


Editorial



This issue, once again, owes much to the US Hydrographic Conference 2009 and much of the material was developed from papers given at that conference and for the contacts the Editor was able to make during that event. We start this issue with an historical paper, which for some years, has been a goal of the Review, on the assumption that history interests most people while some of the technical papers may be too esoteric for some. There is then a paper on surveys in the Arctic Ocean as a basis for US claims to the continental shelf in that area. It is timely from two points of view, one that the opening up of Arctic sea routes as a result of global warming and two from the fact that the Law of the Sea Treaty is placing pressure on countries to make their claims under Article 76. With the help of large modern icebreakers and the latest acoustic technology our knowledge of the Arctic Ocean seafloor is being increasingly revealed. There follows a paper on LIDAR and its ability to detect small objects on the sea floor. This has been a much debated subject in previous issues of this Review and this paper adds further information to the debate. Then onwards to a discussion on matters that have a general interest to maritime navigators and is at present a source of debate at the International Maritime Organisation. This is the mandatory requirement for ships to carry Automatic Identification Systems (AIS). In particular this paper discusses the use of Binary Messages associated with this technology.

The final paper concerns the matter of distributing Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) and it also reflects the difficulties being faced by the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) in providing a global system of ENCs as a basis for the use of ECDIS. The task has proved to be very difficult both in introducing the complex technology and the coordination of the effort between different Hydrographic Offices. This slow and difficult process has possibly resulted in producing “official charts” whose use is becoming mandatory, but whose design will be out of date for the navigators of the future, as discussed in an interesting Note on the “Download Generation”, presented originally at the ECDIS Conference in Singapore last year. Another Note in this issue discussing matters of ECDIS is one also presented at Singapore that outlines ideas of a green ECDIS to aid combat environmental concerns.

A review on a book on estimating sea floor dynamics will hopefully bring attention to the subject of the mobility of the sea floor and the importance to hydrographers of understanding it. Most HOs will be faced with the problem of mobile sedimentary sea floors and their effect on under keel clearances for shipping. The book being reviewed is based on a PhD thesis by a Dutch student and includes a considerable amount of mathematics but the overall objective of improving bathymetric survey planning should interest all HOs.

Adam J. Kerr, Editor