

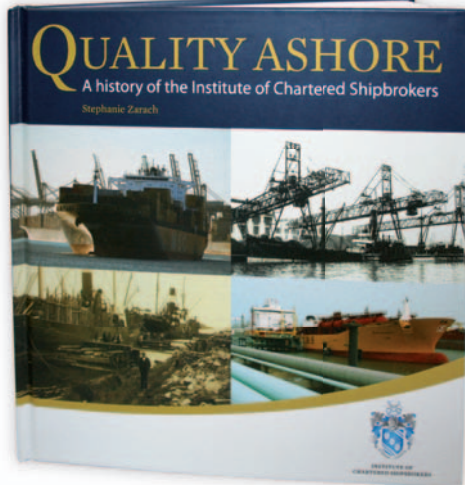
Dancing with the Morris men

One summer afternoon 30 years ago I sat with my fellow rookies to hear what Albert Morris had to say about the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers. Mr Morris was a visionary in a dark suit. He is credited with moving the institute away from its narrow focus on the syllabus and examinations into the realms of training and teaching.

It was overdue: university graduates were required to pass papers on basic geography and letter writing, a source of frustration for many looking to join a modern profession. He asked each of us whether we were "men of straw" and wondered if we could be trusted with "my word my bond". Probably not, knowing some of us.

"It was Albert's idea to raise income [for the institute] by selling knowledge," says another ICS stalwart, Harry Lorkin, quoted in Stephanie Zarach's new book *Quality Ashore*, written on behalf of the institute. Morris's brainchild, TutorShip, changed the direction of the organisation that was created to set and maintain standards for shipbroking from its citadel in London's St Mary Axe. The Institute of Shipbrokers was established in 1911 because professional standards of conduct as carried out by members of the Baltic Mercantile and Shipping Exchange didn't always meet the requirements of the day.

The first records of discussion as to the need for an institute were in this magazine. David Garbutt Pinkney, a shipbroker and Baltic member, wrote a letter entitled 'Reciprocity and the Shipbroker' in the 1



September 1910 issue of *Fairplay* in which he lamented the "gradual decadence of the professional shipbroker, owing to circumstances beyond his control". Reciprocity was broking activity in which the business is secured to the broker "before it is transacted". With no competition to fear, explained Pinkney, the broker does not attend to the work personally, but employs a young substitute to do it for him.

Pinkney and undisclosed other men of Edwardian influence created an august body of traders that soon took on a life of its own, with a series of branch offices, each with its formal gatherings and dinners, and an educative role that resembled the English public school.

Zarach's time has been well spent. She picks out anecdotes and remembrances not

for the sake of nostalgia, but to show how the institute grew in stature, until it became clear to most people that the future of the ICS lay not in the contracting British shipping industry, but in the burgeoning industry overseas. Morris retired in 1984, aged 79, and passed on the baton to others, and their debt to him is acknowledged.

Quality Ashore moves on from outlining the activities of East Anglia and Humber branches to offer some history of the India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, South Africa, Germany, Singapore and Australia/NZ branches. The lack of a footprint in the Americas, with the single exception of Vancouver, says much about the British Empire's influence in the shipbroking world.

Zarach has achieved more than a run through the archives, highlighting the moments of change. For brokers past and present she has written a testimony to the very many dedicated individuals for whom the institute was their life.

But there's a warning: in an unforgiving world there is no place for complacency. Survival, let alone growth, depends on the "continued ability to be relevant". No more or less. If there is to be another 100 years, the only element that can be predicted with certainty is change. **Richard Clayton**

Quality Ashore, A history of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers by Stephanie Zarach is published by the ICS, price £30 (softback) or £45 (hardback); orders can be placed with a.begum@ics.org.uk

letter: In praise of anti-pirate private security

Sir,

I am writing in response to a letter by master mariner Hugh O'Neil. With respect for his experience and opinion, I must firstly agree with him that convoys do help reduce attacks on shipping. In fact, it is one of the basic tenants of the IRTC that has helped reduce the number of attacks in the Gulf of Aden.

However, where I must strongly disagree with him is his description of private security firms as being 'as parasitic as pirates'. The private security industry is meeting a need protecting mariners as they go about their lawful business on the seas, filling in where national navies do not have the resources

to protect them. Ask anyone currently being held by pirates if they would have preferred private security to several months in captivity.

Also consider the many hundreds of attacks that have been successfully repulsed by ex-military UK professionals working for reputable security companies and you will see nothing but praise from the masters for safe deliverance from harm. You would not blame your doctor when you are ill, or the police when they come to your aid, so please do not try to tarnish the work done by private security companies with emotive phrases.

Yours etc,
Brian Short, MD MarineSec