

Hong Kong Branch Report June 2019 - Aug 2020

Good evening Dear Members,

It has been a very different and difficult year, unlike any that this branch and possibly the Institute has ever experienced. It started with the Global AGM and Ship Handling Conference being conducted on 12th and 13th June respectively. The Global AGM which was being conducted in Hong Kong for the first time and was scheduled at the offices of Reed Smith, gave us the hiccup of the year with protests breaking out and tear gas being fired in the immediate vicinity of the venue, leading to a last minute flurry of calls to all registered attendees and a change of venue to the Jumbo restaurant. Despite the logistical difficulties, the AGM was attended by around 30 members, including some observers and the dinner had close to 50 members and guests attending. The Conference was well attended with over 100 attendees and the cocktails thereafter which in another first was hosted jointly with WISTA was a resounding success, being held at the lovely pool side venue of the Hong Kong Yacht club with a lively Lion Dance performance and in addition to members was attended by various guests from the Maritime community.

Despite a lot of concerns with the ongoing protests leading up to the event, the event in the end was a huge success, especially enriching the coffers of the Branch, leaving the branch in a relatively better financial status than it has been in the past. For the financial success in addition to the NI HQ and Gold Sponsors from overseas, I wish to thank our Hong Kong Gold Sponsors, Anglo Eastern, Fleet Management and Invest HK.

Following on the success of the Conference and AGM, the branch member whole heartedly participated in the Dragon Boat race organized by the Hong Kong Marine Department on 22nd June 2019.

The protests then took hold of Hong Kong, making any events rather difficult to organize. In a brief lull, in November, the branch organized a talk by Harry Hirst on the 1st November, on "Traffic Separation Schemes – Has Crossing a Traffic Lane become legally more difficult?", where the speaker discussed certain aspects of the Singapore Court's judgment on a collision case in Singapore strait and whether crossing a traffic lane has just become legally more difficult.

On 20th November 2019, as part of the Hong Kong Maritime week 2019, the branch organized a presentation on "Ship inspections and logistics partnerships – A New approach" by Walter Vervloesem, Director IMCS Training academy. The presentation is about building logistic partnerships through ship inspections and how such partnerships benefits the various parties involved in the maritime adventure.

The Branch then headed into the Christmas and New Year intending to renew activities in 2020, but unfortunately this was not to be as the COVID pandemic took hold, making all forms of gathering impossible, even delaying this AGM and rendering this in a new but now normal format of an online meeting !

During the COVID, the branch supported the initiative started by NI HQ of presenting certification of appreciation to the vessel master and crew for some of the vessels calling Hong Kong. The initiative was NI's way of acknowledging the hard work put in by the maritime professionals during these exceptional times of COVID lockdowns. Mr. Luca assisted in this endeavor.

It has been a rather topsy turvy year for Hong Kong and the branch, starting off with a roar and ending on a rather quieter note. Hopefully the next year will bring more stability and opportunity to resume our activities as individuals and as a branch.

Thank you.