

SEALIFE PROGRAMME



SEALIFE BULLETIN No. 2

FEBRUARY 1976

INTRODUCTION

Sealife has now been in existence for 10 months. This is an update on our progress since Bulletin No. 1, released in October 1975.

GENERAL

Our momentum is now beginning to build up. Working relationships have been formed between Sealife and 15 U.K. shipping companies, and we are actively engaged in project work in 6 of these. Our involvement ranges from occasional consultative discussions on company projects, to full-time involvement by our staff in major joint projects with companies' shore and/or seafaring staffs.

We are discussing the possibility of actively assisting a further 6 companies and hope by the end of this year to be helping at least 12 companies in major work.

A brief picture of our activities in each main project area is given below.

PROJECT 1—TASKS AND SKILLS ABOARD SHIPS

This project aimed to discover if the large amount of information on tasks and skills on modern ships collected by the Germans under their Flensburg study was relevant to British ships. Following visits to Germany, and to U.K. ships at sea, our team has reported that the Flensburg information and the ways it can be used for assessing the effects on training requirements of different practices and work arrangements aboard ship, are satisfactorily valid for the U.K. fleet for us not to need to duplicate the Germans' efforts. Two members of the U.K. industry have been fully trained to help companies and their staffs to ascertain if these findings can help them meet their own needs.

PROJECT 2—ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The project team of four specialists is making good progress with plans of action for experimental changes of organisation or manpower practices in the two companies so far involved—BP Tankers and Stag Line Limited. Discussions are planned with a further two companies with a view to similar work with them.

Again space precludes more than a brief summary of what is going on. Enquiries by anyone wanting to learn more in detail will be welcomed. Please write to or ring the Sealife office.

Sealife may appear an expensive undertaking in these stringent times. The manpower shortages which sparked this Programme have for the present receded and it is all too easy to think that the problem has gone away. The fact is that, unless every effort is maintained to get to the roots of the industry's manpower problems on a continuing basis for some years, the same problems will hit the U.K. industry even harder when the world trade levels again resume their long-term trends.

As we said in Bulletin No. 1, our main purpose is to help the industry get the process of change started, to help it become more flexible in adapting manpower practices to the continuing pressures of changes in ship technology and social values ashore. It is a difficult task and major results will be slow to arrive. It is therefore reassuring that British shipowners consider it worth contributing over £½m to the first two years of this venture. We shall do our best to earn the support and involvement of as many companies, and of their sea and shore staffs, as possible within the scope afforded by these funds.

A further Bulletin will be published in April 1976.

Sealife Projects Office
146 Minories
London EC3

Tel: 01-481 8131

P. W. R. Smith
Chairman
Sealife Programme
Steering Group

Jebsons (UK) Limited had independently started similar work outside Sealife early in 1975. An arrangement has been made enabling the results of their work to be made available to Sealife, and thus to the industry at large, in exchange for some financial support for their work from Sealife funds.

For this type of work to produce significant changes, extensive consultation is essential in the planning stages with ship, shore management and union representatives. This takes time and primarily controls when it is possible actually to attempt experiment its aboard ships themselves. The first experimental voyages are planned to start April/May.

PROJECT 3—SHIP AND SHORE: COMMUNICATIONS, FUNCTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Our work in Panocean Shipping and Terminals has helped to generate a set of plans for important changes in ship/shore policies. Several project teams have been set up within the company to implement improved budgetary control procedures aboard ship, continuity of crew, stores and spares control etc., with the emphasis on giving the ship's complement as much autonomy as possible.

Turnbull Scott are using Sealife in a consultative role to assist them in their own plans for improving crew continuity. Sir William Reardon Smith is working with us on plans for a joint project. Exploratory discussions are in progress with several other companies. It is hoped to have major projects active within at least 5 or 6 companies by the end of 1976 under Project 3.

PROJECT 4—EMPLOYMENT PACKAGE

A possible project leader for the first stage of this important appraisal of the seafarer's terms and conditions of employment has been identified. He is 'neutral' in the sense of having no prior connection with the industry, but has a considerable background of experience in the fields of industrial relations and employment practices in other industries. It is hoped to confirm an appointment by the end of February.

PROJECT 5—RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND INDUCTION PRACTICES

Work is now concentrated in 3 initial areas:

- To see if there is a relationship between personnel selection and induction practices and manpower wastage rates.
 - Identifying whether and how existing recruitment policies for deck and engineer cadets and junior ratings might be improved to reduce terminations.
 - Developing more concrete ideas about the jobs the industry has to offer and to outline a definition of the aptitudes and qualifications best fitted for these jobs which would make recruitment and selection more effective.
- A report will be published in May.

PROJECT 6—SHIP DESIGNER/USER

Out of 65 responses to a questionnaire sent to all U.K. companies, 4 indicated positive interest in taking a new approach towards their next new-building specifications with Sealife help, and 14 expressed interest in involvement in the project as members of workshops/working groups. The Project Leader took up his duties on 5th January and is now starting discussions with potential participants.

PROJECT 7—PUBLIC RELATIONS

Presentations of Sealife have been given to the Ship and Marine Technology Requirements Board, the Department of Employment and the Executive of the NUS. Updating meetings with GCBS key committees are planned for the Spring together with progress presentations to the Seafarers' Unions and Associations.

PROJECT 10—MANAGEMENT CONTENT OF JOBS OF SHIPS' STAFF (PLYMOUTH RESEARCH PROJECT)

Under the management of Plymouth Polytechnic research is being conducted into the managerial roles of all grades of officers and petty officers aboard ship. Two study voyages have been completed—in a medium-sized tanker and a refrigerated cargo liner. Eight or more such voyages are contemplated to ensure a representative picture is obtained of different types of ship, company, voyage phase and trade. This work is being conducted with emphasis on detailed personal contact and discussion with the ship's staff. Project work is expected to continue well into 1977.