

# Never mind the weather

**BW Shipping has installed weather services on some of its ships in a bid to cut operating costs**

**I**N A tougher trading environment, ship operators are examining more closely available options for reducing costs. Recent advances in weather services offer substantial potential savings in time and costs, plus the benefit of reducing harmful emissions.

BW Fleet Management says that it is seeing direct savings by using such weather services. Paul Jones, general manager for fleet performance and development, said: "We had a recent incident where a ship was able to avoid a delay due to the accurate prediction of a tropical storm track, which saved 24 hours and 90 tonnes of bunkers."

At current prices this equates to about \$45,000. The ship altered its passage to sail east instead of west of Taiwan based on the forecast weather information, avoiding a cyclone. It can also help avoid significant losses due to heavy weather damage to ship-board equipment, such as anchors and accommodation ladders.

"In tough markets, when margins are under constant pressure, we face strong demands to cut expenses and so we increase our focus on those solutions that can help us cut operational costs," Capt Jones said. Bridge teams review weather prognoses and discuss a course of action with BW Fleet Management in Singapore.

"If the weather services can save each ship as little as a quarter-tonne



**BW Amazon took part in a weather service trial in 2009.**

of bunkers per day, when multiplied across our entire fleet of 90 ships over a full year, you will have major savings," said Capt Jones.

BW Shipping first installed weather services on a number of gas carriers, oil tankers and bulk carriers in 2006. The initial investment was to provide additional support to staff on board and help ships avoid trouble where weather information is scarce.

In late 2008, BW Shipping changed the provider of its weather services to Jeppesen Marine's WeatherNAV and OceanView. On BW Shipping's HMC electronic chart systems, the Weath-



**Jones: focus on cutting costs.**

erNAV solution provides weather overlays for the bridge team's immediate review. On other ships, masters used OceanView to plan passages with weather data, in the chart room.

Capt Jones said that although most weather service providers used the same sources of basic information, the choice came down to which could provide the best global support for software, installation and training on a long-term basis. A further advantage was that BW was also using Jeppesen for electronic charts and it made sense to have everything in the same format from the same supplier.

BW ran trials of the Jeppesen systems on board some of its vessels in summer 2009. The ships documented comparisons between the weather services' predictions over a period, and the ship's observations, during a transit, covering wind direction and force, sea heights, swell direction and force, temperature, barometric readings and precipitation. The observations and predictions were consistent.

"The use of weather information has become part of the daily planning routine, more of an overall improvement in voyage perform-

ance. This may involve adjustments in course or speed to avoid storms, adjustments in track to utilise currents or avoid them, and more efficient use of crew time by better planning of work outside, avoiding poor weather," Capt Jones said.

BW is assessing how to optimise its operations using weather services. BW's head of operations in Oslo, Arild Julson, said: "With more transit data, we are more certain of the external parameters of a voyage. Then we can begin to study, understand and optimise the parameters that are internal to our operations — that is, we can assess how the engine is run, for example, without fearing that our data is corrupted by differences in weather conditions."

The operator is hoping that optimised voyage systems can generate more savings. A true comparison would look at the predicted fuel consumption of an optimised transit, the actual fuel consumption of an optimised transit and the expected fuel consumption of a conventional transit. This involves significant data collection and analysis.

"We are fostering a change in approach that looks at the bigger picture of vessel management, whether that is voyage routing, power consumption, or loss/leakage reduction. The area having most impact is main engine fuel and we believe that real improvements in consumption will only be made if the onboard approach to voyage management is changed," Capt Jones said.

"Over the years we have received a number of proposals that suggest a reduction in fuel consumption, but realistically the use of accurate weather information and amendments to short-term voyage planning will have the best long-term results."

## New ISM Code guide

A NEW, fourth edition of the ICS/ISF Guidelines on the Application of the International Maritime Organization International Safety Management Code is about to be published and will be available from Marisec in April.

The guidelines are being fully updated to take account of the latest amendments and guidance agreed by IMO, and experience gained since the ISM Code became fully mandatory in 2002. The expanded new edition will also include additional guidance on risk management, safety culture and environmental management. It will supersede and replace the previous 1996 edition.

The new edition will be accompanied by a CD version of the text with a search function. It will also include various reference documents and a Model Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan to reduce fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

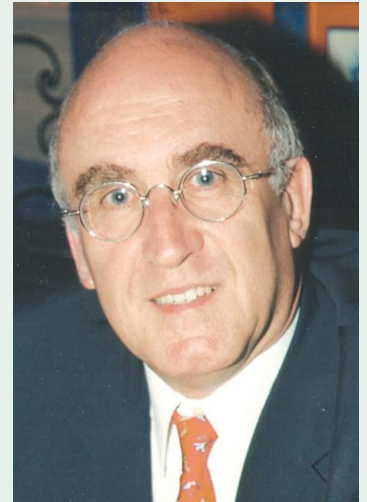
## Change at the top at InterManager

KUBA Szymanski will take over from Guy Morel as secretary general of ship managers' organisation InterManager in June when Mr Morel retires.

Capt Szymanski will join InterManager on March 1 as secretary general elect when he will move from MOL Tankship Management. He will be based in the Isle of Man.

He has been at MOL Tankship Management for two years, having previously worked for Dorchester Maritime in the Isle of Man. As well as extensive seagoing and ship management experience, Capt Szymanski holds an MBA from John Moores University, Liverpool.

Mr Morel has been InterManager secretary general since 2007 and is a former president of its predecessor, the International Ship Managers Association.



**Capt Kuba Szymanski (left) will take the helm at InterManager when Guy Morel (right) retires in June.**