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In 2010, three relatively recent arrivals met at a local shipping function. Talk inevitably turned to the lack of events for younger members of the industry (as they were only ones in the hall who wouldn't have qualified for a pension).

As Tabitha Logan explains, the 'old hands' had built up solid networks through their years in the business, but there was no organised way for the younger set to meet and build similar relationships. So the three women decided to pool their contacts and invite younger shipping people to meet for drinks.

They sent out 20 invitations, but when 50 people turned up they realised they were on to something, and the Young Professionals in Shipping Network (YPSN) was born. Less than two years later, YPSN has around 350 members, and growing.

Su-yin Anand explains that shipping events are normally attended by men, so younger women are nervous about making contact, especially if they are from overseas. YPSN, on the other hand, is still run by the three founders, so it attracts a lot of youngsters new to the business or new to the territory. They have

also attracted a considerable number of members from PRC shipping companies.

Marija Pospisil adds that their meetings tend to be held in an informal setting, which helps because people can come and go as they please. This flexibility is lost at more formal functions, but suits the ways of junior executives.

THE YOUNG ONES

The founders say they are still part of the shipping scene, and are full of praise for the companies and individuals who have helped them or sponsored their events, but note that their focus is slightly different, with sporting and recreational activities. They are planning a six-a-side soccer tournament and a charity walk in coming months, in addition to the major seminar they put together as part of China Maritime Week (27.Feb-2.Mar.12).

They are keen to make YPSN sustainable, which means they will continue to organise activities which will appeal to a range of members. As one of them told us, 'not everyone likes booze', so they must feed minds and healthy bodies as well. This is not an opinion we have heard in shipping very often, and reflects the refreshing approach of the founders.



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Like so many people brought together in shipping, they are a diverse group. Tabitha Logan was born in Britain but raised in Zimbabwe, and studied law at university. She came to Hong Kong on holiday, loved the place and decided to stay. After working with a major shipping law firm, she moved into ship management and now operates a fleet of bulk carriers.



Tabitha Logan, Marija Pospisil, Su-yin Anand

Su-yin Anand is from Singapore, where her father was a timber merchant. She says she grew up hearing about charter parties and bills of lading, and always wanted to study maritime law. She is now firmly established at one of Hong Kong's leading maritime law practices.

Marija Pospisil's mother worked for a shipping company in Croatia, and the family took a holiday trip on a cargo ship when Marija was six years old. She was hooked at an early age, but her mother advised against a seagoing career, so she studied law at the University of Zagreb before obtaining an LLM with distinction from the International Maritime Law Institute. She took a PhD at the

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University of Split and now works for a major P&I Club. Along the way, she also completed the nautical studies course at the University of Rijeka, so perhaps her dreams of a seagoing career have not completely faded.

The three women are modest about their accomplishments, saying they just love the business, and much of their success is due to the people who have supported them. They point out that other major maritime centres have similar groups, so the time was right for Hong Kong to follow suit.

The seminar which YPSN organised as part of the recent China Maritime activities was very much focused on the future of Hong Kong, the port and its maritime cluster, and was a sell-out.

Their opening speaker was Michael Grey MBE, who was a well-known maritime journalist long before the members of YPSN were even born. He is the doyen of shipping writers, and certainly the most famous and respected commentator on maritime matters in the world today. To entice him to Hong Kong was quite a coup.

He took the centenary of the *Titanic* disaster as his theme, and began by pointing out that, for many years, he has railed against *Titanic* being the most famous ship in history. All the great things which merchant vessels have achieved are overshadowed by one rather unfortunate disaster. Indeed, the ship has become an industry.

Less celebrated is the fact that much good came out of the tragedy — the establishment of the North Atlantic Ice Patrol (forerunner of the International Ice Patrol), the requirement for ships to have an auto alarm, the provision of sufficient lifeboats, fire and boat drills, even the genesis of the international cooperation which led to the formation of the IMO.

Other lessons have still not been learned. The complacency which people felt because the ship was 'unsinkable' have been seen recently in the fields of banking and politics, and Grey told his audience that a '*Titanic* mindset' contributed to the BP blowout in the Gulf of Mexico. He also claimed that there was an over-reliance

on technology and statistics which is still evident today. At the time of the *Titanic* disaster, no ship had hit an iceberg for more than 30 years, so what were the chances of it happening? Why bother with sufficient lifeboat space? He compared this to the modern belief that computers are infallible.



Grey ended his presentation with a caution that human frailties are always with us, and insufficient risk assessment in a world which moves ever more quickly can only lead to more disasters. The lessons of *Titanic* have still not been learned.

Andrew Brooker then spoke about piracy and the world of kidnap and ransom insurance. He provided advice which, sadly, will be useful to YPSN members for a large part of their careers.

Arnaud Filancia gave a fascinating paper on Wärtsilä's Shipping Scenario 2030 project. This is an online attempt to predict what the world may be like in 2030, and the types of ships

and technologies which will be required to deal with the problems which emerge. Great stuff, and well worth looking up on their website at www.wartsila.com/shippingscenarios, where you can share your views, or challenge theirs. YPSN members are fortunate that they will still be around in 2030 to gauge the accuracy of the predictions!



Michael Grey and Su-yin Anand

The final speaker was Sabrina Chao of Wah Kwong, who talked about human capital and the importance of investing in people to secure the future of the maritime industry. If other young local shipowners share her enlightened and sensible views, then the prospects for the industry in Hong Kong are good.

The young shipping professionals are already making their presence felt, and it seems the local maritime cluster will be in very capable hands in the future. As Michael Grey wrote after the event, 'YPSN is clearly a force to be recognised, and packed its seminar to the doors with a group of youthful shipping people (along with some who had clearly lied about their age), which makes us optimistic for the future of the maritime sector in Asia.'



Sabrina Chao