BP Shipping Celebrates 100 Years of Maritime Success

Thursday 30 April, 2015

Related Sectors:

Manufacturing, Engineering & Energy ::

Scan Me:

BP Shipping today celebrates its 100-year anniversary, making it the longest continually operating company in the BP group.

Formed on April 30, 1915 as the British Tanker Company, the business has adapted to significant world events including two world wars, the Great Depression, closures of the Suez Canal, and the impact of oil nationalisations on the world economy and the movement of oil and gas.

BP Shipping has also played its role in the evolution of safer and more environmentally sustainable shipping practices including inert gas systems, crude oil washing and double hulling, and has used its marine skills in the design and development of ground-breaking hybrid vessels in support of offshore oil and gas exploration.

John Ridgway, CEO of BP Shipping, said: "I am delighted to have led this great business in its centenary year, and all the many thousands of people that have served BP Shipping over the course of a century can be rightly proud of the company."

Across the 100 years, the company has been responsible for the construction of more than 500 oil and gas tankers – an average launch rate of one new ship every 10 weeks of the century – as well as a myriad of small vessels to support BP's international operations.

Today, BP Shipping operates some 50 oil and gas carriers with a further 200 large vessels and 400 coastal and barge vessels under charter transporting cargoes of oil, gas, refined products, lubricants and petrochemicals.

Company vessels and seafarers saw service in both world wars: between 1939 and 1945, 50 BP tankers – half of the entire fleet - were sunk in the Atlantic and Arctic Convoys and other theatres of war with the tragic loss of 657 lives.

The company has been amongst the leaders in the oil and gas shipping industry in technical innovation and safety standards for decades introducing advances in tanker safety and pollution control well before they became mandatory by international regulation. The company's patented design for an inert gas system (IGS) which was introduced to BP vessels in the 1960s led to the industry mandating of IGS in the 1970s and was responsible for a major reduction in cargo related explosions. The work of a team of BP Master Mariners in the post-war period plotting precise 'actual route' measurements port-to-port led to the publication of the BP World Wide Marine Distance Tables. Today they are not only the industry standard for voyage calculations but are also a key determinant of the Worldscale Freight Rates Schedules which underpin commercial chartering arrangements across the shipping industry.

In the offshore oil and gas sector, BP Shipping led the design and development of Iolair, an innovative semi-submersible emergency support vessel (ESV) for the offshore industry in the 1980s and later Seillean - the world's first dynamically-positioned offshore production vessel. Today, the company is involved in the development of 'state of the art' floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) vessels and platforms for deployment in challenging new offshore environments in the UK, Angola and Norway.

John Ridgway added: "BP Shipping's purpose has remained broadly the same for 100 years – that is to transport oil and gas for the BP group safely and securely. I have no doubt the business is well-placed to continue to do that for another 100 years."

John Ridgway is retiring from BP Shipping after a distinguished career of 44 years; Susan Dio, from BP's downstream business, will take the helm on 1 May, 2015.

BP Shipping currently has around 1,300 seafarers and has supported cadet training throughout its history with some 100 deck and engineering officer cadets coming through training schemes annually.

BP Shipping statistics

- Owned or operated oil and gas tankers: c.500
- Owned or operated tankers and small vessels: c. 1000
- Owned or operated tanker fleet numbers peak: 160 ships (2 million dwt) in 1955

- Owned or operated tanker fleet dwt peak: 6.8 million dwt (97 ships) in 1974
- Owned or operated tanker fleet in 2015: c. 50 ships at 5 million dwt in 2015
- 1939: ratio of tankers owned or operated to chartered: 90:10
- 2015: ratio of tankers owned or operated to chartered: 27: 73
- Total cargo transported in 2014: 180 million tonnes
- First Anglo-Persian vessel: SS Ferrara (cased oil)
- First British Tanker Co vessel: British Emperor, 5300 dwt
- Only sailing ship (Schooner): Scandinavia (1917-22)
- Largest owned/operated ship: P Class- British Pioneer VLCC – 309,000 dwt
- Seafarers who lost lives on BTC managed vessels in WW2 : 657
- BTC Seafarers taken prisoner: 260
- BTC owned/managed vessels lost to enemy action in WW2: 50
- Honours awarded to BTC seafarers in WW2: 203

BP Shipping Centenary "Riding the Waves" app for iPad and iPhone

Download our BP Shipping Centenary App - 'Riding the Waves' - to discover how BP built one of the world's greatest merchant shipping fleets to transport its major oil discoveries in the Middle East and across the globe – to refineries, markets and customers during the past 100 years. Read about the key world events – from war to economic boom and bust – which determined the success and near failure of BP's shipping arm. Hear the personal stories of triumph and tragedy of those who sailed with the BP Shipping fleet – and of those ashore who changed the world shipping industry for the better.

Download the app

Further information:

A selection of historic photographs of BP Shipping is available from the BP press office.

Name: Adam Smith, Head of Communications, BP Shipping

Phone : +44 (0) 1932 771 652

Email: adam.smith3@bp.com

Name: BP Press Office, London

Phone : +44 (0) 207 4964076

Email: bppress@bp.com

Company Contact:

_

Pressat Wire

E. support[@]pressat.co.uk

View Online

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.wire.pressat.co.uk