



# FLEET NEWS

*A Publication Of THOME Ship Management Pte Ltd*

## THOME Opens New Office in Europe

*Getting closer to our clients in the EU*



Thome Group has secured its first dedicated presence in Europe with the opening of an office in Zadar, Croatia. The group launched the offices in April at a formal event attended by group principals, Managing Director Bjorn Hojgaard, Thome crew personnel and management and host of well wishers.

The office will act as a service driven unit for group managed ships calling at European ports. It will be staffed by a full time team led by Valerio Skoblar. The Zadar team comprises technical staff, including captains and chief engineers who will give vessels calling in Europe full marine and technical support.

Managing Director Bjorn Hojgaard said: "This is a big move for Thome as the European market cannot be under-estimated for our company.

Around two-thirds of our fleet is entrusted to us from major European owners in vessel number terms and around half our owner-principals come from Europe."

Essentially, there are three main reasons why Thome has taken this step today.

First, we needed to have close proximity to our European based principals - it will help us serve them better and we now have much better access to all the major European ports. We needed an office in the same time zone as our European clients. Our customers expect 'real time' service and often cannot wait until the next day for service to their vessels. Thome can now provide that, Capt Hojgaard added.

Second, there is a commercial benefit to opening the office - We can be closer to our European officer base and have greater interaction with them which will in turn make us all more competent, service driven and a better team - an obviously commercial aspect when we are promoting ourselves to potential clients.

Third, The Zadar office opening could spearhead further development for Thome in Europe and there is always the possibility that further Thome offices in Europe will be opened, although none are planned for the moment.

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## Message From Mr Olav Eek Thorstensen, Group Chairman & CEO



*Group Chairman & CEO,  
Mr. Olav Eek Thorstensen*

So much has happened in the past few months, it is difficult to mention every single piece of news - but one thing for sure is that Thome Group is battling hard to cope with the ongoing global economic recession.

We are surviving because we are focusing on what we do best - concentrating on the basics of the service of providing quality ship management to our owner-principals with the emphasis on safety and vigorous cost control.

In times like these, our principals want to hear about how we can assist their bottom line when their own bottom lines are being squeezed by low freight rates.

I believe we are doing this which is why we continue to get a steady stream of

inquiries from owners asking us if we would be interested in managing their vessels.

The Thome managed fleet is expanding, but the expansion will be steady and with caution. We will run a tight ship in these troubled times but still maintain our steady course with a strong hand on the wheel.

For now, our emphasis has switched on how we manage our own internal changes which are needed so that we can continue to meet the demands of our principals.

In recent weeks I have asked our senior management to look at areas of our business which have become out-dated for the modern times in which we now operate. I believe that some of our internal processes need changing and some need to be abandoned.

To use a shipping industry analogy, Thome Group is due for a 'Special Survey' and this survey will identify things which need to alter. I have every confidence that the company - and everyone who works for the group - will benefit from this 'Special Survey'. We shall not hesitate to fix what needs to be repaired.

The emphasis from now on has to be on the aim of doing things right first time - our major principals do not just hope for this - they now demand it.

We are now a manager with more than 100 full technical managed vessels and

that means we have to get it right first time. The result of 'getting it wrong' would have a domino effect on the group, and we cannot allow that to happen.

Another internal issue which I want to raise here is the need for all of us to 'Finish What We Start'. Over the years I never fail to be amazed by the number of good ideas which our management and staff produce which are always well received.

After all, it is 'ideas' which grow companies and make them world class organizations. But sometimes there is a tendency to have that great idea, circulate it, agree upon a course of action and then not execute it - this culture is frustrating and we need to address it.

I am all in favour of good ideas - everyone can have them - but let's make sure that if we have a good idea which we all agree upon, it is then carried through! Otherwise what is the point of having the idea in the first place?

From now on Capt Bjorn Hojgaard and I plus the management team will focus on getting these good ideas to work in practice.

You will see from this issue of TFN that many things have happened since our last issue in March. Do take a little time to read TFN as it will help you see and understand the developments and changes which are going on in Thome Group each day - Happy Reading!



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# The Thome Officers and Principals Conference

*More than 200 Principals and Officers attended our Conference in Manila, March, 23-24, 2009*



More than 200 officers and principals of Thome Ship Management gathered at the Peninsula Hotel in Manila, Philippines for the annual TSM Phils conference and get together.

All the Thome senior managers were present and we held two days of conferences which were well attended with some lively debate and some important issues were raised.

Day One, Monday March 23, was our open day - when we invited a panel of outside speakers to talk about a range of issues with the theme of piracy being high on the agenda.

The second day was 'internal' and was held at our Philippines headquarters in downtown Manila. Again, a good crowd of officers were present to hear several strong speeches.

On day one, we decided to 'theme' the conference session and invited a series of outside speakers to give their views on a range of hot topics affecting our industry.

Mr Robbie Shea from Compliance Systems made some vital points about the constant and major changes going on Marpol and the need for seafarers - and owners and managers to keep updated on these changes. He explained to us the serious consequences of not knowing about these rules and regulations - ignorance of

the law is not a defence and that is just as true when it comes to Marpol.

Divay Goel of Drewry Shipping Consultants spoke about macro issues in the global market and one point he made was that the tanker market, while down now, is far less affected by the economic crisis than other shipping sectors.

Our own Peter Helm gave us an excellent summary of our group's approach to piracy in the afternoon in a very well prepared paper on tackling piracy the Thome way. Basically Peter told us all : Be Prepared/ Be Alert/ Be Vigilant and Be safe!

James Drummond, from Ince and Co, the maritime lawyers, gave a thorough overview of piracy and the legal implications - this paper was very interesting as it raised lots of legal issues which directly affect our daily operations. For example, if one of our ships is attacked, when do we decide to defend ourselves, how do we defend ourselves if we decide to do so and how do we define 'proportionate' use of force - very tricky and difficult questions.

James Blakeney from security firm Control Risks gave an overview of preventative measures and the main thing to come of James's paper was the need to train people to respond and to have people in our team who know how to deal with these situations. It is clear that Control



Risks certainly do with the amount of incidents they have dealt with.

Mr Tanabrata from DnV - in a very important message which was linked to James Drummond's speech - the only way we can respond properly to these kind of crises are by adopting management systems that work, are tested and that have integrity.

Chris Hall from Skuld gave a paper which was focused mainly on piracy from an insurance and risk management perspective - He made the point that owners should be aware of what is in their contracts as regards charter parties - should piracy clauses be added? Eg: joining group transits which delay voyages but maybe safer. He also said we owners should talk to their insurers if there is any ambiguity in the cover - understand the extent of the insurance and the strength of the insurer.

## A Word From Our Managing Director



*Managing Director,  
Captain Bjorn Hojgaard*

It seems hard to believe that we are already close to finishing the first half of 2009, there have been so many things happening at Thome Group.

We have had very successful principals and officers' conferences in Croatia and Romania in February and in Manila at the end of March and this was followed up by the official opening of our office in Zadar, Croatia on 17 April.

This was an event at which I was proud to be at as our Zadar office is, in reality, the first time we have had a fully fledged office in Europe.

I attended the event and it was clear from the number of principals who came and the overall enthusiasm with which it was greeted, our Zadar office is going to be a great success.

The reason why we have opened an office in Croatia is easy to explain.

Thome recognizes that we are an Singapore based firm with many Asia based ship owners as our principals, and we also have a strong relationship with many owners in Europe. We simply need to be closer to them - that was a message that came over loud and clear from several of them.

We also have a strong manning link with Croatia and many of our finest crew have come from that part of the world over the years.

Over the last two decades we have come to know Croatian officers to be of the highest quality and we have year after year deepened our dependency on our manning agents here to provide the ships that we manage a steady flow of shipboard managers.

Today, apart from the Philippines, Croatia is our most important sourcing area for shipboard leadership and the up-start of our own office there is a testimony to our continued commitment to Croatia as a vital element in our ship management strategy.

With more than 200 ships continuously trading the seven seas under Thome management, we have at any given time more than 4,000 seafarers onboard. A large part of these are officers from Croatia.

We hope that the inauguration of a Thome office in Zadar will prove mutually beneficial and will deepen the affiliation our seafarers feel for Thome Ship Management. The framework is now certainly in place for a closer, more fruitful relationship between our office and the seafarers.

Also to our partners in Croatia, our service providers, manning agents, training institutes etc., Thome would like to put on record its sincere appreciation for your constructive partnership over the years.

The success of Thome Ship Management could not have been achieved without the dedication and hard work put in by all of them. We salute you for that.

Everyone at Thome Ship Management shares a dream, an aspiration, of making the company one of the very best providers of ship management in the world - in the eyes of first and foremost our customers, but also recognized by the industry at large, by our employees, classification societies, oil majors etc.

With the guiding vision of our Group Chairman and CEO Olav Thorstensen we have come a long way towards achieving that ambition, but we are not resting on our laurels.

A host of initiatives have been launched in the past year which I am confident will take Thome Ship Management in the "yellow jersey" in the years ahead, to lead the ship management industry in the coming decade.

We are, despite the current economic slowdown in the world, accelerating our investments in upgrading of our hard- and software, so that we are ready to support our customers through the hard times and also in the growth period that will eventually follow the current slowdown.

The opening of our office in Zadar is a very tangible example of this investment.

## Expanding Lay Up Services For Owners



*General Manager,  
Mr Raul Matovic*

Thome Group in April expanded its vessel lay-up services in response to the changing trading climate for many ship owners. Thome Marine Consultant has long-standing expertise in the laying up of all kinds of vessels.

Now, in response to several inquiries Thome Marine Consultants has secured several safe and secure lay-up locations in and around south east Asian waters which can be used by owners for both short and long term lay-up.

Thome Marine Consultants general manager, Raul Matovic (pictured) said: "It is apparent that in the current trading

markets, many owners are looking at lay-up as one option for their vessels. We have seen several new operators attempting to offer this service recently.

"In response to this and the fact that several owners have already approached Thome, we have secured several safe and above all secure lay-up anchorages around this region and owners can now take advantage of this."

He said the extensive expertise within the Thome Group meant that a full range of service could be offered. "We can provide backup, technical expertise and a full range of other services to owners wishing to take this option," he added.

Thome Group President, Claes Eek Thorstensen added: "Lay up of a vessel requires to be done by professionals with a track record. The key requirements are proven lay-up procedures, planned maintenance, professional lay-up crew and stringent supervision in order to maintain the value of the owner's asset.

"Having extensive experience in re-activation of vessels, we understand the importance of quality lay-up."

Mr Matovic noted that Thome had a team of experts dedicated to the expanded lay up service. Container vessel operators and dry bulk owners had been making active inquiries about lay up in particular, he said.

### **Brazil President, Mr Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva visited Thome's LNG - FSRU Golar Spirit**



## **KENSUKE OTOMO - Rest in Peace**



We were all devastated to hear of the sad passing of our Business Development Manager Kensuke Otomo, who passed away in hospital in Singapore in May.

'Otomo-san' was born in 1946 and joined Thome Ship Management in 1997. He was educated as a Marine Engineer and had served as such in junior ranks before moving to shore based positions of increasing responsibility from 1972 onwards. During his 13 years with Thome, Otomo proved a loyal, conscientious and hard-working manager and he can be credited with building up the good connections to our Asian and especially Japanese and Korean customer base, where our relations and business have grown steadily over the past decade.

In the past few months Otomo had struggled with cancer. He was universally known as a kind, well-liked and respected member of our management team, a good colleague and a close friend to many people in our organization. His sudden death came at a far too young age and he still had much to offer as a person and to our group.

Our thoughts are with Otomo's wife Grace and their friends, who will need to find comfort and relief for their grief with each other and with their faith. Our sympathies and condolences go out to them - **BH**

## A New Team At The Helm In HR



*Capt Michael Elwert, Ms Angelina Ang & Ms Lizelle Illingworth*

As we head into the second half of 2009, many of you may have noticed a fresh breeze of change in the area of our Human Resources Department (HR) in the last few months.

In just three months, a whole new management team has arrived from various parts of the world and for the first time in Thome Ship Management's history, the function of HR for both office staff and seafarers has been combined under one roof.

A quick tally shows that the three new HR managers have almost half a century of HR experience of handling both seafarer and office HR issues! Quite some track record!

The person leading this 'new' team is Capt Michael Elwert, a Danish/American national who has joined us after many years of experience both at sea with

Maersk and ashore with the Danish Shipowners' Association and BIMCO where he held senior management jobs.

Assisting Capt Mike is Lizelle Illingworth, who hails from South Africa and comes to Singapore with a wealth of HR management role experience across a range of industries in her home country.

And completing the trio is Angelina Ang, a Singaporean who has joined Thome after gaining much invaluable HR experience during her time as HR manager with some of Singapore's leading companies.

An interview with the new HR team found them to be in great spirits, brimming with ideas and ready to go!

Capt Mike said: "It was clear in just a few weeks after joining Thome that it had great people and is a great organization.

Our job is to make sure all the good work that has been achieved to date is continued.

"The idea to combine seafarer and shore staff HR under one roof comes from the need for us to grow as a business, ensure alignment in our HR throughout the Group and collect the obvious synergies with a dual focus on Marine and Shore HR - we are certainly doing that and Thome is currently gearing up for significant growth in the next few years."

Capt Mike, Lizelle and Angelina all agreed that Thome is above all a 'People' Business and so the HR team focus should be on dealing with people issues and making sure every employee can grow along with the group.

The HR team has been busy: Since all three arrived, they have identified 30 positions across all parts of the group which needed to be filled.

Some are new jobs needed to meet Thome's growth strategy and some are staff replacements across our HR, finance, crewing, accounting, insurance and IT sections.

On that count alone, this must make Thome one of the fastest growing ship managers in Asia! In addition we are welcoming a high number of new qualified crew & officers onboard.

As Thome Fleet News went to press, many of these 30 shore positions had already been filled.

Capt Mike added: "The first step our new HR team is taking is to re-enforce the foundations of the company. Those foundations are already strong and we want to make sure we can cope with the growth we anticipate in the next year or so." A major challenge - but a suitable one for a strong team!!

## Introducing Capt Michael Elwert



*Head of Group HR & Crewing,  
Capt Michael Elwert*

Four months have passed since I joined the Thome Team as head of Group HR & Crewing.

It has been four very interesting, energizing and inspiring months. I have had the pleasure to visit a few of our branch offices and several of our crewing agencies and principals, and I have met many Thome colleagues already attending four officers seminars in the Philippines, Croatia and Rumania.

My only regret is that I have not yet had the opportunity to meet all of you.

Thome is a truly international team of more than 8,000 people handling almost 200 vessels around the world 24/7/365!! Truly impressive, and indeed a remarkable success that we all can be proud of - making this happen is however a team effort.

We are known and respected for our strong culture of accountability and discipline. It is important that we safeguard this reputation and maintain

our high standards in all areas of our operation keeping hands-on at all levels, taking ownership, initiative and making each day count.

Our business is characterized more by hard work than high profit margins. We need to stay on top of our costs, spend wisely, tackle matters proactively, and break down internal barriers for improvement. By being cost & quality conscious we will remain ahead of the competition, service our principals and nurture our strong market position.

Thome is the result of a long proven successful track record and close to 35 years of delivering dedicated ship management services. We must ensure that we all know what we mean by the 'Thome way'. Communication will be essential to accomplish this goal. The Thome Fleet news together with officers meetings, intranet, Officer briefings etc, are all important cornerstones for our internal communication.

None of this, however, can replace nor compete with the power of having a global network of more than 8,000 colleagues within Thome. Remember that your colleagues are never more than a phone call or e-mail away, regardless of where they work.

Changes may be difficult, but are more often than not necessary to progress. No single idea, no matter how good yesterday, will be able to sustain us in the future. We must keep ourselves adaptive. So when we push changes it does not mean that what we did in the past was wrong.

To continue being successful, we in other words need to continue getting new

ideas and generate better, more simple, more relevant and more efficient ways of running our principals vessels and thereby creating true value to those who entrust their vessels to us. The Thome HR function will support this drive.

Thome Group HR outlines certain activities, processes, standards and principals, which we have to implement in order to remain a truly dynamic and developing organization.

The range of HR tools that we are now implementing will not merely ensure a stronger organization, but will also align HR throughout the Thome Group. These activities - to mention a few - include a Group HR strategy, improved recruitment procedures, HR Information system, enhanced focus on performance appraisals, job classification, employee orientations, surveys & reporting, educational programs etc.

Implementing higher HR standards and processes is a large task and is not done overnight. However by taking a high priority approach to the step-by-step implementation of HR tools, processes, systems, and the employment of experienced HR staff, we will ensure that Thome moves swiftly ahead and continues to have the best staff and a strong organization that we all are proud to be part of and which our principals are willing to partner with.

In Thome we want to encourage an open, honest and constructive exchange of opinions. If you have specific ideas and suggestions, you should share them with your colleagues and manager. This way we can improve our ability to learn from each other's experiences and successes.

## Crew Training in China

Thome Ship Management Pte Ltd, in collaboration with our China manning agents, Zhoushan Orient International Economy & Trade Co., Ltd (ZOETC) and Sinocrew Maritime Services Co., Ltd (SINOCREW) recently conducted a series of training courses in March of this year at the Zhejiang International Maritime College and Sinocrew Wuhan Training Centre in China.



*Crew training in Zhoushan, 15 Mar 09*

The main aim of these courses was to familiarise the existing crew and joining crew on the various aspects of the Thome Health, Safety, Security, Environmental and Quality Management (HSSEQ) System.

The course curriculum included an Introduction to Thome HSSEQ System, Environmental Training, ISPS Training with case study, Port state control with case study, Near Miss Reporting and Incident Investigation with case study, Risk Assessment Analysis with case study and Bridge Resource Management.

The first stop for the Thome trainers, which consisted of Mr Richard Chen, Ms Evelyn Lam and Ms Madelyn Tan, was Zhoushan, a lovely island about an hour's flight from Shanghai.

The training course was attended by some officers and engineers from Thome's pool of Chinese crew which complements the four bulk carriers, Pacific Navigator, Pacific Vitality, Pacific Challenger and Pacific Enterprise which are operated by our valued owner Island Navigation Corporation International Limited (INCIL) in Hong Kong.

The training was interesting and interactive throughout as the trainers did their best to deliver the training in a mixture of Chinese and English language. Though challenging to the trainers, they were glad that the course participants passed the required written test with flying colours.

The next training stop was in Wuhan, at the Sinocrew Wuhan Training Centre, where Sinocrew recruits and conducts their training for crew and cadets. The cadets that attended the training courses were all chosen and interviewed by the Managing Director of Thome ROHQ in Manila, Captain Ivar Thomasli.

These cadets, being fresh from the colleges, were attentive audiences and it was fruitful to the trainers as they had a very interactive mode of training during the delivery of the course notes, and were as usual, bombarded with plenty of interesting questions and ideas.

The Thome trainers were able to impart good knowledge to Thome's pool of Chinese crew and cadets, which forms one of the main pillars of success for our company's fleet.

To conclude, it was a good collaboration with INCIL and the Chinese manning agents.



*Crew training in Wuhan, 21 Mar 09*

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