

EDITORIAL

It's Thursday the 1st of February, one month has already passed - I just wonder as I am sure many of you do, where did the time go? I was told by my parents once that as one grows older the time passes more quickly. I will have to face that in about 2 weeks time when I turn 55. Still, it's not the years in your life, it's the life in your years.



I am writing this editorial to you from Stockholm, Sweden, it was a bit of a hardship to return from Asia (Hong Kong and Malaysia) to the darkness of Scandinavia. Every place in the world has its good and bad and I suppose no place has it all.

What I found upsetting during my trip to Malaysia was the apparent rubbish being dumped in many places and it seems to me that we have a general rubbish problem in most parts of the world and here I am not only talking about "developing countries" but also of "developed countries", people tell me that it's about education but then how is it that here in Scandinavia where we are supposed to know better.

It looks awful after almost every weekend, or is it because the curling generation that got most handed to them on a plate have started to go out partying? Beats me, but I know this: I prefer the Singapore style of being a "fine" city when it comes to rubbish and dumping it where it doesn't belong and I also believe in harsh punishments to corporations that pollute in order to increase their bottom line.

If the ocean could speak I am sure we would hear it protest, albeit with a voice muffled by vast amounts of plastic.

I spent 18 years in China and traveled extensively in Asia including India and I saw the downside of the economic boom, ie. gigantic amounts of waste, corrupt environmental agencies, fixing the numbers when inspections were due and a long list of other contributing factors. It's a global problem and it affects us all!

I think the only solution is education from day one for all and hefty fines for polluters, especially for those who should know better.

Well, back to the business world and in today's edition we start off interviewing a Belgian in Croatia successfully moving cargoes around the world.

We then visit the African continent and the country of Ghana where we speak to a Dutch gentleman who has been active in West Africa for many years.

We provide news about the startup of "ONE" the Japanese alliance and we bring you interesting project cargo pictures, our sector

news with interesting projects and contracts signed and the video, photo and wise words of the week.

Wishing you a good read and until next time I remain...

Yours sincerely,

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R&B GLOBAL PROJECTS LTD. CROATIA

MR. DAVE ROOSEN
DIRECTOR

Tell us a bit about your background, your country of origin and how you got into shipping & chartering?

My nationality is Belgian, and I have been in the shipping & chartering business since 1990. I started my career in a small Antwerp chartering-brokerage company, mainly in coasting brokerage booking about 4 smaller shipments per week, from where I kicked off and I caught the shipping bug.

After 23 years working mainly in the Antwerp shipping Industry, as well as 5 years in the Netherlands, and becoming a bit bored of bigger company structures where I was having a managerial position for quite some years, I decided to take on a new challenge and start my own company with my wife who has also been in the shipping industry for over 20 years now.

What made me become so interested in this industry is actually the fact that I have a shipping family behind me for three generations. My late grandfather was the co-founder of an Antwerp shipping company in the 1950's (still going strong today), he traveled around the world and later in his career became a maritime judge.



Also, there is my father who today is an 'old rat' in the industry still managing his own project company at the age of 70. He was one of the last Belgian-flag shipowners of multipurpose ships at the time, he spent a long time in Nigeria and traveled the globe as well spending the whole of his career in project shipments, mainly overseas.

Even my mother was working on chartering of Panamax tonnage in the 1970's for a short while till I came into this world at which time she devoted her attention to me. I was and still am her active little son 😊 So one can imagine that I have heard stories and met shipping people in the family house since I was a little boy.

I was even in the newspaper with my father and the Nigerian president at the age of 5, showing off a big project, standing in Antwerp port, but that's 42 years and 80 kilos ago 😊

In lieu of that relic, you can see me in the following photo running enthusiastically in the Antwerp port at the age of 11 (1982) to inspect a wagon going aboard a Spliethoff ship to Greece 😊



My brother also got the shipping bug, enjoying his career for over 20 years already as a manager at the all-weather terminal in Antwerp. I trust this explains enough where my interest comes from.



Who owns the company R&B Global Projects? When was the company established?

The company is owned/managed and run by our small couple-team only, which was a deliberate choice from the start and we strongly intend to keep it like this as we feel that being our own boss still has big benefits and can limit us from having the sometimes (if you allow me to say so 😊) useless meetings we both experienced in bigger organisations during the past. Now we have the time almost 24/7 to be on the job, even during weekends if needed, whereby quick/swift discussions/decision can be taken on the dinner table at any time we feel like!

We started the company on May 1st, 2013 (we began with a day off 😊) and suddenly we have been in the market for 5 years, with more pleasure and success than ever before.



Is there a particular reason why you have chosen Croatia as a base for your business? Is there also a lot of project cargo business into the Adriatic currently?

The choice of Croatia became obvious since the very first time I visited the country for business in 1999, invited by our good partner at that time (who unfortunately has passed away), to effectively organize monthly shipments of offshore drilling equipment for the Croatian National Oil Company, for whom we arranged almost monthly shipments of around 10.000 cbm with Clipper vessels, mostly but not always from/to the Croatian main-ports.



By visiting the country more and more in the years after, with a frequency of few times per year, we established some really good personal and business contacts, and became 'in love' with the country and its more relaxed, Mediterranean working atmosphere (very underestimated if we look at it today, we need to work much

harder then ever before but its very different indeed).

So at certain stage in life, we needed to make a choice, and much to the surprise of many Belgian contacts who said “what the hell to do in Croatia”, we made the step 😊

Today I can say it was the best choice we ever made.

Project business-wise we didn't focus at all on Croatian/Balkan business, as we realize(d) very well that this is an impossible job as a foreigner. Business is/was created globally, only we were domiciled in Croatia, which was the case for sure for 80-90% in the first 2 years.



After that, however, don't ask me why as I never intended for it to happen, more and more global players found their way to our small team and the very dedicated personal service we give. The latter may be the exact reason for which we attracted them, as well as having the advantage of speaking German and French fluently...I don't know for sure, but this is what happened.

Were we prepared for it? In the first 2 months, I don't think we were 100% ready, but we learned quickly and I traveled around the Balkans. Today I would say that about 30% of our business is sourced to/from the Balkans.

I am of the opinion that when thinking outside the box there is some good potential project business in the Balkan area, be it many times financed by outside (Government) organisations, but I think it's developing well. We are not the company chasing things like the bigger ones do, but tend to wait until projects are in the final execution phase, and that's where we can come in if clients are happy to use our expertise.



What are the advantages by contacting and dealing with you as opposed to other competitors of which there are many I believe?

I think in the business where we move ourselves, there is not a lot of competition at all. It must be said, unfortunately, that companies and people with the in-depth knowledge of ship chartering and project business, are not so numerous in Croatia.

In my humble opinion, the advantage of contacting us is the very highly valued, personalized and one-to-one service which we aim to offer with our small team.

We are not dependant on high overhead costs, we mainly work open-book and on a NETT basis with a separate and transparent margin agreement to the mutual benefit of our small portfolio of customers. We can jump in the car where needed immediately, we have clean claim records since we started, and most of all, we don't deal with politics which are highly explored in the Balkan transport industry 😊

We let the world live and keep our hands on the job, just try us.



Explain to us the differences between a project freight forwarder, a broker, as I believe some of our readers are not familiar with the advantages that they could get by involving a broker instead of talking themselves to the shipowner. Sometimes freight forwarders act as their own brokers too I imagine? Clarify it for us the way you see it.

A project freight forwarder is someone who will usually take entire project moves from A-to-Z under his wings, whereby he will endeavour to arrange all chains of the logistics as requested by his client, such as but not limited to pre and on-carriages (rail, truck, sea, river, air), port activities, shipping, and usually deliver to door!

'Extras' which we handle as well, and depending on each forwarder separately, is the surveying of the goods where needed, as well as packing, cargo insurance, etc..

I must admit that I have 'tasted' the project freight forwarding business since the last 13 years and I like it a lot, maybe, who knows, even more than pure chartering/brokerage...so today I can say I handle both 50/50 ratio.

A chartering broker, however, is someone who is focussed on and has in-depth knowledge of the numerous chartercontracts (so-called charterparties), whereby the shipment as such is mainly handled.

“What happens in and around the ship” we could say. Obviously, it is always an advantage to talk to a broker, rather than direct to a shipowner, since a broker will assist in finding the correct ship/size for the correct cargo/commodity, but also it's his job to use the skills in negotiating the right price and terms needed. This being actually only a start, because ship and cargo-chartering is such a specific task, which is full of small and special terms as well as abbreviations often self-invented between brokers, that not only a broker has a vital role in the negotiation process resulting into the 'deal' by signing a chartercontract from both sides, but mostly and especially also his task becomes important during the ship-voyage or stays in the ports, where actually the list is endless to mention how many misinterpretations and misconceptions can occur, whereby each party will obviously defend his own interest.



The broker is there to steer that in the right direction and make sure the terms are followed as they should be, independently and objectively.

A lot of frustrations from the clients' and/or shipowners' side can be avoided like this, where the broker comes in to filter that and lead it to a mutual understanding for all parties.

My philosophy has always been not to be a 'postbox' broker as many are, but to be on the side of the party for whom I act as a broker at all times until the end of the contract.

And I am humbly proud to say that, being fed with the spoon since a little boy in chartering, no many secrets are still around the corner for me in chartering/brokerage and its contracts.

Talking about abbreviations, try this most famous one and call me in case you can't find the meaning 😊FDEOSDNRAOCLONL

Can you provide us with some examples of cargoes that you have handled or been responsible for getting to their destination?

Of course, there are too many to mention since 1990 but just to name a few:

- 4500 cbm mini-mining wagons from Vladivostok to Guayaquil (that was actually my very first one in 1990, I must mention that one of course, a broker will never forget 😊)
- Plenty on and offshore rigging equipment into Lebanon during the 1990's
- The World's biggest crawler crane to South Africa
- Wet-towage of various floating objects/platforms into Libya
- IMO-1 explosive dangerous goods as full aircharterers to South-Africa
- Turnkey project to Serbia for the National Electricity company
- Numerous dismantled 'yellow' machinery, dump trucks, wheel loaders around the globe by sea
- Fragile modules for house and hospital building by sea into Russia and Eritrea

- Aid-cargoes into all the stan countries (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, etc ..) both by air and road
- Biggest road transport ever done in Serbia
- Various power-packs, generators, and foundation rings for the windmill industry in Europe
- Over 15 transformers into Qatar for FIFA Worldcup 2022
- Locomotives and wagons (as well as the moulds) into Colombia and Morocco
- Goldmine project into Brazil (recent award)
- and so on ...



Croatia is a beautiful country how do you find it living there? Any good spots to recommend for our readers if they plan to visit Croatia?

Of course, I am privileged, loving the region so muchbut we have it all!

We have the party-islands in summer for the youngsters, we have the clean sea, we have the mountains with snow for winter sports, we have the pure nature for hiking/biking and the adventurous types, we have a very big inland part which is full of culture and history often highly underestimated but absolutely gorgeous to see.

We have of course over 1000 islands where many of them are connected with easy-going ferries but most of them best admirable from the waterside, meaning that sailing tourism is amongst the most popular in Croatia, we also have the rocky beaches in every bay of the islands and mainland that are not too commercialized....and relaxation is key.

I would say that my favorite spots are the Dalmatian islands of Korčula and Peljesac, but also Losinj island further north and the Istrian province...

We are also blessed to still enjoy the pure and honest domestic food products, produced by the local population that has a rich family inheritance (like olives, fresh fish, garden vegetables, fruits..), not to forget the rich variety of rakhias (strong liquors) and the wines that are (unfortunately) not enjoyed so much outside of Croatia but are of super quality and many times awarded by recognized wine lovers.

We also have a lot of (too much) tourism in the summertime, but I am not sure if you need to see that ...I love to see them come, but I even love more to see them go 😊

Last but not least, we always have time for coffee, so let us know when you come and the coffee is on us!

No doubt some of our readers will be interested to contact you after reading this interview how to get in touch with you?

You can always reach me on my smartphone, as my wife says this is my second (or maybe first) love because everything is on it including my emails, Whatsapp, Viber, Snapchat, phone, SMS, Skype, Facebook, LinkedIn, 😊

Jokes aside, I can be reached at:

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PORTS MARINE LTD – PART OF THE PORTSIDE GROUP OF COMPANIES

MR. BAS DE VAAL MANAGING DIRECTOR

Tell me about how you actually ended up in Ghana? You seem to have chosen shipping and freight forwarding at a young age, why was that? Who owns Portside and where is it headquartered? What activities is Portside involved in?

My shipping career started in Lagos, Nigeria where I grew up, from only a 2 months old baby until 8 years old, my father often took me to the vessels in Apapa port. Then I decided that I also wanted to be part of the shipping community. After living in South America and Switzerland I started studying logistics in Rotterdam and then moved to Antwerp for my Master's Degree where I joined Seatrade Reefer chartering operating a fleet of fruit carriers.

After 5 years there at the age of 29, my family helped me start Portside together with close friends. We chose to make Ghana our base as it is more business-friendly than Nigeria. Ghana is also known as West Africa for beginners!



Ports Marine Ltd is part of the Portside Group of Companies, with headquarters in Leiden the Netherlands, our companies here in Ghana are:

- Ports Marine: the ship agent/freight forwarder
- Multipurpose Terminals Ghana Ltd.: operating a container depot

and warehouse in the port of Tema

- We also operate a fleet of trucks mainly to move containers



Tell us about Ghana, I know from many forwarders that it has been difficult to find a reliable freight forwarder there. What makes you different and what are the obstacles generally for working in Ghana?

The freight forwarding market is very competitive in Ghana, however as every other country there are some operating here to only achieve personal gain, and there is still the perception that Ghana is not a safe place. However, my experience is that you can walk freely over the streets of Accra. Last but not least everyone smiles here, even though there is still a lot of poverty. So it is safe to send your cargoes to Ghana, the country is ranked among the top growers of Africa for 2018 with a predicted growth of 9%.

Obviously, there are challenges in the port, the average time to clear customs is 5 working days, and the process is not all automated as we know it in Ghana. The government is working on a project to enable paperless clearing. The port of Tema and Takoradi are operated by GPHA, a state-owned company. The container terminal is operated by a consortium of Bollore, APMT, and GPHA.



They are currently building a new port which should be operational in 2020.

Roads around Tema and Accra are okay, however, it is very busy on the road so trucks can get stuck into traffic jams easily. The more you go inland the road network is not as good. However, the main road to Burkina Faso is excellent and can be used for transit cargo.

Our main challenges remain the authorities, there is a lot of red tape and documents can delay shipments. We always have to be on top of this to avoid delays. Also, we have to double check quality of trucks, as some are not in a good state or are not insured, so due diligence is of key importance.

Last but also the most important thing is to keep our customers updated of movements of cargo in the port. This usually takes away the scare of Ghana when you know what is going on.



Do you act as shipping agent, freight forwarder, and inland transporter in Ghana or do you specialize in one segment only?

We are line agents for the ro/ro carrier called NMT shipping, they operate a line from Antwerp to Tema, and we, therefore, handle lots of cars, trucks and heavy machinery for the mining sector. Also, we are agents for Breadbox Shipping lines in Tema, they operate liner services on the West African coast. Breadbox also operates a joint service with Intermarine and we handle these vessels from time to time. Especially on the Intermarine vessels, we have seen some very heavy cargoes. The port does not have any heavy lift cranes, so we recommend that vessels calling Ghana are geared.



We have also chartered vessels, to move explosives from Ghana to Liberia for a goldmine. That was a very hectic project, as we were always on the clock to get the products on time to avoid a shutdown of the mine.

It was actually you that inspired me when you were still with Martin Bencher to become more active in the freight forwarding market. So thanks for that.

We have also recently built a washing station for ISO tanks, together with Van den Bosch (the first in West Africa). We have therefore shipped out commodities like shea butter, cocoa butter, and palm oil. Which brings me to the export market in Ghana.

Ghana exports Cocoa, minerals (Bauxite, Manganese ore), Gold and oil. Also commodities like sheanuts, cashews, sesame, palm oil and fruit.



The oil market is regulated by a government organization, our main focus in the mining industry and the commodity market. We have also moved machines for the power industry, there has been a shortage of power in Ghana and the government is working hard to solve this by building gas power plants.

Tell us about the main ports of Ghana and the main import/export commodities of the country. What shipping lines would you say are more active and competent in the Ghana trade if we look at aa/breakbulk cargo and bb/containerized cargo?

Breadbox, Licvem, and UAL are strong in Ghana, and the main carriers call Tema port. Takoradi is the port for the oil sector and mining projects, and also where they export the minerals.



Is customs clearance normally done in the port or can it be done at final destination as well?

Customs clearance is always done at the port unless it is going with a bond to a bonded area.

Do you belong to any freight forwarding networks currently?

I am a member of CLC Projects, no other network.

Interviewee:
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Managing Director
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Portside Ghana
<http://portside.ch/>



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SHIPPING NEWS

3 JAPANESE MAJORS ARE MERGING INTO ONE

Here is the official press release which you will find interesting no doubt, as all 3 carriers are reputable in the market. [View the PDF](#)

THE BELT & ROAD INITIATIVE IS EXTENDING TO THE ARCTIC

Beijing will encourage companies to build infrastructure and conduct commercial trial voyages that will 'bring opportunities' to the region. According to an article recently published in the South China Morning Post. [Read more...](#)

POWER GENERATION

MHPS TO UPGRADE UNIT 1 OF HARTHA POWER STATION IN IRAQ

MHPS will replace core equipment of the Unit 4 which includes boilers, steam turbines and generators as well as install a new distributed control system (DCS), in order to significantly enhance reliability of the power station. [Read more...](#)

MARINE EQUIPMENT

MISHA TO INSTALL DESMI BWMS FLEET-WIDE

Danish firm DESMI Ocean Guard A/S said it has finalized a contract to supply CompactClean ballast water management systems (BWMS) to the entire fleet of Turkish ship owner MISHA Shipping. [Read more...](#)

CONSTRUCTION

JORDAN CONTRACT MARKS ROMANIAN CONSTRUCTION FIRM'S OVERSEAS PUSH

Jordan-based Arab Potash Company has awarded Romanian civil engineering firm Hidroconstructia a \$115m contract to supply infrastructure at its production site. [Read more...](#)

PULP & PAPER

VALMET TO SUPPLY A WASTE-FIRED BOILER TO SHANYING HUAZHONG PAPER IN CHINA

Valmet and Shanying International Holdings have signed a contract regarding a delivery of a mill waste-fired boiler plant to Shanying Huazhong Paper's paper mill in the city of Jingzhou in Hubei, China, as was told on a press release. [Read more...](#)

OIL & GAS

SAMSUNG WINS CONTRACT FOR THAILAND OLEFINS PROJECT

Samsung Engineering stated that it will execute the EPCC contract on a lump-sum turnkey basis. The \$820 million ORP plant will produce 500,000 tons per annum of ethylene through the major naphtha cracker unit and produce 250,000 tons per annum of propylene. Samsung noted that work on the plant should conclude by the end of 2020. [Read more...](#)

PLANTS & PROCESSING

SIEMPELKAMP TO SUPPLY A NEW MDF PRODUCTION LINE FOR RUSHIL DECOR IN INDIA

The Indian wood-based materials manufacturer Rushil Decor commissions Siempelkamp as the single-source supplier of a MDF plant in India. With the new plant in Atchutapuram, the manufacturer will produce MDF from eucalyptus grown in plantations and from over-mature mango trees. To meet local market needs Rushil Decor will significantly expand its production capacities above its current 3.5 million m². [Read more...](#)

CHINESE SUPPLIER ZHONGDING TO OPEN TECH CENTER IN NORTHVILLE TOWNSHIP

China's Anhui Zhongding Holding (Group) Co. Ltd. plans invest \$6.9 million in a 30,000-square-foot technology center in Northville Township. [Read more...](#)

VIDEO OF THE WEEK



AAL Newcastle - Discharging Windmill Blades in Adelaide

- Project: AGL Silvertown Windfarm
- Customer: COLI Schiffahrt & Transport Bremen GmbH
- Industry: Energy
- POL: Ferrol, Spain
- POD: Adelaide, Australia
- Vessel: AAL Newcastle (A-Class - 31,000dwt)
- Cargo: 45 windmill blades - 65.058m (length), 18.74 mt

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Dubai based Fleet Line Shipping last week handled an Oil Heater measuring 15 x 4.20 x 5.1 m, weighing 30 metric tons. The cargo was picked from Abu Dhabi on an EXW basis, then brought to Jebel Ali port and loaded on a container ship on direct loading basis.

Fleet Line's project operations team coordinated well with the Port, Customs and the vessel operator. The job was well executed by placing 4x40' empty flat rack containers on board then the cargo was loaded using a shore crane. The shipment was discharged in Mombassa port in a record 9 days time from pick-up date.

Photo credit: peter@fleetlineshipping.com
Website: <http://www.fleetlineshipping.com>

QUOTE AND PROVERB OF THE WEEK

"FAITH IS TAKING THE FIRST STEP EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T SEE THE WHOLE STAIRCASE"

- Martin Luther King Jr. -

**"FROM FORTUNE TO MISFORTUNE IS BUT A STEP;
FROM MISFORTUNE TO FORTUNE IS A LONG WAY"**

- Ancient Indian Proverb -



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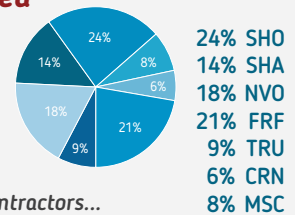
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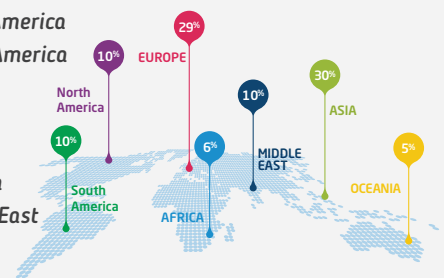
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