

Preface to the Fourth Edition

Most people in the shipping industry—when asked why they have stayed in the industry as long as they have, with all its volatility and uncertainty—point to its unique substance and meaning and the fact that it is an activity which adds value to the world. It combines intellect with practicality and spans every aspect of life—today, as it always has done. It is the one sector on which the modern world depends—for our trade (what we buy in our high streets), our food (for which ships are a major part of the supply chain) and our essential energy resources. The challenges, complexities and excitement of our association with this life-essential are both rewarding and addictive, at all levels of activity involving the sea and the industries which work with it.

The sea demands an elemental attachment, which can be difficult to describe to those who don't see or come into contact with it. It involves a scale and breadth of vision and reality, which shout importance out loud.

This fourth edition is the first since the original author of this work, Bruce Farthing, has died. The previous edition was already the product of a collaboration, but of necessity—with Bruce's encouragement—this one is even more so. It also seeks to move the book in a slightly new direction, taking it beyond the original concept of an introduction to the policy aspects of international shipping to a combination of that purpose and a basic textbook for students and other readers entering the world of maritime services. In the internet era, so much information is available that was not on offer before, that this shift of direction was probably inevitable.

The first and second editions were Bruce's alone. They were much slimmer and focused very specifically on what was then known by the term "shipping policy"—freedom of the seas, protectionism/liberalisation, trade and competition policy.

The third (in 1997), edited principally and developed by Mark Brownrigg, retained the spirit of the original but re-orientated and restructured the book, adding new chapters on broader aspects of policy such as ship registration, safety and the environment. Out of respect for Bruce's vision for his creation, we have reprinted the Foreword and Preface of the third edition as well, for readers to see.

In many ways, the range of international shipping policy issues has broadened again in recent years, with important new subjects coming to the fore particularly in

relation to the environment and maritime security. And these areas have been exceptionally “busy”. This fourth edition, under the principal editorship and direction of Professor Proshanto Mukherjee, together with Mark Brownrigg, again takes the book into greater detail on some of these—aspects of technical policy, maritime security, liability and more. This edition also draws more collectively on associate authorship contributions by Jingjing Xu of University of Plymouth, Max Mejia of World Maritime University, Abhinayan Basu Bal of Lund University and by Donald Chard and David Balston from the UK Chamber of Shipping. This means that there is no longer a single style to the different chapters and a small amount of duplication.

We are particularly grateful to H.E. Judge Thomas Mensah for contributing the foreword to this edition. We greatly appreciate his willingness to continue the tradition set by Sir John Nicholson, Lord Sterling and the then IMO Secretary General, Bill O’Neil, who wrote the forewords to the earlier editions.

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