

## Autumn update and renewal arrangements

**In this *Club News*, we look at recent developments at the Club since our August issue. These include the autumn meetings of our Board and Members' Committee, which considered the Club's approach to the 2021/22 renewal.**

As explained in our recent circular – which can be seen [here](#) – there have been several particular challenges in the current year. These involve the unfolding impact of the Covid-19 pandemic along with a significant escalation in the cost of claims on the Pool, following the increases in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and suggesting the emergence of a new claims pattern.

Moreover, these pressures come at a time when rates in the P&I

sector have reached unsustainable levels after a prolonged period of downward pressure. The result is that combined ratios across the industry have been increasing. In the Club's case the underwriting result for the current year is projected to improve on last year's result but to remain in excess of the Board's risk appetite. Under these circumstances, the Board decided on the general increase and renewal strategy advised in our recent Circular. Further details are in the Club's latest *Position & Performance Review* which can be seen [here](#).

Also in this issue, we feature important developments for our Hong Kong office and highlight a recent interview of the head of our Piraeus office, Joanna Pavlidis, in a leading Greek shipping publication. We also report on news and developments involving

our management team including a profile of senior claims manager and solicitor, Karis Sophia Barton.

Finally, as this unprecedented year draws to a close, we send our warmest wishes to all our friends as we look forward to a happier, safe and secure 2021.



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# 'Elnavi' interviews the head of the Club's Greek office

**Joanna Pavlidis**  
General manager  
Piraeus



**Joanna Pavlidis, general manager of the Club's Piraeus office, recently gave an in-depth interview to Greek shipping magazine 'Elnavi - Monthly Shipping Review'. Below are extracts from the interview covering topics including Covid-19, digitalization and sustainability:**

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**Joanna Pavlidis: The London P&I Club maintains strong and creative ways of communication with its members during the pandemic**

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought new kinds of risks and uncertainties to the way we do our lives including in the world of shipping liability insurance. Joanna Pavlidis, who heads the London P&I Club's Piraeus office comments on the Club's response to the unfolding crisis. "Covid-19 has been a massive operational challenge for us globally. For example, from a governance perspective we examined a wide range of potential risk impacts, using stress and scenario testing to help assess the exposure. This has included detailed monitoring of claims activity as well as the pressures that our members' crews are facing. The impact on their mental well-being in the face of very prolonged periods on board is a major concern and we hope that industry efforts to enable safe and efficient changes to be made come to fruition soon."

**Otherwise and from a day to day operational perspective, we've made considerable changes to the way we work across our three offices and moreover the way in which we had to interact with our members. Not only in response to claims, underwriting and loss prevention inquiries, but also with a view to maintaining the strong levels of communication generally that we find to be an important and helpful way of working. It clearly doesn't replicate the real thing - and we look so forward to getting back to face to face contact - but it is the case that the use of platforms like Zoom and virtual events and webinars are of immense value, while we are also looking at and for other creative ways by which to keep in touch and support our Members."**

**Over the recent past several P&I Club members have experienced considerable uncertainty. What is your company's business model for managing present growth and uncertainty in a world of continuing uncertainty?**

- Joanna says: "Although there was an increase in the Club's free reserves last year, the situation remains positive in both the short and long term. The Club's 2020 financial performance was challenging. Evidence of increasing claims activity is apparent in the current period. We are not aware of any material claims in the first six months since the start of the pandemic. The Club's free reserves are unusually high. The deteriorating claims environment comes at a time when P&I ratings are very soft, which a strong investment return supported the increase in our free reserves that I've just mentioned. That's not something to depend on. In the future we are looking at the Club's ability to manage the risk of sustainability in the pricing side of the business. In addition to the range of measures we have taken to reduce our costs and as I've alluded to above, digitalization enabled us to work from home without interruptions and carry on with 'business as usual'. On a market level, emerging technologies will no doubt bring innovations that should be expected to transform insurance in the years to come. For example, access to a vast number of real-time data will enable insurers to analyse risk and evaluate exposure better."

**How do you think digitalization will impact the industry in the years to come?**

- Joanna says: "Digitalization has been a massive operational challenge for us globally. For example, from a governance perspective we examined a wide range of potential risk impacts, using stress and scenario testing to help assess the exposure. This has included detailed monitoring of claims activity as well as the pressures that our members' crews are facing. The impact on their mental well-being in the face of very prolonged periods on board is a major concern and we hope that industry efforts to enable safe and efficient changes to be made come to fruition soon."

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## "The Covid-19 pandemic:

... has brought new kinds of risks and uncertainties to the way we go about our lives including in the world of shipping liability insurance ... [and] has of course featured prominently on our agenda. For example, from a governance perspective we examined a wide range of potential risk impacts, using stress and scenario testing to help assess the exposure. This has included detailed monitoring of claims activity as well as the pressures that our members' crews are facing. The impact on their mental well-being in the face of very prolonged periods on board is a major concern and we hope that industry efforts to enable safe and efficient changes to be made come to fruition soon.

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**Do you agree that the Covid-19 pandemic has put digitalization on the fast track in the marine insurance sector?**

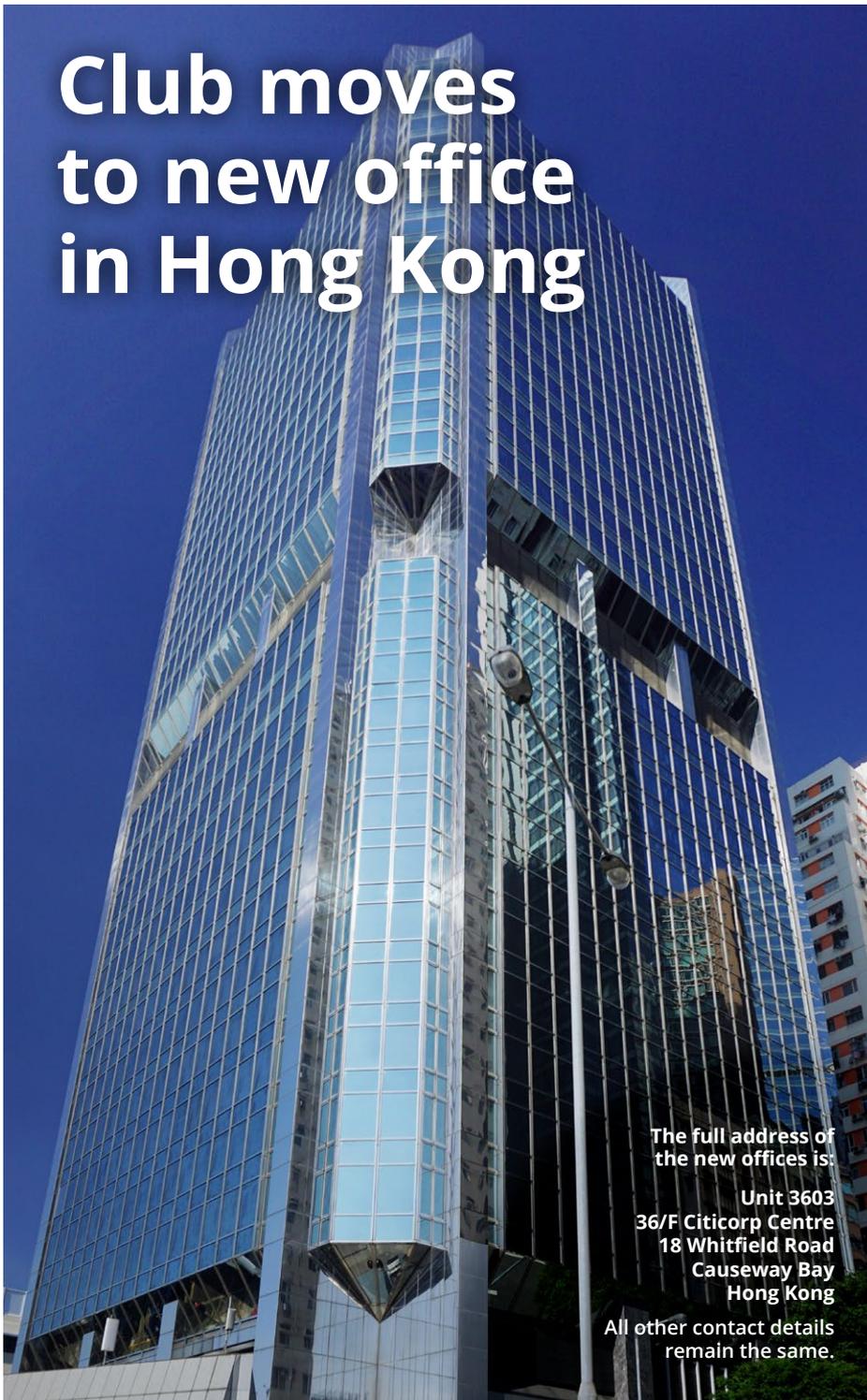
**Joanna comments:** "The pandemic has forced all of us to rethink the way we live and work. At a most basic level and as I've alluded to above, digitalization enabled us to work from home without interruptions and carry on with 'business as usual'. On a market level, emerging technologies will no doubt bring innovations that should be expected to transform insurance in the years to come. For example, access to a vast number of real-time data will enable insurers to analyse risk and evaluate exposure better."

Having said this, the myriad of claims and challenges that can arise from marine liability insurance means that confident relationships play a huge part; it's why people correctly describe it as being likely to remain 'a people business'."

**Do you agree that the increasing need for greener and sustainable shipping operations will lead to the rise of premiums and complexity of risks in the years to come?**

**Joanna says:** "Shipping remains the most environmentally friendly means of global trade. Of course, as in a number of other sectors, there is a growing expectation on shipping - and its insurers - to place more focus on ESG issues. So we see, for instance, IMO setting 2020 as their sustainability year, as well as Flag States and Class Societies using their knowledge to assist in decarbonization solutions. Similarly, on the P&I side, there are issues which the Club is actively engaged with, individually as well as through the IG. The work is ongoing and with so much to do and given the time horizons around it I think the position is more nuanced than the question suggests. For example, the adoption of measures which could reduce the risk of pollution would mitigate one of the highest severity type of claims to which ship-owners and their Clubs are exposed and would be a positive development from a premium perspective."

# Club moves to new office in Hong Kong



The full address of the new offices is:

Unit 3603  
36/F Citicorp Centre  
18 Whitfield Road  
Causeway Bay  
Hong Kong

All other contact details remain the same.

**The Club's Hong Kong team have moved into new offices – shown in the photographs on this page.**

November's move to more modern and better configured premises in Causeway Bay comes at a time of exciting developments for the Club in the region.

Associate director and general manager, Frank He, says: "The Club's business here has been growing for some time and after the relatively subdued start to the current year for our industry, we are seeing an increase in very interesting opportunities that we're exploring with existing as well as new Members of the Club.

"We're dealing with a wide range of enquiries, not only involving our mutual P&I insurance, but other Club products too, especially in relation to war risks, fixed premium and a number of extended, tailored covers."

Frank adds: "Over the last year, we've been joined here in Hong Kong by Dhananjay Das Podiyatvariya and Stan Quan, as well as Fiona Pounds who relocated to the office as a key member of our FD&D and contract review team.

"We've all worked together in unusual circumstances to make Dhananjay, Stan and Fiona feel at home. It's great to have them on board, all the more so now that we've completed the move to our new offices, which also provide good scope for further expansion, reflecting our strategy in the region. We've also been happy to welcome the Members and other friends that have been able to visit us so far – and we look forward to welcoming many others, hopefully in the near future."



Left to right  
John Williams, Frank He,  
Matthew McAfee and Gary Cheng



Our new conference room



Left to right  
Dhananjay Das Podiyatvariya,  
Jing Liu and Queenie Choi



# Club people

## Karis Sophia Barton

Senior Claims Manager and Solicitor, London

**Originally from Scotland, Karis and her family moved to the south coast of Spain where she spent much of her childhood and learned Spanish. She later went to England to study for her law degree.**

Karis later joined law firm HFW where she completed her training contract and qualified as a solicitor in 2011. She says: "It was not until I joined HFW that I realised that I wanted to focus my legal career in shipping. I did two training seats in shipping litigation (one in HFW Dubai) and a third in ship finance. I was fascinated by how internationally vibrant the shipping trade is and how intertwined it is to our everyday lives."

After six years there, she began working at the Club where she deals with FD&D and P&I claims for both owner and charterer members of the Club. It is a role she thoroughly enjoys, as she explains: "The vast spectrum of our Membership means that every day is different as our Members are collectively trading in a variety of markets and each one exposed to different risks."

"Since the law and regulations in shipping are forever evolving, it makes for an extremely interesting role and one where there is always something new to learn. Shipping never sleeps and its fast pace makes for an exciting role."

Karis has a very Member-focused approach and is keen to turn her legal knowledge into solutions. "Being at the frontline for Members who need

assistance, I have the opportunity to take the lead in finding a practical solution," she says.

"I find this very rewarding as I experience first-hand how my input positively influences their business. I very much enjoy the fact that we work closely with our Membership. We are both working towards the same end goal, sharing ideas, and I often feel like an extension of their legal or operations department."

Karis believes her skills and personality are a perfect fit for her multi-tasked role – from the technical side to people. She explains: "I think it is important to enjoy your role to perform well and I can honestly say I do. I like problem-solving through lateral thinking and critical argument and I am conscientious."

"I am commercially-minded and have a genuine care for the success of our Membership's business. I have a busy caseload with new cases coming in daily which can be challenging. It is therefore important to have good time management, maintain attention to detail and be able to manage each Member's expectations. I believe I have good people skills and enjoy getting to know our Members. Building up a rapport paves the way for good performance from both sides to secure the most positive outcome in what can often be pressured and challenging times."

She believes that working at the Club provides her with new opportunities in a positive office culture. "We have an

open-door policy which means ideas and experiences are shared easily which positively affects the service we give."

Travel is a key feature of Karis' work, including a month on secondment to a Swiss-based steel and iron ore trading company. She has also been to France, Italy, Monaco, Ukraine, Turkey, Singapore, the UAE and India to meet existing and potential new Members. "I absolutely love it," says Karis. "Being able to travel regularly helps me to keep up to date with developments in the market and the differing obstacles each Member faces within their jurisdictions."

Outside of shipping, Karis is an animal lover and has been a keen horse rider from an early age. She says: "I was a show jumper and I now regularly play polo. I love the thrill and competitiveness of the sport. I also love travelling and experiencing different cuisines."

## MANAGEMENT NEWS

We are pleased to welcome the following people who have joined the Club recently:

**Costas Kozakis is the Club's new Chief Financial Officer of our subsidiary, The London P&I Insurance Company (Europe) Ltd, based in Cyprus.**

**Gary Beale, Juanita Low and Antonis Vakondios have joined as Claims Managers in our London office.**

**Fiona Pounds has re-located to the Hong Kong office where she works as a Senior Claims Manager.**

**Barbara Wong is due to complete 40 years' service at the Hong Kong office in January.**

## Festive best wishes

**Everyone at the London P&I Club sends Season's greetings and best wishes to all our friends. In place of sending cards, the Club is making its usual donation to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London.**



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