

A WELCOME FROM THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF NAVIGATION

CAPTAIN R A SMITH RN, PRESIDENT

This is a unique occasion: the first time that the International Loran Association (ILA) and the Royal Institute of Navigation (RIN) have held a joint conference. It has taken about 50 years of our joint institutional histories to reach this point – just in time for the next millennium! It might too be just in time to avoid over reliance on and over confidence in a single navigation aid; namely satellite navigation.

It is therefore appropriate for me to read to all of us gathered at this unique conference, the words of welcome of the Patron of RIN, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. As many of you know the Duke of Edinburgh not only served at sea in the Royal Navy but has also been a skilled yachtsman and a qualified pilot in several types of aircraft.

His text is appended.

I am sure that we all agree that the Patron has captured admirably the spirit and intention of our conference.

It now falls to me as President of the RIN to welcome all of you to this event. I am of the age to remember as a very young, inexperienced and seasick officer, attempting to use LORAN A in the middle of the North Atlantic. It was a case of necessity, since Loran was the only long-range navigational aid fitted in my ‘modern’ frigate. At the other end of the spectrum, I am also of an age to have been instrumental in the fitting policy of GPS receivers in Her Majesty’s ships and naval aircraft. The difficulty I experienced in mastering the first compares dramatically with the ease of using the second. But the dangers of misreading both are ever present: neither could be relied upon exclusively. I am sure that this theme will be a constant one in our discussions.

Next and most importantly, I welcome as our guests in this country the International Loran Association. Many of us will have heard of the Wild Goose Association and the tremendous reputation their conventions have in North America. I am sure we in the RIN are looking forward to experiencing an equally tremendous one here in London.

Before handing over to the president of ILA, I would like to record a vote of thanks to the many members, of both RIN and ILA, who organised and set up this event. It was done smoothly, swiftly and surely – thank you!