

# Team Singapore: ready for action

**The Swedish Club's new Singapore office is open for business and receiving visitors. Brian Png is heading up the new office and tells Triton why this is such an important move for the Club and for its members and business associates.**

There is no doubting Singapore's status as global maritime hub. This July it secured the top place once again in the Xinhua-Baltic International Shipping Centre Development Index Report. For the ninth consecutive year, the index confirmed Singapore as the global leading maritime centre, with London in second place and Shanghai third.

## A long process

After two years of planning and legal work The Swedish Club's Singapore team moved into their new offices on 1 August 2022.


"It has indeed been a complex process, working with the Monetary Authority of Singapore to get everything in place," says Brian Png. "But the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and others have been extremely supportive and helpful in our application for the licence. The MPA does a lot of marketing to attract shipping-related companies to set up offices in Singapore and provides welcome incentives. I asked a lot of questions, and they were able to provide a wealth of information about the maritime cluster in Singapore of which we are now a part."

## Commitment to Asia

Having a presence in Singapore will enable The Swedish Club to secure and further enhance its position in Asia, he says. "We will be able to fully capitalise on our unique all-in-one offering and our ability to offer all kinds of insurance that the shipowner or charterer requires. We will also be able to strengthen our brand as far as underwriting, claims and loss prevention are concerned."

## Closer to our partners

The opening of the Singapore office will also enhance accessibility for members and brokers, says Brian. "The Club's membership in Singapore and surrounding markets has grown significantly over the past few years and this new office will give us scope for further expansion in the region."



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“Our new accessibility in Singapore will undoubtedly allow us to improve our service to members and brokers. In the past we have travelled from Hong Kong to Singapore perhaps six or seven times a year.

“We know from speaking to prospective members that they would prefer to place their ships with a Club that has a local presence in the market. They want their Club to have a presence, to provide in-person support and guidance if there is any kind of incident. And even though COVID-19 has led to much more online and remote working, people still prefer face-to-face meetings. Buying insurance is all about trust and relationships.”

### **Working with Team Hong Kong**

Brian has relocated with his family from the Hong Kong office. His new team will, however, work closely with the Hong Kong team to look after the Club’s Asian business.

“We intend to separate out our focus according to geographical regions in Asia – so the Singapore office will look after Singapore and the southeast Asia market, including Japan and Korea, and Hong Kong will continue to look after the Hong Kong market and mainland Chinese and Taiwanese business,” he explains. “We



# The emphasis will always be on quality, not quantity.

are very strong in the greater China area and of course over the past few years we have grown a lot in Singapore and the surrounding area, so having our new office will enable us to be 'on the ground' in order to gain more business in the region."

However, he points out, the emphasis will always be on quality, not quantity. "It is an important part of our mutuality that we always get the right members in."

## Quality support

Another positive aspect, he adds, is that having a Singapore presence will enhance the Club's recruitment base and ability to manage resources. "We will be able to tap into the local market, which has a wealth of expertise thanks to its status as a global maritime hub, which is supported by tax incentives and the good business environment the city is able to offer."

The Singapore licensing requirement is that the Club must be very clear which office is underwriting where. On the claims and loss prevention side, however, there is more flexibility. Resources can be shared between the offices.

"Having a local presence means we can offer more loss prevention services and support to Singapore and the surrounding area – organising in-person seminars, for example."

## Feet on the ground

And of course, there is nothing like being 'on the patch' for keeping up with market developments. Brian says: "We intend to go out to the market and sell our products and, most importantly, be able to meet members and prospects and explain what kind of value-added service we can provide. Being closer to the market means we will have a first-hand local intelligence, which is extremely important, especially as Singapore has become such a hub for marine insurance."

Also, Singapore regulations require local brokers to approach the Singapore marine insurance market first before they are permitted to go out to the international market. "That's why having an office here is very good for us."

## The team

Team Singapore starts out with five staff, with Brian heading up the office and handling underwriting, an office manager, and three claims handlers. There is certainly room for expansion. "We have rented an office which is quite large; we are looking at the future and expansion in terms of staffing is expected."

Located within the main maritime cluster of the city, the office was chosen on the basis of value for money too. It has been refurbished under the watchful eye of a local designer and includes a pantry and a large conference room ideal for seminars, other education and training, and networking events.

This is Brian's first role heading up a team for the Club. "It is an exciting time for me to be the pioneer in a new office, assembling my own team," he says.

The Club had been evaluating its options in Singapore well before the pandemic. Now the team is enthusiastic and ready for an exciting future.

Reflecting on the period of time spent planning, seeking approvals and preparing, Brian concludes: "The Monetary Authority of Singapore is very strict, for good reasons. We have had a great deal of support from all the authorities in Singapore, including with setting up the office, and we are very appreciative of all the help we have received." 🐦



# Always ready for something new.....



Interview:  
**Brian Png**, Area Manager, Team Singapore

Born in Malaysia, Brian Png has a seafaring background. After secondary school, he was offered a scholarship by Neptune Orient Line, to study in Singapore and pursue a career at sea.

As a seafarer between 1991 and 2001, he rose up the ranks to become Chief Engineer, before coming ashore to work for the shipping line as a technical superintendent.

In 2003, at the peak of SARS, he was offered a job working in ship management as a technical superintendent, based in Hong Kong. "I took the brave step to move to Hong Kong and worked for that company for

two years, being promoted to Technical Manager."

He then moved into the ship repair sector, spending four years working for a yard in Hong Kong overseeing drydocking and repair work.

## The lure of marine insurance

"Then I decided to try something new again – marine insurance. I joined The Swedish Club in 2009 and have been working for the Club ever since."

He joined the Club as Technical Manager, subsequently moving to deal with hull

claims, and then marketing, before being appointed Deputy Managing Director in the Hong Kong office.

"Having been involved in ship owning, running ships, seafaring, ship repair and loss prevention, when I go out to meet shipowners and other contacts I can understand what they need," he says. "My experience does help me to resolve issues."

As well as his native Malay, Brian speaks English, Cantonese and Mandarin. He has relocated with his wife and two teenage children. 🇲🇾

## Welcome to the Team



**Andrew Bates**  
Head of Claims FD&D

Andrew previously worked as Head of Claims FD&D in the Club's Hong Kong office.



**Janus Ng**  
Office Administration Manager

Janus is based in Singapore and is new to marine insurance.



**Linda Rydén**  
Claims Executive, Marine

Linda previously worked as Claims Executive, Marine in Team Sweden.



**Sabrina Su**  
Claims Executive

Sabrina was previously employed by CMA CGM as Manager of Legal Claims & Insurance.



**The Swedish Club** is a mutual marine insurance company, owned and controlled by its members. The Club writes Protection & Indemnity, Freight, Demurrage & Defence, Charterers' Liability, Hull & Machinery, War Risks, Loss of Hire insurance and any additional insurance required by shipowners. The Club also writes Hull & Machinery, War Risks and Loss of Hire for Mobile Offshore Units and FPSOs.

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