

Marine expertise is even better in 3D!

by Daily Post Reporter

FORTY EIGHT hours last June changed the lives of three Merseyside mariners.

"They were two days we'll never forget," said David Scruton, 37, a partner in Irby-based 3D Marine.

The master mariner and his two colleagues - David Carlisle, 37, and 44-year-old David Marsh - now control a thriving international marine consultancy with offices in Merseyside and Houston, Texas.

Their dramatic change in fortunes came after a rift developed between the three Davids - hence the 3D tag - and their former employer Stanton Marine.

"We certainly hadn't planned on starting our own business, but we felt strongly enough in the circumstances to take the plunge," said Mr Scruton.

In exchange for relinquishing their partnership with Stanton, they were handed the Houston operation, which had opened a year previously in July 1988.

So successful has their U.S. operation been that Captain Marsh is set to move his family to Houston, rather than continue the current exhausting round of shuttling between Merseyside and America.

The three skippers, who all served with major shipping lines, including Liverpool's own Blue Funnel line and the Bibby line, specialise in a range of marine assignments.

Insurance work, including salvage, groundings, pollution incidents and damage surveys, account for the bulk of 3D's responsibilities.

But Mr Scruton said nautical litigation was becoming an increasingly important



David Marsh (left) and Scruton plan their next project. David Carlisle was in the U.S. when the picture was taken

part of the company's portfolio.

Captain Marsh was relief skipper with the ill-fated MV Derbyshire, the Bibby Line ship which tragically disappeared with the loss of all 44 hands in the South China Sea in September 1980.

"He has been involved in a lot of legal work since then, and because we have experience as 'expert witnesses' in this field, we have been called on more and more, especially in America."

Mr Scruton claims their meteoric rise in Houston is because Americans value British qualifications and experience so much.

"We're fully qualified master mariners and the Americans put a lot more store in our marine qualifications than theirs.

"We've got a good back-

ground in the UK and our American counterparts still haven't got the in-depth knowledge that we have," he added.

With expansion in America in the pipeline, the three partners are already learning Spanish to cope with the work from South American and Mexican clients.

Ironically, the Gulf crisis is adding to 3D's considerable workload as the number of oil tankers anchoring in the Gulf of Mexico awaiting customs clearance to offload their cargoes grows daily.

"A lot of ships carry Kirkuk crude oil, which comes from Iraq via a pipeline in Turkey.

"While customs check paperwork to see if the cargo was loaded prior to the U.S. embargo, we stand by to board tankers to moni-

tor discharge operations and to carry out other surveys," said Mr Scruton.

In the long-term, though, 3D is looking towards North America, in New York, as well as California on the west coast.

"We're still a fledgling company compared with many other people out in Houston, but we're not going to over-extend ourselves.

"Rather we'll take things steadily and expand as and when we feel comfortable," said Mr Scruton, who already spends up to eight weeks a year in America, as well as undertaking European assignments from their Merseyside office.

The three mariners have come a long way from their days spent on the 'Blue Flu' and Bibby fleets!