

CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

PETROLEUM AIDS-TO-NAVIGATION BUOY

Metal and textile (torch)
20th Cent. (1st quarter), USA
MAH.R.1994.0215

This piece belongs to the Angra do Heroísmo Museum Nautical and Aeronautical Management Unit. It was made in the United States of America, probably in the 1st quarter of the 20th century, by the Anthes Force Oiler Co., under the designation of “Anthes Flame Guard nr.1701”. It was a floating device, for general maritime signalization, fed by petroleum, most probably to be used in sheltered waters, at the entrance of harbors, bars, rivers and channels, in a time when it didn't exist other solutions since the time of batteries and solar accumulators was still to come.

It was just in 1980 that, in Japan, the maritime nations, gathered in Tokyo, subscribed an universal convention, to be known as I.A.L.A. (International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities). This convention established a maritime buoyancy system, dividing the world in two regions, A and B, in which, just the lateral marks diverged, probably, paying respect to old traditions. For the A region, where Portugal is inserted, the convention states that the green lateral marks, at the entrance of harbors, channels, bars and rivers, should be left to starboard and the red ones to port. In the B region (America mainland and part of the Asia southwest) it is exactly the opposite.

This kind of buoy is common in auction and antiques sites, being usually classified as “vintage”. This particular piece was property of the former Junta Autónoma do Porto de Angra do Heroísmo (JPAH) and was offered to MAH in February 1994, by its former director, Eng.º Ribeiro Pinto, in a time when the MAH had close relations with the JAP, since both entities were partners and deeply involved in the project of underwater archeological survey, in 1995, in Angra do Heroísmo bay, before the construction of the actual marina. At the time, this museum played a significant role in the process through the extinct Underwater Archeology Group of its Friends Association.