



# ANNUAL REVIEW 2020/21

# Welcome from the Chair



This is my first year as Chair of MSSC, and with Covid-19 taking centre stage, it's been quite a remarkable year in which to start my tenure! The year has seen Marine Society celebrating its 265th anniversary. Through the centuries, the vision has remained the same: to

support individuals in their careers at sea. The enduring success of the charity has been its ability to continually adapt the support provided to meet the ever-changing needs of the seafarer and the maritime sector.

This total focus on effective support has never been more evident than in the last year, as Marine Society has radically redirected its offer to meet the needs of a Covid-19 and post-pandemic maritime sector. Whilst continuing to improve and add to the bursaries, scholarships and learning materials available to the seafarer, the charity has significantly boosted its digital offer to cater for the times in which we live, as well as focusing on much-needed training and career services for the aspiring seafarer and those wishing to come ashore.

I am particularly struck by the increased engagement with young people in terms of raising awareness and prospects in maritime careers. We're training apprentices to realise

their dream of becoming boatmasters and workboat crews, we've directly appointed four young people to gain work experience as boat instructors (with the additional manpower at SCC boat stations beneficial for our cadets too), we're actively promoting maritime careers in schools and colleges and providing a careers bridge for cadets wanting to progress into the maritime sector.

Alongside these developments, during the 2020/21 financial year, the charity has supplied 30 crew libraries to ships as well as providing books in eight different languages to seafarers across 42 countries. Our online store has sold a total of 1,685 books over the financial year, demonstrating the usefulness and relevance of the books we provide for the learning needs of today's seafarer.

All this has been made possible thanks to our dedicated staff and volunteers as well as our wonderful partners and incredible donors, and I'd like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to them all.

Our two-year strategic plan will see Marine Society securing even more opportunities for aspiring seafarers across the UK, further developing our digital learning services and courses on offer through post-16 provider partnerships and devising a refreshed, long-term model to support seafarers considering a career ashore. I'm excited to see what we will achieve in the year ahead.

**Jeremy Penn**  
Chair, MSSC



# Welcome from the CEO



Marine Society has always evolved with the changing times to provide the best possible support to individuals in the maritime sector. Seeing the current climate, we have shifted our focus from providing only distance learning for serving seafarers to delivering careers and

training for people aspiring to work in maritime, both at sea and ashore.

With the Covid-19 outbreak, this ability to adapt and change has never been more timely. Joining forces with our partners, we launched the Covid-19 Redundancy and Retraining Bursary Fund to support UK merchant seafarers facing redundancy or at termination of contract due to Covid-19. These bursaries allow them to take part in training and boost their skills so that they can secure a new job within the maritime industry sector.

Staying true to our mission of supporting the lifelong learning needs of seafarers, we've been able to improve, expand and deliver our offer. This has included further increasing our digital services, now offering 15 courses through Marine Society's Learn@Sea platform. We have also engaged with over 200 seafarers who plan to transition into maritime careers through our Coming Ashore programme.

We remain more committed than ever to promoting maritime career opportunities to young people, especially our sea cadets. An exciting development has been our collaboration with post-16 providers to develop a new, accredited Level 3 qualification in maritime careers ashore. As close partners to Maritime UK's Careers Taskforce, we have delivered a range of outreach events in schools and colleges over the year.

Thanks to our collaboration with SeaRegs Training, we have taken on their existing apprentices and have added 20 more apprentices to the programme training for boatmaster and workboat crew members. Marine Society has also taken on four young people to give them valuable work experience, as part of the government's Kickstart scheme, which offers a six-month placement to 16-24 year olds at risk of long-term unemployment.

None of our achievements would have been possible without our magnificent partners and supporters, and the hard work of our staff and volunteers, to whom I express my heartfelt thanks.

With the recent launch of our two-year regeneration strategy for the whole charity, I am confident that Marine Society will continue to grow and develop, playing its part in providing current and aspiring seafarers with the best possible support to realise their full potential.

**Martin J Coles**  
CEO, MSSC







# Our year in numbers



20

maritime  
apprenticeships  
started



41

scholars achieved  
their Certificate of  
Competency



226

registered seafarers  
on our Coming Ashore  
programme



Books supplied to seafarers across

42 countries in  
8 languages



1,685

books sold through  
our online store



665

people registered  
for Learn@Sea



30

crew libraries  
supplied to ships



41

seafarers granted Covid-19  
Redundancy & Retraining  
Bursaries



39

scholarships  
awarded

# The Covid-19 Redundancy and Retraining Bursary Fund

Marine Society joined forces with the Maritime Charities Group and two of its members, the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB) and Trinity House, to launch a bursary fund for seafarer training during the financial year.

The Covid-19 Redundancy and Retraining Bursary Fund is aimed at UK merchant seafarers facing redundancy or termination of contract as a result of Covid-19. The initiative aims to counteract the unemployment crisis and impact on the wellbeing of seafarers and their families.

The cruise and ferry sectors have been hit particularly hard by the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, with some 2,000 merchant seafarers already facing redundancy in November 2020.

A total of £40,000 was made available thanks to the generous support from MNWB, Trinity House and the

Nautilus Slater Fund to fund training which will help seafarers secure a new job in the industry, whether at sea or on shore.

Applicants can choose the type of training and qualifications they need to get a job, ranging from interview preparation and writing a CV tailored to a maritime industry to Maritime and Coastguard Agency approved courses, Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) refresher qualifications, maritime-related professional diplomas and The Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers' (ICS) qualifications.

A total of 41 seafarers (almost 80% of those who applied) were able to secure funding through Marine Society. Due to the success of the fund and the ongoing uncertainty of the maritime job market, the fund has been extended until December 2021, with the possibility of more funding being made available, if needed.



## **Peter was out of work and used his grant to help him move into offshore windfarms:**

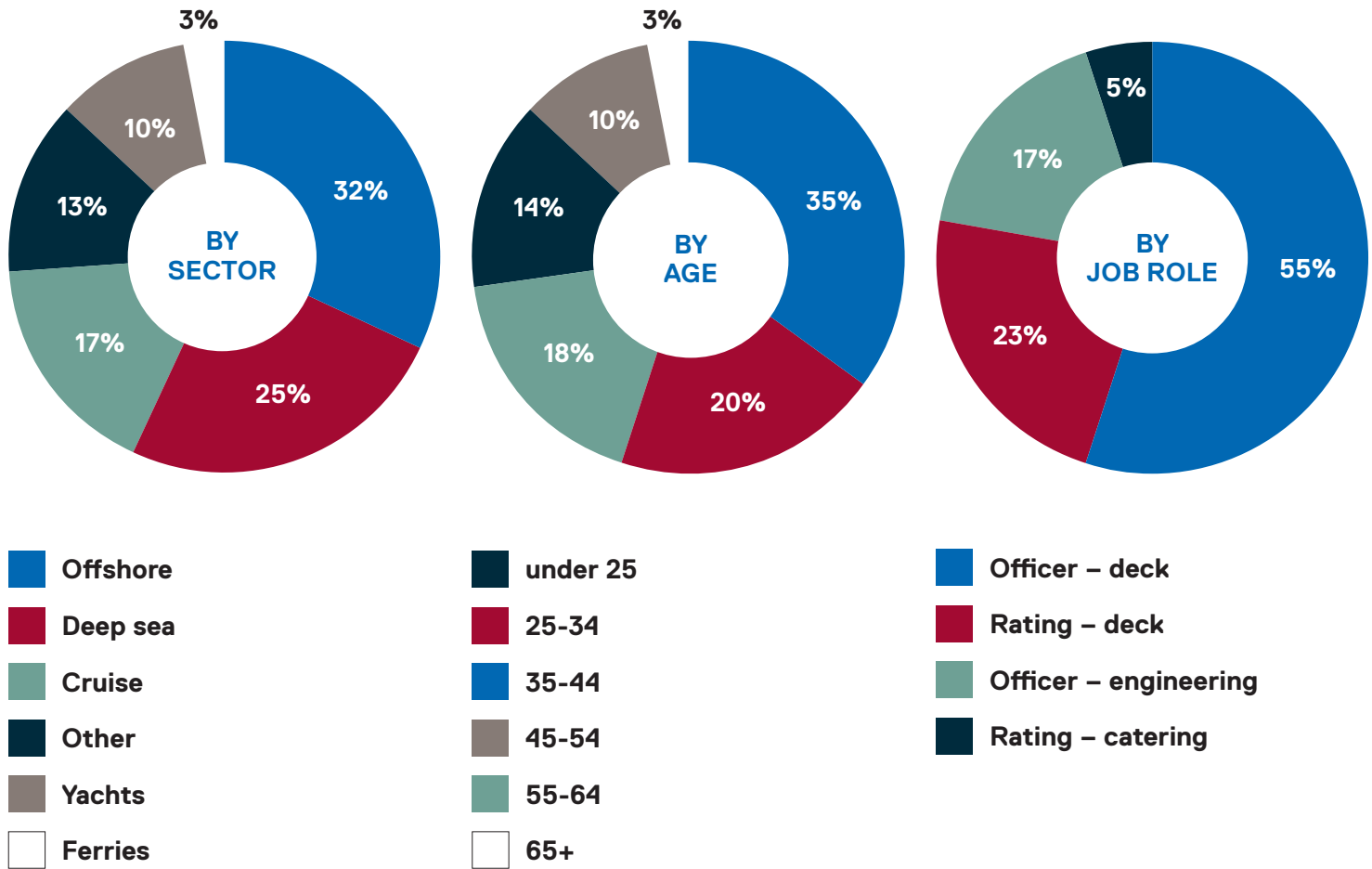
"I've been at sea since I left school over 40 years ago. I started out as a fisherman then moved on to standby, supply, dive ships and then drill ships, where I've been working for the last 12 years.

In October 2020, my contract came to an end. That was the first time I've ever been unemployed. I decided I wanted to move into offshore wind.

Almost all the work at the moment is through agencies and you need to have all your certificates up to date and ready to go. At over £1,000 a time, this is a considerable expense, with no guarantee of a job. So when I heard about the grant, I applied straight away for help with the windfarm industry courses.

Applying for the fund was easy, even for a technophobe like me! I used the grant towards the GWO basic course."

## BREAKDOWN OF APPLICANTS:



**John has been at sea for over 20 years but was made redundant in October 2020. He put his bursary towards four STCW refresher courses, which enabled him to take on a new contract:**

“I’ve been a marine engineer since I left school, working mainly in the deep sea merchant fleet and more recently in oil and gas, specifically offshore drilling. With the onset of Covid-19, the company I worked for made everyone on my rig redundant. I thought about getting a job ashore but decided I should renew my STCW courses and continue working at sea.

I saw the adverts for the bursary fund and, as my certificates were due for renewal, I thought I would apply. I was unemployed at the time and had an offer to start work again soon but needed to get my STCW courses refreshed urgently.

The process was quick and easy. Everything was clearly explained on Marine Society’s website and on the application form. I filled in the forms and sent them off.

Thankfully, I heard back from them very quickly that my application had been successful. I received £500 towards my STCW refresher courses – four of them in total – and this paid the majority of the fees. Having passed the courses, I was then able to accept a new contract.

I’d say to anyone in a similar position: take this opportunity and apply for a grant either for a refresher course or towards training for something new in the sector. It’s a really good way to enhance your skills and improve your job prospects in these hard times.”

# Apprenticeships

In line with its new strategy, Marine Society made a rapid start to entering the world of apprenticeships by successfully applying to join the government's Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers. We secured a delivery partnership in November 2020 with SeaRegs Training, a commercial training provider for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), STCW and Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications and apprenticeships.

As the main funded provider, Marine Society became responsible for SeaRegs' existing apprentices, and has since added to these with 20 apprentices now on the programme training for boatmaster and workboat crew

roles on the River Thames and in other areas.

The partnership has increased our employer and industry connections along the river, including Port of London Authority, Thames Clippers and several towage firms. It has also boosted employment opportunities for sea cadets who wish to build on their nautical skills and qualifications through a career on code and class vessels.

Marine Society secured a dedicated training space for apprentices at the Sea Cadets Royal Docks Boat Station, which extends the use of this centre and opens the doors for potential commercial work.



**Clemence**, aged 28, began her career with City Cruises, working for their tourism department. She worked aboard the ferries, providing customer services during short river cruises.

In 2019, City Cruises offered Clemence a boatmaster apprenticeship that would licence her to crew, and ultimately skipper, the ferries. The two-year apprenticeship taught her new skills such as boat handling, meteorology, health and safety, chart work and rules of navigation as well as vessel stability and construction.

During the pandemic, Clemence was laid off but managed to secure employment with the Port of London Authority, where she could continue her apprenticeship, this time with Marine Society. She has recently passed her MCA oral exams and is now a qualified Tier 1 Level 2 Boatmaster.

Clemence says, "The apprenticeship opened many doors and gave me the opportunity to do something I love."

## KICKSTART

A key strand of the UK Government's response to the pandemic is the Kickstart scheme. The six-month funded placement for 16-24 year olds at risk of long-term unemployment has afforded Marine Society an excellent opportunity to promote careers in the marine and outdoor leisure sectors to young people and offer them an effective progression route into apprenticeships.

We launched the scheme in November 2020, with up to two trainee instructor placements at each Sea Cadets boat station and training centre. Four 'kickstarters' were appointed in the financial year and we are looking to offer placements to more young people until the scheme ends in December 2021.





# Increasing our digital offer



## COMING ASHORE

Thanks to funding support from ITF Seafarers' Trust, we have been able to develop our Coming Ashore programme and implement many new initiatives.

We've had 226 registrations during the programme's first year. We have been focusing on further refining our onboarding processes as well as improving access to resources and mentor support to offer seafarers a structured approach in transitioning ashore.

Marine Society provides a wide range of resources to learners, including access to our commercial shipping ashore, leadership and management online courses, one-to-one sessions with an industry professional on CV building and a recommended book list on niche maritime sectors ashore. We also match each mentee with a mentor, using a skills matrix.



The Coming Ashore programme was aligned to my immediate aim of finding shore-based employment. I was paired with someone who had a wealth of experience in the shoreside sector, where I hoped to gain future employment. I was offered employment for my intended role within three weeks of embarking on the programme.



## LEARN@SEA

We continue to develop our range of @Sea courses to support seafarers, whether studying at college or serving at sea. All this is made possible by the continued support of the International Foundation for Aids to Navigation (IFAN).

Our latest course, Navigation@Sea, is an introduction to navigation, giving seafarers the chance to plan and chart their own virtual voyage from Plymouth to Dover, learning how to plot and calculate the route and creating a passage plan. It also shows the effect of tides and weather, helping the learner to understand how to use electronic navigational aids.

Other recent additions include Stability@Sea and Navigation@Sea Plus, taking the Learn@Sea digital learning suite to 15 courses, with more on the horizon. Meanwhile, we continue to grow our digital library subscribers and range of book titles. Corporate clients can purchase a crew library together with Learn@Sea credits branded as the 'seafarer bundle'.



I recommend the innovative Maths@Sea programme to prospective and serving seafarers alike. My utmost gratitude to Marine Society and all those involved in its development – your contribution to the industry is admirable.

# Maritime careers

The Government's Maritime 2050 strategy set out the urgent need to boost the number of people working in maritime and increase skills so as to grow the sector as it adapts to Brexit, the Green Agenda and new technologies.

In response to this agenda, Marine Society shifted its focus from providing only distance learning for serving seafarers to also delivering careers and training for people aspiring to work in maritime, both at sea and ashore. Having achieved an Ofsted 'Good' provider status and secured a government contract for adult education, we have been able to collaborate with other post-16 providers to offer our maritime expertise.

A successful bid for £4,000 project funding from the Maritime Skills Commission allowed us to develop a new, accredited Level 3 qualification in maritime careers ashore. With the support of the Careers Colleges Trust and the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers, we have since delivered an inaugural course to adult students at Hugh Baird College in Liverpool.

Alongside adult courses, we have grown as close partners to Maritime UK's careers taskforce, participating in numerous outreach events in schools and colleges.



## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



In April 2021, we launched our two-year regeneration strategy, which focuses not only on how to get back to delivering the full experience and services on offer to seafarers after lockdown, but also on how to grow and develop to fully meet the demands of a changing world.

Marine Society has refreshed its offer to include both the current and aspiring seafarer.

MSSC's regeneration plan will empower seafarers to realise their ambitions through:

- Securing 20 Kickstart placements across the country
- Continuing to expand our digital learning services
- Introducing a suite of new Learn@Sea courses
- Further developing post-16 maritime careers and qualifications programmes
- Developing eight outreach courses through new post-16 provider partnerships
- Solidifying our Coming Ashore transition support
- Providing a careers bridge for cadets seeking to progress into the maritime sector
- Devising a refreshed, long-term model to support seafarers considering a career ashore

As we emerge from Covid-19, our charity has proven its resilience. We believe that what we offer has never been more relevant or needed. We will continue to equip seafarers so they are ready to face the future, whatever it may bring.



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 Captain Sea Cadets:  
 Captain Philip Russell RN  
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 and Company Secretary:  
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 Darrell Bate



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**President of MSSC:** Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope GCB OBE DL