

THE MAGAZINE FOR MSSC SUPPORTERS

SEAFARER^{NEWS}

Spring 2024

ms-sc.org



NEW WAVES

Being a sea cadet can lead to an exciting career in the maritime industry, where Marine Society provides support along the way

THE NEXT SEAFARERS

Our apprenticeship scheme is training the skilled maritime professionals of tomorrow

LANGUAGE BARRIER

Cadets and a seafarer share their experiences of overcoming communication challenges

Dear seafarer community,

As we navigate through changing tides and shifting winds, we have reached a new chapter and must share with you that this issue of our long-running *Seafarer News* will be the last of its kind.

This marks a pivotal moment as we continue the transition from our traditional format to embrace new and innovative ways of staying connected with our vibrant community. The magazine has been a beacon of inspiration and information for 90 glorious years, charting the achievements and stories of our maritime family. It's a legacy that began with the Seafarers' Education Service in 1934 and flourished once merged with Marine Society in 1976. More recently, our dedicated team have enjoyed bringing you the latest news and achievements from Marine Society and Sea Cadets.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to you, our readers, for your continued support and feedback. We also salute our many contributors over the years – particularly our regular columnist at sea, Chief Officer Spencer Wyles.

To preserve its rich heritage, we are working to continue the *Seafarer News* legacy with something new; however its purpose and audience may change, we hope to update you soon on the details. In the meantime, Marine Society and Sea Cadets is not slowing down. Here's how you can continue to sail with us:

- **The Sea Cadet magazine will now be published twice a year in a digital format (with access to recent back issues).**
- **You can find the latest news and highlights on the Marine Society and Sea Cadets Facebook pages. Or follow @MarineSociety and @SeaCadetsUK on X (formerly Twitter); and @marine_soc and @SeaCadetsUK on Instagram.**
- **Marine Society supporters can also sign up to receive regular email bulletins from our fantastic bookshop, and will enjoy listening to our Coming Ashore podcast (available on all the major platforms).**
- **For those interested in news from Sea Cadets, our email newsletter goes out to almost 50,000 supporters each month – simply add your email address to the form at the top of our [home page](#).**

We'd welcome any feedback from *Seafarer News* readers on the type of content you enjoyed most over the years, and what you would like to see in any of the above – please share your suggestions with us at seafarernews@ms-sc.org.

Together, we're setting sail towards new horizons, enriched by our shared history and excited for the future's promise.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Coles CBE
MSSC Chief Executive



WELCOME & CONTENTS

Welcome to your spring issue of *Seafarer News*. We're bringing you the story of a seafarer's career that was sparked by Sea Cadets and later supported by Marine Society. We share the latest updates from Marine Society and find out what sea cadets have been up to. And to overcome the labour shortage in specialist maritime sectors, we explain why apprenticeships are more vital than ever. Please share your feedback with us: seafarernews@ms-sc.org

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MARINE SOCIETY & SEA CADETS

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MSSC NEWS

Getting ahead in the tug sector

Marine Society and Sea Cadets has been chosen to administer the British Tugowners Association's (BTA) Tug Trainee of the Year Award. This new partnership could also create career opportunities within the maritime sector for future and current seafarers.

The BTA's new initiative recognises the future of the towage sector, rewarding individuals who have shown overwhelming promise and a commendable attitude towards their learning.

MSSC is honoured to be joining BTA in celebrating and honouring trainees and recently certificated candidates who are working in the UK towage sector. This will not only give us great exposure to the tug sector in

general, but more specifically it will enable the charity to promote apprenticeships to commercial vessel employers, helping to expand our maritime workforce and secure its future prosperity.

Full details of the eligibility, terms and scope of the award can be viewed via the [BTA website](#).



MARINE SOCIETY NEWS

Career navigation

The latest episode of *Coming Ashore: The Podcast* features a former mentee of the programme, Tom Chitseko. Tom spoke to presenter Will Fuller about the guidance he received through the Coming Ashore programme that aided the transition – and even helped him find a new job.

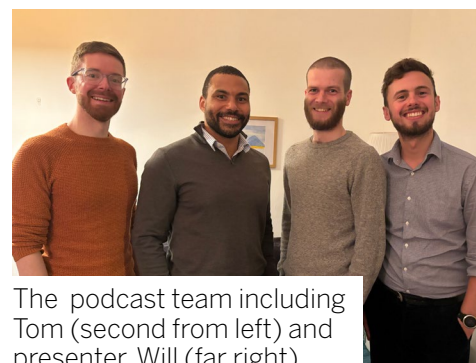
After completing a degree in international relations, Tom expected to find an office job. But he was intrigued by a more adventurous career in the maritime industry. Tom gained a cadetship with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and spent 13 years at sea, broadening his expertise in navigation, cargo work and more. Once he reached First Officer, Tom took on more management responsibilities, including policy writing, which started his transition to shore.

The guidance offered by his Coming Ashore mentor helped him find a position in navigational

risk analysis.

“The role is in the renewables sector,” Tom explains, “where I help ensure that tidal and windfarm infrastructure, and other renewable resources, are put into the world’s oceans in a way that

does not jeopardise the safety and navigation of vessels.” If you are looking to make the move to a maritime role ashore, or could offer your experience and advice to seafarers going through the process, please visit our [Coming Ashore page](#) or contact comingashore@ms-sc.org.



The podcast team including Tom (second from left) and presenter, Will (far right)

Recognition for maritime trainers

Marine Society’s Slater Scholarship was formed in 1977 in memory of merchant navy officer and Airline Officer’s Association General Secretary, John William Slater. It has helped thousands of seafarers study for their first certificate of competency or gain standards of training, certification and watchkeeping (STCW) certification.

The fund has now created the Approved Providers Recognition Scheme, which recognises and promotes esteemed maritime training providers and colleges, providing more benefits for recipients, including discounts on fees.

Slater scholars are advised to use this group of approved providers when selecting their training courses, unless the course or location does not align with a provider on the list. To view the full list and find out more about the

scholarship, go to the [Slater Scholarship page on our website](#).



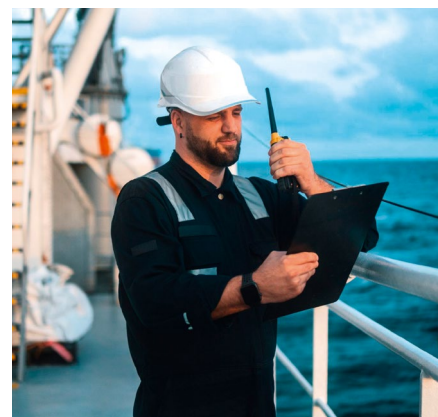
New opportunities on board for deck hands

Marine Society became an apprenticeship provider in 2021, providing current and aspiring seafarers with career opportunities within six structured standards. Now

we have introduced a seventh standard, Level 2 Seafarer (Deck) Rating.

This role is found on a wide range of specialist commercial and military vessels, including for cargo, equipment, passengers and crew. The 15–20-month course provides an understanding of how to support a vessel upon arrival at a port.

With further training and experience, apprentices can progress through the ranks to deck officer and beyond. Seafarers can specialise in a specific area, such as marine surveying or maritime law, which allows for growth in niche sectors and to higher-ranking positions or shore-based roles.



SEA CADETS NEWS

Refitting Royalist



Our flagship, TS Royalist, will be fit for future voyages

Thousands of young people have had memorable voyages aboard the Sea Cadets flagship, TS Royalist. As it reaches its 10th year in operation, the tall ship will go through a comprehensive overhaul after one more exciting season of sailing in 2024.

Since it was commissioned by Admiral of Sea Cadets, HRH The Princess Royal, in 2015, Royalist has been a beacon of learning and adventure for cadets. It is important that we invest in maintenance that will extend Royalist's lifespan, so we can continue to offer cadets a safe and reliable training platform for years to come.

The upgrades involve significant cost, but thanks to support from The Uren Foundation, which is sponsoring the mid-term refit, and The Naval Club and Square Rigger Club, which are supporting various upgrades, much of the work is already funded. New navigational equipment will also make it easier to safely navigate the increasingly busy waters around the UK.



Sea cadets greet HRH The Princess Royal in Glasgow

Royal encounters

Some lucky cadets had the opportunity to impress our Admiral, HRH The Princess Royal, at some official engagements recently. In November, they provided Her Royal Highness with a Guard of Honour on a visit to the City of Glasgow College. Our cadets regularly make use of the college's incredible facilities, which support training programmes identified as crucial by a recent report from the UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce.

The next day, cadets from Barrow Unit met HRH on a visit to the town, at a ceremony to mark breaking ground for a new BAE Systems Submarine Academy. A second group of cadets met their Admiral at the town's port, where they enjoyed a tour of Pacific Heron, one of the world's three specialist nuclear transportation vessels, and learned about the skills, technology and safety measures required in this unique industry.

Cadets go global

In November, two of our First Sea Lord's Cadets, Petty Officer Cadet Maisie from Fishguard and Petty Officer Cadet Joseph from Camberley, represented the UK at the G20 'THINQ' quiz event, hosted by the Indian Navy in New Delhi. Maisie and Joseph competed against students and cadets from around the world and had a chance to share their different cadet experiences.



Cadets Joseph (left) and Maisie (centre)



Keith's unit during his years as a sea cadet

PAYING IT FORWARD



Many people's lives are changed by joining Sea Cadets, or by the support offered by Marine Society. And sometimes, as in the case of maritime professional Keith Murray, it's both

There are certain people for whom joining Sea Cadets at an early age shapes their future path in life, giving them guidance, purpose and an outlet to express themselves. For Captain Keith Murray, Marine Society & Sea Cadets played a key role in his success story, highlighting the benefits and opportunities on offer for a proactive individual to take advantage of its services and reach their full potential.

Keith wanted to go to sea from a very early age, so he joined Beatty Sea Cadets aged 12, after

his mother saw a recruitment advert in the local newspaper and encouraged him to go along. There was one person in particular who mentored Keith through his early years at Sea Cadets and was a pivotal figure in shaping the person he is today.

"Our Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander McFarlane, was a wonderful man – he took me under his wing and helped me through a lot of behavioural problems and teenage angst," remembers Keith. "He taught me how to behave, how to be respectful and how to be self-motivated. It was at Sea Cadets I decided what I wanted to do when I left school."

After completing his O-levels, Keith spent a year at nautical college. There weren't many opportunities where he grew up so, with his father's encouragement, he signed up to be a cadet at a local shipping company. What followed were four

‘My course was through distance learning, and I didn’t have anyone to ask for help, so Marine Society provided the guidance I needed’

formative years that would help Keith to forge a great future career within the sector.

The world is your oyster

“I saw the world thanks to that decision,” Keith says. “When my dad put me on a plane to Edinburgh to start my apprenticeship, I had seen planes before but never been on one. Then I found myself on a jumbo jet to New York, followed by a trip to Acapulco, and we got stuck in a hotel because the ship was late. I had never even stayed in a hotel before! Now I’ve been to almost every continent in the world.”

Keith also used Marine Society’s services throughout his maritime career, initially seeking



Sea Cadets inspired Keith to start a career at sea

financial support for his Open University degree when he first went to sea. “Marine Society was very good to me. I specialised in global warming in the Arctic and I don’t think I would have qualified without its support. My course was carried out through distance learning, and I didn’t have anyone to ask for help on board, so Marine Society provided the guidance I needed.”

Another way Marine Society helped was through the crew libraries it has been providing for more than a century. Keith remembers the importance of having access to those books, for research and recreation. “Marine Society would send boxes of books that kept us going for a few voyages,” Keith recalls. “It was a very important and exciting part of our experience at sea – there wasn’t much to do during downtime, so reading became an essential part of life on board. Marine Society is a safety net; it provides someone to speak to and offer advice. The broad spectrum of services it offers is amazing.”

In 2017 Keith came full circle when he joined Methil Sea Cadets as a volunteer, wanting to repay the charity for all the years of development he received as a cadet. He became a uniformed officer, and last year took up the role of Chair of the Unit Management Team and a senior trustee. Keith is a true example of how all aspects of MSSC can benefit a person throughout their life, and in turn inspire them to give back.



Keith achieved his Open University degree with support from Marine Society



BOOSTING THE MARITIME WORKFORCE



Marine Society is one of only a handful of government providers offering apprenticeships in areas that are vital to the future of the UK maritime sector, says **Darrell Bate**, Director of Maritime Training and Development

We support a number of apprentices as part of our mission to train the seafarers and maritime professionals of the future. Marine Society has helped nine Boatmaster apprentices to pass their end-point assessments, with eight achieving distinctions. A further two Port Operative apprentices made it through assessment and gained full-time roles in their respective ports.

To help promote apprenticeships as widely as possible, Marine Society exhibits at major trade fairs including Seawork, Southampton International Boat Show, the Festival of Apprenticeships and London Careers Festival. Our staff have also raised the importance of apprenticeships at the political party conferences, lobbying policymakers for more flexibility in the 25% maximum ratio of sub-contracted course delivery, to allow for a more rapid achievement of technical courses.

MSSC

Marine Society recently launched its sixth apprenticeship standard – Marina and Boatyard Operative – for those wishing to take their first steps in the marine leisure world. Apprentices have been recruited at boatyards in Norfolk and Suffolk, and marinas in Dover and the Solent. An exciting prospect for the apprentices is a planned voyage aboard TS John Jerwood, where they will be taught boat-handling and enjoy developing their teambuilding skills.

Looking ahead

We continue to look for new initiatives that can help us support apprenticeships. This includes a new partnership with the Isle of Wight-based charity UK Sailing Academy (UKSA) to help younger people take their first steps towards a maritime career as a port operative, workboat crew member or officer of the watch. We have delivered a new Outdoor Activity Instructor apprenticeship in partnership with Sea Cadets, with our first recruit trained by the charity's own Inshore Boating Team.

And Marine Society apprentices are recognised for their achievements. Clemence Barbey gained a certificate for Outstanding Commitment to Learning, awarded by HRH The Princess Royal, in recognition of her efforts during a Boatmaster apprenticeship with the Port of London Authority (PLA). Another apprentice, Beauty Marshall, was Workboat Association Apprentice of the Year.

The future for maritime apprenticeships is bright, with more and more employers recognising the value these programmes bring to their workforce. We will keep advocating for them.



Outdoor Activity Instructor apprentice Lee Jarvis (right) receiving his certificate of completion

Watch a film about the benefits of apprenticeships, presented by Darrell:
bit.ly/mssc-apprenticeships

COMMUNICATION

From feeling included to issues of safety onboard a ship, sometimes language can create a barrier. A seafarer and some sea cadets share their experiences

THE SEAFARER VIEW: “THERE HAVE BEEN AMUSING OUTCOMES DUE TO MISCOMMUNICATIONS”



**Chief Officer
Spencer Wyles**

One of the most wonderful aspects of working at sea is exposure to numerous cultures. My current vessel has 14 nationalities on board, among 67 crew. The bridge team consists of six crew members of five different nationalities.

While diversity is great, it can present challenges with language. Occasionally, there have been amusing outcomes due to miscommunications, prompting me to be more clear and double-check everyone understands.

To overcome language barriers, especially in stressful situations, we conduct regular drills. These ensure that emergency instructions are understood and help identify cultural differences during training, making sure there is effective communication when it is most

crucial. Another effective method I've found to bridge language gaps is to communicate frequently in small doses and take the time to get to know each person. Understanding someone's mannerisms or body language sometimes conveys more than words can.

English is the ship's working language, but the company provides Portuguese lessons for vessels operating in Brazil and Angola, to encourage more interaction, respect and cohesiveness among the crew.

I am particularly conscious and proud of the onboard environment we've cultivated, where everyone can freely express their views, honour their culture or religion, and contribute to a positive working atmosphere. A noteworthy example of this was our Christmas festivities, where we accommodated nationalities who mark the occasion on different days, celebrating on the 24th, 25th and 26th! A truly wonderful experience.

THE CADET VIEW: “IT HELPS STOP STIGMA AND RACIAL TENSION”

Sea Cadets is proud to be a youth organisation that promotes inclusivity and cultural diversity across all units. Sometimes, cultural differences and language barriers can create tensions for cadets who do not speak English as their first language.

At Kingston and District Unit, we asked cadets from a multitude of backgrounds what their personal experiences have been joining Sea Cadets. We wanted to know what obstacles they have experienced and what could be improved to encourage more young people who don't speak English as a first language to join.

Fiona, 15, praised the unit's approach to language differences, saying there were “no obstacles” when joining Sea Cadets and it has helped significantly with improving her English.

Jack, 16, expressed the importance of cadet interaction, incorporating different backgrounds and cultures, saying that it “creates awareness and helps stop stigma and racial tension forming on small and large scales”. Cadets have expressed a need for learning new languages and cultures through teaching and resources. This would only strengthen the international appeal of the charity.

BECOME A JUNIOR SEA CADETS VOLUNTEER!

- ◆ Learn valuable skills
- ◆ Earn recognised qualifications
- ◆ Make a difference in your community
- ◆ Unlock your own potential!



We need more people to become volunteers and help young people achieve their dreams. Find out more and join your local Sea Cadets unit today
sea-cadets.org/units

