

Steve:

Each one has their own unique skillsets. There are lots of roles out there and lots of opportunities. I'll stop at this point and maybe we'll go into more detail later.

Peter:

Fantastic Steve. Are you able to enlighten us on the Marine Society's Coming Ashore program and your work with them?

Steve:

Yeah. Well, I see we've got Karla with us this evening. Hi, Karla. I can't remember exactly when the program kicked off, but certainly a year plus ago now. There are 10 to 12 of us as mentors and I think there're about 60 mentees on the program. Certainly Carla is keeping us all busy. And, these vary from those deck officers to engineer officers from people around the world. I'm mentoring two engineering officers at the moment. A master mariner from Namibia who was on a diamond mining dredger, every girl's best friend. And a couple of other junior officers as well. The program works really well and each mentor is picked to suit the mentee, all the mentor's have got different experiences and the mentee can go and talk to anyone of them at any time to get a feel for their experiences, to help them understand where they might fit. There is a profiling tool that helps you understand your personality and your strengths and weaknesses. And the mentees can have as much or as little time as they require, from meeting weekly or monthly, obviously there are gaps for those that are still at sea.

Steve:

Generally, the common problems that seem to be coming out is what is self-confidence if you've not worked ashore, what is it that I've got that can be of value? But please be assured you've all got excellent skills, good people skills, that have value in shore-based roles. And secondly, is how do I go about finding a job? And the one thing those of us that have been ashore for a while now take for granted, is the network that we built up and that's something that a lot of people coming ashore find tough...

Peter:

Hello Steve? I think we may have just lost Steve in there. I think the technology bug's back again.

Steve:

... part of our role is-

Peter:

Oh, there he is.

Steve:

Okay. I don't know what happened. So, a lot of the work is helping mentees build their networks, understanding their strengths and weaknesses, and helping them define the role that's suitable for them and then helping them build the network to find that job, and where possible, doing some work placements to get a really good feel for what each different job entails.

Peter:

Fantastic Steve, thank you very much. Based on your experience, I know you come ashore and went into the office of your shipping company, is that a route that you recommend for a lot of seafarers trying to go into the office for the shipping company they're with and then branching out from there?

Steve:

Yeah, absolutely. It's a lot easier because you're a known entity, so if you're still at sea, it's really good if you can invest some time into spending time in the office of your employer, if that's possible, and volunteering for projects so you can build a profile ashore, letting them know what your plans are, getting a feel for how things work in offices. That way it can be a much easier task and more of a soft landing because you're a known entity because the company's employed you and they have an understanding of you and what your skills are.

Peter:

Fantastic Steve. Thank you very much. I guess what we'll do is, we'll open up the floor for... has anyone got any questions for Steve on his experiences? Any comments regarding the Marine Society Coming Ashore? Feel free... Carla, fantastic, I see your hand up there. Off you fire, Carla.

Carla:

I just wanted to fill in a few gaps. Steve done really well on explaining the program and his involvement and I just wanted to help by filling in a few gaps on the program, which I'm sure Steve will appreciate. So, like he said, it's been going now for just over a year and we've had many, many people apply to the program and I'm pleased to say that I recognize some of the people who're attending this meeting as mentees on the program. Over the year, we've grown and changed the processes slightly and improved them and what we do now, what we've found, is that before we assign a mentee to a mentor, we do actually have a interview kind of a brief discussion with them before we assign them to a mentor so that we can understand a bit about them a bit more and then it enables us to better allocate them to one of our mentors.

Carla:

All the mentors have gone through the process of transitioning ashore so they will fully understand the journey that the mentees coming up will go through. We also offer a range of resources and Steve mentioned a spotlight profiling tour but we also have a range of online courses and our resources are free to mentees. And we have also a range of courses such as leadership for softer skills and personal skills, leadership management, project management which would be useful skills for shoreside roles. And we also have a jobs board on our website and we find it really important that they become members of our LinkedIn page which is also a closed group, so we're evolving the program to better support mentees all the time.

Carla:

And we have had a few already that have secured jobs ashore. So for some they want to take a period of time and progress over a couple of years to get there but some want to get ashore as quickly as possible. Other observations is that many don't realize the wide range of jobs that there are available ashore and many seem to choose marine surveyor or your typical marine pilots in ports but there are much more jobs available and that's where the mentor can really help and broaden their thoughts and horizons on the opportunities ashore.

Peter:

Fantastic. Thank you Carla. I think that's a very valid point and one myself I was guilty of when I'd come ashore, that I didn't realize a lot of the roles that were available. So, it is quite surprising how much when you do come ashore and you realize there is a lot to shipping that isn't actually onboard ships so your experiences can actually send you off in various paths on your career. It's quite surprising how much you can actually do on the shoreside, given your skills which... quite honestly, the skillsets of a seafarer are in rare supply ashore as well, so you're in high demand... Apologies for my phone going off there. But, thank you very much Carla.

Peter:

In terms of the Coming Ashore project, what do people need to do if they want to sign up? What's the requirements? They go online, sign up, how does it work?

Carla:

So they can go onto our webpage and there's a link there to fill in an enrollment form, and that's it basically. Once they filled in the enrollment form, we get in contact with them and then they arrange one of these calls with us. They fill in an online calendar date of when they'd like a call and then we call the mentee to arrange a 15 minute call and just have a brief discussion with them. So, it's very simple and straightforward, they just literally fill in a registration form. The only requirement is that they are working at sea because it's obviously for shoreside roles. If they already got a job ashore then they wouldn't really qualify. If it's those who are still at sea or have recently come ashore because of the recent COVID pandemic and people have lost their jobs, if they've just recently come ashore we would still accept them. But on the whole, it's for those who are at sea, looking to come ashore. And it's international.

Peter:

That's fantastic. Well, thank you very much for that additional information Carla, it's most appreciated. Does anyone else have any questions while we're on the subject of this? I'm looking for hands up. Can't see any at the moment. Again feel free if you do have any, you can either speak now or drop me a message in the chat box. Steve, have you got a question? Question for yourself?

Steve:

Can I employ my schizophrenic self and ask [inaudible 00:09:59]? One thing that I'd like to just expand on Peter, if I may, and may I also thank you for your help with my mentees, helping me find roles for them. It's been much appreciated. I mentioned that there's no hard and fast rule about when to come ashore, whether you come ashore early or whether you wait until you've got your Master's or your Chief Engineer's equivalent. What I would say is if you're relatively happy at sea, it's definitely worth staying at sea to get your Master's or your Chief Engineer's ticket because they have a value that's recognized and if you come ashore with those certificates into an organization, certainly straight away it gives you a profile that people will respect and value. So if you have a choice, my recommendation is do please stay at sea and get those qualifications.

Steve:

Having said that, if you decide to come ashore early because being at sea isn't for you, then there are plenty of other ways in which your career can progress. As I did, I came ashore with a Second Mate's

ticket and whilst I ended up being the Operations Manager of a shipping line to West Africa which is the best one I've ever had running railroad ships. We got involved in all the aspects of the business. As I said I could've gone into the finance side of the business, I could've gone into the sales and marketing side of the business. I was offered the opportunity to go and work in Africa, so it doesn't matter at what stage you decide to come ashore, there are lots of options for you and certainly the Marine Society can help.

Peter:

Fantastic. Thank you very much. Fergus, I've seen your question there, I'm going to hold off on asking that until we've had our next speaker because I feel it may answer some of it and I don't want to steal all his thunder. I want to thank Steve again for his time there and thank you again Carla as well for having the Marine Society join us on this, really appreciate it. Next up, we've got Gordon Rennie. Gordon runs his own recruitment firm and I have to speak very highly of him as he is responsible for me having my current job, so thank you very much Gordon, it's most appreciated.

Peter:

I'll let you introduce yourself, Gordon. But the one thing I will say to everyone here, if you're not following him on LinkedIn already, I highly recommend it, even if it's just for the entertaining posts that he puts up for the jobs. I think that's become his calling card, he knows what I mean. Over to you Gordon, if you can just give us a bit of information on your side of things.

Gordon:

Sure thing. Thank you. Sorry for the tardiness, I couldn't quite get in. More than happy to help anyone to... I'll say this off at the start, as it goes on I never met Pete yet but maybe four years ago or so, we first got in touch. But there's a lot of different things from my experience that people struggle with when they're coming ashore or even when they do come ashore that they try and address at any given point. One of the things that Steven just said there, my business is set up around moving people and getting people jobs, but I would still recommend if you could stay at sea, do your Chief's ticket, get your Master's ticket and try and get that experience because it does make a big, big difference in terms of the longevity and where your career can go.

Gordon:

Initially obviously myself, I've been in the marine recruitment industry for maybe five, just under six years, you guys have probably been at sea a lot longer so forgive me for that. It's a great industry, there's so much that you can do. There's so many different avenues that you can take when you do come ashore but the one thing I would say that... sorry, there's not one thing there's a few different things I've got down here that I've in my experience have heard people having issues with, obviously coming ashore financially is big difference, tax. I missed the start, so I don't know if this is good overall ground. Being taxed for the first time, obviously you get mortgage payments, all of that really counts and it might not count at the start, it might be exciting at the start but if you're six months in, if you're a year in, you really need to be aware that it's going to be a completely different ballgame. It will get better, obviously, you can push yourself forward but it's just something to be aware of.

Gordon:

I've got that down as obviously, try and get yourself in good financial footing. I heard this, and I thought it was brilliant, I heard this from a GM out in Singapore and he was talking to people that just came ashore and he was basically saying if you're at sea and you're thinking about coming ashore, spend the

last year trying to live below your means and really try to just I suppose have not a financial hardship but experience in what it will be like so you're more than ready to take it.

Gordon:

Other than that I'd say is trying to understand the career path. There's so many people that I would see come ashore or looking to come ashore and they don't really know where they want to go, they don't necessarily realize the importance I would say of sticking within certain vessel types, or certain specific sectors within the industry. So, if you can do that, it makes a big difference. If you're changing and you're going from bulkers, and then you're going to tankers, then you're going offshore, it can be trickier to try and meet that step, so again, it doesn't help a recruiter in the slightest by coming ashore and sticking with your company. But it does help, as an example, today I just got an interview for someone and it's the first time I've spoken to them properly, 17 years with one company and they've got three companies chasing them. It really does help you stand out.

Gordon:

Other than that, if we can go into more the practical side of things. From my experience I would say if you're looking to come ashore and you're either in the process of it or you're thinking it's going to happen in the next six months, I would really set some things up and say "Right, okay, I'm going to go for a 30 day sprint, a 60 day sprint and a 90 day sprint. I'm going to set some goals, so whether that be I'm going to increase my network within 30 days". Say you're a Chief on bulkers at the moment and you're looking to trying to come into London, you really want to try and build your network, speak to the people that matter, if that can be someone obviously like Steve and Carla with the mentorship side of things that can really help you, it's invaluable.

Gordon:

I had a podcast recording the other day with the CEO of Svitzer, Ingrid, it's a hard one to forgive me, Ingrid Uppelschoten Snelderwaard. Her mentor is now the CEO of MSC so this obviously started a long, long time ago and now they're both SeaSuite and it's just incredible. She's working, I think, with seven or eight different people so really you couldn't put a price on it, it's ridiculous. So, I would say if you can do that, if you can try and add to your network. I know it's obviously hard if you're at sea and you're not too sure, but LinkedIn is the best tool. I pretty much make a living off the back of LinkedIn. If you reach out to people, not everyone's going to obviously come back to you, some people are too busy, some people are not that active on it, but if you can get in touch with people and then just ask them questions, "What advice would you maybe give?" Or try and get involved in any workshops and what not.

Gordon:

Other than that, if you're writing your CV, this is where I really get quite nerdy and enjoy myself. But if you really look at your CV, obviously nine times out of 10 a CV that will come in it reads as a job description. A seafarer CV is completely different from someone that's shore based, so if you have your seafarer's CV it's excellent in terms of understanding the vessels you've been with, the vessel types, engine capacity, etc. and obviously the term, your sea time, that's night and day. But when you come ashore, you really need to think about the projects that you've been part of, something as silly as the fact that you've worked on a lot of older vessels, you've dealt with a lot of problems, rather than someone who might not have had the same experience. So I would say to try and quantify your experience, to look at it as a KPI thing. Don't just map out your job description, what you have been

doing, really look at the problems that you overcame, the projects you've been a part of. And then, if you can throw in some budgets, then go for it.

Gordon:

If you're a Chief Engineer or you're a Second Engineer and you've got six dry dockings, that should be on your CV. I know guys that are Technical Directors and I don't know how many people they've had on their team, how many vessels they run, how many dry dockings, how many projects, how many new builds. These things really count. It helps you stand out and at the end of the day, that's really what counts. What you guys do is nothing short of incredible, I would say it's absolutely amazing. It's so easy in my head to try and show the story of who are and what you've been through and if you can do that, you stand a great chance.

Gordon:

Other than that, any questions? More than happy to answer. If you want any advice on your CV, or if you want to do, I don't know if Pete wants to do it, if you want to do a workshop there's a few people we can work through and we can... I've got no problem doing that, I can make some time for that and obviously Jess, I see Jess there that I just messaged maybe a week ago. Hi Jess. But yeah, any help anyone needs, more than happy to help out.

Peter:

Fantastic Gordon, thank you very much. Thank you there for volunteering for a CV workshop in the future, that will not be forgotten. It's on recording, so you can't escape it now, so thank you very much. I'm going to start off with the big elephant in the room question that every seafarer wants to know when they're coming ashore, I'm sure you can guess, salaries. What should seafarers be expecting? A drop in salary, an equal? I know you mentioned the tax, obviously the tax is a shocker, I can attest to that one when I'd come ashore was the same time as I was getting married, so it was a horrendous time for my finances. In terms of salaries, what would you recommend to seafarers that are looking to come ashore?

Gordon:

Again, it's really different wherever you go. If you, say for example, if I've got... recently I can give you some examples. I've had a Junior Vessel Management job, we're talking maybe 40K in Central Scotland, and then you've got a Chartering Manager job in Hong Kong and it could be up to in Pounds it could be 100K, but that's probably not just coming to shore. You really need to, if you're moving into London, you're going to get more money but you also do need to think about it's going to cost you a lot more money, your... Sorry Pete. So obviously [crosstalk 00:22:18] you've got the travel, accommodation, but generally speaking, all the shipping hubs it's going to be quite expensive to live. It depends what rank you are, depends what experience you've got, again it depends if you been, I would say, I don't like saying this sometimes but it's just honest, if you've been dotting around or in different vessel types, and you've not really specialized, the chances are that you won't get paid as much as someone that has. You also might not get in.

Gordon:

I would say, we don't advertise our jobs on job boards but when we did, what you really see it's really apparent people are applying. They might be more and they don't understand why they're not either getting a start or whatever, but there's a lot of people that with every downturn you might have people

that are senior that are then a victim of the downturn, laid off and obviously [inaudible 00:23:13] back in, so there's a lot of tricky things to do. I don't know, it's a really tricky question. If you're a Chief Officer, if you're a Master, if you're a Chief Engineer, I think you should be coming ashore and really kind of be looking for about 50, as a minimum. If you come ashore as a Chief Engineer or Master for a Marine Superintendent... I can go through different roles and different locations if that's better but a Marine Superintendent in the UK will be anywhere between 60 and 70K. It will probably be like for like in Dubai, but again there's no tax there. Norway, again the tax is higher, Denmark again tax is higher, so probably 70, 80.

Gordon:

If you come ashore, we used to put people into personnel roles, maybe kind of mid-twenties so that's that have finished their cadetship and [inaudible 00:24:10] third officers, but again, it's all relative in what your background is and where you go and whatnot. I'll just shove this in, I would say if you're coming up with a plan, come up with objectives. So target three roles that you'd be interested in and then target three locations. You can do your research and then build your network that way. Be very strategic about your network, don't just blast and connect with everyone. If you are a Deck Officer and you're looking at coming ashore, get in touch with the right people. If you're an engineer, get in touch with the right people.

Gordon:

You'd be amazed. When I started in the industry, I had no idea. The conversations I had with senior people, they love telling you, they love guiding you. And I got it, so you guys stand a much better chance of getting that kind of insight. Don't know, that was a bit of a long winded answer but there you go.

Peter:

No, no, appreciated Gordon. I mean, there's obviously... the one question I think even when I was coming ashore, a lot of my colleagues were like "How much are you getting paid to go ashore?" and well, not enough is the answer. Not enough. [crosstalk 00:25:16]. If only. We got a couple of questions in the chat. Apologies, I've missed a couple from earlier, so I'm going to throw them in now. Apologies Gordon, you're going to cop these ones as well. In terms of courses on offer and accreditation, this is from Gerard, what course on offer have any accreditation or recognition from shoreside employers? What sort of courses do you recommend people look up?

Gordon:

I think it depends. If you really look at your long term career goal and you know where you want to get to. It's hard to answer that without really looking at the long term. I had a really good chat the other day with Head of Ops for a tanker company and when he was looking at coming ashore, he started his MBA, in his downtime obviously. I think that's excellent. It's a lot of work, sometimes you guys work harder than most people but when you come ashore it's good to have your time off but if you can really use that and then try and push yourself ahead, anything like that will work. In terms, again it's there's thousands... when that question came in I don't know if it was for Carla, to be honest, when she was talking the different courses and different things that were going on, if they are accredited, I'm not sure. I've seen that pop up at the time, so I don't know if that maybe would be right.

Peter:

Carla, feel free if you're there to jump on that, if that's okay.

Carla:

The learner sea courses that we have, two of them are accredited, but I don't think that they would be applicable to those who are coming ashore. They're more related to those who are getting into the industry and wanting to get a job at sea. They're in Maritime Mass and Vessel Stability, so they're more aimed at young ones coming into the sector and going to work at sea. Our other courses for leadership management and project management, they're just up-skilling, they're not accredited. So they're just for soft skills up-skilling for personal development. I would definitely agree with what Gordon said about, if you've got time whilst you're still at sea and working, and if you've got time to do a degree for example via distance learning, we do support and encourage that. To prepare yourself whilst you're still at sea, for when you do come ashore in advance.

Peter:

Fantastic. Thank you very much Carla. Apologies, I missed that one earlier, so apologies that was a bit of a delayed question on that front. We've got a couple of other questions and while I'm just having a quick look at them, we'll do one now and maybe leave the rest to after Kyle spoke as well and we'll sort of put it to the panel as a whole so everyone can jump in on the various questions. So, apologies if I get this pronunciation wrong, but Evgeny has asked, except for LinkedIn someone who's a seafarer looking for a shore job, what's the best course of action to build their own network? Is it attending the maritime events and workshops, or become members of the various maritime association clubs, such as the Honorable Company, the Nautical Institute, etc. what sort of things would you recommend on that, Gordon, in terms of all of it? [crosstalk 00:28:49].

Gordon:

100% all of the above. Small things like this, we've got a group 20, 30 people, people will help you, so if you can do anything online then get involved. As you've done, ask questions, really get involved in things, it helps. Personally speaking, I try and go to as many events as I can, so if you're in London, London Shipping Week, then up in Aberdeen, there's all sorts. If you're out in the Middle East, there's events on all the time. If you just... as simple as Google "Marine Events" and if there's anything local. I don't know where you are Evgeny but if there's anything local, try and get along, try and build that. And get the business card, immediately follow up the next day "Thanks so much, it was great to meet you, really appreciate your time", I wouldn't go too much to try and ask but anything you can.

Gordon:

IMarEST if you're around Geneva, the dinners are great and the events are great, you may be able to get an experience as well, who knows. But yeah, there's so many. Other than that, I wanted to say as well, if you're looking at doing health and safety, if you can try and get your Nebosh that's something that's very important. One thing as well I've put down here and I forgot to say is, whatever company you're working with right now, speak to your Learning Development, have a good chat with them, try and actually build a relationship with whoever your point of contact is in L and D and then if your company will sponsor any extra curricular activities in terms of education, then go for it. If they are obviously looking at mentorship as well, so it's really good to do.

Gordon:

I've actually got a couple of notes on that. Secondment, that's what I was going to say. Companies like MOL, TK, Vroom, do really good secondments, so they'll bring you in, they'll give you a year, maybe two years ashore. So you'll come in, if you're a Deck Officer you'll come in as a Voyage Manager to start with,



then you move into Marine Super and then they'll send you back out to sea as a Master in a similar... I had a chat with Chris [inaudible 00:31:12] at TK on the podcast and he was saying the exact same thing, so they're looking at the opportunity to bring people ashore that are part of their fleet, give them a year, give them experience so that they're still getting paid as they were at sea. They're not getting the shock to the system. And then you can really test to see, "Do I want to make this move?". So that was just an add in, it wasn't in the question but I think it's quite important if you can try and add that in yourself.

Peter:

That's fantastic. Thank you very much. So we've got a couple of other questions. I think that would be quite good for everyone as a whole, between yourself Steve and Carla at the end. So, I'm not ignoring anyone's questions that are there at the moment, I will come back to them I promise. But what we'll do next, we'll go on to our next speaker, which is obviously the wonderful Kyle from the Honorable Company, who got his arm twisted into this, he didn't get much of a choice. Kyle's sort of going to talk about his experiences where he's recently come ashore and I think based on what Gordon's recently said about London being very expensive, he will certainly back that up, having moved to London recently. So, Kyle, if you just want to give us a bit of an introduction and tell us about your experiences, that'd be great.

Kyle:

Yeah. Good evening everyone. To start off, my name is Kyle and I recognize most faces on here from the last few weeks and things like that, but I'm the Education and Outreach Manager at the Honorable Company. The biggest thing I've learned from tonight, is I obviously came ashore and I didn't follow a single step you're supposed to, so I don't know whether I'm the appropriate person to be talking really. But, I'll give you my background.

Kyle:

So, I found out about the job that I'm in now on the 1st of March and by the 22nd of March, I'd made the decision. I'd interviewed, I'd got the job, I'd found somewhere to live, I moved to London, it was all very quick and very sudden. I didn't have much time to think about whether or not I was going to... what the career progression or anything was, but basically what I was offered was a position that I felt I couldn't turn down. In them kind of short 22 days or so, I learned quite a lot about the process of coming ashore in terms of A, what Gordon said, it's very expensive. I'm very fortunate that I've come into the Honorable Company, it's not like coming into most maritime companies, I haven't had the shock of coming into a big office with hundreds of people and a strict nine to five routine. The cost of living in London thing is quite exceptional so it's definitely something to consider.

Kyle:

The other thing, I think Peter touched on this earlier on, in the short period I've been ashore already, I've been amazed with the size of the industry. As a simple sailor moving to London, it's incredible the range of jobs that I've come across already in terms of when we're at sea, you think of the standard Superintendents, Vessel Managers, maybe P and I clubs, things like that, but when you really delve into and do a bit of research into what sectors there are in the maritime industry ashore, it's pretty exceptional how many opportunities there are.

Kyle:

I didn't formally have any coming ashore mentoring, simply because of the speed, but what I did do was talk to quite a few people who I knew had done the transition before me. I actually spoke to Paul Shepherd who is a mentor in the Marine Society Coming Ashore but again, because of the speed of me coming ashore, it would've taken longer for me to sign up before I'd got the job. But, just having a chat with people that have done that transition ashore and understand. Peter helped me a lot with even things like where to live in London and how much I should be expecting to pay for accommodation and travel is a huge thing, but I guess the main thing for me to advise is just reach out, ask people. We all know people who have moved ashore and also take them opportunities, and opportunity was put in front of me, I didn't think I'd be coming ashore this early, and who knows, maybe I'll end up going back to sea. I'm going to try and keep my ticket valid and that's the nice thing, I guess, about our industry is that option's always going to be there to head back to sea if that's needed.

Kyle:

Ask people questions and seek some advice on it from people that have done it before. Anyone in the chat, moving forward if you want to have a chat with me and if I can help you in any way, then most of you have my number. If you don't, it's on the Honorable Company website, so feel free to give me a ring. On that note, I think I'd rather transfer off and if anyone's got any questions, I'll answer them that way.

Peter:

Fantastic Kyle, thank you very much. Again, I know you didn't really get much choice in this evening, you were strong armed into it, so appreciated. Does anyone have any questions for Kyle? In the meantime, I want to start firing through some of the questions to the entire panel, if you don't mind, that I sort of skipped from earlier on.

Peter:

Fergus, apologies, I know you asked this a while ago. We're going to get back to your question now and that was "Other than a lack of network, are there any common difficulties or problems for seafarers transitioning ashore, for example, difficulty proving applicable and transferrable skills for the shoreside environment, and is there anything seafarers can do in advance so as to assist in this transition?" Gordon, maybe you best to start on that one.

Gordon:

Yeah, when you're coming into the shoreside space, generally speaking the people that will be your line manager will have been at sea so they'll understand the transferable skills. Some of the things that companies are always looking for or hiring managers are generally looking for when bringing people ashore is simple things like budget control, or report writing, being able to actually put things across to if it's ship management put it to the client, so all of these things are important. Generally speaking, you'll do all of that when you are at sea. Other than that... I had some notes on that there but yeah, I think that kind of covers it [crosstalk 00:37:55] more or less.

Kyle:

In terms of once you are ashore and the things that I found challenging the most is, getting used to a nine to five. Most seafarers tend not to do a nine to five and actually it there's massive upsides and massive downsides. So, it's little things like I've been in London now for a few weeks, I still haven't signed up to the doctor because I haven't found time in my day in work to phone up the doctors and

when else are you supposed to do it because they close on the weekends and close after five o'clock. Even things like visiting the bank.

Kyle:

But then, it's also getting used to filling your spare time and filling your weekends because most of the time when you're at sea, you know you're away for a few... you block a time and then you know you're going to have a block of time of, so when you're away you start planning what you're going to do when you're ashore. I found a massive change in mindset of your life in general, so I find that quite challenging to get used to. As much as there's the big issues like finances and stuff, don't underestimate all the menial stuff as well, like being at home all the time and traveling and that kind of stuff.

Gordon:

Can I ask, just while you're on, how do you feel about being at a desk? Not just a nine to five but being at a desk and then having someone essentially looking over you? Are you more conscious of that, do you feel it's a totally different mindset?

Kyle:

Yeah, I think it's a totally different thing. I'm very lucky the Honorable Company isn't quite your standard nine to five working company, we're quite a small team on board. But yeah, I guess things like getting used to time management and things. Again, on a ship it's very structured, you follow the planned maintenance system, you know it's a very structured life whereas knowing a lot of the work I do, I'm left to my own devices and I have to think and plan my own day and that change, I guess, is managerial skills in terms of rather than managing people it's also just managing your time and yourself. But it's quite nice because at least at five o'clock I get to walk away and go home, whereas I'm not stuck in work for three weeks at a time or four months at a time.

Peter:

Thank you very much Kyle. We've got a comment here from Philip Gregson, saying in his experience academic qualifications added to your Master's, Chief Engineer's Ticket, definitely add significant value. For instance, a Nautical Science or Law degree, it may mean self-financing for a few years, but the gain in the qualification in the long run is usually worth it which I think is a very valid point. That it may be an expense short term but in the long run, if that is your path that you want to follow, come ashore, paying for a few courses like that and putting in the work is definitely worth doing. It's not easy when you're at sea, I've been there where you come home on leave and the last thing you want to do is sit and study, you've got your money in the bank, you want to go out and have a good time before you're back off to sea again, but it's one of those challenges to go for.

Peter:

We've got another question regarding COVID, another big event, for the last year everyone's been aware of this. In terms of careers ashore, Gordon especially, have you seen there's more job option, is less job option, how's it panning out in terms of careers ashore at the moment with everything that's going on? And fingers crossed it hopefully easing up soon.

Gordon:

Yes, its definitely on the up and up. No point lying about it, we had a terrible year last year as everyone can understand. Nobody was moving, nobody could move. This year, say from February onwards, it felt like a new world. The confidence is coming back, I think a lot of roles that maybe weren't pack filled, so they were spread amongst the team, are now starting to... right okay, let's. We get back confidence again, we can move people. I would say to, again I'm not sure of the breakdown of people in the meeting, but I would say if you're in the UK and you've got the right to work, you've got a real opportunity now. Most of our clients are saying, "We need to hire from within the UK", so it is a big advantage in the market for anyone that's obviously UK based. But yeah, it's on the up and up for us. Loving it again, happy, come to work with a smile.

Kyle:

I think it's quite a nice transition as well because a lot of companies are doing very flexible working, a lot of companies are doing either full working at home or transitioning slowly back into the office. I guess that could be an advantage for some people but also disadvantage because a lot of people are starting into new roles but not actually going to the office and being on Zoom with their managers and things, so I guess that's the kind of thing to consider yourself. Because if you start with Gard now with P and I, I guess you'd be working from home continuously and you wouldn't have that interaction with an office team which may be a bit more challenging. But on the flip side, you're not going straight into a new job, you go from sea to nine to five, Monday to Friday, so it's quite a double edged sword, I guess.

Peter:

Yeah, that's a fair point and ironically, we've actually just had a new guy start from sea, thanks to Gordon as well. He's joined us recently and that is one of his things he's had to overcome, the fact that he's joining his new job, new career, he's not had the opportunity to meet everyone all at the same time, he's not had the opportunity to have that interaction with new colleagues which is probably a bit of a challenge. Thankfully we've met him once or twice over the last week or so, but obviously with COVID you can only meet up in very small groups, safety first is obviously the important thing.

Peter:

But yeah, admittedly, it's probably a bigger challenge than when I came ashore. I was quite lucky, I went into the office, I got to meet everyone, I got to forget everyone's names over about an hour and then start again. The standard challenges when you start a new job. It's like joining a new ship, you forget who everyone is and about two weeks later, it's a bit too rude to ask because you should know by then. So if anything, that's probably one of the biggest challenges. Thankfully at my job, everyone's got a little picture and their name on the website, so I can just Google them on our website and go "Ah, that's who they are" and then it's fine.

Peter:

Sorry, Carla, I saw you had your hand up [inaudible 00:44:57].

Carla:

Yeah, thank you. I just wanted to also raise there's kind of a industry-wide initiative to promote and recruit more teachers, teaching maritime to encourage more of the younger generation into the maritime industry. So if anyone has got a calling or a desire for teaching, that's another route that you can go into, teaching a maritime subject or qualification. That's something else to consider.

Peter:

Fantastic point. I suspect it's not something a lot of people would instantly think of when looking to what they can do ashore. I know I would never have thought of it, I'd probably have been a really terrible teacher so it's a good thing I never thought of it but some of us may be much more adept to teaching so it's a fantastic career path if you want to go down that route.

Carla:

There are more jobs available now at kind of school age level and also lecturing in college as well. So, it's the younger right through to adults in maritime qualifications all the way through. So, it's definitely one to consider if that's the kind of thing that you like as well.

Peter:

Fantastic. So, I got the next question. It's from Danielle and I think Steve, given your volunteering work through the Marine Society as one of the mentors, it's maybe a great question for you. Are there any volunteering projects or side job roles that can be done on leave that would help boost people? What sort of things would you suggest if people are going to volunteer to come ashore?

Steve:

Thanks Peter. I think the opportunity to volunteer or to get some work placement experience is really important, so a lot of what we're talking about today is planning for coming ashore, I don't mean in a year's time, we're talking about maybe two to three years' time because there's a lot of things that you can do in that intervening period. We talked about joining professional organizations and certainly organizations like the Honorable Company and the Nautical Institute that have regional meetings, are really good places to join because if they're in a region where you happen to live, they'll be in contact with the local maritime community and there'll be people that will be able to introduce you to other members of that local community, where you might be able to get a job or get a work placement.

Steve:

The process of getting a work placement is great because A, it looks good on your CV, B, it teaches you new skills, C, it helps you start to understand where you might be suited, "I didn't like doing that, God I'm not going to be an Accountant, that's for sure", don't know why I said that. But at the same time, it's also building your network as well, so this whole process of work placement and building networks can be done in this way. I think it's absolutely important.

Steve:

Could I just say a couple of things that we haven't talked about, [crosstalk 00:48:32] which is what other strengths that seafarers bring ashore with them? We've talked about the problems of transferability. That is that we take it all for granted because at sea we're surrounded by the same people with the same skills, so we tend to underestimate the skills that we've got as a consequence of that. So, seafarers are very good at what you could call inter-cultural relationships. We don't realize it but every time the ship arrives in a different port and the gangway goes down and all these strange people come pounding onboard, you have to work with them, doesn't matter what religions they're from, which part of the social structure they're from, or what their background is, you have to work with them to turn the ship round. And that is a great skill because you accept people at face value and the whole ethos is about

getting the job done. So that ability to build relationships and manage people across different cultures is a very strong factor as is the can do attitude.

Steve:

When something goes wrong, you'll notice sometimes in an office, there'll be a disaster and people will be running around wringing their hands going "What are we going to do?" And the seafarers will be saying, "Okay, what's the problem? What damage has it done? How are we going to put it right?" So those sorts of skills under difficult circumstances are really good and being able to express them on your CV, I'm sure Gordon would agree, is really important too.

Peter:

Fantastic Steve, it's a very valid point, especially about seafarers in a crisis in the office. Something, after a couple of years in the office, I have noticed a couple of times is if something goes wrong there's certainly two different reactions. You've got the people that have not been to sea that are sort of running around, trying to figure it out, and then the seafarer is sitting there going "Well, make do with what we've got I guess. It is what it is". So something I've definitely witnessed first hand and if any of my colleagues are on, obviously, I'm not talking about you guys, you're all brilliant.

Peter:

Another question, again I think probably everyone from the panel could answer actually, the big topic which always comes up when people talk about coming ashore is the loss of leave or the perceived loss of leave because obviously you're not going to be getting two, three months off at a time. If only, that would be lovely. How do you find it, I think Kyle for yourself, how have you found it? Gordon, from your angle, what sort of things should people expect? Coming ashore, I think, people always think there's going to be no time off but from my point of view you get weekends which make up for a loss of that leave when you're at sea you don't get weekends, it makes a big difference. If you guys want to just elaborate a little bit. Maybe Kyle, given your recent transition, how are you finding it, having just standard holidays and you have to book them in advance?

Kyle:

Yeah, I think the biggest part of losing holidays is more my family and that turning around and going "What are you doing?", because their reaction was... I was taking a job for a little bit more money but losing six months of the year. But I think the big thing, and this is kind of more personal for me and the reason I chose, it's that I find it a lot easier to fit in with everyone else now. It's always hard when you're at sea, when you come ashore all your friends and all your family are still working nine to five, they're still in their office Monday to Friday, so I found that even down to going to the pub, well it hasn't been as much nowadays starting to get there slowly, but popping to a beer garden when you finish work in the evening with a few friends and knowing that if something happens, I'm two hours away from home.

Kyle:

For example, my nephew is turning four next month and next month will be the first time I'm home for his birthday, I'm popping home back to Wales to see him for the weekend. I've gone from six months of leave a year to 28 days or whatever but like Peter said, when you count up all them weekends and things. Again, it depends on what you're looking for and that's going to be a massive consideration when you do move ashore, there is a massive consideration but for me personally at this time, it actually works a lot better because you're in tune with all the rest of your friends and family.

Peter:

Yeah, I think that's a fantastic point and with the weekends, when you were talking I did sort of remember one major thing each year that happens is obviously Christmas. And I think from my own point of view, I spent about nine Christmases on a row, I was away at sea, and then finally I come ashore, I managed to enjoy a Christmas which was a bit of a weird experience. I was so used to Christmas on a ship, I didn't quite know what to do with myself the first Christmas I was at home, so it's definitely things like that. Major life events, you suddenly find you can attend which can make a big difference to you.

Peter:

Steven, sorry, I noticed your hand's up Steve?

Steve:

Yes, thanks Peter. The thing about being at sea after four months and getting two months leave, is that you've got to cram six months' worth of socializing into two months, right. Now, I was pretty successful at that and much to the upset of my bank manager, which was probably the reason why I used to have to go back to sea and most seafarers are. So when you come ashore, it's not just the weekends, you've got evenings to socialize with people as well and you've got actually time to build relationships with people and nourish them and help them develop. With the way things work ashore, you've already got a third of the year in terms of weekends and holidays, so it's not that bad. You've got time to relax and go out with people during the week as well.

Steve:

And with a lot of companies you get the added bonus of travel, so you find yourself traveling to conferences in different parts of the world, looking at new operations in different parts of the world, visiting ships. So, there are lots of bonuses and as Peter said, being able to invite people to your own birthday other than people on the ship you don't necessarily like that much. I have to say, when I had my 21st birthday on a tanker, they did make me a key to the main engine which was about this big.

Kyle:

I think one thing which has been dodged all the way through, there hasn't really been mention, is timing. I think everyone is going to find the right time, if you make that decision to come ashore, which everyone does it eventually maybe. Even if it means you go all the way through your career and when you make that decision to retire, everyone's time is different. Like I said, I wasn't expecting to come ashore so early but then when the opportunity arose and actually a few things aligned and actually it was a good decision to come ashore and take that leap and see what happens. But some people are going to want to spend a few more years at sea and have a few more opportunities to have them two or three months off to be able to go and travel and then go and things like that.

Kyle:

So I think a big thing is just making sure that when you make that leap ashore, that you're choosing the right time and actually it's the right time for you to do that, in terms of career progression but also in terms of just your personal life and whether it's the right time for you to do that.

Peter:

Thank you very much Kyle. I think that's a very valid point, the timing is key for everyone there so I think when I'd come ashore with Gordon's help a few years ago, I'd set foot off my last ship not realizing it was my last ship and then things moved quite quickly and thank God. I'm quite happy now doing the job I do. No intentions of going back but who knows in the future. But it definitely worked out for me, timing wise. I think timing's definitely key there.

Peter:

Actually an interesting question from Duncan now, following on from what we were just talking about in terms of balancing your life and leave, etc. Duncan's asked, how'd you feel about your work life balance ashore, is it better or worse or the same? Employees at the company I'm with are on a month on month off rotation and going from that to five days on, two off, is quite a big change. Kyle, I guess you're probably best placed to comment on that one. How have you found it?

Kyle:

My last job before coming ashore was on breakers and I was doing three weeks on, three weeks off and I actually found three weeks on three weeks off rather hectic because by the time you get off and finally sort your head out and relax, all of a sudden it's time to go back on again. I never had that feeling of having enough time off when I was doing that. I think in terms of answering Duncan's questions is that it's easier to manage your work life balance ashore, I find, because you can choose when you take your leave. It's also going to depend what job you're in, some jobs are going to be quite flexible, you may be able to adjust your hours, you may be on a flexitime contract, which you choose what hours you work in the office. You might want to work a few more hours at the start of the week, so you have a bit of an early finish on Friday or anything like that.

Kyle:

I think my answer to that would be it's easier to manage your work life balance but a lot of that is going to depend on what type of job you get and what type of company you're in. For me, even in the Honorable Company, there are months that we are very busy and months that we're very quiet but one thing that I know that's not really going to happen is I'm not going to get a call to disappear abroad somewhere because an incident's happened on the other side of the world, so it's all going to depend on what type of job you get. And my personal view on that is, in my circumstances, I find it a lot easier to manage my work life balance than when I was at sea.

Peter:

Thank you very much. Again, I'll chime in as well, having done that whole coming ashore. I was on three months on, three off and going onto the five days in and having a weekend off, I thought was going to be a real struggle but admittedly, I think within two weeks, I was more than happy. It's a personal thing, but for me you knew you'd be off every weekend, happy days, that was it. You didn't have to wait so long. And then as Steve referred to earlier, when you're on leave, you're trying to cram everything into a very short period and that can lead to a lot of money spent and quite a few hangovers as well from personal experience, so at least for me just working at a five day week, you're much more relaxed. You can spread out your events, you don't have to meet everyone all in the same week before you go back, you can catch up with your friends whenever you want and things are a lot more relaxed on that side of things. But fantastic question, thanks very much.

Peter:



Got a comment here from Phillip Gregson, thank you very much. Word of warning, there are many shore jobs in shipping where you'll be expected to work long hours or weekends and travel at a moment's notice. My wife had a stunt double to take my place at various social events, having said that, the uncertainty is what makes working in shipping so satisfying. I think that is a very fair point. There's a lot of comments I could make there, Phillip, I'll try and not say too much on that one but yes, again, certain roles we take ashore can lead to some long hours and it all depends on what you want. I think Gordon was saying earlier, if you figure out what path you want to follow and whether you want those long hours, you want that middle of the night phone call "Can you jet off to this ship that's run aground in the middle of nowhere for two months?", and you grab your bag and off you go, that kind of work is there.

Peter:

On the contrary, if you want to go to work and come home every day, that job is also available. There's varying jobs. I think from a seafarer's point of view, there's so much variety out there, I wouldn't be too put off by any one concern because if you have a concern about a certain aspect, there's a different job where you don't need to worry about that. There's plenty of options. And I just want to add on from everyone talking, which has been absolutely great. Thankful to you all for joining us.

Peter:

When you do come ashore, you don't tend to really know too many people and I think straight away I found people, especially Steve you were fantastic for me when I'd come ashore, introduced me to a lot of people, again it led to a lot of hangovers, but you did introduce me to a lot of people. And it's very quickly evident, there's a big support network within the maritime industry ashore. Tonight we've got the Marine Society, the Honorable Company, and the Young Officers Committee, but there are a lot of organizations I could list them for ages. You can go on Google, just type in "Maritime London" and you'll get a whole heap of various organizations that will all sort of help you with various aspects of coming ashore, working ashore, even if you're staying at sea. There's a lot there that can be said for reaching out and asking questions.

Peter:

So again, it's something I would recommend to everyone, if you're interested don't be afraid to reach out to someone and ask a question. Everyone I've ever reached out to has been more than helpful and willing to answer the question. I think us seafarers are quite happy when someone wants to talk to us as well, which is always quite nice, being stuck on sea for a long time, it's nice to have a social life as well. But I think other than that, if anyone's got any other questions or any comments, feel free. Hands up there, we've got Evgeny, I think I see your hand up there. Go ahead.

Evgeny:

Good evening everyone, my name is Evgeny and I know it's a tricky one, sorry about that [crosstalk 01:03:23]. I am a British resident, I am myself working as a Second Mate and I have been promoted to Chief Officer position. I'm just trying to find out how selective do I have to be about various job references because every ship is different, sometimes a Deck Cadet on one ship gives out duties that Captains on many other ships don't do and many job descriptions require a certain specific thing about let's say "You have to be a Chief Officer for about one year before applying to our position". But, is it really a fair thing to consider or what to put to your CV? You'll actually like Carla, the requirement of certain job applications. What I'm trying to say that sometimes I have a specific level of competence of a

Chief Officer but I have never served as Chief Officer, will it be all right for me to apply for something that requires me to serve as a Chief Officer? If [inaudible 01:04:20] necessarily great experience?

Evgeny:

Also at the same time, some jobs require you to [inaudible 01:04:29] Maritime Law majors, Admiral's Law, but as a part of my problem, I had Maritime Law for two semesters two years ago in my university. [inaudible 01:04:41] Maritime Law university or is it all right that I studied in the past? I have a strong interest in commercial aspect of shipping industry, so I'm interested in ship brokerage, ship proprietor's positions but what would the right person to assess my skills like for me personally to [inaudible 01:05:06] those roles for me will be applicable or would I need to get some more junior position in order to move there? I guess this is a question [inaudible 01:05:17] here. I'm going to mute myself now.

Peter:

Fantastic. Very well. Gordon, I think this definitely sounds like it's in your ball park there.

Carla:

Can I just quickly add on before anyone else? I'm not going to answer but the points that he raised are very common. I'm really glad that he asked those questions because from the mentees that we bring onto our program, many of them say that they're literally just got their Ticket and then they want to come ashore, so they won't have built up any sea time with the Chief Officer or Master Mariner Ticket. As soon as they've got it, they want to come ashore, so the questions that Evgeny has raised about "Should I come ashore as soon as I've got it or do I need to add on sea time?", that's really helpful. And the other points he's raised is really helpful, so I'd like to hear as well.

Peter:

Fantastic. Thank you very much. Gordon, your time is now.

Gordon:

Yeah. I would say, again, the same with a lot of the questions you've asked me, it's going to be dependent on each company, each job posting. But, again, this is where your network can be really helpful for you. If it's a recruiter, then try and build relationships with other recruiters, try and build relationship with the HR department, or again, the Line Managers in the companies that you're looking at. You can ask the question. There's one thing I would say, if you apply for 10 jobs and you don't hear anything back, for example, you've got your Chief Mate's Ticket and you apply for 10 jobs, they're asking for Chief Mate's Ticket, you might be coming up against 20 people that have got experience at sea as a Chief Mate, but you're never going to know. So if you keep applying, it's going to affect your whole psychology of it. It's going to get to you and you start to question yourself.

Gordon:

You've mentioned obviously you were thinking about doing the commercial side, looking at ship broking, there's so many options that you can have, there's so many companies that would look at someone with your experience and be happy to take you on, it might just mean that it's not a case of an open job. So, one way that we operate as a business, is we don't necessarily look for the open roles, we're trying to talk to people and try and work out what exactly they might be interested in. And then if we've got a relationship, we can see well Evgeny could potentially do that so you're already ahead of the game.

Gordon:

I'll put into the chats ICS, it's the Institute of Chartered Ship Brokers, get online, have a look. Look at the qualifications and see what might work for you. But again, when you leave and you get an opportunity, really go for it. If you can get experience, as Steven said earlier on as a Chief Officer, then go for it, even if it's relief, then just ask your personnel department and see what's ahead, see what you can get.

Peter:

Fantastic. Thank you very much there Gordon. Hopefully that answers your question there Evgeny. Is there anyone else got any other questions? I see a few faces there, any more further questions? Oh, fantastic. I think we've taken up more than enough of everyone's time this evening. So, I want to thank you all again for attending. Again, thank you very much to Steve, to Gordon and to Kyle for volunteering to stand up and talk in front of you all, or sit down and talk in front of you all today. Joys of Zoom. Apologies again for the technical glitches at the beginning, you'd have thought after using for 18 months during lockdown, we'd have the hang of it by now but turns out none of us have got the hang of it as yet. But thankfully, we'll all be back doing these events in person on the Wellington in the near future, not long to go on that now.

Peter:

Again, I want to thank Carla and Steve for the Marine Society for also joining us with this one, I think it's an important topic and I think the Marine Society do a lot of good work, so definitely reach out to them if it's something you're looking at, definitely reach out to their Coming Ashore Program. And again, follow Gordon on LinkedIn, his posts are fantastic, even if you're not looking for a job, so definitely get in touch with Gordon, it's well worth doing as I can attest to after being ashore for three years, it's best email I've ever sent to be quite honest.

Peter:

So thank you very much to everyone. We will be getting the recording on this online, as long as there's no more technical bugs, which the way things have gone this evening, we don't know how many more of those there'll be. And again, thank you very much everyone. If you're not already a member of the Honorable Company, you want to sign up via the Honorable Company website, please feel free to go and check it out. If you've not already looked at the Marine Society, please feel free to go and check out the Marine Society as well.

Peter:

Thank you again and have a good evening everyone.