



Fifty years of The Nautical Institute

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**The first President of
The Nautical Institute,
Captain Sir George
Barnard FNI**





Introduction

Julian Parker OBE FNI FRSA, Secretary 1972-2003

The makings of our professional institute

It gives me great joy to see the Institute flourishing so well, with consultative status at the IMO, its own professional and integrative projects and over 50 branches worldwide, each with their programmes focused on new developments, innovative training techniques, research and cooperative activities.

But I have to say it was not always quite like that, and in this introduction I want to recognise how exceptional individuals have provided inspiring leadership, sometimes under very difficult circumstances, to lay the groundwork to enable us to get where we are today. Our early conferences and almost all the publishing was to demonstrate the art of the possible without challenging face to face the tried and tested beliefs of established interests.

From a personal point of view I was introduced to the concept of a professional institute during my time in Liverpool studying for my Master's certificate. At that time a new degree was being developed in ship technology which covered naval architecture, marine engineering, electric and electronic control systems. Shortly after graduating I was employed by my old company, Blue Funnel, as its administrative staff training officer. After six months of further

courses in management development and industrial training I was appointed training manager to the newly rebranded Ocean group of companies. Some two years later and after much soul searching I applied for the post of assistant secretary to the newly formed Nautical Institute in 1972, an embryo organisation which I felt instinctively was long overdue.

What really surprised me at that time was the widening gap between CoCs and the rate of change in technological innovation in shipping in terms of size, specialisation, propulsion, control and electronic systems. The wartime T2 tanker carried 16,000 tonnes of oil, yet by 1972 vessels had evolved to the extent that a VLCC could carry 250,000 tonnes. A similar trajectory has been followed by container, passenger and cruise ships.

Does this really matter professionally? Yes it does because, as will be seen later, in the event of an accident the risks can carry much more severe and wider consequences for bigger than for smaller vessels. In a different way, specialisation demands new sets of dedicated skills for the operation of chemical and gas carriers, ro-ros and car carriers, diving support vessels and drilling ships. The list

goes on. In terms of electronics, radar evolved to ARPA, charts to ECDIS, then integrated systems linked to satnav, all developed by a plethora of manufacturers, leading to the urgent requirement for standardisation in displays for bridge teams.

A cautionary tale to emphasise why it can be dangerous to take innovative systems for granted. In 1969 the *Manchester Courage*, a new class of ship fitted with variable-pitch propellers, was on its maiden voyage. Approaching a lock in the Manchester Ship Canal, it suffered a failure in the CPP control system. Unknown to both the pilot and crew the default position was *full ahead* and the ship rammed the lock gates, causing massive disruption.

The Institute was conceived by forward-looking senior staff in nautical colleges who in 1961 saw the threat in nautical qualifications being downgraded. The chief inspector of nautical qualifications, Mr Jim Edgar, was emphatic when he wrote in an open letter to all colleges that nautical qualifications had to change, otherwise capital funding from central government through local authorities would not be forthcoming. "Nautical education has to reflect the educational needs of seafarers through nationally recognised qualifications and not just the narrow requirements to pass Department of Transport examinations."

The Marine Society, the UK's oldest maritime charity, responded to this challenge by proposing the formation of a nautical professional institute which could best facilitate such a social transformation. Much of the preparatory work was led by Captain Wickham (Ticky) Malins, then the Secretary of the Marine Society. He was a retired naval officer of the seaman specialisation, and a highly decorated destroyer wartime commander. I was appointed Assistant Secretary under his attentive tutelage in 1972 and in 1974 I became Secretary of the newly formed Nautical Institute.

During this formative period, we prepared a comprehensive memorandum of understanding concerning the formation of a new professional body. We set about a publicity campaign to invite support from all parts of the maritime industry including as many seafarers as we could contact with the help of shipping companies.

Shortly after mailing to as many outlets as possible at considerable expense, we received

anonymously a copy of a formal circular issued by the General Council of British Shipping. This recommended that on no account should companies respond, and that all their seafarers should not be advised to become involved. We subsequently learned that similar advice had been passed on to the Department of Transport and the Shipmasters Association. Clearly this was intended as a lethal intervention at a very sensitive time.

Under such hostile public pressure only a very brave person would undertake to lead the fledgling organisation publicly forward as President. Captain Sir George Barnard, former Deputy Master of Trinity House, graciously accepted the task. His obituary published by the UK's *Independent* newspaper in 1995 stated that Sir George had the "foresight" to see the limitations and insularity of the shipping industry and acted against considerable opposition to lead the profession forward.

Our second President, Vice-Admiral Sir John Martin, was able to reassure shipowners that their fears (whatever they were) were unfounded and since then relationships have been fine. But it really was difficult early on.

Shipping is international and already storm clouds were gathering in the Middle East as the Institute started operations. The Yom Kippur War in 1973 plunged the world economy into crisis, the effect of which was to raise the price of oil 400% from \$3 a barrel to \$12 globally. In 1979 there was a second oil price shock following the Iranian revolution, when there was an embargo placed on Iranian oil exports. This caused a 4% reduction in supply, effectively further doubling the oil price now to \$40 a barrel.

The upheavals that followed changed the shipping operational environment for ever, with the introduction of open registries, ship management companies, global crewing through agents, slow steaming, lay-ups, scrapping, bankruptcies and so much more. All this was reflected in a scandalous lack of essential maintenance, particularly in the bulk carrier sector. For example, in 1981 a large bulk carrier was lost every two weeks, with the loss of 154 seamen over the course of the year. During the following seven years 100 ships foundered with the loss of 650 lives. Something had to be done. Step forward The Nautical Institute.



Introduction

Philip Wake OBE FNI, Chief Executive 2003-2017

Evolution or revolution? The Nautical Institute 2003–2017

When you are asked at an NI Council meeting whether there has been enough major change already it is worth reflecting whether it is change for change's sake or part of a considered process. The answer given to this question was that it was part of a considered process. Any organisation that does not evolve with the times is destined to die and this was certainly a risk in this period of fast-paced change within the maritime industry. Added to this industry context was the retirement of Julian Parker after guiding the Institute for 30 years as Secretary. Then there was the retirement of other long-standing members of staff, so change was inevitable and carefully considered.

While the Institute is first and foremost a professional membership organisation and charity, it is also a business that needs secure finances to sustain its work. Some of this work was, and is, a direct service to the industry and yet was being heavily subsidised by membership subscriptions. There was clearly scope to increase the fees within the Dynamic Positioning Operator (DPO) Scheme

and it was fortunate that this was done before the massive increase in demand for DPOs. The difficulty the industry faced in recruiting and training DPOs quickly enough was replicated in the Institute. That department expanded to cope with the demand and waiting times for certificates increased, new providers appeared, and the need for a thorough review of the Scheme became apparent. All this was achieved by a young, expanding team ably lead by Regina Bindao in a very challenging role.

Change was also prevalent in the Publications Department, with Julian handing over to Bridget Hogan. Claire Walsh retired after 15 years as editor of *Seaways*, with Lucy Budd taking on that title. Other project periodicals were developed by David Patraiko's Projects Department, which led to the Human Element *Alert!* and *The Navigator* publications. Again, this expansion of work could not be funded entirely from membership subscriptions so relationships were developed with companies and maritime charities. The resulting donations and sponsorship in support of these projects has enabled work of great benefit

to the industry and particularly its new generation of seafarers.

Similarly, the rapid changes in the means of navigation were challenging to at least some older seafarers. The Institute continued to take the lead in providing guidance on electronic navigation methods while trying to ensure that the traditional methods were not lost. The eNavigation project developed by the IMO and IALA was a key part of this work at the Institute, with David developing his diplomatic skills as Chairman of the IALA eNav Operations Working Group. The funding grants received for these projects from the Lloyd's Register Foundation, Teekay Foundation, Trinity House and IFAN as well as sponsorship from many companies for associated seminars was, and is, greatly appreciated.

This development of work and resources put the Institute in a position to apply for NGO status at the IMO with, it has to be acknowledged, much

committee structure was the answer and continues to serve the Institute well.

Throughout this period, the internationalisation of the Institute's membership, governance and branch network continued to evolve but at an increased pace. The credit for much of this expansion is due to the members themselves for volunteering their time and energy in recruiting, running the branches and serving within the Institute's governance structure.

Professional mariners are the heart and soul of the Institute, which has become more inclusive and diverse over the decades from its UK-centric beginnings. Finding and encouraging the right people to rise through the organisation, be they members or staff, is a key role for the leadership team. Succession planning has continued to produce forward-thinking trustees, presidents and leaders for the committees at HQ and in the branches as well as an expanded, hard-working and capable staff.

Over time, there have been many memorable AGMs and Command Seminars hosted by the branches around the world with excellent organisation and warm hospitality. Local and international sponsorship has helped ensure these major events were not a drain on the Institute's resources while the outcomes of seminars were important input for the Institute's project work and representation to the IMO.

At the centre of the Institute's work is the seafarer, whether a member or not, and the professional standards required to provide the world with a safe and efficient shipping service. While the technology in use or being developed changes over the years, this focus on the people doing the work has remained unchanged. Increasingly it was, and is, necessary to speak out on wellbeing issues affecting seafarers as there is a direct link between these human issues and safety of navigation and other operations.

None of this is rocket science or revolutionary, just common sense and evolutionary, but any study of the Institute's work over the past 50 years (and indeed the IMO's) will show that the same issues are constantly having to be addressed so perhaps a revolution in accepting change within the industry is actually required?

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The credit for much of this expansion is due to the members themselves

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encouragement from the then Secretary-General. The resulting election in July 2009 was certainly fast-tracked, but an IMO Committee was quickly added to the Institute's governance structure. Volunteers from the membership brought their specialist knowledge to IMO meetings and working groups, including on GMDSS, eNavigation, Ice Navigation and Dynamic Positioning.

This was not the only change to the Institute's governance in this period as it was recognised that the Council was too large and unwieldy a body of management to provide swift decision-making and leadership required in a fast-paced business environment. It was also necessary to ensure that the Institute's trustees had full legal responsibility for the charity. The establishment of the Executive Board of Trustees in 2012 elected by a slightly smaller Council and other changes to the



Introduction

Captain John Lloyd RD MBA FNI, Chief Executive 2017-present

A stepping stone to the future

Celebrating 50 years as a professional organisation dedicated to the furthering of knowledge in nautical science is a hugely important milestone in our history.

That we have achieved so much and that we continue to make an important contribution across the sector is testament to the application and commitment of so many people who have contributed extensively through the years.

Many are mentioned in this book, many more contributed quietly and behind the scenes. Like our industry, their work may be unseen by many but it is critical to the effective delivery of our objectives. Thank you.

While 50 years is hugely significant and important, it is also just a stepping stone into the future. It is essential we engage fully with the maritime discussions of the future. Nautical science will undoubtedly broaden its horizons as we embrace technical change and opportunity.

The technical changes will inevitably and rightly be inextricably linked with developments affecting wider environmental and social considerations.

Never in our history has our understanding of the impact of climate change been greater. We

know we have a responsibility to operate more sustainably. We already know we are faced with a requirement to deliver carbon-neutral solutions in the coming decades. That means designing the ships, their control systems and their fuel systems now.

What this means for the people, their training and their skills is not fully understood. The Nautical Institute has an important role to play in leading and contributing to these discussions. Similarly, communication systems, autonomous capabilities, satellite coverage and issues surrounding this ship and port interface are all subject to massive change.

Most of our members have grown up with the traditional way of keeping a lookout. Increasingly, technology has made us better equipped to keep a lookout by "other means". But we have not always used that technology wisely or effectively.

The next generational changes will, possibly, be even more significant.

It would be astonishing if we did not realise that these changes were on the way. Our role will be, as the leading professional body for the sector, to influence these developments and ensure they are fit for purpose.

We cannot rely solely on the system capabilities developed by the technologists. We must help them to understand the maritime environment and help them to understand what safety and efficiency means in the context of watchkeeping at sea. We must take the lead in the development of qualifications suited for this new era and to continue to work with stakeholders all around the world to ensure the right standards are in place.

None of this will be easy.

We are though, well-placed to contribute effectively to the next part of this professional voyage. We have an exciting Strategic Plan that focuses on increasing our membership and thus our influence. Our branch network will be a key enabler in engaging effectively on a global basis.

Our publications will become increasingly versatile in delivery while retaining their market-leading content. We know that how information is absorbed and exchanged continues to evolve and we accept the challenge to maintain our strong position in the sector.

Through our qualifications, we have already shown a global lead in dynamic positioning and other disciplines. We will continue to seek ways

in which we can provide agile and meaningful solutions that ensure seafarers are properly and effectively prepared for their duties.

Our technical engagement through our committees and links to other organisations will remain central to how we conduct our business. It is vital we maintain our relevance and the confidence of the sector. Only by doing this can we ensure we will have the necessary impact on the outcomes required.

Every aspect affecting our members at sea is mirrored in responsibilities on shore. Whether these are the responsibilities of those working in ship management, port operations, supply chain logistics or other aspects of our maritime community we have an important professional contribution to make in the years to come.

I look forward to starting the second half of our century with you. I thank each person engaged with The Nautical Institute and who is working tirelessly to support our development, influence and most importantly impact.

Making a difference is what counts and what is important.

Very best wishes

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