

The following is an extract from the Report of the Directors for the financial year ending 31 March 2009.

Background

The Society promotes and supports the interests of all UK companies that do business in the maritime industries. The strategic plan articulates the Society's aims and objectives in meeting the members' requirements.

The Board recognises that in perceiving the value of their membership, member companies must sense that they belong to a vibrant and expanding trade association. The Society has capitalised on the synergies of a strong union of individual associations that make up the organisation yet preserved the strength that comes from the diversity of these separate associations; they represent a wide spectrum of the maritime industries and provide the focus for the specific interests of the overall membership of the Society.

These interests are reflected through our five constituent associations, namely, the Association of British Offshore Industries (ABOI), the Association of Marine Scientific Industries (AMSI), the British Marine Equipment Association (BMEA), the British Naval Equipment Association (BNEA) and the Ports and Terminals Group (PTG).

During the year the Society relocated its headquarters to the City of London.

Achievements:

All our activities are designed to assist member companies achieve growth in a competitive international market place. This is achieved through directly promoting companies, providing a range of export services, being a source of information and advice, assisting with access to government and funding from government schemes and creating the opportunity for important networking.

Our full programme of exhibitions and seminars further our members' interests and we successfully sponsored UK national pavilions or maintained a presence at most of the major maritime trade events in the world calendar. On the exhibition front we have been present at 11 trade shows, namely Petrotech (Bahrain), Posidonia 2008 (Greece), Seawork 2008 (UK), Geo India, SMM 2008 (Germany), Euronaval 2008 (France), Marine Tech (South Korea), Exponaval 2008 (Chile), Seatrade Middle East Maritime (UAE), Infrastructure Libya and Maritime Vietnam.

Outward trade missions were undertaken to South Korea, Gujarat (India), Vietnam and India, the latter contracted to do so by UK Trade & Investment. Inward missions from China, Estonia, France and India were also hosted.

Our programme of seminars and conferences are designed to inform our members and the industry at large on latest developments and market opportunities. Although too numerous to mention them all, networking events have been held on 'Classification of Naval Ships', 'Naval Programmes in the New World', Lloyd's Register Type Approval' and 'Operational Oceanography in the Oil & Gas Sector' which attracted members from across the whole of the Society's membership.

In February the Society's annual conference took place in Edinburgh with the lead sponsorship of Scottish Enterprise on the subject of *Sustaining the UK Maritime Industries at Home and Abroad*. We were grateful to member companies Babcock Marine and Rolls-Royce for hosting the industrial visits both of which were well subscribed. The highlight of the conference was the reception and dinner on board Royal Yacht Britannia moored at Leith Docks. The annual Defence Attachés luncheon was held once again on HMS Wellington and the ever popular members' annual dinner was held at the House of Commons. This year the members' Christmas lunch moved to a new location at the Little Ship Club overlooking the River Thames where the guest of honour was Mr Vincent Cable MP, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer for the Liberal Democrats and an Honorary Vice President of the Society. The occasion of the gala dinner at Ocean Business 2009 provided the backdrop to the presentation of the second AMSI Business Person of the Year award to Mr John Partridge, founder and Chairman of Sonardyne International Ltd. The award is funded by the Donald Maxwell Award Fund.

We have maintained close contact with Government during the period in particular working with the Marine Industries Leadership Council (MILC) within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (previously BERR). The Society, through its Chief Executive, chairs the MILC Innovation and Technology Group which, in tandem with the policy decision of the Society's Board, is working on the development of a marine innovation strategy. The Society also takes a leading role in the Marine Sector Advisory Group and Ports Advisory Group of UK Trade & Investment and is an associate of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee. In other areas, the Society, through its association BNEA, as one of the four trade associations which represent the defence industry on the Defence Industries Council, is represented in the Naval Defence Industries Council, chaired by the Minister of State for Defence.

In addition to our political contacts the Board and executive staff have regular contact with officials from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), recently renamed Department for Business Innovation and Skills following its merger with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, Ministry of Defence, UK Trade & Investment, Department for Transport, Foreign & Commonwealth Office and Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. We also maintain contact with a number of regional development agencies and the Society's Chief Executive is a board member of Marine South East.

The Society is a member of two European associations, the European Marine Equipment Council (EMEC) and the Naval Defence Industries Group of ASD (NDIG). The Society has continued to be active in assisting with the R&D group of EMEC called EMECRID to feed into the sector technology platform, Waterborne. EMEC has also been active in lobbying on recent regulatory changes involving the mutual recognition of certificates for marine equipment (known as Article 10) and the review of the Marine Equipment Directive and is also seeking closer liaison with the International Maritime Organisation. In March the Society hosted the General Assembly of EMEC in London, which included a dinner in the Ward Room of HMS Belfast kindly sponsored by BMT Group and Rolls-Royce.

The Councils of each of our constituent associations have met on a regular basis and formulated the strategy for the business areas covering their interest. This direct input by industry is important in ensuring the Society can portray accurately the views of the membership and we acknowledge the commitment of those members willing to give their time by serving on our Councils and committees.

The stature of our web portal www.maritimeindustries.org continues to grow and receives a substantial number of visits per month, the majority of which are to our 'Product Search' pages, a data base of nearly 1,000 UK companies and 2,000 product categories. This

success continues to bring regular requests for the Society and its constituent associations to support a number of external conferences and where we feel this enhances our status within the maritime community we have done so.

Finally, the Society continues to maintain an office in Shanghai China staffed by our resident China manager, Mr Chen Li Ming who continues to assist maritime companies in the Chinese market and provide market intelligence on the business opportunities in this important market.

The Future:

The current global economic recession has not yet had a major impact on the members of the Society of Maritime Industries although informed opinion suggests that 2010 will see the effects of the trade downturn feed through to new shipbuilding and associated activities. Fortunately a combination of the work involved with the building of the new Queen Elizabeth class of aircraft carriers at home and an increasing proportion of our members being involved with maintenance and support across the world will help to mitigate the worst of the trading outlook. Similarly companies engaging with the important work of monitoring the oceans and its relevance to climate change studies will to some effect be shielded from any general reduction in investment over the coming two to three years.

There is continued interest by a range of companies to become members of the Society and the new financial year has already seen a healthy increase in new members. Applications to attend events organised by the Society are also being maintained at almost normal levels as companies see the need to ensure a presence in their major markets.

Therefore, the requirement for a trade association to meet the needs of businesses engaged with the maritime industries has never been more relevant than in the current climate and the Board remain confident that the Society is delivering the types of services its members and wider industry require. The Society continues to be recognised by government ministers in those areas in which members have interest and will continue to work to strengthen our political influence, particularly as a general election is less than one year away, as well as delivering the mission statement of “promoting and supporting the interests of all UK companies that do business in the maritime industries”.

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