

The Royal Institution of Naval Architects

The President's address to the 2017 AGM

My predecessors as President have all spoken on this occasion of the sense of honour they felt at becoming the President of this fine Institution with its rich history, and of being even a small part of that history. I very much share that sense of honour as the 33rd President of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects, and should like to thank you for entrusting me with the responsibility.

And as President, it is a great pleasure to welcome you to the Institution's Headquarters, and present my first report as the President of the Institution and Chairman of its Board of Trustees. As is customary, my report will reflect on the Institution's achievements over the past year, and will look forward to what changes and activities members can expect over the next twelve months and beyond.

Membership was again up over the previous year, and is again standing at its highest in the Institution's history. The growth continues to come mainly from countries other than the UK, demonstrating that the Institution does indeed reflect the international maritime industry. Seen in the context of the challenges which the maritime industry and therefore members in that industry continue to face, this increase is all the more commendable. Once again, the increase in the number of Associate Members and Student Members – those at the start of their careers – was particularly pleasing, reflecting as it does the continuing priority which the Council and Board give to encouraging the younger members of the profession to be involved with the Institution.

However, the Institution cannot be complacent over these increases in membership. It cannot take it for granted that those individuals who are today involved in the design, construction or maintenance of marine vessels and structures will become members of the Institution. The Institution must constantly show the value of membership and show that it does indeed demonstrate an international recognition of the achievement of, or intention to achieve, the highest standards of professional competence - and that membership will be of benefit to a member's career at all its stages. Increasingly, the Institution must also demonstrate to employers the value of their engineers' membership to their company. Demonstrating this value is, I believe, something which all members can contribute.

As I referred to earlier, over the past year the Institution has continued to encourage the involvement of the younger members of the profession in its activities. This is achieved through student membership at universities world-wide and through the prizes and awards which recognise the achievements of the students. Many of these awards are co-sponsored by companies, serving to demonstrate the valuable link which the Institution provides between universities and industry. These awards are presented to first year, third year and final year students, reflecting the continuous engagement which the Institution has with the universities.

Once again, and thanks to the financial support of the Institution and of some companies, students have been able to attend the Institution's conferences.

For many members, one of the greatest benefits of membership is the opportunity to meet other maritime professionals at local Branch or Section meetings. The Institution's Branches and Sections have had full programmes of technical meetings and other activities during the year, and I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Institution, to thank those members who give willingly and freely of their time to serve on the Division Councils, and Branch and Section Committees. Without the time which they willingly give, such activities would not take place. It is due in no small part to their efforts that the Institution enjoys its international standing.

But of course many members also make their contribution in other ways, for example by refereeing papers for conferences and publications, acting as Professional Review Interviewers for those members seeking registration, sitting on one or more of the Institution's standing committees, promoting the Institution and encouraging membership wherever they are, or simply by maintaining their membership – and paying their membership fees on time! (I think the Chief Executive slipped that line in!) These are all opportunities for members to put something back into their Institution and their profession – nothing is more valued and appreciated than members' time and enthusiasm.

As it was in 1860, “promoting and facilitating the exchange of technical and scientific information ... thereby to improve the design of ships” has continued to be the aim of the Institution over the past twelve months – an aim which it has successfully achieved through its publications and its conferences.

All the Institution's journals have continued to enjoy their well-deserved reputations as the leading technical journals in their fields, appreciated for the quality and scope of their content in the 100 and more countries in which they are distributed. This reputation has helped to maintain the attraction of the Institution's journals to advertisers. The regular email newsletters, *Shiprepair eNews*, *Ship & Boat eNews* and *The Naval Architect eNews*, complementing the full journals, provide further up to date news, views and information on what is happening in those sectors of the industry

However, maintaining the standard of the journals does not come easily and the Institution is very grateful for the work of the editorial and production staff.

The Institution has maintained its reputation for the quality of its international conferences. In the past twelve months, the Institution has organised or co-organised 18 events in 8 countries, covering a wide scope of technical content. The Institution is grateful for the efforts of both the Institution's conference staff and those members who referee the papers and chair the conference sessions. It is also grateful to those who contribute the papers themselves, as it is these that ensure that the conferences are relevant to the challenges facing our industry today.

The Institution has continued to encourage high academic and professional standards by recognising the achievement of both those young - and not so young - members of the profession and industry. It was a great pleasure to present the Institution's medals and prizes a few moments ago. At the Institution's Annual Dinner this evening, I will be announcing the winners of the Institution's Maritime Safety Award, and the Maritime Innovation Award.

The Institution's links and standing with industry were maintained through its Corporate Partner members, the sponsorship of awards and activities, and the many visits to companies made by the Chief Executive.

As I announced at the start of my Report, I present it as both the elected President of the Institution and as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, providing a link between those two bodies.

The Board of Trustees is now in its fifth year as the Institution's governing body, and during the past year has exercised the standards of governance, finance and administration which both the members and the Charity Commission expect. The quality of such governance is monitored through regular internal and external audit and self assessment.

I hope you will agree that this report on the Institution's activities over the past twelve months is an encouraging one and describes an Institution which continues to go from strength to strength. I said at the beginning of my report that I would also look to the future, over the next twelve months. In short, it is expected to be more of the same with regard to its membership and activities, always seeking to respond to the changing needs and priorities of its members, the profession and the maritime industry. It will undoubtedly be another challenging year, as it will be for the maritime industry.

However, I would like to conclude my report by looking further ahead than the next twelve months, indeed to the next thirty years, to 2050.

The Board is, of course, always looking to the future and the Denny Room in which we meet today is a good example of that forward planning whereby the purchase of this fine new Headquarters building has given the Institution an assured future as far as its Headquarters is concerned.

However, I am sure you would agree that there is more to the Institution than its Headquarters, and last year, the Board embarked upon a Strategic Review of the Institution, with the years to 2050 as its scope. Phase One of the Review, to determine the future Objectives of the Institution, was completed last year, and Phase 2 to determine any necessary changes to the means by which the Objectives are achieved is now underway.

The Membership Survey completed towards the end of 2017 showed a high level of satisfaction with the role and activities of the Institution. 94% of members who completed the Survey considered that the current Objectives were correct and would continue to be relevant for the foreseeable future. Those Objectives are:

- Setting standards of professional competence and integrity.
- Encouraging membership at all levels
- Enabling the exchange of technical information.
- Contributing its collective expertise to the benefit of society

The Board accepts that these will be the continuing Objectives of the Institution for the next 30 years. However, the Survey also confirmed the need to review the means by which these Objectives

would be achieved and what changes would be needed to reflect the changes in the maritime industry and the professional needs of the members.

Phase 2 of the Strategic Review will be carried out by four Working Groups, comprising members of Council and other members of the Institution, each addressing an Objective. Each Working Group will identify how the Objective is achieved today and what changes will be required to continue achieving the Objective in 2050.

Working Group 1 will consider the membership structure, standards and requirements, and examine how the benefits of membership of employees can achieve greater recognition and support, including financial, by employers

Working Group 2 will look at how greater membership of the Institution at all levels can be encouraged by developing greater inclusivity and diversity of the membership, and by creating a more open, welcoming and outward looking Institution. It will look at how the benefits of membership to potential individuals and their companies can be better promoted.

Working Group 3 will look at the exchange of technical information through the Institution's publications, conferences and local meetings. It will consider both the content and delivery of such information to ensure it best reflects the future industry and meets the future needs and expectations of the members.

Working Group 4 will consider how the Institution can best use its collective knowledge for the benefit of the profession and society, by looking at its relationship with both national and international organisations.. It will also review the structure of the Institution – the Board, Council, Divisions and Branches/Sections – to ensure it reflects the membership and best meets the professional needs of the members.

The Working Groups are expected to complete their work by October of this year. Members will of course be kept up to date with their progress.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention. That concludes my Report.