

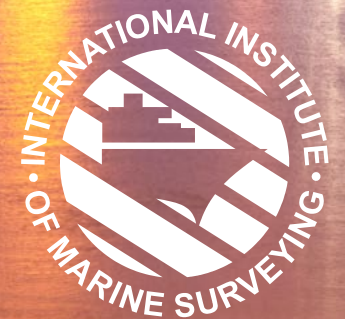


# Chief Executive Officer's Report

By Mike Schwarz

Prepared for the International Institute of Marine Surveying Annual General Meeting to be held on 9th June 2021

Period covered by the Report:  
July 2020 to June 2021





# 2021

## Chief Executive Officer's Report by Mike Schwarz



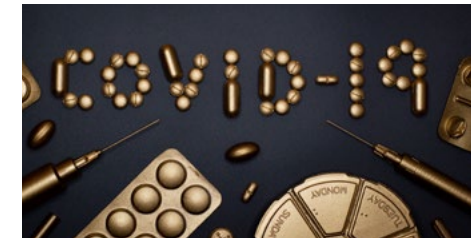
CONTENTS	Page
General overview.....	03
Head Office matters.....	05
Branch news.....	06
Membership update.....	06
Certifying Authority update.....	08
Surveyor complaints.....	09
Online seminars and Marine Surveying Fest III....	10
Distance Learning Professional Qualifications..	11
Bulletins and Handy Guides.....	12
Report Magazine.....	13
Website.....	14
Marketing & Communications.....	14
IIMS Apps.....	15
WhatsApp groups.....	15
Investment Projects.....	16
Thanks are due.....	18

# General overview



At the last AGM I reported we were in the midst of the worst pandemic known to any of us, albeit still relatively early days at that time. Sadly, one year on the situation in certain parts of the world remains critical and chaotic. History will surely show this to have been one of the worst health tragedies to have hit the world for the past century. Although we have made good progress with vaccinations in the UK, and are slowly opening up following several lockdowns, none of us is truly safe until the world is vaccinated. At the time of writing, India is going through the toughest time imaginable, and I extend my thoughts and sympathies to members and their families in that region particularly. The sad fact is most of us know someone who has succumbed to the awful disease that is COVID-19.

The pandemic has forced almost every marine surveyor to change the way he or she operates, from those who survey live-aboard narrowboats on UK canals to surveyors who inspect superyachts in Europe and on to commercial ship and cargo surveying all over the world. Access to vessels has been problematic. No-one has been immune from the need to increase PPE, to undertake enhanced risk assessments and adapting their working arrangements accordingly.



But, strangely for some, there has been a silver lining directly because of the pandemic. As social distancing and mask wearing became the norm and international travel severely restricted for the public, (even banned by some countries), small boat sales (along with motor homes) have surged in parts of the world. This means that some yacht and small craft surveyors, in particular, have been exceedingly busy. Brokers have run short of stock. Altogether a strange phenomenon and not something anyone could have predicted.

So, what of the Institute in these turbulent times? I have steered organisations through crises, but I have never managed a business through a pandemic. We were faced with making some major decisions - and quickly. What to do with the then impending purchase of Murrills House? Could we keep the staff in full employment over this time, or should we furlough them, hunker down and wind down our service to members? How could we repurpose our face to face training with a meaningful offering? With hindsight, keeping the team fully engaged and 'business as usual' as far as we could was the right decision, as was the one to press on with the purchase of the building.



IIMS seemed to become even more relevant to members as the pandemic raged. The true value of the membership network was realised as those unable to travel shared work with other members who could handle jobs locally on their behalf. The programme of online seminars we delivered were exceptionally well attended, new membership applications surged ahead and we achieved a record number of new students wanting to study for the distance learning Professional Qualifications in marine surveying. How much of this has been directly due to the pandemic, frankly I have no idea. The outcome is that the Institute has enjoyed a progressive 12 months and is in good financial shape. This means we have been able to invest monies into new projects, but more of that later.

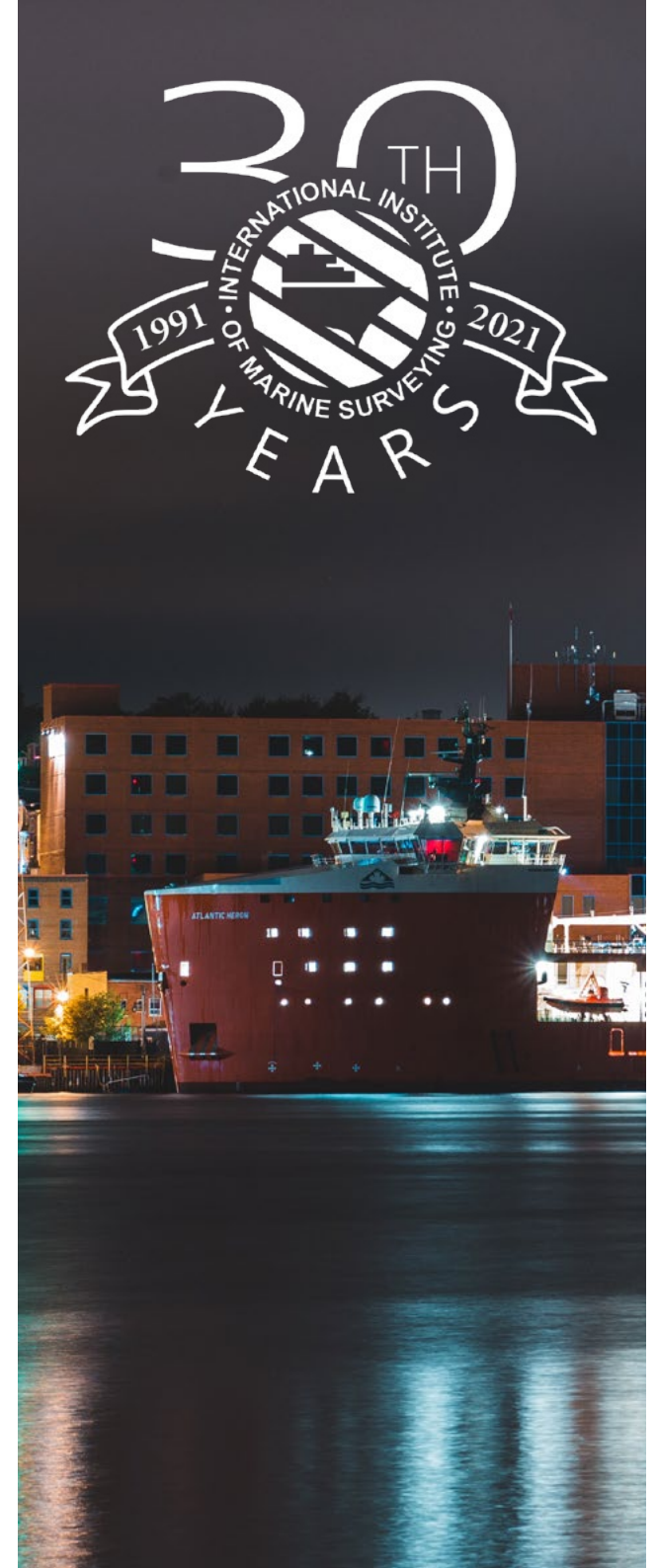
As we approach the 30th anniversary of the Institute, I wanted to share the words of John Guy and Nick Parkyn, both of whom have written for me in recent weeks.

Although not a marine surveyor, John Guy was instrumental in helping with the founding of the organisation all those years ago. He said, "IIMS gives marine surveyors what they did not have, a place to gather, a forum, a platform to share experience, an identity, a voice and a structure. Most importantly, the IIMS has grown as a global organisation and is recognised the world over as a centre of excellence and as the access pathway to being a good marine surveyor, or, just as importantly, finding a good marine surveyor."

Nick Parkyn is the subject of 'A Day in the Life of' feature in the June Report Magazine. In his interview he said, "The IIMS has re-invented itself to become the essential ecosystem provider and enabler for the marine surveying profession. It is the catalyst that brings the fraternity together to ensure capability, integrity, and professionalism of the practitioners. The IIMS is in a commanding position to fully embrace the technical advances of the Fourth Industrial Revolution."

The UK small craft sector has faced some significant challenges post Brexit and President, Geoff Waddington, has given freely of his time to try and understand the issues facing surveyors. I am grateful to him for his input.

Sadly we have said goodbye to three Honorary Fellows since the 2020 AGM - Capt Barry Thompson, Peter Morgan and John Excell - and I have more to say about them later in my report.



# Head Office matters

At the time of writing, the office is slowly starting to reopen. Some of the team continue to work remotely from home with occasional visits to the office. Others are now more regularly back into the office (myself included) and I hope it is not too long before we are all back together as one team. The importance of daily zoom team meetings should not be underestimated, and these have been a lifeline helping us all to maintain close contact and to discuss pressing issues and progress against various goals and budgets.

Remote working has proved to be reliable and robust, although by the time we got to the winter lockdown, I sensed that for some it was certainly losing its novelty. But our IT systems have been solid and moving to a paperless environment, (working in the cloud), made it all possible.

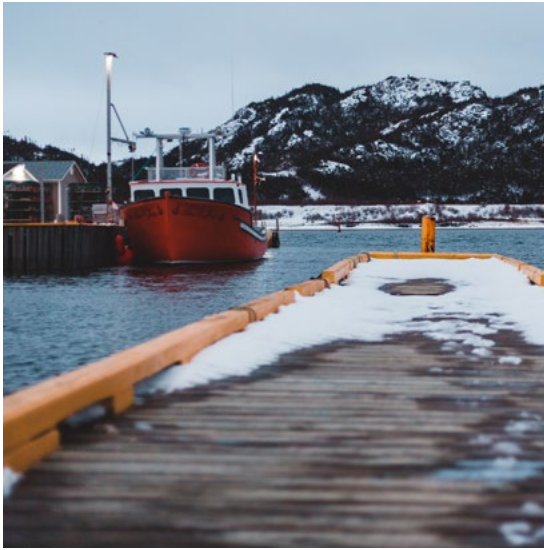
We have an awayday overnight team bonding event planned for the end of June in the nearby New Forest, something we have done before; and I know that everyone is looking forward to participating. Given what we have all had to face this past year, I believe it takes on a new dimension this year as we start to reconnect.

The head office team has been settled. Lorna Robinson, Education Co-ordinator, left us earlier this year to take up a new role with Portsmouth University. Vicki Loizides is her replacement and has settled in well, meaning the transfer from one to the other has been seamless with no loss of service to our many students.

The purchase of Murrills House last year was horribly delayed, (partly due to the pandemic), but we finally got the deal over the line in late July. It is an achievement we should be proud of too. To become the next custodians of a building which can trace its roots back 500 year (and which is an appreciating asset), is a remarkable achievement. The necessary renovation work identified from the survey is well underway. New windows have been installed, but not yet completed. There is work to repair the front door and to replace some of the damaged render. Once that has been done, the exterior will be painted. I am grateful to those who made a donation to the fund to help with the cost of renovations and those names are being added to a special plaque in the Board Room, soon to be unveiled.







For obvious reasons face to face branch activities have been curtailed over the past year. However, there have been several events organised in the regions. James Renn put together a superb programme of speakers for a two-day online event in North America in January. The seminar drew an audience of more than 50 delegates.

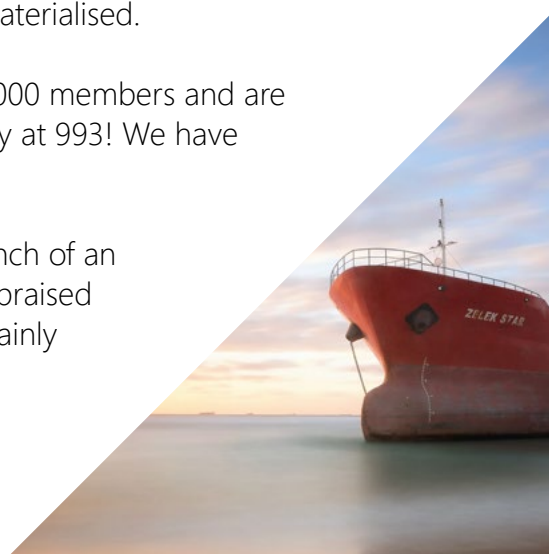
In April, the IIMS Canada Branch successfully organised and delivered their AGM online. This was supported by a seminar covering some interesting topics.

Capt Zarir Irani and colleagues in Dubai, UAE, have run some eye catching online seminars that attracted hundreds of delegates.

Chris Kelly will submit a full report for publication and give a verbal update at the AGM. Membership has remained strong with many new applications received from around the world this past year. I am grateful to all members for their continued support during tough times. The dropout rate I budgeted for due to COVID-19 has not materialised.

We have been edging ever closer to the magic number of 1,000 members and are now within spitting distance of that milestone, sitting currently at 993! We have representation in over 100 countries.

We have made the process of joining far easier since the launch of an online membership application form. Indeed, we have been praised by some applicants for its ease and simplicity. And it has certainly made the vetting and assessing process considerably easier for the Professional Assessment Committee.



## Branch news

## Membership update



*Capt Barry Thompson*



*Peter Morgan*



*John Excell*

The loss of three Honorary Fellows since the last AGM has hit the Institute hard and, with them, has gone a lot of knowledge and surveying experience. Detailed obituaries have been published in News Bulletins and the Report Magazine for all three. I would like to pay tribute to the three gentlemen, namely Capt Barry Thompson, Peter Morgan and John Excell. IIMS owes a debt of gratitude to all three men and all have left behind special memories for us.

Following John's death recently, a proposal was put before the management board that IIMS should launch the John Excell Award for Outstanding Achievement in his memory. The proposal was agreed unanimously. The Award is open to all students enrolled on the distance learning diploma in marine surveying. It will be awarded on a periodical basis to deserving students - those who deliver not only outstanding academic achievements, but who also demonstrate first-class interpersonal skills. Suitable recommendations will be put to the IIMS Education Committee for review and acceptance. It is especially fitting given how much importance John attached to learning new skills and his passion for sharing his knowledge with up and coming surveyors.

*John Excell*  
**AWARD**  
*for*  
**Outstanding Achievement**

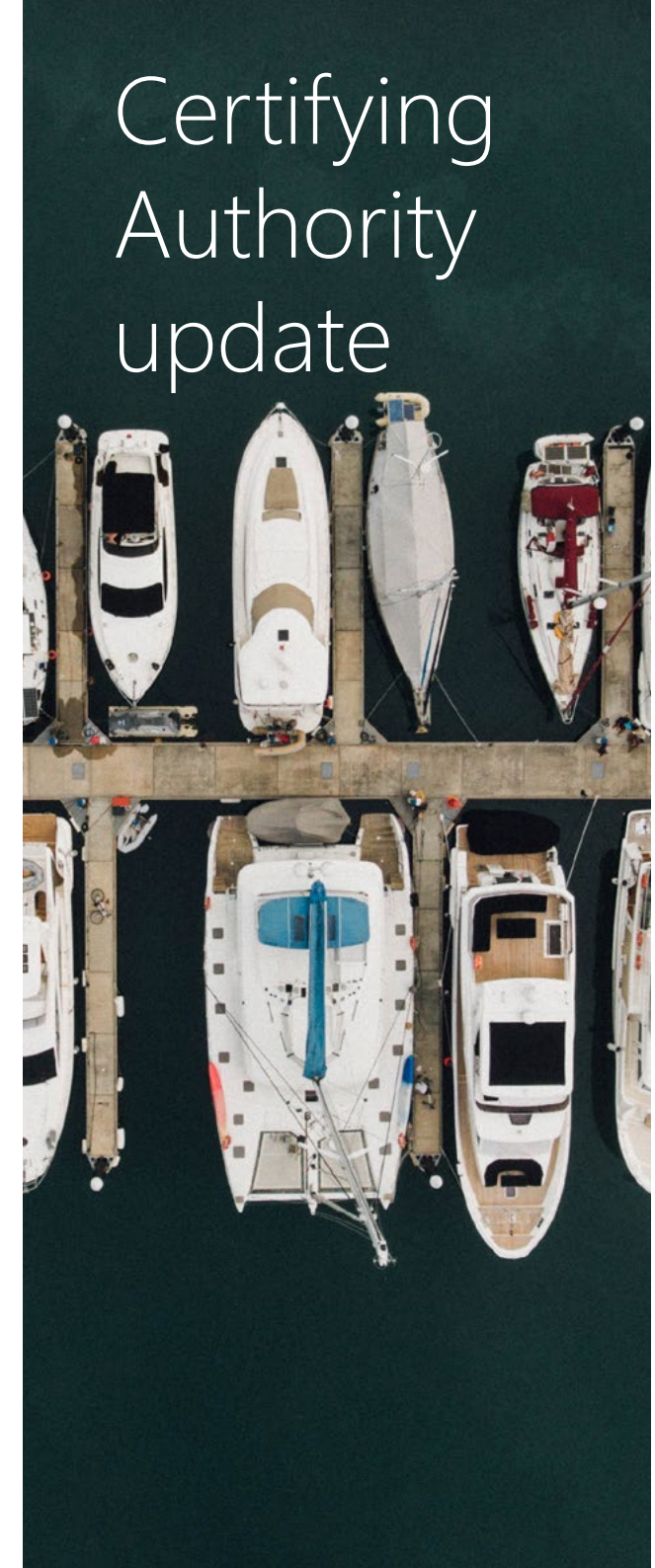


The past year has presented some significant challenges for our CA department as well as other UK based certifying authorities. David Parsons has done an excellent administrative job at head office holding things together. The challenges can be summed up as a) the pandemic and b) Brexit. It was clear very early on as COVID-19 started to hit the boat charter market in parts of Europe, that vessel owners faced some tough decisions which would impact on our revenues. Keeping a boat in code when there are no paying passengers was, for some, not sustainable. We noticed an immediate hit to our revenues and, although they have stabilised, we are behind where we were. Our fleet size contracted accordingly.

Brexit presented an entirely different scenario. Once the UK formally left on 31 December 2020, the problems manifested themselves fast. We received reports that MCA coded vessels would not be able to operate commercially in certain EU member state waters, Croatia being the first to declare their hand. We saw some immediate reflagging of vessels to the Polish and Maltese flags, in particular. The final outcome to this conundrum is still uncertain. What we do know is that each of the EU member states can make their own stipulations as far as the UK coded fleet is concerned and it has to be dealt with on a case by case basis at high governmental level. There is no doubt that there have been some unintended consequences following Brexit and these will rumble on for months to come.

The drive to introduce certification for MCA coding examiners continues, but was badly disrupted by the pandemic. But we are close to proposing a solution for agreement by all UK Certifying Authorities of sub 24 metre vessels to ensure that examiners meet and pass a minimum requirement. This has proven to be a troublesome process, hindered by the change of personnel at other CAs. It is still unknown if we can agree on the scheme that will meet the requirements expected of us all by the MCA.

The revenue from tonnage surveys dropped noticeably as surveyors were unable to travel and demand slumped. These have recovered in recent months. We have a proposal currently with the MCA for consideration to enable us to conduct remote tonnage survey training. The outcome is expected soon.





# Surveyor complaints

There was a concern in my mind that given how busy some yacht and small craft surveyors have been in recent months, the number of complaints would surely rise. But this has not actually proven to be the case. There is a steady number of complaints reaching my office, some serious in nature, some less so. All are investigated thoroughly by Paul Homer, Chairman of Standards, once we have gathered the facts from both the complainant and the surveyor in question. It is a time consuming exercise and I am grateful to Paul. And none of them are ever straightforward, because there are egos involved sometimes too (on both sides of the argument) that need to be handled carefully.

Over the past year, we have lost one member who decided to withdraw following a serious complaint. It is always our policy to protect the member surveyor as best as we can and I am pleased to say that other complaints were successfully pushed back, not always to the complainant's liking of course. It remains surprising to me just what some people are prepared to complain at when they take a pop at a surveyor!

Although in some instances it is the quality of the report that leads to a complaint arising, there have been a couple of noticeable exceptions recently when the surveyor missed something fundamental. Writing effective reports remains a challenge for many surveyors and I would refer you to the online Report Writing course which is run by the Institute on a quarterly basis. These are well attended and even those with more significant surveying experience have found them useful.



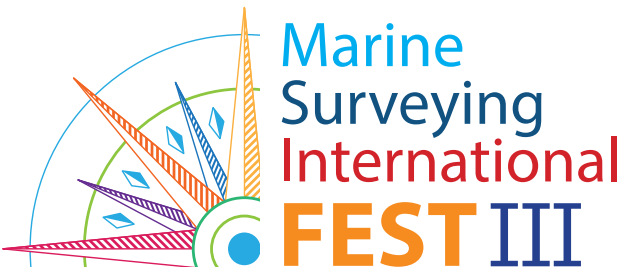


# Online

The series of highly successful online seminars organised by the Institute at the start of the pandemic has continued into 2021. Since the turn of the year we have held several high profile seminars for yacht and small craft surveyors covering topics as diverse as surveying bilge pumps to the position with the Recreational Craft Directive post Brexit. All have been well attended, as was Marine Surveying Fest III, broadcast in late 2020 and attracting more than 100 delegates. Fest IV will be developed ready for broadcast at the end of this year.

The ability to make quality videos of almost broadcast quality of these seminars for sharing back to delegates is valuable and many are now available on the IIMS Pay Per View page on the website, others freely available via the IIMS YouTube channel.

It remains uncertain when face to face gatherings can resume, either in the UK, Europe or elsewhere in the world, but for sure they will in time.



Online seminars  
and

Marine  
Surveying  
Fest III





# Distance Learning Professional Qualifications

It is approaching 20 years since IIMS started to formally educate marine surveyors through what is now an award-winning distance learning education programme and the past 12 months have been progressive for the education department. Our education revenues have jumped appreciably and represent more than one third of the Institute's income, consistently performing ahead of budget. At this time, IIMS has more than 200 students enrolled. We have devoted considerable attention to this area of the business recently, as the number of new students has soared.

We have assessed and reviewed many of the modules, some getting a partial rewrite to bring them up-to-date. We have looked to enhance the content of the modules with new reference material, for example, the inclusion of links to relevant YouTube material to make the studying experience more meaningful.

New student intake online Meet and Greet sessions are now the norm. These can attract up to 20 new students and we are joined by one or two assessors. It is an opportunity for us to explain how things work, to remind students to reach out for help and to network with each other. They have been successful and well received. In addition, we periodically run online seminars on specific modules bringing the unit author together with the students.

Despite the pandemic, IIMS managed to deliver its first 7 day practical course in December 2020 for small craft surveyors. Working with the Boat Building Academy in Lyme Regis, Dorset, we were able to welcome 6 students for the pilot course. The opportunity to get their hands dirty working with wood and GRP, mixed with a day of report writing theory and some hammer testing beneath hulls in the harbour, was much appreciated and enjoyed. Ideally, this can become an annual programme.

The education committee continues to meet on an occasional basis under my Chairmanship and I thank John Noble, Carey Golesworthy and David Pestrige for their support. The need for succession planning is becoming increasingly important as authors and markers age and this is something we need to seriously address over the next 2 years.



The monthly news bulletins continue to be released on the first of each month. Statistical analysis shows that each one is read by hundreds of members. The content has been further enhanced in recent times, by including breaking news items of importance that have cropped up during the previous month.



The series of Handy Guides has grown to 26 in total. Several new publications have been launched in the past year. They include:

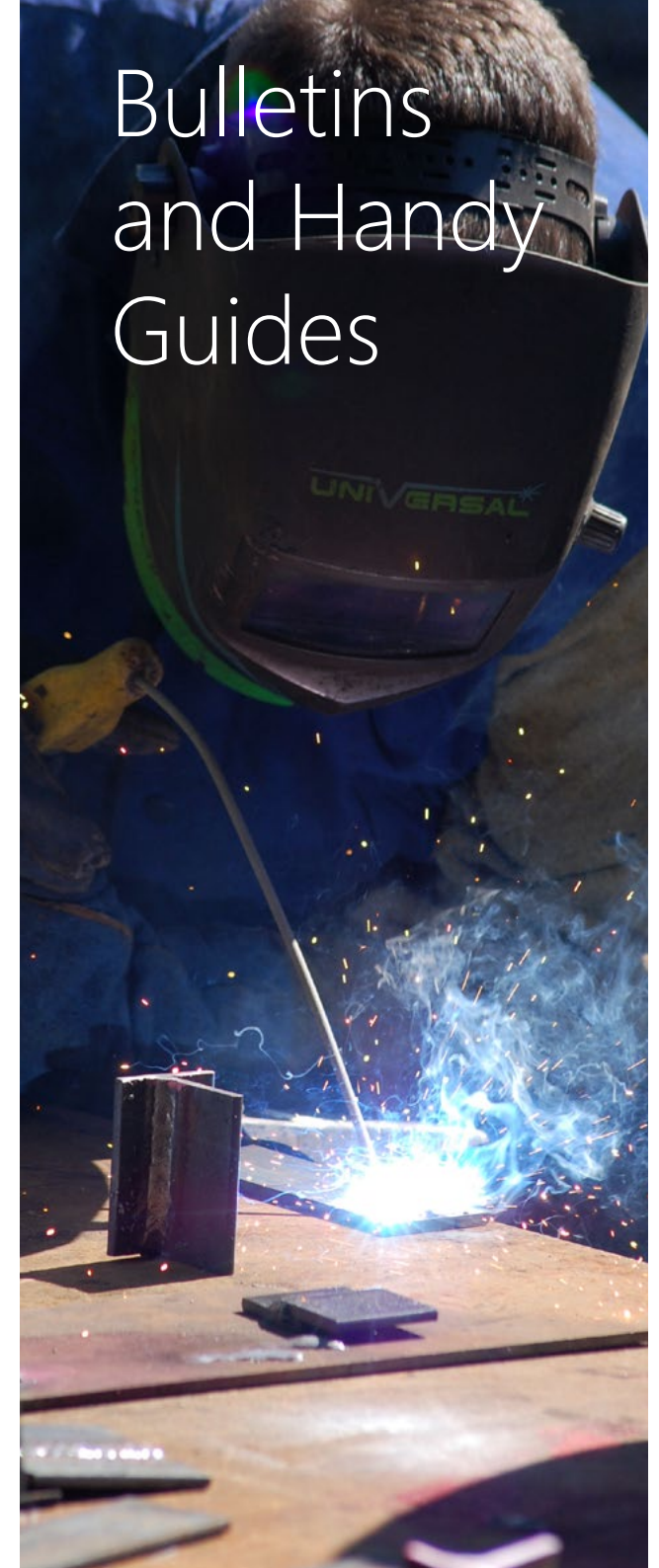
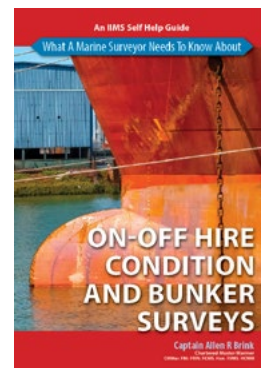
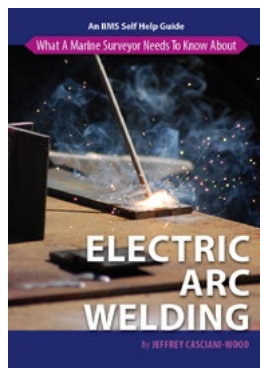
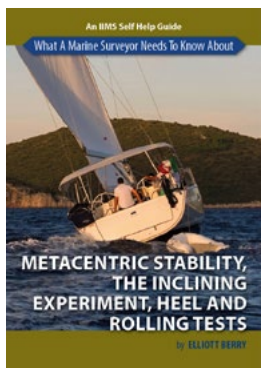
*What a marine surveyor needs to know about metacentric stability, the inclining experiment, heel and rolling tests (ebook only)*

*What a Marine Surveyor Needs to Know About Electric Arc Welding*

*What A Marine Surveyor Needs To Know About Corrosion, Electrolysis, Galvanism, Anodes And MIC*

*What A Marine Surveyor Needs To Know About On-Off Hire Condition And Bunker Surveys*

Sales are steady and constant. The whole series is available to browse at <https://bit.ly/2KIN5WM>.





# Report Magazine

With some marine surveyors having time on their hands as a result of enforced lockdowns around the world, a conscious decision was made to increase the pagination of the quarterly Report Magazine. Each of the editions published in the past year has exceeded 100 pages, culminating in the soon to be released special June edition (celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Institute) anticipated to be a magnificent 136 pages. The Report Magazine has become one of the jewels in the IIMS crown, with each edition read by thousands of people.

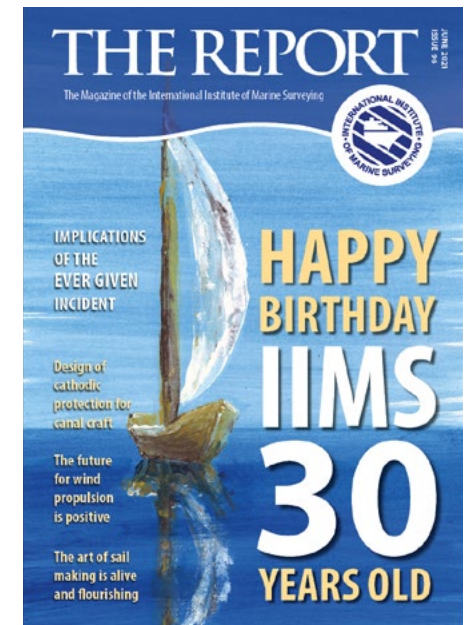
At the end of last year, the Report Magazine was shortlisted for a prestigious editor's award by a British organisation in the Trade & Technical section. Sadly we did not win on this occasion, but it made me realise that others in the non-marine publishing world have noticed The Report.

Each edition is a mix of news and the latest safety briefings gathered from around the world. Many of the main feature articles are specially commissioned for readers, whilst others come from other sources. I am immensely grateful to those who have authored content for the publication. In house graphic designer, Craig Williams, continues to demonstrate his skills to output the highest quality of design to bring the publication alight.

Some of the more eye catching articles over the past year that I am proud to have published include:

- How to survey a mast, its rigging and sails by Kim Skov-Nielsen
- How COVID-19 has affected the role of the marine surveyor
- Wakashio: How the crisis communications could have been better handled by Dustin Eno
- With a spate of incidents and accidents what price human life at sea?
- End of use boats - things are happening by Peter Franklin
- Container stack collapses – causes and solutions by Sudhir Malhotra
- VAT on Yachts - What has changed since 31 December 2020? By Russell Kelly
- The Estonia disaster continues to be a bottomless source of learning by Dr Torkel Soma
- Seafarers 'N' Ever Given respect. What will we do this time so that history is not repeated? By Capt Zarir Irani

These and dozens of other similar articles related to the marine surveying profession can be found in the Report Magazine archive at <https://bit.ly/2WQTosu>.





The Institute has continued to spend marketing monies on further developing the website and working hard behind the scenes using local specialist digital agency, Vertical Leap, to enhance the search engine optimisation and reach with excellent results.

On average the site attracts over 15,000 unique visitors who view more than 30,000 pages each month.

In October 2020, a pdf download tracker was added so that we could directly monitor how many pdfs were downloaded and which ones. It is remarkable to report that since we kicked this off, over 12,000 pdfs have been downloaded from the website.

IIMS has continued to spend money on targeted below the line digital advertising via specialist agency, Vertical Leap. These monies are primarily to support new memberships and student growth, paying handsome dividends.

Expressions of interest from potential students drop into the IIMS education inbox daily. These are followed up and some turn into valuable new students.

Since we started the membership drive, we have harvested over 2,000 email addresses from people who are active on LinkedIn who have downloaded the Report Magazine - the vast majority identifying themselves as marine surveyors. This has proven to be a powerful medium for new leads, some of which convert to membership. Periodically this list is emailed offering the chance to attend online seminars, to purchase handy guides and to become a member.

Each month we are actively broadcasting news and opportunities to over 5,000 marine surveyors.



# Website

# Marketing & Communications



# IIMS Apps

The Apps that have been developed in recent years continue to perform well and are being refined periodically as we look for ways to enhance their relevance and ease of use.

The CPD App attracts a lot of traffic from members wanting to keep their training and development record up-to-date. In 2020 we handled nearly 1,000 CPD requests through the App and this year, so far, about 300.

The Marine Surveyor Search App, which syncs with the search facility on the IIMS web site, continues to perform well. 905 people have downloaded the search App to their smart devices.

# Apps

# WhatsApp groups

IIMS WhatsApp groups have grown in popularity since being launched a couple of years ago. All are monitored and moderated by head office. They are proving to be extremely popular with students, giving them the opportunity to converse with peers about their work, share resource recommendations and offer advice to others. Online learning can be isolating, especially during lockdown, so these groups give students the chance to stay connected. The WhatsApp concept was originally trialled amongst Inland Waterways surveyors in the UK and this group remains one of the most active, proving the value of digital communication across the board. The West Africa group is also very active. We are keen to establish further groups.

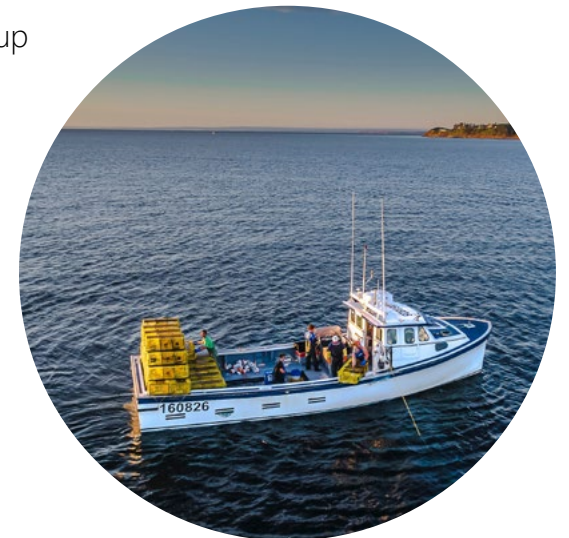
Current WhatsApp groups (14 in total):

*IIMS West Africa group*

*IIMS UK Inland Waterways group*

*Yacht & Small Craft student groups (7 in total) covering the various intakes since 2019*

*Commercial Ship and Cargo student groups (5 in total) covering various intakes since 2019*



Following a successful financial year in 2020, the Institute has been able to reinvest in several new projects for the benefit of its members and those operating in the surveying sector.



## *Certifying Authority training module*

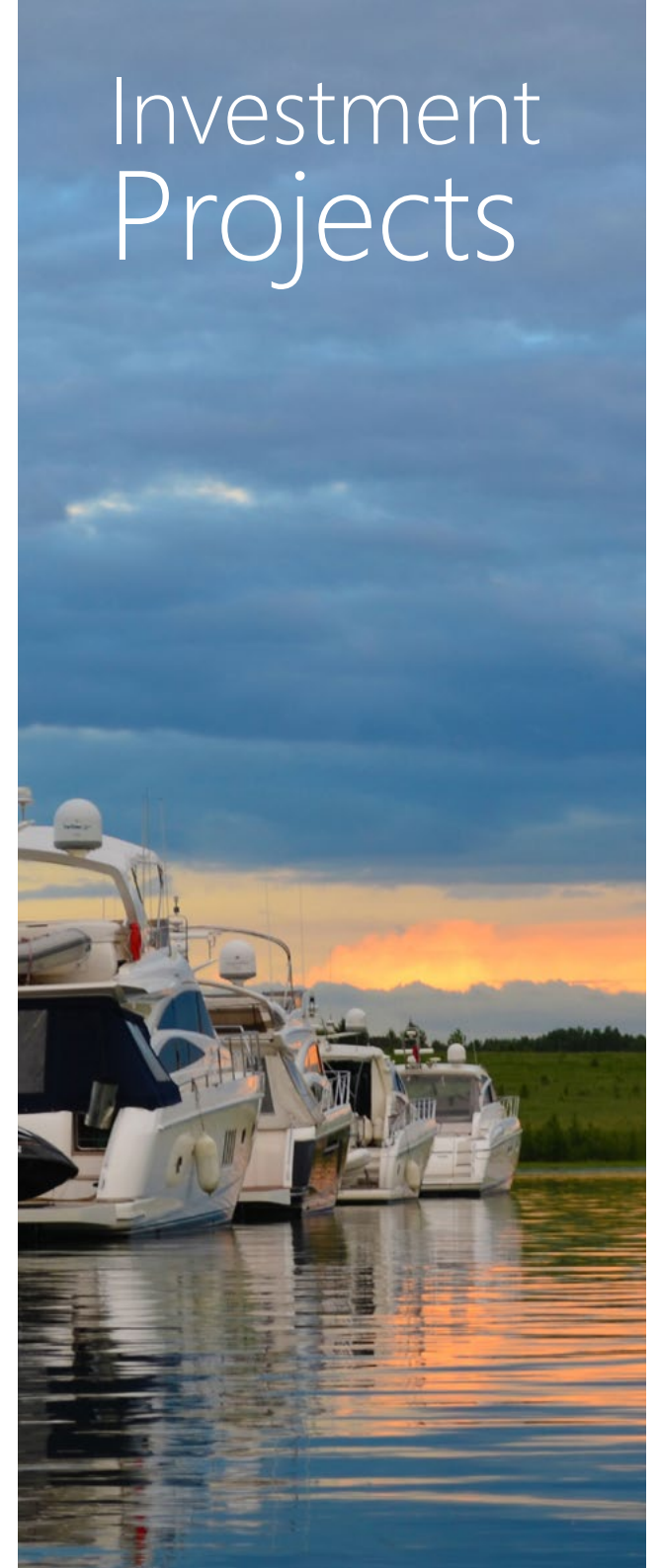
Although still under wraps for commercially sensitive reasons, work is underway to write and produce a comprehensive training module for those who are involved in MCA coding work. It is anticipated that examiners who code their vessels through organisations other than IIMS will want to study the material. Once completed, the new module will be an optional unit for those studying for the Professional Qualification in Yacht & Small Craft Marine Surveying. The investment is being made in an author to write the comprehensive module material.

## *Professional Qualification in Marine Corrosion*

Over the years, IIMS has run several short courses on the subject of corrosion, either in the form of single presentations or one day seminars. Corrosion remains a cornerstone of the surveying professional and still an area of mystery for some. So, a decision was made to develop a new standalone professional qualification in marine corrosion to be launched in June with the second course in November. It looks like about 20 delegates are joining the first course with more booked for the one later in the year. The study material is of the highest quality, written by an expert in the field. The delivery and examining is making use of the very latest and smart technology to a) deliver the material and b) test delegates' knowledge. The investment has been made in Mike Lewus, the author, to write and annotate the course content.



# Investment Projects





## *Murrills House renovations*

The work to make the essential renovations to the IIMS headquarters is still ongoing. In truth it has turned out to be a more complex job than first envisaged. And, bizarrely local suppliers have currently run out of sand and cement due to a construction boom, so work to repair the render and cement the new windows in remains unfinished. Becoming the custodians of an asset with a history going back 500 years carries some responsibilities and there is a financial burden associated with it. One off investment is being made initially to rectify the key recommendations identified in the survey. Routine ongoing maintenance, including internal decorating and managing the gardens will then be a budgeted item annually.



# renovations

## *New student portal*

Work commenced 15 months ago to replace the ageing and very limited existing student portal, but was halted due to the pandemic. Working hand in hand with our digital partners, eDot Solutions in Goa, this project is now back on track. We have targeted a roll out date of 1 January 2022. The portal App will embrace a range of new smart technology to make the experience for IIMS students a much better and enriched one. The investment is being made in developing the portal from scratch.



# Thanks

This is my opportunity to give a vote of thanks to all those who have contributed to the success of the Institute over what has been the hardest year any of us have ever known.

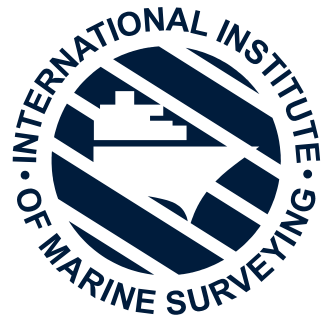
Let me start by thanking the head office team, without whom none of this would be possible. They have all performed admirably and, despite the challenges thrown at them by the pandemic, have succeeded in maintaining the highest possible standards. In particular, I would like to thank Camella Robertson and Jen Argent, who help me manage the day to day affairs of the organisation and who have supported me with some key decision making this past year.

Jen is ably supported by Elly Bryant. Holly continues to consume administrative work looking after a dozen websites and assisting Camella with new membership applications.

I must also thank all those who work on a voluntary basis on behalf of the Institute.

I start with our In-Country Representatives, Regional Directors, Branch Chairmen and Officials.

My thanks also go to the Executive and the Management Board for their work in helping to keep things moving ahead and for the support they have given me. In particular this year, I have a special mention for President, Geoff Waddington, who due to circumstances caused by the pandemic and Brexit, has meant he has been busier than most Presidents!



Thanks  
are due





I would like to acknowledge the work put in by those who are involved with the various committees, much of it on a voluntary basis. They are:

**Capt Chris Kelly:**

Chairman of the Professional Assessment Committee and the dozen or so members who assist him in ensuring we maintain membership entry standards.

**Fraser Noble:**

Chairman of the Certifying Authority and the committee members

**Paul Homer:**

Chairman of Standards

**Geoff Waddington:**

Chairman of Administration (and President)

**John Heath:**

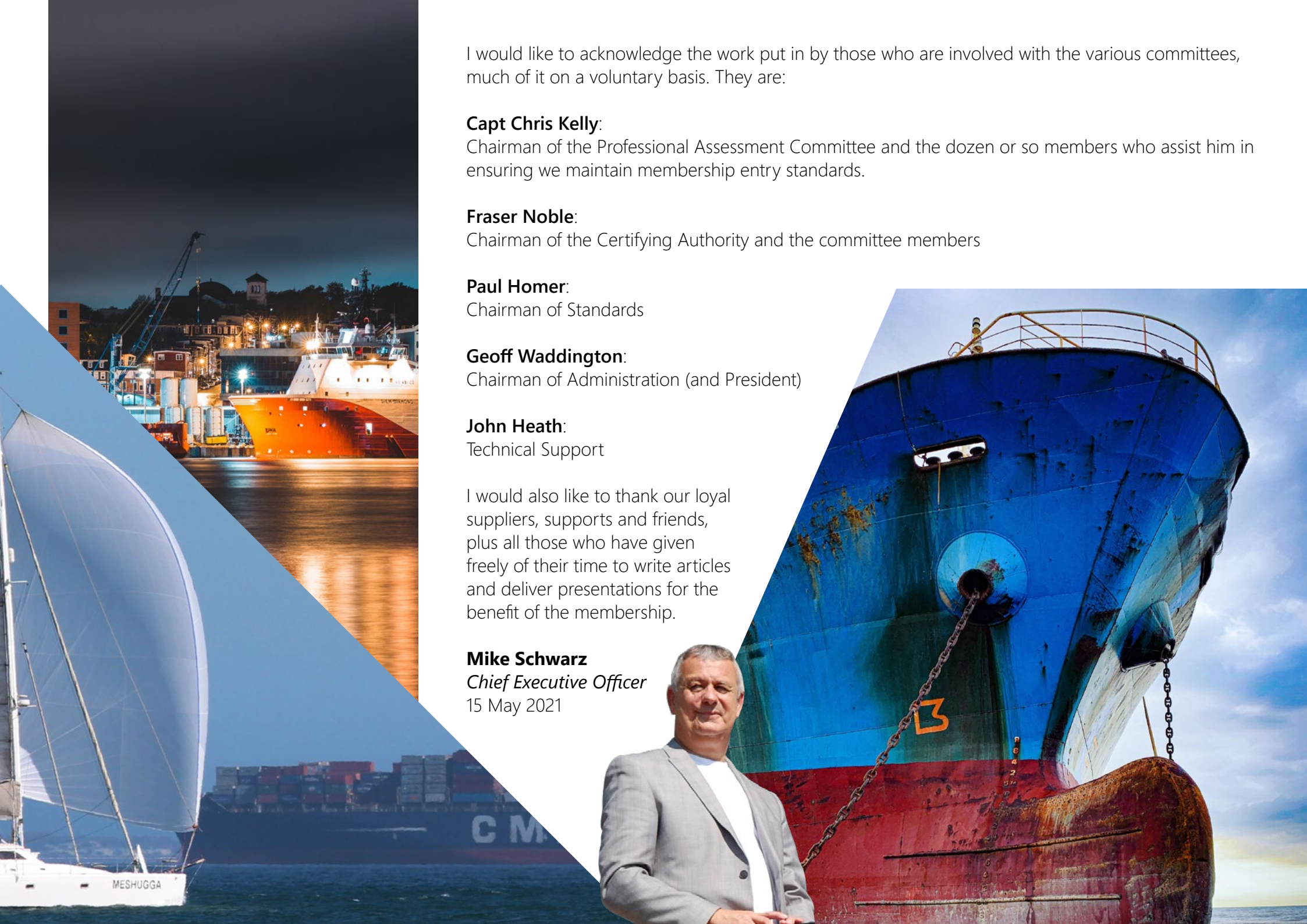
Technical Support

I would also like to thank our loyal suppliers, supports and friends, plus all those who have given freely of their time to write articles and deliver presentations for the benefit of the membership.

**Mike Schwarz**

*Chief Executive Officer*

15 May 2021





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2021

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