

The Royal Institution of Naval Architects

The President's address to the 2019 AGM

May I again welcome you to the Institution's Headquarters. As is customary on these occasions, in my report to you, I 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 increase in members from countries other than the UK, demonstrates 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, such 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, and the efforts of our CEO to engage with students.

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 demonstrate the value of membership. It must show that membership provides both an international recognition of the achievement of, or intention to achieve, the highest standards of professional competence, and will be of benefit to members' professional development at all stages in their career. Increasingly, the Institution must also demonstrate to employers the value of their engineers' membership to their company. Demonstrating this value to both individuals and companies is something which the Board is currently concerned with, and is taking actions on, as will be explained below.

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, the activities of which are described in the Annual Report, That contribution may also come from promoting the Institution and encouraging membership wherever they are, something I would commend to you all. 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. The regular eNewsletters, introduced this year to complement the full journals, provide further up to date news, views and information on what is happening in all sectors of the industry. Access to these publications is provided through the suite of Apps introduced this year, enabling the journals, the eNewsletters, the Events programme and RINA Affairs to be accessed on tablet or smartphone, recognising the increasing preference for digital media in addition to traditional printed format. This is another area where the Board is seeking to review our strategy.

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. Recognising the wealth of expertise which members collectively have, this year members were invited to contribute that expertise for publication in the magazines.

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 17 events in 5 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 winner of the Institution’s Maritime Innovation Award.

As some of you may be aware, 100 years’ ago, almost to the day, at the 1919 AGM members voted to admit women as members of the Institution on the same terms as men. The Institution is fully committed to providing equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, and to encouraging such achievement in the maritime community. In recognition of this significant event in 1919 the Institution has introduced the Eily Keary Award, to be presented annually to an individual or organisation which has made a significant contribution to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the maritime community. The Award is named after the first woman to be elected as a member, who was also the first woman to have a paper published in the Transactions

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.

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 some 5 years' ago 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's future than its Headquarters, and in 2017, the Board embarked upon a Strategic Review of the Institution, with the years to 2050 as its scope. Phase One of the Review determined what would be the future Objectives of the Institution through a Membership Survey. The Survey, completed towards the end of 2017, showed a high level of satisfaction with the role and activities of the Institution, with 94% of members who completed the Survey considering that the current Objectives would continue to be relevant for the foreseeable future. To remind you, 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

This was followed by Phase 2 of the Review in which a number of Working Groups were tasked with determining the necessary changes to the means by which the Objectives would be achieved. These Working Groups made a total of 57 recommendations.

During Phase 3 of the Review, the Board considered the Recommendations made by the Working Groups. Implementation of the accepted Recommendations has now commenced as Phase 4 of the Review. Full details of the Recommendations will be published in due course, but the implementation of one of the most significant of the Recommendations was achieved by the changes to the composition of the Council to make it more representative of the Institution, approved by the SGM Resolution.

While the changes to council were fast tracked, other significant developments are being taken forward by the Board, with three sub groups of the Board looking at specific areas for development. These are: how to enhance diversity, equality and inclusion; the structure and operation of the secretariat; and the digital and communications strategy.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention. That concludes my Report, and the floor is yours.