

Meet Our Committee



Gordon Foot MNM FNI

Branch Chairman

Gordon is a seasoned offshore maritime operations professional with over 35 years of operational leadership within both the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy. A Chartered Marine Technologist and Chartered Manager, he specialises in the delivery of complex offshore projects across the construction, geoscience, ROV, diving, pipeline, cable, and UXO domains, with significant experience in offshore wind, oil and gas, and environmental operations. Gordon has served extensively as an IOGP Vessel Client Representative, operating in remote and high-risk regions including West Africa and Asia. He brings a strategic yet hands-on approach to project and programme management, underpinned by strong HSSEQ expertise, commercial awareness, and a collaborative leadership style. Adept at leading cross-functional, international teams, he is known for his problem-solving ability, effective communication, and commitment to delivering safe, efficient, and high-quality outcomes for clients worldwide.



Richard Allan

Vice Chairman

Captain Richard Allan is the Harbour Master and Chief Executive of Cattewater Harbour Commissioners, overseeing the Port of Plymouth. He began his tenure with the organisation as Deputy Harbour Master in 2017 and was appointed to his current role in 2020. A Master Mariner with a distinguished seafaring career, Captain Allan is committed to ensuring safe navigation, environmental stewardship, and operational excellence within the harbour. Under his leadership, the port has embraced sustainable practices and community engagement initiatives, reflecting his dedication to both maritime heritage and innovation.



Paul Willerton

Secretary

Paul Willerton has devoted his life to the maritime community both at sea and ashore. After serving with distinction in the Merchant Navy - gaining invaluable experience, resilience, and leadership - he transitioned into maritime education, becoming Deputy Head of the University of Plymouth's Maritime School. Paul also led the initiative to establish the Merchant Navy Monument on Plymouth Hoe, ensuring that the service and sacrifice of merchant seafarers are permanently honoured. His career reflects a steadfast commitment to maritime heritage, education, and community.



Matthew Groves

Treasurer and Young Members Representative

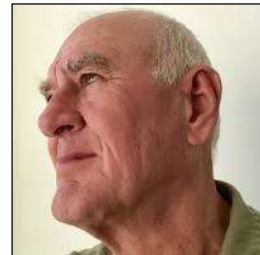
Matthew Groves is an emerging maritime professional based in Plymouth, England, studying Navigation and Maritime Science at the University of Plymouth. Alongside his academic studies, he is gaining significant industry experience through his work with Cattewater Harbour Commissioners, supporting pilotage and port operations. Matthew's maritime career began with a local tour boat operator, progressing into operational roles including pilot boat crewing and maritime security. In addition to his professional commitments, Matthew volunteers as lifeboat crew with Plymouth RNLI, demonstrating a strong personal commitment to maritime safety and community service. Matthew is passionate about professional development and the advancement of safe, sustainable maritime operations. With a growing portfolio of practical experience and academic achievement, he is committed to building a career dedicated to excellence in port management and maritime safety.



George Lang

Committee Member

George Lang is a seasoned maritime professional with a distinguished career spanning over five decades. From 2010 to 2018, he served at Warsash Maritime Academy, a premier maritime training institution in the United Kingdom. During his tenure, he played a pivotal role in educating and mentoring the next generation of maritime officers, contributing significantly to the academy's reputation for excellence in maritime education. Beyond his work at Warsash, George has been an active member of the maritime community. He has been a Fellow of The Nautical Institute since 1972, reflecting his long-standing commitment to advancing maritime safety and professional development. Additionally, he is a member of the Royal Institute of Navigation, underscoring his expertise in navigational practices and standards. George's extensive experience and dedication have made him a respected figure in maritime education and training, with a legacy of fostering excellence and professionalism in the industry.



Charles Hattersley

Committee Member

Charles Hattersley is a seasoned maritime solicitor and serves as Partner and Head of Marine at Ashfords LLP, a prominent UK law firm with offices in Exeter and Plymouth. With a career spanning several decades, he has established himself as a leading authority in maritime and shipping law, advising clients across the commercial marine sector. His expertise encompasses a wide range of maritime legal matters, including shipbuilding contracts, vessel repair disputes, marine insurance claims, and shipping litigation. He has also contributed to discussions on emerging legal challenges, such as the regulatory implications of unmanned workboats. Charles's in-depth knowledge and practical approach make him a trusted advisor to shipowners, insurers, and maritime businesses. He is known for his ability to navigate complex legal landscapes, ensuring compliance and protecting clients' interests in the dynamic maritime industry.



Oliver Chasteauneuf

Committee Member

Captain Ollie Chasteauneuf is a Master Mariner with extensive experience across the cruise, cargo, and offshore sectors. A graduate of the University of Plymouth, he gained his Master Mariner Unlimited licence in 2016 and has since commanded DP3-class vessels in complex offshore operations. Currently serving as Master and Senior Dynamic Positioning Officer (SDPO) for Dong Fang Offshore, he plays a key role in Taiwan's offshore wind industry. His career highlights include commanding Pacific Constructor during the search for MH370 and the discovery of the Argentine submarine San Juan.



David Guy

Committee Member

Dave Guy is an experienced Marine Advisor at BP, specialising in the assessment and inspection of the company's marine operations. Based in Fowey, Cornwall, he applies his extensive knowledge to ensure the safety, compliance, and efficiency of BP's maritime activities. With a strong foundation in maritime operations, Dave's career is supported by his education at Warsash Maritime Academy. His commitment to safety and operational excellence in the maritime industry is evident in his ongoing work with BP.



Peter Hinchcliffe

Committee Member

Peter brings over 25 years of Royal Navy experience and a long-standing commitment to safeguarding life at sea. After leaving the Navy, he joined the International Chamber of Shipping, where he became deeply involved in responding to the growing migrant crisis in the Mediterranean. He worked to support merchant vessels suddenly thrust into large-scale rescue operations and campaigned vigorously to ensure rescued people could be safely and promptly disembarked.



His work forged a close partnership with Chris and Regina Catrambone, founders of MOAS, and on retiring he and his wife were invited to establish MOAS (UK) to help support humanitarian missions worldwide. Peter's blend of operational experience, advocacy, and humanitarian dedication makes him a valued member of the branch committee.

John Hunt

Committee Member

Captain John Hunt is a seasoned Deep-Sea Pilot based in Plymouth, England, with extensive experience in maritime navigation and pilotage. As a certificated Master Mariner, he has served as Master on LPG tankers and worked on survey vessels in the oil exploration industry. In his role as a Deep-Sea Pilot, Captain Hunt provides expert navigation services to vessels transiting the English Channel and North Sea, ensuring safe passage through some of the world's busiest and most challenging shipping lanes. His deep understanding of maritime operations and commitment to safety make him a respected figure in the maritime community. Captain Hunt's career reflects a dedication to maritime excellence, combining hands-on experience with a thorough knowledge of navigational practices.



Tim Charlesworth

Committee Member

Captain Tim Charlesworth is a distinguished maritime professional who served as Harbour Master and Chief Executive of the Cattewater Harbour Commissioners in Plymouth from 1997 until his retirement in March 2020. With a seafaring career spanning 26 years, including 11 years as Master, he brought extensive experience to his leadership role at the Port of Plymouth. During his 24-year tenure, Captain Charlesworth oversaw significant developments within the harbour, including the commissioning of new vessels, modernization of harbour legislation, and the strengthening of relationships with operators and key stakeholders. Beyond his duties at Cattewater, he contributed to the broader maritime community as treasurer of the South West Regional Ports Association and as a member of the British Ports Association Council. In recognition of his services to UK ports and the maritime industry, Captain Charlesworth was awarded the Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service in 2018.



Martel Fursdon

Committee Member

Martel Fursdon is an experienced senior officer with Carnival UK, bringing a rich seafaring background and a strong commitment to the welfare of those working at sea. Starting her maritime career at 18, she rose through the Merchant Navy ranks over nearly two decades, ultimately serving in senior leadership roles on board. Well-known as an advocate for fairness, inclusion, and professionalism across the industry, Martel has been a vocal supporter of women in maritime and has championed practical improvements to life at sea. Her dedication to seafarers' rights, particularly during the global crew-change crisis, earned her significant recognition — including the prestigious Victoria Drummond Award. Martel's blend of operational expertise, leadership, and advocacy makes her an inspiring and valued member of the committee.

