



People in Ports

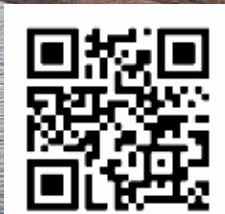
Find out what a career in the port industry
could mean for your future



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ASSOCIATION

Port of Leith Outer Berth

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Port Skills and Safety

Improving standards through collaboration

We work in collaboration with our members to promote the best practice and innovation, develop guidance and services to drive continuous improvement in safety and ensure a highly skilled workforce.



portskillsandsafety.co.uk



The team at the British Ports Association.

People in Ports Foreword

The British Ports Association is the national trade body for ports, harbours and marine facilities in the UK and the People in Ports initiative is a celebration of the wide range of careers and work opportunities available across the country.

With over 32 individual Profiles of inspirational people, each with their own experience in UK ports, our People in Ports programme provides an insight into our rewarding and exciting industry.

UK ports are embracing change which includes adoption of cutting-edge new technology, change to sustainable and alternative fuels, improved working practices, closer co-operation with local communities and industry. All the time the industry is focussing on driving up safety standards while remaining committed to protecting the environment.

People in Ports reflects the drive to achieve a more diverse workforce which is allowing people from a wide range of backgrounds to succeed and prosper, you just have to look at the wide range of Profiles to understand that the industry offers a range of excellent career opportunities.

UK ports are an undoubted success story being responsible for 95% of UK trade and much more, including providing hubs for the energy, leisure, tourism, marine engineering, ship services and fishing industries, which means the career opportunities are many and boundless with great prospects for advancement.

Ports are all about their people.

This publication will support the British Ports Association in our campaigns and activity raising the profile of the UK port sector.

Enjoy reading about some of the amazing people in the industry. We would like to discuss how you can join them and the industry. Send us an email at: info@britishports.org.uk for more information.

Richard Ballantyne OBE
Chief Executive
of the British Ports Association

David Faulkner, Director, Ports and Harbours at ABL - part of ABL Group - talks about 47 years in the industry



What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After I left school, I joined the Merchant Navy as a deck cadet (trainee officer). Over the following years I served on a variety of ships including bulk carriers, container and tankers working my way up to the rank of Captain. During this time, I spent about 17 years trading in and out of UK ports before coming ashore and becoming a river pilot on the Humber. Since leaving my pilotage role, I have now been a marine consultant for over 15 years specialising in the ports and harbours industry.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

I have been working continually in the marine industry for about 47 years since I left school and the jobs can be summarised as sea-going, river pilot and marine consultant.



“Global warming is something that affects us all and the port industry has its part to play in reducing greenhouse gases.”

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

There are many careers within the port industry and my advice would vary depending on the role; however, the role that was particularly relevant to me was piloting. In this country, it is usual that pilots are ex-seafarers and therefore they would have had exposure to port activities before coming ashore. For someone new coming directly into a port environment, I would recommend that they undertake some work experience and that they are prepared for working in a 24 hours a day industry.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

From a pilotage perspective, little has changed in terms of the basic requirements of a pilot i.e. to board a vessel and safely navigate it within the port limits. What has changed for me is the advancement of technology for identifying other vessels and accuracy of navigation.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

Global warming is something that affects us all and the port industry has its part to play in reducing greenhouse gases. There are regulations that have been or will be introduced within the maritime sector but ports will need to be able to monitor and invest in ways of reducing these gas emissions. I hope that ports will take the initiatives required to achieve better green credentials sooner rather than later.



Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

I think that there actually two occasions that stand out. The first would be when I joined my first ship in Vancouver as a cadet. Obviously I was boarding a merchant ship for the first time and to a certain extent going into the unknown. It was daunting but nonetheless exciting times. The second occasion was when I sailed from port as my first trip as Captain. This time the environment and work was familiar to me but it was only then that I really appreciated the responsibility that I held for the ship and all onboard.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

In some ways this was a natural progression for me. Whilst I was Captain, I had already passed my pilotage exams for two major rivers in the UK and was therefore familiar with what was required for the role of pilot. I enjoyed manoeuvring vessels in rivers and ports and full time pilotage was a logical choice.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Variety of work, good working conditions, attractive salary and opportunities to progress.



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Anne Williamson, Civil Engineer at Port of Aberdeen

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I gained experience in a wide variety of civil engineering roles, ranging from Consultant Engineer to working with Scottish Water and Aberdeen City Council's Roads Department.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Prior to joining Port of Aberdeen, I worked as a Harbour Civil Engineer for Aberdeenshire Council, overseeing the maintenance of seven unique and

beautiful harbours across the north east of Scotland. This role gave me a deep understanding of all roles within harbours, from Harbour Masters and slipway management to the responsibilities of the Designated Person, who provides independent assurance of the operation of the marine safety management system.

I also coordinated dive surveys to assess the condition of the structures above and below water level and arranged diver repairs for two harbours.

I then began looking for a new challenge and fortunately the Civil Engineer position within Port of Aberdeen became available.

“I enjoy getting outdoors, especially onto the breakwaters and boats, where I get to experience unique views that most people never see.”

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I enjoy getting outdoors, especially onto the breakwaters and boats, where I get to experience unique views that most people never see. I also find it rewarding to oversee projects from start to finish and see them come to life.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Take every opportunity to explore different areas of the port and gain an understanding of the various roles that keep it running.



What does your current role at Port of Aberdeen involve?

I oversee civil engineering and project management for a wide range of projects across the port, from new ship-to-shore electrical installations to maintenance work spanning both North and South harbour. This includes concrete repairs on breakwaters - both by land and sea - as well as quay decks.

Currently, I am playing a key role in preparing the port for this summer's Tall Ships event, which will welcome 50 tall ships into North Harbour.



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Raslaphas Williamson, Terminal Supervisor at Portsmouth International Port

“ I currently find everything exciting with plenty of opportunities to learn and develop.”

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I have been working at the Portsmouth International Port for 9 years now.

Since I joined the Freight team, I have been trained to move up from FSA to a Traffic Supervisor post and am currently under training for a Security Supervisor role to be ready to become part of the Terminal Supervisor Team. I have also had first aid training.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Be more confident and don't be so harsh on yourself. My biggest success in the port industry has been joining the Portsmouth International Ports team.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

Currently, furthering my port based career is on my radar. I am also looking into getting back to further my education as a part time student.



What inspired you to get into the port sector?

Interest in the travel industry. I currently find everything exciting with plenty of opportunities to learn and develop.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

The variety of works. Not everyday is the same and there is a lot of room to grow professionally and personally.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

My knowledge of the port industry was very limited before joining. I expected the workplace to be similar to airport environment, and have enjoyed learning how a local authority owned port works.



Niamh Dougan, Marketing Executive at Port of Blyth

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I was in the 2nd year of my A Levels and I wasn't sure what career path I wanted to take after completing my A Levels. I then saw an advert for a Business Administration apprenticeship with Port Training Services (PTS), the training division of the Port of Blyth. PTS are a huge advocate of skills and education across the markets that they operate in. I met with the Head of Training at PTS for an informal chat about what I was currently doing and why I wanted to move into an apprenticeship rather than complete my A Levels. This was a very helpful discussion, explaining that

this could be a great starting point for my career journey and further increased my resolve to pursue an apprenticeship. Following this chat, I then attended the formal interview and was successful in getting the role.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

My role at the Port of Blyth is my first corporate role. However, before this I had a part-time job at a local hotel in Blyth. This experience really helped me plan my next career move. I decided to start my A Levels straight from school with little experience of the world. My time at the hotel helped me decide that the A Level route wasn't for me and helped me achieve where I am today.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Before joining the Port, I knew very little about it. I have lived in Blyth my entire life and the Port was just something that was there. Working for the Port I now understand how vital our Ports are to the UK and understand the opportunity you have to begin a long, successful career. I now support the Port's school engagement activities and promote careers in the Port to future generations.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

I have only been working in the Ports industry for a short amount of time. However, during this time, you can see how the Ports are looking to modernise for a digital age, as well as have a real responsibility for decarbonisation initiatives. Plus, our Port has a major place in the local community, and I am actively involved in promoting the good work of the Port, as well as helping our staff be more informed about initiatives that can help their mental and physical wellbeing.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

It's still too early into my Port career to have a really informed opinion on this. However, my goal is to use my position in the business to raise awareness of the opportunities available within the Port/Maritime sector more with the younger generations and the public in general. I don't think people have a true understanding of how vital Ports are to the UK and I'd like to use my role to push that more, using my experiences as an example, as well as using the example of my peers that work in different departments across the Port.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

The Ports industry, like most industries, strive to meet the growing demands of an ever-changing world. As a world, we want things faster and cheaper and that puts pressure on Port infrastructure and their people to meet these demands. Changes to Port infrastructure requires huge capital investment, as a lot of Ports look as they did many years ago. This requires highly skilled individuals to make this happen. Plus, as our people leave the Port, the roles are changing to meet the needs of the modern world. Historically, the Port sector has been male dominated and to meet these demands in the future we need more diversity, so we have the option to select from the other 50% of the population. To improve diversity, we must educate people that the Port is an option for you, regardless of gender. My role plays a big part in this as I work to promote opportunities within the Port.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

The major highlight for me to date would be achieving the Apprentice of the Year award with my training provider. The apprenticeship has been fantastic for me as it has allowed me to achieve qualifications, see different areas of the Port and where I see my place within it. During my apprenticeship, I had the



“The major highlight for me to date would be achieving the Apprentice of the Year award with my training provider. The apprenticeship has been fantastic for me as it has allowed me to achieve qualifications, see different areas of the Port and where I see my place within it.”



What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Everyday is exciting and different. You meet such a diverse number of stakeholders, clients and community representatives. It makes the job challenging, exciting and fulfilling.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

For me the Port was a place ships came in! Being on this side of the fence has really helped me understand how vital they are and how it supports our supply chains from food to energy generation.



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Edd Lumby, Commercial Graduate with Associated British Ports

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After completing my AS-Levels I started an apprenticeship and began an eight-year career in Transport & Logistics. As part of this role, I used the Roll-on/Roll-off (RORO) services at the Port of Immingham to transport trailers to Scandinavia and North Germany. This gave me exposure to the ports industry and further inspiration to work within it, for ABP. As I developed within my previous role and began to feel comfortable, I decided I wanted to challenge myself further. I looked at my options and decided to start a part-time bachelor's degree in business and management, completing night classes twice a week, after work, from 18:00-21:00. I did this for four years and it not only taught me a lot about various business subjects, but also about my character. Balancing the degree commitments around my role, took a solid amount of consistency and hard work. After graduation, I knew the only route I wanted to take was the ABP Graduate scheme. Since starting on the programme 18 months ago, I could not be happier with the choice I made and the work that went into making it happen.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Aside from my time in transport and logistics, I spent around a year working at Wetherspoons as a Waiter. Apart from the obvious benefit of the discounted food, it gave me a huge amount of social confidence as I was constantly speaking to new people!

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

The ports do not function without the collaboration of the great people that work within it. My best piece of advice if you are looking to get into the industry, would be to look for ways to develop your people skills. The most successful people in the industry are all excellent communicators. Whether you are looking to work in the Commercial Team or on the front line running the operations, being a team player is absolutely crucial and people skills are a key aspect of that. These skills can be developed early on, either for individuals who are in school or have just left full-time education.

“There are several routes into the port industry (entry level roles, apprenticeship programme, graduate programme) - be open to the different opportunities, show willingness to learn and be patient. It takes time to learn everything about the port industry.”

Participating in team sports, volunteering or getting a part-time job that involves you speaking and working with new people, are great ways of developing such skills.

There are several routes into the port industry (entry level roles, apprenticeship programme, graduate programme) - be open to the different opportunities, show willingness to learn and be patient. It takes time to learn everything about the port industry.



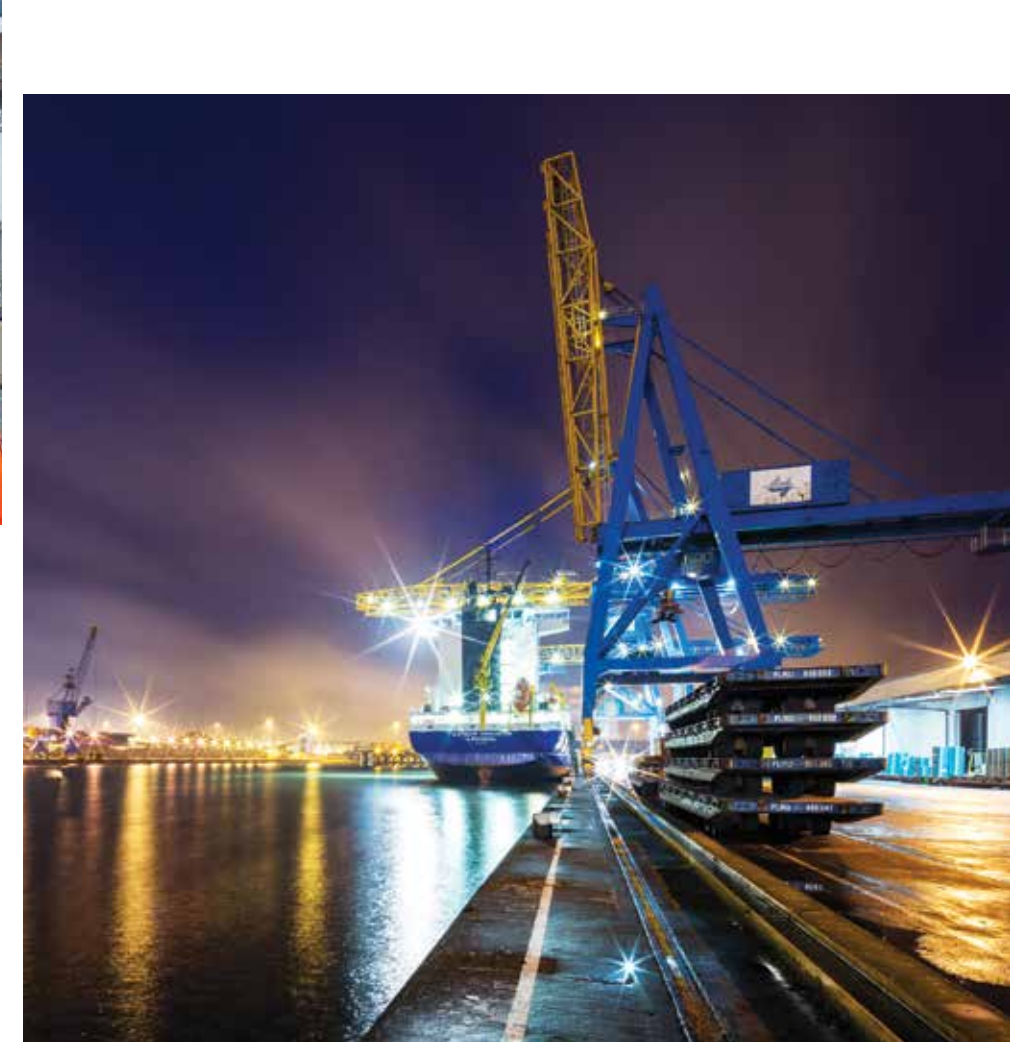
Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

In my 18 months within the industry, the one change I have noticed is the further shift towards Green Energy initiatives. As the UK looks to transition away from fossil fuels and improve its Energy Security, I have noticed the emergence of new greener projects being planned and implemented. These include Offshore Wind, Solar, Hydrogen, Carbon Capture amongst others. These projects will help support the businesses operating within and around the ports industry to meet their sustainability targets. But most importantly, the projects are contributing towards protecting the future of our children and the future generations to come.

As a key enabler of this transition, ABP has a big responsibility to secure this greener future for Britain. So in 2023 we released our 'Ready for Tomorrow' Sustainability Strategy, outlining a clear plan to become net-zero by 2040. In addition to this, we released our new Twin Missions, putting 'Enabling the Energy Transition' alongside 'Keeping Britain Trading', reinforcing the message that we must have green initiatives as a key part of our strategy.

Another big shift in the industry, is the attitude towards safety within the ports. No one should go to work and not return home. Due to the nature of ports, they can be a dangerous place to work in. However, if the right processes are followed and there is a strong safety culture in place, we can collectively minimise the risk of working within our ports. ABP ensures all colleagues complete annual safety training, to ensure that everyone knows the role that they play in ensuring the organisation remains a safe place to work.

Finally, the focus on creating a diverse and inclusive workplace has shifted in recent years. More and more organisations within the industry are actively trying to recruit individuals from different backgrounds (including more women), recognising the different ideas they can bring to an organisation. This is changing stereotype ideas that roles within the industry are predominantly for men.



What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

One change I hope to see is the maritime sector is appealing more to younger generations and an improvement in their awareness of the sector. After recently visiting a primary school where I was representing ABP, it really struck me how blown away the children were when I explained how the ports serve them and the UK as a whole. This kind of engagement and awareness, is crucial in ensuring that these talented young individuals consider a career in the ports industry in the future.

If we can appeal to younger generations earlier, we can ensure that they consider a career within the industry sooner and this will help with any current skills gaps.

Currently, particularly in my experience, there is a lack of awareness and this in turn causes the younger generation to take different career paths. I am thankful for the path that led me to the ports industry so far, but if I had this awareness earlier I would have absolutely looked to get into the maritime sooner as it is such an exciting sector to be a part of.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

Aside from ensuring that we have a skilled workforce, another challenge I see is how we tackle the issue of climate change whilst 'Keeping Britain Trading' (ABP's mission) with the rest of the world. The industry is absolutely crucial in supporting the UK economy, but is naturally a carbon emitting sector due to the operations on the ports/cargo on ships.



Angela Ward, Skills Lead at Port Skills and Safety Limited

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I walked into a recruitment agency in London looking for a job and was recruited to work for the agency as a recruitment administrator. It taught me a lot about working with people, providing a great service and juggling many different things at once.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

I have owned two small businesses and worked for an oil refinery. My main job roles have been within apprenticeships, training and further education. I've had the privilege of working with thousands of apprentices and students and being a part of their career journey.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Contact your local port. Have a look at their careers or recruitment website pages and ask for more information. Do they recruit apprentices, graduates or offer work experience or internships?

There are some roles which you will only find in a port but there are also some you find in any business such as HR, administration and finance roles – you just get to do them in the wonderful environment of a port. Check the PSS website for further information and useful links <https://portskillsandsafety.co.uk>

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Traditionally, ports recruited from their local community and fathers would train sons, and friends would recruit friends. Whilst more change is still needed, ports are opening up to a more diverse workforce, and we can all help to achieve this by talking about the jobs that exists in ports to people who might not previously have considered them as an option.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope to see more people truly excited by a career in maritime and the roles on offer being highly sought after. Not enough people know what working in maritime actually is and all the many roles available in ports. We need to be shouting louder about it and demonstrating the career pathways available.



“The industry is changing. With new technologies and automation comes new opportunities. It's an exciting time to get involved in the port/maritime sector.”

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

The industry is changing. With new technologies and automation comes new opportunities. Careers in digital, sustainability, innovation are increasing, and we'll continue to see new roles emerging. It's an exciting time to get involved in the port/maritime sector.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

Although it wasn't in the port sector, my highlights revolve around some stand-out managers and colleagues that helped my career journey by really listening and supporting me.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I'd worked with ports in one of my previous roles, so I had some idea of what went on behind the gates and the recruitment challenges the sector faces. I wanted to bring my previous experience of working in education, training and apprenticeships into ports, particularly from an engineering-related background, to help make a difference.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

There's a sense of belonging and impacting the community, looking after people, preserving places of beauty along the coastline for future generations, and finding innovative ways to be sustainable and commercially successful.

There's much more to being part of a port than you initially see! They are really something quite special and, being like small cities, the opportunities for careers and progression are amazing.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

Since working at PSS and having visited more ports around the UK, the similarities and differences between ports is more noticeable now and I have a far greater appreciation of the work that goes on behind the gates and how the impact to the environment, the community and its people is always considered.



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Sarah Cockcroft, Monitoring Business Manager at OceanWise

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

When I left education, I joined EMU as a graduate oceanographer. It was a small, close-knit team at the time, and over the years I worked my way up through the ranks — eventually managing the team after about 10 years. In 2012, EMU became part of Fugro, and that opened up a whole new world, moving from a small organisation to being part of a large multinational.

I spent a lot of time out in the field, working on vessels and getting hands-on experience with all kinds of sensors and equipment. Later, I managed a metocean consultancy team, which gave me an even bigger appreciation for how important good data is.

Now at OceanWise, I get to bring all that experience together — helping customers make smarter, faster decisions using both real-time and historic environmental data. Every day is different, and it's really rewarding to support people working in such dynamic and challenging environments.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

My first role was as a Graduate Oceanographer, then I became a Coastal Oceanography Manager, a Metocean Consultancy Manager, and later a Monitoring Business Manager and somewhere in between, I was a barista and became a mum!

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Be open to weird and wonderful jobs, especially early in your career. Try everything, even if you only have a vague interest — you never know where it might lead. There isn't really one place that lists all the roles available in the marine and ports industry, so you need to get stuck in and explore. My advice to graduates is simple: there isn't just one perfect job for you — there are many opportunities out there. Although I call myself an oceanographer, within that I feel I've also been a deckhand, an equipment technician, a data analyst, a mentor, an accountant, and a project manager all at different times, but sometimes all on the same day!

“Ports are places where you can make a real difference. While some parts of the industry move slowly, other areas are changing rapidly — and that pace of change is only increasing.”



Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Yes, definitely. There's a much stronger focus on health and safety now, and there are far more opportunities than when I started. Back then, offshore wind farms were in their infancy, and now there are roles in that sector I probably haven't even heard of yet! Environmental monitoring is now a much bigger part of marine industries, which creates great opportunities for oceanographers and scientists. Technological advances have been huge too, things like UAVs, USVs and real-time data transmission are now commonplace, whereas they were the rarity when I started.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

From a data perspective, I'd love to see more openness and data sharing. At the moment, too many organisations are overly protective of their data, and that holds everyone back. From a people perspective, I want to see a truly inclusive industry where roles and opportunities are open to everyone, regardless of race, orientation, gender, or age. We should be viewing differences as strengths, not restrictions.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

One big challenge will be funding — particularly when it comes to investing in environmental monitoring. Another is collaboration: too often organisations work in silos, even within the same port. Sharing data, resources and knowledge could really drive innovation and efficiency. Automation also brings opportunities but needs to be approached carefully — it's moving quickly, and we need to make sure that people and expertise remain valued parts of operations.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

One moment that stands out is the first time I shouted “Stop!” on a boat — and everyone actually listened. Up until then, I think I had felt like a small girl in a very different world. That moment made me realise that I was being heard, that I was valued, and that I could make a real impact. It was a turning point for me, it gave me the confidence to find my voice and really step up.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

Ports were a natural step as my career evolved. I found myself transferring my oceanographic knowledge into a sector that truly values accurate, timely data. Ports don't just tick a box — they genuinely need the information we provide to operate safely and efficiently. Being able to help ports make better decisions is what motivates me every day.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I used to think Harbour Masters did everything themselves — but now I know it takes a whole team to run a port or harbour effectively. It's a collective effort, and every role plays a crucial part in keeping operations running smoothly.



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Sam Rawlinson, VTS Operator at Milford Haven Port Authority



What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After graduating with a degree in Geology, I started working for a local IT company. Shortly after, I started sail training with the Ocean Youth Trust South for a few years and after catching the sailing bug, went on to work as the Staff Bosun onboard the sailing vessel *Queen Galadriel*. Following a few temporary positions at various charities and sailing companies, I started working as a VTS Operator at the Queens Harbour Master Portsmouth (as it was at the time!) before moving to HM Coastguard and then Milford Haven Port Authority.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Spend time on the water to learn about the sea and challenges faced by mariners. It is unlikely that I would have got into VTS if I had not spent time volunteering with the sail training charity Ocean Youth Trust South and the other volunteers who acted as mentors, many of whom are also experienced mariners. In my experience, that hands on experience was invaluable.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

A significant change to VTS has been the increasing incorporation of IT systems. When I first started, the Vessel Traffic Management software which uses radar and AIS feeds was fairly basic and paper logs were used to record shipping movements. There is a much greater emphasis and requirement now for digital systems which have become more advanced. As most of the information is recorded and shared digitally, this data can then be used to improve safety and the mariners experience using the port.



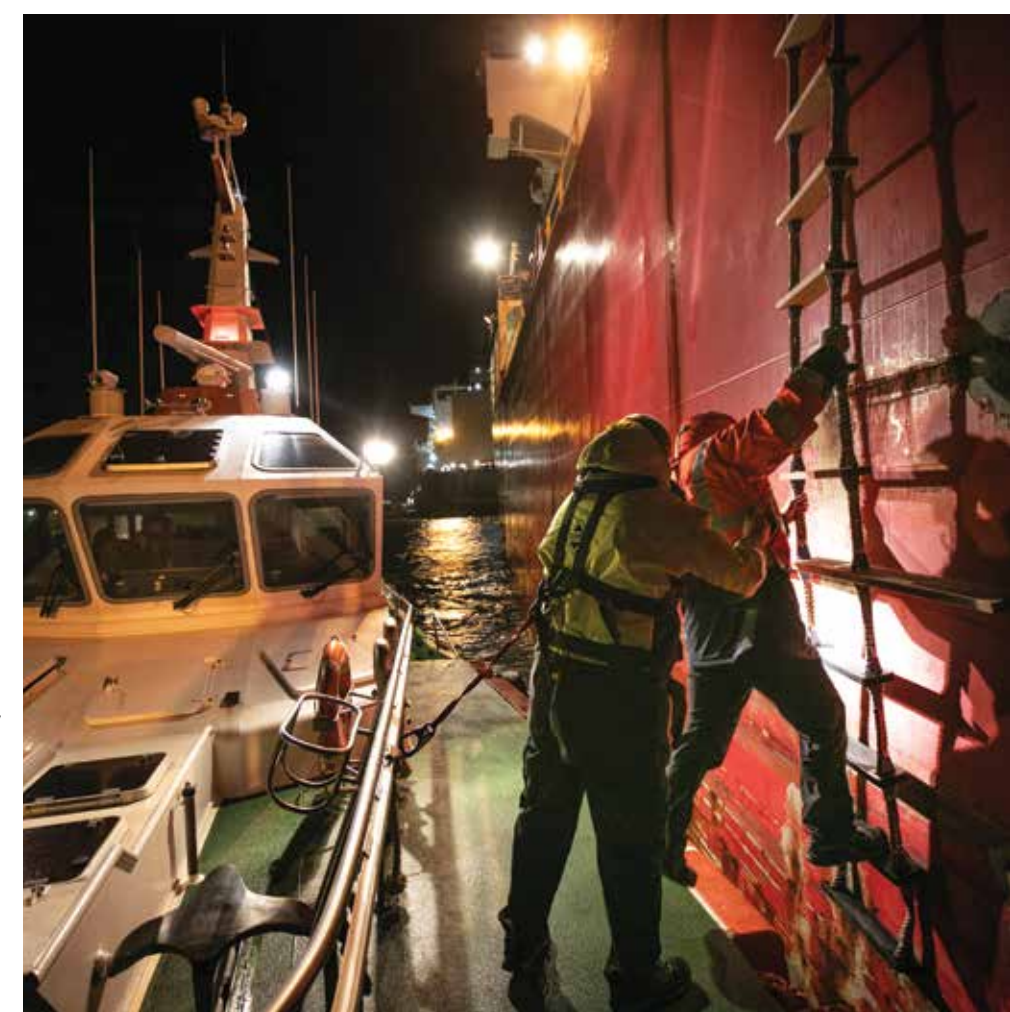
“After graduating, I really had no idea what I wanted to do. One of the key turning points was when I first went on a sailing trip with my dad who was an ex-mariner.”

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

My time as a staff bosun onboard the sail training vessel *Queen Galadriel* and volunteering for Ocean Youth Trust South was probably the most significant in terms of my career. Although an intense job, the combination of inspiring young people through sail training and learning and maintaining a traditional sailing vessel was incredibly rewarding and helped shape my career path.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

After graduating, I really had no idea what I wanted to do. One of the key turning points was when I first when on a sailing trip with my dad who was an ex-mariner. This then led me to volunteer with the OYT south and it was shortly after those first voyages, I just wanted to be on and around the sea. I moved to Gosport and was fascinated by watching the Brittany Ferries, Wightlink ferries and naval traffic all operating in the relatively narrow Portsmouth Harbour. This is what ultimately led me to a career in Vessel Traffic Services.



Denise Dudley, Senior Finance Assistant at Portsmouth International Port

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I have been working in the ports industry for over 18 years now. Before that, I had always worked in retail, but I was made redundant and the position for a part time Human Resources assistant was advertised at the Port and I haven't looked back.

My first role HR role included reconciling hours, training logs and administration. I also had a part time role in Finance, entering mms hours and job costs as well as raising recoverable invoices.

After joining the port team, I went to college to develop my skills and gained my qualification in Personnel. My colleague's are always on hand to help if I am learning something new.

My current position as a Senior Finance Assistant includes raising sales invoices, the banking of money and card payments, paying purchase invoices, coding all staff business cards, sending reminders to customers, chasing arrears and Camber pontoon licenses.



What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Push yourself to try something new, if I hadn't been made redundant I would still be working in retail and I would never know I was capable of so much more.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

Changing from Personnel to Finance and learning so much more about the Port. I am happy where I am in the industry, I feel proud of my journey.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

The job variety - I feel I have learnt so much during my time.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Work colleagues are all supportive and no day is the same whether its a challenging day or a day where you feel you have achieved.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

Before joining the industry I knew nothing, apart from sailing to France from Portsmouth on a ferry. I was excited to be working in a new environment, but didn't quite realise how different working for local government would be, but I am proud to say I work for Portsmouth City Council at the Port.

“Push yourself to try something new, if I hadn't been made redundant I would still be working in retail and I would never know I was capable of so much more.”



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Madison Rault, Digital Marketing Apprentice at Shoreham Port

“After looking at the Port’s website and values, I knew I wanted to apply. Attending their open days confirmed that feeling—it showed me what a great learning opportunity this could be.”

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I finished my A levels in 2022 where I studied Graphic Design, Health & Social Care and French. I enjoyed Graphic Design and Health & Social Care the most, so I knew I wanted a career which followed one of these routes. After college, I decided to go straight into work rather than look for an Apprenticeship right away. I got my first job at HMV, where I worked for two years. Here I gained valuable customer service skills

While working I also completed a course with Creative Process Digital where I obtained a Level 2 diploma in skills for in working in digital technology industries. I took this course because at this point, I knew I was interested in an apprenticeship in digital marketing. It gave me the opportunity to gain some

experience, expand my knowledge and confirm that this was the right path for me.

I have always wanted to do an apprenticeship because I found the style of learning at school quite tricky and didn’t want to continue doing full-time education like university. The great thing about apprenticeships is that you can get hands-on experience directly from industry experts as well as gaining a qualification. At first, I wasn’t sure exactly what type of apprenticeship I wanted to do, but taking that time away from education and gaining different experiences helped me decide on a career path.

When searching for apprenticeships, I came across one at Shoreham Port for



digital marketing and thought it looked like a great opportunity. The brand, values, and website stood out to me and gave me confidence that this was a trustworthy employer. I attended an open evening and an interview day, and was so happy when I found out I got the job! Since starting, I’ve had a great experience - everyone has been so welcoming and I’ve learned so much, from updating the website to designing adverts for our Chandlery, and creating newsletters to share with the public. I still have so much to learn and can’t wait to see what happens next!

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Before starting my apprenticeship at Shoreham Port I worked for 2 years at the retailer HMV. It was a great first job because I was passionate about the products and enjoyed talking to customers.

Taking time to work before applying for an apprenticeship was the right choice for me. It gave me the opportunity to experience a fast-paced environment where I had to think creatively and problem-solve—whether that was organising stock, setting up displays, or helping customers. I also gained a strong understanding of the customer journey and what kind of content engaged different audiences, which has been really helpful in my marketing role.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

When searching for a Digital marketing apprenticeship, I wasn’t focused on a specific industry—I was just looking for the right role. That’s when I came across Shoreham Port’s advert, and it caught my attention as a brand I instantly recognised. I live quite close to the Port, so it was a place I saw most days - but never realised just how much was actually going on there. After looking at the Port’s website and values, I knew I wanted to apply. Attending their open days confirmed that feeling—it showed me what a great learning opportunity this could be. Since starting, I’ve found the Port sector fascinating. - People here talk so passionately about their jobs and share lots of great knowledge. There are also incredible opportunities to learn. For example I got to see the *Waverley* (the last seagoing paddle steamer) when it arrived at the Port to drop off and pick up passengers, as well as the grand opening for our inshore fishing marina where I got to see the incredible transformation that was made during a refurbishment project. If I had to highlight the main reasons why someone might be inspired to work in the Port industry I’d say the variety of career



opportunities that Ports have to offer. There are so many different job roles and expertise that you wouldn’t come across in other industries. They also really care about the well being of their employees, ensuring that everyone gets home safely while providing opportunities to grow and take on training you are interested in.


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Shenaz Bussawon, Events, Marketing & Programmes Manager at British Ports Association

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After leaving college, I started temping at a financial organisation that specialised in loans, and that eventually turned into a permanent role. After some time, I decided to return to college to pursue a course in fashion, which led me into the wholesale fashion industry—mainly in footwear. Interestingly, that's where I first had some indirect ties to the maritime sector through shipping, tracking international shipments, and working closely with overseas factories and warehouses. But funnily enough, that's not how I ended up at the British Ports Association!

Alongside my job in fashion—where I was juggling a lot, including being a PA to

the MD, Office Manager, supporting seven sales reps, and managing wholesale accounts for major department stores and online retailers—I started volunteering with various charities. I found myself enjoying the voluntary work more than my day job, and that started to shift my perspective on what I really wanted from my career.

Eventually, I was approached about a role at the British Ports Association through a recruitment agency. When I met the team at the interview, I had a really good feeling—it felt like the right next step. In just my second week, I attended the BPA's annual lunch and got my first real introduction to the maritime sector. It was such a warm and welcoming environment, and now, seven years later, I've never looked back!

“I have learnt so much about what Ports do and the greater Maritime sector and how hard everyone works to keep nations supplied daily, which before knowing anything about the ports sector I never gave a thought about!”

What other jobs have you done in your career?

I've had a variety of roles throughout my career, starting with jobs in high street fashion stores, which gave me my first taste of working with customers and teams. From there, I moved into a finance organisation, where I developed key office and administrative skills. That experience helped me transition into wholesale sales administration roles across several companies, which later led to PA and office management positions.

Each of these roles has helped me build a strong foundation in organisation, communication, and problem-solving. They've also made it easier to adapt to new industries—including the maritime sector, which I had no prior experience in. These transferable skills have really helped me get a better understanding of the industry and grow within my current role.



What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

When I left school and college, I wasn't given much guidance when it came to career paths, and looking back, had I known more about the maritime sector, I'm sure I would have considered it much earlier in my career journey. Joining the ports industry has been a real eye-opener—it's such a vast and dynamic sector with opportunities to suit a wide range of skills and interests. There truly is a role for everyone.

For anyone interested in getting into the ports industry, LinkedIn is a great platform to follow what's happening across different ports and to spot new opportunities. The British Ports Association also features job listings on their careers page www.britishports.org.uk/jobs. I'd also recommend keeping an eye out for local and regional career events, as well as exploring the Maritime UK careers website www.maritimeuk.org/careers, which shares valuable information and event listings.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Yes, the industry has definitely changed—and honestly, it's such an exciting time to be part of it. Being involved with the British Ports Association, I've seen how ports across the UK are constantly evolving. What makes ports really unique is how diverse they are—every port has its own landscape, its own way of doing things, and that naturally drives innovation.

Because of that diversity, we're seeing so many new opportunities popping up—from roles in green energy and digital tech to community engagement and beyond. It's not just about ships and cargo anymore; the sector is growing in all kinds of directions, which makes it a really interesting and rewarding space to build a career in.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

As someone who is part of the British Ports Association (BPA), I hope to see greater awareness and investment in the wide range of career opportunities the maritime and ports sector offers. There's a common misconception that ports are solely about shipping and logistics, but in reality, the sector is incredibly diverse—offering roles in sustainability, digital innovation, engineering, security, and community engagement.

One of the changes I'd love to see is a stronger push to attract young people and underrepresented groups into the industry. By showcasing the variety of fulfilling and future-focused careers available, we can ensure the sector continues to grow, innovate, and reflect the diverse communities it serves. Through my involvement with the BPA, I've seen first hand the effort to promote these opportunities, and I'm excited to be part of that momentum.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

If I am truly honest, I 'fell into' the sector by chance and luck! However I can say that after seven years in I have not looked back and I have learnt so much about what Ports do and the greater Maritime sector and how hard everyone works to keep nations supplied daily, which before knowing anything about the ports sector I never gave a thought about! This insight has given me a greater respect and deeper understanding of colleagues in this sector.



Jayke Lucioni, Operative at London Container Terminal, Forth Ports Limited

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

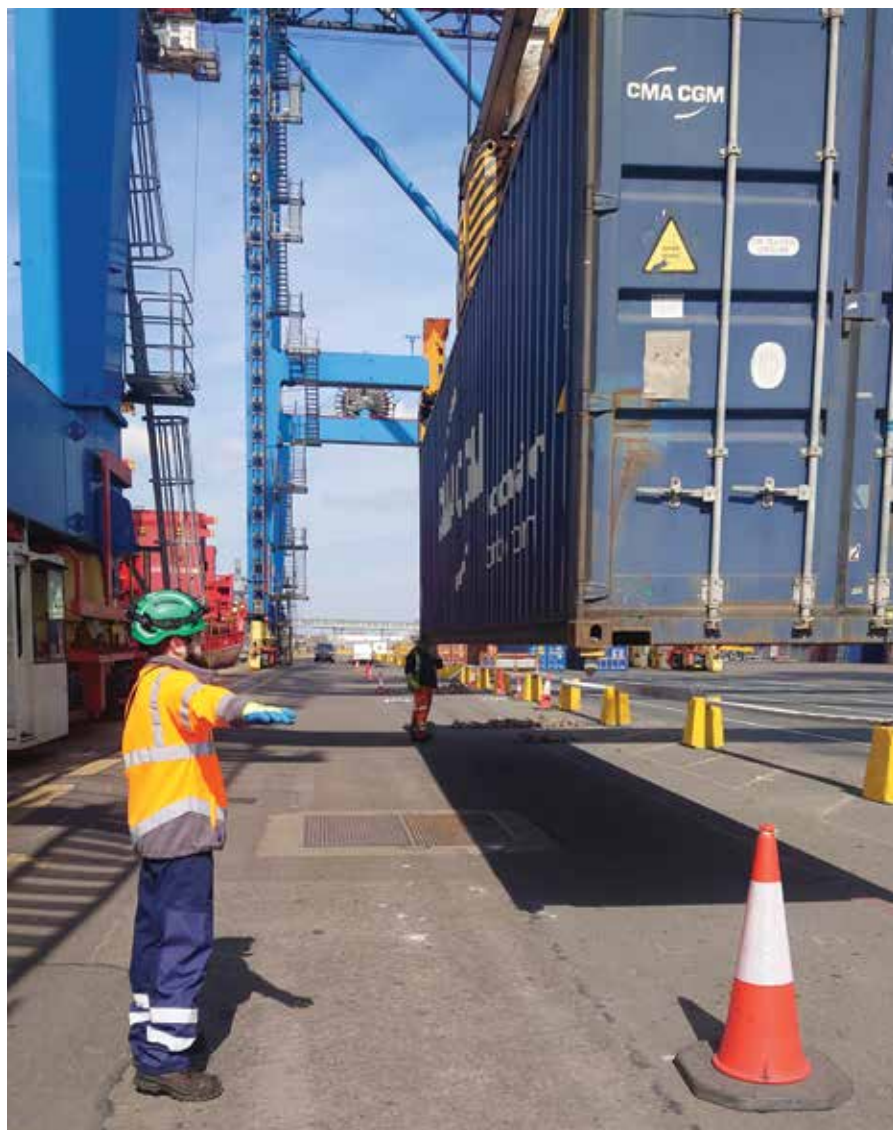
After college I went into bricklaying where I worked on multiple building sites across Essex and London. As a bricklayer I worked outside in most weathers but during the winter period I often found I wasn't working full weeks as per bad weather subsequently earning a reduced income. I realised early on this wasn't sustainable for me. At the time a family member worked for London Container Terminal (LCT) and recommended a job in the gate house booking in Lorries. I had limited knowledge of computers or operating systems besides what I had learnt in school, but thankfully full training was provided and I was soon brought up to speed.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

My career within the port has been really fulfilling and varied. I started in the Gate House assisting drivers with any queries and also assisting haulers with VBS. I then became part of a team with assisted with the amalgamation of two container terminals. I was then promoted to a Terminal Controller which is the role I'm in currently and has given me lots of opportunities such as learning to drive different plant and work around the terminal. It's also lead to other roles within the business, including acting as Operational Shift Manager when required.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

The port can be a really rewarding career. A lot of port work can be shift work so it does suit a lot of people and it's important to know what you are going into. Personally it works well for me as I have a young family so it enables me to be around for the school runs. I really enjoy the work too and the people I work with, and I find it financially rewarding.



“I've recently discovered 90% of our management team has come from the 'shop floor' which is great when your own leadership has done the role you have been in and walked in your shoes.”

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

I have seen many changes in relation to London Container Terminal and the Port, such as the terminal itself, the lay-out and how we utilise its space. Straddle carriers have become more reliant and efficient, and with the aid of add blue, bio diesel aiding the terminal and port to achieve its green targets. The Port has also expanded and continues to expand in new markets which is really exciting too.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope to see investment in vessels enabling them to become more stevedore friendly and with a continued focus on safety. Investment in port operations, vessels and equipment will support overall operations and efficiency.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

I believe there will be ample opportunities within the Port of Tilbury. The port is always looking at ways to invest, adapt and expand its operations. Port and related employment is set to increase from 4000 to over 12000 within the next 15 years so it's great to be part of that.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

I've been fortunate over the last 13 years to have had various opportunities within my career at London container terminal. Firstly, the training itself on handling various equipment but also completing a level 2 ILM course in leadership and lower management. This helped me greatly in obtaining the role of stand up Operations Manager. As I've recently discovered 90% of our management team has come from the 'shop floor' which is great when your own leadership has done the role you have been in and walked in your shoes.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

The Job security for me is a big one but also good progression and how diverse the port is. There are opportunities to move around the Port over your career as we have different parts of our business whether it be bulks, forestry or containers. Personally I like the challenge and pace of our operations at LCT. One day we could have a deep sea vessel then the next day something completely different which keeps it interesting.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

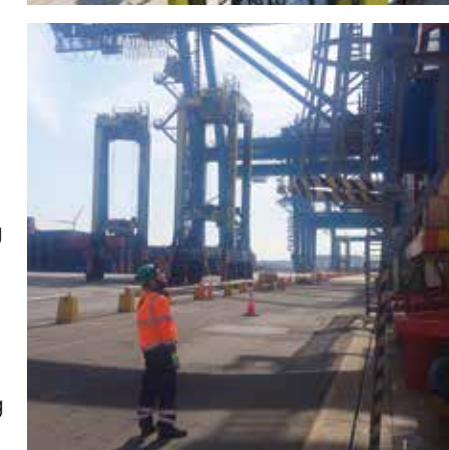
The port industry can be a rewarding place to work with good job security and good opportunities to establish yourself and progress (if you want to). There's lots of opportunities to get further training as we have our RTITB trainers on site to train you on various plant, as well as the option to go on different courses such as first aid or leadership. There's always a lot going on – no two days are the same.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

Before I worked within the port I had no inkling of what actually happens within it, only that in general terms, ships go in and offload then load. One of the first working memories I have is of the port collecting bags of cement for a building job and before I knew it I started working there.

When I started, I couldn't believe the sheer scale of operations and the size and variety of the plant equipment across the port. I always thought Lorries were big until I joined LCT and started working with the Straddles! We never take it for granted though, even now when we talk about an empty container, we remind ourselves that it still weighs 4 tonnes!

I find it fascinating how the port serves so many purposes from the flour mill that makes flour for our well known pizzas, or our cars coming in through Tilbury to so many other goods and products that we all use every single day.



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Sinead Henry, Senior Project Engineer, Port Engineering at Belfast Harbour

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After completing a Masters Degree in Environmental and Civil Engineering in 2005, I joined a consultancy firm in Belfast as a Graduate Engineer. I was involved in a range of projects, from small fishery harbours to large port developments across the UK and Ireland.

In 2023, I joined Belfast Harbour's Port Engineering team, where I have been able to further develop my career on a range of projects, including multi-purpose quay construction and maintenance of existing maritime infrastructure.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

During my time as a Civil Engineering Consultant, my roles and responsibilities included feasibility assessments, structural inspections, design, procurement, co-ordination of multi-disciplinary teams, site supervision and project management with overall responsibility for the delivery of projects on time and within budget.

“I know it's a cliché, but no two days are the same. Any big port like Belfast is a complex system of roles and responsibilities, so you will find yourself doing so many things across a typical working week.”



What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Don't make the mistake of thinking that the ports industry is one-dimensional and just focussed on shipping. There are so many different roles available, but the possibilities only become apparent once you are actually working within the industry. This is reflected in the wide variety of people that you get to meet and work with every day.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

There has been a definite shift towards the importance of sustainability within the ports industry in recent years. This is very much at the heart of what we do in Belfast Harbour. Last year we published our first ever Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) report, in which we are delighted to be able to say that we are on track to be the first net zero port operator in the UK and Ireland, ahead of our 2030 target.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

There is definitely a perception that working in a port environment – and particularly in an engineering role – is not for women. That's why I would love to see a better gender balance and for more women not to be put off from considering this as a career pathway. There is a lot of great work going on in Belfast Harbour around this, including the appointment of the first ever female Chair in the organisation's 178-year history.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

I would like to see an increase in transparency and public awareness of what happens within the port/maritime sector. We also need to promote the various industries and opportunities by encouraging alternative pathways into employment, such as the availability of apprenticeships, alongside those roles which we already know require educational qualifications.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

One of the projects I'm most proud to have worked on was the Caladh Mor Sheltered Harbour development on the Aran Islands, off the west coast of Ireland. There had been issues with fatalities on the original pier, so our task was to look at ways we could allow for safer access for ferries to the islands. I took pride in knowing that the work we were doing would have a direct impact in preventing loss of life within this small, close-knit community.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I think it was the sheer variety of projects which you get to work on. This includes everything from designing infrastructure for leisure, such as cruise berths, to heavy industry, such as container ships and fishing vessels. Working for Belfast Harbour also has a personal resonance for me, as I have lived in the city most of my life, so I feel like I'm making a real difference on my own doorstep.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

I know it's a cliché, but no two days are the same. Any big port like Belfast is a complex system of roles and responsibilities, so you will find yourself doing so many things across a typical working week. The horizon is endless, and the only limit to your career is your own imagination.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

My initial impressions were that ports were a 'repetitive' industry – just ships going in and out each day - but working within the industry has changed my perception. At Belfast Harbour we have a diverse portfolio of projects ongoing, each at various stages of development, and more in the pipeline. Getting those ships in and out of port requires considerable co-ordination between Belfast Harbour and its many partners. Every day we work closely to keep our operations ticking round the clock, and to keep the goods flowing in and out.



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Matthew Boucheron, Trainee Terminal Manager at Port of Blyth

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After leaving school at 16, I gained a carpet fitting apprenticeship. I worked within that industry for two years before applying for an apprenticeship at the Port of Blyth.

I started at the Port of Blyth in September 2013, aged 18 as a Warehouse Apprentice. I have been employed at the Port for 11 years now and have experienced several different roles within the company, progressing onto my current role as Trainee Terminal Manager, in June 2024.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

After leaving school at 16, I worked as a carpet fitting apprentice for two years before joining the Port of Blyth.

A short time into my Warehouse Apprenticeship, I was offered a full-time contract as a Warehouse Operative alongside completing my NVQ Level 2 in Port Operations. After two years in the warehouse, I was moved across to the Stevedore team. This involved working daily on a variety of projects across the different terminals and companies within the Port. Whilst in this role, I gained my crane driver license at the age of 21 and

began to build up my Port operation knowledge.

After six years on the Stevedore team, I was successful in my application to become a Stevedore Supervisor. This involved using my knowledge of the Port to run and lead various projects in the Port, working alongside a range of different companies.

Finally, I was appointed to my current role as Trainee Terminal Manager in June 2024. This has given me the opportunity to use my practical knowledge and experience of the Port of Blyth to move into the Operations team.



“Working for the Port industry, you gain invaluable work experience and it offers many opportunities for progression into a long and successful career if you want it.”



What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

My main piece of advice would be to not allow a lack of experience or qualifications to put you off an application into a role. This industry encompasses a large number of different skills, types of companies and jobs. You can gain a lot of experience and knowledge on the job and it is an exciting industry to be a part of.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

The Port industry has always been a key part of the history of North East England, in particular to our local town of Blyth. The Port remains a key aspect of our town, but the industry has changed significantly, in the last eleven years that I have worked within it. This industry has risen to the challenges and opportunities provided by Brexit and proved how important it was to the entire country during the Covid-19 pandemic. Today, the industry and the Port of Blyth continues to be a leading contributor in the development of the renewable energy sector.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope to see more young people accessing careers in the maritime sector through our apprenticeship and training programs.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

A key challenge for nearly every sector in the modern day is to move towards the Net Zero target. This provides the port sector with a massive logistical challenge regarding our infrastructure and power supplies.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

There have been a lot of highlights in my career, but the most significant would be passing my crane driver license at the age of 21. At the time, I was the youngest crane driver in the Port and I absolutely loved being part of the large de-mob operations we had at the time. The experience was something I will never forget.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

When I applied to join the Port sector, I was finishing one apprenticeship in a completely different industry to start again as a Warehouse Apprentice. This decision wasn't motivated by money or convenience but a passion to move into a job where there were lots of opportunities to progress. At the time, this required taking what felt like an uncertain step back to start again, but I have never looked back.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

This is a rapidly growing, successful industry with a diverse range of job opportunities available. Working for the Port industry, you gain invaluable work experience and it offers many opportunities for progression into a long and successful career if you want it.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

At my time of applying for a role at the Port, I had lived in Blyth all of my life but had very little knowledge of the Port industry. When I started the job, I was in complete shock at the sheer scale of the Port industry in Blyth, which was right on my doorstep. Our port stretches across several terminals, with lots of companies working on projects across a wide range of different sectors such as renewable energy, de-mob, oil and gas and bulk cargo. The Port of Blyth is a large source of employment for the local area but also has connections and links across the world.



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Jose Alves, Cruise and Operational Support Officer at Portsmouth International Port

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I worked for Brittany Ferries for 12 years, joining as a Check-in Agent for passengers and freight, before moving my way up to Assistant Duty Operations Manager. I joined Portsmouth International Port almost 3 and a half years ago providing cover across most of the operational roles in the port (Port Control, Traffic Supervisor, Security Supervisor, Berthing Master, Freight Gates) when post holders are away on leave or off sick.

I've been lucky to have received training across the entire scope of the operation,

from learning to berth vessels to dealing with customs procedures relating to the import and export of freight. I've also receiving training in people managing, including human factors, and have had mentoring by a few members of the managerial team on both personal and professional development, which has helped me grow on both facets.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

It is good to be ambitious, but balance professional ambition with personal ambitions.

The maritime industry is great and full of opportunities. It's also one that expects (and rewards) hard work. The hours

“The maritime industry is great and full of opportunities. It's also one that expects (and rewards) hard work.”

can be long and before embarking (pardon the pun) into a career in this industry make sure that you have taken the time and explored what it might mean for you as an individual to do so. And remember that regardless of what career path you take, no one person is an island. Build up good and meaningful relationships with colleagues and those around you as they will only make you stronger. Share what you know and be ready to listen and learn from others!

And besides all else, be ready to meet wonderful people from all corners of the globe, and look forward to make life long friends out of some of them!

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

I have recently moved from the operational team to our newly expanded cruise team here at Portsmouth International Port, and I look forward to putting my skills to use there as well as develop new ones. Hopefully this will be another step on my professional development that will enable me, in due time, to take a role with more responsibility and help to continue deliver the fantastic service that we do.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

Since I have worked for Portsmouth International Port I am very proud of being part of the team that delivers an outstanding service day in and day out, and have helped the port achieve the



recognition it deserves with the multiple awards it has won year after year.

At a personal level, I was very proud of becoming an Assistant Duty Manager at Brittany Ferries in my mid 20s as I felt that it was validation of the hard work I put in, especially as I was one of the youngest people in the management team.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

The room and scope for growth. The importance of the maritime sector and the critical role innovation is likely to play in the years to come as it transitions into a greener, more environmentally friendly industry.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

The camaraderie. The team that works at the port is fantastic and people have each other's backs. If someone needs help with something there's always someone a phone call away that can assist and do so!

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I had no knowledge of the port industry before I joined. But on joining I expected the port to be professional, well run and with established methods and procedures as it is a municipal port and my expectations were met.



James Gray, Assistant Harbour Master at Shoreham Port



What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I took an apprenticeship as an Agricultural Mechanic when I left school, at the age of 16. After 17 years doing this, the demand tailed off in the early 90's, so I re-trained as a commercial diver, working for various civil engineering companies on a self employed basis. Shoreham Port contacted me one day when they were short of divers. I took the job thinking it would only be temporary, almost 30 years later I'm still here! I changed roles in 2001 to work as an engineer on the Harbour Tug, later I became the Tug Master before eventually becoming Assistant Harbour Master.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Agricultural Mechanic, Commercial Diver, Tug Engineer and Tug Master.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Explore the relevant basic training requirements for whatever particular role it is that your interested in, and do as much research as you can about the company that is advertising the position. Be able to demonstrate a pro-active attitude and an ability to learn!

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Much like every industry, there have been many changes since I joined. Health and safety has played a large part in these changes. Things like the introduction and management of PPE, tighter security and personal welfare issues such as mental health now have a lot more focus.

“ There is a big drive to encourage diversity and gender balance in the marine and port industries. ”

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

There is a big drive to encourage diversity and gender balance in the marine and port industries. Although a conscious effort is being made generally to be more inclusive. In my experience, we can make every effort to accommodate this as an industry, but if the take-up is low we need to look for ways to improve it. I feel the most effective way to achieve this, is through early education and by providing an insight to all the diverse opportunities the Industry has to offer.

In the Port and Maritime sector, huge challenges lay ahead in finding ways to meet government set emissions targets and adapt to the requirements of clients using alternative fuels. This will in turn, provide a variety of new opportunities locally and also across the wider industry.



Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

I think being responsible for overseeing the build and naming of our new Harbour Tug in 2017 -2018, has certainly been one highlight during my time working at the Port. Probably a fascination with water!

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I would have to say both the local environment and the many diverse roles and opportunities.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

I suppose my perception of working in a port as a young boy, was a rough dirty environment with lots of manual labour, modern ways of working are now very much the opposite with gas fired power stations, Mechanical handling equipment and a high standard of training.

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Lynette McKinney, Head of People and Culture at Foyle Port

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After completing my degree in Business Studies at the University of Ulster I began my career in Human Resources by securing a graduate position with Northern Ireland Electricity, where I had previously completed an industrial placement year. This opportunity provided a strong foundation for my professional development and marked the beginning of my journey in the HR field.

I joined Foyle Port in August 2019, bringing over 20 years of expertise as an HR specialist across diverse industries, including financial services, retail, and manufacturing. I achieved Chartered Membership of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) complemented by a postgraduate diploma in Personnel Management. In 2023 I completed a Diploma in Executive Coaching.

As the Head of People & Culture at Foyle Port, my role supports the Executive Leadership Team to deliver the People Strategy. Ports are dynamic, 24/7 environments that rely on a skilled, safety-conscious, and highly engaged workforce to deliver essential services to the economy and global supply chain. In this setting, People & Culture is not a support function—it's a strategic enabler.

My responsibilities span the full employee lifecycle—from talent acquisition and workforce planning to leadership development, engagement, inclusion, and organisational design. At the heart of this work is a commitment to building a culture that reflects our values, prioritises safety, respects others, builds for the future, and empowers people to thrive in a fast-paced and technically complex environment.

We are navigating a time of significant transformation—driven by technology, sustainability, and shifting global trade patterns. As such, a key focus of the role is preparing our people and culture for the future. This includes fostering adaptability, investing in learning and development, and strengthening leadership capability at all levels.

Equally, the Head of People & Culture must maintain a deep connection to the

operational realities of port life. From union engagement and workforce relations to supporting frontline leaders and upholding our safety culture mindset, the role requires credibility, consistency, and collaboration across every part of the business.

Our people are our greatest asset. The role of Head of People & Culture is about unlocking that potential—ensuring we not only meet today's operational demands but also build a high-performing, flexible, values-led organisation ready for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

I began my HR career as a Graduate with Northern Ireland Electricity, where I had the opportunity to grow and progress into HR Advisor and later HR Partner roles over a 15-year period. This journey gave me deep, hands-on experience across the full spectrum of HR and a strong understanding of both operational and strategic people practices.

Following an acquisition, I was offered the chance to specialise in Learning and Development—an area I quickly developed a passion for. Over three

years, I focused on building capability, supporting leadership development, and creating learning experiences that made a real impact. It was a chapter of my career I found incredibly rewarding.

In 2013, after the birth of my third daughter, I made the decision to step away from my role to focus on my family. This proved to be the most difficult job of them all.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

For anyone interested in a career in the port sector, my advice is to actively seek out Port Operations apprenticeship opportunities. These programmes offer hands-on experience across a variety of skilled and in-demand roles such as Electricians, Mechanical Fitters, and Welders/Fabricators—all of which are vital to the safe and efficient running of a port.

Excitingly, this type of apprenticeship will shortly be available in Northern Ireland, and we look forward to the strong talent pipeline it will help us build for these critical roles.

For those interested in support functions and engineering roles—including HR, Finance, Marketing, Cyber Security, Marine Engineers, Structural and Civil Engineers—I highly recommend exploring industrial placements as part of a related degree programme. These placements provide a valuable opportunity to gain real-world experience, build professional networks, and get your foot in the door in a unique and essential industry.

Ports offer a wide range of career pathways, and with the right entry point, there are plenty of opportunities to grow, specialise, and make a lasting impact.

Foyle Port celebrating International Women's Day 2024



Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Ports are entering a new era, shaped by advances in digitisation, decarbonisation, and artificial intelligence (AI). These changes are transforming how we operate, collaborate, and plan for the future.

Digitisation is streamlining port operations enabling more efficient cargo handling, real-time tracking, and improved communication across the supply chain.

Decarbonisation is a growing focus, with ports here investing in greener infrastructure, electrification of equipment, and sustainable energy solutions.

AI is emerging as a powerful tool in improving productivity and efficiency across all port teams.

These shifts are about more than just technology. They call for investment in people, skills, and culture—ensuring our workforce is ready for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope to see the maritime sector become increasingly attractive to the next generation of talent. When I was at school, careers guidance rarely highlighted the diverse and rewarding range of opportunities available within the ports sector—many of which were right on my doorstep.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

As the port sector continues to modernise, it faces several critical workforce challenges that must be addressed to ensure long-term sustainability and competitiveness.

One of the most pressing is an ageing workforce, with many experienced employees approaching retirement and a shortage of younger talent coming through to replace them. This is compounded by ongoing skills and labour shortages, particularly in technical and operational

“I can confidently say it has been an incredible learning journey. No two days have ever been the same...”



roles, where demand is growing in response to increasing automation and digitalisation.

At the same time, the sector continues to grapple with a lack of diversity and inclusion. Greater representation across gender, ethnicity, age, and background is essential—not only for equity, but to bring fresh perspectives, innovation, and resilience to an industry undergoing significant transformation.

To overcome these challenges, the port sector must invest in attracting, developing, and retaining a new generation of talent—ensuring it is equipped with the skills, culture, and diversity needed to thrive in the future.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

In my role as Head of People & Culture, I've been proud to lead meaningful change that supports both our people and our wider culture.

A key highlight has been breaking the stigma around mental health in what has traditionally been a male-dominated environment. Through targeted education, awareness campaigns, and accessible support services, we've opened up conversations, encouraged early intervention, and created a more open and supportive workplace culture where mental wellbeing is prioritised.

Another major achievement has been in advancing gender diversity across our workforce. By enhancing our family-friendly policies—including flexible working, agile working, shared parental leave, and pregnancy loss & fertility treatment—we've created a more inclusive environment that attracts and retains talented women across all levels of the organisation.

These initiatives have not only strengthened our culture but have also aligned with our broader strategic goals—helping us to build a more flexible, diverse, future-ready workforce.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

When I was ready to return to work, I was fortunate that Foyle Port was seeking a HR Manager. As a well-respected local

employer with a unique position as a gateway to global trade, the opportunity immediately appealed to me. The combination of its economic significance, strong community roots, and the challenge of supporting a diverse and operationally complex environment made it a perfect fit. It also helped that the Port is right on my doorstep—within 30 minutes of my children's schools—making it easier to manage the morning routine and family commitments. That balance, alongside the professional opportunity, made the decision to return to work both practical and rewarding.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

The port sector offers secure, long-term careers with clear pathways for development. With an ageing workforce and growing skills needs, there's real demand for new talent and room for rapid progression.

Working in a port, your impact is tangible—from moving goods that support daily life to driving forward projects that shape regional development. That sense of purpose is a powerful motivator.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I had no prior expectations of what it would be like to work in a port environment. However, after six years, I can confidently say it has been an incredible learning journey. No two days have ever been the same, and I've had the opportunity to contribute to the development of our people strategy within a truly values-led organisation. It's been both professionally rewarding and personally fulfilling.



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Gavin Roach, IT Manager at Port of Cromarty Firth

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I didn't take a traditional route. By the age of fifteen I'd been talked out of acting by my dad. So I was left with two dream jobs: lawyer and foreign correspondent.

I was offered a job in my local newspaper group as a Sales and Marketing Assistant, they sat me in front of a computer, telling me "You'll be using that". I turned out to be quite good at it. I'd had an interest in computing since primary. So although I was winning copywriting awards, the journalism thing just didn't materialise and at the same time I was getting more interested in technology. Before I knew it I was on secondment to group IT, and everything grew from there.

I spent most of the next twenty years in the IT departments of regional newspapers, with a brief spell at a software house. But I couldn't ignore that traditional print media was increasingly squeezed, so I started looking around. And there were two immediate options: one largely in my comfort zone of office-based IT, and then this job at the Port, in an industrial setting and about as far from my self-image as it was possible to go. I wanted the other one: I got this one. Regrets? None.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

I've had jobs from waiter to fancy dress sales assistant (I was turned down for bingo caller).

After Newspaper Sales & Marketing, I worked implementing advert booking systems across the north of England, which was a steep learning curve and where I first found I'm a half-decent trainer.

Then the company supplying those systems headhunted me, so I had a year with a software house near Leeds, mainly travelling around to implement, trouble-shoot and train customers on systems for regional press. Luckily the same wave that first dropped me in front of a computer also carried me into an interview at the newspaper group where I'd been doing the installation – this time for a systems admin job. I was there seventeen years, through waves of digitalisation, expansion to cover fourteen sites, and ultimately contraction.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Don't be intimidated. On the face of it, it can look completely different to environments you've worked in before. I'd never worked in an industrial setting, never worked with outdoor equipment, barely worked with any Operational Technology.

But as an IT professional you're used to constant change and learning new technologies, and the core skillset is problem solving: those things carry across businesses, across sectors and ports are no different.

And I'm sure it can look even more intimidating as a traditionally male-dominated sector. But that's changing too, as the BPA Women in Ports events regularly demonstrate. We need more women in tech and we need more women in the maritime sector.

The sheer breadth of learning opportunities has been incredible. I've done deep dives into RF for troubleshooting outdoor point-to-point connections, run a private LTE trial, scoped renewable energy and battery storage options for business continuity. We have many of the same security requirements as airports and computer vision tech is becoming a must-have. I've brought drones into port operations, learned about relay stations and buoy-mounted 5G mesh and ROIP for line-of-sight comms beyond the horizon, boned up on self-driving vehicles and initiated a wide-ranging sensor trial across the estate.

If you like to play with cool new tech – and let's face it, that's one of the real perks of the job – it can be a bit like a day at the funfair. Apply!

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

The obvious answer is the inexorable move away from hydrocarbons. We'd already supported more offshore wind projects than any other Scottish location when the Green Freeport designation was announced, followed recently by the FLOWMIS funding for Invergordon; those were massive wins for the Cromarty Firth/Inner Moray Firth area.

We're still very much open for business as far as offshore oil and gas is concerned – we've been a trusted IRM partner for decades – but there's an undeniable trend towards renewables. That was clear when I started at the port seven years ago and that's going to continue to be the direction of travel: there's a finite amount of hydrocarbons out there.

We have a thriving cruise business, welcoming 213,00 passengers last year on almost 120 ships: those vessels, and

“It's a rare day that doesn't have a learning opportunity and the breadth of technology to work with is beyond anything you'll get in many other IT roles.”

the transport the passengers need during their visit, will be affected too, and there's a growing focus on making the sector as environmentally friendly as possible.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

Late last year I was in Glasgow at the CENSIS tech summit, which showcases innovative, transformational technology and visionary thought in Scotland.

One of the best presentations was from Di Gilpin of Smart Green Shipping, who are aiming to retrofit rigid wing sails on ocean-going tankers and bulkers. She explained in detail how they ran their first sea trials, attaching a massive aerofoil to a British-flagged vessel, so that it runs sort of like a hybrid car. It looks a little strange but the potential fuel savings, upwards of 30%, are impressive.

At the outset the ship's engineer was hugely sceptical of what they were trying to achieve. By the end of the trial he'd taken control of the whiteboard and was enthusiastically showing the project engineer what improvements he could see.

But I also see our sector as being a little behind the curve in digital transformation and in putting IT at the heart of the business. The UK government's Digital Smartports initiative is great, but we need experienced and empowered IT professionals in house to evaluate and test what people are trying to sell us.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

I think global instability has to be top of the list. At some point over the last 10-15 years, we've crossed the Rubicon into a fundamentally more unstable world.

We saw what COVID did to supply chains worldwide, what Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine did to Black Sea traffic and food supply for some of the poorest areas on the planet. And we're a wee part of that massive logistics machine: if it seizes up, we're going to be affected. In any hard times if you can be agile and creative with the use of assets, and find synergies with traditional competitors, you're going to have a better chance.

So currently I organise my head around three 'S's, which are Supply chain, Security and Smart.



Supply chain is about where we get our tech from, what we rely on to be able to use it, and the threats and opportunities inherent in that.

Security has overlap with supply chain, but it's also about what the growing global insecurity means for cyber defence. And it's a tough sell: security costs a lot, usually slows things down, and if it works, nothing happens.

Smart is – obviously – about digitalization and evaluating and making the case for tech, from sensors to computervision to AI/ML. It's not always easy to make a business case for trials and pilots, but we need both budget for innovation and a preparedness for its failure if we're to move forward.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

I don't know about "significant" but I remember climbing all the way up a newly arrived rig to commission a line-of-sight connection internet connection. I had PPE over a three-piece suit because it was an office day, and this was just supposed to be a quick show-and-tell. The rig sparky proceeded to lead me up a long ladder missing a backscratcher, pointed out onto a girder and said "That's where it's going". Having no harness and no offer of one, I replied "That's where you're going", handed him the dish and started back down.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

It was pure chance. I needed a change and this position came up at the right time. I thought it was a long shot because I'd zero experience in the sector, but IT roles like this are fairly thin on the ground in the Highlands and I'd no intention of moving, so there was no harm in applying.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

It's hard to generalise – no two ports are exactly the same and there's huge diversity in the sector – but the first thing I'd say is that you'll be working at the intersection of a massive number of moving parts. You have planned vessel visits but you also

have ships that just show up. Customers are from all kinds of different sectors – cruise and energy are two extremes we deal with but there are bulk carriers and research vessels, yachts and aircraft carriers.

I might be refreshing a cybersecurity risk assessment for a pilot boat first thing, then chasing down a problem with a finance database before working up a procedure for live streaming to an incident room during emergency drone launches. If you like your days and your tech varied, there are worse industries to be in.

If you're motivated by working in a varied environment, requiring a broad skillset and with a people from really diverse disciplines, you're probably going to enjoy port life. It's a rare day that doesn't have a learning opportunity, even seven years in, and the breadth of technology to work with is beyond anything you'll get in many other IT roles.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I don't think I had much of an idea beyond "this is a place with large pieces of machinery, any one of which could kill me". PPE was an alien concept and while I do like orange, wandering round in hi-vis was very much not part of my self-image. I guess it seemed a slightly incomprehensible place where people did arcane stuff with chunks of floating steel, and a world away from words and images getting printed onto paper. And to me, outdoors was where you play, not where you work. So the port was, in a word, alien.

I still sometimes find it incomprehensible, but that's part of the fun – there's always something new to learn. I love being able to get close enough to things like rigs and wind turbines to stand in slack-jawed awe at the engineering effort that goes in to producing things on that scale. In IT you're used to complexity, to the interactive layers of technology that have gone into producing a modern piece of hardware or software, but it's generally really small, or basically abstract, or both, whereas a 50,000 tonne ship up close commands the attention in a totally different way.

It turns out that the machinery and ships are awesome, outdoor networking is fascinating, and I look pretty good in orange.



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Sharon Adams, Commercial Manager at Port of Milford Haven

“It’s a great career, really varied and there’s lots of opportunities out there. I only wish I knew this thirty years ago and any younger team members joining us, I always make sure they know what an opportunity they’ve got.”

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

When I left school I didn’t know what I wanted to do so ended up in retail. I spent most of my adult life working in hospitality and then much later on I ended up working for the Chamber of Commerce which is when I became interested in export and imports. This role came along just at the right time but was a leap of faith as to whether I could utilise the skills I have developed over the previous 30 years into a role commercialising a port operation.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Hotel and hospitality management mainly, working my way up from an events coordinator to Managing Director of a boutique hotel.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Go for it! It’s so varied no two days are the same and you get to work with the most amazing people.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

I’ve only been in the industry 3 years but I can already see that it can move very quickly and keeping good relationships with your local shipping agents and customers is key to you and your team’s success.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

More women getting involved.



What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

Port capacity with the evolution of the energy sector. Whilst we transition to renewables we all still expect to be able to drive our petrol cars and switch the heating on, so we have to ensure we can maintain support for our existing clients while helping our future ones.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

Several but the biggest highlights have been those leaders who inspired, encouraged and supported me to better myself.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I’ve always had a fascination with cranes and big machinery as my dad worked on the oil rigs right back from the 70s. I was also one of the lucky few who got to visit an oil rig to visit their family back in the early nineties and its been my claim to fame ever since!

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

It’s a great career, really varied and there’s lots of opportunities out there. I only wish I knew this thirty years ago and any younger team members joining us, I always make sure they know what an opportunity they’ve got.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I think my main misconception was I really didn’t realise that ports were so critical to the UK infrastructure.



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Martyn Boyers, Chief Executive, Grimsby Fish Dock Enterprises Ltd

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

Originally I was in fish having a father and a grand father who worked as fish merchants. My grandfathers business started in 1911 in Grimsby and then expanded to Fleetwood. From the age of 14 my dad worked in his business and in 1934 he was told to do consider another career as the fish business wouldn't last. After the Second WW my dad went back to work in his fathers business, then set up on his own, a pattern I followed. Funnily enough he told me the same thing as his dad told him! But of course the fish business has continued and will continue.

In 1993 a new business, GFDE Ltd a sort of co-operative, was set up to run the Grimsby Fish Market and the fish docks. I was on the Board representing the Fish Merchants Association. In 2001 the then

CEO retired and because it was 100% fishing vessels and a fish market, and as I wanted to change lanes in my career, I thought I had the knowledge and experience to run the business, so applied for the position and have been here ever since. Little did I know then that my role would completely change!

What other jobs have you done in your career?

My dad had a wet fish shop in Freeman Street and from a young age I used to work in there on a Saturday morning and payment was us going to watch the mighty Mariners (Grimsby Town FC) at Blundell Park in the afternoon! I also did numerous student jobs when I was young including learning to drive a fork lift truck in a pallet making yard, packing frozen peas in a factory and I also did a lucrative week as a 'lumper' when they were on strike, they are the guys who work during the night landing fresh fish from the trawlers. Hard graft down in the hold of the vessel, but I had an easy job on the

quay sorting the fish, as I was the only one who knew the species!

My first 'proper' job was a trainee insurance agent with the Prudential which went very well and I liked it, but as I progressed in their system the evening work clashed with my non-league football playing career and training. Just as I was debating whether to give up the football or the Prudential, (it would have been the Pru!) my dad became ill and he asked me to 'look after' his business. That made my mind up and in 1980 I went down dock and have been here ever since!

From 1982 to 2000 I had my own Fish Merchant business which I called 'Boyers Bros' which was named out of respect to my grandfather who used the same name when he started his business with his two brothers in 1911. During my time as a Merchant I became Chairman and briefly Chief Executive of the Grimsby Fish Merchants Association and represented them on the Board of GFDE Ltd, until taking the role of CEO in 2001.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

My advice to anyone is to consider a career in the Ports Industry as there is such diversity and opportunity. The redeeming feature of the Ports business to me are the personalities and people within it. There is a vast array of different roles and responsibilities on offer, some require degrees and study, some require aptitude and application. But whichever path anyone chooses they will be engaging with businesses so the most important thing is to be receptive to people.

The supportive advice is then to be adaptable and not be stuck in any particular routine as the Ports Industry is changing at a pace. Anyone coming in must be receptive to new ideas, new techniques and new demands.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

The biggest changes are to vessel emission's, fuel and climate change and how do we tackle that. This is closely followed by geo-political events and Governmental legislation that can effect trade and movement of goods and vessels. There is an acceptance that these changes will come but they have to be delivered in a way that is achievable and viable. There will be continuing development of plans and ideas that create change and we must support those bodies and departments that are trying to make improvements.

Change is a constant and when we look back, I don't think any of us could have predicted to what extent. Clearly, all Ports have a history and tradition and it is important to respect that. However, at the same time we have to balance new requirements against the past to be able to move forward and embrace the change with confidence.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

Safety is a key element of all Ports, vessels and business. We have huge amounts of H&S in every aspect of every department of every business. We have become hardened to H&S to the point where sometimes people pay it lip service or see it as a tick box exercise.

What I would like to see change is the attitude to H&S, it is there for a reason, safety for yourself and safety for others. No shortcuts, we must all go with it, support it and encourage it.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

The biggest challenge I see is the type of fuel that vessels will use and the conversion to alternative fuels. Here in Grimsby we have a joint project with ORE Catapult to provide a charging point on a pontoon for a Crew Transfer Vessel for the Offshore Wind Industry. This will be the only all electrically powered vessel in the Port if not the UK. The development work on the vessel has been challenging as has the provision of enough power on the quay to enable the vessel to fully charge in a quick turn.

Another challenge is the development of Port Infrastructure and the availability of government grants. All our Ports have a history and the cost of maintenance and repairs on aging bits of kit is challenging, especially those of us who have lock gates!

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

In 2006 we knew the fishing/catching industry was in decline so we were looking for alternative business. I had a knock on the door from a guy who wanted to bring a 10m vessel for a 6 months and needed some specific facilities. I asked him what was the vessel being used for, he said; survey work. Great I said, survey work for what I asked? The development of offshore wind farms! What are the specific facilities required? A floating pontoon was the answer. At the time we didn't have any.

As they say, the rest is history and 'Port of Grimsby east' is now the busiest O&M Port in the UK!

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

Mine was a subliminal experience as I had worked in the Port from a young age and have grown up and seasoned with it. My dad had his fish business on a pontoon stand on a place called 'Henderson's Jetty' so his place of work was by the water and so mine always has been.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Primarily people look at pay as the deciding factor for going into a career or job. But if you are happy in your work then it is of greater value.

The companies in the Ports industry are professional and create the right environments to work in. The employers are fair and there is a platform for a great relationship and progression with them. The inspiration are the people and the opportunities.



“All Ports have a history and tradition and it is important to respect that. However, at the same time we have to balance new requirements against the past to be able to move forward and embrace the change with confidence.”

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

My impression to start was that the Ports business was isolated and everyone just carried on with their own thing. How wrong could that be, there is always inter activity with staff, customers and business. The Ports business does not revolve around one Port or one organisation, it always relies on engagement and interactivity.

Grimsby Fish Dock Group

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Mike Sellers, Port Director at Portsmouth International Port

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

Before starting out in the Industry I had completed a foundation degree course in banking and had further education on accounting. Early in my career I wanted to develop my knowledge and completed a diploma in port management.

I was part of a mentoring scheme when I joined ABP, where I had the benefit of gaining a better understanding from a senior manager. When I became a senior manager, I had some coaching sessions which I found very beneficial.

I have worked at 8 ports during my career with senior roles at East Anglia and Humber ports. I've been at Portsmouth International Port for 8 years providing strategic direction and overseeing the running of Portsmouth International Port.

I joined via the traditional route of being a dock workers son. My Father was an

ex-registered dock worker who joined an independent stevedoring firm at the Port of Hull after the ports were privatised in the late 80s. As the firm grew over the years, they took on new stevedores and looked towards the dock workers sons.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

I wouldn't change anything that influenced my career choice, I strongly believe that starting out a career at a manual level and working towards senior management has helped me tremendously with my knowledge of how a port functions and setting strategic direction.

Work hard, look to develop your skills through personal development. There will be set backs but don't let them deter you from your goal.

I would probably tell my younger self to avoid buying shell suits in the early 90s. they were not cool!

“I wouldn't change anything that influenced my career choice, I strongly believe that starting out a career at a manual level and working towards senior management has helped me tremendously with my knowledge of how a port functions and setting strategic direction.”



What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

Over the last few years there have been many challenges. The port has had to react a number of times to government policy changes on how trade and borders are run. There are many aspects of government policy that impact on how ports are run that crosses many departments.

In order to adapt and to thrive we have had to be strategic and 'shovel ready' when it comes to developing the port for the future. What is so encouraging is the way the staff at the port have responded to so many changes.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

I've been lucky enough to have been involved in some major projects at the ports I have worked at. I am proud to have been part of the developments of Green Port Hull (Siemens blade factory and load out facility) and the Immingham Renewable Fuel Terminal. The recent developments at Portsmouth and the port masterplan will set the direction of this port for the next 20 years and has made us a leading light in the industry where we continue to held up as the industry standard.

My proudest moment so far was the fact that my peers nominated me for Chair of the British Ports Association, the voice of the industry.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

It was in the blood having family working at the Port of Hull. I therefore had a good knowledge of the industry before joining.

I am proud to be part of the port industry and having the opportunity to help guide government strategy for the maritime sector through membership of the BPA. I simply love the job, the people and get a buzz from setting the strategic direction and making positive changes in the industry.

In this industry, opportunities come at unexpected moments. I am very happy where I am and would certainly feel like I have had a successful career if this is my last role before I retire. However, you never know what is round the corner....

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

The people! I can only speak for the industry I have only ever known but I find it amazing the breadth of knowledge and the camaraderie there is within port sector. We have some amazing people here at the port who are highly technical, highly experienced and great ambassadors to inspire the next generation of port leaders.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

There is a perception outside of ports that we are heavily industrial. The reality is that it is a progressive industry offering high end, well paid careers. The covid pandemic and Brexit have highlighted how important ports are to UK trade.



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Ports Skills and Safety - The UK's professional safety and skills membership organisation for ports

Port Skills and Safety Ltd (PSS) is the professional safety and skills membership organisation for ports. We work in collaboration with our members to promote best practice and innovation, develop guidance and deliver services to drive continuous improvement in safety and ensure a highly skilled workforce.

Our vision is to drive the ports sector to become one of the safest places to work, with opportunities for individual growth and collective success. We drive positive change in skills and safety across the entire port sector.

PSS believes that to deliver safer ports, the combination of focus on skills and safety is vital. Whilst it is more obvious that sharing safety data, learning, and best practice will make ports safer; it is

ultimately people – their skills, knowledge and commitment to a safety culture, who will make ports one of the safest places to work.

Skills ensure there is an adequately sized workforce, with the skills to work safely and the ongoing development to adapt to changing requirements. Sharing safety learnings and resources can only make ports safer if people are able to understand and implement them. Ports cannot become safer if people don't know how to act safely. Port workplace culture must promote safety as the main driver for performance, and people as the main driver for safety.

The PSS Port Skills Group meets quarterly, including two in-person meetings hosted by member ports, to facilitate information sharing and promoting best practice.

The PSS Skills Strategy was created in 2023 and was later restructured into four pillars to reflect the work requested by our members:

- Entry routes in ports
- Progression routes
- Current and future skills requirements
- Skills standards

Entry routes

The PSS website has become a central hub for members to access information on a range of skills initiatives, including T Levels, industry placements, skills boot-camps and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs).

We showcase apprentices and opportunities in the port sector, particularly during apprenticeship and careers weeks.

Working in partnership with members, stakeholders and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, the revision of the Port Operative level 2 apprenticeship was approved and is now in use. The review of the Port Marine Operations Officer level 4 apprenticeship is scheduled for completion by summer 2025, in time for the next apprentice intake.

The apprentice platform is in its second year and has 200 port apprentices registered and able to access a wide range of resources, guides and events to support their apprenticeship off-the-job training.

Progression routes

The development of a career pathway map is underway. Once completed, each port role will be defined with details of typical entry requirements, qualifications, training and progression routes.

The PSS website includes a training list of all courses and apprenticeships provided by PSS members that are relevant to port workers.

Current and future skills requirements

PSS collects annual data on port-specific qualifications and apprenticeships, as well as information on the wider make up of the workforce. In 2025, PSS will gather early careers data to establish a better picture of port's engagement with a wider

“Skills ensure there is an adequately sized workforce, with the skills to work safely and the ongoing development to adapt to changing requirements.”

range of apprenticeship, graduate, internship, work experience schemes.

We have also begun reviewing the new skills which will be required by ports to support the UK's growing renewables sector, identifying any emerging skills gaps. This work will continue throughout 2025.

Skills standards

National Occupational Standards (NOS) are used by employers and training providers for developing knowledge and skills. They can be used to create vocational qualifications, devise job descriptions, measure workplace competence, and produce training materials. PSS continues to be the standard-setter for port skills and leads on reviewing port sector NOS to ensure they remain relevant as operations and technology change.

PSS has a competency management system document for members to use and a small set of competency assessments have been produced to launch in 2025.

Going forward, this work will also be aligned with the port operations categorised in the PSS Safety in Ports.

PSS recognises that it is important to build partnerships with like-minded professional bodies and associations and look outside of the sector for inspiration, good practice and innovation. We deliver events throughout the year, including the annual PSS Members' Conference during Maritime Safety Week in July, the annual Innovation in Ports Conference and, in 2024, the Electric Vehicle Maritime Safety Conference.

In addition, PSS holds quarterly Port Skills Group and Port Safety Group meetings to help facilitate information sharing and promote best practice.

PSS collaborates with employers and training providers to develop and deliver training for the port sector. Some of these courses are available directly through PSS at a reduced rate to members.

- Explosive Security Officers Course
- Incident Investigators Toolkit
- Introduction to Safety Culture Fundamentals
- Introduction to Supervision and Leadership in Ports
- Managing Safely in Ports
- Mental Health First Aider

To get involved in this work and support PSS in ensuring port workers are well trained and supported throughout their careers, contact info@portskillsandsafety.co.uk



Robert Waite, Pilot and Assistant Harbour Master at Shoreham Port

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

My final non maritime education was a degree in Civil Engineering but I did not wish to continue down that career path. I then gained employment with Carnival UK as a Deck Cadet and undertook a Foundation Degree in Marine Operations at Warsash Maritime Academy. This provided me with a degree but the main goal was achieving the Officer Of The Watch Unlimited Qualification. I stayed with Carnival for 11 years and worked my way through the ranks to 1st Officer

navigating on the cruise ships on a world-wide itinerary.

With my partner and I expecting a baby I decided to find a marine role ashore and after passing my Masters Unlimited qualification I secured a Pilot job at my local port, Shoreham. Unfortunately I had a medical issue 6 months in which has stopped me from piloting for a year but Shoreham have been very supportive and found me an Assistant Harbour Master role to fore fill until I can regain my medical and get back on the water.

“Although every port needs to have water you don’t necessarily have to work on it to be within the sector. There are a huge amount of positions that go on behind the scenes at all levels.”



What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

I think the biggest challenge will be reducing the environmental impact that shipping has on the planet.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

During my time at sea I had the opportunity to see some amazing and beautiful sights but in a professional sense, passing my Masters Unlimited exam really stands out as a highlight of my career as it marked the culmination of many hours of hard work and time away from home.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

A family friend who was retired Merchant Navy and Coastguard guided me towards my first step into the Maritime sector. The transition from sea to shore was helped by the Marine Society, Coming Ashore programme.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

There is a clear progression path in your career in a interesting and dynamic industry.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

My impression of the Port sector was that it was all about ships but from working in the industry I can see that there is much more to it than that and how many people work and enjoy the environment that ports create.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Prior to working at Shoreham I worked deep sea, worldwide on cruise ships, working as Cadet, Third, Second, First and Safety Officer.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

There are numerous roles available within the port industry. Although every port needs to have water you don’t necessarily have to work on it to be within the sector. There are a huge amount of positions that go on behind the scenes at all levels from operational to managerial, local to international. My advice would be to find something that you have an interest in and find a role that will suit you. Always be open to new ideas and opportunities and if it’s right for you take them as they arise.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

More written rules, regulations and procedures.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I would like to see more opportunities for seafarers to be able to move ashore into the port industry and still maintain a competitive salary.


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Libby McIntyre , IT Operational Excellence Lead with Associated British Ports

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

Directly after education I worked in performing arts, before entering a corporate office environment. I had been working in a senior IT delivery role ahead of joining Associated British Ports (ABP).

What other jobs have you done in your career?

I have had a varied career history, which includes the financial sector, the security industry working on government contracts, magazine publication and the music industry. I have been working in the marine industry now for the past 2.5 years, and I was brought here through my background in IT.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

The Port Industry, is a collective of roles and not only the traditional manual roles that you would expect. We host a number of work initiatives each year to attract new talent, in addition to welcoming graduates and apprentices. So there really is a path for everyone!

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

I think the industry is forward thinking with a view of sustainability and advancements in technology. I'm excited to see the progress in the next 5 years.

“ I had a expectation that the whole port industry would be a very male presenting space, and while some of our ports are this, I am impressed by the number of women who are in front facing roles leading the operations of our ports confidently with success. ”



What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope to see continued progress in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives. We have seen a 45% increase in Women working in seafarer roles in the past 10 years, which is incredible, I hope this trend continues as we all benefit from a balanced and varied workforce.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

There is more we can do to positively impact our DEI experience for colleagues. This would include education for a better understanding of our differences and how these unite us and make us all better.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

During late 2024, I was promoted into the IT Leadership Team as their Operational Excellence Lead. This role has given me the platform to simplify processes and create a better colleague experience and make IT a more business centric function.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

The key role the ports play in the UK economy, as 95% of all UK trade comes through ports. Port operations really are essential.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

It's a very exciting time to get involved in the Port Industry. Here at ABP, we are constantly improving our technology to make our colleagues lives easier and safer.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions, and how have they now changed?

I had a expectation that the whole port industry would be a very male presenting space, and while some of our ports are this, I am impressed by the number of women who are in front facing roles leading the operations of our ports confidently with success. I find this inspiring to a younger generation of female workers who are looking for their first steps in their careers.



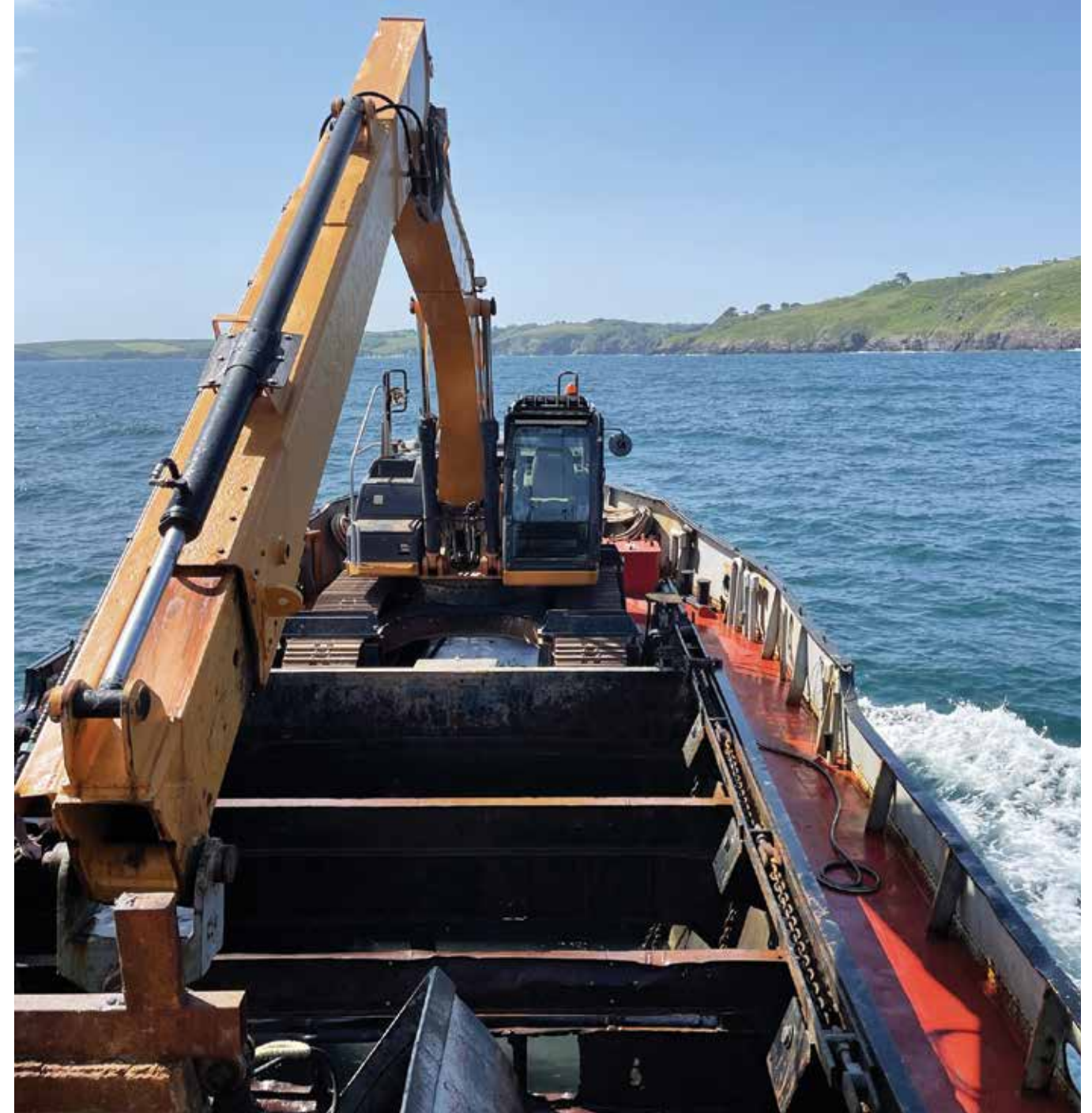
Nathan Lewis, Marine Operative at Fowey Harbour Commissioners

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

When I left school I started as an apprentice at my fathers engineering company. After successfully completing my apprenticeship I carried on with the company. Manufacturing and installing steel structures and large pipework systems, mainly throughout London. With a few years of experience I moved onto the designing aspect of the job, which was great as this allowed me to work remotely after the family moved to Cornwall. However it wasn't long before I saw the job advert for seasonal patrol staff at Fowey Harbour. I continued to

work for my father in the daytime and patrol during some evenings and week-ends. After a few seasons of patrol, learning how the harbour operates and generally enjoying myself on the water. I was thrilled to move into a full time position on the Moorings/Leisure Team. Shortly after this I was placed onto a workboat apprenticeship carrying out courses at SeaRegs in Plymouth, and on the job training completing mooring servicing using our small work vessels, and also as crew on the Fowey tugs and dredger. I successfully completed my apprenticeship at the beginning of this year and I am currently working towards my boatmasters' licence.

“The successful completion of my workboat apprenticeship with distinction is a great highlight of my career so far.”



Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

The successful completion of my workboat apprenticeship with distinction is a great highlight of my career so far. The hard work throughout the courses but more so the teamwork and support from my fellow crew and superiors. Helping me with the classroom based theory and particularly the water based practical aspect. Without them what I have achieved would not have been possible and for that I am very grateful.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

For me it was enjoying the water from a young age on family summer holidays. We used to come to Cornwall every year; boating, kayaking, bodyboarding, if it was water based I wanted to do it. When we eventually moved to Cornwall in 2017 I jumped at the chance to join Fowey Harbour as a Patrol Operative.



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Danielle Rooney, Harbour Master at Northern Ireland Fisheries Harbour Authority



What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

When I finished secondary education, I was intending to go onto university to complete a degree in marine biology. I joined the MCA as a volunteer rescue officer, I got a summer job in a local shop and saved my money to complete various RYA certificates before heading off to university. When the time came to go, I changed my mind. I stayed on at the local shop, started to complete various courses within the coastguard agency and furthered my knowledge within the marine industry. A job came available as harbour foreperson within Northern Ireland Fisheries Harbour Authority, I applied for it and was successful. I joined the authority, being the first female harbour foreperson within the organisation. After a while in the post, I had the opportunity to apply for the Harbour Master post. December 2019 I took on the role as Kilkeel Harbour Master.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Over the years, mostly the summer months I worked in a local sea safety shop, and fished crabs and lobsters with my father.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Go for it, you won't regret it. It's an industry that you never get bored of. It changes all the time, the people you deal with, the vessels, no day is ever the same. Especially within a fishing port, you can never plan a day of work as something else will always come up, this keeps the job exciting but also challenging.



“Go for it, you won't regret it. It's an industry that you never get bored of. It changes all the time, the people you deal with, the vessels, no day is ever the same.”

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Unfortunately from Covid, and possibly the effects of global warming, the fishing industry is changing. Before Covid, the fishing fleet here fished all year round, coming up to Christmas all the boats would have been fishing, and then tied up for the holidays. After the holidays they went back out. From Covid however, the changes in crew visas are having an impact on the fishing fleet, they are only fishing 6-9 months of the year. The possible increase in the water temperature, the fish stocks are not there anymore, therefore the vessels are tying up to save money on fuel and then sending the crew home. The fishing industry within Northern Ireland has become more seasonal as opposed to all year.



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Rhona Macdonald, Senior Sustainability Advisor at British Ports Association

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After completing a Masters in Sustainability and Environmental Studies, I was seeking a relevant position and came across the advert for my current role. I had no previous exposure to the maritime industry as it wasn't a sector that was promoted or highlighted as a potential opportunity to me as a student, however, I have never looked back.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Prior to this role, I had experience working for various environmental organisations as a researcher before working as a caseworker for a local councillor under the Scottish Liberal Democrat Party, which was my first exposure to the policy environment.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

I would highly recommend anyone to look into the wide variety of roles and opportunities that exist within the ports sector or the maritime industry as a whole. Working in this industry extends far beyond the port gates and there are many avenues, types of jobs and subject areas to be explored.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

The maritime sector has traditionally been a very male-dominated industry, and I sometimes still find myself in rooms or meetings as the only female, albeit increasingly less. I hope that with further promotion and greater understanding of the sector, more women will see what a rewarding and fascinating career path they could have within maritime.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

The energy transition is certainly one of the most pressing challenges that ports and maritime face now and as the sector progress towards net zero by 2050. However, even with the continued barriers to decarbonisation, this also presents many exciting opportunities for ports that are fast becoming energy hubs as they look to invest in new infrastructure and expand their scope of operations to facilitate the decarbonisation of maritime and beyond. Being a part of the sector at this pivotal time means there are lots of exciting projects and initiatives to get involved in and no day is the same.

“I hope that with further promotion and greater understanding of the sector, more women will see what a rewarding and fascinating career path they could have within maritime.”

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

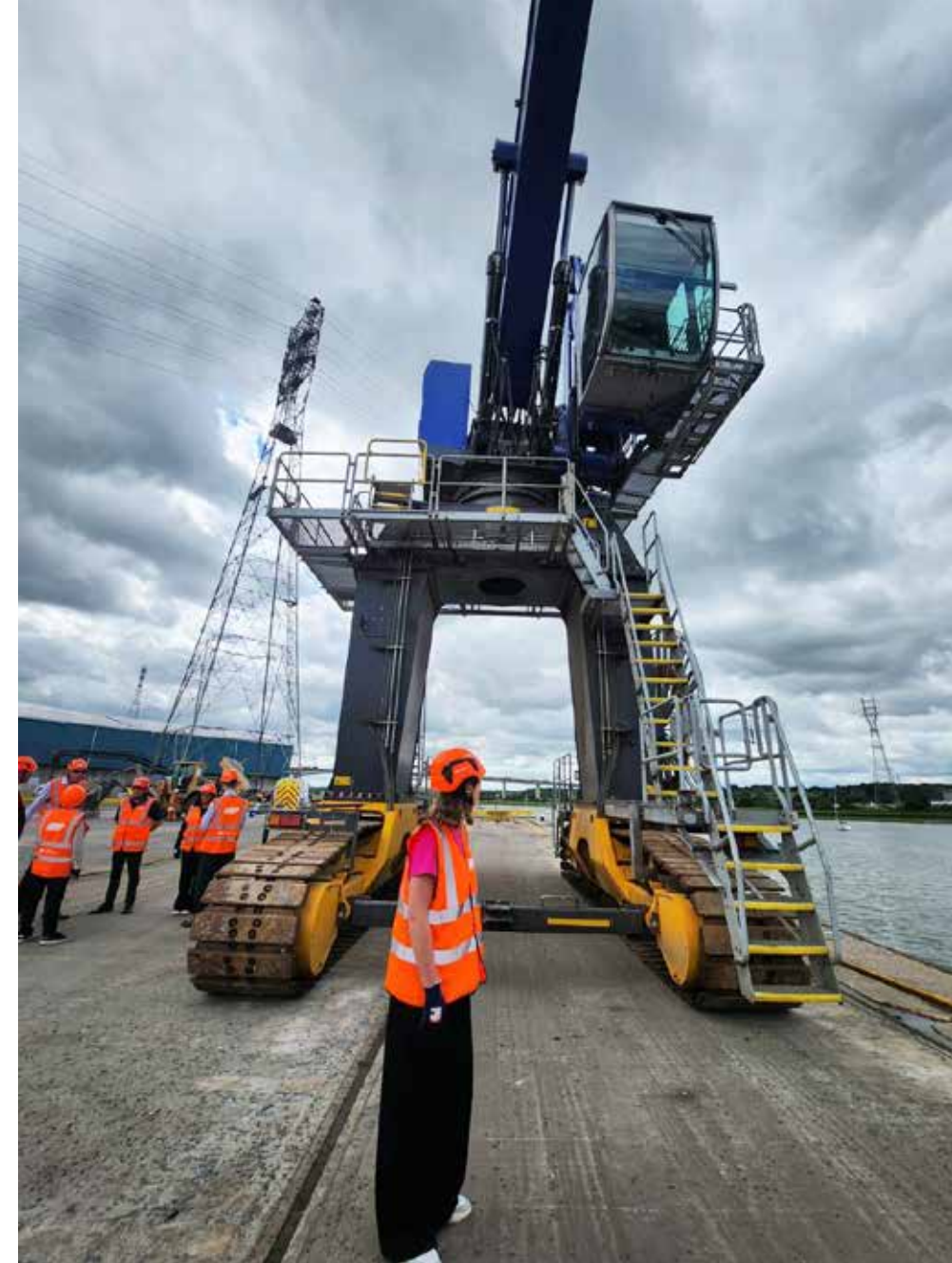
My current roles at the BPA and as policy officer for the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) have afforded me many exciting opportunities. In particular, giving evidence at the House of Commons Transport Committee enquiry into future fuels for maritime was a memorable experience and one where I was able to push myself beyond my comfort zone. I also represent IAPH at the International Maritime Organisation, and contributing to discussions on an international scale and at a United Nations agency is something I never thought I would get access to at this early stage in my career.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I fell into the sector somewhat accidentally, but I have never looked back and I'm excited to continue to grow my career in this industry.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

The maritime industry and ports are responsive to geopolitical shifts and are economic drivers, which makes the sector very dynamic and interesting to be a part of. Given it is also inherently global, working in the ports sector presents a great opportunity to work in international settings and engage in individuals across multiple regions.



Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I had not been exposed to the maritime sector and my previous impression of careers in ports was limited to operational, manual and engineering-based positions behind the port gates. This view quickly changed and my current roles have opened up an entirely new world of opportunities to me.



Ben McCabe, Maintenance Engineer at Port of Aberdeen

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I completed my Mechanical Engineering Apprenticeship from 2016 to 2020, and I'm now working as a Maintenance Engineer at the Port of Aberdeen.

My role involves overseeing the maintenance and repair of machinery and equipment essential to port operations.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

I had already begun my training in Electrical Engineering at Tullis training when the opportunity came up for a Mechanical Engineering Apprenticeship at Port of Aberdeen.

I chose to come for an interview for the role and when I came in and talked about the role and saw what it involved, I knew it was definitely what I wanted. It was hands on, not so pernickety as electrical engineering and really suited me better.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

The strong sense of teamwork here. I've always worked alongside great people, and being in close proximity to others every day has really helped me grow, both professionally and personally. As a young person, it was especially valuable in helping me become more open and confident.



Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

Port of Aberdeen has greatly supported my career development by offering a variety of experiences and constant opportunities to learn. South Harbour, in particular, has introduced many new elements to my role, keeping the work fresh and challenging. There's always something new to learn from scratch, which has allowed me to grow and expand my skills.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

Starting from the ground up has allowed me to build a strong foundation, and even as I progress in my career, I still have a solid grasp of the basics and the hands-on technical skills that are essential in this field.

“I've always worked alongside great people, and being in close proximity to others every day has really helped me grow, both professionally and personally. As a young person, it was especially valuable in helping me become more open and confident.”



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Lynzi Mulford, Assistant Marina Manager at Shoreham Port

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I left school after completing my A Levels, after failing one I re sat it but worked full time for a car rental company at the airport before becoming their manager. I then worked for 20 years in the Entertainment industry as a Sound Engineer, Stage Manager, Lighting Designer, Production Engineer working all over the world.

I was made redundant at the end of lock down and worked for a friend locally cleaning, antifouling boats and doing general maintenance and saw the job for a Marine Assistant at the port advertised and applied.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

I originally managed at Car rental company at 17 after leaving school, before moving into theatre as a Sound Engineer, running my own Lighting and Sound Hire company and working in London West End for the best part of 20 years, where I got to travel the world a meet some amazing people. Having lived out of a suitcase and wanting to spend more time with my family, about 12 years ago I retrained as a Personal Trainer, Gym Instructor and Spin Instructor, I ran my own PT business and then was employed by a gym to look after their Over 50's section. I still teach and have my own clients.

Following on from being made redundant I then worked at freelance a the local Yacht Club doing all types of boat maintenance before joining the Port.

“I didn't really have an idea of what I was getting into. I did think it would be a very male orientated environment but that has been proved wrong, its definitely biased that way especially in the more physical roles but you are given the respect if you are willing to get involved.”



What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Do it, there are many different roles and certainly Shoreham encourages women in all types of roles, having worked in theatre which was at the time a male orientated world, I thought the Port would be the same but I was surprised. If you are willing to get stuck in, there are plenty of opportunities. If you want to progress and train there are plenty of logical steps and I have been supported despite the training not always being relevant to my role but potentially relevant in the future.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

I've only been in the role for 2 years but I think its changing all the time and its down to the individual to help with the changes.

I think if you are willing to learn and work hard there are many progressive pathways for you.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

That the industry continues to provide training and support. That there are apprenticeships for young people that want to learn a trade, skill or within a role. That more women join the industry. That the industry continues to thrive and provides local jobs for local people.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

The need to keep up with cost of living, long hours, split shifts etc. Because of the nature of the work, it sometimes causes a poor work life balance and I think that's important. The cost of everything is going up and to improve the wages in the local area from such a big industry.

As a Trust port Shoreham focuses on its ties with the local community. As industry increases, protection on the environment needs to increase and we all need to be more sustainable in our way of thinking, protecting our coast, marine life and the people that work in it.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

Within a couple of months of joining the port I was recognised for my initial contribution, this felt like I mattered and that despite lots of employees, I had been valued by the senior leadership team.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I wasn't really inspired, I was looking for a local job where I could make a difference, but where there was support and training.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

I think there are such a diverse range of roles, that you can start at the bottom and really work your way up in any role.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I didn't really have an idea of what I was getting into. I did think it would be a very male orientated environment but that has been proved wrong, its definitely biased that way especially in the more physical roles, but you are given the respect if you are willing to get involved. I do think the environment is suited to both and you just have to work hard.


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Mark Butcher, Engineering & Operations Training Team Leader at DP World London Gateway

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I joined the British Army 4 months after finishing my GCSEs, joining the Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers to study an apprenticeship as a vehicle mechanic. We were trained to fix all vehicles in the British Army, from Motorbikes to Challenger 2 tanks. We were taught how to fix all the equipment in different locations varying from a workshop to a jungle or desert, and also using any means to fix vehicles during conflict conditions.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

I left the British Army after 9 years and became a Scaffolder working in a high-risk area within a oil refinery. After that, I went on a holiday to Greece and didn't come back for 10 years! I co-owned a bar on the island of KOS and it changed my life. Learning the customer service skills and also the need to make friends very quickly really helped me in my life.

I joined DP World London Gateway in 2014 as a Terminal Operative, then moved into training in 2018 and have been Head of Training since 2020, where the team has grown from 5 trainers to around 52. Due to the current growth period we have an average of 70 people out training.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Absolutely do it! The range of skills you can gain from working in a port is staggering. Port work as a whole doesn't change, moving a container around a port, however the range of skills that are needed to move that container is incredible, and the knowledge and skills required from all departments for the smooth flow of moving that one container is amazing.

Also the people and friends I have met during my time working in a port - I'm so proud to be part of a very busy and expanding port.



Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

I was always a team member that worked hard and had a laugh with the team, however working in this industry I didn't realise what a good leader I have become. I believe I have helped in changing the culture of having a work-force that doesn't just have to be safe at work, but they take ownership and really want to be safe at work.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope to see more women working in the port industry. It's always been seen as a male dominated area however I've seen some great female dockers start work at our port. Also with the introduction of automation within the port areas, its such an exciting time to work in the industry.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

Shipping companies are building bigger ships so all of our equipment must get bigger too. Another challenge is recruiting the younger generation to work in the Port industry, changing the culture of the younger generation and showing what a great industry it can be.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

Becoming Training Team leader in 2020 and presenting training to CEOs and others in this position, as well as the fact that other ports come to me for my advice and ideas and this is now being used around regional areas.

“The range of skills you can gain from working in a port is staggering. Port work as a whole doesn't change, moving a container around a port, however the range of skills that are needed to move that container is incredible, and the knowledge and skills required from all departments for the smooth flow of moving that one container is amazing.”

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I was working in London with all the travel, but I wanted to spend more time with my family and knew London Gateway was a good employer in Essex.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

People seem to worry about money these days more than ever but working in ports is a opportunity to get a very good job with all types of progression without needing all the qualifications other roles need.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I thought it was a very closed book and you only got in if you had a dad, uncle, or brother working in the industry. Now I'm here I can see so many more opportunities, but I want to continue getting schools involved as a lot can be learnt, such as how maths can be practiced with container weights!

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Pamela Neri, Harbour Development Manager at Fraserburgh Harbour

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I was the 'office junior' in a local car dealership. I found this role by going to the careers advice service in the secondary school where I was a pupil. I wasn't too keen on University - I couldn't really conceive what that would be like and I naively thought it would be more of the same as secondary school and I definitely didn't want that.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Quite a few! Before coming to Fraserburgh Harbour I ran an economic development project in Fraserburgh supporting new start and growth businesses. Prior to that I lived and worked in Aberdeen and was a

Project Manager for Amec Foster Wheeler and Business Development Manager at Robert Gordon University working with oil and gas companies to create new MSc level programmes for their management teams.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

I think there are so many routes into the ports industry and the work is so varied that having a diverse background is actually a benefit not a hindrance. My advice is to focus on the quality of your work and experience. Be good at what you do whether that is accounts, marketing, health and safety or marine operations. Quality of work and experience is as important to me as willingness to learn and get involved.

“I think there are so many routes into the ports industry and the work is so varied that having a diverse background is actually a benefit not a hindrance.”



Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

I'm still relatively new, less than 3 years so I can't really comment on that.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I would like to see more women in operational and maritime based roles. I would like us to be able to collaborate more.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

I think the same as many of industries that use ports. Recruitment, managing costs (harbours are expensive to operate and maintain), helping changing governments understand ports and our customers better, modernising to meet the needs of our customers' way of doing business are the main challenges and I think they are opportunities for us too.



Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

I had the opportunity while employed at Robert Gordon University to study for a business qualification and then an MBA. I was in my early 30s. I studied part time while working full time and I even had my oldest child and moved house a couple of times. I don't know how I did it, but I did and it changed so much for me - my perspective, my confidence and my career path. My employer funded it and I will always appreciate that. A free higher education is a wonderful thing and it is just as valuable later in life.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I love a challenge and I especially love it when people say it cannot be done. That was what attracted me to Fraserburgh Harbour. The Masterplan is huge and I knew I could make a difference. I am third generation to work at Fraserburgh Harbour and I cannot imagine being anywhere else.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Ports make a huge difference to their community - they create jobs, business opportunities and economic impact.



Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I thought the harbour was old fashioned. Nothing could be further from the truth. Depending on where you are and your main business/income a port is at the front line of many things - food security, energy security and so on. We have so much to do every day, so many opportunities that matter for our communities and so much to contribute there is really nothing old fashioned about the ports industry at all.



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Chris Hatter, Head of Compliance, Portsmouth International Port

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After university I tried my own start up business (in gift wrap); continued working at PizzaHut and had a customer facing role with Parker Pens before using my degree to get onto the ABP Graduate Programme.

Nearly 20 years later, with experience in operations and claims across ports; with a ship owner; a broker; a miner and finally a senior role with a distressed cargo trader, where survey, chartering, postfix and commercial work all came together, whilst dealing with problem ships and cargoes, the call came to return home to Portsmouth and back into the port industry.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

My previous roles were supplement by learning skills and training including insurance and legal claims, a masters in maritime law and the ICS PQE. These supported practical applications and assisted in understanding the legal requirements and risks that the port faces as well as returning to the port industry with a wider maritime background.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

The industry needs new employees and is overlooked by many people starting careers. At Portsmouth International Port we now have our own programme to drive interest in getting into maritime and

port work which can be found on our website.

Open days at the port have led to work placements; these students have gone on to pre-cadetship courses and we now have cadets working in the industry who would otherwise have not known about the opportunities and variety maritime can provide in a career.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Sustainability and a focus on being change making organisations in our regions has seen the industry move from pure transport and cargo interchanges to being forces for good.

Portsmouth International Port is a municipal port, owned by the residents

of Portsmouth (my home city) and has developed a reputation for being innovative, responsible and having social values at the heart of what it does. It is leading on environmental elements with bleeding edge technology in the form of its shore power system and already runs off grid for significant periods of time relying upon solar canopies, sea water heat exchange and energy efficient buildings. This does cost more but with social values and improvements for local residents these benefits are included in all of the port's decision making.

As part of this, the port is highly supportive of upskilling its workers and has been superb in building my technical skills, including additional qualifications in health and safety; audit; data control and ISO systems with the 4 years that I've been here full of training to be able to support a much better understanding of the huge variety of work that we do.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

Ports and the wider maritime industry have often worked independently and in silos. Sustainability challenges around the environment, future workforce (competition for), technology, efficiency are all meaning that we need to work more collaboratively and with a big picture view.

When we do bring down the barriers between ports, other maritime and wider logistics and infrastructure companies, we can build better and more integrated systems ensuring that we learn together from good practice and avoid costly mistakes.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

I've loved travelling the world and seeing things that so many people haven't, the size of the vessels and equipment never fails to impress me and the people across the whole maritime industry have a shared bond which brings us together.

However, the favourite part of my role is working out how we can get more people to understand our critical work across the whole shipping and maritime industry. We open our doors at the port to our local community with a programme designed to maximise the awareness of the sector and build in clear training routes for potential students, career switchers and to maintain CPD within colleagues across sectors.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

Originally I wanted a role that had a mix of outdoor and indoor work, great opportunities and was near the sea. The opportunity to learn about trade and see it in action, but also spend time learning through the graduate scheme and getting to drive machinery just added to my sense of adventure. On the way through my port career there have been so many people who have been generous with their time, advice and guidance that it feels like it is time to also give back and make sure that I'm helping develop future leaders and keep brilliant people in this exciting sector.

Having left the port sector I still kept an eye on Portsmouth and when my home port came knocking, looking for someone to be a pragmatic, critical friend with sector knowledge, working with a fantastic team it was hard to say no.

“The favourite part of my role though is working out how we can get more people to understand our critical work across the whole shipping and maritime industry.”

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

I love being in shipping, no two days are the same! You are constantly being challenged in new areas and needing to learn new elements of your role! The world is always evolving, with regulation and legislation changing constantly.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

Ports are misunderstood. The view of burly, dirty men with flat caps hand hauling small parcels of cargo comes from a bygone age, however elements of this remain in forefront of minds. Ports are now clean, organised, technologically advanced and moving ahead at speed. Employees need to be able to be adaptable, ready for change and be willing to think outside the box. It's a brilliant place to work and one where anyone, from any background can now thrive and succeed.

As for Compliance, would I recommend it to someone starting out in their career? Probably not, having a knowledge of the sector is vital to being able to understand the risks and opportunities that are 'acceptable' and you need an element of confidence and experience to be able to justify your comments, particularly when they are not popular with other parts of the business.

However, for those who are curious, ready to be that critical friend and have the confidence to do so, this is absolutely a role that provides real oversight of your business, the industry and understanding of how it works! On top of that we can make real change, ensuring our teams are safe, developing best practice and ensuring that we have sustainable businesses which can make positive developments for future generations.



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Emma Maunder, Harbour Operative at Cattewater Harbour

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

When I finished education, I was working as an aquapark instructor. I have always grown up on the water and knew that I wanted to make a career out of it. My brother had work experience at Cattewater Harbour and I thought that it sounded like a good opportunity so I applied for an apprenticeship!

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Prior to starting my Apprenticeship and then career with Cattewater Harbour, I worked as a waitress, kitchen porter, shop assistant and an aquapark instructor.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Don't hesitate! Do some research and see what roles suit you best. If you're wanting to learn new skills and have new opportunities definitely look at doing an apprenticeship, you're getting paid to learn.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Since I have been in the industry, I have noticed an increase in the number of autonomous vessels being used for research.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope to see more women and younger people starting a career within the industry.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

I think that renewable forms of propulsion will create huge opportunities but also challenges in the future. For example there are high initial costs for adopting renewable propulsion, including retrofitting existing vessels if appropriate. However, once these challenges have been overcome there is an opportunity for technologies that will create a cleaner, more sustainable future for shipping and ports.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

There have been many highlights of my career with Cattewater Harbour; however winning The Workboat Association's John Percival Memorial award for best industry trainee and being the third female award winner in its history was amazing!

“Don't hesitate! Do some research and see what roles suit you best. If you're wanting to learn new skills and have new opportunities definitely look at doing an apprenticeship, you're getting paid to learn.”



What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I think my biggest influence was that I have always grown up on the water and have always been a rower.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Depending on what role you do every day is different and you're outdoors too! The other inspiration that people are usually shocked by is that the average pay is 40% higher than average jobs.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions, and how have they now changed?

To begin with I was worried about being the only girl doing an apprenticeship but I needn't have been - everyone at Cattewater Harbour is like one big family, we all get along so well, work hard but have time for a laugh too!

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Rowena Steele, Geospatial Surveyor at Port of Dover

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I studied a BTEC ND in Construction and a BTEC HND in Building Studies during which I undertook varied modules encompassing many roles within the construction industry including Geospatial surveying and engineering. I developed a keen interest in Land and civil engineering surveying and undertook work experience placements during my college years to develop my knowledge and understanding of the industry. After college I applied for a Geospatial Technician role to begin my career under the guidance of an experienced Senior Geospatial Surveyor. I progressed quickly to the role of Geospatial Surveyor gaining experience in a wide variety of survey challenges including large scale earthmoving contracts, airports, highways,

Topographical surveys, precision control networks and setting out, design work using AutoCad and volumetric calculations.

Geospatial surveying (Geomatics/ Land Surveying) is a crucial part of any infrastructure project, it is the science behind where the world gets some of its most critical data. The role of Geospatial surveyor is to collect, interpret, analyse and present the geography of the natural and built environments. It is a diverse career and always evolving thanks to the use of cutting-edge technology – The task of mapping the world and planning for the future is an exciting and ever evolving pathway!

What other jobs have you done in your career?

I have undertaken quite a varied range of works – Large scale, detailed topographical surveys, decontamination surveys/set out, volumetric survey and calculations for Ex Royal Ordnance site, landfill developments, quarry reinstatement and conversion,

Precision control networks, airport precision runway levelling, housing developments, rail network survey, design works based on detailed survey analysis, environmental displacement surveys and relocation maps/viability analysis, trans-Atlantic fibre optic cable landing survey and utility mapping with precise control network management, detailed volumetric survey management for large scale earthworks... to name a few!

I have had many roles relating to Geospatial surveying and site engineering and ran my own business as a consultant surveyor in New Zealand and Australia. I have taught in primary education but recently came back to Geospatial Surveying now that my children have all grown up.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

My advice for anyone who wants to get into the Ports industry would be to reach out to people in the sector for learning opportunities and work experience placements to get a taster of what is involved. Try to undertake an apprenticeship in the area of interest to you alongside studies to achieve qualifications that are pertinent to what you aspire to become. Use social media platforms to follow advances in your area of interest and find opportunities for engagement within your desired field. Seek out webinars to join and advance your knowledge in as many fields as possible.

“My advice for anyone who wants to get into the Ports industry would be to reach out to people in the sector for learning opportunities and work experience placements to get a taster of what is involved.”

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

The Ports industry is a constantly changing and evolving industry, driven by efforts to improve efficiency Ports are actively seeking to streamline operations not only to improve productivity but to reduce congestion. Moving towards automation is revolutionizing operations and producing efficiency savings. IT systems are making processes more integrated and enhancing our understanding of real time solutions to monitor cargo and passenger movements, changes in the supply chain and national infrastructure that may impact operations – this makes us able to respond quickly and provides end-to-end visibility of our key asset areas. The Ports industry has also had to become more sustainable – Environmental factors and a focus on Green practises are shaping the industry. Reducing waste and emissions are key goals as we strive for Net Zero – investing in and moving toward renewable energy is happening at pace. Technological advances are driving the changes in innovation – AI is helping to fuel ideas for the future of our port both in efficiencies, safety and security. Advancements in Geospatial technology are helping us to embrace the future by enhancing our ability for data capture and analysis using the latest 3D scanners, GNSS, drone technology and robotic total stations – capturing the ever-changing Port of Dover landscape helps us to plan for the future to deliver a more streamlined and cohesive trade route. As Britain's busiest Port it is key that we strive for focussed and committed approach that will increase the Ports capacity and capability which in turn will significantly benefit the local, regional and national economy and environment.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope to see Smart ports using technological advances to aid improvements to operational efficiencies,

drive productivity and create more sustainable outputs. I am keen for the maritime sector to embrace renewable energy and commit to initiatives to clean our oceans. I believe that a more cohesive collaboration across borders will fuel change to drive innovation and connect the world in a way that benefits local and international communities.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

Challenges in the Port/maritime sector – I believe security is one of the biggest challenges faced with cyber security threats being at the forefront of the industry. Keeping pace with environmental legislation and sourcing renewable energy to keep pace with demand is also a key driver for change and presents its own challenges.

Opportunities – Opportunities exist to drive innovation and create sustainable practises, improve our waste management and environmental sustainability, create forward thinking plans that include benefits for our local communities and infrastructure to create a more seamless flow of trade.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

My decision to return to Geospatial surveying after a long career break is probably my most significant highlight – starting at the Port of Dover just over a year ago was an exciting opportunity for me to reprise my career and get to grips with advances in the technology relating to Geospatial survey. The year has flown by, I have been welcomed into a workplace where it is clear there is a passion for change and continuous improvement. I am looking forward to playing my part in the aim to make the Port of Dover a seamless, sustainable and tech-enabled Port.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I am lucky enough to have the historic Port of Dover close to me and grew up close by. The world-famous White Cliffs are not only a national icon but also a geological gem. The variety of factors in the business of ports and what makes them work has always fascinated me, and I love the fact that I learn something new every day, sometimes every minute of every day – there is a lot going on! Going on to work in the port sector was a natural progression from working on many other types of infrastructure but the port sector is so multi layered I thought it would be an interesting way to progress and learn different areas and methods of survey.



What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Ports are our countries most important gateways to trade and are such a bustling fast paced environment to work in and provide challenges to rise to. Ports can offer a wide range of opportunities to a broad scope of work choices. Ports are pivotal in the change and progression of maritime trade routes. Ports are embracing the future and are striving to lead sustainability for economy and environment.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I didn't really consider the port sector much prior to starting my role here, I have now begun to realise what an important role the Port of Dover plays in not only our local community but nationally. I was surprised at the volume of freight and cargo that comes through the port every day. We are now taking more and more cruise passengers and implementing critical national infrastructure works to facilitate the introduction of the EES. I am pleased that the port is embracing the need for a more sustainable future and that we are promoting modernisation of our asset base to continue to play a vital role in the economic development of our area.



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Meenu Thomas, Corporate Social Responsibility and Engagement Lead at Forth Ports

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I graduated in 2022 from the University of Derby, where I studied Business Management and Accounting. That same year, I joined Forth Ports as the HR and Environmental Social Governance (ESG) Graduate. Interestingly, I had initially applied for the Commercial Analysis Graduate role, but following the assessment centre, the company recognised my enthusiasm for community work and alignment of values. They offered me the HR and ESG Graduate position instead – a role I've grown to truly love!

What other jobs have you done in your career?

While Forth Ports is my first corporate role, I've had various part-time jobs throughout my studies. Every one of those roles, whether it was volunteering, tutoring, or retail work, equipped me with valuable transferable skills. Each experience has played a part in preparing me for the work I do now.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Take every opportunity that comes your way! Keep an open mind about the industry – don't let preconceptions hold you back. The ports sector is evolving, and it's an exciting time to be part of that change.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

In my 2.5 years in the industry, I've seen a noticeable shift. Diversity within the industry is growing, with more apprenticeship and graduate schemes available. The sector is starting to appreciate that diversity isn't just a buzzword, it brings innovation, broader perspectives, and stronger connections with communities.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope the commitment to diversity continues to grow. As a person of colour, I was initially hesitant about joining the port sector. However, during the recruitment process, seeing others who looked like me gave me the confidence to step into the industry. Representation is key! It plays a massive role in attracting talent and ensuring people feel they belong. There are so many unique and exciting roles in this sector, and the more inclusive it becomes, the more potential it unlocks.



“Before joining, I did have some reservations. Like many, I assumed the sector was male dominated. But this was not the case. There is a real push for greater inclusivity – more women, more people of colour, more people with disabilities, all being given space and a voice at the table.”

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

One ongoing challenge is bridging generational differences in attitudes towards work, especially post-COVID. We're currently navigating a multi-generational workforce, which brings differing priorities and work styles. While some may view this as a challenge, I see it as an opportunity, to evolve, to rethink how we work, and to embrace new ideas that can boost both morale and efficiency.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

There are so many milestones I have achieved during my career at Forth Ports, and many more to come. One of the key highlights would be delivering on one of the biggest events I have coordinated, Windrush 75. It was not only a significant moment in history but also deeply meaningful for the Port of Tilbury. The atmosphere was electric, with communities coming together and celebrating a momentous occasion. We had groups from across the UK attend that day. Although it was an intense planning process, it was worth every second seeing the end product – an amazing achievement in my first year at Forth Ports.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

Honestly, I fell into the sector – it wasn't something I had originally envisioned for myself, but I'm so glad I found it. The ports industry has such a rich heritage and plays a crucial role in the economy. The opportunities for growth and networking are endless.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

The variety of roles available is truly inspiring. From Health and Safety advisors to Legal teams, and even lesser-known roles like Hydrographic Surveyors – the scope is vast. There's so much to explore, and many people aren't even aware of what's out there. The sector offers something for everyone.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

Before joining, I did have some reservations. Like many, I assumed the sector was male dominated. But this was not the case. There is a real push for greater inclusivity – more women, more people of colour, more people with disabilities, all being given space and a voice at the table. The landscape is shifting, and it's exciting to be part of that progress.



FORTH PORTS LIMITED

For more information, videos and FAQs about career opportunities, follow the links to the Forth Ports website.

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Becky Zaffarese, Assistant Duty Port Operations Manager at Portsmouth International Port

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I started my career at the port in 2008 as a contracted Security Guard and in 2011 joined the main Portsmouth International Port team as a Freight Security Assistant. I remained in this role for the 8 years and covered the Traffic Supervisor position frequently during the 8 years here. In 2019 I was successful with my application to become a Security Supervisor and I continued in this role until October 2021 when I was further successful in my application for Assistant Duty Port Operations Manager. I have been working at Portsmouth International Port for 17 years.

As the Assistant Duty Port Operations Manager, I assist with the overall operational management of Portsmouth International Port, providing absence cover for other operational posts within the port. These posts include: Traffic Supervisor, Security Supervisor, Berthing Master, Port Control Officer, Freight Security Assistant and Quay Assistant. I also ensure that the security of the Port is maintained in accordance with the Port's security arrangements and the requirements of the Department for Transport.

I attend operational meetings as required and liaise with ferry companies, transport operators, stevedores, agents, statutory bodies and other stakeholders

“Go for it! Work hard, stay committed and you will succeed.”

to achieve best use of all resources taking particular note of statutory responsibilities, contractual and legal obligations, system and standards compliance, Health & Safety, customer satisfaction and the prevention of damage.

I am currently studying Level 5 Operations Departmental Management apprenticeship and for a Level 3 Leadership and Supervisory certificate.

I have been assigned a mentor in my current role and feel I am ready to become a Duty Port Operations Manager from an assistant.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Go for it! Work hard, stay committed and you will succeed.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

Successfully making my way up the ladder through training, hard work and support.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

I had always had an interest in marine activity and had knowledge of seaman ship skills. Working for a council-owned port, I knew career opportunities would be available to me if I worked hard enough.

I had heard it was a good place to work with opportunities to develop and progress.



What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

No two days are the same, everyday a new challenge arises. There is always something to learn and support when needed.

Working in a live environment, the day can change instantly whether this is due to sickness, late vessels or an unforeseen event, challenges arise daily.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I had no knowledge of the Port. Born and bred in Portsmouth I knew of the ports location and its existence but nothing more. Since joining, I have been offered many opportunities and I receive a lot of support.



Anna Malloy, Communications and Marketing Director for Port of Milford Haven



What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I grew up in Milford Haven and only left briefly to attend university. Strangely, I wasn't really aware of the Port's significance as a child, which shocks me now, especially since my dad worked at the port for over 30 years as a Coxswain on one of their pilot boats. This lack of awareness has fuelled my passion for ensuring that every young person in the towns and villages surrounding the magnificent Milford Haven Waterway knows about the scale of activity happening right on their doorstep and how they can get involved. Today, Pembrokeshire offers so many exciting opportunities for young people.

After graduating from Swansea University with a degree in Business Management, I returned home to Milford

Haven, but finding good jobs was a challenge. At 22, I gave birth to my daughter, Kaitlyn. Having a baby didn't stop my ambition; in fact, she inspired me to work hard and push myself further. Four years later, at 26, my son Charlie was born, and my drive grew even stronger. When Charlie was just one, I saw a local newspaper advert for a Marketing Assistant position at the Port of Milford Haven. Finally, a local job where I could use the skills I gained during my degree! I applied. I was thrilled to be invited for an interview, and anxiously awaited the outcome. I'll never forget the moment the HR Manager called while I was at a mother-and-toddler group to offer me the job. I was ecstatic and accepted on the spot, eager to share the good news with my family.

What happened next still makes me laugh. My dad was incredibly proud and

“The maritime industry is on the cusp of some truly exciting developments. Rapid technological advancements, the urgent push for more sustainable practices, and the transition toward renewable energy sources are all set to drive significant change.”

told everyone he met about my new job at the Port. “That's a job for life!” he kept saying. In Milford Haven, landing a role at the Port or one of the nearby energy facilities is a big deal. However, unbeknownst to me, the Port's Commercial Director had left the business around the same time I started. For months, my dad mistakenly believed I had been hired as the Commercial Director! I overheard him telling someone and had to correct him: “No, Dad, I'm a Marketing Assistant.” He laughed, but it didn't dim his pride—he was still beaming.

How has your career progressed over the years, and what key steps helped you advance to a senior management position?

As I mentioned earlier, I've always been ambitious and committed to giving 100% to everything I do. That level of dedication comes naturally when you love your work. The Port of Milford Haven has been a fantastic place to grow, always encouraging and supporting staff development. Over the years, I've completed numerous Chartered Institute of Marketing courses, a Diploma in Managing Digital Media, and various



programmes run by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations—all with the Port's wholehearted backing. Typically, I'd outline the course's value for both myself and the business, and the Port supported me nine times out of ten.

Beyond academic courses, I believe the key to success lies in a few additional steps: investing time in building relationships with colleagues and networks; putting yourself forward for responsibilities, even when you feel underqualified (imposter syndrome is something I still battle with!); and putting in the hard work. Being part of the senior management team comes with significant accountability—not just for your own area of expertise but for the entire business. It's important to be curious about unfamiliar topics, be willing to challenge ideas and provide support where it's needed.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

For anyone thinking about a career in maritime, my advice is simple: go for it! The industry is incredibly vast and fascinating with endless opportunities to learn, specialise, or even pivot to a completely different path. The people are fantastic to work with, and as long as you're willing to put in the effort, the possibilities are endless—the world really is your oyster.

Suggested additional question: What have you enjoyed most about working in the maritime sector, and why?

What I love most about my 18 years at the Port is the variety—no two days are ever the same! The fast-paced environment means there's always something new happening, creating endless opportunities to learn and develop new skills. I also have to highlight the people. Throughout my career, I've

been lucky to work with incredibly supportive managers, colleagues and even peers from other ports.

One of the most surprising things about the Port is the sheer range of roles available. The maritime roles—like pilots, launch crew and marina operatives—are the most visible, but it's easy to overlook the essential back-office support teams. These individuals work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the Port operates smoothly, just like any other business. That's where I work. The vital link between the front of house and the back office.

What has been the biggest challenge you've faced in your career, and how did you overcome it?

Public speaking absolutely terrifies me—even to this day. However, I've come to accept that it's a crucial part of my job and I'm gradually becoming more comfortable with it. I've learned that even the most seasoned public speakers still get nervous, and that it's actually a positive thing. So, while I don't think I'll ever fully conquer my nerves, I've embraced the fact that they'll always be there. What matters is that I'll do it anyway, and who knows? It might even turn out to be pretty good!

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

The maritime industry is on the cusp of some truly exciting developments. Rapid technological advancements, the urgent push for more sustainable practices, and the transition toward renewable energy sources are all set to drive significant change. Without a doubt, AI will revolutionise this historically tradition-bound industry. We can expect innovations like autonomous ships, AI-assisted navigation, smart port operations and zero-emissions shipping to become a reality. But we will evolve and the Port of Milford Haven will ensure that South Wales is positioned to

support these major transitions. However, skilled and professional people will always be essential to maintaining the UK's position as a leading maritime nation. That's why inspiring a diverse range of young people to consider maritime careers is so important to us at the Port of Milford Haven, and to me personally. Hosting groups of students from local schools and colleges is one of the most rewarding aspects of my role.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

Two years into my role, I joined a small team responsible for organising the UK's largest ports conference, the British Ports Association Conference. Each year, a different port hosts the event, and in 2008 it was Milford Haven's turn, coinciding perfectly with the Port's 50th anniversary. There was a lot to accomplish and finding a venue spacious enough to host over 300 delegates and their partners was no small challenge. Fortunately, Bluestone—a luxury family holiday resort nearing completion at the time—came to the rescue, and we managed to secure the entire resort for the week.

The event was an incredible success, and it turned out to be one of the best weeks of my career! It was amazing to see hundreds of maritime professionals come together in Pembrokeshire, explore the supplier exhibition showcasing innovative tools and technologies and attend conference sessions covering diverse topics such as safety, law, the environment and communities. It's that same variety that truly drew me to this industry and solidified my passion for it.

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Jason Davis, Pilot Launch Supervisor at Harwich Haven

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After leaving school, I enrolled in a Youth Training Scheme (YTS) to develop construction skills. While I initially worked in other sectors, I was always interested in the vital work carried out by Harwich Haven Authority (HHA). When an opportunity arose, I applied for a position and never looked back. Over the years, I served as a Coxswain for over two decades before progressing into my current supervisory role. HHA has always supported career development, and my journey is a testament to the opportunities available for those willing to learn and grow within the organisation.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Self-employed plasterer, Maintenance Operative at Harwich International Port and Technician at Trinity House Lighthouse Service where I maintained navigational aids, including light vessels and buoys.

“One of the most fulfilling aspects has been mentoring apprentices at HHA. Seeing individuals start their training, gain their qualifications, and progress to become competent Coxswains is incredibly rewarding. It’s a proud moment not just for them, but for everyone involved in their journey.”

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Take the time to research the diverse range of roles available within the industry. Ports handle everything from container shipping to bulk oil and general cargo, and each operation requires a unique set of skills. Understanding where your interests lie and how you can apply your expertise will help you make informed career decisions. The maritime sector offers long-term stability and progression opportunities, so it’s worth investing the time to find the right fit.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

The industry has changed significantly over the years. One of the most positive changes is the increase in diversity, with more women joining the sector in various roles, which has been widely welcomed. Apprenticeships and structured training programmes are now more accessible than ever, making it easier for new talent to enter and progress. Safety standards have also advanced considerably, reflecting the industry’s commitment to ensuring a secure working environment in what can be a high-risk sector.



What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

The maritime industry is on the cusp of I’d like to see more recognition of the vital role the maritime sector plays in sustaining the economy and providing employment. Ports are at the heart of global trade, yet many people don’t fully appreciate the scope of work carried out behind the scenes. Increased awareness, particularly through education and outreach, could encourage more people to consider careers in this essential industry.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

One of the key challenges will be ensuring that training and career development opportunities continue to be widely available. It’s crucial that we support apprenticeships, cadetships, and tailored college courses to cultivate the next generation of skilled maritime professionals.

On the other hand, there are exciting opportunities for innovation. The industry is embracing new technologies, automation, and greener solutions to improve efficiency and sustainability. Ports that invest in these advancements while continuing to develop their workforce will be best positioned for long-term success.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

I’ve had a long and rewarding career, so it’s difficult to pinpoint just one highlight. However, one of the most fulfilling aspects has been mentoring apprentices at HHA. Seeing individuals start their training, gain their qualifications, and progress to become competent Coxswains is incredibly rewarding. It’s a proud moment not just for them, but for everyone involved in their journey. Investing in people and helping them succeed is one of the most satisfying parts of the job.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

Having been born and raised in Harwich, I’ve always had a strong connection to the port and the work that goes on here. The maritime sector plays a crucial role in local employment and the wider economy, and I was drawn to the variety and challenges that come with it. The work is dynamic, rewarding, and constantly evolving, which is what makes it such a great career choice.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Ports offer diverse career paths with long-term stability and opportunities for professional growth. For those with an interest in maritime operations, engineering, or logistics, it’s an exciting industry that provides both hands-on and technical roles. Every day is different, and you’re contributing to something much bigger - keeping trade flowing and supporting global supply chains.



Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

Before joining the industry, I didn’t fully appreciate the scale of port operations. Over the years, I’ve seen firsthand how much the sector has changed. Ships are getting larger, automation is becoming more prevalent, and roles are becoming increasingly specialised. One major shift has been the focus on structured training, with official certifications and continuous learning now a key part of career progression. The industry is constantly evolving, and those who adapt and upskill will always have opportunities to grow.



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Beth Evans-Gay, Commercial & Property Director at Shoreham Port

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After earning my Business degree from the University of Lancaster, I relocated to London, where I worked in sales while applying for graduate trainee roles. With no specific career path in mind, I kept my options open during the application process. I was fortunate to receive offers from three different companies and ultimately chose to join Associated British Ports in 2004. Their traineeship allowed me to gain exposure to multiple departments—including HR, finance, marine, operations, and commercial—across their various UK Ports. This experience helped me discover my passion for the maritime sector, an industry I had little prior knowledge of. Fast forward 20 years, having gained a variety of experience and qualifications I am now the Commercial and Property Director for Shoreham Port.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Following the graduate program, I began my career in operations before transitioning to the commercial team in Southampton Port. Later, I was appointed Head of Operations at Southampton Port. In 2017, I joined Shoreham Port as the Director of Operations and Commercial and after a couple of years, took on the additional responsibility of Safety Director. During my early years at Shoreham, I pursued an MBA at the University of Warwick. It was a challenging yet rewarding experience, and I was fortunate to have the full support of the Port throughout.

Two years ago, I stepped into a new role as Shoreham's Commercial & Property Director. A varied role responsible for delivering revenue growth across the estate.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

The port industry offers diverse opportunities, from highly specialised roles to more generalist positions—there's something to match everyone's skills and passions. A positive attitude, open-mindedness, and a willingness to explore different areas will serve you well. My career hasn't followed a linear path, and I couldn't have predicted where I'd end up. However, I've always focused on being hands-on and learning as much as I can about every aspect of the business. I have always found everyone in the industry helpful and supportive so I would encourage people interested to connect with people in the industry to learn more about their areas of interest.



Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

In the past 20 years, I've seen significant changes. From a female perspective, it's encouraging that I'm no longer the only woman in senior leadership in many settings, which is a welcome shift. There has been vast improvements and investment in safety and wellbeing for employees which is positive to see. There has also been a growing focus on environmental sustainability, with increasing adoption of sustainable practices to reduce our environmental impact. I have also seen the increased use of technology across Ports to enhance productivity, operations and capability.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

There are several key areas where I believe we must continue to maintain our focus and momentum.

The industry has made significant progress in adopting sustainable practices and focusing on decarbonisation, and it is crucial that we keep this momentum going. Continued investment in technology and the utilization of green fuel alternatives will be essential in mitigating the sector's environmental impact and achieving long-term sustainability goals.

In recent years, we've witnessed a surge in technology adoption across the maritime sector. However, as with all industries, it's vital that we continue to innovate and embrace digitalization and automation. These advancements will enhance the services we provide, increase efficiency, and improve safety across the board.

Another area I hope to see continued progress is in promoting the maritime

sector as a career option. Many people remain unaware of the wide variety of roles available within the industry, from operations and technology to sustainability and management. We must better communicate the sector's critical importance and the diverse opportunities it offers, where working in the port industry is widely recognised and valued as a dynamic and essential part of the global economy.

Finally, it is essential that we keep pushing for greater diversity and inclusion, especially at the board level. Representation across gender, ethnicity, and backgrounds is not only vital for creating a more equitable industry but can also drive innovation and improve decision-making. I hope to see continued efforts to increase diversity across all levels of the maritime workforce, ensuring that the sector benefits from a range of perspectives and experiences.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

It's difficult to highlight just one stand-out occasion, as I've been fortunate to participate in many significant moments. These include negotiating at senior levels, conducting plaque exchanges with newly launched cruise ships and leading operations teams. However, one of the best learning opportunities, and perhaps the most challenging, was when I was asked in my late 20s to present to the companies board. The Port Director at the time believed early board exposure was essential for career development.

“The port industry offers diverse opportunities, from highly specialised roles to more generalist positions—there's something to match everyone's skills and passions.”

Though I was incredibly nervous, this experience taught me invaluable lessons. With my Director's support, I learned how to present confidently to senior leaders, the importance of preparation, and how to communicate messages clearly. It also highlighted the value of finding mentors in senior positions who will support and guide you.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

Entering the ports sector was a serendipitous turn of events. Born in Warwickshire, I had limited knowledge of the maritime industry. It was only through an engaging and diverse graduate traineeship that I ventured into this field. Since then, the wide range of roles and experiences in the sector has kept me captivated—no two days are ever the same.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

From the day I started in this industry where I was assigned to Ipswich Port for several weeks to be part of the stevedoring team, the people I met were incredibly passionate and supportive, providing guidance and unique camaraderie to a fresh faced graduate. This first experience of the industry has been replicated throughout my career, working alongside and for some amazing colleagues, the people really do make this industry an incredible sector to be part of.



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Felicity Landon, Freelance Maritime Journalist

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After A-levels, I was fortunate to get a place on the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) one-year “pre-entry” course which was run in several locations – in my case at Harlow Technical College. I then joined the East Anglian Daily Times, where I worked as a news reporter and later had roles as news editor, feature writer and night sub-editor.

As for so many people, my involvement in maritime came purely by chance. I decided to go freelance and got the opportunity to work some shifts as a

sub-editor at Lloyd’s List, where I learned a lot about maritime very fast!

The turning point was being commissioned to write a “South Humberside” special report. I spent four wonderful days working in the ports of Grimsby and Immingham – meeting port managers, talking to freight forwarders and shipping lines, and visiting liquid, dry bulk, ro-ro and general cargo terminals. I found operations across the ports fascinating and the incredible enthusiasm infectious.

Ports, shipping and logistics – and all things connected – have been my passion ever since.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

Does apple picking in the school holidays count? I once edited a regional arts magazine for two years and I did some freelance writing and editing for several women’s and consumer magazines. I wrote a book about the centenary of Dunlop Aircraft Tyres and another about the history of the law firm Stephenson Harwood.

But maritime is my thing! I write about all aspects of the maritime world – including ship registries, insurance, classification societies, port community systems, training, environmental issues and offshore renewables.



What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

I wish I had done so sooner myself! Once you work in the maritime industry, it’s pretty much impossible to get it out of your system. I am proud to say that I work in the maritime sector, as well as being a journalist. If I was starting out today, I would look for a career in port operations and management.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Not so long ago, decarbonisation and digitalisation were dominating conversations. Now geopolitics affects everything as the industry copes with conflicts, sanctions, tariffs and trade barriers, on top of the effects of climate change and the drive for sustainability.

I write for a range of maritime publications and organisations, including for recent BPA publications. From a freelance journalist’s point of view, the ports industry is extraordinary. Every day is different. There is never a shortage of topics to report on and there are always enthusiastic and thoughtful people to interview.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I am particularly proud to contribute to the Mission to Seafarers’ “The Sea” magazine, which takes time to consider the challenges and issues that affect the lives of the seafarers from around the world, on whose hard work and dedication we are all dependent. It’s good to see an increasing focus on the welfare of seafarers and I hope sincerely that this will continue.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

A CEO once said to me: “Ports are in the fallout business.” Certainly, the strength of the ports and maritime sector is its ability to rise to and respond to every challenge.



“No two ports are the same! I have always felt that every port has its own “character”... It is a tremendous privilege to work in such a dynamic, exciting and important sector.”

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

That’s an easy question to answer. Shortly after the wreck of the Titanic was discovered, I went to interview Eva Hart, who was just seven years old when she and her mother survived the disaster. Her father carried the little girl, still in her nightclothes and wrapped in a blanket, to the lifeboats – but he stayed behind and was lost. As Eva said: “With enough lifeboats, nobody would have died – and who would have been talking about it today?”

This, of course, was the tragedy that led to the adoption of the first version of SOLAS in 1914.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

No two ports are the same! I have always felt that every port has its own “character”, based on geography, history, future plans and, of course, the knowledgeable, dedicated, resourceful people. It is a tremendous privilege to work in such a dynamic, exciting and important sector.



Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I grew up in a village about 10 miles from Harwich but the only thing I knew about ports was that my uncle and family, who lived in Finland, would arrive on a ferry into Harwich when they visited the UK.

As for today, I am forever explaining to friends and family the crucial role of our industry in serving the day-to-day needs of us all. Those who work in maritime sometimes despair at the way others take it for granted that the things they need or want to buy are available, on the supermarket shelf or online. How on earth do they think those items are transported around the world?!

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Jessica McDowell, Mechatronics Engineering Apprentice at Warrenpoint Harbour Authority

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I left school at 18 after completing my A-levels. From early on, I knew I didn't want to go to university and instead went down the route of a higher-level apprenticeship in Mechatronics Engineering. Last year, Warrenpoint Port reached out to me with an opportunity to come in as an apprentice engineer and I started in September 2024.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

While still in school, I got a job in my local shop as a cashier. Before that, I was a barista in a small café. I suppose that combination gave me a flavour of working in retail and hospitality.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

The one piece of advice I always go back to is not to be afraid of putting yourself out there. Do what feels right to you without worrying too much what other people think. The good thing about this industry is the breadth of jobs available. No matter your qualifications or level of experience, there is a role for everyone, and over this past year I've enjoyed building up my own experience getting stuck into the task at hand.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

In my short time at Warrenpoint Port, I've discovered just how dynamic the industry is, with many moving parts. No two days are the same. And hearing first-hand the stories from the long-serving staff has given me a sense of the Port's transformation through the years.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

For me personally, I hope to see more young people entering the maritime sector. I would also like to see more women consider the industry as somewhere where they can forge out a career, whether that's in engineering, shipping or HR. I feel lucky to work with many talented women at Warrenpoint.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

In terms of opportunities, I think technology will continue to transform the Port's day-to-day operations. You can see how innovations in engineering and shipping are already helping to create a work environment that is more efficient and productive.



Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

As I have only been in the Port since September, I don't have a big occasion as such to highlight, but I am proud to have secured my forklift license and just overall completing my apprenticeship within the Port in the years ahead.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

When I first applied for my engineering apprenticeship, it did on some level feel like a leap of faith; I had never worked in this kind of environment before. Looking back, I am so glad I did. Every day is truly different, and there are so many opportunities too which is why I love working in the port sector.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

I think generally the dynamic nature of ports can appeal to people who want to experience a new challenge. When you're on the ground, you see just how fast-moving the industry can be, and there's a shared sense of teamwork in accomplishing the task at hand. The views are a bonus!

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

I came to Warrenpoint Harbour fairly fresh and wasn't sure what to expect. Before starting, I thought ports were mostly focused on ships arriving and departing. But you quickly see how many people are involved in the process, everyone works together to ensure the smooth running of the Port. My impressions of the port sector have changed forever and I would recommend it to anyone.

“When I first applied for my engineering apprenticeship, it did on some level feel like a leap of faith; I had never worked in this kind of environment before. Looking back, I am so glad I did.”



Joe Henthorn, Senior Marine Engineering Technician at Harwich Haven

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

I left school in 2006 on a Friday and went straight into full time work on the Monday! I've always had a passion for marine engineering. Even before leaving school, I had a Saturday job at Morgan Marine in Brightlingsea, where I got hands-on experience and confirmed that this was the industry for me. Seeing my enthusiasm and work ethic, the company offered me an apprenticeship - provided I achieved the necessary grades for college.

I attended the Honda Institute for outboard engine training and Paragon in Dorset for inboard engines. After completing my apprenticeship, I moved to French Marine, where I gained eight years of invaluable experience. I applied to be a Marine Engineering Fitter at Harwich Haven Authority (HHA), but I didn't get it the first time around, so I took on a position at Volspec, working on industrial machines and super yachts. When the opportunity at the HHA came up again, they approached me, and I was delighted to join the team.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

A Marine Engineering Apprentice at Morgan Marine, a Marine Engineer at French Marine, an Industrial & Marine Engineer with Volspec (Felixstowe, RTG cranes, and marine engineering) and now a Senior Marine Engineering Technician with Harwich Haven Authority

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

Go for it! Too many people automatically head towards automotive careers, but marine engineering offers far more variety and complexity. In this field, we don't just replace parts - we diagnose, repair, and rebuild. Marine engineers develop an advanced skill set, as we work on bespoke machinery built for endurance. If you enjoy mechanical problem-solving and want a career that challenges you every day, this is the industry for you.

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Absolutely - the maritime sector is evolving rapidly. Sustainability is now a major focus, with the introduction of hybrid and electric vessels. Even within our workshop, we've adopted electric transport solutions like e-bikes and work vans to reduce our carbon footprint.

The role itself has also changed. When I started, diagnostics were entirely hands-on. Now, we rely more on digital tools and laptops to pinpoint faults. While technology has improved efficiency, traditional engineering skills remain essential - you still need to understand the mechanics to interpret diagnostic data correctly.



What inspired you to get into the port sector?

The people. Before joining, I heard nothing but positive things about HHA, and that made me keen to be part of the team. Now, I get to play a vital role in maintaining our pilot launch vessels, ensuring safe navigation for some of the largest and most advanced ships in the world. It's rewarding to see the direct impact of our work on port operations.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Ports offer an exciting, varied career path with real job security. There will always be vessels needing expert maintenance, and every day presents new challenges. If you want to work in an environment where you're constantly learning and developing, this is the place to be.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

Before joining HHA, I had no idea about the wider operations involved in running a port. I didn't realise the extent of the Authority's responsibilities, from buoy maintenance to dredging and environmental initiatives. Now, I see the bigger picture - ports are not just about ships coming and going; they play a crucial role in trade, safety, and sustainability.

Joining this sector has given me a deep appreciation for the expertise and teamwork that keeps everything running smoothly. We work as one team, and safety, innovation and collaboration are at the heart of what we do.

“Go for it! Too many people automatically head towards automotive careers, but marine engineering offers far more variety and complexity. In this field, we don't just replace parts - we diagnose, repair, and rebuild.”

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope we can encourage more young people to consider marine engineering as a career. Schools and careers fairs often overlook the maritime sector, and as a result, very few people enter this field straight from education. I was the only one from my school to take this path, and that needs to change.

The transition to fully electric vessels is another challenge. While hybrid solutions are promising, fully electric propulsion for certain vessels - like our pilot launches - raises concerns about range and performance under demanding conditions. It's exciting to be part of these discussions as we innovate to futureproof our operations.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

The biggest challenge is recruitment. Many experienced engineers are nearing retirement, and we must ensure their knowledge is passed on to the next generation. Investing in apprenticeships and training is key to sustaining our industry and keeping critical skills within the maritime sector.

That said, there are huge opportunities. HHA is committed to career development, and for those entering the industry, progression is very achievable. By nurturing talent through structured training and mentorship, we can build a skilled workforce ready to meet the challenges of the future.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

One of my proudest moments was being sent to France to work on a tender for one of the world's largest privately-owned superyachts. I was entrusted with a full engine refit on my own, and within a week, I had successfully completed the job. It was a defining moment in my career and demonstrated my ability to take on major responsibilities.

I've also progressed from a Marine Engineering Technician to Senior Marine Engineering Technician here at the Authority, where I now supervise a small team. HHA has supported my development, and I'm proud of the career path I've built here.



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Rachel Tappenden, Port Facility Security Officer at Port of Dover

What did you do when you left education and how did you get into this role?

After completing my A-levels in Sociology, Business & Economics, and English Literature, I initially pursued a career in banking. I joined HSBC on a management trainee scheme, where I gained valuable experience in customer service, financial transactions, and daily banking operations. However, I quickly realised that my interests lay elsewhere, leading me to transition into marketing, where I worked at Saga Holidays as a Direct Marketing Executive.

My career took a significant turn when I joined Kent Police in 2004. Over the next 13 years, I built a strong foundation in law enforcement, working in tactical policing and specialised teams. I also undertook leadership responsibilities as an acting sergeant and tutor constable.

In 2017, I transitioned to the Port of Dover Police, where I was later promoted to sergeant. This role introduced me to Port security and resilience, providing me with insight into critical national infrastructure operations. My leadership in security and resilience eventually led to a secondment as a Port Facility Security Officer (PFSO), a role I officially assumed in 2022. This journey has allowed me to apply my law enforcement experience to a high-stakes maritime environment, ensuring security compliance and operational efficiency at one of the UK's busiest ports.

What other jobs have you done in your career?

My career spans multiple industries, including banking, marketing, law enforcement and security management. I started my career in finance, working in customer banking services while enrolled in a management trainee scheme from 1999-2000.

I then moved into marketing managing large-scale promotional campaigns for Saga Holidays and liaising with directors on budget and strategy.

My longest tenure was in policing, where I worked on specialised tactical teams handling organized crime, counter-terrorism, and public order operations.

frequently acted as a sergeant and trained new recruits.

From 2017-2021 I worked at Port of Dover Police, Port Policing & Security. As a police constable and later a sergeant, I managed operational policing at the port, working closely with stakeholders to maintain safety and security.

In my current role with Port of Dover as Port Facility Security Officer, I oversee security across multiple operational areas, ensuring compliance with Department for Transport (DfT) regulations, managing security contractors, and implementing innovative security solutions.

What is your advice for someone who wants to get into the ports industry?

The maritime and port sector is a diverse and fast-paced industry that requires a combination of technical knowledge, adaptability, and strong communication skills.

My key advice would be understand the industry. Research how ports operate,

including logistics, security, infrastructure, and compliance with international regulations.

Gain Relevant Experience. Depending on your area of interest—be it operations, security, or management—experience in related fields such as law enforcement, logistics, or engineering can be beneficial.

Develop Key Skills. The industry values problem-solving, leadership, and resilience. If considering a security-related role, gaining qualifications in security management or risk assessment can be advantageous.

Seek Opportunities for Growth. Many port roles require continuous learning. Pursuing industry-recognised certifications, such as those in security management or logistics, can provide a competitive edge.

Network. Engaging with industry professionals and attending sector events can open doors to opportunities and provide valuable insights into best practices.



“Ports are crucial to the economy, trade, and national security, making them an exciting and impactful career choice.”

Has the industry changed and, if so, how?

Yes, the ports and maritime industry has undergone significant changes over the years, particularly in the areas of security, technology, and sustainability. Security has become more sophisticated due to evolving threats, requiring ports to implement more advanced screening processes, risk-based security strategies, and closer collaboration with regulatory bodies such as the DfT.

The use of AI, real-time data analytics, and automation in port operations has improved efficiency, risk management, and decision-making. The industry has become much more focused on reducing environmental impact, with ports investing in green energy, emissions reduction programs, and sustainable infrastructure. There is a better understanding of need for string resilience, emergency planning and crisis management. Global events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, and geopolitical tensions, have emphasised the need for robust contingency planning to ensure supply chain stability.

What do you hope to see change in the maritime sector?

I hope to see the industry continue evolving in three key areas:

- Enhanced Security and Resilience. More investment in intelligence-led security measures to address emerging threats proactively and effectively.
- Greater Sustainability Efforts. Increased commitment to carbon neutrality through alternative fuel use, energy-efficient port infrastructure, and waste reduction initiatives.
- Workforce Development. More structured training and career development pathways to attract and retain talent, particularly in specialised fields like maritime security.

What future challenges and opportunities do you see in the port/maritime sector?

Challenges...
 Cybersecurity Risks. As digitalisation increases, ports become more vulnerable to cyber threats. Strengthening cybersecurity frameworks is crucial.
 Regulatory Compliance. Adapting to evolving national and international maritime security regulations will require ongoing investment in training and infrastructure.

Climate Change & Sustainability. Ports must balance economic growth with environmental responsibility by adopting cleaner technologies and sustainable practices.

Opportunities...
 Technology Integration. AI, big data, and automation will streamline port operations, enhance security, and improve efficiency.
 Global Trade Expansion. With increasing trade routes and investment in port infrastructure, there are opportunities for growth and innovation in logistics and supply chain management.

Collaborative Security Approaches. Strengthening partnerships between ports, law enforcement, and regulatory bodies will lead to more effective risk mitigation strategies.

Is there any one occasion you can highlight in your career which stands out as significant?

One notable achievement was facilitating the approval for the Port of Dover's cargo terminal to receive cruise ships. This required close coordination with the DfT, innovative risk-based security assessments, and meticulous operational planning. This milestone demonstrated my ability to implement security measures that balance efficiency with regulatory compliance, reinforcing the port's role as a versatile transport hub.

What inspired you to get into the port sector?

My background in law enforcement exposed me to a wide range of security and operational challenges, which naturally aligned with port security. The transition allowed me to apply my expertise in policing and crisis management to a critical national infrastructure setting. I was drawn to the dynamic nature of the sector, where strategic decision-making and proactive security measures play a vital role in maintaining national security and operational continuity.

What are the main inspirations to get people into ports?

Ports are crucial to the economy, trade, and national security, making them an exciting and impactful career choice. Every day presents unique challenges, from managing security threats to ensuring smooth operations. I feel the sector offers very diverse career paths in areas such as logistics, security, operations, engineering, and business development. Advances in automation, digital security, and sustainability make ports a cutting-edge industry. Ports connect nations and facilitate international trade, making them a cornerstone of the economy.

Before you got into the port sector what were your impressions and how have they now changed?

Before joining the sector, I viewed ports primarily as logistical hubs focused on moving goods and passengers. I lived in Dover before working at the Port, and although I had used it to travel on occasion, I never really appreciated the complexity of the operation and the sheer number of people that work incredibly hard to keep the traffic and the vessels moving 24/7. However, after working in port policing, security, and resilience, I rapidly gained a deeper appreciation for the work involved in maintaining security, compliance, and efficiency in a high-pressure environment. The integration of law enforcement, security management, and crisis response within a critical national infrastructure setting has been both enlightening and rewarding.



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