



by Chairman Iain Shepherd

# Foreword

January saw the company's first AGM, a really successful event attended by nearly 50 of our member companies. It proved an excellent chance for them to catch up on the work we have been doing over the last 18 months, as well as find out about the projects we have on the go at the moment and planned work for the year ahead.

The Open Forum threw up some interesting discussions on funding and the complex array of different funding sources available. I think that companies are often put off seeking money to develop projects because they assume the process will be long and complicated and often they are right. With this in mind we are determined to continue our work to make sure that as

many South East companies as possible are aware of new grants available and help them make the most of these opportunities.

We have also recently published our latest Business Plan, which covers the period until March 2008. You will see that we are continuing work on important issues such as planning, innovation and skills, areas which reflect the most critical needs of our sector. If you would like to take a look at our Business plan log onto [www.marinesoutheast.co.uk](http://www.marinesoutheast.co.uk), where you can also sign up online to receive our monthly email newsletter which keeps you updated on issues around the region.



Welcome to the 7th issue of the Marine South East newsletter, and the first of three issues we are planning to send out this year. The company has developed enormously in the last few months and with new projects starting up all the time we felt we needed to increase our communication with you and help keep you up to speed.



## Update on the future of our waterfront

Since the huge success of the sell-out Waterfront Forum, held during the Southampton Boat Show last year, Marine South East has made huge strides to ensure greater representation of the marine industry in the development of the regional strategy document.

As a direct result of the Forum and the work that has taken place since, Marine South East gained a seat on the examination in Public of

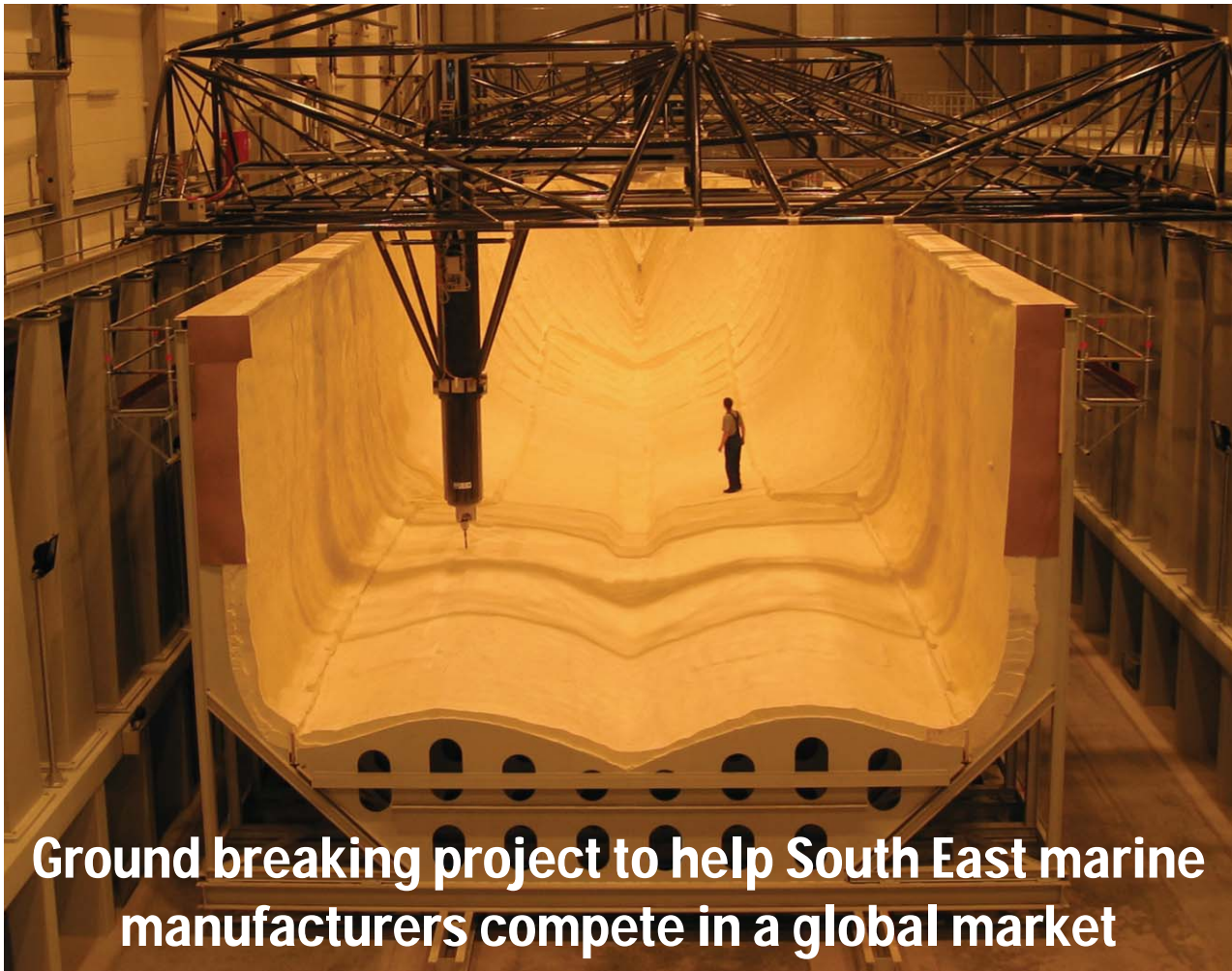
the Regional Spatial Strategy. Until this point marine had had little profile in the strategy. MSE has been using its seat to enable greater importance for the sector in this document, which set out the policies for the development and use of land in the region.

MSE has also been working with the South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA) and others on specific planning issues, including

the development of the site at RAF Hythe. This is a prime example of land that has a history of maritime use, but could face being turned into residential development land. With SEEDA and local people keen to ensure that the site is retained as an employment base, MSE is working to help find a solution that ensures the marine sector retains important access to the waterfront and industrial capability within the area.

### In this issue:

Moving forward on waterfront issues • CNC shared facility • New future for MareNet  
Schools Marine Challenge • Free Marine Apprentice Mentor training • Sail South East on the net



## Ground breaking project to help South East marine manufacturers compete in a global market

UK marine companies are among the most innovative in the world, with the predominance of this activity centred in the South East region. Yet for many small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) it is proving ever more difficult to access sophisticated product development facilities that would help them reduce the time it takes to get from the design stage to the market place.

Rapid product development is becoming an increasingly important factor in the industry's success, yet smaller companies are having to work without the help of new technology. This is mainly due to the prohibitively high set up costs and often the equally expensive general running costs of some of the more innovative facilities now being used by larger companies.

Specifically, access to the sophisticated Computer Numerical Control (CNC) equipment necessary to enable the efficient building of plugs and moulds for yacht and composite production has been mainly out of reach for smaller companies. This technology significantly cuts the time to market and also delivers much improved quality and accuracy. Many smaller companies are still having to

rely on the hand crafting of wooden plugs from which final GRP moulds are constructed, a traditional and time consuming method.

To address this shortfall Marine South East commissioned a successful study in 2006 to explore the feasibility of establishing a facility sharing arrangement for a CNC machine. The study showed that the project is viable and industry has already shown keen support for the idea.

The 5 Axis CNC mould making facility will enable access for small businesses to state of the art facilities, at the times when they need it. This will aid rapid product development and improve cost effectiveness by sharing the capital and overhead costs with other companies.

Marine South East has developed a prospectus for the project and has already held meetings with key companies interested in investing in the machine. Potential investors have discussed the size and type of machine they would require and the level of investment needed.

Jonathan Williams, Chief Executive of Marine South East, has been overseeing the development of this project: "This is

vital in helping smaller companies develop products on a level footing with larger organisations. Although we haven't yet chosen a location for the site there are a few possibilities in the Solent area.

"One of the major hurdles we were expecting to come across was concern over the security of designs as a result of sharing a facility such as this, but potential investing companies believe that this wouldn't be an issue with the type of facility now planned".

"We have undertaken considerable research on the time and cost savings for companies where the 5 axis machine is used. We have spoken to companies around the world, including the USA, Canada, Turkey and Slovenia; they have told us they are reducing lead times by up to 50%. With initial funding, we are confident that we can put in place a self sufficient enterprise that will help marine companies across the region improve profit and productivity."

If you would like to find out more log onto [www.marinesoutheast.co.uk/docs/papers](http://www.marinesoutheast.co.uk/docs/papers) where you can download a copy of the prospectus. Alternatively contact us on +44 (0) 23 8076 6751



## What are the benefits of CNC?

Computer Numerical Control (CNC) 5 axis milling machine centres offer the means to mechanically make plugs or directly make negative moulds for building boats. They provide boat builders with benefits in terms of greater mould making accuracy, and up to a 50% improvement in speed to market. These benefits are already generally understood in the market place.

Recent composite material developments have further enhanced the process allowing for automated application of a thick extruded paste that adds structural strength to the milled foam and provides an accurate surface when machined. Potentially in the future the labour intensive final manual sanding and polishing process can be further aided by automated techniques.

### Benefits:

- Speed to market
- A higher mould accuracy of +/- 0.2mm for objects up to 50m length and extremely good surface qualities. Traditional mould making tolerances can range from +/- 3 to 5 cm, which can lead to production efficiency losses
- Providing production efficiencies in fitment of hull to deck joints, superstructure, bulkheads and deck fittings.
- Opportunity to adopt robotic production methods such as: trimming hull, deck & other mouldings; cutting holes & drilling holes for deck fittings such as hatches; gelcoat application.

## Where could the shared facility be?

There are a number of sites within the boundaries of the map below that are being considered at the moment. The main factors that are under scrutiny include:

- Cost
- Transport infrastructure – road network that can cater for wide loads
- Ground stability
- Access for member companies/shareholders
- Space requirements – able to accommodate a 15 metre long machine



## Case study: Discovery Yachts

John Charnley, Chairman of Discovery Yachts has been part of the team looking at the possibility of setting up a shared 5-axis CNC machine.

“We have used our own 3-axis machine to tool our latest catamaran hull and it has certainly shown itself to dramatically improve lead times.”

“The improvement in accuracy compared to traditional methods has been particularly impressive, and if we were to have the finishing methods proposed with the shared facility we would be looking at a considerable time saving.”

John believes that this machine is vital to ensure the future success of companies in the region.

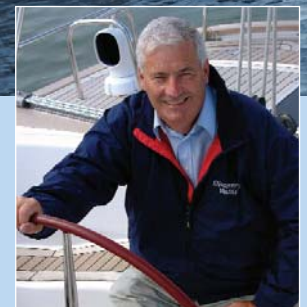
“For smaller companies to continue growing, we need to be

able to get new designs to market quickly and efficiently. This machine would certainly aid this process.”

“Although we are still at early stages, we must work to get funding in place to make this project happen.

The most important factor is to make sure that the facility is commercially viable and that as a group we are sure that the finances work out.”

“I feel confident that we can achieve this and that with the support of the industry across the region we can make this important facility a reality.”





## Schools put to the test

The Schools Marine Challenge is now in its second year in the South East and like many things that are small and specialised, its quality is very high, its agenda is pure and its guiding light is from within the education sector.

Many schools will specialise in one class, with Solar being the most popular entry point, as many pupils can design and engineer a boat of their own for school based trials prior to the race day.

Attention to detail and a super efficient boat are the secrets of success in this highly contested category. Boats can use as many solar panels as they want but must carry them all and be under 400 mm in length. Last year we saw very different approaches: large craft with maximum solar panel area producing maximum power output and small but very light single panel craft. The optimum solution is difficult to find but much learning and fun is had in trying to secure a winning formula.

At the other end of the spectrum we have the Internal Combustion craft, with the boats able to run on a bio-ethanol with castor oil. This class gives a perfect introduction to the practical application of 'Green' fuels in a real world environment where all the variables of supply and application can be put to the test.

If you would like to help a school design a boat or you are interested in sponsoring one of the prizes on Race Day please contact Sarah Dhanda at the British Marine Federation on 01784 473377.

## Marine Apprentice Mentor training – last three places available

The first marine apprentice mentoring course started in January as part of a project set up by MSE and IBP Training and Employment to encourage more marine companies to develop apprenticeship programmes within their organisation by helping them access mentoring support and develop the skills required to supervise apprentices.

The programme will be developed using a marine-focused Institute of Leadership and Management qualification as well as additional tuition focusing on coaching, mentoring and recording and recognising learning achievements.



The course, which is funded by SEEDA's learning and skills division is being offered free to companies. There are now just three places remaining for the second intake, starting after Easter. If you are interested in becoming involved contact Karen Jackson on 02380 652 562 or email [kjackson@ibptraining.co.uk](mailto:kjackson@ibptraining.co.uk)

## A guide to coastal waters with Sail South East

Over 35 marinas, harbours and coastal authorities have come together under the Sail South East brand to launch a comprehensive website for visiting yachtsmen to the South East of England from Weymouth to Ramsgate.

[www.sailsoutheastengland.com](http://www.sailsoutheastengland.com) gives detailed information on cruising areas in the South East, harbour and marina facilities together with website links, tourist information on a number of waterside towns as well as tidal and weather information for the South East region.



## MareNet – a new way forward

The MareNet brand has become familiar to companies in Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight over the past three years and the series of MareNet events has been an integral part of the brand's success in helping companies in the local area.

With the end of funding from Business Link, Marine South East has recognised the important role that MareNet plays in the sector and has decided to take over the running of these invaluable marine networking events.

In taking MareNet forward, MSE would like to see companies across the region, including Kent and Sussex, benefiting from what MareNet has to offer. This includes:

- Access to a forum for sharing knowledge, advice and help
- Information on business support and funding opportunities
- Learning from the best performers within the marine sector
- Receive advice and consultation on government and policy issues directly affecting the marine sector
- Pool resources and expertise to pursue projects and contracts beyond the reach of individual companies

If you would like to keep informed about events taking place in your area over the next 12 months email [sarah@marinesoutheast.co.uk](mailto:sarah@marinesoutheast.co.uk). Details of all the events will also be included in each issue of the Marine South East email newsletter as well as being listed on the Marine South East website in the events section. Make sure you have subscribed to this service to receive regular event listings.

### Update your details

If we don't have the right contact details for you, log on to [www.marinesoutheast.co.uk/services/edit/](http://www.marinesoutheast.co.uk/services/edit/). Type in your email address for your user name and check and update your records here. It couldn't be simpler.



For more information on any of the issues raised in the newsletter, or to register for a monthly copy of Marine South East e-zine, contact

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