

# Worshipful Company of Shipwrights Annual Lectures 2024

24 October 2024

Stephen Boyd and Carin Reisinger



*Speakers and organisers of the Annual Shipwrights Lectures 2024*

The Annual Shipwrights Lectures were held on Tuesday, 15 October 2024, at the MAST Studio Theatre in Guildhall Square, Southampton.

This annual one-day event brings together members of the increasingly diverse maritime community for a series of engaging and insightful lectures. The 2024 event, co-sponsored by [Pendennis Shipyard](#) and the [Southampton Marine and Maritime institute](#), was no exception in terms of their engaging speakers.

[The Worshipful Company of Shipwrights](#) was originally formed to safeguard the quality of shipbuilding in London, with origins dating back to before 1199. The earliest written reference to them as a Company in the City of London records was during the reign of Richard II in 1387. Today the Shipwrights' Company, based at Ironmongers' Hall in the Barbican, London, provides support to organisations, charities, educational institutions, and individuals associated with the maritime sector, its origins and trade.

In 2011, the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights, with the support of the University of Southampton, started a series of Annual Lectures by invited industry speakers to an audience of apprentices, young shipwrights, students, and graduates. The purpose of these lectures is to inspire and motivate young people who are engaged in the diverse maritime sector.

Michael Derrick and the team organised an impressive line up of talks for 2024, as he has done for many years. Simon Crawford, managing director of [Marineware Ltd.](#) and liveryman himself, was the compare for the afternoon and did an amazing job of connecting with the audience and keeping the presenters honest with their timings.

David Kendall, founder of [Optima Yachts](#) gave a great talk on their e-yacht range of vessels with their elegant and highly refined good looks, efficiency and sea-kindliness. The audience also heard from Robbie Urwin, [Artemis Technologies](#), who is leading real-time vessel performance simulation of hydro-foiling boats. Clean maritime and decarbonisation has been a common theme at the lectures in recent years as the industry continues to look to a sustainable future.



*Simon Crawford (Marineware Ltd)*



*Charlie Ross (Pendennis Shipyard) interviewing two apprentices with the programme*

Apprentices are at the core of the lectures each year. Two current apprentices from [Pendennis Shipyard Ltd](#) talked on stage with the Operations Director, Charlie Ross, about learning from their mistakes and how to “do it right first time”. Two former apprentices from the [Royal National Lifeboat Institution \(RNLI\)](#) spoke passionately about the King’s Silver Medal, an annual prize originally awarded by King George VI, permanent master of the Shipwrights’ Company, to the shipyard apprentice of the year. In 2023/24, the RNLI did very well with Callum Ferns winning the King’s Silver Medal, and Matt Snushall won the Derek Kimber

Medal for placing third. The RNLI also won the “Best Company Prize”. Both Callum and Matt have completed their apprenticeships and are now full time staff at the RNLI.

Rob Humphreys, founder of [Humphreys Yacht Design](#), and his son Tom, Director of the company, gave a wonderful talk through 50 years of yacht and boat design at their organisation. Rob started with a wander through his early work in racing yachts of the International Offshore Rule (IOR) era until its demise in the 1990s, the beginning of their involvement in the America’s Cup and extreme racing machines and ocean racers, as well as the over 70 production yacht models for various companies. Tom then took us on a whirlwind of design diversity with International Rating Certificate (IRC) and Offshore Racing Congress (ORC) racing yachts, a continuation with top level brands for production yachts, to motor vessels designed specifically for exploration. The talk finished with their involvement in wind-assisted shipping. Humphreys are collaborators on the [Winds of Change Project](#) led by [Smart Green Shipping](#). They played a key part in the design of the 20-metre FastRig test sail which has been retrofitted to the Pacific Grebe and is currently undergoing sea trials.



*Rob Humphreys (Humphreys Yacht Design)*



*Matt Sheahan (PlanetSail)*

Next was a live interview with renowned sailing journalist, commentator and YouTuber, Matt Sheahan from [PlanetSail](#), as he covered the America’s Cup being held in Barcelona. Matt shared an interesting interview with Iain Percy about the work of his company, [Artemis](#), but also his role in the Youth and Women’s America’s Cup events taking place at the same time and at the same venue as the America’s Cup, in the smaller AC40 class.

The final talk was by [Spirit Yachts](#) Managing Director, Karen Underwood, as she charted her unusual career path through the maritime industry to date, starting with [Oyster Yachts](#) as a personal assistant and then office manager, through [Fairline Yachts](#) as facilities manager, then onto [Spirit Yachts](#) as operations director and now managing director.

The event closed with an address by Prime Warden Simon Beale, who also presented Jonathan De Cruz the prize for the best performing student in Part 3 of the MEng Ship Science degree at the University of Southampton. Behind the scenes our University of Southampton Ship Science scholars, sponsored by the Shipwrights' Company, helped Michael and the rest of the team run a very well organised and interesting afternoon.

*Photographs courtesy of Keith Longman, Berthon.*



*Jonathan De Cruz won best performing student in MEng Ship Science course, University of Southampton*