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STORIES



Inside:

Skipper's lessons from a
lucky escape

The value of a 'Toolbox Talk'

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www.sunderlandmarine.com

Is the tide turning?



As the UK continues the slow return to a post lockdown world, with a society re-adjusting to live with, and hopefully beyond Covid-19, many of us are still adjusting to new working practices, continued restrictions on travel and changes to everyday life.

The UK Fishing Industry has also faced the challenges of Brexit in 2021. Many owners, processors and other service providers are still enduring the pain and often higher costs of transition, in catching and supplying product to the market.

Many insurance companies are no longer covering marine risks after a succession of poor results and those that are, have increased premiums steadily in the last two years. Sunderland Marine, as part of North Group, retain fishing and commercial vessels as our core business. With ongoing risk management and high selectivity we are able to offer stable premiums and excellent service to all our clients.

As we continue to adapt to the 'new normal' here in the UK, you can continue to rely on our outstanding and responsive global service whatever the circumstances.

Our experienced team of underwriters and claims handlers are now back working in the office and travelling to different parts of the UK.

We are pleased to continue our support of Seafish and their releases on vessel safety and risk prevention. As in prior years, we include the Kingfisher "Talking Points" bulletin on several such issues. You can also find links to the bulletin on our website or at <https://kingfisherbulletin.org/>.

From all at Sunderland Marine, we wish you and your families a happy, healthy and prosperous 2022!

Best Wishes,

Craig McBurnie

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Your Insurer of Choice

We are aware that you have a choice when it comes to your insurance provider, but rest assured that as market-leading experts you can trust us to provide the best possible cover for your fishing, coastal or specialist vessels at a competitive price.

We pride ourselves on the service we provide to our clients and this is built on our expert understanding of the markets we're involved in, further enhanced by our global network of accredited intermediaries and correspondents. We handle claims in an efficient and responsive manner, so you can minimise downtime and commercial impact when making a claim.

Personal Accident Cover

Fishing is one of the most hazardous occupations and those who work in the industry continue to be faced with the risk of serious injury and loss of life.

Our Personal Accident Scheme provides some assistance against financial hardship at a very reasonable cost.

We offer 24 hour cover including accidents ashore for crew and skippers, which provides a lump sum payment (up to £75,000 for skippers and £50,000 for crew) in the event of accidental death or permanent disablement.

We can also provide a weekly sum for temporary disablement. It has never been our intention for this cover to take the place of existing personal arrangements, which obviously depend a great deal on individual circumstances, but our scheme can provide peace of mind and assist owners, crew and their next of kin in difficult times.

Safety Case Study: Prevention is Better than Cure



Written by John Clark, Skipper of Reliance III, for MAIB Safety Digest. Published in Polaris with the kind permission of John and the MAIB.

On 13 June 2013, I suffered an accident on my own fishing vessel, one that I strongly remember eight years on, and it's safe to say I'm very lucky to still be here.

Prior to this, we, as a crew, never did any safety drills or wore any sort of personal flotation device (PFD), and assessing risks was unheard of. But after my accident, I made a promise to myself that things were going to change. And so, from 2014 to 2018, I began reading up on and learning how to assess risks and started to put measures in place to reduce them – after a while it got easy.

We installed a host of safer working methods and included these in the planning for a brand-new vessel that started construction in 2018. The focus for the new build being to make a safe working platform for my crew. Our first idea was a method to overcome crew falling from or being washed over the top of the shelter deck. We identified the hazard areas and made the rails one foot

higher than regulations state and then installed a continuous safety rail system fitted to the handrails, which crewmen clip themselves on to and is attached to a harness worn under their PFD. Another proposal was to ensure safe port and starboard walking areas, so I came up with the idea of running all the trawl wires under the wheelhouse floor, making both sides of the vessel free of trawl wire and eliminating trip hazards.

I must say that, over the years, a lot of emphasis has been put into saving a crewman who has fallen overboard and getting him back on board the boat, but less has been put into ensuring a crewman cannot fall overboard in the first place.



A good skipper knows that the most hazardous part of fishing is hauling and shooting the fishing gear and that, on hauling, when the trawl doors reach the gallows, a crewman has to stand on the rail, reach up, grab the lazy wire and attach it to the net drums, which is a dangerous practice. On Reliance III, we made the aft bulwarks 2.6 feet higher than on the previous Reliance and with the installed safety rail system, the crew could clip themselves on by their safety line and harness so that, if a crewman does fall overboard, he remains attached to the vessel and other crewmen can quickly get him back on board. Again, this simple example of identifying a risk and putting measures in place to reduce it demonstrates basic safety management.

It amazes me that winch design has not progressed since the 1980s, with not one guard fitted to winches, such as the main trawl winch and Gilson winch. For Reliance III, I teamed up with Thistle Marine and designed a customised trawl winch fitted with safety guards on all sides and hydraulic brakes that stop a turning winch in seconds and include emergency kill switches. For the Gilson winch on the shelter deck, we fitted a guard over it and placed the winch in an area where, if a

crewman were to fall or trip, he could not be dragged into it.

Additionally, we placed a total of 32 cameras on board Reliance III to record what is going on and enable the skipper to watch crewmen doing their job and monitor what is happening in areas classed as 'needing to be watched over'. If I see a crewman doing something unsafe, I rewind the footage back, show it to him, and explain the risk and how to work safely; a further illustration of basic safety management.

"We need to encourage good risk assessment... Only then will the fishing industry become a safer place to work."

I feel that, within the fishing industry, we need to do a lot more to improve safety; it may be a case of taking a step back and looking at why crewmen are falling overboard or getting injured by winches that have no guards. We need to encourage good risk assessment by identifying the hazard, then put methods or procedures in place to bring the risk down to an acceptable level. Only then will the fishing industry become a safer place to work.



About John

From the age of 12, all John wanted to do was become a fisherman and progress to be a skipper of his own boat. He left school at 16, enrolled in the Seafish YTS fishing scheme, got a berth on a local trawler and got stuck in. At 21, he was offered a quarter share of a fishing boat called Reliance BF80 so sold his prized Audi sports car to raise enough money for that, worked away at the fishing and, six years later, having bought out all the shareholders, he was skipper.

John fished on Reliance BF80 for 18 years before, in 2009, ordering a brand-new fishing vessel, Reliance III BF800 (pictured). In 2018, he commissioned and helped design and incorporate a host of safety features on a new build fishing vessel, Reliance III BF800, which was launched on 3 September 2020. Both Reliance II and Reliance III were built and launched at Parkol Marine Engineering, Whitby.

That's over 30 years of being a fisherman and John has no plans to hang up his oilskins and PFD.

On John's vessel the crew have a motto, which is 'Prevention is better than cure: be aware of what's around you and work as a team'. John really enjoys his job and his goal is to see huge safety improvements made in the fishing industry.

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Follow John on twitter [@jrclarkbf800](https://twitter.com/jrclarkbf800)

Originally published in MAIB Safety Digest Volume 2, 2021. Find out more about the MAIB and access issues of Safety Digest on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.



New vessels in 2021



Orion BF432 - Our front cover feature for this edition, this 24.5m twin-rig trawler was signed over from Macduff Shipyards to skipper Brian Harvey and his sons Andrew and Simon in July 2021. She landed her maiden trip into Peterhead on Thursday 12 August 2021.



Lily James SN36 (above) and Oliivienna BH21 (below) - Two new additions to the North East England fleet were recently completed at Gerry Smyth's Yard in Kilkeel. Lily James is owned by Peter Clark and will be trawling out of North Shields and Oliivienna will be potting and trawling from Blyth for local owners David and Chris Armstrong.



Talking: A vital work planning tool



Everyone is probably aware of the old adages when it comes to planning.

The favourites are usually the 5P's ('Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance') and a variation of US ex-President Benjamin Franklin's "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail".

It sounds like common sense – prepare for what is coming ahead so everyone knows what to expect and what they are supposed to do. If people are prepared and know their roles, then it can go a long way in preventing incidents that lead to injuries, and ultimately claims.

'Work planning' can conjure up images of meetings and charts. But planning doesn't always have to be a lengthy or complicated process. One of the most simple and quickest methods can be one of the most effective; and it is probably the most over-looked – the 'Toolbox Talk'.

It's good to talk

A Toolbox Talk is an open and informal discussion just before starting a job. It helps make sure everyone involved knows what is going to happen and what they have to do.

Before everyone switches off, it's important to know what a Toolbox Talk isn't. It is not a training session, a lecture or another paperwork exercise. A good and effective Toolbox Talk will be quick (no more than a few minutes), to-the-point and interactive.

Here are some tips to make your Toolbox Talk effective:

- Discuss the job – how it is going to be done and what is everyone's role.
- Consider the impact of any other work being carried out on board or ashore.
- The person in charge can lead but don't let it become a lecture. Get everyone involved as they can share their experience.
- No waffling or straying off-topic: Keep to the point, as toolbox talks work best when they are relevant and concise
- Talk about the risks and explain how they will be managed.
- If there is a written procedure or risk assessment relevant to the task in hand, run through them and check that they are correct, up-to-date and workable.
- If there are new crew on board, it is even more important to make sure they understand what is going on.
- Remember, things change - it is a dynamic working environment so discuss what to do if something isn't right or circumstances change.

If your Toolbox Talk highlights a problem with a procedure or risk assessment, don't ignore it. Investigate it and put it right.

At the end of the talk, everyone should know and understand what is to be done, how they are going to do it and what their role is. If everyone understands the risks and the reasons for the instructions, they are more likely to follow them.



Search **"Toolbox Talk"** on our website to find out more and access a free printable guide.

'Mon the Jags!

Buckie Thistle FC, founded in 1889, play in Scotland's Highland Football League and are based in the town of Buckie, Moray. Best of luck for the rest of the season to Buckie Thistle from all at Sunderland Marine.



Your team

Your team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist you with your needs. Contact our underwriters and claims handlers on: +44 (0)191 232 5221 or at the email addresses below.



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See You There

We hope to attend a number of industry events in the UK and beyond in 2022, follow us on social media for our latest event updates.

www.sunderlandmarine.com  

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