

Marine and Maritime Industries range from boat building and marine equipment manufacture to marine research and international communications. Due largely to their presence around Poole Harbour and in Weymouth and Portland, marine and maritime industries play an important role in Dorset's economy. The county also attracts a large number of recreational watercraft, which require overnight moorings, chandlery and repair services.



Poole Harbour. Copyright: Dorset Coast Forum

The British Marine and Maritime Industry

The industry is incredibly diverse with definitions varying considerably. It can be divided into the following sub-sectors:

- **Marine resource-based industries:** those industries directly involved in recovery of marine resources such as offshore oil and gas, fisheries, marine-based pharmaceuticals, aquaculture and seabed mining.
- **Marine system design and construction:** ship design, construction and repair, offshore engineering and coastal engineering.

- **Marine operations and shipping:** marine transportation systems, diving operations, dredging and waste disposal.
- **Marine-related equipment and service providers:** manufacturers, engineering consultant firms in marine electronics and instrumentation, machinery, telecommunications, navigation systems, special-purpose software and decision support tools, ocean research and exploration, and environmental monitoring, training and education. This category also includes tourism and leisure-related service providers and industries.

In Dorset businesses in the industry are divided (Social Research & Regeneration Unit: University of Plymouth, 2003):

- Resource-based industries: 4%
- System design and construction: 3%
- Operations and shipping: 10%
- Equipment and service providers: 83%

Fisheries, oil, gas, aggregates, renewable energy, ports, shipping, and military sectors are discussed in other topic papers, with the focus of this one being on the sub-sector providing equipment and service.

In 2008/9, the estimated turnover of the UK leisure and small commercial marine industry was in the region of £3.61 billion with exports amounting to more than £1.2 billion million (BMF, 2009).

[The British Marine Federation](#) (BMF) is the main trade organisation for the maritime leisure sector. It represents over 1500 firms in sectors from boat building to marina operation. The Federation estimates that in total over 4200 firms in the UK have an interest in the maritime leisure sector (BMF, 2009).

Marine and Maritime Industries in Dorset

The equipment and service provider sector in Dorset can be divided further:

- **Original Equipment Manufacturers:** boat building, marine electronics/engineering and accessory manufacture;
- **Retail:** chandleries, boatyards, sail makers, engines and engine equipment, clothing heavy equipment, i.e. winches, fishing gear, etc. and other similar outlets;
- **Support Activities:** marina developments, repair and maintenance, training, insurance, lawyers and other commercial support;

- **Research & Development:** consultancies, communications and marine research (including military research).

Poole Harbour is the main cluster of marine and maritime industry activity within Dorset, with approximately 208 firms based in the area employing over 3000 people (SWRDA, 2004). Activity is also clustered in Weymouth and Portland and to a lesser amount in Bournemouth and Christchurch. There are several other firms dotted around the county.

There are a number of associations representing marine and maritime industry in Dorset. The largest is BMF Wessex (a regional group affiliated to the BMF), with a current membership of around 90 companies. The Dorset Marine Network works to promote the diverse range of marine businesses in the county.

The Regulators

International

- MARPOL Prohibits the discharge of litter into the marine environment
- [UNCLOS London Convention](#) on the prevention of marine pollution

Europe

- [EU Recreation Craft Directive](#) details new safety measures on recreational craft and specifies the

requirement for wastewater holding tanks on all new craft 2.5-24m, which have toilet facilities.

National

- General regulations set by the Health and Safety Executive apply.
- The use of anti-fouling and marine paints is regulated under the [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health](#) (COSHH) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/> and the Health & Safety at Work Act
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) - discharges of substances, such as copper scrapings, into the marine environment are prohibited.
- Must obtain any necessary disposal consents from the. Passenger ships (those carrying greater than 12 passengers) are regulated under Merchant shipping regulations. The [Maritime and Coastguard Agency](#) survey and certificate vessels and enforce the law.
- Small commercial vessels, carrying up to 12 passengers, are certified by either the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, or the local authority if they operate in an area exempted from Maritime Shipping legislation (within 3 miles from land and not more than 15 miles from the point of departure). A national standard for vessels operating under local authority licence is currently being finalised.

County

- County and Unitary councils are responsible for the production of the Structure Plan, outlining overall planning policy. They also control local trading standards
- Emissions and noise levels are controlled under the [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) and the [Noise & Statutory Nuisance Act](#).
- Under the [Merchant Shipping Act](#) & [MARPOL](#) all landing places, including marinas, must provide facilities for the disposal of garbage. Marine industries undertaking dredging within harbour limits require a licence from the harbour authority.
- Production of the Local Plan outlining planning policy within the district. Deals with most planning applications

Trends in the Industry

The diversity of marine and maritime industries makes generalising over trends difficult. The best information is about the maritime leisure industry. The industry is primarily influenced by trends in the markets for its products, which in the UK are strongly influenced by trends in the national economy. The industry also relies heavily on the export market, with 39.5% of U.K. annual sales being exported. Maritime leisure represents a luxury activity for many, thus during a recession demand falls. According to the latest BMF survey (BMF, 2009) the UK leisure and small commercial marine industry is beginning to show signs of recovery with confidence starting to return. Latest figures reveal a

1.9% increase in revenue with international trade up 13.6% on the previous year to £1.25bn. Future prospects have improved with a continued reduction in numbers of companies perceiving the future negatively. Order books for both domestic and overseas markets are up and workload is increasing.

The UK is one of the leading countries in the boat building sector. The profile of boat ownership is changing. The powerboat sector has grown over the last 10 years and the UK has a significant share of global production with some builders exporting 90% of production (SEEDA, 2007). The proportion of sailing yachts is reducing as more buyers are lured towards motor yachts. The global superyacht market is increasing steadily – the number produced and the length of vessels is increasing with demand from Russia and rising interest in China. Dorset's Sunseeker currently have 22 boats on order of a global order book of 492 (www.superyachtintelligence.com, 2009).

The UK marine equipment industry has a good share of the global market but faces intense international competition. One key UK advantage is linkages with aerospace and electronics industries.

The leisure boating industry has increased in popularity during the last three decades. The following principal factors have been identified as likely causes:

- A growth in affluence of the general population.

- Increases in demand for a greater number and wider range of leisure and recreational activities including entry level.
- Increasing supply of facilities from new developments and regeneration schemes.
- Easier access to facilities.



Poole Sailing boats. Copyright: Dorset Coast Forum

Skills availability is a serious weakness undermining the ability of the UK marine industry. The workforce needs to be flexible to adapt to technological advantages and equipped with appropriate skills. Studies have shown French, German and US workers are more productive and have a higher level of skills. The workforce is aging with a majority due to retire in the next 10-20 years. One response is recruitment from Eastern Europe, another is apprenticeships for local young people

Along the south coast as a whole demand for mooring berths is high. In the Weymouth area, the Portland Marina will add 600 new berths, the Inner Harbour and marina have waiting lists for permanent berths and there is demand from visiting yachts with moorings 'at capacity' at peak season.

Contribution to the Local Economy

Marine businesses in the UK generate revenue of £2.9 billion. The South West generates revenue of over £900 million per year employing some 9,000 people. View the report [here](#)

Estimated expenditure per boat visit to an area averages £103 for domestic visiting yachts and £171 for overseas visiting yachts per boat per night, an important benefit to the local economy (Tourism South East, 2005).

Development Opportunities

• 2012 Legacy

The Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy is hosting the sailing events for the 2012 London Olympics. Marine and other businesses will be able to capitalise upon the increased leisure craft and watersports usage that will occur in the area before and after the games. It is estimated that this is adding about £6m each year to the local economy. Adjacent to the Sailing Academy is the £24m Portland Marina which opened in 2009 with 250 berths and will have 600 berths after the Olympics.

- **Osprey Quay**

Redevelopment of the former HMS Osprey site has given significant opportunities to replace the estimated 4500 defence jobs that were lost on Portland. The SWRDA owned site will provide up to 55,000 square metres of development land. A significant part of the site is for employment and marine leisure use. Current occupiers include Sunseeker, who hope to create up to 1050 jobs in superyacht design and manufacture, and a range of other marine industries.

- **Portland Port**

The port has been established within the former Naval base at Portland. It hosts a growing number of tenants from the marine industry. These cover sectors including submarine cabling, commercial diving, underwater services, marine engineering and boat building. The port provides extensive commercial port facilities with deep water access.

- **Marine Focus**

There is increasing focus on the opportunities of the marine sector to provide employment and income for the area. The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for the South West of England has identified the marine sector as one of its established priority sectors. Weymouth and Portland Borough Council are working with marine sector stakeholder groups including Dorset (Chesil) Marine Network businesses, learning providers, regional agencies to

establish Weymouth and Portland as a centre of international marine and leisure excellence. They aim to attract additional marine businesses, increase the contribution of the marine sector to the local economy and the number of people employed by marine related businesses.

- **Renewable Energy**

The award of the Navitas wind farm zone represents a great opportunity for marine industry in Dorset. In the south-west as a whole, it is estimated offshore wind will require investment in excess of £5 billion and has the potential to create thousands of onshore and offshore jobs (SWRDA, 2009). With its heritage of marine and engineering industries, the south-west is in a very strong position to reap the economic benefits of offshore renewables but has not yet exploited the potential of tidal power

- **Proximity to the Solent**

Maritime industry represents a very significant economic force within the Solent area. The increase in the industry, coupled with the growth of ports and recreation, has created a recognised focus of excellence and expertise. Dorset's proximity to the Solent creates a wider accessible market for the marine industry in the county, especially those in the east which have better transportation links with the Solent.

- **Marine Sidelines to Other Business**

Due to the diverse range of components, parts and equipment required within the marine and maritime industry sector, a company producing just one or two specialist components is often not viable. In Dorset, there are a number of companies that produce specialist parts for boats and watercraft as a sideline to their main trade. As a result the actual turnover and number employed in marine industries is higher than direct estimates suggest.

Development Constraints

Pressure on waterside land is seen as one of the greatest constraints on growth of the marine and maritime sector. This has a number of aspects:

- **Environmental Designations**

There are strong national concerns within the BMF about the implications of environmental designations along the coastline for daily operation and future development of the marine industries. Much of the Dorset coast is designated as SAC (Special Areas of Conservation) or SPA (Special Protection Areas). Westwards from Poole Harbour, only Lyme Regis, West Bay, Portland Harbour, Weymouth, Swanage are not within such areas. The Proposed Poole Bay to Lyme Bay Reefs SAC adds to the protected area, covering areas off the Purbeck coast, to the east and south of Portland and from Abbotsbury into Devon.

- **Planning Restrictions**

Planning restrictions have been identified (Dorset County Council, 1996) as a significant constraint across the whole sector of the industry in Dorset. Particular issues concern expansion and the availability of land with waterside access. The activity most significantly restricted was identified as the development of new marina complexes.

- **Competition**

A shortage of land and pressure for prime and low cost waterside sites is leading to increased competition with other developments in the coastal zone and rising commercial land values. Available sites can be lost to residential development. It was hoped that the former DERA/QinetiQ site at Bincleaves would be retained as employment land for marine tourism and recreation but permission has been granted for a mixed use development.

- **Sea Level Rise**

The risk of flooding to low-lying land will increase both directly and as a consequence of storm surges. With their waterside access, marine industries are unlikely to be protected and such sites could ultimately be lost. Options other than defences will need to be considered.

Other constraints on development of the sector include:

- **The Transport Network**

The road network in Dorset is perceived negatively and appears not to meet the needs of many

businesses. Dorset is one of the few counties in Britain with no motorway links. Although there is a dual carriageway link from Poole to the M27 this does not extend to the west of the county. Only Poole Harbour is adequately served by rail transport. There is no rail link to Weymouth or Portland harbours.

- **Lack of Skilled Labour**

The marine sector workforce is aging with many workers within 10 or 20 years of retiring. A move away from apprenticeships in general about 10 or 20 years ago lost people at the base level. Vacancies for experienced workers in a range of technical fields have been hard to fill in recent years. In response, training and apprenticeships in all areas of the industry are being offered but are oversubscribed ten-fold. Technical workforce development, leadership and management skills (in particular project management skills), IT related engineering and marketing skills are all seen as being in shortage. A Marine Skills Centre has been established in Poole. This offers a range of marine industry qualifications and bespoke training in marine engineering, marine electrical, boat building, laminating and upholstery. Weymouth College has linked with Bournemouth University to provide Foundation Degrees in Marine Leisure, offering aspects of business planning, marketing, retail and customer service.

Environmental Initiatives

A range of activities that are necessary within the marine industry sector impact upon the environment. In response to these issues, the BMF has developed an environmental initiative, aimed at protecting the marine environment.

In December 1996 the BMF launched a voluntary and comprehensive Environmental Code of Practice, based on extensive pilot research in Poole Harbour. The code aims to provide BMF members with clear and practical advice on how to improve their company's environmental performance during their everyday operations and activities. It addresses environmental matters across the entire industry, dealing with issues ranging from waste management and packaging, to power generation, office and administrative facilities.

The Code recognises that it is in the industry's interest in the protection of the marine and coastal environment. They recognise that it is a high quality environment that attracts people to recreational boating and water sports and, in turn, drives the demand for marine industry products.

Contributors to the Topic paper: James Feaver

