

## Extract from All Hands AH2021-2 (Aug 2021)

### 3.1 Youngest Recipient of the MN Medal - Max Bingle

*By Chris Robertson, Sky News Reporter on 12 Nov '20.*

Max Bingle (pictured below 2nd from right) was on the bridge of the Sea Princess sailing through the Caribbean when the distress call came in that a vessel had sunk nearby.

A 24-year-old from Devon has become the youngest person to ever receive the Merchant Navy Medal, after a daring pitch-black rescue in the Caribbean. Max Bingle, who was the Third Officer, got the prestigious award alongside 19 other sailors, who have been recognised for their "outstanding service and contribution to the sector". The Sea Princess was on a world cruise and was sailing near Curacao in the Caribbean, when the ship received a distress call from the coastguard, saying there was a sunken vessel around 60 miles away from them with three men in danger.



"I was on the bridge with a senior officer when the call came through," he told. "It was a team effort, and we had to navigate to the vessel's last known position. There was a tanker standing by, but it was unable to recover the life raft.

"There was a coastguard plane overhead directing us, and at around a mile away, we went down into the rescue boat... and dropped her in to the water. We then sailed around three-quarters of a mile to the life raft to recover the men. "It was pitch-black and a force-eight gale."

Mr Bingle said he managed to get the men into his rescue boat and get them onboard the Sea Princess and into the medical centre.

"As seafarers we get the best training and every two weeks we have a drill and it gets repetitive, but when it happens - you're grateful," he added. The whole ship, which had around 2,000 mainly Australian passengers onboard, had to be turned around to make the rescue. The ship docked in Curacao the next morning as planned, albeit six hours late.

Mr Bingle said that the award nomination came "out of the blue", adding: "it happened a year ago and I still don't know who nominated me!" Pictured right: Sea Princess



"The medal for me is enough - I was just doing my job and it is nice to be recognised." Robert Courts, Maritime Minister, said: "I am delighted to announce the recipients of this year's Merchant Navy Medal. They have all gone beyond the call of duty to provide an invaluable service to our sector and our country.

"It's a special honour to award the medal to Max, its youngest ever recipient. He showed incredible bravery in saving three fellow sailors from drowning in rough seas, and this award is a recognition of his incredible selflessness that night." Since his dramatic rescue, Mr Bingle has stayed on dry land and studied at college for his qualification to become second officer and was due to start his new position over summer, before the pandemic put a stop to it.

### 1.1 About Solent University Alumni of the Year 2021 Awards

Now in their third year, the Alumni of the Year Awards celebrate the achievements of our alumni through an open nomination process. The awards recognise the difference our alumni make, and their accomplishments in the arts, sciences, sports, and business, public, personal, or academic life. For the first time, and following the launch of the refreshed Warsash Maritime School alumni community, we are awarding a specific Warsash Maritime School Alumni of the Year Award. On reviewing this year's nominations, 35 in total, the Vice-Chancellor's Group have awarded three awards...and the Winners ARE!

## 1.2 Solent University Alumnus of the Year 2021 - Christopher Rasmussen

Christopher Rasmussen joined Solent from Norway; he studied BSc (Hons) Maritime Business and graduated in 2014. Christopher is Partner in the newbuilding department at BRS Brokers. With strong roots and a history of shipbroking in his family, it has always been his childhood dream to be a shipbroker and to work in the maritime industry. Christopher's recent work involved brokering the building of the world's largest civilian hospital ship, Global Mercy. This work was undertaken pro bono, along with fundraising activities for the charity. In February 2021, Christopher was one of the guest speakers at Solent's Annual Maritime Conference.



The Alumnus of the Year award recognises Christopher's outstanding accomplishments and commitment to maritime business and alumni volunteering.

On receiving the award, Christopher said: "I am honoured and humbled to be selected to receive the prestigious award of 2021 Alumnus of The Year. I would like to thank all of those involved in helping me to nurture this achievement. "Shipping is an extremely demanding business. Since I graduated, it has had its ups and downs over the years. As my late uncle (who dedicated his life to shipbroking) used to say: "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass; it's about learning how to dance in the rain". I carry this with me when facing challenges in business and in life. With that in mind, I hope to motivate students to seek a career in the maritime industry - an industry that I am absolutely passionate about, and I would like to share that enthusiasm with others as they embark on their journeys. This distinguished award has fuelled me to continue to strive for excellence as I progress my shipping career."

## 1.3 University Alumna of the Year 2021 - Hannah Ngakabe

Hannah Ngakane studied BA (Hons) Marketing with Events Management and graduated in 2014. Hannah is Strategic Partnership Manager at Pinterest. In 2020, she launched Pinterest's first ever UK and Ireland Black History Month campaign, 'Black Gold'. In her own time, Hannah is also the host of podcast *Walk the Walk* that highlights the career successes of Black leaders. She has been a guest speaker to our students, sharing her passion and enthusing the next generation. Recently Hannah was included in the Forbes 30 under 30 for Media & Marketing and won Ad Week Europe's The Future is Female award.



The Alumna of the Year award recognises Hannah's outstanding accomplishments and commitment to her career in media and marketing, diversity, and alumni volunteering.

On receiving the award, Hannah said: "It is an absolute honour to receive the 2021 Alumna of the Year award and to be recognised for my achievements since graduating. From making Forbes' 30 under 30, to starting my own podcast, this last year has definitely been an exciting rollercoaster. Going to Solent University helped build my confidence immensely. I still keep in contact with my amazing lecturers and I developed key skills I genuinely use in my role every day. I'm very proud to accept this award and will do all I can to give back to the students in my position now."

## 1.4 Maritime School Alumnus of the Year 2021 - Christopher Clarke

Christopher Clarke studied at Warsash Maritime School, then known as the School of Navigation, in 1959 as an officer cadet. Christopher's career, until retirement in 2002, spanned offshore and onshore roles, with a focus on IT after coming ashore. Christopher is a member of the Warsash Association, the alumni association established in 1984. He has been the main driver of its website and *All Hands* journal, the two Warsash Association features most appreciated by members, contributing enormously to its growth since 2009.



The Warsash Maritime School Alumnus of the Year award recognises Christopher's outstanding accomplishments and commitment to The Warsash Association as webmaster and immediate past editor of *All Hands*.

On receiving the award, Christopher said: "It will be a great privilege to receive the inaugural Warsash Maritime School Alumni of the Year award for 2021. I am very grateful for this recognition of my humble efforts which, with those of many others, has helped the Warsash Association reunite many hundreds of past cadets, students and staff. My hope is this award will further the growing link between the Warsash Maritime School and the

Association and encourage officer cadets to take up membership of the Warsash Association, which is free whilst in training.”

Congratulations to our 2021 winners and to all our alumni who were nominated for an award. The three winners will be presented with their awards on stage at the class of 2021 graduation in February 2022.