

Thanking Ian Spreadborough for thirty-five years of service at SSTG.

October 2025

We took some time to sit down with Ian to discuss his journey from Deck Cadet to Managing Director. Growing up in Trowbridge Wiltshire a landlocked area of the UK. Ian reminisced that his inspiration to go to sea was a careers advisor at a local careers event. Prior to this Ian had not considered this as a potential career.



Ian studied at Warsash School of Navigation which was situated in the village of Warsash on the Hamble, not in Southampton city centre like the current campus. He recalled that a major difference between then and now was that all the cadets were employed directly by a shipping company. Very different to the system used in the UK today.

Ian qualified as a deck officer and sailed before coming ashore working for Lloyds Register and a towage contractor. Ian then joined SSTG or “*The Small Ships Training Group Association*” as it was known at the time on 22nd October 1990. Ian was employed by SSTG until April 2006 when he was appointed as Managing Director.

Ian discussed how the organisation has changed in his thirty-five years of service. When he joined SSTG, represented a collective of small ship owners managing small coastal vessel some of only five hundred tonnes. Comparing them to the 24,000 TEU container ships some of SSTG cadets serve on now.

Whilst working at SSTG, Ian developed other skills to help him in his role. He studied accountancy and after six years of study achieved a fellowship from the ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants), a true achievement as Ian didn't attend any classes and studied during his own time at evenings and weekends.

During Ian's service at SSTG he has overseen the training of 10,000 people to become ships officers, he recalled that a few candidates were more memorable than others.

We wanted to thank Ian for his dedication and professionalism throughout his service, and he recommended that any cadets under training develop in a professional standard and lead by example, as they will become the Masters and Chief Engineers of tomorrow.