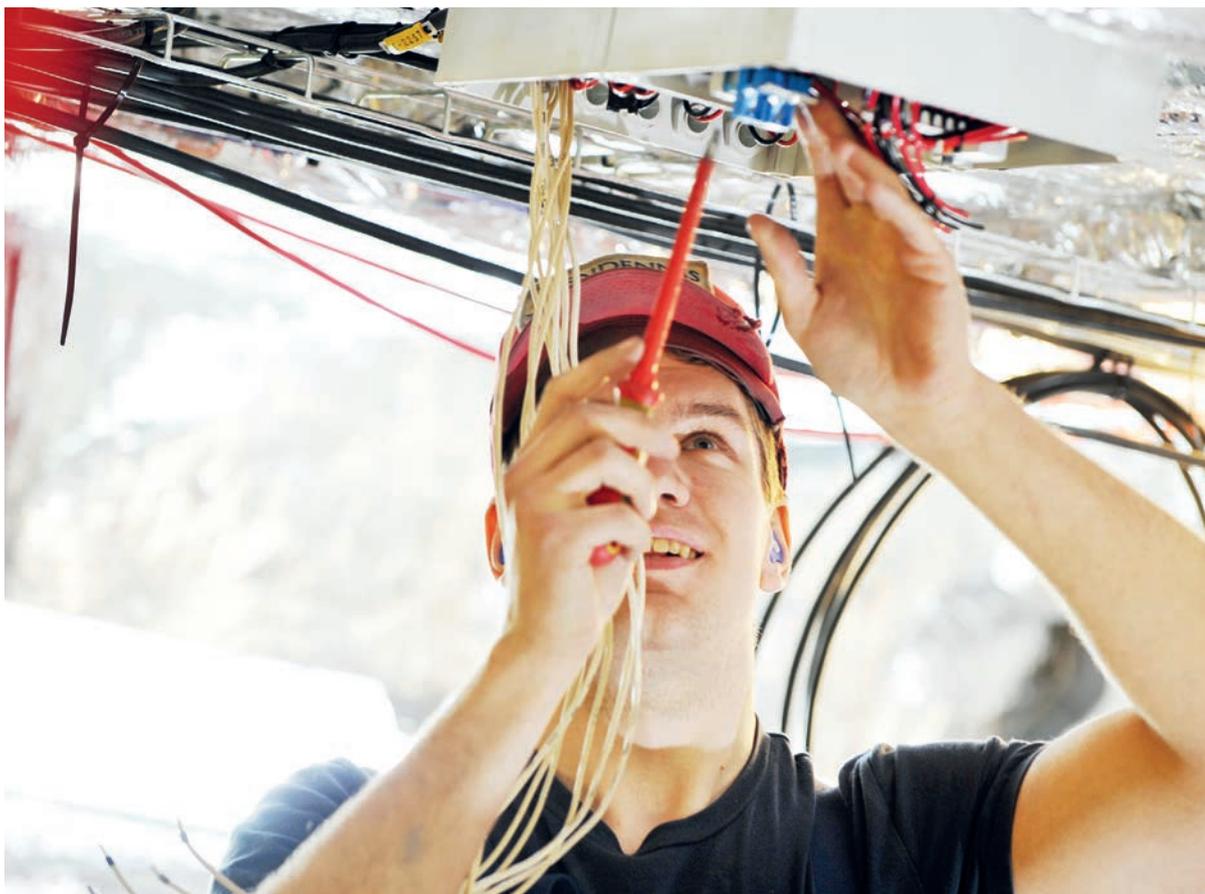


KEEPING SHIPWRIGHT SKILLS ALIVE

In Falmouth the marine industry is a key employer, helped by apprenticeships and initiatives to encourage young people to learn the art of boat building.



Pendennis has developed an award-winning apprenticeship programme

A new project has started to resurrect a Falmouth Pilot Cutter, rejuvenating some of the traditional skills of wooden boat building as a community programme.

The ambitious project includes teaching a new generation the art of the shipwright before the skills are lost forever.

The Pellew is being faithfully restored from one of the best documented and longest surviving of the cutters – the Vincent, a vessel originally built in 1852. She worked successfully for 70 years until being retired in 1922, ending her days as a houseboat.

The Falmouth Pilot Cutters were built for speed and durability. Over the centuries Cornish cutters were made to perfection, developed to survive and sail in some of the wildest conditions in the seafaring world. Each carried eight pilots who would guide ships around the Scilly Isles and the treacherous Atlantic Coast into Falmouth's harbour, one of the deepest natural harbours in the world.

KEY POSITION

During the 1600s and for 150 years, Falmouth played a key role in global communications as a packet station and had a flourishing ship building industry. Its maritime industry is still one of the area's biggest sources of employment with several boat builders having their headquarters there, including luxury superyacht builder Pendennis and other leisure boat builders including Cockwells Modern & Classic Boatbuilding, Rustler Yachts and the Falmouth Boat Company. All of these are keen to nurture younger talent and ensure the skills of boat building continue for generations to come.

Pendennis, one of the area's largest employers, has developed an award-



Falmouth Marine School is a leading educator in the area for courses and apprenticeships in marine engineering and boat building



A project to resurrect a Falmouth Pilot Cutter sees the traditional skills of wooden boat building being rejuvenated

winning apprenticeship programme and has trained more than 200 young men and women in the key industry trades over the past 20 years. The company has developed a four-year apprenticeship programme which includes a one year full-time course with Cornwall College, combined with blocks of practical general experience at the shipyard.

In year two, an apprentice can choose the trade in which they would prefer to specialise and then go on to complete their final three years based at Pendennis Shipyard, studying skills in their specialist trade areas.

Mike Carr, Managing Director at Pendennis, explained: "Just under a third of our current workforce has been trained on the company's apprenticeship programme, including many who have progressed to senior positions such as project engineers, trade and project managers.

people, their lack of awareness of the wide and varied career prospects in the marine sector, a lack of any meaningful work experience and a poor work ethic were key issues.

In response, CMN established the Cornwall Marine Academy, to deliver support to disadvantaged young people aged 14 to 24, who were not in education, training or employment (NEET). CMN has developed a range of individually tailored pre-apprenticeship support packages including online learning resources for traditional wooden boat building courses, taster sessions, one-day-per-week training embedded into the school curriculum and work placements at marine business premises including Power Fal, Mylor Yacht Harbour, Armada Hydraulics and Falmouth Yacht Brokers.

Since 2007, the CMA has delivered vocational training to more than 3,500 young people across Cornwall and career advice at schools using marine business

"The leisure boating sector is in a period of growth and there will always be a demand for the right people. A skilled shipwright or engineer will find work wherever they are, so I believe it is a great career choice, especially if it can be kick-started with an apprenticeship."

"The apprenticeship scheme helps Pendennis to maintain a pipeline of fresh talent, as well as providing a more structured and practical programme of development for young people with an interest in boat and ship building."

ESSENTIAL SUPPORT

As one of the major employers in the area, employing more than 440 craftsmen and support staff, a structured programme makes a lot of sense, but for smaller boat builders and marine engineering firms, there are several supporting organisations that can help them train and attract young people into the industry.

Falmouth Marine School, part of the Cornwall College Group, is recognised as one of the leading educators in the region for courses and apprenticeships in marine engineering and boat building. Students are equipped with both traditional and modern boat building techniques, and it is the only place where students can gain specialist training with access to practical experience across a wide range of boat building yards and projects, including the Pellew Project.

Going beyond training for school leavers and developing an interest in the marine sector within schools is Cornwall Marine Network, also based in Falmouth. CMN is a not-for-profit organisation owned by more than 350 member businesses and dedicated to supporting the marine sector in Cornwall via initiatives that improve profitability and encourage growth through quality, innovation and workforce development.

ACADEMY ESTABLISHED

In 2007, CMN identified a need to find solutions to problems reported by marine employers when trying to employ young people. A steady fall in the employability skills of young

ambassadors to more than 30,000 young people.

GUIDING BUSINESSES

The Cornwall Apprenticeship Agency, which is a subsidiary of CMN, helps to broker potential progression for young people into apprenticeships in the marine sector. The team of skills brokers guide marine businesses through the journey of taking on apprentices and helps enable the natural progression from pre-apprentice training into full time employment via accredited apprenticeship programmes of learning with the opportunity to provide employer incentives to invest in apprentices.

As a member of CMN, Cockwells Modern & Classic Boatbuilding takes advantage of the courses and support they offer and work with Falmouth Marine School to find the recruits the need.

Dave Cockwell, Founder and MD of Cockwells Modern & Classic Boatbuilding, said: "It is a continuous struggle to find more skilled boat builders, engineers and craftsmen, so we are very aware that we need to play an active role in attracting more young people to the industry if we want to find the skillsets we require."

When asked whether he thinks boat building is a career for life, Dave concluded: "The leisure boating sector is in a period of growth and there will always be a demand for the right people. A skilled shipwright or engineer will find work wherever they are, so I believe it is a great career choice, especially if it can be kick-started with an apprenticeship."

Words: Falmouth Marine School

INFORMATION

Web: www.Falmouth.co.uk
Facebook: @FalmouthCornwallUK
Twitter: @FalmouthTownUK
Instagram: @LoveFalmouth