



THE NEED FOR GREEN

HMS reviews the Green Tech Boat Show, held last month at MDL's Queen Anne's Battery marina complex in Plymouth – an event whose ideals and aims become ever more relevant and pressing as the UK and the world at large press on toward a time when 'green' maritime solutions will be the only option legislation allows...

If there was one show that the international marine industry should be putting its muscle and investment behind, then surely it should be one dedicated to the cause of a greener, more ecologically sustainable marine environment. The recent Green Tech Boat Show, hosted by MDL Marinas at their Plymouth, Queen Anne's Battery site, in some ways represented an ideal – a quest, if you will – even more than a show. With just 21 exhibitors on the day, the event was by anyone's standards small in size, and while exclusively representing a 'niche' in the market, nonetheless it distinctly lacked a number of the key players in the 'green' market. Putting the residual difficulties of COVID aside, the show clearly

was a victim of the industry's cautiousness and a tendency many companies have to 'wait and see' what happens in the first year of a new event before committing perhaps in the second or third year when they've seen which of their competitors have given it credence. The issue with this type of commercial cautiousness is that if every business had the same approach, there would be no event at all, and neither it, nor any new event for that matter, would ever get off the ground!

The bigger issue

The marine world is rife with talk of a greener, more sustainable future – one where more ecologically sympathetic solutions can be found, developed and

employed, particularly in the areas of propulsion, fuel and boat construction materials. The Green Tech Boat Show therefore offered the many players in the business the opportunity to embrace the bigger issue. This being the case, companies had the chance to take advantage of this dedicated platform to demonstrate that they are not merely seeking commercial profit and opportunity alone, but rather that their chief aims are more noble-minded and forward-thinking in terms of the greater good.

Collective might

On the face of it, what could be more desirable and worthwhile than for all those involved in the business of greener solutions

to collect en masse and present themselves unitedly as an 'industry' – not only putting their weight and own credibility behind the green initiative but also recognising the commercial value of 'collective might'? Besides, what a valuable forum a show of this kind offers too in terms of business-to-business fraternisations along with the exchanging of ideas between people, one with another.

... the Green Tech Boat Show has the potential to contribute to the advancement and awareness of a greener marine industry, to the benefit of consumers and, of course, the environment too.

Of course, the current Covid-19 pandemic restrictions may have prevented or deterred some, but many companies appeared either too complacent, too cynical or too commercially cautious, or even lacked the sufficient foresight to see this show as being the opportunity it really was. Their lack of presence spoke volumes and made a notably sad statement as a result. Notably RINA, the Royal Institute of Naval Architects, turned the offer aside to host a 'green' marine conference in association with the event. It is incredible, in my view, that they should not consider this opportunity, the first of its kind, to be sufficiently worthy or laudable enough for their membership to be interested in attending. Even in the current situation, a socially distanced or online conference would have been workable. Can you imagine what a forum it would have been if they had, especially with both Plymouth and Exeter Universities, experts in this field, already having such a close association with, and presence at, the show.

G7 & GT

At the very same time as the world's very first show seeking to advance and promote a greener and more ecologically sustainable

marine leisure industry, the G7 members of the world's most influential powers were meeting to discuss, among other things, climate change – not more than 50 miles down the road! Ironic, don't you think? Did any of these delegates and their agencies show the event the slightest bit of interest? No, they didn't. Furthermore, to my knowledge, not a single national newspaper or international media agency gave the Green Tech Boat Show the slightest credit or column mention.

To my way of thinking, the 2021 show's attendance figures are largely irrelevant. Why? Because the show, whatever may be said of it, has made its mark, the flag has been raised and a trumpet blast

VIRTUALLY GREEN

The Virtual Green Tech Boat Show runs until 31st July (supported by ICOMIA). ICOMIA presents: Boating & Sustainability at the Green Tech Boat Show 2021. Introduced by Melanie Symes, the Boating & Sustainability panel presented by ICOMIA looks at how the sector needs to adapt to sustainability. Each of the panellists discusses the current situation as regards boating and sustainability, what we need to do and what we need to be aware of in terms of impact, risks and problems.

THE GREEN TECH BOAT SHOW

MDL MARINAS



1. Broadblue 346 ECO Catermaran
2. Mount Batten Ferry - MV Copper
3. North Devon Marine - Oyster 35
4. North Devon Marine - Contessa 34
5. The Bounty Project
6. Plymouth Boat Trips - e-Voyager
7. ARC Marine
8. University of Plymouth

9. Aqua Superpower
10. Pixii Electric Boats
11. Marine Safety Systems / Sonihull
12. Epropulsion
13. Vulkan Industries
14. Fischer Panda UK
15. The Green Blue
16. Lynch Electric Motors

17. MDL Marinas
18. SA Green Fitness Ltd
19. Aegina-Pure
20. RNLI Water Safety Team
21. RS Electric Boats - Pulse 63 RIB
22. Porsche Centre Exeter - Taycan

has been sounded. That can't be changed and, in a way, as I said at the outset, the Green Tech Boat Show represents an 'ideal' even more than it does an event. It's also one that puts the marine industry in an uncomfortable position. Why? Because unlike other boat shows, it's an initiative wholly associated with principles, motives and concerns that go way beyond the standard norms of trade and commercial gain.

Ever more pressing

But if it is to succeed, MDL's Green Tech Boat Show has to be an internationally attended event

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with a genuine line-up of the world's leading tech companies displaying their products 'in the flesh', and with key personnel on hand to inform and educate people as to options and advancements being made in this field. When you consider that 2030 is apparently the year when

all fossil burning combustion engines are to be banned, surely then, with only nine years to go, the aims of this new show can only become even more pressing and relevant.

It is our hope that the show does succeed and that the likes of MDL are rewarded for their efforts in this arena. For if it does secure an annual place in the maritime events calendar, the Green Tech Boat Show has the potential to contribute to the advancement and awareness of a greener marine industry, to the benefit of consumers and, of course, the environment too. ■



Above: The booths and exhibits shown above were typical of the land based displays at the Green Tech Show.