

WOMEN IN ENGINEERING – NEWSLETTER

2024 will be the 9th year of Women in Engineering at the RNLI. We are excited to see what this year brings, join us for all news STEM related.

WOMEN IN ENGINEERING RNLI

The role of engineering at the RNLI is vital – ensuring our crews have the lifeboats and equipment they need to not only stand the test of some of the most challenging weather conditions of the UK and Ireland's coastline, every bit of kit must keep our crew safe and be fit for generations to come. Currently, figures show across the industry of engineering 16.5% are women, and this is reflected in our team here at the RNLI. I have a film to share with you to showcase careers in engineering across industry to help inspire the next generation of people to take up careers in engineering.

We have prepared a film to showcase the various routes and career possibilities into engineering.

If you are interested in a career in engineering or finding out more about the RNLI, you can visit this website: <https://rnli.org/youth-education/women-in-engineering>



NATASHA
DESIGNER (NAVAL
ARCHITECTURE)



I work as a Designer within the Naval Architecture team. I started at the RNLI in July 2022 immediately after graduating from Newcastle University with a Master of Engineering degree. I studied Marine Technology and specialised in Small Craft Technology, this involved specific modules aimed at the design of small boats less than 20 metres – which is applicable to our boats at the RNLI. I loved my course and had a few opportunities to get involved in research work outside of a university setting.

I knew I wanted to do engineering or design when I was in school, I enjoyed maths and science much more than other subjects, I was also a lot better at them. In year 11 my DT teacher asked me and two other girls in my class if we wanted to apply for an Arkwright Engineering Scholarship. Those who secured a scholarship received a grant to help with studies/furthering development as well as a mentor to help us find our career path. After I passed the exam and completed my interview day in London, I was awarded the scholarship. At the awards ceremony I was introduced by my mentor to the old head of Ship Science at Southampton University. I spoke to him about being unsure what route I wanted to go down.

After I mentioned my involvement with rowing outside of school, he asked if I'd ever considered studying marine engineering/naval architecture. Now look where I am!

I think the thing I enjoy most about my role is the diversity in the work. I get to work on projects that cover the many different elements of our lifeboats. This includes testing the boats overall stability performance, developing new designs for stowage's or operational equipment and updating or writing asset related technical documents. Another thing I love about my role is my team. They are always happy to give me advice and support with my work as well as give me lots of opportunities to pursue task work in areas that I find particularly interesting, or in areas that I feel I need further development in.



SUSIE
SENIOR NAVAL ARCHITECT



My role at the RNLI is of Senior Naval Architect, using my specialism in Composite structures, stability, design and manufacture, trials and R&D to keep our boats and our people safe.

There are so many elements to the role of Naval Architect that it gives this amazing variety to my work. It is very rare that two days are the same and the mix of hands on testing of equipment and desk based research and design development keep me enthusiastic about the way we look after our volunteer crews and our varied fleet of boats .

There have been so many highlights to my career, from being on the bridge of a warship running a trial to find ways to simulate terrorist attacks, to laminating lifeboats, to developing designs from concept to launch, through to going down a slipway on the back deck of a Tamar surrounded by our volunteer crews. I can certainly say I've been lucky enough to experienced so much. The joy of working with great teams to produce real world solutions gives me the drive to keep progressing in the marine industry and I'm sure there will be many memorable experiences to come.

The reason I became a Naval architect stem from the fact that, as a dyslexic, a lot of subjects at school were tricky for me but maths, design and problem solving was something I seemed to have a natural affinity to. As a keen sailor it made most sense to my 18 year old self to follow my hobby into a degree. After achieving a first-class honours in my undergraduate I felt ready to take on a master's degree which really helped to round off my learning and set me up for a fantastic career in an industry I love. Unfortunately, I am yet to design sailing boats but my love of the water has driven my passion for my role at the RNLI. Afterall I never know when I might need to call on them!

The beauty of this industry is the variety, you really can tailor your career path to your interest. I have worked on luxury yachts, floating oil platforms, unmanned vessels, ship equipment, lifeboats and P1 racing powerboats but I have friends who I studied with in the Formula 1 industry, the winter Olympics sled design team and in the renewables sector. There are opportunities to suit every interest.