

Speech – Francesca Cappa – LSLC/YMP Chairman

Thank you very much Aleka, and good evening everyone.

First of all, I would like to thank all the sponsors of this evening's celebration for their generosity in supporting tonight's event, and for all their practical support and involvement over the years.

Our main sponsor is Watkins Associates, along with:

- HFW.
- 36 Stone.
- Quadrant Chambers.
- Stephenson Harwood.

Thank you very much for making this event possible, in these fantastic surroundings at Stationers' Hall.

Thank you also to all our LSLC YMP committee members, past and present, and Ian Woods in particular, for everything you have done to support our programme of events over the years - both social and educational.

As many of you will know, having taking up the baton from Ian, I have been chairing the YMP for almost 4 years. Despite the unexpected challenges of the pandemic, this has been an energetic period of growth and change for the YMP, with a full programme of events, a growing YMP committee, and a strengthening of our links with organisation with similar aims internationally.

It has been a period of huge changes for many of us, me included – having had a baby during the first lockdown, changed jobs, adapted to new ways of working and interacting with colleagues and the wider industry. It has been an honour to chair the YMP, and to work closely with so many talented professionals across all sectors of the maritime industry. I am extremely grateful for all the support, generosity and friendship shown to me personally, and the tremendous support for our YMP mission.

A very special thanks must go to Gerard Matthews. Thank you Gerard for all your patience, time, sage advice and perseverance. I am sorry you have had to put up with us, our changing and ambitious plans, but you have always done so with tremendously good humour and pragmatism.

Above all, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Aleka personally and on behalf of the YMP – for her boundless energy, enthusiasm, vision, belief in us, and for challenging us, at times, to achieve more than we thought possible. None of this would be here without Aleka's foresight, guidance and encouragement. So, on behalf of all of us, and future generations that will benefit from the LSLC/YMP, thank you immensely.

As a symbol of the life that you continue to breathe into the association and all its activities, we would like to give you, a tree of life, as a memento of this milestone in the development

of the YMP. I hope and trust that the association will continue, grow and develop for many years to come under your guidance, and it is a privilege to be a part of this wonderful journey.

Finally, thank you to all of you – for being here, supporting our events and celebrating this YMP milestone with us.

Now, without further ado, I will hand over the floor to Lord Thomas.