

February's Mersey Maritime Face 2 Face meeting presentation was given by Alistair Eagles the Chief Executive Officer of Seatruck ferries.

Alistair gave a brief history of the company for an audience of approximate 60 who had arisen early on a cold and frosty February morning. In 1996 he was employed by Merchant Ferries and decided with three colleagues to set up their own ferry shipping company. They all knew the trade on the Irish Sea and felt there was opportunity even with the existing operators. They chartered their first ship, a Rumanian register Roll on Roll off cargo ferry. On the initial voyage into Heysham the vessel made hard contact with the quay and needed 5 days out of service for repairs. Not an auspicious start for a fledgling company.

Alastair explained that his business plan was freight only, no passengers and unaccompanied trailers. After 6 years of operations and various setbacks, the company need capital to expand and in 2002 they were purchased by the Danish company 'Clipper' who are a large bulk carrier operator.

Today Seatruck has a fleet of 10 modern Ro-Ro freight ferries. The capacity ranges from 65 to 150 unaccompanied trailers. They undertake 78 sailings per week between Heysham and Warrenpoint, Heysham and Dublin and Liverpool and Dublin. A number of their vessels are chartered out to Stena Line who are their competitors on the Irish Sea.

Following his description of the company and its operation he then provided his audience with an insight to his management techniques and how he engages his staff both ashore and afloat. He also stated his relationships with his freight customers and how he maintained a personal contact with them.

A really interesting talk ended an hour later thereby allowing the audience to linger for further bacon butties or get back to work!