

# [Press release: Trade Minister praises South Coast's marine and maritime sector](#)

International Trade Minister, Mark Garnier, has praised the UK's South Coast recognising its world leading maritime and marine industries on a visit to Portsmouth.

The UK has the largest marine and maritime sector in Europe contributing £22 billion to the UK economy and sustaining around 500,000 jobs.

Beginning his visit at Clipper Ventures, the Minister announced that the GREAT Britain campaign will partner with [Clipper Round the World Yacht Race](#) for a third consecutive year.

This will see a Clipper Yacht 'GREAT' branded providing an unparalleled opportunity to promote the UK on a global stage, as the yacht sails around the world and competes in the global challenge.

The minister then visited ASV Global – a leading supplier of unmanned and autonomous marine systems – where he officially opened the company's new mission control centre. The new facility will be the hub for ASV Global's on-going development of their pioneering autonomous vessel control system.

International Trade Minister, Mark Garnier, said:

With world-renowned research institutions and leading innovative businesses the UK's south coast really is a leading marine and maritime hub.

Today I have seen the UK's maritime excellence in operation and how UK companies, such as Clipper and ASV Global, are playing their part in the helping the UK forge new trading relationships and become a truly Global Britain.

I want more companies to follow their example and seize the global opportunities and demand for UK goods and services.

Although in its third year, this is the first time a yacht will be branded 'Welcome to GREAT Britain'. Circumnavigating the globe along historic trade routes, the yacht will promote the UK as a place in which to visit, study and with which to do business.

While visiting Clipper Ventures the Minister met with Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, founder and Chairman of the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race. He met with a number of skippers that will take the yachts around the world and was given a tour of the 'GREAT' branded yacht.

Following this the minister visited ASV Global headquartered in Portchester. The company designs, builds and operates unmanned surface vessels and maritime robotics. With offices in the UK, US and Brazil the company exports to 10 countries and is a world leader in its field.

The minister was given a tour of the new facility which will be enable the control, operation and monitoring of their global fleet as well as operator training and simulation exercises. He also visited ASV Global's workshops and took the opportunity to discuss the company's exporting success and plans for the future growth.