

Maiden Factor crew rely on Inmarsat for global mission

The all-female team has revealed how reliable satellite communications provided by official Connectivity Partner Inmarsat has provided a range of benefits, from avoiding cyclones in the Indian Ocean to contacting home for birthday messages

From emotional phone calls and emails with friends and family to critical access to live weather forecasts and interaction with the world's media, the skippers and crew on board The Maiden Factor yacht have shared their personal insights into the crucial role of Inmarsat's global satellite connectivity as they near the end of the first year of their epic global tour.

Skipper Wendy Tuck revealed that a potentially life-threatening situation was avoided when information accessed over the internet enabled them to direct their course away from dangerous cyclone activity during a challenging crossing from Sri Lanka to Fremantle.

The iconic *Maiden* has already covered thousands of miles on its mission to raise funds and promote girls' education, setting off from The Royal Southern Yacht Club in Hamble in November last year on a voyage to take in some 25 destinations in 13 countries over two and a half years.

Constant link

Stopping over in Seattle, USA, the all-female team had time to reflect on the benefits and reassurance provided by official connectivity partner Inmarsat's seamless, reliable satellite communications in enabling them to stay in touch with home, bring their message to life for a worldwide audience and maintain a constant link to emergency services.

Wendy, who became the first female skipper to win a round-the-world yacht race when she completed the 2017/18 Clipper Round the World Race, took the helm in her home country of Australia. She co-skipped the 3,820nm New Zealand to Hawaii leg with renowned Kiwi skipper Sharon Ferris-Choat, a two-time Olympian and round-the-world sailor.

In this [video](#) explaining the value of Inmarsat connectivity, Wendy says: “While we are thousands of miles away from people when out at sea, it’s absolutely vital that we have reliable comms so that we can get weather information and medical updates if someone gets injured. It’s just incredible. We’ve had a few medical issues on the boat so it such a relief that I can just pick up the phone or send an email to MSOS our medical suppliers and get a quick response – it’s awesome.

“You do have this really lovely feeling of isolation at sea, miles and miles and days and days away from anybody. We all have our own personal email accounts on the boat and that’s just fantastic so we can keep in contact with friends and family the whole time.

“We rely heavily on the internet so we can get our GRIB files [weather data], so it’s really important to us when off sailing so we can update our weather, and so we can see where we need to position ourselves for wind or to get away from wind. This became really important when sailing from Sri Lanka to Fremantle when we had to dodge a couple of cyclones. It just gave us that peace of mind, so we know we were always going to be safe.”

Belle (Belinda) Henry, from Australia, who has been a member of the crew since *Maiden* left the UK last November, spoke of how important it was for her to receive emails from her friends and family on her birthday.

Media role

Meanwhile, Spanish crew member Amalia Infante, who joined the yacht in Sri Lanka, highlighted how Inmarsat has enabled her to effectively carry out her role as on-board media person, sending photos and blogs to *Maiden's* social media channels and sending emails to journalists about their mission.

Inmarsat has equipped the DISQUE D’OR 3 18-metre *Maiden* with a [FleetBroadband 250](#) antenna for seamless voice and broadband data communications to enable the crew to blog and update social media throughout the journey, as well as receive the latest weather updates and navigation charts. In addition, the yacht is also carrying Inmarsat’s Global Maritime Distress and Safety System-approved [Inmarsat C](#) service to provide all-important safety services, along with two [IsatPhone 2](#) satellite phones stowed in the lifeboat’s grab bag in case of an emergency.

The Maiden Factor is the vision of UK sailing legend Tracy Edwards to promote access to education for girls from all backgrounds and countries, and to raise funds to help young women realise their full potential. The project will see her beloved yacht circumnavigate the globe for the first time since Tracy and her crew become the original all-female team to compete in the 1989-90 Whitbread Round the World Race (now The Ocean Race), coming in a coveted second place to set a new world record for women's sailing.

Vital to mission

Tracy added: "The Maiden Factor is delighted to be working with Inmarsat during the project and it is great that the crew are using all the benefits of the advanced satellite connectivity during the tour. It is obvious that the on-board communications system has become a vital part of the mission – not only for safety and navigation, but also in keeping everyone informed about our progress, promoting our message and boosting morale."

Maiden will remain on the West Coast until November, postponing scheduled stopovers in Chile and Uruguay until later in the tour because of the risk of hurricanes. The next leg will take them to Antigua.

For full details of the world tour, visit themaidefactor.org or go to the [Facebook](#) page for the latest information.

-ENDS-

For further information

Jonathan Sinnatt

Director of Corporate Communications

+44 (0)20 7728 1935

jonathan.sinnatt@inmarsat.com

About Inmarsat

Inmarsat plc is the leading provider of global mobile satellite communications services. Since 1979, Inmarsat has been providing reliable voice and high-speed data communications to governments, enterprises and other organizations, with a range of services that can be used on land, at sea or in the air. Inmarsat operates around the world, with a presence in the major

ports and centres of commerce on every continent. Inmarsat is listed on the London Stock Exchange (ISAT.L). For more information, please visit www.inmarsat.com.

The Inmarsat press release newsfeed and corporate updates are on [@InmarsatGlobal](https://twitter.com/InmarsatGlobal).

Tracy Edwards MBE

Tracy made history in 1989/90 as Skipper of the first all-female team to compete in the Whitbread Round The World Race. Her accomplishment was recognised by the Queen when she was awarded the MBE. She also became the first woman to be awarded the Yachtsman of the Year Trophy.

www.themaiderfactor.org