

# Port of London Brings Latest Technology to University College London



The Port of London Authority (PLA) hydrographic department recently teamed up with Unmanned Survey Solutions (USS) to provide ground-breaking educational support to University College London's (UCL) IHO CAT A course in Hydrographic Surveying.

The PLA have supported the university for many years by providing lectures in current hydrographic techniques and equipment as well as supporting their student field projects. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the final element of this year's support had to be conducted virtually. The [PLA](#), in conjunction with the [USS](#) and [UCL](#), devised a two-week schedule which incorporated a combination of manned and unmanned survey tasks to bring the very latest industry solutions to MSc students.

## Changing the Way We Survey the Riverbed

"Unmanned Surface Vessels (USVs) have a key role to play in the future of surveying," said John Dillon-Leetch, port hydrographer at the PLA. He continued: "With the same sonar system technology as that fitted to our larger surveying vessels *Maplin* and *Thame* but at a fraction of the size, this remote unmanned vessel can access areas that weren't accessible before to this level of survey capability, changing the way we survey the riverbed. It is battery powered so releases no carbon emissions and is robust enough to work in rough offshore and coastal conditions."

□ Demo to PLA Surveyors.

Using remote access capability to onboard systems, students from as far away as China, Saudi Arabia and Singapore received daily interactive broadcasts from the hydrographic teams aboard the PLA manned vessels *M/V Maplin* and *M/V Thame* to direct and participate in the project work. During the final week of operations, they were also able to remotely pilot USS's Accession 350 USV and send it off on pre-programmed survey missions to gather high-resolution bathymetry. As future hydrographic surveyors, this was a real insight into how the industry is tackling the impacts that COVID-19 is having on daily survey operations.

□ USS Accession 350 USV on Thames River.