



Caring for seafarers
around the world

the SEA

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Christina Gkazouni, Second officer, Greece
Credit: Christina Gkazouni, IMO, via Flickr, CC BY 2.0

Many reasons to address gender imbalance

By Felicity Landon

Better motivation and a retention rethink needed to encourage and keep women at sea

Let's start with statistics: when it comes to women at sea, most people quote the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) well-worn figures, which suggest that women make up only two percent of the world's 1.2m seafarers.

However, responses to the International Chamber of Shipping's (ICS) recent survey for its Diversity Tracker published in November 2020 indicated that 7.5% of seafarers are women – and the ICS says there are an estimated 1.6m seafarers globally.

Whichever percentage you take, it's clear that in an era when it is difficult to convince young people to go to sea, a very large source of potential recruits is being missed. That, of course, is quite

apart from the numerous studies that have demonstrated the benefits to businesses of increasing diversity.

This is a topic that is certainly being talked about; indeed, WISTA International, Anglo-Eastern Ship Management, the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) and the ICS are currently updating their *Gender Diversity Manual* first published in 2018, and the ICS also tackles many of the issues in its new Diversity Tracker.

Capt Kersi Deboo, director and principal at the Anglo Eastern Maritime Training Centre, observes that traditionally seafaring is perceived as a male-dominated vocation. "Parents,

especially in Asia, are very reluctant to send their daughters to sea," he says.

"We have observed that those [women] that do apply have a very strong drive for the career and often have fought with their parents to permit them to choose seafaring as a career."

Seafaring is perceived as a lonely life, with little social interaction and work fraught with danger and risk of injuries and involving long hours of physical labour, he says, and a drastic change of image is overdue.

Seafaring still has a *'Pirates of the Caribbean'* image, says Capt Deboo, with shipping viewed as a polluting industry rather than being portrayed as the lifeblood of the global economy. >>

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“A ship should be viewed as a sophisticated floating township, with futuristic modern technology driving it. It requires well-educated, intelligent folks to run the ships and not brawny, muscular, ‘Popeye the Sailor’ types of seafarers. Regular magazines should carry articles featuring women who have gone on to command large cruise liners, tankers and container ships. This would act as a strong motivator for women to go to sea.”

Anglo Eastern is working hard to increase its women seafarer base and its recruitment team visits schools and colleges to promote seafaring as a career both to boys and girls. “These visits are bearing fruit,” says Capt Deboo. “We need to bridge the gap; even if we can bring it to 25% women-75% men, then the rest will equalise pretty quickly.”

Diversity goals

The ICS wants to see women on board (across ranks and ratings) rise by 12% in three years and 25% in 20 years. Among a series of recommendations in the Diversity Tracker, it calls for companies to introduce flexible working patterns and childcare policies, ensure suitable onboard accommodation for women seafarers, publish diversity and inclusion targets, and provide ergonomically suitable PPE that meets the needs of all seafarers.



Sanjam Gupta,
WISTA

Sanjam Gupta, a member of the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association's (WISTA) diversity committee and a trustee of The Mission to Seafarers in India, says some challenges are as basic as having

sanitary bins onboard or PPE and safety shoes that actually fit. “There are very few companies that go that extra mile to make sure there is equipment with women's measurements. More often than not, women are drowning in overalls that are much too big.”

However, she says women can face far worse challenges than an oversized overall. “I have come across cases where women want to pursue a seafaring career. They finish their [shore-based]



Natia Labadze, 2nd officer
Credit: Natia Labadze, IMO, via Flickr, CC BY 2.0

“A ship should be viewed as a sophisticated floating township, with futuristic modern technology driving it. It requires well-educated, intelligent folks to run the ships”

– Capt Kersi Deboo

training but are not able to complete their sea training because shipping companies are not keen to take them or don't provide for them. So, you can do the training but not be able to start your career.”

Companies wanting to promote diversity can make the mistake of ‘just putting women on ships’, with no preparation or changes made. The result can be women boarding a ship that does not have the right facilities, with a team that is also not prepared, says Ms Gupta.

“On board, women seafarers can face a lot of scepticism and sometimes bullying and harassment. They can feel unwelcome and isolated and that makes them feel they are not good enough. A lot of women decide to be quiet, say nothing and just move on. Many women just give up and come ashore. On the other hand, the ones that do complain can find that nothing comes out of it and the company simply refuses to hire them again.

“In some cases where they have had harassment and they complain, the company's response is ‘it's too much hassle, let's not do it, the woman is the problem, let's not have the woman on board’.”

Change the norm

While it is easier not to have women onboard than to deal with a legitimate complaint or change the system, and while some companies still say women don't belong on board, what can be done?

Ms Gupta says it comes down to lack of awareness; what is needed is a change of mindset and a lot of sensitisation. “The patriarchal norm needs to be changed.”

To suggest my own analogy: just as sports reporters talk about ‘football’ and ‘women's football’ – implying that football is by default a male domain with women not really belonging – we talk about seafarers, and we talk about female seafarers.

Ms Gupta says: “Apart from facilities and suitable safety shoes, companies should try to sensitise the crew about women coming onboard – it could be as simple as comments and jokes that are not appropriate. These are simple things – but a lot of companies don't want to do it because it isn't something they can measure and show and say ‘OK we have done that’.”

Sensitisation should cover not only the captain, chief engineer and others in positions of authority, but also the

people all around – she calls it ‘empowering bystanders’. “For example, if a woman is being harassed or intimidated and is not able to speak up, other crew members should be able to speak up. What would help here is some positive animated videos highlighting the right and wrong way of doing things. It is about taking simple steps in a positive manner – the message being ‘you have an amazing team, this woman is coming on board, how can you make it easier for her?’ These things would be of huge benefit.”

Shipowners, managers and recruiters must send a clear ‘zero tolerance to discrimination’ message from the top down, says Ms Gupta: “If those onboard know that the company has a very strict policy of zero tolerance to discrimination that would go a very long way. You can’t change people but a company should make it easier for people to complain when they need to speak up.”

Still lagging

As a traditionally global industry, shipping is ahead of many other industries in terms of diversity of nationality, says Andrew Cook, global crew operations director at V.Group – “but in the gender aspect, we are definitely not”.

“It is not through lack of effort – but it is a difficult situation to crack,” he says.

The cruise and leisure sector offers a halfway house between ship and luxury hotel – jobs across hotel, spa, entertainment and other sectors, combined with seeing the world, are a real attraction for people from every walk of life. “But a nitty gritty tanker running between oil refinery and oil refinery – less so.”

Today’s cargo ships are far more user friendly and high-tech than 20 years ago and the skills needed are different, he points out. There is the attraction of sailing the world, too, “but there are only 20 people on board, most ships are alcohol free, and there is very little social life. Also, people see being at sea as an individual career and think they will work their way up but then have to start all over again when they come onshore. But that is not the case and we need to promote the fact that there is a huge shore-based industry – you can get to a certain level at sea and get a job ashore.”

In March, V.Group, which employs 47,000 people in onshore and offshore roles, said women make up 49% of its onshore team and 3% of its seafarers;

it said there was still progress to be made offshore, especially as demand for seafarers is outstripping available resources.

Mr Cook says the group has 32 female seafarers serving onboard cargo ships – all are officers, including two captains and a chief officer. “And that portrays another issue. Officers have better accommodation generally, with en suite facilities and privacy – somewhere to lock your door and your own space. For ratings, it is a different thing – you may have people sharing cabins and toilet facilities, and I don’t think that is attractive. Also, ratings supply is hugely dominated by the Philippines and India, which are countries with very traditional, conservative attitudes.”

Pregnancy is a general safety-related issue he mentions: “A ship is not an ideal place to be if there are two lives involved, not just one.” On a cruise ship, there would be a doctor and small nursing team to turn to if necessary – on a tanker, there would at best be an officer with advanced first aid. Also, seafarers are generally on voyage contracts, which means they are only employed when on the ship. “Once on leave they are out of employment and we re-employ them again each contract. That is good in one way, but if a woman becomes pregnant and is on leave, they are outside of a contract.”

A good welcome

Despina Panayiotou Theodosiou, WISTA international president, welcomes the growing number of discussions around gender diversity, emphasising the need to attract both men and women to a career at sea and to

ensure that living, working and social conditions onboard are fit for purpose for all seafarers.

There are several issues to be addressed to secure diversity, she says. Any career needs to be attractive, welcoming and relevant. Countries providing most of our crews need to ensure that maritime colleges and facilities are suitable for all young cadets and crew members. Girls need to know this can be a welcoming and attractive career for them – “and I think the word is getting out”.

Ms Theodosiou says even though her father was a ship’s captain, when the time came for her to choose a career, going to sea was not discussed. “At the grassroots level we need to get educated young women to be aware that careers at sea are of value – that is what we are missing. This needs work in schools and colleges, and we also need to reach the parents, who are involved with children’s educational choices. Also, the career opportunities need to be better explained to them – it is important to sell the varied career path beyond the seafaring part.”

An important point, says Mr Cook at V.Group, is that ships today are far less about sheer strength and are more technical, digitalised and automated. “As deck cadets, we used to learn navigation but also how to tie ropes and splice wires. There are still some things – such as mooring or anchoring a ship,



Despina Panayiotou Theodosiou, WISTA



Maria Kanelaki
Credit: Maria Kanelaki, IMO, via Flickr, CC BY 2.0

winch to tighten up, and physical work, most of which is undertaken by ratings supervised by an officer – but more and more it is management skills that make a difference between an average and a really good officer. The old days where the captain cracked the whip and everyone did what he said are gone. Young people are pushing back and won't accept that any more. A senior officer needs to have the same management skills as people have ashore, to adapt depending on the situation you are in. That absolutely plays into the hands of women with those skills."

That's echoed by Ms Theodosiou, who says working on ships requires a particular skillset and mental capabilities that are not gender specific.

"Seafarers need to be self-sufficient, have a troubleshooting mentality, be proactive and be reliable decision-makers. We need people who are enthusiastic and engaged.

"This is a transforming industry. One of the attractions for all people is the ability to work hard and gain respect, to learn to make decisions and become

a leader – and that is something we can sell."

One of the common arguments against getting more women onboard ships is that they think and behave differently to men. But this is far too simplistic, says Ms Theodosiou. "Women are as varied as men and some would be more suited to particular roles than other women and men. So diversity is about finding the right person, regardless of their gender, race or social background – we need to finally leave those prejudices behind and find the right person for the job."

Equal attraction

Capt Deboo also believes that the attractions of a career at sea would be the same for a woman as for a man. "In Asia, it is a decent tax-free salary, good vacation after every tenure, opportunity to visit different lands and interact with locals of different nationality and a certain love for the sea. Our experience has shown that women who chose this career had a more carefree streak about them and wanted to take on the challenges of a more physical career rather

than a 9-to-5 desk job," he says.

He believes that on a ship there should be at least two women: "A single woman will find it very lonely not knowing whom to confide in." And he is positive about the impact. "A better gender split will bring in more diversity, better collaboration and a happier ship. Women with their more caring nature bring in a gentle approach which can smooth frayed nerves and irritability. Also, during problem-solving, a woman's thought process could be quite different from a man's and could bring about a lateral viewpoint."

We have come a long way: Andy Cook at V.Group went to sea in 1973, the year BP started its female cadet programme, and recalls: "For some old-timers, that was a big shock to the system. In so many ways we have moved forward. I always considered that having women officers onboard brought a sense of balance to the crew – instead of a bunch of lads together, they brought some realism to the whole vessel. It was positive in so many ways." 🌐



Irene, Engineer Officer. Credit: Irene, IMO, via Flickr, CC BY 2.0



Staying in the shadows

Women seafarers are in the minority and as such are often reluctant to be too visible, says Captain Petra Ahnfors, who is employed by Dania Ship Management and is currently onboard the chemical/oil products tanker *Team Cavatina*.

“This is especially the case with those of us who have been at sea for many years,” she says. “There was more prejudice and outright sexism when I started at sea in 1994 than there is now; in the community as a whole and more so in male-dominated industries. It was (and is) a measure of self-preservation to keep a low profile.”

Capt Ahnfors says there are so few women that there is not much scope for discussions about gender diversity issues: “I don’t know what my male co-workers discuss among themselves, but I have a feeling that gender diversity is not one of the top subjects. On the occasions I have worked with other women, it has been discussed among ourselves at times, but in a multi-cultural/multinational environment, differences in ‘power distance’ make it hard to have an open and unbiased discussion.” Power distance refers to the relationship between those in power and their subordinates.

This is still an old-fashioned industry with conservative values, and much of the crew comes from countries that adhere to a more traditional view on gender roles, she adds.

What are the main issues that hold back women from going to sea? Capt Ahnfors mentions a lack of knowledge about how the industry looks today,

and what the work actually entails. “In Sweden, shipping is a marginal industry nowadays, and most people do not consider it as a career, gender notwithstanding. The threshold is even higher for the gender that does not traditionally seek male dominated industries.”

And then there is the history of harassment. “Luckily this is much better now, but the rumours persist. When the ‘Me Too’ movement was most active, a group for seafarers was founded on Facebook. The majority of all female seafarers had experienced some kind of harassment, of more or less serious degree – everything from being called pet names and overprotection to sexual harassment.”

There is also the issue of family. “Many females want to have children at some time in their lives, and there are many practical problems with working at sea and maintaining family ties, both to nuclear/conjugal family and to extended family.”


Finally, tradition and traditional values come into play: “I came across a Japanese female master mariner many years ago that could not get a seafaring position, as the Japanese Merchant Navy did not accept female officers. Her family was also strongly against her working at sea. She was doing research in the marine segment instead.”

What needs to change? Capt Ahnfors says: “We have had issues with cadets being treated badly and the offenders were not always fired; in some cases they were only moved to another vessel. This is an industry culture issue – it doesn’t matter what policies say if they are not adhered to.”

She says companies should make sure that equality policies are adhered to and ensure that any crew member can count on fair and unprejudiced treatment no matter what position, gender, sexual orientation, or faith they belong to.

Meanwhile, she says the possibility to combine work at sea and work onshore during pregnancy and the first years after giving birth would allow women that want to have children to have a fulfilling career. As it is now, most women work at sea for only a few years, then change employment to short-haul shipping such as ferries, to shipping-related employment ashore or something totally unrelated when they have children. “If there had been a possibility to shift between work at sea and work onshore, it would be easier to retain female officers and crew.”

In her view, seafaring is an interesting job with a lot of scope for making your own decisions. Every day is different, and you are constantly learning. “You work closely with dedicated co-workers in a stimulating and diverse environment and you will see and experience a world of its own and also the world as a whole.”

She says women can bring onboard a proclivity for thinking laterally and a different way of approaching problems: “We are trained from an early age to be self-sufficient.” She adds that in many cases, women have a high degree of mental strength. On top of that, they can bring a different perspective, “and maybe we can in some way bring some warmth and wellbeing.” 

Getting to the heart of the matter

The Mission's WeCare initiative has put an emphasis on relationship guidance

By Verity Relph

The Mission to Seafarers port chaplains and welfare teams know only too well the challenges that seafarers face. They understand that long periods of time away at sea can leave crew vulnerable to feelings of anxiety, depression and, in severe instances, at higher risk of suicidal thoughts. However, they are also aware of the triggers. Often it is not life onboard that is the root cause, but rather dealing with pressures from home that can have the greatest impact on seafarers' mental health, as families and friends struggle to grasp the realities of working at sea.

In January 2019, with the support of the UK P&I Club, MtS embarked on an ambitious new initiative called WeCare. The objective was to address an issue at the very heart of seafarer mental health and wellbeing: relationships. By providing free educational courses, the programme aimed to equip seafarers and their families with the right tools to combat the triggers of poor mental health and ultimately help them to prosper.

Tom O'Hare, project manager for WeCare, explains the philosophy behind the programme: "WeCare is all about giving seafarers and their families a space

to talk about their feelings and emotions, and to discuss how they work together to provide support to one another when they're apart."

There are two strands to the programme: financial management and social communication. The idea is to help seafarers and their families identify the links between these issues and poor mental health, and to provide them with practical methods to deal with them. "What we are trying to do with WeCare is to give seafarers the tools to have a conversation with their loved ones before they leave about how they are going to communicate and manage finances. Through mental health resources and a support plan, we then help seafarers manage these issues while they're on board." Tom says WeCare is best described as a '360 self-care plan': "The programme covers seafarers and their family's welfare from the moment they prepare to leave for ship and throughout their time at sea. It's about managing the long-distance communication and financial matters while they're apart, but also providing assistance for when they're brought together again."

Understanding tech

When emails, social media platforms and text messages are the main means of communication with loved ones for months on end, it is easy to see how problems arise. Messages can be misinterpreted or news from home shared in a way which causes unnecessary stress and distraction, leaving seafarers at increased risk of accidents or mental health issues. The purpose of the WeCare Social Wellbeing course is to help seafarers and their families get a better understanding of the technology they are using and train them to communicate in a safe and meaningful way. Tom gives an example of one of the methods used in the course: "We have one technique called STAR, which stands for Stop, Think, Assess and Respond. It's a way of taking a deep breath before firing off a message that may come across as more critical or upsetting than the person intended."

The Social Wellbeing course was piloted in the Philippines, where MtS has for several years been developing a family support network for maritime communities. In November 2019, Tom flew to Aklan province to deliver WeCare to two local branches, known as 'chapters': "The dedication of our volunteers and solidarity of the community was truly overwhelming. WeCare delivered through the family network is all about community and having a joyous time. Ms Rosy, one of the chapter leaders and the wife of a seafarer, led a group of volunteers to arrange a banquet of fresh seafood, showcase traditional dances, and coordinate the attendance of over 100 seafarers and their families from across the region. Seeing family members from toddlers to grandparents engaging in WeCare and enjoying being a part of the Mission's global family was truly inspiring."

Marilou Abangan, a volunteer WeCare trainer and mother of a seafarer, gives her perspective on the impact that the training can have: "The programme has been a great help to seafarers and their families. Nowadays, the internet is creating a huge impact and affects people in different ways, that's why guidelines in proper handling of social media are very helpful. It intends to protect and preserve relationships and family."

Financial help

Launched this year, the other key strand of the programme is financial management. As MtS research found, there are a number of financial difficulties which

Wife of a seafarer, Ms Rosy has helped to share the Mission's WeCare message





A number of support groups have already benefited from the Mission's WeCare programme

seafarers and their families typically experience, including pressure to share their earnings with a wide circle of family and friends, and planning and saving for the future.

The course aims to help seafarers and their families identify the links between money and mental health and provide them with coping strategies such as budgeting. As Tom explains: "The purpose of the financial wellbeing course is to motivate and empower seafarers and their families to take control of their finances. It encourages participants to explore their attitudes and beliefs concerning money, to understand their current habits and the effects they have on their lives, and to learn positive financial management techniques. By empowering participants to manage their money, we can reduce the impact financial insecurity has on their mental and physical health." Tom explains the financial management side of the WeCare programme in more detail on the following page.

Last year also saw WeCare develop into an internationally recognised programme. By the close of the year, the Social Wellbeing course was in full delivery and reaching over 2,000 seafarers and their families per quarter. This was of course until the Covid-19 global pandemic and subsequent restrictions put a stop to face-to-face workshops. Tom comments: "2019 was a really successful year. We saw that the workshops worked and we were able to deliver WeCare to both seafarers and their families, reaching over 6,000 people. The feedback was showing us that seafarers and families were feeling more confident about having challenging conversations with home. Sadly, 2020 brought an end to all of this."

E-learning launch


The pandemic has, however, presented opportunities for the programme. "We knew we had to act quickly to present WeCare to seafarers," says Tom. "That's why we're transitioning to e-learning, which allows us to reach seafarers directly while they are on board ship. We're

able to address issues such as homesickness and miscommunication with loved ones through our online courses and downloadable mental health resources. In addition, crews have access to our team of MtS Chaplains who have training and knowledge of WeCare."

Thanks to the support of the UK P&I Club, the TK Foundation, and Prime Training, e-learning versions of the two courses will launch early next year. For family groups, meanwhile, the focus is now on webinars, with one of the latest catering for 105 members of the Magsaysay Family Club.

Lala Tolentino, country manager for the Philippines Family Network and WeCare trainer, sees many positives to these online sessions for families: "Meeting people virtually who come from across the nation at one time is such a thrill. Hearing their experiences on how couples keep their relationships amidst the distance, on how families remain bonded, on how someone realised the power of communication via social media, are just some of the discussions I look forward to in every training session. Learning from the participants and at the same time sharing the programme with them is really fulfilling and validates our work, especially during this uncertain time."

Above all, WeCare is about continuity of care. As Tom reflects: "WeCare is more than just a programme or a workshop that they do one day in Manila, in their training centre or online. It's a continuous cycle of providing mental health and wellbeing resources to seafarers throughout their time at sea."

Although 2020 has presented challenges, the move towards e-learning and webinars means WeCare now has the potential to reach thousands of seafarers and family members from any part of the world, whether on ship or at home, and at a time when mental health support is needed more than ever.  Verity Relph is a project support officer at The Mission to Seafarers and can be contacted on +44 (0)20 7246 2942 or Verity.Relph@missiontoseafarers.org. To find out more about the WeCare programme please visit: <https://www.missiontoseafarers.org/wecare>.



Scan the QR code to access the latest WeCare mental health resources.



WeCare's e-learning programme will launch early next year

Financial wellbeing starts with a plan

Learn how to budget better to make your world go around

We are all familiar with the saying 'money makes the world go round'. As a seafarer there are signs of this everywhere you look. The ship you work on darts across the globe to deliver cargoes that fund global economies. The hours invested in training and qualifications enable you to progress in your career and access more lucrative contracts. The wages you earn from protecting your cargo and committing to six to nine-month contracts at sea empower you to provide for your future and family. Money, therefore, is everywhere and as a result it plays a central role in the wellbeing of seafarers.

Due to the nature of their work, it is often presumed mariners are tough people, equipped to deal with situations at sea and at home. However, common misconceptions regarding seafarers' salaries and financial responsibilities often add undue pressure on seafarers and their wellbeing.

WeCare Financial Wellbeing, a welfare programme from The Mission to Seafarers, investigated key financial challenges seafarers face on a daily basis. Issues included irregular income due to inconsistent contract periods, cash-based systems on board and family pressures to provide.

Our research revealed that many seafarers did not talk about money with their loved ones, deciding to avoid emotional confrontations. In the Philippines for instance, it's difficult to say no or put a limit on your generosity. As one seafarer disclosed: "I feel like a human ATM and out of control but [spending] makes me feel happy, helping my family and community." These challenges can weigh one down and cause symptoms of poor mental health including anxiety, insomnia, and in the most severe cases, thoughts of suicide.

Maintaining financial wellbeing is so essential. It means having a sense of security and feeling as though you have enough money to meet your needs. It's about being in control of your day-to-day finances and having the financial freedom to make choices that allow you to enjoy life.

WeCare has identified five steps to achieve this:

- 1) Understand financial wellbeing and mental health
- 2) Make a plan to know where you're going
- 3) Live within your means to feel in control
- 4) Manage your debts to alleviate poor mental health
- 5) Save for a rainy day to achieve peace of mind.

Undertaking these five steps will enable you to do something now that your future self will thank you for.

Make a plan

Let's explore these steps in more detail, starting with making a plan – remember, a dream written down with a date becomes a goal. Break this down

into steps and it becomes a plan. Back the plan up with actions and your dream becomes reality. Our research has found that many seafarers have a financial goal, such as buying a house or sending their children to college. However, planning and maintaining that plan with loved ones in a long-distance relationship is challenging.

As a first step, talk about how money makes you feel? Do you take each day as it comes or do you plan for the future? Living for the day can offer an enjoyable and carefree lifestyle but it puts us at greater risk of debt. Planning can prevent you from purchasing treats and is a great way of achieving your long-term goals. Understanding your approach to money and sharing expectations with loved ones is key.

As a second step, take stock of your finances. Look at where you are now in terms of what you own and owe. This means identifying your assets (what you own), liabilities (what you owe), income (money coming in) and expenditures (money going out). Now assess your family's needs and make a list of 'Needs' versus 'Wants'. On paper, draw two columns headed 'Essentials' and 'Non-Essentials'. List the items you need (essentials) and then add items that you want to the non-essentials column; this will help you to plan for the future.

Then write your budget. This is your plan. It's an estimate of your expected income and list of how you intend to spend it. It allows you to make financial decisions on how, where, and when to spend money. It's a powerful tool for managing your money each day, month and year.

Financial wellbeing is essential to maintaining our mental and physical health. Through taking control of our finances we can control the speed at which money makes our world go round. In 2021, WeCare Financial Wellbeing courses will be available online via e-learning and webinars through The Mission to Seafarers. We hope you can join us and we look forward helping you invest in your future. 🌐

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Family A

Assets		\$
Property and land		51,000
Vehicles		103,000
Stocks & shares		2,000
Cash in the bank		1,300
Personal valuables		21,500
Loans to family		14,000
Total Assets		192,000

Liabilities		\$
Mortgage		33,200
Car loans		69,000
Credit cards		7,500
Unpaid bills		2,400
Pay-day loans		3,800
Total Liabilities		115,900
Difference		

Income		\$
Salaries		43,500
Other income		11,500
Total Income		55,000

Expenditure		\$
Housing		1,800
Transport		9,360
Education/Health care		10,000
Other living costs		5,100
Entertainment/leisure		12,600
Gifts/financial support		15,000
Loan repayments		1,800
Total Liabilities		55,660
Difference		(660)

Take control of family finances with a plan



Empowering crew to take up the climate challenge

How the Oceans ONE initiative can help seafarers to protect their environment

By Franka Wigman

Between September 13 and October 2, a research colleague and I covered nearly 8,000 kilometres on the water, on a journey from Den Helder, Netherlands to Willemstad, Curaçao, across the Atlantic Ocean. This voyage was in pursuit of Oceans ONE, a project that aims to create a CO₂ reduction in the maritime sector through knowledge sharing and innovation. During the passage, I called *HNLMS Pelikaan* my home and its crew my friends.

HNLMS Pelikaan is a support vessel of the Dutch Royal Navy, serving in the Caribbean. The 65-metre-long ship and the 18-strong crew play an essential role in safety and emergency relief operations in the Caribbean.

For someone who usually conducts research for the Navy on land as a Master's student, making this step from shore to ship was, literally and figuratively, a big one. It offered a unique opportunity for someone who works at a theoretical level with the Navy to be able to benefit from practical experience. And what a fantastic experience it was.

The moment we boarded, we were embraced as one of the crew and we wanted to live up to that warm welcome. We were happy to be assigned daily routines and the crew was also pleased with the acquisition of two military work students – if only because they gained two extra pairs of hands to help with the cleaning, cooking and watchkeeping. We learned a lot, and I

became increasingly enthusiastic about the 'practical' side of the Navy. The crew also became interested in our jobs and particularly in the research we are undertaking into how the *HNLMS Pelikaan* could reduce its CO₂ emissions in the most efficient way. We were also able to provide the crew with information about climate change and its effect and a vision for the future. Some crew members were immediately enthusiastic, others were cold – but that was a challenge that we thought we could work on!

Change brewing

After three weeks of following a strict daily routine, we noticed signs of social innovation taking place on the ship. I remember one day on a walk around the ship I saw two crew members, faces set in concentration, recording a video for GPAL, our shared knowledge platform. One of the two crew members had been enthusiastic from the start; the other had warmed to solving the emissions, climate change and environmental challenges. In three weeks, his pessimistic thoughts had given way to optimistic and bright ideas, enthusiasm and awareness.

This crew member had digested the presentations and brainstorming sessions that we facilitated onboard, and listened to the subsequent question and answer sessions. These sessions led to a list of ideas that could be implemented immediately, and a list of ideas for the future. The crew experienced first-hand the usefulness of such a challenge, but also benefited from the fun that came from

engaging in a challenge with a shared purpose. As a spark was ignited in more and more crew members, even more significant and wilder ideas came up and GPAL was put to better use. The crew also embraced the competitive element of this challenge in that GPAL facilitates ships competing against other ships – a definite motivator for some!

The positive wave continued, from the chef who came up with ideas on reducing the amount of plastic in goods purchased for onboard to the technical engineer who brainstormed the design of the new naval ships of the future.

The physical journey from Den Helder to Willemstad came to be matched by the spiritual journey that took place in the field of CO₂ awareness. It was a proud moment when we disembarked the *HNLMS Pelikaan* at the end of our journey, and that pride was reciprocated by the crew.

The experience gave me, the crew and other participants a fantastic energy injection to solve the emissions challenge. I am sharing my story and those of the crew so that social innovation can live on in other crews. This trip gave an insight into the potential for the creation and sustainment of such innovation. The Oceans ONE movement is reflected in the sharing of knowledge, but also in the events that are organised – for example, a CO₂ 'game' is being planned. I encourage all seafarers to spread the word and spread the energy. 📢

Franka Wigman is a military work student at the Netherlands' Ministry of Defence and a Master's student.

“Seafarers are global heroes”

The ICS’ Guy Platten explains why seafarers are absolutely not forgotten

By Carly Fields

2020 has been one of the toughest years in living memory. While the pandemic itself has taken its physical toll, the mental anguish caused by extended periods of isolation and the need to keep a distance from friends and family has been just as crippling for so many people around the world. Seafarers have had a particularly hard time with national lockdowns inadvertently calling an abrupt halt to crew changes, a humanitarian problem that is still unresolved nine months into the pandemic despite the best efforts of so many in the industry.

Guy Platten, secretary general of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), has worked fervently throughout the crisis to come to the aid of seafarers, co-ordinating pan-industry co-operation, campaigning for the right for seafarers to be designated ‘key workers’, and actively raising funds to support the Mission in its programmes to offer welfare support throughout the pandemic.

Speaking to *The Sea*, his message is loud and clear: “Seafarers are not forgotten, absolutely not.” Guy has spent many hours every day, seven days a week, talking to people to get the message out that seafarers are “global heroes”.



Guy Platten

“You are the key workers and without you the world would have ground to a halt over the past nine months,” he says. “All through that time you’ve delivered the food, the fuel and the medical equipment that enabled economies and societies to be able to function.”

The challenge of crew change as borders closed or placed undue restrictions on seafarers has been massive and while, at the time of writing, fewer seafarers were stranded

either on or offshore than at the height of the crisis, there are still too many seafarers serving well beyond their contracted rotation.

Directly addressing seafarers, Guy says: “I’d like to ask for your patience and to let you know that we take this incredibly seriously. We’re working with so many different people to put the solutions in place. And I’d like also to thank you for the amazing job that you have done for the past nine months and that you continue to do.”

Time at sea

As a former master mariner, Guy can relate to the psychological issues that the crew change crisis has created. His career at sea began in 1982 with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service. He joined the UK’s Royal National Lifeboat Institution in 1993 as an inspector of lifeboats, and following this he served with the Ministry of Defence as a salvage officer and led or contributed to a number of projects including the removal of oil from a sunken World War II battleship, recovery of ditched aircraft and the refloating of a grounded warship.

While he acknowledges that it has been a while since he was at sea, he can vividly remember the emotions associated with the end of a rotation. “I can remember how excited you were when you came to the end of your time onboard the ship and you were going home to see family and friends and able to participate in family life again. I can really understand that anticipation and the distress of missing a key event or the passing of a loved one. If you have been away and you have that separation, it can be an incredibly lonely time.”

One acute difficulty for seafarers is that they may feel powerless in solving the problem. They cannot do much more than make their voice heard, which they have been successful in doing, Guy says, but it’s also really important for them to demonstrate how resilient they have been and how professional they have been throughout this crisis.

What more can be done? Guy admits this is a question that he asks every day. With governments rightly concentrating on their national populations, seafarers have become “collateral damage”, he says. “Moving forward, we need to make sure that shipping is understood by society as a whole as an absolute necessity,” he adds.

Seafarers – out of sight but not out of mind



Silver linings

Two developments will help the industry better meet that challenge in the future. The first is using the unprecedented co-operation between industry partners, bodies and governments during this pandemic as a springboard for future collaboration – to the benefit of seafarers. “Everyone put their divisions aside and came together for a common purpose,” explains Guy. “Once you realise that we are not all against each other and that we ultimately have the same objectives, I think that has to be good.”

“Once the Covid-19 crisis has passed – and it will pass – there are so many other challenges, such as the decarbonisation of our industry. The links that we have forged over the last few months will hold us in good stead for what will be the next major challenge of moving to a low carbon future.”

The second development has been the ability to engage the mainstream media to highlight the plight of stranded seafarers. “We have had far more mainstream media coverage than ever before and it has been around the crew crisis and the human element side,” says Guy. “We need to do more and we must capitalise on that going forward as an industry.”

There will, he adds, always be a need for seafarers. While headlines push the autonomous ship message, Guy says that he cannot see the industry being without crews “for a very long time”. “The skill sets will change – we need to accept that and have the right training in place to be able to adapt to that – but there is a very strong future for seafarers.”

He also hopes that this crisis has not put people off pursuing a career at sea: “It has been an incredible career for me. I joined my first ship at the age of 18 and I had such an amazing time.”

Future work

While the crew change emergency has been a priority for the ICS, there are other programmes that it continues to work on. Top of the pile is the environmental side of the industry to meet the ambitious IMO targets for the industry to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2050. “To do that we have to start bringing zero carbon-fuelled ships in from the early 2030s and they will require training,” says Guy. The ICS has also successfully lobbied member states for a comprehensive review of the

“All through that time you’ve delivered the food, the fuel and the medical equipment that enabled economies and societies to be able to function.”

– Guy Platten

International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, the intention being that seafarers are brought along on the journey to a zero carbon future and that they are not an afterthought.

Looking further ahead, the ICS is also considering what changes may need to be proposed for the next planned update to the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) with early discussions scheduled for autumn 2021. Guy makes the point, however, that the problem with the MLC is not the convention itself, but rather the lack of adoption by some countries. “That has been a real issue,” he says. “For example, one of the awful things during

this pandemic has been the lack of access to medical facilities or medical treatment for non-Covid related issues. People still get ill at sea and I’ve heard some heart-breaking stories where countries have just said ‘no’ to medical access. So, it’s not so much changes to the MLC, it’s more about making sure governments live up to their obligations under the MLC.”

But there is a more pressing Covid-related drive that Guy is working hard on today. With talk of viable Covid-19 vaccines starting to circulate, he wants to make sure that seafarers are seen as key workers with access to the vaccine when one becomes available to keep those “global heroes” safe in 2021 and beyond. 📍



The ICS is trying to make sure that seafarers are seen as key workers with priority access to the vaccine when one becomes available



By the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore

All hands on deck to support crew change

The launch of the SG-STAR Fund marks the first global tripartite initiative supporting seafarers

During this Covid-19 pandemic, global shipping continues to operate 24/7 to bring food and essential goods to our homes. Seafarers play an important role in keeping international trade and supply chains going. Yet given the current restrictions, crew change poses one of the biggest challenges in the maritime industry now. Some ships are being turned away by ports, and seafarers end up being stranded on ships for prolonged periods despite ship owners' repeated attempts to change crew.

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) recognises the immediate concerns of seafarers who have been working tirelessly to keep our ports open and cargoes flowing. As a global hub port and international maritime centre, Singapore remains committed to facilitating crew changes in a safe manner.

To accelerate the process and propagate best practices of safe

crew change, MPA and the tripartite partners in Singapore (the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA), Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU), and Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS)) established a Singapore\$1 million Singapore Shipping Tripartite Alliance Resilience (SG-STAR) Fund to work with stakeholders in seafaring nations on concrete solutions for safe crew changes. The Letter of Intent of the Fund was signed by the four organisations on August 28, 2020.

Joining the mission

Following this, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC) jointly contributed US\$500,000 to the Fund, bringing the total of the Fund to Singapore\$1.68 million (approximately US\$1.2 million). The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) also lent support to the SG-STAR Fund including technical expertise in shipping.

With the contribution and support of the ITF, IMEC and ICS, the SG-STAR Fund is the first global tripartite initiative bringing together like-minded international partners from the industry, unions and government to facilitate safe crew changes through the sharing of best practices, and to spearhead innovative solutions for seafarers in their country of residence before flying out for crew change.

Kitack Lim, secretary-general of International Maritime Organization, said: "This is a commendable global initiative bringing together the collective efforts of governments, the shipping industry and maritime unions to take concrete steps to address the urgent issue of crew change."

Since the establishment of the Fund, an SG-STAR Fund Task Force (SFTF) with initial members from MPA, SMOU, SOS and SSA has been formed to work with stakeholders on solutions for safe crew change. Led by Nitin Mathur, chair of SSA Services Committee and managing



Signing the Letter of Intent to establish the SG-STAR Fund marked a critical milestone in addressing the crew change crisis

Credit: Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore

director of Wallem Group Singapore, the task force has started working with seafarer-supplying countries, such as the Philippines and India, on key initiatives. These include the accreditation of quarantine and isolation facilities, Covid-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing certification, ‘white-listing’ of medical facilities for PCR testing, digital solutions for tracking crew change, and interactive training sessions for crew to help them understand crew change procedures and guidelines. The Fund, based in Singapore, will be disbursed for upstream use in seafarers’ home countries.

The SG-STAR Fund launched a Call-for-trial Proposal on October 9 to understand the digital solutions currently available in the industry and to seek digital solutions from potential technology providers to partner key crew change stakeholders in Singapore and overseas. The Call-for-trial Proposal – which closed on October 23 – received a total of seven varied applications.

Call for partners

Sharing a common goal to work together with relevant stakeholders upstream, the SFTF is also working closely with the ITF/IMEC Philippines Working Group. The SFTF has called out to classification societies who wish to partner SFTF to audit quarantine, isolation or medical facilities, based on a standard checklist developed by the SFTF which incorporates the Stay-Home-Notice (SHN) requirements applying to the facilities in Singapore. The deadline for the call to classification societies was October 28, 2020, and the SFTF received a total of six submissions.

In addition, to enhance the Stay-Home Notice processes, the SFTF has been working with the Fullerton Health Group on a screening programme for seafarers in Manila, Philippines, that provides services such as physical and tele-medical check-ups, PCR tests and medical reviews.

Caroline Yang, president of SSA, will chair the Governance Committee of the SG-STAR Fund. The other members of the committee are MPA chief executive Quah Ley Hoon, SMOU general secretary Mary Liew, SOS president Kam Soon Huat, ITF general secretary Stephen Cotton, and IMEC chairman Capt Belal Ahmed. Immediate past senior minister of state for health and transport, Dr Lam Pin Min, now chief executive of Eagle Eye Centre and honorary member of SSA, has been appointed as the senior advisor to the Governance Committee.

Since March 27, 2020, MPA has facilitated crew change for more than 50,000 sign-on and sign-off crew through a ‘safe corridor’ to minimise any risk to public health within Singapore as well as to the shipping community. MPA expects to conduct some 500 to 600 crew changes per day until the normal resumption of flights and connectivity. ☺

Good health more important than ever

This pandemic has wreaked havoc on a global scale and the biggest impact to seafarers is arguably crew change. Many are stuck on board or unable to sign on, often sparking a negative chain of effects from anxiety and depression to financial difficulties. It is a concern for the club to see an overall increase in personal illness claims.

Before Covid-19, there were already red flags from a general rise in obesity among seafarers. Now more than ever, exercise is incredibly important to general health. Seafarers should aim for 10,000 steps a day to maintain a healthy state of mind and body.

Regular exercise burns calories and decreases blood pressure and blood fat levels, which improves cardiovascular fitness and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.

Not only does it help you to maintain a healthy weight, but exercise is also vital in building and maintaining strong muscles and bones, making it a great way to release tense muscles which can otherwise reduce productivity.

In addition to the physical benefits, exercise also helps to relieve feelings of depression by raising your heart rate and increasing blood flow to your brain. This stimulation promotes the production of ‘happy hormones’ such as endorphins. The energy depletion that

Exercise onboard Stay fit

Aim for 10,000 steps per day to improve heart health, boost energy levels and strengthen your bones.

Exercise onboard Working out is fun

Participate in a team event. Regular basketball matches are a fun way to stay fit.

Standard Club

By your side

occurs during exercise also stimulates the recuperative process during sleep, improving sleep quality.

Assess your needs and draw up a simple and achievable daily exercise goal. For mutual encouragement, engage in sports with fellow crew and build it up into a friendly competition through the voyage.

These are tough times. Only by taking care of ourselves first can we be there for our loved ones.

Using a smartphone camera to scan the QR code here and on our posters, seafarers can access valuable advice and tips on looking after your wellbeing. Print and share the full set to encourage a healthy and happy crew. ☺

For more information, advice and club activity regarding seafarer wellbeing, follow us on Facebook @StandardClubPandI.





Drone inspections have increased but should they continue after the pandemic?

Robots to the rescue?

Let's make sure that there is a proper review of remote processes before we fully embrace them

By Michael Grey

In this strange and horrible pandemic, much has been made of the need for everyone to minimise human contact. You might argue that this brings as many problems as it prevents, but it has been interesting to see the ingenuity that is being displayed to fulfil this aim. Clever communications, artificial intelligence and remote devices are all being given a boost by our horror of getting close to other people, ashore and afloat.

Survey and inspection are prominent areas where the use of remote working has come to the fore. With an engineer aboard ship armed with a high definition camera, speaking in real time to the surveyor ashore, it has been possible to undertake a whole range of survey work to machinery and structure. Classification societies have been prominent in devising a range of remote surveys that preclude the need for a physical inspection by the person who must sign the certificate. It has been suggested that such has been the success of these remote inspections, they might become more regularly established when the pandemic has receded. Why go back to the old ways, when the new can do the job adequately?

The use of drones to closely inspect parts of the ship which previously would

have demanded expensive scaffolding or cherry pickers was no longer a novelty when Covid-19 struck, but it is fair to say that the employment of these devices has seen a steep increase. They are effective, cheap and have improved massively in terms of the close-up definition possible with the best camera lenses. They have been employed to airfreight small items to ships in a roadstead and this may well increase as the capacity and precision of drones improves.

Autopilot

Even the controversial issue of remote pilotage has been suggested as a method of protecting human pilots from the risks of piloting ships where the disease may have a foothold on board, or indeed, protecting the crew if it has become established ashore. A pilot, safe in the protected environment of the VTS tower, could, some say, take a ship in or out of port in perfect safety, just as long as there are good communications with an efficient bridge team.

Similarly, effective electronic interchange of documents could, it is suggested, minimise the visiting need for the authorities, the ship's agents or many others who would normally wish to meet an arriving ship.

The question is, however, not why these strategies should be employed

at a time of crisis, but whether the 'robot' or remote working should become permanently established when the industry returns to a semblance of normality? There may well be convincing arguments for this, but equally, it is important that there should be a proper review, in which the possible disadvantages are adequately discussed.

Are human surveyors, using their eyes and experience, necessarily better than the emergency strategy of remote working? There is a strong case to be made for the human element here and the interchange between the surveyor and the ship's personnel which may be missing in a remote discussion. It is no exaggeration to suggest that the judgement of an experienced person may be diluted by distance. And while a remote camera aboard a drone might give an excellent picture, it may miss the deep-seated crack that is just starting to propagate and needs human investigation. It is the human being, familiar with the ship or machinery, who may well express concerns that will not be discerned by a machine. And as pilots have said over the years, remote working may be possible but even the best instruments are unlikely to capture the development of a dynamic situation, unlike a human on the spot. ☺

See Michael Grey's cartoon on pg 16.

Crushed dreams as leave cancelled

Increasing positivity gave way to disappointment as the second waves of Covid-19 hit

The latest feedback from seafarers who shared their views with the Seafarers Happiness Index has been a reflection of the extremely difficult times caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. As Christmas approaches, life is even more challenging for crews – whether at sea longing to come home, or those at home for months worrying about money and job security.

The latest data collected at the end of the third quarter of 2020 saw a surprising uptick in seafarer happiness, with the figures reaching 6.35/10, up from 6.18 in the second quarter. This was especially interesting as many nations were starting to experience a second wave of Covid-19, and there were signs of borders closing and travel restrictions being reimposed.

Digging into the numbers, we found that such had been the hope and optimism early in the quarter that seafarers were feeling extremely happy about the prospect of finally going home. Against such a backdrop, everything onboard was seen in a new, positive light. Sadly, this hope gave way to crushing disappointment, as leave was cancelled once again for many seafarers. At that point, the large early uptick fell away, but the initial positivity was enough to nudge the overall result higher.

So, the reality of life onboard remains one of frustration and worries about crew changes. Tiredness, stress and fatigue are on the rise, and there are many issues which need to be addressed. “Life during Covid-19 is hell” was a response that captured much of the mood.

There is clear frustration as trips have gone far over the expected time frames, and tolerance is being stretched. Working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week for such sustained periods is taking a toll. Indeed, those crew who perform manual tasks feel utterly exhausted, and their bodies, as well as their spirits, are approaching broken.

Some are calling for the pressures of the job to be scaled back. “We are working as hard as ever for longer than ever” ran one comment. While seafarers are facing unprecedented demands, there is concern that the imposition of inspections continues, and crews are finding it hard to service all the demands being made upon them. However, one positive has been the drop in the numbers of visitors

to vessels. This has meant some reduction in paperwork, and less time spent having to deal with people onboard.

Mealtime respite

With life onboard having to somehow find some semblance of normality – whatever that means in a pandemic – we have heard from crews about the increasing importance being placed on meal times. Repeatedly seafarers talked about meals as being the time that they were at last allowed to come together to meet others onboard without masks.

The issue of social distancing and masks was mentioned by many seafarers. The challenges of working in a socially distanced, mask-muffled world are hard enough, but to have to live 24/7 like that is incredibly tough.

Most people get to go home, to take off their masks, to wash their hands and then to have some form of normality with their family in their household. For a few hours, the pandemic does not exist. That is not the case for crews, many of whom have been having to live this zombie lifestyle for far too many months. To spend all their time socially distanced, to live and work behind a mask, to have so few interactions, this is having a genuinely concerning impact.

Seafarers spoke in terms of feeling trapped, isolated, worried and of desperately wanting to get home to their families. However, it was not just those at sea we heard from – we received many messages from seafarers at home too.

While some might consider them the fortunate ones, that would be to ignore the financial impact of being unable to

get back to sea. Many reported facing financial ruin and having to ponder shifting careers, which could be worrying for the future recruitment and retention for the industry.

With so many seafarers stuck at sea with no idea when they may get home, it was not surprising to hear of the importance of having contact with home in comments to the survey. Connectivity takes on even more importance in tough, frightening times. “The only reason to smile is the contact with my family” one seafarer commented, which echoed many more.

Indeed, communication has also become all the more essential as families at home face health emergencies. Being connected is no longer simply important, it is vital. Seafarers spoke of the fact that rumour and ‘fake news’ about the conditions back at home have become prevalent, so being able to talk to relatives and find out what is actually happening has also become crucial to mental wellbeing. ☺

Steven Jones is the founder of the Seafarers Happiness Index, in association with the Shipowners’ Club and Wallem Group. The Index is designed to monitor and benchmark seafarer satisfaction levels by asking 10 key questions and serves as an important barometer of seafarer satisfaction with life at sea. Questions focus on a range of issues, from mental health and well-being, to working life and family contact. If you would like more information, to see the data or read more in-depth reports, visit www.happyatsea.org for access to the latest results and to have your say.



Seafarers are feeling a roller-coaster of emotions
Credit: Brian Millson

theSea Leisure Page

There are many health benefits to spending down-time solving puzzles. Lower stress levels, better memory, improved mood, improved problem-solving abilities, and better work performance are just some of them.

Sudoku

The aim of Sudoku is to fill in the empty cells so that each column, row and 3x3 region contain the numbers 1 to 9 exactly once. Find the answers to both puzzles in the next issue.

MEDIUM LEVEL

5	2		4	1				
			3		9	2		
	8				7			
		3						6
			3	9	2			
2						4		
		6					4	
	1	8		4				
			9		8		5	7

TRICKY LEVEL

9	8			2	5		4	
				5				
	5	4	7				3	
	3	8		6				
	7		1				2	
			2		9		1	
	8				7	6	4	
			5					
3	7	6				2		9

Credit: www.sudokuoftheday.com

EASY LEVEL solution (Autumn 2020)

9	4	5	2	7	1	6	3	8
3	1	6	9	5	8	2	7	4
2	8	7	3	4	6	5	1	9
4	7	8	6	3	2	9	5	1
1	3	9	5	8	7	4	6	2
5	6	2	1	9	4	3	8	7
8	2	3	7	6	9	1	4	5
7	5	1	4	2	3	8	9	6
6	9	4	8	1	5	7	2	3

TRICKY LEVEL solution (Autumn 2020)

4	1	6	5	8	2	3	7	9
8	9	7	1	3	4	6	2	5
2	3	5	6	9	7	8	1	4
6	5	2	3	4	1	9	8	7
1	4	9	8	7	6	2	5	3
3	7	8	2	5	9	1	4	6
9	8	3	4	2	5	7	6	1
7	6	4	9	1	8	5	3	2
5	2	1	7	6	3	4	9	8

Jumble

Can you correctly unscramble these anagrams to form four words? If so, send your answers by email to thesea@missiontoseafarers.org by April 30, 2021. All correct answers will be entered into a draw for a chance to win a Mission to Seafarers' Goodie Bag, containing a pen set, mug and handmade woolly hat. Please include your answers, name, the vessel you are working on, your nationality and finish this sentence: "I like The Mission to Seafarers because..."

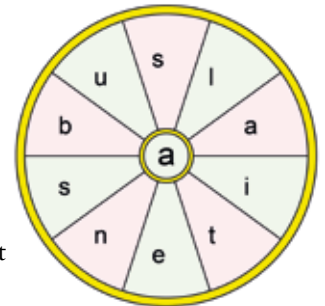
- 1) Cognati 2) Miaoman 3) Inventermon 4) Abcron

Autumn issue solutions:

- 1) Engineer 2) Throttle 3) Deck 4) Rating

Word wheel

This word wheel is made from an eleven letter word. Try and find that word, then make as many words of any length as you can from these letters. You can only use each letter once, and each word must include the letter A.



Answer for Autumn issue: 34 possible words, eight-letter word was OFFICER

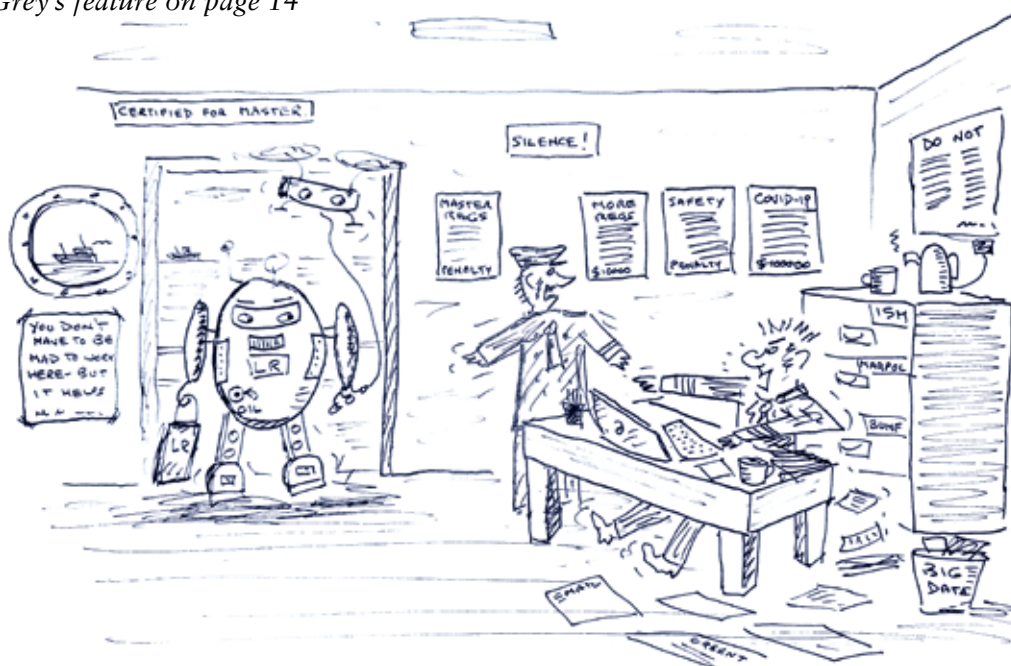
Flag code

Can you tell us what word these flags are communicating? Answer in the next issue.

Answer for Autumn issue: Emissions



See Michael Grey's feature on page 14



"Excuse me captain, it's the class surveyor and his assistant!"

Help for seafarers around the world

Are you one of the 1.5 million people around the world working at sea, or a loved one of someone who is?

The Mission to Seafarers is a great source of support for anyone working in the industry, and we've been helping people like you since the 19th century.

We work in over 200 ports in 50 countries and are available 365 days a year. We can provide help and support, no matter your nationality, gender or faith. Our network of chaplains, staff and volunteers can help with any problem – whether it's emotional, practical or spiritual help that you need.



Our services include:

- **Ship visits** – we carry out approximately 70,000 ship visits a year, welcoming crews to ports, providing access to communication facilities and offering assistance and advice on mental health and wellbeing.
- **Transport** – Our teams can arrange free transportation to the local town, shopping mall, doctor, dentist or a place of worship.
- **Seafarers' Centres** – We operate over 120 Flying Angel centres around the world, offering visiting seafarers a safe space to relax between voyages, purchase supplies, seek support for any problems they might have and stay in touch with their families.
- **Emergency support** – Our teams are trained in pastoral support, mental health first aid and critical incident stress counselling. We can also provide advocacy support.
- **Family networks** – We operate these networks in the Philippines and India where seafarers' families can meet, share information and access support.

Our mission is to care for the shipping industry's most important asset: its people.

To find out where we work, visit www.missiontoseafarers.org/our-ports. Here you can find information about all our centres, including contact details, facilities and opening times.

CREW HELP CONTACTS

SeafarerHelp

Free, confidential, multilingual helpline for seafarers and their families available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year, provided by ISWAN.

Direct dial: +44 20 7323 2737

Email: help@seafarerhelp.org

Chat to a Chaplain

You can now connect instantly with a chaplain via our new 24hr chat service. Whatever you want to talk about, simply go to our website and click 'Chat' in the bottom right corner of the screen:

www.missiontoseafarers.org/

CrewHelp


The Mission to Seafarers can provide help and support if you have a welfare or justice issue. Please get in touch with us at crewhelp@mtsmail.org


Get in touch!


Have you got news or views that you'd like to share with The Sea? Please get in touch with the Editor, Carly Fields at thesea@missiontoseafarers.org.

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Are you a seafarer missing your seamen's club visits? You can now connect instantly with a chaplain via our new live chat service.

Whatever you want to talk about, whatever time of day, our global team of chaplains are here to help.

Click to Chat to a Chaplain.



Chat to a Chaplain is an ICMA project managed by The Mission to Seafarers.



Therapy of singing

Whether through karaoke or carols, singing can be restorative in difficult times

Once found myself part of what I believe is called a ‘Flash Mob’ at Liverpool Street Station in London. Suddenly, music and dancing started on the concourse, all around us. We were quickly dragged in, hundreds of us dancing together. You can still see it on YouTube.

Extraordinary and memorable, it turned out to be part of an advert for a mobile phone company with some slogan like ‘so much better together’. It made us all feel good for days afterwards.

Singing and dancing can be a great thing, lifting our spirits and drawing us together. In this pandemic perhaps we have never needed singing and dancing more, even if we have to do it at a distance! I sometimes think it is something that doctors should prescribe.

I know that singing can be very important on ships and I have seen many a karaoke session in progress. I have never seen crew dancing, not on a ship anyway, but I am sure plenty of it goes on.

For many, singing features heavily at Christmas. We listen to Christmas songs, old and new, and we sing carols. The Bible’s Christmas stories, especially in Luke’s Gospel, are full of songs. Mary sings her Magnificat when she discovers she is pregnant (‘My soul magnifies the Lord’). Zechariah sings his Benedictus (‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he has visited and redeemed his people’). Old Simeon in the Temple sings his Nunc Dimittis (‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace’). And, of course, the angels sing to the shepherds out in the fields (‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace...’).



Hymns were sung in celebration of seafarers at last year’s annual Mission to Seafarers’ Christmas service

This year has been very, very difficult for many at sea, and for their families at home. Some may not feel like singing. Others will sing as a way of feeling normal – and perhaps as a therapy. For many, Christmas singing will bring thoughts of family. It may evoke sadness, but it may also help people feel connected. The singing of the angels came to the shepherds out in the fields, working men and perhaps also women. I hope their song will also be heard this Christmas by all working at sea. It is a song of hope, of the God

who loves us all and with whom there will always be light, even in the middle of great darkness. I hope that message will lift spirits and give us all hope for what might come next year. May the angels’ song help us all keep singing and keep hopeful. May we all try in every way we can to be angels ourselves, working to make those around us feel valued and hopeful. Happy Christmas. ☺

The Revd Canon Andrew Wright is secretary general of The Mission to Seafarers.

A prayer of the angels

All Glory be to God on high,

And to the earth be peace;

Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men

Begin and never cease. Amen.