



**inside:** Focus on the crew change crisis with more than 400,000 crew still at sea working beyond their contracts

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## Dear friends

**Welcome to FAN. COVID-19 continues to have a disproportionate and life-changing impact on seafarers and their families.**

Crew change limitations, loss of work and curtailment of shore leave are all major stressors and can have a highly debilitating impact on wellbeing. An urgent response has been demanded from The Mission to Seafarers.

I am so proud of the commitment and creativity of all our teams. We have continued key aspects of our work in ports, despite the challenges, and are now gradually and carefully reopening wherever we can. Our new digital services, such as Chat to a Chaplain, have provided invaluable assistance and our Family Support Networks have been in great demand.

All this, together with our advocacy work, has proved to be a real beacon of light in what for so many has been a time of darkness. We are also seeing some unexpected new external developments including, for example, significant government funding for port welfare support in New Zealand.

We do not expect the world to be quite the same again. There will be threats but also opportunities and we are carefully considering what this means for the future. You can read more about our pandemic response in these pages – alongside so much more as well.

I always enjoy reading FAN and thank all who work to put it together. It will



certainly inform. I also hope it will inspire. In closing, I want to join with readers in wishing a very happy 70th birthday to our President, HRH The Princess Royal. Her work on our behalf has been wonderful and transformational over so many years. One of my esteemed predecessors will reflect further on this in these pages.

Enjoy.

**The Revd Canon Andrew Wright**  
Secretary General

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# Celebrating The Princess Royal



HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL HAS SERVED AS PRESIDENT TO THE MISSION TO SEAFARER SINCE 1985.

**As Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal celebrates her 70th birthday, former General Secretary Bishop Bill Down reflects on her many years of service to The Mission to Seafarers.**

On 4 August 1969, a few days before her 19th birthday, Her Royal Highness The Princess Anne visited the new Flying Angel Club of The Missions to Seamen in Hull, where I was Port Chaplain.

She was accompanying The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh on a state visit to Norway, and was due to sail from Hull. At the end of their visit, I escorted The Princess to the car, and as we walked she remarked that we had built a marvellous centre.

I met The Princess again in 1981, when Her Royal Highness attended the 125th anniversary service of The Missions to Seamen in Westminster Abbey, by which time I was General Secretary. After the service, I asked The Princess if she remembered visiting Hull, and she did, recalling that she had travelled to Trinity House in an open-top car, and was smothered by a swarm of greenfly!

## BECOMING PRESIDENT

In 1983 I sat next to Her Royal Highness at a dinner-dance in Birmingham celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Birmingham Association of The Missions to Seamen. The Princess mentioned that she was due to go to Australia later in the year. That set me thinking. We were about to open a new seafarers' centre in Singapore – and

“ **The Princess' visit was a resounding success** ”

I wondered if she might stop over and open it. Next morning, I made the request through Her Royal Highness' office.

The Princess' visit was a resounding success. This visit to Singapore inspired the then President of the Society, Viscount Leathers of Purfleet, to suggest that Her Royal Highness would make a marvellous President. To our great joy she accepted, and in 1985 was installed as President in a service in St Michael Paternoster Royal and has held the position ever since.

## INTERNATIONAL DUTY

I was privileged to work closely with The Princess for four years as General Secretary, and I have treasured memories

from that time. Outstanding among these was a visit to a seafarers' centre in Fos, a remote container and bulk cargo port 50km from Marseilles. Her Royal Highness spoke French fluently with local dignitaries and staff members, and made a great impression on the local mayor.

During her 35 years as President, The Princess has visited many of the Mission's centres around the world; is a regular attendee at our annual service and annual general meeting; and takes a keen interest in all that is going on. She is an inspiration to us all.

The Mission to Seafarers is richly blessed in our President, and we wish her health and happiness in the years to come.

**The Rt Revd Bill Down**, Former Secretary General

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**Another way to give towards our vital work.**

Registered charity no: 1123613 (England and Wales) and SCO41938 (Scotland)



Thank you to all of you who joined us for our first ever Mission to Seafarers virtual Sea Sunday in service in July. Seeing the faces of chaplains seafarers from across the world was a reminder how much we rely on these keyworkers of the sea. By bringing together people from across the Mission family for a global event, we were able to demonstrate that seafarers are vital and valued.

As one attendee put it, "At a time when many (at sea and on land) are hurting, confused, and lonely, this was a beautiful way to show that we really are all in this together." The service was poignant for so many. "I found it very moving, connecting people from all different parts of the world, demonstrating the worldwide family seafarers are," commented another supporter.

If you were unable to join us, then don't worry. The video is be available for you

**“ This was a beautiful way to show that we really are all in this together.”**

to view online at [www.missiontoseafarers.org/sea-sunday](http://www.missiontoseafarers.org/sea-sunday). We can also supply you with prayers, hymns and other content to use if you are planning your own Sea Sunday service later in the year.

Sea Sunday is not merely a fundraising opportunity for us, it's a crucial way to reach out to those who are still unaware of our reliance on seafarers and the huge struggles they face. If you were unable to celebrate Sea Sunday in July in your church, then we encourage you to find other opportunities to publicly give thanks for these heroes.

**Johnny Dowling**  
Community and Ports Fundraising Manager



Watch Sea Sunday in full at [missiontoseafarers.org/sea-sunday](http://missiontoseafarers.org/sea-sunday)

## Sector Unites to Support Crew Change

**Over the past few months, the maritime sector has united like never before to help address and resolve the fresh challenges faced by seafarers and their families.**

Every Tuesday lunchtime through the pandemic, The Mission to Seafarers has joined other maritime organisations, under the leadership of the International Chamber of Shipping – by video link of course – to review the current situation.

It has been impressive to see all sides of the shipping industry working in close partnership, and with extraordinary energy, to resolve the almost insurmountable problems which struck so unexpectedly. The Tuesday meeting is an opportunity to report on what is going on, listen to different perspectives and work together on common priorities.

### CREW CHANGES

First on the agenda every week has been the crew change crisis. Around 100,000 crew changes normally take place every month. The rapid imposition of strict border controls and the massive reduction in airline capacity have had a severe impact on the ability for ship crews to change.

**“ Around 400,000 crew are still at sea working beyond their contract end”**

Visit [missiontoseafarers.org/news](http://missiontoseafarers.org/news) for more on how we're supporting seafarers



REPATRIATED SEAFARERS BOARDING AN FAS MARITIME MINIBUS

Shipping companies have gone to great lengths to resolve this problem – chartering aircraft, funding quarantine, engaging in complex negotiations and much besides. This has helped but certainly not solved the issues.

Some governments have been very helpful but many much less so. As I write, it is estimated that around 400,000 crew are still at sea working beyond their contract end – as much as 17 months in total time at sea.

### WELLBEING AT RISK

Unsurprisingly, our encounters with seafarers at the gangway, our digital interactions and our Seafarers Happiness Index are all reflecting high levels of anxiety and worse. We continue to do what we can both to support an international resolution and to help those struggling on a day to day basis.

Many have commented on the contrasting treatment of shipping and aircraft crew – the latter given a respect and a priority in often marked contrast to the former. It is a time for all of us to put ourselves into the shoes of these heroic seafarers on whom we are all so dependent and to take the necessary actions to support them.

## Funding for New Zealand

The government of New Zealand has stepped up to support the Mission as we serve seafarers through the COVID-19 crisis.

At the start of lock down, ship visiting and the work of our port centres in New Zealand was put on hold. Frustrated, the Seafarers Welfare Board of New Zealand, of which the Mission is a member, petitioned the government with a request that chaplains be given essential worker status.

They agreed on the basis that no more than one or two visitors be allowed into each port and that those visitors fulfil a strict criteria. But that's not the end of the story. As Revd Lance Lukin, The Mission to Seafarers' Regional Director for the Oceania Region, explains, "They then said to us 'what do you need from us to affect welfare support?'".



800 FOREIGN VESSELS MAKE AROUND 6,000 PORT VISITS IN NEW ZEALAND EACH YEAR. Source: Maritime New Zealand

### “Ports are all now rushing to assist us”

Considering the demographic of the majority of port volunteers and ship visitors, the current model didn't meet the government's requirements. More money was needed to fund permanent positions.

### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

So, the government agreed to provide NZD 295,000, which is around £150,000, to fund nine new positions including a national coordinator and roles in seven ports for the next six months. On top of that, welfare support was made available to buy toiletries and other essentials for seafarers and help with the running and maintenance of the Mission's vehicles.

"As a result of that, the ports are all now rushing to assist us," continues Lance. This renewed collaboration is much needed as the workload of the team has increased significantly. "We're doing a lot more advocacy work. Now seafarers are being seen as a vital part of the cog, our profile has raised exponentially, and people are valuing what we're doing."

The challenges facing seafarers are constantly changing, but it's encouraging to know that, with this additional support, our team in New Zealand are well placed to respond.

## Serving Latin America

Over the past few months our team has been working harder than ever to find innovative ways to safely support crews in Latin America.

Ship visiting as we know it remains off limits and in some countries our chaplains aren't even allowed back into ports. "The reality obliges us to think creatively," muses Father Ian Hutchinson Cervantes, our Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, based in Panama.

With this positive approach, Fr. Ian and his team are taking the opportunity to build relationships with port authorities and shipping companies; connect with seafarers through social media; distribute care packages to crews; run shopping errands for crews; and respond to emergency calls.

From Costa Rica to Argentina, the impact is tangible. As Fr. Ian recalls, "One German officer said to me recently 'I am not a believer, but I believe in what you are doing!'"

### OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

Such is the reputation of the Mission that, even as our physical presence in port has diminished, people are actively seeking our help. In recent months, Fr. Ian has been called to minister to crews facing tragedy exacerbated by COVID-19.

On one ship, a crew member had been lost at sea; on another, a stevedore was tragically killed; and on a third, a young seafarer was struggling with suicidal thoughts. By bringing SIM cards and



THE MISSION CURRENTLY HAS A PRESENCE IN NINE PORTS IN LATIN AMERICA

care packages to crews, Fr. Ian has been able to offer hope. "It's all about giving them confidence that there are those who understand their challenges and are there for them," he explains.

### CREW CHANGE

Our ability to connect with seafarers has been instrumental in ensuring they can access the information and support they need for the challenges ahead. The port of Curacao, a Dutch Caribbean Island, has become a key hub for crew change. Fr. Ian is connecting crews passing through with services in their home countries, such as our Family Support Network in the Philippines.

This positive approach is opening up fresh opportunities in the region. Conversations about expanding the Mission's work in Brazil and Argentina as well as into Chile and Peru are active and, with your help, we are taking good care of seafarers in the region.



## Tribute to **Revd. Canon Robin Underhill** MA BA (1931-2020)



**It is with a heavy heart that we report the passing of Rev. Canon Robin Underhill, who served The Mission to Seafarers for many years.**

Robin emigrated to the United States from Staffordshire in the 1940s travelling on The Queen Mary to settle in Chicago. From that seafaring encounter, Robin was convinced that his future would be in shipping.

He became a senior executive with Cunard and was later ordained in the diocese of Los Angeles where he worked both as a priest and as a chaplain to seafarers.

In 2001, after eight years as port chaplain to Los Angeles, Robin with his wife Eve came to Scotland. Becoming

Secretary to the Scottish Council of The Mission to Seafarers in 2004, Robin embarked on raising the profile of the Mission across Scotland.

Robin continued to minister to seafarers in Scottish Ports and establish the Mission's presence in Scotland. He was honoured in 2010 by the Cathedral Chapter at Aberdeen being made an honorary Canon.

### **Revd. Richard Kilgour**

Rector of Holy Trinity Motherwell and St. Andrew's Wishaw also former member of the Scottish Council Mission to Seafarers.



**The Battle of Dunkirk was a turning point in World War Two and the Mission is proud to welcome mariners from across the world to our centre in the port.**

Code named Operation Dynamo, Dunkirk saw the evacuation of some 400,00 British troops. In September 1939, the British Army, poorly equipped and under trained, were sent across the English Channel to defeat Hitler's Nazi foe. As expected, this mission failed. Worse still, the troops were trapped by the sea.

With the Germans capturing the French ports, the men were funnelled onto the long, exposed, flat beaches of Dunkirk. In haste, at the end of May 1940, Vice Admiral Ramsay and his team began evacuation operations. The Royal Navy called on any vessel that could float to ferry troops from the shallow waters off the beaches. These vessels became known as Dunkirk Little Ships.

Today, we are proud to welcome seafarers from across the world to our centre in Dunkirk. In May every year a memorial service is held to commemorate those who served and fell in the evacuation and every five years the Dunkirk Little Ships return to keep the memory alive of this critical event in military history.

**Graham Young** – MtS Volunteer

## Supporting **Stranded Seafarers**

**Thanks to your help, maritime students stranded in the UK in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, were not forgotten.**

When lockdown came into force in March, there were around 255 Indian nationals studying at maritime colleges across the UK. With the closure of all universities and the cancellation of flights to India, these students were left stranded.

With the support of ISWAN's Seafarers Emergency Fund, the Mission was able to cover rent and provide supermarket vouchers for more than 100 students. Having a place to stay and essential provisions, helped to ease the stress and uncertainty faced by these men and women, particularly those who had families to support at home.

One of those students was Sanil who had come to the UK to complete his Chief Engineer exams. Sanil had encountered the Mission through our port centres, often purchasing cheap phone cards to keep in touch with his loved ones. He described the Mission as a "home away from home."

### **Global Family**

"I was totally upset and worried as there was no ray of light for getting back to my loved ones and uncertainty everywhere including my job and the social security of my family," he recalls. "It was a great relief for me, and I started feeling that at least somebody is there to look after me in this crisis situation."

**"The timely help meant a lot to us seafarers"**

His feelings were echoed by other seafarers who commented, "When the pandemic was declared, I felt like I was alone in a foreign country, stranded. But, The Mission to Seafarers proved that wrong. The timely help meant a lot to us seafarers. I felt proud to be one."

Sanil is now safely back in India. He faced a worrying few weeks when he was hospitalized with COVID-19 but has since been reunited with his family in Kerala. We are delighted to report that he also successfully passed his exams.

**"I started feeling that at least somebody is there to look after me in this crisis"**



# The Great Outdoors

Many of us have appreciated the great outdoors over the past few months. Pre-pandemic, a number of our Flying Angel Centres had been using their outdoors spaces in creative ways and can't wait to welcome seafarers once more.

## 1 Escaping in Nature

"Wow" are often the first words uttered by Seafarers when they visit our centre in Falmouth. Chairman and manager Penny Phillips and her team have turned the space around their centre into a wildlife paradise. "I was at sea for 37 years. When you get to shore you want to see a bit of green," says former seafarer Graham Hall who was instrumental in bringing the

award-winning garden to life. The sculptures around the garden include memorials to those who sacrificed their lives in World War II and one of Joseph Emidy, a former slave and seafarer who rose to fame as a renowned violinist.



SCULPTURE OF JOSEPH EMIDY WITH ARTIST GRAHAM HALL



FALMOUTH'S AWARD-WINNING GARDEN IN FULL BLOOM



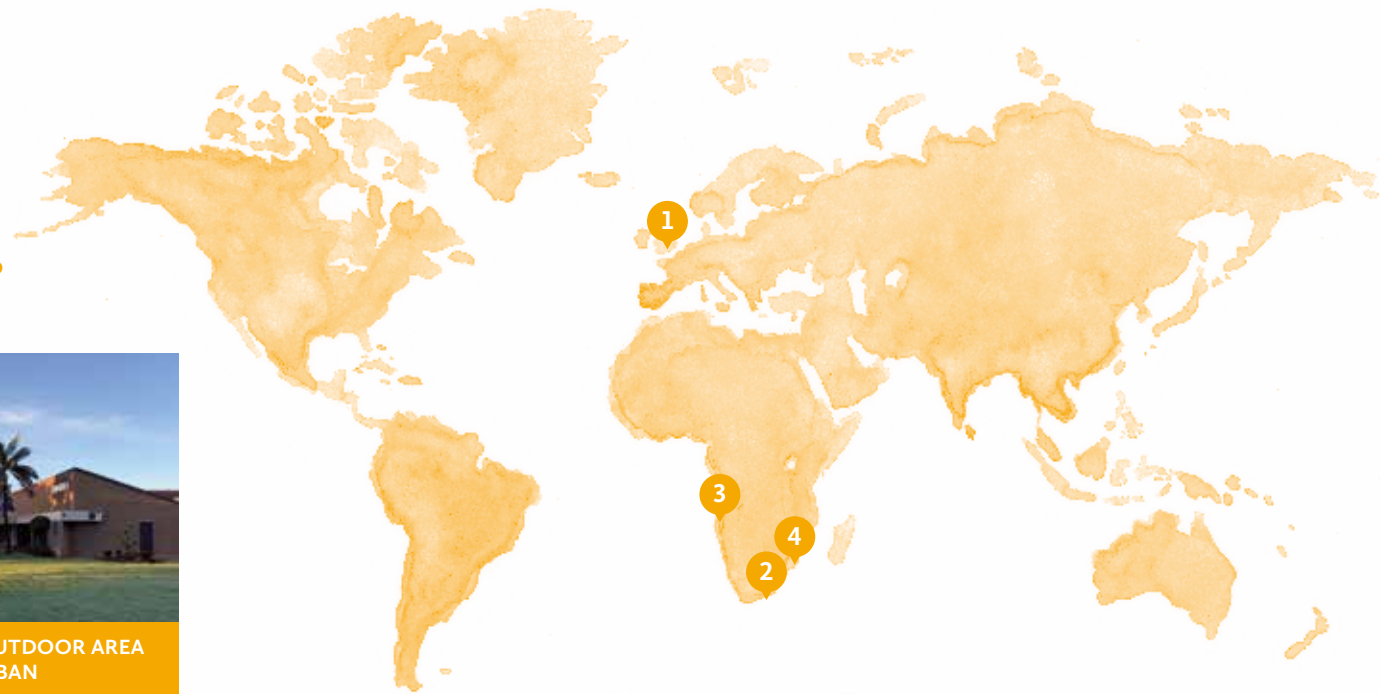
SEAFARERS LOVE THE OUTDOOR AREA AT OUR CENTRE IN DURBAN

## 2 Enjoying Exercise

In Durban, you'll often find a rowdy game of basketball taking place alongside a calmer game of giant chess, while other seafarers enjoy simply sitting on the grass and soaking in the warmth of a summer evening. "Having been on a ship for many months, the seafarers miss out on exercise, so they love the basketball court here especially," says Marilyn Thomson, the manager at Durban Seafarers Mission who is busy preparing the centre for reopening.



THE BASKETBALL COURT AND CHESS ARE READY FOR SEAFARERS TO RETURN



THE GARDEN IS CULTIVATED WITH SUCCULENTS AND POT PLANTS

## 3 Simple Pleasures

Even in the middle of the desert, our team in Walvis Bay, Namibia have been able to create an outside space that provides a refreshing change from the monotony of living in a grey metallic ship. "One of the nicest things is to see seafarers take off their shoes and just walk on the grass," explains Gail Wearne, the centre manager. "Sitting outside is as close to normality as a lot of seafarers get."



THE 'BRAAI' AREA IN RICHARD'S BAY IS WAITING FOR SEAFARERS TO RETURN

## 4 Building Community

In Richard's Bay, South Africa, port centre manager Mac Thompson and his wife Wilma have created a space where seafarers can relax. All year round, they can enjoy South African BBQs, known as braais, which are often complemented by music put on by local performers. "We have the best weather in the world, so we want to help the crews to enjoy it," says Mac.



## Make a donation

If you would like to make a donation, please fill out the form below, and complete your contact details at the bottom of the page.

Please accept my gift of: ☐ £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £50

or £ (your chosen amount)

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☐ Please debit my credit/debit card: Visa/MasterCard/Maestro  
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Card number:

Start date:   -   Expiry date:   -

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## How you can support us

There are many ways in which you can support our work with seafarers around the world.

### Find out more about getting involved

Please tick the box below and fill out the contact details panel overleaf to find out more about:

- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Remembering The Mission in your Will
- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ Involving your company
- ☐ Giving in memory of a friend or loved one

### We will send you regular updates about the work, needs and impact of The Mission to Seafarers.

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You do not need to write any other details on the envelope.



# A Time for Innovation

In a time of global crisis, it's more important than ever for corporate partners and charities to come together and respond to challenges innovatively.

Charities, such as the Mission, are being hit by two crises at once. Demand for our services is higher than ever, while opportunities to engage and recruit supporters are dwindling. We are delighted that our corporate partners have come forward to offer their time and expertise to help us address the key issues of the day.

### Berge Bulk

Berge Bulk, the world leading dry bulk company, offered to provide extensive volunteering support over the last four months. Their team have provided desk-based research to identify possible new corporate supporters and they have also been hard at work translating existing Mission project leaflets into new languages.

This type of support helps the Mission save valuable time and resources. It also represents a good example of how existing skills can be transferred from a corporate to a charity setting under the wider umbrella of volunteering.

### Aslotel

The Mission also received a donation of more than 4,000 mini hotel toiletries from Aslotel – a leading UK supplier of



“ We are delighted that our corporate partners have come forward”

toiletries and hotel equipment. Many, many seafarers across the world have found themselves stranded on ships with dwindling personal supplies. Within days of receiving this donation, we were able to distribute the toiletries to our Chaplains who in turn shared them with seafarers in need.

Both Berge Bulk and Aslotel have shown the ability to support seafarers through innovative thinking and flexible use of the resources at hand. In these challenging times they are enabling the Mission to continue and expand its services.

If your company can provide innovative support to the Mission, please get in touch by calling +44(0)20 7248 5202 or emailing [maurizio.borgatti@missiontoseafarers.org](mailto:maurizio.borgatti@missiontoseafarers.org)

## Global Champions Unite

Join the maritime champions who have helped raise £70,000 through Global Champions Unite!

Global Champions Unite is an international campaign where participants set a challenge goal and fundraising target and have 90 days to complete it.

We would like to thank all the maritime champions who have taken on a challenge whilst in lockdown. Guy Platten, ICS Secretary General, ran a half marathon on the 16th May raising £18,500. Ardmore Shipping with their partners Anglo Ardmore and Thome Ship Management

created *Sporting for Seafarers*, raising £14,500. All the funds raised from *Global Champions Unite* will contribute towards supporting seafarers caught in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis.

Most recently, we had Team IMO and MtS Secretary General, Andrew Wright take part in a 100km cycle ride. We've had participants from all over the world, and there is still time to take on a challenge of your own! What could you do?

To donate or for more information visit [missiontoseafarers.org/events/global-champions-unite](https://missiontoseafarers.org/events/global-champions-unite) or call +44 (0)20 7246 2948.

## Around These Islands in 12 Ports

Sailing round Britain may be one of your life goals, or you may be an armchair sailor interested in coastal history and the maritime world. Either way, here's a new book that will interest you.

Published in support of The Mission to Seafarers, *Around These Islands in 12 Ports* follows Anne and Jonathan Winter aboard the British-built GT35 yacht Nova as they explore 12 landmark ports on the coast of Britain and Ireland.

Covering more than 2,500 nautical miles and staying in 69 places over 155 days, they found themselves surrounded by

diverse shipping on coastal and global trade routes, and deeply impressed by the work of seafarers and those who support them. In the book you'll find sailing stories and beautiful coastal images together with an article from each port, written by local historians and authors.

*"A sailor's perspective on our sceptred isles, sold in aid of the excellent Mission to Seafarers, and worthy of a place beside your bunk."*  
**Tom Cunliffe**  
Author and broadcaster



Pre-order your copy on [www.12ports.com](https://www.12ports.com)  
ISBN: 978-1-909075-96-2 #AroundTheseIslands



# Seafarers Happiness Index

The latest Seafarers Happiness Index has revealed the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the welfare of international seafarers and their families.

The latest survey, undertaken in association with the Shipowners' Club and Wallem Group, analyses the experiences of seafarers across the global maritime industry between April and June 2020. The report shows the continuing decline of happiness at sea, largely due to the inability of seafarers to sign off and return home.

Overall, seafarer happiness has dropped from 6.30 in Q1 2020 to 6.18 in Q2 2020. Even more concerning is the fact that there was a downward trend in all areas, with the singular exception of wages and salary. One seafarer summed up the feelings by saying, "If people are locked on vessels and have to continue working with no chance for crew change, don't expect that they will be happy".

## WELFARE CONCERNS

The latest report shows vessels are sailing with fewer crew, increased sickness onboard and a pressure to keep hygiene standards at almost hospital-like levels. Without the connection to home

“ Seafarers are at a tipping point”

and restricted support from ship visitors and port chaplains, seafarers are on the edge of serious mental distress.

"While Q1 showed us how seafarers suffered as COVID-19 struck home and provided insight into the support that was needed, the Q2 report highlights the cost of inaction," said Steven Jones, Founder of the Seafarers Happiness Index.

The Q1 2020 Seafarers Happiness Index identified the pride that seafarers feel in their work. Today, this is clearly tempered with disappointment that they are not recognised as key workers. As one seafarer put it, "Before the pandemic, work onboard ship was very gratifying, but now it is just relentless".

Seafarers are at a tipping point and it is essential that faster progress is made to protect seafarers and stop the industry from falling into a deeper crisis.

“ Before the pandemic, work onboard ship was very gratifying, but now it is just relentless”



# the SEA

The Sea newspaper enables seafarers to keep up-to-date with all the latest maritime news, opinion, interviews and lifestyle.

To download your copy of the latest issue visit [missiontoseafarers.org/the-sea](https://missiontoseafarers.org/the-sea)



## Chat to a Chaplain

More than 1,000 seafarers have used our Chat to a Chaplain digital service since it launched in April.

Designed for seafarers to connect with chaplains around the world, the programme offers a 24-hour digital extension of our port-based welfare work.

Chaplaincy teams have responded to more than 472 requests for assistance, ranging from allegations of abandonment and contract issues to concerns about repatriation, COVID-19 and family issues.

“ Chaplaincy teams have responded to more than 472 requests for assistance”

We have been contacted by seafarers desperate for work and others who were about to sail in areas known for piracy and armed robbery. Cadets who were stranded in the UK and who have been supported by our Seafarers' Emergency Fund used the service to speak to chaplains based in India and to seek support for their families back home.

Others have sought spiritual support and asked for prayers for safe passage and for their loved ones. In that way, the Chat to a Chaplain service has mirrored the daily rhythm of ship visiting made by the Mission and chaplains in 200 port locations across 50 countries.



Visit [missiontoseafarers.org/news](https://missiontoseafarers.org/news) for more details on Chat to a Chaplain

# A letter from Esben Poulsson

**Esben Poulsson, Vice President of The Mission to Seafarers, shares insight into the current challenges and opportunities within the maritime industry.**

In my last column, I highlighted the issue of crew change – an issue that continues to be the biggest single challenge facing our industry today. Progress was steadily being made, especially in larger ports – such as Singapore and Hong Kong – where a steady increase in successful crew changes occurred, in conformity with the industry-developed protocols, and additional local requirements.

Alas, it was then uncovered, to the utter dismay of all responsible ship owners and managers, that fake and invalid test results were in circulation, leading to a number of infected seafarers arriving at various ports.

Almost overnight, much of the hard work that had been done to date by so many was undone. I can only assure readers that at ICS, we are working with our fellow associations to look at a matter of urgency at new and radical ideas to help address this crucial issue. We are painfully aware of the mantra: action, not words.

On a happier note, I would like to join one and all in wishing our President, the Princess Royal, a very happy birthday. Her tireless efforts and personal interest in the work of the Mission over many years is truly wonderful and hugely appreciated.



GANGWAY SHIP VISITING IN BALTIMORE

Finally, as many readers will be aware, the 'FLYING ANGEL' campaign got off to a well... flying start and we've now exceeded our target! More on that in the upcoming pages. Enormous efforts were made by many, myself included, and it is both heartening and gratifying to see the amazing level of support received from across the industry, be it through ship owners, managers, P&I Clubs, law firms, insurance and shipbrokers and so on. I think it clearly illustrates that in these incredibly challenging COVID-19 times, the work of the Mission has never been more important, and never more recognised.

## Esben Poulsson

Vice President of The Mission to Seafarers.

*Esben Poulsson is Chairman of The ICS and Executive Chairman of ENESEL PTE. LTD., a Singapore based ship owning entity. Having worked in the maritime industry for over 45 years, Esben is also Non-Executive Chairman to a host of companies in the sector and serves on the Board of the Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore (MPA). He was recently appointed as Vice President of The Mission to Seafarers.*

# A Word from Edward Koo

**Edward Koo, Executive Managing Director of shipping company TCC, explains why they are avidly supporting our Flying Angel Campaign.**

"Since the start of this pandemic, people's lives and routines around the world have been turned upside down. But for the seafarers, their fundamental reality has become distorted indefinitely.

"Today, whenever a seafarer commits to joining a vessel, he has quietly accepted the fact that he does not know when he will come home. National lockdowns, limited flights, and unreasonable medical verification demands have made it all but impossible for efficient embarkation/disembarkation of seafarers.

"Our lives on shore have maintained a semblance of normalcy throughout this pandemic: supermarket shelves are still stocked, residential lights and air conditioning stay on, gas stations still have the expected grades of diesel and unleaded gasoline, the promise of a vaccine remains hot in the news.

"But at what expense? We have taken for granted that the luxury of consumer choice, of utilities power, of fuel for our automobiles, of raw chemicals for the potential mass manufacturing of medicines, has only been made possible because of the labour of seafarers.

"What we owe these seafarers isn't just our gratitude and respect, but our acknowledgement that without their

dedication and sacrifice, our lives would have no chance of ever going back to normal.

This lack of awareness and visible support for seafarers is perhaps the greatest silent disaster of this global pandemic.

"TCC is supporting The Mission to Seafarers because we recognise the important work they do, particularly during this unsettling time. Our donation to the Flying Angel Campaign, Safe Seafarers' Centres Fund will enable The Mission to Seafarers to provide a safe sanctuary for all seafarers."



**Lack of awareness and visible support for seafarers is perhaps the greatest silent disaster of this global pandemic"**



SEAFARERS RELAXING IN A SEAFARERS' CENTRE IN SINGAPORE



# Flying Angel Campaign Success

A heartfelt thank you to all of our supporters for their kindness in helping us to reach our target of £600K.

I am delighted to share with you the news that we have reached our target of £600,000 for the Flying Angel Campaign and we are wasting no time in putting the money to good use.

**Technological Solutions Update**  
Our digital chaplaincy service, Chat to a Chaplain, provides vital support for seafarers, many of whom have been away for 15 months or more. We are also deeply grateful to David Pellatt who kindly funded MiFi (mobile WiFi) units, to help seafarers stay connected.

We have started building the Happy-at-Sea app, which helps our team support the varying needs of seafarers during the pandemic, such as providing groceries and essentials to those unable to get ashore.

“We are well on our way to reaching the fundraising target for our Flying Angel Campaign”

**Platinum Donors:** Seafarers UK, Grimaldi Foundation, David Pellatt and BW

**Gold Donors:** TCC, Grindrod and DNV GL

**Silver Donors:** Marine Society, Trinity House, Standard Club, Clearwater Marine Foundation, Skuld, Stena RoRo, Brittany Ferries, and Enesel SA

**Bronze Donors:** Ardmare (with Anglo Ardmare and Thome), UKP&I Club, Dynacom, Bernhard Schulte Group, Thalassa Niki Pte. Ltd and V Group.

## RESILIENCE IN PORTS UPDATE

Our seafarers' centres and minibuses are being adapted to ensure they are COVID-19 safe, complete with Perspex screens, hand-sanitizers and PPE. Thanks to TCC, Hong Kong, for their Gold sponsorship of our Safe Seafarers Centres Fund.

And finally, our Advocacy programme is crucial in so many ways. We've delivered medicines; provided emotional and spiritual support; assisted those whose mental health has been affected; supported repatriation; and provided emergency grants and food packages. Our next step is to create a Sustaining crew welfare Fund to ensure we can serve seafarers globally into the future.

## THANK YOU

A massive thank you to all who have helped make seafarers' lives better during these challenging times. I would particularly like to thank Esben Poulsson, one of our amazing Vice Presidents, for reaching out to some of the most influential people in shipping.

Jan Webber Director of Development

# Shining a Spotlight on Seafarers

Over the past few months it's been encouraging to see more and more people recognising the vital work of seafarers and their status as key workers.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an outpouring of support for NHS workers and others classed as key workers, all rightly recognised for their essential role in helping those most in need.

What we didn't see was the same support for those at sea, keeping the global supply chain moving in some of the toughest conditions we have ever experienced. Thankfully, this is changing.

There has been a significant increase in media interest in our work. From the BBC to Bloomberg, we are spreading the message that seafarers are also key workers and deserve greater support.

The latest Seafarers Happiness Index report has been covered in 43 publications around the globe, highlighting how seafarers have felt during the pandemic.

## AWARENESS AND ACTION

Raising awareness has helped put the needs of seafarers, and the Mission's work, in the spotlight helping deliver funds for our Flying Angel Campaign. The support we have received for the campaign from Seafarers UK, Grimaldi

“Our thanks go to everyone backing our cause”

Foundation BW and David Pellatt, among many others, has enabled us to provide equipment and support where it is most needed. We have already provided MiFi (mobile WiFi) units in Australia and supported seafarers with our 24/7 digital chaplaincy service. We are also adapting seafarers centres so they can open again safely thanks to TCC. We are supporting 600 seafarers' families in Tuticorin, India with a food bank, thanks to a grant from Seafarers UK.

Our new Vice-President Esben Poulsson, Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping, has made a huge difference to our fundraising and we are deeply grateful to him. Our thanks go to everyone backing our cause and raising awareness. It is through a united approach that we can help our unsung key workers: seafarers.



“We are spreading the message that seafarers are also key workers”



# REFLECTION

**The life of the sixth century Irish saint Brendan the Navigator is a remarkable mix of truth and myth that offers a unique perspective on the current climate.**

Information about Brendan comes mainly from later writers and is nurtured within the traditions of devotion which came to surround him. At the heart of the story lies his seven year “voyage” in a small currach – a small traditional Irish boat. Back in 1978, British historian, explorer and writer Tim Severin reenacted the voyage in a similar vessel and proved that it was possible to reach

Newfoundland in Canada. Tales tell us that Brendan went in search of the Blessed Isle and some believe he reached America nine centuries before Columbus.

The story recounts the many adventures and strange encounters he had whilst travelling with a party of fellow monks. It recalls danger, hardship and challenge, as well as

sudden blessing. Amongst the many strange episodes is one where they meet Judas Iscariot – supposedly he had a day off from hell on Sundays and feast days!

Brendan is well worth reflection. His pre-departure prayer has become famous. Looking out to sea at the dangerous and uncharted waters, Brendan’s prayer is one which we can all echo in these uncertain times.

For The Mission to Seafarers, we look out on a maritime landscape which is changing – and global crises often enhance the speed of change. Familiar landmarks can easily disappear. We

face challenges both within and without, which present us with threats and opportunities. At this key moment we too might pray Brendan’s prayer.

*Help me to journey beyond the familiar and into the unknown. Give me the faith to leave old ways and break fresh ground with You. Christ of the mysteries, I trust You to be stronger than each storm within me. I will trust in the darkness and know that my times, even now, are in Your hand. Tune my spirit to the music of heaven, and somehow, make my obedience count for You. Amen.*



**At this key moment we too might pray Brendan’s prayer”**



# Justice, Hope & Joy

## Let this be your legacy

The Mission to Seafarers offers emergency assistance, practical support and a friendly welcome to crews visiting over 200 ports in 50 countries. Legacy gifts are a vital part of our funding, and your generous contribution will make a real difference to those facing peril at sea or distress in our ports.

For more information about leaving a gift in your will, contact Johnny Dowling at [john.dowling@missiontoseafarers.org](mailto:john.dowling@missiontoseafarers.org) or **020 7246 2939** You can also find out more about our work by visiting our website: [www.missiontoseafarers.org](http://www.missiontoseafarers.org)

Registered charity no: 1123613 (England and Wales) and SCO41938 (Scotland)



Caring for seafarers  
around the world



To donate please visit [www.missiontoseafarers.org/donate](http://www.missiontoseafarers.org/donate)

If you would like to donate to a specific region, you can select this from the dropdown menu titled – ‘Why are you Donating?’

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# Thank You

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