



Caring for seafarers  
around the world

# the SEA

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The crew of the *Mary Maersk* celebrate  
an inclusive environment  
Credit: Maersk

## The importance of mutual respect

By Felicity Landon

*Shipping is an international, multicultural industry – we all know that. But what does that mean for those at sea?*

**O**ne word keeps coming up when discussing the priorities around the multicultural nature of ships' crews: respect. Ships can have seafarers of 20 different nationalities or cultures on board – or of only one or two. Whichever it is, the importance of respect, and of building a team, remain the same.

"Sailing with an international crew, we consider understanding of different cultures as a step towards mutual understanding, respect and unity, and a great team building technique. It is very important that you create an inclusive environment where diversity of thought is valued," says Captain Arkadiusz Woszek, master of the *Mary Maersk*.

Bjørn Højgaard, CEO of the ship management group Anglo-Eastern Univan, says Anglo-Eastern's 'one team, one goal, one conversation' policy captures the idea that "we are all in it together and we have to have space for everyone". He says: "We very much want to be open to everyone and we expect everyone to treat each other with respect and professionalism. We are very clear that inclusivity is a value and we expect everyone to avoid bullying, intimidation or harassment of any kind."

But perhaps we should start with that word 'culture'. Højgaard defines culture as "the normal way things are done around here".

"The habits or normal way of life in your family may be very different to those of another, even if you are from the same country or living in the same village," he says. "You can have a ship with 22 Indian seafarers onboard – but India is huge and the difference between north and south, between Delhi and Mumbai, is very pronounced. Some will be Muslim, some Hindi, and there will be many different backgrounds."

In fact, Anglo-Eastern's policy on crew nationality is unusual. "We are one of the companies in the industry that puts the most effort into and most emphasis on having as few nationalities on board any ship at any given time," says Højgaard. >>



*Continued from page 1*

“Most of our ships are single nationality and our policy is a maximum two nationalities on any given ship. Why do we do that? We find that single nationality ships are better performing ships. They seem happier, there is better communication and less space for misunderstanding, which is all conducive to the business.”

However, where there are mixed nationality ships, there is an emphasis on togetherness, he says. If Diwali is being celebrated on board, Filipino crew would join in; if it's Christmas, you would find Indian crew celebrating too. “That is very typical of how we do things. It is the same in our shore offices – we employ 1,800 people across 25 offices in Asia, Europe and North America, and they also celebrate events together. We don't single out Chinese New Year for Chinese, Christmas for Christians, and so on. We have celebrations which are inclusive for everyone.”

### **Celebrating diversity**

Stolt-Nielsen has a different viewpoint, being proud of the fact that its ships have very mixed-nationality crews – at least one of its tankers has had more than a dozen different nationalities on board at one time.

Igor Segeda, Stolt Tankers' global manager for sea personnel, says Stolt employs 20 different nationalities, although the vast majority of its ratings are from the Philippines.

“Yes, people who share a common language tend to share a culture – but typically, because of the demand and

*“Leadership training really helps people to understand the value of our multinational and multicultural approach on board”*

**– Igor Segeda, Stolt Tankers**

supply factor, the seafarer shortage, cost factors, and so on, we would see ratings of two or maybe three nationalities on board as standard,” he says.

It is natural that seafarers of the same nationalities would tend to start grouping with each other, but that can destroy team spirit, says Segeda. “We work to avoid this grouping around nationalities and to create a team spirit on board. Having a strong team spirit means everyone must remain professional – they know they are judged on their competence.”

All Stolt's officers undergo leadership training, within which there is a big focus on the multinational, multicultural approach. “When they join the company, it is not about having an Asian culture or European culture on board; it is about a strong culture that combines all of these. People actually respect each other by default. Leadership training really helps people to understand the value of our multinational and multicultural approach on board; it's a self-reinforcing pattern, system and culture that has worked for many years.”

Segeda says that from this framework of leadership training and supporting people in work to understand what the right team spirit is, officers can create

activities to support this multicultural approach – for example, cooking different dishes so that different nationalities get an introduction to other cuisines. “I think it is very important to allow people to learn from each other. But we don't actively manage that part – it is more at ship's level; they decide what is more important for them.”

There are sports on board with basketball organised in a protected area, for example. There are competitions and games. Bingo is really popular. Stolt's ships provide gym equipment and the younger seafarers in particular enjoy making their workouts competitive.

### **Past traditions**

Segeda, who was at sea himself until 2008, points out that social interaction in the past often centred around the ship's bar. “There would always be someone in the bar – there would be drinks and conversations and that was an essential side. Of course, that has changed, with alcohol removed from the ships, but unfortunately that means the socialising around the bar has also disappeared. In my time, there were also plenty of heavy smokers – a lot of socialising would be done around the smoking rooms. Things have changed



– on one side due to regulation but also because people are more aware today of what is good for them, and the younger generation are more into sports.”

The gap between the old gatherings of seafarers smoking and drinking and today’s online world encourages seafarers to withdraw to their cabins to spend hours online with family and friends thousands of miles away. “The internet means that social activities on board are not as rich as they were in the past because people focus more on connections with home than connections on board,” says Segeda, although he says that on the positive side, the internet has opened up the world. “Youngsters can get so much information and broaden their horizons. They have a wider mindset, cultural traits are being dissolved, there is more connectivity between countries and people have more and more in common with each other.”

As for feasts and festivals, Stolt has a longstanding tradition of celebrating Christmas, providing a special budget to vessels for the Christmas dinner. “That unites all nationalities,” he says.

For Stolt, the multicultural approach is the future, says Segeda. “It is very difficult to find a competent group from just one country; the majority of companies have to stay multinational to have effective costs, a wider choice of competent seafarers. We would want to retain access to all these huge pools of talent to make sure we have the most competent and suitable people.”

### Building a team

Captain Woszek has been master of the Mary Maersk, which sails the Baltjysk, Russia to China route via Suez, since 2019. “Team building with respect for cultural differences is very important. This leads to better results and wellbeing on board,” he says.

“We try to make the most of the opportunities on board to celebrate different cultural festivals, whether it be the Indian festival of colours called Holi, or Easter celebrated in Christian cultures. Into the bargain, the crew not only have a good time but also learn about each other’s culture, developing mutual respect, trust and bonhomie.”

The festivals and feasts are always a good opportunity to do something out of the ordinary, bringing the whole crew together, Woszek adds.

“We have been holding events on our long voyages during weekends to lighten the mood of the crew and

pep up their spirits. ‘Creativity with no boundaries’ is our motto, and we encourage all on board to come up with great ideas for activities that can bring us together. Examples are horse racing, deck golf and different sorts of team games.

“We use Sundays as days to spice up things in the galley, to give our galley team a break and bring out flavours of different cultures from our talented crew to the table. With our chief officer showing his Indian cooking skills in the galley and the chief engineer showcasing his talents in the dessert section, it certainly brings smiles to everyone’s face!”

Højgaard says ‘social Sundays’ are an important part of onboard life for Anglo-Eastern vessels. “Once a week, if possible, in the ship’s schedule, everyone gets together, to play games, sing songs, whatever – rather than letting people go off to their cabins and social media. I understand that people want to have time with their friends and family on social media, but you need to put in a positive effort to make the team on board. It may be more comfortable to go to your cabin and talk to your family and a little bit more uncomfortable to have a bond with strangers – but they only remain strangers if you don’t get together.”

As a former seafarer – he captained large container ships – Højgaard says the working conditions of seafarers are close to his heart. “It is an important job and we must make it as palatable as possible for the people out there. On the other hand, I don’t think seafarers need our pity – they are stand-up, resourceful people who know what they are doing and have chosen this

Capt Arkadiusz Woszek, master of the Mary Maersk  
Credit: Maersk



career knowing what the sacrifices are. In many cases it gives them economic opportunities they wouldn’t have otherwise. But onboard culture is really important.”

In the end, he says, shipping is perhaps the most global of all businesses. “It reaches all corners of the world – and if cultural difficulties were prevalent, we couldn’t get anything done.”

Seafarers tend to be adventurous and they go to sea with an open mind, wanting to work together, says Højgaard. But nevertheless, it is important to make a conscious effort in this area.

“We are all social animals, and we have a need to engage with other people. I absolutely think that a happy ship is a good ship, and you have to pay attention to this social aspect of people’s lives and make sure that culturally people get together.” 📞

A happy ship is a positive, productive and safe ship  
Credit: Stolt Tankers





## Far-reaching impact of Covid

*A Lloyd's Register-led survey sets the foundations for improvements in seafarer well-being*

By Verity Relp

**A**s of December 2020, as many as 400,000 seafarers were stranded on ships working beyond their contractual period, according to figures from the International Maritime Organization. These distressing statistics are heard again and again, but how do seafarers really feel about the situation and their treatment during the pandemic, and what lessons are there to be learnt for the maritime industry? This is what a recent Lloyd's Register (LR) survey set out to uncover. Launched on June 25, 2020, the 'Day of the Seafarer', in collaboration with the UK Chamber of Shipping, The Mission to Seafarers (MtS) and Safety at Sea, it aimed to provide a snapshot of maritime workers' wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The survey was intended to find out what is really going on – are seafarers being treated fairly and what are their own perceptions," explains Joanne Stokes, senior principal human factors consultant at LR. Looking at the efficacy of Covid-related measures and the level of support that seafarers have received during the pandemic, the aim was to offer insights that would help the industry improve its response to the pandemic, and ultimately lead to better

safety and wellbeing for seafarers. It targeted both shore staff and sea staff, helping to throw into sharp relief the effect of the pandemic on those working at sea.

### Feeling undervalued

One of the most concerning findings was around recognition and value. "I think people have been shocked by the number of comments from seafarers as well as the content of those comments," says Stokes. "Specifically, that only 8% of seafarers feel valued in their role and 13% strongly agreeing that they are performing an essential role. This, in my view, speaks volumes about the treatment and experiences of seafarers during this pandemic. It is also compounded by seafarers' comments about being 'in prison' aboard, and that no one appreciates their role in the supply of goods and fuels, and how they feel 'abandoned'."

Communication was one of the areas where seafarers reported feeling let down, not being properly informed of the reasons for Covid-19-related decisions or feeling that their wellbeing concerns were not being listened to, and there were worrying comments about the handling of quarantine measures and treatment following a positive diagnosis.

The survey also shed light on how the stresses and strains of the pandemic have impacted seafarers' mental and physical wellbeing. A total of 27% of those surveyed reported high workloads, fatigue and not being able to get a good night's sleep, while other issues included a lack of social interaction on board, inability to exercise, and poor-quality food. The latest Seafarers' Happiness Index report, published in January, revealed similar findings as crews continue to struggle with the effects of the crew change crisis and incessant workloads (*see page 13*).

Stokes highlights the safety implications that such problems can have: "As an industry we have long been aware of the issues of mental and physical health on board ships. We are aware of the dangers of seafarers becoming fatigued and how this can increase the likelihood of human error. This pandemic has once again brought this to the fore. Seafarers are working harder, faster and longer. If operations are still going on at the same levels, yet you're tired and you don't have enough people, you're not going to perform as well. It's about prioritising safety and managing workload levels in front of operations, so you give crew a chance to rest and a chance not to make mistakes."

It also appears that many seafarers are still not getting the support they need and, even when it is available, there are obstacles that prevent them



from accessing it. The survey revealed that 54% felt they were not being actively helped to manage stress and fatigue during the pandemic. When asked about access to professional support, only 30% of seafarers said they had used professional services, with stigma and concerns that it could affect employment among the reasons given for not seeking help.

### Follow-up actions

The results of the survey have had an impact, says Stokes. “One benefit is that there have been numerous conferences and discussions on this topic since the LR Survey results came out. Many companies have come forward to talk about the work they are doing to support seafarer mental health through programmes, self-help, and training sessions. This is really positive.”

She gives examples of initiatives that bigger companies have put into place, such as mental health training to teach people what to look for in their own and others’ mental health, and podcasts and videocasts talking about mental health and helping to reduce the stigma which surrounds it. MtS’ Mental Health Champions project is one such example, giving seafarers access to resources to support their mental wellbeing.

There have been other signs of progress too. A crucial step in resolving the crew change crisis would be to recognise seafarers as key workers. Designation would ensure that seafarers are exempt from Covid-related travel restrictions, allowing them to be repatriated at the end of their contracts. It would also be significant in helping seafarers know and feel that they are essential and valued.

“There has been mounting pressure on governments to recognise seafarers as essential workers,” says Stokes, highlighting a number of recent publications by bodies such as the United Nations and the IMO. “In addition, the recent Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change has seen over 450 companies sign – including Lloyd’s Register.” Other signatories include AP Møller-Mærsk, NYK, BP and Shell, V. Group and mining groups Rio Tinto and Vale; maritime transporters, unions, The Mission to Seafarers, ISWAN, the World Economic Forum and other supply chain partners have also signed up.

However, Stokes puts emphasis on the role of governments in bringing about tangible change: “The actual impact companies can have in making these actions happen remains in the hands of national governments and their willingness to co-operate with each other. Arguably these changes require governments to change their mindsets, from seafarers as a Covid-19 threat to vaccinated seafarers as essential workers maintaining global trade as we know it.

“That is not to say that there hasn’t been progress at the national and international level. As of January 25, 2021, 53 countries had signed up to IMO Circ. 4204, Add. 35/Rev.3 which designates seafarers as essential workers.”

### Future steps

The survey has been an important vehicle for drawing attention to the issues facing crews and in providing lessons for the industry on how it can improve its response to the pandemic, both now and in the future. As Stokes says: “We are really glad to have put this survey out as it has helped to highlight where we need to push and where we need to exert pressure.”

There is still a long road ahead. With the spread of new variants of Covid-19 and some countries adopting stricter crew-change restrictions since the new year, there are fears that the challenges of last year will only worsen for seafarers in the coming months. However, governments signing up to crew change procedures

and declarations, and the proactive approach that some companies are taking are all positive steps.

As we enter our second year of the pandemic, the challenge now is to ensure that governments and industry continue to take the steps needed to ensure that those who maintain our global supply chain are safe and supported. “The survey is an exercise we’re likely to repeat later in the year to gauge how far the industry has come in the treatment of seafarers as the pandemic continues to play out. We will ask seafarers about their ongoing mental and physical health and whether they have seen a marked change in their treatment as a result of actions by companies and governments.”

Stokes is also hopeful that the focus on supporting seafarer mental and physical welfare will continue post-Covid. She highlights employee assistance programmes to remove the mental health stigma, more open communications and honesty behind decisions, better internet connections, and managed crew changes that put health and wellbeing first, as some of the key ways in which the issues raised in the survey can be addressed. Such actions will go a long way in helping seafarers feel supported and valued. 📞

*To hear more insights into the survey findings and to listen to the podcast, visit: <https://www.lr.org/en/insights/seafarer-survey/>. 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](mailto:Verity.Relph@missiontoseafarers.org).*



There has been mounting pressure on governments to recognise seafarers as essential workers

# Mapping abandonment to raise visibility

*How increasing awareness of maltreatment of seafarers can help to tackle the issue*

It was a late August afternoon when my brother – Matthew – and I were discussing project ideas. At the time, I was a postgraduate research student working on my Master's dissertation and volunteering for an investigative collective called Bellingcat on a project about police violence. Matthew was, among many other things, about to enter the final year of his BA in War Studies. Both of us wanted to start a small project that would allow me to practise the open-source skills I was developing at Bellingcat and hopefully do something useful for the world.

The idea of seafarer abandonment came up because Matthew had just finished reading Ian Urbina's book, *The Outlaw Ocean*, and had been very struck by it. When he brought it up as an idea, I stole his laptop to look at the International Labour Organization's (ILO) database. After spending an hour transferring the 200-odd active cases onto a spreadsheet, it became clear that the decision was pretty much made.

The reason I wanted to work on this issue was quite simple: Ian Urbina describes abandonment as a crime of neglect, something that isn't seen as acute or urgent so rarely gets reported on by the mainstream news. The issue is

unbelievably invisible to people outside the maritime world. My friend's reaction is a case in point: upon hearing about our project, she exclaimed, "what? hold up, people still get marooned in the twenty-first century?!" Everyone else we spoke to about it in our lives had a similar, appalled reaction, especially when we listed the conditions abandoned seafarers are often left in for months or even years at a time.

Having also worked on invisible trade-justice issues in supply chains with a professor during my undergraduate degree, I knew just how impactful and important making something visible could be. Therefore, as someone with basic ArcGIS skills, I thought I could turn the big, complicated ILO database into an easily understandable map that summarised the issue and made it clear that abandonment is still a widespread issue.

## Gaining traction

After we had mapped the whole database (including resolved and inactive cases – over 500 cases and counting), Matthew got in touch with Ian Urbina, who kindly agreed to host it. We then posted it on Twitter. Within a day, it had been picked up by maritime journalist

Sam Chambers who wrote an article on it. This boosted the project's profile significantly and the response on Twitter was far greater than anything I had anticipated.

Since then, we have taken some time to sort out what is happening with the database. A new volunteer collaborator, Genista, has cleaned the spreadsheet this month to make it suitable for public consumption. I am also currently working on ways to make the data even more accessible. The problem with it, as explained to me by someone who used to work on the ILO database, is that the database itself often doesn't pick up on every case as it relies on busy ITF inspectors and other in-country staff to report in. Nevertheless, what we hope to do is to add cases beyond those that the ILO have, and look into the circumstances behind specific companies that abandon multiple ships – for example, in November, I had a look into the Palmali corporation, which has abandoned nine ships since its founder was arrested in March 2020.

In the meantime, the project is going to remain small and independent, building a literal picture so that organisations can use it to lobby for better labour protections for seafarers. ☺

Eliza Ader is founder of Periplous. Her abandonment map can be viewed here: <https://www.theoutlawocean.com/the-hidden-secret/>. To express an interest in the project or to make suggestions for further areas of study contact Eliza on [eliza.ader32@gmail.com](mailto:eliza.ader32@gmail.com)







By Kamlesd Kumar, DNV GL

## Remote surveys: what to expect

*Seafarers are enabling remote survey to bring safety and business benefits on board*

**S**eamen operating cameras are already playing an important role as the on-board eyes for remote surveyors directing surveys to assess compliance against class and statutory regulation. With remote surveys becoming more widely used, seafarers are set to become a central element, delivering superior safety and business benefits to their shipmates and owners.

Remote survey was catching on for ships before 2020, but Covid-19 has boosted uptake as lockdowns meant surveyors were sometimes unable to travel to ships. For some types of survey, remote survey could even become 'the new normal', post-pandemic.

A remote survey dispenses with time waiting for a surveyor to reach the vessel, as well as unnecessary travel costs. Surveys can be performed by remote surveyors 24/7, anywhere in the world, even if the vessel is in a remote location. Remote survey is quicker, produces survey documentation instantly, and even cuts down on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### Remote lockdown

If you work on a vessel when a remote survey conducted by DNV GL is going to take place, real-time instructions for crew will come from remote surveyors strategically located in one of our Direct Access to Technical Experts (DATE) units located in Høvik, Norway; Hamburg, Germany; Singapore; Houston, US; or Piraeus in Greece, over an online connection or video streaming link. We have about 60 trained remote surveyors across these units.

Before you even touch a camera, your company and our remote surveyors will have identified, collected, and reviewed



Kamlesd Kumar, DNV GL

all the necessary documents. We may have online conversations with the ship's master and chief engineer and take written statements from them. We should be given access to relevant documentation

which typically could be repair reports, spare parts delivery notices/orders, and so on.

You could then find yourself walking around with a camera to send us still pictures and livestreamed or recorded videos. For example, you may be asked to zoom in on a replacement valve's nameplate showing the manufacturer and serial number. The camera could well be built into a smartphone, tablet, or even safety helmets.


Your company and our remote surveyors

will previously have planned what needs to happen during the survey, and who will do it. As part of this process, they work out how to avoid any safety risks to you or your crewmates as you walk around with your attention fixed on handling the camera rather than on your surroundings. Your work with the camera should be slow-paced as our remote surveyors give directions to witness everything they need to see. You will receive clear instructions enabling you to do the job safely and to get it right first time.

If you or your crewmates work on more than one type of vessel, you may find slight variations in the way a survey is conducted. For example, on a tanker, an explosion-proof camera needs to be used to eliminate the risks associated with electronic devices on deck.

### Surveyor visits still essential

Not all surveys can be remotely handled, of course, and not all requests are accepted. When a customer requests a survey, we check that remote survey is appropriate. Survey requests are evaluated case-by-case, but some typical examples include condition handling, occasional surveys, minor damage surveys, postponement of surveys, and completion of periodical surveys with minor outstanding items. For example, while it is normally possible to conduct remote surveys when an anchor is lost, it is not normally possible where the vessel has been in a major collision.

Using a remote survey can help to cut waiting time and costs while helping to keep your vessel on the move. At DNV GL we would like to thank seafarers for acting as our eyes on your vessel. The images, streaming or recorded video, and input you provide is helping to ensure that remote surveys can provide the same level of assurance as with an onboard survey. 

*Kamlesd Kumar is head of the Class Systematics & Operational Centre at DNV GL – Maritime.*

## Load line case study

A survey is required when there is a change of load line on a vessel that already has multiple load lines assigned. This can normally be done remotely depending on individual flag State authorisation. Once a remote survey request has been made in DNV GL's Veracity portal, a remote surveyor will then be assigned to the request. Thereafter, the following steps and evidence will need to be followed/submitted as a minimum to the remote surveyor:

- photo evidence that freeboard marks for the intended voyage are painted in contrasting colour;
- photo evidence that all other freeboard marks have been obliterated;
- scan or photo evidence of the relevant entries made in the deck log book or freeboard assignment book; and
- information of approved stability documentation on board to be confirmed by the Master in writing.

# Maintaining the mental health momentum

*Paying more than lip service to seafarer welfare*

In these distressing times a “tiny sliver of positivity” is emerging from the chaos of the pandemic, according to Vroon Offshore chief officer Joanne Rawley. She notes a growing awareness of the integral role seafarers play in the global environment and of the importance of good mental wellbeing.

But if the industry is to capitalise on the momentum, it needs to pay more than lip service to the issue: “We need to show we’re really listening and can be trusted,” says Joanne, speaking to The Sea. This means being actively involved in research and working groups to keep the conversation moving. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted, for example, that more attention needs to be focused on the direct correlation between someone’s health (physical and mental) and the level of distraction while completing their duties safely, as well as the factors that affect that.

Joanne’s sea-going career started in 2012 and over that time she has worked

as a chief officer on multi-role North Sea vessels, yachts and tall ships and has worked ashore in safety. Her goals for the coming years focus on increasing mental health awareness and reducing stigma, particularly in the maritime industry, and supporting other maritime professionals and veterans as best she can.

She was recently awarded the UK State 2020 Merchant Navy Medal of Meritorious Service for services to seafarer wellbeing and mental health, an accolade that prompted a “whirlwind of emotions”. Referring to that award, Joanne says that she does not claim to be an expert; she sees herself as just someone with lived experience and a passion for learning, developing and assisting others.

She sees opportunities for better addressing mental health within seafarer education as one avenue for development and has put forward recommendations for a mentoring scheme within the UK and incorporation of mental health

into compulsory training and first aid courses to raise basic awareness. She also recently joined David Hammond and the rest of the Human Rights at Sea team to raise awareness of seafarers’ struggles and the continued violations of basic human rights.

## Target areas

Many other areas are ripe for improvement when it comes to addressing seafarers’ welfare and developing their careers. For example, interaction of multi-national crews could be enhanced, says Joanne. First there needs to be recognition that levels of interaction depend on the vessel size, role, culture and facilities on board. Second, communication policies must be clear. “For example, the working language of the vessel is English, so all contracted crew are expected to achieve a certain percentage on the Marlins test to ensure communication, particularly in urgent situations, is not a barrier,” she says.

*“Instead of going to individual cabins to watch movies or log on, seafarers could check in with other crew or arrange a computerised football tournament, darts, or card game which all encourage interaction”*





She adds that unlimited WiFi could cause more harm than good when it comes to uniting crews. “I understand the ‘need’ to stay connected with family and friends back home – with my longest trip being 18 weeks – but I disagree that unlimited and faster wi-fi is the answer.” Joanne suggests that instead of going to individual cabins to watch movies or log on, seafarers could check in with other crew or arrange a computerised football tournament, darts, or card game which all encourage interaction. “Leading by example with an open-door policy would help to make personal discussions part of the norm,” she says.

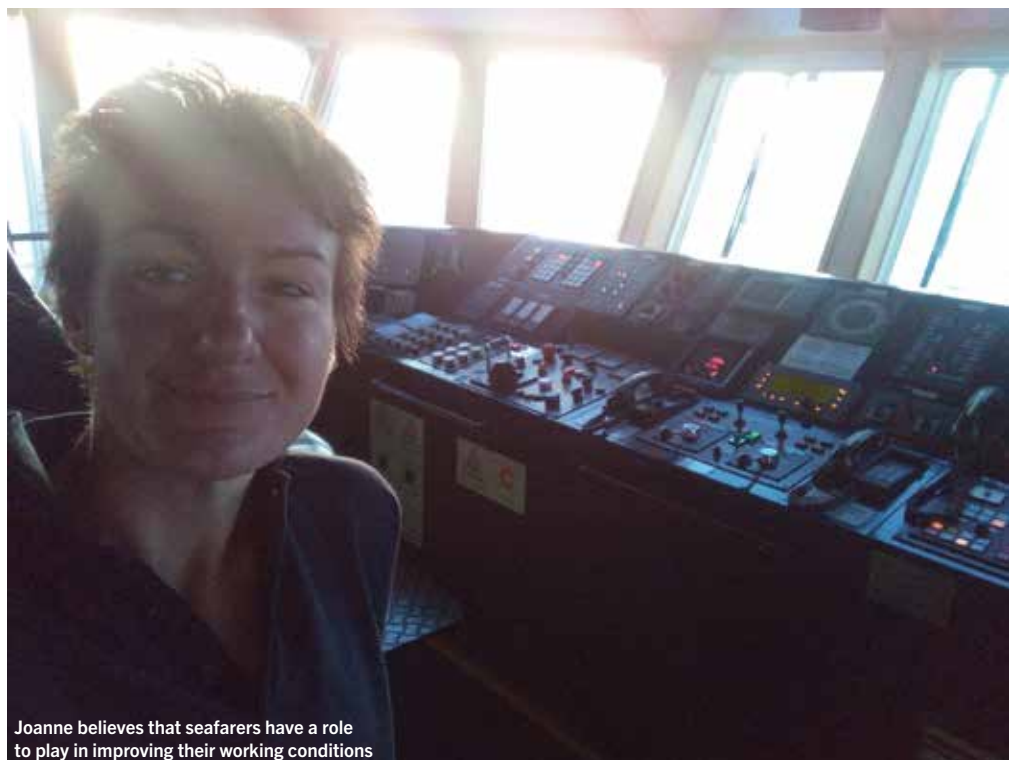
And while cliques develop in all crews, the key is to keep them fluid. “If we start dividing crews instead of uniting them, it could lead to more isolation and reasons for exclusion – crew could be ostracised by gender, religion, race, football team etc. The list goes on and so would the reasons for exclusion – crew don’t need to be best friends and love everyone they sail with, but more emphasis should be given to communication and tolerance.”

### Learning standardisation

Education inconsistency amongst seafarers also needs addressing. “Speaking only from personal experience, seafarer education appears to be highly variable depending not only on the country (I’ve sailed with cadets from UK, Spain, France and India), the college or class of vessel, but also on the individual officers tasked with assisting their development.”

She says that stories and first-hand experience of cadets being essentially employed as cleaners are common and has heard claims of cadets being sent to cabins to ‘study’ instead of undertaking their watches. “Companies sponsoring cadets should be more aware of the commitment they are taking on, realising that these 12 months of sea time is the only real world experience the cadets get before they qualify and are then making decisions that have significant impact on the safety of themselves, others, the vessel and the environment.” She strongly suggests that sponsor companies be obliged to give their newly qualified cadets their first contract to support their career development.

Automation is an area where Joanne urges caution when it comes to the impact on seafarers. While progress in automation could reduce accidents,



Joanne believes that seafarers have a role to play in improving their working conditions

increase efficiency and reduce environmental impact, there could be a negative impact on an already fractured industry. “I believe four categories of [autonomous] vessel have been defined by Lloyd’s Register, only two of which would have seafarers on, suggesting an even greater reduction in manpower and a push for multi-skilling which would lead to increased isolation onboard,” she says. “I’ve tried to stay current with the latest reports from the UK’s Maritime Autonomy Regulation Lab (MARLab) but currently there are too many unanswered questions. What would happen if a vessel were cyber-hacked? If boarded by pirates can the vessel be manually overridden? What if vessel control or visibility was lost by the operator in a fire/pollution incident? There are certainly going to be interesting times ahead.”

### Help yourselves

Seafarers have their own role to play in these ‘interesting times’, particularly when it comes to improving their working conditions. In the UK, the Merchant Navy Code of Conduct exists for a reason: a rank structure complying with a detailed management system in such an environment is crucial – a vessel cannot be a democracy. “However,” Joanne says, “enabling an open atmosphere encouraging discussions and sharing of issues and ideas is also crucial.”

Joanne also urges seafarers to get involved with maritime charities, organ-

isations and study groups to improve the link between sea and shore, making seafarers part of the way forward rather than just subject to it. She highlights two of the many initiatives that she has taken part in. One is the joint Maritime UK, UK Department for Transport and Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers Maritime and Me campaign to profile women in maritime and encourage girls to join the sector. The other is the WISE Campaign (Women into Science and Engineering), which encourages women and girls to value and pursue science, technology, engineering and maths-related courses in school or college and move into related careers and progress.

“By assisting the ‘Maritime & Me’ campaign and WISE, I’m hoping it will generate a spark or two of interest in the industry to show others that it can be accessible for the younger generations of women, or a female in her 30s, as I was, if they fancy the challenge of a complete career change.” Joanne points to figures from the International Maritime Organization reporting that only 2% of seafarers are female – and over 90% of those are employed in the cruise and passenger sector.

“It is certainly not a career suitable for everyone, but I think it’s crucial to let the upcoming generations know there are options out there that don’t depend on university or working 9-5 in an office environment,” concludes Joanne. “The only way we’re going to increase our levels of diversity is to promote, encourage and support.”

# Work/rest culture clash

*Adjustment of seafarers' records is a widespread problem that urgently needs to be addressed*

By Carly Fields

**N**ew research from a project team at the World Maritime University (WMU) has uncovered a 'culture of adjustment' when it comes to recording seafarers' hours of work and rest.

Anecdotal reports of under-reporting of work hours or adjustment of work/rest hour records prompted the WMU to undertake research into the implementation of the current regulatory and administrative framework on work and rest hours to evaluate the level of compliance with the current regulatory regime, assess the barriers to effective implementation onboard ships, and investigate stakeholder perceptions of the current systems.

Undertaking interviews, focus group discussions and case studies, the WMU authors looked to gain an in-depth appreciation of seafarers' recording practices, alongside a clear understanding of how different stakeholders deal with implementation, compliance monitoring and enforcement of the relevant provisions of the instruments of the International Labour Organization and International Maritime Organization (IMO).

A clear outcome of the research was that recording malpractices are widespread.

To monitor compliance, work/rest hour records are required by flag State Administration legislation implementing the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended.

However, the safe minimum manning levels set by the IMO are not being adhered to in most instances, the research found.

The report was particularly scathing of flag State Administrations that do not always fulfil their responsibilities, nor do they necessarily ensure that shipowners carry out theirs with regards to efficient and sufficient manning of ships. The research revealed that "this results in an imbalance between workload and the number of personnel available to complete the diversity of onboard tasks. The analysis made indicates that insufficient safe manning levels are the root cause of violations and recording malpractices the research." In addition, "the situation is exacerbated during peak workload conditions such as those experienced in relation to special operations and port-related activities. The effectiveness of recording practices to demonstrate compliance with regulations was widely questioned by research participants and viewed as purely a paper exercise for compliance purposes."

Worryingly, the research revealed that many of the recording software programmes in current use are 'gamed for success' to ensure compliance with the regulations and 'incentivise' crew to adjust their records.


## Wider problem

The 'culture of adjustment' stretched beyond falsifying work/rest hour records, according to the report. "Participants were

of the opinion that any record has the potential to be adjusted, pointing out a number of records that are susceptible to adjustment practices. They include records of planned maintenance, drills, oil record book entries, checklists and risk assessments, and even official logbook entries," the WMU said.

Reasons given for adjusting work/rest hour records included insufficient manning levels – particularly during activities in ports – quick succession of ports (in particular for short-sea shipping), fear of sanctions from shore management, and the consequences of failing third-party inspections. Financial incentives such as bonuses or overtime, meeting key performance indicators, and the nature of recording software were also mentioned as contributing factors resulting in recording malpractices.

Sadly, the report found that most companies neglect seafarers' feedback about work/rest hours. Seafarers consequently find themselves torn: "On the one hand, they have to complete multiple records to ascertain compliance. On the other hand, the adjustment of records is necessary to avoid disruption to operations. In such a context, the accuracy of records is secondary at best, and at worst, completely pointless. All forms of accurate record-keeping with respect to rest hours is thereby discredited."

The report's authors recommend three significant areas requiring urgent attention. First is the need for collaboration on a research-based model for determining safe manning for all operational conditions; second is a review of the effectiveness of the ISM code and the third is to consider the chronic mistrust between shore and ship personnel combined with the job insecurity characteristic of numerous seafarers' working contracts. 

*The full report, 'A culture of adjustment, evaluating the implementation of the current maritime regulatory framework on rest and work hours', by Dr. Raphael Baumler, Ms. Yvette de Klerk, Dr. Michael Ekow Manuel and Dr. Laura Carballo Piñeiro, is freely available at [https://commons.wmu.se/lib\\_reports/66/](https://commons.wmu.se/lib_reports/66/).*



Seafarers need to be adequately rested to perform



# A helping hand on performance

*Onshore vessel optimisation gives seafarers time-critical information to aid decision-making*

**By Captain Pankaj Sharma, Columbia Shipmanagement**

**C**olumbia Shipmanagement's Performance Optimisation Control Room (POCR) was designed to enable ship owners, operators, charterers and other vessel stakeholders to improve all aspects of their navigational, operational and commercial vessel performance – to ultimately deliver safer and more profitable sailings. Centralising these operations provides the ability to better deal with fast-changing scenarios and potential hazardous developments as they happen.

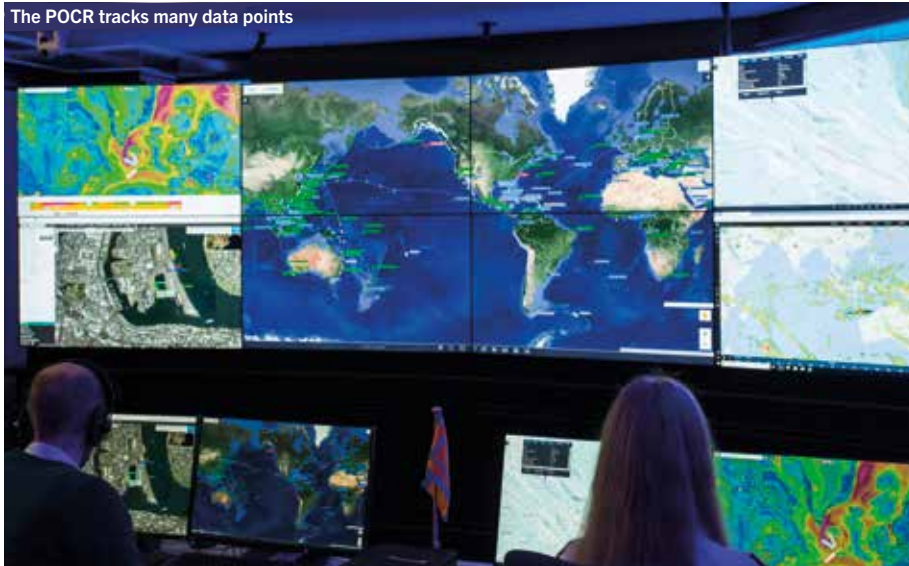
By providing this service via a 24/7/365 digital dashboard manned by seafarers, the goal has been to enable even faster decision-making and greater visibility by using online technology. Vessel support is also provided for disaster avoidance, maintenance (including preventative maintenance through the application of new sensor and camera technology), and contractual compliance. Weather and sea monitoring software enhances routing and sailing conditions as well as the avoidance of rolling and adverse vessel motions. These factors directly impact crew welfare and the safety of cargo.

In the case of Columbia Shipmanagement's sister company AAL Shipping (AAL, a multipurpose and project lift cargo carrier) and the types of incredibly complex heavy-lift project cargoes that they transport globally, this service is crucial to supporting their own operations team and providing greater safety, visibility and transparency throughout the duration of their sailing and cargo lifecycles.

New advances in digitisation and smart technology are regularly seen in the global shipping industry as practitioners seek to add value to their vessels' operating bottom line. But while many see digitisation as a way of taking cost out of the operating equation, the importance of digitisation as an aid to increasing crew, vessel and cargo safety cannot be overstated.

It is true to say that digital routing services have been around for some time, but the full potential of big data and machine learning in these technologies has only recently come close to being realised. Navigation at sea is significantly affected by weather being dynamic, moving and changing. Winds, currents, waves, temperature, and ice can all

The POCR tracks many data points



alter a vessel's route and its operational costs. Intelligent applications, fed with destination, departure/arrival time windows, vessel specs, cargo information (type, weight), bunker prices and regulations (emission requirements), can produce reliable weather forecasts. And, powered by artificial intelligence algorithms, this can produce operator-verified navigation plans with unparalleled benefits in time and fuel saved, emission savings/reduction and reduced risk of accidents.


## Helping the Master

In the area of vessel performance, the POCR reports on route, speed, fuel consumption and trim enhancement. This is combined with hull, propeller and emissions monitoring for better energy management and various preventative maintenance management checks. The POCR takes an incremental rather than a transformative approach, with the aim of augmenting rather than substituting the human element. Indeed, the control room is manned 24/7 by shipping professionals, who harness real-time weather, mapping and sailing data to make split second decisions and recommendations to the Masters. The aim is to 'understand' the type of tasks each technology can perform and, based on voyage instructions, develop the appropriate actions and plans.

Through detailed weather forecasts and machine learning, patterns from large historical data sets are analysed

and discovered while bringing value to optimal route plotting. Avoiding extreme weather enhances crew, vessel and cargo safety and can save days and hundreds of tons of fuel during a long passage. For this reason, the POCR team are in direct communication with the vessels' crew to monitor all aspects related to route, speed and fuel consumption. This means recognising the details of voyage instructions and objectives and focusing on results – whilst at the same time prioritising the safety of crew, vessel and cargo. The team also interacts with the vessel's technical managers, helping to solve complex issues and finding innovative solutions to enhance vessel operations.

Regular and high-quality data makes it possible to plan on-the-go route adjustments. Acknowledging the fact that some weather service providers have more advanced algorithms and multi-model numerical weather products than others has led to deploying multiple data providers within the platform to enable cross-checking. Different voyages/clients/vessels require different qualities of data.

Kyriacos Panayides, managing director of AAL, explained to me that the POCR has allowed AAL to prioritise the safety of its front-line workers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. That reason alone more than justifies their use of the POCR to facilitate safer shipping. 

*Captain Pankaj Sharma is a Master Mariner and POCR manager at Columbia Shipmanagement.*



Seafarers need to be seen for the essential work they do

## The invisible workforce

*Seafarers demand respect for the life-critical services they have tirelessly provided during the pandemic*

By Michael Grey

Some years from now, when the historians get to work on the Great Pandemic of 2020-21, it will be interesting to see whether they notice the fact that despite every sort of handicap caused by the global disease, the world's ships kept sailing. It is an important fact that ought to be emphasised, for if cargo ships had become as inactive as aviation, or the cruise sector, the world would have starved and the lights would have been extinguished.

There has been very little recognition of this fact, or, more importantly, the debt that society owes to the international workforce that has kept up 'shipping as usual' in very unusual circumstances. The ships, the ports and the whole transport sector, with its hard-pressed workforce afloat and ashore, remain largely invisible, but truly deserve the thanks of all.

It is worth thinking for a minute about what might have happened if the ships, like so much else that ground to a halt as the pandemic caused its havoc around the world, had not sailed. Every sensible person can recognise the importance of world trade, which enables nations to flourish and wealth to be created. One can perhaps imagine the scale of

the global disaster if exports were not carried away, and the ships bringing in the imports had stayed tied up in port, empty. It also doesn't take too much imagination to consider the speed with which the shelves would empty and the manufacturing processes would come to a halt because of the lack of raw materials, all rendered even more critical in our 'just in time' era, where few stocks are ever carried.

### Better acknowledgment

As the pandemic spread around the world, certain governments congratulated themselves on the way that they had been able to isolate their countries from the worst of the plague. But they still depended on the ships which carried their imports and exports, even though they may not have acknowledged the debt they owed to the people who crewed them. It is time that the efforts of these 'key workers' are recognised, because to date, they have not been.

How often do we see, in our mainstream media, anything about the importance of the seafaring workforce and just what it has had to put up with since Covid-19 was identified? There might have been some attention paid to the unusual sight of fleets of cruise ships

idling in port, or angry editorials about 'port congestion' caused by container imbalances or problems that delayed the ferries. But it is often as if these great fleets of ships upon which all of us so utterly depend operate automatically, without any human agency. Their crews, the lives they live and the way this has been hugely distorted by the pandemic – all are invisible.

Everyone in the industry knows of the problems of crew reliefs, of the misery of being confined on board when the ship gets to port after a long sea passage, with no possibility of shore leave. All in the business are aware of the difficulties that are faced by people who are months over their contract tour length, and those 'trapped' ashore unable to re-join their ships.

But ashore, in the corridors of power, where the rules and regulations are made, there seems to be little knowledge of the damage being done to the health and happiness of this vital international workforce. Despite the efforts of the industry's institutions and the demands for seafarers to be given 'key worker' status and treated accordingly, it always seems to be easier to ignore them. The ships, it is assumed, will keep on sailing. 🌐

See Michael Grey's cartoon on pg 14.



# Small acts with big meanings

*Some owners have risen admirably to the challenge of lifting the spirits of seafarers*

By Steven Jones

The latest report from the Seafarers Happiness Index (SHI) has been released, and features feedback from crews pleased to see the end of 2020 with some signs of hope for this year.

The average SHI results showed happiness levels of seafarers for the final quarter of 2020 at 6.37/10. This showed a marginal climb from 6.35 in Q3. To see a rise during a pandemic is surprising, perhaps even more so when some of the positives have been delivered through the actions of employers.

All too often we read of problems regarding ship owners and actions which negatively impact crews. Thankfully, this time there were some signs of progress, and we heard of the solutions and investments that some companies are making to improve the lot of their crews.

Some respondents spoke in glowing terms of the efforts that their employers are making. This included improvements in connectivity, food and diet onboard, and in recreational activities. Across numerous surveys, we heard from seafarers who said they had benefited from owners investing more, seemingly in recognition of the problems in getting home and as a reward for the sacrifices that many are making at sea.

We received reports from seafarers whose employers have secured better or cheaper internet access for them, with some even granting free data. We also

heard of companies who had raised food expenses to ensure better quality food, and of others that had provided ships with new exercise or entertainment equipment.

The companies which have found the budget to improve the facilities and life onboard clearly gained much kudos and gratitude from the crew. It is a wise spend indeed, and such investment is recognised and hugely welcomed by seafarers.

While it would be ridiculous to say that such gestures would ever make up for the stress of not knowing when seafarers are finally going to get home, the data shows that the impact of making life better onboard translates into a big difference to the sentiment at sea. The SHI responses from seafarers whose employers had acted to improve facilities onboard were overwhelmingly more positive.

## Crew change mess

Unfortunately, despite this positive news, the problems of crew changes and the realities and impact of Covid-19 for those at sea are still very much in evidence. It was sad to read seafarers describe their current experiences as the worst in decades at sea. The mess of crew changes continues to impact the industry and is acutely and personally felt by seafarers and their families.

Seafarers also spoke of a sense of feeling misunderstood, and that people ashore no longer understood the pressures of the job or the impact of not getting home or being granted any shore leave.

There was also talk of a worrying disconnect between crews and those in management positions ashore. Sadly, there appeared to be a real sense of resignation and antipathy across the written responses received, with a sense that the job and life of a seafarer is simply a mystery to those ashore.

The issue of workload was particularly concerning. We heard that seafarers are losing faith in the rules and claim that time and time again the hours of work/rest are merely being fabricated to maintain compliance. This would be bad enough when seafarers are getting their contracted leave, but to have prolonged work over extended contracts without adequate rest is a recipe for real problems ahead. Speaking under the cover of anonymity, some seafarers admitted to feeling scared that they would lose their

jobs if they could not complete their tasks in their 'work hours', or indeed if they spoke out about the actual amount of time they spend working.

Another key issue related to training, specifically the push to get seafarers prepared for maritime cyber security rules which have entered into force. Seafarers claim the rush to train to meet this ruling was not matched by investment elsewhere. They claimed that while cyber security awareness skills and training are good in theory, they are undermined by insecure systems and/or equipment – something which is beyond the sphere of influence or control of most seafarers.

## Relationship negativity

Where we usually hear positive reports in the SHI about relationships onboard, on this occasion there was a sense of growing levels of stress, uncertainty and pressure which was negatively affecting interactions. Sadly, there was a sense that the atmosphere onboard was being tainted as crews focused solely on 'getting through' the pandemic with an all-encompassing longing to go home.

We also heard of problems arising when seafarers travel to join their vessels for their next rotation. The reports lay bare that the treatment of crews, the checks they go through and the standards of accommodation for mandatory quarantine are not good. Seafarers complained of being treated like criminals in some countries. There is clearly a need to ensure the fair treatment of those travelling to and from vessels.

So, while we heard good news when it came to the gestures which can make life better at sea, the responses to the latest SHI make it clear that seafarers are still struggling, and the issue of crew changes is still very much at the fore. 📍

*Steven Jones is the founder of the Seafarers Happiness Index, in association with the Shipowners' Club and Wallem Group in 2020. 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](http://www.happyatsea.org) for access to the latest results and to have your say.*



Increasing the money spent on crew food can make a difference to morale. Credit: Jamie Smith

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

### FIENDISH LEVEL

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

Credit: www.sudokuoftheday.com

### MEDIUM LEVEL solution (Winter 2020)

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

### TRICKY LEVEL solution (Winter 2020)

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

## Jumble

Can you correctly unscramble these anagrams to form four words? If so, send your answers by email to [thesea@missiontoseafarers.org](mailto:thesea@missiontoseafarers.org) by July 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..."

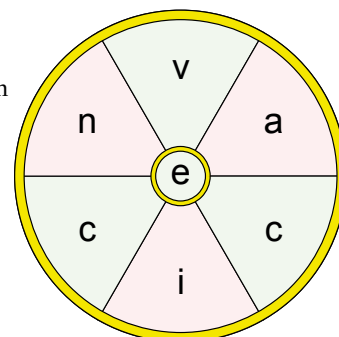
1) Ardra 2) Starch 3) Alliesett 4) Doria

Winter issue solutions:

1) Coating 2) Ammonia 3) Environment 4) Carbon

## Word wheel

This word wheel is made from a seven-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 E.



Answer for Winter issue:

593 possible words, eleven-letter word was SUSTAINABLE

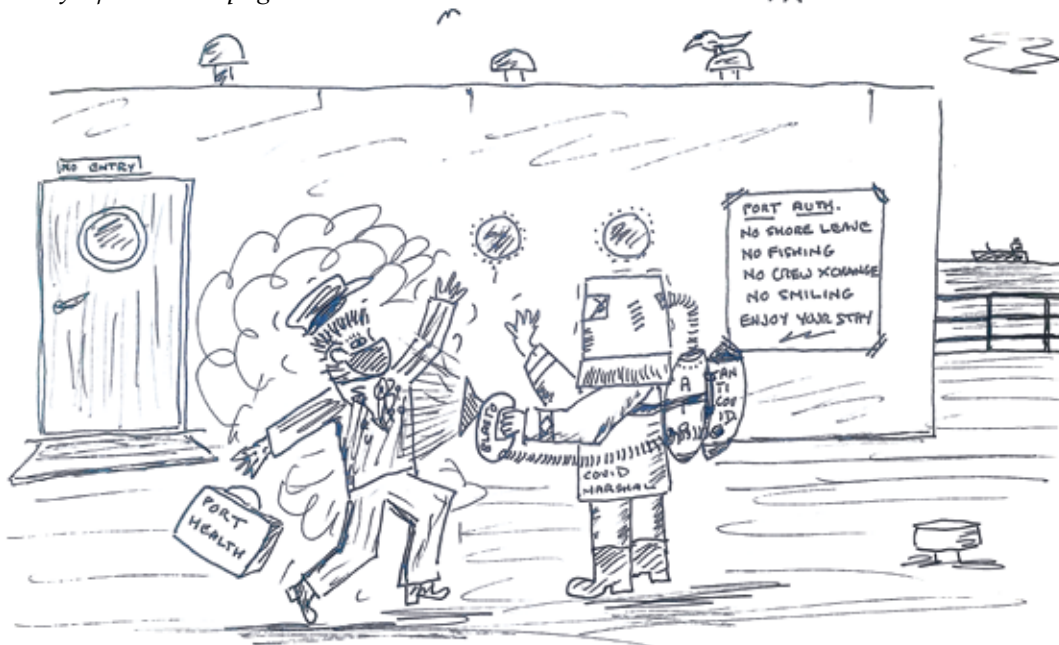
## Flag code

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

Answer for Winter issue: Climate



See Michael Grey's feature on page 12



We take our onboard anti-Covid precautions very seriously!



# 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](http://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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:thesea@missiontoseafarers.org).

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# Journey with company

*Remembering that we do not walk alone in these difficult times*



Self-care and love for companions  
is important in this unusual journey


I used to walk in some wonderful hills near where my grandparents lived. I frequently passed a bench which had been given in memoriam. On it was written the famous verse from Psalm 121: “I lift up my eyes to the hills, from whence comes my help.” The implication is that it is the beauty and grandeur of the hills that inspire us, and remind us of God.

In fact, the verse actually says something different. “I lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord.” It is likely that this Psalm would have been sung by pilgrims as they prepared to travel. From the walls of Jerusalem, they looked at the hills

ahead and were frightened. The road was dry, steep, barren and dangerous. Resting places were few. Robbery and violence were real possibilities. As they set out, they did so with anxiety. However, the song also affirmed the faith they had that God would be with them as their source of strength.

In current difficult times, both on land and at sea, many look ahead with uncertainty and fear. The road ahead can indeed look lonely and dangerous. At the heart of Christian faith lies the belief that we do not walk alone. God is with us. That does not guarantee ease or safety. It certainly did not for Jesus! Life is not like that. However, to have a sense of

the loving company of our God as we walk, a love which can bring comfort both in the green pastures and in the valley of the shadow of death, can be transformational indeed.

In difficult times, the reality of God’s presence can be hard to grasp. It is always good to go back to the story of Jesus and to see how he managed to keep faith alive on the road. And just as those pilgrims set out with companions, we all need to try and make God’s love real through our own care and love for those who walk alongside us. 

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

## A prayer of the angels

*Lord, bless us we pray.*

*Bless our companions on life’s road.*

*May we know your love and support, especially in difficult times.*

*May we love and support one another, just as you call us. Amen.*