



Caring for seafarers
around the world

the SEA

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Columbia Ship Management has been putting fun into life on board.
Credit: Capt Joel T Gonzales

Eat, sleep, relax, repeat

New ideas and initiatives to support those living and working on board post-pandemic **By Felicity Landon**

Never let a good crisis go to waste, said Winston Churchill. This seems applicable when considering the response of ship and crew managers to the pandemic – not only during the crisis, but afterwards too.

Covid-19 threw into sharp relief the very considerable day-to-day challenges of living and working at sea. Ship and crew managers responded to the situation with a range of initiatives and support for those on board. Then came the recognition that many of these initiatives were not strictly ‘Covid-related’ but equally valuable in ‘normal’ times too.

For example, Simon Frank, chief human resources officer at ship manager Thome, says that the mental health support provided to seafarers has proved to be an excellent move. A concerted effort to arrange social events during the lockdown was so successful that Thome is now investing more there, too.

“Whatever we committed to during Covid-19, we intend to hang on to. We see that this has given us an opportunity to review some areas that might have been a bit neglected; now we see ourselves in a better place,” he says.

“We didn’t know when it [Covid] was all going to end but these new initiatives and methods were successful, and it was never our intention to take them away.”

Supporting seafarers on the social and mental side was the priority during the toughest phases of the pandemic – setting up hotlines, ensuring they could contact their families at home, and so on, says Frank. “Now we are focusing on good long-term solutions on the physical health side, including healthy eating.”

Thome is working with two specialist companies to develop health programmes encouraging seafarers to take more exercise.

“A big challenge is, of course, that a

ship has limited space so the chance to do something physical has never been good – but we are looking to motivate seafarers by having competitions and having some fun around this. Our ambition is not to create health fanatics on board – that would be totally unrealistic – but to take smaller steps in a direction towards something more healthy.”

For example, health apps can motivate individuals or entire crews to compete on the number of steps they take in a week.

Fun in fitness

Making fitness fun is also one of the steps taken by Columbia Shipmanagement to promote health and welfare on board. There have been fleet-wide fitness campaigns and a fitness video competition – crews were encouraged to post their own fitness videos online, with a prize for the one voted the best. >>

“We try to put some fun into life on board,” says Capt Faouzi Fradi, group director of crewing and training at Columbia. He also emphasises listening to what seafarers want. “Every seafarer has the mobile number of the CEO; they are invited to text or WhatsApp and encouraged to make contact. It has become like a culture in the company – I get a lot of calls and emails from the crew. It helps to always see both sides of the story.”

Columbia has received ideas from the crews which have also been implemented, he says. “We reshaped the gyms using very professional equipment; we knew what was liked most, so that was provided. It was interesting how much the crew wrote about fitness. These days, a gym on the ship is as important as having the internet and communication on board – the gym is one of the most utilised spaces on the ship.”

Feedback has also included a lot of ideas about menus and cooking, and Columbia is working with international maritime catering management and training business MCTC on these, said Fradi. “When Covid was at its peak, crew were asking for a lot of vitamins and nutritional food to help their immune system. Now their requests for healthy food are mainly about calories; they want to know how much they are eating, and this is a new trend.”

A nutrition service plan has been set up, designed to give seafarers individual guidelines and nutritional advice, and the intention is to scale this up soon. “We want seafarers to have better services than a regular person onshore can have,” he says.

While it is easier to motivate younger seafarers to be active and eat well,

“Our ambition is not to create health fanatics on board – that would be totally unrealistic – but to take smaller steps in a direction towards something more healthy” – Simon Frank, Thome

another competition set up by the CEO gives awards to seafarers who can demonstrate that they have made a significant change to their lives in terms of fitness and sport.

Fradi says that Columbia’s Crew Matters magazine, written by crew, is also an important tool for improving life on board. “We get a lot of input from the crew, including their photos, competitions and so on. We also did a culinary competition on board.”

Pre-pandemic, Columbia already had mental health support in place, with online consultations with psychologists provided for seafarers – this proved vital during the crisis. During the pandemic, it also engaged a telemedicine company to provide a direct online consultation, free of charge, for any seafarer falling ill or with an injury or any medical problem on board.

“We still offer this free of charge to crew – access to a company doctor who can follow their cases sometimes over a long period of time, leading to necessary treatment onshore if needed.”

Without proper medical attention during Covid-19 restrictions, a seafarer could be suffering for a long time before getting treatment, he points out. On

the other hand, having doctors taking care of the crew on board has meant that in many cases the seafarer does not actually need further treatment onshore.

“We have also enhanced significantly the list of medicines on board – we are now not limited by the WHO minimum list but have our own, which is based on the WHO list but improved.”

Support for wellbeing

Anglo-Eastern Ship Management, meanwhile, has recently published *We Care*, a booklet for its seafarers highlighting the various initiatives it has set in place to support wellbeing and engagement.

These initiatives fall under three headings – ‘building trust’, ‘driving performance’ and ‘shaping a better maritime future’ and range from a newsletter providing nutrition guidance to ‘Social Sundays’, dedicated to interacting, socialising and bonding with fellow seafarers.

On the topic of emotional and mental health, Anglo-Eastern’s Reach programme is a confidential service for seafarers facing any issues. In-house psychologists are available to listen and help, there are regular programmes on mental wellness and resilience, and



At CSM, every seafarer has the mobile number of the CEO and is encouraged to make contact. Credit: Angielo Patricio. Columbia Ship Management

there is a guidance booklet on suicide prevention. A 'buddy system' provides emotional support for new joiners, and interaction and engagement sessions are organised under a 'Let's Meet – Trusting Teams' initiative, to build trust between management and seafarers.

Continuity of teams is highlighted: "Our system maintains most senior officers within the same pool of ships, allowing for strong bonds and effective teamwork at all levels," says the company. It also focuses on training, safety guidance, and upskilling and reskilling to support career advancement. Specially developed promotion logs are designed to help seafarers advance to the next step with a clear progression.

Mentoring is important, along with 'Engaging Saturdays', when seafarers are encouraged to share their learnings and skills with their fellow crew.

Anglo-Eastern has also set out its policy on respect, anti-bullying and zero tolerance of harassment, and is encouraging all its crew and employees "to speak up and let us know if there are areas for improvement".

Safety initiatives include the Rest Hour Monitoring Cell, a dedicated team that helps to monitor seafarers' rest hours, to provide a better work-life balance for all on board.

Meanwhile, 'I Make a Difference' is a programme for seafarers to present innovation solutions to problems.

Holistic approach

It is important to take a holistic approach to mental health, says Charles Watkins, CEO and clinical psychologist at Mental Health Support Solutions (MHSS), which provides a 24/7 confidential mental health helpline for shore-based staff and seafarers.

"Mental health should not be seen as separate from other aspects of life such as diet, exercise and sleep, as well as positive relationships both on board and at home. In general, I see that seafarers are a lot happier when there is a conscious effort to educate them actively about their choices of diet and food and how this influences their mood, sleep and energy levels. If there is an effort on the company side to promote exercise – any type of movement, stretching, yoga, and so on – and that spills into other aspects like time out, meditation, reading, praying, etc., that is extremely helpful."

Any type of mental focus that is purely for yourself and with the intention of getting away from work and into a



Thome is working with specialist companies to develop health programmes for its seafarers. Credit: Thome

restful state of mind will have an impact, he says. "It doesn't sound like a lot but a little bit every day can have a drastic, very big impact on your life in terms of focus, sleep, how you process emotions and how you deal with other people on the vessel and off."

The advance in communications technology is a double-edged sword, Watkins believes – it provides the benefit of connecting with family but leads to reduced social interaction on board because everyone just goes to their cabin to connect with people at home.

"Socialising on board is one of the most important aspects when learning to be a seafarer – because it is not just the work aspect but also learning how to deal with life on board, the philosophy and other aspects of it, daily life, how to deal with loneliness – things you should learn from your colleagues. Without social interaction, you are not getting that."

MHSS works with clients to encourage seafarers to be more social on board, he says – offering more social get-togethers, from video nights to barbecues. "Joining together for offline time – playing card games or chess, playing table tennis – is really important for the on-board environment to grow."

He says ships should make sure that gym equipment is good quality and well maintained, so people can really use it. "Seafarers who are healthier mentally and physically are more focused at work – and make fewer mistakes."


MHSS has worked with nutritionists to help seafarers with mental health

issues to change their diet, and run webinars explaining the types of food that reduce anxiety and improve mood, how exercise affects mental health, and meditation.

Time apart

It is often forgotten that seafarers are not just working but living on board, contained in a small space, says Watkins. "Everything that affects their work affects them on a personal level and it becomes exaggerated because they can't leave the place – they are confined and have to deal with the issues. People who work ashore may have an extremely annoying supervisor but at 5 or 6 they can just go home and try to de-stress."

Being financially dependent on the job is an added layer of stress and may make seafarers feel they have to put up with bullying or harassment, he says. Some feel they have to make a decision – do they report the issue and risk someone believing the officer or captain? They worry they could lose their job or get a black mark against their career progression.

"That is the most complicated part to overcome. A lot of people who call me really want to make sure it is private and confidential because they are afraid it is going to backfire. Many people still believe – I have heard this many times – that you have to silently suffer as you move through the ranks. That it is accepted practice. It's an attitude passed on from the older generation and creates a horrible situation – but we are changing that." 



WeCare

Wellbeing programmes from
The Mission to Seafarers

Are you feeling under stress due to recent events?
Are you worried about events at home?
Do you struggle to sleep or to concentrate?
Are you feeling anxious, irritable or sad?

You're not alone. Help is here.



Find out more about Managing
Distressing Events whilst at Sea [here](#).

Reach Out

If you are concerned about a crew member, or would like to speak with someone not on board, The Mission to Seafarers is here for you.

The Mission to Seafarers

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Visit www.missiontoseafarers.org/our-ports
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Caring for seafarers
around the world

Helping those affected by conflict

The Mission is providing care and funds for seafarers and their families affected by the war in Ukraine

By Verity Relph

The Mission to Seafarers' frontline teams have been no strangers to crisis over the past two years, but the start of 2022 has brought a new emergency to the fore. With Ukrainian and Russian seafarers making up some 15% of the global workforce, the Mission has once again had to consider rapidly how it responds.

Pastoral support is of course at the centre of how the Mission's port teams have been working to support crew. With many desperately worried about their families, facing bereavement, or dealing with contracts and the difficulties of travel, chaplains are there to listen.

"The trauma is visible on the seafarers' faces," explains Graham Miller, who manages the seafarers' centre in Townsville, Australia. The port is frequently the first port of call for vessels entering Australian waters from Asia, so the team are very familiar with Ukrainian and Russian crews.

Graham recounts how one seafarer who recently visited the Mission's centre, headed to the centre's intimate Chapel of St Nicholas. The seafarer commented that he was moved to see the Easter decorations of sunflowers, Ukraine's national floral emblem. Having completed an extended contract, he would be heading to his home city of Odessa after departing the vessel at their next port.

Townsville is one port which has received emergency funding from MtS to provide free communication for Ukrainians, or others judged to be in urgent need due to the crisis. "We have been supplying data SIM cards to allow Ukrainian seafarers instant communication with their families," says Graham, "whether they are at home, on the road or in refugee stations across Europe."

Around the world, chaplaincy teams have been handing out SIM cards and portable Wi-Fi devices to crew so they can keep in contact with their loved ones.

Contact with home

Cristi Chapman, executive director of the Seattle Seafarers' Center, spoke of her team's recent visit to a crew of Ukrainian seafarers in Everett (just



Ukrainian and Russian crews often call at Townsville, Australia.

north of Seattle): "During the visit, they gave the crew free SIM cards, which they were really grateful to have. For some, it was the first time they were able to call home in a long time, which brought relief and angst at the same time. All of the Ukrainians were from the Odessa area, and at that time, their families (who were still in the country) reported that shelling continued. Fortunately, none of the family members had been injured, but they are enduring unbelievable conditions."

The Mission has also developed 'own-language' mental health materials in Russian and Ukrainian, which are available both online and in port.

More widely, there are also seafarers of mixed nationalities who have found themselves trapped in Ukrainian ports and some seafarers' vessels have come under attack.

In Turkey, the MtS chaplain ministered to a vessel which had been struck by a Russian missile while at anchor at Odessa. The missile ripped a huge hole in the accommodation block and one member of the crew was hit by shrapnel while preparing food in the galley. Fortunately, the ship was able to

sail unhindered to Istanbul where the chaplain was able to visit the crew, who were all in deep shock, while the repairs were made. The captain and crew were expected to return to the Philippines for rest and recuperation following the incident.

In addition to the work of its frontline teams, the Mission has also made \$50,000 available to the Merchant Transport Workers' Union Ukraine (MTWU) to support those who are in Ukraine or who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. The money will help 52 families, many of whom are still in Ukraine but have run out of funds to pay rent or buy food. This issue is exacerbated as male seafarers cannot leave the country to join their ships so are unable to provide for their families.

Whether stranded at home or on a ship, whether in need of practical support or simply a listening ear, the Mission is there for those who are caught up in the conflict. ☺

Verity Relph is the grants and impact manager at The Mission to Seafarers and can be contacted on +44 (0)20 7246 2942 or Verity.Relph@missiontoseafarers.org.



Calling all women seafarers

New study aims to examine the differing welfare needs of women on ships

By Helen Sampson and Iris Acejo

The Seafarers' Charity is funding the Seafarers International Research Centre at Cardiff University to carry out research into the welfare needs of women working on cargo ships. The aim of the study is to find out about the port-based welfare needs of women seafarers in the cargo sector and how effectively these are being met.

While all seafarers working at sea face difficult challenges, research has suggested that women seafarers may face specific problems because of the male-dominated nature of the industry. In undertaking this new study, we want to gain a better understanding of the challenges that women seafarers face as a consequence of their work, and how welfare services, which have mainly been designed for the overwhelmingly male workforce, might be developed to provide better support for their needs.

We would like to encourage any women seafarers working in the cargo sector, or on-board non-passenger vessels, to take part in the research. If you think you could help us, we would love to hear from you. Alternatively,

if you know a female seafarer who might be interested in taking part in the study, we would be grateful if you could pass on this article to her.

Eligible seafarers who agree to participate will be invited to take part in a recorded online interview (voice only) via Zoom or similar. The interviews would be conducted by us – Helen Sampson and Iris Acejo – jointly or on our own. Both of us have been on board vessels in our capacity as researchers and as a result we have gained a good understanding of the shipboard environment.

Each interview would probably last for between 60 and 90 minutes, however its length would be partly determined by the contribution made by each interviewee. We regret that participants will not be paid for taking part, but the benefit of the research findings is that it will result in recommendations relating to the provision of welfare services with specific reference to the needs of women seafarers. We hope that the recommendations will drive improvements in welfare provision for women seafarers in the future.

We will write up our findings in a report which will be made available

online and we will also write about the findings in academic articles and books. We may quote extracts from the interviews which we carry out, but quotations will be anonymised so that the identities of participants will not be revealed. We will also make sure that companies and ships are not identified in our accounts.

We hope that you might be able to help us! If you are a female seafarer who works in the cargo sector and if you would be willing to consider taking part in a confidential online interview, we would love to hear from you. By sharing your views, you could help to make a difference to the delivery of welfare services to seafarers and help to ensure that they meet the needs of female seafarers as well as they currently meet the needs of male colleagues.

Our study is ongoing, and we will continue to recruit participants throughout the months of May, June and July. To find out more or to take part, please visit www.theseafarerscharity.org/new-research-survey-for-women-working-on-cargo-ships. This page provides some further information about the research, including how to make contact with us. 📞

Professor Helen Sampson and Dr Iris Acejo are based at the Seafarers International Research Centre, Cardiff University, UK. Please see www.sirc.cf.ac.uk for further information.

“By sharing your views, you could help to make a difference to the delivery of welfare services to seafarers ...”

Delivering a cash-free shipping industry

Digital payment solutions offer a safer and more secure way to pay seafarers

By Errikos Andreakos

Seafarers have faced unprecedented hardships over the past two years. While the pandemic and the many restrictions associated with it have now been lifted, the global geopolitical uncertainties, increased sanctions and demands for compliance, particularly in relation to the conflict in Ukraine, are further threatening seafarer welfare, particularly when it comes to payment of wages.

The current situation has highlighted two key points. Firstly, it is critical that companies act swiftly to protect the interests and wages of their seafarers. And secondly, the shipping industry's current system for paying crew salaries and suppliers as well as the general management of cash on board vessels is outdated.

The shipping industry relies upon multiple urgent, cross-currency and cross-border microtransactions to ensure smooth and reliable trading. However, the current methods that vessels use for paying salaries to crews and invoices for ship chandlers, agents and other suppliers require a significant amount of cash to be stored on board. Not only does this present a real security risk and create administrative overheads, with transaction and foreign exchange costs coming in at between 3% to 5%, it's also very expensive.

Most crew members are paid by cash distributed on board the vessel in addition to a wire transfer back home to their families. However, wire transfers are expensive and inefficient to manage which often causes delays in payment to crews. On top of this, if a company pays a seafarer in dollars, which requires conversion to another currency at the receiving bank, they are again impacted by significant exchange rate costs. Understandably, every dollar is important to the crew member and their families and many well-meaning ship owners want to do right by their seafarers.

While the Covid-19 pandemic has caused unparalleled hardships, it has also forced and accelerated digitalisation and the development of digital solutions within the shipping industry; an example of this is a move away from cash-to-master (CTM) payments. At MarTrust, we launched a new solution even before

the pandemic that combines a crew welfare solution with vessel expense requirements. The MarTrust E-Wallet and card is a payment solution that enables companies to transfer funds to multiple accounts and execute payday and CTM transactions with increased control, transparency and security. This includes paying crew salaries, suppliers, agents and any other stakeholder involved in the day-to-day operation of a vessel.

As an integrated payment solution, it is founded upon modern e-wallet and pre-paid card technology and designed to optimise the entire payroll process for ship owners, ship managers and manning agencies. It can be accessed via a web portal or mobile app anywhere and at any time and can be seamlessly integrated into existing systems. From there, funds can be easily and securely transferred direct to crew to pay salaries, bonuses, overtime and cash advances.

As a digital solution, it reduces the need for seafarers to manage or store significant amounts of cash, providing increased security and peace of mind. By using the debit card, cash can be accessed at any Mastercard-supported ATM around the world. It can also be topped up in up to eight different currencies,

making it a local solution in these countries, which substantially reduces fees and provides complete flexibility.

As part of a future development, the MarTrust E-Wallet will include a new Salary on Demand service, which enables seafarers to track and use their income at any time anywhere. Additionally, it will help shipping companies optimise their cash flow, eliminate the administrative costs and hassle associated with maintaining salary advances, and save money on banking transfer fees and other charges associated with CTM payments to advance salaries to seafarers.

Crew welfare is a critical challenge for the shipping industry and we must all take responsibility for ensuring and improving the wellbeing of seafarers while at sea. Protecting their wages and ensuring that their families are looked after and have access to funds is a critical part of this, and the advancements that we are seeing in digital solutions is the route to achieving this. While the well-trodden phrase 'cash is king' may still ring true, a 'cash-free' shipping industry is a safer, more sustainable, and more economic path to tread. ☺

Errikos Andreakos is chief commercial officer of MarTrust, www.martrust.com.



Digital payment options move away from outdated cash-to-master payments.

Credit: MarTrust

Support, retrain and retain

Funding initiative aims to keep seafarers in the industry

By Commander Graham Hockley

Never before has it been so important to support and retain our seafarers. Over the past two years, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, they have worked tirelessly to keep supply lines open across the globe, bringing food and medicines and other vital supplies to our shores. And they did this under extremely difficult and stressful conditions.

Now some of the very same seafarers are caught up in the conflict in Ukraine, suffering the consequences of a war that has taken thousands of lives. Once again, seafarers are stranded at sea, unable to get off their ships or be with their families. Closer to home we have seen 800 seafarers made redundant by P&O Ferries, leaving them searching for jobs in a difficult market.

So, our seafarers have had a very rough time and anything that we as the Maritime Charities Group (MCG) can do to help can only be of benefit to them and to the community at large. They are a skilled and vital workforce which has much to offer. By keeping them employed in the maritime industries, not only will we benefit from their skills, but they can continue to follow a worthwhile and fulfilling career. We need to keep them in the industry if we can.

Our role at the MCG is to encourage collaboration across the maritime charity sector by sharing information, commissioning research, supporting the education and welfare of seafarers and their families, and promoting best practice. We believe that it's only by working together that we can achieve the greatest impact.

In November 2020, in the early days of the pandemic, we launched the MCG Redundancy and Retraining Bursary Fund with funding from two of our members: the Merchant Navy Welfare Board and Trinity House. The Nautilus Slater Fund provided matched funding. The bursary fund, administered by the Marine Society on our behalf, provides up to £500 for training and refresher courses to UK-based merchant seafarers who have lost work due to Covid-19 and want to stay in the industry. It was due to close at the end of March this year but has now been extended to meet growing demand.

Success stories

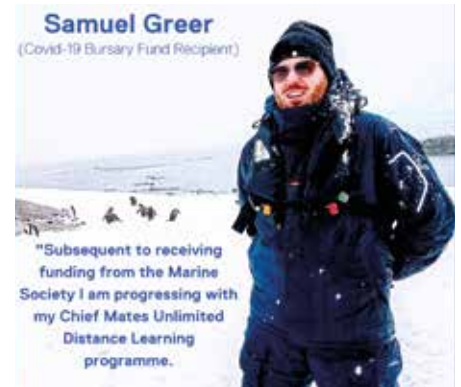
So far, the MCG has helped more than 90 UK-based seafarers to stay in the industry by providing over £40,000 in funding for training of their choice. And over 30% of beneficiaries have already moved back into employment. The courses range from refresher training for STCW and other compulsory certificates, to training for a new skill or sector, as well as academic qualifications to broaden the skill set. We've had applications from seafarers across all sectors of the industry, from offshore to deep sea, from ferries and cruise ships, and at all levels. Here are just a few of our success stories:



• Allan Dickson, 2nd Engineer, did his STCW refresher training with help from the MCG Bursary. He was out of work from the start of the pandemic but now he's secured a contract with potential for further work.



• Canan Sarac used the Bursary Fund to complete the courses she needed and has now been offered the job she wanted as a Mate.



• Sam Greer put his £500 from our Covid-19 Bursary Fund towards a management course that he needed for his Chief Mate CoC. Sam's now back in work.



• Michael Doyle used the fund to help with his Proficiency in Medical First Aid course. "I owe my new employment offshore to MCG and the funding they gave me. I wouldn't have been able to finance my educational commitments without their help."

This initiative has been a real success story for MCG. By working together to fund training for those seafarers who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic, our members have made a real difference to their chances of getting another job in maritime. If you or anyone you know has lost work due to the pandemic, is based in the UK and needs help towards the cost of a training or refresher course, we can help. 📞

Commander Graham Hockley LVO RN is chairman of Maritime Charities Group. To find out more about the fund and how to apply go to <https://www.marine-society.org/redundancy-fund>; for more about MCG go to www.maritimecharitiesgroup.org.

"Our role at the MCG is to encourage collaboration across the maritime charity sector"

Reducing lifeboat risks

Lifeboat safety is improving but there is still more to be done

By Captain Kuba Szymanski

InterManager, the international trade association for ship and crew managers, is leading a drive to improve lifeboat safety and to reduce the risks associated with lifeboat testing and use.

Working with the IMO's Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS), InterManager is collating figures for lifeboat incidents on behalf of the international maritime community to inform discussions on lifeboat safety matters. The Association's work has revealed that, since 1981, there have been 420 deaths involving lifeboats, 346 serious injuries and 116 minor injuries.

InterManager is an active member of the International Lifeboat Group and, as a non-governmental organisation at the IMO, discusses the concerns at a global level. Its activities have raised awareness of procedural and technical risks associated with lifeboat use and have already resulted in industry improvements.

SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3.3 requires each lifeboat to be launched at least once every three months during an abandon ship drill and manoeuvred in the water by its assigned operating crew. As a result of industry concerns, in 2009 the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee agreed that the assigned operating crew should not be required to be on board lifeboats during launching, unless the Master, within the authority conferred to him/her by paragraph 5.5 of the ISM Code, considers it necessary, taking into account all safety aspects.

But there is still more to do to ensure seafarers are not at risk during lifeboat use. The industry has been working on lifeboat safety for over 40 years, but measures taken so far have not had sufficient effect and we are still needlessly risking lives.

It's important that everyone involved, particularly Port State Control officers, understand and apply the regulations correctly. The maritime community must do all we can to ensure the safety of seafarers. 📍

Captain Kuba Szymanski is secretary general of InterManager.



"There is still more to do to ensure seafarers are not at risk during lifeboat use"
Captain Kuba Szymanski

Seahaven offers improved survival technology



Lifeboat first heralds safety improvements

The European Union-led and -funded Safedor project has led to the development of the world's largest inflatable lifeboat which launches at the push of a button and automatically inflates, taking just four minutes to deploy.

Survitec, manufacturer of the Seahaven, says that the slide-based survival technology improves passenger evacuation time without compromising on safety. Once deployed, the inflatable lifeboat can travel independently for 24 hours at a speed of six knots.

Seahaven has completed IMO A.520 physical tests as required by

classification society Lloyd's Register, which included a ship sinking scenario and a timed evacuation, which was achieved in less than 22 minutes. Under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) rules, evacuation should not exceed 30 minutes. During the A.520 tests, conditions were created to mirror those that seafarers and passengers would encounter in a real-life evacuation.

The A.520 tests follow the December 2021 success of Heavy Weather Sea Trials, carried out in line with SOLAS requirements for Novel Appliances.

Seafarers need to be heard and respected

The industry needs to hear real-life stories first hand and humanise crew

Sue Henney may have fallen unintentionally into shipping – she graduated in Modern Language Studies and her first role out of university was to edit German and Latin American news for guests on cruise ships. But that unexpected start led her down a path of challenging current practice and improving seafarer welfare.

During her career she has worked for a number of maritime brands whose services were directed primarily at seafarers, including NEWSlink, Walport, Videotel and KVH. “This meant it was imperative that we understood as much as we could about seafarer needs and likes, and it obviously opened my eyes to the conditions crew faced at sea,” she tells *The Sea*.

A pivotal moment came when Henney attended a conference in 2010 and heard Canon Ken Peters of The Mission to Seafarers talking about a Filipino seafarer who was frantically trying to organise a video call home in one of the UK seafarer centres as it was his son’s birthday. When asked how old his son was, his reply was that he was one that day and they had never seen each other as he had been at sea since before the son was born. “It was this jolt of realisation that galvanised me to get involved more directly,” Henny says.

Today, Henney is a director at Idwal, a ship inspection specialist with over 250 marine surveyors covering 800 ports across 90 countries. Through

“We did, and still do, see first-hand, the extra stress that is being placed onto seafarers as a result of the pandemic and how this takes its toll on both their mental and physical health.”



Sue Henney

this role, she has seen first-hand how the relationship between surveyor and crew changed over the pandemic. With Idwal inspecting hundreds of vessels every month, all around the world, the company had to pivot quickly when the pandemic struck to maintain safe operations. “At first, there was often limited access to the vessel, with some sections kept to crew access only. However, as we got further into the pandemic, these restrictions were seen less and less. This is primarily down to the strict Covid-19 protocols we had in place for all attending surveyors, which we believe helped build an initial sense of trust between the crew and surveyor.”

She recognises that while crew welfare issues are not new to the industry, the pandemic helped to bring them more into the public domain. “However, we did, and still do, see first-hand, the extra stress that is being placed onto seafarers as a result of the pandemic and how this takes its toll on both their mental and physical health.”

Wellbeing focus

Idwal surveyors witness all kinds of conditions on board and interact daily with crew. At a strategic level, Henney notes that Idwal has several objectives around sustainability, one of which is to promote the importance of the health and wellbeing of crew within the company’s products and initiatives. “We recently implemented a crew welfare section into our inspection checklist

in order for us to provide a clear and objective assessment of the welfare on board each vessel we inspect. This data can then not only be used to highlight current and ongoing issues further but also aims to resolve some of these issues.

“Of course, we are also very proud to show how seriously we feel about this by working with The Mission to Seafarers and sponsoring the Seafarers’ Happiness Index.”

Outside of Idwal, Henney is a trustee at ISWAN, as well as chair of the North West Port Welfare Committee (NWPWC), where she has been a committee member for the past 10 years before becoming chair last year. Henney describes port welfare committees as the “local tentacles of the Merchant Navy Welfare Board”, feeding back regional knowledge at a national level. Each committee comprises representatives from organisations concerned with the welfare of seafarers visiting the ports and the local seafaring community. The NWPWC is the largest port welfare committee in the UK and is proud to have representatives from an extremely broad range of organisations, including the MCA, Port Police, Border Force, Port Health, ITF, Nautilus, Peel Ports, port chaplains and seafarer charities. “Having all these stakeholders together in one room enables us to put the seafarer at the centre of our focus for a few hours and to ensure they have the best possible reception on arrival into our ports,” Henney says.

Her trusteeship of ISWAN is a newer position, commencing in early 2020. This meant that she was able to see the impact of the pandemic on seafarers at close quarters via the calls that came into SeafarerHelp and through the work done by the regional ISWAN teams in the Philippines, India and Nigeria.

Seafarers’ voice

Henney’s experiences from her three roles have crystallised for her the critical challenges that need to be addressed with regards to seafarer welfare. “Seafarers need to be heard more and have their voices respected more,” she states. “In much the same way our industry is trying to address the lack of diversity, we should apply the same positive goals to learning more from crew directly.”



While there are, she says, many great initiatives in place to bring these voices to the fore, more still needs to be done here. “We need to hear those real-life stories first hand and humanise crew more.”

The key crew issues that Henney hears about are wi-fi/communication with family, work and rest time, shore leave and non- or late payment of wages. “These are all stressful and potentially debilitating in their own ways.”

Of those issues, connectivity is number one. “Seafarers want wi-fi access so they can be in touch with

their families and manage their lives from afar. For good or bad, we live in a world that is hyper-connected and who are we to deny that to a specific group of people during their rest time because they happen to work at sea?”

True partnership among the various charities, organisations, and other stakeholders and lobbying bodies will go a long way towards effecting change and keeping the focus on the main issues.

Regulators also have a part to play, Henney adds. “I think regulators should regulate more, to be honest. There should be real financial

consequences for companies that are not treating their crew with decency and respect. We are a truly global industry, which makes it very difficult to have one set of rules and regulations for all, so it’s sometimes too easy for irresponsible shipping companies to hide behind the veil of confusion that falls into place when a spotlight is put on something that is wrong.”

Henney calls for more effort from regulators to put the seafarer at the centre of everything they do, as well as working harder at actually regulating. 🌐



Looking forward to our electric future

Progress is being made on the industry's decarbonisation journey **By Michael Grey**

The pace of change in the maritime industry, despite its reputation for conservatism, continues to surprise. It is not that long ago that we were inclined to mock the complaints of Californians who suggested that the emissions pollution from vessels in their ports was responsible for a 'diesel death zone', with premature deaths being put down to the air people were breathing. Some sceptics indeed suggested that it was road traffic, obesity and lifestyles, rather than ships' exhausts, which, in the end, turned out to be the guilty party.

But the years roll on and nobody today would argue with the premise that there is a need for clean air around ports and that ships need to play their part in this green revolution. Which is easier said than done, although the concept of 'cold ironing', in which ships plug into shore power and shut down their generators once alongside, has been around for some time. For a start, the provision of electric connections to berths is not a trouble-free journey.

If you consider some of the world's biggest ports, spread over many kilometres of quaysides, there will be a huge expense for port operators. There is also the question of whether the local electric supplies will be able to cope with the demands of many big ships, particularly huge cruise vessels with their vast electrical loads. And it is not exactly helping the

environment if the power that is taken by the shipping customers is generated from coal-fired or other fossil-fuelled power stations. But progress is being made and ports are indeed working to provide such facilities for ships, although it is also a challenge for the ships themselves, which need on board power connections. Standardisation, not surprisingly, has been another problem.

Halfway house

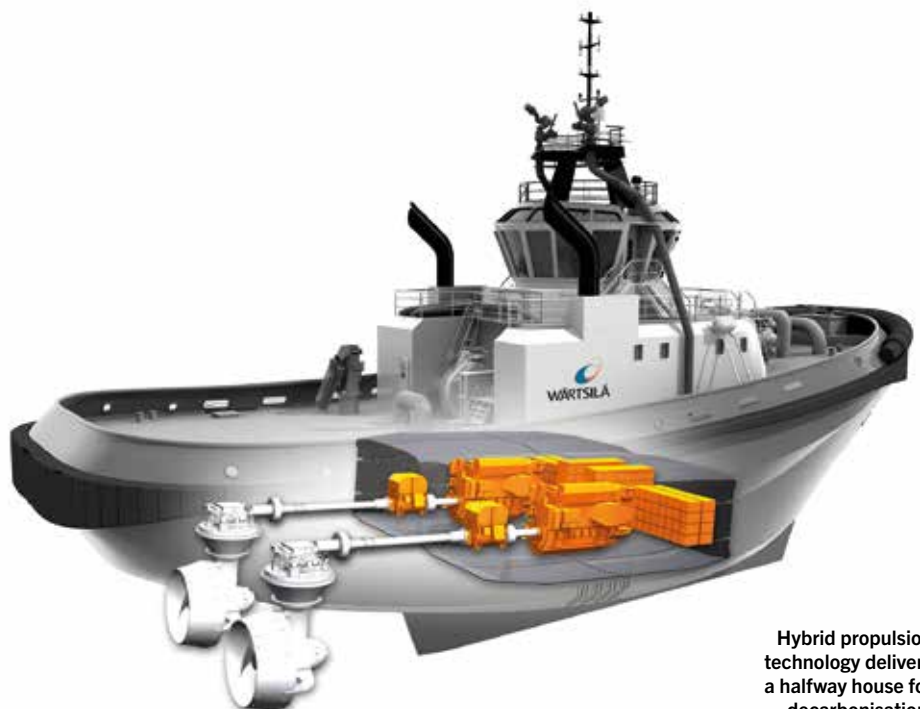
While the business of shore connections for power sources is proceeding, the shipping industry is now moving onto another phase in the 'de-carbonising' process, with more ships using electrical or hybrid systems, many of which would ideally be able to charge their batteries when alongside, from the shore grid. There are already quite a number of all-electric ferries on short routes where charging facilities are available and a growing number of ever-larger hybrid craft. Two of the biggest ferries ever built will enter service on the English Channel next year but they will require sophisticated charging arrangements to be provided at their terminals.

As tugs have also been identified as a source of pollution in port waters, there are a number of designs for hybrid tugs already available and several already in service. Tugs of course have what might be described as an 'erratic'

demand for power, with maximum power only being used during towage operations and the machinery virtually idling as they transit around the port waters between towage tasks. The challenge has been to design a craft that minimised the contribution to atmospheric pollution in confined port areas. There are several all-electric tugs either in service or soon to arrive in their home ports, and these of course will need to charge from the shore grid, between towage jobs. Batteries are becoming bigger and better and there are now quite large ship-handling tugs that will use their diesels only for maximum power, working on the batteries as they move between jobs or alongside.

New methods of propulsion and 'clean operations' require a new skill set for marine engineers and there must be a change in training to equip people to operate these demanding vessels. There is already a shortage of electro-technical skills and there is also a range of safety concerns that must be confronted, as big lithium batteries provide new hazards that must be properly understood. It is also something of a challenge coping with these new and incremental challenges of training, skills and practice, while much of the industry continues to operate ships which run on traditional diesel power plants, albeit with some exciting new fuels. [e](#)

“New methods of propulsion and ‘clean operations’ require a new skill set for marine engineers and there must be a change in training to equip people to operate these demanding vessels”



Hybrid propulsion technology delivers a halfway house for decarbonisation.
Credit: Wärtsilä

Empowering seafarers to say 'no'

Support to tackle bribery and corruption at ports, canals and anchorages

Shippers and crew are exposed to bribery and corruption in the shipping industry as a result of multiple levels of stakeholder engagement. Demands for 'compensation' highlight a network of challenges for an industry habitually slow to reform 'traditional' practices. Collaborative engagement between multiple anti-corruption organisations and public sector bodies have supported a modern outlook, operating with strengthening oppositions to corrupt practices. Such action within the industry supports seafarers in their engagement with authorities making corrupt demands.

One of the most challenging and frequent demands made in the shipping industry are facilitation payments at ports, canals and anchorages by public officials. Transparency International determined that customs authorities of emerging economies, in particular, were ranked among the most corrupt government institutions. The OECD estimates that customs clearance is the second biggest reason for bribes to be paid. The nature of activities that customs officials engage in vary from country to country with acts such as extortion, patronage, nepotism, embezzlement, kickbacks and cronyism in exchange for rewards in cash or kind. These can largely be classified into three types:

a) Routine corruption: instances when bribes are paid to customs officials to ensure customs procedures are completed without delays being incurred.

b) Fraudulent corruption: this type of corruption involves the persuading of customs officials to 'turn a blind eye' to certain procedural requirements to decrease tax liability or other import/export obligations.

c) Criminal corruption: this occurs when criminal organisations offer payments to customs officials to enable the smuggling of illegal substances into the import country.

Refusing demands for facilitation payments can lead to commercial delays or even threats to crew safety in extreme circumstances. Seafarers should be aware of their options to mitigate such events.



Taking action

Seafarers and shipowners have a range of tools at their disposal:

- Implement a comprehensive anti-bribery and corruption compliance program across the business and ensure all areas of the organisation receive training.
- Periodically review policies and assess the effectiveness of programmes in organisation trading areas.
- Policies and procedures must be clear and practical for all levels of the business.
- 'Tone from the top' - adopt a zero-tolerance culture that is communicated from senior board members and directors.
- Strengthen internal controls by conducting anti-bribery training for senior management, seafarers, business partners and third parties that act on behalf of the company.
- Standardised due diligence and risk assessments process for all new business third party/vendors.
- Establish an effective and confidential whistleblowing mechanism to enable seafarers and other third parties to voice their concerns without the fear of retaliation.

Support available

To facilitate seafarers' ability to 'say no' to corruption, they must feel supported by strong company policies and procedures. These must be dynamic living documents, and the best way to constantly strengthen them is by creating a forum to share challenges and best-practices, and collectively assess areas of

improvement in internal processes and approaches.

Additionally, supporting seafarers with shared methodologies, tools, trainings, and awareness campaigns strengthens their knowledge of how to tackle corruption in ports, harbours and terminals. Membership of the Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN) allows companies and seafarers to make use of these tools to report anonymously to MACN when faced with corrupt demands in ports, harbours or terminals. MACN have made significant strides in combatting corruption in high-risk jurisdictions through the use of this submitted data.

Standard Club, one of the world's leading mutual P & I insurers for the shipping and energy industries, has a reputation for lawful and ethical behaviour which stems from its zero tolerance for bribery or corruption. Standard Club accomplishes this through a variety of controls, including regular staff training on anti-bribery laws and regulations, internal reporting of suspicious behaviour, a process for identifying politically exposed persons, and meticulous record maintenance. This is bolstered further by the fact that Standard Club's compliance processes are user friendly and straightforward, and monitored by a very accessible compliance team. ☺

Calum Finch is loss prevention analyst at Standard Club. With thanks to the Maritime Anti-Corruption Network. If you have further questions, please contact Standard Club via www.standard-club.com/contact.

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.

EASY LEVEL

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

TRICKY LEVEL

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

Credit: www.sudokuoftheday.com

EASY LEVEL

solution (Issue 1 2022)

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

TRICKY LEVEL

solution (Issue 1 2022)

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

Jumble

Can you correctly unscramble these anagrams to form four words? If so, send your answers by email to thesea@missiontoseafarers.org by August 31, 2022. 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..."

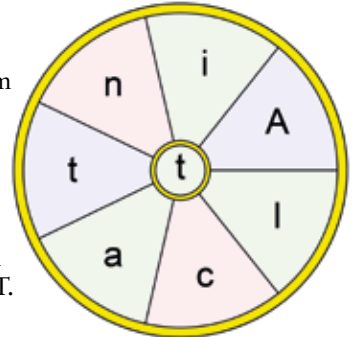
- 1) llixryaua 2) ertruths 3) gentries 4) nitspo

Issue 1, 2022 solutions:

- 1) Galley 2) Provisions 3) Mess 4) Meals

Word wheel

This word wheel is made from an eight-letter word. Try and find that word, then make as many words of three letters or more as you can from these letters. You can only use each letter once, and each word must include the letter T.



Answer for Issue 1, 2022 issue:

23 possible words, eight letter word was Windward

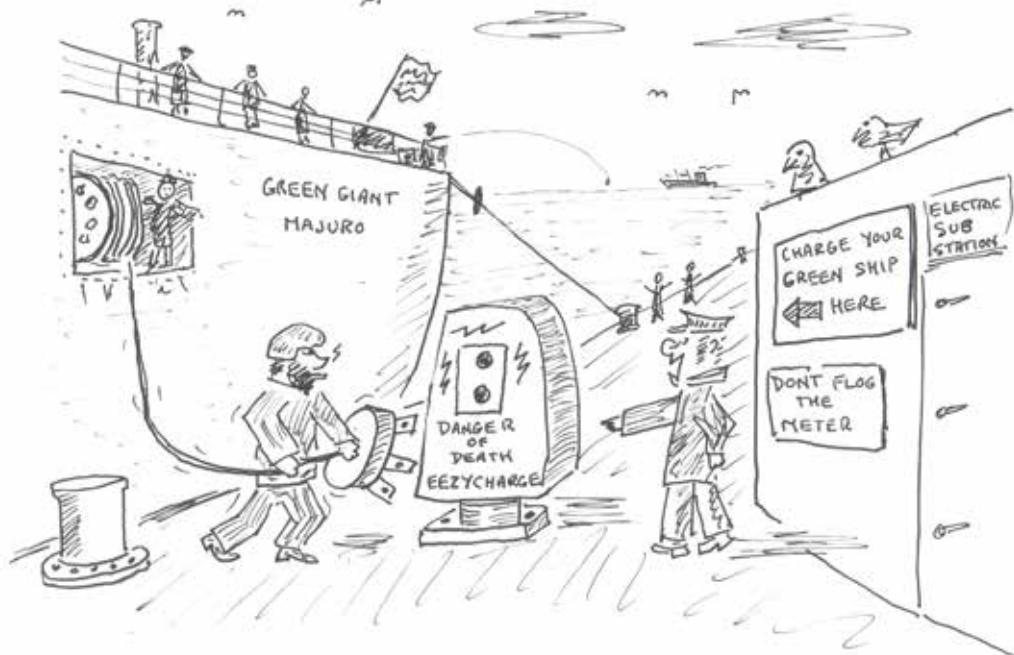
Flag code

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

Answer for Issue 1, 2022: Sextant



See Michael Grey's feature on page 12



"Sorry, we only do two-pin plugs here – don't you have an adapter?"

Help for seafarers around the world

Are you one of the 1.6 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 35,000 ship visits a year, welcoming crews to ports, providing access to communication facilities and offering assistance and advice on mental health and wellbeing.
- **Transport** – Our teams can arrange free transportation to the local town, shopping mall, doctor, dentist or a place of worship.
- **Seafarers' Centres** – We operate over 120 Flying Angel centres around the world, offering visiting seafarers a safe space to relax between voyages, purchase supplies, seek support for any problems they might have and stay in touch with their families.
- **Emergency support** – Our teams are trained in pastoral support, mental health first aid and critical incident stress counselling. We can also provide advocacy support.
- **Family networks** – We operate these networks in the Philippines and India where seafarers' families can meet, share information and access support.

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

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



CREW HELP CONTACTS

SeafarerHelp

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

Direct dial: +44 20 7323 2737

Email: help@seafarerhelp.org

Chat to a Chaplain

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

www.missiontoseafarers.org/

CrewHelp

The Mission to Seafarers can provide help and support if you have a welfare or justice issue.

Please get in touch with us at crewhelp@mtsmail.org

Get in touch!

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

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“Surely greater ‘gentleness’ in all of us would transform the world?”

By The Revd Canon Andrew Wright

The beauty in silence

Learning how to effectively still your mind is a gift

Recently I was asked to lead a workshop on silence and meditation in my local church. As I admitted to the group there, I have never been very good at silence. I am happier with noise, and sometimes find that silence simply allows anxiety to come to the surface.

Learning how to be silent and to use silence is, however, a very important thing, not least on board ship. We need it, even if we find it uncomfortable at first. How do we use it? Sometimes, if I am lying awake at night, worrying perhaps, I try to fix my mind on some remembered words. Occasionally I find myself thinking about a little song I learnt

in childhood, perhaps in my Sunday School classes.

Having some special Bible verses in your head can also be a real help in stilling your mind and helping you to focus. One I use is the first Bible verse I was ever made to learn, Galatians 5:22 – “The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.” These are good things to meditate on and good things to throw around our minds. I guess the best of human qualities have rarely been summarised better. This is the way of life, modelled by Jesus, to which God calls us.

Maybe in silent times you just want

to take one of those qualities. For me, this month, in the face of war and conflict, which has had such a devastating and brutal impact on so many, including many seafarers and their families, I would choose the word ‘gentleness’. Surely greater ‘gentleness’ in all of us would transform the world? How can we model ‘gentleness’ in our homes and in our work communities? How can we contribute to a gentler world? Surely that is something that can nourish our silent times, improve our relationships and inspire our prayers. ☺

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

A prayer for seafarers

*Lord, we pray for the power to be gentle, the strength to be forgiving and the patience to be understanding.
Help us to devote our whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace.
Amen.*