OUR SEAFARERS HELPING TO KEEP US AFLOAT

NAUTILUS AT WORK
How Nautilus fought for members’ rights in past international crises

WELFARE
Nautilus Welfare Fund protecting vulnerable residents at Mariners’ Park

NL NEWS
Members’ view: Working onboard during the pandemic

ENVIRONMENT
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Editor’s letter

What a difference a month makes! In our previous edition the world was only just waking up to the perils of Covid-19, watching in awe as wave after wave of personal and public restrictions were imposed around the world in an attempt to stem its deadly tide.

Now we are ‘locked in’ or ‘locked out’ of our places of work, with no immediate end in sight. It is a stressful and frightening time for many and we are doing everything we can to help our members through it. To read how, go to page 5 for general secretary Mark Dickinson’s comment.

You can also find help online. The Nautilus Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are updated regularly. New information in April includes details on repatriation rights and shore leave, alternative employment for seafarers laid off, and access to government and industry funding bit.ly/2XNQEfG.

Members should now receive a new weekly eTelegraph email for all the latest Union news and information. You might need to update your personal details if you can’t find it. You can also be added to the list via: eTelegraph@Nautilusint.org.

Finally, for those who want a little respite from the pandemic, we have articles on battery-powered vessel standards and the SkillSea project. Take care and stay safe.

Helen Kelly
Nautilus International
Head of Communications

STAFF
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chief sub-editors: Sarah Robinson
Dutch correspondent: Hans Wallthie
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If you have moved recently, your home copy may still be trying to catch up with you.

To let us know your new address, go to www.nautilusint.org and log in as a member, or contact our membership department on +44 (0)151 639 8454 or membership@nautilusint.org.

The membership team can also cancel your print copy if you prefer to read the telegraph online at nautilusint.org.

GENERAL SECRETARY
Mark Dickinson MSc (Econ)

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Nautilus International also administers the Nautilus Welfare Fund and the J W Slater Fund, which are registered charities.
the issues that has been driven home during the global pandemic is that seafarers are an invisible force to most ordinary people. Frankly, some politicians don’t seem to be able to see them either. It was short sighted to lock out or lock in the workers who are responsible for bringing 90% of everything that is needed to sustain us. The pandemic has revealed how exposed many nations are to how the shipping industry is structured. Our resilience as nations has been shaken by this crisis. The pandemic has highlighted the failings of the ship registration, crewing and employment policies of way too many shipowners. Flag states from the more exotic locations have failed to provide support, offshore employment contracts and labour supply policies have exposed the weaknesses of the current system. It all looks a mess and to make matters worse we even have some shipowners exploiting the pandemic to attack our members’ terms and conditions of employment.

If any good can come of this global health pandemic, when we return to normal, we must have a thorough and comprehensive review of the structure of our shipping industry and its employment practices. Covid-19 has revealed how utterly unprepared the shipping industry was, and we cannot allow that to happen again.

All of that is for another day. Throughout this crisis I have remained immensely proud of our members – maritime and shipping professionals, for how they have demonstrated their fortitude and professionalism. They really do ‘supply the world’ to coin one of the welcome hashtags doing the rounds on social media that has highlighted their key worker status. To quote another, #notallsuperheroeswearcapes. Of course, that one is from Nautilus, it is my favourite!

I looked up in my dictionary the definition of a professional. It states simply ‘a person engaged or qualified in a profession’ but I believe it is so much more than just the recognition of status or qualifications. To me it is a state of mind as much it is a recognition of hard fought for qualifications. It is how you go about the tasks you are trained and qualified to perform.

Our members deliver 90% of everything globally and run the lifeline services that support our communities. We know they do it without any thanks or recognition. That’s got to change. Your professionalism must not be taken for granted, certainly not by governments.

During the current outbreak, thankfully many countries declared that seafarers are key workers, and this has helped highlight the vital role that our members perform.

They cannot work from home – although they are used to remote working in an isolated workplace. They work until the job is done, safely and to the highest standards. They are now being required to extend their tours because their replacements cannot join their vessels.

Governments must ensure that this is a short-term measure and they need to urgently turn their attention to getting crew changes moving again. Taking our members’ professionalism for granted would be a mistake.

It has been my honour in the past month to join with my neighbours every Thursday evening to praise from my front door with my family, our vital public sector workers. But I have also been cheering and clapping for my #transporheroes – our seafarers and all maritime professionals alongside all the other key workers who are demonstrating their professionalism and ensuring we are all safe and well during this unprecedented and frankly scary time.

Once this pandemic has passed, and it will, Nautilus and all its staff will continue to fight for our members to be given the recognition that they deserve.

#myheroes, thank you.

Mark Dickinson
sympathise with Martin Heard’s suggestion for cruise companies to vet passenger health before embarkation (Health checks should be for passengers too, April 2020 Telegraph letters). In addition to checking for Covid-19, cruise companies could check that passengers can walk to muster stations, see safety notices, hear safety announcements and follow safety instructions. I suspect if cruise companies were to implement such draconian checks, they would lose a significant portion of their clientele. However, it is not cruise companies that require seafarers to have health checks; that is the responsibility of the maritime regulator IMO. The IMO also has responsibility to ensure passenger safety facilities are fit to use, but paradoxically no responsibility to ensure passengers are fit to use them!

Until IMO closes this loophole, cruise companies will continue to transfer responsibility for the welfare of infirm and disabled passengers to ship’s staff.

Roger Parnell
Membership no 145127

The View From Muirhead
www.thefreakywave.com

Electric ship’s engines?

We’re gonna need a whole load of coins for the meter...

Nautilus is our voice at this time

Thank you for sticking up for our crews stuck on ships around the world with unfriendly port authorities and governments, particularly Ruby Princess and her master. I think you are the only voice I hear/see standing up for us merchant crews. The Nautical Institute is also using all its available communication channels to assist repatriation of seafarers. Keep up the great work, worth every penny of my 42 years of subs!

Nick Nash
Membership no 162299
President of the Nautical Institute
**Engineers wanted for university OWS survey**

I’m currently completing a Master of Applied Science (Marine Engineering) degree with the University of Tasmania. As part of my course, I’m carrying out a research project that analyses the performance of oily water separators (OWS) across the maritime industry. The aim is to find out if poorly designed supporting systems are negatively effecting OWS performance.

To determine this, I’ve created a 5-10 minute online survey aimed at the people who operate these systems: seagoing engineers. The survey will provide information that will rank current OWS types against other provided technical data, and this information should then reveal ways of improving OWS system design.

The inspiration behind my research has come from my time spent working as a marine engineer for the last six years. During this time, I’ve experienced a number of OWS systems that were poorly designed, sometimes making them almost unusable. This in turn placed undue pressure on the engineers that operate them. For the majority of these cases, slight changes to the system during installation would have prevented these issues.

The survey is completely anonymous and no personal information is taken or requested. The more industry professionals that take the survey, the more accurate the research will be, which will hopefully lead to less stress for the people that use these systems. Whenever we hear about OWS violations, it’s usually the seafarers that are blamed. The survey has the potential to shed light on what the actual issues are.

If you are a marine engineer, please take part in the survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/M2LLFB5](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/M2LLFB5)

Gavin Henderson

---

**Plymouth 50 year reunion**

We have arranged a 50 year reunion in Plymouth on the weekend 12-13 September 2020 for all engineer cadets who were in the September 1970 intake at the Residential Nautical College.

Please contact [jimhalligan@aol.com](mailto:jimhalligan@aol.com) for further details.

Chris Ball

**Ship of the past feature brought back memories of Tokyo Bay**

Andrew Linington’s informative piece on the P&O container ship Tokyo Bay (Ships of the past, April 2020 Telegraph) raised a smile as I remembered an incident in the early 1980s.

I was a junior navigating officer on the QE2 during the afternoon 12-4, screaming – or so we thought – south through the sea area Tokyo Bay at about 30 knots. We became aware of a ship overtaking us. Astonishingly, the vessel Tokyo Bay proceeded to sweep up the port side and left us standing. I recall clocking her at 34 knots but perhaps time has embellished that, as Andrew reports she only achieved 30.4 knots on trials.

But the kudos in showing a clean pair of heels to a Cunarder (and the QE2 at that!) would have been too much to resist. Perhaps the officers who served on her will clarify. It was the only time I ever recall being overtaken by a cargo ship in my three years on the QE2 and, needless to say, our pride was punctured. We just shut the wheelhouse door and pretended it wasn’t happening. Forty years on and it still rankles. Different times, different times.

Dr Chris Haughton

---

**Tweets of the month**

**SecretCaptain**
@TheSecretCapt
Well, it’s finally happened. We are on tenterhooks with a Covid-19 scare onboard. Awaiting tests from land based medics. The crew are now very low, missing family and loved ones #Coronavirus #Covid19

**Shouting at Clouds**
@Redrooftinny
Just got a shout out from Steve Wright on @BBCRadio2! Lifted our spirits, huge thanks from the ship’s crew here!

**Mark Dickinson**
@Mdickinson1262

**Danny McGowan**
@danny_union
Seafarers and @nautilusint members might want to #AskTheTreasury too - while the Union lobbies it’s always good for @RishiSunak to hear directly from you too...

**Nautilus International**
@nautilusint
Cheaper calls and free video chat service welcomed for seafarers. @iswan_org is waiting for practical details of how the @InmarsatGlobal discounts would work, and for how many #seafarers. @KVHMediaGroup already offers free calls to #SeafarerHelp

**Helen Kelly**
@helkel45
Our new podcast is free to all interested listeners. Please do send your feedback on this first podcast and include your suggestions for future topics! #NautilusInt #Seafarer
Tribute to colleagues at sea

his is for all British seafarers stuck at sea during the coronavirus pandemic.

When we go to the shops with all the food on the shelves, We buy what we want, in sixes, and twelves.

For the strawberries and others, we buy out of season, We expect them to be there, on the shelves without reason.

Anchor butter from New Zealand, via the Panama Canal, After a month at sea, arrives with us somehow. There is our fish caught at sea, in treacherous storms, By fishermen, whose risks they consider the norm.

Or the meat and the wheat, from Argentina, And tinned tomatoes via the Straits of Messina.

Working months at sea for the global supply chain, Our invisible seafarers through the wind and the rain, Keep our supermarkets supplied and fulfil our needs. Ensuring our children their regular feeds.

Surrounded by water here on the British Isles, It’s the seafarers’ efforts that support our lifestyles. Locked down by the virus, stuck at sea, Missed at home by friends and family, Their efforts unrecognised by you and me.

So next time you applaud all our front-line staff, Who work so hard on our behalf, Please try to make it just a little bit fairer, And give recognition for the British seafarer.

Stephen Cameron AFNI Liveryman, Hon. Company of Master Mariners

Seeking old friends for Bibby reunion

Steve Olson, ex Bibby Line engineer, and myself, Dave Creamer, ex Bibby Line master, are members of a committee arranging what will probably be the last Bibby Line reunion to be held in Liverpool in October, coronavirus restrictions permitting.

Should any Telegraph readers with a past or present connection with Bibby Line be interested in joining us (whether seafaring or office staff), then please email your details of such service to Steve or myself at one of the email addresses shown below.

There is no need to do this if you have already made a commitment to joining us for the weekend.

After writing three other books about my sea career, I’m now collating my many memories and experiences of studying in Liverpool for my First Mate’s and Master’s exams in 1970 and 1974/75 respectively.

Steve Olson has passed on details of sharing a flat at around the same time with a Ford Capri-driving Bibby Line colleague who lived in Ormskirk and with whom we would both be delighted to make contact again. If this is you or someone you know – or if you just wish to share your memories of that time and place – please get in touch by email using the details below.

We sincerely hope everyone is keeping safe and well, whether at sea or ashore, during this difficult time.

Steve Olson – stephen.olson14@btinternet.com
Dave Creamer – sinbadscrewtop@hotmail.co.uk

Dave Creamer
Membership no 160984

‘Recruit and win’ anniversary offer to Nautilus members

To celebrate a decade as the world’s first cross-boundary union, Nautilus is offering members the chance to win vouchers if they recruit someone new during the Union’s 10th anniversary year, which started on 15 May 2019.

UK members can introduce a colleague through this scheme, and once the colleague has joined the Union and paid three months’ worth of union dues, the original member receives a £25 voucher to spend online. The voucher is equivalent to one month’s membership fee.

There is no restriction on the number of colleagues who can be introduced – members could sign up three colleagues and get £75-worth of vouchers, for example.

Nominating members will also be put into a prize draw for £100 voucher, with the winner to be announced at a Nautilus Council meeting in 2020. Similar recruitment campaigns have been used successfully in the past to increase membership and engagement. The most recent winner was announced in the March 2019 Telegraph.
Crew repatriation a safety issue that is rapidly becoming a crisis

Governments and the shipping industry must look for immediate solutions for crew changes as countries begin extending coronavirus lockdowns, says Nautilus.

More than a third of the planet’s population is under some form of restriction, with the UK extending its lockdown until May and the Netherlands recently extending its restrictions to the end of April.

To cope with the restrictions, particularly those which have halted crew changes, many seafarers have had their current trips extended, or been placed in quarantine before being repatriated. Due to the rapidly changing circumstances, these restrictions have often been introduced with little or no notice.

Many members have contacted Nautilus for support and advice during quarantine or to highlight their extended trips.

Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson said that discussions had been taking place among various industry organisations and agencies, and he hoped that plans could be formulated to begin to deal with the impact of travel restrictions and facilitate crew changes.

‘Retaining the current crew onboard and cancelling crew changes is a short-term solution to the current crisis. As the restrictions look set to continue, the time has come for decisive action.

Extending tour lengths further should not be a decision taken lightly and must not be done simply because the alternatives are thought to be too difficult.

‘Those crew who have had their trips extended will be increasingly frustrated and fatigued. Unless action is taken soon to allow seafarers to sign off, there will inevitably be an increase in accidents,’ he added.

‘Where can crew changes happen? What measures need to be put in place to facilitate repatriation? Who will organise it, what will it cost and who will pay? We need answers to these questions urgently.

‘Governments need to support the industry to get seafarers moving again and they need to do it now,’ said Mr Dickinson.

Members with difficulties related to the pandemic should contact their industrial organiser. In an emergency, contact the Nautilus 24/7 helpline (numbers on page 58). More help and our coronavirus resource hub is here: bit.ly/2z9OwFw

Priority testing of key workers includes crew

Key workers – including maritime professionals – should be given top priority for coronavirus testing kits.

‘Maritime and transport workers are the lifeblood of a global economy linking supply chains and keeping the world moving. They have responded to the challenge of Covid-19 despite considerable risk to their own health and wellbeing. They should be given top priority for testing,’ Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson said. ‘Let’s get key maritime workers tested and give them the peace of mind to continue to ensure essential supplies reach those who need them.’

Following sustained pressure from Nautilus International and other transport unions, on 20 March the UK government officially designated seafarers as key workers.

That followed the Isle of Man, which designated seafarers as key workers on 18 March.

Dickinson: Governments need to support the industry to get seafarers moving again and they need to do it now.
P&O Ferries slammed for driving down seafarers’ terms and conditions

Nautilus has raised concerns with P&O Ferries following its proposed changes to members terms and conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic.

P&O Ferries wants to renegotiate rates of pay to a ‘more sustainable level’, revise recall payments, reduce occupational sick pay, revise the redundancy formula to reduce to statutory pay, introduce lay off clauses in its Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), introduce a ‘no strike clause’, remove long service benefits and remove the profit share scheme.

It also wants a two weeks on/two weeks off roster on its short sea route.

Nautilus head of industrial Micky Smyth said this would be against the findings of studies on fatigue including the Union’s Project Horizon, and P&O’s studies which showed that it was unsafe to work over 6/7 days on the route given the intensity of the service.

Nautilus would never compromise on safety, nor accept any wage cuts for staff, he said. ‘It is the staff who are your loyal hard-working employees both at sea and ashore and who have over many years, delivered an excellent service.’

Members would never agree to a no strike clause. ‘Nautilus is extremely surprised that this has been requested, given the history and working relationship between the company and ourselves as the Union for maritime professionals.’

Mr Smyth has agreed with P&O Liaison Officers not to meet with the company again until the Union had been given specific details and costings for the proposals.

In late March P&O Ferries began suspending parts of its operations as passenger numbers plunged. Chief executive Janette Bell said P&O would furlough its tourist operations and put non-essential support functions into hibernation. Up to 80% of salaries of affected staff would be covered by the government, while P&O would pay the remainder. Ms Bell said at the time.

‘Draconian’ sick pay suspensions at Stena Line

Nautilus has protested ‘draconian’ steps taken by Stena Line ferries to suspend its sick pay scheme in response to pressures from the coronavirus pandemic without consultation with unions.

The move has compounded a situation in which more than a thousand shore-based staff have been made redundant by the company.

‘This draconian step will impact on those unfortunate employees, who through no fault of their own, are unable to work due to severe illness when they have provided many years of loyal service to Stena Line,’ Nautilus head of Industrial Micky Smyth said. ‘Employees who may be sick will return to their vessels, which may have serious medical implications for all those onboard including passengers, drivers and crew.’

Employees in receipt of company sick pay before the scheme was suspended will continue to receive payment, Stena confirmed.

- Stena Line has told Nautilus its officer members will not be affected by planned redundancies and furloughs announced in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Nautilus captains, chief engineers and officer members will retain their jobs as some 600 employees are furloughed and another 150 made redundant.

Nautilus A T Work

MORE OFFICERS ONBOARD
CalMac has agreed eight extra officer positions to address Union members’ concerns about crewing levels: bit.ly/2zn4U5L

DONE DEAL
Chief engineers and masters at BW Fleet
Management will get pay rises along with a general pay rise for all employees: bit.ly/2W5PPm
Borr drilling shuts Union out of UK redundancy talks

Nautilus UK has been excluded from collective redundancy negotiations with Borr Drilling, after the firm announced 248 employees would be among the latest to lose their jobs in the crisis-hit North Sea oil and gas industry.

In April Borr said it would be calling a halt to most of its North Sea operations. Some 110 Dutch and 138 UK contractors stand to lose their jobs.

Nautilus national organiser Steve Doran said: ‘Along with fellow unions in the Offshore Co-ordinating group (OCG), Nautilus is dismayed at the scale of job losses in the oil sector’s supply chain and urges the UK Government to intervene and halt the carnage.’

Chairman of the OCG Jake Molloy said that well over 1,000 drilling jobs are at risk, along with several hundred posts at engineering contractors.

For the employees to whom Dutch law applies, collective redundancy will be requested from the UWV and Nautilus International (the Netherlands) will be the representative union.

We asked Borr to also recognise Nautilus for the collective redundancy in the UK. They agreed to consider this but later confirmed that we had been excluded from negotiations,’ Mr Doran said.

Borr Drilling’s notification of redundancy email, sent by North Sea operations director Ray Watkins, said the company was ‘unable to secure future employment’ for workers on two rigs, Prospector 1 and Prospector 5.

He did not mention the potential for staff to be furloughed under the government’s coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS).

Nautilus backs calls to save oil and gas jobs

The UK must take urgent action to save oil and gas jobs from the catastrophic economic effects of Covid-19, which has seen the collapse in the price of oil.

Oil and Gas Committee (OGC) partner union RMT has written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, seeking urgent clarification on the terms of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to demand broader actions to protect oil and gas workers.

Nautilus and RMT had welcomed the announcement in a joint statement with the UK Chamber of Shipping but continue to highlight their ‘serious concerns’ for members working in the sector.

In 2019 nearly 75% of North Sea workers were employed by contractors including the catering, engineering, technicians, and drilling. Contractors are supported by a supply chain of skilled UK-based workers including commercial dive crews and together they reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels.

In brief

24/7 call spike
The Nautilus 24/7 emergency helpline service has seen a rapid increase in the number of calls in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Many of the calls are about employment, joining vessels or repatriation, port restrictions or lack of visa and government support. Health and safety concerns over sick crew onboard, picking up passengers from countries with Covid-19 hotspots, crew members under quarantine and the overall impact on ships’ operations.

PNTL redundancy pledge
Pacific Nuclear Transport Limited (PNTL) has confirmed that no crew members will face compulsory redundancy when the nuclear fuel carrier is decommissioned. Staff who had registered an interest in voluntary redundancy were given until 31 March to accept a package agreed with Nautilus and the RMT union. Enough employees did this to ensure the process could conclude without compulsory redundancies.

Wightlink furlough proposal
Isle of Wight ferry operator Wightlink has agreed emergency measures with the Union. All Wightlink staff, whether furloughed or working, including senior management, are to receive 80% pay from April to September. Fixed-term workers commencing prior to 28 February 2020, either laid-off or placed on zero-hour contracts, are to be reinstated and furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS).

Western Ferries uplift
Members employed by Western Ferries have agreed a pay increase of 3.2% increase during ‘unprecedented times’. Members were advised on 18 March of the ‘full and final offer’ for the 2020 Pay Review with effect from 1 April 2020.
Nautilus has taken a lead role in the new Diversity in Maritime Taskforce, due to be launched by industry umbrella organisation Maritime UK in May. Nautilus head of strategy Debbie Cavaldoro has been invited to co-chair the group.

The new Taskforce sees Maritime UK mirroring the Union’s approach to diversity following the launch of the Nautilus Equality and Diversity Forum at its General Meeting in Rotterdam last year with a number of safe space groups working alongside it.

Maritime UK will hold an online launch of the Diversity in Maritime Taskforce on Tuesday 5 May, with networks dedicated to mental health; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+); Black, Asian and minority ethnicities (BAME) and age discrimination due to be launched across the year. In the future these groups will sit alongside the Women in Maritime group, which is already established.

‘I am delighted that Maritime UK is focussing on a wider approach to diversity and discrimination in the maritime industry and am very excited at being able to co-chair the new taskforce through its inaugural period,’ Ms Cavaldoro said.

Nautilus has successfully lobbied for an extension to SMarT funding for urgent cases where cadets have had their studies disrupted during the coronavirus pandemic. The UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) has agreed to additional financial support for eligible cadets for the next three years.

The additional funding is initially planned for a period of three months with the potential to extend this by a further three months to six months in total. It will include all cadets who are enrolled or will enrol over the next 12 months.

MCA approved training providers may claim funding for each cadet, for whom 150 instalments of SMarT 1 funding has been claimed on or after 1 March 2020, or where the trainee has completed their training in less than 150 weeks, and where the cadet has met the requirements.

Training providers may also claim up to 13 weeks of additional funding at the SMarT 1 higher rate of £107 per week from 30 March 2020. In order to meet State Aid requirements and ensure accountability of funding, each training provider will be required to provide a breakdown of how the funding will be allocated.

The policy is subject to ongoing review.

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MCA approved training providers may claim funding for each cadet, for whom 150 instalments of SMarT 1 funding has been claimed on or after 1 March 2020, or where the trainee has completed their training in less than 150 weeks, and where the cadet has met the requirements.

Training providers may also claim up to 13 weeks of additional funding at the SMarT 1 higher rate of £107 per week from 30 March 2020. In order to meet State Aid requirements and ensure accountability of funding, each training provider will be required to provide a breakdown of how the funding will be allocated.

The policy is subject to ongoing review.

Nautilus has taken a lead role in the new Diversity in Maritime Taskforce, due to be launched by industry umbrella organisation Maritime UK in May. Nautilus head of strategy Debbie Cavaldoro has been invited to co-chair the group. The new Taskforce sees Maritime UK mirroring the Union’s approach to diversity following the launch of the Nautilus Equality and Diversity Forum at its General Meeting in Rotterdam last year with a number of safe space groups working alongside it.

Maritime UK will hold an online launch of the Diversity in Maritime Taskforce on Tuesday 5 May, with networks dedicated to mental health; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+); Black, Asian and minority ethnicities (BAME) and age discrimination due to be launched across the year. In the future these groups will sit alongside the Women in Maritime group, which is already established.

‘I am delighted that Maritime UK is focussing on a wider approach to diversity and discrimination in the maritime industry and am very excited at being able to co-chair the new taskforce through its inaugural period,’ Ms Cavaldoro said.

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Global support for crew change ‘green lanes’ system

A shipping alliance representing more than 1,500 vessels and 70,000 seafarers says a European Commission proposal for designated fast track ports for collective crew changes (see pages 18&19) should be rolled out globally.

The alliance has joined unions and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) in backing the ‘green lanes’ system.


Ports earmarked for crew changes include Singapore, Houston, Rotterdam, Gibraltar, Jebel Ali, Fujairah, Hong Kong and Shanghai.

Governments are urged to immediately enable the resumption of crew changes and officially designate of the world’s 1.6 million seafarers as ‘key workers’.

CEO of Singapore-based ship manager Synergy Group Captain Rajesh Unni said:

‘Current policy represents a potentially disastrous own goal. ‘We understand Covid-19 is a black swan event. But measures aimed at protecting society were never intended to prevent key workers from carrying out tasks essential to the ongoing wellbeing of society.’

• On 16 April the ICS and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), called on governments to identify key airports that could facilitate crew change flights for seafarers to keep the global supply chain operating.

Ship suppliers: we are essential workers too

Ship suppliers should be given ‘essential worker’ status to enable them to keep the world’s ships stocked with vital supplies and spare parts needed by seafarers during the global coronavirus pandemic, the International Ship Suppliers & Services Association (ISSA) has said.

Responding to complaints from ship supply companies that they are being prevented from delivering to ships in some ports, ISSA has written to the heads of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) asking for ship suppliers around the world to be given essential worker status.

‘We are an important part of the supply chain and it is essential that we are able to bring much-needed food, medical supplies and spare parts to ships in order for world trade to continue,’ ISSA president Saeed Al Malik said.

‘With crew changes almost impossible throughout most of the world, some seafarers have been onboard for many months and potentially face many more months at sea before they can return to loved ones. It is vital they receive the equipment and stores they need.’

Crew travel ‘certificates’

Seafarers can now be issued with certificates confirming their keyworker status as transport workers and certifying they be allowed free passage to travel between their home and vessel during the coronavirus pandemic. The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) have jointly produced the special ‘facilitation certificate’ templates and sent them to employers.

To download the form go to: www.nautilusint.org/en/seafarertraveltemplate

In brief

IMO double downs

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has agreed extra measures for the protection of seafarer rights during the coronavirus pandemic, including access to medical care, wages, sick pay and food. During an extraordinary meeting, the IMO Council said: ‘Seafarers delivering vital goods, including medical equipment, around the world was critical in responding to the pandemic’.

World trade slump

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has predicted a global slump in trade ranging from 13% to 32% in 2020, due to the disruption caused by the global coronavirus pandemic. While all regions will suffer a decline, North America and Asia will be hit hardest. The sectors most affected are likely to be electronics and automotive. There are fears that a slump will result in an increase in crew abandonments.

JFD makes ventilators

JFD has developed a new ventilator system to help combat the Covid-19 pandemic. The subsidiary of James Fisher and Sons makes breathing apparatus, life support equipment and hyperbaric medical equipment. The new ‘Invicto’ ventilator design has referenced the latest UK government recommendations and standards based on clinical care experience in China and Italy.

Cheaper calls at sea

Seafarers’ video calls will be free and voice calls at sea half price until the end of June, as global satellite provider Inmarsat responds to industry calls on behalf of crews during Covid-19. Competitor KVH already offers free VOIP calls to Seafarers’ Help and free daily news for crews unable to leave their vessels during the coronavirus pandemic.
Inside view:
Mediterranean yacht season

Nautilus strategic partner and recruiter Wilsonhalligan’s Nicola Morgan talks coronavirus and dockwalking

**Q: Is 2020 a washout?**
This is very uncertain. We are hearing of many yacht owners holding off on all plans for the summer, but equally we also do have clients who are continuing to recruit, which suggests that they may be expecting some sort of a season. I’m hopeful that it might just start later and may run a little later into autumn.

**Q: Is anyone hiring?**
Many of our positions were put on hold completely when the Covid-19 pandemic became serious in Europe. However, as time has gone on, we do now have clients willing to go through the recruitment process, most just cannot give a definite start date or will quarantine crew prior to joining. It’s not like any other pre-season we have experienced in recruitment, but there is definitely some movement going on.

**Q: How are crew affected?**
Travel is a problem – if we have jobs, depending on where candidates are, it may be very difficult or impossible for them to travel. Crew changes have mostly stopped, meaning crew are staying on board longer than what they should be (according to their rotation pattern). We are also dealing with crew who have been made redundant or seeing a reduction in salary, which has a big impact on mortgages, families, and other financial commitments.

Full interview: [bit.ly/2RNH21r](bit.ly/2RNH21r)

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**EU visa extensions available to locked down yacht crew**

Nautilus and its yacht partner A-Z Yachting have helped secure a Schengen visa extension for a member with underlying health concerns stuck in Spain during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The Nautilus member had resigned before the lockdown for reasons unrelated to the coronavirus and was in isolation in Palma. With airlines cancelling flights and fearing the risks of travel the member felt it would be safer to stay in lockdown.

Zsofia Kiss Horti of A-Z Yachting put the Union's strategic organiser Rachel Lynch in contact with the relevant authorities and got advice from a local shipping agent that Spain had made provisions for such an event.

Seafarers wishing to extend a Schengen visa in Spain need to contact a police station or ‘foreigners’ office’ (also known as an immigration office), said Ms Lynch.

Advice for foreign workers in similar situations on their Schengen visas is offered in the ‘What to do if you get stuck in Europe’ section of the Schengen Visa Information site.

The EU Visa Code advises: ‘If you have entered the EU on a Schengen visa, and find your flight back home is cancelled due to coronavirus, there is no need to panic. You will very likely not face penalties for overstaying a Schengen visa during this time. If you are unable to leave before the expiration of your visa, you can simply apply for an extension at the competent authorities of the member state where you are located.’

Article 33 of the Visa code says that if a visa holder already present on the territory of the member state is unable to leave before the expiry of his or her visa for reasons of ‘force majeure’, humanitarian reasons or serious personal reasons, then the visa holder should address the request for extension of the visa to the competent authorities of the member state, even if that is not the member state whose consulate issued the visa.

‘The prompt help for the Union on behalf of the member showed how strategic partnerships work well globally,’ said Ms Lynch.

‘A-Z Yachting was able to assist us using their local contacts to put us in touch with the relevant authorities.’

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**FIRST PERSON**

Yacht skipper Lungi Mchunu recalls her milestone moment as the first African woman to sail to the Arctic. Read the full story here: [bit.ly/2Kfz9NU](bit.ly/2Kfz9NU)

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**EXTREME YACHTING**

First officer Lindsey Jessop talks polar bear lookouts and the growing need for Unlimited tickets: [bit.ly/2RnmkJ5](bit.ly/2RnmkJ5)
Red flag raised over access to financial aid and repatriation

Nautilus has highlighted concerns over the potential for yacht crew to be locked out of government financial support schemes, while facing job losses due to minimum manning requirements and difficulties securing repatriation.

‘Many yacht crew will be employed on offshore contracts,’ said Nautilus director of legal services Charles Boyle. ‘In order to benefit from the UK’s Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS), the employer must have a UK bank account and the employee in question must be a registered PAYE worker, which is going to cause problems.

‘I expect that yacht personnel are going to be unable to benefit from the UK’s furloughing or self-employment schemes.’

With travel restrictions in place in numerous countries across the world, many yacht owners are facing tough decisions over crewing during the pandemic. Some owners may reduce the number of crew onboard to minimum standards to account for lost charter revenues. Other owners, eager to maintain crews and go yachting once the pandemic is over, may decide to keep their crew employed throughout the Covid-19 crisis.

‘While the options vary, typically they include being repatriated without future pay, or being kept onboard with reduced pay,’ Mr Boyle said. ‘Even so, there will likely be a number of crew members with cash flow problems for the coming months.’

With no job and no access to government aid, many yachties could be required to live on whatever cash reserves they have or seek alternative employment.

‘While getting home may be the solution to many seafarers’ problems, the situation is just not that simple today. Depending where they are in the world, even getting out of the port may not be possible. Equally, the jurisdiction they are trying to reach may not be accepting any flights.’

Nautilus is supporting moves by cross-industry partners – including maritime and airline – to get governments to accept seafarers as essential workers, which would include yachting and commercial personnel. That would mean yacht crew get categorised on a special status for transit to ship and back, as well as repatriation, Mr Boyle said.

Many yacht crew are facing a tough season Image: Danny McGowan

MCA approves digital sea-time verification

The UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has given the green light to digital sea-time verification for Nautilus superyacht members.

The move is a temporary step to ensure continued service during the Covid-19 pandemic to yacht crew who require sea-time verification for certificates of competency, and to assist the MCA with the revalidation process.

Yacht members can now send Nautilus a signed and stamped scanned copy of testimonials via email. Nautilus will verify the testimonials as per standard procedures and lodge that with the MCA.

‘We are pleased the MCA is supporting Nautilus and supporting yacht crew with digital verification of sea-time during the Covid-19 pandemic,’ strategic organiser Rachel Lynch said. ‘This will provide seafarers with peace of mind during this time of great uncertainty.’

Digital verification will be available to all seafarers needing to revalidate Certificates of Competency (CoC) and Certificates of Equivalent Competency (CEC) during the pandemic.

Seafarers can also send testimonials electronically for verification to keep on top of their sea time but will be required to send in their Service Record Book (SRB) and original testimonials at a later date.

Union offices at Nautilus House have been closed as per government advice during the pandemic with staff now working from home. Members are requested to cease sending SRBs, testimonials or other documents to this address until further notice.
Crew members on cruiseships involved in Covid-19 outbreaks will need long-term physical and mental health support, a medical expert has warned.

In a special report in the International Maritime Health Journal, Professor Eilif Dahl, a former passengership doctor now working at the Norwegian Centre for Maritime and Diving Medicine, examines the quarantine of the Princess Cruises vessel Diamond Princess in Japan and the ‘unprecedent’ demands it placed upon the 1,045 seafarers onboard the vessel.

His analysis notes the ‘multitude of new challenges’ that were created by the Covid-19 outbreak on the ship. ‘Although effectively protecting the public ashore, quarantine for those aboard was flawed,’ he points out.

Consequently, both passengers and crew increasingly felt helpless, anxious, and fearful, and over time various degrees of mental and physical exhaustion were common.’

Prof Dahl describes quarantine as ‘a logistic nightmare’ for management onboard and ashore. ‘They must ensure consistently safe and professional operation of all aspects of the vessel, 24/7, also under extraordinary circumstances,’ he points out.

‘A primary goal and ongoing challenge will be to keep up morale and motivate a steadily more overtaxed crew to continue not only to work but also to provide the expected “excellent cruise service”’. The Japanese authorities’ attempts to keep the Diamond Princess’s passengers apart from each other and from crew by retaining them in their cabins ‘was not an ideal solution because potentially contagious crew had to interact among themselves and serve the passengers to keep the ship operation running’.

Failing to isolate the crew from the outset of the quarantine probably contributed to further virus transmission to passengers and seafarers during the quarantine time and made it necessary to subject the remaining crew members to another full quarantine period ashore after all the passengers had disembarked.

Crew should be given expert medical and psychological care, including long-term follow-up at home. ‘This will be necessary to counteract reactions from involuntary frontline work in a dangerous environment — and from the subsequent quarantine ashore.’

The report notes the inherent difficulties involved in dealing with the quarantine of a foreign-flagged and-operated ship and says the lessons of the Diamond Princess case need to be shared fully to improve future contingency plans and to ensure that detailed industry plans for worldwide cooperation over emergency medical staffing and assistance are put in place.

The case highlights the need for a worldwide framework to tackle similar crises in. ‘There must be global treaties to ensure that ports cannot turn away ships with outbreaks but must arrange for urgent quarantine of all potentially contaminated persons not aboard but ashore, as well as for urgent shore-side isolation and hospitalisation of all suspected and symptomatic patients.’

To maritime professionals: Our new podcast with Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson on the UK government’s support to maritime professionals: bit.ly/2UypZCh

WATCH THIS
Crew from the Cumbrian Fisher show their appreciation to other frontline workers: www.youtube.com/watch?v=TP6im1FWX10
MCA to extend medical certificates for six months

The UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has updated the extensions available for expired, or about to expire, medical certificates during the Covid-19 pandemic from three months to six months.

The changes apply to ENG 1 holders on UK flagged vessels including seafarers and fishers and adds a provision around non-UK medical certificates when used on UK ships.

‘New medical fitness certificates may not be available during the pandemic,’ the MCA said by way of explanation to the further extensions now in place.

For seafarers whose certificates are due to expire while onboard:
- If the ENG 1 certificate is valid for the full two-year period (or one-year for under 18s) the exception will be extended to 6 months
- If the ENG 1 certificate is time limited (valid for less than two years due to medical reasons) the exception for current voyage (for three months after a time limited certificate expires) is retained. Seafarers still onboard at the end of that three-month exception will require a Telephone Review to assess whether a further exception can be approved or not.

For seafarers who need to join a ship with an expired ENG 1 certificate:
- If the ENG 1 certificate is valid for the full two-year period (or one-year for under 18s) the exception will be extended to six months for those whose certificate has expired within the last three months.
- If the ENG 1 certificate is time limited (valid for less than two years due to medical reasons) and has expired within the last month) will get an extension of six months.
- If the equivalent medical fitness certificate is time limited (valid for less than two years due to medical reasons), the certificate exception is only valid for up to three months from the date of expiry of the certificate.

Seafarers who need to join a ship with an expired acceptable equivalent medical certificate that is valid for the full two-year period can get a six-month extension – but only if it expired within the past three months.

Seafarers with an acceptable equivalent medical fitness certificate that is time limited (valid for less than two years due to medical reasons) do not meet the requirements for the exception and cannot use the certificate to join a vessel. In this case, seafarers should obtain a new medical fitness certificate when possible to do so.

TUC updates advice on maternity rights

The UK must ensure employers protect pregnant workers’ rights and health during the coronavirus pandemic, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) said.

Employers have a legal obligation to assess the workplace risks for pregnant employees and their unborn children, as well as the risks for breastfeeding mothers who have returned to work. They must keep these risks under review as circumstances change and as pregnancy progresses, if applicable.

Employers should follow these four steps if risks, such as exposure to Covid-19, are identified:
1. Employers must try to remove or prevent exposure to risks
2. If that is not possible, employers should temporarily adjust working conditions to allow employees to work from home
3. If that is not possible, pregnant workers should be offered suitable alternative employment at the same rate of pay if available
4. If none of this is possible, employers must suspend employees from work on full pay for as long as necessary to protect health and safety or that of the baby. Full pay should be based on usual earnings, not contractual hours.

Aerosol warning

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has warned of the dangers associated with condensed aerosol firefighting systems, after a fatal accident onboard a fishing vessel. Conor Mosely, 20, died during the installation of a FirePro condensed aerosol fire extinguishing system.
IBF and ITF in global push for key worker status

Maritime unions and employers have issued a joint statement calling on governments to urgently define seafarers as key workers during the current global coronavirus pandemic, and to ensure they are exempt from travel restrictions so that crew changes can take place.

The IBF statement echoed one issued by The International Labour Organization (ILO) Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, which emphasised ‘the critical importance of maritime trade to the global economy, which relies on shipping for 90 percent of all goods’.

Covid-19 is having a negative impact on the lives of seafarers, with most countries in lockdown and imposing travel restrictions, and the virtual collapse of scheduled air travel preventing regular crew changes and repatriations in general.

The IBF statement said: ‘Seafarers in international shipping normally work and live onboard a ship for up to 10 months at a time, but now, due to the restrictions being introduced by many countries, these seafarers are forced to stay even longer because the majority of maritime employers are having to introduce a temporary freeze of crew changes.

‘We are acutely aware that where circumstances require extending maximum tour lengths for seafarers, this is only an emergency temporary solution that is acceptable only for a limited amount of time. We wish to reassure seafarers that the maritime industry is working hard to find solutions so that seafarers can be relieved and repatriated.’

EU urged to ease crew changes during coronavirus pandemic

Maritime unions and shipowners have called on European governments to act together to facilitate crew changes during the global coronavirus pandemic.

The European Transport Workers’ Federation (ETF) and European Community Shipowners Associations (ECSA) have called for international shipping normally work and live onboard a ship for up to 10 months at a time, but now, due to the restrictions being introduced by many countries, these seafarers are forced to stay even longer because the majority of maritime employers are having to introduce a temporary freeze of crew changes.

‘Guidelines on protection of health, repatriation and travel arrangements for seafarers, passengers and other persons on board ships’.

The guidelines broadened the definition of ‘maritime workers’ to exempt from travel bans not just workers essential for the haulage of goods but a broader group of employees working at sea and onboard ships in the operation and maintenance of essential infrastructure and supply chains. 

SHARE THIS
CMA CGM Gemini crew recorded a YouTube video: ‘We stay onboard for you’. Well worth watching and sharing: youtu.be/YOo8RtQtOrY

KEEP SAFE
Piracy and Armed robbery continue to thrive off West Africa according to the International Maritime Bureau: bit.ly/3enO0sm

In brief

Rhine locks closed
Locks on the upper Rhine will be closed at night between 21:00 hrs and 05:00 hrs in a bid to stem the coronavirus in Europe. All locks between Kembs and Iffezheim are affected by this measure. Locks will reopen at night once special protective measures for personnel are no longer required and enough lock operating staff are available. Traffic control centres and reporting points on the Rhine will remain open.

Belgium drops manning
The Belgian Maritime Inspectorate (BMI) has dispensed with minimum safe manning requirements under Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) in response to the coronavirus outbreak. BMI has also ceased all surveys, inspections and audits of ships flying the Belgian flag and companies operating ships under the Belgian flag until further notice.

Italy cuts crew numbers
Italy will reduce temporarily the number of onboard crew based on passenger vessels. The arrangements will last for a maximum 90 days, limited to the period of the national health emergency. Ships with fewer crew would limit the possibilities of exposure to Covid-19 to seafarers, employer associations said.

Unions: deny Jones waiver
US unions have asked President Donald Trump to deny a Jones Act waiver request made by domestic oil and gas interests. Oil firms want financial stimulus, citing the impact of the crude oil price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia. The Master Mates & Pilots (MM&P) union and MIRAID joined a coalition of employers, maritime advocacy groups and trade associations which argued a waiver was unnecessary and contrary to the need to fight the coronavirus.
In brief

**IMO guide to crew changes**
Nautilus has urged all International Maritime Organization (IMO) member states to follow guidance on crew changes and repatriation during the Covid-19 pandemic. While the guidance refers to effective screening and protocols for seafarers embarking ships, the crew already onboard must also be protected. Member states must do everything possible to ensure the availability of testing kits and make seafarers the high priority groups when testing.

**ILO seafarer protection**
The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has fired a warning shot to governments and employers urging them to respect international labour standards for seafarers and to ‘keep a human-centred approach’ for all workers during the coronavirus pandemic. Seafarers should be granted shore leave to benefit their health and well-being, and consistent with operational requirements, it said.

**ITF fights for workers**
Nautilus has welcomed a move by the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) to ensure transport workers’ rights around the world are upheld during the Covid-19 outbreak. The ITF issued ‘global demands’ to governments and employers to recognise the essential role of seafarers and other transport workers, and to enable them to go about their business.

**EC ‘Green Lane’ system**
The European Commission has approved a ‘Green Lane’ system for cross-border movement of freight to ensure the delivery of essential supplies in response to moves from several EU countries to close their borders during the Covid-19 pandemic. Transport workers must also be allowed to cross borders. This includes seafarers and inland waterways crews.

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**Oz investigators must respect fair treatment for seafarers**

Austalian police investigators into a possible Covid-19 related criminal case on the cruise ship Ruby Princess, have been urged to adhere to international standards on the fair treatment of seafarers in maritime incidents.

Nautilus director of legal services Charles Boyle has written to police investigating the circumstances surrounding the deaths of passengers or other persons connected with Ruby Princess expressing concern that lawyers for Carnival are advising they are representing both the company and employees.

Nautilus has retained independent maritime and coronial lawyers to assist members onboard. The union is also cooperating closely with the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA).

Members onboard the Ruby Princess are advised to use the Union’s independent legal service as it is not considered the company lawyers will represent their best interests.

‘It is very clear, even at this stage, that the interests of the employees is likely to diverge from those of the company, and therefore Nautilus would emphasise that it will be highly inappropriate, unethical and unprofessional if the police or other authorities engage with our members, while they are being represented by company lawyers in a situation where there is a clear conflict of interest,’ said Mr Boyle.

Mr Boyle drew attention to the internationally accepted standards for the protection of seafarers in their involvement with law enforcement authorities, as set out in the joint IMO/ILO guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the event of a maritime accident.

‘Australia is a member of both the IMO and the ILO, both of which are specialised agencies of the UN in their respective fields,’ said Mr Boyle.

Guidelines for the port or coastal State also provides ‘that seafarers are, where necessary, provided interpretation services, and are advised of their right to independent legal advice, are provided access to independent legal advice, are advised of their right not to incriminate themselves and their right to remain silent, and, in the case of seafarers who have been taken into custody, ensure that independent legal advice is provided.’

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**READ MORE**

Ruby Princess crew received humanitarian support with care packages delivered to each of the 1,100 crew by AIMPE members: bit.ly/3bj6IdQ

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**JOIN THE FIGHT**

ITF wants repatriation of cruise crew from as many as 18 vessels stranded off Australia in mid-April, calling it a humanitarian crisis in waiting: bit.ly/3eqOKU
Nautilus member fears for crew safety as his employer insists on a return to work in Brazil. Helen Kelly reports

Whilst some Nautilus members are stuck onboard their ships struggling to get home, others are stranded at home contemplating how safe it is for them to return to work.

One member who is working for an offshore services company that operates in Brazil, who asked not to be named for fear of retribution from his employer, has spoken to Nautilus about his concerns around quarantine measures and extensions to trips which are making him reconsider returning to work at all.

‘The reassurances which I have received from my company in light of client instructions have left me concerned about hygiene, safety and the mental health of joiners whilst in isolation,’ he said.

‘We are being asked to spend two weeks in a Brazilian hotel prior to joining the vessel on 50% pay. It is not clear yet if we will be provided with decent rooms with balconies or even in a hotel with anything more than basic facilities. We don’t know if hotel staff will be taking a high level of health precautions or if they remain on site or travel home every day – increasing the level of risk.

‘We are expected to accept half pay for this period and then join the vessel for an extended six-week rotation. We are then asked to volunteer to remain in Brazil during our leave, again on half pay. Something we could be forced to do if we cannot disembark or transit the country.’

The member said there is little incentive for him or his colleagues to work within the proposed restrictions, and that his company has underestimated the situation in Brazil. ‘The UK Foreign Office advice says that the Brazilian authorities will not permit foreign crew disembarkation in Brazilian ports, but our company appears to believe it does not apply to them as we are not a visiting cargo vessel, we are working in Brazilian offshore waters.

‘Not only are we at risk of contagion travelling to and from Brazil, there are other concerns for our personal safety in the event of almost inevitable social unrest in Brazil.’

The member has repeatedly called on his company to alleviate his and other Nautilus members’ questions and concerns and has asked the Union to intervene on their behalf to investigate ways of improving pay and conditions due during isolation.

‘As seafarers we understand the need to maintain our service and most of us are ready and willing to step up; however, I am unsure if our type of vessel is seen as necessary at this time, as we are not directly involved in production or transportation of oil.

‘This is placing a strain on both myself and my family and I am considering resignation instead of taking this huge risk by travelling. Now more than ever, I realise that my safety and that of my family is the most important thing.’
MESSAGE FROM A MYSTERY MASTER

@TheSecretCapt blogs for Nautilus from his ship in the Middle East about his experience of being in lockdown onboard, unable to return home to family.

Hello everyone! How are you all doing out there in this crazy world?

I keep seeing some positive words from them ‘the industry’. But nothing feeding down to the crew stuck out here on the ships.

What is your shipping company/crewing agency doing for you? If you are anything like me, it is precious little. At least my company sends updates on the ‘Global Situation’. Crewing agencies not even that. I think their isolation involves a communication blackout.

The situation here is a suspension, worldwide, of any crew changes until May. That’s a company directive, nothing to do with port or country regulations.

I see some companies are paying crew members who are stuck on ships an extra 50% of salary until they can get home. No such payments here.

The worst thing is there is no light at the end of this long tunnel. We have been told the suspension of crew changes could be extended.

Everyone onboard is very low.

Just no sign of anyone getting off anytime soon. It does not help when you hear of other companies chartering planes to get crews home.

The only good thing that will come out of this will be a very clear understanding, by all my colleagues, of which are the good companies to work for. The ones who care about us seafarers. The days of being just a number or a bum on a seat could, and should, be coming to an end.

It is plain to see already the Oil Majors are found wanting and conventional shipping companies are leading the way.

Care, companionship, empathy and understanding goes a long way when being asked again to extend your contract.

Some of my guys are heading for 9+ months already.

If asked I would like to be quarantined or in isolation with my family right now. Not an option offered by my employer.

Hang in there guys and stay safe.

The Secret Captain
@TheSecretCapt

THE CAPTAIN’S TWEETS

@TheSecretCapt
Apr 14

1. Well, it’s finally happened. We are on tenterhooks with a Covid-19 scare onboard. Awaiting tests from land based medics. The crew are now very low, missing family and loved ones #Coronavirus #Covid19

2. Things are pretty dire right now. After a 6 hour discussion with ship operator and port health my crew member was finally allowed to leave the ship by ambulance and is now in a hospital having tests. Whatever the results he will not return to the ship #Coronavirus #Covid19

3. We await the results to see what happens. All very worried. We are in lockdown, trying to self isolate and observe social distancing. It’s not very practical onboard a ship. Even wearing masks and gloves is awkward. We do a lot of hand washing and cleaning #Covid19

@TheSecretCapt
Apr 16

1. Crew member tested NEGATIVE. All very relieved. Ship fully loaded and ready to return to service #coronavirus #COVID19

2. Not able to get replacement crew member as everywhere on lockdown. #coronavirus #COVID19

3. Pleased to finally have all-clear, but crew getting tired and stress levels high. Hope loved ones at home are all ok #coronavirus #COVID19
An Oxfordshire resident with two Nautilus members in her family has written to her MP to press for action on crew relief and repatriation

Kate Nicholls, whose husband and father are both ships’ officers, told Nautilus in March that she was dismayed by the UK government’s poor understanding of the work seafarers do – work that is keeping the country going during the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic.

‘They keep talking about the frontline of the supermarkets and the warehouses, but they don’t realise that shipping facilitates everything else,’ she said. ‘They need to think ahead. If they don’t take care of the seafarers now, there’s going to be a problem down the line with the goods not arriving to stock the warehouses.’

As she wrote the letter, her father was in lockdown on a ship berthed in the US port of San Diego, unable to go ashore because there were cases of Covid-19 coronavirus onboard, and uncertain if a relief crew could come out or if he could be repatriated.

Her husband was at home with his young family on a leave period. When he rejoined his vessel in Southampton, he would have to go onboard two weeks early and spend the next fortnight in quarantine in his cabin before he could start work, unless more tests became available to establish whether or not seafarers have Covid-19 before they board.

Mrs Nicholls was motivated to write to her local MP Robert Courts after realising that nothing was being said about shipping in the UK government’s daily briefings. ‘Maritime families willingly do our bit by sending our seafarers away, and many of them will be staying away for longer than usual at the moment. It’s our nature to be quiet and not moan, but we need the government to remember us and plan ahead.’

Letter to Robert Courts, Member of Parliament for Witney and West Oxfordshire

Dear Mr Courts,

I am the wife of a Merchant Navy officer, as well as the daughter of a Merchant Navy officer, living in Finstock. I have been alarmed and appalled in recent days by the total lack of reference to seafarers in the midst of the current global crisis. Without seafarers, whose qualifications are very specific and in high demand at all times, there will be no supplies for our supermarkets, or indeed the NHS – indeed there will be very little of anything anywhere since 95% of goods enter the country via ship. We are always a very quiet and hidden community – but one upon which the world relies but does not realise it!

Currently there are a number of concerns which no one seems to be addressing – firstly we have British merchantmen stranded all over the globe (my father included who is aboard a ship currently docked in San Diego) – seafarers are deemed key workers – how do we intend on getting them home? Secondly, in a short time, seafarers currently at sea will need to be relieved by fresh officers and crew – how are we to do this with travel bans in place and a lack of flights? In addition to this I cannot understand how seafarers have not been identified as the first group who needs access to testing once it is more readily available – my husband is currently on leave but cannot rejoin his ship until he knows he is not currently infected? This problem will come to a terrible head in just a few weeks if someone does not point this out and act – the world is reliant upon the goods seafarers transport and you do not have anywhere near enough of them to continue operating in the current crisis. If you think NHS staff are at a premium then you have no concept of the terrifying reality that the lack of available seafarers will bring with it.

PLEASE, I implore you to look into this – I am very aware the seafarers’ union Nautilus is trying to raise this to the highest profile, as is the IMO, but government needs this to be presented to them in the starkest terms and with great urgency.

With all good wishes,
Kate Nicholls
While we’ve all been preoccupied with the pandemic, the need for the shipping industry to cut its emissions has not gone away. Battery-powered vessels are likely to play an important part in this clean-up effort, but seafarer representatives say that urgent work is required on safety standards, firefighting equipment and crew training. **SARAH ROBINSON** finds out how the coming electric revolution looks from the perspective of a Nautilus Federation union.

Like electric cars, battery-powered ships provide a way of improving air quality where they operate – doing away with the SOx, NOx and particulate pollution associated with diesel engines. They can also help to reduce CO2 levels in the world’s atmosphere, as long as the electricity used to charge them is generated by renewables such as wind, solar or hydroelectric power.

‘It’s the future – especially for shortsea shipping and inland waterways,’ says Odd Rune Malterud of the Norwegian Union of Marine Engineers. ‘We have to do it. But we must do it safely, and we must have unions around the table.’

As assistant director and technical manager for his union, Mr Malterud often speaks for seafarers at the International Maritime Organization (IMO). And he’s very keen to see that crew safety is prioritised as fully-electric propulsion becomes more widespread.

‘The problem is that we don’t have international standards for battery-powered vessels, which are fine almost all the time but can be very dangerous if something goes wrong,’ he points out. ‘We need special firefighting equipment and crew training that is quite different from what they get at the moment.’

Although there have thankfully been no major accidents on the few fully battery-powered vessels already in operation, one incident we should be learning from is the 2016 case of Samsung’s overheating smartphones. Stories of the Galaxy Note 7 model catching fire and even exploding were all over the news that year, and Mr Malterud says we would do well to remember this when developing similar lithium batteries for ships.

‘The best thing you can do when a battery like this is on fire at 1,600C is to submerge it in fresh water and wait until the fire burns itself out underwater,’ he stresses. ‘You can’t use salt water, as that makes it worse, which we saw in an incident on the battery hybrid ferry Yttersøyningen last year. So the vessel needs to carry enough fresh water onboard and have a way to seal the casing around the battery, while also dealing with the toxic gases that will be released. And don’t forget that the power for the fire and bilge pumps has to come from somewhere, so what do we do if all the ship’s power comes from a battery that is out of action?’

Another issue to consider is charging. The vessels we are talking about here are fully electric, not hybrids, so they need to charge whenever they dock. ‘It’s quite tricky,’ says Mr Malterud. ‘If you use an automatic arm that connects the ship to the power when it berths, it can be difficult to get a connection with the up and down movement of...’
the tides. Wireless charging is being developed but it’s not in use yet. We have to be very careful with this, because the charge is at such high voltage that it can kill a person instantly, and civilians can be around where the supply cable is.’

If all this sounds rather downbeat, that is not Mr Malterud’s intention. He is pleased to see shipping getting its environmental act together, but with battery-powered vessels set to become more common, the need for standards governing their operation becomes ever more pressing. The good news is that work is underway at an international level to rectify this situation, issue by issue.

In March this year, for example, the IMO Sub-Committee on Ship Systems and Equipment agreed to draft a new interim guideline on the safe operation of shore power for ships. The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) is also involved in the standard-setting work, and Mr Malterud is the chair of the ITF Maritime Safety Committee. In a December 2019 information paper on new fuels and seafarers’ competences, the ITF pointed out that the IMO Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) convention requires personnel on certain types of ships to have specific additional training and familiarisation. In the case of battery-powered vessels, the ITF information paper says:

• appropriate fire extinguishing equipment must be developed
• breathing apparatus and oxygen masks for all personnel must be onboard to protect them from extremely dangerous gases from batteries

This has formed the basis for collaboration between ITF affiliate unions in a working and correspondence group. The Norwegian Union of Marine Engineers is particularly well-placed to contribute to this, because Norway is arguably the world leader in battery-powered vessels. The Norwegian company ABB is a major manufacturer of ships’ batteries, and some are already in regular use on cruise ship tenders carrying visitors to the country’s famous fjords, where air-quality legislation prohibits heavy fuel oil.

Norway is also known for having introduced a fully battery-powered ferry – the Ampere – as long ago as 2015. The lessons learnt from developing and operating this vessel are proving invaluable to the effort to draw up international safety standards, and Ampere’s chief engineer Frank Kristiansen has been working closely with Mr Malterud on their union’s contribution to this.

The ITF working and correspondence group has continued to operate during the first few months of 2020, and has produced a statement on ‘Environment and issues affecting seafarers’ safety’. The group was scheduled to report to the IMO Maritime Safety Committee at its next session on 13-22 May, as well as to the IMO Sub-committee on Human element, Watchkeeping and Training on 1-5 June, but these sessions have both been postponed due to the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic.

‘The virus has taken us all away from this, and that’s no good because the vessel manufacturers are going ahead without us,’ laments Mr Malterud. ‘We have regulations for nuclear-powered ships dating all the way back to 1955, but nothing for batteries or most other new fuels, so this must be a priority as soon as the IMO committees start up again.’

A landmark in the world’s adoption of battery-powered vessels could be witnessed in 2020, with the world-famous Maid of the Mist tour boats at Niagara Falls going electric. Claimed to have zero emissions, the vessels’ green credentials are to be enhanced by charging with electricity generated using the falls themselves.

The two electric catamarans are named after Maid of the Mist CEO James V. Glynn and energy pioneer Nikola Tesla, who had the idea in the early 20th century of using Niagara Falls as an electricity generator. Classed by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) as subchapter K vessels, the tour boats were built in the USA with batteries from the Norwegian firm ABB.

The vessels are now awaiting final regulatory review as well as the easing of the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic, so the plan for them to enter service in spring 2020 has had to be revised, but there are still hopes that they will be launched later in the year.
In commercial operation since August 2019, the Danish island ferry Ellen is the product of a four-year, €21.3 million ‘E-ferry’ project funded by the European Commission and industry as part of the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

Ellen is able to carry 31 cars or five trucks, and as many as 198 passengers at capacity, sailing between the Danish ports of Søby and Fynshav. It’s a distance seven times greater than that covered by the vessel’s Norwegian predecessor Ampere, and Ellen’s battery capacity is four times larger.

Henrik Hagbarth of the Danish maritime college Marstal Navigationsskole has been involved with the development of Ellen since 2013, when he was the coordinator for the feasibility study. He now teaches battery operation and safety and is working on the E-ferry project’s evaluation report.

‘We are using two AC reluctance permanent magnet high efficiency engines of up to 750 kW each,’ says Mr Hagbarth. ‘This gives us a service speed of around 13 knots and top speed of around 15 knots. The ferry is also equipped with a couple of bow thrusters for manoeuvring purposes. All power is supplied by two independent battery rooms. These are also approved for emergency power units, which means that Ellen is the first battery ferry approved to run without any kind of fossil emergency generators at all.’

Now approaching the end of its EU demonstration period, the ferry is considered to have performed very well on speed, energy consumption and reliability.

To address the thorny fire safety issue, a special foam fire extinguishing system has been adapted which is claimed to cool fires in lithium-ion batteries more effectively than the water mist standards seen on other battery ferries. ‘At the same time,’ says Mr Hagbarth, ‘Ellen’s batteries are liquid cooled, which makes a big difference in daily operation and a very efficient first barrier to thermal runaway issues.’

From the environmental perspective, the vessel is charged using some of the greenest electricity in the world, with half of Denmark’s power having been generated by wind and solar power in 2019. Studies are also underway to look at the overall climate impact from the electric operation of ships including production of batteries.

All in all, argues Mr Hagbarth, battery operation is a ‘no-brainer’ in shortsea shipping. ‘The climate impact is reduced by magnitudes of order, operating and maintenance costs are reduced, and even crew costs are reduced in some cases. The investment costs for the first prototypes have been somewhat higher than conventional fossil power, but our recent evaluation of present battery prices and power electronics indicates that price difference to fossil engines in maritime applications is also levelling out now.’

As work continues at the IMO on global safety and crew training standards for battery-powered vessels, the EU has developed the world’s largest fully-electric ship as a working prototype for future European ferries.
Radical changes are required to stop seafarer training and education from falling behind the rapidly accelerating pace of technological advance in shipping, an important new report has concluded.

Research conducted as part of the EU-funded SkillSea project found that more than 50% of seafarers – many of them Nautilus members – believe important topics are missing from the international Standards of Training, Certification & Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention, and one-third consider current training is ‘overburdened with obsolete knowledge’.

Nautilus is an active member of the four-year project, launched in January 2019, which is investigating ways to ‘future-proof’ European seafarer training in response to new environmental regulations and rapid advances in technology.

The project is developing a blueprint for cooperation to create a strategy to equip EU maritime professionals with the necessary skills to meet the evolving demands of the industry – including key digital, green and ‘soft’ management expertise – and also to enhance their employability.

The 90-page report gives details of research conducted as part of the project to analyse the gaps between current maritime training and the actual skills required at sea. A key part of this was a survey of more than 1,600 maritime professionals – 1,149 seafarers and 474 shore-based personnel – to get their views on the adequacy of current maritime training and education and what they consider to be the most important skills needs.

Professor Damir Zec, a SkillSea project member who coordinated the research, commented: ‘New environmental regulations for the maritime sector, as well as the impact of technology and digitalisation, are changing the skill sets required for jobs at sea and in the maritime sector ashore.

‘It is clear that soft and leadership skills, together with a set of new skills, will be a must if European maritime professionals and the EU maritime industry as a whole are to retain their competitive position.’
The survey of seafarers from 51 different countries – 36% of them from the UK and 16% from the Netherlands – showed that they believe the biggest gaps between current training and actual functional needs are with maintenance (reported by 47% of all respondents) and electrical, electronic and control engineering (40%).

Importantly, around 30% of seafarers said current STCW competencies for marine engineering and controlling the operation of the ship are not adequate for onboard duties. Almost one-quarter (24%) said they fell short for navigation and 20% said competencies for radiocommunications are not in line with actual onboard needs.

The survey also showed that the areas where seafarers consider the most serious skill deficiencies currently lie are:
- subjects requiring creative thinking and problem-solving (62%)
- familiarity with digital technologies, including cyber-security (61%)
- teamwork and inter-personal relations (55%)
- subjects related to maritime law, insurance and P&I coverage (54%).

The survey of 474 shore-based staff also showed concerns about STCW not addressing competences for shore-based staff training and also identified some of the skills that will be increasingly important over the next decade, including teamworking, software use, and communications.

‘The accelerating transformation of the industry can be clearly recognised in the study of all the sources investigated,’ the report argues. ‘It is therefore beyond any doubt that the maritime industry is facing significant technological challenges. These changes will inevitably alter the required skill sets required for both onboard and shore-based jobs and positions.’

The research found a broad consensus that technology will not end the demand for skilled maritime professionals, and highlights concern about the chances of a future shortage of expertise for shore-based maritime industries and services.

The report notes the economic importance of shipping to Europe and warns that ‘an effective transfer of knowledge of shipboard operations and expertise needs to be assured if the present position of EU maritime industry is to be maintained’.

Well over half the seafarers surveyed said they would be keen to accept a shore-based job if one was offered to them, and the report says that better training and communications are needed to help them switch to jobs within the wider maritime cluster.

‘The most important skills required for such a transition are identified by seafarers as more detailed knowledge of the regulatory framework, appreciation of different management styles, and the ability to write good technical reports and similar documents. Shore-based staff, meanwhile, believe the most important skills that seafarers should work on before making the move are the ability to use standard office software, understanding corporate culture, and knowledge of internal procedures.

Researchers pointed to the growing importance of digital competence within the maritime industry – with particular emphasis on cyber security and software knowledge. The survey of maritime professionals found that they strongly rate the need for skills in using computers to store, search, find and process information using standard programs, send and receive electronic mail, use word...
processing, and manage files, and using a broader range of computer capabilities and options, such as being able to create and modify spreadsheets, to create documents using formatting options, and to create original drawings or illustrations.

Regulatory requirements mean that seafarers are increasingly required to have a wide range of ‘green’ skills to minimise the environmental impact of their vessels and to ensure safe and efficient operations, the report points out.

However, the study concludes, the current seafarer training system does not enable the flexible adaptation of curricula in response to emerging needs and strengthened cooperation between employers and educators is crucial to preventing skills gaps.

It highlights the way in which technology is driving a need for increasingly specialist expertise, on top of the traditionally broad range of skills required of seafarers.

Researchers identified a number of courses which have been developed to provide training in particular types of equipment, such as Azipod propulsion units.

In addition, the report notes, other courses have been launched with the aim to ensuring safe and uniform implementation of complex procedures or improving interactions onboard – such as bridge and engineroom resource management training.

A significant number of such courses are simulator-based, with a great deal of hands-on training, it adds.

However, the researchers said they had found significant variations in the requirements across different companies. ‘It seems that there is a strong belief that additional competencies are needed, but there is no consensus on which competencies are essentially needed,’ the report states.

‘Designing a future-proof skill set for management positions in the maritime industry is an extremely difficult task,’ the report admits. ‘It must be developed as an additional set of skills for those who already possess a basic shipboard skill set, accompanied by a balanced set of transitional skills as well as digital and green skills.’

Similarly, it notes, the wide variations between maritime education and training (MET) institutions in different countries make it hard to produce a uniform response to changes and challenges.

Current levels of cooperation among European MET institutions is ‘irregular and of questionable usefulness’, the report adds, and there are no recognised EU-wide initiatives aiming to harmonise maritime education programmes offered by different institutions or in different countries.

The researchers suggest that ‘ever-accelerating technological development and the increasing number of high-tech companies who accumulate expertise’ will lead to a significant increase in the number of education and training providers for dedicated applications – which will have an impact on the traditional MET providers.

New modes of delivering training, such as blended learning and distance learning, are expected to increase their share of the market and the report also predicts an increase in both the number and the scope of specialised courses aiming to upgrade or re-skill adult workers associated with the maritime industry.

In contrast, however, the report notes that the STCW Convention makes no reference to digital skills, contains only general references to pollution prevention, and has ‘minimal’ requirements for management-level functions. It does not consider increasingly important concepts such as problem-solving, creative thinking, analysis and evaluation, and does not specify competencies needed to manage increasingly sophisticated ships.

‘Minimal requirements of the STCW Convention for the management level functions onboard contain only the basic levels of “knowing” – knowledge (recognising or remembering facts, terms, and concepts), understanding of these facts and ideas (by comparing and interpreting the main ideas) -- and application (solving problems in new situations by applying previously acquired knowledge and understanding),’ it states.

The convention refers to a limited set of ‘human resources’ skills, which are designed solely for shipboard use, and does not address the competences required for shore-based jobs at management level in the maritime industry, or the competences needed to manage sophisticated ships. ‘Education for these jobs must necessarily include subjects significantly beyond STCW requirements, either as a part of regular education or in the form of upgrading courses,’ the report points out.

The publication of the report coincides with increasing political pressure and maritime industry calls within Europe for a ‘comprehensive and ambitious review’ of the STCW Convention to ensure that it is fit for purpose and responsive to the evolving requirements of shipowners and regulators. All the 27 SkillSea project partners – including seafarer unions, shipowners, maritime colleges and universities, and public authorities – are united in their hope that this research will help to inform the upcoming International Maritime Organization discussions on the next review of the convention.

For more information, visit the SkillSea website: www.skillsea.eu
PROUD WINNERS OF THE QUEEN’S ANNIVERSARY PRIZE

South Shields Marine School innovations on advanced 3D modelling in naval architecture has secured it the UK’s highest education honour – the Queen’s Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education.*

ONE OF FOUR COLLEGES IN THE UK TO WIN THIS PRESTIGIOUS PRIZE

*Awarded every two years, the Anniversary Prize recognises outstanding work by colleges and universities which deliver real benefit through education and training.
During the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic, Nautilus has fought hard to maintain employment rights for members and secure special travel permissions for seafarers who play an essential part in the global supply chain. And it’s not the first time the Union has had to speak up like this in a time of international crisis. Andrew Linington looks back at the First and Second World Wars to see how today’s Nautilus members and staff can take heart from the way their predecessors overcame similar challenges.

“Day after day, it is constantly borne in upon the general public that the safety, nay the existence, of the Nation depends on ships, ships and more ships.’”

These words, written 104 years ago by the Marine Engineers’ Association (MEA) – one of the unions that went on eventually to become Nautilus – could have been written today. But, sadly, they also highlight how it seems to take a national crisis for the UK to wake up to its reliance upon ships and seafarers and how easily the lessons of history are lost.

Nautilus and its predecessor unions have provided vital support for members during these times of crisis, as well as serving as a much-needed voice for seafarers when emergency situations brought governments, employers and employees together to tackle the pressing problems of the day – much like the response to the coronavirus pandemic witnessed today.
First World War – 1914-1918
The First World War and the arrival of submarine warfare put civilian seafarers right into the front line of conflict. Some 15m tons of world shipping was lost – 9m tons from the UK fleet alone – and almost 15,000 British seafarers died as a result of enemy action between 1914 and 1918.

From the outbreak, the MEA, the Mercantile Marine Service Association and the Imperial Merchant Service Guild, which represented shipmasters and navigating officers, were quick to assist their members. As well as negotiating ‘war risk’ pay and agreements, one of the first priorities was to stop the appalling practice through which seafarers went off pay as soon as their ships were sunk.

Although the British Admiralty agreed in 1915 to pay wages to the surviving crew of a ship under charter to the government until they reached their homes, many commercial companies showed no such compassion until forced to in 1917.

The MEA reported that some of its members had survived not one loss, but as many as four, yet the unions had to spend much time fighting for compensation for their members who had lost personal belongings when their ships went down, as such payments were not automatic.

As part of their negotiations over ‘warlike operations’ service, the unions managed to get increased pay rates and pensions for seafarers serving on ships taken up from trade, and were also successful in securing government agreement to reduce the rates of income tax for merchant seafarers and to provide assistance for the costs of travelling to and from their vessels.

They also provided support for members who had been interned in prisoner of war camps, sending parcels of food and clothing, and maintaining lines of communications. They worked with welfare agencies to supply clothing and footwear for seafarers coming ashore after attacks on their vessels, and established benevolent funds ‘to relieve distress amongst members or their dependants caused by the war’.

A letter to the MEA journal in 1917 proved sadly prophetic. ‘Newspapers wax eloquent nowadays on the value of the Mercantile Marine, but it required a serious crisis in the country’s affairs to bring this to the notice of either press or public – clear proof that we have always been content to “carry on” and make no fuss,’ a member wrote. ‘A week after the war, we shall be forgotten again unless we make ourselves heard.’

Lasting effects of WW1
The unions did emerge from the conflict with some major and lasting advances. They helped to get seafarers included for the first time in the national unemployment insurance scheme, while a long-running struggle to achieve a national pay scale for seafarers moved to a higher level in spring 1914, when the MEA instructed members not to take jobs unless they were at a higher wartime rate. This tactic proved very successful when some vessels were held up through a lack of engineer officers.

The sacrifices made by seafarers were recognised by King George V’s decision to confer the title of Merchant Navy on the commercial fleet, and by the agreement in 1918 to introduce a standard merchant service uniform – something the unions had been seeking for some time.

Second World War – 1939-1945
In the years leading up to the start of the Second World War, the Navigators’ & Engineer Officers’ Union (NEOU) had been repeatedly telling the government not to overlook the strategic importance of shipping and seafaring. In response to its concerns about a shortage of maritime professionals, a Merchant Navy Reserve was set up in 1938 to create a register of experienced seafarers willing to return to sea at a time of national crisis.

The union had also campaigned strongly during 1938 against proposals to lay-up British ships in response to a slump in trade, warning ministers that ‘the Merchant Navy is still our first and last line of defence’, and its long-standing calls to establish a Ministry of Shipping were hastily acted upon soon after the war broke out.

In 1940, as the impact of war started to hit shipping hard, the owners and the unions jointly developed proposals for an essential work order in an attempt to reduce the risk of ships being delayed by crew shortages. Introduced in May 1941, this had the effect of creating continuous, rather than casual, employment through a pool of reserve seafarers managed by unions, owners and the Ministry of War Transport.

This centralisation of supply was highly successful, with the pool supplying an average of 400 officers and 3,250 ratings every week. The essential work order also resulted in the creation of a new Central Register of Seamen and the introduction, in 1942, of a special seafarers’ identity card.

The unions also secured an agreement with the shipowners and
At the end of the First World War, the MMSA, IMSG and MEA took part in an international conference in Paris which unanimously agreed a motion calling for ‘adequate and full reparation and compensation for the crimes committed on seafarers of all classes’ during the war, with a demand that at least £1,000 compensation should be paid to the family ‘of every seafarer who was a victim of German crimes during the war’. The meeting also discussed issues including a proposed minimum wage for seafarers in future.

stopped from the moment they were taken prisoner. At the end of the war, the Federation was actively involved in the arrangements for the repatriation and reception of seafarers from PoW camps – ensuring that they could return home as soon as possible, with the speedy issue of identity cards, clothing coupons, ration cards and allowances for loss of personal effects.

The NEOU had also called for special pension arrangements to be made for senior officers who had served in both world wars, allowing them to retire on an adequate pension from the age of 55.

It had taken some time for the public to recognise the huge scale of sacrifice amongst merchant seafarers, with some union members complaining of being socially shunned for not being in the armed forces and others describing how they were treated like ‘lepers’ or ‘criminals’ after arriving home when their ships had been sunk.

Through its connections with the Watch Ashore, the organisation for officers’ wives, the NEOU had helped to alleviate such ignorance by supporting the collection and distribution of ‘comforts’ – emergency kits of clothing and other supplies – for ships’ crews, as well as visiting MN casualties in hospital.

**Lasting effects of WW2**

While seafarers suffered many appalling deprivations during the war, the unions managed to secure some crucial advances in their terms and conditions. These included measures to better control working hours for some crew, progress on the organisation of catering departments and improved compensation for loss of effects, while the statutory victualling scale – which dated back to 1906 – was radically amended in 1940.
introducing new requirements for fresh food.

The NEOU was part of a special committee established by the government in November 1943 to investigate welfare provision for seafarers. The committee's report noted that maritime welfare services had traditionally been almost entirely undertaken by charities, and from the committee's recommendations, the Merchant Navy Welfare Board and its related system of port or regional welfare committees was established in 1948.

February 1942 had seen the launch of the Merchant Navy Training Board – with unions, shipowners and government representatives sitting down to draw up post-war training schemes for MN personnel – and later in the year, the Ministry of War Transport invited the Officers' Federation to submit proposals for a post-war shipping policy.

The Council replied that the scope of matters to be considered – including improved pay and conditions for masters and officers – meant that detailed plans would take some time to produce. However, it stressed, high priority should be placed upon the UK ratification of ILO Conventions.

The NEOU repeatedly expressed hopes that the post-war period would witness a 'fundamental and spectacular revision of the whole position of seafarers in the scheme of the world's life'. Arguing that the public would be prepared to pay an extra farthing for a loaf of bread if they knew it would ensure decent pay and conditions for seafarers, it pointed out that few would notice 'the difference in average weather conditions as well as a basic navigational guide. The first version covered the North Atlantic, while the second one covered the South Atlantic.

However, NEOU president Lord Winster told a parliamentary debate in October 1944 that he had little confidence in the rosy future that had been pledged to merchant seafarers. 'They have heard similar promises and fair words before, and they have tramped the streets in misery after hearing them,' he pointed out.

**Lessons learned?**

It wasn’t long before Lord Winston’s prediction came true. Barely a fortnight after the defeat of Germany, British owners tabled proposals to reduce the gross earnings of shipmasters and officers. The NEOU managed to stave off the pay cuts, but Lord Winster’s pessimism was to prove largely correct over subsequent years. Even the hopes that the Merchant Navy’s critical role in the 1982 Falklands task force would persuade the UK government to reverse its ‘hands-off’ approach to shipping policy were to prove unfounded as British seafarers joined the dole queues only months after returning from the South Atlantic.

Coronavirus has once again delivered a much-needed wake-up call to society about the importance and fragility of its supply chains – especially in a globalised just-in-time delivery infrastructure.

This time, will it be too much to ask for a lasting recognition of the essential role of shipping and seafarers? Proud of its past, Nautilus will be doing all it can to make that a reality in the years ahead.
Communicating feedback on progress is vital to giving the assurance to seafarers they need right now, and to help them to deal with the isolation, and mental health challenges they face, both at sea, and at home.

Method
In late March the Honourable Company of Master Mariners (HCMM) surveyed members, some of whom are also Nautilus members, to identify the issues and concerns flowing from the Covid-19 crisis. The aim was to provide members with support and to allow HCMM to engage with and inform debate with interested stakeholder groups in the maritime sector.

The questions asked were:
1. What are the challenges you face at sea as a consequence of this virus?
2. Do the ships systems allow effective isolation for crew with virus symptoms?
3. What are the issues with crew changes?
4. Are your ships still able to obtain stores and food?
5. What else should the industry do to protect you?
6. What other issues would you like to share with HCMM

Sixty responses to the survey were received from what was a short notice initiative, providing a strongly representative sample of the issues seafarers currently face.
Covid-19 has created a very fast moving and turbulent situation, and much continues to change. However, taking this into account, HCMM believes it has been able to provide an accurate snapshot of the issues.

57% of respondents said they were on ships with isolation policies that are ineffective or without a policy at all.
Honourable Company of Master Mariners survey reveals two distinct groups of seafarers being carved out from the coronavirus pandemic – those who are stuck at sea and forced to suffer extended separation from family, and those whose jobs are now at risk with little or no financial support from employers or government. Both groups are dealing with considerable stress and facing an uncertain future.

It is clear from the many heartfelt comments to the HCMM survey, that most seafarers are concerned at the significantly extended separation from their families, and once they return home an apparent lack of financial support by their employers, or an understanding of their plight by the media, HCMM clerk Commodore Angus Menzies said in his analysis of the results.

Communicating feedback on progress is vital to giving the assurance to seafarers they need right now, and to help them to deal with the isolation, and mental health challenges they face, both at sea, and at home.

The number of responses from seafarers at home and unpaid highlights a significant issue for key workers that needs addressing by the UK government. Long term solutions are also required by employers, if they want to retain their investment in well trained, experienced, and professional staff. The logic and need of key worker status for seafarers, to enable crew changes to take place, and to give seafarers the protection they need and deserve, is clear from this survey.

A by-product of all these issues is the increased workload and tiredness being faced, which has been flagged as a potential risk of increased accidents by respondents.

Although 43% of respondents confirmed their companies have protection policies in place, they believe can cope with Covid-19, the other 57% of respondents are on ships with policies they believe are either ineffective, or on ships with no policy at all.

The limitations placed on crew because of group confinement onboard ships at sea, means that the combination of most ship designs and management systems, are unable to provide them with the protection they need during a pandemic.

In an ever integrated and connected world, likely to create the risk of more rather than less pandemics, future ships systems need to be designed to minimise the risks of cross contamination, ships staff need training and resources. Leadership and management systems need to be tested to make sure they are sufficiently robust.

Many British seafarers serve on foreign flag vessels. This needs to be considered when formulating approaches and policy relating to this survey. Statements from members that serve as pilots, have included the challenges of working on many different ships in a day with differing ideas of what constitutes ‘social distancing’. Pilots boarding vessels that have not declared at risk from infection, when it has been established that they are, increases the risk to UK pilots, and the risk of them unknowingly transferring the virus to all the other ships they visit.

The feedback of appreciation of this survey and the #keepingbritainafloat campaign, underlines the importance of our continued engagement and follow up, with, and for, seafarers.
Data and Results

1. What are the challenges you face at sea as a consequence of this virus?
The feedback from respondents indicate that 40% are concerned and stressed, as they are either stuck at sea with no crew change in sight, or at home without employment or income. The responses highlight the worrying challenges and concerns that HCMM members face.

Other comments that stood out in terms of the serious issues and frustrations faced include:
- In general morale on board is pretty low
- Most seriously, the appalling occupational health of many UK seafarers means that they are at high risk
- We have been advised to implement barrier nursing. The Ships Captain's Medical Guide does not even mention it. Though Master and Chief Mate have been trained, no one else has
- Increased workload, little practical support, threat of job losses
- Stuck in limbo! I am studying for my Officer of the Watch (OWO) and was due to finish my exams this week and MCA oral by May. All on hold now that colleges are closed.

2. Do the ships systems allow effective isolation for crew with virus symptoms?
It was clear from the comments that several the responses came from passenger ships and ferries. Despite having protection policies in place, in many circumstances they are unable to cope with the societal challenges and limitations placed on crew because of group confinement onboard ships at sea.

Of those that responded 43% had plans in place that gave them the comfort that they felt they could cope, 29% had policies or resources that respondents believed were ineffective, 17% said there was no policy, and 11% were unable to isolate due to ships air conditioning systems recirculating the air.

This means that 57% of respondents were on ships with policies that are ineffective or without a policy at all.

Other comments included:
- I work for Trinity House and believe they have a robust plan in place if anyone shows symptoms onboard
- We are isolated in a cabin and have regular temperature checks carried out by the ships nurse
- We have a standard cruise ship policy regarding infectious disease, however Covid spreads rapidly before anyone even shows symptoms
- If one person becomes sick, it is highly likely that all persons on board will also become sick, due to the closed nature of a ship's accommodation
- If someone is showing symptoms, that person is isolated within their cabin and landed at next port.

Afterwards their cabin is disinfected
- Ship is too small for self-isolation.
- Only the Masters’ cabin does not have to share a bathroom. Many cabins only source of ventilation is through ships forced air
- We have a procedure for isolation. However, I would argue that isolation onboard any vessel is almost impossible as the air conditioning system recirculates shared air around the whole accommodation space.

3. What are the issues with crew changes?
At the time of the survey 83% of respondents said crew changes had been stopped. Of those that said crew changes were still taking place, many were involved in UK / home trade or offshore activities.

While the results to this question seem straightforward, the responses flag issues that need to be addressed and included:
- Impossible now due to cancellations of flights, the company are wanting to protect crews and vessels against the virus and are limiting crew change for this reason. Hopefully flights resume and borders open so crew can be changed
- Seafarers face country restrictions. We need to be treated same as airline staff to enable crew changes to take place
- Different country restrictions making it difficult for mixed EU/UK offshore vessels to change crew
- Even if we can get crew to the ship and other crew home, the subsequent ports will ban the vessel from entering and apply a 14-day quarantine period.

4. Are your ships still able to obtain stores and food?
The answer here was 100% yes, with some clarifications:
- Many ports a political nightmare regarding a lot of extra paperwork
- Some restrictions such as fresh food and medical supplies
- Becoming more and more difficult
- Involved in local trade, Master given cash to shop at supermarket, had goods taken out of trolley by other shoppers, whom mistook him for a food hoarder.

5. What else should the industry do to protect you?
Because of this type of question, the responses were more diverse. Irrespective of the percentage scoring, all the issues raised are important and deserve our support.

The two main issues that together equate to 36%, highlight the need for a unified approach by all stakeholder groups (ship owners, managers, flag, and ports) towards dealing with the problem, and recognition by government and media that seafarers are undervalued.

They flag job retention, as a big concern, especially for those stuck at home unable to work. HCMM respondents also flag the need to quarantine and test seafarers, before they join ships, so as not to put existing crew members onboard at risk.

6. What other issues would you like to share with HCMM?
As this type of question stimulates a diverse range of answers, there is no one answer that stands out. The following capture the issues.
There has been feedback thanking us for our efforts to help seafarers and raise these issues to stakeholders:

- Great idea to collate the experience of members. Hopefully the industry and those in power take note
- The #keepingbritainafloat is a great idea but the reality is most British vessels are British in flag only and not crew
- Keep up the social media campaign, I have set the 'I'm at sea' picture as my cover photo on Facebook which has received a surprising number of shares so far
- The general response by my crew is impressive in rising to the challenges, we just need to protect ourselves and keep working
- It is good to see the Merchant Navy doing what it does and hopefully we can be appreciated more after this is all over. Thanks to the HCMM for promoting the MN.

Short term issues regarding Covid-19 that needed to be solved include:

- We appreciate the vital importance of our role, please give us the PPE equipment so we can do our duties effectively and safely
- I am at home on leave without pay. My employer is protected but I am not
- It is not only the crew on board that are suffering. Families are also finding it difficult, not knowing when their husband/father is coming home. And those that are at home are concerned at their future without any salary coming in, with no recourse to their plight
- Our ageing and therefore particularly vulnerable workforce have inadequate protection (we only have one in six ratings under the age of sixty)
- Shore leave has been stopped. I see no difference between someone isolated in their home going for their daily exercise ashore and myself. If social distancing measures are kept in place, seafarers should still be allowed their right to shore leave.

Many respondents flagged the need for long-term changes to the maritime industry:

- Fatigue does not go away in a crisis, this and stress need dealing with, greater risk of accidents
- British shipping is highly dependent upon outsourced labour, current issues highlight these risks
- There is currently no safety net for seafarers who are on 'pay whilst at sea' contracts. These should be banned to give seafarers more financial security whilst on leave. I do not know when I will be going back on board and there is no financial assistance/support from my company written into the SEA contract in the event of a seafarer not being able to return to a vessel due to events out of their control
- The UK and the world must understand that stopping ship's crew and technicians from moving will make an already challenging environment more difficult, and something much worse (will happen as this restriction) will hamper the free movement of goods and energy.

1. What are the challenges you face at sea as a consequence of this virus?

- stuck at sea, no crew changes: 22%
- at home, no employment or income: 20%
- lack of: shore leave/contact/provisions: 11%
- low moral of crew/isolation/lack of support: 11%
- increased workload/tiredness/greater accident risk: 8%
- no proper PPE available: 7%
- lack of screening for crew, passengers and visitors: 4%

2. Do the ships systems allow effective isolation for crew with virus symptoms?

- unable to isolate effectively, as ships air conditioning recirculates air: 11%
- we have a policy, but it or resources are ineffective: 29%
- no policy: 17%
- plans are in place and we can cope: 43%

3. What are the issues with crew changes?

- still doing crew changes fully or in part: 17%
- crew changes stopped: 83%
MARINERS’ PARK COPES WITH CORONAVIRUS

Nautilus welfare services manager Mick Howarth has praised his staff at the Mariners’ Park retirement estate for the way they are looking after residents during the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic. Sarah Robinson and Deborah McPherson report on a challenging period at the 160-year-old welfare complex

At a time when most people across the UK have been asked to stay at home to protect themselves and limit the spread of the coronavirus, most staff at Nautilus Mariners’ Park have not had that option. As frontline workers such as nurses, care assistants, domestic support workers and care home catering staff, the Mariners’ Park employees are classified as key workers who must continue in their essential roles.

Residents at the retirement estate in Wallasey, Merseyside, mainly live in independent bungalows or apartments, with shared leisure facilities at the Trinity House Hub building and a Home Care service offering whatever level of support individuals may need in their dwellings. Also on the site is the Mariners’ Park Care Home, which provides full nursing care and includes a special wing for residents with dementia.

When UK prime minister Boris Johnson announced the ‘stay at home’ social distancing policy in March, the Park immediately ceased all face-to-face social activities and shut down the Can Cook Café in the Trinity House Hub. The hair salon, activities room, games room, laundry, gym and lounge area in the Hub were closed as well.

Residents who usually visited the café every day for their main cooked meal immediately switched over to having this provided by the staff of the Home Care service, who also started carrying out food shopping for all apartment and bungalow residents and helping with tasks such as laundry.

To keep personal contact to a minimum, family and friends of residents were no longer able to visit them at the Park – whether in the independent housing or at the Care Home. However, residents were encouraged to socialise online, with the Park’s activities coordinators providing links via email to internet-based Easter church services and suggesting morale-boosting activities such as balcony bird-watching.

Meanwhile, a Covid-19 preparedness response unit was set up by the Park’s multi-disciplinary teams. Supplies of masks, gloves and other personal protective equipment (PPE) were set aside for the Home Care team, and separately for staff at the Mariners’ Park Care Home. There has been no face-to-face contact between those living or working in the Care Home and the staff and residents on the rest of the Mariners’ Park site since the ‘lockdown’ began.

As the Telegraph went to press,
no Mariners’ Park staff had contracted Covid-19, and residents in the independent housing were also clear of infection, but unfortunately there was one confirmed case at the care home who subsequently passed away and several residents were displaying possible symptoms of Covid-19.

‘Obviously, this is a concerning development,’ said Mr Howarth, ‘but we currently have sufficient PPE for our excellent staff to provide full barrier nursing and keep things contained. I am so proud of the way everyone at the Park has stepped up to meet this challenge – they are all doing a fantastic job in extremely challenging circumstances.’

With personal contact at a minimum, residents are being encouraged to socialise online.

As well as providing retirement accommodation at Mariners’ Park, the Nautilus Welfare fund charity offers a Caseworker Service, providing expert help free of charge to ensure former seafarers around the UK are receiving the financial and healthcare support they are entitled to.

Because of the government ban on unnecessary travel and the need to protect older clients in self isolation, the service has had to cancel its appointments in person across its four regions in Merseyside, Hull and Grimsby, Southampton and Portsmouth, and Glasgow.

Staff are implementing telephone services on a case-by-case basis, as well as helping retired seafarers complete benefit forms online.

Merseyside caseworker Laura Molineux said: ‘Clearly the self-isolation has had a huge impact on the ability to assist our clients face to face. Many have been forced to cancel appointments in the previous weeks due to self-isolation, and now that this has been rolled out to everyone, the caseworkers have no option but to work from home too.’

The Department for Work and Pensions’ disability and capability assessments have been cancelled. Some assessment may now take place via telephone and postal correspondence, but a significant backlog will need to be handled once the government lifts the restrictions currently in place, said Ms Molineux.

‘It will mean that the caseworkers will be very busy at that [future] time when we can attend such appointments with our clients to support them.’

The caseworker service can also provide advice on universal credit applications and complete grant application forms over the phone.

Are you an ex seafarer?
Do you need help with welfare benefits or grants you may be entitled to?
Have you got housing or debt concerns?

The Nautilus Welfare Fund Caseworker service supports retired mariners and their dependants, including former Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) personnel and Merchant Navy veterans.

This FREE and CONFIDENTIAL service is available in the following locations.

GLASGOW Iain Lindsay
07927 569216

HULL John Norris
07841 779234

MERSEYSIDE Laura Molineux
07921 687719

PORTSMOUTH Sandra Silverwood
07841 779237

or email welfare@nautilusint.org or phone 0151 346 8840
Website www.nautiluswelfarefund.org
The maritime welfare charity Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) has launched a special new variety of rose to mark its centenary year and raise funds for seafarer support worldwide.

Available to buy online for UK delivery, the Stella Maris Centenary Rose was developed with the industry volunteer group Container Shipping Supporting Seafarers (CSSS). Each purchase of the fragrant yellow flower at World of Roses will include a donation to Stella Maris.

Chief executive Martin Foley said: ‘Stella Maris is very grateful to the World of Roses and CSSS for this wonderfully innovative initiative to raise valuable funds for our vital work in support of seafarers and their families.’

The Apostleship of the Sea was founded in Glasgow in 1920 and is now best known internationally as the Stella Maris network, providing care to all seafarers regardless of nationality, race or faith. The network operates the single largest ship visiting system in the world, with more than 1,000 chaplains and volunteers in nearly 350 ports, visiting over 70,000 ships and reaching more than 1,000,000 seafarers annually.

Stella Maris usually gets nearly 40% of its annual funding from its Sea Sunday service in July. With Covid-19 restrictions in place, it is unlikely to hold that service this year, thus leaving it with a potential black hole in funding.

ITFST chair Dave Heindel said: ‘At the best of times seafarers struggle to get recognition for the amazing job they do ensuring the steady flow of household goods, food and commodities around the world. Now they have the incredible stress of being stranded far away from their families at a time of extreme distress.

The Trust’s head Katie Higginbottom added: ‘As well as providing for seafarers, we also want to make sure that the welfare services that currently offer much appreciated welfare support for seafarers, survive to serve another day after this crisis is over.’

The Trust is working closely with the TK Foundation to ensure a coordinated approach to funding. Cases relating to individual seafarers can be addressed, but applications must be made via ITF affiliated unions, ITF inspectors or welfare organisations.

For more information, go to: www.seafarerstrust.org/covid-19_grants

Seafarers Hospital Society extends free access to mental health advice

The Seafarers Hospital Society (SHS) has joined forces with free confidential online mental health service Big White Wall to extend its seafarer support services to retired seafarers and families of serving seafarers during the coronavirus pandemic.

Seafarers already deal with challenges such as intensive hours, isolation, prolonged periods away from family, and fatigue. Big White Wall provides online support 24/7 in a safe and anonymous environment, with access to trained counsellors, a support network, self-help materials and one-to-one therapy.

The Trust’s head Katie Higginbottom added: ‘As well as providing for seafarers, we also want to make sure that the welfare services that currently offer much appreciated welfare support for seafarers, survive to serve another day after this crisis is over.’

The Trust is working closely with the TK Foundation to ensure a coordinated approach to funding. Cases relating to individual seafarers can be addressed, but applications must be made via ITF affiliated unions, ITF inspectors or welfare organisations.

For more information, go to: www.seafarerstrust.org/covid-19_grants

ISWAN helps seafarers with Covid-19 quarantine stress

The International Seafarers’ Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) has produced a video to help seafarers cope with Covid-19 restrictions.

Counselling psychologist Dr Kate Thompson reassures seafarers they have the skills to stay safe and well. ‘Seafarers have special strengths that will serve them well when at sea during the coronavirus,’ Dr Thompson says. ‘Please do draw on your strengths and share them with others so we can all manage the pressure and boredom of the coming weeks.’

Crew feeling the effects of the intense pressures of being under quarantine also need to let their employer know. It is important for designated safe places to be set up onboard.

INSTANT REPLAY
Watch the ISWAN video with Dr Kate Thompson via the Nautilus International website at: bit.ly/3cFHuXz

Families of working seafarers can access the service via the Sailors’ Children’s Society: www.seahospital.org.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing

HELPING HAND
Families of working seafarers can access the service via the Sailors’ Children’s Society: www.seahospital.org.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing
Seafarers UK £2 million fund for seafarers and fishers

Seafarers whose wellbeing and livelihood has been adversely affected by the pandemic, are set to benefit from a new £2 million emergency fund announced in April.

The fund, created by Seafarers UK, is intended for distribution in 2020/2021, with 75 percent allocated to the international merchant seafaring community and 25 percent to UK coastal fishing fleets.

Seafarers UK chairman Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson CB CVO BA said: ‘We will work with our charity partners to provide both hardship funding and innovative new projects to support our seafarers through and beyond the current crisis.’

The new emergency fund is in addition to Seafarers UK’s existing annual budget of £2m grants to support delivery partners.

At the end of March Seafarers UK announced an additional £100,000 in emergency funding for maritime charities.

The International Seafarers’ Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) has received a much-needed funding boost to help it cope with increased demand during the pandemic.

Another major beneficiary will be SAIL, the citizens’ advice service for the British maritime community. The organisations can choose for themselves how to put the funds to best use.

To contact ISWAN, call +44 (0)300 012 4279, email iswan@iswan.org.uk or visit www.seafarerswelfare.org

For SAIL, call 0800 160 1842 in the UK, email advice@sailine.org.uk, or visit www.sailine.org.uk

Charities step in to aid stranded crew at Tilbury

Seafaring charities rallied to assist about 3,000 overseas and British cruise ship crew stranded at Tilbury in March.

Seafarers from four cruise ships were laid off at Tilbury when their ships all berthed at once as a result of cruise cancellations. The cruiseships included the Viking Star, the Magellan, the Saga Sapphire and the Spirit of Discovery.

Seafarers could not be repatriated immediately as their flights were cancelled. They were helped by the Tilbury Seafarer Centre run by the Queen Victoria Seamen’s Rest (QVSR).

Full story: bit.ly/2XOPmBQ

to donate to the appeal visit www.sailers-society.org/coronavirusgive

Sailors’ Society in fundraising appeal

Sailors’ Society has launched a suite of seafarer resources and a funding appeal to help it support the ‘key workers of the sea’ during the Covid-19 pandemic.

‘We rely on them to transport the goods we all need to restock our supermarket shelves. Now, more than ever, seafarers rely on us,’ the Society said in its appeal.

The charity’s COO Sandra Welch said: ‘We may not be able to greet seafarers in port right now, but we are here for them and their families as we always are.’

Full story: bit.ly/2XOPmBQ

to donate to the appeal visit www.sailers-society.org/coronavirusgive

The peaks and troughs of funding seafarers’ welfare

by Catherine Spencer, chief executive officer of Seafarers UK

At the end of March, the welcome news that Seafarers UK’s trustees had released £100,000 to deal with some immediate impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on global maritime communities was tempered with the knowledge that merchant seafarers were succumbing to Covid-19.

On cruise ships the plight of passengers received plenty of media coverage, while the challenges facing crew stuck on board quarantined vessels were largely ignored by commentators.

As ports around the world denied seafarers access to welfare services and pastoral support it became obvious that merchant seafarers should be designated as ‘key workers’, in recognition of their contribution to keeping world trade flowing.

That move in itself has not overcome the difficulties faced by ship operators seeking to change crews in accordance with seafarers’ contracted time at sea. As countries closed borders, so it became impossible for seafarers to be repatriated, a problem compounded by many airlines cancelling services altogether.

At the time of writing this, there are a few hopeful signs for the future. Apparently in China the worst effects of Covid-19 have been overcome. Other countries are seeing fatalities reduce as severe ‘lockdown’ restrictions appear to be having a positive effect.

But seafarers continue to suffer. With many effectively stranded on ships around the world and unable to return home to their families, our thoughts are with them as we fund our delivery partner charities in their efforts to provide the advice, communications and practical help that will support seafarers through this crisis.

May 2020
Bilingual facts and fascinating ferry photos

Rails Across the Sea – Sporen Over de Zee
By Kevin Hoggett
Mainline & Maritime £14.95
ISBN: 978 19003 40595

Book of the month
This title is available at a special discount in the Nautilus Bookshop

Rails Across the Sea/Sporen Over de Zee is a bilingual book with the same text in English and Flemish (Dutch) – the languages spoken at each end of the Harwich-Zeebrugge crossing.

As readers may have guessed, Rails Across the Sea/Sporen Over de Zee is a bilingual book with the same text in English and Flemish (Dutch) – the languages spoken at each end of the Harwich-Zeebrugge crossing.

The last train ferry left Harwich in 1987, but there are still plenty of Nautilus members who will remember the route, and this detailed history aims to do justice to their work on a vital cross-modal transport service.

Author Kevin Hoggett has a personal connection to the train ferries, having spent 10 happy years as British Rail’s rolling stock inspector in Zeebrugge. But although he shares some of his own memories, this is not a memoir but a thoroughly researched history, and the care taken with library research and interviews shows in the quality of the information.

The story starts with Pre-history/De voorgeschiedenis. Hoggett explains that the concept of train ferries began back in 1844 with a service to transport wagons across the Firth of Forth in Scotland until a bridge could be built. There was talk of setting up a route across the English Channel throughout the rest of the 19th century, but nothing substantial was put in place until the First World War.

It is this wartime infrastructure that the author credits as the direct ancestor of the Harwich-Zeebrugge service, and he has obtained some fine old photographs of train ferry vessels and terminals being constructed.

Moving on to the 1920s, an Anglo-Belgian business group was formed to drive the development of a commercial train ferry service out of the east coast port of Harwich, which was chosen for its convenience for London, the Midlands and the north of England. Zeebrugge had similarly good connections on the Belgian side and was a fairly new port with room for expansion.

The service proved to be commercially effective, and continued from strength to strength until the Second World War, when the ships were requisitioned by the UK government. Some were sunk by enemy fire, and the wreck of the vessel then named HMS Daffodil was not found until 2010 near Dieppe where it was discovered by a French diving club.

After the war, the revival of the Harwich-Zeebrugge train ferries was seen as an essential part of restoring the European rail network. The network in Britain was nationalised in 1948, and the train ferries came under the ownership of the new British Transport Commission.

The rest of the story brings us into the era that many reading this will remember. As the photos change from black-and-white to colour, Hoggett charts the changes of ownership, successes and mishaps of the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s, all the while detailing the vessels employed and remembering the people who worked on them.

And then things come to a close in the late 1980s, largely because the construction of the Channel Tunnel rendered the train ferries obsolete – although there is a school of thought that the ferries could have continued to play a role if they had been managed differently.

Despite the sad ending, the book provides an enjoyable journey through the decades. Sometimes the text could do with being less densely-packed on the page, but it is an impressive achievement to offer the history in two languages side by side, and the abundant images are a real strength, ranging from ship photographs to architectural plans and advertising posters.
Highly readable history of British shipbuilding’s golden age

You could be forgiven for thinking that a three-volume series about the history of shipbuilding in the Scottish town of Leith might be of relatively limited interest. However, author Ron Neish ranges far and wide in this, the first in the trilogy, bringing in a broad and engaging spread of social, economic and historical themes.

*Subtitled* They Once Were Shipbuilders, the book covers the formative years of Leith’s shipyards, running up to the end of the first world war. Whilst the Clyde is usually celebrated as the source of great ships, the book points out that Leith had been at the traditional heart of Scottish shipbuilding since the 14th century.

Ron Neish examines the factors which drove the rapid development of Leith’s yards in the 19th century, including the American civil war, the whaling industry and the emergence of significant local shipping companies, such as Currie Line, Ben Line and Gibson Line.

However, Leith’s yards were also able to secure a remarkable range of orders from around the world, with vessels going off to owners in such countries as China, the Philippines, New Zealand and Tasmania, or for service on the Orinoco or as a missionary vessel on the river Niger. One yard, R&F, also managed to secure a good chunk of the market for steam yachts, building around 90 of what were the superyachts of their time.

The book delivers some interesting potted histories about many of the hundreds of vessels constructed in Leith during the 70-year golden period for British shipbuilding, noting that the yards were also responsible for some very innovative ships, such as one of the first to be designed with twin screws and one of the first with a triple expansion engine.

It all adds up to a very readable history, providing an excellent mix of social and political context to the technical and industrial achievements of the Leith yards.

**Leith-Built Ships, Volume 1**
By Ron Neish
Whittles Publishing, £16.99
ISBN: 978 18499 54433

Remarkable research into the seafaring of Nelson’s time

Published in association with the 1805 Club – a charity that works to preserve the legacy of the Royal and merchant navies of the Georgian period – this latest volume of the Trafalgar Chronicle delivers a diverse spread of remarkable research, with the focus very much on seafaring of the period.

Whilst there is, perhaps unsurprisingly, a strong focus on admirals and other senior RN ranks, there’s no shortage of interesting accounts and subjects who would merit a book in their own right – most notably, the extraordinary career of Captain John Perkins, the first black officer in the RN.

From Nelson’s Irish connections to the military use of hot air balloons, there’s also much to surprise the reader.

One particularly interesting article covers the role of women in 18th century London ‘Sailortown’ – far more extensive than past histories and stereotypes would have you believe – and another fascinating piece tells the story of the ‘Sin Bosuns’ – the seagoing chaplains on the ships in Nelson’s Navy. In explaining their varied roles onboard, it includes a quote from one commanding officer: ‘I don’t quite know what he did, but when he left we noticed the difference.’

**The Trafalgar Chronicle**
Edited by Peter Hore
Seaforth Publishing, £20.00
ISBN: 978 15267 59504

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**NAUTILUS BOOKSHOP**

Buy the books reviewed on these pages in the Nautilus Bookshop at [www.marinesocietyshop.org/nautilus-bookshop](http://www.marinesocietyshop.org/nautilus-bookshop) and support a great maritime charity. Hosted by the online Marine Society Shop, the Nautilus Bookshop stocks books reviewed in the Telegraph each month, and any profits from sales go towards the Marine Society’s educational work for seafarers.

- Go to [www.marinesocietyshop.org/nautilus-bookshop](http://www.marinesocietyshop.org/nautilus-bookshop) to purchase reviewed titles online and browse a selection of recent releases. One of our reviewed titles is designated ‘book of the month’, and will be available at a special discount.
- You can also call the Marine Society Shop team on +44 (0)20 7654 7012 to order titles over the phone with a debit or credit card.
The Dutch passenger/cargoship Aldabi had a turbulent introduction into service – being seized by Germany following the invasion of the Netherlands in 1941.

The 7,239gt vessel was originally built for the Dutch operator Van Nievelt, Goudriaan & Co (NiGoCo) by the NDM yard in Amsterdam. It had been launched in November 1940 and was being fitted out when taken over by the German ministry of transport in August 1941, along with two other ships destined for the same company, Albireo and Algol.

The Germans renamed Aldabi as Wolta in February 1942 and planned to use the vessel as a supply ship, supporting U-boat operations. Later in the year, the decision was taken to remodel the ship as a troop transporter in Hamburg and in March 1943 Wolta made a maiden voyage between Gdansk and Turku, initially under the management of Deutsche Afrika Linien of Hamburg. The vessel then operated as a target and accommodation ship for the 23rd and 24th U-boat flotillas, supporting submarine training operations in the Baltic.

In April 1945, while running replenishment voyages in the Baltic, Wolta was hit by Russian bombs and underwent temporary repairs in Sonderburg before going on to serve as an accommodation ship for the Luftwaffe.

In May 1945, at the end of the war, Wolta was visited in the port of Flensburg by the British maritime commission and the ministry of war transport gave orders for the ship to be made seaworthy and repaired in Wilhelmshaven.

Following an inspection by the Dutch authorities, a Dutch crew was placed on the ship in July 1945 and the vessel was renamed Aldabi. In November of the same year, the vessel made a voyage to New York and Surabata, Indonesia, carrying general cargo for the Dutch government before returning to Rotterdam and being chartered to Vereenigde Nederlandse Scheepvaart Maatschappij’s Holland-Australia service.

Finally handed back to Van Nievelt, Goudriaan & Co in June 1946, Aldabi was put into service on the RZAL run between Rotterdam and South America, with ports of call including Bremen, Hamburg, Antwerp, Rotterdam, Rio de Janeiro, Santos, Montevideo, and Buenos Aires. Powered by two eight-cylinder Stork engines, the vessel had a service speed of 13 knots and in almost 11 years of service on the route, Aldabi sailed more than 1.15m nautical miles and carried 895,000 tonnes of cargo.

The ship had accommodation for 55 passengers – including emigrants in search of new opportunities in Brazil.

In April 1956, Aldabi suffered some extensive damage in a collision with the Liberian-flagged vessel Melody in the port of Rotterdam. Aldabi was discharging a cargo of wheat and frozen meat when Melody lost steerage and struck its port side.

With passenger traffic on the South American run declining, Aldabi was sold in May 1967 to the Alda Shipping Company of Cyprus and renamed Alda, switching to the Cyprus flag. Two years later, the vessel was sold to the Greek company Astrodisco and in 1971 went into lay-up off the Greek port of Chalcis before sale for scrap in spring of the following year and demolition in Turkey.
**Telegraph prize crossword**

By Mordo

Stuck at sea or bored at home? Now is the perfect time to tackle the Nautilus Telegraph’s famous cryptic crossword! And as well as getting the satisfaction of beating our fiendish crossword-setter Mordo, you could win one of the latest releases in maritime publishing.

This month, the prize is a copy of the book *Rails Across the Sea: the Harwich-Zeebrugge Train Ferry Story* by Kevin Hoggett (reviewed on the books pages 42-43).

We are only accepting entries by email at the moment, so please send your list of cryptic crossword answers and your contact details to: telegraph@nautilusint.org.

The closing date this month is Friday 15 May 2020.

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**QUICK CLUES**

**Across**

9 Place where train stops (7)
10 Cocktail of gin and vermouth (7)
11 Seabird also known as lesser auk (9)
12 Character from Oliver Twist (5)
13 Persons responsible for ship’s course (10)
15 Acidic (4)
17 Mythical sea creature (7)
19 Extreme, severe (7)
20 Tangible (4)
21 Meat used as flavour of crisps (5, 5)
24 Vegetable with many layers (5)
25 Join together again (9)
27 Grand National racecourse (7)
28 Vague, cagey (7)

**Down**

1 Scientific post reporting to the monarchy (10, 5)
2 Music genre of John Coltrane (4)
3 Unit of mass used in some drug prescriptions (9)
4 Sign up (6)
5 Earnestly requested (8)
6 Boat; cunning (5)
7 Relating to the identification of an illness (10)
8 German dish of a breaded meat cutlet (6, 9)
14 Small differences (10)
16 Policy that levies fees on pollution (6, 3)
18 Raised objections (8)
22 Struck with foot (6)
23 Furious (5)
26 Arabian monarch title (4)

**CRYPTIC CLUES**

**Across**

9 Disc of gold allowed for decoration seen over shoulders (7)
10 With case of hay fever, one has a short supply of fresh air (7)
11 These productions of Ibsen in LA occur every other year (9)
12 Earl charmed by charming female relative (5)
13 In favour of fighting with wild dog, almost passing on (10)
15 See 2
16 Melts down when organ lost in car crashes (7)
17 The Gunners get two points in May (7)
19 Desire to pass something on (4)
21 As agreed, criminal has to follow deal initially with time inside (10)
24 Make fast seafood pasta starter (5)
25 Mexican food could come from Iceland? Hal (8)
27 Time when party is getting flatter (7)
28 Watery ale quite unusual at this inn, claim sources (7)

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**Back in time**

**50 years ago**

British shipowners need to seize the ‘encouraging’ opportunities to take advantage of the growth of trade between the UK and Europe, a new report has concluded. The Economic Development Committee working party report notes that more specialised types of tonnage are being developed and forecasts that roll-on/roll-off ships will grow in numbers, while train ferry services will decline in importance.

The MNAOA was a member of the working party, which also raised concern about the international growth of flag discrimination and some countries restricting their coastal trade to their own ships, not practised by the UK — MN Journal, May 1970

**25 years ago**

Rules requiring a common language among seafarers serving on passenger ships are set to be introduced by the International Maritime Organisation. An amendment to the SOLAS Convention requiring a working language to be established on ro-ro passenger ferries is one of a series of key proposals drawn up by a 22-member IMO panel of experts appointed following the Estonia disaster. NUMAST has welcomed the 25 recommendations made by the report, which also calls for additional training for all personnel serving on ro-ro passenger ships, improved standards for life-saving equipment and evacuation procedures, and ending the one-compartment standard for almost all new ships — The Telegraph, May 1995

**10 years ago**

The shock discovery of a newly built ship riddled with asbestos has prompted Nautilus International to launch a major new campaign to tackle the threat posed to seafarers by the deadly material. The Union is concerned that, despite international SOLAS Convention rules restricting the use of asbestos on newbuilds, shipyards in certain parts of the world are continuing to make extensive use of the substance. The Union’s campaign has been put together after officials in the Netherlands were alerted by members to asbestos found in packings during repairs on a chemical tanker that had recently been delivered from Turkey — The Telegraph, May 2010

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Het zijn en blijven onzekere tijden. En wel in het bijzonder ook voor onze leden en alle werknemers aan boord. In de zeevaart, offshore, binnenvaart en waterbouw. En ook voor brug- en sluiswachters aan de wal. Het Nautilus kantoor werd op 16 maart gesloten, maar alle Nautilus medewerkers werk(t) en vanaf dat moment vanuit huis om onze leden zo goed mogelijk bij te staan en om al ons werk in het belang van onze leden verder zo goed mogelijk voort te zetten. In nauw overleg met de betrokken ministeries, werkgevers en werkgeversorganisaties streven we, waar dit mogelijk is, tot een effectieve aanpak van alle voorkomende knelpunten.

Niet van boord kunnen
Niet van boord kunnen, is één van de meest nijpende problemen die zich voordoen. Ook hier pleiten wij als Nautilus International, nationaal en internationaal, in onze overleggen met tal van overheden en instanties voor een zo soepel mogelijke regeling; uiteraard binnen de opgelegde noodzakelijke beperkingen ter bestrijding van het corona virus.

Veilig aan boord gaan
Aan boord gaan van schepen om aan het werk te gaan, spreekt in deze tijd niet vanzelf. Er zijn immers besmettingsrisico’s. Lastig is dat de medische inzichten over wanneer iemand niet besmettelijk is nog in ontwikkeling zijn (bij het ter perse gaan van dit nummer). Er is dus geen zwart-wit advies te geven en de inzichten van deskundigen, waarop wij onze adviezen aan onze leden baseren, kunnen nog van dag tot dag doorontwikkelen. Testen, mits professioneel verricht, geeft zekerheid. Nautilus spant zich daarom samen met werkgevers en overheid in om pre-boarding screening/testen ruimer beschikbaar te krijgen. Uiteraard niet zonder de nodige arbeidsrechtelijke en medische waarborgen.

Sommige reders lossen in het geheel niet af. Andere bedrijven vragen hun werknemers om voorafgaand aan werkhervatting in quarantaine te gaan. Leden vragen aan Nautilus of dit laatste mag en redelijk is.

Arbeidsrecht
Hoofdregel in het arbeidsrecht is dat de werkgever instructierecht heeft en dus redelijke voorschriften mag afgeven. Hier kan dit onder vallen. Echter, een eventuele quarantaine moet dan wel volledig volgens de RIVM richtlijnen gebeuren en professioneel worden begeleid. Ook moet de maatregel proportioneel zijn. Echte quarantaine is een harde maatregel want deze leidt tot een dure situatie die de persoonlijke vrijheden van een werknemer volledig inperkt. Voordat dit wordt ingezet moet er dus worden uitgesloten of er geen lichtere maatregelen mogelijk zijn die hetzelfde effect hebben als quarantaine. En zo’n maatregel moet ook redelijk zijn in relatie tot bijvoorbeeld de vaartijd die na een quarantaine volgt. Als u twijfelt of een en ander in uw situatie redelijkerwijs van u gevorderd kan worden, neem dan contact met ons op, dan denken wij mee.

Aanvullende maatregelen Rijnvaart commissie voor de binnenvaart
Werknemers in de binnenvaart zijn werkzaam in een van de vitale sectoren.
Veel van de maatregelen, zoals beperking in reizen, zijn daarom niet op hen van toepassing.
Eind maart kondigde de Rijnvaart Commissie aanvullende maatregelen aan die binnenvaart werknemers helpen om hun werkzaamheden te kunnen voortzetten, zoals:

**Certificaties:**
Alle certificaties die op 15 maart 2020 nog geldig waren, blijven dit voorlopig ook. Het gaat dan om alle documenten gebaseerd op ROSR, RSP en RPR. Hiermee wordt voorkomen dat er problemen ontstaan doordat keuringen niet meer uitgevoerd kunnen worden.

**Reizen:**
- bemanningsleden tussen hun woonplaats en locatie van inscheping of ontscheping kunnen reizen, zo nodig met een verklaring. De CCR heeft hiervoor een modelformulier gepubliceerd.

**Meest gestelde vragen en antwoorden op Nautilus web**
Op onze Nautilus website publiceerden we op 25 maart een lijst met veel gestelde vragen. Deze lijst wordt regelmatig geactualiseerd. Zie ook voor meerdere antwoorden:

- www.nautilusint.org/ml
  - Van belang is uiteraard dat de situatie steeds wijzigt. Ook kan de situatie per bedrijf of per werknemer verschillen. De toepasselijke cao of de individuele arbeidsovereenkomst kan specifieke bepalingen bevatten.
  - Bij vragen of twijfel hierover: neem contact op met Nautilus: infonl@nautilusint.org, infowaterbouw@nautilusint.org of +31(0)104771188.

**FNV en Nautilus: Samen voor zekerheid in onzekere tijden**
Ook de FNV, waar Nautilus en FNV Waterbouw ook bij zijn aangesloten, heeft een online campagne rondom werk en corona gestart. Om te laten zien dat we ook in onzekere tijden voor werkend Nederland klaar staan.

**#dichtbijopafstand**
Iedereen kan meehelpen om zo veel mogelijk mensen te bereiken, dus gebruik de hashtag #dichtbijopafstand en like deel de campagne-uitingen en boodschap via sociale media.

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**Ook Holland America Line zwaar getroffen door Corona crisis**

Eind februari jongstleden had het Holland America Line cruiseschip Westerdam moeite om een haven te vinden omdat de autoriteiten van verschillende landen bevreesd waren dat passagiers besmet waren met het Corona virus. Gelukkig kon toen het schip, na wat omzwervingen, veilig afmeren in Cambodja en konden de passagiers van boord. Uiteindelijk bleek er toen na testen geen sprake te zijn van corona besmettingen aan boord.

**Besmettingen aan boord MS Zaandam**

Dit bleek helaas anders te zijn aan boord van het cruiseschip Zaandam. Het schip vertrok op 7 maart uit Buenos Aires voor een cruise van 20 dagen met aan boord ruim 1.200 passagiers en 568 bemanningsleden. Tijdens deze reis werd het schip hevig getroffen door het virus. 53 Passagiers en 88 bemanningsleden werden ziek en 4 passagiers kwamen helaas te overlijden. Vanwege de omvang van de besmetting werd besloten om de gezonde passagiers over te zetten op de Rotterdam; op 27 maart voor de kust van Panama. Dit mede omdat ook een groot deel van de bemanning ziek was geworden, waardoor de dienstverlening aan boord zwaar te lijden kreeg.

**Risico’s voor bemanning bij evacuatie**

Nautilus bestuurder Marcel van Dam: ‘De evacuatie naar de Rotterdam leidde tot onrust onder een deel van de bemanning van de Rotterdam. Die vreesde voor haar eigen gezondheid, omdat niet kon worden uitgesloten dat passagiers besmet waren, ondanks dat ze nog geen verschijnselen hadden. De bemanning zou op deze wijze aan onnodige risico’s worden blootgesteld. Op verzoek van een deel van de bemanning hebben wij toen contact opgenomen met de HAL directie in Seattle. De directie van HAL heeft ons vervolgens uitgebreid geïnformeerd over alle maatregelen die werden genomen om infectie te voorkomen aan boord van de Rotterdam. De maatregelen zijn genomen in overleg met de Amerikaanse autoriteiten CDC (vergelijkbaar met de RIVM in Nederland). Zij zijn gespecialiseerd in gezondheidszorg en specifiek in COVID 19 virus. Dit alles in samenwerking met de medische afdeling van Carnival/ HAL. Passagiers van de Zaandam werden volledig geïsoleerd op de Rotterdam. Zelfs de airco werd gescheiden. Bemanningsleden die nog steeds bang waren om te werken, mochten tijdens de reis naar Fort Lauderdale (Florida) in hun hut blijven. Iedere vorm van contact tussen het personeel van de Rotterdam met een van de passagiers van de Zaandam werd zodoende uitgesloten.’

**Tussenkomst president Trump**

‘Alle genomen maatregelen moesten voorkomen dat een van de bemanningsleden van de Rotterdam besmet raakte. Verder heeft het cruiseschip Rotterdam medische uitrusting en bemanning overgebracht naar de Zaandam. Personeel dat overstapte op de Zaandam deed dat op vrijwillige basis om de collega’s op de Zaandam te ondersteunen. Uiteindelijk konden de zeevarenden met de getroffen maatregelen voldoende worden gerustgesteld. De passagiers mochten het schip na toestemming van de Amerikaanse autoriteiten en tussenkomst van president Trump in Fort Lauderdale verlaten op 3 april. Nadat de passagiers de Rotterdam hadden verlaten, werden alle ruimten waar de passagiers hadden verbleven, schoongemaakt door speciaal hiervoor uitgerust personeel. De ernstig zieken aan boord van de Zaandam zijn naar een hospitaal vervoerd.’

Alle schepen van de HAL zijn of worden voor een periode van ten minste 30 dagen warm opgelegd. Het is waarschijnlijk dat deze periode verlengd wordt, waarbij met name de civiele bemanning wordt afgelost. Ook andere cruise rederijen hebben vanwege het coronavirus hun schepen opgelegd. Voor het ter perse gaan van dit nummer was het nog steeds lastig om de zeevarenden af te lossen.

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**LEden en hun werk**

**NAUTILUS STAAT VOOR U KLAAR**

Nautilus lid Richard Eimer* werkte sinds 1 januari 2016 als dekknecht op stationair materieel bij een baggerbedrijf. Op een dag werd Richard door zijn werkgever meegedeeld dat het project waaraan hij werkzaam was, afgebroken en daarmee Richard’s werk voor deze werkgever. Richard werd verzocht een verklaring te tekenen waarmee hij instemde met het einde van zijn dienstverband per 1 december 2019, hetgeen hij wilde.

Later sloeg bij Richard de twijfel toe en meldde hij zich tot zijn bond. Nautilus pakte de kwestie op en maakte officieel bezwaar tegen het beëindigen van de arbeidsovereenkomst met Richard, waarop wij het dossier overdroegen aan onze juridische dienst.

**Wat zegt de Wet?**

Op grond van artikel 7:671 lid 1 BW kan een werkgever de arbeidsovereenkomst beëindigen door opzegging met schriftelijke instemming van de werknemer. Deze beëindigingswijze is in de wet opgenomen om de preventieve toetsing van het ontslag technisch mogelijk te maken. Stent de werknemer namelijk niet in met het ontslag, dan moet werkgever in beginsel naar het UWV of de Kantonrechter. De instemming moet blijken uit een schriftelijke verklaring van werknemer. Werknemer moet zijn instemming op individueel niveau geven. Verder volgt uit de wet dat er sprake moet zijn van een duidelijke en onduidelijkschrifte verklaring gericht op beëindiging van de arbeidsovereenkomst.

Bij een instemming bestaat er het recht de instemming te herroepen. Herroeping dient binnen 2 weken (3 weken indien werkgever de werknemer niet heeft gewezen op de herroepingstermijn) plaats te vinden. Helaas kwam was herroeping van de instemming niet mogelijk omdat ons lid veel later dan deze drie weken bij Nautilus aan de bel trok.

**Verwijtbaar werkoos?**

Bij een instemming heeft werknemer wel recht op de wettelijke transitievergoeding. Op grond van artikel 24 lid 6 BW is werknemer niet verwijtbaar werkoos als werknemer instemt met beëindiging van verzoek van werkgever, tenzij sprake is van een dringende reden en werknemer daarvan een verwijt gemaakt kan worden.

Het gaat in deze kwestie om de vraag of de arbeidsovereenkomst tussen partijen op 1 december 2019 rechtsgeldig is, zoals werkgever stelt en ons lid betwist.

**De kantonrechter** stelde dat Richard schriftelijk ingestemd had met het ontslag. Voorts dat werkgever aannemelijk had gemaakt dat het einde van het project en het einde van het dienstverband ruimschoots van te voren besproken was met ons lid. Ons verzoek om vernietiging van de opzegging, omdat Richard niet had ingestemd met de opzegging ex artikel 7:671 lid 1 BW, hield dus geen stand.

Voorts kon Richard niet aantonen dat een WW-uitkering was aangevraagd en afgewezen dan wel toegelaten. Van dwaling was volgens de kantonrechter geen sprake.

De vordering van Nautilus ‘2x de transitievergoeding als billijke vergoeding voor het gegeven ontslag’ werd afgewezen. Eveneens werd een vergoeding van drie maanden loon wegens onregelmatige opzegging, afgewezen. Uiteindelijk werd de werkgever veroordeeld tot het betalen van de transitievergoeding + de wettelijke rente gerekend van de ontslagdatum tot aan de dag van voldoening.

De strekking van dit verhaal: Stem nooit schriftelijk in met een ontslag en neem allereerst contact op met Nautilus. Als het beëindigen van een dienstverband onvermijdelijk is, kan Nautilus proberen met uw werkgever te komen over een vaststellingsovereenkomst en een betere regeling treffen dan in bovenstaande situatie de wettelijke regeling.

*Gefingeerde naam

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**LEden en hun werk**

**Melding collectief ontslag bij Ardent**

Ardent is een bergingsbedrijf dat wereldwijd werkt en befaamd is om het verrichten van bergingswerkzaamheden onder moeilijke omstandigheden, zoals het bergen van schepen die gestrand zijn, slagzij maken of in brand staan.

Nautilus bestuurder Marcel van Dam: ‘In de wereld van de bergers zijn zij een hoofdrolspeler, naast ook Smit Salvage (inmiddels een onderdeel van Boskalis). Ardent heeft ons eind maart aangekondigd dat ze de intentie hebben om het bedrijf te liquideren en heeft een ‘melding collectief ontslag’ gedaan bij het UWV.

Vervolgens heeft Ardent ons benaderd om deel te nemen aan een sociaal plan voor alle betrokken medewerkers in Nederland. Het aantal personeelsleden is 45. De ondernemingsraad is gevraagd een advies te geven met betrekking tot het voorgenomen besluit om het bedrijf te liquideren.’

**Op zoek naar financiers**

Ardent heeft ook diverse vestigingen in het buitenland. Belangrijkste reden om te liquideren is dat het bedrijf afgelopen jaren verlies heeft gemaakt en onvoldoende geld in kas heeft om grote complexe bergingen voor te financieren. De betaling vindt plaats nadat de bergingswerkzaamheden zijn uitgevoerd. Ardent is nog op zoek naar financiers/banken of een partner die een deel -of delen- van het bedrijf wil overnemen. Mocht dit plaatsvinden, dan kan mogelijk een deel van de werkgelegenheid worden behouden. Nautilus staat in nauw contact met de ondernemingsraad en heeft inmiddels met het management overleg over de inhoud van een sociaal plan voor het geval het doek toch valt voor dit roemruchte bergingsbedrijf.  

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Tijdens de eerste onderhandelingsronde voor de nieuwe cao Waterbouw, op 6 februari jongstleden, werd besloten eerst te wachten op de resultaten uit een onderzoek naar de gevolgen van de overheidsmaatregelen inzake stikstof en PFAS, alvorens verder te onderhandelen.

FNV Waterbouw voorzitter Charley Ramdas: ‘In de kern kwam het erop neer dat werkgevers tijdens de eerste onderhandelingsronde benadruktten dat zij last hadden van de stikstof en PFAS maatregelen. Veel projecten in Nederland zouden zijn stil gevallen.’

Belang werkgelegenheid staat voorop
Werkgevers vreesden zelfs voor negatieve werkgelegenheidseffecten in de sector. Aangezien FNV Waterbouw werkgelegenheid erg belangrijk vindt, hebben wij de werkgevers daarom verzocht om hun zorgen door middel van onafhankelijk onderzoek onderbouwd te krijgen. Het onderzoek was al gestart door het EIB (Economisch Instituut voor de Bouwnijverheid). De verwachting was dat het onderzoek omstreeks eind april a.s. klaar zou zijn.

Gevolgen corona crisis
Charley Ramdas: ‘Echter ondertussen zijn daar de gevolgen van de coronacrisis bijgekomen. Dat heeft niet alleen zijn weerslag op de voortgang van het onderzoek, maar uiteraard ook op de cao-onderhandelingen. Zoals bekend heeft het kabinet maatregelen getroffen waardoor het tot 28 april a.s. niet mogelijk is om fysiek bij elkaar te komen. Zodra na 28 april bekend is wat wij in Nederland wel en niet mogen, zullen wij bezien waarneen het mogelijk is om de onderzoeksresultaten met onze leden te delen en vervolgens de cao-onderhandelingen weer op te pakken.’

ARBEIDSVOORWAARDEN

Stand van zaken onderhandelingen cao Waterbouw

Na a tweetal onderhandelingsronden eind 2019 werd er medio maart een principe akkoord bereikt tussen de werkgever en Nautilus over een driejarige cao.

Loonsverhoging
Gedurende deze drie jaren krijgen de werknemers de volgende loonsverhoging:
Per 1 januari 2020: 4%; per 1 januari 2021: 2,5% en per 1 januari 2022: 2%.

Proef met verschuiving van twee uur
Nautilus bestuurder Bert Klein: ‘Verder zal er een proef plaatsvinden met een verschuiving van twee uur. De middagdienst zal dan twee uur later starten en dus twee uur later eindigen. Na deze proef, die een duur kent van 6 weken, zal geëvalueerd worden of de verschuiving het gewenste effect heeft. Omdat in de komende tijd nog een verdere uitwerking van het pensioenakkoord zal plaatsvinden en er bovendien diverse discussie lopen met betrekking tot duurzame inzetbaarheid is nu de afspraak gemaakt dat deze twee onderwerpen gedurende de looptijd van de cao nader ingevuld kunnen worden. De leden hadden op 8 januari jongstleden in eerste instantie het akkoord afgewezen. Daar waren diverse reden voor, waaronder de proef met de verschuiving van de twee uur voor de middagdienst. Na een nieuw gesprek met de werkgever is inmiddels een en ander verduidelijkt en is het principe akkoord opnieuw voorgelegd, waarna de leden vervolgens op 16 maart in ruime meerderheid hebben ingestemd met het akkoord.’

Nieuwe cao bij Hatenboer-Neptunus
Peuteren aan arbeidsvoorwaarden: ‘StenaLine is zoekende’

Zo’n 950 ontslagen voor Zweedse collega’s en een exorbitante versobering van de loondoorbetaling bij ziekte voor Britse collega’s: het zijn de maatregelen die StenaLine neemt om de financiële tegenvallers naar aanleiding van het welbekende coronavirus te compenseren. Ook aan Nederlandse zijde zoekt men naar mogelijkheden tot een kostenreductie. De cao voor Nederlandse zeevarenden lijkt echter dichtgetimmerd te zijn en vooralsnog is hierin geen ruimte gevonden om direct te bezuinigen.

Extra opgebouwde verlofdagen van OSS crew onder vuur
Dat wil helaas niet zeggen dat StenaLine geen poging heeft gedaan. Eind maart informeerde StenaLine onze Nautilus collega’s dat zij een oud en nooit eerder gebruikt of uitgewerkt artikel uit de cao nieuw leven in wilde blazen. Hierdoor kan StenaLine in zogenaamde ‘slappe tijden’ aan de OSS crew vragen om gemiddeld zeven van hun extra opgebouwde verlofdagen in te zetten in een periode die StenaLine voorschrijft. Aanleiding hiertoe was de sluiting van de restaurants en shops aan boord van de schepen. Geen directe bezuinigingsmaatregel dus, maar zeggenschap van de werkgever over het moment waarop extra opgebouwd verlof ingezet kan worden. Aan Nautilus International de vraag om mee te werken aan de uitwerking van deze regeling. Middels een nieuwsbrief is aan de leden om input gevraagd en die hebben we ook gekregen! Veel OSS crewleden klommen in de (digitale) pen om aan ons te melden dat de situatie aan boord momenteel anders is dan dat ons door kantoor werd voorgespiegeld. ‘De restaurants en shops zijn gewoon open!’ was de veelgehoorde boodschap. Daarnaast werd aangegeven dat er juist nu extra inzet van de bemanning nodig is omdat de hygiënemaatregelen geïntensievereerd zijn. Lang verhaal kort: reden genoeg voor Nautilus om aan de werkgever te melden dat wij vooralsnog onvoldoende aanleiding zien om mee te werken aan deze regeling!

Hoe zit het nu met de onderhandelingen over een nieuwe cao?

**Ontslag in moeilijke tijden**

**Ontslagprocedure**
‘Alle werknemers hebben een individuele arbeidsovereenkomst naar Schots recht, desondanks hebben veel werknemers rechten volgens het Nederlands recht. Dit omdat zij het grootste gedeelte van hun arbeidsverleden bij Borr Drilling en haar rechtsoordragers Paragon, Noble en Neddrl in Nederlandse wateren hebben gewerkt. Voor de werknemers waarop Nederlands recht van toepassing is, zal collectief ontslag worden aangevraagd bij het UWV en zal Nautilus International (Nederland) de representatieve vakbond zijn.’

**Leden informeren**
Tijdens het ter perse gaan van dit nummer waren er nog veel onduidelijkheden. Bert Klein: ‘Op het moment dat de omvang van het collectieve ontslag verder duidelijk is en nadat er gesprekken zijn gevoerd met de directie van Borr Drilling, zullen wij onze leden uiteraard nader informeren.’

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**Tuchtcollege en goed zeemanschap**

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Dienstverlening Nautilus International en FNV Waterbouw

In deze rubriek worden steeds vakbondszaken belicht waarin Nautilus en FNV Waterbouw een actieve rol spelen ten beloeve van de leden.

**Meer dan loon- en arbeidsvoorwaarden**
Wist u dat we als maritieme vakbond meer regelen dan loon- en arbeidsvoorwaarden voor onze leden?

In dit artikel informeren wij u graag over de werkzaamheden die wij voor en namens onze leden doen op het gebied van Arbeidsomstandigheden (Arbo), Veiligheid en Gezondheid in de Zeevaart.

Vandaag richten we de schijnwerper op het Tuchtcollege.

**Tuchtcollege en goed zeemanschap**
Het Tuchtcollege is per 1 januari 2010 ingesteld en nam vanaf die datum de tuchtrechtelijke taak van de Raad voor de Scheepvaart over. Kapiteins en scheepschepen zijn onderworpen aan het tuchtrecht indien zij handelen in strijd met de regels van goed zeemanschap, die zij in acht moeten nemen ten opzichte van de opvarenden, het schip, de lading, het milieu of het scheepvaartverkeer.

**Klaagschrift en verzoekschrift**
Het tuchtcollege behandelt zaken op basis van klachten die door middel van een klaagschrift bij het tuchtcollege kunnen worden ingediend door belanghebbenden. Daarnaast kan de Minister van Infrastructuur en Milieu bij het college een zaak aanhangig maken door het indienen van een verzoek.

**Verweerschrift, repliek en dupliek**
Binnen zes weken na de dag van verzending van het verzoek of de klacht kan de betrokkene een verweerschrift bij het tuchtcollege indienen. Voordat een zitting plaatsvindt, kan er nog repliek en dupliek (over en weer reageren) op het verweerschrift ingediend worden.

**De zitting**
De secretaris roept de verzoeker, de klager en de betrokkene tenminste vier weken voor de dag van de zitting per aangetekende brief op. De betrokkene is verplicht te verschijnen. De behandeling ter zitting wordt gesloten indien het tuchtcollege van mening is dat het onderzoek is voltooid. De betrokkene heeft het recht als laatste het woord te voeren. De voorzitter maakt vervolgens bekend wanneer de uitspraak wordt gedaan.

**Bijstandverlening of vertegenwoordiging**
De betrokkene kan zich tijdens dit gehele proces door een raadsman laten bijstaan. De indiener van een verzoek of een klacht kan zich door een gemachtigde laten vertegenwoordigen of door een raadsman laten bijstaan.

**Tuchtrechtelijke maatregelen**
De volgende tuchtmaatregelen kunnen worden uitgesproken: een waarschuwing, een berisping, een geldboete van ten hoogste €4.500 en schorsing van de vaarbevoegdheid voor een periode van ten hoogste twee jaar.

**Raadsman voor leden**
Als u als lid van Nautilus voor het Tuchtcollege moet verschijnen, is het goed te weten dat wij voor een deskundige raadsman kunnen zorgen.

**Nog geen lid?**
Kortom genoeg redenen om te kiezen voor een lidmaatschap bij Nautilus/FNV Waterbouw. Meer informatie over ons, de actuele contributieregelgingen en digitale aanmeldingsformulieren kunt u vinden op www.nautilusint.org/nl.
Nieuwe Nautilus leden melden zich aan

Hoe meer leden, hoe sterker we staan als maritieme vakbond. Daarom startte Nautilus 15 januari jongstleden de Nautilus ledenwerfactie. De actie liep tot 15 april jongstleden. Tal van Nautilus leden gaven in deze periode een nieuw lid op en dongen mee naar het winnen van mooie en leuke prijzen. De prijswinnaars krijgen binnenkort bericht hierover. Inmiddels is de bekende VVV-bon actie van 10 euro, voor het aanbrengen van een nieuw lid, weer in werking gesteld.

Gezamenlijk optreden belangrijk
Nautilus Raad van Advies lid, kapitein Henk Eijkenaar, één van de prijswinnaars, licht toe hoe hij nieuwe leden voor Nautilus werft:

‘In de loop der jaren ben ik het belang van de vakbond steeds meer gaan inzien en die overtuiging probeer ik over te brengen op collega’s. Door ze te wijzen op de belangen die Nautilus behartigt op internationaal gebied (via de Telegraph, in de IMO, via de Nautilus Federatie, de FNV, etc.). En ook op nationaal gebied (b.v. wetgeving bescherming tegen piraterij). Voor de zeevarende, zowel collectief (CAO, bescherming zeevarende) als op persoonlijk gebied (rechtshulp, belastingdienst, bij mogelijke onenigheid met de werkgever, bij faillissement). Verder tracht ik ze, door mijn functie in de Nautilus Council en Raad van Advies, het nodige inzicht te geven in de werking van de vakbond en het belang van het gezamenlijk optreden om meer te kunnen bereiken. Dit alles helpt me vaak goed om de collega’s over te halen lid te worden. Zo is mijn collega Siebe ook lid geworden.’

Zeevarenden belangrijk voor economie
‘Nu ook in de huidige crisis van COVID-19 doet Nautilus veel voor het maritiem personeel. Zo proberen ze de mensen in te laten zien hoe belangrijk de zeevarenden zijn voor de economie. Iets wat aan de wal nog steeds behoorlijk wordt onderschat of waar gewoonweg niet aan wordt gedacht. Ik vaar momenteel op een klein schip met 6 bemanningsleden, waarvan er 3 afgelost moeten worden, wat door de huidige omstandigheden helaas niet gaat lukken. Normaal gesproken kan de bemanning regelmatig naar een zeemanshuis, daar we maximaal 4 dagen op zee zijn, maar momenteel is dat niet mogelijk.’

Nieuw Nautilus lid Siebe Repko: ‘Ik ben lid geworden bij Nautilus, omdat ik ben gaan inzien dat het belangrijk is om de organisatie te steunen die namens zeevarenden onderhandelt bij de rederijen. Ik heb in mijn nog relatief korte varende carrière al meerdere situaties gezien waarbij het belangrijk is dat het belang van de zeevarenden goed verdedigd wordt. Ik heb bijvoorbeeld als stagiair bij Abis Shipping het faillissement destijds van dichtbij meegemaakt. Met een vakbond kun je in deze situaties zorgen dat je als zeevarenden verenigd meer kan betekenen dan ieder voor zich. Omdat Nautilus dit voor ons mogelijk maakt, wilde ik me daar graag bij aansluiten.’

Vraag de zipcardfolder op en maak ook een collega lid
Om onze leden te ondersteunen met argumenten waarom een collega dat nog geen lid is ook lid zou moeten worden, heeft Nautilus een speciale Zipcard folder ontwikkeld. Ben je lid en heb je deze nog niet? Vraag ‘m even aan via: infonl@nautilusint.nl

Voor goede loon- en arbeidsvoorwaarden, kansen op werkgelegenheid en vele andere zaken die we nu als ‘normaal’ beschouwen, is in het verleden hard geknoopt door vakbondsleden (jouw voorgangers en huidige collega’s). Maar wat je hebt, kun je kwijtraken. Werkgevers hebben immers vaak een ander belang dan jij. Zonder het tegenwicht van vakbondsleden, verenigd in Nautilus International, kunnen al die verworven rechten worden wegbijengezet en is er een groot risico dat zelfs jouw baan wordt weggegeven aan een goedkopere collega. Daarom is het belangrijk onze groep zo groot mogelijk te houden: Maak een collega lid, samen staan we nog sterker!

Ook spontaan hebben zich de afgelopen tijd, vooral sinds het uitbreken van de corona crisis, een aantal nieuwe leden aangemeld.

Ook lid worden?
www.nautilusint.org/nl/word-lid/
**FNV WATERBOUW**

**JAARVERGADERING TOT NADER ORDER UITGESTELD**

In verband met de zeer onzekere tijden inzake alle maatregelen rondom het corona virus wordt de FNV Waterbouw Jaarvergadering, die gepland stond voor 27 mei a.s., tot nader order uitgesteld.

FNV Waterbouw voorzitter Charley Ramdas: ‘De onzekerheid rond het coronavirus raakt ons allemaal en uiteraard ook onze leden. Rekening houdend met de recente maatregelen van het kabinet en de berichtgevingen van het RIVM, valt niet te verwachten dat de jaarvergadering tot nader order uit te stellen. Bovendien mogen er tot 1 juni a.s. sowieso geen bijeenkomsten worden gepland. We houden de komende tijd nauwlettend de door de overheid aangekondigde spoedwetgeving met betrekking tot vergaderingen in de gaten. U hoort wanneer dit kan van ons over een nieuwe datum voor de jaarvergadering.’

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**Ook Maritiem Platform Gepensioneerden heeft JAARVERGADERING TOT NADER ORDER UITGESTELD**

Het Maritiem Platform Gepensioneerden (MPG) heeft op 13 maart haar leden geïnformeerd dat de aangekondigde jaarvergadering van 31 maart tot nader order is uitgesteld.

**Gezondheid op eerste plaats**

‘Aangezien gezondheid voor ons op de eerste plaats komt en onze statuten weinig ruimte bieden voor digitale vergaderingen, achten wij het als bestuur op dit moment de enige passende oplossing de jaarvergadering tot nader order uit te stellen. Bovendien is het op dit moment nog niet duidelijk welke maatregelen in de komende weken/maanden (nog) van kracht zijn. We houden de komende tijd nauwlettend in de gaten. We laten u zodra dat mogelijk is, weten wat de nieuwe datum wordt.’

---

**Symposium vervalt dit jaar**

In verband met de zeer onzekere tijden inzake alle maatregelen rondom het corona virus wordt de Nautilus Jaarvergadering, die gepland stond voor 23 juni a.s., tot nader order uitgesteld.

Nautilus algemeen secretaris Charley Ramdas: ‘De onzekerheid rond het coronavirus raakt ons allemaal en uiteraard ook onze leden. Rekening houdend met de recente maatregelen van het kabinet en de berichtgevingen van het RIVM, valt niet te verwachten dat de jaarvergadering tot nader order uit te stellen. Bovendien is het op dit moment nog niet duidelijk welke maatregelen op 23 juni (nog) van kracht zijn. We houden de komende tijd nauwlettend de door de overheid aangekondigde spoedwetgeving met betrekking tot vergaderingen in de gaten. Mocht dit op een moment aanleiding geven ons besluit te heroverwegen, dan informeren wij onze leden daar uiteraard over.’

---

**Raad van Advies**

Charley Ramdas: Wel zullen we als bestuur de geplande bijeenkomsten met de Nautilus Raad van Advies zoveel mogelijk online organiseren. Juist in deze tijd vinden we het als bestuur belangrijk om de input vanuit de Raad van Advies te kunnen blijven ontvangen. Aangezien de Raad van Advies uit een beperkt aantal personen bestaat, is het praktisch goed te organiseren om online sessies met hen te houden. We luisteren verder ook (en juist) in deze tijd op alle haalbare wijzen naar onze leden. We wensen onze leden veel succes in deze moeilijke tijd en hopen op begrip van hen voor het lastige besluit dat we hebben moeten nemen. U hoort wanneer dit kan van ons over een nieuwe datum voor de jaarvergadering. Tot slot laten we u hierbij weten dat het symposium dit jaar vervalt.’
EMERGENCY SERVICES

Helplines available from the following organisations.
As a member always contact your industrial official first.

NAUTILUS 24/7
SMS text message to +44 (0)7860 017 119
and we’ll get back to you
email us at helpline@nautilus247.org
reach us via Skype (username nautilus-247) take a note of the
freephone number listed on the Nautius 24/7 webpage

THE INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS’
WELLFARE AND ASSISTANCE NETWORK
Call +44 (0)300 012 4279,
Email iswan@iswan.org.uk
or visit www.seafarerswelfare.org

SEAFARERS’ ADVICE & INFORMATION LINE
Seafarers’ Advice & Information Line is the Citizens Advice service
just for seafarers. Contact us for free advice on benefits, debt,
housing and much more.
Call 0800 160 1842 in the UK, or 020 3597 1580
Email advice@sailine.org.uk, or visit www.sailine.org.uk
By Skype Skype4SAIL
Skype calls are by pre-arranged appointment only.

Rules General Meeting notice
Notice is hereby given that the Council of Nautilus International intends calling a Rules General Meeting in accordance with Rule 27.3 (i)- rule changes and in accordance with the associated regulation number 10.
The RGM will be held at 1605hrs on Wednesday 25th November 2020 in London at a venue to be advised.
The new jobs board is ready for you!

SIGN UP & RECEIVE UPDATES.
BE THE FIRST TO KNOW WHEN NEW JOBS ARE LISTED

jobs.nautilusint.org
@NautilusJobs

See your advertisement here

Nautilus International is a trade union and professional organisation serving, supporting and protecting the interests of over 22,000 maritime professionals in the UK, Netherlands and Switzerland.

Nautilus Telegraph is the award-winning international publication for maritime professionals. Distributed to members and the wider shipping industry, it has a global circulation of around 35,000 copies a month and readership of over 116,000.

Get in touch
To see your advertisement in the award-winning Telegraph magazine contact us today:

Jonathan Knight
jonathan@centuryonepublishing.uk
01727 739 193

Hydrography and Charting Officer
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Based: Tower Hill, London

An opportunity exists within our London based Navigation Directorate, for a Hydrography and Charting Officer. You will be responsible for the processing of hydrographic surveys carried out internally by our ships and received from external organisations, utilising the latest surveying technology to ensure there is detailed data for assessment by Trinity House Examiners and dissemination to external organisations.

Appropriate positioning of aids to navigation, both current and proposed, for the safety of the mariner, is the core business of Trinity House and you will be responsible for charting requirements, using both paper and electronic formats. You will ensure that best use is made of all available current technology including extensive use of GIS. You will be responsible for the maintenance and update of all nautical publications.

You will hold a BSc/HND in a relevant subject or an appropriate Marine Certificate of Competency with hydrographic experience. Excellent IT skills will be required, including experience in using MS Suite of software. Previous experience in Caris would be an advantage. You will also be familiar with the IALA Maritime Buoyage System.

If you are interested in this opportunity and keen to develop your skills and experience with Trinity House, then visit our website to download a job description and complete the online application process:
www.trinityhouse.co.uk/careers

Applications to be received by midnight on Sunday 10 May 2020.
Interview date to be confirmed.
Trinity House is an Equal Opportunities Employer.
Ronnie Cunningham retired from Nautilus International in April 2020 after having devoted his adult life to the trade union movement.

As a working-class boy in 1970s Liverpool, Ronnie left school at 16 to get a job. ‘It’s just what everyone did.’ And it seems there were plenty of jobs available at the state-owned Post Office, which employed around 6,000 people at its Girobank complex in Bootle.

Starting at the Post Office in 1974, on his first day the young clerk became a member of the staff union, which was then the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA). The union was strong in this workplace – so much so that there was a 40-strong CPSA committee there including 10 branch officers.

It was a role that caught Ronnie’s eye, and at only 18, he successfully stood for election as a branch officer himself. ‘I liked the idea of helping people, whether that was my own colleagues or other CPSA members,’ he explains.

‘At first, I carried on with my usual Girobank work alongside my union duties,’ he adds, ‘but after a year or so I was able to get one of the four branch officer posts that were on full-time release, meaning that our salaries were paid by the company but our job was to focus on union work.’

It was a change of scene and a way to develop new skills, but it certainly wasn’t an easy option. Ronnie had a very busy decade in the 1980s, split between his Merseyside home and commuting to the union head office in London.

As he rose to serve on the union’s National Executive Committee, and saw the organisation through the 1985 merger which created the National Communications Union (NCU), he found that he was usually spending Monday to Friday in London and only returning to Liverpool for the weekends.

By the early 1990s, he was tired of the travel and looking for something more local, and that’s when he saw the role of industrial assistant advertised at the Nautilus predecessor union NUMAST. The job was based in the NUMAST offices at Mariners’ Park in Wallasey – just across the River Mersey from Liverpool.

Ronnie remembers a daunting interview process led by the Union’s formidable general secretary Brian Orrell. ‘Brian asked me how people would take me going onboard ship as a union rep when I wasn’t a seafarer. I just said, if I can solve their problem, they’ll be happy to see me.’

It was clearly the right answer. Ronnie joined NUMAST in 1994 and was promoted to industrial officer in 1996. He is grateful for the training and mentoring he received during those early days from national secretary Laurie Atwood and regional secretary Bob Elliott, and for the support from another colleague, Karen Jones, who still works for the Union as a membership and research administrator.

Ronnie’s work was at the heart of what a trade union does: negotiating with employers, representing individuals at grievance or disciplinary hearings, and ‘organising’ – the union movement’s term for bringing people together in a workplace to act collectively. While he was learning the ropes at NUMAST, he was based mainly in the Wallasey office, but when he became an industrial officer, he took it in turns with colleagues to spend one week in four in Aberdeen.

It’s a time he remembers fondly. Aberdeen was booming, with plenty of jobs for seafarers supporting the North Sea offshore oil and gas industry. There were so many Union members onboard the supply and standby vessels that NUMAST employed a full-time ship visitor for them: George Findlay. ‘George was an ex-fishing captain and a good, solid seafarer who knew everyone and could get you in anywhere,’ smiles Ronnie. ‘He was so helpful to me and great to deal with.’
Ronnie continued to rise up the career ladder at NUMAST, becoming a national secretary (a team leader) in 2001 and a senior national secretary (head of department) in 2009 – the year the union became Nautilus International.

In this period, it was Ronnie’s turn to pass on his knowledge and experience to more junior colleagues, and he would always advise taking stock of the situation and keeping negotiations calm and professional whenever possible. ‘Whether you’re representing an individual member or carrying out collective bargaining, it’s worth saying to the members beforehand that you won’t be starting from a position of aggression,’ he says. ‘If I’m civil and have a friendly manner to the management, it doesn’t mean I’ve “changed sides” – it’s a sensible way of getting the right outcome. But it’s horses for courses: we will of course take a firm line when the situation calls for it.’

In 2011, Ronnie was senior national organiser, bringing his long experience to the union’s senior leadership team, and in 2016 he was appointed assistant general secretary. Throughout this time, he continued to sit on the oversight committee for the industry-wide MNOPF pension scheme and acted as secretary of the Nautilus Welfare Fund Committee.

Now that retirement is upon him, Ronnie can look back with satisfaction at this body of work, but he won’t miss Nautilus too much because he has always maintained fulfilling interests in his home life. As well as spending more time with his partner Julie and their two dogs, he will continue sitting on the judicial panels for Employment Tribunals (ETs) – akin to being a local magistrate. He will also keep up his volunteer work as a long-standing local activist for the Labour Party. ‘I never brought my political views to work, because Nautilus is a non-affiliated union,’ he stresses, ‘but I have been outraged to see how public services have been decimated by government cuts, and I will always campaign against that.’

Perhaps what Ronnie is most looking forward to in his retirement is helping to renovate and expand the premises of Sefton Amateur Boxing Club, of which he’s been a member since he was 14. ‘I used to do some bouts as a featherweight in the early days, but I’ve mainly used it as a way to keep fit,’ he explains. ‘I wanted to help run the club too, because it’s such an important part of the local community, and we’ve been lucky recently to get a grant to do the place up. You could call it drug money!’ he laughs. ‘The Merseyside Police have given it to us as a charity from funds retrieved under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.’

Working as he does to help teenagers at the boxing club stay on the right track in life, would he recommend trade union work to them as a career option? ‘Absolutely. Being a union official is a privilege. Every day is different and you get to help people who have been unjustly treated, so there’s so much job satisfaction. You’re not in it for the thanks, but it’s nice to have recognition for doing a good job, and I have to say the highlight of my career was when Lord Len Murray, a previous general secretary of the TUC, said he was impressed with my work and I could represent him any time.’
Meetings and events disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic

Nautilus Equality and Diversity Forum
POSTPONED

In last month’s Telegraph, we were still hopeful this forum’s first meeting of 2020 could go ahead in April as planned, but this did not prove possible.

For this and other Nautilus meetings, options including postponement and online sessions are being explored.

To express an interest in attending a rescheduled Equality and Diversity Forum, email Debbie Cavaldoro at dcavaldoro@nautilusint.org.

Falklands weekend in Hull
Now on 16-18 April 2021
As anticipated in last month’s Telegraph, this event has been given a new date. Contact Nautilus member Keith Thompson for more information at keiththompson26@outlook.com.

Contact Nautilus International

Nautilus International welcomes contact from members at any time.

For updates on all Nautilus meetings, go to www.nautilusint.org/en/creating-change/events.

For Nautilus college visits in 2020

Nautilus organiser Martyn Gray carries out regular visits to maritime colleges in the UK and Ireland to meet members face-to-face and give presentations on information useful to trainees.

Unfortunately, the programme of visits this year has been disrupted by measures being taken to limit the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus.

If any college visits do take place, members will be informed and can book an appointment in advance with Martyn by emailing cadets@nautilusint.org or calling +44 (0)151 639 8454.

Next Nautilus Plus job advice webinar: October 2020

The second of this year’s Nautilus Plus free job webinars is due to take place in October 2020.

The webinar will be delivered by the CV & Interview Advisors – and will include some special Nautilus Plus discounts on their services.

The exact date is still to be confirmed, so keep an eye on: www.nautilusint.org/en/jobwebinar.

Pensions

MNOPF member forums provide a focal point for members to discuss and ask questions about the cross-industry maritime pension schemes.

The programme of MNOPF member forums in 2020 has been disrupted by measures being taken to limit the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus.

To find out if any forum meetings are going ahead, see www.mnopf.co.uk under ‘myMNOPFPension/member forums’ or from the home page under ‘Events’. Alternatively, call +44 (0)20 3150 0850.

Crossword answers

– from our brain teasers on page 45

QUICK CROSSWORD

Across:
5. STATION; 10. MARTINI;
11. RAZORBILL; 12. FAGIN;
13. NAVIGATORS; 15. SOUR;
17. MERMAID; 19. DRASTIC;
20. REAL; 21. SMOKY BACON;
24. ONION; 30. EBOOK;
25. RECONNECT;
26. JAWS.

Down:
1. ASTRONOMER ROYAL;
2. JAZZ; 3. MICROGRAM; 4. ENLIST;
5. IMPLORED; 6. CRAFT;
7. DIAGNOSTIC; 8. WIENER SCHNITZEL;
14. VARIATIONS; 16. CARBON TAX;
18. DEMURRED; 22. KICKED;
23. ANGRY; 26. EMIR.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Congratulations to cryptic crossword competition winner Derek Forward, who was first out of the hat from the correct entries to last month’s competition.

Here are the answers to the April 2020 cryptic crossword:

Across:
9. STATION; 10. MARTINI;
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17. MERMAID; 19. DRASTIC;
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25. RECONNECT;
26. JAWS.
WERE YOU AWARE that following the successful outcome of a judicial review in respect of two Seatax clients, (brought before the Courts by Nautilus in collaboration with Seatax Ltd as expert advisors on the Seafarers Earnings Deduction), it was deemed that the two Seatax clients did have a legitimate expectation in applying the only published Revenue Practice with regard to the application of a day of absence in relation to a vessel sailing between UK ports. HMRC did not want to accept this practice (although referred to in their very own publications) but have now accepted that expectations of a claim based on such practice would be valid until the published practice is withdrawn.

Following on from this, HMRC have now confirmed that this Practice is withdrawn as of the 14 February 2014. Seatax was the only Advisory Service that challenged HMRC on this point. Please visit our website for full details of the case.

WHY TAKE CHANCES WITH YOUR TAX AFFAIRS?
Let Seatax use their knowledge and 35 years experience to ensure you do not fall foul of the rules

OUR FEES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Fee</th>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Return</td>
<td>£225.00 inclusive of VAT at 20%</td>
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NAUTILUS members in the UK sailing under a foreign flag agreement on gross remuneration can obtain a 10% reduction on the above enrolment fee by quoting their NAUTILUS membership number and a 5% reduction on re-enrolment.
Nautilus Plus gives you access to a range of benefits and discounts designed to support members both personally and professionally.

This month’s highlights include smart device fitness, lifestyle vouchers, books and healthcare with Nautilus Plus.

From reaching your health and fitness goals to relaxing in front of a blockbuster, take a look at these offers for Nautilus members.

Stay active with MyActiveDiscounts digital fitness subscriptions
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Save 6% on getting fit with Lifestyle Vouchers*
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Lifestyle vouchers can be redeemed online and, what’s more, you can split and spend across multiple big brand names, so you’re not limited to spend in one place and potentially losing your change from purchases. Lifestyle gives you the most choice of retailers, all in one place.

Get fit and save with Apple
Looking to keep in shape? Stay on track with your fitness with the Apple Watch. Plus get active with your family by accessing fitness apps and YouTube through iPad*.

Plus, as a Nautilus member, you can get a discount.

10% online discount at foyles.co.uk
With nearly a million books available for home delivery, Foyles is the home for book lovers on the web. Free delivery is available on all UK orders, and their site boasts a wealth of author interviews and blogs to help you choose your next read. Plus sign up to their Foyalty card to earn points on every purchase*.

Award winning healthcare
Through Nautilus Plus, you’ll get vdoc’s award-winning healthcare at the discounted rate of £4 p/m (minimum 12 months subscription) as an Association member. That drops to £3 p/m if you pre-pay for 12 months*.

To take advantage of these and other fantastic deals visit Nautilus Plus via www.nautilusint.org/en/my-nautilus

*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice. Offers correct at time of print.

Apple – Annual purchase limits apply. Exclusions apply and discounts are subject to availability. For the latest offers visit the Apple EPP store.

Foyles – Unfortunately the discount is not applicable against certain items, including but not limited to already discounted products, events, gift cards, book tokens, theatre tickets, A Year of Books and the Animator’s Survival Kit. The discount is not applicable to postage costs. Foyles reserves the right to alter products included or excluded from the scheme, and to add to or amend these terms and conditions.

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