



The Mission to Seafarers Scotland



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Christmas 2021 Newsletter

A Message from David Graham-Service, Chair, Mission to Seafarers Scotland

Dear Friends,

As we approach Christmas, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to all our volunteers and supporters.

At the end of what can only be described as another difficult year I wanted to write a message to you all.

No matter how you have supported us, through grant funding, through monthly contributions, by knitting hats and other woolly items, by staffing the centre, by ship visiting, by gardening and keeping the centre clean and tidy, by taxi-driving our seafarers from the ships to the Grangemouth Asda, by undertaking administrative work, by organising Sea Sundays, by just being there for us. No matter how much or how little you have done it has all helped us to give support to the seafarers who visit our Scottish ports.



We have done our very best to meet the needs of our seafarers. Over the year we have supplied over £20,000 of phone top-up's, we have given away over 1000 sim cards, we have handed out over 5,000 knitted items despite there being no cruise ships, we have done shopping buying pizzas to M&Ms to ice-cream cakes and many other items, and we have taken seafarers on sightseeing trips to Wallace monument, the Kelpies and other places of interest.

Since churches reopened, we have delivered over 40 Sea Sunday services and we took part in Remembrance Day commemoration services at Limekilns (photo by Charlie Marsh) and Leith. We have also delivered talks to other organisations, all to raise awareness of our work.



Whilst I am looking forward to Christmas, I cannot forget the seafarers stuck on their ships far from their loved ones and I hope we will be able to bring them some cheer as we deliver Christmas parcels to them.



It would be remiss of me if I were not to extend our thanks to our colleagues in Stella Maris and the Sailors Society for without their support we could not have delivered as full a service as we currently do.

Finally I would like to thank the MtSS board of Trustees for all their input and support and to our colleagues in our parent organisation, Mission to Seafarers in London

I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and may 2022 be a better year for each and every one.

David Graham-Service

Chair, Mission to Seafarers Scotland

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The Mission to Seafarers keeps its finger on



the key issues facing those at sea today. Seafarers are asked 10 key questions every quarter about specific issues affecting their life and work. The latest report highlights the findings of the Quarter 3 2021 data – before the current Omicron Covid variant emerged.

So while the report showed some improvement in seafarer happiness at that time, some of the most serious and fundamental issues persist, and the re-imposed restrictions to counter Omicron will surely not make life easier. Whether it is crew change issues or the inability to access any shore leave, the survey reported anger, frustration, stress, annoyance and pain. Another issue repeatedly mentioned was the mental health impact now being felt. “I cannot get ashore and talk to anyone but those on board”, was one quote, reflecting the intense and claustrophobic problems which some crew are going through.

There was also important feedback on the availability (or rather, the lack of reasonable access) to wifi/internet for seafarers. The research indicates that more and more seafarers, and particularly those of the younger generation, crave ever more connection with home – but there is too little understanding of the real-world impacts for those trapped on board ship for so many months without adequate and affordable internet access.

So we hope you can see the importance of the work of the Mission – including our Centre with its free wifi and our volunteers’ ship visits and shopping trips and ‘taxi runs’ – is our way of addressing these issues where we can, with your help.



You can read the full SHI report here:

https://www.happyatsea.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SHI_Q3_2021.pdf