

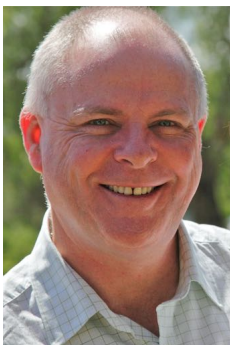
The Master's Mariner

Autumn 2011



Caring for seafarers
around the world

Thank you!



In the previous newsletter I shared with you the shock of receiving a \$7,000+ internet bill following the enthusiastic patronage of seafarers from P&O's *Pacific Jewel*, in dry dock for many weeks while new propulsion units were installed.

All of us at The Mission were humbled by the generosity of your response, as donation after donation came in to help us meet this expense. In the end, your generosity meant that the bill was quite affordable and my sense of dread was replaced by a sense of deep thankfulness. Such things really warm the heart! So, from the bottom of my warmed heart, I want to say 'Thank you very, very much!'

Some months later we were also very grateful to receive a gift from Carnival Cruises (P&O's parent company), so that the total amount donated actually exceeded the cost of the bill! This was a bit embarrassing, and was something we never expected, but it means that other expenses we incur in our ministry to seafarers are more easily borne for the time being.

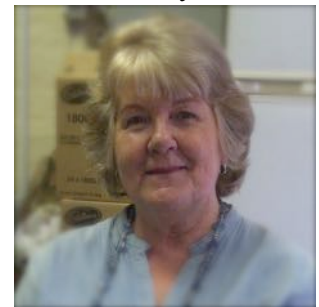
I also described the circumstances that led The Sydney Bethel Union to consider the future of Flying Angel House. After a great deal of consultation, consideration and prayer, the decision has been made to put Flying Angel House up for

sale and to seek an alternative location for us from which to operate our ministry.

Although there is no clear timeframe for a move, we try to continue as usual, thankful for the eager patronage of seafarers and for the recent financial provisions we have enjoyed. We trust that, wherever our next location will be, it will serve to enhance the effectiveness of our ministry.

In April, we were saddened to receive the resignation / retirement of Doreen Barr, whose ministry with The Mission spanned more than thirty years.

Doreen's association began as a waitress in the Mission's restaurant when the Mission was based at Macquarie Place. Her duties steadily expanded over the years until she took on the role of Receptionist /Shop-keeper in 2005. At the front desk, Doreen was often the first person to greet seafarers when they came into Flying Angel House and the person chiefly responsible for ensuring that seafarers' 'knick knacks' in the shop were constantly in stock – no wonder they were so nice to her! The diversity of her duties was quite amazing and the quiet ease with which she fulfilled them all has not yet been matched by those of us who are trying to fill-in for the irreplaceable. We hope to have a proper farewell for Doreen in the near future, when she is able. In the meantime we wish her every blessing for a wonderful retirement and a time of great joy and contentment with her children and grandchildren, and thank her most deeply for all she has done for The Mission - and for seafarers - over many, many years. We miss her already!



**Chaplain George
Gayagay**

We've adjusted well to the new 4-day week roster that went into effect in January. A benefit of the new roster is that it enables us to visit

crews in the late afternoons and evenings as well as during the daytime.

In February, I spent time with an American seafarer, whose ship was berthed in Sydney for two days. He spent much of his time in The Mission chatting for hours (via the Internet) with his wife in the Philippines over the Internet. He asked me if I would talk with his wife, but she was reluctant to do so (*perhaps her father had warned her about talking to strange men* – ed.). Afterwards, as I returned him to his vessel, he shared with me a very complicated and distressing situation involving a former husband, immigration difficulties and children by various relationships.

I was able to be of assistance to him, but pray that the LORD will sort out their relationship with Him, and their relationships with one another.

A month later I visited a Chinese-crewed vessel at Port Botany. I was shocked to learn that they were not allowed shore leave because, during a previous visit to Sydney, three of their crew jumped ship. In consequence, the whole crew was prohibited shore leave - not only in Sydney but in all other ports. They told me they felt like prisoners and were desperate to contact their families in China. Chaplain Jong Jo and I managed to get 18 SIM cards for them, which allowed them – to their great relief - to call their families in China.

Chaplain Jong Nam Jo



Over the past few months, I have felt increasingly effective in ministering to the seafarers who come to us. I felt much more free than burdened by the pressures of ministry. I felt delighted to be a part of this ministry. There were many opportunities to share the gospel. I would like to share briefly some of these moments.

When I on duty as a driver, I am usually involved only in light conversations, and this time was no different - the seafarers who were on board started discussing various topics on Sydney. They were interested in the lifestyle here and my experiences in Sydney. We were discussing various topics and – being Easter - the discussions flowed into the meaning of Easter and the significance of Jesus Christ. I was delighted to encourage them to know the Jesus personally. During crew visits, conversations can get much deeper. On March I visited a ship met the 2nd officer at the ship's

office. We sat together for quite a long time and opening my E-bible (I have the Bible on my iPhone) we discussed Christianity and the Bible. At the end I gave him a copy of the Bible and I prayed for him to start his spiritual journey. A month later I visited him again and asked him about his spiritual journey, but he had not gone beyond our last meeting. As he was signing off and returning home that day, I encouraged him again. It is good to revisit seafarers and resume contact with them.



In March I was crew visiting but was rejected by a Korean crew. It was the first time I had experienced this sort of rejection and I felt a bit upset because they were my own countrymen and I had done nothing to offend them.

On the same day I was on another vessel, whose crew were from the Kiribati, the Philippines and the Ukraine. I met them on the deck and – being Easter - we discussed the Gospel message. They were showing interest and asking questions. One of the Kiribati men told me it was very encouraged by what I'd said, and thanked me. In contrast to the first crew I tried to visit, their minds seemed to be open and keen to know more.

Chaplain Jack Starmans

As we chatted on the bus, he sounded like a Scot, but it turned out that he was born in Italy and had moved to Scotland when he was seven years old. An Italian with a broad Scottish ascent is something I had never come across before! I'll call him 'Scotti'.

I got into to a wee conversation with him, at Flying Angel Hoose. One thing led to another and we ended up talking about Christ's crucifixion. After I explained the reason for Jesus' death, Scotti told me that he had never understood it till then. He thanked me and took a Luke's Gospel with him. He told me he would definitely read it. Later that day I was rostered to crew visit. As I was signing onto one of the ships, Scotti arrived on the deck at the same time. He met me with a great big smile on his face. He then told me he had already begun to read the Gospel. Praise God for these 'royal appointments'. The last time Scotti was at Flying Angel, I was rostered off. However, Jong spoke with him and told me that he was eagerly reading

the Scriptures. We pray that God's Holy Spirit may lead Scotti to entrust his life to Jesus Christ.

Even at the cash register God's Spirit is at work. In the past few weeks, I have had a couple of great opportunities to minister to seafarers - even from the cash register! One of these followed a visit to a particular ship. I had spent some time in the ship's office talking with the ships electrician and two officers. They wanted to come into the City and I was able to wait for them and then drive them to Flying Angel House. That night, at the cash register, the electrician opened up and asked why he was finding it so hard to commit his life to Christ when he wanted to do so. We talked for

some time! Praise God for His royal appointments!

During May I will be on Long Service Leave, working with the Anglican Minister at Gunning in NSW. **Pray for**



his sanity! (these are Jack's word's, not ours, but we do say 'Amen' to the prayer!)

Chaplain Un Hui Tay

In February, The Mission was told that Freddy, a seafarer from a P&O Cruise Ship, had been admitted to St Vincent's Hospital a few days earlier. He had been admitted due to a growth on the right side of his forehead. I visited him and we had a very good conversation. He was very happy for me to pray for him and to receive some Christian literature. The following day, I visited him again to give him a charger for his mobile phone. While there, he told me that he had started reading 'Jesus Spells Freedom', - one of the books I had given to him. I was glad to hear that.

A short time later, I visited Freddy again. I was glad that I visited him that day. On my arrival, he told me that he was to be discharged that afternoon. While we waited, he told me about the book's impact upon him. Praise the Lord, he decided to entrust his life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Glory to God! Freddy has now returned to his family in Goa, India and has been admitted to the local hospital for ongoing treatment. Please remember him in your prayers.

I also thank God for the opportunity to meet the Chief Cook of a Chinese vessel - and not only because of my



love of Chinese food! We had a wonderful conversation discussing our beliefs. He was very keen to know more of Jesus Christ.

His vessel returned to Port Botany in early May and I was able to give him a Mandarin Bible, a DVD and a follow-up workbook. I am looking forward to work through with him the follow-up workbook each time his vessel returns to Port Botany. Pray for wisdom, grace and patience in this follow-up process.

125th Anniversary

The Rev. Tom Heffer, Secretary-General of The Mission to Seafarers, writes: 'The 30th March 2011 marks the 125th Anniversary of the death of our founder, The Rev. Dr John Ashley (pictured at

left). I am sure that he would be delighted to see what good heart the Mission is in as we continue to focus on caring for seafarers and their families worldwide during these challenging times. I am sure, however, that he would also be sorry to see that our work is still so necessary, even after all this time. Although 'crimping' and other such practices which were prevalent in his day have been stamped out, piracy, abandonment and tough working conditions are still major issues for those who transport 90% of goods to our shores. So on this day we thank God for the life work and example of John Ashley, and for The Mission to Seafarers as it carries on his important legacy to care for those on whom we depend to keep the world afloat.'



Ethnic Diversity - Not Quite Enough?

In a recent week we ministered to Chinese, Croatian, German, Greek, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, Lithuanian, Burmese, Dutch, Omani, Papua New Guinean, Filipino, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Tongan, Ukrainian and Vietnamese seafarers. This is true, but imagine if they all went to a restaurant together?

They probably wouldn't be allowed in!

Why? Because they didn't have a Thai, that's why!

Actually, in that 'recent week', we also ministered to Thai seafarers, but the joke would be even more 'lame' if I'd told you that!

Australia Closer to Signing the Maritime Labour Convention

On 5th May 2011, The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, issued this Press Release:



'Australia is one step closer to becoming a signatory to the Maritime Labour Convention following the signing of an accord today in Cairns.

I signed the accord with representatives from the International Labour Organization and the International Maritime Organization, in front of delegates from across the Asia Pacific region.

The accord encourages all countries in this region to work together towards the ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention, which is often referred to as 'Seafarers' Bill of Rights'.

There are 1.2 million seafarers in the world and their work is often hard, dangerous and out of sight of the general public.

The convention sets minimum standards for their employment, accommodation, recreational facilities, food and catering, health care, welfare and social security protection.

The convention will come into force 12 months from the date it secures the signature of 30 nations.

Australia is already substantially compliant and once it has been considered by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, I will be introducing the Navigation Amendment Bill to give effect to the Maritime Labour Convention during the winter sitting.

The Bill provides for the issuing of declarations of maritime labour compliance and maritime labour certificates.

Once the Convention is in force, all ships over 500GT on international voyages will be required to carry the certificates.

Surveyors from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will be empowered to inspect all ships at Australian ports to ensure they comply with the requirements of the convention.

Our ships will be subject to similar inspections at foreign ports in countries that are signatories to the MLC.

Last year was the International Year of the Seafarer and I can think of no better tribute to those who spend their working lives aboard ships than the implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention.'

The Rev. Canon Ken Peters, Director of Justice and Welfare from The Mission to Seafarers' Central Office, came to Australia twice in 2010 to inform MtS Chaplains, Government Agencies, Unions and other seafarer welfare organizations about the MLC. In April he travelled to various MtS Centres around Australia and in September travelled to Melbourne to address the Seafarers' Welfare Forum hosted by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.



Delegates at the 2010 Sydney MLC meeting

It is significant that Mr Albanese signed the accord at this year's AMSA-sponsored Conference in Cairns, because one of the key speakers at the Conference was Mr Colin Brown, MtS Australia's National Co-ordinator of Ministry. Colin addressed the Conference on the topic 'How Will the MLC Improve the Lives of Seafarers', which is really 'the bottom line' of the MLC!

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Donations over \$2 to the Welfare Fund are tax-deductible.