

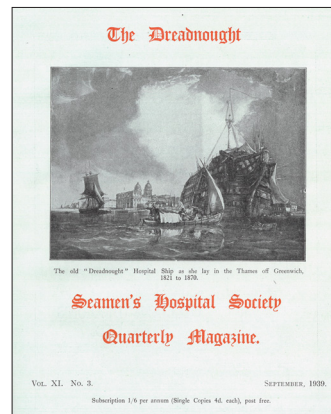


# News update

December 2020

## Welcome from the Chair

As Chair of the Society I'm delighted to welcome you to our first electronic Newsletter, in this our 200th Year. The last quarterly newsletter from the Society was published in September 1939, at another significant moment in history with the outbreak of World War II. It showed that we had six hospitals at that time, including the Dreadnought. When we became part of the NHS in 1948 the Dreadnought continued in Greenwich and then, 40 years later, it transferred to St Thomas's Hospital where it is still healing seafarers.



Christmas celebrations at the Dreadnought Hospital in 1920

Throughout the past 200 years our basic purpose has remained unchanged: *the relief of seafarers and dependants who need assistance and providing such persons with medical and surgical aid, lodging, support and clothing.*

However, the way we've provided that support has changed significantly and never more so than in 2020.

### Our work in 2020

The Society has responded quickly to the Covid-19 pandemic, drawing down funds from our portfolio and increasing the number and level of grants. We have also continued, where possible, to offer physiotherapy services through our physio partners and to provide mental health and wellbeing support through Togetherall.

We are also continuing to move forward with SeaFit for fishermen and their families and will be developing something similar for the Merchant Navy. Mental health and wellbeing will remain a high priority.

This year also saw the appointment of Sandra Welch as our new CEO who has already made a big impact on the work of the Society.

### What's new for 2021?

So, what about the next 12 months? We will continue helping seafarers who face hardship through our welfare grants but with a renewed focus on the holistic care of seafarers and their families. We also have exciting plans for a research project. The primary objective is to increase the overall health and wellbeing of seafarers by conducting a systematic review of

published research into health and wellbeing issues in the maritime workforce. The project will also examine any recommendations made and compare them to those that have been recognised by Seafarers Hospital Society.

Last but not least, in 2021 we will be celebrating our 200th anniversary so do look out for our new website which is to be launched in January, and enjoy a walk through our illustrious history on our interactive timeline.

I hope that you find this first newsletter interesting and helpful. Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.

**Peter McEwen MBE MNM**  
Chair of the Trustees

# Introducing Sandra Welch, CEO



Sandra Welch has been in post for over six months now and is certainly no longer new to the job. Many of you may know Sandra from her previous role at the Sailors' Society where she spent six years as Director of Programmes and COO working across 30 countries and several time zones to provide frontline services to seafarers. SHS couldn't be more different – it's a small organisation with only five members of staff – but the work it does and the impact it has is just as significant.

Starting a new job in the middle of a pandemic has been incredibly challenging but Sandra hasn't been deterred: "Covid certainly changed everything," said Sandra. "All the normal team building and learning that takes place when you join an organisation had to be done remotely and there was none of the usual chatting at the

photocopier or in the kitchen. But we've kept the office open and we all meet up regularly – what would we do without Zoom?"

## Exciting plans for 2021

Sandra has already made her mark. Plans for the charity's bicentenary in 2021 are well underway with new branding already being rolled out and a new website launching in January. Other initiatives being planned for the year include a bicentenary video, an interactive historical review and an online AGM. Watch this space to find out more.

## Raising our profile

Raising the profile of what the Society does and getting the word out about the wide range of support available is top of Sandra's agenda. Speaking engagements, meetings and partnership discussions have all been taking place alongside media coverage for initiatives such as the MCG Mental health and wellbeing awareness training standard, extending free mental health advice and

support from Togetherall (formerly BWW) to seafarers' families, resumption of free face-to-face physiotherapy and the SeaFit dental tours in Devon and Cornwall.

## SHS in the news



# Our response to Covid-19

## Grants to seafarers up by over 50%

The response from the maritime charity sector to Covid-19 has been impressive with several million pounds worth of extra funding being channelled to seafarers in urgent need of support. And the Society has been at the forefront, doing what it does best, with extra money for grants to help those waiting for benefit payments being just one example. In the second quarter of 2020 we paid out £92k in grants, that's over 50% more than the normal quarterly average. Demand was particularly high from the fishing community with so many fishermen unable to fish and in dire financial straits.

## Physios go online

Service provision was more problematic with so much of what we offer being face-to-face. But many of our physios continued to offer online consultations and once lockdown #1 came to an end most of them opened their doors again.

Since January the Seafarers Physiotherapy Network and Connect have provided

**400 sessions**  
of treatment for **98 individuals**

## Togetherall hits a new high

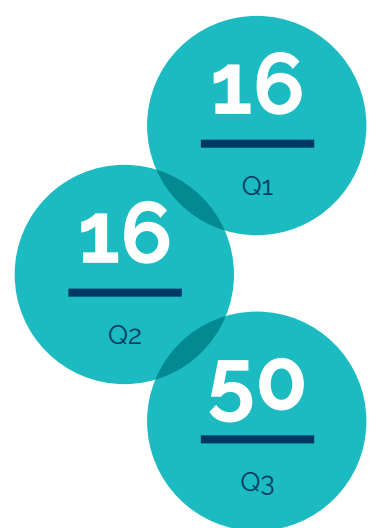
The demand for online mental health advice and support from Togetherall – who changed their name from Big White Wall in response to Black Lives Matter – was unprecedented, with 50 new users in one quarter alone. That's the highest it's ever been.

## New Maritime Anchor Fund

Seafarers UK has launched the UK Maritime Anchor Fund of £150K to support working age UK merchant seafarers experiencing hardship caused by Covid-19 which we are going to administer on their behalf. We're delighted to be involved in this initiative.

We want merchant seafarers to know that support is out there for them and their families. It's not just about money, this is a holistic approach that addresses their wellbeing as well as their welfare needs.

## TOGETHERALL SHOWING FIRST 3 QUARTERS OF 2020



## Update from the rest of our programme

### SeaFit continues to deliver to the fishing community

SeaFit services to the fishing community - which are delivered in partnership with the Fishermen's Mission with support from Seafarers UK - have continued, with health and wellbeing consultations taking place online and face-to-face where possible. Luckily the dental tour of Cornwall and Devon was scheduled before Lockdown #2 so whilst some treatment was off limits, we were still able to provide basic dental treatment and oral health advice to 39 fishermen in 6 different ports. All other major quayside events have been postponed until Spring 2021.



**SEAFIT**  
PROGRAMME

Mental health and wellbeing are high on the SeaFit agenda with increasing demand for support from our services in Newlyn and Norfolk, especially as a result of Covid. To find out how the Fishwell mental health and wellbeing project has helped watch our video [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1baACFws6kY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1baACFws6kY&feature=youtu.be)

### Dreadnought service is open

Unfortunately, at the start of the Covid-19 crisis, and in line with other NHS services, all elective work at St Thomas' Hospital stopped, including the Dreadnought Medical Service. However, the good news is that the NHS is now encouraging hospitals and GP's surgeries to reopen as normally as possible - including for acute procedures. Seafarers who need elective procedures can visit their GP or MCA-approved doctor to request a referral to the hospital via the Dreadnought Medical Unit. Those with existing referrals will be contacted directly by the hospital. There will inevitably be delays as normal service slowly resumes, but it is good news that this important service for seafarers is slowly returning.

To find out more about what is and isn't available from the Society at any time, get in touch by calling the office on **020 8858 3696** or email [admin@seahospital.org.uk](mailto:admin@seahospital.org.uk)

### SEAFIT STATISTICS



**488**

health trainer consultations



**334**

dental checks



**176**

mental health and wellbeing sessions

## The people we've helped

### Fishermen

"I just wish that this service was available 15 years ago, as two of my friends might be still alive now, having lost two fishers to suicide one 3 years ago and one 14 years ago."

"Fishermen go through a lot of things in secret that they do not really speak about. Having a confidential service quayside has been beneficial."

### And MN seafarers

"After I lost my job, I felt like I was losing everything. The grant and financial advice and help you gave my family literally saved us. Thank you!"



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