‘Loneliness is like a shadow…it follows you everywhere’.

This is how one messman responded, in 2018, when he was asked to describe his life at sea. Whilst such eloquence is perhaps unusual, the sentiment expressed is commonplace and has been regularly articulated to staff at SIRC over the last twenty years. Working on long-term contracts, at sea, and far away from home, loneliness is one of the most prevalent emotions amongst contemporary seafarers.

Mindful of such issues, some forward-thinking companies reduced the length of their standard per voyage contracts in the period 2011-16 and it was pleasing to be able to report this in one of our free online publications in 2018, ‘The working and living conditions of seafarers on cargo ships in the period 2011-2016’ (www.sirc.cf.ac.uk/SIRC_Free_Online_Reports.aspx). In the same report we also identified a significant increase in internet provision – much of it free and unlimited. Both measures have the capacity to contribute to a strengthening of the bonds between seafarers and communities ashore, and may also help to reduce the levels of anxiety and depression found amongst seafarers - militating against mental health problems and any associated tendencies for self-harm.

However, it seems we need to greet such encouraging findings with extreme caution, as progress can be rapidly reversed. In January 2019, we were disappointed to hear that a major container line which had previously reduced the length of ratings’ per voyage contracts to six months is now rolling back on this and returning to a nine month standard. This is bad news for crews living in the shadow of isolation and solitude and it tarnishes the reputation of the global shipping industry - presenting a challenge to anyone interested in representing the cargo sector as humane and socially responsible.

Mental health issues and seafarer suicides have pre-occupied us, at SIRC, in 2018, as we have continued to focus on these issues as part of an IOSH-funded study of seafarers’ mental wellbeing.
There is little doubt that this has been an issue which has captured the attention of many stakeholders in the shipping industry in recent years. However, as is often the case in this global, and highly segmented industry, we are bedevilled by a lack of available statistical data. Some find this absence of ‘hard data’ incomprehensible and imagine that it must be somewhere ‘out there’ just waiting to be accessed by researchers who are, perhaps, more motivated or better skilled. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Hard data depend on reports being made by seafarers to companies, by companies to P&I clubs or flag states, and by flag states or P&I clubs to interested parties (including researchers). They depend on reports being made, and also on data being recorded and stored in an accessible format. They further require a greater degree of consistency, than is currently found across the industry, with regard to what is recorded and how. One final complication with regard to fatality data in the industry, is that whilst there are some bodies which consistently attempt to record incidents, they rarely have access to ‘population data’ (e.g. the number of seafarers employed under a flag, or covered by a P&I club, over a particular time period) and it is therefore impossible for anyone to construct ‘rates’ which allow for reliable comparisons to be made over time and across industries. So it is a difficult job to ascertain the scale of the problem of mental ill-health amongst seafarers and of fatalities and injuries within the industry more generally. For this reason we look forward to the publication of our findings from a current IOSH-funded SIRC study which we hope will make a significant contribution to the understanding of the nature of seafarers’ mental wellbeing and the ways in which it could be improved.

Looking ahead to 2019 and 2020 we will continue to work on this issue and on other research relating to: seafarers’ faith; mandatory equipment; and ship-shore interactions; in an effort to contribute to improvements in the health, safety, and wellbeing, of those who work in the international cargo shipping industry.

Professor Helen Sampson
2018 was a busy year for the Seafarers International Research Centre. We published the findings of several significant studies, saw the completion of various PhD theses, and began new projects. We also engaged with stakeholders across the maritime spectrum via: the production and distribution of various multi-media resources; attendance at maritime events; attendance at policy fora; and of course in receiving a number of visitors at the Centre in Cardiff.

The first of our guests in 2018 was Jon Foster who visited us in his (relatively) new role as advocacy manager for the Sailors’ Society. Jon wished to become more familiar with the welfare-related work undertaken at SIRC over the last few decades as part of a program of familiarisation designed to support the development of an advocacy initiative at the Sailors’ Society. His visit was followed in March by another member of the maritime community seeking to support seafarers’ welfare – Jason Zudeima from NAMMA. As a Centre with a great concern for seafarers’ wellbeing, we were delighted to meet with both Jason and Jon and to provide whatever support and assistance we could.

In March, we were notified that a Newton Advanced Fellowship application made by Dr Fernando Ramalho Martins, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Brazil, and Professor Helen Sampson from SIRC had been successful. The project seeks to undertake a comparative analysis of the impact of labour and capital mobility upon workers in the automotive and shipping industries and it will last for two years.

March also saw a couple of researchers at SIRC travel to present papers at different conferences. Neil Ellis travelled to London to present a paper on mental health at sea to the Sailors’ Society Wellness at Sea conference whilst Nelson Turgo made the longer journey to Argentina to present a paper on the performance of masculinity amongst seafarers at the 36th International Labour Process Conference.
As the UK recovered from the so-called ‘Mini Beast from the East’ which brought a late spell of severe weather and disruption in mid-March, Nelson, Iris and Amaha prepared for a series of meetings and presentations. In April, Nelson went to the Mission to Seafarers’ regional conference in Chesham to talk about our ESRC-funded project on faith and to take the opportunity to conduct a few interviews with key personnel.

He also attended the Sailors’ Society 200th Anniversary Service at Southwark Cathedral. Amaha went to a conference on the design and operation of search and rescue craft held by the Royal Institution of Naval Architects in London, and both Iris and Amaha attended the Nautical Institute London Branch Conference in Bristol. Meanwhile from our base in Cardiff, Helen accepted an invitation to join a newly established advisory group in support of the Sailors’ Society future campaigns.

In May, Helen, Iris, Neil and Amaha all attended an international conference organised by Lloyd’s Register Foundation in London. The conference showcased a range of innovative research and development projects supported by the Foundation covering four strategic themes: promoting safety and public understanding; advancement of skills and education; supporting excellent scientific research; and accelerating the application of research.

The following week, Helen was in London again to attend a workshop in support of the Department for Transport initiative ‘Maritime 2050’. The workshop was organised as part of a consultation exercise with maritime stakeholders and experts. The exercise underpinned the development of the government strategy for shipping which was formally launched in January 2019.
In the third week of May, Helen and Nelson both attended the European CrewConnect conference in Hamburg, where Helen was part of a panel considering the return on investment relating to seafarers’ welfare. This was fittingly subtitled ‘Pay now or pay more later?’. Whilst in Hamburg, Helen not only caught up with the range of delegates attending the CrewConnect conference but also the former captain of one of the first vessels she sailed with (back in 2000) who gave her a guided tour of the port and an up to date insight into developments in the local shipping industry.

Meanwhile, Iris had travelled to Singapore where she attended the 22nd HR & Crew Management Conference and shortly afterwards our ‘Advanced Newton Fellow’ Fernando Ramalho Martins arrived in Cardiff to work with Helen on their study comparing auto workers and seafarers.

However, prior to the start of their collaborative efforts Helen travelled to London to attend the Sailors’ Society 200th anniversary reception at Westminster where Kim Spooner, whose aunt and uncle lost their lives in the *Herald of Free Enterprise* disaster, spoke movingly about her family’s experience and the support they have received from the Sailors’ Society over the years.
In June, Amaha attended the ‘European Consortium for Political Research Standing Group Conference’ in Paris (France) and presented a paper on the securitisation of migration based upon his PhD research into the global governance of stowaways. Meanwhile Iris was in the Philippines where she met one of Cardiff University’s undergraduate students who had secured a ‘Global Opportunities’ placement at the Third World Studies Centre in the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of the Philippines (UP), Diliman. In recent years, UP Diliman and SIRC have developed a close academic relationship based upon shared research interests and a formal Memorandum of Understanding. This connection underpins the development of the Global Opportunities placement, in Manila, which we hope to continue with in the coming years.

As the UK basked in summer sunshine, Victor Gekara, one of our former students and colleagues, arrived from RMIT University in Australia where he works as an Associate Professor. Victor was not only in Cardiff to avoid the Melbourne winter and catch up with friends, however, he came as a visiting scholar with a program of research-related activities to fulfill. One of the most significant of these, was the finalisation of a manuscript with Helen, which is based upon a range of work produced by SIRC-Nippon Foundation fellows in the period 2004-2018.

Over the summer, we were joined at SIRC by Alice Wiggins who came to assist us with the IOSH-funded study of seafarers’ mental wellbeing. Alice was sponsored by the Cardiff University Research Opportunities Programme (CUROP) which provides students with the opportunity to benefit from paid work experience relating to active research studies within the University.

Both Amaha and Helen presented papers in July. Helen attended the ‘XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology’ in Toronto, to give a paper with her long standing friend and colleague from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro – Professor José Ricardo Ramalho. The paper addressed some of the complex challenges of globalisation focussing upon union strategies in the shipping and automotive Industries. Our Advanced Newton Fellow, Fernando Ramalho Martins, was also at the congress and presented a paper in a panel jointly convened by Helen and José as part of the ‘RC30 Sociology of Work’ stream.
Following the conference Helen visited the port and the Mission to Seafarers ‘post’ located on the ‘sugar dock’. This Seafarers’ Centre was about to close/relocate as a consequence of some of the port changes that have occurred in recent years but Helen was pleased to have an opportunity to meet the resident cat – Titus – as well as the serving port chaplain and one of the key Toronto volunteers. The visit allowed her to gain an insight into some of the current issues facing chaplains engaged in supporting seafarers’ welfare as well as into broader shipping operations on the Great Lakes. Meanwhile Amaha presented a paper on his unique research with stowaways at a ‘Risky Methods’ Workshop in Liverpool.

In August, Fernando Ramalho Martins made his second visit to Cardiff and was soon joined by visiting fellows Jingying Chen from Xiamen University and Yingchun Liu from Dalian Maritime University.

In September, Amaha travelled to the beautiful city of Prague where he was privileged to present another paper on his PhD research on stowaways to the Pan-European Conference on International Relations. Nelson was also on the move, journeying to Singapore to win a ‘best paper’ award at the Political Science, Sociology and Industrial Relations (PSSIR) conference for a paper he presented on seafarers’ sense of time whilst serving on board cargo ships.

In October, Hiroto Shimizu, arrived in Cardiff to spend time with us as a visiting scholar at SIRC. Hiroto is a Research Fellow in the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science at Ryukoku University.

Meanwhile, Helen travelled to London to meet with a senior member of the Nippon Foundation (NF) in order to discuss ways of continuing to support productive workshop events for SIRC-NF fellowship alumni and the publication of an edited collection based upon many of the successful theses which have emerged from the SIRC-NF PhD scholarship program.

As the summer faded, we were briefly joined by Ana Slišković from the University of Zadar in Croatia, who visited for three days supported by the Erasmus Staff Mobility for Training program. Ana presented her work to SIRC staff, students, and visiting scholars where it was very well-received and for the remainder of her visit she focused upon SIRC work concerning seafarers’ wellbeing.
In November, at the CrewConnect conference in Manila, Helen launched an animation that she created with the assistance of a professional company as part of our Lloyd’s Register Foundation supported program to create positive change in the industry following completed studies of mandatory equipment, ship-shore interaction and accommodation design for seafarers. The animation is available to all companies who wish to offer training to shore-staff in support of improvements in intra-organisation ship-shore relationships. The animation which is called ‘An Everyday Tale of Life at Sea: A training resource for companies to improve ship-shore relationships’ is available, on request, free of charge from SIRC (details are available on the SIRC website). So far we have received 32 requests for the animation and accompanying training guide from a variety of companies including some of the largest in the international shipping community. The initiative has also attracted the attention of the maritime press and a lot of positive feedback from senior industry figures.

Teaching

The following contributions to teaching and training in the school and university were made in 2018:

Helen joined colleagues from other research centres to contribute to a one-off training event for staff relating to securing large research grants. She also provided a workshop for PhD students concerned to mitigate risk in relation to their fieldwork as part of a long-term program of support provided by the Doctoral Academy at Cardiff University.

Carolyn Graham, worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the School of Social Sciences in support of the undergraduate degree programme covering classes on: Globalisation and Social Change (third years); Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Sciences (first years); Introduction to Social and Developmental Psychology (first years); Sociology, Society and Social Change (first years).
In January 2018, a new program commenced funded by the Lloyd’s Register Foundation. This two-year project seeks to create impact in relation to two previous studies funded by the Lloyd’s Register Foundation, The TK Foundation and Cardiff University, which considered the relationships between shore-side and shipboard personnel and the use of shipboard mandatory equipment on-board merchant ships. It also seeks to promote positive change with regard to the design of seafarers’ accommodation on board.

In March 2018, Helen Sampson and Fernando Ramalho Martins began work on a collaborative project funded by the British Academy as part of their Advanced Newton Fellowship programme. The new data which will be collected as part of the study will largely come from interviews and fieldwork with personnel associated with the auto manufacturing/assembling sector of Brazil. These data will subsequently be compared with data from the shipping industry. The project has got off to a good start and successful interviews have been conducted in two regions of production in Brazil.

Our IOSH-funded study of seafarers’ mental wellbeing has progressed well in 2018. We have administered questionnaires with a large number of seafarers, we have worked hard to gain responses to a questionnaire targeted at employers and we have undertaken a number of interviews with P&I club representatives, stakeholders, seafarers, and company HR managers.

In relation to our ESRC-funded study of faith, we have made considerable progress with data collection and Nelson has completed the second of our two-scheduled voyages. Archive material from ICMA has been carefully analysed and a small number of qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and chaplains have been conducted.

The collaboration between Professor Helen Sampson and Stord Haugesund University College (SHUC) has continued and she and Idar Johannessen have successfully submitted an article describing the usefulness of ‘real-life vignettes’ to a well-ranked journal on qualitative research methods.

Our collaborations with our network of associate fellows across the world continue and this year we completed the preparation of an edited collection of work which is derived from original PhD studies. The work is currently under review with a leading University Press.
In 2019, we will complete our IOSH-funded study of seafarers’ mental wellbeing and will publish our findings alongside a good practice guide for the shipping industry. We will make significant progress in relation to the promotion of positive change in the industry concerning ship-shore relationships, mandatory equipment, and vessel accommodation design, and in line with these objectives we will produce a film for port-personnel and a good practice guide relating to vessel accommodation design. In conjunction with our ESRC-funded study of faith, we will complete our archive-based work on materials held in Hull and will organise and advance fieldwork in two UK ports. We will continue our collaborative work with colleagues in Brazil, Norway and Denmark and will continue to work with our network of associate fellows across the globe.

Theses and Alumni

In 2018, the following PhDs were awarded to students supported by the Nippon Foundation:

Amewu Attah, for her study of the impact of oil exploitation on a Ghanaian fishing community (supervisors Helen Sampson and Nelson Turgo)

Amaha Senu for his work on the intended and unintended consequences of state border regulation, policing and policies on undocumented migration using the case of seafarers and maritime stowaways (supervisors Helen Sampson and Adam Edwards)

The following MPhil was also awarded:

Sarah Simons for her analysis of maritime piracy in Eastern Africa in the period 2000-2010 and its impact on seafarers’ welfare (supervisors Nick Bailey and Trevor Jones)
Work is progressing on the following postgraduate studies (all of which have been financially supported by The Nippon Foundation):

Ralph Buiser - Unionised Seafarers and Maritime Trade Unions in the Philippines

Jabeth Dacanay - Regulating Occupational Health and Safety in the Maritime Industry: A Case Study of the Philippines


Isaac Mensah - The Dynamics of Poverty, Inequality and Coping Strategies Among Small-Scale Fishers in Ghana

Rogenen Pepito - Understanding the Crewing Crisis in the Context of Agency Employment: Perspectives from Seafarers, Crewing Agents and Ship Managers

**Career Success of SIRC-Nippon Foundation Fellows and Alumni**

Dr Sanley Abila is currently an Associate Professorial Lecturer at the College of Liberal Arts, Science and Education, University of San Agustin, Philippines

Capt Mohab Abou-Elkawam is a Senior Lecturer in Nautical Studies at Liverpool Maritime Academy, Liverpool John Moores University, UK

Dr Iris Acejo is a Research Associate at the Seafarers International Research Centre, Cardiff University, UK

Dr Ngwatung Akamangwa is a Researcher & Analyst at the Centre for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, USA

Dr Nippin Anand is a Principal Specialist in Safety Management System and Human Factors, DNV (Det Norske Veritas) GL – Maritime, UK
Dr Amewu Attah is currently a Lecturer at the Regional Maritime University, Ghana

Dr Polina Baum-Talmor is a Postdoctoral Researcher, at Solent University, UK

Ms Jessica Bernfeld is a Deputy State Public Defender for Colorado State, Colorado, USA

Prof Syamantak Bhattacharya is the Dean of Warsash School of Maritime Science & Engineering, Solent University, UK

Mr Ralph Buiser works as an International Market Insight Officer at the University of Bristol, UK

Ms Jabeth Dacanay has established the Dacanay Magracia Law Offices, Philippines

Dr Helen Devereux is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Warsash Maritime Academy, Solent University, UK

Dr Manasi Dutt is a Project Manager for Bernhard Schulte Cruise Services, Germany

Dr Roderick Galam is a Lecturer in Sociology at Oxford Brookes University, UK

Dr Victor Gekara is an Associate Professor in the School of Business Information Technology and Logistics, RMIT University, Australia

Dr Aditi Kataria is a Doctoral Research Candidate (for a 2nd PhD) at the University of Tasmania, Australia

Dr Momoko Kitada is an Associate Professor at the World Maritime University and Secretary of the WMU Women's Association, Malmö, Sweden

Dr Priscilla Leong is the Assistant Manager at Wavelink Maritime Institute, Singapore

Dr Lin Li is a Documentation Administrator, Dalian COSCO Shipping, China

Dr Mark Llangco is an Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of the Philippines Los Baños, Philippines

Dr Don Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III is an Associate Professor of Public Health, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, China

Dr Capt Shahriar Mazhari is a Lecturer at Warsash Maritime Academy, Solent University, UK
Dr Jean Pia is the Director II of the Overseas Shipping Service, Maritime Industry Authority, Philippines

Dr Amaha Senu is a Research Associate at the Seafarers International Research Centre, Cardiff University, UK

Dr Desai Shan is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Ocean Frontier Institute in the Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University, Canada

Dr Lijun Tang is a Lecturer in International Shipping & Management at Plymouth University, UK

Dr Nelson Turgo is a Research Associate at the Seafarers International Research Centre, Cardiff University, UK

Dr Conghua Xue is an Associate Professor & Deputy Director at the Office of High-level College Construction, Jiangsu Shipping College, China

Dr Peidong Yang is a Lecturer at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Dr Zhiwei Zhao is a Lecturer at Dalian Maritime University, China/Centre of Maritime Health and Safety, University of Southern Denmark

In January 2018, Amaha Senu joined the staff at SIRC as a full-time Research Associate. We also received a number of visiting scholars at the centre including: Fernando Ramalho Martins from UNESP in Brazil; Victor Gekara from RMIT University in Australia; Jingying Chen from Xiamen University in China; Yingchun Liu from Dalian Maritime University in China; and Hiroto Shimizu from Ryukoku University in Japan.

In sadder news, we regret the loss of Professor Alastair Couper in September. Professor Couper was instrumental in setting up the Seafarers International Research Centre in 1995 and served as its first Director in the period 1995-1997. Despite his retirement, Alastair never abandoned the University and was a frequent visitor to SIRC and a true friend and supporter of the staff. He is greatly missed.
Academic Staff at 31 December 2018

Prof Helen Sampson  Director
Dr Iris Acejo  Research Associate
Mr Neil Ellis  Research Associate
Dr Amaha Senu  Research Associate
Dr Nelson Turgo  Research Associate

Administrative Staff

Ms Louise Deeley  Executive Officer
Ms Kate Whittaker  Clerical Officer

Associate Fellows

Dr Sanley Abila  Dr Helen Devereux  Dr Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III
Dr Mohab Abou-Elkawam  Dr Manasi Dutt  Dr Shahriar Mazhari
Dr Ngwatung Akamangwa  Dr Victor Gekara  Dr Jean Pia
Prof Maragtas Amante  Dr Aditi Kataria  Dr Desai Shan
Dr Nippin Anand  Dr Momoko Kitada  Dr Lijun Tang
Dr Amewu Attah  Dr Priscilla Leong  Dr Conghua Xue
Dr Polina Baum-Talmor  Dr Lin Li  Dr Peidong Yang
Dr Syamantak Bhattacharya  Dr Mark Llangco  Dr Zhiwei Zhao

Visiting Scholars / Interns

Alice Wiggins, CURPOP student, Cardiff University (July-August)
Dr Victor Gekara, RMIT University, Australia (July-November)
Jingying Chen, Xiamen University, China (September for 12 months)
Yingchun Liu, Dalian Maritime University, China (September for 6 months)
Hiroto Shimizu, Ryukoku University, Japan (September for 18 months)
Ana Slišković, University of Zadar, Croatia (October for 3 days)

Awards & Nominations

In September 2018 Dr Nelson Turgo was awarded Best Research Paper at the 8th Annual International Conference on Political Science, Sociology and International Relations (PSSIR 2018) Singapore, for 'Time after time: Filipino seafarers' notion and experiencing of time on board ocean-going cargo vessels.'
Academic Journal Articles


**Books**


**Short Works and Reports**


Authored Publications in Maritime Press


Contribution to Edited Works


Theses (completed)


Book Review


**Refereed (Published Conference Contributions)**


**Shan, D.** (2018) Mapping the Occupational Health and Safety Challenges arising from Employment-relate Geographical Mobility among Canadian Seafarers on the Great Lakes and St Lawrence Seaway. On the Move: Employment-related Geographical Mobility in Canada and Beyond International Symposium, Memorial University, St John’s, NL, 18-21 November.


Guest Lectures, Seminars, Panels, Workshops, Conferences (unpublished papers presented)

Abila, S. (2018) The Occupational Socialisation of Merchant Marine Cadets in the Philippines, Project Southeast Asia International Conference organised by Oxford University (UK) and University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia, 24-26 March.


Other Conferences, Workshops Attended (paper not delivered)


**Baum-Talmor, P.** (2018) WSMSE Research Seminar Series. A talk by Anne Longmuir presenting her findings on the Relationship between Seafaring and Wellbeing of Cadet-Officers and Experienced Officers, Solent University, 28 November.


**Shan, D.** (2018) Regulating maritime occupational health and safety in the Canadian Arctic Gateway, the ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting, Ottawa, Canada, 10-14 December.


**Shan, D.** (2018) Session 4: Enforcement of Labour Rights, in Migrants at Work in Canada Symposium, Centre for Law in the Contemporary Workplace, Queen’s University, 20-21 April.

SIRC Work in the Media - Engagement and Impact


Forthcoming Publications


Abbreviations and Acronyms

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
CUROP: Cardiff University Research Opportunities Programme
DOI: Digital Object Identifier
eds: Editors
ESRC: Economic and Social Research Council
HR: Human resources
ICMA: International Christian Maritime Association
INTED: International Technology, Education and Development Conference
IOSH: Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
ISSN: International Standard Serial Number
ITF: International Transport Workers’ Federation
NAMMA: North American Maritime Ministry Association
PhD: Doctor of Philosophy
P&I: Protection & Indemnity
PSSIR: Political Science, Sociology and Industrial Relations
RMIT: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SHUC: Stord/Haugesund University College
SIRC: Seafarers International Research Centre
TK: Torben Karlshoej
UNESP: Universidade Estadual Paulista
UP: University of the Philippines