

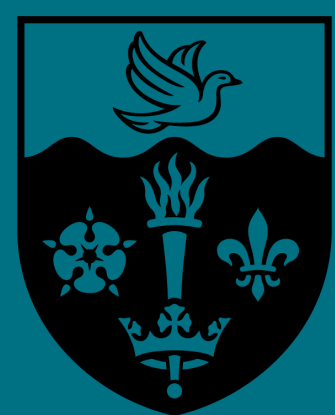
Don't miss the latest display in  
our Library exhibition cases!

Head into the Library to discover  
what a lantern slide is and how  
they can help us learn about  
early 20th century seafaring...

## View Through a Lens



Uncovering seafarers lives in the photographs  
of the Mission to Seafarers



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# What's a glass lantern slide?

Before the digital age, lantern slides were created so that images could be viewed as a projection.

The photographs featured in these exhibition cases are digitised versions of late 19th and early 20th century monochrome lantern slides.



To make a lantern slide:

- a square piece of transparent glass is covered in a layer chemical emulsion,
- the chemicals are used to develop a photographic image onto the glass,
- a second piece of transparent glass is placed over the image to protect it,
- thin paper tape is glued around the edges of both pieces to hold them together.



The first plates prepared for projection in this way were created in 1850. Over time, the commercial viability of the process increased.

By the later 19th century, lantern slides were commonly used to show educational and entertainment content. The examples seen here were used to stage projection shows which highlighted and promoted the work of the Mission to Seafarers.



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During the 19th century, maritime missionary societies sprang up along UK coastlines and waterways. In setting up these societies, missionaries expressed concern for the spiritual, moral and physical welfare of seafarers. A national society was formed in 1856 to co-ordinate the activities of local missions of the Anglican Church. The society became known as the Mission to Seafarers and surviving records are held at Hull History Centre. This extensive and fascinating archive offers us the chance to understand more about the lives of seafarers.

The surviving records consist mainly of administrative papers, such as updates to head office, annual reports, minutes of meetings, and publicity material. The subjects they cover include staff appointments, operational matters, and business activities. The voice of the individual seafarer, therefore, is a rare discovery. Finding these individual voices can help us to start to see seafarers as individuals with their own lived experience, rather than as a homogeneous community. Survival of photographic material offers a unique opportunity to discover individual lives. Excitingly, the Mission to Seafarers archive also includes photographs.

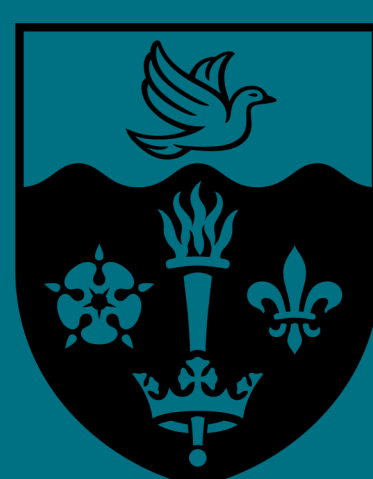
## View Through a Lens

In these exhibition cases are a selection of images from the collection which reveal seafarers onboard ship, in port, and at social events. However, when looking at them, we should be conscious that they were originally created for publicity purposes and to show the society's interactions with seafarers in a positive light.



RefNo. U DMS/16/7/1/50

Uncovering seafarers lives in the photographs  
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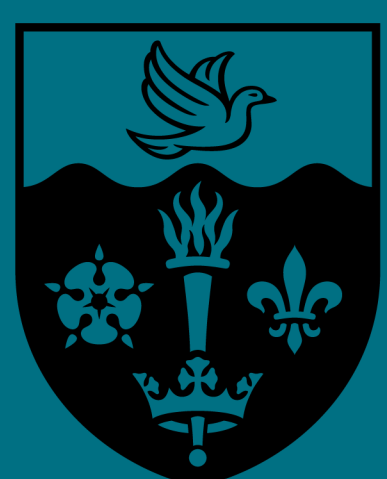
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# At the Seamen's Institute...

The Mission to Seafarers operated institutes for seafarers to use when in port away from home. Institutes usually contained billiards tables, libraries and newspapers, a place to write letters home, and refreshments.



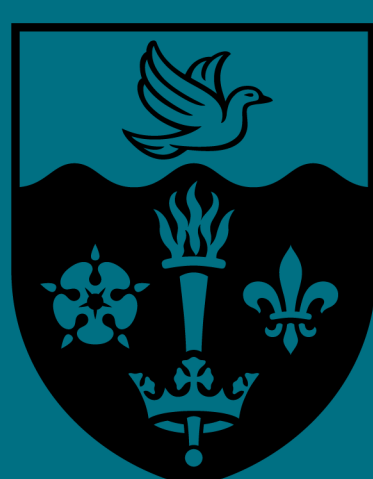
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# Onboard Ship...

Crews weren't always able to leave their ships when in port making ship visiting one of the chaplain's most important jobs. These photographs give us a glimpse of how seafarers spent the free time reading, playing cards, and chatting. They also show that some seafarers chose to speak to chaplains during their visits and attend religious services that they held.



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# Sports, walks and picnics...

Entertainments such as sports events, rambles, picnics and dinner dances were arranged for seafarers that chose to engage with Missions to Seamen whilst onshore. Football and tug of war teams were fielded by local parish members and institute staff and faced ships crews in friendly matches.



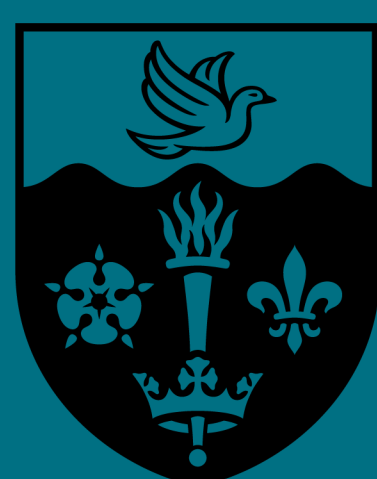
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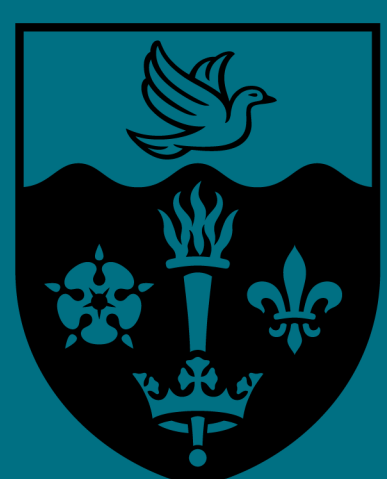
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# Health and Wellbeing...

These images give a sense of how seafarers looked after their own health and wellbeing. One also illustrates that seafarers could experience illness whilst in port away from home. If hospitalised, they might receive a visit from the local port chaplain. If a death occurred, funerals could be held by port chaplains if requested.



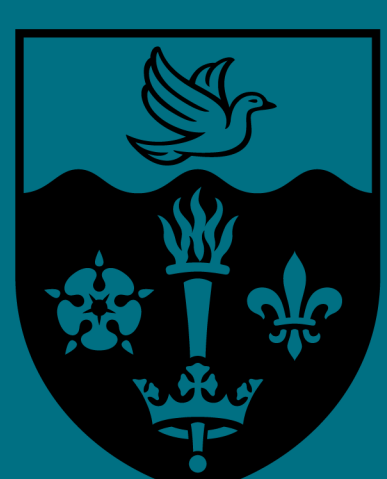
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# Lighthouses and Lightships...

Before automation, lighthouses and lightships had to be manned continuously by lightkeepers. These men were stationed in remote, largely unreachable places. Chaplains were often the only people they would see for weeks on end. Here we see lightkeepers occupying themselves by playing cards, reading and listening to records.



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# Missionaries as Seafarers

Let's not forget that maritime missionaries were themselves seafaring folk.

The crews of isolated rock lighthouses, lightships anchored at sea, and remote fishing fleet vessels, were all considered members of the chaplain's flock.

Reaching these hard-to-access places required chaplains to board boats and take to the seas, whilst getting into them often took feats of agility in hazardous watery settings.



RefNo. U DMS/16/7/1/5



A Missions to Seamen chaplain being hoisted from a small boat up to a rock lighthouse

[U DMS/16/7/6/3]



A large vessel waiting to meet a small boat bringing a chaplain back from a rock lighthouse

[U DMS/16/7/6/4]



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Missions to Seamen staff onboard a boat pulling alongside a large ship at anchor

[U DMS/16/7/1/6]



Missions to Seamen staff climbing wood and chain ladders to board a vessel

[U DMS/16/7/3/16]



The Mission vessel 'Francis Logie Pirie' sailing in a channel with three Mission to Seafarers staff onboard

[U DMS/16/7/33]



A Mission to Seamen chaplain helping to transfer a care package from a Mission vessel to crewmen onboard a ship anchored away from port

[U DMS/16/7/1/2]



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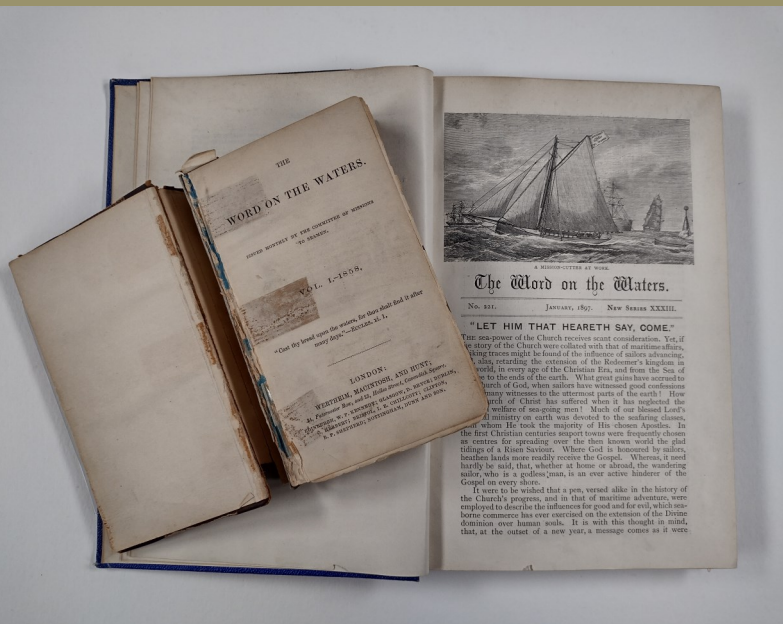


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# Further Glimpses

Passing mentions of the lived experience of seafarers can also be found in written evidence left by the missionaries who interacted with them. This written evidence might take the form of a personal diary entry, or an update report submitted to a society newsletter.



These examples, taken from the Mission to Seafarers archive, demonstrate how such records can help us uncover little details about the lives of seafarers that we might otherwise no nothing about.

- A. Journal kept by Reverend Nibbs during his time as a Mission to Seafarers port chaplain at both Hull and Belgium, 1915-1920 [U DMS/20/2/3]
- B. Bound volume containing the earliest surviving issues of 'Word on the Waters', the first magazine to be published by the Mission to Seafarers, 1858-1859 [U DMS/13/1/1]



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