



Podcast 2 : Beyond the Horizon and Beneath the Surface

You are listening to Port Walks an art project of podcasts creating a temporary link between Dublin Port Workers and Dublin Port Walkers. The workers are the seafarers who pass through Dublin port. The walkers are the people who use Dublin Port & Bay area for recreational walking, particularly on the Great South Wall leading to Poolbeg Lighthouse. All ships entering Dublin Port pass along the channel adjacent to this area. Hence it's at the Great South Wall that we begin, but of course you can listen from anywhere.

The walk from the Sluice house to the Poolbeg lighthouse and back again is 4km. The cobbles underfoot are uneven so take care and be aware of prevailing weather and tidal conditions. Wind & tide together can periodically submerge the wall.

Somehow we have forgotten about the sea, Allan Sekula calls it *the Forgotten Space* in his film of the same name and Rose George calls it *Sea Blindness* in her book *Deep Sea & Foreign Going*. She says we are blind to the sea as a place of industry or of work. It's just something we fly over, a patch of blue on an airline map. Nothing to see, move along.

All the while in our imagination we yearn to be close to the sea, to live by it and to have a sea view. Those lucky enough to do so call their homes, Sea Foam, The Lookout, Ard na Mara, Realt na Mara, Cois Farrage, Harbour View, Sea View, Ocean View. There is some irony in realizing we don't see what we are looking at. The flight of the ocean from our consciousness conceals the loneliness of seafarers on long contracts far from home, the legal flouting of regulatory measures that protect workers and the environment, and the global supply chain of goods in a vast, slow, procession of ships carrying over 90% of world trade. Beyond the horizon lies a global industry of shipping without which we might starve or freeze.

Walking the Great South Wall gives an unparalleled view of the sea. Stretching almost 2km out into Dublin Bay, it provides in the time it takes to walk it, an opportunity to suspend belief in the romance of your eyes and instead hear what's happening beyond the horizon and beneath the surface.

The Great South Wall extends into Dublin Bay from a position 53 20.4 minutes North & 6.20.6 minutes West. These are the navigational coordinates of latitude and longitude the historical conventions for identifying a position on the planet. History and convention too have shaped the maritime industry so that it appears almost as a pre existing fact. In actuality shipping in its current form is an outcome of complex and interconnected forces, not apparent to the eye. And just as hydrophonic equipment can yield an impression of what is happening beneath the waves, an attention to specific practices gives a particular insight into the sea as a place of trade and a place of work.

PART 1 Beyond the Horizon

Walking the Great South Wall brings you past the shipping channel for entry and exit to Dublin Port. Here you will see

- Passenger Ferries,
- roro's Roll on roll off ships carrying wheeled cargo of cars, trucks and trailers,
- Lo los lift on lift off ships with onboard cranes to load and unload cargo,
- tankers,
- container ships,
- bulk cargo carriers,
- cruise liners
- and naval vessels,
- as well as port tugs, barges and pilot boats.

Dublin Port displays the schedule of arrivals and departures on its website, so it possible to anticipate ship movements. Before beginning the approach to Dublin Port many ships lie at anchor at a designated anchorage to the South East of the Great South Wall. They can be seen through a haze of sea spray waiting for their slot on a berth to load and unload. For most people we only become aware of ships, the cargoes they carry and quite possibly the crews on board when we see them entering port: anything that happens beyond the horizon, or below the waterline is invisible to us.

It's the disasters that capture our attention: sinking, drowning, polluting, piracy and abandonment. Ian Urbina has written extensively of these in a series for the New York Times called *The Outlaw Ocean*. The work is set to become an action film produced by Leonardo di Caprio for Netflix. and while each is indeed a problem, they draw attention away from the day to day activities which unknown to most landlubbers shape our lives now and will do so even more in the future. Shipping may well be the prototype of our future industries.

When you see a ship you are only seeing a tiny tip of the massive industry of shipping. Beneath it lie a labyrinth of owners, insurers, investors, operating companies, manning agencies, and regulators, complexly connected in a globalised and historically secretive industry and who have adopted novel practices that make shipping unique.

Flags of convenience are one such practice. Under International Law every merchant ship must be registered with a country known as its flag state. The ships then operate under the jurisdiction of their flag state and have to comply with its laws and regulations. The practice of flagging out began in the 1920s when American ship owners reflagged their ships to Panama to skirt Prohibition and other legislative measures. After World War 2 with US support Liberia established an open registry



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and many developing countries followed suit. Now almost three quarters of the world commercial fleet operate under flags of convenience.

Historically a ship or a company is tied to the country that its based in, so you could have a Dutch company with a Dutch flag historically, Irish company and Irish flag, American , American flag but that means you are governed by the regulations of that country or flag. So back in the day certain countries offered their flag to national flagged vessels to allow them to bypass national regulations and they are then covered by that particular flag country. so they are call flags of convenience because the company is using the flag of convenience to avoid, in our opinion, regulation covering taxes, wages, health and safety so you have a national flag country losing a vessel or a company the company signs with whatever flag of convenience country that is covered by regulations from that country.

Panama and Liberia hold the largest registries by a huge margin but even States which have no marine borders, like Mongolia are permitted to hold a register.

Cargo was general cargo trading Red sea East coast of Africa and India – Flag was Mongolia – suitable, suitable flag for the small money to pay in taxes

Shipowners who use flags of convenience can save on operating costs and search for the cheapest crew available all over the world. This obviously has had an impact on the employment of high wage crews from countries like Ireland.

Yes to be blunt and it's a shame if you went to the normal FOC (Flag of convenience) merchant navy vessel you'd rarely find an Irish or a UK captain or officer outside of the ferries.

Few shipowners employ crews. Instead the management of crews is outsourced to manning agencies who hire crews often on a per voyage basis.

that is one of the biggest problems a seafarers has working through a manning agency he doesn't know what kind of ship he is going to be sent to. They arrive they are given where they are going they arrive into whatever country met by an agent and brought to the ship and that's there home for 9 months and all because its just precarious casualisation of employment and if they are on a good ship you meet a seafarer on a really well regulated tanker with good facilities they just want to stay working there because they know they could end up on some feeder container vessel tearing back and forth constantly working and struggling to get the correct amount of rest hours

According to Sampson & Bloor at the Seafarer International Research Centre at the Cardiff Univeristy, 'Flagging out' and the associated movement away from national control transformed the shipping industry into a truly global sector no longer bound by national legislation.



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It's a global industry, its probably the original global industry and the manning power is gone very global.

If a ship passes you while you are walking on the Great South Wall, look out for it's name and its flag state. Ship and voyage details are all easily accessible using websites such as marinetraffic.com. Take a look at the live map on the website. When zoomed out it gives a glimpse of what's happening over the horizon with real-time graphics of ship movements globally.

The practice of flagging out inevitably brought marine safety considerations into question. The *Torrey Canyon* and the *Amoco Cadiz* are infamous in maritime history because both ships caused massive oil spills off the coast of Cornwall and off the coast of Brittany respectively. Both ships were registered in Liberia. Subsequent public concern lead politicians to attempt to re-regulate shipping through measures such as Port State Control.

Introduced in 1982 this system of maritime enforcement subjects ships, regardless of flag, to inspection with penalties up to and including ship detention. Measures such as Port State Control rely on consistency in enforcement of regulatory standards across the globe. Yet the research carried out by Sampson & Bloor in Russia, UK and India indicates perceptions of inconsistency in practices undermining effectiveness. For example, in India shipping agents played a mediating and interceding role in the inspection process, a practice alien in other jurisdictions. Can it be just a coincidence that another two oil spills occurred subsequently from Liberian registered ships? Off the coast of Shetland in 1995 from the MV Braer and in Milford Haven from the MV Sea Empress in 1996.

In Ireland the Marine Survey office carries out Port State Control inspections . These inspection reports are made publically available online at Equasis.org. Public operation of port infrastructure is not a given. For example, the Port of Piraeus was privatized as one of the austerity measures imposed on Greece post bail-out. The Chinese company Cosco now operates the port of Piraeus as a controlling shareholder. The Port of Thessaloniki faces a similar fate. In Ireland Dublin Port is operated as a commercial state company returning profits to the Exchequer through Dublin Port Company. Both Dublin Port Company, and the Marine Survey office come under the aegis of the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport.

There is some comfort in having national oversight. As Sampson & Bloor have pointed out there are problems associated with regulating a global Industry, they conclude, using the analogy of a Jack in the box, that 'governance is fraught with difficulty and that, therefore, once the 'Jack' gets out of the national regulatory box there are real grounds to worry about its control.

Similar regulatory concerns are prevalent around the International Maritime Organisation Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping



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for Seafarers. The STCW sets minimum standards relating to training, certification and watchkeeping.

The route to becoming a Captain is long, but it is possible for crew to join as an able-bodied seaman (AB) and progress through the ranks to reach Master Mariner competency by preparing for written and oral examinations. It is a long haul.

I complete my education was college first then maritime academy in Kiev, I work at sea 15/ 16 years,. Chief officer work 7 years, I work 5 years as AB, after 4 years 2nd mate, after 7 years Chief Mate ... I have licence Captain ah Master, need only promotion take promotion from vessel

Navigation and collision avoidance are key elements of watch keeping duty, so confidence in the standard of training is essential. Audits by the European Maritime Safety Agency first disclosed deficiencies in training of Filipino officers as far back as 2006. A return audit in 2010 found little had changed leading to the very real prospect that Filipino trained officers would face a ban from EU-flagged ships. In March 2017, the European Maritime Safety Agency conducted its seventh inspection audit. At the time of writing, the audit report has not been issued, however, it's available actions are limited by arithmetic. A third of all officers from non-EU countries permitted to work on board EU-flagged vessels hold Filipino qualifications. Beyond the horizon over 100,000 ships transit the globe, crewed by over one million seafarers. The Jack in the box reaches goliath proportions.

Part 2 Beneath the Surface

While globalization shrinks spaces, making it possible to access cheap labour worldwide, the illusion of proximity to families for seafarers is maintained through the internet. In the seafarer centre, Skype channels are opened and maintained for long periods. Sometimes in animated discussion, sometimes in amicable silence, sometimes in sporadic conversation. As if spouses were physically present together in the same room preoccupied with individual pursuits, but sharing an occasional commentary, separated by hundreds and possibly thousands of miles they join in a simulation of domestic intimacy.

that's why I run in and try to find some free wifi try to find connection find connect with my family then Using skype and not email some ... viber Sometime they are not in contact they are busy also ..so send message and they will receive later

This was the first and only female voice I encountered. Women comprise less than 2% of the maritime workforce and are most commonly found in the cruise and ferries sector, where they are unlikely to hold officer roles. This seafarer worked front of house hospitality on board a cruise ship. She shared a cabin with 3 or 4 others for up to 10 months and was too busy with work to make friendships or spend much time at home with her family.



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Yes We have cabin we shared this cabin for 3 or 4 people. Its ok we are friendly. Actually they have no time no time for example I me I have no time just say hello. Its 7+ months Sometimes we can extend our contract already for 4/5 years I extend my always extend and I stay 10 /11 months I like it and I really need the money I have son at home and very soon I will be grandmother I help parents also, father and mother they are already old father he is invalid he cannot walk I try to help them

The internet is not a neutral technology. It can make things better and worse, bring people together over a distance, but also separating crews onboard.

I think its better and worse. I think its better that they can see the new baby or talk to the toddler and the toddler can see their dad and worse in that it can be a bit isolating they don't chat as much they don't interact as much with us at the centre and with even with each other.

The French anthropologist Auge created the concept nonplace to refer to spaces of transience. The term might well be applied to ships. The purpose of a ship is to transport goods, entertain guests, carry passengers. Relations on board are stratified through established conventions of officer and crew roles, they are indifferent to time as crews are deployed in different rotations of different duration, in temporary formations, they are unconcerned with identity, or with building shared experiences. They are anonymous and lonely. As one seafarer explained he felt entirely alone in a crew that was a total mix, drawn from all over the globe.

I am alone all the time Pakistan Indian Sri Lanka Filipino Syrian so total mix chief engineer was also Syrian first mate was from Canada of Pakistanian nationality

Auge insists that the perception of nonplace is highly subjective. It is possible for the same space to be designated place or nonplace.

For those who are in a position of privilege on board, the ship is clearly a place. A place where they can fulfill themselves through professional and social bonds. Those in subordinate positions might have a different view.

Last week we had a Dutch sea captain in and he was chatting to myself and the chaplain Willy and he was telling us about the fact that he had chose to be at sea and had a look at our visitors book and said that most people names in that would have been working at sea because they didn't have any option they came from countries where there wasn't enough work or enough well paid work to support their extended families and that he himself was very happy being at sea because that is what he had chosen to do and he loves what he does

Non-places always gesture to a reality or destination somewhere else, they are characterised by their transitory nature and corresponding social emptiness. 'in



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nonplaces no-one can hear you cry' concludes logistics researcher Chua after spending several weeks on a container ship. On board ship seafarers are longing for home. At home, they are anxious to get back to earning a wage at sea. There is the imagined life of a seafarer, and there is the reality.

I think a lot of people think that is more exciting than it is for many sailors I think if sailors are working on cruise liners or they are officer level they probably have more of the life that people expect seafarers to have in that they see the world and they have a decent life but I think that for the ordinary seahands there life is not glamorous and they don't necessarily get to see the world. We had a ship that regular visited us on the Poolbeg side and only the Captain ever got off the ship the crew were used as stevedores when they came into port and they did 3 ports Dublin Belfast and a port in England I cant remember the name and they just did that triangle and the ship crew never got off presumably they were on a 6 month or 9 month contract and they never set foot on land. So that would be the opposite of what people would think of as a seafarer I would think

Our modern romantic enchantment with the sea, has made us forgot the harshness of the ocean environment and blind to contemporary conditions of work and trade. As you walk spare a thought for seafarers plying their way in and out of Dublin Port, autonomous shipping technologies bring the very real prospect that soon our seas will be empty of seafarers ... a profession as old as trade.

The Seafarer an old English Poem translated by Burton Raffel

This tale is true, and mine.

It tells how the sea took me, swept me back And forth in sorrow and fear and pain,
Showed me suffering in a hundred ships, In a thousand ports, and in me.

It tells of smashing surf when I sweated in the cold of an anxious watch, perched in
the bow as it dashed under cliffs.

My feet were cast in icy bands, bound with frost, with frozen chains, and hardship
groaned around my heart. Hunger tore at my sea-weary soul.

No man sheltered on the quiet fairness of earth can feel

How wretched I was, drifting through winter on an ice -cold sea, whirled in sorrow,
Alone in a world blown clear of love, Hung with icicles.

This is the second of a series of podcasts about contemporary seafaring. Please sign up on the website portwalks.ie or follow on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram to get details of further podcasts as they are released.

Port Walks is an art project by Sheelagh Broderick supported by a Dublin Port Port Perspectives Commission. The Seafarers Mission at the Seafarer Centre in Dublin Port provided a base for research. Thanks to Rev Willie Black, Noeleen Hogan, Dermot Desmond, Ed Taylor and all the volunteers who welcomed me. Rose Kearney of Stella Maris also at the Seafarer Centre gave generously of her time and experience



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and Michael Whelan of the International Transport Federation. Thanks to all participating seafarers whose identities are being kept confidential in this podcast. Cliona Harmey kindly provided a hydrophonic recording of a ship passing in Dublin Bay, from her artwork *A Ship Comes In* exhibited at Temple Bar Gallery & Studios in 2007. Extracts were read from the poem *The Seafarer* an old English poem translated by Burton Raffel. Music clips from *Even if Love* written by William Oldham and performed by Andria Degens & Susan Stenger. Sound by Dan Guiney.