



Seamen's Christian Friend Society

“Taking the Message of Life to Seafarers”

The Seamen's Christian Friend Society (SCFS) is a small non-denominational evangelical Christian mission, working amongst merchant seamen onboard their ships while they are in port.

Originally known as The Mariner's Church Society, SCFS began in the London Docks in 1824. The aim was “**To preach the gospel to the men of the sea.**” From the beginning SCFS has been faithfully supported in this work by Brethren Assemblies and other evangelical churches in the United Kingdom.

SCFS Port Missionaries visit seafarers onboard their ships in port. SCFS has 14 missionaries working in ports in the United Kingdom, 2 in Southern Ireland, 2 in the Netherlands, 2 in Germany, 1 in Belgium, 5 in the Philippines, 1 in Ghana, 1 in the West Indies, 1 in the USA and 1 in Australia – at Port Botany in Sydney!

Rob Flinders is the sole SCFS Port Missionary in Australia. He was a professional mariner for 12 years and an instructor of professional mariners in the NSW TAFE system for 20 years. Rob has been a Christian since 1974. Rob started work amongst seafarers in Port Kembla NSW in October 2000. In January 2001 Rob & Greta moved to Sydney to establish a SCFS ministry at Port Botany. They are now members of Mascot Christian Fellowship.

The Seafarers. 70% of all Sydney trade passes through Port Botany. Last year 1200 ships visited this port. Each ship has a crew of around 20 men. Approximately 25,000 seafarers pass through Port Botany each year - 2,000 every month. Many of these seafarers are from third world countries. Most are from SE Asian and Pacific countries. Some are from central European countries.

Ship Visiting. Rob visits ships in Port Botany on a full time basis. Typically he will visit between three ships each day, five and sometimes six days a week. His first priority is to determine if there are one or more born-again Christian seafarers onboard the ship. These men are potentially strategic inasmuch as they are able to have an ongoing witness to other seafarers onboard the ship while it is at sea. Rob aims to do all he can to equip these men for this work. His other priority is personal evangelism with non-Christian seafarers.

Bibles and Emmaus Bible Correspondence Courses are given free to seafarers who want to learn about the Christian faith. Other materials, such as gospel messages on DVD and CD, video and audio-cassette tapes, The Jesus video, Christian books, magazines and tracts, are also loaned or given to seafarers. Bible Teaching, encouragement and fellowship is provided for seafarers who are already Christians.

As circumstances allow, Rob and Greta also provide hospitality to seafarers in their home and invite seafarers to attend Bible studies and worship services at Mascot Christian Fellowship.

“**The Helmsman**” is the journal of SCFS. This provides periodic reports from SCFS missionaries in various ports around the world. **www.scfs.org** is the Internet address of the SCFS web page.

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