

## Hull Based Master Mariner Runs Marathon

Captain Richard Spencer talks about training at sea, the challenge of long absences and missing Hull City's promotion to the Premier League

Captain Richard Spencer has shown impressive dedication to his training for the London Marathon later this month, raising funds for global charity Sailors' Society and getting fit by working his sea legs on a treadmill on board ship.

Captain Spencer has worked in the shipping industry since 1974 and was keen to give something back to the industry which has provided him with such a rewarding and challenging career. He chose to raise funds for the Sailors' Society because they provide a personal lifeline of support for seafarers across the globe.

Captain Spencer says:

The modern shipping industry is challenging multinational crews, quick port turnarounds and restrictions on shore leave can leave seafarers isolated, and so I know the work of the Sailors' Society is absolutely vital. There are big concerns, such as the constant threat of piracy, and more personal forms of isolation too. I remember anxious pacing around my cabin waiting to hear the results on the BBC World Service from Wembley when Hull City were due to be promoted! It seems minor, but it can make you feel lonely or homesick, especially at times like that when you'd love to celebrate with your loved ones.

Captain Spencer has been running for many years, but never taken on a challenge as great as the London Marathon. After a few false starts and injuries, he hit his stride and persevered with the gruelling training schedule even whilst at sea, despite having nothing more inspiring than the view of a lifeboat outside the window by his treadmill. As 2010 is the International Maritime Organization's Year of the Seafarer, it seems fitting that he has taken on this challenge to support his fellow seafarers this year, and his grit and determination have already inspired sponsorship from friends, colleagues – including a substantial donation from the officers and crew of his ship the Al Shuhaada and his family.

His wife Maxine Spencer agrees that life for seafaring families can be tough. She says:

For families, the real downside is the lack of communication and the long absences. I am used to being part of a seafaring family as my father and brothers have all worked at sea, and shipping is in the blood in Hull – they call us grass widows in town. I am lucky to have a strong network of friends and family for support, but the work of the Sailors' Society is absolutely vital in supporting seafarers – and their families – across the globe. I'm proud as punch of him running the London Marathon for the Sailors' Society. We'll be there on the day to cheer him on.

To sponsor Captain Richard Spencer and register your support for the Sailors' Society, visit [www.justgiving.com/richardspencer](http://www.justgiving.com/richardspencer)

Ends

For more information, please contact Zoe Mitchell: [zoe@lcm.co.uk](mailto:zoe@lcm.co.uk) or call 0845 345 6969. The Sailors' Society is an international charity that provides a personal lifeline for seafarers throughout the world. Existing to enrich and enhance the well-being of the world's 1.2 million seafarers, the charity offers practical help, emotional and spiritual support and, when in dire need, financial assistance and family liaison through our Port Chaplains and Seafarers' Centres. Our Port Chaplains visit thousands of ships every year, directly addressing the needs of seafarers – irrespective of a person's belief or nationality – as well as maintaining vital links within the Ports.

that they operate. The Sailors Society is backing the IMO Year of the Seafarer campaign with a new fundraising drive asking for just £1 for every seafarer the charity aims to reach in 2010 For more information, please visit [www.sailors-society.org](http://www.sailors-society.org), or contact Zoë Mitchell at Logical Creative Marketing on: 0845 345 69 69 or email: [zoe@lcm.co.uk](mailto:zoe@lcm.co.uk)