

# Time and tide wait for no man

**Chatham Marine** based in Canterbury are the newest of only a hand full of UK travel companies that specialise in the demanding world of marine travel.

Says David Thompson, Owner and Managing Director

It's simple our slogan say's it all, our job is to get crew on and off vessels anywhere in the world within a very short time frame, a vessel could arrive in port at 03:00 and sail on the afternoon tide. We have to ensure that the new crew and this could be anything from an individual to 40 people are available to join the vessel when it docks and then to repatriate the off-signing crew as quickly as possible.

It may sound simple but crew are not all arriving or departing on one aircraft, nowadays a ship's crew can be made up of many nationalities, Filipinos, Polish, Russian, Canadians, Cape Verdes.

All joiners must be at the port at the same time, delays mean extra port costs and delayed sailing leads to late arrivals at the next port and possible missed berthing slots. All very costly to the ship owners, as large or specialist vessel's can pay thousands of pounds a day for a berth.

Off-signing crew members, who may have been on board for up to nine months need to get home quickly to their families. This all sounds simple but vessels do not always call at accessible locations like Tilbury or Barcelona where regular flight schedules operate. We can be asked to move crew from Szczecin in Poland to George in South Africa, Cotonou in Benin or Ixtapa in Mexico, ports where there may only be one flight day in and out - timing is everything.

It is essential we provide a 24 hour service for our clients who are based all round the world, as most of what we do is generally within 48hours and if bad weather prevails or accidents occur on board then it could be within hours of a seafarer turning up at an airport to collect a ticket.

This type of travel is demanding but extremely rewarding and our profile within the shipping industry is growing all the time, we now handle crew travel for a number of well known shipping companies and indeed have recently opened an office within one of the UK's largest ship owners, solely to manage their crew needs.

*Article written for 100 Kent Network*



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