

Melbourne Branch

The Log
The Monthly Newsletter of the Melbourne Branch of
The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Limited

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**Next Meeting 30 August 2017 1800
for 1830**

Subject The Boulton Lecture

Speaker Warwick Norman

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From the Branch Master



At the July meeting Captain Patrick O’Sullivan was elected Branch Treasurer to replace Captain Chris Noon. During Chris’s period as Treasurer he transferred our accounts to Westpac which saved us money in bank fees. He also set us up for electronic banking. We thank Chris for significant contribution he made during his term as Treasurer.

Every few months the Federal Court members have a telephone conference call. During the last such call we were advised that ASIC have approved a change to our constitution that will allow the Federal Master to serve longer than 3 years provided no other member of the Federal Court nominates for the position.

The issue currently concerning the Federal Court is the future of the “Master Mariner” magazine. Joanna Carson will cease as editor in April next year and it is expected that it will be difficult to find someone to take over the role. Joanna was not only the Editor but also wrote most of the articles.

One suggestion is that we may be able to get someone to do the editing but the articles would have to be provided by the branches. This suggestion would only work if members were willing to write articles. It may be that the “Master Mariner” will be a smaller magazine in the future with a reduced number of editions each year. The matter will be discussed at the next Federal Court meeting in September.

Capt. Ian French



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July Speakers Summary



The Speaker at the July meeting was Rachel Johnson the CEO of Victorian Ports Corporation (Melbourne). The Corporation was set up in November 2016 to manage certain assets and statutory responsibilities following the leasing of the Port of Melbourne. Rachel came to the position from a background in freight, logistics and the operation of transport infrastructure in both the public and private sectors.

The Corporation has a staff of 65 and is divided into three divisions.

The Marine and Navigation division is headed by the Harbour Master and is responsible for ship movements and safety and operates the VTS which handles an average 22 movements per day. The Strategy, Risk and Environment division has amongst its role the management of Station Pier. The Finance and Corporate support division looks after legal and corporate affairs, human resources and administration.

Speakers Summary Contd.



The Corporation's major commercial asset is Station Pier and with it comes a responsibility to develop the Tasmanian and cruise ship trades. This year 85 cruise ships will berth at Station Pier and this will increase to 114 next year. Arranging transport for thousands of passengers from the Pier to the City and other attractions requires the Corporation to liaise and cooperate with both private and public transport operators to manage this task.

The cruise industry's handling of the Norwegian Star's problem was amongst the issues which Rachel discussed in her very interesting talk on the responsibilities and operation of the Victorian Ports Corporation. Rachel ended her presentation by showing some excellent photos taken around the port.

Containers lost at sea

The World Shipping Council has released its estimate of the number of containers lost at sea. During the period 2008 to 2016 there were on average 1582 containers lost at sea each year. 64% of the losses were attributed to catastrophic events.





Piracy Update



The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre's incident report for the first half of 2017 shows a continuing decline in the number of reported incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships. In the first 6 months, 63 vessels were boarded, 12 fired upon, 4 were hijacked and attacks were attempted on another 8 vessels. 63 crew have been taken hostage.

41 crew members have been kidnapped, three injured and two killed. Pirates in Nigeria are the most aggressive with the abduction of 31 crew from 5 incidents and half of all vessels fired upon occurring in that area. Somali pirates remain a threat and have hijacked an Indian dhow and boarded a bulk carrier in the Gulf of Aden and fired on 3 vessels during the reporting period. In SE Asia 6 heavily armed pirates hijacked a small coastal tanker and transferred 1500 MT of gas oil to another vessel. Cooperation between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines has reduced the number of attacks in the Philippines and Indonesia. Most of those attacks were described as low level. Overall there were ten fewer attacks than in the same period last year.



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Operation Pedestal Commemoration



On Sunday 13th August the Maltese Australian Association held a service at the Shrine of Remembrance to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Operation Pedestal. CoMMA attended as a representative of the Merchant Navy. This year the service followed a different format to previous years. The service commenced with a march up the forecourt of the Shrine. The march was led by the RAAF Band and followed by cadets carrying the House Flags of the ships that took part in the convoy. They were followed by dignitaries and members of the Maltese community.

With the parade facing the Cenotaph there was a fly past by the RAAF “Roulettes” They flew first from north to south then east to west making a cross in recognition of the George Cross awarded to Malta by King George VI.

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The proceedings then took place in the west wing of the forecourt in front of the Cenotaph and the Eternal Flame. During the service the story of the convoy and its significance was spoken about by the various speakers who include Mr. Ben Soler, the President of the Maltese Australian Association, representatives of the British and American Consuls, representatives of the armed forces , Dr V. Sammut and Dame Leonie Christopherson.

Following prayers by the RAAF Chaplain and the Last Post the parade reformed and marched behind the RAAF Band to the Maltese Shelter of Peace. At the Shelter of Peace with a Catafalque Party in position wreaths were laid including one from CoMMA. This was followed by a procession of the House Flags through the Shelter of Peace. As each flag emerged from the Shelter the name of the ship it referred to was announced by the CoMMA Branch Master. The service ended with the RAAF Band playing the national anthems of Malta, The United Kingdom, USA and Australia. The service commemorated not just Operation Pedestal but all the Malta convoys and the courage and resilience of the people of Malta.

Portsmouth Harbour

When Portsmouth Harbour was dredged so that the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers could use the port thousands of artefacts were recovered some dating back hundreds of years.

Amongst the items recovered were 8 cannons, 36 anchors, an aircraft engine, a human skull, a torpedo, a German mine and 5 large bombs along with more mundane items such as bottles, plates and boots.