

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 25th March 2020

**POSTPONED DUE TO
CARONAVIRUS**

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Victorian Regional Channels
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From the Branch Master

There was quite a lot of activity at the end of February. On the 26th February the Mission to Seafarers held the premiere screening of the documentary “Harbour Lights- Women with a Mission – 1914-1918.

This 17 minute documentary relates the history of MTS from its foundation in 1857 through to the present day but concentrates on the Ladies Harbour Lights Guild and their activities during WW1. The Ladies Harbour Lights Guild was established in 1905 and included some prominent members of Melbourne society. This group of women raised the money to build the Chapel and the Norla Gymnasium which was a remarkable feat particularly given that it was done during WW1 when most available money went to the war effort.

The Film contains some rare footage and photographs of shipping, the wharfs and City of Melbourne of the WW1 era and can be viewed by entering the heritage section of the MTS website.

The Harbour Lights film project was supported by the Victorian Government and the Victorian Heritage Council and was produced by Wind and Sky Productions.

Later that day we held our first meeting for 2020. It was a very successful start to the year with a good attendance of 29 and Captain Kell Dillon, the Harbour Master, was an excellent speaker. New television screens and a re-arrangement of the tables made a significant improvement to the meeting room.

On Friday the Federal Court held a meeting by telephone conference call. This meeting was to do the preparation work for the Federal AGM which will be held in Melbourne at the Mission to Seafarers on Saturday 4th April. Matters such as our membership of IFSMA and the future of the “Master Mariner” magazine will be on the agenda as will the issues that were raised at our October meeting when the future direction of COMMA was discussed.

The month ended with plenty of on water activity. The Navy had three ships in port including the flagship HMAS Canberra. The Williamstown Seaport Festival was held over the weekend with the sailing ships “James Craig”, “Young Endeavour” and “Enterprize” as major attractions.

February Speakers Summary

In January this year Captain Kell Dillon took over as Harbour Master from Captain Roy Stanbrook who has retired. Kell is believed to be the first Australian born Melbourne Harbour Master.



Kell joined the RAN directly from school and specialised as a navigation and surface warfare officer. He served in HMAS Brisbane during the Gulf War. Kell told of the part he played in the Pong Su incident in April 2003. The Pong Su was a small North Korean owned freighter that landed about 125 kilograms of heroin on the Victorian coast. The ship tried to escape but was intercepted by HMAS Stuart and members of the Army Tactical Assault Group boarded by fast roping from a Seahawk helicopter. Others including Kell Dillon boarded from inflatable boats.

Kell took the pong Su into Sydney. In 2006 the ship was sunk off the NSW coast by F 111 strike aircraft. Kell alerted us to a video clip on YouTube what shows the Pong Su being hit by two 2000 pound guided bombs. Quite spectacular.

Kell spoke about his time as Navy East Coast Port Manager and Navy Pilot and the challenges of piloting the large American Aircraft Carriers. With the bridge on the extreme starboard side and the flight deck overhanging the hull visibility to port is very restricted, even the assisting tugs were lost from view.

Kell spent 6 months in the Solomon Islands in command of HMAS Huon but after 18 years in the Navy decided that he wanted to spend more time at home with his family.

Kell worked for NSW Maritime and Sydney Harbour Ferries before spending 10 years as General Manager Operations and Harbour Master at Port Kembla. The fire on "Iron Chieftain" occurred during this time. Kell started work as Melbourne Harbour Master on 6th January.

Kell spoke about how the management of the Port of Melbourne changed when the port was leased to the Lonsdale Consortium in 2016. The Victorian Ports Corporation (Melbourne) which employs the Harbour Master was established to manage the safe operation of the port. This includes navigation, security, pollution response and emergency management.

VPCM operates the VTS which is being upgraded with better electronics. The system manages ship movements from the approaches to the Heads, across the Bay to the Port.

VPCM is responsible for Station Pier which handles about 130 Cruise Ships per year as well as the Spirit of Tasmania. Kell said that newspaper reports that the pier was falling down are incorrect and that a program of regular maintenance which included pile replacement is carried out each winter which is the off season for the cruise ships.

VPCM run a number of programs to promote safe boating on Port Philip.

Kells power point presentation showed the advantage of the new TV monitors in the meeting room and added to a very interesting talk.

Recent Publications

WHO Guidelines for COVID-19 Control on board Vessels

The World Health Organization has released guidelines to avoid or manage outbreaks of coronavirus on board ships.

Owners should provide the crew with guidelines on how to recognize signs and symptoms of the disease. If a suspected case is identified an outbreak management plan should be implemented even before lab results confirm an infection. In the guide WHO recommends that crew members wash their hands often, avoid touching their face and that alcohol based hand sanitizer should be readily available.

Seafarers suspected of contracting the virus should be isolated and people who were in close contact with a suspected case are considered high risk and must be separated from other individuals as soon as possible.

Crew should wear disposable gloves when in contact with sick people or contaminated areas,

Cabins and any equipment used by patients must be cleaned and disinfected daily.

If a coronavirus test comes back positive any people who were in close contact with the patient should go into onshore quarantine.

Fatigue Guidelines – Managing and Reducing the Risk of Fatigue at Sea

AMSA has released new guidelines based on IMO guidelines on fatigue and are aimed at regulated Australian and Foreign flagged vessels.

The guidelines cover the causes and consequences of fatigue and the risks to health, safety, security and protection of the environment. It will assist all stakeholders to better understand their roles and responsibilities in managing the risk of fatigue. The guidelines are divided into three modules.

MODULE 1 Fatigue

This module accepts that the nature of the shipping industry and the working environment contribute to fatigue. It discusses the circadian rhythm and other factors affecting sleep and the signs and symptoms of fatigue. It lists the relevant IMO and ILO regulations.

MODULE 2 Fatigue and the company

This module covers the responsibility of the ship manager to provide a work and living environment that ensures an adequate opportunity for quality sleep. It gives advice on workload management and fatigue avoidance.

MODULE 3 Fatigue and the seafarer

This module covers the seafarer's responsibility in fatigue avoidance. It gives advice on developing good sleep habits and the value of short naps. Seafarers should be aware of fatigue and how to counter its effects.

Membership Application

Captain Anand Ravi has applied for ordinary membership of the Melbourne Branch. Capt. Ravi holds an Australian Masters Certificate and is employed as a lecturer at the Australian Maritime College.

Federal AGM

The Federal AGM will be held on 4th April in the Board Room at the Mission to Seafarers starting at 1000hrs. Members are welcome but if you are going to attend please let us know by Wednesday 1st April. We need to know for catering purposes.
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