

Melbourne Branch

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

Hon. Secretary Rudy Rietwyk
email melbourne@mastermariners.org.au



NEXT MEETING

Mail Exchange Hotel

Wednesday 25th May 2022 @ 1830 hrs

Joint meeting with MLAANZ

ECDIS Aid or Hindrance to Navigation

Speakers Malcolm Collins AMSA

Tristan Shandy ATSB

Tom Morrison HFW

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Hon. Editor Capt. Ian French
email icfrench@bigpond.com

From the Branch Master

First month as the Branch Master and on course on track. Many thanks to the support I am getting from the Court members.

It was interesting to note that a cruise ship will be home ported in Melbourne for the 23/24 cruise season. Quote from the Herald Sun *'Melbourne has scored a major win over Sydney with one of the world's most modern ships to be berthed at Station Pier for number of months'*

Virgin Voyages will base one of its ships in Melbourne next year, the first from billionaire Sir Richard Branson's cruise line to visit Australia.

The 2770 passenger luxury ship Resilient Lady, the third in Virgin Voyage's fleet, will use Melbourne as its home port from late 2023, offering a mix of itineraries across Australia and New Zealand ranging in length from two to 14 nights.

But before the new vessel can call Australia home, she'll embark on an epic 44 night trans-continental voyage, sailing from Athens to Sydney, before docking at Station Pier in Port Melbourne.

We have also had several naval visits to Melbourne and Geelong. HMAS Hobart visited Melbourne for the ANZAC Day long weekend with HMAS Parramatta visiting Geelong for the same period. Both ships were involved in extensive community engagements both for ANZAC Day and the port visit.

HMSAS Warramunga conducted an operational port visit to allow for the repair of the ship's rotary wing aircraft. HMAS Stalwart will be conducting its inaugural port visit to Melbourne from 11-16 May berthing at Station Pier.

It is refreshing to see that port visits of all types are on the increase after the COVID quarantine requirements.

While on matters naval, there is a discussion paper on our options for the replacement submarine in this month's LOG. Prepared by Frank McCarty of the Navy League of Australia, Vic/Tas Division. Frank is a long term member of the NLA and has a keen interest in maritime affairs.

Finally we are looking at options for speakers and a location to hold the Bolton Lecture later in the year.

Also the Outstanding Achievement Award needs some thought on a nomination.

The Federal secretary has asked members to submit articles of interest for publication in the Master Mariner magazine and/or on the CoMMA web site. Please forward any ideas to our web address” melbourne@mastermariners.org.au

Yours Aye,
Graeme Furlonger
Commander RAN
Branch Master

Membership

The Following applications to join the Melbourne Branch have been received:

Nekzad Cama has applied for Ordinary Membership of the Melbourne Branch. He obtained his Masters Certificate in 2009 in the UK and is employed by Ports Victoria as a Senior Vessel Traffic Service Officer.

Paul Fleming has applied for ordinary membership of Melbourne Branch. He obtained his Masters Certificate in 2011 and is a Vessel Traffic Officer with Ports Victoria.

Savio D'Sa has applied for ordinary membership of Melbourne Branch. He obtained his Masters Certificate in 2018 and is a Casual VTS Operator with Ports Victoria.

We were sorry to hear of the passing of Walter Stuart on 10th May. Walter was for a number of years the Editor of the LOG .

On a happier note we welcome our newest member Olabuwale Oladipupo whose membership application was ratified at the recent Federal AGM.

Melbourne Harbour Master

Capt. Warwick Laing

Captain Warwick Laing has been appointed by Ports Victoria as Harbour Master for the Port of Melbourne as of 2 May 2022. He was previously Manager Navigation Services/Deputy Harbour Master.

Warwick joined the Royal Australian Navy as a Seaman Officer in 2003 after completing degrees in Commerce and Economics at Monash University.

He held positions aboard HMAS Betano, HMAS Launceston, HMAS Manoora and HMAS Perth. After spending far too long on the surface he joined the Submarine Squadron holding various positions aboard Collins Class Submarines.

His final and most rewarding role was as Navigator on-board HMAS Waller. Warwick then transferred to the Royal Australian Navy Reserve where he completed patrols on Armidale Class Patrol Boats and joined the Maritime Trade Operations Team providing a link between military and civilian maritime industries.

After leaving full time naval service Warwick sailed in the offshore oil and gas industry on seismic survey vessels and then anchor handling tug and supply vessels with Farstad Shipping and Siem Offshore.

After 15 years at sea Warwick moved ashore and spent 3 years with Shell QGC as an LNG Loading Master in Gladstone, before moving to Melbourne as a Deputy Harbour Master.

He lives in Mount Eliza with his wife and two young daughters. He enjoys family camping, competes in triathlons and is a student of Wing Chun Kung-Fu.

Management Changes at MtS

Sue Dight is stepping down as CEO of the Mission to Seafarers Victoria after 5 years in the position. Sue has led the Mission through the difficult years of the pandemic when seafarers were not allowed ashore to attend the Mission and Mission staff were not allowed on-board the ships. The Mission was able to provide support to visiting seafarers by providing comfort packages and doing their shopping. Sue will take leave before moving on to other projects.



Philip Cornish will step into the role as interim CEO. Philip is a health and community services consultant who has worked in leadership position in both the public and not for profit sectors.

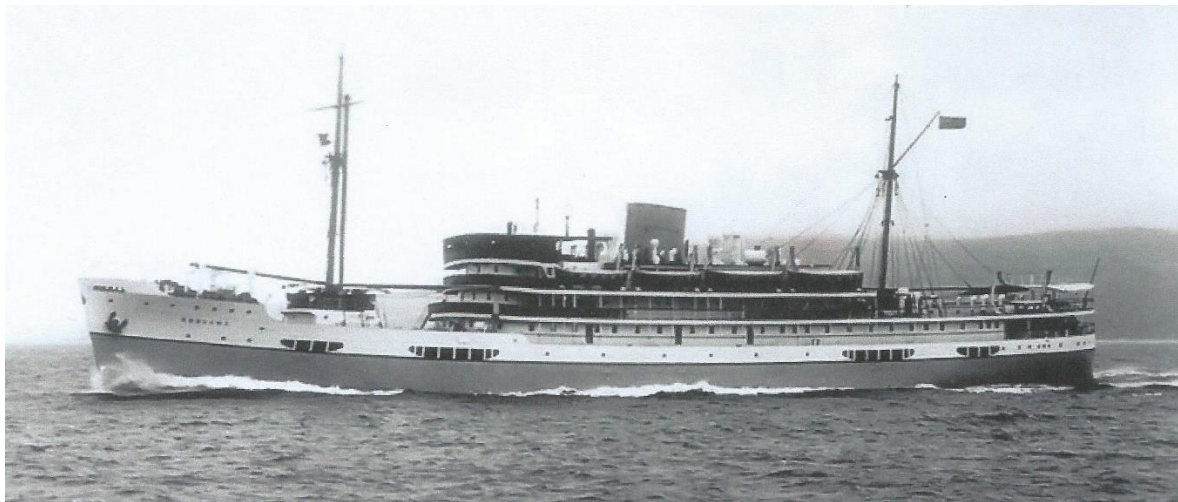
Former ANL chief executive officer John Lines AM has taken the role of Chairman of MtS Victoria for the next three years. Mr Lines is the patron of the MtS Victoria Maritime Art Prize and Exhibition. He is a former Chairman of Shipping Australia and Chairman for Australia on the Asian Shipowners Forum. He was awarded the Order of Australia for services to the Australian Shipping Industry and the decoration of Chevalier de l'Ordre du Merite Maritime by the French Government for services to shipping.

April Speakers Summary

The speaker at our April meeting was Maurie Hutchinson whose subject was the Koolama Incident

The "Koolama" was a 4060GRT twin screw passenger/cargo ship operated by the Western Australian Shipping Commission on the coastal trade between Eucla and Darwin. The ship was fitted with strengthened bottom which enabled her to take the ground without damage in ports which had extreme tidal range.

When "Koolama" departed Derby on the 19th February 1942 she had on-board a crew of 89, 14 army personnel and 77 passengers and a cargo of army trucks and heavy earth moving equipment for the war effort in Wyndham.



At 1130 hrs 20th February "Koolama" was attacked by a Japanese flying boat but its bombs missed. Two hours latter 3 flying boats attacked but this time bombs hit the ship causing damage to No.3 and No.4 holds and to the rudder. Three crew members were injured one seriously.

The ship was taking water and was down by the stern so the Captain decided to beach the ship near the mouth of the King George River in Rulhieres Bay now known as Koolama Bay.

The passengers and most of the crew left the ship in the lifeboats and the Chief Officer was ordered to find a safe refuge for the survivors. A camp was established at Pengali Cove about 5km from the ship.

Maurie then spoke about the main characters in the story.

Captain Jack Eggleston was mentioned in despatches for his part in the ramming of a U Boat as a Deck Boy in WW1. He rose from Deck Boy to Master in 10 years and at 28 was the youngest ever Master in State Ships. He stood by "Koolama" when she was building in Scotland. He was a very competent master and became Marine Superintendent in 1949.

The Chief Officer Ken Reynolds lived in the shadow of Eggleston. His career followed along the same lines only slower. He became Marine Superintendent when Eggleston retired. He lacked the personal charm and popularity of Eggleston.

Reynolds organised the camp and transferred food and other equipment from the ship. The lifeboats were hidden in the mangroves out of sight of Japanese aircraft. Those left on the ship worked to plug the holes in the hull. They worked at night because it was too hot during the day. Captain Eggleston visited the camp at Pengali Cove a number of times to ask men to help with the repairs to the ship. Three passengers and two crew agreed but the officers led by Reynolds refused.

Eggleston and Reynolds disagreed on the best course of action. Eggleston wanted to re-float the "Koolama" and sail it to Wyndham while Reynolds wanted to abandon the ship and wait for rescue. The crew and passengers split into two factions along these lines.

On 24th Feb RAAF planes flew over the ship and reported its position to the Drysdale River Mission who sent the lugger "Teresita Moa". The lugger departed the next day with the 3 injured crew, 3 women, baby and parents and one ships engineer to assist with the luggers unreliable engine.

Next day two groups totalling 73 left on a 5 day walk to the mission.

Three Officers, two Radio Officers, Purser 10 passengers and 34 crew remained at Pengali Cove. On 3rd March 9 passengers and 16 crew were flown to Broome by flying boat. On 6th March the last 19 including the 3 Deck Officers left on the "Teresita Moa"

When the temporary repairs were completed the ship was re-floated and departed for Wyndham on the 1st March 9 days after the bombing. With the rudder damaged the ship could only be steered by altering the revs on the twin screws.

Captain Eggleston was the only deck officer on board and was on the bridge for the entire 24 hour passage. He took "Koolama" down Joseph Bonaparte Gulf avoiding the King Shoals and Medusa Banks and into the narrow channel leading to Wyndham.

"Koolama" was berthed at Wyndham Wharf at 1100 hrs 2nd March and work commenced discharging the cargo. The ships pumps were unable to keep up with the rising water in the holds and at 1700 hrs 3rd March "Koolama" capsized at the wharf.



MV Koolama sinking at Wyndham Wharf

Maurie then went on to speculate about why the ships officers led by Reynolds refused to assist the Captain and why most of the crew and passengers supported Reynolds. Maurie pointed out that it was not mutiny because Eggleston did not order the men to assist him he only asked them to do so. The Marine Board of Inquiry exonerated all crew members of any wrongdoing.

Maurie gave a very interesting talk which was illustrated with numerous photos and diagrams. For further reading Maurie suggested "The Koolama Incident in the Timor Sea 1942, Malice or Mutiny" by Bill Loane Published by Rosenberg Publishing 2004.

Nuclear Powered Submarines for the Royal Australian Navy

The following extracts are from a paper written by Frank McCarty the Honorary Vice President of the Vic/Tas Division of the Navy League of Australia.

With the Australian Government's plans to equip the RAN with 8 Nuclear powered submarines and having cancelled an order with a French Company for 12 conventionally powered submarines, many discussions and much debate has transpired in various world-wide circles relevant to the subject. It has been the Navy League's belief for many years that nuclear powered submarines are by far the most preferable choice when compared to diesel electric.

Some 10 years ago, the Defence White Paper had been released and it was welcomed by the Navy League. There was much in this paper with which the League agreed. To quote the words of the immediate Past Federal President of the Navy League, CMDR Graham Harris, from his comments ten years ago in his "Navy" Column:

One area of difference was in the question of the propulsion of the submarines that the Defence White Paper stated Australia would acquire. The Defence White Paper did not discuss the issue. The White Paper contained nothing other than a one line rejection of the possibility of nuclear propulsion.

It is the Leagues view that at the very least the option of nuclear power should remain under consideration.

It was a long time coming but the message found its way through and nuclear powered it is to be.

The next item on the agenda of the nuclear powered submarines project for the RAN, one would expect, is to be the design of the submarines for which a time frame of 18 months has been allocated.

In line with the AUKUS alliance, we may expect the design to be either out of the UK or the US, which would probably result in an "Astute" class from the UK or a "Virginia" class from the US or a derivative of either class.

For comparison purposes, the main characteristics of the UK Astute and the US Virginia Classes are as follows:

	ASTUTE CLASS	VIRGINIA CLASS
LENGTH	97M (318FT)	115M (377 FT)
BEAM	11.3M (37FT)	10M (34FT)
DISPLACEMENT	7500 TONS (SUBMERGED)	7900 TONS (SUBMERGED)
RANGE	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED
COMPLEMENT	98	135 (15 OFFICERS & 120 ENLISTED)
SPEED	30 KNOTS	25 KNOTS
TEST DEPTH	300M (980 FT)	240M (800FT)
ARMAMENT	6X533MM TORPEDO TUBES PLUS TOMAHAWK CRUISE MISSILES	12 VLS TUBES FOR BGM TOMAHAWK MISSILES & 4X21INCH (530MM TORPEDO TUBES FOR MK48 TORPEDOES & HARPOON MISSILES
PROPULSION	1X ROLLS ROYCE PWR2 NUCLEAR REACTOR	1X59G NUCLEAR REACTOR

HMS Astute is the lead vessel of seven Astute Class nuclear powered submarines. Five of that class are in commission with more currently being built, the last of which is due to be commissioned in 2026.

The US has 19 of the Virginia Class operational and 11 more in various stages of construction. Additional orders are also expected.

The cost of submarines appears difficult to accurately ascertain when the conventional type French boats for the RAN started at A\$50 billion for 12 submarines, rising to A\$90 billion just prior to the cancelation (=A\$7.5 billion each). However as a guestimate figure, the cost of an Astute Class submarine to build in the UK is probably in the order of \$2.8 billion each and the Virginia Class to build in the US would be something like A\$4 billion each.

To build these submarines in Australia of course would be significantly more expensive due to start-up costs plus tooling, jigs, drawing costs, possible infrastructure etc. Until such time as the design is determined, it is most difficult to be anywhere near accurate with costing figures.

To be also taken into consideration is the situation of the Life of Type Extension (LOTE) project to extend the life of the current Collins Class fleet of submarines until such time as nuclear powered boats come on stream.

The total cost of the LOTE program has been estimated at A\$6 billion.

This program for the Collins Class commences when each of the class has completed 30 years of service and will extend the life of each boat by a further 10 years.

HMAS Collins is expected to be the first boat to achieve 30 years of service in 2026.

Each of the Collins Class submarines are expected to be in dockyard hands in Gisborne, South Australia, for a significant period of time as the LOTE program calls for a replacement of the electric motors, diesel engines and generators.

Collins Class main characteristics are as follows:

LENGTH	77.42M (254FT)
BEAM	7.8M (26FT)
DISPLACEMENT	3400 TONS (SUBMERGED)
COMPLEMENT	58
SPEED	20 KNOTS SUBMERGED, 10 KNOTS SURFACED
TEST DEPTH	180M (590 FT)
ARMAMENT	6X530MM = 21 INCH BOW TUBES

Much discussion has revolved around the timing for Australia's entry into nuclear powered submarines, plus the importance of this aspect of the project. When estimated dates are being bandied around, it is not so much as how many years, but how many decades that it will be before the first boat is completed.

With the understanding of Australia's mammoth task of almost starting from scratch in dealing with nuclear power, besides the minor exception of the small-scale involvement of the nuclear plant at Lucas Heights near Sydney which was involved in medical type radioisotope production and research. It is therefore early days for Australia which may not see her first Australian built nuclear powered submarine fully operational until well into the 2040's.

By all accounts it certainly seems that the Osborne, South Australia shipyard will be kept quite busy. They will be building nine 10,000 tonne Hunter Class frigates, rebuilding the six Collins Class conventional powered submarines and building eight nuclear powered submarines.

Free To Good Home !

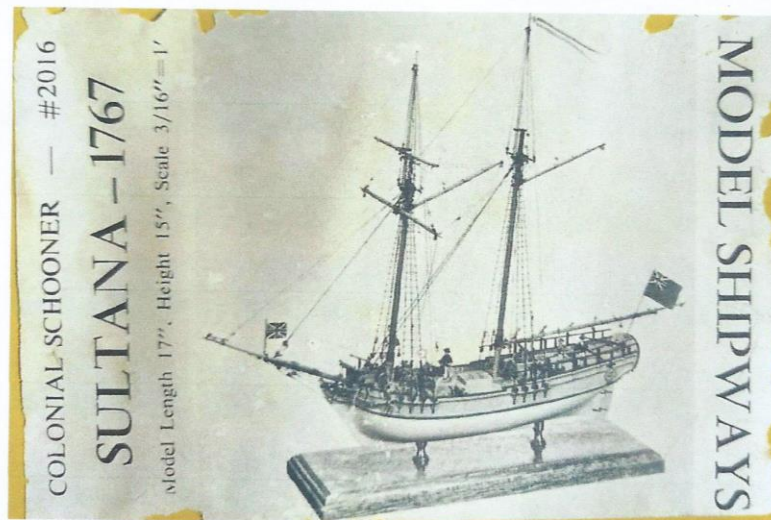
There are two complete new kits of model ships looking for a good home. These were purchased by Capt. Tony Beck in 1979 in anticipation of a quiet retirement, but unfortunately he never got started on them before he passed away. I have now been tasked to give them away to a dedicated model maker. These are not toys, and have many very small parts !

They are :

the "Billing" model "Blue Nose" :



and the "Model Shipways" model "Sultana"



You can still find all the details, including sizes, of these boats on the Internet. If, after reading up on the details, you are interested, please get in touch with me, preferably by email.

Peter Bosman.
0408 367 074
bosman@bigpond.net.au