

## Melbourne Branch

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



### NEXT MEETING

Mail Exchange Hotel

25th November 2021 @ 1830 hrs

End of Year Break up and

Christmas Party

### In this issue:

- From the Branch Master
- Alma Doepel Back in water
- Art Prize Winners Announced
- October Speakers Summary
- New to the Job
- 

*Hon. Sec., Alexandra Evered*  
Email [alex@baysideshipping.com](mailto:alex@baysideshipping.com)  
Tel 03 5424 1224

## From the Branch Master

Our November meeting will be our last meeting for the year. Our last meeting before COVID restrictions were introduced was in June so we are looking forward to a large attendance at our end of year break up and Christmas Party.

Please remember you must be fully vaccinated to attend.

We are putting on a special menu and you might even win a prize. Sue Dight will speak about how the Mission to Seafarers have managed to provide services to visiting seafarers during these difficult times when the seafarers cannot come ashore and the Mission staff cannot attend the ships.

It is encouraging to see that we can still attract new members during a time when we can't hold meetings. WE hope for a full year of activities in 2022.

The following applications for membership have been received.

<b>George Raoul</b>	Ordinary WA Branch	3 <sup>rd</sup> Officer “ Northwest Sanderling”
<b>Mark Pearce</b>	Ordinary Queensland	C/O DSV “Skandi Singapore”
<b>Dinesh Dhawan</b>	Ordinary Sydney	Master “APL Barcelona”
<b>Harshvardhan Kunar</b>	Ordinary Melbourne	Marine Surveyor
<b>Tristan Shandy</b>	Ordinary Melbourne	Senior Investigator at ATSB
<b>Mark Mcllwain</b>	Associate Melbourne	Marine Surveyor George & Sim
<b>Amandeep Riar</b>	Ordinary Melbourne	Marine Surveyor
<b>Ryan Dagnall</b>	Ordinary WA Branch	C/O “Coral Adventure”
<b>Divya Bharati</b>	Ordinary WA Branch	Marine Superintendent at Santos
<b>Michael Parker</b>	Ordinary WA Branch	Master “fugro Etive”
<b>Kel Dillon</b>	Ordinary Melbourne	Harbour Master
<b>Sam Coote</b>	Ordinary WA Branch	C/O “Skandi Singapore”
<b>Mani Bajwa</b>	Ordinary WA Branch	Commercial and Compliance Manager

## Alma Doepel back in the water



In a procedure lasting 5 hours the Alma Doepel was returned to the water on the 16<sup>th</sup> October after spending the last 8 years on a barge undergoing restoration.

The operation started with the barge with the Alma Doepel on it being towed from its berth at North Wharf and positioned alongside the AAL Shanghai which is equipped with heavy lift cranes.

The Alma Doepel was lifted off the barge which was then towed away. Alma Doepel was lowered into the water and checked for leaks before being towed back to its berth at North Wharf.

Dr Harris the Alma Doepel Restoration Director was reported as saying another \$1.5 million was needed to finish the deck, rigging, internal fit out and engineering including fitting fuel and water tanks, a sewage system and engines.

It will be a few years before the restoration is completed. \$30,000 is required to carry out the rigging and our branch has donated \$1,000 to provide blocks for the rigging.

## Art Prize Winners Announced

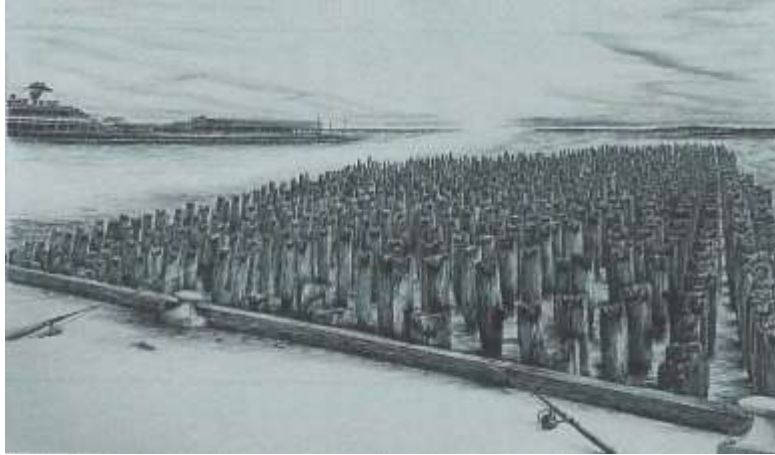
Due to COVID-19 restrictions the announcement of the winners of the 2021 MSC Maritime Art Prize was held online. The theme this year was “The relationship of humanity to the sea”

The winner and recipient of \$10,000 prize money was Laurel Foenander for her oil on canvas work *Lest We Forget*

The Judges said the painting captured the colours of the sky during the bushfires and the desperation of people fleeing. The boat is the life saver and the sea is a safe barrier. *Lest We Forget* captures humanity at its best during one of our worst moments.



The winner of the Port Phillip Sea Pilots best traditional maritime art award and \$5,000 was Debra Marshall for her pen on paper work *Sea Forrest* which the judges said embraced the connection between nature and the man made built environs. The natural and inevitable decay of the pier that is home for marine life was also once a pier for fishing and sea traffic.



The winner of the Nevile & Co. Runner Up award was Don Braber for his oil on board *Once Were Lifesavers* and Antoinette Inguanti was the Gulf Agency Emerging Artists award for her acrylic on canvas work *Men at Work*



## October Speakers Summary

During our October Zoom meeting our branch treasurer Capt. Mario D'Suozza gave a presentation on the explosion and fire on the Cayman Islands registered chemical tanker "Stolt Groenland" on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The vessel loaded a parcel of Styrene Monomer at Houston and proceeded via the Panama Canal to Kobe then to Ulsan where the incident occurred.

Styrene monomer is a volatile hydrocarbon used in the manufacture of plastic and rubber products. Styrene monomer is a heat sensitive cargo which will heat up through polymerisation and at high temperatures a self-sustained and extremely rapid polymerisation, known as runaway polymerisation can occur. During this process styrene monomer will expand and create a build-up of pressure.

To prevent polymerisation during transport at sea an inhibitor such as Tert-Butylcatechol (TBC) is added to the styrene monomer at the time of loading but it relies on the motion of the vessel at sea to ensure a good mix.

The carriage instructions were for the temperature of the cargo to be kept below 30 degrees C. Products in some adjacent tanks were loaded at 40 degrees plus.

During the voyage the temperature of the styrene monomer was not monitored and temperature alarms were not set.

Tank temperature records showed that the temperature in the tank containing the styrene monomer began to rise when the crew initiated cargo heating to nearby but not adjacent tanks. These higher temperatures reduced the effect of the TBC inhibitor and when the temperature exceeded 65 degrees runaway polymerisation occurred resulting in pressure so high the tank ruptured blowing a large hole in the main deck and igniting a fireball.

The investigation conducted by the UK Marine Accident Branch on behalf of the Cayman Islands found that the cause of the explosion and fire was runaway polymerisation of the styrene monomer resulting from the transfer of heat from adjacent cargo tanks.

The probability of heat being transferred from other cargo tanks was not considered during the planning of the cargo stowage because the calculations to predict heat

transfer were complex and outside the capabilities of the ships operators and the tankers crew.

A similar incident occurred only a few days before on the "Stolt Focus" but in that case the rise in temperature was noticed and action taken before the critical runaway temperature was reached.

Mario gave an interesting talk on a very technical subject that highlighted the dangers involved in the carriage of chemical cargoes.

## New to the Job Captain John Paine

I arrived in Australia in March 1961 with a one way air ticket from New Zealand, 10 pounds in my pocket and a 2 month old letter of interest from Howard Smiths which was not quite a job offer. Fortunately I had relations in Sydney and a girlfriend in Newcastle so temporary accommodation was not an immediate concern. Just as well as my visit to Howard Smiths office bright and early next day did not follow the expected script. Apparently they had just sold a ship and had a second ship undergoing a major refit so there were no vacancies for a brand new third mate unless I was able to wait 6 weeks. OK not a good start for the day but no worries there were 4 other Australian shipping companies in the same area so there had to be a job there somewhere right? Four interviews later and plenty of "thank you for coming we will keep in touch" things were not looking quite so positive and the 10 pounds was looking decidedly short of what might be required for the future, maybe I should have listened to my father and taken the guaranteed job with the Union Co. in NZ. I finally found the office of the Merchant Officers Guild and surprise surprise BHP was very short of officers and if I passed the initial interview it was likely I could start tomorrow. What a difference a day makes and in no time at all I was walking up the gangway of the Caloundra which BHP had just bought and the commencement of a 40 year career with BHP Shipping.

The vessel was berthed at Pyrmont in Sydney and I was surprised to see a gantry loading coal into the hatch just above the gangway so arriving on board with the usual accumulation of suitcase, duffle bag, radio, sextant etc. a question to the Chief Officer who was in near vicinity as to where the coal was going to be delivered was answered by "don't be a dickhead this ship is a coal burner and that's the bunkers". Not really a silly question as all the ships I had sailed on during the past 4 years were motor ships and I thought that coal fired steam ships existed only in text books never mind ships that had hand fired boilers like the Caloundra. To have a small ship of about 6000 tons employing a total crew of 57 was also a surprise not to mention that there were 7 maritime unions involved so for the officers the biggest challenge of the day was not cargo operations but the need to resolve the many and varied disputes with the maritime unions without provoking a stoppage of work. The Caloundra now renamed Iron Warrior was a very unpopular ship with the engine room ratings as no one wanted to serve on a hand fired steam ship so at every port there was a constant stream of bodies off to the medical inspector of seamen with a whole range of inventive medical conditions that made them unsuitable to continue their employment. Maintaining the paperwork for that lot was a full time occupation and frequently ended up in overtime hours. There were times when I questioned my decision to join BHP Shipping as most of my fellow Union Co. cadets had taken jobs with overseas shipping companies and didn't know the meaning of an industrial dispute, still the generous wages on offer on the Australian Coast were very attractive particularly when you have spent four years as an apprentice barely earning pocket money.

After six very busy days in Sydney and on a steep learning curve as to what was expected of a third mate the ship departed for Port Kembla early evening and I found myself on bridge watch just as we were in the final stages of clearing the harbour with quite a lot of other vessels in the near vicinity. At this critical stage of the pilotage the helmsman chose to pass out and slide down to the deck in a drunken heap so there was some instant activity to shift him clear and grab hold of the wheel to get back on course before we were involved in a serious accident. As you can imagine this did not please the Captain one bit so there were some terse ship handling instructions to keep us out of the way of incoming vessels. At the same time he was also carrying out a heated debate on the bridge wing with the ships delegates regarding the performance of the mud pilot and the words Official Log Book and instant dismissal were being

used. If I was not convinced before, this was a clear indication that sailing with BHP was going to be very different to the quiet days with the Union Company.

Arrival at Port Kembla provided some practical anchor handling experience as the outer harbour at Port Kembla is a very confined difficult place to berth a ship with very little room for mistakes. I was informed by the Captain that he would let the starboard anchor go just inside the breakwater and I was to stop it at 3 shackles so the ship would sheer to starboard and swing in stern first to No.3 jetty. Sounded like a plan to me but I didn't realise that the Chippy was also very new to the job having just finished his time at Cockatoo Dockyard in Sydney and had never been anywhere near a windlass. At the appropriate signal we let go the anchor and he continued to unwind the brake so the cable flew out in a large cloud of rust, dust and mud followed by a good deal of loud shouting to stop which was echoed by even louder voices from the bridge. By the time we were able to get some control of the situation about double the amount of anchor cable had run out and the ship was just about stopped in the water. The advice from the bridge made it clear that we were about as much use as an ash tray on a motorbike and we had just stuffed the whole operation which amused the sailors no end. The only saving grace was a spell of very mild weather which allowed us to pick up the surplus anchor cable without the ship drifting into danger and finally managed to move astern into the waiting berth without any further complications. The events of that first trip are as clear to me today as they were in 1961 and the anchor handling mistakes were never repeated in subsequent years. A clear reminder that knowledge learnt from a text book should be treated as advice only and no substitute for hands on experience.

