

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



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

NEXT MEETING

1830 hrs 30th November 2022

Mail Exchange Hotel

End of Year Break Up

and Christmas Party



Victorian Regional Channels
Authority

From the Branch Master

I would just like to promote our Christmas party on 30 November at the Mail Exchange Hotel. The event promises to be a gala night to mark the end of the year. A sumptuous meal, a bottle of red and white wine will be provided on each table with Capt. Dick Francis to regale us with stories of his life at sea. I hope to see you all there to mark the end of the year.

I was looking through photographs I have taken over years. I thought I would include one that was taken during one of the tall ship events. The ships are berthed at Workshop Jetty, Williamstown. I think it gives a taste of what the port would have looked like during the 1800's

Fair winds

Graeme



Branch News

The annual Seafarers Church Service was held in St Pauls Cathedral on 23rd October. Francis Castellino stood in for the Branch Master and read the 1st Lesson. After the service the traditional luncheon was held at Young and Jackson's



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A recent visitor to Melbourne was Captain Victor del Prado who is the President of the Society of Filipino Ship Captains (FILSCAPTS) which is the Philippine equivalent of COMMA.

FILSCAPTS is looking to form alliances with other master mariner organisations in the Asia-Pacific region. Capt. Del Prado has met with counterparts in Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan and asked if Australia would be interested in joining with neighbouring countries to provide a joint representative voice to IFSMA and possibly to IMO. The matter has been passed on to the Federal Court.

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On 9th November about 100 friends and colleagues gathered at Station Pier to celebrate the life of Captain Roy Stanbrook who died 14 July 2022 aged 65. Roy had been a member of the Melbourne Branch and Melbourne Harbour Master. Amongst those who spoke was Captain David Shennon a former Melbourne Branch Master and also a former Melbourne Harbour Master.

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On 15th October Captain Paddy Michaelson passed away. Paddy had been a member for over 50 years and had served on the Branch Court from 1973 to 2010 Ten of those years was as Deputy Branch Master.

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On 6th November our oldest member Captain Martin Spencer Hogbin passed away aged 98. The July 2019 edition of The Log contains Martin's reflections on the role of Alfred Holt & Company's ships during WW2 including his role as 4th Mate on "Antenor" which was one of the troopships conveying U.S. troops from the Solent to Omaha and Utah beaches.

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At the DCN 2022 Australian Shipping and Maritime Industry Awards Teresa Lloyd was announced as the 2022 inductee into the Australian Maritime Hall of Fame. In 2010 Teresa Lloyd (nee Hatch) received the COMMA Outstanding Achievement Award for her work as Executive Director of the Australian Shipowners Association.

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New Zealand Accident Report

MO-2021-203

This collision occurred between the fishing vessel “Commission” and the container ship “Kota Lembah” which was stopped and drifting about 70 nm off the Bay of Plenty waiting for its berth in Auckland to become available.

The FV “Commission” was motoring at about 6kts and was laying out a longline. The Captain of the fishing vessel had detected the “Kota Lembah” on radar but had not sighted it or plotted it on radar before he left the wheelhouse to assist the crew with the fishing gear. There was nobody in the wheelhouse when the fishing vessel scrapped down the side of the container ship. FV”Commission” suffered damage to the stabiliser arm and wheelhouse structure.

Te Pou the Captain of the FV”Commission” appeared in the district court and was found guilty of operating a ship in a manner which caused unnecessary danger or risk and was fined NZ\$1650.

The New Zealand Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) reached a different conclusion on fault in its report into the incident.

The TAIC found that despite its failure to keep a lookout the FV”Commission” was a fishing vessel engaged in fishing and therefore had the right of way.

They found that because “Kota Lembah” had voluntarily turned off her engine she was still a power driven vessel under COLREGS and was the give way vessel and therefore required to take action to avoid the collision.

TAIC found that the watchkeeping standard on both vessels fell well short of good industry practice.

Strategic Fleet Task Force Announced

The Government's policy is to have a Strategic National Fleet of commercial cargo ships to strengthen Australia's economic sovereignty and national security.

The Government claims that the fleet of up to 12 Australian flagged and crewed ships will secure access to fuel supplies and other essential imports.

A strategic fleet task force is to be set up to provide the Government with advice on how to establish the fleet as quickly as possible and on what legislative or regulatory reforms are necessary to support the strategic fleet and Australian shipping.

The task Force Chairman will be John Mullen who has been in the transport and infrastructure industry for 20 years. The other members are Angela Gillham from Maritime Industry Australia, Dr Sarah Ryan from Woodside Energy, Paddy Crumlin from the Maritime Union of Australia and Major General Jason Walk from the Department of Defence.

The Strategic fleet concept is not supported by Shipping Australia and the recent Productivity Commission Report found that the fleet would have limited ability to mitigate the supply chain issues of recent years and that the fleet would find it difficult to compete on a commercial basis.

October Speakers Summary

The speaker at the October meeting was Captain Dick Francis whose subject was the restoration of the Steam Tug “Wattle”. Dick is a former Melbourne Branch Master and has had a long involvement with the “Wattle”

During the depression the Cockatoo Island Dockyard built the Tug “Wattle” in order to provide work for the yards tradesmen and apprentices. When the “Wattle” was completed in 1933 it was given to the Navy to operate as a small harbour tug in Sydney.

In 1969 the Navy had no further need for the tug and it was put up for sale. It was bought for its scrap value by the fore runners to the National Maritime Museum who operated it as a tourist vessel on Sydney Harbour.



Wattle in Victoria Dock prior to restoration

In 1979 it was bought by a Melbourne Consortium and towed to Melbourne by the Howard Smith Tug “Edina”. After undergoing a refit “Wattle” worked as a tourist boat on the Yarra River and on occasions in Port Philip Bay. The tug had catering facilities and at times entertained the passengers with a 3 piece jazz band. The “Wattle’s” condition was deteriorating and in 2003 it failed survey and was withdrawn from service.



Funds raising for restoration commenced and in 2009 “Wattle” was lifted from the water and placed on blocks so that restoration of the hull could be undertaken. 60% of the plates had to be replaced. Repairs were made with welding rather than the original riveting due to cost. The engine was overhauled and in 2015 the tug was returned to the water and restoration work continues to this day. The galley has to be fitted out and the tug slipped before it can undergo its final survey.



Wattle in new colour scheme

Dick explained that the restoration depended on sponsors, donations and a large group of volunteers some of whom Dick mentioned by name. The presentation was illustrated with numerous photos and was well received by the members. A donation was made to the restoration fund.