

A history of the League of Ancient Mariners of New South Wales

The League of Ancient Mariners was co-founded in 1903 by Captain A.W, Pearce (Born 16th April 1857 – Died 11th July 1951) and Dr R. Scot-Skirving (Born 18th December 1859-Died 15th July 1956)

It came about when they were passengers aboard the S.S. Miowere in September 1902 en route between Vancouver, Canada and Sydney NSW.

By the time the ship berthed in Sydney they had planned an organization 'having an occasional muster of retired Master Mariners and Deck Officers to be a worthy idea so as to keep alive the traditions of the sea, particularly as it applied to the era of sail'.

In 1903 the League was born, sail having given way to steam and steam in turn, having given way to motor, the league has been going strong ever since.

During the Great War Capt. Pearce was appointed Chief Commissioner of the Australian Comforts Fund in Egypt, retaining this for two years from 1917 to 1918. In recognition of this work he was awarded the King's Jubilee Medal.

Dr Scot-Skirving attended the pre-sea ship Conway in the Mersey. He was then apprenticed in Donald Curries Services aboard the sailing ship Tantallin Castle.

During the voyage he contracted beriberi and was hospitalized. He was then encouraged to take up medicine which he did, taking his degree at the University of Edinburgh.

He came to Sydney as Surgeon of the Migrant Ship 'Ellora' and after various traverses settled in Sydney and becoming Superintendent of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

He went to the South African War as a Consulting Surgeon and in the Great War was occupied in England as a Major in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Back in Australia he was appointed Specialist Surgeon at St. Vincent's Hospital and as a Specialist Physician at The Children's Hospital Camperdown.

He held a limited Master's Certificate and was a keen yachtsman owning a double-ended 32 foot yacht "Phalarpe" which he had till his death..



The logo which celebrates the 100th anniversary in 2003 shows the magnificent and graceful Wandering Albatross which is the largest flying bird alive today. With a wingspan of nearly 3.5 metres, it soars and glides over the Southern ocean for days on end before returning to land. It was chosen long ago as the emblem on our badges, ties, and pennant.

The 100th year was celebrated with the book, "Sons of the Sea" and a special outing in addition to the annual outing where members went to the Maritime Museum and three members, Captain John Spiers, Captain Mike Costello and Captain Alan Tait spoke in the Museum theatre followed by lunch aboard one of the Captain Cook Cruise vessels.