

Captain Michael John Herbert Plant

25/08/1940 – 27/12/2023

Member No.235



Mike was born at Rose Bay in Sydney and went to Christian Brothers College and enjoyed sailing VJ yachts in his youth.

Mike sailed coastal with his father Captain John Plant on the E&A vessel SS Eastern in 1955, before signing up for a four-year apprenticeship with British India Steam Navigation Company in 1956. He joined his first ship MS Carpentaria in Sydney and sailed for Rangoon, on the 7th December 1956.

Mike passed his Second Mates Certificate at Southampton on 7th March 1961 and then signed a two and a half year contract with BISNC. On the 22nd April 1965 he signed off MS Bancura in Auckland, New Zealand and also resigned from BISNC.

In November 1965 he joined the E&A vessel SS Arafura as a relieving 2nd Mate. After passing his Masters Foreign Certificate in Sydney on 7th March 1966 he was appointed to the Eastern & Australian Company vessel SS Nankin as 3rd Officer.

In 1970 he stood by the final construction and fitting out of MS Ariake. From February 1972 to October 1974 he sailed as Chief Officer of the Cargo Passenger vessels SS Cathay and SS Chitral before being promoted Master of MS Ariake in December 1974.

Mike was demoted to Chief Officer in June 1976 due to the sale of SS Cathay & SS Chitral and was reappointed Master in April 1980 when a new vessel was acquired. He went on to command MV Ariake, MV Arafura, the new Ariake and MV Asian Jade.

In 1984 Mike resigned from E&A to join the Queensland & Torres Strait Pilot Service and retired from Australian Reef Pilots in April 2013 after piloting 1368 vessels through the Barrier Reef.

Mike was diagnosed with cancer in the early 2000's and underwent treatment up until his passing.

Biographical details from Captain Tony Saville & photos from Captain John Cardelli



SS Cathay ship's officers