

Captain Robert Michael “Mike” Flowers Bertram

11th June 1936 to 2nd November 2023

Roll No. 23

Member of the League’s Committee 2002 - 2023



Robert Michael Flowers Bertram, affectionately known as Captain Mike, was born on the 11th June 1936 in Northumberland, not far from Newcastle on Tyne. He went to the Royal Grammar School followed by the Training ship HMS Conway.

At Conway he graduated with the leaving certificate, recognised as G.C.E in Mathematics, Science and Seamanship at Advance Level, and also English, Navigation and Ship Construction. This reduced his apprenticeship from 4 to 3 years.

In 1953 he was indentured to T&J Brocklebank Ltd and sailed on MV Mahanada on the general cargo trade to India and the United States of America, he was promoted 4th Mate in 1955 before attending Nellys Nautical School in Newcastle upon Tyne, where he passed his Second Mate’s Certificate.

In 1956 Mike joined W.H. Stott, Mann and Company as Third Mate and later as Second Mate on tankers operating mainly in the Caribbean and world wide on bulk carriers. After attending Nellys Nautical College again in 1958 Mike passed his First Mates Certificate. He then joined Indo China S.N Co, a subsidiary of Jardine Matheson of Hong Kong, sailing as Second Mate on MV Eastern Trader on a regular service with timber from Borneo to Hong Kong.

After attending the Polytechnic in Hong Kong in 1961 he graduated with his Masters Foreign Going Certificate and returned to sea with Indo China S.N.Co. as First Mate on MV Eastern Moon on the Bay of Bengal to Japan Service and later on the Australia – Japan Service. In 1966 Mike was promoted Master of MV Eastern Trader, in November 1968 Mike resigned from Indo China S.N.Co and moved his family to Sydney

Frank Pickering (Second Officer) remembers:

“Mike was Master of MV Eastern Ranger on the Far East & Calcutta Service and we were at Hong Kong when a Typhoon passed over the Colony. We went to the Typhoon anchorage and streamed two anchors with the engine running all night. Mike was very professional and calm during the ordeal and had the admiration of the other Deck Officers and Engineers“.

In 1969 Mike joined Union Steamship Company as Third Mate of MV Pateena in the bulk trades and later as Second Mate, and finally as First Mate of MV Kootara an experimental Sulphuric Acid carrier.

In December of 1969 Mike joined Seatainer Terminals at White Bay as one of the three Planning Supervisors in the early days of containerisation. For some years Mike planned ships on the Japanese Trade, but later as the systems were upgraded and the company took on more work branch into other trades including the coastal service of ASP, and other Lines that were clients of STL.

In February 1982 all the business from White Bay was moved to C.T.A.L at Port Botany, Mike had acquainted himself with the new computer system before the move. Mike retired from C.T.A.L in 1993.

Mike was a stalwart supported of the Company of Master Mariners and the League of Ancient Mariners of NSW.

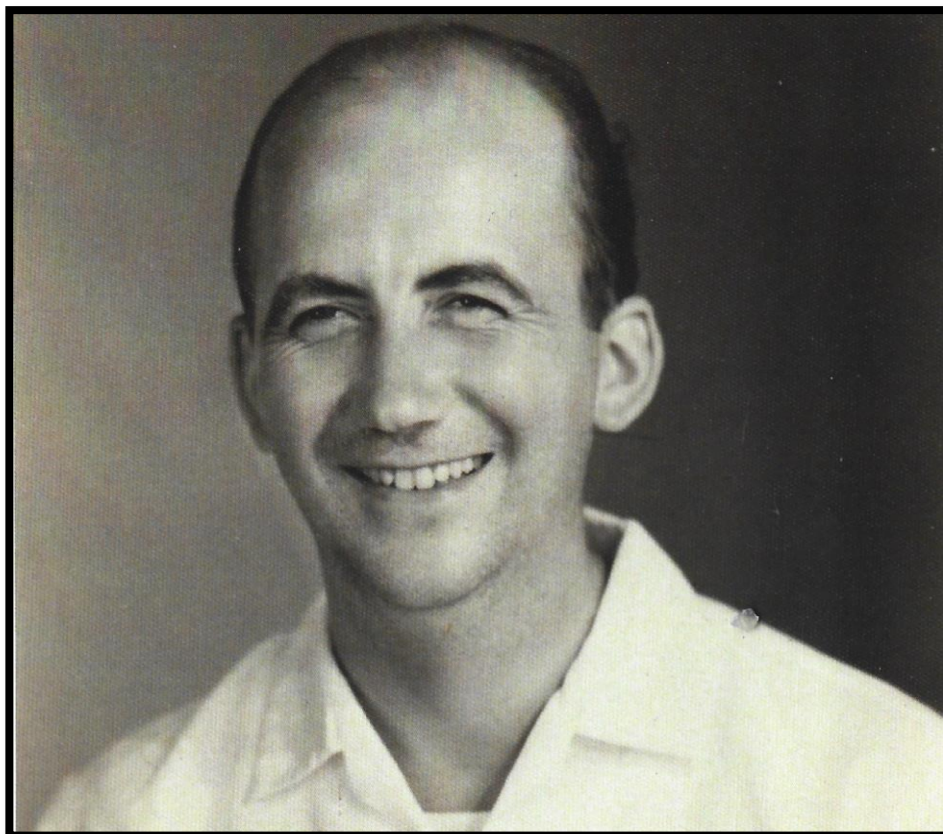
He served as Treasurer of the Sydney Branch of the Company of Master Mariners.

Mike served on the Committee of the League of Ancient Mariners NSW from 2002 to 2023 our longest serving office holder. He would always sit quietly at meetings only making a comment when he had something to say and always very polite.

Mike’s main interests were Classical Music and Jigsaws and he was well read.

Mike & Patricia were married at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Kingsford Sydney.

He leaves behind his wife Patricia and son Adrian and was predeceased by his other son Roger.



**A Thought from Our Members:
Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.
Rime of the Ancient Mariner
Samuel Taylor Coleridge
!772 - 1834**



**Fair winds and following seas,
may forever you feel, upon your cheek, the salty breeze.
Your spirit lives on in many a heart,
your words captured, and never to depart.
May your loved ones have the comfort in knowing,
to heaven is where you are going.
For all that they have to do is look above,
and they will be reminded of your love.**

Thank you to Ted Van Bronswijk for the biography and photos from Order of Service