

SONS OF THE SEA

The History of the League of Ancient Mariners



Ted Liley

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It is with our grateful thanks that we publish this edition of *Sons of the Sea* through the courtesy of Mrs Brenda Liley in honour of the memory of her husband Captain Ted Liley (1927 – 2018), Member, Past President and Honorary Historian of the League of Ancient Mariners of NSW.

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SONS OF THE SEA

FOREWORD

Thanks are extended to the members of the League of Ancient Mariners who willingly submitted articles thereby sharing their sea-going experiences and other matters of interest for inclusion in this book.

Particular note is made of those lengthy histories relating to the dark days of conflict - 1939 to 1945. They have been recorded for the benefit and knowledge of later generations of readers who will hopefully be untouched by similar circumstances. The graphic account of capture, hospitalisation and internment as portrayed by Captain Bruce Wharton not only portrays the brutal side of conflict but also the fellowship of seafarers.

The article "Twilight of Sail" gives a first hand insight of the way of life which was commonplace when the League was founded one century ago and which is today, almost a memory of a bygone era. Captain Lindsay Davis recalls those days of long ago when many young New Zealanders gained first hand experience of the "Romance of Sail".

Thanks to the dedication of C.C. Croft, our Secretary for some fifty years, historical records of his active period have been saved and are included herein. Again, a rather scant amount was gleaned from records retained in the Mitchell Wing of the State Library.

Mention is also made and thanks extended to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and the Central Sydney Health Service for locating and forwarding two copies of photographs of our far sighted co-founder, Doctor R. Scot-Skirving.

The ranks of sea-farers, especially those who made and those who still pursue a career in the Merchant Service are thinning alarmingly. This is due to an apparent concerted commercial and political move to whittle the once proud and productive Australian merchant fleet almost to annihilation

The production of this book is not intended to be a business venture. It is a record and celebration of the centenary of The League of Ancient Mariners of N.S.W. and this aspect of our heritage makes it all the more worthy in preserving as much as is possible of a proud identity.

I must also include my personal thanks to those folk who provided the assistance and support in the compilation of this story. In this regard I note my sincere appreciation to my advisers Major Sid Cheeseman AM JP and Captain Graham Haultain as well as my ever patient wife, Brenda, without whose help, 'Sons of the Sea' would still be in its embryonic stage.

E.T. Liley. Master Mariner.

Pilot, Port of Sydney (Rtd).

Honorary Historian - League of Ancient Mariners.

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SONS OF THE SEA

The History of the League of Ancient Mariners

The League of Ancient Mariners of New South Wales celebrates its centenary in 2003. The Object' of the League is still found in the Rule Book and is stated as :-

'The object of the League shall be to promote and encourage the social intercourse and welfare of its Members; to cultivate a knowledge of the usages of the interests of the Merchant Navy; to preserve its traditions and all matters relating to its past and present conditions”



CHAPTER 1

Setting the Course

The year was 1902, the month September and the S.S. Miowere under the command of Captain Hemming was on passage from Vancouver, Canada to Sydney, Australia. Amongst the passengers aboard the vessel were Captain A.W. Pearse and Doctor R. Scot-Skirving.

These two passengers, both in their mid forties, had pursued different professional paths during past years but started to recall bygone days before they had each 'swallowed the anchor'. By the time the S.S. Miowere had berthed in Sydney Harbour, they had agreed that -

'An organisation 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.'

The Design Team - Captain A.W Pearse and Dr. R Scot Skirving.

Captain A.W. Pearse:- Captain Pearse, born in London on 16th April 1857 went to sea at the age of 17, spending several years in sail. He commenced his apprenticeship aboard the sailing ship Cardigan Castle a vessel of some 1,200 tons and owned by Richard Mills and Co. of Liverpool. On his 3rd voyage he deserted to the Hokitika goldfields in N.Z. but was apprehended and returned to sea. He later transferred to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. running to the West Indies and South America where at some stage he served under Captain J. Jellicoe, father of Admiral Lord Jellicoe. He transferred again to the Orient Company serving in the steamships Cusco and the Austral. He passed his examination for Master in London in the year 1885 and 'swallowed the anchor' in 1887 after receiving an appointment in London to manage a gold dredging company on the Molyneaux River in Otago, New Zealand.

In a brief life history given to the League, he gave an insight into early Colonial life during this period of his exploits as follows :-

During that time I had a thrilling experience. Having decided to inspect the gold dredging companies higher up the river, I hired a buggy and pair of horses and started from Alexandra, my headquarters.

Shortly after leaving the township I saw that one of the horses was not fit, so went very slowly until I reached Clyde. Here I managed to get Hughie Craig, the well-known coach-driver of Cobb & Co's coaches to lend me a horse. This change of horses saved my life.

Soon after leaving Clyde darkness fell with a thick drizzle, so I lit my two lamps which shone very brightly. My road ran along the right bank of the river and in many parts I could look a hundred feet below me at the roaring cataract; even if out of sight it could be heard plainly.

My own horse was on the river side and the borrowed coach-horse on the inside. About 8.30 pm, when I began to think I should soon see the Cromwell lights and when I was in about the worst part of the road, suddenly a tall white figure with both arms held up, appeared in front of the horses in the full glare of the lights. The horses made a bound to the left, or towards the river. I felt the buggy slant outwards and I knew the wheels were over the bank. However the coach-horse which had travelled hundreds of times over the road saved me. He leaned whilst going full speed towards the inside and by his weight, pulled his mate and the buggy back to safety, flew past the figure and then took charge of me.

For four miles we tore along the road, passing tent after tent on the hillside with the miners rushing out to see what lunatic was risking his life - until we came to the Cromwell bridge with an almost right-angle curve to the left. The coach-horse again saved me. He literally pushed my mad beast round and we narrowly escaped being smashed up. We clattered over the bridge and with a riderless horse ahead of us, drew up at the hotel door, while the whole population rushed out of their houses to see what was the matter.

At first, everyone thought I was on a drunken spree and it was only the sight of the riderless foaming horse which also stopped, that told them something was wrong. I reported the matter to the local police, thanked God for my escape, had a good supper and slept.

On my arrival next morning in Queenstown, I was met by the police and was told that a Government Official was missing. In company with the police I went back over the road. When we reached the place it made me feel ill to look. Over 250 feet below was the roaring river. At the edge of the bank, the tracks of the wheels were plainly seen where they had gone over about eight inches below the edge. Even the marks of my horse's feet were visible over the bank.

Apparently a man had been down the river collecting taxes from the miners. Somehow he had been thrown from his horse which was the one ahead of me galloping into the township. Hearing my buggy coming along, the man endeavoured to stop it. He had a long white waterproof coat on and this was the apparition which frightened my horses. Ten days later his body was picked up 100 miles down river. I thank God to this day for the loan of Hugh Craig's coach-horse.

In 1891 Captain Pearse moved to Sydney, Australia where in association with R.E.N. Twopeny founded and became the Proprietor and also Managing Director of the 'Pastoral Review' and in this leading livestock and wool publication often expressed candid and sometimes critically outspoken views of Australian shipping, political and agricultural topics and State interference in industry.

Prior to the first World War, he made many overseas trips in connection with his business interests, while in 1908 and again in 1913 he represented Australia and New Zealand at International Refrigeration Congresses.

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

His interests thereafter were many and varied.

They included Member of the Historical Society of N.S.W., Fellow of the Royal Colonial Institute, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Liveryman of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, Freeman of the City of London, From 1922 to 1937 represented the Port of London Authority in Australia and New Zealand. For over 40 years Vice President of the C. of E. Boys and Girls Homes in Burwood, N.S.W. and also Vice President of The Mission to Seamen; Vice President of The League of Ancient Mariners for many years and President of The League during 1940-41.

Captain Pearse also found time to write a few books including 'A Windjammer', 'Prentice', and 'Windward Ho' which contain reminiscences of his time at sea. Another book 'The World's Meat Future' covered most countries livestock, climate, pastures and prospects. He was a man who developed many and varied interests and talents during a lifespan of 94 years. Captain A.W. Pearse 'Crossed the Bar' on 11th July, 1951 at Rushcutters Bay.



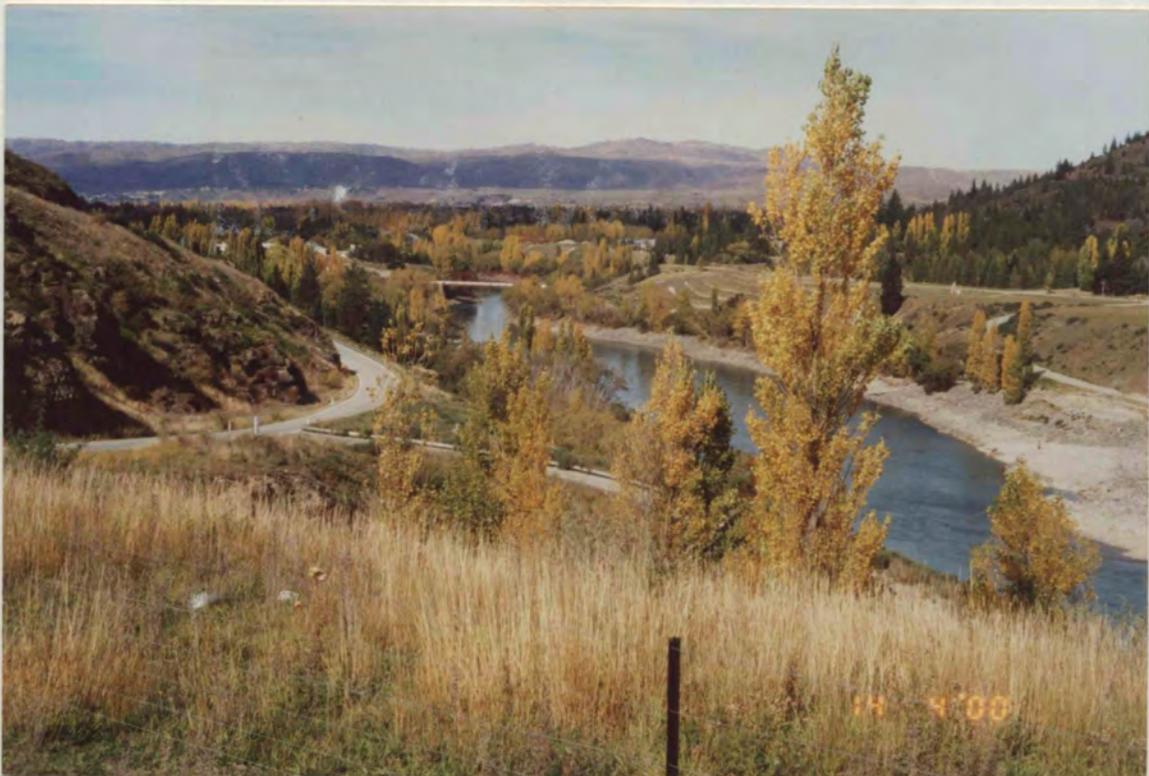
Captain A.W. Pearse J.P. F.R.G.S.

Born 16th April 1857, Died 11th July 1951.

Co-founder of The League of Ancient Mariners in 1903.



The Clutha River is now blocked by a dam wall in the vicinity of the near accident to coach and driver. The views show the impounded water upstream and the view downstream of the wall, the area being a few miles east of the town of Cromwell.



Doctor R.Scot-Skirving - In November, 1943, Dr. Scot-Skirving wrote a short biography at the League's request, as follows :

"I have always felt rather a fraud in the gatherings of the Ancient Mariners, for I rather regard myself as more an Epsom Salt than a Sea Salt. When still very young, I 'swallowed the anchor'. I have therefore really nothing worth remembering of my career." (What an understatement! ed.)

I started my boyhood with Sea - Fever, and it has been more or less chronic all my life. When I was just twelve I went to Eastman Royal Navy Academy in Southsea, to be crammed for the Entrance Exam for RN. Cadets but as I missed getting the necessary Nomination, I just decided to go into the Merchant Service, against my Father's wishes. I went to the training ship Conway in the Mersey. I truly loved my time in her.

Then I was fixed to sail in one of Greens, Blackwall ships but there was no vacancy for several months. As I hated drifting, I was apprenticed in Donald Curries Service aboard the sailing ship Tantallon Castle. I then got beriberi why I don't know, ---and came ashore. By the time I was well I was strongly urged to take Medicine, which I did, ---hating it at first and wishing I was back at sea.

But I got over that for I found I liked Medicine. It was no joke for me to tackle the study of Medicine after several years of work at a different profession, but ultimately I got my degree at the University of Edinburgh. Thereafter I did lots of post-graduate work on the Continent and elsewhere as well as resident jobs in hospital, but I hankered for Australia.

So I came to Sydney as Surgeon of the Migrant Ship 'Ellora' and after various traverses I settled in Sydney, becoming Superintendent of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, on the staff of which I still am. I also held posts, first in the Children's Hospital and then for many years I was Hon. Surgeon to St. Vincent's. I also lectured at the Sydney University. Went to the South African War as a Consulting Surgeon and in the Great War I was very fully occupied in a responsible job in England as a Major in the Royal Army Medical Corps,

Since then I have just jogged on here. Although I stopped going to sea when quite young, I have never lost my interest in all that concerns sea-faring and especially have I continued a fairly conscientious familiarity with navigation. I sometimes write articles which partly deal with the sea and a number of them have been printed in the Medical Journal of Australia.

This Ancient Mariner (then aged about eighty three) ends his Log as follows :- "This suffices to tell you what a commonplace pilgrimage I've had in life."

Articles to the Medical Journal above mentioned include 'Recollections of the Emigration Service to Australia, in Sailing Ships in long past years' dated June 27, 1942, and also 'Surgery at Sea in the Eighties' in the issue of June 6, 1936. He also wrote another book - 'Wire Splicing for Yachtsmen'.

There is much that Dr. Robert Scot-Skirving omitted from his memoirs to the League. On his return to Australia following the Boer War he wrote a book - 'Our Army in South Africa'. Again, back in civilian life and medical practice in Sydney after W.W.1, he was considered a very popular and accomplished if somewhat flamboyant lecturer at the University of Sydney.

His appointment as a Specialist Surgeon at St. Vincent's Hospital and as a Specialist Physician at The Children's Hospital, Camperdown, was an extremely rare honour. He held a limited Master's Certificate and was a keen yachtsman - the sea was his greatest love. The double-ended 32 foot yacht "Phalarope" remained in his loving care to the end.

His love of the sea helped to start this League of Ancient Mariners of New South Wales and we therefore say honour to another of our Founders, a genuine Ancient Mariner if ever there was one. Doctor R. Scot-Skirving was born on 18th December, 1859 and 'Crossed the Bar' on the 15th July, 1956.

These two distinguished gentlemen, so fired with enthusiasm for the idea of a fellowship of retired seafarers, gave considerable thought to the drafting of Rules for an Association while on board the *Miowere*. On arrival Sydney, they contacted Captain S.G. Green who was at that time Marine Superintendent of the E. and A. Steam ship Company.

Captain Green wholeheartedly supported the enthusiastic proposal of Captain Pearse and Dr. Scot-Skirving, whereby he also threw his far sighted effort towards the objects, ideas and rules for the League, which Rules remained basically unaltered for more than forty years.

Ring Stand By

The association was formally established as The League of Ancient Mariners of N.S.W. in the year of 1903.

Captain Green presided from its formation, remaining in that position until he resigned the Presidency in 1940 due to ill health. He died shortly after. He was an excellent speaker, while his personality and industry in League affairs resulted in the excellent standard it attained under his guidance. The first recorded Secretary of the League was Captain A.J. Webber. Captain Webber held this position from 1902 until retiring the position some 19 years later.

Under Way

It had been decided that meetings would be held as close as possible to Saint Valentine's Day. The first official outing of The League of Ancient Mariners was held in February, 1903, appropriately on the Harbour, aboard the tug *Challenge*. She was a 68 hp. paddle steamer of timber construction, Length 84ft, Beam 16 ft, Depth 9 ft.



Dr. R. Scot-Skirving

Born 18th December 1859.

Died 15th July 1956.

Co-founder of The League of Ancient
Mariners.

(Photo taken during early days at Royal
Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney).

Dr. R. Scot-Skirving

A photo taken in the twilight of his life.

His outstanding contribution to
medicine is also acknowledged
in Sydney's teaching hospitals.





The earliest photo of members of the League - at an outing aboard the R.M.S. "Aorangi" at anchor in Sydney Harbour. The picture of the debonair looking gentlemen was included in the edition of the Pastoral Review dated December 15, 1906. It was noted that the organisation was then known as "The Ancient Mariners League" as indicated on our badge.

CHAPTER 2

Rules of the League

No information is available as to the terms of the Rules in the early days. League records have indicated that the Rules were amended in 1930 and again in 1945. On each of these occasions, an increase of the annual subscription was the reason for change while in 1945 the amount was raised to one pound per annum. The subscription fell due for payment by January or February each year.

A Rule change made at the A.G.M. on 27-5-49 changed the Full Member status from : “.....had retired from active service afloat” to “all certificated Masters and Deck Officers of the Sea Service of the British Empire”.

At the same time that Membership status was altered, the amount for annual subscription was increased to One Pound and Ten Shillings for Full Members and One Pound and Fifteen Shillings for Associate Members. There were further increases in subscriptions in the years -1954, 1966, 1976 and again in 1979 when the annual subscription was altered to the amount of \$10 for all.

Other changes to the rules occurred, with material alterations to membership status on the 24 March, 1986 which read :

- 1 . Extend Full Membership to Certificated Masters, Deck, Engineer and Radio Officers of the Sea Service of the Commonwealth of Nations.
- 2 . Life Membership may be accorded to any gentleman deserving special recognition for 'Services to the League'. A Gold Badge may also be awarded at the discretion of the Council.
- 3 . Honorary Membership may be granted but, 'such Membership shall have the same restrictions as for an Associate Member and shall be reviewed by the Council biennially'.
- 4 . Council. - The composition and conditions in respect to Council Members have been considerably altered and amplified as were aspects of the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- 5 . The matter of subscriptions was changed to read 'The annual subscription shall be determined by the Council from time to time'.
- 6 . In previous years council meetings occurred on an average, 5 times per year, however in the year 2000 it was agreed that 'Council Meetings shall be conducted a minimum of 2 times each calendar year, namely in March and November and at other times as deemed necessary. The November Meeting will process Applications for New Membership.'

The Rules of the League of Ancient Mariners has stood the test of time. They were well considered and well drafted from the earliest days of the League. From 1903 to 1949, the only alterations we know, reflected the increased cost of living.

The Council

Today, the Council of the League consists of :-

President	1	Elected every 3 years
Senior Vice President	1	Past President ex officio
Vice President	2	Full Members, elected annually
Secretary/Treasurer	1	Full Member, elected annually
Council Officers	10	Full Members, elected annually
Honorary Historian	1	Full Member, elected annually
Honorary Padre	1	
Honorary Auditor	1.	

The Patrons

In 1951 the Governor General, His Excellency The Right Honourable W.J. McKell, G.C.M.G., graciously accepted the position of Patron of the League. On his relinquishment of that high office and also the patronage of the League the position of Patron was offered and accepted by the following gentlemen:-

1954 Field Marshall Sir William Slim, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.,
L.L.D.

1960 Viscount Dunrossil, G.C.M.G., M.C., K. St.J., Q.C.

1961 Viscount De Lisle, V.C., P.C., G.C.M.G., K. St.J.

1965 Lord Casey, P. C., G.C.M.G., CR, D.S.O., M.C., K. St.J.

1970 Sir Paul Hasluck, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K. St.J.

1989 Rear Admiral Sir David Martin, K.C.M.G., A.O., K.St.J.

1990 Rear Admiral Sir Peter Sinclair, A.C., A.O., K, St.J.

1997 Dr. Paul Scully-Power, D.S.M., D.Sc., F.R.Aes, F.A.I.C.D.

The Presidents - Lords Over All That They Survey: -

1903 - 1940 Captain S.G. Green

1940 - 1941 " A.W.Pearse

1942 - 1945 " F.J. Bayldon, M.B.E., F.R.G.S.

1945 - 1946 " Sir Frederick French, K.B., R.N.R.

1946 - 1951 " Finlay Murchison

1952 - " Sir Geoffrey Brookes, Kt.

1952 - 1954 " A.J. Aucher

1954 - 1962 " A.G. Rose

1962 - 1965 " F.C. Avdall

1965 - 1971 " W.W.K. Bishop

1971 - 1986 " L.M. Hinchliffe D.S.C., R.A.N. (Rtd.)

1986 - 1990 " P. Lusher

1990 - 1993 " J.F. Rahilly

1993 - 1996 " J. H. Knight

1996 - 1999 " A. Pearson M.B.E.,

1999 - 2002 " K.H. Ross

2002 - " A. Tait O.A.M



The Board room table at Tattersall's Club in Elizabeth Street was the nerve Centre for the retiring committee meeting on the 14th March 1999. It was followed immediately afterwards by the Annual General Meeting.

Seated from left to right was Vice President, Captain Ken Ross, then President, Captain Alan Pearson MBE., followed by our meticulous Honorary Secretary, Major Sid Cheeseman AM and Captain Alan Tait OAM, the other Vice President.

All the retiring office bearers inclusive of the other committee members were re-elected unopposed at the following A.G.M !!!



A fine body of Committee-men and Members. They had just inspected the new flag following the 1999 Annual General Meeting Left to right from the back – Capt. Higgs
 Cmdr. Cameron, Captains Pearson, Arthurson and Rowe.
 Middle row – Capt. Davies, Mr. Powell, Dr. Scully Power, Capt. Dodds, Capt. Ross,
 Capt. Hinchliffe, Major Cheeseman, Capt Tait.
 Front row – Capt. Bolas, not identified, Captains Carson, Walker and Cocksedge, then
 Captains Steuart and Skipper.



The Secretaries - Any problem? See the Mate.

1903 - 1921	Captain	A.J. Webber
1921 -1923	“	Arkley Smith -
1923- 1931	“	F.H.C. Brownlow OBE. (R.A.N.)
1931 - 1944	“	J.R. Stringer
1945- 1952	“	A.J. Aucher
1952-1952	“	J. Simpson
1953- 1953	“	E.W. Livingston.
1947-1953	Mr.	C.C. Croft acted as an assistant secretary. (He maintained he was a victim of the press gang!)
1954-1997	Mr.	C.C. Croft - 50 years of yeoman service.
1998-	Major	S.H. Cheeseman A.M. J.P.

The Life Members For Service to the League.

Captain A.W. Pearse, (born 1857, died 1951). Gold Badge, 27-10-50.
 Doctor R. Scot-Skirving (born 1859 died 1956). Gold Badge 27-10-50
 Captain A.J. Aucher. Gold Badge, 25.7.47.
 Captain F.J. Bayldon.
 Mr. F. Burns. Silver Badge, 27-10-50.
 Captain R.G. Hart.
 Major K. Linde, U.S. Army. (Rtd.)
 Captain F. Murchison. Gold Badge, 27.10.50.
 Captain J. Owen.
 Captain W.G. Rippon.
 Captain G.F. Langford R.A.N. (Rtd). Gold Badge, 24.11.53.
 Captain F.J. Maitland. Gold Badge, 24.11.53.
 Captain J.J. Hughes
 Captain A.E. Jolly.
 Captain T. Carson.
 Captain A.C. Gardner.
 Captain D. Craven.
 Captain I.M. Norrie.
 Captain J.H. Simpson.
 Captain P. Lusher. Gold Badge, 1998.
 Mr. C.C. Croft. Gold Badge, 1998.
 Captain T. Haworth, A.M. Gold Badge, 1998.
 Captain L.M. Hinchliffe, D.S.C. Gold Badge, 1998.
 Captain J.H. Knight.
 Major S. H. Cheeseman, A.M. J. P.

CHAPTER 3

The Gold Badge Recipients Past and Present

Captain Albert J Aucher.

Once again we have the opportunity to refer to a submission by Captain "Sammy" Aucher (pronounced as in French - Or Shay) to the League dated 18/11/43 where he stated -My first recollection of the sea was as a passenger, when a very small boy, on a steamer, Australia which took about four days to travel from Melbourne to Sydney and I lived on a straight diet of prunes, which had the effect of creating a dislike for this supposedly succulent preserve, which has lasted throughout my lifetime.

I can still remember the excitement when my Father took my Mother aboard the American full-rigged ship California in Newcastle and on getting into the boat to come ashore, he somehow dumped her in the harbour. She was, after a bit, extracted from the harbour, wet but resolute.

I later worked in a departmental store as boy, a counter jumper and thereafter in the Silvertown India Rubber Gutta Percher and Telegraph Works Pty. Ltd. for a short period and after making a visit to Newcastle and having a talk with the Captain of the Barque Oiamara, decided to go to sea. The Oiamara a year or so later piled up on the Oyster Bank off Nobbys, Newcastle, and became a total loss.

My Mother died when I had just turned seventeen and a few months after, I joined the ship Hampdon of Liverpool at Sydney and at a shilling per month, to be apprenticed on her return to U.K. On arrival in England, I found my Father there and having a commercial mind, I obtained the twenty eight pounds premium from him and forthwith went to sea as an Ordinary Seaman in the Barque Kilmallie. I was also Acting Steward on the Kilmallie for two or three months. The Steward was disrated and this gave me an insight into the commissariat department's activities on the ship.

I next joined the ship Kirkcudbrightshire as an A. B. She was partly dismasted, bound from Sydney to Queenstown for orders. Then I joined the T.S.S. Tongariro - New Zealand Shipping Co. as A.B. for one trip, Quartermaster one trip, then Moravian, Aberdeen White Star Line as Quartermaster one trip. Third Officer next trip. I later left and joined the Induna as Second Mate. Left her in Sydney and joined the British India Steam Navigation Co.

When returning to Sydney after three years in India, I left in the Fortunatus - the vessel was burnt at sea. After seven days, my boat was picked up by the ship Forth and we were taken to Mauritius. I had some passengers in the boat with me and all survived the trip, in good condition, including the lady.

Returned to Sydney and joined the Union Steamship Co. of New Zealand and eventually came ashore in Wellington, N.Z., as Assistant Stevedore for the N.Z. Shipping Company and later, partner in the firm of Gannaway & Co., Stevedores.

I obtained my Second Mate's Certificate in Sydney, my Mate's in Bombay and my Master's Certificate in Wellington, N.Z.

Retired from Gannaway & Co. Ltd. in November, 1921 and came over to live in Sydney. I found all the pirates in front of the Stock Exchange, Pitt Street, Sydney and they sold me every useless thing that I had the money to buy. These useless things are now the foundations of the business of Aucher Pty. Ltd., Importers, Exporters and Manufacturers.

Having profited by my errors and having paid 25/- in the pound for everything I received, am at this date, President of the Wholesale Importers Association of N.S.W., Chairman of the Importers' Section of the Wholesale Softgoods Advisory Committee, Federal Delegate of the Federal Clothing and Textile Advisory Council etc. I am also acting as Honorary Secretary of the Ancient Mariners' League and have been Vice-President for three years.

Went to sea originally to find out who ran the ship because I wanted to run one. Today I know it is the man who puts the cargo aboard the ship who has the most say in normal times, - and is invited down as and when the occasions arise, as an honoured guest to any dinners given by the Ship Owners. At present still going strong, and hope to have a few more feeds at the Owners' expense after the present war is over.'

Our retired Secretary, Claude Croft who worked for Aucher Pty. Ltd. remarked that "The League was very fortunate during the Second World War in having Capt. 'Sammy' Aucher who worked diligently to keep the League going and most of the work and expenses during that time were borne by his own Company". Captain Aucher was Secretary from 1945 to 1952.

A.J. Aucher was President from 1952 to 1954.

He was made a Life Member of The League of Ancient Mariners and presented with a Gold Badge in 1947 for the services he rendered over many years. Captain Aucher died in 1954.

Captain A.W Pearse and Dr. R Scot-Skirving

Both Founders of the League were made Life Members on the 26-5-1948 and were presented with Gold Badges on 27-10-50.

Captain Finlay Murchison

Born 26-1-1890, Ross-Shire, Scotland. At age 16 years joined the Barque Loch Lomond as boy bound for Port Adelaide. On arrival, jumped ship to join the fire- brigade. When nothing came of those intentions, he returned to sea alternating between steam and sail, the latter being his preference. Captain Murchison passed for Master in 1913. Command time was spent aboard the barque Wild Wave and barque Wathara, before being appointed to supervise the construction of two five-masted barquentines, the Braeside and Burnside for Burns Philp & Co. These vessels of wooden construction were found to be defective and the ownership relinquished.

In 1921 he joined the N.S.W. Navigation Department in the Pilot Service, finally serving as Harbour Master - Sydney. An early Member of the League of Ancient Mariners, he was a Council Member, then Vice President before elevation to the position of President between the years 1946 and 1951 He was presented with a Gold Badge on the 27th October, 1950 and made a Life Member in 1951.

Captain George F Langford

Apprenticed to barque Windsor Castle in Cardiff, thence Swansea Castle and later joined as A.B. aboard S.S. Peregrine before gaining 2nd. Mate's certificate 24.7.01 in Australia, followed by Mate, Master and then Extra Master on 18.8.1916. He joined China Nav. in their Australian trade in 1901 thence transferred to the China Coast trade finally resigning from his command on the 20th November, 1911.

Joined the R.A.N. as Lieutenant on 29th December, 1911, rising eventually to Acting Commander in January, 1925, thence transferring to Naval Auxiliary Services.

Again to R.A.N. Emergency List in 1932 when reaching the statutory retiring age for the rank of Commander, R.A.N. Recalled to Active Service on 28.8.1939, and appointed Commander H.M.A.S. Penguin, at Garden Island as Master Attendant, later as Assistant to the Captain of the Dockyard. Retired in 1946. Commander Langford was elected to the Council at the A.G.M. of 26.2.1947 and a Vice President in 1949. He was awarded a Gold Badge on 29-9-1953.

Captain F.J Maitland

Regarded as an extremely capable exponent of Sailing Ship Fancywork and decorative ropework. In 1948 he prepared a bell lanyard to be presented by the League of Ancient Mariners of N.S.W. to H.M.S. Vanguard while his Majesty, King George VI was aboard. As this visit was sadly aborted it was decided to vary the proposal and in its stead the presentation was made to H.M.A.S. Rushcutter at the outing on 23rd April, 1949.

Once again, Captain Maitland bent to the task of repeating the gesture and in March 1953 the President, Captain A.J. Aucher, prepared a letter to H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh regarding the presentation of another bell lanyard. Captain Maitland's service to the League was recognised by his receipt of a Gold Badge in September, 1953. All other information regarding this gentleman is now lost in the mist of time.

Mr. Claude C Croft

Born 3-11-11. The year 1947 found young and enthusiastic accountant, C.C. Croft employed by Aucher Pty. Ltd., Importers, Exporters and Manufacturers. Captain "Sammy Aucher was at that time Acting Honorary Secretary and Vice President of the League. Claude still maintains that he was pressed into taking on the position of Assistant Secretary to assist Capt. Aucher at that time. In 1954 he finally accepted the position of Secretary, remaining in that capacity until retiring the secretaryship in 1997.

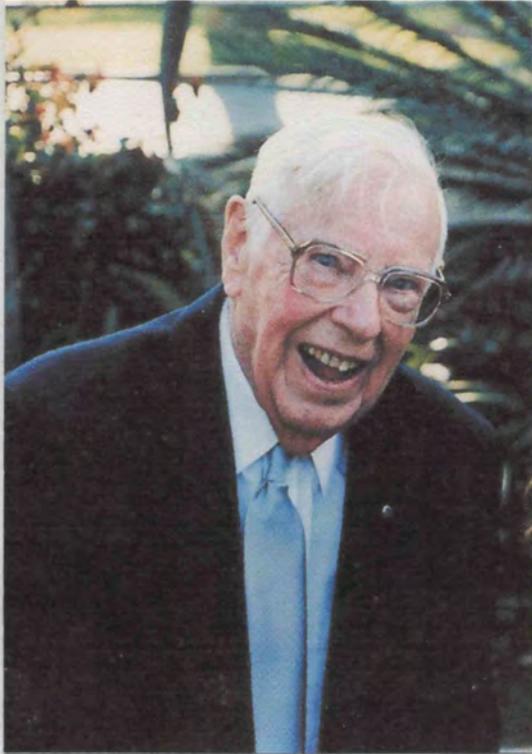
During those 50 years, all records and correspondence, invitations and envelopes bore the unmistakable copperplate hand writing of C.C. Croft. He was assisted in all these endeavours by his wife. To quote his own words - "I have a lot to thank my wife Joyce, for the great help she has given me over the last fifty years, during my association with the League". They both celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary on 13th December, 2001.

Claude Croft – the "Captain", passed away on the 11th June, 2002 after a short illness. He was in his ninety-first year.

Captain Trevor Haworth A.M

Accepted membership of the League of Ancient Mariners on 16-8-62. He commenced sea training in H.M.S. Conway in 1948. Thence saw service in South American Saint Line and Australian Shipping Board, rising to command in Australian Oriental Line followed by experience as a Marine Surveyor and Loss Assessor. In 1970, Trevor founded Captain Cook Cruises Group and has served as Chairman and Managing Director throughout the Company's development. He has been actively associated with many Government and Industry Organisations in such capacities as a Director or Chairman and was made a Member in the Order of Australia (AM) in 1985 for services to Tourism.

Captain Cook Cruises have for many years now, made available one of their fine vessels for the annual outing of the League. The generous conditions of hire are made, thanks to a very fine gesture on the part of Trevor Howarth, for which the League is most appreciative. Commencing with a converted Fairmile in the early days, his company now have the largest number of cruise vessels in Australia including those cruising the Barrier Reef and the Murray River as well as in Fiji.



Claude Croft –
Secretary of the League for one
half of its existence, what a feat.



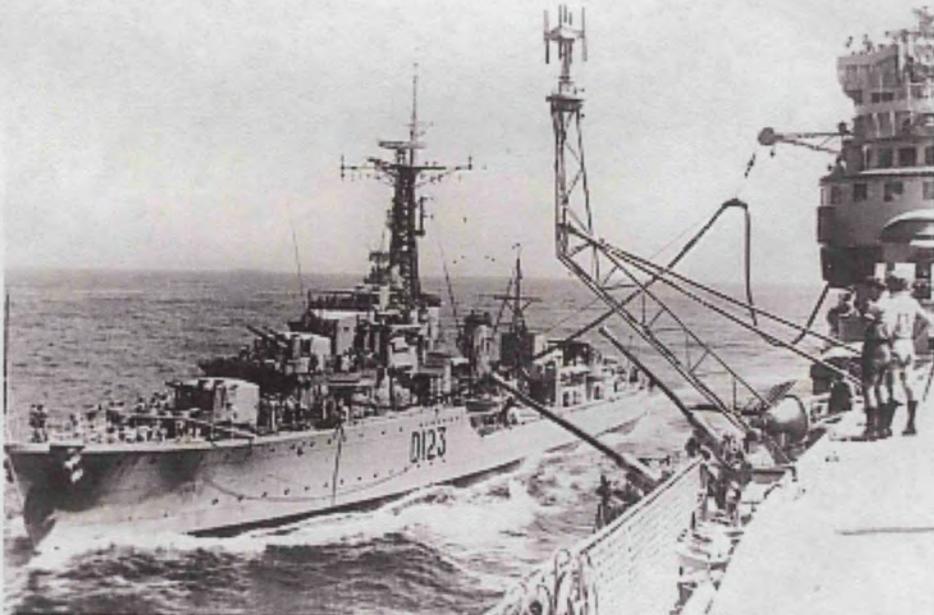
Watsons Bay bound in the year 2000, Commodore B.D. Robertson AM, RAN, the Guest of Honour, seated opposite to Captain Max Hinchliffe DSC, RAN Rtd and our then President, Captain Ken Ross. Captain Trevor Howarth AM is standing. Naturally, the “Steamer” was one of Trevor’s well appointed ‘Captain Cook Cruisers’



H.M.A.S. Macquarie



H.M.A.S. Culgoa



H.M.A.S. Warramunga

Captain L M (Max) Hinchliffe D.S.C. R.A.N (Rtd)

Born 3-9-16, and educated at Scotch College, Melbourne. Joined R.A.N. College, Jervis Bay in January, 1930 and passed out at Flinders Naval Depot in December, 1933.

Joined H.M.A.S. Canberra in January 1934 thence Australia, December the same year. Carried H.R.H. Duke of Gloucester to Britain via Pacific and Carribean. Joined the Mediterranean Fleet before returning to Britain for the Jubilee Celebrations of H. M. King George V, thence rejoining the 1st Cruiser Squadron in Alexandria after a catapult was fitted. At that time political relations were severely strained with Italy. In July 1936 a visit was made to Gallipoli where the crew were conducted around the ANZAC battle area by the local Turks and War Graves Commission personnel.

In July 1936 the "war" was over in the Eastern Mediterranean, so was H.M.A.S. Australia's exchange and she was off home. Australia had left her mark in that she set the A.R. gunfire control of the fleet by successful shooting. She also won the Cruiser's Regatta (pulling) for the years 1935 - 1936, the first time in 70 years that the same ship had done this.

Royal Navy - Joined H.M.S.Devonshire, transferring from H.M.A.S. Australia and then off to the Spanish Civil War where we experienced our first air raid while in Majorca. Left 'Devonshire' in August 1936, joining the R.N. College at Greenwich for the start of our Lieutenant's course, being by now Acting Sub-Lieutenant. Then to Portsmouth in January '37 for the remainder of the courses. Returned to Australia that November.

Royal Australian Navy - Joined H.M.A.S. Swan (sloop) in December, 1937. Thence H.M.A.S. Adelaide, February 1939 and H.M.A.S.Vendetta on 1st. April, sailing to Singapore and thence the Mediterranean, the first Australian ship to enter the Med. since 1936.

Royal Navy. - Left H.M.A.S Vendetta to travel to H.M.S. Osprey in February, 1940. My first time in a large troop-ship to Marseilles and then on to Cherbourg by troop train areal experience as officers had to feed themselves! Being late for my long A/S course by about 5 weeks, I joined St. Modwen (patron saint of beer drinkers). She was a private yacht running for Osprey, the anti-submarine establishment on Portland Bill. What a cabin I had too! I eventually qualified in late July, 1940, despite the evacuation of Europe and air raids causing the sinking of an auxiliary A.A. ship in Portland Harbour and my doing night patrols off Portland Bills' shore.

Proceeded to Tobermory on Mull to work up small ships before joining escort forces. H.M.S. Western Isles, a converted old and small passenger vessel was to be stationed at Tobermory with instructional facilities but was not there when I arrived. My work there entailed sailing at 0600 hrs. in one of the little ships, exercising enroute to the Anti-Submarine exercise area, then A/S training for up to 6 or 8 hours followed possibly by A/S gunnery runs. On the return run to harbour all ships were exercised in man overboard and such like evolutions. If a night shoot was scheduled, those exercises were carried out in the outer area, on completion of which the darkened ships were exercised in changing station, all in preparation for convoy escort duty. The course lasted for 14 days and the ships were pleased to leave and have a rest!

My next move - unheralded, was to Glasgow for Napier, the "N" class leader completing at Fairfield's yard. After commissioning and trials, up to Scapa Flow to work up. We carried Prime Minister Churchill to Scapa to visit the fleet and farewell the new Ambassador to the U.S.A. who was taking passage in a battleship.

In late March, 1941 we returned to Fairfields for contractors defect repairs. Whilst there, the city suffered 2 nights of constant bombing but we were not hit. I did however discover a magnetic mine nearby, as I unbeknowingly walked along it!

We then left with a troop convoy for Gibraltar carrying as deck cargo -two sets of LL (anti magnetic) minesweeping gear. This new equipment was badly needed in the Eastern Mediterranean and Canal area so we were routed around the Cape of Good Hope, having to wait a few days for the Canal to be cleared before getting through to Alexandria and then the Crete battles. After Crete, the Napier had only one good engine.

I transferred to Nizam as First Lieutenant and A/S Staff Officer. Syria was then on the list and we bombarded in support of our army.

For the rest of 1941, Nizam

Chased hopefully after Italian ships,

Made 14 runs to Tobruk including the last before the siege was lifted,

Bombarded along the coast of Libya,

Took part in convoys to Malta.

Saw action at the first Battle of Sirte

And probably helped the frogmen through the Alexandria boom when we returned just after midnight, whereby a few hours later both H.M.S. Queen Elizabeth and H.M.S. Valiant were mined and the stern of the tanker from which we were refuelling was severely damaged. We whipped (and I was thrown out of my bunk) but not damaged.

A few days later we departed for the Indian Ocean to escort a carrier from Sudan to off Sunda Strait. She carried some 60 crated fighters and ultimately the R.A.F. pilots got them off. A second run of this type resulted in the fighters going to Ceylon to the chagrin of the Japanese when they had a go at Colombo.

As 1942 unfolded, we steamed around, providing cover for various operations. Madagascar was invaded to prevent the Japs doing so and we also spent some time exercising in the vicinity of Addu Atoll - a strategically located base which was virtually unfortified.

In May, Nizam left for the Mediterranean to escort a convoy from the Eastern Mediterranean, whilst one from the Western Mediterranean also endeavoured to get through to Malta. Malta was very low on all commodities. Regrettably, our end was forced to return without achieving its objective. We had the very efficient Luftwaffe against us! - Nestor was lost through a close near miss.

The Eastern Fleet component then returned to the Indian Ocean.

I left for the U.K. early in March 1943 to catch up with the latest A./S. warfare practices and while in transit swam from the Empress of Canada in a position a few degrees south of the equator. There were 500 Italian p.o.w.'s plus a League of Nations including French, Dutch, Poles, H.M.S. Hermes survivors and a few South Africans aboard the ship. As a matter of extreme interest - losses among ex officers from Hermes included virtually all who were not circumcised. (I later represented this matter to the Admiralty as such a loss of trained airmen in my opinion could be prevented if people were warned of possible death if they were in oily water for a long period. I personally spent about 10 hours in the water and 2 days in a boat before being picked up by a corvette.

I received my D.S.C. from H.M. Queen Elizabeth, (a charming personage) at Buckingham Palace, after being briefed on the anti-submarine information and then returned to Australia: starting the passage in H.M.C.S. Restigouche, a destroyer, followed by a minesweeper, thence rail from Sidney, Nova Scotia to Washington D.C., then air to Brisbane and finally air to Sydney arriving late August 1943, 4 years after sailing from Australia.

R.A.N. - Joined H.M.A.S. Rushcutter and in May, 1944 was posted to P.N.G. as Anti-Submarine Officer, Escort Forces, returning to Sydney mid '45 being appointed to 'Shropshire' as First Lieutenant. The war was rapidly waning and this appointment was cancelled and in its stead I was appointed CO. of the frigate H.M.A.S. Macquarie then completing at Mort's Yard. I had her until paying her off in December, 1946 - then carried out steaming trials of H.M.A.S. Culgoa.

Then joined H.M.A.S. Rushcutter as O.I.C. A./S. School and rising to C.O. of 'Rushcutter' before standing by the destroyer 'Tobruk' then completing at Cockatoo Dockyard. From H.M.A.S. Tobruk I went to F.O.I.C. /E.A.'s staff as SO. Operations, then promoted to Commander, taking over 'Watson' as C.O.

In October, 1954 I stood by Warramunga, refitting extensively at Garden Island. We commissioned under dreadful conditions and after clearing Sydney Heads late at night into the teeth of a Southerly we arrived Jarvis Bay next day. The next morning I woke up deaf. As it remained uncured, I went to Navy Office for 2 years and then with my family, I went to Washington D.C. as Staff Officer to the Australian Joint Services Staff in the Embassy.

Whilst in that job, I witnessed an atom bomb explosion in Nevada and also the extraordinary life of Las Vegas while awaiting the right weather for 12 days. For the record, at an approximate distance of 6 miles, I likened the shock wave, which knocked my cap off, to the shock and heat of the two 8" guns of X turret in 'Canberra' firing on the maximum for'd bearing whilst one was in the after control, fairly close by.

From Washington D.C., in March '59 I went to Canberra as C.O. of H.M.A.S. Harman, the R.A.N.'s main W/T Station and from there to Manus Island as N.O.I.C. New Guinea and CO. H.M.A.S. Tarangau.

From there I became Chief of Staff to F.O.I.C./E.A. from which I was invalided - P.U.N.S. due to deafness in May 1964.

I became Secretary of Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron but decided that running their newly acquired Careel Boat Service in Avalon would be more attractive and I remained there until 1979 when I retired to look after my wife.

Whilst at H.M.A.S. Rushcutter in 1947, I experienced my first harbour outing and except for a few intervening years I believe I have attended them all.

When Rushcutter could no longer accomodate the League for it's outings, I was able to get Penguin's help but that was short lived due to the surge often experienced at the jetty, making it hazardous for all concerned when landing and embarking. 'Watson' came to our rescue and still nurtures the League.

Captain Philip Lusher. is included in the list of Members of the League of Ancient Mariners in 1944, - 57 years continuous membership must stand as a record. Phil commenced his 4 year apprenticeship in P and O Branch Line followed by 4 years in British India Co. Thence onto the Australian Coast in A.U.S.N. before joining the Adelaide Company. The year 1942 saw Philip Lusher as Master of the C.S.R's vessel, M.V. Moama and his introduction to the League.

Following a short spell as Marine Superintendent with C.S.R., Captain Lusher joined the N.S.W. Pilot Service piloting a total of 7526 vessels in almost 30 years of service, firstly in Newcastle and then for the major part of that time in Sydney. Phil was a tireless Council Member and also a President of the Merchant Service Guild of Australia. He was also an Alderman in Local Government and keenly interested in community organisations. On retirement from the Maritime Services Board in 1973, Philip Lusher spent 5 years as Harbour Master in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Back home in Sydney, League affairs interested him once again by his active participation as a Member of Council culminating in the office of President from 1986 until vacating that position to Captain J. (Paddy) Rahilly in 1990.

Captain Lusher attended his first function with the League in 1943 and at his passing on 30th December 2000, at the age of 91, was the longest serving member of the League of Ancient Mariners.



Captain Philip Lusher
Our longest serving member.

The lifeboat Alice Rawson exercising in Watson's Bay. It was manned by a volunteer crew of 12 men and coxswain and housed in a shed on the site now occupied by the Sydney Sea Pilots. The lifeboat service was disbanded in the early 1920's. In the background is Captain Cook No.2, LOA 47 metres which entered service in 1893.



The classic yacht like P.S. Captain Cook No.3 took over pilotage duty in 1939. Three crews each having a Master, Mate, Engineer, 5 men on deck, 3 below, cook and assistant manned the vessel. She had a bar keel, a LOA of 50 metres and in even moderately heavy weather, quite readily gave the figurehead of Captain James Cook (arm raised and scanning the horizon) a regular dunking. She carried accommodation for 12 pilots. An oar propelled boarding boat hung in davits on each side. A small motorised dinghy was also carried. This beautifully proportioned pilot cutter was replaced by diesel launches in 1959 when the pilot station became land based.



P.S. "Ajax" was built in Sydney as a tug and was reconditioned to serve from 1897 until 1927 as the first permanent steam powered pilot vessel for the port of Newcastle.



'Ajax' was replaced by the P.S. 'Birubi' in the December of that year. As with the Sydney pilot cutter, the crew numbered 13 all up while accommodation was provided for 6 pilots. The Birubi was a fine little craft in foul weather, being dry and very responsive under helm and engines. As with the Captain Cook, the double ended clinker timber built boarding boats were manned by a coxswain and two oarsmen. Late in 1959 and after 32 years excellent service, she was also replaced by launches for the transfer of pilots (who managed to keep their shoes drier than in earlier days).





Some of the members and friends who attended the outing at HMAS Rushcutter 1946. A total of 225 members and guests sat down to lunch, at that time the biggest gathering ever. The report went on to say that Commander Mesley and Lieutenant-Commander Hinchliffe of HMAS Rushcutter acted as hosts to Captain Murchison and his "co-pirates". Captain Sir James Bisset, Kt. was guest of honour while nine Masters of overseas vessels then in port also attended.

Identified in the photo - in the left foreground with umbrella is Captain Gambrill; Captain Avdall is in the middle foreground; to his right Captain Sir James Bisset, then Captain Newcomb the C.O. of Rushcutter, Captains Pearse and Bayldon. In the middle of the picture is Captain Linde (USA) while at the back and to the left wearing a hat is Captain Aucher, the then Secretary. Captain Philip Lusher at the far left stands behind Captain Gambrill.



Captain A.J Aucher in conversation with Captain K. Linde at the 1946 outing. Why the serving American officer (later promoted to Major) was granted life membership of the League is now a mystery. He later took demobilisation in Australia to settle on the land in this country. He had originally come from Texas.

Outing day, 4th May 2002, at No.6 jetty, Circular Quay and Padre the Rev. R. Duffield is made to walk the plank. He is closely followed by the Guest of Honour, Commodore Kim Pitt AM RAN (Rtd). Capt. Cec Forrest was happy to take his turn in the queue while others appeared to be deep in discussion.



Cameras don't lie. Both Commodore Pitt A.M. and President of the League, Captain Alan Tait O.A.M. stop for a moment half way up the plank to record their enthusiasm for the occasion. During the luncheon the Guest of Honour proved himself to be a popular and lively raconteur by capturing the attention of the assembled company when discussing his subject A.N.A.R.E.(Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition) where he is the Project Manager.



They also walked the plank - and none were blindfolded.



Once aboard, friends intermingled to relive the experiences of past years or of other times long ago. Here we see Captains Gordon Walker, Alan Tait OAM, John Lunn, Brian Druce and John Biffin. None appeared to be at all interested in viewing the harbour scenery!!



Commander Ron Cameron and Captain Ted Liley turn their back on Woolloomooloo Bay for this exposure.



Further down harbour, this happy band faced the camera. From left to right – Captains Martin Skipper and Alan Tait O.A.M., Commodore Kim Pitt A.M., the Executive Officer at HMAS Watson Commander T.J Breukel and Patron of the League, Dr. Paul Scully Power D.S.M, D.Sc, F.R.Aes, F.A.I.C.D.



Captains Derek Simon and L.W.D. (Bill) Taylor in conversation -disturbed by that interfering camera.



Methinks the discussion revolved around the days in Burns Philp.
Mr. Tony Marsden , Captains John (Snow) Ealey, Peter Sturt and John Biffin.



More enjoyable here at the outing 2000 than waiting at T.I. to take another ship south. Two old Torres Strait pilots, Captains Jim Mort and Ken Nettleship.



A snap taken on the "Steamer" in 2000. Captain Max Hinchliffe is taking a lesson from the accompanying musicians. Unfortunately Mr. W. Rushton the violinist passed away before the following outing. Mr. B. Saitta then had to squeeze a little harder on the accordion to be heard above the general noise of conversation.



Captain Arne Ulrichsen, one of our longstanding committee members is intent on learning a few pointers on submarines from his retired naval friends sitting opposite as we make our way into Watson's Bay.



Some of our members comes down from north of the border every year to renew acquaintances; some just thrive on chatting to old acquaintances and ship-mates of long ago. The fellowship is infectious. This poop photo aboard "Capt. Cook No.2" includes those very willing members from Army R.A.E. (Afloat), Mr. MM Campbell, Mr. HG Laird, Mr. RL Clarke, Mr. RJ Keanan, Mr. N Payne and Mr. KS Lowe. Major Sid Cheeseman AM JP and Capt. Peter Boswell MC keep them in sight while Lt. Col. KC Tunbridge surveys the scene from the bottom right hand corner of the photo.



Master of the John Cadman 3, Capt. Hamish Paternall and his Engineer Mr. Bill Rennerberg see their passengers safely ashore at Watson's Bay.



The parting of the ways – who is taking the bus up the hill and who are the energetic walkers, much to the debated interest of the patrons lunching at Doyle's Restaurant on the beach.



The climb up the hill in the grounds of HMAS Watson is no trouble to Captain Mike Bertram seen here leading the charge towards the mess hall.



Members and their guests waiting on the deck outside the dining area until the doors open while final preparations are made within.



Looking towards the official table in the dining area of the Junior Sailors Mess, an ideal focal point for the yearly gathering.



The flag station located behind the top table displayed the National Flag, Red Ensign, White Ensign, RAE (Afloat) Ensign and the League Flag. The Army RAE (Afloat) Colours was displayed celebrating the RAE centenary in 2002.





Two views, firstly in year 2000 and then in 2002. A keen study of faces show we are wearing well!



CHAPTER 4

Gatherings

For many years now, the annual outing has been held without fail on the first Saturday in May. Members and guests congregate at the appropriate ferry jetty at Circular Quay some 30 minutes before departure in the 'Steamer' to the meeting place, which was for many years prior to the last occasion in 1966, the R.A.N. Drill Hall at H.M.A.S. Rushcutter. Due to depth restrictions in the Bay the 'Steamer' would stand off and a smaller ferry would transfer passengers ashore.

From 'Rushcutter' the next annual outing was spent at H.M.A.S. Penguin fronting on to Hunter Bay on Middle Head. 'Penguin' was eventually considered inappropriate after a Southerly gale and swell alongside the wharf made embarking and disembarking somewhat hazardous especially for the older folk. Since the 4th May, 1968, and by the very generous invitation of the Commanding Officers, the expansive Junior Sailors Mess at H.M.A.S. Watson has been made available for the annual luncheon of the League.

The Sydney Harbour Ferries Kosciusko or Kanangra were hired for many years to cater for transportation of passengers but from the mid 80's, one of Captain Trevor Howarth's Captain Cook Cruise vessels has been graciously leased to the League for each outing since that date.

The trip down harbour allows a convivial revival of old friendships. For many it is a chance to catch up with the past-times and interests of other members at either work or in their retirement. The lounge seating and open deck space on board is most appropriate the sea air is so refreshing and the bar facilities so conveniently located. The wandering minstrels add extra atmosphere to the occasion and the time passes all too swiftly before the gangway brow is run out onto Watson's Bay Jetty for disembarkation.

Those still athletic enough attack the climb up the hill to H.M.A.S. Watson with considerable gusto - for the first part of the climb at any rate. Transport is provided for those who are less firm than in bygone years.

The Commanding Officer of H.M.A.S. Watson has seen fit each year to delegate a Host Officer for the occasion of the luncheon - a gesture appreciated by all gathered at the Mess including those Members of the League who are retired Flag Officers from the Armed Services.

The repast is a set menu catering for the League's traditional needs. G. R. Larnach-Jones Pty. Ltd., catered to those needs for many years. Their sea pie and dumplings were their specialty. Alas, the company ceased operating in 1997. However in the following year, the catering staff at H.M.A.S. Watson ably met the task of their predecessors presenting a most enjoyable spread.

The celebration of the luncheon is to many, a quite moving experience of loyalty, remembrance and fellowship. The senior office bearers of the League together with the V.I.P's take the top table while the other members and their guests find their own suitable positions at tables around the room.

Our Chaplain is then invited to say Grace. At the 1999 lunch, Padre Tom Hill, Senior Chaplain at the Mission to Seamen was requested to say Grace to the assembled company. With his permission these quite fitting words are repeated: -

Lord once more you've brought us through the stormy seas
 And found safe haven for our wobbly knees.
 You've given us victuals rich and rare
 and friends aplenty for to share.
 Some are thin through wear and tear
 and some are ample without hair.
 You've shown once more your Grace and Love
 and poured your blessings from above.
 But could You grant us one more wish
 A cup of ale wouldn't go amiss.

The order of proceedings during the luncheon include the Loyal Toast and National Anthem, Toast to the League of Ancient Mariners of N.S.W. and Musical Honours - "Sons of the Sea", followed by Remembrance of those who have 'Crossed the Bar'.

The Guest Speaker is then introduced to the assembled company and invited to address all present for a short while, the subject usually having a very interesting and current nautical theme. As an example, in 1998, the Honourable Mr. Peter Morris M.H.R. (Rtd.) spoke about 'Ships of shame and flags of convenience', a matter which he successfully brought before the world's shipping forum. Again, in 1999, Rear Admiral A.L. Hunt AO RAN (Rtd) spoke of the herculean effort involved in the restoration of the sailing ship James Craig. At the luncheon on 6th May, 2000, the assembled company were remarkably hushed and transfixed by the moving account given by Commodore B. D. Robertson, A. M. R.A.N., who was the senior Naval officer (serving under Major General Cosgrove) during the East Timor peace keeping exercises.

Last but not least, the shanty-man leads the assembled company of some 250 or more voices of variable and sometimes questionable quality with songs of yore - "Rolling Home", "Blow The Man Down", and other nostalgic airs, always rounding off with "Sons of the Sea".

Captain David Craven with his rich baritone voice and repertoire of airs led the shanty singing for some 35 years until his passing in 1980. He was recognised for his services to the League by presentation of Life Membership. For some years, Captain Peter Boswell M.C. also led the shanty singing. There has been some conjecture of late as to the correctness of some of the words used in the airs so our Secretary now ensures there are sufficient copies of the sea-shanties available for all to avail themselves so to add lust to the vocal celebration. In 2002 when ill health forced Peter to relinquish these duties Captain Mike Downes filled the roll of shantyman admirably.

Following a toast to the Visitors and the President's Report, time marches on towards 1515 hours. Luncheon comes to a close for another year and 250 or more happily contented souls make their way down the hill to the wharf and rejoin the 'steamer' for the long trip back to Sydney town and Circular Quay. The friendly crew then assist the old hands down the gangway to navigate their unassisted passage homeward for another year.

In previous times an evening re-union or "Smoko" was held about 6 months after the harbour outing. The Sargents Blue Room in Market Street became the venue in the nineteen forties. It later gave way to Anthony Horderns Welfare Hall. These happy gatherings will bring back memories to some of our more senior members. On many occasions a band, at other times an entertainer was engaged to add a distraction to the more fundamental aspects of the night. These evening gatherings were disbanded some twenty years ago.

A perusal of some Annual Reports show a few interesting comparisons, for example

1945	membership 181,	expenditure £217,	assets £125.
1950	400,	£651,	£66.
1989	325,	\$10,808,	\$3,816.
1997	313,	\$15,357,	\$3,465.
2000	330,	\$16,381,	\$1,285.

In past years the League was in the very fortunate position of enhancing funding for its operations by the very appreciative donations made by companies with interests in shipping in the port of Sydney. Alas, today with the decline of commercial interest in all things maritime, especially in coastal shipping, these gestures are virtually non-existent, with the result that we now as an association, have to be totally self-funded.

Gone are the days when the port was filled with cargo liners of the world, fine vessels, efficient crews, great days!

The Red Ensign was a-flutter along side the flags of other great maritime nations in this port and throughout the harbours of the world. When wire runner and cargo hook gave way to containerisation, when in the board rooms of shipping companies, men who loved ships were replaced by men who loved money, a different way of life was heralded in for world shipping. For this reason alone, the traditions of the sea are surely worth preserving. In this new millennium it is a staggering thought to know that there are now fewer than fifty Australian registered ships serving this island continent! That number not only includes cargo vessels and tankers but service vessels as well.

Not until the 1980's did Australia have its own Register of Shipping. Prior to that date all Australian vessels were British ships registered in a British Dominion, namely the Commonwealth of Australia. Today the Australian Red Ensign is just as inconspicuous as the Red Duster. One might well ponder the consequences of this state of affairs in times of stress.

The singing of the shanty "Sons of the Sea" has filled the auditorium at every gathering of the League of Ancient Mariners. It has depicted the heritage of this Association for those past and present during this first 100 years.

*Sons of the Seas - all British born,
sailing every ocean, laughing foes to scorn.
They may build their ships, my lads
and think they know the game,
but they can't build the boys of the bulldog breed
that made our country's name.*

CHAPTER 5

The Bulldog Breed of Yore

A concise life history was requested of members during the days of the Second World War. Here are some accounts which will interest the reader and give food for thought. Some of these reminiscences are rather lengthy. However they amplify the picture they portray.

Captain A. E. Jolly born 17th October. 1867

At the age of fourteen I left school, and as my father would not consent to my going to sea, I commenced work in a ship chandlery store at Great Yarmouth. This kept me in contact with seamen and after being two years in this position, I left and told my father of my intention of going to sea. At this time he was owner of Oyster Dredges, and suggested that I should commence my sea-faring on one of them. Although the work on these dredges was very hard and rough, it did not kill my desire for a sea career, so I decided to act for myself in the matter.

There was an old wooden barque, Princess of Wales, which had been a China Clipper, but was now in the Baltic trade, and I got in touch with the Captain, who agreed to take me for a trip. After managing to accumulate sufficient clothing and necessities, - unbeknown to my father, as I thought, --- the barque sailed before the due date, and was gone when I arrived to board her. When I returned to the oyster dredges, my father expressed surprise, saying he thought I had sailed on the Princess of Wales, having known of my intentions all the time. However he could see that I was determined to go to sea. I was then seventeen and a half years of age.

An old barque, called the Sealotter arrived in Ipswich from Australia. He got in touch with the agents, and signed my indentures on the 8th October 1885, in the White Star office, 34 Leadenhall St. London.

My first voyage was from London to West Coast of South America, and back to Cardiff, from the 10th October, 1885 to 14th July 1886. This trip was quite uneventful, except that I did not receive any news from home, during the whole voyage; and was always hungry. The second voyage from Cardiff to Iquique and back to Marseilles, was from August 1886 to 17th August 1887. A few interesting incidents occurred during the two years and three months trip, from Marseilles to Monte Video, and Paranagua in Brazil, back to West Coast of South America, loading in Pisagua for Aberdeen, - from 5th September 1887 to 18th November 1888. The crew consisted of sixteen hands, made up as follows Captain, Mate, 2nd Mate, Carpenter, Sailmaker, five Able Seamen, five Apprentices and one man, --Cook and Steward. This latter was a sick man and on arrival Valparaiso, we had to land him with heart trouble.

I was then installed as cook and steward, and on arrival at Taltal, the Captain decided to give an English dinner to some friends. He told me to order whatever I wanted from the butchers, so I served up a good soup, (made from the crew's meat which had gone into sea-pie). Roast joint and plum pudding which I had boiling all night, attended by the night-watchman. The dinner went off well, but as I had been drawing the beer corks before taking it to the table, I was rather sleepy by the time they had finished the dinner. The Chief and Second Mate complained to the Captain that I had not given them their dinner, but the Captain exonerated me and told them to leave me alone.

Before leaving this port, we shipped a new man as cook and steward and all went well until the night before leaving Pisagua for home, when he ran amok, taking charge of the deck. We eventually put him in irons and took him ashore next day, paying him off at the same time.

We were now unable to obtain another cook, so the Captain signed on another A. B. and I had to act as cook again until we arrived at Marseilles. It was not a very difficult job to do the cooking as after we were at sea we discovered that the poor old cook we had had on the outward trip had used most of the small store, there being only 6 tins of bully beef left, which we used up at the rate of one every other Sunday and for three weeks before arriving at Marseille, we had no meat at all, but to make a change of diet, I used to make sop with biscuits.

The Pilot whom we picked up the day before we arrived at Marseilles brought his own bread, which I served at the cabin table that day, distributing what was left between my fellow apprentices. When it came to giving the pilot his coffee next morning, I had to give him a Liverpool pantile. He objected and complained to the Captain. However the bread was gone so nothing could be done.

Bad weather on the voyage from Pisagua to Aberdeen and the fact that we were short of provisions caused us to put into Leith and the journey to Aberdeen took six weeks. After a week at Leith, we left in tow for Aberdeen and over ran the tug and had to cast off on arriving off Aberdeen. There was too much sea on the bar so we had to still stand off and during the night were partly dismantled. It took us another week to reach our destination with most of our sails blown away.

During my third voyage, which was from South Shields to Valparaiso and back to Charlestown, -25/12/88 to 9110189, I completed my apprenticeship, so left the ship and joined the S.S. Charrington as AB. and arrived in Liverpool, 13/11/89 . Spent two weeks at a school and sat for my 2nd. Mate's Certificate which I obtained about the middle of December 1889.

On the 14th March 1890, I joined the four-masted barque, Gilcruise as 3rd. Mate and when in Coquimbo, left her and became 2nd. Mate of the ship 'Ellenbank'. I left this ship in Rotterdam on 5th March, 1891 and was appointed 2nd. Mate of the new ship, Forth of Cromarty and sailed from Glasgow to Sydney, thence to San Francisco and back to Antwerp on 17th August 1892.

On securing my 1st. Mate's Certificate in London, I rejoined the ship as 2nd. Mate and on arrival in London again about 2nd December 1893 I left the ship and sat for my Master's Certificate, which I obtained and once more joined the Forth of Cromarty. Owing to a full cargo of barley having been taken on at San Francisco, we had to stiffen the ship by filling all the limbers with shingle ballast and this was left in when we discharged in London and re-loaded with cement for Glasgow.

This ballast was the means of saving the ship on the Glasgow trip. We struck very dirty weather in the Channel and had to run back to the Downs three times; but the third time went ashore on the South Foreland and were all taken off the ship by the Rocket Apparatus, with the loss of one apprentice. Next morning there was no sign of the ship but she was traced on to St. Margaret's Beach where she had drifted. We were eventually towed to Glasgow and when docked, found the whole bottom of the ship was corrugated, but not cracked, due to the heavy shingle ballast and the bag cement cargo, which formed a solid bottom.

In March 1894 I was sent to Cain in France to join the Firth of Forth as 1st. Mate, she having capsized on to the wharf and sunk. It was a big job to repair her, but we sailed for New York with a heavy cargo of freestone block in April and on the passage across the Atlantic struck heavy weather, when the ship was thrown on her beam ends owing to the cargo shifting. We managed to get the ship before the wind and arrived in New York, anchoring off the Statue of Liberty. Next morning, found the crew had deserted, so we loaded for New Zealand, with a new crew consisting of blacks, who signed on at cheaper rates than the white crew.

We had a lot of trouble with some of these men, one in particular who was in irons for the last three weeks before arriving at Dunedin, he having kicked my front teeth out in a brawl. On handing him over to the authorities on arrival, they considered he had had sufficient punishment, and as he was a coloured man, we could not pay him off but had to take him home, during which trip he gave more trouble so was carried home in irons.

On arrival in London, I was appointed Master, but as there was a possibility of the next trip occupying three years, I decided that the day of sail was done for me so resigned and in August 1895 joined the Port Line, my first steam ship being the Port Hunter in which I was Third Mate being promoted to Second Mate on arrival at Melbourne.

I served as an Officer in various ships until 1903, and was then appointed Master of the "Port Albert". She was sold in 1905 and I took command of the Port Stephens. On arrival in Australia, was chartered to make a trip to Shanghai and then three New Zealand trips for the Union Company. On the latter trip from New Zealand we sailed from Timaru for Sydney and after passing through the Foveaux Straits encountered heavy gales and high seas which were dead ahead.

The vessel being so light we had to head to the South West as she was pitching heavily. After 24 hours we found we had been taken south of all steam-boat tracks. Then our tail end shaft broke and were helpless in heavy seas, lying broadside on, and rolling heavily. I rigged a sea-anchor made out of derricks and heavy cargo nets and canvas. This was paid out ahead on wire, but did not last long as the heavy strain soon crumpled it up.

After securing the propeller as it was threatening to carry away the rudder post at any time, we started to make all sail that we could from out of canvas we had. We got her before the wind alright, but as soon as she got headway, she would broach to, this being caused by the propeller being a fixture and, as she went ahead, the sea acted on the propeller as if she was going astern

We now found that there was a clean break in the tail shaft about a foot from the propeller and it was a difficult job to get a blank flange over the opening in the small amount of space available to work in, as every time the ship dipped we were half drowned. However we got it secured after taking a great quantity of water aboard. We had to go at once on to short rations, not knowing how long it would be before we would be picked up, if ever and I had to keep the men very busy to keep their minds off the situation.

After drifting about 600 miles we were near the Auckland Is. when at 3 am one morning, we sighted a sailing vessel, which picked up our distress signal and bore down on us. It was the barque, Ravenscroft which had also been blown hundreds of miles south of her course by the heavy weather and she proved our salvation and took us off and back to Dunedin.

After the loss of the Port Stephens, I returned to England. In 1907 I joined the Port Pine and from then until 1926 when I retired, had command of the following vessels - Port Pirie, Indralema, Port Elliot, Port Hacking and the Port Chalmers.

Captain George Irvine_D.S.O., 2 Mentions, R.N.R. Rtd., M.N. Rtd., A.T.C.

When furnishing his memoirs as requested, he wrote "Have had a very sticky past, and would rather not mention it". !!!

Captain J.D.S Phillips

Born on board his father's Aberdeen Clipper Ship, John Duthie at Circular Quay, Sydney, 13th May, 1865, hence his name, John Duthie Sydney Phillips.

Made two voyages round the world as a baby, via two Capes. Father died on board on passage out to Sydney, off Tasmania on 8th January, 1868 and taken to Sydney for burial. Went to sea on 13th February, 1882 as boy and after twelve trips round the World finished with sail in November, 1893 as Master of the Aberdeen Clipper Ship Cairnblug. Then in Sydney he joined the Canadian Australian Royal Mail Line, Sydney to Vancouver, B.C.

After one hundred and twenty -five (125) round voyages, came ashore at Sydney as Assistant Marine Superintendent and Pilot for the Company in 1918, until 1931. Then joined Burns Philp & Company as Coasting Pilot and Relieving Master. He retired in 1942 and tallied up 2,974,832 nautical miles.

He died on 28th October, 1945 and his ashes were scattered over the waters of Sydney Cove as requested, (directly adjacent to the Sailors' Home where he was born eighty years before) by the then Harbour Master, Captain Finlay Murchison.

The supplement to the "Melbourne Argus", 3rd May 1941, in an article headed "Several Places at the Same Time and Vice Versa" told the following story

'Travellers who have overlooked the astronomical conventions attaching to the 180th meridian and have sailed across it to find themselves wondering what happened to Thursday or where the deuce that extra Friday came from, may console themselves with the reflection that it might have been worse. At midnight on December 30th, 1899, passengers on board the R.M.S. Warrimoo of the Canadian-Australian Line, (Captain J.D.S. Phillips in command) bound from Vancouver to Brisbane, found themselves (astronomically speaking) in several places at the same time and at several times in the same place. The situation arose from the Captain's fondness for a prank.

Earlier that day, his second in command aboard (F.J.Bayldon) pointed out to him that if he liked to alter the ship's course a degree or two and suitably adjust speed, he could cross the 180th meridian (the international date line) at the point where it is intersected by the Equator exactly at midnight. The Captain grinned and immediately altered the ship's course as suggested. Thereafter five experienced navigators each took observations of the sun when it was visible and of the stars when it was not, at three hourly intervals to make sure that the ship did reach the appointed spot at the appointed time.

The result was, that at exactly midnight, the Warrimoo found herself in an extraordinary position. Her bow was in the Southern Hemisphere, but her stern was in the Northern Hemisphere. One end was in the Western Hemisphere while the other was in the Eastern Hemisphere. Passengers and crew in the forward section were living in Monday, 1st January, 1900 in the new Century while those in the after part were in Saturday, 31st December, 1899, the old Century."

Did any vessel meet similar circumstances at the turn of the century just past? - many shipping companies advertised cruises intending to repeat such an occurrence. There was no G.P.S. available for use one hundred years ago:-- maybe, - possibly - no sextant was in use, maybe not even on board in this last change of century, 1999/2000 !!, so much for G.P.S.

The name John Duthie led to enquiries of one of our flock. The answer was certainly in the affirmative. Captain Bill Duthie passed on the history of his forebears where John Duthie Sons & Co. built ships in Aberdeen, Scotland and amongst other milestones have almost 200 years of continuous seagoing service in the family. During the 1860's the company had 3 very popular 3 masted clipper ships on the U.K. to Australia service. They were the William Duthie built 1862, the John Duthie 1864 and Ann Duthie built 1868.

In 1866, the John Duthie caught fire while at anchor in Farm Cove shortly after arrival from Britain. She was beached and flooded in Little Sirius Cove to extinguish the fire, then refloated and 4 months later sailed for London after reconditioning in Johnson's Bay.

Captain F.H.C Brownlow. O.B.E., RAN. (Rtd).

Born at the Guard's Barracks, Westminster, London in 1859. After an education at St. Olave's Grammar School, he entered the office of a Surveyor, but soon found that profession irksome and was apprenticed to a firm of Ship Owners in Sunderland. His reminiscences of travel around the world included the great fire at Iquique, where he was landed with crews from all the British ships to subdue the conflagration which lasted three days and burnt out the town.

On his arrival in Sydney in 1882, F.H.C. Brownlow entered the Coach Building trade with the firm of T. Moore & Son. Upon the despatch of troops to the Sudan in 1885, he joined a contingent and went to Egypt and was present at the affair at Tamai, winning the Queen's Medal and the Khedive Star.

On returning to Sydney and civvy life, he found employment in numerous Government Departments white joining the Naval Artillery Volunteers, where he was promoted to the rank of Sub-Lieutenant, then in 1892 to Lieutenant.

Upon the reorganisation of the Naval Forces under the Federal Government in 1902, Lieutenant Brownlow was appointed Officer Commanding the Naval Forces of N.S.W., where he successfully reformed the Naval Brigade.

In 1904, when the enrolment of Australians to the Royal Navy under the Naval Agreement Bill took place, Captain Brownlow was appointed by the Commander in Chief of the Australian Station, Admiral Fenshawe, as Royal Naval Registrar. All applicants to the Service were therefore required to pass through his hands before appointment. He was a man of great organising ability, of fine physique and splendid constitution and was much valued as Secretary of the League of Ancient Mariners which position he held between 1923 and 1931.

Rear Admiral H.B. Farncomb C.B., D.S.O., M.V.O.

Rear Admiral Farncomb, (born 28-2-1899), was educated at Sydney High School and joined the R.A.N. College with the first batch of Cadet Midshipmen in 1913. Passed out December 1916, top of his year, winning the Grand Aggregate Prize and proceeded to the U.K. to join the battleship H.M.S. Royal Sovereign as a Midshipman serving with the Grand Fleet. Promotion same rapidly; - Sub-Lieutenant in 1918, Lieutenant in 1919 after gaining 5 first class certificates at Greenwich Naval College. He then returned to Australia to serve in -

H.M.A.S. Anzac -1919 and H.M.A.S. Stalwart in 1921. War Staff Officer H.M.A.S. Melbourne 1922-23, and then back to U.K. to R.N. Staff College Returned to U.K. to the R.N. Staff College 1923-24 and later appointed to H.M. Ships Barham then Malaya as Assistant W.S.O. Staff Officer (Operations) in H.M.A. Squadron (H.M.A.S. Sydney)

1925-28. Lieutenant-Commander in October, 1927. Exchange Service in H.M.S. Repulse, Battle Cruiser Squadron, Atlantic Fleet, 1928-29 Imperial Defence College, 1930.

Returned to the Naval Staff Office Melbourne 1931-33, Promoted to Commander in June 1932. He then served in H.M.A.S. Australia 1933-35, including Duke of Gloucester's return to England. (M.V.O.).

Naval Intelligence Division, Admiralty, 1935/1937. In June 1937, he became the first graduate of the Royal Australian Naval College to be promoted to Captain. By that year H.B. Farncomb became convinced that war with Germany was inevitable so he gave up his 6 weeks leave to visit Germany and improve his knowledge of the language.

First Command - H.M.A.S. Yarra, October 1937 to October 1938. Commissioned H.M.A.S. Perth at Portsmouth - June 1939. Thence West Indies and North Atlantic from September 1939 to February 1940, before transferring to H.M.A.S. Canberra in June 1940, mainly Indian Ocean. Rescued survivors from Port Brisbane sunk by raider Pinguin. The Canberra's reconnaissance Walrus aircraft spotted German supply ships Coburg and Ketty Brovig in March 1941, H.M.A.S. Canberra intercepted and both vessels then scuttled themselves.

On Christmas Eve, 1941, 17 days after Japan entered the war, H.M.A.S. Australia became Flagship with Farncomb in command, transferring with Rear Admiral Crace. Then followed the Battle of the Coral Sea. Farncomb was mentioned in despatches for bravery and Crace recommended him for promotion to Flag Rank. H.M.A.S. Australia led the attack on Guadalcanal, the first Allied offensive in the Pacific on August 7. After Guadalcanal, Farncomb commanded the Flagship at the Battle of the Eastern Solomons, at Arawe and Cape Gloucester.

In April 1944, H.B. Farncomb went to England to take command of the Aircraft Carrier H.M.S. Attacker. At the same time he received the D.S.O. from King George 6th. Attacker saw operational duties at the invasion of Southern France and in the Aegean.

He returned to Manus in the S.W. Pacific Area, promoted to Commodore (1st. Class) commanding H.M.A.Squadron - December 1944 to July 1945 relieving Commodore Collins who had been wounded. During operations at Lingayen Gulf, Australia (under the command of Captain J. M. Armstrong) was hit in 5 kamikaze attacks. Thirty nine crew members were killed and fifty-six were injured, including Commodore Farncomb who remained on duty. The USA awarded the Navy Cross to both officers for extraordinary heroism. Then followed the bombardment of Corregidor for which he received the C. B. for distinguished service. Action then ensued at Wewak, Brunei Bay, Miri, Balikpapan - at different times, Australia being in the company of Shropshire, Hobart and Arunta.

Being relieved again by Commodore Collins, Commodore Farncomb spent a short period as F.O.I.C. Sydney, before being appointed Commodore Superintendent of Training Flinders Naval Depot. On Trafalgar Day 1946, the US Naval Attache invested Farncomb with the Legion of Merit, Degree of Commander. In January 1947, after being promoted Rear Admiral he became Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Squadron. In November 1949 Rear-Admiral Farncomb was appointed Head of the Australian Joint Services Staff in the U.S. and Australian Naval Representative and Naval Attache in Washington.

On retirement, he studied law, was admitted to the Bar in 1958 and practised in Sydney. Rear Admiral Farncomb was an Honorary Member of the League from 1947 to 1967.. In earlier days he was known to his midshipmen as 'Uncle Hal'; to his officers serving under him during war days, he was 'Fearless Frank'. The most highly decorated senior R.A.N. Commanding Officer of W.W. 2, H.B. Farncomb died on 12-2-1971, his ashes being scattered at sea from H.M.A.S. Sydney.

A glance over the roll of members taken from records give us the names of some more members of old;- their names will turn back the years and stir a few more memories: -

Rear Admiral H.J. Feakes C.B.E., R.A.N.R.(S)

Went to sea in 1891 from the Worcester and gained his Master's Certificate in 1902 while serving with P. & O. Joined the Commonwealth Naval Forces in 1907. Commissioned the Commonwealth's first destroyer H.M.A.S. Parramatta in 1910. After serving in many capacities including command of both H.M.A.S. Brisbane and Melbourne and H.M. Ships of War was promoted to Flag Rank in 1934. He was a member of the League of Ancient Mariners until his death in 1950.

Captain Sir James Bisset Kt., C.B.E., RD., R.N.R., LLD (Cantab)

Retired to Australia after serving in Cunard Line and remembered as the Master of the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth during the W.W.2 days. He was appointed to Council in 1949 and Vice-President of the League from 1951 to 1959.

Captain F.J Bayldon MBE, FRGS

Mentioned earlier as the Chief Officer of R.M.S. Warrimoo. Well known for his Navigation School in the old Wool Exchange Building where many of the League's past and present Master Mariners give thanks for his able tuition. He was a very early, keen and able member of the League until his passing in 1949

Captain J R Patrick - who commenced the shipping company of James Patrick and Co. - a very early member and a good friend to the League.

Captain R.W Miller - Millers colliers, the sixty milers, Canopus and Ayrfield and the William MacArthur as well as the tanker fleet. Another company now departed from the scene and whose friendly hospitality is unfortunately lost to the League.

Commodore A.V Knight O.B.E. D.S.C. RD. R.A.N.R.(S) – from early days in the Union Steamship Co., then to what eventually became the Australian National Line. Elected a member of the League of Ancient Mariners on the 28th March, 1947 and to the council in the mid 1960's.

Captain Thomas Minto -

Billy Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia offered one apprenticeship in each State of the Commonwealth to the son of a fallen Serviceman from the Great War. On the 11-11-1922, young Thomas Minto being chosen from Queensland, walked up the gangway of the then Commonwealth Line T.S.S. Jervis Bay to commence his sea-going career.

He later transferred to spend the remainder of his time at sea in the Adelaide Company. In 1929, aged in his early twenties, Tom Minto was 3rd Mate of the S.S. Junee (LOA 300 feet). The ship spent 80 days unsuccessfully searching the Southern Ocean during late winter for the great 5 masted sail training ship Kobenhaven which had then been missing for some 7 months. The Kobenhaven was never found. The year 1942 found him Mate of the hospital ship M.V. Manunda being attacked by Japanese aircraft in Darwin Harbour.

Appointed Master in 1943 and resigning in 1948 to take up a position ashore as a Dept. of Navigation Surveyor for a short period, then joining forces with Captain Gibson in Gibson and Minto, Marine Surveyors. Tommy Minto gained membership of the League on the 27th November 1952 regularly attending all the League's functions until passing on in the year 2001 aged 94 years young.

CHAPTER 6

And Today - now for some of our present day members

Captain Alan Pearson MBE. - Joining Furness Withy in 1937 as a Deck Cadet, seeing service throughout W.W.2 and until 1952 in the North Atlantic and World Trades; gaining his Extra Master's Foreign Going Certificate just 10 years after in 1947 is a remarkable effort. The years 1952 until 1982 were spent with the Australian Dept. of Shipping and Transport, retiring from the position of Regional Controller, N.S.W. Awarded the Graduate Diploma in Business (Shipping) in 1997 and also the Graduate Diploma in Port and Terminal Management in 1998. He is keenly interested in various maritime associations and in 1979 was awarded the M B E. Captain Pearson joined the League of Ancient Mariners on 14/12/1958 and held the office of President from 1996 to 1999

Captain Jack Knight - Packed his kit bag to join Burns Philp's Neptuna as a Deck Cadet in 1941. Injured when that vessel was sunk in the Darwin bombing. Later resuming service with the same Company before seeing service in overseas companies 1950 to 1952 when he returned to join the Adelaide Company. Thence ashore as a marine surveyor for Port Line before joining Westminster Dredging, (now Westham Dredging Co). In 1978 he gained a Diploma in Labour Relations and the Law from the University of Sydney and retired in 1984. Captain Jack Knight gained membership of the League in 1962. He became a member of Council in 1977 and was appointed President in 1993 until relieved by Alan Pearson in 1996.

When pressed so to do, Jack Knight recalled some amusing anecdotes of his days in Burns Philp:-

Alex Donaldson was Senior Master in Burns Philp and as such he drew a lot of water. He was in command for many years of T.S.S. Marella, running between Melbourne and Singapore via Sydney, Brisbane, Thursday Island, Darwin and Java. The Marella was at anchor off Tandjong Priok (the port for Batavia, now Djakarta) when Singapore fell to the invading Japanese. Also in port was H.M.A.S. Perth, Captain Howden, RAN. in command. He was in earlier days, a merchant navy officer when he served in sail with Alex Donaldson.

He boarded Marella and advised Captain Donaldson to depart forthwith via Sunda Strait. Marella was one of the last ships to escape the area. The story is told that on the Saturday night at dinner as Marella was en route to Fremantle, a woman passenger sitting at the Captain's table said "Captain, I believe if asked, you will, on a Sunday, conduct a church service." Donaldson replied "God damn it all woman, its bad enough saving your God damned life without trying to save your God damned soul as well." There was no church service.

In the same vein there is the story about Captain (Wild Bill) Wilding who considered it appropriate to conduct a Sunday service when possible.

He was on this Sunday, Master of the M.V. Malaita and was in "full flight" when the 3rd. Mate who was on deck duty and keeping an eye out that the ship did not drag anchor from the reef with disastrous results (as the surrounding depth exceeded 400 fathoms) entered the saloon and tried to draw his Captain's attention. But Captain Bill was far too engrossed in his service.

In the end the 3rd. Mate called in a loud voice - "Captain, Sir, she's almost off the reef". With that Captain Wilding slammed shut the ship's Bible, exclaiming "Jesus Christ, why wasn't I called before" and on passing the steward at the piano as he bounded out to the bridge, said "Give 'em some hymns". That ended the day's service.

A book written by B.A. Wilkinson and FIX Willson called "The Main Line Fleet of Burns Philp" is dedicated to Bert Walford and Roy Waddell, Marine Engineers. Bert Walford was the Chief Engineer aboard Marella for many years. Marella had in No.2 hatch, large compartments allowing her to carry freezer or cooler cargo. The machinery to operate these compartments was situated in the upper 'tween deck of No.2. One day in Singapore, a local wharf labourer being lazy and not going ashore, urinated in the scuppers alongside the machinery.

The Chief Engineer checking up that the junior engineer in charge of the machinery was being attentive to his duties, saw this puddle of liquid, put his finger in it and sampled the taste. He then sought out the junior engineer and advised him that the brine was leaking and to attend to same. No one had the heart to advise the poor old Chief he had made a terrible mistake!

On another occasion the Chief blew down the speaking tube and passed on instructions to the senior duty engineer. This engineer scribbled a note to his junior who was inspecting the engine tops to "go and see what the silly old bastard wanted", and gave it to the Indian greaser to deliver. Unfortunately the note was mistakenly given to the Chief who had just entered the engine room. With that "Bertie" made his way down to the Second Engineer and in no uncertain terms said "Mr., old and silly I might be but bastard I am not."

Captain Bruce Wharton - Also packed his bags to join the T.S.M.V. Rabaul as an apprentice on the 25th October 1940, in Melbourne to spend the next few years in totally different circumstances.

The Rabaul was a twin screw motor vessel of 6,809 registered tons, built in Copenhagen, Denmark, for the Fred Olsen Line and was named George Washington. She was one of two vessels acquired in 1934 by W. R. Carpenter & Co.

The other was the Salamaua and both were registered in Fiji. The vessels carried British Deck and Engineer Officers and a crew of Asians and ran a service between Australia and Europe including calls at South Sea Island ports running a ten weekly service carrying wool, copra and other products.

During the early 1900's, William Randolph Carpenter, left Burns Philp & Co. to establish his own company, W.R.Carpenter & Co. Ltd. The company was a particularly aggressive competitor in the area.

Bruce Wharton's narrative continues - We departed Melbourne, calling at Adelaide, Fremantle and Bunbury, loading wheat and railway sleepers, thence en route to England via Cape Town.

Two days prior to arriving Capetown, Rabaul was challenged at night and flood lit by searchlights from a Naval Cruiser, demanding we establish our identity. Having satisfied this challenge, the cruiser then identified itself as H.M.N.Z.S. Leander, and bade us bon voyage. It was a tremendous relief to learn the Cruiser was friendly.

Rabaul berthed at Capetown on 24th December 1940, alongside the Danish ship Elanora Maersk and we were invited on board for Xmas dinner next day. We departed Capetown late December with instructions to proceed to Freetown, Sierra Leone to join a convoy for Liverpool. The Burns Philp ship H.M.S. Bulolo was part of the convoy system out of Freetown. We arrived at Liverpool on the 15/2/41 without being involved in any enemy action.

An interesting occurrence happened whilst steaming up the Irish Sea towards Liverpool in thick fog. The port and starboard sidelights of a sailing ship were seen dead ahead and each time we altered course to avoid these lights, they kept on showing up dead ahead of us. There is a story of the sailing ship Marie Celeste- an unsolved mystery. She was found drifting at sea, under full sail with no body on board, the crew never accounted for and that any vessel sighting these lights would be doomed. This certainly had a later bearing on the future of Rabaul.

We remained berthed at Canada Dock in Liverpool for one month, loading war supplies and were subjected to continuous bombing raids but fortunately avoided being hit. This was the time known as the Liverpool blitz.

On completion of loading, Rabaul was taken over by the British Ministry of War Transport and was ordered to proceed to Newport in the Bristol Channel to be fitted with anti magnetic mine equipment known as degaussing gear. Thereafter the ship was ordered to proceed independently and without escort to Capetown, Alexandria and Haifa.

During loading at Liverpool, large glass bottles of sulphuric acid were stowed as deck cargo on the after deck. The crew complained bitterly about this, as being a highly dangerous procedure as the bottles could burst open, should we meet any enemy action. Unfortunately, we were totally ignored by the ruling authorities.

Rabaul departed Newport in April and on the 13-5-41, a large cargo ship was sighted with Portuguese identification of neutrality. She passed close across our stern and then steamed down the starboard side. Rabaul was closely observed during this operation by a number of uniformed officers on the bridge, - far in excess of the number required to be navigating a Portuguese cargo ship. She then made a 180 degree turn to starboard and sped off over the horizon. This vessel was obviously a supply ship to German U.Boats and or Surface Raiders operating in the area and was then making contact with the enemy giving appropriate information regarding the Rabaul.

Our suspicion was soon proven correct, when at 0100 hours on the 14th May, M.V. Rabaul was shelled and sunk by the infamous German Raider Atlantis under the command of Commandant Bernhardt Rogge.

Rabaul attempted evasive action during the confrontation, but was no match against the speed and armament of a top sophisticated and equipped German raider. After refusing to stop as ordered by the Atlantis so a boarding party could board and take over the ship, 90 six inch shells were fired into the Rabaul before she sank.

During the shelling, all the bottles of sulphuric acid were smashed, and the after deck was awash with acid. I slipped in the acid and was badly burnt over my arms and body. As Rabaul commenced sinking by the head, we managed to get the starboard lifeboat on the poop deck launched and clear before the ship finally disappeared into the depths of the Atlantic Ocean.

Victor Eyres, one of our Naval Gunners who hailed from Hobart Tasmania, had a large piece of shrapnel lodged in the centre of his back. Victor was my best mate on the ship and he sadly died in my arms in the lifeboat.

There were many sharks and the Germans machine-gunned the water to keep the sharks at bay. A machine-gun bullet went through my left shoulder but it was obviously not deliberate.

Upon boarding the raider Atlantis, everybody was treated with respect, those suffering no harm being locked away down below in a specially prepared hold and those requiring immediate medical attention were placed into the ship's hospital, situated amidships on the main deck.

Sixteen days after Rabaul was sunk, Atlantis rendezvoused with one of its supply ships and all prisoners in a fit state were transferred to this vessel for transit to Germany. All of these prisoners were later rescued by six British destroyers off the Spanish coast and taken ashore at Gibraltar. The German supply ship was scuttled and sunk.

Atlantis continued on its marauding voyage, sinking ships at regular intervals, taking on board prisoners and transferring them from time to time aboard supply ships for on carriage to Germany.

Due to my severe acid burns, the German doctor retained me in the ship's hospital for five months, giving me wonderful attention and finally repairing my damage with a skin graft.

Atlantis proceeded south around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Whilst in the Pacific Ocean she met up with five Japanese supply ships. Captain Rogge offered me the opportunity of being transferred to one of these ships to be taken to Japan, seeing that I had by this time been six months at sea. Having given me the choice of remaining with him, I thanked him for the suggestion but decided I would live longer by remaining in the raider. I found him to be a very kind and considerate man, but could not say the same for his No. 1, who was a typical Nazi. The rest of the crew were friendly and the food aboard the raider was good. This was just another example of fellowship of sea-farers, regardless of colour or creed. Probably, I would have been the only person ever given the opportunity of being a prisoner of either the Japanese or Germans.

I had been warned by Captain Rogge to be aware of German service personnel in Europe, especially Gestapo, so was mindful of the advice when we prisoners were transferred to a captured Dutch freighter, the S.S.Kota Nopan and then landed in Bordeaux. We were taken to a concentration camp and spent 2 weeks with hardly anything to eat, keeping alive by eating grass.

The raider continued southward, around Cape Horn into the South Atlantic Ocean where she was sunk on the 22nd of November, 1941, by the British cruiser H.M.S. Devonshire. All but 9 of the crew were rescued.

Thereafter, all prisoners of war were placed on a train and taken to Wilhelmshafen in the north of Germany, where their interrogation took place for six weeks in a Naval Cadet school under the Gestapo. Solitary confinement was practiced. The final journey was by train to Tarmstedt, and then by truck to Westertimke, some 25 miles east of Bremen, where a Naval camp and a Merchant Navy camp were built about one kilometer apart. We were housed in barracks which contained 14 rooms, each room being fitted with 16 bunks with straw mattresses and one only blanket to each bunk. All told, this camp contained the survivors from 199 ships.

Food parcels (one per week per person) were obtained through the Red Cross, but during the winter when heavy snow was around hampering transport from Switzerland, food parcels became scarce and one had to survive on two slices of bread and a bowl of soup from the Germans each day.

Towards the end of the war, we found ourselves on the front line and were obliged to dig trenches outside the barracks as we were situated between German troops in the east and allied troops to the west, both firing over the top of us towards each other.

Dead Germans were strewn all around the camp and as the situation became unbearable, four of us decided to escape from the camp and try to make our way into Bremen which we knew was already in the hands of the Allies.

Cutting our way through the barbed wire fences one night, we were fortunate to find an empty Mercedes car not far away, with the ignition key still in place. We climbed aboard and eventually made it to Bremen where a British Commander took care of us all. He arranged for us to be driven to Emsdetten Airport where we boarded a Lancaster bomber and were flown to England.

I remained in England for 4 months before deciding to take the risk of further danger and joined the Empire Rawlinson in Glasgow as a passenger, which sailed to Brisbane with only one stop at Aden.

I was then reunited with my family, whom I had not seen for five long years and after being a P.O.W. from 14/5/41 to 27/4/45.

I then returned to sea, qualifying and gaining my certificates while serving in W.R. Carpenter's vessel Admiral Chase and in ships of other Australian companies before finally coming ashore in 1967 to commence my Marine Surveying Company. I finally retired some years ago.

While in camp I maintained a diary in a note book issued by the Red Cross which is valued enormously to this day. An extract there from reads : -

Here we are at Milag Nord drinking at the bar,
with pretty girls to draw us beer, like hell we are.

We travelled here in luxury the whole trip for a quid,
a sleeping berth for each of us, like hell we did.

Our feather beds are 2 feet deep, the carpets almost new.
In easy chairs we spend the day, like hell we do

The Goons are really wizard chaps, their hope of victory good,
we'd change them places any day, like hell we would.

When winter comes and snow's around the temperature at nil,
we'll find hot bottles in our bed, like hell we will.

And when the war is over and Jerry gets the bill,
we'll remember all that's happened here, my oath we will.

Bruce Wharton 1944.

'Atlantis' laid down as a conventional merchant ship in 1937, was known to the British as Raider C. She carried a crew of 351. Her particulars were :

GRT 7862 tons. - L 155m. B 18.7m D 8.7m - Speed 16 knots

Main armament of 6 x 5.9" guns 4 x 21" torpedo tubes 2 aircraft

The League of Ancient Mariners
of New South Wales 286



Harbour Cruise and Luncheon
Saturday, 15th March, 1947.

Steamer will leave
No. 7 Jetty, Circular Quay, at 12.30 p.m.

Admit.....

This Ticket to be presented at the Naval Depot.
NOT TRANSFERABLE.

R.S.V.P. Hon. Secretary
(B 6131) Captain F. Murchison, President.
A. J. Aucher, Hon. Secretary.

Members have the privilege of inviting guests, at a cost of 15/- each, on application for tickets to the Hon. Secretary, 26-30 Clarence Street, Sydney.

The League of Ancient Mariners
of New South Wales 013



Harbour Cruise and Luncheon
SATURDAY, 4th MAY, 1996

Steamer will leave No. 6 Jetty, Circular Quay, at 12 Noon Sharp

Admit Capt. E. J. Foley

This Ticket to be presented at the Naval Depot "H.M.A.S. Watson", Watsons Bay
(not transferable)

R.S.V.P. 2/5/96
to C. C. Croft
Telephone: 798 4040 or 377 2325
Capt. J. H. Knight, President
C. C. Croft, Secretary

Members have the privilege of inviting two guests at a cost of \$30.00 each, on application for tickets to the Secretary, 8 Dudley Street, Haberfield, N.S.W. 2045

League of Ancient Mariners of N. S. W.

ANNUAL RE-UNION
(SMOKE-OH)

SARGENT'S BLUE ROOM, MARKET STREET
FRIDAY, 5th NOVEMBER, 1943
at 8 p.m.

This Ticket must be presented at the door.

Members have the privilege of inviting guests at the cost of 10/- each on application for tickets to the Secretary.

Not Transferable.
R.S.V.P. 29th October
(B 6131) Capt. A. J. AUCHER
Hon. Secretary
26/30 Clarence St., Sydney.

Admit.....

THE LEAGUE OF ANCIENT MARINERS OF N.S.W.

HARBOUR CRUISE
HND
169 LUNCHEON

Saturday, March 31st, 1928

Steamer will leave the jetty at Fort Macquarie at 1.15 p.m.

Admit.....

THIS TICKET TO BE PRESENTED AT THE GANGWAY
NOT TRANSFERABLE

Captain S. G. GREEN,
President.
Captain F. H. BROWNLOW
Hon. Secretary.

ANCIENT MARINERS LEAGUE
Saturday, March 31st 1928.
LUNCHEON.

Two more of our very worthy present members who just cannot be overlooked are :

Our Secretary Major S.H Cheeseman A.M. - Sid Cheeseman joined the League in 1990. Mr. Claude Croft made it known that after fifty years as the Secretary/Treasurer he wished to relinquish the position. Sid was approached by Capt. Knight and Capt. Ross and he very graciously accepted that mantle. Sid had retired from Army life in 1985 and shortly afterwards took up full time retirement.

Service life commenced as an Army Apprentice at age fifteen where he gained qualification as a vehicular mechanic. Aged twenty-one (1956) he was posted to service in Korea and later to Kure on Honshu Island, Japan.

At the rank of Sergeant he was attached to the Dept. of External Affairs and joined the Antarctica ANARE in 1964 under the control of Dr. Philip Law, the well known Australian explorer. Sid gained his sea legs passing through the 'Roaring Forties' and 'Furious Fifties' aboard the Norwegian ice-breaker Nella Dan which was chartered by the expedition. Visits were made to Macquarie Island twice and to Mawson, Davis and the now abandoned base at Wilkes where his duties related to the operation and maintenance of the attached Army amphibious DUKWS.

Soon after his work with the ANARE he was promoted to Warrant Officer Class 2 and then posted to South Vietnam with the 1 RAR Group at Bien Hoa airbase. Thence to Vung Tau as part of the advance party of troops for the implant of the 1st Australian Task Force to be based at Nui Dat.

On returning to Australia he was selected for a SEATO project in Thailand and promoted to Warrant Officer Class 1. The project established a training school for vehicle mechanics in Bangkok. During this posting in Thailand he was promoted to Lieutenant.

Again returning to Australia, he was project instructor for the training of Army Adult Tradesmen at Bandiana in Victoria, training 750 tradesmen yearly.

Sid was then promoted to Captain and made Officer Commanding the squadron workshop of 35 Watercraft Transport Squadron based at Woolwich Dock, then again promoted to Major and Officer Commanding the 1 Watercraft Workshop, Woolwich, Sydney. The workshop was responsible for service, slipping, repair and modifications to the total watercraft fleet in the Army inventory.

Major S. H. Cheeseman was awarded the AM - The Medal of the Order of Australia (Military Division) in 1984. He retired from military service in 1985.

The League of Ancient Mariners is indeed very fortunate to have his membership together with his dedicated and efficient secretaryship. In recognition of his outstanding contribution, Sid Cheeseman is now a Life Member of the League of Ancient Mariners.

An item in the Sydney Morning Herald dated 22 . 2 . 1916 stated :

A model of "Endeavour" was launched at Mort's Dock on the 21st - an exhibit by the League of Ancient Mariners at the forthcoming Police and Firemens Carnival for charity to be manned by Ancient Mariners. It is 30feet long and loaded onto a horse drawn wagon for the procession.

A report of Sunday's Sun Herald of the 27th February 1916 stated :

From the poop of the "Endeavour", Captain Cook and his crew took soundings of the pockets of the people and as the tableaux passed the saluting point in Macquarie Street where the State Governor and State Commandant were stationed, the old ship's cannonade boomed out. This was the Ancient Mariner's Exhibit - the prize winner of the day. Captain Pearse assumed the roll of the great navigator and the roll call was a big one when at intervals Captain A.W. Webber piped all hands.

Dr. Paul Scully-Power DSM DSc FRAeS FAICD - our hands-on Patron, who was officially asked to accept that position by Council on 22-9-1997. We are delighted to have him as our Senior Member. Dr. Scully-Power is a businessman, mathematician, high-tec consultant, scientist, author, oceanographer and our first astronaut. A biographical book, "Oceans to Orbit" was published in 1995.

He is either a Chairman or a Director of a number of corporations, both public or private including his own high-tec consulting company, Prime Solutions Pacific.

He is involved in many business and community groups through his roles as a Councillor of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Australian British Chamber of Commerce; Vice President of the Antisubmarine Officers' Association; Patron of the Australian Aviation Museum; the Lawrence Hargrave Foundation; the Royal Australian Navy Laboratory Association; the Macquarie Bank Aero Club as well as our own League of Ancient Mariners; a member of the International Trade and Government Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce; a Director of the Australia Youth Trust and a Governor of Youth Off The Streets.

Dr. Scully-Power is the immediate past Chancellor of Bond University and was the inaugural Chairman of the Queensland Science and Technology Council. Prior to that, he spent over twenty years in the United States of America, working in many areas including the U.S. Navy, NASA, the Pentagon, Lockheed Martin and for the White House in development of advanced communication systems and also in other distinguished positions. Before going to America, he was the inaugural Head of the Oceanographic Group of the Royal Australian Navy.

Paul Scully-Power was born and educated in Sydney. He earned the degree of Doctor of Science in Applied Mathematics and a Graduate Diploma in Education from the University of Sydney. He is a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society, a Fellow of the Institute of Company Directors, a Liveryman of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators and a Freeman of the City of London. He has published over ninety international scientific reports and journal articles.

Among his awards are the U.S. Navy Distinguished Service Medal, NASA Spaceflight Medal, Casey Baldwin Medallion of the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute, U.S. Presidential Letter of Commendation, U.S. Congressional Certificate of Merit, United Nations Association Distinguished Service Award, Laureate of the Albatross (Oceanography's equivalent of the Nobel Prize), Order of the Decibel (the highest award in the field of Underwater Acoustics), University of Sydney Distinguished Graduate Award, and Australia's highest aviation award, the Oswald Waft Gold Medal.

Once again from the archives in the Mitchell Wing of the State Library an item extracted from the Sydney Morning Herald dated 20th February 1911 reported a reunion of The Ancient Mariners where Captain A.W. Pearse in proposing a toast to the "The League" said :

"Whilst sailors might be a bashful lot, he thought they would get about 30 men out of the crowd to run this country better than it was run at present." There was laughter as he concluded "Sailors were used to commanding men and understood the value of discipline".

CHAPTER 7

Memories of Days Gone By

Most members of the League will surely recall some incidents during their sea going days which readily come to mind when reading of the career and reminiscences of some more of our present day members. They also kindly submitted their stories to be used in this history of the League to once again bring to mind the way of life of a seafarer not only in the dark days of war but also in the brighter days of peace.

Captain John Arthurson

Born 20-9-18. Educated in Sydney passing Q.C. examination at Leichhardt Junior Technical College. John then continued his life story :

Joined Aeon (Howard Smith) as Deck Boy 13-3-33. Then Kowarra then Lady Isobel (Howard Smith) and Abel Tasman (H.C.Sleigh) as Ordinary Seaman. Then Canberra (Howard Smith), then Malaita (Burns Philp), then Jervis Bay (Shaw Savill) as A.B. Took my discharge London 18-6-38.

After a visit to the Orkneys and Shetland Islands (birth places of my Mother and Father) and nearly starving in London!!; joined the Beacon Grange (Houlder Bros. London) as A.B. from 8/8/38 to 27/9/38 - Voyage to 5 ports in South America and back to London.

Enrolled at the Marine School, South Shields and passed for Second Mate (Foreign Going) in January, 1939 and joined Antigone (Langdon Rees) as 3rd. Mate the following month. My first trip was to Baltimore for scrap-iron to Japan(a long trip and only 8 knots). Then to Ocean Island for phosphate to New Zealand. Back to Ocean Island for phosphate, this time for Bunbury (WA.), calling into Port Kembla for bunkers. I went home to Abbotsford for 4 hours (after 15 months away). That was at the end of August 1939.

I next went home on 18-9-45 after an absence of 6 years 2 1/2 weeks. World War 2 started when we were south of Port Phillip. I had my 21st. birthday at Bunbury. We afterwards anchored off Fremantle, cleaning holds before taking on a wheat cargo for Karachi (India - now Pakistan) . The 2nd. Mate (a fine friend) fell down a hatch and was killed and I was promoted to fill that position on 12-10-39 after being 3rd. Mate for some 8 months.

After discharge at Karachi, we loaded cereal (rape seed etc.) for Liverpool, calling at Port Said, Malta and then Gibraltar to join our first convoy. Departed on Christmas Eve and could not keep up with convoy with our 8 knots speed so were sent on our own, arriving at Liverpool on 2nd. January 1940. Following discharge, we had a 1912 model 4 inch L.A. gun and a 12-pounder installed and degaussing wires fitted in the scuppers. Two 303 rifles were issued - one was taken off us after Dunkirk. We worked back and forth across the North Atlantic (plenty of action and tales to tell !!), until I paid off in Tilbury at the end of February 1941.

I again went to the Marine School at South Shields and passed for 1st Mate (F.G.) in May 1941. Then joined an ex-French collier, the S.N.A.10 running between the Tyne and Erith-Thames. She had a gun on each quarter and the gunnery magazine was the Chart Room! On leaving the Tyne, a Dutch ship ahead was mined and I then turned to the Master and said "Sorry Sir, I forgot to test the degaussing": (a life-boat compass is handled and the compass needle points outboard if all is 0. K.) He replied "We aren't degaussed, we are wiped which is done in smaller ships." We saw plenty of action, but then I had word that a Company ship,theAntar required me so I signed off the S.N.A.10 on 5-8-41 and joined the Antar on 9-8-41. She was only 3-4 months old and very good, a Doxford engine, built in Sunderland.

We sailed in ballast to Norfolk, Virginia, for coal to Montevideo, then loaded maize in Rosario and topped off at Buenos Aires. On to Cape Town for stores, water and bunkers, then to Port Said and Haifa. At Haifa, two tankers were blown up (I have some 'illegal' photos). During a wild storm we had a collision with a Russian ice-breaker. It all happened on Christmas Day. We eventually went to Bombay for repairs then loaded the then largest cargo of tea for the U.K. at Mangalore, Calicut, Tillicherry and Cochin before sailing via Freetown, Sierra Leon to pick up the convoy.

The next trip was back to Haifa via an aborted Murmansk trip, It was in Haifa, on a Saturday night about middle of October '42, when the Master, Captain B.M. Stephens had a heart attack when returning from the shore and drowned. I was promoted to 1st. Mate on 19/10/42 (Mate with Mate's Certificate). We loaded a cargo of potash for Middlesbrough via Port Said for a small parcel of wine for the Officers Club at Aden where we loaded 500 tons of guano. Then to Cape Town for stores, water and bunkers.

Departed Cape Town on Christmas Eve morning for Punta Arenas and the Strait of Magellan, up the west coast of South America, through the Panama Canal, waited a week for convoy - but no convoy, so on to New York alone. Anchored in East River where swirling river ice cleaned off our growth. After a week or so we joined a convoy of 31 ships. One broke down early in the trip across and we arrived in Manchester (U.K.) with either 14-16 ships lost. It was a terrible time. We saw Canada Star torpedoed abeam of us - with the wolf pack attacking for more than 4 days and nights.

I paid off in April, 1943 and then back to South Shields for Master (F.G.), passing early July, then joined the Appledore of Bideford as 1st. Mate. There was no Master when I joined and we were in Hull for a couple of weeks.

After the first day I was instrumental in all Officers dining in the Saloon which had previously been allotted to the exclusive use of the Master and (I think) the Chief Engineer. Officers had been expected to dine in a very poky mess-room!

We loaded lower holds with coal at Cardiff then army stores and munitions and sailed for Syracuse (Sicily) via Gibraltar. The Master was a most objectionable and cowardly man - I could go on for ages!! The Italians had surrendered by the time we arrived in Sicily and we were sent to Taranto (South Italy) to discharge munitions etc. and stayed and bunkered minesweepers for a few weeks. Saw Italian naval vessels going to Malta to surrender. Left Taranto for Algiers, had two days there, then directed to Freetown, Sierra Leone for iron ore to the U.K. then back to Taranto with Army stores.

I paid off in Cardiff and joined Empire Swordsman, building at Hamilton's Shipyard, Glasgow, three days before launching. Then fitted out including 1 x 40 ton and 1 x 60 ton jumbo derricks (for motor transports) at Glasgow and sailed for London late May, 1944. Anchored off South End just after D Day. We had about 16 trips to the Normandy Beaches (Juno, Sword, Gold and Omaha and once to Arranches) to back-load tanks for repair. When Antwerp was cleared we went between Tilbury and Antwerp until March 1945 when we outfitted for normal operations at Glasgow. We had been on C.O.M.N.O. Articles (ie. Combined Operations Merchant Navy Organisations).

From Glasgow we sailed for Three Rivers (Trois Riviers), Canada. War ended in Europe en-passage, 8-5-45; we saw three German U-Boats with large black flags of surrender sailing very close to us. Back to Glasgow to discharge wheat then sailed with a cargo of stores for Tromso in northern Norway. I took our motor lifeboat to look at the sunken German battleship Tirpitz, just south of us. There were supposed to be 1500 to 1600 bodies still on board - lot of disinfectant about.

We returned to Leith where I had news of my Father's death. I applied for repatriation and after a tribunal hearing, was given passage on Empire Grace (Shaw Savill) and sailed from Glasgow, 4-8-45 with 92 war-brides, 6 R.A.N.V.R. Lieutenants and another ship's officer, a David Evans, who had been captured by a German gun ship after it sank a British Phosphate ship off Ocean Island early in the war. I arrived in Sydney on 18-9-45 after 6 long years without seeing my family.

After about 2 months I had word that a Master's position with my old Company would be available in February 1946 and they arranged with Bank Line for me to join the King Charles at Port Kembla and go to Melbourne for a cargo of flour for Great Britain. Orders were changed and we went instead to Lucinda Point and Cairns for Sugar to Port Swettenham, Penang and Singapore, then ballast to Vancouver to load for London via Coos Bay, San Francisco and Curacao.

Arrived in London and paid off. Langdon Rees told me that the new Government was selling all the "Empire" ships and they weren't buying the ships so employed me in their office until I joined the U.S.S. Co. of N.Z. and they sent me as passenger to Auckland.

I had been promised an Australian flagged ship after briefing in N.Z., but was appointed to Wahine (the one later lost in the Arafura Sea), sailing between Wellington and Lyttelton. After many tense meetings in their Head Office I was given a passage to Sydney and joined the Talune, fitting out after service in the Navy. After a fortnight I was told I had to go to Melbourne the next night to join a small ship running to Strahan in Tasmania. For the first time in my career I said "No" and offered my resignation. I was then told that I could go to the Ngatoro for the time being. I did and met Bernie Johnson – a long time ago, 1946.

I later joined a little ship, Ruena (Fairymead Sugar Co. of Bundaberg) as Master, running between Sydney, Bundaberg and then the Solomon Islands to discharge general cargo and collect small copra cargoes at various islands and then returning to Sydney. I stayed with it until September 1948.

About Easter 1948 I had a most frightening and exciting experience in Ruena when in near-cyclonic conditions, very close to Breaksea Light Vessel, deck cargo was lost and damage to skylights allowed water to enter the engine room. I had to steer for shelter at Double Island Point. The storm increased in violence and anchors dragged. After some hours during which a life boat and raft were lost and damage done to crew quarters and bridge windows broken etc., I decided to beach the vessel. I had been in contact with Brisbane Radio for many hours and they had alerted Double Island Lighthouse keepers. All the crew got away safely and by the time I reached the beach the shore personnel helped us to the lighthouse for shelter, warmth and food. Eventually the vessel was refloated and I took it to Brisbane for repairs and then to Bundaberg and Solomons again. An enquiry at Brisbane exonerated me from blame.

Back in Sydney, I joined the Maritime Services Board, as relief Mate on P.S. Captain Cook, thence appointed Relieving Officer, Newcastle and Outports. The duties included relieving pilots in 6 out-ports, the Master of P.S. Birubi and also the Shipping Inspector at Newcastle. I later returned to Sydney as Traffic Officer, then Shipping Inspector (again with Bernie Johnson). Appointed Relieving Pilot at Botany Bay from December 1956 and then Pilot, Botany Bay in 1960. I retired in 1978 from the position Assistant Harbour Master, Sydney and Botany Bay.

Captain J. R. Arthurson became a member of The League in 1955.

They Were The Days.

Another Ancient Mariner (A member of the League for more than 40 years), after 'playing around with ships enjoyed nothing more in retirement than going down to his small yacht and take her for a run, single handed around the South West Pacific - a nostalgic re-tracing of days gone by. The following reminiscences are just some of the experiences of this very successful sea-faring career which he related in his usual very reticent way.

Aboard ship, we were in the islands - I was painting the inside of a lifeboat when the Captain (a fine man but fearsome when angry) walking along the boat-deck called "You - come here! ". As the ship was rolling heavily I didn't want to leave my paint pot unattended, so I leapt nimbly down to the deck with pot in hand. It was made of an old paint tin with a seizing wire handle which carried away. He, the Master had on his blue uniform. One leg was soaked from the knee down and both shoes were filled with stone coloured paint. He forgot what he wanted me for - didn't say a word but squelched off along the deck leaving stone coloured foot-prints and muttering to himself.

Another time, I was sent up the funnel (very tall) to send down the radio aerial. I had a coil of rope over my shoulder. The 3rd. Mate (another of our present League Members) was keeping an eye on things. As I worked my way aft round the funnel rim, it got hotter and hotter until I was getting burnt, so I threw the coil of rope down and scurried round to the other side of the funnel. The poor 3rd. Mate, seeing the rope come down, then looking up and not seeing me yelled *****! so and so has fallen down the funnel!**. He seemed relieved later to see me with only a medium/rare rump instead of being completely barbequed.

I served on a couple of other ships and was then called back to my old ship on sailing day for her last voyage to Singapore to be sold (the ship, not me). A Malay Quartermaster had jumped ship and I was put in a watch as his replacement. Apart from 4 on and 4 off as Quartermaster, I turned to in my watch below during the day and when in port, did a Cadet's duties as well. However we paid off after 28 days.

In Singapore after the others went home, I stayed, hoping to get a job but there were too many men on the beach looking for work. A little ship, the "Islander" was in dry dock and the Cadets there looked after me while I was job hunting. I eventually went back to my old ship or Captain Marcos as she was then called, with Greek officers and under the Panamanian flag. I was engaged as Q.M. on 16 Pounds per month (undreamed of wealth). I was given what used to be the Mate's locker on the boat deck. It was 0. K. but with a hurricane lantern and no ventilation it often became untenable. As it was a hot bunk job as well (2 bunks for 4 Q.M's) - I also had a bunk in the fo'c'sle where there were 20 Malays in the shelter deck and I think 35 or more Lascar firemen in the other half of the shelter deck and tween deck. The Malays were wonderful shipmates and I learned a lot from them.

We carried refugees from Shanghai to displaced persons camps in Italy. (It was 1948) We shipped extra lifeboats and managed to cram 750 people on board where previously she carried 300 on the Australian / Singapore trade.

A couple of incidents come to mind. The telemotor steering gear failed just after taking on the Yangtze Pilot. The emergency steering was a huge double wheel that I don't think had been turned for many years. It was very hard and slow to turn for the four of us. Helm orders were relayed from the bridge, for'd end of the boat deck, after end of boat deck, break of poop to steering flat. I really don't know how the pilot got the ship to the buoys off Shanghai. We would get -starboard -midships - port - starboard again while we were still trying to get half a turn of starboard wheel on. All I can think of is that pilots sometimes give a lot of unnecessary orders !!

We stowed women in No.3 'tween-decks and men in No.2 shelter deck and tween-deck freezer lockers (unfrozen of course). We had to bunker at Durban and had made a coal chute out of awning spars and spare hatch boards to go down through tween-decks to the lower hold for spare bunkers. In the middle of the night the chute collapsed and before anyone could stop it, the tween-decks were 1/2 full of coal and the poor fellows in the lockers were stowed in. It took the rest of the night to dig them out. Some of the wives came from No. 3 hatch to watch. It reminded me of a pit -head scene from an old movie.

After a close shave with the breakwater at Dakar (guess who was on the wheel) the pilot, very shaken, wouldn't put her alongside as she was very tender and having no cargo, little fresh water or bunkers and the 750 passengers crowding the starboard side, she had a considerable list. It took all the sailors quite a long time to get enough of the live ballast over to the port side to have her stand up enough to put alongside.

We put the people ashore in Naples, then went up to Genoa where she lay for some weeks while it was decided what to do with her or us. Italy was rather depressing still - 3 years after the war, so we were pleased to leave.

I finally returned home and also had my time in for 2nd Mate. I passed and joined another Island bound vessel. After a few voyages I heard of a Bank Line ship looking for a 3rd Mate. I took the job --- it was a good ship. In Suva we were loading copra when Aorangi tied up astern. I had an old shipmate A. B. in her but neither of us could get off duty to meet up. I knocked off just as she was leaving (great send off - streamers, band etc.), ran along the wharf and saw my mate at the for'd spring. He disappeared briefly and returned with a bottle on the end of a heaving line which he was able to swing over to me. Next thing, I had a big Fijian policeman on each arm before I even had time to read the label and was marched off through the crowd as the sailors laughed and the band played "Isa Lei".

I left her in London and joined a beautiful little ship running up the Baltic Sea and Gulf of Bothnia. It was an interesting trade, good people and I was very happy.

Later I was on my way to Hampton Roads for orders aboard a Fort class ship belonging to a London Greek. It was coal from Newport News, Norfolk, Virginia to Rotterdam, back and forth with little or no time ashore at either end. The Captain, Mate and Second Mate were Poles and only spoke English when they had to - or if the Chief Engineer was within earshot who'd then shout "shut up that monkey chatter'. After a few voyages the 2nd. Mate paid off, I was promoted and another Pole joined as 3rd. Mate. I eventually signed off the ship in Rotterdam.

I spent a little time in England then joined a Liberty ship in Southampton - Portlock Hill, loading an army cargo for Cyprus, Suez, then east awaiting orders. It sounded good to me. She turned out to be a very happy ship with lots of singing. Unfortunately, she was wrecked in a N. E. gale off Cyprus and we lost the lot - ship, cargo and some good crew members.

On arrival back in London I enquired about a new ship building for my old Australian company and was told she would be engaging Officers in a fortnight's time and taking on an emigrant crew. So I signed on my new ship in Glasgow as Second Mate and came home to Sydney and my old Company. I was lucky to have joined at that time as promotion seemed to be quite rapid. I got to Mate fairly quickly and then later to Master.

I enjoyed my 9 years as Master, staying with my Company until the very last ship was sold. Then on coming ashore, I spent 18 very happy years still 'playing around with ships' until retirement.

I now have a 30 foot sloop and get off the coast from time to time. Once or twice a year I sail to Lord Howe Island while I've made New Caledonia on four occasions. Once I went on up to Vila for old times sake. Left Noumea, cleared Havannah Passage and sailed east till raising Aneityum (the southernmost island of the group). Each island had its memories - serious at the time but funny in retrospect.

Memories – Aneityum – I was Cadet launch-boy at the time – My mate and I were sent out one night to find a raft of logs that had broken away. We couldn't find it on the reef and thought it must have gone out through the passage in the lagoon. No logs, but a big swell had lifted us onto the coral and we spent the rest of the night heaving her off as each swell lifted her. The Captain had the Manager of the logging company, a Government man and their respective wives on board for dinner and we had been told to be at the gangway at 2200 hours to take them ashore. Being a rather shy man and having little conversation, he was very angry when we eventually turned up at 0500 the following day.

It was dark as I sailed North, past Tanna Island but I could see the lights ashore –

Memories – The ship used to arrive there late at night mostly, to anchor at Lenakel and discharge cargo, load copra and engage 60 odd cargo boys to take round the Group. The sides of the hills would be dotted with fires as we steamed in blowing the whistle: the fires would go out and the boys come down to the beach hoping to be picked up. We'd take two empty surf boats in and several kerosene duck lamps. The Bosun would do the recruiting. Some of the boys he knew, the others he would grab by the shoulders and shake them to see if they were strong and only take the best, as it was very hard work from there on - night and day - 35 odd missions and plantations in three weeks, all by surf boat.

I stayed well off and headed north with a lovely 20 knot trade wind on the quarter and some hours later raised Eromanga Island –

Memories – We used to drop off a few surf boat loads of stores there occasionally and on the return, pick up wool, sandalwood and hides. One trip we were anchored there off Dillon Bay and had a bull to land. Cattle were mostly swum in but as the surf was up a little, the Mate decided to put him in a surf boat. I was in the bow and Paddy, the big Irish bosun was in the stern. The bull did not care for the ship, but the surf boat was just too much - he went berserk. I was at the head end and the bull seemed to blame me for its predicament. The Bosun certainly did for he was shouting "take a turn you useless bastard". (I had noticed that Bosuns and Mates often called that out when things weren't going as planned!)

The S.E'ly had freshened again and I got into Vila before noon. It seemed so clean, touristy and respectable. It was a different place 50 years ago.- -

Memories – As I sat on deck having a drink and waiting for Customs, I thought of one very important occasion when we were to take the British Resident Commissioner and his wife to Sydney. Actually he had no option but to travel with us as there were no other ships and no planes then.

My mate and I had the launch scrubbed white and gleaming. She was a double ender with passenger space forward. We towed surf boats back and forth all day and had orders to be at the jetty on Iririki (the British Residency) at 1400 hours. It was my turn at the engine, my mate had the tiller. We had an empty surf boat in tow but my mate did a perfect job of slipping it as we approached the jetty and put her alongside.



All the necessary equipment now stowed away,
The victualling completed too.
All medicinal and health supplies checked,
Replenished too where found advisable.
Safety equipment checked and OK

Gear all bent on and clearance obtained to sail.
So "Let go fore and aft".

What! – no crew, no Log Book, no worries either,
Just the wide blue sea and me!

Oh yes and look - - NO hands.



It's been a great run across, - of course
you recognise the area -and the boat too!

The weather looks fair so will snug down
to a comfortable anchor watch to-night.
Must check the glass before turning in though.

First thing in the morning I'll paddle ashore
and report back to headquarters.
They'll be waiting to hear from me.

We picked up His Excellency and Lady, an aide and two other ladies, retrieved the surf boat and set off for the ship. He slipped the boat at No.3 hatch and was on the way to the gangway when I (head down over the engine) heard him yell - "Sh ** - Full Astern."

Next thing all hell broke loose. The ship had started pumping hot ashes over the side and the heavy old launch pulled up with the fore part right under it. The poor people were soaked, scratched, bruised and in deep shock as they were landed at the gangway. The Captain stood thunderstruck with his welcoming speech frozen on his lips as the first apparition (His Excellency), socks round his ankles, covered in ashes, squelched past him followed by three hysterical women in similar disarray and a furious aide waving a torn umbrella. Apart from the wrath of the Captain, Mate, Bosun, etc. we got no sympathy from the crew who felt we had let the ship down badly. I didn't realise how proud they all were of our old vessel.....!

And so I came back down to New Caledonia and through the Havannah Passage just as a low to the North East was backing up the S. E. trade wind to 40 knots and so anchored in a lovely little bay in Bale de Proney where I could listen to the sea breaking on the other side and the wind roaring in the trees. It eased after 3 days and I went off home."

This delightful biographical story typifies the experiences, the self-discipline and the comradeship in a fulfilling career of another highly respected seafarer.

Even As You and I.

A fool there was and he went to sea

Even as you and I

And he chose a life of misery.

The poets call it brave and free

Yet a fool he was and a fool he'll be,

For only a fool will follow the sea

Even as you and I.

anon

More Gems from Then to Now.

Dust from the Past - by Captain Hugh Murray.

Many of us will have sat enthralled as schoolboys when John Masefield's *Cargoes*' was recited during English lessons. *Cargoes* of peacocks, apes and sweet white wine are, however, a rarity and the commodity I never seemed to escape from as a seafarer was - coal. Perhaps Masefield's quinquireme carried it too, but he just could not make the word rhyme.

My first experience with coal was in 1950 when I joined the Clyde puffer *Serb* in the Ayrshire port of Troon, where she loaded coal under an ancient steam crane bound for Tiree in the Outer Hebrides. Tiree had few facilities other than broad sandy beaches. The local coal merchant boarded as a sort of de-facto pilot and would indicate on which stretch of beach he wished to receive his cargo. The puffer would steam in and ground just after high water.

When the tide receded sufficiently, horse-drawn carts appeared alongside and discharge commenced. This was by means of one-quarter ton tipping baskets which were lowered over side and the contents spilled into the carts. It was not unusual to see a panicking horse plunging off to sea until they became accustomed to the noise of the buckets being dumped.

Later that year I became a Hogarth' apprentice and joined my first ship the *Baron Elcho* under a coat tip in Swansea, loading for Genoa. This was our usual outward bound cargo from the U.K. One exception was when the ship was chartered by the French Colonial Railways to carry a cargo described as "patent fuel" from Cardiff to Conakry and Duala in what was then French Equatorial Africa. Patent fuel turned out to be just a posh name for good old coal briquettes.

Even when not carrying coal as cargo it was still featured largely in our lives as most Hogarth ships were coal burning steamers and bunkering was an extremely filthy business. Bunkers stowed on deck during longer West Indies passages was quite usual and this had to be transferred into the permanent bunker spaces by the deck crew as the voyage progressed.

After leaving Hogarths, I managed to avoid coal for a few years apart from a brief flirtation with a cargo of coke. Arriving in Australia, I spent a year as Mate of R.W. Miller's S.S. *William McArthur* on the 60 miler run. This was in the last years of Sydney's coal fired power stations and business was still brisk in the coal trade around the country. At least, most of the coal carried in this trade was washed power house mix and not all that dusty.

Coal is of course a major world commodity to this day but the under 10,000 ton tramp that once delivered it with its own discharging gear is long since gone. On my last trip to the U.K., all the old loading gantries and staithes I remembered stood derelict or the site on which they once stood had been redeveloped for other purposes.

Gone too were the communities who made their livelihood from coal when its production and handling was less mechanised - such as the coal trimmers with their large heart shaped shovels and bunches of tallow candles. They all appeared elderly, at least through the eyes of a teen-aged apprentice. They could level off and stow huge mounds of coal with little visible effort.

These trimmers were the subject of legend. They were self employed and reputedly the wealthiest men on the South Wales waterfront. Once, talking to them in a jocular vein, I asked was this so. The leading wag, after a moments consideration said - 'not true, the Marquis of Bute is marginally better off'. He of course owned Cardiff and much of the surrounding countryside.

To Australia in a Tug Under Sail

The tug Hero which operated in Sydney, Newcastle and Port Kembla from 1892 to 1960, was driven ashore in a gale at Port Kembla, becoming a total loss.

The following story of her voyage from England to Australia, under sail, in 1892 is taken from an account in the Shields Gazette of 27th June, 1932, by a member of her crew, will be of interest, especially to those who so often used her services.

On a dark night in the month of July, 1892, a little vessel dropped down the Tyne, to engage on a voyage which many people believed at the time to be a forlorn hope. She was the Hero, a sturdy little screw tug built and engined by Messrs. J.P. Rennoldson and Sons, South Shields, for service in Sydney Harbour, New South Wales, her destination.

She had previously run her trials under steam with satisfactory results, and afterwards was converted into a sailing vessel by riggers in the employ of her builders under the supervision of the foreman rigger, Mr. Adam Fleck.

Her rig was of the topsail schooner style and with her sails filled with the favouring breeze she looked as pretty a picture as one could wish to see. Her propeller had been unshipped and lay securely in its fastenings below and the vacant arch under her stern was filled with wood, giving the vessel a clean heel.

She was manned by a crew of eight - six men and two boys. A local skipper was in command. There was a slump in shipping at home in consequence of the Durham coal strike and sailors were plentiful. Excepting for one who had sailed the seven seas, the whole of the crew were chosen from Shieldsmen.

There were affectionate adieux to say before the little ship was finally cast off by the tug in charge, for many of the crew had their friends on board. The last parting farewells were shouted from the deck of the returning tug as the Hero set sail on her long and adventurous voyage.

Captain Crofton Elliot, who had been the Chief Officer of the Hero retailed to a Shields Gazette representative many interesting reminiscences of that memorable sea passage which took 156 days to complete.

It was on a Saturday night, I remember - he said - when we passed out of Shields Harbour into the open sea. We hoisted our sails to a southerly wind, the captain deciding he would go north about to start the voyage. After making 150 miles the wind chopped right round dead ahead.

We then decided to square away to the south, as the breeze seemed promising and we made good progress over the track we started on. In three days we passed the mouth of the Tyne again and we had a favourable wind all along the coast.

We struck a strong westerly in the Channel. The vessel behaved splendidly and established our confidence in her sea qualities. Her bottom was coated with white lead and tallow to keep the barnacles and sea growth off and she slipped through the water in fine style.

After we got out of the N. E. trade winds we set a course to cross the equator at 22 or 23 degrees west longitude. The days passed uneventfully and happily for we were a cheery family. When in the doldrums we had a lively time chasing the winds. We trimmed sails to capture every cupfull but often we lay becalmed and the heat was intense.

One day in my watch below, I heard a splash in the sea. When I reached the deck I saw half the crew swimming in the water. We were all swimmers. I went overboard too.

That was our only dip for the next day a big shark was lying under the counter. He followed us for some time before disappearing and we thought it unwise to take further risk.

On another calm day we put the boat over the side and painted ship topside in green colours. We were then 35 to 40 days out. Eventually we picked up the S.E. trades which gradually worked into a fair wind and we stood away to the westward. We passed Trinidad Island bearing west, distant 6 miles. After running into the prevailing westerly winds we stood across towards Cape of Good Hope. It was not long before we encountered heavy seas but the little craft behaved splendidly, running like a duck on the crests of the waves. However we had to steer with great care owing to the big mainsail and the danger of jibing. There was some dirty weather ahead and the seas swept our decks and flooded the well of the ship. Anxious moments but the vessel shook herself clear each time.

Towards Tristan da Cunha we were clear of accidents save that we had to give some attention to torn sails. We made a brave fight with the big seas and our progress was maintained until we finally sighted the islands. One big sea was shipped which smashed through into the engine room. As we had to turn over the engine every morning, this was an unfortunate mishap and it was decided to run for Table Bay to check the vessel herself and to replenish supplies.

We remained in port for three or four days before resuming our passage in severe squally weather. We ran south to skirt the Agulhas Banks, then set our course to the eastward and thus entered the last long run from the Cape to Australia. The prevailing wind was westerly and terrific squalls occasionally burst upon us. Tremendous green seas chased along behind us and it was fortunate that the man at the wheel could not see them. The ship rose to the crest of the waves which swept us along like an avalanche for a considerable distance at a time.

We shipped one huge sea which swept the bosun along the deck and dashed him against the bulwarks. He was found to have fractured ribs, a trying ordeal for he had to lay in a pitch plaster for ten or twelve days. His injuries healed but the removal of the plaster adhering to his skin was a painful operation. Ultimately restored to his normal self, he resumed his duties.

On another day, one of the boys was knocked over the side with the flap of the foresail. He had a miraculous escape. He was working on the top of a little house reeving the fore bowline when the flap of the sail pitched him into the sea. The vessel was only going at three or four knots at the time. The little fellow held on to the end of the bowline and by that means he was retrieved safely on board again.

Seldom, indeed, was anything sighted - just an occasional sail. A close look out was maintained and it was early morning, with a high westerly wind blowing that the first sighting was made of the Australian continent, Cape Banks on the South Australian coast.

The arrival of Hero in perfect condition in Sydney after a sea voyage of 156 days created the anticipated excitement on the waterfront while of the crew, Captain Forrest remained by the vessel, two crew members remained in tugs in Sydney and her Chief Officer eventually returned to the U.K. and was in later years in command in the Stag Line.

God's Glorious Seas

The pubs are closed on Sundays
 Because they cannot trust
 The weak and wayward shoremen
 From going on the bust.

But we whose hearts are cleansed
 From sordid thoughts of beer,
 With joy that never endeth
 May serve the Lord down here.

From the pen of Bruce Wharton

Please God, the gentle sailor
 May never know the pain
 The manager must suffer
 If we, in port remain.

To clear the ships each weekend
 And get them off to sea,
 For ships tied up on Sundays
 Would spoil eternity.

Oh day of joy and gladness,
 A sailorman's delight
 To stay in port in sadness
 Would surely not be right.

So, each Saturday you see him,
 The mooring lines set free,
 To spend each weekend
 Upon God's glorious sea.

A Century of Change

Let us now roll back the years to the dawn of the 20th century -to the earliest days of the League - sailing ships competed with coal fired, steam powered vessels transporting cargo and passengers to the 4 corners of the world. Larger steel hulls replaced timber or iron hulls and black gangs in the stoke-hold fed the coal from the coal-bunker into the boiler furnaces to drive reciprocating engines and push the sleek new liner or rusted old tramp through all kinds of weather at, in most cases relatively slow speeds.

Dreadnoughts proudly flying the ensigns of their country patrolled the world's sea-lanes and Bleriot had just proved the feasibility of Hargreaves' philosophy of flight. Illumination aboard ship was provided by "electric light machines" replacing the oil lamp as well as the lamp-wick and the lamptrimmer while a new little 'dog-box' called a radio room housed a spark transmitter for radio communication at sea.

Then two World Wars, only 21 years apart during the first half century caused heavy losses to merchant fleets and men-of-war on all the seven oceans of the world where good men suffered and good men perished and where many fine vessels found watery graves.

In those intervening years diesel engines were introduced into engine-rooms to cough and splutter away while the dwindling supply of starting air would cause a count down on the ship's bridge before the main engine finally fired and the immediate danger of collision evaporated until the next occasion.

The graceful sailing-ship was relegated to the museum or scrap heap and the welding machine found its home into the world's ship-building yards to replace the rivet-gun and dolly.

As the latter half-century unfolded, the ever increasing size of ships gradually became inversely proportional to the complement of crew and accomodation aboard merchant-men if not sighted on the fo'c'sle could well be located over the rudder stock! Diesel engines became more reliable and powerful and gas turbines are today, gaining moderate popularity while elaborate electronics are now the norm both on the bridge and in the engine-room.

Who in 1950 would have dared to think that a tanker would lift half a million ton of crude oil, a cargo ship carry 5,000 steel boxes of cargo each measuring 20 ton and a passenger ship of over 100,000 ton would house a league of nations of 4,000 odd souls on board!!

The speed of change coupled with financial cost and competition today demands that cargo is either poured or boxed and carried in vessels of ever increasing capacity to be loaded, transported and discharged with the minimum of delay. In the world's navies, only the aircraft-carrier (requiring the length of flight-deck and space for housing aircraft) comply with this need for increased size. Today's warships house their very complex requirement in smaller hulls and with reduced complement of crew to man them. Will total automation be the next episode? Will seamen eventually become redundant? Will the proud profession of a seagoing career which blossomed in the twentieth century become a thing of the past and fade into history in the next?

John Masefield O M 1878 - 1967

Appointed Poet Laureate in 1930 and awarded the Order of Merit in 1935, John Masefield was born in Ledbury, Herefordshire and educated at Kings School, Warwick. From there he went to H.M.S. Conway before serving as an apprentice in sail. Chronic seasickness later drove him to shore-side employment. Serving with the Red Cross during the 1914 - 1918 Great War, the year 1916 saw him aboard a hospital ship in the Gallipoli campaign. Let us recall two of his renowned poems: -

Seafever

I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely sea and the sky
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied:
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

And

Cargoes

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt caked smoke stack
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road rails, pig lead,
Firewood, iron ware, and cheap tin trays.



Pamir

CHAPTER 8

The Twilight of Sail

The Committee of the League were of the opinion that one of their midst, Captain Lindsay Davis also had a story to tell. So he was invited to be the Guest Speaker at our luncheon on the 5th May, 2001. Here is that story -

Fellow members and guests of the League, one of the wishes of this League's founders was to perpetuate the memory of sail. While cadet ships still have their much publicised races and enthusiasts still operate reproductions like the Bounty and Endeavour, along with restorations like our own James Craig, for Australia, commercial sail passed into history in the late 1940's, when Pamir and Passat sailed with grain cargoes from Port Victoria to Falmouth for orders.

The Pamir arrived in Wellington in July 1941 from the Seychelles with 4380 tons of guano and as Finland had thrown its lot in with the Germans and attacked Russia, Pamir was seized as a prize of war. As such she sailed under the New Zealand flag until late 1948, making five voyages from Wellington to San Francisco, three to Vancouver, one to Sydney and one to the U.K.

The war time voyages had been profitable but not so those after the war, particularly those to Sydney and to the U.K. Faced with a claim by Ericksons for 21,000 pounds for wrongful seizure and the fact that the U.K. was returning prizes to Finland and last but by no means least, the New Zealand Government was losing money, it was decided to return her to Finland as a good will gesture.

I was one of twelve new Deck-boys who were signed on for voyage five to San Francisco in October 1944. Nine of us were first trippers, while three had a few months sea time in on the coast. The four boys remaining from the previous voyage were promoted to Ordinary Seamen, but of the A. B's., nine were new to sail.

One afternoon which has stuck in my memory from those few days before we sailed, was the bending on of the mizzen upper top gallant sail. The sail had been checked by the sail-maker. The rope-yarn rovings were loosely hitched in the eyes along the head of the sail and the buntline cringles and foot cringles stopped together. The head earrings and spectacles in the sails clews were stopped together and then the whole sail was rolled up like a giant sausage and stopped off with rope-yarns. A masthead gantline was made fast a couple of feet from the middle of the sail, while the head earring lashings were made fast to the gantline a few feet above the sail. The hauling part of the gantline was then led through a snatch-block and taken to the capstan and the sail then hove aloft.

Then came the CRUNCH. - With the shortage of experienced hands, two newly promoted Ordinary Seamen, both having a mere six months experience, were sent aloft with myself and another new Deck-boy to bend on the sail.

Once aloft, the head earrings lashings were taken to their respective yard-arms and loosely hitched. The gantline was then eased off until the midship stop of the sail could be made fast to the midship point of the yard. It was then hung off in the gaskets, the rope-yarn stops cut and the head of the sail stretched along the yard. Then with the head earring lashings hove taut, the head of the sail was secured to the jackstay with the rovings.

Sheets and clewlines were shackled in and their shackles moused. Buntlines were rove through their cringles and made fast to their foot cringles with a buntline hitch, the end being seized to the standing part with rope-yarn. Leech lines were made fast in same manner.

The sail was now clewed up from the deck so that it hung from the yard in three folds. We then pulled all of it up on to the top of the yard except the last two feet which formed the skin into which all the sail was pushed. Then the whole sail was rolled up on to the top of the yard and secured with gaskets, all being made fast with timber hitches to produce a harbour stow.

As this was the first significant job aloft in which I was involved, it is a memory that has stayed with me. As for the two Ordinary Seamen, it was just part of the day's work, something done many times before and afterwards. How many Ordinary Seamen (or Integrated Ratings) today, would we find capable of doing such a job? - all done 150 feet above the deck, before safety harnesses were thought of and where their only assistance was given by two boys who yet had to gain their full confidence in working aloft.

All four on that yard later obtained their Master's Certificates with Square Rigged endorsements. One of the then Ordinary Seamen is well known to many, - Captain Bruce Hitchman, a retired Sydney Pilot and another present day member of the League.

With our pitifully small 1074 tons of tallow stowed, those stays which had been dropped to give cranes working cargo access to the hatches set up again and all sail bent on, we towed clear of Wellington with a favourable North Westerly wind on the 10 th day of October.

To us new chums, it was a matter of follow the leader, pulling on scores of lines, heaving on capstan bars and winding halliard winches. Soon we were bowling through Cook Strait.

Once clear of the land, anchors were taken inboard and bolted down, cables sent down, hawse pipes plugged and the cat davit stripped and housed. Watches were set, four on and four off, - A B's and Ordinary Seamen taking the night wheels. As all steering was by quarter points, the boys took the wheel by day until they got the hang of steering by quarter points, - that little diamond two to the left of that big triangle - or something similar.

Having a semi-balanced rudder, even though the ship only had hand steering, one man could steer her quite comfortably. He did have his work cut out though when the wind was aft, when the wheel's kick was most felt. The helmsman stood on the weather side of the wheel. He put his helm down to bring Pamir up to the wind and got his helm up to put her off. Port and Starboard were terms seldom used. They were just names of the watches, the expression was weather and lee. We were given a quick run around all the lines and their belaying points and, as all had a logical system this knowledge was readily absorbed.

This first passage to San Francisco was one of learning the whys and wherefores of sail. With the wind aft or on the quarter, she was squared in, that is -the yards were braced at right angles to the ship's fore and aft line, while, with the wind on the beam or forward of the beam, the yards were braced up to catch the wind. The lower yards were always braced up sharper than those above.

This trim of the yards was a precaution against the wind jumping ahead. Should the royals and top gallants be taken aback, the lower sails would still be drawing and the helmsman could get his helm up and hopefully put her off the wind until all the sail was again drawing. When, with the yards braced hard up, the ship was still unable to make her course, she was steered by the wind to bring her as close as possible to the required course.

In steering by the wind, the mizzen royal was not braced up quite as sharp as the fore and main, so the helmsman watched its weather clew and kept it just lifting. This required good concentration and a gentle touch, the wheel probably taking a mere two or three spokes to hold her. But woe betide the man at the wheel if he got too close to the wind and got taken aback!

Sorting this out then involved 'boxing her off'. Mainsail and crojack were dewed up. Main and mizzen yards squared in while the fore yards were braced right round on the other tack so that the wind could push, or box her round and back onto the desired tack till the after yards were again drawing. She was then braced up again and the mainsail and crojack reset. This half hour's work did not make the helmsman very popular, though the thought by many that "there but for the grace of God go I" no doubt saved him from much adverse comment.

When tacking against head winds, the ship could be put about in heavy weather, by wearing or turning stern to the wind and losing considerable distance, or preferably by tacking head to the wind. This was the most spectacular evolution of all. Again, mainsail and crojack were clewed up for the simple reason we did not have sufficient men to handle the sheets and tacks. The spanker boom lee tackle was shifted to the weather side, then aided by the vang, the spankers and gaff topsail were taken as far to weather as possible. The lee topgallant braces were made fast by the wind hitches and brace whips were eased.

The Old Man would then let her pay off the wind a little to gain extra way. Then came the order "Lee Oh" at which the helmsman put the helm hard down and the carpenter let fly the jib sheets so the ship flew up into the wind, was then taken flat aback and yet still continued to turn. Once through the wind the jibs were sheeted home on the new tack to help the turn.

Next came the order "Mizzen Yards", at which the top gallant braces were let go, the brake released on the brace winch and the brace runners given a helping hand until the wind took charge and all the yards on the mizzen mast swung round through an arc of ninety odd degrees from hard up on one tack to hard up on the other, being brought up by the brake on the brace winch and by the wind hitches on what were now the weather top gallant braces.

This was followed by "main yards" and the same evolution occurred with all the yards on the main as on the mizzen. So with the head yards on the old tack and main and mizzen on the new tack, all flat aback, she would box herself round till the after yards filled. The head yards were now braced round and Pamir was brought up to the wind on the new tack. Braces were now set tight and staysail sheets changed over to the new lee side and mainsail and crowjack reset. For those who were free to watch the yards come round from one tack to the other, it was an unforgettable sight.

On this, my first voyage, we had a dream run to the equator, crossing it twenty one days out in the longitude of the Marquesas. In the south -east trade winds, we changed sail replacing the heavy weather canvas with older worn fair weather sails. Easy days ended in working the ship through the doldrums. They were hot and humid with frequent rain, resulting in endless bracing and boxing her round to catch every fickle catspaw of wind, until we picked up the north-east trade winds.

For the Mate on watch, the 'days work' (that we were later to face in Second Mates syllabus) was a daunting reality in the doldrums with many a D.R. position leaving much to be desired. Navigation was but a part of a watch keeping Mate's duties as he was there to sail the ship and work her as required, keeping his watch on the weather side, always watching the weather, ready to call out the watch to brace or drop the gaff topsail and spankers should a squall tend to drive her up into the wind. Navigation equipment was a magnetic compass, taft rail log and a Kelvin Hughes hand operated deep sea sounding machine.

Courses and routes taken were the prerogative of the Master and with the war situation in the Pacific improving, a more direct route than usual was taken, though boats were still swung out when North of the line and extra lookouts posted. On the twelfth of November when E.N.E. of the Hawaiian Islands, we were sent to boat stations as a surfaced submarine was having a good look at us. In that it left us unharmed, we believed it to be

friendly though the U.S. authorities later informed the Master that it was not one of theirs. We made San Francisco on the thirtieth of November, fifty one days out.

Leaving San Francisco south bound, the tug wanted to tow us out on a manila towline. The tug not having a towing wire aboard, suggested we tow out on our wire. This, the Master flatly refused to do as on a previous voyage the tug had slipped the tow barely clear of the Golden Gate, leaving Pamir with little sail set and a towing wire on the bottom which had to be retrieved by hand. We waited another day until the tug returned with a massive towing wire.

Apart from general work, every morning and evening we boys found ourselves aloft, stopping buntlines so that they hung slack over the sails and not chafing them. As we carried a mere forty five tons of fresh water, the pump was locked. In the first dog watch, the carpenter would unlock the pump and we boys would carry the water rations to the galley, saloon and messroom - all carried in five and ten gallon cans. Then every so often, the galley bunker would have to be coaled with the coal being hove up by hand from the fore peak. When sail had to be furled, the boys were the first to be sent aloft.

The most hated job of all however, was the peggying. Around five in the morning, one boy from each watch would start by scrubbing out the two fo'c's'les of the watch on deck, getting under the bunks, removing and then replacing all buckets and sea-boots, then scrubbing the forms. Then followed scrubbing out the messroom and Bosun's mess along with their tables and chairs, followed by an alleyway slung in for good measure - all wooden decks, down on your hands and knees with sand soap and salt water.

Next job, - run the seven bell breakfast for the watch going on watch at eight bells. Then clean the mess kits and run the eight bell breakfast for the watch going below. After breakfast, scrub out the fo'c's'les of the now watch on deck. Next came smoko, usually followed by Master's inspection before the seven bell and eight bell dinners had to be run. In the afternoon, the chartroom and Bosun's quarters were scrubbed out. Then afternoon smoko and if you had time, try and do something about the bathroom up forward before both watches had tea together at five p. m. We struck peggying for one week in six but with the threat of getting a second week if the Master was not satisfied, the standard was naturally good!

While it has always been my wish to be a fair weather sailor, I fear it has not always worked out that way. When south of Tonga on our return from San Francisco to Wellington, we were caught in a tropical cyclone with hurricane strength winds well above force 12 on the Beaufort Scale. We had dropped all the lighter fore and aft sails and clewed up the mainsail and crojack. Then I recall hearing the Old Man tell the Third Mate to ease her to lower top gallants, before my being sent aloft with two other boys to furl the fore royal.

Our weight on the foot-ropes steadied the yard which was literally jumping. We were able to save all the sail except a couple of cloths, while those who followed us saved the fore upper top gallant sail.

Moving down to the lower top gallant yard, we found the sail had completely blown out, only the bolt ropes remaining. Making our way down to the top, we looked aft and saw that everything had blown to ribbons. Even the new heavy fore-sail had blown to shreds, its two and a half inch wire sheets and tacks twisted up like tangled string. We were ordered down on deck, not that we could do anything aloft. The ship was now careering along and rolling heavily to port, with only the inner and outer jibs along with the fore and main topmast staysails remaining. It was decided to ease her further by taking in the main topmast staysail, so we bent on to the downhaul, ready to drag it down, but once the halliard was eased it blew to shreds.

Daylight revealed a shambles; a list to port through the cargo shifting, or rather, compacting to the lee side of the holds. One 5" wire backstay carried away and one wartime life-raft washed off the poop.

Again on a later voyage, we were running before it under fore topmast staysail and three lower topsails. It was decided to ease her further and spilling lines were rigged on the main and mizzen lower topsails. In spite of our efforts on spilling lines and buntlines, once the sheets were eased, both blew out. This was interesting in that with the main, a comparatively new machine sewn sail, the stitching went and the cloths held, whereas with the old hand sewn mizzen, the cloths went but the seams held.

Perhaps one of the worst nights was making the Straits of Juan de Fuca. It was as cold as charity taking in the mizzen upper topsail - when hands froze so we felt nothing. Then as we worked, they thawed a little so we again felt the freezing cold. As we were doing this, the ship was racing along and the Mate decided to ease her further by breaking the gear on the main upper topsail and letting the halyard go. As the yard came down, the sail banged and flapped like a giant towel being vigorously flicked. We watched from our vantage point expecting the sail to blow out any second, but no, the watch below turned out and secured it, though with the severe cold, some of the lads were a little groggy when they got down on deck again!

My eighteen months and three voyages aboard Pamir is a time I shall never forget. I regret none of it and I am proud to have had the opportunity to gain a brief insight into life at sea at the end of this very note worthy era.

Lindsay Davis, Master Mariner.

Sydney. 5th May, 2001.



Wreck of the Hesperus

It was the schooner Hesperus, that sailed the wintry sea; and the skipper had taken his little daughter to bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy flax, her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That aye in the month of May.

The skipper he stood by the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow. The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailor,
Had sailed the Spanish Main,
"I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane".

"Last night the moon had a golden ring,
And tonight no moon we see!"
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the North-east,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

"Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,
And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale
That ever wind did blow."

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

Her ranting shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Oo! ho! the breakers roared!

"O father! I hear the church bells ring,
Oh, say, what may it be?"
"Tis a fog-bell on a rock bound coast!"
And he steered for the open sea.

"O father! I hear the sound of guns;
Oh, say what may it be?"
"Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea!"

'O father! I see a gleaming light.
 Oh say, what may it be?"
 But the father answered never a word,
 A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
 With his face turned to the skies,
 The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
 On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
 That saved she might be;
 And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave,
 On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
 Through the whistling sleet and snow,
 Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
 Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between
 A sound came from the land;
 It was the sound of the trampling surf,
 On the rocks and hard sea- sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
 She drifted a dreary wreck,
 And a whooping billow swept the crew
 Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
 Looked soft as carded wool,
 But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
 Like the horns of an angry bull.

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
 A fisherman stood aghast,
 To see the form of a maiden fair,
 Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
 The salt tears in her eyes;
 And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
 On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
 In the midnight and the snow!
 Christ, save us all from a death like this,
 On the reef of Norman's Woe.

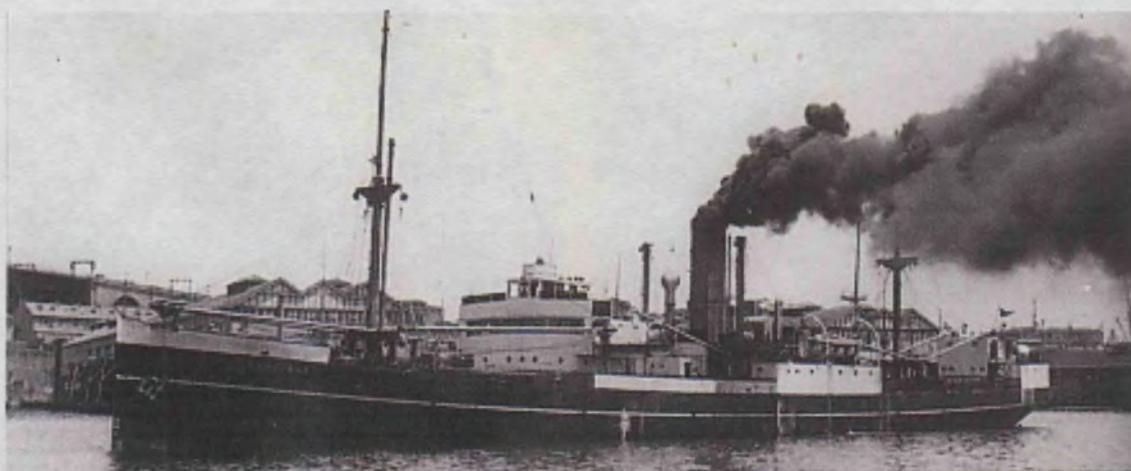
By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

The Coaster

She is only a coaster - how oft do we say,
 A dirty wee packet, the scorn of the spray.
 Drab and bedraggled, dismiss her from mind
 We place no importance to ships of her kind.
 But tarry a moment, let's ponder again,
 Lest thoughts that are idle bring sorrow and pain,
 Think not as those others who think not as you,
 She's a ship of all ships to her master and crew.
 She's not built for grandeur, nor comfort or grace,
 She's no model of splendour, no greyhound for pace,
 No shining buttons, no starch or gold braid.

A plain little vessel devoted to trade.
 Unspoilt with false beauty, unselfish yet proud,
 The hand-maid of commerce with merchandise bowed.
 Scorning foul weather, afraid of no sea,
 Her motto is service, for you and for me.
 So when in the night-time you hear the wind blow,
 Snug at your hearth side, with embers aglow,
 Think of the sailor and murmur a prayer,
 The little brave coaster, the tempest who dare.

How times have changed. James Patrick's SS Carlisle, at LOA of 300 feet; she was the average size ship serving the Australian coastal trade during the 1920 to 1950 era. Coal was still the main fuel used, in this case Miller's best Airfield brand.



Fare-ye-well, ye blue-eyed damsels
Give three cheers for Aussie beer.

4 Goodbye, Downs, we're bound to leave you
Haul the tow-rope all inboard,
We will leave old England sternwards
Clap all sail we can afford.

5 Mister, set yer stuns'ls quickly
Set all flyin' kites ye can
Molly-hawks and chickens meet us
Souls of long-drowned sailor men.

Drunken Sailor

1 What shall we do with the drunken sailor
(3 times)
Early in the morning.
Hoo-rah and up she rises (3times)
Early in the morning.

2 Put him in the long-boat and make him bale her (3 times)
Hoo-rah and up she rises (3 times)
Early in the morning.

3 Put him in the long-boat till he gets sober (3 time)

4 Hoo-rah and up she rises (3 times)
Early in the morning.

Shenandoah

1 Shenandoah I love your daughter,
Away you rolling river
Shenandoah I love your daughter,
Haul away we're bound to go
'Cross the wide Missouri.

2 Shenandoah I long to see you,
Away you rolling river

Shenandoah I long to see you,
Haul away we're bound to go
'Cross the wide Missouri.

3 Shenandoah I'm bound to leave you,
 Away you rolling river
 Shenandoah I'm bound to leave you,
Haul away we're bound to go
'Cross the wide Missouri.

4 'Till the day I die I'll love you
 Away you rolling river
 Shenandoah I'll love you ever,
Haul away we're bound to go
'Cross the wide Missouri.

Blow the Man Down

1 Oh, as I was a-rollin down Paradise Street,
oh away hay, blow the man down.
 A fat Irish bobby I chanced for a meet
ooh gimme some time to blow the man down

2 They gave me six months, boys, in Liverpool town
oh away hay, blow the man down
 For bootin and kickin an blowin him down
*ooh gimme some time to blow the **man** down.*

3 Now all ye young fellars what follows the sea
oh away hay, blow the man down.
 Put yer vents on the wind an listen to me
ooh gimme some time to blow the man down



The Outing is almost over for another year as we set a course down the hill from HMAS Watson along Marine Parade at Watson's Bay and board the 'Steamer' to return to Circular Quay, ETA 1700 hours. The patrons at the well known Doyle's fish shop wonder each year just who are all these debonair well dressed gentlemen!! Striding out behind Andy Daly and Mark Davis - Sid Cheeseman and Lindsay Davis.

Once back aboard the "steamer" some members have the foresight to focus on a quiet spot to further their fellowship while others prefer the fresh air on the after deck.



CHAPTER 10

One Hundred Years After The S.S. Miowere

On the 19th of March 2002, the Annual General Meeting of the League was conducted at the N.S.W. Sports Club in Hunter Street at which the following personnel were elected to office:

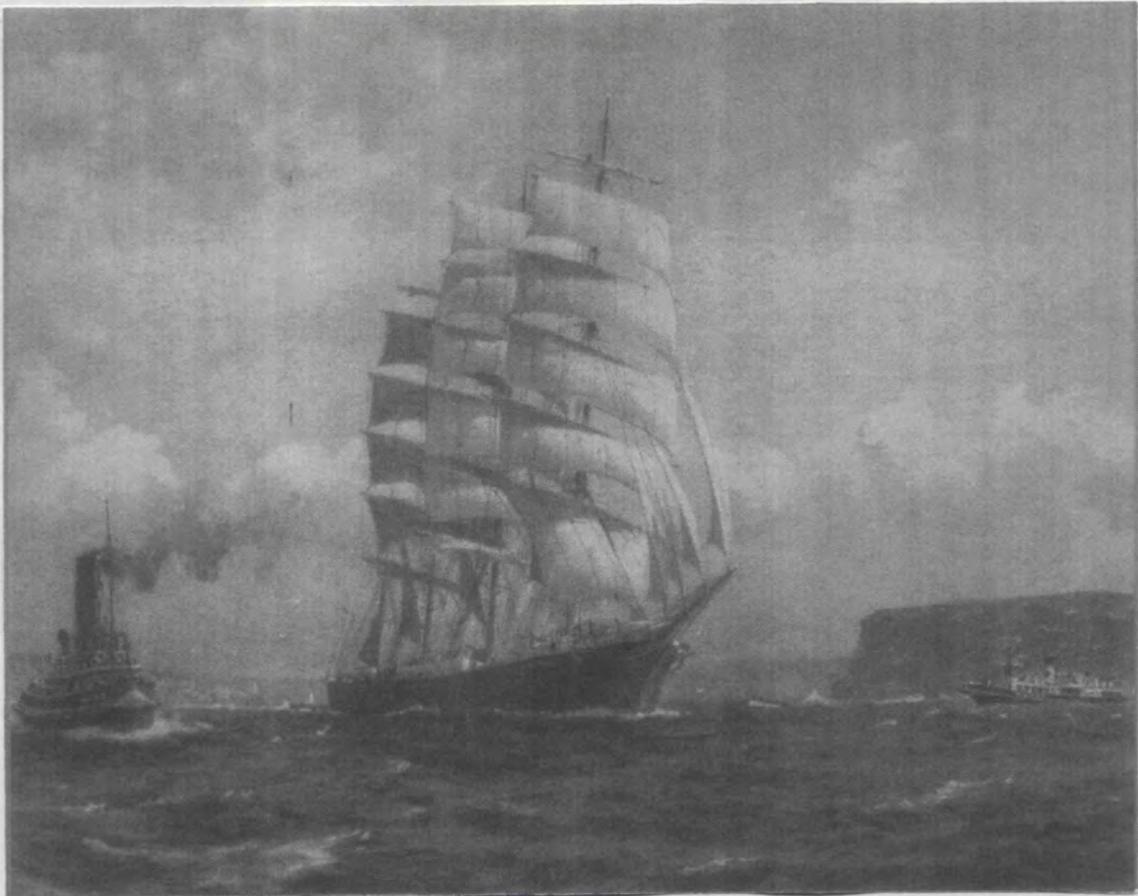
President	Capt. AA. Tait OAM (3 year term)
Senior Vice President	Capt. K.J. Ross
Vice President	Capt. M Skipper
Vice President	Capt. C.G. Cocksedge
Councillor	Capt. L.M. Hinchliffe DSC RAN (Rtd)
Councillor	Capt. A. Ulrichsen
Councillor	Capt. J.S. Steuart
Councillor	Capt. E.T. Liley
Councillor	Cmdr. R. Cameron RAN (Rtd)
Councillor	Capt. L Davis
Councillor	Capt. G. Walker
Councillor	Capt. J. Lunn
Councillor	Mr. I. Cooper
Councillor	Capt. M. Bertram
Secretary/Treasurer	Major S.H. Cheeseman AM JP
Honorary Historian	Capt. E.T. Liley
Honorary Auditor	Colonel K.C. Tunbridge

It was at this A.G.M. that Major Sid Cheeseman was unanimously elected a Life Member of the League of Ancient Mariners for his wholehearted and dedicated service. The Council is sure that all three hundred and thirty four members currently listed on the roll will wholeheartedly endorse and support this honour.

The magnificent and graceful Wandering Albatross is the largest flying bird alive today. With a wingspan of nearly 3 1/2 metres, it soars and glides over the Southern Ocean for days on end before returning to land. He is known to all who turn their back to the land and who go down to the sea and to their ships to sail those same waters which that remarkable watch-keeper patrols so relentlessly throughout all weather and all time.

The Wandering Albatross was chosen long ago as the emblem on our badges and on our ties. With white wings outstretched on a royal blue background of ocean, the Wandering Albatross is a very worthy centrepiece on our tie, on our badge and on our new pennant, the

Pennant of The League of Ancient Mariners.



CHAPTER 11

List of Members

Founding Members and Other Early Members of the League of Ancient Mariners of N.S.W.

- Captain A.W. Pearse - Joint Founder 1903
 Dr.R. Scot Skirving - Joint Founder 1903
 Captain S.G. Green - President 1903
 Captain A. J Webber - Secretary 1903
 Captain F.H.C. Brownlow
 Captain J.H. Watson - Who listed in records retained in archives held in Mitchell Library from 1906 to 1917, some names of “ those on deck and those who have turned in”.
- Captain Arkley Smith
 Captain Murdoch Mc.Leod
 Captain A. Kethel MLC
 Captain J.R. Stringer
 Captain Thompson - the Examiner of Masters and Mates.
 Captain J.M. Banks – who always attended Outings and Smokos in the company of his old friend
 Captain Frederick Bracegirdle – who retired from the position of Assistant Harbour Master, Sydney, in 1901. He had earlier served in the Clarence and Richmond River Company, one of the fore runners to the North Coast Company and prior to that saw service in British Companies under sail. At his passing in 1916 it was recorded that the age of these two veteran Shipmasters totalled 171 years

The records in the Library also included a newspaper photo of the Outing of the 17th February, 1913 listing the following : -

Captains Flowerdale, A.Harding, Mark Breech, John Storey, Moran, J.H. Banks (83), T.S. Brown, J.L. Parker, Tom Pain, Cromarty, Jack (80), Alex Kethel MLC (80), A.W. Jack (84), Mr Johnson the sole survivor of the “Dunbar” wrecked at South Head Captains Charles Napier (80), F. Sheed (80) and South.

No doubt there were other members of The League of Ancient Mariners of N.S.W. in those early days but records of any certainty preclude their inclusion.

The
League of Ancient Mariners
 of New South Wales



Executive and Members
 1953

The League of Ancient Mariners
 of New South Wales.

RULES

The Association shall be called the LEAGUE OF ANCIENT MARINERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

OBJECT.—The object of the League shall be to promote and encourage the social intercourse and welfare of its members, to cultivate a knowledge of the usages of the interests of the Merchant Service, to preserve its traditions, songs, and all matters relating to its past and present conditions.

MEMBERSHIP.—All Certificated Masters and Deck Officers of the Sea Services of the British Empire shall be eligible for full membership of the League.

Associate and Honorary Members may be admitted at the discretion of the Council of the League, such membership permitting them all privileges of full members, excepting that they are not entitled to a vote, or a seat upon the Council.

All intending members must be nominated by two financial members of the League, and elected at a meeting of the Council.

COUNCIL.—The Council shall consist of a President, not less than two Vice-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer, and ten financial members of the League. Five members to form a quorum. The seat of any member who shall be absent from two consecutive meetings of the Council without leave may be declared vacant, and the vacancy filled by the Council.

ANNUAL MEETING.—The Annual General Meeting of the League shall be held in February of

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each year, to be convened by circular, setting forth the nature of the business, presentation of Annual Report and Balance Sheet, and Election of office-bearers. Retiring office-bearers are eligible for re-election.

GENERAL.—Once in each year at a time to be arranged by the Council, a Harbour Outing shall be held at which all financial members of the League shall be entitled to attend. Other social gatherings may be arranged by the Council.

The Council may at any time convene a meeting of the League, to consider any matter concerning the welfare of the League.

SUBSCRIPTION.—The Subscription to the League shall be 40/- per annum for Full Members, and 50/- per annum for Associate Members, payable in the month of January-February in each year. Any Member elected to the League after the month of June in any year shall pay half the annual subscription for the balance of the year.

Members in arrears for period of twelve months may be struck off the roll of membership at the discretion of the Council.

Nothing in these Rules shall alter the status of any members of the League whose names are on the Roll of Membership at this date.

Passed at the Annual General Meeting of the League, held at the Chamber of Commerce, Sydney, on 26th February, 1953.

All correspondence, subscriptions, &c., should be addressed to the Secretary:—

C. C. CROFT,

26/30 Clarence Street, Sydney.

Telephone: BX 3101 G.P.O. Box 3974

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The League of Ancient Mariners of New South Wales.

Patron:

The Governor-General, His Excellency
The Right Honourable Sir William McKell, G.C.M.G.

EXECUTIVE:

President: Capt. A. J. Aucher
Past Presidents: Capt. Sir Geoffrey Brookes, Kt.
Capt. F. Murchison

Vice-Presidents: Capt. Sir James Bisset, Kt.,
C.B.E., R.D., R.N.R., LL.D. (Cantab.)
Capt. Sir Geoffrey Brookes, Kt.

Capt. G. W. Airey	Capt. G. F. Langford
Capt. T. Carson	Capt. R. W. Miller
Capt. D. Craven	Capt. F. Murchison
Capt. P. Everitt	Capt. F. Mortleman
Capt. O. A. Godwin	Capt. J. H. Simpson
Capt. G. I. Griffiths	Capt. G. A. Whitton
Capt. J. J. Hughes	Capt. G. Worthington
Capt. A. E. Jolly	

Council:

Capt. E. H. Bullman	Capt. F. G. Gambrill, O.B.E.
Capt. R. J. B. Dunning	Capt. L. J. F. Muncey
Capt. R. C. Dene	Capt. E. W. J. Nursey
Capt. A. S. Fenton	Capt. A. G. Rose
Capt. S. G. Ferguson	

Hon. Chaplain: Rev. Colin Craven-Sands, Ex. R.A.N.

Hon. Medical Officer: Dr. R. Scot-Skirving.

Hon. Asst. Medical Officer:

Major-General W. L'estrangle Eames

Hon. Auditor: Mr. R. H. Goddard.

Hon. Solicitor: Mr. E. E. J. Ford.

Hon. Musical Director: Capt. David Craven.

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer:

Capt. E. W. Livingston.

Asst. Secretary: Mr. C. C. Croft.

Page Three

Members—Continued.

Capt. F. Carter	Mr. J. H. Donohue
Mr. George Carter	Mr. L. Douglas
Capt. L. Chambers	Mr. T. C. L. Douglas
Capt. E. A. Chapman	Mr. W. A. R. Douglas
Mr. Neville Chatfield	Mr. L. S. Doyle
Mr. R. T. Chatfield	Mr. E. S. Draper
Capt. Terence Christy	Capt. F. C. Drewett,
Capt. G. D. Clark	R.N.R.
Capt. E. F. Clay	Mr. H. M. Driscoll
Mr. J. S. Cockle	Capt. Andrew Duff
Mr. J. S. Cockshaw	Capt. R. J. B. Dunning
Mr. S. J. Coggins	Maj.-Gen. W. L'estrangle
Capt. John N. Collins	Eames (Ret.)
Mr. A. Corrigan	Brig. Henry H. Edwards,
Mr. W. A. L. Court	C.B.E., E.D.
Mr. F. Cox	Mr. W. Eskdale
Mr. W. T. Craig	Capt. P. Everitt
Capt. David Craven	
Capt. R. H. Creasey	Mr. M. E. Farley
Comdr. Herbert V. Creer	Rear-Admiral H. B. Farn-
Capt. Reg. Creer	comb, C.B., D.S.O., M.V.O.
Capt. R. T. Crowe	Capt. H. N. Farr
Mr. Leonard S. Crowle	Mr. R. H. Fearnside
	Mr. C. H. Fearon
Mr. J. W. F. Daly	Capt. P. C. Feary
Commander Stanley	Mr. Douglas Fell
Darling	Capt. C. J. Feller
Capt. H. C. Davies	Mr. E. H. Felton
Mr. Peter W. L. Davies	Capt. A. S. Fenton
Capt. W. de Burgh	Capt. S. G. Ferguson
Thomas, R.D.	Mr. John B. Ferris
Air Commodore H. F.	Capt. Arthur E. Fishwick
De la Rue, C.B.E., D.F.C.	Capt. A. S. Fitch
Capt. R. C. Dene	Sub-Lieut. (S.R.) A. M.
Mr. N. Dewhurst	R. Fitzhardinge
Mr. D. S. Dind	(R.A.N.V.R.)
Capt. K. Ditcham	Mr. B. Foggon
Capt. P. R. Dixon	

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The League of Ancient Mariners of New South Wales.

MEMBERS—1953

Mr. C. R. Abbott.	Capt. A. P. Billington
Mr. H. O. Abbott	Mr. A. Birch
Mr. W. E. Adams	Capt. Sir James Bisset,
Mr. G. L. Aicken	Kt., C.B.E., R.D., R.N.R.,
Capt. G. W. Airey	LL.D. (Cantab.)
Mr. H. G. Alderson	Capt. R. G. Blayney
Mr. D. R. A. Alexander	Mr. Geo. W. Bonsall
Mr. J. Allcot	Mr. J. M. C. Boulton
Engineer Capt. E. R.	Mr. M. Bowers
Amor, R.N. (Ret.)	Capt. J. C. P. Boyle
Mr. Scott Anderson	Capt. Geo. W. Brandis
Capt. W. Andrews	Mr. C. A. Bray
Capt. Geo. E. Appelbe	Mr. J. Breen
Capt. J. Armitage	Mr. Arthur E. Brett
Capt. H. Armstrong	Mr. Morton Brewster
Mr. Walter R. Armstrong	Capt. Sir Geoffrey
Lt.-Commander G. J. A.	Brookes, Kt.
Ashley-Brown	Mr. Eric H. Browne
Capt. P. G. Ashton	Mr. Ronald C. Brown
Capt. A. J. Aucher	Mr. I. Buchanan
Mr. A. L. Aucher	Capt. E. H. Bullman
Mr. Arthur T. Aucher	Capt. John W. Burch
Capt. F. C. Avdall	Mr. I. G. M. Burgess
	Mr. Lloyd T. Burgess
Capt. Cyril H. Batty	(LIEUT., R.A.N.R.)
Mr. D. H. Baxter	Mr. Wm. Butcher
Dr. Francis W. Bayldon,	Capt. E. G. F. Butler
M.B.E., V.R.O., M.B., B.S.	
Capt. W. W. Beale	
Mr. Knowles A. Bennett	Mr. George Campbell
Capt. W. L. Bennett	Mr. T. D. Carroll
Capt. R. L. Bewick	Capt. Tom Carson

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Members—Continued.

Capt. D. J. Ford	Mr. E. Griffiths
Mr. E. E. J. Ford	Capt. G. I. Griffiths
Mr. Harvey C. Ford	Commander H. Guest
Mr. R. S. Forrest	Mr. Vernon Guest
Mr. R. V. Frazer	
Capt. G. R. Free	Eng.-Commander H. C.
Capt. J. D. Frew	Hack
Commander C. D. Friend	Mr. T. A. Hagley
R.A.N.	Mr. C. R. Hall
Mr. Harry Friend	Capt. Geo. Halliday
Mr. Charles Frolick	Mr. C. Hard
(Lieut., R.A.N. — Ret.)	Mr. Roland S. Harris
Capt. C. G. Fry	Mr. E. Hart
	Capt. R. G. Hart
Capt. C. F. Gaby	Capt. F. G. Harvey
Capt. J. Gaby	Capt. H. J. Harvey
Lieut.-Commander	Capt. S. J. G. Harvey
D'Arcy T. Gale	Capt. J. F. Headrick
Capt. F. C. Gambrill.	Mr. W. D. Heighway
O.B.E.	Capt. C. W. T.
Capt. A. C. Gardner	Henderson
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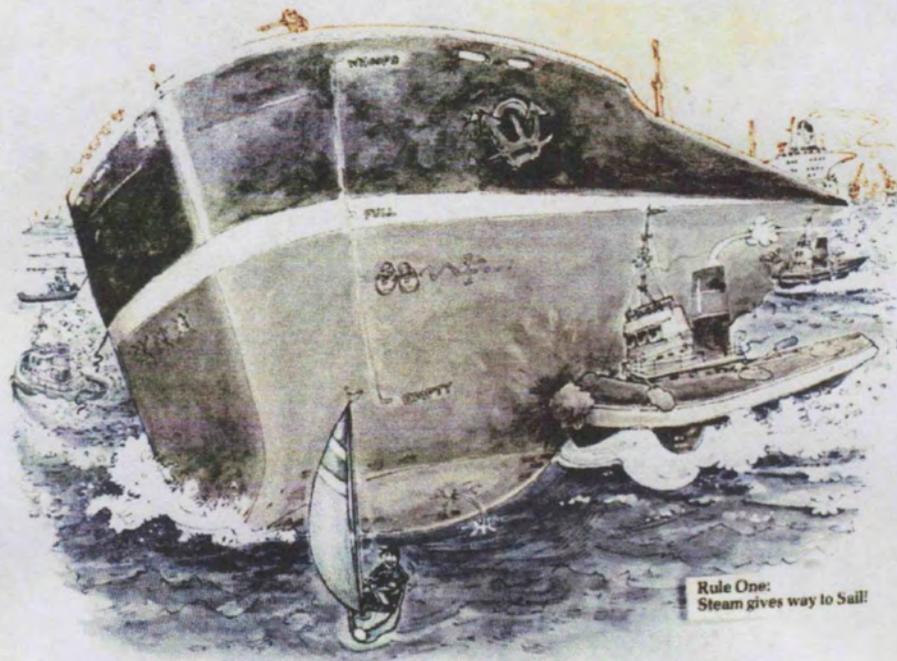
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The League of Ancient Mariners of New South Wales celebrates its centenary in 2003. This book is a record and celebration of The League. This aspect of our heritage makes it all the more worthy in preserving as much as is possible of a proud identity.