



The Ancient Mariner

NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF ANCIENT MARINERS OF NSW Inc. Vol.1 No.4

League of Ancient Mariners 2026 Annual General Meeting.

Notice to All Members

The Annual General Meeting of the League will be held at **10:00 Thursday 19th March 2026** at **Occidental Hotel Wynyard 2nd Floor 43 York Street Sydney.**

The Agenda will be posted on the website or available from our Secretary at (loam.secretary@gmail.com). Members can also apply for proxy vote from our secretary, which must be received before start of meeting.

News from 2025 Annual General Meeting

The AGM approved the minutes of 2024 AGM of 26th March 2024 as a true record and received and adopted the Financial Report for financial year ending 31.12.2025.

Lt Col K.C. Tunbridge RAEME RTD who has acted as Honorary Auditor for the passed 25 years has resigned. The Meeting thanked Kerry for his long service and wished him well in the future. Kerry was awarded Life Membership with Gold Badge in 2018 for his long service to the League.

Jennie Miles has accepted the position as Honorary Auditor and was endorsed by the AGM.

2025 Annual Muster [Luncheon]

The **2025** Annual Luncheon Cruise was held once again afloat on the m.v. Captain Cook III, and after a week of showers the day dawned fine & clear, and members and guest enjoyed another great day on Sydney Harbour. Mister Chris Hickey our guest Speaker gave an interesting talk on the construction of the new Fish Markets, although he would not be drawn on the date of opening.

Guest John Jowett won the Starlight Dinner Cruise, and the Hop On Hop Off cruises were won by Pat Keane, Sir Peter Cosgrove and Roger Hinton.

Certificates of Membership were presented to Captain Welwyn Gamble, Captain Lindsay Cavanagh and Captain Rob Anderson.

2026 Annual Muster [Luncheon]

We have booked Captain Cook Cruises' m.v. **Captain Cook III** again for our **2026 Annual Muster, on the 2nd May 2026 boarding at 1130 to sail at 1200 and returning to Circular Quay at 1630**. We will have this vessel entirely for our own function thus enabling members to socialize on the upper deck during the cruise. We have invited Mr Brett Smith as Keynote Speaker this year. Due to size of the ferry, our numbers will again be capped at 140. We have, however, been able to keep ticket prices the same as last year, at \$125 for members and \$145 for visitors. We will be using **Trybooking** for members to pay Annual Subscriptions and Luncheon Cruise Fees. ***We request that all bookings be made via Trybooking and please note that we can no longer accept cheques.***

Brett Smith Guest Speaker – Sydney Heritage Fleet



Brett Smith is a maritime operations leader with more than 30 years' experience across vessel command, port operations, and maritime heritage management. Beginning as a volunteer with the Sydney Heritage Fleet at age 12, he has built a lifelong career on the water, progressing from volunteer crew to senior operational roles throughout Australia's maritime sector.

He currently serves as a Vessel Traffic Services Operator and relief Duty VTS Manager with the Port Authority of NSW, coordinating safe vessel movements in Sydney Harbour and Port Botany. His career also includes senior leadership with Transdev Brisbane Ferries, consultancy work in maritime operations and compliance, and extensive command experience as a Ferry Master, Training Master, and Tug and Launch Master.

A long-standing leader within the Sydney Heritage Fleet, Brett is currently the organisation's Vice President, Vice Commodore, and Executive Master of SS John Oxley. He plays a central

role in restoration and safety management initiatives that support the preservation and operation of Australia's historic vessels.

At this year's Ancient Mariners Lunch, Brett will share the story of the Sydney Heritage Fleet and its 60-year journey to build an internationally recognised centre of maritime excellence—a "museum that goes to sea." He will explore the challenges of maintaining the skills required to operate late-19th and early-20th-century technology in 2026, and the social value that keeping these vessels operational continues to deliver to the community.

Smoko at the Greenwood Hotel

At the request of many members, during our traditional after cruise debriefings at several watering holes around Circular Quay after our last couple of annual outings, the committee has investigated holding an informal lunch get together in the second half of this year, and after much investigation The Greenwood Hotel North Sydney was selected. This location was chosen as being situated close to various transport options and good facilities. The date for this event has been booked for 16th October 2026, to be confirmed at our annual cruise.



admin@ossa.org.au

OSSA Forms new Scholarship Fund to support seafarer Training

OSSA has taken a proactive step to address the well-recognised challenge – a shortage of experienced seafarers and difficulty of attracting new entrants to the profession. The trust has been established to support young Australians pursuing a professional seagoing career. The Trust known as the OSSA Scholarship Fund has been registered as a Charitable Organisation with the Australian Tax Office.

The Trust has been created to provide both financial assistance and structured mentoring to trainees working towards maritime qualifications.

OSSA is a not-for profit organisation that is committed to strengthening Australia's maritime capability, that includes an extensive outreach through its nationwide school's program, which introduces secondary students to the varied and rewarding careers available in the maritime sector.

For more information or to discuss supporting the Scholarship Fund with a donation, or becoming a member then contact OSSA at admin@ossa.org.au or visit the website <https://offshorespecialistships.com/>

Merchant Navy Day - 3rd September 2025



Lost Ones

They live in the curl of the breaking wave,
They sing when the sea winds blow,
They lay not confined in a land locked grave,
Nor in dim dark depths below.

Do you hear them laugh in the ripple tide?
Call free in the ocean breeze?
Do you see them soar where great gulls glide?
At peace with the fearsome seas?

They live still in the hearts of those who wait
Held strong in the bonds of love
“Til their souls unite and congregate
In God’s great harbour above

Noel Smith
Merchant Seaman

The annual Merchant Navy Day Memorial service was held at the Mosman Art Gallery, with a large turn out and a large number of associated organisations including the League laid wreaths in commemoration of those lost at sea.

Mosman High School Captains, Katie McPherson and Rafferty Laight gave a thoughtful presentation on the Australian Merchant Navy and its current sad state.

Thank you to Merrill Barker Merchant Navy Chapter Co-ordinator RSL and Mosman Council for organising this service.

National Merchant Navy Memorial Kings Park Canberra

The 35th Annual Commemoration was held on 19th October at the National Merchant Navy War Memorial in Kings Park Canberra. There was a large turnout once again, and the Guest Speaker was Andrew Keffort PSM Deputy Secretary, Policy & Programs Department of Veteran Affairs,

The League was represented by Committeeman Mr John Harding who laid a wreath.

Captain Michael Kelly OAM, Roll No.434

Captain Michael Kelly, a Sydney Marine Pilot was the winner of the Annual DCN Seafarers Welfare Award for his unwavering dedication to the wellbeing and support of seafarers. Michael's activities include giving continuous support to the efforts of Sister Mary, including packing and delivering thousands of Christmases hampers every year to visiting seafarers and suppling them with Opal Cards.



DCN Photo

Captain Mike Kelly with Amy Beaumont, Group Executive People, Environment & Legal Port Authority of NSW

Michael Kelly was also awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2026 Australia Day Honours List for service to seafarers welfare, and to the maritime transport industry.

Memorabilia

A number of members have contacted the League with regard to their memorabilia and personal papers, looking for a safe place to lodge them. A number of organisations were approached. Below is a reply from the Australian National Maritime Museum which I suspect would apply to all museums.

“The answer really depends on many factors that determine the objects’ significance – these include provenance, rarity and storytelling potential. Objects that don’t fit into the collecting policies of museums, galleries and archives might be of great interest to private collectors. We do take object donations for the National Maritime Collection. For tracking purposes, all donation offers must be sent to: collections@sea.museum

Request received via other means may be missed or delayed.

To help us assess alignment with our Collection Development Policy and decrease processing times, we ask that the following information be included:

- What do you want to donate and Why is it important?
- How big/heavy is it, what is it made of, and how did you come to own it? Eg: is it a piece of family history, an object you collected etc.
- Photographs of the object.

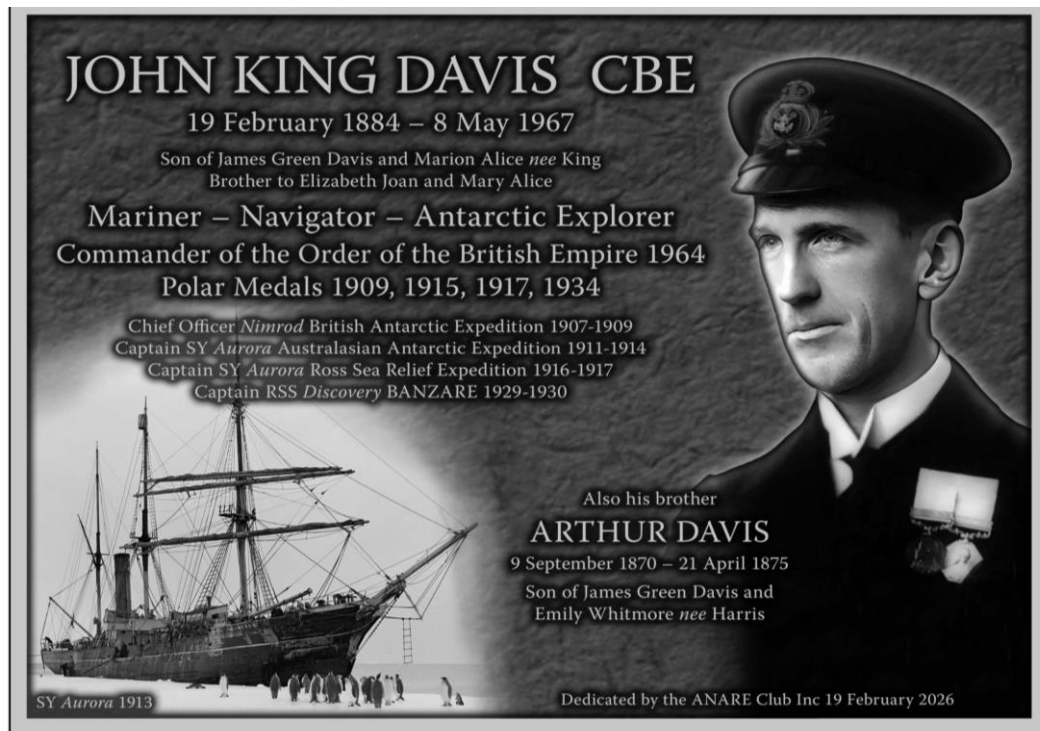
Then an auto response is generated.

The process of assessment is extensive and may take some time.

Our LOAM committee is continuing to seek other solutions to this request from members.

Forgotten Ancient Mariners Remembered

Captain John King Davis



The plaque above is to be installed at the unmarked grave of Captain John King Davis in Melbourne General Cemetery on the occasion of the anniversary of his birth on 19th February 2026.

John King Davis was an English born Australian navigator and explorer, notable for his work in Antarctic waters, as well as establishing meteorological stations on Macquarie Island in the subantarctic and Willis Island In the Coral Sea.

Davis was Chief Officer of the Nimrod on Ernest Shackleton's 1908-1909 Antarctic Expedition and Captain of the Aurora and second in command of Douglas Mawson's 1911-1914 Australasian Antarctic Expedition. He was Captain of the Discovery during Mawson's 1929-1930 British Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition. During First World War he commanded HMAT Boonah carrying troops and horses to Egypt and England. Davis served as Commonwealth Director of Navigation from 1920 to 1949. The Davis research Station in Antarctica and the Davis Sea were named after him. The ANARE Club, (an organisation of people who have worked in Antarctic or have an interest in the Polar Regions), was informed about his unmarked grave in 2023 and set about raising funds to rectify this oversight.

William Henry Belpitt MOH



William Henry Belpitt was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, which is the highest US military decoration for gallantry in 1884. On 7 October of that year, he was captain of the Afterguard on the USS Monocacy at Fuzhou, China, and jumped overboard to rescue a Chinese man whose canoe had capsized. For many years William Belpitt had laid in an unmarked Grave at the Rookwood General Cemetery in Sydney. The United States Veterans Administration provided a bronze memorial plaque to his descendants, but they were unable to meet the substantial cost of mounting the plaque on a granite base at the gravesite. William Belpitt has a great granddaughter Mrs Pam Lewis who resides in Western Australia who set up a Go Fund Me page, and with the assistance of the American Legion in Sydney, the funds were raised and the plaque, affixed to the base, was dedicated Saturday 11th October 2025.

William Belpitt was born in Ryde NSW on the 3rd May 1860, as his step father was away at sea, he and his brothers got up to mischief and ended up on a training ship **Vernon** in Sydney Harbour, after completing his "training", he headed off to Fremantle where he again ran foul of the law and on release shipped out to England joining the Royal Navy. Not finding this to his liking, he fled to New York in 1881 where he joined the United States Navy, sailing to the Chinese coast as a seaman on **USS Monocacy**, gaining promotion to Petty Officer and Captain of the Afterguard.

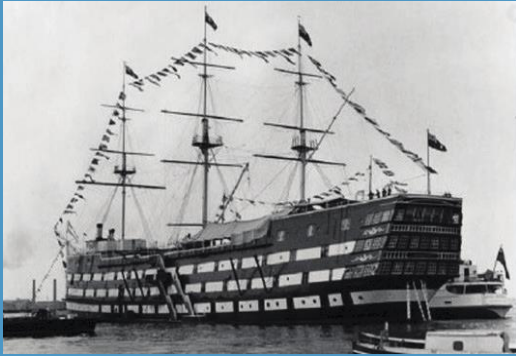
After completing service in the USN he returned to Sydney and married Minnie Gould and had a son Charles.

William served as Harbour Master – Harbour & Rivers and later served on the nautical training ship **Sobraon**, writings letters about the brutality and abuses on the vessel.

William Henry Belpitt volunteered to serve in the Boer War, seeing service in the Imperial Hospital Corps, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and South African Light Horse earning the Queens South Africa Medal with three clasps. On his return Sydney he became a fireman, but his health was in decline and he passed away on 29th November 1912 whilst a patient at the Rookwood Infirm Asylum and was buried in an unmarked grave.

From Icebergs to Crocodiles

by Captain Peter Hay
Ancient Mariner Roll No.146



HMS 'Worcester' where Peter Hay started his career.

As a bachelor Peter worked for six different shipping lines on ships registered on four continents. Highlights included eighteen continuous months in the Antarctic and a year running 500 miles up the, then uncharted, Fly River in PNG. Marriage meant settling down, and he joined the Australian National Line as 4/Officer, the rank he had been fourteen years previously, and started the long slog back to command. His final twenty years were spent piloting more than 1,000 ships through the Great Barrier Reef.



Peter and Jean Hay at 'The Last Hurrah', in 2018, commemorating 50 years since the 'Worcester' closed. Held at the Hall of the Inner Temple in London, former cadets from around the world attended.



FROM ICEBERGS TO CROCODILES A Navigator in the '50s and '60s
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Copies of Peter's book may be obtained online from Dymocks and Amazon.

Members who have crossed the bar in 2025

Captain A.P Davey Roll No.77 – 2024

Captain Michael Edward Power Roll No.239 – 7th December 2024

Captain Michael Williams FNI Roll No.334 - 1st February 2025

Captain Barclay Proctor Ross FNI Roll No.261 - 19th February 2025

Captain Angus Donald Bethune Capron Roll No.46 – 3rd March 2025

Mr Gerard Joseph Bourke Roll No.24 - 4th March 2025

RADM Anthony Lancaster Hunt AO Roll No.344 - 5th March 2025

Captain Lindsay Davis Roll No.85 – 08th April 2025

Mr Hugh Keith Treharne Roll No.295 -24th June 2025

Captain Jonathon David Mann Roll No.11 – 27th August 2025

Biographical Details are published on the Crossed the Bar Section of our Website

Members who have retired for Health or Other Reasons in 2025

Captain Kushlan Arthureliya Roll No.369

Captain Tony Keane Roll No.165

Captain Barry Keeble MNI Roll No.166

New Members for 2025

Mr Lindsay Cavanagh Roll No.468

Mr Neal Aitken Roll No.469

Captain Peter Brownette Roll No.470

Mr John Champion Roll No.471

Mr Matthew Dayhew Roll No.472

Captain Brett Derwin Roll No.473

Captain Llewyn [George] Gow Roll No.474

Mr Nigel Holt Roll No.475

Captain Charles Johnston Roll No.476

Captain Rod Quinn Roll No.477

Mr Craig White Roll No.478

Mr Timothy Winship Roll No.479

Mr Phillip Trefry Roll No.480

Mr Leslie Quinn Roll No.481

Mr John Weekes Roll No.482

Member Diary

Captain Allan Porter our web master endeavours to keep our web site up to date so members can see at a glance - upcoming social and professional events, but requires member input to keep it updated. Note web address on front page.

Dates to Remember (Check Member Diary for updates)

19th March 2026 Annual General Meeting of League of Ancient Mariners NSW Inc.

19th April 1100 Rookwood Cemetery 62nd Annual Merchant Navy Service

25th April ANZAC Day

2nd May League of Ancient Mariners Annual Cruise (1st Saturday)

17th May USASS Honouring Merchant Mariners of WWII 1100 L'Aqua Cockle Bay Wharf

24th May 84th Anniversary US Army Small Ships Section Association Reunion.

1130 Harvey Bay RSL Club Pialba QLD.

6th June Newcastle Merchant Navy Memorial Service (1st Saturday)

25th June International Day of the Seafarer.

15th August Victory in the Pacific Day

3rd September Merchant Navy Day Service 1100 at Mosman War Memorial

6th September Battle for Australia Day

25th September World Maritime Day

18th October National Merchant Navy War Memorial Commemoration Canberra

11th November Remembrance Day

6th December Memorial Service for Merchant Mariners Lighthouse Reserve Norah Head
(1st Saturday)

The League has moved to an email based communications system to members, and to be successful we require members' current email addresses, so could all members please email our secretary John Cardelli at loam.secretary@gmail.com with any updated details.

Regards

Captain Murray Doyle AAM AFNI

President

