

line paid out as well as the tension it was carrying. Once the grappling was successful and the cable recovered, it was severed with a hacksaw – a dangerous operation especially in bad weather. Both ends of the cable were now on board and the technicians then tested them. The one which made contact with Ireland or America being attached to a large buoy which hung on the foremast shrouds and later lowered into the sea, its position being carefully fixed by our navigators who were first class; the other end, being faulty, was dumped overboard. When later we arrived back at the buoy to retrieve the good end of cable, the boat's crew readied themselves.

With the Bosun on the sweep steering oar, Bosun's Mate on the bow and four ABs on the oars, we climbed into the boat which was already swung out. The Captain ordered 'lower away' and when we were about a fathom above the waves, he called 'Release!' and the Bosun then let go both falls; we hit the water with a bang, out went the oars and we headed for the buoy.

When we reached the buoy, the line we were towing from the ship was attached to it. The Bosun's Mate then tripped the release system, separating the buoy from the weight of the chain holding it in position and it leapt about 10 feet in the air. We then tied the towing line to it and returned to the ship where the line was winched on board and technicians spliced the cable with the cable on board. When this was completed it was passed overboard and tested to check it was in working order. Cable was important because unlike radio, it was secure. Nobody could listen in.

## Maritime Labour Convention now in force

The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) is an international convention developed under the International Labour Organization. It consolidates a number of existing labour conventions, while introducing modern standards relating to the working and living conditions of seafarers at sea. Over 90 per cent of the world's trade is moved by ships in a truly international industry which should be regulated as such.

Australia is a signatory to the MLC which entered into force internationally on 20 August 2013. Australia already has a good reputation for the treatment of seafarers so compliance and implementation meant adjusting current law and practice to fit with our international obligations.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority has been designated by the Federal government with responsibility for the discharging Australia's obligations as a signatory to the Convention.

The MLC provides standards for the world's 1.4 million seafarers and creates a level playing field for the majority of shipowners and operators who do the right thing. It has been referred to as the fourth pillar of effective maritime regulation – alongside the International Maritime Organization's International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

In the lead up to the coming into force of the MLC, Australia adjusted its legislative and regulatory framework to align it with the key provisions of the Convention which address:

- Accommodation and recreational requirements on board the ship.
- Medical care and facilities on-board and ashore,

including access to dental care.

- Access to and use of sanitary and laundry facilities.
- Provision of free supplies of food and water and their storage and handling.
- The content of work agreements and their application.
- Regulations governing rest breaks for seafarers.
- Repatriation arrangements.
- The inspection regime and certification.
- Rights for younger seafarers.
- Seafarer recruitment and placement services.
- Seafarer access to shore based welfare.
- The on-board and on-shore complaints handling procedures.

The Chairman's message in this newsletter outlines the continuing involvement which our Society, along with other organisations involved in providing for shore-based seafarers' welfare, will keep itself informed of developments in this area and be able to contribute to the discussions that they generate.

## International Fleet Review marks Naval Centenary

The highlight of the week-long celebrations surrounding the Centenary of the Royal Australian Navy was the International Fleet Review (IFR) on Sydney Harbour on 5 October. In addition to the RAN vessels taking part, warships from Britain, Brunei, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Micronesia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Spain, Thailand and Tonga also participated.

The Review commemorated the centenary of the first entry of the Royal Australian Navy's Fleet into Sydney. On 4 October 1913 the flagship, HMAS *Australia*, led the new Australian Fleet Unit comprising HMA Ships *Melbourne*, *Sydney*, *Encounter*, *Warrego*, *Parramatta* and *Yarra* into Sydney Harbour for the first time to be greeted by thousands of cheering citizens lining the foreshore. This was a moment of great national pride and importance, one recognised as a key indicator of Australia's progress towards national maturity.

The RAN and visiting warships assembled in Jervis Bay NSW on 1 October for final preparations and briefings. These vessels then sailed up the coast and entered Sydney Harbour on 4 October – exactly 100 years after the first RAN Fleet entry.

The following day, Her Excellency the Honourable Quentin Bryce AC CVO, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, on board HMAS *Leeuwin*, officially reviewed the fleet. The Review included a moving line of seven RAN ships to further symbolise the 1913 entry. The day's events also featured formation fly-pasts by fixed and rotary wing aircraft, naval displays and demonstrations, naval gun salutes and naval band performances, culminating in a spectacular evening fireworks and lightshow on the harbour. Other events during the week-long celebrations included a combined naval march through the Sydney CBD, naval memorial and religious services, ships open to the public, sporting competitions and a range of community and cultural events.

Coinciding with the IFR were the RAN Sea Power Conference 2013 and the Pacific 2013 International Maritime Congress and Exposition at Darling Harbour.



HMAS Sydney leading the fleet entry into Sydney Harbour (Photo by John Jeremy)



# The Mariners' Lifeline

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN MARINERS' WELFARE SOCIETY  
A division of the Sydney Sailors' Home Volume 12 No 2 December 2013

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## Chairman's report



Captain Alan Tait, OAM – Chairman, The Australian Mariners' Welfare Society

I referred in my last report to an anticipated productive year for the Society and am pleased to record this proved be so!

The May Council meeting gave us the opportunity to welcome aboard Captain Conrad Saldanha as our newest Councillor and he has already been able to bring hands-on experience to the table. Conrad is Marine Manager LPG for Origin and replaces Ian Bulmer, now retired.

Whilst, disappointingly, no scholarship grants have been awarded this year, welfare requests have grown substantially. With our help Stella Maris at Mackay has a new air-conditioning system and their station at

Port Adelaide is now offering Internet services. The Mission to Seafarers (MtS), Albany has updated and expanded their computer capacity, while MtS Eden has received a grant for i-Pads for use by ship visitors to assist crew members who are unable to get ashore to contact home. At Newcastle, where MtS and Stella Maris jointly operate the port's seafarers' facility, a substantial donation was made to assist expansion of wireless Internet capacity in their newly-refurbished premises and MtS Fremantle has been able to repair and replace sections of the station's roof. MtS Sydney approached us seeking assistance in meeting the cost of repairing their bus fleet, to which we gladly agreed, knowing it is a key component of the operation of their recently-opened new premises at Walsh Bay. We have also assisted the Seafarers Centre located close by the Botany Bay container terminals by funding the replacement of a TV used by their seafarer visitors. We also made a donation to the UK-based Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Fund which assists seafarers and their families who have been affected by acts of piracy on the high seas.

I represented the Society at the biennial national conferences of both the Mission to Seafarers and Legacy, to which in both instances we provided financial support. Every opportunity was taken on these occasions to highlight the work that our Society has done in the past and will continue to undertake in the years ahead.

Council members represented us at the Rookwood Cemetery's Annual Service on Sea Sunday, the Merchant Navy Day Memorial Service at Mosman and at the National Merchant Navy War Memorial Service in Canberra, amongst others. I thank my colleagues for their support on these occasions.

On the 20 August 2013, the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 came into effect. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) held a well-attended Forum in Sydney on the 15 August to explain the legal and moral obligations which the Convention imposes on the maritime industry worldwide. Up to now, AMSA has been working with the assistance of

an Advisory Committee, whose members included our own organisation. Later, at a meeting held on the 31 October this Committee was replaced by a body named the Australian Seafarers Welfare Council, which is designed to encourage the provision of appropriate welfare services for seafarers visiting Australian Ports. The Council will implement a strategy to achieve this vision, including provision of leadership and assistance in implementing the Convention, promotion of a network of support arrangements and coordinating the activities of parties delivering services. Once again it is pleasing that AMWS will participate as a member in the work of the Council.

Our seafarers John Cleaver and Joe Dryburgh, residents at Horizon Towers, remain stoic and grateful for the help we provide.

Once again may I thank my Council members for their contributions, readily available assistance and good advice! I am very fortunate.

Finally I must acknowledge our very loyal membership in 2013 who inspire me to do more. Merry Christmas and a very happy new year to all our readers.

Alan Tait  
Chairman.

## Refurbished Newcastle Seafarers Centre commissioned

The anticipated doubling of shipping activity in the Port of Newcastle over the next four years has prompted the Newcastle Seafarers Centre at Wickham to significantly redevelop and expand its facilities.

Last year, the centre welcomed over 10,000 visitors and this figure can only grow markedly in the next few years given the expected growth of shipping in the port.

The Hannell Street property has been welcoming mariners of all nationalities and faiths for nearly 70 years and for the past decade has been operated jointly by the Mission to Seafarers and the Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris).

Part of the Centre had been leased out but when this tenancy recently expired, the timely opportunity presented itself to enhance and redecorate the existing facilities. A significant grant from the Society assisted the Centre to expand computer and Internet facilities in its communications room, a very popular amenity with visiting seafarers.

At a ceremony at the Centre on 21 July in the presence of



External view of the Seafarers' Centre, Newcastle.



The refurbished non-denominational chapel.

a lay chaplain with the Apostleship of the Sea. A team of 38 multi-talented and dedicated volunteers work as coach drivers, ship visitors, counsellors, librarians, kitchen staff and tradesmen.

### City of Adelaide bound for Australia

The hull of the clipper ship *City of Adelaide*, discovered some years ago in Scotland, left Rotterdam on 26 November as cargo on a heavy-lift ship for its long voyage to Port Adelaide where it will be preserved as part of a land-based maritime historical precinct.



City of Adelaide in her heyday



City of Adelaide departing from Rotterdam on board mv Palanpur on 26 November 2013. [Photo: Wiebbe Bonsink (HEBO)]

The *City of Adelaide*, sitting on its specially made cradle, was lifted aboard the German vessel mv *Palanpur* and lashed and welded to the deck. The voyage to Australia is being made via the Cape of Good Hope with an expected arrival date in Port Adelaide in late January.

*City of Adelaide* was built in Sunderland (UK) as a passenger ship in 1864,

specifically to carry migrants and supplies to South Australia. For nearly a quarter century she made regular return voyages, where wheat, wool and copper were loaded for the London markets. Today it is estimated that one quarter of a million South Australians are descendants of her passengers.

The *Palanpur*, with the *City of Adelaide* on board, is expected to arrive in Port Adelaide late in January. Those interested should be able to track the progress of the voyage on the website [www.cityofadelaide.org.au](http://www.cityofadelaide.org.au)



As reported in the last issue, the Mission to Seafarers, Sydney recently relocated to new premises at Walsh Bay. Supporters and friends of the Mission attended a ceremony on 25 September when the facility was declared officially open by Her Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO. Photo taken during the ceremony shows Her Excellency with Rev Ian Porter, Senior Chaplain.

### Quincentenary of Trinity House

The Corporation of Trinity House, London, the General Lighthouse Authority for England and Wales founded by King Henry VIII under Royal Charter in 1514, is planning to celebrate its 500th anniversary next year. It is responsible for nearly 600 aids to navigation including lighthouses, buoys and beacons to the latest satellite navigation technology. In addition, with its fleet of specialist vessels, it regularly inspects over 10,000 local navigation facilities provided by port and harbour authorities, and those positioned on offshore structures. It is also a Deep Sea Pilotage Authority.



Trinity House flagship Patricia (2,541 grt). The vessel can also accommodate 12 passengers who are able to observe at first hand the ship's operations on a regular working voyage.

As well, Trinity House is a major maritime charity, wholly funded by its endowments and spends around £4m each year on its charitable activities including welfare of mariners, education and training, and the promotion of safety at sea.



Patricia stands by to recover crew and technical personnel following a routine visit to the Sandettie light vessel on the Sandettie Bank located to the north of Calais in the Strait of Dover. Light vessels are unmanned, have no engine and are powered by solar panels.

### Response to Cyclone Haiyan

Cyclone Haiyan, which struck the Philippines on November 8 causing widespread death and destruction, understandably gave rise to anxiety among many Filipino crew members of vessels visiting Australian ports at the time. As result, some seafarers' centres received numerous requests for assistance in enabling them to contact relatives and friends living in the areas affected. The Society responded promptly with additional financial assistance being extended through the Australian headquarters of the Mission to Seafarers and the Apostleship of the Sea so that any of their stations facing exceptional telephone and communications charges could be compensated.

### Councillor honoured

We extend congratulations to Llew Russell AM, a member of the Society's Council and recently retired Chief Executive Officer of Shipping Australia Ltd, who was honoured last month with his admission to the Australian Maritime Hall of Fame at the Lloyds List Australia Shipping and Maritime Industry Awards ceremony held in Melbourne.



Llew Russell AM



### The Australian Mariners' Welfare Society

ABN 86 000 008 122

Founded as The Sydney Sailors' Home opened in 1865

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Captain C Green, Mr L C Russell AM,  
Mr M B Longstaff OAM, Mr R A Birdsall,  
Mr P A Jones, Mr S Liddy and Captain C Saldanha

#### Secretary:

Mr S Moriarty

### New chief for Shipping Australia

The Board of Shipping Australia Limited has confirmed the appointment of Commodore Rod Nairn AM as Chief Executive Officer effective 20 August 2013. Commodore Nairn had been acting CEO of Shipping Australia while his predecessor, Llew Russell AM took long service leave in preparation for his retirement.

"It's great to be aboard," Commodore Nairn said, "I have spent my life supporting safe navigation of ships as a hydrographer throughout 38 years of Navy service and now I am very pleased to be representing the interests of the commercial shipping industry because a strong shipping sector is absolutely vital to Australia's economic wellbeing."

### QE2 to move from Dubai?

Recent international media speculation as to the future employment of the former Cunard liner Queen Elizabeth 2 centres on the imminent likelihood of the ship leaving Dubai where she has been located since arriving in late 2008. The original plan was to transform the liner into a floating hotel,



QE2 berthed in Sydney in 2008 on her final visit before withdrawal from Cunard service.

this scheme being apparently shelved in the wake of the global financial crisis.

Since then, ownership of the vessel has passed to other interests who reportedly will now move her to Shanghai for conversion there into a 400-room luxury floating hotel eventually to be based in an as yet unnamed 'Asian port'. (While in Dubai, the ship has been kept on a 'care and maintenance' basis and has now been brought back to class, thus enabling her to sail under her own power.)

Built for Cunard in 1967, QE2 carried approximately 2.5 million passengers and made more than 700 Atlantic crossings. The highlight of her career was participation from trooping duty in the Falklands War in 1982 and in later years she undertook an annual round-world cruise and was a frequent visitor to main Australian ports.

### A mariner remembers

In our April 2010 newsletter, Joe Dryburgh – one of our Horizon Towers residents – recalled his time at sea aboard oil tankers in North Atlantic convoys during World War II. He remained at sea after the war and in the early 1950s was back in the North Atlantic serving in the cable ship John W Mackay (4,105 grt, built in 1922) which maintained undersea communications cables. Here he describes a typical voyage.



Joe Dryburgh

The best training ship for a young seaman was the *John W Mackay*. She could carry 3,000 miles of cable, which was loaded in London into three giant round tanks. When it was laid at sea, the cable ran from these tanks to giant, grooved wheels and was paid out over the bow, not the stern.

When transmission was disrupted because of a break in the cable, the cable ship on standby in Falmouth was ready to sail within a couple of hours. Even the local cinema screen flashed an urgent recall for any crew who were there and the ship also sounded its foghorn to alert those in the pub. The ship was fully stored and bunkered for 10 weeks. Returning on board, we were immediately put on watch: four on, four off, with a meal every four hours. Each watch consisted of four ABs, Bosun and Bosun's Mate.



Cable ship John W Mackay

Deep-sea cable was only about 30mm in diameter. It was copper-covered with gutta-percha, a vegetable gum, then jute and protective armouring. When a break occurred, its location was fairly accurately judged by measuring the resistance in a signal sent from Ireland or New York. The cable ship then steered towards this position. Arriving over the break, we commenced grappling to pick up the cable. The grappling line, on a large three-cylinder steam winch with a drum about two metres in diameter, passed over a dynamometer which measured the strain on the line thus indicating when we had located the cable.

The grappling line was at least three miles long and the cable passed through a unit which recorded the length of