

completed a voyage from Melbourne to Sydney and on return he reported on his experiences:

On my 11 day expedition I was stunned at how everybody was so friendly and everybody got along. We were a family for those days at sea. I thought that the youth crew would be all my age but most of them were older than me. I really liked how everybody worked as a team and how the crew took care of us, feeding us well and teaching us skills to develop over the 11 days. The trip was challenging but the scenery was breathtaking. We learned how to man the ship, the history of the ship, how to control the ropes and how to be a leader. I personally learnt to push on and don't give up and to always try my hardest. These experiences wouldn't have happened without my sponsors and I would like to thank them for the opportunity that I have been given. I would recommend this to other young people and I would do this again if given the chance. Thank you so much.

Society's website redesigned

In recent months the Society's website has been completely redesigned and is expected to be on-line early in the New Year. The address of the site remains at www.marinerswelfare.com.au.

This project has been co-ordinated by Council member Captain Chris Green, working with a sub-committee comprising Captain Alan Tait as Chairman, Graham Lightfoot and Malcolm Longstaff.

The content of the revamped site will be easier to navigate and highlight the Society's current activities and plans, supported by a series of images and film clips which will catch the eye of visitors to the site.

Our program of grants to seafarers' welfare organisations, maritime-related scholarship opportunities, new membership promotion and our active participation in the Government-convened Australian Seafarers Welfare Council will feature prominently.

Separate sections will also cover the historical background of the Society and its origins, backed by images tracing the history of the organisation dating from 1863 when the company was formed to raise funds to build the Sydney Sailors' Home which was completed and opened in 1865.

Copies of media releases and an archive of our newsletters will also be accessible.

Minister comments on new shipping policy approach

The Hon Darren Chester, Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, recently commented on progress towards further reform of shipping in Australia, hinting that reform would depend on both sides of the political divide adopting a unified approach, *Lloyds List Australia* reports.

'After many meetings and much feedback, I am acutely aware of the need to work in a bipartisan way to deliver reforms that will boost confidence, provide certainty and deliver the productivity benefits the industry desires' he told a function in Canberra arranged by Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL). He added that the modern Australian maritime industry was innovative and he expected it to keep pushing the limits.

These developments flow from the release by the

Australian Government in April 2014 of an Options Paper on approaches to regulating coastal shipping in Australia, which reportedly had been well received by industry.

AMWS grant assists refurbishment of MtS station at Port Pirie (SA)



The Mission to Seafarers at Port Pirie (SA) has expressed appreciation of a grant received from the Society which has assisted in refurbishing their premises (pictured). The Mission's Janice Chandler reports that the work included renewal of the ceiling and repainting of the hall, which was undertaken without charge. An ecumenical dimension was introduced into the project when surplus carpeting following work undertaken at the nearby Roman Catholic Cathedral was acquired.

New Great Barrier Reef ship tracking service

The recently introduced Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Vessel Traffic Service (REEFVTS) is a coastal Vessel Traffic Service created by the Australian and Queensland Governments to protect the environment and improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic.

It has now received international accreditation following a two-week audit conducted by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

The Townsville-based ship navigation service monitors vessel traffic through the Great Barrier Reef to prevent collisions and incidents using land and satellite-based sensors to assist ships to navigate the reef including visits to Queensland ports.

Its coverage extends from the Torres Strait and the approaches west of Thursday Island as far south to a point just north of Sandy Cape on Fraser Island.

Mr Steven Miles, Queensland Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef said the system lowered the risk of maritime incidents in the reef, helping to prevent pollution and damage to the marine environment.

"It may not be as busy as other international services but it is certainly one of the largest, and watches over one of the world's most unique ecosystems."

Queensland Maritime Safety staff over the past year has monitored and assisted about 19,000 ship movements through the state's ports and 11,250 movements through the reef.

According to AMSA, ReefVTS is the largest vessel traffic service in the world by area.

It was developed following an Australian Transport Safety Bureau recommendation following the grounding of the container ship *Bunga Teratai Satu* in Cairns in 2000 that a full advisory service for the Great Barrier Reef be established.



The Mariners' Lifeline

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A division of the Sydney Sailors' Home

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Chairman's report

Since our April newsletter a further deterioration in freight rates has seen at least one major carrier go into receivership and others amalgamating, downsizing, scrapping or laying up tonnage. It would seem once again it is due in part to a cyclical over-supply of tonnage on the world market.

Along with the three scholarships we awarded through the Australian Maritime College (AMC) in Launceston, a further two have been granted to students for study at the newly-named South Metro TAFE Fremantle.

May I thank our scholarship sub-committee comprising Llew Russell and Chris Green for their work in ensuring we have eligible and suitable candidates. They in turn would support me in saying how much we appreciate the efforts of AMC, Challenger TAFE and Leeuwin Ocean Adventure in this program. A recent visit to WA gave me the opportunity to speak with those organisations and I came away reassured there will be both applicants and jobs for our sponsorship recipients in 2017.

On the matter of the Captain Trevor Haworth Memorial scholarships, it was unfortunate that the young lady who was nominated through the Tribal Warrior Association to undertake a voyage in the sail training ship *Young Endeavour* last May had to withdraw at the last minute. The booking has now been deferred until next year.

Grant requests from the Mission to Seafarers and Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris) stations have continued although slightly reduced in number. In many cases, our grants have been in the form of co-contributions where the overall cost of a project is shared with others; this arrangement has worked well, especially in the area of funding for the replacement of buses used for transport of visiting seafarers.

In regard to piracy on the high seas, while the number of incidents has lessened, a troubling factor is that attacks on shipping are now occurring beyond the Horn of Africa. A donation of A\$10,000 was again made this year to ISWAN (International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network) to assist the families of seafarers affected and I thank our Councillor Peter Jones for co-ordinating our involvement in this important program.

Our home unit properties at Horizon Towers in Hornsby (NSW) continue to maintain full time occupancy. A recent electrical survey resulted in renewal of some safety switches, while replacement of cooktops and ovens in both units is also in hand.

As will be seen elsewhere in this newsletter, the Society's website is currently undergoing a complete re-design and I particularly thank Chris Green and Malcolm Longstaff for their work in steering this project. The new website is expected to be on-line early in the new year.



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

It is important that I thank a number of people that continue to make our Society a very credible and strong contributor to seafarers' welfare in Australia. Graham Lightfoot, as Deputy Chairman, has been a rock in supplying advice and untiring support to me in my role as Chairman.

Rodney Birdsall, our Treasurer, chairs an exceptional group comprising Graham Lightfoot, Peter Jones and Howard Clark which has managed our funds well during a somewhat volatile year.

We are very fortunate also to have Simon Liddy whose maritime law expertise provides us with advice on our activities and who also, through HWL Ebsworth, kindly makes available the venue for our Council meetings.

We are also well served by Conrad Saldanha and David Parmeter with their insights into developments in the shipping industry, which informs the Council's decisions as to how best the Society can channel its welfare support to seafarers.

I reiterate previous acknowledgments of the expertise in many fields that our Councillors bring to the table in guiding our affairs. Their efforts are supported by our Company Secretary, Stan Moriarty of Pringle Moriarty & Co. whose unfailing dedication and efficiency in keeping the corporate wheels turning smoothly is warmly appreciated by us all.

As will be realised, I feel fortunate in leading a harmonious and committed team that serves the Society so well.

May I conclude by wishing all our readers a Merry Christmas and all good fortune in 2017.

Alan Tait
Chairman.

MtS Brisbane Chaplain honoured



Fifty-six years' service as a Mission to Seafarers Chaplain in Queensland was recently honoured with the appointment of Rev Bill Pearson as Chaplain Emeritus.

Born in the sea port of Liverpool (UK), Bill was ordained in Townsville in 1959 and it was there his work for MtS commenced; he also served in the armed forces and at parishes in Cairns, Redcliffe and Nundah.

A certificate was presented to Bill by Captain Dave Ellis, President of the Mission to Seafarers, Brisbane, (pictured), the citation recording his visionary leadership and his dedication to serving mariners.

Obituary

With the passing of Mr John Strang AO on 29 September aged 76, the Society lost a member whose major contribution to the Australian transport and logistics sector spanned over 50 years.

As Chairman of the Strang-Tradex Group, he oversaw the provision of services including freight forwarding, inland transport, stevedoring, customs clearance and also development of supply line facilities for the resource and energy sectors, along with a port logistics advisory business.

He was also an articulate commentator on merchant shipping and naval issues.

In the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours List, Mr Strang was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished service through executive roles in progressing industry development, and to professional business organisations.

In a tribute on behalf of the Society, Captain Alan Tait OAM described him as a very proud Australian and a leader in the maritime industry.

'We were very fortunate to have him as a member of the AMWS, albeit in a membership support role for a limited period. He was well known and respected by our Council members, some being in one form or another users of his Company's services', he said.

Sincere condolences are extended to Mr John Hunter, a former Chairman of the Society, and Mrs Hunter on the recent loss of their son Simon, a member of the Society. Mr John Hunter served as a Councillor from 1989 to 2006, the last five years as Chairman.

Farewell Sailors Thai

This popular restaurant, which occupied premises in the Sydney Sailors' Home building for more than 20 years, recently relocated. The management of the restaurant was always conscious of the heritage significance of the building and in their dining areas displayed details of the history of the Home. In the days leading up to its ceasing operations, as a gesture of appreciation, members of the Society's Council, at their own expense, lunched in the restaurant to wish the management well in their new surroundings.

Annual Merchant Navy commemoration in Canberra

The annual remembrance service at the Merchant Navy War Memorial in Kings Park on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra was held on 23 October. This commemoration is arranged by the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund Ltd and attended by WW2 merchant navy veterans, representatives of the Merchant Navy Association, the RSL and other kindred organisations defence forces and the Diplomatic and Consular Corps.

Captain Alan Tait OAM laid a wreath on behalf of the Society and was also guest speaker at the traditional dinner held on the evening prior to the ceremony.

Annual General Meeting

The 154th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in Sydney on 17 May 2016 and adopted the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2016.

These reports disclosed that the Company remains in a sound financial position.

In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, Mr Simon Liddy, Captain Chris Green, Mr Rodney Birdsall and Mr David Parmeter retired and, being eligible, offered themselves for re-election and were duly elected.

ISWAN upgrades seafarers' international helpline

SeafarerHelp, which is operated by the International Seafarers Welfare Assistance Network (ISWAN), London providing a free, confidential helpline service to seafarers and their families all over the world, has recently upgraded its facilities to reach more seafarers.

Its multilingual team offering 24-hour assistance helped nearly 10,000 seafarers of 86 different nationalities last year.

The newly upgraded website, which can be viewed in nine different languages, provides a number of ways for seafarers and their families to get in touch, including by telephone, e-mail, Skype, text message and a Live Chat feature. Trends show that seafarers prefer to contact the helpline by mobile devices over the internet, so the website is optimised for mobile use.

Seafarers can also access general information from the SeafarerHelp team, along with downloadable resources providing guidance on health and wellbeing. Further information is available at <http://seafarerhelp.org>.

Gladstone Port Welfare Committee assists stranded crew

Under the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) which came into effect in 2013, countries which ratified their participation were encouraged to adhere to Convention requirements relating to the welfare of seafarers including provision of appropriate facilities both on board ships and at ports of call.

In Australia, oversight of compliance with the Convention was vested in the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).

Subsequently, AMSA formed the Australian Seafarers Welfare Council consisting of representatives of Government, maritime industry organisations, shipowners, port authorities, the International Transport Workers Federation and seafarers' welfare organisations including our Society. In addition, establishment of Port Welfare Committees in Australian ports comprising local representatives of the industry and welfare organisations was also encouraged.

A good example of ways in which port committees can effectively assist seafarers is the case of the Hong Kong-flag bulk carrier *Five Stars Fujian*. Following its loading of coal at Hay Point near Mackay (Q) in August, the vessel anchored off Gladstone having been detained by AMSA due to breaches of the Convention that related to non-payment of crew and the lack of food supplies on board.

Members of the recently established Gladstone Port Welfare Committee, which includes the Gladstone Ports Corporation and the Mission to Seafarers at Gladstone, worked closely together with AMSA to provide ongoing support for the crew during the period the vessel was detained.

The Hon Mark Bailey (State Minister for Road Safety and Ports) commended the Gladstone Port Welfare Committee, which was established last year to develop a collaborative approach to providing assistance and support to seafarers visiting the Port of Gladstone and this had worked well in

effectively managing the situation.

On 1 September, AMSA confirmed that outstanding crew wages had been paid, *Five Stars Fujian* had been refuelled and that sufficient provisions were on board for the vessel's safe passage. Following a final inspection by AMSA, the ship was released from detention that day.

Container ship breaks record

Loyds List Australia recently reported the arrival at Port Botany of the largest container ship to visit Australia.

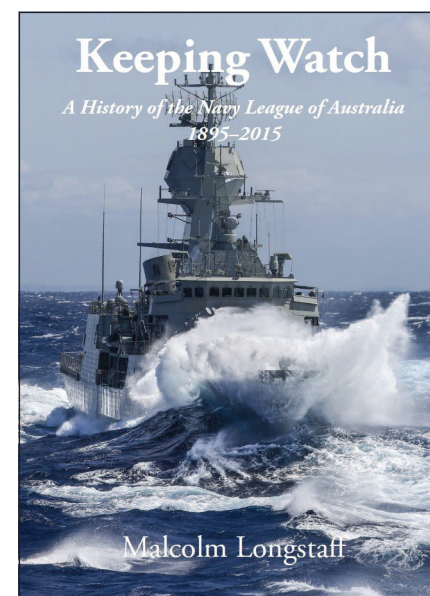
The Maersk Line *Seroja Enam* which has a capacity of 8,540teu, has a length of 316m (1,036.5 ft), beam 45.6m (149.5 ft) and draft 14.54m (47.5 ft) and was making a one-off call to collect approximately 1,800 empty containers prior to departing for Taiwan.

NSW Ports commented that the size of container vessels sizes visiting Port Botany is increasing due to the steady expansion of the international container freight task and moves by shipping lines to achieve economies of scale, adding that Port Botany, with its suitable infrastructure and deep water, is well placed to accommodate these larger vessels.

However commentators observed that the advent of larger vessels will no doubt present problems handling container ship size increases. For example in the case of the Port of Melbourne, the potential constraint is not only draft, but the turning circle and height of the West Gate Bridge, approximately 58m (190.25 ft).

The trend towards larger container ships was highlighted recently when Maersk Line announced it had ordered the building in Korea of ten of a new class of vessel which would have capacity for 18,000 teu, which is 2,500 more than their existing E-Class vessels.

Navy League history published



It is likely that some of those readers of this newsletter who are serving or retired members of the RAN or the Merchant Navy will recall being inspired by membership of the Navy League Sea Cadets in their youth to follow a seagoing career.

They would be interested to learn that the Navy League of Australia has just published its history under the title *Keeping Watch*, commencing from 1895 when

the Navy League of Great Britain was formed as a result of growing public concern about the increasing naval strength of Continental European powers and Japan.

The League soon began forming branches in Australia, the first being in Launceston (Tas) in 1900. Growth of the League in Australia was slow until after the early successes of the RAN in World War I. This stimulated public interest in naval affairs and ultimately, the League was strongly represented in all States and Territories.

In 1920 it formed the Navy League Sea Cadet Corps which

was instantly successful and eventually cadet units were established across Australia. For over 50 years, the cadets prospered under the League's guidance with the support of the Royal Australian Navy and civilian volunteers working with the various units.

In 1973, responsibility for cadet management, administration, operations and finance was transferred by mutual consent to the RAN. The Cadets, now known as 'Australian Navy Cadets', continue to be supported by the League with awards and occasional sponsorships.

In 1950 the individual League branches were consolidated into an autonomous national body, The Navy League of Australia, with each State and Territory having representation on its Federal Council.

Today the organisation is a respected commentator on defence and maritime issues and is frequently requested by Government to provide input on these matters. Its quarterly magazine *The Navy* – published continuously since 1938 – is widely read in Naval and Defence circles.

Keeping Watch was written by Malcolm Longstaff OAM, a Councillor of the Society, who has served on the League's NSW Division Executive continuously since 1970. The book runs to 280 pages with 70 illustrations and is indexed.

Copies of *Keeping Watch – A History of The Navy League of Australia (1895-2015)* can be obtained by downloading the order form to be found on the League's website at www.navyleague.org.au. The book is available for \$30 plus \$15 postage and packing per copy.

Disclosure: The author, Malcolm Longstaff, is also the editor of this newsletter. He receives no financial benefit arising from sales of this book.

Captain Trevor Haworth Memorial Scholarship winner goes to sea



Lieutenant Commander Gavin Dawe OAM, RAN, Commanding Officer, STS Young Endeavour, presents Johnny with his voyage certificate.

This scholarship is a joint project of the Society and the Rotary Club of Sydney Cove and honours the outstanding service given to both organisations by the late Captain Trevor Haworth AM, founder of Captain Cook Cruises.

The award takes the form of a sponsored deep-sea voyage as a youth crew member in the sail training ship *Young Endeavour*. Recipients are chosen from young people whose circumstances are such that they would otherwise not have the opportunity to experience an environment that focuses on the importance of teamwork while building an individual's self-confidence and leadership skills.

The inaugural scholarship winner, Johnny, recently