



Queen Mary 2, outward bound from Sydney on 12 March passes Queen Elizabeth which also departed shortly afterwards.  
[Photograph by courtesy Russell Cooke]

### Cruise market expanding

Cruise ship calls at Australian ports by members of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia in the six months ending 30 April are expected to number 642, a rise of nearly 10% on the same period last year.

The number of round trip cruises being operated Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Fremantle also escalated to 253, compared with 202 such cruises the previous year.

A feature of operations was the significant increase in calls being made at regional ports such as Busselton, Eden, Esperance, Albany, Port Hedland and Geelong which also benefitted regional tourism.

Sydney, which is included in the itineraries of many of these voyages, continues to experience lack of suitable berths for cruise ships and it is now necessary on occasions for some liners to remain at anchor in the harbour with passengers being ferried to and from the shore by tender. This was highlighted recently with Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth* having to move from the Overseas Passenger Terminal at Sydney Cove to Athol Buoy near Mosman to make way for *Queen Mary 2* to berth there. There are also reportedly some potential challenges faced by operators of cruise ships based in Australia year round arising from declining local dry-docking capacity.

### Somali Piracy 'dormant, not defeated'

Commenting recently on current piracy threats to shipping, the British-based International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) quoted Somali Government sources indicating the decline of activity off the Somali coast only meant that piracy was 'not defeated, but dormant'. This in turn had given rise to new maritime challenges in the Gulf of Aden.

Also, the UK Chamber of Shipping warned that progress made in the Indian Ocean should not mask significant security threats to shipping and seafarers in other regions, both off West Africa and in South East Asia where a violent 'petro-piracy' is thriving.

For example, Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Program (MPHRP) had reported an incident in South-East Asia where pirates had boarded a Vietnam-flagged vessel, searched crew cabins and stolen personal effects during which time the 3rd Engineer was shot dead. MPHRP had assisted with arrangements for the repatriation and burial of the deceased,

who left a wife and two young daughters. The organisation currently is assisting nearly 500 seafarers and their families who have been affected by piracy and armed robbery.

Summing up its report, ISWAN commented: 'It is our seafarers who bear the brunt of these criminal acts, irrespective of what these crimes are called or how statistics are counted. Ultimately, violent crime at sea will affect the recruitment and retention of career seafarers.'

The International Transport Federation Seafarers Trust, London which has assisted MPHRP financially since 2011 recently pledged ongoing support for seafarers and their families affected by piracy.

### Sydney Sailors' Home history

A reminder that copies of the history of the Home by Jan Bowen are available at a cost of \$30.00 per copy (incl. GST and postage) on application to The Secretary, Australian Mariners Welfare Society, PO Box 818, Ingleburn NSW 1890, telephone (02) 9605 1344, or by email to ssh@marinerswelfare.com.au



# The Mariners' Lifeline

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN MARINERS' WELFARE SOCIETY  
A division of the Sydney Sailors' Home Volume 15 No 1 March 2015

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## SYDNEY SAILORS' HOME – 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

### Chairman's report

Our 2014 year ended with our Deputy Chairman Graham Lightfoot attending the Apostleship of the Sea biennial conference in Adelaide in December. He came away confident that there is an ongoing, strong resolve of the Church wishing to ensure that mariners receive both pastoral and support care of the highest order. This, as always, is extremely important!

Year 2015 began on 2 February with a most successful celebration of the 150th anniversary of the commissioning of the Sydney Sailors' Home, held in the building which first opened its doors on 1 February 1865 and where it operated for the next 114 years. The heritage-listed building is now tenanted by the Sailors Thai Restaurant and the Billich Art Gallery and appreciation is extended to both for their support for our celebration, with the former allowing us to hold a special meeting of our Councillors in their dining area and the latter providing the venue for the subsequent informal midday reception.

Our reception was very special, being as it was attended by guests representing almost every sector of our community including the Government, shipping and stevedoring, the arts, the law, education, banking, commerce, the defence forces, hospitality and the media, along with former residents of the Home and a number of our members. Also present were representatives of Churches and other organisations committed to the welfare of mariners of all nationalities. It is worth recalling here that it was the Churches who were the very first to provide both pastoral care and hospitality to seafarers, while our Navy for many years now has shown great courage in protecting merchant shipping in international waters. All who attended, from wherever they came, shared an interest with us!

Our Society has been a continuously registered corporate entity since it was established in 1863 for the purpose of raising funds and then building the Home. There would surely be few organisations in Sydney still able to hold meetings in the actual premises they themselves had built 150 years ago?

One benefit of milestone anniversaries such as this is that it encourages thoughts and discussion about what direction the organisation should be taking in the years ahead. Our reception and my remarks gave me the opportunity to tell our story which as always tends very much to consider where we should be heading in the future. It is also a reminder that shipping and those who serve at sea are working in an ever-changing environment. Thus we must be constantly keeping ourselves up to speed on developments in the industry so that the support we provide can be properly targeted where it can do most good. That remains our mission and I believe we are well-equipped for the task; and history shows the Society has never been slow in adapting to changing circumstances.

I strongly believe Piracy will undoubtedly remain the greatest challenge in the foreseeable future. While Somalia



Ms Kimberley Karlsboej, Head of the International Transport Federation Seafarers Trust, London was a special guest at the 150th anniversary reception held at the Sydney Sailors' Home building. She is seen here with Captain Alan Tait OAM, Chairman of the Society.

has recorded a decline in hijacking activity in recent months, incidents are now on the rise in West Africa, with some 32 attacks in the first half of last year, some accompanied by particularly high levels of violence against crew members. In South-East Asian waters, ship hijacking spiked in 2014, with 21 incidents compared with 12 in 2013.

We as a Society are actively supporting the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Program (MPHR) which is providing aid to those affected by piracy, with 100% of monies collected being applied to the welfare of seafarers and their families. MPHR is an industry-wide alliance of shipowners, shipping agents, insurers and bodies such as the International Transport Federation and mariners' welfare organisations. It is noteworthy that such a diverse group of interests has joined in a common cause; this must be unique and speaks highly of the program's support base.

Meantime, 2015 is shaping up to be as busy as ever with several grant applications either approved or being processed. Our contributions to seafarer training remain an extremely important part of our portfolio and we will be looking at how that support might be broadened and hopefully expanded in the coming year.

Alan Tait  
Chairman.

### Annual General Meeting

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at the offices of HWL Ebsworth, Level 14, Australia Square, 264-278 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000 on Tuesday 19 May 2015 at 10.30 am.



## Chairman's comments at Sydney Sailors' Home reception

In welcoming guests attending the 150th anniversary reception at the Sydney Sailors' Home on 2 February, Captain Alan Tait recalled some of the highlights of its history and referred also to some of the activities undertaken by the Council of the Society in marking the occasion:

Today gives us the opportunity to pause and recall the thousands of mariners of many nationalities who crossed the threshold of this building in times of peace and war in the 114 years that the Home operated.

For the first 25 years of its existence up until Royal Naval House was opened in Grosvenor Street in 1890, the Home accommodated many naval personnel serving with the Royal Navy's Squadron based in Sydney. Through the interest and support of Rear-Admiral Stuart Mayer, Commander of the Australian Fleet, copies of our history are now being placed in the libraries of all Royal Australian Navy ships and establishments.

Similarly, with the support of the NSW Department of Education and Communities, copies are also being placed in the libraries of many high schools across New South Wales and this should assist in alerting young people as to the importance of shipping and seafarers to our island nation.

Life at sea has always been a demanding occupation for all who pursue it. Despite technological progress and generational change in recent times, seafaring today remains a challenging calling.

But in the mid-19th century, sadly, maritime disasters were all too commonplace. In the five years after the Home was opened in 1865, no fewer than 133 vessels were lost in New South Wales waters alone, that is an average of almost two every week. And, as the records show, not a few survivors of these tragedies – many of whom had lost everything – were made welcome at the Home in their distress.

Interestingly, for most of its existence, the Home was managed by a retired master mariner as its Superintendent. And while the house rules inevitably were quite strict we do know that many a young seafarer staying at the Home was given guidance and mentoring by successive Superintendents.

After the Home closed in 1979 following its compulsorily resumption by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority, the directors of the company immediately looked for other ways in which they might continue serving the interests of seafarers. So it reinvented itself as the Australian Mariners' Welfare Society and over the past 15 years has made grants totalling well over \$1 million to organisations such as the Missions to Seafarers, the Apostleship of the Sea and others that provide facilities for visiting mariners at 30 ports around the Australian coast.



## The Australian Mariners' Welfare Society

ABN 86 000 008 122

Founded as *The Sydney Sailors' Home*

### Secretariat:

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PO Box 818, Ingleburn NSW 1890  
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### Chairman:

Captain AJ Tait OAM

### Deputy Chairman:

Mr L G Lightfoot AM

### Councillors:

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

### Secretary:

Mr S Moriarty

## Who looks after the Sydney Sailors' Home building?

Subsequent to the Sydney Sailors' Home ceasing operations in 1979, the building became a heritage-listed property under the management of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA), whose function is the care, management and interpretation of the significant natural and cultural heritage resources that exist within its jurisdiction.

The Authority owns and maintains over 100 heritage-listed assets and is committed to protecting and enhancing the unique heritage of The Rocks while ensuring it is a vibrant place offering a diversity of experiences for the 14 million people who visit the precinct each year.

SHFA Chief Executive Officer Ms Catherine Gallagher was a special guest at our anniversary reception and spoke of the role of the Authority in caring for historically-significant items of heritage within The Rocks. This is an area located in the northern part of the Sydney CBD occupying the peninsula between Circular Quay and Sydney Harbour Bridge and considered to be the most significant heritage precinct relating to European settlement in Australia.

Items of heritage significance in the Authority's precincts include: existing and potential archaeological sites, landscapes, buildings, engineering structures, monuments and movable heritage. The Home's listing in the SHFA heritage record explains:

*The site and building are also of State heritage significance for their contribution to The Rocks area which is of State Heritage significance in its own right. The Sydney Sailors' Home is significant primarily because it provides an important historical record of changing attitudes to social welfare in the 19th and 20th centuries.*



Ms Catherine Gallagher

The building fabric records the foundation and changing operation of a comfortable home ashore for transiting sailors of all nationalities. The physical fabric retains evidence of the meagre expectations of the working class, in particular seamen, during 19th century, and through its expansion and ongoing use provides evidence of a continuing acceptance of these standards, well into the 20th century. Internally and externally, sufficient detailed fabric remains to provide a physical record of the building's earliest use.

The fabric and history of the Sailors' Home records changing social values of the 20th century, with the construction and subsequent removal of racially segregated facilities, and with the eventual lapse of interest in the Home following the reassessment of seamen's wages in the 1970s.

The construction of the 1860s block as part of a grand overall scheme highlights both an awareness of the growing importance of Sydney in the mid-19th century, and a competitive desire to match the 'mother country' amongst the Colony's citizenry. This desire is further evidenced in the original design through its obvious derivation from a British model.

The Sailors' Home is thus a good illustration of Australia's dependence on British architectural trends at that time. The history and significance of the Sailors' Home is inextricably linked with its location. The Home's long association with Cadman's Cottage, The Mariners' Church, Circular Quay and the general fabric of The Rocks area (and in particular the hotels), render the building historically significant.

The Society counts itself fortunate that despite changing circumstances, the original building, under the stewardship of the SHFA, is being well maintained and continues to be a reminder of the need for seafarers' welfare to be supported.

## MtS Port Pirie (SA) – Over 90 years serving seafarers

Port Pirie is situated on the eastern side of Spencer Gulf, 223 km north of Adelaide. The township developed in the 1870s and the port was once one of the busiest in Australia.

The key industry is the Nyrstar Smelter, one of the largest of its kind in the world which relies for its operations on imports by sea of concentrate and other feed materials, while local mining interests regularly export lead and zinc products. Lead and zinc concentrates represent the main exports.

The Missions to Seamen commenced operations with the purchase of an old shop and an attached residence next to the now Anglican Cathedral. The building was officially opened on 26 June 1923 by the first Bishop of Willochra, Dr Gilbert White.

In 1942, however, the need for larger premises was identified and a site at 37 Florence Street was acquired.

With financial support from the Patriotic Fund and local industry, along with a contribution from MtS London headquarters, a new seafarers' centre was built. The official opening was performed by His Excellency Lieutenant-General Sir Willoughby Norrie GCMG CB DSO MC & Bar, Governor of South Australia, on 8 June 1945.

The centre is managed and staffed entirely by a small but dedicated group of volunteers and operates from 7.00 pm to 10.00 pm when a ship is in port. Facilities include a large billiard room with an open fireplace, a chapel that can accommodate 24 people, a large hall, an office and writing room and has access to Internet facilities for the use of visiting



The Mission to Seafarers, Port Pirie (SA)

mariners. Since 2004 the Anglican Thrift Shop has operated at the Mission and is opened at night for the exclusive use of seafarers.

In recent years, additional financial support from local sources and from the Centre's loyal and dedicated volunteers as well as from the Australian Mariners Welfare Society has assisted in upkeep and maintenance of the building.

Last year, 64 vessels called at the port and 608 seafarers visited the centre, an increase of 44% on the previous year. A key advantage is its location, being only a very short walk from the port security gate.

The Centre also liaises regularly with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) in regard to the Authority's responsibilities in administering in Australian waters those sections of the international Maritime Labor Convention that relate to the welfare of seafarers.

Commenting on the role of the Mission, Ian Pole, Lay Chaplain said: 'Statistics can only indicate a part of our service to seafarers. It's impossible to record the warm smiles, a warm handshake, a listening ear or a comforting word when a seafarer tells of a family celebration, an illness or a death in the family when it's impossible to go home to be with family and friends at these significant times.'

*Footnote: Mariners Lifeline would be interested in publishing in future issues the stories of other seafarers' welfare stations around the Australian coast. Information and photographs (in .jpg format) should be sent to mblongstaff@ozemail.com.au or by posting hard copy of the narrative and glossy prints of pictures to AMWS Editor, PO Box 518, Turrumurra NSW 2074.*



Immediately prior to our 150th anniversary midday reception referred to in the Chairman's report the Society's Council, by courtesy of Sailors Thai restaurant, held a special commemorative meeting at the Sydney Sailors' Home building. Attending the meeting, from left to right, were Mr Graham Lightfoot AM (Deputy Chairman), Mr Malcolm Longstaff OAM, Captain Conrad Saldanha, Mr Howard Clark OAM, Mr Simon Liddy, Mr Llew Edwards AM, Captain Alan Tait OAM (Chairman) and Mr Stan Moriarty (Company Secretary). Absent: Mr Peter Jones, Mr Rodney Birdsall and Mr David Parmeter.