



Mission to Seafarers representatives from Australia and New Zealand at the Newcastle conference

**AOS, also its role in providing valuable scholarships and, more recently, assistance with purchasing vehicles and its support for seafarers who have undergone the trauma of piracy. He encouraged the conference to be active in changing to meet the needs of seafarers and to be realistic about the future.**

Because these conferences are held only every two years, the opportunity to bring the family together is significant. As discussed many times, the incredible distances between centres prevent most chaplains or volunteers to visit or liaise with each other. Consequently there is great emphasis on sharing stories, resources and struggles. Often the real value of a conference is at the end of the day, socialising with each other.

## Obituary

With deep regret we note the passing of Captain Donald Dykes, a long-serving Councillor of the Society, who 'crossed the bar' on 15 August. He was 96.



Captain Donald Dykes

Donald was born in Taree (NSW) on 27 March 1919, the eldest of seven children of Charles and Matilda Dykes and grew up on their farm near Kendall. At the age of 16, he was apprenticed to the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company Ltd. (AUSN) operating mainly in the Australian coastal trade, but just prior to the outbreak of war he made a voyage to the Far East with the Eastern & Australian SS Co Ltd (E&A).

During World War II, he served in the RAN, initially in the Australian armed merchant cruiser HMAS *Kanimbla* for 3½ years on operations in South-East Asia, Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. His next appointment was as First Lieutenant of the corvette HMAS *Ballarat* engaged mainly on convoy duties and ultimately, at the age of 24, was promoted to command of the ship. He later served in HMAS *Australia* which participated in the landings at Lingayen Gulf (Philippines) during which action the cruiser sustained severe damage when attacked by Japanese kamikaze aircraft.

Donald, who was married to Nanette in March 1945, spent the immediate post-war years at sea with the E&A Line, initially as Second Officer. In 1953, he and his young family travelled to Scotland where Donald stood by the building of E&A's 8,700 grt cargo vessel *Arafura* before sailing as its Chief Officer on the delivery voyage to Australia. In 1956, he was promoted to command of *Nankin* and later joined *Arafura* as Master.

A career change came two years later when he joined the Queensland Coast and Torres Strait Pilot Service where he was to spend 30 years piloting a total of 794 vessels through

Great Barrier Reef waters, all without untoward incident. He retired from the sea in 1988.

In an active retirement, he pursued a variety of interests, including Legacy. His main sporting activity lay in lawn bowls. He had joined the Gordon (NSW) Bowling Club in 1974, became an excellent player and among other successes skippered the winning side in the Club Championship Triples in 1984. He served as Club President for two years in 1990-1991 and was elected a Life Member. Donald was always willing to serve the club in any way he could and remained on the roster to answer telephone bookings on bowls days right up to the time of his final illness.

He also joined the Australian Mariners Welfare Society in which he served as a Councillor for 21 years. His special Board responsibility was to maintain contact with the ex-seafarer occupants of the Society's apartments in the Horizon Towers complex at Hornsby (NSW), a role he filled with dedication. He was always quick to volunteer for any other Council work that needed to be done.

A large congregation, which reflected his many and varied interests, attended a memorial service at St Martin's Church, Killara on 21 August at which Captain Alan Tait delivered a eulogy. Sympathy is again extended to Donald's extended family and friends in their sad loss.

## Interpretive plaque for Sydney Sailors' Home building

When our Council last year was considering plans for marking the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Sydney Sailors' Home, it was noted that, apart from signage on the roof line there was no indication to pedestrians walking past the building of the important role the Home had played from 1865-1979 in accommodating seafarers.

In discussions with the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA), which manages the heritage-listed building, it was learned that interpretive plaques are due to be installed at selected sites in The Rocks, each giving a brief description of their historical significance.

SHFA has now confirmed their agreement, in consultation with the Society, to include the Sydney Sailors' Home building in the program and final details of the design and wording of the plaque are expected to be settled shortly.

Footnote: It was announced recently by the NSW Government that the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority is to be abolished and its functions transferred to other government instrumentalities including the recently-formed Greater Sydney Commission which will have oversight of the entire harbour foreshore and also conduct a review of heritage sites in The Rocks area.

## New members – welcome!

A warm welcome is extended to the following newly-joined members of the Society:

Dr Seref Aksu	Mr Jeffrey Hawkins
Mr Stuart Ballantyne	Dr Richard Kenchington
Mr Neil Bell	Mr Mark Purcell
Mr Steve Brokce	Mr Ian Robertson
Captain George Campbell	Mrs Donna L Sill
Mr Neill Connell	Mr Drew Shannon
Mr Dean Cook	Ms Deborah Wakelin
Ms Rachel Geddes	Mr Alan Williams
Mr Luke Hartfiel	



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# The Mariners' Lifeline

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN MARINERS' WELFARE SOCIETY  
A division of the Sydney Sailors' Home  
Volume 14 No2 November 2015

## Chairman's report



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

It has been a very active year for our Society.

Firstly, I would like to expand on my comments in the March edition highlighting the importance of our remaining relevant in responding to the needs of seafarers, who work in an industry with an evolving and ever-changing environment.

In this context, I attended a conference in March organised by Maritime Industry Australia Limited (formerly the Australian Shipowners Association) with its theme 2035 Maritime Space. One of the sessions challenged delegates to envision how ships and shipping might look 20 years hence. One discussion of special interest was speculation that crew numbers of ships may be curtailed further, even to a point where – in limited situations – unmanned ships will be introduced. An interesting concept!

Another Paper referred to the increasing on-board availability of satellite communication facilities as a crew amenity and it was noted that nowadays, prior to signing on a ship, seafarers will sometimes check on the availability of such services. Obviously it will be some years before the provision of these amenities is commonplace; meantime Internet access currently offered at Australian ports by the Mission to Seafarers (MtS) and the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS), costs of which are substantially funded by our Society, will remain very relevant. When visiting stations it has been noticeable how many visitors were using their own mobile telephones to access free Wi-Fi to make contact with loved ones and for downloads. At the same time there remains ongoing demand for desktop Internet facilities and also phone cards. This emphasises the need for us to remain flexible and ensure our resources are appropriately directed.

Quite apart from these developments in communications, the opportunity for a crew member to go ashore even if only for a few hours to visit a mission and for shopping or sightseeing, remains a key factor in maintaining his or her well-being. Thus, the ready availability of bus transport for crew is critical to many AOS and MtS stations. This year alone we have assisted both organisations with grants to cover part of the cost of purchase or refurbishing of four vehicles used for this work, with the balance being generated by the station themselves from local corporate and other community donations.

Since we commenced our grants program in 2006, we have disbursed more than \$1,100,000 in support of numerous projects, national administration grants and contributions towards costs of staging port chaplains' conferences. In that time, 34 MtS/AOS mission stations in all States and the Northern Territory have been recipients of our support including WA (26 grants), NSW (17), Queensland (16), SA (14), Victoria (12), Tasmania (4) and Northern Territory (1).

At the same time we continue to provide accommodation for two ex-seafarers in our home units at Hornsby (NSW); pleasingly, both gentlemen are well and in good spirits.

One significant area of growth this year has occurred in our scholarship scheme, which assists young Australians either planning or currently undertaking a seagoing career. This year we have already awarded six scholarships to recipients across Australia covering ongoing tuition and/or training at recognised tertiary institutions.

I believe the effects of piracy on seafarers, particularly on our doorstep in South-East Asia, remains one of the most important unresolved issues confronting the industry worldwide. AMWS has substantially increased its donation to the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Program which is now integrated with the International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) in the United Kingdom. So far we have contributed \$12,000 towards assisting victims of piracy and their families and plan to continue our support for so long as it is required.

It is clear the name of the Society and its work is now becoming more widely known in the community. A further opportunity for promotion arose at the three-day Pacific2015 International Maritime Exposition in Sydney in October where we mounted a display. We are also in discussion with the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority regarding locating a plaque near the entrance to the Sydney Sailors' Home building to inform pedestrian passers-by of the important role it played in the maritime story of the port.

Again I thank my Board colleagues for their continuing service and good counsel in pursuing the work of the Society, supported as always by Stan Moriarty, our energetic and diligent Company Secretary.

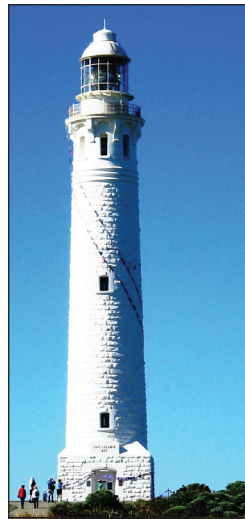
Finally, to all who read this newsletter may I offer Season's Greetings and best wishes for the coming year.

Alan Tait  
Chairman.



The Society recently assisted the Newcastle Seafarers Centre with a financial contribution towards acquisition of a new bus. The Centre is jointly operated by the Mission to Seafarers and the Apostleship of the Sea

## Australian Lighthouses – an important centenary celebrated



The lighthouse at Cape Leeuwin (WA) built in 1895/1896, is the tallest lighthouse in Australia

A century of Commonwealth management of lighthouses has been commemorated with a stamp collection, two minted coins, lighthouse open days and a gathering of former lighthouse keepers. Australia's coastline is dotted by more than 300 lights managed by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) along with some 200 other navigation aids around Australia's coastline.

The first lighthouse was a simple iron basket on a tripod at the heads of Sydney Harbour, built in 1794. The lighthouse network is made up of a variety of imposing structures that are just as important to the safety of those on the sea as they were 100 years ago. Special \$1 and \$5 coins are available from the Royal Australian Mint and a commemorative stamp series has been released by Australia Post.

## Upgrade for MtS Thevenard (SA)

Daine Burden, Lay Chaplain of the Seafarers Centre at Thevenard (SA) reports that renovation work has been completed on its old building at the rear of the Ceduna Anglican Church and the new Seafarers Centre is up and running. The project was assisted financially by a grant from our Society.

He added that crew members from mv *Corio Bay* were the first to visit the newly refurbished centre and they were also the first seafarers to travel in the Mission's recently acquired second-hand bus, kindly donated by the Mission to Seafarers at Fremantle. The furnishing of the Centre has been assisted by items offered on permanent loan by the Ceduna Foreshore Hotel.

'Those who knew the old building, which dates from the early 1950s, are amazed at the transformation. We now have a wonderful facility to offer seafarers visiting the Port of Thevenard. It is small by comparison to others but is proving to be ideal and will serve us for many years to come', he said.

**'Our gratitude for the support of AMWS goes beyond words. We thank them not only for the generous grant for the renovation work, but also the ongoing contribution towards our Internet service.'**

The Rt Rev John Stead, Bishop of Willochra visited Ceduna and Thevenard on 25 April and in the presence of members of the church congregation, conducted a blessing of the new centre and bus.



At the Thevenard dedication service, left to right, George Johansen, Rev Gael Johannsen, Bishop John Stead, Daine Burden (Lay Chaplain) and Pamela Burden.

## Young WA mariners benefit from expanded AMWS scholarship program



(Left to right) Captain Nihar Rai, Leeuwin II scholarship recipients Benjamin Errington, Woodren Bourne and Liam Evans with Captain Sarah Robinson, Master of STS Leeuwin II.

In recent months, our scholarship program has been significantly expanded and more young people have been assisted financially in their studies towards moving on to seagoing careers.

For example, three young West Australians are a step closer to a career in the maritime industry after being selected to take part in the *Leeuwin* Ocean Adventure Foundation's pilot cadetship scheme. Our Society has provided each with study scholarships to assist in meeting the costs of their professional training.

Benjamin Errington (24), Woodren Bourne (19) and Liam Evans (17) were selected from the *Leeuwin's* successful volunteer program to complete a twelve-month cadetship with the sail training ship.

The cadetship will see the individuals gain their Marine Engine Driver (MED) Class 2 ticket in addition to their Master <24 metres near coastal qualifications. J714 – Certificate III – Maritime Operations (Master up to 24 metres Near Coastal).

The three recipients were financially supported by AMWS under its scholarship program after the Challenger Institute of Technology submitted their applications for sponsorship. Captain Nihar Rai, Director of the WA Maritime College at the Institute nominated the three cadets, who all volunteered to serve in STS *Leeuwin II* to secure their required sea service time.

Captain Sarah Robinson, Master of STS *Leeuwin II*, said the financial support provided by AMWS will make an enormous difference to these individuals' futures and they will commence their study in the next course rotation.

All three scholarship recipients have family links with the maritime industry. Benjamin Errington's great-grandfather was Fremantle Harbour Master in the 1890s while Woodren Bourne's father served a cadetship in the merchant navy and ultimately reaching command, later serving as a Harbour Master and pilot; Liam Evans has family connections with the commercial fishing industry and with boat-building.

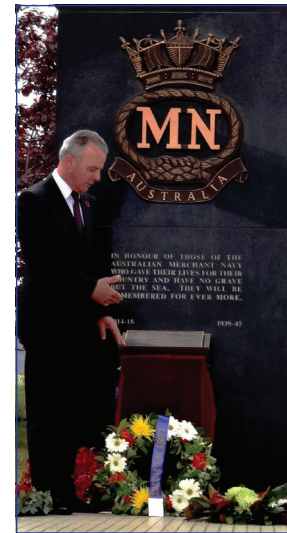
Other scholarship grants – to meet fees for a Deck Watchkeeper course at Newcastle (NSW) TAFE and funding of a shipboard safety course for an applicant who was volunteering to serve in the hospital ship *Mercy Africa* in Madagascar.

## MN seafarers' wartime service honoured

The Society was represented at two recent annual commemorations to remember and honour the service of merchant seamen who gave their lives in war. The first of these – on 3 September, which date is now officially recognised as Merchant Navy Day – was held at the War Memorial at Mosman (NSW). Commodore Rod Nairn AM RAN (Rtd), Chief Executive Officer of Shipping Australia Ltd was guest speaker and AMWS Councillor Rodney Birdsall attended and laid a wreath.

In Canberra on 18 October, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson BMBS FRACP (Hon) FAMA, Director of the Australian War Memorial was guest speaker at this year's annual service held at the Merchant Navy War Memorial in Kings Park on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin arranged jointly by The Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund Ltd in partnership with the Merchant Navy Association, the Merchant Navy RSL Sub-Branch and the Company of Master Mariners of Australia.

Malcolm Longstaff OAM, representing the Society, laid a wreath on its behalf and was also guest speaker at the traditional MN Association Dinner in Canberra the previous evening.



Dr Nelson unveils the commemorative plaque

These events had special significance in that they also marked the 25th anniversary of the monument's commissioning by the Hon Bill Hayden AC, then Governor-General of Australia on 7 October 1990 and Dr Nelson unveiled a commemorative plaque recording this milestone.

## AMWS flag flies at Maritime Exposition in Sydney

The Society mounted a display at PACIFIC2015, the ninth biennial Pacific International Maritime Exposition held at the Sydney Exhibition Centre at Glebe Island in Sydney from 6-8 October. The event was also the centrepiece of Australia's 'Navy Week' celebrations.



Llew Russell AM on duty at the AMWS display at Pacific2015.

The only comprehensive international exhibition of its kind in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, PACIFIC2015 provided an avenue for commercial maritime and naval defence industries to promote their capabilities to decision-makers from around the world. Our involvement provided an opportunity to remind participants of the contribution made by seafarers to the world's seaborne trade.

Arrangements for our exhibit were co-ordinated by AMWS

Councillor Llew Russell AM assisted by other Councillors who shared duties in manning the display over the three days, along with Sister Mary Leahy OAM (Apostleship of the Sea) and Rev Ian Porter (Mission to Seafarers Sydney.)

Visitors were briefed about the work of AMWS while new members were recruited and copies of our history were also on sale.

## ISWAN report discusses social isolation of seafarers

The issue of social isolation among seafarers is common, and has been researched and documented in the past. However, the London-based International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) remains keenly aware of the problem, partly due to the nature of some calls received by their Seafarer Help team.

ISWAN is keen to lay the foundations for a discussion of the possible ways to alleviate the causes and symptoms of social isolation, including seafarers, welfare providers and shipping companies in the debate. To this end it has published on its website a Paper prepared by Dr Olivia Swift, an economic anthropologist with a PhD from Goldsmiths, University of London. This is recommended reading for those interested in the welfare of seafarers and can be downloaded from the ISWAN website at [www.seafarerswelfare.org](http://www.seafarerswelfare.org)

## AMSA and AMC to host Ergo2016 conference in Melbourne

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and the Australian Maritime College (Institute of the University of Tasmania) are jointly hosting Ergoship 2016, a maritime human factors conference with the theme 'Shaping shipping for people'. The conference will be held at Intercontinental Melbourne The Rialto on 6-7 April 2016, with a cocktail reception on the evening of 6 April.

The aim of the meeting is to provide a national and international forum for the dissemination and exchange of applied scientific knowledge in the field of human factors within a maritime context. It will bring together ship owners, operators, seafarers, researchers, maritime regulators, classification societies and other maritime stakeholders with a particular interest in maritime human factors to promote collective understanding in this very important area.

The program will include a wide range of topics covering maritime human factors applied research, with leading national and international speakers, presentations and panel discussions which will capture the attention of anyone with an interest in applying maritime human factors principles in ship and equipment design, shipping operations or research. Further information is available on the conference website [www.ergoship2016.com.au](http://www.ergoship2016.com.au).

## MtS Chaplains biennial meeting held in Newcastle

With the theme *Looking over the Horizon*, the biennial conference of Chaplains of the Missions to Seafarers (MtS), was held at the Newcastle Seafarers Centre on 3 September which has been operated for many years jointly by MtS and the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS). It has a support team of about 40 volunteers who work as kitchen staff, tradesmen, counsellors and drivers. The Society contributed to the costs of staging the meeting.

Canon Garry Dodd, Senior Anglican Chaplain at the Centre, who is also National Executive Officer for MtS, reports on the meeting which was attended by representatives of 24 of the 27 Australian stations in addition to two from New Zealand:

*We were honoured to have Andrew Wright, the Secretary General from MtS London with us who led two keynote addresses. The conference theme focused on the changes within the maritime industry over the next decade and what we need to do in response. Representatives from Government, shipowners, port authorities and funding bodies presented their opinions of the future needs of seafarers. Delegates were encouraged to consider what impact this might have on individual centres and MtS Australia collectively.*

**Captain Alan Tait, Chairman of the Australian Mariners Welfare Society gave a wonderful presentation on the 150 years of service it has given to the maritime industry and to organisations such as MtS and**