

Melbourne Branch

The Log
The Monthly Newsletter of the Melbourne Branch of
The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Limited

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NEXT MEETING
FEBRUARY 2021
DETAILS TO BE ADVISED

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Hon. Sec., Alexandra Evered
Email alex@baysideshipping.com
Tel 03 5424 1224

From the Branch Master

A Federal Court meeting was held on 23rd December by telephone conference call.

The meeting ratified the membership applications from

Kishore MATTA Ordinary Sydney Branch

Karen MONTFORD Associate WA Branch

Preetham KUMAR Ordinary WA Branch

Carol Shannon is planning to have an electronic draft of the Master Mariner Magazine completed by the end of January. She has been having difficulty in getting content for the magazine which will have the theme "Maritime Training"

Once this first edition has been received decisions will be made on whether or not to continue and if so whether it should be distributed electronically or printed.

This year because of COVID -19 the Federal Court has not been very active and therefore has not spent much money. It has been decided, on a one off basis, to reduce the Federal Levy to \$50 which is a saving of \$25 per person which branches can either retain or pass on the members by way of reduced membership fees.

Reports from the Treasurer and Registrar were received and discussed. The Next meeting of the Federal Court will be held when the draft of the Master Mariner is received .

We hope to be able to resume normal meetings in February but as we have seen during the last week in Sydney, a city can be COVID free one day and in lockdown a couple of days later. On behalf of the Melbourne Branch Court I wish you all:

**Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year**

Queensland Maritime Museum

After nearly 50 years of operating the Queensland Maritime Museum (QMM) will have to close permanently on New Year's Eve if it is unable to secure additional funding.

The Museum's history dates back to 1969 when the Queensland branch of the World Ship Society was formed. This led to the establishment of the QMM in 1971.

The State Government provided the South Brisbane Graving Dock as the site for the museum. The Royal Australian Navy donated the decommissioned WW2 frigate HMAS Diamantina which was placed in the dock in 1981. One of the display halls built for Expo 88 was donated to QMM and following extensions funded by the State Government that building has been used to display the museum's extensive collection.

QMM's income which has been reduced due to COVID-19 is insufficient to meet expenses and fiscal planning and projections indicate that QMM will have to close on December 31 to avoid insolvency.

The museum relies heavily on volunteers but about 40 of its 150 volunteers were COVID-19 vulnerable and cannot be on site. Once COVID -19 restrictions eased in September the museum implemented a COVID Safe plan and reopened on weekends but has had only 30% of usual visitor numbers and has had to pay costly cleaning fees.

COMMA Brisbane Branch Master Captain Kasper Kuiper is the Chairman of the QMM Board. He told ABC News that "we need a big injection from private funding, corporate funding and Government help. We have some opportunities that we are looking at to get some donations from investors, from the private sector, and again we have lobbied the State Government for Funding".

HMAS Diamantina is the museum's most prominent display. The River Class frigate was built by Walkers Ltd at Maryborough and saw war service in the Solomon Islands and the Bougainville Campaign. She was paid off into reserve in 1946 but in 1959 was recommissioned as an oceanographic survey ship.

Other large attractions are the Tug “Forceful” which was built in Scotland in 1925 and was the last coal fired tug in Brisbane when it was retired in 1971. During the war Forceful was requisitioned into the RAN and served as a harbour and salvage tug in Fremantle, Darwin and Thursday Island.

CLS 2 Carpentaria was one of 4 light vessels built at Cockatoo Island Dockyard Sydney in 1917 for the Commonwealth Lighthouse Service.

CLS 2 spent most of its time in the Gulf of Carpentaria but was last stationed in the Bass Strait Oilfields serving as a traffic separator. It was withdrawn from service in 1985. QMM has the largest collections of lighthouse artefacts in the country.

Other vessels on display are the pearling lugger “Penguin” which was used by the Americans during WW2 and a dingy from General Douglas MacArthur’s motor yacht “Shangri-La”. “Ella’s Pink Lady” the 34 foot Sparkman and Stephens yacht used by Jessica Watson for her solo round the world voyage is housed at the Museum.





Cruise Ship-Breaking Booms

The sector of the shipping industry that has suffered the most from the COVID-19 pandemic is the Cruise Ship Industry. Cruise Lines International Association predicts the global industry will have lost US\$107 Billion and 518,000 jobs by the end of October this year.

With the wide availability of vaccines some way off and the virus still raging in many parts of the world there is no way of predicting when cruise ships will be able to resume sailing and what will be the level of demand from passengers. Cruise ship companies are critically examining their fleets and the older and less economical ships are being disposed of. It has been reported that Carnival Cruise lines will reduce its fleet by 13 ships in 2020. Few of the discarded ships will find a buyer so most of these “end of life” ships will be dismantled for scrap.

Scraping ships can take place in two ways “Shipbreaking” and “Ship Recycling”.

Shipbreaking is the method commonly used in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan and involves ships being run ashore on tidal beaches (the Beaching Method). Large sections of the ship are cut away and allowed to fall onto the beach where they are cut into smaller pieces. Toxins and hazardous materials leak from the ship into the sand or sea and are flushed away by tidal movements. 70% of the approximate 1000 ships that are scraped each year are broken up by the beaching method.

The International Labour Organisation has named ship breaking amongst the most dangerous jobs in the world. Workers have increased risk of cancer and other diseases due to asbestos, heavy metals and other hazardous waste.

Ship recycling yards can be found in Turkey, China and across Europe and America. In these yards the ships are taken apart using cranes and mechanised equipment and hazardous waste is prevented from contaminating the environment and is disposed of by approved methods. Health and safety measures for the workers are enforced. Recycling is much more expensive than ship breaking and this can result in a difference of several millions of dollars in what the yard will pay for a ship.

Because the industry has such a poor reputation for workplace health and safety and pollution of the environment it has come under the attention of regulators.

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal, which came into force on 5th May 1992 was designed to reduce the movement of hazardous waste between nations and specifically to prevent transfer of hazardous material from developed countries to less developed countries. The convention lacked enforcement provisions but required the nation receiving the hazardous waste to give "Prior Informed Consent".

Ships sent for scraping rarely fly the flag of the nation doing the scraping so this can be considered a transboundary movement of hazardous waste but given the prior informed consent provisions and the global nature and practices of shipping it has been difficult to apply the Basel Convention to ship recycling.

The Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships was adopted in 2009 but will not come into force until 24 months after 15 states representing 40% of the worlds shipping by gross tonnage and an average 3% of recycling tonnage for the previous 10 years have signed it.

Under the convention ships sent for recycling must provide an inventory of all hazardous material on board. A ship specific recycling plan must be developed by the recycling facility to establish, maintain and monitor "safe for entry " and "safe for heat work" conditions and how hazardous materials will be managed.

Each party to the Convention shall establish mechanisms for authorising ship recycling facilities that meet the requirements of the convention including prevention of adverse effects to human health and the environment, safe and environmentally sound management of hazardous materials, emergency preparedness and response, worker safety and training and reporting procedures.

A number of facilities in Asia have obtained certification stating they are operating in line with the HK Convention but beaching remains the main form of delivering vessels to these yards.

The EU Ship Recycling Regulations (ESRR) resulted from the European Union deciding not to wait for the ratification of the HK Convention. In 2013 it transposed the HK Convention into EU Law with the adoption of the ESRR.

From 31 December 2018 EU ships over 500 GT will be required to use a ship recycling facility on the European approved list and all new EU ships to have an Inventory of Hazardous Material (IHM) on board. From 31 December 2020 all ships including non EU ships calling at EU ports will be required to have an IHM on board. There are currently only 41 recycling yards on the EU approved list made up of 34 in Europe, 6 in Turkey and one in USA. China which previously was a choice for “green” recycling banned the import of foreign ships for recycling in 2018.



Cruise ships being dismantled at Aliaga ship breaking yard Turkey

Most ship owners sell their end of life ships to so called “Cash Buyers” who take the financial risk of selling the ship for scrap away from the ship owner. This method also provides distance between the owner and the scrap yard should there be criticism due to accidents or pollution during the dismantling process. However recent court judgements in UK and Netherlands have reinforced the principal that owner’s liability may continue after they have divested themselves of the ship.

Ships may be sold under the guise of being operational to avoid existing laws then re named, re registered and re flagged before being sold to a beaching yard for scrap.

There are many matters for owners to consider when recycling their ships and the Standard P&I club recommends that they select recycling yards that are compliant with the HK Convention or EU Ship Recycling Regulations and if selling to a third party that they are compliant with all applicable regulations and licences. They also recommend referring to the International Chamber of Shipping Guidelines on Selling Ships for Recycling. The Club points out that there have been several high profile cases where operators have suffered reputational and financial damage because of how their ships have been recycled at the end of the ship’s life.