

## PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS NOVEMBER 2015

We have an excellent team assembled for the year ahead, and welcome to the Executive our new secretary LCDR John Redman RAN (ret) and new Librarian and assistant Librarian, LCDR Roger Buxton RCN (ret) and Sue Buxton respectively, who are taking up the baton from our Sue Curwen and her able assistant Fay Claxton, and we acknowledge the excellent job, Sue and Fay they have done in setting the Library up. On the sick list is our 'money man' George Bird. Get better soon George. We miss you!

A dream held by two of our past Presidents came to fruition on Friday November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 1000 when our Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett AO CSC RAN, unveiled and dedicated the bronze



statue of the lone sailor 'Answering the Call.' The statue is situated on the foreshore at Port Melbourne, opposite Dow



Street, across the road from former site of HMAS LONSDALE. The concept was initially envisaged as a 'Navy Square' by Don Boyle and LCDR Mac Gregory, and later it successfully transitioned into the 'Answering the Call' concept. With Don's passing Mac resolutely persevered on to bring their dream to fruition! The 'Naval Heritage Foundation of Australia Inc.' was incorporated on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008 and Don and Mac's dream came to pass on November 27<sup>th</sup> 2015, nearly 8 years later. Upon Mac's death, the Presidency of the Foundation passed to his daughter Jayne, and a hearty **WELL DONE!** to Jayne and her committee upon achieving such a successful outcome.

### *The NAVY's back in Port Melbourne!*

**Rex's Odyssey: Part 2:** Whilst I was staying with my friends Gill and John Davies in Three Crosses, a small village, just on the edge of the Gower Peninsular, John and I drove up to Monmouth for the day. My ancestors came from this area in South Wales, but in this case the purpose of our visit was to conduct research at the 'Nelson Museum' there. I had contacted the curator prior to my visit and she kindly arranged access to their library. My particular interest was to research the women in Lord Nelson's life. Nelson's mother was a member of the Walpole family and it was through her brother Captain Maurice Suckling RN that he got his start in the Navy. He formed an attachment to a married woman Mary Moutray in Antigua, and also had a relationship with a 'Dolly' in Leghorn. He met and eventually married widow Frances Nisbet on the island of Nevis in the Caribbean. The love of his life was Emma Hamilton and she was able to provide him with the child he had long wanted. What a fascinating woman Emma was! Eventually I'll share with you the results of my research, but another time!

The Museum celebrates the visit of Nelson and the Hamiltons' to Monmouth in 1802. Cheering crowds greeted them everywhere they went during the three month tour of Wales which also included Milford Haven, Swansea and Cardiff. I took many photos in the museum, some of which we'll share with you in this 'Dog'. The 'Nelson' collection of Lady Llangattock, (the mother of Charles Rolls, of Rolls Royce fame,) was donated to the town in 1924 and contains many interesting artifacts including Nelson's fighting sword plus the swords of French and Spanish naval commanders from Trafalgar. There are a number of his letters both to his wife and to Emma plus a death mask, and various ship models etc. ***Enjoy the photos.***

Our National President Paul Martin has retired from his post after 11 years in the job, and we welcome Captain David Michael RANR as our new leader. Paul will continue to serve on our committee.

As your President I wish to place on record my admiration for the job Paul has done over the years. Paul and I came into the job at around the same time and with my first phone call to Paul, we established a rapport which stood the test of time. Prior to us both coming into our respective Presidencies, relationships had not been all that constructive, but, within that five minute phone call we both saw smooth sailing ahead, and that was exactly how it turned out!

***On behalf of the Victoria Chapter extend a very warm welcome to our new National President, Captain David Michael. I hope to visit Sydney early in the new year and look forward to catching up with him!***

The Navy League of Australia in Victoria have always enjoyed a close relationship with our N H S of A Victoria Chapter. Over the past 11 years The Victoria Chapter have been part of the Australian Navy Foundation day Organizing Committee in conjunction with the Naval Association of Australia, the Naval Officer's Club and the Navy League of Australia. Each year we hold the Creswell Oration on the Navy's birthday March 1st or thereabouts, but generally it is on the actual day. The Speaker at next year's Oration is Vice Admiral David Johnson AM RAN. VADM Johnson is Chief of Joint Operations Command in Canberra, and yours truly is chairing the event next year. It promises to be a very interesting occasion.

***Another splendid occasion was the celebration of the centenary of the Navy League in Victoria. A gala dinner was held for 70 guests to commemorate this on Saturday evening the 14th of November.***

***Well done Navy League--Happy Birthday!***

**YOURS AYE!!**

**REX WILLIAMS**

