



"THE SEA CHEST"

Peninsula Ship Society Newsletter June 2019

The Peninsula Ship Society meets, in the lower lounge, at the Hastings Yacht Club on the fourth Tuesday of each month. The meetings commence with refreshments at 10am. After the meeting, at about noon, you are invited to join most of the attendees of the meeting at the Westernport Hotel and enjoy a reasonably priced meal.

The Last Meeting



The bridge of the *Mikhail Lermontov* after 33 years under the water

At our May meeting we watched a very well researched film on the sinking of the *Mikhail Lermontov* on 16th February 1986 in the Marlborough Sounds in New Zealand. The reason for this maritime disaster has never been disclosed. The actions of the Marlborough Sounds Harbour Master, who was the pilot at the time of the disaster, have never been satisfactorily investigated and he has never spoken publicly on the reasons for his actions.

The Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 25th June at 10am. Our Vice-President, Chris Hart, will give a presentation entitled, "My experiences sailing with the Australian National Line between 1970 and 1979".

The American, Bill Miller, is considered an international authority on the subject of ocean liners and cruise ships. Unfortunately, he is unable to come and speak to us, in person, but we can see some of his magnificent collections of photographs and paintings of the ships that have led to him being known as "Mr. Ocean Liner".

The Burns Philp vessel MV *Bulolo*'s role on D-Day

One of the biggest news items in recent weeks has been the Seventy-Fifth commemoration of D-Day, that occurred on 6th June 1944. Australia's involvement in this massive exercise was minimal as our defence resources were fully involved in ensuring that Australia was not taken over by Japanese forces.

But a well-known Australian vessel, MV *Bulolo*, owned by the Burns, Philp Shipping Company played a major role on D-Day. *Bulolo* was built by Barclay, Curle & Co. at Glasgow and left for Australia on 18th November 1938. She was built to be a part of the service that Burns, Philp provided between Australia and Papua New Guinea. But her part in this service came to an end on 22nd September 1939 when the vessel was requisitioned by the British Ministry of War Transport. She was then converted to an Armed Merchant Cruiser with seven 6-inch guns, two 3-inch anti-aircraft guns, depth charges and smaller armaments.



For the next 27 Months *Bulolo* acted as a convoy escort on the Atlantic with voyages between South America, South Africa and Britain carrying troops and supplies. In 1942 *Bulolo* was converted to an amphibious Landing Ship Headquarters ship. This conversion included the installation of a sophisticated communications system for use by army, navy and air force control purposes. The vessel was then used in Operation Torch (the invasion of North Africa). After participating in a number of operations, including Operation Husky (the invasion of Sicily) the vessel returned to Britain in April 1944 in readiness for Operation Overlord, the Allied landings being planned for Normandy in June 1944.

On 28th April 1944, Commodore Douglas-Pennant, Naval Commander of Force "G", hoisted his flag on HMS *Bulolo*. The vessel then commenced training for D-Day. On 6th June 1944 HMS *Bulolo* commanded the landing on Gold Beach, and although she was forced to relocate after receiving incoming fire from the German battery at Longues-sur-Mer, she remained off the beaches directing the assault. On 27th June *Bulolo* returned to Portsmouth.

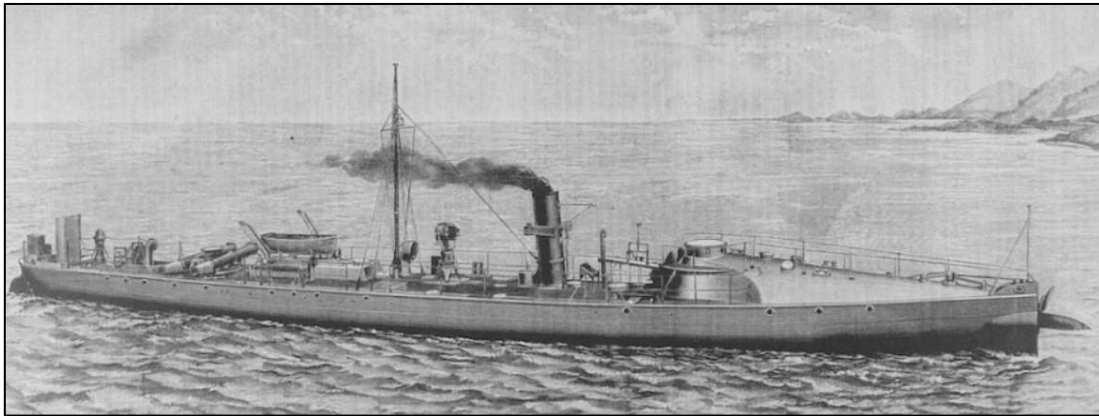
After a refit *Bulolo* sailed, in 1945, to be the Headquarters ship for "Force W" operating off Malaya in the retake of South East-Asia from Japanese forces. In September 1945, *Bulolo* was used to accept the Japanese surrender at Singapore.

On 4th December 1946 *Bulolo* was decommissioned and returned to the Burns, Philp Shipping Company. After an extensive conversion back to a merchant ship, she went back into service for Burns, Philp in 1948. After 161 round voyages to Papua New Guinea *Bulolo* was sold to the China Steel Corporation and scrapped at Kaohsiung, Taiwan in May 1968

The Victorian Torpedo Gunboat *Countess of Hopetoun*

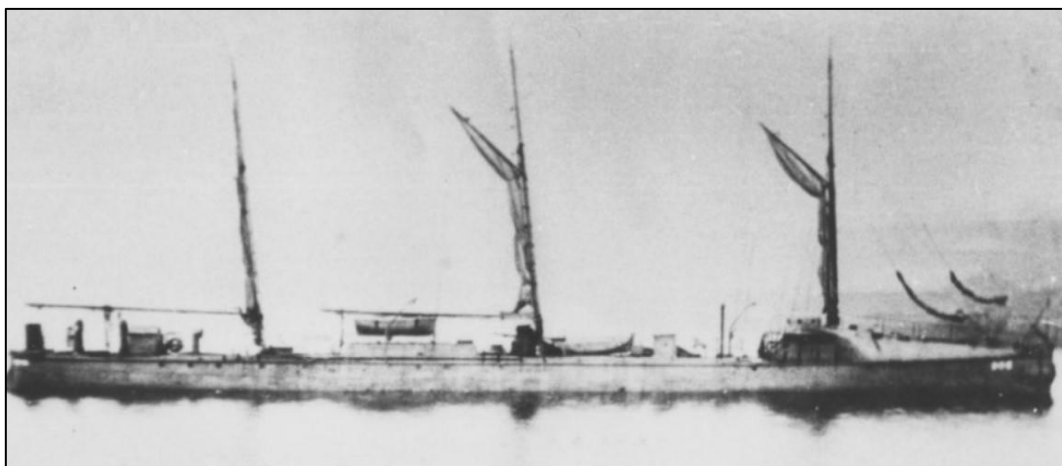
The torpedo gunboat *Countess of Hopetoun* was the last vessel built for the Victorian Naval Force. It was built by Yarrow and Company on the river Thames in 1891. In order to sail from England to Port Phillip the vessel was rigged as a ketch and made the voyage, via the Cape of Good Hope, under wind power in 154 days.

The vessel was named by the wife of the Governor of Victoria after arrival at Williamstown. The christening was done in the usual way by breaking a bottle of champagne over the bows, but the bottle was smashed by a torpedo launched from the forward torpedo tube. The torpedo launch was electrically initiated by the Governor's wife, the Countess of Hopetoun.



The vessel had a displacement of 75 tons, a length of 130 feet (40m.) and a beam of 13.5 feet (4.1m.) Powered by an expansion steam engine the vessel had a top speed of 24 knots. It had three 14-inch torpedo tubes. One tube was installed at the bow and a rotating twin-tube arrangement was installed amidships.

The vessel joined the Commonwealth Naval Forces following federation in 1901, then the Royal Australian Navy when it was formed in 1911. During World War I she served in Victorian waters and as a tender to HMAS *Cerberus*.



The vessel rigged as a ketch for the voyage to Melbourne

Countess of Hopetoun was sold to Edward Hill of North Melbourne in April 1924 and scrapped the following year. Her hull was later sunk near Swan Island in Port Phillip.

The Queensland government & Uber launch a rideshare submarine

A rideshare submarine, **scUber**, aimed at helping bring tourists to the Great Barrier Reef, is the focus of a joint project of the Queensland government and Uber. From 27th May to 18th June, **scUber** will be available for a limited number of riders on request through the Uber app. The experience for two riders includes pick up and drop off from their location with Uber and a one-hour ride in the **scUber** submarine.



Tourism and Events Queensland chief executive Leanne Coddington said consumer research last year identified exploring the Great Barrier Reef in a submarine was the most desired future travel experience sought by visitors. “We’re thrilled to partner with Uber to showcase the beauty of the reef through this innovative experience,” Ms Coddington said.

Uber regional general manager for Australia and New Zealand, Susan Anderson, said the response to the launch of scUber had been positive. “The focus of Uber’s partnership with Tourism and Events Queensland is to showcase to the world the wonder and beauty that exists on the Great Barrier Reef through this unique form of movement,” Ms Anderson said. We’re thrilled to bring scUber to Tropical North Queensland to give riders the opportunity to see a different part of the reef.”

The launch of scUber also aims to support protection and conservation of the world’s largest coral reef system through Uber’s partnership with Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef. “The scUber submarine will continue to collect data to support reef research and monitoring for Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef over the next two weeks,” Ms Anderson said. “The sustainable protection of the Great Barrier Reef is of global importance and we hope with the launch of scUber, people from all over the world will be inspired to also help protect it.”

It is the ultimate rideshare. Uber dipped a toe in the water when it launched its first submarine rides, on the Great Barrier Reef, at a cost of \$1500 per person. Passengers will dive to a maximum of 30 metres – about the same levels reached by advanced scuba divers – with 180-degree views of Australia’s most recognisable World Heritage site in a battery-powered submarine.