



## **"THE SEA CHEST"**

### **Peninsula Ship Society Newsletter     October 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 Wetsernport Hotel and enjoy a reasonably priced meal.

#### **The Last Meeting**

Our speaker at the September meeting was David Baird, who was the Harbour Master at Western Port for many years. Because of his involvement, from the development stages through the boom years to the present, he was able to give his listeners a wonderful coverage of the story. Few were aware of just how busy the port was and the huge number of ships which passed through both the petroleum and steel wharves. David used a PowerPoint presentation to show statistics of ship numbers, of their increasing size over the years and photographs of many of the ships. We thank him for a most informative and entertaining presentation.

#### **The Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October. We can all remember when the first container ships came to Melbourne. This was probably the biggest change to world shipping since the first steamships commenced to sail in opposition to the sailing ships. The predominantly United Kingdom shipping companies were unable to go it alone in building new ships, purchasing containers and establishing container terminals with the specialised gantries. So, two consortia were established, **OCL** and **ACT**. We will look at the rise and fall of these two groups and their associated companies.

#### **The November Meeting**

As has become a tradition, the November meeting (this year on Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> November) will be a Lunch in the Upper Lounge of the Hastings Yacht Club, commencing at 11:30am. We will be using the same caterer as last year and we will be able to keep the price at \$20.00 per head. Partners are cordially invited to attend this function and bookings can be with our Treasure (Frank Garton) at the October meeting. If you wish to pay directly you can make a deposit to the P.S.S. Bank Account at BSB 663 000; Account No. 14318 1691. Please ensure that you include your name on the documentation.

#### **The Trip to Sale**

We regret to advise that due to lack of numbers the trip to Sale will not be taking place

## The Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network



The website of the MMHN has the following statement. *“Melbourne has, in effect, turned its back on its rich maritime heritage. Melbourne was, and still is, a great port city. Trade by sea was, and is still, crucial in underpinning Melbourne’s economic prosperity. Melbourne remains the nation’s largest port. The cultural and economic strength in Melbourne has not been adequately acknowledged in the public realm and thus far remains undervalued and inadequately exploited by government. The **Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN)** was formed to address these ‘deficits’ and to facilitate cooperation, collaboration and coordination across stakeholder groups.*

*The MMHN membership is not constrained by single interest groups or confined to specific locations. It seeks to sharpen the focus upon the richness of Melbourne’s maritime heritage and upon the crucial role of its port facilities in delivering social, cultural and economic benefits to Melbourne and regional Victoria.”*

The Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network is holding its inaugural Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, between 6:00pm and 7:30pm, in the Swanston Hall at the Melbourne Town Hall.

If you want more information on MMHN go to their website [www.mmhn.org.au](http://www.mmhn.org.au)

---

## Offshore and Specialist Ships Australia



Offshore and Specialist Ships Australia are having an exhibition, with the title, **“Specialist Ships made Australia – How?”** at the ‘**Library at the Dock**’. This fairly new facility is at Docklands and is just along the wharf from where the *Alma Doepel* and the *Wattle* have been located in recent years.

Address: 107 Victoria Harbour Promenade, Docklands

It will be open from Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> November to Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> November

Hours: Monday to Friday: 8am to 7pm; Sat. 10am to 5pm.; Sun. 12pm to 5pm.

## The wreck of the barque *Amazon* at Inverloch

The 402-ton barque *Amazon* was built, in 1855, by Frederick Charles Clarke at Jersey in the Channel Islands. On 12<sup>th</sup> December 1863 the *Amazon* left Melbourne with a load of salted meat. After sailing into Bass Strait, the vessel encountered very severe weather and instead of rounding Cape Otway the vessel was forced eastwards and eventually was beached at what is now the holiday township of Inverloch. The *Amazon* had a length of 131.5 ft.; a beam of 25.5 ft. and a depth of 16.2 ft.



Early this year some parts of the wreck of the *Amazon* became visible at extreme low tides and marine archaeologists from Heritage Victoria became involved in a research project on the wreck. Heritage Victoria lists the *Amazon* as a “rare example of an international wooden trading ship” and the only wooden cargo vessel of its kind in Victoria. It is listed as one of the twenty most significant shipwrecks in Victoria.

Erosion, caused by storms in September, exposed parts of the barque that have not been seen for over a century. These parts of the vessel will be dug up and reburied on another section of the Inverloch beach, that is less subject to erosion. They also plan to recover some of the more fragile parts of the wreck and take them away from the beach to store temporarily in a salt-water bath.



Storm surges this year have washed away almost forty metres of the beach. The road, shown above, was previously over forty metres from the high-water mark. The Bass Strait Shire Council has spent more than \$160,000 in an attempt to prevent this erosion from getting any worse. However, what is a disaster for the residents of Inverloch, has enabled Heritage Victoria to learn a little more about the sailing ship that ended up on the Inverloch beach one hundred and fifty-six years ago.

## A self-indulgent look at an old steamship



The *Straits Breeze* with a full load of logs in the Rajang River, Sarawak in the early sixties

When I recently received the current issue of the Nautical Association of Australia's quarterly journal, 'The Log', I was astonished to see this photo of the steamship, *Straits Breeze*. This ship was built, in 1938, by the Caledon Shipbuilding & Engineering Company at Dundee, as the *Kooringa*, for McIlwraith McEacharn Ltd.

Although I never sailed on this vessel it played a major role in my life. In June 1936 my mother returned to Australia on the delivery voyage of McIlwraiths passenger vessel, *Kanimbla*, that had been constructed by Harland and Wolff at Belfast. Her father had supervised the construction of this vessel and he was then seventy-one.

My parents married in September 1936 and they left Melbourne in April 1937 on the Swedish cargo ship *Parrakoola*, as the first stage of travelling to Dundee, where my father supervised the construction of *Kooringa*. They returned to Australia on the new vessel. My mother was signed on as "Stewardess". Also, on board were the wives of the Master and Chief Engineer. I was born the following year.



This watercolour of *Kooringa* was given to my father by a draughtsman at the shipyard

*Kooringa* was in service for McIlwraiths for twenty years until 1958 when the vessel was sold to John Manners & Co., who renamed the vessel *Straits Breeze*. Later the name was changed to *San Eduardo*. In 1968, with the name *Teh Foo*, she was broken up.