



WAVE



Number 163 “the ship comes first” December 2018
The Newsletter of the Barque *Polly Woodside* Volunteers Association Inc.

PWVA Committee:

Chairman: Neil Thomas, thomclan1@dodo.com.au 9802 4608

Hon.Secretary:

Temporary Treasurer and Wave Editor: Neil Thomas

Committee Members: Don Knowles, 9877 1584; Roger Wilson, 9376 6429

DISCLAIMER: Please be aware that statements, opinions & comments made by contributors to this journal are not necessarily those of the PWVA Committee and/or its Members.



**National Trust acknowledges Polly Woodside volunteers at their Annual General Meeting
L/R Don, Campbell, Neil, Roger, and Charlotte, with the chairman of the National Trust
Ms. Kristin Stegley OAM, after presentation of their pictures of Polly Woodside.**

Chairman's Chat:

Consumer Affairs have agreed that we can continue as an Association providing we have all executive positions filled at least.

This will have to be fulfilled at the Annual General Meeting to be held in February 2019.

At present your committee is:-

Chairman: Neil Thomas.

Vice Chairman – VACANT

Secretary: VACANT

Treasurer: VACANT

Wave Editor: ?

Committee Members:- Don Knowles Roger Wilson.

Unfortunately Jenny Hunter has had to resign as Secretary due to health reasons. Jenny became Secretary in August 2006, our longest serving Secretary, and will be sorely missed. Many thanks to you Jenny for 12 years of dedicated service.

If this situation cannot be resolved, then we will consider attempting to continue on until the end of 2019, having our Christmas party, and then holding an Extra-Ordinary Meeting to voluntarily disband the Polly Woodside Volunteers Association in early February 2020.

50 years is not a bad run for an incorporated Association.

Volunteers:

Our volunteer numbers are fluctuating between four to about ten on a good day. The stalwarts being, Don Knowles, Roger Wilson, Richard Barber, John Slattery, Campbell McCullough coming down by train from Bendigo, John Maxwell, Tod Gardiner, and D'Arcy Wells whenever they can. Also Simon with his carer Effie, are doing a great job overhauling and painting the mast fittings. Wayne and Damien Bette, come down whenever their sea time allows them to. Also Charlotte is continuing serving the ratlines. Don Knowles is continuing overhauling and renovating blocks. I wonder if he dreams about them? Also a warm welcome to our new volunteer Geoff, a retired US Navy seaman, who also works and crews on Enterprize.

Richard Barber is continuing to parcel and serve the rigging with stoic determination.

Roger Wilson is working to complete the Mizzen mast-coat, but feels that is the easy one, as things are cramped at the Foremast (an anchor) and Main mast (ship's pumps). Any volunteers to set them up?

Maintenance Coordinator: Ferdi Darley, and his team are hard at work manufacturing the masts down at their workshop next to Seaworks. As the timber is not available in size or strength for this duty Ferdie and Co are constructing them using the laminated principal (layers of timber glued and clamped to the correct size). This is the same technique that is being used on 'Alma Doepel.

The ship: Unfortunately, she really needs a good clean, and dress up, which cannot be done until the rigging is installed.

Management: Shara Canzano our Manager, has the site looking great. There is a great rapport between the volunteers and management with security an important issue.

The Pump House: The periodic working bees at the Pump House are ongoing. Thanks Derek – all these improvements in the Pump House are thanks to you.

Vale John Wroe

It is with sadness I have to inform the volunteers that John Wroe died peacefully at home on the 28th September, 2018.



John joined the PWVA in 2002. Became Editor of the Wave in December 2003, then also took on Treasurer in February 2005, and did not resign from these positions!.

He was a staunch ally to me giving advice and helping out over a myriad of times. If I was stuck I knew I only had to contact John for assistance. He was not just Treasurer and Editor of Wave, but was also a perfect de-facto Vice Chairman.

John had a quiet but firm determination in tackling problems. All of this would happen with his customary smile, warm manner, and soft voice. I remember when we were investigating the ship's pumps John made a wooden template of one of their driving-wheels, a very fiddly job however we had to put in the too-hard basket. We appreciated his labour, but unfortunately could not continue.

John and Chris made their home available for the PWVA Committee meetings with their warm hospitality

John was special and will be sadly missed by all the Polly Woodside volunteers who came to know and admire him.

Our thoughts are with Chris and the family

Neil Thomas

The National Trust's show of appreciation to Polly Woodside's volunteers

Polly Woodside's report in the Property section of National Trust's Annual Report 2017- 18.

'It has been a big year for Polly Woodside with the commencement of a major restoration of the masts and rigging. With State Government funding, provided through Heritage Victoria, the masts of the Polly are being removed and lowered for the first time in 27 years, inspected and refurbished, where necessary. Hundreds of metres of rigging are being painstakingly stripped and restored. The project will continue to run through the coming financial year. Volunteers are playing an important part in this project and more are always welcome. Special mention should be made of Neil Thomas, who has been volunteering at Polly for 40 years

Polly continues to be a popular destination for young Victorians, with education and Pirate Sunday Groups making up the bulk of its 15,469 visitors this year.

Martin Green came down to Polly and videoed our work on the ship and in the workshop. He then interviewed Don, Richard, Campbell, Roger, Charlotte, and myself, while we were working, after which he informed us the video was to be shown at the National Trust's Annual General Meeting, and would be available to download.

Next we all received an invitation to attend the National Trust's AGM, which included our partners.

On arrival we were ushered to the front row of seats (why?).

Martin Green gave the Property Report – including the video at the Polly, and we were invited onto the stage, where we were individually introduced to the meeting by the Chairman Ms. Kristin Stegly OAM, then each of us were invited to give the meeting a picture of what we do down at Polly Woodside.

After which we were each presented with a framed photograph of Polly Woodside (Rona).

A very enjoyable experience!



Pros & Cons of Permanently Dry-Docking Historic Vessels Captain S.T. Waite, M.N.I. Master, *Cutty Sark*

In recent years more and more historic vessels are being considered for preservation, and one of the factors to be considered when planning this is whether or not the vessel is to remain afloat as, in the case of H.M.S. *Warrior*, or to be permanently dry-docked, as with H. M.S. *Victory*. These are not, however, the only options. Two other options have been used:

- 1) to sit the vessel in a hole in the ground and infill around her.

Two examples of this method can be seen in Japan, the *Meiji Maru*, built in 1874 as a Royal Yacht and the pre-Dreadnought battleship *Mikasa*, built in 1900. While another example is the *Caishot Spit Light Vessel* in England.

- 2) to locate her in a permanent dock that may be used as either a wet dock or a dry-dock, as in the case of R.R.S. *Discovery* in Scotland.

Ships are designed to withstand the crushing force of water outside, and are not very well suited to remaining out of the water for prolonged periods unless very well supported. This illustration shows what can happen to a vessel that is not adequately shored.

When *Cutty Sark* was permanently dry-docked in 1954 there was only one other example of a major historic vessel already preserved in the United Kingdom, HMS *Victory*, to which the *Cutty Sark* Preservation Society could look for inspiration. Unfortunately, the minutes of the Technical Committee of the Society are no longer in existence, but one has to assume that having decided to preserve the ship at Greenwich and to open her to the public as a visitor attraction, the following points were considered when deciding whether to leave her afloat or to permanently dry-dock her:

- 3) Ease of access
- 2) Evacuation in event of fire, and accessibility for emergency services
- 3) Need for periodic dry-docking, resulting in loss of revenue
- 4) Risks when under tow
- 5) Risk of damage from the wash of passing vessels, and the risk of collision
- 6) The cost of maintaining moorings
- 7) The possible loss of display area in the lower hold caused by the amount of ballast required
- 8) The extra cost of maintenance, being afloat
- 9) The ability to display the underwater body, and show off the ship's fine lines. In the event, it was decided to dry-dock her, it being felt that her composite construction, with sharp rise of floors, would allow her to remain out of the water for an indefinite period without the hull losing shape. It was also believed that very light bilge and breast shores would suffice to support the hull and yet allow the ship's lines to be appreciated, and that with her unique construction of iron, teak and elm, and being permanently out of the water, there would never be a need for major repairs to the hull in general, nor to the keel in particular. With this in mind, the ship was docked down on a continuous concrete plinth. Experience has shown that the assumptions made in 1954 on the inherent strength of the hull were incorrect, the extent of the wastage of the ironwork, as shown in this illustration, not being appreciated. By the 1970's it was realised that the ship was losing shape and an additional 31 intermediate frames had to be fitted to maintain the shape of the hull. These run from frame 25 to frame 105, that is from abeam of the mizzen to abeam of the fore mast and rise from the keelplate to the bilge stringer. Extra shores had also to be placed to support the counter and in 1991 additional shores had to be fitted to support the bilges and the keel, because the latter was beginning to crush due to electro-chemical degradation of the timber. It has become apparent that the ship needs a massive amount of restoration, and she is likely to continue to need it in the future. Being unable to remove keel blocks makes working on the keel extremely difficult.

With H.M.S. *Victory* it was known that the hull was fragile when she was docked in 1922, and massive bilge stools were built to support the hull, but thought had been given to the possibility for the need of keel repairs in the future, and although she is docked down on a continuous concrete plinth, wooden keel blocks were provided.

The S.S. *Great Britain* has the advantage of being dry-docked in the dock in which she was built in 1843, using traditional methods with wooden shores. A more sympathetic arrangement than the tubular steel shores used on *Cutty Sark*.

In the case of H.M.S. *Warrior* it was decided to keep the vessel afloat in Portsmouth Harbour. This is obviously the most sympathetic way of displaying a ship, provided that she has the strength to

remain afloat, which obviously the *Great Britain* had not, having broken her back while abandoned in the Falklands.

When deciding on what course of action to take, I believe that a ship should be kept afloat as long as is possible, but she must be placed in a safe berth, and the future costs of dry-docking, towage, insurance etc. should be taken into account. However, with the decline of shipbuilding and ship repair in the Western World one has to consider the possibility that there might be no suitable dry-docks nearby in the future, and a long and expensive tow may be required.

Permanently dry-docking a ship removes the problem of future availability of dry-docks, but this only works well if the dry-dock looks like and is fitted out like a dock that is contemporary with the ship, and it is imperative that the ship is provided with suitable workshop accommodation nearby.

Unfortunately, *Cutty Sark* was provided with nothing and restoration is being carried out from a temporary pound alongside the ship, with 40 ft containers being used as rigging lofts and metal working shops. The wood working shop is a quarter of a mile away!

To build the ship into the surrounding land is, I believe, the worst possible option. Not only is the surrounding totally out of keeping, but how does one determine what is happening to the "under water body". In the case of *Mikasa* I believe that the Japanese authorities had no option but to treat the vessel in this way, because part of the surrender agreement after WWII stated that Japan could not operate battleships, and the alternative would have been to scrap her. I am not aware of the reasons for preserving *Meiji Maru* in this way. The *Caishot Spit Light Vessel* is not open to the public, and appears to be preserved just as a piece of street decoration.

The best choice of berthing arrangement is the wet/dry dock such as that used for *Discovery* in Dundee and HM.S. *Gannet* in Chatham. The dock in Dundee was specially constructed, was expensive, and unfortunately does not look like a traditional dock, but serves its purpose well, allowing the vessel to remain open to the public while docked down for underwater restoration. Here again, for various reasons, adequate workshop facilities were not provided.

Gannet has the advantage of being in one of the historic dry-docks of the decommissioned Royal Naval Dockyard, but even so there were costs involved in converting the dock to its present use. The caisson had to be modified to take the water pressure of the dock being full, when the tide in the river was out, because it was not designed to operate like this. other factors to be considered if keeping a vessel afloat are:

- 1) The salinity of the dock water. An iron or steel vessel is better off in freshwater, while the reverse is true for a wooden vessel.
- 2) Construction of the vessel. Wooden merchantmen pose a particular problem in that if they are afloat with the minimum of ballast, in order to make the hold accessible to visitors, there is a very strong possibility that they will hog badly. The 103ft wooden tops'l schooner *Kathleen & May* was prepared for a 600 mile tow from London to Gloucester, for restoration. For 10 years she had been in a special wet/dry dock in London floating in fresh water. No workshop facilities had been provided, and when work had to be carried out the surrounding businesses were concerned about the noise levels likely to be created, hence the move to Gloucester.

Prior to the tow all underwater seams were battened, and these battens clearly show how the keel has hogged and the bilges have dropped. The vessel had a 15" hog in a keel length of 90ft!

To conclude, I believe that ships should be kept afloat when-ever possible, depending on the following factors:

- 1) Strength of the hull
- 2) Construction of the hull
- 3) Salinity of water
- 4) Ability to carry sufficient ballast for stability and to prevent the hull hogging
- 5) Accessibility for visitors and emergency services
- 6) Present and future availability of dry-docks or slipways

However, whether kept afloat, docked down or in a wet/dry dock, day to day maintenance and repair will have to be carried out and workshop space must be made available.