



# WAVE



Number 192

“the ship comes first”

March 2026

The Newsletter of the Barque *Polly Woodside* Volunteers Association Inc.



**Polly Woodside February 1978**

Photo: Neil Thomas

**Note:** Photo prior to Jeff's Shed & Plenary with Robour Tea House (once promised as our museum) on left, & a lock-gate in centre.

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**Chairman's Report:-** Our Tuesday Gang of volunteers consists of Nat Trust recruits Colin, Drew, with Lauren-Jane and Michael (at Uni) Sandy looking after the garden, not our members yet. Jeff is back when ashore and me. Campbell, from Bendigo, hopes to be back with us now the trains are running again, and Mike Ridley is coming down whenever he can. Roger Wilson, we miss in spirit, and Mark we miss with his practicality.

**The Deckhouse: -**

The galleys' fittings will have to be renewed.

The deckhouse crew's cabin is the only part open to the school groups, and we still await the opportunity to commence all the work that must be done through the whole deckhouse.

All fittings of the port and starboard cabins, galley, and crew's quarters require tender loving care. While the mystery deepens due to the disappearance of the three of the cabin door lintels that Campbell restored, have and will require remaking.

**The Ship: -**

Decks & scuppers have been cleaned, though seagulls are added to the rubbish cleared, while under fo'c'sle head, requires bailing out and painting inside and out.

The officers' quarters appear to be fixed, and after a week or so of rain, the aft accommodation remained dry.

We have started overhauling the poop deck fittings, and then they are to be cleaned and re-oiled.

The replacement base for the starboard side poop steps, has been restored, while the forrard gangway landing steps deck base has also been done by Craig

Fo'c'sle has had water leaking into the paint lockers, and down into the lower fo'c'sle.

Pump in lower fo'c'sle has been reconnected, and the space bucketed out. Now dry?

**The ship still has signs of black mould in the deck house, and the poop deck's 2<sup>nd</sup> mate's cabin (locked up due to security reasons), and also the fo'c'sle paint lockers. Professional cleaners will still be required to prepare the ship, after the deck leaks are resealed, so we can then paint it.**

Unfortunately, she doesn't look any better, with the officers' quarters still looking tatty, but the lights have been repaired but awaiting replacements for the broken chimneys etc. that require attention! **They have been ordered!**

With the boat falls blocks overhauled and crossed the first boat has finally been moved to be overhauled.

**The Site: -**

The dock side workshop bench has been moved and cleared in preparation for the ongoing ships' blocks to be repaired, repainted, and some renewed. Is our production line in operation? Henry Ford beware!

National Trust's maintenance member Craig is fitting in well and really stirring the pot, getting us moving.

The site has been cleaned and tidied, so it doesn't look too bad, although the seagulls are nesting behind the power box on shore and the pin rail on board.

It could appear there will be no celebrations in 2030 for her 175<sup>th</sup> birthday or in 2055 for her 200<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **Bosun's Ship Report**

**Polly Woodside 2025 / 26.** This is an updated report of Jeff's 2024 report, however as Jeff is at sea at the moment, I have updated his report for 2025 / 2026 feeling that it still awaits recognition. (Neil Thomas – Chairman P.W.V.A.).

Over the last year we have seen many ups and downs onboard Polly. We continue to fight the battle against the ship's deterioration as best as we can with a small crew and a shoestring budget.

The ship is still in a declining state with no major renovation/restoration projects happening at the moment. The ship could do with- a thorough hull inspection/dry docking (then repairs as necessary and a fresh lick of paint).

The deck has numerous spots which will need repair. Patch work will get us a long way, but I believe we (and the Trust) need to start thinking of a long-term plan for the future (really for the whole ship!).

The rigging is still as it has been since professional work halted in **February/March 2019**

On deck- housings, fittings, gear, pin rails, get some attention but not enough, partially due to weather or school groups onboard on Tuesdays (our only day for maintenance 9am to 3pm). The forward deck house roof is staying dry with the canvas tarpaulin (**an Australian army truck cover**) but again we need to come up with a long-term solution.

The ship's boats are exposed and in a rough state, **but a plan and action has finally commenced with the 'double ender' now resting on Robertsons Wharf in her cradle support.**

The mooring lines are looking tired and although they are sure to have a decent bit of life left in them, we again should look at a succession plan for replacing them. The fair leads for the mooring lines all require attention as well as showing corrosion where they are in contact with the lines, we have applied chafing gear for a temporary fix. Canvas has a finite life and ours is not far from its end.

We need to look at a plan to replace the boat canvas covers as well as the hatch covers, particularly the forward and after covers where crew and visitors enter/exit below decks.

Speaking of below decks, not much has changed in the last few years, the ships' watertight integrity looks good, and the bilges are mostly dry. The forward bilge at the pump usually has some water as does midships near the mainmast and up in the bow, forward of the collision bulkhead, I believe this is all from rainwater ingress. I will note the continued spots of rust on the inside of the hull, below the waterline back aft of the mizzen mast continue to show an increase of the white crystallised corrosion. I wonder what plate thickness is in those areas.

Anyway, enough gloom and doom, let us talk about some successes.

From the maintenance crew of the National Trust Craig is continuing to come to Polly nearly every Tuesday even though the Trust's new CEO with a bit of shake up and a reduction in hours, we still get some assistance from Myron, and Tim. Craig is coming more often and has taken a keen interest in the ship and has also taken the responsibility of getting us supplies for bigger projects like the ships boat movement.

Additionally, it's time again to change our anodes. This year the Trust has purchased the anodes but decided to not pay for installation and instead go with the Trust maintenance team and our volunteers. This will be the maintenance team's first go; it is not rocket science but that stern one

can be a little tricky as our volunteers already know.

We have also had an increase in volunteers. Colin and Drew show up most Tuesdays and turn their hands to any and all projects. One of the biggest projects we have on the go now is the ship's boat blocks. Colin has stepped up to repair and rebuild many of the damaged and destroyed boats' blocks of the ship's rig while the rest of us paint and reassemble and hopefully one day when the rig is ready to go back up, she can be completely dressed and fitted with her gear.

The ship's boats are our next big project. The plan is to get the "double ender", **which is now on its chocks on Robertsons Wharf with scraping vacuuming and cleaning commenced for her complete overhaul. We had planned for the move with the new gear (strops and rope) already used. This success of the project will have several knock-on projects. Refurbishment of the boat deck, boat cradles, and davits. Additionally, once the "double ender" is complete, we will repeat the procedure for the captain's gig on port side and finish off with new canvas coverings.**

We have a potential increase in effort on the horizon. A prior volunteer (insert name here) who lives in Queensland has offered to come visit Polly and do an assessment and then make a proposal to the Trust. He has stated that he comes to Melbourne a couple of times a year for a few weeks each time and can organise labor and materials for work on the ship from top to bottom at minimal to no cost. He currently operates a tall ship in Queensland. Watch this space.

I must also mention that we've recently been joined by several new volunteers who came for an orientation a few weeks ago and I believe several have shown a keen interest in staying onboard, let's hope this is an increasing trend!

I'd also like to say thanks to the folks who keep this going, our site manager, Kathleen and her several 2ICs and the facilitators. I'd like to thank Neil, who has stuck with Polly through thick and thin (I reckon you deserve a medal for your efforts); you truly are the glue that holds this association together (in my humble opinion). I'd like to thank all current and past volunteers; everyone has given a little piece of their heart and soul and sweat and blood into our lovely ship.

I'd also like to thank a few special crew members who for several distinct reasons are unable to come down to Polly and their presence is definitely missed-Don, Mark and my favourite old sailor Roger, **(now in spirit, lost)**, but our last I hope to see them onboard again. I'm sure there are many others to mention but I'm sure you all think this "report" has gone on long enough...

In closing, I'd like to end with a few thoughts for discussion:

1. I hope this isn't the end for the PWVA, I think we need to discuss a plan to invigorate membership and potential benefits of membership. I don't know the solution but think it's worth keeping alive. If I'm alone in this thought it's ok, I reckon then we end it with proper Irish wake... hopefully this isn't the case.
2. I think the ship needs some proper planning and organisation. We and the Trust should have a meeting with a proper agenda to discuss the ship and her future. Out of this meeting I believe a new "ships committee" should be created with long and short term goals on which actual long and short term plans can be made.
3. I believe Polly needs a complete 2nd restoration, maybe 75% vs 100%, but still a lot of work, manpower, skills, proper planning and oversight and of course, money. This is where a proper committee, project manager and permanent (part-time) maintenance person would be of great benefit to the ship.

There are two plaques onboard the ship which I always look at when I see them, words passed down from sailors over the years which I feel breathe a little honest life into the ship. The first is in the forward deck house saying, "growl you may, but go you must", this is from an old sea shanty and simply means you can complain if you want but you will turn too and do your job-sailor! The next line of that shanty states "if you growl to loud, your head he'll bust" ... don't worry, those days are long gone. The second plaque is on the forward face of the boat deck, just aft of the main mast

and states “the ship comes first”. Years ago, this had a couple of meanings, ship owners wanted their investment and cargo to be number one, the crew were second. The crew wanted to have a ship in good shape as this was their home and protector from the dangers at sea. I think we can all see how fitting a phrase is for our ship and how important it is to keep this little piece of history alive!

Respectfully, Jeff – Bosun

## **Starboard Polly’s Boat Move for Restoration**

My records show that the double-ender boat was suspended on its falls, ready to be moved to the Robertson Wharf on 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2017 and has been suspended there until 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 – 8 years and 3 months or 99 months in total.

**Following for your information is our procedure for the event**

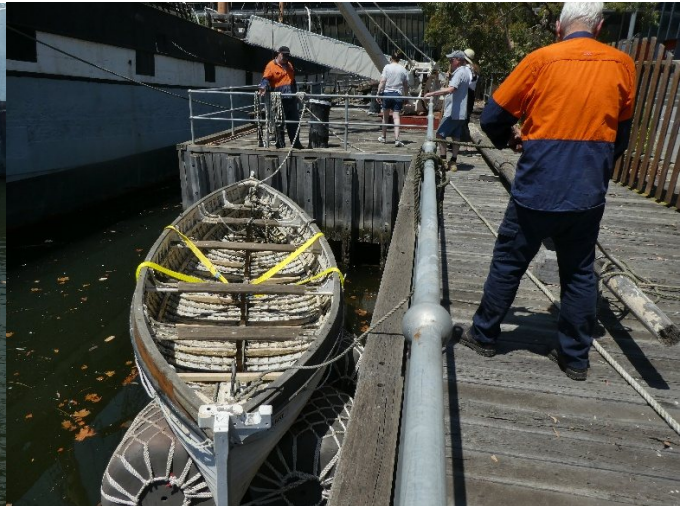
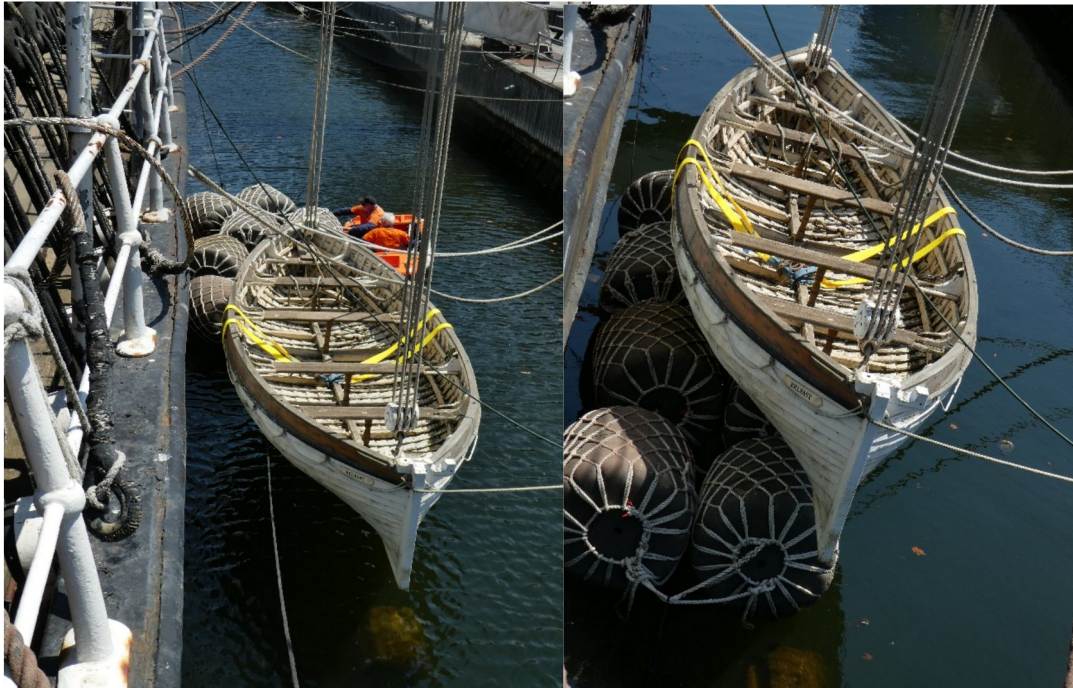
### **Preparation:-**

1. Rig slings under boat and secure together.
2. Fasten rope to boat’s bow.
3. Feed this rope around side of dock clear of moorings, gangway net etc. and fasten to dock side rail at dock gate end.

### **Boat Move:-**

1. Bring fenders up from ‘Tween deck by rolling up aft stairway, one fender at a time (2 persons).
2. Set up fenders on deck between starboard boat’s davits – in 2 rows of 4.
3. Fenders have two fastened ropes attached on each.
4. Tie short ropes between fenders to support boat between them.
5. Tie long ropes through centre of fenders to make two rows of four.
6. Raise boat to clear fenders and place slings in correct position in line with boat’s seats.
7. Rope tied to front fenders to pull them clear of the boat and lower them into the water forward of the boat.
8. Rope tied to the stern of the boat to pull fenders into position under the boat.
9. When all are in correct position, lower the boat onto the fenders, and clear the falls.
10. Haul boat up the dock to the dock gate by rope, set clear of obstacles i.e. (Prep.3).
11. Pass rope to person on gate, cross to Plenary side wharf – and haul boat across to it.

12. Haul boat to Robertson Wharf and prepare to raise boat by crane.
13. Rig slings to crane, and lift to height to clear handrail and lower the boat onto the cradle support.



*Top* - Setting up fenders.

Boat lifted – fenders pushed under.

*Middle* - Moving boat around to Robertson Wharf.

At Robertson Wharf.

*Bottom* - Swinging the boat to its cradle.

The boat settled onto its cradle



THE GANG - from left to right: - Tim (NT), Chris (NT), Jeff, Ellen (NT), Kathleen (NT), Shruti, Drew & Craig (NT)



The falls as they are now.



The Bow section



The Stern Section

Volunteers are required to assist in restoring boat No.1, then guess what!. boat No.2.