



Number 158

“the ship comes first”

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

PWVA Committee:

Chairman: Neil Thomas, thomclan1@bigpond.com 9802 4608

Hon.Secretary: Jenny Hunter. 9690 3669, jmdhunter39@gmail.com

Hon Treasurer and Wave Editor: John Wroe, jacwroe@bigpond.net.au, 9531 5626

Other Committee Members: Don Knowles, 9877 1584; Neville Keown, 9877 9234;
Roger Wilson.

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Chairman's Chat

We held our General Meeting on Saturday 12th August which eight of us attended, with five apologies. After which lunch was enjoyed by all at 'The General Assembly'.

Shara could not attend due to work commitments, so she briefed me prior to the meeting.

Ferdie also could not attend and sent me a report to read at the meeting, which is in this Wave.

At the conclusion of the meeting we toured around the ship and work areas explaining what we are doing and the condition of the main topmast, t'gallant mast, the yards and the standing rigging we are working on. Thanks to Ferdie, Rupert, Phil, Roger, Christian and co. we are all learning old skills from great teachers.

Don, Richard, John and me are at present working on the standing rigging cutting out worn or frayed serving, then renewing as required. The blocks are being overhauled and painted by Simon and Ash, while Campbell took four blocks home to Bendigo, overhauled and painted them and brought them back ready for final coats of paint.

We are concentrating on completing the standing rigging, so the masts can go up when ready.

On completion of the restoration of the main mast, it will be the foremast's turn.

Roger Wilson is commencing to tailor the mast coats (canvas covers to seal the lower masts where they pass through the deck), which look awfully complicated to me, after making smaller models to test he has got them right.

The number of volunteers are steady with about fourteen of us getting around the table on Tuesdays. The volunteers being, Don Knowles, Roger Wilson, Richard Barber, Todd Gardiner, John Slater and D'Arcy Wells. Campbell McCullough coming down by train from Bendigo. Welcome back Peter Allen, on light duties due to a sore shoulder, and Simon with Ash his Carer, who are continuing

to do a great job overhauling the sheave blocks. Ash Green who divides her time between Polly and the Old Melbourne Gaol, week about, is now working with Wayne and Damien Bette, whenever sea time allows them aloft on the mizzen ratlines,. John Maxwell is laid up at home – we wish him all the very best, and wish to reassure you John, we will save some work for you when you are back on your feet.

The Gaff is out on the wharf with most of the fittings replaced – cannot get over how much extra room there is in the workshop/mess room. After a paint touch-up it will finally be ready to be hauled aloft.

My son Mark is back working on the Memorial Plaques board, which is looking great, and we hope to have it finished in time for celebrations commemorating 50 years since the National Trust purchased Polly for one cent. Another four new plaques have been ordered and are to be fitted to the board. Roger's idea to frame the board with rope containing fancy knots, will be the final touch!

Shara Canzano, our new Manager, is coming down to Polly every Tuesday when we are on site, and is really getting stuck into improvements on the site.

Neil

Ferdie's Report Presented to General Meeting 12th August

Sorry for my absence and I hope the day is an enjoyable one for all and especially for those that have helped us so much with the rig overhaul. The job would not be possible without this contribution of labour and company.

As you will all see when walking around the vessel, the main mast and fore mast top yards are down and being overhauled. In general the standing rigging is in good condition.

We have devised an inspection routine which is budget driven but also practically driven for ongoing future maintenance. The inspection of wire needs to be visual so we have divided the rigging up into "must do" and "can still be done in the future" when the rig is back up.

Every lanyard and every second back stay has had the seizings cut and turn backs opened, de-served, inspected and put back together with new serving and seizings. This, along with their associated top eyes (which are around the mast) have been inspected, and this means that half the stays in the rig have been inspected and seen to be in good condition. The remaining turn backs can be broken out as the serving breaks down in the future, *in situ*.

All foot ropes and stirrups (things that we climb on), have been stripped, inspected, re-parcelled and served.

We are re-serving the rig in these areas and also those which would be difficult to access once the rig is back up, with a modern spun-yarn that will have better lasting abilities.

This approach will again make ongoing maintenance easier and more complete.

All the timber work, masts, spars, blocks, are in the process of being inspected. All the blocks are being broken down for a complete overhaul and documentation. The trestle and cross trees have been removed from the top mast and timber spans and fittings from the yards.

Careful consideration is being given to these items by the National Trust, both in structure, safety and time span before they might need repair or replacement. The other requirement the Trust has put on the refit is that it is completely documented. This means that not only is the state of everything being recorded but measurements, diameters, amounts of serving and quantities of materials are being recorded for future reference. We are at the end of the main mast overhaul and about to begin the fore mast.

It has and is a real privilege to be able to look at the master craftsmanship that put this rig together. We have not changed any of these techniques, only repaired and learnt.

Again I must say and earnestly, this would not have been possible without the endless help, skills and company of you all.

It is appreciated and I look forward to the fore mast.

Regards,

Ferdi

Article from Cranbourne News Thursday 15 June 2017 supplied by George Corcoran

George a man of the times By Victoria Stone Meadows.



George Frew with one of the Polly Woodside models that helped to restore the sailing ship to its former glory.
Picture: VICTORIA STONE-MEADOWS

Former business tycoon and Botanic Ridge resident George Frew has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) this Queen's Birthday for his services in historic restoration, having a long history in being involved in the preservation of history.

He has been recognised for his work raising money to restore the Polly Woodside sailing ship and saving the Goldsbrough Mort building in Melbourne's CBD.

Mr Frew was the founder and builder of the Commodore Hotel and Motel Chain in the 1960s, '70s and '80s.

He did not have a maritime background and confesses to knowing very little about ships and sailing, but that did not stop him from working hard to raise the funds to restore the Polly Woodside.

Mr Frew was approached by Dr Graeme Robertson of the National Trust of Australia to help with the fund raising for the restoration of the Polly Woodside which would cost \$300,000.

This is equivalent to \$3.3 million in 2017 with the government contributing \$200,000 to the project.

Mr Frew came up with a genius idea of how to raise the remaining \$100,000 needed to restore the ship.

He was unsure he wanted to commit to being involved in such a project, but it was an interaction with a passerby when he first saw the ship that changed his mind.

"Doc Robertson from the National Trust and I went out to see the ship," he said "I remember when I first looked off the bridge I thought 'what a mess'; it was devoid of sails and not sailing anywhere".

The much run-down sailing ship had been used as a coal hulk since the 1920s and was towed up and down the rivers in Melbourne delivering coal.

"First I had to get up on board to have a good look at her which is a tricky thing to do. When I was up there I thought it was pretty solid, but still thought it was a flight of fancy trying to restore it," he said.

"That was when a woman walked down below and called out saying we should 'take it out to the middle of the bay and sink it'."

"My blood rose. Fancy someone making a comment like that."

Thanks to the throwaway comment by this woman, Mr Frew's determination came to the fore and he dedicated himself to making sure the Polly Woodside would be refurbished.

"That was the decision-maker. I was irate and thought to myself it wouldn't be impossible to restore."

It was from there that Mr Frew decided his fund-raising efforts should centre on the kinds of people that really cared about restoring and preserving history. So he decided he would raise money for the Polly Woodside directly from the members of the National Trust of Australia.

Mr Frew had made 1170 small models of the Polly Woodside and what she would look like once restored and sold them at \$100 each to the members of the National Trust.

Each model ship had a personalised plaque that recognised the buyer of the ship as a contributor to the resurrection of the Polly Woodside.

"We sold so many, people were being shamed by other members to contribute to the Polly Woodside," Mr Frew said.

"Once we raised the money it went straight to the National Trust and the balance of the money was raised by the State Government."

Mr Frew has also been recognised with an OAM for his preservation of the Goldsbrough Mort building that sits at the corner Bourke and William Streets in Melbourne.

The building had been used by various companies when Mr Frew purchased it in the late 1970s and was in a state of disrepair.

"It was a terrible mess," he said. "There was refuse from storage in the rooms for what was then a telephone company and there was stuff everywhere."

After purchasing the building, Mr Frew said he and his crews removed about 100 tonnes of rubbish from the building.

"We then had to design the interior and undertake restoration of it, which with the help of the Melbourne Council took about three years."

Mr Frew said he had fond memories of the times he spent working on the Goldsbrough Mort building.

“It’s a magnificent building and renovating then in the city was nothing new to me and it proved to be a very worthwhile doing.”

Among other historic achievements, Mr Frew rescued the gigantic chandelier from the Regent Theatre when it was scheduled for demolition, then gifted it back to the new owner once it had been saved.

Throughout all these tasks and undertakings to preserve important parts of Melbourne’s history, Mr Frew said he hadn’t done it for the recognition.

“In one sense, I can’t help but say throughout all these things no-one has given me much recognition,” he said.

“But that’s just life – I feel grateful that somebody has said that this is not right and decided to give me this honour, and that’s more than good than enough for me.”

Article from Docklands News – Date unknown.

Chamber ‘adopts’ Alma



Alma Doepel restoration director Peter Harris with Joh Maxwell, Tim Horton and Bill Reid.

The Docklands Chamber of Commerce has partnered with the Alma Doepel restoration team in an attempt to raise funds for the completion of the project.

With at least a further \$1.7 million needed to complete the project, the chamber will be promoting and educating the local business community about the restoration project in order to help secure more funds.

“They’re the peak body for commercial organisations in Docklands so it is very exciting that they’ve decided to adopt us,” Alma Doepel restoration director Peter Harris said.

“The chamber is so supportive and positive, it’s very encouraging,” Mr Harris said.

In particular, the chamber will encourage its business network and the local community to take part in the 'buy a plank' scheme.

According to chamber vice-president Bill Reid, all businesses in Docklands should get behind the project by raising \$500 to buy a plank for the restoration of Alma's hull.

He said the chamber planned to put together an exhibition on Harbour Esplanade providing information about the Alma Doepel's history and restoration and charting the fundraising progress.

"It will be a static display, possibly an open container people can walk through with information on display and a graphic charting the fundraising progress," Mr Reid said.

"We want to encourage people to donate and to get the Alma back in the water."

"We think it is a great thing to have here in Docklands because it contributes to the maritime heritage of Docklands that we need to preserve."

Owned by not-for-profit company Sail and Adventure Limited, the 110 year old historic three-masted topsail schooner has been under restoration at Shed 2 in Docklands since 2009.

It's the last of its kind in Australia and is expected to become a key part of the Harbour Esplanade redevelopment.

The chamber has been a vocal supporter of the restoration project and in June hosted a fundraising event on board the Lady Cutler to make local stakeholders aware of the project.

It had been hoped that the ship would be back in the water by Christmas in order to avoid the damaging effects of the summer climate on the ship's wood, but Mr Harris said this would not be possible.

"The volunteer team continue to work, but until we get some major funding, the professional team won't be back," Mr Harris said.

Around \$800,000 is needed to get the ship back in the water and a further \$900,000 to get it fitted out and rigged.

Sadly, two more long-term members passed away earlier this year.

Ron Soley passed away in May 2017 and had been a PWVA member since 1978.

Joan Rudolph passed away in June 2017, Joan was a shop volunteer, guide and an enthusiastic supporter of the PWVA . She loved ships and the sea having spent some years at sea with the Dominion Line. Serving as 3rd officer on the Francis Drake and the George Anson her particular delight was looking after the comfort of passengers and ensuring they had the best possible voyage. Joan first joined PWVA in 1987.