



# WAVE



## Number 166    “the ship comes first”    September 2019 The Newsletter of the Barque *Polly Woodside* Volunteers Association Inc.

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Our tribute to Betty.

### **Chairman's Chat:-**

It is with sadness that I have to inform you of the passing of Betty Crompton peacefully on the 7<sup>th</sup> August this year aged 97. Our tributes to one of our most stalwart members are on pages 3 and 4.

### **Volunteers:**

Our volunteer numbers are continuing to fluctuate between four to about ten on a good day. The stalwarts are, Don Knowles, Roger Wilson, Richard Barber, John Slattery, and John Maxwell. Tod Gardiner, and D'Arcy Wells coming down whenever they can.

Also Simon with his carer Effie, are doing a great job painting the capstans and deck fittings.

Wayne and Damien Bette, always come down whenever their sea time allows them to.

Don Knowles is continuing to find more blocks to overhaul and renovate, as well as other jobs which seem to pop up all the time. Next job will be making a new side-rail for the gangway stairs.

Max Baxter coming down from Ballarat, was welcomed with open arms by Roger, as he has sea time on sailing ships in many roles, and also worked on restoration of 'Picton Castle' for 4 years as Bosun..

Richard Barber is continuing to show he can turn his hand to anything.

Campbell McCullough is back crewing on the 'One and All' in warmer climates. We are saving some interesting jobs for him on return.

Roger Wilson is on sick leave and now recuperating at home, and we wish him a speedy recovery. Our best wishes to Fran and Roger and hope to see him back at Polly soon.

### **The ship and site:**

Whilst awaiting Ferdie's return we have been concentrating on tidying up the ship and the site.

All the remaining backstays have been stretched out and secured clear of the ground. In the hold the rigging has been cleared from the working floor, laid on the ballast and covered with our cargo bales and sacks.

Also the braces have been tidied up and the lines to the belaying pins have all been neatened so she now looks more shipshape.

One of the main jobs to be done are the refitting of the wedges on the Fore and Main masts where they pass through the deck, and the manufacture of their mast-coats. The Mizzen mast-coat, has been completed but this 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?

**Management** Shara is successfully doing all she can to keep the site functioning smoothly, and is an asset to the Polly.

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### **Pump House Ponderings by Derek Moore - 2019**

The Pump House and its heritage steam engine, boilers and centrifugal pumps continue to be controlled by the State Government. Over the past 2 months, there have been two occasions on which 2 members of Engineering Heritage Victoria and myself have had access to undertake cleaning and lubrication of the engines, pipework and associated fittings.

The builder's plate has been reinstated on the HP engine cylinder on the Dry Dock side of the engine, thus complementing the plate on the HP cylinder on the boiler side.

Further painting has taken place on the engine bed, columns and the steam accumulators.

The active interest and support of PWVA volunteers and associates is greatly appreciated, including that of Polly Woodside management.

## Our Tributes to Betty Cromb



Remembering  
**ELIZABETH AGNES  
CROMB**

9th September 1921 – 7th August 2019

*I'd like the memory of me  
to be a happy one,  
I'd like to leave an afterglow  
of smiles when life is done.*

*I'd like to leave an echo  
whispering softly down the ways,  
of happy times and laughing times  
and bright and sunny days.*

*I'd like the tears of those who grieve,  
to dry before the sun,  
of happy memories that I leave  
when the day is done.*

***Betty's family wish to thank  
you for your kind messages and  
support during this difficult time.***



A couple of Betty's favourite quotes

*"The sun must be over  
the yard arm"*

And no matter how  
bad things seem.

*"Worse things happen at sea."*



The Celebration of Betty's Life was attended by many people. PWVA attendees were Derek Moore and his wife, Lindsay Rex and his wife, Ann Gibson, John Maxwell, Anne and me, as well as a large group from the World Ship Society, and family and friends.

Both Ann Gibson and I both paid tribute to Betty on behalf of the volunteers.

## Tributes to Betty Cromb

It was Betty's love of the sea that attracted her down to Polly Woodside, then a rusty coal hulk, berthed at No. 9 South Wharf.

Betty was invited to join Polly Woodside Volunteers Association in 1979.

The gardens around Polly were Betty's pride and joy – from designing, then creating, and lovingly maintaining them. The disappointment now is that all her gardens have gone, thanks to our shrinking site.

In recognition of her achievements at Polly she became an Honorary Life Member in February 1999.

Whenever we had a special celebration (any excuse) Betty always attended. My wife, Anne, would see Betty coming, murmur something like 'she needs a glass of wine' and quickly got her one.

That is when Betty was not taking off on one of her favourite Cargo-passenger ship experiences.

Her Walker – The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and heaven help any toes in between. She could definitely have given lessons to 'Ironsides'.

She looked marvelous and vivacious at her 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party at Williamstown.

Neil Thomas

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### Betty Cromb – volunteer and friend.

It was a lucky day for *Polly Woodside* when Betty moved to Port Melbourne and joined the Volunteers' Association. To the ship and museum came a woman whose passion in life -only slightly behind that for her family - was ships. It was no wonder as she grew up at the naval establishments of Jervis Bay & HMAS Cerberus, where her father and grandfather both served and her mother was a seamstress for the naval cadets at the latter establishment.

As well as her enthusiasm for all things nautical, Betty brought her love of plants and her 'green thumb' to the Melbourne Maritime Museum and helped create a green oasis around the ship and the industrial buildings of the museum. Trees native to the area, a spacious lawn, shrubs and flowers were all under her meticulous care. It was a great sadness that all this disappeared with the construction of the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. Undaunted, Betty turned her attention to maintaining the tubs bright with seasonal flowers which brought a welcome touch of nature to the museum grounds. Always neat herself, Betty decided that the dock should be as spick and span as the ship. A memorable image is of Betty – well into her 60's by then - armed with a long-handled net, cleaning the dock of the stream of rubbish that poured in almost daily from the Yarra River.

Betty was generous in every aspect of her life. She gave of her time, her friendship and her hospitality. Lunches in her Port Melbourne garden for Polly shop volunteers, where food, wine and chatter mingled to make memorable occasions. The celebration of her 90 & 95<sup>th</sup> birthdays were very special & she took great pleasure in being able to gather friends and family to mark these special occasions. Betty also loved to travel to travel – trips to Tasmania by ferry were yearly occurrences and her voyages on container ships an absolute highlight of her life. Never one to travel alone, Betty gathered friends and family on these trips, and I was lucky enough to go twice with her to Tasmania. Lots of laughs, glasses of wine, visits to anything to do with ships and Betty always immaculate and ready for anything. The visit of the Tall Ships to Hobart in 1988 was a special occasion made all the more so by Betty's enthusiasm and knowledge.

Always interested, always welcoming, always a warm friend, Betty was a very special lady to all who were lucky enough to know her.

Ann Gibson

## **The First Ocean Voyage of Rummy-Tum V**

A seaman's tale in 4 Chapters

1. - The Departure
2. - All at Sea
3. - Western Port
4. - Homeward Bound

### **CHAPTER 1 - The Departure**

Having heard of experiences encountered by some of our members from Whalers Cove, we decided to plan a cruise to Hastings in Westernport Bay. Whalers Cove is a marina on the Patterson River, which flows into the Eastern side of Port Phillip Bay at Carrum.

On Tuesday the 30th of April (around 1985), we were nearly ready to go to sea. The weather was ideal, typical of Melbourne's autumn. The forecast was for mild days with little wind. What's more, the forecast turned out to be right.

Our vessel is a Markline 850 - one of those 8.5 metres (28 feet) plastic stink boats.

The crew consisted of three very dubious characters -

- Ross, temporarily retired (between careers), crewed in the Melbourne to Hobart yacht race on the only

boat to catch a 3.6 metre (12 foot) shark on route. During the trip to Hastings, Ross was to earn the

nickname of "Thethil" as in Cecil B. de Mille. This may have had something to do with the video equipment which formed a permanent growth on his shoulder.

- Phil, although officially retired, still works for a hobby. Phil had not been on a vessel of less than 4,000 tonnes, and that was during the last (World) War.

- The Captain, a VERY dubious character indeed. He had twice retired from 15 years of Ocean racing

(That's one of the water diseases.) He has frequently been referred to as "Captain Bligh" - always trying to find a new crew.

As the provisions, equipment and water were loaded, the boat slowly sank in the pen. The Captain decided to perform the simple task of replacing the anode on the propeller. (Why do they always leave it to the last minute?) At least one hour later, complete with an almost severed thumb, he rose from under the Marlin Board with red face, greasy hands and vague mutterings about the efficiency of the fishing line cutter - a novel multi-purpose device attached to the propeller.

Diesoline was poured endlessly into a little hole in the deck. The boat sank further. Finally we coasted down the river, fortunately on a high tide. Port Phillip Bay was as smooth as a baby's.... The sun was warm and cosy. We cruised across the serene bay to the West Channel Pile Light, the shortest route to the West Channel, north of the Heads of Port Phillip bay. We passed two large ships as we crossed the shipping lane. The navigator took credit for timing our run down the West Channel in conjunction with the outgoing tide. Although normally turbulent, we skimmed across calm water between the Heads, keeping to the Port side of the Great Ship Channel.

### **CHAPTER 2 - All at sea**

The Heads of Port Phillip bay are justifiably respected by all competent sailors. Various factors contribute to the reasons for the Heads being so treacherous. A long detailed study of the chart provides some of the relevant information. (Again the navigator claimed credit for choosing the perfect conditions) Rarely is the (so called) Rip so docile.



Although the seas in Bass Strait were smooth, a rolling 3 metre high swell was being lifted by the outgoing tide. Clear of the Heads, the swell settled to 1 to 2 metres. Cape Schank to the east was hidden by the horizon and low lying morning mist. The navigator set a compass course, accompanied by the instruction to keep Australia on the left. No GPS in those days!

A calm blue sea and a cloudless windless sky - what more could a sailor ask for? Perhaps the all-male crew left something to be desired! A little activity on the skyline consisted of the odd fishing trawler rising from between the swells. We were cruising very comfortably at 14 knots, leaving plenty to spare in the turbo-charged diesel engine. The helmsman had his work cut out for him, dodging the kelp and the fishing buoys with nets or crayfish pots attached.



After a while, we ran past the Cape on our way to Flinders, located inside the entrance to Western Port bay. In the distance we could hear the dull boom of what could be distant gunfire. A few minutes passed before we realised that the large puffs of grey smoke which followed the flashes on the seaward horizon were related to the noise. We concluded that the Royal Australian Navy was conducting gunnery practice by firing large shells from West Head at the entrance to Western Port. This placed us directly under their line of fire. The Captain completed a calculation and concluded that the trajectory did not place us in any danger, allowing us to proceed under the danger.

As we approached West Head, a fishing boat appeared from behind the headland, and passed us to seaward. If he had come from Flinders, then it would be equally safe for us to go there. As we came closer to West Head we noticed a buoy about half a mile ahead. The sound of rapid gunfire was followed by a series of water spouts rising around the buoy - which had just become a TARGET.

### **CHAPTER 3 - Western Port**

Time to panic? Definitely! We stopped - motionless in the water while target practice proceeded. It was a long way back to the marina! We used the 27 MHz radio to call the ever reliable and long suffering Westernport Safety Council. We explained our predicament, enquiring about the chances of our survival. They were very understanding and relayed our position to the Navy. The Navy instructed us to proceed directly to 12 miles offshore. However this would have required us to travel South when our destination was North West. They also advised us that they usually ceased firing when anybody gets too close. (How close do you have to get?)

The firing stopped but the hearts in our mouths didn't. We gingerly circumnavigated the target after going out to sea by a mile, with everything crossed.

Our nerves were pretty ragged for most of the journey up the channel of the bay of Western Port. The navigator again claimed credit for running with the incoming 4 knot tide. (He never missed an opportunity.) Twice we had to stop to allow kelp to fall free of the propeller on the stern drive. As our senses steadily returned we began to enjoy the delightful panorama of a completely calm bay enclosed by the Mornington Peninsula and Phillip Island. The sighting of

French Island reminded us that the course of Australian history could have been quite different had the original French sailors decided to colonise our country. The whole of Australia would have been called French Island.

We arrived at Westhaven Boat Harbour at Hastings as the sun settled in a beautiful red and orange western sky - a sure sign of another great day to come. We broke into the provisions. It was calculated that we would need to consume at least 12 courses to even marginally reduce the huge stock of food. Phil was not only the ship's entertainer but was also the Cordon Bleu cook. We only managed 5 courses but they were all recorded for posterity on video. Ross was no ordinary wine waiter, providing some "top shelf" vino. To help settle the tasty and bulky dinner, we took a stroll around the marina paying particular attention to anything of luxury and over 70 feet (21 metres).

The security was impressive as we were accosted by the night watchman. We recounted the day's adventures which amused him greatly. His response was "you were lucky - they usually prefer a moving target, but on the other hand if they did fire at you, you should have been pretty safe!"

After spending some of the early morning hours shouting at the crew to roll over and stop snoring, 3 A.M. saw the skipper hanging over the transom feeding the fish. A virus or RAN nerves? The 2 crew were wondering whether it was something we had eaten (plenty to choose from) and were apprehensive about the outcome. Obviously nothing to do with the copious amounts of hops, red ned, etc., consumed earlier in the evening! Only the skipper was afflicted- and he didn't drink!

#### **CHAPTER 4 - Homeward Bound**

After refueling, 8 A.M. saw our departure and slow cruise down the Western Port Channel. At one stage we were completely enveloped in low flying cloud. The navigator somehow bluffed his way through and we popped out of the other side of the fog to tie up at the Cowes jetty on Phillip Island.

A leisurely walk around Cowes revealed a lone fisherman, an elderly couple and the inevitable dog. A pretty lively town at 10 A.M. on a Wednesday in May? - NOT! Returning to the jetty we noticed a 24 foot yacht. We found the owner huddled up in the cabin, bleary eyed from a sleepless night, having been bashed up against the wharf by the tidal surge. Being a retired train driver, the lone yachtsman had built this sturdy craft and motored most of the way from Portland due to lack of wind. He was bound for the Solomon Islands! We wished him well without being even slightly envious.

We steamed out of Western Port Bay contemplating the visits by the French and English sailing ships some 200 years ago. Such thoughts were quickly shattered by the sound of heavy gun fire! Yes the RAN was at it again! As advised, we had checked the newspapers, both local and city, before our departure. We spoke to the Cowes radio base but nobody knew of any planned gunnery practice. A VHF radio would have been handy to talk to the Navy, Melbourne Radio, or somebody.

The Captain made a decision (the first?) to head direct for Tasmania - well for 12 miles anyway. It's a lonely feeling being out of the sight of land. Twelve miles out and we turned right to sail on a compass course for the Heads. A two metre swell was rolling over completely calm waters for another glorious sunny day.

With unerring accuracy, Point Lonsdale at the Heads appeared directly ahead. The tide was still running out as we steamed in through the centre of the Heads - playing BIG ships. We entered the Queenscliff Boat Harbour and moored for a late lunch, followed by some "nodding off" in the sun.

An easterly wind started gusting across the bay from Portsea. It took the heat out of the sun. We cruised slowly close to the sandy beaches of Portsea to Rye to avoid the building waves. Full throttle took us quickly past the Hovell Light at the exit to the South Channel. Shortly afterwards a violent vibration brought us to a standstill. The motor was idled to cool the turbo-charger before switching off.

We hoped the now incoming tide would compensate for the easterly wind and prevent us from drifting back onto the Hovell Light and the sand banks. The raising of the stern-drive revealed a small heavy net entangled around the propeller. It was easily removed. (You can't do that with your shaft drives!)

Full throttle again brought us up to Mornington as the bright orange sun sank on the western horizon. The 20 knot easterly sent spray flying over the bridge, resulting in it being deserted for the comfort of the cabin. The Patterson River navigation lights sparkled in the darkness ahead - they were all working! Home again.

The exhilaration and fatigue caused the skipper to attempt an entry through the marina gates (the old ones) - sideways! Guess what? - the gates are less than 28 feet wide! A bit of pushing and shoving with the assistance of the incoming tide finally resulted in the boat returning to the safety of our pen.

Who would of thought that two days at sea could seem like a week of amazing experiences.

*Woman, cranky because her husband was late coming home again, decided to leave a note saying, "I've had enough and left you, don't bother coming after me." and hid under the bed to see his reaction. After a short while the husband comes home and she could hear him in the kitchen before he comes into the bedroom, she could see him walk towards the dresser and pick up the note.*

*After a few minutes he wrote something on it before picking up the phone and calling someone – "She's finally gone... yeah I know, about bloody time, I'm coming to pick you up, put on the sexy French bit, I love you".*

*He hung up, grabbed his keys and left.*

*She heard the car drive off as she came out from under the bed, seething with rage and with tears in her eyes*

*She grabbed the note to see what he wrote; "I can see your feet.*

*Stop being retarded, we're outta bread, throw the kettle on, back in 5 minutes.*

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An annual competition is held by the New York Times to see who can create the best original lexophile.

**This year's submissions:**

I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.

This girl today said she recognized me from the Vegetarians Club, but I'd swear I've never met herbivore.

I know a guy who's addicted to drinking brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.

A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.

When the smog lifts in Los Angeles U.C.L.A.

I got some batteries that were given out free of charge.

A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.

A will is a dead giveaway.

With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.

Police were summoned to a daycare centre where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.

A bicycle can't stand alone; it's just two tired.

The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine last week is now fully recovered.

He had a photographic memory but it was never fully developed.

When she saw her first strands of gray hair she thought she'd dye.

Acupuncture is a jab well done. That's the point of it.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

Did you hear about the crossed-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.



When chemists die, they barium.  
I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.  
I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.  
Those who get too big for their pants will be totally exposed in the end.

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### **Grammar Lesson: Is it "complete", "finished" or "completely finished"?**

No English dictionary has been able to adequately explain the difference between these two words – "Complete" or "Finished".

In a recent linguistic competition held in London and attended by, supposedly, the best in the world, Samdar Balgobin, a Guyanese man, was the clear winner with a standing ovation which lasted over 5 minutes.

The final question was: 'How do you explain the difference between *COMPLETE* and *FINISHED* in a way that is easy to understand? Some people say there is no difference between *COMPLETE* and *FINISHED*.' Here is his astute answer:

When you marry the right woman, you are *COMPLETE*. When you marry the wrong woman, you are *FINISHED*. And when the right one catches you with the wrong one, you are *COMPLETELY FINISHED*!"

He won a trip around the world and a case of 25 year old Scotch.