



Number 142

“the ship comes first”

June 2013

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

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CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

Greetings fellow volunteers,

Unfortunately I haven’t been able to attend Polly this year, due to ongoing ailments which have succeeded in preventing me doing so.

The Signal Mast looks like it will be erected very soon probably by crane. It has been assembled, checked out, and painted by Don Knowles, Richard, as well as John and Peter Maxwell, (no relation), but the icing on the cake was the discovery by Jenny Hunter and Ann Gibson, of Arthur Woodley’s original plans of the mast.

I have delayed sending you information for your 'Wave' article until meeting with the new maintenance coordinator, Trevor Dove who was introduced to the volunteers today by Samantha Tait. First impressions are that he appears to be well organised. He and Sam spoke to the group and asked for input as to what jobs need to be prioritised.

Ferdie Darley, who built the aft accommodation, was on site this afternoon as well, and suggested that the sections of the margin boards that have been dug out be filled with a sandy mortar to retard the ingress of as much water. He also suggested that we treat the sound section of the mizzen gaff with pure turpentine and oil, a task that we hope to start next week, Trevor has listed the turpentine for purchase. Another job Trevor was getting on with today was measuring the signal mast in preparation

for calculating stay lengths and consulting catalogues for suitable cable.

The suggestion was made at the meeting that people from the historic tool user group be approached with a view to have them scarf a new section into the mizzen gaff.

A coat of white gloss paint was applied to all sections of the signal mast today and we hope to apply a second one (weather permitting) next week.

That just about covers the days' events as you wanted to know what has happened on site over the last months or so ----- well apart from the signal mast, not much. About the only work actually on board Polly herself has been the replacement of the Ship's wheel and polishing some brass work.

Cheers

Don

Thanks also to Sam Tait for telling us the future plans for the upkeep of Polly in her report in this Wave.

Neil

NOT DROWNING, WAVING

New changes have been made with the ship's management arrangements in order for the ship to better realise some overall synergies. The National Trust has appointed BMT to provide onsite management of the volunteers, as well as helping to arrange a more comprehensive volunteer and community engagement program. This complements the work being undertaken by BMT on developing the asset management program.



Trevor Dove, a senior naval architect with hands on experience in a diverse range of areas, has taken over the role of co-ordinating and assisting the volunteers on site every Tuesday. After only two weeks, Trevor and the volunteers have already got the signal mast to a point where its reassembly can begin. Additionally, Trevor arranged for a consultation by shipwright Ferdie Darley on the issue of the margin boards and leaks through to the accommodation space and has already started implementing a temporary measure for the margin boards as recommended by Ferdie. Sam Tait will provide back up to Trevor, in the event that Trevor cannot attend on a Tuesday.



Sam Tait is continuing to assist the ship by assisting the National Trust in developing a greater community engagement program. With their endorsement, the on-site volunteers will be set up as a “Men’s Shed” under the federal government initiative, allowing a new avenue to gain funding for tools and provide a path for other like-minded individuals to join the Tuesday volunteer crew. In addition, preliminary inquiries have been made into sponsoring a “tall ships” skills merit badge with the Scout movement; thereby re-engaging with the younger generation (no promises here yet folks, but preliminary inquiries have been well received). Finally, Roger can teach some youngsters how to make a monkey fist!

Sam Tait has also recently been involved with the South Australian historic ship, the A.K. Falie. A bonus to come out of this work is the discovery of a tall ships’ rigging expert based in Hobart; so we will be following that up in earnest.

The National Trust have also been doing their part; with the ship now listed with some of the corporate volunteer programs run by some large organisations; so we have a number of spritely, enthusiastic volunteers from the ANZ Bank scheduled to come and help out in June. This nicely fills the age gap between the Scouts and the Men’s Shed target generations, and should provide us with some people to do some of the more back-breaking work, such as re-pitching and sealing the deck.

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MEETING BETWEEN PWVA, THE NATIONAL TRUST AND BMT

The PWVA Committee sent a letter to the Trust management recently which read:

“Dear Martin

The Volunteers Committee sees a number of issues that are in need of resolution:

- 1. At present only the manager Sean de Courcy has a master key to access the facilities at Polly Woodside and if he is not around on Tuesdays (volunteers day), the volunteers are unable to carry out work on the ship. Might we suggest that a second master key or a key to the ship’s hatch access and paint & timber lockers is made available either to another on site staff member or to a senior volunteer (e.g. Don Knowles) or to the newly appointed maintenance supervisor (Trevor Dove).*
- 2. As you are aware, we have some 50 volunteers’ bronze memorial plaques which we would like to display either on the spar ceiling on board or mounted on a suitable board in a volunteers section in the interpretation centre together with a selection of photos of volunteers at work on the ship. This issue has been outstanding for some years & a speedy resolution would be appreciated.*
- 3. We would also like to voice our concerns about conditions aloft on the ship. At present there is no qualified person available to work aloft on the rigging, spars & masts and there are problems that urgently need addressing (e.g. broken ratlines, rotting t’gallant spar on the foremast).*

We look forward to your views on these issues which we think are in all our interests to resolve.

Kind regards

John Wroe

On behalf of the PWVA Committee

Copies to: Martin Purslow, Martin Green, Sean de Courcy”

Consequently and through the good offices of Sam Tait, representatives from the PWVA, the National Trust and BMT met at the Polly site on the 4th June. It was, in my view, a most productive meeting which hopefully will engender a new spirit of co-operation between ourselves and the Trust. Outstanding issues were discussed and largely resolved.

The problem of access to the ship & workshop for the Tuesday volunteers has been sorted by ensuring that a key-holder will always be available on Tuesdays.

We now have the green light to go ahead with installing the 50 volunteers’ memorial plaques on a suitable mount in a Volunteers’ Space in the Interpretation Centre.

A full audit of maintenance requirements for Polly is underway and it is proposed that a rigger who is currently in Hobart and experienced in work on tall ships should be brought over to assess the maintenance required aloft.

The Trust and the PWVA is keen for more volunteers to get involved at the Polly site and we jointly plan to identify those areas where volunteers may make an active contribution. We are all keen to see younger people get involved in this initiative. In particular, Ship Guides who can talk to guests about the history of Polly and more broadly the Maritime Industry. They would mostly be required at weekends. Fundraising and Volunteer Recruitment Guides are also required.

At the meeting it was agreed that the PWVA Committee will meet with Trust representatives in early July at Sam Tait's office to ensure that the improved lines of communication remain open and issues can be resolved. It is hoped that this will become the first of periodic meetings between The PWVA, The Trust and BMT.

Present at the meeting were: Sam Tait and Trevor Dove (BMT), Drew Grove and Sean de Courcy (NT), Don Knowles, Roger Wilson, Jenny Hunter and John Wroe (PWVA).

Ship's Piano

The late 19thC ship's piano which was in the former Maritime Museum & been gathering dust ever since has been handed (*gratis*) over to a piano restorer who will hopefully restore it to its former glory. I will endeavour to track progress on its restoration and I will let you know where it ends up (in a good home, hopefully).

Maritime Library & ships photo collection

The maritime library (including the photo collection) is on its way to Seaworks in Williamstown where it will be housed in a new library for the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, many of the books in storage have been water-damaged.

2013 PWVA SUBS ARE DUE

Only about 50% of Members have paid their subs this year, please forward your 2013 subscription of \$20 to John Wroe, 38 Addison Street, Elwood, 3184. Phone 9531 5626, 0407 530 940. Cheques should be made payable to PWVA.