



**Number 137**

**“the ship comes first”**

**Mar 2012**

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

**PWVA Committee:**

**Chairman:** Neil Thomas, [thomclan1@bigpond.com](mailto:thomclan1@bigpond.com) 9802 4608

**Vice-Chairman:** Capt. Ralph McDonell, [ralphmcd@bigpond.com.au](mailto:ralphmcd@bigpond.com.au), 9807 5646

**Hon.Secretary:** Jenny Hunter. 9690 3669, [jmdhunter39@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jmdhunter39@yahoo.com.au)

**Hon Treasurer and Wave Editor:** John Wroe, [jacwroe@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jacwroe@bigpond.net.au), 9531 5626

**Other Committee Members:** Don Knowles, 9877 1584; Neville Keown, 9877 9234;  
Roger Wilson, Barrie Wood

**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.

**Chairman’s Annual Report for 2011 - 2012.**

Yet another year has galloped by for the PWVA and our beautiful ship. It has been a year of accomplishments, unfortunately also many conflicts and disappointments, but look on the bright side, the volunteers are still a dedicated group doing wonderfully valuable work.

Graeme, as you all know, was our Maintenance Coordinator. Although employed by the National Trust he worked very closely with the volunteers, liaising maintenance requirements and schedules. His departure was a great shock, and following some misunderstandings and conflict, we now have two great skilled workers. Sarah and Seumas (Bosun/Riggers) who now define the Polly’s maintenance requirements. Our new site manager, Melissa Gilmore then passes on this information to the Tuesday and Thursday gangs. This arrangement is working well. We warmly welcome Melissa as Site Manager while Marcia Ryan is on maternity leave.

A special thanks to the Tuesday and Thursday gangs for perseverance under difficult circumstances. Without you ‘the ship would not come first’.

This brings us to the Workshop area.

Andrew Gooday of the National Trust has confirmed that the new plans for fitting out of the Workshop have been approved. These plans, already perused by the Tuesday and Thursday gangs are tabled here

for general viewing. Unfortunately our working and recreational areas continue to be eroded, and such events as our Christmas Party and today's AGM now have to be held off-site at considerable cost to us.

The Ship Research and Reference Service at Tasma Terrace manned by PWVA members, has had to close after more than 30 years of faithful service, having been located first at the Polly Woodside, and then conscripted to Tasma Terrace. Glen Stuart has moved to a retirement village in Mornington, hence too much travelling required, and John Wroe has resigned, feeling that it is too much for one person, particularly when working in a morgue like atmosphere. It is amazing how little appreciation has been shown to John and Glen by the Trust for so much dedicated and profitable work for them. On behalf of all the volunteers, I would like to thank John and Glen for their dedication to a service, which cannot be appreciated enough. There are a lot of organisations, both maritime and genealogical, that will miss their services. Ann Gibson has tentatively stepped into the gap. Good luck Ann!

The Pump-house has reached an untenable situation. It has been rapidly flooded above the catwalk to around the low pressure cylinders of the steam engines – the highest level yet, and then it was discovered that the water was coming in faster than ever before, so a larger pump was required to clear the water from the lower level. And this is not the first time. Major Projects are now responsible for the Pump-house, and Derek feels he will get a more sympathetic hearing from them than by the Trust

The Signal Mast had to have a new tabernacle manufactured (which didn't fit) as the original one had disappeared while we were an Industrial site, and its replacement is now being constructed. However as the Signal Mast is soon to be erected on Crown Land, the main concern is security, and the means of protecting it from vandalism. One consideration is to make the signal lines stainless steel.

Following the raising of the Signal Mast we will perform our re-dedication ceremony, as we have twice in the past.

Due to the number of break-ins, vandalism on the ship, theft of the ship's lifebuoys, and evidence of persons unknown sleeping in the captain's bunk, the National Trust are negotiating with Melbourne Convention Centre to get the site included in their security screen. Unfortunately the site fencing appears to be an easy obstacle to overcome.

I will end with exciting news – The PWVA's 'Jack Davey Bell Collection', consisting of some 30 bells, has been loaned to Seaworks, on the understanding it will be returned to the PWVA on request. It is with a feeling of relief and delight we know that the 'Bell Collection' is to remain complete after the enormous effort that Jack Davey made to collect them over many years.

Also Betty Cromb, who is an Honorary Life Member of the PWVA, celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday during the year.

Congratulations Betty.

Finally I wish to thank the members of our Committee for the enthusiasm and dedication they have brought to our meetings for the benefit of all our members.

Thank you all

## *The Ship Comes First'*

### **Maintenance Report, January 2012 - Seumas & Sarah**

Maintenance has been moving on apace on Polly, around the busy holiday season. We have commenced work on her major rigging report, which will be a full assessment of Polly's condition down to every last shackle, bottle-screw and bolt, as well as the larger elements of her standing and running rigging, and from her deck downwards. The first part of the report has been submitted as a first draft to the Ship's Committee for perusal, and we continue to work on it. Once it is completed, it will be used as a template for a state of the art computer program which is being developed by Polly's Marine Engineer, Samantha Tait, in conjunction with her riggers (us). This program will not only provide an ongoing record of Polly's maintenance, but will also put in place a maintenance schedule for her future upkeep, ensuring that she remains in good condition, and that her various parts are regularly serviced within an appropriate time-frame.

During the course of this assessment, we have found some areas which need more immediate attention, and we are working on these as well.

The main motor of her bilge system experienced some problems, and an electrical engineer (with experience in tall ships) came in to look at her bilges as a whole. The main motor has been taken away for a complete overhaul, and we have been in discussion with the engineer with regards to redesigning and updating Polly's bilge control system, hooking it up to the monitored alarm system. This is currently ongoing.

The break of her poop deck has been leaking, creating rivulets under her deck which have spread over the poop deck area, and resulted in leaks through the officer's quarters. The method for addressing this is under discussion by the Ship's Committee at the moment, as this is a major undertaking, with a number of possible solutions.

Polly's fore topmast spreaders were found to be extremely rusted, and the stays unattached, so the spreaders were brought down to deck, where they have been disassembled, and are being refurbished by volunteers.

The fore t'gallant yard is quite rotted, and is recommended to be brought down as soon as possible for replacement. The method for bringing the yard down has been submitted and is waiting on approval before this can be commenced. Once a method has been approved, we anticipate bringing the yard down using Polly's own rigging and the help and co-operation of all her hands on deck - much like the raising of the mizzen top-mast not so long ago, but minus the crane!

We managed through good luck and the goodwill of a very lovely local gentleman, to source most of a mature oak tree's worth of timber. Oak is a difficult wood to find these days and perfect for many aspects of ship repair, including the making of blocks, which Polly will need in significant numbers. The green wood is being split and seasoned, and will be used once it is ready.

Work continues on the signal mast, to be erected just across the cobbled laneway. Rigging and engineering specifications have been submitted for official assessment and are awaiting approval. As this is being erected in a public space it is subject to rigorous safety standards.

The portside gangway and guys have been installed.

Whilst refurbishing Polly's decks for her re-opening back in 2010 some pockets of rot were discovered in several of her margin-boards. Since then we have had some of the wettest months on record, and the rot has become worse. Volunteers have started chiselling the rot out so the extent of the damage can be assessed. The margin boards are made largely of Jarrah, a marvellous timber for below-waterline hull planking, but a problematic wood for this sort of use, due to the porous nature of its cells, which allow microspores to enter and start decay. The repair plan for this issue will become apparent once the extent of the damage is known.

While this has been taking place, Polly's tireless regular volunteer crew have been working on various other projects around the ship, such as chipping back and refurbishing the handrails, oiling the pin- and fife-rails, and the timber fittings on the quarterdeck, making cleats for her flag halyards, disassembling the broken midships capstan, freeing up seized scuppers, reinforcing the starboard side stairway landing, moving the steel plate under the gangway and attaching the protective gangway wheel skirts, refurbishing and repainting the playground bouys and boat, splicing frayed lines, and helping to dismantle the crane in the Orr's Dock park for removal - not to mention the never-ending task of chipping, priming and repainting on the ship.

Once the maintenance report is completed, and the maintenance plan is in place, a greater variety of jobs will begin in earnest.

We have also started a blog to chronicle Polly's maintenance. This is in its infancy at the moment but will hopefully help promote Polly to a broad online audience, introduce traditional maritime refit and

craft to a wider audience, and highlight the contribution of Polly's 'family' past and present, to her working life, her survival as a museum ship, and her future. Content will come from the work currently being undertaken on the ship, from her current staff and volunteers, events that are held on the ship, and snippets of her history. I would also love to be able to include some stories and photos from Polly's earlier years, and would really welcome contributions from those who have worked on her and would like to share their stories. If anyone is interested in doing this, please get in touch with Sarah - Neil has my email address.

### **Update March 2012 - Seumas & Sarah**

Much has been achieved on Polly since our maintenance report in January. The large steel plates for both gangways are now in place, with protective skirting attached, and will put an end to the problem of the gangway wheels slipping off the plates onto the dock. At 600kg apiece, moving them was no small effort; fortunately the now-restored trolley was up to the task. The starboard side plate had to be cut in half in order to get it past the crane halfway down the dock; we are waiting on quotes for welding the plate back together, as well as repairing the crane on the starboard dock and the midships capstan.

Engineering and materials specs for the Signal Mast have been officially signed off, and we are now able to go ahead with purchasing the materials and assembling the mast. As yet no date has been locked in.

Shipwright Ferdinand Darley visited Polly to 'peer review' the plan of action for the repair and replacement of the rotted margin boards and the leaks in the quarterdeck. His advice has been invaluable (not the least because he was instrumental in laying the quarterdeck, and knows exactly what's lurking under the deck planks), and he has also offered to source some good timber to replace the rotted boards.

Seumas and I have been meeting with naval architects Samantha Tait and Sean Johnston, to design a computerised maintenance schedule and asset management plan for Polly, which will provide an overview of her rolling maintenance program, down to an itemisation of every last shackle and bottle-screw on Polly. We feel incredibly lucky to have the expertise of two of Australia's most experienced naval architects and their IT programmers, and to be able to be involved with the design of a state of the art programme that will benefit Polly so greatly, both now and in years to come.

Work continues on the design of the 'new' workshop. Frames for improved chemical and timber storage lockers have arrived, and a 'wish list' is being researched, to procure some new machinery we need (including a really good dust extractor), and new, more solid workbenches.

Lastly, we have been involved in some nautical work with a difference, designing and making sailor and pirate props for Polly's new children's birthday party programme, which will hopefully be a great

fundraiser for the ship. The programme has only been advertised for a short time, and the first parties take place on Saturday, but there are already bookings several weeks in advance, and it will hopefully become a popular and lucrative sideline. Although the pirate treasure chests, 'antique' maps and compass roses have proved to be a fun diversion from the more 'serious' work on the ship, we're also looking forward to getting back up aloft to finish off the rigging report.

### **Beulah Lee**

**Death Notice:** LEE (nee Stibbard). - Beulah Mary Wife of Harold (dec.). Beulah passed away peacefully at Baxter Village, Frankston on Feb. 12, 2012, aged 85 years. Loving mother of Janet, Max and Rod. Mother-in-law to Micheal and Robyn. Nanna to Danyl and Adele, Breelee and Jeremy. Grandma to Kim, Suzy and Dan. Great grandmother to Madeleine. Heartfelt thanks to the Community of Baxter Village for the unreserved care and compassion shown to Beulah in her twilight years. Resting Now In God's Care

Beulah will always be remembered working in the shop at Polly on Sundays, which she looked forward to and thoroughly enjoyed. She and her late husband Harold (Honorary Life Members of the PWVA), were regular attendees at all our functions. Jointly they commenced working at Polly in 1976 giving 36 years of dedicated service to Polly Woodside. They will be missed by us all.

### **2012 PWVA SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**WE HAVE RECEIVED ONLY A HANDFUL OF SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2012. IT IS ONLY \$20 A YEAR, PAYABLE TO "PWVA" – PLEASE SEND YOUR CHEQUE TO JOHN WROE AT 38 ADDISON STREET, ELWOOD, VIC 3184. IF YOU HAVE A QUERY MY NUMBER IS 9531 5626 or 0407 530 940.**

**JOHN WROE, TREASURER**