



WAVE



Number 181

"the ship comes first"

June 2023

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

SOS For the Year 2035!



POLLY IN THE 1980's AS SHE USED TO LOOK AND WILL LOOK AGAIN.

POLLY WOODSIDE's 150th BIRTHDAY.

PWVA Committee:

Chairman & Wave Editor: Neil Thomas, thomclan1@dodo.com.au , 9802 4608, 0402 037 800.

Vice Chairman: Mike Ridley,

Hon. Secretary: Michael Porter, 0409 596 342

Hon. Treasurer: Don Knowles, donkey@optusnet.com.au , 9877 1584

Committee Member: Roger Wilson, 9376 6429

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 Chat, Proposal and Appeal

Our Tuesday Gang of volunteers consists of Jeff Melancon, Mike Ridley, Mark Thomas and me.

Roger Wilson is still on sick leave, but hopes join us in June, body willing.. However we are really looking forward to it as the list is fast growing for him.

Our Bosun, Jeff has been with us, since March, and it's great to have him with his maritime knowledge and ability to move heavy objects we can't!. Also we have Wayne Bette back as well for a few weeks.

Unfortunately we have lost Richard, we miss him and hope he can return in the future.

Despite the school groups attending, and limiting our time on working on the ship we have achieved a lot. Cleared the fo'c'sle of junk. Cleaned the entire deck of rubbish and algae (no longer slippery). Pumped the water from the fo'c'sle head. Checked and lubricated the crane in preparation for moving the starboard boat (double-ender) for painting. Removed portside davit blocks for renewal and repair.

Thanks to National Trust replacing some of our elderly inefficient gear, and also replenishing essential materials, making our maintenance easier.



Deck looking great, thanks to hard work from all.



Fo'c'sle hasn't been cleared like this in a long time.

Thus ends the Chat – now for the Proposal.

As you can see from the front cover, an idea has been born, to give Polly a magnificent 150th birthday with a 12 years preparation for bringing her back to her wonderful appearance she had in 1980s, when she was the pride of Melbourne, Victoria, and Australia.

You could also say similar to her Centenary celebration in 1985.

Thus ends the Proposal – now the Appeal.

To show how we feel, - read the following article written by Jeff,- ‘The Bosun’, our newest volunteer, who has the knowledge and experience of the maritime world.

What he writes, the Polly Woodside Volunteers Association Inc. fully supports.

To achieve what we want to do will take blood, sweat and tears (no bad language, I hope).

Our big chance to give her, - **HER SECOND RESTORATION**, - THE gift to Melbourne’s pride and tourism.

We will need to find the expertise, the passion, and the dedication our predecessors had in the early days with the dream of giving Melbourne something unique.

Could it be that Polly Woodside is to be resurrected to her full glory in the Future?



The ‘Memorial Plaques’ display the dedication of our forerunners, and the centre plaque sums it up.

POLLY WOODSIDE

150TH ANNIVERSARY

1885 – 2035

An idea, a vision, a proposal.

By Jeff Melancon

An idea.

07 November 1885 is the date Polly Woodside was launched according to Vin Darroch in his book "Barque Polly Woodside (Rona)" 1978. What a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our fine ship's birthday, to dress her up, and re-introduce her to the world.

A Vision

There are several photos which show Polly Woodside at her best as a static museum ship, smartly painted, complete rig, several sails set, signal flags from stem to stern (dress ship).

Now is the time to look at restoring Polly Woodside to her former glory, to set realistic and achievable goals and a sustainable plan to see her well into the future.

Its 2035, a tall ships sailing festival is happening (perhaps logically in Williamstown or if possible in Docklands), international and Australian flagged sailing vessels have come for the event, drawing sailors and enthusiasts from far and wide (have a look at tall ship events around the world).

It can be quite a big draw, there was a tall ship event in Williamstown in 2013 and Hobart has the Australian Wooden Boat Festival every two years).

This festival will coincide with Polly's 150th. (*Remember Polly's Centenary Birthday was celebrated in 1985, when she was docked over at North Wharf*).

A fair type of atmosphere is around the surrounding grounds of the ship, booths selling wares, pop-ups dishing out food, perhaps a symbiotic convention is going on next door (boat show, tattoo, maritime industry?).

A ferry runs from Williamstown to Polly bringing in folks from the festival during the course of the week.

Polly will be the centre of attention, hosting several banquets or parties during the week, ending in a fantastic birthday party reception where Polly crew, past (perhaps family of some of the original folks who rebuilt this ship) and present, representatives for festival vessels,

Government and National Trust officials celebrate the achievements of so many who have kept our little ship afloat, of course all the while having Polly as the ideal backdrop for her birthday.

A smart coat of paint inside and out, a completed and functional rig, clean and tidy decks (looking at minimum rot and rust), tidy pin rails, fresh rope, a few faux sails set (I have a concept to use mesh similar to what is used on construction site fencing which has minimal wind resistance but made to look like traditional sails, rigged like sails with a few additional lines as to be set and doused/handled like traditional sails, from deck, without people needing to go aloft each time to furl and gasket or let loose).

Have her dressed with signal flags (which will be rigged so that they can be brought down/put up easily with 1 – 2 crew), several items around the yard in decent working order for visitors to see in operation (both cranes on either side of the dock).

The original topmast yard raised for children (and adults), to stand on the footropes, the old block and tackle demonstrator for kids to hoist up weights, perhaps some additional items like a steam engine or donkey engine, her old windlass (currently sitting outside and neglected at the steam museum in Scoresby), good lighting so that she can be admired in the evenings along with good signage around town so Polly can be easily found amongst the hustle and bustle of Melbourne.

*Clearly this is pure fiction but perhaps with the right planning and foresight it might not be too far off the mark for a **great second restoration, wonderful 150th birthday and an opportunity to gather support an enthusiasm for an icon of Melbourne's past, present and future.***

A Proposal.

With any good idea, there needs to be a solid plan and, of course, money to actually make the idea come to life. We have 12 years to give the ship the second restoration she deserves as well as a solid plan to keep her going into the future.

As shown by the recent BMT inspection, the ship is in decent condition as a static floating museum.

They discussed several areas that need attention and devised a maintenance plan to be broken down by cycles and cost estimates but will require many outsourced contractors to finish the work, additionally there is no target dated for completion of these tasks and no specific organisations or contractors designated to complete the task, nor any specifies products to be used.

Let's start with a plan that everyone can agree with and work toward with minimal changes as it progresses.

It sounds easy enough but I would imagine many people would have different visions. Luckily, we do have the advantage of time at the moment.

This is a working document, and these are just my ideas, changing them is certainly on the table. I propose looking at the end result of this plan and working back to now as a way to make it happen.

What we would like to see by 2035.

The ship in as complete a state as possible, dry-dock completed, hull preservation below the waterline and fresh paint everywhere.

The rigging complete, all mast and yards in place, all standing and most running rigging in place.

Deck and ladders up to speed (should we give thought to handicap access?).

Additional hands on items or activities in and around the ship/dock area such as practical engineering using block and tackle, weather forecasting, labour saving devices, communications, climbing the rig, examples of diet (some faux pigs and chickens as well as hard tack-bread).

An in-depth plan for maintenance and upkeep and a plan for the skill levels required to carry out the checks and maintenance (some things may require a professional electrician or rigger to check and or maintain, some things might need any responsible adult to read a maintenance card and perform the check or task, some things may be carried out by volunteers under the guidance of a responsible person.

A sound business model/plan to keep the operation and maintenance ongoing to prevent the ship from being in a less than good condition.

How do we achieve such a feat? Money. Money is the only way to actually achieve most of these things.

Good will and hope along with volunteers will get some things done but we will need money, backing, income and a network of providers with technical expertise.

BMT has given (at a cost) some initial guidance as to the task to be completed and costings (which I think is a tad under actual cost) but it is a decent stepping stone, however, how do we accrue the money necessary to get these things done?

This is the question that I don't know the answers to so I will hurl out a number of suggestions (which I would also be happy to investigate into their feasibility).

Seeking sponsorship, particularly where they can supply a product which is useful for our restoration and upkeep.

Paint is a good example (companies such as JOTUN or HEMPEL which have warehouses locally) and painting supplies like brushes and rollers.

Obviously organisations like BMT or F.J.Darley for consulting and work.

Printing companies for signage, banners, etc.

Electrical contractor for electrical work.

Marine supply for ropes and appropriate marine gear.

I'm sure there are many other possibilities, it is just a matter of what we can offer them to make it appealing to them to sponsor us?

A tax deduction, advertisement on a sponsorship board, flying a flag, free/reduced admission or perhaps a "company picnic" day.

A focused campaign on restoring the Polly Woodside, fundraising events, go fund me, distilleries doing a small batch.

Reaching out to organisations where we may have some crossover and they have money. Maritime organisations such as shipping companies (TOLL, SEAROAD, Spirit of Tasmania, TEEKAY etc).

Maritime unions (MUA, AMOU, AIMPE), shipping suppliers/chandlers (Whitworths, C.H.Smith), maritime schools and training organisations (AMC, ERGT and many more).

Reaching out to other organisations with crossover but not likely to have money to offer, but possibly volunteers, subject matter experts, additional advertisements agreements. Some examples are Enterprize, Alma Doepel, Wattle, HMAS Castlemaine, Seaworks, James Craig, Australia Maritime Museum or any maritime museum in Australia.

Additionally we can reach out to other Maritime Organisations and Museums worldwide, especially ones who are operating with ships such as ours (I've sent a list out already)

Reaching out to other organisations which have money but may or may not have crossover with Polly.

Organisations such as Banks, Oil and Gas Industry, Windfarms or 'green' energy, alcohol producers (beer, spirits, wine).

We should also think about the Aboriginal community, not to gain money, but to make sure that we are being inclusive and thoughtful which may have a secondary benefit with some sponsors.

And any other ideas for money/sponsorship that anyone else has which might be worth exploring. I don't know how things work with the Trust when it comes to a task and/or request such as this and so I would imagine if enough interest is generated with the right people, things may move forward.

In my humble opinion I think the first step would be to have the interested parties form a preliminary committee to discuss and form an actual plan which is feasible, set up subcommittees to iron out specifics of the plan as well as produce a pitch for seeking out sponsors, government assistance etc.

The committee should discuss and recommend people for oversight such as for financial management, project manager, resource management, funding etc.

Three additional things that I think are of note that the committee should endeavor to keep the ship open as much as possible during this time (except of course when this is impossible such as dry-docking, but this should be managed during off peak times, winter).

Have the foresight to document the restoration for marketing (documentary or books or for future restorers) and to have follow up plans for the ongoing upkeep of the ship well into the future and onwards to her 200th birthday.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Respectfully,
Jeff Melancon.

In case you are wondering who I am, here is just a little bit about me.

I was born and raised just outside of New Orleans, Louisiana and spent my early life around boats and shipyards.

I joined the US Navy and became a Hospital Corpsman (medic) where I served for 21 years and retired a Chief Petty Officer.

After moving to Australia in 2014 I began volunteering and working on "Tall Ships" performing all matters of work on deck as a deckie, or boatswain's mate and even as bosun, this mostly included maintenance alongside as well as underway, working aloft in the rig, setting and dousing/handling sails, sail/canvas repair, helming and lookout, and any other of odd jobs in-between.

These sailing ships afforded me the opportunity to travel the world (literally crossing the Pacific and Atlantic, rounding Cape Horn and seeing the northern lights in Norway).

The ships I have sailed on are very similar in size and rig as Polly Woodside, they are the James Craig, Tenacious, Europa, Picton Castle (for a Bosun course where we derigged/rigged her alongside without the use of cranes as well as repair most of her standing/running rigging and sail repair), USCG Eagle and Enterprize (topsail schooner), and of course volunteering on Polly. Throughout this time I worked on commercial maritime qualifications and am qualified as Master<24m, MED3 (basic engineers ticket) and Coxswain (small vessel driver), all these are domestic certs.

I've recently qualified as an Integrated Rating (IR) which is, for lack of a better phrase, working on a big commercial ship as a deckie (I've recently been working on a 270 metre long tankers in WA).

I have a passion for the sea and ships and history and the people who bring the human touch to it. I am an ideas man who is happy to get his hands dirty and work hard but I am certainly not a captain of industry, I don't have any clout in the government, I don't have any wealthy friends with more money that they know what to do with.

I'm just a sailor who is passionate about seeing Polly be the best she can be!

Cheers.

THREE MISTAKES AT PEARL HARBOR

Author Unknown

[Good story and one for the strategists to ponder.](#)

God & "The 3 Mistakes

What God did at Pearl Harbor that day is interesting and I never knew this little bit of history.

Tour boats ferry people out to the USS Arizona Memorial in Hawaii every thirty minutes. We just missed a ferry and had to wait thirty minutes. I went into a small gift shop to kill time.

In the gift shop, I purchased a small book entitled, "*Reflections on Pearl Harbor*" by *Admiral Chester Nimitz*.

Sunday, December 7th, 1941--Admiral Chester Nimitz was attending a concert in Washington, DC. He was paged and told there was a phone call for him. When he answered the phone, it was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the phone.

He told Admiral Nimitz that he (Nimitz) would now be the Commander of the Pacific Fleet. Admiral Nimitz flew to Hawaii to assume command of the Pacific Fleet.

He landed at Pearl Harbor on Christmas Eve, 1941.

There was such a spirit of despair, dejection and defeat--you would have thought the Japanese had already won the war. On Christmas Day, 1941, Adm. Nimitz was given a boat tour of the destruction wrought on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese.

Big sunken battleships and navy vessels cluttered the waters everywhere you looked. As the Admiral's tour boat returned to dock, the young helmsman of the boat asked, "Well Admiral, what do you think after seeing all this destruction? Admiral Nimitz's reply shocked everyone within the sound of his voice.

Admiral Nimitz said, "The Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could ever make, or God was taking care of America. Which do you think it was?"

Shocked and surprised, the young helmsman asked, "What do mean by saying the Japanese made the three biggest mistakes an attack force ever made?"

Nimitz explained:

"Mistake number one: The Japanese attacked on Sunday morning. Nine out of every ten crewmen of those ships were ashore on leave. If those same ships had been lured to sea and been sunk-- we would have lost 38,000 men instead of 3,800.

Mistake number two: When the Japanese saw all those battleships lined in arrow, they got so carried away sinking those battleships, they never once bombed our dry docks opposite those ships. If they had destroyed our dry docks, we would have had to tow every one of those ships to America to be repaired.

As it is now, the ships are in shallow water and can be raised. One tug can pull them over to the dry docks, and we can have them repaired and at sea by the time we could have towed them to America. And I already have crews ashore anxious to man those ships.

Mistake number three: Every drop of fuel in the Pacific theater of war is in top of the ground storage tanks five miles away over that hill. One attack plane could have strafed those tanks and destroyed our fuel supply. That's why I say the Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could make or, God was taking care of America.

I've never forgotten what I read in that little book. It is still an inspiration as I reflect upon it. In jest, I might suggest that because Admiral Nimitz was a Texan, born and raised in Fredericksburg, Texas -- he was a born optimist.

But any way you look at it--Admiral Nimitz was able to see a silver lining in a situation and circumstance where everyone else saw only despair and defeatism."

President Roosevelt had chosen the right man for the right job. We desperately needed a leader that could see silver linings in the midst of the clouds of dejection, despair and defeat.

PLEASE NOTE.

There will be a ***Book Signing at Polly Woodside, on Sunday 2nd July on the Polly Woodside's Open Day – The Author, Denis Robertson, will be onsite from 11am till 12pm*** selling and signing his books.

Entry to the site:- National Trust Members are free. PWVA members wishing to attend are free, just need to tell the staff at the ticket desk they are PWVA members.

Also

Denis spent long research hours at Polly, quizzing us, to ensure his chapter on the ship is accurate.

Book "E. Graeme Robertson" by Denis Robertson.

The book is a biography of Graeme Robertson who led the restoration of the Polly Woodside between 1968 and 1975. The chapter on the ship emphasises the importance of sailing ships in the discovery of Australia by Europeans and then in the conduct of trade with the rest of the world. The work of many people who contributed to the success of the restoration is recorded.

Other aspects of Graeme Robertson's life were his photography and writing about the use of decorative cast iron on buildings. He wanted to encourage the preservation of good things from the past.

By profession he was a neurologist. In this specialty he also made a significant contribution.