

CASTLEMAINE CHRONICLE

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An Occasional Newsletter

Issue #12 – June 2025

This issue see's the ship in winter mode which is only different to summer mode in two ways, it's cold inside and the awnings are down. Otherwise we continue opening to the public and hosting special group visits. Visitor numbers are always lower in the winter months but we are still attracting good numbers.

Talking of winter perhaps spare a thought for two of our contemporary museum ships in North America that have to close down completely in winter due to snow and ice and generally inclement weather. That is USS *Slater* in Albany, New York and HMCS *Sackville* in Halifax, Nova Scotia. During this time they cannot generate any income as we are able to do however they do have support from other areas. For instance, unlike us, *Sackville* are supported by the Canadian navy in many ways.

In the last issue I mentioned a grant we had applied for from the Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme (MMAPSS) run by the Australian National Maritime Museum, the task is to weld doubler plates on sections of the deck. We were successful in that application and are now working towards getting the job done.

While on the subject of grants, over the years we have been fairly successful in applications to the Department of Veterans' Affairs *Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program*. Their latest round of grant opportunities is now open and the first batch closes at the end of August and the second in February 2026. What we are looking for are suggestions for projects that we could apply for a grant for. If you can think of anything please let me know and we will assess it against the criteria.

Now a quick update on the status of the Oerliken gun we have been offered and are trying to acquire. Well, it is still sitting in a room in Sydney (isn't it the way of the world, everything you want seems to always be in Sydney!). By the time the next newsletter appears I hope to be able to bring you some more positive news.

If you cast your minds back you may remember that we acquired two mannequins that we dressed up and put into spaces on the ship to bring it to life a bit. One went into the CPO's mess and the other in the Wardroom. Since then we have been working to get two more which arrived a few weeks ago. They are now in position; one in the CO's cabin and the other in the wireless room.



The CO's cabin with what we feel is a fair representation of *Castlemaine's* first CO Lt. Cdr Philip Jack Sullivan RANR.



The wireless room with an operator in place which could have been Telegraphist Bruce Dyker. Bruce's diaries are available to read on our website.

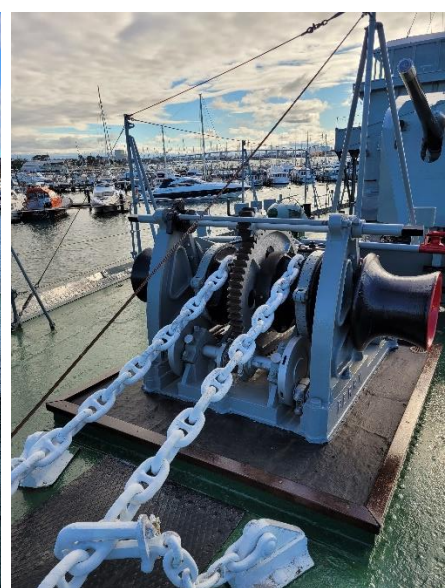
Thanks to Rob for coordinating the project and everybody else who had a hand in it.

Maintenance work continues, and is never ending, in order to preserve the *Castlemaine*. There are the usual jobs to do with the fabric of the vessel such as identifying rust, chipping and painting etc. Then the tasks around the presentation of the ship to the public such as ensuring the museum areas are clean and brass is polished.



Mike doing some preservation work on the door from the CO's lobby to the upper deck and Peter polishing the ship's name-board which is just about the first thing the public see when they board the ship.

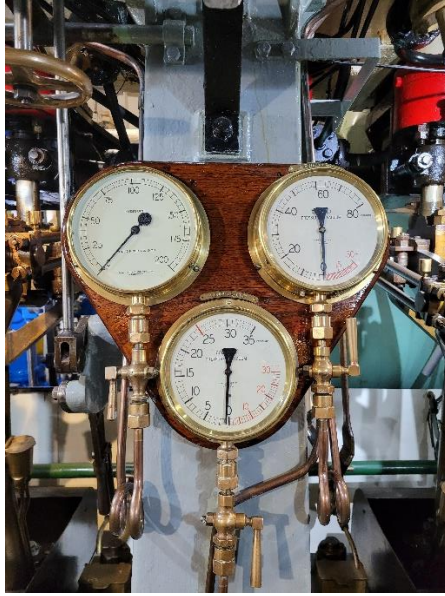
Over the past few months Geoff has been spending his time between the ongoing jobs of getting the engine room looking like new and re-furbishing the fwd winch. The winch is now finished so that if we ever need to drop or raise the anchors we can do it with a working winch that looks brand new.



On the left is a before picture and the other two as complete.

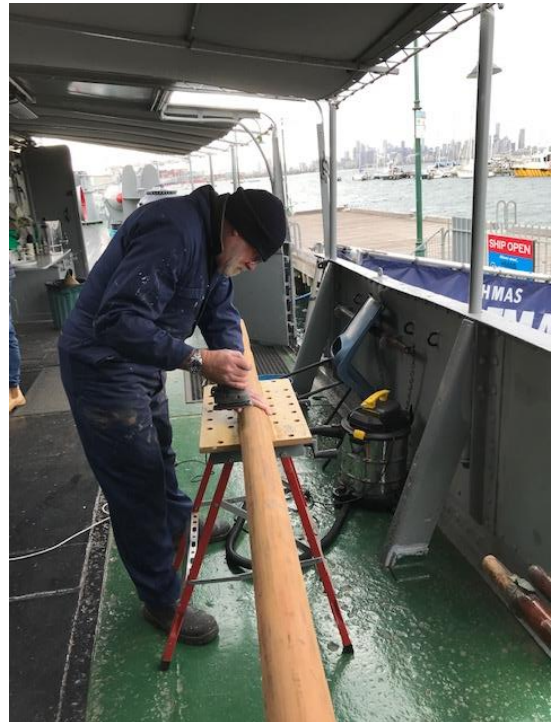
Mick did the excellent work on the brass polishing and Mike and Dean the base painting and the timber sealing of the foundation highlighting the excellent finish.

Below are three photos of work done in the engine room.



The engineer's desk and gauge boards with the clear finish, just one of those small jobs that highlight the trade craft of the 1940s.

Dean has been busy refurbishing the mast from the whaler, just in case we decide to take it for a sail. He's been stripping, sanding and re-coating, and the day was pretty cold.



Since the last newsletter we have had a number of visits worth noting. On Thursday 10th April the grandchildren of WW2 crew member A/B Gunnery Robert Stone visited the ship. Cheryl Stone is a Melbourne local but her brother Sam and his family had travelled from Port Hedland WA. They explained that it was

a bit of a pilgrimage to see the ship Robert served on and put some perspective on what he had told them of his wartime service. They really enjoyed the visit and were so happy that we are preserving the ship and the history/memory of crew members. Dick was on-board to show them around and showed them Robert's service record that we keep on board.



Sam & Cheryl Stone



A/B Robert Stone

Over the past few years we have been successful in being awarded grants under the Volunteer Grant Scheme which is run through the local federal member's office. The ship is located in the Gellibrand electorate and the member is Tim Watts. Tim's office contacted us about two years ago telling us that Tim wished to visit all the recipients of grants that were organised through his office. Ourselves and various 'minders' from Tim's office tried to set a date but for various reasons it didn't happen – until just prior the recent election. Tim visited on a Tuesday morning, our working day, and Dennis was on hand to show him around and explain our successes and problems.



The month of May saw a visit by a large contingent of Air Force cadets, some of them are pictured below on the quarter deck listening to Dick.



You may have noticed over the many editions of this newsletter that many of our volunteers feature in the photos, you may also have noticed that I have never featured. Some of you may think that I am just an invention of AI created to put a human face to the superb journalism of this publication. Well not so, I am real and the photo below sort of proves it. My daughter, her husband and some American friends have been visiting from Florida and they got a private ship's tour hosted by me and Dick. I'm the one with the beard.



STOP PRESS - STOP PRESS – BREAKING NEWS

In the last edition I mentioned that we had been successful with a '*Saluting Their Service*' grant application. That grant was to put the histories of 56 Australian crewed Corvettes up on the website. Well the job is now complete and the histories are up there for all to see at www.hmascastlemaine.org.au

Thanks to Kate for another terrific job.

Also thanks to everybody who does something, no matter how large or small, to help keep this project moving along.

Don't forget if you have any articles you wish to write for the newsletter don't be shy send them in. If you prefer we can publish them as being written by 'Anon' or 'A. N. Other' or any other silly name of your choosing.

Please send your articles or any comments about the newsletter to me Bob Pearson at newsletter@hmascastlemaine.org.au

TTFN
Bob