

CASTLEMAINE CHRONICLE

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An Occasional Newsletter

Issue #14 – Dec 2025

Welcome to the final edition of our newsletter for 2025. We have a blockbuster edition for you with lots of pictures (I know you like lots of pictures!). We have had a number of events or happenings since the last newsletter, all positive.

- Our deck plate doubling was successfully completed. You may remember we obtained a grant from the Australian Maritime Museum to cover that.
- The derrick mentioned in the last edition has been finished and rigged thanks to Deano, Buffer, Mike and Peter T.
- As also mentioned in the last edition the rubbing strip on the aft dolphin that fell off in that there inclement weather event has now been replaced by Parks' contractor Witt Marine.
- The awnings both forward and aft were put up without any fuss or bother, and in record time. (It always bothers me when I write that sentence or similar, it doesn't seem right, it's not the natural order of things. Ah well).
- There has been some minor mischief occur with visitors entering the CO's cabin expressly against our instructions. The signs are not ambiguous as they say DO NOT ENTER. Still I suppose some people choose to be illiterate when it suits. So Mike and Deano have produced and hung a see through stable half door (the bottom half before you ask).
- We had a visit from the councillor for the Williamstown ward Lisa Bentley. We like to show our local representatives what they have in Williamstown.
- Geoff and his little helpers are continuing there never ending task of tarring up the engine room, and a terrific job they are doing too.
- Several of our younger volunteers are getting in the punt whenever the weather is favourable to touch up the boot topping and other bits of the hull.
- Finally the end of year get together for volunteers, partners and friends. For the first time in about 16 years your humble correspondent was unable to attend having a prior engagement eating oysters, scallops and leatherwood honey in Tassie.

The list is in no particular order so the first photos are of the visit by Lisa Bentley.



The doubler plate job, a few before, during and after shots.



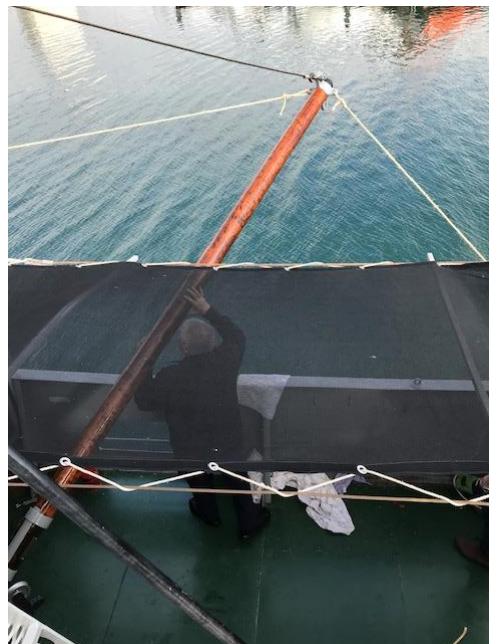
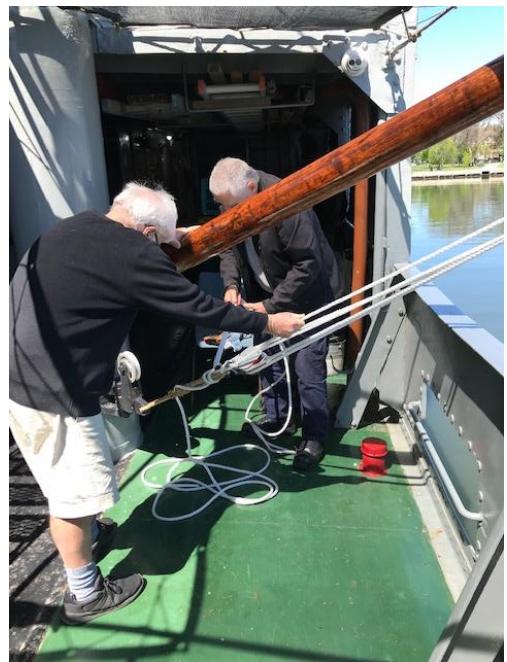


How about that then, thanks to the Australian Maritime Museum Grant Scheme and the blokes from PC Mobile Welding.

The CO's cabin door. On the day of the photo shoot Mike, who made the door, wasn't on board so Deano, who finished it off and hung it was. Hence he is the only one in the photos – next time Mike.



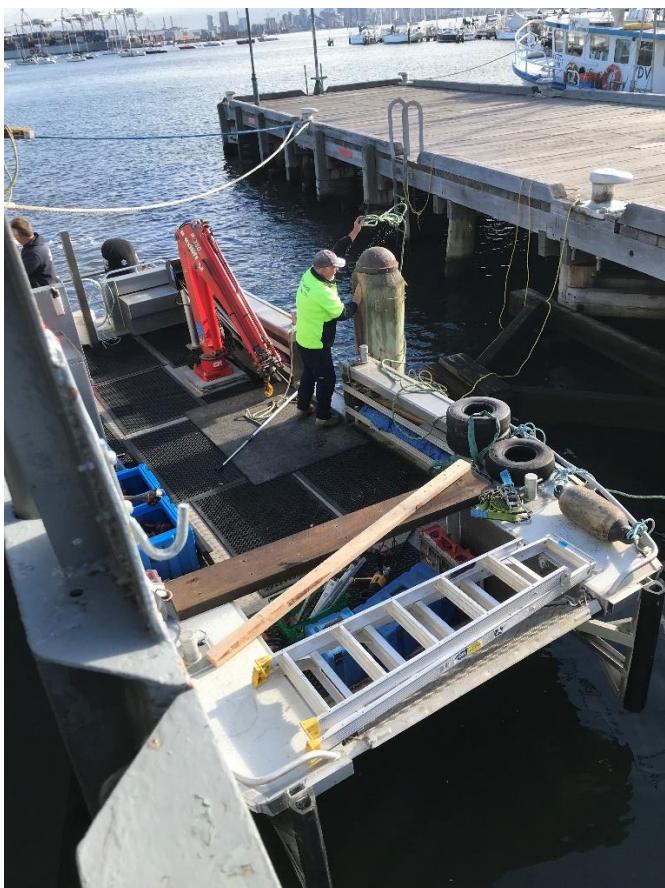
Let's now rig the derrick.



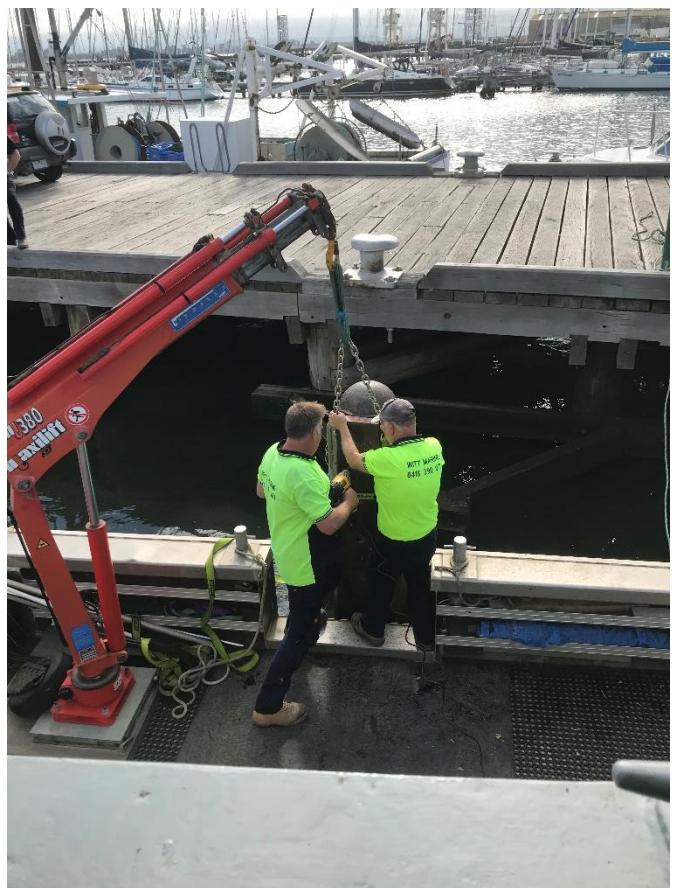
Dolphin Repair



Holding us off the pier

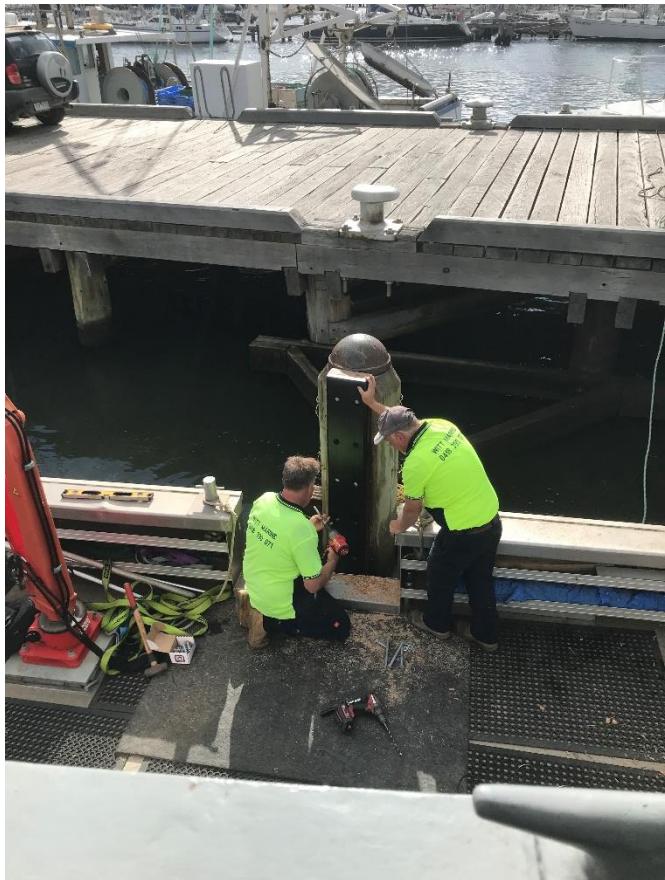


Bringing in the work barge

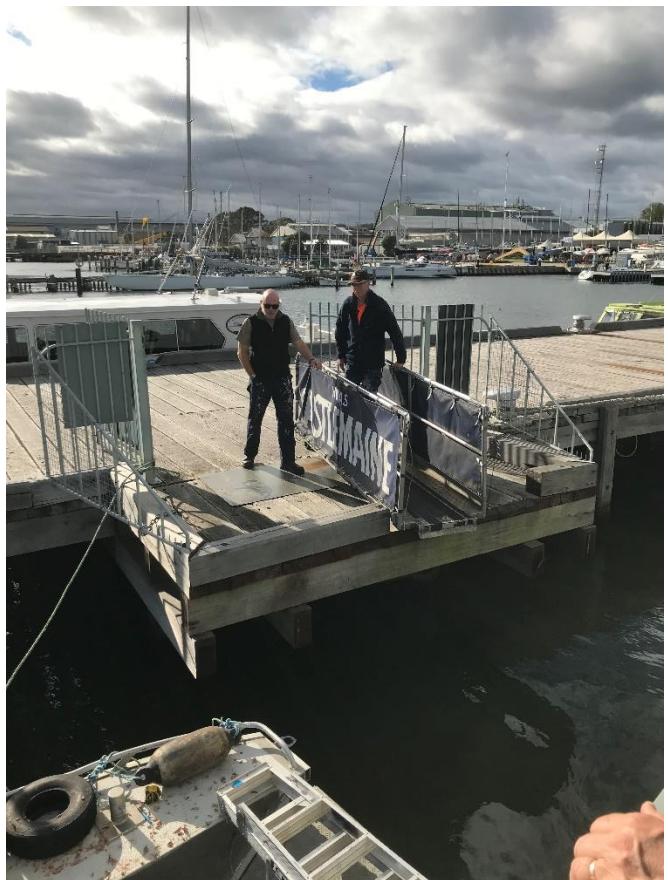


Affecting the repairs

At this point I have run out of room for another picture on this page but have space to fill. Please move to the next page for more stunning visuals.

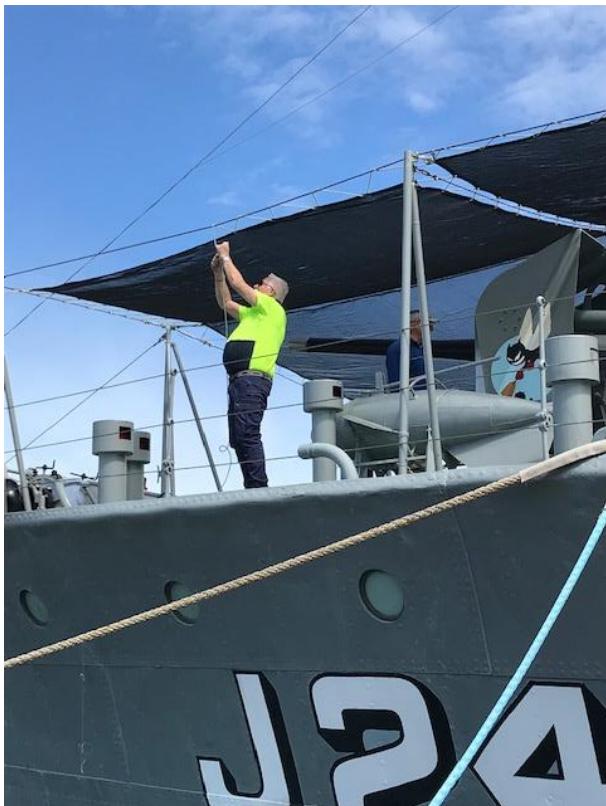


Finishing off.

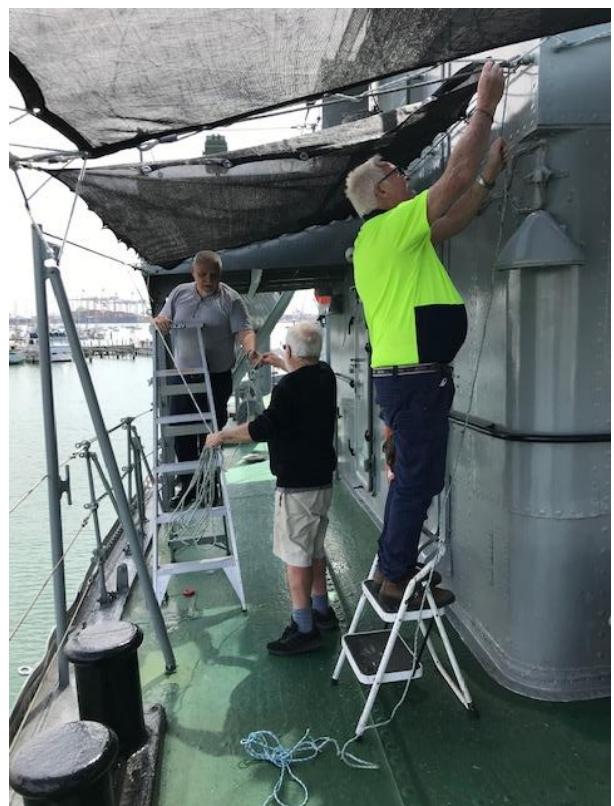


During the job we had two late arrivals.

Now two shots from when the awnings were put up – I still can't believe it went so well.



Mike



Buffer, Peter & Mike

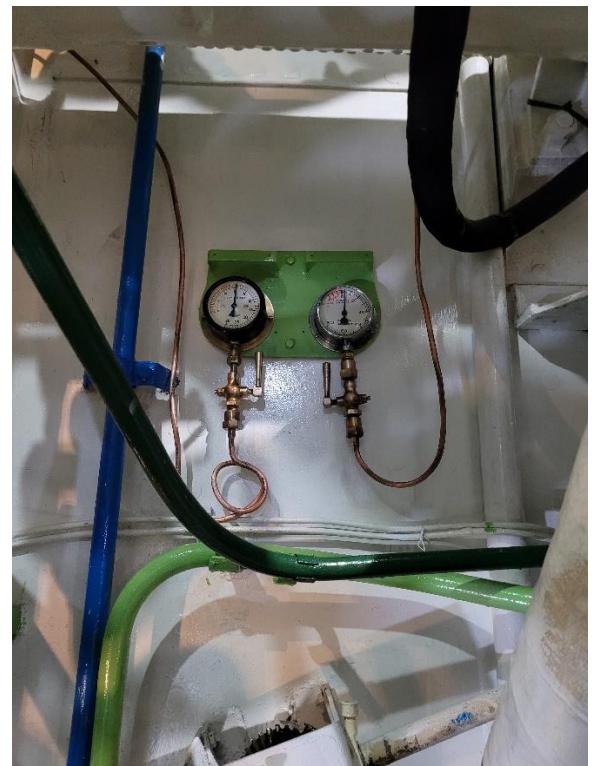
As mentioned before here are two of our younger volunteers messing around in the punt.



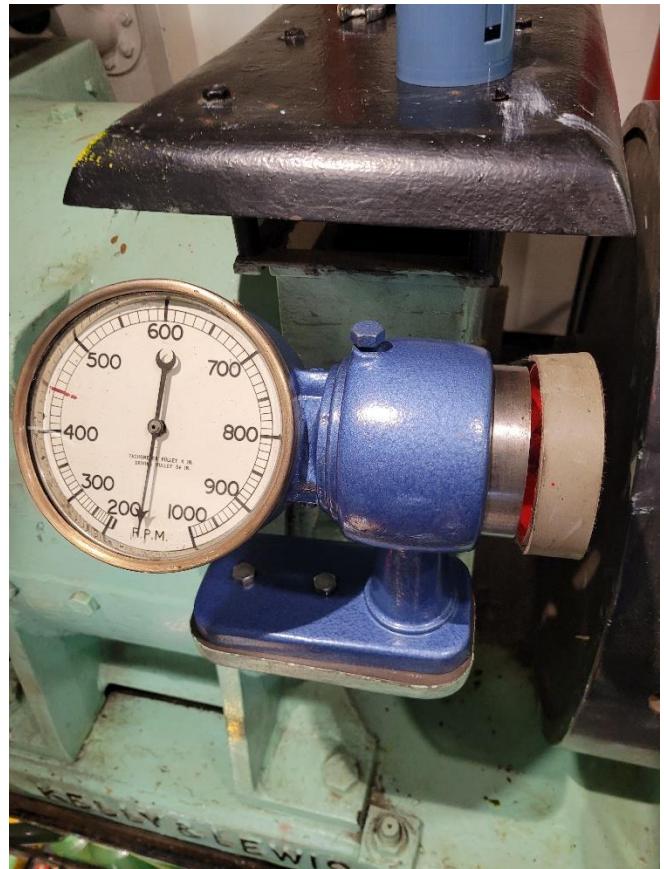
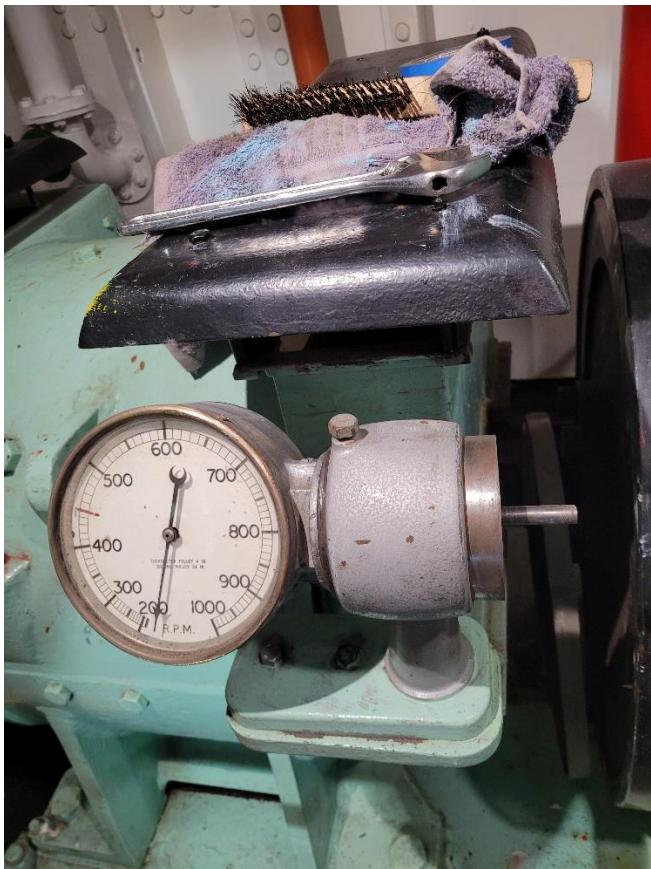
Now some before and after shots of the work being done in the engine room by Geoff and his crew.



Before



After



Not only is the brass shiny and the paintwork renewed but it is now functional.



The crew at the Christmas soiree 2025. I will not do a cast list as you know who you are.

Over many years members of our volunteer crew have made themselves available to assist the Australian Navy Cadets of TS Voyager in Williamstown. Last Friday 12th December Dick attended their presentation night during which we were presented with the certificate below.



AUSTRALIAN NAVY CADETS

This certificate is presented to the

HMAS Castlemaine

In recognition of your generous support in hosting the Cadets of TS Voyager, Australian Navy Cadets and for providing valuable insights into your facilities and operations. Your teams time, professionalism, and encouragement has made, and will continue to make a lasting impact on our young leaders.

We look forward to continuing our partnership in the future.

Bravo Zulu!

Commanding Officer

LEUT ANC

Ashley Alp

Executive Office & Training Officer

SBLT ANC

Rachael Fricker

In a similar vein we received a missive from a gentleman who had visited the ship and wrote to congratulate us, please read on.

To whom it may concern,

I had the pleasure of visiting the HMAS Castlemaine Maritime Museum Ship over the weekend and wanted to acknowledge the volunteers that are involved with the Ship.

It was clear as we explored the ship the immense pride that is being taken in maintaining the vessel, the attention to detail and the cleanliness. The signage to alert visitors to hazards and the knowledge of the volunteers on duty was impressive.

I happen to be the Chairperson of Volunteering WA, the State Peak Body for volunteers in Western Australia and in this role I have reason to engage with many volunteers across the very diverse volunteering sector.

Thank goodness you all chose to volunteer. Your passion and pride shown through and you should be very proud of the social and cultural value you are providing to this Nation in ensuring that Museum ships such as the HMAS Castlemaine can continue to be explored and enjoyed by generations.

Thank you so very much.

Respectfully,

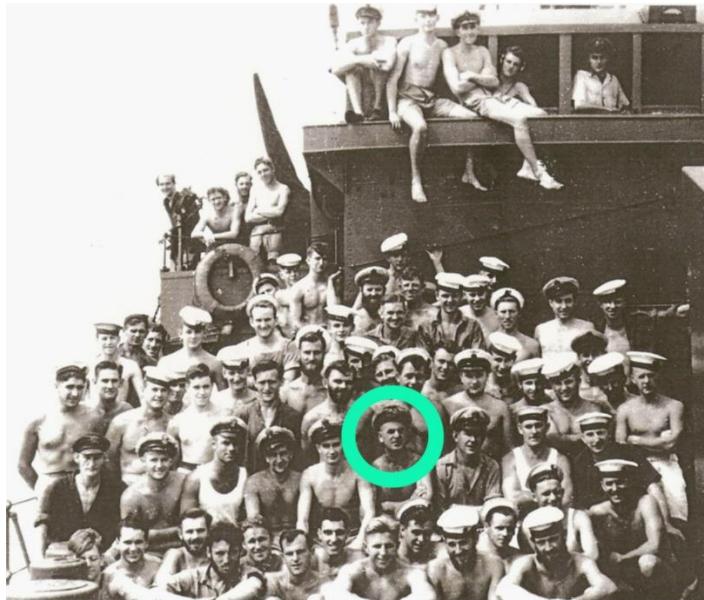
Craig Spencer OAM
Chair Volunteering WA.

I think that letter says so much that we don't say ourselves, about the pride and passion that we all feel but don't say because we are 'blokes' (apologies to Kathleen and Gail, I hope you know what I mean).

Part of our ongoing commitment to honour the men who served on *Castlemaine* during WW2 is, where possible, to collect photos of them. Any new photos that we get usually come from relatives of the men who visit the ship or see our website and contact us through our email. Our latest photo and identifications on group photos on the website came from the grandson of CPO Stoker William Frederick Oldfield DSM who served on the ship between June 1942 and September 1943. He was born in the UK in 1900 so he was one of the older crew members and I'd like to think he would have been a kind of father figure to some of the young recruits.



Engine room crew



Castlemaine crew



CPO Stoker William Frederick Oldfield DSM

Now a quick shout out to Steve, one of our Saturday regulars, who is still doing it tough health wise. We hope to see you back soon Steve.

If you need to contact me with any complaints, suggestions or articles for inclusion please use this email newsletter@hmascastlemaine.org.au

Remember that all editions of this newsletter are available on the website at www.hmascastlemaine.org.au

A big thank you to all our volunteers and anybody who has helped keep our ship at the forefront of Australian museum ships over the last twelve months. Because that's what we are the most complete, accessible and best example of a preserved warship in Australia. We should all be very proud of what has been achieved, starting with those pioneers back in the 1970's through all the volunteers in between right up to today.

I'd now like to wish all members, friends and supporters of *Castlemaine* a very Merry Christmas and great 2026.

TTFN

Bob