



# CASTLEMAINE CHRONICLE

Previously published as CASTLEMAINE CAPERS

## An Occasional Newsletter

Issue # 8 – June 2024

Welcome to edition #8 of our newsletter, now known as the *Castlemaine Chronicle*. The title has now been changed due to an overall positive response to the question posed in the last newsletter. I was hoping that an original copy of the paper, published in 1944, may have been found by now but I'm still waiting.

The awnings were pulled down just after Easter which signifies moving into winter mode on the ship. This really just means that we feel colder when on board unlike our sister historic ship USS Slater in Albany, New York which almost hibernates during the winter months due to the weather. They carry out some maintenance work however they have no income during this period. We are lucky that Melbourne weather is not too bad, although we do moan about it at times, and we are still able to keep the ship open as normal and generating income which is vital to our survival.

The new innovation for the engine room mentioned in a previous edition has now come to fruition. It is an animated representation of the way our main engines operate and, just to show we are up with the latest technology, it's in colour! It plays on a continuous loop (thanks Matt) on the screen mounted on the aft access steps. The steps are rarely used and the screen can swing away if the steps are needed in an emergency.



This latest innovation is proving to be quite popular with our visitors who can now get a better understanding of how the engines work. Couple the graphic with the port engine slowly turning over, with sound effects, and the explanation provided by our guides then the visitor has the opportunity to get fully immersed in the engine room.

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On 16<sup>th</sup> April the AGM of the Maritime Trust of Australia was held on board. The main order of business was the biennial spill of the committee and the election of a new committee. An election was not needed as there were the correct number of nominees to fill the available positions. Therefore your new committee is as follows.

President:	Dennis Gale
V/President:	no nominee
Secretary:	Dick Budzienny
Treasurer:	Dick Budzienny
Committee Member: (Assistant Secretary)	Andrew Campbell
Committee Member: (Assistant Treasurer)	Martin Woodhead
Committee Member:	Bob Pearson
Committee Member:	Michael Harrington
Committee Member:	Andy McNeill

The President's report was read out by Dennis and presents a very healthy picture of the Trust's position in regard to the operation of our asset *Castlemaine*. However there is one dark cloud on the horizon, that being the future docking of the ship. As you are all no doubt aware there is currently no operational dry docking or slipping facility available in Port Phillip that will take a ship of the *Castlemaine's* size. Just to refresh some memories, not that long ago we had Alfred Graving Dock, Wagglen floating dock and Rippleside slip at Geelong.

A copy of the minutes and the President's report are available on request.

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Restoration and maintenance projects are continuing every Tuesday. There is the never ending 'Rattle & Daub' on rusty steel all around the ship. Andy and Martin are particularly good at this, it is not unusual to see them 'discussing in an animated way' who should have the rattle gun first on a Tuesday morning. And God help anyone who walks on some wet black paint then steps onto some green!

Since the last newsletter the Oerlikon gun on the port bridge wing was moved sideways in order to clean off the rust underneath.

When in operation during WW2 the *Castlemaine* had an Oerlikon on both bridge wings now we just have the one. That is not for the want of trying to obtain another but we have had no success. If anyone knows of anyone who has one being used as a garden ornament please let us know, it doesn't need to be operational! It has been suggested that we could maybe 3D print one, anybody know anything about that?





Martin with his favorite tool



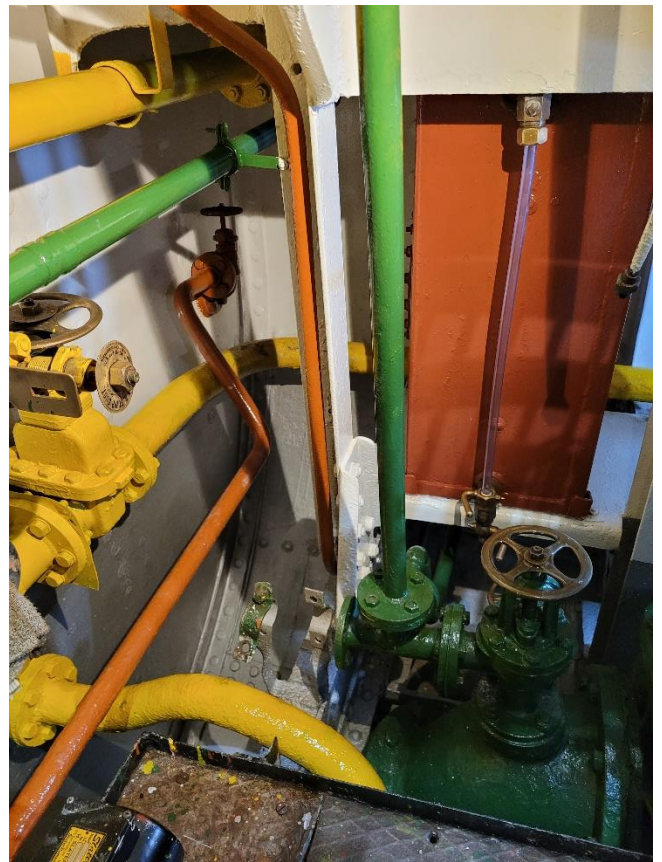
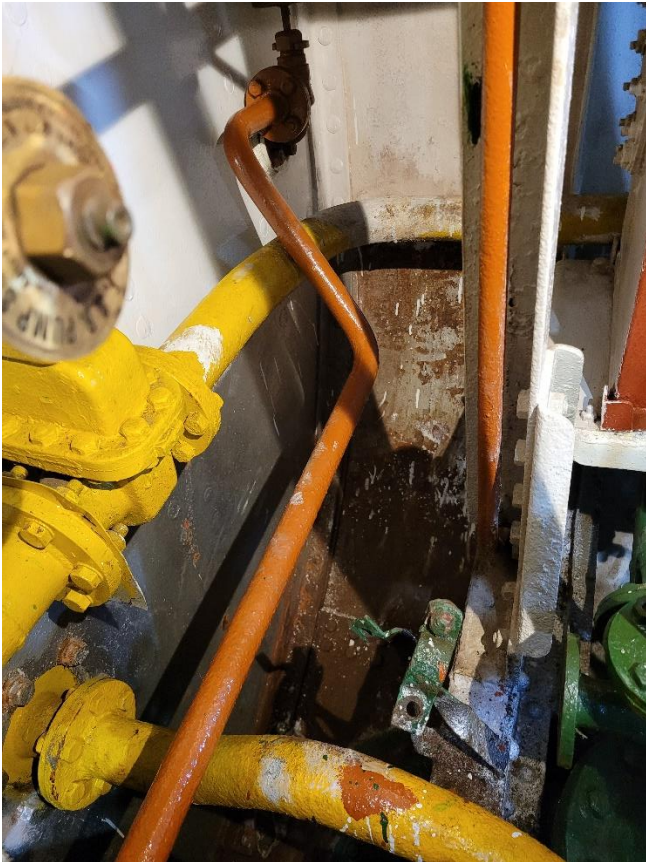
Good for another twenty years

Work has also been undertaken on one of our mines on the after deck. There was a lot of rust around where the top of the mine bolts to the body so the top was taken off. There was found to be some water in the mine, maybe left over from when the mines were filled with water for ballast many years ago. This is still an ongoing project.





Work is continueing in the engine room particularly in the bilges where Geoff our resident 'bilge rat' has almost completed his mammoth task of needle gunning, cleaning and painting them. Below are before and after shots of the last of the bilge wings.



One of Geoff's part time assistants in the engine room is Mick who, when not doing electrical work, has become our resident expert in polishing brass and copper. An example of his work is below, and getting the thumbs up from Geoff.



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After many years work by many people we are fairly confident the honour roll of the men who served on *Castlemaine* during WW2 is almost up to date. I say almost because new names pop up from time to time which then involves research to ensure that the suggested person did indeed serve on *Castlemaine*. If it is proven to be correct we then add his name and details to our digital and hard copy records as well as trying to find space on the Honour Board for his name. As an example of this Andrew, who has been researching the story of *HMAS Goorangai*, came across the brother of a stoker on *Goorangai*, this brother served on *Castlemaine*. He was also a stoker and named Leonard Wilfred Johnston, Leonard survived the war but his brother, sadly, went down with the *Goorangai*. So Leonard is the latest addition to our honour roll.

Photos of the crew members are also priceless as it puts a human face to a name on a list. All the photos we have of crew members are on our website and kept in our files on board. Recently a lady came on board on a Saturday and gave us a framed 6"x4" photo of her father. His name is Francis Crawford and here he is.



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A feature of our visitor experience is having to walk past our strategically placed souvenir table on the way off the ship. Souvenir sales have increased gradually over the last few years until they now make up a small but significant percentage of our income. The range of items available has gradually grown due to the diligence of Dick who hunts down anything with a connection to *Castlemaine* or the RAN that he thinks will be of interest to our visitors.



One of the newer items available is a black polo shirt with the *Castlemaine* logo. These are available for purchase by you our members at cost price. If you are interested please contact Dick on the ship's email [hmascastlemaine@dodo.co.au](mailto:hmascastlemaine@dodo.co.au)



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Every now and then we come across an historical photo of *Castlemaine*, just when you think there are no more to find. The photo below is courtesy of Geoff Dougal of Seaworks. It shows, from left to right, *Castlemaine*, *Geelong* and *Ballarat* fitting out at the WND in 1941.



I now have the sad duty to report that Geoff Middleton, a volunteer for about 30 years, crossed the bar aged 91 on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2024.  
Geoff, a proud Yorkshireman and a Stoker, was a Royal Navy veteran who served on *HMS Vanguard* the RN's last battleship.  
We will miss his optimistic outlook and his tireless efforts in trying to win that big Tattslotto prize for the ship's syndicate.  
RIP Geoff



If anybody reading this would care to contribute an article it would be terrific. It would need to be connected to the *Castlemaine* or *Bathurst* class corvettes or maybe the RAN in general. It doesn't matter how short or how long it is and there will be no judgements made as to spelling or grammar!

All the 'Castlemaine Capers/Chronicle' newsletters are available on our website:  
[www.hmascastlemaine.org.au](http://www.hmascastlemaine.org.au)

If you have any comments or contributions, please send them to me Bob Pearson at [newsletter@hmascastlemaine.org.au](mailto:newsletter@hmascastlemaine.org.au)

TTFN  
Bob