

Newsletter

October 2011



Editorial

Much has happened since the last Steamlines in July. The most obvious difference at 19 South Wharf is the appearance of the ship. Where once there were growing gaps between frames in the forward section there is now beautifully welded steel. Thanks to Waterside Engineering there is now evidence of substantial reconstruction. A recent visitor to our site admired the welding of the Waterside crew and described it in terms of beauty and a first rate example of artisan skill. In an ideal world these underwater sections of the hull might have been restored to their original riveted form, however the realities of time and resources have taken us down another pathway.

Our own volunteer workforce is now focussed on the boiler compartment and the detachment of the propeller shaft from the stern tube at the thrust block. A recent shuffling of the workshop containers has also brought about a reorganisation of stores and storage.

Other events have contributed to focussing our activities towards a 2013 target for getting the Wattle back into the water. The Lend Lease maritime heritage proposal for North Wharf gives us a target date to work to. It has also encouraged a number of maritime heritage groups to come together and work collaboratively on the development of a shared site. This is a significant development in the consolidation of maritime history in Victoria and one can only hope that such cooperation is ongoing.

Research on the history of the Wattle keeps throwing up tantalizing gems. In this issue some aspects on the decision to build the Wattle and hand it to the navy are revealed. In the next issue of Steamlines we will reveal some of the politics surrounding the transfer of Cockatoo Island Dockyard to private enterprise and the role that ship number 111 played.

From the Bridge

Dick Francis

Since our last Steamlines big things have been happening. Firstly Waterside Engineering have fitted the first two new plates to the hull and I have no doubt that Jeff Malley will have some photographs elsewhere in this issue. This is a very important step in the reconstruction and a very big vote of thanks is due to all those tireless volunteer workers who have got us this far. As I write this Waterside Engineering have commenced the second instalment of welding new plates to the hull.

Planning is well underway to start work on the galley area as soon as it is fit to do so.



Please look at the proposed galley layout drawings in the mess room container and in this issue of *Steamlines* as Tony Lewis would like some feedback.

Later this month we have the **Maritime Museum of Victoria Conference** which will be at the Royal Historical Society building in William Street. That is on the 29th October. Registration is still open and the \$30 covers morning and afternoon teas as well as lunch. If you can make it come along and hear a good line up of speakers including our own Peta Knott.

Another significant development is the proposal to develop a maritime heritage centre on the old North Wharf section of the river. Initial presentations to VicUrban and Lend-Lease by Geoff Harris (Sorrento Steam) and myself re a proposed Heritage Centre in the Docklands were well received. Consequently a team has now been formed to prepare a concept proposal to place before them. The team is Henry Hudson, Peta Knott, Tony Lewis, Dick Francis, Tim Horton and Liz Stewart. Liz is an interior architect and the daughter of Tony Stewart from Sorrento Steam.

Once the proposal is ready for presentation members will be asked to comment as will members of the Maritime Museum of Victoria and Maritime Heritage Association of Victoria. We are all working together on this one.



Restoration Report

Anthony Mansfield Project Manager

As most people know, Waterside Engineering have started work on the structural work in the fwd accommodation area and are progressing well.

The boiler is ready to lift and is awaiting the completion of the stands to hold it.

The focus for the volunteers can now move to the after end of the ship where the tail shaft and stern tube will keep us busy for the next few months.

The current schedule milestones are:

*“Dry” work complete and ship ready to refloat (and hopefully under its own power) – **April 2013***

*Refloat- **May 2013***

*Present at Docklands Site Opening – **June 2013***

Later, and more flexible milestones are:

*Completion of Survey and technical repairs – **Feb 2014***

*Completion of Cosmetic and Domestic work – **Nov 2014***

*Return to Commercial Service - **Jan 2015.***

I will print up the detailed schedule to the refloat date as it currently stands for display in the site office and I fully expect members to let me know what needs to be added!

Someone from the Wattle?

An old, retired sailor was sitting on a bench at Port Melbourne, watching the ships sailing up Hobsons Bay and reminiscing about the past.

A young punk was passing and the old sailor looked at him intently.

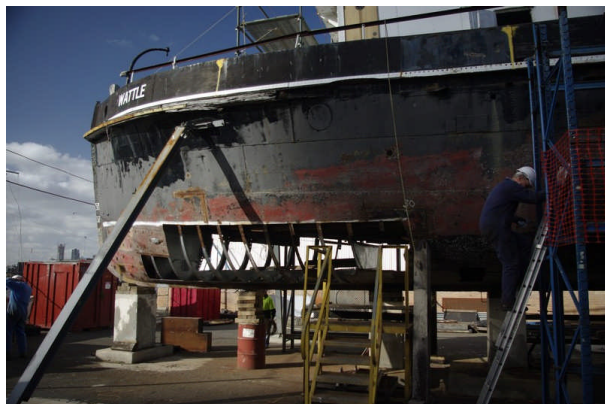
The colourful young punk caught him looking and said, "What the hell are you staring at?"

The old fella said, "I was looking at your hair, it's all colours, red, blue, green, orange and yellow!"

"What's the matter with that, didn't you do anything wild in your day, old man?" said the punk.

"Well yes, I did," said the old sailor. "I once got pissed in Valparaiso and had sex with a parrot. So I was just wondering if you were my son!"

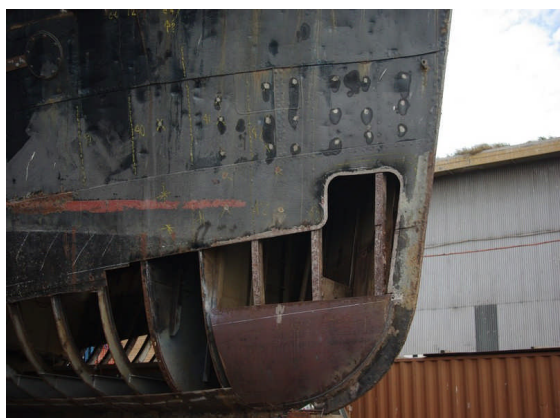
Restoration photo record – the new hull emerges



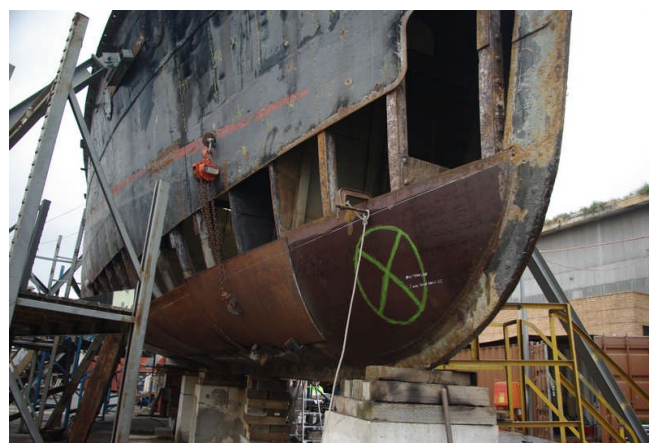
Before the new plates



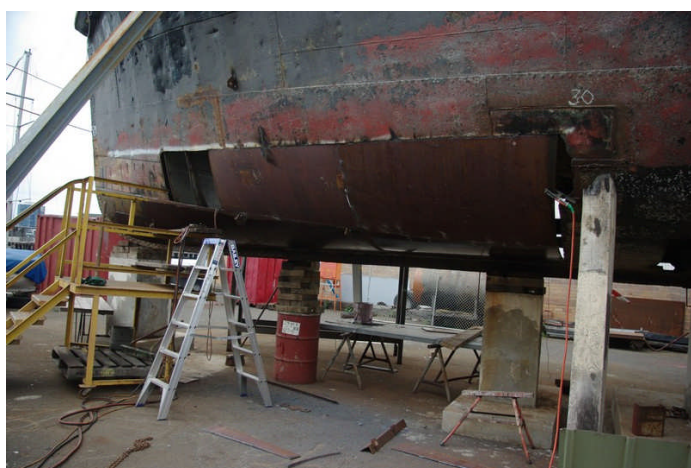
Flanges welded to inside of frames



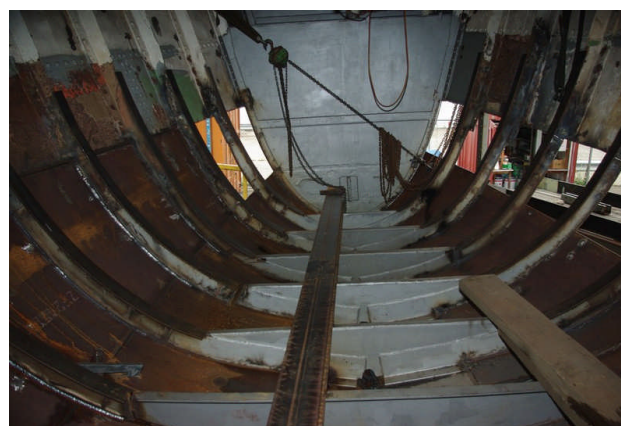
First welded plate by Waterside Engineering



*Subsequent forward plates starboard.
Place for bowthruuster is marked X.*



Port side plates



Interior looking forward

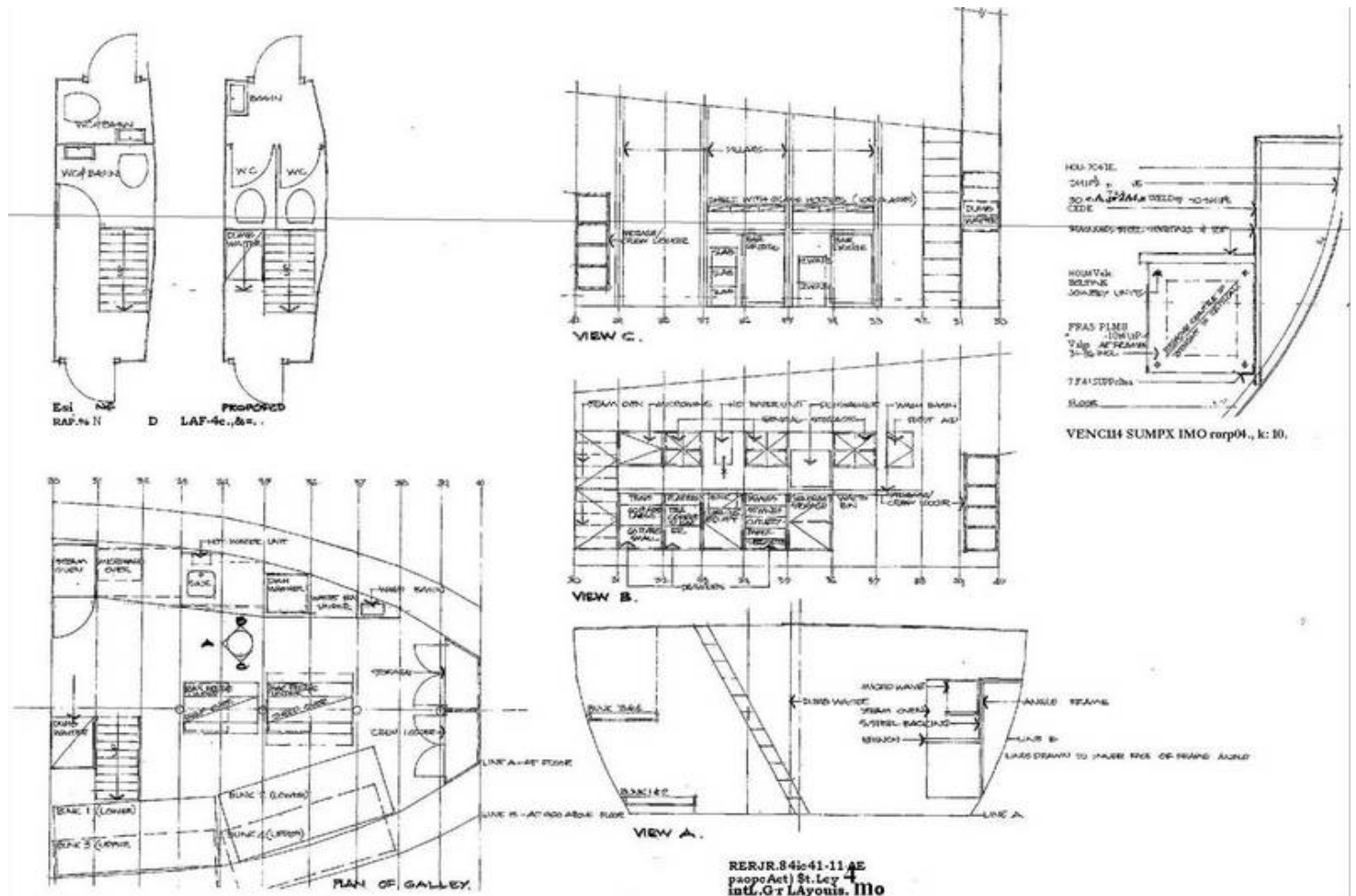
Wattle galley plans.

The galley proposal is based on allowing us to serve pre-cooked finger food warmed up in a steam oven. Cold foods such as salads will also be able to be served. Small refrigerators will enable us to serve chilled drinks and tea and coffee will also be available. A dishwasher is incorporated for when we are connected to shore based power. Stainless steel has been used as much as possible to comply with food regulations.

Four bunks are provided for crew if we overnight at Rye as in the past. A microwave is suggested for crew-use in that circumstance.

To avoid the extreme hazard of carrying hot food and drink up the steep companionway, a dumb waiter is proposed. This requires some alterations to the toilets at deck level.

The scheme has been prepared for comment and criticism. Please direct these to Tony Lewis on tel. 9846 1819 or <ailston@iprimus.com.au>



Above and below decks

Wattle and the Melbourne City Council Crest

Set into the Swanston Street footpath on the outside of the portico of the Melbourne Town Hall are a set of brass plaques that were commissioned in 1992 to present a modern interpretation of the Melbourne City Council crest. The original crest, shown here, was divided into a quadrant with each sector illustrating a source of wealth for the city. “The fleece, the bull, the whale and the ship represented wool, tallow and oil, the chief exports of 1843, and their means of transport from Port Phillip.”



For the 1992 reinterpretation the commissioned artists chose the Wattle to represent the port activity of shipping exports and imports.

Next time you are in the city go and have a look at the “Wattle” in the footpath and reflect on the recognition that the City of Melbourne has given to the ship.

Broadmeadows model boat builders



On September 10 members of the Broadmeadows Model Boat Group (BMBG) visited the Wattle. They are very interested in producing a model of the ship. So keen is their enthusiasm that they have been accepted by “Model Boats” magazine to write an article about modelling our ST Wattle as the major subject for their 2013 Winter Special. While this is some way off considerable collaboration will happen between BMBG and BSMM to ensure that appropriate plans, photographs and historic records are examined in order to contribute to this article.

Continuing cooperation with a range of interest groups such as BMBG and the Eastern Suburbs Photographic Society is yet another important means of increasing the awareness and significance of the Wattle.

At left Ron Stannus is discussing aspects of the Wattle with Alan, Les and John from the BMBG.

Maritime Museums and Ship Preservation

Steam Tug Portwey

Portwey was built in 1927 by Harland and Wolff's at Govan near Glasgow as a coastal and harbour tug for the Portland and Weymouth Coaling Co. to form part of the essential coaling fleet needed to keep Britain's vast commercial fleet moving

Portwey is the only twin screw, coal fired steam tug now active in the United Kingdom.

She is 80 feet (24.3m) long by 18 feet (5.5m) wide with a displacement of 330 tons (9' draft), She can do 9 knots, if the boiler crew can keep the pressure up to 140 p.s.i.. When built in 1927 Portwey had provision for a crew of 8 seamen or apprentices



She is a typical British tug of the period used for towing barges, pulling and pushing ships about and taking fresh water to ships. She also carried Pilots out to ships.

Today Portwey is lovingly preserved by a small band of volunteers belonging to the Steam Tug Portwey Trust Ltd. The Trust is a Limited Company with Charitable Status. Portwey's current permanent berth is in the South Quay of the West India Docks, London. Visit the Portwey website on <http://www.stportwey.co.uk/>.

Maritime Heritage Association of Victoria Evening talk

*Tuesday 22nd November 2012 at the Port Education Centre, 343-383 Lorimer St, Port Melbourne.
7pm formalities begin including a presentation by our own Anthony Mansfield, "To Repair or Restore the Wattle"
6pm doors open, 6:30pm hot food and snacks served. An enlightening evening for all Wattle members.*

From the Past Part Two

The Wattle from 1932-1934

Rob J Newland (Boatswain ST Wattle 1987-2002)

Its time to take a voyage to 1932 /1933 when Australia and the rest of the world were recovering from the great depression, Mr. Joseph Lyons and the United Australia Party had won an election held on the 6th January 1932 defeating James Scullin's Labour Party. Lyons remained in Government until 7th April 1939.

A Cabinet briefing paper dated 13th December 1933 from the Prime Ministers Department with the heading, "Disposal Of A Steam Tugboat Recently Built and Financed by the Commonwealth Government at Cockatoo Island Dockyard" and other internal government correspondence give an indication as to why the ["Codeco"] "Wattle" came into existence and who was involved in that decision.

People who had some part in the decisions include:

*Mr. H. C. Brown, Chairman, Australian Commonwealth Shipping Board
A. Percival, Acting Chairman, Australian Commonwealth Shipping Board
G. F. Pearce, Department of Defence
M. L. Shepherd, Secretary Defence Department
C. J. Pope? Captain Superintendent H. M. A. Naval Establishments*

The Cabinet briefing paper indicates that Commonwealth funds were provided in the estimates for 1932 – 1933 for Cockatoo Island Dockyard, “to keep the nucleus staff employed by the building of a tugboat”. There is no direct mention of a project to keep the dockyard apprentices employed.

The Australian Commonwealth Shipping Board inquired into the disposal of the tug “Codeco” as it was nearing completion. Codeco No.111 “was not built to the order of any department or for any specific purpose at a total cost of £18,500”. It was believed that “the tugboat would only obtain £6,000 as a commercial proposition”. The Defence Department reported that “the tug would be of great service to the Sydney Naval Establishments and it would be grateful if the transfer of the tug was without financial adjustment”.

The Deputy Director of Navigation, Sydney reported, “the vessel was a handy, powerful tug suitable for harbour and river work only and was eminently suitable for harbour purposes and the Naval Department might find her useful provided it was not decided to dispose of the vessel outside as a sacrifice”.

He also had submitted a draft advertisement for the sale at public tender as a means to dispose of the vessel.

There must have been a fair bit of interest as “she was found to be unsuitable for use as a lighthouse tender in the South Australian Gulfs and the Geelong Harbour Trust Commissioners had been making enquires for a tug”. The Naval Board were also looking to replace a similar vessel, the “Bimbi”, which was considerably damaged as a result of a collision.

At the Cabinet meeting held on the 14th December 1933 it was decided that the steam tug “Codeco” was to be handed over to the Department of Defence, Navy Department free of cost with the vessel being under the control of the Naval Board on the understanding “that whenever military authorities required the services of a tug, this craft was to be made available by the naval board for such work”. On the 15th February 1934 the trials took place with representatives of H.M.A Naval Establishments attending. The trials were considered to be satisfactory and the vessel was taken over at their conclusion.

On 5th April 1934 notification of the tug being renamed “Wattle” came from the Captain Superintendent, H.M.A Naval Establishments Sydney to the Secretary Naval Board Melbourne.

It must be noted that the construction of tug No. 111, “Codeco” was initiated by the Australian Commonwealth Shipping Board who administered the Commonwealth Naval Dockyard, Cockatoo Island, Sydney until 1st March 1933 and then completed by the Cockatoo Docks & Engineering Company Ltd. who took over the private lease hold of the Cockatoo Island Dockyard. The “Codeco” was owned by the Australian Commonwealth Government and was transferred internally from the Australian Commonwealth Shipping Board to the Department of Defence, Navy Department at the conclusion of the trials held on the 15th February 1934 until retired and disposed of in 1969

References:

*Australian Archives Victoria now National Archives of Australia (Naa)
Accession No. MP124/6 Dept. of Defence Navy Office, Defence (Navy) Series.1923-1938 File No. 612/227/1062
Naa index Steel workboat Bustler Working Drawings of Steel Workboat Bustler, 1978- 79 Accession M3183
Naa Margaret Chambers Collection 2000, The History of Cockatoo Island Dockyard Chapter 1*

*If you have any queries I am happy to try and answer them in Steamlines and directly to the enquirer.
Until next time Rob Newland, robnewland@yahoo.com.au Ph (03) 5985 3817 or Mob 0417 519 049*

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given for the Annual General Meeting and election of office bearers for Bay Steamers Maritime Museum Ltd.

The AGM will take place on Saturday 26th of November 2011 at the Port Education Centre, 343 -383 Lorimer Street, Port Melbourne, starting at 4.00 pm. The AGM will include Chairman and financial reports, the election of office bearers and presentations on the restoration progress, maritime precinct developments and aspects of the ships history.

The Port Education Centre is 5 minutes drive downstream from the Wattle and is next to the Melbourne Vessel Traffic Service tower (Melway Map 42 F10).

A BBQ will follow the closing of the AGM at 5.00 pm.

Preceding the AGM will be an inspection of the Wattle at 19 South Wharf, Lorimer Street, Port Melbourne, between 3.00 and 3.50 pm.

Volunteers BBQ

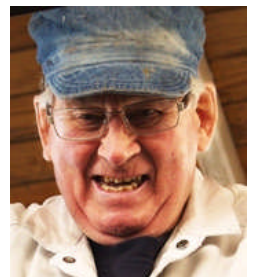
Sorrento Steam is putting on a special BBQ lunch for all those volunteers who have made it down to the Wattle during 2011 doing the various jobs required to progress the restoration. So come on down and meet the Sorrento Steam crowd and catch up with your shipmates **on the evening of Wednesday 16th November at 1830hrs at the Wattle. If you are coming please RSVP to Dick or Jeff (contacts at bottom of this page) by Sunday 13 November.**

Members profile



In other places he is known as the STIG. It is not widely known that when he left that well known British automotive TV show that he ended up at the Wattle. As it turns out he is a dab hand at doing spot welding repairs on holy rudders, angle grinding unwanted bits of plate and needle gunning unbelievers. No one at the Wattle has seen the face of our STIG because when he finishes at the Wattle he goes straight to his motorbike and zooms off into the wilderness to slaughter some IT monster threatening our national data systems. We do wonder though how he manages at lunchtime with all that headgear. If you want to find out more about our Wattle STIG you might have to come down to the shipyard soon.

John Rogers is one of our senior marine engineers. Lately he has been working with Peter Batey down in the bowels of the ship disconnecting various feed pipes from the boiler and more recently disconnecting the main shaft from the thrust block. If you go down into the ship when these two are working you will quickly realize that there is a special marine engineering language used to help difficult objects become unstuck. John's photo is here because he is smiling. Clearly something has just become unstuck and made him happy.



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Bay Steamers Maritime Museum Ltd. may be contacted at P.O. Box 98, Albert Park, Victoria, 3206 or through the Chairman Capt'n Dick Francis on 03 9873 2009 (email wendick116@bigpond.com) or Secretary Jeff Malley on 03 9876 2213 (email jeffmalley@bigblue.net.au).