

The MASTHEAD

Mid North Coast Maritime Museum

The Mid North Coast Maritime Museum acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, and pay respects to the elders both past and present. .

Third Issue

August 2020



*MV "PORT MACQUARIE" (1942-1960s) Port Line Ltd UK, ashore on Seaforth Sands , 21 Jan 1953.
Photo RH Blanchard per Ships Monthly December 1994—story starts on Page 2*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our Management Committee has held two meetings recently in which we met together. All precautions were taken during those meetings and I mention this fact because the further easing of some restrictions in NSW more recently has meant that we were once again able to 'open our doors' at each of our locations. Work was going on even when we had to have our doors closed to the public and I thank each of our hardworking committee members for all that has been achieved for our organisation by them in these unprecedented times.

A recent welcome change is that a Produce Market is now regularly being held in the museum grounds at William Street. You will find full details and dates about the Produce Market elsewhere in this newsletter.

The popular Artist Market that was previously held here on a monthly basis has returned to the Museum grounds too, so that is more good news.

Two pieces of news that unfortunately seemed to get lost in all of the coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic was that it is the 250th anniversary year of when Capt. James Cook's sailed up along our eastern coastline in 1770 and in March it was also officially announced that the wreck site of the Wollongbar (11) had been definitely located north of Port Macquarie. Understandably these news items were relevant maritime events that were so important to us but unfortunately were not heralded locally because of the tragedies happening all around the globe. More about both of these events in the months ahead.

I do hope you enjoy this Masthead edition. We always try to have interesting and informative articles for you to read, regular up-to-date news from each of our locations and having stories or news about present or past members who have contributed in their own way towards the success of our organisation. Stay well.

Ted Kasehagen

PILOT COTTAGES REPORT

We re-opened the museum on Monday 15th June and with our new "OPEN" banner out on our front fence this welcoming sign was just that. Perhaps like most of us, people wanted to enjoy outings and freedom in general so we have been very happy with the amount of people visiting us over the last couple of weeks. A lot of preparation and planning had gone in to having the museum ready when the Covid-19 restrictions eased and our Watchkeepers were ready too. The new protocols are working well and hopefully our visitor numbers will continue to build.

We now have a Produce Market that is being held in our museum grounds and we are finding that the market does bring us more visitors when it is being held.

Three new Watchkeepers have joined us now but John Gwalter is no longer helping us at the museum. John has volunteered here and at the Pilot Boat Shed for many years. His knowledge of shipping and local maritime history helped us over those years as well as all the research that John did at home. His knowledge of forestry was another benefit too and he was a keen twitcher (bird-watcher). I think that his fishing skills are amazing! He knows our Hastings River in these local areas very well and in fact it was John who was instrumental in producing a DVD for us that listed the good fishing spots and other helpful hints. The DVD was filled with information and for examples it listed the locations of boat ramps, bait shops and where the fishing tackle outlets were in the PMQ Hastings areas. We thank you John for all your valued help over the years.

Ted Kasehagen

HIBBARD REPORT

So much has gone on since our last report. The placing of "Ben Bow" on Gum Tree has resulted in the boat being finally sold and is going back up north to Ballina to be restored. It was a mammoth task and has had a lot of up and downs in these trying times. We are just waiting on the removal truck at this stage.

There has been a lot of boat movement at our yard. The slip has been fully occupied these past couple of months. We actually have one of our own boats, "Pamco", on there at the moment getting her electrics and motor operational.

It is all happening in the yard; "Nellie" and "Pamco" were put in the water after a long rest on land. The "Ajax" has now moved into the shed on the small slip and being rebuilt by people new to wooden boats under instruction from more experienced people. The yacht stand has moved from one side of the shed to the other and is ready to take two yachts waiting to come up on the hard standing for major work.

We were fortunate to be given by the Anning family the hull of a 21 ft large fishing boat and it has moved in. It had been reduced to the bare hull by their father, a shipwright, who originally built her. "Mary Heather", as she was known by, will be tidied up, repainted and sold so the new owners can finish her off to whatever design they so desire.

The new slipway is being worked on continually with most of the drilling complete on the girders, all the bracing plates have been cut to size and are ready for drilling. The sad news is that we were unsuccessful with our Boating Now application for a grant. We will be looking elsewhere for assistance with that project.

Ron Window

PILOT BOAT SHED REPORT

The Pilot Boat Shed was closed in late March due to the Covid 19 pandemic, however in early June it became clear that it would be possible to re-open subject to introducing a cleaning and sanitising routine as well as limiting the number of visitors in the Boat Shed at any one time. We are also collecting visitors contact details in the event that contact tracing should become necessary. With these procedures in place the Boat Shed was able to re-open on 15 June. Visitor numbers have been low since the re-opening but that was to be expected with so many travel restrictions in place. As you can imagine the Clarence Street waterfront has been noticeably quiet but hopefully will recover in time.

Tony Stevens



STOCKLAND GRANT FOR NEW OPEN FLAGS

Thanks to a much appreciated Stockland Grant we now have new 'OPEN' flags at all three sites.



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

During the recent shutdown of the Museum facilities due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many volunteers have continued to dedicate their time and energy keeping the wheels turning at each site and contributing to the ongoing maintenance and running of the facilities. The Management Committee would like to acknowledge your efforts and we greatly appreciate what you have done during this unprecedented time.

MV "PORT MACQUARIE" (photo on front page)

The steel vessel "PORT MACQUARIE" was a no frills cargo ship built in the war years and launched in 1944 for her owners the Port Line.

As a survivor of the WWII hostilities she continued her service to Australia and New Zealand returning to the UK via Continental ports.

Port Line ships carried large quantities of general cargo down under returning with wool and sheep skins and NZ butter. Just a few amongst the wide range of commodities urgently needed in a war torn Europe, struggling to recover from six years of battle.

One of the more satisfying periods of her career was the rescue of the aging passenger ship "CAPTAIN HOBSON" then engaged in the immigrant trade to New Zealand.

During one such voyage after leaving Glasgow in June 1957, and two days out of Wellington she had a complete engine breakdown. MV "PORT MACQUARIE" was nearby and towed the disabled "CAPTAIN HOBSON" with 590 migrants aboard to the safety of Auckland much to the relief of all involved. But "PORT MACQUARIE" had previously had her share of misadventure with her grounding on the Seaforth Sands (See photo on front page) shortly after her departure from Liverpool on 24 January 1953. On the next high tide she was refloats with the aid of four or five tugs and after a dry dock inspection which reported no damage, she resumed her voyage to Australia, but not without a few red faces all round.

The "PORT MACQUARIE" went on to make a valuable contribution to the trade between Australia/New Zealand and the UK until her demise. By CE Ellwood

PRINCE REGENT

From the March 1997 issue

On April 27th, 1819 the schooner Prince Regent was launched by Governor Macquarie. Intended for the King of the Hawaiian Island, she was built in accordance with orders issued by Earl Bathurst in 1815. Before her despatch to His Majesty, Governor Macquarie utilised the vessel on a number of important exploration tasks.

It was not, however, until October of 1821 that the vessel sailed for the dominion of her royal owner. Attended by the Prince Regent, HMS Dromedary sailed from Port Jackson for New Zealand on March 28, 1820 to procure a cargo of kauri spars for the use of His Majesty's navy at Whangaroa Harbour.

Both ships were in the Bay of Islands on April 12, 1820, when they fell in with the General Gates, whose crew they looked over. This resulted in finding on board more convicts than even Captain Abimilech Riggs could justify, so the General Gates was sent back to Sydney with a prize crew on board, for a judge to determine what to do under the circumstances. Mr Justice Field gave judgement on the case of the General Gates on September 15, 1820, in the course of which he said:

'It appears by the evidence before the court, that the American, being suffered to refresh his ship here, while partaking of a valuable fishery, which we might, if we pleased monopolise to ourselves, instead of repaying the hospitality of the port with gratitude, acted more like a pirate than the subject of a friendly civilized nation, and went about into low public houses seducing some of our best convict mechanics. The learned judge had no doubt that this was a breach of laws between friendly powers, and might revive the embers of a discord in countries now happily at peace, and involve the defendant in consequences of which he is little aware.'

He rounded off his remarks in fining Riggs 500 pounds (\$1000) for each of the eleven stolen convicts, and another 500 pounds (\$1000) for leaving Sydney without a clearance. After paying all the fines and observing the essential formalities, Captain Riggs obtained

the release of General Gates sometime in January, 1821, and in the following months sailed from Port Jackson on a sealing expedition.



About the middle of

August the Prince Regent was despatched to find the store ship Coramandel at either the Thames or in Mercury Bay. On 21st the Prince Regent entered the channel in Hauraki Gulf to which she gave her name.

On October 18, 1820 the Prince Regent returned from Bay of Islands New Zealand. Under command of Captain Kent, she departed November 24th to Port Macquarie. On board was John Oxley, who, Macquarie had asked to carry out a final survey 'on the capabilities and advantages of the port for establishing a settlement there for convicts'. Oxley was accompanied by the man who was to be appointed Port Macquarie's first Superintendent and Commandant, Captain Francis Allman.

The Prince Regent ran into stormy weather most of the way up the coast and arrived off Port Macquarie on November 30. Oxley had also been ordered by Governor Macquarie to make observations of the inlets north of Smoky Cape.

After exploring around the Hastings and Port Macquarie, he reported on his observations of Trial Bay in rather glowing terms, 'In Trial Bay, vessels prevented by unfavourable winds and tides from entering Port Macquarie will find shelter and I think it an eligible station from whence to take advantage of wind and weather'. This information was to prove invaluable for ship's master for many years to come.

The Prince Regent returned to Port Macquarie on December 12. Oxley then selected the present site for the town of Port Macquarie, which he duly reported to Governor Macquarie on December 27.

On December 18, 1820, the Prince Regent sailed again to Port Macquarie on special service in pursuit of runaways where she arrived on December 25. She then returned to Sydney where she was laid up and converted to a schooner.

Early in March, 1821, the Masters of the Lady Nelson, Mermaid and Prince Regent were alerted to stand by to transport troops and convicts to Port Macquarie. The troops and convicts embarked on March 17 but contrary winds prevented the fleet from leaving. They sailed from Port Jackson on March 21st, 1821 with an expedition of 40 troops and 60 convict artificers for Port Macquarie. The next day, gale-force winds forced the little fleet to take shelter in Port Stephens where they sat for fourteen days waiting until the storm blew itself out. On arrival at Port Macquarie, conditions were too rough for them to enter so the fleet sailed for Trial Bay where they sheltered until the storm blew itself out. They returned to Port Macquarie and were able to enter the harbour and set up the settlement. The three vessels sustained some damage as they entered.

Prince Regent was still detained at Port Macquarie because of the state of the bar and did not return to Sydney until 21 June. On the 3/4 July 1821 she sailed to Port Macquarie, returning on July 19 to Port Jackson. She finally sailed on October 16th, 1821 from Port Jackson to Sandwich Islands (renamed Hawaiian Island) under convoy of Commander Kent, who sailed aboard Mermaid and presented the Prince Regent to King Tamehameha on his arrival.

Between 1815, when Earl Bathurst ordered that the Prince Regent be built and her delivery, a new king had ascended the throne. The new king, Tamehameha, wrote; The whole of these islands having been conquered by my father, I have succeeded into government of them, and beg leave to place them under the protection of your Most Excellent Majesty.' Thus did the Hawaiian Islands become British territory. It would appear that the gift of the Prince Regent would have been a small price to pay for such a prize.

INVESTIGATOR SHED UPDATE

We received great news in late July that the DA approval for Stage 2-3 has finally come through. We are now awaiting the results of the grant application. Then we can commence the inside refurbishment of the shed. We will keep you posted of further progress.

Investigator shed Stage One

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Our 2020 Annual General Meeting is on the 17 October which is a Saturday, the venue is the Hibbard lunchroom building and the starting time will be 2pm. All financial members are invited to attend and afternoon tea will be served at the conclusion of the meeting. Please consider attending if you are free on that day and please

remember that Nomination Forms will be at William Street, at Hibbard and at the Pilot Boat Shed where if you wish, you can personally nominate for a position on the next Management Committee for 2020 – 2021, or perhaps nominate someone else. Make sure your membership is paid to be able to vote.



*Having had the **WOLLONGBAR 11** wreck site on the news in late March, here is an article that was printed in a 1988 museum newsletter.*

“I REMEMBER”

As a resident of Wauchope from 1940-1947, I usually came to Port Macquarie for holidays as to go too far afield was not possible because of the shortage of petrol. My father was given petrol coupons to enable him to buy 4 gallons per month to run the family car.

We were at Port Macquarie for Easter 1942 when the “WOLLONGBAR” was sunk. Our house was on the corner of William and Lord Streets on the site of the present 52 William Street. When word of the sinking became known, several of us (all about 8-10 years of age) headed for the local beaches and there (especially Flynn's Beach) found butter and broken butter boxes covering the rocks and sand. This was quite a happening as butter was on the short list of rationed goods. There were also parts of lifeboats and an intact raft.

I remember it being said that one crew member was blown out the funnel. Whether this was actually correct I do not know. However, he was transported to the Hastings District Hospital for treatment for burns. This was in the same place as the present public hospital but was a cottage hospital. I think the Matron was a Matron Jobson, who I remember used to drive round town in a 1929 Chevrolet car which was a blue colour and had a 'dicky' seat.

Remembrances from Glyn Lickiss from Lismore.

OPENING TIMES

Pilot Cottages	7 days a week	10am—4pm
Pilot Boatshed	7 days a week	10am—2pm
Hibbard Boatyard	Wednesday & Saturday	

UPCOMING EVENTS

“The Local” produce market 1st, 2nd and 4th Sunday of the Month.

“The Artist Market” 3rd Sunday of the Month

Captain Cook display—September school holidays

17 October 2020—Annual General Meeting – Saturday at 2pm at Hibbard Slipway. All financial members are invited to attend and afternoon tea will be served at the conclusion of the meeting.