

**NEW ZEALAND COMPANY OF MASTER MARINERS
WELLINGTON BRANCH**

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING MARCH 31 2015

The Wellington Branch of the NZ Company of Master Mariners has functioned efficiently during the year under review regardless of operating without an Honorary Secretary for most of the year. It was with the assistance of Captain Nicol Campbell who provided many very interesting guest speakers that entertained the membership at the Branch monthly luncheons. The Branch now has ready access to a projector for power point presentations which adds to a speakers subject and generally makes for an interesting address

While all the guest speakers were informative and entertaining, one of our own members, Captain Ifor Owen, gave a well researched and informative address with an excellent power point showing on Liberty and Victory ships that were built by the USA during World War II. Mention is made of this as there must be many members of the Branch who could also give a good dissertation of their experiences/travels etc. Those who feel they could do this are urged to contact the Hon. Secretary, John Williamson Esq.

In lieu of the regular annual cocktail function the Committee decided to organise a harbour cruise and dinner aboard "Sweet Georgia" for members and partners. The Branch subsidised the costs of the dinner and cruise by 50%. It was a success but the attendance was not as many as expected.

Captain Graham Williams, who held the office of Hon. Secretary for some years resigned for health reasons at last years Annual General Meeting. Regardless of sedulous efforts by the Branch Committee to enlist a member to this position, the Committee, after considerable deliberation and because the Rules of the Company require an Hon. Secretary regretfully were forced to resort to calling a General Meeting to close the Branch down unless the position of Hon. Secretary was filled. At the eleventh hour the Branch was saved from closure by an Associate who offered his services. The Branch is thankful to John Williamson Esq, the present Hon Secretary.

Is it a discredit to the Members of the Branch that it now has two Officer holders who are Associates ? Or perhaps it is the slow demise of the NZ Company of Master Mariners caused by the depletion of New Zealand merchant shipping. New Zealand can barely claim to have a merchant navy and it's demise is aided by successive Governments that are hell bent on fostering road and rail transport. Coastal shipping by New Zealand ships was an expensive mode of shifting freight before the waterfront was reformed and the once powerful Waterside Workers and Seaman's Unions were curbed when the Employment Contracts Act was introduced in 1991.

The Wellington based Interisland line combined with Strait Shipping possibly employs 60% or more of New Zealand's merchant marine. The five vessels operated by these two companies employ two crews that work week about and the change over day is on a Wednesday which coincides with the Branch monthly meetings. This is a reputed reason for not having any of the Deck Officers from these two companies as members of the Wellington Branch NZ Company of Master Mariners, albeit that is very debatable. A change of day for the monthly meeting is an item on the agenda for this AGM and the meeting will be asked to give a recommendation to the incoming committee.

Contd/2

MEMBERSHIP OF BRANCH AT MARCH 31 2015 – 2014 IN BRACKETS

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Full Members | 19 | (20) |
| Retired | 23 | (22) |
| Country | 9 | (8) |
| Assoc Members | 1 | (0) |
| Life | 2 | (2) |
| Assoc. | 8 | (6) |
| Honorary | 3 | (3) |
| Totals | 65 | 61 |

The increase has been attributable to two Associate (formerly Friends) , one Associate member one country member and one retired master mariner.

Much has been done by so few to raise the profile of Master Mariners and it was mentioned in last years Annual Report that the Master, Captain Ken Watt, is a staunch advocate of raising the Company's profile. Captain John Brown has been instrumental in setting up and managing the Company's attractive Webb site. Captain Nicol Campbell has produced the bi-yearly magazine "On Deck" which has won much acclaim from many local and overseas organisations. These members do this work at considerable personal sacrifice but it is sad to report again that it does not seem to stir any enthusiasm or assistance from the overall membership who do not bother to visit their Webb site. Although, there has been some interesting articles produced by our members for inclusion in "On Deck" and other interesting items are displayed on the Company's Webb site.

The importance of raising the profile of the NZ Company of Master Mariners is a head wind battle. It is strongly suspected that the Company are regarded as a bunch of outdated, ineffective antiques, one step from dementia and running second to an old ladies afternoon tea circle. There is good reason to suspect that this impression is promulgated by some of those in influential positions in the maritime industry who themselves are completely devoid of the knowledge and expertise required to manage and operate an efficient and respected Crown entity. This cruel but true comment about the crown entity is strongly supported by the vast number of maritime professionals and the editorials of a very popular industry magazine entitled "Professional Skipper". It is pleasing to report that two members of the Wellington Branch have contributed support for the maritime industry with letters and articles in this well read and very popular magazine.

In conclusion, the Committee and in particular the Treasurer, Peter Cagney Esq, are acknowledged for the support that it has given towards the running of the Wellington Branch. Further, it is worthy to extend an appreciation to the solid core of members that regularly attended the monthly meetings. Without them the Wellington Branch would slip into demise.

Ronald A Palmer
Warden – Wellington Branch
NZ Company of Master Mariners

April 07 2015

At March 31 2015 the total membership of the Wellington Branch was 61 members. This comprised of 20 full members, 22 retired members, 2 life members, 8 country members, 6 associates and 3 honorary members.