

THE MARITIME MUSEUMS OF VICTORIA INC. 2016 CONFERENCE

BASS STRAIT: THE WESTERN APPROACHES

Featuring speakers on the fascinating maritime heritage of Victoria's unique West Coast.

Hosted by
Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village
Warrnambool
8th to 10th April, 2016



Topsail Schooner Thistle

Jack Koskey Collection. © Maritime Museums of Victoria Inc.

Introduction. Schedule. Speakers. Registration Form.

Introduction.



After seven years of discussion, questionnaires, policy formulation and documentation the **Maritime Museum of Victoria** was launched by the Victorian Minister for the Arts on 19 November, 1993, exactly 149 years after the first permanent white settlement in Victoria was established at Portland. The basic philosophy of the MMV, a multi-site organisation, is that in-situ or on-site local maritime artifacts in their own environment have more relevance and significance for the visitor and the maritime communities themselves than a collection of unrelated material in a central irrelevant location. The concept, an analysis concluded, was particularly

applicable to specialist maritime themes in which the intrinsic physical environment and the maritime community have a specific relationship with their maritime heritage.

Although it has recently changed its name to **Maritime Museums of Victoria Inc.**, the organisation's vital collegiate structure remains fundamental to its existence. The number of its member museums has grown and now stands at fifteen. They are located at coastal and riverine centres across the state and indeed some of the museums are afloat.

Every two to three years the **MMV** endeavours to mount a quality conference cum seminar that will engage a public audience and also be useful to members of the museum fraternity and specialists. The most recent of these events took place in 2014 at the Echuca Wharf Museum with the theme 'Life and Legends of the Rivers'. When thought was given in the following year to the next conference it was agreed that the West Coast of Victoria with its wealth of maritime history and its close relationship with Bass Strait should be the focus of the event. Hence the theme of this seminar, 'Bass Strait: the Western Approaches'. It is believed to be the first time a concerted effort has been made to draw the threads of this maritime history together in such a form. The **MMV** was greatly facilitated in this task when its member museum, Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village, agreed to host the event at Warrnambool.



The spectacular western coast of Victoria has a particularly rich maritime history. More than 180 wrecks and strandings have been recorded in the harbours and bay anchorages and on the intervening wild and beautiful shores of this Shipwreck Coast. Situated squarely in the middle of this stretch of coastline and providing one of its premier attractions is the city of Warrnambool. **Flagstaff Hill**

Maritime Village with its maritime museum and outdoor village, its 1890s battery and working lighthouses is a state heritage site located on an extensive elevated area overlooking Warrnambool harbour and Lady Bay. The museum displays and interprets local maritime history from earliest times and includes Australia's richest collection of shipwreck artefacts. On the other hand the precinct of the maritime village provides an insight to the work practices, professions and activities taking place in a regional port of the 1870s. This was an era in which sail was rapidly being supplanted by steam afloat and railways were burgeoning ashore, a lively period of intense competition when sea trade and passenger traffic was at its peak between the regional ports of Bass Strait, the Western Coast of Victoria and the South-Eastern Coast of South Australia. The well-displayed indoor galleries and the extensive outdoor premises with original fittings make Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village a gem amongst the outstanding attractions of the Great Ocean Road.



MARITIME MUSEUMS OF VICTORIA CONFERENCE 2016

Bass Strait: The Western Approaches

Dates: Friday 8th to Sunday 10th April 2016

Venue: Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village, Warrnambool

Conference Program

Friday 8th April:

- 9.00am – 5.00pm Entry, reception and collection of conference materials package at the Foyer, Flagstaff Hill
- 6.00pm Conference opening and welcoming addresses at Wharf Area, Flagstaff Hill
- 6.30pm – 8.00pm BBQ meal served at the Wharf
- 8.00pm Light and Sound Show at the Wharf Theatre

Saturday 9th April:

- 8.30am – 9.00am Entry, reception, and package collection for delayed arrivers at the Foyer, Flagstaff Hill
- 9.00am Conference preamble and exposition by the MMV Chairman at the Sail Loft auditorium
- 9.15am 1st Speaker – Dr John Sherwood
Form and Aspect: The Geomorphology of the Western Coast and Bass Strait Entrance
- 9.45am 2nd Speaker – Damein Bell
The Indigenes' Coast
- 10.20am Morning tea at the Stella Maris Tearooms
- 10.50am 3rd Speaker – Brendon Jarrett
Intruders from the West: Opening Bass Strait

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| 11.25am | 4 th Speaker – Martin Syme
<i>Sealers and Whalers Along the Shore</i> |
| 12.00pm | Lunch at the Stella Maris Tearooms |
| 1.15pm | 5 th Speaker – Ann Grant
<i>Settlers from the South: The Van Diemen's Land Connection</i> |
| 1.50pm | 6 th Speaker – Walter Stewart
<i>The Funnel: The Great Circle Route and the Navigator's Dilemma</i> |
| 2.25pm | Afternoon tea at the Stella Maris Tearooms |
| 3.15pm | 7 th Speaker – Gordon Stokes
<i>The Western Ports: Design and Construction from Tyers and Mitchell to Coode and Hughes</i> |
| 4.00pm | Bus departs Flagstaff Hill for a guided tour and inspection of the Breakwater and Port area |
| 7.00pm | Conference Dinner at Pippies by the Bay, Flagstaff Hill
Key Note Speaker: Professor Weston Bate, OAM, Patron of the Maritime Museums of Victoria Inc.
Supported by his friend Danny Spooner, distinguished folk and chantyman musician |

Sunday 10th April:

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| 9.30am | 8 th Speaker – Bernard Wallace
<i>The West Coast Steamers: Rise and Demise</i> |
| 10.05am | Morning tea at Stella Maris Tearooms |
| 10.40am | 9 th Speaker – Garry Kerr
<i>Fishing Craft: 150 years of Change in the Western Ports</i> |
| 11.30am | 10 th Speaker – David McGinness
<i>Victoria Electrified: The Batteries</i> |
| 12.00pm | Conference Conclusion: Cannon Firing at the Flagstaff Hill Garrison. |

The Conference Speakers.

The speakers at this conference *are* the event.

The Maritime Museums of Victoria Inc. acknowledges this and expresses its gratitude for their generous cooperation.

Weston Bate

For many years the Maritime Museums of Victoria Inc. has been proud to have the distinguished educator, historian, poet, golfer and sometimes singer *extraordinaire*, Professor Weston Bate, OAM, as its Patron. The organisation is also indebted to him for his readily shared knowledge, advice and counsel, and not least for accepting the role of very special speaker on an occasion such as this. His presence is greatly valued. A quick hop and a skip through his life story to date shows that having played First XVIII football, Second Eleven cricket and won the Moyle Prize for a short story, he left Scotch College in 1942 to become a Lancaster pilot in the Australian Air Force during World War II. After this service he studied at Melbourne University under Manning Clark, Max Crawford, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, John O'Brien and other luminaries while gaining a B.A. and M.A. Weston Bate began his working life as a primary school teacher and since then has taught at every level, ranging through Brighton Grammar, Melbourne Grammar, Bradfield College in Berkshire, Melbourne Grammar, Monash University and Melbourne University where he taught Australian History from 1964 to 1977 and became Head of Department. He then capped his career as an educator at Deakin University, Geelong, where he held the foundation chair of Australian Studies from 1978 until 1989. He has been a prolific author, in 1962 setting new and ground-breaking standards in research, writing and technique with his first work, *A History of Brighton*. It has been credited with breathing life into many local history societies and encouraging a new style of local history which places local communities within the wider historical context. His first Ballarat volume, *Lucky City*, received the 1978-79 Ernest Scott Prize for published Australian history. Weston Bate has had a long association with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, having been its president and written extensively for the Society's periodical, *The Victorian Historical Journal*. Weston and his wife Janice last year celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Among those present on the day was their friend **Danny Spooner**. We are delighted that this fine musician with his love for songs of the sea has consented to Weston's request to be present at Pippie's Restaurant on Saturday evening and give him musical support during his keynote address.

Damein Bell

The wetlands of Budj Bim (Lake Condah) are likely to become a World Heritage Site. The Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation is the organisation responsible for the administration of this highly important area which has not just local but world-wide heritage and cultural significance. The Chief Executive Officer of the corporation and Manager of the Budj Bim complex is a Gunditjmara man, Damein Bell. He was, of course, locally bred at Heywood, and was formally schooled there and at Portland before gaining a Graduate Diploma in Natural Resources and Management at Deakin University in 2003. Through a Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation bursary program in 2012 he attended a professional development program at Harvard University in the Kennedy School of Government. He has been a Board Member of Native Title Services Victoria for ten years; a Strategic Project Manager for Glenelg Shire Council—a position monitoring investments made in Heywood, Lake Condah and surrounding towns through the Victorian Government's 'Advancing Towns' Project; and has been a Board Member of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission since 2012. In addition, Damein Bell recently was appointed a board director of the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority. He has a broad and intimate knowledge of the Budj Bim wetlands culture as well as the nature of Aboriginal seasonal relationships with sea and land.

Anne Grant

Not too many Australians can say they were born in Tasmania of a series of nine convict families. But Anne Grant can say it with authority, and she does so. During her childhood it was emphasised that there were NO convicts in the family, but although the 'cover ups' started very early, she says, to be fair, that she doesn't think the family really knew. Anne was educated in Hobart at both church and state schools and later qualified as a state registered nurse and midwife. She came to Victoria in 1966 and married Iain, a western Victorian, moving to Portland in 1970 where their two sons were born. A favourite line is that she 'followed the Hentys' from Tasmania to Portland. During the 1980s she worked as an industrial nurse at Borthwick's meat works where, in view of the fact that it was the town's largest employer, she fast acquired a considerable knowledge about Portland and its families. In 1980, following a conversation with a woman who, like herself, was tracing her family tree, the two called a meeting which resulted in them becoming original members of the Portland Family History Group. In 1985 the group became the tenant of History House (the former Town Hall overlooking the harbour) where it continues under the auspices of the Glenelg Shire Council.

Anne Grant remains a leading member of the Group which has established a high reputation in the field of local, regional and general genealogical research. Over thirty years the group has acquired a research library of genealogy and history books, maps, CDs and DVDs in addition to Portland newspapers in continuous runs from 1842 to this week. Additional to its custodial role it provides public access to the group's resources and expertise for 363 days a year. And as often as not, Anne Grant will be there to provide a helping hand and give advice founded on her deep and comprehensive knowledge of local history.

Brendon Jarrett

Born in Portland from a family associated with the port's maritime activities since 1845, he has had a lifetime interest in the town's heritage. In the 1960s he was a foundation member of the Portland Branch of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and became its second Branch President, a position held for a number of years during which the Branch undertook and completed the restoration of St Peter's Church of England at Lower Cape Bridgewater and in 1976 was instrumental in saving from destruction and starting the conservation of the Steam Packet Inn at Portland, possibly the State's earliest timber building and certainly its most complete. He wrote the 'Portland' chapter for The National Trust of Australia's *Historic Places* which was published in 1977, and was a foundation member of Glenelg Shire Council's Heritage Advisory Committee, established in 1984, serving on it until it was discontinued in 2013. The lifeboat *Portland* (1858), of *Admella* fame, has been a continuing project on his agenda. He was a foundation member of the Council's Maritime Heritage Advisory Committee set up by the council as the result of a report he presented in 1986 which drew its attention to the historic lifeboat's deterioration, the likely outcome if it remained in an open-sided shed in the Botanic Gardens, and recommended certain action. He subsequently took a prominent part in writing the brief for an architectural competition that produced the prize winning Portland Maritime Discovery Centre in which the old lifeboat has been rehoused and conserved. In 1999 he was recipient of the Glenelg Shire Council Citizen of the Year Award. He is now a retired farmer but history still calls and he continues to represent the Portland Maritime Discovery Centre on the Board of the Maritime Museums of Victoria.

Garry Kerr

Garry Kerr has been a professional lobster fisherman, first operating in Victoria waters for twenty-five years and, after 1988, off Tasmania's West Coast. For over forty years he has taken a keen interest in the evolution of timber fishing and trading vessels. This interest was sparked when in 1965 he bought an ex-Tasmanian trading ketch which had been converted to fishing. Thus began his research into the history of this vessel and those of her type. His particular focus is oral history, recording initially in audio but since 2000 on film, first hand accounts from people who built and crewed these vessels.

Having begun fishing in 1961 Garry witnessed the very last of the sailing cuta boats fishing out of Portland. This led to him researching the history and origins of fishing craft used for various purposes around Australia. In 1985 he produced the book *Craft & Craftsmen of Australian Fishing, 1870-1970*. This was followed in 1987 by *The Tasmanian Trading Ketch, an illustrated oral history*.

In the 1990's he produced a further two books, *Of Men, Boats & Crayfish, an oral history of the Norling Family*, and *The Huon Pine Story* which many believe to be the bible on the subject.

Garry considers by far the best means of recording oral history is on film (nowadays digital) where the interviewee can be seen and heard. Consequently, seven documentary DVDs in what he terms his 'Australian Maritime History' series have been produced since 2000—including *The Cuta Boat*, *Trading out of Hobart* and *The Last Cape Horners*, to name but three—and employing the same DVD format has also recorded an eight-part local history series.

Garry Kerr was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 2005 for services to history. Today he is semi-retired from fishing, dividing his down time between travel, producing more films and speaking to various clubs and oral history groups.

David McGinness

David was raised on a dairy farm near Framlingham and attended the local school, but he had been born in Warrnambool and received his further education there, attending North Technical School and completing a motor mechanic apprenticeship with a Warrnambool automotive business. From an early age he was a keen horse rider, was a member of the Emu Creek Pony Club for many years and rode horses competitively in shows and gymkhanas. For twenty-five years he has been a volunteer firefighter with the Framlingham RFB and over that period has been deployed twice to NSW and numerous times around Victoria. After discovering he had relatives in the armed forces who died overseas, and others who served in the 8th Light Horse and the Royal Australian Flying Corp in World War One, the knowledge sparked an interest in military history and at the age of twenty-one he started a Light Horse living history group. In 2005 he joined the Warrnambool RSL as Assistant Memorabilia Officer and two years later was Vice President (Affiliate) on its committee, positions he continues to hold. Since 2005 he has travelled to the First World War battlefields of Gallipoli, France and Belgium, most recently in April of 2014 as a battlefield guide. David McGinness' involvement with Flagstaff Hill is long-standing, in recent years being as the gun crew coordinator, organising working bees on the guns and garrison area, and assisting with the training of volunteers to fire the eighty-pound guns. He remains involved in and passionate about preserving our military history and maintaining its importance in the national consciousness.

John Sherwood

The Deakin University Sharks have named their pavillion in honour of Dr Sherwood who *The Footy Almanac* says, 'since arriving in Warrnambool in 1979 has held every position in the club including that of part-time goal umpire'. However, Dr Sherwood also holds qualifications in science, philosophy, education and environmental studies, with extensive experience as a research scientist in freshwater, marine and estuarine systems, and in environmental management. Wearing these hats, John sits on the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority Board. Not least, he is also an Honorary Associate Professor in the School of Life and Environmental Sciences at the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Built Environment at the Warrnambool Campus of Deakin University. Although he has lectured on the elusive 'Mahogany Ship', which he calls 'Warrnambool's Loch Ness Monster', he has published widely on a range of more substantive matters such as midden shell deposits; the age and contemporary environments of the Tower Hill volcano; the dynamics of estuarine systems, their management policy, practise and monitoring; heavy metals and their affects on irrigation water; and the adsorption or desorption of flourides in calcareous and siliceous sand acquifers. In his professional life and private life too he is a student of the high energy Victorian West Coast, knows it well and has a deep understanding of its processes.

Gordon Stokes

Here is another person having a long family association with the Western Coast. Gordon Stokes has been the mainstay of the National Trust in Portland for many years. He is one of the founding members of the Portland Historic Buildings Committee Inc., a persistent advocate for heritage planning, which came into existence as a result of the demolition of the circa 1842 Forester's Hall following a fire. His persevering efforts to improve town planning practices in the shire have seen a slow renaissance in its attitude towards built and natural heritage, a sea-change from disengagement to acceptance. To bring this about has required numerous appearances before VCAT and other tribunals to make representations personally or on behalf of the Trust; in addition to this has been his work in producing substantial submissions to state government departments, local government and enquiries. One result has been a scathing Auditor-General's Report on Glenelg Shire planning practises tabled in the State Government in 2005. Maritime heritage has not been neglected. His input to negotiations with the Port of Portland to retain the Old Fisherman's Breakwater in the port led to an agreement to retain this important maritime relic which formerly was under imminent threat of destruction. Apart from his active part in the eventual conservation of the 1858 lifeboat *Portland*, in more recent years he has been actively involved with a local group called Promoting Portland Maritime Heritage. Its members built the whaleboat *William Dutton* and some since have been training crews and promoting whaleboat racing with similar groups in Warrnambool and Port Fairy, a tradition of competition in the ports reaching back more than a hundred years. The boat has also appeared on the Yarra River. Gordon has been a member of a number of City of Portland and Glenelg Shire Council advisory committees over the past twenty-five years. He is currently a member of its Heritage Advisory Committee, the Collections Management Committee and the Integrated Growth Plan for Portland Advisory Committee. Gordon Stokes has tertiary qualifications in visual arts, communications, and museum collections management, and runs Portland Heritage Services, a small heritage consultancy providing research-based conservation advice to select clients.

Walter Stuart

Walter Stuart's association with this part of the world began as an apprentice and ship's officer on the Melbourne to Strahan run across Bass Strait. On his sixteenth birthday he joined the Adelaide Steamship Company as a cadet officer and five years later, at the age of twenty-one, secured a Second Mate's Certificate (Foreign-Going). Three years after this he advanced to Mate and in 1968 completed his Masters Certificate. Walter has since occupied many varied and challenging roles including pilot, Harbour Master and Manager of Marine Safety; he has been Technical Director of *Falje* Tall Ships; has worked with the SES and as a ship surveyor; and he has been Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oil Response Company of Australia.

As well as trading to all major Australian ports Walter Stuart has been engaged in foreign trading, mostly around Asia, often working with Chinese crews and conducting crew training. He also has conducted investigations into shipping incidents. As a seaman and navigator Walter is conversant with the waters of Tasmanian and Western Victoria and has personal and practical knowledge of the idiosyncracies of their coastlines.

Marten Syme

When in 1976 Marten Syme and his wife Angela became the resident owners of a house with an intriguing history at Port Fairy it piqued their interest in the old town and its history. Perhaps it also put them on the path to production of Marten Syme's wonderfully thorough-going 'Shipping Arrivals and Departures: Victorian Ports'. The first of the three volumes, covering the years 1798 to 1845, was published by the Roebuck Society in 1984, and the last in this mammoth effort, 1856 to 1860, appeared in 2006. Marten Syme was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2009 but not for this important reference work alone. He has published seven books with relevance to Port Fairy. In 2001 he published *Lifeboats for Victoria*, the story of the state's lifeboats and their crews from 1856 to 1979, a work that sprang from his abiding interest in the oldest lifeboat in Australia, *Port Fairy*, which

for many years had been deteriorating on the grassy bank of the Moyne River. As the Chairman and driving force behind the Port Fairy Lifeboat Committee he oversaw the derelict boat's complete restoration to better than new condition by local boat builder Gary Stewart and, what is more, documented the whole remarkable process in an impeccably scholarly manner. Today the lifeboat is regularly rowed; indeed it was sailed to Portland and back in 2009 during the *Admella* wreck commemorations. Not bad for an 1858 vessel! Marten Syme is a diligent, accurate and resourceful researcher. He is also a formidable proponent of good heritage planning and its application by local government. His most recent publication is a Syme family history which, because of the wide and lively interest expressed by family members, he considers his toughest self-assignment yet.

Bernard Wallace

Bernard Wallace has an abiding interest in the history of Victoria's South West, particularly in the origins of its place names, the significant personalities closely linked to the region, its whaling tradition, the manner in which the region's economy has evolved over time—and all aspects of the rich and diverse history of Portland, where he resides. Bernard is a former mayor of Portland. He writes a weekly history feature for the *Portland Observer* as part of the series, 'Our yesterdays revisited'. He is also a regular contributor to the *Hamilton Spectator* and an occasional contributor to a range of publications including those of the La Trobe Society and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. He was a substantial contributor to the *Biographical Dictionary of the Western District*. His recent publications include *The Whaling Era at Portland Bay 1833-1868* and the second edition of *Mary MacKillop's Portland Years - 1862-1866*. He has tertiary qualifications in History, is a member of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the La Trobe Society, the Malaya Study Group of Great Britain and suchlike. In his youth, he served in the Royal Australian Navy for a time. Bernard's 'day job' is Executive Officer of Portland WorkSkills, a major provider of training and community development services in Portland and the Glenelg Shire. In 2015, Bernard Wallace was the Glenelg Shire's 'Citizen of the Year', in recognition of his contributions to the interpretation and promotion of the region's rich and diverse history.

The Maritime Museums of Victoria Inc. acknowledges with thanks the photographic material used in the preparation of publicity material for this conference. It was supplied by **Bruce Colyer** from his series 'Portland and Coast 2012 – 13'.



Registration Form

(Details marked * will allow us to respond promptly to your request for registration but the additional information would be helpful.)

Title (Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms, etc.)	
*Given name	
*Last name	
Organisation (if applicable)	
*Postal Address Line 1	
*Postal Address Line 2	
*City/Suburb	
*State & Postcode	
*Phone Number (or)	
Mobile Number	
Fax Number	
*Email (if available)	
Special dietary requirements: vegetarian / gluten free / dairy free / other	
Conference Costs Conference Registration includes: • Entry to Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village • Friday evening: Official Opening , Welcome, BBQ and S. & L. Show • All Speaker Sessions • Morning Teas, Lunch and Afternoon Tea • Harbour Tour • Saturday night: Conference Dinner and	Please enter in the squares below the number of people you are registering. ☐ Early Bird Discount Registration \$ 175.00 (if payment received before 31st January 2016) ☐ Full Registration \$ 185.00 ☐ Friday Evening Events Only (limited to Partners of Speakers and MMV Delgates) \$ 45.00 ☐ Saturday Conference Dinner Only (limited to Partners of Speakers and MMV Delegates) \$ 65.00 Please note: Seating at the Saturday dinner venue is limited. Preference will be given to those paying the full registration fee. Any seating remaining will be allocated 14 days prior to the event <u>but there is no guarantee that seating for 'Dinner Only' partners will still be available.</u> For the Friday evening event numbers are not

Keynote Address • Cannon Firing	restricted.
<u>Completed Forms</u>	Please return your completed Registration Form via one of the following options: • Fax to: (03) 55 594 613 • Email to: ckelly@warrnambool.vic.gov.au • Postal mail to: Cindy Kelly, P.O. Box 198, Warrnambool VIC 3280 • Hand delivery: Cindy Kelly, Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village, 89 Merri Street, Warrnambool.
<u>Methods of Payment</u>	• By using your Visa / MasterCard on Flagstaff Hill Website or • By enclosing your Cheque or Money Order made payable to Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village and posting it with your Registration Form .
<u>Cancellation Policy</u>	• 80% refunded when cancelled 14 days or more before the event • No refund when cancelled 14 – 0 days before the event
<u>Acknowledgment</u>	Registrations will be acknowledged via email or mail with confirmation of your requirements according to your registration form, together with a tax invoice receipt.
<u>Accommodation</u>	Special discounts have been arranged with local accommodation providers. Please call the friendly staff at the Warrnambool Visitor Information Centre on 1800 637 725 and quote MMV16

Full registration for the Maritime Museums of Victoria Inc. Conference 2016 includes admission to Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. After the final conference event at midday on Sunday, attendees are encouraged to explore the museum's attractions at their leisure.