



"You should know, what you do is so important for all of us. It is hard to explain, but it is so important that we feel that we are not forgotten about. That someone is thinking of us. You remind us of that."

Image © Sman Keviclus

Shore Leave & Karaoke Machines

by Ben Schroeder,
MtSV Venue Operations Manager

During one of the lockdowns in late 2020, I drove some small items to a ship berthed at the Yarraville docks. Over that time, we were assisting seafarers by providing them with items that they would otherwise not be able to get.

SIM cards for calling home were always popular, but we also transported fast food, electronics, souvenirs, books...the list goes on. I can't remember what I was taking that day.

... Cont'd page 5

CEO's Update

Our project continues

Melbourne's biggest secret in plain sight

philip.cornish@missiontoseafarers.com.au

I call the Mission, Melbourne's biggest secret in plain sight. Once people know my background and the location of where I work, they often say, "I always wondered what that building was for."

What it is for, of course, is service for seafarers irrespective of background, country or creed. I am pleased to say that our seafarers are continuing to return to the Mission and whilst the numbers vary, we have had the occasional day where more than forty merchant seafarers have been here. The atmosphere of the Flying Angel Club provides a setting for seafarers to experience fellowship, perchance a game of pool and other recreation, and a slice of normality (or even a slice of pizza).

As hard as the past few years may have been for the team here at the Mission, we are aware of just how very hard it was for the seafarers. The already long stays at sea, away from family and home, were extended by months. Our ability to offer succour, recreation and material aid was hampered, but not our ability to advocate humane treatment of our seafarers. On this year's Sea Sunday, July 10, we appeal to our supporters for their practical and financial help.

As you know, the Mission's finances are also supported by the income from our hospitality function and venue hire. We encourage everyone to visit our heritage-listed venue for a cuppa and a chat, an ice-cold beer, or a warming drop of some of Victoria's finest red wines. Do keep us in mind for your celebrations and events as we have many spaces available for hire, including our beautiful memorial

chapel, with its tribute plaques to lost seafarers, and also the Norla Dome.

I am grateful to our supporters who are reading this, who do indeed spread the word about our good works. The people who knit the beanies, lead the heritage tours, and volunteer for so many other things, are treasured by the Mission and the seafarers.



Philip Cornish has stepped off the MtSV Board to be the Interim CEO until the new appointment is in place. Philip was appointed to the board last year and has a long history in the NFP, health and community services in executive and senior management roles for over 30 years across three states. He remembers with fondness

visiting the Flying Angel Club in Fremantle in the late seventies where he had accepted an invitation by the chaplains to pop in. He is a church warden at St Mark's Fitzroy and remains on another board.



20th Maritime Art Prize & Exhibition

September 30th-October 16th 2022

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gallery.missiontoseafarers.com.au



Sailing the Skies

by Geraldine Brault, Heritage Collections Manager

The Mission to Seafarers' weather vane has until recently had a long and proud history atop the heritage-listed building.

Having endured the rough weather conditions of Docklands for decades, it first fell in 1998 and sculptor David Hope undertook the responsibility of replacing the missing sails and bowsprit.

In 2017 after strong winds, it was kept indoors for several months, giving a unique opportunity to conservators and visitors to the Mission to admire the delicate design and help raise the funds for its restoration.

It was during this time that descendants of Henry Saw, a talented coppersmith, shared with us the information that their ancestor was the maker of the vane. Henry Saw worked for a company located in Lygon Street opposite Trades Hall. His grandson, Brian Baker, recalled his grandfather creating an additional two ships of a similar design, however these were made from soft metal which was a cheaper material. "It was always common knowledge in the family that my great grandfather made this weather vane and was something talked about by my father and his brother, Brian. As kids, when we drove past, it was always pointed out that our great grandfather made the weather vane" says Susan Hilton, a great granddaughter of Harry Saw.

In 2019, thanks to generous donors and a grant from the City of Melbourne's Victorian Heritage Restoration Fund it was sent to the Grimwade Centre, where expert Evan Tindal used the latest technologies to examine it and apply the right treatments. Evan marveled at "... the way the sheet metal of the sails is beaten to curve as though billowing in the wind, the bulging hull of the ship, and the delicate rigging details make it quite a special and evocative object for something that is also structurally robust and was intended to serve use as a meteorological instrument"

In early 2020 it finally returned to its rightful place atop the Mission's roof.

But after 100 years of contributing to the unique aesthetic of the building, the weather vane sadly vanished late one night in early March when it was sawn off with a hacksaw from its pride of place by burglars.

A \$10,000 reward has been offered for its recovery and we are still hoping it hasn't been melted down but was just sold to an amateur antiques dealer. As Andrew Rule noted in the Herald Sun "A master criminal might have known that the weather vane is worth no more than \$250 as scrap. Its value is purely historical and sentimental...and regarded so highly among marine history buffs that one of them has pledged the reward money". A private investigator has also been engaged and has been working closely with Victoria Police.



FIGURE 1: In his early vision of the Central Institute that was built during World War I, architect Walter Richmond Butler (1864-1949) had already incorporated a ship shaped adornment on the roof of the main building.

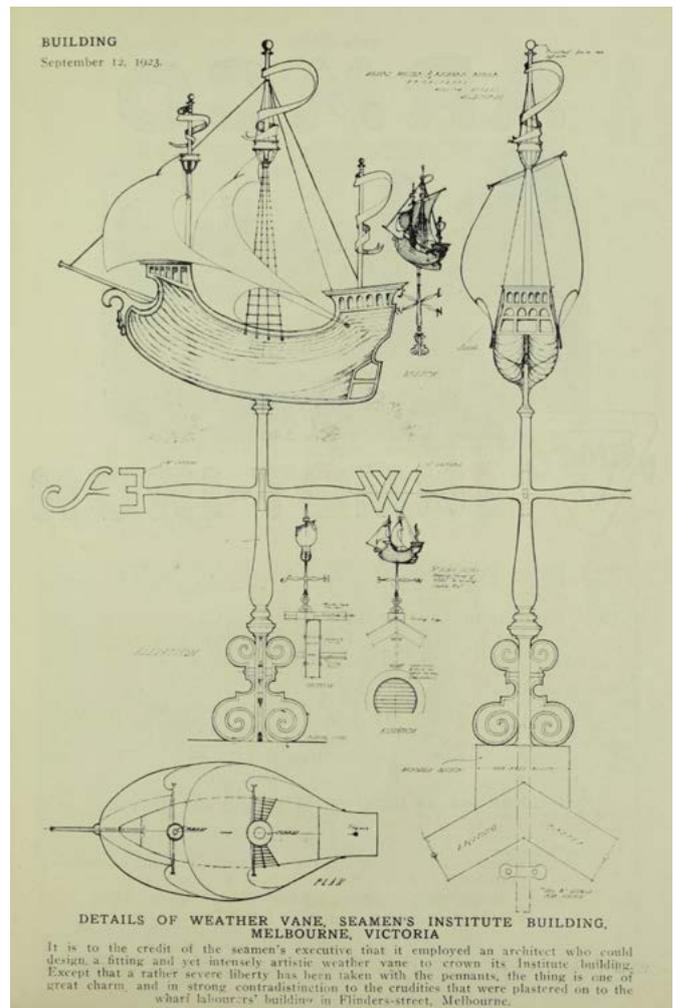


FIGURE 2: In 1920 Mr. John Sanderson, from John Sanderson & Co - wool merchants, stock and station agents, commission, and shipping agents - donated the funds for the weather vane to crown the roof of the new building. It was designed by Walter, and his nephew and associate, Richard Butler.

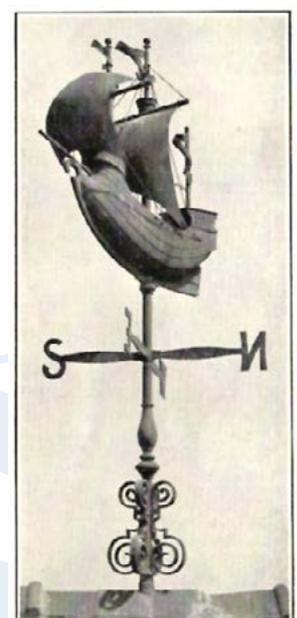


FIGURE 3: It's not clear when the weather vane was erected on the roof of the Mission building, but the shiny warm golden colour of the copper must have been a beautiful sight.

SEA SUNDAY JULY 10 2022



We all rely on seafarers.

With your help, they can rely on us.

90% of everything we use; from the coffee we drink and the cars we drive, to the clothes we wear and our mobile phones, reaches us via the sea.

By bringing goods to our shores, seafarers and the shipping industry support the economy of our island nation, so we may stay healthy and thrive.

We will always strive to support the physical and mental wellbeing of seafarers, but we need funding to reach so many more.

Your donation enables us to care for the shipping industry's greatest asset - people.



Mission to Seafarers-Victoria (MtSV)
717 FlindersSt, Docklands VIC 3008
+613 9629 7083
missiontoseafarers.com.au
info@missiontoseafarers.com.au



Shore Leave & Karaoke - cont'd

I rarely took the goods to port. Most of the time that duty sat with our Chaplain, who was at least able to give a wave to the crew when he left the items at the foot of the gangway.

It was late in the evening. We had been waiting at the Mission building for some time, preparing the boxes to take out and readying ourselves for when the Australian Border Force would approve our request to take the goods to the ship. Sometimes that happened quickly, others took a bit longer. Our Chaplain and CEO had headed off home before I arrived. I drove down Footscray Road, and it was maybe the quietest it has ever been. I would have seen ten other cars on the way there.

Yarraville is one of the eeriest ports in Melbourne, I think. Some of them – DP World, for example, a bit higher up the Maribyrnong River, and Patrick's off the Yarra, always seem to be heaving with machinery and cranes day and night. Yarraville 5, with its smaller ships carrying sand and gypsum, seems comparatively motionless, at least while the ships are not berthing or setting out.

On this particular night, Yarraville was even quieter than usual. I pushed on the buzzer and waited for security to open the door, then made my way onto the dock. The sand crunched under my feet, and I saw a figure in white overalls waiting for me at the foot of the gangway. He turned out to be the captain of the ship.

I held up the bags in a greeting and he gave me a wave as I got closer. I tried to smile behind my mask but ended up just bobbing my head in a kind of nod. He gave me an envelope of money for the items, and took the bags, and I asked him how he was. His eyes narrowed a touch. It wasn't going well. Some of the crew were so sad, and so homesick. I understood a little better, then, that a captain of the ship must worry so much about the mental health of their crew, especially at that time, when none were sure when they might get home, or even put their feet back on dry land.

"Is there a chance," he asked, "that you could get us a karaoke machine?" There was, but the ship was leaving very early in the morning, and there was no chance a shop would be open to sell one by then. "A pity," he said. "Some of the crew love karaoke so much. Helps them feel a bit better". He gave a little wistful smile.



"I'm sorry we can't get it to you now". He shrugged. "It's no problem. We understand." He stared at me for a moment. "You know, you should know, what you do is so important for all of us. It is hard to explain, but it is so important that we feel that we are not forgotten about. That someone is thinking of us. You remind us of that".

I was tremendously moved. We said our goodbyes, and on my drive back to the Mission I thought a little more about what that meant. How the cumulative thoughts and prayers of our many supporters created a ripple effect that lifted the spirits of a captain and his crew.

Not long ago, maybe a few weeks after shore leave was permitted again, we were finally seeing seafarers coming through the Mission building doors. Some seafarers were drinking beers and one of them wanted to know how much we could sell them a bottle of vodka for. This question isn't unusual, but it's not something we can do. I directed him and another crew member down to the bottle shop on Spencer Street and waited for their return. About half an hour passed, and it was nearing about ten at night.

One of the other crew asked if they could be taken back to their ship. I said that the other two hadn't returned from the bottle shop yet, and we needed to wait for them. He laughed and shook his head. "No, they have decided to stay out the night in the city for a while, take a taxi back to port."

Before the lockdowns, this might not have meant a lot. But just recently, as Melbourne had only slowly started to hum with people again, it felt quite strange. But then I laughed as well, because of course they should stay out and enjoy our wonderful city. The rest of the seafarers packed their gear together and I drove them back to their ship. One drummed on his knees to the radio and as they left, he thanked me for the good music. They clapped each other on the back, laughing, as they walked back to the security gate.

There are all sorts of wonderful and difficult moments happening at the Mission to Seafarers all the time. These two stuck in my mind. It is tremendous to see seafarers coming in once again, and I hope we can always help them in the future if they are looking for anything, including karaoke machines.



Events at the Mission

Over the years we've hosted so many wonderful and varied events – from weddings and birthday celebrations, to theatre performances, exhibitions and live music. Every event helps to support our work looking after seafarers and maintaining our glorious heritage-listed building.

Here are some recent amazing happenings:

1: *Mat Spisbah's Hylozic* featured six groups performing hazy, ethereal, experimental music on a Sunday afternoon in the Norla Dome and Main Hall

1.



2: *Konstantin: Grandmother's Tongue* finally had its Melbourne premiere at the Mission and performed to rapturous audiences.

Image: *Suzi Jacmenovic*



2.

3: *OnSide* hosted a team building day that culminated in building Bikes for Tykes.

Image: *Rick Clifford*

corporatechallenge.com.au

4: The Norla Dome provided the perfect venue for *Adrian J Portia* and his masterful playing of the handpan.

Image: *Ange Maloney*

5: *Ahoy! The Pirate Experience* swings into action every Saturday night.

queensofthedamnedcabaret.com

6: *Carolyn and Fraser* treated their family and friends to an afternoon of *Murder in the Mansion* before surprising them by getting married!

upliftevents.com.au



3.



4.



5.



6.



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Volunteer Call-Out!

We're looking for more volunteers to help support what we do at the Mission.

If you have some time to spare, and skills to share, we'd love to hear from you!

Fancy driving a mini-van to the docks to pick-up seafarers?

Enjoy a spot of data-entry?

Or maybe you love history and have the gift of the gab and can host the occasional heritage tour?

We provide full training and will support you along the way.



missiontoseafarers.com.au/volunteers

What's the thing about Volunteering?

My reminiscences as a volunteer

by Michael Scandurra



It was at the start of April when I first came to the Mission to begin my twelve week-long internship as part of my final year of studies at Monash University and it has felt as if very little time since then has passed. However, it is with some melancholy which I come to truly realise the finality of my time here.

As in line with my studies of history, I came to the Mission to garner some practical experience of what a historian may do when working outside of academia. In doing so, I have had the tremendous pleasure of assisting and working alongside Geraldine Brault, the Mission's current Collection Manager. I can say, with gratitude, that Geraldine has taught me so much about managing historic collections, analysis and documenting various types of items, as well as how to prepare spaces for exhibitions.

The most salient achievement that I helped in realising, was the somewhat last minute, almost complete overhaul, of the previous exhibition that is located in the Billiard Room at the Mission. This was done as part of our arranged celebration of National Trust's Heritage Day. I believe that

given the circumstances, all those involved contributed to a rather impressive display which features some of the Missions' oldest and most significant artefacts, that I have been told not many people have had the enjoyment of viewing.

Beyond this, I've had the great opportunity to be exposed to many items and objects which normally would have been outside of my interest. Because of this I have gained a greater appreciation of what the Mission to Seafarers has accomplished, past and present, and the importance of studying the past.

So, before I go, I would like to thank all those who have made working here, if only for a short time, some of the most pleasurable days of my university studies so far. I have learnt a great deal of new things, many of which would not have been possible if I was not kindly taken aboard by former CEO Sue Dight and the Mission. To those I did meet, only had the chance to say hello, or not meet, I would like to wish the best for you all as well as for the Mission.

Notes from the Garden

Maureen Scoble, volunteer Gardener

It has been quite a while since we had garden notes, but I am sure you have all been aware of what is happening out there. All the renovations took quite a toll on the plants. They were dug up, put in pots, and kept alive for very many months. That set them all back (it would me too). There were a few casualties but mostly they survived and are very much happier in the ground.

Quite a lot of plants are flowering now. Lots of Magnolias flower in Autumn and Winter, and quite a few Salvias too, which I just love. The big purple Salvia Amistads continue, as do the Salvia Oxyphoras (bright pink). In the Chapel Courtyard the purple Tibouchina has been flowering for ages. Under the big Peppercorn trees, I have planted Salvia Miniata, which is bright red and that should start flowering soon.

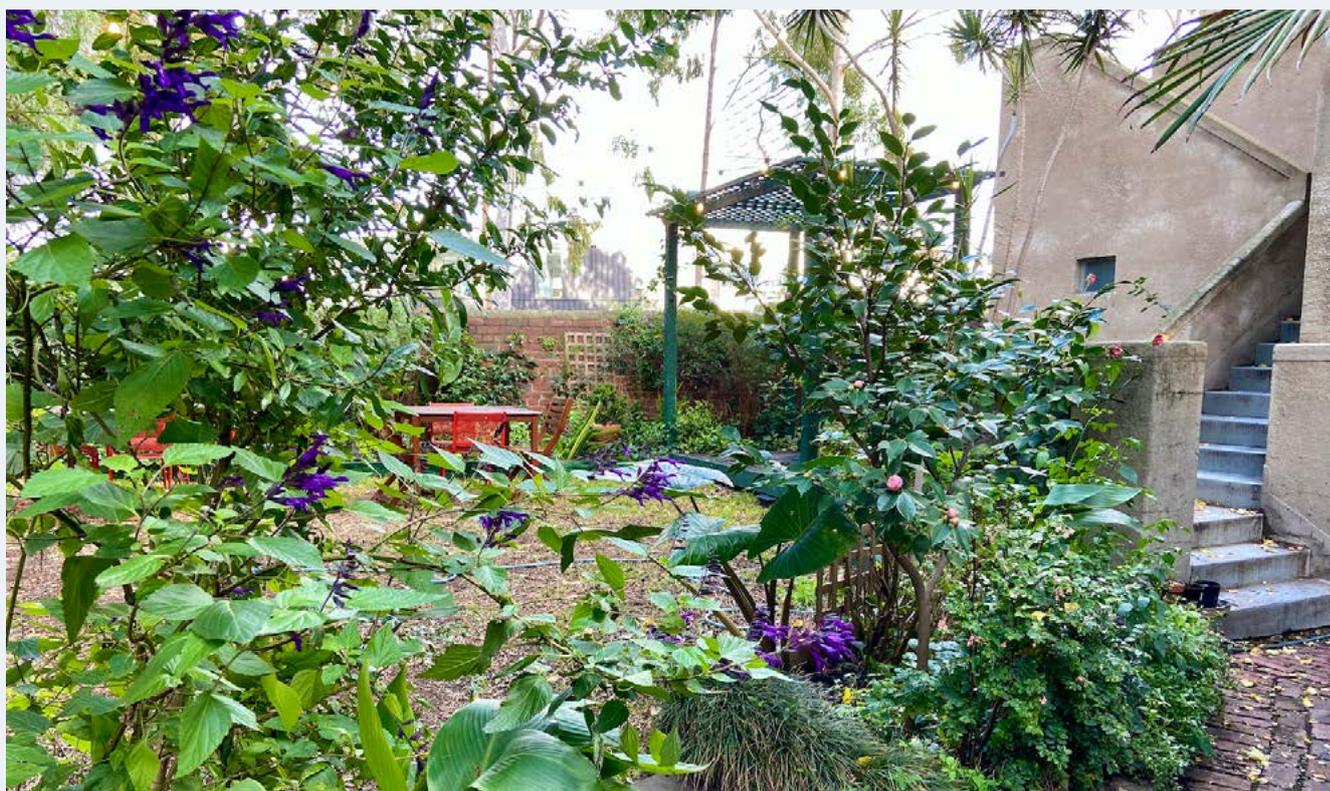
I am sure you all noticed that some of the big Camellias in the pots in the Chapel Courtyard got burnt on those sweltering summer days, and then they were attacked by spider mites and lost so many leaves. I think they are

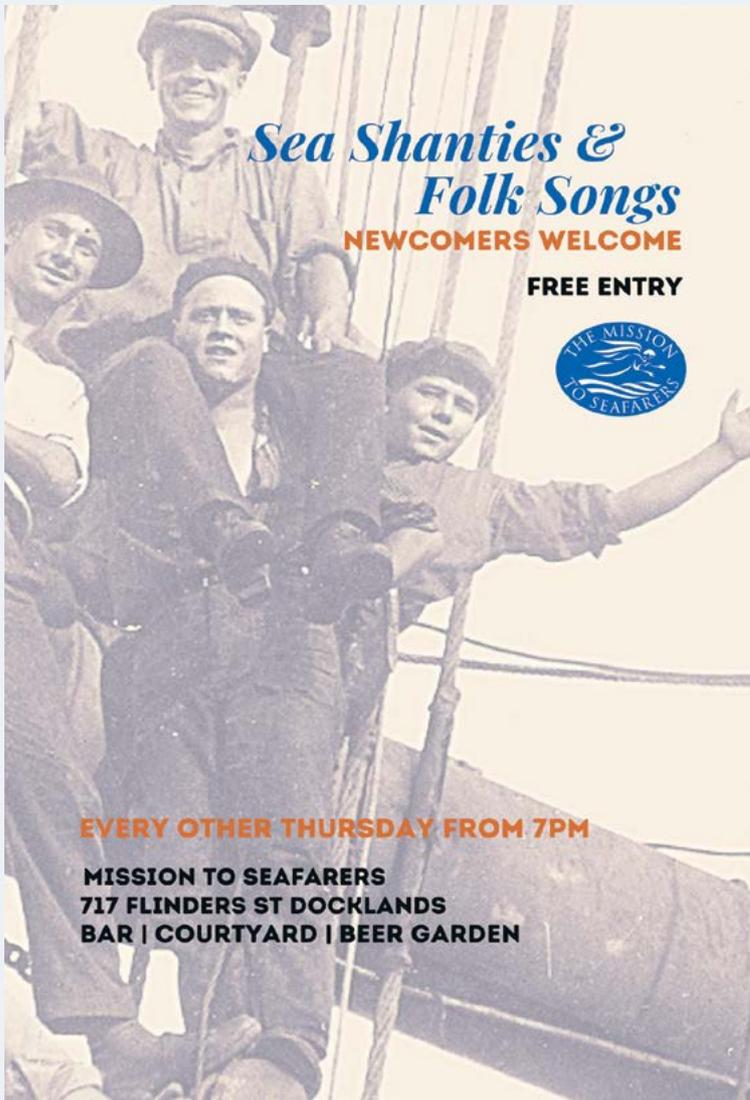
starting to recover but I would like to move them into a more sheltered spot. When we have some money to spend on the garden, I will buy some nice big pots and put citrus in them, like cumquats. They always look lovely and they like heat. Also, the bright orange fruit looks wonderful.

I have planted several vines over the trellis on the stage in the garden. A couple have just reached the top so this coming year should see it looking much nicer. Thank you to my favourite sea captains from OSSA for the trellis and for widening the brick path. Not so many people standing on my garden beds!

The lawn is a heartbreaker, isn't it? Everyone really wanted that lawn to work and selected grass that was supposed to be okay under trees, but it struggled and now there is not much left. I have stopped watering it every week and am not sure what to do next. Any ideas?

Happy gardening everyone!





*Sea Shanties &
Folk Songs*
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& Exhibition
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\$25,000 in Prize Money

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Mr. Benjie Amador Germina

by Rev'd Inni Punay, MtSV Chaplain

In early May, Bayside Shipping asked if we could provide services to Mr. Benjie Amador Germina, a seafarer on the *OOCL Houston*, who was staying in a hotel on Bourke Street recovering from an accident. This ship seemed jinxed here in Melbourne as this was not the first time.

I was able to get in touch with him via Facebook Messenger and established a relationship with him. It turned out that, like me, he was from the Philippines.

Benjie was injured while they were repairing the ship's engine and his left pinky finger was pinched. He was taken in an ambulance to the hospital where he had surgery.

I visited him and took him out for dinner - he mentioned to me in one of our conversations that he hadn't had rice and stew soup (a Filipino favourite) since disembarking the ship.

I also brought some of his needs as his personal effects were left on the ship. Among the things we provided were personal hygiene items, socks, some clothes, and a thick jacket. The jacket was a hit (aside from protection from the cold Melbourne weather) but also because his injured hand was all

wrapped up and he couldn't fit any other clothing. Most of these came from the Goods 360, a non-profit organisation who have helped MtSV provide goods to seafarers before.

I also showed him around his hotel and encouraged him to take a walk from time to time. I took him to a supermarket and bought him some food (one of his requests) to fill his stomach before taking his prescribed medications.

A week or so later, Benjie called to tell me that the doctor looking after him was satisfied to refer him to a doctor back in the Philippines, and so he was now going home for his recovery and other medical needs.

I have chatted with him since he returned to the Philippines and he said he's being looked after and is happy to be home.



Open House Melbourne 2022



Take Hold of the Clouds is an experimental exhibition taking place in seven of Melbourne's most significant buildings - including the Mission to Seafarers - as part of this year's Open House Melbourne

Ying-Lan Dann's installation, *Circular Temporalities* (2022), is a site-responsive sound and video installation that considers the Norla Dome's relationship to global seafaring – and to the seafarers stranded at sea during the pandemic.

We are also conducting free heritage tours as part of the weekend at 11am (Saturday only), 1pm and 3pm - no bookings required.

www.takeholdofthecLOUDS.com/projects/ying-landann

openhouselmelbourne.org/event/mission-to-seafarers-heritage-tours



Thank you

To all our wonderful knitters – we thank you for your beanies, scarves, neck warmers and fingerless gloves!

- Jane Ronan
- Ladies at St Eanswythes, Altona
- Elsie Storr, Holy Spirit Mothers Union, Watsonia
- Brad Miles, All Saints Anglican Church, Northcote
- Mothers Union, St Mary's Anglican Church, Sunbury
- Elizabeth Kilburn
- Jill Towers
- Karolina Sevcikova
- Maryellen Griffiths
- St Barnabas Mother's Union, Glen Waverly
- Barbara McBean
- Whittlesea CWA
- Lois Smith
- Cheryl Timbury, First Fleet Fellowship
- Hearts & Crafts, St Peter's Anglican Church, Ocean Grove

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Remembering the Mission beyond today

Legacies are very important to the Mission. Supporters of our work have remembered us in their will, while others have set-up an ongoing legacy through a trust.

We appreciate each and every donation, and a gift of any size can make a real difference to the more than 50,000 seafarers who need our support every year.

Please contact Philip Cornish for details philip.cornish@missiontoseafarers.com.au

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