



## PENSHURST RSL TRAVEL CLUB REPORT

### AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

#### THURSDAY 20 JULY 2023



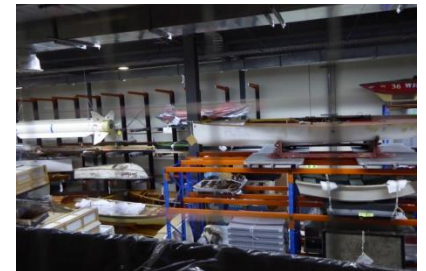
A smaller group of us today, as some were unwell and one member would be meeting us at the museum. Collected nice and early on a beautiful day by Malcolm, our coach headed out into the usual peak hour mess. Travelling through Beverly Hills, Belmore, Canterbury, Ashbury and Ashfield, a leisurely morning tea supplied by Elizabeth was at the spacious Timbrell Park, Five Dock.

Over the picturesque Anzac Bridge and, by 10 am, we'd arrived at the Maritime Museum in Darling Harbour. Malcolm was unable to park there for any length of time, but found coach parking some distance away under the Harbour Bridge. On arrival, we wandered around the museum's fantastic shop just inside the entrance, until guides Reuben and John appeared and separated us into two groups for their 'Behind the Scenes' tour first, followed by the destroyer HMAS Vampire. There was quite a long, but easy walk that followed which saw us passing and admiring the Welcome Wall which in September 2018 listed 29,957 names of migrants from over 200 countries.



At the start of our tour, just inside the Wharf 7 Maritime Heritage Centre, we stopped at a replica of the SS 'Orion' with the model-maker in attendance replacing one of the tiny damaged lifeboats with a 3D printed version. Sadly, I neglected to ask his name, but the former 24,000-ton ship was significant to one of our members who, as a young £10 Pom, made the five-week trip on that ship with their family from London to Sydney in late 1952. The ground floor of the heritage centre, which has three permanent exhibitions, is open to the public, but we were taken up the many stairs to Levels 1 and 2 (fortunately there was a small elevator) where

we passed by the Vaughan Evans Library which is opened to the public by appointment only. Then guided through corridors to areas where we could overlook the repairs area - a hive of activity - and the large storage room that contained a remarkable collection of many types of watercraft. We were quite at liberty to use our cameras, but, unfortunately, it was difficult to obtain decent photos due to wire mesh covering the viewing windows. There were also various types of ships models and other items stored in glass cabinets in the passageways. Again, with the reflection, photos weren't great.



From there, we strolled back to the HMAS Vampire for a tour through this ex-navy destroyer which is Australia's largest museum vessel and was actually built at Cockatoo Island Dockyard (completed in 1959) as the third of the Daring class, the largest destroyers built in Australia. She served in the RAN from 1959 to 1986 and some of her guns are still in place. She apparently had a peaceful career though, despite escorting troops to Vietnam in the 1960s, and, during the Queen's Silver Jubilee tour of Australia in 1977, she was the RAN escort for HMY Britannia. Our group's photo was taken on board at the completion of the tour.



We arrived around 1 pm at Club Rose Bay, a long-standing RSL Club, and were ushered into the dining room for our pre-ordered lunches. There seemed to be some confusion at first, but our meals appeared quite promptly and were enjoyable. Malcolm had to be content with takeaway, as he understandably wasn't permitted to leave the coach unattended in the smallish carpark. We finished off with whatever type of coffee/tea we wanted which was a nice touch.



At 2.30, we left for Watsons Bay in the eastern suburbs where we alighted the coach to enjoy the fantastic views, including the notorious Gap, from a couple of the lookouts. A very popular spot, it was fairly quiet today. We were there until 3.20 and then, of course, got caught up in the school traffic as we journeyed home via Randwick, Moore Park, Brighton-Le-Sands etc and spectacular cloud formations. Janice T and Irene O'N won the Lucky Seat Prizes and we were back in Penshurst just after 4.30. A very enjoyable day.