

SIGNALS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

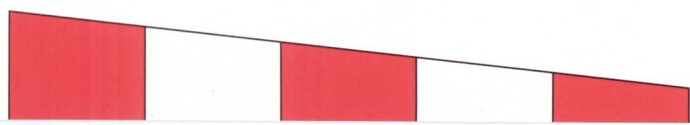
SPRING 1990

NUMBER 13



Work begins on building fit-out

The Australian National Maritime Museum is home at last, after taking possession of its Darling Harbour site. The Museum's lightship, *Carpentaria*, is now moored alongside.



SIGNALS

is the quarterly newsletter of the Australian National Maritime Museum. Material from this publication may be reproduced with permission from the editor.

ISSN 1033-4688

Editor: Jeffrey Mellefont

Graphic Designer: Peter Tonkin

Photographer: Jenni Carter

Printed by W&B Mastercraft Pty Ltd

39-45 Collins St Alexandria NSW 2015

INTERIM COUNCIL

Chairman: Mr Peter Doyle, AM

Dr Alan Bartholomai

Dr Jean Battersby, AO

Professor Geoffrey Bolton, AO

Ms Sue Calwell

Captain John Evans, AM

Ms Tricia Kavanagh

Mr Patrick Moss

Mr Bruce Stannard

SENIOR STAFF

Director: Dr Kevin Fewster

Deputy Director: Gavin Fry

Assistant Director (Museum Programs) &

Senior Curator: Mary-Louise Williams

Assistant Director (Collections

Management) & Conservation Manager:

Don Ellsmore

Assistant Director (Resources):

Quentin Howarth

Secretariat: Merv Ryan

Senior Curator/USA Gallery: John Wade

Registration: Sally Fletcher

Exhibitions: Leo Hoefsmit

Fleet Management: Steven Segerstrom

Education/Visitors: Claire Duffy

Library: Frances Prentice

Public Affairs: Jeffrey Mellefont

Marketing: Alex Varley

Information Systems: Mike Lorimer

Museum Services: David Thompson

Personnel: Robert van Maanen

Finance: Sophie Kuchar

CONTACTING THE MUSEUM

In developing the National Maritime Collection and the opening exhibitions, the Australian National Maritime Museum has worked closely with many other cultural institutions, public and private, and with the Australian community. The Museum welcomes contact from interested individuals and groups. For further information about the Australian National Maritime Museum, contact the Public Affairs section.

GPO Box 5131 Sydney

NSW 2001 AUSTRALIA

Telephone: (02) 552 7777

Facsimile: (02) 552 2318



From the Director

The last few weeks have been full of excitement for all of us at the Museum. After months of frustration waiting for the Museum building dispute to be resolved, it was most satisfying to welcome our Minister, the Hon David Simmons MP, and other guests to the official handover function on 2 October 1990. My words of welcome were extremely brief because, as I commented at the time, I am the last person who would wish to slow things up after so much delay already!

The occasion was also a milestone in the Museum's history with the announcement of the ANZ Banking Group Ltd as major naming-rights sponsor of the ANZ Tall Gallery and the ANZ Theatre. The generous support of ANZ is most gratifying to the Council and staff of the Museum, with the recognition by a leading Australian corporation of the Australian National Maritime Museum as a major new national cultural institution and a high-profile tourist attraction.

The ANZ Banking Group joins an already impressive list of companies sponsoring the Museum. Sponsorship has become an integral part of funding and marketing of the arts, as governments have demanded that museums such as ours become more entrepreneurial. While there are many in the community who oppose government reductions in arts expenditure, I think there is ample evidence that operating in a more competitive environment has produced museums that are more dynamic. For instance, in years gone by museums and galleries offered far fewer temporary or visiting exhibitions than they do today. The diversity and frequency of these programs is made possible only by the support of corporate sponsors.

ANZ is an ideal partner for the Museum. The company's network of branches across Australia provides a ready means for the Museum's message to be taken to all parts of the country.

Recently, I attended a function in Melbourne when the Museum's major tapestry, *Disaster at Sea*, went on

public display for the first time in the foyer of ANZ's Collins Street head office. This dramatic tapestry, based on a 19th century engraving of the shipwreck of the *British Admiral* in Bass Strait, was specially woven for the Museum by the Victorian Tapestry Workshop. The Museum is grateful to ANZ for providing the opportunity for it to be seen outside Sydney and in such a high-profile public location.

An even more tantalising glimpse for the public of what lies ahead when the Museum opens came through our first exhibition, *Painted Ships, Painted Oceans*, shown in September at the S H Ervin Gallery (story page 5). After four years of working behind the scenes it was most gratifying for all associated with the Museum to see some of the fruits of our labours on public display for the first time. The feedback we had from the public was most enthusiastic. By the way, the title of the exhibition came from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*:

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath, nor motion
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Any resemblance between a becalmed ship and a museum beset by delays beyond its control was, of course, coincidental!

Another memorable occasion was the Seventh Triennial International Congress of Maritime Museums held in Sweden, Finland and the USSR in late August, which I attended with Chairman Peter Doyle. As reported elsewhere in this issue, I was elected to the Executive Committee of ICMM, an honour that recognises the Australian National Maritime Museum as an emerging force on the world maritime museum scene and an acknowledgement of the rapid growth of maritime museums in this part of the world over the past decade or so.

As you read through this issue of *Signals*, I feel sure that you will agree that it has been an exciting period for us. Of course, the real excitement still lies ahead as we move towards opening!

Kevin Fewster



Home at last!

The Australian National Maritime Museum has moved into its landmark Darling Harbour building and is set to open late next year, after repeated delays in obtaining possession of the building. Museum staff began work immediately to prepare the building for the installation of the Museum's six major exhibitions, education area and other visitor facilities.

The spectacular exhibition facility was handed over to the Commonwealth Minister for the Arts, the Hon David Simmons, MP, by the NSW Minister for Local Government and Planning, the Hon David Hay, MBE, MLA, in a major ceremony at the Museum on Tuesday 2 October 1990.

At the same time a generous sponsorship of the Museum was announced by ANZ Deputy Chairman and Group Chief Executive, Mr Will J Bailey, AO (details page 4). It was the largest corporate sponsorship received by the Museum so far, and is exceeded only by the United States' Bicentennial gift which has funded the USA Gallery.

The Australian National Maritime Museum, a Commonwealth Government project and the first national collecting institution to be located outside Canberra, was jointly announced in 1984 by Prime Minister Bob Hawke and then-NSW Premier Neville Wran. The Museum building was constructed by the Darling Harbour Authority under a 1986

agreement between the Commonwealth and NSW Governments. However, construction problems and disagreement between the two governments over building costs had delayed the project, with an 11-month gap between completion of the building last year and its hand-over to the Museum in October.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, the Federal Minister for the Arts, Mr David Simmons, described the Museum as a 'dynamic and innovative institution that will provide the nation with a substantial and enduring asset.'

'It will be a first-class institution standing in the front rank of maritime museums around the world,' added Mr Simmons.

The Museum now begins its \$18 million, 12-month fitout program, promising Australia a major new cultural and tourist attraction next year when its innovative indoors exhibitions open to the public, along with the historical Australian vessels displayed at its wharves.



Left to right: ANMM Director Dr Kevin Fewster, ANZ Deputy Chairman Mr Will J Bailey, Minister for the Arts the Hon David Simmons, MP, NSW Minister for Local Government and Planning the Hon David Hay, MLA, and ANMM Chairman Mr Peter Doyle, all with something to smile about. Mr Bailey holds the builder's half-model of the Museum's 18-footer *Britannia* presented to him in recognition of ANZ's sponsorship package announced at the 2 October building handover ceremony.



Record sponsorship deal announced

The largest unencumbered cash sponsorship of an Australian museum by a corporation was announced at a ceremony in the Museum on 2 October 1990 by ANZ Deputy Chairman and Group Chief Executive, Mr Will J Bailey, AO. The \$2.25 million sponsorship has gained ANZ naming rights to the Museum's largest gallery and its 220 seat theatre. The ANZ Tall Gallery features vast aerial spaces where key exhibits including the America's Cup winner *Australia II* will be displayed, along with a Navy Wessex helicopter, 18-foot skiffs and the world's fastest boat, *Spirit of Australia*.

As Mr Bailey handed a cheque to ANMM Chairman Mr Peter Doyle, AM, he said that Australia had overcome the barriers of distance and isolation imposed by the sea. The country had forged an international role for itself, particularly in the development of business and trade.

'ANZ values its commitment to a project as significant as the Australian National Maritime Museum,' he added. 'We look forward to working with the Museum to provide a valuable entertainment, information and education resource for all Australians.'

As a token of the Museum's appreciation Mr Doyle presented Mr Bailey with a handsomely mounted builder's half-model of *Britannia*, the 1919 18-foot skiff that will sail in mid-air in the ANZ Tall Gallery (photograph on page three).

Over the next few months a video produced by ANZ will be screened at bank branches across Australia, explaining the Museum project and ANZ's involvement with it. A poster and postcard set illustrated with items from the Museum collection were also produced for branch promotions.

Museum open for a day

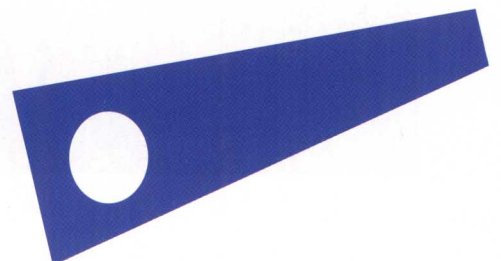
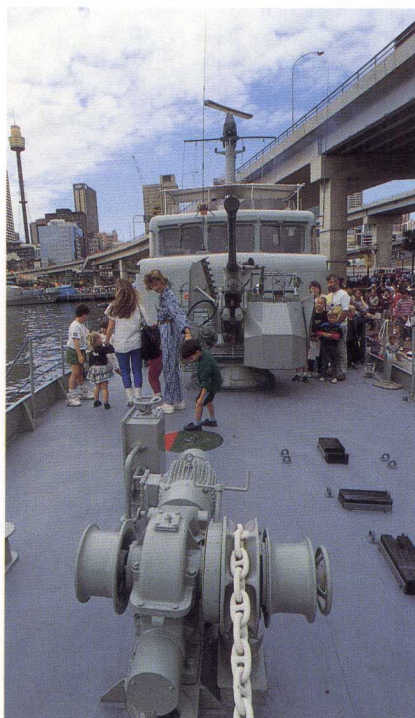
In a preview of its dramatic exhibition spaces, the Philip Cox-designed Australian National Maritime Museum building was opened to the public on the first day of National Arts Week, Sunday 7 October 1990. Museum staff were on hand to guide visitors through the 4 000 m² of indoor exhibition space, while video, audio-visual and graphic displays provided a glimpse of the exhibitions that will occupy it. Conservation staff utilised the empty gallery space to demonstrate one aspect of their work, laying out a large, unusual sailing rig of bamboo and plastic to measure and record it accurately.

Some of the Museum's historic vessels made their public debut, moored in front of the Museum. These were the Commonwealth lightship *Carpentaria* and the traditional Indonesian perahu *Sekar Aman*. Also on display were New Zealand's Bicentennial gift, the 1888 racing yacht *Akarana*, and the pearling lugger *John Louis*. At the same time two vessels from the Museum's Navy exhibition joined RAN vessels for the annual Navy

The Museum building was the artefact on display as the public had its first preview of the Philip Cox-designed exhibition spaces (above). Museum vessel the ex-HMAS *Advance* (below) was a popular attraction for crowds visiting Navy vessels in Darling Harbour during Navy Week in October.

Week display in Darling Harbour. The famous WWII commando raider, *Krait*, and the Attack class patrol boat *Advance*, proved popular drawcards.

Nearly 6000 people visited the building and the vessels on display during the day.





Painted Ships, Painted Oceans

The Australian National Maritime Museum recently mounted its first major temporary exhibition. Called *Painted Ships, Painted Oceans*, the exhibition previewed a selection of art and artefacts from the National Maritime Collection. Held at the S H Ervin Gallery at the National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney, from 14 September to 14 October 1990, *Painted Ships, Painted Oceans* presented what might be seen as the traditional components of the collection - maritime paintings, Aboriginal art, sailors' crafts, prints, posters, books, ship models and instruments. It provided visitors with a glimpse of the richness and variety of the maritime heritage that will be presented to the public when the Museum opens.

Marine painting is a fascinating field not previously well covered by state and national collections. The Museum, in preparing the exhibition, sought a representative grouping of marine works, with examples which portray both the historical context and the quality of the artists who have depicted our maritime life. These ranged from the Gallic extravagance of Gustave Alaux's *Bougainville at Tahiti* to the charming watercolours of Frederick Garling, the honest and workmanlike ship portraits of Borstel and Forster, the stylishness of Oswald Brierly and the ethereal quality of Haughton Forrest.

The exhibition was opened by His Excellency Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, AO, Governor of New South Wales, who recently retired from the Interim Council of the Museum to take up Vice-regal duties. Speaking to the 500 guests who crowded the gallery for the official opening, the Governor said that Australians lacked a fundamental understanding of the sea and the maritime environment.

'The Australian National Maritime Museum will make a positive contribution towards lifting the community's awareness of our maritime heritage beyond the first line of breakers,' he said. 'I truly believe that this is a matter of vital importance to the nation's future which goes beyond any cultural charter for the Museum.'

Oswald Brierly's *Amateur whaling, or a Tale of the Pacific (1847)* recalls his time as manager of the Twofold Bay whaling station (above).

Opening night (from left): His Excellency Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, AO, Governor of NSW; Mrs Shirley Sinclair and ANMM Director Dr Kevin Fewster.



Archaeology in the surf

When the First Fleet ship *Sirius* was driven ashore on the reef at Norfolk Island in 1790 it was a major blow to the recently established colony at Port Jackson. Contemporary paintings emphasise the unending lines of waves rolling in towards the reef where the vessel lay. These waves pounded *Sirius* to pieces, and are a feature of the site today.

Maritime archaeology on a surfbreak wreck site such as *Sirius* can be difficult, as diving is frequently impossible. In March 1990 ANMM curator and maritime archaeologist Mark Staniforth spent 12 days on Norfolk Island. During this time diving was possible on only two days, even though the season had been carefully chosen for the greatest likelihood of calm days.

“Even when diving can proceed you are still faced with the effects of the surf,” said Mark. “These require a number of strategies for working in the powerful surge, like knowing when to hold on and when to let go. There’s still the ever-present risk of being swept up onto the reef. And it can be disconcerting when the locals are riding overhead on their surfboards!”

In recent years several expeditions have surveyed the remains of *Sirius* and excavated material from the wreck site. The core team of maritime archaeologists has come from the WA Maritime Museum, with support from a variety of organisations and museums around Australia, including ANMM. The 1990 *Sirius* expedition was assisted by Sofrana Unilines which freighted equipment to the island free. ANMM will display material from *Sirius*, on loan from the Norfolk Island Government.

Contemporary view of the *Sirius* wreck and breakers (top) by George Raper, in the British Museum. Centre and right: The site today, and maritime archaeologists at Norfolk Island; not for the faint-hearted. Patrick Baker photographs.



Japanese naval memorabilia

An unusual collection of personal memorabilia relating to the Japanese Imperial Navy was recently presented to the Museum by Mr Youichi Ogo, Director of the Okayama Judo Federation, who was visiting Australia. The material included items from naval uniforms, including badges and an aviator's suit of the type worn by kamikaze pilots, and a set of naval presentation sake bottles and cups with cherry blossom and anchor patterns. Among the items were copies of writings made by Imperial Navy personnel on the eve of key WW2 actions, including the midgeet submarine attack on Sydney Harbour in 1942. The material was gathered from various individuals in Japan by public appeal on television. Mr Ogo (right) presented the collection to Chairman Peter Doyle and ANMM curator of the Navy theme, Patricia Miles (centre).



Disaster Averted

Friday 3 August could easily have been Black Friday at the Museum's Pyrmont premises which house offices, the library, conservation work areas and most of the National Maritime Collection. At 6.00 a.m. as a winter gale lashed Sydney with winds of over 50 knots, a portion of metal roof cladding over the conservation workshop peeled back, ripping out a sprinkler pipe. This caused substantial flooding of the conservation workshop and laboratory on the upper level, and the office, library and storage areas below.

Major damage to the collection was averted by a swift initial response from the Fire Brigade in stemming the flow of water, the prompt response of staff, and the successful implementation of the Museum's Disaster Plan. There was, however, a great deal of disruption to the operation of the Museum with damage to computer equipment, the flooding of offices, storage and treatment areas. Predictably it was the mobilisation of well disciplined museum staff from ANMM and other institutions which minimised damage to the collection.

In addition to the prompt work of Australian Construction Services and its contractors in making repairs to the roof, the Museum received a great deal of support from the Disaster Planning Committee comprising conservators of other Sydney cultural institutions. Staff from the Powerhouse, Australian Museum and Australian Archives helped with the treatment of damaged objects, and the State Library of NSW and Westpac Archives loaned materials and equipment. Drying areas for water-damaged objects and paper-based materials were set up in the staff kitchen and on the large board-room table.

Morale was boosted by the provision of a barbeque lunch by Chairman of Interim Council, Peter Doyle. The situation was under control within twelve hours, with most Museum services returning to full operation during the following week. My warmest thanks go to all who assisted on this fateful day.

*Donald Ellsmore
Collection Management*

ANMM Director joins ICMM executive

ANMM Director Kevin Fewster and Chairman Peter Doyle travelled to Stockholm in August for the seventh International Congress of Maritime Museums (ICMM). Dr Fewster was elected at the conference to the executive of ICMM, an affiliate of the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The executive manages ICMM, which draws its membership from all the major maritime museums around the world, and organises its annual meetings and its major conference held every three years. Among the

over-200 delegates at this year's conference were 18 Australians representing maritime museums in four states. The conference was held on board the cruise ship *Kristina Regina*, and included visits to maritime museums in the Åland Islands, Finland, Leningrad and Estonia. In Stockholm, delegates inspected the new museum built to house *Vasa*, the 17th century Swedish warship which sank on launching in Stockholm harbour, and was raised in the 1960s. The remarkably complete hull structure, which required decades of stabilisation before moving into the new museum, is a unique record of ship design and decoration of its era.

Desperate voyages

The Museum has added a traditional South Vietnamese fishing boat from Phu Quoc island to its fleet of vessels representing Australian maritime history. The boat was registered VNKG 1062ADC and was named *Tu Do* (Freedom) by its captain, who landed near Darwin with 30 passengers on 21 November 1977.

The arrival of more than 2000 Vietnamese refugees in flimsy boats in the 1970s had a tremendous impact on Australia. The history of these arrivals may seem too recent to portray in a museum -- but how many still remember reports of the refugees' tales of death and danger in South East Asian waters, and their determination to survive when most of them had never been to sea? Fifteen years later, Australia still receives these desperate seafarers. The Museum will display this history in the making as part of the exhibition *Passengers - the long*

sea voyage.

Before acquiring *Tu Do*, Museum staff had researched the story of another refugee boat, *Hong Hai*, which reached Darwin in November 1978 with 38 passengers. *Hong Hai* was acquired by the National Museum of Australia for eventual display in Canberra, but in the meantime its story will be told in the Australian National Maritime Museum. Oral histories in English and Vietnamese, and personal possessions from the *Hong Hai* voyage will make a moving display for the 1991 opening.

Curators are still researching the voyage of *Tu Do* and would like to contact ex-passengers or crew.

*Sue Effenberger
Assistant Curator*

Thistle

The newest addition to the ANMM fleet made its debut on Sydney Harbour in October at the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club's triennial Gaffers Regatta. The 1903 Victorian cousta fishing boat *Thistle*, restored by Sorrento boatbuilder Tim Phillips, was trucked to Sydney and launched two days before the event. *Thistle*, although not an official entrant in the regatta, paced the fleet from its 10-minute handicap start and romped home first across the line.

Thistle was one of the fleet of open gaff or lug rigged boats that worked from Port Phillip Bay or Victorian coastal ports to supply the Melbourne fish and chips market.



WEA summer courses

As part of the outreach program developed by ANMM Education and Visitor Services section, a series of courses organised in conjunction with the Workers Education Association (WEA) is continuing over the coming summer of 1990-91.

Harvesting the Deep is a seven-week course organised in conjunction with the Fish Marketing Authority at Blackwattle Bay, Sydney. It begins on Thursday 17 January 1991. Lindsey Shaw, Curator of the Museum's exhibition *Commerce - the working sea*, will talk about the high export earners of the Australian fishing industry, tuna, lobster and abalone. Staff from the Fish Marketing Authority will lead a guided tour through the market, explaining where the fish are caught, how they are auctioned and how to identify different species. Students can try fish filleting, and the final talk will cover the nutritional aspects of cooking and eating seafood.

Pox, Plague and Pestilence is a series of six talks on aspects of medicine at sea during long voyages to Australia, and the history of the Quarantine Station at North Head, starting Wednesday 23 January, 1991. Three talks will be delivered at ANMM's Pymont offices by Mark Staniforth, Curator of *Passengers - the long sea voyage*. They deal with the medical arrangements on board convict and immigrant ships and the treatments and cures passengers were subjected to. Beth Robertson of the National Parks and Wildlife Service will conduct guided walks at the Quarantine Station, North Head, and discuss the history of the buildings, the cemetery and mortuary, as well as Aboriginal engravings and middens at the site.

Enquiries and bookings for these courses should be made through the WEA (telephone 02 264 2781).

Museum staff are contributing to a current WEA course organised in conjunction with the Sydney Aquarium, *Exploring the Deep*, which commenced in October and continues until the end of November 1990. The Museum's maritime archaeologist, Mark Staniforth, provided talks about this subject which is growing in recognition in Australia. Education officer Mary Smith spoke about the

survey and excavation of the wreck of HMS *Sirius*. Other talks, and a tour of the Aquarium, were provided by Aquarium staff.

1991 Festival Of Sydney Umbrella Events

In January 1991 the Australian National Maritime Museum will run two entertaining education programs during the Festival of Sydney, held in summer each year.

Walk the Wicked Waterfront, organised in conjunction with the Royal Australian Historical Society, is a walking tour from History House in Macquarie Street to the Palisades Hotel at Millers Point. ANMM education staff and RAHS members have researched famous and infamous events in Sydney's waterfront history for the tours, which run on Wednesday evenings at 5.30 pm and Saturdays and Sundays at 10.30 am and 3.00 pm. Topics to be covered include waterfront crimes, waterfront characters, historic waterfront pubs and buildings, the changing waterline at Circular Quay, and the epidemics brought to Australia by sea. Bookings through History House. (02) 247 8001. Adults \$10, RAHS members \$8, children and concessions \$5.

Cruising into Quarantine offers a full day's outing on ANMM's ex-RAN patrol boat *Advance*. After a tour of the museum's building in Darling Harbour, visitors will board

Advance for the former Quarantine Depot at Berry's Bay, North Sydney, the Museum's fleet management site. A talk on the history of the site and a tour of the Museum fleet follows morning tea in one of the 1920s Quarantine Service cottages. *Advance* then sails to the Quarantine Station at North Head, to be declared 'in quarantine'. The yellow flag will go up and visitors will be given lunch on the beach and taken through the Station just as they would have been early this century. Organised in conjunction with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, *Cruising into Quarantine* will run on Wednesday and Sunday, 9 and 27 January 1991. Bookings are essential for the program (\$30 including morning tea and lunch.)

Enquiries and bookings for both programs should be directed to Mary Smith (02) 552 7777.

East of Eden - a whale of a time

In March 1991 a four-day tour, arranged by ANMM and the Royal Australian Historical Society, will explore the whaling sites on the NSW south coast. Highlights include the Pilot's Cottage at Kiama, the Lady Denman Museum at Huskisson, the Aquarium at Merimbula, a boat cruise on Twofold Bay, the Eden Killer Whale Museum at Eden, Boydtown and the Davidson Whaling Station. The return will be via the Snowy

Mountains Highway to Canberra. Museum staff will provide talks on the history of whaling and its characters, and tours of the sites.

The tour departs Sydney on Saturday 16 March, returning Tuesday 19 March. Cost of \$350 per person is based on twin share accommodation and includes entrance fees and all meals with the exception of dinner on one night. Single room accommodation is available at an additional \$15 per day. Bookings are essential and should be made through the Royal Australian Historical Society on (02) 247 8001.

Maritime Fathers Day

The Museum and Sydney department store David Jones combined last August to provide a glimpse of some of the more traditional maritime artefacts in the ANMM collection. The artefacts, which included boatbuilding tools, pearl diving gear and contemporary ship models from the Museum's TNT collection, were displayed for two weeks in the menswear department of the retailer's Market Street city store as part of DJ's Fathers Day promotion. Many of the artefacts were displayed in splendid antique David Jones showcases over a century old. Among the objects was a group relating to the early history of the Adelaide Steamship Company, forerunner of David Jones' present parent company, Adsteam.

