



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



Passing of Captain Barry Thompson

Dear Members

It is with much sadness that I pass on the news that Captain Barry Thompson died this morning [September 24]. At 92 years old Barry was one of the association's most well-known (and longest-serving) members.



Barry was hugely respected throughout the industry and made a real and lasting contribution. One E-mail I received today described him as a most courteous and kind gentleman and very knowledgeable, saying: "You always wanted him on your side as an expert in a court case, but if he was on the other side, at least you knew he would always give his evidence fairly." He remained active in the association, attending conferences including travel across to Waiheke in recent years. Barry was a stalwart of the marine surveying world and MLAANZ for decades. Some of you may also have memories of what I understand to be somewhat famous Christmas parties down in St Heliers in the early 1970s ... !

Those who were able to attend last year's MLAANZ conference will recall that we had the opportunity to celebrate his legacy. For those who were unable to attend, a reminder of his life and contribution to

the marine industry is below, courtesy of Mike Austin. Funeral details will be passed on when available, and when time and opportunity permits, the association will find an appropriate way to come together to raise a toast and remember Barry together.

Captain Barry Thompson

Barry was at sea in the merchant navy as an officer and gentleman before coming to New Zealand and settling down in St Heliers with his wife Diana who was a nurse and, in due course, their two children Kate and Sara. He became a marine surveyor in 1964 as a partner in Thompson Whiston & Co then formed his own company Thompson Marine in 1968. He had a marine shop, with the business in St Heliers, in a premises that was previously the Eastern Suburbs Bus Service. It had a concrete floor and high ceilings, and was shared with a squash court. He joined forces with Mike Austin in 1974. Barry was a longstanding member of Maritime Law Association (MLA) and he and Mike (together with many of their staff) attended the early MLA conferences that were held at Tokanau, and have been to nearly every annual conference since. They considered it the best meeting ground for folk involved in marine law, shipping, ports, marine insurance, etc. Barry was asked to act as arbitrator on occasions and became a member of the association.

Barry was a member of the New Zealand Royal Navy Reserve, a member of Rotary, a member and subsequently president of the Coastguard and in 1972 a founder and original board member of the Spirit of Adventure Trust where he sailed as Master and was closely involved with sail training in New Zealand and around the world, and was none of its vice-patrons. Barry also had a well-known enthusiasm for heraldry – it was important to get flags right!

In 1980 Thompson Marine became the Lloyds Agents and continue to this day. In 1986 the firm joined MBS Loss Adjusters that has morphed with changing owners over the years to Sedgwick. Barry retired in 1991 to become a consultant and also to author his book "Surveying Marine Damage" that was first published by Witherby in 1994 and is now in its third edition, published in 2016.

Barry wrote other books, one of which is "Deeds Not Words" about the Coastguard, and another entitled "All Hands and the Cook" about sailors' slang expressions. Barry was instrumental in setting up the International Institute of Marine Surveyors (IIMS) in New Zealand, which now has about 20 members, and also continued working and writing most recently as the author of a number of Marine Survey Booklets available through IIMS.

Barry leaves a lasting legacy. The New Zealand marine industry and our association is all the better for his contribution and it was a privilege to know him.

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