

THE AUSTRALIAN MARINERS' WELFARE SOCIETY

ABN 86 000 008 122

(Formerly the 'Sydney Sailors Home')

July 2010

SYDNEY SAILORS' HOME HISTORY PUBLISHED

Many AMOU members serving on ships visiting Sydney will be familiar with the old Sydney Sailors' Home in The Rocks – and in earlier times some might themselves have lodged there.

A book, *The Sydney Sailors' Home (1859-2009)* by Sydney journalist and author Jan Bowen has recently been published by the Australian Mariners' Welfare Society, formerly the company that operated the Sydney Sailors' Home.

In 1859 a committee was formed to build a Sailors' Home in Sydney '*... in which seamen, while on shore, could have comfortable accommodation, be brought under moral and religious influence and be encouraged in sober and thrifty habits*'. The Sydney Sailors' Home opened its doors in 1865 at a time when around 1,000 ships with crews totalling some 20,000 were coming to the port each year.

Although it no longer accommodates seafarers - the Home was shut in 1979 following compulsory resumption of the property by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority - the building itself has been preserved as a heritage-listed property managed by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. It is currently occupied by a commercial art gallery and a restaurant.

After the Home closed, its Council identified other opportunities to continue serving seafarers. It re-invented itself as the Australian Mariners' Welfare Society and nowadays is a generous provider of ongoing financial assistance to organisations such as the Mission to Seafarers and the Stella Maris Clubs stations around the Australian coast and also funds scholarships for promising young Australians planning a seagoing career to attend the Australian Maritime College in Tasmania.

Jan Bowen's entertaining story of the Sydney Sailors' Home, the people who drove its formation and the sometimes colourful characters who rested there is a welcome addition to the maritime history of Sydney. Sensitively illustrated with historic and contemporary photographs, this book will be of interest to seafarers and indeed anyone interested in our maritime heritage.

The Society is offering members of the AMOU a special price of \$30.00 (incl GST) per copy plus \$12.00 postage and handling. Copies can be obtained by sending a cheque or postal order in favour of the Australian Mariners' Welfare Society for \$42.00 to AMWS Book Offer, PO Box 518, Turramurra NSW 2074, also indicating the name and postal address to which the book should be forwarded, as well as a contact telephone number.