

Harbour Lights

Media Kit

Media Release

For immediate release

Wind & Sky Productions, 4 March 2020

Shining a Light on Untold Women's History

Few Melbournians realise that the Mission to Seafarers, that odd-looking building with the dome and the bell tower currently getting a facelift at the Docklands end of Flinders Street, has a story reaching back to World War One and early 20th century Melbourne harbourside life.

A new documentary 'Harbour Lights' tells the story of a remarkable and forgotten group of women connected to the origins of that building.

In 1906 a pioneering women's network called the Ladies Harbour Lights Guild was founded at the Mission to Seafarers in support of sailors who risked their lives at sea.

"The Ladies Harbour Lights Guild is an untold story and has some national significance, we think", says Mission to Seafarers curator and registrar Jay Miller.

The Guild was a formidable group of philanthropic Melbourne society women who raised funds for the Mission and volunteered their time.

"They were a who's who of Melbourne' says Ms Miller. "They were proficient fundraisers who set up a structure around the state."

The Melbourne Mission to Seafarers, which still operates today, was built on the Yarra River waterfront in 1917 thanks in large part to the Guild's fundraising efforts.

This was at the height of World War One when ships carrying cargo and passengers were subject to great danger at sea.

"The people of Melbourne knew they had to continue to support seafarers who were risking their lives and were coming into the port and up the Yarra into the city," says Mission to Seafarers Heritage Committee Chair Gordon Macmillan.

"Because it was built during the war," Mr Macmillan explains, "there was built into it from the very beginning commemoration of Merchant Navy and Navy people who were lost."

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The commemoration of sailors in the building was driven by the women of the Guild, but by the turn of the 21st century their efforts had been forgotten.

“Voluntary work is often not given its full due in the same way that paid work is in a wider workforce, and women were very, very active”, explains Historian Professor Kate Darian-Smith.

“I don't think it's often fully recognised just how much they contributed to support for the troops, and sailors, and merchant seamen, and how they were very important through that work in maintaining morale, and it's really an often forgotten story but absolutely crucial story for Australian women,” says Professor Darian-Smith.

‘Harbour Lights’ was produced by Wind & Sky Productions in collaboration with the Mission to Seafarers Victoria.

It was directed by Jary Nemo and written and produced by Lucinda Horrocks and Jary Nemo with executive producers Sue Dight and Gordon MacMillan.

Narrated by Sharon Turley, it features Jill Garner, Kate Darian-Smith, Chris McConville, Janet Miller and Gordon MacMillan. Music was composed by Dr Richard Chew.

Featuring Melbourne historians, commentators, archivists and architects and rare footage and images of sailing and social life in and around the ports of Melbourne, this film will inform and connect audiences young and old.

Created with the support of the Victorian Government.

The film is free to show, watch and share at windsky.com.au and missiontoseafarers.com.au

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Story Background

At the outbreak of World War One shipping was central to the Victorian way of life.

Seafarers from every corner of the world visited Melbourne on merchant ships. They risked their lives bringing goods to what was then the largest port in Australia. Life could be equally difficult in port where exploitation of sailors was rife.

To help protect them from harm the Mission to Seafarers set up a network of support in Australia and around the world. The Mission was first established as a floating chapel in Hobson's Bay in 1857, but by the early 20th century had established shore-based missions in Williamstown, Port Melbourne, and on the Yarra River in Melbourne.

The Melbourne Mission to Seafarers building which stands today was constructed on the Yarra River waterfront in 1917 during the First World War at a time when ships carrying cargo and people were subjected to heightened dangers at sea.

What is little known about the story is the crucial work of a group of women called the Ladies Harbour Lights Guild who raised significant funds for the Mission's construction and who volunteered their time to support the global welfare of seafarers from ship to shore.

Founded and led by their formidable Secretary Miss Ethel Godfrey, the Guild volunteered entertainment, support and connection to seafarers who visited the Port of Melbourne as part of their working lives as ships crew.

Though the Ladies Harbour Lights Guild disbanded in the 1960s, their legacy is present in the bones of the building they helped construct during the terrible years of the First World War. Their traces can be found in the outdoor garden, designed and planted by members of the Guild, and in the stained glass, decorative work and plaques in the building's Memorial Chapel, dedicated to the memory of merchant mariners who lost their lives in the Great War, built with funds and donations of the Guild.

Today the Mission continues to operate from the same building and has an active staff and volunteer community of women and men working in support of the world's seafarers who still visit the port of Melbourne.

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Project Information

Title:	'Harbour Lights'
Country:	Australia
Released:	2020
Project Hyperlink:	https://windsky.com.au/harbour-lights/
Produced by:	Wind & Sky Productions
In Collaboration with:	Mission to Seafarers Victoria
Funded by:	Victorian Government
Writers/Producers:	Lucinda Horrocks and Jary Nemo
Film Director:	Jary Nemo
Film Running Time:	17:51 minutes
Featuring:	Kate Darian-Smith, Jill Garner, Gordon Macmillan, Chris McConville, Janet Miller, Sharon Turley (narrator).

Topics

Australian History, Women's History, Military History, Naval History, World War 1, Melbourne History, Ladies Harbour Lights Guild, First World War, Merchant Marine, Merchant Navy, Mission to Seafarers, Melbourne Docklands, Melbourne Women, Great War, U-boat, tall ship, Melbourne Harbour Trust, Yarra River, Melbourne Urban History, Melbourne Built Environment

Synopsis

In WW1 Melbourne a pioneering network of women at the Mission to Seafarers called the Ladies Harbour Lights Guild supported sailors who risked their lives at sea.

The documentary 'Harbour Lights' tells the remarkable story of the Ladies Harbour Lights Guild and the lives of seafarers in early 20th century Melbourne. It focusses on Melbourne's iconic Mission to Seafarers building, its connection to the Great War and to a unique community of ships crew and volunteers.

This Wind & Sky Production was produced in collaboration with the Mission to Seafarers Victoria. It was directed by Jary Nemo and written and produced by Lucinda Horrocks and Jary Nemo with executive producers Sue Dight and Gordon MacMillan.

Narrated by Sharon Turley, the film features Jill Garner, Kate Darian-Smith, Chris McConville, Janet Miller and Gordon MacMillan. Music was specifically composed by the incredible Richard Chew.

Featuring Melbourne historians, commentators, archivists and architects and rare footage and images of sailing and social life in and around the ports of Melbourne, this film will inform and connect audiences young and old.

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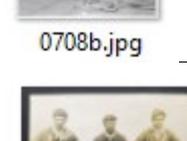
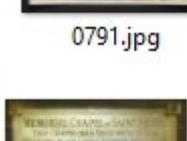
Images:

Dropbox link to images:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/lp42w4ka87z1f0z/AAD_TlyKqKXxWeiBA9D6u14Ua?dl=0

Thumbnail	Citation/ Caption
 <p data-bbox="221 557 368 618">INT Jay Miller 01.jpg</p>	<p data-bbox="464 427 1407 488">Jay Miller, Mission Curator and Registrar, photograph courtesy Wind & Sky Productions.</p>
 <p data-bbox="225 790 410 851">INT Gordon Macmillan 01.jpg</p>	<p data-bbox="464 651 1407 712">Gordon MacMillan, Chair Mission to Seafarers Heritage Committee, photograph courtesy Wind & Sky Productions.</p>
 <p data-bbox="225 1014 394 1104">Kate Darian Smith Interview 01.jpg</p>	<p data-bbox="464 882 1407 943">Professor Kate Darian-Smith, historian, University of Tasmania, photograph courtesy Wind & Sky Productions.</p>
 <p data-bbox="212 1270 397 1330">1545-1543-ALBP1 -DS1.jpg</p>	<p data-bbox="464 1122 1394 1151">717 Flinders Street building, circa 1920, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
 <p data-bbox="264 1509 354 1538">1662.jpg</p>	<p data-bbox="464 1352 1394 1382">Ladies Harbour Lights Guild, circa 1910, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
 <p data-bbox="264 1671 331 1686">1634b@0.25x.jpg</p>	<p data-bbox="464 1559 1394 1588">Ladies Harbour Lights Guild, circa 1910, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
	<p data-bbox="464 1704 1407 1765">Christmas Day 1914, function for Seafarers at St John's College, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>

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 <p>1665.jpg</p>	<p>Ladies Harbour Lights Guild, circa 1910, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
 <p>1847b.jpg</p>	<p>Ladies Harbour Lights Guild, circa 1910, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
 <p>1644.jpg</p>	<p>Ladies Harbour Lights Guild, circa 1910, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
 <p>0023.jpg</p>	<p>Flinders Street Mission Building being constructed, circa 1916, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
 <p>0708b.jpg</p>	<p>Seafarers circa 1920, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
 <p>0791.jpg</p>	<p>Seafarers circa 1920, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
 <p>1532.jpg</p>	<p>Memorial Chapel dedication plaque, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
 <p>1590-1587-ALBP9-DS1.jpg</p>	<p>Seafarers circa 1910, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>

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 <p>MTSV2069-IM1.jpg</p>	<p>Ladies Work for Sailors, circa 1915, Mission to Seafarers Victoria archives.</p>
 <p>Flinders Street West Showing Market Circa 1910-1.jpg</p>	<p>Flinders Street West showing Fish Market, circa 1910, courtesy of the State Library of Victoria.</p>
	<p>Ethel Godfrey with nieces Violet and Eileen, circa 1900, courtesy of the Mackarness family archives.</p>
 <p>Chirs 01.jpg</p>	<p>Dr Chris McConville, urban historian, Victoria University, photograph courtesy Wind & Sky Productions.</p>
 <p>INT Jill Garner 01.jpg</p>	<p>Jill Garner, Victorian State Architect, photograph courtesy Wind & Sky Productions.</p>
 <p>L_BW_IMG_6292_w.jpg</p>	<p>Lucinda Horrocks, photograph courtesy Wind & Sky Productions.</p>
	<p>Jary Nemo, photograph courtesy Wind & Sky Productions.</p>

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Film Links

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/86UP6s6uGOo>
Wind & Sky Portfolio page: www.windsky.com.au/harbour-lights/
Mission to Seafarers history page: <https://missiontoseafarers.com.au/history/>

The film can be embedded into online content using the standard YouTube embed option.

High quality versions of the content can be provided on request for specific media formats. For more information contact Lucinda Horrocks 0423 126 697 lucinda@windsky.com.au

About Wind & Sky Productions

Wind & Sky Productions is an independent film production company specialising in short documentaries.

Working mainly in digital video, they produce stories for smaller screens, web and digital formats. They are based in Ballarat in regional Victoria. They take on commissions and also produce self-driven projects where they develop story concepts, source funding, and bring together project partners and collaborators. Their remit is to produce stories which promote positive change and social responsibility.

Wind & Sky Production's work is often distributed online, projected at special events, viewed on plasma screen installations or produced on DVD.

More information about Wind & Sky Productions is available at <http://windsky.com.au/>

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