



What's On in Shed 2

First to Start, Last to Finish: When building ships in the era when wind and sail powered the main form of transport for people and goods and for navy fleets, the Block Maker was the first to start and last to finish and it is no different during the restoration of the heritage schooner *Alma Doepel*.



Volunteer Francis Crome is part of the dedicated team working on *Alma Doepel*. Francis is restoring the ship's 198 blocks of various sizes from small bunt-line blocks to triple sheet blocks weighing in at 13 kilograms.

Each block has to be pulled apart and sanded to be inspected, repaired and varnished. The steel strops are re-galvanised and sheaves are cleaned, serviced and refitted in readiness to be put back on the ship.



Each block is fitted with the ship's name plate and an identity tag and is tracked through the repair process from start to finish.

Francis says these are not the ship's original blocks but they are over 30 years old and most are made from elm. Francis spends 2-3 days a week at Victoria Harbour in Docklands on the *Alma Doepel* Restoration Project.

Alma Doepel now in her 107th year is a three masted topsail schooner originally built as a shallow drafted coastal trader in Bellingen on the NSW North coast. She served in New Britain during the second world war but spent most of her years transporting a variety of goods between Hobart, Melbourne and Sydney.



Alma, as she is affectionately known, was converted into a sail training ship running youth mentoring and adventure programs throughout the 1980s and 90s. The current restoration project is well underway with the goal to be a sail training ship once more.

For more information visit the website www.almadoepel.com.au or contact Tony Spencer to arrange a tour for your group on Ph: 0418 313 816