

## REPORT ON AUGUST MEETING

Lieutenant Kevin Slade had no trouble holding the interest of members and friends who came along on Saturday, 5th August, 1995.

He is now stationed at the naval Hydrographic Office at Wollongong. He 'launched' his address by saying that it was naval policy to name ships, not buildings, after mariners and 'sailed on' in his address to demonstrate 'RMS Flinders' involvement in maritime survey work, supporting the opponents' case (remember that) on the naming issue.

He spoke of navigation aids and their development; the chronometer, the sextant and the maritime tables and their use in the 18th century in establishing position at sea, and the accuracy that was achieved. He spoke of technology to determine tide levels, current flows and to identify distances at sea, from particular landmarks. The exacting nature of maritime surveying, carried out from small open boats by day and chart work by night, usually at very isolated locations, was covered. For sea-depths there was the leadline and techniques for establishing the nature of seabed materials.

he convinced us all that naval surveying work will never be finished and it has a valuable exploratory, commercial and maritime safety focus. Slides were available to show the range of naval vessels engaged in survey work from master vessels to very modern ones. The huge steel hull of a container vessel and its depth below water level demonstrated very forcibly the need for safe and properly surveyed sea channels, both in the wider oceans and in our local harbours and waterways. No evidence other than the running aground of the 'Iron Barron' in Tasmania recently was necessary to drive home the problem.

As Bill Mowbray said, in moving a vote of thanks, it was an excellent address. Lieutenant Slade was enthusiastic and had to struggle to confine himself to the time limit and, from reports, everyone was very pleased with what they heard.

In closing, Lieutenant Kevin Slade 'floated' the idea of an excursion to the Hydrographic Office, Wollongong, where early maps are available and some displayed. Mapping is another topic.

PETER DALY