



# AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

MAY/JUNE '07



Paddlesteamer "Marion" at Morgan on the Murray

## THE SMALL PROPELLOR – A COLLECTION

On March 28 we were addressed by Steve Green on the subject of his outstanding collection of outboard motors. Needless to say, he was unable to bring along the collection, which runs into a couple of hundred different types, but he did bring one interesting motor along. It was an American air-cooled Bendix of about 3hp, made about 1937. The cylinder (quite small) and cooling fan (large) were all enclosed in a rather Art Deco streamlined, thin-shelled cover in cast aluminium, which made it look rather bigger and more powerful than it actually was. Steve described how some examples were produced with a chopped, flanged shaft leg so that they could be mounted and used as an inboard/outboard and how in this guise they were used to power Polynesian canoes during the filming of an early, possibly the first, "Mutiny on the Bounty". One advantage of the aircooled engine is that it will run in very

dirty water with no cooling water inlet to block up. This makes it safer to use in flood relief situations and the like.

Steve also had photos of large slabs, but not all, of his collection taken in happier times when he lived in Kingsley where he had room to set up a reasonable display. At his present home in Mandurah he has nothing like the available space of before and is forced to keep them packed tightly in an undersized shed. We had hoped to have a Toolbox Visit there at some time but it's not really suitable at the present site. For this reason Steve is thinking of selling the collection, and already one of our members is thinking about acquiring it. Nothing very concrete as yet, so if anyone else is interested I guess Steve would be open to offers.

To pad out the evening, Steve had also brought along, very thoughtfully, quite a decent collection of old books and magazines which were shared around the table and discussed between members at such length that I eventually had to start shooing members out at the witching hour of ten o'clock. The magazines ranged from 1950s "Seacraft" (my vintage) to 1912 editions of "The Rudder" (my grandfather's vintage) – some range! We owe a debt of thanks to Steve who lugged up an outboard and stand and at least two boxes of books and magazines all the way from

Mandurah. Thanks, too, to Bob Walsh who helped out with transport.

An interesting new member we enrolled was a friend of mine, one Mike Williams, who has dreams of building his own steam launch and engine but in the meantime has caught the collecting bug and is after Seagull outboards. I think he's got about half a dozen already and is even now a bit appalled at the prices asked for these on E-bay so he's looking to shop locally. If you've got a Seagull, going or not, which you've lost interest in, ring me and I'll tell Mike about it.

## A MAJOR RESTORATION

April's Toolbox Visit was a return to the Maylands Slipyard, but this time with a specific interest. New member, Terry Langton, has acquired an old launch already at the yard and is now faced with an extensive rebuild. In fact Terry confessed during the afternoon that he'd originally been looking for something much smaller, about 15' of camping dinghy, or similar. However, when he found how scarce Maylands sites were (like, none available), he bought the launch to get the site!



The vessel is a fairly conventional 28', carvel planked launch of uncertain design and age. It came with a motor, a 250 cu. inch, 6 cylinder, side valve Chrysler M7 of 120hp, so Terry already knows more about the engine than the boat. We didn't see the engine but it's apparently pretty bulky and would occupy most of the saloon space when in place. Not a comforting thought. Interestingly, the keel and buttock lines arch upward to create a concave shape over the propeller, possibly to get the prop higher and reduce draft – the

same aim as a proper tunnel hull. There's apparently a pair of more modern, compact diesels at the yard and Terry hopes to get one of these if at all possible

Quite a few of the planks and ribs could use replacement but the planking timber is yet to be identified. We thought it's possibly red meranti but no one really knows. At least two or three planks are broken, one where the hull fell over on one of its own props, and another is simply broken straight across near the flared bow where it may have been asked to take too much bend during construction (possibly with insufficient steaming). Also, many planks are rotted within an inch or so of the transom, just as the restoration articles warn you. Whether to scarf in new pieces to the offending planks or simply bring the transom forward is another decision for Terry.



Towards the starboard bow, just below the waterline, several planks seem to be trying to

twist out of line, possibly as a result of inadequate steaming again – it's hard to say how to fix that.

Caulking will be another skill for Terry to learn. He's got most of the old stuff out and found quite narrow seams above the waterline – say, around 5 to 8 mm, but below the waterline the seams will just about accept a whole finger in many places (see photo).



He's contemplating conventional caulking, splining or a combination of the two, and none of us could advise him. To me, splining sounds dangerous unless you can guarantee to keep the timber dry forever after, otherwise, where do the planks move to when they expand? The gaps near the keel look too wide to even hold caulking at this stage.

The deck and superstructure will no doubt need attention, too. The general appearance is fine – no need to re-design it, but one cabin side is badly kicked in and no doubt dry rot is round about, that being the area most affected by rain water.



We didn't examine the deck but it won't be perfect either. So Terry's got a long haul ahead of him if he decides to go ahead. So far he and his wife have stripped about half the planks of paint, but that's as far as they've got. It's still quite possible that he cuts the launch up with a chainsaw and dumps it, to be

replaced with something like the original plan. That will depend on Terry's eventual assessment of the size of the mountain he has to climb. We can only wish him all the best.

Among the members present were Paul and Rosemary Naylor whose own project was also at Maylands. They've got their Van de Stadt Dogger – class yacht, "Minx II" out of the water here.



The Dogger is a single chine hull of 31' length, and a good sailer especially in heavy weather. A little bit cramped down below compared with newer designs, but an excellent yacht nevertheless.



I crewed on one in Geraldton in the '70s. Paul and Rosemary have some general maintenance to do, plus reposition the chainplates and create some more useable space below. For instance, the stern storage spaces are just too narrow to reach internally and have no external hatches, but provided they can be made water-tight it would make sense to have them. This should certainly keep them out of mischief over the winter and provide a lot of satisfaction. Good luck to them.

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## ADMINISTRATION NOTES

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### ABBA COMMITTEE

Bob Walsh	President	9537 8570
Alan Coy	Sec/Treas	9204 3043
Mike Beilby	Newsletter	9397 6209
Mike Rogers	Library	9527 7313

### LIBRARY

Mike Rogers has completed a roll call of all the books and finds twenty missing – a fair few. If you know the whereabouts of any of these, please contact him. Ph 9527 7313.

### NEXT TECHNICAL MEETING

Our Guest Speaker on Wed, 30 May will be Craig Wilson, talking on general boat maintenance, including painting, anti-fouling, osmosis treatment, etc. Craig used to do this as a business at the Fremantle Sailing Club so has had heaps of experience. He normally didn't do mechanical work himself but supervised contractors, so should know a lot

about that field as well. That's in the Committee Room, S of PYC, 7.30 for 8pm. Don't forget, there's a good smorgasbord meal available as well, best to get there about 7pm.

### NEXT TOOLBOX VISIT

Our host will be El Presidente, Bob Walsh at his building site at 44 Empress Crt, Barragup. This is about 6 km east of Mandurah along the Pinjarra Rd. Get there via Fiegert Rd. This turns north off Pinjarra Rd just east of Black Lake. Continue on Fiegert until the bitumen runs out and turn left into Empress. Fiegert is shown on the '05 UBD, but just misses out of the StreetSmart for '05. I don't know about later editions. Bob, with Mike Rogers' help, is building a 10m motor launch designed by David Payne. They should just about have the hull ready for turning over.

That's on Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> June between 2 and 4 pm. See you there.

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### GOOD HOME WANTED (well, home for boatbuilding, that is.)

Harry Speight is aware of a boatbuilder who will lose his premises about June and is looking for a new site as of now (April). I'm not sure if this issue will get out early enough to help, but he's looking for around 800 sq. m. of covered space (with a fairly large door, I think he builds catamarans) with a similar area outdoors – quite a bit of space. We were told that if he gets the sort of site he's after, some space could be available for members' projects. He'll consider anywhere between Canning Vale and Henderson, and we assumed he'd probably consider further afield if pushed. Apparently these places are very hard to get so if you know of something going I suggest you ring Harry on 0438 923 465.



Tasmanian Piner's Punt at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival, Hobart



"Eve" a 15 ft pulling boat by Colin Wragg, also at the AWBF

## VALE – KEN PETHER



It is with deep regret that we note the passing of Ken Pether, an esteemed and long standing member of ABBA.

Ken grew up near the river at Bassendean and in a good wet winter probably needed a boat at the bottom of the garden. He and his younger brother, David, utilized everything that would float in their childhood, moving on to a Chapman Pup powered, planked dinghy and finally turning up a part finished, carvel-planked 24ft motor-sailer which, at the time, had grass growing up through the uncaulked seams.

They embraced the challenge, caulked this very solidly built boat, re-modelled the cabin, converted and fitted a Ford 10 engine and launched the boat, keeping it alongside a friend's jetty at Bassendean. While proceeding with the fitting out Ken also completed an Associateship in Electrical Engineering while working for the railways. This qualification later took him to the position of Electrical Engineer for the Port of

Fremantle, the position from which he retired several years ago.

The boat was finally completed, rigged and moved to a pen at Swan Yacht Club in the late '60s. Ken married his soulmate, Yvonne, in 1972 and a firm family bond was forged with the boat. Over the years several modifications and improvements, such as fitting a lead keel shoe, a twin cylinder Bukh diesel engine and a new rig were made, with the boat being used by Ken and David, their wives and later, children and grand children.

None of us usually has a choice of how we will depart but having known Ken for over 40 years, to be enjoying a quiet time aboard your boat, in a peaceful bay at Garden Island with the Love of Your Life seems a fitting scenario. Our deepest sympathy goes to Yvonne, her children, grand children and family. We will miss Ken, his quiet friendliness and wise counsel.

Peter Leggatt

At the AWBF in Hobart, Feb '07



An Oughtred Acorn 12 built by Brian Templar



A Liberty 15 ft sailing canoe, designed by Douglas in 1887



The real McCoy, an original 1896 Thames skiff, "Poppy"



A Bolger, North American lobster boat built by Barry Tyson



An exhibitor rowing fisherman's style



The incredible Dutch *musik boote*



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