



AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

April May 2018

THE KEEPING OF A TRADITION

VANISHING SAIL

Our Meeting on Wednesday 4th April was a showing of the film "Vanishing Sail", a very interesting documentary that reflects on the risk of traditional boat building skills being lost to upcoming generations.

The film is set in the village of Windward on the island of Carriacou. Carriacou is the largest island in the Grenada Grenadines, a part of the Lesser Antilles, a group of islands in the Caribbean Sea that form a long, partly volcanic island arc between the Greater Antilles to the north-west and the continent of South America to the south. Carriacou is home to 8,000 people. The capital city is Hillsborough, the only town or city on the island. The rest of the island settlements are very small villages of which Windward is one.



In this small group of islands, the traditions of boatbuilding were once crucial to the survival of local communities that skimmed a living from the sea. Hundreds of sailing vessels were once launched there - more than anywhere in the West Indies. Today there is no more trading by sail, and these skills have vanished elsewhere in the region.

The central figure in the film is Alwyn Enoe, one of the last boat builders practicing a trade passed down through the generations from Scottish settlers that arrived in Carriacou in the 18th century. Approaching his 70's and with no more orders coming in, he decides to build one last sailing sloop with the hope that his sons will continue the trade.

Some Background

The film commences in the first person with Alexis Andrews, the Writer, Director and Cinematographer of the film making brief mention of his personal connection to the core reason for the film. His own story is told in a great more detail on the film website www.vanishingsail.com.au and in other internet sources.

Alexis was born in Greece, studied photography in London and then sailed to Antigua. His iconic mega yacht images have been featured in magazines and luxury charter advertising for over three decades (see <https://www.yachtcharterfleet.com/credits/alexis-andrews-7/>).

In 1997, he purchased an old Carriacou sloop, *Summer Wind*, that had sunk in Antigua, rebuilt the vessel and sailed her back to the Grenadines to meet her creator. He fell in love with the simplicity of the lines and the open decks of these basic, wooden fishing boats. He spent a lot of time at Windward Beach, Carriacou, where they are built, and was very taken with boat-builder Alwyn Enoe. They became very good friends and when Alexis realized he had to have a new sloop of his own, he commissioned Alwyn to build it for him. His 42 foot *Genesis* first raced in the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta in 2005 and interest in Carriacou sloops soared.



In 2007, Alexis launched his two-volume book on Carriacou sloops; the first entitled "Vanishing Ways". It records life in one of the few remaining places in the Caribbean where men still hand-build, sail, fish and race these beautifully simple and incredibly fast boats, with no engine or electronic device. The second is about the building of Alexis' own Carriacou sloop, *Genesis*. During this period, Alexis had the idea of making a documentary film on Carriacou boat-building. He sailed up and down the islands, seeking out old captains and sailors and recording their stories. This unique chronicle culminated in the brilliant film "Vanishing Sail", the film which was screened at our recent ABBA Meeting. The stories of trading by sail and smuggling contraband told by some of the last old Caribbean Sea characters weave through the film like the

currents of the Grenadines. The film was screened for the first time to great acclaim at the St Barth's Film Festival in April 2015. This took place during the increasingly popular annual West Indies Regatta, which attracts a spectacular array of these remarkable, colourful vessels in a fantastic atmosphere of camaraderie and fun.

Alexis' journey which commenced in 1997 with his purchase of *Summer Wind* thus sparked a ten year photo-essay tribute to the last boat builders of the islands and the building of *Genesis* and a further four 42 foot vessels. The film documents the building of the last of these, *Exodus*. Along the way, the project inspired a wider interest amongst outsiders in the region and the formation of the UNESCO sponsored St. Barth's West Indies Regatta.

It is largely thanks to Alexis Andrews that the dying art of boat-building by West Indian men, the old way, on a beach, still thrives, and that we are able to enjoy watching these lovely wooden boats skim through the waves at Caribbean regattas.



The Building of *Exodus*

The boat building skills of the people of Carriacou were brought to the islands by Scottish indentured servants many generations ago. Their skills have been applied in building large numbers of boats from open, sail powered fishing boats to large trading schooners. The biggest of these was the *Gloria Colita* which was 165 feet long and displaced 170 tons – completely of wood and built in the traditional way. It is these methods that it was hoped to keep alive in the building of *Exodus*.



The hull shape was taken from a half model based on generations of experience. The building process commenced with the fast growing West Indian White Cedar being cut from the local forest for framing. The timber was worked using the adze and the levels were taken using the natural level of the horizon – the framing being set up on the open beach at Windward. The vessel was to be 42 feet overall length with a beam of nearly 12 feet.

Work progressed slowly as the family were funding this vessel themselves and the four sons who were helping, along with Alwyn himself, had to find other work to pay the bills. The delivery of the planking timber which was sourced from abroad was also delayed due to shipping issues.

With the hull materially complete, Alwyn proceeded with the cotton caulking of the hull and deck which he insisted on doing himself. The latter was then sealed with hot pitch sourced on the island.



As the 18 month build moved towards a launch, the potential to complete her in time to race in the upcoming Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta – five weeks & three hundred miles away – emerged, and the pace quickened considerably. Five weeks out from the regatta, the deck sealing was progressing, the mould for the lead keel was made from local scrap steel and the lead keel poured. Three weeks out, the keel was fitted but painting was yet to proceed and the hull was bare of any fittings or rigging. Two weeks from the Regatta, on a beautiful sunny day in 2013, the boat was launched in the midst of a sequence of culturally traditional activities which brought the whole community of Windward together for a day of celebration. As is the tradition, the name was kept secret until the time of launching when she was named ‘Exodus’ by the unfurling of a flag that flew free on a temporary mast above her deck.



As the last week before the regatta approached, a mast was hewn from an old telegraph post, a boom was constructed and all the rigging came together in what appeared to be a miraculously short timeframe. The sails were donated by Alexis *Genesis*. With one day to go before they must depart on the 2 to 3 day sail to Antigua, the flooring was going into the main cabin and loose mattresses were thrown aboard for sleeping on. There was effectively no internal fit out.



And so, with a great deal of satisfaction at the build being completed, Alwyn Enoe set off with his sons to Antigua to race in the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta – and to find a buyer for *Exodus*.

There are various competitive classes in the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta, such as Vintage for boats built before 1945, Classic – built after that date and the Traditional Class, to which belong the Carriacou sloops. These nippy little boats are a pleasure to watch and the racing is keen. At the 2013 Classics, the speed of *Exodus* was so impressive that she was sold by the end of the first race, which she won! The buyer was Philippe Fabre, of the French-Argentina family involved in shipping since the 16th century. He first became interested in Carriacou sloops when his son's boat, German Frers classic *Vagabundo II*, was under restoration at Antigua Slipway – right next to the Carriacou sloop *Genesis*, owned by Alexis Andrews. Alexis invited him to the launch of *Exodus*. Philippe was both enchanted and enamoured: the boat was painted in the colors of the Argentinean flag! That and her performance in Race I at the Antigua Classics, and it was a done deal: Philippe bought her there and then.

After the three races, *Exodus* was third overall in the regatta, even after having withdrawn from the second race with a broken backstay. Alwyn had sold *Exodus* for an attractive price and subsequently received a new order for a sloop which his sons are building. He was also very enthusiastically recognised with a 'Lifetime Achievement Award' at the Regatta presentations.

What a great response to his determination to pass the traditional boat building skills on to the next generation and to his contention that;

"If this thing gone from here, everything gone you know....."

ALWYN ENOE, MASTER BOAT BUILDER

Ed – There is no substitute for viewing the film. If you were not available on the night of our Meeting, please contact me and I can arrange for you to borrow the DVD.

TOOLBOX VISIT TO YACHT GROT

Our May Toolbox was a visit to Yacht Grot in Fremantle and our host, business owner Trevor Richards, kindly accommodated this event after closing time on Saturday 5th May.

Trevor has been running Yacht Grot at 57 Queen Victoria Street in Fremantle for some 30 odd years. The original tenancy of his building was a butchers shop during WWII and evidence is still there. Then it became a motorcycle business.

Prior to Australia II's America's Cup win in 1983, Trevor was working for an American computer company for 10 years. He provided 24 hour on site support for large main-frame computers for clients such as the Tax Department, Main Roads etc. With 3:00am call outs when these computers went down and the stress of getting in there with the million and one wires to fix things, he decided that he needed to change direction. So he withdrew his superannuation, took his long service leave and went sailing for a year in a Duncanson 29 ft. sloop from Fremantle around the north to Brisbane with his wife. When he returned in 1985, he had an idea of buying and selling second hand boating gear which he commenced doing from his home. He quickly found out that he was a bit of a horse trader.

By the time the America's Cup had finished in 1987, the business had expanded, setting up shop in Fremantle from where it continues to operate to this day as a chandlery, having become a destination store in the port city. Yacht Grot has branched beyond the marine industry to become a provider of hardware solutions to a wide variety of non-boating individuals and businesses using their knowledge and experience of marine products.

Yacht Grot has become a leading marine hardware and accessories supplier (chandlery). With a strong reputation for quality advice over 30 years, Yacht Grot can assist the novice recreational sailor through to super yacht captains and others outside the marine industry. The staff take pride in helping customers find solutions for their projects, no matter what they may be.

Products

- Anchors and mooring
- Cabin and deck hardware
- Chains
- Cleaning and boat care
- Clothing and shoes
- Electrical
- Engines and accessories
- Hose and plumbing
- Lighting
- Paints
- Pumps
- Ropes
- Safety
- Sailing hardware

Services

- Rigging
- Ropes and splicing
- Balustrading and non-marine wire applications

Customers

- Architects, builders and interior designers
- Car enthusiasts
- Construction
- Commercial and leisure boat owners
- Defence contractors
- Engineers
- Equestrian
- Farming and horticulture
- Fine and performing arts
- Government agencies
- Healthcare providers
- Homeowners
- Manufacturers
- Marine trades
- Mining and petroleum supply companies
- Port operators
- Road, rail and aviation
- Schools
- Shipbuilders
- Shipping agents
- Superyachts
- Veterinarians
- Watersports
- Zoos/sanctuaries and many more

On the day, a small number of ABBA members turned up to inspect what is a treasure chest of new and second hand boating equipment, as well as seeing behind the scenes of the Yacht Grot business. Our host Trevor gave us a 'run down' on a number of the product areas that are available in the shop as well as some information on lines that are able to be procured on an order basis. He also indicated the limited availability of some second hand items due to the gradual disappearance of the boats that formed the source of such products. An example was bronze port lights that are no longer used on ships or are available from second hand small boat sources.

Members also availed themselves of a discount on the day and purchased a number of items that were no doubt needed for that urgent winter maintenance or the major project in train.

It was interesting to see the great range of good quality chandlery readily on offer and experience the obvious ability of Trevor and no doubt his staff to assist with advice on all matters marine in the context of one of the few 'over the counter' independent chandleries in Perth. We thank Trevor for his time and generosity in accommodating this ABBA visit and encourage members to avail themselves of Trevor's service, particularly when they are trying to source that hard to find item.

A FURTHER NOTE ON "FLAME"

Following the Toolbox to Steve Ward's workshop, in a response to a request from son Geoff for some dot points on the 22 square metre "Flame" built by his father, Peter Leggatt has put together a substantial document on his memories of the building of "Flame" which commenced when he was just 6 years old. The information below is a summary of that document and as indicated, more detail can be provided on request.



Design information for 22/30 Square Metre Skerry Cruiser 'FLAME'

Basic Hull Dimensions, Sail Plan (2 mainsails), Construction Detail and my recollections of the building progress from age 6yo. up until the launching on Sunday 6th December, 1953. This was the day after RPYC opened on the Matilda Bay site it currently occupies. May this also serve as a tribute to the memory of my father VIC LEGGATT who devoted 4 years of his life, while also working as an insurance executive, to produce this boat with no more than a small circular saw, a small lathe, and no other power tools. Not even an electric drill was used, and this was probably the reason that not a single drill was broken in the drilling of over 7000 rivet holes through the planking and ribs. A hand drill gives great control. His day started about 0530 working in the shed until 0800, then breakfast and off to work at the office. After getting home and finishing dinner around 1800hrs, it was down to the shed and finish by 2200hrs, so as not to upset the neighbours. Using only hand tools at night, the only obnoxious noise was the rivetting of over 7000 copper fastenings during the construction. We did have good neighbours but tried seriously to choose quieter work after 2000hrs. This programme was for 5 days with a full working day Saturday and Sunday - say 16hrs/ day. No other breaks were taken other than a couple of weeks at Rottne most years to recharge the enthusiasm.

Design Details:

DESIGNER - Knud Reimers, Stockholm Sweden. Signed by Knud 1938-39

HULL - L.O.A. 37' 9⁵/₈" , L.W.L. 26' 7⁵/₈" , BEAM 6' 11¹/₈" , DRAFT 4' 4"

BALLAST - Moulded Lead 23 CWT. (2,576 pounds) fastened with 6 moulded in manganese bronze bolts. I suspect 3/4" dia. bolts may have been used.

MAST - 37' 3" long

30 Sq. Metre Rig - Mainsail 34' Luff, 12' 6" Foot

22 Sq. Metre Rig - Mainsail 34' Luff, 9' 3" Foot

Largest Genoa Headsail - 24' 3" Luff, 25' 7" Leach, 18'9" Foot

Lead keel was cast alongside the shed in the summer of 1949-50

Boat Launched - 6/12/1953

Further ramblings of the build would be available on request.

Happy Boat Building.

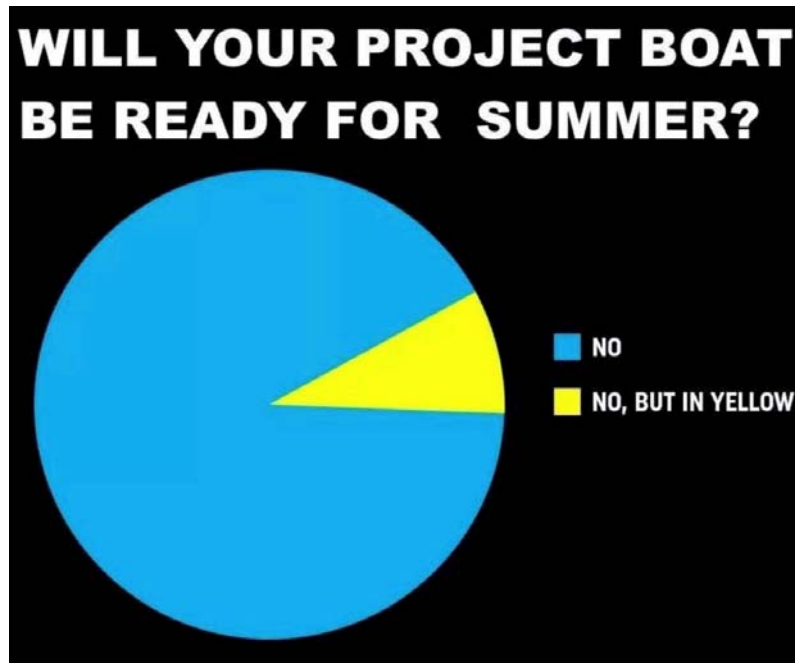
Peter Leggatt.

A WORD ON WINTER BOAT BUILDING

Life Member Kim Klaka has posed the following question as we move into the 'off season'. Thanks Kim.

I hope members who are engaged in winter maintenance or finishing the major project for next summer can find some 'yes' somewhere in their grand plan.

How are you going? Yes, YOU!



ADMINISTRATION NOTES

ABBA COMMITTEE

President	Ken Potts	0421 178 991
Sec/Treasurer	Bruce Cadee	9259 0844
Newsletter Editor	Chris Davis	9387 5042
Library	Rosemary Nayler	9455 1470
General Committee	Rob Bingham	9246 0202
	Ed Essers	0406 050 989
	Neil McKenzie	0424 533 063
	Keith Glenn	0477 172 881

JUNE MEETING

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 6th June, as usual in the Heritage Room at South of Perth Yacht Club, 7.30pm for an 8pm start. Our presenter will be Peter Worsley who members will remember gave us a very interesting presentation on WA shipwrecks at our April 2017 meeting. Peter and his wife Jill are long time volunteers with the WA Museum Shipwrecks Collection. Together they have written four books on WA shipwrecks.

Peter and Jill have also been amateur boat builders for a great many years and Peter will present at this meeting on the various boats and sailing ships they have either built or been involved with others in building. He has built a 34ft fibreglass yacht from scratch, completely fitted out a 33ft fibreglass yacht, has done a bit of work on the *Endeavour* Replica and a lot of work on the *Duyfken* Replica. Peter also spent an academic year at Great Southern TAFE in Albany helping build two 15ft plywood dinghies and a 29ft whaleboat to be awarded a Certificate IV in Wooden Boat Building. He also helped a friend repair a 40ft jarrah planked ketch back in 1947. Although he has not built any boats for almost 18 years now, he maintains his skills on a smaller scale and has just finished building a 1:16 scale model of a whaleboat (he says that bending planks only 1mm thick is about his limit now!).

JULY TOOLBOX VISIT

The next Toolbox will be on Saturday 7th July, as usual 2.00pm to 4.00pm. This Toolbox will be a visit to current ABBA member Frank Morrah's project. Frank is building a 47 foot Van de Stadt Samoa design in round bilged steel. This is a very large and long term project similar to that of Ed Essers. Frank is nearing the end of the major steelwork phase. The boat building shed is at the back of the block at the rear of Frank's home at 11 Bangap Place, Oakford. If you get lost, give Frank a call on 0402 223342.

Please park in front of the house and walk down the driveway. Also note that covered shoes are essential and please take care when walking around the deck as this is a large boat and there is limited guarding around the deck at present.

ADMINISTRATION NOTES (Cont'd)

ABBA LOGO

Members are reminded that Bruce Cadee has made arrangements with Shaun Luong of Image Embroidery at 26 Tulloch Way, Canning Vale (Phone 9456 2324 Mobile 0403 250 389) for an embroidered ABBA logo. The logo can be applied to your own clothing (assuming it can be accommodated in their equipment) or to shirts, caps or hats purchased through Image Embroidery. Feel free to call in on Shaun to look at the limited range of clothing he has on site or visit the following web sites to choose your preferred style, size and colours. The weblinks below are only examples of the wide range available. Half chest measurements are included on the web sites to help ensure you select the correct size. Ladies styles are also available.

Clothing (excluding Logos)

Style 1300 – Aussie Pacific Mens Murray Polo, Navy/White/Ashe or White/Navy/Ashe - **\$20.00 + GST each**

Weblink: http://www.aussiepacific.com.au/the-murray-polo-navy-white-s?color=Navy%2FWhite%2FAshe&primary_color=Navy&secondary_color=White

Style 1304 – Aussie Pacific Mens Eureka Polo, Navy/White/Ashe or White/Navy/Ashe - **\$21.00 + GST each**

Weblink: http://www.aussiepacific.com.au/mens/polos/eureka-polo-sky-navy-s?color=Sky%2FNavy%2FAshe&primary_color=Sky&secondary_color=Navy

Hats/Caps (excluding Logos)

Style 4199 – Headwear Brushed Heavy Cotton Cap, White/Navy (many other colours available too) - **\$6.50 + GST each** **Weblink:** <http://au.headwear.com.au/productDetails.cfm?&prodID=53&prodCatID=2&pageNumber=1>

(Also refer poly/cotton legionnaires hats Styles 4057 or 4126 for maximum sun protection under website sub heading 'Hats, Visor & Beanies' <http://au.headwear.com.au/productList.cfm?&pCategoryID=7>)

Style 4199 – Headwear Brushed Heavy Cotton Cap, White/Navy (many other colours available too) - **\$6.50 + GST each (includes poly/cotton legionnaires hats for maximum sun protection under website sub heading 'Hats, Visor & Beanies')**

Weblink:

Style 4223 – Brushed Sports Twill Bucket Hat, White/Navy (many other colours available too) - **\$8.00 + GST each**

Weblink: <http://au.headwear.com.au/productList.cfm?&pCategoryID=7&page=2>

To make your annual membership even more value for money, ABBA will pay for up to 2 logos per financial year to be applied to your items of clothing. The current cost to ABBA is \$7.15 per logo. There is no intention for this to be an ABBA uniform so the choice of style and colour is totally yours. If you are seen wearing the logo while building, working on or using your boat or anywhere for that matter it might get people asking questions and wanting to join our association. You are free to deal direct with Image Embroidery but please ensure you get an itemised invoice showing a separate price for the logo and present this to Bruce Cadee for reimbursement. Bruce Cadee is happy to take orders and liaise with Image Embroidery if you so