



AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

Jan Feb '07



The Fremantle Maritime Museum, our December Toolbox visit

THE 2006 AGM

The 29th November saw our Annual General Meeting held, a little late but quite effective. It finally resulted in a president being elected – that worthy being Bob Walsh. Many thanks for stepping into the gap, Bob; we'll try to keep the load light for you. The roles of secretary and treasurer were combined and taken by Alan Coy, Molly officially stepping down from the secretary position, although she'll still be involved with Alan's work a fair bit. Yours truly, Mike Beilby, stood again as newsletter editor but be warned – this is my last year – come September, '07 I'm out and we will need a new editor. I'd like at this point to express my thanks to Alan and Molly for all their work over the past period, including as it has, not merely the day to day operation of ABBA, but usually the final newsletter layout, printing and postage, which some might consider the editor's job. A formal vote of thanks to the committee was moved and passed from the floor.

Mike Rogers was confirmed as librarian, and custodian of the books. We intend to re-vamp the library system – see Admin Notes.

The Treasurer's report indicated that including a small fixed-term deposit we have about \$1800 which is up a fair bit from last year, mainly due, I'd say, to electronic mailing of this newsletter to about $\frac{3}{4}$ of you, and the Coys' printing of the remainder at their own expense!

The Secretary's report included the fact that memberships are up from only 15 last year to 28 now – a big improvement. She also stated that, should we participate in the East Perth Boat Show next year, we will need paper promotional material to hand out and that this could significantly improve membership again: I couldn't agree more.

IF YOU WANT TO FLY OR FLOAT, KEEP IT LIGHT

This was the enduring message from Nigel Barron (erroneously recorded as Nigel Fleet in our last issue) of High Point Timbers in Rockingham. High Point (of 12 Hurrell Way, ph 9592 4093) is the retail outlet for Environmental Forest Farms, a plantation system mostly in Joondalup. They grow Pawlonia trees (about three million of them in WA) and 12y.o. thinnings are currently being harvested and sold at Rockingham as Kiri timber. It sounds as if they also import some older, and longer, samples from China. Local lengths are usually under 3.6m, whereas the Chinese product can reach 5m.

So what is Kiri? It's a super-light (260kg/cubic metre), very pale coloured timber which is closed-cell, thus technically a hardwood. Its nearest established competitor is Western Red Cedar and so it makes an ideal substitute in strip-plank composite structures such as Mike Rogers' launch, Platypus. It's termite resistant (not much value to us), contains no gums or resins and is very stable. It's lighter again than WRC, and doesn't contain the carcinogens carried in the latter's dust when machining. I wasn't aware of the carcinogen problem but I've always had to use a dust mask to avoid hay fever (and usually with Nyatoh, too) Currently Kiri sells for about 20% less than WRC. It's possibly not as strong along the grain as WRC and so slightly heavier sizes should be employed in any given structure.

Of ten possible species of Pawlonia, p.tomatosa is the one in question and this is classified as a marine grade timber. At 260kg/cu,m (16lb/cft) Kiri is about the same density as hard (heavy) balsa (18lb/cft). Now balsa is often used in composite constructions, too, but it absorbs a great deal of resin

when fibreglassed, and gets heavier, while Kiri does not. The trees are harvested and sliced immediately, followed by air-drying for a period which can be as short as four weeks in summer. This short time is probably due to the low resin content in the timber to start with. The product, incidentally, responds well to impact tests such as 15kg dropped onto it from 3 metres. Now if that test was applied to your big toe, it would certainly make your eyes water.

Although he professes not to be a boat builder, Nigel had several pictures of marine projects, including a couple of a delightful 14' rowing boat which weighs only 75lbs. The boat was rather like my Acorn 15, but with more freeboard, hence more material used. I built the Acorn from 6mm Gaboon ply (which is a light weight ply) and it must weigh at least 75lb, probably more like 100lb.

Currently, most Kiri is sold for caravan and motorhome construction, venetian blind slats (it stains up well) and, wait for it, coffins! (some people are actually dying to get into Kiri – ouch, sorry). It's available in rectangular sections, tongue and groove boards, and just for we boat builders, concave/convex strip planks. I'm going to investigate it for fuselages of small, hand launch gliders which I occasionally build.

So, all in all, it was a most informative talk from which we all gleaned a lot. Now we just need someone to start a new project. Many thanks, Nigel.

P.S. HPT have a website at www.highpointtimber.com.au

*NEVER FORGET, Although amateurs built the Ark,
the Titanic was built by professionals*

FISH 'n' CHIPS, AND A MUSEUM VISIT – THE XMAS TOOLBOX

A goodly roll-up of about ten members made this an interesting and enjoyable day on Saturday, Dec 9. We met at Ciccerello's for lunch and got a couple of good, adjacent tables on the verandah overlooking the fishing boat harbour, and for about an hour we munched on fish and chips and just nattered. Very pleasant.

Then most walked (but not your editor) the short length of Cliff St and across the parking area to the new Maritime Museum on Victoria Quay. After organizing the money side of things (\$6 for Seniors, which meant most of us) we met our guide for the afternoon, Michael Seats. Although I also do guide work in this museum I chose to sit back and let someone else do it this time – in fact it was interesting to listen in on another guide's interpretations and stories.

With only an hour allocated for an adult tour, Michael had to move pretty fast over the seven main areas of the museum, briefly describing each display in such a way that people could come back and specialize in their own time. Oddly enough, the museum allocates 1½ hours to school tours – they seem to think kids have a better concentration span than adults! Sometimes they're right.

Michael started with the whaling exhibition on the top floor. This is centred on a whaleboat spectacularly tilted on a large whale tale, and fully fitted with all the kit for a whale chase. The boat is a modern replica (probably no originals exist) built for the museum at Mystic Seaport in the US. Then there was a delightful model of the State Ship, *Koolama*, a beautifully proportioned cargo-passenger vessel of 1938, sadly sunk by the Japanese at Wyndham in 1942. This was followed by a section on Fremantle harbour itself, including navigation, the history and cargo and passenger transport.

Over to the Broome lugger, *Trixen* – a magnificent tribute to Bill Leonard's restoration skills. Fortunately, being housed indoors, this one will last, unlike the *Ancell*, another pearling lugger stored outside at the Shipwreck Gallery. The defence gallery came next, mostly WWII and mostly submarines, in deference to Fremantle's war time role as a large submarine base. At the far end of this display we found the replica conning tower of the Australian WWI sub, AE2, sunk in the Dardanelles on the first Anzac Day, and recently re-discovered. This led on to a window view of the submarine *Ovens* outside on

the slipway, dating to the '60's. The improvement in streamlining over the AE2 was marked.

Then we saw the Leisure Gallery from the top floor, with its centrepiece, Australia II, fully rigged, and for which the museum building was specifically designed. She is set up with lifelike mannikins of the crew and support crew, rounding the last mark of the seventh race, the crew realizing that they have just regained the lead over Liberty and if they can cover her for the 47 tacks needed to the finish line, the Auld Mug will be theirs for the first time in 132 years. This was also a good point to view Jon Sanders' triple circumnavigation yacht, *Parry Endeavour*, and the much older 18' skiff, *Mele Bilo II*.

After a brief glimpse of the steam pilot boat, *Lady Forrest* (better seen from the intermediate floor, but we didn't go there), it was down to the ground floor and the fishing gallery. This has many subsections, not all of which we had time for, but Michael did explain the aboriginal fish trap from the Mandurah area, and the Patagonian toothfish full-size model, the originals of which have led to international notoriety. Hanging above us were two original fishing boats as used by the early Italian and Portuguese fishing communities. The smaller, *Little True*, was apparently built in Sydney in 1850! Behind the Val-boat, *Valdura* we even found two pretty little inboard putt-putt motors, single and twin West-Ho's made in Victoria Ave, Dalkeith, I think before the war. At the same level we also saw the tin canoe which gives the Leisure gallery its nickname, "From Tin Canoe to *Australia IP*", the famous "winged keel", an original HQ surfboard, shaggin' wagon (sadly not rocking at the time), and finally the Indian Ocean market.

Even though we moved pretty quickly, the tour still took over an hour before we finally thanked our guide, Michael, and moved on. I think some went back to re-visit areas we'd covered too briefly, and some made a sideways detour to visit the marine steam engines in the adjacent shed, the ex-blacksmith's shop. There's no room for big engines here, but a good range of smaller ones, plus models, all run on compressed air, and are well explained by a volunteer attendant on all days except Wednesdays. So the museum visit provided something for everyone and we are grateful to the Museum in general, and to our guide, Michael Seats, in particular, for a most enjoyable trip.

THE EPRA JAZZ AND WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL CLAISEBROOK COVE, 29 October.

This event went off without a hitch and a good time was had by all. Included in this issue are some photos, principally of the hardstanding, partly because that's where I was exhibiting and partly because it was hard to get good pics of the boats below the footpath. But I was able to get some of these anyway, including Andrew Tainsch's mahogany speedboat, *River Rat*, a Glenn L designs *Riviera* which we helped to turnover during a Toobox Visit a couple of years ago. Quite a few water berths were empty, however, and it

would be nice to see more boats on the water next year. About the only difficulty was the narrowness of the hardstanding area, on the north side of the Cove. This was only a wider-than-average footpath placed between the road and the river. It made life pretty interesting when there were more than a few spectators, which was often. Still, no one fell in. Interest shown by the public was generally very high and we clearly could have used some promotional material on the day, as was brought up at the AGM.



1950s Cadet Dinghy, built in Victoria



Madison a 1902 design built by Robin Hicks



Alan Maffey's delightful steam launch *Inyanga*



A Herreshoff 12 ½ (Joel White mod) by Hugh Jones



Hugh Jones' Canadian strip planked canoe, 1997



Two launches afloat on Claisebrook Cove,
Marrawa and Meroo



Inyanga and Mike Rogers' Platypus



An Oughtred Willy boat by Ian Pavey, 2006



Doug Baker's double expansion steam engine as
per *Inyaga's*



A Glenn L *Riviera* built by Andrew Tainsch, 2006

ADMINISTRATION NOTES

ABBA COMMITTEE

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

LIBRARY: Library responsibilities are now taken over by Mike Rogers. As most of you know, the books are too bulky to bring them all along to each meeting so the following procedure will be adopted: a new catalogue list of all holdings will be prepared. Copies will be distributed to all members and books to be borrowed will need to be selected from the appropriate set. A phone call then to Mike Rogers will ensure that the desired book(s) are delivered to the borrower at the next meeting. It is assumed and expected that the borrower will see to it that the borrowed books are returned at the next Technical Meeting. The list is not yet up to date, and will take some time, but we're working on it.

CALENDAR ADJUSTMENT:

Due to the occurrence of the Australian Wooden Boat show in Hobart affecting the timetable of our Toolbox host, the Technical and Toolbox Meetings will be moved forward by one week, the evening Technical Meeting being on Jan 24 and the Saturday Toolbox on Feb 3 – DON'T FORGET!

NEXT TECHNICAL MEETING

Wednesday, Jan 24, will see Mike Rogers talk about the construction of his steam launch, Platypus. We made a Toolbox visit to this project, 4 months ago, but the weather was bad and almost nobody went, so this is a chance for everyone to catch up on this interesting, Kiri strip-plank exercise. SofPYC, no later than 8pm (about 7pm if you want to eat there) in the Committee Room. Close parking, beyond the automatic gate, can be difficult (press the button and ask for it to be opened through the microphone) but parking in the outside public area is not much further away.

NEXT TOOLBOX VISIT Saturday, Feb 3, will be to a boat builder's, Rod Lines' Coastlines Marine Services of Mandurah. Rod builds boats in almost any material, depending on demand, but prefers timber, as do many of us. In fact, the following weekend, 10th and 11th, he will be in Hobart for the Wooden Boat Festival, which is why we've advanced the programme this time around. At the time of writing it's not entirely clear what projects will be on show, but there should be several. That's at Unit 2, 7 Rouse Rd, Mandurah, between about 2 and 4pm. See you there.



Wembley Downs 6019

If undelivered, please return
to:

6 Stow Court