



# AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

NOV/DEC '00

## ABBA COMMITTEE

<b>Geoff Leggatt,</b>	<b>President,</b>	ph 9410 1900 (Wk)	9367 3595 (Hm)
<b>John McKillop.</b>	<b>Secretary,</b>	ph 9410 1900 (Wk)	9313 7442 (Hm)
<b>Chris Davis,</b>	<b>Treasurer,</b>	ph 9222 5664 (Wk)	9387 5042 (Hm)
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Contact any of these four people for clarification of association activities.

## A REPLICA WHALEBOAT - RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

Our guest speaker for September was maritime artist, Ross Shardlow, who spoke on his contribution to the design and installation of the recently completed replica pilot/whaleboat now gracing the restored boatshed on Rottneest Island. As a brilliant illumination to the talk, Brian Lemon had brought along his model of the project and at the conclusion used the occasion to present it to Ross. At Brian's own talk, two months ago, this model was merely a set of frames glued to a strongback. Now it's a complete miniature vessel kitted out with pilot's telescope, compass, lantern, chart case, etc, etc.

As a preamble, Ross described his background as a trained illustrator and how this led to the precise details he includes in all his paintings. He explained how the "Endeavour" project resulted in his visiting England and Mystic Seaport (US) in 1988 and how taken he was by the whaleboat

racing conducted with the "Charles W Morgan" boats. He returned home with hopes of seeing a similar activity start here, as it already had in Warrnambool, Vic, but it was not to be, although there are now moves afoot in Albany

Then last year Tupp Lahiff and the Wooden Boat Works were asked to build a replica of the first official Rottneest Island pilot boat, dating to 1853. Ross became involved when early searches suggested that no design information existed in the State Archives. He very quickly discovered a set of plans (not necessarily of the precise boat) and several tender documents which contained many details to get him started. Later he discovered that maintenance and repair requests were still extant and these all gave further details of the boat's design, construction and contents. Then details of the boat's successor, built in the 1860's, came to light. Many of these were couched in such a way as to show how

the first boat looked and functioned, especially where improvements were required. And finally Ross even found several illustrations both of the boat and similar ones. These confirmed, among other things, that a jackstaff could and did exist at the stern, side by side with the sweep oar without interference (later confirmed on the finished product).

The original pilot service operated from a station at Fremantle from 1846 but it was decided to base it at Rottneest from 1851, no doubt to be closer to the incoming customers, and originally used the pilot's own boat which he leased to the authorities. Then in 1853 the proper boat was built by William Hugh Edwards over one month, for thirty three pounds. That sounds cheap until one realises that the sum was probably equivalent to a single average annual income for the time, valuing the boat at around \$30,000 today. Over the following decade the boat suffered much damage, including breaking in half at least once and saw seven crew drownings. Clearly the work was not for the faint-hearted.

## **SOMETHING DIFFERENT - A VICTORIAN STEAM LAUNCH**

On Saturday, Oct 14 we were privileged to visit a rare project in the inner suburb of Como. Steamboat Association member, Alan Maffey, is nearing completion of an exquisite Victorian counter-sterned river launch for steam. With measurements of 25' by 6'8", the boat will draw about 1'8" and seat eight souls in padded comfort. These launches date to the turn of the last century and are usually a fully open boat with a full length canvas canopy. Larger vessels, over thirty feet, often sported a rear cabin, but are more usually described as Windermere launches. A Windermere style launch, Ti-Tu, is in the collection of the WA Maritime Museum,

Security on the penal island of Rottneest was always a worry, too. The boat was supposed to be padlocked into its shed nightly but if it finished a day's job at low tide this could not be done due to the short launching ramp so it spent those nights at anchor. Ross didn't say if any convicts took advantage of it but since oars would have been removed it seems unlikely. Convicts would have been hard-put to make and hide eighteen foot replacement oars. When at the Fremantle end of a journey, security prevented all but the pilot from going ashore!

Ross was able to finish up with colour slides, some of research details, but mostly of the replica's sea trials and towed voyage to Rottneest. They showed her to be eminently dry and sea-worthy in average conditions, despite the low midships freeboard and sailing must have been a lot of fun for all involved. For us the fun had to be restricted to the insights revealed by Ross's illuminating talk and viewing Brian's magnificent model but that all made for a great evening's listening and participation. Thanks again, Ross and Brian.

Fremantle.

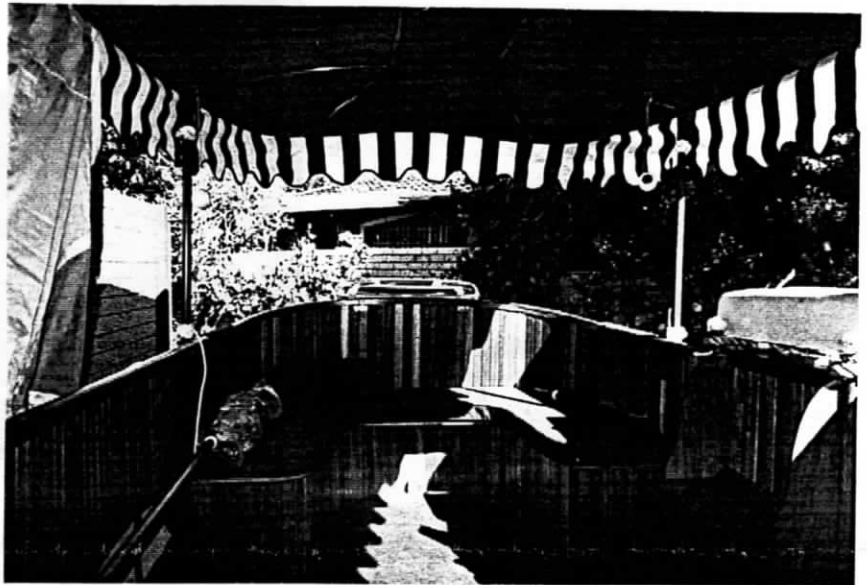
Alan's boat is one of two being built in Perth based on fibreglass shells originating from Graham Daniels of Debco Marine, Pt Lincoln, Sth Aust. The other one is being completed by Scarborough engineer, Doug Baker. Doug is producing the compound twin steam engines for both. Logan Tabateau did much of the initial fit-out of each shell in Myaree but both are now nearing completion at their respective owners' residences.

The boat looked complete at first glance, right down to the striped canvas awning but

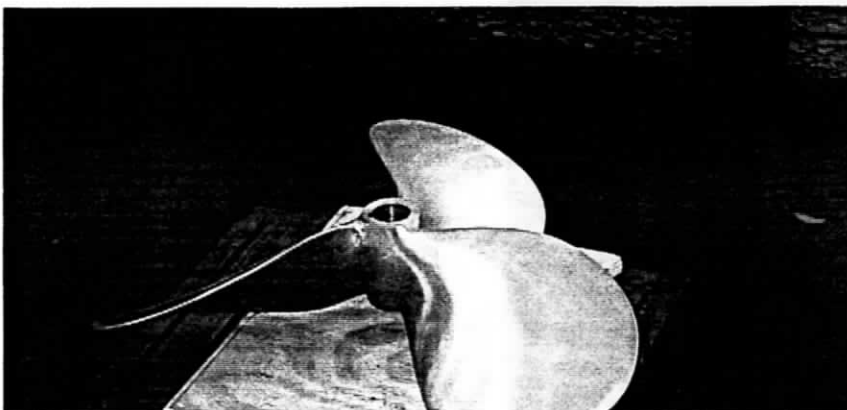
## A VICTORIAN STEAM LAUNCH



The fantail, or counter stern. Looks a little incomplete without rudder or propeller aperture. Still needs rudder shoe to be cast and bolted to keel.



Looking aft, under the canopy. Vertical boards line the cockpit. Seats end to give walking space around boiler.



The propeller or "wheel". 20" dia by 30" pitch, to operate at a mere 350 rpm.



The bow fender, woven by Alan, rather more elaborate than most, but who wants to scratch this delightful boat?



A thoughtful Peter Leggatt in the bow. Side seats resume forward of the boiler - plenty of seating, really.



At the September meeting. Builder, Brian Lemon(r), hands over the model of the Rottnest pilot boat to Ross Shardlow who spoke on his involvement with the full size project.

closer inspection revealed that both the (dry) stern tube and rudder tube needed to be bored and fitted as well as the installation of the steam plant. The boiler is yet to be made and this will be of the Yarrow tube type, professionally constructed and certificated. Final certification and control can be done through a self-regulating amateur club, providing steam pressures do not exceed 80 psi. A very elegant broad-bladed propeller was already on display, sourced from Japan via a Singapore agent. Alan's early enquiries centred on American sources for the prop and the price was about US\$1000! The final Japanese solution, measuring 20" dia by 30" pitch, cost only a fraction of that amount.

The engine will not feature a condenser. Rather the hull has underfloor tankage of fresh water sufficient for 18 hours steaming if necessary. Even at only five or six knots, (maximum hull speed) that's a lot of distance on our restricted inland waterways. Alan did confess to an ambition to circumnavigate Lake Argyle sometime in the future, however. Just as your editor found with a similar project a few years ago, authentic bronze fittings are unobtainable these days, apart from one or two cleats, and so Alan has had to resort to getting castings, in this case from Welshpool foundryman, Laurie Priest, made

from his own home-made patterns. This gives the project a certain uniqueness and delivers a great deal of satisfaction to the builder. The accommodation features fore and aft seats both ahead and astern of the boiler/engine position, with lockers beneath as well as in the fore and stern peaks. Most passengers will sit forward while the engineer/helmsman will sit just astern and to one side of the engine, steering through a side-mounted wheel connected to the (concealed) tiller by Morse cable. At a steady, wash-free six knots it will be no trouble to doff the straw boater, unbutton the striped blazer and serve out the champagne. There won't even be much boiler stoking to do. Alan is expecting to get a weekend's steaming out of one milk crate of firewood, probably mostly the remains of old picket fences

Our host had gone to a lot of trouble in presentation for us. Special steps gave easy access to the boat's interior and a side-table display covered construction photographs, construction data, the Windermere Steamboat Museum's collection and many allied subjects. It all added up to an informative and eye-opening visit for which we are very grateful. We can only wish Alan the best of luck in completing and launching this rare project

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **OUR NEXT TOOLBOX VISIT**

The next boat we've been invited to inspect is even rarer, in this country at least, than a Victorian river launch (yes, Virginia, it's possible). It's a Dutch, Overnaads Vlet, being built by one, Martin Hartman of 13 Parian Place, Rossmoyne. What, haven't got your tongue around it yet? Well, overnaads simply means clinker, but vlet is harder to translate. It's a traditional boat from northern Holland deriving from a captain's naval sloop

of the 1800's, usually used these days as a powered launch. Rather than a stem post at the bow it has a very small, pram dinghy-like bow transom, carried well clear of the water, the hull showing a lot of rocker. In contrast, the stern transom is quite large. Traditionally these boats are planked in teak, but Martin's done that before, so this one is clinker planked in aluminium. I guess he likes welding aluminium because the boat is 6.5m long and has fourteen full length seams! The

boat is nearly complete, it even has a nice new 30hp Yanmar installed, but there's some way to go, in particular a forward cabin-top to house a toilet and other modern conveniences. At initial flotation the hull was so buoyant that Martin decided to pour concrete in the bilge for ballast but this has meant his earlier plan to build in a live bait tank (he goes fishing) now needs a re-think. The boat will be powered-only to start with, but Martin hopes to add a sailing rig at a future date. For the moment the date you need to know is Saturday, December 9th, between 2pm and 5pm. Come along to 13 Parian Pl, Rossmoyne for a look at this very interesting project.

### **NOVEMBER EVENING MEETING**

At this meeting we will be addressed by Don Kyle, general manager of Rolly Tasker Sails, Pty Ltd. Don is an expert in rigging and sailmaking and because the field is so broad he will, after the shortest of introductory talks, settle down to a question and answer session. This is perfect for us because it will allow members to find out the answers to their special questions and since our members are not run-of-the-mill racing yachtsmen the problems often require specific answers. Don's major interest is the field of rigging but he's in a position to talk on sails as well, of course. So come along with your questions ready on the 28th November; this will be a great opportunity for any who either owns a boat with sails, or is building one.

### **JANUARY EVENING MEETING.**

The committee (well, three of them) has already given some thought to this occasion. Since it will be over a year since our last Show and Tell evening, we thought another one wouldn't go amiss. Last time (December, '99) six members spoke and filled in the two hours or so of meeting time more than

comfortably. Let's hope we can do it again. So if you've got a project underway, or recently finished, how about telling us a little about it on the 30th of January?

### **ADMINISTRATIVE.**

Memberships have been due for some time now but very few have renewed so far. We're sure it's just an oversight on everybody's part, but we do have this newsletter to pay for as well as the evening suppers so we've got to have some money coming in, and \$25 (I think) is little enough, so how about bringing it along to the November meeting and bringing a smile to the face of treasurer, Chris Davis? You'll still have three weeks to save up for the kids' Xmas presents.

For the same meeting Geoff will bring library books on the subject of sails and rigging to complement Don Kyle's talk. There may be something you need in the collection.

And finally may I, on behalf of the ABBA committee, wish everyone a Very Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year. It still seems a little premature at this date, but it will be 2001 when the next issue comes out, so have a good one, you hear?

### **CALENDAR.**

**Tues, 28 Nov,** 7.30 for 8.00pm, Don Kyle on rigging and sails. At MBSC, upstairs at the Kings Park end of the building.

**Sat, 9 Dec,** 2pm to 5pm, visit Martin Hartman's traditional Dutch "Vlet" at 13 Parian Pl, Rossmoyne. 6.5m of clinker aluminium!

**Mon, 18 Dec,** Committee Meeting.