



AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

Sept/Oct 09

THE ABBA '09 AGM

This earth-shattering event was held before the Technical Meeting on 29th July and the main part of the business was concluded in record time, due mainly to there being no changes to the Committee of '08 – '09 anyway. In fact, after President Paul had been voted back in he took over the meeting again in such a way that we voted the rest of the committee back in en bloc – probably a world record. However our thanks are due to all the committee members for their work over the year, it's certainly helped to keep ABBA afloat for another year. Treasurer Chris presented a brief financial report which stated that we have \$1100 in one account and \$1300 in another, more than enough to tide us over. This happy state of affairs has come about because almost all members now get their newsletters on Email so the cost is negligible whereas once upon a time it was our major expense at \$50 - \$60 per issue. Thanks are due to all members for their participation in this system.

To conclude the AGM the president proposed your editor for Life Membership of ABBA as recognition of ten years' service in managing

this newsletter, and the proposal was passed unanimously. There were also some noises made about my efforts holding the whole association together, and it may seem like that, but it so happens that as all communications take place through this organ, setting up guest speakers and so on is just a logical part of the role, following some discussion with the other committee members. Let me say that I deeply appreciate the honour accorded to me on that night, it is not accepted lightly. I would also like to add that of all the newsletters I've edited over the years (there've been several for various organizations) this present one has been the most satisfying and in some ways the easiest. Firstly, it's so small I write it all myself so I don't have to chase up other contributors. Secondly, it's only every second month, no big work load there and thirdly, you're the most appreciative bunch of readers I've had – most months at least someone comments favourably on the previous issue – very gratifying and believe me, it hasn't happened with the other publications, so my sincere thanks to all members.

MORE SHENANIGANS

At the Technical Meeting Harry Speight continued his dissertation on improvements to his 32' Manitou ketch. There's some question as to whether this vessel is a ketch or a yawl because the rudder post is a long way forward, ahead of the mizzen mast. But that's only one definition of a yawl, as far as I'm concerned the sail in question is big enough for the boat to be called a ketch, so ketch it is.

Using a power point presentation, Harry first gave a brief overview of the previous meeting's talk, a history of the class and his modifications to the boat in his possession which was a good thing since we had even more members at this meeting than at the previous one.

He then continued with the various improvements. First on the list was mooring cleats. Hard though it was to believe, the originals had been bolted directly through the balsa-cored deck with no reinforcing pads! The balsa had compressed and the cleats were loose. The cleats were removed and pads inserted into the balsa core, with further pads added above and below. The cleats now sit 12mm higher than before, making it easier to get large ropes on, etc.

New water and fuel tanks came next, replacing old flexible ones. The water is now in polyethelene, 82l, under the cabin sole. There's room for a longer tank and Harry now wishes he'd used it. Some time was spent adjusting the breather pipe to the right height so that the tank top didn't inflate on filling. The cabin sole was then fitted with new carpet and anti-slip. The fuel tank is aluminium, 62l, with water drain, isolating stop cocks and so on. It's situated under the cockpit berth which has had a ventilation point built in as well.

Although the fuel tank was subbed out, Harry made the cockpit dodger coaming over the coach roof entirely himself. This must have been a tedious job involving several trips between Hovea and the water. It's got to be

the right curve for the coachroof, bridging over the sliding hatch and cut away to allow all the halyards, etc, to come through to the winches and cleats. It's laminated up from several layers of closed cell foam and two layers of marine ply, all reinforced with fibreglass. It's fitted in place with epoxy filleting only. Harry hopes that in the event of an accident it will knock off clean and not damage the coach roof. The dodger itself is a beautiful job with a clear ahead window, made by Ocean Canvas, while the folding frame was made up by Southern Ocean Stainless and is equally good.

In the rigging, the lazyjacks, useful when reefing, can be released to clear the battens when hoisting a sail. Because the main doesn't drop down very easily when stowing, a downhaul has been added to the system increasing the number of lines coming aft but continuing Harry's aim of all sail handling from the cockpit. All the lines in question are coiled and draped over the cabin bulkhead from individual hooks, rather than just being dumped in bags. Also on this bulkhead is a swivelling coffee cup holder intended to keep coffee upright when the yacht heels, but it doesn't work so well, yet. I wonder if Harry's heard of CRC or graphite powder? On the inside of the bulkhead a shallow ply box now covers the backs of the instruments which are, of course, read from the outside.

In the saloon a small fixed table is mounted on the mainmast strut. This had to be braced in two directions with brackets and cut to non-rectangular shape to clear a door forward, but it serves the purpose, especially with the mandatory fiddles attached.

Up on deck again and a hard-bottomed inflatable dinghy has been acquired, stowed upside down on the foredeck. It's covered with a cover from Ocean Canvas and powered now by a 3hp Mercury. All up it owes Harry \$1900 – not bad. In the foredeck and/or anchor well a 10kg Delta anchor replaces an earlier Patent Stockless which weighed 35kg.

In the pen itself things were pretty unfriendly, especially for single-handed entry, so Harry added vertical timbers with fenders for a start. Now ropes line the entire three sides of the pen, somewhat in from the edges and very taut, so the boat bounces off those first, giving a soft arrival. Leaving the pen is still difficult because with the present prop – rudder relationship the boat steers very badly in reverse. However the prevailing wind helps a bit.

Several things are planned for the future, the main one being a replacement of all standing rigging next winter, it will be almost overdue by then. Further down the track Harry hopes to completely rebuild the underwater profile, moving the rudder off the fin and back to a

skeg, and bringing the off-centre prop shaft and prop to the centre and ahead of the rudder. This will mean major surgery and a huge job. He's already consulting with Ted Brewer in the States about this and so far has taken the lines off "Shenanigans" using photography and computer work, to get Ted started. Whether all this will lead to actual saws and drills being taken to the hull remains to be seen. It remains something to be resolved between the Manitou and Harry's other project, his folding Farrier tri-maran. If he decides to sell "Shenanigans" the buyer doesn't get the pen – that goes back on the club list, and there's a shortage of them, making it harder to sell. Ah, the problems of retirement! Good luck, Harry, and many thanks for the information.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE MM'S BOATS GONE?

We got an insight into the answer to the above question when shipwright, Bill Leonard took us through the "A" Shed storage area on Victoria Quay on Saturday, 8th August. The main museum displays a reasonable number of restored, larger boats, my favourite being the steam pilot boat, "Lady Forrest", closely followed by the pearling lugger, "Trixen", but there's also the ferry "Valdura", "Australia II" and various fishing boats and river racing yachts – must be about a dozen and a half boats on display in all. But up to about ten years ago there were many more small boats on display in "B" Shed, before it became first a restoration area and then the Motor Museum.

I expected to find these missing boats tucked away in "A" Shed but there were many more than that again! It seems that the Maritime Museum has more than seventy boats all told, some at Kew St, Welshpool (such as the lugger, "Ancel") but most in "A" Shed. The western half of the shed is given over to museum administration while the eastern end houses the boats. There's an extensive set of steel racks running down the middle of the shed, holding small boats such as dinghies

and a couple of racing hydroplanes and larger vessels are floor mounted around the periphery. Unfortunately the shed was so crowded with boats there really wasn't room to move and certainly no room to stand back and take a decent photo. The samples published here are the best I got, and that's not saying much.

Bill started off with the biggest wreck in the shed, one of only three known surviving Shark Bay luggers which used to trawl for pearl shell. This one was built by Tommy Rann in 1927 and is now a collapsing shell, split open at the stem, but Bill has been able to take off the lines from the better side. An interesting feature of the SB luggers was the long, shallow counter stern, topped by reverse sheer at the stern to allow the trawl lines to run true. A complete and working lugger, the "Galagussy", has been returned to Shark Bay, partly because the MM can't afford to keep any working boats on the water.



We then went to one end of the shed to see “Georgia”, a launch converted from an HMAS Sydney lifeboat, although Bill was unsure which “Sydney”, WWI or WWII, she came from. Although the outer planks are laid horizontally and look like carvel, she’s actually double diagonally planked and quite strong. Near her was “Cygnet II”, the second Police launch of the name (The first being C Y O’Connor’s steam launch). She appears to be in good nick and displays a delightful shape in the tumblehomed transom.

Back at the racks, and almost too big for them, we saw the “Cape Don” work boat. The CD was the lighthouse ship on the west coast and is currently in Sydney, likely to be restored as a museum ship. Her workboat was built extra strong and heavy to withstand the frequent torture of launching from davits and approaching surf-washed rocky cliffs. It appears to have survived these rigours very well and is in very sound condition. I’m not sure what restoration has been involved.



At the other end of the scale, high up on the rack, was a WWII Carley life float. These were standard on warships of the day and the crews’ main hope of survival in the event of a sinking. Not far away was a “tub pair”, a racing rowing trainer, protected in a steel cage, built I think by John Inham. The shed has space for a four as well, but not for the forty-odd feet of a racing eight. To see one of those we have to go to the Barry Hicks museum, where a couple are stored outside

but under some cover. We also saw one of the five Moths the museum holds. This one was a super wide scow, probably built and sailed by Brian Plumb at Maylands about 1970. I used to race them at that time and since they used to plane from four knots, they were great fun.



Small enough for the racks, but actually on the floor was a delightful rowing dinghy salvaged from the Mews boatshed. This seemed to be very sound as well. In the racks above could be seen several plywood surf skis, c1950s, plus VJ racing yachts (I cut my teeth on these, too).

Around the other side of the centre rack we found the original pattern for Australia II’s winged keel. What mystery surrounded this artefact in ’82 and ’83! Ben Lexcen’s inventiveness in developing the wing, and the secrecy surrounding the keel at Newport was simply amazing. The final casting is, of course, still bolted to the yacht’s hull in the main museum. The pattern these days is painted in the same blue and white design as the finished product but would have originally been plain.



Further along the rack we found the Lightweight Sharpie, “Jason”. There’s also an earlier “Jason” to the heavyweight rule, restored and on display in the main museum. Both were built and raced by the same

yachtie, whose name escapes me for the moment. There was also a very neat International 14 to the “Venture” design although I’m not sure how it came to be in WA. Beside this was the 1970’s 18 ft skiff, “Kilat”. To me this doesn’t look very different from present day ones, with its folding wings and so on. It was originally displayed fully rigged in B Shed but because of the mast height, had to be leaned over. In A Shed all of the yachts, of necessity, are stored un-rigged. 18 footers were raced briefly in WA, not any more.

On the floor at the end was what must have been one of the largest hire rowing boats ever, from the fleet built and hired by the Swarbricks when they were still at Walpole, many moons ago. This sample, at 17’ long, still only had one pair of rowlocks. After rowing that around Nornalup Inlet you’d know you’d had your money’s worth! We also saw in this area an early, double ended surf boat, known as a “banana boat” and probably going back to the ‘40s. I’m pretty sure the MM also has a later, tuck-sterned boat from the 50s somewhere, too.

Only three speed boats grace the museum’s collection but they are all in good to excellent condition. There’s one elegant clinker racing skiff from 1969, and a pair of hydroplanes. The first of these is “Titan” of one of the smaller classes raced in the ‘50s and then there’s the mighty “Ka-Pow” which once thundered down the Swan at 118 mph (that’s 190 kph in today’s speak).

Originally from B Shed too, there’s the original Garden Island mailboat pre-dating 1940, and the intriguing Cocos-Keeling Island racing yacht. This is a long, narrow, open boat, built to hard chine, and raced as a class in the islands. I could go on and on – there’s the “Gascoigne” whaler, “Hermes”, Cock of the Swan in 1948 and even the Devines’ World Champion 14 foot dinghy from 1975, but we have to stop somewhere. I only hope the pictures are some help. Our sincere thanks are due to Bill Leonard for taking us through in his own time, although he told us the public can get in at any time if they ask, but Bill’s commentary, which added much, wouldn’t be available.

WOODEN BOAT BUILDING AUCTION

Brian Phillips is retiring! He is selling all his tools, etc, by auction, this Sunday 13th Sept at The Wooden Boat Works shed at the western end of Slip St, Fremantle. The shed will be open for inspection on Saturday the 12th. Included will be hand and power tools, boat building jigs, timber, drawing equipment, benches and several boats from small dinghies through a 24’ shell needing restoration to an original Dragon class yacht. This should be a real gold mine for some members.

FOR SALE

A couple of items the editor can no longer use:

1. Plans and instructions for Ian Oughtred “Shearwater” sailing and rowing dinghy, 11’10” long. These are unused, hence no extra royalty applies. \$100.
2. Plans and instructions for Oughtred “Acorn 15”. 15’, double banked rowing skiff. Used once, hence royalty could apply. \$50.
3. Seagull outboard, standard shaft, Century 100, 5 blade prop, good condition, suit “Shearwater”. \$250 o.n.o.
4. Unidentified inboard putt-putt two stroke motor, about 3 hp. Like a Chapman Pup, but not. It could well be an English-built Rae. Free to good home.

If interested in any of the above, ring Mike on 9397 6209.

ADMINISTRATION NOTES

ABBA COMMITTEE

President	Paul Thompson	0419 193 605	Vice Pres.	Rosemary Nayler	9455 1470
Sec/Treas	Chris Davis	9387 5042	Editor	Mike Beilby	9397 6209
Library	Mike Rogers	9527 7313	Asst Editor	Jay Niven	9291 8460

MEMBERSHIP FEES

These fees remain unchanged from the previous year, being \$20 with electronic newsletter, \$30 with hard copy. Unfortunately they are now overdue for most of you! Please pay the Secretary-Treasurer, Chris Davis, either at the next Technical Meeting or direct to his home at 5 Johnson St, Wembley, 6014, A.S.A.P.

SEPTEMBER TECHNICAL MEETING

We had hoped to bring you David Lugg of the DPI Marine Division to explain the intricacies of registering a new amateur-built boat under the present compliance rules but unfortunately he won't be available until later, probably the November evening, but we have an excellent guest in his place. Tony Hanson is building a very interesting, 38', timber and ply motor sailer to his own design. She's round-bilge but still sheeted in ply due to the use of conical sections and is being built to full survey so she could be used for commercial purposes if so desired. I've seen some photos and the hull is nearly complete. Tony will have a 1:10 scale model of the boat to show us as well. That's at S of P YC, Wed, Sept 30, 7.30 for 8pm

OCTOBER TOOL BOX MEETING

This event will be a second visit to the Maylands Slipway (the last one was some time ago), at the end of Johnson Rd, Maylands, at 2pm. It will be interesting to see what changes have taken place in the interim; Arno, the manager, being keen to move on forgotten wrecks and replace them with going projects. We'll have a barbecue there, meat being supplied by Pete Russel and Paul Thompson, and being Spring it should be a very pleasant afternoon.

MELBOURNE WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL

President Paul recently received the following Email from Victoria. It looks like being a big deal and not to be missed by any members who may find themselves over there in February next year:

I have great pleasure in announcing the first Melbourne Wooden Boat Festival to be held at Docklands Precinct Feb 19-21 2010.

Mark, Roger and I are well under way in contacting as many boat, yacht, tall ships, fishing, photo, historic, shipwreck, diving etc clubs, assocs, boat builders, shipwrights, chandlers, maritime interest groups, Seafood industry, colonial music, timber industry, ferry services etc with the intention of introducing all the above to the general public at large and showcasing our rich and wondrous maritime history and culture for the first time.

Please continue to view our webpages at-
<http://www.woodenboat.com.au/MWBF2010/> and watch as we progress to the start line in Feb 2010.

Kind regards
Andrew Cohen
President WBA VIC >

FREMANTLE BOAT FESTIVAL

This event will be held again, from 26th to 28th March, 2010, in the same area as this year, viz: Fremantle Esplanade and the RPYC Annexe at Challenger Harbour. We've been invited to participate. More information as it comes to hand. Let's hope we can get a few more boats this time.

THE HICKS MARITIME MUSEUM

Doris Hicks tells me that the museum will feature on ABC 1's "Collectors" programme on Friday, 2nd October, at 8pm. It should make for interesting watching. Set your recorders if necessary.



If undelivered, please return to:
50 Valley View Rd,
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