



AMATEUR BOAT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

September October 2012

JAMES CRAIG SAILS AGAIN

September Technical Meeting

For our September technical which followed the AGM – more on that later in this newsletter – we showed a DVD on the restoration of the iron barque James Craig. In early 1972, a young Sydney based maritime museum in search of a tall ship, located the derelict century old rusting iron hull of the barque James Craig aground in Recherche Bay in a remote part of southern Tasmania. The DVD is an exceptionally detailed account of the salvage and restoration that proceeded over the following 30 years and which transformed this rusty iron hulk into a magnificent, fully operational, square rigged sailing ship.

For those interested in more detailed information and with a few hours to spare, there is a great deal of enjoyment to be had in the many articles and photographs on the James Craig website at www.shf.org.au/JCraig/JCraig.htmlor for those that missed the meeting, you may wish to purchase the video which is available through the Sydney Heritage Fleet website at www.shf.org.au for a very nominal cost.



Built in Sunderland UK by Bartram, Haswell & Co in 1874, James Craig was originally named Clan Macleod. She had a busy working life. For 26 years, she sailed to the four corners of the globe, rounding Cape Horn 23 times. In 1900 she was purchased by Mr JJ Craig of Auckland and was used on trans-Tasman trade routes as a general cargo carrier. In 1905 she was re-named *James Craig*, but six years later, in 1911, she was laid up because increasing competition from steam ships made sailing vessels uneconomical. She was then stripped and used as a copra hulk in New Guinea.

After the First World War, there was an acute shortage of cargo ships. James Craig was towed from New Guinea to Sydney for re-fitting. However, her return to service was brief because in 1925 she was reduced to a coal hulk at Recherche Bay, Tasmania and in 1932, she was beached and abandoned after breaking her moorings in a storm. There she remained until her restoration journey commenced in 1972.



The importance of this monumental project cannot be underestimated. The James Craig is one of only four operational 19th century barques in the world still capable of sailing – the others are the *Star of India* in San Diego, California, (1863), *Elissa* in Galveston, Texas, (1877) and *Belem* in France (1896). Of these, *James Craig* is the only one in the Southern Hemisphere, and is the only one in the world which regularly carries members of the general public to sea. In 2003 she was awarded the World Ships Trust Medal for authentic restoration. She joins a select band of restored ships throughout the world, including the *Mary Rose*(UK 1510), *Vasa* (Sweden 1627), *USS Constitution* (USA 1797), *Great Britain* (UK 1843) and *Cutty Sark* (UK 1869), which have received this honour.



The brief version of the salvage and restoration of the James Craig, just to whet the appetites of those who could not join us on the night follows;

In March 1972, a small group of volunteers from Sydney sailed into Recherche Bay to undertake an initial survey of the James Craig. Her first examination in over forty years revealed that she was in reasonable shape. Much of the damage caused by vandals could be patched. The deterioration of plates and frames by wind and weather was not as extensive as had at first appeared. And, most importantly, she was lying evenly on the bottom and there seemed no wracking or twisting of her iron framework.



However, there were tons of silt and coal in her hold, and there was no way of knowing what was underneath it. The volunteers worked non-stop through a weekend pumping and patching and examining the hull in minute details. An extensive survey was carried out in which details of every damaged section were recorded so that a close study of the damage could be made later in Sydney and patches fabricated to cover the major holes.

By October 1972, a salvage team composed of museum members was heading south with one intention - to refloat the James Craig. The chartered salvage boat was loaded with massive pumps, compressors and salvage gear which had been sent down from Sydney. At Recherche Bay, the major holes in the hull were covered with prefabricated patches and the salvage operation began. A sandbag cofferdam, similar to those used to repair river banks breached by flood waters, had to be built in the stern end of the vessel to 'isolate' a hole too large to patch.



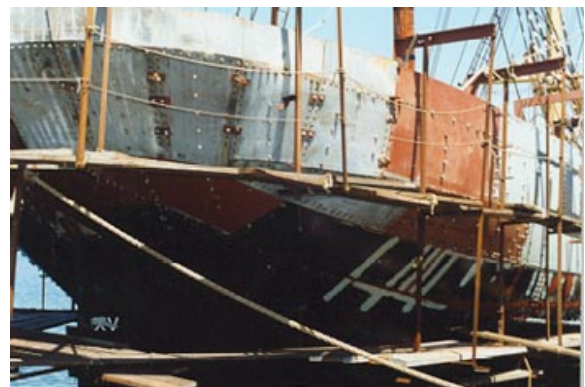
A huge 60,000 gallons per hour pump was hooked up through the stern and at 5 am on 24 October the James Craig stirred gently and lifted herself from her sandy bed. For the first time in over forty years she was afloat again!and the refloating had proved one thing - her hull was intact under water.

By May 1973, cleaning out of the remainder of her hold had been completed and a professional steel fabrication firm from Melbourne had carried out a considerable amount of strengthening work to her hull to prevent the old ship breaking up as she fronted once again into the ocean swell. At 7 am on 26 May 1973, the tug Sirius Cove nudged the James Craig out of Recherche Bay and into the ocean she had sailed so many times. At the end of a 350 metre tow line she was towed jubilantly up through the magnificent autumn colours of the D'Entrecasteau Channel to her home port of Hobart. Hobart Marine Board provided a permanent berth at the old Powder Wharf but it was to be some years - during which she sank once at her berth - before availability of funding saw her restoration become a reality.

By early 1981, temporary repairs had made the integrity of her hull adequate enough for a tow to Sydney and on 18th January, 1981, James Craig arrived in Sydney behind the tug Gresham, to a tremendous welcome.



In Sydney, a purpose-built pontoon dock was planned and built and in October 1985, the James Craig was floated onto it. Restoration and then conservation was then able to begin in earnest. The original plans were to restore the vessel up to the status of a static museum display. It soon became evident however that her importance to maritime heritage made it imperative that she be fully conserved so that she could sail again. With the lifting of the ship onto the dock, substantial repair work on the hull structure was possible. The hull was effectively taken apart and rebuilt using as much of the original plating as possible. On Sunday 23rd February 1997, the James Craig once again floated on her own bottom after she was officially relaunched by the Premier of NSW, Mr Bob Carr.



Further fitting out works proceeded over ensuing years. In order to comply with modern navigation and safety requirements, some modern equipment had to be installed to gain certification for sailing into and out of Sydney Harbour with passengers. The James Craig was fitted with engines (donated by MTU), gearboxes (donated by ZF Australia), controllers (donated by Mannesmann Rexroth), sullage tanks, modern fire-fighting equipment and 21st Century navigation and safety devices. However these were integrated into the ship in such a way as to not significantly interfere with her 19th century ambience.



On a glorious summer day in February 2001, the James Craig hoisted sails off Sydney Heads for the first time in nearly 80 years and is now fully operational.



'October' Toolbox Visit

Our October toolbox was a visit to Ron Lindsay's workshop to see Kiewa as she approaches her relaunch time.

Ron and his shipwright Kevin Hart had progressed a great deal since some of us visited on the open day in March, 2012. Kiewa is now starting to really look like she is close to launching and looking the part of the *"gracious colonial lady recapturing the elegance of a bygone era"* as her website introduces her.

Most recently, Ron and Kev have been hard at it with the varnish and paint brushes but

this endeavour now looks near complete with a very good finish being achieved - not an easy job given the many boundaries between white matchboard surfaces and adjacent detailed varnish work which includes semi cylindrical decorative turned posts along the cabin sides.



The other big item of critical importance has been the caulking of the good ship. This has entailed a process of priming the seams and then caulking with appropriate amounts of caulking cotton which is hammered home to the required degree. This is followed by further primer before the seam is flushed off with linseed oil putty and then primed over again. Ron and Kev are adopting this traditional approach for the entire hull - both above and below the waterline. The photographs show the resulting fair finish which now forms a good foundation for achieving a very smooth finish on the paint topcoats. A great result for what Ron estimates was 40 to 50 manhours of work. And I did notice a mechanics trolley under Kiewa to ease the pain of caulking 'uphill' between the chines and the keel.





On stepping aboard, the attention to detail becomes immediately obvious. Once again, great progress has been made since our last visit. All the glass has been installed in the windows and upholstery has been completed throughout the vessel. In this respect, Ron has selected a good leather look vinyl. The upholstery has been finished with decorative seams and buttoning to a very high standard and the fawn colour fits in very well with the general theme of the clear finished teak and sheoak woodwork which abounds.

Ron has also fitted all the bronze hardware which he has sourced from Davey in the UK. This includes fixed and opening ports, ventilators, chain plates, door hardware and a myriad of other knick knacks that the keen eye picks up around Kiewa's fitout.



The Volvo diesel main engine, shaft, propeller, rudder and all associated engineering is now complete and the underwater components await the final paint stage.

In addition there is a Honda 3000 four stroke generator set neatly hidden under the cockpit seats to provide 240V power when required for the microwave and any other equipment demanding mains power.



And then there is the helming station which has very good sight lines to everything that matters. The traditional timber helm controls the rudder via a hydraulic system and all electrics are close at hand. This includes the controls for the Stressfree anchor winch, neatly housed out of sight in a varnished timber enclosure on the foredeck. A Sestral Major compass, now almost a collectors item in itself, takes pride of place in front of the helmsman.





Mounted amidships on the main coach house beam over the helmsman's station is a brass plaque capturing the true spirit of this amazing project. It reads:

KIEWA

*Builders W & S Lawrence, Perth WA For Dr William Trethowan Commodore RPYC Launched 1913
Restoration by Ron Lindsay - Principal Shipwright
Kevin Hart - 2012*

Dedicated to Mrs Ethel Mena Lindsay (nee Lawrence)



Out on deck, the quality of the workmanship that Ron and Kev have put in over so many months is in evidence everywhere. The teak laid deck and the external joinery and detailed cabinet work on the cabin are a masterpiece. And the 'jewel in the crown' is the turned timber stanchions and hood bows over the stern cockpit which will support a portable awning. Below the gunwales, Ron points out that he was able to retain all of the original timber in the hull, including the rubbing stakes.



A few other details come to light as we share a scrumptious afternoon tea kindly provided by Ron's wife Dora.

Kiewa will have two masts accommodating 27m² of sail comprising two lug sails and a jib, all of which is to a design donated by Len Randall. There is almost a full size fridge which will operate on 12v power or LP gas awaiting installation. When launched, Ron anticipates that Kiewa will displace around 11 tons of which 1 to 1.5 tons will be ballast. And the big question - launch day - Ron is currently aiming for January 2013.

As we leave, we have a last peak into the shed and notice the pile of lead by the door. Yes, one of the last items, the ballast, is to hand and ready to be installed.



This was a most enjoyable toolbox visit to a very special project and we sincerely thank Ron and Dora for providing their usual good dose of hospitality, on this occasion exclusively for ABBA members. We wish Ron and Kev all the best for their work on the final leg of the project and look forward to seeing Kiewa back in the water in the not too distant future.

Footnote: Ron was a notable absentee from the recent AGM but he had formally tendered his apology to your Editor. We congratulate Ron and Dora on achieving 50 years of marriage on that day and hope they had an enjoyable night celebrating that milestone. Ron tells me they reached this 50 year milestone because Dora is very understanding of his need to own and restore a boat that is 100 years old!

ADMINISTRATION NOTES

ABBA COMMITTEE

President	Chris Davis	9387 5042
Sec/Treasurer	Bruce Cadee	9259 0844
Editor	Chris Davis	9387 5042
Committee (Library)	Rosemary Nayler	9455 1470
General Committee	Rob Bingham	9246 0202
	Alun Dufty	9272 8905

NOVEMBER TECHNICAL MEETING

The next technical meeting of ABBA will be held at the South of Perth YC as usual 7.30pm for an 8.00pm start on Wednesday, November 28th. Peter Leggatt has kindly arranged for Henry Moorfield to address us on everything diesels. Henry is a very experienced diesel specialist who worked for a long period for George Monkhouse & Sons and has also recently run power stations. So, bring along your questions – this will be an outstanding opportunity to explore this subject.

DECEMBER TOOLBOX MEETING

The Christmas toolbox will be at Harry Speight's place to view Harry's trimaran - a Farrier F82 folding flying machine - all in one piece. Yes, it's getting perilously close to launch time and Harry tells me that he even has the mast up. That's on Saturday December 8th from 2.00pm to 4pm. Harry's place is at Lot 4 (No. 305) Hedges Road, Hovea. Approach from the west (off Park Road and then via Oxley Rd). Proceed up Harry's fairly steep, winding driveway to the top of the hill.

MEMBERSHIP

We are now well into the new financial year. Anyone with outstanding membership fees (\$20 for an electronic newsletter and \$30 for hard copy) should contact our new Treasurer, Bruce Cadee, at the technical meeting, the toolbox or by post to him at 7 Fifth Avenue, Rossmoyne WA, 6148.

LIBRARY

The ABBA Library has an extensive collection of books and magazines. Rosemary Nayler has now collected all the books from Mike Rogers and we are in the course of updating the catalogue so that they can be made more readily available for loan at meeting and toolbox times. Stay tuned.

COMMITTEE MEETING — THE WAY FORWARD

Your committee met recently to discuss the future directions for the Association following on from the discussions at the AGM. A good number of ideas were tabled and discussed and I will report on these in the next newsletter — suffice to say that I think we have identified enough material as a basis for our meetings and toolbox visits for the next 12 months.

In the meantime, you will recollect that at the AGM, I foreshadowed an arrangement wherein I would seek volunteers to be the scribe for each meeting and toolbox event. This would be a combined total of 12 articles/volunteers required each year. I will arrange the photos for the toolbox report and continue to edit the newsletter but this process will hasten arrangements as I will not need to write both reports each month as well as undertake the editorial task.

Bruce Cadee has volunteered to write up this month's technical meeting. **I'M NOW LOOKING FOR A VOLUNTEER TO WRITE UP THE TOOLBOX VISIT TO HARRY SPEIGHT'S PLACE.** Please email me or let me know at the technical meeting on Wednesday 28 November.