



THE HOLLOW LOG

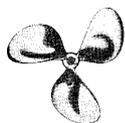
The Classic Australian Wooden Power Boat Association Inc.

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Tekton struts it stuff at Hobart

2013 Australian Wooden Boat Festival

Well, what a fabulous weekend we had when a few of us mainlanders headed on down to Hobart for the Australian Wooden Boat Festival.

Alan Price, Darren Goldberg, Ray Russell and Carol, Peter and Anthony Drogenik, Scott Botterill and yours truly made the trek from Melbourne, with Dave Pagano and kids coming from Sydney and Glenn Hickmott from northern Queensland.

Arriving early Friday morning and being picked up at the airport by Stuart Beattie, Alan, Darren and I were dropped at our respective hotels and settled in. With the festival already under way, we wasted little time in heading down to the water front at Sullivans Cove to check things out.

Covering the wharfs, piers and docks from Davey Street to Salamanca Place, the considerable area was a sea of timber boats, packed in everywhere. I'm not sure how many boats attended over the weekend, but I understand it was nearly 600. Looking across the site was a spectacular show of masts, rigging and flags.

Boat types ranged from 230 foot barques, 120 foot river steamers, cruisers, speedboats, yachts of every shape and size, putt-putts, dinghies and canoes. Every type of boat was covered, including

the RAN's guided missile frigate HMAS Sydney. I have it on good authority that the 138 metre warship is constructed of BHP Pine.

When we arrived dockside, we headed down to Elizabeth Pier where we were greeted by Captain Chivs (aka Chris Chivers), aboard his 25 foot *Tomboy*. Alongside was Barry Jones in his 23' *Tekton*. Also there was *Seabizcuit*, a 1958 Chris-Craft Continental. Alongside *Seabizcuit* was *Marguerite*, a 27 foot reproduction of the Hacker designed 1922 Gold Cup winner.

After some catching up, we wandered off for a quick bit of a look around. In the meantime, Chris went and picked up his Dad, as we were to go for a bit of a cruise on the magnificent Derwent River a little later.

We arrived back and boarded *Tomboy*. Stuart was back as well and we headed off. There was a bit of breeze, but conditions were very pleasant out on the water close in. As we headed out, Barry brought *Tekton* along side and cruised with us briefly, making for some great photos. We continued to cruise in what would have been a southerly direction and tucked in at Sandy Bay where the

... cont'd page 2

Australian Wooden Boat Festival

engine was stopped, allowing us to slowly drift and enjoy the amenity of the area. Beautiful beaches with the mountains in the background and the houses overlooking the water as well as watching the passing parade of timber craft heading to Sullivans Cove for the festival. This truly is a magnificent area.



After a while we were approached by a couple of the local waterborne constabulary. Of course, having a “brother” captaining our craft meant it was purely a social visit and we were kept entertained listening to some of the goings on with policing.

All too soon it was time to head back, but before returning to Sullivans Cove we would drop Chris’s Dad off at the Motor Yacht Club of Tasmania, a trip of about 5 kms. We were pushing against a fair chop and after a few of us got somewhat wet, we moved up forward for the protection of the *Tomboy’s* stateroom (well, behind the windscreen anyway). It was a great trip with that big 351 purring away as we cruised across, passing under the Tasman Bridge along the way.

After dropping Chris’s dad off and a potty break for a couple of us, we headed back to the festival. It was much easier going this time with the breeze at our back.



Another wander around revealed so much to see. Booths offering everything nautical, traditional and modern, plenty of food, some excellent live entertainment and even more boats on display on the hard.

There were a few speedboats displayed off the water. A couple of honest inboard clinkers, another with an outboard and the recently built 22’ *Miss Tamar*. This spectacular 1920’s style reproduction gentleman’s racer is based in Launceston and was brought down by its

owner with its stable mate, an equally magnificent clinker hulled steam launch.

Saturday was a more of the same, with the area continuing to fill with boats. They were crammed in everywhere. With crowd numbers continuing to build as well, it was obviously going to be a good show. The weather was fantastic, with temperatures hovering in the mid to high 20’s over the days with mainly blue skies. Organisers estimated over 200,000 people attended over the four days.



There was a BBQ organized for Saturday night, with Stuart and Sara Beattie generously opening their house to us all, both locals and mainlanders. Stuart had a good number of his boats there, giving everyone an opportunity to clamber over them. It was terrific night, with some great conversation helped along by plenty of beverage.



Sunday offered more of the same with things missed from previous days always popping up. We went wandering among the yachts and cruisers and delighted in seeing yachts that were built in the 1890’s. These boats were just superb and I wondered whether people will be viewing existing boats built of GRP and other composite materials in 100 years from now.

As the time approached for Alan, Darren and I to head off to the airport for our flight home on Sunday afternoon, we headed back to *Tomboy*, only to find an empty boat. A quick phone call was made and we found Chris, Scott, Glenn and others at a bar not far away. These boys were in dangerously good form and having a ball. I think we would all have loved to have stayed, but I would have dreaded the “morning after”. As Tiger Airways is very unforgiving of passengers that turn up late or not at all, we tore ourselves away and left the boys to party on.

On the Monday, a mock speedboat race was held in conjunction with the sail past and I have it on good authority that it was an excellent event. Apparently it was the best day weatherwise for the weekend, with plenty of sun and calm water. Not too sure about final results, but I don't think there was a lot of competition out there because the drivers and crews were having too much fun just being there.

Hobart's Australian Wooden Boat Festival is reputedly Australia's premium wooden boat festival, and I would have to agree. It holds



something for everyone with its enormous range of boats. Sullivans Cove is a superb setting and while Tassie weather can be cool and unpredictable, the weather for our weekend in Hobart was very good indeed. Our weekend was made even more enjoyable by the hospitality afforded to us by Chris, Stuart and Sara, Barry, Brent, Ian and others.

I'm already looking forward to 2015's event.



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Australian Wooden Boat Festival pictorial



Kindling

I was contacted a few months back by an enthusiast in Queensland who had just acquired a project boat. He was told the 17' clinker was a Lewis, but there was nothing really to support that. He was also told that it ran a direct drive Ford 272 ci V8. As with many other enquiries I receive, he was wondering what he'd bought.



Construction is of plywood planks and as seen in the photo, plenty of ribs. Racer, maybe? Some further enquiries with the seller revealed it was called "Old Timer" and was used around the Murray in the late 60's into the early 70's before heading up to Queensland.



I asked if there were any identifying names or marks on the boat. He replied there was a name or ID plate, that was pretty much the correct



size for a Lewis plate, but with nothing written on it. He began scratching around the boat and found something unusual with the transom. He peeled off a covering plywood sheet to reveal some old signwriting with the words: Driven, Trevor, Tuned and Shoriis. Further stripping back of paint revealed: "Driven by Trevor Nunn, tuned by Des Shoriis". Also revealed was the name *Kindling*.

Armed with that info, Mick set off. He spoke to a lot of different people over many many hours both on the phone and via email.

He discovered it was one of the Surfers Paradise Ski Gardens boats, circa 1959-1960. It had a sister boat that was last seen out the back of Nerang (Queensland) about 8 or 10 years ago. He was being sent the address of that boat's location. He also tracked down the original engine from the sister boat, which he has purchased. It is still all together but needs rebuild, which he will do.



When the boats were not being used in Ski Shows, Keith Williams had them working as Ski School boats. The name on the back, Trevor Nunn, was the ski instructor/driver of the boat. Mick was then off to see the Gold Coast Historical Society, as when Keith Williams died his family donated pictures and information about the Ski Gardens to it. The gentleman he spoke to has assured Mick he has pictures which will confirm the identification of the boat.



The picture above shows the boat pulling skiers at the Ski gardens in 1959.

Hopefully I will be able to bring you some more details in the next issue of the Hollow Log.

Shed Discovery Secrets Revealed

Bob Carter

Swan Reach is a quiet little village, tucked away in East Gippsland not far from Lakes Entrance. It is the kind of place where motorists get annoyed having to drop back to 60 km/h as they pass through and then speed away on their journey, barely noticing anything memorable about the place.

Who would ever have thought that a property here would house a Lewis runabout, a skiff and a hydroplane? Plus a plethora of old fishing boats in various states of repair.

The first hint of the fascinating history behind the boats on this property came in an email from Terri Albert. Turns out that Terri's father was Neville Aitken, a boat builder who built timber ski and race boats from the 1960's. Neville spent some time working for Jack Eddy, before operating his own business out of a small factory in Plateau Rd in Reservoir (Aitken & Turner) and their boats were test run at Edwards Park Lake in Reservoir.



Along the boat building journey, Neville built a hydroplane in his front yard in Bundoora, named *Exciter*, for Tom Watts. This was powered by an aircraft jet engine. (This was Toms second *Exciter* – and interestingly his first was then renamed *Exciter Too*) Neville's son Ken undertook and completed his boat building apprenticeship with his father, and then moved on to work alongside Keith Simpkin.

Terri well remembers going with her family to power boat race meetings at Eppalock and Glenmaggie. Neville and Ken ultimately moved to East Gippsland where father and son continued to repair and work on all sorts of timber and fibreglass boats. This region has always been a well respected powerboat racing area with strong clubs at Paynesville, Glenmaggie and Hazelwood.

Glenmaggie was the home of the first *Stampede*, dubbed the Glenmaggie monster. Also, Stephens race hulls started their life in Gippsland.

Boats have always been in the Aitken family but the time comes when a clean out is required. With Neville passing away in July 2010, his wife Barbara called on the family to move along all the accumulated boats and gear. Mother ordered the block to be cleared and so it must be done - although this itself has been a long task.

The Swan Reach property is large, and seemingly behind each clump of trees is a boat under a tarp or further down the rise are a few more boats crammed into a rustic shed. As Terri said, "Dad never threw anything away."

While there are roughly 10 boats on the property, the Lewis runabout, skiff and hydro hold the most interest for wooden boat devotees.

The skiff is a 13' hull and was designed and built by Ken Aitken for his brother Barry, some 38 - 40 years ago. *Itchy Earwig* was finished but never fitted out. While it is a conventional skiff, it has been designed to run a vee drive gearbox mounted ahead of the engine.

While *Itchy Earwig* has plenty of rot in the timber, it is restorable. It has been stored over the years bow high. So while the deck is rotten and the aft end of the planks rotted through, the bow half of the hull and deck timbers are in good shape. They are also testimony to boat building skills of Ken. This hull has been moved out and now resides with Robert Young of Paynesville who will restore the boat.



Also on the property is a Lewis runabout, called *Furious*. In her day this was a solid race boat which did the rounds of speed boat events in East Gippsland. The owner left the boat with Neville for some repairs, but then never came back to collect her.

With her inboard rudder, short cav plate and upright stem, this Lewis has also seen far better days. It is not unlike *Cherdith*. There is no deck and what remains of the deck frame has serious levels of rot. The timber planks are dry on the outside. *Furious* is restorable, but it would take a very dedicated owner to attack this project.

Perhaps the rarest of finds is the hydroplane. This intriguing but unnamed hull is a classic rear seater and was designed to run a Ford engine, something along the lines of a 351. Like the *Itchy Earwig* skiff, the hydro hull was completed but never fitted out.



The hydro was built for MRSBC driver Joe Cooper (*Mariah*), but it is not understood why it was never delivered. This is a big boat, maybe in the order of 20' long.

Years of outside storage, albeit under a tarp, has taken its toll. Large sections of the hull have literally disappeared with the ravages of timber rot. It is difficult to image that this boat could ever be restored. But . . . in wooden boat restoration, nothing is impossible . . . it's just a matter of where to stop ripping away timber to find the solid base from which to start the restoration.



While the name of Neville Aitken may not be as well known as those of Lewis, Everingham, Simpkin and Gill, it does hold high respect amongst those who once owned one of his boats. Two examples of the Aitken genre remain, but only just.

It again goes to show that spread around Australia in sheds and on farm properties, classic wooden boats are there, still waiting to be discovered.

Some of the boats built by Neville Aitkin include . . .

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| <i>Miss Anne</i> | Les Jenkins |
| <i>Hurricane III</i> | Phil Dunn |
| <i>Exodus</i> | Alan Robinson |
| <i>Mystic Mist</i> | Alan Robinson (Won Paynesville Gold Cup) |
| <i>Exciter</i> | Tommy Watts |
| <i>Slo Moshun</i> | Jerry Plen |
| <i>Zenith</i> | Max Kirwan |
| <i>April Dancer</i> | John Arnold |
| <i>Satan</i> | Bob Young (Gloen Maggie) |
| <i>Miss Wendy</i> | Frank Reece |
| <i>Fox</i> | |
| <i>Kumbalah</i> | |

NSW Get Together

A couple of shots sent to me from the NSW January get together at Bonnells Bay at Lake Macquarie.

Fifteen woodies turned up, including a few not seen before. Gladly, some threatening weather held off to make it a great day.

It was a big weekend for wooden speedboats with 15 boats on the water in NSW and about the same number at Yarrawonga in Victoria. Imagine if we had that sort of turnout at the one event.



Trivia

I came across one of these recently. I had never seen one before, but thought it a novel way of doing what it was designed to do.

Does anyone else know what it is?

Here's a clue - it was fitted to a boat (duh!)



**The Classic Australian Wooden
Power Boat Association Inc.**

Postal Address:
18 Grandview St
Moonee Ponds
Vic 3039

Phone: 03 9370 2987
E-mail: nh35_stormy@bigpond.com

President's Pronouncements:

I received an email from someone I assume is tied up with organising the Lake Macquarie Classic Boatfest that was held at the end of March. It was a bit of a dig as to why we don't/won't support the event. I responded that we were happy to support any event appropriate to our boats, but we needed to be advised. I have always put that event in the newsletter's "Coming Events" section when I have known of it. I received his email a week before the event was held.

I suppose I could sit and constantly scour the internet, magazines, etc, for these events, but it's disappointing that they don't contact us, even when they know of our existence.

If you know of any events coming up that you think members might like to participate in, let me know so I can put it out there. If you think that an event might like our involvement as a group, please tell them to contact us.

Happy and safe boating and remember, keep talking to me . . .

Greg

Around the Traps

General:

- They still keep coming out - boats, that is.

Victoria:

- A very good winged Eddy hull appeared on Ebay recently. I had viewed this boat a month or so earlier and although part way through a basically cosmetic resto, was an easy one to finish off. The original Holden 308 was also there and ready to go back in.

NSW:

- A small clinker skiff with a Peugeot 4 cylinder surfaced as well. From the few poor quality pictures I received, the boat looked to be in excellent condition. No idea of its age or its pedigree. Apparently the owner wants big money for it, with the potential buyer being prepared to wait a while for a better price.

South Australia:

- A great looking winged twin cockpit Lewis has also surfaced. I was aware of this boat some years ago, with the owner talking about selling or restoration options, but all went quiet and it disappeared. The owner had apparently decided to restore it, but as he hadn't started on it a few years later, he is now convinced that it just isn't going to happen. The boat is fitted with a 313 Chrysler.

- Hopefully more on all of these when I find out their destinies.

2012/2013 Committee Members

PRESIDENT

Greg Carr
AH: (03) 9370 2987
Mob: 0408 937 029
Email: gca42796@bigpond.net.au

VICE PRESIDENT

Paul Siddall
Mob: 0419 826 377
Email: lema033@bigpond.com

SECRETARY

Alan Price
AH: (03) 5367 1941
Mob: 0403 838 193
Email: a_mprice@bigpond.com

TREASURER

Darren Goldberg
AH: (03) 9783 5952
Mobile: 0418 171 042
Email: coolwoodboats@gmail.com

COMMITTEE

Dave Pagano Mob: 0413 766 501
Bob Carter Mob: 0418 101 626

Coming Events

May 2013:

- Everfest, 4th & 5th. Sackville North, NSW. First ever Everingham boat owners get together. Timber and glass. For details, contact wildthing350@hotmail.com
- Classic/Vintage demonstration run after the NSW Bridge to Bridge race. 5th. Runabouts, skiffs, hydros. Contact Nathan Mills on 0418 45 7788 for details.
- Hammond Boat Owners Cruise, 5th, after the NSW Bridge to Bridge. Contact 0448 892 837

November 2013

- The CAWPBA Annual National Regatta, 2nd & 3rd. Lake Talbot, Narrandera, NSW. Our big one. For details, contact Greg on 0408 937 029 or Alan on 0403 838 193
- Melbourne Wooden Boat Festival, 1st, 2nd & 3rd, Gem Pier and the Commonwealth Reserve, Williamstown. All types of wooden boats on display, including speedboats. Contact Mark Bergin for details on 0418 565 848. (Unfortunately this event clashes with Narrandera. If you are not going to Narrandera, this is a great alternative for Melbournians).

Please check for confirmation of dates and venues

- Police arrested two kids yesterday, one was drinking battery acid, and the other was eating fireworks. They charged one and let the other one off
- I went to a seafood disco last week . . . and pulled a muscle
- What do you call a fish with no eyes? A fish
- Apparently, 1 in 5 people in the world are Chinese. There are 5 people in my family, so it must be one of them. It's either my mum or my dad, or my older brother Colin, or my younger brother Ho -Cha-Chu? But I think its Colin

Quote for Today
*"Time is the bearer
of all knowledge"*

Club Contact Details

New South Wales/ACT Chapter

For further information, contact Dave Pagano by phone on: 0413 766 501 or by e-mail: davehotboats@hotmail.com

Queensland/WA Chapter

For further information, contact Greg Carr by phone on: 03 9370 2987 or 0408 937 029 or by e-mail: nh35_stormy@bigpond.com

South Australian/NT Chapter

For further information, contact Paul Siddall by phone on: 0419 826 377 or by e-mail at: lema033@bigpond.com

Victorian/Tasmanian Chapter

For further information, contact Greg Carr by phone on: 03 9370 2987 or 0408 937 029 or by e-mail: gca42796@bigpond.net.au

Membership Update:

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----|----|
| Vic | 43 | NT | 1 |
| NSW | 20 | Tas | 5 |
| Qld | 6 | SA | 12 |
| WA | 1 | USA | 1 |
| Total | 89 | | |