THE HOLLOW LOG

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The Classic Australian Wooden Power Boat Association Inc.

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Circulation this issue: 80

Three Lewis skiffs together at Narrandera. More next issue

The Hollow Log and other stuff

The newsletter is weeks late this issue with much of the delay caused by chasing up things to put in. Many of you would be familiar by now with my incessant carping about the struggle with content for the newsletter. Well, look out 'cause here I go again!

The Bulletin Board is a great tool for getting information out there to members and the general public, and it gets it there fast. Feedback is also fast. Unfortunately (for me), it has taken a lot of content away from the newsletter, to such an extent that I have seriously considered either reducing the newsletter to a one page flyer a couple of times a year or disposing of it altogether and saving the club some money. Both these options have proved very unpopular with you. It seems that even in these hi-tech days of electronic media, most of us still like to sit down for a few minutes with some printed text.

We had some good discussion around the subject at this year's AGM, held last month. Suggestions such as member's submitting their personal profile and/or descriptions of their boats was put forward. This is an area many of you know that I have been pushing for some years now and all at the AGM thought it was a great idea.

I know we are a fairly conservative bunch (well, most of us, anyway) and are reluctant to expose our inner selves to all, but I also know that we are keen to find out about each other, our backgrounds, our work, our boats, how we came across them and how our interest in old wooden speed boats came about., etc You don't have to lay yourself bare, but you can help us get to know you by sending something in.

Normally I would kick something like this off, but there has been so much put in about me over the past many years that I reckon I'm done to death. There are a few others in the same boat, so it's over to the rest of you - the challenge is on!

We had a great Narrandera this year. For those of you who could not make it, you will most likely have read a bit and seen some great photos on the Bulletin Board. There will be a full run down on the weekend in the next issue of the Hollow Log.

Fiona

Fiona was one of about 14 clinker runabouts built by carpenter and cabinet maker Neville Burton in Charlton in Victoria. The boat was built in 1964 and purchased new by Ron (Dick) and Betty Cowling of Bendigo.

Dick and Betty Cowling saying farewell to *Fiona*

The 17 footer was powered by a Dodge Kew and was used extensively in the area in the 60's and early 70's. The boat was often seen with

Fiona on Green Lake with her new owners

Corvette, another Burton boat, built in 1966. The owners and families were good friends and spent many weekends water skiing together.

Fiona on Green Lake

Fiona just prior to engine removal

With the family growing and moving on to other activities and the boat laying idle for many years, *Fiona* was offered for sale in early 2008. After attracting quite a bit of attention, it was soon purchased by Echuca based CAWPBA member Travis Owen.

Engine out and rubbing back has begun

Travis and family used Fiona until last year when it was decided the old Dodge was due for an overhaul. With the engine out, it was also

Back to base timber

decided that it would be a good opportunity for the hull to be freshened up. Travis's intentions are to bring the boat back to original condition, down to stain colour and signage. Unfortunately, at this time, it seems VicRoads cannot find a way to issue the boat's original MG55 registration number.

Travis will send more pictures as progress is made.

Hey Travis, nice looking Valiant Pacer in one of those pics.

Transom sanded back

Jut prior to turning over to get at the bottom planks

CHRISCRAFT CONTINENTAL - *CAPRI*

Glenn Hickmott

My interest in wooden boats started about 10 years go after seeing them on TV and in movies like *On Golden Pond* — my primary exposure to these old boats since I live in Townsville, in Queensland, Australia, wooden power boats are nearly extinct.

About eight or nine years ago, a young soldier had an old Lewis clinker hull, Australian made, with a 308 Holden engine. I offered him what I thought it was worth and he said he would take it into consideration — a week later it was in the paper and sold right away. I knew I had let something special get away.

My wife, Donna, knew of my interest in wooden boats and told me to look for another one, so, I started searching. I had been looking for quite some time when a Chris-Craft came up on eBay. One of the photos caught my eye because it looked like it was out of the movies. I showed my wife and she said to go for it — so I did. There were plenty of bids on it, but I got lucky and won. The boat was located about 1,000 miles away on the Sunshine Coast, so, I started arranging a road trip to pick it up. Being as excited as I was, I got to my destination well ahead of schedule.

When I first set my eyes on the boat, it looked huge and in much worse condition than it appeared in the photos. At that stage, I felt cheated; especially after driving such a long distance only to find it was in bad shape. There was a lot of wood rot, planks were gone, and the inside had been stripped down to pieces. The seller ran through what the boat did and did not have; all of the chrome was there and the windscreen was there (but in pieces). The original gauges, steering wheel, gearshift, and Cadillac engine were gone and there was no fuel tank. The engine that did come with the boat was a 255-hp Mercruiser, which didn't do much for me. The seats were bare timber and the engine box was in a poor state.

Despite the condition, I loved the shape and lines — from the bullnose bow to the big curved back transom. I was nervous that I was taking on too much, but I just had to have it. On April 19, 2006 I was the proud owner of my first Chris-Craft.

After a long and nervous trip back home with my 'new' Chris-Craft, it was safely tucked away in my shed. After closely looking over the boat for a couple of weeks, I knew I was well in over my head to restore the boat back to its original condition. I began the search for a shipwright to help with the timberwork and was lucky enough to find someone who was semi-retired, so he was able to come to my shed and work on it whenever he felt like it. Each day, after I had finished work, I would study what he had done and how he had done it. It was becoming more interesting and exciting by the day.

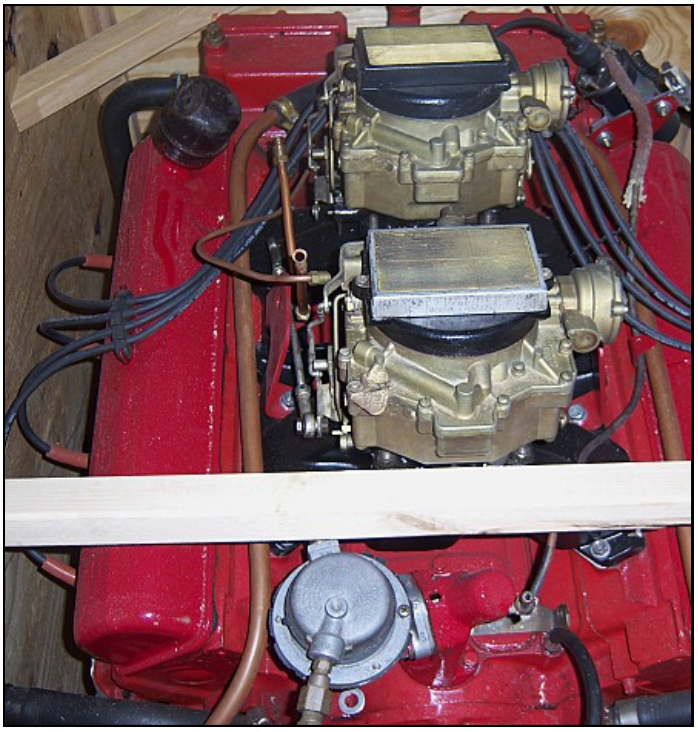
After spending some time researching, I quickly found out that my Continental was even more special than I had first thought: my boat was number 93 of 97 made in the series. It came with a 300-hp Cadillac engine made by Cal Connell Cadillac. I contacted the previous owners, tracing ownership back to the original owner — the late Mr. O'Neil. O'Neil purchased the boat late in 1956 and brought it to Sydney, Australia where it spent most of its life. After one or two years he sold it to Laurie O'Neil, his brother, who kept the boat for about 20 years where it was moored in Balmain Harbour.

As we all know, the Cadillac engine is not meant for saltwater, so, the engine was pulled out in the 1970s and replaced with the 255 Mercruiser. I tracked down the owner of the boat at the time the engine was replaced and asked where the original engine was located and if I could buy it. He laughed and told me that the engine was at the bottom of Sydney Harbour.

By this time, I had joined the Chris-Craft Antique Boat Club (and what a great club it is) and I asked Bill Basler if there was any way that I could get the same engine as the original for my boat. I remember Bill saying that he would make it his personal mission to try and track down an engine that was the same as the original. Bill, with the help of Terry Fiest, did track down an engine from a Chris-Craft member who not only collected boats, but engines as well. This member is known and respected: Clay Thompson. Clay had a 300-hp Cadillac (which was in good condition for its age) and was kind enough to part with it, and freight it from the U.S.A. to Australia. The original Cadillac engine that was in the boat was engine no. CCC -1617 and the one Clay provided was CCC-1609. Three months later, this beautiful engine was in my shed waiting to go into my boat. A very special thanks to Clay, Bill, and Terry for all of their help in making something that looked difficult, easy — especially when I lived half a world away.

By the time I got the engine, all of the timberwork had been completed, and a fuel tank had been made out of aluminium to replicate the original, as well as powder-coated in a copper colour. Clay also helped me to locate the right gauges, steering wheel, and gearshift.

After two years of restoration, and a lot of hard work, it was time to hit the water. I headed down to the local river with two of my ski club friends, two fire extinguishers, and a lot of safety gear. The ex-



Top left: The Hickmott family poses after a water ski outing

Above: A 300-hp Cal Connell Cadillac Crusader engine still in the shipping crate after its transcontinental journey. This engine, just eight serial number digits from the original which had been removed from the boat many years prior.

citement of starting her up was overwhelming. Listening to that 365 cubic inch Caddy burble in the water for the first time, is a moment I will never forget. I had a couple of minor problems with fuel leaks and water leaks, but they were easily fixed. After repairs, two weeks later, we were back in the water — this time with my mechanic to fine-tune the engine. To date, every time I take my Continental for a run, it still feels as exciting as the first.

The Continental's name is *Capri*. I don't tell many members this, but, the *Capri* badge was applied on the transom, *on day one,* at the Cadillac, Michigan factory.

I run my boat on the local Ross River Dam and Ross River. It is the figurehead boat for the Townsville Water Ski Club and other local boat shows; all the while flying the Chris-Craft and Australian flags proudly. The boat has even been the choice of transport for kids attending their high school graduations.

Throughout the restoration of this 25-foot Continental, I continued to track the full history of the boat, and have kept in touch with most of the previous owners. I learned a great deal about restoring boats and about Chris-Craft; looking back, I was meant to have this boat.

In hindsight, though, I should have done a few things differently: for instance, after I had the seats reupholstered (to the same scheme as the oldest photo I had), I found out that they were originally Carpenter-Flame in color — but either way, my Continental is a keeper. The next time I restore her, it will be with all the knowledge and extra skills I have gained and she will only get better.

I am very proud and privileged to own a Chris-Craft Continental and I'm looking forward to getting my next one to restore, preserve, and enjoy.

This article was reproduced from the 2010 Fall edition of THE BRASS BELL, the Chris-Craft Antique Boat Club's official magazine. It was written for them by CAPRI owner and CAWPBA member, Glenn Hickmott.

RAVEN Update

It has been a while since we've had an update on Glenn Hickmott's other project, *Raven*.

As can be seen, the boat has been progressing along steadily and the boat is looking fantastic. I'm guessing Glenn will have received the Ford 272 ci Y block back from his engine builder and have it installed by now.

The builder of the hull is unknown, but Glenn and I are pretty much convinced it is a Jack Eddy. The hull shape and transom bear a very close resemblance to my own Eddy hull, *Stormy.*

Can't wait to see it on the water, Glenn.

Another in the collection

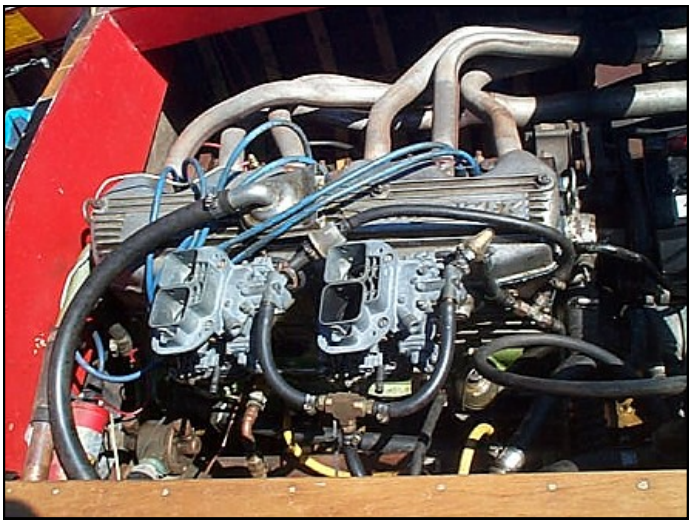
Member Dave Pagano has placed another thoroughbred in his stable, in the name of *Bernadine*.

Bernadine was built by Goodlear Boatbuilders in 1958. Intended for racing, owner Jack Casey fitted the boat with a Repco headed 138 ci Holden 6 cylinder. The boat was very competitive and was raced extensively and quite successfully in NSW.

The boat remained in the Casey family for many decades after, being used as the family ski boat.

As often is the case, there comes a time to sell what becomes a part of the family. With the passing of Jack and the boat laying idle for many years, Jack's son Bernie contacted Dave and offered the boat. The offer was readily accepted by Dave, who has been chasing a Repco head for some years.

Dave is keen to get the boat running and back in the water, something I expect to have happened by the time you read this.



Classique

A new addition has joined member Andy Griffiths' family. Much more on *Classique* to come.

Quiz Answer

Nobody came through with an answer to last edition's quiz. Well, *Detonator* was built by Bruce Walker in Heyfield, Victoria. The 1962 hull is powered by a 308 Holden and is still in use in the Gippsland area.

OK then, what about the one on the right? A lesser known NSW builder from the 60's built this and a few other 16 footers.

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

We're on the web
http://www.cawpba.com

President's Pronouncements:

Well, what a great start to the season. A couple of club outings and our nationals at Narrandera.

Narrandera was pretty big this year, with many new boats and faces. We certainly did have the shoreline full of boats - a real logjam! More of that in the next issue.

Water seems to be abundant everywhere this year, so there are no excuses for not having plenty of outings. As I mentioned at the AGM, it doesn't have to be an official club meeting to put some boats on the water. If you feel the need, put a suggestion on the Board and see what reaction you get. You only need a couple of boats.

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

Greg

Letters

I received the letter below soon after this year's Narrandera event. I was rapt to read this, making me realise that the kids are also a big part of the weekend. Well, it's great to hear they are having a good time as well. Thanks so much Georgie.

It was a great weekend and I just wanted to let you know. Some of the good things were when the kids went fishing and caught lots of carp. Lots of us went swimming, jumping off the ramp and swinging off the tree rope we had great fun doing all of that. It was really nice that a lot of the people that owned the boat asked if we would like to go for a ride. I got to go on Tom Boy which was really smooth compared to some of the other boats. I liked all of the wildlife and how there was always animals around I went looking for kangaroos and I saw some. On Sunday we were just sitting down when some of the kids spotted a baby long necked turtle it was making its way to the water. Then we saw another and we ended up seeing 5 altogether, we think they must have been hatching up on the top of the hill. Hannah loved looking for snails she found lots of them which made her happy. When the news came they got in JAYME ll Jack was in the front with his dad he was having a great time also on his blow-up ring. Emma and I were in the water nearly the whole time but then on Sunday it got to cold. There are lots of good places in the area like parks, shops and skate parks which Michael was at some of the time. Some of the people there played with rocket balloons which Kaitlyn and her family brought it was good fun that night. Thanks once again and I am looking forward to next year, we will see you there.

Georgie Bailey

(Jan II)

2011/2012 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

December 2011:

- Proposed Maribyrnong Cruise, December 11th. I'm looking for interest in this event. Please contact 0408 937 029 or email nh35_stormy@bigpond.com

January 2012:

- In conjunction with the Let's Go Cruisin car club, on water or hardstand display of classic cars, hot rods and boats at the Seaworks Maritime Centre, Williamstown. Date TBA. We are looking for boats to display at this event.

February 2012:

- Geelong Waterski Club 50th Anniversary celebration. Feb 18 at the Club on the Barwon River in Geelong. CAWPBA members have been invited to display their ski-boats, with the possibility of a demo run on the river. Please contact 0408 937 029 or email nh35_stormy@bigpond.com

March 2012:

- Victorian Chapter weekend at Paynesville on the Gippsland lakes. Possibility of putting on our own classic boat show. Further details soon.

Please check for confirmation of dates and venues

Quote for Today

"A timid question will always receive a confident answer"

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Sanding and Polishing of timber flooring

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Club Contact Details

New South Wales/ACT Chapter

For further information, contact Dave Pagano by phone on: 02 4777 4558 or 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	40	NT	1
NSW	16	Tas	4
Qld	3	SA	9
ACT	1	USA	1
WA	1	**Total**	**76**