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Next meeting

Tuesday 13 May 2008

1930 hrs, The Auditorium,
Gladesville Sporties,
corner of Ryde Road and
Halcyon Street, Gladesville

Guest Speaker

John Crawford, President of
Sydney Amateur Sailing Club,
will talk about *Vanity* – 8 years
on, his Ranger Class yacht.

Wooden Boat Association of NSW, Inc

PO Box 673, Forestville, NSW 2087
Email smith_m_peter@yahoo.com.au
Website www.wbansw.com

President
Chris Goddard 9560 5192
0414 447 007

Vice President
Peter Gossell 9543 2408

Secretary
Peter Smith 9879 7095

Treasurer
Tony Curtis 9452 4166

Membership Secretary
Ross Andrewartha 4739 3706

Committee members

Dick Branson 9520 7557

Jeff Clout 0408 993 026

John Dikeman 4739 2480

Bob Ellis 9555 7293

Robert Tullett 9997 4073

Scuttlebutt Editor
Lars Frostell 9451 9278

Email lars.frostell@bigpond.com

Scuttlebutt

May 2008 Members' monthly publication of The Wooden Boat Association of NSW, Inc



"This is what happens after a 93 knot nor'wester," writes Ross Barnett from Hobart. "Thankfully she (*Maori Lass*) picked the only muddy/sandy spot along the foreshore as everywhere else is rocky and oyster-covered. Presently, she is on the hard at RYCT with very little apparent damage and is awaiting the insurance assessor – who is just a tad busy at the moment."



MV Toby II was recently officially launched at a riverside ceremony conducted by Queen Belle of Bellinger. Read about the Bellinger River Cruise on page 3.

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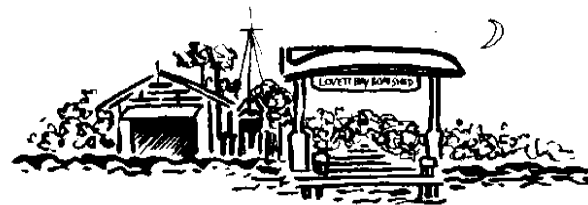
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Scuttlebutt

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Heritage Afloat at Toronto 2008

Why is it that it always rains for Easter? Thursday was perfect, and right on cue, a southerly change came through on Good Friday with the usual Easter squalls and rain. Again, on Easter Monday, Lake Macquarie turned on another perfect day.

A record number of classic and wooden boats came to the 2008 annual Heritage Afloat on the foreshore of Lake Macquarie at Toronto, along with a record number of vintage cars.

WBA was well represented with boats coming from Pittwater, Sydney Harbour, Botany Bay, Port Hacking and Lake Macquarie, including Monte Cristo, Magic, Faerie, Westwind, Mavera and Starlight. Many members came by road to visit over the weekend.

Heritage Afloat is organised by the Toronto Chamber of Commerce Co Ordinator, Anne Murphy, along with a team of volunteers. Anne reports that over 10,000 visitors came to the festival over the two days, despite the weather.

The weekend started with a Meet and Greet on Friday afternoon at a nearby café where the weekends program was outlined. Most of the boats had arrived by then and there were a good number of people in attendance.

Saturday dawned with a heavy sky and wind blowing. The rain came down early and 53 mm fell in a half hour deluge. The crowds came and went as the weather allowed.

Sunday turned on better

weather and the crowds arrived to look at the boats and watch the barrel racing, quick and dirty boat building, and putt putt parades. Good music and entertainment was provided in the rotunda and there was an air of festival all weekend. Protex from the Sydney Heritage Fleet was running all weekend taking visitors for a run on the Lake, as was the local ferry Wangi Queen.

During the morning, a ship of pirates (*Toby II*) arrived in the harbour which was met by a challenge from the NSW Corps of Marines, calling for surrender with rounds of gunfire, much to the delight of the crowd. The weekend concluded with the traditional blessing of the fleet parade.

Heritage Afloat will again be on next Easter, and with space at a premium, it would be advisable to lodge your entry form early. Details and entry forms are available from www.heritageafloat.com.au

Rob Hardy
'Putten'



Waking up on a boat

President's message by Chris Goddard

The first thing you notice when you wake up on a boat and look out of the cabin is that everything has changed. And for me, I always have a moment of disorientation and panic - this isn't where we were when we went to sleep! Did the anchor drag? Are we aground? But another look around and you realize that the surroundings look different because your boat has swung around in the night and is facing in a different direction than it was when you sat in the cockpit last night munching cheese and crackers and sipping a port.

So you get your bearings. Hmmm, yes, that's where we were facing before, and that boat next to us has swung the other way and that other boat seems closer to us than it was last night, but is that the angle or is that because their anchor has slipped. If you're on a mooring this isn't such a worry, but if an anchor is involved I always worry a little bit about dragging. Things will look different not only because everything has swung around, but also because the tide is most likely at a different level. So the coastline

is different when the tide is down than when it is up. The shoreline looks a little different. That's what you've absorbed as your surroundings before you went to sleep.

Imagine if you went to bed and while you were sleeping your house rotated an unknown amount and just stopped in a different orientation. And meanwhile all the vegetation either grew or shrank by one and a half metres. You'd look out your window and the view would be unrecognizable. That's the first feeling for me when I wake up on a boat.

Sleeping on a boat to me is easy; I go to sleep quickly but wake up slowly. There are sounds and of course motion that is different to the norm. Both the sound and the feeling of water against the hull are different. If it's a calm night neither of these are distracting; I find them both pleasant. Occasionally you'll just hear a big splash. Maybe it's a fish jumping. Maybe it's a gull diving into the water. You'll also hear maybe the sound of a motor - at night, maybe a person in a little outboard dinghy coming back to their boat from shore

or, in the early morning, maybe a fishing boat heading out early. One of the boat sounds I love to hear occasionally is the sound of halyards ping against the metal mast - like the sound of a flagpole where the flag halyard is slapping the pole. It's a metallic ping, ping that happens on windy days and I love it. (yes, my mast is aluminium). But it would be an unusual sound to wake up to.

Mornings are usually very still, with the water glassy dark green first thing in the morning, and little puffs of wind appearing at 8 or 9 am and real breeze starting to kick in around midday.

When I wake up in a bay I like to climb down into the dinghy and go and row around looking at things and talking to the other boaties. I like the feeling of rowing; the rough wood in my hands and the quiet sound of the (beautifully varnished) oars in the water and the gentle way I can steer a little rowboat around. I like to row right up into the rocks into shallows where you can't go in a bigger boat. There are subtle smells and sounds you notice when you're sitting right amidst seaweedy rocks on the shore in your little rowboat.

Waking up on a boat that is racing however, is rather a diverse experience. After only three hours sleep, waking can be even more disorientating. The boat is pounding through the water. There is a lot of creaking and sounds of straining. If the wind is up, you hear the whistling in the

shrouds. Your first thoughts will be "Are the conditions the same? What distance have we covered?" There is no time to serenely sip a coffee before struggling into the wet weather gear and harness prior to scrambling on deck to take the watch. I've known many racing crew who never take off their wet weather gear to sleep. They simply collapse on the bunk wearing all their gear including harness, PFD and boots. Maybe these are the risk cognisant or perhaps the anxiety stricken sailors. I sleep better without the bulky paraphernalia.

You grab some nibbles for sustenance hoping that one of the crew coming off watch may make coffees in the next half hour. You rub your eyes, collect your thoughts, struggle through the companionway and make your way to the helm. Now you must be alert. You get your bearings. You consider the sky, wind and water in a different light. Racing a boat can be fun; it gets the adrenaline pumping and is also a much-loved component of my sailing. It's how awake and alive and tuned in it makes me.

What ever the manner, racing or quietly cruising, spending a night on a boat is really worth doing. You don't have to have your own boat to do it. You can hire one or you can go out on someone else's boat. Many of our association members have boats that they can't sail alone - they're dying for someone energetic and enthusiastic to help them sail their pride and joy.

From the Editor

It is very gratifying to have received enjoyable contributions from no less than seven members for this issue of Scuttlebutt. Paul, the splendid raconteur; Rob Hardy, the fine rural events reporter; the Member for Pittwater; Our inspired Leader (above); Tony Curtis; Bill Gale and David Payne. What a distinguished list! Please don't give it to Classic Boat or Wooden Boat magazine editors, or we will

lose the authors overseas.

In an effort to create more space for this literary exuberance I have slightly modified the style of the layout, which has been the same for 4 1/2 years.

Elizabeth Rowe spotted Magic off Port Stephens and managed a few snappy shots from the bow of Skomer. Will we see more of Elizabeth's writing soon?

Lars Frostell



For sale

WBA members may place a non-commercial ad free of charge if the member's name and phone number appear. Non-members are charged \$10 for a text ad (maximum 25 words), \$15 with a picture. Ads will run for two issues, members' ads longer if you ask for an extension. Submissions close on the 20th of each month.



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WBA burgee, small	\$20.00	Rugby shirts, by order	\$45.00
WBA burgee, large	\$25.00	Business shirts, by order	\$40.00
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On the horizon

8 June
Queens Birthday Pittwater Regatta
Robert Tullett 9997 4073

13 - 15 June
Timber and Working with Wood Show
Tony Curtis 9452 4166

5 July
South Steyne Pirate Dinner Party
Bob & Barbara Tullett 9997 4073

WBA meetings

	General	Committee
May	Tue 13	Mon 19
June	Tue 10	Mon 16
July	Tue 8	Mon 14
Aug	Tue 12	Mon 18

Disclaimer

Opinions and advice expressed in this publication and at the Association's meetings are those of the individual originator's only. The Editor and the Association's Committee do not necessarily endorse views expressed at such forums.

From the archives

Comments on last month's picture, by David Payne



A good nor-westerly on the harbour, and the slight focus problems with the image enhance the atmosphere as Mr Fairfax takes his regular sail from moorings in Double Bay, early in the afternoon. He may well be alone, certainly shorthanded.

How do I know this? I have another sharper image of this yacht and dinghy, a copy by permission from a family album, and the source of the album

told me that Mr Fairfax had this yacht (name forgotten) which he would regularly take for a sail by himself, or with one other hand.

This was around the 1910s to 1920s approx, and in the afternoon he would sail out of Double Bay past Pt Piper, where this and my copied image may have been taken, and certainly not 'near Fort Denison', that is in the background, safely up the harbour by the looks of things. The yacht may be a

Walter Reeks design, various details suggest this, and a date of around the 1880s must be near to the mark.

Also, I have a feeling it could be owned by JO Fairfax, as I noted in an SASC book it mentioned JO Fairfax from Double Bay as a senior member.

The small picture is from Davies Family Collection courtesy Mrs Cherry Jackaman.



Timber & Working with Wood Show

13-15 JUNE 2008

Our mid-winter off water event is on again at the Horden Pavilion and we are looking for not only our regular volunteers to man the stand for 2 hours or so, but also some new members that haven't experienced the buzz of fellow woodworkers and all things wooden that the show provides. A clip board asking for volunteers to staff the stand will be circulated at the May meeting to provide the organisers names for the entry nametags. Patrick O'Reilly, the genial mover and shaker of WWW assures me that the entry name tags will be available for all stand volunteers who attend the June WBA meeting.

We have been allotted a central position of 20 x 15 metres backed like last year by the Central Coast Woodturners, We have Ian Smith's Balmain Bug, a traditional 6 footer dwarfed by Commonwealth, Fergies traditional 10 footer filling the airspace to the ceiling. I'm hoping to have a

putt putt of some description and on the work in progress front, I will be bringing Anonymas' dinghy in, on which we will steam bend some new ribs and fasten with nail, rove & rivet. Jeff Clout and Peter Smith will be running some audio visuals of our other events throughout the last year.

I have noticed that over the last 3 years it has been surprising that large number of the same faces have volunteered to man the stand on the same day and time. Aren't we strange creatures of habit! If you have some time available and haven't been in recent years, come along and help us to spread the good news about wooden boats. The WWW show allows us to showcase our talents and ideals and I would like to have a push this year to rope in some new members by converting the enthusiasm the show generates in the attendees to be future WBA members.

Tony Curtis

The Maritime Museum needs you

The Museum is looking for volunteers to assist within the upcoming exhibition "On the Waterfront", starting in September. The display will portrait life in Pyrmont/Ultimo in the early 1920s.

Working and domestic life on the waterfront was dominated by the trade and industries in the area. The organisers are seeking people to demonstrate traditional maritime and dockside trade skills as well as activities and craft from around the home (darning, lacework, etc) and anything which may help evoke the era (childrens' games, recipes, curios, old photos, anecdotes).

If you feel you could assist, please contact Scott Andrew Event Coordinator ANMM Phone 9298 3621 sandrew@anmm.gov.au

The Bellinger River cruise

by Rob Hardy, Putten

Over the weekend before Easter, the annual Bellinger River cruise was held for over 20 putt putt boats. Not really an organised event, this weekend just seems to happen. WBA members and others arrive from the Sydney region and as far away as Queensland. Although a weekend event, many choose to arrive on Thursday at a riverside caravan park at Repton, while some stay on after Sunday.

On Friday about six boats travelled downstream past the township of North Beach to the river entrance where the Bellinger and Kalang rivers join. We beached the boats and spent



residents! Back at camp and before dinner, Toby II was officially launched at a riverside ceremony conducted by 'Queen Belle of Bellingen.'

the programmed destination of Bellingen. Two more cattle crossings and we arrived at the foot of the rapids just short of Bellingen. With a combination of a low tide and little water flow in the river to back up behind the tide, there was not enough water to proceed, so we

landed on the shore and walked the short distance to the butter factory for afternoon tea.

The four boats returned to the park in time for dinner.

On Sunday, we all ran down the Bellinger to the Kalang at Urunga and circumnavigated Newry Island. This is a very pretty run with history along the river banks to be seen in the form of old boilers and the site of an old saw mill, amongst oyster farms. Lunch stop was on the lawn of a friendly neighbour who invited us to stop and



hours on the clean sandy beach and in the sparkling water. The bar always seems to be rough, and although we dream of one day being able to venture outside, it was not to be this year. A short run away is the local waterfront fish and chip shop which was our lunchtime destination. On the run back to base, an act of piracy occurred when the crew of Toby II managed to remove one of the ducks being towed by Chenonetta without being noticed by the crew. This act was quickly brought to the attention of most riverside

As the tides were not right for the Saturday run up the Bellinger to the town of Bellingen, a late start was made. The fleet assembled for a relaxed lunch besides the river on a dairy farm, however the urge to move was too much of a temptation and many boats set off to find insufficient water to clear the first cattle crossing upstream. Others stayed back and waited for the first signs of the turn of the tide. We also grounded, however after a wait we were able to walk the boats across, and Putten, Thumper, Toby II and Trinity set off for



enjoy their lawns while having a 'whistlestop'. Peter took great delight in showing us his workshop where we saw three timber kayaks in construction. After a farewell, we continued on and

returned to the beach near the river mouth for a swim before heading for home and dinner.

Another great weekend, with friends in wooden boats.

Rob Hardy

Photos, from top: Lunch time at the dairy farm; Walking boats over the cattle crossing; Some of the fleet on the beach at the caravan park. Photography courtesy Rob and Fran Hardy.

The chap behind the name

(a member profile) by Tony Curtis

Our Editor has been badgering me for months to contribute to Scuttlebutt some of my 'Boys Own' adventures and has for starters suggested it follows the current theme of a profile of committee members. As your humble bean counter, where do I start? We all have our own unreliable memories that we have packed into a life time of work. Perhaps more relevant to you all, is what I have done when I have snuck out to play.

Early photo records reveal my parents had the appropriate wooden boat genes,



so my childhood memories were always associated with boats even when it was the only clinker dinghy on the inhospitable coastline at Burnie. After a storm surge that demolished dinghy and beach side boat shed, the replacement was a 11 footer, built at 4 pounds a foot, incorporating a centreboard case and an unstayed mast with calico mainsail. After some coaching, I mastered the nuances of tacking, gybing all standing, and the use of a centreboard to get to windward without rowing. Amazingly it was another 10 years before I actually capsized a boat and realised the inherent dangers afloat.

In the late 40s my father's plans turned into fruition with the refurbishment of a 20 foot sloop, Teal, and the building of Anonyma II by EA Jack as our cruising family boat during holidays, rather than owning the obligatory Tasmanian shack or caravan. I was kept busy on the foredeck with extended primary training in the school of hard knocks under my father's direction, from anchoring to the joys of spinnaker handling.

At 21 I left home, gave up surfing, did my 1st Hobart, and for the next 10 or so years, in

Some time ago Scuttlebutt featured my article on the 8 metre Norn. I mentioned that, as a small boy, I was most impressed by Lex (later Sir Alexis) Albert and his arrival and departure on race days. Lex, attired in full yachting dress, as were all the big boat skippers, stepped into a beautiful varnished clinker power dinghy and was delivered to Norn just as the mainsail reached full hoist.

A hand cast off and Lex took the tiller - relinquishing it as the mooring was retrieved and the main was lowered, when the tender came alongside and



between the inconvenient curse of the working class, I became an ace foredeck tragic. Through good fortune and sheer being in the right place at the right time, with the help of mentors and PBO's I sailed and caroused with many legendary yachts and crews, to places you only read about.

Lars suggested I list my best and worst boating memories. Shall we say the best are so numerous, that it would be much too hard to isolate one out of all those transient moments of glory. The low moments are not quite so numerous, so shall we say the ill fated 1964 race from Satander to LaTrinite when 7 lives were lost. My memories are of broken wave crests sweeping over the deck and the foam taking an interminable time to de-bubble so one could take another breath of air. Debubbled foam turns into water and cockpits into brimming baths that makes you ponder about the

Lex stepped aboard. Young Bill thought this was just great and it never crossed his mind that he would ever go sailing with such bling.

Decades have passed and I have very nearly achieved this envied state!

On race days I arrive at the SASC at a civilised hour and while imbibing coffee I observe through the Club windows a crew member, usually the glamorous Marni, row out and remove the cover from Ranger.

Other crew members board later and when I have finished lecturing members on yachting and other matters I board the

inadequacy of cockpit drains and the virtues of the modern trend to backless transoms.

I was introduced to the WBA in the early nineties through Ian and Bob Major, soon after its founding, as a boat owner with a more than common interest of like minds. I served about 3 years on the committee in the late 90's and returned in 2005 taking over as co-ordinator of the Working with Wood exhibition from Lars, who was snowed under with Scuttlebutt.

My boat Anonyma II is moored in Gore Cove, one of the more protected moorings on Sydney Harbour which is a base for my taking part in the rallying siren call of Bill Gale to doing battle on Saturday with the SASC traditional division. It is as we all know a continuing work in progress to maintain our boats as an active wooden boat, and I find association with like minded individuals a constant inspiration to try harder to lift my goals.

Club tender and am taken out to the family boat and step on board.

By then all preparations for sailing have been completed. The crew assist me in demolishing a large bottle of stout and one of beer and we then proceed to the start.

My only contribution to the de-rigging of Ranger is to hold the gaff on the boom during furling. We proceed to the Club pontoon where I then take a seat in the SE corner with a can of very cold beer and watch the crew cover the boat - all very exhausting!

Southerly

The art of fibre glassing

by Paul Smith

Many years ago my mate Ken Hutchings and I were sailing in the local club that we had formed. I had a VS and Ken had an Elwood Seahorse: the Elwood Seahorse was a 19ft boat built with battens over the moulds and covered in canvas. It was heavily painted to make it water-proof.

The boats were very tender so as Ken wasn't racing anymore, he decided to make his boat more stable for his wife and himself by adding a lead keel. Because the boat was going to be moored out he decided to strip the canvas off and replace it with fibreglass.

This was back in 1950, when fibreglassing was in its infancy, and Ken decided to do the boat a very pale blue, which looked terrific. The weeks went by and after about six weeks' wait, the

fibreglass had not cured and was still quite sticky. We decided to put it on a trailer and I would tow it to Sydney where he would put it in the water at Watsons Bay. We set off one Sunday morning and as we were approaching Tom Ugly's Bridge there is a sharp bend. Unfortunately, as I took this sharp bend, the main member in the trailer broke and the boat fell off onto the road. We got out of the car to inspect the damage and found there was no damage to the boat, just the trailer. The boat was blocking off half the road and as we couldn't move it with the lead keel on it, I said I would go across the bridge, turn around and go back for a couple of mates to help move it onto another trailer.

As I was crossing the bridge I

saw this police car going the other way. In those days they were smartly dressed in long dark blue pants and dark blue jackets. What transpired going across the bridge was that the police car reached the boat lying on the road with Ken standing on the footpath waiting for me. The sergeant got out of the car with his four constables and asked Ken what the devil was the boat doing lying in the middle of the road. Ken explained what had happened and that the boat couldn't be moved by just him and me, and that he was waiting for me to return with a couple of mates to move it.

The police sergeant said the boat couldn't be left there holding up the traffic so he instructed the four constables to get around it and pick it up and put it on the footpath, which they duly did.

Just after this I was on my way back and passing the scene, and I couldn't help but notice the four constables standing beside the boat with pale blue fibreglass stripes across their uniforms. The sergeant seemed to be very annoyed with Ken and was showing it in no

uncertain manner, and at this point I thought it would be best for me to keep going. I carried on home and with another trailer and some mates we lifted the boat onto the trailer and took it to Watsons Bay and launched it into Sydney Harbour. The boat gave Ken and his wife many happy hours sailing, but they had to be very careful not to put their hands over the side as the fibreglass was always very tacky and I don't think it ever cured. Ken's Elwood Seahorse got its name through the Elwood Sailing Club in Victoria, where it originated. They were a gunter-rigged boat that carried a lot of sail, and very tender. They were about 19ft long with a beam of about 3'6" and required a 3-man crew; although a good boat and very fast they never became popular in NSW. To the best of my knowledge, the only Seahorses in Sydney were the three in our club in Cronulla.

Pittwater news and views

Daylight saving has at last come to an end and with it the grand spectacle of large twilight fleets sailing into the setting sun. Now I like daylight saving, I am not worried about my curtains fading and I did appreciate the extra hour of daylight to help the Pittwater convoy navigate the Swansea channel on Good Friday evening. But I don't like going to work in the dark, it's not natural, when it's dark it's sleeping time, the only people who work in the dark are butchers, burglars, and the Editor of Scuttlebutt who maintains he is always kept in the dark. I think this year it was a few weeks too long, is anyone listening?

The Queens Birthday Regatta will be held on Sunday 8th June, the official public holiday is Monday 9th. In recent years the weather hasn't been particularly kind for this event which probably accounts for the fleets being small. I live in hope that this year, with a new federal government and a new president of our association in power, things will change and we will be blessed with a fine day, a good breeze and a good sized fleet. As always if you would like to be part of this occasion and didn't return a regatta form when renewing your membership; ring me, you will be very welcome.

Robert Tullett
99974073

Social occasions

The Dinner/Dance/Show organized by Joe Abela was a most enjoyable evening, the two course meal ended up being three courses and carafes of red and white wine were placed on each table, most generous. We danced (or in my case shuffled) to an excellent band that played proper music. Thank you Joe.

South Steyne dinner

Last year a dinner was held on the South Steyne to celebrate the Solstice, which I believe was most successful. We have booked the same venue again for a similar event, the theme on this occasion will not be the solstice, the organizers feel it was done to death last year. The theme will be Pirates.

An authority on the subject will give a number of lessons

throughout the evening, sea chanties will be sung, plank walking and keel hauling may take place. It will not be necessary for olden day pirate dress to be worn, it is however hoped that all male participants will dress as modern day pirates - bankers, financial advisers, stockbrokers - yes, we would like you to wear a jacket.

The cost is unknown as yet but last years bash was \$65 a head so I expect somewhere within this region. The date is Saturday 5th July, at 1845; money in cheque form will be required by the general meeting on the 10th June. Our private room only seats 35 so first come best dressed, it should be very enjoyable.

Bob and Barbara