Our aim is to promote the appreciation and participation of sailing classic yachts in Australia, and help preserve the historical and cultural significance of these unique vessels.
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BOATING EVENTS & FESTIVALS 2010

FEB
6-7 Queenscliff Maritime Weekend
6-8 Kettering Wooden Boat Rally
13-14 Wooden Boat Rally Launceston
20-21 Melb Wooden Boat Festival Docklands
21-27 Tall Ships Festival Williamstown
26-28 STAD Amsterdam visits Melbourne

MAR
6-7 WJ&M Lawyers Geelong Wooden Boat Festival

OCT
11 National Maritime Festival Newcastle

FEB 2011
11-14 AUST Wooden Boat Festival Hobart

MAR 2011
TBA SA Wooden Boat & Music Festival Goolwa

COVER PHOTO: ERIC E. STORY
A NATIVE DUKONG CIRCA 1920s
DUKONG RACING AND LIFE ON THE COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS IN 1922-1941

GABRIELLA SZONDY

These photos were taken by my grandfather Eric E. Story during his postings as engineer for the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company to the cable station on Direction Island at Cocos (Keeling) Islands in 1922-23, 1929-30, 1935-36 and 1940-41.

The Cocos (Keeling) Islands are a series of 27 coral islands, formed into two large coral atolls, situated in the Indian Ocean, approximately 2,770 kilometres north west of Perth. The main islands are Home Island, South Island, West Island, Horsburgh Island and Direction Island which together form the South Keeling Islands, and North Keeling Island to the north.

With the establishment of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company cable station on Direction Island in 1901, Cocos (Keeling) Islands became a vital link in world communications. The islands are probably best known for the battle between the HMAS Sydney and SMS Emden in November 1914 when the German warship visited the remote outpost to destroy the cable station.

Dukong racing was a popular pastime both for the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company staff on Direction Island and the islanders on Home Island. It was a much-loved social activity, bringing together the entire population of the islands. The design of the traditional sailing boats was influenced by both Scottish and Malay watercraft. Dukongs were once the main means of transport on the shallow lagoon and were used to collect the coconuts from the plantations for production and export of copra. Today, dukongs – also called jukongs - are still raced for ceremonial purposes during the Hari Raya festival, to celebrate the end of Ramadan, and on Self Determination Day.

In addition to sailing, other activities the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company staff engaged in were fishing, bird-watching, photography and camping, together with their dogs who were their constant companions. The company also provided a library, tennis courts, a billiard room and a soccer pitch.

For the EETC staff, contact with the outside world as well as with their families was extremely limited during the years of their postings. They relied on passing ships to drop off a ‘cask’ or barrel about twice a year containing food, books, magazines, letters from home and sometimes kittens that had been born on the ships and were adopted by the men.

The staff would sail out in their two dukongs ‘Matey’ and ‘Diana’ with one boat collecting the cask and the other trying to get their outbound mail on board by attaching it to the ship in a tin can. Once the cask was safely on board the dukong, they would sail back to the Direction Island jetty, unload the cask onto the tramway trolley and transport it to the staff quarters.

Photo: Eric E. Story

Home Island Race Day
where they would eagerly unpack the contents. At other times the sea was too rough for a cask to be dropped and retrieved, and the men would watch from the shore as the ship sailed away again.

From 1929, mail became somewhat more frequent when the ‘Islander’, which was owned by the Christmas Island Phosphate Company, started visiting Cocos (Keeling) Islands every three months. The main purpose of the vessel was to collect phosphate from Christmas Island, but it also collected copra from Cocos and delivered supplies to both places. Occasionally staff could also communicate with their families in Australia via cable or would send a cable message to colleagues in Perth to be transcribed onto a postcard and sent on from there by mail.

The isolated islands were uninhabited when discovered in 1609 by Captain William Keeling, a Royal Navy commander and agent of the East India Company, while returning to England with a convoy from the Dutch East Indies.

In his sailing directory for this region of the Indian Ocean, compiled in 1805, the British hydrographer, James Horsburgh, called them the Cocos-Keeling islands, and named one of the islands after himself. They were also known as the Keeling-Cocos Islands, until 1955 when they officially became the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Despite knowledge of the islands for 200 years or more, it was not until the early nineteenth century that they were settled. Interest was taken in them because they lay on a trade route from Europe to the Far East. The first settlement was accidental, Captain Le Cour and the crew of the brig Mauritius lived on Direction Island for several weeks after their ship was wrecked on the reef in 1825. Captain Driscoll in the Lonarch went ashore on 24th November 1825, shortly after they were rescued, and noted the wreck.

In 1825 Captain John Clunies-Ross, a Scottish merchant seaman sailing the Borneo for the Trading House of Hare, made a brief landing on the islands on his homeward voyage from the East Indies. He had orders to investigate Christmas Island on Alexander Hare’s behalf as a possible site for a settlement. Bad
weather prevented these plans and he surveyed the Cocos-Keeling Islands instead.

The following year Alexander Hare arrived on the islands and established the first settlement bringing with him approximately 100 people, predominantly Malays with a number of people of Chinese, Papuan and Indian descent. A year later, Captain John Clunies-Ross returned to the islands with his family and a small party of servants, seamen and tradesmen, and settled there. After several years of strained relations, Alexander Hare left the islands and John Clunies-Ross took sole possession of Cocos (Keeling). The Clunies-Ross family established coconut plantations on the islands and built up a successful business dealing in copra which they transported in their schooner to Batavia for onward shipping to London or Hamburg. They also carried mail and supplies between Cocos and Batavia. John Clunies-Ross taught the islanders shipbuilding and a schooner called the Harriet was built on South Island and launched in 1835.

Charles Darwin visited the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in 1836 aboard the HMS Beagle and it was during this visit that he developed his theory of atoll formation. He spent some time exploring the southern atoll and also visited North Keeling.

In 1857 the islands were declared a part of the British Dominions by Captain Fremantle who arrived aboard HMS Juno, having misread his directions which instructed that he annex Cocos in the Andaman Islands. In 1886 Queen Victoria granted all of the islands, under certain provisions, to John George Clunies Ross in perpetuity. Responsibility for supervision of the islands was transferred over the years to the Governments of Ceylon (1878), the Straits Settlements (1886), Singapore (1903) and Ceylon again (1939-45). They became a Territory of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1955, and in 1978 Australia purchased all of the lands, excepting the family home, from the Clunies Ross family for AU$6.25 million. In 1984 through the United Nations supervised Act of Self Determination the Cocos-Malay population voted to integrate with the Australian community and the Territory is administered by the Australian Government.

At the end of the 19th century as coconut plantations flourished on Cocos (Keeling) Islands, more and more submarine communications cables were being laid, and in 1901 the Eastern Extension, Australasia & China Telegraph Company decided to improve its service to Australia and lay a new submarine cable from Durban to Adelaide via Mauritius, Rodriguez Island, Cocos and Perth. The company leased land from the Clunies-Ross family and established a cable station on Direction Island. Up until this time the islanders had rarely seen people from the outside world. Now the islands became a crucial link in world communications.

From the start of the First World War, submarine telegraph cables were considered to be of vital strategic importance as they were the only means of long-distance communication.
One of the first offensive actions of the British Government after the declaration of war was therefore to cut the telegraph cable linking Germany and the United States.

This single action gave the British government total control of all transatlantic telegrams. Both sides attempted the destruction of the other’s communication networks and in November 1914 the German light-cruiser SMS Emden headed towards Cocos Island to destroy the Eastern Telegraph Station. Realising they were about to be attacked, the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company staff sent an SOS message and the nearby ANZAC convoy dispatched HMAS Sydney to their aid.

Meanwhile, the SMS Emden sent a 50-man landing party ashore who captured the EETC staff, destroyed the cable station and toppled the telegraph mast. The HMAS Sydney arrived and defeated the Emden after a battle which lasted several hours. Rather than allowing the enemy to take over their ship, the Emden crew ran her ashore on North Keeling Island and the surviving crew was captured. Not all of the survivors were prepared to give themselves up, however, and a handful of diehards hid on the island. In October 1915 a work gang from Home Island found their skeletons and buried them on the shore near the wreck.

The 50 other Emden crew who had been ashore on Direction Island as part of the landing party to destroy the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company installations escaped by stealing the Clunies-Ross schooner Ayesha which was anchored in the lagoon. In the past Ayesha had served to carry copra from Keeling to Batavia two or three times a year as well as to bring provisions on her return trip. The Germans sailed Ayesha to Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies and arrived back in Germany seven months later via Yemen and Turkey.

The cable station ceased operations in 1966. Some of the buildings were relocated to Home Island, others were bulldozed into the sea. Today all that remains to bear testimony to the men who lived and worked on Direction Island are crumbling ruins, overgrown tennis courts and some rusted cables.

**SOURCES**

Eric E. Story’s personal recollections and photo albums
Cocos (Keeling) Islands Tourism Association Inc.
History of the Atlantic Cable & Undersea Communications
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
TWO ESCAPE FROM NORMALITY

NICK BECK & MELISA COLLETT

From city workers to working boaters

On Thursday 23 April 2009 Nick Beck and Melisa Collett, IT specialists working in banking jobs in the City of London left their respective workplaces and departed the capital to start a new life in the South coast county of Dorset in the UK. Less than 24 hours later, having driven 300 miles to Gweek in Cornwall, they watched the manifestation of their dream, a 44 foot gaff cutter called Amelie Rose, take to the water for the very first time.

We were fascinated to discover what inspires a couple to undertake a project like this and to hear a little about the burgeoning Pilot Cutter scene in the UK, so we spoke to Nick and Melisa at their base in Poole Harbour to find out more.

The seeds of this story began back in 2004 when the couple met at a mutual friends house. ‘We were the two sailors at the party,’ laughs Nick, ‘so it was Nick, this is Melisa, she likes sailing. Melisa this is Nick, he likes sailing. There you go, that’s you two sorted for the evening.’ As it turned out they’ve been ‘sorted’ for longer than that and sailing has been a big part of their lives together ever since.

Nick already owned a 9-metre GRP Bermudan sloop, which they sailed together around the English Channel, often talking about leaving their working lives behind and setting off in a bigger boat to cruise the world. ‘It became known as the dream of the 45 footer,’ Nick says, ‘we got all the sell-up-and-sail books like Annie Hill and the Pardys and carried on dreaming like I guess most sailors do.’

The London bombings of 2005 acted as a spur to action. ‘It made us ask why we were just waiting for stuff to happen,’ says Nick. ‘You need to make decisions and then act on them, otherwise 30 years later you’re left wondering where your life went, or worse, you don’t wake up tomorrow, and you’ve never achieved any of your dreams. We’re not special people in any way. We just made a choice one day and then got on with dealing with the consequences.’

By this point they’d already concluded that a gaff or junk rig might be a good option ‘as they put less load on the boat, and are easier to maintain’ and at that time in the UK there was a lot of buzz about Pilot Cutters. With four shipyards building replicas and many originals still afloat, these boats had a strong following of serious sailors, drawn to their reputation as sturdy seaboats with a good turn of speed. And so it was while browsing the Internet one day Nick discovered Luke Powell’s Working Sail website. Luke was at the forefront of
the replica Pilot Cutter scene – he had already launched five boats from 38 to 46 feet and was busy on a sixth boat, Tallulah, when they contacted him for the first time.

Having chatted with Luke via email the couple decided to sail down to Falmouth to meet up with him and have a look at his boat Agnes. ‘We had a very strong reaction to her,’ says Melisa, ‘these boats are beautiful to look at and from the minute you step aboard it’s like they are giving you a big wooden hug.’ Later on they were lucky enough to go sailing on Agnes and Nick remembers ‘realising that we were done for. At sea they are solidity in motion, they’re just awesome.’

That was July, and by November, after a glass or two of wine one evening, the couple shook hands with each other and agreed to go ahead and commission a cutter of their own. The next issue was how to finance the dream. ‘There were no big piles of cash to fall back on and we didn’t have much equity in our flat so chartering was the only option that made sense to us,’ says Melisa.

With this in mind Amelie Rose has been designed from the keel up to be charter boat. She’s full in the beam and carries her width and draft well aft giving her tremendous internal volume and space for up to 11 crew, although the couple prefer to carry only six or seven guests plus themselves as skipper and mate.

Neither is new to sailing. Nick has sailed since he was 10 when his parents bought a Tinker Tramp sailing dinghy to keep him and his sister entertained. He is now an RYA Yacht Cruising Instructor and Commercial Skipper, having moved to bigger boats via Enterprise and Merlin Rocket sailing dinghies. Melisa started even younger, aged 7, accompanying her father on sailing trips aboard friends’ boats and chartering with the family in Greece, Turkey and the Caribbean. She is also RYA qualified.

‘We love the teaching side of sailing Amelie Rose,’ says Melisa, ‘we get a real buzz when a couple of days into a charter the crew manage to get on with a job like hoisting the jib without needing us to direct them.’ Indeed re-connecting their guests to the UK’s sailing heritage seems to be a big part of the couple’s mission. ‘Sailing aboard Amelie Rose is a way to get hands-on experience of what it was like to sail aboard a boat of Nelson’s era,’ enthuses Nick, ‘without the bad food and the beatings of course.’

They go on to make it clear that good food is particularly important to them aboard Amelie Rose. ‘A well-fed crew is a happy crew’, and with this in mind the galley has been equipped with a catering-style GN Espace cooker and a large custom-built fridge with a Frigoboat keel-cooler. Yet more high-technology is hidden under the chart table in the form of an EFOY Hydrogen Fuel Cell to keep the batteries topped up. ‘We’re no fans of burning diesel,’ says Nick, ‘in a boat as environmentally friendly as this it’s a shame to be running the engine an hour or two every day just to keep lights on.’
Square in the forefoot, deep and upright at the sternpost, with a long sloping keel, a high rise of bilge and a trademark lute stern, Amelie Rose is modelled on Isles of Scilly Pilot Cutters from the early 1800s. In their heyday there were 46 boats working the treacherous waters surrounding these remote Southwestern outposts of the British Isles. On station in the North Atlantic in all weathers they would watch for the approach of square riggers bound for the Bristol or English Channels, and then race to get their pilot aboard first. Crewed by just a man and a boy these boats reached a near perfect balance between sea-kindliness and speed and were incredibly strongly built in order to survive the rigours of their trade.

The appeal of this blend of pace and strength has been enough to keep some of the original Pilot Cutters in service as yachts even though commercially they were usurped by steam in the early twentieth century. More recently, builders like Luke Powell and Dave Cockwell in Cornwall and the Bristol-based RB Boat Building and Bristol Classic Boat Company have been breathing new life into the whole scene – between them launching 11 new Cutters in the last 15 years. These new boats regularly race against originals at venues up and down the UK coast, and in an interesting comparison with the modern yachting world, it’s often not the newest boats picking up the silverware.

Taking 18 months to build, from lofting to launch, Amelie Rose is constructed of larch on oak, with oak topsides and bulwarks, an opepe backbone and a straight laid opepe deck. Her spars are of Douglas fir, with the mainmast and bowsprit solid wood while the topmast, boom and gaff are laminated for extra strength. All halyards and sheets are controlled by ash blocks and tackles, with a handspike barrel windlass on the foredeck to provide power for raising the anchor and tensioning the rig. Down below, she’s traditionally laid out with varnished oak and painted softwood panelling.

Why the name Amelie Rose we wonder? ‘We both love the film and the name Amelie,’ Melisa answers, ‘and when we looked it up we discovered that it means ‘hard worker’ which we thought was very appropriate for a working boat.’ The ‘Rose’ part is a oft used name in Melisa’s family tree and, the couple believe, helps to balance the French forename, great for a boat who spends time on both sides of the English Channel. The 9-foot clinker sailing tender, by Chris Rees (who built Pete Goss’s Spirit of Mystery), sits upright atop the saloon skylight and is called Mary Rose, after Nick’s Mum; who died of motor neurone disease in January 2008, having followed the project avidly up to the framing stage.

When asked why they have chosen to base their business in Poole Harbour rather than in the heart of the Solent like so many other charter businesses, Melisa replies: ‘Poole is a beautiful base from which to sail, right in the heart of the Jurassic Coast [England’s first natural World Heritage Site]. We’re just three hours sailing from the Solent but perfectly placed to make passage to Cornwall and the Scillies to the West, or the Channel Islands and Brittany to the South.’ ‘Plus Dorset’s great for good locally produced food,’ adds Nick, ‘and we have decent rail links to the rest of the country.’

How was the first season afloat? ‘Fantastic!’ says Nick, ‘really really hard work but incredibly rewarding. Looking through our photos from the year makes me smile every time. The people we’ve had aboard have been lovely and the reception that Amelie Rose gets everywhere she goes just makes me really proud of what we’ve achieved.’

So what’s next? ‘We’re taking Amelie Rose back home,’ says Melisa, ‘a trip to Cornwall for the Pilot Cutter Review and Championships, followed by an adventure out to the Isles of Scilly where it all started.’ Whatever they do next we’re sure that it will be done with bags of enthusiasm and commitment and we wish them well. Amelie Rose is as beautiful a piece of craftsmanship as you are ever likely to see and will, we’re sure, continue to turn heads wherever she goes.
CROSS-TASMAN EXPORTS (PART III)

HAROLD KIDD

In the last issue I wrote about the exports of the large Niccol yachts into the Australian colonies from New Zealand, Secret, the first Waitangi and Taniwha, between 1875 and 1880 and the Chas. Bailey 10 tonner Erin built for Joy of Melbourne in January 1877.

After Joy sailed in the local regattas and cruised in the Hauraki Gulf for some months Erin was shipped to Sydney. She was later bought by A.W. and W.S. Fergie of Melbourne and was still racing in 1924. With their racing successes these fine yachts caught the attention of Australian sportsmen, but for several more years there were no more inter-colonial commissions for Auckland builders.

However, two local yachts were shipped over to Melbourne to race in the 1880s, Zephyr and Akarana, of which Akarana had by far the greater profile. She is the subject of an excellent book, Akarana, by Daina Fletcher, published by the ANMM in 1991.

Zephyr was one of a series of quite extraordinary yachts built in Dunedin by Henry Thomas Green who had arrived in New Zealand’s South Island from Sydney with his father and brothers around 1864. David Payne of the ANMM and I have spent several years unravelling the Green family’s exploits in NZ, Australia and the UK (see David’s article on Richard Green in the ANMM’s magazine Signals on June–August 2009). Zephyr was a highly idiosyncratic 36ft gunter-rigged Bermudan cutter of 1876 or so ‘built on Green’s circular principle, with a straight rise of floor and an almost absurd spring in her keel.’ Like all of Green’s yachts she was of a (relatively) light displacement and was probably of two-skin French carvel construction. Green built several fast yachts of this type in Dunedin before returning to set up as a boatbuilder in Lavender Bay in 1889. One Green yacht, Clementina, built in 1883, survives to this day.

Zephyr’s second owner was Tasmanian expatriate, Capt. A.J.S. Gibbs, who was heavily involved in Dunedin shipping interests. He shipped her to Melbourne to race in the Geelong...
Regatta of 10 January 1881 and the Melbourne Intercolonial Regatta five days later. Gibbs took Zephyr to victory against 10 opponents in the Second Class race, then sailed her on her own bottom to Hobart for its Regatta. Zephyr later had an illustrious racing career in the hands of Prof. R. J. Scott of Christchurch who radically altered her to win the 1896 New Zealand Championship at Lyttelton against Waitangi, the Robert Logan Sr. crack of 1894, which is now back in Auckland waters after many years in Oz.

The International Regatta held in Melbourne in November–December 1888 to celebrate Victoria’s centenary promised to be a showcase for New Zealand constructors. This country had been in the grip of a deep economic depression for 10 years on the downside of massive Government overspending on infrastructure and subsidised immigration in the 1870s. To stir the Australian market for yachts, one of our few manufactured exports, was clearly desirable.

However, times were tough and only one yacht was built specifically for the regatta in NZ. Robert Logan Sr. of Auckland built Akarana in the latter months of 1888 and shipped her over by steamer. Logan’s yacht was quite untypical of his designs as she was a ‘plank on edge’ in the current pernicious tradition of the Northern Hemisphere, built solely to rate well. Sadly she was built as a 5-tonner to the only just superseded rating rules which had been changed to avoid the dangers of the previous rule which penalised beam but did not take sail area into account at all, leading to narrow-gutted, over-canvassed ‘leadmines’. Under the recently adopted BYRA rules she rated just over 6 tons. Nevertheless she won one race in the 5–10 class well and there were suggestions of ‘nobbling’ in at least one other race in the series. That’s scarcely credible, knowing as we do the inherent decency of Melbournites. Logan took her to Sydney where she was sold.

Of course Akarana’s recent history is illustrious as she was restored at the cost of the NZ Government as a bicentenary gift to Australia in 1988. Now that the ANMM has sorted out some infelicities in rig and ballasting, Akarana sails well and looks easily capable of being around in another 100 years.

RESTORATION ACTIVITY IN NEW ZEALAND CONTINUES UNABATED

HAROLD KIDD

Despite the economic downturn, which seems to have affected Australia and New Zealand less than the rest of the world thanks to our sound common banking industry, Kiwis continue to produce some fine restorations. In Auckland we have a number of landmark old yachts just launched or about to go in the water.

Steve Horsley has been working on the total rebuild of his Chas. Bailey Jr. cutter Ngatira for several years. Ngatira was launched in November 1904 for the Frater brothers, Auckland sharebrokers. She was one of the new breed of NZ yachts which purposely ignored overseas rating rules which had little relevance any more in home waters where performance handicapping had taken over and where the constantly changing international rules had lost credibility. Nevertheless the 40 footer Ngatira was a hark back to the Bailey Bros’ Meteor of October 1897, a 30ft linear rater which was really the first Bailey yacht to give a Logan competitor a bloody nose in their annual rater production battles. Meteor was commissioned by A.T. “Harry” Pittar, of later Rainbow, Sunbeam and Rawhiti fame, trounced the Logan Kotiri several times and was promptly shipped to Sydney to lick the Aussies. Ngatira had a foot more beam than Meteor at 8ft 6in which made her a better boat.

Steve had a lot of work done by Jay Lawry of the NZ Maritime Restoration School at Opua but, when its activities wound down when Jay returned to Oz, Steve rolled up his sleeves and taught himself a whole bunch of new skills. Ngatira was re-launched at Sandspit on 18th December last, a tribute to a Kiwi battler who would not compromise on standards.

Peter Brookes’ yard at Huapai continues to produce outstanding...
restorations. Rod Marler’s Arch Logan-designed, Bill Couldrey-built 42 footer Little Jim of 1934 has had a refit that ended as a rebuild to superb standards, while Rawhiti is getting close to launching after a similar experience. It will be recalled that Pittar had Logan Bros build Rawhiti in December 1905 to have a crack at Sayonara. She had a horrendous voyage to Sydney under jury rig to avoid customs duty which had recently been imposed on imported yachts unless they arrived on their own bottoms. Rawhiti was sold to C.T. Brockhoff who challenged for the 100 Guinea Cup (now the Sayonara Cup). The eventual races in Melbourne in January 1907 were close. Rawhiti beat Sayonara for the La Carabine Cup as a preliminary, but Sayonara won the first two races for the challenge cup straight in a magnificent contest.

Rawhiti was owned in Sydney for many years by Frank Albert but repatriated to Auckland in an epic voyage in 1946 by Hec Marler. She was impeccably maintained by the Marlers for many years but went downhill after her sale out of the family, sprouting an ugly doghouse and undergoing botched repair work. A syndicate headed by Greg Lee bought her a few years ago and has commissioned this magnificent Brookes restoration.

Jason Prew has almost completed a restoration of the 1904 Arch Logan-designed 35ft cutter Wairiki. It has been a lightning job, mainly at the Auckland (now NZ) Traditional Boatbuilding School at Hobsonville. Jason doesn’t hang about. Wairiki has spent a lot of her life in the South Island where she was prominent in Lyttelton racing but, before leaving Auckland, had a fantastic success rate in coastal racing, especially in the Auckland-Tauranga race. We expect her in the water for the tail of the season, sailing under a gaff rig again of course. Jason, meantime, is sailing master of the Robert Brooke family’s 1908 Logan Bros cutter Rawene which itself has had its first really major overhaul and timber replacement since 1908 by Robert, and then only because she was badly strained when tee-boned while racing.

A Wellington restoration is generating increasing interest in the Capital City in old yachts. Pheroze Jagose bought the December 1892 Chas. Bailey Jr. 2-rater Rogue recently from Nelson, a very pretty little yacht that has been a feature of the Cook Strait area as Muritai since 1900. As these things do, renovation led to restoration so that we are now eagerly awaiting the launch of the first Wellington restoration for many years.

Finally, the sturdy offshore cruiser Ngataki is lined up to go in for restoration in Auckland as soon as the yard’s doors have been made big enough to get her inside! She has been taken over by Tony Stevenson’s Tino Rawa Trust which already owns several landmark historic vessels. Ngataki was built in Auckland in 1933, at the height of the Depression, by Johnny Wray, who was the ultimate scrounger. He dug kauri logs out of shingle beaches and had them milled, he made fastenings from fencing wire staples baked in road tar in his mother’s oven, he cut spars out of the bush or swapped for vegetables from the owner of the wrecked barque Rewa.

Prior to September 1939, Johnny had covered 58,000 miles offshore in Ngataki including a Trans Tasman to Melbourne and a race to Hobart against Te Rapunga. Ngataki, despite her ugly duckling looks, was a seminal Kiwi yacht of the 1930s because Johnny’s hugely entertaining book South Seas Vagabonds inspired a post-war generation of Kiwis to build their own yachts and sail to the Pacific Islands and even circumnavigate.
The Huon Valley is wonderfully rich in boating history, and just 45 minutes south of Hobart. The famous Huon River provides the perfect vista backdrop for past wooden boat builders and their sheds on the banks of the river.

It all began in 1792. The first known Europeans to visit the Huon region were in the French expedition commanded by Admiral Bruny D’Entrecasteaux and Captain Huon Kermandec. Their ships, Recherche and Esperance carry special names for people living in the Huon Valley.

Both men’s names and their ships are familiar in local place names. The D’Entrecasteaux Channel of the Huon region today provides some of the best sailing and cruising experiences found anywhere in the world.

The first sales of crown land in the area were in 1836, the same year as the world famous wooden boat, the May Queen commenced construction on the shores of the Huon River.

In 1837 Lady Jane Franklin bought one square mile of land and four years later bought another 640 acres nearby in the Huon area. Lady Franklin encouraged her husband to accept the position of Governor of Van Diemen’s land and not take a low ranking post in the West Indies.

Today Franklin town in the Huon Valley owes its wonderful name to Lady Jane Franklin, a most generous woman with a passion for social welfare.

Annual regattas were held in the Huon region including Shipwrights Point where up to seven steamers brought passengers from Hobart to attend the events.

Shipwrights Point Regatta of 1 January 1898 will live for ever in the memories of those whose misfortune it was to be present or to make the pleasure trips in the SS Oonah and river steamers, as one of the most unpleasant ever recorded. After a strong wind and fierce sun the previous day, bush fires started up and the Huon River area became an inferno. An old yachtsman writes: ‘I well remember beating up the Huon River when neither bank could be seen for smoke until the yacht was nearly on it. The roaring of fires, and burnt leaves falling on the sails and decks, the atmosphere unbearable. The fires burnt houses, fruit and crops, and swept right to the shore of Woodbridge and elsewhere.’

The wonderful legacy of those regattas lives on at the existing clubhouse at Shipwrights Point today.

With the location of the Huon River to nearby woodland and forests, wooden boatbuilding sheds could be seen right along the banks of the Huon River from Cygnet to Port Huon and beyond.

Huge trees of Tasmanian blue gum and swamp gum were hauled out of the local forests by bullocks and milled close to the waterside boatbuilders.

The Wilson family were local ship builders of distinction in the Huon area of Cygnet. John Wilson began his shipbuilding career in 1863. Over 146 years later the fourth generation of Wilsons are still building boats in Cygnet. The present Wilson Bros boatshed was established in 1946.
I visited Ninie in Hobart back in June at her rented shed. What a beautiful yacht, wonderful sheer and so sleek, and with such a rich history of winning club races. I could still see the smile of her Huon pine planking and her recently completed caulking and splining over much of her planking.

Ninie was saved for destruction and sold to a gentleman from the Huon Valley who will return her to the former glory she deserves, I am sure.

I have so enjoyed reading about local boating legions in the book called Heroes of the Huon and the 1936 publication of the book, A Hundred Years of Yachting. My thanks for the use of material. How wonderful classic boat cruising is in the Huon Valley of Tasmania.

John Wilson was to design and build 30 large timber boats in primitive circumstances.

On 26 October 2006 a beautiful Herreshoff built wooden yacht launch took place on a traditional grease covered wooden slipway from the Wilson boat building shed in Cygnet. I was privileged to attend the launch of Gloria of Hobart and witness her 16 tonnes of wooden perfection being launched.

Loud bangs echoed under the boat as the remaining chocks were knocked out and she slowly slid from the old fashioned wooden slip rails, stern first, to the waters of the Huon River. It was such a powerful motion: Gloria went almost halfway across the bay. It was a magic event steeped in local boatbuilding history and wonderful local boatbuilding timbers.

The first Hobart Regatta was held on 1 December 1838. Evidence of the Regatta was found in the Colonial Times, for yacht racing, and not for fishing or other trading vessels. The first race was nearly two years after the arrival of Sir John Franklin as Governor of the Colony.

The Tasmanian Yacht Club was established in 1859 and the first record of the formation of a Yacht Club appeared in the Hobart Town Advertiser of 19 October 1859. In the same paper of Monday 2 January 1860 it was notified that a Tasmanian Grand Yacht Club race would take place that day for a purse of sixty sovereigns.

In the records of the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania is a book of certificate forms of the yachts registered then by the club.

As this was the first yacht race under the control of a properly organised Yacht Club in Tasmania, all information that can be obtained about it is of importance, especially as, very likely, it was the first of such clubs to be established in Australia.

If you visit the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania in Hobart you will see a Club Championship board dating from 1907. It lists the yachts that have won annual club championships. A wooden yacht built by Perc C. Coverdale called Ninie won the Club’s championship in 1933 and 1934.

Perc Coverdale took over the boatbuilding yard of Robert Inches in Sandy Bay in 1923. In the book, A Hundred Years of Yachting, it quotes Perc Coverdale as the boatbuilder of the highest quality and has included the building of his own yacht Ninie. The book shows a photograph of Coverdale’s ships getting ready for the season.

Ninie has had several owners and recently an SOS was sent out to all local shipwrights and interested boating people to save her from the chain saw.

Her current owner was not able to continue to pay for the rented shed she was being restored in, and unless help was to be secured her fate was to be lost forever.
THE CUP REGATTA 2009

MARK CHEW

The sporting events that have become truly iconic are those that have created traditions over time, building a history, layer by layer. Wimbeldon, would just be another tennis match without the whites, the strawberries, the Pimms Spritzers, Cliff Richard and the Royal Box.

The Sydney Hobart would just be another uninviting slog southwards if it wasn’t for the excitement of Boxing Day on the harbour, the southerly buster, the aura of Bass Straight, Storm Bay’s reputation, the drifting Derwent, and the Quiet Little Drink.

The Cup Regatta is only in its third year and so comparisons are ridiculous but we can look at these great events (which themselves were once in their third year!) and we recognise the essence of success and plan and build for a long future.

This year a new tradition was started with the creation of the Guineas Cup in which two of the greatest Ocean racing yachts from the 1960’s sailed against two fishing boats designed about 90 years ago in a winner take all Match Race. The event that was generously sponsored by the wineries of Portsea Estate and Punters Corner, took place on Hobson’s Bay in a dying northerly on the Friday before the Regatta proper. There was genuine tension on the start line as Mercedes III, Boambillee, Nepean, and Romy manoeuvred for the perfect start. There was a world champion sailor on every boat, but the Coutas won the start and Nepean with Grant Smith and Peter Gale calling the shots scraped round the first mark just ahead. On the down wind legs raw horse power of the yachts spinnakers made it hard for the Coutas to stay in touch and as the breeze faded Boambillee took control and finally the gun. There was much discussion afterwards as to how the playing field could be levelled for next year…perhaps just two sails per boat could be used…?

For the main regatta beginning on the Saturday, the fleet of timber boats competing was as diverse and interesting as ever. Without the magnificent Sayonara (which was still in Sydney) and with late withdrawals from the Fife Caraid, and Dalimore’s Windward II, the emphasis shifted from glamour to substance. It was great to see the four Tumlarens proudly sporting their primary colours, reviving the great era of this class during the 1930’s and 1940’s. With another three Tums ready for relaunch the revival of this remarkable fleet is well underway.

As usual the contingent of New Zealanders added flavour to the event. We learnt the kiwi for “Pursuit Race” (Mark Foy),
and “tight reach” (lead) and enjoyed the company and advice of some excellent sailors. The Trans-Tasman trophy for the best performed overseas sailor was presented for the sixth time and this year was won by Tony Blake, the first ever multiple winner having also taken it home in his luggage in 2008.

Day One turned in the day you order when you organise a sailing regatta. A great course, plenty of opportunities to make (and loose) ground on the fleet. 12-20 knots of warm wind and flat seas. I was racing a Couta boat for the first time ever this day and it gave me a real understanding of the pleasure of sailing in a fleet of one class. From a novices point of view they seem easy to sail and hard to sail well. Ideal for learning but difficult to master. One day I’m sure I will own one. I suspect that the Melbourne Couta Boat fleet benefited from some generous handicapping from the experts at the South end of the bay as the top for skippers on day one were all northerners.

The Classic Fleet of seventeen yachts had a gala day with Mercedes III fresh from her joint victory in the Guineas Cup taking out both line and handicap honours. And what an inspiration it was to see the remarkable Bob Munro out there again in the beautiful Rasmussen designed Tandanya. At 82 Bob has had a tough year with illness but he was back again in 2009 as sprightly and as competitive as ever.

Day Two provided testing conditions with an ugly left over slop and wind that came and went with little rhyme or reason. We sailed the two laid courses and as always David Leroy did a faultless job getting the fleets off safely. One of the best things about the 2009 regatta is that it is the first one in which we have avoided a major crash. Perhaps we are all finally learning that the craft are more important that our egos and winning by risking the splintering wood is really not winning at all. The standout Couta boat from day two was Eva sailed by Paul Blunt and Doug Hem. She won both the races and cemented what was to become an overall victory in the regatta. This smaller pale green Couta boat for some reason always looks as if she’s off to go fishing, without the crackeling fresh white sails and immaculate paint work of some of her rivals, however she rarely make a mistake and in the light stuff is almost unstoppable. Day two also saw the Classic Yacht honours shared between Marie Louise III (pale green must be a fast colour) and Boambillee the S&S nugget from 1968.

Day Three (Race four) was always going to be light. It must have been tricky applying the calculations to keep the pursuit race even. The blood red sails of the H28 Jenny Wren went off as the hare, and Acrospire III went off as scratch marker. There must have been wind up high as Ack’s topsail filled and eased her past most of the fleet by the second mark. She is a magnificent sight powering along in the calm water, Col (green can in hand) smiling contentedly. The wind dropped right out for a while and a massive bulk tanker decided to tie up, causing a severe diversion for half of the fleet but in didn’t really seem to matter as the boats pottered along in the sunshine, with the course eventually being shortened to allow the prawns to be lunch rather than dinner.

This year for the first time, we decided to make the presentations on the lawn at RYCV directly after the last race and what a great decision! The prawns and Calamari went down well as the band played and David McKenzie woke up Williamstown with his bagpipes. Stories were enhanced, and mostly happy and some sad memories were created as Joy Bandy handed the overall winners trophy to Doug Hem and Paul Blunt.

Bit by bit this diverse group of wooden boat sailors is learning to stage a quality event. To paraphrase Juan Antonio Samaranch “This was the best one yet” but we are always looking for improvement and an injection of new enthusiasm. If you are prepared to give a little time in return for the satisfaction of seeing this great little event grow then put your hand up. One day the Cup Regatta might also be an iconic Melbourne event.
EDITORS PLAINTIFF CRY

As any editor will tell you a magazine is as good as the contributors make it. My job has been to produce a quality document of record and that is only possible with well written articles and quality photos. Many might argue that the magazine has a southern bias. This may be true but that is where most of the energy seems to lie in the Association.

To all who read this, look to the thought of being published in this classy classic document and get to work to make this magazine one of which we can all be proud.

Roger Dundas - Editor
dundas@melbpc.org.au

NEW MEMBERS

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DRY REACH TO NEW ZEALAND

ROGER DUNDAS

That should have a comma, dry, reach to New Zealand, but that doesn’t sound as interesting!

CYAA President Mark Chew had decided after the CYANZ Classic regatta in 2008 that he would love to enter his Classic 1956 Philip L. Rhodes in the regatta. Having purchased Fair Winds in New Zealand in 2002 and taken her to Melbourne he thought it only fair to take her back for some classic racing.

The journey began in November 2008 when we turned left out of Port Phillip for Wilsons Promontory and had a following wind all the way to Sydney. (Head to Head without a tack, CYAA Issue 27, June 2009) Couldn’t get better than that thought I. Fair Winds could not be better named for on the trip from Brisbane to Auckland, 1250 nm: we required one gybe!

John Donati and I had been dispatched, two days before departure from the Royal Brisbane Yacht Club in Manly, to get the yacht prepped and provisioned. Simple task of wandering the supermarket with a large trolley and an ability to determine every crew member’s personal tastes, then multiply by however many days the trip might take. Add a couple of things they may or may not like, add a few more dark chocolate blocks, add another shopping trolley, and so on.

Refuelled, including 200 litres in jerry cans tied on the after deck, watered and weighed down with fresh and tinned tucker, refurbished sails hanked on and the ship in shape. John and I had wondered what Mark, Antony Perri and Kiwi Tod Benson had done on a preparation weekend a couple of weeks prior, except grease the winches and empty beer cans.

4 am, day of departure. Alive, alert and ready to tackle the first tricky bit of the journey, motoring through the winding maze that is the route through the inner Stradbroke access below Coochiemudlo Island. Lots of chart gazing aligned with lots of lookout meant only one small contact with the mud, even on a rising tide. It was a relief to reach the overburdened landscape of the Broadwater and tighten up and out through The Spit. 15 knots from the north and heading east makes for a very comfortable ride that varied only with the wind velocity.

For one hour short of a week and 1100 nm we ‘suffered’ a continuation of the nor nor westerly, 8 to 37 knots, predicted perfectly and reported daily on the satphone by Roger ‘Clouds’ Badham. Our only decisions were when to reef and furl.

The situation below became very comfortable and the cushion position for the off-watch needed only minor adjustment. We had time to concentrate on reducing the food and grog supply by creating some splendid meals and trying to outdo one another on the apperitivo for happy hour.
Tod Benson, our Kiwi naviguesser was determined to supplement the rations with ocean fare, but try as he might, including dawn and dusk exclamations of ‘C’mon fish,’ nothing came back on board across the Tasman. He contented himself with the making of daily bread which didn’t fully satisfy his hunting instincts. Tod, a long (suffering) friend of Mark’s from their years together on the charter yachts in the Med had been titled ‘Tupia’. In 1769 James Cook on HM Bark Endeavour had brought an interpreter with him from Tahiti who proved to be a major asset in negotiating with the native New Zealanders. We hoped Tod would prove as useful.

Day 7 and our only sighting during the Tasman crossing, another yacht on opposite tack, threw us a wave, like us enjoying the stunning conditions. Nothing for it now but to keep a watch for the long white cloud that is the precursor of our destination. On time and out of the morning mist the shapes of The Three Kings, 40 nm north west of North Cape appeared and confirmed Tod’s traditional island skills of being able to read the sky and currents as well as the GPS!

Pressure building, not the wind, the thought that we might have to shift the cushions below as we had to turn south eventually. And gybe we did, the only manoeuvre we had to make on the whole journey because ‘Clouds’ had predicted a SW change as we reached North Cape and on schedule we found ourselves reaching yet again, this time stunned with a shot of gin to calm its gyrations.

With the wind picking up and ahead of schedule we decided to reach further into the journey than planned. Viaduct Harbour, Auckland was now our destination and with ‘Tupia’ in local waters we couldn’t go wrong. Past the Poor Knights, inside the Hen and Chickens, leave a bit of room at Cape Rodney as the light isn’t on the easternmost point of land and take a line inside Tiritiri Matangi until you sight Rangitoto, from there you are in Auckland Harbour. Rationing had proven perfect as we scoffed the last beers in sight of the Sky Tower.

The NZ Customs men were efficient and polite, keeping their Aussie jokes to a minimum and as the sun set we berthed in the beautiful Viaduct Harbour. A fresh water shower was high on the agenda but with facilities closed we made do with a hose over the floating marina. Hope the security footage doesn’t make it to Utube.

A most magnificent trip to a magnificent country.
Like many good ideas, it started over a glass or two of red wine. Fortunately, the wine was both excellent and free, so after a few too many glasses the idea took wings and became the genesis of the Guinea Cup.

The place was the Queenscliff Couta Boat Club. Two classic yachts, the 1960’s ocean racers, Mercedes 111 and Boambillee, had just taken part in the Couta Boat regatta, and had enjoyed a match race between the two classic boats which Mercedes had won. The classic racers were started after the two Couta Boat divisions, so we had an interesting time weaving our way through the smaller Couta boats. The larger Couta boats were gone...in fact the front runners had travelled through the water two or more minutes faster on elapsed time than the ocean racers.

There had been a few comments from the top Couta boats about how fast they were compared to the older ocean racing boats, and the results at this regatta seemed to confirm this fact. That said, these modern Couta boats are a distant relation to the fishing boats which raced home to get the best prices for their fish. The modern boats have been optimised for speed through the water, rather than carrying capacity. Their hulls have been faired with epoxy compounds, and their rigs have been tweaked with floating blocks and barber- haulers for maximum efficiency. The sails are cut beautifully, and the boats are relatively light. They are also stacked with skilled sailors!

The skippers of the two ocean racers agreed. It was time to challenge these Couta boats, to see who really was the fastest boat across the water. The challenge for the Guinea Cup was born.

One thousand Guineas was the prize for the winner. The richest prize in yachting in Australia. The honour of the classic boats was at stake.

In the harsh cold light of dawn, whilst the skipper of Boambillee nursed his hangover, the skipper of Mercedes, Martin Ryan, boldly took the idea forward. The Classic Yacht Association issued the challenge, and the Couta boats gleefully accepted.

Fast forward to a balmy evening at the end of October at the top of Port Phillip Bay. The gun goes, and the two fastest Couta boats selected, and the two former ocean racers are all on the line in a perfect start. The crews are stacked with talent across the four boats, but Boambillee is favoured with John Savage, multiple world champion and America’s Cup skipper on the helm. She has the started at the boat end, and is on top of the stack of four boats. Things look good, but astonishingly, the Couta boat just to leeward is doing better with great height and speed. Old gaff rigged fishing boats?? John says there is more pressure out to the right, so we tack away, but in part it is to prevent being lee-bowed by the Couta boat.

John’s right...there is a little more pressure out to the right.
Boambillee seems to be in a great position, but halfway to the mark the consensus is to protect our lead, and tack back. We cross in front of Mercedes and that extra-ordinarily fast Couta boat, but we go too far. When we tack back we realize that the right has continued to be favoured, and we are now third. Curses, but around the mark we go and pop up the spinnaker. This is a revelation. As soon as we have the kite drawing, we realize we have the legs on the Couta boat and blithely sail over the top of her. A messy spinnaker jibe at the mark, and we lose the lead again, only to pass the Couta boat once more.

Yes, the ocean racers are faster with spinnakers on reaching legs than the Couta boats – in light to moderate winds.

Meanwhile, Mercedes 111 has her own problems. We were curious why she seemed to be carrying a small headsail upwind; only later did we learn that she had torn both her light and heavy No.1 headsails, and had been forced to use her No.3 headsail.

For the last upwind leg we has changed to our light No.1 headsail as the evening breeze abated. We are well ahead of the Couta boats; in these conditions the spinnakers of the old ocean racers prove to be an overwhelming advantage. It becomes another match race between Mercedes and Boambillee for the glory of coming first. Surprisingly, we don’t take a lot of distance out of Mercedes – despite the small headsail she is doing remarkably well. We round the last mark close together, Boambillee heads to the right and Mercedes to the left of the course. Mercedes seems to have made the right decision, and appears to be ahead when a little more pressure builds out to the right. John stays calm and in total control. Slowly but surely, Boambillee pulls ahead, and gets the gun. Victory!

Most importantly, victory over those two Couta boats. The thousand Guineas has been won for the Classic Yacht Association. The Guinea Cup is ours.

But surely this is just Chapter 1 of many more. In reality, the conditions very much favoured Boambillee, the old but slippery S&S. In more breeze we would have trouble shy reaching with spinnakers, while the Couta boats can reach with remarkable speeds. They proved how high they can point going to windward, and not at the expense of boat speed. Different winds, different seas, and I’m sure they can be faster in some conditions than the ocean racers. Certainly it was not for lack of skill, or potential boat speed as demonstrated by the Couta boat sailors.

The argument has begun...should the old ocean racers be banned from using their spinnakers? I don’t believe so. These boats are what they are. The ocean racers have accommodation, weigh much more, and both Boambillee and Mercedes are authentic – they are essentially have not been altered since the 1960’s. In some conditions the older ocean racers will win, while I suspect the Couta boats will win in conditions which favour them. Let the gods decide.

However, it was Boambillee’s day that fine evening in October. Thanks to Martin Ryan for carrying our drunken ideas to fruition, and to the Couta boat owners, skippers and crew for making the enormous effort to get their boats to the top of the bay to challenge for the Cup. Stand by for Chapter 2.
PLANKING WOODEN BOATS

RICK MITCHELL

In this article I will be discussing the different ways wood can be used to plank hulls, and examining the advantages and disadvantages of each of these methods.

Traditional wooden boats are made up of individual components that are fitted and fastened together, and the design of these components allows for the wooden pieces to move in relation to each other as the vessels works in a seaway, or as their relative moisture content alters.

Traditionally built boats are planked in one of two ways, edges butt up against one another and the outside surface of the hull is smooth. In English boatbuilding tradition, the overlapping method is called clinker (in American tradition it is called lapstrake, as the planks, or strakes, lap each other). The second method is called carvel. Traditional hull planking runs fore and aft.

Modern timber boatbuilding techniques create monocoque hulls where the components are all glued together making the hull a single unit. These structures need to be isolated from moisture to minimise the movement of the timber that forms the basis of their construction. The introduction of water into the timber will cause the timber to swell, forcing the individual parts of the hull to detach from the monocoque, thus destroying the structural nature of the hull.

There are essentially two ways to make a wooden boat using modern techniques, firstly strip planked where narrow planks run fore and aft and are sheathed inside and out with fibreglass cloth in epoxy resin. The second method uses two or more layers of planking running at opposite angles, 45° to the keel. These layers are glued and fastened together, then epoxy glass sheathed inside and out.

CLINKER PLANKING

Clinker planking developed in northern Europe. All Viking boats were clinker planked. Clinker boats are built plank first and once planked, have their ribs bent into them.

This method of planking produces a very light weight hull as each of the laps of the planks forms a kind of fore and aft stringer giving stiffness to the boat so that it resists the racking (or twisting) movement that is created as a boat moves over a set of waves. The laps also allow the planking thickness to be thinner (and therefore lighter) than a carvel planked boat of similar size.

The water tightness of this kind of hull relies on the quality of the fit between the planks at the laps. The laps are made up of a long rolling bevel. This makes it a building technique that requires the boatbuilder to have a high level of skill. However the fact that the laps are relatively wide (usually twice the thickness of the plank) means that the timber can shrink and grow as its moisture content changes and yet still maintain the hull’s watertight integrity. For this reason clinker boats are well suited to uses where they are not in the water all the time. Ships’ lifeboats where often clinker built as they spent most of their life on skids on the ships’ deck in all kinds of weather. Small racing dinghies that likewise were not in constant use were also often clinker planked. The main disadvantage of clinker built boats is that they require a skilled boatbuilder to both build and repair.

CARVEL PLANKING

Most classic yachts built before the 1960s are carvel planked. In Europe this construction method developed in the Mediterranean. There are two ways to build a carvel hull. The oldest is to set up the keel, stem and sternpost (the backbone) and then plank, temporarily fastening the planks to each other. Once planking has been completed frames running thwartship are fitted out against the planks and the planks are then fastened to these frames. The more modern way of building a carvel hull, developed in the late 1600s is to set up a backbone then set up the frames and plank straight onto the frames.

Once the hull is planked it needs to be caulked. That is, some form of vegetable fibre very loosely spun into a rope must be inserted under pressure into the seams between the planks. A variety of materials have been used over the years to caulk plank
seams: moss and bark, hemp, jute and cotton fibres. These seams are then paid (or filled) with pitch, or some form of putty.

Boats can be built this way from about 16' up to 300' in length. The maintenance of a carvel hull is restricted to painting and occasionally hardening up the caulking. The main advantage of carvel built hulls is that they are easy to repair. Each component is relatively easy to remove and replace. Relative to a modern monocoque hull, carvel boats tend to be heavy, although with care, because of the relative ease of part replacement, a carvel hull may still be sailing when she is 100 years old.

**STRIP PLANKING**

Strip planking developed on the east coast of America in the middle of the twentieth century. In its original form it was similar to carvel planking in that the planks ran fore and aft, however they were much narrower than the planks used in carvel construction and instead of being only fastened to the frames were also edge fastened to each other. This produced a boat that was quickly and cheaply built but was almost impossible to repair. These were boats that were expected to have a working life of around 20 years.

The development of thermosetting resins (polyester and epoxy) during and after World War 2 radically altered this technique. By strip planking a hull, gluing and edge fastening the planks to each other, then sheathing it inside and out with epoxy saturated glass cloth a very strong hull can be made. The structure of the hull is essentially a sandwich with the wood forming a core between two strong, impervious and stiff plastic laminations, it is possible to use very light wood in the hull. Western red cedar is often used. This results in a relatively light hull.

Strip planking can be used on any traditionally shaped hull and is ideally suited to the amateur builder as it is a relatively straightforward construction technique.

Because it is a monocoque construction, it is essential that the moisture content of the timber remains as constant as possible to minimise potential movement in the timber core. Should the epoxy seal be broken either inside or outside it is critical that the timber under the break be fully dried out before the epoxy seal is repaired.

This is the main disadvantage of strip plank construction that it is often complex to repair well, particularly if the timber core has become saturated.

**COLD MOULDED PLANKING**

Cold moulded planking was developed in the nineteenth century where it was used to build lightweight lifeboats. The Port Fairy Lifeboat, built in the 1850s and probably the oldest Australian built boat still afloat, was built using this method.

The planking for modern cold moulded boats is made up of multiple layers of thin timber laid at a number of differing angles. Usually the first two layers are laid at right angles to each other and at 45° to the keel. These layers may be covered by another layer that runs fore and aft. Each of these layers is glued to the one underneath it and the whole structure is sheathed inside and out with fibre cloth, usually glass, saturated in epoxy resin. These days cold moulded hulls are often vacuum bagged to minimise the possibility of voids forming between the layers of timber. This produces an extremely light, extremely stiff hull and is best suited to racing and high speed hulls.

Quite radical shapes can be produced using cold moulding, because the grain of the timber runs in a number of ways, it is possible to use quite thin timber which can be bent and twisted to develop quite extreme shapes. Cold moulded hulls need to be built over fairly substantial jigs which add to the building costs. However, old hulls that are in poor condition and not worthy of restoration either because they are not significant enough, or because they would be too expensive to restore, can have their life extended by having a layer (or 2) of timber cold moulded over the existing planking. Depending on the condition of the original hull this process could add 15 to 20 years onto a boat’s life.

In the next issue I will be talking about the various ways that carvel hull planks can be caulked or splined. We would welcome any questions readers may have about this, or any other, aspect of wooden boats, their construction, maintenance and repair. We can be contacted at mh.shipwrights@gmail.com
Col Bandy had an infectious disease.
It has a long medical terminology but translates as ‘unbridled enthusiasm’.
And it was very infectious.
I caught it...badly...and I have Col to thank for it.
He upped the bar all the way...you couldn’t be with him for long without getting into the buzz of the activity.
If there was a problem he had an answer...not just a simple answer either.
He would redesign whatever, to make it work and not stop there...he would then go out and make it.
The resin Classic Yacht trophies are testament to a Col idea followed by a Col action.
His unstinting work for the Classic Yacht Association of Australia in Victoria, countless hours calculating handicaps, even more time meeting with other wooden boaties to organise races and regattas, presentations and barbies, not least to produce his post-race summaries, Musings from the couch, was effort that created a great reward for him and a great reward for all of us who benefited from his tireless energy.

He told me once his ticker problem, which he had lived with for more than a decade, gave him about 60 per cent capacity.
I was in awe because my 100 per cent was only just keeping up.
The smiling photo above was taken by me from Tumlaren Zephyr. I can only presume from the smile on his face that Bungoona was passing us at the time.
I am truly grateful to have known Col and been a brief witness to a life of passion and achievement.
To Joy, Jo, James and Finn I can say from my heart, a special man has been in our presence.

AT HIS WAKE AT THE ROYAL YACHT CLUB OF VICTORIA ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2009, JOY BANDY, COL’S WIFE OF 37 YEARS, HAD THESE WORDS.

About 12 years ago Col fell in love with a younger woman. She was what you would call ‘high maintenance’. She demanded a lot of Col’s time, personal attention and heaps of money. She constantly required makeovers. She was greedy, broad-beamed and definitely male-centric.
She even taught Col a new language. After some time I became familiar with words like gaff, halyard, vertical leech, bilge and bow sprit.
Col was besotted. He was passionate about what she brought to his life. In spite of this I’ll be ever grateful for her, Bungoona, because she introduced Col to the sport of sailing, and in particular Classic yachts.
In Col style he committed and immersed himself in the voluntary work of the Classic Yacht Association of Australia and it was here that he established many great and valued friendships with those who shared in the love of old boats.
One of his favoured projects was the Cup Regatta. He loved the camaraderie with the Kiwis, the sailing, the after-race post mortems and social activities.
In fact his last holiday was in Auckland last February at the Southern Trust Regatta. He talked about it endlessly.
Col always gave his best at whatever he undertook so Jo, James and I see it fitting that a trophy is presented to the best performing yacht in the Cup Regatta.
We thank the Committee for honouring Col in this way.
He would have been chuffed!
At Scotch College, Melbourne, Michael’s dentist father arranged for a special programme. Michael was not an academic. He spent a lot of time in the woodwork classroom under ‘Bulldog’ Dent, a perfectionist.

He also spent a lot of time with old man McPherson, head of McPhersons Ltd (Engineers and machinery makers) in his workshop.

Michael rowed in the winning Centenary Head of the River crew in 1951 as number 2. During school Christmas holidays, he and his brothers camped at Portsea, Victoria. Michael would sail his Tumlaren Saga the forty miles across the bay, towing his wooden Norwegian designed pram dinghy. Six weeks of rowing and sailing followed, although Michael seemed allergic to swimming. Michael left school and for three years worked in sawmilling for Neville Smith in Gippsland.

He returned and then worked in partnership with his brother Frank as a builder.

Michael trialled unsuccessfully for the 1956 Olympics. After Saga, he sailed a Soling.

He loved wood best and when I invited him to Tasmania to view the Alma Doepel which was moored with the scow Kathkit at Electrona he was captivated and set out on the mammoth restoration task which he completed with enormous determination. The team even built slipway (rails, cradle and winch) to pull the ship out for a six-month rebuild of the hull.

Michael gained his Master 4 Certificate and ran the Alma Doepel sail-training programme for 11 years putting more than 5000 young people to sea.

An achiever. A great man.
Say the word “rum” and for me it will evoke many images. I see the turquoise Caribbean, the Jolly Roger, gold doubloons and pieces of eight, Long John Silver and peg legs, bronzed buxom beauties in floral skirts and bandanas, and slaves working in sugar cane fields. I can still smell the sickly sweet molasses wafting from the sugar mills along the Tweed River of my childhood, Mum’s delicious rum custard and a flaming plum pudding at Christmas courtesy of bottle of Bundaberg rum and the warmth of rum and milk (Moreton Bay porridge) after the dawn service at ANZAC Day. Thus for me, rum is the most evocative of drinks, unlike wine, whisky, or beer.

In French as in most European languages, nouns have gender i.e. masculine or feminine. The Fates decreed that rum be masculine (le rhum). After a hard day’s sailing in a 35 knot nor’easter with waves crashing into my cockpit and down my cabled polo neck jumper, with my red ensign shredded and my blasphemous red macaw hanging featherless and freezing from my left shoulder, don’t hand me a chilled well-oaked chardonnay, an amber ale, nay not e’en a dram of your best single malt. Pour me generous rum and one that looks like the bronze thighs of a Tahitian maiden and not one of them (sic) pale imitations blanched white like a sperm whale’s tooth for milady’s cocktails, complete with a pigmy’s umbrella and a swizzle stick.

The origin of the word “rum” is obscure but may come from the word for rum, “rumbustion” or perhaps a contraction of the Latin for sugar cane “Saccharum officinarum”. Cane sugar along with coffee and rum saw its debut in Europe in the 17th century and at first sugar was dispensed by apothecaries. Rum reached Australia in the late 18th century and is now second only to beer in popularity.

Rum is forever associated with Admiral Vernon, who in 1740 instituted his infamous Order to Captains No. 349; the dilution of the daily ration of neat rum in the proportion of one quart of water to half a pint of rum, in a scuttled butt and for “those that are good husbandmen receive extra lime juice and sugar that it may be more palatable to them”. As he wore a cloak made of the fabric, grogram, he thereafter bore the contemptuous nickname of “Old Grog”. The Royal Navy rum ration ceased on “Black Tot Day”, 31 July, 1970 but is still available as Pusser’s (viz. Purser’s) Rum; a dark, robust rum still made in the original wooden pot stills.

The test of rum for me is whether it is nice to drink it neat. Regrettably our rums are third rate. Rums are made either from molasses, or less often, from the first-pressed sugar cane juice which gives a smoother finish and more subtle, floral flavours. The French call this type “rhum agricole” and my favourite is Ron Zacapa from high altitude of Guatemala. I also like L’Arbre du Voyageur 1998, from Martinique and the slightly orange marmalade taste of Pyrat Rum, from Anguilla in the British West Indies, Angostura from Trinidad, Ron Matusalem from Cuba and the hint of vanilla in Appleton’s from Jamaica. Drink these neat like cognac. After a hard day’s winter sailing I come home to a rum toddy; a nip of Pusser’s rum in a medium glass with boiling water, a teaspoonful of Demerara sugar and a slice of lime. Indeed a small amount of Demerara sugar goes well with rum on the rocks. I have enjoyed seeking out new rums which are now competing with best Cognac, Armagnac and my favourite, Calvados. But that is another story.
FOR SALE: FRANCES INTERNATIONAL 8 METER RULE
$200,000

Frances was the third vessel that Ernie Digby built after Independence and Defiance. Defiance was originally gaff rigged but later changed to Marconi.

Frances was built at 63 Victoria Street Williamstown and launched in 1946 with the sail number R8 which she still carries today. Digby sailed Frances to Sydney to challenge for the Sayonara Cup and won it three times. After Digby passed in 1960, Frances was sold to a Brighton syndicate and later privately to a Tasmanian resident and returned to the Royal Victorian Yacht Club by Alex Morrison, past Royal’s Commodore. Captain Michael Wood purchased Frances in 1994. Frances was restored to original lines and in now offered for sale since Captain Michael Wood’s passing. Contact Anton Oxenbauer on (03) 9398 3399.

FOR SALE: CONCERTO 1969 TED HOOD 50’ CENTREBOARD KETCH
$235,000

Designed and built by Ted Hood as his own boat. Fibreglass hull and deck moulded under Lloyd’s supervision by Tyler Yachts UK. Shipped to Holland for solid teak fit out by the famous Frans Maas’ Yard. (Including beautiful and practical tiled open fireplace). Originally rigged as a ketch or "racing yawl" under the CCA Rule of the time, her mizzen has been removed and stored and as a result she has a lovely long and roomy cockpit. For the past 7 years she has been a much loved family boat and weekender on Pittwater and her standing and running rigging were replaced in 2008 before a 1500nm Queensland cruise last Christmas school holidays. Numerous photographs, articles and full details are available at http://www.directorspot.com/concerto.php or by contacting her owner John Lamble on 0408 970 087.

FOR SALE-ZEPHYR-AN ICONIC MELBOURNE TAMMLAREN $30,000

History: Built over a five year period beginning in 1947 by Bob Stevens in his backyard ZEFIR (Swedish for Zephyr) was built as Knud Reimers designed with hot zinc galvanised frames and floors, with well seasoned Jarrah garboards and Queensland Kauri topsides. Spruce deck-beams and cabin and cockpit structures. She was raced successfully in Port Adelaide by Bob until the early sixties then sold to Howard Fox in Melbourne in 1975 when her name was changed to ZEPHYR. She was purchased by Kevin Read in 1993 after coming ashore at St Kilda and had two major restorations that replaced the galvanised ribs and floors and completely refurbished the hull and cabin and finished with a laid teak deck.

For More information contact Roger Dundas dundas@melpc.org.au
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Return this completed form to the following address:

CYAA Membership Officer
65 Surrey Road
South Yarra
Victoria 3141
admin@classic-yacht.asn.au

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT - BECOME A MEMBER!

Your support makes all the difference, and costs so little.

To ensure you never miss another issue of this newsletter, why not become a member of the Classic Yacht Association of Australia. Full membership costs just $75, or crew/friends membership for $50 including GST.

APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

I ....................................................................................
(Full name of Applicant)
Of .................................................................................
(address)
wish to become a member of the Classic Yacht Association of Australia and apply to have my Yacht accepted on to the Yacht Register for the annual fee of $75

Signature of Applicant..............................................
Date .............................................................................

Please supply the following details:
Phone Number ..........................................................
Fax Number ...............................................................
Email Address ............................................................
Boat Name ............................................................... 
Designer ........................................................................
Date of Build ...........................................................
Construction ............................................................
LOA ...................... Rig .................................
Sail Number ..............................................................
Details of other Yacht Club Memberships:
......................................................................................

APPLICATION FOR CREW MEMBERSHIP

I ....................................................................................
(Full name of Applicant)
Of .................................................................................
(address)

wish to join the Classic Yacht Association of Australia as a crew member / friend for the annual fee of $50

Signature of Applicant..............................................
Date .............................................................................

Please supply the following details:
Phone Number ..........................................................
Fax Number ...............................................................
Email Address ............................................................
Boat Name ............................................................... 
Details of other Yacht Club Memberships:
......................................................................................