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Editor's Note:

Thanks to all those who have contributed to this edition of the Hollow Log.

March was a big month for the club with the Sydney Festival attracting a record number of wooden speedboats this year. It is heartening to see them coming out of the woodwork, so to speak. While not all owners are members, it is good to know that there are many more out there appreciative of these older powerboats.

Please, keep talking to me

Greg Carr

Around the Traps

Victoria:

Pearl Necklace, a 15' Walker, has been sold. The "ex" Melbourne based runabout has found a new home in the Snowy Mountains in NSW.

I hear rumors that Nagambie is being closed to speedboats. Does anyone know if there's any truth to this?

NSW:

Boat collector Jeff Lockhart has a new addition to his fleet - a 13' Lewis skiff (report elsewhere).

Ken Warby has added the Lewis skiff *Flamingo* to his stable.

National Get Together:

I have received feedback from only two people so far about this event. This event, in some shape or form, will happen this year. Wagga's Lake Albert is the likely venue, depending on water levels, numbers and feedback. The success of an event such as this depends on you and we need to know about your attendance and thoughts as early as possible - like right now.

Incorporation:

The feedback received from the article about Incorporation in the last issue of the Newsletter was disappointing to say the least. Three responses - I don't think any more needs to be said, it just makes it real hard.

Etcetera, etcetera

Each member should have found a membership card included with this quarter's newsletter.

The card has been introduced for a few reasons:

- As a receipt for your membership fees
- To record your member number, something you need to know if applying for insurance through Club Marine
- And if nothing else, to give us all that warm fuzzy feeling of "belonging"

Email to the Club:

I understand that some of you have emailed me but have not received a reply. My apologies if that has happened to you.

I currently receive around 130 emails per day with the vast majority of them being junk mail. I have taken measures to stop this, but still cop them. Every day I clear them out, but you can imagine what I walk into if I go away for a couple of days. I go through them quickly and any mail received without a subject or at least a legitimate subject is deleted straight away, so make sure you make the content of the "Subject" something to register with me. "Wooden Boats" always works.

Even so, if you do not receive a response, please resend it.



THE HOLLOW LOG

Volume 4 Issue 2

March 2004

The Classic Australian Wooden Power Boat Association

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The Sydney Classic & Wooden Boat Festival

The 2004 Sydney Classic & Wooden Boat Festival was held recently at the Australian National Maritime Museum on Sydney's Darling Harbour. Many said that it was the best Festival yet and I would probably have to agree.

Unfortunately, the weather was not kind this year, with constant heavy rain for much of both days. Even so, it was pleasing to see many people still in and looking at the boats. Luckily temperatures were quite mild, meaning getting wet was not really too big a problem.

This year's event saw what would have to have been the largest display of wooden speedboats seen anywhere in Australia for many decades. The range of craft was as varied as it was international. The collection of 25 boats included runabouts



Only a few of the boats attending this year

from Australia, Italy, the USA and New Zealand. Many of the boats had not been seen by us before and it never ceases to amaze me where they all come from - but who's complaining?

In this year's event there was a focus on Lewis boats, of which there were six represented. This coincided with a 60 minute

lecture given by Ron Hodge about his time of employment with the Lewis Brothers in Sydney. Ron started an apprenticeship with Lewis Boats in 1946 and worked there until 1968. He spoke of how boats were designed and built, about racing

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Coming Events

March 2004

- Heritage Boat Show, Williamstown, Melbourne. 27th and 28th of March. This is a big event covering all boat types and is being held in conjunction with the Williamstown Festival - a very large event in itself

April 2004

Victorian Chapter Wet Together, Nagambie. Sunday 4th April. Meet at 10 am at the ramp. BBQ lunch. Contact Derek on 0403 131 304.

National Wooden Power Boat Rally

- No firm dates or venue at this stage, but this event will happen this year. Lake Albert in Wagga is a likely venue and the time to be around October. We need serious expressions of interest for this event as there will be considerable organising to be done. More info next issue.

① Please check for confirmation of dates and venues

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The Classic Australian Wooden Power Boat Association

For general information, contact Greg Carr by phone on: 03 9370 2987 or 0408 937 029 or by e-mail at: NH35_Stormy@bigpond.com or write to the address at the top left of this page.

Merchandise

Caps and polo shirts sporting the Association's logo are available again. Caps are available now and shirts on order. Enquiries/orders to Greg Carr via email.

Shirts are \$27.00 each and caps \$18.00 each.



NSW Chapter Wet Together

Greg Carr

The day on the Hawkesbury River on the Monday following the Sydney Classic & Wooden Boat Festival is certainly becoming a tradition now and the recent day following this year's Festival can only help to cement it as a major day in the classic wooden powerboat calendar.

This year saw seven boats turn up on what was a superb day

weather-wise after a very damp weekend. Blue skies and temperatures in the mid to high thirties made for a perfect

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Boys and their toys

... from page 1

boating day.

Boats attending the event were Suzie Vlamig's 14' Hunts Marine *Little Devil*, Darren Goldberg's 17' Simpkin runabout *Steinway*, Arthur Lighezzolo's 16' Lewis runabout *Arf-a-Mo*, Jeff Lockhart's 13' skiff, Dave Pagano's Lewis skiff *FF Sure* as well as a 1921 22 footer speedboat we nicknamed "*The Tug*" and Neil Blyth's 16' Kencraft runabout *Mystress*.

The day consisted of the normal boat talk made up of discussions about performance, set ups, boat histories, etc. There was quite a bit of test driving of other people's boats.

The river itself also caused a few problems with its infestation of alligator weed. The weed was so thick in many places that you could not navigate around it, so had to travel

through it. This then caused some overheating problems with a couple of boats due to blocked water pickups until we learnt that you didn't idle through it, but went through at speed. The large tree floating down was also a bit of an obstacle, particularly when it entered the inlet and decided to come

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The "Arrival"

Predator hits the water

Darrell Brown

Darrell Brown and Ray Jones took their superb hydro *Predator* out for a spin on the Hawkesbury River recently.

Darrell said the Rolls Royce V12 powered Jones hydro went well on the test day, with only a few bugs to sort out.

Darrell also said the 26 footer was a bit of a handful to turn around on the river, but is certain things will improve once he gets the hang of driving the big craft.

On the test day the engine was fitted with exhaust manifolds that Darrell and Ray had just finished making. Apparently the zoomies are going back on though. The boat was so quiet you could hardly hear it, and the superb sound of a V12 Rolls Royce must be heard!

A few problems arose with the self launching trailer as well, requiring a fair amount of the tow vehicle to be in the water. Normally at race meetings, the boat will be taken in and out of the water by crane, so it shouldn't prove to be much of a problem.

All in all, a successful day for the boys. It shouldn't be too long before we see *Predator* charging around the race scene.

I had a look at *Predator* at the recent Sydney Classic and Wooden Boat Festival and was most impressed with the preparation of big hydro. Congratulations gents.

Quote for Today:

"Originality is thinking for yourself, and not thinking unlike other people"



Lucky!

Paul Siddall and Colin Bailey went skiing a couple of Sundays ago and while it was a great day with good weather, Colin had a bit of trouble with his Gilflie Commanche. Well, maybe 'a bit' is not telling it all. The following is Paul's account of the day:

Colin has the boat going hard, with it running well over 80 mph. He was taking a friend for a ride and although not flat out, he was close. I happened to look over at the boat and all I saw was water spraying out from all over the place, with the deck level with the water and the boat turning left real quick. I thought straight a way that it had done a plank and was going down. Colin was standing up waving furiously and I can tell you that he wasn't saying "hello"!

By the time I untied *Lincoln* and got there he was still in shock. He was drenched and so was his mate. I looked inside the boat and it

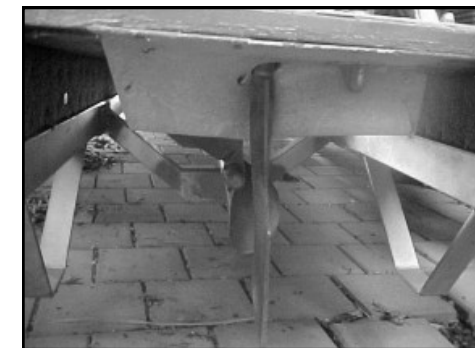
had a heap of water in it. Colin told me he didn't know what happened apart from it stopping fast and losing steering. His mate had gone under the deck with the force and Colin thought that his feet must have gone out through the planks. He told me that he was so happy to see him stand up.

Well, the water wasn't rushing in so I towed him back to the bank and put the boat on the trailer. As we pulled it out there was a lot of water running out the bottom near the prop.

I had a look underneath and I couldn't believe my eyes - it had the sheet of alloy attached to the bottom of the hull above the prop wrapped around the rudder! What had happened was that the bolts along the forward edge of the plate had pulled out and it had peeled back like a piece of paper. The plate is 5 mm thick and I couldn't believe it could do that (the plate is fitted there to prevent a thrown prop blade going through the

hull). The force of it stopping and turning the boat so violently had cracked the gunnel rail all round the deck, split the deck where it has been joined and cracked all around the cockpit.

Needless to say it is need of some major work and Colin is thinking that it might be time for a rebuild.



The offending 5 mm alloy plate

Sydney Harbour Hire Boats

My father lived in Balgowlah when he was in his teens; a Northern Sydney suburb fairly close to Manly and North Harbour. After seeing and reading the article in the February edition of *Australian Power Boat magazine*, he sent me an email regarding a couple of woodies on Sydney Harbour during that time. The following are his words with a couple of relevant comments inserted in [brackets]. I've left it complete as it tends to lend a human element to the tale. He doesn't have any photos unfortunately as he said film for private use was very scarce during the war years.

"At Manly in 1941-2 there were two sets of speed boats which operated from near the Manly ferry wharf.

Ken Breakspere, who owned the flats we were in, near the fire station in Sydney Road, owned "Lets Go" and the "Lets Go Too". He'd imported these from the US as deck cargo and they operated from the eastern side of the wharf near the amusement pier.

They were Chris Craft and had Chrysler 6 cylinder petrol marine engines. They had [from memory] 2 sets of seats aft for passengers and room for 2 beside the driver, so all up was 8 passengers plus driver. They were

kept at Jack Verrall's boat shed at North Harbour and were slipped and kept out of the water. I worked on them at weekends as a rouse-about, tying up, cleaning etc.

Ken joined the RAAF in 1942 and was a sergeant on the RAAF crash boats. He was sent to Port Moresby and was awarded a "Mention in Dispatches" for bravery in rescuing people from the Burns Phillip Co. liner



One of the Kookaburras' survives with the Sydney Heritage Fleet

"Macdhui" in Port Moresby harbour when it was bombed.

He started them [the boats] up again when he got out of the RAAF but gave them up as the novelty had gone. His opposition had 2 boats the "KOALA?" and "KOOKABURRAH" They were made in Sydney as far as I knew and were a copy of the Chris Craft, but they

folded also. The pontoon they operated from in the middle of the pool promenade [at Manly] was destroyed by a Dutch Submarine they had tied up there. They showed visitors over it for a fee. [The pool promenade was washed away in a storm and never replaced.]

Ken was an Australian Champion snow skier [alpine cross-country]. He also owned an Austin Wasp, 1927 model, which we used to ride down to the boatshed in. Nigger was his dog's name and he was a pitch black fat Kelpie which we had to throw out of the car when we drove up Woods Parade, a very steep hill from the harbour to Sydney road. We, Grandma, Fred [my father's brother] and I inherited the dog when Ken went into the RAAF. He loved Grandma and used to follow her everywhere. He would follow her to the shops in Manly, she walked down the hill, and the only way she could lose him was to walk through Woollies and he would be waiting for her at home when she got there without fail.

I don't remember who owned the opposition boats or what happened to them. Ken died a few years ago and still lived in the same flats. The Chris Craft boats had a badge on the bow combining with a number and date on it. This may help with the history."

NSW Chapter Wet Together cont'd

to rest across the boat ramp.

I spent a fair bit of time in the back of a couple of the boats with a video camera at my eye, getting some good action footage of the boats from water level.

Watching that footage later, it was amusing listening to the sound on the video taken from the rear of ARF-A-MO. It had been about 18 months since Arthur had had the boat in the water and it was running a bit rough. Actually, I think its Y Block was only running on about 6½ cylinders. Mind you, it still sounded OK. One thing though, by the end of the day she was running sweetly -just needing the cobwebs blown out.

Club member Graham Lloyd (editor of Power Boat magazine) was there as well and took quite a few pictures of the boats. There was an excellent article on classic woodies

unit manufactured by the company. Pity I have to travel to Sydney to get a drive of this Melbourne based boat. Is this a sign?

FF Sure was given a work out and really got the adrenalin pumping with all who rode in her. This is still a very quick boat and always looks and sounds wonderful.

Little Devil looked good on the water and as usual ran reliably all day, although the weed briefly claimed



Rearin' to go



Just some of the group



Darren, Liz and Luke in Steinway

written by Graham in the Feb-Mar edition of the magazine and if you haven't seen it yet I suggest you go out and pick up a copy. The article included some beautiful photos and gave us (the Club) some terrific exposure (website hits skyrocketed!).

The big circa 1921 22' carvel runabout (*The Tug*) Dave brought along caused some interest. Powered by a 351 ci Ford, this big boat really gets going. Still needing to be finished off after its recent fit out, the boat ran very well on the day. During its final run for the day I am sure I counted about 8 people on board and there was still room to dance.

Steinway impressed all who drove her. This boat runs very smoothly with its Oldsmobile V8 driving through a three speed automatic transmission and Chamberlain V drive. The Chamberlain gearbox is reportedly the last

it as a victim as well. I am sure I saw about 20 kgs of weed being pulled away from the outboard's leg.

The rotary powered *Mystress* again proved what a quick boat it is. Neil has just about got the boat finished now, with the new rear seat looking very classy.

All in all it was a great day. As someone said on the day: "If you didn't enjoy yourself then you don't know what a good time is."



ARF-A-Mo and Mystress

4 Bees II

NSW Chapter member Jeff Lockhart is continuing to add to his collection of classic speed boats with the recent acquisition *4 Bees II*. The little skiff is 13' 8" in length with a beam of 4' 9" and used to race at Deep Water.

The ex Sydney boat came to Jeff from Canberra in good condition after its recent restoration.

After a period of wetting out, Jeff and son Liam recently took the new addition for a run on Lake Munmorah, an old speed testing venue. Typically she leaked like a sieve, but with a bit of foresight, Jeff had installed an electric bilge pump prior to the outing, which coped easily. As the day wore on the leakage rate reduced slightly.

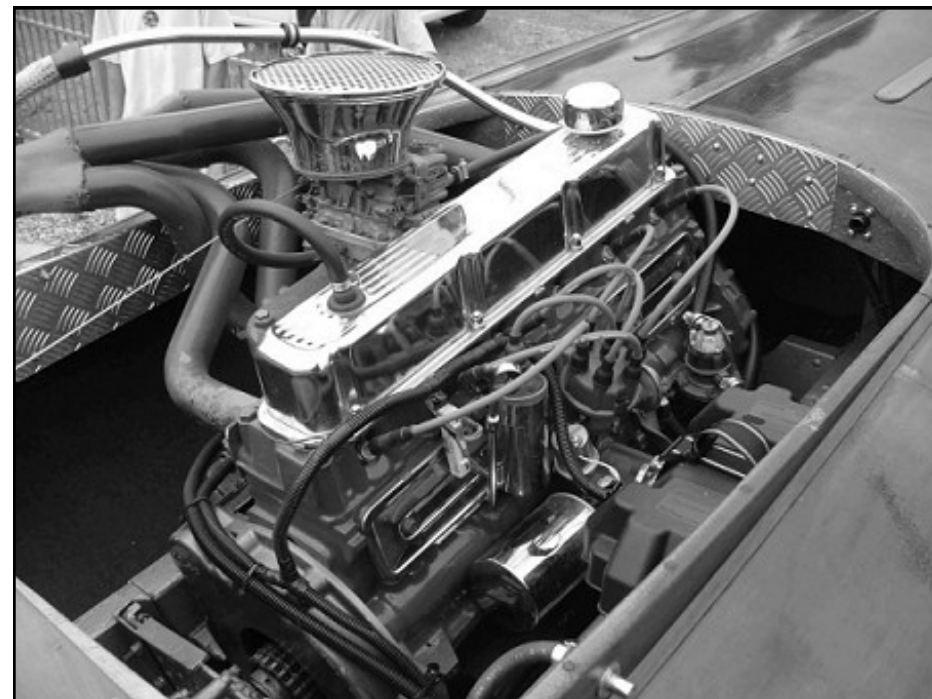
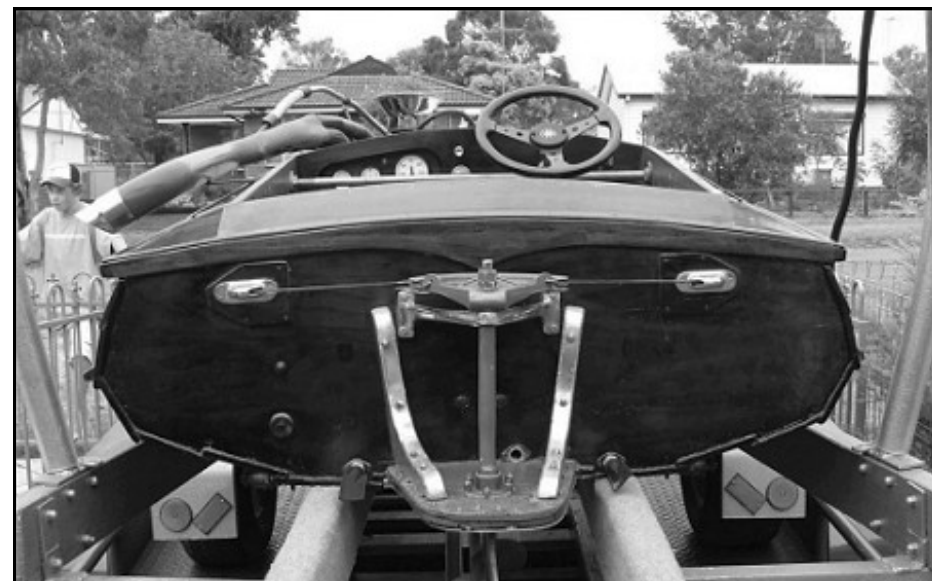
After those first runs it was decided a muffler was in order to reduce the noise from the exhaust that ended virtually next to the driver, making the boat a little more user and environmentally friendly.

On his first drive of the boat, Jeff found the porpoising action, so typical of skiffs, unusual and hard to get used to. Speed did not seem to have much effect on it, although the motor, a Holden Grey, was only taken up to about 4000 rpm due to being freshly rebuilt. Later trials and advice from the "experts" all pointed to fitting trim tabs or tweaking the cavitation plate angle to try and cure the problem, or at least improve it. But then, after seeing the boat on the Hawkesbury River during the recent NSW Chapter Wet Together may mean there is another problem causing the porpoising. With a much lighter driver (Rob Cranfield) at the wheel, the boat performed beautifully. Not too sure about what was said, but I think I heard words that sounded similar to "weight distribution" and "diet", something I won't go any further into.

Both Jeff and Rob reckon the boat is a lot of fun to drive. With Rob at the wheel, the little skiff skipped across the water looking very impressive with its turning ability equal to any task. Mind you, after a couple of long runs up and down the river, when Rob returned to the ramp he found himself sitting in a fair amount of water, a consequence of not turning on the bilge pump.

There are still quite a few of these smaller skiffs about in various states of repair. Some that spring to mind include Zarak, Naiad, Hornet, Cougar, Venus, Piranha, In-M-Ocean, Busy Bee, Fox and Chug-a-Lug.

Hmm, definitely some potential there for a few friendly circuits around a couple of buoys somewhere.



The Sydney Classic & Wooden Boat Festival cont'd



Lewis line up

Rivas are built, was ordered by the Nicholas family (of Aspro fame). Arriving in Melbourne in 1959, the boat was used by the family on Victoria's Lake Eildon before being sold in the late 1960's and moving to Sydney, where it had little use.

1994 included a couple of planks and the transom being replaced.

Illusion was another boat that had not been seen by many prior to the show. The runabout was built by Ritchie Lewis in 1969 and used by him personally for about 20 years.

Peter Moir's *Zarak* was there after its recently completed restoration. The little 13' Brian Storm built skiff is just waiting for a set of extractors before it hits the water.

them and the experimentation with hulls and engines to improve performance not only for racing but also for the everyday runabouts they produced. Ron's talk was accompanied by a slide show showing many of the boats built by the company. Good numbers attended the lectures on both days and all walked away with a better appreciation of the legendary company.

Discovered this year in a partly dismantled condition by Dave Pagano, it was restored for the Festival, with the finishing touches being completed as late as the night before the show.



Dave Pagano's Abbate, "Cassata"

As mentioned earlier, there were some pretty exotic craft in attendance this year. *Suz-Ann*, a 21' 6" Riva was very popular with the crowd. The big Italian boat was first owned by a Mr Linselhof of VDO Instruments fame before being imported to Australia in around 1970.

Another Italian boat that really did catch everyone's attention and was certainly a favourite was a 19' Abbate runabout. This beauty was discovered by Dave Pagano in a garage in suburban Sydney where it had been stored for 34 years. The boat, built in Italy on the opposite side of Lake Como to where the

attending were the runabouts *J.O.E.*, *Comanche*, *Illusion*, *ARF-A-MO* and the racing skiffs *FF Sure* and *Renegade*.

ARF-A-MO had not been seen until this show. Owner Arthur Lighezzolo purchased the boat new from its builder, Ritchie Lewis, in 1969 and has owned it ever since. A restoration in



Darren Goldberg's Steinway

Other imposing boats on show were a 22' 1949 Chris-Craft Sportsman, the 24' Chris-Craft *Silver Gull*, a recently restored 1965 Century Resorter and an early 1980's built Hacker reproduction called *Kookaburra*.

The six Lewis boats

Other raceboats in attendance were the 17' *Inbred*, an APBA entry level design for the 135 ci race class, and *The Graduate*, a mid 1970's built 18' 6" hull fitted with a big block Chev.

Other makes represented were Andrew Petty's Goldsbrough *Sheba II* and Darren Goldberg's Simpkin *Steinway*. Darren made the trip up from Melbourne to put his boat on show. *Steinway* caused some interest in that the Melbourne built Simpkin hulls are not



Arthur Lighezzolo's Lewis



Riva "Suz-Ann"



"Miss Auckland"



"The Graduate" - scary!

often seen in NSW and are especially rare in Sydney.

Hydroplanes in attendance included the imposing Rolls Royce V12 powered *Predator*, *Atomic* and *The Bug*.

Of interest was a very pretty carvel planked speedboat from New Zealand called *Miss Auckland*. This circa 1950 hull is nearing the end of an extensive restoration and attracted a lot of attention.

Lola, a 20' carvel planked runabout and 15' *Mystress* were also there in all their glory.

Apart from yours truly and Darren Goldberg, other interstates visiting the festival this year were members Dave Powley from Victoria and Alan Mansfield from Tasmania. It was great to catch up with these people.

While I have concentrated entirely on speedboats in this article (because that is what this newsletter is all about), there is much more to see and do at these festivals. There are Putt Putt and steam engines displays, superb yachts, rowboats, magnificent Halvorsen cruisers, vintage tug boats, cotta boats, lectures and films and so much more to keep everyone entertained.

Again, it was a great weekend that was followed up by a magnificent Monday, but more on that elsewhere. Roll on Goolwa!



Dave Pagano entered the Best Dressed Crew competition as a raceboat driver. Maybe next time Dave.