



COUTA BOAT ASSOCIATION INC

SCOOP

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CAYZER BOAT BUILDING HISTORY

Four generations of the Cayzer family have been involved in the family boat-building activities since Bob Cayzer went to work for Peter Locke in the early 1930s.

Bob was working as a house builder at this time with his father Nathaniel and his love of boats saw him move *from house building to boat building*.

Bob's grandfather John Cayzer, purchased land in Cheshunt Street Point Lonsdale in 1891 and soon after built a holiday house for his family. Bob's father Nathaniel Cayzer, a Coach Builder by trade, moved to Point Lonsdale with his wife and twin sons Bob and John in 1912 having had a great love of the small sea-side town for many years. Nathaniel, who was in demand as a house builder, became Point Lonsdale's first Real Estate Agent and built many homes in the growing town with his twin sons working for him. *Bob always had an interest in boat building with its shapes and techniques and when the opportunity to work for Peter Locke in the early 1930's came, he jumped at the chance.* He excelled at the craft of boatbuilding and with Peter spending much of his time fishing, Bob carried on the business in his absence. In 1938 Bob's eldest son Aston left school and commenced work as an apprentice with Peter still at the old site in 31 Beach Street, Queenscliff, behind where Peter lived.

They both shared the same love of boats with their shapes and the joy of working with timber to create those shapes. In 1947 Bob and Aston with Bob's twin brother John, who was also now working for Peter, purchased the boat building business from Peter Locke. They saw that with Peter spending more and more time fishing they were in fact running the business so purchase was an obvious move. By now the business was established at 1 Beach Street with a *water frontage and slipway*. The front of the shed was soon adorned with the trading name of *Cayzer Bros and Sons, Boat Builders and Designers*. The first order they took was for a 12 foot clinker dinghy for noted Queenscliff fisherman Dugger Warren. Eventually Bob's second son Robert joined the business and with him brought his business management experience.

Bob and Aston had taken the great knowledge of Peter Locke to combine with their own skills to build boats that were renowned for their strength and seaworthiness. Bob was the designer with a great flair and understanding of what each new boat needed to meet the needs of its owner. In many instances Bob's lines plan for the boat they were building would be turned over and the lines for the next boat

would be drawn on the same sheet of paper. *Models of the intended boat were made to show the fisherman the shape of the boat.*

The early fifties was a time that saw cray-fishing on the South-East coast of South Australia flourishing and Cayzer built boats were in great demand in this region. *At times several boats at a time were under construction in the shed in order to meet the growth in the fishing industry not only in Queenscliff but in the new areas in South Australia.* It was not uncommon for Cayzer Bros and Sons to have a staff of 20 building their boats all to Bob's designs. They made many changes internally to the old shed with the introduction of electric machinery. When they purchased the business the machines were all belt driven by an old Dodge car engine. When replaced by the electric motors the dodge became the winch motor. It was soon replaced by an electric motor that drove the winch through the old dodge gearbox.



CAYZER BOAT BUILDING HISTORY CONTINUED.

In the late fifties the Victorian Government set on a program to replace some of their workboats built during World War 2 because they became outdated for their needs. Cayzer Bros and Sons won the tender for the construction of the first boat and as such found a need to make some long overdue improvements to the old shed. The roof in the main bay, which had been built all those years ago from second hand materials by Peter Locke was raised and replaced to fit the new Government boats in. It was a requirement that the superstructure on these vessels be completed under cover. Previously the shed did not allow the wheelhouse or engine to be fitted until the boat was launched. This work was all carried out at the wharf when the boat was launched. In some cases the new boat would be towed to [Swan Island to use the crane](#) that existed on the jetty.

The new shed would now allow the boat to be completed prior to hitting the water. Another first occurred with the building of this first boat for the State Government, it would not be to Bob's design but was to be built to a design by John Tyrell and Sons, Boat Builders in Ireland. It was a time of great enthusiasm not only to be awarded the contract to build the boat but as Bob put it "to build a design by such a renowned builder". Aston was the architect responsible for the constant construction process with dead lines for the start of the fishing season always having to be met for the new boats and their owners. The plans continued to be turned over for the next boat to be built and contracts were in many cases done on a handshake such was the philosophy of Bob and Aston. [The records that were kept were very few and in many cases the old drawings were dispensed with when the boat was finished.](#) Still to this day the Cayzer Family is unsure how many boats they built but Aston has by memory calculated around 240.

By the late fifties Robert had left the business and Aston's wife Joyce was working in the office. John did not wish to play any other role than that of an employee so the business became [A and R Cayzer](#). John a great lover of boats and boat building with an excellent knowledge of the craft was in fact the painter and was always the first to grab a paint brush to get some red lead on the timber as quickly as possible. Being Aston's uncle he was affectionately known by all who worked in the shed simply as "uncle". This was still appropriate when Aston's sons Allan and Keith joined their father and grandfather building boats.

With the arrival of the sixties the [Cayzer boats continued to be known for their strength and seaworthiness and were in all ports on the southern coastline.](#) The materials used were changing with the scarcity of Huon Pine from Tasmania, Kauri from New Zealand and Jarrah and Karri from Western Australia. A new era was to emerge with the availability of excellent hardwoods from Northern New South Wales and Southern Queensland. Aston who was the principle of the business, had established an excellent relationship with the Duncan family who had several mills in the area and as such they would put aside logs they believed to be suitable for the Cayzer Boats and hold them until they received the next boat order.

The boats from 40 feet up were now all planked from Iron Bark or Spotted Gum from these mills and were extremely strong. The timber was of excellent quality and it became very rare to break a rib during the steam bending process. The boats were getting bigger and the demands for more comfortable fit-outs for the owners increasing. The Cayzer family had the luxury of being able to [launch their boats directly from the shed via their slipway into the water.](#) Apart from being used to launch new boats, the slipway was constantly in use for the maintenance and repair of the fishing fleet. The slipway was unique in that the cradle had to be pulled into the water as well as out of the water because of the very flat grade on the rails. In the early days the old dodge was simply put in either forward gear or reverse gear to launch or retrieve the cradle. When the electric motor was installed it was able to be reversed simply by the push of a button. The slipway also had the [ability to move the boats sideways or traverse](#) them into the yard for major maintenance. This also enabled boats to be built side by side in the shed and traversed to the main slipway on launching day. The launching of a new boat was always a major event



from when the cradle was placed under the new boat until the champagne was broken on the bow and down it went. As with the launching of a new boat the first sea trials were also a great time. Such was the excitement Allan and Keith were often allowed the day off school to be part of the activity of the larger boats trials. Aston would always take the helm for the first trip away from the wharf. Whether up the bow watching the new boat cut through the water or down the stern, for Allan and Keith, being on the boat was the place to be. This was not so for [Bob who always was at the end of the 'creek' to watch the new boat go past](#) and then down the end of the main pier where he would watch until they returned to the wharf, something the young Allan could not understand.

1963 Aston's eldest son Allan joined the workforce as an apprentice and became not only the family's fifth apprentice but the third generation in the business. In 1964 Aston's second son Keith joined the family to become the sixth apprentice. Bob and Aston were pleased to see the next generation continuing the family tradition and both were ever keen to pass on their great knowledge. "Uncle" continued in his quiet way and with a workforce around 12, the boats continued to roll out of the shed. The scallop industry had emerged in Victoria with strong boats required for this demanding type of fishing. Bob continued to meet the design demands of the growing fishing fleet and Allan who had possessed a keen interest from a young age in his grandfather's designs was now involved in the design process. [The drawings were now required to be submitted to South Australian and Victorian Authorities prior to commencement and the detail was much more intensive than in those early years.](#) These plans were not thrown out after being used and accurate records were now kept. While Allan was still at school he had shown an interest in Bob's designing skills, Bob had said to him that anyone could design a boat, the trick was knowing whether it was right or not.



In 1967 after the normal closing time of 5 o'clock Bob was working back and while cutting a small piece of timber on the circular saw he tragically severed the fingers on his left hand. In his normal calm

manner he called Aston who was still at work with him, to drive him to hospital. The following day while in hospital he commented to Aston and Allan that he had concerns for his music and his drawing without fingers on his left hand. On the way home from the hospital Aston commented on the need to get the lines plan for the next boat done for the owner to see. Allan suggested that he could do the drawing and so completed the design. *The design became perhaps the most popular the family built with 24 boats coming from those plans.* Bob was satisfied with that drawing perhaps not only for the design but that he had been able to pass some of his great knowledge to his grandson. When the day arrived for the sea trials for this boat Bob asked Allan to drive him to the end of the creek where they watched the new boat pass and then they went to the main pier where Aston circled several times at different speeds before he returned to the wharf. *They talked how the boat sat in the water, how it turned and how much disturbance it created.* Allan realized why Bob had always stayed ashore to watch a new boat rather than simply go for the ride. Another lesson had been given and Allan chose the shore for the sea trials from then on.

Boats continued to roll out of the old shed without a single day that a boat was under construction. Bob and John retired and Aston, Allan and Keith were now entrenched in the Boat Building business. Several boats were built for various State Government departments but they now chose the Cayzer designs rather than the John Tyrell design used years before. The old shed was repainted and was now adorned with the name *Cayzer Boats*. The boats varied in length from 15 to 75 feet, from small fishing boats to large ferries and in some cases pleasure boats or what we now call recreational boats. The seventies saw boats continue to roll out of the shed and down the slipway with that design Allan had drawn years before, a regular for the fishing fleet as well as the recreational fleet. The seventies sadly also saw the passing of John and Bob. The legacy they had left not only to the generations that followed in their footsteps, but also to the fishing industry, cannot be measured. During this period Keith left to pursue other interests and the construction of the first of three steel hulled boats that Aston and Allan were to build took place. Their introduction into steel fabrication came at the request of owners of wooden boats they had previously built, wishing to utilize the Cayzer design and methodology.

In 1978 Cayzer Boats was offered the opportunity to relocate on land in Larkin Parade. Since 1947 they had operated on a site that was crown land with no more than a three month permissive occupancy lease. Aston and Allan agreed it was the right thing to do. It was a major move to not only build a new shed but it would mean operating without a slipway. Timing of the move was critical. With advance orders constantly in hand the move was timed immediately following a launching. *The last boat to be launched from the old shed was built for the Australian Army.* During the construction the Army personal, keen to show off their new boat to the Navy, brought some of their Navy colleagues to see the boat while under construction. The senior Navy officer asked Allan where the naval architect's office was and was astonished with the reply that there wasn't a naval architect. He then asked where the lofting shed was and was equally surprised when told the boat was lofted on the section of floor painted white under the rubbish over there.

The steel frame built in the old shed in the fifties was used as the main bay in the new shed. The construction of the new shed and demolition of the old shed took three months, a lot of which was done "after hours" so as to create as little disruption to the boat building as possible. *A 21 foot couta boat* under construction in the eastern section of old shed was moved to the new shed and *became the first boat out of the new home.* Boats continued to come out of 2 Larkin Parade but were cradled across the road and launched by crane. The largest boat built by the family, the 80 foot steel hulled St Andrew was built in the new shed as well as timber boats from 18 foot couta boats to 60 foot fishing boats. In 1987 Aston remarked to Allan who in the early seventies had become the principle of the family business, that he was considering retirement. Aston was injured in an accident at the

old shed in 1972 and was finding the heavy work associated with the larger boats difficult. Allan was aware that his three young sons, although having a great love for boats and growing up with boats and boat-building, were not likely to follow in the footsteps of the generations before them and suggested that they could sell the business. They both agreed that this should be explored. The property was sold and the last boat under construction was completed. As Allan and Aston wound up the operation with the building of their last boat, Allan's son's Damian, Rohan and Nathan were often recruited to help when an extra pair of hands was needed. *There was a link to the next generation after all.*

Building a wooden boat is as much about sculpture as building. It is a craft tinged with art. Rarely were two Cayzer Boats identical. People like Bob and John, Aston, Allan and Keith Cayzer, blessed with carpenter's hands and artist's eyes who belonged to the brotherhood of boat-builders and fishermen were practical people with their secrets and superstitions, fantasies and folklore that they passed down to their sons and grandsons.



In 1996 with the pending arrival of Damian's first child, Allan reflected on his childhood and his lifelong association with boats and what his heritage had given him and suggested to Aston that they should build one more boat for the Cayzer generations that were to follow. The joys associated with growing up around boats that first Aston, then Allan and Keith had experienced, would not be repeated without a family boat that had links to their boat-building history. *It was agreed that they would build a 21 foot couta-boat* and Allan proceeded to design another vessel that they would build. The McNulty family in Benalla, who had supplied the hardwood for many couta-boats years before were contacted and the timber was ordered. The Morrisons in Straghan were contacted to see if by chance some Huon Pine could be located. Remarkably Ern Morrison said he had a pack of boat boards he had been keeping and told Allan that he was more than welcome to use them for this boat. Aston built the hull in his back yard in Yarrowonga with the help of Allan and Damian. When completed the hull was moved to Point Lonsdale where Allan Damian and Nathan together finished the boat for the then three years old Nicholas. Aston made regular visits from Yarrowonga to lend his assistance.

Today Keith has returned to boat-building in Queenscliff with his son Daniel joining him to continue the tradition. What the future holds for Keith and Daniel in a world far removed from the days of Bob and John rests with the fourth generation. Bob would be delighted with their activities. Aston is delighted with their activities and has given his grandson Daniel help and advice with the clinker dinghy he is building. Aston is indeed an artist when it comes to building clinker planked boats and he regularly makes the journey from Yarrowonga to Queenscliff to see what is happening. Allan is still a keen observer of their boat-building activities as are Damian, Nathan and now Nicholas and Christopher.

*Contributed by Allan Cayzer CMM
Manager, Queenscliff Harbour*

DR BARRY'S STORY

March 2000. I had just graduated from the University of Papua New Guinea with a Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery Degree and about to board a plane for Alotau, the capital of Milne Bay Province, to commence my two year internship as a rural doctor. Milne Bay is an "Island Province" where over 100,000 people live scattered among the island clusters which stretch eastward to the Solomons.

My decision to change from carpenter, building foreman, project manager in Oz to being a rural GP in PNG is another story but came from working in a remote village for four years and experiencing at first hand how village people constantly struggle with health, nutrition and the tropical environment. TB, diarrhoea, malaria and pneumonia plagued most families causing high infant mortality (10%) and a life expectancy around 53 years. The exposure had changed me and my genetic Ozzie way of life for good. During the next twelve years I was to sell my much loved "Colin Archer", say "no" to potential marital bliss, live in a 10x6 "cell" in order to remain focused on my "mission" through two degrees and countless negative remarks from academics ("aren't you too old to become a doctor") Knowing I would be still single, 52 years old and penniless at the end of all this didn't worry me. (I had already read too many St. Francis books as a youth!) The "bel hot" energy kept flowing and I wanted to contribute to the wellbeing of those in poor health and less fortunate than myself. (to the average Aussies that would constitute the rest of the planet). As the plane circled over the waters of Milne Bay, it felt great to be finally coming back to the sea after ten years of "boatlessness".

The idea of building a boat gained momentum during my internship and time as a surgical registrar. *Trying to organize health patrols to the outer islands was always a problem due to a lack of funds to charter boats.* When health patrols were finally arranged by the Health Department, they were of too short a duration to be useful and the boat would be full of non health officials and families visiting relatives. To have my own boat would solve this problem.

A chance meeting with "mad Pete", an expatriate from Phillip Island, who knew of the late Ken Lacco and his famous couta boat designs, for some reason sparked my interest. He talked of their shallow draught 'up front' (perfect for the short steep beaches), turn of speed and easy construction!!.



Dr Barry Kirby and his Ken Lacco designed Couta boat, who would have thought a Couta boat would be built as a serious work boat today. Shown here bending the bowsprit.

I had never heard of the couta boats let alone set eyes on one. (pardon my ignorance, I was/am a lover of Norwegian double enders) I contacted Ken Lacco who was now living in San Remo.

He was very helpful over the phone and sounded like a thorough gentleman whom I hoped to meet one day. Plans for a 26' 6" couta boat duly arrived in the mail. Now one advantage of being a rural doctor in Alotau (or anywhere for that matter) is that your friends don't ever want you

to leave and will 'scheme' to any lengths to keep you in town including offers of a place to build the boat and free power and access to lumber necessary for the project, knowing full well "this will probably take him years".

Construction started with the purchase of a 50'x 3'6" diameter log of kasi kasi for K250 (\$120) in February 2003. Kasi kasi is resistant to marine worm and was used for Warf piles during the war, and many are still in place. It is so hard the local saw mills refuse to break down the logs as it blunts their saw blades with the first cut, so I had to use a chain saw with a Canadian bar to carve out the keel, stem and stern. The keel was cut for a 28' 6" couta simply because the log was long enough and finished off at 12"x 8" with tapers at stem and stern. I should add... and burned out one chainsaw, one power planer and a power saw in the process.

The camber in the keel was achieved by rapping the keel in plastic and steaming it for a whole day while supporting the weight of a bobcat with its bucket full of gravel pressing down in the middle. But then I was doing orthopedic surgery at the time. Perfectly understandable!! I remember ringing Tim Phillips later inquiring as to how he got the bend in the keel. Ringing at 8am from PNG (same EST) is the best time as the public servants aren't at work yet, but this irritated Tim greatly I was to find out. "Absolutely ridiculous" I can hear Tim say, "you simply support the keel at its ends and it will sag for you.. look, I'm too busy to talk at this time". Gee, what a stressed bunch they are 'down there', I thought. Ha,ha.

Now leaving all this extra weight in the keel and deviating from the plan was of some concern to me so I rang Ken to ask his advise. He assured me there was no problem "to keeping the weight on the bottom" but during the course of our conversation he told me his health was failing and he "would be lucky to make it to Christmas." This came as a sudden shock and saddened me greatly even though we had been acquainted for only a short time. I was building his boat, we had already "bonded" and here he was saying, I'm not going to be around to answer any more of your questions. It seemed so final. There was a moment of silence; I was struggling to say something. "...your boats will sail on for a hundred years and give enjoyment to many" was my eventual reply. Ken Lacco passed away in the winter of 2002. *It wasn't until August 2006 when I traveled to Sorrento to meet Tim Phillips and see my first of many couta boats that I realized what a wonderful legacy Ken Lacco and other couta boatmen had left us all.*

Off cuts from the log were used to make a steam box 35' long to take the full length planks. The box was lined with tin, had space for two planks and had a hinged lid (to facilitate loading) which was tightened down with wedges. The boiler was made from an old gas cylinder with two 1 1/2" pipe outlets running into the box. The steam was "super heated" by hanging half 44 gallon drums from the pipe and setting fires in each. The box was aligned with the keel so that planks could be pulled from the end of the box and quickly moved forward into position. Ribs were steam bent from back sawn 2 1/4" x 1 1/4" kwila. Towards amidships, ribs had to be cut lengthwise down from the shear and up from the keel using a hand saw to facilitate bending. The ribs were checked into the keel and held with copper nails. Kwila floors (4"x2") were placed at every rib and fastened onto the keel with hot dipped galvanized angled drift bolts. Full length planking was cut from 1 1/4" Masawa, which is worm resistant and bends well. Planks were fastened with copper nails and roves. The garboard was fastened with 3" bronze screws as was the ends of each plank. Decking was cut from yellow hardwood which looks the same as beech and beautiful to work with. Knees are all grown from the twisted branches and roots of Crisafillum, a large fig tree which grows on the beaches everywhere in Milne Bay. The timber has pinkish wavy grain, is difficult to cut with hand or power saws but very decorative and pleasing to the eye. The plate case is cut from a greasy hard terpentine smelling timber (whose name escapes me at present) which the 'locals' assure me is too sour for the Toledo worms' liking. Deck beams were cut out of 10"x2" kwila. Mast and spars are from pencil cedar.

Bow spit is of Kwila, steam bent into position using two 44 gallon drums filled with water as a counter weight.

A doctors wages in PNG are very modest and employing local shipwrights was not an option, however shipwrights were employed for three weeks for the roving and caulking. The work was carried out largely by myself with the help of friends. Great friends such as Tom Cowen who volunteered at weekends to help with bending in of ribs and planks, Tass Silcox who gladly provided free land and power, Peter Nevell who supplied the timber at below cost, Julius Volaris who gave the stainless steel rods for the plate case, refusing payment, and Sornam who arrived with countless meals at just the right time. An engine will be fitted if and when funds become available.

Being "on call" after hours and weekends 24/7, there were many memorable occasions when I was called out to do an emergency caesarian section, fix a broken arm or simply treat malaria at a critical time during construction. I can recall several times when preparing to pull a plank from the steam box, (Murphy's Law I think they call it) a message would come scribbled on a piece of paper "we need you in ED Dr. Barry" and one would simply drop everything and cycle madly up to the hospital, do the procedure and return hours later to a smoldering fire and a "cold" plank. The "coconut hut" under which the boat slowly took shape jokingly became known as *Dr. Barry's Boatbuilding and Surgery*. As the project nears completion there is always a sense of urgency to finish the "bloody thing" if you know what I mean. People walking by call out "when's the launching"??!*

No doubt the boat is a little heavier and perhaps slower than her cousins in Sorrento but I figure it's a working boat and will have to endure many a beaching and occasional scraping over the many reefs which surround the islands of Milne Bay. *The boat will be used for traveling to the islands to conduct clinics, give public health education on HIV-Aids and deliver supplies such as bed nets etc. to aid posts.* The boat will have to survive without an engine just like the old days (until funds permit). No doubt Ken will be watching. I love my 'island flavoured' Couta boat as much as my old Colin Archer. Meeting Tim and Sally Phillips and the wonderful crew of The Wooden Boat Shop was like 'traveling to Mecca' and spending a few days looking at couta boats, buying bronze fittings, bits and pieces, ropes and sails makes the 'end of the beginning', come into sight.

And the launching date ? It's close, very close. I'll keep you posted.

My sincere thanks to the Phillips family, Wayne and 'Crew' at The Wooden Boat Shop for their generosity and kindness during my stay in Sorrento.



Above: Map showing the location of Milne Bay, also the extending islands Dr Barry will be running his floating practice.

Below: Showing the unmistakable Couta boat lines, Barry's boat is almost complete.





*A boat is not just for christmas
Wot if I had more money.
Wot if I had a bigger boat.
Wot if I had a better spars.
Wot if I had new sails.
Wot if I could just mess around
in boats.*

A friend once said "I only need enough money to pay someone to fix and service my boat without me worrying how much it costs."

Perhaps it's not about the money; perhaps it's about doing it yourself! The benefit being, learning all about the boat you sail on.

It's very easy to call Tim or your local boat haulage company to strip the boat, remove the sails, remove the ballast, unstep the mast, boom and gaff, slip the boat, haul the boat to its winter storage location, block the boat up, pressure wash the weed off the bottom (and that's only on the first day) then whinge about how much it costs. Just because you didn't want to do it yourself, it doesn't mean other people actually want to do it, just because they get paid to do it as a job. If you helped, (and not got in the way) you'd learn something that day and perhaps it would be a more pleasant experience for everyone involved.

Wot if all of the crew came down for the day and carried a few bars of lead each and then they stood and watched a lot of boat emerge from the water. They might say, "So that's what it looks like under there". At the end of the day with a beer in hand, you can all stand around and discuss the shape of the boat and say "If we sand this bit or make that bit smoother, then it will look better or go faster". You could all look for other possible improvements. If everyone gets to help and does their bit or someone else's bit, then we can all feel as though we have contributed toward the next season of sailing "our boats". You could look at all the other boats in the yard and perhaps give a hand with someone else's boat, you'd see all of the different hull shapes and this might provide thought and discussion on "the shape of speed". You might think about why that boat sails like it does compared to that other boat. Maybe you could ask the owner or someone else who seems to know what they are talking about. They can give you their interpretation, whether right or wrong, it doesn't matter, you might have just learnt something for the day.

Another possibility is you could take your boat home and park it on the front lawn. Sure the grass dies off from the antifouling leaching into the soil like some weed killer(that's what it is!), but all summer as you're about to go off sailing, you walk past the spot and think of some achievement or that you have done it yourself (sounds like "fig jam", doesn't it?). The grass will grow back by next winter and you can do it all again. The reality is, it will probably cost more money to take the boat to your house or other location because it's physically harder to transport it and get it off the trailer and onto blocks, and you'll need your crew to help with some or all the upcoming maintenance work. You'll probably need to engage the services of other specialist trades, i.e. a diesel mechanic, auto electrician, shipwright, etc. Or you could have a crack at it yourself and if something breaks or doesn't work, then after the obligatory cursing, you think I'll fix that, improve on that or do it better next year.

It all comes down to: Do I want to really get messy in a boat? If your answer is Yes, then the next question is: Do I have the time? If your answer is Yes, then the final question is: Wot if I had enough money so that I could sail and work on my boat? - and that's all I did!!!!

Perhaps you're a little strange! Wots wrong with that?

Written by Darren Hart and edited by Bernie O'Hanlon

22-24 February 2008

Preliminary Announcement

Following the tradition of recent years, the Queenscliff Maritime Weekend will again be held on the last weekend in February.

This popular event will kick off with 'Fishy Tales' on Friday evening at the Queenscliffe Maritime Museum Couta Boat Shed.

On Saturday the Museum will again host the Queenscliff Regatta Lunch, and the Blessing of the Fleet will be conducted just prior to the race.

The last Sunday of the month is also the day of the Queenscliffe Community Market which is held in parkland adjacent to the Maritime Museum. After the Crew Breakfast at Fisherman's Flat (and a visit to the market?), there is a Passage Race from Queenscliff Pier to Portsea Pier incorporating the Memorial Sail Past at Shortland's Bluff.



WOODEN' MISS THIS FOR QUIDS!

*The 2008 Geelong Wooden Boat Festival
Labour Weekend, 8-10 March 2008*

Following the highly successful 2007 Festival, most of the planning for next year's festival has been decided.

Next year's event will be held during the weekend of 8th, 9th and 10th of March at the Royal Geelong Yacht Club and it promises to be bigger and better than ever before as there will be no conflict with Hobart or Goolwa. Everyone at the club is looking forward to hosting a bumper 'crop' of Wooden Boats.

The 2008 Festival will produce a magnificent display of wooden boats of all shapes and sizes, such as clinker-built dinghies, large topsail cutters, putt putts, dories, classic speedboats, yachts, fishing boats, old ocean racers, harbour greyhounds, and ex-pilot launches!

Special shore-based displays of wooden boat building actually in progress will highlight the woodworking artistry of prominent boat builders. This will surely compliment the fine assembly of our outstanding Victorian maritime heritage.

The Festival's Concourse d'Elegance, a cavalcade of sail and races close to the shoreline will put icing onto an incredible cake! Something for everyone. The 2008 program will again include a Grand Parade of Boats and Cavalcade of Sail, a Concourse d'Elegance, racing for the Corio Bay Couta Boat Cup, the Corio Bay Classic Wooden Yacht Cup and the Passage Races from Melbourne and Portarlington.

Guest speaker will be Irish yachtsman and yachting historian Hal Sisk. Why 'wooden' you put these dates in your diary?

For answers to your questions, please contact the Royal Geelong Yacht Club on (03) 5229 3705 or e-mail to info@rgyc.com.au

*Contributed by Stuart Dickson,
Chairman of the Organising Committee, Geelong Wooden Boat Festival.*

THE CUP REGATTA UPDATE 3-5 NOVEMBER 2007

Entries are starting to flow for the inaugural Cup Regatta.



The sailing arrangements have been finalized with a selection of races from a mini passage race to laid courses to a final day pursuit. A fleet of Coutas is planning to make the journey up from the South end of the Bay to join the regulars at Williamstown. We are expecting about 20 New Zealanders to make the trip to sail with us on our boats. Interstate Members will be heartily welcomed, and will be guaranteed an unforgettable three days. Although the racing will be keen, (the top boat will win an air ticket to The Lindauer regatta in Auckland next February) the emphasis will be on having fun and meeting likeminded enthusiasts.

We have a comprehensive social program, involving a regatta barbeque and a presentation Dinner at the New Melbourne Yacht Club Hotel who have generously sponsored the mooring arrangements for that night at Docklands.



For more information on the regatta format and to download an entry form please visit the CYAA website at www.classic-yacht.com.au or call Mark Chew on 0417 358 809.

There are some dates you need to be aware of...

The cut off for receiving standard entries is **12th October**. That's less than a fortnight away so why don't you get onto it right now?

There will be a \$50 additional administrative charge for entries received after this date.

In addition to this we have secured 15 berths at Docklands for the **Presentation Night Dinner on 4th November**. There will be no charge for these; however as this is a busy time down there it is important that you contact me directly on 0417 358 809 if you wish to take your boat up for the evening. The berths will be allocated on a first come first served basis

*Contributed by Mark Chew,
National President of the Classic Yacht Association of Australia.*

THE AUSTRALIAN REGISTER OF HISTORIC VESSELS

The Australian National Maritime Museum launched an ambitious project early in 2007 - the Australian Register of Historic Vessels, a website and database developed in association with the Sydney heritage Fleet and now managed by the Museum. It is available online to everyone. The Register presents information about surviving vessels of significance to Australia's maritime heritage. One of the first craft on the Register was the 1903 couta boat *Thistle*, originally from Port Fairy.



Since its inception the Museum has recognized the couta boats' almost iconic status in Victoria and their national significance as an original Australian type of workboat. These craft are an original Australian working boat, not adapted from a design outside of the country. The Museum acquired *Thistle* for the National Maritime Collection in 1988.

An important aim of the Register as it builds a national picture of historic vessels is inclusion of the vessels' connections to people as well - their designers, builders, sailors, crew and communities. In the case of the *Thistle* and the couta boats, it is important to note that the local fishermen were also the volunteers from the community who manned the shore based lifeboats. This then leads directly to the Port Fairy Lifeboat, another highlight of the region's maritime heritage.

It is significant as a rare surviving example of the many coastal shore-based lifeboats, and remains housed and operating from its original shed and slipway. Along with other intact and related items the lifeboat forms a focal point for the community to celebrate its heritage.

As with this lifeboat, an important consideration with *Thistle* was retaining it in sailing condition as means of keeping the skills alive that are needed to maintain and sail the craft. This represents another aim of the Register, to encourage vessels to be preserved in use where this is practicable.

Thistle was listed with another Port Fairy couta boat *Ariel*. Also related to the couta boats are the 21 Foot Restricted Class racing yachts and the Gippsland lakes fishing craft. These craft are represented on the Register by *Nerana* and *Chance*, along with reference pages on the couta boats and 21 Foot Restricted Class. This small group shows the web of connections between craft, types and communities which the register is beginning to highlight. As the Register grows this web will expand considerably. Its diversity can be shown with examples of other craft connected to Victoria, such as the barque *Polly Woodside*, hydroplane *Nautilus II*, a corrugated iron dinghy from the Bendigo region, and the yachts *Thera*, *Oimara*, *Mallana*, *Boomerang* and *Hurrica V*. Another recent addition with origins in Port Fairy is the fishing vessel *Tacoma*.

The website for the Register is www.anmm.gov.au/arhv. Around 120 craft are now listed, along with reference pages on types, classes, designers, builders and events. The site explains the criteria used to consider craft for nomination and there is an online Nomination Form for vessel owners to use if they wish to nominate their own vessel. The Register's curator at the Museum is David Payne, a yacht and small craft designer with a strong background documenting historic craft for the Museum and other clients. He is available on 02 9298 3875, Tuesdays to Thursdays, or by email on arhv@anmm.gov.au.

Contributed by David Payne, Curator, Australian Register of Historic Vessels & Australian National Maritime Museum

COUTA BOAT ASSOCIATION CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CBA MERCHANDISE | AVAILABLE NOW

New Stocks of Small, Medium, Large and Extra Large Tee Shirts.

Available at SSCBC, the Wooden Boat Shop and the Queenscliffe Maritime Museum is a range of new CBA Tee Shirts in the colours stone, grey-blue and couta-burgundy which feature the official 'Couta Boat Club' logo front and back. **Tee Shirt \$30.**

New CBA Burgees

New CBA Burgees are now in stock at the Wooden Boat Shop, Sorrento. **Burgee \$44.**

MARITIME SWAP MEET | 2 DEC 07

The 1st Annual Maritime Swap Meet will be held at the Queenscliffe Maritime Museum - Wharf Street, Queenscliff on Sunday 2 December 2007. Entry \$4 for Adults, Children free. Gates open at 9am.

Donations to the Museum's stall can be collected from any location on the Bellarine Peninsula.

STALL HOLDERS WANTED

phone: June on 5258 3440 Mon – Friday for siteholder information and registration. www.maritimequeenscliffe.org.au

COUTA BOAT ASSOCIATION COUTA BOAT NATIONAL TITLES | 29-30 DEC 07

The Couta Boat Association has allocated funds for members outside of Victoria to participate in the Couta Boat National Titles to be held on 29 and 30 December 2007 at Sorrento.

For more information, contact cba@coutaboatclub.com.au or view <http://www.coutaboatclub.com.au>

COUTA BOAT ASSOCIATION PORTSEA CUP | 19 JAN 08

The Portsea Fishing Boat Regatta - Portsea Cup will be held at Portsea on 19 January 2008, followed by the picnic at the Quarantine Station on 20 January 2008.

COUTA BOAT ASSOCIATION COUTA BOAT STATE TITLES | 9-10/16-17 FEB 08

The Couta Boat State Titles will be held on two separate weekends in February 2008.

Championship Races 1, 2 & 3 will be conducted at Martha Cove on the first weekend (9-10th Feb). Championship Races 4 & 5 will be conducted at Sorrento on the second weekend (16-17 Feb).

COUTA BOAT ASSOCIATION RACE RESULTS 2006/2007

CBA State Titles (29/12/06)

Division 1

Line Honours		C2003	Vivienne
Handicap	1st	C2003	Vivienne
	2nd	C14	Surprise
	3rd	C77	Barracouta

Division 2

Line Honours		C126	Kitty Miller
Handicap	1st	C81	Fiona
	2nd	C96	Dawn
	3rd	C31	Lucy

Portsea Fishing Boat Regatta – Portsea Cup (06/01/07)

Division 1

Line Honours		C2003	Vivienne
Handicap	1st	C888	Mystify
	2nd	C2006	Zephyr
	3rd	C73	Lincoln Rose

Division 2

Line Honours		C31	Lucy
Handicap	1st	C911	Lyndal Lea
	2nd	C148	It's All Good 'Nellie'
	3rd	C51	Corsair

CBA National Titles (11/03/07)

Division 1

Line Honours		C2003	Romy
Handicap	1st	C70	Roma
	2nd	C97	C97
	3rd	C134	Leeuwin

Division 2

Line Honours		C55	Paris
Handicap	1st	C55	Paris
	2nd	C110	Lila
	3rd	C51	Corsair

Congratulations to all

Couta Boat Association Inc.

WWW.COUTABOATCLUB.COM.AU

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VICE PRESIDENT: Nigel Abbott
SECRETARY: Steve Chiодо
TREASURER: Chris Malkin

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:
Tim Phillips, Peter Sydes
Mark Foley, Bernie O'Hanlon

CLASS MEASURER:
Rod Austin

EDITOR: Carmen Bell
EMAIL: cbell@pipeline.com.au

We are actively seeking your Couta tales (stories about the boats, club life or events)

Preserving the Heritage and promoting the sailing of Australia's unique Couta Boats.