



Coua Boat Association Inc.



SCOOP

Preserving the heritage and promoting the sailing of Australia's unique Coua boats

April 2009

C Blunt Boatbuilders 150 years of history

For 150 years, C Blunt Boat Builders, of Williamstown and Geelong, has been launching wooden boats into the waters of Port Phillip, from sea-faring vessels carrying missionaries to the New Hebrides to race-winning yachts. Now a listed heritage site run by a fifth generation of the Blunt family, it provides a unique link to Victoria's maritime past.

*"To the Chief Port and Harbour Master,
Sir, I beg to tender for building two Centre Board
Whale Boats for the sum of ninety five pounds each.
Clement Blunt, Pilot Cottages, Geelong"*

LOSING your home and possessions to a bush fire would be enough to send all but the hardest of new immigrants scurrying back to their homeland. Yet, when such a disaster struck English newlyweds Clement and Sarah Blunt shortly after their arrival in Australia in the early 1850s, they entertained no such thought. Back then, the outpost of Lorne was no place for the fainthearted. Settled by only a handful of men seeking fortune sending valuable timbers along the coast to Geelong and the colony of Port Phillip, it was frequented only by aborigines, sealers, whalers and adventurers.

Clement Blunt, a boat builder by trade, must have belonged to the latter, taking a wife barely in her 20s to live on the beautiful, yet wild coastline, 140 km southwest of today's Melbourne, where he sought to eke out a living building a boat for one of the squatters.

Having left the relative comforts of Cambridge, England, for the bush, the fire that ravaged their home was not to deter him. Undaunted, they walked with what little survived the blaze to Geelong, a journey which in those days followed a treacherous route through virgin forests. There, on June 9, 1858, the 34-year-old began a boat building dynasty that survives to this day with the above tender for a pair of centre board whale boats.

Before migrating to the colonies, Clement grew up the son of a coal whipper working in the docks of Regency, England, operating the hoists that unloaded coal from ships. Born on January 22, 1824, by the age of 17 he was already an apprentice boat builder, having decided his previous trade – that of a tailor – was not for him.



Blunt's on the Geelong waterfront



Clement Blunt



Clement Blunt II



Herbert Blunt



Clement Blunt III



Arthur Blunt



Robert Blunt

Trading cloth for wood served him well as he paid his passage to Australia working as a ship's carpenter aboard *The Isabella* in 1850. According to family stories, it was on that voyage he met and fell in love with future wife Sarah Emerson, ten years his younger, whose father owned the ship.

As in Lorne, the couple did not linger in Geelong. Within two years of establishing his business, they took their three young children to Melbourne at the height of the Gold Rush boom where Clement built the first hire boats on the Yarra River. But here, the forces of nature proved to be against him again – as they would subsequent generations of Blunts – when, in 1865, the yard he had established to the east of the Princes Bridge was



flooded. With three more children in tow, he returned with Sarah to Geelong after a brief stop in Sandridge, now Port Melbourne.

After several unsuccessful attempts at obtaining permission to operate a pleasure cruiser on the Barwon River, Clement's attention was refocused on building boats and distilling his talent into the five sons who followed him into the family business. Within two months of opening his yard, it became home to the Geelong Rowing Club. And, according to the city's newspapers, his designs began turning heads. One report of May 1, 1874, said a 24-foot yawl built for a local doctor "skims over the water like a thing of life".

Given the survival of Blunt's through five generations and numerous calamities, it is likely his sons inherited

other talents: unwavering self belief and stubbornness. A death notice posted shortly after he passed away aged 75 praised his "superior" workmanship and popularity with "all classes of yachting men, few of whom ever put in a day at Geelong without whiling away half an hour 'yarning' to the old man". However, it also stated:

"He took unkindly to the modern shaped bow and long overhanging counter, and many's the fight an intending owner ... had with him before he consented to fall in with the new fangled notions."

"On Monday evening a yacht made to the order of Mr Findley was launched from Mr Blunt's boat building establishment in the presence of a number of members of the Hobson's Bay Yacht Club. The boat is considered one of the finest... turned out from local sheds... The health of the builder was also drunk. Mr Findley and Mr Blunt suitably responded."
The Advertiser, Williamstown, June 9, 1888

Long before he passed away, the old man's eldest son, also Clement, who had enjoyed a successful early career winning numerous trophies competing on the waters around Geelong, headed up the coast to start his own business on the thriving foreshore at Williamstown. Already a major maritime centre following the opening of Port Phillip's first patent slip by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1868, Clement II opened up alongside other pioneers, including William White, originally from the Isle of Wight, who designed the first steam ferry to operate on the Bay. Displaying a similar longevity to his father – and, latterly, the same full white beard – he would oversee the yard's operations well into his 70s.

The new C Blunt Boat Builders was founded in 1887 on Nelson Place, when Clement Blunt II was granted 33 feet of frontage for a £10 annual rental. All manner of boats began flying off the slipway, including Williamstown's first ever motor boat, the *Ariel*, and a fleet of 24 power launches and sailing boats for missionaries headed to the Solomon Islands.

Boosted by the fortunes of Blunt racing yachts such as the *Sunbeam* and *Hyacinth*, respectively winner and runner-up in the St Kilda Yacht Club, N H Roberts and Corio Bay trophies of 1892, the site was soon unable

to cope with the volume of orders, despite an ability to produce boats in astonishingly quick time. "A smart piece of workmanship was displayed by Mr Clem. Blunt, boatbuilder, this week. In six days he turned out a large



six-oared surf-boat for work at the stranded *Drumblair*," reported *The Chronicle*, on October 22, 1892.

The business was forced to move to a bigger yard, at Clark's Slip, now the site of Williamstown's police station, in 1898, where Clement was praised by *The Advertiser* "upon his determination to launch out in a large

way." Among the boats to grace Clark's Slip were oil-powered pleasure boats capable of carrying up to 40 people and the sloop-rigged yacht *Aotea*, designed by famous Scottish designer William Fife Jr, which is sailing in Hobart to this day.

All the while, the Geelong business was kept running by his brothers Herbert and Charles. They produced a number of large yachts, most notably the sturdy, sea-faring *Shamrock*, which made history as one of only four boats to compete in the first Australian Ocean Race from Geelong to Tasmania in 1907, a race that was nearly abandoned due to fierce weather on the Bass Strait. As he approached his 60s, Charles decided to join his older brother in Williamstown. It was 1922 and already the third generation of Blunt boat builders was being groomed.

Within four years of moving their yard once more onto the grounds owned by the Royal Yacht Club, this time at the behest of the Melbourne Harbour Trust who had earmarked their site for land reclamation, tragedy again struck the Blunt family. In the early hours of Sunday, May 30, 1926, despite the best efforts of the fire brigade their boat shed was gutted by fire, along with timber, tools and a 16-foot boat ready for delivery to the Railways department.

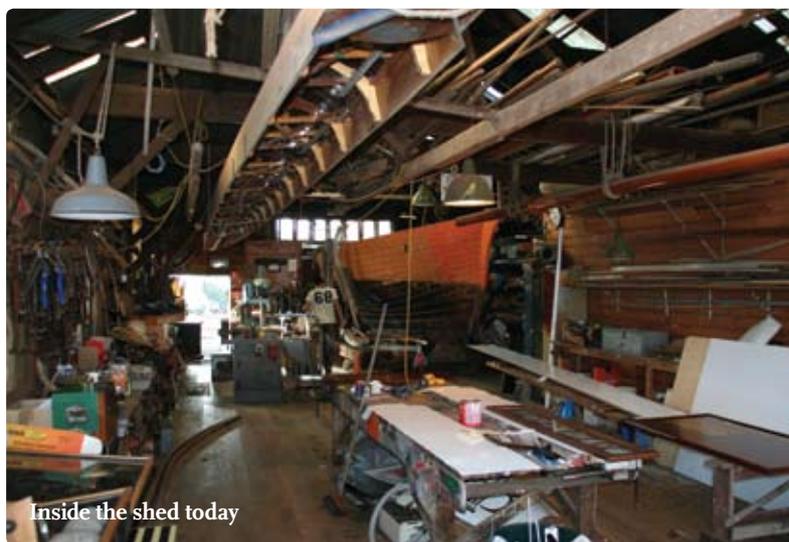
"Residents of Williamstown awoke on Sunday morning to find that one of the oldest landmarks along the waterfront in Nelsons-place had almost disappeared during the night...Mr Blunt has the sympathy of a wide circle of his friends in his severe loss."
The Chronicle, June 6, 1926

Thankfully, with the Blunt name well known in the sailing world and the family well loved in Williamstown, their "wide circle of friends" ensured the business was

not short of offers of a new home. And, if the small matter of a devastating blaze had not deterred the first Clement, neither would it his sons and grandsons, who combined to build a new shed adjacent to their first site in Nelson Place. They took over a building previously used for motor repairs and, using timber from the first ever floating dock to inhabit Port Phillip's waters, laid down the yard and slipway still in operation today.

Among the grandsons were the third Clement, born in 1894, and Arthur, two years his younger, who over the coming years would gradually take over the reins. By this stage, a large part of their work was contracted up river where Clement oversaw their men's work, while Arthur took charge of the shipwrights at the yard. The former Naval Reservists became a formidable partnership, leaving an indelible mark on Williamstown.

Stories abound of their time in the yard, one recalled so often it is commemorated by Hobson's Bay City Council on a plaque outside the yard. "A client neglected to retrieve his boat," it reads. "Frustrated with it taking up space, Arthur recycled it into wood needed for the new pier. But the owner reappeared. He unwittingly leaned against the pier, resting his foot on what was once his boat's keel and hollered 'Where's my bloody boat?'" According to the current yard's owner, Greg Blunt, Arthur - never one to take a backward step - chased the man from the yard with an earful.



Inside the shed today

Such mishaps did nothing to stem the yard's progress; at one stage ten shipwrights made up orders from rowing skiffs to wheelhouses for tugs. And when Clement III was diagnosed with diabetes and had both legs amputated, they installed ramps throughout the yard so he could continue working. The firm also secured regular contracts from the local naval authorities, ultimately forcing them to request an extension to the site from the Melbourne Harbour Trust in October 1942.



Greg & Joanne Blunt

The Blunts became so integral to Williamstown life that they took over part of the Steampacket Inn, an old pub one block back from the waterfront. Blunt's Room, to the side of the main bar, had its own sign and boating paraphernalia and was off limits to all but the Blunts, their employees and friends, a cosy corner that served generation after generation at their shifts' end. The men's only distraction was the need to take lemonades to the wives and girlfriends waiting patiently in cars outside.

*"In Williamstown, they say that Clem and Arthur Blunt are as well-known as the Gellibrand Light."
The Advertiser, November 18, 1970*

As well-known as the Gellibrand Light they may have been but, like Hobson's Bay's most famous lighthouse, which closed in 1976 after being struck by the *Melbourne Trader* in heavy fog, the brothers could not keep going forever. Arthur died within six months of that article's publication; Clem passed away in April 1973.

In a break from tradition, Clement Blunt III's eldest son, Clement, chose not to inherit the boat building mantle, instead opting for a career at the Altona refinery as a fitter and turner. He retained a love for yachting, but not the art of building them, so younger brother Robert, who had served his boat building apprenticeship with the Melbourne Steamship Company, first at Williamstown, then for three years at sea, stepped into the breach.

By this stage, the demand for wooden boats was in steep decline, with plastics and fibreglass becoming the material of choice for an ever-growing majority of prospective owners. The Blunt yard had been moving steadily into the field of repairs to compensate for declining orders. Among the staff struggling against the tide of progress were Robert's two sons, Greg and Paul, both of whom served apprenticeships at the behest of their grandfather.

It was as well they did, because by 1982 the orders had completely dried up and the dynasty, now in its

125th year, faced a threat to its future greater than those earlier posed by Mother Nature. Robert had wages to pay, but no income, so both sons offered to leave the yard. Greg returned to his previous trade as a signwriter; Paul became a boatman with the tug company; their father soldiered on.

Orders failed to pick up and Port Phillip's oldest surviving boat building business faced closure. By 1991, Blunts had just one employee and was in trouble with the banks. That all paled into significance when Robert was diagnosed with bowel cancer and given just months to live.

On one of the final visits to see his father in hospital, Greg had in his back pocket a letter from the bank saying they would honour no more cheques from the yard until they received repayments on their mounting debts. It is a visit he remembers clearly to this day:

"Dad said to me, 'You know that if I die there's a huge mess to sort out'," recalls Greg.

"I told him, 'Don't worry, I'm just the boy to do it'.

"That's good,' he replied, 'because I've made you sole executor of my estate'."

Four days later, Robert died. The letter from the bank never left Greg's back pocket.

Debts owed by Robert's estate were gradually cleared, but new obstacles soon arose. The lease on the site was up for renewal and there were vultures hovering. A meeting of four Blunts was called to decide the fate of the business: Greg, mother Peggy, brother Paul and sister Shelley. Ultimately, it fell to Greg to choose whether to take the business into a fifth generation or consign it to the history books. After much soul-seeking with wife Joanne, they chose the former and cobbled together the necessary \$20,000 to purchase the business.

Since then, the yard has been hit with a \$280,000 bill from state government environmental inspectors demanding the removal of a foot of top soil contaminated with heavy metals. A compromise was reached on covering the costs, only for the Blunts to learn the pan service for the area was finishing meaning the site had to be connected to the sewer.

"With the lease not up for another 21 years, I started thinking, like my father before me, 'What on earth have I done?'," says Greg.

A white knight arrived in the form of Heritage Victoria who listed the entire site and later agreed to provide a \$15,000 grant, funding a complete refit of the floor. Occasional



Restored Blunt boat from 1900

orders for boats began coming in and requests for repairs became regular again. And, with yards like Blunt's becoming increasingly rare, it began attracting inquisitive passers-by through its door; not just boat people, but tourists drawn to its antiquated look.

"This boatyard is a great delight and a pleasure for all. It is part of our maritime history that should be preserved as a working shipyard for our heritage wooden boats."

Retired seaman Paddy Garritty, Blunt's guest book, January 30, 2008

But, while the yard's value as a tourist attraction may prove central to its future, the Blunt family's past will never be forgotten; it may even be impossible to escape. The tools and methods used by Greg and his small team of staff and volunteers are the same as they were when the shed was opened by Clement II more than 80 years ago and work is currently underway on a beautiful yacht, *Janet*, that was built by Greg's great-grandfather in Geelong in 1900. She was reclaimed from a scrapyards in the 1960s and returned to Blunts from Kettering, Tasmania. Its owner later sold her to Greg for \$1 in 1999 as the scale of her restoration grew beyond his means.

New owners took over at the Steampacket Inn last year, stripping out the bar's traditional furnishings and giving it an identikit modern makeover. It means Blunt's Room is no more, its adornments returned to the yard, but its legacy lives on in a pontoon restored by ten local men behind the yard where they have formed their own club. Greg also keeps an eye out for old Blunt boats still in existence, the oldest to his knowledge being the *Wildflower*, in Oyster Harbour outside Albany. She celebrates her 119th birthday in July.

"It's been a roller coaster ride," says Greg. "But we'll always be fixing boats. What we've got here is unique." 🚩

Contributed by James Smith
Australian Heritage Magazine, Summer 2008



Paul Blunt's couta boat *Eva*

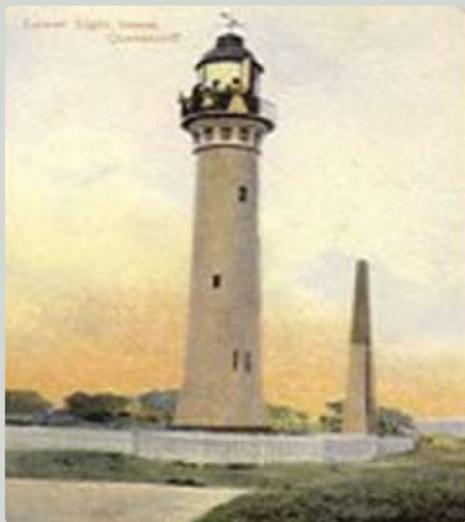
Guiding Lights for Ships

Lighthouses have always been important at the Borough of Queenscliffe.

The very first aide to identify the entrance to Port Phillip was a simple oil lamp which was kept burning on a flagstaff at Point Lonsdale.



The first permanent building erected at Shortland Bluff was a sandstone lighthouse, built in 1842. This proved to be not totally adequate and thus, in 1853 it was decided that two lights were needed to lead the ships through the Heads and a wooden tower was built lower down the Bluff.



By 1863 both structures were replaced by the current 'black' and 'white' lighthouses. They were both constructed of basalt, one was rendered white (the Lower

Lighthouse), the other one was left to weather to black (the High Lighthouse), the only lighthouse of that colour in the Southern hemisphere (and one of only three in the whole world). When both lighthouses are aligned ship navigators know that their vessel is on the safe course to follow along the deepest channel through the Rip. The lighthouse lamps were manufactured by Chance Brothers in England. The lights were converted to gas in 1890 and to electricity in 1924. They are now fully automated and unmanned.

“ Its lens contains about 70 pieces of glass that were ground by hand in England in 1901. ”

Fort Queenscliff was built around the black lighthouse to guard the entrance to Port Phillip during the Australian Gold Rush after concerns that ships carrying gold might be attacked by privateers.

The redundant wooden Queenscliff lighthouse was re-erected at Point Lonsdale in 1863 where it stood until replaced by the present Point Lonsdale Signal Station in 1902. Its lens contains about 70 pieces of glass that were ground by hand in England in 1901. A complete set of spares was made at the same time and has never been used!

In 1950 an octagonal structure was added at the base of the tower to provide an observation room and shipping control room. The lighthouse is staffed 24 hours a day to organise commercial shipping through Port Phillip Heads. It is probably the last manned lighthouse in Australia.



The Queenscliffe Maritime Museum conducts tours of the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse which offers spectacular views of the treacherous Rip. For information call +61-3-5258 3440.

It has taken a mere 135 years before yet another lighthouse is being built at Queenscliff! This one is a modern structure, in keeping with the working harbour, which some locals have already nicknamed “The Screw”. It will not only serve as a navigational aide but also provide a viewing platform for the public. 🚩

Images by Queenscliffe Historical Society and Ed Kavaliunas

Pat Fanning's Lighthouses

by Mary Kruihof

My great-grandfather Patrick Fanning first settled in Queenscliff in 1853, at the age of 17, having survived the nightmare voyage of the *Ticonderoga*, and having been stationed at Point Nepean for nearly a year. After service with the Health Officer and with the Pilots, he joined the Lighthouse Service at Queenscliff on 1 October 1861. To qualify for the lighthouse service Pat had to "be able to read and write, ride a horse, handle a rowing boat, and be able to work at heights".

At that time, William Foy was 'Keeper' (or Superintendent) of the two lighthouses at Shortland's Bluff (Queenscliff) and of the new Swan Spit light which had come into service in October 1860. Pat's service record shows he joined "*Division No. 1 - Shortland's Bluff and Swan Spit lights.*" His fellow assistant keepers at that time were Henry Kermode, James Jamieson, James Dimond, and James Taylor, all employed at seven shillings a day. Pat started as Junior Assistant Keeper and gradually worked his way up to Senior Assistant Keeper. He was assigned to the lower wooden lighthouse which had been erected hastily in 1853 to indicate, in tandem with the upper light, the correct shipping lane for safe passage through the Rip.

It was an exciting time to be involved with the Shortland's Bluff lights. Preliminary works had been started on building a new battery on the Bluff, which in turn meant that the old lighthouses had to be replaced with new towers solid enough to withstand the shock of cannon fire. Between June 1861 and February 1863, two new bluestone towers were erected close by the old towers giving approximately

the same guiding line. Two new lighthouse keeper's quarters were built near the lower light. Pat, his wife Kate and their three little children moved from their own house in Stevens Street into one of the keeper's houses. Four more surviving babies were born to them in that little cottage.

The two new lighthouses were both built with their doorways 12 feet above the ground and were accessed by ladders that most certainly would not pass modern-day WorkSafe inspections! The keepers climbed up and down those ladders day and night, in all kinds of weather. There are several theories about why the lighthouses were built that way, but I don't know of any documentary evidence supporting any of one of these theories.

In 1877 a big change came into the Fannings' life. Robert Bowie, the keeper at Cape Schanck retired on 1 July 1877, which brought about a reshuffle amongst the other keepers. George Tapp, the keeper at Gabo Island since 1858, suffered from asthma and chronic bronchitis and reached the point where he could no longer manage the 93 steps of the tower. He was moved to Cape Schanck, which is not quite as tall, to give him some respite (!). In the interim, Thomas Musgrave, the keeper at Wilson's Promontory was sent to Gabo Island and Pat was moved to the lighthouse at Wilson's Promontory as Senior Assistant Keeper at a salary of 180 pounds per annum. He was not given full keeper's status, as it was only meant to be a temporary arrangement. (Keepers were paid 200 pounds per annum at that time). While the Fannings were at the Prom, Pat nicknamed the tower 'Roaring Meg' after the cannon



mounted on the wall of old Londonderry city. The wind catches the tower at Wilson's Promontory in a peculiar way and during a gale it makes a booming noise like a cannon going off. The nickname stuck for many years, and still survives as the 'Roaring Meg Creek' camp site, not far from the lighthouse.

George Tapp never did recover and after a year at Cape Schanck was taken to Melbourne where he died shortly afterwards. After his death, there was another reorganization. Thomas Musgrave was moved to Cape Schanck whilst Pat was promoted to Keeper status and posted to Gabo Island .

The Fannings spent two years at Gabo and were quite content on their remote little island, until yet another change arose. William Foy, Keeper at Shortland's Bluff, was due to retire on his 60th birthday at the beginning of October 1880. Pat was appointed as his replacement. It was the proudest moment in his life when he returned to his beloved Queenscliff with full Keeper status.

The Fannings then lived in the Keepers' quarters close by the upper black lighthouse. While they were there, it was decided that at last the Victorian Government could afford to build a Fort at Queenscliff and have it manned by a permanent army corps. The Fort was opened in 1882. At about the same time the Keeper requested that the doorways of the two lighthouses be lowered to ground level. It was probably Pat who requested that change, but I have no documentary evidence of that. Heaven knows he knew all about having to climb those ladders - he'd had fifteen years doing it!

(A little aside: Although intimacy between the Fort's soldiers and the lighthouse keepers' families was actively discouraged, it didn't stop a certain gunner Robert Leech marrying Pat's eldest daughter Catherine - and they became the reason why Patrick is my great-grandfather!)

At the end of 1884 Pat received some bad news. The Harbour Trust, who were by then in charge of all lighthouses, made the decision to rotate the keepers, giving them two years on an outstation and two years close to a town where their children could attend school.

As a result, Pat had to leave Queenscliff once again. He knew there was a valid reason, but was nevertheless deeply disappointed. The other keepers were very sympathetic about his losing the No. 1 posting. They took up a collection amongst themselves and the citizens of Queenscliff and gave him a send-off at the Royal Hotel. They presented him with a gold watch chain. He wore it till the day he died and it is still in our family's possession.

So it was back to Wilson's Promontory and 'Roaring Meg'.

A further two years on and Pat was sent to Point Lonsdale and put in charge of the old wooden tower that he had tended at the start of his career. This tower had been moved from Queenscliff in 1863. Pat's assistant at Point Lonsdale was Henry Stewartson, an old friend from way back in 1853. Only two months later, William Martin, Keeper at Cape Schanck, became seriously ill and was taken to Melbourne where he, too, died. Pat was sent to Cape Schanck to take his place.

Patrick spent two years at Cape Schanck and then in 1889 once more came back to Queenscliff. Then, in 1891, he was put in charge of the new light at Airey's Inlet, now known as the White Queen. That appointment proved to be somewhat of an embarrassment. The light had been ordered showing a red light shining over the safe waters out at sea and a white light shining over dangerous rocks, contrary to convention. No-one had picked up the mistake, and it stayed that way until the Commonwealth took over the lighthouses in 1913 and had the lights reversed.

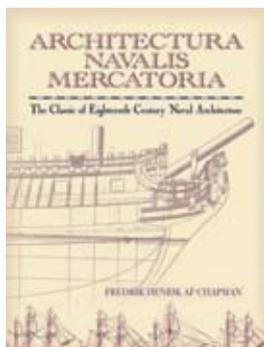
Whilst at Airey's Inlet, Pat was beginning to slow down somewhat and actually became ill in 1892. He was given sick leave that extended to six months in the latter half of the year. During this time he wrote a number of articles about his experiences in the 'Queenscliff Sentinel'. He went back to work in at the beginning of 1893, but died suddenly on 23 March 1893. He is buried at Winchelsea, at the time the nearest cemetery to Airey's Inlet. 

Reflections on Hull Form, Boat Speed and Ballast

A Review of *Architectura Navalis Mercatoria*

Frederick Henrick Chapman was born on 9 September 1721 in Gothenburg, Sweden. His father, a Yorkshire man, worked at the Gothenburg Naval Dockyard after having been enlisted into the Swedish Navy.

It is not surprising that the boy was attracted to his father's occupation and in 1738 joined the Naval Dockyards as a shipbuilding apprentice. Quite early in his career he took interest in drawing ships' plans. His curiosity and frequent



visits to shipyards during which he made notes on British shipbuilding, raised suspicion and once he was even arrested for suspected espionage. He studied mathematics in Stockholm under Frederick Palmquist, and London under Thomas Simpson

(founder of a method of calculating the sectional areas of a hull published as 'Simpson's Rule' in 1743 which is still used by shipbuilders today). He traveled extensively and visited shipyards in England, Holland and France and returned to his native Sweden in 1757. He had a distinguished career as Master Shipbuilder to the Navy where he designed craft suitable to defend the Finnish coast in unfavourable winds and shallow water, followed by Chief Shipbuilder to the Swedish Navy.

In 1768, he published the *Architectura Navalis Mercatoria*, a systematic classification of ships into types, including scientific findings on the position of the centre of gravity and the metacentre for different states of sail trim. A handbook on the design of ships from 1775 deals with displacement, location of centre of gravity, stability, resistance, shape and dimensions of ships, and measurement of tonnage.

Chapman developed mathematical models and conducted practical experiments. For example, he placed in a large pond 2 poles 100 feet apart and 2 piles with 2 copper pullies, and through these were reeved ropes to support the weights. These ropes were attached to the body to be tested, and both ends were weighted, one with a larger weight to propel the body, the other with a smaller weight to keep the body in a straight line. On the pulling rope, there were 2 pieces of red cloth at a distance of 74 feet from each other. When the first red cloth reached a certain point, a stop watch was started and when the second red cloth reached the same point, the stop watch was stopped. The bodies used were made of wood, were all 28 inches in length, and the transverse sections under the water were circular. Their diameter at the greatest breadth was $\frac{2}{7}$ of the length, or 8 inches. The water-lines were either straight or conic parabolas, and the vertex of the parabolic line was at the greatest breadth. As these bodies were lighter than water, lead was run in until their specific gravity was nearly equal to that of sea water and they only just floated, having their axes parallel to the surface of the water. The pulling weight was varied according to whether it was required to increase or diminish velocity; the retarding weight at the opposite end remained the same. Each experiment was repeated six times, and a mean taken of the results (which for the most part were nearly equal).

Weight of the bodies		N ^o . 1 27 pounds	N ^o . 2 27 pounds	N ^o . 3 27 pounds	N ^o . 4 22 pounds	N ^o . 5 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ pounds	N ^o . 6 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ pounds	N ^o . 7 12 pounds						
Form of the bodies														
Moving weights	Retarding weights	Time the bodies have been describing the space of 74 feet, in seconds												
		Seconds A	Seconds B	Seconds C	Seconds D	Seconds E	Seconds F	Seconds G	Seconds H	Seconds I	Seconds O	Seconds P	Seconds R	Seconds P
$\frac{3}{4}$ the weight of the body	$\frac{1}{2}$ the weight of the body	25 $\frac{1}{2}$	26 $\frac{1}{4}$	24 $\frac{3}{4}$	27 $\frac{3}{4}$	26 $\frac{1}{2}$	25 $\frac{3}{4}$	25 $\frac{1}{2}$	27 $\frac{1}{4}$	24 $\frac{1}{4}$	30	29 $\frac{3}{4}$	45	29 $\frac{1}{2}$
The weight of the body	$\frac{1}{2}$ the weight of the body	14	14	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	13 $\frac{3}{4}$	13 $\frac{3}{4}$	15	16	24 $\frac{1}{2}$	24 $\frac{1}{4}$	38	24
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ weight of the body	$\frac{1}{2}$ the weight of the body	11	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	11	11	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	12 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	30 $\frac{3}{4}$	19 $\frac{1}{4}$
37 pounds in all	12 lb. and $\frac{1}{3}$ in all	12 $\frac{1}{2}$	lost		11	14	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	11	10	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	12	16	—	—

The bodies N^o. 1. has its greatest breadth at the middle, and its two extremities formed by parabolic lines.
 N^o. 2. has its greatest breadth at $\frac{2}{7}$ of its length from the point B; the two extremities are also parabolic.
 N^o. 3. has its greatest breadth $\frac{1}{7}$ of the length from the point D; the two extremities still parabolic.
 N^o. 4. has its greatest breadth at the middle; the extremity F parabolic, the other G conic.
 N^o. 5. has its greatest breadth $\frac{2}{7}$ of the length from the point H; the extremity H parabolic, the other I conic.
 N^o. 6. has its greatest breadth $\frac{2}{7}$ of the length from O; the two extremities conic.
 N^o. 7. wholly conic, having the greatest breadth equal to that of the other bodies, and its length twice and an half the breadth.

The following inferences were drawn:
 * When motion is low, the body has greater velocity when the sharp end is forward;

* When velocity is increased, the body passes over the same distance in equal times, regardless of which extremity is forward;

* When velocity becomes still greater, the body passes through the same distance faster when the obtuse end is forward.

Thus, it is the velocity of the body which should determine the greatest breadth, to render the resistance least.

As is evident, scientific study in the 1700's resolved some of the issues of hull form in relationship to slipperiness (speed) and stability. It is worth comparing the substantial variability of the existing Couta boat fleet. Some old boats (like **Nellie C148**) carry their widest point well forward.



Measurement for tonnage takes into consideration the dimensions of a ship, its form, and the lading it can carry in order to navigate without danger. The length of the ship is taken on the upper deck from the stem to the sternpost, the breadth within the ceiling, and the draught of water from the plank of the upper deck to the plank of the bottom. These 3 dimensions are multiplied and the product is divided by 200. Five-sixth of the quotient will be weight which the ship can take in ballast (in Sweden that was lasts of 18 skiponds iron weight per last). As much per cent, however, is subtracted from the quantity as the measurer judges the ship more or less full in the floors, or as it carries a greater or less number of guns. It is known that the weight a ship can carry is always equal to the displacement of water which that

weight occasions. The question then is only to measure the part of the ship which is to be immersed in the water by the weight of the cargo. The simplest method is as follows: The ship, when its admeasurement is taken, is supposed to be light; its draught of water is taken in this state forward and aft. When the lading is in, the draught of water is again determined forward and aft. This provides the number of feet to which each extremity must be brought down. Their sum is divided by two. This value, the length of the ship, and the breadth of the ship to the outside of the plank are multiplied together, and the product is divided by 110 (if the ship is full at its extremities) or 115 (if it is lean). The quotient of this calculation is the burthen of the ship in lasts. A vessel with its greatest breadth almost the whole length and full at the extremities (a store-ship) has a divisor of 105.

Chapman wrote from extensive observation of existing vessels, his practical experiments and complex calculations, including calculation of movements of stability expressed as mathematical formulas or graphs.

Thus, one must conclude that the weight (ballast) a Couta Boat should carry cannot be determined by hull length alone. Hull shape, sail area, sail height all have impacts. Insufficient ballast will result in poor windward performance and an unstable boat. Clearly no fisherman would have wanted a boat that could not carry a substantial amount of fish to take to market. ▶

Thank you to Peter Gale for making this most interesting book available

Early Regattas

Couta boats were part of a fleet of up to forty that worked the oyster beds in the eastern part of Western Port during 1910 to 1930. Most were from Rhyll, as were these boats, but they also came from Corinella, Hastings and San Remo. None of the boats had engines. Depending on the size of the boat they would tow two or three dredges in about twenty foot of water. The dredge ropes were tied to the horse, thwart and mast. The oysters were cleaned, then bagged in hessian bags and sent to the Melbourne Fish Market via ferry to Stony Point then train.



The sepia photo is of the *Seagull* owned by Ossie Underdown. He bought her during the 1st war but she was in poor condition and apparently leaked badly. When he had made enough money he bought the bigger *Vanguard* around 1920. She is shown in the tinted photo.

The *Vanguard* was one of the fastest boats in the regattas, winning ten races out of fourteen during 1920 to 1923 at Cowes, Rhyll, San Remo and Hastings. The boats were of all types, shallow draft net boats and deep draft



Queenscliff type boats and anything they could hang a sail on. One Rhyll seaman was in Melbourne and borrowed some money from my grandfather to go to the races. He had a good win and went to Williamstown and bought a boat to go oystering. (My boat the *Amy Christina* was the last one to go oystering under sail, during the period 1959-60.) ▶

Question submitted to
sec R Y C

If after the start of a race
the wind dies calm and one
of the competitors is set
by the tide on to a bank
is the crew entitled to pole
her off and continue and
win a prize in the race

Here is a race
rule enquiry from
Rhyll Yacht Club
to the Royal Yacht
Club of Victoria
from 1923 -
nothing much
has changed...



R. A. Grayden Esq.
Rhyll
via Bowles

375 COLLINS STREET,
MELBOURNE.

3rd May 1923

Dear Sir

I regret not having answered your letter
of March 3rd before this, but owing to so many of the
members of our sailing committee have been away, with the season

According to the Yacht Racing Association rules
a boat may take any steps to prevent the tide setting her ashore
during a race if there is a calm, including dropping an anchor.

They are also entitled to pole her off the bank but one other must
not use the pole.

Until the Association print some more copies of their rules I
can not let you have a copy as I have only one myself.

Yours faithfully
H. J. Cook
Yacht Secretary

Contributed by John Jansson



The Spirit of Mystery

An Epic Voyage from Cornwall to Australia

The following extract appeared in the *Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List* of the 26th of March, 1855:

*On Thursday last there arrived in Simon's Bay, the **Mystery**, a small fishing smack of 16 tons, from England, bound to Melbourne. The little gallant adventurer has made an excellent passage of 60 days. On her arrival in Simon's Bay, she was considered to be a Table Bay cutter, and on that account was not boarded by the Harbour Master. He did not know the real character of the diminutive craft, until he observed the captain and his crew quietly beaching their bark and hauling her with ease on the shore.*

In Newlyn, UK there is a plaque on the wall of the Royal Mission to Seamen commemorating the epic voyage from Newlyn to Melbourne by the Cornish lugger, the **Mystery PE233** in 1854/55. This is believed to be the first recorded voyage of a sailing boat converted from a fishing boat. The **Mystery** was built in Newlyn for mackerel driving.

Her overall length was 36 feet, 11 feet beam, drawing 6 feet of water and tonnage of 16. Prior to her departure, the **Mystery** was decked in fore and aft, and her bottom was sheathed with zinc.

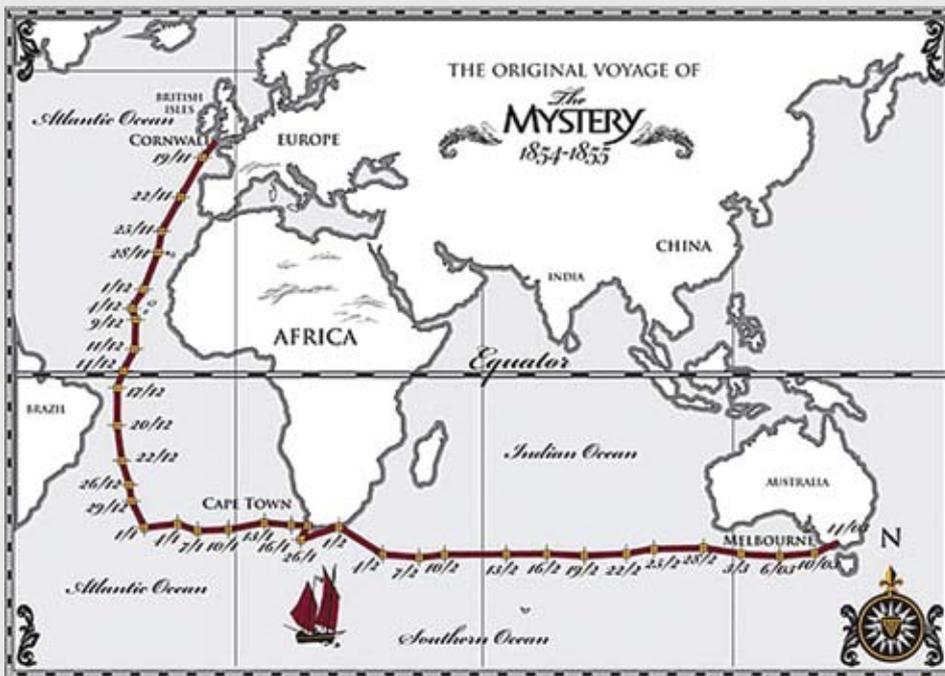


At the time of the voyage Cornwall was witnessing the virtual collapse of the lucrative tin mining industry. Many Cornish had already emigrated to other parts of the world particularly, as in the case of Australia, where there were good mining conditions. It was said that anywhere in the world where you found a hole in the ground there would be a Cornishman in it! There were already Newlyn families living in Australia and at least two of the men planning the voyage in

1854 had relatives here. The decision to make the journey was first made one evening in the Star Inn, Newlyn. The men had been discussing the possibility of emigrating and it was suggested by Job Kelynack that they

might sell his **Mystery** to pay their passage. Then one of the men, Captain Richard Nicholls of Hayle, who was married to Job's sister Victoria, suggested that they should sail her to Australia. At that time Richard Nicholls was on leave from

his post as Captain of a 700-tonner in the Welsh trade. Enthusiasm roused, the crew who eventually left on Saturday, the 18th of November, 1854 were Captain Richard Nicholls, navigator; fisherman/owner Job Kelynack; brothers William and Richard Badcock, who were married to Job Kelynack's sisters Harriet and Nanny; Kelynack cousins Charles Boase and Philip Curnow Mathews; and a Penzance man Lewis Lewis, the cook.



Philip Mathews remained in Australia and became a land surveyor in Melbourne. He married Miss English Harvey from Mousehole, Penzance. He died on the 13th of November 1896 and is buried in Melbourne General Cemetery, College Crescent, North Carlton, Victoria. They had no children.

Lewis Lewis worked as a shepherd and died, aged 50 years, on the 7th of March, 1866. He was buried in an unmarked grave at Campbell's Creek, Victoria.

The *Mystery* was sold in Melbourne for £150 shortly after her arrival. She went through 8 owners, one of whom was JB Clarke, owner of the Mornington Hotel, who used her in the Bay trade for freighting produce between Melbourne and Sorrento. She was moored off The Baths

A log was kept of the voyage and a true copy of this is in the Royal Institution of Cornwall Museum Library in Truro. On the 14th of March, 1855, the *Mystery* cast anchor in Hobson's Bay, Melbourne, thus accomplishing the voyage in 115 days, including seven days stoppage at the Cape of Good Hope where, in addition to water and supplies, she was commissioned by the Royal Mail to take the post on to Australia. A log entry from the 6th of March 1855 gives a taste of what conditions they encountered in the Southern Ocean: "A terrific gale of wind - heaviest so far experienced. Our gallant little boat rides the mountains of sea remarkably well. Not shipping any water, dry decks fore and aft. I am confident she is making better weather than a great many ships would, if here."

he died in 1874. Descendants of these men, or their immediate families, still live in Newlyn today.

Of the seven men who came to Australia five returned to their native home. Job Kelynack returned to fishing in Newlyn and died in Cardiff in 1903. William and Richard Badcock also returned to fishing in Newlyn, after first working as warder boatmen in the prison hulks in Melbourne harbour. Richard died in 1874 and William in 1906, aged 85 years. Richard Nicholls returned to work in shipping but in 1868 was knocked down by a horsedrawn cab in London and killed. Charles Boase returned to Newlyn where



Spirit of Mystery at South Channel Pile

at Sorrento. She was eventually wrecked on Halftide Rock in Keppel Bay off Rockhampton, Queensland, on the 26th of March 1869, where she was being used as a Pilot cutter. Her crew was saved.

Pete Goss, Cornish sailor and adventurer, was intrigued by the story of this extraordinary voyage and commissioned the building of a replica Mounts Bay lugger, the *Spirit of Mystery*. The naming and blessing ceremony was held at the Newlyn Fishing Festival in August, 2008, and the voyage to Australia commenced on the 20th of October, 2008. The expected arrival date of the *Spirit of Mystery* at Port Phillip was early- to mid-March 2009.

After battling a fierce storm for two and a half days in the Southern Ocean, the *Spirit of Mystery* was knocked down more than 90 degrees by a freak wave near Kangaroo Island, South Australia early Wednesday, 4 March 2009, resulting in the injury of crewman Mark Maidman (Pete Goss's brother-in-law), who broke his leg while on watch on deck, loss of the life raft and dinghy and damage of the communications equipment.

Amazingly, the log entry from the 6th of March 1855 gives a taste of what conditions the crew on *Mystery* encountered in the Southern Ocean at about the same time of the year.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) dispatched a Donier aircraft and dropped medical supplies and a satellite telephone - all of which landed within 100 metres of the bow. While the initial decision was to evacuate the injured crewman once the *Spirit of Mystery* was within helicopter range (about 150 nautical miles from Portland, Victoria), in the end the vessel sailed all the way to Portland to deliver the injured man for medical treatment.

The remaining crew (skipper Pete Goss, his brother Andy and his son Elliot) then continued the trip towards their final destination of Williamstown, Victoria.



Spirit of Mystery ahead of Nellie

The *Spirit of Mystery* passed Queenscliff Pier on Monday, 9/03/09 and was met by Russ Watson's cota boat *Nellie C148* and a number of modern yachts. Following is an excerpt from Pete Goss's weblog:

Just before sunup we entered Port Philip and were met by a Cota Boat which is a traditional boat which reminded me of a Falmouth work boat. Fortunately for us the yacht 'Secretary' was just ahead of us and hearing us on the VHF to port control offered to hang back and take us through the western channel. Just as we cleared this Mark Lloyd turned up on a helicopter and we did a photo shoot which included putting up St

Pirans - they are stunning. A welcome fleet soon started to build up as we closed Melbourne and the sense of anticipation built. As we closed the marina we noticed a crowd and on closing them realised that they were all dressed in traditional Cornish clothes and waving St Pirans flags.

Pete Goss gave full credit to the crew of the original trip on *Mystery* - They succeeded without technological help and communication equipment - and completed their trip in less time. 🚩➡️

www.petegoss.com/blog.php

Images kindly supplied by Mark Lloyd & Russ Watson



'Fishy Tales' at Queenscliff Maritime Weekend 2007 – delivered by former pilot master Capt Colin Springall



TRAFALGAR DAY on the 21st October, 2005 marked the 200-year anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. Imagine the following:

Lord Nelson returns to the deck of the recently renamed British flagship HMS Appearment.....

"Order the signal, Hardy!"

"Aye, Aye, Sir."

"Hold on, that's not what I dictated to the Signal Officer. What's the meaning of this?"

"Sorry Sir?"

"*England expects every person to do his or her duty, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religious persuasion or disability.* What gobbledegook is this?"

"Admiralty Policy, I'm afraid, Sir. We are an equal opportunity employer now. We had the devil's own job getting 'England' past the censors, lest it be considered racist."

"Gadzooks, Hardy. Hand me my pipe and tobacco!"

"Sorry, Sir. All naval vessels have been designated smoke-free working environments."

"In that case, we break open the rum ration. Let us splice the main brace to steel the men before battle."

"The rum ration has been abolished, Admiral. It's part of the Government's Policy on Binge Drinking."

"Good heavens, Hardy. I suppose we'd better get on with it: Full speed ahead!"

"I think you'll find there is a 4 mph speed limit on this stretch of water, Sir."

"Damn it man. We are on the eve of the greatest sea fight in history. We must advance with all dispatch. Report from the crow's nest, please!"

"That won't be possible, Sir ..."

"What?"

"Health and Safety have closed the crow's nest, Sir. No harness. And they say that the rope ladder doesn't meet regulations. They won't let anyone up there until proper scaffolding can be erected."

"Then get me the ship's carpenter without delay!"

"He is busy knocking up a wheelchair access to the fo'c'sle, Admiral."

"Wheelchair access? I've never heard anything so absurd!"
"Health and safety again, Sir. We have to provide a barrier-free environment for the differently-abled."

"Differently-abled? I've only one arm and one eye, and I refuse to hear mention of the word. I did not rise to the rank of Admiral by playing the disability card."

"Actually, you did: The Royal Navy is underrepresented in the areas of visual impairment and limb deficiency."

"Whatever next? Give me full sail, the salt spray beckons!"

"A couple of problems here, too, Sir. Health and Safety won't let the crew up the rigging without crash helmets. And they don't want anyone breathing in too much salt – haven't you seen the adverts?"

"I've never heard such infamy. Break out the cannon and tell the men to stand by to engage the enemy!"

"The men are a bit afraid about shooting anyone, Admiral."

"What? This is mutiny!"

"It's not that, Sir. It's just that they're afraid of being charged with murder if they kill anyone. There are a couple of Legal Aid lawyers on board watching everyone like hawks."

"Then how are we expected to sink the French and Spanish?"

"Actually, Sir, we're not."

"We're not?"

"No, Sir. The French and Spanish are our European partners now. According to the Common Fisheries Policy, we shouldn't even be in this stretch of water. We could get hit with a claim for compensation."

"But you must hate a Frenchman as you hate the devil."

"I wouldn't let the Diversity Coordinator hear you say that, Sir. You'll be up on a disciplinary."

"You must consider every man an enemy who speaks ill of your king!"

"Not any more, Sir. We must be inclusive in this multicultural age. Now put on your Kevlar vest – it's the Rules."

"Don't tell me – Health and Safety. Whatever happened to rum, sodomy and the lash?"

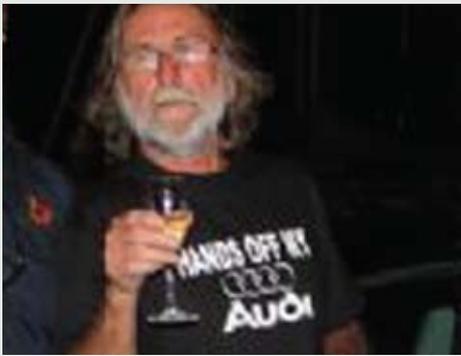
"As I explained, Sir: Rum is off the menu. And there is a ban on corporal punishment."

"What about sodomy?"

"I believe it's to be encouraged, Sir."

"In that case, kiss me, Hardy!"





Congratulations

to Mick Morris, proud owner of cousta boat *Cariad Cir7*, for winning an Audi A3 in a draw at the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club in Pittwater, NSW.

This prize was for participation in the weekly twilight competition on Thursday evenings which was held over 16 weeks. The concept obviously favoured participation instead of point score, as owners received a ticket for each race they entered which was then placed in the barrel for the final draw. The series even included a 'Cruising Division'.

Upcoming CBA dates for the Diary



CBA Class Rules 2009 Forum 13 June 2009



CBA Annual General Meeting 13 August 2009



The Cup Regatta 2009 1-3 November 2009



Double ender at Port Melbourne

BOAT FOR SALE

C514 'Gosling'
\$51,000

Contact Robert Bryce
0431 715 716

BOAT FOR SALE

C1932 'Victoria'
\$26,950

Contact David Hoyle
0418 686 602

Couta Boat Association Inc.



Registered Number

A0000225D
ABN 17 803 524 588

Business Address

PO Box 490
Port Melbourne
Victoria 3207

cba@coutaboatclub.com.au

President

Carmen Bell

Vice President

Steve Chiodo

Secretary

Bernie O'Hanlon

Treasurer

Chris Malkin

General Committee Members

Mark Foley, Peter Gale,
Tim Phillips, Peter Sydes,
David Todd

Class Measurer

Ray Eades
0408 394 054

Editor

Carmen Bell
cbell@pipeline.com.au

We are actively seeking your Couta Tales
stories about boats, club life or events.