



The Binnacle



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Our new work table at Harrison Pond!



Photo: Mike Woodley



From the Bridge

It looks like spring is finally coming at us , uncertain weather , and a lot of things to do .

This **Binnacle** will get to you as we are getting things ready to sell at our Swap and Shop. Following Swap and Shop we will take some time to acquaint you with the **Thomas Tugs**. I told **Earnest Reid** about it and he says oh yeah, I built one of those, and he has done a real fine job of it too. I am building one and at the time of writing I am putting in the nozzle. **Ron Hilsden** is putting a servo motor in his so we will have quite a few for you to choose from as to what you want to set yours up like . This size and design is going to be the answer to a maidens dreams as far as construction, materials, quality, and performance, the whole spectrum can be adjusted to suit what you want to do, as long as it floats on the water line, I don't think that it matters what you do with it. I think we could christen these things on the weekend of the **Battle of The Atlantic** down at the pond. I have had a vision, yes indeed people, a vision of hundreds of these little tugs pulling barges, doing square dances, and all sorts of other strange things. Maybe I drift a little.

Upcoming stuff

The Sunday after the meeting we are invited to go to Cowichan Lake to do the next leg on the **All Island Series**. You can read all about it in the **C.R.Y.A.** News letter that just came out. There are two good articles in there ,one by Barry Fox and one by Lawrie Neish of Saltspring.

Next up is **Pirate Days** at the **Maritime Museum**. This is a fun event but a little exhausting. All the little pirates and their ideas of what will float really spurs their imagination, and then they get to put them in the water, "Golly what big surprise, right before my very eyes".

Powell Cup will be contested on April 1 at Beaver Lake I would like to make some changes, this year, it will be run past the Exec. next meeting.

The **Canadian Power & Sail Squadron** will be Holding their annual general meeting on the 4th and 5th of May at the **Saanich Fair Grounds**. We have been invited to put on a short display of about 2 hours on the evening of the 4th. Some of our members are members of the

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ON THE HORIZON

INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 15-18 The Mid Vancouver Island Marine Modelers show at the Country Club Mall, Nanaimo.
- Mar 20-22 Maritime Museum: Pirate Days arghh!
- April 12th April Meeting: Social



MEETINGS: Second Thursday 7:15-9:15
313 Brunswick Place
Next is April 12



POWER: Sundays 10 – 12
Harrison Model Yacht Pond (HYP)
Dallas Road at Government.



SAILING: 1st and 3rd Sundays 1 – 3 PM
Beaver Lake
Next are March 18th and April 1



LANGFORD LAKE NAVY
Wednesdays 9:30
Langford Lake, Leigh Rd at Trillium



Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society

General Meeting – 8 February 2007

Call to order: 7:15 pm

Present: 26 members and 2 guests (Dick Gill and Ken Ensor)

1. Outreach:
 - Dave Marryatt is still in Jubilee Hospital (since Oct)
 - Ernest Reid had a hip replaced
2. Dave thanked everyone who participated in the Westshore Village Hobby Show
3. We are looking for an organizer for the power/HMYP side of the club. There were no volunteers
4. The Future Committee (B. Fox chair) is looking for members
5. Sailing Program. We are hosting the first All Island Meet February 18.
6. Other Business – Westview Gospel Chapel returned our rent cheque and asked us to donate it to a charity of our choice.

Adjournment 8:20

There followed a discussion about building cardboard tug models after the next meeting

Get your 2007 VMSS Calendar now!

2007 Executive Committee

President: Dave Denton 478-1800
Vice-Pres: David Taylor 652-6480
Secretary: Ron Hillsden 479-5760
Treasurer: Tom Pound 595-6487
Show Coordinator: B. Andrews 479-2761
CRD Liaison: Ken Lockley 477-5830
Barry Fox 743-5729
Parks Liaison: Dave Denton 478-1800
Binnacle Editor: Bill Sturrock 479-0239
Quartermaster: Bob Rainsford 383-2256
Librarian: Rick Rainsford 382-0898
Sailing Director: Barry Fox 743-5729
Director at Large: Ken Scotten 472-6187
Director at Large: Ernest Reid 652-8579
Publicity: Dave Denton 478-1800

Sailing News

After some issues with frozen water at the start of this year we have been very busy sailing ever since and with some very good winds to make the boats really move!!! After a couple of good warm up club sailing days we hosted the first round of the new All Island RC Sailing Series. The entry was maybe not as big as we would have wanted but the quality of the entry was very good. For many of the skippers this would be their first competitive regatta exposure either ever or for some time. In the same vein as the competitors, our Race Committee consisted of people experiencing running one of these events for the first time.

Mike Woodley acted as Race Director for the day and did a great job keeping everyone on track and got us 11 races with a few course changes along the way to adapt to new winds and to make the course more of a challenge.

Ron Hillsden was our Scorekeeper. Good accurate counts and a few line calls later we had our results complete and ready for the awards ceremony at the end of the event.

Bill Andrews was Captain Rescue Boat. He didn't have to rescue anyone all day but did a first rate job of getting the course set up and then making a few changes

through the day.

With good help like this it allows all the competitors to stay focused on their racing and makes the whole event an enjoyable experience. And then, when you get an additional person to step in and help with some of the background details, as **Lois Lockley** did for us this time, it just adds to the way the event flows.

From the beginning it was obvious that the boat to beat for the day was **Dave Seager's** Flatout. He started the event out with a win and then sailed all day near the front of the fleet, ending the day in first place with 3 wins on the day.

Scott Ringrose had some alarming issues after a hard day of work on Saturday. Scott said he sacrificed a couple of races for his "beauty sleep". The beauty part didn't work but it was clear that it helped his sailing as he had a number of 1st's throughout the day. Even with those missed starts he had a great sailing day and sailed his Flatout to a strong second place with 5 wins on the day.

Third place went to newcomer **Gord Sirop** and his Kite. Gord managed to sail to a convincing win in one race and generally sailed well all day except for one little interlude when he had some on board battery issues and had to

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power squadron, so there is a natural cross over of interest, and we may drum up a few new members who are tired of the Moorage Rates.

Battle of the Atlantic, May 6, as I said before a good day to try out our Thomas Tugs with our military stuff.

Mike Woodley has agreed to run the show, and we know that he can do a real number, judging from what he did for us at the H.Y.P. 50th event.

See you on the water. **Dave Denton** .

Flagging Sales?

Ron Hillsden is going to retire from the flag business. If the flag is 2" or smaller it is \$2; 3" or larger is \$4.00. Add \$1.50 for mail if not taking it in person. In stock only, I am not going to order any more. Appreciate it if you can find room for that bit of news. Thanks, Ron.

From City of Victoria re: HYP

Please remind members that **parking on the grass is not allowed**. "Not only does it cause maintenance headaches for our staff but it also sends a bad message to the public about all of your members."



Old Wood & Rusty Iron – by Mike Creasy

Tugboats have been a fixture on the west coast for as long as there have been engines to run them. Steam, naphtha, gas and diesel, with fuel cells and hydrogen yet to come.



SS Beaver, BC Archives

You've heard of the Beaver, the first tug on the coast in 1836 – towing sailing ships out to sea between freight trips for the Hudson's Bay Company. A 101 foot paddlewheel steamer, she was very early steam technology, putting

out about 75 hp at a working pressure of about 2 ½ psi. That's less than the pressure in your water pipes!

The Beaver also sported a small cannon on her foredeck, useful for keeping the locals at bay while the crew were ashore on their frequent firewood expeditions to feed the inefficient boiler. The general routine was, steam for 1 day and spend the next 2 days gathering wood.

Beaver wasn't the only armed tug in those days. When Alaska was sold to the States in 1867, they threw in a former Russian Navy gunboat – the Polittkofsky. She had a battery of small cannons, plus a nice copper boiler. The paddlewheel Polly, as she was known, was converted to tugboat duty in the Puget Sound area. The cannons stayed aboard.



Ex-Russian gunboat Polittkofsky was towing the Maria J. Smith to safety in 1869 off Vancouver Island, when the towline broke.

Think of the possibilities! You could tow a square-rigger out to Cape Flattery and open fire if they didn't pay up. (Now you know why big-city car valets are armed!!) Anyhow, the Polly ended up as a barge on the Yukon River in the early 1900s.

In 1869 the former British gunboat HMS Forward was retired and sold at auction in Victoria. With the examples of the Beaver and the Polly, it seemed reasonable to leave Forward's cannons on board when she was sold to smooth talking chap named Pedro Viscayno.

Pedro assured Her Majesty's men that he represented the navy of San Salvador, and that such a ship would be perfect! And it was. Pedro sailed south and declared war on the Republic of Mexico, capturing ships and looting villages along the Mexican coast until he was tracked down and captured by an American gunboat.

The poor old Forward was burned on a sandbar, while Pedro faced Mexican justice.

Cannons on civilian ships seem to have gone out of style after this; whether because Her Majesty frowned on it or because of a new cannon registry system, we just don't know.

Thanks to Bill Birch and Binnacle readers for giving me the motivation to do some writing. Now that the genie is out of the bottle, I hope to keep contributing on a more or less regular basis – writing about maritime history. Other people are far more qualified than me to write about model-making so instead, I'll try to bring out the stories behind the ships we model. Keeping this historical perspective alive by telling or re-telling these stories plays a very large part in ensuring that our models aren't seen simply as expensive toys. I hope you agree. Mike Creasy

The unarmed towboat industry thrived on the BC Coast, as sailing ships continued to call at Victoria and Vancouver, and the new ocean steamers needed barge-loads of coal from Nanaimo.

A number of early entrepreneurs began servicing the growing trade, competing for business with each other and with the American towboats. The Mackenzie brothers operated the 95



Title: Tug Lorne in Vancouver Harbour

foot Escort # 2 – built in Oregon in 1882 – on the lower Fraser and around the Vancouver area. The Mackenzies became marine consultants to Charles Melville Hays, who was bringing the

Grand Trunk Pacific Railway into competition with the CPR.

Coal baron Robert Dunsmuir recognized the opportunity, and hired marine architect George Middlemas to design a ship specifically for this new West Coast towboat trade.

The Lorne was built in Victoria by Robert Laing, while her engines and boilers were built next door at Albion Iron Works. She was state of the art; one of the first ships built for towing and nothing else. The city followed the construction with interest, and turned out for the grand occasion of the launch on June 3, 1889.

Unfortunately, a request to have the federal government's harbour dredger clear a channel for the big tug had been lost in the bureaucracy. Lorne slid majestically down the ways and came to grinding halt in the shallow water, losing much of her copper plating in the process.

Despite this little embarrassment, Lorne's design proved to be ideal for the west coast, and her general arrangement became the benchmark for towboat design.

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- Westcoasters Ships That Built BC, Tom Henry, Harbour Publishing, 1998

THE SUB SUBJECT - MARCH 2007

“How does one get a model boat/ship of one’s own?” interested or prospective modelers may ask. “Build it or buy it” is the answer, but both those options sport sub-options.

It will take two and possibly three columns to vent my views...views that are NOT cast in bronze.

PART I

Modelers, broadly speaking, prefer personal inputs rather than an easy, read-to-run purchase. But the “building” option takes on several guises. Four of ‘em come to my sub-slanted mind.

1. Buy a kit with a fancy artists’ rendering on the box. Prices will vary according to what is or is not included, and that can vary from main components (for advanced talents) to most components, or all components, including RX and TX, together with pamphlets, booklets or manuals of clear or esoteric instructions that may take longer to read/decipher than it then takes to assemble the pieces. (I’ve never gone there.)
2. Buy a so-called ‘semi-kit’ that will include main (often difficult to fashion) parts, such as the hull, sail/conning tower and extensions if it involves a submarine. (My “Boomer” ([Florida](#)) a sad example.) Most often but not always less costly than “1”.
3. Buy or borrow a set of the chosen prototype’s scale plans, and start from scratch. For a skilled beginner, this will involve buying more supplies than needed, but all can go in stock for a next project. (I’ve gone there.)
4. The ultimate, as I see it, is to scratch build a model based on your OWN plans. Inspiration may be drawn from all and sundry prototypes, but the result...its looks and performance...is your very own. (e.g. Norman Farley at HMYP.)

Rather than now plunging in on how I perceive the merits and demerits of the listed options, I need to first summarize the provenance of the six home-made models in my fleet...two this month, others in April and May.

The very first sub I built was a 1:202-scale model of USS [Miami](#) (SSN 75)...a free-running, dynamic diver.

For her plans, I enlarged outline profiles that illustrate the text in Tom Clancy’s book: [Submarine](#), (1993).

Since radio reception was not a consideration, I decided on a metal hull, for which I soldered together three and one-half (empty) cans of La Tosca tomato paste. The choice of cans was based on (a) their suitable diameter and, (b) the now rare happenstance that they are not corrugated. Bow and stern cone were shaped out of balsa...soaked in diluted two-to-one epoxy.

The simple guts (motor, batteries and drive shaft) were lined up on a thin plywood, slide-out platform. Oak was used for the sail, while the control surfaces took up more

of La Tosca’s tin plate.

She looked pretty good, and rode on the water nicely. And she moved at a nice turn of speed. Two problems then arose: she wouldn’t dive and she leaked. The leak problem was broadly solved, but not the diving. She declined.

Without a thought of giving up on 1:202 [Miami](#), I decided to build the boat that had inspired her design, namely Glynn Guest’s plans for a free-running model of a German Type XVII U-Boat...published on pp. 368-69 of July 1985’s [Model Boats](#).

I built the little Type XVII in no time...all balsa, and meticulously followed Glynn’s instructions and suggestions, painted her in black on white zebra stripes, and ran her in HMYP with almost immediate and total success. There were leaks, but the diving-surfacing pace was a delight.

In the March 2001 “Sub Subject”, I mentioned that Bill Birch and I had each built a Type XVII from Glynn’s plans. Glynn fired back an E-mail to Ron Hillsden. He was pleased to read that his almost 16-year-old plan was still being followed, but wanted it clear that, counter to my assumption, he was NOT a Welshman. So Romanus had that wrong. But that’s just an aside.

What’s not an aside is that the Type XVII model made me go back to the 1:202-scale [Miami](#), and got it to operate every bit as properly.

What had happened is this: by comparing the two models in all respects (weight, size and so forth) I’d learned a few things about hydrodynamics. That newly perceived insight made me take steps (modifications) that made “Little” [Miami](#) do what it was meant to do...run, dive and resurface in that order. How did I get there?

I put on a bigger screw, increased the areas of both bow and stern planes beyond their scale size, put up with the now somewhat awkward looks, and... enjoyed her performance. That two-boats exercise and the experience gained emboldened me to step up to the plate, and dive into R/C model subbing. And that will be covered in Parts II and III, and perhaps IV, of how and why a building/procurement program may be approached.

[Editor’s note: **PART II** will appear in the April issue.]

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