

The Binnacle

September 2022

Volume 44 Issue 9



**Ken Lockley on the
Sea Commander**



**Pictures from the
Classic Boat Festival.**



**Edward White
Manila Galleons Pt 2**



**Mike Claxton
On TugFest**





On the Radar!

Our next general meeting will be Thursday September 8th. at 7:30.in the usual place (St Peters Church Hall, 3939 St Peters Road off Quadra Street near the Keg).

Also, please bring your present project to the meeting for a show and tell.

It's September, and it's an article of faith for me that September is the best month of the year in B.C.

So, we've three lovely Sundays likely left before the weather closes in and the coffee shop becomes more attractive than the pond.

They are your chance to finish your season's boating on a high note, so make up your mind to finish that build or restoration you meant to get done this summer, and bring it down to the pond.

And when you are there, enjoy the company of your fellow club members, each of them is amazing in their own way.

I'm going to try to wipe out the memory of failures and rough times this year, and get into the fall with a golden glow.

Edward.



Regular General Meetings
2 nd . Thursday, 7:30 pm. St Peter's Anglican Church Hall,
St. Peter's road, Lakehill.
Next meeting September 8th.



Every Sunday Morning, 9am-ish to 11:30-ish at Harrison Model Yacht Pond, Dallas road.



The Langford Lake Navy.
Wednesday Mornings 9 :30 ish, Leigh Rd. At Tillicum.

Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society

General Meeting
St Peters Church Hall
Aug 11 2022

Welcome & Call to order:

- Time 7:40
- Number present 10
- No New Members or Guests

Reports

- Outreach Mike Woodley passed away
- Financial: Insurance bill came. \$25 higher than last year - \$1,200
- Now we are \$350 in the red for the year not including \$90 in gadget sales tonight and \$400 expected from Saanich Fair.

Old Business

- We found some old rack cards so replacement is not urgent. Calvin will order 500 new cards and get them for us at a good rate. Thank you Calvin!

New Business

- nil

Donations

- A couple of books and some stuff from Dave Denton were sold at the meeting

Upcoming Events

- Aug 14 Tugfest – Mike Claxton- Ron Burchett has everything in order, has developed a course similar to the one used in Seattle. No food at this event, prizes as Ron Gonder suggested . Thank You Ron Burchett for running this!
- Saanich Fair Sept 3. Jim Cox has sign up sheets for volunteers. Has work party for set up. Will ask Bill Andrews about drink boxes to give children for paddle boats.
Elgin Smith and family made and painted new paddle boats for our use at the fair. Thank you Elgin Smith family!

Entertainment and Round table

- Ken Lockley talked about the history of the Amex Group tug Sea Warrior and his model of the 90 foot tug.

Adjournment

- 8:30



SHIPS, BOATS AND MODELS Ken Lockley SEPTEMBER 2022

“Sea Commander”, part of the A-Mix group, sitting in the Fraser River looking like it’s ready to be scrapped. This 142 ft. tug was originally built for the US. Army and listed as LT 829, completed in 1945 only to spend the better part of the next twenty years in a remote corner of San Francisco Bay. Part of the “moth ball” fleet that seemed important at the time.

In 1966 she was bought by Gulf Towing and renamed “Gulf Joan”. The new owners removed her steam propulsion and installed four Caterpillar engines giving a total of 3060 B.H.P., she was now ready to start a busy career for the next 55 years.

In June of 1971 she left Esquimalt, towing a 500 ton barge, “William Denny” built by “Yarrows” and destined for Halifax.



Mac Mackay photo

This Mac Mackay picture is “Gulf Joan” in Halifax Harbour waiting for the tug “Salvage Monarch” bringing a barge from Sorel, Quebec that has the ferry “Napoleon L.” aboard. This ferry will eventually become the “Howe Sound Queen”, just recently been replaced and sold off by BC Ferries Ltd. The return tow arrived in Vancouver September 18/71, completing 86 days for the round trip to Vancouver. The “Howe Sound Queen” was used in many locations but best known for the Horseshoe Bay to Gibson ferry.

“Gulf Joan” continued to do more epic type tows such as Halifax to Resolute NWT taking barges of machinery and other supplies. Gulf Towing and Island Tug and Barge became part of a series of mergers which eventually formed as “Seaspan Ltd. The tug became “Seaspan Commander” for a number of years. In recent years she has operated with the name “Sea Commander” for the A-Mix group.

The repowering of “Gulf Joan” certainly was a boost to her capabilities for long distance towing. Free running and calm conditions she was able to maintain 14 knots and able to tow a 6000 ton barge cruising at 10 knots.

During my research on “Gulf Joan”, I learned she did many tows of self dumping log barges from the Queen Charlottes to the Fraser River Sawmills. Also at some point in the 1970’s she made several trips to “Resolute Bay” towing prefab housing for the hamlet. In recent years she was re-named “Sea Commander” and the A-MIX group kept her busy with their many barge tows of one types or another.



Photo: John MacFarlane



© Dave Hinsly
MarineTraffic.com

Specifications for “Sea Commander” ex “Gulf Joan” are:
length 142ft x beam 33ft x draft 18.5 ft.

I have used material for this article from Marine Traffic website. Mac MacKay website and John MacFarlane picture above of the self loading log barge.

Classic Boat Festival.

While the most important event on the Island this weekend was without doubt the VMSS pond at the Saanich Fair, (report next month), there was one other minor event, being the 43rd Classic Boat Festival in Victoria Harbour. Here's a few pictures to give you a sense of what was there.



TugFest 2022.

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The Competition Towing Routes

Mike Claxton's Report

First - thanks to the members and others that came out and helped setup, shift equipment, answer questions or watch the activities with boats in the pond.

Thanks especially to Calvin who stepped into hip waders and spent too much time in the pond setting up, moving barges, repairing boats or lending tools out.

He also brought his two log barges and showed the logs being dumped and gathered up by the boom boats brought to the

pond by two fellows from Nanaimo.

Richard Paddle who posts a lot of photos of tugs on Facebook took a number of photos both of boats in the water and those on display. His photos are on the club FB page.

We had a number of visitors -

Christina Morrison came and chatted with some of us - she is an artist that has a goal to try and paint all the tugs on the coast - over 500 I think!

She had a show at one of the hotels - worth looking at her website. I think she painted one of Ray's tugs and it was an opportunity for her to put names to faces.

Ray Malone from the UK brought 3-4 tugs from home and ran them - his Nellie Irene model put on a bit of a show! I've been to a number of regattas with Ray and he always has some well detailed boats with him.

Ron and Ray setup two basic navigation courses -

1. tow a barge through a course and dock it at a wharf setup,
2. leave a dock and go out and retrieve a barge, tow it back to the wharf and park it as close to marks on the wharf

We had a total of 7 Skippers participate - would have liked to see more though.

Here are the results:

1st place Bill Andrews 113 pts

2nd Ray Malone 112

3rd Dave Nelson 99

4th Sue

5th Mike

6th Corey

7th Andy Le

Andy had the Tupperware tug with 3D printed jet drives First time build - next a hull!

It's been a number of years since we had a regatta and this was an idea put forward by Rick Gonder.

I thought it was a start - had lots of comments from some members and will digest them for a possible repeat.

Thanks also to Ron, Sue and Ray who looked after repairs to the equipment that they brought from Crofton.

Feel free to send me your comments or ideas for future ones,

Mike.

Pictures of some of the action.





The Manila Galleons: Part II

After Magellan's voyage the story of exploration and exploitation of Spanish America and of the Pacific becomes a huge and very complex tapestry. Here are a few of the things that happened that are most relevant to the Manila Galleon story.

In 1513 Balboa and the young Francisco Pizarro had crossed the Isthmus of Panama and saw the Pacific ocean for the first time with European eyes.

In 1523 Cortez had conquered the Aztec empire in Mexico, established where the Pacific coast of Mexico was and ordered the settlement of Acapulco bay.

In turn, in 1533, Pizarro completed the conquest of the Inca empire in Peru. He founded the city of Lima on Peru's coast. The exploitation of silver mines in Peru led to the establishment of major shipyards at Guyaquil in Ecuador.



16th. Century map of the Philippines

In 1541, Ruy Lopez de Villalobos was commissioned to lead an expedition of six galleons with between 300 and 400 men to the "Islands of the West", which he renamed the Philippines after Prince Philip II of Spain. The fleet reached Mindanao at the end of February 1543.

But the expedition was not a success, they failed to establish a settlement in the islands, and the one ship that was despatched to find a route back to Mexico, the San Juan, explored most of the Phillipine archipelago and north as far as the 30th parallel, but then was forced back by storms. By the beginning of 1544 the remainder of the expedition was forced to seek refuge with the Portuguese on the island of Amboyna. There, they were imprisoned, and Villalobos died in his prison cell in 1546, from fever. There were though, about 80 survivors who were sent back to Lisbon by the Portuguese.

In the process of researching this story, I found a hero who I had never heard of before. Next is his story

In 1522, when Juan Elcano, the captain of Magellan's only surviving ship got home, the Spanish crown finally knew where Asia was and how difficult it was to get there. The choice was between the Cape of Good Hope in defiance of the Portuguese, or Cape Horn in defiance of the appalling distance and the worse weather. But they decided to have one more try.

So in 1526 another Spanish fleet set out for the Straits of Magellan with Elcan as the master pilot under the command of Garcia Jofre de Laoisa. Both of the commanders died of scurvy in the journey across the Pacific and only one ship with 105 men lived to reach the Spice Islands in October 1526. They tried for eight years to keep a foothold in the Spice Islands but in the end were forced to surrender themselves to the Portuguese to be shipped home.

Among them was a young man who had set sail as a 17 year old page to Elcano. He was Andres de Urdaneta. He had kept detailed maps and journals of the entire voyage, including the eight years on the Spice Islands, but they were confiscated by the Portuguese before they allowed him to go back to Spain. But once in Spain he prepared a detailed report on the whole expedition which satisfied the Spanish authorities and made his personal reputation. He had grown from a young page to a master navigator, explorer, and seaman, with great diplomatic skills.

He was given the opportunity to go to New Spain in 1538 with a view to joining an expedition from there to the Philippines. That fell through and Urdaneta remained in New Spain for 14 years, employed by the ViceRoy, Luis de Velasco on many different tasks and taking a great interest in all that went on in exploration of the Pacific. Then, in 1552, around 44 years old, he decided to become an Augustinian monk, taking a strict vow of poverty and joining the order's missionary and education work. He was ordained a priest in 1557. He became the master of novices at the Priory of San Augustin in 1558, no doubt expecting to spend the rest of his life in quiet teaching and scholarship.

But that wasn't to be. His Viceroy wanted to mount another expedition to find a trade route to and from the Phillipines, and Urdaneta was his first choice for the commander. He persuaded King Philip II to back the expedition and the King wrote to Urdaneta asking him to do just that. Urdaneta got the permission of his order, and agreed to join the expedition, not as its commander, but as its master pilot and leader of its missionary effort.

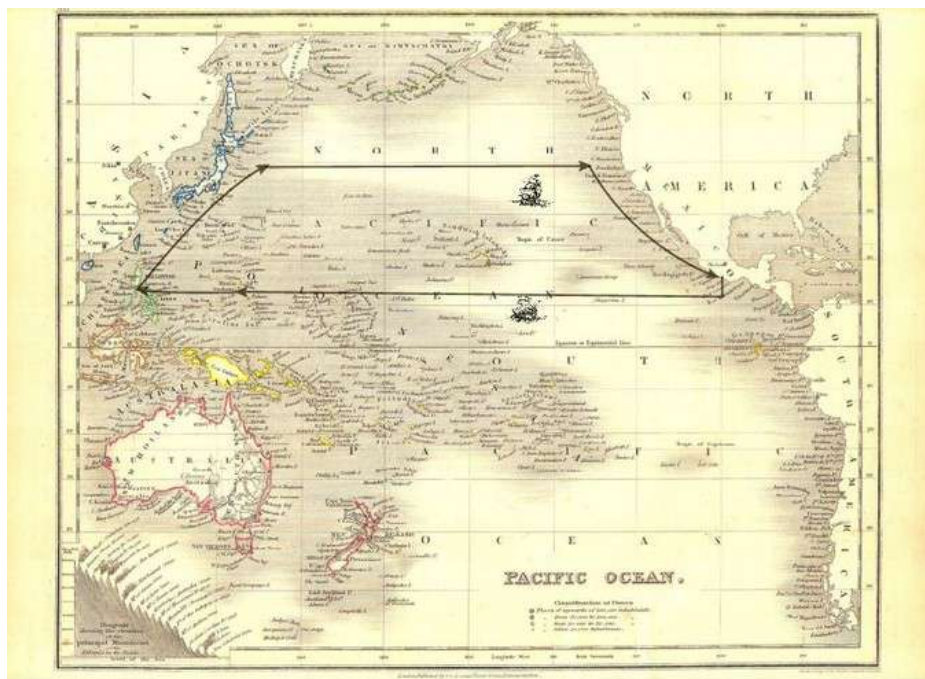


Urdaneta

So in 1564 he set sail under Miguel Lopez de Legazpi with two galleons and two smaller ships, with 150 sailors and 200 soldiers on November 21st.

They reached the island of Guam on January 23rd 1565, and sailed on to reach the Philippines by mid February.

They found a first place to settle on the island of Cebu and by June 1st. Urdaneta was ready for the attempt to find a return route. He sailed north to the 38th. parallel and then east across the Pacific to the coast of California, arriving in Acapulco on the 8th October, four months and eight days after leaving Cebu.



It was a triumph; with good timing a trading ship could complete the round trip in a year, and Spain had a trade route to all the wealth of Asia. For the following 250 years, one or more ships would make the voyage every year and, allowing for Portugal's efforts, trade now had a complete network around the entire world!

Urdaneta returned to Spain to report to King Philip, and there wrote his findings before returning again to New Spain. His order would not allow the risk of another voyage to the Phillipines because of his age and state of health, and he retired to the Priory where he died in 1568.

I should pause to explain a little of the nature of these islands at the time the Spanish and Portuguese arrived. They were a sophisticated society that had been the heart of a sea-borne trade route, the Maritime Jade Road, for over 3000 years. Jade, mined in Taiwan, and carved in the Philippines, was traded throughout south-east Asia and at least as far as India

up to around 1000 a.d. This trade had originated in the Austronesian expansion from Taiwan and their sea-faring was based on the use of outrigger craft, ranging from small canoes for coastal fishing to Balangays, large ships with sewn together planking, lightweight like the clinker craft of the North Sea, but using outriggers for stability and different forms of fore-and-aft sails. They were part of the trade network that included Arab dhows, Chinese Junks, and the various forms of balangay, that existed all the way from Japan to the Mediterranean and East Africa.

While the interiors of the islands were sparsely inhabited and largely tribal, the plains and coastlines were, by the 15th century, characterized by small kingdoms, analogous to European city states, with their main cities based on ports, and their strength mainly maritime. They had close trade ties with south-east China, and their nobility could afford all the luxuries that Asia could produce. But of course, there was constant rivalry between them.

People of the most northerly and largest island in the Philippines, Luzon, were especially active both in trade and naval war, and had some close ties with the Portuguese, introducing them to the Chinese port of Canton and also to Japan.

So when Legazpi established his first headquarters on Cebu with around 150 men left after Urdanets left with the rest, only in his mind was he conquering the Philippine Islands and bringing them to Christendom. A far more accurate description would be that he was setting up the shop, and he and his men would have been seen as a new potential trading partner or possible rival. Like Cortez and Pizarro did in Mexico and Peru, he was to play off the rival kingdoms of the Philippines, one against the other, to become the dominant power over a period. He would have to survive by trading the goods and silver he had brought with him, and by renting his small force as mercenaries until more resources could arrive from Mexico.

It took him almost six years, until 1571, to gain control of the trading centre of Manila, in the island of Luzon. It was to remain under Spanish control for almost 250 years.

The key was silver. The Chinese Ming dynasty, which ruled from 1368 to 1644, and oversaw the doubling of China's population, had from its beginning printed paper money that was not exchangeable for metal cash, although its denominations were strings of cash. Inflation set in, and they abandoned the system in 1450, returning to copper and silver cash coins. But there wasn't enough silver to meet demand, and the price escalated.

The conquistadors had taken abundant silver from the Aztec and Inca empires and, by around 1540, started to mine silver using natives as slave labour. So silver was abundant in New Spain, while China was short of coinage. So after the Spanish were established in Manila, a city grew rapidly as traders, craftsmen, and artisans from all around came to get a share of this new source of money. At the same time, as the flood of American silver across the Atlantic reached Spain, the worth of silver in European trade dropped. So by 1550, the same silver Peso would buy two and a half times as much gold in China, as it would in Europe.

Native Spaniards back in Spain naturally reacted strongly to this price advantage of Asian goods, and for all of the history of the Manila galleons, the Crown was trying to limit their size and the quantity of goods that they carried. But with potential profits that high, contraband became a major profession, and corruption among the officials in Mexico who were supposed to enforce the regulations was rife. It is likely that there was up to ten times the volume in contraband to that which was officially recorded by the Mexican and Spanish authorities.



A silver Peso minted in New Spain. A Piece of Eight!

These treasure ships became hugely attractive targets and Spain therefore kept most of the details of them secret. So there is relatively little documentation available today, and a great deal of that has never been translated from the Spanish archives.

In Part 3, I will tell the story of the galleons that we do know, of some of the wrecks, of the victims of piracy, government sponsored or otherwise, and of the Spanish rule of the Philippines and its end.



A Manila Galleon

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