

Parappa



NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE BOAT "PARAPPA"

APRIL 2006

Parappa is a 90 year old Tasmanian fishing boat that has spent her working life around southern Tasmania, and is now being preserved as an excellent example of her type.

Parappa was built in 1915 by the well-known boatbuilder Edwin A. Jack, at Trevallyn in Launceston, a few hundred yards away from the Cataract Gorge bridge. With an overall length of 52 ft (15 m), construction is of huon pine planks over lightweight hardwood frames only 2" x 1" (50 x 25 mm) in size. The deck is of celery top pine.

Parappa - the name means dolphin in the Tasmanian aboriginal language - was initially owned by Ned and Jack Pulfer, and was sold to William Bowtell in 1921. Bowtell was a fish merchant with a shop at 53 Elizabeth Street, Hobart. In 1936 Bowtell sold her to the Jager family of Lune River. The official owner was Handy Jager, then aged 16, but the boat was worked by him and his brother Scotty with their father, Jack. Scotty purchased the boat from Handy in 1955, and worked it as a cray and scale fish boat until his retirement in 1998. After his retirement he sold *Parappa* to his grandson Paul Delaney and a major upgrade was attempted. With the realization that the boat was not competitive as a modern fishing boat she was retired and sold to Des Beechey in 2004.

This boat is an excellent example of the progressive development of the Tasmanian fishing fleet. Commencing as a gaff-rigged yawl in 1915, she was equipped with a 10 horsepower petrol engine, with tiller steering, no wheelhouse and low freeboard. She was the first fishing boat in southern Tasmania to be converted to the more manageable Bermudan rig, with removal of the mizzen mast and increase in height of the main mast. The main deck was raised a plank to provide more freeboard, and the forward deck was raised 18 inches to allow standing room in the galley. At the same time a wheel house was built to give shelter from the weather, and probably at this time, wheel steering installed.

A major upgrade was commenced in 2001 to bring the boat up to modern survey standard, but not car-



"Parappa" won the race for Fishing Boats (First Class) in the Hobart Regatta in 1919. The prize was this photograph taken by J.W. Beattie

ried through to completion. A new aluminium wheelhouse was installed, a genset was installed to provide 12V and 240V power, and hydraulics were provided for steering, pot hauler and anchor winch.

Parappa is currently on the hard stand at Oyster Bay Marina, Kettering, where a major renovation of the hull and deck is underway. After 90 years, the hull is being refastened, caulked and splined. Feel free to come and visit this important vessel while she is accessible at Kettering.

Parappa's British Ship registration certificate

OFFICIAL NUMBER OF SHIP 151544						
Port Number... 10 of 1921		Port of Registry... Hobart		British or Foreign built... British		
Number of Decks... One		Number of Masts... Two ONE		Build... David		
Rigging... Ketch Cutter		Stern... 18' 6" 1/2		Gallies... None		
				Wood... Kauri		
				Framework... Wood		
				No. of Built... 10		
				No. of Tons... 16.88		
Tonnage under Tonnage Deck		Tonnage.		No. of Tons...		
Closed-in Spaces above the Tonnage Deck, if any, viz.,		None deck Deck		0.12		
Space or Spaces between Decks		None		0.08		
Poop		None		0.08		
Roundhouse		None		0.08		
Other enclosed Spaces (if any), naming them		Express for HATCHWAYS.		0.08		
		Gross Tonnage, being Register Tonnage, if a Sailing Ship		17.18		
		If a Steamer, deduct allowance for propelling Power, as per other side		3.06		
		Register Tonnage if a Steamer		14.12		
Names, Residence, and Description of the Owners, and Number of Sixty-fourth Shares held by each Owner		William George Bowtell, of Hobart in Tasmania Fish Merchant		14.12		
Dated 14th November 1921						
Col. 1.	Col. 2.	Col. 3.	Col. 4.	Col. 5.	Col. 6.	Col. 7.
Number of Transaction.	Letter denoting Mortgage, and Certificates of Mortgages.	Name of Person from whom Title is derived.	Number of Shares affected.	Date of Registry.	Nature and Date of Transaction.	Name, Residence, and Occupation of Transferee, Mortgagee, or other Person acquiring Title or Power.
1	A	W. G. Bowtell	64	13th January 1924 at 11 a.m.	Mortgage dated 10th December 1924 to secure sums due in account current with interest at annual rate of 4%	The English Scottish and Australian Bank Limited of Hobart in Tasmania

Certificate of Parappa's registration as a British Ship in 1921, from Commonwealth Archives, Hobart

Parappa was built in 1915, but first registered as a Launceston, in 1915.

British Ship in 1921, with number 151544. Registration of a fishing vessel was not compulsory, but was frequently done as it was proof of ownership, and enabled a mortgage to be raised on the vessel.

This registration certificate was issued in Hobart as number 10 of 1921, dated 14 November 1921. The top of the left page records that when first registered she had one deck, with two masts, was yawl rigged, with an elliptic stern. Propulsion is recorded as "Sail and oil". The rig details were altered in the registration book in 1955 to one mast and cutter rig, following replacement of the gaff rig and removal of the mizzen mast. The top right of the certificate records the builder as Edwin A Jack, of Trevallyn

On the centre left of the certificate the owner is recorded as William George Bowtell, of Hobart in Tasmania, Fish Merchant. On the bottom left is the recording of the first mortgage raised on the vessel. Over the years, the vessel has been used as security for six mortgages by the various owners. (These are recorded on continuation sheets of the Registration Certificate, not shown here). The first mortgage was raised by William Bowtell in 1924 on the English Scottish and Australian Bank in Hobart as security for his account with the bank.

The top right of the certificate gives the boat's dimensions. The length from the forepart of the stem under the bowsprit to the aft side of the head of the

NAME OF SHIP <i>Parappa</i>		First Registry <i>146</i>				
Whether a Sailing or Steam Ship; if Steam, how propelled	<i>Sail and motor SINGLE SCREW</i>	Where built... <i>Lantern</i>	When built... <i>1915</i>			
Measurements		Length from the Forepart of the Stern under the Bowsprit to the Aft Side of the Head of the Stern. post <i>42</i> Feet Main Breadth to Outside of Plank <i>12</i> Feet Depth in Hold from Tonnage Deck to Ceiling at Midships <i>6</i> Feet <i>Round of Beam .3</i>				
Additional Particulars for Steamers.		Tons.				
Deduction for Space required for propelling Power (as measured)		<i>3.05</i>				
Length of Engine Room (if measured) <i>7</i> Feet <i>7</i> Tenths.		<i>299</i>				
Number of Engines		Six (6) CYLINDERS <i>3 1/2</i> " 5" STROKE No. of SHAFTS <i>ONE</i>				
Combined Power (estimated Horse Power) <i>10 1/2</i> H.P. <i>3.67 N.H.P. 70 B.H.P. 9 KNOTS</i> INTERNAL COMBUSTION DIESEL ENGINE - BRITISH - MADE 1946 - BY PERKINS DIESEL LTD., PETERBOROUGH, ENGLAND.						
<i>Notes: The tonnage of the engine from space below the upper deck is 1.74 tons, and the tonnage of the total space found in above the upper deck for propelling machinery is 1.74 tons.</i> <i>The uppermost space above the upper deck are not included in the above tonnage.</i> <i>Signature: [Signature] (Signed) [Signature] Registrar.</i>						
SUMMARY.						
Col. 8.	Col. 9.	Col. 10.	Col. 11.	Col. 12.	Col. 13.	Col. 14.
Number and Account of subsequent Transaction, showing how Interest disposed of.	Number of Transaction under which Title required.	Names of Owners.	Mortgages and Certificates of Mortgage.	Names of Mortgages or Attorneys under Certificates of Mortgage.	Number of Shares.	REMARKS.
		<i>H. G. Rowell</i>	<i>Mortgage & transfer</i>	<i>The English & Australian</i>		

sternpost is 42 feet (*Parappa* has a counter stern, and there is a further 10 feet behind the sternpost). Beam is given as 12 feet 6 inches, and the depth of the hold (i.e. the well) as a little over 6 feet.

The section labeled "ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS FOR STEAMERS" is difficult to read, as it was crossed out and updated in 1955. Initially it said "10 hp, 6 1/2 knots, One engine, oil, USA, 1912 Union Engine Company. Two 5 1/4 inches, 6 inches". In other words, *Parappa* in 1921 had a 10 hp Union petrol engine, with two cylinders, of 5 1/4 inch bore and 6 inch stroke. It is likely that this engine was installed when she was built in 1915.

The engine information was updated in 1955 to read "3.67 NHP 70 BHP 9 knots. Internal combustion diesel engine British made 1946 by Perkins Diesel Ltd Peterborough England. Six cylinders, 3 1/2 inch bore, 5 inch stroke". There had actually been two

other engines installed between the Union and the Perkins, but fortunately nobody told the registration authorities, for they would have made the registration record even less readable!

Ninety-Year Hull Service Underway

Every 20 or 30 years it is necessary to refasten the planks to the ribs of a wooden boat. Refastening was a bit overdue for *Parappa*, as an entire refastening job had never been done. The hull planks are 30 mm huon pine, and the ribs 50 x 25 mm hardwood, all fixed with copper nails. Over the 90 year life of the boat many of the fastening had loosened, so the boat was excessively flexible. In some parts of the hull the copper nails were completely corroded away, particularly beside the concrete in the wings on each side of the well. So each plank was re-fastened to each rib with two stainless steel screws, needing about 3500 screws in all. A huon pine plug was then glued over the countersunk screws and sanded smooth.

Seams between planks are traditionally packed with oakum or cotton caulking and sealed with putty on top. For *Parappa* we decided to spline the seams with



Screws in place ready for driving

strips of king billy pine, glued into place with epoxy glue. The old caulking was scraped out. In some parts of the hull the original oakum and putty were in excellent condition, but in other parts the oakum had rotted and only the putty was sealing the seams. Various replacement had been made over the years, with Sikaflex over oakum in places and Sikaflex over new cotton in others. For splining, the seams were cut to an even width of 10 mm wide and 15 mm deep with a circular saw. Cotton caulking was hammered into the bottom of the seams in the usual manner, and then the splines glued into place on top. After the splines had been planed flush and the hull sanded an excellent fair surface was achieved.

Thanks go to Angelo Perry and his crew of shipwrights at Able Marine at Kettering for taking on this formidable job and producing an excellent result.



Splines in place ready to be planed and sanded

Des Beechey, custodian as well as owner of *Parappa*

Parappa's owner is Des Beechey, who was born in Dover, Tasmania. Des comes from a fishing family—older readers will remember his grandfather Andrew Drysdale, who lived and fished at Dover all his life, and his uncle Walter Drysdale and his boat *Kent D*. Des moved to Hobart as a child and attended Hobart Technical High School (now Newtown High) and the University of Tasmania. He moved to Sydney, where he has worked in computing and more recently in both of Sydney's large museums.

Des regards his involvement with *Parappa* more as custodian than as owner. When asked his plans for the boat his answer is likely to vary, but centres around the importance of preserving this 90 year old Tasmanian vessel for at least another 90 years. Recognizing the working life of her previous owners is equally important, particularly the Jager family who owned and worked the boat over four generations.

