

TACOMA PRESERVATION SOCIETY



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December 2018 Newsletter # 12

CAPTAIN'S REPORT - for the AGM 2018:



Well it's probably been the first time I have been able to concentrate fully on the job and I have had a very enjoyable year.

There is a great camaraderie amongst the crew and that is apparent in the way everyone goes about their chosen tasks with vigour and enthusiasm. It came to the fore on a cold, wet and windy slipway and an arduous two weeks of drilling, sanding and painting; as well as the engineering team pushing out props, cleaning radiators, pumps etc.

The work didn't end there. There have been numerous engineering, carpentry, painting works and let's not forget the new curtains and Tina Tuna Mk 2. Our 2018 trip repertoire has included collecting wool, weddings, birthdays and funerals.

I am not going to single anyone out however the crew's commitment has been outstanding.

We have welcomed some new blood this year in the form of down-under men Greg Sleep, Kevin Krahge and painter and docker Tony Lucena. All have brought a breath of fresh air with their willingness to get stuck in. Tony has amused us no end with his water blasting display and Spanish tales, Kevin with his stories and Greg with his quiet achieving.

We mustn't forget *The Good Time Girls* who ply us with beautiful cakes and goodies to keep us going in our endeavours. They are ever present to help our punters with their catering, although some groups have taken liberties this year and we will take steps in the future to let them know our expectations.

Financially we have had a good year. We've achieved full bookings on the tuna trips along with some generous donations from sponsors and members. This was welcome, given that slipping the boat is now quite an expense. We have also been able to upgrade our sound system, wet weather gear and fishing tackle, as well as adding a defibrillator this year.

Ian Doyle has been extremely active in many areas, media wise and not to mention lobbying the top men in the corridors of power both in Port Lincoln and Adelaide. His work probably goes unnoticed as he lives in the Big Smoke but I can assure you, he is extremely active and definitely the right man in that role. I know he has spent many many hours hunkered down with Ross preparing submissions and presentations on our berthing project. Hopefully we will soon see some light poking through. Thank you Doyley.

We mustn't forget those who handle the admin, taking minutes etc... and paying bills, a task much bigger than people realise, especially when it involves chasing certain personnel for their paperwork. Thank you Breeze for stepping into the breach and doing an excellent job.

Thank you all for making my year so much fun and I'm looking forward to another 12 months.

Peter (PJ) Jessep
Capt. Pugwash

TACOMA'S BERTH:

It's on its way. The Port Lincoln Council has commissioned a planning firm to develop a master plan for the marina precinct. There has been a round of community consultation, lots of ideas but mostly the cry, "fix up the marina." It's in a little bit of a neglected state. Put the Tacoma as the new centrepiece, adjacent to the Fishermen's Memorial and the whole area will receive a boost. The Parnkalla Trail repositioned where it should be, smelly bins shifted, new signs in the correct place and voila, you have a nice place we can all be proud of.

Our planning work over the last 7 years was well received. We are hopeful the master plan will reflect the true potential of the marina and its vibrant fleet. Then it should be a win win for all.

Tacoma Preservation Society's marina proposal

- 25m fuel pontoon
- 90 m unloading pontoon suitable for 200 t and berthing of the Tacoma
- Parnkalla Trail around the hotel
- Sell land inside the Trail
- Construct a boardwalk adjacent to Fishermen's Memorial
- Fisherman's Memorial up grade
- Utilise the land adjacent to the Fishermen's Memorial for a departure centre, tuna and marine park display

TACOMA'S STORY IS POSTED TO SCOTLAND:



Flat Stanley is a paper doll made and sent by students from a school in Scotland to Brooke Neindorf. Brooke is an ABC Journalist based in Port Lincoln.

Brooke was asked to show Flat Stanley around and explain the history of Port Lincoln.

Brooke took Flat Stanley for a visit to Ross at the Tacoma. Flat Stanley got to Ross and to learn all about this historic fishing boat. Flat Stanley was posted back to Scotland. Brooke included extra brochures and pamphlets to the students in Scotland which she had collected about the Tacoma and Port Lincoln to the students.

Thank you Brooke for including the MFV Tacoma in your Port Lincoln story for the students in Scotland.

Neindorf.Brooke@abc.net.au

OUT OF THE CAN:

Adelaide Advertiser - April 18th 1939



TUNA CANNING AT PORT LINCOLN

Work at the tuna canning factory at Port Lincoln will be practically at a standstill until plans for further development are put in hand, said Mr. W. R. Brennan, manager of the Kangaroo Investigation Proprietary Limited, on his return from Melbourne and Adelaide.

Mr. Brennan said the pilot plant established at Port Lincoln had been of great advantage in experimental work to ascertain the best process of cooking and treating tuna for canning.

As a result of the experiments, it was now possible to standardise the method of production. The directors of the company were also considering further plans to place the product on a commercial basis.

The tuna prepared locally had been independently judged to compare more than favourably with the American product. The directors were considering the purchase of further equipment for the factory and for catching the tuna.

It was realised that with such a long coastline, a bigger and speedier boat would be necessary in order to maintain the supply of tuna, he said.

Further particulars regarding the habits of the tuna and the particular type of bait they required were also necessary. Both the Terralinna and the Whynunga were still engaged in looking for concentrations of tuna and bait, and reports were expected shortly as to whether either, or both, had shifted their localities.

TACOMA'S 2018 / 19 BOOKING SCHEDULE:

December: Friday 21st

Carols in the Marina with Sing Australia
Transferring to Dolphin for tour
On board by 6.00 pm

January: Sat 26th

Tunarama Blessing of the Fleet & Fireworks Display
Departing berth at 5.00 pm
Cost: Members \$30.00 & Non Members \$40.00 per head
Please bring a plate to share

February: 8th to 13th

Gerry Veitch Private Tuna Charter Trip

February: 15th to 17th

*Ladies Tuna Poling Experience

February: 22nd to 27th

*Men's Tuna Poling Experience

March: Sat 16th

Pukehoe Travel Group
Departing the berth 11.30 am – self catered
Crew required – please bring your own lunch

All departures are from **Sandy Point Drive** unless otherwise advised. The Booking Schedule is subject to the tide and the weather. To book a charter, or go on one, please contact **Peter Jessep** on 0419 814 505.

The *Blessing of the Fleet* is very popular so please book now.

* Details about the Ladies and Men's Tuna Poling Experience can be found on the front page of the Tacoma Preservation Society's website www.tacoma.org.au

A WEDDING DAY TO REMEMBER:

It was a fine chilly day with a keen southerly wind when the party started at 9.00 am with the arrival on the Dolphin with the first 20 guests to decorate the aft deck. The second group were ferried at 11.00 am.

Because of the very low tides, it was an early start for the Tacoma crew. They left the pontoon by 7.00 am to anchor in Porter Bay at the entrance of the Marina.

After the bride and her party were boarded at 12.30 pm, we motored to the sheltered anchorage in the Bay. The day flowed; the ceremony, then an endless stream of food, some prepared in the galley and the rest barbequed on the Dolphin tied alongside. A continuous stream of champagne and of course the wedding cake followed. It was 5.00 pm before our very happy guests departed and the crew could relax in the galley and relive the many highlights of this memorable day.



The bride wasn't driven to the wedding in a vintage Rolls Royce. She was rowed in a vintage surfboat to MFV Tacoma where the ceremony and reception was held on the aft deck.



Above: Braden getting ready to tie the Dolphin next to Tacoma. Right: Peter Jessep and Braden Stockham skippered the Dolphin. Our bride and bride maids mingling on the Tacoma

TAYLOR ISLAND PILGRIMAGE:

The Tacoma Preservation Society is 10 years old and this is the 8th trip to collect wool for Ray Watherstone. The Taylor Island trip has become a pilgrimage.

Cameraman Mark Thomas from Missing Link Media was engaged by Channel 7 Adelaide. Mark took some amazing shots with his drone and we were thrilled when his news clip was shown state wide – and in Queensland. This year there are 18 bales of AAA Merino wool and the wool price is \$18/kg - a record high.



Whilst the wool is transported to Tacoma, we are guided over the Island by Lily, a large ewe who prefers humans to her own kind. The beaches are clean, there is no rubbish on the Island and no tourists and this is the way Ray wants it to be.

One of the passengers Vaughan Chenoweth remembered that in the early 70s, as a young wool classer at Elders in Port Adelaide, when he was faced with bales of wool that had been dropped into the sea at Port Lincoln - story below.



Bales are rolled over a simple wooden frame onto the dinghy



Large Pacific Gulls accompanied us

Tacoma Wool Experience:

As part of the Tacoma fundraising for restoration purposes, the annual wool trip to Taylor Island looked like a great day out.

The story of how the tuna industry has evolved has been something that I have followed for a long time. The players behind this industry and the risks they have taken, both financially and emotionally have forged an industry that all Australians should be proud of.

The story of the Tacoma and the people behind her closely mirror the efforts of another great South Australian Len Beadell. Len surveyed and opened up much of South Australia. In the early 70s, as a young wool classer at Elders in Port Adelaide, I was faced with bales of wool that had been dropped in the sea at Port Lincoln. At the time, how it happened was unknown to me. To open these bales was an experience, as salt water and sand had given the natural lanolin oil a hard time. I believe this wool had to be sent away to be steamed.

This link made the Taylor Island trip special to me. I now understand how easy it would be to drop bales in rough seas.

I had a very enjoyable day with some Icons of the sea. It's a memory that will last.

Tuna Team Selection:

In the mid 60s as a very young boy, I was taken to Pt Lincoln by my Grandma and Grandpa. At the town wharf I remember seeing a group of men. As it unfolded, we were witnessing the selection process of crew for the upcoming tuna poling season.

About eight men at a time were asked to get in the baskets and haul 13-inch car tyres from the bottom of the sea, onto the deck with a pole. The last man still poling in each group was given a berth for the season.

Another eight entered and tried out for a position. This process continued until the crew was full. This showed how competitive these operators were and how the industry has changed to today's cages and methods of catching, feeding and marketing tuna.

Memories from Vaughan Chenoweth

MY FIRST BIG TUNA - Sequel



Adam and Kit Turnbull

If you read the article *My First Big Tuna* by Adam Turnbull in the last newsletter, you may remember his love of fishing and the sea. Adam Turnbull, my late father was a crewmember of *Tacoma* in Port Lincoln during the years 1959 to 1961. After a failed attempt to begin tuna fishing in Port Lincoln on *Just David* from Apollo Bay with Jock Muir and Bart Allen, Adam somehow managed to convince the Haldane brothers that they needed another crewman and that it should be him. Not that he was a stranger to them. For many years he and they had lived in Port Fairy where the *Tacoma* was built.

Adam's Cousta boat *Globe* was moored in the Moyne River.

As a very small child I remember walking along the riverbank by Haldane's high paling fence. I was told "The Haldanes have been building a boat behind that fence for a very long time." There was a flavour of Noah's Ark. The locals wondered whether it would ever be finished and then what? One day we excitedly got into the old Morris Cowley and drove down to the wharf. "We are going to see the Haldanes off."

The beautiful white boat was moored in the river, its deck full of crates and furniture. A mob of excited white-haired little children were jumping around the boat like fleas. "It's not going yet. They are waiting for the tide. Come back later." Sadly, when we did return there was just empty water. We'd missed the boat!

Adam Turnbull's fishing career in Port Fairy began in his teens. Although his forebears were squatters from Scotland via Van Diemen's Land who took up land in the Wimmera after the Hentys settled Portland, the death of his father when he was 9 years old meant that his mother lost the farm "Winninburn" and they went to live with her parents in the Yambuk pub.

In his late teens Adam built his first boat, a dinghy which he named *After Many Days*. During these years Adam developed two dislikes: the first being of alcohol and its affects and the other, of working in a factory. His mantra was "I want to be my own boss." Little did he know what lay ahead of him.

When war broke out, Adam and others of the Port Fairy Militia, enlisted in the army. His natural intelligence was recognised and he became a Lieutenant serving in the AIF in Dock Operations, Cairns and building the Bulldog Road in Wau, New Guinea. His great friend Jack Condon often said in jest "Bloody Turnbull. He talked me into enlisting. What did he do? He sat on his bum in Wau while I was on the Kokoda Trail!"

When he returned to Port Fairy after the war, newly equipped with leadership training and experience, Adam was concerned about marketing of their fish. Fishermen were vulnerable to a range of issues like transport, storage and practices of wholesalers. Along with other fishermen and supporters they formed a fishermen's cooperative. And so, he became the inaugural Chairman of Port Fairy Fishermen's Cooperative, the first in Australia. However wild fish became less prolific and he had to look elsewhere which led him to *Tacoma*.

I remember sitting up one night by our back window which overlooked Boston Bay. I knew *Tacoma* was coming home with a load of fish. Chris Haldane would ring my mother Kit, after she heard from Bill Haldane by radio. The moon had risen behind Boston Island and the water was shot silver. Huff, chuff, huff, chuff - that special note of the engine - then the beautiful white lady, well laden, slipped through the water. Later, crinkle, crackle on the gravel! That would be young Roger Haldane jogging home from Brennan's Jetty. Then later, tired and slow, crunch! crunch! That would be Dad arriving home, smelling of fish but happy to have earned good money in an unreliable industry.

By 1962 his *Tacoma* days were over and Adam was fishing full time on his boat, an ex-navy cutter named *ARJI*. He angled for choice scale fish (working 4 rods at a time) in his dinghy near Taylor Island, with *ARJI* moored exactly where *Tacoma* anchors for the annual wool bale trip. Many a cup of cocoa he shared with the Taylor Island farmer Roy Owen and his dog Toby. Being away for 5 to 10 days, meant he was separated from his family, but that was the life we knew.

And the stories!

There was the time a white pointer shark, larger than his dinghy came nosing around at Taylor Island. Adam took the dinghy anchor and threw it over the back of the shark, pulling the chain as he did so. The rattled shark took flight. It saved him a bullet from the .303 rifle.

One day in Port Fairy in severe weather, he was out at the Dusty Reef pulling in his cray pots. He saw other boats out. "What are you silly blighters doing out in this weather?" he asked as they drew alongside. "We have come to rescue you, Adam!"

Previously his mate - I think it was Tubby Olsen (or maybe Strangler Terjesen) - was at sea and his boat sank. They found Tubby clinging to the lid of the engine housing about done for, with the Molly Gulls circling to peck his eyes out. I never saw any flotation devices, life jackets or communication equipment back then. It was man against the elements and some perished. We were amazed that Dad did die with his bed socks on. He faced so many risks but somehow always found a way through.

His friend, Merv Roberts was intrigued that Adam always wore a hat; a grey felt Akubra. Merv was on a fishing trip on *ARJI* when Adam went forward to the bow to raise the anchor. As the boat lurched, he lost his balance, lunged at the forestay but it broke in his hand. Adam stepped out into space. Merv loved re-enacting the story, "Adam came up with his hat still on his head!"

July 1962 brought a catastrophic cascade of events. One afternoon another boat ran over and sank his permanent moorings below our house at Shelley Beach. This meant that he had to anchor the boat off the Kirton Point Caravan Park. In the night there was a terrific storm. So bad that the tuna boat *Smarda* (later lost at sea) dragged its anchor from near the slip. Its trailing anchor took Adam's boat with it. In deeper water *ARJI* broke free and was wrecked on Boston Island. Our livelihood was gone! At this point Kit put her foot down. No more fishing! So Adam got a job at in the SAFCOL cannery. He was back in a factory!

On his 60th birthday Adam retired. He set to work establishing a bush camp, complete with tent and boat at Moonlight Beach north of Port Lincoln. About 3 months into his retirement he came home to get something and in the night, he suffered a massive stroke. Was he guided home? I'd like to think so.



Marion Miss Tunarama with her parents - 1970

With medical help and hard work, he was restored to reasonable health and enjoyed life with Kit, my sister Alice and family and myself in Adelaide for another 17 years.

Adam was a man of his time, with good humour, forbearance and integrity.

I was privileged to have him as my father.

Marion Mayes (nee Turnbull)

December 6th 2018

Ed: Marion Mayes was with us on board for the Taylor Island trip, accompanied by her husband Ken and son Dave.

CREW OF THE MONTH:

Our engine room guru **Greg Sleep**



From left Peter Jessep behind Ross, Daryl peeking over Jacks shoulder and Tony Lucena behind him. Then we have Fred and Greg on the end of the front row. (Guys in yellow and blue shirts are slipmen).

All contributions will be gratefully received. Please email them to me on medley0246@gmail.com if you have an article to offer.

I encourage you to have a look at the TPS website www.tacoma.org.au

Editor: Chris Houweling