



Wooden Boat News

Volume 5, Issue No. 1, 2014

Look Aft and Learn

Partnerships Key to Moving Forward

Trinity

The Wooden Boat Museum of NL and Trinity Historical Society are joining hands to share experience and expertise. Drawing on the experience and expertise of both organizations, we are forming a partnership whereby the Wooden Boat Museum's Exhibit and Boat Building Workshops/Demonstrations can be offered in the high established visitor base in Trinity.

Chapter II of our **Before Fibreglass – Wooden Boats of Newfoundland and Labrador** story will be written and displayed at the Courthouse in Trinity beginning in 2014. The Exhibit will combine storyboards from Chapter I intertwined with an historical narrative of boat building and the fishery in the Trinity Bight area.



Trinity Courthouse

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Twillingate

Our **Before Fibreglass – Wooden Boats of Newfoundland and Labrador** will be on display at the Long Point Lighthouse for the 2014 – 2015 seasons, through an agreement with the Twillingate Isles Tourism Association. A portion of the proceeds from this agreement will be used to assist the Isles Wooden Boat Building Committee in their development work.

The Wooden Boat Museum of NL and the Isles Wooden Boat Building Committee are forming a long term partnership which will enable us to tell the Twillingate Isles story. Upon completion of their developmental work, the Isles Wooden Boat Building committee will offer boatbuilding workshops and demonstrations of wooden boatbuilding skills and Chapter III of the story will be written and displayed in their new facility.



Long Point Lighthouse





Wooden Boat
Museum
of Newfoundland
and Labrador

The Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador archives, conserves, exhibits and transmits our wooden boat history and its contribution to the province's economy and way of life.

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Funding Partners:

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
(Government of Canada)

Department of Innovation Trade and Rural Development
(Government of Newfoundland and Labrador)

Website:

www.woodenboatnl.com

Membership:

Individual membership is \$30 and includes unlimited free admission to the Wooden Boat Museum in Winterton for one year (and 10 per cent discount on guest admissions); 10 per cent discount at the museum store in Winterton; and free subscription to Wooden Boat News.

For information on other membership categories and benefits, contact Beverley King. Phone 709-583-2070 or email bkingheritage@gmail.com.

Newsletter:

Wooden Boat News is published four times a year. Members contribute most of the information and photos for this publication.

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Cle Newhook

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Beverley King, Secretary

Sailing a Punt, Rediscovering an Old Tradition

By Derrick Burry

We started to grin when the punt began to increase speed in the rising winds. Dad was on the tiller and I sat on the midship tawt (thwart) with the sheet in my hand. "How fast is she going?" asked dad. I glanced at the GPS. "5 ½ knots," I said. "Das not bad, me son" he replied, "The wind is only blowing about 10 or 12 knots." We looked astern to see the wake that she was making and I knew we were going to have a great run home. Such are the many experiences I've had in the company of my father since building my punt in 2006.

I initially considered building a speed boat, but soon I decided to build a punt instead. My father had shared many stories with me of his youth, rowing and sailing punts in his home waters of Greenspond, Bonavista Bay. These stories enthralled me so much that I decided to build a punt of my own and experience firsthand what it was like to sail an open boat in the same manner as he did.

"My punt's design is directly influenced by its intended purpose – to sail."

My punt's design is directly influenced by its intended purpose – to sail. I took an existing mold for a 14' rodney and altered it to get a larger punt, measuring 17'5" in length and 5' wide. I determined that with these dimensions she'd have plenty of volume to easily accommodate three adults and comfortably



Moving along under full mainsail and jib



Trimming sails. Hare Bay, Bonavista Bay in Background

carry a bit more sail. I made her bottom flatter to give her good bearing and the counter is high out of the water to minimize as much drag as possible. Cutting timber in the woods was near impossible at the time, so I decided to build her out of wood strips and fibreglass.



Note Spread and lacing along mast

She is also built with a dagger board to improve her performance on all points of sail, especially when beating to win'ard. In the tradition of punts sailed in Greenspond I chose the spritsail configuration and to make her more versatile for other uses she is also set up with two rowing stations and a motor well to accept a 2.5 hp outboard motor.

From dad's description of the sail rigs used in his day around Greenspond, the sprit rig was the most common for small punts. This four sided sail has its

upper aft corner held up by a long pole called the sprit (traditionally pronounced "spread"). The bottom end of the "spread" is held to the lower mast by a small loop which can slide up and down the mast for quick and easy adjustments. The butt of the mast was commonly tapered and rounded to allow the mast to rotate freely in its mast step while sailing on either a port or starboard reach. To erect the rig into place all one needed was a hole in the bow tawt, allowing the mast to pass through it into a simple mast step – a small notch in the keelson where the butt of the mast would sit. This rig was favoured as the sail was generally small in size and along with its short mast allowed fishermen to douse it easily, roll it up and stow it out of the way aboard the punt. The sail is so small and simple that the mast is unstayed, meaning it does not require rope or wire stays to keep it upright or prevent it from breaking under load.

At 70 square feet the sail I chose is a little larger than traditional punt sails and has a single reef that reduces the sail area to 55 square feet. The plan for the sail was professionally drawn and is constructed from Dacron. After a couple of summers sailing with this single sail, I added a small jib of 25 square feet giving me a total sail area of 95 square feet. With this amount of sail the punt moves swiftly through the water and can easily handle wind speeds reaching 12-14 knots. Beyond this wind strength, it's time to reduce sail and put in a reef.

This project provided me with my first opportunity to sail and needless to say, when launch day finally arrived I was quite excited, yet apprehensive, to see how the boat would perform. Dad took the lead and skippered the boat on many of those early outings. He looked quite comfortable and in his element. It seemed as though he hadn't forgotten one thing after all those years. In 10-12 knots of wind the boat travels easily at 5 knots and in heavier winds has often attained 6-7 knots on a broad reach. Her stability is very good and she bears up well with her full sail and small jib. She points high with the dagger board extending 3 feet below her keel and handles well on all other points of sail. I was surprised to discover that like many larger sailboats with ballasted keels, the punt heaves to with minimal drift in the water. I'm still learning to sail her and on each outing I continue to discover more of the punt's performance characteristics and have become more confident in her ability to handle varying wind conditions.

This fall I ended my sailing season with some of the best sailing experiences I've had since building her. I am fortunate to have learned much from my father who continues to coach me and offer advice in boat handling and seamanship. And in turn I am grateful for the opportunity to provide him with another chance to re-experience a mode of travel he so enjoyed in his youth.



Heeling slightly in a gust.

Out and About

Membership Renewals Due April 1, 2014

Membership renewals are due April 1, 2014. Revenue generated through our **Friend of the Museum** program is vital to our survival. We need all our members to encourage family and friends to pledge their support, either through memberships or donations. Consider upgrading to a Family, Benefactor or Life member –benefits include a tax receipt, recognition on both our Museum Friends Plaque at the Museum and on our website.

San Juan Project

The Museum of Albaola Basque Maritime Heritage Society is currently building an authentic replica of the Basque whaling ship San Juan that sank nearly 450 years ago in Red Bay, Labrador. In 2016, the replica will sail all over Europe as a floating ambassador for the Basque culture. In 2017, they would like to contribute to the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Canada as a country, by bringing the ship to Canada.

The San Juan Project represents a rare opportunity to building strong cultural and commercial connections with an historical partner in the development of our province. The WBMNL believes that a comprehensive collaborative and integrated planning effort needs to take place to maximize the benefits of this partnership.

WBMNL and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation are hosting a planning meeting on April 10, 2014 at the Holiday Inn, St. John's, beginning at 10:00 AM for the purpose of establishing an overall steering committee and working sub-committees.

If you are interesting in being a part of this project, please contact **Beverley** at (709) 583-2070 or by email bkingheritage@gmail.com



2014 Boat Building Workshops/Demonstrations

The WBMNL offers Boat Building Workshops that teach the basic skills and knowledge required to build a wooden boat. Workshop participants actively learn how to build a traditional wooden boat through hands-on training with instruction and interpretation from our resident boat building and museum staff. Workshops are offered at three levels with each level increasing in duration, materials covered and skills developed. Our Children's Boat Building Workshop will take place every Thursday in July and August in both Winterton and Trinity.



For a complete list of workshops available, check our website at <http://woodenboatmuseum.com/2014-boat-building-workshops>.

Documentation Continues in Trinity & Twillingate

Our documentation team will be in Trinity, Twillingate and Petty Harbour this coming summer. If you know of any boats or builders in these areas we would love to hear from you. Contact our **Folklorist, Crystal Braye**, at folklore.wbmn@gmail.com or call (709) 699-9570.



Look Aft and Learn is Our Motto

Seafarers commonly say "look aft" to mean look behind, to the rear and the wake of the vessel. As a wooden boat museum, we feel it is a fitting expression that shows our commitment to looking to our history and heritage as a means of learning for the future.



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Wooden Boat Museum
of Newfoundland and Labrador

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