

Parappa



NEWSLETTER

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On *Parappa* in Wineglass Bay, between 1915 and 1921. Seated on the left is Ned Pulfer, identified by his daughter Rhonda Thorpe. The identity of the man standing is not known. The photo is from Christina Smythe, granddaughter of Ned Pulfer. The Wineglass Bay location was identified by Stuart Lester.

Parappa is a 52 ft (15 m) fishing boat of huon pine planks on steam bent ribs, built by Ned Jack in Launceston in 1915. *Parappa* is currently on the hard stand at Oyster Cove Marina, Kettering, undergoing repairs, or a "90 year service".

Parappa was built for Ned and Jack Pulfer, who operated her as a fishing boat for only six years, until 1921. They sold her to William Bowtell, fishmonger and businessman, of Elizabeth Street, Hobart, who engaged skipper and crew to work the boat for him. In 1936 she was sold to the Jager family of Lune River, in whose ownership she remained until being retired from fishing in 2004. She was purchased by Des Beechey, who is repairing and preserving the boat as an excellent example of a Tasmanian fishing

boat that has remained in service for 90 years, showing continuous development of boat and equipment.

Parappa was built as a gaff-rigged yawl, with quite low freeboard, with a stern coachhouse, a large wet well, and low fo'c'stle. Steering was originally by tiller, converted to wheel when a wheelhouse was added. The gaff rig was replaced by the more practical Bermudan rig around the 1950s. The deck was raised in the 1960s, by one plank all around and by 45 cm forward, to provide head height in the galley. The wood burning stove was replaced by a gas stove in the 1970s, and a refrigerator added. The boat was originally built with a 10 hp Union petrol engine, which was the first of about 10 engines, the current one being a Bedford diesel.

Parappa in the years 1921-1936. The Bowtell years.

In 1921 *Parappa* was purchased by William Bowtell, fishmonger, of 52 Elizabeth Street Hobart. Bowtell owned the boat for the years 1921-1936. He was a businessman and did not work the boat himself, but engaged fishermen as skippers and deck hands to supply his retail fish shop and wholesale business. When I talked to Handy Jager in 2004, he said "Bowtell, he had different ones running her for a while - Eric Martyn, Tom Martyn - it wasn't a real roaring success. Crayfish were only eight bob a score at the time". In a 1927 survey certificate the master was shown as Claude Button. Two others who worked on her were Syd Dale and Clyde Clayton.

Janet Fenton is currently writing a biography of Clyde Clayton and his wife (her aunt) Win, and has kindly provided the following information on Clyde Clayton and Syd Dale.

Syd Dale was born at Esperance in 1889. He grew up in Dover, served in the army in the First World War, and moved to Bellerive in 1926. At first he operated boats for their owners, starting with *Navaboe* and then *Parappa*. He later owned various boats including *Doris Louise*, *Arlie D (Atlanta)*, *Nguna* and possibly *Derwent Hunter*. He became one of the pioneer fishermen of the south-west coast. He carted stores and mail to the tin miners at Cox Bight and Melaleuca and delivered tin ore to Hobart for them.

Clyde Clayton was Syd Dale's stepson. He was born at Dover in 1914 and moved to Bellerive when his mother remarried. At the age of 15, he commenced



Charlie King (left), Syd Dale (centre), Syd Dale jr. (right) at Melaleuca Tin Mine, early 1940s. (Photo King Collection, courtesy Janet Fenton)

work with his stepfather on *Parappa*, which the pair seemed to have worked for about another two years. At that time, *Parappa* had the Union 10 hp petrol engine, (described in Newsletter No. 2) which Clyde described: "It was a hit and miss engine, 10 hp twin cylinder Union, considered big power them days. It would skip an ignition to slow down". Clyde operated the engine, and Syd would give the orders, "Get the bugger going", or "Stop the bugger" he would shout down to the engine room.

In his book *Craft and Craftsmen of Australian Fishing 1870-1970*, Garry Kerr reported a conversation with Clyde Clayton about his early days of fishing:

"It would have been early 1929 when I first started fishing on *Navaboe*, she was a 40 foot double ender which ended up as *Roweta*. I fished on the *Doris Louise* with the step-father Syd Dale and the *Parappa*.

"When I started on the *Navaboe* we weren't using pots - still used the rings. Pots had been legalized in 1927, but some fellows were still using the rings - couldn't get out of the habit. We'd use about a dozen rings and row around them in the dingy - wouldn't have to leave 'em long - an hour or less than that. Those days it wasn't any trouble to catch crays - they were so thick - the bottom was red with 'em. We got eight to ten shillings a score for crays just as they come - didn't matter how big they were - still eight shillings a score."

"When we started using pots we didn't fill up much quicker than when we had the rings. 'Course we didn't have the number of pots, only had 20 pots, and we didn't have the bait laid on like you have now—we had to catch all our own bait and we had no motors in the dinghies—had to row everywhere, and that all took time. It would take us a day and a half to fill the *Parappa*".

Clyde Clayton became a well known Tasmanian fisherman, crayfishing in the south-west as his step-father had done. In 1948, 20 years after his time on *Parappa*, he married Winsome King of Melaleuca Inlet. He and his wife settled in Port Davey, living at Bond Bay for a decade, then at Claytons Corner, Bathurst Harbour until their retirement in 1976.



Clyde Clayton and wife Winsome on *Stormalong*, 1963. (Photo N.E. Poynter, courtesy Janet Fenton)



William Bowtell operated as a fishmonger and restaurateur from 53 Elizabeth Street, which is about midway between Collins and Liverpool Streets. Born in 1859, he commenced in business by joining with W. Carns in the company Bowtell and Carns, which later became W.G. Bowtell Pty Ltd. In 1926 he was listed as fishmonger and restaurateur of 53 Elizabeth Street, and fish curer at premises in 9 Hunter Street. He sold fish through his shop and restaurant, and sent fish to the mainland; his obituary in 1932 said “he spared no effort to promote a thriving trade with other states in the fisheries products of the south”.

Bowtell prospered as a business man, and became prominent in Hobart in Freemasonry and sporting circles. In Freemasonry, he was the first Worthy Master of lodges Victory and Clarence, and filled several offices of the Grand Lodge. At the time of his death in 1932 he was President of the Board of Benevolence. For some years he was a director of the Freemasons Hall Company, where “his business ability was a distinct help”. He was also an elder of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. He was a keen follower of yachting, with an interest in the yacht *Clyde*. He was a member of the Tasmanian Racing Club, and of the Tasmanian Amateur Jockey Club, and in his later life a member of the Buckingham and Hobart bowls clubs.

Bowtell operated a small fleet of fishing boats. When he registered *Parappa* as a British Ship in 1921, he also registered *Nilipa*. At about the same time he also owned *Legara*. All three were built by Ned Jack in Launceston. To secure his business loan with the English, Scottish and Australian Bank, he mortgaged *Parappa* in 1924.

The business at 53 Elizabeth Street was described by Barbara Ditcham, Bowtell’s granddaughter, as it was in the 1930s:

“There was restaurant behind the shop, and an upstairs, which I think was more of a storage area. The kitchen of course was at the back, and a stairwell that went down to the basement where the floor was concrete and there were troughs for cleaning fish. It always seemed to be damp down there, being hosed down frequently.

“There were wire mesh gates leading to the laneway which now is the area behind Drysdale House. The Hobart Rivulet used to run by the laneway; it had sandstone walls and capping, the same that it still has in lower Collins Street. Next to the mesh gates was the stable where the horse (or horses) were kept, plus the cart. How times have changed!

“Another early memory is Dad [Arthur Bowtell, son of William] driving down to Jones & Co to the freezer room, which was quite a small door midway along the frontage. Dad would disappear inside and emerge carrying these 18 inch by 12 inch blocks of ice wrapped in hessian bags, and take them back to the shop. Sometimes in hot weather Dad would bring home a block of ice to keep things cool, and sometimes we would try to



William G. Bowtell

make icecream—rather unsuccessfully most times.

“Another of my early memories is the two fishing boats *Parappa* and *Legara*. I can still picture “Old Sam” who was the skipper of *Legara*—he had a wooden leg.

My grandfather was a very aristocratic looking gentleman. I only really remember him sitting very regally in his armchair over in Britannia Place, Bellerive”.

The Bowtell fish restaurant served a good, square meal. Max Smith, who worked on *Parappa* with the Jagers, the later owners, remembers going there in the 1940s: “It was a little café in Elizabeth Street. You could go in there and order your fish or scallops meal. You would get a good meal, no mucking around. You wanted scallops, you got scallops; you wanted fish, you got fish”.

William Bowtell died in 1932, and the operation of the business passed to his son, Arthur William Bowtell. The firm sold *Parappa* in 1936, to the Jager family at Lune River.



Parappa today

In June to August 2008, Adam and Mark Brinton made substantial repairs in the well area. The 96 water inlet holes had been closed a few years previously, but the top of the keel was deteriorated and the garboard planks no longer met the keel. To carry the tons of ballast needed after the well was closed the whole area had to be repaired and strengthened.

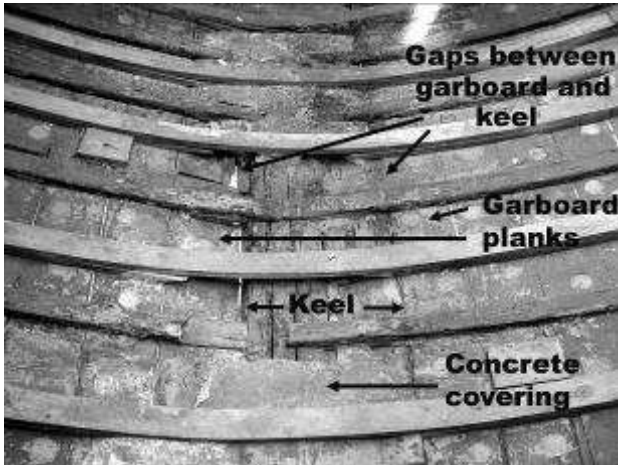


Fig. 1. The top 50 mm of the keel was rotten and cracked, and the garboard planks no longer met the edges of the keel



Fig. 2 The ribs were cut back and the top 50 mm of keel was chiselled away. A new top to the keel, made from three laminated layers of hardwood, was screwed down and sealed to be watertight. When the top of the keel was exposed, a slit for a centreboard was discovered.

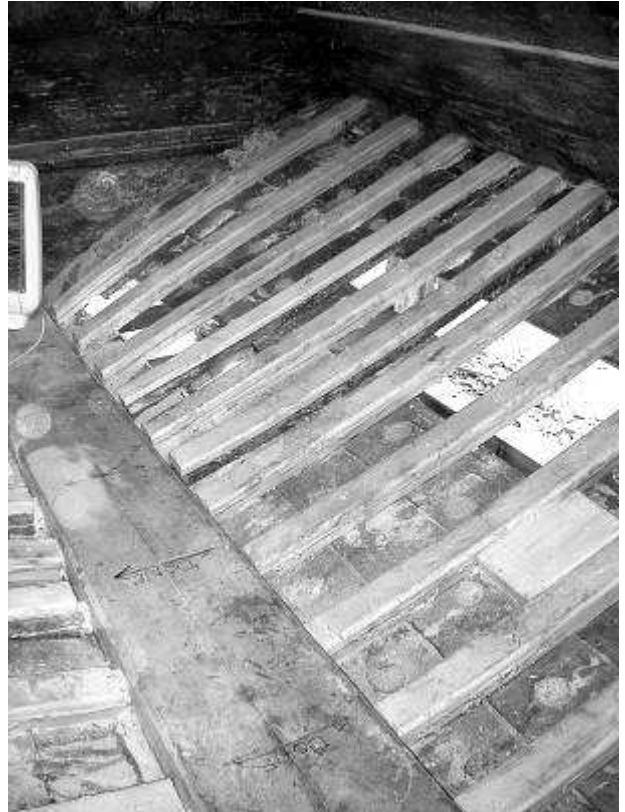


Fig. 3. Deteriorated ribs were replaced, and a top layer laminated on those that were still serviceable. Some hull planks were split and needed replacement



Fig. 4. The new keel top and all the new ribs are in place. One of the new floor timbers is in place. Seven new floor timbers were installed, fixed with 30 cm long copper dums through the floors into the keel.