



An Historical Overview

Here is an historical overview of the Cowichan Wooden Boat Society and the Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre, in largest part gleaned from back issues of the Society's newsletter *Soundings*.

1985

Cowichan
Wooden Boat
Society Founded

Founding Goal

To preserve, instruct and develop the skills of wooden boat building and related arts.

1986

1st Annual
Cobble Hill
Boat Show

Founding Members

Paul Mitchell, President
Robert Fox, Vice-President
Bob Down, Secretary
Keith Sandilands, Treasurer

1987

First 40 Week
Skills Course



Student Sam Jack fits the floor boards



'Strawboss' - 17-foot Swampscott dory

1987

CWBS's first course, a 40 week Skills Course was attended by four local young men who built a 17-foot Swampscott dory. The lapstrake planking is Bruynzeel mahogany plywood, the stern and ribs are yellow cedar and the gunwales, keel, ruder and centreboard are oak. All four graduates were working in the industry by the end of the year.

The 2nd Annual Cobble Hill Boat Show (sponsored by CWBS and Tony Balding) featured a dinghy toss event! The boat, named "Strawboss", was launched May 22.

Proposal to CVRD to Renovate Chevron Warehouse in Cowichan Bay



Design concept for reno of vacant Chevron Warehouse

A decision still has not been reached by the CVRD on whether to award the lease on the vacant Chevron warehouse in Cowichan Bay to the CWBS.

1988

Cowichan Bay
Maritime Centre
Dream Comes True



*The Pier before
renovations*

Renovations
Begin



*The Pier during
renovations*

3rd Annual
Cowichan Bay
Boat Festival



*Toy boat building
and sailing!*

Two wooden
hulls donated
for restoration

1988

On March 12 an agreement was signed which gives the CWBS a 30 year lease on the former Chevron warehouse and pier facility in Cowichan Bay. The boat school was moved from the Bluenose Marina to their new quarters.

Negotiations are under way to implement Phase II of the CBMC – a waterfront promenade and pier development which could include museum displays.

Funds are raised through “plank sales” where donor’s names will be carved into the Pier’s planks.

The first Fast and Furious Boat Building Challenge took place June 11th at the 3rd Cowichan Bay Boat Festival. Four teams took part.

The children’s booth featured fish printing and toy boat building.

Talent from the Victoria Folk Music Society and the Cowichan Folk Guild provided musical entertainment.

Two wooden hulls have been donated to the CWBS Boat Building School for restoration projects - a 26’ sailing hull donated by Warren Baker and a 16’ mahogany runabout donated by Glenn Johnson.

Renovation of the Pier is well underway.



Pier Renovations - December 1988

1989

Cowichan Bay
Maritime Centre
Grand Opening
June 2, 1989

2-day 4th Annual
Cowichan Bay
Boat Festival



*'Fast and Furious'
boat building race*



*Graduates of first
NET class*

Gift shop at the
end of the Pier
converted to
an exhibit area
for loaned
ship models



*One of the ship models
built by Harvey George*

Renovations
Complete



The renovated Pier

1990

5th Annual
Boat Festival

New entrance kiosk
for Boat School



*Boat School float home
under construction at
Bamberton site*

1989

Maritime Centre opened June 2, 1989 by the Minister of Fisheries Tom Sidden, and Graham Bruce, MLA. Total project time about 10 months!

The Boat Festival expanded to 2 days with a pig roast and salmon BBQ, street dance and live band on Saturday night.

The CBMC has acquired over 20 outboard motors, on permanent loan, as well as a number of inboard marine engines - some dating back to 1915 - from the Royal BC Museum and other donors.

Maritime Centre closed in October for the winter to preserve the exhibits.

The first Native Employment Training (NET) class - all 6 students graduated from the Boat School Dec. 15, 1989.

1990

The 5th Annual Boat Festival returned to a one day schedule. 21 teams participated in the three hour long Fast & Furious boat building competition. The Legion Pipe Band led the proud builders from the Maritime Centre to the launch-point.

Marine Life in the Cowichan Estuary was featured in a display alongside the Maritime Centre and proved a popular stop for the crowd.

Harvey George has loaned most of his collection of large wooden ship models to the Maritime Centre. Some of the models are over five feet long.

A new entrance kiosk was built at the front of the Boat School.

Legendary boat builder and teacher, Simon Watts taught a 10 day lapstrake dinghy course at the end of July.

3 float homes were completed on the Bamberton site.

1991

“Elder Spirit” cutter replica project begins



Last year for 40 week boat building course

Marine Ecology Station Opens November 24



Marine Ecology Station

1991

A group of Cowichan seniors undertook a project to construct a replica of one of Captain Vancouver’s Survey Cutters – a 22’ Chatham’s Cutter to be named Elder Spirit. A portion of funding was provided by the federal government’s New Horizons Program and the CWBS is helping by providing project space at the Maritime Centre. Launch will be in spring of 1992.

1991 is the last year for the Maritime Centre’s 40 week, direct employment, boat building program due to a lack of funding. Plans are in place for two 12 week carpentry/construction courses, targeting young people entering the labour force, beginning in 1992.

A Marine Ecology Station was officially opened November 24, 1991 – attended by over 150. The Station is moored at the end of the Pier.

The Maritime Centre initiated the Environmental Partners Fund contract with Environment Canada in November, to continue through fall of 1992.

1992

7th Annual Boat Festival



Maritime Centre with Marine Ecology Station barge at the end of the Pier

\$10,000 grant for videos and an interactive computer program



Students learning their craft

1992

A \$10,000 grant from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, under the Ministry’s Partners in Science Awareness Program, along with help from Shaw Cable Ltd., enables the Marine Ecology Station to develop two video programs and one interactive computer program on marine ecology in BC. Completion of the project is expected to be 1994.

1993

“Elder Spirit” launches



3 of the 4 canoes built in the Airolite Course

Marine Ecology Station busy

8th Annual Boat Festival



Twin float homes soon ready for launch



Family boat building teams encouraged

1994

First Machining Program

1995

Marine Ecology Centre moves on



Marine Ecology being towed to new home



Enjoying the new Maritime Library

1993

On March 3rd the Centre was burgled and almost all of the portable power tools taken – a value of at least \$3,000. A call for help to replace the tools is put out.

The Marine Ecology Station was so busy that some school groups were turned away due to lack of space in June. Macintosh computers are installed.

“Blind Rowing Race” a new event at this year’s Boat Festival.

Nearly identical float homes look similar to last year’s builds but all parts were completed in the shop and assembled outside.

Parent/child and grandparent/child partnerships were encouraged to work together boat building and three of the stitch and glue, plywood tenders came out of the shop, painted and ready to row in 5 days.

1994

First year for Machining Program. The instructor was Mike Tansley.

1995

The Marine Ecology Station moves on ... a new society was formed to operate the MES and the barge was unhooked and relocated to Pier 66. The MES was a great idea but was not self-supporting and the CWBS could not continue operating the MES in its current form.

Maritime Library opened in the pod at the end of the Pier. Based primarily on the generous donation of Jeremy Watney the Library is a great reference resource. A new workshop is in use at the end of the Pier.

2003

2003

Over 4,000 people attended the 18th Annual Cowichan Bay Boat Festival.

A 14-ft Peterborough runabout with engine and trailer and a double-ender rowboat were donated by Paul Nesbitt.

A 10 x 10 pen holding 10,000 salmon fry, constructed by Fisheries & Oceans was anchored at the end of the Maritime dock for 4 weeks. They were successfully introduced to the wild on May 10.

The La Vesta Gem was sold for \$10,000.

2005

20th Anniversary of CWBS. A gala dinner was held May 7th to celebrate.

The Pavilion at the end of the Pier was refurbished this year and a viewing area added.

2006

CBMC is currently relocating and restoring the marine ways donated by Ron Lindsay. The ways, called the Covey Heritage Marine Ways will be located at the back of the CBMC workshop. The public will be able to view boats being pulled up the ways out of the water where they will "sit" while being worked on.

2004

2008

Maritime Centre
turns 20



*The Shop is busy
as usual*

2 Summer
Students



Logan and Scott

Tall Ships 2008



Coming aboard

Bathrooms
Renovated



2009

30 Year Lease
Renewed



Scott



*Ian Douglas and
Dave Knott preparing
a hull for rib replacement*

2008

A good time was had by all at Tall Ships 2008. A team of boat builders worked from sun up to sun down to produce our signature 10' lapstrake dinghy for the raffle. Over \$7,700 in tickets were sold.

After six months of planning, the 3-day Cowichan Classic Boat Festival began with a South Cowichan Rotary pancake breakfast with many sail and power boats visited.

The pod upgrades are underway with help from a BC 150 grant.

Two summer students - July to September - were busy painting, reorganizing and giving tours.

The Christmas Sailpast was held on Sunday Dec. 6th.

Bathroom renovations were made with the help of a \$10,000 contribution from the CVRD.

Membership grew by 85 this year.

2009

The CWBS's 30 year lease has been renewed.

Ashley and Scott were our two summer students this year.

"A" Channel did an article about *Tedora*.

CWBS Sailing Group inaugurated!

A new display in the end pod features a rowboat china cabinet filled with 45 tea cups donated by Bob Weinberg who collected them from various cargo ships working as a BC Supercargo for years on the west coast.

Our application to Heritage Canada for funds to Celebrate the Olympics in 2010 has been approved.



*New display donated by
Bob Weinberg*

New Maritime Centre building becoming a reality



Current street-side building that will be replaced



Raven Brings Light to the World

25th Annual Boat Festival

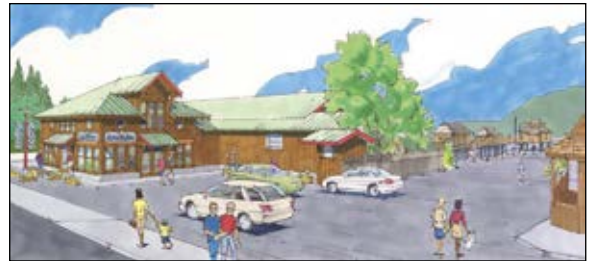


Classes and restorations are ongoing

“Fires that Inspire” event, CBMC makes 1,500 wooden Olympic torches - shared with elementary students. The design for the torches, by Herb and Edgar Rice, was inspired by the First Nations’ of “how the Raven brought the light of the world.”

The 25th Annual Cowichan Bay Boat Festival was, as usual, a big hit. Highlights included a Chowder contest, Pirate Costume contest, kids’ activities and a candlelight dinner.

A Federal Government donation of \$210,000 has been confirmed to help in the construction of the Maritime Centre’s new addition. John Duncan, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and MP for Vancouver Island North made the announcement. The funding is from the Westcoast Community Adjustment Program (WestCAP).



The total construction budget is \$625,000.

Boat sales - Landfall, Clarion Call, Sea Wing and Wimbrel raised over \$60,000.

Restorations underway include Tedora and the Mona A.

The Friedes Johanana, a Viking Ship built in Denmark and touring Canada, was on display for a few days in September.

2011

Interpretive Centre
built and opened



Lorraine Murray in
last summer's
raffle prize



Len hard at work
creating boardwalk
donor name plaques



Sue Coleman print
fundraiser

2012

Renovated Marine
Ways christened



Pressure washing
the Pier

27th Annual
Boat Festival



Fishing at the
Boat Festival



Dragon Divas at the
Boat Festival



Dinghy Race

2011

The new Interpretive Centre has moved
from start to completion!

The Centre's mezzanine is available for
event rentals.

Sue Coleman's limited edition prints
titled "Maritime Museum" used as a
fundraiser - many thanks.

The "Wednesday Knights" group built a 10'
3-point hydroplane.

2012

Restored ways christened on April 1st.
The Carriage is 3' longer, the engine was
repositioned, the catwalk and platform
have been extended and the rail tracks have
been trued.

The Centre's classes were expanded to
include "Art by the Sea" drawing classes
taught by Lynda Faulks.

An Open House and Garage Sale was held
on April 14th.

A Mad Hatter Tea Party fundraiser was
held on April 28th.



Chowder contest won by The Cow Cafe.

2013

Supercargoes
Donation



Roof repairs

2013

New roofs are needed on the three pods and pavilion and rot is found in some interior walls of the pods. The pier is closed to the public.

To cover the cost of the repairs, \$35,000 was raised through the generosity of countless individual donors, a \$5,000 gift from the Nanaimo Port Authority and a \$20,000 donation made by the BC Supercargoes' Association.

The Wednesday Knights restored two Snipe dinghys.

2014

Renovated Pier
Complete



Cupola with weather
vane on new pavilion



MP Jean Crowder and
Chris Banner cutting the
ribbon (photo courtesy of
Rachel Penney)

2014

A cupola with weather vane is mounted on the roof of the pavilion by Golden Rule Roofing just in time for the pier reopening. The cupola was built by Lew Penney and the stainless steel weather vane built by Ron Lindsay.

The pavilion is finally complete!

Official Opening of the renovated Pier. Official Pier and Pod Reopening Party held on April 5, 2014. Many CWBS members, the local media and MP Jean Crowder attended the festivities.

Rollie Woods donated Kalisha - a 1913 Edwardian cruiser.

The Small Wooden Boat Festival was a success as usual.



Kalisha
donated



Ron Lindsay
fires canon