



The 2006 Classic Yacht Symposium

The Second Classic Yacht Symposium, held on March 31-April 2 in Bristol, Rhode Island, was co-sponsored by the Herreshoff Marine Museum and the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers (SNAME). A record, standing-room-only audience was enthralled when the first presenter spoke for more than forty minutes on the subject of yacht model testing. That speaker was none other than 98-year-old Olin Stephens, the undisputed dean of yacht design. Stephens provided the seminal moment of the symposium as he stood at the podium and spoke on one of his favorite subjects. The attendees learned who had designed the America's Cup winning boat *Ranger*, and how the yacht had been tank tested by a young Olin, and the veteran designer, Starling Burgess. From there Stephens discussed other model testing that he had completed over the years, including yachts whose names have become the stuff of legends: *Courageous*, *Intrepid*, *Freedom*, and *Gimcrack*.

The morning session, moderated by noted writer and author, Roger Marshall, included three more presentations of various yacht restoration projects. One was the restoration of the New York 30, *Alera*, completed just in time for the 100-year class anniversary in 2005. Another paper looked at the restoration of *Cangarda*, a 126-foot yacht originally built in 1901. On this yacht the steel hull had corroded to the point where virtually all of it had to be scrapped except for the transom. A new hull was fitted with the original steam engines, and the original beautiful Victorian interior was reinstalled. The restored *Cangarda* will be launched by mid-2006. A third presentation dealt with one design fleet management and the maintaining and preservation of the Dark Harbor 20 racing fleet through the pragmatic application of technology.

The afternoon session, moderated by SNAME President, Dr. Roger Compton, began with a panel of five of the leading boatbuilding/restoration schools in the country for an informative and lively discussion with the audience on the current state-of-the-art and practice of educating for the classic marine trades.

The panel was followed by a look at *Peggy Bawn*, hilariously narrated by Irishman Hal Sisk, who had traveled to America just for this symposium. Now in her eleventy-first year, according to the paper, *Peggy Bawn* was designed by G. L. Watson and re-launched on June 16, 2005. This 40-foot cruiser competed in the Glandore Classic Regatta and sailed around the Fastnet Rock before sailing 250 miles back to her Home Port of Dublin.

Saturday's discussions and papers were capped with a dinner in the Herreshoff Museum's Hall of Boats among some of the yachts designed and built by the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company. Well-known sailing commentator Gary Jobson capped a most satisfying day with video clips of various yacht races and a talk about famous yachts that he had known.

On Sunday, attendees of the Symposium boarded, for the first time, the recently restored 1887 cat yawl *Clara* and were treated to a tour of the Museum's Model Room by Halsey Herreshoff including a demonstration of his grandfather's (Nat Herreshoff) model measuring techniques, his tools and many half models used as the basis for the development and construction of all of his yacht designs.

The attendees were universal in their praise of the importance of the Symposium to the classic yacht community, and the significant lasting value of the *Proceedings* that contained a total of fifteen papers and reports from each of the five schools. Copies of the *Proceedings* will be available through SNAME by calling 201-798-4800, or toll-free at 800-798-2188.

The next Classic Yacht Symposium will be held in April 2008, and biennially thereafter, alternating yearly with the SNAME-sponsored Chesapeake Sailing Yacht Symposium (CSYS). Check the SNAME events calendar at www.sname.org for details.