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THE DEVICE

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DISPRO OWNERS

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



www.disproboats.ca

Photo: Gary Campaigne

John and Heather Cooper beneath the high level railway bridge at Parry Sound. August 19, 2017.



President's Letter • October 2017

The main item of business since Gananoque has been finding a place for the 2018 Regatta. Ann Verth has borne the brunt of this quest. There are no venues available, including Glen House, for our usual dates, so the new dates will be September 14, 15, and 16th. Ann found one place and at this moment, October 15th, is finalizing an agreement. Yes, it will be Patterson-Kaye Lodge, Bracebridge. Whoopee.

Now let us consider the Device and while doing so think how indebted we are to Paul Jenner for organizing and producing this gem. Everyone waits its arrival, not just once but four times annually. Amazing!

With our regatta seeming to have taken root in my brain of late my thoughts wander back to two fond memories related to some of us at the Glen House Saturday evening party. Each was a story telling of how a Dippy came to life under its present owners. This inspired me with an idea to add some spice, nostalgia, humour, and history to our "Dippy Vignettes" column in the Device. Let's make the theme "how we acquired our Dippy" for as long as we have willing authors. Readers are easy to find - maybe historians will be too. Our first such story is provided by Happy Thomson. Thank you Happy.

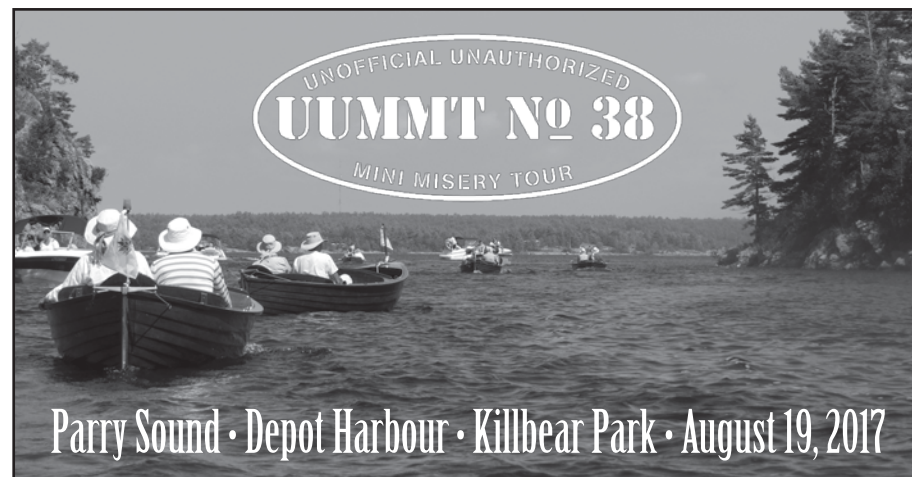
I will keep this message short and end it by adding my personal regret to all of the many friends of Ron Hill and also of Paul Commission, both of whom, as Dippy Club members, carried with them the love and respect of a lot of people. Empathy and support are surely very strong attributes of this club.

Keep well, **Helen Byrne**



Photo: Paul Jenner

Kerry Harmon and Karen Boyer provided the ride for Helen and Stan Byrne at this year's regatta.



Parry Sound • Depot Harbour • Killbear Park • August 19, 2017

On the scheduled date, Saturday August 18th, the 41 kph winds and driving rain lead the assembled folks to a unanimous agreement to postpone the event until Sunday August 19th. Eight DisPros gathered at Waubuno Beach in Parry Sound for the 10:00am launch. The weather was ideal; light winds, sunny and warm. We followed the Storeys west past One, Two and Three Mile Points then south through Depot Harbour which is the historic site of one of Canada's Largest Ghost Towns.

It is located just west of Parry Sound on the Ojibway First Nation's Territory on Parry Island. In the 1890's J.R.Booth built the town as a port for his railway from Algonquin Park to ship timber to his mill in Ottawa. In 1898 it had grown to include two large grain elevators, the coal dock, a hotel, boarding houses, homes, stores, and three churches on its tree lined streets. It became a major port and rail hub for the shipment of lumber, grain and coal. The railway was sold to the Grand Trunk Railway and then to CNR in 1918. In 1933 ice damage to a bridge in Algonquin Park was not repaired, eliminating train travel to Ottawa and the town quickly declined. By the 1950s the coal dock was closed, the rail bridge decked in wood and the townsite fell into disrepair. Today, only building foundations and sidewalks remain.

Cruising the north shore of Parry Island revealed cottages and commercial fish farms. The scenery was beautiful as we navigated between the islands of Waubuno Channel around the end of Davy Island and headed back east to the beach area in Killbear Park. With calm waters, little other boat traffic and the rugged beautiful views in all directions this area is a delight.

A sand beach provided a good landing, friendly campers, beach volleyball and indoor outhouses, just in the nick of time! The BYO lunches varied from a simple sandwich and fruit to some very elaborate cold dishes and salads. The plan ahead types even brought tarps and beach blankets for maximum enjoyment. The less organised where able



Photos: Mary Storey

Sylvia Sumner, Cynthia and Eric Luks enjoying lunch on the beach at Killbear Park.

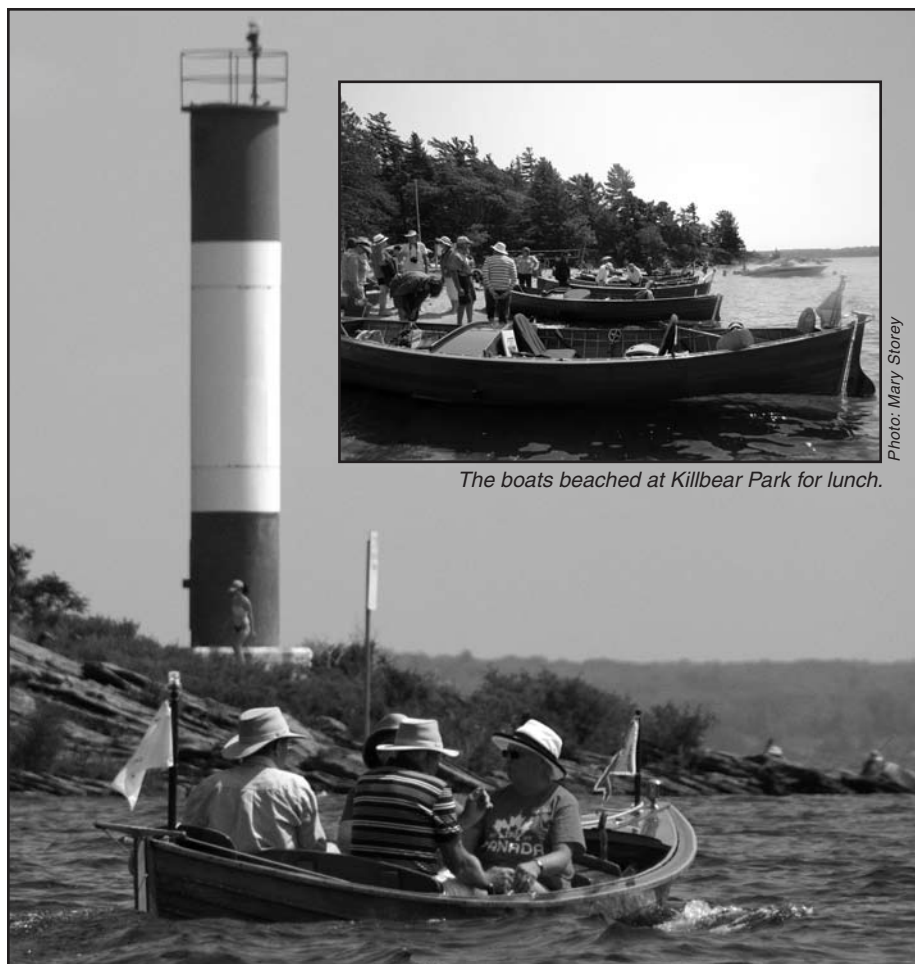
to 'log on' to a number of appropriately arranged fallen tree trunks. As always there was much socialising as well as admiring comments from people sharing the beach.

Back to the boats and we wove our way around various islands to and through Wall Island where we shared the famous Hole in the Wall passage with lots of other boaters. From here the route took us north again around Elizabeth Island and back south east to the ramp. The optional route into and around Parry Sound Harbour was enjoyed by several crews.

As an 'inshore boatsman' used to travelling close to one shore or another admiring the view at close hand this UMMT was particularly interesting as we crossed some longer stretches of open water. It was a very leisurely activity to just steer generally that-a-way and have plenty of time to relax and look around at the unfolding panorama. With the regular beat of the engine, the sun shining down and lunch happily being processed it would be a perfect time to nod off. Fortunately, not this trip!

For those who could attend, the drinks and dinner at Bass Lake House proved a great way to end the day.

Kerry Harmon



The boats beached at Killbear Park for lunch.

John and Mary Storey accompanied by Clarke and Joanne Smith cruising Parry Sound.

Photo: Mary Storey

Photo: Gary Campaigne

The 39th Annual Dispro Regatta

Glen House Resort, Thousand Islands • September 8-10, 2017

Lucky number 39 took place in Gananoque Ontario, gateway to the Thousand Islands, and we saw a bunch of them.

Some keeners arrived Thursday but most arrived Friday and thanks to the launch crew the boats were all launched and moored well before the 6:00pm dinner deadline. The launch crew varied as people arrived and dealt with their boats but the core team of Bob Burke and Peyton (Jake) Fulmer seemed to be there the whole time; ably supervised by a rotating crew positioned in the prime viewing spots, Muskoka chairs located within shouting distance but just out of splash range, very wise! Thank you to all who made the process easy.

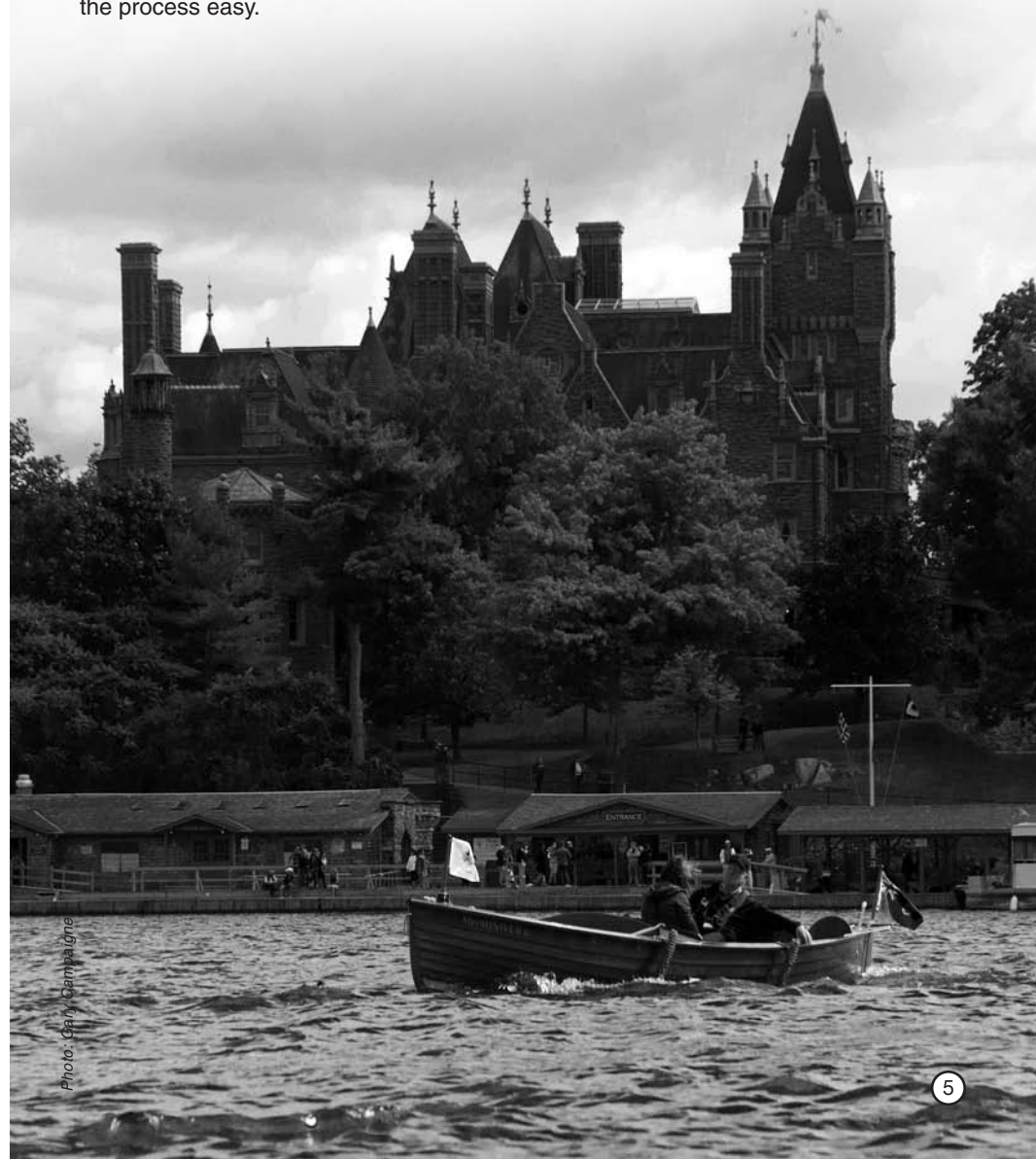


Photo: Gary Campaigne

Upon launching a few crews took the opportunity to preview the adjacent islands and weed beds. We made it back to the dock for the prop cleaning but it was slow going. A sign of things to come!

Following dinner the Captain's Meeting was well attended by most of the attendees which I took as an indication of a number of boats where the Captain's role is a shared responsibility.

Saturday began with a hearty buffet breakfast and a leisurely departure down stream through the Canadian side of the river and islands ably lead by a 100 year old steel hull launch and its seasoned skipper. The scenery was lovely, the weather was cool but fine and the currents mostly in our favor. It was great travelling with so many other DisPros adding to the view and creating our own historic feel to the day. The sight of our flotilla is enjoyed and acknowledged by all who see us, many of whom stop to admire the first boat and are still watching as the last one passes from view. I think it's particularly noteworthy today when most people are so wrapped up in their busy lives that they fail to stop, look and enjoy what is around them. We even had a Ferry Boat stop to let us pass!

Our lunch stop took place on Heart Island, US of A, where we cleared customs to tour Boldt Castle. That is most of us cleared customs but there is a story told of one sweet talker convincing the Homeland Securities Agent that his Mum was no threat and she was allowed to enter without passport! Probably it was the same Agent who recognized that it was Karen's birthday and cheerily commented on the same. Just the right sort of person for the job!

The Castle and its Yacht house are well worth a tour. The story of them being built by a self-made-man, George Boldt, as a tribute to the love of his life, Louise, who died prior to its completion resulting in the project being abandoned is stirring. Fortunately the project has been taken up by the local bridge commission after being abandoned for decades. Having the buildings open while being restored and completed makes it all the more interesting. The 5 acre Heart Island property also includes a Power House,

the Alster Tower, the Hennerly, the Arch and a stone Gazebo; all are built in the same whimsical style as the main Castle.

After the tour we did a victory lap of Heart island then return trip up river following the Canada/US border through a series of narrows between large islands. We were pre warned that the currents were challenging for the helmsmen in that they seemed to come from strange directions and even when you could see them by the changing texture on the surface of the water. The International Rift had a few boats mostly sideways in the passage but we all came through OK.

By the time we were back at Glen House I had stopped to clear the prop of weeds four more times and I was happy to have installed an Aquascope for easy access. The wedding, which was also taking place at Glen House, had moved to the front lawn and overflowed onto the docks where there was lots of interest in the Dippies. The two groups seemed to blend together well except for one very disgruntled fiberglass cruiser owner who had to use a secondary mooring, poor little chappy.

The wine and cheese is always a great social time with the organizers providing lots of delicious finger food, wine and beer for everyone in need of refreshment after the day on the water. The dining room had tables of eight which allowed friends to regroup as well as a chance to dine with members you may not know. After dessert the DJ struck up the band and dancing broke out all over the room. I understand the evening got a bit boisterous later on resulting in Varnish Award number 8!

Sunday we faced the nicest day of the weekend and used the opportunity to cruise through many more of the islands within an hour radius of Glen House. I found it interesting that these islands were so sparsely cottaged compared to Muskoka. I believe the area to have been a holiday destination for at least as long as Muskoka but there seems to be more undeveloped shoreline. Another observation from the visit was the seeming carpet of underwater weed growth in many areas almost all of which was neatly trimmed to average boat depth. I say almost as I managed to explore passages good for three more Aquascope exercises and still had weed on the prop and skeg when we put the boat on the trailer.

Marty McClure and Anne Porter "hitching a ride" with Dennis and Nancy Howchin.



Following lunch the closing ceremonies began with President Helen Byrne introducing Barb and Ian Dickson who entertained us with their presentation of the Varnish Awards:

1. John and Mary Storey for dealing with immigration, preparing maps, arranging guide boat and great skippers meeting.
2. Brad Armstrong for successfully pleading with the immigration official to let his mother into the U.S. without her passport.
3. Keith Billet for successfully threading the needle and passing through 2 semi-stationary boats in a narrow harbour entrance.
4. Susan McGarrell for popping out of her boat like a champagne cork and landing on top of her husband, without injury.
5. Art and Launi Clarke for being fun, gracious and brave passengers in a boat after Launi was nearly tipped overboard.
6. Jack Law for his great dancing ability and joie de vivre at the dance in Campbellford.
7. Joanne McLean for her great dancing skills and John Travolta female impersonator with the music from Saturday Night Fever.
8. Jim Onions and Jennifer Matthews for a 10:30pm call from the front desk regarding an alleged party with loud noise and profanity!



Photo: Mary Storey

The Hard Luck Trophy was awarded to Pamela Gibson and Robert Clipsham for what else their boat was a non starter all weekend, but like seasoned Dippyers, they were still smiling!

Then, when the laughter had subsided, Barb and Ian handed out the commemorative plaques with Ian enthusiastically claiming a kiss from each female recipient! The male recipients seemed to approach Ian with some trepidation... Many thanks to Barb and Ian for finishing the event on such a high note and we look forward to doing it all again next year. We hope you, dear reader, will be there!

In closing I would like to extend, on behalf of all the participants, our thanks to the able group of club members who made this event so enjoyable. Helen and Stan who did the bulk of the organization, Ann and all her assistants for the wine and cheese, Barb who did registration, Sheila for sourcing and selling the Dippy glasses and mugs as well as coordinating the boat launch activities and to all the others who generously volunteered.

Kerry Harmon



David and Nel Deardorff came from Pennsylvania to cruise amid the Thousand Islands.



Photos: Paul Jenner

Jim Onions introduced his daughter Jennifer Matthews to all the fun to be had at a Dispro regatta.



Photo: Paul Jenner

Some of the boats begin the cruise back from Boldt Castle to Glen House. In the background is the Yacht House, with a fine collection of historic craft on display and well worth the visit.



Photo: Gary Campaigne

As usual, there was no shortage of helpers willing to literally wade in for the launching and retrieval of the boats and consequently, the operation went like clockwork.

~~~~~ Dippy Vignettes ~~~~~

Baisong was built and launched in Port Carling in 1920. Her formative years are a complete blank, and cannot be traced.

Mr. Seagrave found her in a field some fifty years ago and used her as a fishing boat on Georgian Bay at Woodland Beach. Mr. Seagrave's grandson Gary does not remember much about her except being caught in a storm with a dead engine, terrified that the end of his world had come.

Mr. Seagrave kept Big Cedar (as she was once called) under the cottage 200 feet from the water across a sand beach. He had rigged up a wonderful Fred Flintstone type dolly and a cement walkway to get her in and out of the water.

Every spring he would round up all the neighbours and family to haul her across the beach to launch her. After a while it seemed that everyone became quite deaf and did not hear him when he knocked on their doors asking for help, and the family couldn't go to the cottage that particular weekend. To keep this magnificent vessel afloat, she was patched with canvas and tar, her cracks were filled with oakum and string then painted many times with many colours. While she was repaired many times, she was never changed with additions such as lights, steering rope pulleys or starter.

John heard about the boat from a mutual friend. When we went to see her (still under the cottage) we were told that if she wasn't out soon, she would be burned as firewood. John went under the cottage to inspect the boat, came out and told Happy in a very calm, controlled voice (with dancing eyes) that the boat had iron nails and a 8" rib span. He didn't want to appear too excited by his find. It took us one day to arrange a trailer and manpower but we couldn't pick her up until the next weekend

When she came out into the sunlight, she was both a magnificent and sorry sight all at the same time. As she emerged, still on her dolly, the neighbours (some of them grandsons of the original neighbours) gathered around to help push the dolly and boat down to the water. We had to take her down to the launch ramp by water. This in itself was a feat as there was a split in the garboard plank through which you could read a newspaper. She only took on a foot of water in 5 minutes. When we were ready to leave, boat on trailer and money in Gary's hands, his wife said "Don't forget the oars. They have the Disappearing Propeller Boat Co. decal on them, so they are yours." Now we knew we had a treasure and conscience made us raise the ante. She was taken home to the garage. Our kids were not impressed with our find.

The following year, a friend who opens and closes cottages at Keswick, found a Dippy seat in a garage. He was going to take it and give it to John. Luckily, John said to ask the owner first. When he was asked, he said "yes, but take the stuff in the attic including the top". Again it took about one day to arrange procuring it. At first we thought the top was just a buggy top, but as it opened up we realized what we had and were stunned. Baisong's One-Man Auto Top was a costly accessory in the 1920's, about half the price of the boat. As a result very few were sold. We believe that it is the only one left. In fact that evening we had supper in the garage looking at it.

She had four colours of paint and a layer of tar to clean off. Since she was at a beach on Georgian Bay, and painted there, the spaces behind the ribs were full of painted sand. It was not a nice job stripping her down to bare wood. There were many splits to



repair, but since she is made of Cypress, there was no rot and none of the planks had to be replaced. The stem and stern are made of Oak and had to be replaced. The complete restoration took two years to complete. All the early boats were signed by the planker and nailer. Ours was signed by Bert Hurst who was still alive at the time we were restoring the boat. His signature had been partly erased due to stripping, but he fixed it up for us in 1984 before we began varnishing. She was nailed with iron nails and some of these nails were used to reinstall the stem and stern.

The engine is a Silent Dispro 2 cycle gas engine, and runs about 5 hours to the gallon of gas. It was remanufactured from a bucket of worn out parts. There were about three engines in the bucket. The man who had the parts would not sell them but accepted a working engine from these parts in return. Everyone ended up happy.

In all, it was about 2 years before everything was completed and the boat, now named Baisong, was ready for launching. She was re-launched at Port Carling with Paul Dodington's insistence and assistance. Her first day in the water was quite a social one. She put in the water at Hanna Park, along with Fossey's Margie. Stopped at the Port Carling Island for lunch, on to the Turnbull's for cocktails, then a visit with Barb Sebben, and finally to Paul Dodington's for a swim. Paul suggested we not tell Ron Hill that the motel group travel this way as he might defect from the Georgian Bay group.

The next winter, Baisong was the Dispro shown at the ACBS booth at the International Boat Show. It was exciting that Gary and Mary Seagrave came down to see her, pat her, and take her picture. They may not have wanted her, but they still appreciated her.

Baisong travels at about 5 miles an hour and has done much travelling. She has traveled the complete Rideau Canal system, much of the Trent Severn Waterway, and part of the St. Lawrence. Her home lake is MacLean Lake near Coldwater, Ontario. When the Dispro Regatta was held on Gloucester Pool, she was one of 27 Dippys to board and ride the Big Chute Marine Railway in one load.

Baisong is named after the falls that were in Port Carling in 1916. Now those falls are the Port Carling Lock.

John & Happy Thomson



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