



Why Tappensailor?

The Tappen part is easy. Tappen is a rural community half way between Vancouver, British Columbia and Calgary, Alberta on the Trans. Canada Highway close to the new City of Salmon Arm. Tappen is where Cynde and I live.

The sailor part is a little bit more complicated. I'll bet you thought that just because I like to sail that would be the answer.... well think again.



A Brig

My great great grandfather Luke Hildreth around 1800 had a argument with his father who was his captain on board a sailing ship in the port of Greenock, Scotland, there is no record what this discussion was about, supposition was either about a woman, drink or something like that. It is believed that they both originated in the Boston, Mass. area although confirmation of this is still to come. The outcome was that Luke

took up residence in Greenock. We have verification of this in a family bible dated 1803, Luke was married a couple or three times and there were children some of whom died in childhood.



A Bark

Robert was one of those who made it past childhood. There is not much known about his early life. We do know that he followed his father to the sea. In the 1840 edition of Lloyds Register of Shipping he is listed as the master of the "Margaret Wilkie" 240 tons out of the

Clyde to Sydney Australia. In the Greenock directory of 1851/2 he is listed as the ship master of "Sapphio" 446 tons. Again in 1861 as the master aboard "Sapphio" only this time the weight is 374 tons I believe there was a change of rating. At this time he was on a voyage between Greenock and Manila in the Philippines. 1869/70 Greenock Directory lists him as Ship master again in 1871 master of "Kooria Moorina" 1066 tons. Again in 1872 Ship Master of the barque (bark) "Kooria Moorina". He passed away in Greenock on May 28, 1873, Oddly enough the "Sapphio" and the "Kooria Moorina" were built in St John's, New Brunswick and used to transport lumber to Europe. The boats were sold together with the lumber on arrival to British owners sailed on many voyages all over.

His son, John Angus Hildreth, my grandfather was a marine engineer working out of Shanghai, His family return home to Greenock, Scotland sometime in either 1913 or early 1914. My mother Nancy was born in March 1914. As I understand it she did not meet her father until 1917/18, when he returned home together with his brother George. They either return by the overland route from China via Russia which was in the middle of its revolution, or by Canada. John did not go back to sea and passed away in 1923 aged 66. George had predeceased him in 1920.



My Father, James Nelson, joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve in 1917/18 and was still a midshipman at the end of hostilities. His only ship was the HMS Rosalind



Dad also enjoyed painting and drawing not always with a nautical theme.



Born in Greenock, Scotland, a major port and shipbuilding town at that time, there was always access to the water and I grew up around boats of all kinds. Through connections with my Dad I was able to visit many of the ships, navy and otherwise during my growing up years.

We vacationed at a place called Carradale, a small fishing village on the Mull of Kintyre, for a few years and I was able to go out with the herring drifters overnight at least twice a year as extra crew assistant to the assistant cook.



During these holidays I was introduced to sailing. Dad had a small 10 foot sailing dinghy with a dipping lug sail and a rather heavy dagger board. Learning to row this beast was a tough job, it had a flat bottom and was extremely difficult to keep in a straight line, Dad was a tough task master. We did have a small Seagull outboard motor and that was even worse it use to spin like a top.



Dad introduced me to Jimmy Petrie, an old school friend of his, who had a 26 foot gaffed rigged yawl. Ailie, as I subsequently found out was a Albert Strange design.

I sailed with Jimmy as crew for about 4 years, racing at least twice a week in club races. Jimmy was a good skipper and we were always in the top 2 or 3 to finish. These races were handicapped so the first boat home was not always the winning boat, it made for interesting evenings.

Starting work, put a bit of a damper on these evening races as it was not always possible to get down to the boat in time. I was lucky I had a co-worker who also sailed and her dad was able to pick me up along with her after work and I would sail with them. They sailed what were called RNSA sailing dinghies and also occasionally a Loch Long class, a 21 foot keel boat.



Emigrating to Canada in 1964 curtailed my sailing activities for a time, although I briefly

joined Kitsilano Yacht Club in Vancouver late in the summer of 1964. I was transferred to Vernon in the interior of BC and that was the end of my sailing for a while.

A couple of attempts to build sailing dinghies ended under the chain saw.

I was able to assist in teaching a sailing course one summer. However that was all.

Moving to Revelstoke and the subsequent break up of the family was a difficult time and out of sheer frustration a 11 foot Flying Junior dinghy was purchased with the idea of sailing it on the Columbia River and other lakes and actually did a couple of times.



Meeting Archie and Sharon McGillivray in Revelstoke allowed me to continue my dream. Archie had recently purchased a San Juan 21 and was trying to sell his first boat a 19 foot plywood construction sloop. The price was right and I made the plunge. Archie allowed me to pay in two installments a year apart.

"Whisper" was launched from Captain's Village Marina, launched with a drop of something, "Canadian Club"

poured over the bow (remember I am Scots) the rest was drunk. Needing a small boat to access the shore I built a Glen L "8 Ball" dinghy on the back porch of my house in Revelstoke. It actually floated and could be rowed in a straight line!



This was restart to my sailing. I spent many week ends on "Whisper", arriving late Friday evening from Revelstoke and leaving Sunday evening. Shuswap lake is a great place to sail. At that time you could count up to

30 odd masts at the marina slips. Many friends were made and some of whom are still sailing.

Moving back to Salmon Arm again and getting some normality back into my life I met Cynde and our first outing was to the marina to look at "Whisper" I guess the trip was a pleasant experience. The following summer we were able to continue sailing.



After 5 years of sailing "Whisper" and a few hurdles in the way, major refits 2 footitis etc. "Sunshine" was purchased "Sunshine" was a San Juan 21 and she was to be in our family for 13 years. She came with the name



"Sunshine" which was appropriate as Cynde had been diagnosed with breast cancer and this was our "SUNSHINE"!!! A visit from Mum allowed us to take her out for a sail.

The following year major back surgery laid me low for the beginning of the year but with the help of good friends "Sunshine" was launched and sailed again. Whisper was subsequently sold together with the 8 ball. We were back to one boat again. Actually that is not quite true as a form of therapy a model sail boat kit was purchased and completed. Basically this was built on my knee on the front porch.



The following summer a trip back to Scotland and a purchase of a magazine stimulated the juices again we did need a row boat to get to shore and plans were available to build an 8 ft lapstrake hull from 4 mm plywood this little boat was finally complete and launched successfully and looked very traditional.

After a sailing holiday in the Gulf Islands with good friends John and Virginia Halper a trip down to Victoria necessitate a stop off at Dallas Pond, were the Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society sail their boats. A search of the internet lead me to a website where I could purchase a set of plans fo r a US one meter design model sail boat.



The forms were left over scraps of "doorskin" plywood and the hulls were formed from thin strips of cedar 1/4" by 1/8th" thick stapled and glued to the forms and the staples were subsequently removed and the hull sanded down and covered with a thin fibre glass cloth coated with epoxy. This boat was completed together with sails made from ripstop nylon purchased at the local store. They worked but some improvement was required.



Subsequent research allowed me to download a program and information on building my own sails and access to scrap fabric from sail makers meant that the sails were greatly improved.

After building one, it is hard to stop. Two hulls were built like this. Looking for a simpler form of construction that would be easier to make and that might get other people involved I located a design by Ken Lockley, a "Reno", this boat was built like a full size plywood boat would be, hard chine and covered with fibre glass cloth and epoxy. One was constructed and sailed. Ken put me in touch with another interested model sailor Terry Hanson, who lived in Kelowna emails back an forward and a visit to his home to help out got him started.



There was no interest shown locally, but a group of modelers in Kelowna had got together and were arranging races. On a visit there one Sunday to check things out we met Terry again who did not have his Reno finished but was trying out a new boat that he had build, from construction lumber, nylon string, and fabric painted with exterior latex paint. A skin boat, Greenland Kayak, Terry offer it to me for \$50.00 I declined but

during discussion I determined that my son Greg had given me a book written by the designer, and I had actually seen him building them in Vancouver.



Cynde, was very involved with dragon boating paddling on the Shuswap (another story). I thought something like this would allow her to get out paddling on the lake in front of the house. She try the kayak out but found it a little tippy.

Subsequent reading determined that skin boats are built anthropometrical meaning built to the body sizes of the paddler. One had to built!!!



Luckily the weather on the Shuswap is normally warm and sunny this first attempt was too big to build in my shop so it was built outside when it occasionally rained the ends where covered with garbage bags and slung up on the porch till it stopped. About four weeks after construction started we had a brand new pink skin boat.



Cynde really enjoyed her trips out that first summer venturing along the shores of the Shuswap. I tried it the day we launched the kayak but long skinny boats were not something in which I felt comfortable.

The hull, being fabricated from a light weight canvas and not ballistic nylon as recommended in the plans, was subject to abrasion and puncturing. The shores of the lake are rocky, making entrance and egress difficult unless you have an assistant to hold the boat steady in the water. A decision was made to look for another design, why not make one similar to the hulls of the model sail boats from cedar strips. Many books and web sites were consulted finally a

design was decided on and plans were drawn up on the computer.

Looking for a place to build was solved by a cooperative neighbour who had a heated shop. He also wanted to have a cedar strip deck install on a stitch and glue hull that he had acquired. A deal was struck and the next stage was started, molds and a strong back were built and stored till warmer weather.



Where to get the material? Clear cedar is not an item readily available in our local lumber yard. Contacts that I had enabled me to acquire 10 boards of 1" x6" x 16 foot long clear cedar at a reasonable price. A few hours with a table saw and a router set up produced 140 + strips of 16 foot long by 1/4" x3/4" with a cove and bead ready to start construction.



This kayak took a little longer to build but it was launch in late July about 3 months after construction started.



Paddles had to be made (Scots again) why buy when you can make During the time varnish was drying a double bladed paddle was made.

Having made a couple of paddles why not make a set of oars. A friend had built a small sailing dinghy and was using a set of plastic oars from a plastic boat. A good excuse to try my hand at oars.



A design for and slow turning lathe was found and a lathe built from odds and sods in the shop. Material was located from my lumber pile, glued up and turned on the lathe with the blades being carved out with a grinder and various hand tools. They actually worked.



That is how the name sailor came about, so now you know!!!!!!