

Rescuing the James Craig Presentation

By David Salt

Alan Edenborough gave a highly informative and entertaining talk to the Cruising Division on Wednesday 26 October; we were most fortunate to have such a wonderful speaker.

Alan is an Honourary Life Member of the Sydney Heritage Fleet, having joined SHF in 1968 as a young man along with a couple of mates. He became very interested in the fleet's future and was charged with finding a 'ship wreck of some significance' so that the fleet had a real project to pursue in order to create a Maritime Precinct in Sydney.

The *James Craig*, formerly the *Clan MacLeod*, was built in Sunderland, England and launched in 1874. Alan's talk was all the more fascinating as he was able to share his first hand experiences. He spoke of the time he first saw the *James Craig* on the beach at Recherche Bay south of Hobart in 1972. He purchased the vessel from the then owner, a scrap metal merchant. The deal was done but on the condition that the purchase price was never to be revealed while either he or Alan lived. The merchant has since died.



The first task was to patch the holes in the hull. This required Alan and several steel fabricators to spend three weeks camped on board the wreck, with only a tarp for shelter, in appalling weather conditions whilst they made repairs in order to tow her to Hobart. And this was only stage one!

Alan described being on board as she was towed to Hobart for more repairs and then the long tow to Sydney and the struggle to find a permanent home.

Alan spoke of the long and involved restoration in Sydney from hulk to a fully square rigged sailing ship and the trials and tribulations of funding such a restoration. He also described the operations of the SHF which includes keeping the steam tug *Waratah* and the pilot ship *John Oxley* operational.



We thank Alan for sharing his personal story which made this historical tale so much more fascinating. He also advised that day trips are available so that anyone can get a glimpse of life aboard a square rigger including swinging the lead, climbing a mast and other activities. Should Members be interested, the Cruising Division will organise a day out on the *James Craig*.