



**NATIONAL TRUST**

WATSON ROAD  
OBSERVATORY HILL

GPO BOX 518  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

[www.nationaltrust.com.au](http://www.nationaltrust.com.au)

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Saturday 31 October 2009**

### **DOUBLE BAY SAILING CLUB**

The National Trust has recognised the historic and ongoing significance of Double Bay Sailing Club to the community, the sport of sailing and to the landscape of Sydney Harbour by including Double Bay Sailing Club (DBSC) on its heritage register. **Mr. Scott Woodcock Core Programmes Director from the National Trust** visited Double Bay Sailing Club on 31 October to recognise DBSC as an important and living part of this city's heritage.

**Mr. Woodcock said:** "heritage is more than old buildings. Of the 11,000 items on the National Trust register many are imbued with the authority derived from their occupancy and their use. The Double Bay Sailing Club recently commemorated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The National Trust sought to recognise the enthusiasm and commitment of the sailing club's membership and their continued contribution to the community life. A sailing club is heritage at its most active."

The National Trust recognised the maritime and sporting heritage embodied in Double Bay Sailing Club. Double Bay has been the nursery ground for those that have gone on to achieve considerable success in Lasers and other classes.

**Mr. Woodcock said that:** "the sailing club was formed by *old salts* to inspire the next generation of sailors. The tradition of handing down of knowledge is common to the National Trust and the Double Bay Sailing Club. Heritage like sailing is all about learning the ropes."

Double Bay Sailing Club has been around for over 50 years supporting sailing on Sydney Harbour. The Sailing Club was started in a local fishing shed in Double Bay in 1956 with construction of the club house commencing in mid 1958. The sailing club remains very active, and the club house is essentially unchanged from the 1950s.

**David Shannon, Commodore of the Double Bay Sailing Club said that:** "the Double Bay Sailing Club welcomes the National Trust Listing. The club is proud of its origins. The construction of the boatshed funded from successive £25.00 loans taken out by individual members, repaid in 5/- per week instalments over two years is emblematic of the club's spirit that continues to this day."

Double Bay Sailing Club is a wholly amateur district sailing club built over the foreshore at Double Bay. In appearance and function the clubhouse remains an authentic Sydney Harbour boathouse, filled with boat racks, simple amenities and a welcoming group of volunteers to teach sailing and run dinghy races on the harbour every weekend. The club has always been run by volunteers as a not-for-profit organisation and caters for sailors of all skills and all ages.

See the attached background documents, including a facsimile of a 1958 News Sheet announcing the club's construction in 1958.

ENDS

**Media enquiries – National Trust:**  
Hansni Bhagani

Double Bay Sailing Club  
Commodore, David Shannon

**BACKGROUND – Double Bay Sailing Club**

Double Bay Sailing Club is a wholly amateur district sailing club built over the foreshore at Double Bay. In appearance and function the clubhouse remains an authentic Sydney Harbour boathouse, filled with boat racks, simple amenities and enthusiastic sailors of all ages. The club is run by volunteers and caters for sailors of all skills and all ages.

Information about Double Bay Sailing Club can be obtained at [www.dbsc.com.au](http://www.dbsc.com.au)

***Narrative*****Harbour Sailing History – 1958, a Village Builds a Club to Support Sailing**

Double Bay Sailing Club has been around for over 50 years supporting sailing on Sydney Harbour. The Sailing Club was started in a local fishing shed in Double Bay in 1956 with construction of the club house commencing in mid 1958. The sailing club remains very active, and the club house is essentially unchanged from the 1950s.

Double Bay Sailing Club has recently uncovered a Monthly News Sheet distributed around Double Bay village in July of 1958, which announces the impending construction of the clubhouse. The 1958 News Sheet provides a window into the sailing-rich life of Double Bay and Sydney harbour in the 1950s. [see photo]

The 1958 News Sheet lists a virtual who's who of Sydney Harbour sailing families who were involved in setting up the club. Office holders in the early days of the club in 1958 include such names as Piggin, Messenger, Backhouse, Shaw, Slight, Hornabrook and Rose.

The new sheet heralds "A Step in History" and recognises

"a very fine group of men and women of vision, courage, and action, at the wheel to steer this club to success, for in about a fortnight's time, the first piles will be driven, then shall arise a Club House, which will make history in this village."

The News Sheet continues:

"It is also fitting that this Club House will be built by a Champion Skipper, a product of the BAY".

The builder being referred to was Cliff Monkhouse, a founding member of Double Bay Sailing Club, a stalwart of the 18 foot skiffs and a champion sailor. Looking at the clubhouse today, you can still make out the name 'Monkhouse' in white chalk on timber tresses in the club's roof for delivery of timber from the yard to Cliff Monkhouse. [photo available]

Funds to build the club were raised entirely from loan units sought from the local sailing community. All sailing families were asked to take out a £ 25 loan, which could be paid to the club as 5/- per week. The club did not ask for a gift, but paid back the loaned funds, albeit without interest.

Various fundraising activities, particularly by the Ladies Auxilliary, were pursued to pay back the loans that support the club's construction. The News Sheet lists a few: A card night was held at the Golden Sheaf Hotel with a profit of £ 51 made on the night. A cooking demonstration (£ 3) was held at the Bondi Junction Gas Company; and a teenage dance was held at St Brigettes Annex. A guessing competition was being run, with the prize "a ladies' shaver".

Finally, the date was set for the club Opening Day at on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1958. The News Sheet was "Hoping for Mr Messenger's Boat" to be present, and mentioned that tea and scones would be served in the Shed.

Double Bay Sailing Club maintains much of the spirit and commitment of those early days, although scones are too rarely on hand. While the of most of the club's members are a bit older than in the 1950s, the club is rebuilding its junior fleets with a tie in with Sydney Boys High School, as well as UTS. The club's laser fleets continue to prosper and the club boasts sailors including Laser Masters world champions Peter Heywood, Mark Bethwaite and the champion junior Alex South.

A host of volunteers continue to teach juniors and adults to sail, coach sailors and run races. This reflects continuity with the past and original purpose of founding Double Bay Sailing Club. The 1958 News Sheet has a strong message of the value of local sailing clubs:

"Let us be thankful that there are still some people in this world who think of others, and their unselfish and untiring efforts are an inspiration to our youngsters".

DBSC has have been a nursery ground for sailors who have gone on to great success in Lasers and other classes-- but rarely 'professionals'. Certainly in early days the club was an integral part of the Double Bay village social life. These days, in addition to the club's own sailing programs, it acts as a focus for various community activities such as the annual clean up Australia day in the Bay. Recognising the long continuity of sailing tradition on the harbour, DBSC is involved in hosting the 18Footers World Championship-- the JJ Giltinan Shield each year.

In 2009 the National Trust has recognised the maritime and sporting heritage embodied in Double Bay Sailing Club by including it on the National Trust list.

Representatives of the National Trust attended Double Bay Sailing Club on 31 October 2009 to unveil the plaque of registration. Sailors past and present were in attendance. Older sailors were assured that it was the clubhouse, rather than the sailors who had been included on the list. [photos available]