

THE KITCHEN RUDDER

Members who attended the inspection of Mayfield's slip at Goolwa on Sunday 18th November 2007 were treated to a cruise on quite a unique wooden vessel: a 32 ft ship's boat (Cutter) from the Aircraft Carrier HMAS SYDNEY. It was built at Portsmouth in 1941 and passed successively from the Australian Navy to Naval Cadets at Port Adelaide to Milang Historical Society then Goolwa.

The cutter is fitted with a Kitchen Rudder, invented by Admiral Jack Kitchen of the British Royal Navy in 1914. This gadget allows the boat to go from full ahead to full astern without changing engine revs or direction! It pre-dates the reverse thrust mechanism of some jet planes by half a century. There are two conical plates (clamshells) which close behind the propeller to direct thrust forward or open out to allow normal forward thrust. The position of the plates is controlled by a wheel on the tiller (see photograph).

We had a great cruise around the Hindmarsh Island marina with its collection of abnormally expensive (exclusive?) real estate – my money was pretty safe! The flexibility of the cutter was amply demonstrated by manoeuvres to retrieve the skipper's hat which blew off in a gust of wind as we were docking.

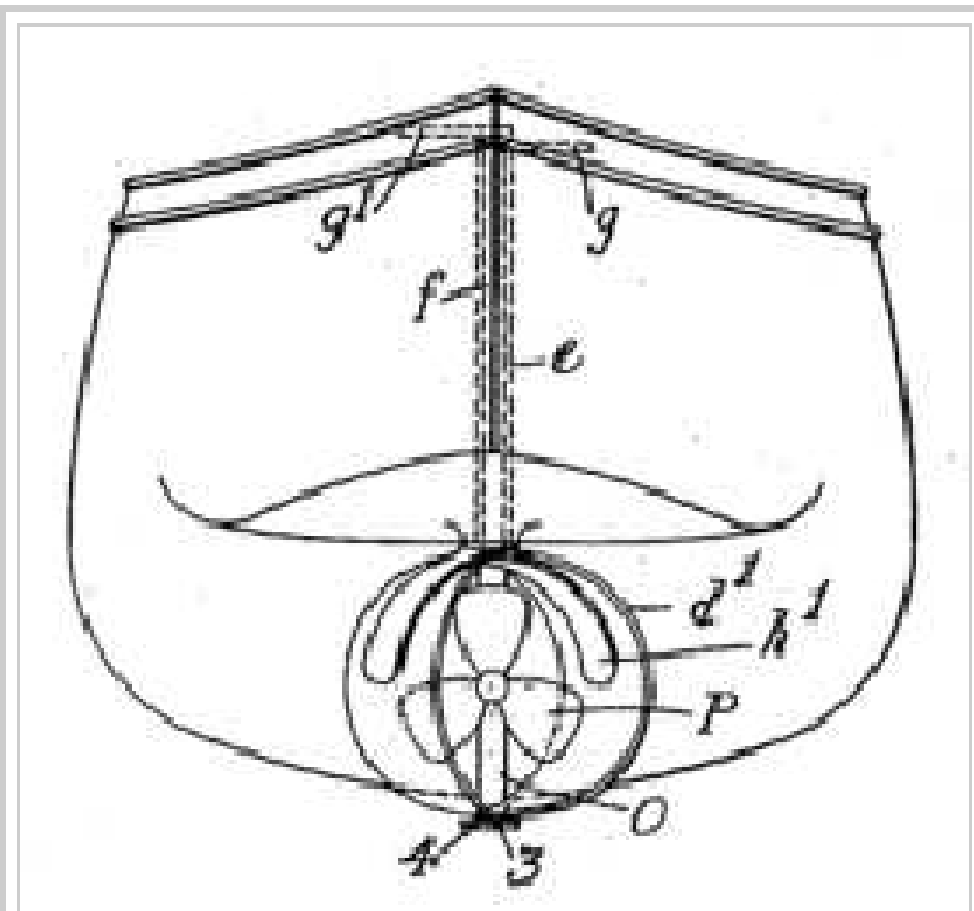
Mark Randell

References:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/news/navynews/editions/4916/pdf/RN8.pdf>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitchen_rudder





Kitchen Rudder. Image from the 1916 U.S. patent.

Fig. 2

