

Burnsco Interclub Searchlight Trophy

During the April club meeting a member asked what exactly the Burnsco is, and how did it come about. Len Stott of the Hibiscus Coast Boating Club wrote the following article, which was published in the Outboarder back in 1998.

Whilst attending a New Zealand Trailer Boat Federation conference in New Plymouth somewhere in the early 1980s I was impressed by the interaction between the neighbouring clubs. This seemed to go much further than the small town friendliness and I asked why.

They all said that their "Challenge" trophy was the reason. Apparently any club could challenge the holders at any time to any competition they liked and the holding club had to respond or forfeit.

At this time there were three Auckland members of the federation which never interacted as the Taranaki clubs were doing. Hence the inspiration.

At about the same time the late Ossie Tait (a stalwart of the NSOBC) brought me a piece of what he said was from a World War I submarine: the front searchlight. Covered in verdigris and looking very sad for itself Ossie wondered if we refurbished it, could we use it as some sort of trophy?

The timing was right, so I outlined the idea of an interclub trophy and received his wholehearted approval.

Next came a meeting of the clubs (OBC, NSOBC, and West Auckland Trailer Boat Club) and as it was anticipated that Maraetai Beach Boating club would soon be joining the federation they were invited to participate.

The rules were purposely drafted to give all participants a chance whether they owned a launch or dinghy, and accordingly 'outer limits' applied. There was also to be a total of 'the five best fish by five different fisherpersons' so that any individual boat that may have come across the 'big ones' would not dominate the competition. At this time it was also obligatory for the fisherpersons to weigh in their own fish with the weighmaster.

It was also agreed that the club holding the trophy be responsible for the organising and catering on the day.

The spirit of the interclub trophy has worked like a charm. Sadly West Auckland later closed down and about this time we were joined by Hibiscus Coast OBC where Brian Clough (ex OBC club captain and custodian) was instrumental in getting things going.

