

Scuttlebutt

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANBERRA MODEL SHIPWRIGHTS SOCIETY

SPECIAL EDITION - SEPTEMBER 2020

MEMBERS' SURVEY



As one of the initiatives to take CMSS into the future, a survey of members was recently undertaken. While not every single member responded, there was a healthy takeup from a solid core. This was taken to be a positive response by our committee, particularly at a time when some were questioning the viability of the Society. Many sister organisations have asked the same question and often it seems to come down to the few to keep things alive and well. The survey, however, undertaken so ably by Max Fitton, indicated that there were respect and appreciation of the directions taken by the committee. Nonetheless, there were some valuable insights and suggestions presented, which, if nothing else, confirmed some of the broader ideas being explored. But, however enlightened committee members might be, they can't operate in a vacuum. And that is why this survey was so important. The committee thanks all those who contributed to the survey and feels confident that the returns have given the CMSS a solid sense of direction for the future.

Members' Survey - Executive Summary

The survey was formulated in July 2020. First drafts were sent to the Committee and Non-Committee Appointees on July 8, resulting in the final series of questions sent to 46 members on 15th July for completion.

Twenty-one responses were received, twenty of which were collated.

It is important to realise the limitations of this survey.

- The great majority of responses were from those members who are already interested enough in CMSS to be bothered to respond, and
- The survey results are subjective.

KEY FINDINGS

First and foremost, the members indicated what they want from CMSS – **camaraderie** and **transfer of technical information**. If this is what they want then it is the responsibility of the Committee to take this into account.

Comments received in response to the request for other ideas were collated separately for the Committee's detailed consideration. In summary, these suggestions could be grouped thus:

- * Ideas to increase technical content
- * Introduction of an annual cycle of activities to provide more 'structure' to monthly meetings
- * Ideas to better communicate with members
- * Ideas to better promote CMSS to the public and prospective members
- * Ideas to support beginner modellers

Other recommendations

A further survey should be conducted after about a year to discover the level of satisfaction of members, including telephoning non-responders to ascertain why they are not apparently interested and how CMSS might get them engaged.

The survey activity also confirmed that one of the most important administrative tasks for the Committee is to maintain an accurate list of members and former members.

My thanks to all who responded.

Max Fitton
Mandurah WA
August 2020



Survey - Your thoughts - Actions that follow

On 15 September the CMSS committee met to discuss the findings of the survey, including resolving which actionable items would be taken forward. The following are the immediate and long term items that will be pursued:

Increased technical content. This was evident in many of the survey responses across multiple questions. Steps are already being taken...including select monthly gatherings having a 'modelling skills' focus, separate from other events for 'general interest'. We will also look to continue the workshop visits on occasions, and make a general call to members for more technical submissions in Scuttlebutt. Ultimately, improved content must be generated by the Society's members.

Annual activity calendar. A generic annual calendar has been developed, which will be used as the basis (adjustments as required) for our yearly cycle of activity. This will be published on the website, promoted in each Scuttlebutt and via Facebook and email. If members can't make the monthly session routinely, then perhaps they can see a theme of interest and try to get to those specific events.

Scuttlebutt content. The survey reinforced that Scuttlebutt is a highly valued product of the Society (our thanks to past and present editors!). We are always looking at ways to improve - most of which relies on member contribution. Expect to see more information about our coming events, continuation of technical and general interest content and a member profile in each issue. If you get asked to prepare something about yourself, don't be shy! It can be in whatever form you are comfortable with—long or short—even better if it includes photo(s) of you (and your models), and a description of what you've built or are working on! And keep the

technical content coming! Kit reviews, build logs, final products, tips and tricks...doesn't matter how big or small.

Marketing. The committee is exploring options to get the Society mentioned in local media such as city magazines and suburban newspapers, a new 1-page information brochure/flyer, and promotion through Canberra's Visitor and Information Centre.

Facebook refresh. We are exploring options to revamp our Facebook presence to a more 'outward communication' footing, rather than a 'group discussion' focus, which is not being used. We want to increase our use of Facebook to **push** information to current and prospective members, including event reminders, release of Scuttlebutt, and links for joining. This will be done **in addition** to our website, newsletter and emails, to cover all members.

Longer term, we are exploring the possibility of an 'expo-like' event at the National Museum of Australia and have had a good early response from them, but unfortunately COVID-19 is preventing any progress of the idea for now. We will continue past efforts to display at all relevant events, including joining forces with related clubs, once normalcy returns.

The survey also highlighted some support for more modern communication techniques including live streaming (using Zoom or similar) and uploading videos to social media. Unfortunately there was no clear consensus, and there remains concern that the effort to achieve a useful result may be onerous. More investigation is required before we commit to the idea.

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