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# NEWSLETTER

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## Australia Day cruise

The tall ships *Young Endeavour* (closest) and *Enterprise* jockey for position in a mock battle complete with rousing cannon firing on Australia Day, viewed from the *Lady Cutler*.

## Seaworks at Williamstown

These two artifacts (*right and below*) were seen during the

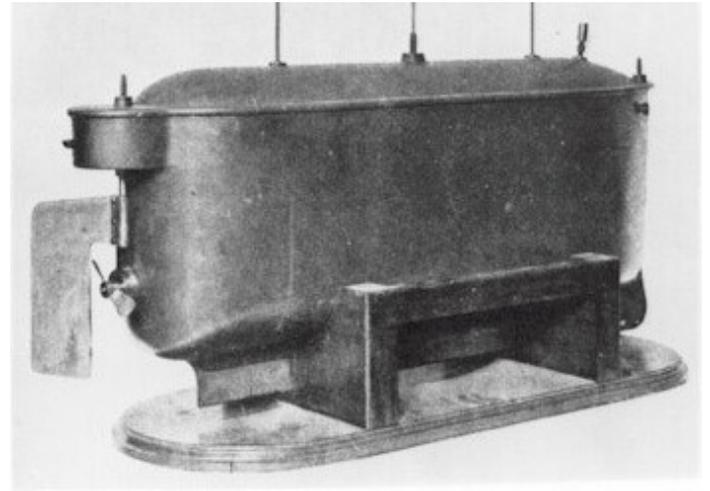


Seaworks Open Week 23-30 January 2011.

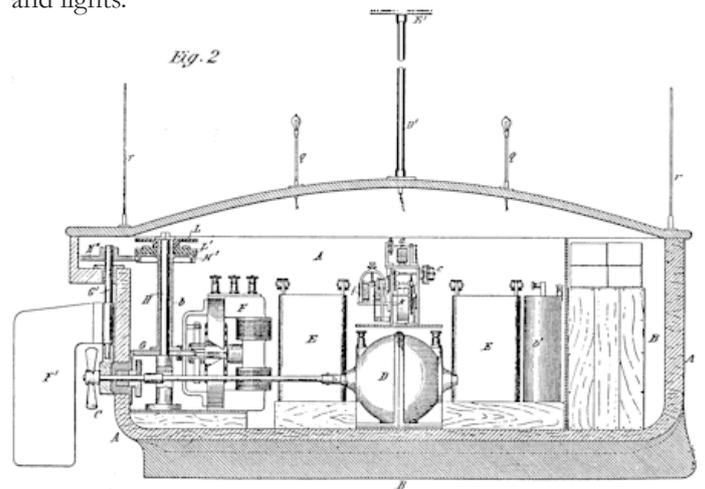
Along with other clubs and groups, the BMBG put on a display of their models and it is hoped this will become a regular feature of the evolving maritime precinct at Williamstown.

## The first radio-controlled model was a boat

Some years before the Wright brothers made their first successful powered flight and two years before the 1800s drew to a close, the Serbian flawed genius Nikola Tesla demonstrated a radio-controlled model boat to the public in an indoor pool at Madison Square Gardens, New York.



The craft was around 1.1m long and by using an early “coherer” detector (metal oxide particles in a glass tube) was able to receive signals sent from a transmitter and turn them into a sequential series of control functions for the motor, rudder and lights.



It is fascinating to look at the patent drawings for what Tesla called his “Teleautomaton”. Can you make out the drive motor and batteries? There is also a second motor used to turn the rudder via a system of gearing and sequence switches. After receiving each command, the coherer had to be turned upside down to shake up the metal filings, so there was an automatic mechanism provided for this.

To prove he was controlling the model, Tesla asked the audience to call out which way they wanted it to turn. Many refused to believe what they saw, claiming that there must have been a trained monkey inside.

Tesla’s many inventions were ahead of their time and he has been called “The Man who Invented the Twentieth Century”. Never a good businessman, he was systematically ripped off by all he came in contact with, including Thomas Edison, who sought to discredit him and claim his inventions as his own. Only after Tesla’s death did the US Patent Office recognise his claim over Marconi as the inventor of radio.