

Classic Yacht Association

O F A U S T R A L I A

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Our aim is to promote the appreciation and participation of sailing classic yachts in Australia, and help preserve the historical and cultural significance of these unique vessels.

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BOATING EVENTS & FESTIVALS 2010

FEB 2011

11-14
Australian Wooden Boat Festival Hobart
<http://www.australianwoodenboatfestival.com.au>

FEB 2011

26-27
South Australian Wooden Boat Festival Goolwa
<http://www.woodenboatfestival.com.au>



Photo: Roger Dundas

Marie Louise III Port Phillip



Photo: Julie Geldard (www.VidPicPro.com)

Part of the vintage fleet

THE 35TH VINTAGE REGATTA; QCYC SHORNCLIFFE, BRISBANE, 13-14TH JUNE, 2010

ROGER KA ALLEN

The regatta reminded me of the poem, "The man from Snowy River" as all the cracks or in this case, forty or so wooden boats had gathered for the fray.

With the winter solstice only a week or so away, it was as if the wood nymphs that live in our wooden boats were drawn to meet in the morning chill of a Brisbane winter which to a southerner is like a summer. It was a chilly 10°C for Brisbane, on Saturday morning as I threw my sailing bag on the deck of my boat, Wee Barkie, lying in what is affectionately known as the "pig pen" at QCYC, Shorncliffe, where itinerant boats can pull up instead of taking up a mooring. It was high tide in Cabbage Tree Creek, with its tall mangroves on the southern bank, the Boondall Wetlands Park beyond, and red and blue steel-hulled trawlers just up stream from the club. It is a pretty place; one of the loveliest creeks I know although a devil to get out of a mooring in unfavourable wind and the wrong tide although these minor adversities make for a better sailor. I think most of us there did not come to win. I certainly didn't. We were more like a pack of dogs let off the leash in a playground, bounded not by wire netting but of an imaginary

triangle described on Bramble Bay and fenced in by time, tide and wind and a few buoys shouldering the ebbing tide.

The first race was scheduled for noon on Saturday, 13th June but after some confusion the Blue Peter fell and the starting hooter sounded in the still air which made the start a mere formality. We crossed the starting line and headed for the first leg, south-west to windward. The forecast was 10-15 knots SW but as often happens on Moreton Bay in winter, the sea was like glass and my Red Ensign hung sulking from my jackstaff. It took us about half an hour to get over the line and I think we should have got line honours for spending so much time on it as I think we drifted back over it again while the starting boat seemed to be our constant companion. However, everyone was in the same boat so to speak and for most of the afternoon, only the sleek greyhounds in the fleet of forty boats were able to harness the faintest breeze. It is an ill-wind that blows nobody any good and as result we boiled the kettle on my gimbaled spirit stove and had lunch of salami, biscuits and Brie as the winter sun in the clear blue sky made us remove our jumpers, and although it as it was forecast 21 degrees, it felt hotter in the still air and later noticed Peter Kerr sailing past without a shirt in a "plastic" Folk Boat. It was strange to see this familiar figure of the sun-tanned, long-haired shipwright from Cabbage Tree Creek go over to the dark side as his elegant wooden yacht, Pagan was temporarily hors de combat.

COVER PHOTO: WAITANGI, PORT PHILLIP
MAY 2006

IMAGE: KEVIN READ



Cherana

The wind picked up a little as the afternoon progressed but the course was shortened to two laps rather than three as the bigger boats on the larger triangle of the course, billowed forth with the odd disobedient spinnaker failing to fill on the run to the line and finishing boat. The relatively short course of about a mile or so on each leg made for a great spectacle as all the boats were kept in close proximity although it was somewhat daunting to be lapped by the bigger boats who crept up behind with their surging bows and billowing kites. There were the gracious lines of the more classical yachts replete with dazzling varnish and generous overhangs at the stern. There were some double-enders like my Colin Archer and a beauty called Four Winds and the elegant old schooner, Blue Nose on which the father of my crew mate, Ken Fraser had died from a heart attack many years ago. One of the few with tan sails was a Bolger cat-rigged ketch, and there was a small version of Joshua Slocomb's Spray called "Rosinante" after Don Quixote's steed and the name of one of the boats of L. Francis Herreshoff in his charming book, "The Complete Cruiser". A sleek beauty called Archinar II slipped by above us to later win the Best Presented Vintage Yacht. No boats bared their bottoms that day as the wind was slight but the spectators lining the cliffs at the headland just south of the creek were treated to lovely scene. As usual for the end of the race, the tide was dead low as the boats headed back in down the channel to the creek while on both sides, wide sand banks at low tide etched innumerable parallel waving lines which is at its best from those landmark cliffs which date back to the late Jurassic. We were in no hurry to come in and as result were the last boat in and revelled in the stiffer breeze which had sprung up late. When we reached "The Basin", a widening in the creek near the Sandgate VMR, we passed a yacht struggling like a beached whale embarrassed at the indignity of being aground. We offered a tow but she was free before we could throw a line.

There were the usual yarns around the bar, lubricated with lashings of Pusser's rum dispensed in handsome enamel mugs with Pusser's naval traditions around them. It seemed somewhat odd to be sipping rum and coke with ice cubes out of a mug which summed up the day's proceedings; conviviality

with a lashings of charm and nostalgia. The rich honey colour of the varnished moored wooden yachts were reflected in the mirrored surface of the creek, tinged by the soft pink glow of the setting sun, contrasted with the purple of lengthening shadows as swallows swooped after insects above the darkening water. There is something special about wooden boats that fibreglass can never replicate regardless of their teak decks and chipboard interiors.

For those who did not eat aboard their boats, there was a BBQ dinner in the chill night air and later a band called the Baby Boomers played but despite the appeal of the name of my generation I did not stay. There was a certain paradox in the day with the mainly male participants varying from the very wealthy who just had a passion for wood to those who were equally passionate if not more so but who were of humble means, in boats with less gloss, some open to the elements or without a touch of varnish. The common denominator was wood and sail, and not speed or money. Somehow the latter didn't matter although the speed of a boat is governed by that eternal truth about 1.4 times the square root of the waterline length and as length costs money, speed does too. The slower the boat as is the case with mine, the more time spent on the water and not in the bar, a bit like a golfer with a bad handicap.

The following day saw a sullen sky and the promise of a rising southerly which was just what my boat likes. My first mate, Ken rang to say he was sick so I was lucky to have my other crewmate, Kevin bring a friend, Steve who had once sailed in 18 foot skiffs. Our mean age was about 55 but somehow it didn't matter. We set out at 1000 in preparation for the race at 1100. We had two head sails (a jib and a Yankee) as well as the main which I did not reef as they had forecast 15-20 knots and I thought we'd be fine even with a new crew. I lent them a spray jacket each and suggested they put them on as I could see it was going to get cold with the wind picking up. I wore my Tasmanian hand-knitted sailing jumper, cabled and heavy and my woollen Breton cap and put on my foul-weather gear before too much longer.

We had a good start on a starboard tack and found it exhilarating to be up with rest of the fleet rather than being well behind. The twin headsails were well suited to the gustier conditions and we were at one time neck and neck with a boat called Carouse who hull seemed only a short distance away as we fought it out for the second marker on a starboard tack again. We rounded the mark ahead of her and soon we were on a run down to the starting line only hampered by not setting the spinnaker as I was with an untried crew and dare not do it. The two laps of the course went quickly quite unlike the day before. We then had about half an hour before the next race and rather than sail around aimlessly, we hove to; back winding the Yankee, with the main out and the tiller to the lee. She balanced beautifully in the choppy sea and despite the freshening wind, we sat there doing less than one

knot to leeward while we were able to eat and drink in relative calm. We told another boat that came too close we had hove to but the skipper didn't seem to understand. Only a well balance boat can do this and at times I undid the lashed tiller and saw the boat still hove to regardless.

The second race of the day was much the same only with a poorer start, which was mainly due to the confusion about the 15 minute start as we didn't hear the siren when it went up. The wind was still quite fresh and favoured the heavier boats like us but we were at a disadvantage down wind with the larger boats with kites up, passing us on the home leg.



The author's classic Wee Barkie

When the finishing flag fell and the hooter sounded our finale, we were much relieved and then headed, not south-west back to the club, but north to the Scarborough Marina in Deception Bay where the Wee Barkie has taken up a new mooring. It was 1410 when we headed north expecting it to take us at least three to four hours and to be there after dark. However the wind was on our starboard quarter and the sea which was up to a metre in height, was rolling in from the south east at about 25 knots pushing us at six knots and sometimes over seven down a wave. We were at our maximum speed most of the way and with not too much weather helm despite the main being full and with two head sails. When not far from North Rock Light at the top of Redcliffe, with the seas even rougher we took in the furling gib and sailed with the Yankee and main. We giped suddenly on a wind shift but survived unscathed and were then on a port tack going around the corner on the home leg to Scarborough with the tide at dead low and the wind rising and only a metre or less under the hull. We dropped the main outside the outer leads and had motored in and soon dropped the Yankee as we were nose to the wind. It was just after 1600 hrs and we had done this in record time for us.

Inside the marina the wind dropped and we wondered what all the fuss had been about. Ten minutes before the darkening sea had looked sullen and threatening but now we were home safely thanks to Colin Archer and the Wee Barkie. When we had moored and tidied up, we drove back to QYCY about 30 minutes

to the south, just in time for the presentation of prizes. I smiled to myself as we had sailed further than anyone that afternoon and in record speed and in conditions ideally suited for a North Sea double-ender. We didn't win a prize; not the fastest, the one with most varnish or the best dressed crew. Two of my crew didn't even have wet weather gear and one had never sailed on my boat before and Kevin had only sailed once before on her and had never been on a boat heeling forty degrees with water coming up through the scuppers. These are the sailors who should get a prize, not just those with acres of varnish, a pea-jacket and white commodore's cap. We had only raced a few times before and never with this crew. The names of the winners are now a blur, at least to me. What mattered to me, and I am sure to most, was not the speeches and the mugs, but just being there.

Overall we came 8th in the three races of Division 3 and in Race 2 we did our best by coming fourth out of seventeen boats. In a way, it doesn't matter but what did was the spirit of adventure, the comradeship of fellow sailors, the exhilaration of wrestling with the sea in the company of other boats and wooden boats at that, made from once living things re-incarnated in carvel or clinker, fashioned by craftsmen and maintained with love. Winning is ephemeral but the experience of sailing a wooden boat is a form of respectful contemplation on the Cosmos. You learn to go with it, not against it. Fight against it, and you die.

That night as I snuggled up to my wife in bed, I reflected on those rolling, sullen seas at North Rocks Light and how easy it would be to succumb to the sea by making a wrong move, an unwise decision or a miscalculation in navigation. It reminded me of scenes from The Riddle of the Sands, with the shoaling seas and shifting banks of the Frisian Coast. It is this challenge which makes it so exciting, even in a relatively slow boat like mine which was designed not for speed but to bring you home to a safe harbour and a warm bed.



Bright Eyes

Photo: Dianne Ling



'Frances'

SOUTHERN TRUST REGATTA 2010 AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

MARK CHEW

In the last CYAA Magazine you may have read about Fair Winds' trans Tasman crossing to Auckland. Well, the ostensible reason (and you need a good reason) for crossing the ditch was to compete in the series of Classic Yacht events held on the Hauraki Gulf during the summer sailing season. The precursor to the racing season was a three-week family holiday, exploring what I consider the best cruising ground in the world.

The memories of Great Barrier Island, sitting at anchor watching dolphins in Nagles Cove, climbing the spectacular Mount Hobson, sheltering from gales in the remote Hooks Bay on Waiheke Island East end, New Year's Eve with friends near Oneroa, the delightful naivety of the mussel festival at Port Fitzroy and a whale breaching 50 metres from the boat off the Coromandel Peninsular ... these are all moments I will never forget. Returning to Melbourne in mid-January was only made bearable by the knowledge that we would be back in Auckland in three weeks to put Fair Winds through her paces on the racecourse.

Given the spectacular venue, the beautiful craft racing and the incredible hospitality of the New Zealanders, it is significant that the highlight of the week for me was the friendships I shared with the crew. I first sailed with Antony Perri in 1993. We have done Sydney-Hobarts together and crossed Bass Strait too many times. He is the most grounded level-headed sailor around and the only time I have ever heard him raise his voice is when arguing about

the proper way to cook fish. This argument would normally be with his countryman John Donati (who I also first sailed with in 1993). Those of you who know John will also know that his unquestioning generosity and zest for life raises the standards of those around him. It's because of this that we forgive him the habit of tucking the tea towel into his undies while cooking in a hot galley mid-Tasman.

Gordon Tait's first ocean passage was in 2004 when we sailed Fair Winds west across the Tasman. Fourteen days later we had failed to put him off sailing and he has crewed regularly ever since. Damian Purcell has taught me to appreciate proper yachts. The professor encouraged me to buy a Rhodes boat and thus raised my standards beyond the usual Classic Yacht crowd. He also quite rightly reminds me to concentrate on steering and trust the crew to do their jobs, his particular one being a bowman and a damn good one at that. I first met Tod Benson in a boatyard in Corfu, Greece in 1991. We worked as skippers for the same flotilla charter company, and Tod held my hand through the trauma of having to look after English holidaymakers. Almost twenty years later I consider him one of my closest friends and trusted sailing companions.

The final crewmember for the regatta is also the one with whom I have sailed for the longest. In 1990 my wife Sally Ann and I bought a 30ft plastic tub and took her through France to the Med. We moored beside super yachts, in Antibes and drank rosé in Corsica, and have cruised our boats together ever since. For her to be aboard racing was a special treat for me. For the duration of the regatta most of the fleet is based outside the Americas Cup, Team New Zealand base in the Viaduct Basin. This is hallowed ground in sailing history as it was here in 2000 that Russell Coutts held up the Auld Mug after beating the Italians 5-0. It's still possible, with a little

imagination to hear the blaring Super Yacht horns and cheering crowds ten years later. The Halsey street precinct has recently been marked for redevelopment and so another characterful and historic commercial port will surrender to the developers' plans, as they have done all over Australia in the last ten years.

Once out of the Viaduct the fleet turns east down the Waitemata to the start line somewhere south of Rangitoto. This four-mile journey shows off the spectacular Auckland skyline, passes Devonport to the north, home of the original Logan Yard, and eventually takes us out into the Gulf where so many famous sailors have been made. Names like Logan, Bailey, Blake, Butterworth, Bouzaid, Dickson and Dalton all called this patch of water their home, and alongside Newport and the Solent, it must be one of the three spiritual homes of yachting.

On day one, the trim and highly-tuned crew of Fair Winds, fresh from a full Christmas social schedule, purred like clockwork. With Tupia's (Tod) local knowledge we found our way through the tides (remember tides Port Phillip sailors?) around a series of markers with names like Bean Rock, Salt Works, Flax Point and Narrow Neck, to a creditable second place in our division. This was the high point as far as results go, so forgive me if I don't mention the scores for races two, three and four. At this point you should know that I am writing this account six months after the event from memory and so you might forgive me that the next few days became a blur. I have vague

recollections of high winds, rounds of beer, broken spinnaker poles, frustrating wind holes, more rounds of beer, friendships renewed, long beats to windward, friendships made, more rounds of beer, and above all visions of the best Classic fleet in the world enhancing the natural beauty of the Gulf. This small group of Australians in a fifty-five-year-old American-designed boat, put together in Germany after the war, was privileged to be a part of it.

Keith Glover the owner of the magnificent Wraith of Odin also made the trip across from Australia, and when he (eventually) got to New Zealand he sailed a lot better than we did. His advice, support and encouragement were truly invaluable. Steve Cranch, Tony Blake, Tony Stevenson, Bruce Tantrum and Joyce Talbot, have managed to combine ruthless efficiency with genuine friendship and for that I thank them. The small but passionate community of Classic Boat sailors that has formed on both sides of the Tasman over the last ten years has started a relationship that will endure and give pleasure for many years to come. The Cup Regatta in Melbourne and the Auckland Summer sailing program have already provided a forum for exchange of knowledge, ideas and most importantly friendships based around our special craft. Long may it continue. Summer sailing program have already provided a forum for exchange of knowledge, ideas and most importantly friendships based around our special craft. Long may it continue.



Photo: Dianne Ling

'Wraith of Odin'



Leda's maiden sail in Auckland's Rangitoto channel. The Wilsons remembered it as "the greatest day in our lives."

THE LEDA ENCHANTMENT

BRYAN REID

This is the first in a series of excerpts from *The Leda Enchantment* - the story of the classic New Zealand-built 54ft cutter *Leda*, the embodiment of two brothers' boyhood dream, the people who sailed her, and their lives over more than 60 years. It's a story of adventure at sea, of the failure of a dream, of tragedy, and the resurrection of *Leda* by a man who came under her spell half a world away.

The author, Bryan Reid, helped build *Leda* in Auckland the late 1940s, and remained a close friend of her owners, although separated from them for many years. He is a former yachting and shipping reporter, who now lives in Melbourne.

THE SPELL

I don't believe in spells – at least, not the sort that call for incantations, waving wands or rubbing old lamps. Life casts its own spells, but in a way that makes us unaware of them at the

time. Their results for good or evil become apparent only when memory illuminates the events and patterns of the past and fits them into the narrative of our lives. *Leda* cast her spell over me at a critical stage of my life more than 60 years ago. I still don't know whether my course was changed for better or for worse, but it was changed for certain.

The introduction came from Sandy Wilson, recently returned from World War II, who had joined the reporting staff of the *Auckland Star*, then New Zealand's largest-circulation evening daily newspaper, where I was a junior reporter. He was five years older, and had spent the last years of the war in the heavy fighting against the Germans in Italy. I had had my own call-up papers for military service when I turned 18, but the war was over before I could be called up. Sandy and I hit it off immediately, at first through our shared love of the sea and sailing. I had joined the *Star* as a cadet reporter in June 1943, but had left two years later for a six months' stint on *New Zealand Truth* in Wellington. Up to that time, I had been the *Star's* shipping reporter, and on Saturdays, the yachting reporter. When I returned, Sandy was the yachting reporter.

I had done some sailing on Auckland Harbour and had cruised the inner waters of the Hauraki Gulf, first in my uncle's motor launch when I was very young, then with friends and schoolmates in sailing boats of various sizes. I learned the basics of handling a sailboat, but not much more. Sandy Wilson, however, had learned to sail and to race as a boy before the war on the harbour at Tauranga, where the family lived, and he and his elder brother Christopher, who was never known as anything other than 'Dooley', for three years in succession represented Bay of Plenty in the Cornwell Cup interprovincial contest for 12ft 6in Z class boats.

But what really fascinated me was that the Wilsons were building a yacht. It wasn't just a weekend sailboat. It was a 54ft cruiser-racer in which Sandy and Dooley and Dooley's wife Kit and their young family were determined to see the world. The yacht was to be called *Leda*, after the beautiful Greek queen with whom the great god Zeus had had his way after descending from Olympus in the form of a swan. Sandy asked me if I'd like to help build *Leda*. I did not hesitate.

The spell I succumbed to was not cast solely by *Leda*, although from my first sight of her at her building site on the Auckland North Shore suburb of Northcote, I was enchanted by the grace and strength of the form already defined by the framed-up hull taking shape beneath a huge, open-sided canvas-roofed shed. Just as strong an attraction was the Wilson family. Sandy exhibited quiet strength and quirky humour, an uncommon ability with languages and great good humour.

His older brother Dooley shared this sense of humour, to which he added a prodigious determination and single-minded durability in the face of hardships and difficulties—he encountered plenty of those as the driving force behind the building of *Leda*, Dooley's wife Kit, was an attractive, lively, intelligent and well-educated young woman, a teacher by profession, who shared her husband's determination and dedication. She was then the mother of a three-year-old daughter, maintaining the family and the household as well as feeding and watering the teams of volunteer workers who came every weekend to help the great building project. The Wilson family's arrangement was that Sandy's job at the *Star* supplied the money to sustain them, while Dooley worked fulltime on *Leda*.

The Wilsons won me completely. It was a delight to travel almost every weekend and days off from my home in Orakei, across the harbour by ferry, then walk up the hill to for a couple of days' work at the building site at the rear of the huge old house the Wilsons had rented in Onewa Road, Northcote. Often, too, on weekdays I would go straight from work at the *Star* with Sandy and put in a few hours before dinner with the family, followed by drinks and music and conversation, ending often with my staying the night. They were some of the happiest days in my memory.

The work I and most of the other volunteers did was at the lower end of the boatbuilding skills spectrum. We held lengths of timber while the craftsmen measured, cut, drilled, screwed or bolted; we helped bend the ribs, almost unbearably hot from the steam box, around the longitudinal stringers that held the fore-and-aft shape of the hull, then we fastened the ribs to the stringers and later, the planking to the ribs. We fetched and carried, hammered, lifted and strained. I became utterly devoted to the boat and its builders, and as time went by I began to learn more about them and in particular, to discover the origins of the dream that drove them.

In Tauranga, the family had lived in a large two-storeyed house in Devonport Road, and their property ran down to the harbour's edge. Nick, Dooley's son, still lives there at the same address, in a house even closer to the water. The location could be described as idyllic and so, for the most part, was the boyhood of the Wilson brothers.

In this environment, they took eagerly and early to sailing. They were allowed to buy a boat as soon as they had saved up the money and could swim 50 yards. When they were able to cover 220 yards, they were allowed to race them. Their first boats were little 7ft single-handed pram dinghies with a single sail, a design by a Tauranga man which became, and still is, a national basic sail-training craft, first designated the Tauranga, and now simply known as the P Class. Sandy was seven when he bought his for £2 and sailed his first race the following year.

Eventually, Sandy and Dooley, demonstrating early sailing skills, graduated to the 12ft 6in Z class, proving themselves highly competitive, not only in local racing, but also in the national Z class series for the Cornwell Cup, in which selected boats from all the New Zealand provinces competed. Their boat *Tio* was selected to represent Bay of Plenty for three years in succession. In the first series, Sandy sailed with Dooley as skipper. *Tio* was narrowly beaten by one race in each series.

Racing in the shelter of the harbour was absorbing and exciting, but the Wilsons began to dream of wider horizons when, every Christmas, the big keel yachts raced the 120 miles from Auckland to Tauranga, sailing all day and overnight across the Hauraki Gulf, around Cape Colville and down the rocky and dangerous coast of the Coromandel Peninsula. On the day the big yachts left Auckland, Sandy and Dooley would wait on the wharf at Tauranga to see the homing pigeons arrive from the boats, each carrying a message reporting on position and progress.

Then, one by one, and often very close together, they sailed into Tauranga through the narrow passage between Mount Maunganui and Matakana Island, sometimes speeding in under billowing spinnakers with a north-easterly wind behind them, or reefed down, slogging up in the teeth of a hard westerly. Sailing in their little boats close to these magnificent

craft, trying to imagine life on board, with cabins and bunks and galleys—the Wilson brothers’ dream of sailing the world in their own ocean-going yacht was generated, and another spell was cast.

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 cut short the brothers’ university and sailing careers, when they were called up for war service. For years before, they had been saving money to buy a keeler, as sailing yachts other than small light-displacement boats are called in New Zealand, and before they left for overseas service, they took a trip to Auckland to look over the sort of craft that might appeal.

There were plenty on the market, but none seemed to fit the vision they shared. Disappointed but not discouraged, they talked to leading boatbuilder Roy Lidgard, telling him how much money they had and what sort of boat they wanted, or thought they wanted. He promised to build them a boat after the war. When they finally went overseas, they continued the search for their ideal, pored over boat designs, and eventually formed a reasonably firm conception of the boat they wanted. But first they had to get through the war.

Sandy went into the army with an artillery regiment and saw some hard fighting in the Middle East and towards the end of his service, in the bitter Italian campaign. Dooley was recruited into the Royal New Zealand Air Force and served in the Pacific as a wireless operator/technician. At war’s end, the brothers returned to New Zealand with their funds now loaded with back pay and gratuities from their war service, (they had saved £1200 each). Their dream stronger than ever, they began with high hopes to negotiate the building of their yacht.

THEY RECEIVED A NASTY SHOCK

Postwar boatbuilding timbers and other materials and above all, labour, were in very short supply and compared with what they had known in peacetime, outrageously expensive. There was no way they could afford to have a boat built, and they realised that if they still wanted it, they would have to build it themselves, but they faced the daunting problem that neither of them had ever built a boat before. Although they had sailed and maintained small boats, the knowledge and the skills required to build a large cruising and racing yacht were quite outside their experience.

But the Wilsons were not the men to easily abandon a goal. They decided that Dooley, a natural handyman who had always been clever at making things, would learn the basics of boatbuilding by working for an Auckland boatbuilder until he had gained the skills they needed. In those times of severe labour shortages, he soon found work with Roy Lidgard, whose yard had turned out many first-class sailing craft. Sandy, meantime, had got a job as a reporter on the Auckland Star and was able to contribute his earnings to the building fund.

At Lidgard’s, Dooley’s official work status was as an ‘improver’, one who was regarded as somewhat more advanced than an apprentice but not yet to be classified as a ‘journeyman’—a completely skilled and qualified tradesman. One of his workmates was such a journeyman and destined to become one of the leading Auckland yacht designers. His name was Jack Taylor, and he soon developed a friendship with Dooley whom he described as ‘a good workmate and an intelligent person’. This friendship led to the realisation of the Wilsons’ dream and the emergence of Leda into the world.

The question of how the dream yacht was to be designed had occupied the brothers’ minds for seven years, five years during the war and two years afterwards, before they found what they wanted. Sandy came across the lines of a beautiful yacht in one of the books of the great English yachtsman and boat designer Uffa Fox, whose published collections of selected designs from all over the world were, and still are, cherished additions to yachtsmen’s libraries. The design they chose was that of the English yacht Ragna R, by the great Swedish designer Knud Reimers. She was exactly what they wanted.

Dooley had, of course, told Jack Taylor of his ambition to build a keel yacht. Taylor had always admired the work of Reimers, particularly his ‘square-metre’ yachts—classes of boats distinguished only by their sail areas of 20 or 30 square metres, but otherwise unrestricted in design or construction, resulting in fast and beautiful craft. Jack, too, was attracted to the design of Ragna R. He offered to draw the Wilsons’ boat to the same design, and spent many hours studying the reproduction in the Uffa Fox book, until he felt he could visualise her lines blindfolded.

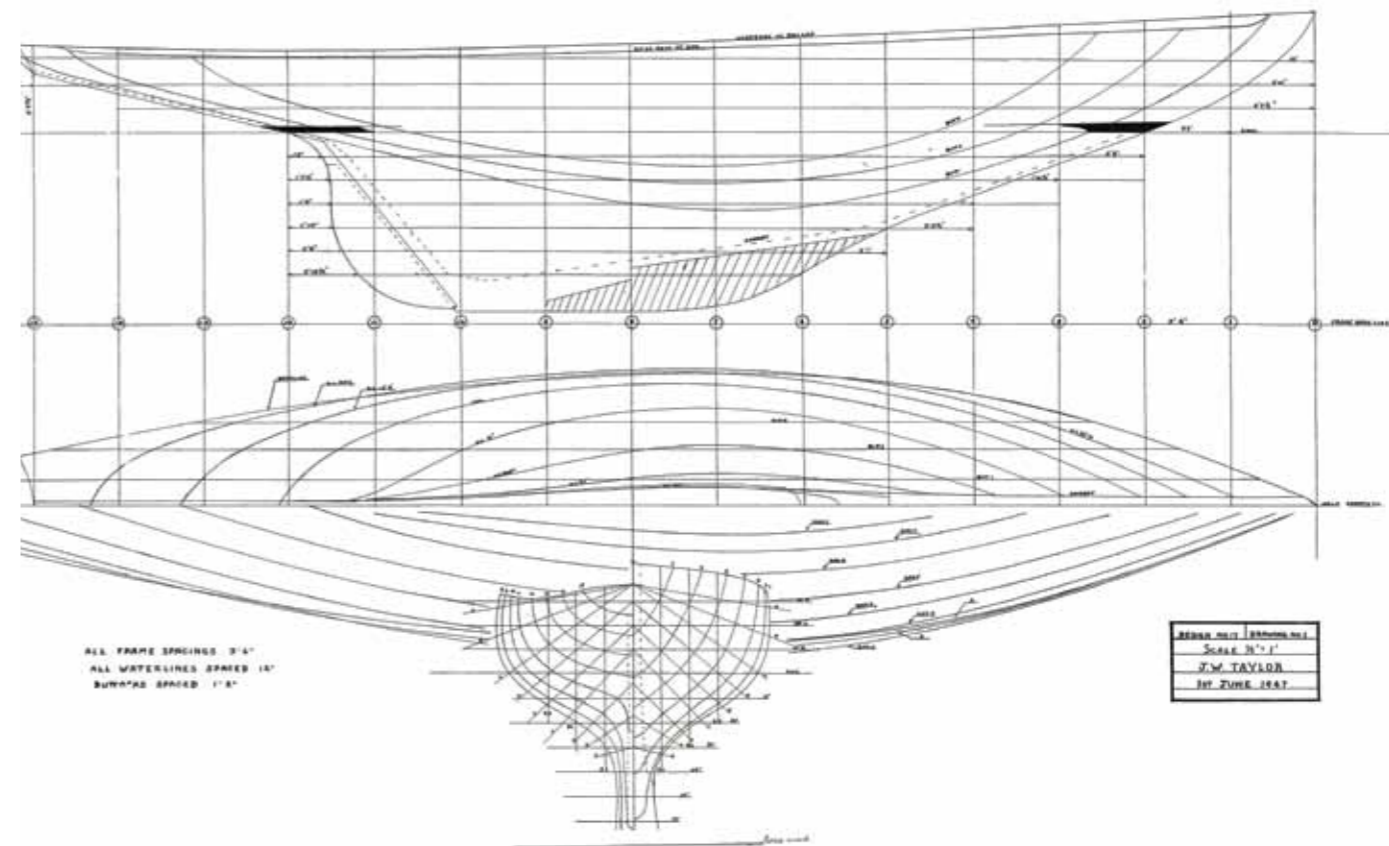
There were no offsets (measurements to show how the three-dimensional shape of the hull was to be realised in full size) for the Reimers design in the Uffa Fox book and no sail plan, and the drawing took up only about half a page. From this scant information, Jack Taylor set to work to draw new lines to a large scale for the image he had fixed in his mind. His drawings eventually showed a boat 54ft long, with a beam of 11ft 6in and a draft of 7ft 7in, a sweet hull that combined ample onboard space with a fast and sea-kindly shape, a graceful bow and a stern that tapered into a long and elegant overhanging counter. Speed and power were eloquently expressed in every line. The brothers were well pleased. Taylor, who regarded Dooley as a friend, made no charge for his design.

Taylor also gave his attention to the way the boat should be built. Reimers’ boats were built from a single skin of close-seamed planking on angle steel frames, deck beams and transverse floors. Jack preferred the traditional New Zealand method of a diagonal skin, 3/8in thick, an outer fore-and-aft skin of 7/8in planking, and sawn pohutukawa floors. The New Zealand pohutukawa is a large coastal tree yielding extremely dense timber and gnarled limbs enabling boatbuilders to produce

54 FT FAST CRUISING CUTTER. FOR WILSON BROS.

DIMENSIONS ABOVE WATER LINE										DIMENSIONS BELOW WATER LINE										DISCREPANCY																																										
NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT																																							
1	LENGTH	54.0	11	BEAM	11.5	21	DEPTH	7.7	31	DISCREPANCY		41	DISCREPANCY		51	DISCREPANCY		61	DISCREPANCY		71	DISCREPANCY		81	DISCREPANCY		91	DISCREPANCY		101	DISCREPANCY		111	DISCREPANCY		121	DISCREPANCY		131	DISCREPANCY		141	DISCREPANCY		151	DISCREPANCY		161	DISCREPANCY		171	DISCREPANCY		181	DISCREPANCY		191	DISCREPANCY		201	DISCREPANCY	

CHARACTERISTICS	
LENGTH O/L	54 FT 0 IN
BEAM	11 FT 6 IN
DEPTH	7 FT 7 IN
DISPLACEMENT	25 TONS
DRIFT	1/2 IN
WINDING DRUMS	2
WINDING BALLAST	10 TONS
WINDING ROPE	1/2 IN
WINDING SPEED	100 FT PER MIN
WINDING TIME	10 MIN
WINDING WEIGHT	100 LBS



natural ‘knees’ and other joints, curves and components of great strength and durability.

The change in construction method favoured by Jack Taylor would alter the displacement of the boat, and the sections—the parts of the design which defined the shape of the hull at intervals along the length of the boat—would have to be altered accordingly. Recognising that Dooley and Sandy were relative amateurs in boatbuilding, Jack drew very detailed construction plans. Among his other variations from Reimers’ original specifications was the change from a cast-iron ballast keel to a lead keel, which Jack saw as more easily cast by the Wilsons themselves, thus avoiding the considerable expense of having the keel cast by a foundry.

Now, they had to translate the lines into timber, bronze and lead, but that was still a long way ahead. Like the opening words of Mrs Beeton’s recipe for jugged hare (‘first catch your hare’), the Wilsons had first to get their timber. There was no question what sort of timber they wanted. It was the famous New Zealand kauri pine, which had been used for shipbuilding since the late 18th Century when Captain Cook cut down young kauri trees to make spars for the ships in which he charted the islands of the South Pacific, New Zealand and Australia. Kauri is easily worked but very durable, and has always been by far the preferred boatbuilding timber in New Zealand. The kauri can live 2000 years, the narrow pole-like trunk of the young tree gradually swelling into a vast cylinder with a girth of up

to 15 metres. The species grows mainly in the far north of New Zealand and that was where the Wilsons set out to choose a tree and fell it for the birth of Leda.



A kauri tree from which Leda was built, being felled in Northland.

DOING IT THE HARD WAY

There could hardly have been a more difficult time to build a yacht. For a start, wartime restrictions on the use of kauri for other than essential services were still in force. Other materials such as bronze bolts, rivets and similar fastenings and fittings, were very hard to source and very expensive. The Wilson brothers seemed destined to do things the hard way. The process began with Dooley and Kit setting out for Northland in their battered old Vauxhall car to find a kauri tree. For three weeks, ignoring the restrictions in the hope they would not be enforced because the war was over, they searched almost all of Northland, in the process casting covetous eyes on the strictly protected giant kauris of the Waipoua State Forest. (These days, no standing kauri tree anywhere in New Zealand can be legally felled).

At first, the Wilsons found that no one who owned or had legal access to kauri seemed willing to sell but eventually they struck lucky with a farmer in the Okaihau area who had three big trees he agreed to part with.

From then on, it was all hard work. First they had to get the trees felled, have the trunks hauled out of the steep wooded valley and get them transported to a sawmill. There, they encountered the problem that the long lengths they wanted for the 54ft hull were not favoured by millers accustomed to working with shorter baulks. Dooley finally persuaded the mill to produce the

lengths required, then stayed on the job to ensure the sawyers cut the logs to avoid faults and aberrations in the wood. After that, it was a matter of transporting 8000 cubic feet of sawn timber—enough to build a couple of average sized houses—to the railhead for transport to Auckland.

While all this was going on, the brothers began building the framework of a shed 60ft long, 15ft wide and 18ft high in the backyard of the big old rambling house they had rented in Northcote on the north shore of Auckland Harbour. The structure was given a tarpaulin cover and under it they built a work bench and installed a bandsaw for cutting curves and irregular shapes and a circular saw for straight cuts.

The timber arrived in Auckland at last, and the Wilsons now had to unload it from the railway trucks and transport it across the harbour to Northcote, where they deposited it on the roadside near the house. Friends, neighbours and passers-by, looking at the mountain of timber, thought they were crazy, but the Wilsons worked on the principle that they could cope easily with the difficult; the impossible would just take a little longer. It took another week to get the timber to the shed, but they did it in time to keep it out of the rain, and stacked it so as to prevent rot and to allow it to season. Now the real work of building could begin.

For building Leda, the Wilsons had engaged the services of professional boatbuilder and designer Jim Young, who agreed to provide part-time supervision and advice on the project. His contribution proved to be crucial in the early stages of the building, when he identified and was able to correct a potential disaster.

The actual work was done under Dooley's direction, with help from Sandy and his team of volunteers, many of them other members of the reporting staff of the Auckland Star. To begin, the Wilsons had to build a huge timber floor, 54ft long and 13ft wide, on to which the exact dimensions of the yacht's lateral sections would be drawn to full size. Next came the setting up of the 'backbone' of the boat, the components of which would be laid over the full-size plan on the floor.

The backbone was made up of the keel, comprising six pieces of solid heart kauri. At the bow end came the stem, shaped from a piece of timber 8in wide and 9in deep, then the fore-keel, 9in wide and 19in deep, so heavy that six strong men could barely carry it into place. The main keel was another massive piece, 18in wide and 9in deep, which eventually would bear the weight of 6 1/2 tons of lead keel bolted to it. The stern or rudder post came next, joined with bolts to the keel by a huge, curved 'knee.' Attached to the top of the stern was the horn timber, a sort of secondary keel on which the long counter stern would be formed. At the end of the horn timber, they would place the neat little tuck, or transom stern.

The whole of this vital foundation process demanded great care and accuracy so that when the timbers of the hull were applied, they would fit the backbone snugly and smoothly, without bulges or hollows. The backbone segments were locked in place with dovetail joints and fastened together with copper bolts, which the Wilsons made themselves. No chances were taken with strength in the building of Leda.

Now came the big day when the whole of the backbone structure was lifted up from the floor and set properly upright in the shed. At last they could admire the outline of Leda, the actual size and shape of her profile clearly visible for the first time.

By this time the frames had been made from the full-sized lines on the floor. They were solidly built from rough pine and placed at three-foot intervals along the keel from bow to stern, representing the exact shape of the hull every three feet throughout her length. The rest of the work required to build the hull was to construct the longitudinal stringers, then ribs and skins outside the frames. Then the frames would be knocked out, leaving the finished hull in place. Easy to say, but not so easy to do. In fact, it took the Wilsons another two years before that stage was reached.

First members to go into place were the stringers—three on each side of the hull running from bow to stern each respectively one-third, half-way and two-thirds of the distance from the keel to the deckline. At four inches wide and nearly three inches thick, tailed into the keel pieces at each end, they gave the boat immense longitudinal strength. The Wilsons were building Leda for ocean racing and cruising, so that where there was any doubt about her ability to survive whatever the ocean could present her with, they made every part a little stronger than might have been the case with the average Auckland keeler.



The author, aged 20, (at right) with Leda's co-owner, Sandy Wilson, working on the building. I was one of a rag-tag volunteer team, most of us reporters from the Auckland Star newspaper.

Things did not always run smoothly. Where the two top stringers ended at the stern, they were to fit the tuck to complete the stern. Dooley spent eight days making the tuck, only to find that when he got it into position, it was an inch and a-half too narrow. It took him another five days to make a

new one. This time it fitted perfectly. With the stringers fixed to the frames, they were now able to get a good view of the boat's lines, and were able to satisfy themselves that her shape was, as boatbuilders say, 'fair'.

Leda's gunwales were of 10in by 4in kauri, and of a quality that enabled them to bend it to the exact shape to fit the frames. This was another big task. To tackle it, they used a 'Spanish windlass' the nautical term for a double length of rope twisted together by means of a strong stick in the middle. When this is turned the rope twists and shortens. In this way, the builders were able to drag the two gunwale pieces, already bolted to the stem, around the frames to the stern.

Next came the fitting of the ribs, made from the tough and wiry native timber mangeao. Each of the 86 ribs was 2in square and about 12ft long. They fitted into notches cut into the stringers and were riveted through the stringers and the gunwales. The ribs for the bow, where curves were gentle, could be put in place without any further treatment, but for more than 40ft on either side they had to be split and laminated for most of their length so they would bend in a fair curve and not an ugly series of straight lines between the stringers.

However, to prevent breakage, these ribs still had to be steamed. For this, the Wilsons built a steam box—a long airtight box about 8in square, with one end open to take the rib timbers and at the other end, a pipe from which steam was fed from a heated oil drum of water. Steam softened the timber sufficiently to bend it easily around the stringers, as long as it stayed hot. Watching the builders struggling to handle the scalding ribs before they cooled down was a favourite spectacle for the local children.

With all the ribs in place, the next stage was to cover them with the inside planking, fitted diagonally from gunwale to keel which meant more steaming, bending and nailing into position. The work was not without its problems. They discovered that some of the steam-bent ribs had kinked where they passed over the stringers, so Jim Young was called to the job to help get the hull back into shape by gluing packings on to the flat spots to avoid lumps and bumps.

But that was nothing to what happened soon after. On one weekend, a storm blew the tarpaulin cover off the shed. This revealed a new view of the hull, and on the Monday morning, Jim Young was horrified to see that the boat's sheer line was badly distorted on one side. This was a serious problem, and a potential disaster.

The source of the trouble was a minor error on Dooley's part. When he had set out the grid on the floor from which the full-size sections were drawn, he had apparently got the vertical and horizontal lines slightly out of square, so that neither the forebody nor the afterbody, including the sheer, blended correctly at mid-length.

The Wilsons took no convincing that the situation had to be remedied, and that this would involve an enormous amount of work. They spent many weeks, first establishing a fair sheerline by eye, then virtually cutting the hull to the correct sheerline, repositioning gunwales and beam shelf, cutting the top ends off the diagonal inner skin of planking and the hardwood bent steam ribs—all over both sides of the 54ft length. Dooley named the duo 'Wilson and Young—Hack'em and Pack'em'.

After a month, with the inner diagonal-planked skin in place, Leda was no longer a skeleton, but a solid hull. The Wilsons realised with delight that at last they had a boat on their hands, but there was more to come, and a long and wearisome job it was. For applying the outside fore-and-aft planking, no steaming was called for, as all the curves were easy and gradual, but each of the 60 strakes, as the longitudinal planks of a hull are called, had to be accurately planed on both edges, slightly hollowed on the inside to fit the curve of the hull, and slightly bevelled on the top edge so that caulking cotton could be hammered in later to ensure the hull was absolutely watertight.

Each strake was nailed at the top and bottom edge at each rib and again, in between each rib. This was not a matter of simply banging in nails. Boatbuilding 'nails' are corrosion-resistant copper rivets, too soft to endure hammering into even soft wood. Thus, a hole had to be drilled for every nail—9000 of them—and the nail punched through from the outside. Then came a job which might have daunted Hercules—riveting the nails from the inside.

This is the most vivid memory of my own contribution to the building of Leda. Crouched inside the hull, inserting copper roves (small washers the shape of coolie hats) over the nail points, cutting off the point with nail cutters, then carefully tapping the end of the nail with the ball of a riveting hammer until it had burred over the rove and pulled the ribs and the hull timbers firmly together. It was utterly exhausting work, but it's questionable whether the man on the inside had it better than the one working on the outside. He had to hold a long, heavy, pointed piece of iron called a dolly against the head of the nail to keep it in place and provide a base against which the nail could be hammered from the inside.

Then, after a personal crisis which seemed at the time to be of some magnitude, but now seems rather trivial, I wanted to get away from Auckland. I resigned from the Star and, with Frank McGorm, a fellow-reporter who also wanted to see more of the country and have a change of experience, left for a year wandering about New Zealand, working in wool stores, then on a tobacco farm, finally fetching up in Central Otago fruit-picking. It was a thoroughly therapeutic experience.

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I know the Wilsons were sorry to see me leave. I believe there was an unspoken assumption that I would eventually become a regular member of Leda's crew, and possibly sail with them over wider horizons. I went with their goodwill intact, but the building of Leda had to go on and much was still to be done.

The boat was now a hull which only had to be caulked, puttied and painted before she could take to her rightful element, but she was still an open shell, needing a deck to complete the integrity of the hull.



Top: Leda's hull with fore-and-aft planking completed over the inside diagonal skin. Lower: The yacht is slid around from her building site to await the low-loader.

This began with cutting 40 or 50 deck beams to be dovetailed and screwed into the gunwales on either side. They were curved to provide strength and to allow seas to run off when they broke onboard. The deck beams had to be shorter where they met the cabin top over the accommodation area, and fitted into carlines—the timbers which defined the outline of the cabin top with the same function as a gunwale. The coamings, or sides of the cabin top, were bolted to the carlines. At the bow end, these were very low, but for 8ft in front of the cockpit they were nearly 18in high, and formed the doghouse. Holes for two large windows were cut on each side of the doghouse and three portholes cut in the coamings on each side. More beams were fitted across the coamings to form the cabin top, and holes cut in the deck to provide the fore- and after- hatches. Then came

a great deal of planing and smoothing to make sweet and fair curves before the deck, double-skinned like the hull, was laid.

Now followed the long, tedious but vital job of making the hull watertight. First, caulking and puttying, and cleaning off—that is, planing and smoothing the sharp edges of the strakes with a curved plane called a compass plane. By the time the last seam of the sides and deck had been caulked, the hull was booming like a drum with each blow of the hammer, but when the job was done, Leda was a boat at last.

After caulking, a special paint mixture was squirted into the cracks with a car tyre pump with a modified nozzle to ensure the caulking cotton was watertight, then followed weeks of puttying after work and every weekend for six weeks for Sandy and the volunteers. Finally, another of the great thresholds in building Leda was reached. After applying coats of linseed oil and red lead, they put the first coat of white paint on the topsides.

They could not help stopping and stepping back to look at it every few minutes, bursting with excitement and pride at the vision of elegance before them. But their troubles were not over yet. Still to come was casting six-and-a-half tons of lead for the keel, moulded to fit the smooth outlines of the hull, to ensure that Leda stayed upright in every kind of weather.

Here, too, there was a series of disasters before the keel was ready to be fitted to the hull.

First, they had to make a mould to the exact shape of the lead keel. Under Jim Young's supervision, they did this by making a wooden mould to the designed shape, built from strips of kahikatea timber, set into the ground and thus supported by the surrounding earth. The inside of the mould was liberally coated with silicate of soda (also an egg preservative), which was the accepted method of sealing the wood from the air so that the hot lead would not burn it. Dooley, however, was not satisfied that this would be sufficient, and he decided to line the mould with asbestos sheeting fixed to the inside. It seemed like a good idea at the time. On either side of the mould, they fixed two big troughs made from the halves of a 44-gallon oil drum with manuka firewood stacked beneath them.

On the day when pouring the lead was planned, an early start meant that by 7am they had about a ton of molten lead in the bottoms of the troughs. Then it began to rain heavily. They had to put the fires out and abandon the job for a week. On the second Saturday, they had about three tons of lead melted when they suddenly discovered they had no firewood left. That was that for another week.

Third time lucky, they thought, but they were wrong. As the fierce fire began to melt the lead, it also melted the softer white metal plugs in the 44-gallon drums. Hot lead ran out on to the ground and into the cracks of the dry clay.

Again, a week later, the lead was loaded and the fire started. If the team thought the previous work had been hard, they were soon disillusioned, but at last, the job was done.

It wasn't. The mould was not full. It turned out that it was too big by one-third. The volume had been calculated on the basis of the weight per volume of iron instead of lead! Desperate measures were called for. In the end, they melted another half-ton which they fortunately had in reserve, and achieved a result of more than the right weight. They decided then to remove it from the mould, reposition it with the now changed centre of gravity and fill the gaps between the two separate sections of lead with wood which would be included in the bolting to the hull. Now they thought, they could put all the traumas behind them. Except, that is, for the fact that Dooley's asbestos lining for the mould had buckled with the heat, leaving large dents in what was supposed to be a smooth shape fairing sweetly into the hull. More hacking and packing!

To bolt the lead on to Leda's keel the boat had to be moved from her building site to a position alongside the lead casting so it could be slid underneath. They knocked down the shed, and with timber jacks, levers and baulks of timber made slippery with mutton fat, slid her around the corner and alongside the lead.

The whole operation took only one day. The question that 90 per cent of visitors had asked, 'How are you going to move her?' had now been answered. The Wilsons had decided not to do too much at this stage to the interior of the boat, apart from putting in bulkheads (walls across the hull which provide extra rigidity, as well as partitioning for the accommodation). Now the most essential requirement was a mast, sails and rigging and myriad fittings.

Leda's mast was to be 70ft long, hollow, oval in section and tapered from a few inches at the top to 10in by 8in at about 10ft above the deck. They were able to get some first-class Scandinavian spruce in 40ft lengths for the mast and were lucky in getting special samples of a new waterproof plastic glue. This held all the joints in the mast, and was much lighter than if screws had been used. Being hollow, the mast was much stronger than solid timber.

It was built up by gluing the four sides together like a box, and increasing the strength by gluing triangular pieces into each of the inside corners. It was oiled and varnished inside and before the last side was glued on, electric wires were run up the middle to connect floodlights for working on deck at night, and also to provide a masthead navigation light.

Leda's main working sails were a mainsail, staysail and jib and they also ordered a storm mainsail, or trysail, for use in heavy weather, and a storm jib for similar conditions. Finally came the most spectacular sail, the parachute spinnaker, a great

billowing monster with an area of 2000 square feet. While the sails and rigging were being made, the Leda team had turned their attention to the interior of the boat, laying the cabin sole, putting in water tanks, bulkheads for the cabins, bunks to accommodate a total of eight people and spaces for radio transmission, chart room, galley, lavatory and lots of storage.

Only two jobs now remained before they were ready to launch Leda. One was to build a dinghy to be the yacht's tender and the other to get the boat ready for a heavy truck to come and pick Leda up for her first journey to the sea. They soon built a pretty little nine-foot dinghy with varnished topsides and white bottom, mast and spars and a blue sail. She was named Kingfisher.

The next job was to provide the answer to the next perennial question: 'How are you going to get her into the water?' They slid the yacht slowly along 100 yards of pathway and as they slid, they lifted her gradually on chocks of wood until she was 3ft 6in above the ground, making room for a low-load trailer to back in under the cradle which kept the boat from falling over. It was a tricky procedure, because the yacht now weighed 12 tons, but they completed it in four days, to the astonishment of friends and neighbours. The stage was set for the launch of Leda.

LEDA MEETS THE SEA

Next day, the Wilsons invited all their friends to a pre-launch party, where, as the night proceeded, jokes about whether Leda would float or not flowed as freely as the beer. But the Wilsons did not sleep well that night. Tomorrow would be one of the greatest days of their lives, when the yacht would be carried through the neighbouring suburbs to Birkenhead, then lowered into the water by a floating crane.

They had arranged for a low-loader to pick Leda up at 9am. A traffic inspector was coming to keep the road clear, and a truck from the Electric Power Board to lift the overhead power lines out of the way, because Leda's bow would be more than 17ft off the ground.

Leda slipped on to the trailer without fuss or bother and turned the sharp corner on to the main road without a hitch. 'She's riding like a lamb,' said the truck driver. In the neighbouring suburbs of Highbury and Birkenhead Leda stopped all business; shopkeepers and customers rushed out onto the footpath to watch her go gliding down the main street. The long procession went slowly down the Birkenhead hill towards the sea and finally came to rest on the wharf by the water's edge. Across the harbour, they could see smoke belching from the funnel of the Auckland Harbor Board floating crane, Hapai, as she came churning over for the big lift and pulled in alongside the Birkenhead wharf.

Two strong steel slings, capable of lifting three times Leda's weight, were passed under her keel and round the crane's lifting hook. Dooley Wilson sat in Leda's cockpit, while Sandy stood with the hundreds of onlookers on the wharf. This was one of the great moments they had looked forward to for so many years.

'Are you ready?' shouted the crane driver high up on his bridge. There came a grinding of the lifting gears, the slings tightened, grew rigid, and paused. The skipper was making sure they were secure and the balance was right. The gears meshed again, the slings quivered, and then, inch by inch, Leda rose from her cradle. The crowd on the wharf was hushed.

Up, up she went. Twenty feet above the wharf, then slowly down to the water. There was not a murmur from the crowd. Her lead keel touched the water. Down she went. The crowd held its breath. Down, down, down.

Suddenly, the slings went slack. There was no more weight on them. Leda was afloat! Cheers and clapping burst from the crowd.



Leda touches the sea for the first time. On board, builder Dooley Wilson is delighted to know she floats perfectly to her marks.

'Is she floating to her marks?' asked Dooley. She certainly was; just an inch or two of green copper paint showing at the stern and about four inches at the bow. It could hardly have been better.

After the excitement of the launching, for the next few days the Wilsons saw little of Leda, safely tied up in the lee of the wharf and showing no signs of leaking. Besides, they were too busy preparing the mast for stepping. Once more, the volunteers and anyone else who could be persuaded to join them were called into action the following weekend to carry the mast down to the boat, in a procession that was almost as impressive as the launch.

Two men could lift the mast without its rigging, but once 800ft of shrouds and stays, cross-trees, lumber struts and associated fittings were added, it needed six to carry it, and then with considerable difficulty. The answer was to put one end on a car trailer and to carry the other end. Once more, the traffic

inspector was called in to clear the way.

The mast was laid temporarily on Leda's deck, and the next day she was towed across the harbour to the Westhaven marina, where there was a gallows frame to hoist the mast into place.

The Wilsons spent the next ten days preparing Leda for her first sail. Impatiently, they worked through a seemingly endless succession of small tasks. No matter how much they had achieved, the brothers were always impatient to carry on. Once one job was done or one obstacle overcome, they immediately began to plan the next stage.

Eventually, Leda was ready for sailing. The last pattern was made and the last bronze fitting cast and bolted to the deck. The sails arrived and were tried for size. At noon one Sunday, they were ready to set off under their own sail power.

After about half an hour, an overcast and showery day had suddenly changed to sunshine with a light westerly wind. It was time to hoist the mainsail, with its brand new class number—A26. With the sail set, they let go the stern rope and the boat nosed away from behind the wharf and on to the open harbour. Leda was alive, sailing for the first time. She began to heel slightly as the sail filled. Water seethed at her forefoot, the little Kingfisher in tow began to plane like a speedboat. An impudent 14-footer set its spinnaker in pursuit, but Leda soon left it far behind.

They sailed down the Waitemata Harbour towards Rangitoto, the volcanic-coned island that stands guard at the entrance to the harbour. Then they spent three glorious hours reaching up and down the wide Rangitoto Channel in bright sunshine. Dooley later described the maiden voyage:

'It was, without doubt, the most gratifying, the most utterly joyful afternoon of my life, after two and a-half years of patient toil on an inanimate, unrewarding and as yet unproven 13 tons of wood and copper, lead and steel, paint and putty, to go for our first sail!'

The next Friday, Leda set sail for the Wilsons' home port of Tauranga, on the same course as the big keelers had taken in the Christmas races the young brothers had watched many years before. With Kingfisher lashed securely on the cabin top or 'coach roof', Leda set off in bright sunshine down the harbour and across the Hauraki Gulf, around the Coromandel Peninsula and then headed south for Tauranga.

A CLOSE CALL

Three weeks after her triumphal maiden voyage to Tauranga, Leda was very nearly lost on her return voyage to Auckland. Leaving Tauranga Harbour about 4pm on a Thursday in mid-December, 1949, she met light north-easterly head winds, so they had to lay a course between Mayor Island and Motiti Island, in the direction of the second big Bay of Plenty township,

Whakatane, before tacking back to the east of Mayor Island.

At this stage, Leda's interior was, to say the least, sparsely furnished. There was no engine, a floor, but no galley, bunks or toilet. Provisions for the expected two-day sail were all in a plywood tea chest in the middle of the cabin, lashed in place to the stringers on either side. The boat was sailing very light.

That night, with a rising sea and a dead ahead northerly, Leda was not enjoying herself. Neither was the crew, having to rig an outhaul for the main before reefing. The main halyard jammed, there were no lifelines rigged, and they still had no winches for the headsail sheets. They switched to a trysail as the wind reached gale force, then decided to shelter in Tairua Harbour, about half-way to Cape Colville, the point at which they would swing south-west for Auckland. This was hopeless. Tairua has a sandbar at its entrance, and as they approached they could see breakers. With no engine and high land on the northern side, they could lose the wind and with a strong ebb tide could be at the mercy of the breakers. It soon became clear that to try to enter would be suicide. They reconciled themselves to another night at sea.

The wind began to ease on the beat out from Tairua, but the seas were still high. Suddenly it became doubtful whether they would clear Shoe Island, off the Tairua entrance. The breeze dropped again, with the slop of the waves moving them nearer and nearer to the rocky shore. Then, at the last minute the wind changed. Dooley rushed to push the boom out to catch the wind that came now from astern. Slowly, only sixty feet from the rocks, Leda slopped and pitched her way against the confused sea away from what looked like certain disaster. Sandy, letting out a deep breath of relief, said, 'Christ, that was worse than dodging Jerry's bullets'.

When they rounded Cape Colville it was a beat all the way to Auckland. They arrived, very relieved.

Cruising was all very well and great fun, but the Wilsons were keen to test Leda's racing form against the traditional stiff competition among the big A class keel boats of Auckland. She could hardly have had a more auspicious start to her racing career—the Auckland Centennial Regatta, marking 100 years since the first regatta was held only 10 years after the Colony of New Zealand was founded.

For the crew of Leda, the tension was high. How would she perform against the fastest yachts on the harbour, including the virtually unbeatable Ranger, which dominated the class from the time of her launching in 1938 and was still highly competitive in the beginning of the 21st Century. Ranger's design, like Leda's, had been heavily influenced by the work of Knud Reimers, particularly his 30 square metre racing yachts. Her builder, Lou Tercel, developed from this influence a yacht which was by far the fastest boat of its kind to sail in New Zealand waters and

was beaten only by the revolutionary advances in materials and technology which produced the phenomenally fast boats of the 1960s and onwards.

But Leda was no 30 square metre boat. She was designed as a fast cruiser, fit for open ocean racing, and not for races around harbour buoys. Her first competitive tilt showed this clearly but allowances have also to be made for the crew's relative lack of racing experience with the boat. She was yet to show her real performance.

Twenty-one A class yachts started in the Centennial Regatta at 11.20 am in a light north-westerly breeze which freshened later and changed to the south-west as the boats moved out into the Hauraki Gulf, giving them a good windward beat back to the finish. No one was surprised when Ranger, starting from scratch, not only finished first, but also, despite having conceded a 13-minute handicap to the second boat, the veteran gaff-rigger Ariki, won the race on handicap. Leda finished 15th, 1hour 2min 10sec behind the winner. The Wilsons were disappointed, but they knew very well that Leda needed the stimulus of a hard wind and sea to bring out her best. She was soon to get it.

While Leda was poised to enter a dramatic new phase of her life, there were some big changes in the lives of the Wilson family. The biggest was Sandy's marriage to the beautiful and intelligent 19-year-old Erica Randle. They had met while both were working on the Auckland Star. They were married on 1

August 1950. Sandy was nine years older, and from all accounts it was an immediate and lasting love match.

Erica was a member of the crew when Leda established beyond doubt her reputation for speed and seaworthiness after the Royal Akarana Yacht Club announced a new ocean race of 460 miles from Auckland, around Cape Colville, and south around the active volcano, White Island, off the coast of the Bay of Plenty, and back to Auckland. White Island is one of the best-known geographical features of the east coast of the North Island. Its landmark plume of steam and ash, constantly varying with its volcanic activity, can easily be seen from Tauranga, 84km away to the north-east. As a yacht racing mark, it could hardly be missed.

On 22 December 1950, six crack A Class keelers left Auckland in the first White Island race—Leda, Tara, Blue Water, La Paloma, Hope and Ghost—a fleet which included some of Leda's closest rivals. In the event, Leda completely outclassed the rest of the fleet, finishing at 15.55 on the Tuesday. The second boat, Tara, did not finish until more than a day later, at 16.42 on the Wednesday, with Blue Water in third place, Hope fifth, followed by Ghost. La Paloma retired. Leda not only finished first, but also took the race on handicap. She had shown beyond doubt what she could do.

But there were bigger fish to fry.

In the next instalment, Leda makes her first blue-water venture as an entrant in the 1951 Trans Tasman race from Auckland to Sydney, and proves beyond doubt her ability to sail fast. She also becomes involved in an incident that has become a landmark in New Zealand aviation history

NEW MEMBERS

SELKIRK	Sarah	Crew	Mercedes111
DORROUGH	Cameron	Boat Owner	Bungoona
FOX	Peter	Crew	Between owning boats
KELLY	Graeme	Boat Owner	Kallara
WARNER	Fred	Crew	Kallara
HUTCHISON	James	Boat Owner	Dingo
CURTIS	Marella	Boat Owner	Amanda
TUCK	Joe	Boat Owner	Loama
MARTIN	Gary	Boat Owner	Acrospire IV
WALSH	Reginald	Crew	Renene
HART	Richard	Boat Owner	Matilda
SALTER	Charlie	Boat Owner	Ellida
ENGLISH	Steven	Boat Owner	Granuaile
LOVETT	Helen	Boat Owner	Oenone
LIPSCOMBE	Timothy	Boat Owner	Haze
HARRIS	John	Crew	Haze
O'LEARY	Brendan	Boat Owner	Seabird
JOHNSTONE	Bil	Boat Owner	Lily Guy
DOOLAN	Andy	Boat Owner	Tina of Melbourne
ROCKE	Maris	Crew	Savona



Image: Roger Dundas

Oenone in Figtree Bay, Sydney

OENONE

HELEN LOVETT

My association with *Oenone* began back in the early nineties through a friendship I had with her owner. I owned a Beneteau which was in charter with Eastsail in Rushcutters Bay, Sydney. I used to visit for a few days at a time and that is how I met Kenneth Banbrook or Seagull as we used to call him. Seagull lived, in a manner that his name implies, on his yacht, *Oenone*, which was moored in Rushcutters Bay.

Every day, Seagull would row ashore and have a natter with the locals, give us a weather report then take himself to the TAB up at the Cross, and perhaps have a meal with one of his girlfriends. He was always talking of visiting a girlfriend in America but in the end he never got there. He had many stories to tell but I don't remember him ever referring to *Oenone* by name.

Although it was easy to see what beautiful lines *Oenone* had, it was difficult to imagine her ever being able to sail or in fact leave the mooring as she was rather loaded up with a chaps belongings collected over a lifetime. But according to Ken, he had sailed the east coast of Australia, at one time losing his mast

which he had replaced with an aluminium spar that he got from someone cheaply.

Seagull's mooring was situated in front of Australia's richest real estate and as such was in high demand. He told me that everyone was after it but that you were not able to transfer NSW Maritime moorings. However, he knew of a way and he had verified it with the authorities.

Eventually, Seagull moved into an apartment but he still visited the marina and his friends every day. He wanted to sell his yacht but she was really worthless. So, cleverly, he hatched the scheme that would bring him some money and dispose of his yacht at the same time. I fell for it and duly purchased *Oenone*, which was part of the scheme. All was going very well to plan, we had just one last document that required to be signed, after which the yacht and the mooring would be in my hands. Unfortunately, poor Seagull died quietly in his apartment with the money in the bank and the transaction was never completed. Seagull's friends held a funeral for him and his ashes were disposed of at sea.

Not very long after his death NSW Maritime contacted me, the owner of the yacht on the mooring leased by Kenneth Banbrook, and told me I had six weeks to remove my boat. What on earth

was I going to do with her? She was beautiful but clearly needed a small fortune to restore her and even then how could you know what she would be like to sail? We thought of scuttling her out the heads but that would have been criminal. Eventually I advertised her on ebay, but I was looking for a buyer with the money to do her up, not just sell off her parts, or what was left of them. It was the most frantic week of my life, There really were so many people interested.

At exactly this time, Brendon Hunt believed that the boat, *Ventura*, for which he had been searching for 20 years, and had belonged to his great-grandfather, had been burnt. His search was over but here was an opportunity, and that is how the sale to Brendon took place in 2006.

Brendon had the right credentials and subsequently put much time and money into the restoration of *Oenone* with the help of David Payne and Rob Tearne. He loved to sail her too, which he could do on his own with his dog as crew.

In 2009, Brendon was contacted regarding an old boat which turned out to be *Ventura* after all. Having had the practice doing up *Oenone*, he was now ready to start on his next venture, *Ventura*. *Oenone* was listed for sale.

I happened to be talking to Brendon regarding another matter, and he told me about *Oenone* being on the market. This started me thinking over the next few months and then it dawned on me that this was exactly what I was looking for. She is not too big, she is not plastic, she is not fast and requiring a hot crew, she is manageable for a woman, she has sentimental value and she is gorgeous to look at. Since buying her, I realise that I have opened

the door to a new world and I am on an amazing journey that has just started.

So *Oenone's* builder is largely still unknown. There was an *Oenone* built in Geelong in 1901 by Clem Blunt. However this Linton Hope designed yacht was longer by 7 feet. According to David Payne, he has a reference to a 34-foot *Oenone* built in 1958 in Victoria but the hull of this *Oenone* looks much older than that.

The story I got from Kenneth Banbrook was that a chap (a solicitor in Sydney) built her in his back yard with the help of shipwrights over 15 years, but died before she was finished. The estate sent it to Williamstown. I bought it new and built it up from there. Had a gaff rig, then got rid of that and made her a sloop – practically rebuilt the superstructure – half built it – changed the cabin, put in a new roof, made it higher. New mast, took the bowsprit off, built the inside up, made bunks, made a galley.

The story is that Seagull won *Oenone* in a card game and I believe it was in Melbourne. Whether this story is true or not we don't know. Those who know her and have worked on her say that the hull definitely dates from around 1900. In literature that has been discovered so far, there are references to an *Oenone* built by Clem Blunt of Geelong in 1901 and a reference to 'the ill-fated *Oenone* which won the Hobart Regatta seven times before being wrecked at Taroona on 3 February 1920. She was the most successful A class yacht on the Derwent at that time'. There is also the reference to the Victorian *Oenone* built in 1958 but was this a restoration, which is doubtful, or was it another one? This *Oenone*, which has the name on the brass rudder stock, arrived in Melbourne, 12 October 2010 and so this is where the journey begins for me.

THE PETER PRINCIPLE

PETER LLOYD

aka Peter Costoloe and Peter Lloyd

Of APPRAISAL and REWARD for DISPARATE YACHTS racing in the one fleet - Particularly a diverse range of 'CLASSIC YACHTS'.

The Victorian Division of the CLASSIC YACHT ASSOCIATION of AUSTRALIA has for some ten years had a strong fleet of Classic Yachts racing every few weeks at the top end of Port Phillip. The racing consists of a Summer and a Winter series, each with 8 races, and a three day regatta held over the Melbourne cup weekend.

The races are typically around 6 to 8 nautical miles, and the fleet ranges from 25/30 ft Cauta boats and Tumlarens up to a 55ft Topsail schooner, and everything in between. Fleet size varies between 10 to 20 boats. In all quite a deal of ClassicYacht racing.

The handicapping has been "PERFORMANCE BASED" with scoring based on the "LOW POINTS" system .

With astute handicapping this has served us well, trophies have been spread around and will no doubt continue to in the future. This extensive experience over the years has led to questioning whether there may be another way of judging the relative performance of the fleet.

We all know the frailities and perversions in the "performance handicapping system", [and it is not just confined to Classic racing],but it is really the only known way of handicapping a mixed fleet of boats. It has been ,and will remain a continual source of contention and discussion where-ever sailors congregate.

are hulls clean ?-say not cleaned for a while and then scrubbed before every race! Is the crew the same? Mishaps? New sails? Weather? Course?

To name a few, but a whole host of variables impinge on the results, and with such a diverse fleet it really is particularly difficult to administer. Experience tells us that virtually the only way to win a series is to have some poor performances[however engendered], over a long enough period to get the handicap down –and then sail the next series at a much higher level. It takes the handicapper a few races to catch-up. In the meantime some races have been won and the series is in the bag!

And then we get so eager to win that chances are taken and "incidents" occur -eg, aggressiveness on the start line, port tack boats thinking they might just make it against a starboard tack boat, long keel boats not as manoeuvrable as centerboard skiff-like work boats- never mind the large discrepancy in size, but this can get overlooked in the race for the line.

We all talk about being careful and looking after our boats , and that the real joy of our racing is just to be out there on the water,

sailing them to the best of our ability and the boats capabilities, and without pushing too hard or taking unnecessary risks. Whilst the competitiveness is good and healthy, and we should keep going with our current system, there is perhaps merit in finding another way of reward. So, an adjunct or overlay system has been devised to reward boats that –

- PARTICIPATE in each race, and
- CONSISTENTLY sail to their handicap.[which mathematically means finishing somewhere around the middle of the fleet on corrected time.]

Scoring is similar to the 'Low Points' system ,in essence a negative scoring system with penalties for both:

- non-appearance, not finishing,disqualification etc.,-20 points
- the further,[up or down], the achieved BCH [back calculated handicap] is away from the ACH[allocated handicap] for each race -one point for each %age point discrepancy.

Handicaps will still be adjusted on a performance basis as at present ,and in fact need to be as they are also the foundation of this new system. Gradual and consistent changes in handicaps will not significantly impinge on results.

So, the winner will be the boat that achieves the lowest points, by competing and sailing to its handicap. A boat competing in, and sailing to its handicap in every race would have a perfect score of zero. We will still be out there competing with each other for line or corrected time honours, but also against ourselves.

By offering a less aggressive alternative, just maybe it might encourage more participation from other classic boat owners. Anything we can do to encourage this would be of great benefit to our Association. Of course this will not prevent incidents happening ,but I do believe by changing the competitive emphasis we can lessen the likely hood of incidents, and maybe even gain greater enjoyment and satisfaction!

Importantly –this is an overlay to our present system, not an alternative. It will be presented on an annual basis, combining our Summer/ Winter series, but excluding the Cup Regatta, for which, for which it may well be appropriate to run this system separately.

Interestingly, in analysing the results over the last year, those boats that score well in the PETER PRINCIPLE, are also amongst the front runners for the conventional trophies.

This system has been discussed at length with the CYAA committee, and the consensus is that it is worth while to instigate it, and monitor the results going forward.

AS Victorian President I have decided to make the initial award based on the Winter 2008 and the Summer 2008/9 results. It will be known as the "PRESIDENTS TROPHY" The inaugural results for 2008/9 are 1st Mercedes 111, 2nd PASTIME 11, 3rd FAIR WINDS.



Tuesday October 12, 2010. *Oenone* being unloaded at Savages Wharf

THE NEW ZEALAND CLASSIC YACHT JOURNAL

NEW ZEALAND CLASSIC SCENE 2010

HAROLD KIDD

Progress is the keyword for the Classic scene in New Zealand, progress in membership numbers of the Classic Yacht Association, progress in the spread of the Word throughout the country, progress in restorations and progress in the diversification of the activities of the CYA. All of this is occurring despite a slack economy.

Classic yachts and launches are increasingly popular attractions at Boat Shows which has a potent effect on our visibility and the mainstreaming of our activities. A superb book has just been published on the Classic scene which will further enhance our status in the sporting community. Written by Ivor Wilkins and published by the Godwit imprint of Random House it is called, simply, *Classic*. It is a splendid overview of Kiwi Classics, beautifully illustrated and written. A must read.

Restorations are continuing unabated. The very latest is a 14 month complete rebuild of the 1904 Arch Logan-designed 34 footer *Wairiki* by Marco Scuderi and owner Jason Prew. She had her first sail on 23rd October and looks magnificent.



Photo: John Bertenshaw

Wairiki on her first sail 23 October 2010

The Wellington group of CYA owners has gained critical mass and is flourishing. "New" imports to the Capital City include two 2½ raters, the 1892 *Rogue* by Chas. Bailey Jr. (which, in fact, has spent a great deal of her life in Wellington in the past, as *Muritai*) and the C. & W. Bailey 1895 *Thelma*, which spent her early life in Dunedin. My old 1909 28 footer *Loloma* is now there too, owned by Phillipa Durkin, a most enthusiastic lady skipper.



Photo: Katharina Monien

Lizzie stripped to her essentials Aotea Quay, Wellington, where she first hit the water in February 1909

But the excitement in Wellington right now is the rescue and restoration of the Wellington-built 22 footer *Lizzie* of 1909. *Lizzie*, neglected, sank at her moorings in Shoal Bay Auckland in July. News of her plight reached Gavin Pascoe in Wellington. Within hours the Wellingtonians had drummed up enough funds to pay for her salvage and cartage 600 km to her home port where restoration started immediately in an upsurge of energy that is most impressive.

Finally, the launches. As I have reported in previous issues, the CYA's launch section is blossoming. Again their energy is remarkable and launch activities are beginning to crowd the calendar, varying from gunkholing up tidal creeks to ritzy social events.

As you can see, your Kiwi counterparts are in great heart.



Chas Bailey Sr's last design, 23 ton yacht, Viking

CROSS TASMAN EXPORTS, PART IV

HAROLD KIDD

At the time Robert Logan Sr. built *Akarana* and shipped her over to Melbourne for the 1888 International Regatta New Zealand was in a deep economic depression caused by years of over-spending on assisted immigration from the British Isles and on the infrastructures that became necessary as a result, a civil service, railways, roads and ports.

Little by little the country pulled itself out of the slump but many boatbuilders left, notably Dunedin's H.T. Green who returned to Sydney, but others went to various parts of the Pacific. The best yacht builders survived and in Auckland, where most of the yachts were built, if only because that's where the kauri grew, that meant the ascendancy of Chas Bailey Sr. and Robert Logan, both of whom founded dynasties of superb craftsmen.

As the country recovered from depression under the stimulus of its new frozen meat and butter trade to England, its sportsmen ordered more and more yachts and followed the overseas fashion for raters. Why raters, when they were often ill-suited to our mix of round-the-buoys harbour racing and the customary long coastwise Christmas cruises? Not only were raters in fashion but also there always lurked the possibility of international competition in the minds of their owners and of overseas sales in the minds of their builders.

By the early 1890s it was boom times again. From 1892 Auckland builders began producing a batch of new 2½ and 5 raters every season. The Logan and Bailey boats were the pick of them of course, the Logans produced by Robert Sr. and then, increasingly by three of his sons, John, Arch and Robert Jr., trading as Logan Bros, while the Baileys were from two of Chas Bailey Sr.'s sons, Chas Jr. and Walter, trading as C.& W. Bailey.

Then, in March 1893, Tom Henderson, an Auckland shipping bigwig, bought a major Australian yacht in Sydney and had her sailed across the Tasman in a smart passage of 16 days. This was the 65ft cutter/yawl *Volunteer*, designed by Walter Reeks and built at Drummoyne by T.R. Dudley in 1888 for W.P. Smairl to compete in the Melbourne International Regatta. She was sailed down and took second in the main event to the Reeks-designed *Era*, also from Sydney. The other four First Class yachts in the racing were *Wanderer* (SA), *Janet*, *Iduna* and the old Auckland-built warhorse *Taniwha* (Vic.).

Reeks had gone to America only a few months before to investigate challenging for the America's Cup with *Volunteer*, but she was really too small for a challenge to be seriously entertained by the New York Yacht Club. Early in 1889 there was another proposal to send her to California to race John D. Spreckels' yacht *Lurline*, but nothing came of that either. Hard times hit Australia in the early 90s just as New Zealand's economy took off. First Class yachts were an unnecessary luxury, so *Volunteer* was bought very reasonably.



65 foot Cutter Yawl Volunteer

With *Volunteer*, by far the biggest and most modern yacht now in New Zealand, Henderson was set to capture the New Zealand First Class Championship due to be raced on Auckland's Waitemata Harbour on 29th January 1894. Two Auckland brothers, J.L.R. and H.R. Bloomfield, rose to the challenge. They had long been Henderson's arch-rivals on the water

with their respective yachts *Arawa* and *Rita*. The Bloomfields at first negotiated for the 18 ton Sydney cutter/yawl *Thelma* but probably realized it was no match for the 33 ton *Volunteer*. In August 1893 they commissioned a latest-style 23 ton yacht, *Viking*, from Chas Bailey Sr., destined to be his last yacht before he handed over to his sons. Chas Bailey Jr. later claimed to have designed *Viking*, but there is no contemporary confirmation of that, and he had a habit in later years of claiming the Bailey brand for himself, despite the input of several of his brothers, principally Walter, a self-effacing genius.

These two new titans of sail caused great excitement amongst the Auckland sporting fraternity. *Viking* hit the tide on 23rd December 1893, barely a month before the big race. *Volunteer* was thoroughly worked up already. The bookmakers were busy; despite a poor showing in early outings, *Viking* was the favourite for a handicap win as *Volunteer* was giving her time, and was picked by many to take line honours too. On the day, *Viking* proved far better on the wind than *Volunteer*, but wasn't terribly well sailed. The Aussie yacht came in first across the line by 2 minutes after a 46 mile race. However, *Viking* won easily on handicap and took the Championship, to enormous local acclaim.

Viking only got better as the owners learned to handle her, and is still with us today. *Volunteer* was sold to Fiji for trading in 1905 and was a total loss in a hurricane in 1915.



Organised by:

Auckland Anniversary Regatta and Classic Yacht Association Committees.

Join us for two fabulous weeks of classic sailing and racing on the spectacular waters of the Hauraki Gulf and Waitemata Harbour, and the enjoyment of the warm hospitality and camaraderie of Kiwi Classic Yachties.

SCHEDULE of EVENTS:

- Friday Jan 28: Devonport Yacht Club Night Race to Mahurangi. (24 miles)
- Saturday Jan 29: Mahurangi Cruising Club Classic Yacht Regatta & Classic Launch Rally - optional event and points not included in the Challenge Series
- Sunday Jan 30: CYANZ Mahurangi to Auckland Race. (24 miles) Start 10am
Raft up in Viaduct
- Monday Jan 31: Oceanbridge Auckland Anniversary Regatta
The Southern Trust Classic Yacht Regatta:
- Thursday Feb 10: Skippers briefing, followed by dinner at the Royal NZ Yacht Squadron
- Friday Feb 11: Race 1
- Saturday Feb 12: Race 2 followed by Race 3
- Sunday Feb 13: Race 4 & Official Prizegiving

HIGHLIGHTS:

Mahurangi Regatta

Saturday 29 January: An absolute highlight of the season hosted by the Mahurangi Cruising Club. The origins of this event go back to 1858 when a regatta was held between the Navy and local work boats finishing with a picnic ashore, and was revived in 1977. With over 100 classics competing and a 1000 spectator boats the atmosphere in the spectacular Mahurangi Harbour is incredible!

The Regatta is followed by a very popular prize-giving at Scotts Landing with a 'big band' playing classics from the swing era and more.

While not part of the Classics Series this event is highly recommended for a relaxed fun day of racing, great camaraderie & tall tales in a beautifully historic setting. It's a "Must do".

Auckland Anniversary Day Regatta

Monday 31 January: New Zealand's oldest sporting event, first raced in 1840 and celebrating Auckland's 171st Birthday in 2011. A fabulous day on the water featuring races for all classes of vessel from optimists to A Class Keelers & Tall Ships, with the classics being the highlight of the day's racing. Also features a tugboat race!!

Classic Yacht Regatta

11-13 February: A fabulous three days of racing and rafting up, celebrating our yachting heritage with great camaraderie and prizegivings after the days racing in Race HQ right at the Viaduct.

Crew Opportunities

There are opportunities for those of you who would like to crew on one of our vessels and compete for the Trans Tasman Trophy.

Accommodation:

For a selection of accommodation all within walking distance of the harbour:
www.viaduct.co.nz www.gatehouse.co.nz
www.accommodation-auckland.com/beaumont-quarter.htm

Berthage:

We will be endeavouring to organise berthage for your vessel at the Viaduct or close by at Westhaven Marina. Once we have your registration of interest we can pursue options on your behalf.

Things to do in Auckland

There's a multitude of things to do while visiting Auckland - beaches, parks, art galleries, museums, markets, winery tours
www.aucklandnz.com for a detailed guide of what's happening, where and when

For more information contact Joyce Talbot:

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Photo: Bec Hudson



Post start 2010 Classic Cup Regatta, Port Phillip

THE CUP REGATTA PORT PHILLIP OCTOBER 2010

ROGER DUNDAS

The October that scored the most rain in Melbourne for 35 years and we had to have a Classic Regatta !

Undaunted as wooden boat sailors must be, we paddled on.

The Guineas Cup, a match race between two of the best yachts of the 1960s, Boambillee and Mercedes III and two of the fastest Couta boats in the Sorrento fleet, C 97 and Lincoln Rose, was postponed due to excess wind. Foiled on Friday.

Saturday dawned with a BOM forecast for 50mm of rain to fall. We eyed the sky, the radar, the iPhones and even the arthritis of older sailors, which suggested we could go. The northerly wind was low in knots but the crews high on enthusiasm as the 18 Classics and 8 working boats headed south on Port Phillip. We soon mixed with RYCV Palliser Trophy fleet, a range of racing/cruising plastics that had started an hour before us and as the majority of the Classics moved through the plastic fleet, we were smiling broadly but there were some signs of consternation on

the faces of the modern-boat sailors.

Wind kicked in and the racing became keen, Acrospire III and Sayonara, gaff topsails taut, were once again a pleasure to watch and the gaff working boats found an edge that put them towards the front of the Classic fleet. The current from the Yarra with all the rain complicated the finish.

The BOM forecast for 30kt-plus winds meant abandonment of the two laid course races and our International guests from over the ditch made the most of the Melbourne sights.

Monday is an unofficial holiday as the Melbourne Cup dominates the sporting calendar and we decided on the laid course races. Two short races round the buoys and home for a seafood BBQ.

Peter McDonald's Pastime II, a very fast Skerrie cruiser design took the Classic Cup Regatta trophy home and the Williamstown Net boat Jean owned by John Raff managed to win all three races in the Couta division and took both the Couta and overall trophies to his mantle.

Our Kiwi cousins made a fine contribution to the crews and provided a substantial camaraderie to further strengthen our Classic bond.

Photo: Bec Hudson



John Raff's Net Boat, Jean, overall winner of the 2010 Cup Regatta

Photo: Bec Hudson



Col Anderson's Gaff Cutter, Acrospire III

Photo: Bec Hudson



Peter McDonald's Skerrie Cruiser, Pastime II

Photo: Bec Hudson



1897 Fife Sayonara

Photo: Bec Hudson



Couta formation

Photo: Bec Hudson



Reaching for the mark



Photo: Roger Dundas

Melbourne Wooden Boat Festival, Docklands February 2010

MARITIME HERITAGE RETURNS TO MELBOURNE DOCKLANDS

MARK BERGIN

From Feb 19th -21st 2010 Melbourne Docklands was treated to the largest display of Classic and Wooden Boats since the redevelopment of the precinct.

With over 120 boats on display and 3 tall ships , the first Melbourne Wooden Boat Festival managed to achieve what the organisers had initially planned. We managed to bring together the Melbourne Wooden Boat community into one site and gave over 5000 event visitors an opportunity to get up close and personal with a great collection of boats.

Hosted at d'Albora Marina, we had access to two thirds of the marina exclusively for the event and a large 250 metre long hard stand for the shore display. The weekend was warm, actually above 33 degrees on both days. This probably limited the crowd numbers. Those that did attend got a chance to see the Tall Ship Enterprize under sail in the Harbour as well as a wide range of boats out free sailing in the harbour.

To me, one of the highlights was seeing a wide range of associations establishing connections and understanding more about how to help and support each other as we collectively work to promote wooden boats and maritime heritage.

Bringing an event like this together needs cooperation by many parties; be that industry, local government, sponsors, associations and most importantly, boat owners. Thanks go to the volunteers who gave up their time to bring the event together and to our partners who supported the event through marketing and being on site - Alma Doepel, Blunts Boatyard, City of Melbourne, Classic Australian Wooden Power Boat Assoc, Classic Yacht Association of Australia, Couta Boat Association, Docklands Yacht Club, Enterprize, H28 Association, Maritime Heritage Association of Victoria, Mordialloc Boating and Angling Club, Mordialloc Motor Yacht Club, One & All, Polly Woodside, Sail and Adventure Ltd, Sandringham Yacht Club, Sorrento Sailing Couta Boat Club, Steam Tug Wattle, Tall Ships Victoria, Tumblaren Association, Victoria University, The School of Construction Industries, Wooden Boat Association, Yachting Victoria, Lend Lease, Hempel Paints, d'Albora Marina.

The next Melbourne Wooden Boat Festival is planned for 2012, with 5 sites currently under consideration. To be honest, holding an event at Docklands is complex and expensive; without government or corporate sponsorship the next event won't be able to be held at Docklands. At this point we're working through the options, but the most important thing to remember is that the bi-annual event is now a fixture on the Wooden Boat calendar.

If you have a boat or interest to get involved in the next event please get in touch. The planning committee needs your input. mark@woodenboat.com.au or phone: 0418 565 848.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

For more information on the formation of "THE HISTORIC YACHT TRUST" see www.classic-yacht.asn.au/category/news or contact Peter Lloyd at pwalloyd@netcon.net.au

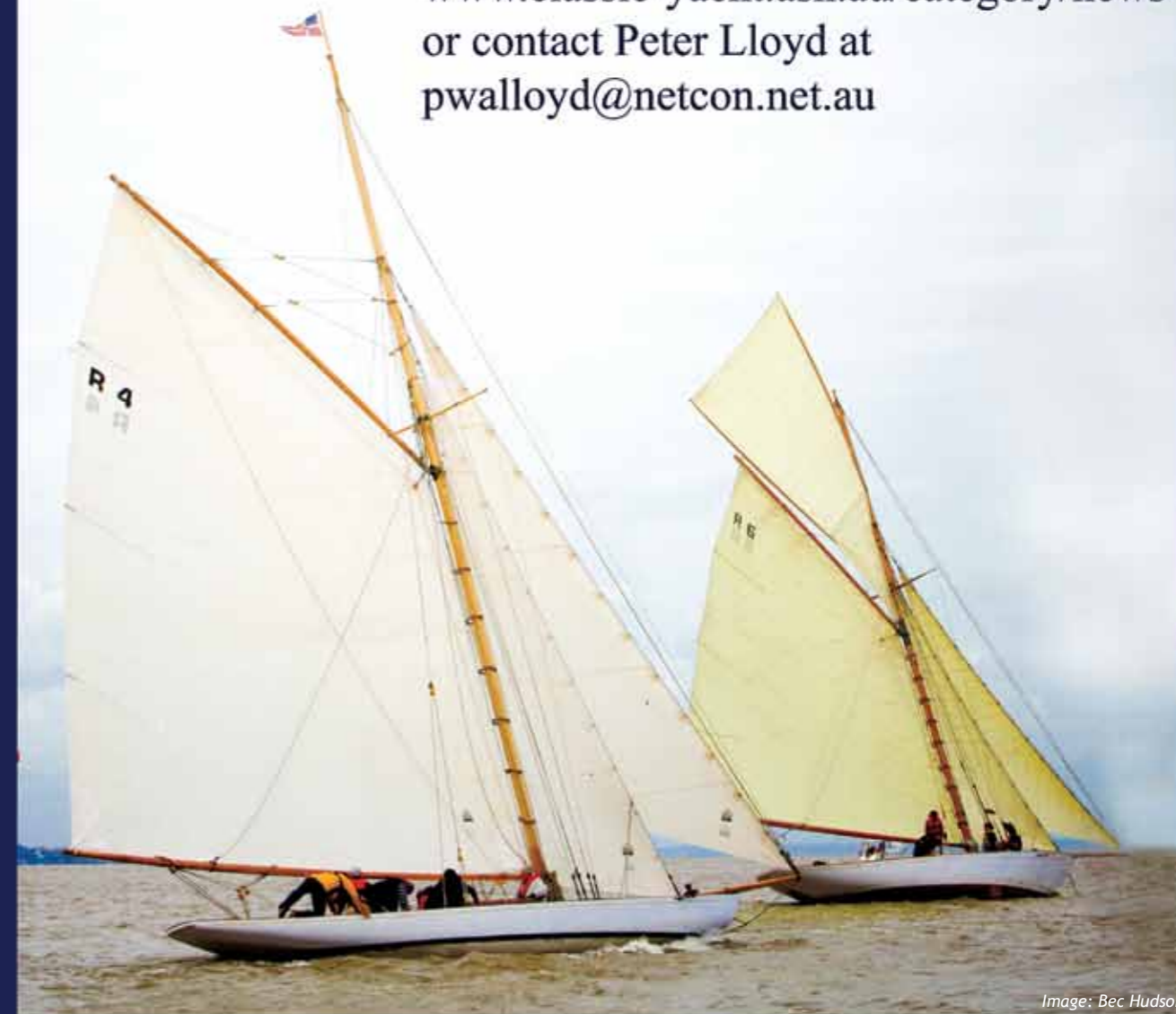


Image: Bec Hudson



FOR SALE
"FRANCES" R 8
\$200,000

Designed to 8 Metre Rule
 (Rated 8.14)
 Designer and builder,
 Ernest O Digby
 Built at Victoria Street,
 Williamstown. Victoria
 Launched 1946

Overall Frances won Four Victorian championships. And won the Sayonara Cup for interstate competition on three occasions, 1951 and 1952 in Melbourne, lost to Erica J from Tasmania in 1953.

In 1954 Frances sailed to Hobart and won the cup back for Victoria. Saskia sailed down from Sydney and won the cup for NSW on Port Phillip in 1955. Frances sailed to Sydney in 1956, but failed to bring the cup back to Victoria.

Upon the death of Mr Ernest Digby in 1960, Frances was sold to a syndicate from RBYC and name changed to "Bridgett".

In 1971 Frances was sold to a Hobart owner, and the name restored. During this time the stern was shortened, and successfully used for ocean racing.

In 1981 she was purchased by Alex Morrison and sailed back to RYCV. In 2002 she was purchased by Capt. Michael Wood, who engaged shipwright Michael Hurrell to restore her to her original design, alter the self draining cockpit, plus other major work.

Frances is now in Top condition and requires only fine tuning to be a formidable racer again. Or a very comfortable pleasure yacht!

LOA. 51ft. (15.54m)

LWL 30ft. 9"

BEAM 8ft. 6"

DRAFT 6ft 5"

Displacement 9 tons

Keel/ballast. Lead

Construction: Planking NZ Kauri, Q/land White Beech laid deck over 6mm ply

Main mast and boom, and spinnaker booms x 2. Alloy.

Accommodation: 2 Bunks main saloon, 2 quarter berths (space for more if required)

Galley: 3 Burner Metho stove, Sink

Marine toilet (head)

Engine: Nil

Safety gear: Cat. 7. Flares, PFD 7, 2 safety harnesses 2, life ring, fire extinguisher, first aid kit.

Full size boat cover.

CQR Anchor, Chain 5m, Warp 45m

Electrics: 12v Batteries x2

VHF Radio

Steering compass. Barometer

Sails: Mainsail, No.1, No.2, No.3, headsails, Storm: - Main & Jib, Spinnakers 2

Winches: 4 Large self tailing-sheet, 2 Medium-halyard.

Fenders, boat hooks, mooring lines, sheets etc.

Pumps: 2 manual. 1 electric with float switch.

Brief History: Raced in "A1" class against other 8 metre rating yachts such as Vanessa, Acrospire 1V, Eun-namara, Saskia and Erica J etc.

To enquire please contact:

Anton Oxenbauer on (03) 9396 3399

http://www.australianwoodenboatfestival.com.au/images/enevs_18_Nov10.pdf



Photo: Bec Hudson

Cup Regatta 2010, Port Phillip

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Return this completed form to the following address:

CYAA Membership Officer
65 Surrey Road
South Yarra
Victoria 3141
admin@classic-yacht.asn.au

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT - BECOME A MEMBER!

Your support makes all the difference, and costs so little.

To ensure you never miss another issue of this newsletter, why not become a member of the Classic Yacht Association of Australia. Full membership costs just \$75, or crew/ friends membership for \$50 including GST.

APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

I
(Full name of Applicant)

Of
(address)

wish to become a member of the Classic Yacht Association of Australia and apply to have my Yacht accepted on to the Yacht Register for the annual fee of \$75

Signature of Applicant.....

Date

Please supply the following details:

Phone Number

Fax Number.....

Email Address

Boat Name

Designer

Date of Build

Construction

LOA Rig

Sail Number

Details of other Yacht Club Memberships:

.....

APPLICATION FOR CREW MEMBERSHIP

I
(Full name of Applicant)

Of
(address)

wish to join the Classic Yacht Association of Australia as a crew member / friend for the annual fee of \$50

Signature of Applicant.....

Date

Please supply the following details:

Phone Number

Fax Number.....

Email Address

Boat Name

Details of other Yacht Club Memberships:

.....