



Story of the month: September 2008
By David Hardy

Toby II's big adventure

Owners of Toby II, David & Kim Hardy from Lake Macquarie NSW, are not only looking forward to their first trip to Tasmania, but tell us that it will be a great adventure for their 20ft clinker-style timber launch, Toby II, who is clearly part of the family.

Here's David's version of events that led to the happy little boat pictured right.

"On a Sunday in June of 2006, as I set off kayaking with a mate on Sydney Harbour, I made a mental note of a semi-submerged timber launch lying on a mooring some distance from us. Later that day, as we returned from our paddle, I made sure we took a diversion around said distraction.

"Littered with notices of intended removal and birds nests on top and a prize-winning crop of oysters underneath, we were looking at the sad, dying remains of what we made out to be a clinker fishing boat named "Toby II". Apart from its absence of engine, the mooring line lying through the rotting foredeck and the long-since expired registration led us to believe that Toby II had not seen a day out for many years and its final steps of its imminent removal would be its last.

"Sad... it looks like it was once a beautiful boat" were our closing comments as we paddled back to the shore. So, naturally, on the way home, I couldn't help but leave my phone number with the relevant authority and was surprised by a phone call from the owner in the following weeks. As I drove north towing my newly purchased two-tonne oyster farm to Lake Macquarie I found myself glancing in the rear view mirror and muttering those all too familiar words: "What have I done this time!"

"The restoration was extensive and included replacing the timber log through which the stern tube passes, rebuilding the keel section around the propeller and re-designing the engine mounts and surrounding floor to support a new diesel engine, tube, shaft and propeller. Toby's hull had been previously sheathed with fibreglass and needed re-doing under the waterline to repair many punctures and splits where it must have bounced on the rocks in its past life. A new colour scheme, port holes and a mast were among the finishing touches to the makeover.



“After two long, but rewarding years in between university study and a work stint interstate, we re-launched Toby II in March 2008 just in time to celebrate at the local "Heritage Afloat" festival. Toby II lives with us on Lake Macquarie, near Newcastle on the NSW central coast. Many hours are spent "putting" along either exploring the Lake or other waterways of NSW with our Border Collie pup standing on the bow.

“Toby II is a 1950s 20ft clinker- style timber launch, sheathed in epoxy and powered by a 20 hp Yanmar diesel. Little history is known, however we suspect, given her lines, a previous life as a navy work boat may be possible.”

Below, obligatory “sad” “before” shot.



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