



Australian Wooden Boat Festival

6-9 February 2009 Hobart Tasmania



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Boats special!

Share prices may have crashed, but boat registrations have surged in the past few weeks. Three hundred and fifty boats are now registered, so to celebrate we are dedicating this September edition of the newsletter to boat stories. In October we will advise on the teams chosen to participate in the inaugural Community Boat Building, and give you an update on other programmed events and highlights including steam-powered vessels and more news about the Sydney 18footers!



Spirit of Tasmania – passenger deals for Festival-goers

Before we get on to registered boats, we are delighted to advise that a very big boat owner, TT-Line, has offered passenger discounts on the Spirit of Tasmania for travel between 24th January and 1st May 2009 for festival-goers travelling across Bass Strait. Please note, however, that the 20 per cent discount is only applicable to cabin fares, excluding Deluxe cabins and day tickets, and bookings have to be made using the Spirit/AWBF form available on our website.

Travel with a boat/trailer: We are negotiating with an alternative commercial carrier for a rate on trailers/boats (no passengers) and will contact registered boat owners direct when this is confirmed.

A wonderful sibling home-coming and reunion

There are always things to look forward to at the Festival, but the arrival of two Jock Muir built boats, *Maris* and *Westwind*, is something we are looking forward to with great excitement! Both have different tales to tell and if they could talk we might learn that these long-lost siblings knew each other on Sydney Harbour sometime in the late 1950s.

The elder by 23 years, *Westwind* is a 36' double-ended Huon Pine cutter and was the first big boat built by Jock Muir. She's coming home for the first time in 69 years. Jock began building her in 1935, for himself, in his parents' back yard, but in 1940 she sailed to Sydney and was sold. Up until at least 1956 she was still racing successfully on Sydney Harbour.

Details of the next 40 years are sketchy, but in 1997 her "rescuer", Chris Dicker, got a call from some friends saying "come and look at this wreck we've found for you in a paddock".

Chris recalls the boat was in an almost terminal state when he saw her in Port Stephens, and reminded himself he had no intention of buying "another wreck".

Westwind photo: Ian Carpenter



Naturally, a week later he went back and bought her, and then, madness of madness sailed her down to Sydney. By the time Chris had finished stripping the boat she was just ribs and planks – and he estimates he replaced around 40 per cent of the boat, including stem and stern post. Her rebuild, in a boatyard at Kurnell, Sydney, took Chris 8 years.

Plans to be at the 2007 Festival were scuppered when *Westwind* sprang a leak in Bass Strait, and Chris and his wife Gilli decided it was prudent to turn back. They've been up the east coast of Australia since then and will be cruising back down from Airlie Beach in time for the Festival..

Maris is an Alan Payne-designed Tasman Seabird, built by Jock Muir in Hobart in 1958 for marine artist Jack Earl. A 37ft yawl, she's Huon Pine over Spotted Gum. And thanks to the best beauty treatments that money can buy over the past few decades she's not just a well-kept 50-year old, she is drop-dead gorgeous.

Sold by the Earls to Ian Kiernan in 1971, *Maris* is now partially back in family hands. Ian offered two of Jack's grandchildren the chance to "have her back" with a quarter share each, while he and long-time family friend John Green also have a quarter share each.

In her 50-year lifetime, *Maris* has: competed in seven Sydney Hobarts (soon to be eight), stopped off in Lord Howe, New Zealand, Hawaii, Tahiti, Mexico and San Francisco during her three Pacific crossings; lived a while in Vancouver; surfed to victory in the 1978 Trans Tasman solo race; raced in the solo Trans Pacific; celebrated 200,000 miles astern in 1980; and has subsequently been to Lord Howe so many times the current owners joke that on average she's been there once for each year of her life.



A second major refit in 1994 included replacing her Teak deck with Celery Top Pine. New King Billy flooring was fitted through the cabin. Birthday celebrations this year have included being campaigned in the Gold Coast and Lord Howe races, and she will participate in the Sydney to Hobart on her way to the Festival with support from Sanyo and Veolia.

Maris photograph: Louise Southerden

Seven boats for eight Festivals!

So far, we will have 7 boats coming to the Festival who have registered for every event since the inaugural AWBF in 1994. In 2009 it will therefore be their eighth showing. Our thanks go to the owners, past and present of the following vessels for their continued support for the Australian Wooden Boat Festival. Here are a few words from their owners, and a photo of *Leah-Sofie* (sorry, but we don't have photos of the others in digital format).

Kookaburra – launched in 1936, *Kookaburra* was built by Fred Rodway for his family and was first rigged as a gaff cutter. She was changed to a gaff ketch and later to a Marconi ketch. During hard times the boat was converted to a fishing vessel and a wet well added. In the 80s restoration started and her dog box was removed and her rig restored to ketch.

Moby Dick – this 36ft Barber-designed yacht was built in 1936 by Charles Larsen alongside Cathleen Gelett in Sydney, and commandeered by the Navy to find the Japanese midget subs.

Leah-Sofie - built in 1963 in Copenhagen, *Leah-Sofie* has sailed in waters around Denmark, Sweden and almost to the Faroe Islands. Shipped to Sydney 1988, she sailed to Hobart 1989. She's been sailing in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, Port Arthur, Maria, Bruny, Recherche etc. and has been to Port Davey twice. Now mooring at Drip Beach (Port Cygnet), she is pictured, below, at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival.

Mary Elizabeth – designed by W. McBrydee of Scotland, the yacht won first prize in a worldwide competition in World Yachting Magazine 1945. Built by Lee Owen in 1955.

Tinderbox – as featured in a previous newsletter, *Tinderbox* is a Tasmanian-built rowing boat.

Kate and Baby Boat – Bruce Tyson will bring *Kate* and *Baby Boat* to the Festival. *Kate* has been a tender to the Phil Badger designed modern adaptation of a 1920's ELCO launch, and *Baby Boat* is a beautiful swinging cradle, commissioned by Bruce's son for an impending birth.



Triabunna tribe on their way!

A posse of fishing boats and pleasure boats will be making their way to Hobart from Triabunna – look out for a story we've written about some of them in *Forty Degrees South Tasmania* magazine.

In brief, boat-builder extraordinaire, Bernard Wilson (pictured here with Malcolm Fergusson aboard *Corrina*) will be bringing his own recreational (he says retirement) fishing boat *Memories*, and a few others built of his hands will also be at the Festival. Two Malcolm Fergusson boats – his own *Corrina*, and *Rachel Christine* – are coming along, as are *Silver Cloud*, *Juliene* and *Lady Margaret*. Two boats built by Bernard Wilson's father, Dean, *Carolyn* and *Kerry E* are also expected.



Although she no longer lives in Triabunna, *Antares* will be making her way to Hobart from her home in Toowoona Bay, NSW. Built in Triabunna in 1947 by Fred Jones for "Happy" Martin ("Old Hap"), *Antares* ran on sail for many years before "a decent engine" was installed (Gardner), by Frank Bosworth who ran her for many years as a cray boat. Thanks to

Frank, we've got some old photographs of *Antares* that have been scanned and (fingers crossed) might be published in the *40 Degrees* article.

Since restoration and conversion by the current owner *Antares* has clocked 19,000 miles traveling the Pacific, the East Coast of Australia, and around Tasmania. Not bad for a girl in her sixties. 2009 will be her first visit to the Australian Wooden Boat Festival.

Back to Rule the Waves!

Finally, a short story about local Tasmanian boat, Britannia who will be a real feature at the Festival.

Built in 1898 on Flinders Island by Richard Day, Britannia is one of the oldest boats still sailing. Originally constructed as a double ender, she was a freight-carrying and later a fishing cutter with a gaff rig and centreboard.

Britannia was built of Kauri below the waterline and Huon Pine above using batten-seam construction. Bought by her current owners in 2000 from the estate of Alfred Davis (Bruny Island), Britannia was first displayed at the Festival in 2001, after being hauled out and partially restored. Now, after a major restoration she's coming back to "rule the waves".



We would love to hear from you!

To contribute stories please get in touch by email: media@australianwoodenboatfestival.com.au

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