

Catriona: A Wooden Boat to Dream Upon

by Adrian Donald

The purchase of a yacht is usually an emotional affair and in the case of *Catriona* it was love at first sight. In a bout of insanity I decided to purchase her despite already owning *Exodus*, a beautiful timber sloop built by Wayne Rosenzweig and launched in 1964. Luck was on my side and *Exodus* sold in a matter of weeks, thus avoiding a potential bout of poverty that owning two yachts at the same time was sure to create.



Adrian Donald with Catriona

Catriona's LOA is 46 feet 2 inches, LWL 35 feet 4 inches, Beam 14 feet, Draught 6 feet 9 inches, Displacement 15 tonnes. She was Alan Payne's last major design commissioned by Malcolm Kinnaird who requested a fast comfortable timber cruising boat to be built to a high standard incorporating all the modern advances in wooden boat technology.

Malcolm persuaded shipwright Allan Smith to relocate from Sydney to Adelaide to undertake the building project with assistance from Searles, Tim Went, Allan Gill and others. State of the art at the time electronics were provided by John Moffat. She was built using the best available timbers; hull of old growth Douglas Fir, epoxy glued and silicon bronze screwed to laminated Queensland Maple, with frames and floors running gunwale to gunwale. Backbone / Stem assembly also was to be Queensland Maple, and the lead keel to be monel fastened. Deck substrate was fibreglass covered Canadian Cedar and set in epoxy with laid Teak top. Deck house was to be Huon Pine and the interior Mahogany.

Early in the design stage there was extensive tank testing using one metre models. Then followed the building of a 26 foot prototype for sea trials. The design proved exceptional and was sold to Columbia Yachts in the USA who produced 8.3, 8.7 and 10.7 metre versions for the world market.

Construction commenced in 1974 and due to the high standard required was not completed until 1984 at a cost in excess of 1.5 million dollars.

I have been most fortunate that Naval Architect Howard Peachey, who was Alan Payne's business partner during the *Gretel* 2 Americas Cup challenges and involved in the design and testing of *Catriona* now resides in Adelaide. I am most grateful for his input for this article. He tells me that where applicable the knowledge gained from the Americas Cup Challenges went into *Catriona*'s design and construction.

In 1988 *Catriona* took part in the Bi-Centennial Tall Ships cruise from Sydney to Hobart with Alan Payne on board. Near Portland she ran into violent weather and was struck by lightning which knocked out all the electrics and knocked her nearly flat. Malcolm Kinnaird was down below and Alan Payne in the cockpit. After Malcolm had disentangled himself from fallen objects he appeared at the companionway where Alan calmly said "See, I told you she will never heel far enough to get water in the cockpit".

I consider wooden boats as pieces of history and their owners are custodians to keep and maintain them for the enjoyment of future generations.

With the help of some very experienced Squadron members and accompanied by some other Squadron boats we intend to cruise to Hobart to attend The Wooden Boat Festival to be held on the 6th to 9th of February 2015. We plan to do a bit of cruising around Tasmania after the show. It will be a memorable experience and if anyone is interested in joining with their boats they can contact Bones (Kingsley Haskett).

To look her over, see *Catriona* in her temporary berth B5 at the Squadron. At the moment it is still work in progress. The mast is out while we renew the standing rigging and Bones is busy down below, but if anyone wants to have a look they are welcome



The beautifully crafted *Catriona*, now in the Squadron pool, is being fully restored by new owner, Adrian Donald. She is bound to turn heads when she turns up in Constitution Dock next February for the Australian Wooden Boat Festival.