

What's in a Boat Name?

Demeter

Robert Elmer

Demeter was a Greek goddess, the daughter of Cronos, old father Time and Lord of the Universe and Rhea, the mother of the gods. Unsurprisingly, knowing that god's reputation, Demeter was both the sister and consort of Zeus.

Her name came to mean either Mother of Grain or Mother Earth and her story is that of the coming of mortality to Man.

Demeter had a daughter called Persephone who had the misfortune to have aroused the passion of Hades the god of the Underworld who carried her off to his dark retreat.

Demeter was furious and went to the other gods and pleaded with them to do something to get her daughter back. When they said that they were powerless against the god of the Underworld, Demeter went mad with grief. She turned her attention from the Earth and it became dark, cold and barren, creating the first winter the world experienced.

The gods then pleaded with Demeter to have pity on the Earth but she was unrelenting. They then went to Hades and persuaded him to give up Persephone but she had eaten a seed of the pomegranate, the fruit that symbolised fertility, birth and death, and this tied her to the underworld for part of the year.

This is how the seasons and growth cycles were formed. When Persephone is below ground the land is barren but her re-emergence in spring is heralded by green shoots on the grain.

In this way too the ancient Greeks envisaged the life cycle of man, as grain is thrown into the field to give new life, man dies and is buried in the earth.

Demeter herself went underground in search of Persephone and created secret rites which were enacted in the Eleusis Mysteries where there is a cave sacred to her, celebrating the cycle of life.

My boat *Demeter* was the last boat built by one armed Bill Wilson in about 1955 in Tasmania. One of the present owners of Wilson's boatyard in Hobart sent me old black and white photographs of her being launched and of her arrival in the Squadron.

She is a 32' Hobbs design and was originally called *Resurgam* which means 'to rise again'. I am not sure who renamed her but the parallel in the meaning of that name to her present one of *Demeter* certainly suggests an awareness of the myth.

Demeter has many qualities of the Goddess, but two of them I find especially gratifying.

The first is her ability to 'rise again' to any sea that we have faced together and the other is her mystical ability to celebrate life with her crew.



Birkenhead Pontoons open

Boaties visiting the Inner Harbor for the day will now find convenient moorings available at the Birkenhead Bridge pontoons.

With an upgrade now complete, the Land Management Corporation recently decided to trial opening the facility to the boating public for day use.

The pontoons, located on Queens Wharf promenade adjacent to the Fisherman's Wharf Markets, contain 19 berths and complement the existing public moorings in Dock 1, operated by the City of Port Adelaide Enfield.

'Opening the upgraded facility will provide visiting boats of all types with handy moorings close to Port Adelaide's many attractions, including museums, pubs,

café's and the Sunday markets', said Andre Stuyt, spokesperson for the Port Centre Coordination Group.

Overnight moorings are not permitted, with gated access to the pontoons open between the hours of 0800 and 1700 – extended during the Summer months - (a security company has been engaged to open and close the pontoon gates at the nominated times and a call out fee will be charged for out of hours openings).

Middlewatch Bulletins will try to keep you informed of extended opening times.

