

OUR BOAT LORELEI

By Scott Anderson Photo: Langdon Hamlyn



My wife Billie and I have owned Lorelei for some 22 years now. Lorelei is a Mk IV Camper and Nicholson, although they are most commonly referred to as Nicholson 32s.

Camper and Nicholson were an English yacht building company of some note that had its origins in the 1890s in England. They were mainly known for the construction of somewhat larger more prestigious vessels of both sail and power built for private persons, the Royal Family and the UK government. In the early 1960s they entered the mass production market that was being generated by the advent of a new building material – fibreglass. Some 350 Nicholson 32s were built in England and the production duration stretched from 1962 to 1981. Within that production period, seven Marks or versions were built with varying modifications, all being reasonably minor.

In 1964, a Sydney boat builder, Phil Rudder of Rudder Yachts, managed to acquire permission from Camper and Nicholson to build the Nicholson 32s under licence. Camper and Nicholson dispatched a set of moulds which consisted of separate moulds for the hull and deck/cabin. It was rumored that Lorelei's hull and deck/cabin were shipped in these moulds to stabilise them during the sea voyage.

Lorelei was ordered by then RSAYS member Terry Dickson. A Sydney Morning Herald article of the time, dated 12 November 1965, described the christening of Lorelei at the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club in Pittwater, Sydney on Sunday 14 November 1965 by Terry's wife.

Terry and a crew of four set sail from the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club the following week, bound for Adelaide. Squadron member Rick Halliday is the only member I know who took part in the delivery, boarding in Melbourne.

Lorelei became the first fibreglass yacht in the Squadron at that time.

She has had a handful of owners, and a couple of name changes since then. Billie and I acquired her in October 1995 from Jack Daniels of Port Lincoln, father of Graham Daniels – a well-known wooden boat builder there. Jack had bought her from the previous owner who lived aboard her in Whyalla. By all accounts, she was in poor condition when he acquired her. Jack commenced some modest restoration work on her which also included a reconditioning of her original 15 hp Volvo Penta MD2 prior to us acquiring her.

I remember settling on the purchase of her early in September 1995 and I travelled to Port Lincoln on the Friday night after work to get her ready for the delivery trip. I did three of these trips before we were ready to bring her back to Adelaide. It was very exciting because prior to this I had inherited my father's home-built trailer-sailer, but we almost lost her in Backstairs Passage when the rudder snapped, so I had decided that we needed a bigger vessel.

The survey report for Lorelei was generally good, except that the surveyor noted that there was no battery isolation switch.

I arrived at midnight and Bruce, the marina manager at the time, had left the gate key under his mat in South Point Drive. Unfortunately, his dog slept on the mat and it was not the friendliest of animals. Eventually I managed to get the key and boarded Lorelei after midnight. She was moored right in front of the hotel on the inner side of the pontoon. I managed to unlock the companionway hatch and went below. Once below, I switched the saloon lights on but alas, the batteries were completely flat. Two or three drunken patrons then decided to throw some empty cans down on her deck from the balcony of the hotel but I decided that discretion was the better part of valour – I needed to get some sleep!

I awoke next morning with the intent of starting the engine in order to recharge the batteries. The Volvo had a crank handle and decompression levers. Old Jack had shown me how to use the can of AeroStart that he'd left me just in case she was hard to get going.

I tried several times to get her going, cranking the handle and then dropping one of the decompression levers while trying to spray some AeroStart into the intake – to no avail and I was tiring and puffing heavily.

All of a sudden I started to feel quite ill, my vision and colour started to fade, and everything was turning white. I presumed that I was either having a heart attack or something even worse. I cursed this whole venture as I was truly in trouble and my thoughts went to my wife and two daughters and whether I would ever see them again.

I decided to see if I could climb into the cockpit before falling unconscious with the hope that a passerby might see me and raise the alarm. I made it to the cockpit and slumped into the corner under the dodger and I must have lost consciousness.

My next recollection is seeing vertical dark sticks in a white background which, as time went by, ended up being the vista of masts in the marina, and slowly my vision and colour came back. While this was occurring, my mind was revisiting what had just happened and what could be a possible explanation for this. After about 15 -20 minutes I thought I needed to get to the hospital but my car keys were down below. I climbed down the companionway to get them and I was confronted with a strong smell of diesel and fumes and I saw the yellow can of AeroStart. Picking it up and turning to the label, the warning was clear – Contains Ether!

I slowly came to the conclusion that I had basically anaesthetised myself. I decided I'm not going there again and I grabbed my car keys with the intent of going to town and buying two new batteries. I grabbed the can of AeroStart, opened the engine room door and bent down to put the can back on a small shelf in the engine room – and low and behold, tucked up high under the bench close to the underside of the sink – a battery isolation switch! – switched to Off! All of a sudden, turning to Battery 1, the cabin lights came on and the radio started! Lorelei and we have never looked back. Apart some general improvements and replacement of old sails and the upgrading of navigation equipment, Lorelei didn't miss a beat for the next 15 years. Never once did we suffer any serious mishaps or breakages. Her Volvo Penta MD2 proved to be extremely reliable.

We have sailed extensively to most ports in Gulf St Vincent, Kangaroo Island and the southern Spencer Gulf. For many years we holidayed in Port Lincoln at

Christmas time and the annual delivery of Lorelei to Port Lincoln was a much-anticipated voyage on the calendar.

In 2010 on a regular 'men's cruise' to the Yorke Peninsula, Lorelei had engine oil in the bilge while anchored in the Davenport Shoal anchorage. The Volvo had suffered a terminal fracture to her cast-iron crankcase and so was eventually repowered with a new 20 hp 3-cylinder Yanmar.

Most members would be more familiar with her as the yacht that sat on the static cradle in the RSAYS slip yard from May 2012 to November 2014. She had had 10 years on the chain moorings and her hull, top-sides and decking were in need of attention/sprucing up. Kingsley Haskett (Bones) suggested that she should be salvaged for any useful equipment and be broken up. From a cost perspective that may have been wise, but Billie and I decided to give her another chance.

Searles Boat Yard got to work on her 'below water line' and I started on the topsides, doing the decking and everything else. My wife commented that she didn't see me on the weekend for the next two years!

In November 2014 she was relaunched, and on 28 October of this year her sails were hoisted for the first time in five years. As we have recently retired, we are looking forward to getting the most out of our 'old girl' over the next few years.



Billie and Scott Anderson

Vessel Details

Make – Camper Nicholson 32; Built – 1965;
Hull type – long keel with encapsulated lead ballast;
LOA – 32'; LWL – 24'; Beam – 9.25'; Draft – 5.5';
Displacement – 5.5 tons (unladen); Ballast – 3.0 ton

JUNIORS REPORT

By Stuart Davis

The enthusiastic Junior Sailing squad experienced all manner of conditions in the first few weeks of the season. They had the chance to refine their skills in a tricky light breeze on 8 October and again in the strong, challenging conditions two weeks later. Due to even stronger winds a solid theory session was held in the clubhouse on 29 October. This meant that the squad missed out on participating in the Bunday Cup this year. However, listening to Albert Mead's tales from his participation in the Sydney to Hobart and other offshore adventures on Friday 13 October set the team up for some competitive racing in following weeks.

Opening Day was attended by a number of Juniors with two pacers participating in the sail past. Captains Lachlan, Kyla and I were happy to be onboard the One and All for the official duties.

There is still plenty of sailing ahead this summer, so if you have any young people who might be interested, encourage them to join us for all the fun.

