

My Boat, *The Mameema* Robin and Angela Smith

As you enter or leave the pool, you can't help but notice the former tuna boat moored immediately on the entrance channel finger. *The Mameema* is a boat with a colourful history and a certain future, thanks to the loving care and patient restoration work being undertaken by its current owners

The Mameema originally operated as a fishing vessel under sail out of Eden in New South Wales. She was severely damaged in a storm in 1930, but was repaired and continued as a fishing vessel until the outbreak of the Second World War when she was commandeered for War Service. She served in and around the islands of New Guinea for the duration of the war. The engine room was used as a hold for stores and ammunition for our fighting forces.

In 1947 she was decommissioned and sold to the South Australian Fisheries Department and became the first Tuna Poling boat in the state. A few years later *The Mameema* was sold and then achieved another first – the first prawn boat in South Australian waters. Later on she was also used as a cray and shark boat before coming back to Adelaide to be rebuilt.

Around 1977 *The Mameema* went to the rescue of a deep sea trawler in trouble 180 nautical miles off-shore in the Great Australian Bight. Of the ten vessels that set out to help, only *The Mameema* made it to the rescue site.

In 1988 she was bought by another owner and again operated as a shark boat. I bought her in 1995 after she'd been sunk and salvaged in Fowlers Bay. I'd seen some photos of her and was attracted to her shape and character. I've always loved wooden boats and had dreamt of owning one since I was about the age of five.

I motored her back from Venus Bay with two other guys in rough seas. We had engine failure due to three injectors seizing and three tips had blown off so I sat on the engine room floor and rebuilt three working injectors out of the six. The reason for the failures was water and sludge in the tanks. We drained them out but the fuel was still too dirty. We had two 200 litre drums of fuel on the aft deck so we rolled them to the back of the wheelhouse and lashed them. We had to cut the hydraulic hose from the anchor winch and made a syphoning line to the motor. We started the engine and ran the first drum out quickly. I then realised I didn't have a return line to the drum so we improvised by using two jerry cans. When one can filled up we transferred the hose into the next can and returned the full can to the 200 litre drum on the deck. We did this until running aground on the Longnose Sandbar entering Coffin Bay, staying there until the next high tide.

To enter the shallow Coffin Bay I filled two 200 litre drums with sea water and swung them from the boom then swung the boom to port. This gave us a list to port which allowed us to get in. We cleaned out the fuel tanks, strained the fuel and put in new injectors, fuel pump and filters.

We headed back out using the same method as getting in, then steamed off to Port Adelaide. We went to Porters Slipyard and had her hull cleaned

and a full check over. Then we took her around to the North Arm for berthing. Unfortunately an incompetent fellow, to my disgust, gutted the boat. She lay at her berth until mid 2000 when work finally began to take shape. The hull was cleaned and painted, bunks were made, the wheelhouse was built, decking pulled up and relayed and a coachhouse was constructed.

In May 2003 *The Mameema* returned to Porters for more repairs including taking out the old putty and caulking. We changed over planks that needed attention and assisted some ribs and fitted a 671 GM motor. Fuel tanks were added in June 2005 and the gearbox was changed. We moved from the North Arm Marina to Porters for the next 13 months, where we wired the vessel, made the dash area, completely sanded and repainted the whole boat and made and stepped the mizzen mast and booms. Finally *The Mameema* went back into the water, having been the last big wooden planked vessel to be on Porters Slipyard when it closed. We moved to the RSAYS on August 18 last year and have been working on the fo'c's'le since.

"We love it here, and it's the only place where we are allowed to live aboard," Robin says. "There's a lot of interest in the boat and we have a 'yack' to everyone who walks by. They say we mustn't take her away as she belongs to the Squadron and adds colour to the fleet."



The Mameema Specifications:

- Launched January 15, 1906
- Design: Tuna boat with cruising stern
- Construction: 3" planked

Spotted Gum and Jarrah

- Length: 56'
- Beam: 18'
- Draft: 9' 6"
- Weight: 65 Tons

Engine: six cylinder, 2 stroke diesel, 671 GM, 270hp