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A FEW MORE PIECES IN THE TUMLAREN JIGSAW.

RACING
29 Mar

By Charlie Salter



Tumlare VENTURE RSAYS #4 in 1961. Photo RSAYS Archive

ADELAIDE'S TUMLAREN

SWS is continually shuffling pieces around the Tumlarén history puzzle. It's gumshoe work to cross reference clues and sift fact from bar-fiction. The Melbourne story is anchored by Bert Ferris' eyewitness account in his *"Royal Melbourne's Remarkable Tumlarens"*. Bert was forward hand on the champion boat *YVONNE #97* helmed by Selim Nurminen. However, we have little information and no photos of the Adelaide boats and the shipwrights who built them. These are integral to the Australian Tumlarén story from 1937.

A few weeks ago, Chris Henshall, a sailor from Adelaide visited Williamstown in Melbourne, looking for a Tumlaré built by her father Jack Williams. She had heard it was still sailing and found it penné at the Royal Yacht Club Victoria and sent this signal;



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front of him, he turned to the sea. He procured plans from St Kilda Yacht Club and proceeded to build his own Tumlare. He was a perfectionist in this respect but he was not working alone. A lifelong friend Bob Stevens (who recently passed away in his 100th year) built ZEFIR and another friend, Alan Jordan built CELESTE. They became friends and rivals on the water but with a lot of mutual respect for each other. There were other Tumlaren at the Club.

You can imagine my excitement when I found photos online of SIROCCO and was able to read that it was alive and well, and being regularly sailed in Melbourne. Google is such an amazing search engine ...sometimes.

As my father Jack Williams progressed, he bought a 6m yacht called JUDITH PIHL. I discovered she had been found in a paddock, transported to Sydney in about 2015, completely restored and is now sailing on Sydney Harbor.

Next, he built CANOPUS, a 36ft Vashti design in which he competed in local races, but then long distance in the 1966 Sydney-Hobart and Queenscliff-Port Lincoln. CANOPUS was built of Huon Pine, with teak cabin and decks and well loved by our family. It was also in this vessel that I was introduced to cruising in local waters. CANOPUS was also built in a shed in our backyard in Alberton, with the help of a boat builder, George Butcher. It was launched in the 1960's and was very competitive at the time. Up until very recently it resided at our Club.

The next stage in the journey was to purchase a Cole 43 called MINNA, not built by him this time. He eventually sold it to another Club member, Harold Handley upon whose death it was sold. I was pleased to hear that MINNA is also in Melbourne at Hobsons Bay YC.

You might see from the potted history that each boat is getting bigger. Upon his retirement, my father organised the building of a new house and a new boat ALLEMANDA, a 54ft sailing cruiser, not shabby on speed while very comfortable for us to cruise with him and our 3 young children.

The next time we are in Melbourne we hope to see SIROCCO again, but without the covers. It was a tremendous thrill to see it being well-cared for after all this time.

Kind regards Chris Henshall

JACK WILLIAMS

Here's some old photos of Jack Williams sailing his boats. The 1947 Tumlare *SIROCCO* is shown hard hauled with fully battened cotton sails in the early 1950's. *JUDITH PIHL* is a 6m William Fife III design, built in Melbourne by Charlie Peel and named for his daughter and their original Polish/Scandinavian surname. In Swedish pil means 'arrow' that seems appropriate. The second photo shows *JUDITH PIHL* sailing through Tumlare *TROMIE*, originally the 1937 Charlie Peel built *YVONNE #94* before being sold to Adelaide. Jack's third boat is *CANOPUS* and then in his Cole 43 *MINNA*, he won Line Honours in the Melbourne Hobart west coaster in 1974. Richard Downey of Hobsons Bay YC is the current owner of *MINNA*. He is notable for once owning three Tums at the same time, including *SIROCCO*.





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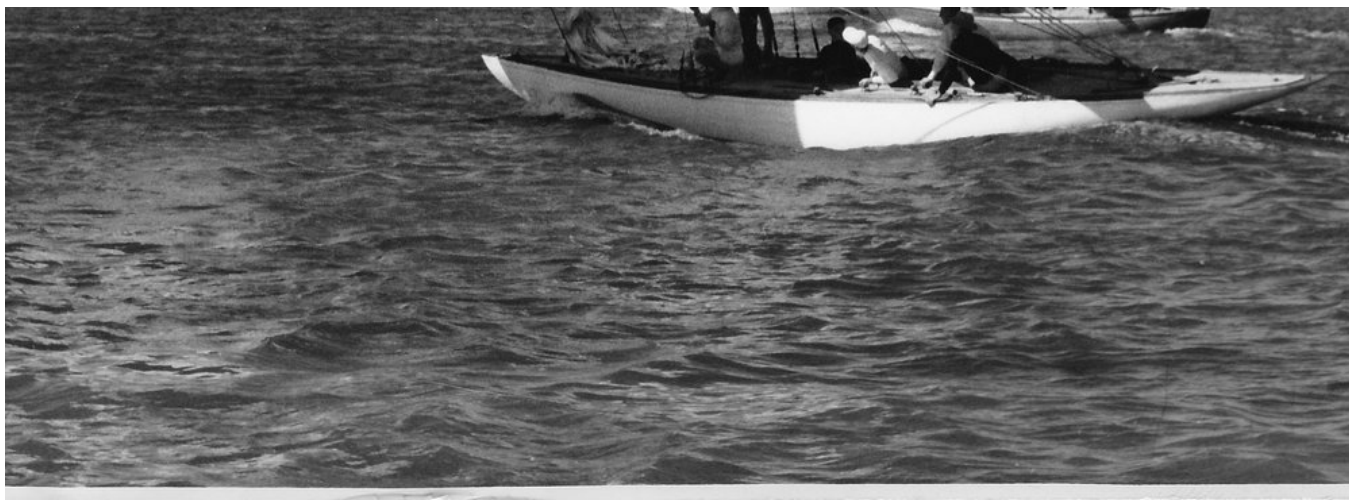
Jack Williams sailing SIROCCO early 1950's. Photo RSAYS Archive





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Jack Williams sailing JUDITH PIHL C1960. Photo RSAYS Archive





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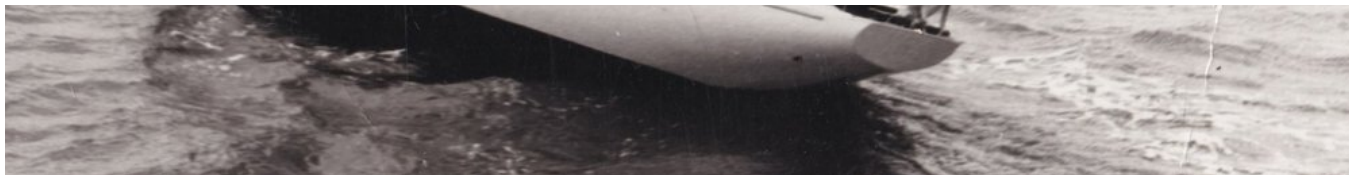
JUDITH PIHL crossing Tumlare TROMIE RSAYS #6 in 1962. Photo RSAYS Archive





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CANOPUS sailing in Port River C1964. Photo RSAYS Archive

ST KILDA 1937

Bert Ferris notes the founding story;

Royal St Kilda YC (now RMYS) were looking for a One-Design class for Port Phillip. In April 1937 a meeting was called that included a delegation from Royal South Australia YC, headed by boatbuilder Mr P Clausen. On the night, the Tumlaré Class of Knud Reimers was unanimously adopted. It was agreed that 6 yachts would be built. Two orders were placed with Clausens of Adelaide and two each with J. J. Savage and Charlie Peel a designer/builder of Acrospire fame in Melbourne. The RSAYC adopted the design and ordered four more from Clausen who already had the first Tum CELESTE (later ANNA RSAYS #1) under construction in Adelaide.

Clausen's had ACKLOREAN #98 finished by September 1937 and TARNA #91 two months later ready for launching in Victoria. Savages built ZONJA #92 and Charlie Peel had YVONNE #94 and ZEST #99 ready for the November start to the 1937/38 season. GOTNUM #93, the sixth boat was built using Peel moulds and launched in early 1938. The other Savage boat remained unpaid for and was only launched in 1940 as red AVIAN #96.

Apart from AKLOREAN, all these boats are restored and still sailing.

ADELAIDE 1937

It's been difficult tracing interstate Tumlarén. Most boats were built in Adelaide and Melbourne then traded between these cities over the years. Several early boats were built in Port Macquarie and Sydney NSW, some in Perth and one in Hobart Tasmania by Max Creese at Battery Point in 1948.

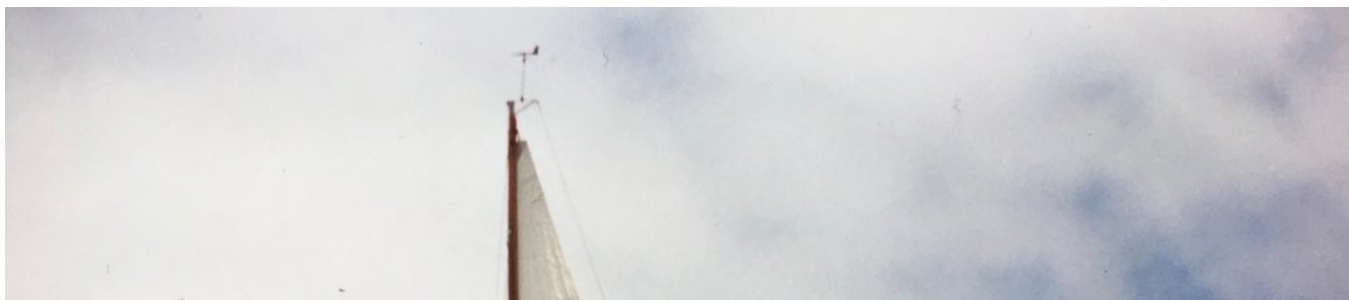
Connecting with the family that built your own boat fills many gaps. Chris Henshall suggested a dive into the RSAYS history archive. This was like a Tum Wiki-Dump. The Club has developed a terrific [open-source digital archive](#) including excellent information and old photos of their boats and members including the Tumlarén fleet.

Most Adelaide boats were built by shipwright J P Clausen & Sons at Largs Bay. It was Peter Clausen who attended the meeting at Royal St Kilda in April 1937 to select the Tumlaré One-Design. Others were built after the war by skilful amateurs like Jack Williams in their backyard sheds. For a terrific story about Clausens see [Harold Clausen – Tumlarén Builder](#), by Steve Burnham. He notes one appealing reason why these shipwrights are hard to research. They were busy building boats rather than doing promotion;

Unfortunately, the Clausens were not photographically inclined, which seems to have been the case with a lot of the old families. Either the cost was prohibitive, or (unlike today) it was merely that the act of taking a photograph did not spring to mind.

The 1950's and 60's RSAYS archive photos show a healthy Tum fleet at the Club. Adelaide Tums were built to the original Reimers cruiser design with small cockpit and sliding coach-house hatch. Unlike today's sails using stable synthetics, the early mainsails are fully battened to flatten the shape and control the cotton cloth. The list of owners shows many young couples purchasing and sailing Tumlarén and - bare chested sailing with short shorts seemed popular in the hot Adelaide climate.

The first boats built and delivered from Adelaide were ACKLOREAN and TARNA. ACKLOREAN was a really beautiful boat, that broke her mooring and was smashed up on the St Kilda breakwater in 2005. After a lifetime in St Kilda, TARNA was restored by shipwright James Frecheville. It's the shed boat that still sails from Paynesville on the Gippsland Lakes in SE Victoria.





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Tumlare ACKLOREAN off St Kilda C1993.





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Tumlare TARN restoration 2006. Photo James Frecheville





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TARNA in her pen on the Gippsland Lakes. Photo James Frecheville

Clausens built *CELESTE RSAYS #1* (later *SYLPHIDE* then *ANNA*) in 1937 for Alan Jordon. Her topsides were Huon Pine with Jarrah deadwood. Jordon kept the name *CELESTE* when he later built a modified Stor Tumlare, still sailing at Sydney Amateurs. See [WHO IS KNUD REIMERS SWS 19 August 2021](#).

UNITY #2, *ZANET #3* *VENTURE #4* and *ZANNE* are probably the four early Clausen boats ordered in 1937 after delivery of the two Melbourne Turns. *UNITY* is still on the RSAYS Club Vessel Register. We are not sure where the others are now.





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SOUTHERN MYTH + SYLPHIDE, R.S.A.Y.S. Opening Day
1955

SYLPHIDE (prev. CELESTE & later ANNA RSAYS #1) on Opening Day 1955. Photo RSAYS Archive





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Tumlare UNITY RSAYS #2 C1960. Photo RSAYS Archive



UNITY with canvas dodger and RSAYS Clubhouse . Photo RSAYS Archive



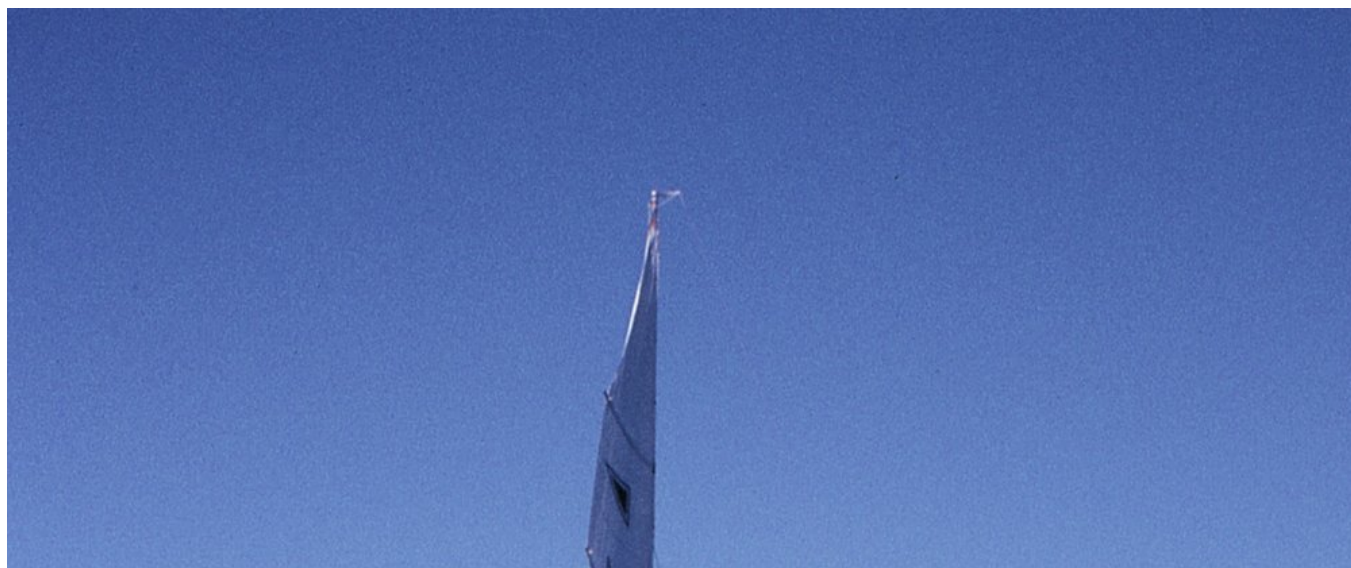


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Tumlare ZANET RSAYS #3 with Stor Tumlare CELESTE beyond 1962. Photo RSAYS Archive





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Tumlare VENTURE RSAYS #4 1961. Photo RSAYS Archive





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Tumlare ZANNE in full flight date unknown. Photo RSAYS Archive

A South Australian register of boat builders records Tumlare *BETH* now *ZARA* built in Adelaide in 1939 by P. O'Grady. She was sold to Melbourne in 1944 and is currently being restored by shipwright Mike Hurrell in Altona.

TROMIE (originally *YVONNE* #94 then *DOFFIE* and now *TRILLION*) is still afloat at the Garden Island YC in North Adelaide. While not a SA built boat she's pretty much a sub-local after 70 years.





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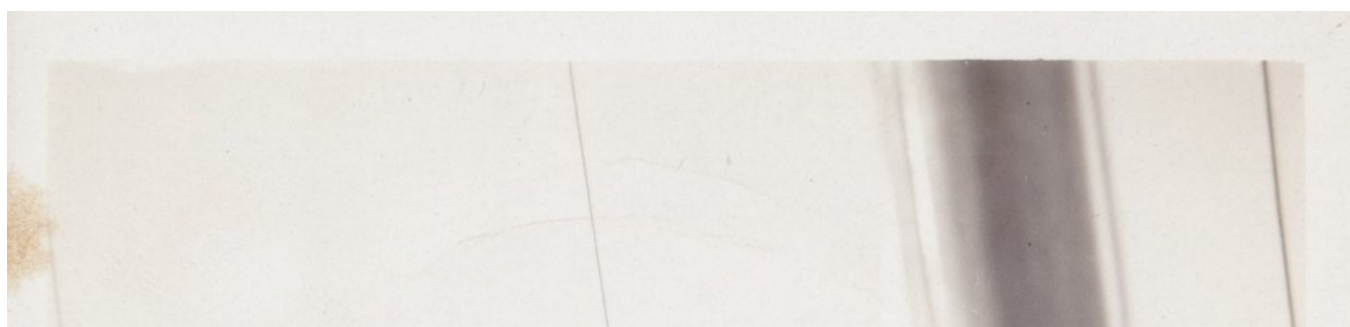
Turnlare TRILLION at Garden Island YC Adelaide. Photo Tony Kearney

POST WAR TUMS

SIROCCO was sailed by the Williams family at RSAYS until 1955 when she was sold to John Ulysses Watt at the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron. He named her *ELLIDA*. After restoration by F J Darley Traditional Shipwrights in 2012 she was relaunched as *SIROCCO*.



Turnlare SIROCCO with Jack Williams on the helm 1947. Photo RSAYS Archive





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Jack and Iris Williams with son Graham and Jack's parents 1948. Photo RSAYS Archive



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Tumlare SIROCCO sailing off Williamstown 2015. Photo Peter Costoloe

ZEFIR RSAYS #5 was built in Adelaide by R.P (Bob) Stevens who started sailing as a teenager in a 14ft Sharpie. In 1940, while still studying engineering at university, he spotted the Tumlare ZANET and decided this was the boat for him. He purchased plans from Royal St Kilda YC that held the Reimers license. Rather than follow the modified full timber construction nominated by St Kilda, he reverted to the original Reimers specification with steel ribs. He made hot dipped galvanised frames set on a jarrah keel and started planking with Queensland hoop pine and jarrah garboards. After graduation in 1942 he was posted overseas and didn't return to Adelaide until 1950 finishing and launching ZEFIR in 1952. This beautiful cruiser was fully restored in Melbourne in 2000 and still sails with the Classic fleet. See [*THE GOOD SHIP ZEPHYR SWS* 18 March 2021](#)



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Tumlare ZEPHYR RSAYS #5 at Williamstown 2017. Photo Mark Chew

TUM NAMES

There's an international tradition with Tumlare boat names. Many start with letters from the end of the alphabet like U, V, Y and Z. This started with early Swedish and English Tums like *ZEST #25*, illustrated in Uffa Fox's 1935 *Second Book* and Adlard Coles red *ZARA #27*. The Canadians and Australian boats followed. *There's ULRIKE, UNDA and UNITY*, then *VAHINE, VALHALLA, VANDA, VENTURE, VIKTORIA and VINDA*, then *YEOMAN and YVONNE*, finally *ZANE, ZANNE, ZANET, ZARA, ZEA, ZEFIR, ZEST, ZEST II, ZETENA, ZIRCON (ZINITA) and ZONJA*.

STILL AT SEA

Here's what we know. The Hobart built *MALAREN 34* sailed one season from Bellerive YC. Ken Gourlay moved to a Dragon and sold her to Sydney in 1951. She was renamed *Glyn Ayr* and can't be found.

We know of *KYUMA M3* built by Les Steel in 1937 and launched the following year on Lake Macquarie. She's still there. *SVALAN 83* was built by Alfred Johansen in Tuncurry in 1949 for Sheila Patrick the Seacraft journalist. The boat is now at RYCV waiting restoration. Early photos from Middle Harbour YC in Sydney have *SPINDRIFT MH25* in the fleet (Seacraft Feb 1955).

HAZE RF4 was built in 1938 by Hudson Bros in Perth. She was refurbished by shipwright Steve Ward (builder of *Australia II*) and he's out sailing her with his partner Leonie. *SONNET R30* was the second Tum built in the west. She sailed at Royal Freshwater Bay YC and was last sighted on a mooring in East Fremantle and now moved to Albany.

ZIRCON #323 is the last Tumlare built in Melbourne by shipwrights J. & O. Whitley in 1969. She's on a mooring in Lovett Bay, Pittwater in Sydney and coming up for sale. The work continues.

tumlaren • racing • RMYS • Sirocco • RSAYS

COMMENTS (10)

Oldest First



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Martin Bunny 5 days ago · 0 Likes

I recall a Tum visiting Mount Martha in about 1952 when a strong blow arrived and, rather than have her drag onto the rocks on the point at the southern end of the bay, she was scuttled and lay happily and safely? on the bottom to be raised a couple of days later.

Subsequently I regularly saw Haze (Merv "skinny" Finn) and Sonnett (John Kitto) racing on the Swan River and bashing offshore to Rottnest Island



Martin Bunny 5 days ago · 0 Likes

Forgot to mention, seem to recall the "Mt Martha" Tum was owned by a Mike Woods?



Mark Chew 5 days ago · 0 Likes

Lovely history Martin.. Charlie will add your stories to the accumulated knowledge database! Thank you!



Mark Chew 5 days ago · 0 Likes

That might be the Captain Mike Woods who owned the 8 meter Frances for a long time????



Ann Crisp 5 days ago · 0 Likes

Bit of information. I notice my Uncle Len Digby's yacht 'Yeoman' mentioned re the Tulmaren details. Also, my grandfather, Ernest O Digby built the 'Frances' mentioned in another comment. Nice to be part of 'history'. Ann Crisp



James B Waters 5 days ago · 0 Likes

Great sleuthing, Charlie!!! The history continues....!



Harry Leggett 5 days ago · 0 Likes

My first keelboat in 1972 was the Tum Zea



Charlie Salter 5 days ago · 0 Likes

Hi Harry appreciate your reply and follow up email with Uffa Fox's Tum notes written only 3 years after she was designed. Thats a nice book



Charlie Salter 5 days ago · 0 Likes

...and Zea has returned to RMYS



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