

THE NEW ZEALAND CLASSIC YACHT JOURNAL

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CLASSIC YACHT ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC.

www.classicyacht.org.nz

ISSN 1175-804X Issue 141 – September 2022



A woman of vision and with a mission

Shirley-Ann McCrystal is the CYA's new launch captain. Her vision, she says, is to have classic launches regularly on show alongside classic yachts; and for launch crews and yacht crews to enjoy combined social events.

"For instance, as part of the CYA regatta, I would like to see a launch parade that shows off their beauty to the public; and a launch parade on Anniversary Day would be fantastic. Launch crew should be attending social activities too, even if they haven't been racing," she says.

"I want to inspire our other launches to get more involved."

One of Shirley-Ann's first actions as launch captain will be to survey launch owners about how they want to be involved; another is the donation of a large sterling silver trophy – the McCrystal Cup – for the best restoration of a launch in a particular year.

The cup, which came to her through her late first husband, Richard McCrystal, has a horse-racing provenance (it was previously the Malaysian Ipoh Gymkhana Trophy). But Richard would have been delighted that it was going to something to do with the



water, she says, because he really enjoyed everything on the water, especially in the Hauraki Gulf.

The long-time sailor (and launch-owner, celebrant, JP and writer) has loved the sea since she was a very young girl: "I lived on a farm inland from Gisborne, miles from any sort of water. I remember the first time driving towards the beach, when I smelt the salt in the air. I have never forgotten it. Anything to do with the sea I really enjoy."

Shirley-Ann's boating began with a Hartley trailer-sailer on the Whangarei Harbour with Richard, more than five decades ago. Next came a 24-foot S&S, *Talia*, built on their front lawn. A 36-foot launch, *Pursuit*, followed, as their boys wanted more space for their friends; then a Davidson 31, in 1985, when the boys tired of "not being able to do stuff and liked the idea of sailing".

The family raced *Saltpetre* on the Waitematā Harbour until just before Richard died in 1991. While Shirley-Ann continued to help out with women's races at the

Squadron, she did not go sailing herself again until she met present husband, Bruce Tantrum, and became an indispensable crew member on *Paramour* from 2014.

"It was so good to get back into sailing again," she says.

Now Shirley-Ann and Bruce have the 39ft launch, *Menai*, designed and built of New Zealand heart kauri by Sam Ford at his Ellerslie boatyard and launched in 1937.

In 1940 *Menai* was famously involved in the rescue of passengers from the steamer *RMS Niagara*, mined off the Mokohinau Islands by German mines. *Menai* was subsequently seconded by the New Zealand Government as a Naval Auxillary Patrol Service vessel (NAPS) with a coastal patrol role. After the war, she changed hands multiple times, ultimately becoming part of the CYA fleet with her purchase by Andrew Collier in 2012.

Menai was berthed next to *Paramour* at Heritage Landing. "We often used to sit in the cockpit of *Paramour* and say, 'Okay, when we get

beyond this sailing caper, this is the boat for us'," says Shirley-Ann. Bruce sold *Paramour* in April last year – and serendipitously, *Menai* was for sale. The couple purchased her in partnership with Shirley-Ann's eldest son, Michael.

Menai had scarcely left her Heritage Landing berth in the preceding five years – but all that is changing now. Among the many roles Shirley-Ann has in mind for her is that of CYA Committee Boat, being seen on the Waitematā, carrying VIPs, and assisting in starting and finishing CYA races.

Built of kauri with an interior of gleaming varnished heart kauri, *Menai* has had her topsides and hull repainted, a new engine installed, and a crosstree mounted on her mast for displaying flags.

"Oh, I love her, I love her," says Shirley-Ann, "I think she is an absolutely beautiful boat."

"And we are so privileged to own such a lovely piece of history."

By Penelope Carroll



*Frances showing her
prowess in the 2013
Mahurangi Regatta.
Photo by Lyn Bergquis*

A major makeover for CYA stalwart Frances

By Larry Paul

Skipper Iain Valentine keeps a close eye on maintenance for the 1906 coastal trader *Frances* and this year a collection of small repair requirements have added up to a major maintenance programme.

Fund raising started back in August last year and by early 2022, Iain and the Classic Yacht Charitable Trust had reached the \$85,000 required to complete most of the work through charities and private donations.

Frances emerged from Horizon Boats Ltd shed on 29 July having gone through a thorough programme of work by Wayne Olsen and supported by a small volunteer team headed by first mate Derek Knight.

Works included: New engine mounting blocking; full engine service and repaint; rot repair around shaft log; replacement of copper shaft tube and bearings; sampson post repairs; tiller and rudder post repairs; rudder removal and rebuild; replacement of deteriorated timbers below waterline; splining of some hull planks; removal of old through-hull fittings; addition

of an electronic depth sounder; replacement of hull planking roves; addition of new spines between bilge stringers to add hull strength; engine bay and cabin repaint; full exterior repaint; re-varnishing mast and spars.

Relaunch day for *Frances* was witnessed by a small group of supporters at Orams Marine, where she showed off her lines and beautiful finishing work. An open day for the public is planned over the coming month.

Coastal shipping was the grass roots for trade around New Zealand pre-1900 and, despite the development of the rail and road networks, shipping still held importance in the early 1900's, particularly for coastal farmers. When Robert Shakespear of Whangaparaoa was looking for a vessel to move produce from his farm to the markets in Auckland, the snapper fishing boat *Frances*, owned by an Auckland storekeeper was for sale.

The 38-footer designed by Chas Logan was built by the Logan Brothers on the shores

of St Mary's Bay in Auckland in 1906 and proved such a successful coastal vessel that the Shakespear family used her for freight and pleasure for over 85 years. She proved a sturdy vessel capable of moving their farm produce of wool, melons, cement and even livestock around the Hauraki Gulf.

When she was sold in 1991, she was described by the marine surveyor, John Harrison, as being "in good condition, without significant defects, exceptional for her age and has been well looked after and has not been subjected to all manner of ill-advised modifications, as is so often the case". John hoped a new owner would be selected with great care, as she is unique and irreplaceable.

Frances duly passed to the care of Auckland brothers Paul and Adam Cato, who were the perfect custodians to maintain her well and who kept her active in classic yacht regattas and cruising the Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Islands.

They completed a major refurbishment of *Frances* in

1999, including refastening the topsides and giving her a new deck and deck beams. The Catos recognised the importance of *Frances* to New Zealand maritime history and, to ensure her ongoing survival, generously gifted her to her current custodian, the Classic Yacht Charitable Trust in 2004.

Iain Valentine also recognised the importance of *Frances* and since 2004 has donated his time and effort in maintaining and sailing *Frances* in CYA events and keeping her highly visible and accessible to the community.

The NZ Maritime Museum has been generous in providing space for visitors to view *Frances* as an active on water exhibit.

As custodian of *Frances*, the Classic Yacht Charitable Trust regularly makes her available to the New Zealand public.

• *To become involved in The Classic Yacht Charitable trust activities or contribute to the upkeep of the fleet contact Chair Larry Paul 021 280 0360.*

