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RESTORATIONS GALORE

Chad Thompson has been around the yards and come up with the remarkable conclusion that there are 800 linear feet of boats under restoration right now ...

In our early days, yacht races commenced from anchor out in the bay, some even commenced from the pub. The crews would run down to the beach, row out to the yachts, hoist sail and be away, a genuine precursor for Le Mans. Around Auckland right now, there are currently a lot of yachts in boatyards racing to be back in the water, let alone be on the start line of a yacht race.

A couple of seasons ago I had the privilege of helming *Ariki*, the 1904 Arch Logan designed 54' LOD gaff cutter, champion of the Auckland Harbour from her launching through until 1938 when *Ranger*, the Lou Tercel-designed 60' bermudan cutter was launched. I have always wondered just what it would be like to come up against similar sized gaffers and have a really serious scrap

out on the Waitemata Harbour. Well, it's all about to happen!

After a conversation with Warwick Jones, the owner of *Ariki*, it was decided we should visit the boatyards where *Rawhiti*, *Rainbow* and *Thelma* are in an advanced stage of restoration. Purely a Corinthian visit with all of the usual camaraderie disguising our intention of sussing out the competition for the rapidly approaching clashes out on the water.

I have written in the past about various individual restorations, but never before have we taken stock of everything that is going on down here in Auckland. It's quite remarkable when you do the numbers: NZ's population 4,000,000; the CYA has been going only 12 years; there are 220 members of the CYA, owning 150 classics. Ergo, New Zealand currently



Gloriana shortly to hit the water

A fever of rebuilds and restorations is

has 10% of its “registered” fleet under restoration or in the queue for the big job. And the yachts visited on this one day are only the high profile jobs. There are numerous other enthusiasts undertaking the work in backyards around the country.

An update on each is detailed below:

Rainbow — is in South Auckland undergoing restoration by a team led by Paul Tingey. *Rainbow* was designed by Arch Logan in 1898 as a 50’/34’/8’8”/6’8” gaff cutter. She is nearing completion after being taken back to gaff. Her spars, built by Collars (UK), have just arrived. She should be out racing in the CYA’s three-day regatta next February.

Kaiwaka — is out in West Auckland at Colin Silby’s yard. Built as a fishing vessel designed by Roy Lidgard in 1951 — 52’/ 15’/ 7’6” displacing 43 tonnes — being restored and converted to a classic charter vessel, also to be the mother ship of *Ariki*. Her superstructure is now well on the way to completion, her interior fitout will be completed and she’ll be back in the water by around February 2008. She is one of the first of our workboat conversion/restorations and will set the benchmark for many of her contemporaries to better.



Above: The magnificent lines of *Rainbow* emerge from her rebuild. Top right: The plumb bow of *Kaiwaka* at Colin Silby’s yard and (small picture) the engine installation

under way across the land

Rawhiti is a little further north in Kumeu at Peter Brookes' yard. She was designed by Arch Logan for Harry Pittar in 1905 and sailed to Sydney on her own bottom. There she was the champion of the Sydney fleet for many years until brought back to Auckland immediately after WWII by the Marlers. She is a 54'/37'6"/9'8"/7'6" gaff cutter; her restoration is very time consuming with serious work required to her stem timbers and some of the inner diagonal skins. She is still to be redecked and have her interior fitted out. She probably won't be in the water until next season. The regatta of 2009 is therefore shaping as the big one where all of these large gaffers will be out on the water.



Left: Impeccable restoration work under way on *Rawhiti*. Below left: *Little Jim* at Peter Brookes' yard, along with (below right) the Col Wild launch *Amakura II*



Also out at Peter Brookes' yard was:

- ***Little Jim***, 42'6"/25'/9'1"/6' designed by Arch Logan as a bermudan cutter in 1934, undergoing a rolling restoration with the focus this winter on strengthening her mast step and forward sections, re-trimming her, counteracting the extra



weight in her stern from the engine, tankage and batteries located there during her initial restoration in 1995/6.

- ***Ladye Wilma***, built in 1895 by Logan Bros as a gaff cutter; 43'/34'/9'/6'3". Peter had bought her for his own family's use, but is now snowed under with

work and is willing to see someone else take over her stewardship.

Also in the yard awaiting restoration is the 52'/14'/3'6" Colin Wild launch ***Amakura II***, built in 1936. She is to be used by the two families that own *Rawhiti* as her mother ship. A recent arrival is the 30 square metre class

Hjalmaren (ex *Lill Singva II*, S-164), designed by Erik Nilsson and built in Sweden in 1938. The biggest wooden boat project in NZ at present is the NEW build of a 50' traditional built gaff rigged Pilot Cutter to the design of Colin Brookes for a client in Essex. When completed she will be cruised in New Zealand waters before heading to the UK.

After another half hour drive to Silverdale, we had the privilege of seeing:

- ***Gloriana***, the 1892 Logan Bros 2½ rater gaff cutter (34'/24'6"/6'10"/5'4"). After a serious rebuild by Wayne Olsen for the Classic Yacht Charitable Trust she is now in immaculate condition and ready for launching.

And then there was ***Thelma***, the 1897, 60'/40'/12'/8'3", Arch Logan-designed gaff cutter. Having arrived back from the Mediterranean earlier in the year, our largest racing classic is well on the way to gracing the Waitemata

Classics Action

once again. Wayne and his team have been cutting through the “To Do” list like a hot knife through butter and, much to everyone’s disbelief, are planning on her competing in the CYA’s February 2008 Lindauer Regatta. The top layer of her old deck has been replaced, the ever-widening caulked seams of her 109 year old hull have been splined, her interior has been rebuilt over a new kauri mast step and floors, a new engine has been fitted and her spars repaired. Her standing and running rigging is still to be replaced.

These were the yachts we saw in just one day of travel around the yards. Out there, as Works-in-Progress, are a number of others: **Ngatira**, the 1904 Chas. Bailey Jnr. gaff cutter, 40’ 28’ / 8’6” / 5’10”, is up in the Bay of Islands. She is making slow but steady progress to the water. When relaunched she will be in as-original condition; a fine example of Chas. Bailey’s design and craftsmanship. **Jessie Logan**, the 1880 Robert Logan 28’6” / 25’3” / 8’6” / 3’3”, centreboard gaff cutter is being rerigged and ballasted at the Auckland Traditional Boatbuilding School. We may see her out on the



Thelma’s pristine new deck

water later this coming season.

While **Thelma** was Arch Logan’s largest racing classic, **Viking** was Chas Bailey Senior’s equivalent of 1893. At 67’ LOD she was the largest racing yacht built up to that time. She is currently at Salthouse Boatbuilding’s yard being redecked and some “Tender-Loving-Care” being undertaken where necessary. Also at the Salthouse yard is **Windhaven**, Colin Wild’s 1948, 71’ 54’ / 15’ 7” ketch. After years of being away from New Zealand, Bruce Dunlop brought her back from the west coast of the United States in 2005.

Soon afterwards he was made an offer he couldn’t refuse and she is now in the midst of some major work including strengthening the hull, new masts and new deck.

Finally, out at Yachting Developments Ltd’s yard is **Lady Shirley**. A 1938 Colin Wild designed, Percy Vos built 45’ 13’8” / 3’6” ex police launch still using her third engine ever fitted, a 1956 6LW Gardner. She has been replanked and splined in the hull. They have also rebuilt the superstructure. She is due for relaunching in April 2008. Also out there is **Erewhon**, a 1949, 64’ Colin Wild-built version of **Bacchante**. After **Lady**

Shirley is relaunched and other superyacht projects permit, Ian Cooke, the owner of Yachting Developments Ltd, will have his apprentices undertake her restoration.

The classic yacht scene here is rocketing ahead and the momentum is accelerating for the preservation of New Zealand’s yachting heritage. While the current batch of classics mentioned is very significant, after their completion the next echelon of classics may not be as large, length-wise, but will nonetheless be equally, if not more numerous. Long may our passion last!

CLASSIC YACHT ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

GENERAL ENQUIRIES:
CLUB CAPTAIN YACHTS:
CLUB CAPTAIN LAUNCHES:
www.classicyacht.org.nz

Joyce Talbot (09) 836 4747 or joycetalbot@classicyacht.org.nz
Jason Prew (09) 846 4721
Ian Gavin (09) 846 1828