



Story of the month: June 2008

by Chris Chivers

The *Tomboy* Revival (*revive*: to bring back to life or existence) **The Story So Far!**

My father owned the *Tomboy* when I was a young boy in the 1960's – 1972. I have many fond memories of the times my brother and I spent with dad at the boat, more often than not sitting on the mooring in Lindisfarne Bay. Dad spent most of his time “head down and bum up” working on the V8 motor as he used to race the *Tomboy* in Motor Yacht Club events and at various regattas. The *Tomboy* is a wooden boat 25 feet long and only just over 6 foot wide at the widest point of her beam. In 1972 my father had a career change which forced him to sell the *Tomboy*, (I like to think reluctantly).

The *Tomboy* of my childhood



My brother and I often talked about finding the *Tomboy* and restoring her. In late 2004 my brother told me he had found the *Tomboy* and she was on a mooring at Cygnet. I later checked this out and found her to be the “Leo Eugene” with a large forward cabin and a 20 horse power Mercury on a bracket attached to the stern. I located the owner of ‘Leo Eugene’, told my story and asked if they ever decided to sell the boat to give me the first option to buy.



Found as the *Leo Eugene*

The short story is, in early 2005 I was contacted by the owner and I bought the boat. I moved the boat to my home and stripped her. There were two more names under her many coats of paint, ‘Lee-ann’ and ‘Anne-lee’. During this process a gentleman by the name of Bruce Sault introduced himself to me because he thought he may have some material I could use which he wanted to sell. I told Mr Sault that I would buy anything he thought I could use. Fortunately for me the material came with Mr Sault’s skills, tools and labour. God only knows what the *Tomboy* may have turned out if it was not for Bruce Sault, perhaps a sand pit in a children’s play ground!

The goal was to have the *Tomboy* ready for the 2007 Wooden Boat Festival, but I soon came to realise 'I had bitten off more than I could chew'. Working on the boat outdoors was weather dependent and at times frustrating. Eventually we extended the roof of my garage and put the boat under cover.



Of interest, (a reminder of the small world we live in) my brother was at the 2007 Wooden Boat Festival and overheard a conversation concerning the *Tomboy*. My brother joined the conversation and advised Doug Elliot (the son of George Elliot who dad bought the *Tomboy* from) I now owned the boat. Doug has since visited me and the boat, as he plans to make a model of the *Tomboy*.

Doug Elliot informed me the *Tomboy* was built in Sydney around 1932-4 and was based on a Chris Craft design. Arthur Drysdale brought it to Tasmania, had a cabin put on it to run passengers from Wrest Point. Later the Elliots found it resting in the mud on the Tamar River and purchased it from a 'bookie' possibly Jack Berenging, or similar? At this time the *Tomboy* had a flat keel and they had trouble with water leaking through her diagonal planked bottom. The Elliots replaced the bottom with 3 inch by 1 inch huon pine and fitted a blue gum keel. Doug said at one time the *Tomboy* averaged a speed of 39.7 miles per hour over a distance from Lindisfarne to the Bridgewater Bridge when fitted with an Oldsmobile V8 engine.



I now hope to have the *Tomboy* ready for the 2009 Wooden Boat Festival, which I have already registered in and paid (so the pressure's on). I am not restoring the boat to look like the way she was when dad owned her, but as an open 'gentleman's' day cruiser. Briefly the work undertaken to date is:-

1. After completely stripping her, she was braced and rolled over (upside down)
2. Old blue gum keel removed and new celery keel shaped and fitted
3. Bottom of hull 3' by 1' huon pine planks re-corked, filled and primed
4. Side plank joins routered and celery slithers glued in place
5. Bow strengthened with laminated celery strips which are rebated into the keel
6. New celery/king billy chine boards fitted to hull for extra strength
7. The boat rolled back upright and all paint removed from interior
8. Various hull planks replaced etc.
9. Old stern removed and new celery top pine stern fitted (wood finish)
10. Extensive work to gunwhale for extra strength
11. Bow deck beams fitted and laminated marine ply shaped over the top
12. Blue gum engine bed rails made up and fitted
13. Exterior primed and painted white (bottom black)
14. Interior primed and painted saffron
15. King Billy flooring fitted throughout interior

Future work for completion;-

1. Seating, interior completion, windscreen etc
2. Steering
3. 350 Chev V8 to be installed, propeller and shaft work
4. Fuel tank/s
5. Trailer
6. Miscellaneous never ending odd jobs...

We would love to hear from you!

To contribute stories or make any suggestions for the newsletter please get in touch with Lois Ryan by email: media@australianwoodenboatfestival.com.au

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