



WOOLLACOTT ASSOCIATION

EBB TIDE - FEATURE BOAT OF THE MONTH



Designer: Bert Woollacott Design: Marco Polo Dimensions 28'0" x 8'6" x 4'9" Launched c1959 Painted white with buff deck and black bottom.

Ebb-tide was built on an empty section in Kawerau Avenue, Devonport by Joe Davies and launched at Devonport Yacht Club in 1959. I lived in number 30 Kawerau Avenue and watched her being built by Joe who lived opposite me. I was sailing a 22-foot Woollacott yacht named "Tiara" at the time but as my family got larger I needed a bigger boat and also had an ambition to go offshore. As Joe had reached mature years and used Ebb-Tide only occasionally I approached him and suggested I buy his boat. After a lot of persuasion on my part, he reluctantly agreed to sell. I sold "Tiara" to Pony More and I became the owner of a boat that fitted my dreams of ocean sailing. As years went by, each winter I made some alterations to accommodation down below, fitting a gas cooker and refrigerator and re-engining with a diesel. Moderate success was achieved in club racing with entries in the first two man round the North island race and in 1967 raced to Noumea with Fred Norris, Alex Stewart, Brian Johnstone and Pony More as crew. These efforts convinced me that Ebb-tide was the boat to venture further offshore in. In May 1972, my wife Coral and I set off for Tonga, Samoa, Wallace Island and Fiji on a cruise to last six months. Near the end of this cruise we were driven ashore on Bengga Island, 30 miles southwest of Suva, during Hurricane Bebe, but managed to salvage the boat and return home after an eventful six months and great confidence in the boat and ourselves. 1979 saw us leave Auckland again, bound for Suva. It was a rough trip, where we lay a hull for 22 hours, and eventually turned and ran before gales, under bare poles, towing warps and a car tyre attached to the anchor warp. We arrived in Suva with the thought that Ebb-tide had once again performed well. Leaving Suva, we proceeded westward to Lautoka (passing Bengga of fond memories to Port). With ambitions to cruise Yasawa Islands. These islands, which stretch 50 miles to the North of Viti Levu.

are magnificent cruising grounds. and with the aid of charts, made by Harold Eickmere of Northland, who spent some time in the area. We were able to spend some weeks and find safe anchorages. Returning to Lautoka, we cleared several days later and set course for Port Vila in Vanuatu (New Hebrides). With fair winds we made Port Vila in fine style and made use of a mooring off a local waterfront hotel. After some days ashore we met Dale and Jenny Pomeroy from Nelson in Whakatari. Who we found great company and continued North, cruising with them among the islands. On return to Port Vila in early October it was decided to return to New Zealand, but day after day forecasts were for fresh South-East winds and 100% cloud cover. Finally we decided to go so with reef mainsail and staysail we set off. I had decided to use Walpole Island, about 200 miles Southeast of New Caledonia. As a waypoint on our course for home. Complete cloud cover made sun sights impossible but we managed to get one position line by radio beacon from the Loyalty Islands. By keeping an accurate dead reckoning plot, I hoped to finally raise Walpole Island. After several days, early one morning I saw large flocks of birds coming from a point off the bow. This has to be Waipole. Sure enough, some hours passed and a long, flat land, covered in scrub, appeared. This was Walpole. As we got closer, a more uninspiring place I couldn't imagine, but it was a landfall and gave me a position. Shortly after the wind went round to the North-west, so I set all plain sail and made good daily runs until the latitude of Norfolk Island. Then the honeymoon was over. We got back to fresh Southwest winds and shortened sail. For several days we plugged away in discomfort but made good headway and finally made landfall at the Needles on Great Barrier Island. We made contact with Auckland radio and gave an ETA of 8AM the following morning. By 7.30 we had rounded North Head and made our way to Admiralty Steps for customs clearance. So ended another successful cruise. Where to next? And when? In 2002 I sold Ebb-tide to Jeff Cook, after a lot of soul searching and heated discussions, the decision was made, and my dream and I parted company. The consolation is that I know she is in good hands and will give Jeff the pleasure we have had for the 39 years together.

Phil Waring

I first encountered Ebb-Tide in 1983 when I lived on Kawau Island next door to Fred Lidgards at Sunny Bay. Phil and Coral Warring would visit and anchor off regularly during the summer for many years. I was up to my neck at the time rebuilding an old 22ft Logan type launch in the shed dreaming of joining the boaties in the bays and enjoying the many jewels of the Hauraki Gulf. It was when I lived at Two House Bay a few years later I mentioned to Phil that if he ever wanted to sell the boat I'd like first refusal. Several years later when Phil offered the boat for sale I didn't have the money. I'd just bought my house out of a broken marriage and was in no position to stretch any further. Undeterred by this fact, Phil was still keen to for me to own the boat, and suggested that we not worry about the money but agree on a price. This generous offer allowed me to pay her off within two years. Thank you Phil.

I first took possession of Ebb-Tide in July 2000 while she hauled was out at Sandspit Yacht Club. She had been moored up the Mahurangi River for 12 years since leaving Devonport, when Phil and Coral retired to Warkworth. The very first job required was, to remove the rudder and repair its bearing surfaces. While laying the heavily leaded rudder down onto the work bench it slipped out of my hands and dropped on to the saw horses loosening off a 1914- 1915 Volunteer Gallipoli medal of Joe Davies (the builder of Ebb-Tide) that Phil had soldered to the rudder stock. I had great delight in refastening Joe back on to the rudder stock as the first and strongest lasting connection with the boat builder who I had never met, but admired and enjoyed his craftsmanship. Joe's medal gets polished every year on and around ANZAC day. I joined the Devonport Yacht Club that year and sailed the boat to the Bay of Islands for the summer. Ebb-Tide has hauled out every winter at DYC and progressively refurbished. The Yanmar motor overhauled removed from the cabin and installed under the new extended and self draining cockpit, new rig, new mizzen. When I resteped the mast I found a 1959 two shilling (florin) at the base, I returned this when resteping the mast. I found several pencil drawings on the plywood in the forward bunk, which were drawn by Phil's young grandson, Simon 30 years ago. I have replaced the windows, fibreglassed the decks, completely refurbished the interior, and replaced the galley. The boat has been moored at Bayswater Marina for a number of years where I lived on board in the summer and hauled out in the winter. While I have owned her, she has sailed in the Bay of Islands Classic Tall Ships race, entered Mahurangi Regattas, Devonport Yacht Club races and cruises and circumnavigated New Zealand in two parts during January, February, March 2006 and Dec 2006 January, February 2007. Ebb-Tide has won the Woollacott Cup, B Division night race to Kawau, Mahurangi Cup and the Lady Pat Trophy. She was on display at the Auckland Boat Show in 2005 representing the Devonport Yacht Club in its Centenary year. The circumnavigation of New Zealand took her from Auckland to Cape Reinga, to New Plymouth, Picton, Lytttleton, Akaroa, Dunedin and Stewart Island, then to Fiordland, Westport and back to Picton where she spent the winter. The following January we spent time in the Marlborough Sounds, Abel Tasman, Durville Island before leaving for Gisborne and back to Auckland. Selection of sailors as crew included Devonport Yacht Club members Steve Hinton, Dot Woollacott and Daniel Leech.

We sailed 3,300 nautical miles. Some memorable moments included 100 miles of Raglan where we spent an awful night laying a hull after an even worse day battling a southerly gale hard on the nose with just a tiny jib and fully reefed mizzen, after the boom had broken the previous evening rolling on a wave in the darkness and gybing awkwardly. Five days in Picton licking our wounds, a new crew and a new boom and off on our Southern Sojourn which included five weeks at Stewart Island with continuous gales and severe storms which tested a mans resolve, but was rewarded by the sheer beauty and power of the these southern isles and inlets. A remarkable top speed reached was 14.6 knots by GPS running down huge southern ocean swells off Dusky Sound heading towards George Sound. An average speed of 6.5 knots was achieved Picton to Gisborne, 300 miles over a 48 hour period. We sailed broad reaching through Cook Strait at 8 to 9 knots in a stiff Norwester at times in double figures and travelling up the back of the waves at 6 knots. She has been through French Pass three times, the last time logged at 13 knots on GPS under full sail in 10 knots of breeze and around 10 knots of

knarly current. I still have the original table of offsets and lines drawings from Bert, together with photos of launching on 9 May 1959. When she is hauled out she still sits in the original hardwood cradle the boat was built on. Original hand stitched sails from Frank Warnock, Shore Sails, were on board when I purchased Ebb-Tide, but these have since been replaced. The original rigging was stainless and galvanized, all hand served. These have also been replaced. Summer trips on the boat include visiting the Bay of Islands, Great Barrier and the Mokohinaus. She is now peacefully moored back at Scott's Landing, hauling out at DYC in the winter. At 84 Phil Warring still sails with me, especially the Mahurangi Cup weekend. Now turning 50 Ebb-Tides re-launching birthday is to be held Sunday, 10 May 2009 at 8.15 am at Devonport Yacht Club. Coral Warring will re-launch Ebb- Tide, and I look forward to many more years of happy sailing.

Jeff Cook April 2009

