



WOOLLACOTT ASSOCIATION

TRUANT - FEATURE BOAT



Designer: John Woollacott Design: Truant Dimensions: 28' LOA 24' 4" LWL 8'7" Beam 4'4" Draft 4.45 tons Launched c1959 Painted white

TRUANT'S JUBILEE On December 19, 2009 a special relaunching of the 28foot Woollacott sloop Truant will take place at the Devonport Yacht Club to mark the yacht's 50th Jubilee. Truant was designed and built by Bert Woollacott's son John in 1959 and launched by John's youngest daughter Gail just prior to Christmas that year at the Devonport Yacht Club. The yacht was built in the open under canvas covers on John Woollacott family's front lawn in Wairoa Rd in Devonport. Truant is built of single skin construction on permanent frames and steamed timbers and planked in North American Oregon pine. Following her launching I used to crew on Truant for John on a number of long distance blue water races including three Whangarei-Moko Hinau Islands -Poor Knights races and a number of other local blue water classics. On one Whangarei race we got a real pasting racing in an easterly gale and being one of only three yachts out of a fleet of eighteen which were able to complete the course. On another occasion, I sailed with the family one Christmas holidays up north as far as Doubtless Bay and return. After taking over the yacht in 1967 I owned her for the next thirty one years and raced and cruised in her extensively covering many thousands of incident-free nautical miles. I have kept a log book of all my sailing experiences in Truant including a record of all the crews who have sailed with me over the years. My sailing highlights in this fine little sea boat include a five month voyage around New Zealand in the summer of 1972/73 and racing in the first Two Man Round the North Island Race in 1977 in which Truant won the Borough of Devonport Trophy for the first Devonport yacht on handicap. The voyage to Stewart Island and back up New Zealand's west coasts was a real adventure and was to prove the yacht's sea keeping abilities under some pretty atrocious weather conditions encountered in southern latitudes. In those days navigation had to be by traditional means, sextant and chronometer and where radio coverage was not what it is to-day. I have done quite a bit of offshore sailing in my life but this particular voyage will always remain the highlight of my fifty two years of yacht ownership.

I treasure the memories of all my voyages and of all those who have sailed with me in Truant. Truant has always been a happy ship; has never let me down and believe me we have sailed in some really tough situations. She has also taught a number of young men a lot about seamanship many who have gone on to make their mark in the sailing world. In order to take over Ladybird in 1997 I reluctantly had to part with my beloved yacht and sold her to an old friend of mine, Mike Sweeney who used to crew with me as a teenager. Mike eventually sold Truant to Mike and Natasha Strong who later came into partnership with me in Ladybird and sold Truant to her current owners of Bill Rimmer and Steve Hinton partnership.

Martin Foster





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