



Photo - Will Calver. www.oceanphotography.co.nz

Waitangi during shake-down sail after her re-launch 25th June 2013



fourteen

Refreshed for the next generation

Larry Paul, Skipper.

In February 2013 the Robert Logan-designed, 119-year-old, classic yacht *Waitangi* entered the shed at Horizon Boats in Stillwater. When she emerged four months later her distinctive black hull had a gleaming new paint job, she had a new, straighter bowsprit and her brightwork glowed beautifully. Plus, there were many less obvious improvements to help ensure she is good for another 100 years.

Thanks to the work of boatbuilder Wayne Olsen, *Waitangi* had new, diagonal spears in the bow to reduce the “panting” that used to occur in the large flat areas up forward when she thumped through heavy seas. Particular attention had been paid to the starboard bow area where the fibreglass coating had shown signs of delamination and some outer planking needed replacement. All the repaired areas were re-glassed, faired and repainted; and the bulwarks received new coats of paint, too. *Waitangi*'s curved bowsprit, which had suffered rot where it passed through the bulwarks, was replaced with a new, straight sprit.

Classic yachts are known for their brightwork - the nautical term for varnished timber - and *Waitangi* absorbed many hours of tender care as chipped and faded varnish was stripped from her cockpit, hatches, cap rails, cabin sole and mast and spars. When she returned to the water in June, her timber shone with a new, high UV-and-impact-resistant varnish from Altex Coatings Ltd.

The decks, which were blackened under layers of oil, were stripped back to bare timber and recoated with a diluted Altex Coatings 421 sealer to expose the honey-coloured kauri and provide a low-slip surface. Other jobs included re-seizing the rigging, removing and servicing the engine, updating the electrics and replacing the stern tube and gland.

Most of the work on *Waitangi* was completed at Horizon Boats, Stillwater, while her spars were worked on in the Lysaght building in Pakenham St West, in the Viaduct area, a space made available by courtesy of the Auckland Council.

Many people contributed to *Waitangi*'s recent restoration, for they recognise her immense value in New Zealand's maritime history. Launched in 1894, she was the last big racing yacht built by Robert Logan Snr. Immediately after launching, Logan sailed *Waitangi* to Wellington where she won the NZ First Class regatta. She had a successful racing career in Wellington until she returned to Auckland in 1920.

In Auckland, her part-owners in various syndicates included five commodores of the Royal NZ Yacht Squadron. She spent most of World War II on the hardstand. In 1946 she was sold to a Lyttelton couple, Mrs K E Clarke and J R C Kilian. They converted her to a ketch and cruised the Hauraki Gulf in the summer of 1946/47 before heading south. Due to ill health, they sold *Waitangi* in 1948 to the Chapman family, who lived on board her at Russell in the Bay of Islands before refitting her and departing on a world cruise.

Skipped by 23-year-old Peter Oldham, *Waitangi* and her crew survived a tumultuous Tasman crossing which included an engine failure, a roll over in mid-Tasman and 26 days under jury rig.

On arrival in Sydney, the Chapmans cancelled their plans to cruise the world and, after an insurance claim for repairs, *Waitangi* passed to a new owner. Skipper Peter Oldham, now 87, recounts the story of *Waitangi*'s dramatic crossing of the Tasman, in the Spring 2013 issue of *NZ Yachting* magazine.

Waitangi completed a three-month, round trip to New Zealand about 1960 under the command of then-owner Captain Percy London. Due to atrocious weather, both crossings of the Tasman took more than three weeks and *Waitangi* was declared ‘lost at sea’ before being located by aircraft 60 miles east of Sydney. She was towed into Newcastle. During this voyage *Waitangi* had a ketch-rig and a large “tramshed” cabin. It provided extra space but was aesthetically terrible.

Waitangi passed through several owners in Australia. She gradually deteriorated until, in 1986, a Melbourne syndicate of 10 rescued her. The syndicate researched *Waitangi*'s original design and organised the funding for a complete restoration. It was to be as authentic as possible and return *Waitangi* to her original livery and configuration. She was relaunched on her 100th birthday, 13 December 1994. The passion and commitment that went into this restoration was a turning point and ensured her on-going preservation.

When the Melbourne syndicate took on the preservation of another classic yacht (the 1897 *Sayonara*) it put up *Waitangi* for sale, hoping to see her return to New Zealand. The Classic Yacht Charitable Trust purchased her in 2003 and still owns her.

Waitangi's recent extensive refurbishment was made possible by the financial assistance of the Lion Foundation and close cooperation from Wayne Olsen of Horizon Boats Ltd. He undertook the build work and guided the skippers and crew of *Waitangi* in the considerable amount of voluntary work required for more menial tasks.

On Sunday, 30 June 2013, more than 150 members of the Classic Yacht Association and friends of *Waitangi* welcomed this sleek, black beauty's return to the water. New Zealand's most recognisable classic yacht was launched at a ceremony at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron. 

Waitangi

For more information about *Waitangi* and other vessels owned by the Classic Yacht Charitable Trust, visit www.classicyachtcharitabletrust.org.nz.



Waitangi at the re-launch celebration after her 2013 refit.



Waitangi tied alongside a fairmile at Lidgard House, Kawau on her cruise to NZ in the 1960s. Note Tramshed additions



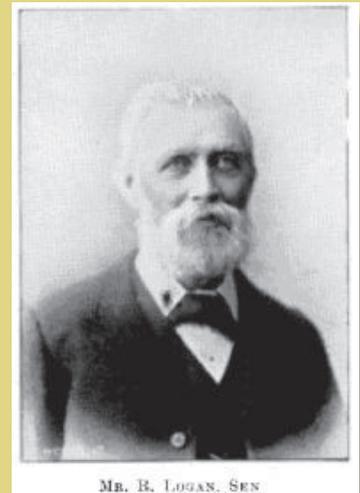
Captain Percy London at the wheel of *Waitangi* in the cramped cabin, on her way to New Zealand around 1960.



The new diagonal spars added to reduce 'panting' in the large flat bow sections when in heavy seas



Waitangi in the 2013 Mahurangi Cruising Club Regatta



MR. R. LOGAN. SNR

Waitangi Specifications

Designer/Builder:
 Robert Logan Snr
 Launched:
 13th December 1894
 L.O.A:
 74ft
 Boom end to Bowsprit
 LOD:
 58ft
 LWL:
 38ft
 Beam:
 11ft
 Draft:
 9ft 7in
 Displacement:
 22 tonnes
 Sail areas:
 Main 1,385 sq ft
 Jack Topsail 225 sq.ft
 Jib Topsail 161 sq.ft
 Jib 248 sq.ft
 Staysail 240 sq.ft