

History Of Yacht "Merlin"

It is believed that Merlin was probably built in 1902 by a Mr Derwent Aitcheson in Waikouiti.

The boat was used mainly as a fishing boat in the Karitane and Moeraki areas. The main fish caught was blue cod and groper which was mainly "given" or traded for other goods in the immediate area. (There is a book on the history of the Moeraki fishing industry which has photographs of boats like Merlin pulled up on the beach.)

Folklore has it that Merlin was once blown out to sea in a southerly storm with one man and a boy on board—after a day had passed most people had given up on the boat ever being found—however at the end of the second day Merlin returned over the horizon with everyone safe and well!

The boat spent the next few decades in the ports from Oamaru to the little fishing settlement near the Nuggets lighthouse, spending some time as a general carrier on the Otago Harbour. Merlin eventually passed into the hands of Mr. Buchannan, a sawmill owner from Akatore--south of Taieri Mouth around the 1950's.

Mr. K. Martin owned Merlin for 5 or so years around the late 1950's and early 60's. Kevin recalls getting the train up to Dunedin from Gore to sail the yacht over a weekend and catch the train back later in the weekend. The boat was moored on a swing mooring in the northerly half of the Otago Boat Harbour often sailing on and off the mooring and entering the harbour through the (now filled in) gap in the Eastern rock wall. The boat had no motor but there was a stern tube fitted on the quarter but no shaft as the stuffing box was "dowelled". The engine may have been a "Clinton" or something that sounded similar.

Mr. Les. Skinner—(Dunedin Central Fire Chief) purchased the boat from Martin.

Unfortunately Mr. Skinner removed all of the hand-made wooden blocks and other rigging to make a wall-hanging for his lounge!

A Mr. Robert Watt bought the boat from Skinner and sailed the yacht extensively on the Otago Harbour.

Mr. Bill Inglis bought the boat from Watt and he also sailed the yacht frequently---often entering races for the Otago and also Port Chalmers Yacht Clubs.

Merlin appears to have ended up in Oamaru again, this time for an extended period.

She broke her mooring in Oamaru and ended up on the little beach adjacent Holmes' Wharf. During an attempt to lift her off the beach with a crane and ropes, her stem was extensively damaged.

Mr. John Salmond then purchased Merlin and had the stem restored. The boat was seen on a trailer at the Otago Yacht Club's stand during a watersports display in the Edgar centre in the early 1990's.

The boat was for many years laid-up in a cradle on the Otago yacht club's hard-stand from where she was sold upon Mr. Salmond's death.

Merlin then went to someone? in the Redcliffs area of Christchurch where she was restored by Franklins boatyard.

I believe that Merlin has always had a gaff-sail rig and I remember sailing against her in the older (1879) "Plucky". Merlin was always faster off the wind however the smaller Plucky

could hold her own when beating to windward and on a reach---we often ended up less than a minute apart --sharing the honours---great fun!

I hope this is of some assistance to you.

Les. McBean—lesnbron@gmail.com

Andrew Hewitt

From: cm.doudney <cm.doudney@xtra.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 31 March 2016 11:35 a.m.
To: Andrew Hewitt
Cc: Chris Doudney
Subject: Re: Emailing: P3130022 (002).jpg

Hi Andrew,

It is great to see Merlin sailing again!

During her refit at Franklins (which was very thorough) it was apparent that she had been built with a centreboard - the Beaven's elected to refit her (straightened) keel, rather than revert to a rebuilt centreboard case. She also had a shaft for an inboard engine, which it would have been nice to see retained to enable an electric inboard engine to be fitted (her counter stern does not really suit an outboard bracket), but the Beavens decided to retain the outboard option, possibly on the basis of cost, and had the shaft plugged. I note below a little information on Merlin's past history, previously sent to Lesley Beaven:

"Dear Lesley,

Merlin's age would be a lot closer to the 1840's than the 1940's.

My recollection is that Merlin is the last survivor of one of four identical (or at least similar) boats built (probably at Port Chalmers) some time in the second half of the nineteenth century. They were either pleasure boats, or, more likely, inshore fishing boats. Merlin's revealed original centreboard construction indicates that there would have been a useful ability to work around the sand banks in Otago Harbour. It is likely that her conversion to a fixed keel yacht would have occurred when her owner desired more space down below and a steadier boat for off-shore activity.

Kevin Martin, the Otago Yacht Club yard manager, a previous owner of Merlin, would be the best authority on Merlin's history."

Regards,

Chris

Chris Doudney
124 Beachville Road
Redcliffs, Christchurch 8081
03 384 2263 027 221 9397
cm.doudney@xtra.co.nz

On 30/03/2016, at 3:22 PM, Andrew Hewitt <andrew@siseed.co.nz> wrote:

Re: "MERLIN"

Hello Chris

Thanks for the pic.

I've attached one of her, taken by another entrant, whilst sailing in our recent (this month) Classic Boat Regatta at Lake Hood - now her 'home'

I'm keen to assemble as much information as I can on her history. I have some 'early' history, supplied by the NZ Classic Yacht Assoc. But apart from two owners (of which Salmond is one) - I don't know much of her yachting career in Dunedin.

Andrew Hewitt

From: admin@classicyacht.org.nz <admin@classicyacht.org.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 11 November 2015 9:51 a.m.
To: Andrew Hewitt
Subject: Re: "Merlin"

Hi again Andrew,

Harold has been doing a little more research and has come up with this gem below too.

It's clear that LARK was either built as a launch or converted to one c1915.
She was owned by "Scotty" Henderson who proposed taking her to Auckland Is to search for the gold from the General Grant in February 1916.
I don't know if that happened but her engine was removed shortly after and put in the yacht REVENGE. It would seem unlikely in early 1916 during WW1.
But it would be interesting to follow that story up!!

Cheers,

Harold
Harold Kidd | PRINCIPAL

Regards

Tanya Ankersmit
Secretary
Classic Yacht Association of NZ

P O Box 911055, Victoria Street West
Auckland 1142
p. 0275 453 355

From: Andrew Hewitt
Sent: Tuesday, 10 November 2015 1:33 p.m.
To: Tanya

Thank you very much for this

Cheers
Andrew

From: admin@classicyacht.org.nz [mailto:admin@classicyacht.org.nz]
Sent: Tuesday, 10 November 2015 1:18 p.m.
To: Andrew Hewitt <andrew@siseed.co.nz>
Subject: Fw: "Merlin"

Dear Andrew,

I have the following information from Harold Kidd who is familiar with this vessel.

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etary

Classic Yacht Association of NZ

P O Box 911055, Victoria Street West

Auckland 1142

p. 0275 453 355

This MERLIN was built as a Moeraki fishing boat c1900.

She was built in Dunedin; don't know the builder.

As LARK she was used as a yacht from c1924 and owned by Les Jones of Dunedin in the 1930s.

She was bought around 1957 and renamed MERLIN by Robert Watt who largely rebuilt her.

A later owner was A J Salmond (1983).

Harold

Harold Kidd | PRINCIPAL

Andrew Hewitt

From: cm.doudney <cm.doudney@xtra.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 30 March 2016 1:18 p.m.
To: Andrew Hewitt
Cc: Chris Doudney
Subject: Merlin
Attachments: merlin pic.pdf; ATT00001.htm

Hi Andrew,

I noticed your request on the Canterbury Classic Boats website. I am very familiar with Merlin, having known her from the late 1970s to her more recent refit in the ownership of Peter and Lesley Beaven. You may be aware that one of her previous owners is Kevin Martin, currently still the Otago Yacht Club site manager.

I attach one of the few photos I have of Merlin sailing on Otago Harbour. When I showed it to Peter Beaven, he said "I hope those are large people on board". John Salmond, Merlin's owner at the time, was actually quite tall...

Let me know if you want any further information.

Regards,

Chris

Chris Doudney
124 Beachville Road
Redcliffs, Christchurch 8081
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cm.doudney@xtra.co.nz