

Norwalk Islands Sharpies news

by ROBERT AYLIFFE

THANKS so much for the (literally) cards, letters, phone calls, visits and emails following my telling you in the last *AABB* that I have left Duck Flat Wooden Boats for my new business, **nisboats.com** - I am touched, and as a result, feel not so much wind, as a gale under my wings!

It has been a wonderful start, and I look forward to working hard to meet your expectations in the great future that lies ahead. I also look forward to continuing to support my friends at BoatCraft Pacific, Duck Flat Wooden Boats, Randall Cooper, Harken and SpunSpar, who have been especially good to me over these years. Again, thank you all.

2004 was a great year for NIS racing, especially for me, as it relates to NIS23 *Charlie Fisher*. We were placed in the over 300 boat Milang-Goolwa race organised by the superb Goolwa Regatta Yacht Club and then a couple of weeks later won the return Goolwa-Milang race organised by the Victor Harbor Sailing Club.

Later, having seen *Charlie Fisher* placed in it some years ago, when Michael Storer and his muse Marion Fitzgerald borrowed her, we succeeded in taking out right line honors in the big, 67 kilometre, two lake race, the Goolwa to Meningie Classic.



NIS23, *Charlie Fisher*, on her way to Meningie.



THOMAS Miller comes ashore at Meningie, with his dad, Jonathon, after helping sail *Charlie Fisher* to line honours victory in the 2004 Goolwa Meningie race. (above)



THOMAS Miller - Super Crew, with the Goolwa Meningie Line Honours trophy. (right)

The last was the sweetest; having arrived at the start of the race 20 minutes late (because of weed fouling the outboard) and receiving permission to start, *Charlie Fisher* faced the daunting prospect of light air and on the nose, and a fleet almost over the horizon. By the time we got across Lake Alexandrina to the narrows, at Narrung and almost midway through the race, *Charlie Fisher* and her first time crew of Jonathon Miller and his seven-year-old son and now master mariner, Thomas, had caught the entire fleet.

Jostling with fluky winds in the narrows saw our lead come and go, and once out in the treacherous Lake Albert, we were startled to find the shelter of the narrows gave way to 20 plus knots, on the nose, and on a lake with a 37 kilometre fetch and only 1.8 metres of average depth.

Square waves and close together. We headed straight into it. A couple of other yachts followed but soon bore away, one with serious structural damage from falling off waves. *Charlie's* flat bottom becomes one side of a vee when heeled, and when heeled it is the softest riding, highest winded, dry yacht you could sail.

We seemed to be outpointing everything in these conditions. We only needed two big tacks,

and some two hours later we blasted over the line about 300 metres before the next boat! Thomas got so excited he convinced his dad the next morning to buy him a second hand Mirror that had he had seen in the Duck Flat yard.

He is now trying to join one of the Adelaide foreshore clubs that race Mirrors!

I love this stuff.



KEVIN Nicole's self built NIS29, *Chilli*, on her way to her second win in the Goolwa Milang race.

Kevin Nicole also had a big win, his third, in his division of the Goolwa Milang race. His NIS *Chilli* gets better and better.

2004 was also a great year for NIS building.

Tony and Yvonne Nichol in Adelaide launched their beautiful NIS26, *Little Jimmy*.

Dave Huard in *Ann Arbor*, Michigan is completing his NIS 29. He is using the Australian made spars and booms, should be launching any day now.



IAN Ramsay's NIS 29 ex Basil Stitt hull arrives for completion at Duck Flat Wooden Boats.

Ian Ramsay has bought the part built *Basil Stitt* NIS29 from Cairns. Duck Flat Wooden Boats will be completing the hull and structure, then NISBOATS will be working with Ian to complete the rigging. Basil had done a nice job of the hull, it will be a great boat once done.

Kevin Nicole has completed the makeover of his double Goolwa-Milang winning NIS29, *Chilli*. He has replaced his original heavy booms with new NISBOATS/Randall Cooper Booms, and he has also changed from mid boom sheeting to end boom sheeting and lighter sheets on the main. Much less stress on the rig in jibes, and gets rid of all the junk on the roof. If the boat went well before, it should go a lot better now.

While I was down on Tasmania at the Wooden Boat Festival there, I caught up with Rob and Jo Nolan, and their excellent NIS23 *Shearwater*. Rob and Jo built her and have sailed her extensively out of Hobart. I had the pleasure sailing with them at the close of the festival, and for a while we seemed to be the fastest boat in the fluky airs of the late summer Derwent.



ROB and Jo Nolan's self built NIS23, *Shearwater*, during the recent Tasmanian Wooden Boat Festival sailpast.

Fastest that is, until *Serano* joined us. *Serano*, beautifully built in strip plank by former NIS23 builder Angelo Pericleous is the first NIS31 to be built in Tasmania. This boat is a rocket ship. It is also highly modified in rig and keel from the original plans, though I can't help the feeling that the original yawl rig, built this light might have been just as fast and perhaps slightly more convenient. Doesn't matter. All these boats are slippery. This one screams. With her seven crew and asymmetrical spinnaker up, she has shown over 15.5 knots on the GPS for protracted periods, She has recently added the big Sailing South Series, the Tasmanian coastal race that follows the Sydney Hobart to the cupboard full of trophies that she has garnered in her short racing life.

Angelo fitted her with a fixed bulb keel (water is deep in these parts) a foil spade rudder and a retracting carbon fibre bow sprit. Her sails were made by Doyle Fraser, with an excellent and economical #1 jib by up and coming young Kettering sailmaker, Russell Streckfuss.



DIANNE Barkas driving Serano, the Angelo Pericleous souped up NIS31 that she and her husband Roy campaign so successfully out of Hobart.

Watching Dianne Barkas helming the boat through the fleet around the Derwent, confidently burning everything off on the water, was a compelling and stirring sight.

The 31 is a magnificent hull shape and cabin set up. It's so light and strong, and the cabin has an open, minimalist, warm feeling with the timber accents and is very comfortable. No sense of claustrophobia in this space!

Dianne and her husband, Roy very kindly had me to stay at their home in Tasmania on the last night of the amazing Tasmanian Wooden Boat Festival. (More about the festival in next AABB.) During the evening Roy and Dianne were looking through the NISBOATS study CD. They saw *Lena*, the first ever NIS43. As I left Roy was muttering to Dianne, "If the 31 is this fast, wouldn't the 43 be nice?"

"Yes dear."

"Robert, I think we'd better look at the logistics of the 43". This could have Sydney Hobart potential..!"

Good owners make good boats better. If their NIS31 campaign is anything to go by, Dianne and Roy could make the 43 a world beater.

Dan Cavins is coming to South Australia for the SA Wooden Boat Festival!

Dan is a TV News Camera operator from Norwood, Ohio, USA. He built a Norwalk Islands Sharpie 23 up on a first floor in a disused factory over the past couple of years. He bought his sails, spars and the new NIS Easy raise tabernacle systems from Australia and now his boat is sailing in America.

Dan will be staying with the NISBOATS.COM crew at the festival, possibly aboard *Charlie Fisher*, though we have booked him to spend some time on the paddle steamer *Marion*; pretty

stylish accommodation; great view, great showers over the paddle boxes and stunning breakfasts.

After the Festival Dan and I will be going down to Kangaroo Island from Wirrinna on the Fleurieu Peninsula on *Charlie Fisher*. We will be accompanied by Greg Henderson, long time NIS18 owner builder from Humpty Doo, near Darwin. Greg's boat, *Avalon Dream* has had the unhappy experience of being rammed and holed while on its moorings in Fanny Bay, Darwin. The holing, caused by Mr or Ms Anonymous, was fortunately confined to topsides above the waterline. South Australia looks forward to having another NIS18 to add to the local SA NIS fleet.



GREG Henderson's self built, venerable and much loved NIS18, sailing 'somewhere', out from Darwin.

Greg just ordered a new lighter weight mast and the easy raise tabernacles for his boat.

These rigs have transformed the NIS range from being trailer sailers with slightly awkward mast raising systems to the easiest and quickest trailer sailer set ups around. One person, about 15 minutes.



RUTH Mills derigging her Mark Boutle built NIS23, Hobgoblin, by herself in Canberra, just because she can!

Saw my old friend Tony Kennedy at the Tasmanian Wooden Boat Festival. Tony built his NIS 18 in Hahndorf, South Australia, years ago and took *Casper* as she is called, to his new paradise of waterfront property at Bruny Island, Tasmania.



TONY Kennedy's much loved self built NIS18, Casper, on the mooring at Bruny Island, Tasmania.

Tony tells me that he loves his boat and finds *Casper* perfect for his needs.

Peter and Vicky Shipline are ready to put the lead on the bottom of their 23, building in Goolwa. Peter has done a very fine and speedy job of the hull.



VICKY and Peter Shipline with their NIS23, in their workshop at Goolwa.

Ian and Heather MacDonald have got to the same stage as Peter and Vicky, while in Tin Can Bay, Queensland, experienced boat builder Phil Corro is flying into his new NIS26.

Cruising. Have not heard from Jill and David Penhall who are 'somewhere' in Queensland aboard their twice Marlay Point winning NIS26, *Goldon Dream*. If you are out there David and Jill, we'd love to hear of your adventures!

It is a white NIS26, green Cop R Bote permanent antifoul and tan sails. They are towing a little David Payne designed Jilly Boat as a tender.

Next issue I'll try to catch up with the English, German, Croatian and Italian builders, because their experience has relevance for us Australian builders, too. Quite a lot of NIS29s in Italy, at least one NIS18 and a couple of NIS23s as well. There are some NIS18s in Germany and several NIS23s in the UK.

Happy building, happy sailing!



DAVID and Jill Penhall's twice Marlay Point winning, Duck Flat built NIS26, *Goldon Dream* 'somewhere cruising'.

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