

Basic Detail Report



Acrospire III

Vessel number

HV000541

Date

1923

Primary Maker

J Hayes & Sons

Description

ACROSPIRE III is a 50 foot long gaff cutter, carvel planked in New Zealand kauri. It was designed by Charlie Peel, a Victorian born designer and builder well known for many yachts that raced in Victoria and NSW, in particular his designs for the 21 Foot Restricted Class. It was built during 1923 and early 1924 in Sydney at James Hayes and Sons yard in Careening Cove. Peel was working there

at the time, and was part of the team building his design. ACROSPIRE III was built for Joe White, then Vice Commodore of the St Kilda Yacht Club and a prominent yachtsman in Victoria. It was built with the intention of being Victoria's challenger for the Sayonara Cup, an event that had not been raced for since 1911 when it was won by NSW. White had a brewing business, and the name ACROSPIRE is taken from the term that relates to a stage in the grain used in brewing. When it has grown its first shoot it is the right time to use the grain, and that shoot is called the 'acrospire'. His previous yacht the 7.62 m long ACROSPIRE II (HV000148) was built in 1911 for racing on the lake at Ballarat. ACROSPIRE (I) remains elusive, but one newspaper record shows it raced in a mixed fleet including the 7.6m long IDLER (HV000475) suggesting it may have been one of the early square-sterned racing yachts popular on Port Phillip in the early 1900s . ACROSPIRE III was completed in early 1924 and shipped to Melbourne aboard the SS ECHUNGA, arriving there in mid-February. It was launched, rigged and sailed on Port Phillip in the A class. Amongst the fleet was EUN-NA-MARA , which won the 1910 series for NSW under the name CULWULLA III. ACROSPIRE III was designed to rate as an 8 metre and provide an even match with the likely defender of the cup for NSW, which would also be an 8 metre class yacht. However ACROSPIRE III's construction proved too light for the rough conditions on Port Phillip and it was strengthened, adding weight. The outcome was that the yacht sat lower in the water than intended by the designer and with a longer waterline it ended up rating nearly 9 metres. The Sayonara Cup series was eventually organised for early 1928, and by this time White was commodore of the St Kilda Yacht Club. The cup rules required the yacht to sail from Victoria to NSW, and ACROSPIRE III left Williamstown on Boxing Day 1927, starting out in rough conditions. Light winds were encountered off the NSW coast until just after Jervis Bay when they met strong NE headwinds, and they eventually sheltered in Kiama until a southerly change had swept through.

On the tail of that wind they made Sydney Heads early on the afternoon of January 2 1928. Four NSW yachts were available as possible defenders of the Cup, RAWHITI rating 11 metres, CARINA, 9 metres and the two 8 metres NORN and BRAND V. NORN was chosen as the NSW defender, and the first race took place on 21 st January with NORN measured at 8.03 metres and ACROSPIRE III at 8.83 metres, giving NORN a substantial handicap advantage. The race was sailed in a north east breeze, and ACROSPIRE III gradually took the lead on the windward beat to be nearly 3 minutes ahead at the windward mark, increasing this to almost four minutes at the finish. This was not enough to win on handicap, and NORN's rating advantage gave it a win by 3 and ½ minutes. The second race was sailed in light conditions, and NORN took the lead on when the southerly turned toward the east and then north east during the second leg and it was better placed to pick up the new breeze. ACROSPIRE III made up some ground on the final leg as the breeze freshened, but NORN ended up winning by a huge margin of just over 23 minutes. The cup was therefore retained by NSW, and ACROSPIRE III returned to Victoria. Joe White then commissioned a new design from Peel for the Sayonara Cup and this became the 9 metre ACROSPIRE IV (HV000545) which was launched in 1929. ACROSPIRE III remained in Victoria racing in the A class during the 1930s. The sail number changed from S1 to S17 when ACROSPIRE IV was launched. ACROSPIRE III was changed to a Bermudan rig in the early thirties and sold to Hobart owners around 1938 where sailed under the new name ACUSHLA. It raced in A division until after 1948 when it sailed to Sydney with a new owner RA and JAS Dickson and was renamed WAREE. in the 1949/50 season it won the RSYS Norn Cup. An anonymous correspondant wrote about WAREE in Seacraft Magazine early in the 1950s: " At the time of writing, WAREE is sitting forlornly on the RSYS slip awaiting a new owner.....WAREE was being raced hard and consistently. She's an old-timer, but a real whizzer, with an underbody that bears a striking resemblance to some of the really modern designs.... Boats like WARREE were built as day sailers 40 to 50 years ago, so it didn't matter if they were wet, and they certainly were just that; they had less freeboard than some of the modern counterparts like the Bluebirds, which have onnly half the length of WAREE's ilk. On the other hand, of course, driving WAREE hard in a breeze with her stern wave roaring astern gives such a thrill as could never be had from a Bluebird, no matter how hard you drove her". A subsequent owner was well known ocean racing skipper Bill Psaltis. He raced it for a few years before selling it to an owner who left it on a mooring off Scotland Island in Pittwater and rarely used it. The yacht was later was purchased in poor condition by Sandra and Michael Paul who had a property on the island and enjoyed having the graceful yacht to look at from their window. Unfortunately it was not used and kept afloat at times by regular pumping out from local marine tradesman Ian "Bomber" Treharne. It is even understood that it sank on at least one occasion. He eventually suggested they donate the yacht to the current owner who had experience with other yacht restorations including WAITANGI and SAYONARA (HV000367) In 1996/97 ACROSPIRE III was returned to Melbourne and completely restored by the current owner to its original gaff cutter configuration. In 2012 it races with the Classic Yacht Association of Australia in events on Port Phillip.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 15.24 m x 17.98 m x 2.44 m x 2.13 m, 8.13 tonnes (50 ft x 59 ft x 8 ft x 7 ft, 8 tons)