

Basic Detail Report



New Silver Gull

Vessel number

HV000339

Date

1940

Description

Harry Newton Scott launched his self-designed and built NEW SILVER GULL in December 1940 at Yowie Bay, on the eastern shore of Botany Bay, NSW. He was a civil engineer and surveyor, and had built the yacht right on the shore, in fact at high tide the water lapped under the hull as it was being built. Launching as a result was relatively easy. He started construction some years earlier, but even before that had spent some years perfecting the design. His training gave him an edge in maths and drawing, and his sailing background gave him a feel for what he wanted, and what he did not want.

According to notes he is quoted saying his twentieth design was the one that he was finally happy with. He had a naval architect friend give it a review, and for the most part his comments were relatively minor considerations for improvement. One thing though stood out, Harry insisted the centre of buoyancy be forward of midships, whereas the naval architect wanted to stay with convention, whereby the centre is usually just aft of midships. Harry prevailed, and cites the forward location as one reason why the ship is so sea kindly. The other novelty was the rig. Harry's experience and age suggested an easy to handle option was required, and he moved toward a Bermudan ketch as the design developed, then chanced upon a magazine illustration of the eventual wishbone rig. It was an American design, and with perseverance and some luck he located the designer, who sent blue prints of the details so that he could solve some of the problems he could not understand. The hull was planked with spotted gum below the waterline and Oregon above the waterline. The spars were Oregon. When the war began the government had commandeered all available materials, so it was launched without a completed interior. On the first anniversary of its launch he took it sailing with three small, borrowed sails. Throughout the duration of the war he was able to make some progress on finishing it off with whatever materials he could find. After launching the boat and sailing it for a few years it is understood Newton Scott handed over his engineering and surveying business to another associate so he and Oceana could begin cruising the yacht. With the war in progress those opportunities were very limited. Geoff Ruggles (who sailed on WAYFARER HV000152) was a sea scout in Mosman Bay during this wartime period, and recalls NEW SILVER GULL gently making its way into the bay one day. Harry then used an old ring set in the rocks on the Cremorne shoreline to

attach lines and haul the boat down so it was careened on its side for antifouling. Geoff and his friends had their childhood curiosity rewarded by being allowed to help with the scrubbing and painting. In late 1945, Harry and Oceana made their first passages offshore, working up to a Christmas cruise to Hobart in 1946. During this period they learnt how to use the innovative wishbone ketch rig he had built. The cutter rigged mainmast had a wishbone mainsail with the clew level with the mizzen top. This allowed a modest headsail to be set from the mizzen on all points of sail. It was ideal for shorthanded sailing as it divided the sail plan up into a small number of similar sized sails which formed combinations that could be easily matched to the prevailing wind direction, strength and sea conditions. they were easy to handle. When he came to America later on, and they saw this unique rig, he was proud to say it was their design, but he had figured out how to use it. In 1948 they crossed the Tasman Sea to New Zealand intending to stay for six months. Up to this point it had been called SILVER GULL. But prior to leaving New Zealand waters they registered the yacht, and found that name had been used, so they added NEW to its title. In New Zealand there was too much to see and it was 18 months later when they left and headed out into the Pacific and eventually passed through the Panama Canal, making gradual progress with long stops at different ports. Their 12 year voyage from Sydney took them as far as Nova Scotia on the east coast of America in 1957, before returning home via French Polynesia in the Pacific. The voyage ended in late 1959 and had covered almost 43,000 miles. Newton Scott is understood to have died while still living aboard NEW SILVER GULL with Oceana. She sold the boat soon after in mid 1985 to Ian Frood who operated it briefly as a tourist and charter boat on Botany Bay. Frood sold it after only a year to Christopher Wisby from Tasmania, and then in 1989 it was sold to the current owners. At one point it was used in a movie production of the 'Flipper' series, as well as the location for a Canterbury clothing advertisement. It was a well known yacht on Pittwater north of Sydney during the 1960s, still using its unique rig. The current owner is overhauling and restoring the boat to its original condition as far as possible and anticipates cruising NEW SILVER GULL again to familiar places later on in 2011. .

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 16.5 m x 14 m x 12.5 m x 4 m x 2.8 m, 23 tonnes (54.14 ft x 45.93 ft x 41.01 ft x 13.12 ft x 9.19 ft, 23.37 tons)