

Basic Detail Report



The Fan

Vessel number

HV000121

Date

1924

Primary Maker

William Fife III

Description

Colonel Sir Richard Waldie-Griffith commissioned THE FAN as WA's first boat for the relatively new 21 Foot Restricted Class Yacht so that the state would have a representative in the popular interstate series for the class, The Forster Cup. Waldie-Griffith was a late convert to sailing, arriving in Perth in 1922 he took up the sport at an age of 73. The yacht was built in Perth by Hudson Brothers and Waldie-Griffith spared no expense in the project which cost 1100 pounds. The English baronet went back to his homeland for the design, asking the world famous Scottish designer

William Fife III for a set of plans, and he produced a typical Fife profile. However compared to the other Australian designs racing in the class, Fife's design was heavier, deeper and had no bowsprit. Waldie-Griffith also put the project in the hands of one of the West's best skippers of the period, 'Bunna' Howson. THE FAN's first outing at the Royal Freshwater club was a success and Waldie-Griffith then sent the boat to Hobart for The Forster Cup series. It was held early in 1926 and THE FAN did not perform very well. Waldie-Griffith joined Howson's 16-foot skiff crew and they finished 5th overall. After the racing the winner 'Skipper' Batt from Hobart was invited to WA by Waldie-Griffith and helped him modify the rig so that it would be a better yacht. The bowsprit was added to make the rig more conventional for the class, but Batt pointed out how much heavier THE FAN was compared to the local craft and that it would still remain uncompetitive in most conditions. THE FAN was an elegant craft, planked in cedar. The original colour scheme featured a dark hull color, and the sail had a large colourful fan emblem. It sailed again in the next Forster Cup series off Fremantle and after that Waldie-Griffith donated THE FAN to Royal Freshwater who raffled the yacht in an art union to raise money for charity. Tickets were 1 shilling each and Mr. Leach who won the raffle took ownership and turned THE FAN into a keel yacht. He took out the centrecase, fitted the lead keel, a small cabin and a Marconi rig plan. This was the first of a number of gradual evolutions for the yacht. It was later sold to Mr. Graham and raced as a scratch boat with Fremantle Sailing Club. In 1943 Wally West bought the vessel. Under his ownership THE FAN took part in early WA offshore racing events. He extended the cabin, fitted a galley and other accommodation features, and in 1947 strengthened the

hull with new jarrah planking and fitted additional grown timbers internally. This was quite a transformation, taking THE FAN from a daysailing race yacht to ocean racing competitor where it withstood the rugged conditions often encountered along the WA coastline. By 1963 it had changed hands twice more before Alan Hall and John Forde bought the vessel and rebuilt the boat yet again to take part in local racing. In the 1990s time was catching up with THE FAN and it was stored ashore unused. Wally West bought the boat back with intentions of sailing it again. He removed some of the internal structure, and fibreglassed the hull inside and out. His plans to sail the boat again did not eventuate but new owners in 2004 rebuilt THE FAN extensively, returning it to a gaff rigged daysailer for use on the Swan River. Relunched in 2006, THE FAN still features the sheathed planking and revised external ballast keel arrangement, and has an electric motor installed for auxiliary power. The yacht joins in the twilight races and once again shows off the colorful fan emblem it had in 1925. AUGust 2023 update: THE FAN was sold in 2022 , and since then has been repainted and revarnished where required. In 2024, THE FAN will be 100 years old.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 7.62 m x 6.4 m x 2.44 m x 1 m (25 ft x 21 ft x 8 ft x 3.28 ft)