

## SQUADRON CLASSICS

“THERE IS NOTHING – ABSOLUTELY NOTHING,  
HALF SO MUCH WORTH DOING AS SIMPLY MESSING  
ABOUT IN BOATS” – KENNETH GRAHAME



### **Margaret Rintoul by John Brooks**

*Margaret Rintoul* (Sail No.353) is a beautiful 44' yawl designed by Phillip Rhodes. Built in Sydney in 1948 by Ted Haddock for Austin Edwards, *Margaret Rintoul* has a carvel-planked Kauri timber hull with a long keel and classic lines featuring an overhanging stem and overhanging transom.

The original spruce main mast has been replaced with an oregon one designed by Alan Payne. The mizzen mast has been replaced several times over the years and is also constructed of oregon.

*Margaret Rintoul* was a consistent performer in many ocean races on the east coast in the 1950s, winning several races including the Montague Island race in record time in 1951. The yacht was 2nd on handicap in the Sydney to Hobart in 1949 and won the Sydney to Hobart race line honours in 1950 and again in 1951 when she set a race record.

*Margaret Rintoul* continues her adventures to this day. Owned by RSYs Life Member Bruce Gould since 1980, she is a familiar sight cruising on Sydney Harbour or on Pittwater and competing regularly in veterans races, the RSYs Friday night Twilight series and in the RSYs Annual Cruise. As a classic yacht, it is appropriate that *Margaret Rintoul's* regular crew members (unkindly known as “Dad’s Army”) are older than the boat.

### **Fidelis by Nigel Stoke**

*Fidelis* is one of those distinctive and recognisable Classic Yachts. She has a sailing and race record spanning more than 50 years since her origins in New Zealand and now more than 25 years with the RSYs in Sydney.

*Fidelis* has sailed more than 200,000nm, competing in most Tasman offshore races including the races to Suva, Noumea, Tonga, Port Vila, Japan, and from Sydney to Mooloolaba, Brisbane to Gladstone, Brisbane to Gizo, Sydney to Lord Howe and a notable win and line honours in the 1966 Sydney to Hobart.

The original design for *Fidelis* dates back to Europe in the mid 1930s but she was built in NZ in the early 1960s and launched on Anniversary Day, January 1964 in Auckland.

The yacht was built for Vic Speight in Auckland who had been to Newport, Rhode Island, USA having taken an interest in the America’s Cup.

**Margaret Rintoul –  
Australia Day  
Regatta. Photo John  
Jeremy**

**Margaret Rintoul  
leading the fleet –  
Storm Bay 1951.**



He was inspired by the Metre designs and went to meet Knud Rheimers in Denmark to negotiate the purchase of the line drawings for a 75 Square design. He was somewhat shocked that the price for the design was quoted at £10,000 which he said was 'the price of a block of flats in Auckland' at that time!

On returning to New Zealand, Vic came up with an alternative solution with the builders Lidgard Brothers. The Knud Rheimers design had been featured in a book written in 1935 by Uffa Fox. The book titled *Power and Sail* had a chapter on the 75 Square yacht including some photos and, importantly, the lines of the hull and rig design.

Lidgards lofted the lines in their yard from a copy taken from the book. The boat yard and shed were relatively small for a 61 foot hull, and the story goes that the lines were drawn out to full size onto the footpath and out into the roadway!

*Fidelis* is built from NZ Kauri which is a classic and traditional boat timber. The triple planked construction and workmanship produced an extremely strong and long-lasting hull. The years of hard racing and cruising have proven the case.

*Fidelis* is described in New Zealand as an 'A' Class keeler. She was launched with a mission to beat the then cock-of-the-harbour in the 'A' Class division, a similar looking yacht called *Ranger* which had been the fastest in the division in Auckland for 25 years since the late 1930s.

The ownership of *Fidelis* changed hands within a few months and the new owner, Jim Davern, set out to modify the yacht with an upgraded aluminium mast and skeg rudder designed by Warwick Hood. This improved the performance: she won her first race against her nemesis *Ranger* in Auckland and went on to win the Suva and Noumea races, before heading across the Tasman to take on the Sydney to Hobart.

There was some scepticism on the Sydney waterfront as to whether, despite having crossed the Tasman, *Fidelis* could make it to Hobart. Skipper Jim Davern said that with her low freeboard, the crew would need snorkels down below to breathe through the deck... *Fidelis* went on to win the 1966 Sydney to Hobart race by what was then close to a record margin of more than 17 hours from *Ballandra* representing the RSYS.

*Fidelis* had a major upgrade in the mid 1980s in Auckland with the addition of a full fit out down below to remove the four pipe cots, metho stove and ablution bucket. The layout of the saloon, cabin, chart table and galley have changed little since that time. The addition of teak decks and modernised winches changed her from a sparse racer to the 'Greyhound of the Seas'. She had a second major refit in 2005 and upgraded the rig with a new carbon fibre mast in 2010.

I purchased the yacht in 1994 to bring her to Sydney for the 50th anniversary of the Sydney to Hobart yacht race. This was the largest fleet ever for the Hobart. Given the number of older yachts in the Veteran and Vintage divisions, it was decided that they should start at 1230hrs, half an hour before the main fleet, to encourage unwavering media coverage. In the event, *Fidelis* was 'First out of the Heads' and featured on Channel 7 nightly news. She led the fleet for at least an hour before the maxis of the day overtook and headed down the coast.

*Fidelis* has now competed in eight Sydney to Hobart yacht races and has been to Tasmania many times cruising down for the Wooden Boat Festival and trips around the coast. The most recent outing was the 75th anniversary race in December 2019. There was one older yacht in that race but *Fidelis* was the only competitor to have raced over a period of more than 50 years.

*Fidelis* is out sailing on Sydney Harbour most weeks with mid-week racing, twilights, the occasional cruise and trips out to Lord Howe. If you're dining at the Club, you can see her on her mooring beyond Kurraba Point in Shell Cove. ⚓

*Fidelis* in the SASC Classic Yacht Rally 2010. Photo John Jeremy

Inset: *Fidelis* in the 1966 Sydney to Hobart. Photo Brian Curtis, *The Mercury*.

