

ON THE WATER

Sailing into history

By DOROTHY PREECE

WHITTANGA. A piece of maritime history is undergoing major repairs at the Whītanga marina.

Karin III is 102 years old. She was built in Norway by Colin Archer for tea magnate Sir Thomas Lipton. Launched in 1898 under a different name, the gaff-rigged yacht was built specifically as a spectator vessel for the owner's prestigious guests, while watching the Lipton Cup yacht race in 1899. The Lipton Cup was the forerunner of the modern day America's Cup.

Sir Thomas Lipton owned her until 1917. She sailed her first transatlantic voyage in 1917. Her owner Lieutenant of the Royal Navy. Five men are working fulltime repairing the solid teak hull planking and decks, and fine interior finishing to get her back to the original plans that were published in books when she was launched more than a century ago.

III's history. In 1982 a Chinese businessman brought her to New Zealand, and used her for drug-running until the police caught up with him. She was left abandoned in the Whangarei River and eventually sank at her moorings. Northland Harbour Board eventually sold her for \$15,000 to recover mooring fees.

"\$15,000 would not even buy the lead in her keel," grins owner Daniel Evans. He and co-owner Stuart Hanson of Auckland pulled the yacht out in Whītanga and now a major renovation is under way.

The 16m long Karin III draws 2½m of water, which precludes her getting into most marinas. Whītanga is one of the few places where they could work on her. Five men are working fulltime repairing the solid teak hull planking and decks, and fine interior finishing to get her back to the original plans that were published in books when she was launched more than a century ago.



Daniel Evans at work on the massive rudder of Karin III.

Mr Evans says they plan to take the yacht to the America's Cup Jubilee races in San Francisco next year and are seeking sponsorship to get her there.

History will then go full circle when Karin III comes back to Auckland for the next America's Cup, serving once again as a corporate spectator vessel.

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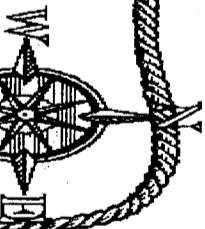
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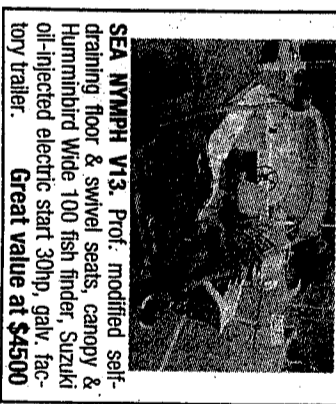
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