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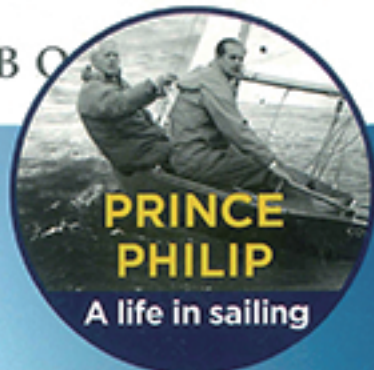
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06



MADE IN JAPAN

She was talked about for years as “one of the last big ones still left to do”. Now, the giant Nicholson ketch is back

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The extensive restoration of a yacht not far short of a hundred years old and a hundred foot long can provide a mighty challenge for any established boatyard, however skilled and experienced its labour force might be. And while the difficulties are on another level altogether when undertaking and completing such a project in a distant country with absolutely no previous history of such work, the 1927 Camper and Nicholson ketch *Cynara* is clear proof that nothing is impossible.

Cynara's original name was *Gwendolen*. She was commissioned by HG Nutman who, in 1922, had bought the 1902-built, 92ft (28m) yawl *Lady Beatrice*, designed by Charles E Nicholson and built at Camper & Nicholson's Gosport yard – so it was perhaps natural that he should go to the same designer and builder for his new boat. *Gwendolen* was built with teak planking on oak frames, and with an elm keel, an oak stem and oak sternpost. After she was christened by Nutman's daughter and launched in March 1927, the *Hampshire Telegraph* described her as “a fine specimen of modern yacht architecture, being up-to-date in its general design, accommodation, and equipment.” That summer Nutman cruised *Gwendolen* extensively, mostly along the English south coast. But the following winter – following Nutman's death, so it is thought – she was bought by Valdemar Graae, a Danish businessman based in London who owned the Morgan Giles 6-M *Dana*, also built in 1927.

Graae used *Gwendolen* in a similar fashion to his predecessor before selling her in 1930 to American Herbert H Warden who renamed her *Easy Going*, took her across the Atlantic and kept her in Philadelphia. Just two years later she was bought by Sir Howard Frank who brought her back to the UK and renamed her *Cynara*, but he died soon after. Her next owner was the Marquess of Northampton who would keep her for almost a quarter of a century. Not much is known of her history in that period, except that she came second in Class One in the Coronation Race from Southsea to Torbay via Cherbourg and the Eddystone lighthouse in 1937, and took part in Cowes Week the same year and again in 1939.

After a couple more owners, the racing car driver Duncan Hamilton had her for four years in the 1960s



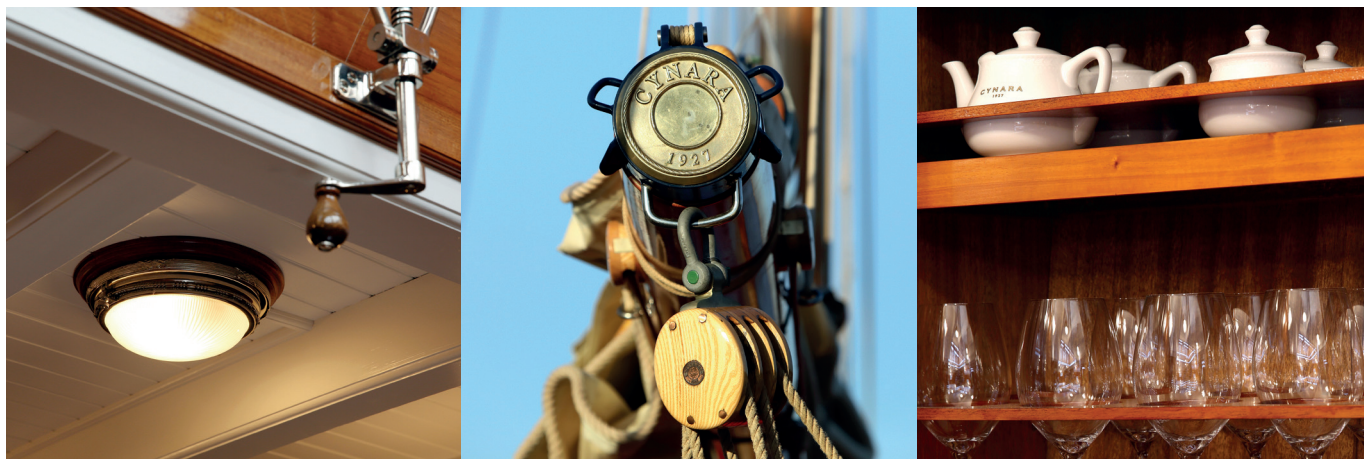
Above: Lord Northampton with Lady Northampton on the helm of *Cynara*

during which time she was based in Monaco where other drivers such as Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart were occasionally entertained on board. She also made a brief appearance in the 1966 film *Arrivederci Baby* starring Tony Curtis and Zsa Zsa Gabor. Her next owner, Warren Eve, took her to Bermuda and she spent a few years sailing between the east coast of the USA and the Caribbean before returning to Europe in 1972.

It was then that she came into Japanese ownership and in January 1973 she set off with a crew of 13 to sail across the Atlantic, through the Panama Canal, then across the Pacific, arriving at Misaki (about 40 miles south of Tokyo) after 195 days. She then spent many years cruising between the most northern and southern of Japan's islands, and was used as a venue for weddings and parties, and for television and magazine photoshoots.

In 2001, Japanese leisure company Riviera acquired three Japanese marinas, and with one of these – Seabornia Marina, about a mile from Misaki – came the ownership of *Cynara*. She remained in commission and continued to cruise locally, but it then became apparent that she would greatly benefit from a major restoration. In 2015, it was decided to take steps in that direction. Although Japan is one of the world's leading shipbuilders, companies or individuals with the skills and experience necessary to restore a 90-year-old timber sailing boat were non-existent. The sensible plan, therefore, would have been to ship *Cynara* back to an established yard in Europe. This was initially considered – with some focus on yards in Palma and the UK – before Riviera chairman Mr Noboru Watanabe realised that there was an opportunity to do something very special: to restore *Cynara* in Japan.

As a result of Riviera's research into European yards, contact was made with two highly experienced British shipwrights who had been based in Palma for about 20 years: Ben Hobbs and Paul Harvey. After a couple of visits to inspect the boat, the two of them submitted a cost proposal and a basic plan, as a result of which, in February 2017, they were asked to take on the project.

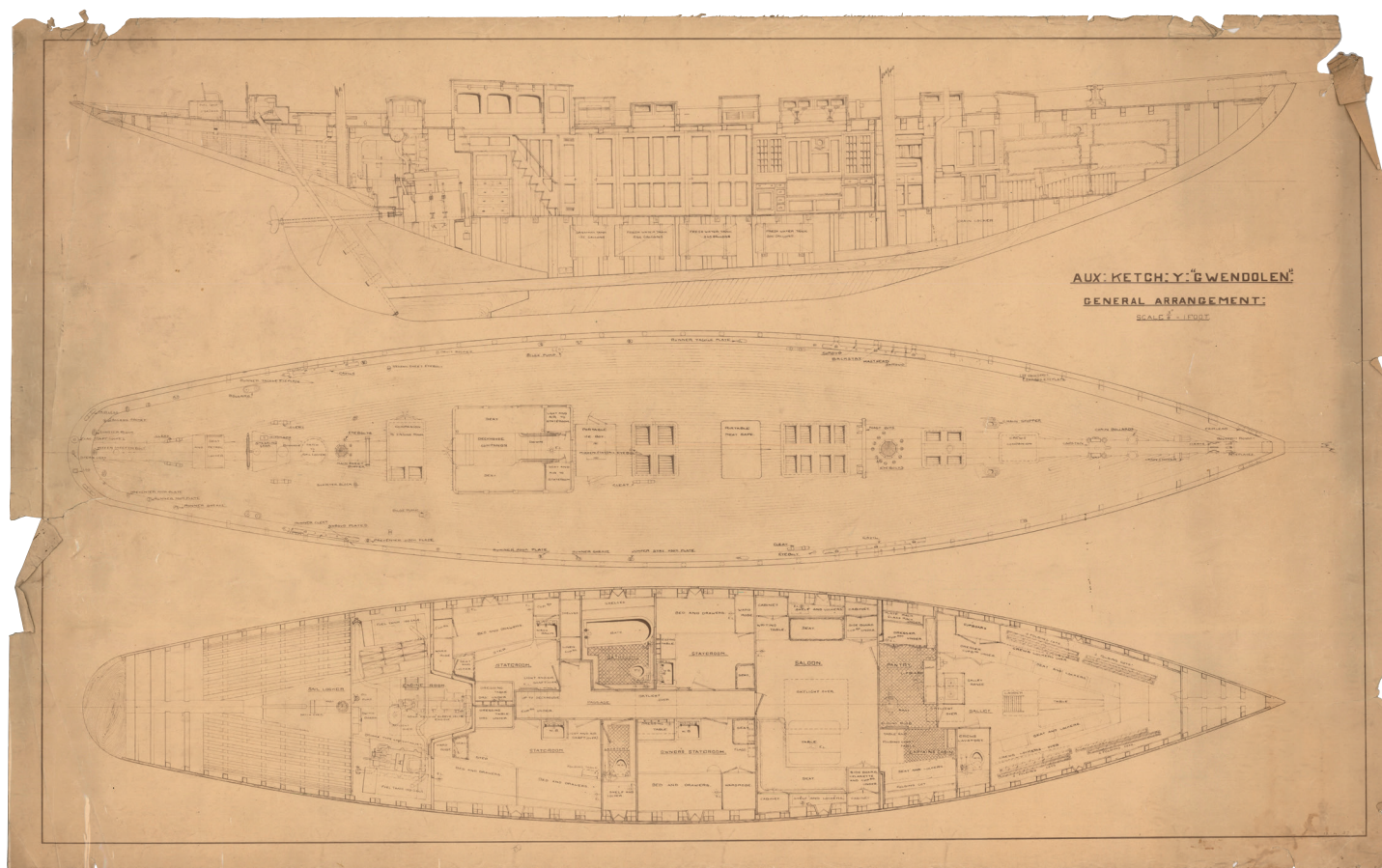


Above from left: Cabin light and skylight adjuster; Boom end and mainsheet block; Teapots and glasses



Main and inset: Early sea trials in Sagami Bay





During the course of the restoration, a number of other European-based experts would be recruited: project manager Feargus Bryan who visited Japan for a few days every couple of months but otherwise remained involved from his base in Nice; Paul Spooner who took care of various naval architectural issues and layout changes, and produced detailed designs for a multitude of deck fittings; Chuck Demangeat who was responsible for the rig; 14 other skilled boatbuilders from a variety of European countries (“all amazing guys that we found just through random contacts,” said Paul Harvey; a team from Centreline Marine to lay and caulk the deck; and another team from Stirling and Son mainly to caulk, spline and fair the hull. In total, almost 50 people from a dozen countries outside Japan contributed to the project. Various Japanese craftsmen also played an essential part (of whom more in next month’s issue).

The first significant issue to be tackled was the fact that the hull was significantly hogged, by about 6in (15cm) over the length of the boat. To address this, the boat first had to be partly dismantled. The deck (which was to be renewed anyway), the interior joinery, various planks, the ballast keel and the false keel aft of it were all removed. A large H section girder was then placed under the wood keel and, by an elaborate system of jacks under this and in other parts of the hull, the problem was resolved. “It was surprising how easily a boat could be manipulated when a few key parts are removed,” said Paul. “But it didn’t all happen overnight. It was a process of tweaking, pulling and pushing for a couple of weeks until we thought she was in the right spot.” The 25-tonne ballast keel was also hogged, of course, but about a year after supporting the ends and laying about

CYNARA

TYPE
**Gaff-rigged
ketch**

BUILDER
Nicholson

LAUNCHED
1927

LOA
**95ft 10in
(29.2m)**

BEAM
**18ft 8in
(5.7m)**

DRAUGHT
**10ft 6in
(3.2m)**

DISP
91 tonnes

SAIL AREA
**3,920 sqft
(364m²)**

five tons of lead ingots on the middle, it was within about ½in (12mm) of being straight and this was finally resolved with jacks and with “a few swipes of the plane”.

Although most of the oak frames needed to be replaced, about 90 per cent of the 2in-thick (5cm) teak planking was found to be reusable with some minor local repairs after all of it was removed to assess its condition. After the 18 naval brass keel bolts, between 1 1/8in (29mm) and 1 3/4in (44mm) in diameter, were all tested with liquid penetrant, four were renewed; and all 31 wrought iron floors were replaced like for like along with their centreline fastenings.

The deck was completely replaced with the new beamshelf and laminated beams in English oak and carlins in teak, over which 3/8in (10mm) Canadian cedar planks were laid followed by 3/4in (19mm) plywood and 3/4in swept teak planking. “We used the Canadian cedar to replicate the look of planks with a nice, clean, paintable, rot-resistant timber,” said Paul. “We didn’t want to cheat and router the underside of plywood. Routed plywood always looks like routed plywood.”

After great efforts were made to save as much of the deck furniture as possible, only the round hatch for the sail locker aft had to be replaced, with the remainder undergoing subtle repairs and modifications including the renewal of the glazing. Similarly, many of the original deck and hull fittings were refurbished and refitted including the fairleads, portholes, ensign staff holder, most of the mainmast Fife rail, the steering gear and a pair of tall mushroom vents. Wrought iron chainplates were replaced with new ones in bead-blasted stainless steel, and new gunmetal hawsepipes were fitted. It is thought that the windlass – made by the Ideal Windlass



Main picture: Seating and table in the saloon Above left: Starboard aft guest cabin Above right: Main deckhouse leading down to guest cabin corridor



Co, East Greenwich, USA – was fitted after *Cynara* arrived in Japan, and this was sent back to Deep Blue Engineering at Millbrook, Cornwall for refurbishment. A new main boom gallows was produced with a bit of help from a scene in *Arrivederci Baby* which clearly shows its previous position. Nine new Lewmar bronze winches have now been fitted – four of them electric – replacing just two non-original winches.

From the companionway moving forward, the interior layout consists of four sleeping cabins, two each side; a full-beam saloon with a dining area to starboard and comfortable seating to port; the galley to port and skipper's cabin to starboard; a heads and shower to starboard; then six pipe cots and large table for the crew. Modifications to the layout include the addition of ensuite heads and shower for the owner's cabin to starboard and a guest cabin to port, and a new day head.

A riveted-steel bulkhead between the accommodation and the engine room had to be replaced as the bottom third was rotted through, while two similar half bulkheads in the crew area were saved. All of the white painted bulkheads were renewed, a decision helped by the various small layout changes and the fact that many of them either had a fair degree of rot or were “riddled with old holes from years of fittings being moved around.” The new bulkheads are framed in poplar (as were the old ones) and panelled with Tricoya, the latest version of MDF but far more durable, all traditionally joined with wedged tenons. The use of Tricoya provides “a certain symmetry,” as it was discovered the original panels were Masonite, a state-of-the-art product when *Cynara* was built in 1927.

The vast majority of the original Honduras mahogany panelling and furniture was saved, repaired and refitted. Among the areas to benefit from new joinery were the panels around the saloon portholes that had suffered from freshwater ingress, a heads vanity unit, corner seats for both forward guest cabins which were on the original drawings but had been removed at some point and, in the crew cabin, the hull linings (which also had freshwater damage) and crew table. The cabin soles were renewed in Japanese oak. The interior lights, locks and door knobs were sent back to the UK where Duncan Walker of DW Yachting had them refurbished or replicated.

The engineering systems on *Cynara* were “a bit of a time capsule” at the start of the restoration. Her riveted iron tanks and lead piping – presumed to be original – were

Above left: Mr Watanabe on the extreme right, Akira Yokokowa the captain next to him

Above right: Mount Fuji in background

still in use; her lead-insulated wiring was still in place, albeit redundant, with newer wiring retrofitted over it; and the engine room was “like the entrance to hell,” said Paul, “dark, greasy and gloomy.” The 25-year-old, 11.5hp Yanmar was sent to Yanmar in Japan for a rebuild but almost everything else was renewed. She now has a Cummins 5kw generator, a Schenker watermaker, Dometic air-conditioning, a Virifigion fridge/freezer, a Force 10 electric oven and hob and Dometic electric heads, with the addition of Japanese-style washlet systems.

BACK TO FULL GAFF RIG

Cynara always had a gaff mainsail and it was thought that she also originally had a gaff mizzen, subsequently changed to bermudan, so it was decided that the new rig should be all-gaff. Towards the end of the project, evidence was found to indicate that the mizzen may have originally been bermudan, but plans were too far advanced to change, besides which the consensus is that *Cynara* looks and performs better all gaff. The spars – which had varying degrees of rot – were replaced by new ones in Douglas fir by Noble Masts; and almost all spar fittings were replaced with new ones in steel and bronze by Kinza Nautic in Mallorca. Chuck Demangeat renewed all the rigging, and new sails were made by Ratsey and Lapthorn, who almost certainly made the originals.

Mr Watanabe spoke about two major roles that *Cynara* will be fulfilling in Japan in the near future. The first is as flagship for the sailing regatta in the forthcoming Tokyo Olympics. The second is in keeping with Riviera's Sustainable Project philosophy. “We believe in finding and acquiring classic things of quality, and preserving them for the next generations,” he said. “We are also committed to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. So *Cynara* will have another important role in helping to educate people about history, culture, diversity, and the environment.”

In 2028, *Cynara* will sail to LA for the Olympics, where the golf will be held at Riviera Country Club, owned by Mr Watanabe's company and where golf was first played in 1927, the year *Cynara* was built. From there it is hoped she will return to her birthplace in the Solent then to the Med, where Mr Watanabe is keen to race her at Régates Royale, Cannes. “I can't wait to show the beautiful *Cynara* to the people of the world and to tell them her story.”

See more on *Cynara*'s restoration in next month's CB