

# Basic Detail Report

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## Curlew

### Vessel number

HV000723

### Date

1911

### Primary Maker

William Hand Jnr

### Description

Charles Lucas built CURLEW at his Battery Point yard in Hobart for a syndicate of owners, P.C.Douglas, J.W. Tarleton & H.W.Knight. They were well-known yachting figures and businessman in Hobart. CURLEW was the third of seven of the type that were built to race in Hobart. Lucas built six of these almost identical yachts. CURLEW is carvel planked in Huon pine and when launched measured about 10 metres overall. It had a gaff rig and the design for the yacht came from William Hand Jr in the USA, with modifications suggested by Hobart designer Alfred Blore. Hand was a prolific designer from the late 1890s until the late 1930s, who specialized in V-bottom powerboat designs after about 1910. He came from Fairhaven, Massachusetts in the USA. Blore was a draughtsman, designer and engineer who produced vessel designs of his own, but was widely used in Tasmania as a consultant on in a variety of vessel projects from the 1890s until 1930. The plans were drawn in 1899 and originally published in "The Rudder" in February 1900. The yacht was designed to be a "knockabout" type and the construction to be "strong and durable". This design was modified by Blore to suit local boatbuilding methods and sailing conditions. It was the blue print of this adapted design that was finally approved for a one-design class by the committee of the Derwent Sailing Club which later became the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania (RYCT). The vessels cost 200 pounds to build. CURLEW was mentioned at the end of the report in the Hobart Mercury on the 18th of October 1911 under the heading "Launch of the SPINDRIFT." "A good deal of local interest has been excited over the construction of these one- design yachts, and the Spindrift, which is the first to be completed, was much admired, both on the slip and in the water. Her owner can certainly claim to be the pioneer of a movement which is almost certain to be of incalculable benefit to yachting, and when the other two which are in course of construction are afloat it will be surprising if more do not follow very rapidly. Mr. D. Barclay, jun.'s yacht is now ready to have the keel fitted, and the one for Messrs. Douglas, Tarleton, and Knight is ready for planking." CURLEW raced with success through 1911 to 1913 on the Derwent River and the class became well established. However in October 1913 CURLEW left Tasmania as reported in the Hobart Mercury, Monday 27 October 1913. "SALE OF THE CURLEW. The one-design yacht Curlew, which has raced at Hobart regattas with considerable success, has been sold to a Sydney owner. The Curlew was owned by Messrs. Douglas, Knight, and Tarleton and was one of the first three yachts of the one-design class to be built. She won the championship this season, and will, no doubt be missed by many admirers of yachting. Her owners decided to give up racing, and so the Curlew was sold to a local

syndicate who again, offered her in Hobart. On receipt of a telegram from Sydney, however, the purchase was completed, and the Curlew is now owned by Mr A Wilson chief engineer of the Sydney Gas Company. The Curlew will probably be shipped to Sydney by the steamer Paloona on Friday." Wilson's plan was to establish the class in Sydney, but it did not get off to a good start. The following report in mid-November in the Sydney Morning Herald painted a poor picture of the yacht's abilities. "ONE-DESIGN YACHT. An interesting trial took place in Sydney Harbour on Thursday last between the Tasmanian champion one-design boat Curlew, which was recently acquired by Mr A. Wilson, and Mr Charles Trebeck's Petrel. In the run from Clark Island to the pile light, Watson's Bay, Curlew, with a reef down, was beaten by Petrel. For the thrash to windward Curlew shook out her reef, but the local boat beat her on the work by 7&1/2 minutes. The day was admirably suited to such a test, and the result was that the Hobart one-design craft was hopelessly out-classed by the 30-footer. The opinion has been expressed that, should the Tasmanian class be adopted for the Sydney model, it would certainly be a retrograde movement, and we would introduce a very much slower class of boat than we have at present. The Curlew makes a lot more leeway than our present style of boat, and as our races rates have a fair proportion of windward work, boats of her class would be at a decided disadvantage" The Mercury on Tuesday 18 November 1913 responded, quoting the above and taking them to task. "Subsequently exception was taken by Mr Norman Murray and "Old Salt" to the above report in the "Herald". Mr Murray says the day was most unsuitable for even the preliminary canter which took place, as the wind was patchy and from several points of the compass. In addition, the Tasmanian craft was not in racing trim, while, owing to the want of some gear that was inadvertently left behind, no attempt could be made to substantially set her canvas. The spin cannot be regarded as a contest or as a guide to the relative merits of either of the yachts. "Old Salt" stated that it was unfair to infer that the trial was under equal conditions The crew of the Curlew he says, was composed of three yachtsmen, none of whom had the slightest knowledge of the vessel had even pulled a rope or handled a tiller on board of her before The day was anything but a propitious one, and the Curlew started out with two reefs in her mainsail and small jib, and not one reef, as was stated in the report. He concludes: "To make comparisons between the Petrel, a yacht in the prime of her racing career, and handled by her capable owner, and the Curlew with a scratch crew, who did not know one rope from another when they went on board, besides the handicap of an impossible jib, is not fair play to a boat which I feel sure would, under reasonable conditions, acquit herself creditably in any company." Despite the poor report orders were placed and during 1914 CURLEW had two significant wins- one in a Sydney Amateur Ocean Race and the other in the prestigious RPAYC Albert Gold Cup. Meanwhile the war intervened and the orders were not followed through and CURLEW changed hands. From 1914-17 it was owned by Walter M. Marks and renamed CULLWULLA IV. By the end of the 1920s the one-designs in Hobart were being out-classed by newer and larger yachts and some left racing to become cruising yachts. CURLEW avoided this and kept racing on Sydney Harbour through different owners. In 1931 it was converted to Bermuda rig and later won the Kelly Cup. By 1936 it was racing with Royal Prince Alfred yacht Club and stayed on their register until at least 1967 by which time the club had become well established on Pittwater just north of Sydney. From that time until 2006 its movements are not well documented. It came to Queensland in 1982 and until 1988 it was owned by Alan London. By 2006 CURLEW was with a new owner and under restoration with its original hull being sheathed in two diagonal layers of veneer and plans for it to be returned to gaff rig. It has since changed hands again, but the restoration and rebuilding work is being continued and

CURLEW will be sailing again in the years to come.

### **Dimensions**

Vessel Dimensions: 9.95 m × 2.77 m × 1.42 m (32.66 ft × 9.1 ft × 4.66 ft)