

The “Centurion” Walronda

By Jim McDonald, Canadian Fleet member

1886 was the debut of petrol powered boats although there were much earlier steam-powered vessels that were primarily built for commerce or military use. As time went by, yachts were developed. **Walronda**, launched in 1912, was built early in the development of petrol-powered yachts and as you would expect, there was plenty of room for improvement. She has evolved over the years to better serve her crew.

Hanging on to a wheel on the roof of the cabin while a big sea heaves you around with just a thigh-



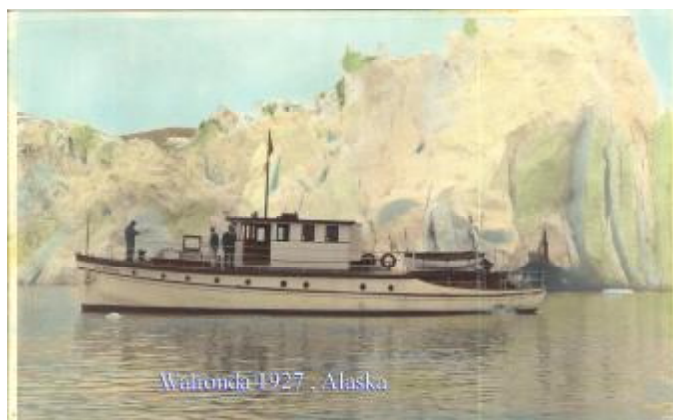
Walronda about one year after her launch
photograph provided by J McDonald

high pipe rail for protection must have been exhilarating. The helmsmen of a sail boat stood outside at a tiller or steering wheel, so why not on a power yacht! It is not unexpected that the modifications in the first year included Bimini's over the helm and the two aft deck areas along with replacing the helm pipe railing with a higher wooden fence or bulwark.

Walronda looked much the same through the mid-20's, the original deck-house was low, less than shoulder height from the deck. A notch in the engine room bulkhead suggests that the floor in the small deck-house was recessed below the sheer to give headroom in the deck-house.

By 1927 the small low deck-house was re-

placed with a longer and higher cabin. The helm was moved down from the roof into a short forward section of the deck-house while the aft section became a captain's cabin. The next significant modification was raising the roof of the deck-house about



Walronda about 1927 at the TANO glacier
photograph provided by J McDonald

6 inches, supposedly for a taller crew. The exhaust that had been out the side of the hull amidship was moved to near the stern.

Bow bulwarks were added in 1963. Until about 1975 the sheer at the aft on both sides was swept



Walronda leaving False creek about 1975
photograph provided by J McDonald

down resulting in a narrow trunk cabin.

Blocking in the swept down sheer on both sides made a big improvement to the aft cabin. The stern exhaust was likely moved to through-the-roof at the same time, the Cat engines were installed in 1961.

Sometime after the mid 1970's the deck cabin aft was extended about 9 feet. The owner at the time

Walronda's Modifications Over the Years

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Len Lakberg, commented that he was astonished at the improvement when the aft wall of the small wheel house was cut out on one side to connect the two cabin areas and make the present long saloon/helm. Radar and gum-wood railings were installed, as was a new mast and boom arrangement.

The current owner purchased **Walronda** in 1985 and continued the improvements including widening the deck-house eave, blocking in the aft deck to continue the sheer back to the aft stem, installing a new engine room hatch, aft-deck seats, a live bait tank-fish cleaning station, a new mast arrangement, the addition of large galley windows in the hull; and modifying the cabin combing. Some of the work made no significant changes to the look of **Walronda** such as replacing the deteriorated bulwarks, replacing the rotted members of the guard and toe cap, coating the toe cap and a portion of the hull with epoxy and cloth.

There are very few pictures and no layouts that record the many interior configuration changes over the years prior to 1985. The interior changes after

her hull paint scheme has changed from white to black to several different two-tone colours, back to white and now two tone blue-grey. Sanding the head walls revealed twelve layers of paint colours. About the only items apart from the hull that is original is the steering wheel and the six smaller cabin windows. Future projects may include returning to bright finished vertical vee-joint on the exterior lower section of the deck-house walls.

No doubt **Walronda** will continue to evolve to suit the needs of the future owners.



Walronda when we bought her in 1985

photograph provided by J McDonald

1985 include extending the engine room by removing a collision bulkhead, which was useless as it wasn't water tight; gutting and rebuilding the galley; head and aft cabin, and rewiring the vessel.

You are probably realizing that there is very little apart from the hull that is near to as originally built. She is on her 4th set of engines, 3rd generator, at least the 3rd model of depth sounder, 2nd anchor windlass, 4th heating system, at least 4 mast arrangements, drag chain to hydraulic steering, the nth tender arrangement, and numerous deck house combings. Even



Walronda 2006 today

photograph provided by J McDonald

