

## WELLINGTON TALE

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# A piece of history in the making

James Hollings

**A**GEM of the capital's maritime history that has been giving Wellingtonians a living exhibition of the boat-restorer's craft has finally taken to the water.

Lizzie, a 6.7-metre gaff-rigged wooden sloop, was launched at Oriental Bay last week after a painstaking hull restoration by Wellington Classic Yacht Trust.

The rebuild, in the old Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club slipway next to Freyberg Pool, has been a living exhibition of traditional boatbuilding techniques for thousands of Wellingtonians promenading along Oriental Bay over the past two years.

Built by legendary Wellington builder Ted Bailey, who made many of New Zealand's classic yachts, Lizzie was first launched either at Oriental Bay or Balaena Bay in 1909, for owner CJ Ward.

It dominated the racing scene in the years leading up to World War I, with its wide beam and flat bilges far ahead of its time.

CJ Ward's sole surviving grandson, Terry Ward, of Upper Hutt, says he is delighted to see



**Living legend:** Classic sloop Lizzie takes to Oriental Bay on Wednesday after restoration by volunteers from the Wellington Classic Yacht Trust.

Photo: TONY WARD

Lizzie back in Wellington and on the water.

His grandfather was a bootmaker who made a fortune selling boots to the army during World War I, eventually owning three factories around Wellington.

The sail boat was named after his wife Elizabeth, and family legend had it that he had to leave her and their baby in Day's Bay to hitch home when a storm sprang up during a harbour excursion.

"When he got back his wife said, 'Sell it and buy a car.'"

Trust director Gavin Pascoe

said a team of about 20 put in 3000 hours to repair the hull, which was bought from a wrecker's yard in Auckland in 2009.

Volunteers had to cut off the old deck and topsides, refit ribs, strip, refasten and repaint the hull, and build a new teak deck.

Mr Pascoe said it was great to see all the hard work pay off and he lauded local firms that donated thousands of dollars worth of materials and services, including Uroxy's, Barton Marine, Andrew Chemicals, and Chapman Tripp.

The Royal Port Nicholson

Yacht Club and its marina manager, Andy McCallum, had also been a huge help during the restoration, Mr Pascoe said.

The next stage will be to fit the rig and deckhouse, and have a formal launching in a couple of months.

But the trust will not be spending much time resting on its laurels – its members are already looking for another boat to restore.

**Wellington Classic Yacht Trust:** <http://www.wcylt.org.nz/>