

Basic Detail Report

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Title

Bluebird Class yacht plans

Date

1940-1949

Primary Maker

Ken Watts

Medium

Paper

Dimensions

Overall: 709 × 989 mm

Name

Plan

History

The Bluebird was the product of Sydney Naval Architect Ken Watts. During World War II he considered what sort of simple yacht he could build when the war ended. He came up with a design which became the Bluebird, and although he never built one himself, he had created a design for a small yacht that could be amateur built in plywood, and allow sailors easy access to owning a yacht and enjoying sailing despite the hard economic times that were ahead. The Bluebird introduced several features which, though neither original nor entirely novel, were certainly departures from standard Australian practice. The original owner and builder of KOTARE Robert Brown began the construction in his backyard in the late 1970s and saw the yacht launched in 1982. He named it KOTARE after a New Zealand coastal steamer on which his grandfather had been chief engineer. KOTARE was built to modified plans to give it higher head room, and it is not unusual for amateur builders to customize their own craft, as this is one of the appeals of building it yourself. Some of the plans are marked up with notes by the builder. Robert Brown noted the following. "I always regarded the Bluebird as Australia's own Folkboat, being as prolific as they were. They are a seaworthy little boat and I did single hand her offshore to King Island about 10 years ago, but I have heard of others being sailed much longer distances." The class is distributed around Australia, and some examples were built in other countries such as New Zealand.