



Seefalke – A Prize of War

BY LUCY TULLOCH

Shortly following the death of his Grandmother, one unusually sunny afternoon in Wales, a good friend suggested to Lynn Roach that they might take a little trip down to Milford Haven and check out a very interesting boat lying there at the docks called *Penelope*. It turned out to be a visit that would change Lynn's life and eventually bring him to Antigua for the Classic Yacht Regatta.

In 1930's Germany, the Nazi regime commissioned a large number of boats to be built, regardless of expense, for the purpose of training their service personnel. Then after the war, the German navy was split up by the allies except for the yachts found in Kiel which were taken by the British. These were known as 'Prizes of War' or 'Windfall Yachts'. *Seefalke* (later named *Penelope & Sea Soldier*) is a wooden fifty square meter, tight-seamed without caulking or splines, constructed by Abeking & Rasmussen with no engine.

Despite having had only two previous owners she was still in a sorry state when he bought her, with only her keel, stem, stern-

post, counter and rig original. He set about refitting her and while working as an engineer during the day, he worked late evenings and weekends on *Seefalke* for four years. Replacing frames, deck, deck-beams, beam-shelf, cabin and cockpit coamings, and hatches, he also gutted and replaced the interior. Now she has the warm, reassuring atmosphere below, of a yacht that has sailed many miles, will sail many more and does so with the grace of a lady and the speed of a greyhound.

The launching Lynn remembers with a wry smile. The plan was to launch *Seefalke* and sail her to the Brest '92 festivities. He had purposely announced the time later than actually planned in case of any hitches, yet as she went into the water, it was in front of an audience of over a hundred people. This historical moment reached a climax when his mother arrived just in time to see the boat sinking with the cabin disappearing under the surface. She was slipped again and they took Lynn's other boat – a Maurice Griffiths sloop *Sequence* – instead. After a wet Welsh season, the following spring the yard saw a

more successful launch with little or no leaking.

With a small mainsail that cost him just fifty pounds (US\$75) *Seefalke* beat into gale force winds with 80ft waves in Biscay for three days and it was with the winter trade winds of '95 that Lynn sailed single-handed to the Caribbean for the first time. Eighteen hours after leaving, he lost a top spreader, and as he was carrying a spare, replaced it underway while a windvane of his own design steered the boat. With three reefs in the main and a #3 jib, they still made 130 miles a day.

On reaching Antigua, Lynn found work within three days. Stopping in at Seagull Services to ask the way, they inquired what his trade might be. "I'm a toolmaker" he told them and has worked there ever since.

He had read about Antigua's Classic Yacht Regatta in England and was excited to take part. He believes she was the tattiest boat out sailing in '95 and yet he won his class. Now with two Classic Regattas behind him he hopes to race in '98 with new sails and renewed enthusiasm.