



ARTISAN BOATWORKS

Classic Wooden Boats

September 2012 Newsletter

This summer signifies an exciting transition for Artisan Boatworks from a nine-year period of rapid growth into a long-term future of sustainability and security. We have gone from a crew of two to a crew averaging twelve. We have established a strong seasonal storage and maintenance program that's over forty customers strong. We have built ourselves a brand name, graced magazine covers, and have come to be recognized as the area's foremost builder of classic Herreshoff replicas. Four of our employees are starting families this summer and fall, so we will be providing health insurance for the first time. We now have a full-time office manager, a service manager, and a shop manager. We added a second construction bay last fall, and will continue to add inside storage capacity.

I want to sincerely thank everyone who has taken part in building what Artisan Boatworks has become.

I see the boats we build as more than just as objects of beauty and function; I see them as vessels in a metaphysical sense that bring proud craftsmen together with devoted connoisseurs.



Buzzards Bay 18

Beginning in January, we constructed the first N.G. Herreshoff-designed *Buzzards Bay 18* to be built since 1904. Five *Buzzards Bay 18*s were built by the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company during the winter of 1903/1904 for the Beverly Yacht Club (then of Monument Beach, Massachusetts), and were known as the Beverly K Class. Essentially an enlarged version of the 15 foot waterline E class (24' 6" overall), the *18*s measured 29 feet on deck, with an 8 foot 1 inch beam and a 3-foot draft with the centerboard up. Displacement is recorded as 4,430 lbs, 1,950 lbs of it being outside fixed ballast. They carried 470 sq. ft. of sail. None of the original five boats remain and there is virtually no documentation of their history and only one photograph is known to exist – a grainy postcard of K-4, named JAP, on her mooring off Monument Beach.

Construction of our *Buzzards Bay 18* replica is edge-glued cedar planking over steam-bent oak frames with a laminated mahogany backbone. She is powered by a Beta 14 hp inboard diesel engine, which is completely hidden from view within the cabin. GMT Composites of Rhode Island designed and built the carbon fiber mast which is faux painted with wood grain to simulate Sitka spruce, of which the booms and gaff are constructed. The carbon mast allows the new *BB-18* to be sailed

*Uncas at the Eggmoggin Reach Regatta, with owner, builder, and guest skipper Maynard Bray
Photo by Alison Langley*



Hanging planks

BB18 Continued

without running backstays. This feature, in combination with a full length jib club, makes the entire rig exceptionally easy to single-hand. Our goal was to build a boat that looked exactly as the originals did, yet incorporate new technology in ways that increase safety and longevity, reduce maintenance, and improve performance and usability.

The new *Buzzards Bay 18* (named *Uncas* after the last Sachem of the Mohegan tribe) has sail number K-6 as a tribute to her Beverly Yacht Club lineage. She was launched on August 2nd, raced in the Eggemoggin Reach Regatta on August 4th, and then displayed at the Maine Boats Homes and Harbors Show in Rockland on August 10-12, before being delivered to her owners in Boothbay Harbor, Maine. We will have her on display at the [Newport International Boatshow](#) on September 13-16, at the [Maine Boatbuilders Show](#) in Portland on March 15-17, and again at the [Wooden Boat Show](#) in Mystic Seaport next June.

We were fortunate to meet up with renowned classic yacht photographer [Alison Langley](#) on our maiden sail, who put together a photo and video montage that can be seen at <http://vimeo.com/47196215>. There was plenty of wind, sun, and fog, making these some of the best sailing photos I have ever seen. Thanks Alison!



*Uncas on her maiden voyage with Alec and Erin Brainerd
Photo by Alison Langley*

Owner Involvement:

Not only does the construction of *Uncas* epitomize elements of authenticity, craftsmanship, and careful application of new technology—but it demonstrates what enjoyment there can be in the relationship between builder and owner over the course of a project. This aspect gets overlooked sometimes but can give a deeper meaning to commissioning a custom wooden boat. Once *Uncas'* owner (Jim) decided to have such a daysailer built by Artisan Boatworks, he spent many days and weeks researching and discussing with us the merits of different designs we could build for him.

Once we decided on the *Buzzards Bay 18*, there were lengthy conversations about auxiliary power options, the moral and practical implications of adopting a carbon fiber mast, and the projected costs.

During construction, Jim visited the shop weekly, taking photos, asking questions, and admiring the process. By the time *Uncas* was launched, he was familiar with every piece of her, understood its importance, how it was made, and by whom. Jim got to know the carpenters building his boat, and commented on launch day that he would remember them fondly and with gratitude for the rest of his life. Every time he stepped aboard he'd be reminded of those who built her.

The day *Uncas* was launched, Jim and his wife came down to Rockport Harbor with their daughter and grand-daughters. The boat was fully rigged, dressed in signal flags, and adorned with a holly wreath. We each said our respective thank you to the carpenters and crew, and then Jim's wife performed the traditional Champagne christening. When her keel touched the water, a cheer went up from the crowd of assembled onlookers, and an hour later we were sailing across the harbor.

BB18 Continued

A few days after launching a full spread about *Uncas* appeared in the local paper, and both *Wooden Boat* and *Classic Boat* magazines are currently writing articles about the project. Jim and I sailed together up to the Eggemoggin Reach Regatta in Brooklin, and his pride was apparent as everyone we met admired the boat and wanted to know more about her.

Most people don't commission a wooden boat for personal notoriety. To the contrary, many of our customers prefer to remain anonymous. Jim discovered with *Uncas* that he had not merely purchased an inanimate object but had actually helped create something with real meaning that was in a certain sense, independent. It has been said that one does not actually own a wooden boat, but is charged with caring for it, as will the next generation, and so on.



Launch Day at Rockport Harbor
photo by Alison Langley

Quissett Spars

On January 4th of this year, as we were beginning construction of the *Buzzards Bay 18*, there was a fire in a historic boat storage building at Quissett Harbor Boatyard on Cape Cod. Thankfully, the local fleet of forty-eight *Herreshoff 12 1/2s* that were stored on the ground floor was spared. But the spar loft, including over 200 wooden masts, booms, gaffs, and spinnaker poles was completely destroyed.



Laminated Gaff jaws for Herreshoff 12 1/2s

Artisan Boatworks was chosen by Quissett Harbor Boatyard owner Weatherly Dorris to construct the replacement spars, and a custom batch of full length, tight grain, clear Sitka Spruce was ordered from the West Coast, kiln dried to the desired moisture content. In late February half of our crew began making the new spars, completing the final shaping and sanding in mid-April. Full-size patterns were made for each taper, and the curved oak gaff jaws were laminated four at a time. Two people worked on shaping; three on sanding; and the sixth on laminating gaff jaws, drilling for outhauls, and fitting hardware.

It was a particularly interesting and challenging project for us, because the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company was well known for their production methods, but current demands for higher quality and lesser quantity usually limits us to custom building our Herreshoff replicas one at a time. A manufacturing job like these spars allowed us to tool up for a level of efficiency that custom boatbuilding rarely justifies. We were able to produce new spars for the Quissett Harbor 12 1/2s in roughly half the time it would have taken individually. And the techniques we developed in the process will continue to benefit future projects.

The new spars were delivered to Quissett on June 1st, and Weatherly and her crew heroically managed to launch and rig their entire fleet in time for another competitive racing season—seemingly while the embers of their burned-down shop were still smoldering! We can only imagine how much extra work this past spring must have landed on them, and we wish the crew at Quissett Harbor Boatyard the very best as they rebuild.

Lobster Boats

I have always been a sailor. However, this spring our daughters (ages two and three), along with Erin and I, decided that a motorboat might be worth considering. We have an outboard skiff for towing our customers' boats that could be found many weekend mornings on an island beach full of brightly colored towels, sand, and bits of watermelon. But without fail, the girls always fell asleep on the way home. So we started looking for something larger—just large enough to sleep aboard.

The early wooden Beals Island / Jonesport lobsterboats were some of the prettiest and fastest ever built, their designs having evolved to perfectly suit local conditions and optimize performance with the relatively low horsepower engines then available. With greater horsepower lobster boats continued to evolve, becoming larger, proportionally wider, and built of fiberglass with PVC moldings. Most of the narrow, more fuel efficient wooden boats were abandoned to rot or were cut up before their value as classics became as appreciated as it is today. My Grandfather “Bud” Lamson grew up in Jonesport, so

it seemed appropriate that we find a “Jonesporter” and name it after my Grandmother, whom he married in April of 1940.



The Janette Lamson in Camden Harbor

The *Janette Lamson* was built by Vinal Beal on Beals Island along with his son Osmond in 1963/64. She's skeg-built, of cedar planking on oak frames, with fiberglass sheathing over the house and deck. She's 33' long, 9-1/2 ft wide, and for power has a mid-1970s 455 cubic inch V-8 Oldsmobile gas engine. Coincidentally, the engine was built while Erin's father was working at the General Motors plant in Lansing, so we tell people she's the perfect marriage of Maine and Michigan!

What became apparent while searching for what we now call the *Janette Lamson* was that there are only a few of these classics left. Several I discovered are perfect candidates for restoration if gotten to soon. It's interesting to me what a wide appeal these boats have. While we've been bare-boat chartering the *Janette Lamson* this summer to offset her maintenance and restoration costs, one recent charterer who owns a Hinckley Picnic Boat back home says he was amazed at not only how much more practical and better suited the *Janette Lamson* was for New England waters, but how genuinely well received he was everywhere he went in her. These classic Maine lobster boats can be re-powered and restored to as-new condition for half the cost of a Hinckley Picnic Boat and offer the same amenities and twice the class. If you happen to be looking for a 26-36 foot classic motorboat with simple overnight accommodations, here is an opportunity to save an iconic piece of Maine history as well as gain the respect of “locals” from Eastport to Freeport! And if restoring an original boat does not appeal to you, of course building a new one would also be another great option.

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Nutshell Prams

No classic Maine lobster boat is complete without a classic Nutshell Pram towing behind, and we have built two of them this year. The first was a 7' 7" rowing model that I built for Erin and the girls last winter. It's painted bright pink and aptly called FLAMINGO.

The second Nutshell is a 9' 6" sailing model that we are building for a family from Birmingham, Alabama. They learned about the Joel White-designed Nutshell Prams from a video produced by OffCenterHarbor.com, called "Introducing Kids to Boats." If you have children or grandchildren, this video is a must-see.



Adella and Grace, learning to row

Press

It's been another great year for press. BoatingLocal.com and *Points East* both did pieces on the launch of our new Herreshoff 12 ½ replica, and the June issue of *Classic Boat* in the UK ran a page on Artisan Boatworks titled "[Pre-War Daysailers Built New.](#)" In July we were particularly honored to be featured by the *London Financial Times* in their column, "[How to Spend It.](#)" You can read any of these articles by clicking on the links, or by going to the press section of www.ArtisanBoatworks.com.

In April, OffCenterHarbor.com produced a video called "A Boatyard Visit to Artisan Boatworks." If you'd like a guided tour of our facilities, it's a great virtual experience, and OffCenterHarbor.com is well worth the \$29 annual cost of subscription.

Also in July, *Professional Boatbuilder* magazine published a feature article on the installation of a Mastervolt Electric drive in one of our *Watch Hill 15s*. If you're considering auxiliary propulsion for your boat, and don't have space for a diesel, this article can help. It can be read in full on our website.

Upcoming

We will be displaying UNCAS, the new *Buzzards Bay 18* at the [Newport International Boatshow](#) September 13-16, and have some exciting new construction and restoration projects coming up that you will hear about soon.

Please contact us with any questions regarding new commissions, restorations, or seasonal storage and maintenance. Even for boats not built or restored here at Artisan Boatworks, we can offer the same full mooring-to-mooring service as far south as Long Island Sound.

Best Regards,

Alec E. Brainerd
President, Artisan Boatworks
Rockport, Maine