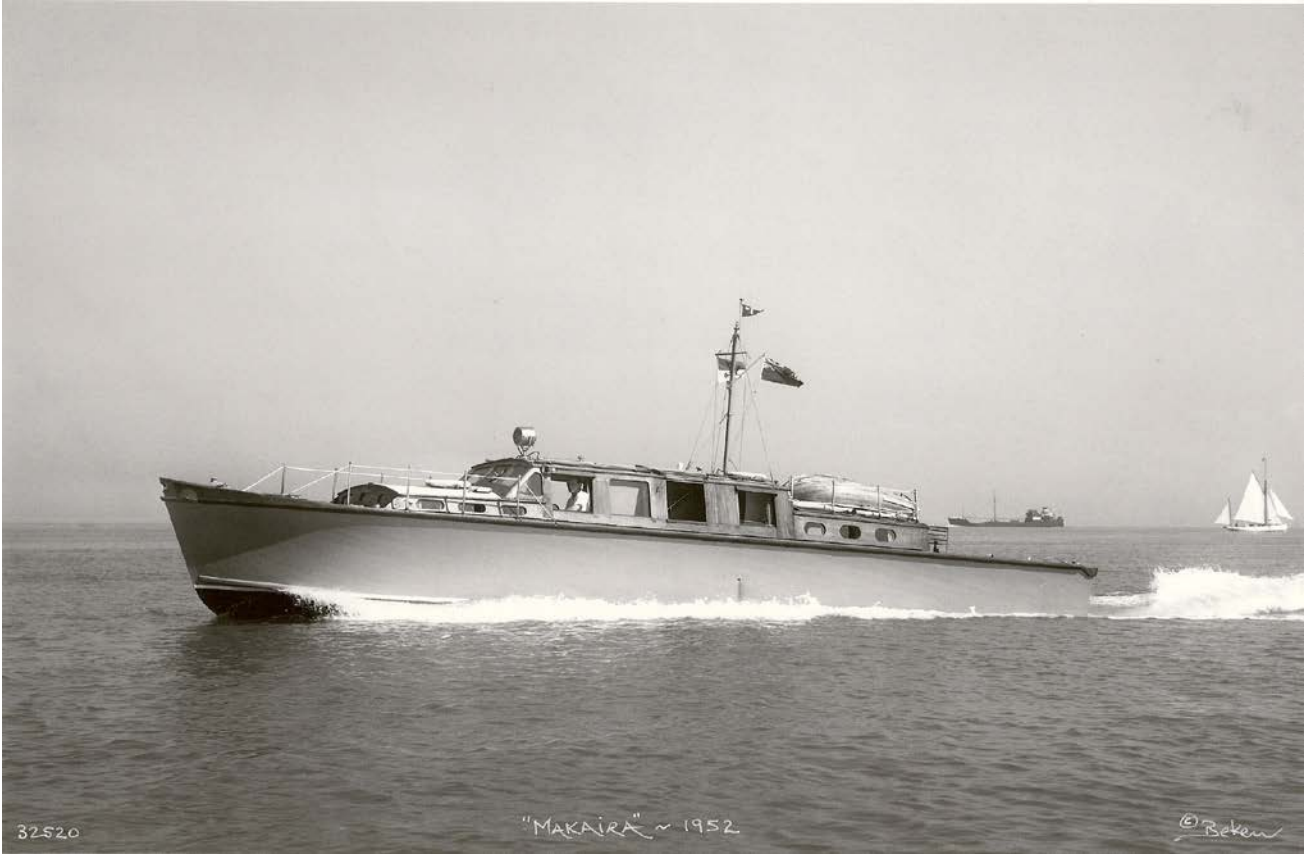


## MAKAIRA

Ex. Esther Barbara ex. Makaira ex. 113 RFC (R.F.C. 113)

By Philip Simons & Jon Blair



Makaira on Southampton Water 1952

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The Beken Photo Archive at Cowes  
<http://www.beken.co.uk/>

In 1938 The British Power Boats Company of Hythe completed a 47ft 6in Express Cruiser for Mr John Heron Storey as "113RFC"

Details were:-

47ft 6in x 9ft 6in x 5ft 2in depth x 2ft 9in draft, 16.48gt, 13.43nt

Twin Screw, 2 x 100hp Power-Meadows petrol engines driving the shafts through standard Power V-drives. 24 knots max 18 knots cruising.

In 1952 she had two Perkins 6cyl diesels installed

In 1966 She had two Perkins 6cyl diesels installed each 145hp

She was re-engined again, with two Perkins 6354.2 Low-line diesels, the port engine built in 1974, the starboard engine in 1980 total hp. 290hp (As seen in an advert for "Makaira" for sale by Dale Sailing, Neyland, Milford Haven, undated but obviously after 1980)

Official Number was 166796, Port of Registry, Southampton. (Whilst in L.R. of Yachts unless otherwise stated)

An article for this type of cruiser appears in the Motor Boat & Yachting of July 29<sup>th</sup> 1938, "113RFC" is not mentioned by name but it is obviously this boat that was being reviewed. It is thought that "113RFC", launched in June 1938 was probably the only one of her type ever built.

Her first owner was Mr John Heron Storey and he had been in the Royal Flying Corp, 113 Squadron in WW1 - he served right through the war, spending quite a lot of time in Egypt and the Middle East, being awarded the Order of the Nile in 1918. Mr Storey bought the boat new in 1938 and named her after his old RFC Squadron, hence the name "113RFC"

Following the request for ships from the Admiralty in 1940, Mr Storey gave "113RFC" to the Admiralty and she was sent for use as a Crash Boat / Air Sea Rescue Boat based at St Helier, Jersey. (Ref: Jersey Heritage Archive). The boat was crewed entirely by local volunteers from Jersey, Bill Cox (The Town Pilot) and his brother Ted Cox, Harry Le Boutillier and Clarence 'Clary' Glendewar (Ref: Jersey Heritage Archive)

At the end of May 1940, she was ordered to Dunkirk and arrived at Ramsgate May 31<sup>st</sup> before setting off, but pulled out later due to engine trouble. (Ref: John de S Winser "B.E.F. Ships")

She was then fully involved in the evacuation of North West France and the Channel Islands, completing a round trip from Jersey to St Malo and back on the 17<sup>th</sup> June and returning on the 18<sup>th</sup> June, she was absolutely the last to leave in company with the Duchess of Normandy only leaving as the German were entering the town. "113RFC" carried Commander (later Rear Admiral) Clarence 'Johnny' Howard-Johnston, who was in charge of the demolition party to blow up the port at St Malo. "113RFC" was able to observe the explosives detonating from offshore before returning to Jersey. (Ref: Kevin Le Scelleur "The Evacuation of St Malo" and "Sailing through a Century" K Le Scelleur and Philip Jeune)

With the Channel Islands now occupied, she then went to mainland UK departing on 21<sup>st</sup> June and it is thought she was then transported by road to Scotland, initially to the Air Training Station at Arbroath, assisting with Deck Landing Training. Squadrons at RNAS Arbroath in July 1940 were 763 Squadron and 767 Squadron – Swordfish. (Ref: Jersey Heritage Archive)

The next known location for "113RFC" is Crail in Aberdeenshire in January 1942. This refers to RNAS Air Station Crail in Fife commissioned 01/10/40 and paid off 28/4/47 and used as HMS Jackdaw a Torpedo Training School. (Reopened as HMS Bruce 1947-49, then Black Watch use 1952-56) "RFC 113" / "113RFC" was not the Nominal depot ship for the base but was given as an auxiliary vessel for flying training, and would have been used as a crash boat / rescue launch whilst flying was in progress. (Obviously the similarity between this hull and the ST's and FMB's of the BPB Co made it extremely suitable for the job.) The most likely squadrons when "RFC 113" / "113RFC" was there in Jan 1942 are 819 and 833 squadrons up from Lee-on-Solent and flying the Fairey Swordfish. (Ref: naval-history.net under RFC.113)

In 1944, "113RFC" was taken back to the Solent area, again by road and used as a Dispatch boat in the run up to the D Day landings. In May 1945 the volunteer Jersey Island crew, Bill Cox, Ted Cox, Harry Le Boutillier and Clarence 'Clary' Glendewar who had served in "113RFC" throughout the

war, were all given special leave following the liberation of the Channel Islands and allowed to return home. (Ref: Jersey Heritage Archive)

At the end of hostilities the vessel was retained by the military, for what use we are yet to discover, but we do know that "113RFC" was handed back to John Heron Storey and re-entered the civil register at Southampton as "113RFC" in 1947, we have a copy of a letter from the BPB Co. on 13/3/47 to The Registrar of Shipping at Southampton asking for a copy of her certificate on behalf of the owner. Perhaps the Admiralty used the name the other way around to fit in with their other naming conventions? John Storey sold the boat to Bruce Colin Campbell on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1951.

From Anthony Holtham, Secretary of the WSS Small Craft Group, "In the additions and Alterations section of the MOWT (Ministry of War Transport) Records Register R.F.C. 113 is mentioned as being previously owned by J.H. Storey and was under Miscellaneous Naval Duties on the 13.2.46. Phil Simons informed me that 113 RFC was first registered in March 1947 at Southampton. This gave me something to work on, he also mentioned she was in service in the Channel Islands and was known as a vessel taken up for duties in Operation Dynamo. Further he mentioned that she was later transferred to Scotland.

From the Special Military Branch Acquaint (SMBA) Records held by the Small Craft Group.

SMBA 434 dated 23.3.40 starts a list which includes R.F.C. 113 being allocated to the F.A.A. Jersey. This is hand written notes from the research carried out by Mr Dick Dennison. He obtained photocopies of the SMBAs from the Naval Historical Branch in London.

SMBA 942 dated 1.8.41 refers to R.F.C. 113 being allocated to F.A.A. Dundee. In brackets it mentions a previous SMBA 447(5). Whether this is the correct SMBA previously which mentioned the vessel in Jersey, it is not known.

SMBA 2864(3) dated 5.12.45 refers to N.A.B. R.F.C. 113 to be returned to owners by the Department of ST. as per instructions M.01093/45. SMBA 2350(12) is the previous SMBA that R.F.C. 113 is mentioned. The SCG do not hold a copy of this SMBA. SMBA 2350 would be dated around June 1944. Perhaps she was involved in Special Force S that was assembled on the East Coast of Scotland for Operation Overlord.

Shore Establishments of the Royal Navy compiled by Lt. Cdr. B Warlow R.N. mentions a few establishments in Dundee. Of these one looks very familiar to the dates against R.F.C. 113. HMS TAEPING which is one of the bases at Dundee operated from 10.5.42 through to 6.5.45. The nominal depot ship listed is a MFV hired 11.39 until 2.46.

SMBA 2952(21) dated 3.4.46 states R.F.C. 113 was released from naval service on the 13.2.46 as per M. 0983/46. The previous SMBA refers to SMBA 2864(3)." (Anthony J Holtham)

She first appears in Lloyd's Register of Yachts as "Makaira" ex "113 R.F.C". In the 1952 Register 2<sup>nd</sup> Supplement her owner was B.C. Campbell, 5c Glenhow Gardens, London, SW5. Members of the Fairey Owners Club have told me that they are fairly sure this is the Bruce Campbell of "Fairey Christina" fame – hat tip to Ben Curtis and Charles Lawrence – can anyone confirm this? The man visible in the 1952 photograph (reproduced with the kind permission of Beken Photo Archive at Cowes) does look remarkably like Mr Campbell.

In 1956 her owner was M.L. Marsh, Alveston Pastures, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire.

In 1958 her owner became J.T. Lee, Thames Hotel, Hampton Court, East Moseley, Surrey and her home port was Jersey. In 1960 his address was given as Meldor Hotel, Pierson Road, West Park, St Helier, Jersey CI. Around 1962 her ex. name was dropped from the register, no reason given. But it was still J.T. Lee in 1964. now at The Cottage, Ann Port, Jersey, CI. (In 1963 J.T. Lee had another boat, "Katie Lee" an ex Admiralty 30ft boat, but not enough details to identify type, His address for this one was given as Park Hotels Ltd, Hotel Les Arches, Gorey, Jersey, CI.)

In 1965 her owner was John N.S. Cunningham, 88 Bath Hill Court, Bath Road, Bournemouth, Hants, and her home port became Poole.

In 1971 her name changed to "Esther Barbara" and she was owned by R.A. Cowland of 17 Seymour Mews, London, W1 & Jack Berman of 75 Meadway, London, NW11

In 1972 her name reverted to "Makaira" and her owner was W.A.J. Street, c/o 30 Curzon Street, London W1, home port was Ampuriabrava & Antibes.

In 1974 her owners are R. Brown & B.E Hoyle, Tower Works, Tower Street, Turton, Bolton, Lancs, home port was Birkenhead

She last appears in the 1977 Yacht Register, no reason given for her omission, but as she was not classed with LR, this could well have been one reason why.



Makaira at Swansea 15/5/94 (Philip Simons)

The next time Phil Simons comes into contact with this boat was at Swansea on the 15/5/94 when he saw this interesting and obviously British Power Boat cruiser in the outer marina. At this time the vessel was still fairly original in all its cabins and upper-works apart from no mast and altered side windows to the main cabin, also the aft cabin extended towards the stern, six windows instead of the original three. In the earlier Dale Sailing advert a poor photo shows her with the extended aft cabin and a funnel, now also confirmed with a photograph from the Jeff Cole Collection.



Makaira at the Bristol Festival of the Sea 1996  
(Motor Boat & Yachting, September 1996)

1982 she was owned By Mr B.E. Hoyle and Charles Henry Iveson

1990 She was owned by James Maxwell

1993 She was owned by Jeff Cole of Swansea

We then have a gap until February 2010 when Phil was contacted by Charlie Cantan with reference to a mystery boat at Swansea, which I believe he was thinking of purchasing. He identified it as Makaira even though by this time it had been modified with a raised wheelhouse, which altered considerably the original simplicity of line.



Makaira Swansea 2/10 (Charlie Cantan)

By August 2010 she was purchased by Richard Dyson-Harvey and was left at the Pembroke Sunderland Trust at Pembroke Dock for restoration and display. Dyson-Harvey had emigrated to Australia. In late 2012 The Sunderland Museum was forced to move premises and having at that time found no evidence of her wartime history decided not to pursue the project.

They asked Mr Dyson-Harvey to have the boat back. Mr Dyson- Harvey decided to sell the boat through a third party, John Powell, and she was sold on to Jon Blair who took her by road to the Thames & Kennet Marina, at Caversham, Berks. Jon wishes to restore her to her former good looks and has been widely researching the vessel, and that is how I came to be involved when he contacted Richard Hellyer at the BMPT, who asked me to answer his queries.

Richard Hellyer, also asked the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships if they would be able to include Makaira in their Records, and Jerry Lewis who leads the Dunkirk Little Ships Restoration Trust team has asked for more historic detail. Jon has approached John Tough, archivist at the Association. He is happy that “RFC113” / “113RFC” took part in both Operation Dynamo and Operation Aerial but needs to make the link between “Makaira” and “RFC113” / “113RFC”. With the information just obtained from the Southampton Registry office, this link is now without doubt.



The BPB Co practice was to stamp the yard number under the floor inspection panels on the larger military boats and “Makaira’s” panel has JHS stamped underneath, showing the boat was in build for J.H. Storey. (Photo Jon Blair)



Makaira with funnel (Jeff Cole Collection)



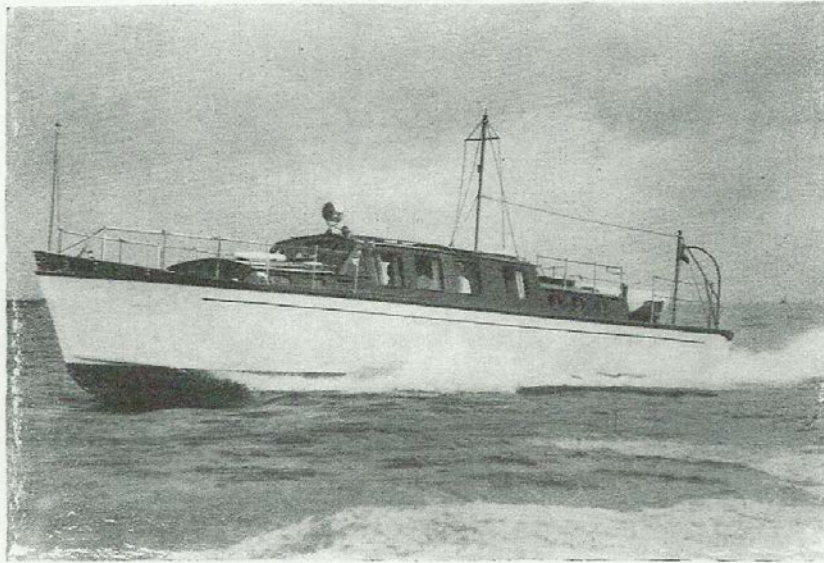
Makaira, Pembroke Dock, late 2012 (Sunderland Flying Boat Trust)



Makaira, Pembroke Dock, late 2012 (Sunderland Flying Boat Trust)



Makaira in Milford Haven (Jeff Cole Collection)



## A 47-ft. 6-in. Express Cruiser

Courtesy of Motor Boat & Yachting

### Acknowledgements

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**Kevin Le Scelleur “The Evacuation of St Malo”**

**Kevin Le Scelleur and Philip Jeune “Sailing through a Century”**

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**Jersey Heritage Archive**

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**Ben Curtis Fairey Owners Club**

**Motor Boat and Yachting Magazine**



Makaira at Swansea 15/5/94 (Philip Simons)