

## **BERN CUTHBERTSON**

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TASMANIA has lost one of its finest mariners with the peaceful passing of Bern Cuthbertson, aged 89.

Mr Cuthbertson's love of the sea started at 13 when he began crewing for his father on the ketch Weerutta in 1937. This started him on a fishing career that spanned six decades.

When he retired from the industry in 1984, Cuthbertson had owned seven commercial vessels, had started his fish-processing factory at Port Esperance, pioneered bringing abalone back to port alive, had built the Australia's first purpose-built abalone mother ship, Tasmanian Enterprise, caught a world-record catch of 25 tonnes of abalone in one trip, and was a driving force behind limiting Tasmania's abalone licence ownership to 125.

He was just as active in the sailing side of seamanship.

Mr Cuthbertson was instrumental in establishing the TS Esperance in the 1960s to train naval sea cadets. In 1964 he chartered the schooner Astor as their sea cadet training vessel.

About 80 sea cadets received training on Astor that year and seven sailed as crew in the 1964 Sydney-Hobart yacht race in which Astor won line honours, with Peter Warner as owner/skipper and Mr Cuthbertson sailing master.

In 1977, he and wife Janice sailed the 73-foot timber schooner Derwent Hunter back to Hobart from Cairns and restored it to her former glory.

He then embarked on a series of re-enactment voyages, his most notable being the 1986 journey around Tasmania in a whaleboat, following in the wake of James Kelly's voyage of 1815-16, and then skippered the replica Norfolk in 1999 to re-enact the circumnavigation of Tasmania by Bass and Flinders 200 years after the explorers.

"Bern was well-known for the project to build the replica whaleboat Elizabeth that he sailed around Tasmania, and he also managed the building of the replica Norfolk among his many achievements," Colin Denny, former head of the Tasmanian Maritime Museum, said.

Both vessels are displayed at the Bass & Flinders Centre at Georgetown.

In 2000, Mr Cuthbertson was appointed an Officer in the Order of Australia for services to the community and fishing industry, for the training of sea cadets and for services to Australia's maritime history.

Last year he advised Hobart's Tobias Fahey before his attempt to sail solo around the world.

"Bern was a great bloke who lived a life people can only dream of living," Mr Fahey said.

Mr Cuthbertson passed on his respect for the sea and nature.

He is survived by Janice and children Wayne, Charmaine, Adrian and Martin.

