



## REFLECTIONS 150 YEARS

### Michal Tomaszewski

**Michal Tomaszewski:** When the war broke out we were living in Katowice (Poland). Of course the Germans moved in, so we went to Krakow. My mother, she was an amazing person, amazing woman. Not just a woman but an amazing person. She went to our old flat in Katowice, hired a truck, still had the key to the apartment, took all the furniture out and went back to Krakow.

When the war broke out, we went to my uncle's property in the country and that's when I first saw the Germans. The day before the Germans came in there the Boy Scouts were manning the artillery and things to defend the place from Germans. Next day they were all gone, and we were in the cellar of the building. My mother dressed me as a girl because she was scared because they were killing boys and the German officer asked me, "Are you scared?" And my three-year-old little boy said, "I'm never scared of Germans".

**Ian Macintosh:** Three-year-old little girl?

**MT:** Yeah! Anyway, so they're little things. Then we went back to the city, to Krakow, and my mother hired an apartment there. There were my cousins with us and my mother's sister. Her husband was taken to jail. Germans jailed him and he died in jail, and so on. But my mother and her mother, my grandma, was running the household and my mother was keeping the whole family alive.

**IM:** Your father was a lawyer. Where was he?

**MT:** He was in England.

**IM:** So he escaped?

**MT:** He escaped with all the bullion the company had to take to the nearest Polish consulate, which was in Hungary. And then he wanted to, he tried to join the army. But he couldn't. He had a broken arm which was a bit unfortunate. Anyway, he didn't. So he finished up in England. At that stage he transferred to become a specialist in marine law.

**IM:** So at the end of the war he came back to Poland as a marine broker; is that when you moved to Gdansk?

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** And is Gdansk where you learnt to sail?

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** What sort of boat was that, how old were you?

**MT:** I suppose that was about '46, so I would have been 10 years old. We belonged to the yacht club. But of course you were not allowed to go out of port, you could only sail in the port. You know it was all crazy, it was crazy. They think that if you...

**IM:** So we should add for the benefit of the listeners that the War is finished, the Germans have been defeated, but the Russians brought Poland into the Soviet Union.

**MT:** Yeah, and they put in a Polish government which they appointed and that was it.

**IM:** So whilst you were still young, 10 or something like that, the family went to Stockholm?

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** And take me on from Stockholm, what happened then?

**MT:** Well, Stockholm, we knew that we can't stay there.

**IM:** Your parents had made a decision to get out of Poland?

**MT:** Well, he knew if he stayed he'd finish up in jail. Not that he did anything wrong, but because he was a capitalist.

First of all, we wrecked the ship. The boat, we sailed the boat all the way from Stockholm right across down to the... and we wrecked it in a storm running aground on one of those...

**IM:** This was a sailing boat?

**MT:** No, it was a fishing boat. Had a sail and things but we can only use it for running before it.

**IM:** So you ran aground?

**MT:** Yes. We ran aground in a storm. We missed our entrance to a little fishing port by two miles or so. Anyway, we finished up on the sand bank.

**IM:** Was this Holland?

**MT:** In Holland. We got pulled off next day. The boat had a cracked keel. So it wasn't worth much and my father left it there with a broker to sell it. Eventually they managed to sell it, but I know very little of that.

**IM:** But you got to Stockholm as a family?

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** And then to Paris?

**MT:** Then to Paris. We sailed...my father, my brother, myself and a couple of other Polish blokes. My father acting as a captain. How the hell he navigated I've no idea, but he did till we wrecked the ship and then finished up in Paris. We stayed with his sister, my godmother in Paris.

**IM:** So at some point fairly soon thereafter the family had to make a decision where it was going to go. My understanding is the choices were Canada or Australia?

**MT:** That's correct.

**IM:** Why did they choose Australia?

**MT:** Well because it's fucking cold in Canada.

**IM:** You've never liked the cold, have you?

**MT:** No.

**IM:** Your writings are full of stories about sailing around the Pacific...

**MT:** But going to Australia, I knew nothing about Australia. I thought that Sydney would be still people on horseback carts and all that sort of thing.

**IM:** So you arrived in Sydney in 1950?

**MT:** 1950 yeah.

**IM:** You were 14. Straight to Riverview (St Ignatius College). No English. A border at an elite private school on the lower north shore. How did you integrate? It must have been hell.

**MT:** Look I've no idea how. The school appointed two senior students to look after me. At that stage you learn languages very quickly, at that age. So I finished up with a High School Certificate or whatever it was called in those days...

**IM:** So you learned your English, you finished high school, you're ready for university but before we go there you were quite an athlete. As I understand it you stroked the Riverview eight in your school days.

**MT:** Yeah, well at Riverview, because I had a cracked head, I couldn't play football, but I could row and I was pretty strong. Three years I was rowing in the number one high school, school....

**IM:** The first eight?

**MT:** Yeah, the last two years I was stroking the eight. We used to come in last (in) most of the races (laughs). But that's a different story.

**IM:** You said you had a 'cracked head' and you couldn't play football. That goes back to something that happened to you as a little boy?

**MT:** Yeah, when I had a head operation in 1946 in Warsaw. Because they had to cut my head open. So I didn't miss playing football because I never liked that very much.

**IM:** So rowing was the big sport when you were at school.

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** Did you sail even then?

**MT:** No, I didn't sail then because I was rowing. And when I left school because I was a rower, and I had a name (for it), so I started rowing for Mosman and we were undefeated for two years. We had a very good crew. My crew went off to what was then called the Empire Games in Wales, I think it was. But I was at that stage already doing architecture and I went to my school and said look can I have...because you had to go there by ship and come back by ship, so three months you had to (be away). I had to have a three months off and they said, "Well you can either, if you want to become a rower you can go, but if you want to become an architect you can't go rowing".

**IM:** So your international rowing career was very short-lived, but you were studying architecture. Tell me about your university days. The word the Push comes up.

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** How do you recall your time at Sydney Uni?

**MT:** Look it was fantastic really. You had to be a fairly strong human being. Not physically, but emotionally. Because a lot of people used to go nuts, and some of them used to become alcoholics and all sorts of things. But there were also some very, very notable people that came out through the Push.

**IM:** And there you are in your early 20s and you're associating with the Push.

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** Which now has a sort of legendary status.

**MT:** It's now.

**IM:** What was the Push?

**MT:** It started off at Sydney University, in the Philosophy department of Sydney University, that was full of, it started off by expats, people out from the army. So they were grown-ups, people who went through the war.

**IM:** Was the emphasis on intellectual pursuits or debauchery?

**MT:** Yeah, intellectual pursuits, (and) fucking and drinking. Yeah.

**IM:** Now in May 1957 a large American warship, an aircraft carrier to be precise, the *USS Bennington*, was in Sydney to celebrate the Coral Sea Victory Week. A group of Sydney University students, including your good self, took the ship over. Take me through that. First of all, how were you dressed?

**MT:** I didn't get on board the ship. I was with the crew with a motorboat that took them over to (it). My brother was one of the ring leaders in the group. They went on board. I didn't go on board.

**IM:** Oh they didn't just go on board; at one stage they activated all the emergency alarms?

**MT:** The trusting Yanks left a gangway down on the outside. So we just pulled up to the gangway and they went up to the flight deck, and asked the gentleman in a uniform and a helmet on, "So where is the...which way to the bridge?" And he said, 'Oh, up those steps up there'. So that's where they went.

**IM:** This is a student prank aiming to raise money for charity. It ends up with one of the (student) leaders on the intercom on the ship calling general stations and radiation and chemical attacks?

**MT:** Yeah, yeah.

**IM:** It's a miracle you weren't all shot.

**MT:** Anyway they called us...

**IM:** Were you charged afterwards? Were you charged by the police?

**MT:** Well the police wanted to charge us. But the Americans refused to lay charges because they were so ashamed of the whole thing. And subsequently the skipper of the *USS Bennington* got sacked, and rightly so.

**IM:** Were you wearing an Arab sheikhs outfit?

**MT:** Oh, that was on another occasion.

**IM:** What was that?

**MT:** That was in the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne. Again my brother was one of the ringleaders in it. But we had a mate at the university, a young Jewish boy who had more money than sense. So he was financing the whole operation.

But what we did, we dressed him as an Arab sheikh. He flew in to Melbourne. We were in Melbourne, and we had one guy who did architecture with me, a great big ex-pug, and he was dressed up as a bodyguard and had a motor car for him and alerted the press that there's this guy in incognito, this sheikh, Arab sheikh coming in and so on. And it all went off, and then we finished up at the Olympic Games, and nobody got arrested or anything. But after, when we were going on the way back home, we had absolutely no money. We caught a train, got in somehow through the entrance, got a train as far as we could and then we were hitchhiking (the rest of the way back to Sydney).

**IM:** And it's around about that time or very soon after that you, in a Sydney pub, met a young woman named Maris. Do you remember that?

**MT:** Yes, I do remember that, yes.

**IM:** What do you think she saw in you? You were a pranking, loud, rambunctious, larger than life, drinking, larger than life character. What was the attraction?

**MT:** To tell you the truth, I don't know. She was, at that stage, she was married and she had a little son, this is Ben (Hawke). Ben's father, he disappeared, he sort of...disappeared. She was just 17 I think, and he was maybe a year older than her, and it lasted a few months and it was over. And she was living with her parents just across the road.

**IM:** And so you came into the famous Earl marine family.

**MT:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**IM:** How were you received by Jack and Kath(leen), Maris's parents?

**MT:** I was always on great terms with Jack. Kathleen didn't like me very much because (a) I was a foreigner, and just not the right colour...and so on. So she never really liked me very much, but Maris did. Jack, I always had a great time with Jack.

**IM:** And this is where you really got into sailing, obviously.

**MT:** Yeah, when I stopped rowing, I started sailing. I bought a little boat as well, on the little 12-foot dinghy, which I sailed around in. It was a sailing dinghy.

**IM:** You had a little boat called *Salty*. By this stage, the twins had been born. (Daughter) Tiare talks about you going out on family outings with the dog and the kids on *Salty*. What was *Salty*?

**MT:** She was a 22-foot, beautiful little boat designed by Ronnie Swanson. So I knew Ronnie fairly well, and I said, "Well, there's this boat up for sale. What she like?" He said, it's terrific. So I bought her. And Ronnie said, "Look, if you want to race the boat, you have to put a bigger mast because she's been designed specifically for people as a family boat". So I got a Soling rig, put her in, and she was terrific. We won lots and lots of races.

**IM:** By this stage, you're married with a young family. You're trying to make a living as an architect. Meanwhile, Jack and others are cruising off in *Maris* and doing an awful lot of sailing. You're stuck in Sydney. Was this what led you to racing on the Harbour initially, the fact that you couldn't do long-distance cruising?

**MT:** Well, not really. First of all, I had to get my degree, which is the main reason I stayed. Once I got my degree, I had to pay various debts I had accumulated as a young student. So I stayed. I didn't really have terribly much time for sailing in those days.

My whole life is full of adventures. I met this American Indian woman who was married to the first officer, Swedish officer, on one of the Swedish freighters that used to come. I met her in Sydney. Through her, I got on board this Swedish freighter to sail to Hawaii to join (wife) Maris. I got to Hawaii, and I found out Maris wasn't there. She was already gone to the mainland. So by then, I shipped out of the ship, but then I went to the captain and said, "Look, I'm sorry, but my wife's not here. I've got to go to America". Because the ship was going to Los Angeles. So anyway, so they took me on, and I went to Los Angeles. And that's where I caught up with Maris.

**IM:** *Maris* the ship, or Maris the wife?

**MT:** Maris the wife, yeah. Maris the wife. So the whole story finished up very well. I remember I bought a car for \$250, literally. In those days cars were peanuts. And the guy said, "Do you want to take it for a drive?" I said, "No, if you say(it's) all right, I'll go for a drive". And he said, "Do you want to have a look at the engine?" I said, "No, I wouldn't know what to look at." It was a big station wagon. So we took whatever possessions we had and then (got) on board and went down south.

**IM:** You hit Route 66, or something like that?

**MT:** Yeah, and we finished up in Mexico, because I wanted to work for this Felix Candela, who was in those days a very famous architect. So I got a job with him for a while. Of course, he paid fuck all for it. So after a few months, my visa ran out anyway.

Life is so full of crazy things. We had enough money to pay for accommodation somewhere. Not much, but we had enough. But not enough to pay key money. We could pay the rent, but not the board money. So we finished up living in a caravan park in the

back of (inaudible). So every morning I'd get up and put a tie on and go to work for Mr. Architect, yeah.

**IM:** Your writings that I've been through in the SASC News, the word 'vagabond' appears regularly. You're a vagabond, aren't you?

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** We'll come back to that a little later. But when you came back to Australia, your family life revolved around Mosman Bay and the water, and the Earl family connection with sailing and the sea. You didn't actually join the Amateurs, I think, until 1976.

**MT:** Yeah, something like that.

**IM:** Why did you join then? Did Jack say you should do it?

**MT:** No, I think to me it was the thing I had a boat. I thought it was the proper thing to do. I was living in Mosman Bay. The Amateurs were in Mosman Bay. So it was a natural sort of thing. And then I started racing with the Amateurs and so on. I came back to Sydney to work for (Jorn) Utzon on the Opera (House). And that only lasted six or eight or nine months or something, because Utzon got thrown out.

**IM:** So you came back to Sydney to work on the Opera House?

**MT:** Yeah, yeah. Because I met Utzon before I left.

**IM:** And you stayed with the project after he was thrown out?

**MT:** No, no, no, I left that.

**IM:** So you were part of Utzon's team?

**MT:** Yeah, yeah. For two years, I got a job as a government architect. I tried different jobs with different architects. But a lot of them were anti-Utson, because they thought the Opera House should have been designed by an Australian architect. So I got a job with the government in designing high schools, which was good for two years. And then I started my own practice.

**IM:** And you joined the Amateurs. What was your first impression, being a vagabond? You know, clubs don't necessarily attract vagabonds. What was your first impression of that club?

**MT:** Look, I thought the Amateurs was a friendly sort of club. It was very simple, everyday life was very simple.

**IM:** It wasn't formal and stuffy?



**MT:** There was very little formality, except at meetings. But even they, whoever was the boss, used to say that the shorter the meeting, the better. And I got involved with Bob Lawler. And I sailed a lot with Bob. And Bob was Commodore for two or three years or whatever it was. And I was on the Board.

**IM:** You were on the Board for nine years.

**MT:** Yeah, it was just a nice little social club. And in those days, we had a strong offshore division, which doesn't exist anymore, really. So going to Hobart we usually had at least six boats. Because I'm not a very club type person, but it was very informal. Fees were very small. You could work on your own boat, and it was handy. At first, I lived across the bay, on the other side of the bay. So I used to row across to the club because we had a dinghy. And there was a lot of young people like myself.

**IM:** There's a question I've always wanted to ask you. Was living close to the club an advantage or a disadvantage?

**MT:** No, it was an advantage. Yeah, because I didn't have to drive anywhere after. In those days, in the early days, it didn't matter, really, because we used to all drink so much.

**IM:** But the disruptions and all the disadvantages would have been all the parties at Tomo's place.

**MT:** Yeah, well, that wasn't very hard to put up with.

**IM:** I remember one particular party here after Jack died. I remember coming in the front gate and the Governor of New South Wales and his wife, in civilian clothes, were leaving. I think the party ended about two days later.

**MT:** Yeah, yeah.

**IM:** Do you remember that party?

**MT:** Yeah, yeah. Well, Jack wasn't a pretty amazing character. I remember he used to tell me that when the CYC was, because he was one of the founders, one of the four or five founders of the CYC. But when the CYC put on a farewell party for him all these millionaires were saying, "Oh, you're so lucky, Jack, you can go sailing around the world". And then Jack would say he could only sail from one port to the next, and then he'd do a couple of paintings, get a bit of money for a couple of paintings, then he can sail further on. He was a very unique sort of a person, yeah.

**IM:** One legacy from all that was that for some time you were banned from the CYC, is that correct?

**MT:** No, Jack was banned from CYC.

**IM:** Jack was?

**MT:** Jack was, yes.

**IM:** Why?

**MT:** Because that particular thing was we'd go and have dinner at one of the Spanish places in the city and drive my little Morris, a little Morris Minor, to the CYC and we got terribly pissed in there. And Maris was with us, and Maris...because she'd painted her hair so many times that she decided to have a crew cut...she was dancing around, and somebody took her wig off. And then they decided that (we) can't have guys like that as members of the club. But then (later) they got him, (and) asked him to rejoin.

**IM:** Was Jack your sailing mentor?

**MT:** Very much, very much so. When we were in Gdansk and we joined this sailing club, they had lectures and so on because we couldn't really go anywhere. We were taught how to sail, what to do and all that sort of thing. But I was a kid then. So really, I've learned a lot from Jack. I mean, Jack was such a terribly practical sailor. He knew very little, he had very little theory really, except that he read a lot of books. He could navigate a ship, but his navigation was very primitive.

**IM:** Artistic?

**MT:** When he sailed around the world, one of the (other) guys was a good navigator. And so he presumably did most of the navigation. But Jack was a brilliant sailor.

**IM:** You wrote a piece about a race you were doing, or maybe it was a cruise, I can't remember, south of Sydney, and I think Maris was with you, with Jack. And you wrote very lovingly of the way he ran the boat and the sort of instinctive, natural way he sailed. Is that what you learned from Jack?

**MT:** Absolutely. Well, because to him it was something which is natural, and you do it the natural way. He didn't really like racing. He raced because it was the done thing. But he really wasn't a racing sailor.

**IM:** He wasn't a competitive person?

**MT:** No.

**IM:** Before we come to your sailing, can we just talk about your boats? We talked about *Salty*, but the boats most of us knew at the Amateurs were *Trangie* and now *Indulgence*. Tell me about those boats and what they mean to you.

**MT:** Well, *Trangie*, I loved *Trangie* (an Alan Warwick 24). First of all, she was a beautifully designed boat, very good sailing boat. Particularly once I got the slightly 20% bigger rig. She was very, very fast. Originally, the class was designed with a centreboard. I had a fixed keel, which was much better for sailing, really. We sailed her in lots of wind. In those days,

they didn't cancel races because the wind was blowing. So we'd race. She didn't have a self-draining cockpit, so if you put her down she'd fill up full of water. But she was a lovely, lovely little boat. We used to go on weekends. There were the twins (Lani and Tiare) and Matt, Maris and myself, and a big dog on board.

**IM:** So you raced her, and you cruised her?

**MT:** We cruised her. We'd go off to drop a pick somewhere nicely out of the (way) and go swimming.

**IM:** In the process, you produced three fine sailors in Lani, Tiare and Matt.

**MT:** That's right. All of them have learned sailing when they learned to walk.

**IM:** At a certain point, *Trangie* went and *Indulgence* arrived. *Indulgence* is a Young 88, isn't it?

**MT:** Yes. I was looking for a new boat and I looked at a couple of boats and my mentors, Jack (Earl) and Hugh (Treharne), said, no, no, that's no good. So I finished up, a friend who had a Young 88 in Tasmania and he said, look, there's another one, a sister ship built by the same people at the same time, but I don't know where she is. So I traced her, and the boat was in Coffs Harbour. So I went up there and she looked fantastic. So I bought her and sailed her back to Sydney with Ben, Ben's mate from school (and) probably Matt was with us and myself and Chris Oh, of course. Chris Oh was putting the outboard on the thing when we were coming into port and, of course, he dropped the fucking thing. Yeah, so that was the end of the engine.

Anyway, I rang up Jack that we were leaving this morning, and we had a big Nor'easter, and the boat was just flying. I rang up Jack (again) when we got in and he couldn't believe us.

**IM:** That you'd made it home so quickly?

**MT:** Yeah. Probably took us about eight (sic) hours or something.

**IM:** So *Indulgence* is still in the family. No regrets?

**MT:** No. I guess I probably had a bit more money and things, wanted a bigger boat, and that I could race offshore a bit.

**IM:** Well, *Indulgence* won you a few club gold medals.

**MT:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. We won a lot of races, a lot of races in her. We've owned her now for probably about 12 or 14 years. Quite a long time. And she's fantastic because I used to sail her single-handed a lot when I had free time and things because you could handle it. She was a typical Kiwi design boat. Very practical. Chris Oh sailed a lot with me and our present-day boss of the club, Commodore (Sean) Kelly, he learned to sail with us.

**IM:** I've also seen some fairly serious sailing 'royalty' on your boat. I've seen Ken Beashel, for example.

**MT:** Yeah, I was lucky because again, that was through Jack. When we're taking racing seriously, we used to have some very good people sail with us.

**IM:** And some of your great sailing mates were the Beashels, Hugh Treharne...

**MT:** Yeah, yeah.

**IM:** Big names in international sailing.

**MT:** Yeah, and you learn a lot from these people. And with sailing, I always used to believe that you never stop learning.

**IM:** In the last part of the last century, say from the mid-70s until around 2000, the Amateurs, as you alluded to earlier, had a significant offshore fleet. I think in the '94 Hobart, the 50th, there was something like a dozen or more Amateurs boats.

**MT:** That's right.

**IM:** The name Tomo is associated with that era. You did Sydney-Hobarts. I think one of your first offshores was the West Coaster from Melbourne to Hobart down the West Coast of Tasmania.

**MT:** That's correct.

**IM:** You did Hobarts, you did Southports, you did Lord Howe Island.

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** What were your favourite ocean races?

**MT:** Probably the favourite would have been the (Sydney to) Southport. Hobart was a thing in itself. You can't, it was either a brilliant race, it was always eventful race. But strictly as a race, Southport was fantastic. You always had to use your nuts to navigate the boat the right way, to guess what the weather's going to be and so on. Southport would have been my favourite.

**IM:** And you also got to take a layer of clothing off as you went further north, and we know you don't like cold weather!

**MT:** That's right, yeah. We used to have a lot of fun, too.

**IM:** For you, was it more about fellowship than winning?

**MT:** Yeah. Oh, absolutely. Invariably, we had very friendly crew. We all knew one another very well. We depended on one another. And I used to be a lot younger in those days. I navigated a lot of these races and I used to run them as a watch captain as well. Because I was young and strong, and I could do all those things.

**IM:** I recall you had a lot of fun too.

**MT:** Yeah, yeah. A lot of fun, a lot of fun.

**MT:** Let's turn to cruising. I would call this section of our chat 'Tomo's vagabond adventures in paradise'. And fortunately for members of the Amateurs, over a period of almost 20 years, you regularly documented your travels. So, one of the first ones I recall reading was about *Havana*, a vessel that was in French Polynesia that Hughie Treharne asked you to join. Tell me how that came about.

**MT:** What happened was that we were sitting having breakfast just in the kitchen down here. There was, I think maybe, probably was Lani and Tiare and me, or maybe just one of the twins and me. And the phone call came, and it was Hugh Treharne ringing up from Hawaii, saying, "Tomo, can you come up and run the ship for me for a few days? Because I have to go, I'm committed to go and sail a boat on the East Coast". So I said, "Yeah sure, when?" "Well, can you hop on a plane tonight? Because I have to go off tomorrow". So I said, "Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, okay, what?" He said that there are three people on board, the owner is coming down from Sydney, and he wants somebody to run the boat, or I want somebody left over to run the boat for them. So I hopped on a plane and went.

**IM:** And that particular trip took you through French Polynesia and Tonga, and various other places?

**TM:** Yeah, which was fantastic. I took the owner and his mate. They weren't interested in sailing at all. I asked them, "Where do you want to go?" And they said, "Well, wherever you want to take us". I said, "Okay, well, look, I'll take you around a few of the islands". And the owner and his mate were just on sun deck, enjoying the sunshine. And I had Hugh's daughter; I had another lovely, lovely woman, who I still know around here; and myself.

**IM:** And it's a lovely long cruise back eventually to Sydney.

**MT:** Back to Sydney, yeah.

**IM:** Another boat that you seem to be very fond of was *Blackwater*. It was an Oyster, a 70-foot Oyster, owned by your...not owned, but skippered by your friend, Terry Hick.

**MT:** Oh, he's great. That was, I had a lot of, I cruised a lot of...

**IM:** A lot of that was around Fiji, wasn't it?

**MT:** Yeah, I met him originally in Hawaii. And subsequently, then one of the islands on the way back to Sydney. And I stayed in touch. Later on he rang me up and said, "Well, can you join the crew? We're going to Southeast Asia". So I said, "Yeah, sure". And we did that.

*Blackwater* was a particularly good experience because a skipper who's a lovely, lovely guy, ex-Royal Navy, but he was in the Royal Navy not to shoot people and things...he became a sailing instructor in the British Navy.

**IM:** She was a Moody Oyster, which suggests she was extremely well fitted and comfortable?

**MT:** Very beautiful boat. Fast. Quite a big boat, but beautiful. And he sailed her for an owner, for a woman, an American millionairess, who every year would have a meeting with him and said, "Now look, where will you take the boat this year?" So he would make a plan. And she would just fly in, sometimes with a few friends, (and) join them wherever he had the boat. So he really had this beautiful boat. He was on that boat for probably about six years.

**IM:** And you had other people like Captain Anne Cleghorne, Ken Pryor. You did trips through the (Pacific) islands. You even did a trip with Ken from Auckland to Fiji on a rolling motorboat, which I think her name was *Aurora*, but you called her something else. I think you called her *Our Stumpy*. And she rolled the whole way.

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** But what's interesting in all of those writings is your obvious affection for the islands and the island people. You were in Vanuatu, in the Solomons, Fiji, French Polynesia, Tonga and so on. What is it about the islands that you find...?

**MT:** Look, the people are self-sufficient. They're inventive. They live a very simple life. Their kids learn to sail little dinghies that they built themselves. And then they go fishing. And they're pretty traditional. They're very close to nature. And we had some lovely, lovely times. And they're gentle, and friendly. I love that.

**IM:** The Pacific has been a really big part of your extended family life, hasn't it?

**MT:** Well, really, yeah. Yes, it was.

**IM:** And you went further afield. You sailed, you cruised in Canada with your mate Mike Barrett. You volunteered in Peru and used that as the excuse to visit Patagonia and other places.

**MT:** Yeah, yeah.

**IM:** The extent of your travels amazes me that you got any architecture done.

**MT:** Yeah, yeah. Well, perhaps I could have become a much better, more famous architect if I didn't. But life's too short. Mike Barrett, who is still a very close friend of mine, he was here for my 90th birthday.

**IM:** 90th?

**MT:** 80th. But he was a young pilot and I met him in Fiji. I was in Fiji because I was doing some architecture, doing some development down there...holiday development. I ran into Mike Barrett in a hotel. He was in the middle, in between jobs. He was a young pilot, so he didn't have a steady job. I got very friendly, so he came down, stayed with us in Sydney. And through a friend, he borrowed a bike and sailed (sic) up to Queensland on a motorbike. Anyway, Mike Barrett finished up (as) a full-time pilot and I've sailed (sic) with him in the cockpit. He put me on one of the flights back to Canada.

**IM:** And the two of you have cruised the Inside Passage and various other places in the Pacific Northwest.

**MT:** Yeah, yeah. He also had a yacht in Canada, and we sailed that boat a few times in Vancouver Island and the mainland.

**IM:** On the Inside Passage?

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** You had quite a catholic taste in cruising boats. You also sailed on a 60-foot catamaran that was built in, ironically, in Gdansk, Poland.

**MT:** Yes.

**IM:** With Captain Anne.

**MT:** Yeah.

**IM:** What was that like to sail?

**MT:** I had a ball. She was lovely. I mean, we sailed mainly in the Pacific. I sailed (with) her in the islands down here, but that was just a relatively very short thing. But later on, I sailed (with) her all the way to Thailand. There was only usually three or four of us on board. As skipper, she's a lovely woman. She used to be a hairdresser. She actually went to the college in Tasmania and got a ticket.

**IM:** The Maritime College?

**MT:** Yeah. She got a job skippering this boat in Poland. The idea was to bring the boat here. And she did. But she was obviously a very clever woman because she was a good navigator.

**IM:** In all this cruising, you have the image of something that's carefree and relaxed, but it doesn't always go to plan. You got stranded after 9/11 in Hawaii, didn't you?

**MT:** Yeah. I was coming back from Canada with Mike (Barrett) on his plane. And we got to a stopover in Hawaii. We were in this hotel and Mike's wife rings up and says, "Hey, boys, everything stopped". I couldn't get back on board because whatever planes there were, were booked up (and) I didn't have a paid ticket because I was a guest (of Mike's). So I was stuck in Hawaii. Mike flew off to Melbourne, and I was stuck.

I was actually on board and had a seat. And the authorities came up and said, "Now you've got to stay because we've got somebody else who's got to take that seat". So I stayed there. Fortunately I knew a few people from being there in Hawaii before, quite good friends. So they put me up. And then I managed to get another flight once the regular flights started flying.

**IM:** A lot of memories and nostalgia, which brings me to something you wrote after the 2013 picnic cruise to Lord Howe Island. You said, "On the island I missed the many shipmates like Bob and Jim Lawler, Paul Slocum, Jim Davern, Chris Oh, Dal Wilson, Hugh O'Neill and too many others to name. Some still walking and sailing the oceans, others no longer with us". The fellowship of the sea and of the Sydney Amateurs is something quite special, isn't it?

**MT:** Well, that's what I think the Sydney Amateurs were very special like that. I remember, apart from sailing the oceans with them, but also when we were racing. I remember on one occasion I was very close to the end of the season race, and very close to winning the whole thing for the season. And my main sheet fell apart. And all these blokes came up and repaired the whole (thing)...it was a big job to try and get the boat so the boat could sail. And that was the Amateurs. They were (my) competition. But they were there always to help you.

**IM:** That's the Sydney Amateurs.

**MT:** That's the Sydney Amateurs. Yeah. And I guess probably that's why I originally joined it, because I'm not really a club person.

**IM:** Well, it's been a wonderful sailing life. Thank you for spending the time with us. I personally have always looked up to you as somebody quite special in my life and on the water. And I think I can speak for a lot of other of your old sailing mates and say that any happy crews we were in always included Tomo.

**MT:** Well, look, I had fantastic people I've sailed with.

**IM:** Great memories!

**MT:** Yeah. Interesting life. Yeah.