

**Real Life Skills
- Build a Yacht!**

FIREBUG NEWS 40



Celebrating 20 Years of 'BugBuilding'!

It's twenty years since John Spencer and I launched our first FireBug with my two small boys. I jumped in and did a short test sail around the bay and thought wow this is a beaut little boat! Later on over a beer Spence said "Well if you think it's any good we might try and promote it as a new build-it-yourself class, what do you reckon?" I couldn't say yes quick enough and now all that time and so much pleasure-for-thousands of keen folk later the boat is pretty well established as a great-fun build and a capable sailer for young and old. To date I've sent off thirteen hundred planpacks to 39 countries and a large number of boats have been built! A lot of builders have kept in touch to the extent that I now have good friends in all corners of the world. Read on for some of the highlights..



First Equal Best Club Build: Des Clark and the team at Lindsfame Yacht Club in Hobart did a great job. Fun building, fun sailing, fun racing and fun socially. Des said the rewards for kids building their own boats have been life changing!



First Equal Best Club Build: Early on the PPYC in Christchurch NZ built a fleet of 15 'Bugs', all launched on the same day to the sound of cannon fire! The well supported fleet today enjoys sailing at various clubs and scenic lakes in the region.



Irakli Kutsia in the Republic of Georgia, where supplies were very difficult to find and opportunities are near zero gets **Best Solo Effort!** A donated sail replaced this one which was self-made from two layers of umbrella nylon! Great effort Irakli!



The Seventh Day Adventist High School in Auckland with Bryce Wastney at the helm takes the **Best School Build** award. Bryce, a fantastic teacher, unfortunately found the school paper war too much and is now a professional musician. What does that say?



Carlos and Antonio (far right) 'BugBuilding with cerebral palsy sufferers in Lisbon, Portugal gets the **Best Charity Build** award. The NCBE has other charities building mostly with Lisbon Council funding: poor kids, Gypsies, handicapped and partially blind!



Best family photo: Papa and Stella having first sail in one of the boats built at the LSC in Hobart. Unlike most kids learn-to-sail programs the kids take great pride in their family built boats and the club has been like a second home for them.



Far left: The Lindisfarne Sailing Club at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival with parents and children building 'Bugs' live at the show.
Near left: The Sydney Boat Show build with kids from the Forster Neighbourhood Support Centre blocked the aisles for International Paints.
Right: Ross Venner on launch day in Sydney at the Concord Ryde Club which has a keen 'Bug fleet'. Ross is working to get the class recognised in Australia and is also keen to set up interclub and interstate racing.



Left: Nice speedy shape, see why they go fast. Patrick Sullivan racing at Concord Ryde.
Near right: Koos Winnips enjoying a first sail in Tuk. Koos, a uni professor in The Netherlands built in the living room of his fourth floor apartment and loved the experience. He has gone on to build high tech flyers and maintenance on his classic 'flatbottom'.
Far right: Mr I've-lost-a-millimeter Manu from just across the Bay here in Russell has now built three 'Bugs'. Ivan, a retired school technology teacher does remarkably accurate woodwork. More accurate than the plans he reckons and the debate continues, I'm right!



Left: Robyn and Warwick Mobray from Tamworth NSW visited Pete to say G'day. Warwick had suffered a stroke and lost the use of his right arm but successfully built then sailed a 'Bug'. He said with a grin - 'I had to make a few jigs to hold things!'
Near right: What, a leg in plaster? Not a problem up at Carnarvon in WA.
Far right: David McDonald in Bundaberg is more used to building with chainsaw, mauls and wedges. He tells me he ripped the stringers with his beloved chainsaw. Perhaps?



Far left: Moko the friendly dolphin at Mahia in NZ thought the 'Bug' was fun to play with. He swam around, sprayed the sailor, turned the rudder and pushed the stern up for a compulsory nosedive!
Near left: Part of the colourful club built 'Bug' fleet in Carnarvon WA. A very successful build with council funding and more underway with the local schools.
Right: At 95 NZer Ron Maskell has taken the world record for the oldest 'BugBuilder! Ron completed the boat to a high standard and donated it to a club in Auckland for kids to sail.



Left: What do Santa Claus, chocolate birthday cakes and Firebugs have in common? Well that's an easy one - they're all great fun!
Right: Brett Elliot and Chris Tait going for it at Point Chevalier in Auckland. The bow buoyancy works so well! I wonder what the world FireBug speed record is?





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There are so many good stories and achievements in twenty years of FireBugs, this is but a few. Many thanks to those who have kept in touch with news and photos and please keep sending stuff in. For me this has been an amazing experience, so many good times generated for both young and old, and so international! Truly putting something back in to the pastime that I love. The full version of some of these stories can be read at <http://www.firebug.co.nz/download.html>. Cheers, Peter.

