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. article by Jill Andrewartha

can the opossum bay jetty be saved?



Two intrinsic characters of Tasmanian history couldn't quite get it together last month at Opossum Bay. 92 year old Cartela cruised down the Derwent to meet with her old friend, 115 year old Opossum Bay jetty, but no physical contact could take place – the jetty is scheduled for demolition, so Cartela wasn't able to lie alongside.

Currently there are no plans to replace the jetty, but a dedicated group is working hard to ensure this historic river-link can be maintained.

Opossum Bay jetty was built in 1889 to facilitate the transportation of South Arm Peninsula produce (sand, stock, and the famed Pinkeye spuds), then later down

the track Cartela began the cruises that brought thousands of visitors to the Bay – who doesn't fondly remember staff picnics and school excursions to the beach and the walks to Gellibrand Point? There, two sons of Tasmania's first Attorney General, Joseph Tice Gellibrand, are buried with their grandfather William. Buried in a vault and on top of the beach, the Gellibrand grave is an icon. How many boaters haven't used the grave's location as a navigational reference point? Cartela's excursions had to be curtailed when the jetty sustained some major damage through collision and so the deterioration began.

Hope there is, though, for MaST has allocated a generous \$35,000 towards the cost of a new work-again jetty. This is very gratifying.

Sunday, 3 October last, saw some 300 supportive people gathered at the jetty to watch Cartela's welcome return visit in company with several cruisers and a helicopter with cameraman to take low-level TV footage. Cartela looked magnificent as she made several circuits of the bay and Leigh Winburn of the Mercury took a classic shot as she turned for home and cock-a-doodle-dooed her departure amid cheers from the shore.

What has been a successful liaison between Opossum Bay and the port of Hobart for over a century has the potential for an even brighter future with a new Millennium trend to open up and maximize the opportunities of this beautiful estuary.

(Serendipity? The day after Cartela's visit to Opossum Bay a seal spent ten minutes swimming around the end of the jetty. Cartela is an indigenous word for seal).

