

EDUCATION RESOURCE

THE FALIE

COASTAL TRADER



USING THIS RESOURCE



This education resource was created for educators, to learn and share stories about one of South Australia's most beloved and historically important vessels. The information and activities in this booklet may align with the following Australian Curriculum links:

- Year 9 History: the Making of the Modern World.
- Year 5 HASS: The impact of a significant development or event on an Australian colony
- Year 4 HASS: How people, places and environments interact, past and present.
- Year 3 HASS: Diverse communities and places and the contribution people make.
- Year 2 HASS: The importance today of a historical site of cultural or spiritual significance in the local area, and why it should be preserved
- Year 3-8 Design and Technology: Generate, develop and communicate design ideas and processes for audiences using appropriate technical terms and graphical representation techniques
- Year 9-10 Design and Technology: Develop, modify and communicate design ideas by applying design thinking, creativity, innovation and enterprise skills of increasing sophistication

ABOUT THE FALIE

***Falie* is a 46-metre (151 ft) ketch that traded for many years in Australian waters. She is on the Australian Register of Historic Vessels. After her retirement in 1982, she was then the last working ship representing the South Australian ketch fleet, and along with the *Nelcebee*, one of the last two working sail powered cargo vessels in South Australia.**

Falie was originally built in Maassluis, Netherlands by W Richter in 1919 as a gaff rigged motor schooner collier originally named *Hollands Trouw* after the shipyard where she was built. Originally built as a speculation by the builder W. Richter Uitdenbogaardt in the hope of selling her to a prospective buyer, she sat idle after her launch in 1919 until purchased by the Spencer's Gulf Transport Company in 1922. She was renamed *Falie* and used for coastal trading in South Australia.

The vessel was commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) as *HMAS Falie* during World War II, serving first as an inspection vessel primarily patrolling the Port of Sydney, Australia, then as a stores ship.

Returned to her owners in 1946, *Falie* was used to transport general cargo and explosives around Australia before resuming the South Australian coastal trade to Kangaroo Island and on occasion carrying bulk gypsum from Stenhouse Bay from 1968. She was retired in 1982, then purchased by the South Australian government for preservation as a community and educational resource. The ship was restored for the state's sesquicentenary celebrations in 1986, with re-masting, new sails, and the fitting of accommodation and a galley. With this arrangement, she could carry up to 70 passengers on day trips, or 16 passengers plus nine crew overnight.

THE FALIE NOW

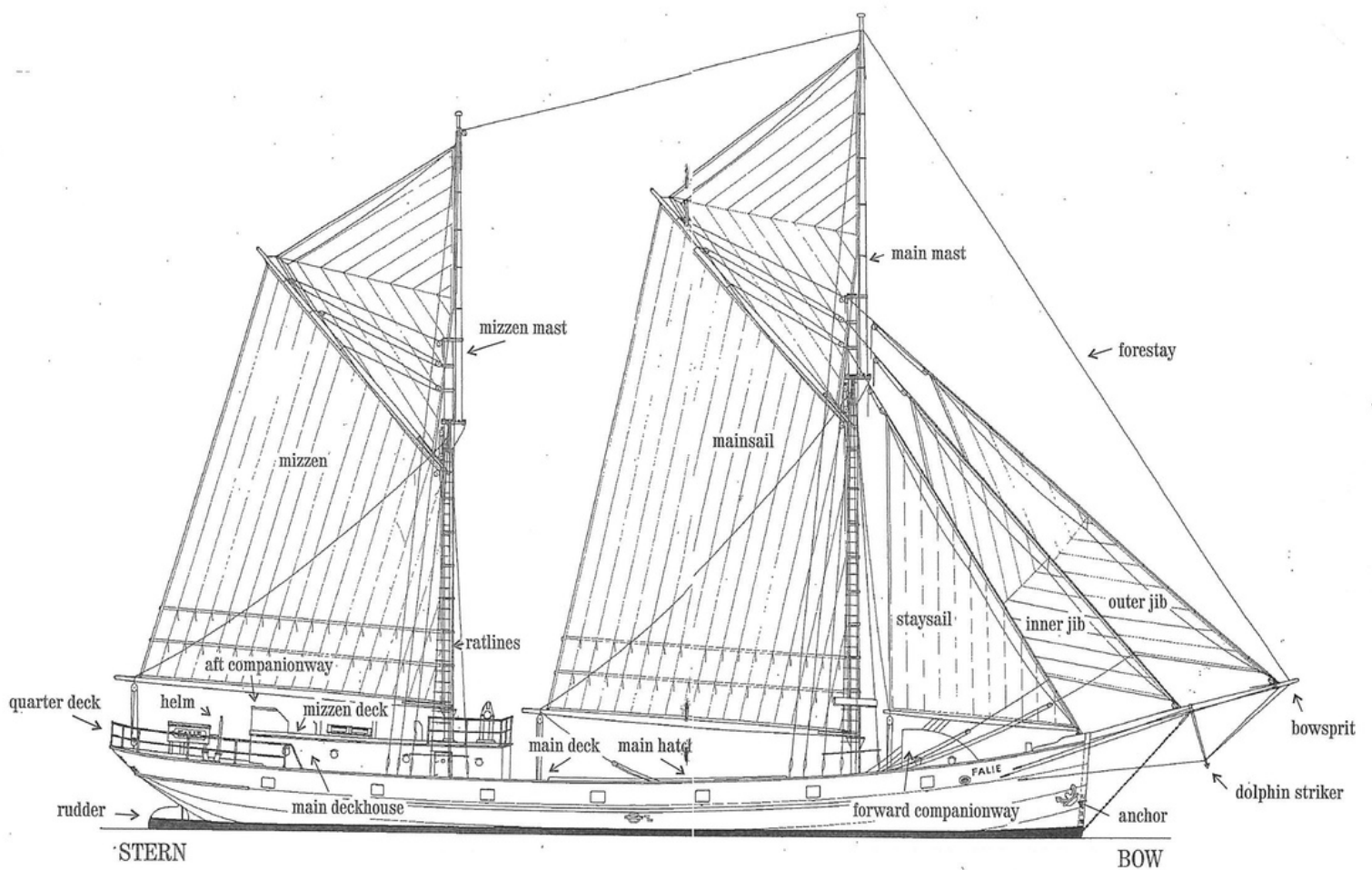
***Falie* is currently owned by the SA Department of Infrastructure and Transport, and looked after by a dedicated band of volunteers. They aim to restore and keep her in Port Adelaide inner Harbour for future generations to enjoy, and seek to spread awareness of the historic ketches and their importance to South Australia's maritime history.**



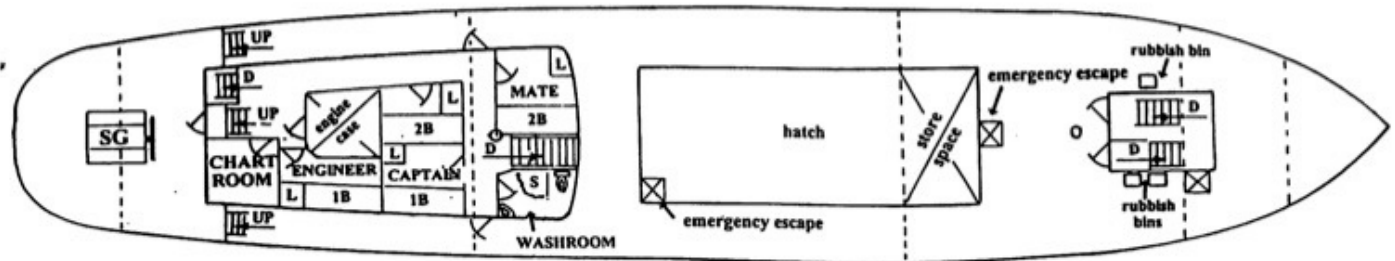
WHAT IS A KETCH?

A ketch is a two-masted sailboat whose mainmast is taller than the mizzen mast (or aft-mast), generally in a 40-foot or bigger boat. The name ketch is derived from the word 'catch'.

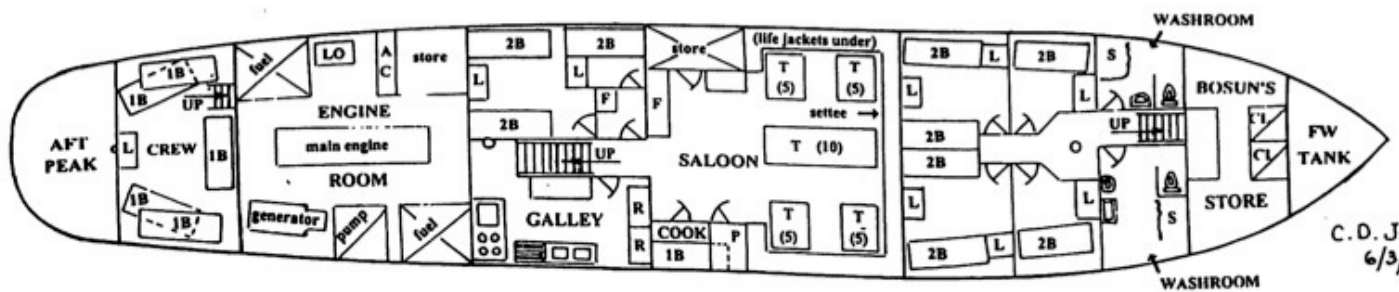
Below you can see an illustration of a typical ketch.



INSIDE THE FALIE



UPPER DECK



BELOW UPPER DECK

C. D. JAMES
6/3/93

KETCH QUIZ

1. **How many masts does a ketch have?** (two)
2. **What is the nautical term for the front of the ship?** (bow)
3. **Is the mizzen mast closer to the bow or stern of the ship?** (stern)
4. **True or false, a ketch is no bigger than 40-feet long?** (false, a ketch is usually 40-foot or larger)
5. **What is the galley used for?** (storing food and cooking)
6. **What powers a ketch?** (wind, although *Falie* had an auxiliary engine fitted, and was subsequently known as an Auxiliary Ketch - *AK Falie*)
7. **What is the purpose of a ship's rudder?** (to steer the ship)
8. **On what deck can you find the *Falie's* Chart Room?** (upper deck)



THE MOSQUITO FLEET

The Mosquito Fleet played a significant part in the development of South Australia, growing its economy and its relationships between city and the country.

The job of the ketch fleet was to facilitate trading with remote communities along the coast of South Australia. The Fleet linked town and country from the 19th Century to the late 1970s as they carried food, mail and building materials to remote settlements along the coast, and cargoes the produce from the remote farms to Adelaide and export interstate and overseas.

Life onboard the ketches

Crew members consisted of a captain and two seafarers as well as between two and four deckhands as most of the fleet were rigged as ketches and were quite small. Most deckhands were generally young boys who wanted a taste of the open ocean, learning the ropes on these smaller trips before searching for a chance to be aboard the bigger ships and see the world.

Life at sea meant being at the mercy of the weather and when necessary, finding shelter in quiet bays during storms. Some ships ended up being swamped by large seas or wrecked on rocky outcrops. Deckhands worked around the clock, on a 4-hour shift at the helm, manned the sails when called and manually loaded and unloaded the cargo.

Despite the dangers, the ketch trade was booming during the 19th Century.

There were even ketch races held within the Port River; its earliest being the 1838 Regatta, two years after colonisation of South Australia.

The fall of the Mosquito Fleet

The Mosquito Fleet was at its greatest during the 1880s and 1890s when over 70 ketches and schooners were travelling between rural ports and city. Despite enduring the improvements of road, rail and steamship transportation, it wasn't until the 1950s that ketches slowly died out with only 30 ships working the South Australian coast.

The fleet officially ended in 1982 when the last two working ketches, *Falie* and *Nelcebee* were officially retired. These ketches were, and still are much loved by the maritime community.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think the group of ketches was known as the 'mosquito fleet'?
2. What difficulties might arise, manning a ship with a small (and often young) crew?
3. Why do you think ships like the *Falie* are so loved by the community?

COASTAL TRADER

After WWII, the *Falie* returned to South Australia's coast, to support a booming economy.

After her requisition during the war years, the *Falie* was returned to Port Adelaide in October 1945. She remained under Naval Charter while being repaired and refitted for peacetime duties. In August 1946 she was finally handed back to the owners, who were pleased with the excellent condition of the vessel.

While many small ships were away during the war, some regions had to find alternate means of transporting goods. This led to more reliance on road transport, which continued after the vessels returned. The Bass Strait traders such as the *Falie* however, found their services in demand once again, as the economy recovered. There was a strong need for reconstruction after years of depression and war, and with an influx of migrants to Australia.

Falie recommenced transportation of grain along the West Coast and Spencer Gulf. The four main ports being Thevenard, Port Lincoln, Wallaroo, and Port Adelaide.

She was chartered several times for journeys to Launceston, carrying grain and returning with Tasmanian hardwood. Most of the timber was used by the South Australian Housing Trust, who were quickly building houses and flats to overcome accommodation shortages.

She would also carry grain to Melbourne, Devonport, Burnie and northern Tasmania in the off-season, before returning to Port Turton for the grain season.

The 1950s saw technological development in the packing and transport of grain. Packing wheat into hessian bags that were hand-sewn closed and transporting in small batches was time consuming and labour intensive. In 1952 the first terminal for bulkhandling grain came into operation in Ardrossan, sharing the facilities with a mining company.

Next came the erection of vertical concrete silos to store grain after harvest, and loading facilities installed at more ports. Quickly thereafter there was a rapid revolution, resulting in the grain being transferred in bulk all the way from paddock to ship, with tremendous savings in time, labour, and farm costs.

As a result of these developments, work for small coastal crafts like the *Falie* dried up. The vessel that had played such an important and colourful part in the maritime and agricultural and economic development of the state, quickly passed into history.

Other work had to be found for the *Falie*. She was a sound ship, with a powerful engine in addition to her sails, and a new field of endeavour presented itself to such a vessel.



COASTAL TRADER

The next phase of the *Falie's* working career was the transportation of dangerous cargo; explosives! There was a new push to exploit the country's natural wealth, and explosives were used to explore mineral deposits at various locations around the country. Explosives were also used for making road and railway cuttings.

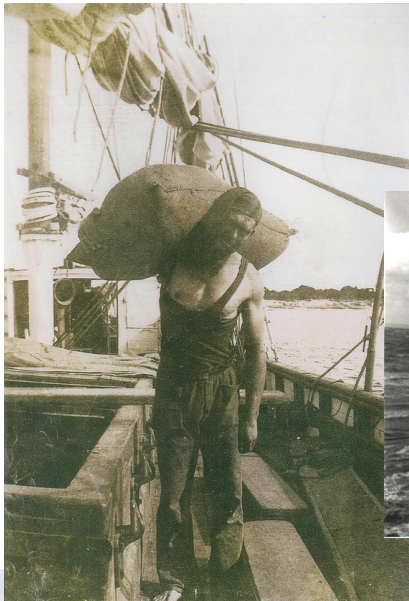
These explosives were first manufactured just outside of Melbourne and during the war, local production was further increased. *Falie* would be loaded with explosives from Altona, Victoria to various locations around the country. In the early days the cargo would reach the ship by horse-drawn railway, down the explosives jetty and then loaded onto the awaiting ships about 2.5 miles off shore. Remarkably, in nearly 43 years of shipping this cargo, the company did not have one explosion.

When no longer required, *Falie* returned to Port Adelaide in 1966. After undergoing a refit, she was put into general cargo trade to Kangaroo Island, mainly carrying fuel. This was to be her last commercial field of work.

The nine-hour voyage to Kangaroo Island was often made at night, so as to be ready for unloading in the morning, and would travel home or on to another port the following night.

It is remembered by those involved with *Falie's* shipping trade, that the ship's masters were skilled seamen. During the island trade they made landfall up to six times a week, and not always under favourable conditions.

Lyall Jones of Frickers commented that in spite of all her activities in many waters and under the command of many masters, the *Falie* never had a serious accident. 'We always had faith in our skippers from the first in 1922 to the last in 1982.'



RESTORATION

In 1982 the *Falie* was purchased by the SA Government and began a project that would restore *Falie* to her former glory.

Upon her retirement from the shipping trade, *Falie* was promptly purchased by the South Australian government. A committee known as the *Falie* Project Ltd was formed, and plans for her restoration begun.

The *Falie* had been modified over the years to suit her trade and increase engine power, but it was decided that she should be restored as close as possible to her original appearance. Many of her features had been retained over the years, including the curved sweep of her sheerline, to the pleasant surprise of Dutch maritime historians.

Various functional items that had been added to the upper deck (known as tophammer) could be removed. Her sail-plan was also adjusted now that she would not have to load so much cargo. A ketch rig was designed with similar proportions to those adopted by the Dutch, maintaining the connection to her origins.

It was essential that some cargo capacity was maintained but *Falie's* new life was largely as a passenger ship. The vessel was brought up to the Uniform Shipping Laws Code for a Class 1B Vessel, allowing her to carry up to twelve

passengers, plus crew. A portion of the hold was transformed to provide additional cabins and bathrooms. Various other rooms were rearranged too, such as moving the galley, food storage and messroom below the main deck.

As part of the restoration work, it was necessary to

recondition the engine, which was largely carried out by Bill Rehn, one time engineer of the *Falie*. Considerable work was put into refitting, cleaning and replacing various elements of the engine. In some cases replacement parts were unavailable, so it was necessary to improvise or make new items.



RESTORATION

Partnership with SA industry.

For *Falie's* general restoration, there was an agreement that would give many young people a unique opportunity.

In 1983, the State Government led by Premier, the Hon. John Bannon, worked with the Metal Industries Association and the Metal Trades Federation of Unions to devise a scheme to utilise the 200+ out-of-trade apprentices who required the mandatory work experience to complete their qualification. The project was known as the 'Metal Industry - Out-of-Trade Project.'

These apprentices were able to complete their required experience, while contributing to a community based project, with enduring value and importance to the state, the restoration of the historic *Falie*.

A workshop was established in a waterfront building,

and throughout 1984 and 1985, the whole fore end of the vessel was replaced, including structure, hull plating, deck and masts. Apprentice electricians, plumbers, joiners and riggers supplemented the core team of boilermakers, welders and shipwrights, to help the final fit out.



JUBILEE

Restored, cleaned and painted, Falie would set off to play a key role in the state's 150 jubilee celebrations.

The passionate team involved in her restoration were able to look back with great satisfaction at the completion of a thorough overhaul. *Falie's* hull was cleaned and painted white, ready for the central role in the state's jubilee celebrations.

During February and March 1986, *Falie* was the centrepiece of a re-enactment of the grain trade, in which she played a part following her arrival to the state in 1923.

She visited a large number of towns along South Australia's coastline in this role. Crowds would gather to meet the *Falie* and costumes were donned by re-enactors and many in the community.

Falie also assisted in other historic re-enactments, such as the landing of Governor Hindmarsh at Holdfast Bay, and of Chinese migrants at Robe in the South East, bound for the Victorian goldfields.



ACTIVITY: JUBILEE CELEBRATION



Why do you think the South Australian government and various townspeople around the state wanted to celebrate the anniversary of the grain trade?

Why was this event and the appearance of the newly restored *Falie* significant?

What significant event in your local community could be recognised with a jubilee celebration?

Your task is to research the history of your local community, and to plan a celebration of an historical event. This community could be your local town, city, suburb, or even your school. When was your community established?

Make a list of activities and events that were significant for your local area. These may include, important industries, establishment of certain buildings, groups or schools. Choose one event that can be (partially) re-enacted, with costume and decoration!

Who are the people involved in your community's significant event? Are there any memorials, plaques or places connected to these people? What kind of clothes would they have worn?

Who are the traditional custodians of the land your community is on? Ensure your research also encompasses Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, so you can pay respect to Elders past and present.

Don't forget to invite community members to your jubilee celebration! You may like to invite older people to share personal stories and create a display of items such as photographs and collected objects.

NEW LIFE

Newly restored, *Falie* had a new life as a passenger ship, now accessible to the general public.

Following the 1986 jubilee events, the beautifully restored *Falie* was made available for charters. She was now available for day cruises, weekend trips for deep sea fishing, scuba diving and even diving in shark cages.

Some lucky high school students went on sail training trips as part of careers week, and trainees with the Fisheries Academy got hands-on experience sailing and working on board.

In a similar vein to the grain trade re-enactment of 1986,

Falie also attended 'tall ship' events around Australia, including the 1988 Bicentenary Tall Ships race from Sydney to Hobart.

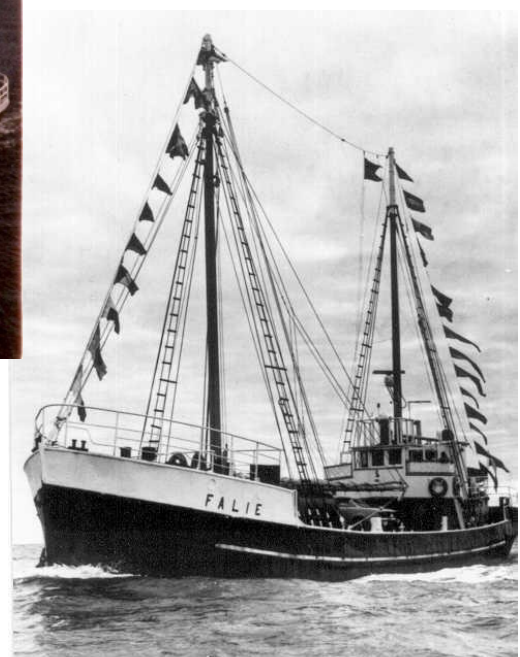
In 2001 *Falie* was utilised for a re-enactment in a documentary about explorers Matthew Flinders and Nicolas Baudin. The English and French crews met by accident in 1802 as they both explored the South Australian coast. The meeting took place in what Flinders later named Encounter Bay.

In the early 2000s *Falie* was routinely surveyed for seaworthiness, and sadly

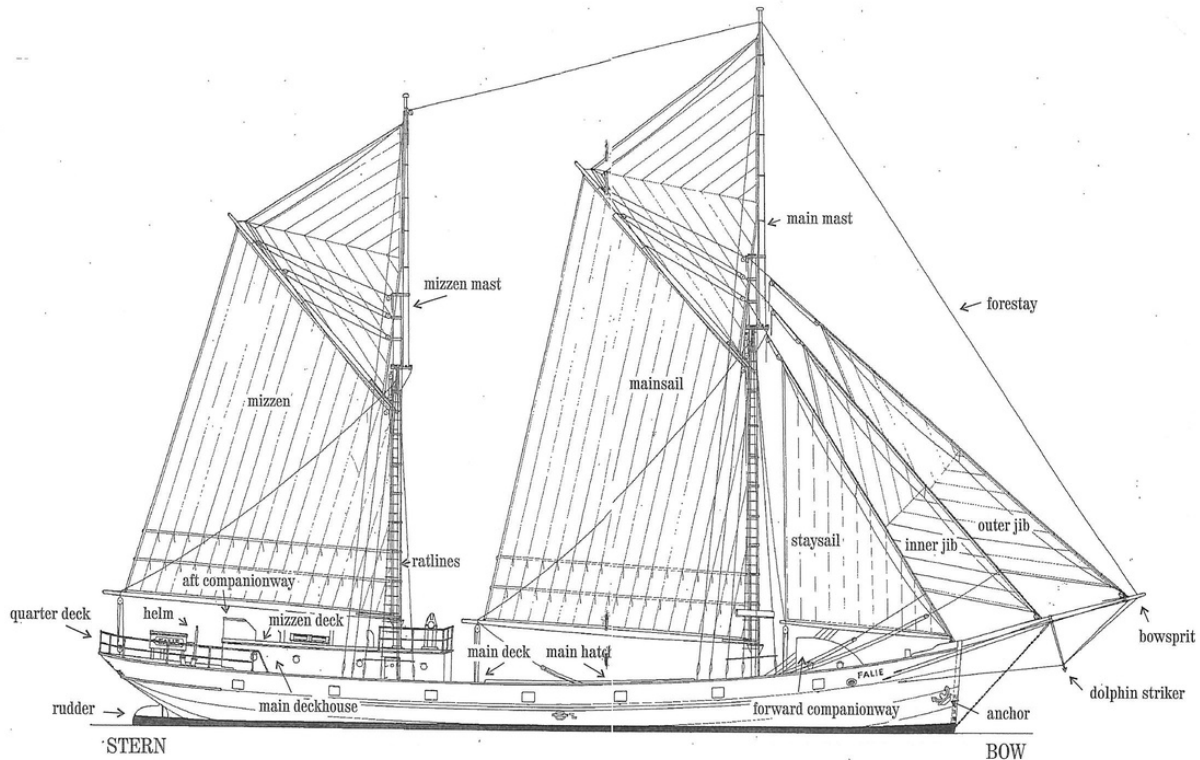
she did not meet inspection requirements: parts of her steel hull had worn thin.

By 2009, she was looking desperately in need of maintenance when Errol Ford and Keith Ridgeway, two retired merchant seamen, were given permission to undertake general maintenance aboard.

The fact she is a steel ship is why she has lasted long after some of her crew have crossed the bar. *Falie* was rescued by the band of men who kept up her maintenance. Without their work, *Falie* would surely have been scrapped or joined the ships' graveyard. They firmly believe she has not finished her sea life and will serve her State once again in the future.



ACTIVITY: ADAPTING THE FALIE



The Falie has had many roles over the last century: carrying all kinds of cargo, from grain to explosives along the Australian coast, requisitioned as a merchant navy ship during WWII, a site for young tradespeople to learn and build, a passenger ship, and an exciting sight during state-wide celebrations.

Imagine you are lucky enough to have the *Falie* all to yourself. If you had an unlimited budget, what would you use this ship for? Perhaps you would live on board, or take groups of people shark diving, or go on Antarctic voyages.

Through her different roles, *Falie* had to be modified for use, with different engines, equipment and even changes to her appearance.

How would you modify the *Falie* to suit her next role, as your personal ship? Use the illustration above as a guide and draw, label and map out the changes you would make.

- What changes would you make to the sails and engine?
- How would her appearance change?
- How many people (crew and passengers) would need to fit on board?
- What other rooms or features will you add inside the *Falie*?

Under your illustration, write a brief explanation of the *Falie*'s new job, and why you are making certain changes. Remember to think about function, but you can have fun with it too!

REFERENCES

Information and images have been gathered from the sources below, and from the Falie group's own collection.

FALIE: Portrait of a Coastal Trader. Published by Falie Project Limited, 1985. Text by Robert Thomas Sexton and Gordon Samuel Pickhaver.

South Australian History Network: Historic Ketch Falie. Website: explore.history.sa.gov.au/organisation/historic-ketch-falie

South Australian Maritime Museum: The Rise and Fall of the Mosquito Fleet. Blog post by Alyssa De Luna. maritime.history.sa.gov.au/blog/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-mosquito-fleet/

