



James Wharram – *A Living Legend lives no more*

Eulogy from Hanneke Boon

We are very sad to announce that on the 14th December 2021 James Wharram left this earthly world, joining Ruth, Jutta and his many close friends who departed before him. At 93 years old his spirit has set out on the voyage to sail the oceans of heaven.

James was a trailblazer, a fighter with great determination and vision. From a young age he followed his passions - to roam the hills - for fair politics - for intelligent women - to sail the seas - to prove the Polynesian double canoe an ocean-worthy craft - to become a Man of the Sea.

These passions made him into a pioneer of catamaran sailing and a world-renowned designer of unique double-canoe catamarans that now sail the oceans. He designed for people who wanted to break out of mundane lives, gave them boats they could build at an affordable cost and gave them the opportunity to become People of the Sea like himself.

His chosen life was never easy, he would always fight convention and conventional thinking head on. His passionate and multi-faceted personality was very attractive to strong, independent women who helped him in his pursuits, starting with the steadfast Ruth, without whom he would never have reached his goals. Young Jutta joined them on their pioneering ocean voyages and was the mother of his first son. Sadly, she died very young from mental illness as a result of her traumatic WWII childhood experiences.

James lived his entire life openly with more than one woman at the same time, as many as five in his prime in the 1970s, with whom he built and sailed his boats. Alongside Ruth, who died eight years ago at the age of 92, I was his other life partner and soul mate. I first met James when he was in the full flow of designing his range of Classic Designs in the 1960s, which led to him becoming a cult figure in the alternative society of the 1970s. In time I became his design partner and together with Ruth we were an unbreakable unit. I gave birth to his second son and together we gave birth to many new double-canoe designs.

James achieved everything he set out to do in this lifetime, but only received public recognition from the establishment in more recent years. The final project was his autobiography, published a year ago as *People of the Sea*, on which he worked for many years, as he was very critical of his own writing. We worked together to complete it and to get it published.

People would refer to James as the great James Wharram, the Living Legend, but he didn't see himself as such. He was aware it was his large following of builders and sailors, their beautiful boats and great voyages that created the famous Wharram World. He saw them as the real heroes.

Sadly, in the last few years James' brain, which he always talked about as a separate entity, started to fail him due to Alzheimer's. He was very distressed by losing his mental abilities, and struggled with his diminished existence. He could not face the prospect of further disintegration and made the very hard call to end it himself. It was with great courage that he lived his life and with great courage he decided it was the time to finish.

In this moment of great loss we should all remember the good and glorious times of a life fulfilled. This is not the end, I, we, all the Wharram World will keep his work alive.

James Wharram's new book of memoirs 'People of the Sea' is available in our webshop: <https://www.wharram.com/shop/books/people-of-the-sea>