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A New Black Films Production

Maiden

Directed by Alex Holmes



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MAIDEN
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A New Black Films Production

Directed by Alex Holmes

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MAIDEN

Director's Statement

Maiden is one of those inspirational stories that, once heard, you are unlikely to forget. And so it was for me. My first encounter with Tracy Edwards was when she came to give a speech at my daughter's elementary school. I was struck not only by the power of the story but by Tracy's passion and commitment. And I knew straight away that I wanted to make a film that celebrated her achievement.

Four years later I am delighted to be able to say: here we are.

Maiden is a film about guts and the power of determination, about how when we are allowed to believe in ourselves great things are possible. It's the story of a young girl who dared to dream and of a team that came together to challenge chauvinism and set an example to the world.

Tracy's story is as relevant today as it was back when she and her crew completed their momentous journey. In many areas of life prejudice and chauvinism still hold sway, but hopefully this film will help remind us that whoever we are, male or female, we should chase our dreams even if it appears we are up against insurmountable odds.

Alex Holmes

MAIDEN

Synopsis

In 1989, the very idea of a competitive all-female sailboat crew was nearly inconceivable to the manly world of open-ocean yacht racing. They'd never make it to the start of the Whitbread Round the World Race, much less survive to the finish. They'd never find funding. They didn't have the strength or skill. They'd die at sea. Did that many professional female sailors even exist?

Tracy Edwards proved them wrong. 26-year-old skipper Edwards, her second-hand racing yacht Maiden, and her seasoned crew not only became the first-ever all-woman challenge to the Whitbread, they proved able competitors in the famously grueling race, besting male crews in their class. By the time they returned to their starting point at Southampton, England after 32,000 miles of global racing, they had shocked, inspired, and transfixed the sailing world and the British nation. Tracy Edwards was awarded the 1990 Yachtsman of the Year Award, the first woman ever to receive the accolade, and was named a Member of the Order of the British Empire.

Maiden's story does not begin in such glory. Unlike most of her Maiden crewmates, Edwards did not grow up in a sailing family. After her beloved father died when she was 10, conflict at home with an antagonistic, alcoholic stepfather drove Tracy to anger and rebellion. Although her supportive and adventurous mother stood by her always, Tracy dropped out of school and ran away at 16, finding refuge around island resorts among the hard-partying tribe of boat crew gypsies, working as a cook and stewardess. Sailing represented freedom—and she then set her sights on experiencing the world's biggest sailing event, the Whitbread Round the World Race that circumnavigated the globe every three years (known since 2001 as the Volvo Ocean Race). In 1985 she managed—barely—to find a berth as a cook on a British boat in the 4th Whitbread Race, observing and absorbing as much as she could about racing “when they'd let me up on deck.” After that exciting taste of the sport—along with the bitter taste of the sport's pervasive sexism—Edwards became determined to skipper her own boat in the 5th Whitbread, in 1989-90.

The obstacles were daunting. Racing requires massive financial support, and corporate sponsors were leery of attaching their names to a novel and potentially disastrous effort led by an untried girl in her twenties. When the yachting press paid attention at all, it was to treat Edwards and her campaign as an amusing curiosity.

She didn't even have her own boat till she found an old racing yacht, beat-up but still sound. Edwards put everything on the line, mortgaging her house to pay for the 58-foot aluminum monohull previously named Disque D'Or and later Prestige, a veteran of two earlier Whitbread races that had performed well. She had been designed to be relatively easily handled on long ocean passages—but when Edwards bought her, she was in disrepair, “a wreck with a pedigree” as Edwards called her.

Edwards may have lacked funds, but what she did have in strength was a knack for finding and inspiring talent. Highly skilled professional women sailors did indeed exist, and they signed on to fight alongside Edwards for recognition, opportunity, and passion for their sport. One of the first to join was Tracy's girlhood best friend, confidante, and moral support Joanna Gooding, who came aboard as cook (and behind-the-scenes videographer). Many of the crew members had far more sailing knowledge and experience than Edwards herself, but her relentless determination made her a leader, even when she battled exhaustion and self-doubt.

To get to the Whitbread start line in the first place, the crew rolled up their sleeves to painstakingly tear down and refurbish Maiden in the venerable Hamble shipyard, a traditionally male bastion. By carrying out the refurb themselves, the crew knew every cable, bolt, and latch on the boat—which proved life-saving when they were able to diagnose and repair a leak at sea off Cape Horn. Edwards and crew adapted the boat to compensate for the lesser physical strength of a female crew but to benefit their talents; for example, the foresails were smaller than those on their competitors' male-crewed yachts because they require frequent changing. Because the Maiden crew could muscle their way quickly through resetting foresails, they could use sail changes strategically. Maiden wore the colors of Royal Jordanian Airlines, the sponsor Tracy finally secured through the patronage of Jordan's King Hussein.

The story of Maiden's upstart, defiant run at the Whitbread Round the World Race has all the elements of an epic adventure tale—50-foot waves, life and death drama, near-mutiny, thrilling victory—grounded in a perceptive group portrait of a team of courageous young women led by the remarkable, complicated Tracy Edwards. They pioneered the sport of long-distance racing for the women who followed and inspired women in all fields to prove themselves the equal of men.

The Whitbread Race and Maiden's Performance

The Whitbread Round the World Race began in 1973, sponsored by Britain's Whitbread, a brewery that evolved into a hotel and hospitality chain. The race, held every three years, switched sponsors in 2001 and is now known as the Volvo Ocean Race.

Maiden competed in the 5th WRTWR which comprised several classes of different boat sizes and six legs totalling 32,000 nautical miles. In more recent years, smaller yachts such as Tracy Edwards' 58-foot Maiden no longer run the Volvo Ocean Race, which is dominated by bigger yachts racing more and shorter legs.

Maiden won two of the legs, the longest and shortest, in the 5th WRTWR and came in second overall in her class, the best result for a British boat in 17 years, and still remaining the best result ever for an all-female crew.

6 legs of the 5th WRTWR 1989-90:

1. September 2, 1989, Southampton, England to Punta del Este, Uruguay, 5,938 miles; observers and commentators professed surprise that Maiden managed to finish the first leg, third out of four in their class.
2. October 28, 1989, Punta del Este to Fremantle, Australia, the Southern Ocean crossing, 7,260 miles. As skipper, Tracy determined navigation, choosing the daring strategy of sailing the most southerly route, which was most direct but also challenging, with huge seas and icebergs. 52 days at sea in extreme conditions. 'Creighton's Naturally,' a contestant in a larger boat class, lost two men overboard in frigid seas. They were recovered with hypothermia. Maiden was the closest vessel, and the medic onboard, Claire Warren, instructed the Creighton's crew by radio in resuscitating the men. One survived. Maiden won the 2nd leg for her class.
3. December 23, 1989, Fremantle to Auckland, New Zealand, 3,272 miles, the shortest leg. Maiden again wins this leg.
4. February 4, 1990, Auckland to Punta del Este, 6,255 miles. Over this and the following leg, the 18-hour overall lead time in class that Maiden had built up on her winning legs 2 and 3 evaporated on legs 4 and 5 due to 100 days at sea with little wind followed by pounding waves that caused a leak around the mainmast. With the boat taking on water in open sea, the crew was able to find and patch the leak, but time was lost.
5. March 17, 1990, Punta del Este to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, 5,475 miles. By the end of this leg, Maiden was 16 hours behind the class leader, the Belgian boat Rucanor.
6. May 5, 1990, Ft. Lauderdale to Southampton, 3,818 miles. Despite low wind, Maiden regains some time in this leg. When Rucanor is stuck on a sand bank off the coast of England Maiden is just behind her. L'Esprit de Liberté wins the leg and the overall race in Division D with Maiden second and Rucanor placing third. But for the thousands of spectators on shore and the swarm of yachts and dinghies accompanying Maiden into port, it was a momentous triumph for the hometown yacht Maiden, her intrepid crew, and her inspiring skipper, Tracy Edwards.

MAIDEN

Production Notes

Determination is everything. Luck and a sense of humor help too. Determination drove the Maiden race challenge back in 1989-90 as well as the *Maiden* documentary filmmaking project over the past few years. Currently, the racing yacht Maiden has been resurrected with a determined new life carrying forward **Tracy Edwards'** [Maiden Factor Foundation](#) supporting girls' education.

Luck brought Maiden skipper Edwards and *Maiden* director **Alex Holmes** together. Edwards, who has devoted much of her post-sailing life to advocating for women's and girls' education and empowerment, happened to be the speaker at an elementary school celebration evening in South West London where she lives. Holmes was the proud parent of one of those young students inspired by Edwards' talk. "Someone must have canceled—I was invited at the very last minute and had to drag myself to go," recalls Edwards. "But I got a phone call the next day: 'Hi, my name's Alex Holmes, I'm a film producer, I love your story and my daughter just wouldn't shut up about it on the walk home.'"

"I'm the first to admit," says Holmes, "I went to the school evening with a slightly heavy heart as I've sat through many such evenings with my older kids. But this year they had a guest speaker—Tracy. I was immediately struck by the power and resonance of her story. It got me thinking that things were still different for my son compared to my two daughters—that I still felt I needed to remind my girls that they shouldn't feel in any way limited by the world around them, that it's theirs for the taking if they choose. Tracy's story still felt as relevant now as it did back then. Not only was Tracy an amazing character—you can tell that straight off the bat—not only was this a very powerful and positive emotional story, but it was an important story. And now was the time to tell it."

Holmes at first envisioned recreating the Maiden odyssey as narrative drama. His long career as a documentary film producer and director had encompassed short-form investigative journalism for the television series *World In Action*, the post of creative director of the documentary department at the BBC, and the development of long dramatic documentaries such as the BBC miniseries *Dunkirk* and the feature bio-doc *Stop at Nothing: the Lance Armstrong Story*.

"I assumed that, because so much of Tracy's story was confined to a boat, the chance of there being any footage from back in 1989 was very slim. My assumption going into the conversation was maybe writing a screenplay and making a drama. And Tracy rather wonderfully made the opposite assumption, because she was quite proud that Maiden had had a camera onboard the whole way around, and that they had mastered it themselves.

“So here was a story that I fell in love with immediately,” continues Holmes, “and a way of telling it in documentary form. Of course, we had hills to climb. You have to find the footage. You have to raise the finance. You have to clear your schedule and make time. But I knew it was going to happen, really from that first encounter. Tracy’s one of those people who has such a strong sense of purpose and confidence herself that it emboldens you when you speak to her.”

A footage treasure hunt ensued, through the Whitbread Race’s archives, to old video out of local news outlets around the world, to Tracy’s mum’s closet: “We managed to track down bits and pieces,” remembers Holmes. “It was frustrating at first, because we thought maybe the archive would all be in a pristine state somewhere in a box—you’ve got the gold dust, and that’s it. But it had been flung to the four corners because, you know, when they cover these sports events they rage around the world, but nobody’s really keeping track of where the tapes are or where the high-quality footage is. Everything’s a dub of a dub of a dub.”

“My mum collected everything,” says Edwards. “Tea towels, cups, badges. Took 10 million photos. Recorded everything on the news in every country. If she was in the UK and she heard that something was on the news in Australia, she would track it down. When Mum died I found this huge plastic box of all the stuff she had collected, and Alex said ‘this is the motherlode.’”

Most remarkable is the very raw and real footage filmed onboard Maiden. As Edwards explains: “We had two cameras, a fixed camera mounted on the back of the boat, and a handheld camera. When you see the video lurching around in heavy seas, that’s the fixed camera—there was an emergency button by the hatch, so if it’s ‘all hands on deck’ the last person up would hit that button, and that’s where we got the images of surfing giant waves and that sort of thing.

“Then there was Jo with her camera”—**Joanna Gooding**, Tracy’s girlhood friend who came on the round the world journey as cook (and documentarian). “She was everywhere with her camera! You’d be doing something, you’d turn around and it was ‘Jo, Jo, go away!’ But she never gave up. Alex said it was her tiny little vignettes that make the film.”

Says Holmes, “The other boats had cameras, but the things they captured were a lot of horseplay, guys being guys, or rather stiff interviews or action scenes. Jo is now a counselor by profession, and she always had a high level of emotional intelligence. Very attuned to people. And she and Tracy were the only ones not on the four-hour watch system, so Jo could be the observer and make shots that contained character, not just action. In fact, we’ve given her a camera credit on the film.”

While some of the shots look as if she must have been lashed to the mast, Jo explains, “There were of course scary times—we were always hooked on with a harness in bad weather. The camera we had was huge and not easy to use in some conditions. I would rely on others to film as well, especially Tanja” (one of the foredeck who kept watch off the bow). “People did not always want to be filmed and there would be times when you are hanging on to the boat, the camera, trying to keep it dry and get a steady shot.”

All the footage gleaned from a year of archival and back-of-closet research afforded ample material for Holmes and Editor **Katie Bryer**, whose work editing the documentary *Virunga* had greatly impressed Holmes. Add to that the one-on-one interviews with many of the crew members, whose vivid personalities and memories tell tales that no vintage news clip ever could. “Katie’s an astonishingly talented editor, especially in these slightly rangy, many-sided stories. She just got Tracy and the crew straight away. It took about nine months of off-and-on work to cut the film together—it takes a long time to make something really simple.”

Early on, Holmes and the New Black team made a creative decision to keep the film’s focus squarely on the time frame of the 1989-90 race itself, with a brief preamble into Tracy’s early life. “There were so many different films we could have made,” says Holmes. “But to me, the simpler we kept the story, the more powerful it was. Unfiltered. I regard it a bit like portraiture—this is my version of Tracy. And the story of that crew. Someone else could have taken the same material and told a profoundly different story.”

As Producer **Victoria Gregory** says, “The crew are all such brilliant people, you could make a movie about every one of their lives.” Gregory is co-founder (with *Maiden* Executive Producer **James Erskine**) of the sports-oriented documentary production company [New Black Films](#), which produced *Maiden*.

The Maiden Factor

The documentary film was not the only Maiden-related project to kick off back in that late spring in 2014. Not long before Holmes and Edwards met on the fated school presentation night, Edwards got a call from a boatyard in the Seychelles. Maiden, the “wreck with a pedigree” that Edwards had rebuilt back in 1989, was about to be scuttled. Edwards had sold the boat immediately after her history-making Whitbread Race (she was dead broke), and Maiden had gone on to sail under different owners and different names. Now, she was virtually abandoned for unpaid boatyard fees. She’s yours if you’ll get her off our hands, offered the boatyard in the Seychelles, fees forgiven. Tracy raised the funds through Crowdfunding and bought her back.

Post-Whitbread, Edwards had continued racing and organizing competitions in the sailing world, and had written two memoirs: *Maiden*, a best-selling recounting of her Whitbread experience, and *Living Every Second*. In the mid-2000’s, her focus shifted to advocating for children through Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP), an NGO contributing to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). She went to University at the age of 47 for a psychology degree and continued her inspiring work as a speaker. When she heard about her old friend Maiden being located, she brought all these strands together.

“It was my daughter’s suggestion” says Edwards: “‘Why don’t you use the boat to raise money for the girls’ educational charities that you’re a patron of and that you work with?’ I just thought that’s a brilliant idea, so that became our *raison d’etre*.”

As in all endeavours—altruistic, cinematic, and other—first there were funds to be raised.

“We spent two years getting financing sorted out for our *Maiden* documentary at the same time as Tracy was raising the funds to salvage Maiden,” says Victoria Gregory. “Tracy and I became fast friends, and we’d go through parallel frustrations and joy over good news and bits of financing. It’s not that different, really, independent filmmaking and running an operation like Tracy’s. We ring each other up and ‘Oh, I’ve got to do month-end accounts this weekend.’ ‘Oh yeah, me too.’”

“As they found money to make the documentary, I found money to rebuild the boat,” says Edwards. “The whole thing has been synchronistic. It’s just meant to happen.”

Synchronicity played out dramatically when Edwards secured support for her project from Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, the daughter of the late King Hussein of Jordan, who had sponsored Maiden’s 1989 Whitbread race through Royal Jordanian Airlines. As Tracy Edwards was making the rounds of international conferences drumming up support, HRH Princess Haya heard about her campaign and reached out, unsolicited, to offer help in the rescue and restoration of Maiden, continuing her father’s legacy.

Meanwhile, the derelict yacht Maiden was the centerpiece of another reunion when it finally arrived back at the same Hamble shipyard where the crew had stripped her down and rebuilt her by hand back in 1989. “When we rescued Maiden from the Seychelles and brought her back, the reaction was so extraordinary,” remembers Edwards. “Everyone was in tears. The whole boatyard was out to see her. Seven of the original Maiden crew. These guys who helped work on her 30 years ago, these rough-ty tough-ty yard workers. People were saying, ‘what is it about Maiden?’ and I said ‘well, she made me who I am. It’s kind of the Maiden factor.’ And that’s how we hit upon the project name. Once we restored her to her former glory, she became the vessel for our two-year [world tour](#) to raise funds and awareness for girls’ education and female empowerment.”

The Maiden Sailors

“If Tracy has a unique skill,” Holmes says, “it’s in spotting talent in other people. And the way she chose that crew and put them together was extraordinary. I think her single greatest achievement was attracting that group of women. They fit together so perfectly.”

[For profiles of each of the Maiden crew mates, see *Meet the Maiden Crew*, which follows.]

The crew members had all remained in touch to varying degrees with Tracy and each other (the upside of Facebook for a group scattered across the continents.) The near-simultaneous flurries of activity around the making of the documentary, the repatriation and rehabilitation of their old sailboat, and the launch of Edwards’ Maiden Factor Foundation brought old shipmates back together in person and gave Holmes the opportunity to film interviews (though not all the crew members were able or available to take part in the filming).

“One by one,” says Edwards, “the girls asked me, ‘how honest do you want us to be?’ And I said, Oh, complete honesty. This must be an absolute record of what happened, because the

first one”—a TV documentary made shortly after the race—“was all nicey-nicey, aren’t we all wonderful? And this one was the truth.”

When Edwards, Holmes, and the New Black team embarked together on the making of *Maiden*, they quickly reached a mutual understanding that extended to all the crew members. Says Holmes: “Tracy trusted us, which is unbelievably brave, I think. I always marvel at characters who allow their lives to be put on a sleeve, particularly the way Tracy did it, allowing it to be very raw and real. We made it very clear from the start that we wanted everything. We would choose the right bits to tell the story in the most powerful way. And they would have to trust us. That’s the deal—we really want to tell this story. We think it’s an important story. We want to honor what you achieved. But we can only do that if you’re totally upfront.”

The *Maiden* sailors did not let them down.

As **Sally Hunter** (formerly Creaser, one of the helms and head of safety on *Maiden*) reflects: “I sometimes feel that the whole *Maiden* project is portrayed as being some rather miserable existence which the girls on board had to simply endure to get it done. I remember it as being huge FUN. We were a bunch of girls who loved racing yachts and being at sea and we got the chance to compete in the most iconic yacht race there was. We all got on very well with each other, had a good boat to sail, were sailing round the world, what’s not to love?!” She and her husband, also a sailor, now operate [Hunter Yacht Deliveries](#) in her native Scotland.

Marie-Claude Heys (formerly Kieffer) was the first mate and, at the time, most experienced crew member; she was sacked when conflict with Tracy escalated shortly before the 5th Whitbread start date. It’s hard to imagine that the skipper and first mate who clashed over leadership would ever find themselves on friendly terms, but, says Heys: “A chance meeting in Hamble about five years after *Maiden* allowed Tracy and I to exchange views and build a bridge. We have remained in touch thereafter. We were young, enthusiastic, headstrong—our problems came from passion and immaturity. At the time the stress was so great we were not very forgiving, but neither of us bore a grudge. Pulling together this unique challenge against all odds was an incredible feat. I was disappointed not to sail the race with *Maiden*.”

Heys, like several of the *Maiden* crew including **Dawn Riley**, **Mikaela Von Koskull**, **Michèle Paret**, **Sally Hunter**, and **Amanda Swan Neal**, has made a life in yachting and sail racing at a high professional level. Heys competed in the 6th and 7th Whitbread Races on all-women crews, and sailed many other competitions as well. She married Paul Heys, a fellow sailor, and they operate [Key Yachting](#), a boat broker business.

“Everyone turned out to be the person we knew they would be thirty years ago,” observes **Claire Russell**, *Maiden*’s medic and now a doctor in New Zealand. “We knew Jeni was absolutely brilliant. We knew Jo was really caring and was going to become that kind of amazing counselor who creates safe spaces for everyone. We knew Dawn was just a force of nature who was one of the fittest, most driven and brilliant women. So when we heard what became of everyone, we’d just go—yeah, of course.”

Dawn Riley, like her fellow Maiden watch captain Michèle Paret, is one of the top yacht racing pros in the world. Both sailors have logged hundreds of thousands of open-ocean regatta miles and won numerous awards (they, along with Mikaela Von Koskull, another Maiden helm, are still close friends who sail and compete together). Riley, who is also an author, public speaker, and TV commentator, operates [Oakcliff Sailing Center](#) in Oyster Bay, NY, training, coaching, and developing sailing and racing professionals and amateurs. “I can’t get enough students through my program to fill all the demand in the marine industry,” says Riley.

Claire Russell notes, “It’s too bad the documentary didn’t have the footage to really show how phenomenal Dawn and Michèle were as watch captains” (in charge of on-deck operations, spelling each other in the four-hour watch system). “There were times in the Southern Ocean when they helmed until they were frozen, till they cramped, because they knew and we knew that they were the ones who were able to pull it off when we were in a shit fight. Staggeringly fantastic yachties. That couldn’t be shown because there was nobody on the camera right then—we were all just doing our jobs as crew, praying and hanging on.”

Riley shrugs off the terrifying wave-surfing sequences. “I grew up sailing the Great Lakes. That prepares you for anything.”

Equally high profile in a very different field is **Jeni Mundy**, who, with **Tanja Visser**, was on the foredeck keeping watch and handling the sails off the bow. “We’d hang off the bow and watch for icebergs and help maneuver sail changes, out the end of spinnaker poles, up the bow, out the boom, dangerous and wet. Tanja and I never sailed together—one would be asleep when the other was working.”

Now, that dauntless energy runs multinational corporations. Mundy is the Regional Managing Director for UK and Ireland for Visa; prior to that, she was Chief Technology Officer for Vodafone, the telecomm giant. After her Maiden experience and with a few years more adventuring and sailing under her belt, Mundy earned a Masters degree in electronic engineering, a career path she traces back to the 1989 Maiden rebuild in the Hamble shipyard. “I was interested in electronics, so I ended up with the job of rewiring Maiden top to bottom even though I had to figure out as I went what I was doing. My Masters specialized in communications systems, which was how I worked my way into telecomm—and it all started with slithering around in the bilge and trying to keep smoke out of all the boxes!”

Mundy continues: “In business, we always talk about ‘teamwork’ but Maiden gave me a very high bar. Being a great team is a piece of work. You have to be very deliberate about it. We were all such strivers on the Maiden team, and I try to help women succeed and build confidence in tech and business. I’m very proud that Visa Europe just signed a multi-year sponsorship supporting women’s football with UEFA” (Union of European Football Associations).

And some sailors love—horses. One might intuit that sailing and equestrian sport would both attract adventurous personalities, and several of the Maiden yachties have made horses a

prominent part of their lives. Tanja Visser breeds dressage horses in her native Holland; Claire Russell runs an equestrian facility in New Zealand with her husband; and **Nancy Harris**, who was in charge of deck hardware, **Sarah Harrison**, reserve crew, and Mikaela Von Koskull, all own and ride horses.

The *Maiden* Screening Reunion

When the documentary *Maiden* was finally ready to roll, the race crew and other film participants made up its first private audience in a London screening room.

“Apart from Michèle, who had the very feeble excuse of waiting for the ice to break up in the Northwest Passage, we all made it there” jokes Claire Warren.

“We’ve always had little pockets of reunions,” says Tracy Edwards, “but we’ve never managed to get everyone together at the same time. So we paged them. And we hassled them. And we organized them. We sent them tickets, we made it impossible not to be there.” Spouses and children—most now in their twenties—were there too.

“The best part,” says Dawn Riley, “was seeing the kids, the boys and girls, seeing their moms as really cool. Nobody had changed, it was the same old banter and humor and jokes and heckling. We’re crammed in the taxi and they’re saying ‘Dawn, you’re all dressed up but you always did look better out of clothes than in clothes.’ And Tracy going over our schedules like we were fifteen years old. Walking down the London streets barefoot because none of us can wear high heels. Nothing changed.”

Anticipating the screening, Marie-Claude Heys felt “excitement and a little trepidation beforehand, joy at reuniting upon arrival. A mixture of pride and surprise during the film, ending with gratitude for the compliments from my former teammates about a job well done.”

“We are all phenomenally close,” says Warren. “If anyone ever pushed the panic button, within 24 or 48 hours the crew would be there wherever you are in the world. Not that it was a panic, but this film gave Tracy a great button to push.”

Mikaela Von Koskull observes: “The bond we *Maiden* crew have is the strongest imaginable—unbeatable and unbreakable—similar, I imagine, to what teams experience who have done something—war, climbing—any incident where you are truly 100% relying on your next buddy for survival! Seeing the documentary, once again, made me realize that the achievement of *Maiden* was truly a historic first, something I believe that most of us—to this day—have not always been able to comprehend.”

Maiden and her indefatigable skipper and crew paved the way for many women in sports that followed them. “If what we did inspired people and changed misconceptions then that is a very good thing that happened from something that was so enjoyable,” says Hunter.

“It’s great to see women athletes holding their own,” says Amanda Swan Neal. “I’m watching with interest the upcoming women’s professional team in the Sydney-Hobart yacht race. These thirteen women are sailing stars in their own right.”

But, as Mikaela Von Koskull reports, “Progress is slow. Maiden did change a lot of lives and was really the steppingstone for women sailors, but there is still a long way to go.”

“Women athletes still have to carry day jobs,” observes Jeni Mundy. “I did expect us to be a lot further on in these many years. My patience has run out—c’mon! c’mon!”

Dawn Riley, who trains the next generation, sees the long view: “Women feel that they have to achieve perfection right off the bat. It would be so much nicer if the guys were more realistic about what they can accomplish and women could stand up and ask for more opportunity, and disprove the naysayers. We’ve moved past that as a society. In large part the problem is retiring or dying.”

Tracy Edwards is optimistic: “The great message we always had was simply equality. What’s the difference between thirty years ago and now? My usual answer is: not enough. But there is a difference. Thirty years ago, men were either aggressive towards us, or there was antipathy. Whereas thirty years later, women are not just having the conversation with ourselves. We are having it with men.”

For the team of intrepid young women racing Maiden back in 1989, matters of gender parity and politics were important, but secondary; the ocean, the wind, the camaraderie, the sailing itself were the essentials. “What I learned from racing Maiden,” concludes Dawn Riley, “is how big the world is. Literally. Because I sailed around it.”

Maiden
Meet the Maiden Crew



Tracy Edwards MBE – Skipper



Tracy Edwards is the central figure in *Maiden*, the documentary feature about her successful effort to compete in the 1989/90 Whitbread Round the World Race skippering the first all-female crew. In 1990, Tracy was awarded the MBE (Member of the British Empire) by HM Queen Elizabeth II; the Royal Jordanian Air Force Wings by HM King Hussein of Jordan; and became the first woman in its 34-year history to be awarded the Yachtsman of the Year Trophy. Her memoir of the race, Maiden, was Whitbread Sports Book of the Year and on the Times bestseller list for 19 weeks.

In 1998, Tracy put together the first all-female crew to attempt the fastest non-stop circumnavigation by sail. Her 92-foot catamaran broke five world records. Her second memoir, Living Every Second, was published in 2001. *Maiden II* in 2001 saw Tracy create and manage the world's first ever mixed gender fully professional racing team which broke many world speed records in their 120ft catamaran. In 2005, Edwards created and managed the first ever round the world race to start and finish in the Middle East.

Tracy retired from sailing in 2005 and worked for CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) as Project Manager for their International Youth Advisory Conference. During 2009 - 2012 she studied at Roehampton University and graduated with a 2:1 Degree in Psychology.

Currently, Tracy has combined these passions for sailing, female empowerment, and youth advocacy with her Maiden Factor Foundation, named for her original sailboat. She rescued Maiden from a dilapidated condition, restored the 58' monohull to its former glory, and is organizing round-the-world fundraising and awareness tours for her foundation. Maiden, an iconic part of British maritime history, now has a new life as an Ambassador and fundraiser for girls' education.

Tracy Edwards on fighting sexism:

“30 years ago, it may have been easier for us to have the battle than I think it is for young women today, because when we came up against sexism it was in your face. It was—Bam! It was something you could fight. You know, that you could see and you could take hold of it. And you could shout and fight. Now it's insidious. No one would dare to be overtly sexist now or misogynistic; it's kind of gone under the radar. And I think that's really worrying. It's a new conversation—the discussion hasn't gone away. It's just taken a different form. So, with The Maiden Factor we've decided to engage men more within the project, including sailing on the boat for the first time.”



Jo Gooding – Cook, Videographer



Jo remains one of Tracy's closest friends having known each other since their childhood in Wales. But the pair couldn't be more different; in stark contrast to Tracy's high energy, go get 'em attitude, Jo is perennially calm, shy and insightful.

Before Maiden, Jo was working in a pub in her hometown and had lost touch with Tracy, but out of the blue Tracy gave her a call and told her about the idea for competing in the Whitbread Maiden. Jo had never sailed competitively but immediately answered Tracy's call to become the cook on board. She also served as the principal videographer though she also shared filming with other crew members.

Post Maiden Jo went back to the Isles of Scilly, working in the local hospital and volunteering in the school. She moved back to the mainland and worked in various caring roles including Adult Mental Health and children and young people with learning and physical disabilities.

In 2002, Jo trained as a Counsellor and in 2006, set up her own business working with children, adolescents and adults. She completed her Postgraduate Certificate in Education in teaching in 2008, and now delivers courses, workshops as well as health and well-being programmes.

Jo Gooding on doomsayers:

“When we were on Maiden we didn't really take much notice of the negative things that were being said. Even when it was said that we could die and that would be a tragedy—we agreed it would be and no-one had any intention of dying!”



Marie-Claude Kieffer Heys – First Mate



Marie-Claude was born in the seaside town of Brest, Brittany, France, to parents who enjoyed yacht racing as a hobby. She started sailing school at the age of 7, participating with family in races on her parents' boat. By 16, Marie-Claude took charge of her father's 28-foot sailboat for cruising and racing with friends, bringing early lessons in responsibility and freedom. To further

her dream of someday competing in the Whitbread Race, she learned sailmaking, boat building, and every aspect of yacht racing, and supported herself as a professional sailor from a very young age.

In 1983, she entered the single-handed Figaro race, a key race for gaining media coverage and, subsequently, sponsorship. This also proved to be a key race in developing her confidence in her own abilities. She competed in this race again in 1987, 1990, and 1991, with respectable results. She skippered female crews for the Tour de France à la Voile in 1985 and 1986. At the age of 25, Marie-Claude completed her first victorious transatlantic race: Monaco-New York on Lady Elf with a crew of 7 women and 5 men. She used her prize money on another mode of transportation, buying a motorcycle from another crew member.

When she heard about Tracy Edwards' campaign to bring an all-female crew to the Whitbread Race, she immediately sent Tracy her CV, eventually bringing two of her sailing comrades, Jeni Mundy and Michèle Paret, onboard the Maiden team with her. As First Mate she played a key role in Maiden's intensive six-month tear-down and refit project and devoted two years to preparations for Maiden's Whitbread campaign.

The leadership conflict with Tracy Edwards that led to her sacking shortly before the start of the Whitbread Race is captured in the *Maiden* documentary feature. Although she was angry and disappointed that she missed the chance to race the Whitbread with Maiden, she went on to complete the race twice: in 1993 on board 'Heineken' (invited by skipper Dawn Riley), then again in 1997 on 'EF Education.' In 2011 she again sailed Heineken in the Volvo Alicante regatta with a 12-woman team made up of representatives from all 4 previous all-girl Whitbread/Volvo campaigns. Marie-Claude and Tracy have been able to settle their differences and sustain a long-term relationship of cordial respect and friendship.

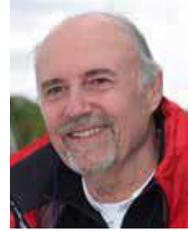
After retiring from professional sailing Marie-Claude married a fellow sailor and moved to Hamble in Hampshire, where Maiden was based all those years ago. She now runs a company importing and brokering boats, [Key Yachting](#), and sails year-round with customers and friends.

Marie-Claude Heys on women in yacht racing today:

“Overall it is still tough for the girls. Girls who train hard and earn their stripes are now seen at all level of campaigns and have gained respect. However, the imbalance of weight and strength, plus stereotypical mindsets, still makes it a man's world in many types of boats. The boat designs have become more and more extreme, requiring fewer crew but more brute physical strength—so if you need to take the strongest people, obviously that won't be the women. Now the Volvo race requires two women on every crew—otherwise there probably wouldn't be any.”



Howard Gibbons – Project Manager



The all-female Maiden crew actually had several men as well as women on shore crew, led by Howard Gibbons, who managed project planning and land operations from the very start of the campaign.

Before he met Tracy Edwards, Howard was a journalist working for a local newspaper in Southampton. Having been close to the sailing community for some time he had some experience of helping to organise professional crews. When he heard the idea for Maiden he was the first person to encourage Tracy to go for it.

He became the project manager before the team was in place and used his press connections to push the idea to a wider audience. He motivated Tracy to speak publicly and front the project and gave her extensive media training. Howard was also Tracy's rock and was always there, right beside her, if doubt ever set in.

After the '89 race Howard went on to project manage 'Heineken' in the 1993 race (skipped by Dawn Riley and crewed by several Maiden alums). He also managed Tracy in the early 2000's with her 'Maiden 2' catamaran campaign.

Howard still lives in Hamble and has been helping manage the refurbishment of Maiden throughout 2018. He has also served as the project manager for the Volvo Oceans Legends Race.

Howard Gibbons on a once-in-a-lifetime experience:

“Every so often a sporting first comes along that transcends sport itself to become world famous for a whole set of reasons. Tracy's determination to make it happen against all the odds, and gathering such a wonderful crew and support team around her to make it so, was, and still is, an epic achievement, and to say it changed perceptions of women in sailing is an understatement. It was unprecedented, challenging, great, wonderful and a lot of fun. We had the time of our lives.”



Dawn Riley – Watch Captain, Diver, Engineer



Dawn Riley, the only American on the Maiden team, began sailing as a young girl with her family in Michigan on Lake St. Clair (“nothing yacht-clubby”) and has supported herself on and around boats since age 14, putting herself through college boat-captaining. The Great Lakes trained her well in extreme conditions and heavy seas. She jumped at the chance to join a Whitbread team with Maiden, intrigued to see what an all-female team could achieve.

As Watch Captain on Maiden, she and her co-captain Michèle Paret traded shifts on deck command while Skipper Tracy Edwards typically focused on strategy and navigation. Dawn’s physical strength also served her as Driver and Engineer.

Within 36 hours of Maiden crossing the finish line in 1990, Dawn was back in New York appearing on the David Letterman show, snatched up by the producers as the American rep on the high-profile team. She had graduated from Michigan State in Advertising before the race and this served her well as her career went from strength to strength in the sailing world. In 1996, as CEO and Captain of America True, Dawn was the first woman to manage an America’s Cup sailing team. She has raced on four Americas Cup campaigns and two Whitbreads (now Volvo Ocean Race). In the 1993-4 race she was Skipper of Heineken, joined on her team by several former Maiden crew members.

Dawn is a former president of the Women’s Sport Foundation, founded by Billie Jean King, and is active in many public service and political activities. Dawn serves as a board member of the NGB – US Sailing and the SCS Democratic Club. She was co-author of [Taking the Helm](#), an autobiographical story of her Round the World Race experiences.

Dawn is a television commentator and experienced public speaker, on topics ranging from entertaining adventure stories to motivational seminars in team building and personal success. She considers herself to be a well-rounded, accomplished businesswoman, community leader and youth sports advocate, author, speaker, TV commentator and committed philanthropist. Most recently, Dawn created and runs Oakcliff Sailing Center, a unique training and coaching center that is “Building American Leaders through Sailing.” Dawn believes that this center will prove to be significant in creating leaders inside and outside the marine industry.

Dawn Riley on the audacity of the Maiden challenge:

“I’m quoted in the documentary saying I didn’t believe there were any other really good female sailors in the world. I didn’t say that to be snotty—though it sounds a little that way. I was underscoring how absolutely radical an idea Tracy’s campaign was, and what a fantastic opportunity it was for really competitive, ambitious women like us.”



Michèle Paret – Watch Captain and Helm



French sailor Michèle Paret has always been an active sportswoman, devoting her youth to wind surfing, climbing and mountain biking until she discovered sailing. She met and raced with Marie-Claude Keiffer in France, joined Maiden with her, and took Marie-Claude's position when she left the team. She became one of the two watch captains under Tracy.

She spoke no English when she came aboard Maiden—the first vocabulary she mastered was the names of tools. She quickly picked up the language.

After the race she met her partner in sailing, racing, and life Dominique Wavre and the pair continued sailing together, achieving a successful 3rd place in the Quebec to St Malo Transat. In 2007 they placed 3rd in the Barcelona World Race.

Michèle continues to sail and has over 170,000 sea miles on the open seas with vast experience of crewed and solo ocean regattas. Due to her almost continuous travel we were unable to find a time to interview Michèle for the film.

Michèle Paret on how women collaborate:

“I discovered onboard Maiden a different way of women working together to achieve the same performance as men, a typically feminine and caring solidarity amongst us. Approaching the finish line, I simultaneously felt a huge joy mixed with a huge pain, mixed up with tears... All the girls were in the front of the boat but I couldn't go up there. The finish line marked the end of this great adventure, but the beginning of many others.”



Sally Creaser Hunter – Helm, Safety Equipment



Scotswoman Sally Creaser (now Hunter) came from a sailing family and raced extensively in both Scotland and Northern Ireland. She took a job working in a boatyard, heard about Maiden

early on, and wanted to join up. She traveled down to Hamble and was hired by Tracy on the spot because of her experience and sense of humour.

Onboard Maiden, Sally worked mostly in the cockpit, at the helm or winches.

After the '89 race Sally continued sailing until 1991 when she finished second in the 'Azores and Back' race. She married in 1995 to Iain Hunter and set up her own company, [Hunter Yacht Deliveries](#), as well as a swim school in her local Scottish town, Arran. Her two sons are both professional sailors; the older, Neil, sails for Ben Ainslie's Americas Cup campaign. Sally is still heavily involved in the sailing world.

Sally Hunter on physical strength and skill:

"A lot of credit for how well we did should go to the girls who were so good at helming the boat, in the Southern Ocean especially. It took a lot of skill and physical strength to keep that boat going fast in the right direction in some very heavy sea and wind conditions. Every one of the helms suffered from tendonitis in our wrists from the constant movements necessary."



Jeni Mundy – Foredeck



Jeni finished university with a BSc in Maths with Philosophy and in need of an adventure. She had grown up sailing and racing dinghies on the Thames with her family, and spent a couple of post-bac years in the Caribbean where she met Marie-Claude Kieffer and advanced her sailing skills. Marie-Claude connected her with Tracy's Maiden crew search.

Maiden was Jeni's first experience of professional sailing. She did go on to complete the Whitbread Race again four years later. It was during the preparation for the 1989 race that Jeni realized a talent for electronics when laying the cables in the refurb of Maiden.

After her stint sailing, Jeni gained a Masters in Electronic Engineering and became a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineers. She worked in New Zealand telecommunications in various Engineering roles before joining Vodafone as the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) and leading the Enterprise Product Division for Vodafone Group. She has also worked with Auto Trader, the UK's largest digital automotive marketplace, as an Independent Non-Exec Board Director.

Jeni is currently Regional Managing Director for UK and Ireland for Visa, the credit card giant.

Jeni Mundy on endurance:

“Human beings are amazing. We can achieve and endure so much more than we think. We’re amazingly resilient. During the Southern Ocean crossing we lived in extreme conditions, minus twenty with the wind chill, lucky to get two hours sleep, exhausted but two hours is better than no hours. The definition of a team is having confidence that every single one is fully braced to take on whatever happens. We were that kind of team.”



Tanja Visser – Foredeck and Sailmaker



A childhood sailing in her native Holland gave Tanja a passion for sailing and when she had finished her studies in both dentistry and photography she jumped at the chance to make a career change into professional sailing for a while. When she joined Maiden she became the first Dutch woman to have taken part in the race.

In addition to her jobs as bowman and sailmaker, Tanja brought a dental emergency kit onboard as she was already a professional dentist. She also helmed, and did some of the video filming and still photography. During the race she met her husband, a watch captain on board ‘Merit’. Tanja was the first of the Maiden crew to have a child, so their daughter is the first child to be born to parents who both completed the Whitbread.

After the ‘89 race Tanja continued sailing until the early 2000’s, meanwhile setting up her own dental surgery outside Amsterdam. Tanja also breeds dressage horses and owns her own studfarm where she lives with her two children and six dogs.

Tanja Visser on the Maiden experience:

“For all of us it was a big dream that came true. The trust and respect for each other, the strong sisterhood of my Maiden friends makes me feel strong in difficult times. It’s part of ourselves and I carry it with me always. If you believe in something, go for it, work hard, and never give up.”



Mikaela Von Koskull – Watchwoman, Helm, Deck Hardware



Originally from Korpo, in the southwestern Archipelago of Finland, Mikaela inherited her love and respect of nature and sea, from a long line of seafarers in her family. She started her career graduating as Radio Officer from Mariehamn Maritime Institute, working on merchant ships, followed by ship's purser on passenger ships. Slowly she gained sea-miles and experience to follow her real dream: to become a professional yachtswoman on sailing yachts.

As well as crewing on Maiden in 1989, Mikki participated in the next Whitbread on Heineken's all-woman crew skippered by Dawn Riley. She is the only sailor to have taken part in all three of Tracy Edwards' sailing ventures: the '89 Maiden campaign; the 2001 Maiden II catamaran outing; and the launch of the Maiden Factor. Mikki has also participated in both the Jacques Vabre and Jules Verne race events and on the Multihull circuit. Having spent so many miles and years on fast, extreme yachts, both in the Northern and Southern Hemisphere, she now enjoys being part of similar expeditions (although on somewhat slower ships).

Since 2009 she has been working as a tour guide, mainly in Europe and Africa, as well as zodiac driver in Svalbard and Greenland; she is drawn to places that offer both vast open space and astounding nature. When not enjoying her two favourite areas, the North and the South Pole, Mikaela enjoys being at home on her small farm in Portugal, riding her horse or hiking in the Alentejo countryside.

As another world traveler difficult to pin down, Mikaela could not be interviewed for the *Maiden* film.

Mikaela Von Koskull on Maiden's dream fulfilled:

"Having been brought up in a country that was rather equal-opportunity, I had decided, many years before Maiden, that racing big boats across the ocean was the thing I wanted to do—not because I'm a woman, but simply because it was my dream. We all just wanted the opportunity to do it. Maiden was really my steppingstone for a lifetime in sailing. Tracy made that happen."



Claire Russell – Sail Trimmer, Medic



Born in Birmingham, England, Claire studied medicine at the Royal Free Medical School in London. She began sailing as a university student, so was a keen but somewhat inexperienced sailor relative to the Maiden crew. When Claire heard an all-female crew was being put together and needed a doctor she signed up straight away.

During the race Claire showed incredible grace under pressure when two men fell overboard into the Southern Ocean on board 'Creighton's Naturally'. With Maiden being the closest boat to Creighton's, Claire took to the radio and talked the crew through emergency care for the two men once they had recovered them from the fatally cold ocean. Through Claire's instruction the Creighton's crew were able to save the life of one man, Bart Vandendway, but tragically were unable to save the other, Anthony Phillips, who perished on board.

Claire also met her future husband during the race, Peter Warren, a New Zealander who was racing on 'NBC Ireland'. In the years following the Whitbread, Claire continued to sail, travel and practice medicine, eventually specializing in Accident and Emergency Medicine in the UK.

After their daughters were born in 1997 and 1999, Peter and Claire moved to New Zealand and Claire worked as a Rural General Practitioner and primary response doctor, also becoming a Fellow of the New Zealand College of General Practitioners.

Claire is presently a senior staff doctor in an 'Urgent Care' centre in Hamilton, New Zealand; a facility providing 24-hour accident and medical care to the population of Waikato area. They run a small equestrian facility and Peter runs a farm contracting business. Their eldest daughter Jessica is in her third year at Wellington University, NZ, and Leah is in her second university year in the United States on a sports scholarship.

Claire Russell on facing danger:

"If you send a whole load of 20-year-olds round the world doing high-profile dangerous sport, for lots of reasons there's potential that people could die. In truth, any doctor could have done what I did, talking the other boat through hypothermia treatment. We were close to Creighton's, we knew them. I had friends on that boat. So, my voice on the radio gave them permission to act. I was a step distanced from their desperate situation and awful emotions because I was on the end of a radio. A lot of medicine is just support. When we reached port, Bart came up and gave me a box of chocolates—it was wonderful!"



Amanda Swan Neal – Rigger



Amanda grew up in Auckland, New Zealand and sailed to North America as a teenager aboard a 38' sloop that she helped her parents build. She has spent her life on and around sailboats.

She was rigger aboard Maiden, then in 1994 joined her future husband John Neal aboard Mahina Tiare II for a series of sail-training expeditions from NZ to Cape Horn and Antarctica. They still own and operate [Mahina Expeditions](#), leading ocean sail-training expeditions worldwide aboard Mahina Tiare III and also present instructional sailing seminars at major boat shows worldwide.

Amanda is author of [The Essential Galley Companion](#) and [Marine Diesel Engine Essentials - A Coloring and Learning Book](#) created to help demystify engine systems, and since 2005, she has written the monthly Galley Essentials column in *48 North* magazine. She and John write for four sailing magazines and submit cruising images to yachting journals.

Amanda's 335,000 miles of ocean sailing include two Sydney-Hobart Races, numerous international regattas and seven Cape Horn roundings intermixed with a ten-year involvement in tall ship sail-training. Amanda and John recently sailed from 80 degrees north, above Spitsbergen, to New Zealand. Mahina Tiare will be based in the South Pacific for the next five years.

Still based in New Zealand, Amanda enjoys introducing women to the joys of the cruising lifestyle and her personal interests include Celtic step dancing, photography, triathlon training and sewing.

Amanda is not interviewed in *Maiden*.

Amanda Swan Neal on the job of rigger:

"For me Maiden was a dream come true. I was the first woman in New Zealand to complete a sailmaker's apprenticeship and first woman rigger in the Southern Hemisphere, so it was fantastic to work and race aboard Maiden and hone my skills. My job as rigger on Maiden entailed taking care of the mast and rigging. I was responsible for keeping the mast up, ensuring that the standing rigging helped keep the mast up and that the running rigging was in order for controlling the sails. This entailed daily trips to the top of the mast for rig inspection and broken or tangled halyards. I'm proud I personally stuck the course, we didn't drop the mast, there were no major incidents, and that we were the first woman crew to race around the world—no one can ever take that away from us!"



Nancy Harris – Sail Trimmer, Deck Hardware



Born and bred in Hampshire, England, Nancy grew up in Hamble, the hub of England's boatbuilding and professional sailing circuit. Nancy began sailing singlehanded boats in her teens before beginning in offshore sailing.

In 1988 she had a chance meeting with Howard Gibbons on board a bus and she went along to meet Tracy Edwards that day and joined Maiden.

After the race finished, Nancy remained in Hampshire and enjoys life in the countryside with her husband, two daughters and several horses.

Nancy Harris on the joys of dry land:

“When we screened the film, it was good to show my family a part of my life they really didn't know much about. It was wonderful to see how well everyone was, and to follow Tracy's projects, but I am happy with my feet on the ground and looking after my animals and garden. I've tried to instill in my children the values I learned from Maiden: don't give up. There is always a way of overcoming anything.”



Angela Heath – Sail Trimmer



Irishwoman Angela worked as a secretary/receptionist in National Board for Science & Technology and six years in an insurance company until in 1989 a chance encounter with Tracy Edwards in a bar in Cork led to her competing in the Fastnet Race with the Maiden team. Tracy then invited her to join Maiden as Sail Trimmer for the 1989 race.

She continued to work in various administration roles until 1994 when she became a mum of two boys.

From 2001 to 2006 Angela worked as Office Manager in Viking Marine, Clothing & Marine Specialists, Dun Laoghaire.

A change in career direction led her to join a doctor as Practice Manager in a newly established GP practice. She remained in the medical industry until early 2017.

Angela lives in Dublin Bay with her family and friends. She also loves gardening, hill-walking, piano, snow-skiing and pottery.



Sarah Davies – Reserve Crew Member



Sarah served with the Woman's Royal Navy Service (WRNS) from 1982 and before going to Sandhurst to train as an Army Officer.

Having spotted a small advert in *Yachts and Yachting* for crew wanted for Maiden, with leave of absence granted by the Army, she joined the team as reserve crew nine months before the race. She completed one leg of the race from New Zealand to Australia in place of Sally Creaser.

After the race, Sarah continued to race with the Army offshore team and racing a variety of other boats including their Nordic Folkboat.

She has lived and worked in Kiel, Germany, London, Suffolk and Cyprus. A brief foray away from sailing saw her working with one of the City of London Livery Companies, the Worshipful Company of Saddlers, which only served to encourage her two daughters' passion for riding, and she now spends her spare time, along with Simon her husband, as groom and horse transporter.

Sarah has three children, two who have sailed in the GBR Junior and Youth teams and the third who prefers to be on horseback.

MAIDEN

New Black Films Team

Alex Holmes – Director

Alex is a Bafta-winning filmmaker with extensive experience in producing, directing, and writing acclaimed documentaries and dramas. His work as a writer-director includes searing documentary *Stop at Nothing: The Lance Armstrong Story* for BBC's Storyville, which Variety magazine described as "riveting... devastating... thought-provoking", as well as Emmy, Bafta and RTS-winning factually-based dramas *House of Saddam*, *Dunkirk* and *Coalition*. Last year Alex directed the horror influenced revenge drama *Paula* for BBC 2 which the Telegraph called "Harrowing, brilliant and superbly directed." Alex most recently directed the theatrical documentary *Maiden*, which tells the epic story of Tracy Edwards who, through sheer grit and determination, successfully skippered the first ever all-female crew in the Whitbread round the world yacht race.

Katie Bryer – Editor – <https://www.katiebryer.com>

Katie Bryer initially trained as a drama editor, first at the National Film and Television School in London and later at the BBC. Katie started working on documentaries in 2010 and has worked on many award-winning features with subjects ranging from forced marriage, to human trafficking, from Mount Everest to the moon. Her first feature documentary was the snowboarding movie *We Ride*, before she went on to co-edit the Oscar-nominated *Virunga*, directed by Orlando von Einsiedel. In 2014 she returned to her drama roots and edited the award-winning romantic-comedy *Superbob*, directed by Jon Drever. The film was described as a 'modern romantic classic' by Ricky Gervais. In 2015 she worked with Orlando again on *Moon Shot*, a series of short documentaries for J.J. Abram's company Bad Robot. In 2016 Katie edited *Bruce Lee & The Outlaw*, a film built from footage shot by the photographer Joost Vandeburg over the course of 8 years. In 2017 Katie made two more feature docs: *Maiden*, an archive-based feature about the first ever all-female crew to take part in the Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race, and as additional editor on 'Evelyn' Orlando von Einsiedel's heartbreaking journey into his own family's history with suicide.

Chris Openshaw – Cinematographer - <http://www.chrisopenshaw.com>

London based Director of Photography Chris Openshaw has been involved in documentary and drama for 25 years. His wealth of experience draws on his creative abilities in lighting, composition and technical knowledge to deliver exciting and original images. His CV reflects the vast array of projects he has been involved with. He has travelled to many countries and his proven creativity and reliability in all extremes and environments has led to international recognition and many awards. His most recent works include *One Strange Rock*, an extraordinary documentary series in which Astronauts tell the story of the earth from their unique perspective, and *Maiden*, the epic story of the first ever all-female crew to compete in the Whitbread round the world yacht race.

Victoria Gregory – Producer

Victoria has a wealth of experience in producing both documentary and drama at a high level. After working at the BBC making factual dramas like *Space Race* and *Dunkirk*, Victoria also worked on the critically acclaimed drama *Last Resort* directed by Pawel Pawlikowski. Since leaving the BBC Victoria has worked as part of the producing team on the BAFTA award winning feature documentary *Senna* and co-produced the Oscar winning *Man on Wire*. Since forming New Black films with James Erskine in 2009 Victoria has produced all of New Black Films' output including *Pantani*, *Battle of The Sexes*, *The Ice King*, and *Maiden* in 2018. Victoria is currently producing *Billie*, a moving portrait of the greatest jazz singer of all-time: Billie Holiday.

James Erskine – Executive Producer

James is an Emmy-nominated filmmaker whose work as a writer/director/producer includes, in addition to his New Black Films projects, *Vanishing of the Bees*; *Oil Storm*, an award-winning TV movie for FX; and *EMR*, a theatrically released independent feature, and winner of several film festivals including Raindance. He has also directed several episodes of popular BBC dramas *Robin Hood*, *Torchwood*, *Holby City* and *EastEnders*, among others. In 2017 James directed *Sachin: A Billion Dreams*, a feature documentary about the life of Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar, the film went on to smash box office records in India. His most recent film, *The Ice King*, tells the story of John Curry, the Olympic gold medallist ice skater who challenged norms in both art and sexuality. The film was released to critical acclaim in the UK earlier this year and has gone on to be sold around the world. As well as developing New Black Films' current projects, James is currently directing *Billie*, a portrait of the greatest jazz singer of all time, Billie Holiday.

Sam Brayshaw – Associate Producer

A key member of the team at New Black Films since 2016 Sam has a background in both documentary and drama, working as an assistant on various shows including the feature documentary *Stop at Nothing: The Lance Armstrong Story*, Channel 4's RTS winning political drama *Coalition* and BBC 2's horror influenced drama series *Paula* in 2017. More recently Sam associate produced on Channel 4's thrilling documentary *Hunting the KGB Killers* about the poisoning of Russian dissident Alexander Litvinenko on British soil and *Maiden*, a feature documentary that tells the story of the first ever all-female crew to compete in the Whitbread Round the world Yacht Race.