

# The Rip

July 1986

The Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club Magazine



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# **The Rip**

**Vol.5, No.1  
July 1986**

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THE RIP is the official magazine of the Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club Inc., Wellington, New Zealand.

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### **COVER**

**SKIDDY BOARDS**, John Mines' 9.5m ultralightweight racer designed and built by Mike Muir, shows its paces at the front of the fleet. (Story p.10.)

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# Single-handed racer visits Wellington

By Cam Williamson

HIGH-TECH single-handed round-the-world yacht *KIWI EXPRESS*, with her intrepid helmsman, Dick McBride, visited Wellington recently, and the Club was proud to host the pair as they prepare for the BOC Challenge race in August.

The 27,000-mile race, as testing as the Whitbread, but lonelier, has joined the recognised superhuman events of the world, being described by *TIME* magazine as "the most gruelling test of nautical know-how imaginable".

Its high profile and obvious prestige have attracted a record 57 entries, including two women, and the world's best designers, sailmakers, and builders.

*KIWI EXPRESS*, with the seasoned McBride at the helm, Bruce Farr behind her design, and Tom Schnackenburg sewing up her wardrobe, must be an on-paper favourite, but the competition is almost as tough with an Australian *Lexcen* design also built for the race.

The sight of the innovative Farr 60-footer on the harbour over the Easter period prompted many a nautical question, especially on some of the fast northerly reaches across Oriental Bay to her berth on Queen's Wharf.

## Video evening

The personable McBride was around the Club for much of his time here, always friendly and obliging, and the Club held a well-attended video evening to help raise some of the \$150,000 race costs.

McBride first came to be known as a hardy sailor with his heart-warming performance in the last BOC Challenge which finished in Newport, Rhode Island, late in 1983.

In that race he sailed the boat he built, the *CITY OF DUNEDIN*, a 40-foot steel-hulled schooner. The race was hard and lonely, but McBride, a jack of such trades as fishing, boatbuilding, mining, stage-managing, copywriting, and



deer culling, enjoyed it so much he would have been happy to just keep going when he reached the finish line.

He came in tenth and last on the scoresheet, but the support and admiration he had built up from his "keep-going" attitude, even after being grounded on the Falkland Islands and capsizing in the southern ocean, made him the real winner in many people's eyes.

This time he's in to take the race for himself. He's got the boat and the experience, but until the last minute had not found a sponsor.

## Sponsorship

Shipping company Blueport ACT came to the aid of McBride — they also supported him last year — by offering to transport his boat to Europe for the 2000-mile qualifying leg across the Atlantic. The company's huge fleet of container ships will be in constant touch if McBride needs them, and their facilities will be available in every port of call.

Then, as hopes of finding a major sponsor were fading fast, a group of four South Island businessmen, including Dick's brother Geoff, came to the rescue. They formed a company — *Kiwi Express Yacht Company Ltd* — which has purchased

**Though designed for single-handed racing, Dick McBride's graceful Farr 60 had no difficulty in accommodating an eager crew for a club race on Wellington harbour.**

the yacht, and will raise funds by means of debentures and sponsorships.

## All the gear

*KIWI EXPRESS* is set up to give McBride all the information on weather and performance he needs — he can even sleep with the boat on auto-pilot, knowing an alarm will wake him if conditions change and alterations become necessary.

The design has incorporated movable water ballast to give maximum performance at every point of sailing. Water is taken on and distributed among the windward tanks, and piped across with each tack.

The 60-footer is built light — she weighs only 10 tonnes — and is rigged for the maximum variation of sail area. Using a three backstay system, the yacht can be rigged as either a fractional or masthead to cope with a huge range of conditions.

Built of kevlar and divynycell, the hull is as light and as strong as any these days, without the weight of

more traditional materials.

McBride isn't the only one to have got the bug for single-handed long-distance racing. Eleven of the 17 starters in the last BOC Challenge will be there at the Newport startline in August.

He's also not the only one to have built a sharp boat, either. Some of his strongest opposition will come from the Australians. Ian Kierman, racing the Lexcen-designed SPIRIT OF SYDNEY, has plenty of solo experience behind him and will be best remembered for his win in the 1978 trans-Tasman Mooloolaba-New Plymouth race. SPIRIT OF SYDNEY is a shallow downwind design built of aluminium and also using movable water ballast.

Jack will sail a modified Adams 13m fibreglass sandwich hull, fractionally rigged and fast downwind. Jack is a believer in creature comforts and their effect on performance, and has hot and cold running water and full power.

The twin-spinnaker masthead rig of Don McIntyre's Adams 15 will give it extra power, and is at the upper limit of the class two section of the fleet. Neville Gossan is the only Australian who also raced in the last BOC, and this time will sail a Lexcen 15.2m aluminium masthead-rigged yacht. John Biddlecombe, a highly-experienced solo sailor, will sail one of his own designs with twin rudders behind a dagger centreboard. Biddlecombe's boat is of wood sheathed in fibreglass for strength without weight.

McBride picks the Aussies as the ones to beat, but having a less specialised boat in KIWI EXPRESS he figures they are beatable.

---

## New boats

New registrations with the Club are:

AMIO  
Pelin 24, Nick Van de Ven.  
AMOKURA  
Turner 33, Jim Kebell.  
CATALA  
Ganley 39, Alan & Cathy Kent.  
EQUITY  
Farr 43, Del Hogg.  
KITTYHAWK  
Reactor 25, Alastair Salmond.  
KIWI EXPRESS  
Farr 60, Dick McBride.  
RAKINO  
Woolacott 30, John Hayes.  
RESULT  
Lidguard 36, Alistair Turnbull.

# Editorial

WITH winter upon us and a season of protests behind us, it may be timely to resort to a bit of armchair sailing. Have you ever compared the functions and responsibilities of a yacht race protest committee with those of a football referee or cricket umpire?

The referee and umpire each have supreme authority, and a ruling of off-side or leg-before-wicket is beyond appeal. Not so for the protest committee, whose decisions may be appealed to the respective national authority (in New Zealand, the NZ Yachting Federation).

Of course, the referee or umpire saw the incident to be decided at first hand. But a protest committee is dependent on evidence presented by the parties to the protest and, where available, witnesses to the incident. More often than not the members of the protest committee saw nothing of the relevant race, let alone the incident under dispute.

A less than full understanding by competitors of all the rules of yacht racing must diminish the efficiency of presenting a case to a protest committee and thereby restrict the committee in concluding what really happened out there on the water.

In football and cricket, there appears to be as much understanding of the rules by competitors as there is by referees and umpires. Can the same be said of yachting?

What can be said of many yachting, judging from overheard after-match comments, is that they believe they know as much about the rules of football or cricket as the referee or umpire they saw at the park or on TV. Wouldn't it be good if they knew as much about the rules of the sport in which they are competitors... yachting... as they profess to know of the rules of other sports of which they are only spectators!

If we knew our game thoroughly, and if we "played the game" on the water, there would be no protest... and no need of a protest committee.

The late Clarrie Gibbons, of athletics and rugby fame and father of Muritai Yacht Club Commodore, Murray Gibbons, summed it up nicely in his poem "Rugby", which was included in Clarrie's funeral service at Eastbourne recently:

Oh for thirty strong men  
Who know the game and for  
once no referee,  
Then I'll guarantee we will  
see the game  
Played as it should be.  
With due reward to  
strength and speed  
and all malpractice trampled  
under the feet of the righteous.

The ideals sought by Clarrie can be a part of yachting too, but only if we work at it together. It would be good for the sport and for our club if RPNYC became the first club to eliminate the need of a protest committee.

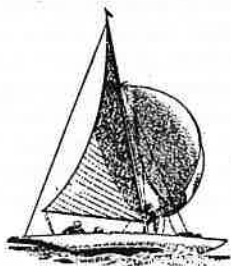
HAL WAGSTAFF

RUMPUS  
Farr 1020, John Bristed.  
SKIDDY BOARDS  
Muir 9.5, John Mines.  
WAKARERE  
Crocker 35, Bill McCullogh.

**Note:** The Club Register is maintained by the Club Manager, and registration forms may be uplifted from the desk below the Sailing Notice Board in the Wardroom.

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# EQUITY makes the team for Kenwood Cup

CLUB members and supporters of DOLLAR EQUITY were delighted to learn that the new Wellington contender had earned a place in the three-boat national representative team to contest the Kenwood Cup off Hawaii in August.

The immaculately-campaigned Farr 43, built by a Wellington syndicate led by Del Hogg, will soon return to the water where New Zealand came so close to winning the elusive Clipper Cup in August 1984.

In that series, the core of DOLLAR EQUITY's crew were racing the Farr 40 PACIFIC SUNDANCE, which had cleaned up the Southern Cross Cup fleet, and was doing the same in Hawaii. New Zealand would have brought the cup home if not for the tragic dismasting of teammate EXADOR off the southern tip of Hawaii in the last, long-distance race.

EXADOR bounced back, and became the strength of offshore teams at Cowes and Sydney before campaigning once more for the renamed Hawaiian offshore series.

As plans started to develop for the campaign to win the Kenwood Cup, a new breed of ocean racer emerged from the development of SUNDANCE and EXADOR

designs. The FARR 43, designed specifically for Hawaiian conditions, produced triplets in the shape of THUNDERBIRD, Don St Clair Brown's replacement for ANTICIPATION — the only Kiwi boat to have campaigned in all Clipper Cups, SWITCHBLADE, supposedly an EXADOR replacement which later faded from contention, and the youngest, DOLLAR EQUITY.

## Latest refinements

Being the youngest in today's technology race meant that DOLLAR EQUITY had every up-to-the-minute refinement available, the latest in Bruce Farr's America's Cup thinking, including the bulbous elliptical keel, and refined on-board computer equipment. She also had great support from American rental firm Dollar Rent-a-car, Jarden Corporation, Leadenhall Investment Management, and Reg Pharaoh Providers.

Being youngest also meant missing the Southern Cross series, in which the major contenders for the Kenwood Cup team found another hero, and valuable international competition. Davidson 40 MAD MAX shone through from the B

## By Cam Williamson

team to astound the international yachting fraternity with a clear individual points win in the series.

Going into the Kenwood Cup selection trials, a likely team was named by Hogg as "Two 43s and a 40", but after a late start and a dismasting through rigging failure, MAD MAX took a back seat, and EXADOR once again dominated the harbour racing.

Sailing in 10-15 knots of breeze on Auckland's relatively tame harbour wasn't a good indication of how the same boats would perform off Hawaii, and when THUNDERBIRD and DOLLAR EQUITY broke EXADOR's dominance in the one long race of the evaluation series, it was obvious the conditions would have to be taken into account.

At the end of the official trial, DOLLAR had recorded a 2/1/5/2/3/2/1/1 series, THUNDERBIRD a 3/7/3/3/2/1/6/2, and EXADOR a 1/5/2/1/1/3/2/4. MAD MAX looked sunk with 4/4/1/dnf/dns/4/3/3.

## Not satisfied

But the selectors weren't satisfied. They wanted to see the yachts racing in a full breeze, wearing No. 3 headsails before naming a team on May 19. With only two weekends left before that date it was looking like DOLLAR EQUITY, THUNDERBIRD and EXADOR would be our representatives in Hawaii. But would the selectors leave out MAD MAX and risk the mockery she made of their Southern Cross selection?

## As predicted

As it turned out, the team finally selected was as predicted — DOLLAR EQUITY, THUNDERBIRD, AND PAXUS EXADOR, with MAD MAX as reserve.

DOLLAR EQUITY was expected to be shipped to Hawaii early in June.



Spectators among the vast fleet which turned out to see the start of the third leg of the Whitbread race in Auckland might have wondered if the crew of DOLLAR EQUITY were taking their Auckland stay seriously.

# Bubbles for Breakfast

ONE of the year's most popular social functions is undoubtedly the Champagne Breakfast, and this year's event, held in the Overseas Passenger Terminal early in June, was no exception.

A high standard of catering put everyone in the right frame of mind to enjoy the festivities, which were ably compered by Bill McCarthy.

Prizes for the year's two special racing series were presented — Spring by Epiglass representative Jim Cottle, and Autumn by Barton Marine's Mike Calkoen, while six bottles of champagne were presented to various Club members who had achieved some form of notoriety.

**RIGHT:** Alan Dunn seems to have the situation well in hand.



**ABOVE:** Compere Bill McCarthy swaps his valued America's Cup tie for Wayne Wilkie's Police tie — purchased, Wayne explained, at Kirkcaldie's.

**ABOVE:** Murray Sleeth, showing customary shyness and reticence, is delivered forcibly by Greg Turner and John Brooks to receive his award for his outstanding performance, with Jill Green, in the two-man Round-the-North Island race.

**BELOW:** Recognition of three years of valuable service to the Club is given to retiring Commodore Gary Tye in the form of a magnum of champagne, and a sheaf of flowers for his wife Jenny. Enjoying the breakfast with them is daughter Annabelle.

**BELOW:** Phil Cox finds that bacon and eggs are not enough, and that he must bite the nearest leather-clad female leg.





# Personality of the year



A POPULAR choice for this year's Club Personality of the year was Dr Dick Graham. Dick, a paraplegic, has been a member of the Club since 1977. He owned ONDINE for several years, and now owns the Sparkman and Stephens 42 footer KOAMARU, which he bought from Brian Millar.

He races KOAMARU in the Cruising Division, and has done some lengthy cruises in her, in-

cluding a trip to Fiordland and two circumnavigations of the South Island.

Last year he completed an extensive cruise to Australia and the Great Barrier Reef, which won him the Fiebig Offshore Cruising Trophy at this year's prizegiving.

Dick is shown here receiving his scroll from Commodore Gary Tye at the Champagne Breakfast.

# Boat of the year



IN A break from tradition, this year's award for Boat of the Year was not given to a boat from the Club, but to the Wellington Police launch, LADY ELIZABETH II, in recognition of the many services she has performed for Club members.

The first Police launch came into service in 1930, and was seconded to war activities in the early 1940s.

The LADY ELIZABETH II was launched in 1973, a new boat designed specially for the rough

conditions of Cook Strait, and since that time she has made an outstanding contribution to the safety of small craft in the area.

She has three crews of three, on call 16 hours a day, every day.

It is a common sight to see small craft in tow behind the Police launch, being brought home after misadventures on the harbour.

Sergeant Wayne Wilkie, of the Wharf Police, accepted a cup and the customary scroll at the Cham-

# Gubb resplendent!



THE Club extends its congratulations to Paul Gubb and Julie Mexted who, assisted by 180 guests, celebrated their wedding at St Hilda's Church in Island Bay and then in the Long Room at the Basin Reserve on May 31. It is reported that on the following day the hardest of the guests were unable to resist a harbour cruise in one of Wellington's most biting southerlies.

pagne Breakfast, and in return presented the Club with a framed photograph of the LADY ELIZABETH II.

As this issue was going to press we learned of the sinking of the LADY ELIZABETH II at the entrance to Wellington harbour with the tragic loss of two of the crew. The Club extends its sympathy to their families and fellow crewmen.

# Tony Ray started it ...



# YOUNG 88 sets the standards! . .

Cruising

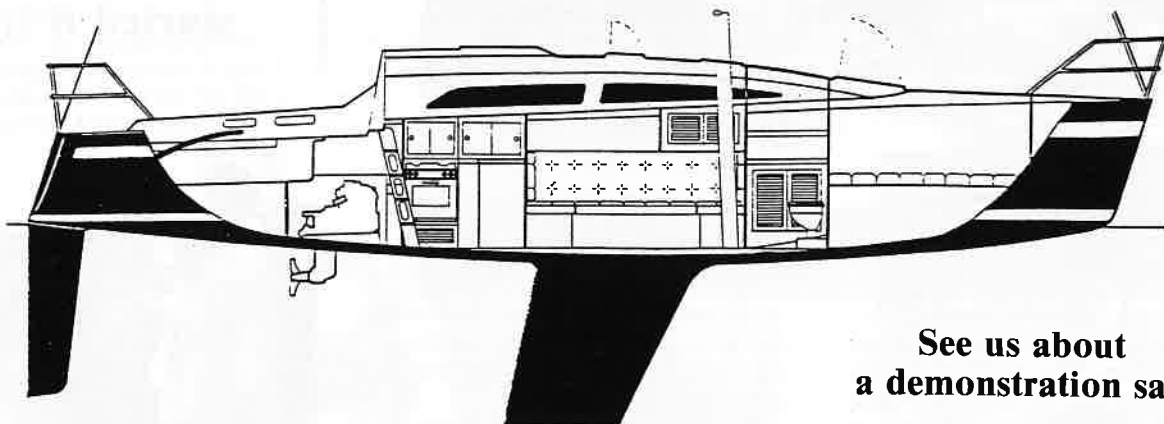


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# Race promotes youth yachting

THE annual Business House Race sponsored by General Finance Limited was held on Wednesday, February 19, in fine conditions with a 20 to 25 knot northerly. Conditions were a pleasant change from the 1985 race held in 40 knot southerlies and in which only three boats completed the course.

This year 15 starters made for a reasonable fleet in this Mark Foy event, with the majority finishing within 15 minutes of one another.

The day's format has now been well established. With crews and sponsors meeting prior to the start for lunch at the Club, and with a presentation at the conclusion, it is providing an excellent opportunity to introduce non-sailors to the world of yachting. From those who attended and took part in the event the response and enthusiasm is there to support the race on an annual basis.

The successful yachts and their sponsors this year were: 1st AZTEC, Avery Motors Limited; 2nd NIRVANA, Marubiri NZ Limited; 3rd SAVANT, General Finance Limited.

With net proceeds of approximately \$1500 being donated to the Youth Yachting Assistance Fund, the day is an excellent opportunity to compete on the water and to raise funds for a most worthwhile cause.

The promotion of Youth Yachting in Wellington is essential if we are to produce the top talent needed in Wellington to ensure that yachting is New Zealand wide and not confined to the waters north of the Bombay Hill.

To those who assisted in the organisation and the smooth running of the event, thanks for your efforts.

## Tell it to *The Rip*

A box for miscellaneous advertisements (free to members) and other written contributions has been provided in the downstairs foyer of the Clubhouse.

Alternatively, post them to:

The Editor,  
P.O. Box 9674,  
WELLINGTON.



General Finance representative John Foot presents a cheque for \$1500 to Club Executive member Roy Cowley for the Youth Yachting Fund at the end of the Business Houses' race.

## From the Club Manager

### Subscription accounts

By now the AGM will be only a memory and one of the items considered by you all will be the level of subscriptions for the current year (1 April 1986 — 31 March 1987). A week or so after the AGM you will receive your subscription accounts through the mail and will have until 30 September 1986 to pay them. Remember, failure to pay the subscription by due date could well result in you losing your membership of the Club.

### Payment of subs

Subs may be paid either by mailing them to the Club's postal address (P.O. Box 9674, Wellington) or placing them in the box provided in the Clubhouse. Please don't leave them with the Bar staff, they are not responsible for receiving subscriptions.

### Changes of address

Please remember that subscription accounts are sent to your last known postal address and the onus is on you to advise the Club of any change in address. If you're not receiving Club mail get in touch with me without delay or leave a change of address form in the mail box provided in the Clubhouse or send it through the mail. (I'm assuming that you may be reading this RIP courtesy of a friend or may know of a fellow member who is not receiving mail!).

### Membership cards

I generally aim to mail out membership cards within a week of receiving your subscription payment

although some delays occur in the initial stages of receipting when the sheer weight of sub payments slows me down a bit! I'm a one man band on this one so bear with me.

### Dinghy sheds

The Club leases several Wellington Harbour Board sheds in the Boat Harbour including the six sheds located in the Old Clubhouse by the Freyberg Pool. Occasionally these became vacant, so if you're looking for dinghy stowage in the Boat Harbour give me a call.

### Slipway

Boat owners please note that the Slipway is now fully booked from August — December 1986 and I'm sorry if you've missed out but we only have one Slipway and it seems that everyone wants to slip their boats over those four months.

I do maintain a waiting list for these months in the event of a cancellation so if you want your name on that list give me a call (during working hours please!).

In my absence, slipping is carried out by the Club's Honorary Slipmasters. Just to refresh your memory they are:

	Phone
Bill MacQueen	862-878
Garry Nimmo	863-506 home 722-395 work
Keith Cameron	862-428
Bob Daniel	688-446

In the event of any emergency if any of the above are unavailable our well-known WHB Boat Harbour Custodian Roger Carter is available.

GRANT SCOONES

*“What’s that little thing out in front of the First Division boats?”  
“It’s that new Muir 9.5.” “That WHAT ...?”*

# SKIDDY BOARDS rockets to success

LAUNCHED near the end of the season, SKIDDY BOARDS has raised a few eyebrows on the Harbour in its short racing career. Her results to date include a fourth in the Commodore’s Trophy Mark Foy Race where she took time out of most of the fleet, a line honours win in the HEBTRO Race finishing ahead of AZTEC, and a second in the Veterans Race, despite the attempts of her aged helmsman (a well known broadcaster of sports) to slow her down.

Showing amazing speed off the wind, SKIDDY BOARDS will be the boat to watch next season after a winter’s tuning in the Mana Cruising Club’s RELING CUP Series.

**Many friends lend many hands to move SKIDDY BOARDS to the launching ramp.**



## Innovative

Designed and built by Mike “Rocket” Muir of Mike Muir Boats Ltd, SKIDDY BOARDS is owned by John Mines, who runs a metal fabrication and engineering business in Wellington. John’s skill with metal is evident in many of the fittings on SKIDDY BOARDS from the alloy chainplates and pushpit/pulpit to the alloy case enclosing the inboard mounted 15hp Yamaha outboard motor. In his attempts to keep the weight of the boat to a bare minimum, John has extended his imagination to such

**SKIDDY BOARDS gets the feel of its new spinnaker.**

items as solid nylon stanchions with kevlar lifelines, a set of pipe berths, a foam and glass galley set up, and even a tubular fabricated alloy bulkhead mounting for the required, quote, TOILET, securely installed, unquote — in this case a marine-quality pvc bucket. Weight saving is the name of the game on SKIDDY BOARDS, and the boat is being fitted out with the NZYF Handbook in one hand and an Honorary Inspector standing close by for interpretation.

## Hull and decks

SKIDDY BOARDS is Mike Muir’s first attempt at the Wednesday Night Racer concept which is proving so popular in Auckland, and his rendering of that concept is both attractive to the eye and, if performance to date is any indication, very effective. Constructed of Kevlar and high tech resins, SKIDDY BOARDS hull and decks are stiff enough as an integral unit to negate the requirement for excessive internal stiffening through multiple bulkheads and other cabinetry. Indeed, the interior is quite empty at the moment with a main bulkhead under the mast and large glassed-in water tanks under each side deck

providing most of the internal support.

### The rig

SKIDDY BOARDS sports a high-aspect double-spreader fractional rig from Swanson Rigging Services with sails by Coutts and Associates of Auckland.

### Water ballast

Built in to the maximum beam sections under each side deck are large water tanks which could easily be mistaken for water ballast tanks by the uninitiated. John Mines assures us however that the use of water ballasting is not permitted (yet!) and that the large tanks with their 3" crossover pipe and gate valve are a concession to the many gin drinkers he will no doubt be entertaining while cruising with his wife Fiona in the Sounds. Holding some 120 gallons between them the tanks in SKIDDY BOARDS could well prove popular as an alternative fresh water supply to the somewhat tainted stuff we get from the Picton wharf.

### Engine

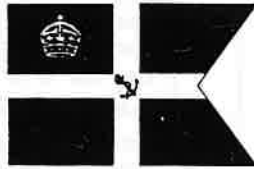
Another cunning feature of the boat is a variation of the outboard motor well theme. When sailing, the motor is raised on a vertical track in its alloy housing under the bridge deck and the hull aperture covered completely by a blanking plate welded to the bottom of the outboard leg. This system provides the hull with an unbroken underwater profile for maximum efficiency and keeps the engine in the correct spot for trim while providing ample power from the 15 available horses.

### Market potential

The MUIR 9.5 design was specifically created with Wellington conditions in mind, and the future could well see a series of sister ships to SKIDDY BOARDS fleet racing on Wellington Harbour. As a prototype, SKIDDY BOARDS (the name is still a mystery!) is a tribute to the builder, and could indeed prove to be an exciting prospect for a production line of Wellington-designed and built keelers.

### Specifications

LOA: 9.5m  
LWL: 9.0m  
Beam: 3.15m  
Draft: 1.76m  
Displacement: 2000kg



# Commodore

AS this is my final opportunity, as your Commodore, to communicate with Club members through the columns of THE RIP, I feel that it is time to pause and reflect on aspects of the Club that come to my mind after three years in office.

I am still amazed and I must say somewhat concerned at how few members actively support the Club outside of yachting events. My own observations when attending various functions over the years are of seeing the same faces (with a few exceptions), people who have continued to show their interest and loyalty by supporting time after time these functions and activities. One wonders sometimes whether the other 75 per cent of our membership actually exists.

Once again this apparent lack of interest shows up in other areas. Probably the most important one is the availability of members for committee work, whether it be Executive, Sailing, House, Cruising, or backstays.

Maybe it can be a nice secure feeling to arrive at an AGM and know that the various positions will be filled and presented to the meeting in a nice tidy package with

little or no need for ballots to take place. However, even this situation is only arrived at after some fast talking and arm twisting to achieve the 100 per cent filling of positions.

One does not have to be a Solomon to realise that as a Club we have many members who have the skills and talents to offer to the various committees, so how about coming forward and making yourselves available.

Having got that off my mind I must hasten to add how much I have enjoyed my three years as Commodore. It has been a period of challenge and in some aspects controversy, but that is really what it is all about.

I have enjoyed strong support from Flag Officers and Executive members, and thank them for it. To all members I would say thank you for your support and the opportunity of being your Commodore, an opportunity I have been proud to have had. Finally, grateful thanks for the very real support I have had from my family.

GARY W. TYE

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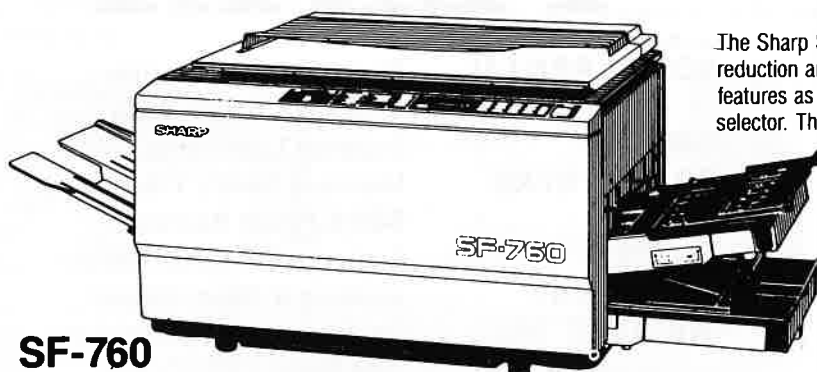
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# Foggy start for Kapiti - Picton race

CERTAINLY this was one of our more unusual offshore races in recent times. A strange combination of "pea soup" fog, frustration with lack of wind, and some very pleasant sailing breezes added up to what I found overall to be a most interesting finale to our offshore season.

The race promised controversy from the outset. At Friday's pre-race briefing one of the leading contenders for season's honours queried whether consideration had been given to postponement as the light airs would unfairly favour small yachts.

By Saturday evening the largest yacht in the fleet COTTON BLOSSOM had taken out line honours so convincingly that she won IOR, PHRF and Club Handicap 1st placings. 2nd and 3rd placings in both IOR and PHRF were taken out by NIZAM, followed by AZTEC. So much for pre-race predictions!

After a start in very light airs, all wind disappeared off Kau Bay, allowing the fleet to regroup.

In darkness, a second start took place as the fleet gradually moved into the clear air of the main channel, encountering light southerlies. Almost immediately fog appeared, gradually thickening until by the time the fleet had reached Steeple Rock Light, visibility was as bad as I have ever encountered.

With the fleet concentrated in the area of Barrett's Reef some excitement was created with the departure of a ferry — not an experience one would wish to repeat.

At this stage NENYA (unofficial entry) and SNOW GOOSE both returned into the harbour, neither subsequently rejoining the race.

The fog and light airs were to last throughout the night, with fog not really clearing until 0700. Overnight progress was obviously minimal. In the 8-hour period 2200 Friday to 0600 Saturday NIZAM made a net forward gain of 6 miles. In that period we had entered the rip at Sinclair Head, only to be pushed back out when the tide turned.

During the night COTTON BLOSSOM broke away from the fleet and was never seen again by most competitors.

Light variable sea breezes arose at approximately 0700, coinciding with a clearing in visibility. By 0800 most

by Ian Greig

of the fleet was in the Terawhiti area where a moderate northerly prevailed. This provided ideal conditions for the 30 mile beat to Kapiti.

PHORTYS had had enough before reaching Terawhiti, and withdrew.

BRAVADO took a starboard tack across Cook Strait and never put about. She simply disappeared into the northern entrance to Queen Charlotte Sound.

Overnight conditions led to some very interesting placings. After the beat to Kapiti Jim Owers' Young 88 HIGH ANXIETY was in a group of yachts including COPPELIA, HIGH SOCIETY, JOKATO and NIZAM (having reached Kapiti before JOKATO and NIZAM).

Usual frustrations were encountered rounding Kapiti in the wind shadow created by the island, against the tide. Once round some time was spent wallowing with almost no wind in the slop created by a very large groundswell, and backwash from the island.

Brian Miller in HIGH SOCIETY had by then had enough. Picton was beckoning and the "button was pushed". Within a matter of minutes as yachts cleared Kapiti Island a moderate north westerly set in, and the fleet enjoyed excellent reaching conditions back down to Queen Charlotte Sound.

Sailing through the Sound in darkness provided the usual variation in conditions that can prove so frustrating. In the area of Ship Cove NIZAM was suddenly flattened by winds in the order of 40 knots. Once she had reduced sail, the wind moderated almost immediately to provide very pleasant sailing.

By Dieffenbach winds had backed sufficiently to allow us to carry a spinnaker almost to the finish line. As we travelled down the centre of the channel at speeds of up to 9 knots, some sympathy was felt for JOKATO and COPPELIA who were overtaken appearing almost stationary near the eastern shore.

With winds strengthening and coming on the nose shortly before the finish, and heavy rain setting in, I was one competitor who breathed a sigh of relief when we finally crossed the finish line in the early hours of Sunday morning.

## New members

THE Club welcomes the following new members:

### Senior

Con Anastasiou	Brian McGruer
Timothy Bayley	Larry Morgan
John Belgrave	Sepp
Murray Brown	Niedermoser
Bryan Calcott	Murray Owen
John Coad	Kevin Paton
Richard	Alastair
Crawford	Salmond
Graham Culy	Stuart Schon
Paul De Lisle	Peter Sutherland
Denis Foot	Grant Tregurtha
Andrew Harris	Nicholas
Paul Hicks	Van de Ven
Bruce Hills	Peter Walker
Graham Hoare	Peter Wells
Pam Jackson	Bruce Wheeler
Graeme Lind	Graham Westerby
Darryl	John Worth.
MacDonald	

### Lady

Susan Ballinger	Deidre Gunn
Jan Broadhead	Linda Layton
Pam	Anne McCallum
Christopherson	Christina
Margaret Culy	Symmons
Christine Dickson	Charlotte Tapley
Shona Fox	Caroline Vennell
Alison Franks	Kathryn White
Jill Geange	

### Country

Kevin Fletcher	Nigel Willis
Colin Hickey	Lindsay Wilson
Lindsay Jellyman	

### Intermediate

Stewart Rainey

## Bryan Coleman is trying it ...



*Design it, build it, fix it — it's all in a day's work for Eric Bond. But for him there are no half-measures.*

# Doing it the right way

EAT your heart out, COTTON BLOSSOM. There is a faster craft in the Club — and this one is a real flyer. Get it? A REAL flyer.

Eric Bond — a long-time legend in the Club for finding solutions to mechanical problems — recently set his mind to a problem he shared with many Club members: How to travel quickly, easily, and relatively inexpensively from home in Wellington to holiday house in the Sounds. His answer can be found in a hangar at Paraparaumu aerodrome — a Lake LA-4 Buccaneer amphibian.

This four-seater pusher-prop aircraft is ideally suited for the purpose. Off the runway at the local airstrip, a short flight across Cook Strait cruising at 100 mph and dodging the cables, then down into the sea at Lochmara Bay, taxi on the gently-sloping beach, park on the front lawn, and — who's for a barbecue?

Co-owners and operators of the aircraft are elder daughter Donella and her friend Peter Fenwicke, both of whom are cramming in flying instruction as fast as they can.

## Vast experience

Eric, who has been a Club member since 1966, has a vast background of experience in all kinds of craft — land, sea, and air.



He started his lifelong association with boats as a young lad living at Narrow Neck, in Auckland. At the bottom of the street was the Wakatere Boating Club, where he began racing in Frostbite dinghies, progressing to "Zeddies", and then to "Mulletys".

## Boatbuilding

But racing boats was not enough. Three doors up the road lived John Brooks, who used to help club members to build the solid, clinker-built Frostbites under the clubhouse. After a bit of hanging

**Eric Bond with his Buccaneer amphibian, which will provide quick transport direct to his house in the Sounds.**

around the club Eric soon found himself pulling planks around the dinghies, and was invariably "dolly boy" on the inside.

Further grounding in craftsmanship was given to him by his uncle, who was a carpenter of the old school. He had made all his own tools, and taught Eric to do the same. "Look after your tools and they will last forever," he explained. And it appears that he was right. Today Eric is still using the ones he made for himself many years ago.

## Engineering

Coming to Wellington, he went to Hutt Valley Memorial Tech. This seat of learning seemed good at producing engineers — among his classmates were Hugh Poole and Bob Daniel — and after leaving he did a motor engineering apprenticeship with Wright Stephensons.

During this time he built a complete sports car, using Austin Seven bits, but he was also very active in the boating scene. In his spare time he worked with Ray Pinney building clinker dinghies for Manthel Motors, who were at that time agents for Briggs and Stratton engines. The engines were fitted to



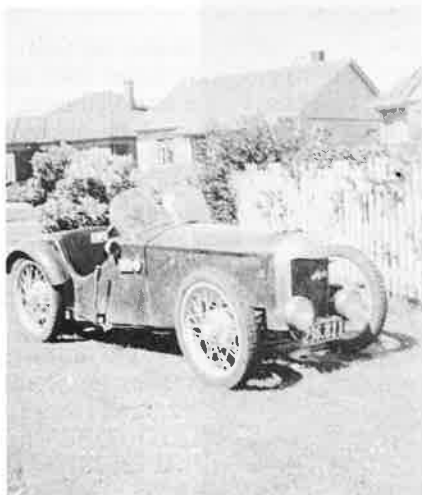
**Towed by his faithful Riley, Eric's BONDETTE travelled to speedboat regattas throughout the country.**



the boats, which were then sold complete off the floor.

He also built various small boats for other people, and designed and built a tunnel boat for his own use when fishing on the Tongariro river. This 8 ft craft was a forerunner of the jet boat, with its propeller in a tunnel running through the hull.

Speedboat racing captured his attention, and he designed and built a number of them in the early 1950s. Of particular interest was his *BONDETTE*, a B-class midget with engine at the rear and adjustable cavitation plate — an idea which was well ahead of its time. He raced



**The Austin Seven Special which Eric built while doing his motor engineering apprenticeship.**

this machine around the country, including the Masport regatta.

Eric's interest in flying also developed early, through the Air Training Corps. He was too young to be involved in the War, but was called up and scheduled to have his medical at 9.00 am on what turned out to be VJ Day. He learned to fly with the Air Force, however, and carried on privately afterwards, being involved with another well-known member of RPNYC, Snow Gatehouse, in running a flying school at Paraparaumu.

In 1948 he went to the UK, where he became involved in motor racing, working in a team of three racing mechanics designing and building cars for Connaught, and travelling with them around the European racing circuit. (Those who watched the motor races on Wellington's waterfront last January would have seen a beautifully preserved Connaught on the track — unfortunately rammed by an out-of-control Lister Jaguar.)

**Eric at the helm of his beautifully-built FALCON in Evans Bay.**



Motorcycling came next when he returned to New Zealand in 1951 and started up his own business, VIC Cycles, in Lower Hutt. Motor cycle racing was a natural development, and he was soon building



**Eric's first motor cycle — a Triumph, which he bought for seven shillings and sixpence.**

speedway frames as well as competing on the circuits.

Eventually he left the bike business and joined Gilbert Mitchell, the welding specialist in Marion Street, where he worked for seven years. Then in 1961 an opportunity arose with the setting up of a school of industrial design engineering at the Wellington Polytech. Eric joined the staff as a tutor, and helped to get the department going. He is still there, 25 years later — as he puts it, the longest-surviving tutor on the staff.

Boats were never forgotten,

however, and eventually Eric undertook to build a 20 ft yacht on contract. The person for whom he built it was unable to pay, so Eric kept the boat and sailed it for a year. This boat was a forerunner of today's trailer sailer, with a swing centreplate and a small cabin.

He began building *FALCON* in 1964. This was a 27ft 6in "Daydream" double-ender, a design very popular in Sydney — some with good ocean passages to their credit. The project took two years, and the result can be seen in Evans Bay today, still looking shipshape, having been sold recently by



**One of the Connaught racing cars which Eric helped to develop and build in the U.K.**

John and Pat Rainey to its current owner, Mike Lindsay.

After sailing *FALCON* enthusiastically for three years, Eric looked

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## Eric Bond (cont.)

for something a little larger to accommodate his growing family, and found his present boat, DELPHINUS. This beamy, flush-decked 30 footer was built by Jorgensens in Picton for a couple named Jenkins, who intended to circumnavigate the world in it. They had worked for three years fitting it out, living aboard in Evans Bay, but had to abandon their plans.

### Rebuilt

Eric set about rebuilding to suit his own requirements, gutted it, re-rigged it, fitted a luff spar and self-steering, and generally set it up for single-handed sailing. In the course of this, he says, he pulled out a lot of coal, along with the open fireplace, and it took months to get rid of the smell of home-made bread!

Although he favours heavier, cruising craft, he is no stranger to the faster variety, and for a number of years he raced as mainsheet hand on SEQUOIAH II and then WHISPERS II.

There is no way that Eric's skills can be categorised. He will design and build anything that seems necessary at the time. Towards the



**Eric Bond's amphibian is not the first of its kind to be associated with the Club. This photograph shows the first seaplane to fly from Auckland to Wellington, moored in the Boat Harbour after its historic flight in October 1921. The photograph was discovered on the wall of the Kapiti Aero Club, Paraparaumu.**

end of the War he patented a kerosene/diesel conversion burner for cars — enabling them to run on virtually anything that would burn. He produced about 20 units, but the War ended before large-scale production could begin.

He made a machine for making aluminium venetian blinds. One of his recent developments is a light, clip-on kit for motorising any standard folding wheelchair.

He built his own house in Johnsonville, out of timber bought at a Maori mill in the King Country,

plus a 750 sq.ft workshop to build a boat in.

He is an enthusiastic member of the Alfa-Romeo Club, and has two Alfas — one of which he is restoring completely.

He is also an experienced scuba diver.

Eric's do-it-yourself approach extends to flying, also, as he is President of the Wellington Chapter of the Amateur Aircraft Constructors Association, as well as being a stage inspector for composite and metal aircraft and Volkswagen converted aero engines. Recently, under his guidance, the association built a hangar for six homebuilts at Paraparaumu, and he hopes to build another alongside for his own amphibian.

### Marine engineering

RPNYC members will know Eric mostly for his skills in marine engineering, and there will not be many boats in the harbour that have not had the benefit of his experience at some time or other.

Experience is something for which there is no substitute in Eric's book. You can't have too much of it, and you are never too old to acquire it. The young have to make their own mistakes, he says, and eventually they will learn that there is only one way to do a job — and that is the right way.

And what does a man like this do for a hobby? He and wife Pat breed Burmese cats.



**Eric's present boat DELPHINUS, a solid but deceptively-fast 30ft cruiser, which he has completely re-rigged and rebuilt below.**

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## Safety — a plea for common sense

SKIPPERS should always remember that ultimately the safety of crew and vessel are their responsibility.

After two or three seasons of very pleasant sailing conditions, it is easy to forget just how treacherous conditions can be around Wellington. In the last Island Bay race strong southerly winds created short steep seas in the Harbour entrance. Conditions were such that the crew of one of our more experienced offshore race yachts were all seen to be wearing safety harnesses.

Conversely, the crew of one of our less frequent race entrants were wearing neither harnesses nor life jackets. Two crew members spent time in the water, later requiring hospitalisation from the effects of exposure.

A few weeks later at the end of the Easter vacation one of our cruising yachts ran into difficulty returning across Cook Strait. Conditions were so bad at the time, with a gale southerly and poor visibility, that most members chose to return to Wellington by ferry, leaving their boats in the Sounds. In this case ultimately the combination of weather conditions, motor out of action, blown sails, and inexperienced crew led to assistance from the Police launch being required.

Skippers please — remember the basic rules and apply a little common sense. All crews should be familiar with safety equipment and its use. Skippers must insist on its use when appropriate. It is the lives of your crew and friends that are placed at risk!

## Safety regulations

Members will be aware that earlier in the season our Sailing Committee expressed concern to the Federation at some of the new safety requirements. In short, it was considered that the new rules were in some areas unduly stringent, with requirement for excessive equipment.

Experience to date indicates that the Federation is not happy with us adopting a category and then deleting items considered unnecessary for a particular event.

To overcome the problem we in-

tend following the recommendations of our own safety sub-committee. Categories will be lowered, and our own specific safety requirements added to the category requirements under which we sail.

It is worthy of note that the Federation has taken our earlier criticism seriously. Graeme Hargreaves has been appointed by the Federation to a three man national sub-committee to review the position.

## Winter series

At the end of the season there was a movement afoot to re-introduce


our own winter race series.

Over the last few years the Club has largely "died" over the winter period. With modern low-maintenance yachts, and the number of our club yachts seen competing in various winter series conducted by other clubs, it seems the time is ripe for reintroduction of our own series.

## PHRF


The Federation has expressed concern over the recent fall in numbers of PHRF registrations. Hopefully present investigations will result in improvement within the system, and a consequent increase in registrations. In principle we must support continuation of a handicap system based on handicapping a yacht to its optimum performance.

IAN GREIG



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# Two men in a boat — round the North Island

ALMOST twice around the North Island was the reality facing the six "southern" yachts entered in the Two Man Around the North Island Race staged by the Devonport Yacht Club during February and March of this year.

FREDERICK (Graeme Moore/John Askew), NOT GUILTY (Murray Sleeth/Jill Green), SYRAH (Mike Hughes/Mike Ahern), RESULT (Alistair Turnbull/Alistair Shanks), INNOVATOR II (John Mansell/Allan Thomas), and BOBBY SHAFTO (Grant Scoones/Wayne Tomlinson) all had to find their way to Auckland by February 16 before starting on the 1264 NM, four-stage dash around New Zealand's North Island. Some, like country members Shanks and Turnbull on RESULT, were to cut it fine, having dropped the mast of the Lidguard 36 in the Sounds in January, but all made it to the start and not surprisingly to the finish with varying degrees of success. This is the story of the race on board BOBBY SHAFTO, told by Club Manager Grant Scoones.

## Auckland bound

With the Port Nick burgee flying bravely from the spreaders of BOBBY SHAFTO we set sail for Auckland on February 1 with some **The Round-the-North Island fleet in the Devonport dock prior to the start in February.**



10 miles ahead of us before returning to the fair port of Wellington. Wayne and I had entered the race three months earlier, and although we hadn't done much sailing together as a team we felt that we were fit for the race and that the boat was sturdy enough to go the distance without difficulty.

## History of success

BOBBY SHAFTO is a Sparkman and Stephens half tonner launched in 1974 as COTTON BLOSSOM IV for Auckland Peter Spencer. She won the NZ Half Ton Cup in 1976 and since moving to Wellington in that year had been sailed very successfully first by Hugh Poole and then by Dave Lackey. She is 31 feet overall, and while only 22ft 9in on the waterline, has been well sorted out over the years and we felt that her good performance on most points of sailing (dead flat running in strong winds excluded!!!) could see her well placed in Division III.

As the race is a handicap event to cater for the diverse range of yachts entered, we hoped that a TCF (Time Correction Factor) appropriate to the boat's age and design would keep us competitive. As it transpired, however, the TCF given us by the NYC was identical to our PHRF — as was the eventual winner's, MAGIC DRAGON, a Farr 39. Other boats' TCFs differed from that of their respective PHRFs to a greater or lesser degree.

## by Grant Scoones

Without dwelling on the temperamental nature of the weather, suffice to say that our voyage to Auckland up the East Coast was memorable in some respects and entirely forgettable in others. Forgettable were the two days of windward work up the Wairarapa coast into a 30-40 knot nor'easter and largish seas, the 24 hours spent in sea mist navigating entirely on dead reckoning around Portland Island and Mahia Peninsula (using the depth sounder and reading the chart in metres when in fact the silly thing was charted in fathoms!!!), the nauseating smell of diesel resulting from a cracked injection line, and not to be missed, the broken main boom off East Cape and slow progress to Auckland under trys'l, No. 1 genoa and Volvo Penta.

The good bits include a brilliant day's running before a moderate southerly from Gisborne to East Cape, making 10-12 knots under spinnaker, and the arrival in Auckland.

## The Devonport dock

After a week lazing around Westhaven marina and sweating over the availability of a new boom we eventually motored line astern into the dock at Devonport Naval Base to join the 33 other race entrants for our compulsory three-day internment and safety inspections, engine checks, liferaft drills, and the main race briefing at the NYC. Although conditions in the dock were very hot and humid, this time was well spent getting to know the opposition, the organisation behind the race, and not the least, the excellent value provided by the counter lunches and bistro meals at the local pub to which we all adjourned each evening.

## The start

While not up to the huge crowds farewelling the Whitbread fleet the previous day, a large group of wellwishers was in evidence on the Devonport wharf as we tacked back and forth in preparation for the

start at 1400 hours. The awesome sight of the Davidson 55 STARLIGHT EXPRESS charging back and forth at the line with two miniscule-looking crew on board (apologies to Ian Treleven and Pat Costello, but they did look only just in control of their beast at times!) made us wary of attempting too "gung ho" a start.

Conceding that many of the larger entrants would probably have passed us by the time we reached North Head even if we had crossed the line first, we chose to lurk about closer inshore by the wharf.

With the start programmed for high water slack tide, we hoped to be clear of Tiri Island by nightfall, but the large black rain squalls moving on to the city from the north put paid to that, and by late afternoon we were becalmed just to the north of Rangitoto Light and facing the distinct possibility of making an unscheduled landfall. A blustery noreaster had swept the fleet out round North Head but died shortly after, and in the company of several other yachts we wallowed helplessly awaiting the arrival of the wind.

As luck would have it, a light northerly returned (with rain) and we crept painfully up the East Coast Bays towards Whangaparaoa Peninsula, eventually clearing Tiri Passage by 0200 hours the following morning. Pushed along by a freshening breeze which had boxed the compass but finally settled on a souwesterly direction of no more than 10 knots, the Log entries for the first 16 hours spoke of rain, rain, rain, and more rain, with the rather damp start to the race finally clearing the following morning.

### Little wind

Dawn found us just south of the Hen and Chicken group with several sails in sight and the Chico 30 CHO CHO SAN just inshore and astern of us. The sight of the Chico encouraged us a bit as there were three of them in our division and they are generally a well-performed design with a higher handicap than BOBBY SHAFTO.

The morning radio sched put us 20 miles astern of the bigger boats but still within reach of most of Division III and some of Division II. What we needed now though was some light-to-moderate tail winds in order to do a catch up act.

All day we worked our way painfully up the Northland coast with the souwester of 5-8 knots gradually dying out during the afternoon. CHO CHO SAN remained astern of



Grant Scoones holds what is left of BOBBY SHAFTO's boom, broken off East Cape on the journey to Auckland before the start of the race. They continued under poled out headsails, trys'l and motor.

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## North Island race (cont.)

us despite a flurry of activity from her crew involving kite changes but we slowly pulled away from her. Around sunset that night a fresh offshore breeze caught us in the middle of an excellent risotto, and amidst a shower of rice and veges we hoisted the No 1 kite and creamed up the coast towards Cape Brett at 8-10 knots. The sight of several nav. lights ahead obviously making slower progress had us on our toes, and within an hour or so we were surging past Piercy Island with the Peterson 33 TOUCH WOOD close astern. By this time, nav. lights were visible all around us and even the news that STARLIGHT EXPRESS and FREDERICK had just finished the first leg at Manganui failed to dampen our enthusiasm.

### Becalmed

If the breeze held right through till dawn we would be clear of the Cavallis and on target for a good placing on handicap. Well, there's no such thing as a free lunch, and by dawn on the 18th we had lost our breeze and were becalmed just to the north of the Cavalli Islands and fast running out of time to make good our hopes of a well-placed finish. Inshore we could see TAILGUNNER working her way towards Berghan Point at the southern extremity of Doubtless Bay, and to the south we could make out several sails working their way up the coast.

As we watched TAILGUNNER, a large cloud build up appeared from the northwest and with it came a breeze, straight out of the bay and dead on the hooter. TAILGUNNER was only minutes from rounding Point Berghan at this stage, and within no time at all had disappeared from sight on a fast reach to the finish line. With a good 8 miles to go we knuckled down to the job of working the boat inshore, and by mid-morning had entered the bay and were engaged in a tacking duel with AURIGA, another Chico 30, eventually finishing four minutes astern of her at 1259.

Behind us and still to finish were TOUCHWOOD, CHO CHO SAN, ROLIG (Pacific 38), CERRAWAY (Nova 28) and RAGTIMER (Robertson 42). TAILGUNNER had finished 80 minutes ahead of us and HOT GOSSIP and CHICANE five and four hours ahead of us respectively.

After crossing the line we downed the sails and motored into the beautiful little fishing port of Manganui to join the other yachts and enjoy the excellent hospitality of the Manganui Yacht Club.

### Manganui — Ship Cove (500 NM)

The 500-mile leg to Ship Cove in Queen Charlotte Sound was to prove a fast one for most of the fleet, the only exception being CERRAWAY. The little Nova 28 was lagging so far behind after the end of leg one that she missed the favourable tail winds that boosted us down the west coast and was eventually to withdraw from the race after lying becalmed off the Northland coast, hopelessly out of contention. CERRAWAY's withdrawal was to highlight the dramatic change of emphasis in the race from the predominantly cruising designs of previous years to lighter, larger, and faster more racing-oriented designs of this year's entries.

The strong northerlies that filled in after most of us had cleared Cape Reinga provided some exhilarating sailing, even for dumpy little short-ended IOR yachts like BOBBY SHAFTO. The highest average speed for the leg was recorded by STARLIGHT EXPRESS at 8.84 knots and the slowest, the Chico 30 CHO CHO SAN, at 5.88 knots.

Perhaps the most outstanding performance for this leg was recorded by the Farr 9.2 HOT GOSSIP sailed by boat builder Grant Mitchell and sailmaker Nick Willetts. They averaged an incredible 7.08 knots for the 500 miles distance all on a theoretical maximum hull speed of just over 6 knots!

Southern yachts also clocked up some respectable speeds as witnessed by the following average speeds:

FREDERICK	7.79
NOT GUILTY	7.65
RESULT	7.30
INNOVATOR II	6.39
BOBBY SHAFTO	6.08
SYRAH	6.06

Our duel with TAILGUNNER was developing well by this stage and having sighted her only once further up the coast it was no surprise to us when she hove into view only a mile or so behind us as we struggled to reach Cape Jackson in flukey winds. TAILGUNNER clos-

ed to within a few hundred metres of us under spinnaker while we were becalmed, but a nasty wind shift and some hefty gusts off the coast caught them out and we charged off along the coast (by now under flanker), broad reaching in a good 30 knots of steady air and logging a constant 10 knots in flat seas. Spinnaker cracking and flapping wildly, TAILGUNNER fast disappeared astern and fell out of sight completely as we popped like a cork between Cape Jackson and the light (no sweat!!) and reached up Queen Charlotte Sound to the finish off Motuora Island.

TAILGUNNER finished some 22 minutes astern of us after declining the passage inside the light and coming very close to rediscovering the exact site of Walker Rock. More than a little unnerved, Ross and Ian (TG's crew) meandered up the Sound with us in the dark toasting their safe arrival and swearing never, never to come this way again (a promise forgotten the next day!)

The parties were in full swing at the Picton wharf when we arrived, but the long haul and a few beers got the better of us and we soon crashed out for some much-needed kip.

### Ship Cove—Napier (228 NM)

A southerly storm warning for the Cook Strait area delayed our mass start by 24 hours and although the so-called "storm" turned out to be a fizzer we were not overly disappointed and enjoyed an excellent barbecue of lamb a la Shanks and mussels a la Gair at Graeme Moore's house in Hitaua Bay before

**Craig Jones  
does it a lot ...**



## North Island race (cont.)

joining the rest of the fleet at the head of Queen Charlotte Sound for the start on February 26. The forecast for the day was moderate norwesters but by mid-morning a gale warning had been issued. By this time, however, the fleet was rounding Cape Koamaru and hoisting kites for the run down through Cook Strait. Near the tail of the fleet approaching the Brothers, we were having to run by the lee to clear the southern island in the group, and in 30-plus knots, life was proving a bit of a trial. Stretched out ahead of us across towards Terawhiti we could see the rest of the yachts in line astern gyrating wildly in the flat running conditions.

As the wind rose, so the rolling increased, and by half way across the ditch we decided temporarily to con-

cede defeat to the conditions and dropped our kite (losing a second sheet and snap shackle in the process), poling out a genoa until we were clear of the Rip.

Behind us the ketch RAGTIMER was putting on quite a show. Having "wine-glassed" her kite at the Brothers, her crew, Dave and Sue Keruse, had chosen to leave the whole mess and it wasn't until just off Cape Terawhiti that Dave was able to clear the sail by going aloft. With the kite flying cleanly, RAGTIMER made a magnificent sight as she surfed past us to leeward, but her progress was short lived for she soon broached and lay like a stranded whale on her side while Dave attempted to douse the kite and regain control.

With gusts of up to 50 knots off the Karori coast we were soon

abeam the airport and with wistful glances at the entrance to Wellington Harbour I entered our first complete circumnavigation in the log.

Slightly ahead of us and further out to sea we watched TAILGUNNER round up and lie shuddering from the whiplash of her kite which was flying way out to leeward at the end of both sheets and halyard. The wind off Baring and Turakirae Heads was by now blowing a steady 40-plus knots with gusts in excess of 50 and we could see several knockdowns in progress amongst the boats ahead. Our conservative sail plan seemed OK to us, and it wasn't until half way across Palliser Bay that we dug out the flanker and completed the run to Cape Palliser in 14 knot surfing bursts, taking a lot of time out of TAILGUNNER in the process.

Rock hopping amongst the cray pots around Cape Palliser, our decision to stay close inshore soon paid off, and by White Rocks we had drawn level with several other yachts who had stood further offshore and now lay becalmed in the extended wind shadow of the Cape. With the willy willies gusting down off the coastal hills we were soon tight reaching up the Wairarapa Coast under reduced sail and made good progress right through the night in winds ranging from 15-40 knots.

### Slow finish

By the radio sched the following morning we were just south of Cape Turnagain, but with the wind moderating fast the prospect of a slow finish seemed inevitable. Through the day we remained close inshore where a light breeze seemed to favour us until we finally fell becalmed in the company of TAILGUNNER, ROLIG, TOUCHWOOD and CHO CHO SAN close to Bare Island just 15 miles south of Cape Kidnappers.

The evening radio sched gave us some hope when it became apparent that the rest of the fleet were in similar conditions and it seemed we could still achieve a good handicap result.

Around 2200 that evening, ripples across the millpond calm sea heralded the arrival of a southerly, albeit a light southerly, and hoisting a spinaker we soon began closing in on the nav. lights ahead although the Kidnappers light was nowhere to be seen. As luck would have it, the light on Cape Kidnappers had conveniently decided to go on strike

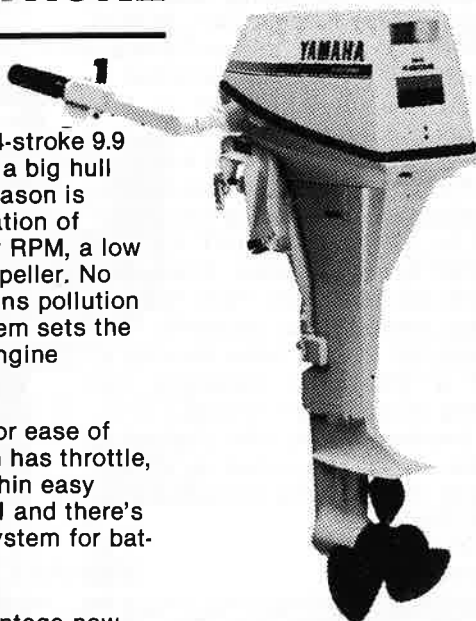
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that night, resulting in some disorientation for yachts unfamiliar with the coast. Taking advantage of the indecision ahead we crept in close to Cape Kidnappers and reached across Hawke Bay to the finish well to weather of several other yachts who had stood further on to the north in their search for the elusive Kidnappers Light.

We eventually finished the third leg at 0535 hours on February 28 in the company of AURIGA, KIRSTEN 3, RAGTIMER and TOUCHWOOD, and only an hour or so behind some of the Division II boats.

## Napier—Auckland (375 NM)

The two day stop at Napier initially seemed excessive, particularly after the three days at Picton, but as it transpired the hospitality and generosity of the Napier Sailing Club was a pleasure not to be missed or shortened in any way, and it was generally agreed by crews that as a port of call, Napier was out on its own.

On arrival each yacht was presented with a gift pack consisting of wine, fruit, fags and sundry other items much appreciated by us all. Moored bow to the wharf right alongside the Clubhouse we enjoyed two days of hot showers, hot food (both through the Club and through the bistro meals at the nearby Ahuriri Tavern), and a level of hospitality, interest, and co-operation from the locals that left only good memories.

Having visited Napier SC on several occasions now I am at a loss to understand why this delightful spot is so often overlooked as a destination for coastal yacht races. As far as facilities are concerned it far surpasses those offered by yacht clubs at Gisborne, Nelson and Christchurch, and the location of the Clubhouse and availability of moorings allows for on-shore facilities and short-term berthage for visiting yachts when bad weather prevents the sail home.

Restarting just before dawn on March 2 we ran across Hawke Bay in a strengthening southerly, blew out our light No 1 spinnaker approaching Portland Island, and under heavy No 1 kite rounded Mahia, avoided Bull Rocks, and set heading for East Cape in a 30 knot southerly and steep seas.

With TAILGUNNER tucked in astern of us we decided to sacrifice a bit of speed in the interests of sanity and clean underwear when a sus-

tained surf of 16 knots on a precipitous wave brought our bow wave back to cockpit level! (Even under reduced sail we were still surfing regularly at 10-12 knots.)

Gybing over to port abeam of Table Cape we ran up the coast on a course that would take us inside Aerial Bank off Gisborne, and permit a faster point of sail with the wind over the quarter than the rather uncomfortable, roly poly flat-off run direct to East Cape.

By that evening we had gybed again off Tolaga Bay and were running neck and neck with TAILGUNNER in a light southerly with several other Division II and III boats visible to the north.

By midnight we lay becalmed with the loom of East Cape light clearly visible. Inshore of us lay RAGTIMER and INNOVATOR II. TAILGUNNER was further out to sea.

Around 0100 we could make out some movement on the water around us and it wasn't long before we were bowling along in a 15 knot westerly, two-sail reaching for East Cape.

## East Cape

We rounded East Cape before dawn and sunrise found us close to TAILGUNNER and the Lotus 9.2 (with a Lotus 10.6 rig!) KIRSTEN 3 just off Hicks Bay with the now moderate norwester kicking up a short, uncomfortable sea.

Our next turning point was Cape Colville at the tip of the Coromandel Peninsula and that, dear friends, was the direction from which the wind was blowing.

For the next 24 hours we sailed close hauled into the Bay of Plenty without sighting another yacht, and it was only after emerging from a front that had met us halfway across the Bay that we once again regained contact with our friends on TAILGUNNER. Opting for the inshore route up the Coromandel Coast we sailed through the "Hole in the Wall" between the Mercuries and the mainland only to discover after making this passage that we'd chosen the wrong "hole" and had in fact sailed through a more direct but more hazardous route.

Behind us we could identify KIRSTEN 3 clawing to windward to make the safe passage through the wall, and I wondered at the time how they felt about our little act. Our "tactical" decision had however given us a good break, and with eased sheets we chewed up the

miles to Cape Colville, eventually rounding inside Channel Island about midnight and setting course for Auckland, which could be identified by the loom in the distance.

By now the wind had backed to the south and strengthened, and we were able to lay a course direct across the Firth of Thames and into Motuihi Passage while many of the other yachts chose to take the northern route around The Noises and into Auckland via Rangitoto Channel.

## Seconds ahead

With North Head only half a mile away we could make out a set of nav. lights working up through Rangitoto Channel, and as we converged it came as no surprise to find our old rival TAILGUNNER once again at close quarters. Sailing with more apparent wind she eventually beat us around North Head and finished only seconds ahead of us. We finished at about 6am on March 5, completing the race in a total elapsed time of 245 hours 12 minutes and 36 seconds. TAILGUNNER's elapsed time was 245 hours 34 minutes and 30 seconds.

While we were pleased with our overall placing of 8th it was the Farr 38 MAGIC DRAGON which took the prize of first overall, first in class, and third across the line beating previous line-honours winner ARETHUSA, finishing only 11 hours behind line-honours winner STARLIGHT EXPRESS and beating two Ross 40s in the process. In my opinion the efforts of John Bethell and Warwick (Gearbox) Gair were justly rewarded and a credit to their sailing abilities, stamina, and not the least, the preparation of their yacht.

## Final results

**Overall:** 1. MAGIC DRAGON, 2. HOT GOSSIP, 3. CHICANE.

**Div I:** 1. MAGIC DRAGON, 2. FREDERICK, 3. ARETHUSA.

**Div II:** 1. KITENGA, 2. HERO, 3. BEAU (Young 88).

**Div III:** 1. HOT GOSSIP, 2. CHICANE, 3. BOBBY SHAFTO.

## Southern yachts

<b>Overall:</b>	
FREDERICK	5th
BOBBY SHAFTO	8th
RESULT	13th
NOT GUILTY	20th
INNOVATOR II	29th
SYRAH	32nd



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# Farewell to the Whitbread fleet

by Norah Stagg

JOINING the many Wellingtonians full of Whitbread fever, we headed by road for the shores of Auckland to watch the start of the third leg.

Our driver, with the frustrations of a non-sailing season at the helm of WHISPERS II to suppress, rapidly flagged the miles astern as we headed for Taupo, our arranged stopover. A pleasurable time was spent fishing on the lake, for those often-elusive trout gave their obliging attention to our lines and sent us happily on our way next day as they iced up awaiting our return.

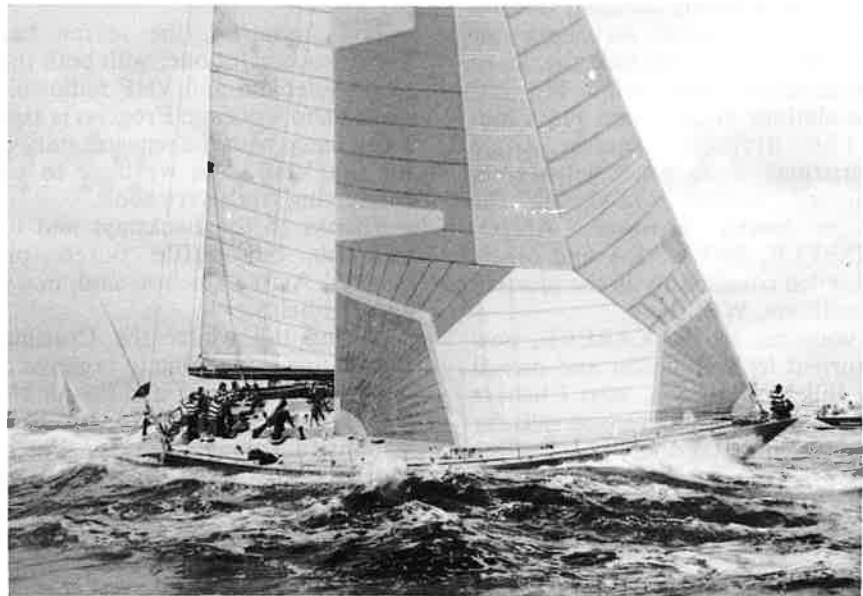
Our journey onward was uneventful, barring one mishap when I overlooked the necessity to check the sign "Ladies/Gentlemen" at a comfort stop. I was informed that my rapid exit was nothing compared to that of a little old gentleman who rushed out behind me in some apparent confusion and shock — this related to me of course through tears of mirth.

However, my old friends of Muritai yachting heydays, Elaine and Bert Christensen, welcomed and consoled me. Bert and Elaine now live in Takapuna and sail in the Auckland "big time" in a 12.34 metre yacht designed and built by Don Senior, and this was to take us on to the harbour the following day together with 30 other eager passengers to observe the Whitbread fleet's departure.

What an occasion this was! More than 20 helicopters roared above, and every conceivable type of water craft crammed with sightseers and well-wishers was afloat, intent on giving the racing fleet a massive and glorious farewell.

## After-start function

The day was finally capped for me by attending the "after start function" at the Squadron in the evening. Overseas officials, local Whitbread Committee, key helpers and all their wives, together with representatives from the council and Harbour Board were present. Champagne glasses tinkled appropriately as the spirit of the occasion warranted, followed by an abundant buffet dinner, at the centre of which was an elaborate garnished and glazed smoked salmon.



**LION NEW ZEALAND** powers through the choppy water churned up by the huge spectator fleet out to farewell the competitors at the start of the third leg of the Whitbread race.

This glaze, however, is open to question as a happy hazy glaze was becoming apparent on all the gathering.

Speeches by Rear Admiral Charles Williams, Chairman of the Whitbread Round The World Race, representing the Royal Naval Sailing Association with headquarters in

Portsmouth, UK, Jack Alison, Commodore of the RNZYS and chairman of the local Whitbread Committee, and Dame Cath Tizard were heard and applauded.

It was altogether an occasion to be long remembered, and rounded off a memorable journey with yachting distinction.

## Other members are watching it ...



# Cruising Captain

WHAT I don't like about the Pub-to-Pub race is that it heralds the end of yet another racing season. Apart from that sobering thought, all went well on the occasion. As usual we all enjoyed this relaxed race thanks to the excellent organisation. My congratulations to the Evans Bay Club.

The division racing since Christmas has been mostly in blustery weather, favouring the larger boats; however, AMIO, GISELLE, SHEMARA and others all sailed consistently in the blustery conditions. Well done.

Welcome to WAKARERE, now returned to Wellington and owned by Bill McCullough, who I believe wants to swap some Nelson sails for some Wellington ones.

## Business Houses race

The General Finance Business Houses Race, held on Wednesday, February 19, was blessed with another of Wellington's 25-knot-plus norwesters which contributed to an exciting day's racing thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated and especially by the ZMFM crazy radio team on OMEGA. It was unfortunate that some of the faster yachts were away from Wellington and were thus unable to take part. However, the day netted the tidy sum of \$1500 for the Youth Yachting Assistance Fund, and our thanks go to General Finance for this excellent gesture, and of course to the skippers who made their yachts available. The Rotary Celebrity Race was held on Sunday, March 3 — another windy northerly day! A shortage of entering boats meant that a reschedule of passengers was necessary, and that most of the entrants would have to sail the course twice to give all the visitors a ride. The Rotarians, their students, and their under-privileged charges received the thrill of a lifetime, and participating skippers also enjoyed the occasion.

The Veterans' Invitation Race was rescheduled from the original date in February to Sunday, April 6, having been cancelled due to lack of entries. Unfortunately the day was again marred by a northerly buster and we had plenty of withdrawals by both yachts and veterans. (Who could blame them?) A new system of drawing for boats added an air of anticipation to the allocation of

veteran skippers, proving to be more popular than the old method, and the day turned out to be a total success.

To summarise, the season has been a successful one, with both the single sideband and VHF radios installed and working. Progress is also being made with the repeater station for the VHF, and we hope to be conducting trials very soon.

Thanks to the Backstays and to all who buy raffle tickets on Fridays. As the Duchess said, every little bit helps.

During the winter the Cruising Committee is planning to organise a few evening lectures, and has an offer from RFD Liferrafts to demonstrate their products. Watch your notice board — we will keep you posted.

COLIN H. BAYLIS



AFTER such a marvellous summer, the end of the sailing season has come all too soon. With the increasing numbers of Backstays taking an active part in the sailing, we wonder if our original purpose might be showing a result. At the same time, there has been a significant lack of volunteers available to man (or is it "woman", or perhaps "person"?) the toasted sandwich roster, with the result that this service has been noticeably lacking since Christmas. However, do not despair! Discussions are currently taking place between management and a caterer, and we hope to be in business again next season.

Club Week again provided the opportunity for a Ladies' Lunch, regrettably poorly patronised and therefore run at a loss. Nevertheless, those who did attend enjoyed a very good meal, and were entertained by Kay Paget's anecdotes from an all-woman yacht charter in Queen Charlotte Sound during the

## Thrills and spills



102 starters, from wind surfers to the largest keelers, left the Clyde Quay end in this year's Pub-to-Pub race. As usual, the difficulty of transferring runners from the Passenger Terminal wharf to the waiting yachts led to some death-defying manoeuvres.

## The backstays

Christmas holidays. Kay also told us about her invitation to attend the launching of the SPIRIT OF NEW ZEALAND in Auckland, and of the aims and aspirations of the Trust.

Our first off-season event was to have been held on May 17, but was moved forward to May 24 to coincide with Prize Giving Day. Members were entertained by the Bill West Jazz Band, whom many remembered from one of our earlier dances a few years ago. Their music is both good to listen to and to dance to, and a great crowd turned up.

Plans are being made for an evening hosted by Roger Carter, who is a past master at the art of rope work. We look forward to learning the basic nautical knots and some of the intricacies of macrame, or square knotting as it is more correctly named.

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