

Dinghy Derby Day

The annual Dinghy Derby was conducted after the Reception for New Members on 21 September. The two hundred spectators on the Quarterdeck, the lawns and the balcony urged on 24 entrants in the Senior Derby and nine Juniors. The course contained a tight chicane which had to be negotiated just before the final turning mark at the eastern end of Squadron Straits. Many mishaps and changes of place occurred at the turning marks, provoking cheers and laughter. It was pleasing to see strong contingents of ladies in both divisions. Strong opposition was provided by members of the Trailer Sailer Association, who were enjoying the hospitality of the Squadron. They were quick to accept the invitation to join in the fun and frivolity.

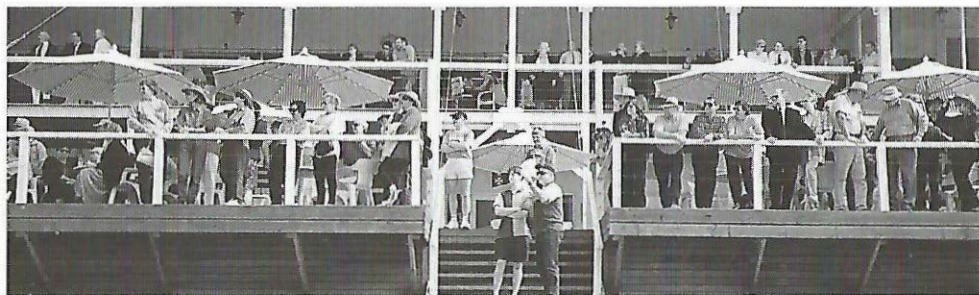
The 1996 winner was Treasurer David Harris, who was on hand to defend his title, and defend it he did! David won two heats, despite some keen and formidable opposition, while at the other end of the draw David Rawnsley and Jane Harris worked their way through their heats to provide competition for the final.

The Senior final looked to be a runaway result for the Treasurer, but it was not to be. He had no help from his wife, who catapulted into No 5 dinghy as the defending champion was negotiating the chicane and promptly set about grabbing his oars. 'If I can't win this race, I'm going to make sure you don't either!' (No protests allowed.) This tactic allowed David Rawnsley, who had rowed consistently all day, to slip through and take the lead. He was never headed.

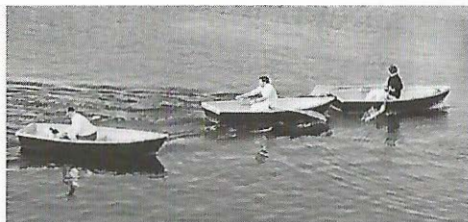
In consolation, Jessica Harris was the outstanding Junior, and comfortably won that final.

Senior winners were presented with Yalumba Vintage Racehorse Series Port, and the Junior received a Squadron V-neck pullover.

There were many thrills and spills; collisions and lost oars were common place. Spectators were kept amused and were quick to offer both advice and enthusiastic applause. The success of the event will keep it on the calendar next year, and we urge more Members to come down for the fun, both as participants and spectators. It was a great afternoon! SQ



Eager spectators watching...



Jane Harris leading two Davids...



Until Jane seizes an oar from David Harris and David Rawnsley slips through. (RSAYS)

Just Jane in the Pacific

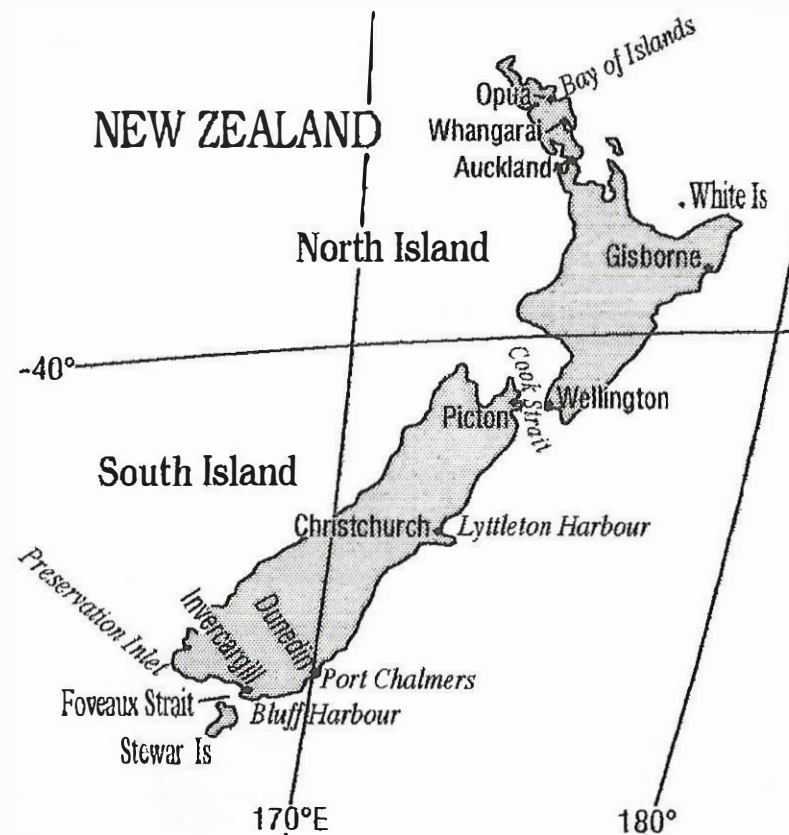
Jo Capel

Just Jane departed from Preservation Inlet at the SW corner of the South Island of New Zealand, and we had an easy sail of 90 nm through Foveaux Strait back to Bluff Harbour. As we rounded Pusegar Point, we heard a voice on the VHF say, 'I've hit the rocks at Breaksea!' [See Jo's map in the last issue — Ed.]

The guy didn't need to give the name of his trawler or any other information. Immediately, one after another, four trawlers answered, 'OK, Fluff, we're coming.' The radio network at the S end of New Zealand is incredible. The fishermen all have unusual names or nicknames, and they know all the trawlers and where everyone is. For the next few hours we

listened to these guys helping Fluff and his trawler get off Breaksea Rocks, on the outskirts of one of the fiords.

Back in Bluff we badly needed stores, and took a bus to Invercargill, as the only small supermarket was terribly expensive. Our next priority was to repair the forestay, as we had noticed that a couple of strands were broken and we had nursed the rig with a staysail and double-reefed mainsail all the way back from Fiordland to Bluff. This seemed too remote to provide a replacement, so we decided to continue to nurse the rig until we reached Christchurch, and sailed to Stewart Island for a few days to await a favourable wind.



Stewart Island is about 22 nm S of Bluff Harbour. It is a large island, where the main economic activity is commercial fishing, including salmon farming in one of the bays. Whilst doing what we now were good at, namely waiting patiently for the weather to be favourable, we heard on the radio that *Iniquity* had activated her EPIRB. Eventually we were informed by the excellent radio network that an injured crew member was lifted off by chopper and she was heading back to Bluff for repairs, so we sailed there to catch up with her.

In Bluff our Tim decided to go to the local school, and we decided to replace the forestay, which turned out to be a lot easier than we thought it would be. Arnold faxed a detailed drawing of the forestay to a sparmaker in Auckland, and after a few phone calls, two days later a courier delivered the new one to the wharf. Meanwhile, Tim rode his bike to school each day and brought local kids to the boat. On the second day Tim and his teacher came at lunch time. Arnold and I thought that he was in some sort of trouble (not unusual for Tim) and had been asked to leave. School at Bluff was very laid back, so we chatted over coffee until Tim suggested it was time to go back to school.

We left Bluff Harbour for Port Chalmers on the east coast of South Island. As usual, regardless of the forecast, the wind was easterly in Foveaux Strait, so we again went to Stewart Island to wait. We anchored in Halfmoon Bay, which is a fantastic place.

A couple of days later, after sailing for 24 hours we entered Otago Harbour, passing fairly close to Tairoa Head with its Royal Albatross breeding colony, the only one of its kind on a mainland anywhere in the world. We stayed the night in Port Chalmers, a very picturesque place. The next day it rained, so instead of leaving we motored up the river to the Otago Yacht Club at Dunedin. This is a very shallow place, so after talking to them on VHF, we lined up the appropriate white triangles and scraped over the mud at high tide in about six feet of water to tie up to the pontoon. Dunedin was within walking distance and we were made to feel very welcome. The Commodore was fantastic! He spent some time telling us of the wonderful

experience being enjoyed by his 17 year-old son, and he visited Brett, the crew member air-lifted from *Iniquity* while he was in hospital. Much to our regret, we sadly heard at Whangerei that his son was lost at sea from the yacht *Queen Charlotte*, which was caught in a cyclone off Fiji and went down with no survivors.

A Dutch and a French yacht were tied up to the pontoon with us, both with children, so Tim had great fun. While the adults had dinner on the Dutch yacht, the children made pancakes for themselves on the French yacht. It was interesting to listen to them communicating when they all spoke different languages. In the mornings the children tackled their schoolwork, then got together in the afternoons to have fun.

It was time to leave again, and as we left the river we headed into what looked like a red sea. There were masses of red krill everywhere, and we were sailing into the home of Hector dolphins and whales. We did see some pilot whales from a distance, and many Hector dolphins accompanied us to Lyttleton, the harbour of Christchurch which we reached before sunset the following day.

Since we left Bluff Harbour, sailing through the night was not your peaceful cruise up the coast. After a few minutes, when we thought we had safely avoided one tanker, another would appear on the horizon. It was difficult to determine their course just by navigation lights, as they appeared to change every few minutes. As a safety precaution, whoever was on watch would call the other one out of bed, so we could both confirm the course of the approaching vessel and scan it on radar. Consequently, Arnold and I had very little sleep on these overnight passages. Some nights were indeed quite spectacular from the blazing light shows from squid boats, which illuminated the whole horizon.

Lyttleton Harbour is a historic port and a busy place, with trawlers in and out, and also huge tankers and luxury cruise ships. We tied up between piles, with access to the yacht club's showers, toilets and laundromat. There was no charge, only a \$20 deposit for the key. Once again the people were terrific. Next to us on the yacht *Vagan* lived a New Zealand couple who

were trying to get themselves and their children used to living aboard before they took off to explore the Pacific. We hardly knew them, but they offered to lend us their car. By this time the French yacht *Nivolet* had arrived, and the two girls and Tim were keen to explore Christchurch, so we took them to the fabulous Antarctic Centre, museum and every other educational place we could find. We also took the Transalpine train to the mountains and stayed in Arthur's Pass for a couple of days. The scenery was spectacular, with great hikes to waterfalls on the many scenic trails which this area is known for.

Once again we said goodbye to *Nivolet* and set out for Picton, 180 nm away. During the night, apart from the usual problem of staying awake and avoiding ships, we experienced another interesting problem. For about two hours the latitude and longitude readings on the GPS did not change. I thought for a while our GPS had failed us, but our hand-held GPS told us there were not any satellites available. Eventually everything got back to normal and both GPSs told us accurately where we were. The only other time this happened to us was in Fiordland, and that was only for about half an hour.

Picton is in the Marlborough Sounds, entered from the E by Cook Strait and through Tory Channel. This can be tricky to locate, as it has a very narrow entrance and blends into the hillside, with a very strong tide race of up to seven knots. It is, of course, better to enter with a flooding tide, preferably with the wind behind you, which we luckily managed to do. We spent a pleasant time at Picton, tied to a wharf next to the ferry terminal. As Tim was skateboarding up and down the wharf, a film

crew happened to be there filming something else. They were from a children's daily show called *What Now?*, and wanted to do a segment to show different lifestyles children have. They spent most of the day filming Tim skateboarding, climbing the mast, doing schoolwork and talking about sailing. He had great fun in front of the cameras.

Cyclones further N were sending down some particularly nasty weather, so we stayed in Picton and the Marlborough Sounds for a couple of weeks. We finally set out for Gisborne, which is about 300 nm away, with a weather forecast telling us to expect light southerlies for the next few days, which was perfect for us. A few miles out, crossing Cook Strait 'Securité! Securité!' came on the VHF, telling us that NW winds of 30 to 40 knots were expected in the next 24 hours. We sailed into Wellington, about 15 nm behind us. Two days later we set out again, and made a fairly quick passage to Gisborne. This turned out to be a delightful place, until a local drove us nuts by visiting about 0700 every morning.

Once he found out that Arnold was an electrician, he became very keen to talk 'electrical' every morning on his way to work. He stood on the wharf above *Just Jane* and yelled out, 'Hey, Arnie!' We both cringed in our bed with the sheets over our ears, but he wouldn't go away until Arnold went outside to have the customary electrical discussion with him. He even arrived early on Saturday morning to invite Arnold to play lawn bowls on Sunday and 'bring the missus'. Arnold made the lame excuse that he didn't have appropriate white clothes and wasn't very good at ball games. However this guy was very persistent, and rolled up next morning to take us to bowls. Arnold and I hid below and

We welcome ~

Dean Bonnett
Gordon Brice
Leigh Causby
Wayne Frost

New Members

Andrew Gordon
Angela Mikan
Richard Mollison
Dianne Mollison

Jonathan Morris
Suzanne Nash
Brian Steinke
Bryan Todd

New Vessels on the Squadron Register

Allair John Jackson

Top End Paul Smith

Whai-Koa Stan Quin

threatened Tim with instant death if he breathed. Arnold's electrical friend stood on the wharf calling, 'Arnie!' for about ten minutes, until he finally gave up. Terrified that he would come back later in the day, we made the only decision possible, which was to leave, regardless of the weather forecast.

We planned to go to Auckland, over 300 nm, with a brief stop at White Island, which is an active volcano. This was fascinating, and we were enveloped in smoke and sulphurous fumes as we approached, stayed for a few hours and then moved on.

Every marina in Auckland was packed, and it was extremely difficult to get a berth. Anchoring was out of the question, as port authorities would immediately tell you to find a proper berth or else leave the vicinity. We managed to stay at Westhaven Marina for ten days, but most mornings at 0800 we were asked to move to another berth. This was the closest we could get to the city and the marina shops, and as we needed to obtain extra charts and cruising information in preparation for Tonga, we put up with the daily movement from berth to berth. It certainly gave us some practice in manoeuvring *Just Jane* in tight spots and with a critical audience.

Westhaven Marina is so big that it took up to half an hour to walk from one side to the other. Tim and I decided to use quicker modes of travel. He skateboarded while I used the roller blades I bought him one birthday when his shoe size was the same as mine. Unfortunately, the security guards (of whom there were many) did not approve of this means of travel, and continuously threatened to confiscate our board and blades. They seemed to bring out in me the rebellious nature which had lain dormant for many years, and I found myself experiencing great delight as we sped round the marina dodging these officious guards.

From Auckland we had great sailing up the E coast of the North Island to Whangarei, about 70 nm away. This was a fascinating place for us, as it was a Mecca for international cruising yachts. They go there because not only is it a pretty place, but every possible yachtie's need is within walking distance. Here we had to get ready for our next adventure, 1010 nm to Tonga. We checked our rig and gear, replaced the steering cable and stocked up with six months worth of food. From there we went to the Bay of Islands and finally Opuia, where we cleared Customs and set sail for Tonga. SQ

To be continued...



White Island Volcano, New Zealand. (Jo Capel)

Tassie and Back

John Smith

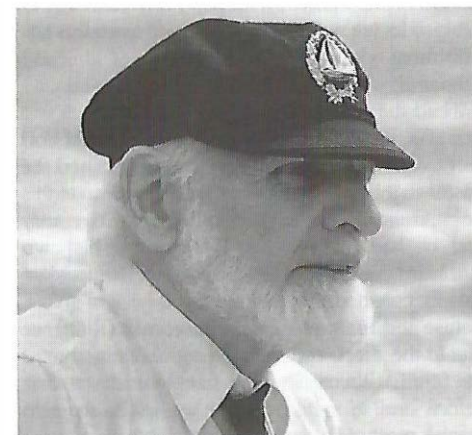
'What would you think if I said I would like to sail to Hobart and back?' This was the question I put to my wife Mavis.

Her curt and prompt reply was, 'I think you're mad!'

The project was promptly put on the back burner, with the gas firmly switched off. About two months later I cautiously broached the idea again and found an agreeable response, although Mavis would not be able to accompany me because of other commitments.

Friends asked, 'Why Hobart? Why Tasmania? It's cold down there.' They suggested I turn left at Wilson's Prom to warmer climates. This was a good question. Why indeed? It was partially my stubbornness. Most of my friends were departing on cruises to Queensland, so true to my nature I wanted to go somewhere different. Why now? This question was much easier to answer. I have been diagnosed as having Parkinson's disease. It has brought home to me that I am not getting any younger. Mavis and I concluded, if I did not go now, I may never have another opportunity. So the die was cast.

Oberon is a steel sloop/cutter [Does this mean she is what Norman Howard called a slut? — Ed.] Length 11 m, LWL 9.66 m, beam 3.05 m, draught 1.625 m, displacement 9 tonnes. She has a four-cylinder Perkins capable of transmitting 43 hp at 2,000 rpm through a two-bladed fixed propeller. I took a more serious look at her. She was perfectly seaworthy for local day sailing, but for a trip of this nature she would require extra work. For example, where was I to put over thirty charts and stow them flat? I would need lee sheets on all bunks. I wanted a chart table in the cockpit and an electric anchor winch, which subsequently required new chain, since the old chain refused to transport on the new gipsy. The echo sounder gave up, so the boat had to be slipped to fit a new one. The list went on and on. In addition to working on the boat, I spent many hours collecting charts, reading about anchorages and writing a cross-reference index of them, more general study and talking to people about the proposed trip.



It was intended that my son-in-law John Inverarity and Louise Hoffmann would accompany me to Hobart; Mavis, Louise and I would cruise Port Arthur and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel; and then Rick Holden, Louise and I would bring the boat home. We departed from the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron, with much flag waving, etc in the late evening of 24 January, 1997, and spent several days rolling about in Antechamber Bay awaiting the demise of a strong wind from the SE, before making an early morning start for Beachport.

About this time we discovered that the new anchor winch had put a spike into the electrical system, which damaged the memory of the VHF radio. I could not use some channels or contact Mavis by telephone. We were motoring much more than anticipated, and my concerns about fuel capacity were justified when the engine stopped with the fuel berth at Beachport in sight about three miles distant. Three hours later, having worked very light head winds, we neatly parked the boat alongside. I bought extra fuel tanks to stow on deck, extending our range under power to better than 200 nm.

At Portland we had our first experience of wood chipping. Great trucks driving over the top of massive mounds of wood chips kicked up a terrible dust, which permeated everything. When we departed, *Secret Men's Business* had