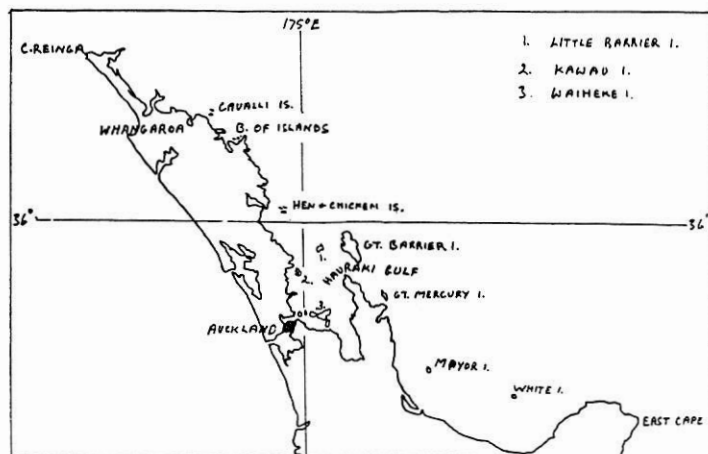


MORNING HUSTLER'S NZ CRUISE CONTINUES

In the previous edition of the newsletter I described our voyage from KI across the Tasman to Nelson, and our subsequent cruise through the Marlborough Sounds and on up to East Cape, the most easterly point of the North Island.

After rounding East Cape, the wind lightened off and by Monday morning, 8th February 85 we began motoring and continued to do so all the way to Auckland.

We stopped briefly at White Island, an active volcano in the Bay of Plenty, then motored on and spent the night at Mayor Island. Mayor Island is best known as headquarters of the Tauranga Game Fishing club and there were quite a number of boats about. We had filled one water tank in Picton and we had found only now that this water was chlorinated and almost undrinkable. So I paid a visit to the Game Fishing Club and got 25 litres of rain water - enough to last to Auckland. But it made us very careful in future to taste the water before we filled our tanks.



NORTHERN NORTH ISLAND - NZ

MORNING HUSTLER'S NZ CRUISE CONTINUES

Tuesday was warm, sunny and calm. We motored all day and at 8 pm anchored in Mercury Cove on Great Mercury Island, not far outside Hauraki Gulf. There were 17 other yachts in this lovely, almost land locked, cove. A farmhouse and buildings partially hidden amongst trees sat close to the entrance which we would not have known existed but for the very excellent cruising guide published by the Royal Akarana Yacht Club.

It was here that the owner of a large motor yacht called LANAKAI noticed our Australian ensign and hailed us. During the course of a conversation over a 100 yards of water he offered us the use of his berth in Westhaven Marina for 2 days. We had planned all along to go to Westhaven in Auckland but we were not to realise how fortuitous this meeting was until the next evening. From Great Mercury Island we had only about 60 miles to go to Auckland in the SW corner of Hauraki Gulf.

The final approach to Auckland is through the islands outside Auckland and as we motored and sailed through the southern one, Motuihe Channel, on that Wednesday afternoon, 6th February 85, the sight that confronted us was almost unbelievable. We had never seen so many yachts. It made Sydney Harbor look almost deserted! But of course there had to be an explanation. This day, apart from being a perfect sailing day on the harbor, was NZ's National Day, Waitangi Day, the day in 1840 when the Treaty was signed with the Maoris at Waitangi in the Bay of Islands. I cannot say that there were great displays of national pride but there certainly were some yachts taking advantage of the holiday and the lovely weather. In fact, the next day several people at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron said they had never seen so many yachts out on the harbor.

MORNING HUSTLER'S NZ CRUISE CONTINUES

We entered Westhaven Marina at 1900 hours and immediately found the berth offered to us by the owner of LANAKAI. Where we would have moored had we not had that offer is problematical. Westhaven moors 1400 yachts and there were 26 visiting overseas yachts occupying every other available space. In the longer term we were in Westhaven for 10 days, and we could only find a berth by enquiring at the boat yards for berths that were temporarily vacant. The Auckland Harbour Board who administers Westhaven seemed interested only in keeping us out of berths we were, in their eyes, not entitled to, rather than helping us find a vacant one.

Next morning we presented our credentials at the RNZYS and were made honorary members for the duration of our stay. That was very nice for me but less so for Ann - they have no facilities for women. But they have otherwise comfortable club rooms and a very good dining room which is open every night. The clubhouse (and several others) is built on the breakwater on the north side of Westhaven almost under the shadow of the harbor bridge, so there is always much of interest going on. If NZ is suffering economic depression, it is not evident in Westhaven!

Jack left us 2 days after we arrived in Auckland and Ann and I spent the next week making new friends, communicating with old ones (in Australia), doing jobs on MORNING HUSTLER and enjoying the club and the boating environment. We hired a car for the week and visited some of the surrounding countryside. Then on Saturday, 16th February 85, our next crew, Bill and Rosemary Seager joined us and we were ready to leave Auckland and head north.

The NZ coast from Auckland northwards to the Bay of Islands and Whangaroa, including the Hauraki Gulf and the offlying islands, constitutes a yachtsman's

MORNING HUSTLER'S NZ CRUISE CONTINUES

paradise. There are literally hundreds of sheltered lovely anchorages close enough together and providing shelter from any weather. There is the grandeur and challenge of offshore islands and the open sea, and there is the peace and seclusion of quiet sheltered covers. There are yachts and yachtsmen from around the world if you want company and human interest, but there is room for everyone if you want seclusion and quietness. The climate in our limited experience is sub tropical, mild days and nights, and the water is not cold. We all swam daily. But don't be misled, it can still turn on bad weather from time to time just as it can anywhere.

We left Auckland on Sunday 17th February 85 in threatening looking weather for Waiheke Island 10 miles or so east of Auckland in the Hauraki Gulf. It is the biggest island in the gulf being about 10 miles long, but I think it might have shrunk a little the previous night. Eight inches of rain had fallen overnight and when we went ashore on Monday morning, people were at work repairing washed out roads and driveways. We spent the day being shown around the island by Jack Hargraves and his wife Jocelyn. They live on Waiheke, as do a couple of thousand others, and keep their boat moored not from from their house. But their life is boats. Jack has sailed twice round the world and when we were there he was about to deliver a yacht from Hong Kong to Australia. We spent two nights in different anchorages around Waiheke. We could easily have spent a week or two but we had to move on; we had only a week to get to the Bay of Islands.

So we did a kind of Cook's Tour up the coast stopping overnight and for lunch each day in a different anchorage. After Waiheke it was Kawau Island, also within a day's sail of Auckland - also having a number of lovely land locked anchorages. We spent the night in Mansion House Bay, so called because of the one

MORNING HUSTLER'S NZ CRUISE CONTINUES

time NZ Governor, Sir George Grey's residence, built there and now administered by the National Trust.

We were having some difficulty in deciding on our next anchorage but our minds were made up for us by people on another yacht who said we must visit Great Barrier Island. So we sailed the 25 or so miles to Great Barrier Island, passing close to Little Barrier on the way. Great Barrier stands at the entrance to Hauraki Gulf, hence its name and is about 20 miles long. It rises to about 2000 feet, and its western shore is much indented forming many sheltered anchorages. It is described in the cruising guide as "a yachtsman's paradise", and to do it justice would require much more than the overnight stay we gave it. We entered land locked and expansive Fitzroy Harbor through the southern Man o' War Passage and spent the night in Port Abercrombie on the north side.

The weather continued fine and warm with pleasant north east to northerly breezes. Over the next 2 days we visited Lady Alice Island in the Hen and Chicken group, Tutakaka Harbour, Mimiwhangata Bay in Whangaruru Harbor and finally on Friday 22nd February 85 we rounded Cape Brett, passing between that spectacular headland and Piercy Island and anchored in Deep-water Cove in the Bay of Islands.

To be continued.