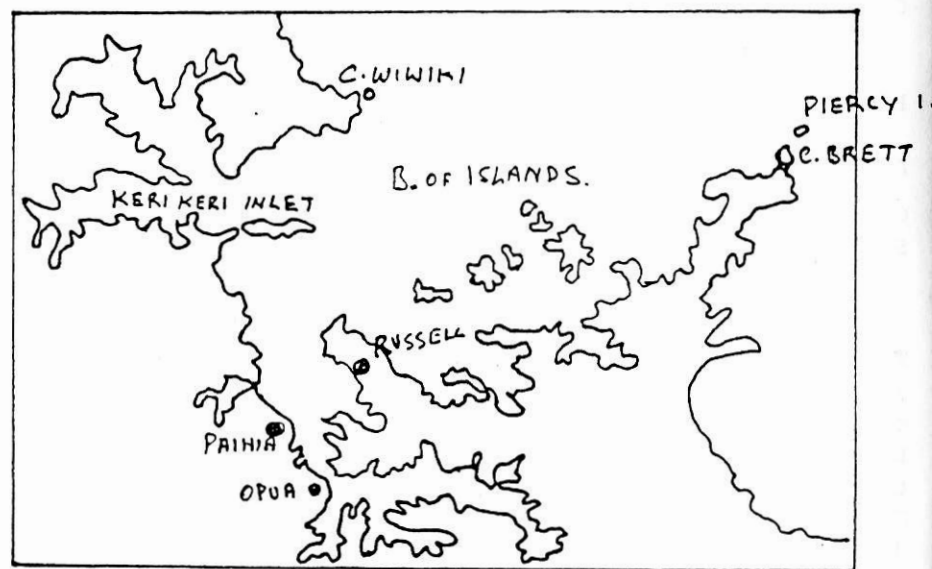


MORNING HUSTLER'S NZ CRUISE CONTINUES

In the last 2 editions of the newsletter I described our trip across to NZ, through the Marlborough Sounds, up the east coast of North Island to Auckland, and then on to the Bay of Islands.

Bay of Islands lies between Cape Brett in the east and Cape Wiwiki 10 miles to the northwest. Opuā, in the SW corner of the bay, lies 10 miles south of Cape Wiwiki at the entrance to Waikere Inlet. Keri Keri Inlet runs 4 miles or so westward from the NW corner of the bay. Of Bay of Island, the Cruising Handbook says "with its multiplicity of islands and sheltered anchorages married to a temperate climate it must surely rank as the finest cruising water in NZ".

We had 2 appointments to keep in Bay of Islands. The first was to meet my cousin Susie Carr who was arriving at Paihia from London on Sunday morning 24th February 85. The second was a rendezvous the next day in Waipiro Bay with Colin and Barbara, friends we made in Auckland on the yacht JOCASTA. So we left early on Saturday



THE BAY OF ISLANDS

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morning for Russell to do some reprovisioning before the shops might shut. We need not have worried - they don't.

Russell is set on a peninsula on the south side of Bay of Islands and is relatively inaccessible by road, but a regular ferry service connects it with Paihia a couple of miles south west across Veronica Channel. There were said to be about 150 overseas yachts in Bay of Island this summer, mostly waiting for the end of the cyclone season in the South Pacific. Many of them were anchored in Matauwhi Bay, adjoining Russell, and their presence makes Russell a cosmopolitan and fascinating place to be. We did our shopping - it took a long time. There is no hurry in Russell and there were interesting people to meet. Over the next few days we developed a saying "Bay of Islands time...".

When I am cruising I generally do not like ports or places crowded with other yachts and tourists, and I am generally anxious to move on and explore new territory - maybe that is why we cruised to NZ in the first place. I expected Bay of Islands to be over rated, tourist oriented and spoiled, but I was wrong. In Bay of Islands and Russell I found a place where I could have stayed for a long time. I felt no urge to move on even when the time came to leave for home.

We kept our appointment with Susie from London in Paihia, and our rendezvous with JOCASTA. We moved about from one lovely anchorage to another. The weather was fine and warm, the nights were mild and the water was warm - at least by South Australian standards. Bill and Rosemary left by ferry to Paihia on Wednesday and we went searching for Eric and Susan Hiscock on WANDERER V. Susie's and my cousins in England are friends of the Hiscocks and they wanted news of them. We found WANDERER at Opuā, 3 miles or so south of Russell, and they came aboard MORNING HUSTLER for a drink.

MORNING HUSTLER'S NZ CRUISE CONTINUES

The earliest European settlements in NZ were in the Bay of Islands area. Russell was originally a whaling settlement and at Keri Keri some 4 miles up the Keri Keri River stand the oldest buildings in NZ. Yachts can make the passage up to Keri Keri if they go up with the tide. There is a range of 2-3 metres here as there is at most of the places we visited.

Arthur Carolan, President of the CYC of SA, had suggested we call on Alan Warwick - a marine architect who lives in Doves Bay at the entrance to Keri Keri Inlet. We received the most hospitable welcome and he showed us over his most artistic and innovative house designed and built by himself on a headland overlooking the inlet. It incorporates his design loft in a tower above a workshop in which he is building a 50 foot yacht for his own use.

We were anchored just below Alan's house and next day when the tide suited, motored the 4 miles up the Keri Keri River. There were yachts moored at various points up the river, including many overseas ones and at the head of the navigable part in front of the famous Stone Store lay a large Dutch yacht painted in brilliant orange, red and blue! The Stone Store was built in 1830 and is the oldest solid building in NZ. It is still in use as a store and houses a museum in its upper storey.

Just after we had anchored in front of the Store a man came off in a dinghy and to our surprise enquired "Aren't you from Kangaroo Island?" He turned out to be the owner of another S&S 34 called KIRIWINA. He had met us very briefly on the jetty in Port Lincoln in February 1981 when he and his wife were on a cruise from Perth that was to take them eventually to NZ and the Bay of Islands. They liked the place so much that they are still there running a youth hostel at Keri Keri. His is Ross Ewans.

Our time was running out but we wanted to visit Whangaroa

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Harbor, some 30 miles north of Bay of Islands. We made a quick passage there and back over the 5th to 7th March 85, spending one night in Whangaroa, and one night each on the way up and the way back at the islands of the Cavalli Passage. Whangaroa is a landlocked harbor with a very narrow inconspicuous entrance (Cook missed it altogether!). It runs back for 5 or 6 miles and has some lovely coves including the fiord like Rere Bay. We spent most of our day there admiring the vertical walls and pillars of rock and being amused by a very tame and very ugly domestic duck which followed us about wherever we went.

Susie had to leave for Auckland and Sydney on 8th March 85. So on Thursday the 7th we anchored again in Russell, and early on Friday she left by ferry for Paihia. It was time for Anthea and I to think of our passage back across the Tasman.

There is no Port of Entry in Bay of Islands. The nearest is Whangarei, 50 miles further south. However, for a fee of \$50, Customs will come to Opuia and clear yachts from there. It is common for yachts wishing to clear, to club together and share the cost. We had learned that the P & O cruise ship ORIANA was to be in Russell on Tuesday, 12th March 85, and Customs would clear us on that day for no charge as they had to be there anyway. So Anthea and I had Saturday, Sunday and Monday to finally enjoy Bay of Islands and prepare to leave on Tuesday.

The weather was still lovely and we were able to visit several more places during this time. We took on fresh water at the little jetty in Te Hui Bay and visited a game fishing friend of Ann's father in Parekura Bay. She, Kura, lives alone on the site of an old Maori pa, a fortress built at the end of a narrow peninsula. Her lovely luxuriant garden hid the deep trenches cut through the peninsula to make it easier to defend against invaders.

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On Monday, 11th March 85, we reprovisioned in Russell, filled up with fuel, did the washing and prepared for sea. In the evening we watched some of the 80 game fishing launches participating in an International competition coming into the harbor. Among them was LANAKAI whose marina berth we had used in Auckland and we were able to say how much we appreciated that offer.

On Tuesday morning we moved down to Opua and tied up at the Customs berth. Clearance was quick and simple. We bought our last icecream at the store and at midday left for Devonport in Tasmania - 1500 miles away. The weather was calm and sunny so we motored. Seventeen hours and 103 miles later we were north of Cape Reinga, the northern tip of the North Island, and still motoring.

By 0900 on Wednesday, 13th March 85, we were sailing with a very light WNW breeze. Shortly afterwards, Auckland Radio forecast a front approaching from the south west with storm force S-SE winds to 55 knots in Cook Strait and the area north of it, and gale force to 45 knots in our area. They had earlier reported cyclone "Hina" 1000 miles to the north of our position. Auckland continued to broadcast storm and gale warnings throughout the day, and later when they relayed a telegram to us which said "We are thinking of you, may you and Aries have a fast and pleasant crossing, love Anne and John Hamlyn" we replied to the radio operator that we were thinking of us too! We found it somewhat ironic that we had had weeks of fine weather in NZ, and now just one day after leaving, we had the worst forecast that we had heard and that, for the whole of NZ. In addition, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane were broadcasting strong wind warnings and Hobart a gale warning!

By 2130 on Wednesday night we were hove to with a triple reefed mainsail only heading WSW. The wind was strong and fluctuating from SSW at maybe up to

MORNING HUSTLER'S NZ CRUISE CONTINUES

45 knots. We lay that way all night and listened to some very strong squalls and the occasional wave falling into the cockpit. We were quite comfortable and spent most of our time in our bunks. I ran the engine for a while to charge the batteries. We had all our navigation and deck lights switched on to make ourselves as conspicuous as possible.

In the morning of Thursday the 14th, we put on our storm jib and let draw. The boat tore off at high speed on course in a shower of spray and crashing from wave to wave! It was too much. So we took the jib off again and continued with the triple reefed main only at 4-5 knots. At mid-day we put the storm jib on again and our speed increased to 6-7 knots in a very rough sea. New Zealand radio stations all continued broadcasting storm and gale warnings, and the wind remained strong and the sea rough. Navigation was difficult and a fix impossible until Friday.

But gradually we sailed out of the worst of it and by Saturday morning we were able to set a No 4 jib, and shake out one reef - leaving two in. We had breakfast in the cockpit - "on the patio" as Ann put it. The weather was better but hardly suited to "al fresco" living. By midday we were back to full mains'l and No 4 jib. In spite of the weather we had averaged 134 miles per day so far. From then on, the weather continued to improve. The wind remained in the SE-E. We were in a high pressure system that extended from the Australian Bight across the Tasman to NZ.

On Saturday night the main halliard broke, so we furled the main and set No 2 genoa. In the morning with only a light breeze and low swell, Ann pulled me up the mast on the topping lift and we rove a new main halliard. I was glad that MORNING HUSTLER was well equipped because we had to drill out the halliard outlet box then pop rivet it back in after we had caught the new halliard from inside the mast.

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We wanted to visit Three Hummock Island on the NW corner of Tasmania on our way home. For this reason we decided to enter at Devonport so our course was shaped to pass through Bank Strait on the NE corner of Tasmania. As we travelled south westwards the wind became lighter and more nearly astern. At times we poled out the jib and with the wind aft, the Aries had difficulty maintaining a steady course. A piece of light shockcord to dampen the swing of the wind vane helped, but this is the main weakness of wind vane self steering, the inclination to do a slalom down wind.

On Thursday, 21st March 85, when our position was 39° 54'S 152° 27'E, 1235 miles from Russell, we crossed our outward bound track and completed our circumnavigation of New Zealand's North Island.

The same day we made arrangements through Mersey Radio for Customs entry on Sunday in Devonport. We expected to make our landfall north of Eddystone Point at about midnight on Friday, but Friday dawned overcast and foggy and we could get no fix that day. Very rough RDF bearings on St Helens and Flinders Island seemed to confirm our estimated position and at 10 o'clock that night, the Eddystone Light came up on the port bow where it was expected. At midnight when we were 10 miles north of the light, thick fog closed in and blotted out everything; so we hove to heading out to sea and waited for daylight.

At 0700 on Saturday, 23rd March 85, we got under way with the engine. It was calm and remained so. We motored most of the way from here to Robe! It was foggy still but we had no difficulty in finding our way through Banks Strait. We found Devonport through the fog and tied up at the Mersey Yacht Club pontoon at 0540 on Sunday, 24th March 85, 11 days 16 hours and 1538 miles from Russell, an average of about 130 miles per day. Customs cleared us at 0840 and we spent the day with minor reprovisioning, telephoning

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and lazing at the yacht club. We felt we were home already even though we still had more than 500 miles to go.

After an overnight sail (and motor) we spent Monday and Monday night at Three Hummock Island, then left on the final leg.

But it was still calm so we put into Grassy on King Island for more fuel. This resulted in a further 14 hours delay, but we eventually tied up in American River at 0745 on Saturday, 30th March 85, exactly three months after we had left. We had motored from Grassy to Robe, but the final 133 miles was a vigorous spinnaker run which we covered in a little over 19 hours.

The distances covered were:-

American River to Nelson	1945 miles (by the log)
Arrival in Nelson to departure from Russell	1397 miles
Russell to American River	2089 miles
Total	5438 miles

Time : American River to American River - 90 days.

We did 300 engine hours for the whole trip and used 103 gallons of fuel. Of this amount, 38 gallons were used between Tasmania and American River on the return voyage!

JAMIE COWELL