

PLAIN SAILING

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 1



RICHMOND
YACHT CLUB



FROM THE FLAG

BY MARK BECROFT
RYC COMMODORE

Summer is on a roll.

For part of our holiday, we cruised the Northland coast. It took two days to hop from Kawau to Whangamumu Harbour. This provided a comfortable sail in the westerly breeze. Then we cruised quietly back down the coast from one sandy bay to the next.

I have noticed many mangrove seeds washed up on the beaches in Kawau Bay recently and have come up with a plan. If we can all pick up any mangrove seeds that we see at the waterline and throw them up to well above the high tide mark, they will then dry out and die and therefore not clog our beaches and waterways with horrible trees and ever-expanding mudflats.

The year of club sailing started well. The first FNS race of 2021 had about twenty boats and fifty crew out doing the long course in a nice south-westerly breeze.

By the time you read this, we will be back into Wednesday racing and the Mahurangi Weekend Champagne Breakfast and interclub Tug'o'War will be but fond memories.

We still have a ton of sailing, with the Route 66 and Gulf Triangle at the end of this month. Have you sailed up the coast before? The Route 66 can be an amazing sail for your first coastal passage. Why not grab your crew and give it a go? Then join the crews for dinner at Kawau on the way back Saturday evening. We'll spare a thought for those hearty souls taking on the challenge of the Gulf Triangle, as they approach Great Barrier on



Saturday evening. Then a layover and back to town Sunday.

Next up, the Kawau Night Race kicks off Waitangi Weekend as part of the Westhaven Triple series. Keep an eye out. Maggie May will be out around Kawau Bay that weekend.

There is still another Cruising Rally to go and then the Haystack Race.

Wednesday evenings, Friday evenings and weekends. There's lots of sailing events for all to enjoy, whether competitive or social sailing appeals to you. Who could ask for more?

What about the America's Cup racing? Excitement and thrill! The lame duck of the World Series has transformed into a bulldog and the Americans have re-enacted the crash landing on the Hudson River. Match racing at forty knots. It's exhilarating to watch.

It's still a great time of the year for mucking about in boats. ►

THIS ISSUE

BY CHRIS CRONE
EDITOR

Welcome to the February 2021 issue of Plain Sailing: Charles Bradfield tells us about his voyage on Vingilot to NZ's sub-Antarctic islands, Steve Horner of Pepe runs us through the exciting Akarana 350 and Tony Evans reports on the recent Sir Peter Blake Memorial cruising event.

Route 66 is fast approaching. Make sure you're signed up (and maybe

consider writing a race report for May's magazine!?).

Also, a big thanks to Tony, Cory and Jeremy for their help with my on-water marriage proposal on the Friday Night Special in December - and to those who've sent me their photos of it from all angles, much appreciated.

To everyone - happy sailing, and enjoy the rest of summer! ■

JUST ANOTHER WEDNESDAY RACE

Race 7 of Richmond's Wednesday Night Series (sponsored by CRC, New World and Sailutions) gave competitors a close look at a few of the America's Cup boats. Emirates Team NZ looked very tidy as they flew along past Devonport. American Magic was also out but took a breather as our fleet sailed back from Resolution. ■



MESSAGE FROM THE MUMMERY FAMILY

Peter, Kathy & Family would like to thank everyone for their kind wishes and cards sent to us in May upon the passing of Vera Mummery (aged 96).

The Richmond Yacht Club was her second home and one of the highlights of her life.

As a Mum, Mother-in-law, Nana, Great Nana she was an inspiration to us all. ■

WELCOME



New Members

Angus Hancock & Victoria Piatov
Associate Family

Liz Norquay & Kevin Hawkins
Associate Family

Sam and Evie Standley
Associate Family

New Crew Members

Trish Coffey

Nicola Gamble

Suzanne Histen

Janine Lang

Chloe Matthews

Fabio Santos

Jane Shvarova



UPCOMING CALENDAR & EVENTS

February 2021

- 1st Auckland Anniversary Regatta
- 3rd Pot Luck Lunch
- 5th Westhaven Triple Race 2
(Kawau Night Race - RNZYS)
- 10th Wednesday Night Race 8
- 13th Single-handed Series Race 7
(BBYC)
- 14th Single-handed Series Race 8
(BBYC)
- 19th Friday Night Special Race 7
- 24th Wednesday Night Race 9
- 26th **Route 66**
& Single-handed Series Race 9
& Gulf Triangle (26th-28th)
- 27th Short-handed Series Race 3
(two-handed)

March 2021

- 3rd Pot Luck Lunch
- 12th 2-handed, 3-legged (PYBC)
- 19th Friday Night Special Race 8
- 24th Wednesday Night Race 10
- 27th Cruise Rally II

April 2021

- 10th Gulf Race (Westhaven Triple) -
Haystack &
Single-handed Series Race 10
- 17th Single-handed Series Race 11



6 REASONS TO DO THE ROUTE 66

Heard about Route 66 and wondering if it's for you?

Here are six reasons why it is!

1. Sailing instead of working

Route 66 takes place on Friday 26 February - and there's nothing quite like the feeling of crossing the start line bathed in the envious gaze of Harbour Bridge commuters stuck in Friday mid-morning traffic.



2. A great sail up

It really is a picturesque trip up, taking in sights like Tiritiri Matangi, Kawau Island, Tawharanui Peninsula, the Barrier islands, Hen and Chickens and the beaches north of Leigh.

3. Good yarns at the other end

Whether you decide to raft up or pay for a berth, there will be plenty of your fellow competitors only too keen to share stories (and a rum).

4. Good brekky and prizegiving

Onerahi Yacht Club puts on an excellent breakfast in the morning up at the prizegiving marquee. It's \$10 a head, kicking off at 8am, with EFTPOS available.

Afterwards, prizegiving kicks off, with

division prizes and lots of great spot prizes too.



5. Kawau Island party on Saturday night

While some boats choose to head straight back to Auckland, many spend the Saturday night in Bon Accord harbour at Kawau Island - with dinner, drinks and banter at the Kawau Boating Club. Stay tuned for water taxi details.



6. A leisurely sail back on Sunday.

Cruise back to Auckland on Sunday, arrive back in good time and congratulate yourself on a weekend well spent. ▶



EXCEL
REFRIGERATION



GULF TRIANGLE

Single Handed Challenge

26 February 2021

New Zealand's
Longest Solo Sailing Race
of 2021

**3 Legs, 2 Layovers –
One Sailor**

Auckland to Whangarei
Whangarei to Great Barrier Island
Great Barrier Island to Auckland

To register visit:
richmondyc.org.nz



A CRUISE TO NEW ZEALAND'S SUB-ANTARCTIC ISLANDS

BY CHARLES BRADFIELD



'I think I'd like to sail to the sub-Antarctic Islands.'

'If you need crew, we'll go with you.'

This casual exchange between me and our friends Tom and Vicky Jackson led deep into the thorny garden of bureaucracy, but also nearly two years later to a fascinating cruise to a little-visited archipelago.

Statistically February and March are the most benign months for weather in the Southern Ocean south of New Zealand. On Thursday 7 February we started south by going north, heading for Cape Reinga. Surprisingly the distance from Auckland to Stewart Island, our initial destination, is little different via either the east or west coasts of New Zealand. The advantage of the west coast route is that it avoids the likelihood of a 150-mile beat from the Otago Peninsula to Stewart Island



into strong westerlies.

We had fair winds, pleasant weather and even some good tuna fishing on a fast passage south. So fast that after only six days we were off Fiordland in the south-west of the South Island and popped in for a visit to the dramatic scenery of Fiordland. The following day we paid a brief homage to James Cook, by visiting Pickersgill Harbour, where he anchored Endeavour for refit in 1793. As the forecast was favourable, we set off the same afternoon toward South West Cape, Stewart Island, one of the world's five great southern capes.

We got more than we bargained for from the northwest 25kt forecast. We had a wild ride through the night, at one point registering 19kts on the log, surfing down the face of one of the 5-6 metre waves in 50kts of wind. Fortunately when we headed up at South West Cape, we also eased under the lee of Stewart Island for an easier sail, surrounded by flocks of albatrosses, to the entrance to Port Pegasus, one of the least-visited jewels

of New Zealand cruising. We only had time for a single night and a brief hike at Evening Cove before moving on to Halfmoon Bay and metropolitan Oban (Pop ~400).

After a suitably social and very pleasant stay in Oban, visiting with old friends, we headed 25nm north across Foveaux Strait to Bluff where we collected Simon Mitchell, who through his contacts had been influential in helping me obtain our permit to visit the Auckland Islands and would serve as the honorary DOC officer.

Bluff is not a yacht-friendly port, its berthing more suited to fishing boats and the whole harbour swept by fierce tides. On Monday 24 February, we passed our DOC inspection and were delighted that the forecast was once again favourable for an immediate start on the 250nm passage south to Enderby Island, the most northern of the Auckland Islands group. This time the forecast proved correct and less than 40 hours of fast sailing later,



OVERFALLS APPROACHING ENDERBY IS.

having braved a line of a dozen huge trawlers crossing our track, we were bouncing through the heavy overfalls at the eastern end of Enderby and turning along its south coast to anchor in Sandy Bay.

Unlike the main Auckland Island, which is mountainous and has an eastern coast heavily indented with fjords, Enderby appears quite flat despite its mostly rocky, cliff-edged coastline. The bright yellow sand of the beach at Sandy Bay is a marked contrast to the rocks everywhere else. Here too are about the only signs of current human life in the whole island group. There are some small white huts above the beach which house the DOC staff and volunteers who come to the island in summer to monitor the fauna and flora as well as continuing the battle to return the islands to their original ecosystem.

Over the next three days we took turns hiking right around Enderby (the DOC regulations require you to leave sufficient crew on the vessel to pick up anchor and leave if the weather turns). This was fascinating but far from easy due to the vigorous growth of both megaherbs and tussock grass.

Though there are some fur seals, the most numerous species of the Island is the New Zealand sealion. We had arrived just after the end of the mating season, when the southern and eastern beaches would have been filled with

the combat of huge bulls protecting their harems. By March most of the sealions had retired to the grassy



slopes. Some females were teaching their pups to swim and we still saw many moving out from the beaches to feed or to play in the surf.

Our anchorage at Sandy Bay was generally well-protected from the east through north to the west. However when winds came in from the south-west it was best to move, which we did for one night to Erebus Cove further west in Port Ross. This cove and the adjoining Terror Cove were the sites of one of the attempts at a colonising settlement on Auckland Island. A small group of British settlers vainly tried to scratch a living from the challenging landscape. After only three years the attempt failed and the only sign of it now is the burial ground which DOC preserves. The graves include both settlers and some of the many mariners who lost their lives among the islands. In contrast to most of Enderby, much of the coast of Auckland Island is overgrown with thick rata forest. Even after their bright red spring



RATA FOREST COLOURS



and summer blooms have faded, the rata present a colourful mosaic when blessed with early morning sunshine.

On 2nd March we had a delightful sail south along the east coast. As we turned the corner at Cape Farr to sail through the five-mile-long entrance into Carnley Harbour we were hit by 25kt winds funnelling between the heights straight along the passage. These rose rapidly to gale force. We used the engine to short-tack our way very slowly up the passage in the hope that the winds would ease once properly into the Harbour. They did not, at least not until we reached the lee of Camp Cove, where we anchored in relative peace.

The conditions for our departure were a repeat of the previous day, though we were fortunately sailing downwind. However, they were if anything worse as the strong winds and williwaws extended around Cape Farr and some

way up the east coast. As we headed north we were hit by several gusts of over 50kts shrieking down from the cliffs. We were delighted to get a little further out to sea in steadier and somewhat lighter winds as we beat north and skirted the offshore rocks and islands to reach Sandy Bay once more.

After only eight days in the islands our weather window arrived, so after a final run ashore we said goodbye to the fauna of Enderby Island and to the DOC staff who had been so helpful during our visit and set sail for Oban on Thursday 7 March.

When we passed through the overfalls off the east end of the Island during our arrival they had been impressive, but we had been running with the wind and waves. When we departed it was a different story. With tide running strongly into the wind over the very uneven, shallow bottom we ran the

gauntlet of a cauldron of waves. At times Vingilot's 20-ton hull seemed ready to stand on its stern as it climbed the steep breakers and slammed down the other side. Even with a good breeze and full engine power, there were times when we could barely keep way on. Though it seemed longer, half an hour of this pounding saw us through to deeper, calmer water and we settled down to a fast reach through the afternoon and night, with the wind slowly easing through the next day. Friday evening saw us back on our borrowed mooring in Oban.

The following day Simon and Kevin headed back to Auckland, leaving Tom, Vicky and I to enjoy a brief interlude of three days gentle cruising in Paterson Inlet, while easterlies blew themselves out. On Wednesday 13 March we sailed away with a moderate and fair wind headed for the eastern end of the Otago Peninsula, where we would turn north.

The same night we heard the news on the radio of the terrorist massacre at the two mosques in nearby Christchurch. This was New Zealand's first direct experience of this kind. The immediate, sympathetic and supportive response of both the government and the whole country was striking and was widely praised. For us it also confirmed why we love New Zealand and are proud to call it home.

The weather Gods smiled on us and in the wee hours of Wednesday 20 March we motored into Westhaven Marina and put both Vingilot and ourselves to bed.

We had not expected to make the passage north so easily in a single week, having assumed that we would have to stop either for contrary winds or fuel. Overall, we had sailed 3066 miles in 41 days, circumnavigating the three main islands of New Zealand and visiting one of its most isolated and fascinating outposts in the far south. ▶



PEPE AND THE AKARANA 350

BY STEVE HORNER



Two of Pepe's regular crew were unable to come due to work commitments so Sin from Hotdogger joined us. We were all competing in our longest race and were looking forward to testing our skills and endurance.

Briefing on Thursday night went well. A bit awestruck to think we would be competing against NZ Ocean Racing and some of the legends of world sailing in Tony Rae and Stu Bannatyne with tens of thousands of

miles of ocean racing under their belts Estimated finish times were asked for: Pepe? 8.45 am on Sunday. Ocean Racing? Lunch in a cafe on Saturday, maybe brunch if things went well. David versus Goliath!

Race day dawned overcast with 15 knots SW and a good forecast for the whole race. Team NZ did a cool flyby on the way to the start line.

Aiden nailed the start. Zero to Rangi Light then masthead spinnaker heading to Channel Island in a building breeze. Carpe Diem on our heels. Changed to fractional gennaker, gybed too early (bugger).

Rounded Channel Island in 30+ knots and steep sea - had fun sitting in the mid-teens of boat speed. Broached and lost both sheets. Caused a few problems getting gennaker back on board in 30+ knots and 2-metre seas but good crew work especially from



bowman Ryan. Carpe Diem still on our heels.

Two-sail reaching to Old Man Rock having a nice sail in a slowly dying breeze. Drifted through Old Man Rock with Carpe Diem 100 metres to leeward. Breeze filled in and reaching to Karewa Island in 15 knots. Round Karewa Island with the moon up and headed back to the Mercs, still reaching in 15 knots.

Breeze lightened at the Mercs. Checked the weather: Channel Island has 28 knots peaking 36 knots. We are in 8-10 knots and can see Channel Island. We start downsizing and hoist No 3 jib and full main. Sea state building along with the breeze so we put a reef in. Passing Channel Island the sea increases to 2 - 2.5 m with the odd one breaking and the breeze in the mid-20s at 70° true. Carpe Diem has slipped 400-500 m ahead and slightly to windward.

Eased sheets passing Broken Islands on Barrier and heading to the Moks (Mokohinau Islands). Slightly under-powered so shake the reef. The breeze backs a bit so we hoist the fractional gennaker. Ryan takes his wet weather gear off to dry out a bit.

At the Moks the breeze builds to 20-25 knots at 100° true wind and Pepe turns into part-submarine with water everywhere surfing down waves. We sit in the mid-teens for about three hours and have the time of our lives. Ryan very wet but his wet weather gear is dry. This is the biggest gap we have put on Carpe Diem, but we can still see them a couple of miles back, They just won't go away.

At the Poor Knights we start to set up for our first upwind of the race. No 2 jib and a reef and head towards the shore to position ourselves for westerly change due in a couple of hours. Dinner is served. Crumbed scallops courtesy of chef Ryan. Very nice.

We tacked as the wind breeze starts

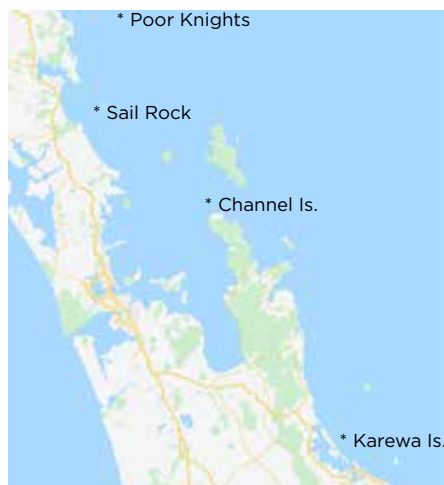
to knock only to find we have overlaid Sail Rock by about 20° (bugger). The breeze drops at Whangarei Head so we hoist the code zero in 10 knots at 70°.

Ease sheets at Sail Rock and head for Cape Rodney in a softening breeze with Carpe Diem slowly catching us, then watching them drift past us at Kawau as the breeze shuts down.

Changed to masthead gennaker (known as Pinky) in Tiri Channel in a very light breeze, but slowly catching Carpe Diem which ends in a luffing duel at Rangī Light which Carpe won. Follow Carpe a couple boat lengths behind, but only one broach away from a pass. Very tight heading to finish at Orakei. Carpe Diem broach right on the line. This was our chance to pass but we broach as well. Carpe Diem recovered quicker and beat us across the line.

What a great race. Match racing for 350 miles. Well done Rowan and his crew on Carpe Diem. They definitely brought the best out of us.

Thanks to my crew who pushed hard all the way. What a great race! ■



Orakei, Rangitoto (S), Channel Is. (S), Karewa Is. (P), Poor Knights (P), Sail Rock (P), Orakei.

SIR PETER BLAKE MEMORIAL CRUISING EVENT

BY TONY EVANS

This is one of the best events in our calendar, always delivering a fabulous sail and a brilliant after-match beach BBQ.

The November 2020 event saw plenty of action with a strong SW 25kn and big seas. Some of us sensibly sailed with just main only to focus on the more pressing social activities, like lunch and watching the single-Handed folks broaching all over the harbour. Who was that guy with the Red spinnaker? (great show)



A healthy fleet of around 20 yachts made it to the 10 am start and powered down the harbour, then the brave set spinnakers and gennakers for a sleigh ride to Long Bay. Some with reward and others with a heap of challenges.

Pete Locke on his new weapon “The Entertainer” put on a show, with a well controlled gennaker run: rumours of 16 knots were verified by the GPS... He had the biggest grin of all the sailors at the beach BBQ and bagged a well deserved 1st on handicap. Fortune follows the brave.

The single-handed folks did a slightly longer course, with an upwind finish, while us cruisers had it easy with a downwind reach all day long, just perfect.

We all finished in good time and settled in close to Mullet Bay, super sheltered and a safe anchorage in the



big breeze. What a great crowd on the beach for games and to share a fun social evening. Spot prizes were well distributed, and the stories flowed as the Mt Gay tide went out.

Special thanks to Taipan for looking after us all with finish times (that was tough sitting out in that swell) and fantastic hospitality on the beach. Roger and Bill are such a big part of what makes our cruising events so magic.

Other notable winners on the day were:

- Peppermint Planet, who always sails hard, for a win in the spinnaker division - well done Rodney and crew.
- Roadrunner, well sailed by Ken and crew for a first in the non-spinnaker division, top effort. ▶



LAST FRIDAY NIGHT



Friday 4th December saw the last Friday Night Special race of 2020 and a great Tiki Bar theme party afterwards.

Some donned hawaiian shirts, some donned leis.

One donned... an engagement ring?!







RICHMOND YACHT CLUB

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