

THE NEW ZEALAND CLASSIC YACHT JOURNAL



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CLASSIC YACHT ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC.

P.O. BOX 69-172 GLENDENE, AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND.

ISSN 1175-804X

www.classicyacht.org.nz

Issue 63 – April 2009

Southern Trust Classic Yacht Regatta

By Chad Thompson

The Regatta we held from the 13th to 15th Feb was the best yet. Our classic yachts were able to enjoy racing at its best in spite of the concerns we had over the simultaneous staging of the Louis Vuitton Pacific Series in the same waters. With some lateral thinking we were able to cope with the vigorous activity on the Waitemata. With the support of Viaduct Harbour Marine Village were still able to enjoy the hospitality of the race headquarters there.

Because of the increased number of large gaffers and big Bermudans we have and the expected congestion on the harbour, the starting area

for the big yachts was moved away from Orakei Wharf to the east of Northern Leading Beacon. This was certainly more suited to the conditions on the day. However, because of the anticipated spectator wash from the Louis Vuitton event the smaller fry experimentally sailed their races west of the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

The remarkable weather we enjoyed from New Year's Eve had to come to an end at some stage. Day 1 saw the fleet starting in 25 knots with winds increasing to over 30 knots at times. The odd Chinese jibe, submarining and soggy cobweb bore testament to the extreme conditions

experienced. Fortunately the weather did moderate on the Saturday and most of the fleet sailed under full sail, handling the conditions well with a few exceptions when squalls passed through. Then Sunday was one of those picture postcard days with suntan lotion aplenty being slapped on. A beautiful sea breeze favoured the fleet for the race around Motuihe Island. It was a classic sparkling Waitemata day.

Mark Chew and his merry band of Classic Yacht Association of Australia members were with us in increased numbers, as was one of Australia's modern classics, our own *Fidelis*.

As always, the camaraderie between Australia and New Zealand yachties was just wonderful. Long may it blossom! Joining the Australians down here this time were Phil and Jill Slater from Falmouth and Laurel Seaborn from Maine.

Among the highlights this year:

- The gathering of *Ranger's* old rivals: not only *Ta'Aroa* and *Northerner*, but also *Fidelis* and *Ragtime* (née *Infidel*)
- The increasing numbers of mullet boats
- The return of more of the K Class



*Thelma under all sail at the
Classic regatta.
Mark Bergin photo*

Continued overleaf

Classic Regatta continued ...

- *Moana's* return to racing
- *Jessie Logan*, the flying little gaffer, reborn

Early last year Nigel Stoke, of Sydney and owner of *Fidelis*, indicated he was contemplating sailing across the Tasman to sail alongside her nemesis, *Ranger*. As you would expect, Ian Cook welcomed the opportunity. No sooner had these intentions been confirmed than Chris Welsh, the owner of *Ragtime*, indicated he wanted to also come on down right across the Pacific to enjoy a little competition too.

Fidelis was always a much closer rival of *Ranger* as the yachts were very similar in their design origins, inspired both by Knud Reimers' *Bacchante*. *Ragtime* on the other hand was a complete departure from previous design thoughts and, back in the 1960s, often beat both yachts. Now with her modern carbon rig and new hi-tech keel, she is sailing even faster. Nonetheless it was great to be able to enjoy the sight of the Ranger Challenge Fleet crossing tacks and their crews enjoying one others' company at Race HQ after the racing.

This year the racing between *Ranger* and *Fidelis* started at Auckland's Anniversary Weekend of classic yachting and continued on in the Southern Trust Classic Yacht Regatta. In fairness to Nigel, he was having to get used to his new rig. As the racing progressed he steadily improved *Fidelis'* performance.

The results in our Regatta reversed *Ranger's* dominance



Top: Nigel Stoke at the helm of *Fidelis* in New Zealand
Above: Mullet boats *Orion* (L53) & *Scullet* (L56) enjoying close racing

of Anniversary Weekend. Anniversary Weekend: *Ranger* 2–0. Southern Trust Classic Yacht Regatta: *Fidelis* 3–1. There is obviously unfinished business, only to be settled in the racing still to come before *Fidelis'* return to Sydney.

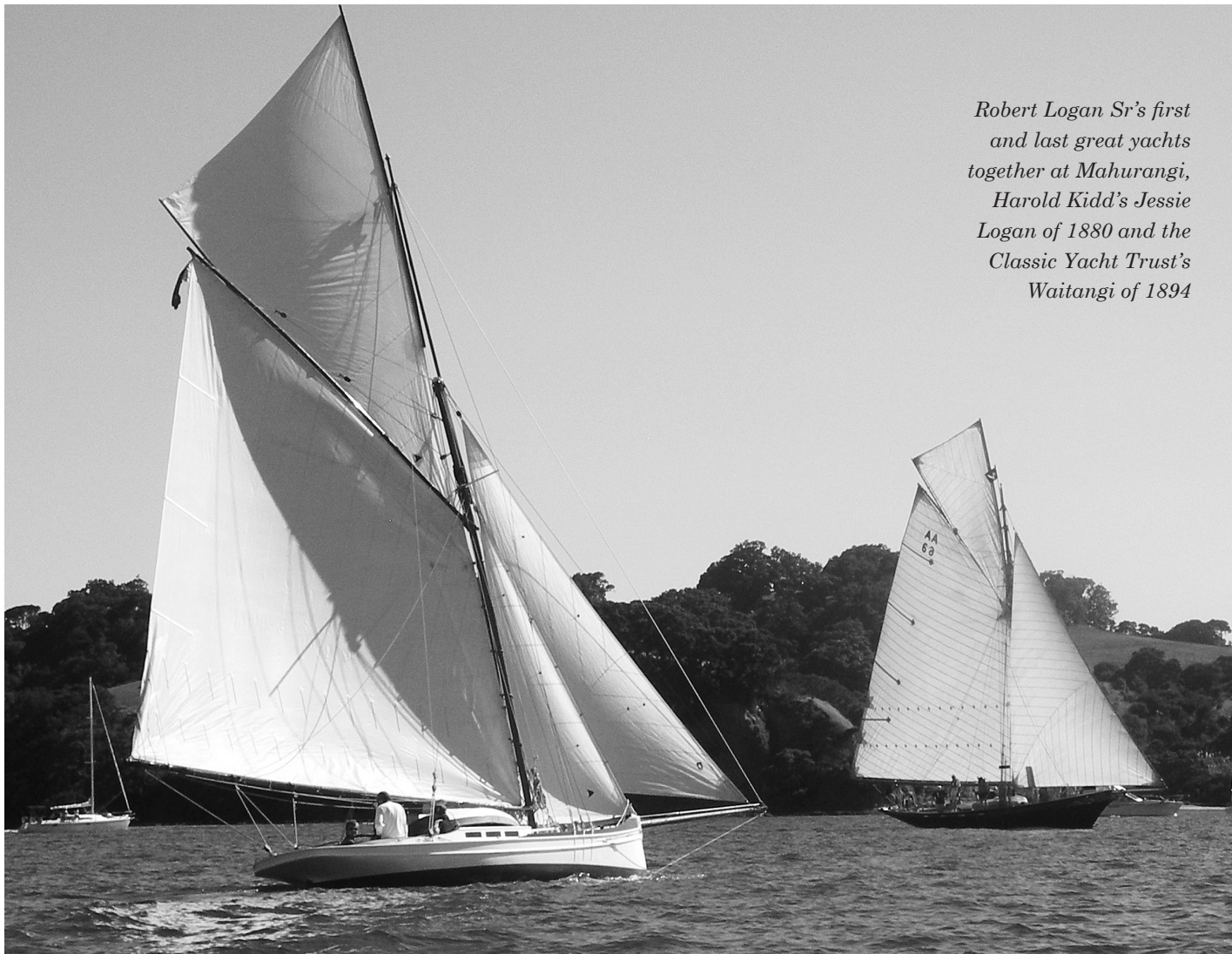
It was also great to see *Ta'Aroa* revelling in the racing, albeit only on the Friday when in the 25 – 30 knots of air she showed all but *Ragtime* the way home. The power of this 1960's S&S 62 footer was awesome. We look forward to Wayne Gilfoyle and his crew competing on an ever more frequent basis in future.

For the first time, the mullet boats had their own division, offering a number of the couta boat skippers and crew from Melbourne an opportunity to race aboard what was once upon a time a close cousin of their yachts. The potential rivalry between these two old workboat-origin fleets would be awesome. Hopefully the fun and enthusiasm being demonstrated by the Melbourne fleet will inspire

Please turn to Back Page

HOSPITALITY BUT NO POLICY CHANGE

Some of our members have pointed out to us that Ragtime, formerly Infidel, was riddled with carbon fibre, and that Fidelis has recently stepped a new carbon fibre mast and yet both were allowed to race unimpeded amongst our classics, despite the CIM prohibitions on such exotic materials. By the creation of the Ranger Challengers' division and a switch to a PHRF style handicap for this division, we made an effort to bring together these yachts for what was quite possibly a once in a lifetime opportunity to see them racing together again on Auckland harbour. Please be sure that this is not as a result of the softening of our overall aims and objectives; it is merely the courtesy of a good host welcoming old friends who have taken the trouble to sail thousands of miles of open ocean to bring their yachts back to their homeland and to renew the rivalries and camaraderie of last century. We sincerely thank the owners, Chris Welsh (Ragtime) and Nigel Stoke (Fidelis), for their daring, and for the time and expense they both went to in order to be with us in this vintage season of 2009 and would welcome them back anytime.



Robert Logan Sr's first and last great yachts together at Mahurangi, Harold Kidd's Jessie Logan of 1880 and the Classic Yacht Trust's Waitangi of 1894

Anniversary Weekend ... a personal view

There were four days of sailing.

Friday 23rd January; The race up to Mahurangi had a split start this year with the B Division starting at 15.00 and the A's at 17.00. Even so, the B's struggled to get in before dark as it was a dead muzzler to windward to Tiri and the wind faded right away, leaving a NE slop.

It was *Jessie Logan's* first race in her new configuration. We lost the jib early when a bronze clip on the halyard broke and couldn't be fixed as the synthetic rubbish seizing on the mast hoops was letting go and we didn't want to send

the boy aloft on them.

It was a tough grind to windward under staysail but magnificent to see the A's ghosting past us in the pitch black off Tiri as we were succumbing to a rum or two.

Saturday; After an uncomfortable (and surprisingly cold) night under the stars, we repaired to Tony Stevenson's *Wild Duck* for a gourmet breakfast, which altered the world-view totally.

The Mahurangi Regatta was its usual mad self, with mouth-watering boats rushing about helter-skelter on all sides. Where else in

the world can you see so many fine craft enjoying themselves in splendid surroundings and without a scrap of regimentation? Long may the recipe continue.

In the race, *Jessie* picked up her skirts and flew, but sadly we fell into a typical Mahurangi hole in the wind just before the finish and were pipped by arch-rivals *Jonquil* and *Thelma minima*.

I had to go home. Pauline was waiting for me on the beach at Sullivans and we had left the dinghy on *Wild Duck*, which had disappeared up harbour. No problem; we just sailed *Jessie* up to

the beach and I hopped off the bobstay in 18 inches of water!

Sunday; It was a great sail home for all; see Wayne Gilfoyle's joyous account of his match with Ian Cook in *Ranger*.

Monday; The Anniversary Regatta had a good dose of wind which made for exciting sailing. We, in the tiddlers, had a good go with *Gloriana*, but *Frances* revelled in the conditions and *Jonquil* blitzed us all again.

What a fantastic four days of sailing! Can it ever get better than this?

Harold Kidd



Like Two Dogs Fighting over a Bone

Mahurangi Harbour dawned to a nice South Westerly breeze with clear skies. It was 0700 on January 25th, the morning of the race back to Auckland. *Ta'Aroa* was sitting happily at anchor, bow held high, looking towards the entrance. It was as if she knew something special was going to happen, and happen it did!

Into the bay sailed her mighty competitor, *Ranger*, gleaming in the morning sun and moving gracefully through the water. Back in the water after a refit she looked magnificent. The start boat had laid her anchor and the line was set. We on *Ta'Aroa* were still getting under way (due to a welcome round of Bloody Marys) while most of the starters were milling about, waiting for the start gun to fire.

Now under way with mainsail up, the decision was made to run with the number 1 headsail. The Tui Girls (Michelle and her sailing buddies) were at their stations, as was my son Wesley. A few circles and a

close look at *Ranger* and we were ready for the challenge ahead.

Five minute gun sounded and everything started to hot up. To windward of *Ranger* but a little slower, we were away and from that moment it was all on. On the tight reach to the Whangaparaoa passage we were able to climb to weather of our arch rival and with cracked sheets it was a straight-line drag race.

Ranger started with full main, number 2 and small

stays'l while we had full main and number 1 heads'l. Weaving our way through the fleets that had started before us it must have been rather splendid for the others to see these two mighty yachts from a past era battling it out with no holds barred. The constant noise from trimming sheets went on all across the Whangaparaoa Bay.

First *Ranger* managed to sneak ahead but, with more wind pressure, *Ta'Aroa* slowly pulled her in and squeezed into the lead. Half

way across *Ranger* dropped the small stays'l and seemed to pick up speed. By the time we were abeam of Wellington Rock it was neck and neck.

The wind now lightened off in the lee of the headland and, with constant switching of wind direction, it soon became a battle of wits. Through Tiri Passage the two yachts constantly exchanged the lead as the wind pressure favoured first one then the other.

Out of the passage, the battle continued, with *Ta'Aroa* gaining the upper hand and holding her lead on a long drag race to the Long Bay shores. All looked good, but then the fickleness of the Gulf winds had their say. *Ranger* in better breeze slowly lifted out on *Ta'Aroa* and when the next tack was made passed ahead by two boat lengths.

After another flurry of tacks and changes of lead, *Ta'Aroa* tacked over and headed for the North Shore while *Ranger* tacked and headed for the Rangitoto shore line.





Opposite page: *Ta'Aroa* and *Ranger* engaged in close battle. Bottom: Skipper Wayne Gilfoyle formulates battle plans with tactician *Bandit the Dog*. Above: *Ranger* in full cry.

Now it was *Ta'Aroa's* turn to have some luck from that "Fickle Lady". Lifting and sailing higher good gains were made. The long drag down the Shore beaches saw little between the two yachts.

Then fortune swung back to *Ranger* hooking into a lifting breeze while *Ta'Aroa* was knocked. *Ranger* had us again and passed a boatlength ahead. *Ranger* continued across to the white cliffs of Takapuna while *Ta'Aroa* lifting off the Rangī shore sailed towards Mission Bay.

Soon the breeze shifted left and again the race was on to see who would cross whom. *Ranger* sailing beautifully crossed well ahead, this time by at least six boatlengths. Separating to either side of the anchored Navy frigate, the yachts emerged with no more than 50 metres separating them.

Then *Ranger* tacked, why we asked? Read the race instructions again was the call – are they crossing through the finish line? – yes, yes we have to round Resolution buoy! *Ranger* obviously

seeing their mistake tacked back and it was on for young and old.

At the mark *Ta'Aroa* tacked over to starboard and having rights, no overlap at the zone, she was able again, to sneak ahead. Two boatlengths separated these magnificent yachts. Cracked sheets and they were off, *Ranger* closing the gap ever so slowly. Knuckles now white, the two crews worked to get every bit of speed out of the two charging champions. The line crept closer and closer. 'UP!' was the call from

Ranger as she slipped inside, but time was running out. 'UP!' again called, but now it was almost cockpit and cockpit. *Ta'Aroa* got a small gust and again surged ahead. Then it was *Ranger's* turn, together as if glued by the topsides, the race was really on.

The committee boat crew members, standing with mouths agape, could only watch as this dance by two of Auckland's yachting legends unfolded before their eyes.

Then, as if time had been frozen, the gun, followed by the smell of cordite that we all love so much. 'Who got it?' was the call and from the committee boat the signal showed *Ta'Aroa* by about 1 metre.

Both crews applauded one another as they crossed over and all with smiles as wide as the ocean on their faces.

So, for now, *Ta'Aroa* has the bone to chew on and will throw it down on the ground for both of these beautiful yachts to fight over, when next they meet.

By Wayne Gilfoyle

Ta'Aroa's crew

Wayne Gilfoyle
Michelle Gilfoyle, Tui's Girl 5
Wesley Gilfoyle
Jo Monaghan, Tui's Girl 1
Angie Arcia, Tui's Girl 2
Kate Brown, Tui's Girl 3
Michelle Linstrom, Tui's Girl 4
Bandit the Dog, Tactician

Ranger's crew

Ian Cook
Bianca Cook
Paige Cook
David Cook
Andrew Howarth
Tony Gable
George Norridge



Rudder Cup steers a straight course between past and present

Around 1908 the editor of the influential American *Rudder* magazine donated several magnificent trophies to yacht clubs around the world for offshore racing. Two came to New Zealand, one to the Squadron and one to Otago Yacht Club. The RNZYS decided to run a race for motorboats, around Sail Rock and back, at night, with the benefit of a full moon on 12th December 1908.

It was a great success; there were 14 entrants and the weather was kind. First home was James Reid's *Seabird*, while first on handicap and the winner of the superb Rudder Cup

was the Matheson brothers' *Maroro*, itself a design from *Rudder* and home-built by the Mathesons. Another entrant in that first race a century ago was H.H. Adams' husky Bailey & Lowe double-ender *Eliza*, which was hampered by engine troubles in the race, but challenged *Seabird* to a race to Russell and back. *Eliza* won that race, held in rough conditions.

Eliza was subsequently bought by the Frankovic family of Whangaparaoa who changed her name to the Croatian *Kumi*. Taupaki veterinarian Haydon Afford now owns *Kumi* and floated the idea to me of a centenary

Rudder Cup rerun. Two of my *Boating NZ* articles on the race later, the vintage launch community was abuzz with the idea, and the CYA ran it.

Boating NZ were magnificent sponsors and we had great help from the Squadron, Coastguard and the Harbourmaster. We cajoled Steve Thomas, *Seabird's* Nelson owner to bring her up for the race, with generous assistance from Pacifica Shipping and skilful handling in Auckland by Boat Haulage, NZ Crane Hire and Half Moon Bay Marina. We gained the enthusiastic involvement of the Matheson

family. Andrew Matheson led a Matheson contingent, who lent us the precious original cup and took part.

As for the event, it was just bloody magic. We had 26 launches, two built in 1905, in a mass start off Westhaven at 19.00 on Friday 12th December 2008. The Waitemata rocked with the wash of elderly hulls streaming towards North Head and then sweeping round into the Channel. The modern planing hulls like Murray Gatt's big *Pelin Rakoa* and Bruce Webb's early Jim Young Vindex *Delmar* soon cleared out. In a sweet nostalgic link, *Delmar* was



Opposite page: *Seabird* romps down the harbour. Top left: Andrew Matheson hands over the original Rudder Cup to Ray and Jill Russell of *Joan* to hold for a moment. Left: A pocket trumpet salute from the stern of *Seabird*. Above: Dressed to kill, the crew of *Falcon* cut a sartorial dash. Top: *Kumi*, set the revival ball rolling.

skipped by Geoff Cooper, whose grandfather Alf Cooper had competed in the 1908 race in his *Winsome*.

These two hot ships were closely tailed by James Mobberley's 38 footer *Falcon*, built by Lane Motor Boat Co for G.R. Chamberlin of Ponui in 1924, now powered by a 180hp Hino and tuned to perfection by her owner, now gaffer at Moon engines. *Falcon* was touching 17 knots as she thrummed through the night.

The weather stayed kind. No one who took part will ever forget the thrill of approaching, then rounding Sail Rock in the dark, just a

gentle slop around its base, bouncing back the roar of the engines. Kevin O'Sullivan, navigating *Seabird*, thrilled the fleet with his clipped, precise RT sked: "*Seabird* has rounded Sail Rock for the second time in a hundred years." Skipper Steve Thomas says he felt James Reid's presence with him.

Kumi had some engine problems and there were other minor discomforts, but 26 started and 25 finished. Tony Stevenson pulled *Wild Duck* out at Kawau for a refreshment break after some overheating. *Romany II* from Whangarei gamely plodded around the course

at reduced revs after similar problems, finishing at 10.43 on Saturday morning!

The Prizegiving was another thrill as the handicap winner, and extremely popular winner of the new Rudder Cup Trophy, proved to be the lovely old Bailey & Lowe 45 footer *Joan* (ex *Marion D*, ex *Imanota*) owned by Ray and Jill Russell.

Seabird won the Veteran class, bettering her 1908 time by 90 minutes. *Falcon* romped in third overall, out-performing launches a fraction of her age in a magnificent performance.

Maybe we have rekindled the flame of launch racing, for

so long a feature of Auckland sporting life, but which died in the Depression of the 1930's. What a good time to start it again and "look Ol' Man Depression right in the eye", as Dick Powell sang in 1932. Will we do it again? Of course we will, but maybe not around Sail Rock every year!

Harold Kidd

Overall handicap winner;

Joan (Ray and Jill Russell).

Veteran (pre 1919): 1 *Seabird* (Steve Thomas), 2 *Mapu*, 3 *Ferro*.

Vintage (1919 to 1949): 1 *Falcon* (James Mobberley), 2 *Moanalua*, 3 *Lady Gay*.

Classic (1950 to 1978): 1 *Rakoa* (Murray Gatt), 2 *Delmar*, 3 *Waimiga*.

Spirit of Tradition (1979+): 1st *Lucille* (Alan Good) Logan 33.

Classic Regatta continued ...

the restoration of an ever-increasing number of our mullet boats. A little bird tells us that *Corona*, the greatest of the local 26 footers, is close to beginning restoration at the Traditional Boatbuilding School, hopefully in time for the 2010 Regatta.

Warren Tuohey, the owner of *Katrina*, has been working away at bringing more of this early restricted design class along to CYA events. This year we enjoyed seeing *Helen*, which had come up from Wellington, and *Kiariki*, sailed by the Brookes again after many years, join the larger bermudan yacht fleet.

This class did provide close racing from the late 1940s into the 1960s. That close racing was well demonstrated this weekend and bode well for the rejuvenation of the fleet in years to come.

It was also a great thrill for us all to see Chris and

Jenny Smith back out racing on *Moana*. It was just a pity that her old rivals: *Little Jim*, *Ngataringa* and *Prize* weren't there to give him a hurry along.

The B Division enjoyed their racing west of the harbour bridge but several of

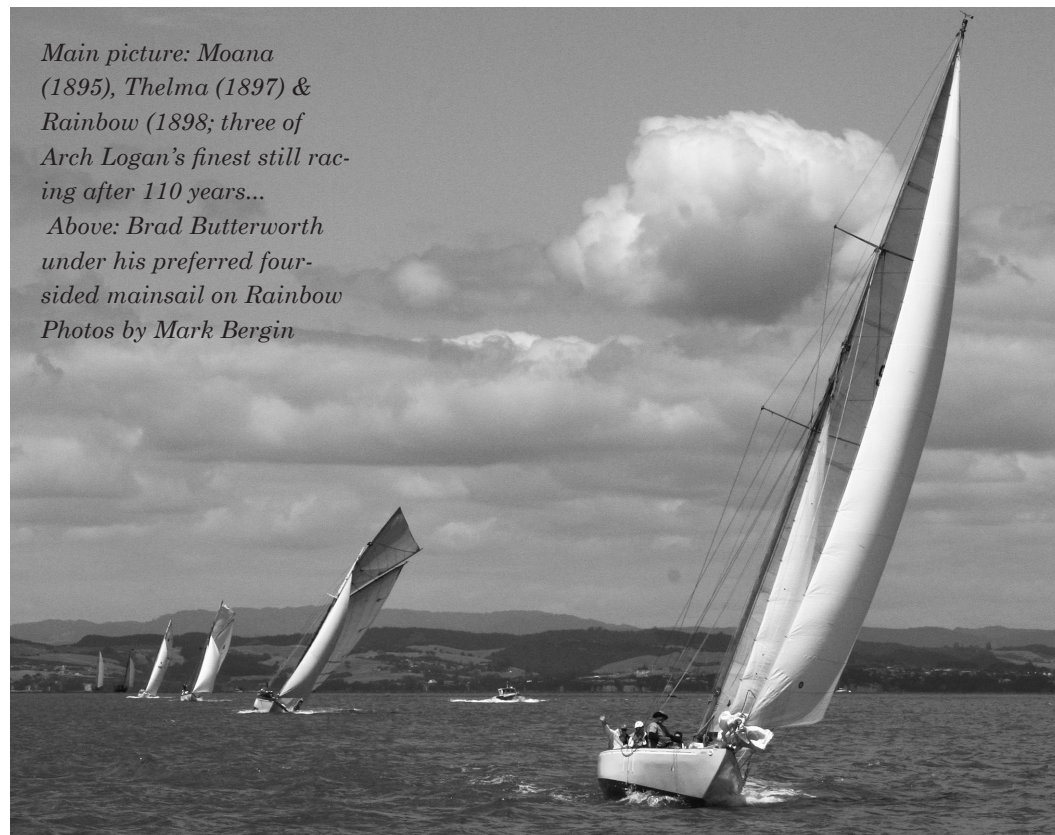
the skippers neglected to read their charts and insisted on sailing through water more suited for paddling.

And the darling of the fleet had to be *Jessie Logan*. Her return to racing after getting her original rig right this time has been a 110% success. Now set up with much lighter spars and fittings and about a ton of unnecessary ballast gone she was chasing yachts many years her junior and greater in overall length around the racetrack, making a very good account of herself. Harold Kidd who has driven the changes, and Jason Prew skippering the little beauty, can't wipe the grins off their faces.

We thank the Southern Trust and our family of sponsors for a great array of prizes and financial support. Especially we thank Tony Stevenson, for bringing the sponsors together, Chris Collins our Principal Race officer and the hastily-volunteered race officers at Birkenhead Wharf. And, again, our very special thanks to Joyce Talbot and her team for the preparation, administration and engine-room operations during the Regatta. Without their tireless efforts for the CYA events like this just wouldn't happen.

Chad Thompson

For full results, please refer to the CYA Website: www.classicyacht.org.nz



Main picture: Moana (1895), Thelma (1897) & Rainbow (1898; three of Arch Logan's finest still racing after 110 years...

*Above: Brad Butterworth under his preferred four-sided mainsail on Rainbow
Photos by Mark Bergin*

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