



Honouring the founders of CYANZ

By Penelope Carroll

The beginnings of the CYANZ are well documented: four keen boaties, all restoring and repairing old classics, meet in the workshop of the NZ National Maritime Museum at a gathering to view progress on the restoration of *Ngataringa* in January 1995.

Greg Scopas was the new custodian of *Ngataringa*, Hamish Ross had bought *Little Jim* and begun restoring her in 1994, John Gorter had been custodian of little *Thelma* since 1987, and Chad Thompson had enjoyed a life-time sailing on *Prize*.

“During the course of conversation, one of us said,

‘Wouldn’t it be great to have a club for people mad about classic boats – and to create a base for classic racing?’” says Hamish.

The group were encouraged by Ron Copeland, then Commodore of the Ponsonby Cruising Club (PCC). A meeting was called for May 8, 1995 at the PCC, and the CYANZ was born. Hosted by the PCC for seven years, in 2002 the association moved to its present home with the RNZYS.

Last month, Hamish Ross and John Gorter received Life Memberships of the CYANZ at the 2022 annual prize-giving in recognition of their roles in its founding.

“I am so proud of what we achieved, for the sport and for the county’s heritage,” says Hamish. “We became a centre of classic racing; and it is great to see so many pictures on the walls of the RNZYS coming alive on the water.”

Hamish came to classic yachts via windsurfing and sailing a two-handed Phase Two dinghy. First there was *Little Jim* and then *Rainbow*, which he has raced on the Waitemata for the past 15 years. Sailing *Rainbow* is one of the most beautiful experiences you could have, he says.

John had a sailing dinghy growing up and in 1987 he decided he wanted to start

racing, so he purchased little *Thelma* “basically because she was cheap, and I loved the aesthetics”.

He subsequently sold her and bought and restored *Iorangi*.

Says John: “Classics are pieces of art. They sail well too. And there’s all that history. I love sitting on *Iorangi* and thinking about all the people who have sailed on her before me.”

Hamish and John both say they are delighted to have been awarded Life Memberships.

• *Pictured above: John Gorter and Hamish Ross with co-founder Chad Thompson and CYA Chair Rachel Orr.*

A new life for classy *White Tie*

The newest addition to the CYA fleet is *White Tie*, a 25ft Top Hat yacht launched in 1963 and now owned by CYA Chair, Rachel Orr. She is the modern classic's third owner.

Designed in the UK by Illingworth and Primrose, *White Tie* was built by NZ boatbuilder Keith Atkinson for a Brit living here. She is constructed of multi skins of mahogany planking fastened to transverse steam-bent timbers, with fore and aft stringers and GRP sheathing. Atkinson liked the design so much he built a further six.

White Tie is the first boat Rachel has owned. As a child she messed around in an Optimist called *Alligator* off Paramatta, but "wasn't into sailing that much".

Some 15 years ago, she discovered dragon boating – and, through that involvement, sailing and classic yachts. "I'd be dragon boating on the harbour and see these beautiful old boats going so much faster."

Rachel has crewed on *Waitangi* for the past decade. At first she tried to combine sailing and dragon boating, but there were too many clashes with race times. Sailing won out.

A big bonus of her involvement with the CYA, she says, has been the opportunity to crew on a range of classic yachts. "I particularly love the freedom of the smaller classics like *Little Jim* and *Kotuku*."

She began to dream of one day getting her own boat – "a smaller classic where you don't have to rely on other people to go sailing." She mentioned this to *Waitangi* skipper Larry Paul, and he introduced her to *White Tie*, then berthed in the Okahu



Bay marina. "She was – and is – perfect," says Rachel.

Brothers Peter and David Steward were looking for a new owner to cherish *White Tie* as their brother Don had during his 45 years sailing her up to his recent death.

"We wanted to make sure she went to the right person," says Peter. "She has been a big part of our family. We have all enjoyed sailing on her. We are very glad she is

in safe hands with the CYA."

White Tie is now berthed in the Milford marina, having her rigging redone and some minor repairs.

Rachel has yet to sail her. But she is looking forward to many sailing weekends and summer cruising around the Gulf on *White Tie* once she steps down as Chair of the CYA in August.

• Above: *White Tie* and Rachel in Milford Marina.

A memorable Waihou River expedition



Easter weekend saw a flotilla of 10 CYA launches make their way from the Waitematā Harbour, across

the Firth of Thames and up the Waihou River to Paeroa's Historical Maritime Park – the site of Aotearoa/New

Zealand's most inland port.

Veteran seaman and life member of the Historical Maritime Park Paeroa Trust, Peter Vandersloot (80 years old) piloted the launches from Kopu to Paeroa on Good Friday. The central swing span of the old Kopu Bridge opened for the occasion and thousands of spectators turned out to admire the parade to Paeroa's recently reinstated town wharf.

"It was quite surreal cruising up the river with cows running alongside and all those spectators. There were even people gathered in the middle of farmers' paddocks to watch us," says Justin Prew, skipper of *My Girl* (1925), CYA launch

captain and trip organiser.

Timing the trip up the river and back was quite a juggling act, he says, especially with a three-hour tide difference between the river mouth at Kopu and Paeroa. "We had to time things so the tide was high enough not to go aground, but low enough to get under bridges." Bigger and smaller launches had to leave at different times.

Additional highlights included seeing NZ's only remaining complete paddle steamer, the *Kopu*, and other reminders of our maritime history in the museum, and a side-trip on the local launch *Ariana* up the Ohinemuri River for Devonshire tea at the Paeroa RSA.