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Season opens to a fabulous weekend of racing

What a weekend it was! Traditionally the classics are seldom ready to hit the water before mid to late October, so the number likely to attend the opening races to and from Gulf Harbour was always expected to be down.

The fleet consisted of *Ranger*, *Tawera*, *Prize*, *Scout* and *Spray II*. Given the fresh conditions we have experienced in recent months the idea of racing outside of

By Chad Thompson

Tiri and thrashing our way back through the Tiri Passage was not appealing. A course was therefore set to Islington Bay Yellow Buoy, Motukorea Beacon, B Buoy and then on to Gulf Harbour. What a cracker of a course it was.

The start was something of a shambles with the cruising division of the Squadron

heading straight to Gulf Harbour in a northerly direction at the same time as the classics were heading east. After untangling ourselves, we had a fast run to Islington Bay in which *Scout* showed the rest of the fleet how to properly set a spinnaker.

We all enjoyed a good beat to Motukorea in 17-20 knots of SSW with *Ranger* stretching her legs on the rest of the fleet while *Tawera* reefed to cope in

the freshening conditions. *Prize*, three quarter rigged with staysail, was forever catching *Tawera*. *Scout* quietly made good ground to weather only being overtaken by *Prize* and *Tawera* close to Motukorea Beacon while *Spray II* struggled under too much canvas and fell astern.

The reach to B Buoy was great in smooth water with *Ranger* continuing to step out

Continued overleaf...

Paradise at our doorstep

We are some of the most fortunate yachties in the world. After a long week in the workforce we are able to escape to our glorious playground, the Hauraki Gulf.

This large expanse of sheltered water affords us clear open water for stress free sailing, a large number of secluded safe anchorages and, as is so often the case, the good company of like-minded friends. After a lifetime on the water I am now fortunate enough to not only enjoy the Gulf with family and friends, but now also with my guests of New Zealand Classic Yachts.

We can become very blasé about this jewel of ours. For me it is only when I am showing overseas guests some of the



The dock at Salthouse Boatbuilders on the Upper Harbour

delights of the Gulf that it is brought home to me how special it really is.

Over the next issues I'll share with you my favourite spots and hope they will delight you as they delight me. I'll start really close to home.

When was the last time you sailed westward up the harbour for a day sail? On *Prize* and *Tawera* our sailing must stop at the Upper Harbour Bridge thanks to some engineer who decided to save on concrete and during construction lowered the bridge from its original specified height. But the smaller keel yachts and centreboarders can work the tides as far as Riverhead itself.

If time is short, or there is a fresh

easterly blowing, it's a great run in calm water with the opportunity to anchor under the native bush clad cliffs immediately south of the Upper bridge opposite Hobsonville.

Equally close to home is the anchorage near the Coastguard Buoy in from the Saltworks Beacon, south of Rangitoto light.

In weekends there is too much slop from passing vessels, but midweek it's a dream, and the walk up Rangitoto is a great way to develop an appetite and keep the kids quiet.

Chad Thompson

Opening Regatta provides excitement and very close racing – *Continued from Page 1*

in front. On rounding B Buoy *Tawera*, who had rolled out her reefs, now set her #2 genoa and *Prize* hoisted her working jib. What a ride! *Prize* was surfing up *Tawera's* quarter wave at over 9 knots gaining ever so slightly until at Gulf Harbour there was only 50m between the two.

Gulf Harbour Marina was a welcome refuge for some exhausted and wet crews. What a great destination for the start of the season! A great party was held ashore by the Squadron as guests of the Gulf Harbour Yacht Club.

During the festivities it was indicated by the crews of *Spray II* and *Ranger* that they may not be in good shape for the race back to Auckland on Sunday (*Scout* retiring to the Mahurangi for deferred maintenance).

Sunday morning shone

beautifully with a light 8 knot southerly. Only *Prize* and *Tawera* were at the start line when the gun went and the scene was set for a great match race back to Westhaven and what a scrap it was.

Tawera had the better of the start heading off on starboard tack in a SE direction, while *Prize* immediately tacked inshore. When the two yachts converged *Prize* was ahead sailing fast in 8-12 knots of air. However whenever the breeze dropped away *Tawera's* big headsails would dominate and she would come flying back at *Prize* doing an extra knot or more.

Prize's objective was to keep *Tawera* out to the east of the rhumb line or at least always to the east of where *Prize* was, a tactic that paid off until *Tawera* went surging ahead in the very light

conditions.

Tawera tacked onto starboard to cover, so *Prize* immediately tacked inshore again to take advantage of the adiabatic breezes generated along the shore line. Slowly but surely *Prize* recovered her position and broke through *Tawera's* lead off Takapuna. And that was only the halfway mark in the race

At this stage other yachts were becalmed out in the Rangitoto Channel indicating the inshore course was the only serious option and numerous short tacks later *Prize* rounded North Head four minutes ahead of *Tawera*.

By now the SW breeze filled to around 15-18 knots and it was a procession up the harbour. *Prize* eventually crossed the finish line doing around 7.5-8 knots three hours after the start of one of the

best match races ever.

It was a real David and Goliath scrap: a sloop with large overlapping headsail against a smaller cutter-rigged earlier generation of classic. *Tawera's* speed was awesome, but in the short tacking that was required, the large overlapping headsail was too slow to bring around when covering the opposition.

Don't miss this weekend next season. It would have to be one of the best destinations to race to and the courses there and back are great. Results:

Race to Gulf Harbour
Gun: *Ranger*
1st on handicap: *Prize*
2nd on handicap: *Spray II*
3rd on handicap: *Ranger*
4th on handicap: *Scout*
Race back to Westhaven
Gun: *Prize*
1st on handicap: *Prize*

Events Program for 2002/2003 Season Classic Yacht Association of New Zealand

The Classic Yacht Association's 2002/3 season is the biggest it has ever organised. For the first time a full set of events for motor launches is planned. Apart from details of the Classic Regatta between the Louis Vuitton Cup and the America's Cup racing, details of which are now being finalised, the programme is as follows;

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| C.Y.A. Points Series (Non Spinnaker) Races | 11, with 7 to count | |
| Spinnaker Races | 4 (not part of Points Series) | |
| RNZYS Club Champ Series | 6 races with 4 to count | |
| Rally Weekends | 3 | |
| Launch Events | 9 | |
| | | |
| Saturday, 9 Nov | RNZYS Harbour Race | C.Y.A. Points |
| Saturday, 16 Nov | RNZYS Motor Yacht Log Rally | Launches |
| Sunday, 24 Nov | DYC Janet's Anniversary Race | CYA Points |
| Friday, 29th Nov-Sun 1st Dec | Patio Bay Weekend Yacht & Launch Rally | |
| Friday, 24 Jan | CYA Yacht & Launch Rally to Mahurangi | |
| Friday, 24 Jan | DYC Night Race to Mahurangi | C.Y.A. Points |
| Saturday, 25 Jan | Mahurangi Festival | C.Y.A. Points / Launches |
| Sunday, 26 Jan | CYANZ Picnic sailing out from Mahurangi | |
| Monday, 27 Jan | Auckland Anniversary Regatta | C.Y.A. Points / Launches |
| Friday, 31 Jan-Sun 2nd Feb | RNZYS Squadron Weekend | RNZYS Series * 2 / Launches |
| Thursday, 6 - 9th Feb | NZ Int Classic Yacht Regatta | (see separate program for details) |

[America's Cup 15th February - 1st Match]

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Saturday, 8 March | DYC F.Winstone Memorial & Col Wild Cup | C.Y.A. Points |
| Saturday, 8 March | RNZYS Motor Yacht Log Rally | Launches |
| Sunday, 9 March | RAYC Centenary Anniversary Day Race | C.Y.A. Points |
| Sunday, 23 March | Richmond Yacht Club Anniversary Day Race | Non Spinnaker |
| Saturday, 29 March | RNZYS Te Kouma Race | C.Y.A. Points / RNZYS Series |
| Sun, 30 March | RNZYS Race back from Te Kouma | Non Spinnaker |
| Saturday, 12 April | RNZYS Round Rangitoto Race | C.Y.A. Points / RNZYS Series |
| Sunday, 13 April | PCC Vintage & Veterans Race | C.Y.A. Points / Launches |
| Friday, 18 April | RNZYS Yacht & Launch Rally | |
| Friday, 25 April | VCC ANZAC Day Old Crew Day Race | Non Spinnaker |
| Sunday, 27 April | PCC Closing Day | C.Y.A. Points |
| Saturday, 3 May | RNZYS Hauraki Trifecta | Spinnaker |

MONTHLY MEETINGS – The monthly meetings, held the second Tuesday in each month and organized by Russell Brooke, have been a great success. The CYA invites you all to make sure you come and enjoy these informal evenings. Russell has done a magnificent job and the guests have been superb. Information on these meetings is advertised in *Sheertines*.

Renumbering the launch fleet

Picture below: Charles Palmer's Adelaide in a 1913 race with race number 8 issued for the race.

This picture: Adelaide, now sporting a clerestory or "tram top", racing in 1915 with her permanent number, 1.



The Classic Yacht Association has begun re-issuing numbers to be displayed by its launches, motor yachts, call them what you will, so a little history on the subject of launch numbers is appropriate right now.

Robin Elliott and I have written a lot about the various Auckland numbering systems for yachts. I don't intend to repeat it all, but bear in mind that uniform launch and yacht registration systems originated together for the same purpose and had a similar history.

A wide variety of numbering systems was tried by many clubs from the earliest times but, when the regatta fleets got really big around 1900, and you could no longer guarantee that everyone could tell every boat by the cut of its jib, numbers were issued by the regatta organizers for the day. When launch racing came in soon

after, they got ad hoc numbers too. Attempts by individual clubs to allot permanent numbers to their members' boats were thwarted by the fact that most people belonged to several clubs.

The Auckland Yacht and Motor Boat Association was founded before World War I for the purpose of co-ordinating the activities of yacht clubs and rationalising events and championships etc. Despite vigorous opposition from its constituent clubs, it also pressed for the adoption of a system of permanent numbers to be displayed, at least when racing, by both yachts and launches. Launch racing had become a feature of every regatta and most individual club race days. The New Zealand Power Boat Association was itself a vigorous and influential club with as many members as



many of the yacht clubs.

The outbreak of war in August 1914 crystallised action on registration. The German raider scare was very real. The army accepted the AYMBA's proposed system as a means of craft identifying themselves leaving the harbour and relieving them of the need to either report to the picket vessel or be blown out of the water.

Aided by the New Zealand Yachtsman magazine, run by the pushy and jingoistic Wilkie Wilkinson, the system was up and running by the end of September 1914. The white on dark blue numbers were available from E. Le Roy's in Queen St, two per boat. Some of the launches appear to have

knitted up their own.

For both yachts and launches the preservation of pecking orders had been an underlying stumbling block. In the case of yachts, Viking, Ernest Davis, got number 1, as being the longest yacht in Auckland. In the case of launches, Adelaide, Charles Palmer, got number 1, because he was Chairman of the AYMBA! Clubs were given blocks of numbers. The first total of pleasure launches registered was 166. Fishing launches received numbers in a series starting with 300. The Manukau club would have nothing to do with registration for either launches or yachts.

Harold Kidd

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