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Arcturus a worthy winner after a great season



Arcturus enjoyed excellent racing with skipper Bruce Dunlop
Ivor Wilkins pic

By Chad Thompson

After we had been shattered by the America's Cup and the intensity of the International Classic Yacht Regatta there seemed a rather substantial void waiting to be filled with some good yacht racing. What we experienced in the remainder of the season got better and better.

April 12 brought the Squadron's Round Rangitoto Race, which turned out to be one of those character-forming events in which the race was restarted at A buoy after the tail-enders brought up the new

breeze, and places changed with each stray zephyr. Once the northerly settled in, *Moana* tacked out to sea and came back into Motutapu very strongly to give *Ranger* a hard time up to Administration Bay where *Ranger's* longer waterline and greater sail area prevailed and she sailed away to a 21 minute lead at the finish. *Moana* was extremely slippery and well sailed by Chris Smith, finishing 20 minutes ahead of *Tawera*. Handicap results were: *Moana* 1st, *Tawera* 2nd and *Prize* 3rd.

The B Division were extremely frustrated after some great fluky sailing at the

beginning of the race in which *Gloriana* was seen to sail through the A Division fleet as if they were all anchored. She finished at 1847 hours with *Spray* nearly an hour behind, struggling to complete the course in a dying breeze.

Sunday's Ponsonby CC Vintage & Veterans race was nowhere near as frustrating. The new day brought with it a beautiful steady easterly of around 12-15 knots with clear skies and a flooding tide, great autumn sailing conditions. The first important decision before the race was what end of the line to start. You would think the answer was obvious: in by

the wall out of the tide; but then there is always the possibility of less wind in by the wharves, so what about starting at the outer end and nipping across to Stanley Point and up the Devonport shore? Some of us knew better and went for the Westhaven wall end of the line, charging at full speed into the wall for a tack on the line at the gun and then working our way up the wall out of the tide. Great plan, but it requires water to execute. *Prize* came to a sticky halt almost obscuring the view of the line from the start tower for the divisions that followed. Skippers are

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Classic Yachts Regatta

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meant to make these sorts of *faux pas* away from the public gaze, but in this instance we could only apologise to the Race Officials and, in our Corinthian way, ask for permission to continue to race after the *Deodar* pulled us off the mud.

Meanwhile, ten minutes up ahead, there was a great scrap going on between *Moana* and *Tawera*, sailed by Nick Atkinson, which had stuck to the southern side of the harbour and, with her big overlapping headsail, was powering away in an awesome display of speed and good tactics. Chris on *Moana* realised the error of going to the northern side of the harbour, but by then it was all too late. He was playing catch-up. The light on-the-wind work did not suit *Arcturus*, who struggled on the long windward leeward legs of the course up to Islington Bay and back to Westhaven. She has been well sailed throughout the season by Bruce Dunlop. *Tawera* took line and handicap honours, *Moana* 2nd, *Prize* 3rd.

In the B Division there were only two competitors. Ponsonby Cruising Club had set two very good but different courses for each division and the real losers were the non-competitors. The bermudan rig of *Janet* was better suited to the on-the-wind work down harbour. The skipper of the day on *Janet* will tell you it was his superior tactics of staying on the southern side. He is probably right. However *Gloriana*, sailed by Tony Blake, is proving to be very slippery when running and, although she was a long way behind at the windward mark, she made

up a lot of ground on the run back to Westhaven. These plank-on-edge, big gaff mainsailed centurions are a real threat. Heaven help the opposition when she has a new set of sails fitted next season.

After all of the close racing for the season the scene was set for a great battle in the A Division to find the eventual winner for the Points Series. *Arcturus* was leading with 4 points back to *Prize*, and a further point back to *Moana* and another point back to *Tawera*.

Ponsonby Cruising Club's Closing Day dawned with a light south westerly, a flooding tide again and the promise of a great day on the water. Once again there was only a small fleet: *Prize*, *Tawera*, *Moana*, and *Arcturus* in the A division and *Gloriana*, *Spray II* and *Janet* in the B Division.

Having learned the lessons from his previous start line incident *Prize* sailed so close to the outer distance mark on the start line the skipper, yours truly, could have stepped onto the yellow buoy. Chris Smith on *Moana* was in pole position and led the fleet down the middle of the harbour, eventually coming across to the Naval Base, but too late to stop *Prize* sailing underneath him. The reach down to Motuihe Green Buoy had the trailing boats playing catch-up in the building SW breeze. Even on these old girls, racing is taken seriously and the cleaning of *Prize's* and *Tawera's* bottoms was paying off. The beat up to Navy Buoy at Brown's Island and the run to Islington Bay saw *Prize* slip further ahead and *Tawera* sneak past *Moana*. The tactician on *Prize*, Iain Aitken, would say it was superior tactics, but I have a feeling that, after the

embarrassment of the Vintage and Veterans start, *Prize* was determined to not even let the opposition see her transom; she finished 4 minutes ahead of *Tawera* and 8 minutes ahead of *Moana*. Results: *Prize* FOL and 1st on handicap, *Tawera* 2nd, *Arcturus* 3rd and *Moana* 4th. What a great day's sailing.

In the B Division, *Janet*, sailed by her departing syndicate member, Chris Cotter, had a blinder. Like *Prize*, she stuck to the northern side of the harbour after the start and kept sailing away from the opposition. *Gloriana*, with that huge gaff mainsail, ran very quickly and left *Spray II* to have her day in the long beat back up the harbour. *Janet* was untouchable finishing 9 minutes ahead; however, *Spray II* kept eating into *Gloriana's* lead until at the finish there was only 10 seconds between the two boats. Just the sort of racing you wish for!

With too few competitors in the A Division's final race, *Prize* could not overhaul *Arcturus* on the points table.

The Points Series was therefore decided on a countback. *Arcturus* having three 1sts to *Prize's* two, she was deservedly out in front. Congratulations to Bruce for a very consistent performance. Bruce would modestly tell you that the two masts of a schooner are definitely better than one. The Duder family are ever consistent and always there, and were justly rewarded with the Points Prize for the B Division. Congratulations to John, Ross and Lisa.

After such an intense season of racing filled with all of the emotions known to man, it is time to reflect on the programme and work out how we want to enjoy our time on the water together in this coming season. There are many differing views on this subject and hopefully, after the Boat Owners Meeting on May 13th, we will plot a new course for the enjoyment and the camaraderie that draws us to the classics. It's been a great season of Corinthian sailing!



In B Division, Janet was untouchable on PCC's closing day



The Col Wild cruiser Royal Saxon on the launch grids at Whakatakataka Bay towards the end of World War 2

Launch numbers provide something for everyone

As stated in a previous issue, the launch numbering system, which had its origins in 1914, was almost totally moribund by the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939. The new war created a need for some sort of numbering system again for a number of purposes, however, and new *ad hoc* systems were set up by the authorities for various categories of launches.

- Pleasure and fishing launches. Tight fuel rationing was imposed right from the outbreak of war particularly because of the threat of the German commerce raiders being at large in the Pacific and the huge demands of the

Harold Kidd concludes his three-part series

modern mechanised armed services and of military aircraft, a factor which had not been a consideration in 1914.

Nevertheless, all launches in commission received a simple number to be painted prominently on the bows to serve as identification in much the same way as the 1914 numbers had. In fact, little pleasure launching was done until the latter stages of the conflict and then often only through the sacrifice of petrol coupons intended for minimal essential use of the family car.

- After a very brief spell of

volunteer patrol work, the NAPS organization was efficiently set up. In most cases, the patrol launches were commandeered by the authorities and often run by their owners with a naval rank. These boats bore a number preceded by the letter Z on the bows.

- Eleven of the most capable private launches were impressed into RNZN service as full-on patrol vessels and they bore a number preceded by the letter Q.

- Other services. A large user of launches was the RNZAF,

particularly at various local seaplane bases, recreational establishments, and at Laucala Bay in Fiji and other forward areas in the Pacific. These launches were given a number alongside an RNZAF roundel, and were on charge with a W prefix.

- The fleet of HDML's and Fairmiles either imported from California or built here all bore naval numbers.

At the cessation of hostilities, owners thankfully removed these numbers from the pleasure launches which they had somehow maintained throughout the war, or had got back from the NAPS, or forces' service. The numbers were just

CYA modifies its management structure to accommodate growth

Launches continued

another nasty reminder of an unpleasant war.

The AYMBBA commenced a new system of numbering but, perhaps as a reaction to the regimentation of the wartime years, only a tiny proportion of local launches registered. The numbers were never worn in any shape or form, and they were generally considered to have no significance or practical value. Radio call-signs were of much greater value. By the 1960's even the

AYMBBA had given up bothering to number the launches on its register and just listed them alphabetically.

However, modern-day launch owners, without the baggage of the War, and motivated only by sheer nostalgia, do have a choice of numbers to wear, the 1914 system, the wartime systems or the post war system; and there is something there for everyone!



Top: Lady Gay in RNZN patrol service as Q00.

Above left: the Sam Ford cruiser Playmate at Laucala Bay with her RNZAF number 72; Above right: Mavis B serving with NAPS on the Waitemata in 1943/4 as Z24.

The Special General Meeting was called to consider a new set of rules prepared by Ron Jamieson and Harold Kidd at the request of the CYA Management Committee.

The CYA, established in 1995 by a group of dedicated enthusiasts, has broadened its activities over the past year by, for example:

- bringing classic launches on board
- accepting an invitation from the RNZYS to base itself at the Squadron
- involving itself with the Government's and other bodies' efforts to retain and preserve historical boats in New Zealand,
- and projecting itself better to interested boat owners outside of metropolitan Auckland.

The CYA pioneers laid very strong foundations through informal and convivial management, but CYA's growth, coupled with the loss of founder members Hamish Ross and John Gorter from the Committee, called for a review of structure and management.

The new rules create a conventional elected system of officers, allowing the growing and diverse membership to more easily participate in the affairs of the CYA.

At the well attended meeting, the new rules were adopted by a unanimous vote and new officers elected.

The management and leadership team now in place is:

Chairman - Russell Brooke

Vice Chairman - Chad Thompson

Club Captain (Yachts) - Greg Scopas

Club Captain (Launches) - Ron Jamieson

Secretary - Joyce Talbot

Committee - Chris Smith,

John Webber

John McFarlane

Dick Coughlan

Harold Kidd

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