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The Oyster story

Oyster is a 31ft 6in LOA ketch built by Charles Bailey Jr in December 1902 as a centreboard cutter/yawl to a design by George Holmes, published in 1899 in the *English Yachtsman* magazine. The design had taken the fancy of John Glasgow, a Nelson solicitor, and foundation member of the Aurora Sailing Club, who had already done a lot of yachting in Nelson. He knew every part of the Tasman Bay coastline, including all of its shoal waters, and had bought his own patch of paradise in Torrent Bay which the Glasgow family still enjoy today.

Bailey adapted the lines from a canoe stern to a counter, lengthening her by 2 feet, and altered her to the typical NZ three-skin diagonal frameless construction method. There was a substantial lead shoe for ballast.

Oyster was shipped down to Nelson from Onehunga by steamer and immediately put to cruising. Glasgow



Oyster reflected in the mud exposed by the departed tide in January 1904

was an intrepid cruiser who fortunately kept extensive logs, which are soon to be published, and entertaining reading they will make. In 1924 he sold *Oyster* for a bigger yacht to undertake more far-ranging cruising (Kapiti was a favourite). He bought the sturdy 34ft straight-stem cutter *Arawa*, built by Roy Henderson in

Auckland in late 1923, to a design by Gladwyn Bailey. Typical of the man, Glasgow sailed her to Nelson around North Cape and the west coast. *Oyster* went to Nigel Blair of Wellington.

She remained in Wellington for many years in the hands of several owners including R.G. Millman in 1937 (by when she had been

renamed *Ariki*) and later Gilbert Beckett. Millman removed her centreboard and converted her to a keel yacht.

From 1955, *Oyster* had another long spell in her home port or in the Sounds nearby, during which she was rebuilt by Dennis Win

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Restorations of the century



The much-anticipated restorations of the two Logan Bros 50-footers are progressing well. *Rainbow* (above), launched in December 1898, reveals her glorious lines above, while *Rawhiti* (right), first launched in October 1905, shows the great workmanship of her new timbers.



Voyage of the Galatea

– A Cautionary Tale of Nautical Negligence ...

By David Waddingham

We should have taken the events surrounding the trial sail as a portent ... A week before the delivery voyage to Auckland of the recently purchased *Galatea*, a 1909 le Huquet pedigree racer (in reconfigured form), the proud new owners and I, plus a couple of others, made the journey down to Tauranga early one winter's morning to get shown the ropes by the vendor.

She looked sound enough and quite elegant in her lines, excluding the quite angular new cabin addition, and all was going well until about 30 seconds into the shake-down sail when the engine ran out of diesel. Luckily we had enough way on to just coast out of the marina at which moment we were hit by a colossal squall bringing amazingly dense, near horizontal rain. We managed however to hoist the staysail and gain control, deciding to sail downwind and tie up at the other marina to refuel.

Unfortunately, it appeared that the problem lay deeper than fuel alone and we were treated to the experience of the vendor and two of his friends who turned up to assist, forming the memorable trio of 'Nev, Gav and Trev' engaging in amusing banter, abuse and tinkering. I can still remember the comedy socks that Nev, a genial short bald chap was wearing, that



Loading provisions prior to departure from Tauranga

carried the amusing line, "I'm not bald, I'm just taller than my hair".

Eventually, about six hours later, the problem was solved and we were able to complete our day's sailing at dusk back to the first marina. The vendor was still wet and cold from the morning's rain and arranged to meet us

back at the berth. That was fine until we discovered that there was no chart of the harbour on board.

Anyone who knows Tauranga harbour will recall that it has many convoluted channels and idiosyncrasies and, to make matters more confusing, the channel buoys didn't seem to mark



Hoisting a celebratory beer on leaving

the channel in the most obvious way. The position of the channel was a matter of enthusiastic debate, which was only resolved when we ran aground and became firmly stuck in the mud.

Luckily the tide was rising, so we had to wait only two hours to break out, and were privileged enough in the interim to be treated to the prime seats in a spectacular air show overhead free of charge.

We noticed that the bilge pump seemed to be activating occasionally coming back into the marina where we hadn't recalled this occurring earlier, so we asked the vendor to keep an eye on her over the week. The next weekend, a long one, came round and we reconvened back at the ship ready for our voyage complete with our provisions and a relatively bad forecast that warned of a severe cold front with power lines expected to come down – that kind of thing. However, it would all be offshore from the southwest, so we could hug the coast. As this was our only shot, we decided to brave it, our confidence buoyed by the knowledge that, in a worst-case scenario, we actually for once had a liferaft and epirb.

The leak seemed negligible and we set off enjoying a celebratory beer each as we navigated our way into the main shipping channel and exited the harbour.

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Antiquities are out while Protected Objects are now locked away

Back in 1975, the New Zealand Government decided that it was important to protect the country's cherished cultural heritage and antiquities especially since our Maori artefacts and history were under increasing pressure from overseas collectors. The Antiquities Act 1975 was passed to preserve Maori taonga and important aspects of NZ Pakeha culture as well.

Since the founding of the Classic Yacht Association of New Zealand that Act of Parliament has done a lot to protect our classic yachts and

launches. In one milestone case, a significant Logan Bros 36 ft linear rater was brought back from overseas, through the vigilance of the Association. But still the odd boat gets away like the game fishing launch Avalon, used here by Zane Grey in the 1920s.

In 2005 the Government called for submissions to strengthen the protection afforded to our heritage and the Association was one of the organisations that presented submissions before the parliamentary select committee.

The result was that, on 2nd August 2006, the Protected Objects Act 1975 was passed, coming into force on 1st November this year. The new Act is a complete rework of the Antiquities Act and tightens up the protection of our Maori artefacts and New Zealand's many other unique and significant cultural heritage items including those of our yachts and launches that are of historical significance. Whereas elsewhere in the world yachts are freely traded across oceans and borders, the possibility of *permanent* export from New Zealand has

been effectively stopped.

Penalties for any breach of the Act have also been significantly raised to \$100,000 or 5 years imprisonment for an individual and \$200,000 for a corporation. Fines of \$10,000 or 2 years imprisonment will also be in place for wilful damage of the object.

The Association welcomes this further tightening up of the loopholes and is heartened by the commitment the Government has towards our unique heritage vessels.

Chad Thompson

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in 1957 (who renamed her *Oyster*), and again by Dick Young in 1977, when she reverted to her original gaff rig. In 1999 she was bought by Mike Roussow and put into survey at Lyttelton. She replaced his Albert Strange 22 footer *Cherub*, built in 1922 by J. Miller Ltd for E.B. Scarvell of Lyttelton. Under his Jack Tar Sailing Co., Mike has run *Oyster* in charter ever since. Fortunately, she rode out the big October 2000 storm on a swing mooring with minimal damage.

Mike has been associated with the sea all his life. After two years in the RNZN, he worked as a seaman all over the world until returning to New Zealand and swallowing the anchor in Christchurch. It was a great



thrill for him in 2002 to have three descendants of John Glasgow aboard *Oyster*, son Ted, grandson Richard and greatgrandson Rohan.

It's a great story of the connections that still exist between our heritage yachts and the people who brought them to life.

Harold Kidd



Above left: Lyttelton CYA member Mike Roussow. Top: *Oyster* in company with HM Bark Endeavour off Banks Peninsula. Above: Three generations of Glasgows with *Oyster* at Lyttelton.

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