

# THE NEW ZEALAND CLASSIC YACHT JOURNAL



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Chris Miller Photo

*James Mobberley's Falcon (left) and Colin Pawson's Waimiga lead the flotilla upriver*

## *The great Labour Weekend Warkworth Launch Invasion*

Labour weekend marked the start of the new season for the CYA's Launch division with the highly anticipated cruise to Mahurangi and subsequent trip up the river to the Warkworth township. Not since the Dunkirk evacuation has so much physical activity gone into preparing a fleet of boats with one goal in mind.

Sadly the rigours of

working on a classic boat were too much for some and many a fine vessel remained on the hard awaiting that final touch, but as we all know maintaining a classic is like painting the harbour bridge: when you finish at one end you start again at the other.

The weather gods smiled on the weekend and Saturday dawned as the first real

summer's day of the new season. Throughout the day a superb collection of classic launches began assembling in the picturesque Mahurangi Harbour and the decision was made to make PukaPuka Inlet the overnight anchorage. Colin and Sheryl Pawson's immaculate launch *Waimiga* was nominated as the 'mother ship' for the sundowner session. At one

count 21 bodies were seen to be partaking of the hospitality before dispersing to other boats for dinner and an early bunk (yeah right). Skippers woke early to another fine day and commenced preparations for the invasion via water of the uber chic retail hub of Warkworth.

The assembly point was

*Cont. overleaf*

### Launches continued ...

Scott's Landing where a collection of boat-less mariners and invited CYA yachties were to join the fleet. The start was delayed to allow Alan Houghton on *Raindance* to demonstrate in the pure ice cold waters how to remove a painter from around one's prop. The assembled masses were entertained with numerous heroic dives before the call went out for a pair of younger lungs – the day was saved by Phil Hamlin (*Moanalua*) and James Mobberly off *Falcon*.

The fleet departed at approximately 11.00 and travelled in Indian file up the river on the incoming tide. Numerous skippers were seen with eyes glued to the depth sounders, but the fine skills of Colin Pawson delivered everyone safely to the town wharf. Along the way the fleet passed the beautifully restored scow *Jane Gifford* plying her trade with cruises on the river.

A second party of supporters who had travelled by car and motorcycle to Warkworth greeted the boats on arrival. The crews very quickly jumped ship and disappeared into the cafes and stores of Warkworth to boost the retail coffers of the town.

The return trip back down the river was very sedate with a couple of notable exceptions.

Alan Good on *Lucille* led Trevor Fell's *Lady Eileen* astray several times. Trevor will need to retrospectively apply to Rodney County for a resource consent to shift a few tonnes of river bed. Alan is suspected of having a severe case of colour blindness.

Leaving the river and once back into open seas the slow pace was too much for several of the to quote Harold Kidd 'slippery' launches, so the throttles were opened wide. Given the roar exiting from the exhausts, the upcoming Centennial Cup / Patio Bay race will be very interesting.

On board one of the 'slippery' vessels was our very own above mentioned historian who was observed to have a wide grin. This sentiment was not shared by said historian's wife, who was heard to warn him against any such behaviour in their newly acquired speed machine, *Romance II*. Historian's son,

Alex, however was very impressed.

Sunday evening saw many vessels depart for home leaving *Paramour*, *Waimiga*, *Falcon* and *Lucille* to enjoy another magical night in PukaPuka inlet.

James and Cherie took *Falcon* out for a brief fishing expedition and deprived the Hauraki Gulf of one of its finest male breeding snapper. Bruce Tantrum on *Paramour* displayed his usual hospitality on Monday morning when it was a case of 'who baked the best morning tea?'

The jury is still recording the votes and the result will

be made public in the future.

For those who missed the weekend a selection of images have been posted on the CYA forum for viewing and comment. Check out: [www.classicyacht.org.nz/forum/index.php](http://www.classicyacht.org.nz/forum/index.php)

Click on both 'The Forepeak' and 'The Launch Forum' sections.

It was another great weekend aboard some of our finest old ladies of the sea. We thank those skippers who shared their hospitality and boats with the extended CYA family. As they say if you were not out there – you were not there!

– Alan Houghton



Top: *Falcon* alongside Chris Miller's ex-whalechaser *Rorqual* in Warkworth's town basin. Middle left: The newly-restored scow *Jane Gifford*. Bottom left: James Mobberley (left) and Phil Hamlin, *Moanalua* warm up after cutting *Raindance* free. Bottom right: A nice snapper for *Falcon*.



*Ngataki in Picton,  
ready for shipping  
to Auckland*



## Ngataki returns to Auckland

If you were to make a list of the top three iconic yachts that sailed in Auckland in the 1930s there would be little difficulty. You would have the ultra-modern crack racer *Ranger*, the Logan masterpiece *Ariki* from the Edwardian period and ... *Ngataki*.

Ugly duckling *Ngataki* was built by unemployed Johnny Wray in the bite of the Great Depression. Wray followed a half model he made, inspired by the form of the Colin Archer *Teddy*, but square-bilged and with a transom

stern for ease of construction.

Scrounging material from all manner of sources he built the 35ft yacht in his parents' backyard in Lucerne Road and then undertook a series of epic offshore trips.

His 1939 book *South Sea Vagabonds* is a Kiwi classic, which inspired a whole post-war generation of Kiwi backyard builders and had them cruising the Pacific and even circumnavigating.

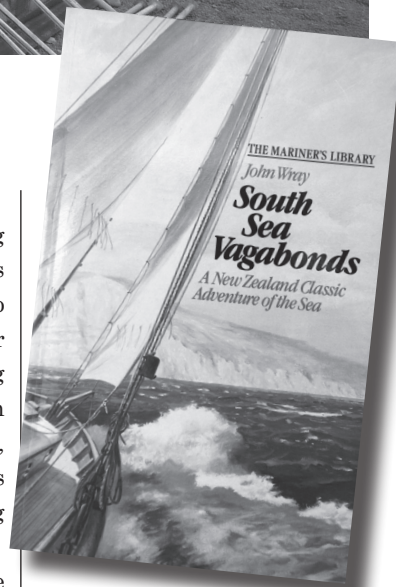
Tony Stevenson has recently added *Ngataki* to his Trust's stable and Boat Haulage have just brought

her up to Auckland.

Hopefully she'll be sailing on the Waitemata this summer. There is a lot to do to bring her back to her 1933 configuration, including reinstatement of her high bulwarks and her gaff rig, but the boat is as sound as a bell and it will be a rolling restoration.

Long time owner Debbie Lewis of Picton will continue as *Ngataki's* skipper.

Debbie has sailed *Ngataki* far longer and far further than Johnny Wray ever did, including a circumnavigation,



accompanied only by her seven-year-old son. Now that's a story.

*By Harold Kidd*



*Corona's centrecase is built, floors in place (left) and the sweet Wairiki with her new deck beams (below). Progress is rapid.*

Tuesday nights to find out what all the fuss is about. The buzz and excitement within this group is really infectious and sooner or later you find yourself looking for a small project just so you can be involved too.

Outside, *Wairiki* is looking absolutely gorgeous, now sporting new decks, coamings, cabin sides and toe rails. The engine is installed and work is continuing on floors and cockpit. Jason Prew and his team are really pushing ahead with this job and it won't be long before she will again be gracing the Waitamata harbour.

Enquiries are coming in thick and fast for next year's courses, in particular the certificate of traditional boatbuilding course, a full time one year course and also our clinker dinghy course. There is increasing interest in the hobby classes, in fact so much that there is a waiting list developing.

Peter Herbert our librarian is doing a fantastic job of cataloguing and filing the huge collection of local and overseas magazines including a complete collection of *Seaspray* magazine from issue number one. This library is proving to be a hugely valuable resource for those researching or restoring classic boats.

*Steve Cranch*

# Developments at the Boatbuilding School

Robert Brooke has stood down as Chairman of Trustees and been replaced by David Glen. We wonder if Robert will really spend any

less time at the school for which he has been the heart and soul since its inception. The board has been beefed up by the addition of journalist

Rebecca Hayter and myself.

Great progress is being made on the restoration of the 26' mullet boat *Corona*. Every day a small cheery group of volunteers come to work, chat, reminisce about old times and generally have a jolly good time of it. At the centre of hilarity is Ian McRobie of course. The centrecase is in place as are the floors; even the deckbeams are in up forward so she is really starting to look like a proper little ship.

Meanwhile, in the front workshop, several of the night school hobby class have happily completed their projects and some newcomers are starting to arrive on



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