

# THE NEW ZEALAND CLASSIC YACHT JOURNAL



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*Shane  
Appleton's smile  
says it all as  
champagne  
flows*

## Oh, Happy Days!



On 4th September 2011 we rejoiced in the long-awaited relaunch of the 54 footer *Rawhiti* at the Viaduct. Ten days later, at exactly the same spot, the tiny 20ft keeler *Happy Days* was launched.

This was the culmination of the efforts of CYA members Brian and Jean Holgate, Jason Prew, Robert Brooke and Shane Appleton, a young man who had put his heart and soul into the job for over three years, assisted by his parents Bruce and Heather, with support too from Tony Stevenson, Marco Scuderi and Paul Tingey.

*Happy Days* is a really tiny

craft, 20ft overall, 17ft 6in on the waterline; her beam is just 6ft, she draws 3ft 8ins and has 15cwt of lead on her keel.

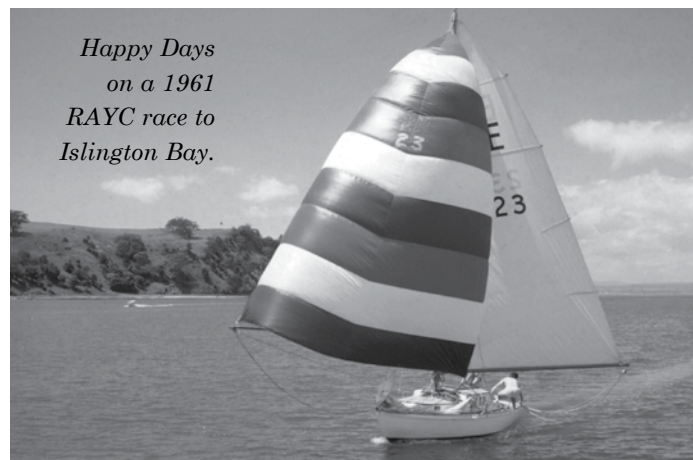
*Happy Days* was built in

1948 by Artie Perkins and his son John at their home in Kauri Glen Road to a plan appearing in a 1947 *Mechanix Illustrated* magazine, a neat little 'arc bottom' fin keeler in

the American style that had influenced Colin Wild with his *Tawhiri* and *Val* designs. Artie Perkins was a highly skilled joiner by trade, ending his working life as the well-loved woodwork teacher at Northcote Intermediate.

When the Perkins built the bigger keel yacht *St. George* in 1950, they sold *Happy Days* to Tony Armit, who sold her when building the Woollacott ketch *Marco Polo* for his 1954-7 circumnavigation with Tig Loe.

The little yacht, often referred to as *Little Ranger* went through several hands until Brian Holgate bought



**From Page 1 ...**

her in 1960 from Tauranga.

*Happy Days* did well in Brian's hands. Brian raced with Royal Akarana and Northcote-Birkenhead yacht clubs and cruised as far north as Mangonui. With his crew were Ron Holland (then not as famous as today) and brother Kevin Holland. Tony Armit had put on an extended cabintop but even so, cruising was a challenge. Nevertheless Brian found that the little keeler always sailed well and felt completely safe in all conditions. He adored the little yacht.

But when Brian married Jean in 1964 he sold *Happy Days* and she disappeared from his life for 43 years. In 2007, when Brian and Jean took part in the annual CYA launch trip to the Riverhead Pub, they spotted *Happy Days* moored off Whenuapai, with a yard of weed on her hull. A few days later she was in Holgate ownership once more, towed to Gulf Harbour and trucked home.

Brian aimed to restore her

himself, but ill-health struck unexpectedly.

He rang me, offering to donate the little yacht to the NZ Traditional Boatbuilding School. More than that, he threw in her excellent cradle and a tidy sum towards her restoration and paid for her transportation to the school.

The school decided to find an owner-restorer. A likely candidate was already to hand: 17-year-old Shane Appleton had been the monkey aboard *Jessie Logan*. Shane got straight into the job with much help from Jason Prew and kindly guidance from Robert Brooke and with cleaning, scraping, sanding and painting work by his parents, Bruce and Heather. Working outside gave way to a shift to Tony Stevenson's Tino Rawa Trust workshop in Kingsland.

Rapid progress then took place alongside *Wairiki* and *Ngataki* with input from expert tradesmen Marco Scuderi and Paul Tingey. The aim was to have her in the water for Auckland Waterfront's Heritage Week



and Boat Show in September. Shane made it with a couple of days to spare.

Shane will use *Happy Days* solely for racing in the B Division and for overnighing. Brian and Jean Holgate are

as pleased as Punch with the restoration, the Tino Rawa Trust has added her to its team at the Viaduct, and yet another historic Auckland yacht lives again.

**By Harold Kidd**

## A veritable Santa's workshop at Yachting Developments

For those of you that have not been out Hobsonville way recently, the new land development has transformed what was the old RNZAF base into Auckland's newest residential suburb. Recently announced plans for the construction of the Marine Quarter mean the 'old' aircraft hangars that for so long have been standing on their own will be integrated into Auckland's long awaited marine hub.

At a casual glance, most people would think these hangars are a storage area for surplus marine industry 'stuff' but that can be very misleading as I and a group of fellow CYA members discovered during a tour of Yachting Developments' facility in September.

There, we enjoyed a peek inside Blanche and Ian Cook's toy shed. It was what I can only imagine Santa's workshop must be like. On display, in varying degrees of restoration, was a slice of New Zealand's maritime history with the



crack yachts *Ranger*, *Innismara* and *Erewhon* accompanied by Blanche's ex-Police patrol launch *Lady Shirley* either almost ready for the water or about to receive the treatment from Yachting Developments' craftsmen's hands.

**By Alan Houghton**





*Admirers gather round to celebrate the relaunch of Mystery in Wellington*

# *The launch of Mystery*

Since The Wellington Classic Yacht Trust was formed in July/August 2010, a weather eye has been kept out for a planked Idle Along, the classic Wellington-designed centreboard class. In May, we acquired *Mystery* from her owner, Auckland-based boatbuilder Gary Matthews. This came after a tip off from John Logan, an IA enthusiast, who told us that the ex-Wellington champion *Windhover III* might be available for purchase – but it turned out she wasn't.

*Mystery* was built in Nelson by the most successful and prolific builder of IAs, Joffre Kroening, in the early 1950s. In 1956 she competed in the Moffat Cup, that year held in Wellington. She came second to the *Lorraine*, another of Kroening's boats, sailed by Hugh Poole.

Kroening used kaikawaka (also known as NZ cedar or kaiwaka), which is very light, but somewhat brittle. She had a few narrow cracks in the hull planking, and the topsides and transom had suffered a bit of iron sickness and stress around the rudder and chainplate fittings.

These were cut away and replaced with red cedar. This is a departure from designer Alf Harvey's insistence that boats be planked with native NZ timbers, but our attempts to source air-dried kaikawaka proved fruitless.

Someone had taken some power sanders to her hull, which meant that she wasn't very fair. This required a lot of work in filling, fairing, filling, fairing, painting, fairing, (you get the picture), until we were reasonably happy.

This has been very much

a 'get her in the water and sailing' restoration, rather than showroom finish. The deck at some stage was redone in ply (not accepted in the class until 1960), and the coamings aren't quite of her era. The ply was in good condition, though stained, faded and highly discoloured, so the decision was made to keep it for the time being.

We managed to contact Kroening's daughter, who supplied us with what information she could, along with copies of photographs and newspaper clippings, which was fantastic.

*Mystery* was relaunched on 22 October, and she proved very slippery (photos at [www.facebook.com/wgtnclassic](http://www.facebook.com/wgtnclassic)). Her maiden voyage was an absolute joy, and we later decided to push her further afield during a 20 knot

southerly. It was then that the decision about the deck was made for us because, on a tight lead crossing Evans Bay on a return trip from Kau Bay, a lashing on the chainplate failed and we lost the rig over the side.

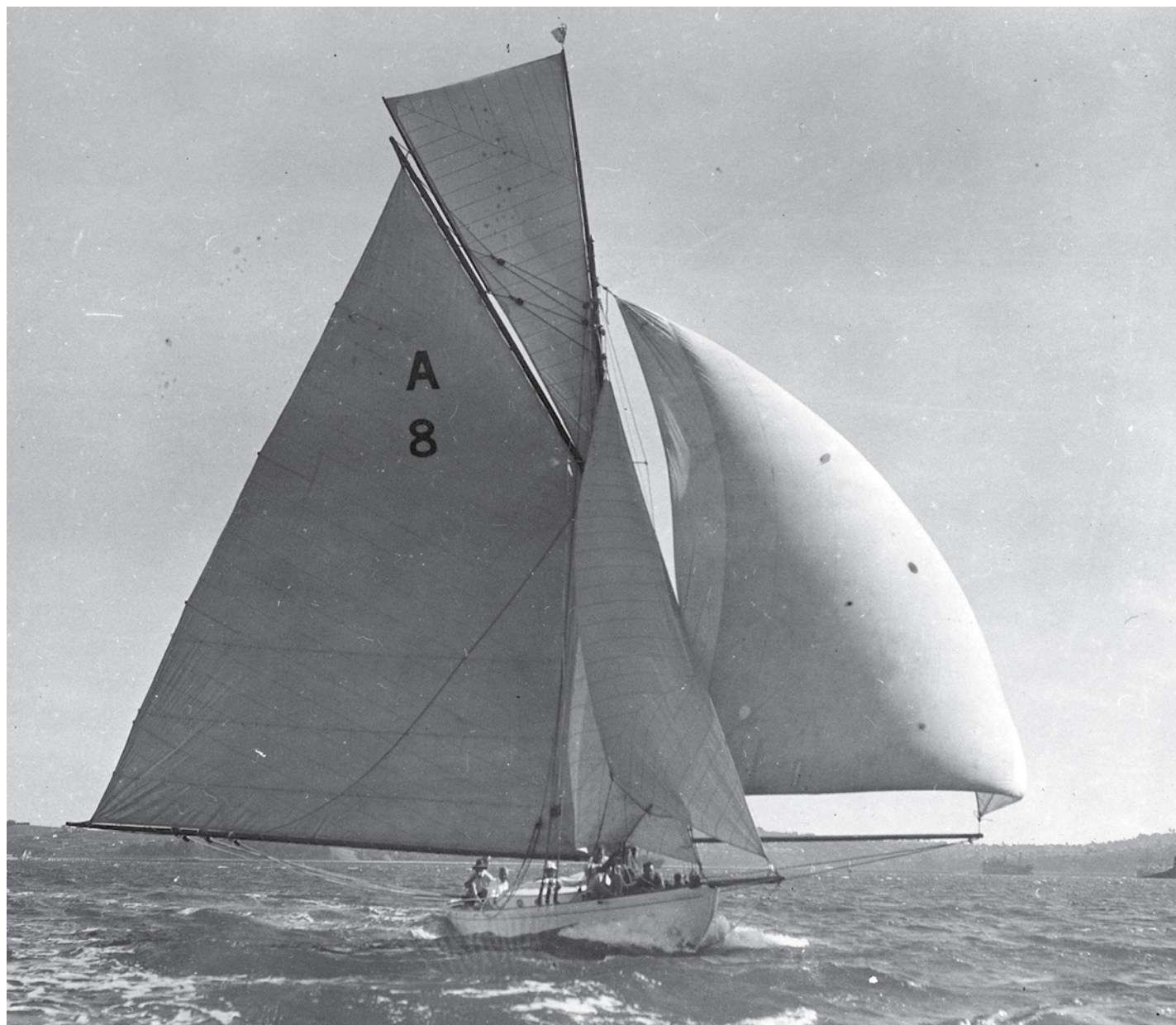
We were very fortunate in the lack of damage to the boat: there is a hole in the ply deck, and the box for the mast (they aren't stepped in the usual fashion) broke cleanly along one side – an easy fix.

As I write, we have purchased replacement decking, and by the time you read this *Mystery* will be redecked (or very close to) with class-approved planked deck and coamings appropriate to her era.

Roll on the Idle Along Regatta in Taupo next year!

*By Gavin Pascoe*





# *Victory back in harness*

One by one the thoroughbreds of our yachting past are being rescued and restored to their original form. Joining her Logan sisters is *Victory* (A8), which has been languishing for some years.

Marco Scuderi, the Sicilian

character and boatbuilder (the only one with a Ph.D. that I know) has bought *Victory* for a full restoration to her gaff cutter origins.

Built as a fishing boat, a 'schnapper boat', but soon converted to a cruiser/racer because of the power given by

her extra beam, *Victory* spent much of her life in the hands of the related Couldrey and George families and carried Harold George's Squadron Commodore's flag in 1937-9 and 1946-7.

Harold took her on a daring (for the time) trip to Norfolk

Island over Christmas 1928-9. She won just about every cup and trophy in the Squadron's cabinet at one time or another.

Back to glory days again!

*Harold Kidd*

## CLASSIC YACHT ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

GENERAL ENQUIRIES:

CLUB CAPTAIN YACHTS:

CLUB CAPTAIN LAUNCHES:

EDITOR:

WEBSITE:

Tanya Ankersmit, [admin@classicyacht.org.nz](mailto:admin@classicyacht.org.nz)

Robert Taylor 021 929 292

Alan Houghton 027 660 9999

Harold Kidd [harold@hklaw.co.nz](mailto:harold@hklaw.co.nz)

[www.classicyacht.org.nz](http://www.classicyacht.org.nz)