

THE NEW ZEALAND CLASSIC YACHT JOURNAL



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CLASSIC YACHT ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC.

PO Box 911055, Victoria Street West, Auckland 1142.

ISSN 1175-804X

www.classicyacht.org.nz

Issue 88 – June 2013



All smiles and a pint of the best to celebrate the successful circumnavigation – Alan Good Photo

Kumi's magnificent voyage

By Haydon Afford

It seemed like a good idea for years so in the end I said, 15th December I'm leaving. Which I did with a sack of potatoes, sack of onions, sack of rice, sack of muesli, sack of bread mix, a new foresail (instead of the sack I'd previously had) and heaps of diesel (not in a sack).

The plan was simple: out to The Barrier and turn right, so

I did that and went to Great Mercury Island. Great feed on the most luxurious boat I'd ever been on and belonging to a chef from Whitianga. Next day off to Tauranga, but all friendliness was off the menu when they found I was not insured. I anchored on the other side of the harbour and in the middle of the night things felt wrong, so I looked out the window and saw the

wharf motoring past. That was definitely wrong, so I re-anchored with heaps of scope and thereafter the chain was out the front, not in its locker.

Off to Whakatane and surfed in the bar. Wowzy Zowzy. They closed it for several days then, while it looked like Piha; then off to Omaio Bay, then Hicks Bay, then Te Araroa to anchor ready for East Cape.

I don't think Te Araroa is the perfect anchorage, but at least the wind was off the land, if rather fast ... OK though, plenty of scope.

East Cape deserves its reputation and I noticed that the waves can get quite big off the east coast end. You have to go over them sort of diagonally, but by the time I got to Gisborne, it was nice and sunny and calm and I

had decided to convert the non structural bulkhead at the front of the boat into a structural bulkhead. While I was there, Gisborne had a big song and dance and boozy festival, which doubles their population, but I was too involved with timber, glue and bolts to go to it. Also, I might have been a bit old.

On to Napier and off Portland Island in the middle of the night the sea decided to give the strengthening a big test, but no more creaking and groaning. I have a fuel tank built into the forepeak. It's meant to hold 300 litres, but when you fill it up you have to pay for 500 litres, so it might be quite heavy for poor old *Kumi*!

Napier Yacht Club was very friendly and there I met Bill, who agreed to come to Wellington with me because I was a bit scared. Turned out perfectly fine and I learned a lot from Bill, who has coastal skipper qualifications. Cape Palliser was calm, but lots of big swirly bits.

Wellington forecast was terrific: 50 knot northerly, changing 50 knots southerly

later that day. Outlook following three days: 50 knots northerly, followed by 50 knots southerly, etc.

After 10 days, a big high appeared and we were off to Marlborough Sounds. Great if you're into vertical bush with a thin rind of rock at the bottom and 40m deep, 20m from the shore. I found a couple of nice beaches though, then to D'Urville Island. Admiralty Bay suddenly turned very windy, and wavy, dead ahead. Makes you go slow, but on D'Urville Island the bay that looked good on the chart was actually a pub with moorings for the night. They said 50 knots was blowing, but that was normal.

Next morning, French Pass at low tide was calm, (but obviously could push you where you did not want to go), and down to Nelson in brilliant sunshine. Up to Golden Bay and into Tarakohe harbour, which I left at 2am for the West Coast. Farewell Spit in the early hours; Cape Farewell and the Navy spots me. A warship of some sort comes roaring over, straight at me,

big bow wave, big rooster tail – oh! oh! It's OK, he applies full port rudder so that I can see his beautifully anti-fouled starboard bottom. Someone on the after deck waves and he is gone into the mist. I wouldn't mind a ride on that little number.

Cape Farewell is correctly named, because the South Island disappears behind mist there and does not reappear until you're getting up close and personal with the Greymouth Bar. The night off Westport, though, was the most spectacular of the journey. The moon was full and the sea so calm that there was no reflection of the moon off the water except just on the horizon.

Then a ripple must have started, because the moon's reflection reappeared as spot lights in the line from me to the moon ... pow, pow, pow they would go, very sudden on and off. Lasted a minute or two, then more ripples appeared and the reflection next to the boat appeared as almost stationery zebra stripes. These very slowly undulating stripes gradually

crept out to the horizon, turning off the spot lights.

The Greymouth Bar was fine, fishermen friendly. Haydon has a big sleep. Milford Sound spectacular, but tour boat operators definitely not friendly. And on down Fiordland where there is a lot more vertical bush, strong winds and hard to find a good anchorage. I think we are rather spoilt in the Hauraki Gulf!

It nearly all ended at Riverton, where I misread the GPS coordinates. With zero visibility in fog this was not the perfect place to do that, but I noticed the depth was wrong (not enough), so it was OK.

Then Stewart Island. South of Mason Bay, the waves and wind got up to their normal size again (can't see over them, rigging makes a whirring sound) and I'm aiming for 'Easy harbour'. I make the turn, so I'm now running with the waves – fast and easy, (*Kumi* is a fantastic following sea boat), straight at a very smooth and clean cliff. Not very high, but looks very wet.



A reminder of the Mariner's Prayer – Oh Lord, your ocean is so big and my vessel is so small ...



Job done – Kumi heads back up the Waitemata Harbour to Auckland – Alan Houghton Photos

I dodge an ugly reef off the island to the left. I dodge an even uglier 'sister' on the right, but I'm having trouble identifying the rocks off the entrance to this harbour. It is all rocks and *Kumi* is having a terrific time surfing down the waves at 10 knots straight at them.

Half a mile and it is all over. I look left and there it is. Hard to port, plenty of throttle and all is soft, but still not easy. Do I anchor and eat my celebratory steak at the silver sand beach with the sapphire water? Or, do I go 300-400m to the right to the golden sand beach with emerald water? Decisions, decisions.

Next morning, great – gone calm again around South Cape, and up to Port Pegasus where there is more vertical bush. But it is not so deep. I even managed to hit the bottom. Then up to Golden Bay in Paterson Inlet (in time to join a team for pub quiz night). Then over to

Bluff, where the tidal range and the tidal overfalls in the channel are big.

Out again at dawn for Port Chalmers, past the attractive cliff, beach, harbour bays and rolling hills background of the south coast. Round Nugget Point and next day cruise into Carey Bay at Port Chalmers. Then off to Akaroa, once again dodging cruise ships, which seem common around the coast.

At Akaroa, 100% fog – better not misread the GPS here because it's cliffs, not a beach. I sail out of a curtain into brilliant sunshine and I'm half a mile inside Akaroa Harbour. I think I'm clever this time.

Next, Lyttleton (rather wrecked by the earthquake), and another over-nighter to Port Underwood. This leg used too much oil. Across to Wellington again and through the 'Karori Rip'. You are supposed to avoid this area, but it was a calm sunny day. Then ahead the

sea went white, so I thought, oh! oh! and hung a hard right. I stopped the 5 knot nonsense and started the 12 knot nonsense ... wow that water moves! Then it started going white around me and we seemed to be going up and down a lot. It all happened very quickly, and then, 10 minutes later, we were out of it. It's probably best to avoid this area.

At Wellington, after lots of phone calls to James Mobberley (thanks James), I replaced an O-ring and we stopped using oil.

Then New Plymouth, through Hokianga, more over-nighters in what seems like the west coast of NZ to me – calm, fine weather with the wind and waves more behind than ahead, motor purring, sails drawing GPS speeds over 6 knots. Captain happy.

Hokianga Bar is quite shallow and I waited there till the weather was such that it would change SE to

SW at the top of the Island. This worked. Anchored at Ahipara, then up to Maria Van Dieman, Reinga, North Cape (very rough) and, because it was now SW, across to Parengarenga to the lee of the land and down to Henderson Bay for the night.

Next day called on Mangonui, then Whangaroa, where *Kumi* spent 25 years as a crayfish boat. The family of the fishermen were happy to meet her there. My cousin boarded here and we went to the Bay of Islands in perfect conditions. Next day was good, but forecast not so good, so overnight to Kawau and waited out the 35 knot SE by sleeping, then next day back to a terrific welcome home party. Thank you everybody.





Alan Houghton Photos

Above: Diane and Viv Wyatt with Tony Blake. Below: Manhandling Bandit from the shed.

Sir Peter Blake's first keeler acquired

Bandit has been purchased by the Classic Yacht Charitable Trust for restoration. Built by a young 18 year old Peter Blake in the backyard of the family home in Bayswater and launched in 1966, it was his first keel boat. Designed by Van de Stadt, she is 23' 4" long by 7' 8" beam, and in reasonable original condition.

The CYCT has an existing active fleet of Logan classics including Waitangi, Thelma, Frances, Gloriana and the former Auckland Harbour Board tugboat Te Hauraki, plus the 40' Kotere (yet to be restored). The Trust, chaired by Mr John Street, is committed to the preservation and continued use of important old wooden vessels that have a most

valued place in Auckland's maritime heritage.

Bandit will be restored back to the condition and appearance she had when built 47 years ago. Peter, and younger brother Tony, now a CYCT trustee and skipper of Thelma, raced in the JOG (Junior Offshore Group) in Auckland and won

the division in 1967.

Bandit has been in a shed for some 14 years and has now been generously handed over by Mr Viv and Mrs Dianne Wyatt of Warkworth to the CYCT for restoration.

Bandit will return to Auckland to be on permanent display for public viewing in a suitable harbourside

location. Funding for the restoration needs to be raised and any donations would be gratefully received. Please contact the Classic Yacht Charitable Trust, c/- A Foster & Co, PO Box 1951, Auckland, 1140

Bruce Tantrum,
Trustee, CYCT



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