

Journal of the  
Wellington Classic Yacht  
Trust

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

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Number 1, October 2014



*Lizzie* (foreground) and *Nanette* reach for the finish during final race of the RPNYC Moore Wilsons Classic Winter Series

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## About the Wellington Classic Yacht Trust

WCYT was set up in 2010 in response to the situation of the *Lizzie*, which had sunk at her moorings in Auckland due to neglect. *Lizzie* is a 22-foot sloop built by Ted Bailey at Balaena Bay. Launched in February 1909, she is the oldest surviving Wellington-built racing yacht. WCYT focuses on the rescue of vessels with a significant association with the Wellington region which are at risk of destruction, and works to ensure their continued useful life.

The trust also researches and publishes on the history of the sport of yachting in the region.

Our burgee was designed by Phillipa Durkin. The colours are cream, brown and orange; representing the timber our vessels are made of, the sails which drive them, and the fastenings which hold them all together.

### From the editor

Welcome to the first issue of the Journal of the Wellington Classic Yacht Trust. It is planned that four issues be published per year, in electronic format only.

The purpose of the journal is to act as a document of record of the activities of the Trust. This first issue is an experiment in form and content. I hope there is something of interest to all readers.

We welcome contributions from our readers, as well as suggestions and corrections!

**Gavin Pascoe**

### From the chairman

This first issue of our journal provides an opportunity to look back, take stock, and reflect on some achievements and highlights of the Trust's first four years.

Our first task was to rescue and restore *Lizzie*, and we achieved that remarkably quickly and economically. Within three years *Lizzie* was transformed from a stripped down hull to a regular race entrant and winner, with 2013-14 Summer and 2014 Winter Classic Series handicap wins.

No sooner was *Lizzie* back in the water than *Atalanta* was kindly donated to us by Julian Matson and transported from Dunedin to Wellington courtesy of Meric and Heather Davies. About six weeks of intense weekend work carried out by volunteers at the Evans Bay hard stand saw her hull splined, re-caulked, painted and returned to the water. Work is getting underway on her deck and house.

Alongside these larger projects we have restored and occasionally raced the *Idle-Along*, *Mystery*, and have taken on a classic launch and lapstrake dinghy.

Our nautical real estate is gradually growing, with two Clyde Quay moorings and a dinghy locker, and we are getting closer to acquiring a boat shed.

Of course these growing commitments call for a growth in income. We are pursuing a number of strategies to achieve that, and this journal and its associated Supporter Membership drive is one of those. We hope you'll enjoy this journal and support the work of our Trust by subscribing.

**Peter King**

## WCYT Fleet update

Work on the boats has appeared to have been a bit slower lately. However, looking back, we have accomplished much.

### Atalanta

Since the initial rush last year of getting *Attie* into a position where she can sit at her mooring, we are in planning and gathering materials mode. She is moored at number one, Clyde Quay (in the corner near the new apartment development).

We've been in conversation with Bruce Askew about reverting to her original centreboard configuration. Bruce has taken her lines and drawn up the specs for centreboard, along with a suggested sail plan.

As in all restorations, one thing depends on another, and we are developing ideas and plans to cover contingencies as the first stage of work begins.



Milan and Ben working on the samson post tenon

In September work began on her samson post and we lofted out her stern counter. It won't be long before we have a bowsprit in place, and with the counter attached, the full grace of her hull will be restored. As with all boats, the head bone is connected to the foot bone, so we will be looking into the stemhead, deck, reshaping the toerail, and planning her cabin – more or less at the same time.

Richard Holmes has donated some nice pieces of

New Zealand kauri (delivered from the South Island by Denis Maddever on board *Nanette*), and the

RPNYC has also provided enough to rebuild her counter. We also have stockpiled a large amount of douglas fir, sourced by Peter Askew.

We are always on the lookout for and stockpiling raw materials such as fastenings, glues and timber. We will need a lot of Oregon/douglas fir, NZ kauri, Australian hardwoods, pohutukawa and teak, but will accept just about anything, including ply of any grade, for lofting and patternmaking purposes. Every little bit helps!

### Rowboat

Our Titahi Bay boat is stored in Gavin's garage at the moment. She is in good shape, having been stripped back by Don MacDonald and is ready for some planking repair to commence.

## Lizzie

*Lizzie* has proved a real joy to sail since her relaunch in 2013. Over last summer David, Peter and Gavin worked on interior panelling, toe rail caps and sundry other things. After a recent haulout which saw her repainted and faired, a leak attended to, and bits and pieces of rigging work, she is getting more and more interesting, and enjoyable to sail. With funding supplied by the Wellington Community Trust, *Lizzie* now has a new mainsail and jib. These were made by Seaview sails in June - they threw in a very nice mainsail cover gratis.

*Lizzie* has also won for herself \$1000 worth of work by Bud Nalder (see article on the RPNYC Classics Winter series), so she is looking better and better!

## Mystery

*Mystery* is stored at Clyde Quay and available for members to sail – we have been invited to the Idle Along Nationals in November this year. We went several years ago and came away with second place – it would be nice to be able to repeat this performance, but before we do, we need to find a trailer – can anyone help?

## Mahoe

*Mahoe* remains in a holding pattern. She has recently had a cover put on her. We plan to have another blitz day on her soon – it will be announced on our facebook page.

## Other Activities

Gavin has made two models of Alexander Turnbull's yacht *Rona* to sell at the National Library shop. We approached them thinking they would appreciate something made locally with a direct link to the founder of the library, and proceeds to go to the WCYT. One made of NZ kauri, Kahikitea and Douglas fir has just sold, and is going to be used as a trophy presented to a staff member of the Library. The other remains on sale for \$250. **[STOP PRESS – these have now sold. More coming]**

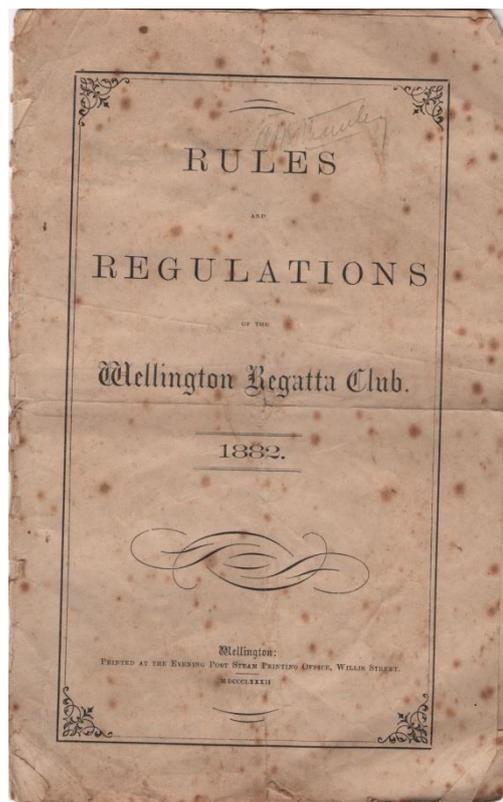


## RPNYC Archive

The RPNYC plan to put the Coene sheds to better use by expanding the Ocean Sports Centre. This means moving the archive. We approached the Alexander Turnbull Library to assess the collection with a view to taking it into their care. An initial assessment will take place in November with Commodore Geoff Herd, Field Librarian Diane Woods and WCYT trustee and National Library staff member Gavin Pascoe.

The archive dates back to the very beginnings of the club and contains unique material relating to the sport and pastime of yachting in the region. The image at right shows one of the oldest items in the collection, a rule book of the Wellington Regatta Club, from which the RPNYC was formed. It's the only copy known.

As Alexander Turnbull was an active member from 1892-1906, holding various offices, including Commodore (1899-1901), the Library which bears his name is very interested in looking after the collection to ensure continued care and access for any researchers.



## TV One's Descent from Disaster



For the past few months we've also been working in a small way with the production of a Documentary on the 1951 Wellington to Lyttelton race Disaster. It will be part of the Descent from disaster series and screen next year.

Trustee Milan Mogin's shed is the venue for Peter Montgomery's interview with Bruce Aske about his participation in the race.

Detailed restoration and conservation plans of our vessels are on our website in the WCYT Documentation section:

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

## Meet the Trustees

There are at present nine trustees of the Wellington Classic Yacht Trust. Each issue we'll single one out to write a bit about themselves. First up is the redoubtable **Ben Amor**.



I've been sailing since I was about 8, one way and the other. I bought *Tracer*, a Raven 26, in about 2009, as the old boy who taught me my seamanship always said that glass boats require less maintenance and allow you to go sailing rather than being a boatbuilder. This, as it turns out, was wholly inaccurate, and I spent the first season of owning *Tracer* replacing most of the deck.

Then the mast fell down.

I fell in with the WCYT pretty early in the piece, donating some money to assuage my conscience because I was too busy working on my own boat to volunteer any labour. Also, I'd never worked on a wooden hull. Then I felt guilty and fixed up *Lizzie's* rudder. Then I did a bit of rivetting. Then I did a bit of sanding. Then we laid the deck...

Four years on, and I've won two championship series with *Lizzie*, sailed *Mystery* in the nationals, stopped talking to Gavin for a week after he bought *Mahoe*, built a boom from scratch, sailed Cook Strait on a couple of 100+ year old boats, and spent more time around, in, and under the waters of Clyde Quay than I can count. From never having worked on a wooden hull I've gone to having a distinct order of preference among my collection of planes and drawknives and opinions on douglas fir...

*Tracer* now needs the rest of her deck replacing.

Become a member of the Wellington Classic Yacht Trust and know you are doing something to keep our rich sporting history alive.

**\$30 per annum**

Payment details

Bank **BNZ**

Account name **Wellington Classic Yacht Trust**

Account number **02-0536-0138286-000**

Email [wgtnclassic@gmail.com](mailto:wgtnclassic@gmail.com) to notify us of payment

# Xarifa

Wellington's number one yacht

by Gavin Pascoe



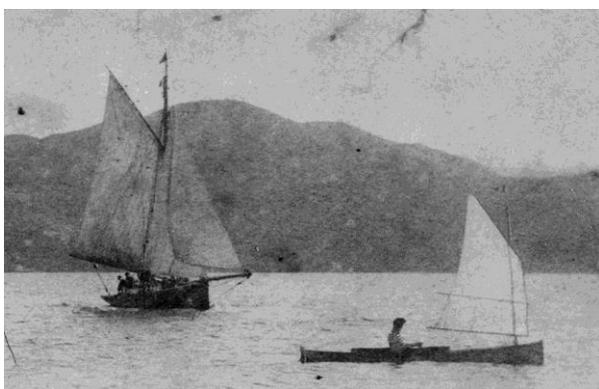
**Xarifa at her moorings at Thorndon (Thetis behind?) date unknown**

Launched 01 August 1874, *Xarifa* was the first "proper" yacht to be built in Wellington - her purpose nothing other than the recreation of racing and cruising. She was built at Clyde Quay by Henry Berg, a Norwegian boatbuilder who made his home variously in Nelson, The Marlborough Sounds and Wellington. During the mid 1870s he was particularly busy in Wellington.

The build took 14 weeks.

She was also reputedly the first Wellington build to carry all of her design ballast under her keel, as opposed to the usual centreboard/moveable ballast combination on a boat this size.

There were no yacht clubs at this time in Wellington, so beyond the annual regatta, run by a committee convened each year, there was not a great deal of organised sailboat racing. Races would take the form of a public challenge and proposed stakes published in the Evening Post newspaper, followed by a response. These races were generally administered by the regatta committee.



**Xarifa departing for Lyttelton 1880. Rob Roy canoe in foreground**

*Xarifa*, under her first owner (G. Firmin) campaigned in the inter-provincial regattas in Wellington and Lyttelton, the Anniversary regattas of both ports, and cruised around the Marlborough sounds.

The first of her challenge races took place in February 1875, against the *Garibaldi*, also built by Berg in 1874. *Garibaldi* was a centreboarder built as a fishing boat; judging by the name, for some Italians working out of Island Bay.

Each party put up a stake of 20 pounds, though a book worth £200 in stakes was soon running. The *Xarifa*, skippered by Lancelot Holmes (Port Nicholson's chief pilot) came out clear winner, when the *Garibaldi* overstrained her garboards and filled with water. A rematch was held, though the result doesn't seem to have been recorded.



1891 was the final year for *Xarifa*, *Isca*, *Thetis* and their ilk, as the new rating rule was introduced this year. New designs – based on sail area and penalising waterline length (and which gave rise to the rule cheating “Classic” look associated with long overhangs) spelled their end.



*Xarifa*, with her sensible rig, gets a nice lift and climbs to weather of a picturesque, but inefficiently rigged *Thetis* ca. 1880



*Xarifa* was eventually sold as a cruiser to a Blenheim owner in 1894, and she continued to be cruised and chartered in the Marlborough Sounds through the decade. One night in June 1900, while in charter to a group of surveyors, she slipped her anchor and disappeared without trace.

*Xarifa* at Nelson in 1892

E. W. Mills became Commodore of the Port Nicholson Yacht club (1891-1896) He was an importer of iron and related goods based in Wellington. His son did most of the helming of *Xarifa*

Xarifa

Builder Henry Berg  
 Year 1874  
 LOA 41' 2"  
 Beam 10' 9"  
 Tonnage (Builders' rule) 18  
 Year lost 1900



E. W. Mills

## RPNYC Classic winter series

A competitor gives his perspective on the recent series



Loloma (foreground) and Thelma cross the start line race 1

Almost a dozen classics registered to share the start line with the boats from the two-handed PHRF series, before each would head off on their respective courses. The classics ranged from the 1895 Bailey, *Thelma*, to the 1958 Woolacott *Reremai*; in total, over 1000 years of vintage New Zealand craft, plying the harbour on five alternate Saturday mornings from mid-June.

Apprehensions of bleak Wellington winter weekend mornings were dashed by a succession of zephyr-like conditions, in which the fleet tested each other's light air

sailing skills and equipment over occasionally shortened courses. To be fair, only the Saturdays were so blessed (or cursed); the Sunday fully crewed division regularly saw winds the classics could not have endured, and there was plenty of rain, wind, snow, and hail in the interstices between race days.

*Thelma's* crew plainly found the trip up from Evans Bay to the Inner Harbour startline each day an unattractive alternative to a sleep-in: she twice arrived behind the line after the starting gun, and missed the earlier start of the penultimate race entirely (although the last buffets of a challenging southerly may also have played a part). Throughout the series *Thelma* marked herself as the fastest of the gaff-rigged ships, and decently challenged more modern boats.

The rakish *Galatea*, apparently blissfully unaware of all developments, regularly missed course changes and postponements. In race 3 she got caught in an awful hole by the container terminal, out of sight of the race officials. By the time she got out she decided to return to her moorings, with the happy but brief result of being awarded line honours. [This of course gave rise to debate on board

*Mabel* whether she was purposefully deploying the classic Donald Crowhurst manoeuvre – ed.]. An OCS on the final day meant a race well sailed squandered.

Some controversy erupted over editorial observations of the Bermudan-rigged *Marangi* and *Wakarere*'s use of spinnakers in Race 2, which took them off to an unassailable lead. Their subsequent performance under plain sail illustrated these boats' superiority on reaching in stronger winds, and their skippers' preparedness skilfully to muscle through time-saving gybes too daunting for some of the more extensively rigged older craft improved their results again.

*Loloma*, missing the last races due untimely crew maladies, through the series showed unanticipatedly good reaching capabilities, not easily observable at higher attitudes. Her deep tracks away from the main fleet in Race 3's strengthening winds saw her reclaim substantial distance as she headed for the common marks.



Lizzie's yellow peril chasing Thelma's red mist.  
Race 2

*Lizzie* was the revelation of the series, as she showed speed beyond her waterline expectations, and headed on clever tracks to avoid vast holes and to take advantage of evanescent breezes. Her light air manoeuvres in Race 2 came close to upsetting *Thelma*, who survived only by dint of her starboard tack, and to whom *Lizzie* doggedly stuck in Race 3. *Lizzie* was in receipt of a new suit of sails for the final day of racing, which meant her earlier apparent 'sponsor', Hyundai, could return to its exclusive support of the P and M classes at the Royal Akarana Yacht Club, and of the *Spirit of Adventure*.

In the result, series line honours went to *Marangi*, *Wakarere*, and *Thelma* in that order; on handicap (although its calculation may not have been quite as Dixon Kemp envisaged), *Lizzie* and *Mabel*, 1<sup>st</sup> =, and *Thelma* and *Wakarere*, 3<sup>rd</sup> =. A terrific inaugural series; here's hoping it becomes an institution.



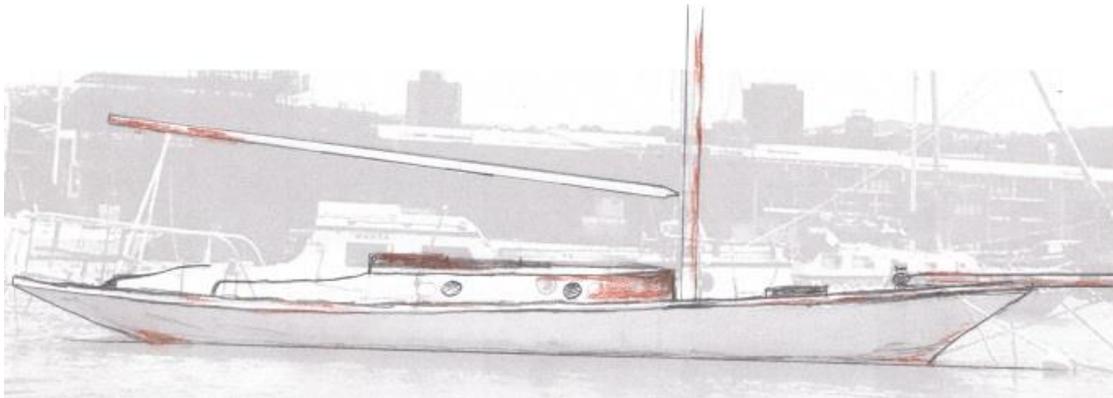
Marangi and Wakarere wait for the start of race 3

**\*\*A big note of appreciation is due to Paul Davies and the race officials for the series – Ed.\*\***

## One of the locals

by Gavin Pascoe

### Waiata/Mabel



Concept drawing superimposed on a recent photograph of Mabel

Readers familiar with the Evans Bay marina might be wondering where long term tenant *Waiata* has gone. She has been bought by a local and moved to new moorings at Clyde Quay.

About the fastest passage from Auckland to Nelson was made 24 years ago by Dr. Deck in the 2-rater keel yacht *Mabel*, which he purchased from Mr. W. Swinerton, of Devonport. He thought of sailing her home single-handed, but "Speedwell" persuaded him to take a paid hand. She made the very good time of about six days to Cape Palliser, where a heavy southerly gale sprang up and blew her over 100 miles out to sea. During this trying time, the doctor wrote to me later, the paid hand was so seasick that he took quite a lot of attention, and for the time was more trouble than help to the gallant doctor, who had to beat the yacht back single-handed, eventually making Nelson in 12 days.

Auckland Star 13 May 1939

*Waiata* was believed by her previous owner to be a Logan build from ca 1905. She is actually *Mabel*, built by Charles Jr and Walter Bailey in 1895. She is looking a bit rough around the edges, and during the storms last year had the misfortune of having her furling headsail and mainsail and cover shredded while at her moorings. Her new owner has plans for a spruce up, however, and work has begun on a new house closer to her original configuration. She has also reverted to the name with which she was christened.

*Mabel* spent a considerable time in Nelson before being taken to Lyttelton. Seaspray reports that she was sailed north to Wellington during the 1950s.

Despite her inefficient sail plan and an alarming tendency to take on buckets of water when close-hauled, she had a good season in the recent RPNYC Classic Winter series (see contributor's article above).

She will perform better once she returns to the rig for which she was designed.



Mabel as she appears now

## Sponsorship opportunities

Wellington Classic Yacht Trust is currently seeking sources of funding for the below. We are flexible in our dealings, and are happy to discuss each on a case-by case basis, so as to come to an arrangement which suits everybody.

We also happily accept one-off donations of materials or money. We are a NZ-registered charitable trust. Payments may be made directly into our bank account. A tax receipt will be issued for each donation received. No amount is too small!

We are all volunteers, and retain no staff, so all donations received go directly to our core task of caring for the vessels held in our trust.

Bank **BNZ**

Account name **Wellington Classic Yacht Trust**

Account number **02-0536-0138286-000**

### Moorings

We are seeking funding of *Atalanta's* mooring fees at Clyde Quay. The cost is \$1050 per annum. She has great city waterfront visibility, directly adjacent to the Clyde Quay Wharf apartments ([www.clydequaywharf.co.nz/](http://www.clydequaywharf.co.nz/)).

### Atalanta restoration

*Atalanta* requires funds to complete her restoration. We are interested in discussing funding of any portion of expenses relating to this project. More details may be found in her restoration plan on our website in the WCYT Documentation section.

### Small shed at Clyde Quay

WCYT is on the waiting list for a shed at Clyde Quay to store our *Idle Along Mystery* and gear. The sheds vary in cost, depending on the floor area. The type of shed we require costs in the region of \$1500 per annum.

We are willing to share shed real estate with any individual or group willing to sponsor the rent, and are open to discuss the possibilities of a shared lease.

As it is impossible to predict when a lease may become available, and confirmation of acceptance of the offer of a lease requires a fast response, we are seeking expressions of interest which we may keep on record to refer to once our name reaches the top of the list.

Thankyou Jason Walker for undertaking to cover Lizzie's mooring fees for the next 12 months!

## Sailing Calendar

Below is a list of sailing events and racing suitable for Classics and wooden boats in general. For notices of race, rules, etc, visit the Clubs' websites.

### Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club

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

RPNYC are putting on two series over spring and summer for classics. Any boat made of timber may enter. Courses tend to suit the older hull type, and typically (but not always) involve a short beat, with longish leads and runs - Good courses with just enough thinking involved to ensure the race is not just a procession.

| <b>Classics Windward series</b>                          | <b>Classics "Big Day" series</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 01 November – 1315 RPNYC Windward Classics series race 1 | 08 November - Classic race 2     |
| 17 January – 1315 Windward Classics series race 2        | 28 Feb – RPNYC Classic race 3    |
| 07 Feb – Windward classics series race 3                 | 02 May - RPNYC Classic race 4    |
| 07 March - Windward classics series race 4               |                                  |
| 14 March - Windward classics series race 5               |                                  |

RPNYC also run Rum racing each Friday evening from 31/10/2014 to 27/03/2015.

### Evans Bay yacht and Motor Boating Club

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

Evans Bay runs a series for cruising keel yachts. No spinnakers are used, but there is always plenty said post-race at the very convivial clubhouse. Each race has a trophy assigned. The series runs October-December, the summer series begins January. The club plans to put together a small regatta for classics in March 2015.

|                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 01 Feb – Volvo international boating day            |
| 21 Feb – East –West dash (Evans Bay)                |
| 14-15 March – Evans Bay Regatta (Classics division) |

### Cook Strait Sailing Club

<http://cssc.org.nz>

The CSSC is a new club dedicated to social sailing events. They generally take place on long weekends, or other times when the other local clubs have nothing in their calendar. Keep an eye on their website for alerts.

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| 26 October – Three shoals fiasco |
|----------------------------------|