

BILGEWATER

January 2024



...A happy squadron Christmas party...



COMMITTEE DIRECTORY 2023-2024

Committee Member

Murray Pearce

Flip Rayner

Portfolio

Commodore, Sponsorship,
Keeler Race Officer #1

Vice Commodore, TY Race Officer
New Member liaison,
Comms-Website and Facebook

Contact


0274 951 223

021 354 773

Jim Pasco	Treasurer Keeler Race Officer #2	021 143 1199
Greg Reeve	Secretary Membership Manager	021 507 809
Chris Martin	Gulf Classic KKBC Liaison Understudy to Treasurer	021 354 773
Tim Hayward	Handbook Editor	027 444 5902
Andrew Jones	Handicap Administrator Understudy to Secretary	022 326 1993
Anton Post	Assistant TY Race Officer Assistant to Flip on Comms.	021 296 9346
Rodger Bonnett	General Committee work	021 423 457

Non-Committee Portfolios

Hugh Beecroft	Compound Convenor	027 496 7033
David Whitburn	Compound Site Manager	027 384 1014

Website: www.waikatoyachtsquadron.org.nz
Email: waikatoyachtsquadron@gmail.com
: www.facebook.com/groups/waikatoyachtsquadron/

Postal: PO Box 4263, HAMILTON 3247

*Our first and foremost objective is to encourage and support
safe family sailing – both cruising and racing*

Commodore's Comment

Well, the opening photograph records the great xmas gathering at the yacht club on the 12th December. What a great turnout and terrific organisation by Tracy Lee Perry and her happy band of elf helpers. It's the best turnout I have seen in my time with the squadron and bodes well for our future – especially with all those new members and junior sailors.

And now to 2024 and the rest of our sailing season. Facebook posts have shown Anton and Family, as well as Jim Pasco, with visiting crew John Lowery from England, sailing their yachts to the far north (that's north of Kawau!!). Many other posts show a good turnout of squadron boats, out and about the Coromandel coast and the Waitemata sailing areas. Great to see.

Our sailing programme recommences on Anniversary weekend with the 4th round of our passage series, together with a “have a go” fun race on the Sunday. This is followed a week later by the midsummer cruise to Rakino and Kawau over the long Waitangi weekend. This is a great opportunity for Trailer skippers to go a bit further afield in squadron company.

My last comment is to highlight the upcoming Gulf Classic open regatta scheduled for the 9th-10th March. This is our premier event, is open to all sailing clubs affiliated to Yachting NZ, and this is our 42nd year of operation. The Notice of Race and entry form are now up and live on our Facebook page as well as the website at www.waikatoyachtsquadron.org.nz

I encourage you all to make plans to crew and enter your boats to this event.

Last thing – I hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year break, and have come back with great ambition for the new year. Lets make it a great squadron year!

(Commodore) Murray

Upcoming Events

- Saturday 27th January – Passage series 4 – Destination to be advised. Keelboats and TY will converge at the same beach gathering destination.
- Sunday 28th January – “have a go” fun race / skipper training event
- Saturday 3rd - Tuesday 6th February– midsummer cruise to Rakino and Kawau island.

NOTICE OF RACE

Passage Series – Round 4

DATE: Saturday 27th January 2024.

START TIME: 1000 hours for trailer yachts, 1030 hours for keelers.

RACING INSTRUCTIONS: shall be in accordance with the “standard instructions for non-regatta races” except for those that are altered by these sailing instructions.

ENTRIES: To the Event Coordinator via VHF Channel 77 by 0930 hours for trailer yachts and 1000 hours for keelers, advising name of yacht and number of crew on board.

DIVISIONS: The race will consist of one trailer yacht division and one keeler division.

RACE BRIEFING: 0935 hours for trailer yachts and 1005 hours for keelers, by VHF radio channel 77 where the Event Coordinator will advise of any changes to the course or racing instructions.

COURSE: **Trailer Yachts** – From the start line at Kawakawa Bay. Finishing destination will be decided on the day by the race Officer and will be selected from the chart destinations in your handbook. Destination will be weather dependant.

Keelers – From the start line outside Pine harbour. Finishing destination will be to the same destination that the Trailer yachts select, and from a course shown in your handbook.

Note: Final courses and finishing destinations will be advised to all members by email and Facebook briefing on Thursday 25th January, once weather and wind conditions are confirmed.

START LINE: **Trailer Yachts** - Between the start boat and a position (i.e. moored boat or other marker) to be advised by the Event Coordinator.

Keelers - Will be off Pine Harbour, between the nominated start boat and the Dennis Rock cardinal mark to the northwest of Motukaraka Island.

DINGHIES: Allowance will be made for towing dinghies (trailer yacht open championship only.)

RACE OFFICER/EVENT COORDINATORS: Trailer Yachts and Keelers – To be advised at email briefing

A beach gathering location will be advised at the race briefing. Yachts wanting to participate in the gathering, but not the race, are most welcome.

Our First Race on 'Louisa' – Ponui, Saturday 9 December 2023

The race around Ponui on 9 December 2023 was just our third sail and our first race on our recently purchased Hanse 350 keeler 'Louisa'. In fact, despite having turned 15, we understand this was 'Louisa's very first race ever.

As well as Jo and me (Tim), we had Alex Ross along to help as we are still very much 'learning the ropes' – especially when it comes to backing into a narrow marina berth, and with a wheel rather than a tiller that we have been accustomed to.

It was an early start as we left Westhaven to motor to the start line outside Pine Harbour. The course is from Pine Harbour to the Waiheke Channel and then a circumnavigation of Ponui Island. Around 21 nautical miles in total 'as the crow flies' (or should that be seagull).



A good breakfast is essential on Race Day

Weetbix and Muesli for me

2 day old vegetarian Subway and concrete-like porridge in a mug for Alex

As it turned out there were only two keeler race starters. However, not to worry, two boats out on the water is always a race anyway. Our other competitor was Jim Pasco's Farr 1020 'Acushla', with son Mark and a friend as crew. As we approached the starting area off Pine Harbour the wind died from next to nothing to well nothing. We had ambitiously hoisted our mainsail but had to motor the last half mile, not wanting to be late for our first, action packed race start.



Jo on the helm during the pre-start. A nice day but where's the wind?

The lack of wind was rather ominous as 'Louisa' is underpowered in light conditions, only having a small jib and no genoa. Plus, she is relatively heavy at 6.3 tonnes which we believe is around 2 tonnes heavier than 'Acushla'. Needless to say, our expectations weren't high, and we were just hoping to finish within half an hour of 'Acushla'.

There was also an opposing tide that needed to be factored into our route decisions, so it was going to be an interesting, if not challenging day.

As expected, 'Acushla' rocketed away from the start and after an hour or so was about a mile ahead of us. Jim even called us up on the radio to see if we wanted to shorten the race to finish at the Waiheke Channel. "No way, we're here to complete a race" and so the scene was set for what might be a long day.

From the start line both boats were sailing fairly high, but as we drew closer to Waiheke Island it looked (at 'Acushla' way up ahead of us) to become more of a broad reach. On board 'Louisa' we were then impressed with 'Acushla's sportsmanship in not flying her spinnaker as we don't have one. We do have an asymmetric gennaker but haven't yet figured out how to rig it, and trying to do so in our first race didn't seem a good idea. Having said all sorts of kind words about 'Acushla's sportsmanship, shortly after the radio call we were dismayed to see this large blue spinnaker being hoisted. Hmmm! We wondered what the wind gods would think of that.

Then about 15 minutes later, we observed an interesting thing. That big blue spinnaker was starting to flap, and 'Acushla' (we think that boat way ahead was 'Acushla') was starting to bear away. Then the spinnaker came down as they looked to be close hauled and no longer laying Passage Rock or the Waiheke Channel. Perhaps this was the start of a sea breeze coming in.

We could still see a bit of breeze over at Waiheke so it was time to sheet in to be close-hauled and to head upwind straight to Waiheke. Next thing 'Acushla' looked to be completely becalmed, also out in the opposing tide. Their plight was something we had nothing but extreme sympathy for, as over the next 15 minutes we held the breeze to sail completely around 'Acushla'. She did eventually pick up some breeze and was just behind us as we passed Passage Rock at the start of the Waiheke Channel.



You don't need to look at this photo – we've just included it for our own personal record. But if you're interested, it shows that when passing Passage Rock after 8 miles of racing we are actually ahead of 'Acushla'

At this point, now in the breeze, 'Acushla' came steaming up behind us and was threatening to pass us to windward to take our wind. No way is a faster boat going to pass us to windward and rub our nose in its speed advantage! After all, with just two boats racing this is now a match race, so the only decent thing to do was to luff up sharply and send 'Acushla' shorewards, where there

was less wind. The alternative being for her to go lower than us and further out into the opposing tide. Either option was quite OK with us. It didn't take long for 'Acushla' to realise she needed to do the honourable thing as the faster boat and to sail below us.



'Acushla' doing the honourable thing – sailing below us

We managed to hold her there until Sunday Rock at which time a reasonable breeze arrived from the north that 'Acushla' got well before us, so she took off again. Now in a good breeze, 'Louisa' started to find her feet, but 'Acushla' had the jump on us through the Ruthe Passage and was well ahead again sailing flat off down the west side of Ponui. On this leg both boats had goose-winged headsails and in about 10 knots of breeze we seemed to have similar speed downwind.

Thankfully 'Acushla' didn't hoist her spinnaker on this leg. Later Jim said he considered they were far enough ahead that they didn't need to. Fair enough!

Rounding the bottom of Ponui Island and heading to the Sandspit Beacon is always tricky due to the wind shadow and 'Acushla' once out in clear breeze again maintained her lead as we headed for the finish line another 4 miles or so further on, which was now an upwind leg.

One thing we like about the Ponui Race is that the keelers and trailer yachts undertake the circumnavigation in opposite directions, so we got to see all the trailer yachts battling it out. And

battling it out it was for first place at their Sandspit Beacon finish line, as we saw Gazelle 25 'Escargot' helmed by Alyssa Reeve pip Hugh Beecroft's Elliott 7.4 'E Type 2' right on the finish line.



A close finish for first across the line in the trailer yacht fleet

Back to the keeler race. As we rounded Sandspit Beacon we could see 'Acushla' sailing on a knock compared to us. That was promising as it suggested there were some good windshifts for the final 4 miles of the race, which we could hopefully capitalize on sailing upwind.

And so it proved to be. We made sure we tacked to take advantage of every windshift that came along and each time we could see we were making ground on 'Acushla'. 12 tacks later we crossed the finish line just 31 seconds behind her, after nearly 6 hours racing and just over 20 miles sailed.



'Acushla' approaching the finish line just ahead of us

Which all goes to show you can have a great race with just two boats on the water. And a big thanks to 'Acushla' for giving us such an enjoyable first race.

Tim and Jo-Ann Hayward (and Alex), Hanse 350 'Louisa'

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