

INTRODUCTION

After Richard Hartley designed the first “trailer sailer” in 1958 people built their own vessels from his plans but as designers and builders progressed to using moulds and fibreglass while they produced eighty different models trailer yacht interests grew.

In 1974 on Lake Rotoiti when the summer was ending three trailer yachts “Pleiades” “Limelight” and “Atlanta” were anchored in Te Aro Bay while their owners Val Arnold, Peter Crawley and Graham Pettersen discussed over a few drinks if other people might be interested in forming a club, and as the sun began to set their decision to have a public meeting was the first step taken to form the Bay of Plenty Trailer Yacht Squadron.

Some years later after members spoke of the early years on the lake one evening and finding little had been written this narrative was formed in appreciation for the contributions people made.

Barrie Dennehy

THE SQUADRON

In the nineteen seventies as trailer yachts and power boats shared one ramp at Otaramarae on Lake Rotoiti friction often arose during launching and retrieving as trailer yachts raised or lowered their masts on the water due to power cables over the launching area. Although a few sailors used a ramp at the Okawa Bay Camping ground others were using facilities at the Taheke Motor Camp alongside members of the Rotorua Pleasure Boat Club.

In May 1974 Mr Bob Scott Commodore of Rotorua Yacht and Power Boat Club (RYPBC) accompanied Messrs Arnold, Crawley, and Pettersen to address a public meeting in Cornish's Coffee Lounge about the formation of a "Trailer Sailer" group. With over fifty people attending Val Arnold spoke of being involved within the Waikato Yacht Squadron or forming an independent club and after Bob Scott explained the advantages of being part of the RYPBC a steering committee of seven people comprising Val Arnold, George Stacy, Ted Miller, Peter Crawley, Graham Pettersen, Alan Escourt, and Jill Stacey were appointed to examine a "Trailer Sailer" section within the RYPBC or the Waikato Yacht Squadron.

Over the following month after visiting the Taheke Motor Camp Messer's Arnold and Crawley reported back to their committee the owners were sympathetic to yachting and could provide launching facilities but when they together had considered a growth of yachts, power boats, parking and one ramp the area was excluded.

Around that time when Taupo Yacht Club received correspondence from a newly formed Trailer Yacht Association suggesting they should form a trailer yacht squadron their members after discussing the matter agreed Rotorua people might be interested and sent Peter Crawley the information.

Faced with three options, a membership in the Waikato Squadron, a Trailer Sailer division in the Rotorua club or a club of their own Arnold, Crawley and Pettersen decided to ask the RYPBC for an \$8 subscription on the same basis Waikato Yacht Squadron had with the Cambridge Yacht Club and after doing so RYPBC gave their approval.

Two weeks later in June fifty people at a general meeting agreed a Bay of Plenty Trailer Sailer Squadron was to be inaugurated in association with the RYPBC and after Harvey Hornblow and Michael Muncaster moved "that the Commodore Val Arnold, Vice Commodore Graham Pettersen, Rear Commodore Peter Crawley, along with Secretary/Treasurer Barry Grayson, Social Hillary Pettersen, Publicity Colin Lundy and Bob Blackman be the Squadron Officers" the meeting agreed. With \$4.20 donated for the supper the Squadron had its first funds and in July members received a newsletter with a Commodores welcome, a race programme and cruises to other lakes. In August the first Mainsheet arrived and members learnt a club night would be held on the following Tuesday at the RYPBC where Mr Bill Loper the County Councils Lake Inspector would answer questions about navigation and matters regarding areas that were prohibited for overnight anchoring.

A few months later the Rotorua County Council forwarded twenty dollars from their Sport and Recreational fund and in November the Mainsheet advised twenty six trailer sailers with various Hartley's along with a mixture of Kestrel's, Beach Comber's, Venturer's Mullet boats, and a Spencer were active within the Squadron. Around that time members volunteered to work alongside Bill Loper and moved the water ski lane in Ngongoahai Bay ("Chung Chung") to Ngapuka Bay as others helped Bob Neal to define various Land and Survey boundaries around the lake.

Meanwhile members had cleared scrub in Te Arero Bay installed a pipe from the natural spring and then moved to the head of the bay to clear an area known as the "Poplars" for the Squadrons meeting place on the lake.



BA

“THE POPLARS”



It was after Sea Spray Magazine published an article about the Squadrons formation the trailer yacht owners in the Whakatane Yacht Club were upset about "Bay of Plenty" being used and as correspondence flowed between the organisations when this Squadron wrote " as Whakatane Yacht Squadron is a division of an incorporated club Bay of Plenty Trailer Yacht Squadron (BOPTYs) intends to be a constituted body in the NZ Yachting Federation with a membership available for all trailer yachts" the issue died.

Before that season closed a small committee investigated the south east corner of Okawa Bay as a possible mooring area and in due course enquiries were made to the Rotorua County Council who in turn suggested a proposal should be forwarded outlining the Squadrons requirements. When a plan containing twelve pole moorings, a 30ft jetty, a ramp, a parking area and future toilets arrived Council members commented "these proposals are not pie in the sky" and permission for ten moorings, a jetty and a ramp confirmed most of the requirements.

In June as sixty five people attended a Squadron Dinner and prize giving at \$6 per person they were served a bottle of bubbly or grape juice and after dancing to stereo music then a Plunket Society supper Peter Crawley of "Limelight" was awarded the first racing championship.

A few weeks later at the first Annual Meeting Commodore Arnold reported "The Squadron is in good health and from the first year there is \$115.00 in the bank. The fleet numbers for the season were, Hartley 21 (2), the 18s (4), the 16s (3), the 14s (2), Kestrel 18 (4) and Mullety (4) along with one Venturer 20, one Noelex, three Beachcombers, a Spencer, a Fletcher while a new Noeleda and a Tasman 20 were due to arrive."

Members agreed the \$8 subscription should remain, and after they appointed a Safety and Training Officer that brought committee numbers to eight.

Over the following months Peter Crawley cut steel drums in half and members with Bill Penno's guidance filled them with concrete at Winstone's ready mix plant and when twenty eight mooring blocks arrived at the lake Okawa Bay became a busy place during August to October.

While moorings were being assembled dredging was underway along the foreshore area as members built a retaining wall and a jetty and when people visualized a marina taking shape a large number then assisted Rear Commodore Yo Sands to install the breast work and backfill the area that would later be used to load and unload vessels. While good progress was being made there members with Keith Ross and Brian Briggs were diverting an underground stream to the reserve boundary by placing pipes in a trench as others were cutting manuka from the hills and after lashing them into bundles with flax they were placed in the swampy area before surplus dredging and other debris was spread prior to top soil and grassing.

When members from the Waikato Yacht Squadron participated in a cruise on Lake Rotoiti this Squadron expressed its gratitude to the Waikato people for the help they gave BOPTYS during its formation and although problems arose at Otaramarae and the Okawa Bay camping ground as vessels were launched and retrieved a bond developed between the two Squadrons.

In later weeks after thirty after yachts had participated in the first race the committee decided with the many new Merlins, Quick Silvers, Variants, Davidsons, Harmonics and Catalinas, some rules were required and referred the matter to member and solicitor Lindsay Moore. Suffice to say that was the easy part. Membership and voting became debatable issues and it was 1980 when the Incorporated Societies stamped their approval.

Endeavouring to better membership the committee that season organised a non nautical pursuit activity and encouraged new people to be involved and after a large number attended the event many were later assisting children at the Christmas party in Te Aro Bay where over turned dinghies were used to provide food and drink. Within a few weeks as members cruised Lake Rotoiti on New Years Day others had rendezvoused at North Harbour on Kawau Island for the Squadrons first Blue Water Cruise and as they scattered themselves around the Hauraki Gulf John Hudson in his new Tasman 20 "Kotare" sailed solo from Tauranga to Great Barrier Island.

In the following weeks a grant of \$575 arrived from Sport and Recreation and while some people viewed the ramp to be a mere formality others argued the money should be placed in a reserve fund but as the weeks passed and after much debate some of the committee concluded an idle sum of money should not be eroded by inflation and the ramp was eventually installed alongside the jetty.

When Lake Taupo Yacht Club hosted the 1977 New Zealand Trailer Yacht Association (NZTYA) Championships Mike Muncaster gained 2nd place in his Hartley 18 and with Harvey Hornblow in 3rd place two other members George Stacy and Lindsay Moore finished a few minutes behind. Within a few months the NZTYA Annual meeting appointed Val Arnold as their President and he confirmed with Peter Crawley, Mike Muncaster, Yo Sands and Keith Ross BOPTYS would be organising the 1978 North Island Championships on Lake Rotoiti.

Over winter Peter Crawley conducted a Boat Masters Course and when thirty members passed the exam some experienced sailors passed their Yacht Masters Coastal Course after lectures and instructional evenings. At the third Annual Meeting when Commodore Crawley advised "the past season must be the best since the Squadron's inception" members agreed then increased subscriptions to \$15 and added a \$10 Entry Fee for a marina fund which had to be placed in a separate account. Early in the next summer after a Daily Post Boating page highlighted BOPTYS to be one of the fastest growing clubs in the country membership increased as did marina facilities when a six meter jetty was completed on the eastern side and with dinghy storage in place and road metal sweepings over the roadway sixty nine yachts attended for the North Island NZTYA Championship..

Later that year to encourage ladies to the Squadron's Prize Giving the Mainsheet advised "an opportunity has arisen for Ladies to wear a nice dress and dance on a floor that stays level, partake in a supper they haven't cooked in a bent knee position which can be taken to husband or partner without having to wade knee deep in water to find him" it worked and was a great evening.

After subscriptions became \$17 per family at the 1979 Annual Meeting the sailing programme created strong debate about spinnakers being used when the event calendar indicated poled out headsails but after members had expressed their views on what was fast becoming a contentious matter they agreed a voting form in the next newsletter would finalise the matter.

Before that meeting closed members heard with an average of sixteen boats supporting eleven events over the season it was proposed the new Medtha Cup should be for a race around Lake Rotoiti and that met approval.

At a later club night when Commodore Graham Pettersen spoke about the programme he advised from a majority of votes indicating members should decide when to use a spinnaker the matter would remain unchanged.

Within a few weeks of the retaining wall being completed a Council lease arrived acknowledging the Squadrons use of the area and although the entire venture was a massive undertaking its success was due to a membership ensuring it would be. Later that season after the first Endurance event was reduced to eighteen hours the inaugural Round Rotoiti event had thirty two yachts start at Te Aro Bay, sail up to Otaramarae, the Okere Arm, Gisborne Point, Hinehopu and return to Te Aro Bay where Ian McMillan sailed "Aeolus" across the line to win the Medtha Cup.

At the fifth Annual Meeting members learnt the constitution had been approved and when the matter of spinnakers arose a motion from the floor "that all club events carry spinnakers" with a majority of hands in favour that closed the matter. However within a month as a new system to assist sailors with a fair adjustment to their performance was being tried all was progressing well until spinnakers appeared and when members excluded themselves their actions only increased cruising event numbers.

That season the Squadron joined the BOP Yachting Association and the NZ Yachting Federation and over winter as social convenor Gay Sutcliffe and helpful husband Harry organised "Guess who's coming for dinner" those evenings created good fellowship and were well supported as were the two visiting guest speakers Penny Whiting and Tony Bouzaid.

Members were kept up to date in the Mainsheet by editor Colin Moore and later James Mathews at a time when Vice Commodore Max Nelson to increase race numbers was providing hands on guidance to offending crews. At Rainbow Springs where the Squadron Dinner and prize giving was held he presented the Beazley Shield for competition among the Noelex 25 owners and in early spring as new members received sail training at the RYPBC the interest carried over into summer as thirty children in family membership learnt basic sailing skills at the Aquatic centre using Optimists.

When 6.5 a 7.5 trailer yachts began appearing Jonty Farmer was the Vice Commodore and although family members were at times replaced by competitive sailors some racing was cancelled due to weather although the Night Race, the Single Handed, and the Endurance event had good numbers.

Later in the 83/84 year Commodore Nicholson advised the Annual meeting "the last season had seen constant south westerly winds in the early months that made people wonder whether yachting was a relaxing activity" the following summer was superb but as sailing people and others enjoyed Lake Rotoiti public concern regarding pollution from houseboats, and pump out toilets had increased and the Squadron appointed Val Arnold to be its representative while matters were under discussion.

It was around that time after vandals "barbecued" marina signs and destroyed the ramps barrier arm mooring holders decided to stem further attempts of vandalism by providing an overnight watch from their vessels and in due course after the loading area was sealed, metal signs were in place, a steel arm was over the ramp and with a light installed members and visitors alike provided a marina watch for nearly twenty years.

After a second jetty was installed the committee decided with a Marina now capable of servicing a membership for many years to invest \$4000 into an interest earning account but later as members were seeking winter boat storage at a Club night when it was suggested the investment should be withdrawn to purchase facilities in the city that met a strong resistance.

Over winter Club activities were held at various locations such as Ian Todd Marine for members to learn about outboard motors but those events fell aside once the "Beef and Burgundy" evenings began as members ate good food and quaffed their way through (gallons) volumes of red wine.

At the twelfth Annual Meeting Val Arnold became the first Life Member and in general business when members heard one interference had occurred since a Marina Watch was established the system became permanent.

During 1987 after twenty three yachts contested the first Endurance event sailing numbers decreased but not through a loss of interest due more to unstable weather conditions and eventually when Cyclone Bola arrived in March 1988 all facilities withstood its vicious onslaught. That year members at the Annual Meeting awarded Life Membership to Peter Crawley and later agreed the current \$45 subscription was to remain.

When Paul Rogers and Noel Blackwell arrived for the 1988 NZTYA Annual Meeting in Wellington they along with others were surprised local people were unavailable and a new committee would have to be appointed. On their return when the situation was explained people volunteered to assist and with Paul Rogers (President) Harry Sutcliffe (Vice President) Annette Sands (Secretary) Bryon Somerville (Treasurer) Richard Mansell (Technical Officer) Brad Scott (Publicity Officer) along with Council members, Dave Bang, Dave McGaffin, Brian Gray, Noel Blackwell, Val Nicholson, and Bill Penno those members managed the organisations affairs for two years.

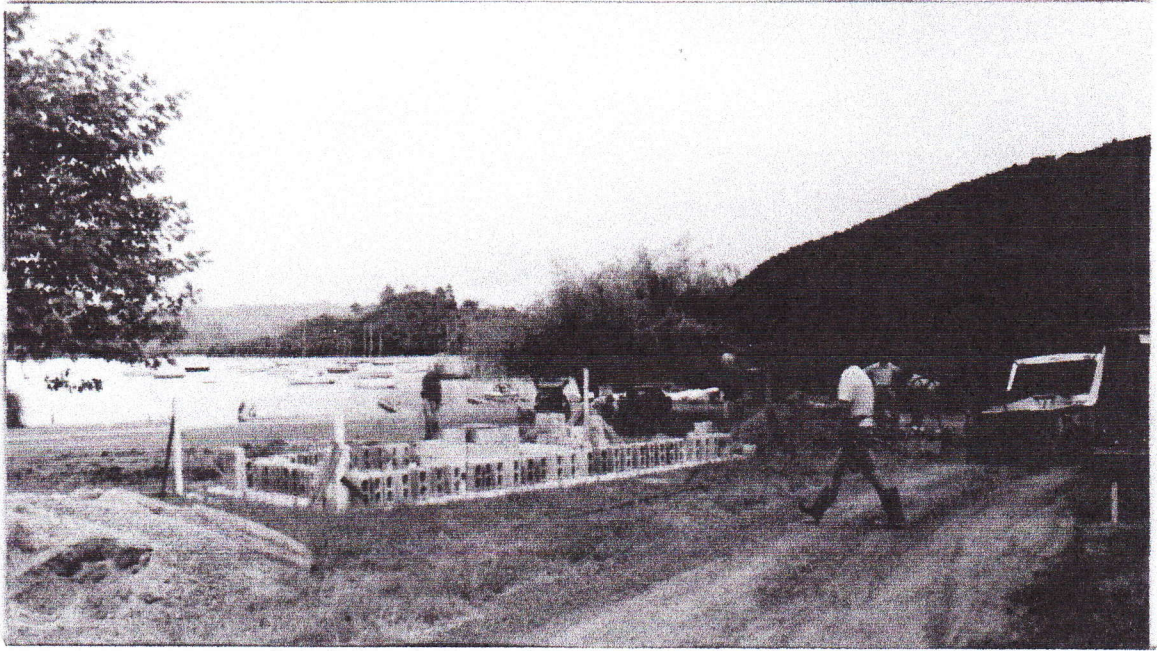
Wednesday Night racing began that season with twelve entries and when Brad Scott was made President of the Bay of Plenty Yachting Association a few hours later he joined Squadron members at the 1989 prize giving and dinner where a roast pork or lamb dinner was served by BOPTYs "chefs" David Bang and Brian Hogg. A few weeks later after members awarded Life Membership to Bill and Ann Penno of "Ponaturi" Alan Escourt of "Ariel" and Dick Wilson "Nanook" the question arose "is the Squadron sexist and if it isn't why is a ladies race not a permanent event" With little debate it did with acclamation from the ladies present.

Around that time when net weed invaded Lake Rotoiti boat ramps, trailers, motors, keels, and rudders were all affected but in due course members and other lake users were relieved when Conservation staff, Regional Council and the Rotorua Council conquered the infestation.

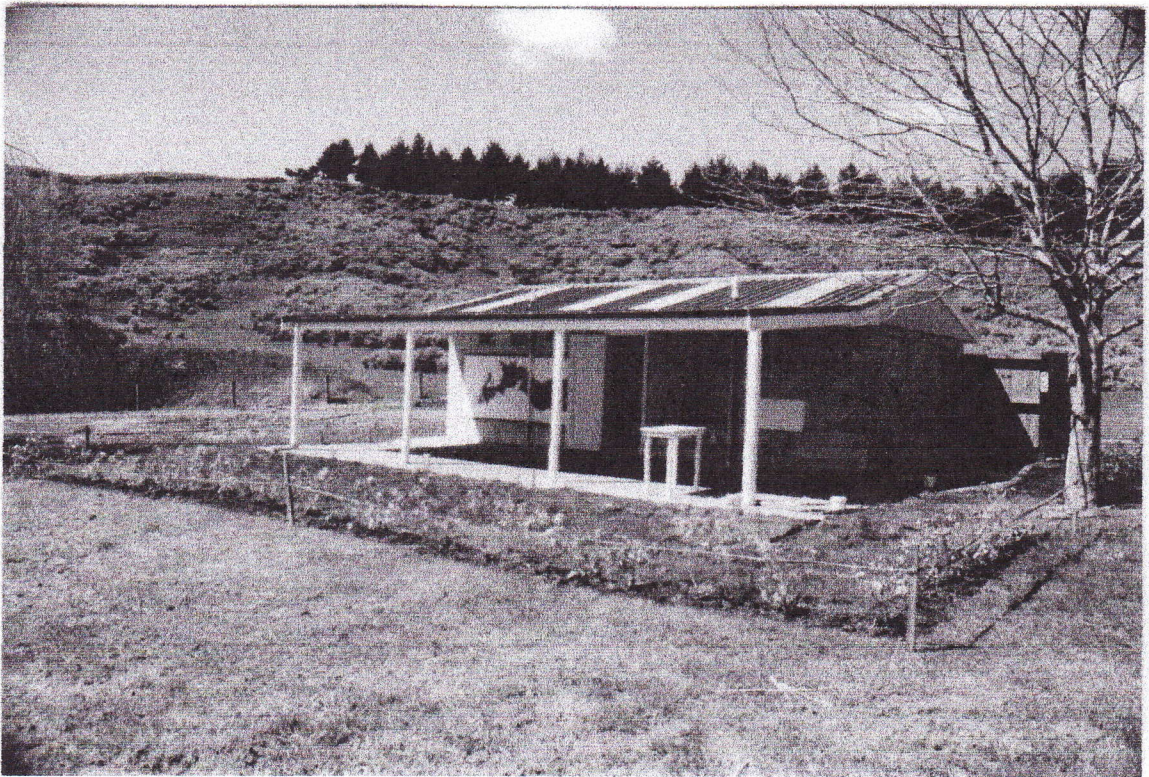
That season the committee appointed Harvey Hornblow to be the Squadrons Visually Impaired People (VIP) representative and with his yacht Chuzeuji he organised other yachts, So There, Cest La Vie, Cetus, and Maui, to assist VIP people to sail and have a lunch in Cherry Bay.

Six weeks later thirty seven people were at a general meeting in the RYBC to discuss plans for a clubroom and boat storage and while some interest in plan drawings was shown after costs were discussed a show of hands to support the complex lost by twenty seven to eight. In a few months public amenities proposed for Okawa Bay were announced and the executive agreed to enquire if an area could be found for member interests.

Within a month Commodore Bryon Somervell, Bill Tevendale and Art Abbott met Rotorua District Council (RDC) staff and advised there were people within the Squadron well qualified and capable of constructing such a building and in due course when plans arrived material costs were sought while a public notice was under way. While member /builder Art Abbott sought a building permit members learnt funds in the term deposit account were to be used and for some people that became an issue until the Executive advised at a general meeting after viewing the rules they were satisfied the right steps were taken the building commenced in October 1990. Members gave good support during the construction and its most ardent supporter Noel Blackwell summed up the camaraderie when he recalled Val Arnold with "teas up" and Mack Bargrove being told he could ask only one question a day. When all was done Bryon Somervell wrote "already the toilet block has shown its worth as a focal point with barbecues and it will in time become more than just a storage area for marker buoys and somewhere to discharge holding tanks. Dollars aside it will be a major asset for members and will provide a return no amount of money would compensate"



10. A.



Sailing numbers and race interests grew after Tony Thompson shared his Noalex 25 knowledge among members and while Farr 6000 sailor Barrie Dennehy organised activities for the Farr Trailer Yacht Owners Association Rear Commodore Peter Gibb in January led a Squadron cruise on Lake Taupo where members enjoyed sailing from Kinloch to Tokaanu and places in between.

Around that time Commodore Harvey Hornblow and two crew had sailed his "Chuzenji II" across Cook Strait to Pelorus Sound and ventured through French Pass to Nelson where after a few weeks in the Golden Bay area they returned to Ship Cove, then to Plimmerton ahead of a 30 knot southerly.

Over winter members completed roof extensions then seating to the facilities along with a concrete patio all of which were really appreciated during the North Island NZTYA Championships especially with a few drinks when two BOPTYS yachts Honesuckle and Alchemy won their divisions. A few months later member yachts assisted with the first Rotary Lakes Charity Yachting Classic and after Colin Moore's "Alchemy" won the twenty boat racing event Squadron Life member Alan Escort won the lucky draw for a Queenstown holiday. With \$8000 raised for local hospice Rotary later forwarded a substantial donation to the Squadron.

In November 1995 Harvey Hornblow passed away and a few months later member David Williams tragically collapsed while sailing his Elliot 7 "White Knight" in the Round Rotoit event.

In autumn members assisted Bill Handley and Tony Thorne with two marina projects one being a twenty metre extension on the eastern jetty, and after a few changes were made to the Squadron rules at a dinner in the Rotorua Citizens club members learnt in due course other rules would need attention. In due course a four person sub committee spent nine months updating the system which members adopted at a special meeting and a few months later at the Annual meeting Paul Rogers received a Life Membership and the honour of first Patron was conferred on Val Arnold.

To acknowledge the proposed Okawa Bay Reserve Management Plan the new Committee suggested “the primary centre in Rotorua District for Trailer Yachting” should be included but when people advised the RDC that Okawa Bay was unavailable for public use due to the Squadrons encroachment the Committee replied “it is from hard work and the provision of public facilities from its funds that the reserve is popular.” and that closed the matter.

Olympic racing on Sunday mornings and afternoon Lake course events proved to be popular as did the inaugural Rum Race Commodore Barrie Dennehy devised with Vice Commodore Alan Civil. Later at seasons end YNZ Commodore Brian Smith with Chief Executive Adrian Greenwood attended the Squadron’s Prize Giving and after they presented members with their winning trophies they presented BOPTYs with Yachting NZ Honours Award for the contribution given to the NZTYA.

Early in the following season Commodore Dennehy advised the executive after he approached the Okawa Bay Trust about placing member yachts in a compound area on their land his proposal had been welcomed and over following weeks after the executive discussed the merits of providing thirty berths in a enclosed hard standing area when the proposal was announced at a club night it received unanimous support from the membership..

In the following months safety mesh was installed on jetty areas and the old tyre buffers were replaced with thirty Passgard Bumper Gaards from Rotary funding when Safety Officer Brad Scott organised and conducted a public Orientation Day it created plenty of public interest and some new members.

- In January 1999 forty yachts contested the NZTYA Championships on Lake Rotoiti, and during the course of year the Squadron celebrated 25 years with an evening at Skyline Restaurant. The next day past and present members on yachts and motor launches visited Te Aro Bay, Ngongoahi Bay and the hot pools where many recalled their activities and good memories. On return to the marina some light refreshments were served with a barbecue as members said their goodbyes.*

When that seasons Rum Race was under way member yachts "The Tease" and "Wild Orchard" were contesting the South Pacific Masters Games on Lake Ngaroto and they returned with silver and bronze medals respectively.

It was later in the season as three member yachts sat quietly moored in "Geriatric Bay" heavy rain caused a major slip to place mud and slush in cockpit areas and shunt all three vessels out into deeper water as stern ropes and anchor warps became entangled amongst trees and other debris. While that was all taking place a "Mayday" call was made and while criticism was raised from people unaware and unaffected on the day it must have been for those involved a daunting experience to say the least.

As interest grew in the hard stand member vehicles received unwarranted attention when parked overnight on the reserve and after Tony Thompson was appointed project manager within a month discussions to raise \$40,000 were underway. By mid April member Colin Head organised earth moving machines to level the area and over the following months as hard fill was placed and compacted David McGaffin with his machinery drove numerous posts into the trench around the perimeter and members placed sheets of iron to deter unlawful entry. In due course a mesh netting fence was erected, the trench was backfilled and over following months as members attached insulators for electric fencing, lighting and a electronic locking system was installed while Don McGowan and members planted a number of shrubs across the compound frontage. A few weeks later Trust chairman David Dorset, Mayor Graham Hall and Patron Val Arnold opened the complex and Tony Thompson placed his Noalex 25 "The Tease" in the compound.

Over the following months Team NZ toured the country with its mobile fleet of 9.2 Etchells to raise funds for its Americas Cup challenge, and in this area BOPTYS members Tony Poolman skipper, Darrell Civil and Chris McIndoe after winning a Bay of Plenty elimination series had the honour of racing Team NZ for "second" place on Lake Rotorua.

Around this time after the NZTYA found itself in difficulties in the Southland area Otago people provided some assistance but at the Annual Meeting in Dunedin their delegates advised they were not available and again BOPTYs had members ready to assist. Art Abbot became President, Alan Morton and Tom Stapleton returned as Secretary and Treasurer respectively and with Bay of Plenty personal from other clubs assisting the organisations affairs were administered professionally.

Early in the 2002/03 season Vice Commodore Adrian McHardy announced "at the request of small boat owners Division C would be reintroduced" and while that was perhaps reinventing the wheel the Squadron would host the first North Island Trailer Yacht Rally. Despite a little rain Cherry Bay lived up to its name over Labour Weekend and a hundred yachts attended. That year after BOPTYs yachts assisted Auckland's VIP "Sailing for the Blind" on Waitamata Harbour Tony Thompson expanded the interests locally organising Noalex owners to participate in VIP Match Racing events and when BOPTYs VIP sailors Rob Aisilabie, Eddie Moree with helmsman Tony Thompson finished third in the event. Later as VIP interest spread YNZ announced Tony Thompson was "Volunteer of the Year"

After Don McGowan proposed a secure parking area for member vehicles some people suggested extending the clubroom roof and installing outside showers but after a member survey supported the car park within a few months land was acquired from Okawa Bay Trust and a vehicle/trailer park became available. Although bad weather stalled the Rum Race for a week members were fortunate to have the event as algal blooms turned Okawa Bay and other areas into a shade of green but fortunately it all cleared before the VIP regatta in March. While that event was under way other members were contesting the Waikato Yacht Squadron's Gulf Classic and after "Hot Mumble" repeated their "Intermezzo" won division three. Later in the annual report where Commodore McHardy said "it was a busy season" it certainly was. Members had supported VIP sailing three regattas, the inaugural Trailer Yacht rally and the National Championships.

During the 2002 Annual Meeting at Gondolas Restaurant prize giving took place with guest speaker Tom Schnackenberg. A few weeks later new social activities were under way as members organised Pot Luck dinners and visited venues for "Nog n Natter" evenings.

That same year the Squadron introduced its own web site in November then amended its waste management policy to zero discharge from vessels and while that required the installation of grey water tanks it also banned a system used by sailors for centuries. It was later that season Don McGowan and George Carson completed an amazing amount of work to provide a secure car parking area on further Trust land and while that brought an end to the Marina Watch system Paul Rogers the newly appointed security officer soon found with all the benefits in place to make life less stress-full entrance ways into the hardstand, car park and dinghy storage were being left open and unattended.

In January the Noelx 25 Association had their 2004 National event on Lake Rotoiti and member yachts "Blue Thunder" took 3rd place in division A, "High Time" came 1st in division B and "Sky Bird" had line honours in division C. That same season BOPTYS also hosted the first NZ Blind Sailing Championships and after Eddie Moree, Rob Aislabie and Tony Thompson won the National title, Rob Aislabie was named NZ Blind Sailor of the year. Later members competed in all four divisions for the inaugural Trailer Yacht Inter Club Challenge Trophy at the Waikato Squadrons Gulf Classic where "Assailant" and "Intermezzo" crews won A and C divisions and with crews from "Cloudburst" and "Cheers" they all returned home with the trophy.

In May seventeen yachts started the twenty fifth Round Rotoiti event and although fluky winds caused many retirements eventually "E Mail" arrived first on line and "Wild Orchard" took the Medtha Cup home.

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