

# July 2015 Newsletter

CANANZ



*Cruising and Navigation Association of New Zealand*

## Featuring

- ✓ Beautiful Whangaroa Harbour – please help
- ✓ Swansong on her way home by Shawn Baker
- ✓ Update from Jim and Karin Lott on Victoria.
- ✓ About my boat “Close Encounters”

## Annual dinner and guest speaker

Featuring our guest speaker, Laura Dekker, the youngest person to circumnavigate single-handed at age 15.

Meet in the Member's Bar, upstairs at the eastern end from 6:30pm for drinks, and proceed to the Quarterdeck Restaurant at 7:00pm. A three course roast dinner will be served, with a cash bar available.

**When : Monday 10 August 2015**

**Where : Royal NZ Yacht Squadron, Westhaven**

**Cost : \$45.00 per person.**

Please email [basil@orr.co.nz](mailto:basil@orr.co.nz) to make a reservation, and make payment to our account: 03-0263-0086299-00. Please enter your name in the details.

Otherwise please mail you reservation to CANANZ, PO Box 564, Shortland St, Auckland 1011 with a cheque. **We must receive your reservation before Monday 3 August**





## Beautiful Whangaroa Harbour – please help

In the previous CANANZ newsletter, one of the CANANZ founding members, Pony More wrote an article describing the legal action that a group of concerned boaties have taken to keep Whangaroa Harbour free of Mussel Farms.



They have reduced the affected area within this magnificent harbour, but judgement against them has made them personally liable for legal costs of \$200,000.

They welcome any contribution:

Whangaroa Maritime Recreational Park

Account No: 02 0352 0119769 00

or mail a cheque to them: PO Box 264, Kaeo 0448.

They have done their best to help boaties enjoy sailing in Northland –

**Any support from CANANZ members would be very much appreciated.**



## Swansong has arrived home

From Shawn Baker

Swansong has arrived home, after some 16 years based in Alaska, and having cruised the Aleutian Islands, and visited the pack ice, as part of her many adventures in the far north latitudes.

Swansong is a 48-foot steel cutter rigged yacht. One of the few steel yachts designed by John Spencer. She was built by Rue Smith in Whangarei and launched in 1984. Swansong is relatively unique in that she has a swing keel and draws less than a meter when the keel is up. The rudder is also a stern hung swing rudder that is designed to pop up if it hits anything.

I flew to Sitka Alaska, via LA to join Swansong for the leg from Sitka to Hilo in Hawai'i. Arriving after around 28 hours of continual travelling at 11 on Saturday night – the air temperature of around 5 degrees was a bit of a cool change from New Zealand's early summer temperatures.

Sunday was spent provisioning, completing final checks and catching up with some old friends. By Monday 2pm we were pulling out for Hawaii, still somewhat jet lagged but looking forward to the passage ahead.

We were given a great send off by the local sea lion who took a great interest in proceedings and gave me a hell of a fright when it surfaced next to me and let out a great big whhooossh. Monday saw one of the few days of light winds from the north, which meant it was like being in a freezer because the wind was straight from the Arctic – which is not far away when you are at latitude 58° North. Whales were competing with the salmon fishing boats and there was spectacular snow covered mountains in the background – very cool.

Not long after getting away the wind stubbornly turned to the Southwest – which was pretty much where we wanted to go – so the next 5 days was spent bashing into 25 – 30 knots, hard on the wind and into 3-4-meter steep seas – somewhat uncomfortable. We ended up way out west and hardly anywhere south – so the temperature was still hovering around 8 degrees – and Auckland winter clothes was just not really cutting the mustard so to speak.

Finally, the wind swung enough to make good southerly within about 20° of our ideal course – but still bashing into it. This was the norm for the entire passage, with only a few days of reaching conditions and a couple of days screaming downwind conditions. Going south meant everyday got warmer.

This passage took us through some of the most isolated waters in the world – in terms of distance to land. The only sign of civilization (which we got really excited about) was the occasional drifting fishing buoy, plastic carton and even a wheel (from a car with inflated tire) – To be honest we were looking for the label “from the Fukushima Power Company” following the big Tsunami in Japan. We went over two weeks sighting only one ship – and that one was a close encounter of half a mile. There was much excitement at the spotting of a plane at 30,000 feet.

We had an amazing humpback whale encounter – Donald the Whale set up camp about 15m behind us and followed us for nearly a whole day. In all the whale encounters I have had, it is the first time a whale actually took much notice of the boat. Donald was bigger than Swansong and swam directly off our stern, matching our speed. Every now and then, Donald would dive



and disappear for 15 – 20 minutes and we would see him ½ a mile or so away (presumably feeding), then he would be back on station immediately behind our stern.

About 1000 miles from anywhere – near disaster struck. A nut had worked loose on the rudder. This was attached to the bolt that the rudder pivots on – and if the bolt comes out we lose the rudder. Naturally this was discovered in the middle of the night. Hanging over the back, Dad managed to work the bolt back into place (it had worked about ½ way out). Out came the spares – only to find that the spare nuts did not fit the bolt.

After a bit of scratching our heads, a solution was found – plastic zip ties (never leave shore without them) were wrapped around the thread to stop the bolt working out. However, because the bolt could not be tightened, the rudder was moving slightly laterally, which, after another few hundred miles, broke the “U” Bolt that locks the rudder in place....you guessed it, more plastic zip ties, and pieces of thin cord to tie it all up.

Eventually we hit the Trades – and had some magic sailing on a broad reach – sitting on around 8 to 9 knots – looking over the back of the boat at the rudder all the time with fingers crossed.

With a little over a hundred miles to go, the weather threw us a real storm – fortunately we were going downwind in about 25 – 35 knots but in 7-meter steep seas with a wicked cross swell that was super imposing on each other. This meant that we had breaking seas on the stern, and breaking waves on the beam – many of which broke straight over the top of the boat, landing on the cabin top. A solid dodger was great but did not always work.

When the cross seas crashed onto the cabin top, the entire boat shifted sideways violently and shudder with the impact. Fortunately Swansong is a tough, well proven yacht and was well and truly up to the conditions.

Entering Hilo – was done in the middle of the day under RADAR as we had about ¼ mile visibility. Once into the harbour it was welcome relief.

Skipper: Ken Baker (Owner Swansong)

Crew: Shawn Baker

Passage Time: 26 Days



## Update from Jim and Karin Lott on *Victoria*

### ***Summer Gales and Single Malt***

Scotland welcomed us with a full gale out of the north. Coming from south we pushed our luck and carried on through the night hoping the gale would arrive later than forecast. The helpful tide running strongly against the blast from the north created waves that kept all other vessels in port as we crashed and bashed, tacking our way up the Firth of Clyde to Largs Marina. The marina manager leaned into the wind as he nobly turned out to take our lines, but at least the rain washed the encrusted salt off “Victoria”.

Scotland has always been in the background of Jim’s life. His mother came from the Bruce family and being greeted by the pipe-band at practice on arrival at school encouraged an appreciation for bag-pipes, even if haggis does not feature in his diet. Learning to translate the Scottish brogue of several teachers helped to understand the weather forecasts broadcast by Stornoway coastguard.



The Scots are wonderfully hospitable and we appreciated the welcome we received from new friends. Alan and Fiona drove us around Gareloch, home of the Trident submarine base, helped us with much needed shopping and had us for dinner. It was a pleasure to talk yachting and hear many Scottish sailing yarns and talk about great designers such as Fife, Watson and McGruer.

Last year in Norway we arranged to meet Karin’s cousin Else and her husband Per Erik in Inverness for a passage across Scotland through the Caledonia Canal. Wind conditions in April made the North Sea inhospitable hence our arrival in Glasgow, a long way from Inverness. Glasgow City is working hard to attract tourists. They offer visiting yachts free stays at well appointed pontoons in the city centre and with Jim’s careful attitude (Karin says parsimonious) he quickly noted the word ‘free’.

It was mid-May and Karin’s birthday. After previous birthdays spent at sea, we set off early to catch the train from Glasgow to Edinburgh where we spent several hours on board Britannia, including a splendid lunch. She is carefully maintained by volunteers and open to visitors since the





public purse no longer funds this fine royal yacht for the queen. The advice “if you do nothing else in Edinburgh, visit Britannia” was good advice indeed. We also met up with Else and Per Erik, whose first words to us were “We thought they spoke English in Scotland” as we walked in the rain to Edinburgh Castle.

More gales and rain kept us at the Glasgow pontoon beside the splendid new transport museum and the 75 metre steel barque

“Glenlee”, carefully restored after a life carrying cargo and latterly as a Spanish sail training ship. She was launched in 1896 at Port Glasgow on the Clyde River. As the gales eased and we headed down the river, we passed miles of deserted ground once the workplace for thousands of craftsmen in the shipbuilding and engineering yards. Half a century ago the Clyde was the thriving centre of world shipbuilding with over fifty major yards. There are now just a few cranes to be seen and an



occasional derelict building, with the two remaining yards reliant on government contracts. In its heyday, Clyde shipbuilding and engineering brought great prosperity to Glasgow with many fine houses and a vibrant city centre. Today Glasgow is again lively and positive as it works to rebuild its prosperity with a focus on electronics and tourism.

We wondered what had caused the demise of Scottish shipbuilding and the shift from prosperity to hardship. The universal reply was union and demarcation issues, which simply made the yards unprofitable allowing the ambitious Asian nations to take over. Not only was shipbuilding lost, Scottish engineering was second to none and with no ships to build, the foundries and machine shops faded.

At Dumbarton, a castle stands on a steep bluff overlooking the Clyde River. Dumbarton was the birthplace of Robert Logan, the great New Zealand designer and boatbuilder who immigrated to New Zealand after training as a shipbuilder and designer on the Clyde. More than anyone, he is the father of New Zealand yachting.



While ship numbers have declined, the number of yachts and marinas has exploded. Boatbuilding yards in Europe and America now mass-produce yachts and power boats having taken a leaf from car-makers’ books. Boats are now much less expensive in real terms and technology has allowed owners to go to sea with little understanding of navigation,



maintenance, engine operation or ship-handling. We even see bow-thrusters in the smallest boats.

The marina business has grown to provide a place not just to keep a boat but to provide a haven each night with an electrical umbilical cord to make sure the fridge keeps the beer cold. Sadly, many fine anchorages have been lost to such marinas with moorings often filling what space is left.

In fairness, we enjoyed many a night in a marina berth where the bitterly cold Scottish weather had us plugged into shore power to run an electric heater that we huddled around. But such comfort does not come cheap with a typical cost around \$NZ80 per night. Even a mooring when there was no room to anchor cost \$NZ30 per night.



In days when the winds dropped below force 7 (30 knots), we headed through the narrow channels towards Crinan Canal, a 9-mile shortcut across the Mull of Kintyre. With Else and Per Erik to help with lines and fenders, we enjoyed taking a few days to work through the 15 locks and 7 bridges in perfect shelter. The canal, which charmed us with lovely scenery, is so narrow in parts that we could not possibly have turned round and we were thankful not to meet opposing traffic.

Tides run fast in almost every part of the UK so timing is always an issue. Getting it right makes for fast passages often at speeds over 10 knots. Ardfern is a lovely village whose sheltered anchorage we enjoyed and the tourist town of Tobermory is always picturesque. In Oban, Else and Per Erik left to return to Oslo after a windy and wet couple of weeks. It was a wonderful opportunity for Karin and her cousin to delve deeply into family background.

Fair winds carried us north to the Hebrides and the legendary Island Of Skye. Many yachts avoid heading past

Ardnamurchan Point, Scotland's

western extremity exposed to the Atlantic. This far north, there are just a few marinas and plenty of anchorages. In some, hotels and cafes offer free use of moorings in return for buying a drink or a meal. As gale after gale arrived we accepted the offers and spent several afternoons sitting in front of a fire in a cosy hotel.





At Mallaig, a fishing village at the end of the western rail line we were joined for several days by Auckland sailing friends Liz MacFarlan and her husband Chris. Their arrival coincided with a week of wonderful weather. Jim and Liz swapped tall tales from the past. Liz's father was the respected headmaster where Jim and many of his friends went to school and some fascinating yarns emerged.

The good weather and fair breeze allowed us to head to places we hoped not to miss. At Loch Scavaig the cliffs rose sheer to cloud height with snow in the hollows, reminding us of the Beagle canal at the other end of the world.

A good reason for visiting Scotland has to be Scotch. Visiting distilleries was an attraction for Jim while Karin was more inclined to a ruined castle or a long walk.

Tobermory has an attractive distillery producing a peaty single malt but Skye produces one of the finest at Talisker in

Loch Harport on the west coast. Following a tour and a tasting we headed back in the dinghy carefully protecting our purchases.



With no particular itinerary we allowed the wind to dictate and gave the genniker its first outing for the year on our way to Canna, an island near Rum and Muck. A small store is operated by a couple who renovated a roofless stone cottage. It's open 24 hours with an honesty box and a book to write down what is purchased.

Over many years they have never been let down but some visitors, possibly crew on a fishing boat at the small dock, took several items during the night. The owner was greatly upset and in the following days



this quaint story made newspapers round the world. Karin and Liz bought some amazingly costly wool that is hand-produced and dyed by the store owner. Made from fine merino and silk, Karin's scarf is growing slowly as the days go by. On the other hand, the equally costly Talisker is diminishing quickly.

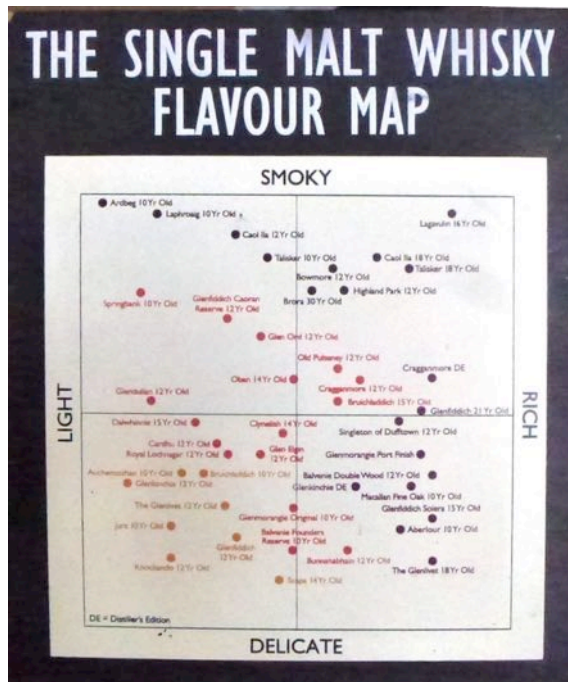




After a sunny day walking and sailing on Loch Nevis, it was a pleasure to catch up with Alan and Fiona at Sandaig Bay where they joined us for dinner. They were cruising with Oliver Lennox-King and his wife Jane. Oliver was at school with Jim many decades ago. With more bad weather on the way we bade our crew farewell in Loch Alsh near the bridge to Skye. It was time to head south and after catching up with a friend we met a couple of years ago in the Caribbean, we headed for warmer climes.



Scottish sailors claim to have the greatest cruising ground in the world. Certainly the glorious scenery, abundance of sheltered anchorages and welcoming villages justify such a claim were it not for the weather. We were too early for the height of summer and wet and windy conditions heavily outnumbered fine days. But when fine and calm, cruising in Scotland is hard to equal. We saw just a fraction of it.





## About my boat “Close Encounters”

From Stephen Plank

This is a new section for the CANANZ newsletter and I encourage everyone to send me a quick bio about their boat.

To start I will outline my boat *Close Encounters*

**The Farr 1104** : Design No. 51 represented Bruce Farr's first commission for a full blown IOR race boat. The first boat launched was Prospect of Ponsonby which immediately won the Southern Cross trials. This was followed by Jiminy Cricket which swept away with the New Zealand Dunhill Series and of course Piccolo which won 1976 Sydney to Hobart.

More recently these boats were fitted for cruising and coastal sailing. The last batch of 1104's produced (to my knowledge) was in the mid 1990's.



**What this boat?** My previous boat, Amigo, was riddled in osmosis to the extent it wasn't economic to repair which gave me an excuse to a quickly upsize which happen last year. I was looking for a larger volume boat with some kiwi heritage.

**History.** The original owner had Nautech lay the boat up in 1986. The outer skin was Isophalic gelcoat over vinyl ester (Derakane) for strength and osmotic protection. The laminate was engineered by Richard Honey of Hi Modulus. The hull was 20mm H100 divinicell core and the deck 15mm (not CSM). The boat was described by original owner as *“bullet proof and fostered a revival in the design with several being built subsequently though to a much lesser specification”*

She has participated in many offshore races including Auckland > Noumea twice, Wellington > Gisborne Sandown Park Series. Her last offshore stint was 9 months to Noumea & Fiji in 2006. Subsequently the boat came with lots of Cat 1 equipment which I've removed. Anyone want a 10+ year old life raft?

### **Funny or embarrassing moments.**

I'm probably the only Farr 1104 owner to be soundly beaten by a H28 on Anniversary Day (mental note – antifoul before racing in future)

**Favourite moments.** Sailed to the Bay of Islands over Xmas for 3 weeks. She has plenty of room for a family of four. Enough pace to keep up with some modern boats.