



With the Canang News Letter now becoming more than a Day account of past and future club business, and your plea for contributions, I have raked out this letter of 30 years ago. I remember the Day well - a gentle period of the year - early autumn. Looking back on over eighty years of sailing, this little cruise stands out from memorable events that occurred, generally not documented at the time, like this account.

The Robin I refer to is Robin Harris who lost his ship and his wife on their honey-moon cruise coming down the Northland coast.

Dear Mum,

Thankyou for your letter. I suppose, as a family, we are all pretty avid letter writers - I have no doubt where it stems from. Yesterday, Kit and Carol told me they'd had a letter from Jill, who seems to be carrying on the tradition.

She'll be on her way to England now after her Asiatic experience, one that will live with her for the rest of her life. At work we had a visitor from mainland China, a hydro expert who is keen to benefit from our home grown expertise, a lot of which is especially relevant to china which has a lot of small hydro. If somebody will fund it (Govt., U.N etc.) Bryan is keen for a couple of us to visit and give seminars on Gates, screen cleaners, control systems etc. All this jetting around - who could have foreseen this. Whilst we often pause to look back on the good old days, how often do we offer up thanks for what has become possible (and even commonplace) now. We take a lot for granted. As for instance my last Friday

Hadn't sailed the Seagull singly for some time, so with a midday tide, fine weather predicted, and my conscience salved by the impending arrival of Peg and daughter which would preclude Sue from being jod up at not being included in the expedition all was set for a day on the water. I would sail up the Tamaki river and have lunch with Robin, up near Otahuhu. Slackness at work made this all possible, though I'm afraid my predilection for taking five days off unsettles some of the others, who mind you, have not had forty years of toil to reflect on.

So there I was down on the beach (at the Subitaka landing) rigging my singly in the sunshine. On the launching ramps, huge maori freezing workers were backing their trailers loaded with figg boats, my fellow truants. A faint breeze from the N (diametrically opposite from the forecast direction!) would help me on my way up the river, together with the tide. Whilst others are starting up their noisy, smelly and expensive motors, how utterly satisfying it is to sheet the sail in step into the singly and glide noiselessly out into the river. The sails sets so beautifully, like nature all curves, and the little chuckle of water from under the bow, the pull of the tiller and the loose motion of the boat itself, all combine to make one feel at one with nature. After the preceding four days, bashing back and forth to work, dropping down to New Plymouth it's all that much more enjoyable. Why is it that humans get sated so easily. The polynesian launching his canoe onto a idyllic lagoon yearns for the Otara concrete jungle. No doubt, once escaped, he dreams then of the lagoon.

Throughout my trip up the river I spoke to two people, both fishing from Singhies anchored in the river enjoying the quiet of the weekday. Weekends the river is busy, noisy for the most part with Diesel driven luxury launches and high pitched outboard figg boats tearing out to sea. This type of scenario has many of us preferring to go out during the week - I am fortunate indeed to have a job that allows me to take

time off so easily. Let's hope it lasts.

Anyway, picture me loling back in that most comfortable of Singhs, the Seajoll. Under a seat a bunch of grapes, with the river handy to receive pip and skin. A kapok filled life jacket serves as a cushion and with both sun and wind behind me, I'm indeed a fortunate fellow. One or two improvements to the rig carried out during the past winter have proved successful and the subconscious workings of the mind pop out another two interesting ideas to be followed up when opportunity arises. A jammed zip on a twelve metre off Perth has somehow or other applied itself to the cotton mainsail of a sailing Singh ambling up an N.2 tidal river. Instant reefing. I mentally enjoy the possibilities, wondering where else one could put zips. Did you know Lord Louis Mountbatten (a sailing man) is credited with introducing outers trousers, thereby doing away with those damned buttons.

Over the years the Tamaki river has filled up with boats on moorings. When first we moored at Pannure, a dozen keelers at most, shared the length and breadth of river. Now, a thousand or near to it. So to the helmsman of a Singh making it's way up the estuary there's plenty to look at. Old friends, re-painted, with different rigs recall years long past. New flash (literally) beacons reflect the withies that once marked the spit off Point England. One thing generally leads to another, and my thoughts go back to those early days with the short stocky gentleman that used to launch his fishing Singh at Pannure (towed by his Model T Ford) with every year or so, a load of Tai tree withies, his self appointed communal task. Very good, they were too, guaranteed not to harm one's craft if straying from the channel. Now a series of spiked steel monstrosities line the channel allowing the speeding gin palaces to reach the outer gulf in a series of straight line dashes from point to point so to speak. Costing thousands of dollars to instal and maintain it's all gird for the mill for the bureaucrats who submerge their regular (and secure) income in the levies imposed on all who use the waterways (provided by nature).

Now, why am I spoiling things by getting wound up by the machinations and actions of others. For the most part, they are screwing themselves up thinking up new ways to further their aim, whilst I'm enjoying myself sailing. Off Pannure I sail over the spot where the 'Ostia' spent ten or more years scumming to a mooring. Then on up under the new bridge. New bridge Sid I say, it's the old bridge now. Perhaps we should have them numbered, then it would be No 4 or so. In this area there are piles with boats tethered between them. Piles are shocking things, hard on boats and hard on the landscape. Almost as bad as moorings.

Thanks to the tide and the following breeze (winds always blow along rivers) I had made steady progress. Shortly after launching I had partaken of morning tea - now as my destination hove into view it looked as though I'd be there on the dot of twelve. Sure enough as I rounded the point and headed into the little ramp off Robin properly, I saw a figure appear and come across the reserve. Together we hauled the Singh a foot or so up the ramp and with much boating talk, repaired to the house for lunch. Robin is building another boat and in this

way is assuaging his grief. CELENDOWIE

After a couple of hours suaying which
time we had lunch, a bit of a sail and
a good look at the new boat I set sail
for home with the tide flowing out at a
good rate. Afternoon tea at the Panmure Y.C.
ramp and then a good beat down river to
the Subritsky Landing. Home by 5 to find
the visitors settled in. So ended an enjoyable
day - needless to say I slept well.

Fraid this is not a newsy letter, will
make the next one different.

Love,

John

