

'A BRUSH with SAIL'

THE OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER OF NEW ZEALAND MARINE ARTIST JIM BOLLAND

October 2007.

The boyhood adventures of LARRY & ERNIE.



© Jim Bolland. 2007.

‘STARLIGHT’ STILL SPARKLES!

Following several years of ownership in Wellington, the Laurie Davidson designed 55 footer ‘Starlight Express’, returned to her original homeport Auckland, in late 2006.

Purchased by brothers Mike and Craig Wilson and Dan Stenhouse, this famous race boat will have new enthusiasm injected in to her already super-successful history that goes back to 1985, when she was built by McGaffin Boat Builders Ltd.

Laurie Davidson designed several well performed race/cruise yachts around the same size that were exceptionally quick and made names for themselves in the eighties and early nineties in regattas around the world, notably the Kenwood Cup series.

Like all Davidson boats, ‘Starlight Express’ still looks great and still sails well enough to be very competitive. Laurie is a very clever designer, but above all, an artist when drawing a hull!



‘Starlight Express’ Detail of acrylic sketch for oil painting © Jim Bolland

Here’s what Mike Wilson has to say about the trio’s new acquisition;

‘It was seen as a vessel that would satisfy our desire to compete in Coastal and Offshore racing events at a reasonably competitive level whilst also allowing us to cruise the NZ coastline and Pacific Islands.

‘I was aware, before buying her, that she was legendary within the NZ yachting scene, we are only just realizing the magnitude of this status.

Everyday, we are discovering more about her history and the people that have sailed on her.

'Our current schedule of races is: Coastal classic 2007, Nexus Gold Cup Series 2007/2008, Round White Island Race 2007, Auckland to Fiji 2008.

'No modifications are planned as we have become just as much attached to history as we, to the boat itself. Our first experience on her was a sea trial in Wellington (35-40knot northerly, gentle by Wellington standards) and we could not believe how fast we were going without trying. We signed the papers before the excitement wore off.



'Delivery trip north to Auckland'. Photo © 'Starlight Express' partners.

'The next outing was the delivery trip up to Auckland (her new home, again), up the East Coast in a 40-50knot Southerly reaching speeds of nearly 25knots with a storm jib and 3 reefs in the main. What an initiation, it took 2 months for the smiles to ease.

'I personally have not sailed a boat that glides through the water with such purity. It is a huge credit to both Laurie Davidson (original Designer) and Brett Bakewell-White (Keel, Rudder and other improvements). She is still capable of being very competitive today and can hold her own amongst the newer boats (canting keels aside), we just need to learn what makes her go'.

With that promised new enthusiasm and keen appreciation of the history of 'Starlight Express' it looks sure that the great yacht will add to her already fine tradition. In case you've forgotten, or are too young to remember her earlier days, here are some of her race statistics during the past 27 years;

Sydney to Hobart - 1985, 1987, 1994, 2000, 2002

Hamilton Island Series - 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002

Kenwood Cup Hawaii - 1986, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998

Auckland to Musket Cove Fiji - 2003

Presidents Cup Fiji - 2001

Burns Philp - 1985
Squadron Cup - 1998
Around the North Island 2 handed – 1986
Brisbane to Gladstone - 1987
Royal Akarana Balokovic Cup - 1992 winner IMS
Royal Akarana Ice Breaker - winner IMS
Bay of Islands to Port Vila – 1995

‘Whispers II’.

Following the story about ‘Whispers II’ and her original owner and builder, Geoff Stagg (August ‘07 issue), I have been in contact with the yacht’s fourth and present owner Vaughan Wilkinson of Auckland.

Vaughan tells of a lot of loving restoration work that has been carried out to the dear old lady and has sent me the image below of his pride and joy that certainly looks very smart in her new colours.

Vaughan says that the dark blue-green that was her trademark colour in Wellington was creating too many heat problems in mid-summer Auckland!



‘Whispers II in the City of Sails’.

© Vaughan Wilkinson.

APOLOGY!

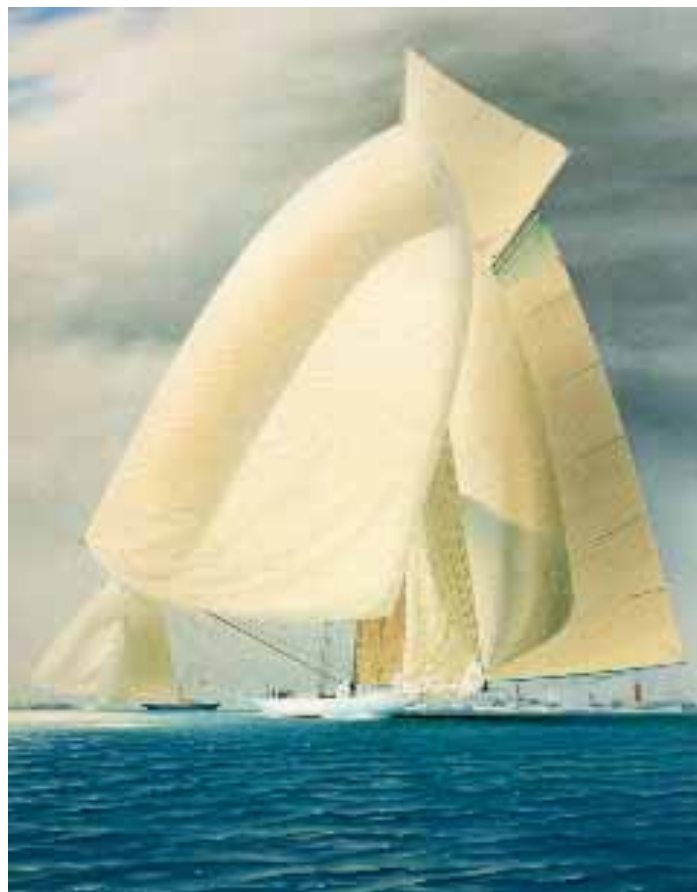
In the September edition of 'A Brush with Sail' I carried a story probing the difference between the thrill of winning a regatta of 'Grand Prix' TP 52's or the thrill of winning the historical Governor's Cup in the famous Olin Stevens designed Lightning Class dinghy.

I credited the photos of the Lightening regatta at the Lake Wallenpaupack Yacht Club, to Danny Giacobe! Apparently his fellow members have been giving him a bit of a hard time over his name change! Because his name is really **Denny Giacobe**.

Sorry Denny!

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See original art & prints by Jim Bolland at his only U.S.A. outlet
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'New Breeze' (Reliance 1903) © Jim Bolland

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TORBJORN'S SUMMER OF SUCCESS!

Torbjorn Tornquist sailed his Rolf Vrolijk designed, Cookson N.Z. built, TP52 'Artemis' to victory in this years Breitling Med Cup series when he won the final regatta, the Trofeo de Hyeres, sailed at Hyeres, France in mid-September.

Then, as if to justify his success, took his yacht to Porto Cervo, at the island of Sardinia, Italy and won, comfortably, the TP52 Global Championship sailed from the Yacht Club Cost Smeralda, during the last week of September.

Sure, he did have Russell Coutts , arguably the most complete sailor on the planet, standing at his shoulder calling the shots and running the ship, but keep in mind that this Swedish business man - and his country's Consul in Switzerland - was in only his second season of competitive sailing!



'Artemis'

photo©ThMartinez

His was the hand on the tiller in the heat of the start when 15 or more of the world's hottest Grand Prix yachts and their equally hot crews fought for the best place on the line, or the right side of the course during the first beat to weather, or placing the yacht for success in a crowded mark rounding or wringing a little more boat-speed from 'Artemis' when the wind faded and became a directional lottery!

Yes, it's true, he also had a crew - selected by Russell – that would please any owner trying to win a regatta, Juan Vila, Ed Smith, Ross Halcrow, James Dagg, Andrew Taylor, Jared Henderson, Richard Meacham, Peter van Nieuwenhuyzen, Jeremy Lomas and Max Sirena. Add to that list of 'world' sailors, Russell standing beside him and Torbjorn could have been excused if he felt intimidated in such company!



'Yes coach!' Torbjorn Tornqvist & Russell Coutts. photo © Carlo Borlenghi

Said Torbjorn after the Global Championship win, "It's a challenge and I like challenges'.

'Coming into this season I felt the pressure of sailing with such good sailors and sometimes I thought, am I going to be the weak link in this, but I have had great support'.

'I have probably improved as we have gone on – starting, how to accelerate, getting the timing right. It was good, but I can improve more!'

Wow! Look out! When you consider that the *'Artemis'* winning margin was 26.75 points and the next four boats, Eamon Conneely's *'Patches'* (2006 champion), *'Mean Machine'* Peter de Ridder, Alberto Roemmers *'Siemens'* and Stuart Robinson's *'Stay Calm'* were covered by only six points, Tornqvist and Coutts put one hell of a campaign together and *'Artemis'* was a worthy winner of both series.

Final Overall Points. 2007 TP52 Global Championship.

1. *'Artemis'*, Torbjorn Tornqvist, (Sweden), 23.25
2. *'Patches'*, Eamon Conneely, (Ireland), 50.00
3. *'Mean Machine'*, Peter de Ridder, (Monaco), 50.50
4. *'Siemens'*, Alberto Roemmers, (Spain), 55.25
5. *'Stay Calm'*, Stuart Robinson, (Great Britain), 55.75
6. *'Windquest'*, Doug Devos, (U.S.A.), 61.50
7. *'Matua Madrilena'*, Bablio S.P., (Chile), 61.75
8. *'Glory'*, John Buchan, (U.S.A.), 69.00
9. *'Cristabella'*, John Cook, (Great Britain), 74.75
10. *'Cam'*, Leon/Sanchez, (Spain), 78.00



'TP-52 A-sail parade.'

Photo © Gilles Martin-Raget..

A personal view.

As an elderly enthusiast who follows the TP52 racing throughout the northern summer, along with other major and minor events in Europe and the America's, I would like to draw the organisers of many regattas attention to the standard of press assistance displayed by the Breitling Med Cup series.

I follow the TP52's because I think they are keel yachts designed and built to a great box rule and they look and behave like a 'real' race yacht. They attract the very best sailors, corinthian and professional alike. A more personal reason is the fact that many Kiwi sailors are involved!

I've never been on site of any of these regattas, but each regatta appears to be very well planned and co-ordinated with the competitors and the prize-giving and social events also appear to get the full treatment.

The part of this great event that I do have a full grasp of is following it on-line. I can't sing the praises of the Med Cup press office or web-master enough!

When the regattas are under way, every morning (N.Z. time) I log on to a screen full of information on recently completed races and a mass of professional images that are the nearest thing to being there.

It's a great example of how any class can involve the yachting public and grow interest in its activities. Well done and thank you!



'TP-52 fleet at the weather gate'.

Photo © ThMartinez

It's fleet racing like this (above), that is fast propelling the TP-52 class toward the absolute pinnacle of Grand Prix competitive sailing. While war has broken out over the America's Cup and the talking heads battle for World supremacy, these TP-52 guys just keep on having the greatest fun and the most sailing!

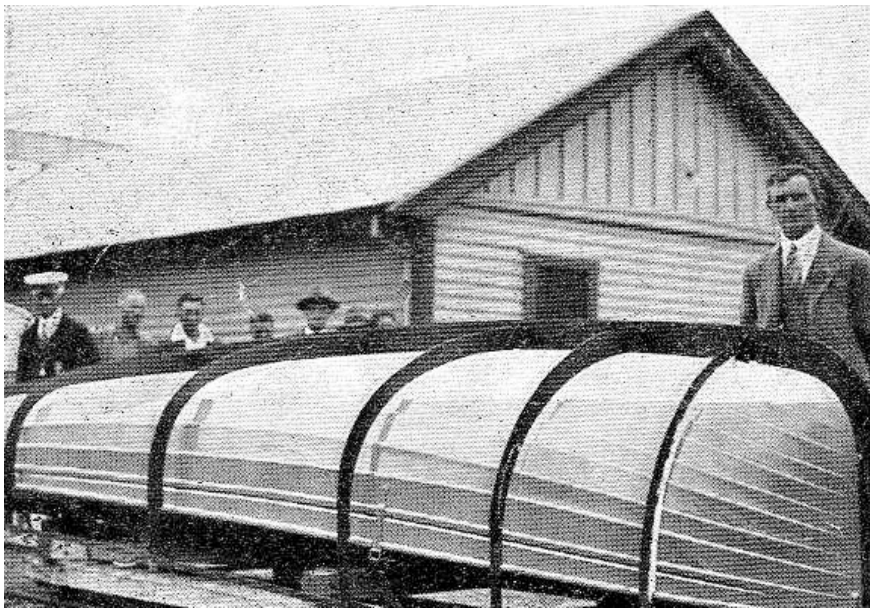
Next season looks like being even better than 2007. What a show!

CONTINUED FROM THE SEPTEMBER EDITION OF 'A BRUSH WITH SAIL';

' NEW ZEALAND'S 'BLUE RIBBAND' OF SAILING'.

The introduction of the 'Rona' steel mould in measurement started a trend to refer to the boats of the X Class as 'Rona - Jellicoe' boats.

The measurement wrangle was with the X Class continually and was not helped when, during 1934 or '35, the steel mould could not be fitted to a boat that had previously measured. Already appreciated by sailors with a knowledge of building a round bilge boat by the clinker plank system, strapped only by ribs riveted to the plank lands, was the fact that continued hard sailing with a four man crew was bound to take its toll on hull shape to some extent.



The infamous 'Rona' measurement mould.

The move then was to re-write the 'Class rules, drop the one-design title and make it a restricted 'Class. This was done at a meeting of delegates at Auckland on January 31, 1936. This allowed a variation of two inches in the main dimensions, instead of the 3/4in. concession in use until then. The sail plan was to remain the same, as were the construction and spar details.

In the new restricted class the length would be between 13ft. 10in. and 14ft., the beam between 5ft. 7in. and 5ft. 9in., the transom of a width between 4ft.10.in.and 5ft. and the depth amidships between 1ft. 8in. and 1ft. 9in.

Following the rule change, boats of the previous regime continued to dominate Sanders Cup regattas. In fact the year of the change, 'Avenger' returned from her winning ways of 1932-33 to win the 1936 contest for Canterbury and then in '37 and '38 Wellington won the Cup with 'Lavina' and 'Kitty'. Both boats were to the original one-design rules as was the 1939 Canterbury winner 'Huia'.



The Wellington rep. 'Kitty' on her winning way during the Sanders Cup regatta in Dunedin in 1938

The dark clouds that hung over International affairs during 1938-39 had truly become a storm front by 1940 with England at war with Germany and a call to arms throughout the British Empire thinning the ranks of sailors able to continue with their sport.

But 1940 was also a centennial year for Wellington, the Capital City of New Zealand and among the many celebrations planned was a regatta that would include all the National class championships and a festival of keel yacht racing. Everyone knew that there were dark years ahead and this would be the last big celebration for some time!

At the top of the sailing programme was the twentieth regatta for the Sanders Cup and the entries included the Auckland challenger 'Caress' sailed by Billy Rogers. 'Caress' was a new boat built to the new restricted class rules and she created a lot of interest. The Wellington representative was 'Kitty', winner of the 1938 contest and as she had won the representative trials in a dominant fashion she was most fancied by local pundits.

The Canterbury representative was 'Ariki' skippered by George Brassell, a veteran of the class and he proved that he was not to be taken lightly, by winning the first race from 'Caress' by 40 seconds. 'Kitty' led until half way up the first beat when the lower stem bolt holding the bobstay broke and forced the Wellington boats retirement.

Billy Rogers and his young crew then took contest by the throat and won the next three races to claim the 'Cup back for Auckland.

'Caress' successfully defended the Sanders Cup on home waters the following year in the 21st and last contest before the cessation of hostilities against Germany and Japan.



This photo is of the Wellington yacht 'Kitty' fifteen minutes after the start of the first race of the 1940 Wellington Centennial Sanders Cup contest. Shortly after this photo was taken the bobstay-stem bolt parted and 'Kitty' retired.

This is a very special image for me, as the young chap steering is my Father, the mainsheet hand forward of him is my maternal Grandfather. What other sport would interest me?

Apart from the fact that it is one of the better photographs I have of one of the true one design X Class yachts and that it shows how Kiwi sailors have always liked yachts with lots of sail, it is also a beloved part of my heritage.

In the next edition of 'A Brush with Sail', I'll continue with the post-war story of the Sanders Cup, the Blue Ribband of New Zealand Sailing.

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(The following story is re-printed from the book 'History of the Sanders Cup' by Wheatley and Reid.)

The Epic of Sanders, V.C.

The life story of the man after whom the Sanders Cup is named is an epic of achievement and heroism.

Lieutenant-Commander W.E.Sanders. V.C., D.S.O., RNR., was born to the sea and his stirring deeds in the Q-ship 'Prize' in the first world war served as an inspiration to the great numbers of yachtsmen who fought in that struggle and also in World War II.

He was a man to whom the sea was home and whose association with the sea was a religion. His advancement in the Mercantile Marine and in the Royal Navy was a little short of meteoric and had he survived the war his naval career would have culminated in very high rank. But he died at the age of 30. In New Zealand his name became synonymous with skill in battle, gallantry and self-sacrifice.



Son of Mr E.H.C.Sanders of Devonport, Auckland, he went to sea as a steward at the age of 17 and in 1906 signed on the old Government steamer 'Hinemoa' as an ordinary seaman, subsequently joining the Craig Line of sailing ships out of Auckland to gain deep-water experience. He then went back into steam and at 27 passed for his extra master's certificate.

On the outbreak of World War I he applied for admission to the Royal Navy, but the Admiralty at that time did not welcome Mercantile Marine officers, although they were only too glad to engage them later. The young master mariner went to England and again made application. This time he was successful and was appointed Sub Lieutenant, R.N.R., on April 19, 1916 and later joined H.M.S Sabina as second in command.

Volunteering for service in Q-ships when that method of combating the German submarine menace was adopted, he was given command of the topsail schooner 'Prize'. In a little over a year he had been promoted from Sub Lieutenant, to Lieutenant Commander, one of the most remarkable cases of rapid promotion in the history of the Royal Navy. Within another few months he had been awarded the Victoria Cross and the Distinguished Service Order, though the latter award was made posthumously.

He made no boast of his distinction in rank and made light of his wounds, while his religion was the Navy and his belief in its invincibility was profound.

It was on the evening of April 30 1917, that Lieutenant-Commander Sanders earned his V.C. A German submarine was sighted from the 'Prize'- it was the U93 commanded by Baron Spiegel von und zu Peckelsheim. The submarine was running awash and Sanders ordered his men to action stations. At a range of 4000 yards the first German shell whined overhead, the schooner lowered her topsails and the well drilled 'panic party' manned their boat and pushed off with the customary flurry and shouting, while Sanders and his gun crews lay hidden waiting for the submarine to come to close quarters.

But the commander of the U-boat was suspicious and the German kept firing as he closed in, reducing the 'Prize' to a mass of wreckage. Sanders and his men held grimly to their task, while shell after shell crashed into the hull. At last the submarine lay a bare hundred yards abeam, slowly circling the 'Prize' before sending her to her doom with the final shell.

Then came a shrill blast from Sanders whistle. The gun-screens clanged down as the White Ensign fluttered up to the masthead and the 'Prize' opened fire. With the first salvo, the submarine's for'ard gun was disabled. Another shell struck her hull and when she swung away at full speed and prepared to dive, her commander and three men ran aft to man the other gun. Good shooting from the 'Prize' soon had the Germans swimming.

As darkness set in, the 'Prize's' boat picked up those members of the submarine's crew who were swimming about. Despite the severe damage she had suffered, the 'Prize' was brought safely to port, carrying with her the U-boat Commander. The submarine returned to Germany, but she was so badly holed by the 'Prize's' shells that she could not submerge. Her second-in-command however, managed to evade the British naval patrols by going north round the British Isles, almost up to the Arctic Circle and thence down the coast of Norway and Denmark, running awash all the way. This was recognised as a very fine feat of seamanship on the part of the Germans.

The award of the Victoria Cross to Lieutenant-Commander Sanders was gazetted on June 27, 1917 and at his base at Milfordhaven a few weeks later he received the Sword of Honour from the Navy in recognition of his gallant work. Sanders, however, was denied the crowning honour of receiving the award at the hands of His Majesty the King, as he fought his last action before the next investiture at Buckingham Palace.

It was during the afternoon of August 14, 1917, that the 'Prize' was again in action with a U-boat, but this time the German commander was too wily to be lured within effective range of the Q-ship's guns. Almost submerged, the German followed his quarry until nightfall and then a torpedo sent the 'Prize' and her complement to the bottom. For his service in this action, Sanders was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

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'WIND WHISPERER'.

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