

## Some Information about Historical Model Yacht Racing on Orakei Basin

By Graham Barker 19 September 2016

It appears that model yachts were initially raced on the Orakei Basin prior to 1928 under the auspices of the Orakei Basin Model Yacht Club. In 1928 a new club was founded as Auckland East Model Yacht Club, which took over the model yacht racing on the Basin. (Refer Attachment A for more detail).

Photos from New Zealand Herald of 1935 in Attachment B show club members gathering with their yachts for sailing at the Basin. One photo also shows a boat shed, which presumably housed members' dinghies that skippers used for chasing their yachts.

Below is a photo of model yachts racing on the Basin in 1937. The skipper of each yacht rowing with their yacht to cause it to tack and gybe as required to complete the course.

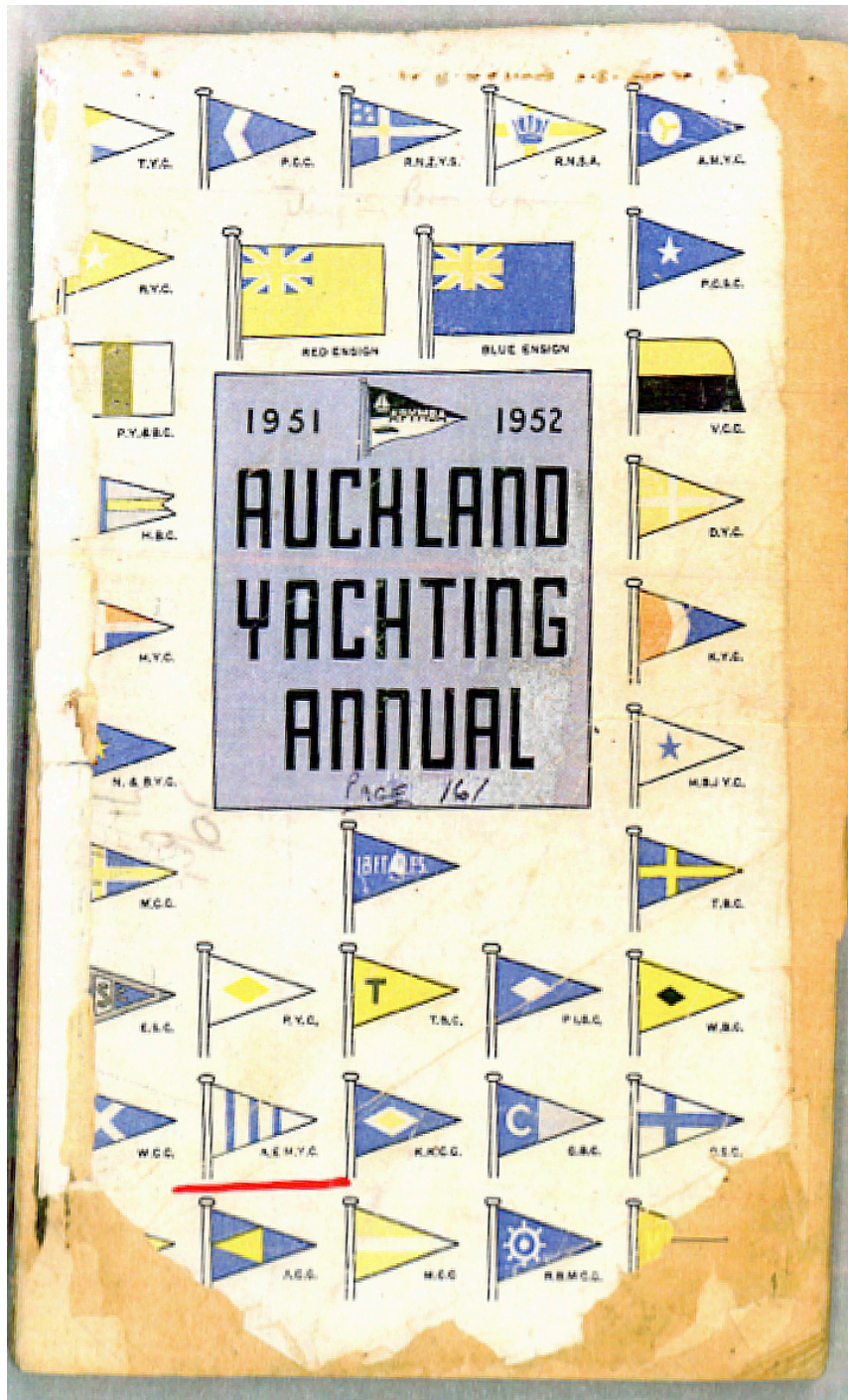


From discussion with Mr Bruce Anderson, who raced a similar yacht on the Basin in 1943 as a 13 year old, we have more information on the yachting of this era. He believes that the yachts in photo are of the 3-foot class, which is the same class of yacht that he sailed. Races were held on Saturdays because larger yachts such as P-Class, Frostbites and Z-Class were raced on the Basin on Sundays by another yacht club called the Orakei Yacht Club. Mr Alistair Bevan was very active in leading the Auckland East Model Yacht Club.

At this time the rock groin (or jetty) on the South side of the Basin had been constructed for launching the yachts. Also a substantial boat shed was adjacent to the rock groin for housing the dinghies used by the skippers of model yachts. A breezy day would cause the skippers to have a lot of exercise. Up to 10 yachts would participate in these races. The course would consist only of upwind and downwind legs.

The 3-foot yachts had a beam of about 12 inches and deep lead bulb mounted on a metal skeg.

In 1951 the club introduced the 12-inch class of yacht, which had a strong following in Sydney. These yachts had 12 inch overall hull length but with bowsprits 16 inches long, mast height 36 inches and keels 15 inches deep. The club introduced a plastic version of these yachts at this time. (Refer Attachment A).





#### AUCKLAND EAST MODEL YACHT CLUB.

Founded 1928.

\* Clubhouse: Orakei Basin.

President: H. Martin, 3 Somerfield St., Ellerslie, SE6.

Commodore: G. Brown, sear., 53 Keraha St., Remuera, SE2.  
Phone 32-644.

Secretary: R. R. Small, 7 Ward Terrace, Sandringham.

Formerly the Orakei Basin Model Yacht Club, the principal objects are the fostering of the art of building and sailing model craft of all kinds, in particular model racing yachts for organised racing in which the factors influencing yacht performances, hull form, balance and trim, are clearly emphasised. Probably no better training ground exists for embryo yachtsmen than in the building, rigging and sailing of models, and the Club caters for this aspect of the sport. This season a 12in. Class (with a strong following in Sydney) is being introduced, the models being 12in. O.A., 6in. to 9in. Beam, with sliding keels approximately 15in. deep, masts about 36in., boom 20in., bowsprit 16in., displacement 5lb to 1lb. To encourage beginners, particularly young people, ten plastic models are being built to the above class. Persons interested in model yacht racing are invited to the Club headquarters in Orakei Basin, where an area of some 130 acres with an average depth of about 4 feet provides ideal aquatic conditions for model boat racing of all kinds. Facilities are available for borrowing models from the Club to compete in races.

#### AWANUI CRUISING CLUB.

Commodore: A. Vazey, Box 25, Awanui.

#### CLEVEDON CRUISING CLUB.

Patron: R. McKenzie.

President: H. E. Goodwin.

Commodore: G. K. McKenzie. Vice-Commodore: J. Hepburn.

Secretary and Treasurer: J. L. Munro, Box 34, Pupakura.

#### CAMBRIDGE YACHT & MOTOR BOAT CLUB (Inc.).

President: R. F. Buckingham.

Commodore: W. R. Collins, Duke St., Cambridge.

Vice-Commodore: E. Levesque, Victoria Rd., Cambridge.

Rear-Commodore: H. L. Watkins.

Secretary: H. L. Watkins, P.O. Box 17, Cambridge.

Phones 22 (Business), 539D (Private).

The Clubhouse at Lake Karapiro is practically completed and will provide many amenities for Club members and visiting yachtsmen, facilities being available for the storage of gear, etc. Trophy races are contested each Saturday, with the exception of the Christmas and New Year week-ends, and Sweepstake Races are held each Sunday. The Annual Regatta—a two-day programme—is held usually on the first week-end in March, and racing is provided for the following classes: 14-footers, Idle Alongs, Frostbites, Silver Ferns, Z's and P's. Visiting yachtsmen are always assured of a warm welcome should they visit the Clubhouse at Lake Karapiro.

## Attachment A - Information from Auckland Yachting Annual 1951/52

Provided by Ross Morton September 2014

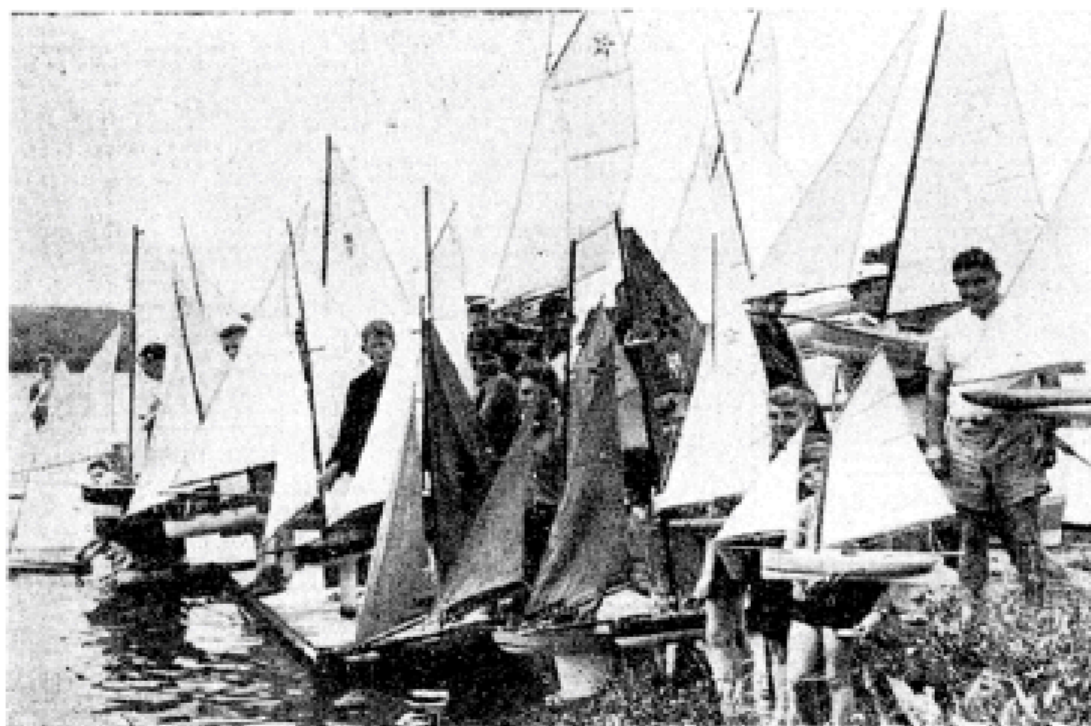
## Attachment B - Photos from NZ Herald 1935

Provided by Terry Lloyd Wood



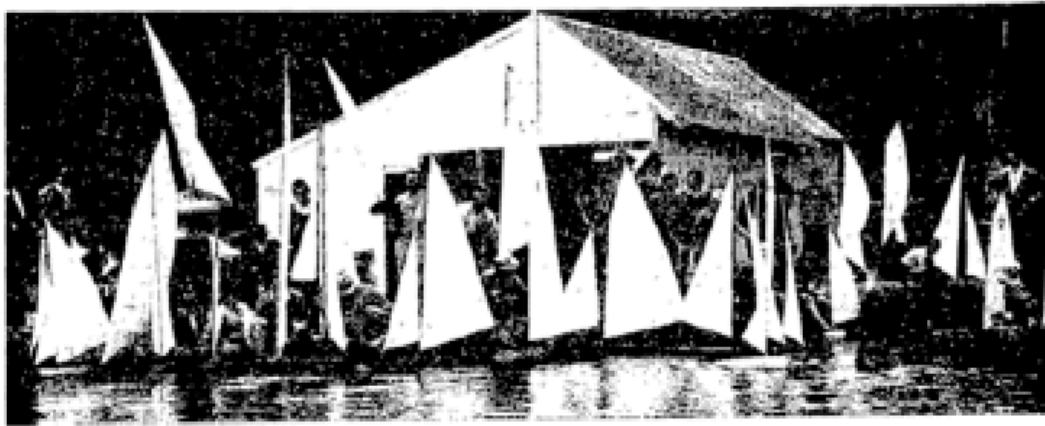
**MODEL YACHT RACING ON THE ORAKEI BASIN DURING THE WEEK-END**  
Members of the Orakei Basin Model Yacht Club with their models prior to the start of one of the races on Saturday afternoon.

NEW ZEALAND HERALD, VOLUME LXXII, ISSUE 22258, 5  
NOVEMBER 1935



**MODEL YACHTING SEASON OFFICIALLY OPENED AT THE ORAKEI BASIN YESTERDAY**  
Model yachting enthusiasts prepare their craft for the water before one of the events yesterday morning, when the Orakei Basin Model Yacht Club officially opened its season.





READY FOR ANOTHER SEASON.—Model yachts lined up at the Orakei Basin during the week-end, when Club held the first race of the season.

Attachment C is an advertisement for the Auckland Anniversary Regatta 1948 which shows that model yachts were raced on the Orakei Basin as part of the Regatta in that year.

98th

**AUCKLAND ANNIVERSARY**  
**Regatta**

(INAUGURATED 1850)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29th, 1948.

Celebrating the Anniversary of the Founding of the City of Auckland.

LOCATIONS:

**YACHT RACING—**  
OFF WESTHAVEN—NORTH END OF CURRAN STREET, HERNE BAY.  
FIRST RACE: 10.00 A.M.

**MIDGET YACHT RACING—**  
AT WESTHAVEN—INSIDE BOAT HARBOUR.

**MODEL YACHT RACING—**  
AT ORAKEI BASIN, REMUERA—SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14th.

**HEADQUARTERS FOR THE DAY:**  
WESTHAVEN CABARET

By Royal Permission Auckland Harbour Board.  
By Appointment of Curran Street off Jersey Road, etc.

**Model Yacht Section**  
— AT —  
**ORAKEI BASIN, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14th, 1948.**

*Judge:* Mr. H. Martin.      *Timekeeper:* Mr. J. Stewart.      *Starter:* Mr. J. G. Wilson.

*Handicappers:*  
Senior Division—Mr. H. Wilson.      Junior Division: Mr. C. G. Ellis.

**SENIOR EVENTS:**

|                             | First | Second | Third |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Anniversary Handicap (Open) | 25/-  | 10/-   | 5/-   |
| 3-Foot Handicap             | 10/-  | 5/-    | 2/6   |
| 3-Foot Championship         | 20/-  | 10/-   | 5/-   |
| General Handicap            | 10/-  | 5/-    | 2/6   |
| Consolation Event           | 10/-  | 5/-    | 2/6   |

**JUNIOR EVENTS:**

|            |      |     |     |
|------------|------|-----|-----|
| Five Races | 10/- | 5/- | 2/6 |
|------------|------|-----|-----|

(Subject to restrictions by Minister of Health being lifted)  
POST ENTRIES CLOSE 10.30 A.M. ON THE DAY.  
ENTRANCE FEES: Seniors, 6s. Juniors, 3d.  
FIRST RACE: 10.30 A.M.

*Owing to the Controlling Club having lost six dinghies through theft,  
Senior Competitors are asked to bring their own dinghies.*

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**POINT CHEVALIER SAILING CLUB**  
(Incorporated)

**Annual Club Regatta - - 21st March, 1948**

If you want to be in the big money enter for the Regatta of the Club that leads New Zealand in Prize Money.  
One glance at our Prize Money will be sufficient to note the date and enter.

**PRIZES:**

|                      |         |         |         |
|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14ft. and over .. .. | 1st, £7 | 2nd, £4 | 3rd, £3 |
| Under 14ft. .. ..    | 1st, £4 | 2nd, £2 | 3rd, £1 |

In addition, first boat to finish in each class will be awarded the Club's Championship Pennant for the 1947-48 Season.

Remember this is a Club Regatta with the usual entrance fees. Entries close Tuesday, 16th March, 1948, John Burns & Coy. Ltd., at 5 p.m. Club-house, 7 p.m.

9 Oliver Street,  
Pt. Chevallier.

V. H. A. MILLER,  
Hon. Secretary.