



TUGS AND TOW SUPERCITY ACTION

Once again the OceanBridge Auckland Anniversary Regatta put on a great show right on the doorstep of our amazing city. I must say, after walking around the Viaduct Harbour, this overall celebration is now gaining good traction with a wider group of the public, just like it did years ago. Well done, super city!

However, the second big bang after Sunday night's fantastic fireworks display was the Tug Boat Race and the Tugs Through the Ages Parade.

Once again, people both on the water and on land are now making an appointment with this event. Someone asked me, "Why has this event taken off like a rocket and is still flying well?"

I thought for a while, and apart from the huge variation of size, shape and colour of these boats there is all the action that goes with them, with lots of wash and a bit of smoke.

I think people see them as the "happy boats" of the harbour. Looking into this further, they represent the hard yards our commercial fleet has put into building Auckland and the nearby coastline, making history alive and exciting.

The event started as usual with boats assembling off Hobson Wharf shortly after 0800. Total Marine's little *Kaipara* steamed into the Viaduct with her race number well posted, just to show her muscle and mana.

Then all the old boats turned up, with the *Ferro* and *Sierra* looking absolutely fantastic, the *Bondi Belle*, and the *Sterling* showing off her lovely little slim hull like a catwalk model.

It was so nice to hear the voices of the skippers as Keith Ingram went through the roll call, all sounding eager and proud

to be part of this event. Shortly after, we all steamed down the harbour as part of the parade of sail and peeled off as we reached the starting line at North Head.

As always, rain, hail or shine, Dick and Colleen Fisher's *Akarana* was taking position with Terry Koefoed and his team on board. What a lovely sight to see one of the toilers from the past in such stunning condition. After five years of this event, it is nice to see the participating boats naturally finding their comfort zone on the starting line. Well done boys, for a great display of safety and good old common sense.

Maui I and the little *Kaipara* edged their way forward of the line with great anticipation and returned just before the gun went off after a blast on the RT from Keith and myself.

Bang and away they went. The *Whakakume* and *Waipapa* were hard at it with more than a bone in their fat mouths. The *William C Daldy* showed the young fellas she's far from being over and out of this silly play, with *Maui I*, the *Daldy* and the *Tamaki* not far behind.

The little old ladies like the *Bondi Belle*, with her little six-cylinder Mercedes were going flat out, while on the inner side of the line, Jim Ashby's stunning spirit of tradition *Olga*, with her lovely old cast iron 6L3 Gardner winding up that 50-odd inch propeller. It's still the nicest sounding diesel engine ever made, in my mind! I think marine engine designers need to go back to the drawing board, as I think a modern 114hp engine would not perform like this.

Flywheel inertia is still the key element for a displacement boat engine. Back further, *Ferro*, *Sierra* and the lovely *Valda M*

The darling of the harbour, our very own steam tug *William C Daldy*, won on handicap and took out the prize for best presented workboat



BOATS SHARE

BY BADEN PASCOE

took up the challenge with caution. The old speedster *Sterling* took her time this year. Her skipper, Brett Evans, tells me she has a dirty bottom, but I don't know about this?

He might have been making the most of his handicap. Full marks to this boat and crew after what they went through a couple of years ago. Great spirit, Brett!

Looking down at the harbourmaster's buoy, the terrible twins took the turn first, with the *William C Daldy* close behind and the *Manukau* going well, the *Daldy* close on port and Richard Fisher in the *Hamal* going faster than ever.

They came down the main shipping channel trailed by the

Gladiator and the *Christine Mary*, who took time off from a very busy work schedule to make time for the event.

Thanks Thompson Towing, for making the time during your day in the true spirit of the event, as always. That's what you get from a family owned and operated business. Long live family businesses!

By this time the wind had set up a nice little chop from the southwest, creating a lovely environment for photographers and a few onlookers from the Devonport Wharf.

Our skipper, Mike, positioned us exactly where we needed to be, on the inner side of the finish line, with the *Akarana* on the outer mark. They came across the line as follows: ▶

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Port of Auckland's four tugs take a bow after giving a public display of manoeuvrability



The *Tamaki* shows her fire fighting ability



Pure grunt as they head for the bottom mark



RESULTS		
Line	Time	Handicap Place
Waipapa	32.08	2 (<i>Professional Skipper Trophy</i>)
William C Daldy	33.20	1 (<i>Thompson Handicap Trophy</i>)
Whakakume	33.23	3
Daldy	35.28	6
Hamal	36.21	5
Mahia	36.38	6
Christine Mary	36.47	7
Bondi Belle	40.27	8
Manukau	40.51	9
Olga	40.57	4
Ferro	41.32	14
Maui 1	42.04	16
Sierra	43.29	5
Gladiator	44.08	13
Kaipara	44.48	7
Valda M	45.24	10
Sterling	46.59	17
Tamaki	53.58	18

The *Valda M* followed the *Kaipara* across the line and as always they were greeted home with an array of hoots. But we had forgotten some. The *Sterling* was still on her way and the *Tamaki* had problems with her propulsion system and was coming up the harbour backwards. Eventually she made it across the line and made use of her fire-fighting gear and joined in with the *Maui 1* by pumping a lot of water around. Thanks Nick Lewis and Tim Coulson. The harbour looked absolutely fantastic with all the shapes, sizes, colours and the spray from your tugs.

As for the display at the end of Princes Wharf, it was the best ever and people are still talking about this. Thanks again Ports of Auckland and skippers Andy, Rahul, Tim and Graham. You are number one.

Due to Thompsons and Total Marine having such a busy workload on the day, there was very little pushing and snorting from old Caterpillar exhausts. We know you will be back in earnest next year, so thanks for showing up with the boats you had on hand.

The parade was down on numbers as well. There were no Black and Red boats and a lot of the older boats like the *Te Hauraki*, *Curlew* and *Ronaki* were off duty due to mechanical and family reasons. Our small after-match raft-up was compromised due to the dragon boats and all the construction going on in the Viaduct.

However, Viaduct harbourmaster Alex Atkinson kindly accommodated the *Sierra*, *Ferro*, *Bondi Belle* and *Valda M* for a few hours while their crews had lunch. It was such a nice little scene and with a little luck this will be expanded next year once all the construction is finished around the Gateway Plaza and the Events Centre areas.

I think we all know this event could be bigger than Texas if we can get berthage for a few hours.

Our vessel judging team was down to Peter Soljak alone and comprehensive judging was so difficult, with boats making their departure from the event after the parade. Peter called the shots to judge the boats on a steam-by basis only, taking into consideration the age of vessel. Nevertheless, being a top-notch boatbuilder, he poked his nose onboard whatever vessel he could. Old habits are hard to change! A special thank you to all involved. See you all next year, with bigger and better things to come.

Patterson Trophy for the best presented retired vessel:
Bondi Belle

Parry Trophy for the best presented vessel still in survey:
William C Daldy 