



TUG AND TOWBOAT EVENT BUILDS ON LAST YEAR

BY BADEN PASCOE



The event was supported by an aerobatic display



Tugs prepare for the start

It was not hard to notice on the day of the Oceanbridge Auckland Anniversary Regatta that this event had grown at all interest levels from last year. Yes, we only raced 30 boats, the same as last year, but at least six vessels were on the slip or could not make it down the coast because of bad weather. And then there were the skippers who wanted to be there but had other commitments.

The support from the industry was outstanding. Thanks go to Thomson's, Brent Shipman from Total Marine and Greg Kroff from Heron Construction. You guys really showcase the towboat industry. It was so nice seeing you and your skippers having such good fun. In fact I heard a comment from one of the passengers on the *Christine Mary* saying, "Isn't it good to see these guys out there today just doing what they love, and displaying such high regard for safety at the same time."

In addition to this, the families of the skippers and crews simply loved every minute of the event. I heard a little girl say to her mother, "Can we come back and do this again next year?" To me

this is the greatest reward for being involved in such an event.

Then there were the dedicated owners of the retired vessels who had put in such an effort to present their pride and joy. The older-style boats, such as the 1917 *Sierra*, really make the event with their flowing lines and characterful paintwork. Her owner, Dennis Christopher, sacrificed his summer to make the *Sierra* look like she was ready for the event.

The *Valda M* looked simply stunning after her nearly three-year restoration. It is hard to believe she could look like this after being totally abused and unloved by various owners over the last 50-odd years. Wayne, you have given her a new heart and soul. Good on ya, mate!

Topping it all off was Greg Lees and his crew in the immaculate little 26ft *Karewa*. The only word I can use to describe her is cute. Her crew were all dressed in Lees' shirts. They had another purpose for this event, as they were fundraising for the Neonatal and Parent Home Care Services at National Women's Hospital.

There were visiting boats like *Enterprise 11* from Tauranga,

crewed by Tim Olsson and his family. They built this event into their summer cruise, stopping off at Mercury Island for a few days and then exploring the Hauraki Gulf on the way up to Auckland.

The fanfare of Aquatica came with a wide range of events for the family. Tim mentioned to me that they had enjoyed it so much that they will be back next year, and they will bring other boats along with them. Jim and Evelyn Ashby's *Olga* was also another visiting boat from Opuia. The *Olga* is not an old boat but she is built in the true spirit of tradition. I have not been on board her but it would not be hard to imagine she would be a reflection of Jim's outstanding craftsmanship and character.

The other visiting boat was the graceful pilot boat *Rawinia*, built in 1961 by Robb, and now owned by Graham Metge. There were also boats that simply did not make it due to the weather, including the *Phyllis* and the *Meola*, both from the Bay of Islands.

Tommy Walker was thinking of bringing the legendary *Oleo* down from Awanui. I don't think she has been to town for 50 years. Bring her down next year, Tommy, and we will have a giant welcoming party.

The event started as it did last year off the entrance to the Viaduct Harbour just after 0800. Boats slowly mustered themselves into a flotilla that was colourful and interesting to any eye. At 0830 the oldest entrant, the *Bondi Belle* (1900), lead them down the harbour to the start line. As a matter of interest, the *Bondi Belle* and her crew won the Patterson Trophy for the best-presented retired vessel last year.

Once down at the starting area the boats assembled behind the line between North Head buoy and the former Auckland Harbour Board pilot launch *Akarana*. Our safety officer, Keith Ingram, instructed the largest boats to take the starboard side and the smaller boats the port or inner side.

The *Christine Mary* hugged the extreme port side, while the *William C Daldy* stood off some distance behind the line. I think they had planned a rolling start but things did not turn out



Quality, Reliable, Marine Diesel Engines for Commercial Applications from 350bhp



Smooth, Quiet and Very Reliable. The Perkins Sabre Series of Marine Engines from 65bhp



Custom built gensets from 6kva
Keel or Heat Exchanger Cooled



SPARES SALES SERVICE
 ROTORUA PH: 07 3456657
 AUCKLAND PH: 09 2778857
 WESTHAVEN PH: 09 3790260
 CHRISTCHURCH PH: 03 3498738
www.transdiesel.com