

THE TUGBOAT RACE & TUGS THROUGH THE AGES PARADE 2009

A DAY FOR THE THE AHB LEGENDS

BY BADEN PASCOE & KEITH INGRAM

Once again this event was a wonderful way to open the 2009 Oceanbridge Auckland Anniversary Regatta. After three years, interest from skippers, crews and the general public, in this event is still on a high. This year's event was full of drama and adrenalin pumping action that would even get hard-core junkies going.

It was so nice to see the fleet grow as the boats turned up one by one and stood by off the end of Princes Wharf. They certainly made an A grade scene for any keen photographer.

Amongst the fleet were a few new entrants, like the cute little *Vulcan* owned by superyacht builders McMullen & Wing. She was apparently built up from an old counter stern hull into an immaculate looking little American like tug by their staff and apprentices. Another newcomer was *Mapu*, built around 1913 by TM Lane of Totara North (Whangaroa Harbour) well before they became the famous launch builders in Auckland. She has been in the family ever since and is now owned and loved by Dr Mark Lane of Auckland. She is steeped in family history, shame she can't talk! The other new old timer was the towing launch *Shamrock* built in 1909 by the famous Bailey & Lowe partnership. She is a legend on the Manukau and Kaipara Harbours. Brett Evans and his crew had steamed her down

from Mangonui in Northland to be part of the event. This effort demonstrates such spirit for this event and the revival of the soul of this little launch.

Gladiator looked sharp as well, she arrived back in town after serving many years in the Pacific Islands. Originally built in Auckland and almost a sister ship to Thompson Towing's *Manukau*. Great to see a new steel tug in the event.

Once again at 9am, safety officer Keith Ingram gave the order for the fleet to set off behind the *Spirit of New Zealand* in the parade of sail. This is a very difficult thing to put together and is a bit like herding wild cats. Eventually it fell into place with our oldest towboat *Bondi Belle* taking the lead after a hurry along from her skipper Ted Carter. Down the harbour and across to Devonport they went. Most of the boats made it down to the start line with plenty of time to spare and it was not hard to see the crews enjoyed the voyage.

Spectator craft were a challenge this year and some of them had to be reminded by the Police and event safety RHIBs that they had to get off the course. Nice to see such interest but they could create a challenge for the competitors. This year the larger boats were instructed to keep to the starboard side of the line in order to isolate the wash.



Lion Foundation aids the *Sterling*



Shall we dance?



A knuckle up is always a friendly chance to get pushy

After another safety briefing and time check from Keith, the clock struck 10, *Akarana* sounded her horn and a white flare was fired, they were off.

However the marginal arrival of the terrible twins, *Wakakume* and *Waipapa* was welcomed although they can cause a bit of havoc as they overtake the fleet. These skippers were well aware of the wash they can make as they tailed the lead boats to the first mark mindful of the rest of the smaller fleet following in the wash.

Te Hauraki, with her recently top end overhauled engine, shot into the lead. A perfect start from her skipper, John Street. At the first mark it was the steam tug *William C Daldy*, *Pacific Way* and *Daldy* crowding in on the mark with John Street's *Te Hauraki* ducking to the inside like a rat up a house pipe.

From where we were, it looked like *Te Hauraki* was the first around to clear the second turning mark.

Once clear of the bottom turning marks the lead boats were stretching out, closely pursued now by Jimmy Thompson's *Christine Mary* and a number of the faster, smaller vessels. As they came up the main shipping channel we could see the terrible twins closing in on the leaders *Te Hauraki*, *William C Daldy* and *Pacific Way*. As they approached the sweeping bend the *William C* and *Pacific Way* were neck and neck with *Daldy* and *Te Hauraki* abreast in behind as the twins were closing in.

Across our side of the line you could hear *Bondi Belle's* little six cylinder Mercedes going hard at it and *Stirling* tucking her ▶



Sea Recovery

REVERSE OSMOSIS DESALINATORS®



Water water everywhere...



and every drop you can drink, shower, make ice, wash, hose down and never run out

Cruise where you want, when you want, without a fresh water worry in the world. Sea Recovery manufacture water makers for all types and sizes of vessels guaranteeing fresh, safe, crystal clear water 24/7.



LIGHTHOUSE

MARINE EQUIPMENT

always on the look out

tel: 09 448 2761 fax: 09 448 2764

email: sales@lhmarine.co.nz

web: www.lhmarine.co.nz

Address: 3C Henry Rose Place, Albany, Auckland, New Zealand.