Have you ever heard of the Spring Chickens?

The Spring Chickens Group at their Mid-Winter Xmas Party!



The group was formed by retired members in 2014 to do much needed maintenance around the club. At the time it was proposed that we sell the yacht club to the marina for $1 and as many of our members had actually been responsible for building the club (both the Lowry Room and the extension known as the Seaview Room) in the 1980s, we weren't happy about that.

When we got through the maintenance list we started the Moorings Project and organised the 6 moorings the club has around the harbour. That wasn't easy and took a lot of perseverance but thankfully the Cruising Captain is now in charge of them and the burden is shared by several clubs, not just Lowry Bay.

Gareth Edwards, who was Commodore when Spring Chickens was first formed, nominated us for a Yachting Association of NZ Service Award which we were presented by Peter Lester, and is displayed at the club.

Fourteen years on, we meet on Thursday mornings for a coffee and a natter. We're now all in our late 70s, early 80s so don't do the maintenance any more. All but four of the Spring Chickens have sold their boats so don't sail any more but most have been avid racers in their time, with their names on lots of trophies.

We have six Life Members in our group:
Cathy Kent
Romain Busby
Steve Taylor
Sue Eathorne
Grahame Eathorne
Keith Murray

all of whom have spent many years serving the club in different executive positions, enjoying the camaraderie of the club as well as the full-on racing programme.

Below are the years of membership of 4 of our longest term members. Most of us have been at the club for at least 30 years:

RICK REEVES = joined in 1974 (52 years ago)
STEVE TAYLOR = joined in 1975 (51 years ago)
ANTON VON OPDORP = joined in 1979 (47 years ago)
JOHN RUSHTON = joined in 1979 (47 years ago)

RICK REEVES

Rick Reeve was Vice Commodore from 1988-1993, served on the Committee and was the Protest Committee Convenor for many years. At this time there were frequent protests, in fact more like at least one protest per race. Nobody wanted this job as it's a thankless task with lots of aggro but Rick took it on and was good at it. Rick was a very competitive racer on his yacht "Windscreamer".

Rick, along with others, and particularly his wife Karen (who was Club Secretary for many years) and Romain Busby another Spring Chicken who is a Life Member, produced the booklet for the LBYC 75th Jubilee occasion so he knows a lot of the background and history of the club.

Very few people know that Rick was awarded the George Medal by the Governor General. He jumped off the Bulls bridge to rescue a bus driver who's bus had ended up in the river when the bridge collapsed. The current at the time was around 25 knots! He got the guy out and saved him!

STEVE TAYLOR

Steve is a Life Member. He was Vice Commodore from 2001-2003, Commodore from 2003-2006 and on various committees. Steve has been through the whole scenario of boats, starting with a trailer sailer in partnership with Rick, Witchcraft, Spartina and ending up with a 930 "Stunned Mullet". He won the Rum Regatta twice, the Shaw Savil Cup in 2004 and a Walker Offshore.

JOHN RUSHTON

John was Commodore from 1984 -86. John has built, owned and repaired boats. He has had numerous boats – "Sherilee", "Eastern Jade" and a motor sailer "Wenderholm" initially jointly owned with his son, Antony. In his restored-from-a-wreck yacht, "Sherilee" he won the first Port Underwood Race. A collision with a whale in Cook Strait on "Sherilee" was a memorable event.

ANTON VON OPDORP

Anton Van Opdorp still owns "Talaria" on B Pier. Anton built "Talaria" himself and has helped out many a club member with engine problems as he is a mechanic by trade.

When the club was at Lowry Bay we laid our own moorings and as the Moorings Officer Anton used a punt and a small crane hand windlass to lower them to the seabed. What a responsibility! Any time there was a nasty southerly you could be sure that one boat at least would come off its moorings and end up on the beach.

As you can imagine, lots of memories of times gone by are related at our meetings. What's revealed at Spring Chickens stays at Spring Chickens!!