



Russell Boating Club (RBC)

History of RBC Yacht Racing Trophies

About the Author

This document was kindly prepared by Andrew Riddell, a life member of the Russell Boating Club. It is a transcript of a talk given by Andrew at the 2026 annual racing prizegiving.

Since the 1990s, Andrew has served the club in a wide range of roles, including:

- Club Secretary
- Secretary/Treasurer
- General committee member
- Mainsheet editor
- Calendar editor
- Racing secretary
- Handicapper
- Racing News editor
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1. Introduction

Kia ora

Tonight I start with some general comments about our trophies and then a look at most of trophies raced for in the 1990-1991 season.

So in general

- the trophies provide a history of our changing fleet makeup by date, boat name and skipper.

- what races and/or series each trophy is for is a changing feast – repurposing is common

- several trophies pre-date the club, including some of our most significant trophies – hand me downs – 5 covered in this talk – several started life at overseas yacht clubs.

- we have more trophies than are raced for each season – I talk about 3 of these sitting on the shelf unused – for now.

And a bit on how I went about this and some limitations

In June 2016 I photographed the trophies engraved for the prizegiving for the 2015-2016 season. Most of what I relate here is taken from those photographs of what was engraved on those trophies, supplemented by electronic records I have of racing since the 2004-2005 season.

I do have copies of lots of Club race calendars and trophy lists from the late 1980s on which can – in time – provide more information about trophies but these are currently buried under piles of boxes of house contents, and will remain like that until we can move back into our house.

I am not attempting to cover all the trophies in one talk – for now just going over trophies in play in the 1990-1991 season. Four or five or so new trophies have been added to the Club's collection since then.

Nor am I covering any of the centreboard trophies either – there are three or four of those.

2. Hassall Shield

So to the 1990-1991 season.

On 30 September 1990 we had an Opening Day race – for the Hassall Shield.

To understand what the Hassall Shield is, we need to go back to 1946:

From the booklet Russell Boating Club The First 20 Years by Don Beattie:

“In the period 1946 to 1952 the Russell Yacht Club was in being, and was a very active club throughout these years. They chose as their future sailing fleet as American Cat boat design, 15 foot in length and had 7 boats built. The cost of these at the time was 31 pounds per hull. The Club conducted sailing races, log trials for power boats and staged fun races and picnics”.

There is a photograph of a Russell class boat on the noticeboard below the chart.

Okay – back to the Hassall Shield (a favourite of mine because it was the first trophy I won – back in 1998)

Its original purpose is engraved on the Cup

Hassall Shield

Russell Class Yachts Annual Ocean Race

Russell to Otehei Bay

donated by C J Hassall Otehei Bay

It was awarded five times to Russell Class Boats – 1946, 1947, 1949, 1950, 1951

Then it lay around unused until 1979 when it was won by Roy Grant in Kumara.

Perhaps the last winner of the Shield in the Russell Class boats (Ian Clifford in Loloma in 1951) passed it on to the Russell Boating Club?

The Hassall Shield was the Opening Day trophy until the 1991-92 season when it shifted to later in the weekend race programme.

Later still it became a Winter Series trophy – I need to look up a few more things to work out when that was.

3. Russell Hardware Trophy

The 1990/91 programme next shows a Mark Foy race for the Russell Hardware Trophy – a trophy for a Mark Foy Series.

A Mark Foy race has a staggered start – slow boats start first, fast boats start last – the aim is to have all boats finishing at once. A real pain for the handicapper, having to work out start times for every boat in the fleet based on some wild guess on how long it will take each boat to go around the course. Avoid.

The Russell Hardware Trophy started in 1977, and last race recorded on the trophy was for the 2001-2002 season.–

We now have an Etchell fleet. In the early 1990s we had a Soling fleet. So it is interesting to note that 21 October 1990 was “Sail a Soling Day” –

The race programme describes this as

“a chance for anyone to come sailing, weather permitting. 3 short races off wharf. Bring yourself, bring a team, try match racing or just try sailing. Give it a go!”

4. James Wright Scott Memorial Cup

The next weekend race – part of the series for the Duke of Marlborough Cup – was the James Wright Scott Memorial Cup; presented, according to the cup engraving, to the Russell Yacht Club, by Mrs. F M Scott.

It states on the Cup that it is to be Competed for Annually in Russell Handicap Race, Standard Course.

Now the earliest date recorded on the Cup as being awarded was 1980, Neville Renauld in California Jack – a Soling with a cabin on it.

But the Cup was presented to the Russell Yacht Club which was in existence from 1946 to 1952.

Where was the Cup between then until 1980? (when it became a Russell Boating Club cup).

Was it ever raced for by the Russell class boats of the Russell Yacht Club?

It is a memorial cup but I have not found out yet who James Wright Scott was. However, there is a James Wright Scott buried in our

Russell Cemetery – the record says he died 1 November 1949, age 67. That date would line up with a memorial cup being presented to the Russell Yacht Club one or two years or so before it wound up.

Anyway from the 1991-1992 season continuously up to now the James Wright Scott Cup has been the cup for our Opening Day race.

5. Bengal Trophy and Windward Cup

There was an active summer weekend racing programme in 1990-1991 – roughly a weekend race every fortnight. Worked into this was the popular interclub racing between the four yacht clubs in the Bay of Islands – the Epiglass Series. The format for this series was two weekends set aside for racing – each day with a race run by a different club. Two divisions, big fleets, get together at each clubhouse after the day's racing, crew feeling seedier on Sunday than Saturday.

The Russell Boating Club has two trophies for its boats in the interclubs – two trophies because in those days fleets were big enough to warrant two divisions.

These are the Bengal Trophy and the Windward Cup -presented in 1990 to the Club by Trevor Geldard, Patron from 1984 to 1992. He was the GM of Epiglass so sponsored the interclub series as well.

Trevor's photograph is above the bar in the corner by the kitchen door.

The Bengal Trophy (for the Challenge Cup) and the Windward Cup were both originally issued by the Bengal Bay Yacht Club.

And later repurposed into Russell Boating Club trophies for the best Russell Boat in A Division and B Division Interclubs – the Epiglass Series mainly – respectively.

The best Russell boat in the each division of the interclubs started being recorded on the Bengal Trophy and the Windward Cup in 1994.

The appetite for this type of interclub racing declined, two division racing became one division racing, Kerikeri and Bay of Islands drifted away, (Bay of Islands concentrating on centreboarders over keelers, Kerikeri no longer apparently needing the rest of us)

These trophies were again re-purposed with the Bengal Trophy staying as the trophy for the best Russell boat in interclub races and the Windward Cup changing to a trophy for a 2 handed series which was run each season from 2008 until 2017.

The Windward Trophy now sits on the shelf unused.

6. Phoenix Beer Cup

Single handed yacht races have been since forever. In 1985 the Phoenix Beer Cup appeared as the trophy for a single handed race.

A trophy with a presentation date (1985) but nothing further engraved on the cup until 1994 when Warren Want won the single handed race in Jazz.

Yet the 1990/1991 calendar (and the 1991/1992) calendar both show a single handed race being held in November-December.

Where was the Phoenix Beer Cup between 1985 and 1994? Was it that in the Club's early years only some of the trophies – the ones seen as most important – were engraved with winners each year?

In 2014 the cup was engraved with a note that the Cup was now for a Single Handed Series, not just for one race.

And it has been so ever since.

7. Macushla Cup

Macushla Cup – a cup for a Ladies Handicap Race. Macushla is a Mullety that was raced by Jill and Roy Hornell. Originally launched in 1936.

The first boat recorded on it is 1987 Tia Maria, a Soling. And only a couple of gaps since then – nothing for 2004 or 2005 or 2009. From 2010 the Cup was reassigned from a single race cup to a Women's Series Cup.

Some curiosities about the Macushla Cup – it looks like engraving the winners on the cup started a few years after the cup started being raced for. So, for example, we know that Valwyn won the Macushla Cup in the 1982-83 season but the first engraved date

on the Cup is for 1987. A pattern common to several other trophies, such as the previously mentioned Phoenix Beer Cup.

Second is this the only women's series trophy? I have always thought this cup was the only one -- donated by Jill Hornell who raced Macushla with Roy. But a 1983 club newsletter refers to a Ladies Race Trophy donated by Jim Bruton. Is there a second women's trophy kicking around somewhere?

Well this afternoon I found it behind the bar – a tray for Ladies Racing donated by Jim Bruton in 1978. Winners are recorded on it from 1978 to 2003.

Jim Bruton's photograph is the top photograph on the nib wall at the end of the bar by the woodburner. He worked on either the Gretel or Gretel 2 Americas Cup campaign and regularly race the Soling Tia Maria in the early days of the Club.



8. Friendship Cup

The fourth race in the 1990/1991 weekend series was for the Friendship Cup. The evidence is this is another of the founding trophies specifically for the Russell Boating Club because - the cup has 'Friendship Cup The Russell Boating Club' engraved on it.

- the first winner in on the cup is N C Ellis in 1972 – the Club was formed on 3 August 1971 so a 1972 date on the trophy is consistent with racing in the first summer season of the Club

Since 1972 the Friendship Cup has been been raced for each year except between 2008 and 2012.

The cup also shows a way engraving has changed over the years. Between 1972 and 1976 only the winners initial and surname was recorded. From 1977 the boat name was added. From 1999 the winner's first name was added to the surname and the boat name.

Engraving usually has a per letter charge which might be some explanation for less being engraved in the early days.

9. Little Ships Cup

Little Ships Cup – another cup that is not used today.

It was donated by the Fladgates.

The Little Ships Cup was limited to boats of no more than 28 foot overall (8.5 metres).

Winners are recorded on the Cup each year from 1977 to 2007. The Little Ships was still being raced in 2009-2010 so there may be some catch-up engraving required.

At least in the late 1990s and early 2000s the Little Ship race was open to all boats but the Cup went to the first Little Ship on corrected time.

It is another cup that has not been used for several years.

10. Russell Cup

Which takes us to the Russell Cup. An old trophy. With a different name. And quite a history.

On the front of this trophy it says

Challenge Cup
presented to Russell Regatta Club
by
E R Clow esq
President
for
Keel Yacht Race

And as that Challenge Cup it was won by Rawene in 1923, Ilex in 1924, Little Jim in 1925, and Windward in 1926 and 1927, and probably Iorangi in 1928. All boats familiar to anyone delving in our yachting history. Auckland boats winning in the Russell Regatta.

Then an 18 year gap and the Cup appears as a cup for the annual Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron (Boxing Day?) passage race from Auckland to the Bay of Islands.

More well known boats recorded from Ranger in 1946 to Judith in 1955.

Another gap, 13 years this time, and more winners recorded from 1968. This was the start of the Russell Cup as we know it - as a cup open to all boats in the Bay of Island.

At this time (1968) the Russell Cup race was organised by the most active keel boat club at the time – the Bay of Islands Yacht Club – its activities regularly reported in Sea Spray for example.

So why do we have it now? In 1978 it was transferred from the custody of the Bay of Islands Yacht Club to the Russell Boating Club – full circle back to a Russell Club holding the Cup.

What happened that led to the Bay of Islands Yacht Club running races for the Cup in 1968, so long after the previous recorded race in 1955?

Well, the story I have been told is that the Cup was retrieved from a rubbish tip, was panel beaten and cleaned up, and races for it re-started by the Bay of Islands Yacht Club.

11. Fullers Trophy

Fullers Trophy is the trophy for the Nine Pin Bird Rock race – often misnamed as the Fullers Cup (largely by me when preparing the season's results).

It looks like another of the trophies started by the Club.

First awarded in 1977 to Reremoana, Ron Hope-Lewis, the trophy states that it is awarded to handicap winner Ninepin-Bird Rock Yacht Race. Reremoana is a Bay of Islands Yacht Club boat – a Herreschoff ketch – that features often in early Boating Club results and in Tall Ships.

The month we hold the Fullers Trophy race has changed around a bit. In 1990 it was in late April. Other times it was earlier, now it is held in November.

A reason for the shifting around – for moving to November/December – was that holding it later in the season meant greater chance of a drifter.

Not that November is that great anyway – there was a spate in the early 2000s where the Nine Pin Bird Rock race did not include either the Nine Pin or Bird Rock because it was too windy – typically then the Nine Pin Bird Rock race only went around the

islands and/or Motuterakihi.

Still we got some big fleets in these races as Opuia boats would join in. In 2008 for example 20 boats.

The next year – 2009 – 27 boats. That year I was on Breezebender. It was well over the forecast 20 knots NW and gusty - the run from Nine Pin to Bird Rock was something else. At one stage the call from down below was we were doing 25 knots – until they worked out the gps was reading in kph, not knots. Still Mike reckoned it was the fastest Breezebender had been.

That race also led to a tightening up of our safety standards for sports boats because Orange Peeler, a Shaw 7, ended at Bird Rock, pitching everyone in the water. They got the boat upright and made it back in, but still not good.

For a while Fullers gave us car ferry tickets for the Fullers Trophy winner.

12. Duke of Marlborough Cup

Add in the Closing Day race and that gives a 6 race weekend series for the Duke of Marlborough Cup. This Cup has always been a points trophy mainly for 6 weekend races although at times it was down to 5 races or up to 8 or so.

The Duke of Marlborough Cup looks like another founding cup for the Russell Boating Club as the first race recorded on it was in 1972 – C Ellis in Celox. Celox went on to win the Cup 4 times in 6 years.

That record stood until the 2017/2018 season when Caprice, Brett Avery, won the Cup for a fifth time.

In the 1990/91 season the Cup was won by Solway Steamer, Graeme Townsend, starting a 5 year burst where the Cup was won by a Soling.

The July 1982 Club newsletter identifies the Duke of Marlborough Points Cup and the Patron's Cup as our major trophies. I would add the Russell Cup as another major trophy.

13. Patron's Cup

Anyway I will finish with the Patron's Cup – another exercise in repurposing.

In 1926 one Ella Dorothy won the Royal Singapore Yacht Club's Visitors Cup for 'Round the Island'.

This Visitor's Cup was renamed the Russell Boating Club Patron's Cup and presented to the Club in 1978 by Captain and Mrs Townend. Colin Townend was Club Patron from 1975 to 1980.

This repurposed cup first went to Macushla, R Hornell.

In the 1990-1991 season it went to Solway Steamer for the second year in a row – Solway Steamer being a Soling raced by Graeme Townsend.

The Patron's Cup has been won 10 times by Caprice, Brett Avery. The next most times it had been won is 4 times by Capella II.

And that more or less takes us through the trophies in play for the 1990-1991 season.