

Friday
5 January

A fine morning, wind light from the SSW, scattered cumulus cloud over the hills, barometer 30.95 in. The first job was to settle John and Mike back in the Deas Head area and we were off at 0815 with them on board, anchoring in Erebus Cove at 0855 so that they could sort out gear. John and Sam had been waiting for an opportunity to go up a hill and here it was: promising weather, local running only for 'St Michael', and they went off up into the Hooker Hills accordingly at 0955. We brought Mike and John off and moved round to Deas Cove, where they went ashore at 1015 while we left a few minutes later for Enderby. There we picked up Milton at 1050 and headed for Ranui Cove, the weather fair, still light but now WSW, and a shower over the hills which made us wonder if Sam and John were going to be disappointed; it soon cleared off again. 1130 at Ranui, where we picked up Brian and left at 1150, anchoring off French's I. at 1155 for half an hour while we all went ashore and looked it over. Under way again at 1225 and put Milton ashore in his Camp Bay then left again at 1250 heading round to the north of Ewing I. and anchoring at 1305 off its eastern side, in the inlet between the long rock shelves there.

After lunch (eaten quickly as there was quite a roll coming in and we did not feel, somehow, like sitting round down below) we all three went ashore, and Nicholas and I looked over some of the places which I had seen on 30 December. Brian found and banded another pair of skua and we left him to go on southward round the island. We returned on board 'St. Michael' at 1600, weighed, and picked up Brian at about 1645 at the west point of Ewing, facing Ranui Cove. Coasting round southward of the island was interesting but involved cutting through some thick beds of kelp and later clearing the resulting tangle from the propellers. We had a quick brew in Ranui Cove at 1700 before putting Brian ashore to prepare for an influx of botanists coming up from the south in 'Acheron'. We left at 1715 and anchored in Erebus Cove at 1805, John and Sam returning soon afterwards delighted with their day, having had fine views, reached the top of Mt Hooker, and found a sea bear and pup about 800 ft up. They also stalked a pig, well up in the tussock, and confirmed what we had suspected, that the diggers all over the tops were pig rootings. 'Acheron' turned up at 2030 and anchored astern of us. A beautiful evening, quiet, with sunset cumulus drifting off eastward from the tops. Barometer 31.12 in. at 2100.

We heard some more of Milton's travels. He has been to the Falklands, South Georgia, and Tierra del Fuego, where he stayed at Ushuaia with the descendants of Lucas Bridges. He is quiet and his camp a model of tidiness so that one assumes that his work is equally competent, and we all enjoy his company. Nicholas and I also enjoyed our afternoon with Brian; it was pleasant to have him to ourselves for once for he too is good company.

Saturday
6 January

A fine morning, light NW wind, barometer still over 31 in. and we put in train the tentative plans made the day before, getting under way at 0545 and having breakfast on our way down to Ranui Cove, where we found 'Acheron' (she had beaten us down) picking up the shore party



'Acheron' off NW Cape, 6 January 1973

at 0615. For we had decided at the early radio schedule that it was a possible day for Disappointment Island.

We had no passengers but naturally went along too and, after waiting round for a while to see if any help was needed, left at 0650. We went out through the Rose I. passage with an ebb stream and some breaking seas but very comfortably at reduced speed. We had the dinghy on deck and, as 'Acheron' had taken her usual route round Enderby I., we could not see her for some time, and congratulated ourselves on the good start. Some NW swell and light wind, still fine but prospects of more cloud later in the day. Beyond Compadre Rock, west of North Harbour, the coast was new to us and a wonderful sight, culminating in the 600 ft headland of NW Cape and its offlying rock islets and the twin 330 ft spires of Column Rocks.

We had seen 'Acheron' astern before rounding Black Head and as we closed NW Cape she overhauled us; I believe Alex was a little anxious that we might reach Disappointment first! There was a mild but most irregular sea at the Cape in which we tossed about making photography tricky, and 'Acheron' rolled, in keeping with her rumoured reputation; this was at 0845. Column Rocks close-to were quite fantastic, bundles of (presumably) columnar basalt, the slighter one nearly symmetrical and in profile like an exaggerated lighthouse. But I think Disappointment I. took the greater part of our attention, looking not unlike Stephens I., sharp in the morning sun and wearing a cloud streamer blowing off towards the mainland to leeward. The west coast cliffs ran away in a long undulating perspective punctuated by dramatic towers, to the blue haze of Bristow Point 17 miles away, and the light nor'wester was already capping the higher clifftops with cloud.



'St Michael' off
Disappointment I.,
6 January 1973
(Photo: A.J. Black)

We rolled down towards Disappointment I. as 'Acheron' drew ahead, escorted by shy mollymawks and hoping that the wind would not freshen. The main swell was from SW which would not worry us much in Castaways Bay but we felt that if the nor'wester blew up it could make the bay lively and would in any case give us a hard plug back to NW Cape and an uncomfortable time along the north coast. But there was no sign of this, though we all kept a sharp eye open for any change during the day.

We reached Castaways Bay at about 0910, twenty minutes or so behind 'Acheron', to find Brian just returning after putting his first load ashore from the Wildlife dinghy that she had towed down. The Bay was dramatic, cliff all round except at the head where the island's main valley dropped over a 30 ft cliff into the sea, a good deal of surge, and much scattered kelp. Alex told us there was about 12 fathoms (and it looked like it) and because of this and a real risk of a fouled anchor, and indeed the limited room to swing we did not try to anchor. Brian's-description of the landing (which we could not see from the Bay) as 'good' we took with reserve. However, after some talk, Nicholas having assured us he did not want to land and Sam having given John first turn, he took us in in 'Bosky' and sure enough the landing, on to bull kelp on a rock ledge just round a small point, was indeed simple, John and I stepping ashore with gentlemanly ease. However, we then had to dislodge a native occupying the beginning of the 'track' up the steep hillside to the north: a young sea lion. The track was his and his friends' no doubt, so he was probably entitled to block it.

John and I then separated and after a quick look at the collapsed boat shed (on a narrow shelf about 50 ft above the sea, and under it the flattened garboard planks of a 16 or 17 ft clinker boat), I followed him

'St Michael' at
Castaways Bay,
Disappointment I.,
Brian Bell in 'Bosky',
6 January 1973
(Photo: A.J. Black)



up the hill, a cliff dropping sheer to a geo on my right. The vegetation was vigorous, tussock, poa, *Hebe elliptica*, stilbocarpa, anisotome, *Pleurophyllum speciosum* of magnificent size in full flower, and a muddied slippery sea lion track through it. I soon came upon Gordon confronting a second sea lion. The footing being poor and a cliff nearby, one had some reservations about pushing past, but a solid branch from the nearest hebe turned him off and we were able to go on to the first pairs of nesting shy mollymawks. We had seen these from the bay, hundreds of pairs, evenly spaced out over the very steep northern slopes of the bay, with a cliff at the foot. I soon saw the reason for the choice of this nesting site, for with every care I could not avoid disturbing one or two birds and these floundered off down the slope through the tussock and anisotome and usually arrived at the cliff edge without really managing to disentangle their wings. But there, a last effort and they dropped off airborne and in full control.

Brian, Ron, Mike, and Rod were already further up the slope, and with the possibility of an early departure still in mind I decided to cross the valley up to the south ridge. Telling Brian where I was going I set off on an exhausting trip, conscious too that Nicholas and Sam were patiently circling round the bay below waiting until John and I had had our turn, and arrived on the south ridge hot and breathless. The going up through the tussock was made no easier by the masses of petrel burrows: one could hardly put a foot down without breaking into one. I saw a redpoll in the valley and passed several skuas, and on the ridge top widely spaced wandering albatross nests, and over the top on the tussock slopes falling to the southern cliffs were hundreds more of the shy mollymawks which I photographed in a general way so that at least someone could make a later count. The mainland

looked less remote from this height (although a daunting distance for the awkward little coracle the 'Dundonald' survivors crossed in), but 'St Michael', tiny in the bay below, gave a measure of scale. Orographic cloud brought in by the NW wind made a plume from the island and was beginning to cap the mainland clifftops.

I stole a few more minutes to go up the ridge to an intermediate summit which gave me a sight of the rest of the southern slopes, took a few more photographs, then trotted down to the stream and followed it out to the landing slope. The vegetation was particularly vigorous in the narrow gully, much the same as on the more sheltered slopes but the hebe bushes quite large and the pleurophyllum superb: huge spreads of broad, curved and fluted leaves with great heads of aster-like white flowers two or more inches across with purple centres. Picking my way carefully along the steep slope I found myself in the middle of a rockhopper penguin colony, an unusual situation for one as rock debris at the foot of a well watered seacliff is a typical site. These birds were not at all pleased with me, for with the best intentions I had no way except by a long detour back and round of avoiding their rookery, and they were closely spaced and difficult to see under thickly growing anisotome and poa so that I had many angry attacks on boots and ankles.

John soon appeared, having been up on the northern slopes, and we managed to attract 'St Michael's' attention. Sam came in for us at about 1200 and he and John changed over, Nicholas still preferring to stay on board. We could see Mike Soper high on the NE headland of Castaways Bay and some of the others scattered up the valley; 'Acheron' had gone off round the south side of the island looking for a 'quieter' place to wait, optimistically as it turned out. Sam did not seem to want very long ashore and he and John returned at 1225, when we got under way to go round the Island, south-about, first through a group of offlying stacks.

Disappointment Island is not, apparently, volcanic but is heavily stratified with the strata vertical or near it so that the seacliffs tend to follow the strata planes and to develop deep cracks parallel to their seaward faces. In Castaways Bay, which seems to be formed in a more easily weathered band of strata, two deep geos on the northern side show this tendency and one of them runs into a cave the roof of which has collapsed some seventy yards in, forming a sink-hole on the northern valley slope. John and Sam and I had walked round the edge of this and certainly I did not then realise there was a drop of maybe 100 ft to a sea-filled cave! Anyway the general effect of the way in which the strata lie and the very severe hammering the Island must sustain from the sea make its coastline particularly wild and rugged.

The cloud cap which I mentioned earlier had developed to the point where the south shore under it was gloomy, and having passed 'Acheron', tucked in under the cliffs but still fairly lively, we were pleased to get out into the sunlight at the western end. The cliffs were topped by steep tussock slopes in many places really cliffs with vegetation, and all over these areas the nesting shy mollymawks were spread, and the air was full of their coming and going. Off Castaways Bay there were also large gams [groups of birds] on the water. The sunlit western headland of the Island was dauntingly impressive, a



Castaways Bay landing,
Disappointment I.,
6 January 1973

heavy swell rolling in clear turquoise until it burst brilliant white on rocks coated with a reddish algal seaweed. Above, the cliffs towered up to jagged knife-edge ridges, green where not actually sheer or slipping and where above the worst spray, but looking as if accessible only to a skilled climber approaching from the landing bay eastward. We turned into a small cove inside Pinnacle Rocks and cruised slowly round it, keeping a vigilant eye open for rocks; a cave ran in at its head, below a low saddle, clearly well on the way to isolating another group of Pinnacles on the western headland. In this bright weather the western end of the Island was magnificent; one can faintly imagine what an appalling place it must be in a sou'westerly gale. Then we turned round the westernmost rocks, taking quite a violent tossing although there was no more wind than before, and headed back along the northern shore. A second possible landing opened up, in a cove just eastward of the north point, but 'possible' is perhaps optimistic: its only virtue was that it provided shelter and with that help one might have had some prospect of starting one's climb out of the cove.

By 1340 we were back in Castaways Bay, no-one in sight but an occasional skyline figure and puzzled as to how we could tell the Wildlife people about the rockhopper colony. This did not seem easy and we were sure someone else would find it, so wishing to take a

closer look at the western cliffs of the mainland we headed off ENE in the direction of the 1600 ft cliffs. In the event no-one did see the rockhoppers, which I suppose should not have surprised us as they were well hidden and in an unlikely habitat but there was a certain amount of chagrin when we told them later! Meanwhile 'Acheron' appeared from her retreat and headed in our direction so we waited to tell her what we were doing and she in turn went off to have a close look at Sugar Loaf Rocks as Brian's party were still hard at work ashore.

We left Invercauld Rock, which is perhaps 5 ft high and easily seen, to port and closed the coast below Point 1617 ft, that is at what are so far as I know the highest cliffs on the island. Here we were back under the mainland cloud cap, although out to the NW the sea was bright with sun, and the cloud cleared slowly; we hoped for sunlight on the cliffs but it only managed a few gleams. This was a pity, for the cliffs, topped by curious battlement-like turrets, fell here practically sheer to the sea and showed a wonderful cross-section of 1200-1400 ft of rock with a wide band of varied and strong colours half way up. This is the kind of place where scale is most difficult to judge. We were interested to see what kind of routes were apparent up the easier slopes above workable beaches, for somewhere along here 'Dundonald's' survivors landed in their coracle in 1907 on their way to the food and boat depot in Port Ross. There were two or three such places but one was struck once more by the toughness of these men. Granted that they must have been ready by then to stretch their luck to the limit, yet to make that boat trip from Disappointment I. to the cliffs three times (they had to return after the first landing) in the crazy little coracles which were all they were able to build, must have needed high skill and desperate courage. And that was only the most risky part, for getting up to the western crest and making their way across to Erebus Cove would have been very hard going too. One wonders if they kept to the tussock tops, the obvious thing to do if one realised how tough the scrub would be, but from the western head of Grey Duck Creek it must have looked tempting to drop quickly to the shelter of the valley.

So we continued towards NW Cape, close inshore. Presently the cloud cap cleared away leaving a sparkling sea and bright sun on the great layered towers of the Cape, and on the twin Column Peaks, reddish bundles of columnar basalt, even their 330 ft dwarfed by the cliffs behind. Once again we had a wild tumble as we rounded the Cape at 1515, then in bright sun a fine run along the northern shore, much of it now familiar, with the coastal colours rich in the clear light. We ran in through the Rose I. passage against a strong ebb tide very comfortably at 1625, one or two seas breaking round us, and almost literally climbed over the lip of fast-flowing water in the narrow gap at the inner end of the channel. Port Ross was peaceful and lovely in the late afternoon sun and we anchored in Deas Cove at 1635 rather thankful to relax after a day of lively movement and one so full of excitement. I believe that the last landing on Disappointment I. was made by Dr Falla and Mr Turbott in 1945 at the end of the 'Coastwatcher's' stay, so our day was quite an event.



'St Michael' in Lindley Cove, Friday, Rose and Enderby Is in background, 7 January 1973

The NW wind had dropped off and after a meal (afternoon lunch perhaps? - as we had had little but snacks earlier), the birds were so tuneful ashore that I took the tape-recorder in and sat in the warm sun for some time while they recorded themselves, mostly bellbirds.

Later we saw 'Acheron' coming in from the east and heard their news on the evening schedule.

A fine evening, moderate NW wind and barometer 30.82 in. at 2130.

Sunday
7 January

0645 barometer 30.62 in., a fair morning with a fresh WNW wind. Weighed at 0710, Ranui Cove at 0735, where we picked up our three American botanists and John Farrell as arranged the night before and set off for Laurie Harbour, putting them ashore on Williamson Point at 0845. They were aiming for Mt Eden and Cloudy Peak and we arranged to collect them at 1800. 'Acheron' was at anchor at the head of Laurie and we greeted them as we left again to collect some supplies from the Erebus Cove camp for Mike and John, anchoring in Deas Cove at 1000.

The day was now bright and we had no commitments until the evening so we amused ourselves variously. John and Sam went off in the dinghy after putting me ashore, and I walked through the woods and up on to Deas Head. The rata forest along its foot nearly deserves such a description so open is it and so pleasant is the walking. The rata covers the top of the Head, 205 ft, except at its western end where a clearing of dracophyllum gives a lookout, and a very fine one for so slight a climb, with a view extending from the Hookers round to Rose, Enderby, and most of Port Ross. I had to push aside two young ladies - sea bears keeping out of harm's way - to photograph and presently I saw Mike and John at work in a clearing over towards Matheson Bay. The rata flower was beginning to show up by this time and the general effect of it and of 'St Michael' lying peacefully at anchor surrounded by sunlit catspaws was decidedly summery - but the wind was quite fresh and cool!

After lunch it seemed necessary to do something about our water supply, which was rather low, and at 1430 we moved round in the direction of Terror Cove, finding a small stream about half-way there. Watering was not a success as we could not get very much fall in the hose and I only rediscovered, after spending a great deal of time trying to get airlocks out of the pipe from the top end so that it would flow, that one had to deal with them from the other end. Eventually, with the others' rather long-suffering patience we got it flowing and filled up; fortunately it was a sheltered and warm spot with an interesting boulder shore and thick kelp round the ship, but it was not until 1730 that we were finished and under way for Laurie Harbour.

We anchored off Williamson Point, as close in as we could manage (this side of Laurie being shoal) at 1810 and looked round for our passengers. They eventually turned up at intervals, tired but satisfied with their day, and we were under way again at 1910, plying them with tea and crunchies on the way down to Ranui Cove, where we put them ashore and anchored at 2000. The wind was still fresh from WNW and the evening fine with scattered cumulus, the third successive fine day, a state of affairs which received some comment. Barometer at 2130 30.78 in.

Brian had been looking for another opportunity to 'spotlight' for specimens and measurement of birds not otherwise accessible, and this evening, although rather fine, seemed worth trying. We were interested to see it, and as quite a large party was involved we took the Wildlife dinghy in tow and left Ranui at 2130. On board were Brian, Mike Soper, Ron, Rod, Hugh, Graham, and Peter Connors. Peter was one of the American party with particular interest in DDT uptake, I believe, but with wide interests which warmed us to him.

We went northward round Ewing I. in the late dusk with the intention of landing on the eastern side, but having nosed carefully in concluded that there was too much swell to make a landing in the dark sensible. So we continued round the island and anchored at 2240 just south of the western spit. Nicholas and John preferred to stay on board (and we left the masthead light on) while the rest of us went ashore and landed, not without some difficulty as the surge here needed a watchful eye which was not very effective in the dark. 'Bosky' we lifted up on to the rock-shelf and the other dinghy was anchored off with a sternline ashore, and the generator and spotlight were arranged up near the edge of the *Olearia lyallii* bush and set going. Nothing happened for a time, Brian sweeping the beam around and over the treetops without picking anything up. Then we moved the gear further out on to the point, only to disturb a large sea lion peacefully asleep in the deep poa grass. This was quite tricky and there was a good deal of laughter on a mildly apprehensive note while we 'moved him on' with the nearest pieces of driftwood.

Then the birds began to appear, white and swift at first in the beam, and we admired Brian's holding skill as he followed them and brought them down. Then the nearest two or three of us would hurry over (most of us had torches) and pick the bird up, careful not to harm it and to hold or avoid its beak and claws. Diving petrels, black-bellied storm-petrels, Auckland I. prion, all fascinating to see close and quiet, and then several white-headed petrels, really the most beautiful of all,

nearly all white with a dark patch round the large eye, black bill, and flesh-pink and brown feet. After they had been caught and measured they were released in a hollow and we stood round while Mike and others took flash photographs, several of each as the birds were lively and never stayed in a suitable position for more than a moment or two.

Some of the birds had to be killed for study specimens for which place and time of taking must be known; this is done, painlessly as far as one could tell, by simply holding the bird firmly round the body so that it cannot breathe and suffocates but is not damaged. I saw this done on several occasions and certainly the bird always seemed to die quickly and without distress; one cannot know for certain, I suppose.

The spotlighting was exciting as the bird, once caught in the beam, changed its flight from a strong purposeful one to a hovering flutter with more, or less, skilful attempts to get out of the beam. Some (and my recollection was that it was not just a matter of the kind of bird) showed high resistance to what must be a bemusing experience, and much initiative, fluttering away downwind in the beam until too distant to be dazzled by it and then flying clear. Others seemed to be dazzled almost at once so that they fluttered down close to Brian. One or two produced clever displays of aerobatics, in following which Brian would be 'wound up' and lose his balance!

The night remained fine and clear but rather cold and we stopped from time to time for a snack of biscuit and chocolate, but without paying proper attention to the weather...

Monday
8 January

... until about 0200 when we first noticed black clouds coming up from the SW, as we were packing up. This took time and we pushed off from the rock-shelf at 0215 into a heavy rain squall with the wind change to SW, thankful for 'St Michael's' masthead light.

Under way at 0220, rain still heavy and the night too dark to steer by eye, so we set our course on 220° for Ranui Cove, towing the two dinghies. The rain eased as we came into the Cove so that we could pick out the silhouette of the hills and anchor with confidence at 0250 in our usual position. Our visitors all went ashore in the Wildlife dinghy and we settled down quickly to a short sleep.

A fresh SW wind at 0739, cumulus over the hills but bright and sparkling. 'Acheron' went off south to Shag Rock at 0910 with parties for botanical work, and we left at 0955 with Mike Soper, Graham, Hugh, Peter and Rod for Erebus Cove, where we landed them all at 1050 then moved round to Deas Cove and anchored there at 1110 to make arrangements with Mike Rudge and John. Under way again 1250 and at 1310 picked up the Erebus Cove party, stopping off briefly at Terror Cove so that they could look at the German Expedition's astronomical sites of 1874. We took 'St Michael' inside the seaweed belt off the Cove and nearly put her forefoot on to the beach, close under the ratas. They were coming well into flower and were a fine sight, a deep red dusting scattered along the treetops.

I had wanted to take a photo of Erebus Cove from off Davis I. as John Campbell had described to us a drawing he had seen of the

Hardwicke settlement from near that point, so we returned briefly there after leaving Terror Cove and I got my photographs from the bosun's chair at the masthead - and surprisingly cold it was up there. Then we went over to Enderby's Sandy Bay to return Hugh at 1430, then on to Ewing I., where Peter went ashore at 1455, and back to Ranui Cove, where we anchored at 1515 and all went ashore. The old copper had been boiled up for us 'St Michaels' and we had a glorious hot wash of ourselves and clothes, out under the dracophyllum at the back of the main hut. How one enjoys hot water when deprived of it for some weeks!

Then we passed the time of day over a cup of tea with the Ranuis and left them to go off at 1805 to collect Mike Rudge and John at Deas Cove at 1840. They had packed up their camp and we moved them round to Erebus Cove, where we anchored at 1920. We had persuaded them to have dinner with us and after helping them to get their gear ashore we brought them back and enjoyed another cheerful evening with them.

An overcast evening with a light westerly wind.

Tuesday
9 January

Overcast with low cloud over the hills and clear patches above, a moderate WSW wind, barometer nearly 31.00 in.

Weighed at 0750 after the morning radio schedule and we went out through the Rose I. passage to look at the weather outside. There was a strong ebb tidal stream and seas were breaking in the channel but it was quite reasonable, and not bad outside though rougher than on our Disappointment I. day. We had the dinghy towing, and having gone out beyond the breaking water watched the dinghy's performance with interest when we turned back, Nicholas on the painter to 'play' her if she ran up on us. But she behaved very well in the steep breaking following seas, merely sideslipping when one broke under her, without showing any vices.

We reached Ranui Cove at 0915 to find 'Acheron' there with Brian on board in consultation with Alex. I joined them and we agreed that with a quiet day and 'Acheron's' return to Dunedin not far off it made sense to fuel from her now in case bad weather or some other unexpected development interfered later. So we made a rendezvous with her for after our run to Sealers Creek. We left at 0945 with the three American botanists for a four hour spell at the Creek, where we landed them at 1030. The two resident skuas were there, each demolishing prions they had just caught, probably, Brian said later, having got them out of their burrows. One skua had been banded (by Jerry Vantets at Sandy Bay), having a stainless and a yellow plastic ring on its right leg.

'Acheron' was anchored in the bay just west of Beacon Point, across Port Ross, and we went alongside her at 1055. She has a fuel transfer pump and had a good length of 1½ inch plastic hose; there was no nozzle valve but Ian Macdonald stood by the pump in her engine room, Alex just outside the saloon door where he could shout down, Nicholas on 'St Michael' and I manipulated the hose end and a torch into our tank-filling caps, calling out my guess of the number of gallons

still to go as the tank approached full. Then a shout quickly relayed and the pump was switched off. We filled all four tanks very quickly and efficiently without spilling a drop; as I told Alex, a much more efficient fuelling than most we have had. Total fuel taken on was 139 gallons. 'Acheron' then invited us to lunch which was as usual enjoyable both for the company and the food. We left them at 1255 and anchored separately, after handing a telegram to Alex. This was to tell the family how we were going and to warn them that there would be letters soon,

We got under way at 1250, crossing to Sealers Creek, where we picked up the botanists at 1415 and ran them down to the western end of Ocean I. Here Nicholas landed them, not without some difficulty through the thick kelp at 1445. We then went on to Ranui Cove and anchored there at 1515. I went ashore to tell them about the banded skua and found only Ron and Rod at home, the latter hard at work on his journal. Over a cup of tea Ron and I had a long yarn about our jobs and the way our departments work, interesting, and good to find that he, at least, had a good word for the cooperation he receives from Ministry of Works. At 1650 we moved off to Ocean I., picked up our trio from the eastern end at 1705, and returned them to Ranui. Then we went out beyond French's I. to dump our rubbish; this we usually managed to do in the course of one of our runs and always made a point of picking an offshore wind. Sometimes we would forget or conditions would not be right and then a short special run like this was needed. Fortunately the prevailing westerly-quarter winds made offshore wind dumping from Ranui Cove not at all exacting. Anchored again in the Cove at 1730, a fair evening with much high cirro-cumulus and a light W wind. Barometer 31.00 in. at 2100.

The evening radio schedule was very amusing (they were usually quite entertaining) as Alex Black by a shrewd piece of manoeuvring managed to get Brian to commit himself to an 0730 radio schedule next morning - he had been indulging in an orgy of 0630 schedules recently! I could do no more than congratulate both parties.

During the afternoon 'Acheron', with some time on her hands, went off to Sandy Bay to investigate the two plastic buoys which had for some time intrigued us. They appeared to have the name 'Coromel' on them, and I heard later from Lew Ritchie, who had been down there on the giant crab investigation in 'Tuatea', that the former had been down too, and had left a number of crab-pots behind to be picked up on a projected third trip which did not come off. Apparently she became concerned about the amount of deck cargo she was carrying, hence her abandonment of the pots.

Anyway 'Acheron' fished away and brought up, attached to the buoys, seven large crab-pot frames of steel rod with most of their wire-netting rusted off and carrying a mass of assorted seaweeds. Samples of these were taken for sending to Nancy Adams at National Museum and the pot frames were all put ashore; there was general approval of 'Acheron's' effort for they would have made an unpleasant tangle for someone anchoring there in the dark and fouling the pots, and the bay is, after all, shown as an anchorage on the chart. 'Acheron' proposed to bring back some wire-netting on her return and refit one

or two pots to try for giant crabs; I left my second copy of Lew Ritchie's paper, accordingly, with Alex as it contained much useful information about the crabs.

**Wednesday
10 January**

An overcast morning with low cloud and fresh NW wind, barometer 30.81 in.

We left Ranui Cove at 0800 for Ewing I. where we picked up Gordon at 0910 and transferred him to 'Acheron' which was preparing to make a trip down the coast and left soon afterwards. We returned to Ranui, where at 0935 we collected Brian, Mike, Graham and Rod. Calling off the 'wharf' at Enderby at 1005 we tossed over a parcel of rings for skua banding to Jerry. His enthusiastic banding of the many skuas around Sandy Bay, particularly when the others were dissecting sea lion specimens, had run him out of rings. Then we went on to Lindley Cove. Our four went ashore at 1030 to go overland to Matheson Bay where John Campbell had reported a single royal albatross nest. By this time it was beginning to rain and the wind was rising; we had arranged to collect them at 1700.

We went on to Erebus Cove where we handed over a saw which John and Mike had asked for and arranged to pick them up later for a short winding-up trip to the head of Laurie Harbour. The wind was now NNW becoming strong and we returned to Lindley Cove and anchored there. By noon it was blowing a gale with heavy showers and we were not surprised to hear, a little later, shouts from the shore; we picked them up wet but cheerful at 1300 and warmed them with hot soup. They had found the albatross nest. Then we ran them back to Ranui, a wild trip across Port Ross and an awkward landing at 1445 in the Cove as the wind was driving in and one had to be careful to keep 'St Michael' heading right into each squall. Otherwise the wind took charge of her in the rather cramped corner where we put our passengers ashore so as to leave as short a pull ashore as could be managed.

We had a heavy thresh back to Erebus Cove, every wave driving across and heavy rain, and picked up Mike and John at 1530, putting them ashore on the north side of Laurie Harbour opposite Williamson Point at 1600 for a few minutes. Then we took them further down the north shore about half-way to Beacon Point. They would not let us wait, characteristically, but insisted that it was only a short walk overland to their camp, so we left them to it. We anchored on our familiar shoal near the head of Laurie at 1035 in steady heavy rain.

In this wind Laurie Harbour is very well sheltered by the Hooker Hills and it was quiet. Then the rain stopped and at about 1815 'Acheron' anchored astern of us. She had had a wild run up from Hanfield Inlet with williwaws [sudden violent squalls off coastal cliffs] coming off the land; on this occasion, too, they saw waterfalls spiralled up by the wind and looking convincingly like fires. The wind backed to WSW and the weather started to clear. We returned from 'Acheron' after coffee and a chat with fresh milk and bread, the kind of treat she gave us regularly and which we would miss when she left. At 2230 the wind

was WSW fresh with a clearing sky and barometer 30.59 in.; there had been no further rain.

***Thursday
11 January***

A fair morning, moderate SW wind, partly cloudy with cumulus, and barometer 30.74 in. It was a day of brisk wind and the wonderfully rich colour we now associated with sou'westerlies, until late afternoon, and 'Acheron' made the most of Ranui Cove being quiet and dry to stow as much of her considerable cargo of equipment of those leaving on Saturday as she could get hold of. We had a busy day of 'suburban bus-running', to help out with people's winding up of their projects.

Weighed at 0740 for Erebus Cove where at 0800 we collected Mike and John and ran them down to Enderby, landing them at 0850 then returning to Ranui 0920. Off again 0955 with Gordon and put him ashore 1010 on Ewing, picking up Milton and his gear and leaving again at 1030 for Ranui, where Milton went ashore.

Then we collected Brian, Mike Soper, Rod, and Graham, and the Wildlife dinghy, and left at 1055, reaching Dundas I. at 1135. After a good look at it we decided it was not too good for a landing and as other opportunities could be made later we called off and returned the four to Ranui Cove at 1220. Then we picked up Peter Connors and Dale Vitt, dropping them at Enderby at 1300 and picking up in turn Mike and John, after which we anchored briefly for lunch. Under way again 1340, put John and Mike on to Ocean I. And at 1410 picked up Milton and another at Ranui. While waiting there we heard aircraft engines and an RNZAF Orion flew over then circled back low and waved his wings at us before flying off south. Later he returned further out to sea and we saw him climb away on his northward course home. At 1440 we landed Milton and the other on Rose I., where Milton found and photographed the teal chicks I had seen; in fact a number of chicks had been found by this time and I believe a nest had been photographed too.

We left again after an hour, crossed to Enderby and picked up Peter and Dale at 1550, putting them off at Ranui at 1630 and anchoring for a brief spell. Then over to Ocean I. to collect Mike and John at about 1740. The sun left us at this point, blotted out by a curious bank of Scotch mist which dropped right down on the water and brought a light mizzling rain. We were off again at once to Rose I. to pick up the two there at 1820, then on to Erebus to land Mike and John before returning to Ranui to anchor at 1950 and put Milton and co. ashore.

This dull timetable has been given in full to show why, by the end of the day, we were feeling somewhat used up. However, Brian and 'Acheron' both appreciated our efforts and the latter gave us some hamburger steaks on which we dined with relish. Alex had, with typical thoughtfulness, found time to drop over to Sandy Bay and give the Marlowes the opportunity of a hot shower on board.

The mist lifted later and at 2200 it was only partly cloudy with the wind still moderate SW and barometer 30.97 in.

Friday
12 January

A fair morning, barometer 31.18 in., wind fresh from SW and occasional showers. The wind would give us a weather shore along the north coast which a number of people wished to visit so we took the opportunity.

We left Ranui Cove at 0825 with Ron, Rod, and Graham on board and went out through the Rose I. passage as usual, with an ebb tide at 0900. The morning was rather foggy and mizzly here but without too much swell and sheltered from the wind. Our job was to put Rod and Ron ashore on the east side of North Point so that they could look over it for royal or other nests, and to pick them up further west later after an inshore examination of Matheson Bay for fur seals or other life of interest. 'Acheron' left later with another party for North Harbour where we would meet her; as she went east-about round Enderby we did not see her for some time.

Nicholas landed Ron and Rod on a rock-shelf giving access to the clifftops on the west side of Matheson Bay, not a bad landing but made to look easy by skilful work all round. Then we turned back into the head of the Bay, close inshore, and found much of interest. First of all, was a stretch of dark red cliff looking very like sandstone (but most unlikely to be), topped by attractive groups of rata and dracophyllum. Then, still on the western side, we rounded a small point to find hidden behind it a semicircle of overhanging cliff and a deep water cove backed by a narrow boulder beach, one end of which ran into a cave under the cliff. There were several fur seals on the boulders, most difficult to see even from fifty yards off. This cove was so well tucked away that there was no swell, only a slow surge. We left reluctantly and had to pass by other intriguing coves and caves which did not look likely places for fur seals. But in the other small bay at the head of Matheson was a large colony of rockhopper penguins and there were several groups of ten or a dozen round us in the water. This is not, we were told later, a breeding colony.

The eastern half of the Bay had already been examined and was more rocky and exposed, and it was time to go off for Ron and Rod so we returned towards North Point. Presently we saw them, walking back along the low cliffs towards where we had landed them and, guessing that they had not been able to see a suitable place to the westward, we returned to our previous landing and picked them up at about 1030. They had found no nests so we set off for Beacon Rock. We joined 'Acheron' there at 1115 and she put three on to the Rock (or at least Brian and Sandy did) while Nicholas put Ron, Graham and Rod on at 1130. Conditions were rather rougher than on our earlier visit but our familiarity with the place made landing easier on the whole; for all that, care was necessary.

By this time the day was a good deal brighter and, while waiting round, I was looking across to the eastern headland of North Harbour and saw what I thought looked like a royal albatross. So we went over that way and confirmed that there was a single royal nesting; along the clifftop lower down wound a group of five or six goats, which was interesting as we had seen none on that side on our previous visit but a number on the western shore. Then we ran up to the head of North Harbour, anchored at 1150 and all went ashore on to the wide very gently shelving beach.



'St Michael' and 'Bosky' at North Harbour, 12 January 1973
(Photo: A.J. Black)

There were skuas strutting about and bathing in the stream and quite a number of sea lions, not a colony but individuals. On a place like this where one could run fast and far one could afford to be casual about them. At one end of the head of the beach was a collection of skulls of some small whale, 3 ft or more long with a broad pointed beak. I realise now that we should have brought one back for the Marlows to identify. We wandered up the stream a little way; there were a few old much-broken bottles and I picked up a shard of willow-pattern china out of the stream. This was a sealers' base in the early days and there were a number of old cut rata stumps in the bush.

I scrambled up on the small sandhills on the edge of the rata, looking across the swampy patch behind in case there were snipe or something even more interesting, but found instead some unusual plants and, clearly imprinted in one spot, the pads of a cat. Under way again at 1330 we returned to Beacon Rock where 'Acheron' asked us to pick up the botanists at 1500 while she 'nursemaided' the Wildlife dinghy across to the East Head. We had told Brian about the royal there and they got ashore on the east side of the Head and found and ringed the bird.

Meanwhile we had an hour and a half to fill in and went westward round Black Head to have a look at the Five Sisters Rocks about a mile and a half east of NW Cape. We turned back there at 1415 after deciding that there was a workable beach in the lee of the Rocks which would be worth a closer look. Ron later told us there were rockhoppers breeding there and we saw a number in the water. There was a moderate swell coming in but the beach seemed approachable inside a heavy belt of kelp. Then we turned back towards Compadre Rock, the cliffs about 800 ft high but with a narrow beach backed by a low talus slope covered with hebe at their foot. We were back at the head of North Harbour at 1150 and collecting the three botanists and John Farrell brought them back to

Port Ross by way of the Rose I. channel - this time on a flood tide - at 1545, putting them ashore at Ranui Cove at 1605 and anchoring there ten minutes later.

We were all busy that evening finishing off letters for the 'Acheron' mail next day. I had started mine in late December and added to it from time to time and had two fat letters to go. Milton Weller had had an expedition stamp made up before he came and this was much in demand by letter-senders. We did not find an opportunity to ask him to stamp ours before he had packed but he promised as he went off next morning, to deal with them before they reached Dunedin and was as good as his word.

A very quiet evening with very light SW wind and low cloud but fair. Barometer very high at 31.42 in.



Alongside 'Acheron' in Ranui Cove, from left, Sam, John and Nicholas Atkinson, 13 January 1973

***Saturday
13 January***

A fine morning, mild and nearly calm with slight assorted cloud. Barometer 31.44 in. Under way at 0850 to pick up Gordon from his Ewing I. camp at 0903. 'Acheron' arrived outside the kelp beds and we transferred Gordon and his gear to her at 0935 then returned to Ranui and anchored. There was a steady traffic of dinghies to and from the inner cove ferrying gear out; we helped where we could.

At 1100 we went off to collect John and Mike from Erebus. As a matter of interest I steered a careful course from Ocean I. to Erebus Cove on

'Acheron' about to go off for Dunedin, 13 January 1973



a line of bearing on the hills beyond to see if magnetic anomalies were noticeable. This took us about 600 ft SE of Shoe I. and at that distance it had no evident effect. However, there was a swing of a few degrees at a point about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile back towards Ocean I., and again as we approached Erebus Cove. And on other occasions we had passed very close to Shoe I. (as it is steep-to this means 20 ft or so) and found a swing of about 15° . One's comment is that the note on the chart about Shoe I. being highly magnetic is not as helpful to the navigator as might have been a more general note about the anomalies in parts of Port Ross.

We were in Erebus Cove at 1150 and ferried off Mike and John and the rest of their gear then returned to Ranui and transferred everything to 'Acheron' at 1250. She was finishing off battening down and her passengers were collecting on board. We made our farewells and stood off while she weighed and set off for Dunedin at 1330, then we anchored and had a late lunch with the Ranuis, cheered by their company and by one or two 'specials' left by 'Acheron' when she cleared out her deep freezes. We were pleased to think that we still had more time to see the Islands.

Later in the afternoon as our water was under half, we went over to our first watering place south of Ranui Cove, rigging our hose as before and completing with water before returning to Ranui, where we anchored at 1710. At the evening schedule Brian talked to 'Acheron', 80 miles out, so well on her way to the Snares where she was to call to pick up the Hornings. They were an American couple who had been there for the last twelve months doing research work, Brian was not quite sure what, as their specialty is understood to be aphids. There may be twelve months' work on aphids waiting to be done on the Snares but it seems unlikely.

An overcast evening with light NW wind and barometer 31.41 in. at 2200.

Sunday
14 January

The morning much the same: moderate NW wind with an overcast of low cloud and occasional drizzle. Barometer 31.25 in. We heard 'Acheron's' morning radio schedule with Ranui Cove; they had found conditions good at the Snares and the Hornings all ready although for some reason there had been no radio contact with them for some time.

At 1010 we set off with three from Ranui for Enderby (Rod stayed behind being duty cook) and anchored there at 1050, when they went ashore. Nicholas and I tackled the starboard exhaust pipe, which was blowing through again where we had repaired it earlier, and was niggling at us. This time we used some copper sheet, No. 8 fencing wire, seizing wire, asbestos string, and Plastibond and made a pretty robust job; we had no further trouble with it in consequence and were pleased to have it off our minds.

By 1515 when we finished, the wind was fresh to strong NNW, the weather fair with some high cloud, and barometer 31.15 in. We picked up the Ranui three at 1600 and left. After a brief call at Ewing at 1630 to check that the camp there was in good order we anchored back in Ranui Cove at 1720 and went ashore to have dinner with them. Much interesting bird talk: one of the cape pigeons on Beacon Rock, for instance, was banded probably in the late 1940s in Cook Strait where a fisherman did quite a lot, but the band being very worn will need specialist examination and even then may not be readable. There is a record of a cape pigeon banded in the Weddell Sea by a German whaling ship in 1938 and caught in the late 1950s so that a life of at least 20 years has been confirmed. Brian and Mike were also discussing the pattern of movement of royals which is emerging from banding at Taiaroa, Aucklands and Campbell. They move steadily eastward round the southern ocean, Tierra del Fuego/South Georgia and so on one year, then Cape of Good Hope/Kerguelen, then Bass Strait/Tasmania and back to their home ground. Royals and wanderers are now thought to live to 50 or 60 or perhaps even 70 years.

We had a close look at the bands now used in this work, lettered and sized for each kind of bird. Bands are now stainless steel (as aluminium wears smooth quite quickly), specially made in Sweden, consecutively numbered and marked 'Send to Dominion Museum New Zealand'. On the smallest, for storm petrels, this was just readable without magnification. The bands are simply closed up until the ends butt, being stiff enough not to re-open, and are a loose fit; there is no evidence that the bird is discommoded at all. For use the bands are mounted consecutively on a piece of plastic tube and a special pair of closing pliers is used.

We talked with 'Acheron' again at 2045. She was off Breaksea I. (NE corner of Stewart I.) and expected to be in Dunedin by noon next day, Monday. Then we talked with Campbell I. where they said it was blowing hard, williwaws in Perversence Harbour. We left at 2100 as Ranui Cove was rather uncomfortable. The wind was NNW moderate to fresh with low overcast and drizzling rain and as we went across Port Ross we had two white-headed petrel flying round. These we had seen brought down in the spotlight but they were even more handsome flying naturally, with the same kind of 'W' pattern, darker across the grey of their wings, as the prion have. Anchored in Lindley Cove at 2130 with a small roll coming round from the Rose I. passage and the noise of heavy surf coming over from the Pillar Rock coastline. Barometer 31.10 in.

Monday
15 January

Rather a restless night for John and Sam in the main cabin as the roll was just enough to give them, without bunkboards, an uneasy feeling that they might roll out. Nicholas and I in the after-cabin were not worried by it.

Wind NNW fresh, cloud low overhead with rain. We stayed where we were until 1125, by which time it was clear that we would put off our trip south another day, so we weighed and went up to the head of Laurie Harbour. Anchored in our usual place off Williamson Point at 1200, barometer 30.88 in.

After lunch the weather cleared up and was quite sunny. I felt like some exercise, so took the dinghy round Williamson Point (where I saw the first fuchsia I had yet seen at the Auckland Is) and along the south shore to the head of the basin there, where Grey Duck Creek divides to form a small tussock-covered islet with a number of sea lions in possession. The creek was big enough to row up some way and I went on as far as a big boulder whose eddy kept me in place without the need to row. I made several attempts to get past it but the current was too strong; the stream here is rather straight and swift with steep bushed banks. On the way down I took the north branch round the islet and found the best preserved of the provision depot/castaways' boat notices. This one said 'Provision Depot 4 miles', pointing to Erebus Cove, the writing very clear and the finger-end of the board painted with a signwriter's hand complete with cuff! The distance had been carved in, being left, obviously, to be added when the sign was set up. Many of these have survived all about but I saw no other nearly as well preserved.

The islet beach was covered with masses of large cockle shells. When I returned, Sam and John went off in the same direction and found a group of pigs on the islet. They photographed these (a black and a brindled adult and two piglets of each colour) and Sam later ran one of the piglets down and caught it. However, it squealed blue-murder and he let it go for a little peace and quiet.

The wind turned to the west in the evening and while there was low cloud about it was clear above, with a prospect of good weather next day.

Tuesday
16 January

Moderate WNW wind, partly cloudy but fair, barometer 31.00 in. There were a few early showers. As arranged we made an early start, weighing at 0545 and breakfasting on the way down to Ranui Cove, where we anchored at 0630 to pick up Rod, Ron, Mike Soper, and Brian with their gear for our trip south. The Camp Cove camp in Carnley Harbour was already set up and provisioned and, of the other two camps used earlier, that in Magnetic Cove had been dismantled but there was a tent still at Fairchild's Garden at the western end of Adams I. So we did not have to take too much although they came prepared for a fly camp ashore - eight would have been a squeeze on board. Under way at 0720, the ship's antifouling six inches under water aft in spite of the limited amount of gear on board.

Kekeno Point was abeam at 0800 and the day already bright with a brisk wind, cumulus rolling off the tops, and bright colour and we all

felt the holiday atmosphere. We passed Haskell Bay and closed the coast southward of it where a boulder beach ends and the cliffs begin to rise to the north head of Chambres Inlet. Ron and Brian pointed out the rockhopper colonies along the foot of the cliffs and close to open sea. I gather they live in squalor in muddy burrows under the boulders and presumably love it! We could see a few citizens sunning themselves. This was the typical habitat, as the one Sam and I came across on Disappointment I. was not.

Then round the headland at 0840 into Chambres with recollections of the very different day we arrived, and along the NE shore to the head. This is a magnificent hillside, nearly five miles of uniform slope sweeping round in a gentle curve and up into the glacial valley at the inlet head and we saw all this and the sharp-ended ridge which divides the two northern streams of Chambres, in sunlit splendour. At the head at 0925 we turned down the SW shore and people came out on deck again, for the wind blew strong and cold as we headed inland although it was pleasant going downwind. We looked into our first anchorage bay, then at 0950 rounded the long narrow south point and headed into Granger Inlet. Lake Tutanekei is about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile beyond the inlet head and only about 30 ft above sea level but the going is not easy and we did not land but turned at the head of the inlet at 1010.

Keeping close to the coast we looked next into Griffith Inlet, then taking a careful look at the reef off the next headland and, deciding that the passage inshore of it was not attractive, we turned up Musgrave Inlet and anchored at its head at 1125. Here we all went ashore except Nicholas, whose foot was still blistered from our Hooker Hills trip and who wanted to give it a chance to cure so that he would not miss a hill trip on Adams I.

The inlet head was lovely, a beach of large scattered boulders overhung by rata, much of which was in flower, the water crystal-clear, and the substantial stream tumbling straight out of the bush down the steep beach. Beyond were two levels of hanging valley the nearer (and plainly just beyond Lake Hinemoa) with a fine waterfall from it.

We had a pleasant scramble through the bush, along the stream most of the way, and the going sometimes cramped in low rata and dracophyllum. We crossed the stream once or twice, rather deep and mossy but well bridged by prostrate rata trunks, some dipping into the water, and came out on to the lake shore. It was worth seeing, closely grown with low rata and dracophyllum, many gentians in flower, and under a bank, some of the little purple-centred celmisia we had seen on the Hookers. The wind blew briskly across from the hanging valley fall half-a-mile away.

Our return routes were more independent and I followed John down the south bank of the stream, a wise move as his route was quick and easy and we had time back at the beach for a cooling face-rinse in the stream and a photograph before all the others were back.

Then on board for a lively quick snack with all eight of us squeezed into the main cabin - or nearly so, the coaming into the engineroom making a comfortable extra seat. We were soon under way again at 1335 past the small cove which gave a view up to Chapel Rock then



Cave at Musgrave Inlet, 16 January 1973
(Photo: Mike Soper)

into a minute inlet with low rata-covered cliffs on which was a small shag rookery, a stream in a smooth bed of native rock on one side, a mysterious black cave on the other, and at its end an arch with sunlit cliff beyond. Through the arch was a completely circular basin with rounded overhanging sides 30 ft high perhaps, topped by rata, a delightful place. There was deep clear water and only a slow surge but the arch was too low for 'St Michael' and instead a dinghy-load went through to admire it. I suggested they should look into the cave when they came back but they were discouraged by distant gurglings.

Then on and round Signboard Point at 1420 and into the short Tandy Inlet, really part of Smith Harbour. The wind blew hard, once again, out of Tandy, which has the lowest saddle, 650 ft or so, leading to the west coast. We could see right up this, an unusually open valley, and at the head of the inlet an old sealers' camp was given away by flax bushes. This is not endemic and plants round Ranui Cove and Erebus Cove, for instance, were brought by Maori and sealers.

Smith Harbour curves right round until it runs nearly south, between high steep slopes bluffed at the top, then its head shoals out and over a low saddle is the high ridge on the far side of Norman Inlet. We anchored in shallow water for a break at 1515 and enjoyed the quietness after Tandy and the warm afternoon sun and the lonely calls of sooty albatrosses circling about the bluffs on the western end of Falla Peninsula and just above us. We persuaded John and Sam over the late lunch we were all ready for that it would be interesting to cross over the saddle and be collected later in Norman Inlet, and I put them ashore at 1615. We left them and found the seaward coast of

Falla Peninsula full of interest, comparatively low-lying, with curious sharp ridges and big chunks of broken-off cliff on the shore. At one place a most regular 'jetty' of rock projected out perhaps $\frac{1}{4}$ mile straight on both sides and nearly level. Shag Rock was low and rounded and had an interesting-looking bay inshore of it but we were a little obsessed by the shortness of Sam and John's saddle and the distance round the Peninsula, over $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles, so did not pause.

Norman Inlet is very long, about five miles, and looks rather austere, both shore-lines being smooth and steep, the only variation being the view over the Smith Harbour saddle to the wide upper tussock of its stream valley running up to the west; the weather increased the effect as the sky had clouded over and there were some showers. There was little doubt where to look for John and Sam and presently we spotted them, picking them up at 1730. They had had an easy walk and had found some *Myosotis capitata*, still with a few of its deep blue flowers.

At 1800 we anchored at the head of Norman Inlet close to the SW stream and only three miles as the crow flies from the nearest part of Carnley Harbour. We were, indeed, in the shadow so to speak of Mt Raynal, which dominates North Arm. We ferried our four passengers ashore to a good camp site and, while they set up, Sam, John, and I rowed over to the western stream outlet to look at the old provision depot there. There were many names carved on it including one from 'Hinemoa' - Hooper - without a date. We found more myosotis in flower, close to the beach and probably well salted on occasion. I collected some plants and now have some growing, but whether they are from Norman Inlet or were collected later I am not now sure. However, it will be exciting if they flower in Eastbourne.

Then we picked up the shore party for the evening meal, cheerful, crowded, and needing good organisation. We had no radio schedule as we could not transmit to either Enderby or Campbell. The rain had passed over by 2000 and at 2100 wind was WSW moderate, sky overcast, and barometer 31.17 in. The anchorage was very sheltered and only stray puffs found their way down to us.

Wednesday
17 January

Wind W, moderate still, low overcast on all the surrounding hills, barometer 31.10 in. There was some rain overnight and more was about.

We collected the campers, who had had a comfortable night, and over breakfast on board decided that we would go straight on to Carnley Harbour as the day did not look very hopeful and we should have another chance to see the southern inlets in good weather. When we weighed at 0830 there was mizzling rain and visibility was low, perhaps half-a-mile. We kept along the south shore of the Inlet and at 0909 had the headland between Norman and Hanfield Inlets $\frac{1}{4}$ mile abeam. The next headland south was hidden in the mist so we set a compass course and were 1 mile off the north head of Deep Inlet at 0930.

There were signs of the sun breaking through and visibility varied considerably. I amused myself by taking transit bearings between

headlands, heading the ship on to the bearing. There were some appreciable differences from the chart but the bearings may not have been very accurate as there was quite a lot of swell. Or perhaps there are local magnetic anomalies; maybe the headlands are not very accurately plotted. In other words there seemed to be too many possible reasons for error for the results to be significant.

At 1020 we were a third of a mile off the reef between Worth and McLennan Inlets; this reef is a series of sunken rocks running nearly due east. They were breaking and looked thoroughly unattractive. We passed Waterfall Inlet a little sorry not to be calling in again and at 1045 were close in to Archer Rock, an isolated stack 80 ft high in a small bay with sheer cliffs. The passage inside it looked unsatisfactory, but we had a close look at Archer from three sides to see if it had any features of special interest. It did not look climbable as it overhung all round.

We rounded Cape Bennett at 1100 with the weather clearing further and patches of sun. There were very many sooty shearwaters about, some prion, a few sooty albatross, and we also saw a lone Buller's mollymawk, a most handsome creature. Cape Farr at 1130 to find the wind blowing fresh to strong out of Carnley Harbour and great flocks of muttonbirds (sooty shearwaters) flying and floating. They dive straight in, obliquely, with wings partly closed and apparently use them under water when fishing then pop up in a corky way. It is an extraordinary experience to steam into a large floating flock; when they take off, almost all together, the effect is wonderful. Perhaps a tight swarm of locusts might give something of the same impression: that one cannot imagine how so many can fly together without collisions. There were, I suppose, many tens of thousands around the eastern entrance of Carnley.

We were tempted by the brighter weather to look round the south side of Adams I. and were close off Gilroy Head at 1145. This rises in a series of sheer or overhanging steps to about 500 ft then slopes back rather more easily up to the 1200 ft eastern end of Adams Island's backbone, but its top was in mist and steady rain began again as we steamed along close under the great black cliffs. We continued as far as Bollons Bay but the weather was not encouraging and the Bay has a thick belt of bladder kelp across its entrance. So we contented ourselves with looking round the outer bay and were rewarded by a following of eight or ten sea lions, porpoising and swimming close astern, a delightful sight in the very clear water. They are not prepossessing ashore, as a general thing, but in the water their grace and skill are a pleasure to see. They seemed most interested in us and particularly in 'Bosky' towing astern, and stayed with us for ten minutes or so.

Then back towards Gilroy Head which we passed again at 1220 to find the Carnley wind only moderate and the rain easing. We passed through many of the great flocks of muttonbirds that we had seen earlier and Mike and others photographed their taking-off. Grafton Point abeam at 1320 and at 1350 we anchored in Camp Cove, a snug anchorage with just enough room to swing comfortably inside a point of boulders on the eastern side. 'Acheron' I believe found it too constricted for an overnight anchorage and I could understand Alex

feeling that way about it. 'St Michael' on the other hand fitted it most comfortably. This cove is, incidentally, well charted and it has a very fine outlook across to the summit ridge and noble spurs of Adams I. only a mile and a half away. The wind was moderate from SW and it was still cloudy though there was no more rain

We had a late lunch then, and the worst happened while we were brewing up - the gas bottle gave out! We had reckoned, after careful weighing, that it would do to Carnley Harbour, a bit concerned because the second bottle was a different shape and would not fit the shelf. However, we coupled it up temporarily, finished lunch, then took the Camp Covers ashore and helped them set up. A comfortable tent camp, as the southern wartime coastwatchers' hut is over on the isthmus of Musgrave Peninsula, a good deal less convenient and it is in any case in poor repair.

Then I did some carving of the ship to fit the new gas bottle in properly. Later John and I went fossicking along the shore and found under the boulders (it was low tide) many small Auckland I. pauas, *Haliotis virginea*, but I believe a local variant. Their colour when fresh is most beautiful, richer than any I have seen round Cape Terawhiti or in the Sounds. There were no big ones and few empty shells, the first because this kind never grows very large, and the second, perhaps, because the wild weather breaks them up quickly on the beaches. The other two New Zealand pauas do grow at the Auckland Is but we found no recognisable shells.

We had a fair afternoon but later it clouded over with drizzle and at 2100 it was blowing fresh to strong from SW with low overcast and barometer 31.13 in. The anchorage was very snug and a batch of date scones made by John for supper somehow gave emphasis to the snugness.



'St Michael' in
Carnley Harbour,
Adams I. viewed
from Camp Cove,
17 January 1973



(Above and left)
'St Michael' negotiates Victoria
Passage, Carnley Harbour,
18 January 1973

Thursday
18 January

I turned out at 0530 as arranged, to see Brian, and a little later the others, on the shore. The wind was still strong SSW, sky overcast with cloud at about 1200 ft, and after looking it over we mutually waved the 'no-go' signal for an Adams I. day. Barometer was 31.17 in.

We turned in again and I am not sure what the others ashore did. Anyway we had a civilised breakfast later, brought them out at 0735 and got under way. There was a little rain by this time; we headed over to the Adams shore expecting to get some lee but the wind tends to follow the curve of a lead like the Western Arm and in any case a weather shore was hardly necessary. The Camp Cove party were making for SW Cape to band shy mollymawks and some wanderers and wished to be put ashore just inside Breaksea Point, from which there is easy access to the 1000 ft or so tableland behind the Cape.

The Western Arm seemed familiar from photographs and John Kendrick's film, but it was exciting to see it at last and particularly to see Victoria Passage and Monumental I. There was a strong flood stream pouring in and dissipating in the quiet water inside and I got a little carried away. Having seen the obvious passage, on the Adams I. side of Monumental I., at 0900 I put 'St Michael's' bow into it. As it was running at about 5½ knots or maybe more I thought we would only have to throttle back to get inside again - it was too narrow and the sea was breaking along the rocks a little too heavily to encourage turning in the channel. However, we went through so sweetly that I finished up by going right out, where there was a considerable lollipop in the great cliff-girt bay between SW Cape and Adams Rocks, but no real sea and not a great deal of wind. When we had searoom we waited for a smooth then turned and shot back through into the quietness of Western Harbour, an exhilarating experience and one could almost see the drop as the water poured through. The channel is curved with low cliffs at the end of Fairchild's Garden on the Adams side, and on the seaward face of Monumental I. a tidal shelf. The only slight danger seemed to be the two low reefs at each side of the inner end of the channel; over these the surge broke and one might, if careless, be carried on to one or the other through relaxing one's attention too soon. Otherwise I thought the flood flow (and I later watched the ebb very carefully from Monumental I.) followed the curve of the channel smoothly and without serious disturbing eddies. It may, of course, have been behaving well on this and our later passages and it was most certainly a place one would always treat respectfully; that it was clear of rocks in the channel was plain for they would have been apparent in that surge and strong current.

Then we looked along the inside of Breaksea Point and landed our four, not without a little trouble, on a steep beach of large boulders there at 0920. I took the opportunity to scramble out to the end of Breaksea Point from which there was a good view of the North Passage past Monumental I. I did not like the look of it as much as the other: there was an unpleasant reef of two awash rocks with a heavy surge breaking over them just outside, and two ugly swirls, one in the middle of the channel and one just north and west of it, which showed up in the current as the swell rolled through. I had no doubt that these were rocks but could not judge how much water was over them; they showed no sign of breaking while I was there.

Most of Breaksea Point is wave-swept in storms as was clear from the bare black rock, and even on this quiet day the outer end was doused from time to time. The day was now fair and there was a most spectacular view of the western end of Adams I., Monumental I. in the foreground, the curious 500 ft pinnacle at the cliff-edge behind Fairchild's Garden in the middle distance and the twin 800 ft mesas below SW Adams Trig crowning the cliffs beyond. Adams Rocks, their near 400 ft height dwarfed, were off to the right and eastward ran the long summit ridge and a receding vista of spurs of Adams I., while the southern ocean surge rolled in a clear clean blue and broke white at my feet.

Sam came in and picked me up and we steamed back to the north point of Fairchild's Garden where John and Sam went ashore with the



Victoria Passage and Monumental I., 18 January 1973

cameras and at 1020 Nicholas and I took 'St Michael' out through Victoria Passage again, this time with the flooding tide easier; the wind was only moderate. I can feel still the wild and magnificent magic of that place: great cliffs, the bay a cauldron for the SW gales, the rocks swept bare and black, the relentless river pouring through the two channels, and at home in all this the wandering albatross, shy mollymawks, blackbacked gulls, and sooty albatrosses which nest round the bay.

We ran in once more and anchored at 1040 close under the lee of the north point of Adams I., as close as the kelp would let us. Then ashore to scramble up, with a cautious circuit round a group of sea lions, to the cliffs overlooking Victoria Passage, and along these to the south. The rocks soon drop down to a low saddle which is obviously completely swept in gales, cutting off the outer end.

Away from the trampled mess made by the sea lions Fairchild's Garden is deep in herbs and tussock, the flowers largely over but the plants flourishing. One had to become used to crunching through the *Pleurophyllum speciosum*, like crushing the crispest lettuce, if one was to get anywhere. Over on the seaward side I found a good deal of pleurophyllum still in flower, on a slope with the bay and SW Cape beyond, in kind but not in scale like similar slopes of thrift I remembered from Cornwall and Wales.

There were scattered nests of wandering albatross but I wanted first to look out from the pinnacle above the tussock slopes. These rear up very steeply at the top, which then drops off in a few hundred feet of cliff to a lower slope which in turn falls to the sea-cliffs. The ridge being isolated and narrow is a real crow's nest, this being emphasised by the deep hollows between tussock heads on the top, and the view, down to Monumental I., out to SW Cape and Adams Rocks, and eastward down the Western Arm to Grafton Point is just as fine as one could expect from a lofty crow's nest. Hundreds of feet below I could see wanderers and sootys flying across the lower seaward slopes, and to the south the clifftop curved round over a great sea-cave and then reared up to the 800 ft twin mesas on the plateau-edge below SW Trig. Sam followed me later and I went down to see what Nicholas and John had found.

At 1340 we got under way and went back to the Breaksea Point beach as arranged, four hours after putting them ashore. No sign of them at first, then we saw them up on the top and deciding there was time for a meal and that the little cove straight across from Monumental I. should be visited we went over and anchored at 1400. John, Nicholas, and I lunched, while Sam was keen and went ashore, where he saw no fewer than six pigs, an adult black with two black piglets and two brindled adults with a brindled piglet. This was a pleasant little cove rocky-sided with a boulder beach near the entrance and a shingle beach backed by a flat scrub-filled stream-valley behind the cove-end. We watched the opposite slopes through binoculars and saw the banders working their way down. At 1430 we hauled up the anchor, collected them from Breaksea Point beach at 1445, and headed into Western Harbour.

We kept close in to the western shore on the lookout for the NZ falcon's nest found by 'Acheron' and which Mike had later visited. We saw the falcon and stopped (somewhat hurriedly, having just commented that the water was shoaling when we saw the bottom!) at the head of the harbour while Rod, Sam and John went ashore at 1455 for a quick look round. There was nothing of particular interest to be seen, the valley leading off gently to the north, and they returned before long. We moved off again at 1525 by which time the afternoon was clouding over. On our way down, a visit to Monumental I. was suggested and approved and we anchored off at about 1540, all of us going ashore except Nicholas and John. The others spread out over the island and Brian and I, coming along the shore from a different landing, found ourselves faced by a large sea lion. Well, we had both dealt with these gentlemen before and something had made me bring the good long 2 x 1 in. dinghy prop with me so we were confident if cautious. But this one was really aggressive: we tried stones first but he took no notice and just closed us; I took a firm footing and lunged out a few times to tap him, progressively harder, on the muzzle. This, and aggressive movements on our part, just seemed to make him angry. In the end I found myself having to lay about his head about as hard as I could hit; I missed my footing once and he lunged out and nearly got his teeth on me, as it was leaving quite an impressive gouge on my club. By this time he looked rather bloody and was wilting a bit and, feeling rather a brute, I kept it up and as soon as he hesitated we both moved in and he turned tail for the water, followed up by stones to convince him he had lost that battle. I certainly was, and I think even Brian was, somewhat breathless and shaken by this: Nicholas and John were interested spectators from 'St Michael' and were not inclined, even from their haven, to think we had been unnecessarily brutal!

After that we were able to explore. The island is rather bare, with some short tussock, and hebe tucked in under the low eastern cliff where it presumably gets some shelter from spray. The Monument is a curious basaltic stack with a flat top, on the highest point and visible from all round. Rod had gone off to the bare rocky southern end to count the black-back colony there and I followed him to see the current pattern through Victoria Passage with an ebb tide. The black-back colony is on a flat-topped knob of rock from which I had an

excellent view of the channel: the ebb current set strongly out along the Adams I. side of the Passage and below me a mild eddy swung back along the Monumental I. shore, but there was no indication that the Passage would be any more trouble in these ebb-tide and weather conditions than we had found it in the morning. Rod found chicks in a range of ages and one nest of eggs. I found a red-billed gull on its nest in one of those rounded pockets characteristic of volcanic rock, and a neat and snug site it looked. I also found a mass of *Cantharidus* shells - *pruninus?* - purplish-pink, and collected a pocketful for a necklace.

Back on board and under way at 1630. On the way back we stopped off at the castaways' boatshed on Adams, opposite the first signpost shown on the map just west of Trinity Cove. This boatshed was still in fair condition and the boat quite reasonable, barely seaworthy but the only one in anything like a complete state. Rod, Nicholas, John, and Sam went ashore to look and later we discussed what might be done: Brian, I think, suggested that the shed might be repaired and the boat left, or perhaps brought up to Erebus Cove where the main 'museum' survives. But I believe I said that it was a pity that this example of a type of boat not built for seventy years or more and now rare could not go to a museum where more could see it, and quoted the Norwegian Maritime Museum at Bygdøy, where working boats of extinct types are preserved. So it was good to hear later that 'Acheron' had brought the boat, a clinker gig of about 17 ft, back for the National Museum, and that Dr Yaldwyn had commissioned Nicholas to restore her.

We anchored in Camp Cove at 1745, the wind now moderate SW and an overcast sky and later in the evening there was rain, the wind dying to a very light SW. Brian talked to Enderby in the evening, told them what we had been doing and heard their news. At 2100 the barometer was 31.30 in.

Friday
19 January

A good deal of rain and variable, sometimes strong, SW wind overnight. Brian and I exchanged signals at 0530. All I had to do was put on a jersey and pop up on deck; Brian on the other hand had to get out of his warm sleeping-bag and clamber down to the beach where I could see him - usually in a long white garment looking like a nightshirt! This morning it was mizzling with rain, light SE wind and low cloud and not a day for the Adams I. tops. We signalled agreement and returned thankfully to bed.

At 0830 or so barometer was 31.31 in. and though it was still overcast and cloud was low on Adams the sun was breaking through and I went ashore to carry our suggestion that it was a proper day for circumnavigating Adams I. This met with approval and accordingly we left Camp Cove at 0945 with the four from ashore and headed down the Western Arm.

The flood tide was running in through Victoria Passage but we had a couple of knots in hand this time and an easy passage through at 1030.

The bay tossed us about although there was little wind, and, indeed, the wind remained very light, but the combination of SW swell and the always steep and often sheer coast meant that the ship was very lively all day. We circled the cave bay under the two mesas and passed close to Adams Rocks at 1050, looking hard at the passage between them but being unable to convince ourselves that it was justifiable. The Rocks, dwarfed as they may be by the scale of the surrounding cliffs, are impressive enough when one is close alongside and we scanned them carefully: cape pigeons nesting but landing would be extremely difficult even if one was fortunate enough to have the essential really quiet day. This day there was a considerable surge.

Round Embrasure Point we found ourselves looking up to thousand foot cliffs disappearing into mist, and along to Logan Point, stepped down with a striking erratic (perhaps?) perched on one of its tussock-covered 'treads'. In the middle of the bay was the large coffin-shaped awash rock which was apparent in one of the oblique aerial photos Brian gave me, but which is not on the chart.

The next great bay, bounded by Lantern Rocks and Astrolabe Point to the south-east, was a tremendous sight: it is nearly three miles across with cliffs nowhere under 1000 ft and running up to 1700 ft at the highest point. All the clifftop was in mist and the black walls ran up, in many places sheer from the water and if not from a low 'beach' of debris, and disappeared vertically into the gloomy mist. Strung out to Astrolabe Point are the Lantern Rocks, six altogether and the four outer ones 190 to 280 ft high. Again we went as close to them as seemed prudent, while the Wildlife people examined them with binoculars (as well as they could with 'St Michael's' liveliness) and noted bird kinds and numbers and vegetation.

Around Astrolabe at 1130 we had a long stretch of cliff, ranging up to 1400 ft and rather straight, interrupted by a hidden inlet which we knew to lead to Lake Turbott, and nearly six miles off the lower headland of South Cape. We passed inside Amherst Rock at 1155 (one rock perhaps 70 ft but not more than 100 ft high with an awash rock to seaward, not two large rocks 165 ft as the map shows) and admired a fine fall which must be 1000 to 1200 ft high, dropping straight to the sea from the plateau.

We were all interested to see Lake Turbott outlet, knowing that the lake was just above sea level and hopeful of a landing, but when we rounded into the little bay at 1215 these hopes evaporated rather quickly. There was a steep boulder beach and a confused sea/surge in the bay and breaking wildly on the beach and a landing was not to be considered. We looked briefly up the lake valley curving round under Mt Dick and turned away.

The coastal cliffs were here falling away in height, and looking out to South Cape we could see many birds flying across the cliffs and sitting on the water. The effect was like Ward I. at the height of the blackback breeding season. But when we came closer we realised that these hundreds of birds were all wandering albatross. There was some speculation about the concentration - could it be because they could not get enough lift to top the cliffs in the absence of wind? I did not get the impression that this was the reason as the birds seemed to be

well able to get off the water, and under full command. We had seen, pointed out by Ron and Rod who had been on some of the clifftops we craned up at, the specks which were flying sooty albatross, shy mollymawks, and wanderers high on the tops from time to time as we came along. One colony of shy mollies on Astrolabe Point Brian noted in particular, hoping to reach them later from the tops.

The next 2½ miles of coast, after we had rounded South Cape at 1230, were less dramatic but only by contrast with the cliffs further west. The lively lollop which we had become used to was even livelier off the Cape; we all needed a very firm grip. At 1300 we were off Cape Thomson and entering Fly Harbour, a narrow steep-walled inlet running in to the heart of the Island, a kelp bar right across just inside the entrance. This was very thick and without anything approaching a clear passage but fortunately it was not wide, 100 ft perhaps. So we just took a run at it, and needed it: the ship was slowed right down and the engines labouring before we drew clear inside, trailing weed.

There was no point in removing this and we went on up to the head anchorage at 1320. There was much fine rata round the shore which rose steeply on each side in tiers of bluffs and at the head in a great cirque of bluffs to the 2000 ft main ridge of the Island. Two fine waterfalls, one shooting out from the skyline westward, rolled down through the rata and there were - sandflies! There was very little wind though it was still overcast at 1800 to 2000 ft with some clear sky to seaward. The harbour head was absolutely still, only the roar of the falls and the high lonely cries of sooty albatross circling about the bluffs in numbers breaking the quietness. But there were some red-billed gulls to keep us company, and many bellbirds, whose song was part of the quietness. We had a meal, then some went ashore for a little time, hardly a beach but a step on to boulders and into the bush. Ferns very abundant and I would think that rainfall here is above the Carnley Harbour average. We found an old mooring rope fast round a huge boulder and of long standing as it was much overgrown with moss although not rotted away.

At 1430 we weighed, forced our way out again through the weed, and at 1450 stopped to clear the propellers using a boathook from 'Bosky'. From here on I made notes of the coast shape and height, having realised that the map was sketchy. In fact there are no contours south of the main ridge of Adams, as Alan Eden was unable to finish this part of his survey, so admirably done over the rest of the Auckland Islands. The coast was irregular in height and the cliffs two-tiered with a steep tussock slope between. Between Fly Harbour and Castle Point two valleys run down from the north-west, the first ending gently in a low coastal waterfall about 30 ft high, the second in a fall 150 ft high of two steps, just SW of Castle Point.

Round Castle Point we were in Bollons Bay and back on familiar ground as we had looked in here on 17 January. But this day the weather had brightened up to a fine afternoon with light SE wind. Again we forced our way through a kelp bed, and anchored well off the shoaling sandy head of the Bay at 1535. It is an open place after Fly Harbour and the great coastal cliffs, the bay shores lying back at gentler slopes and a long valley running bush-filled to the WNW and curving round to the west, out of sight, a mile or so inland. On the

eastern side of the Bay is a beach of large round glistening boulders, backed by rata; bellbirds, pipits, and parakeets were plentiful. We all landed, Brian, Ron, and Rod in some slight hope of finding signs of the Auckland Island merganser in the valley, the rest of us to see this interesting place. Nicholas and I felt though that a more impressive inlet might have been found to give Captain Bollon's name to. After all he had much to do with the Islands and the early scientific accounts owe much to his deeply knowledgeable observations.

There were a few sea lions on the beach but they were a peaceful lot and only stopped, shoulder-deep in the water, to see what we were. I went on with my search for ferns, having looked also in Fly Harbour, and was at last sure that I had found *Asplenium aucklandicum*, one of the two I had been asked for. The trouble seems to be that there are hybrids with the much more common *Asplenium obtusatum*, with varying degrees of saw-tooth margins to the fronds. This time I had no doubt and now have one or two growing well, in addition to those I sent off to Kate Stocker.

We strolled back to the dinghy, perched on a beach of large boulders further out in the Bay, in ones and twos, and ferried out to 'St Michael' rolling about in the SE swell which runs into this open bay. Under way at 1645, we stopped ten minutes later to clear off weed outside the kelp bed and then continued round the coast towards Gilroy Head. The cliffs here are relatively low, 200 to 500 ft, and more irregular than further west, I think because of the geological differences rather than any great difference in the kind of wave attack. In fact the eastern end of the Adams I. backbone ridge runs out in a long gently-falling promontory from The Dome to Gilroy Head, the last few miles quite narrow between the eastern entrance of Carnley and the southern ocean; there is no plateau at this end of the Island.

At 1715 we rounded Gilroy Head to find very large flocks of sooty shearwaters feeding in the Entrance. This seems to be a favourite place, perhaps because of tidal upswellings which would bring plankton to the surface. Mike Soper was keen to photograph these and we spent some time steaming up quietly to great rafts of birds on the water, then surrounded by what seemed a completely chaotic mass of thousands of flying birds which sorted itself out into a wheeling pattern as they swung away then dived in with wings only half-folded. One is almost bewildered by the rapid random flight of such numbers of birds so close round the ship, and we continued to be amazed that no collisions occurred.

Off Grafton Point at 1815, the afternoon becoming greyer and cloud spreading at about 2500 ft. There were light airs only. At 1845 we anchored again in Camp Cove and ferried Mike, Ron, Rod and Brian ashore. A light northerly wind came up later and the cloud dropped on to the tops of Adams I.; at 2100 barometer was 31.40 in. and it was raining slightly.

Saturday ***20 January***

There was more rain overnight and at 0530 Brian and I exchanged our usual signals. Wind was light NE, sky overcast with cloud down to 600-800 ft and we agreed it was not a day for the tops and returned to bed. However, later on (barometer 31.37 in.) the weather brightened



Carnley Harbour from Adams I., 20 January 1973

up and we changed our minds, getting under way at 0945 with the shore four and going straight across to Magnetic Cove where we anchored at 1005, nearly calm. This cove is where Ron and Rod had their camp in December while banding wandering albatross on the Adams tops, and John Kendrick's good track up the spur, which he made in 1966, is one of its attractions. It is a pleasant place but marshy and Ron and Rod were pretty wet in their camp at times.

We set off gently up the hill, first through low rata then dracophyllum scrub, with much fern and the path a boggy stream in places, needing careful going if one was not to land on one's face in sopping peat. Further up we came out into the open and could look down on 'St Michael' quietly at anchor in the cove below, and westward and north along the Western Arm and to North Harbour, and a mile and a half off Camp Cove with its snug bay opposite us. But the cloud stayed at 800-1200 ft and though we talked to a number of nesting wanderers and saw a falcon flying across the valley below and admired the neat shape and variety of browns of an Auckland I. snipe caught by Brian, the day did not improve. Some of the wanderers - partners of those previously banded - were banded during the morning.

We went on, across fell-field with large boggy patches starred with the large grey-green rosettes of *Pleurophyllum criniferum*, and dotted with cushions of a little bog astelia and a minute creeping coprosma, both with bright berries, and with scattered clumps of gentian and a few celmisias. Then we stopped at the cloud base at perhaps 1200 ft under a rather gloomy basalt bluff and lunched, looking out along the underside of the cloud. The view was wide and rather bright over Carnley Harbour as the cloud was thinner and we 'St Michaels' did not feel deprived although the others were a little disappointed not to be able to introduce us to the tops. There was not very much point in going on and we moved off down again after eating, finding plants and doing a little more banding and admiring the scenery and the northward sweep of the Adams spurs. The lower bush was full of bellbirds and parakeets.

It was close to high water when we reached the shore again; we ferried off and were under way by 1330 for the short run back to Camp Cove where we put our passengers ashore at 1350. Having only 10 gallons of water left we set off to find a good stream. There was

some discussion about this; eventually we went across to the end of Murgave Peninsula two miles away, on the chance of finding a stream. This is a rather bleak stretch of steep rock with scrub above but there were several small streams and we found a satisfactory one easily enough. Put the CQR out astern as a kedge and pulled the ship in through the fringing kelp with a bow-line ashore where there was a narrow rock ledge. Then a scramble up the hillside with the hose and we soon had a good head of water flowing on board.

It was calm still, but cool and we all washed clothes on deck and then, overcome with a passion for cleanliness by so much fresh water, washed in turn. By this time there were occasional puffs of wind and when one was wet with cold hillside water these really made one shiver. Then we hosed out the forepeak, then the engine room, and finished up with ship, clothes, and selves clean and an all-round smug feeling of virtue. Under way at 1725 after retrieving hose, headrope and kedge and we returned by way of the coast north of Masked I. We passed through a large raft of sooty shearwaters, one of several we had seen from up the hill, very plainly against the calm water, and were again amazed at the great upsurging of birds from the water, like bees swarming, until they swung round clear of us and dived in again.

The rata grows strongly about Camp Cove and was already flowering well. We looked in to the channel behind Masked I. but it was soon plain - we were moving very slowly - that there was not water enough and we backed out, a little crestfallen. Back to Camp Cove and anchored at 1810. There had been talk of spotlighting down at Fairchild's Garden later in the evening but it threatened rain and the cloudbase was down and we called it off by mutual consent. We had a cape pigeon paddling round us at dusk - he would not take trail biscuit crumbs and we did not discover until later that what they really enjoy is dripping. Wind was light WNW at 2030, cloud down to about 600 ft and raining and barometer 31.17 in.

Sunday
21 January

When Brian and I looked out at 0530 there was a moderate SW wind with rain. I was lucky, only having to poke my head out of the after-hatch for long enough to make the obvious signal to Brian, then turning in again.

And we did not surface until about 1000 when we had a belated breakfast and congratulated ourselves on having a snug ship and anchorage. At 1100 wind was still moderate SW with an overcast sky and rain, barometer 30.84 in. We went ashore later, to be invited to lunch (rather too close to breakfast!), scrambled eggs and toast and cheer. Rod was duty cook and broke the eggs, fourteen of them, into a billy until Sam said something about bad ones. Rod took the hint and used a mug for the last few, and the very last was very bad, a perfect object lesson.

The camp was comfortable, tucked in under a dense rata canopy at the top of a low cliff just above the beach; in fact at high water there was no beach, and at low water fifty feet of seaweed and rock. They had separate sleeping tents and the large living tent, but of course none of the luxuries of Ranui Cove. After lunch we went off with the camp

four to coast up the western side of North Arm. The rain had gone and the SW wind was freshening but the clouds did not lift off although there were bright glimpses. Under way at 1335, we steamed first up to the head of Coleridge Bay, richly bushed, turning there at 1405. We looked up to the heights to the west where there are bluffs on the end of the ridge south of the Tower of Babel, finding it difficult to see where there could be a large enough hollow to accommodate Lake Speight. Brian had been there and showed us where it was, when it became understandable.

Then round McClure Head and past the small bay where there was another magnetic variation station and on to Musgrave Harbour, the steep uniform flank of Dromedary over to starboard. Musgrave head opens out into wide flats with a large open valley to the west and north, very different in character from any that we had seen. The western arm was short and the great bluffs of Fleming Plateau ran up into the cloud to the SW; the shores were low and the head shoaled, and we turned there at 1435 and went round into the north-west arm. The peninsula between Musgrave Harbour and North Arm is low-lying and the wind-lanes across it and across the rounded headland between the two arms of Musgrave were very striking. Here their relationship to the prevailing wind as it might well be modified by the local topography seemed rather plain. Whereas there had been plenty of rata around Coleridge Bay the head of Musgrave Harbour had rather scrubby bush, perhaps because of its greater exposure.

We ran a little way into the NW arm when the flatness of the surrounding land and the low shores made us realise rather suddenly that it should be shoal; we looked overboard to see that indeed it was, and a quick turn back at 1450 just kept us from running aground in the mud. The wind was still freshening and the cloud beat down low from time to time then as we ran back to Circular Head it dropped down nearly to sea-level and we reckoned it was not worth while going further north. At 1520 we turned back, below the 'prominent dyke' marked on Circular Head, a striking bluff-girt castle of basalt 600 ft up the hillside.

Brian and Ron wanted to look at the old coastwatching camp in Tagua Bay with an eye to a convenient camp thereabouts for the parties coming down in February. So we went off round Flagstaff Point and along in the lee of Musgrave Peninsula (in passing, the several features named after Musgrave may be confusing unless one looks at the map) to Tagua Bay where we anchored at 1555 and some of us went ashore. There are low rata-covered cliffs round the Bay and one narrow beach from which we could get up on to the isthmus which is here very narrow, maybe 200 yards. I pushed through to the far side where the wind was now tearing at the trees and driving a sharp sea against the rocky shore below. Then I went off south-westerly along the Isthmus hoping to find the hut but although I found tracks, a fenced enclosure, a rotting pile of sawn timber, and the platform on the cliff-top above Tagua Bay by which stores were landed, I did not have time to find the hut which is about half a mile from the landing beach. (Recently in Wellington I saw a PWD film of 1944? vintage, 'Fifty South', of a relief trip to the Auckland Is by 'New Golden Hind', in which a party was shown bringing stores ashore in Tagua Bay using

a man-hauled hoist to lift cases from a boat up to the platform I had seen.)

So back to the beach where the others were returning. It was now raining hard and blowing half a gale and we returned on board for tea - and pikelets! - cooked by John and Sam who had stayed aboard with Nicholas. A lighthearted and crowded cabin-full for a depressing afternoon. At 1750 we left and returned to Camp Cove, anchoring at 1835 when Nicholas took the four campers ashore in heavy rain. Once again we were thankful for the snug anchorage the cove provided. A late dinner followed this day of late starts and we were very much cheered at the evening radio session by Brian's report from his talk with Campbell I. that they had heard of Gerry Clark's safe arrival at the Chathams in 'Ketiga'. He had had a rough passage, having been hove down at least once with water in the ship and damage to the sails and gear. However, remembering the gales we had had while he was on passage, we were relieved to know that his skill had brought him through with nothing worse.

At 2130 the wind had moderated and rain eased to occasional light showers, barometer 30.65 in.

***Monday
22 January***

0530: fresh SW wind, rather cold, partly cloudy, barometer 30.59 in. and Brian and I signalled agreement on the Adams tops. So 0700 saw us under way with the Cove four and eventually, at 0750, anchored in Magnetic Cove with the fisherman wedged in the rocks on the weather shore and the CQR out astern to prevent her swinging back inshore. This was after two attempts to get the fisherman in from out in the cove: the bottom must be soft mud for with a generous scope we had no difficulty at all in dragging it along. It was as well that the day remained calm when we anchored here on 20th, for I did not then, as I should have done, give the ship a kick astern to check the hold.

Once secure we were soon ashore and adjusting boots before setting off up the track again: curious how familiar it seemed after only one previous visit, and we listened sympathetically to Ron and Rod's account of their many trips up and down this track in all weathers, and Ron's story of John Kendrick, going off day after day with his heavy gear, determined to be in the right place when the weather was right for his filming. This time the wind remained fresh or strong and cold, but it was typical sou'westerly weather with longish bright patches as well as a good deal of cloud.

We pressed on up to our previous lunch spot at about 1200 ft, and here Brian, Mike and Rod sidled south-eastward to a saddle which we knew to be at the head of the Lake Turbott cirque, while Ron stayed with us and kept on up the spur to the main ridge. The going was very good, steep but easy with many plants but sadly few flowers.

The main ridge is mostly rather level and gently undulating, bare and slabby, and on the south side the country falls gently to the shallow valley which drains to the spectacular clifftop waterfall near Amherst Rock which we had seen on our circumnavigation. To our left the ridge curved round nearly level to the south to Mt Dick 2190 ft, hardly

discernable as a separate summit from this angle. We found pockets of vegetation among the rocks and a few *Ranunculus pinguis* and blue forget-me-not flowering, as well as the ubiquitous gentian but disappointingly few, and we turned eastward to rejoin the others. While we were hidden in a temporary lowering of the cloud we heard the RNZAF Orion out to sea heading westward. We were rather scattered and Sam went off to Mt Dick without our realising it while Nicholas, Ron, John, and I found our way independently along, and down quite a steep drop to the saddle. At the top of this drop we had a wonderful view of the great cirque, a mile across, at the head of Lake Turbott and of the long flat plateau of tussock, sunlit and sloping gently down to South Cape and Cape Thomson beyond, and along the castellated eastern part of the main ridge. The wind was strong and cold and we dropped down to rejoin the others who were lunching on the south side of Peak 1990 ft and had found a sooty albatross nesting.

As Sam did not appear, John and I thought we should have a look and scrambled back up to the Mt Dick ridge again where some detective work by John on footprints revealed where Sam had gone. We saw him presently on the rocks of Mt Dick, which is quite dramatic on the Lake Turbott side, but could not attract his attention and so went along the ridge to meet him. The wind snatched at us and the cloud dropped over us and then lifted again. By the time we rejoined the rest they were on their way back across the saddle as it was clearly too windy, cold, and generally rather gloomy for photography.

On the north side of the ridge (and we all sidled back having had enough of the exposed top) it was pleasant going and John and I lagged behind photographing *Pleurophyllum bulbifera*, ranunculus, myosotis, celmisia, gentians, blue hebe, and other things. Only the gentians were flowering here, but all were interesting and attractive and the growth extraordinarily rich for so bleak a place. We caught up with the others further down where they had scattered to measure up wandering albatross, and fossicked round, enjoying the opportunity to see more of plants, birds and rocks than we had had time to before. I found a triangle of wanderers, a pair with another young female trying to break it up, and was able to snug down in the tussock with the tape-recorder out of the wind and record some of the courting chatter: rather duck-like croaking-quacking, and bill-clapping. It was not very passionate and I was sorry not to have seen them displaying, which must be a wonderful sight.

Down in the rata just above the cove the bellbirds were in great form and again I recorded quite a lot of song. One young bird in particular sat within arm's reach and sang like a prima donna into my microphone held a few feet from her, a delightfully unselfconscious performance! We must have been used to the wind by that time for I do not remember it, yet one can hear in the recording squalls sweeping down the hillside and roaring through the trees. There were again many parakeets about too.

We collected slowly on the beach, washed the mud off our boots, and went on board. I thought high water was at about 1530 but in retrospect it was probably rather earlier, and rather later than on 20th, when I noted it as about 1330; the point is of interest since I

have not found anything relating tide times to the nearest standard port. Anyway we had some trouble getting hold of the fisherman anchor which having been well placed by hand at lower water in the morning was now difficult to displace under water. The dinghy and crew were wedged in under dracophyllum scrub in a very awkward position to lift it. We left the cove at 1550 and anchored in Camp Cove at 1610.

At 2100 the wind was still strong SW, barometer 30.35 in., weather fair with occasional showers and a good deal of cloud over 2000 ft.

Tuesday
23 January

Another 0530 exchange: wind fresh SSW, fair weather with passing showers, barometer 30.50 in. and Brian and I agreed on the outlook for a reasonable day. We set off at 0725 with Brian and Rod, who were to go up the spur on the west side of Magnetic Cove and traverse westward along the tops to Fairchild's Garden with, they hoped, a detour down to Astrolabe Point on the way. Landed them in Magnetic Cove at 0745 and returned to Camp Cove, where we collected Ron and Mike and set off for North Harbour.

The weather was kind, turning into a morning of crisp wind, cumulus over the hills, a good deal of sun, and superb colour and we went straight from Circular Head up the western side of North Harbour to its head. Here two small bays lead off into easy valleys running northward to the western cliffs less than two miles away in the great western bight. The more easterly of these valleys rose gently to a low saddle of about 800 ft at its head on the clifftop and with its easy tussock slopes looked on this bright morning very like NW Scotland. A low point between the two was where the German merchant ship 'Erlangen' fuelled with 400 tons of rata in September 1939, having been obliged to leave Port Chalmers just before war broke out without enough coal to get her to South America. Apparently she was beached for a time to speed her loading, and the neatly cut rectangles of rata could be clearly picked out in their second growth. She deserved a better fate, after such an enterprising effort, than internment in South America, which she reached with the help of the rata and sails made of hatch tarpaulins. She did eventually get away, only to be intercepted and scuttled in the North Atlantic in July 1941. There is a story that 'Leander' looked into North Harbour but did not see 'Erlangen' which was hidden by Figure of Eight I., but I find it difficult to believe that the latter is big enough, and in fact the official account says that on her first visit (made when 'Erlangen' was fuelling) she did not enter Carnley Harbour but lay-to two miles off the entrance.

We did not go ashore but coasted close in then landed briefly, at 0925, on Figure of Eight I. This is rather low-lying with a rocky shore and low rata and scrub and is occupied by the third breeding colony of Auckland I. sea lions, Sandy Bay and Dundas I. being the other two. Figure of Eight I. was attractive, the rata flower coming out and bellbirds abundant but it is no place, with its rough terrain and low trees, to meet a cross sea lion so I kept to the coast; John and Sam were bolder and came to no harm.



'Grafton' wreckage at 'Epigwaitt', in North Arm of Carnley Harbour,
23 January 1973

Left again at 1005, steering down the eastern side and at 1030 we anchored off Epigwaitt, where Musgave's and Raynal's 'Grafton' was wrecked in 1864 and where they and their crew spent 15 months. There were the remaining timbers of 'Grafton' on the beach, with treenails and iron spikes, riveted in some cases over copper roves, securing 6 × 2 in. timbers of some exotic wood (I found later a reference to 'Grafton' having been built of timber from a dismantled Spanish ship).

Epigwaitt is an exposed place and not very attractive, low-lying with a rather characterless rocky beach and an uninspired view by Auckland I. standards. Of course the crew had no choice: the ship was wrecked there in the course of trying to beat up to a good anchorage in the teeth of a rising westerly gale, and she represented all they had, so naturally they stayed there. John went off to look for the remains of the survivors' hut, but without finding it.

We did not stay long, leaving again at 1115, the day now past its best but still fair and passing Camp Cove at 1200 on our way out to Fairchild's Garden. We anchored at 1245 about half a mile south of Victoria Passage close to the steep, almost low-cliff shore bushed with an area of rata and scrub in which was another fly camp used earlier by Ron and Rod and left standing. We all went ashore, the landing being on to a rock ledge with a steep and slippery sea lion path up to the bush, and a hundred yards or less of bush before we came out into the tussock and herbfield. Here John, Ron, and Mike

went off about various interests while Nicholas and I, and Sam separately, set off across the herbfield for the two flat-topped mesas overlooking the great SW Cape-Monumental I.-Adams Rocks bay. I kept to the edge of the sea-cliff where the tussock was low, for over the main herbfield the going was quite heavy, marshy with high tussock and quantities of huge pleurophyllum and anisotome out of which we flushed several snipe as we went along. This cliff-edge steepened to a stiff scramble, between tussock-heads and great fronds of anisotome near the top, a steep drop to the cliff-edge, and the sea far below on my right. A breathless last pull and I found myself, surprisingly, on the edge of a great plateau at about 800 ft falling gently to Embrasure Point about a mile westward, rising in an easy slope to my left and southward to the 1701 ft of SW Adams Trig, and on my right the low cliffs, fifty feet or so of columnar basalt, of the two mesas above the plateau. These mesas are cliffed all round, on the north - seaward - side sheer for several hundred feet down to a band of steep tussock ending at the sea-cliff another several hundred feet high, and on the plateau side by the low columnar cliffs. There are one or two scrambling routes on to the tops. I left the first and smaller mesa and went round at the foot of the wall, past a gap between the two tables, until I was able to scramble up the middle of the larger western one.

This was a most spectacular place, quite flat-topped, with low tussock, plants of the smaller pleurophyllum and huge clumps of gentian flowers, some a foot or more across and all a deep purple-crimson except for one white plant. Southward lay the plateau dotted with nesting wandering albatross and rising to SW Adams Trig a mile and a half away, south-westward the plateau ran out to the sea-cliffs between Embrasure and Logan Points and on the west the mesa ended in a headland of cliff with the plateau sea-cliffs at its foot running on to Adams Rocks. I looked, gingerly because the tussock edge was riddled with petrel burrows, over the edge northward and down into the big bay, and across to Victoria Passage, Monumental I., and Western Harbour beyond, and over the bay to another plateau running out to SW Cape. Straight down was a great curved hollow of cliff, the south-westerly rollers creaming into it and disappearing into a cavern which must in the end break through into western Carnley Harbour. Beyond Fairchild's Garden was the small patch of bush we had come through and 'St Michael' quietly at anchor, and eastward in the foreground the smaller mesa with Sam on its top and behind the long reach of the Western Arm of Carnley Harbour back to Grafton Point and, receding, the great northern spurs of Adams I.

From here as from the spur above Magnetic Cove the noble scale and architecture of Carnley Harbour is very apparent in its great reaches and the sweeping ice-sculpture of its ridges, spurs and valleys. So much to take in and the time so short!

I wanted very much to look over the western cliffs at the plateau-edge and from now on kept a wary eye on the skyline by SW Adams Trig where Rod and Brian would appear. Not that I thought they would mind waiting down at the camp but we knew they would have had a hard day. There was no sign of them so off I went, down by the same break in the cliff and heading first for the point above Adams Rocks.

This took me along the cliff edge and past a number of nesting wanderers and two all-brown yearlings, last year's chicks nearly ready to try their wings.

I looked steeply down on to the 388 ft of Adams Rocks and a gleam of sun came at the right moment for a photograph. There was a moderate wind only, but what a savage place it is! Then I followed the cliff edge along to Embrasure Point with glimpses down occasional gaps in the cliff to the sea 800 ft below. From the Point I could look along to Logan Point and had a wonderful view of the small stream, draining the plateau, making futile efforts to fall to the sea: the wind just blew it up and back in spray although presumably it must eventually get down. I think that it is spread widely along the cliff edge and trickles down over a considerable area. Logan Point and the thousand foot cliff just north of it were spectacular, the cliff from below my feet to Logan Point sheer, but with a small debris pile making a beach of sorts at its foot. I had a good view of 'Coffin Rock' about a third of a mile off shore, which we had looked at on the 19th; it appeared from its shape and alignment to be part of a dyke which outcropped also across the plateau below SW Adams Trig.

I still had time to go right along to the 'water-rise', until its spray wetted me, and to see how the spray modified the growth and plants locally. Then back across the plateau's gentle slope and, as there was still no sign of Rod and Brian, another visit to the larger mesa followed by a fossick for plants: *Hebe benthamii* and some small *Pleurophyllum spectiosum*, which have survived the journey back and are growing at Eastbourne.

Then they appeared, and Nicholas and I (we met here as I came back from Embrasure Point) and Sam, on his way back from the cliffs, headed down to Fairchild's Garden. John had caught a number of snipe and developed a quiet technique of holding them until calm then letting them go in such a way that he was able to get 'free' photographs. He caught another for me (it was not easy but there were plenty about) but my photograph did not do justice to his skill. We converged on the track back through the bush, hearing on the way about Brian and Rod's successful day: they had gone out to Astrolabe Point and found the shy mollymawk colony there, about 200 nesting birds. They had also done a good deal of banding. Back on board we got under way at 1815, the evening now rather grey following an afternoon with patches of sun after the bright morning. We anchored in Camp Cove at about 1900, the wind SSW to S, fresh still, sky overcast, and put the shore party off. The plan was to return north next day as Brian wanted two days or so clear there for preparations before 'Acheron' came back, and to visit on the way the inlets we had not seen when coming south. Later, the wind still fresh SSW, there were passing showers and at 2100 the barometer read 31.10 in.

**Wednesday
24 January**

A moderate SW wind, generally overcast with occasional showers, barometer 31.21 in.

We loaded the shore party's gear, leaving the camp set up as we had found it, and at 0845 were under way, the morning now rather brighter. This was a sad occasion for 'St Michaels' and we looked searchingly about, trying to soak up clear last impressions. We had, of course, been lucky in the weather and other ways which allowed us to see so much yet could not but have some regrets at the relatively short time we had had in the south. Passed Perpendicular Head at 0950 and Cape Bennett at 1010. There was a considerable swell from SSE but little wind in the lee of the cliffs. Further north we again had a moderate SW wind and the weather cleared up to a bright day.

We kept close inshore but did not go into Waterfall Inlet, turning first into McLennan at whose head we stopped at about 1130 in a great basin enclosing nearly two-thirds of a circle, with tiered bluffs of 400 ft or so. There were catpaws only of wind and, with 15 fathoms' depth, anchoring would have been laborious so we simply stopped engines. A fine waterfall drops from a western gap in the bluffs and a second fall on the north cuts down obliquely along a fault. The shores are generally rather easy and heavily bushed with rata, rising to the bluffs above; many sooty albatross wheeling about these and the only sound that of the two falls and the single, rather wild, cries of the sootys. It was overcast again at this stage so we left, at about 1220, with an impression of grey grandeur.

Then into Worth Inlet, rather short and without any special feature to leave an impression. Left the head of Worth at 1300 and we turned at the head of Deep Inlet at 1410. This again had no particular interest but the rata was very fine and we saw a few - and my first on the Auckland Is - tree ferns in the flourishing coastal bush. Hanfield Inlet, next north, we knew by repute to be beautiful and it did not disappoint us. We left North Arm, short and running into a long easy valley, to starboard and passed through the narrows by Middle Head with great cliffs and a fine waterfall in a notch in the southern shoreline. The rata, under the bluffs and growing robustly up all but the sheer rock faces, was a fine sight and much of it in flower and as the sun had now come through again we saw the Inlet at its best. The head of South Arm was hidden until we turned the next corner but it was equally beautiful, a steep bluffed shoreline heavily bushed, a fall coming down from the high hanging valley beyond, and at the head two small islets overhung with dracophyllum and rata reflected in the very clear, calm water, and a pebble beach behind. This was too attractive to leave and we anchored at 1522, various boatloads going ashore, circumnavigating the islets and exploring up the stream under the trees while the more sedate had afternoon tea on board. We only left, reluctantly and after the sun had clouded over once again, at 1635. At the entrance we set course for Kekeno Point having reached Norman Inlet where we had stopped on the way south, and at 1720 we were off Shag Rock.

Hereabouts we made some diversions to let Mike photograph large rafts of shags and sooty shearwaters. Then a little later we saw, a hundred yards or so away, two fins: they seemed to be about 10 ft apart and of the form and attitude which I believe is typical of basking shark. The leading fin was rather rounded and the other tapering and raked. We closed him, of course, but without any sign of alarm he



'St Michael' at head of Hanfield Inlet, 24 January 1973

quietly kept clear and before long disappeared; we never got near enough to see clearly what he was.

The afternoon was now grey and the wind dropping right off but the whole main island, tops as well, was very clear, our first real overall view of it from seaward. Eastward the sky was clear but with that difficult-to-define oceanic look about it. This is, indeed, characteristic in our experience: in clear weather when one had a seaward view one was very aware that, large as is the island group, it makes only a small stir in the passing sweep of the weather and the sea.

We picked up a strong northgoing tidal stream as we approached Kekeno Point and swept past it in fine style at 1835 so that we were in Ranui Cove by 1910. Here we put Ron, Mike, Brian and Rod ashore with their gear; we were sorry to come to the end of this week of particularly close companionship with these four.

There was now a little rain and the Cove was rather restless with lops from the morning's SE wind so we left again at 1925 and after some discussion as to whether to anchor in Lindley Cove or Erebus Cove chose the latter and anchored there at 2005. Wind light W, some showers, and overcast at about 2500 ft. At 2200 it was nearly calm and the rain was over; barometer 31.26 in.

***Thursday
25 January***

It was apparent when we woke that Erebus Cove had been the wrong choice, for there was a moderate NNE wind - an unusual direction - blowing right into the Cove. Still overcast and steady rain developed during the morning. We had a late breakfast and at 1145, having

become tired of the lop, got under way and moved round to Lindley Cove where we anchored again at 1205 and set about various jobs as we felt inclined. Barometer was 30.81 in. at noon.

However, from early afternoon the day decided to clear up, the wind veering to light SE, rain retreating to the hills and a fine-looking clearing to the north and east. We had missed the morning radio schedule with Ranui and, unwilling to lose a good afternoon, we weighed at 1530 and steamed down to Ranui Cove, Enderby and Ewing in sun and Ranui too from time to time. We anchored there at 1605 and found them all at work on a variety of chores. We had noticed that Dundas I. looked quiet, and when I suggested that we have a look at it, the idea was welcomed and we left accordingly at 1700 with the Wildlife dinghy in tow. John decided to stay behind and make an overland visit to Crozier Point.

We were off Dundas at 1745, the wind now light SW and a fine afternoon and anchored just north of the Island, after watching the swell breaking on it for a time. While the northern approach seems to be the best it is still rather shoal so we were perhaps 200 yards off, the bottom clear so that we were able to put the anchor into a patch of sand. The landing looked reasonable; Nicholas, Sam, and Mike decided to stay on board so Brian, Ron, Rod and I went off in the Wildlife dinghy. After watching the break on the rock-shelf of the northern shore for a while, with some coming and going to find what seemed to be the best place, we ran in and landed comfortably on the shelf, which is heavily padded with bull kelp. What Brian and I did not then notice, which was careless of us, was that it was slack water in the Kekeno Point channel; it did just cross my mind that our landing was in a rather narrow quiet belt between heavier breakers! We dragged the dinghy well up on to the wide intertidal rock-shelf and set off to look round, the late afternoon sun slanting down in golden light.

Dundas is a curious little island which I described when we first visited it on 26 December. It is quite shoal well offshore except to the north and, outside the reefs, to the south-west. To the north-east and east and to the south the two long bouldery spits run well out; elsewhere scattered reefs break in the swell. We found a large population of sea lions, I suppose several hundred, and many pups old enough by this time to form their own groups away from the adults on the beaches. And there were many corpses in the mud-wallows - I saw six together in one place - as the pups presumably cannot swim at this age and once in cannot get out up the steep sides.

We caught and banded several giant petrel and chicks, a little tricky as they took cover in the central hebe and tussock tangle where they had virtually a system of tunnels to escape into. Then we rescued a pup struggling in a mud-wallow, also tricky as he naturally did not see the point of our efforts and was very muddy and slippery. Then I stayed behind to wait for a few minutes for a slant of sun so that I could get a photograph or two.

Whether this delay was the last straw or not I am not sure, but by the time I joined the others back at the dinghy they were looking glumly at our landing shelf and a succession of all-too-large breakers which were assaulting it. It then occurred to us that with the change of tidal stream had come this change in the pattern of breakers, an interesting but

belated observation! However, we decided to give it a try and, dragging the dinghy down, made everything ready to go off. Looking back on it we made two more mistakes: in going off in one load, and in not having two pairs of oars out. We got off the shelf with all on board and then things began to happen fast: first we met two big seas which pushed us back into the kelp where Brian could get no purchase with his oars; I was forward and was just dragging out a second pair when the next big one broke over us and threw us back on to the rock-shelf edge, stoving-in planks on the port quarter, breaking an oar and filling the boat. It was obvious what had to be done and in seconds we were out, Brian chest-deep astern, Rod and Ron on to the rock-shelf each side and I on to the shelf with the painter. After ten minutes of exhausting heaving we had managed to get the full boat up on to the shelf where she was no longer being battered.

Then we took stock, after waving to 'St Michael' to show we were all in one piece; all wet (but not cold - far from it!), and collected the gear together. My camera and telephoto lenses were in a plastic bag under my parka and I got them out expecting the worst: they had got no more than a little wet and I restored them, where they should have been from the first, in Rod's rucksack. We carted the gear up to the boulder beach at the back of the rock-shelf then humped the dinghy up and stowed it all safe, the sea lions a nuisance but easily driven off although the sea bears here seemed more determined. At this stage we were all thinking a little gloomily that it was not much of a place to have to spend the night, but without saying this we moved round the western point to the SW beach and spent some time watching the breakers there. They came round in a sweep from both south and north and crossed, somewhat attenuated, over several small reefs of rock off the beach, the furthest perhaps 100 yards offshore. The wind was now SW moderate to fresh and there was a northgoing tidal stream of 2½ knots or so.

After watching this and considering possibilities we decided it was reasonably worth a try and accordingly waved to 'St Michael', Nicholas bringing her round well off the beach because of the shoal water and Sam bringing 'Bosky' in. He stood off - and this was the difficulty as the larger breakers started well out - and with guidance from us and well-judged skill brought her in without disaster, though he had to swing round twice to meet overtaking breakers. They had not been able to see from on board just what was happening as we had been hidden by the breakers, and they then saw only three figures on the rock-shelf so were considerably relieved when Brian also popped up once we got the boat on to the shelf.

So Rod and I went off first with Sam, some lively moments keeping clear of the reefs and meeting breakers, and a hard pull out to the ship, then I took the dinghy back and brought off Ron and Brian. As we headed back for Ranui Cove at 2000 we warmed ourselves in the engineroom and Sam produced hot soup, and we were thankful to have got out of our home-made mess so lightly. It was as well that there was a strong party left in 'St Michael'. We decided that this must have been the first shipwreck in the Auckland Islands since the 'Dundonald' in 1907!

We anchored in Ranui Cove at 2050 and all went ashore for a meal with them, and to rinse out clothes and leave them in the convenient botanical drying-room overnight. I had a careful clean-up of camera and lenses and Mike cast an expert eye over them and pronounced all well, which was a relief to me. With one thing and another it was late by the time we returned on board and as there was a restless roll coming into the cove we got under way at 2320 for Lindley Cove. It was marvellously glass-calm in Port Ross on our way across, the moon trying to come through the cloud and a good deal of late evening light still in the sky. We anchored in Lindley Cove at midnight, a SW air having come up, the sky partly cloudy and barometer 31.05 in.

Friday
26 January

A light SW wind this morning with a partly overcast sky; barometer 31.10 in. at 0745. We moved off for Ranui Cove at 0950 and anchoring there at 1020 went ashore to consult about salvage. Clearly we should take the first opportunity to get the boat off, both for everyone's peace of mind and because she would be wanted for unloading 'Acheron', due on 28th. We had looked carefully at Dundas as we came in and thought it seemed quiet. With slack water (low) at about 1300, conditions looked right so we set off at 1150 with, this time, a properly considered plan. Anchored off the NW end of Dundas at 1200. Four of us would have to go ashore to handle the dinghy. We would get all the heavy gear off first in 'Bosky', and caulk up the stove-in planks temporarily with rag before launching the dinghy. So with just shorts under our parkas (it sounds chilly but was fine if one did not have to stand about) and arrangements made, Brian and I went off first with Sam and landed, on the same rock-shelf as before, without any difficulty. Then we sent off the outboard and fuel-tank and while Sam brought Ron and Rod ashore Brian and I did a caulking job on the dinghy. The four of us dragged her down and, with Sam and me towing, Brian was launched by the other two and we pulled her clear; the caulking worked so Sam went back for the others, who looked very shipwrecked, standing forlornly in the surge on the edge of the rock-shelf. And by 1230 we were under way again with the two dinghies in tow. We anchored in Ranui Cove at 1320.

So that was Dundas I.: rather too short an observing visit and on our return we were concentrating on salvage. I think Dundas must be an awkward place for landing, at any time. Our two abortive efforts and then the 'wreck' showed that conditions are not often as good as one would like, since swell from any direction between NNE and SSE must be expected to affect landings. The other difficulties are the shallow approaches and the rough beaches; even our rock-shelf, well padded with bull kelp, had a shallow approach so that the swell broke out from it instead of merely on it, and the beaches were all shoal and rocky well out.

Nicholas started in on the Wildlife dinghy in the afternoon. We dismantled an expedition packing case of resin-bonded ply to make tingles, found 'St Michael's' stock of copper nails, and the Ranuis produced some tins of old paint and plenty of calico. Nicholas cut and fitted tingles - eight or ten of them outside and some in - over the broken planks; the dinghy is clinker-built of kauri which had shattered

in the way it will when rather dry so the repair was a matter of providing something by which the pieces could be held. He assembled the tingles over calico soaked in paint, messy but effective, and clenched the nails through.

We had a meal with the Ranuis and worked again on the boat while the light lasted, then out to 'St Michael', spending the night in the Cove, which was quiet. There was an hilarious radio schedule at 1930 with 'Acheron', which had left Dunedin this day, in which Brian told Alex about our landing on Dundas and managed to sidestep very neatly any giving-away of the shipwreck. Then he talked to Enderby and as Basil had seen, in the distance and with interest, things going on at Dundas during the last two days, while Alex would of course hear the conversation, Brian again managed to avoid any direct mention of our mistake by some obscure double-talking. Not that we minded Alex knowing, but his mildly avuncular prudence left us with a slight addition to our feeling that we should not have got into this trouble. And pulling his leg about it (and I still do not know how much he guessed or found out) had a savour of its own. So that when someone produced spray-on paint in white and red, intended but never used for bird-marking, Nicholas finished off his workmanlike repair with paint in a way which needed a very close look before the patches were apparent.

By 2230 the wind had dropped to light west, partly cloudy with some showers, and barometer 30.74 in.

*Saturday 27
January*

Nicholas and I were woken by dinghy noises and came out to find - a yacht lying astern of us! Sam and John were on board and she turned out to be the sloop 'Maraval' from Dunedin, Neil Brown owner and builder, with Bob Cunninghame, Jim Wakelin, and Mervyn Reid as crew. She had arrived in Sandy Bay at 2100 the evening before and had moved over to Ranui Cove at 0530 when the wind came up and made the Bay uncomfortable.

There was a fresh to strong SW wind with barometer 30.63 in., the day mostly fine but cold with passing heavy rain or hail showers. We found out more about 'Maraval' when John and Sam returned: she had been to the Auckland Is before, in 1969, and a short account had appeared in one of the mountaineering periodicals. On her way south this time they had had a lively passage of 7 days from Dunedin during which she was twice hove-to.

Nicholas stayed at Ranui to finish off the dinghy when at 0930 John, Sam, and I got under way with Mike Soper, who was moving to Enderby for a few days. There was a high concentration of sea lions on Sandy Bay beach which would be awkward with Mike's gear to handle and there was some surf too. So Sam at 1025 landed the gear at the 'wharf', access to which was also restricted by sea lions so that Basil and Judy had to haul the gear up the 20 ft cliff. This was awkward at first as they were unused to this sort of thing and Sam could only advise from the foot of the cliff. Eventually John landed Mike in the middle of the beach where unencumbered he had no sea lion worries, and when he reached the clifftop the job was quickly

done. This, though we did not realise it, was our farewell to Mike, who was on Enderby still when we left and whom we did not see on our subsequent visits there. I think we had all come to appreciate his quiet slightly sardonic humour, his ready efficiency with all sorts of jobs, and his deep and unobtrusive knowledge of birds and plants. I had had a quiet walk with him up to Observation Hill behind Ranui Cove while Nicholas was at work on the dinghy the day before and we had found orchids and other plants some of which I collected with Mike's encouragement.

Left Sandy Bay at 1040 in what was by this time a strong SW wind, about force seven, with passing showers and bright sun, and we battled back to Ranui Cove through sheets of spray, anchoring again at 1105. Ashore to find Neil Brown (who is an expert electrician and runs an electrical business) at work on the Wildlife outboard which had refused to kick after being dried out from its Dundas dunking. It could not withstand his skill so, with the motor running, Ranui Cove was ready for 'Acheron's' arrival.

Brian wished to strike the Ewing I. camp, so at 1410, again leaving Nicholas ashore finishing off some work on the dinghy, we left with Brian and Rod. Hove-to off the west beach of Ewing, inside the kelp beds, at 1425 while John, Rod and Brian went ashore and John ferried off several loads. He had hard work, into the teeth of the very strong squalls, although I kept in as close as I dared; Sam handled the gear on board. I was reluctant to anchor, partly because the bottom is foul and in that strong wind we might have had trouble clearing the anchor, partly to save time. But it was a full-time job keeping the ship under command and into the eye of the wind, quite interesting: a slight misjudgement and the bow would sweep off and one had to use full helm and power to get her back, in an area restricted by kelp beds and the nearby boulder beach. The last load came off with Rod and Brian and we left at 1515, anchored again in Ranui Cove at 1530 and ferried the gear ashore.

We again had an evening and meal with the Ranuis, now reduced to three, and at 1930 talked with 'Acheron', in Port Pegasus. She had run into the sou'wester off the Nuggets (from which she normally made her departure for the Auckland Is) and having very properly decided that it was too strong, had a forty-five mile plug to windward into the shelter of Stewart I., anchoring in Port Adventure in its NE corner at 0100 that morning. Later in the day she had moved down to Port Pegasus, a coastal run in the lee of the Island. A special Port Pegasus/Auckland Is forecast from Awarua Radio at 2000 said: wind SW 35-40 knots, heavy showers with low visibility at times, seas rough to very rough, little change expected for the next 24 hours, and made it clear that they would be staying where they were for another day.

We returned on board at 2200, wind still strong SW with heavy rain or hail squalls at intervals between fair spells, and rather cold. The barometer 30.56 in.



Sandy Bay anchorage, Enderby I., 28 January 1973

Sunday
28 January

Another day of strong SW wind but easier than yesterday and with long sunny periods between squalls with heavy showers. Barometer 30.65 in. Nicholas saw some aurora streaks in the southern sky at 0300.

Water was low so at 0950 we moved over to our usual stream, towards Crozier Point and anchored at 1000 close in with the CQR ahead, nylon warp and hose ashore. Completed with water and left at 1140 anchoring, after two attempts to get hold, off the NE end of Ocean I. at 1155. We had not landed on this island, and Nicholas and I set off clockwise, John and Sam the other way, sheltering when the squalls swept over black and menacing then passed off to seaward with rainbows and sunlit anvil heads.

Ocean I. is interesting though small for it carried sheep for many years during and after the Second World War and is now recovering very fast. *Stilbocarpa polaris* and *Hebe elliptica* are both particularly prolific and large, and we had for some time been admiring in passing a small rata on the eastern end in rich flower. There are low cliffs north, east, and south, with a wide rock-shelf, partly tidal, on the eastern end and attractive rock gardens on the cliffs. The western end runs out in a boulder beach with much offlying kelp, familiar to us from our frequent use of the channel there.

We left again at 1340 and returned to anchor in Ranui at 1355, then picked up Rod at 1515 by arrangement and ran him over to Enderby to shoot some rabbits for the pot, with the influx of hungry passengers from 'Acheron' in mind. Hungry after seasickness of

course, not in any criticism of Alex's generous table! Anchored in Sandy Bay at 1545 and all went ashore. Rod disappeared eastward and I wandered round quietly on the edge of the 'pasture' watching and trying to photograph rabbits and parakeets and admiring the rata now in full flower. After about two hours Rod returned with 12 rabbits and when these had been dealt with we left at 1810 for another thrash back against the sou'wester, anchoring in Ranui Cove at 1840.

We dined again with the Ranuis and listened to Brian's radio talk with 'Acheron' still in Port Pegasus. They had had a quiet but interesting day with various parties ashore and Alex expected to get away next morning as the wind was moderating there, as it did also with us during the evening. The special forecast for Port Pegasus/Auckland Is from 2100 gave SW winds up to 40 knots moderating to 15/25 knots in the morning. Seas rough but moderating, heavy SW swell. Outlook for further 24 hours from 2100 Monday: wind turning NW up to 30 knots. Of course by this time we ourselves were beginning to be interested in the weather elsewhere.

At 2200 when we returned on board the wind was light to moderate SW with long fair intervals between showers and barometer 30.87 in.

***Monday
29 January***

A very light SW wind with fair overcast at about 1500 ft. Barometer 31.09 in. 'Acheron' was just leaving Port Pegasus when we spoke on the 0730 schedule, but Alex said he would not know until about an hour later when he cleared South Cape what the weather was like. It appeared to be moderate SW and they had some sun.

After breakfast we picked up Ron, Rod, and Brian at 0920 and left for Enderby where they had some measuring of royals to do and wanted to visit Derry Castle Reef. By this time the wind was light westerly and there were gleams of sun; we anchored in Sandy Bay at 0940 and all went ashore, the four of us with some lunch. Sam and John went off in one direction and Nicholas and I towards Butterfield Point, at first together, then he went to talk to royalty while I followed the coastal cliff along past Jerry Vantet's shag colonies, on round Butterfield Point, and out to the western end opposite Rose I. There is much to be said for going alone: although one wants to share one's finds, alone one does notice more and on this occasion I felt too that it was probably the last quiet chance to enjoy it all.

The shags were busy with large nestlings and one family, rather rashly, had found a fine site on the top of a great basalt column whose foot had slid out at the cliff base. This left a comfortable platform on the top but the whole affair looked very shaky. I found the depot signpost which we had often seen, leaning rather tiredly, from seaward. It was still readable: BOAT DEPOT 4 MILES and was much weather-worn: $\frac{3}{4}$ in. plank down to three-eighths or $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in places and presumably by wind-driven spray, rain and snow for there is no sand or loose soil thereabouts. Out on the western point there were six vociferous Antarctic terns (like our white-fronted terns with black caps, but light greyish head and breast and scarlet beak). We had become used to these on Rose and Enderby and had often looked for nests, which the birds' mounting excitement seemed to show were near, but without

finding them. This time I stood for some time watching and finally saw the nest, just a very slight hollow, in the shelter of two stones, and two khaki-green eggs speckled with brown. The camouflage was nearly perfect and it is not surprising that one needs luck, or the skill which comes with experience, to find them.

I followed the cliff-edge along north-eastward, watching the Auckland I. shags which also nest along these cliffs, a pair of sooty albatross formation-flying with wonderful combination and skill, more Antarctic terns, red-billed gulls, pipits, and an occasional giant petrel, and admiring the grim black or grey basalt cliffs with their fascinating columnar formation, and the low wave-platform below. There were several deep caves, one huge, 50 ft span and 30 ft high and going-in some unknown distance. I managed to find one easy place to get down the cliff to the low shelf ten or fifteen feet above sea-level and explored along it a little way, finding a rock pool with curious seaweeds, one in particular in bunches of stiff strands of an unusual coppery green.

Further on I was eating my trail-biscuits, chocolate and apple when Nicholas came across from inland. We found a red-billed gull with a very lively chick and in the course of photographing it I very nearly caused a tragedy by driving the chick among neighbours: there was a flaming territorial row of course and the chick got hell from everyone including its own parent who was plainly telling it not to be so crass as to trespass. The poor little wretch was pecked and bundled over but eventually got clear and back to its own ground, and I managed to get several photographs.

We headed back then as Brian wanted to go back early, across the bulbinella fields to one of Jerry's tracks down through the scrub and bush to Sandy Bay. Judy and Basil Marlow and Hugh Best gave us afternoon tea, then Nicholas and I protected each other from a quick-moving sea bear while each in turn photographed the four cubs she seemed to be looking after. Brian had appeared with Rod and Ron, and John and Sam had returned and we ferried out and got under way at 1445.

At Ranui Cove Sam and John took the others ashore at 1515 and Nicholas and I went off again, past Ewing and then south towards Dundas and out along the line of reefs to Green I. The main reason was to try to fix the position of a drying rock, quite a distance north of the rest and not shown on the chart. We managed to get a series of transit bearings and fixed its position -021° true $7\frac{1}{2}$ cables from the centre of Dundas I. The weather was very quiet and we were able to take a close look at that rather ugly area, the tidal stream setting southward across the line of reef between Dundas and Green Islands. I did not get the impression of rocks here and there as the chart shows, but of a shoal line most of the way out to Green I., the tide disturbance along the reef line being rather regular. There were large patches of bladder kelp north and north-east but not over the reef: I would think this is too wild, even for kelp, in bad weather. We should have taken the opportunity to look for and try to fix the dangerous rock eastward of Green I. but I did not think of it until later. Blanche Rock showed what I considered to be several acres of drying rock,

but it was about a mile and a half off so not altogether easy to be accurate about.

We returned inside Yule I. and east and north round Ewing I. and anchored again in Ranui at 1755. We had been asked to a rabbit dinner as had the 'Maravals' and they turned up later, having had a good day on the Hooker Hills, then on Enderby after we had left. 'Acheron' at 1930 reported all going well and Alex expected to arrive early next morning. If the weather seemed right we intended to leave that evening.

Wind light NW at 2145, partly cloudy with the upper cloud moving from WSW. Barometer 31.07 in.

Tuesday ***30 January***

Our last day at the Auckland Islands came in with a moderate NW wind and mizzling rain. Barometer 30.87 in. 'Maraval' and we, who had shared Ranui Cove, were a little lively. 'Acheron' in an 0530 schedule with Brian said she was off Bristow Rock and would be in soon after 0600 and at 0615 she appeared out of the rain between Ewing and Enderby and anchored soon afterwards.

Fortunately the wind backed to SW and the weather cleared. A busy morning followed, with 'Acheron's' and the Wildlife dinghies running a shuttle service with people and gear. We were all at work stowing, then helping ferry people ashore. I did not try to remember all the new faces but was glad to meet Ben Thorpe, Lands and Survey Reserves, again, and Rowley Taylor, DSIR ecologist, the Hornings husband and wife only three weeks from their year on the Snares, John Dugdale, and Chris Robertson, Wildlife scientist. As 'Acheron' was due to go south next morning we offered to clear her decks of a substantial load of timber for Erebus Cove. So at 1115 we went alongside and combined loading this - and as a deck cargo for 'St Michael' it looked most impressive - with filling up our tanks with 75 gallons of fuel from 'Acheron'. Cast off at 1320 and at 1340 left with Ben and Rowley for Erebus Cove where at 1420 we anchored and landed the timber, very heavy green baulks of pinus, while Rowley collected some of John Campbell's and Mike Rudge's gear. The wind was fresh WSW, barometer 31.02 in. and a fair afternoon and we left again at 1530, dropping off Rowley and Ben at the NE end of Ocean I. at 1610 so that Rowley could try out some rodent traps. Anchored again in Ranui Cove at 1625.

While we were ashore in the main hut, John looking out of the window suddenly saw a cat, tabby with a good deal of white. He was probably on his way to the rubbish pit. Much excitement during which Ron grabbed the axe and dashed out while Rod more wisely went for his rifle, but at the noise the cat of course shot off into the bush like a rocket, very much wilder than he looked.

Then we went off for an early dinner and returned on shore for Brian to take our 'Expedition' photo and to collect the mail - a considerable quantity of it, envelopes enlivened with the Auckland Island map stamp which Alex had had made and brought back with him - and to say our goodbyes. As we rowed out of the inner cove, two of the new arrivals were already at work on the beach, examining seaweeds. This had been a busy and restless day with little time to think about our

departure, but at the backs of all our minds, I suppose, were sadness to be leaving, some apprehension at the trip ahead of us, eight hundred miles of it, and underneath it all the homeward bound feeling.

At 1920 we weighed and hoisted all sail as we headed out past Ewing I. for Enderby's NE Cape, the wind moderate to fresh WSW, the evening fair but hazy. At 2000 NE Cape was abeam about a mile away, we set the log to zero, and course 335° compass for the Snares. For our plan in leaving at this time was to reach the Snares, 149 miles away, before darkness next day, so that we could at least see them although we did not intend to land. We had a lumpy swell at first from the local tide rips but this evened out as we cleared the land. In retrospect the high, rather brassy hazy sunset might have given us a clue as to what was coming, but the forecast for Foveaux Strait was reasonable and the barometer high and steady.

Homeward passage

It was quite a quiet night but for some reason I was sick, as were all but John in time. He kept to Marzine and managed very well, being the only one strong enough to run the radio schedules among other things, a tower of strength. Nicholas and Sam took the first watch and John and I followed with the middle ...

Wednesday 31 January

... and at 0600 as the wind was veering to WNW Nicholas furled the jib and mizzen followed at 0700 by the main, as the wind, moderate to light, came more ahead. At 0800 the log read 65 miles and the wind was light NW, low cloud with rather poor visibility.

During the forenoon the wind veered further and freshened steadily until by noon it was blowing strong from the north with a rising sea. It was clear that we would not make the Snares in daylight and were probably in for a real blow so we slowed to half throttle, easing the ship as the wind continued to strengthen to gale force by 1800. As the sea increased we nursed the ship along through our watches, which became rather miserable tests of endurance, the seat belts clipped round us and every now and then an anxious swing of the wheel to bring her head right on to a big breaking sea, and a sickening drop and thud as she slid over it. Watch finished, we would wait in the wheelhouse for some kind of lull then claw gingerly but quickly out and down into the after-cabin for four hours' rest.

I believe the gale was at its worst by about 2300, a steady 45 to 50 knots I thought, as there was a good deal of spindrift even before the light went, and at the height gusting up to 60 knots perhaps. After dark one had little warning of the big breaking seas and we dropped off some of them with a considerable jolt. Our state of mind may be shown by Nicholas's and my comparison of notes later: we were both wondering about the strength of the keel bolts when this kind of thing happened! But it would not have done to throttle down further for we needed the power to keep the ship properly under command. Of course she behaved, as she always does in bad conditions, magnificently and, although taking the tops off most seas, she only occasionally allowed anything heavier on deck and never enough to be alarming.

There was not much we could do about our course and distance: we stayed, nominally, on 335° and read the log but our speed over the ground must have been less than 2 knots during the worst part and, going over distances in my head I decided that there was no danger of our meeting the Snares before daylight.

Thursday 1 February

After midnight the wind started to moderate and back and at 0200 we altered course to 020°, the log reading 132 miles, this being the course for Stewart I. from the Snares, as I considered we had run our distance: we thought that we were certainly further than the log showed but wrongly as it turned out. Nicholas and Sam, about the middle of their

middle watch, noticed an easing of the sea for a time and presumably we were then in the lee of the Snares. When John and I came on at 0400 it was beginning to lighten and the wind was much easier; as soon as we could see well, at 0420, we increased to full speed again. There was a big swell but a clear horizon and we both spent much time looking all round for a glimpse of the Snares, with never a sight of them. In fact, although it was clear, from a small ship with a brief view only from the top of a bigger sea, it is not easy to sight anything, as one can only glimpse a small part of the horizon each time. Working back on course and time from our later landfall it seems we were about 17 miles south of the Snares at 0200 and that the easing Nicholas and Sam noticed a little later might indeed have been the lee. At 0400 the Snares were about 10 miles on our port beam, so it was not surprising that we did not see them. We averaged about 3 knots from noon Wednesday to 0200 Thursday.

The wind continued to back and the day brightened, and by 1130, the wind a moderate westerly, we set main and jib and went along in fine style. I must admit that I did not feel very strong (John was, I think, really the only one in good shape thanks to his Marzine routine, and proceeded to feed us all up), although enjoying the going and the warm sun. The log had been playing up, the bearings defective so that it tended to stick and, although we had kept an eye on it and believed that it had a reasonable ability to store up turns in its line, turns which were of course clocked up when it freed, I did not take its readings very confidently. Again, in retrospect after working back from our landfall, it seems that the log was reading quite accurately.

The day became fine with a brisk breeze from the west on our port quarter and a sparkling sea but a rather hazy horizon, and we looked in vain for the high hills of Stewart Island. At 1330, by which time I had concluded that we were too far to the eastward, we altered course to due north by compass and ten minutes later sighted, a mile or two off fine on the port bow, what I took to be the North Traps. Fifteen minutes later they were about a mile on the port beam and confirmed as the North Traps, making us about 15 miles to the SE of our intended track! We saw nothing of the South Traps, which must have been about five miles off on our starboard beam. Our course was right for Breaksea I. and we were going well, and eventually the faint blue ghosts of the Stewart I. hills appeared out of the haze. We altered course to 350° compass at 1500 and further west later as the wind allowed us, to close the coast. We had already decided, as we had a fair wind for Breaksea I. and would have had something of a plug to windward to Port Pegasus, and with the need to get to Oban or Bluff the next day to post our mail and buy fuel and stores, to forego the Port Pegasus visit. We were in good time to make Port Adventure that evening and would then have an easy run to Oban.

As we approached Breaksea I. it was clear that we had several knots of tidal current against us so that we did not round it until 1815, very close-to. This gave us 4 hours 20 min. for the 20 miles from North Trap, only 4.7 knots, so we were going uphill indeed. Then we steamed along close off Shelter Point in the quiet evening offshore wind, high cirrus banners overhead, and furled mainsail and jib as we steered a careful course between the reefs in the southern entrance

of Port Adventure. Anchored 100 yards off Salty Beach at 1910, a long stretch of white sand backed by low yellow cliffs bush-topped, bush on all sides and absolutely quiet except for a gentle surge on the sand, chattering, of parakeets perhaps?, and wekas and calls of oystercatchers. A perfect anchorage after our rough passage. We were struck at once by the variety and richness of the bush after the Aucklands, and by the difference 230 miles of nothing makes to it.

We had a good radio schedule at 1930 with Ron Nilssen at Ranui Cove and could hear 'Acheron', busy at Grafton Point taking a party off Adams I., and Basil Marlow at Enderby. It was blowing hard from the west at both ends. They had been a little concerned about us so were pleased to hear that we were in a comfortable anchorage and asked if we had any damage! Which was kind of them but suggested that they had not really looked closely at 'St Michael's' construction. After dinner - and did we enjoy it! - John and Sam put me ashore and went off fishing. I hoped to find a stream to wash in, and wandered up and down the beach, the sand squeaking under my feet, then across to look into the inner bay, Abraham's Bosom, without any luck. In the end I stripped off and had a very short sea bathe, and felt a little cleaner after it. Back on board in the last of the light and all night in, a treat after even these few days of watchkeeping.

Friday
2 February

I woke with the sun shining horizontally into a port and took a photograph of sunrise as it climbed out of the sea to the SE, a flawless morning. But my bunk was still welcome and I went back to sleep for a while. But Sam and John got up and went fishing!

We found it a fine morning with a very light NW wind and barometer 31.21 in., and talked to 'Acheron' in Carnley Harbour at 0730. After breakfast as we had time in hand and all felt dirty, we got under way at 0840 and fifteen minutes later anchored near the head of North Arm, off a small beach with a stream. All the surroundings are heavily bushed and the only disappointment, when we went ashore and found a good flow of fresh water from a pipe at the top of the beach, was the sordid fishermen's hut nearby, with dumps of broken bottles and rusty iron. How can people foul such a place?

Anyway the sun was warm and we all washed ourselves and a few clothes and ran up and down on the sand to dry off. We would have stayed but at this point decided to get our chores done in Oban and perhaps return here or find another anchorage for the night so as to see a little more of Stewart I. So we left again, feeling very clean, at 0950, passing through great flocks of sooty shearwaters fishing as we left Port Adventure. Cleared the entrance at 1020, with a solitary shag in clover in a solid mass of small fish about five feet in diameter. We had a delightful coastal run, Foveaux Strait perfect with just enough breeze to ruffle it and the far shore and scattered Islands as clear as the mountains of Stewart I. to port. I spent a good deal of the time writing letters and steering the ship, the second not very exacting. Passed a yacht running down the coast as we approached Bench I. and rounded Ackers Point inside Barclay Rock at 1220.

Halfmoon Bay was a little disconcerting with its two central rocks and its fishing boats and civilised look. 'Wairua' was alongside the wharf

with her ensign at half-mast. We looked round for somewhere to lie alongside then gave up and anchored nearby at 1245. After lunch all went ashore in 'Bosky' with our pile of mail, which we got rid of first to the very helpful Post Office, and sent off telegrams. Then Nicholas and I went off up the hill to find the policeman and tell him of our departure form left at Bluff. He was good value, had seen us coming in and was interested, tried to raise Bluff on his radio without success but would tell them later, took our particulars and plans, and told us of David Lewis' safe arrival at Scott Base after his wild journey, and of his visit to Oban and an unimaginative Customs man the policeman had had to deal with over that visit. He also told us 'Wairua's' half-mast was for the kindly shipkeeper who had looked after us in Bluff on our way south and had just died - sad news.

Then we found John and Sam, bought some fruit and vegetables and films, and after some difficulty found, down at the wharf, someone who knew about fuel. 'Wairua' had left so we returned to 'St Michael' to bring her alongside and found the anchor foul of something awkward. We could see the bottom but not in enough detail to make out what the trouble was, and two elderly fishermen working on a fine old launch, beautifully kept, nearby assured us there were no moorings there. So we hove up taut and pushed and pulled from every quarter of the compass until finally it came clear, with a somewhat chafed and rusty-looking length of warp just above the chain.

Took on 49 gallons of fuel, inners only, between 1500 and 1600 then left. We had decided, first to return by way of the West Coast, although we were light on detail charts and could not get any until Monday, hardly worth waiting for; second, to go on at once and take advantage of the fine weather. The West Coast would give us a much better prospect of a fair wind, even NW being only just before the beam, while the East Coast is liable to produce nor'easters at this time of year. Besides, we all wanted to see Dusky Sound and should have time for two days there and still be back in Wellington by the end of the week.

So the afternoon found us heading NW along the shore, a hot afternoon more like Tasman Bay and really summery after the Auckland Islands. Mt Anglem towered over us as we rounded Saddle Point and its high fell-fields looked fascinating, their colour unusual and, knowing a little about their plants, one longed for a closer look. We were making good progress with a fair tide, and rounding Black Rock Point half a mile off at 1830 set the log at 92.3 miles and the course 270° compass. There were light airs only with a high cirrus overcast spreading from the west and a SW swell, becoming large as we cleared the land, and steep and occasionally breaking as it met the west-going tidal stream out of Foveaux Strait. The western side of the Island reminded me of 1959, a vista of steep and rugged coast and islands partly lost in heavy breaker haze, a wild and daunting sight. The evening forecast confirmed what I judged the sky to show: fair weather still. I managed a reasonable radio schedule with Ron Nilssen again at Ranui Cove and heard Alex Black and Brian also down at Carnley Harbour. They had had a good day up on the eastern end of Adams I. and had found royal albatross nesting there; I thought

several hundred were mentioned, but we were more exposed to interference than down south and I could not be sure. Anyway an exciting find: rediscovery I gathered later of a rookery known long before.

John and I had the first watch and ran towards a lovely sunset, slowly leaving the steeper breaking swells as we cleared the Strait and enjoying for twenty minutes or so multiple sunsets as the sun dropped behind an approaching swell then rose again. And the rest of our watch was lovely too, mild and starlit, not too much tiring tossing about, the loom of the land on the starboard bow, Centre I. light on the starboard quarter, and westward distant lightning flashing below the horizon. Later we had an escort of about ten dolphins leaving magnificent phosphorescent wakes and themselves outlined in every detail. And from time to time they, or the ship, would trigger off a glowing mass of brilliant light which dropped astern slowly fading out, I believe pyrosoma, a colony of salp-like animals which may be quite large, several feet in length in the tropics. These seemed to be a foot or so long and remained bright for 20 or 30 seconds.

Saturday
3 February

When Nicholas and Sam took over the middle watch, in time to see the dolphins, I was rash enough to say I really rather envied them. For I woke up later to find the ship plunging in short thumps into a rising head sea. This was the nor'wester that was forecast, but it went on to blow up into a gale which was not forecast. Nicholas sighted Puysegur Point light off the starboard bow at 0230 and by the time John and I came on watch again Nicholas had reduced speed, as the ship was thumping more heavily and it was blowing hard and still freshening. At 0410 Puysegur Light bore about 325° compass, log reading 150 miles and we altered course to 295°. The distant lightning had come down with the wind and there was a spectacular display as the dawn broke. I thought it was blowing close to 50 knots by this time, and we slowly crept up to Puysegur Point, its line of houses so exposed on the spur behind the lighthouse and the gale driving the seas on to the savage coast. I think we were doing less than three knots over the ground although I had increased to full speed again, concerned that heavy rain seemed to be on the way and wishing to keep in touch with our landfall in case it became thick. Puysegur Point was at last abeam at 0635. We wanted to get into shelter as soon as might be but I did not think the passage south of Coal I. reasonable in those conditions with the small-scale chart we had, so we continued our crawl past the cliffs of Coal I., the engines labouring as the squalls pushed at us. Eventually we drew in to the lee of Gulches Head and at 0810 took in the log, reading 162.5 miles, off Welcome Bay.

We had some discussion here about an anchorage: fortunately the view, not at that stage mine, that we should go further in to a sheltered anchorage, prevailed and we steamed up the northern shore of the Inlet, while in a brief clearance the clouds opened to a superb towering thunderhead brilliant in the early sun. At 0840 we anchored in a rocky cove at the head of Brokenshore Bay, in a really sheltered corner. It was just as well, for heavy rain developed and though the wind did not drop we had a quiet day and on the whole a lazy one. Sam

and I went ashore later in the morning and while I investigated the local stream Sam explored in the dinghy. The stream dropped straight into the cove so I climbed up a little way and found a very satisfactory pool where I bathed first then washed some clothes. In the afternoon (I was asleep) a friendly fisherman proposed coming alongside but was discouraged tactfully and anchored quite happily nearby.

We had forgotten that with engines working hard and the ship battened down at sea in nor'westerly weather the atmosphere in the wheelhouse becomes quite sticky. We were not yet used to the mild north! The forecast that night was for continued NW winds, moderate to fresh with light rain but moderating and becoming fair. In the evening we had our final, incomplete because of interference, radio schedule with Ranui Cove and at least Ron heard that we had got as far as Preservation Inlet.

Sunday
4 February

There was heavy rain overnight but the morning, showery at first, cleared to fine with a moderate to fresh NW wind. We could hear Camp Cove and 'Acheron' on the morning schedule, and their good wishes, but could not get through to them. We weighed at 0935 and on the way out, past the dramatic bush-covered shattered rocks of Cavern Head, looked rather gingerly into the little bay, rock-strewn but with a sandy beach, behind Spit I. Then round Gulches Head at 1105 and across to the shore of Chalky I. and along Great I. where at 1210 we were spoken by the fishing launch 'Hananui' of Bluff, well-kept and workmanlike. Did we know our way into North Port? If not she would lead us.

However, we had come to look again at 'Stella', ex-Government lighthouse ship under Captain Fairchild and, when paid off, a refrigerated store for blue cod in North Harbour. She now lies on the bottom but her lean hull and fine clipper bow and counter stern are worth seeing still. We wandered round and took photographs after anchoring near her at 1250 and Nicholas and I collected some large pieces of teak hatch-coaming from her bridge deck and some hardwood rubbing pieces from her bow. There were a number of fishing boats anchored in pairs and we watched with admiration the casual skill with which 'Hananui' was berthed. They gave us a large groper and would accept nothing in return. We had hoped to meet 'Munida', the Portobello Marine Research Station's ship skippered by Bill Tubman whom Alex had told us to look out for, but we were told she was off somewhere else.

After lunch we left again at 1410, going down through North Port and out to Cape Providence, taking a wide sweep to seaward to clear the offlying reefs where another fishing boat was setting pots. Chalky I. from this side made a very fair copy of Alum Bay in the Isle of Wight, and I took a photograph, thinking of Tony Shearman. At 1530 we were abeam of the offlying rocks and turned up the coast. The wind was quite strong so we had a steady plug up the coast but progress was reasonable and interesting until we were off West Cape at 1625, when it closed in to about a mile or a little more visibility. This was just enough to let me keep the shore in view without having to go too close to that wild and breaker-swept coast and at 1740 we rounded

South Point Dusky Sound. Our progress seemed very slow up the Sound presumably because of an outgoing fresh or tidal stream, and the small-scale chart did not help much to freshen Nicholas's and my recollection of the entrance to Pickersgill Harbour. However, the entrance, that very narrow rocky channel west of Crayfish I., eventually opened up and Sam and John were duly impressed by our turning into it at 2010 without reducing speed, like a car turning up a drive. We rounded-to at 2025 in 'Resolution's' cove and with some trouble got the fisherman anchor settled on the rocks ahead and the CQR astern 'Resolution' was first here almost exactly 200 years ago, on 28 March 1773.

Our run from Cape Providence to Pickersgill Harbour, about 19 miles, had taken us over 4½ hours, less than 4 knots over the ground so we must have had a substantial south-running coastal set. The rain lifted and eased occasionally but the Harbour was gloomy, though our dinner, magnificent fresh proper steaks, was not!

Before I went to sleep I heard the rising whistle of a kiwi ashore and next morning ...

Monday
5 February

... I was wakened by a long-tailed cuckoo not far off, a strong throbbing passionate sound very different from the more distant and rather eerie night whistle we hear at York Bay. The morning was grey, cloud low and at first mizzling rain but better later. We explored the cove and examined the simple plaque on Astronomer's Point put up since our last visit. Ashore we looked carefully for the stumps of trees cut down in 1773 to make a clearing for the astronomical work and found by the Beggs, but without being very sure of what we did find. Nicholas and I both collected some small plants, including *Olearia oporina*, and these are growing well.

At 1145 we left for the inner Sound and as drinking water was below half (27 gallons left) found at 1230 a rock face and lay alongside it while Sam scrambled up to a point where he could anchor the hose in the stream. Left again at 1345 and steamed on through the long narrow channel south of Long I., past the line of almost identical spurs on the south shore. We looked into Fanny Bay and up at the fine peak of Mt Burnett, now clearing, then at 1700 stopped off a wide delta on the south shore near Nine Fathoms Passage. The delta had recently had a major flood over it; we put 'St Michael's' fore-foot against a soft part of the delta edge and carried the anchor ashore while we explored and picked up interesting stones. John and Sam found traces of an old camp and unearthened part of a clay pipe and of an earthenware bottle - a schnapps bottle perhaps? - both obviously very old.

Under way again at 1740 and through Nine Fathoms Passage, with two rocky islets in it and a knot or two of westward set and a fine rock face to starboard. The head of Dusky ran away into the steep bush country eastward but we felt, with an early start next day in mind, that we should find an anchorage, so turned back round the north shore of Cooper I. We picked our way through Shag Islands and opened up the entrance to Sportsman's Cove: its extreme narrowness and overhanging trees brought a gratifying reaction from Sam and John, as did the spacious quietness inside, the surrounding bush overtopped

by mountain peaks north and south. We anchored at 1910 and set about getting a meal and putting the ship to rights for the passage north, and plotting courses and distances. The forecast that night spoke of decreasing westerlies becoming variable down as far as Cape Foulwind, variable light to moderate winds with areas of fog and rain down to Milford, and the outlook for 25 knot northerlies in the south but otherwise little change.

Tuesday
6 February

We were under way at 0445, just light though as it was a rather gloomy morning of low cloud all we could see was the silhouette of the surrounding hills and light reflected on the calm water of the Cove. We went dead slow towards the silhouetted notch which we knew marked the entrance, using a powerful torch occasionally to see that we were not too close to the rocks, and almost literally felt our way out through the entrance channel. It was a relief to be able to see where we were outside and to set a course for Passage Point and the entrance to Acheron Passage.

The others turned in again and rain came, heavy as we passed the entrance to Wet Jacket Arm. I was keeping a normal, rather casual, lookout ahead when at 0605 I suddenly saw, fifty yards off to starboard, two great logs. The larger was 20 to 25 feet long and 3 feet or so in diameter, the other not so big, but both were nearly awash, quite fresh with bark on them and the kind of company one did not relish at all. My lookout became much less casual! There were heavy rain showers still and at 0645 we hove-to just south of Occasional Cove on Resolution I. at the northern end of Acheron Passage to have breakfast, and to oil round the engines and grease the steering-gear and stern-tubes.

Under way again at 0740 and a very expensive-looking light alloy fast fishing launch passed ahead of us inward bound for an anchorage behind Harbour I. There was a certain amount of nor'west sea and moderate wind outside; we streamed the log, reading 66 miles, off the north end of Breaksea I. at 0830 and set course 311° compass to clear the land, altering to 000° at 0855 log 68 miles.

This was the start of a frustrating day on which we had set out with the long West Coast passage in view. But progress, into a fresh head wind and uncomfortably substantial head sea, was slow. At 1015, log reading 75 miles, we were off what I took to be Coal River. The coast is very steep-to here, running up in steep bush-covered faces from the narrow rocky beaches on which the SW swell and NW sea broke heavily; white threads of rain-swelled streams laced the steep bush which disappeared into mist. Visibility was good at first and at 1235, log 88 miles, we were off the north point of Daggas Sound, and at 1300 off Peninsula Point, but thereafter it became progressively more foggy. I kept the shore just in view, a ghostly loom of hillside and glimpses of black rocks and surf.

We ran into very brown water with many small logs and branches, clearly fresh flood-water and equally clearly setting strongly down the coast, and after a time saw off to port a sharp line with clear blue-green water beyond. Thinking that we might find less current against us we crossed over, at about 1400, through a lively area of rip at the

interface, into the clear water and followed the line for a time as it was more or less parallel to the coast. But this took us out of sight, such as it was, of the shore, so at 1410 we altered back across the tide-line on to a NE course, and at 1420 sighted what I reckoned to be Febrero Point, at the southern entrance to Doubtful Sound. Ten minutes later the Hare's Ears, unmistakeable, appeared. Our progress was so slow and unsatisfactory that we decided to take the hint, turn into Doubtful Sound, and go round Secretary I. But the Sound did not take kindly to this: it was another 40 minutes before the Hare's Ears were abeam with the log reading 102 miles, and the fresh brown water poured out of the Sound like a river at four to four and a half knots. Then the fog lifted so that we could see right up the Sound and much of Secretary I. beyond Bauza I., with a fishing boat or two working. To seaward the sun tried to break through the fog, as thick as ever.

We left Bauza I. to port and steamed across to Common Head, passing several trots of fishing boats anchored in Grono Bay and followed up by another, and turned into Thompson Sound. Here the wind was fresh again and after some discussion we decided to stop in Deas Cove, which we knew from the 1959 trip, and wait until the forecast cold front arrived: progress under present conditions was just too unrewarding. Deas Cove, which is restricted by mudbanks on its eastern side and at its head, looked rather crowded. One large vessel had several smaller fishing boats alongside, there was a second trot close by, and another boat was lying on the mudflat under repair. The 'mother ship' to the trot of 25 ft steel boats looked very familiar with her Norwegian-style bow and powerful hull and we suddenly realised she was 'Ranui', which had served the wartime coastwatchers at the Auckland Islands and given her name to Ranui Cove. And one of the steel boats alongside was called 'Acheron'; we regretted that we no longer had radio contact with the Auckland Islanders so that we could surprise them by saying we were in Deas Cove, lying alongside 'Ranui', with 'Acheron' astern. For the fishermen appeared as we came up in pouring rain and offered us a berth which we were glad to have: there was no room elsewhere to swing and we were saved anchor work; we secured alongside at 1740.

From Breaksea I. to Hare's Ears is 19.4 miles; we had taken 6 hours 40 min., giving 2.9 knots over the ground and the log showed 36 miles, 5.4 knots through the water, so the hill we were climbing was indeed steep! I believe it was mostly flood-water and of course Doubtful Sound does now take, from Manapouri, a considerable flow in addition to its natural drainage. 'Ranui's' three fishermen: two young men whose names I have forgotten, and Alan Hill, skipper of 'Ranui' and owner, I think, of the 25 ft 'Acheron' DN 186, made us welcome and we spent part of the evening with them in 'Ranui's' large fo'c'sle. Fishing poor this season with small catches of crays and too much bad weather. The other two were apparently deeply mortgaged, one of the big companies virtually owning their boat which, it appeared, they saw little prospect of paying off. Alan was, we gathered, making ends meet but had not been back to his home in Bluff since before we were there on our way south and with a house in that town which would not sell had little chance of moving elsewhere. Altogether, on a wet blustery evening in Thompson Sound, a depressing story. We did our

best to persuade them to take some of our ample stores but they would not take anything.

Wednesday
7 February

Much rain overnight and the nor'wester evidently still blowing though Alan said that they found it very difficult to judge what it was like outside. We spent a quiet, rather lazy, morning, a good deal of it yawning with Alan over coffee. The forecast seemed hopeful, the long-awaited front now being quite near and when the weather cleared soon after noon it really looked as if it had arrived. Alan was going out after lunch to look at his pots and we left, too, having squared the ship up, at 1355, hoisting mains'l and jib as we went out through the nearly windless Thompson Sound in company with 'Acheron'.

But outside it was southerly all right and our sails began to draw. Alan Hill left us to work inshore to the northward; a sobering sight it was to see his little ship seemingly in the breakers from our viewpoint, against that savage coast, but it was very clear that he knew what he was about. We had the north entrance point of Thompson Sound abeam at 1425, the log reading 105 miles and our course 340° compass to give us an offing; there was plenty of wind and it was freshening. At 1500 we altered course to 016° compass (courses will all be compass courses in what follows) and, as this brought the wind astern, we took in the jib and set the genoa as spinnaker goose-winged with the main, both with fore-guys and preventer lashings to hold down the booms.

This was more like it and we really began to move at last, ticking off the Sounds as we passed and exhilarated by the going and our progress as the mileage mounted. I needed a boost, for my back, which I had cricked mildly when restowing the main after we entered Preservation Inlet, had begun to be a nuisance, and this lively going, although it made steering hard work, cheered us all.

At 1620 Caswell Sound was abeam, log 117 miles and we set course 019°, a course we should hold to Cape Foulwind. The wind was SSW strong, perhaps 40 knots but the sea still moderate; spindrift blew away steadily from our forefoot and we were glad of the strong sails and gear so that running, at least, we need not worry. George Sound, log 132.5 miles, was abeam at 1825 and at about 2015, log about 144, Poison Bay was abeam. The light was now going but I hoped for a reasonable last check off Milford Sound and was still just able to see Mitre Peak when it came into transit with St Anne's Point at 2145, the log reading 156 miles which gave us a speed of just short of 7 knots from our departure off Thompson Sound. And on we ran, the sea building up and the ship swinging 30° each side of the course so that even 'St Michael's' easy steering became tiring.

Thursday
8 February

And still we ran on without any slowing. At 0800 the wind was still SSW right astern and strong and the morning was fine. The following sea was now large: she would drag a little as the stern dropped and the engines slowed then the big overtaking sea would rear up past the stern and the ship pick up speed and foam along with her bow-wave

and the breaking sea spread out abeam. After an exciting juggle with the wheel (needing a strong arm) to keep her running true, the light-load engine sound would drop a little as the sea passed ahead and then the same thing again, though never quite the same. And so on, hour after hour, watch after watch, magnificent going.

We emptied the starboard inner tank during the forenoon and opened the cross-connection. Looking out to starboard where the coast was about 40 miles away, we could see, high up and faint through the haze, the Southern Alps. The wind and sea moderated from mid-morning and in the early afternoon we watched with interest for the log distance to come up after 24 hours: it read 281 miles at 1425, so we had covered 176 miles, seven and one third knots! At 2000 the wind was still SSW but had dropped to perhaps 25 knots and the sea had eased too so that steering was no longer such an effort. At 2145, 24 hours from Milford Sound, the log read 333 miles making 177 miles, another gratifying run. We altered course to 030° at 2200, for reasons not logged, but I must have considered we were to the westward of our desired course.

Friday
9 February

The port inner tank was empty at about midnight and the cross-connection opened (a mundane fact to record but an important detail to remember). At 0000 the glow of three groups of lights was in sight bearing about 060° and at 0100 a further glow of lights appeared fine on the starboard bow. At this I decided we were closing the coast too quickly so we altered course to 020°. However, at 0400 I realised that the lights (which we presumed to be those of Westport and the settlements north) were still some way off and returned to 030°. This bit of rather pointless navigational juggling I am not proud of.

During the morning watch the wind had backed to just east of south and moderated and the sky was overcast with some showers. It was difficult to identify Cape Foulwind certainly for we were, after all, a good deal further offshore than intended, but I thought we had it abeam at about 0700. At 0915, as the main was by the lee, we gybed it over to port and reset the genoa/spinnaker to starboard, the first change to the sails since leaving Thompson Sound.

Then the morning cleared up and it became obvious that we were still well offshore, so at 1115 we altered course to 040° and at 1230 to 045°. The shore - steep bush-clad hills north of Karamea - was a fine sight and the Heaphy River was abeam at 1430, with the wind freshening again and veering. At 1500 we altered course to 060° to close Kahurangi Point which was about 3 miles off bearing 110° at 1555, the log reading 461 miles. It was a fine sparkling afternoon, the wind back at SSW and strong with a big and sometimes steep sea as we ran up that rather shoal coast, inside the Paturau Shoals. Altered course to 030° at 1615 and by 1740 with the Paturau Shoals abeam and the log reading 479 miles the wind was dying. That varied and interesting coast from Kahurangi Point northward looked very fine in the clear afternoon light and I remembered Jinny's and my visit there some years ago, and could see the road winding along the coastal hills. Course was changed to 035° at 1850 and to 066° at 1950. We were about 3 miles due north of Cape Farewell light at 2010 and altered

course to 060° to stay close to the Spit. The wind was now light, a fine clear evening, and a large fishing boat bound down the West Coast passed inshore of us and disappeared into the sunset. At 2100 we altered course to 075° then at 2200 to 087°, course for Stephens I. passage. Farewell Spit light, sweeping its long beam round the horizon, was about 2 miles off at 2230 with the log reading 507 miles.

This is the point, perhaps, to record that from the northern entrance of Thompson Sound to Kahurangi Point we had covered 356 miles by log in 49½ hours, an average of nearly 7.2 knots through the water, a magnificent run and certainly the best long run 'St Michael' has made. The actual chart distance is 348 miles so that our speed over the ground was just over 7 knots.

As night came on a number of large lights, beyond the horizon, showed up, six or seven to the north and two or three to the north-east. These were obviously Japanese fishing boats and one light which was visible, again below the horizon as we passed Farewell Spit, was not abeam until we were nearly half-way across Tasman Bay. So they were easily visible about twenty miles off and this particular one came up over the horizon like the rising sun. It turned out to be a cluster of very powerful lights presumably for attracting fish - squid I suppose.

***Saturday
10 February***

A quiet mild night, calm sea and little wind. At 0205 Stephens I. light appeared ahead and daylight came with light variable winds and a rather grey morning with cloud over D'Urville at about 800 ft. We were off Cape Stephens at 0555, log 554 miles, and at 0650 with Jag Rocks close abeam the log read 560 miles and we altered to 122° for Cape Jackson. Once again I was amused at how short these legs of the trip seemed: the run across Tasman Bay, which on a summer holiday I tend to treat as quite a passage, was hardly an incident!

Cape Jackson Boat Passage was passed at 0930 with a fair tide, log 576.5 miles and with a freshening NW wind, main and jib were set at 1000 and Cape Koamaru passed at 1035 log 584 miles, course being altered to 140° for Karori Rock. The Brothers were abeam at 1110 and the wind continued to freshen. We were a mile SSW of Karori Rock light at 1345 in a strong NNW wind and steep sea, for the tide had turned against us mid-morning. A Union Steamship coaster coming down on our port quarter seemed a little concerned at our unavoidably wild steering and, having hooted at us, took a seamanlike but perhaps rather pointed wide sweep to seaward as she drew slowly past. Sinclair Head produced its usual quota of wild NW squalls, and as we drove across for the entrance, gunwhale down and spray everywhere, we saw some of Wellington's keelers rounding Tarapunga in Island Bay and thrashing back for the Heads.

We entered Chaffers Passage, close-hauled, at 1530, some of the keelers beating up through the main entrance. The leader suddenly put up her helm and ran back and we then realised why: the third or fourth boat, 'Crescendo', had lost her mast. So we did a hurried stow of main and jib and roused out the manilla anchor warp as we ran down to her between Barretts Reef and Pencarrow. Two other

keelers were standing by and 'Crescendo' had the mast on board and was lashing it down. She was under power but without much in reserve and accepted our offer of a tow, so we passed the manilla over. It was smartly made fast, and we settled into harness. By this time Wellington had laid on a hard nor'wester and, although 'Crescendo' towed easily and was under power herself, it was a slow plug up the coast to Halswell. The Sea Rescue launch shot down in a cloud of spray then returned later, having satisfied herself that no lifesaving was needed, and we eventually worked round Point Halswell. In the middle of Evans Bay 'Crescendo' signalled that she could now manage and cast off at 1625 with appreciative waves: they laughed when we told them how long we had been away!

So it came about that our course back to York Bay was from the westward not from the south, and we moored at 1720 a little ahead of our welcome. But it organised itself very quickly and by the time we came ashore was congregated on the beach and the air was fuller of questions and chatter and kissing than Wellington Heads of spray! We ferried ashore the more perishable of our treasures, and the more precious, the poor plants, looking battered after their tossing and salt, and dispersed homeward.



Back at York Bay, 10 February 1973

(Left) With 'Bosky', from left, John, Sam, Tudor, Nicholas and Hal

(Right) Hal and Tudor Atkinson

Appendix 1.

The motor-sailer 'St Michael'

I think many of us are interested in older vessels which have acquired some history, and have survived until today. So a short account of 'St Michael's' design and building and of her journeys seems to be timely, as it is now 43 years since she was launched.

'St Michael's' designer and builder was my uncle H.M.W. Atkinson, Hal, and her concept owes something to his experience in the first World War. He had worked his way to England in 1916 to join the Navy and was commissioned as a sub-lieutenant. His first posting was to a requisitioned Scottish herring drifter working out of Wick in the far north-east corner of Scotland. This vessel 'Crystal River', of a type known as a Zulu having been developed in the late 19th century at the time of the Zulu Wars, was about 75 feet overall, double-ended and beamy with a straight stem and heavily-raked sternpost, straight keel and heavy displacement. She had been fitted with an engine in 1906 but earlier would have had only sail, a huge dipping-lug mainsail and standing-lug mizzen, neither mast stayed.

Hal served in her for only a few months in 1916 but her behaviour so much impressed him that when he came to designing 'St Michael' in 1929 he had 'Crystal River' very much in mind. That is not to say 'St Michael' is a Scottish herring lugger design: you cannot successfully reduce a 75 footer to 31 feet, yet the characteristics remain. These are: double-ended, a straight stem and keel, outboard rudder, firm bilge, deep draught, and certainly 'St Michael's' behaviour in heavy weather shows how successfully Hal had imbibed and suitably modified the essentials.

So her particulars are: length 31 feet overall; beam 10 feet; draught aft 5 feet; displacement 10.5 tons with full fuel 200 gallons; outside ballast 2 tons.

She is ketch rigged with a small working sail area of 275 sq. ft., main and mizzen jib-headed, and a genoa headsail of 130 sq. ft. Hal had thought much about the rig: with the deep-keeled stiff hull she could stand a much larger area, but he decided to keep the rig low and handy and so more likely to be used more regularly. She has two engines, 14 HP diesels.

Construction is in kauri and Australian hardwood, planking double-diagonal in two five-eighths thicknesses, stringers 3 inch by 2 inch fore-and-aft, keel and floors in spotted gum, stem and stempost tallow wood. She was formed conventionally on eleven disposable moulds and was built in a temporary corrugated iron shed on Hal's land in York Bay. When I record that building was started in 1931 yet she was not launched until 1955 it can be seen that the temporary shed did well to survive for 24 years! When Hal had drawn the lines in 1929, wanting to make some sort of start even without money he took the two large knees which tie the stem and stem posts to the keel out of the bush behind York Bay. These were roughed out to templates from rata roots and he describes in his diary the very hard work of getting

the knees down from the bush. They were well seasoned when two years later he had them bandsawn to accurate shape.

Hal had no regular job and little money so that building 'St Michael' was an intermittent business, with interruptions to earn some money and so on. The kauri timber - about 3000 superfeet of it - was bought in Auckland in September 1931 and the Australian hardwood ordered at the same time, and all was stacked in the shed to season. Actual building - laying of the keel - began in December 1931. When the ship's framework - stem, sternpost and knees, floors and aprons - had been assembled and the moulds put in place, Hal fitted the stringers and gunwales. The hull shape made this difficult and even with steaming the twist in some stringers was particularly troublesome. However, by May 1932 'as the boys [his nephews and cousins] were on holiday, decided to begin planking'. Planks, five eighths by four inches, were steamed and bent round the hull stringers and left to 'set', without being fitted, then removed and stacked, both diagonal skins being so dealt with. Then inner skin planks were permanently fitted and faying edges planed to a close butt. There were many visitors then and throughout the building and Hal's friendliness and readiness to talk, boat building or philosophy, meant a good deal of time lost!

The inner diagonal skin had been finished by March 1933 and, after a break of a few months, fitting of the outer skin began in May. A jointing mixture devised in consultation with a paint chemist friend was applied between the diagonal skins. It consisted of: white lead one part, putty one part, red lead quarter part, and a little castor oil to make it slow drying, and planking sections removed in later repairs showed that it had remained very effective, still tough - and she has never leaked through the planking.

There was then a gap in building from May 1933 until August 1935 before construction resumed. The two diagonal skins were secured together with copper nails riveted over rooves and were through-nailed to the stringers. Hal's diary mentions 14 000 nail holes puttied and most of these would be rivets. Much of the holding-up while Hal riveted inside was done by his schoolboy nephews and cousins; the form moulds were removed progressively to make access easier for riveting. Then in April 1936 building again stopped, this time for nearly eight years, while Hal built a house and the Second World War intervened.

Before I was mobilised in the RNVR in March 1940 I had built a model of 'St Michael', one inch to one foot, decked but not rigged, and displacement and ballast to scale. Hal rigged this in his occasional spare time during the war years, ketch rig, and satisfied himself by sailing the model in York Bay that the rig was practical. And some time during the war he decided on the raised coachroof over the main cabin and engine room and over the after-cabin - the 1929 design showed a flush deck and wheelhouse only.

So in February 1944 Hal was able to start on 'St Michael' again, with the help of a new generation of schoolboys during the holidays and himself working on her only on Saturdays. The deck was to be planked double-diagonal so the first job was to shape and fit the deck

stringers, after a complicated time making the bulkheads, three full bulkheads two of which had doors. Then in July 1945 the first deck stringers were fitted and by September all were in and hatch-framing and mast-partners completed. I had returned from overseas and from November worked, mostly full time, with Hal on the deck planking until March 1946. The second skin of deck planking was laid over canvas and the two skins riveted together, Hal again having help with a variety of cousins and others - there was never a shortage of interested volunteers. In October 1946, after much investigation, Hal ordered the engines, Lister 14 HP with reverse and two-to-one reduction gears, giving a propeller speed of 600 rpm, very suitable for the fairly heavy hull.

In September 1946 my brother Nicholas returned from overseas service and worked with Hal before starting his own boat building, of rowing and sailing dinghies, mostly 10 to 12 footers, to his own design. He helped Hal from time to time, very patiently as Hal looked for perfection, trying things out often with a mockup, absorbing for him but less so for his helper. There was a four-month pause at the start of 1947 then work continued on the coachroof coamings and tops and the wheelhouse. Hal writes: 'I spent 21 hours trying to design the window details, made mockup after mockup. Extraordinarily difficult to make it look harmonious from all angles'. Then with the wheelhouse top finished, work stopped from November 1947 to August 1949.

The engines arrived in June 1949 and from September Nicholas worked, mostly full time, with Hal and construction progressed steadily with his skilled help. Hal spent much thought on the engine installation before the shaft logs could be bored; it is worth mentioning here that the engineroom is generous - some have considered it wasteful of space - but he had firm views about engine accessibility and was prepared to sacrifice some living space to that end. So work continued on the hundreds of details to be decided on and built: wheelhouse slide, guardrail and stanchions, wheelhouse door and windows, forehatch, and so on, before moving on to engine bearers and patterns for A-brackets and rudder fittings locally cast in bronze.

In October 1950 two tons of lead ballast arrived, then next month the propellers and shafts. The lead they decided to cast in a wooden box lined with plasterboard, after an experiment showed this to be satisfactory; holes for the twelve keelbolts were bored and the bolts set in white lead and oil and projecting into the ballast keel mould. Then in February 1951, after careful preparations, the lead was melted and poured using ladles made from tin hats, relics of wartime home guards, the whole exercise worked out with precision and entirely successful. There followed the fitting of the rudder, making and fitting the bilgekeels and wormshoe and making the engine bearers. The A-brackets and sternglands having been fitted allowed the bearers to be lined up. Means for installing the engines were devised and in May they - three quarters of a ton each - were lifted in. Hal had overlooked the projection of the reduction gearcase but fortunately it just cleared the inner skin!

As a result of their experience with Cellobond and of enquiries from DSIR they decided to build the fuel tanks and water tank in wood, multi-skin glued with Cellobond and coated inside and out with Phenoglaze. Meanwhile work continued on a great variety of fittings - engine bearers and installation, bunks and lockers, rail stanchions, mast steps, steering gear, cabin flooring, chainplates, fairleads and towing bollards, and so on endlessly. From August 1952 the oregon masts were shaped up and the mast and boom fittings designed and patterns made for casting, then galley storage and fittings fixed. In April 1953 work started on the fuel and water tanks, four fuel to hold 200 gallons and a central water tank for 60 gallons. The five tanks, outers shaped to the hull, filled the width of the ship under the wheelhouse. Later in the year Hal ordered the sails and bought ground tackle and early in February 1954 worked on the engine exhausts so that with fuel and cooling arrangements finished it was possible to trial run both engines.

Electrical wiring followed, the steering installation was finished, shrouds spliced, mainmast trial-stepped, bilgepumps rigged, and anchor winch fitted, during the rest of 1954. Then in January 1955 the lavatory was installed and forepeak storage for anchor warps finished off, the masts were taken down again, and over the next two months final arrangements were made for launching. There being no bridge over the Waiwhetu Stream at its confluence with the Hutt River then, 'St Michael' was lifted into the Stream by the Seaview Bridge on 1 April 1955. Hal's diary comment - 'The end and the beginning!'

At this point a tribute should be made: Hal died in 1975 and Nicholas in 1981. Their long hours of planning and hard, skilled, faithful work survive and continue to give great pleasure to all who come into contact with 'St Michael' and especially to those of us who are fortunate enough to go to sea in her. Living on board one comes to appreciate fully her carefully-thought-out details, so practical and robust.

Afloat, over the years she was much used, by Hal and the friends he took out and by his nephews and cousins. She frequently crossed Cook Strait, carried A.H Reed from Wellington to Puponga as part of his walk from North Cape to Bluff, helped fishery researchers in the deep waters south of Cape Turakirae, and became familiar with the Sounds and Tasman and Golden Bays. Then in 1959 Hal and three younger relatives took her down the east coast of the South Island and round to the Southern Fiords, 8 March to 4 April. We explored most of the fiords and returned up the West Coast. I usually managed to get away for a fortnight's holiday with my family in January and we became very familiar with the Straits, quiet inlets in Queen Charlotte and Pelorus Sounds, D'Urville Island, Tasman Bay, and the Abel Tasman Park coast. Hal and others of us often made day trips around Wellington Harbour and its approaches. Over the years 'St Michael', often with Nicholas and me, made a number of rescues of small craft in the Harbour - we had a good view and the habit of keeping our eyes open.

The events leading up to the Auckland Islands expedition of 1972-1973, and the account of it, have already been covered. Then in June

1976 when my wife and I as well as many of the younger generation were overseas, 'St Michael's' mooring riser parted in a southerly gale and she came up on the rocks near the north point of York Bay. She was bilged and otherwise damaged and Nicholas and Ned Atkinson, with much help from many friends, had a most exhausting cold time getting her off, helped by 'Lady Elizabeth II'. 'St Michael' was later brought round to York Bay, to near where she had been built, and over the next 13 years (following the pattern set by her building!) she was worked on intermittently and fully restored. Various people worked on her: Ned, Tony Shearman professionally, Richmond, myself much of the time, but with specialist help from cousins. We re-engined her with new 14 HP Lister diesels having three to one reduction gears so retaining the slow-turning propellers, and she needed new shafts and propellers. We re-launched her in May 1989. I was thankful that Hal was no longer with us when she came ashore and sorry that Nicholas was not there to see her back in the water. We were all inspired to get her there again by the thought of all their work in building her.

As if this was not enough, 'St Michael' again came ashore as the result of a failed mooring riser, in March 1992. Unlike the 1976 grounding which was the consequence, really, of bad organisation, this one was unfortunate as we had a refurbished riser wanting only a quiet day for it to be fitted. But a full north-west gale beat us and she came ashore on rocks towards the south point of York Bay. Again many people came to help. With the big fisherman anchor out to windward and a pull from 'Lady Elizabeth III' we got her off and with one engine (the starboard shaft being bent) got her round to the Gracefield marina. Later she was brought round to the Lowry Bay reclamation and hauled out on a trolley. Here we undertook repairs including a new starboard propeller, straightening of the shaft, and professional patching of damaged areas along the starboard bilge. I worked on her through the winter, and it was a bleak windy job. There was a good deal of minor damage but this could be fixed with Epifill. After we had refitted the reconditioned riser we repainted 'St Michael' and she was rolled back into the water in October 1992. She has continued to cruise the Harbour and the Sounds with the younger generation of the owners.

Tudor Atkinson

June 1998

Appendix 2.

Mileages, running hours, fuel

Mileages

Nautical miles measured from charts

York Bay to Chambres Inlet, Auckland Is	747 miles
At Auckland Is, local running, 19 December to 30 January	761 miles
Ranui Cove, Auckland Is, to York Bay	938 miles
Total	2446 miles

Average daily mileage at Auckland Is

17.7 miles

Running hours

Both engines throughout

York Bay to Chambres Inlet	139 hours 20 min
At Auckland Is, 19 December to 30 January	192 hours 50 min
Ranui Cove to York Bay	170 hours 5 min
Total	502 hours 15 min

Average hours per day

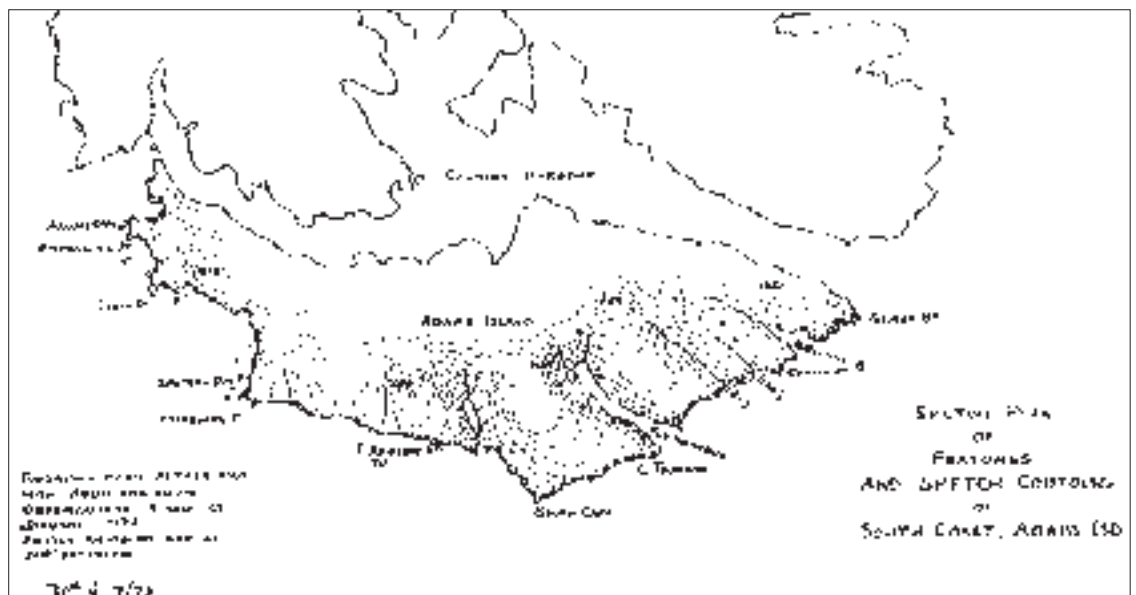
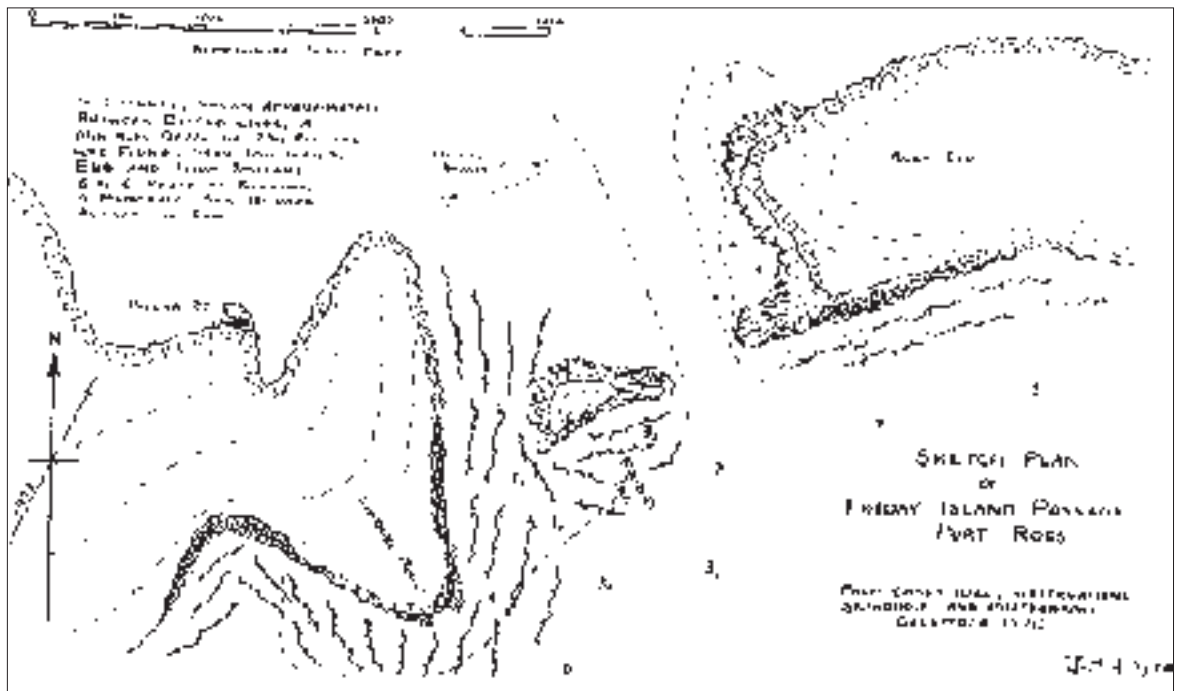
during 43 days at the Auckland Is 4 hours 30 min

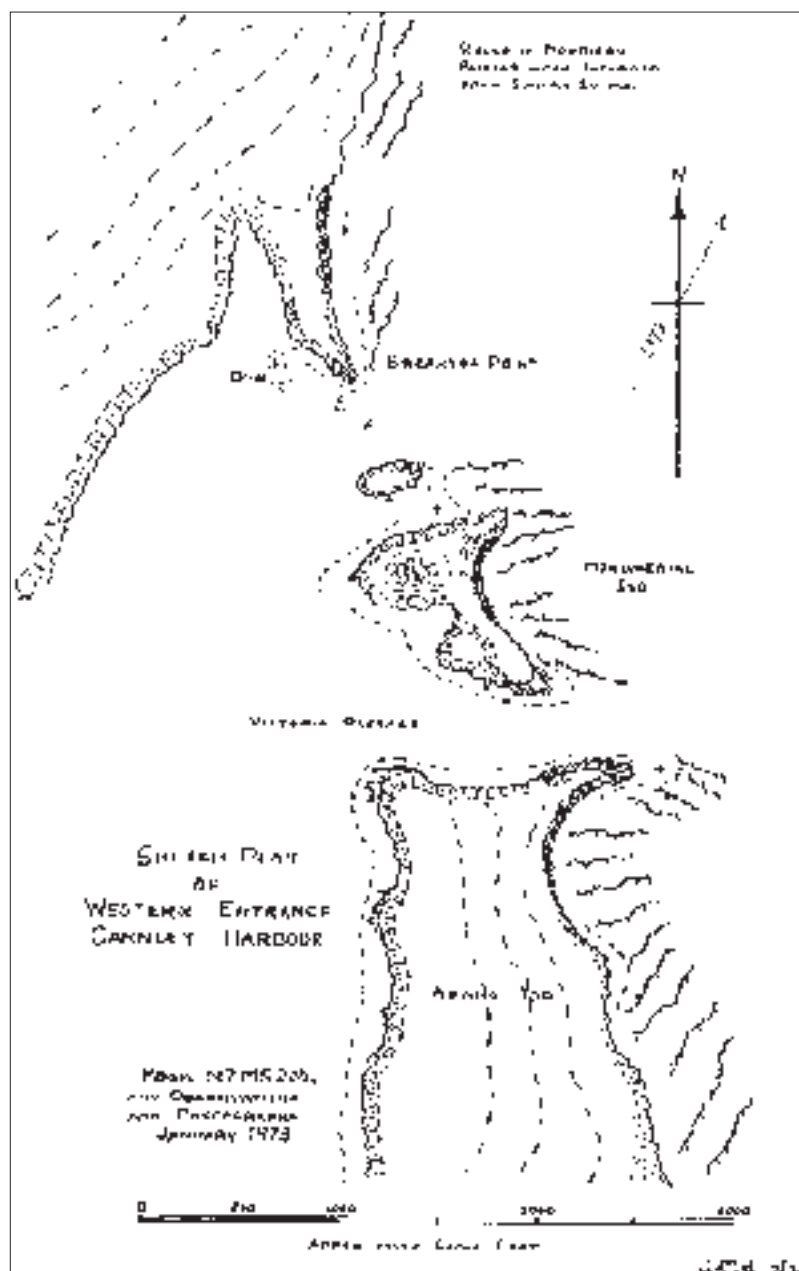
Fuel used

Tanks were virtually full on leaving Wellington

Taken at Bluff 15 December	98 gallons
From 'Acheron', Port Ross 9 January	139 gallons
From 'Acheron', Port Ross 30 January	75 gallons
Taken at Oban 2 February	49 gallons
Refill tanks at Wellington	146 gallons
Total	507 gallons

Appendix 3. Sketch plans of uncharted areas





Appendix 4. Letter to Hal Atkinson

13.1.73

St Michael Anchored in Ranui Cove

The Auckland Islands

Dear Uncle Hal

Thank you.

'St Michael' has been our home for over a month now, and a better ship we couldn't ask for. She has weathered every mood of the sea admirably, be it a lollypop lumpy sea reflected from the 1000' cliffs on the western coast near Disappointment Island, plugging into a 50 knot gale up Carnley Harbour just skimming the top off the waves, nothing more, or simply idle cruising round Port Ross on a calm sunny day. We're very grateful too for the big 'Fisherman' - it hasn't budged, unlike 'Acheron's' Danforth, a crazy anchor that doesn't allow for any swing with a change of wind direction, and consequently she bent her shank, and dragged in the williwaws on Christmas Eve. We manage to keep really snug, the Listers conjure up a goodly fug.

The Auckland Islands are utterly fantastic! The weather is predictable in its uncertainty - mist, rain, wind or sun come and go all the time, but it has been much kinder than we had envisaged. Remarkable cloud formations every day almost, but the days are so long we often miss the sunset. The islands are a volcanic doublet, beautiful inlets on the East and the most spectacular cliffs up to 1600' on the West, where the sea has been eating away the cliff for thousands of years, providing gigantic cross sections of the volcanoes. High basalt columns very impressive, with layer upon layer of lava flows and ash showers below. Huge sea stacks, 600' pinnacles rising out of the sea along parts of the coast, large caves too.

The bird life is incredible(!) - the Royal Albatross, and Wanderer too, being the most magnificent birds I've ever seen, and so close, too. We tagged along when the Wildlifers banded some Royals one day - Cape Pigeons, Skuas, Petrels, Prions and 'Nellies' - hundreds of them everywhere. The Penguins are especially fun, though - Yellowhead and Rockhoppers, most with chicks, balls of grey fur. Luckily we haven't seen the wild cats that live here. What's so terrific is that the birds and animals are all so tame - that's the word, for they never were tamed really, purely natural unmolested by man, I guess. You can just sit down in the bush and in a minute or so will be surrounded by a dozen or so bellbirds, singing beautifully, or tomtits (and chicks) parakeets and pipits on the beach. They like the kelp, another impressive feature, golden swards of it everywhere, and it's massive, good for sandal making but no good around the props.

Even the blue bunnies on Enderby Island are unperturbed by our presence. Some of the Sea Lions however, and rightly so, take a dim view of our invasion into their breeding ground at Sandy Bay. It's fascinating to watch the old Bulls trying to ward off the young males doing their level best to sneak into their harems. These young bulls

are the aggressive blokes and the ones we have to watch. Usually can manage on the beach, but they may tree you in the bush!

They like to porpoise along behind St Michael, and invariably one arrives to escort us to the beach in the dinghy around Port Ross. They're usually just inquisitive blokes, and turn away with a little snort before you get out.

The land is peaty but holds magnificent bush on the coast, dense gnarled Rata blooming bright red, dracophyllum, hebe, blechnums too, all so interesting, and such variety of mosses and lichens as well.

Thank you once again, and wishing you well for '73.

Sam and John

Appendix 5. The Auckland Islands from 'St Michael'

So many things have we seen
I shan't relate the inbetweens
Meaning thus the 'thens' and 'nexts'
That, only serve to lengthen texts
And 'hours' and 'dates' and 'this day we'
Can lead but to monotony
Besides, the 'mailboat' leaveth soon
So impress-i-ons will have to do!

Bleak coastline, day we landed
Turned our thoughts to the stranded
Chambres Inlet, or 'Broccoli Bay'
Green rumpled treetops seemed that way
Adams Ale a peaty brown
The mist was oh so low down
But weatherwise we're not dejected
'Cos its finer than expected
When it blows it really screams
Williwaws' whistles wake our dreams
Swinging St Michael thru 360
Glad we've got an Admiral pick eh!
Or Fisherman if you prefer
But Danforths I wouldn't give you tuppence fer
'Acheron' swung, the shank it bent
Anchor dragged, their sleep went.
And so they spent all Christmas Eve
Cruising round on Sarahs Bosom
While we clung, a pendant jewel
Cleavage close and saving fuel!

Of the food, we have plenty
Living well, hale and hearty
Almost like a long term party
Wot with rabbit, wild piggo
'Horses d'oeufers' better still
A bowl of pog, a goodly brew
Trail biscuits topped with cheese
Cape Gooseberry jam if you please!
Break another packet open
Trailos for tea, not bacon
Suck sweet juice, a Tangelo Trip
Thank you Nancy we think of Dick.

Bellbird chorus early dawn
Tonging out across the seas
From the blooming rata trees

By the outer they're resplendent
Bright red flower, sunburst scent
By the inner, grotesque beauty
Gnarled and twisted, spreading so
From moss covered, peat below
T'was from one of these I did nick
A knee for me tobacccy pipe
Not the country for a snipe
These little fellows they prefer
The cutty grass on open spur
Peter Pippit silly booker
We found him on top of Hooker
He liveth on the kelp too
'Hop Hop' only a yard from you
All the boides are so tame
Tomtit, parakeet or skua
Flightless teal, molly or Nellie
No need to sneak up on ones belly
Focus on a nearby branch
The restclick .. is a sinch

Of course the royal albatross
Aroused a lot of interest
Resting serenely on his nest
Harbouring a biggish egg that stays
That way 3 months it's said
Some, on calm days waddle round
Mammoth 'chookies' 10 k round
But come the wind and off they go
Madly flapping white wingso
Undercarriage scraping scrub
At last he's airborne there he goes
Folding up those webb-ed toes
Soaring upwards, banking round
Flight personified, ocean bound.

Spotlighting birds is quite an art
(Tho you need it fairly dark)
A minor problem you might say
But half the night is bleeding day
I suppose you expect idiosyncrasy
At latitude 50.3
And so you begin at 11.30
(Preferably the night is murky)
Throw your beam into the sky
They'll flutter down, bye the bye
Dazzled by the blinding glare
They may forget their landing gear
And land 'kerthump' upon the rock
Where eager hands put on the chocks
Dominion Museum here you come
Sorry I have to squeeze your tum

Whiteheaded petrels, prions too
A sooty albatross, thats new.

'King crabs' I hear you asking
'Have you found where they are basking?'
Well I made a little net
But I havn't got one yet!
All we've caught are several cod
Full of wur-um-es by God!
Little squirming nematodes
Cur-led up inside the fish
Every inch they did possess
So we sadly pitched them over
And some were such a lovely colour
Red and green and yellow gills
Yep! These fish need feeding pills
Johnny nobbled one barehanded
In a rock pool it was stranded
The only worms were in his gut
So we thort we'd fry him up
Tho he made a nice wee dish
Black cod's a pretty tasteless fish
But John and I the mussels tried
That I pluck-ed at low tide
From the head of Laurie Harbour
Tasty morsels dipped in vin-arger
Wot could possibly be nicer
Than unpolluted (phylum) Mollusca!

The sea is cold as Nic discovered
When a big wave dipped him and Bell
Boski flipped, they soon recovered
Enderby beach, SW swell
Now we use a little shelf
Of rock that there is jutting out
The fringe awash with golden kelp
Slippery stuff, that doesn't help
Ah, but never mind
'Wots that?'
'Look out behind'!
Hell its SAM (Sub Adult Male!)
The stroppey type who seeketh here
The fancy of some sleek sea bear
And spying us so very near
Considers opposition fair
It takes some doing to quell his lust
But by golly you really must
Some of them are fearsome creatures
Others just groan 'don't beseech us'
Wield a stick a decent clout.
He knows 'waddis' all about
Follow with a goodly shout

The little pups I must confess
Are something else, should be blessed
Balls of shorthaired fur at that
Bleeting like a new born lamb
'bahha' They go and 'bah' again
Watch out pup or you'll be crushed
By Big Daddy's casual lust
Daddy weighs much more than you
The king of the harem needeth too
Thick, thick neck and big black flappers
Fat, to ward off young attackers.

The rabbits here are Français stock
All shades of blue and grey and black
A couple of skins I shall bring back
Of course they're only from the lot
That we captured for the pot
Bunnys everywhere you go
But penguins put on the real show
'Twoddle Twuddle' down the slope
Arms outstarched, wota joke!
Stopping every so often
To converse with all, or nuffin
Ah! But even better still
Is watching penguins climb a hill
'Twopple Twupple' here we go
Brace yourselves, a cliff you know
Arms back now, heads held high
Peering up into the sky
Good stuff this wind for holding upright
Yellowheaders never in flight
By far the most impressive yet
Are rockhoppers that we met
At Disappointment, Saturday,
They are so very bright and gay,
A penguin with an orange eye
An orange bill and yellow frill
These being eyebrows waving at me
From under clumps of anisotome.

So much for the Islands Fauna
Wot of Flora and her corner
On this far flung rocky Isle
Volcanic doublet of 40 mile
Basalt columns of the East
To 1000 cliffs in the West
'Incredible' to say the least
'Spectacular', the very best
waterfalls that plummet down
And some blow back o'er the top again
On 'Disappointment' there we saw
250 000, maybe more

Mollymawks beak to beak
Nesting on the steep lee slopes
I wouldn't fancy banding these blokes.

But of the plants, I am proud to say
The rata holds the pride of place
Magnificent trees interlaced
Dwarfing all the dracophyllum
Blechnum, hard ferns try to follow
But its often only moss below.
Here and there a hebe flowering
Mostly white, some smaller, red
A beautiful blue one to be seen
Mother I know you'd love one, clean.
We've only met it on the tops
In the boggy, peaty spots
I will try to get a cutting
Nearer the time of our departing
Poppa you certainly were right
The draw knife was good foresight
Jerry Clark the solo sailor
Broke his tiller in a gales
So he now could fashion one
From a rata bough, ho hum!
My he's a corageous bloke
Sailing 'Ketiga', 21 feet!
In latitude 50 he's bound to meet
The odd blow or two that's really scary
A long long way from 'Kerikeri'.

Time has flown 2 weeks to go
All too soon we will be leaving
The Auckland Islands, so intruiging
Probably home via the West Coast
See ya soon - Tea and toast!

Love Samwell

Appendix 6.

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