

Chapter Four

2018 SUMMER CRUISE OF AVANTI

The 28th Voyage Dunedin to Nelson

Bill and Margaret McIndoe

Abbreviations and nautical terms:

nm, nautical mile = 1.82km:

kts = knots, speed, one nautical mile per hour (1kt =1.8 kph).

CQR = a type of anchor; play on words - "secure".

Rode = anchor, chain and/or rope which holds the boat to the seabed to stop it drifting.

ETA = Estimated Time of Arrival.

Sailed = moved the boat under wind or motor or both.

Steamed = moved under power

Sized crayfish = measured

Le Bons to Picton

Departure for Cook Strait

Once all was secured for sea, I caressed the steering wheel, eased the gear lever into ahead, increased the revs and slowly steamed the mile to the open sea. At 07:00 set course for the entrance to Tory Channel in Cook Strait, 170nm along the Canterbury and Marlborough open Pacific coast to the north. Again there was no wind but a southerly was forecast to build.

Estimated travel time was 34 hours at an average speed of 5kts with an ETA of 17:00 on Thursday 11 January.

The sky was overcast and it rained occasionally. When clear of the disturbed waters around Banks Peninsula the sea conditions settled and Avanti forged ahead into her work. While crossing Pegasus Bay, by comparing speed through the water from the log with speed over the ground from the GPS, I noted the 0.8kt average current running north carrying us along, which was good news.

The Southerly comes away

Then the southerly wind stirred and freshened to 20kts. I unfurled the mainsail, which with the engine at 1600rpm gave us a good 6.5kts through the water. Added to this was the 0.8kts ocean current running north which gave us an average of 7.3kts and on occasions 8.0kts over the ground. That was a satisfactory speed which could not be bettered. As the wind strength built to 25kts the boat became overpowered because we were traveling too fast. To slow the boat down I reefed the mainsail to about 25% of full size. To reduce drive from the propellor I reduced engine revs to 1400rpm which would still give a flow of water over the rudder to help the self steering system

and keep the boat running true at an even speed. Fuel consumption would reduce from 3 litres per hour when there was no wind to one litre per hour when there was a reasonable breeze but still doing over 6kts. The Autohelm electric self steering and the radar had ample continuous power generated by the engine's alternator.

Over the Abyssal Depths

Crossing Pegasus Bay north of Banks Peninsula my plotted course took us within 5nm of Kaikoura peninsula. Here the edge of the continental shelf dives from 100 meters deep down to the abyssal depths of 900 meters where the sperm whales hunt giant squid for breakfast. I like to stay at about the 100m line. Further out in deeper water the seas are bigger. Further inshore, in shallower water, there is danger of getting crayfish pot lines tangled around the propeller.

Cape Campbell ahead

From Kaikoura I set a course to clear Cape Campbell by a mile. It is one of New Zealand's great capes to be treated with caution, fear and respect. Cape Campbell takes no prisoners. On the eastern side there is a large paddock of rocks projecting from shallow water upon which the sea breaks. Although deep right up to its edge it is desirable to go no closer. This is easy in good visibility but in the dark, rain or fog certain caution must be exercised.

The north running tide gave us rough seas but a 1.5 knot push around the Cape on our way. I was not one to complain as we made such good speed towards Tory Channel now only 25nm and 5 hours away.

Approaches to Tory Channel

The southerly had died to a whisper and the sails were slatting as the ship rolled. I furled the mainsail to prevent damage to the sail. As we approached the entrance visibility had reduced to 5nm. We detected on radar and then sighted visually a trans Cook Strait ferry coming from Wellington heading for Tory Channel. Our approach was from further south than their course and she was ahead of us anyway so there was no risk of being run down. Out in the open sea the normal Regulations for the Prevention of Collision at Sea apply between say a Cook Strait ferry and a 12m sail boat. In most cases a vessel under power gives way to a sailing vessel no matter what the relative size. However in this case Avant was also under power so that "give way rule" did not apply. It is too involved to explain here. If the reader is interested look it up in Wikipedia. (Beware, it *is* complicated).

With the tide still flooding Avanti was swept through the Tory Channel entrance at a great rate. Through the rain I sighted the transit posts which gave me the entry course. It is good-practice not to be on that line because that is the exact course that entering or departing ferries would take and I would not want to contend for give-way rights. When approaching from the east (Cook Strait) the entrance is narrow and tide-swept running up to 7kts at

springs. There is a 70° turn to port 0.7nm just inside the entrance, requiring good ship-handling skills for a ferry captain to bring the ship into Tory Channel. In such a confined and tide-ridden waterway it is impossible for them to alter course to avoid small ship traffic without the danger of sheering off into the surrounding cliffs. Consequently the ferries have absolute right of way.

Inside Tory Channel

After 27 hours at sea it was a delight to be inside Tory Channel and out of the swell. Visibility was still only one mile and by keeping close to the port (south) side kept us out of the way of the ferries which occupy the centre of the waterway. I have never seen two ferries going in opposite directions in Tory Channel. With a 07:00 entry we were well ahead of my scheduled arrival time. It was so early in the morning that my original plan to anchor in Hitau Bay, off Tory Channel, to rest up, reorganise the boat and sleep the night seemed unnecessary. Our favourite arrival anchorage was by-passed and we steamed another 9nm (2hrs) straight on to Picton marina.

Arrival at Picton Thursday 11 January 2018

When I had rung ahead to Dave Mahoney, Picton Marina Manager, he kindly offered to meet us at the Fuel Pontoon to assist with berthing. As I made my approach he was there to secure the mooring ropes as Margaret passed them over.

Statistics of the Voyage

Since departing Port Chalmers we had been away 7 days living in the yacht, spent four days (including two nights) at sea, 3 nights on a mooring in Akaroa Harbour resting and riding out the gale, a quiet night at anchor in Le Bons, and sailed 323nm (590km) under sail and power because of unusual no-wind conditions. There had been rain and fog with moderate to poor visibility. Sea conditions had been moderate. We maintained as high a speed as possible in order to not be caught out at sea in the forecast gales. Secured to the Picton Marina berth at 12:30, our open east coast of New Zealand voyage, from Port Chalmers to Picton in the Marlborough Sounds section of our 2018 cruise was completed. In summery - It was what we missed that was important. An easy and enjoyable voyage.

End of Chapter Four
2018 Summer Cruise of Avanti,,
Le Bons to Picton

Written by M M (Bill) McIndoe
15 January 2018
Aboard Yacht Avanti
at Picton Marina

