

# Chapter Eleven

## 2018 SUMMER CRUISE OF AVANTI

The 28th Voyage Dunedin to Nelson

Bill and Margaret McIndoe

### Homeward Bound

#### Picton to Akaroa

##### 1 March 2018 at Picton Marina

Determined to have everything ready for departure tomorrow morning, Friday 2 March we have been flat out over the last few days. Completing all the jobs was only possible because Jo Hall so kindly lent us her car.

List of jobs:

Watered ship - filled the water tanks.

Filled one lpg gas bottle ashore.

Victualed Avanti with meat, veges and fruit for a week

Drove from Picton to Blenheim and back to pick up crew Craig Wilson.

Filled car with petrol.

Met Nick and Heather Fulton for lunch at the Jolly Roger, Waikawa Marina.

Payed our marine fees.

Cleaned the car.

Returned the car to Jo and Jem.

Prepared Avanti for sea.

On the davits aft secure the dinghy for sea

Set up the navigation gear.

Put up the main saloon shelf netting and safety grab ropes.

And lots of other things that I have forgotten to mention.

##### **Wakey, wakey rise and shine: Bunker Ship**

Out of our bunks at 06:00 on Friday 2 March; breakfast and all the remaining pre-departure jobs had been done by 08:00. We were ready to move. All that needed was to warm through the Yamaha main engine, cast off the mooring lines and carefully manoeuvre Avanti out of our berth at Waikawa Marina and move her 120m to the fueling wharf. There we bunkered with 84 litres of diesel to top up the main fuel tank. Already full were the five 20 litre on-deck fuel cans, the two water cans and the main 400 litre water tank. With fuel and water we were ready to go.

##### **Tory Channel**

The narrow opening in the sheltering breakwater allowed access to Waikawa Bay and so out into Queen Charlotte Sound proper. Another 8nm north we turned from the sound into the 11nm long beautiful Tory Channel. The tide was flooding into the channel against us from Cook Strait but I kept close to the northern (Arapawa Island) side where I found the counter current that helped us along.

In accordance with the Harbour Board regulations before reaching the Entrance I was obliged to make the rather grand broadcast on VHF Channel 16 informing the marine world that "All ships, all ships, this is yacht Avanti. In ten minutes Avanti would make the Entrance, outward bound from Tory Channel".

An hour earlier the incoming tide at the Entrance had started to flow west (against us). The current was only running at 2kts but in 2 hours, when at half tide and flowing at the maximum rate, it would be running at 5kts. It was a spring tide and the maximum might reach 6kts. We wouldn't go there at that time but it was alright two hours before the

maximum flow. The fast flowing water was unruffled and smooth as glass but further out in Cook Strait there were large whirlpools, tide rips and frothy boundary lines. Beyond the Entrance the water had some innocuous whirlpools that didn't scare us one little bit. Ten minutes and one mile further on there were no tidal indications at all.

### **Cape Campbell**

Although Cape Campbell was not visibly 32nm away over the horizon, using the iNavx chart plotter programme on the iPad I set course 180°T directly for it across Cloudy Bay. Visibility was restricted by the haze but the lighthouse is a tall structure painted with broad black and white horizontal stripes to make it easier to see against the barren country and exposed gravel of the Cape. It is positioned on a short low headland sticking out from the end of the peninsula.

### **Extreme Turbulence**

Sea conditions were something else again. Never have I experienced such turbulence on the water. Although the surface of the ocean looked reasonable a 2m northerly swell meeting a 1.5m south easterly swell at an angle of 135° gave the most appalling sea conditions. The boat was thrown around in a most unseemly manner. Violently from side to side and seesaw-like up and down. Corkscrew fashion was another variant. During my many years at sea I have never experienced such an awful motion and it went on for 30 hours. The only comparatively safe places on board were laying down on one of the midships bunks or firmly strapped into the watch keepers seat in the cockpit. Cooking or boiling water was impossibly dangerous. Bread and cheese sandwiches or the old standby cold baked beans out of the tin, eaten with a teaspoon, was about as much as was possible.

### **Le Bons is no Good**

After being at sea all the previous day and night we entered Le Bons Bay at 12:00 and took the boat 1.5nm up to the Yellow Buoy anchorage where I found that the easterly component of the swell was running right into the little bay where I normally anchored. To stay there overnight would be most uncomfortable with the boat rolling heavily. I decided therefore not to even stop but with our dwindling energy levels to return to sea and keep on steaming around the great arc of Banks Peninsula for another 5 hours to find shelter, a cooked meal and rest for our bodies in Akaroa Harbour.

### **Shelter from the Cross Swell**

When far enough around Banks Peninsula we got shelter from the northern component of the swell system and the violent movement began to improve. Exposed only to the south easterly component of the swell the boat moved much more freely. I kept as close to the cliffs as I dared which normally reduces the swell height experienced. There were rock reefs extending from the headlands but I could see the surf breaks and also follow our position on the iPad chart plotter so there were few nasty shallow water surprises. Pompeys Pillar is surely a magnificent great lump of rock only seen by those who go down to the sea in little ships. Conical and standing possibly 30m high, clear of the cliffs of Banks Peninsula by a narrow strip of water, it lies only 6nm ENE from the entrance of Akaroa Harbour.

### **Inside Boat Rock**

As is the custom aboard Avanti when making the final approach to Akaroa Entrance I took the boat between Ruahine Point and Boat Rock. The passage between it and the high cliffs is narrow and deep but it is the waves crashing onto Boat Rock, sending white foam into the air, that makes this stunt so enjoyable. It only looks dangerous to the neophyte.

### **No Sounder- No Tikao Bay**

It was gratifying to be in the sheltered waters of Akaroa Harbour. Even though my echo-sounder had failed my plan had been to anchor in Tikao Bay. Approaching this delightful little cove at high tide I had qualms about anchoring and having to guess the depth of water. If I got it wrong and there was insufficient water, when the tide went out we may

ground, the boat heel over and lie down on her bilges at 45° like a stranded whale. I did know exactly where to anchor - behind a yacht on a mooring that had been there for years. I took the boat in and placed her in the exact position and then looked around. Doubts assailed me. This was the wrong thing to do. To anchor at full high tide close to another vessel on one side and on the other side close to a shallow bank with no echosounder to tell me the depth of water was bad, bad, bad seamanship. Tired as we were and aching for the yacht to just stop I did a slow wheelie turn on the spot in the confines of the cove, and with relief that the decision had been made, left Tikau Bay. I headed east back across the harbour towards Akaroa township to find a better anchorage where I could tell the depth from our position on the chart plotter and there would be no chance of ending up aground when the tide went out.

### **Red Rock Bay**

I had anchored in Red Rock Bay last year and knew it was good shelter in a northerly but not good in a southerly. In the middle of the harbour the wind was gusting 20kts from the north but with the binoculars I could see that the bay was well sheltered. Anchoring close by a 13m sailing catamaran on the Akaroa Yacht Club mooring, we soon had a simple meal on the table. Then there was silence, everybody was horizontal, dead to the world, asleep.

### **Why was I Tired?**

We had been sailing for 34 hours and it was then 12:40 on Thursday afternoon and we were anchored in Akaroa Harbour. It was a rough, even violent 207nm passage but at average 6kts it was a fast one to be there before the forecast southerly front arrived. Margaret, Craig and I stood our 4 hour watches during the passage but being skipper and navigator I had also to manoeuvre the boat out of Waikawa Marina in the dawning and navigate 18nm to through Tory Channel to the entrance. Then navigate across Cloudy Bay to double Cape Campbell and down the coast on the 100m line without the sounder to avoid the many crayfish pot floats which might get caught round the propellor. Care was needed to give Kaikoura a 3nm clearance to be beyond the continental shelf, to avoid the cray pots which would not be laid in the abyssal depths.

During the crossing of Pegasus Bay we had, what seemed to be, a serious leak in the boat and with the help of Craig I had to attempt to solve that in the dark at 04:00. I then navigate the landfall on Banks Peninsula and the approach and entry to Le Bons Bay. When I decided not to anchor there I navigated the ship back out to sea and close along the cliffs of Banks Peninsula, attempting to gain shelter from the atrocious seas. More pilotage was required to reach the Akaroa Harbour entrance and the eight miles up the Harbour for our abortive visit to Tikao Bay and the final anchorage at Red Rock Bay. And I wondered why I was tired on arrival at Akaroa?

### **Milligan can't stay for Whiskey Cake**

The next day when I rang Jonny Bell, the AYC moorings officer, he was very helpful in allocating us the use of the Club mooring #120. I rang old friend John Milligan who immediately offered to come down and in his dinghy to make sure we picked up the correct mooring. We rendezvoused with John and with his help identified and picked up mooring #120 and then had the pleasure of his company aboard for one of our chats. Not a long one this time and because of other commitments he could not even stop for a piece or two of Margaret's famous whiskey fruit cake and a cup of tea.

End of Chapter Eleven  
Written by M M (Bill) McIndoe  
Monday 5 March 2018  
Aboard Yacht Avanti  
On mooring #120  
in Akaroa Harbour

Banks Peninsula