

New Zealand Radio Yacht Squadron October 2018

1. Club organization

When the club was originally formed it was called the "Whitbread 60 Remote Control Yacht Club" and sailed Yamaha Whitbread 60s. The Kyosho Seawind took over in the late 1990s and the name was changed to "New Zealand Radio yacht Squadron" (NZRYS).

The communications with the members was via "Upwind" newsletters produced every two or three months. These contained series results, calendar of upcoming events and general articles. They were printed and distributed by post. The club committee, as well as organizing the events, were primarily concerned with writing and producing these newsletters, envelope stuffing and posting.

In the last dozen years or so the communication moved to being email. The primary communication also changed to being extended weekly reports and the Upwind newsletters have only been produced just prior to the AGM and soon after it. The October edition has carried the final list of results, proposals for the next year's operation to be considered at the AGM and some general articles. The November edition in the last four years has contained the AGM minutes, reports and a photo report of the prize giving. Previously, the minutes and reports had been distributed separately.

These changes have resulting in less need for committee meetings, which were primarily concerned with getting its members organized to carry out the tasks needed to get the newsletter written and distributed. Consequently, there has not been a formal meeting (with pizza) for several years. Any decisions not requiring to be dealt with by the AGM could be done by a short meeting at the pond.

2. NZRYS Committee Organization

Commodore - job description

- Represent the club as required
- Present cups and trophies

President - job description

- Chair club meetings and AGM
- Resolve disputes with casting vote or executive decision.

Secretary - job description

- Record and keep minutes of meetings
- Keep copies of all club communications
- Reply to correspondence
- Keep membership records
- Register frequencies and sail numbers
- Maintain records of club assets
- Organise trophies and engraving of cups

Treasurer - job description

- Maintain records of club funds
- Bank monies received by the club
- Make payments of club expenditure
- Produce finance report at AGM

Editor - job description

- Produce reports and newsletters

Racing Committee - job description

- Assign members' handicaps and division
- Organise the racing on club days
- Set race courses
- Assign race referees as required
- Record race results
- Form protest committees as required
- Maintain class rules
- Scrutinize yachts

Equipment Officer - job description

- Transport and maintain equipment:
timer, chart, result sheets, etc
- Maintain and transport club boat(s)

Currently the president is acting as editor and equipment officer.

3. Maintenance of the Pond

3.1 Management Plan

The Onepoto Domain Reserve Management Plan, revised in 1997, lists radio yachting (section 1.3.1) as a specific recreation pursuit to be protected, including keeping the pond clear of weed, maintaining a minimum depth of 300mm, and keeping the surrounding area free of interference to the airflow.

General maintenance of the pond, though, was left to the clubs that used it. In earlier years this was done by members of the NZRYS and the Electron Owners' Association. Specific mention is made of Roy Johnstone of the NZRYS and Bill Herald of the Electrons who maintained and flushed the pond in the 2000s. The buoys were also made and maintained by members of both clubs. In particular Don Lidgard and Bill Herald of the Electrons maintained them for several years and Ian and Carol Bergquist of the NZRYS replaced and repainted them all a couple of years ago. This last year Wayne Carkeek bought new buoys and rope and they were all maintained and replaced.

3.2 Problems in the Pond

In the mid 2000s the council remade the sports fields by laying down better drainage and adding sand and fertilizer. This had a damaging effect on the pond by runoff increasing nutrient levels and encouraging algae growth. At its peak this covered about 40% of the pond surface as well as causing problems over the whole pond by catching in the yachts' keels.

Raking the pond, as far as possible, became a common requirement and working bees were organized to drag chains over the pond bed to lift the weed out. On hot days the dead weed trapped in the silt at the bottom of the pond gasified and floated up causing even more problems.

3.3 OLCC and Council

The Onepoto Lagoon Co-ordination Committee (OLCC) was formed to deal with the problems and lobby the council to help by, among other things, dredging the pond to remove the silt and decaying vegetable matter. The members of the committee were nominally taken from the NZRYS, the Electrons and the Ancient Mariners, who sailed during the week, in order to present a unified voice in the presentations to the local board.

The OLCC created documents that described the operation of the pond, how it is to be flushed, why it floods and the problems that it has. These were used in presentations to the council.

The flushing of the pond, especially during dry periods, drained the warm, stagnant, dirty water and replaced it with cooler sea water, the salt helped to kill the algae. The problem with this was that it took several days for the pond to drain and refill with many interventions at appropriate, and often inconvenient, times to open or close the flap valves and to adjust the weir gates.

Flushing two or three times a year was replaced by stopping the flap valves completely closing and allowing the high tide to flood in raising the pond level by 2 or 3 inches which would then empty during low tide. Over the course of a week the 13 high tides would total up to the complete volume of the ponds. In time of heavy rain the pond would be almost completely fresh water but it would return to being salty within a few rainless days. The circulation by the fountains helped to distribute this throughout the pond.

The weir gates were made of wood and these eventually rotted and were affected by gribble worm requiring their replacement by contractors. Some time later these failed and the pond level fell several inches. The council

had put a padlock on the weir cover. Fortunately a council car was driving out of the park as I was trying to deal with this and I was able to stop it and ask if they had a key. The driver turned out to be the officer in charge of all keys and was able to provide one so that we were able to replace the boards and refill the pond.

This committee also joined the council's Wai-Care group which provided equipment, chemicals and procedures to monitor the water quality. Monitoring was done on a regular basis and the results loaded into the Wai-Care web site. These results were also useful in convincing the council to install the new fountains to oxygenate the water. When the fountains were running this also circulated the water from the southern end up to the northern end.

Other activities of the OLCC included petitioning the council over the proposed Korean Gardens and the club rooms.

3.4 Current situation

The pond was dredged by the council and this was completed in 2015. They also replaced the wooden weir gates by aluminium ones, which have their own problems.

Currently, the pond is in reasonable condition. Mostly, the weed and debris in the pond is very low and only infrequently causes problems. The rain over winter has kept the pond water fresh and the fountains are not running but the water has not become stagnant.

In summer the heat will bring problems and the following will need to be done:

* Reduce the height of the weir gates to lower the pond level by 2 or 3 inches, keeping water off the paths much of the time.

* Redo the flap valves to let in more salt water at high tide.

* Lobby the council to reinstate the fountains to oxygenate and circulate the water.

3.5 Weir gates

The aluminium weir gates are formed from hollow planks that have 'skirts' overlapping the board below. Each plank adds 75mm (3 inches) to the height of the weir. Over the years algae, or other matter, has grown in the overlaps and this has glued the boards together. There is a strong risk that if the top board is lifted by mechanical means that all the boards will be displaced and debris will flow below them and will prevent the boards being resealed. This would lead to a serious leak that will drain the pond, or at least reduce the level significantly.

The plan is to lift the top board by levering it against the next board down. A 'spring compressor' has been modified so that it acts in expansion. It will be necessary to attach leverage points to the top two boards, such as wire loops threaded through the boards, so that the expansion will lift the top board by acting against the rest.

Once the top board is removed a spare board that has been cut in half horizontally can replace it to limit the level reduction to less than 3 inches.

Update November 2018

The weir gate has had the top board removed and replaced by a cut down board.

Update November 2019

The council cleared the sludge from the forebay at the northern end of the pond.

The chain has been put into the flap valves to increase the salt level to control weed and prevent stagnation in tides of low rainfall.