

The 1950 Lyttelton Race.

Easterly's.

I had the good fortune to be engaged in the building of the Bait House at Island Bay. (Another story) While there, one of the Italian fishermen said "Never trust an Easterly."

As I walked along the "Hard" towards the pre race briefing, one of the Shed door observers said "There is an Easterly Storm off the North Wairarapa Coast."

The breeze at that time was warm and North East, unusual for Wellington. At the meeting I mentioned this easterly but the race committee said what fundamentally sounded like "Be quiet boy, we are Admirals."

The day was quite warm and pleasant. We were setting off in a virtually brand new yacht and being enthusiastically competitive we chose the most Northern end of the line and managed to weather Halswell where others had to tack. This was followed by a reach down to the heads and out into the Straights.

We kept high while most of the fleet headed more towards Cambell. When we cleared Baring Head there was a large Easterly swell and a very gloomy sky to the East. Considering the fisherman's comment, we turned back and were eventually becalmed at Pencarrow.

Out of the gloom came the Lyttelton yacht "Joy" being skippered by George Brassel. He was a well known Lyttelton Fisherman. George said "there is going to be trouble". Joy towed us back to our mooring. Brassel somehow got back to Lyttelton very quickly and manned his fishing launch. I think named Tawera, and helped to gather up the straggling yachts.

The only finisher was the Nelson yacht Taphiri. She was the winner. She had also won the 1940 Centennial Race to Lyttelton.

Unfortunately both Argo and Mistry were lost with no real evidence of their problems.

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