

Curtain up?

IN LITTLE more than a week it will be known whether Blenheim is to have its civic theatre. January 28 is again crunch time for the project, which has been exercising the trust, its fund-raisers, donors, civic authorities and the general public for years. We remark that it is crunch time again because there have been so many other "crunch times" as crises over site, size, support, and subscriptions and local body involvement came and went. All this has taken the best part of five years. It would be wrong to say that the theatre is no nearer reality now than it was all that time back because some light can really be seen at the end of the tunnel.

While the project has a long way to go, it is encouraging that the modifications to the original plans and proposals made necessary by mounting inflation and increases in building costs seem to have the support of the fund donors. Few, if any of them, have asked for their money back. And if at the meeting on January 28 the contributors so decide, the money will go into funding the modified concept, one which should be within the capacity of town and district to fulfil.

MAIL BOX
CAR WRECKING

To the Editor

Sir. — Clearly J. T. Pacey (The Express, Wednesday January 14) has little or no idea of the concerns of the average Blenheim citizen when it comes to objectionable proposals for the community. Most residents reject abuse of their own properties and will firmly reject abuse of the environment in which they live.

Safety for children, increased traffic in a no-exit street, proximity to an oil installation, and attracting an undesirable element scavenging for cheap vehicle parts and eyeing up nearby private vehicles as another source for parts are all valid concerns and reason to object to a car wrecker's yard near residential properties. Not hysteria. Mr Pacey, but genuine and logical reasoning. As for Mr Baldick soliciting support for his application, I hope would-be supporters first check out his other premises in the Budge Street-Herbert Street vicinity.

OBJECTION

Against birching

To the Editor

Sir. — Prompted by Ministerial statements in the Express, I wish to state my belief that birching is punitive but not reformative, revenge-seeking and counter-productive. The efforts of the Minister of Police should be directed at the solving of the causes of violent offending which have their roots in unemployment, broken homes, mental and physical violence in schools and a decline in that caring concern which used to characterise New Zealanders in another time.

This caring concern has been severely damaged by governments which put other financial, political, power-seeking motives ahead of human needs. The Government of Mr Couch has a sorry record in this regard — at Prime Ministerial, ministerial and legislative levels. The belief of the Minister of Police that all violence will come from anti-tour protesters seems to be prejudging and a false generalisation and the public statement of that belief might well add to the desire of pro-tour people to inflict their forms of violent revenge-seeking, of which birching is but one.

BRIAN McNAMARA
Spring Creek

Democracy step

ANKARA (NZPA). — Turkey's military junta took the first formal step today for a promised return to democracy by announcing that it would establish a constituent assembly in September or October.

General Kenan Evren, junta leader and Head of State, told a public meeting in the central Turkish town of Konya the military would have overall control of the assembly, approving or rejecting its recommendations.

The assembly would draw up a new constitution and frame new electoral laws and rules governing political activity.

The announcement was expected to be welcomed in Western capitals. Turkey's military and political allies were alarmed by last September's takeover and suspension of democratic life.

Coast schools' 75th anniversary

More than 500 ex-pupils of schools from Tairimate to Kekerengu will attend the 75th anniversary celebrations of all the schools in the area — Tairimate, Ward, Wharanui, Mirza and Kekerengu — on February 6 to 8.

Only the Ward school is still functioning with pupils from the other areas adding to the local roll.

The chairman of the committee organising the celebrations, Mr O. J. Hickman, says a good number of ex-pupils will come from Blenheim, but there will be some from other parts of the country and from Australia.

First ewe fair on Thursday

Blenheim's population will be outnumbered this week.

A lawful assembly at the Blenheim saleyards on Thursday will bring together more than 22,000 sheep of various breeds for the first adult ewe fair of the season.

Most are annual draft Corriedale ewes from runs and stations from the upper Awatere Valley out to D'Urville Island. They include some big drafts — 1100 from Meadowbank Station, lots of 700 from Tynestad Station in the Waihopai Valley, Akaroa and Ohaka Holdings in Pelorus Sound, and some 10 lines of 500 or more from other parts of the Province.

BETTER PRICE

Last year annual draft Corriedales averaged \$20 compared with \$14.26 in 1979. With sheep numbers still increasing, and with a favourable season behind them, vendors and potential buyers could be looking to something a bit better, in spite of a levelling off of the wool markets, an easing in meat prices, and not the least, to keep up with or ahead of inflation.

Thursday's fair (to start at noon) will be followed by the two-tooth and ewe lamb fair on January 29, an open ewe fair on February 5, and the merino fair on February 18.

Nessie gets official nod

The Loch Ness monster has apparently become "official." The British Tourist Authority has put out a press release on the dear old thing.

It says there have been more than 3000 recorded sightings since Nessie hit the headlines more than 40 years ago. St Columba made the first recorded sighting in the sixth century and in the 16th century a large animal came ashore, felling trees with a sweep of its tail and killing three onlookers."

WORD OF GOD

The Lord himself will lead you and be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you, so do not lose courage or be afraid.

Deuteronomy 31:8

Boat builder's dream nearly ready to ride the oceans

[By Henk Hilhorst]

Stormbird . . . She squats in her cradle-nest on the Waikawa shore ready to spread her white wings over the oceans.

No bird was hatched and reared with more care.

Stormbird is the dream yacht of Pop Jorgensen, was decades in coming, a year in designing, and seven years in building.

"Two months from now," Pop muses, "I'll be ready to take her out."

Pop (Peter) Jorgensen founded the boatbuilding business at Waikawa now run by his eldest son, Fin. Pop retired some years ago following a heart attack and doctor's orders to ease the pace. That gave him time to build his dreamboat, a joy, not a job.

Pop was born 65 years ago in Copenhagen and spent his childhood in Sjælland (Sealand), deep in the countryside and well away from the sea. Yet as soon as he could handle a knife he whittled toy boats.

In his early teens his parents returned to live in Copenhagen, much to the chagrin of young Peter who had come to love the fresh air and open spaces of the country. He felt lost in an alien world until the family acquired a very small seaside cottage to stay in at weekends.

"I loved it. I knew what I wanted. I knew the sea was to be my life."

HIS FIRST BOAT

Three drums fitted to a triangular frame with a mast and sail made up his first self-built boat. It could sail only downwind. It whetted his appetite for the sea even more, but he never made the grade as seaman. A medical test disclosed he was colour-blind and he was rejected.

"I cried for a week."

Instead he signed on as a messboy, but after six months in a hot galley and mess he longed for open space and fresh air. He was apprenticed to the Royal Danish Navy shipyard in Copenhagen, where he worked himself up from repairing dingshies to fully fledged shipwright and overseer.

He worked on the restoration of the 1860-built wooden frigate Jutland, on destroyers and all types of vessels. When the Germans overran Denmark he joined some other shipwrights from the Navy yard to build North Sea fishing boats.

TO NEW ZEALAND

One of the main reasons why 25 years ago he packed up and came to New Zealand was to find a better climate for his son, Harry, who was sickly and could not stand the wet and cold climate and smog of Copenhagen.

When he spotted an advertisement in a Danish boatbuilding gazette offering a boatbuilding job in New Zealand he applied, got it, and came to the Bay of Many Coves. For two-and-a-half years he took care of a businessman's property there and built boats to fill in spare time.

"It was a beautiful spot, just what we wanted. Clean water, clean air. Harry had been seriously ill nearly every year of his life. He was nine when we came, tiny and pale. In one year he started to grow. We could throw away his whole box of pills. That alone was worth all the effort."

Harry is now a gifted boat designer working in Auckland.

Before setting out the family had decided to review the situation within four years after their arrival. They liked the life, the country and the people, but Pop found the language an enormous hurdle. The isolation of Bay of Many Coves was no help, but the problem eased a little when they moved to Picton and gained more practice in English.

"The language. It is difficult. It was a year thing."

Pop and his son Fin were taken on by Roger Carey, an established Picton shipwright.

"I told Roger that we would like to build boats ourselves later, so, if he did not want us . . ."

"He could not do enough for us. A very nice man. We got accustomed to New Zealand ways. Different systems, different timber."

TOOLS HIS CAPITAL

When he landed in New Zealand Pop had only four pounds ten shillings left in his pocket. His capital was in nine boxes of tools and in a dismantled Danish-designed double-ender boat. They rebuilt it in Hende's garage.

"The Henders were good to us. Mrs Hender brought us cups of tea. We did not want them. We were not used to sitting down with tea. We wanted to work. But she said we must have our cuppa. So we drank tea and built the double-ender. We sold it in Nelson for \$1300, which was enough to buy a section."

"We never looked back. We built quite a few boats there."

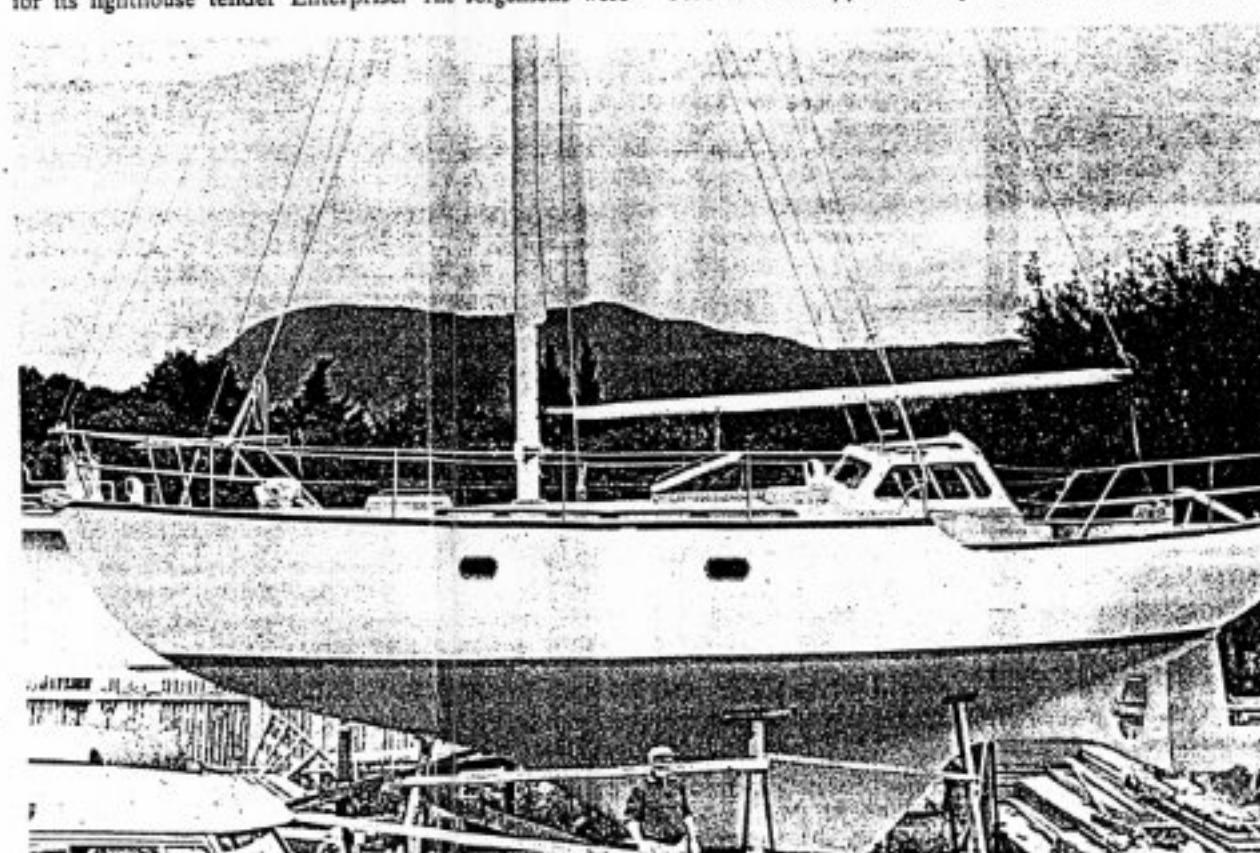
Fin went back to Denmark for three years to learn about boat designing from Pop's old boss. When he returned three tradesmen and two apprentices were working for Pop.

ENOUGH TO START

"I've been lucky. The Shell Oil Company wanted my section. The price was enough to start at Waikawa. We couldn't afford it really. It was the only time Fin and I had a disagreement."

They themselves built their large workshop and slipway, aided by a bank overdraft and an understanding bank manager.

About that time the Marine Department called tenders for its lighthouse tender Enterprise. The Jorgensens were



Stormbird in her Waikawa nest. Reared with care, she is nearly ready to spread her white wings over the ocean.

among the eight who put in quotes. All proved to be too high. The Department asked Pop where savings could be made and following his suggestions, new tenders were called. The Jorgensens landed the contract. It consolidated their venture.

"I put all my knowledge into that boat. I wanted it to be a good boat for New Zealand."

The Harbour Board's pilot boat, Marlborough, came next. Pop was not too happy about winning that contract. The boat had been designed by Roger Carey and he reckoned that Roger should have built it, too. But tenders were called and his was a mere \$100 less than Carey's.

The business flourished.

Hard work, long hours and stress exacted their price. Just when Pop began to enjoy fewer financial worries his doctor advised him to retire and Fin took over.

DREAMBOAT

A born optimist, Pop saw it as an opportunity to build his dreamboat.

The dream was of long standing. He designed his first in 1949 when still in Denmark and after he had launched three Danish double-enders.

Stormbird is related to that smooth, Danish design, but more modern and mature. She was finished on the drawing board in 1971 and Pop began building her the year after.

All his skill and love of boats are part of Stormbird. Only the best materials — spotted gum, kauri and teak have been used.

Her streamlined hull is so smooth that landlubbing admirers compliment Pop with the supreme insult: "What a lovely fibreglass boat."

"It's bloody wood, **WOOD** with capital letters . . .!"

The hull is kauri, the backbone and frame spotted gum (an Australian hardwood) and the decking teak. The wood was specially selected and left to dry for three years. The kauri came from Lane's sawmill in Totara North, Bay of Islands.

"Lane is a man you can trust. He sent the best, at the right lengths. Beautiful wood."

Though built conventionally, the planking was edge-glued, not caulked. No putty was used. Heavy copper rivets tie the planking to the laminated ribs and kauri plugs are fitted into the rivet holes.

Pop was nervous bringing the boat out of the workshop into the hot, summer sun. Everyone in the yard pulled his leg, saying the glue would not withstand the sun's heat and the planking would split. It did not, not even during the hot January days, and Pop is sure it won't happen now.

TURTLE DECK

Unusual, too, is the turtle deck, flat along the outer edges, but rounded in the centre.

"If the boat ever turns upside down she will have no trouble coming back up."

Not that he intends to be silly, but just in case . . . Strength and safety went into the design.

After all, he and his wife Phyllis are getting on in years. The whole interior is designed for comfort and safety in rougher weather. Nowhere can they be tossed about. Supports are placed everywhere and spaces have been kept purposely confined to prevent the occupants falling over below deck.

"She is 95% waterproof, even upside down."

The cockpit is the nerve centre. Skipper Pop can reach every control — wheel, winches, tiller and engine — from his "throne" aft, protected from waves and wind, with all-round visibility.

The main cabin holds four of the six berths, stove, gas range, primus, a deep freeze and galley. The gas range is gimbaled "so I can have my boiled egg even in rough weather."

CAREFULLY DESIGNED

Every fitting has been carefully designed, every space has been practically used. Alongside the tall, wooden mast are the berths for the skipper and his wife, the latter's built into a cabin complete with dresser.

Light and fresh air are still important to Pop, and he has placed portholes and hatches so that both are plentiful.

The only fibreglass used on the boat is atop of the hatches so he could paint them bright orange.

"That makes us visible from above. Sometimes it is good that they can see you."

Gadgets have been kept to a minimum.

"I kept everything simple. It is no good having lots of electric gadgets that can go wrong. Imagine an electric toilet flush that won't work."

A footpump brings fresh water to the sink, a bucket on deck gravity feeds the shower, a handpump clears the cabin floor should water enter. The only mechanical unit is housed under the cockpit, a 36-horse Volvo Penta diesel. Most likely it will run only to keep the deep freeze functioning.

"I love to switch it off, but you need it, particularly in the Sounds, to get out of a tight spot quickly."

The double-ended Stormbird is 11.2m long, has a chubby 3.2m beam and a draft of 1.8m. Her keel is weighted with three tonnes of lead. Her hollow wooden mast reaches 16m from the keel.

Her cutter rig can carry 55 sq. metres of sail, a mainsail and two head sails. The latter can be spacers, jibs or genoas.

Practical experience shows through in the design. The boat can be slipped on any normal cradle. Many modern

yachts have to be lifted by crane on to a slip, but since Stormbird is essentially a cruising yacht which will sail in New Zealand waters and perhaps to the Pacific Islands, ability to be slipped anywhere is important.

Pop can talk for hours about his masterpiece, unconsciously caressing her well-dressed timbers.

"I'll be grateful if I can have her for five years. I'll savour every day of it. Building her was a joy. I loved every minute. No stress. I could work on her when I wanted and no one was on my back to get her finished by a certain time."

The only sour note was struck some 18 months ago when the Government applied a 20% tax on boat building. Pop could not afford that, and feared his dream would be shattered just when it was to become a reality.

He won that battle.

Above all, he is a realistic man. He knows he cannot keep the Stormbird forever.

"When the time comes I will sell her."