

SEA SCOUTING

ONE SCOUT'S JOURNEY

BY ANA CANTY

Sea Scouting offers so much to those taking part – and especially to those who take the opportunities presented. The following are my reflections as someone who has taken these opportunities. I have been a key member in a national regatta winning team, excelling in various discipline areas such as sailing, rowing, canoeing, ironman, swimming and seamanship to contributing to the group's success in gaining "Naval Recognition", an award presented by the Royal New Zealand Navy that acknowledges all round excellence in stewardship, leadership, programme, effort and attainment.

My father is English, my mother is Niuean and I was born in a land locked county in England. I never really saw much of the sea until I moved New Zealand at age 10. This is where my journey through Sea Scouting began.

Dad suggested that because we lived in the "City of Sails", how about I learn to sail and become a Sea Scout? A few calls later, I was hooked up to the New Lynn group.

Soon my love of sailing became apparent, my first capsizing drill in the Manakau didn't really worry me. It was the idea of sharks and the tales of the Kraken that put the fear of Neptune into me! Before long I was involved in annual regattas, starting with the Ice Breaker in Hamilton in 2007. Oh boy – I was kinda rubbish in a kayak!

As time went on, I centred my efforts on Sunburst sailing with the scouts and travelled all over the country competing in various regattas and competitions, narrowly missing out on representing New Zealand Sea Scouting in the United States.

Throughout my time in scouts I have gone from pupil to master and I now thoroughly enjoy passing on my passion for the sea by teaching youngsters how to sail.

I have met many interesting people through my association with Scouting and as a direct result of one meeting I now crew in Keeler Class racing on Tuesday, Wednesdays, Friday evenings



and on many Sundays with the Ponsonby Cruising Club, Richmond Yacht Club and Yacht Squadron. This has furthered my fascination with sailing, especially as we – as a crew – have won a fair few race series.

Many friends tell me how jealous they are of my exploits, saying how they wish they could do this... that... the other. The answer is simple – you CAN! All you need is application and everything else falls into place. It matters not if you are Pacifica or Palangi – the sea doesn't care nor judge.

In the early days, on cold winter Sunday mornings I remember thinking that my dad must have been mad waking me up to go sailing, but I'm glad now that he was a bit nuts as I am enjoying the benefits. I look back fondly at those times – as I return home from visiting dad in the asylum!

But my scouting hasn't been all about sailing. I've enjoyed many a tramping expedition and various other competitions not connected with the water. Many times we have beaten the Land Scouts at their own game.

Through scouts I managed to gain a place on the *Spirit of New Zealand* in 2012 (Voyage 628) and had the most amazing 10 days of my life up till that point. It opened my eyes to a whole new form of sailing and camaraderie. My knowledge of sailing taught through Sea Scouts stood me in good stead on board the *Spirit*.

To cap it all, I got the chance to crew on the *Spirit* again during the 2013 Trans-Tasman Race. We sailed from Sydney to Russell in seven days, 22 hours and 36 minutes in appalling conditions that saw five ships having to retire due to damages sustained.

Whilst not wholly a scouting thing, the *Spirit* often has Sea Scouts on board and scouting has taught me many things about how to get on with fellow shipmates in confined quarters, and how to be tidy and well ordered.

The expert and stable leadership of New Lynn Scouts has shown me how to get the very best from myself and for that I will remain forever thankful.

