

30 MINUTE SPECIAL AMERICA'S CUP TOUR

Direction: up the stairs/down the ramp.

■ Welcome to this special tour about the America's Cup, and how a small nation like NZ came to win what is often considered yachting's most prestigious prize – three times. In **1995**, New Zealand won the America's Cup, then again in **2000** and yet again in **2017**. How did that happen?

A background to NZ sailing:

In main gallery.

■ Unlike many other countries, New Zealand is completely surrounded by water – the only way to get here, until about the 1950s, was by sea:

700 years ago, Māori arrived by sea from Polynesia, and the Europeans arrived about 250 years ago.

Once here, many people worked, fished, traded and travelled on the sea.

■ By the late-1800s, sailing had become a popular sport, though mainly either between workboats, or between the wealthy in their expensive yachts. The average person generally didn't take part, except as a spectator.

Among others, fishermen played a part in changing that:

Mullet was a sought after fish in Auckland at the time, and fishermen wanted to get their catch to market as quickly as possible so it was fresh.

Mullet boats were simple, fast and cheap, very appealing to the less well off, who were keen to take part in yacht racing.

As the sport developed, yacht designs and sailing skills improved and in time, world class sailors emerged, among them was Sir Peter Blake, our most famous sailor ...

Walking up the stairs.

■ This gallery, called *Blue Water Black Magic*, was built in memory of Sir Peter Blake, after his death in 2001. [Brief outline of the tragic story of his death goes down well if there's time to explain it somewhere in the tour.]

At top of stairs, facing Bandit.

■ At eight years old, Peter Blake's father built him a P-Class like the one suspended at right. It's a children's yacht – not easy to sail, but it teaches children excellent sailing skills.

■ Later, as a teenager he, his brother and a friend built their family boat Bandit (suspended next to the P-Class).

■ In time he became a very successful international and round the world sailor. [Including winning the Whitbread Round the World Race (1990) and the Jules Verne Trophy (1995).]

By 1992 he had become involved with the America's Cup. In 1995, Blake was head of the New Zealand America's Cup team – which went on to win the Cup in this boat – NZL32 'Black Magic'.

In 2000, the NZ team won the Cup again, then – after years of disappointment – finally won it for a third time in 2017.

So, what's the story of the America's Cup?

Standing in front of AC uniform, then moving down to image of yacht 'America'.

■ This is a replica of the America's Cup – the oldest (still active) sporting trophy in the world [the original is held not far away, at the RNZYS].

■ The first race was held in 1851 in England. The British Royal Yacht Squadron established a race intended as a "friendly competition between yachts of all nations", and originally known as the 100 Guineas Cup.

■ The race took place around the Isle of Wight and an American yacht named 'America' easily beat 17 British yachts.

■ Later the Cup became known as the America's Cup, named after the winning yacht, *not* the country.

How did NZ get involved? ...

Progressing down the ramp.

[At about this point you should be passing the other group, going in the opposite direction.]

■ For 132 years, American yachts kept winning the America's Cup, and it stayed in the Northern Hemisphere, not really on the radar of NZ sailors.

■ Finally, in 1983, the Australians won the Cup and brought it 'down under'. Now NZ sailors took notice and were keen to take part.

■ The first attempt took place in 1987 in Fremantle. [In the so-called 'plastic fantastic' – *top qualifier in the round robin races.*]

■ In 1988 the New Zealand syndicate made a hostile challenge to the American team – in KZ1 the Big Boat. [Note that KZ1 is on display outside the museum.]

The Big Boat had a crew of 40 – but lost to the much smaller American catamaran – which had a crew of 9.

[■ In 1992 – in NZL20 – the team *reached the finals of the Louis Vuitton Cup.*]

■ In 1995, NZ finally won the America's Cup [Start video clip of 'Black Magic' racing to see it in action.]

■ Peter Blake was now a national hero and was knighted, to become Sir Peter Blake. [Point out picture of him on wall if appropriate for group].

He was also part of the 2000 competition, which New Zealand won again, here in Auckland.

Part way down next ramp, alongside hull of Black Magic.

■ Here are a couple of interesting numbers about Black Magic: the boat is 80 ft long. The mast *alone* is 110 ft tall.

■ The total boat weighs 25 tonnes ... the weight of the mast and hull together is 5 tonnes [may need to point out that displayed mast is not full height!! If asked, full size spare mast is suspended in gallery downstairs].

The remaining weight is all in the bulb: 20 tonnes

[the original is made of lead alloy but ours is a lightweight replica – original is held in Te Papa].

In 1995 it was a very fast boat, but technology moves on ...

Beside the 2013 test foil.

■ With each competition, designs change and the boats get faster.

2013 – a major design change ...

■ For the 2013 challenge in San Francisco, there was a major design change.

■ The Cup holders, Oracle, chose to use 72ft catamarans, fitted with hydrofoils [point out top image on special panel].

■ Suspended here is a test foil from New Zealand's catamaran.

■ This race was infamous for its shock result: Team NZ were ahead 8-1 and needed just one more race to win. However, part way through the competition, the tables turned dramatically and Oracle went on to win 9-8. The nation mourned!

2017 – smaller, faster catamarans ...

[Point out lower image on special panel.]

■ Bermuda. Nervous that history might repeat, New Zealanders were biting their fingernails.

■ However, shortly before the racing began, Team New Zealand revealed their secret weapon: 'cyclors' – the cycling sailors. [See image on panel.]

■ Happily, this time Team NZ won the Cup convincingly: 7-1, although until the boat crossed the line in the last race, the nation held its breath. Then rejoiced!

The future, 2021 ...

■ We're looking forward to the next competition, which will be held here in Auckland in March 2021.

■ The yacht design will go back to monohulls – though a very radical new version. [See special panel.]

Proceeding down final ramp:

■ We will be right in the centre of the action: the end of this wharf has been extended for the Italian Luna Rossa team base. Team NZ's own base is just opposite and is already a hive of activity.

■ Thank you for listening etc ...