

The John Cole tribute to regatta aesthetic

CIMINO COLE



Lurline

brother, to be raised, and to subsequently live, worlds apart. At Elam, John met Betty, his soul-mate and in time they had two daughters. Betty arrived in Australasia as a nine-month-old as part of a Jewish migrant family from Eastern Europe.

John and Betty were close friends of, and politically simpatico with, John and Cathy Male of Scotts Landing. John, who'd once been Eleanor Roosevelt's personal secretary, was the founding chairman of the Foundation for Peace Studies, and of Mahurangi Action. The Coles were regular visitors of the Males at their Ridge Road home, which had been scouted out for them by Rex (ARD) Fairburn. John's preferred mode of arrival was his Noelex 22, but Betty preferred the road, so would arrive independently. John was also a regular visitor at Mahurangi West, often as a result of being roped into projects by activist cousins there. John richly illustrated and drew maps for the community-led walking-access-only initiative that blew the proposed concrete road bridge out of the estuary at Te Muri. With the purchase of additional parkland in 2010, connecting to Hungry Creek Road, the community was forced to relitigate the issue. This time, however, the council committed, in February this year, to keeping Te Muri car-free forever.

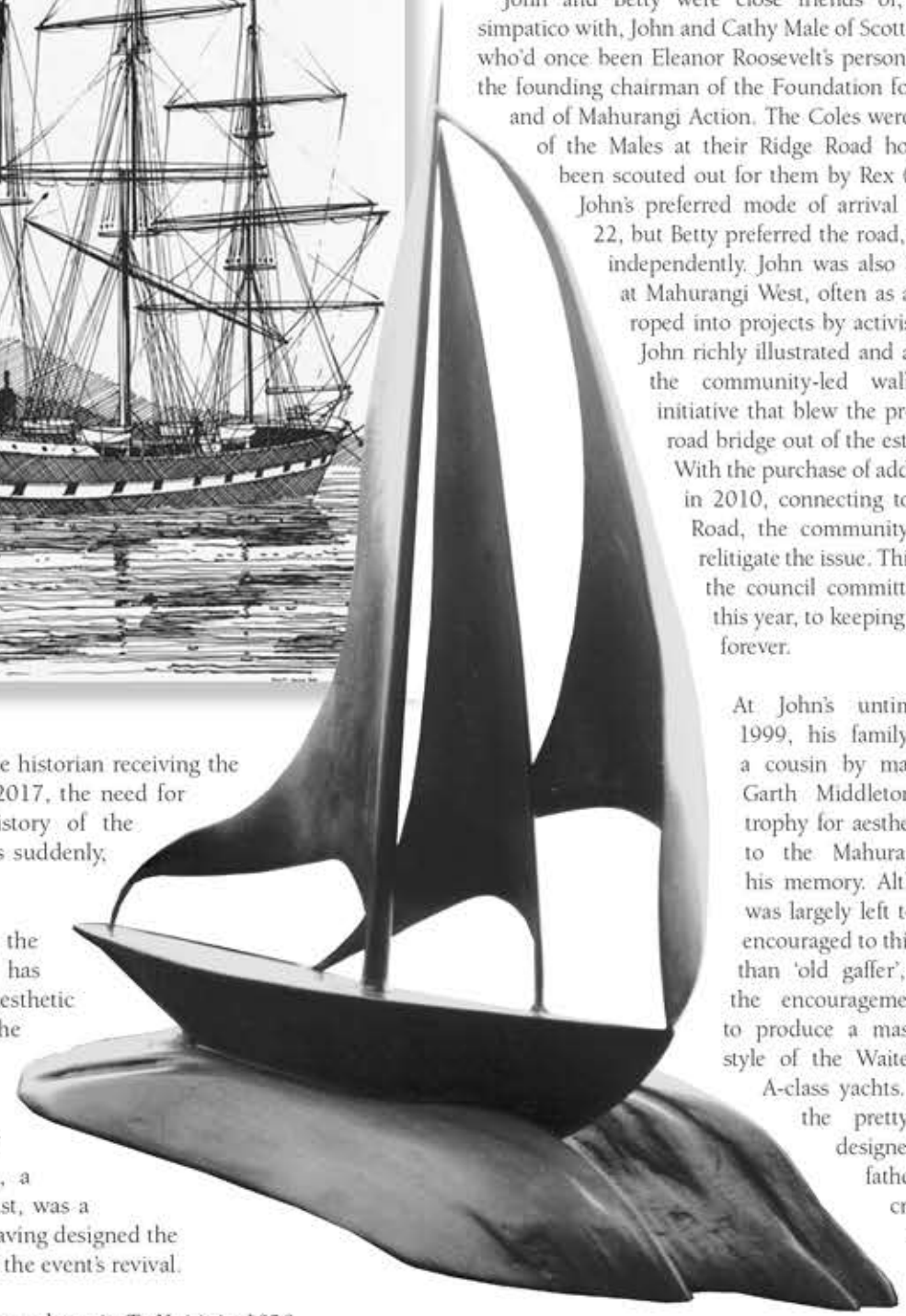
At John's untimely death in 1999, his family commissioned a cousin by marriage, sculptor Garth Middleton, to create a trophy for aesthetic contribution to the Mahurangi Regatta in his memory. Although the brief was largely left to Garth, he was encouraged to think classic rather than 'old gaffer', which was all the encouragement he needed to produce a masterpiece in the style of the Waitemata Harbour's A-class yachts. One of which, the pretty Colin Wild-designed *Arohia*, Garth's father, Jack, had crewed aboard, when she was owned by his boss Gordon Pollard. Jack later became

an owner. Garth acquired an abiding reverence for wood from his grandfather, a Norfolk-born Gallipoli vet, who, despite losing his favoured right arm in that forlorn campaign, became an accomplished hobbyist cabinetmaker in later life, and, like so many of his comrades, a confirmed pacifist. His penchant for mottled kauri led to the inevitable moniker Mottled Mid.

With a marine historian receiving the trophy in 2017, the need for a short history of the John Cole Trophy was suddenly, starkly apparent.

Since 2001, the John Cole Trophy has been awarded for aesthetic contribution to the Mahurangi Regatta. Aside from being a yachtsman and exemplary friend of the Mahurangi, John, a successful graphic artist, was a friend of the regatta, having designed the poster that was part of the event's revival.

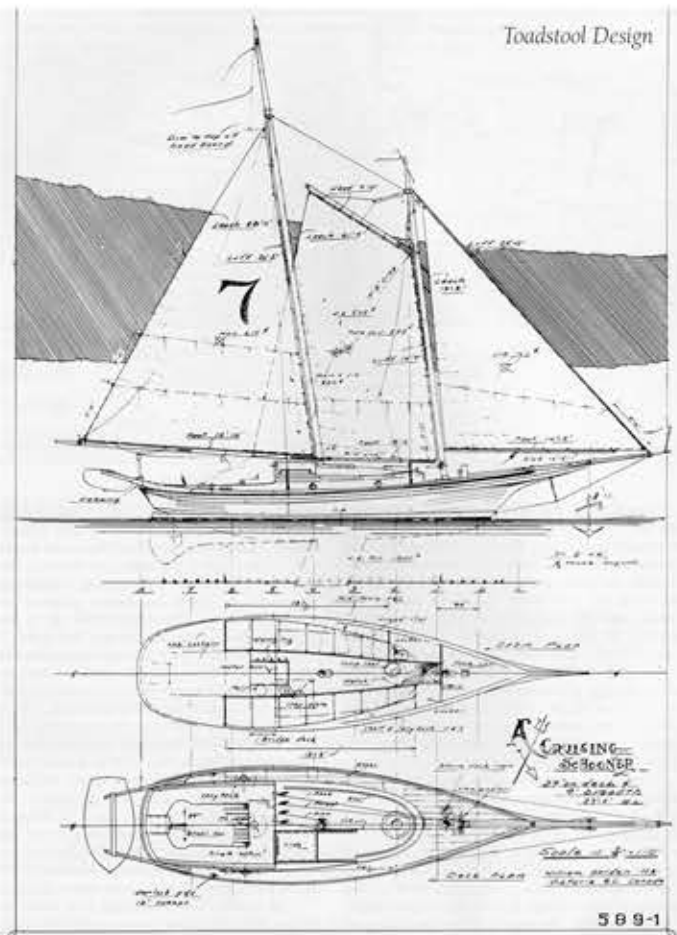
John Turnbull Cole was born in Te Kuiti, in 1929, a day, in those days, from where his Cole grandfather had settled his winnowing oar, deeper in the King Country in Waimiha. As an 18-year-old, Robert Bell Cole had sailed from Northern Ireland aboard the barque *Lurline* and worked for his relative Thomas Ritchie on the Chatham Islands. John's father Jack, the eldest of six and of intelligent temperament, had succumbed to depression, leading to the tragic separation of John and his



While it was imagined that the work would feature Garth's signature wafer-thin kauri forms, the sculptor was adamant that the trophy, to endure, should be cast in bronze. Garth's other insistence was that the trophy itself should be inscribed, so that over time its surfaces would become increasingly imbued with those engravings. Already, the inscriptions have filled much of the available deck space, nicely following the lay of the decking, as it were.

When Mahurangi Action took delivery of the John Cole Trophy, a Mahurangi artist and furniture maker, while transported by its form, felt that its wave-like wooden base was not sufficiently substantial. It has taken sixteen years for the penny to drop: The John Cole Trophy is now to gain a mottled-kauri plinth, just as soon as some reader offers a suitable off-cut!

When it comes to selecting a recipient, Mahurangi Action is invariably spoilt for choice, and 2017 was no exception. Prompted by the crowd-pleasing parade of classic wooden launches organised by the Waitemata Woodies, it was decided to honour the incomparable contribution of 'patron' and marine historian and author extraordinaire, Harold Kidd, to the appreciation of the region's boatbuilding history.



John Cole Trophy inscriptions

- 2001 *Jersey Lily* Fred McElrea
- 2002 *Maggie* Brian & Andrea Owen
- 2003 *Thetis II* Paul & Felicite Harris
- 2004 MCC Yearbook Stephen Horsley
- 2006 Peter Oxborough
- 2007 Prohibition Big Band conductor Trevor Thwaites
- 2008 Shoreside regatta director Michael Gordon
- 2009 *Fidelis* Nigel Stoke
- 2010 *Jane Gifford* Peter Thompson
- 2012 *Rawhiti* Greg Lee
- 2013 Hugh Gladwell Services to Mahurangi Regatta
- 2014 MCC Yearbook Lyn Bergquist
- 2015 *Rainbow* Brad Butterworth Dimock Family Hamish Ross
- 2016 *Wee Tawera* Mike Mahoney St Ayles skiffs fleet
- 2017 Harold Kidd marine historian and author extraordinaire

Toadstool Design of the first trophy winners boat 'Jersey Lily'

