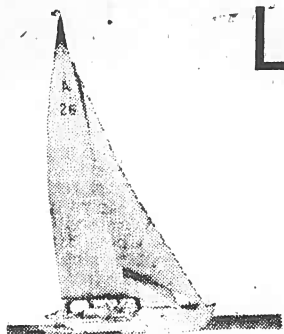


LORD HOWE—Hospitable, Lovely And Little-Known



Sailing back from Sydney after competing in the Tasman yacht race, the Auckland yacht, Leda, called at a tiny island paradise out in the middle of the ocean. Unlike Norfolk, little is known in New Zealand of Lord Howe Island. The only regular service to it is from Sydney. The Auckland Star's yachting writer, W. A. Wilson, describes the Leda's visit:

NORTH-EAST from Sydney 430 miles a great pyramid of rock rises sheer out of the sea. High as Mount Victoria, Mount Eden and One Tree Hill piled on top of one another, it was the first land we sighted after five days of tacking back and forth against fresh nor-easters.

We eased sheets and ran down toward it across long Pacific rollers in the warm afternoon sunshine. Almost to the day we were 163 years

by **W. A. WILSON**

behind the frigate, H.M.S. Supply, commanded by Lieutenant Henry Liddbird Ball, the first European vessel to sight Lord Howe Island.

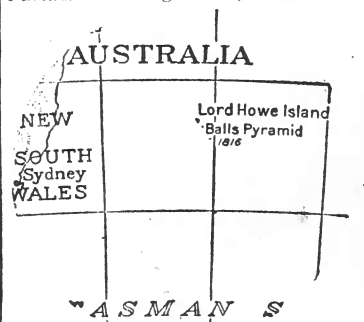
It was dark by the time we were in the lee of the land. So Terry Hammond, our radio operator, contacted the island on the wireless and told them we would not attempt to sail through the coral reef into the lagoon until morning.

Our two women cooks staged a "strike" at this stage. They were left to stow sails and heave to while the six men prepared tea. (Both parties considered they had the best of the bargain!)

It was blowing fresh with rain squalls when we hoisted sail early next morning and headed for the narrow entrance. A small launch from Wilson's Ocean View Guest House was waiting outside the reef and it piloted us in to a mooring which had been quitted the day before by the Auckland yacht, Tara.

South Sea Idyll

Only seven miles long and about a mile wide, Lord Howe is the southernmost and one of the loveliest, most unspoiled islands in the Pacific. Meaning to stay three days



H.M.S. Supply sighted Lord Howe 163 years ago.

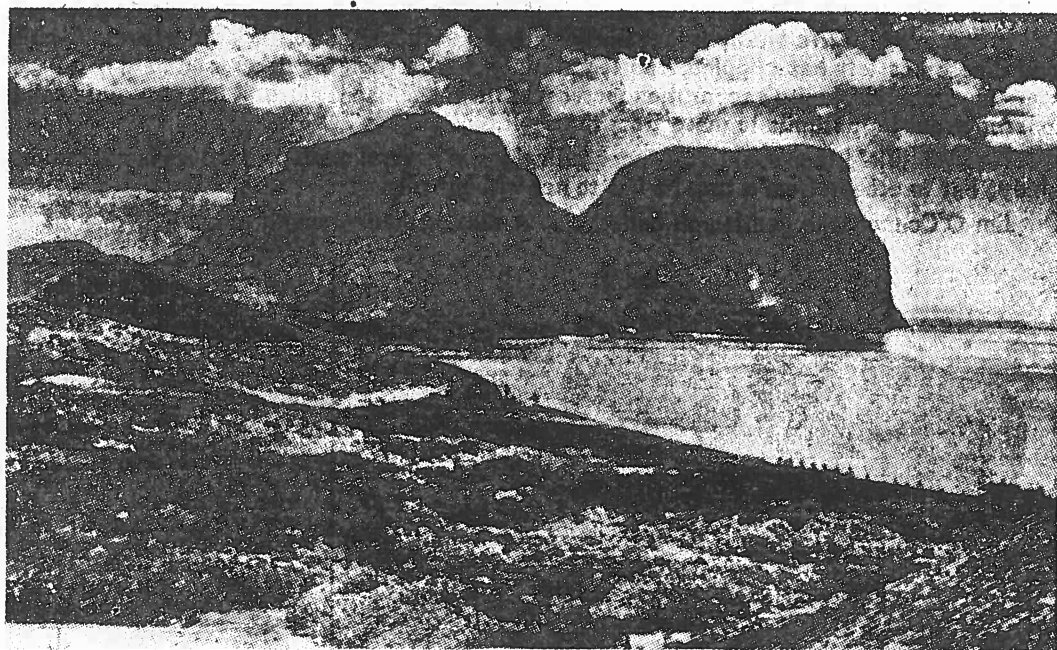
there, we spent six before we got away—and it's not for want of wishing that some of us aren't still there.

Each day that we didn't leave for Auckland we went on fishing, tramping, mountaineering or surfing trips. As we accepted the hospitality of the two guest house owners, lazed about and swam from the boat or paddled round the lagoon in the rubber dinghy, we told ourselves we were waiting for a fair wind for North Cape.

The lagoon, about four miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide, averages between six and 12 feet deep with several deeper holes or coral pools. We found it easy enough to spend a whole day paddling about in our eight-man rubber dinghy, looking at the coral and brilliantly coloured fish through glass-bottomed boxes and diving for anything we fancied.

On the island's eastern side there is no reef and from Ned's and Blinkie Beaches you get excellent surfing. There are points all round the island for rock fishing. In the hills are wild pigs and goats.

Dominating everything and generally capped with clouds, are



Lord Howe Island is dominated by Mounts Liddbird (2504ft) and Gower (2840ft).

Mounts Gower and Liddbird. Mount Gower at the end of the island is the taller but also the easier to climb. Nevertheless it is a day's stiff going to get to the top and back in 10 hours.

Mount Liddbird has only been climbed by three or four people. It required ropes, irons and pegs.

Just to make it a real fairy story island Lord Howe also has a buried treasure.

In George's Bay, an almost inaccessible little cove at the foot of Mount Liddbird's eastern slope, the skipper of the whaling ship George buried a chest full of 5000 sovereigns after his ship had struck a rock and been beached there in 1830.

He kept quiet about it when picked up, but when he returned with a new ship the following year, he found that there had been a landslide—his treasure was well buried. It's still there if anybody feels like digging it out.

Seeds And Tourists

Apart from guests, who, since 1948 have brought much money to the island, sale of seeds of the Howea palm has helped to support the population for most of the last 80 years. These palms, sometimes wrongly called Kentias, were originally only found on Lord Howe. They are now used as ornamental shrubs all over the world. Today, they are grown in places like Norfolk Island and California, but the trade from Lord Howe is maintained. The little 1800-ton cargo steamer Morinda was due to take a load of them aboard the day after we left.

As far as is known Lieutenant Ball and his crew were the first people to call at Lord Howe. It was 45 years before anybody went to live there.

In 1833 a party of New Zealand pakehas and Maoris spent two years but became dissatisfied and left. In 1810 two families from New South Wales, whose descendants are still living there, settled on the island.

One of the island's main attractions for visitors today is its remoteness. On the island itself the only means of transport apart from two old trucks are push bikes. The settlers are very careful to preserve the island's unspoiled appearance.

There is a small "city" with store, airways office, meteorological station and post office and school.

Most of the young people from the island finish their education in Sydney—virtually just round the corner from them by plane. Two generations of islanders have fought in world wars.

While we were there, two or three New Zealanders were visiting the island and a couple of girls were working at one of the guest houses.

Like other visiting yachtsmen we had a tremendous job getting away again. Hospitality and kindness of the people is almost overwhelming.

But all good things come to an end. Before we realized it we were tacking past the towering walls of rock while Terry shouted dolefully to us from the launch which would soon take him back to catch the Sydney plane.

But we will go back one day.

Leda Wins White Island Race

The scratch keeler Leda, owned by the Wilson Brothers, has won the 400-mile White Island cruising race for the second year in succession. She finished so far ahead that the big time allowance she was giving to the smaller boats cancelled itself out.

Second place went to Taurangi and third place to Hope.

Ladybird and Bluewater had not finished by 10 a.m. today but they had no chance of upsetting the placings.

Hope had a chance of beating Leda for first place until she was becalmed and had to anchor off the Whangaroa Heads. An ebbing tide prevented her from sailing up the harbour and it was not until 2 a.m. today that she finished.

Hope gave a good performance as it was the first time she had raced ketch-rigged and her sails had never been stretched.

