



-TO-
WONDERFUL TRIP
 -TO-

TONGA, SAMOA, FIJI, BANKS ISLANDS, NEW HEBRIDES, NEW CALEDONIA, NORFOLK ISLAND

* By the Company's Magnificent New Steamer *

"WAIKARE" (3070 TONS REGISTERED).

From SYDNEY, 1st JULY, 1899. From AUCKLAND, 6th JULY, 1899.
 Arriving back at Sydney, 9th August, 1899.

FARES - - £35 to £52 10s, according to Position and Occupancy of Cabin.
 For Itinerary and all other Particulars apply at any of the Company's Offices throughout the Colonies.

PLAN OF PASSENGER ACCOMMODATION, S.S. "WAIKARE."

UPPER DECK.
 MAIN DECK.
 Odd Numbers, Upper Berths. Even Numbers, Lower Berths.

The Early Days of Cruising (Part 5)

by Peter Plowman

In January 1898, Waikare had operated two ten-day cruises from Port Chalmers to the West Coast Sounds, but for 1899 the Union Line scheduled Waikare to operate only one cruise to the Sounds. However, instead of following the same itinerary as the previous year a totally new route was devised, which had similarities to the first trip made by the Wanaka in 1877, as Waikare would make a complete circle of South Island, or Middle Island as it was still generally known.

The cruise would be operated in the middle of a regular voyage from Sydney to Melbourne via New Zealand ports, and passengers from Australia would be able to make the entire trip. After leaving Sydney, Waikare would call at Wellington, Lyttelton and Port Chalmers, from where it would make the 14-day cruise. Waikare would then go from Port Chalmers to Bluff and Melbourne. This advertisement appeared in Sydney and Melbourne newspapers:-

SUMMER EXCURSION ROUND THE MIDDLE ISLAND OF NEW ZEALAND

The magnificent SS WAIKARE will leave Sydney 7th January for Wellington and Port Chalmers. Thence she will make a complete circuit of the Middle Island of New Zealand, visiting Stewart Island, West Coast Sounds, also Pelorus and Queen Charlotte Sounds in Cook Strait. After returning to Port Chalmers she will proceed to Melbourne. The circuit of the island will occupy 14 days and the round trip from Sydney to Melbourne 30 days. Fare £14 and upwards from Port Chalmers.

On Saturday, 7 January 1899, when Waikare departed Sydney there was a large number of passengers booked for the full trip including the cruise. The Daily Telegraph reported:

EXCURSION TO THE SOUNDS

An enthusiastic send-off was accorded the excursionists by the Union Steamship Company's steamer Waikare on Saturday to the Sounds of New Zealand. The Waikare was commissioned to make the trip last season, and proved so admirably adapted for the purpose that it was decided to utilise her again this year. Hitherto the excursion has been limited to a cruise of the West Coast Sounds, but in compliance with a general wish, the company decided that this year's excursion should include a visit to the Sounds of Cook Strait, Queen Charlotte and Pelorus Sounds – thus making a complete circuit of the Middle Island. A medical officer is accompanying the steamer, and a band to provide music for the series of concerts, dances, and balls, etc, to be held during the trip.

Most of the sea travelling between the different sounds is done in the early morning before breakfast, and as they are separated by only a few miles, the vessel is only at sea for a few hours each day. The remainder of the time is to be spent in sailing up and down the sounds or laying at anchor. A steam launch and a fleet of boats are to be placed at the disposal of the passengers for fishing excursions, boat races, etc.

On the way back from Lyttelton, the Waikare will call at Akaroa, a place described as one of the prettiest seaport towns in the colony, spending a few hours there. It is not surprising, therefore, that this extension and such a varied programme of amusements proved a strong inducement to so large a number of excursionists.

On arrival at Port Chalmers on 16 January, Waikare had 108 passengers on board, embarked at Sydney, Wellington and Lyttelton, who were to make the subsequent cruise. More passengers embarked before Waikare departed on 17 January, with a number of passengers brought from Melbourne on the Talune joining at Bluff, bringing the total on board up to 192, the largest yet to be taken on a West Coast Sounds cruise. Later an unidentified passenger provided a report on the cruise that was published by a number of newspapers, which stated:-

The Waikare left Port Chalmers on the 17th ult with 192 passengers, bound for the famous Sounds of the West Coast. This year a new departure was made by the Union Co. Instead of an eight days' trip beginning with Preservation Inlet and ending with Milford Sound, returning to Dunedin direct, the experiment was made of making an entire circuit of Middle Island. The trip was lengthened to 14 days, enabling the steamer to call at Stewart Island in the south, and Pelorus and Queen Charlotte Sounds in the north, afterwards landing passengers at Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin. The new departure must be pronounced an unqualified success, although next year the programme will probably be modified to allow of a longer stay in Hall's Arm and in Milford Sound.

Waikare returned to its regular trade between New Zealand and Australia, and soon promotion began for a second winter cruise to the Pacific Islands. Instead of being a repeat of the 1898 trip, a totally new itinerary was devised, which meant there would be fewer days at sea and more ports, with advertisements in newspapers on both sides of the Tasman Sea.

WINTER EXCURSION

To the SOUTH SEA ISLANDS, JULY-AUGUST 1899. An Excursion will be made by the S S WAIKARE to the South Sea Islands, leaving Sydney about 3rd July, and Auckland about 7th July, whence the Route will be to TONGA, SAMOA, FIJI, BANKS ISLANDS, NEW HEBRIDES, NEW CALEDONIA And NORFOLK ISLAND and back to Sydney. The time occupied on the round trip from Sydney will be about six weeks. Leaflets describing the tour and all information, interesting to passengers, may be obtained from any of the Company's Offices.

The arrangements for the start of the cruise were also quite different to the previous year. Waikare arrived in Melbourne on a regular voyage from New Zealand ports on 26 June, the next day embarking 46 passengers booked for the South Seas cruise and departing for Sydney. The Argus reported:-

At noon today the fine steamer Waikare, of the Union Line, will leave the wharf for a six weeks cruise to the picturesque South Sea Islands, and a large number of well-known Victorians are making the excursion. The Waikare proceeds first to Sydney, where many other excursionists will join her, and will finally take her departure for the islands from Auckland, which port she is expected to leave a full ship. The popularity of these trips is increasing every year.

By the time the Waikare departed Sydney on Monday, 3 July, the number of cruise passengers had swelled to 110, and The Daily Telegraph reported:-

The popularity of the excursion to the interesting Islands of the South Seas, as arranged by the Union Steam Ship Company, was shown by the crowd of passengers which left Sydney in the Waikare yesterday, and the immense crowd of friends which assembled on the wharf at Circular Quay to bid them a safe and pleasant cruise. The weather prospects for the trip are all that could be desired, while the arrangements of the Union Company for the convenience of the passengers were complete, even to luxuriousness. The Waikare, than which no better vessel of the company's fleet could be selected for the purpose, was in perfect order, and the passengers and their friends were loud in their praises as to her clean and comfortable appearance.

The company's announcement for the excursion, "a wonderful trip among sunny southern Isles," is thoroughly justified by the programme, gaining experience from last season's excursion, which included the somewhat lengthy

run from Auckland to Tahiti; the trip this year embraces a succession of two-day inter-island voyages. This will give passengers less time on the water and more time ashore at the various ports of call. In addition to a visit to Tonga and Samoa, the programme covers a stay of some days in Fiji, visits to the beautiful Island of Rotuma, and to such islands of missionary enterprise and interest as Banks Island, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia (Noumea), and Norfolk Island.

Waikare arrived in Auckland on 8 July, and after embarking about fifty more passengers departed the same day, the United Press reporting:-

The Waikare, now engaged in an excursion trip to the South Sea Islands, arrived from Sydney this morning, and left again in the afternoon for the South Seas. The Waikare today took aboard a large steel steam launch belonging to the Mokoia, for use at ports of call where there is no boat service. A large number of the passengers have taken bicycles, there being a number of places at which these may be used. The Waikare took in a considerable quantity of coal at Sydney, and 430 tons were shipped here. The vessel has to carry sufficient coal to last her throughout the trip.

Overall the cruise was a great success, the only problems being some very wet days that restricted shore excursions, and the abandonment of the visit to Norfolk Island due to very bad weather.

The Union Line decided to again operate a 3-night cruise from Port Chalmers to Stewart Island over the Christmas 1899 period. This trip had proved popular in 1895 and 1896, and was made by Mararoa, with some 180 passengers in both the saloon and steerage accommodation.

Waikare again operated a cruise around the South Island of New Zealand, but the itinerary was different. On 30 December 1899, Waikare

departed Sydney for Wellington, from where it departed on 4 January to make the cruise around South Island. There were about 180 passengers on board, almost half of them from Australia. Waikare arrived back in Wellington on the morning of 25 January and disembarked the New Zealand cruise passengers, then left the same afternoon for Sydney, where it arrived on 30 January.

The Union Line did not schedule another South Seas Islands cruise in the winter of 1900, and the Christmas cruise from Dunedin to Stewart Island was also not repeated. However, Waikare again operated a West Coast Sounds cruise in January 1901, though there would be another alteration to the itinerary for Australian passengers. Waikare departed Melbourne on 3 January, proceeding via Hobart and Bluff to arrive in Dunedin on 10 January. The actual cruise, departing on 12 January, only went to the Sounds, arriving back in Dunedin on 24 January, and then Waikare returned to Melbourne. With no South Seas Islands cruise scheduled for the winter of 1901, Waikare spent the rest of the year on its regular service across the Tasman Sea.

Waikare started 1902 operating its seventh cruise from Dunedin to the West Coast Sounds. The vessel departed Sydney on 4 January and had a rough trip to Wellington, arriving a day late and embarking more passengers for the cruise. Waikare arrived in Port Chalmers on 12 January with 70 of the passengers on board being booked for the cruise to the Sounds.

Departing Port Chalmers on 14 January, Waikare stopped briefly the next morning at Bluff to embark the passengers who had come from Melbourne on the Monowai. The cruise had fine weather throughout, and Waikare returned to Port Chalmers 28 January. Next day Waikare left for Lyttelton, Wellington and Sydney, arriving on 4 February.

