

Places

Place branding is an important aspect of planning. One only needs to look at the many expensive attempts of Auckland and Hamilton to find a 'brand', the success of the "Absolutely, Positively Wellington" and Christchurch's Garden City brands and at smaller scale the iconic Rakaia salmon to see the significance that a good brand can have for a place. Some brands are cleverer than others and in this issue we launch a series looking at place brands with one of the cleverest, which coincidentally has a Lincoln University connection!

The Canterbury Earthquakes have significantly impacted on the psyche of its residents, so viewers of the new mural at the entrance to the small Lyttelton Harbour community of Charteris Bay might be forgiven for thinking that its claim to be "Home of the Optimist" is an attempt to lift spirits! Only those familiar with yachting might recognise that this commemorates a significant moment in New Zealand yachting history - Charteris Bay was the New Zealand launching place of one of the world's most popular dinghy yachting classes, the Optimist class. In 1975 the first New Zealand Optimist was launched in Charteris

Bay by its builder Paul Pritchett and Optimists went nationwide the following year. Within five years there were more than 2,500 optimists spread throughout the country. It is now nearing 5,000. The Optimist yacht is the class with the greatest number of boats in the world and holds the record for the greatest number of participants in junior classes. It is sailed in more nations than there are in the Olympic movement. New Zealand America's Cup skipper, Dean Barker is one of the many well-known yachties who started their career in Optimists and the current New Zealand champion is Charteris Bay's 15 yr old Jayvee Buchanan.

And there is a link to Lincoln University. On the day that the first Optimist was launched, the daughters of the builder were the first to sail it, Tanya and Sarah Pritchett both went on to complete degrees at Lincoln University – see "Where are they now?" page 34.

Hamish Rennie



Charteris Bay, Home of the Optimist.