

Armit sets course for OK Worlds

by Howard Smith

Takapuna's Leith Armit won the New Zealand OK Dinghy Championships raced off Port Taranaki in February — and set himself a course for the July Worlds in Holland.

Armit, 24, 1983 World Champion and three times world competitor, was far superior in all aspects to easily head the 25-strong fleet.

The powerful boat builder, sailing Joint Effort, in which he won the Worlds in 1983, had only six others close to him in the competition, raced in flukey, unpredictable winds and varying seas.

But Armit managed with his strength and concentration to take four firsts, a third and fourth — enough to give him the series with a race to go on the final day. He chose not to sail the final event.

Greg Wilcox (Charteris Bay) 24, was second over all with 1/2/3/5/6/9 placings. Nineteen-year-old Nigel Soper (Charteris Bay) was third.

The 25 contestants, from all over New Zealand, were surprised by the unpredictable conditions at Point Taranaki, noted previously for its swells and consistent winds.

The New Plymouth Yacht Club, proud of these conditions watched the fleet being spread out by opportunist sailing and contrary breezes.

Attention turned on the last day to the battle for second and third places raging between Peter Meo (Auckland), Dave Gunn (Napier), Joe Ponebski (Worser Bay) and Peter Maynard (Christchurch).

And in that bunch there was an undeclared tussle between Soper (2/10/1/3/10) and Gunn (14/4/5/2/4), the only two with a chance for New Zealand places at the Worlds.

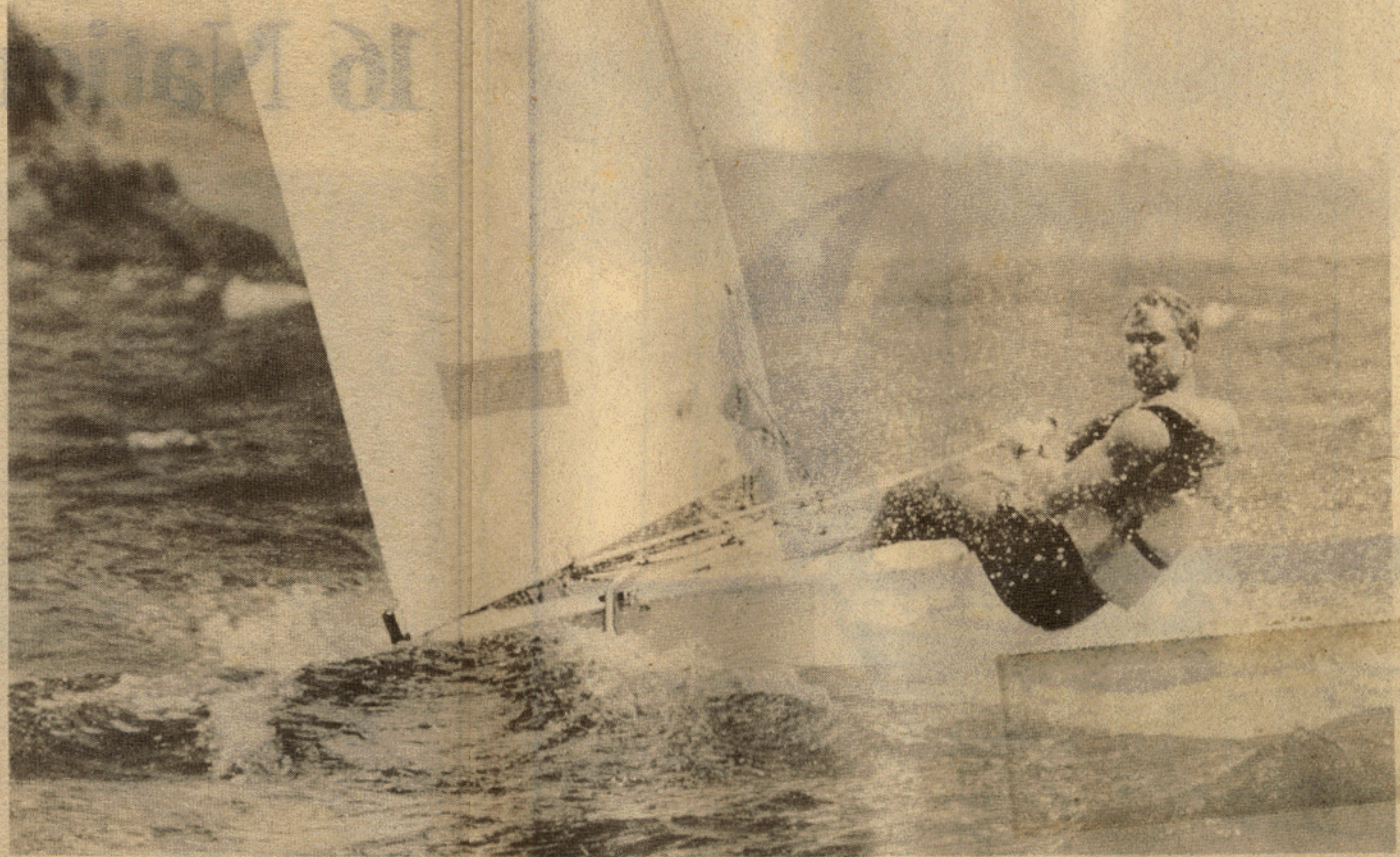
Soper was able to drop one of his 10ths into the last two races on the last day and Gunn could drop his 14th.

The first race was in conditions that saw the wind change 180 degrees and rise from 1 knot to 12 knots. Soper finished 4th and Gunn 8th.

Wilcox came second and clinched his second placing overall, but does not intend to contest the worlds.

In the last race, so important to Gunn, he was lying second when a buoy was shifted after he had passed it, causing him to pull out of the race and protest.

Soper finished eighth in the race but the protest, joined by three or four others, was upheld and the race cancelled.



Leith Armit — sailing hard on a course for the 1985 OK Worlds.

Soper therefore took third place overall and a place at the Worlds.

Gunn later said he was disappointed, but with the wind shifting as it was he couldn't guarantee he would have held second place.

He said the required signals were not given for shifting the buoy which so disadvantaged him.

Soper, on the other hand, was pleased to have the chance at the Worlds. Finance would be a problem (an estimated \$10,000 to get him and his boat to Holland) but he predicted help would be forthcoming from some quarters.

OK results (with total points and places):

Joint Effort, Leith Armit (Takapuna) 5.7, 1; The Water Method, Greg Wilcox (Worser Bay) 30.4, 2; Shotgun, Nigel Soper (Charteris Bay) 32.7, 3; Kampuchean People's Boat, Dave Gunn, (Napier) 43, 4; Rogue and Vogabond, Joe Prebski (Worser Bay) 47.5; Angelo Bly, Peter Meo (Auckland) 47.7, 6; No Name, Dave Clarke (Takapuna) 52.4, 7; Hi Jacker, Peter Maynard (Christchurch) 55.4, 8; Rape and Pillage, Adrian Mannering (Napier) 70, 9; Innocent Victim, Nigel Mannering (Napier) 72.7, 10; Nam Nam, Paul Bainford (Christchurch) 75, 11; Point Blank, L. McLean (Napier) 81, 12; Razor Face, Mike Bamford (Christchurch) 92, 13; Aqualung, H. Dawson (Christchurch) 93.7, 14; Wally's Pride, Alan Holdt (New Plymouth) 95.7, 15; FM, Mike Russell (Manawatu) 108, 16; Hustler, Maurice Parlane (Manawatu) 109, 17; The Reefer, Neil Harvey (New Plymouth) 115, 18; Faf O'Sassy, J. Stewart (Napier) 119, equal 19; Animal, C. Devine (Ngaroto) 119, equal 19; Blunt Instrument, G. Hewitt (Worser Bay) 121, 21; Buckshot, S. Devine (Napier) 131, 22; Kurly Joe, Tony Flannagan (Manawatu) 136, 23; Samantha II, B. Arms (Waitara) 140, 24; Gentleman Joe, Steve Flannagan (Manawatu) 142, 25.