

VICTORIAN NEWSLETTER



RL₂₄

Association of Victoria

AFFILIATED WITH THE RL24
OWNERS ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

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HAWKESBURY RIVER CRUISE - "ARCHENA"

The following article on cruising the Hawkesbury was prepared by our Measurer, Doug Lee. Doug has been knocking about in RL's for some time now, beginning his relationship with the class in the MK1 La Mancha. After cruising the Whitsundays in company with Arch and Geoff Olney (and their RL28 ARGO) the Lees decided more headroom was a high priority and soon "ARCHENA", a MK3, was in their backyard. Doug has made a great job of fitting her out as she just drips with clever ideas and neat fittings most of which he designed and made himself. Doug is no stranger to yachts having built a succession of highly successful LAZY E's and achieved State Champion status in that class and National Champion in XY16 catamarans. He is a VYC qualified sailing master and in addition to his support of the RL24 Association he is actively committed to the McCrae Yacht Club where he is heavily involved in the junior training program.

Doug writes

For the August/September 1986 school holiday period we took "Archena" north to Sydney to cruise the Hawkesbury River. With "Lowana V" joining us for the second week we decided to begin our adventure up river from Windsor.

Tuesday August 19

The journey from Sydney took about one hour, with one wrong turn, and we launched our yacht from a good but silted three lane ramp, just down stream from the Windsor road bridge. Leaving the crew to sort out our home afloat, I left with car and trailer for Akuna Bay on the Cole and Candle Creek. After parking in the public trailer park I had a quick look over the facilities of the Akuna Bay Marina and the large fleet of luxurious motor cruisers and yachts moored to the floating jetties.

Our Sydney cousin arrived after work and drove me back to Windsor where, to our surprise, we found Archena high and dry in the mud. Engrossed in their own activities the crew were unaware of the receding water until it was too late. So we bed down for the night slipping down to the bottom of our sleeping bags. By midnight we were level again and after some manouvering in the moonlight, an anchor was set in the middle of the waterway.

Wednesday August 20

After a hearty breakfast we began our voyage, making good progress under motor and the outgoing tide. The extent of the recent Sydney floods soon became evident with debris entangled high in trees along the river bank. Various areas had been silted over and numerous structures and buildings had been washed away. The first overhead power cable was approached with caution as we edged safely under in almost disbelief. We subsequently passed under many more cables on our way which all had a minimum clearance of 13.7 metres above the M.H.W.S. (Mean High Water Surface).

We lunched at the jetty at Sackville Gardens, another caravan park devastated by the floods. After Lower Portland the river seemed to widen around each bend all the way to Wiseman's Ferry. The area appeared to be a haven for water skiers with waterside accommodation at numerous caravan parks along the way. We pulled in at the sandy spit at the turn of the river at Wiseman's Ferry for the night and utilised the facilities of the barbeque and toilets in the adjoining park.

Thursday August 21

I awoke in the early hours of the morning to find ourselves hard aground and listing over to starboard. Being on the high side of an open berth I spent an uncomfortable time paying for my negligence. Afloat again at 1015 hours we continued down the river, dropping anchor in the Sentry Box Reach for lunch where the crew rowed ashore to inspect a large rock cave which we assumed was the Sentry Box. Moving on round the next bend the motor stopped as our fuel ran out. Hoisting our sails we made slow progress in the fickle wind conditions. Fortunately, Spencer was only a couple of bends away where we obtained fuel, ice and supplies.

Friendly Bay around Fishermans Point proved to be anything but friendly with its shallow, muddy bottom and racks of oyster leases, so we moved on to find a lovely little sandy beach on the eastern shoreline of the Marramarra National Park where we stopped for the night.

Friday August 22

We headed off into the morning mist up the Berowa Creek. At times it was hard to pick the turns in the waterway until we were right upon them. Rounding the point into Neverfail Bay, we came across the beginning of a variety of holiday cottages and houses built into the cliff face of the south western bank, with their private jetties, boat ramps and sheds. The startling realisation was that there is no road access to the properties which can only be reached by boat. Passing Calabash Point we came upon the renowned Berowa Waters Inn and at the vehicular ferry crossing we pulled in for a cuppa.

The return trip passed quickly and on negotiating Milsons Passage between Milson Island, the Pacific Highway and the Newcastle Expressway bridges came into view. Passing safely under the bridges, we negotiated the western channel through oyster leases up into the Mooney Mooney Creek. Unable to find a suitable landing spot, we picked up a mooring in Sunshine Bay for lunch. The dominating presence of oyster leases discouraged us from venturing further up the Creek, so we headed south east around Spectacle Island and under the railway bridge to Brooklyn. Replenished with supplies, we sailed across to America Bay at the entrance to the Cowan Creek. Dropping anchor between the shore and the permanent moorings a pair of ducks swam out to greet us and were rewarded with a feed of bread from the crew.

Saturday August 23

Two kookaburras heralded the dawn to a fog bound morning. Taking the dinghy to rocky shore, we climbed the steep track up the eastern bank some 100 metres to the top of a plummeting waterfall. The view at the top was exhilarating as the mist lifted to a bright sunny day. Descending again we scrambled up the rocky creek valley to the base of the waterfall for another perspective.

After lunch we rowed around in the dinghy to Refuge Bay to find the more exposed and photographed waterfall which descends down a rocky cliff face to a small sandy beach. Returning to our craft we found that we had been joined by several large motor cruises rafted together in groups, with their occupants consuming drinks on their raft decks. We felt rather insignificant in our little RL.

Sunday August 24

The drizzling rain cleared by mid morning so we motored around to Refuge Bay to share the inlet with the other weekenders. By late afternoon most of the boats had left and we had the place to ourselves. At dusk thundery clouds rolled in, accompanied by the predicted south-westerly change. In the gusty breeze Archena began to dance from side to side in typical RL fashion, in front of a lee shore. We contemplated moving but elected to stay put rather than come to grief seeking a better anchorage in the dark. Around midnight the breeze had slackened and by morning the wind had abated.

Monday August 25

We headed for Akuna Bay to meet up with Barry and Lyn Aitken and family in "Lowana V". At Cottage Point we pulled into the store for supplies. Unfortunately, daughter Susan didn't quite make the jump to the landing with the low line and had an unscheduled dip and change of clothes.

A short distance up the Cole and Candle Creek we turned into Akuna Bay where we tied up at the wharf and waited for our companions to arrive. We replenished our water, fuel and food supplies, telephoned family and friends, checked our car and trailer and did the washing.

Susan's friend, Felicity, was elated to catch her first fish, a small bream and the only one we got for the day. We were pleased to see the Aitkens and helped them rig and launch Lowana V. Leaving the marina late in the afternoon we rafted together at the end of the Cole and Candle Creek for the night. The crew of Lowana V launched their new rubber dinghy and we had a barbeque tea ashore before retiring for the night.

Tuesday August 26

Unfortunately Lowana V lost a buffer overnight and after a search of the immediate area, we motored down each side of the Cole and Candle Creek without success. At Cottage Point we shopped at the store. Lowana V set her main and jib for the journey up the Cowan and Smiths Creeks, whilst Archena proceeded under motor and jib. It was a gusty south westerly which greeted us as we moved out on the more open water of the Cowan. Lowana V responded instantly, footing high to windward in the fresh breeze.

Approaching the entrance to Smiths Creek, her rubber dinghy flipped and she reluctantly had to retreat under motor to retrieve its contents. We picked up a mooring in the creek and dropped in a fishing line to wait for our companions. Lowana V eventually arrived, all ship shape. After lunch and without any fish, we motored round to the protected anchorage of the southern extremity of Smiths Creek and picked up two moorings for the night.

Wednesday August 27

Four large birds high in a tall gum tree kept a watch over us and greeted us when we awoke in the morning. By 0900 hours we cast off for Bobbin Head. At Cotton Tree Bay we rafted together for a cuppa, where a card school started up on Archena between the teenage crews.

Motoring on again, we reached Bobbin Head and pulled in at the Halversons Boat Hire headquarters for supplies. Anchored off the rock wall of the picnic reserve, we lunched in the warm afternoon sun. Returning back down the Cowan we reached the all weather anchorage of Pinta Bay off Jerusalem Bay. At the end of the inlet we hiked up a rocky valley to find a large cave which a family lived in during the depression years. Whilst having tea, a kookaburra landed on our cross trees and swooped down to the deck for pieces of our meal.

Thursday August 28

Hallets Beach was our next stop, directly across the Cowan from Jerusalem Bay. With a clear beach front and sandy bottom we ran straight up onto the beach on a flood tide. We lazed about in the sun for some time before making a return visit to Refuge Bay and then onto America Bay for the night. We hiked back up to the top of the waterfall again with the crew of Lowana V. The barbeque tea ashore extended well into the night as we assisted the Aitkens in polishing off their bottle of port around an open fire.

Friday August 29

At 0930 hours we set sail for Pittwater. A light north westerly eventually faded and we had to start the motor to make progress against the flood tide. The further we pressed into Broken Bay the more the ocean swell became accentuated. Passing Flint and Steel Point, Barrenjoey Headland and lighthouse came into view and on reaching West Head, we were able to proceed without the motor. Running across the entrance to Pittwater, a seaplane landed along the eastern shore. We lunched at Palm Beach and were impressed with the architecture of various houses as we strolled around the neighbourhood.

It was a short reach across the waterway to Coasters Retreat, where we anchored for the night. The area is a National Park picnic area and camping reserve, with picnic tables and barbeques, a telephone, toilets with showers and a clear sandy beach. We had an uninvited guest for tea, a kookaburra, which swooped down and took a sausage off Denny's plate.

Saturday August 30

At 0900 hours we reached down Pittwater under mainsail in a light north easterly. While underway, Susan and Felicity turned too in the galley and made a batch of pikelets which we ate for morning tea in Towlers Bay. At Church Point we picked our way through a maze of moored yachts (mostly larger) to the park down McCarrs Creek where we had our lunch.

By mid-afternoon the wind had gone round to the south west and was gusting over 20 knots. We reached over to the Prince Albert Yacht Club under jib and motor whilst Lowana V showed her speed, like a true champion, under reefed main and jib. The southern end of Pittwater late on Saturday afternoon was very congested with the larger keel boats returning in divisions from Broken Bay and the smaller dinghy classes racing in between them around the buoys. In the confusion, we lost Lowana V, so returned to Coasters Retreat as originally planned.

Sunday August 31

Lowana V breached beside us in the morning, having also stopped on a mooring in the Retreat for the night. We were pleased to see them and recounted our movements. With both crews wanting to go in different directions, we parted company and set off under working rig for Patonga on Middle Head.

Out on the open water of Broken Bay, Archena romped along on the beat in the 10 to 15 knot breeze. Crossing tracks with a keel boat, the concentration increased as we vied for supremacy. Progress to windward was frustrated by the tide as we crossed from tack to tack. We anchored off Patonga Beach because of the ocean swell and lunched on fish and chips of the fishing and holiday village.

Looking for a place to stop we negotiated the Patonga Creek bar but did not find the creek an attractive anchorage. Moving on we passed Smugglers Cove and Little Patonga Beach. Back into the Cowan, we spent the afternoon in the delightful sandy cove of Fishermans Beach on the western shore. Moving on round the next point, we dropped anchor up the end of Jerusalem Bay for our last night.

Monday September 1

We ghosted down Jerusalem Bay in the morning sun and explored the sheltered anchorage of Yeomans Bay on the opposite side of the creek. Looking Glass Rock was our next point of interest and we made our last stop at the Cottage Point store, before retrieving Archena from the waters of Akuna Bay. By 1400 hours we were all packed up for the road after a most enjoyable cruise.

Having covered most of the Hawkesbury River system, with the exception of the Brisbane Waters, we found the Cowan Creek and its tributaries to be the highlight of the river system and a must for the cruising yachtsman. A dinghy is essential when venturing into the area and a boat hook would be useful.

Doug Lee

HIGH LEVEL CRUISING ON THE HIGH PLAINS

At the end of the RL24 State Championships held at Portland in January this year, most competitors headed west to Adelaide for the National Titles. However, we Corbens and "Anitra" turned north-east and made our way into Victoria's Alps for a short cruise on this State's highest stretch of water, Rokeby Valley Dam. The dam is formed by a wall built across one arm of the Kiewa River and is located above the Falls Creek ski village in the Bogong National Park. The dam is not very big being little more than one-third the area of Lake Wellington but its attraction lies in its scenic beauty, its remoteness and its lack of crowds. We were hoping to have the place to ourselves but two other craft were there when we arrived at about 3pm on a warm Thursday. One was a hovercraft which had no trouble hovering but appeared impossible to steer while the other was a moored Flying Fifteen of considerable vintage. This boat clearly has the distinction of being Australia's highest keelboat on Australia's deepest mooring. During our stay we saw it sailing and in the fresh breeze with almost no waves it was really thrashing along despite its antiquity.

There are two fairly primitive gravel launching ramps giving access to shallow but near-freezing water so having slid "Anitra" off the trailer and secured the car, we motored off-shore without delay. Our ground tackle consisting of a 15 lb CQR on 10m of chain and 35m of silver rope was nowhere near enough to reach the bottom so we hoisted sail on the trot and spent the rest of the afternoon exploring the dozens of little bays and other nooks and crannies around the shoreline. The shore, we discovered with growing dismay, was lined with a combination of natural rock and boulders strategically placed during the dam's construction in the early 1950's. However, with the sun about to drop behind Mt. McKay we found a small inlet measuring about 500m long by roughly 300m wide on the southern side of the dam and all of it ringed by coarse sand. It was the ideal overnight anchorage being surrounded by hills to the west, south and east with an extensive spit on the northern side giving protection should a northerly whip up a chop on the Lake.

We spent the early part of the evening stargazing, but it was soon obvious that we were slowly freezing to death and that the only answer was to hop into our sleeping bags. The transition from clothes to P.J.'s was agony but not half as bad as obeying the commands of nature during the early hours of the following morning. There's a lot to be said for a boat with full headroom and a Porta Potti which is not buried in the nethermost regions of the vessel under the V-berths. On the other hand one could drink less coffee.

Next day began superbly. The weather, in sharp contrast to Portland, was warm and sunny and we did nothing more than soak up the sun, read and soak up more sun. However, after lunch it was clear our luck had run out as massive clouds tumbled over Mt. McKay to the west blotting out the sun and filling us with anxiety. The thought of an alpine electrical storm, however spectacular and awesome, had no appeal to us so with the wind rising quickly we gathered in our lines and raced for the security of the trailer.

Retrieving "Anitra" didn't take half the time it took to launch her but as we drove away from Rocky Valley heading for the waters of Lake Dartmouth, the clouds engulfed us. For the next couple of hours we were fog bound as we groped our way towards Mitta Mitta looking now for a spot to pull over for tea. At length we found it, a place just big enough for the car and boat and a signboard to tell us where we were too. As we picked out the letters, we could hardly believe that it said "Sunnyside"!!

Ross Corben

FOR SALE

RL24 MK I

About 10 years old, Sail No. 113 (present owner has had it for nine years).

Colour: Hull - Yellow, Deck - White

Sails: Headsail, Storm Jib, Main, Radial Spinnaker (red/white)

Motor: Mariner 8hp and 5 gal. tank

Instruments: Boat speed, wind speed, total miles, wind direction, depth sounder.

Extras: Full boom tent - completely encloses cockpit with full head room, good 12v battery.

Trailer: Home made, single axle, tilt trailer. Tows beautifully, easy to launch and retrieve boat (no need to submerge bearings), provides boat with protection and enables easy access to boat whilst on trailer.

Condition: Boat, trailer and all accessories in good condition. Boat has performed well in competition in past years. Has only been used once a year for past three years (comes out for Marlay Point Overnight Race). Kept in shed. Anti-fouling below water line.

Price: Asking Price \$8,500

Boat and owner are well known at Lake Wellington Yacht Club. Genuine opinion of craft could be obtained from Bruce Castles or Ken Hackett.

Boat is housed at Paynesville.

Owner would negotiate a better price for a quick sale as he has committed himself to purchase of RL28.

Contact: Bruce Bowman
PO Box 619
CHELTENHAM 3192
Phone: 03 584 4605

RL24 MK I

Tim Tarri, Sail No. 105, Hull and Trailer recently re-painted.

Contact: Charlie Blackney
Phone: 059 97 6225