



NATIONAL NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2003

RL24 - It's YOUR kind of boat

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FROM THE SECRETARY:

Congratulations again to Simon, Shane and Darryn on their well deserved win in the National Titles at Loch Sport. Their excellent crew work and boat preparation paid off once again. Jeff Germaine and I traveled to Portarlington for the Victorian Trailable yacht championships, which included the Victorian RL24 titles. We had lots of excuses for not sailing - too far to tow the boat for a weekend, trailer not roadworthy, had to work Friday etc. but those who made the effort enjoyed the sailing, even though conditions were very light for most of the weekend. Six RLs competed, the most represented class amongst the 30+ boats in the fleet. Next time we will try to be better organised. We failed to arrange accommodation prior to arriving at Portarlington and spent Saturday afternoon cruising between there and Geelong looking for somewhere to stay. Eventually we ended up in Queenscliff due to the many events going on on the Bellarine Peninsula. The trip home was interesting with a ferry ride across the heads to Sorrento. It gave us the opportunity to look at some possible future locations for State or National Titles. Which brings me to my next subject, the next National Titles. The location has been set, Loch Sport for the third consecutive year and the dates have been set at January 3rd to 9th but the actual program is still to be fine tuned. The consensus is to make the program more flexible ie. more short races early in the series, have a lay day if the weather turns bad and have any resails as soon as possible instead of on a fixed date. This may allow us to finish the series earlier for those who have problems taking the whole week off. Please let the committee know if you have any good ideas for the program as this will be the 30th anniversary National Titles and it would be great to see as many RL24s as possible in Loch Sport.

A BIG THANK YOU FROM SPIRAL NAVIGATOR:

To Hugh and Family (Miss Tress) for providing the final impetus to get us here via the web site.

To Ian for the techo advice that got us onto the same lap. Regards to the rest of This Way Up.

To Mick and Ross for advice and an informal measure - I'm off to the sail maker soon for a trim!

To Jeff for the loan of the belt sander and great hospitality at the club.

To All on Toucan... Some good tussles... We'll be back - watch out!

To the gentleman that spotted us \$10 for lunch. Thanks!

To Jim and Pegasus for additional techo advice and a historical perspective.

Finally to Ross and the crew of the Bertram who re-united us with the tipped Spiral Navigator and kept an eye on us while we swam.

It's been great - we'll be back next year and will hopefully appear for the Vic. titles on the West side of the Bay.

Regards: Wayne, Gretta, Mitchell and Monica.

Don't forget the Melbourne Sail Boat show at the Sandringham Yacht Club on 12th and 13th April. We will have two RL24s on display and Lloyd or Les will be around for a chat about RLs. The website is www.sailboatshow.com.au . For all the interstate RL sailors, please send in any details of your local events of interest so that we can print them in the next newsletter. My e-mail address is catfishtj@hotmail.net.au .

National Championships – 2003

Loch Sport Boat Club was our host for the Twenty-ninth National Championship regatta conducted Lake Victoria from 4th. to 10th. January last and again, the club excelled itself with a great program both on and off the water. Thirteen competitors, represented by eight drop keel and five swing keel boats contested the series which was sailed in breezes ranging from too much to too little but generally was just right if you didn't want conditions too heavy.

The action commenced on Sat. 4th. Jan. with the Invitation Race, the format of which was three consecutive heats of a one-lap derby around a triangular course, the second and third heats starting 10 minutes after the last boat finished the previous heat. On this occasion, the breeze strengthened progressively throughout the afternoon to the extent that, by popular demand, the third heat was abandoned. In the SK divn. Ian Lane (*This Way Up*) won both heats while amongst the DK's, honours were shared between Mick Shannon (*Lowana 6*) and Simon Walsh (*Ohau Rua*). This pretty much set the pattern for the rest of the series with Ian and Simon once more demonstrating their superiority in the Class by winning the SK and DK divisions respectively. They and their crews are worthy champions and deserve our warmest congratulations. However, despite their domination there was plenty of action just behind them and in the DK divn. in particular, the Shannon family (*Lowana 6*) kept Simon focussed and at times downright worried as they led him around the course on various occasions. However, apart from heat 6, the lads on *Ohau Rua* were always able to find something extra and won 6 of the 7 heats. The next 6 boats were very evenly matched and enjoyed some exciting racing throughout the entire regatta. The 4th. place result, for example, was not resolved until the conclusion of the final heat. Going into that race, *Casper* (Trevor Jones) held a one point advantage over *Splice* (Ken Griffiths) but in the light and variable conditions, Ken was able to finish two places to the good of Trevor thus snatching a well earned 4th. place overall. Further illustration of the similarities in the performance of much of the fleet comes from the fact that, at some point during the regatta, nearly all beat each other at least once.

Some high (& low) lights observed during the racing

* Simon scored a DNF in heat 6 because, as James Shannon unkindly remarked, "he didn't have a clue!" (it was a *clew* that Simon unexpectedly didn't have but all wasn't lost – the incident won him the coveted Toad of Barmera Award.

* The prize for the bloke with the widest and most constant smile went to Michael Reid, the new owner of *Sasha*. He won it by the length of the Lake, such was his joy with his new boat. However, the point should be made that it takes courage to turn up with a boat with a performance record like *Sasha's* – a record entirely attributable to the way she was sailed by her previous owner, Ken Hackett, and his son Peter. The fact that she finished a very creditable third in the DK divn. speaks volumes for Michael's sailing ability and his capacity to adjust to a new boat.

* Second prize for the bloke with the widest smile was a tie between Paul Corben who snared a third in the DK divn in heat 6 and swing keeler Paul Davis (*Street Car*) who finished *third across the line* in the same heat, being beaten only by *Lowana 6* and *This Way Up*. Great sailing, boys.

- * Hugh and Lisa Hetherington (*Miss Tress*) were again the sole contestants in the Cruising divn. but clearly enjoyed themselves. With their children, Kara (8) and Howard (now 10) crewing, they exercised sensible discretion when the breeze was up but were seen dicing vigorously with *Toucan* and *Spiral Navigator* when conditions weren't so hectic. Their crowning glory came in heat 7 when, after battling all week with *Toucan*, they finally beat her to the line.
- * The wake board riding prize was won easily by Greta Hill. After performing an involuntary forward one-and-a-half with pyke into the water when *Spiral Navigator* made a rapid and violent round-up, she managed to get a grip on the stern step and was towed (planing, she swears) several hundred metres down the Lake. The spinnaker sheet and brace had run through the blocks and the kite was flying like a massive burgee but the boat was still making good time and in the right direction too. Skipper and husband Wayne had a wonderful view of the unfolding drama because, as it happened, he also went over the side but didn't surface quickly enough to grab hold of anything as the love of his life (with his wife in tow) headed for the horizon. Since they were sailing only two-up, Wayne was beginning to think his day was about to become a tad lonely, if not messy. However, the lads of the Sailing Committee on *Ikarra*, the Bertram 35 owned and skippered by Peter Cox, saw the round-up from about a kilometre away and soon had Wayne back on board his boat. He then "helped" Greta aboard – a fairly inelegant procedure – but to her great credit, she retained her sense of dignity and humour and together they set about getting the boat shipshape and Bristol fashion. Commenting later on the experience of being towed by a runaway RL24, Greta simply noted that "it was a great way to wash the wee out of ones wetsuit!"
- * At the risk of offending every other skipper, your scribe reckons the prize for most "picturesque" boat is shared equally by Ken Griffiths' *Splice* and *Toucan* the pride of the **Cuthbertsons of Colac Inc.** Both boats are immaculately presented and just look so good on the water.
- * Jeff Germaine, (*Radical Lady*) Association President and Trevor Jones, (*Casper*) our Secretary are both members of the Loch Sport Boat Club. Together, they put in a huge amount of work to ensure that the regatta ran seamlessly all week and it did. Congratulations, Jeff and Trevor, it was a great effort and all who were there are grateful to you.
- * Jeff and Trevor were, of course, backed up by a tireless team of expert helpers from the Club. Barry Phillips, a long time friend of the Association, was Officer of the Week and presented us with excellent courses and first class race administration. This, despite fractious winds which sometimes refused to settle into a breeze of constant direction and a few skippers anxious to get racing before the START signal had sounded. We also had the wonderful advantage of two excellent vessels as Committee Boats both of which were handled expertly by their respective owners, Ray Walsh and Peter Cox. On shore, Mary Jones and her team looked after the processing of results and a million other things while June Phillips saw to the all-important business of

the bar and a million other things. There were many others including Kay and Graeme Hogben who helped in a variety of ways and to all, the Association extends its sincere thanks.

- * The *COOLIBAH TROPHY FOR TEAMS* was won this year by *This Way Up* (Ian Lane), *Casper* (Trevor Jones) *Lowana 6* (Mick Shannon), and *Toucan* (Bryan Cuthbertson). Teams were selected with the aid of a hat from which names were drawn.
- * Finally, the absolute highlight of the entire regatta was to see the Castles kids, Helen and Jim, sailing for their Dad and igniting in all of us who knew Bruce the most wonderful memories of him and his beloved *Pegasus*.

Age Shall Not Weary Them...

..... at least certainly not Les. Browne, our rep. on the Yachting Victoria Trailable Yacht Committee. Late last year our Les. was at a metaphorical loose end having completed all the jobs Barbara ('is Guv'nor!) had set for him. Casting around for something to satiate his restlessness, he hit upon the South Pacific Masters Games being staged in and around Brisbane and before Barb. had time to put together a new list of THINGS TO DO he'd cobbled up a crew and headed for Qld. with the immaculate *Alicia 2* in tow. Fetching up at the Southport Yacht Club, Les. and his ensemble entered the Over (not by much!) 60's Masters Sailing Regatta and after the usual joys and woes of such an event, came away with the Silver Medal. What a blast! What a fantastic result! Well done Young Fella!!

Them Were The Days...

Can you believe that we, as an Association, have been hassling each other at National Championships for 29 consecutive years which means, of course, that next year we celebrate our **THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY**. To mark the event and to make the occasion something to remember, the Committee is asking members to check out their photo albums, have a look under the bench in the shed or sort through the bits and pieces box to see if they can find anything (eg old photographs, bits of broken gear etc.) which might be suitable for a memorabilia display we hope to arrange for the duration of the next Nationals. If you have anything at all which speaks of the RL24 and tells of its extraordinary journey across the last 30 years, we urge, nay, plead with you to let Trevor (03 51430806), Jeff (03 51432067) or Ross (03 97637732) know. It goes without saying that every care will be taken with any treasures loaned for display.

Fools Rush In..... (An Occasional Series)

Nearly all of us have had our "moments" with our RL24 but for most of us the "moment" has been on the water rather than on dry land. So this true story is different to the extent that it happened entirely on terra firma but the results were every bit as spectacular as any water-borne disaster and the margin separating it from being an horrendous disaster and the hugely funny episode it turned out to be was wafer- thin.

What happened was this. Our intrepid skipper, we'll call him Dave, retrieved his swing keel RL at the boat ramp at Rhyll on Westernport after an Association – sponsored race. It was late on a hot February afternoon but the easterly sea breeze had kicked in and retrieval was problematic. However, with the assistance of his mate, an American gentleman of somewhat impetuous habits, the boat was finally coaxed onto the trailer and with the American driving, car, trailer and boat came up the ramp into the adjoining car park. Now, you need to understand that it is entirely possible to drive from the ramp, through the car park, down Loch Rd. and into the Rhyll Yacht Club yard without lowering a boat's mast and nearly everybody does. However, of those who do, ALL know that where Loch Rd. swings left towards Cowes, those with masts up and heading for the RYC go straight ahead. There are two compelling reasons for doing so. The first is that that is the direction in which the RYC is located. The second is that, if you bear left, immediately around the corner is a 22000v power transmission line crossing the road at less than RL24 mast height. I think you might now guess where this story is heading already. If you thought our American hero gunned the V8 station wagon through the car park ridiculously fast and if you thought he nearly turned the trailer on its side when he hit the kerb at the end of the parking bay and if you thought that, yes, he did swing left into the power lines, you were absolutely right. What you didn't guess was that with the impact of the mast on the feeder line, there was an almighty bang which finally brought a sensible reaction from our overseas guest. He slammed on the brakes and stopped dead. What was fortuitous about this development was that it not only terminated this idiot's progress but it saved the life of our intrepid Dave. Unbeknown to the driver, Dave had climbed aboard his boat as it came whistling up the ramp and was standing in the companionway facing aft, his elbows resting on the cabin top as he watched the world zooming away from beneath the stern of his boat. He had survived the near-death roll as they crossed the parking bay kerb and had just regained his equilibrium when the whole outfit stopped dead amidst this colossal explosion. As far as we can tell, what happened next goes like this. The car and boat stopped dead. Dave kept going (backwards) his head thumping the forward end of the main hatch opening before his shoulders, back and bum ripped across the winch mounted on the aft end of the centre case. At this stage, his luck improved – the winch deflected his course so that it's his right shoulder which crashes into the King Post and not his head. His momentum thus arrested, his legs swing sideways into the metho stove mounted on the "galley" moulding and so he becomes the only person I know who has stainless steel temporarily stuck to the outside of his leg rather than inside. But his journey is almost over. With the noise of the explosion still reverberating through his aching head, he rolls off the centre case and is wedged safe (?) and secure between it and the forward bunk moulding. Nevertheless, our Dave is laughing. Peering aft through dim and confused eyes he sees, standing exactly where he had stood moments before, the sword-like top section of his mast, which, severed neatly by the power cable, had dropped straight and true into the cabin of the boat and would certainly have killed him if it had struck his head. As it was, Dave escaped with broken ribs, lots of bruises, some minor grazes and a great story to tell his grandchildren. But wait, there's more! The next day, after the mess was cleaned up and the American had cleared out, Dave was heading back to Melbourne for a well-earned rest. Somewhere between Anderson and The Gurdies, a car pulls along side and motions to Dave to pull over. Being in no condition to argue and being of agreeable disposition anyway, Dave does what he's asked whereupon he is informed that back down the highway a kilometre or two, his tandem trailer has shed a wheel which subsequently

collided with an on-coming car rendering it (and the wheel!) unfit for further duty and its owner somewhat less than grunted. History has no record of what then transpired except that it is known that, after appropriate action on site, Dave trundled off home with his RL doing just fine on 3 wheels. And sometimes you think you have a dreadful weekend!

Sport

Aiming for eighth win

By Leigh Rogers

THE National Championships of the RL 24 foot trailer-sailor yacht class commenced on January 4 at Loch Sport Boat Club and will run through to Friday, January 10.

Sale local Simon Walsh is hoping to extend his winning run in the race to eight consecutive victories and will this year take his own and his crew member's children out during the heats.

"It's good to get the kids in the races, it's a bit of a challenge for them and they can help out," he said.

Crews of four take to the water in the annual event which attracts competitors from around Australia.

Seven heats will be staged throughout the week long competition, with one covering a long distance 'passage race', the length of which varies according to the weather.

Six shorter courses will be sailed 'around the buoys', each about 10-12 kilometres in length.

Because all boats are the same, with stringent rules governing modifications, the skill of each team will decide who gets across the line first — not necessarily who has the fastest boat.

Loch Sport Boat Club secretary Barry Phillips said the 2003 race is the second year the club had hosted the event and there would be many great places to relax and take in the sights.

"Loch Sport is the perfect venue to watch from anywhere along the foreshore, you could even watch it from the pub if you wanted," he said.

"It's a fairly exciting boat (the RL 24) to watch sail and to sail yourself — in the breeze you could get up around 10 knots."

Walsh said the event was one he especially looked forward to throughout the year.

"It would be the main sailing competition for the year and it doubles up for a holiday, I get a week off from work which is good."

Physically the sport can be demanding, though it is not the limit of challenges facing teams, who are also subjected to mental fatigue.

"It depends on the weather, it's always a mental strain if it's windy and it can get pretty hard on the body, especially if you're getting old like I am," Walsh said.

"But that's what yachting's all about, you have to make the boat go fast in all conditions and have to pick wind shifts and



AIMING to win . . . Sale's Simon Walsh and crew members Darryn Dyer and Shane Bennett are aiming for their eighth consecutive win at the National Championships in the RL 24 foot trailer-sailor yacht class.

the line you want to take.

"It's like chess, you have to get between two points but you've got the whole board to use."

Events got under way on January 4 with the running of an invitational race in the lead up to the main heats.

Presentation night will be held at Loch Sport Boat Club on Friday with awards presented to the overall winner and the handicap winner.

"It goes on the points you get for placings and it's usually the guys that are consistent that win the series," Phillips said.

Results of RL24 National Championships held at Loch Sport, January 2003.

Drop Keel Division

Boat Name	Skipper	Heat 1	Heat 2	Heat 3	Heat 4	Heat 5	Heat 6	Heat 7	Points
Ohau Rua	Simon Walsh	1	1	1	1	1	DNF	1	4.5
Lowana VI	Michael Shannon	2	2	2	2	2	1	6	10.75
Sasha	Michael Reid	4	3	3	4	4	4	2	20
Splice	Ken Griffiths	5	5	8	DNF	3	2	3	26
Casper	Trevor Jones	DNF	4	4	3	6	5	5	27
Radical Lady	Jeff Germaine	3	7	7	5	5	6	4	30
Cosmic Sedso	Paul Corben	7	6	5	7	7	3	7	35
Pegasus	Jim Castles	6	8	6	6	8	7	8	41

Swing Keel Division

Boat Name	Skipper	Heat 1	Heat 2	Heat 3	Heat 4	Heat 5	Heat 6	Heat 7	Points
This Way Up	Ian Lane	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4.5
Street Car	Paul Davis	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Toucan	Bryan Cuthbertson	DNF	3	4	3	3	3	DNF	22
Spiral Navigator	Wayne Hill	3	4	3	DNF	4	DNF	DNF	27
Miss Tress	Hugh Hetherington	DNF	5	5	4	DNF	4	3	27

Fleet Placings

Boat Name	Skipper	Heat 1	Heat 2	Heat 3	Heat 4	Heat 5	Heat 6	Heat 7	Points
Ohau Rua	Simon Walsh	1	1	1	1	1	DNF	1	4.5
This Way Up	Ian Lane	3	2	3	2	3	1	6	13.75
Lowana VI	Michael Shannon	2	3	2	3	2	3	7	15
Street Car	Paul Davis	4	4	5	7	4	2	10	26
Sasha	Michael Reid	6	5	4	5	6	7	2	28
Splice	Ken Griffiths	7	7	10	DNF	5	5	3	37
Casper	Trevor Jones	DNF	6	6	4	8	8	5	37
Radical Lady	Jeff Germaine	5	9	9	6	7	9	4	40
Cosmic Sedso	Paul Corben	9	8	7	10	9	6	8	47
Pegasus	Jim Castles	8	11	8	9	10	10	9	54
Toucan	Bryan Cuthbertson	DNF	10	12	8	11	4	DNF	59
Miss Tress	Hugh Hetherington	DNF	13	13	11	DNF	11	11	73
Spiral Navigator	Wayne Hill	10	12	11	DNF	12	DNF	DNF	74

Results of Victorian State Titles held at Portarlington:

Place	Sail No	Boat Name	Class	Skipper	Agg Score	Race 5	Race 4	Race 3	Race 2	Race 1
1	306	Lowana III	R124sk	B Sponner	4.00	1.00	(2.00)	1.00	1.00	1.00
2	110	This Way Up	R124sk	I Lane	10.00	(7.00F)	4.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
2	427	Lowana VI	R124dk	M Shannon	10.00	(7.00F)	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
4	555	The Sting	R124dk	L Graham	15.00	(7.00F)	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
5	269	Street Car	R124sk	P Davis	21.00	(7.00F)	5.00	6.00	5.00	5.00
6	600	Cosmic Sedso	R124dk	P Corben	23.00	(7.00F)	6.00	5.00	6.00	6.00