



NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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RL24 – It's YOUR kind of boat

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From The Secretary:

Well it's time again for another newsletter. Actually it's a little late, I had intended to send out the Notice of Race earlier than this to allow everyone plenty of time to organize themselves. This will be the 30th. National Titles (well it may be the 31st. but we will count the first one as year zero as we didn't notice the number last year), so come along and enjoy the celebrations. Summer is not far away and the Nationals at Loch Sport will be another great week of sailing, and socializing with the Boat Club members and other RL sailors. Even for those more interested in cruising, you can be almost guaranteed a place in the cruising division, there will be something for everyone, you won't be disappointed. It is even planned to have a cruise after the racing finishes for all those crew who would like to spend a few days exploring the Gippsland Lakes in the company of other RL sailors.

There will be a display of RL24 memorabilia at the Nationals so if you have any items of interest, old photos etc. bring them along. If you have any interesting stories to tell, like the great articles Ross pens for the newsletters and the ones you have always meant to send in but just haven't got around to, write them down and we'll put them on display.

Once again there has not been much news sent in for publication. It seems that there are a lot more RL24 sailors contributing to the RL24 website than to the Class Association. Our membership stands at only 22 at this time so it seems that we are not offering much to the RL24 owners who are not interested in travelling to State or National Titles. Maybe we need to modernize and start our own website or maybe someone has some other ideas of how to give value for money to the Association members.

I had planned to include a copy of the class rules with the last newsletter as there had been a few requests for them recently. I have written them up on the computer in a form that can be printed or e-mailed but I had been informed (by non-Association members) that the 1992 copy I had was out of date and changes had been made. The minutes of the AGMs have since been checked through and it appears that the only change was the deletion of the appendix which disallowed slopper-stoppers at the AGM in Jan. 2001. There has been plenty of discussion on other proposed changes over the years but no other changes have been passed so far. I have included a draft copy of the Class Rules with this newsletter for everyone to check and they can be accepted or changed at the next AGM.

A venue for the Victorian State Titles has not been set yet. Does anyone have any suggestions or do we incorporate them with the Victorian Trailable Yacht Championships again? I believe these will be held at Geelong but this is yet to be confirmed.

Anyhow, have a great summer of sailing and I look forward to catching up with you all at Loch Sport.

Trevor

The Loch Sport Boat Club committee and members are looking forward to the RL24 owners, skippers, crews and families visiting for the third year for the RL24 National Titles from the 3rd until the 7th January 2004. Planning is well under way and in 2004 your time with us will be shorter.

On Saturday the 3rd January short back-to-back heats for fine-tuning will be run with our welcome sausage sizzle at 1730.

Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday will be the serious heats with no lay day unless absolutely necessary, thus finishing the Titles on the Wednesday with a Presentation Dinner. You will find attached to your Entry form a *Presentation Dinner* form. The Loch Sport Boat club asks you to fill in and pay with your entry fee to the RL24 Association thus helping us with catering on the Wednesday. *Please make special note on your form for those with dietary requirements.*

Lunches will be available on the days needed and we ask again that you pre order so that all food can be ready when you come off the water.

As in the past you will be required to sign the visitors book as part of the liquor licence requirements and mark next to it RL 24 titles.

Looking forward to seeing you all there, with spirits high as usual.

Mary Jones
Commodore

Still Just Cruisin' – This Time, Down Memory Lane.

In the absence of any contemporary news, the last Newsletter (June 2003) carried a story lifted from the RL newsletter of Oct/Nov. 1976. As you will recall, the story was written by Jo Robjohn and recounted the voyage she and her partner, Merv. Allwood undertook from Mackay to Cairns in Merv's RL24, *Falcoln*. While there is still no contemporary news that RL folk are prepared to share with the writers of this worthy journal, the *Falcoln* story did elicit a wonderful piece of reminiscence from Association Patron, Life Member and the bloke responsible for our marvellous boats in the first place, our own Rob. Legg. Part of Rob's letter reads as follows.

"Dear Ross,

I read with interest the retelling of the cruise of the *Falcoln*, the boat owned by Merv. Allwood. When Merv. picked his boat up from the factory, he had ordered a basic kit to finish it off and told me he was going to enter the National Titles which were to be held in 3 weeks time. I took little notice of this and several days later driving along the Esplanade I saw what looked like an RL24 in distress on a trailer under a Morton Bay Fig on the side of the road. Hoping to be of some help, I stopped and there was Merv. and Jo bolting on the gunwhales. They had lived on the boat in a caravan park since picking it up and had moved out to get some shade on the side of the road. They **did** make the first race – surely a record for finishing off a boat from the basic stage."

After reading Rob's account, I couldn't help comparing Jo and Merv's circumstances with my own when I completed my first RL from basic stage to sail-away. I picked up *Timtarri* (Sail # 105 – where are you now? We'd love to get you back!) from Rob's factory on a beautifully warm Saturday morning in May 1974 and brought her straight back to Melbourne where not only did we not see the sun for 3 weeks (and therefore had no need to seek shade!) but, as I recall, the temperature slid below 15c and remained there or lower for several months. Try as I might, I found it impossible to summons the motivation to get out in the shed after work to start the fit-out project, a situation which I suspect left my mentors, Bruce Castles and Geoff. Olney, absolutely aghast. The upshot was that the project commenced properly only when the weather warmed up in November so it was a rush to get *Timtarri* launched on the last weekend in February 1975 – just in time for the Marlay Point Overnight Race the following weekend. Unlike *Falcoln*, we didn't have the gunwhales fitted (they came months later!), nor a cap on the centre case which gave rise to considerable mirth amongst the crew and caused great consternation to the skipper/owner as the rooster tail gushing out of the case was nearly enough to wash a helmsman over the transom. It is said that sailing is akin to standing under a cold shower ripping up \$100 notes. Sailing *Timtarri* that day was like standing in front of a fire hose doing something similar. As you might expect, fitting a cap to the keel case was a prominent priority the next week and we set out on the MPONR all shipshape and Bristol fashion. The race in 1975 was one of the few which didn't start at night due to the strength of a rotten easterly which howled up the Lakes all day Saturday. It was still blowing freshly on the sabbath but we started anyway at 8am as I recall. What little sailing experience I possessed at that time had been accumulated social sailing Attunga and Quickcat (in that order) class catamarans and it was only my recent seduction by Bruce and Barbara's *Sundance* that led me to RL24's. Of racing experience, I was quite bereft (and nothing's changed after 30 years!) so it was little wonder that I found myself fighting to keep my new pride and joy upright in the face of a screaming

easterly and struggling to suppress an almost overwhelming urge to turn tail and run back to the shelter of the cuts at Marlay Point. But then, providentially, Bruce saw my predicament and, as he always did, came to my rescue. Sailing along side with great skill and giving vent to his most wonderful stentorian voice, he told me to pull on the Cunningham Eye as hard as possible, let the traveller all the way down and give the mainsheet a good hard tweak. Instantly, *Timtarri* stood up and we took off – it was a different boat and the further we went the better we went. However, that stuff about shipshape and Bristol fashion was true only to a point and that point happened to be Point Turner, the rounding of which saw our lower rudder pintle drop off the boat. Our inaugural race was prematurely terminated by careless assembly work done under the pressure of a foolish time constraint but we'd had a taste of what an RL is all about and it was addictive.

Building *Timtarri* was a great feeling. I can't think of any other project from which I have derived so much satisfaction (and not a little frustration too!) Along the way, we (ie Bruce & I) fabricated two swing keels, one for *Timtarri*, the other for *Grey Lady* now owned by Chris Laird and family but built by Bruce. We made up a couple of rough crucibles in which we melted lead scrounged from all over the place and entertained our kids by letting them float nails on the surface of the molten metal. Bruce also built our trailers to Rob's design and I wish I still had mine. Much more substantial than the tinny things that pass for trailers these days. Like *Sundance*, *Grey Lady* and *Pegasus*, (all built by Bruce), *Timtarri* was purchased as a bare hull and deck (unjoined!). Jan and I brought her down from the factory wrapped in fencing wire to keep the two halves together. There was no internal furniture moulding or any bulkheads – just a huge 24ft. dish of fibreglass with a big lid that resembled a cabin top. Very intimidating to one with so little skill as I but with a lot of help and encouragement from my mate(s) our beloved *Timtarri* eventually materialised into a very seakindly boat. The framing and much of the timber trimming of the interior furniture we built in *Timtarri* had a history all of its own. At the time, Bruce owned Victoria Hall in Sale, a huge former concert hall and picture theatre, the stage of which was once graced by Dame Nellie Melba during one of her many regional tours. While retaining its exterior authenticity, he developed it internally as a warehouse and workshop as a result of which he provided me with an almost unlimited supply of beautiful cedar timber which had been carefully removed from the hall and which we used to good effect inside *Timtarri*. One great consequence of all this messing about was that *Timtarri* was an exceptionally light boat and for most of the 3 years we owned her, we towed her about with our family car of the time, a Fiat 125 – all 1600cc of it. That car took us to the Gippy Lakes frequently, to the Myall Lakes and often around Port Phillip with no trouble at all and at around 35mpg to boot. Try that with your V8! *Timtarri*'s finest "hour" was the 2 months we spent on her cruising the Whitsundays in 1977 but indirectly it also led to us forsaking her. By then there were 5 of us and when Rob announced the Mk.3 with the extra 100mm. of freeboard, we were easily seduced. *Timtarri* went on the market and not surprisingly sold quickly. For a few years she was owned, loved and used constantly by Charlie Blackney, a well-known seafaring identity on Phillip Island but when he sold her, she disappeared from our lives. That is a sadness for us because it feels as if we have lost part of our history.

But enough already – I have dragged you down this particular Memory Lane for far too long. It's Trevor's turn to entertain you. But before I quit, just a reminder that the

cruising story promised in the last Newsletter hasn't been forgotten and will probably appear next time.

Good sailing,

Ross.

The case for the development class

Our editors excellent article has inspired me to write some of my thoughts and maybe a future proposal on the subject - the development of swing keels.

I am sure the article was meant to shake us out of our comfort zone. RL24 class rules and restrictions appendices Section (3 i) states- "Swing keel division shall be restricted to yachts whose centre cases are as originally constructed prior to 1992 and that no device be fitted to close the centre case slot."

One RL24 was constructed prior to 1992 with a longer swing keel slot. The RL24 CBH was calculated on the performance of the modified boat and remains unchanged to this day. Consequently RL24 swing keel owners find it almost impossible to win in open fleet competition. This factory modified boat is the only one allowed to have a lengthened keel under the 1992 class rules.

The design of keels has made a quantum leap in the last few years. Because we are a development class I am contemplating a proposal lifting all restriction on the development of keels. The result would be a safer and more competitive boat able to hold its own with most cruiser racer trailables. Many of us have adopted the mast and sail developments of the successful drop keels, such as taller masts, fifteen square metre high roach mains and swept back spreaders, which should be compensated by appropriate keel development. The result would be a safer, faster boat.

Are we brave enough and dedicated enough to vote for unlimited development of our keels, that the drop keels have enjoyed for years. For those of you who are happy with just the cruising aspect of your boat and who also enjoy entering some races, a separate division and (or) CBH could be arranged. We can have the best of both worlds and still keep our RL24s at the forefront of respected performers.

I welcome your advice, arguments, comments and criticisms.

Les Browne