



RL24 Owners' Association of Australia

— NEWSLETTER —

December 1977

Australian Championships

Peter Arnold has indicated that arrangements for the 1978 Australian Championships are well under control at the Lake Bonney Yacht Club. At the time of writing (end November) 21 entries have been received which should provide good close racing. A comprehensive social program has also been prepared to ensure that the week is a memorable one for all participants.

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Victorian Association Committee

At the Victorian Association's A.G.M. held on 26/11/77, Mick Shannon was elected President while John Miller won the Secretary's job. Geoff Olney was again conscripted as Treasurer and a similar fate befell Bruce Castles and Peter Trigger who were appointed as Measurers. Doug Lee, Graham Askew and Colin Pill were also elected to the committee. The Secretary (John Miller) can be contacted at 125 Lum Road, Wheelers Hill, 3170, phone (03) 560 1728.

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Annual General Meeting — 1978

As advised in the October Newsletter, the Association's A.G.M. will be held on 9/1/78 at the Lake Bonney Y.C. Bruce Lewis, our National Secretary, has indicated that the following motions have been received and will be put to members at the Barmera meeting.

- (i) The Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Association gives notice of motion that RL24 class rules be amended to provide that outboard motors conforming to VYC Safety Prescriptions* be carried by all yachts competing in RL24 class events.

*"The VYC prescribes that a motor shall be capable of driving the yacht into 30 knots headwinds AND against currents likely to be experienced in the area. Motors of less than 6 HP shall not be used unless proven adequate. Fuel for 4 hours operation shall also be carried." (VYC Yearbook 1977-78, p. 156)

- (ii) The Queensland Association Committee Meeting of 13/10/77 gives notice of motion that the RL24 Class Rules be amended to let RL24's carry two (2) spinnakers when racing.

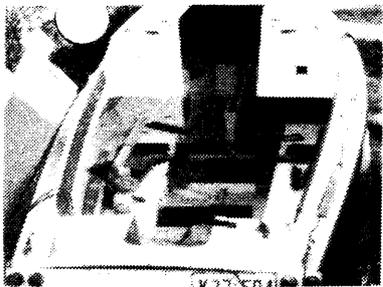
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Don Chops His "Big D"!

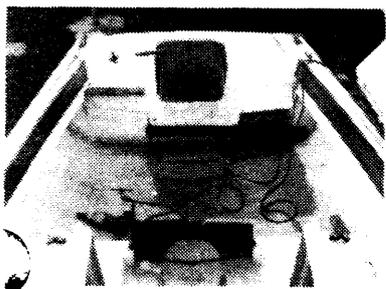
Don Castles' ("Big D" — Sail No. 103) had a problem. Here he explains in an exclusive interview with "RL24 News" how a massive surgical operation on his "Big D" restored the pleasure of going to bed — in his quarter berth.

"Having owned a Mk1 RL24 since early 1974 and experienced the lack of hip room in the quarter berths I took the big decision to improve the situation by raising the cockpit. Many alternatives were considered but the following is the method adopted.

The whole cockpit was cut out by cutting parallel to the top of the coamings (6" down from the top), then horizontally across the rear of the cabin and along the line of the inner transom.



Supports were added at the companion way, at the end of the quarterberth at the inner transom. The rear support on the inner transom needs to be at least 2½" wide because the cockpit when raised and overlapped at the rear of the cabin moves forward approximately 1½". It also sits well inside the existing coamings. This section was spaced out with a continuous timber insert but I believe a series of spacer blocks with foam fill would be adequate.



The whole assembly was bolted in, lapping the raised section over the rear of the cabin section. The overlap on the cabin was glassed over on the inside and a timber strip added outside to cover the lapped joint. The joint along the cockpit sides was dressed by another timber strip and then capped in timber to cover the joint and provide a nice flat gunwhale for sitting on.

The rear section of the cockpit with a 1½" exposed gap was glassed in over the additional support previously added.

I will admit to having contracted the job to a carpenter/boat builder from Hastings Y.C. where I currently sail from. He spent \$100 on materials and took 75 hours to complete the job. So far the only problem encountered is that the crew now have to duck further to miss the swinging boom."



Marlay Point Overnight Race 1978

The Lake Wellington Yacht Club advises that it is now taking entries for the Tenth Anniversary Marlay Point Overnight Race to be held on 11th and 12th March 1978.

This event has become the leading trailerable yacht race in Australia and this year it is expected to draw a fleet well in excess of 400 boats. The course is laid over Lake Wellington, Lake Victoria and Lake King and finishes at the Gippsland Lakes Y.C., Paynesville. The race starts on Saturday night (the RL division gets away at 2300 hrs) which is one of the reasons for its popularity and usually finishes from 9 to 20 hours later with skippers and crews in a state of ecstatic exhaustion. Interstate competitors are particularly welcomed by LWYC and entry forms can be obtained from the Club Secretary, Bob Neill, P.O. Box 201, Sale, 3850. Entries close on 21/2/78.

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CRUISING CORNER

(i) More on Wilson's Prom.

Earlier this year "RL News" featured a cruise to Wilson's Promontory by Judy and Colin Murray ("Pamperoo"). Bruce Castles in "Pegasus" undertook a similar voyage but in the middle of winter and here he adds his impressions to complement those contributed earlier by Colin. Bruce writes — "There are many good reasons for making the trip to Wilson's Promontory. For example the scenery is magnificent and wildlife abounds — we saw numerous seals, porpoises, penguins, cape barren geese, sea eagles, etc. The water is crystal clear, and Waterloo Bay and Refuge Cove must rank in world class as cruising anchorages.

When brought down to cold, hard facts, the technical aspects of this cruise are as follows— the distance from Welshpool to Refuge Cove is about 25 miles, the first 8 or so in the relatively sheltered waters of Corner Inlet and then past Entrance Point into Bass Strait for the 17 mile hop to Refuge Cove with no shelter between, save perhaps Rabbit Island at about the halfway mark. These waters are

totally exposed to easterly weather and in my opinion no trailerable yacht should sail them without a reasonable certainty of set westerly conditions.

Conditions in the area are generally blustery, and an efficient jiffy-reefing system would be a boon — we had a half-efficient system and reefed and unreefed under way at least four times.

When sailing close inshore, the rugged coastline causes sudden violent changes in wind direction and strength, and tidal currents move at about 2 kts — north on ingoing and south on run-out.

The ramp at Welshpool is of timber construction with a rather awkward approach — it launches into shallow but protected water near the fisherman's wharf.

For those with radio equipment the keeper of the store at Port Welshpool (Mr Lubeck) maintains a constant listening watch on 27.880 MHz, and regularly makes a "standing by" call or relays weather reports.

During our visit to Refuge Cove we had only one other boat for company overnight, an express cruiser type, but the Ranger of the National Park says that hundreds of yachts visit over the summer months — I think next summer, we will join them!!"

(ii) **Diary of a Dream Cruise**

Ken and Ruth Hackett with 5 year old son Pete were amongst the lucky groups of RL24 owners who cruised the Whitsunday Passage earlier this year. Ken kept a comprehensive log of the cruise and for the benefit of those who are wondering whether or not they should make the effort to go north, a random selection of entries is reproduced here. I think you'll agree it makes seductive reading for the cruising yachtsman.

Day 12. Fully provisioned once again left Airlie Beach with out-going tide, headed for "other side" of Whitsunday Island. Perfect sailing conditions, reaching across 15 knot S-Easterly, crossing Whitsunday Passage — about 25 km to Hook Passage. This passage is fiord-like channel between Hook and Whitsunday Islands. The crazy angles of Norfolk pines on the craggy slopes, reminders of Cyclone Ada — 7 years ago. Chart showed reef on one side of Hook Passage so trolled a lure as we went over. Sure enough — bang — a nice mackerel.

Sailed past the Underwater Observatory — a tourist attraction visited by all the cruise boats and headed out of Hook Passage. As we passed from the narrow passage into open sea, caught in a vicious tidal rip with very rough disturbed water. Fired the 6 HP Chrysler and motor sailed through this patch, for 8-10 km stretch down east coast of Whitsunday. (Beating into the prevailing S-E trade winds against the tide is for the birds when you are cruising. We found we avoided this situation wherever possible, or when unavoidable we motor sailed — or as Pete coined 'get the iron spinnaker going Dad — you can't buck the tide').

Dropped anchor in Apostle Bay 1600 hours. What a spot — wouldn't be dead for quids. A shoaling inlet halfway down east coast of Whitsunday out of the tourist route, entirely to ourselves with a beautiful beach, coconut palm with ripe nuts within spinnaker pole reach, oysters abounding. Set out preparing for some heavy relaxing. Ran Sasha right up to beach and put out gunwale props for stability when tide run-out leaves us high and dry. Fresh mackerel for tea, glass or two of cold white, tropical sunset, ho-hum.

Days 13 & 14. Propped at Apostle Bay, sun-baking, scunging on beach, fishing. Finally tempted out by rarity for this time of year — tail wind when heading south. Sailed rest of way down Whitsunday's east coast, an absolute gem of a day, past incredible Whitehaven beach with its 6 km of white silica sand, revelling in wind and tide with us. Destination, Hazelwood island, reached after lazy 3 hour sail. The little bay at north end of Hazelwood is a delight, but this time shared with a ketch, 2 sloops and a power boat guy camped in a tent. Unlike keelers who have to stand a long way off these shoaling lee side beaches, we run right up to the sand, keel retracted — "that thing floats on a wet rag".

Days 15 & 16. Spent another few days in this anchorage fishing (very good and varied results, including 1 tuna hooked in the tail!), exploring the adjacent coastline, walking (not far). Walked across the island to where a reef can be crossed on foot at low tide to nearby Lupton Island. Poking about the reef revealed spectacular coral, coloured clams, some beautiful shells and all sorts of sea creatures. Met crews from two sloops trying a clam bake in driftwood fire — declined invitation to eat but

stayed and chatted with one couple from Brisbane spending 12th winter in a row in the area, other couple, with 2 pre-school kids dropped out of Sydney rat race and took to sea "indefinitely" — interesting people.

Day 17. Pulled out of Hazelwood rating it a great spot, headed back to Whitsunday to have a look at Whitehaven and maybe stay if anchorage any good. Another superb sailing day. Stopped off at likely looking beach near south end of Hazelwood to do a bit of fossicking. Father took Sasha off the beach to a fringing reef to "get onto a big one". Right on lunch time a 5 lb (?) coral trout hit the deck. Straight into the beach and onto fire. This IS the life.

Whitehaven turned out another delightful anchorage, especially for a T.S. in close. Water superbly clear and this time deep enough for swimming straight off the beach. Spent the time here just "going native".

Day 18. Headed out with favourable tide to go through Solway passage at South end of Whitsunday, back to the "tourist side" of things. The narrow pass turned out pretty rough with wind against tide but things settled down once in the open again. Pulled into Gulnare Inlet on West side of Whitsunday for cuppa then on to Henning Island where we intended to explore. But wind freshened more than somewhat as we were attempting to beach

on a lee shore in a stroke run. A little drama as we aborted the landing and bumped over rocks but pressed on regardless, with reefed sails, for Long Island, across a heavy swell in Whitsunday Passage. Ruth really looking forward to a shower at Happy Bay resort. Even got ourselves sufficiently respectable to join the "Happy Hour".

Day 19. Lowest tide of year today. Decided this was time for visit to outer reef. Took float plane operating out of Happy Bay, landed in lagoon on Hook Reef, 80 km off shore, spent fascinating 1½ hours reefing and snorkelling. Really memorable experience. Pilot returned us right alongside Sasha anchored in Happy Bay.

Day 20. After lazy morning on beach set off on favourable tide, past South Molle across to Hook Island again, to check out Underwater Observatory. Anchored for night in Maona Inlet.

Day 21. Motored out into Hook passage, moored off beach at Observatory. Unfortunately timed our visit badly — coinciding with 2 cruiseboats. Seem to have developed quite an aversion to people en masse and did not really enjoy this spot — also entry fee very high in our view. Bumped into one yachting here sporting Marlay Point O'Nite Race tee shirt. Just about out of provisions now so set sail for Airlie Beach. Rough crossing in heavy seas. Dropped anchor at Airlie, already planned next outing — further south around Lindeman area.