



ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

OFFICE BEARERS 1977

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May-June, 1977

Trapezes

As recent political events have demonstrated, constitutional reform is a difficult business and that seems to apply no less to the RL24 Owners' Association than to the Australian Government. As explained in the last Newsletter the previous referendum to decide the trapeze issue was a non-event as it was found that many members did not receive a copy of the Minutes of the 1977 A.G.N., a ballot paper or the Newsletter containing the reasons for the referendum. In these circumstances the committee felt it had no alternative but to conduct another ballot and in this regard you should find a form attached to this Newsletter. The committee has gone to some lengths to ensure that membership records are accurate and with the assistance of State class secretaries it is hoped the problems which beset the last attempt will be avoided. All that is required to achieve a result which reflects the wishes of members is for every member to carefully consider the matter and vote. The voting forms should be returned to Bruce Lewis (Class Secretary), 33 McGhee Street, Sale, 3850, by 31st ~~July~~ ^{Aug.} August, 1977. The results will be announced in the July/August Newsletter.

Although the committee felt obliged to maintain a neutral stance and therefore was reluctant to become involved with "for" and "against" arguments, the issue has generated some correspondence from interested members. Barry Arnold (*Coolibah* — Sail No. 79) has outlined a case in favour of allowing trapezes in class racing while Mick Shannon (*Lowana II* — Sail No. 115) has presented reasons for their exclusion. Both letters are reproduced here for members' consideration.

A.
Fellow RL24 Owners,

Over 250 of us have chosen the RL24 from the many trailerable yachts on the market today. Having sailed amongst other RLs in four States in the past two years, I have been impressed by the wide range of interests this boat caters for. It must surely be the most versatile and successful Trailer Sailer available.

Due to the wide diversity of conditions under which RLs are being sailed, it would seem desirable to keep open the widest possible range of options for the widest possible range of owners. Like other owners I enjoy varying the use of my boat as much as possible, however circumstances dictate that most of my sailing is Saturday afternoon buoy racing against other RLs. Those of you who are fortunate to have a variety of cruising areas close by will no doubt take advantage of this asset.

In our situation the trapeze has helped to make our type of sailing more interesting. We have found that the trapeze enhances the performance of the boat in certain conditions and helps us to compete with the dinghy classes for top line crew members. In my experience, trapezes in no way impair the safety qualities of the RL24 in buoy races, but definitely add an extra dimension to this style of racing. The additional equipment is inexpensive and does not structurally alter the boat, so by simply not using it, one is still eligible for other events. The RL with trapeze gives me fast buoy racing, and without alteration, provides my wife and young family with those facilities expected in a good trailerable yacht. No other sailing boat on the market gives me this range of activity. I feel if the designer-builder of the RL24 is happy with trapezes, he can not have encountered significant buyer resistance to it.

In my opinion, no class can remain healthy and expand on National and State levels without a strong racing element. Championships give the class the opportunity to hold annual meetings, exchange ideas, gain publicity, plan for the future and generate necessary enthusiasm. Attendance at championships requires

considerable commitment in time, effort and finance by all crews and families. I feel that the retention of the trapeze would encourage boats to remain in this type of racing and compete regularly, despite the long distances involved. Trapezes, I feel sure, would keep attracting more dinghy sailors to our class and further strengthen this area of activity. The cruising area of the Trailer Sailer market is very well catered for by a number of boats with excellent accommodation. Let us not weaken the racing supremacy the RLs have enjoyed, thereby inviting new designs to compete in this area which could threaten our present investments in our boats.

At the last three National Titles some boats have competed without trapezes and should be encouraged to do so by suitable recognition, thus appealing to the widest range of competitors.

In the recently held referendum it appears that by not voting, about two-thirds of the members did not feel personally involved in the result. The remaining one-third were fairly evenly divided on the issue. On behalf of those members wishing to retain this important option, and to uphold the image of the RL24 as the most versatile Trailer Yacht on the market, I urge you all to vote for trapezes in the next referendum, to ensure the necessary two-thirds majority required by our Constitution. By catering for ALL sections of the existing membership, we must also be catering for the widest range of future members.

Barry Arnold

B
Dear Ross,

I raised the question of the use of trapezes in RL24s at the last annual general meeting for two reasons.

(i) A large number of competitors at the National Championships expressed their opposition to the use of trapezes.

(ii) The original referendum on trapezes was answered by a very small number of owners, the vote was close and the required two-thirds majority was not achieved. Hence the decision in favour of trapezes was invalid and my motion called for a new referendum.

It is with some reluctance that I agreed to your request to present the "anti-trapeze" view as I think most owners are now well informed of the pros and cons which will obviously vary from person to person and State to State.

However certain facts seem to me to be relevant.

(a) Trapezes marginally improve the performance of RL24s on a close spinnaker reach in heavy weather. They make little difference to windward.

(b) The RL24 is by far the fastest trailer sailer in Australia in all conditions **with or without trapezes**.

(c) No other trailerable yacht association permits the use of trapezes.

(d) No major trailerable yacht event, including the Tripolis, The Marley Point Overnight Race, the Queensland T.S. Championships, the Geelong-Queens-cliff Race and the Round French Island race permits the use of trapezes.

(e) The recent RL24 national championships were won by the best boat and crew and the use of trapezes had no influence on the result.

(f) Other high performance classes such as the Soling, Etchells and Y.W. Diamond have banned the use of trapezes and hiking devices.

(g) The recent drop in sales of RL24s, at least in Victoria, has been in large part due to criticism of the class both by the media and by competitors on the grounds that the boat is unsafe because it is unstable — the proof being that a trapeze is needed to hold the

boat upright.

It is my view that the use of trapezes requires a standard of athletic performance that is not necessarily available in a family and I believe that the RL24 is and should remain a family boat. I believe that the interests of all owners are served best by making it possible for all to compete on an equal footing, thus providing better competition within class events, encouraging potential buyers and maintaining the resale value of the boats.

Rob Legg has designed a magnificent boat. Around this has developed a class association which has been well administered and has catered admirably for a wide variety of interests. I regret that the trapeze issue has created so much dissension among owners and I hope this referendum will be answered by all owners whatever their interest and that whatever the decision it will be accepted by all so that we can get on with the business of beating *Coolibah* at Barmera in 1978.

Sincerely,
Mick Shannon

So, once again, please consider the matter carefully and return your vote to Bruce Lewis, 33 McGhee St, Sale, 3850, by 31st July, 1977.

Self-righting, Buoyancy and "Finnisterre"

Like most RL owners, Bruce Bowman often wondered whether or not his boat *Finnisterre* (Sale No. 113) would self-right or float. Being a man of action Bruce decided to use his own boat as a guinea pig for the class and with a team of helpers and observers from the Lake Wellington Y.C. conducted a series of self-righting and buoyancy tests. L.W.Y.C. Secretary Ralph Arnup and RL24 Association Measurer Bruce Castles ensured that the tests were conducted correctly, class secretary Bruce Lewis recorded the event and Association Vice President Alby McCracken took fiendish delight in having the opportunity to sink someone else's boat — for once legitimately.

Bruce Lewis sends this report.

"Self-righting and Buoyancy tests conducted on *Finnisterre* at the Port of Sale on 29/5/77. The following points should be noted.

1. Water conditions — dead calm.
2. *Finnisterre* was tied fore and aft with head to wind.
3. She has the 220 lb centre plate.
4. Full main and genoa were set.
5. Foam was in the top 6 ft of the mast.
6. In addition to the standard buoyancy she carried: foam in the two rear stowage areas alongside the motor well and about 50% of the area under the coamings in the quarter berths.

1st Test — Self-Righting

The following conditions were enforced:—

1. Both sails were cleated in the "on the wind" position.
2. Centre plate was locked in the down (out of case) position. The mast was then forced down below the waterline until the mast at the diamond struts was submerged.

Result: The boat lay on its beam end with no attempt to recover.

Observation: Both sails were holding a great deal of water preventing the self right.



With sheets on hard, *Finnisterre* won't budge

2nd Test — Self Righting

All the conditions were the same as Test 1 except that the sails were uncleated.

The mast was again forced into the same position in the water.

Result: The boat made a slow but positive recovery.



Up she comes with sheets sprung

3rd Test — Self Righting

This time the conditions differed from test 1 as follows:

1. Once again the sails were uncleated.
2. In addition to Test 2 the centre plate was fully retracted (raised inside the centre case).

The mast was once again thrust down as in Test 1.

Result: The boat lay on its beam ends, similar to the result of test 1.

Comments

1. It would be interesting to do the same tests with the 330 lb centre plate (50% heavier).
2. In inland waters with foam in the top of the mast it is hard to envisage circumstances that would make the mast go below the waterline as was enforced in these tests.



4th Test — Buoyancy

It should be noted that for this test:

1. The sails were removed.
2. The boat was secured from the bow only.
3. The boat had nothing inside.
4. The boat had no rudder.
5. There was no motor or fuel tank on board.
6. The centre plate was retracted (inside the centre case).

Method: the boat had water pumped into it with a fire fighting pump. It took 30 minutes to reduce the boat to the water line.

Result: The boat floated.

Observations:

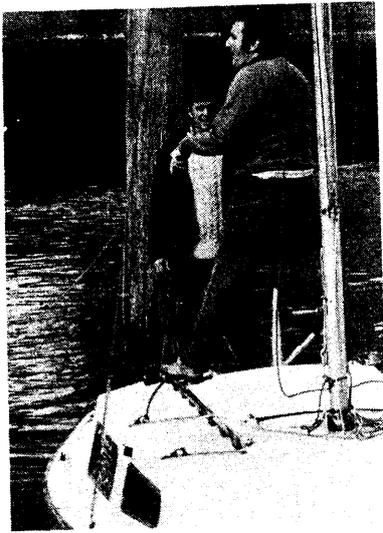
1. With one man standing on the cabin roof and one on the transom the boat floated with the bow inclined into the water at about 25°.
2. Upon request for an extra body to stand on the boat to add extra weight a man stood on the side of the boat. Before all his weight was on the boat it tipped disturbingly and he withdrew.
3. The boat was then pulled over onto its beam ends and it had no tendency to invert or recover.

Comments:

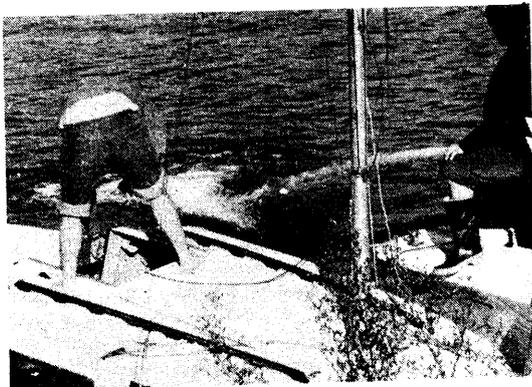
1. The boat floated but was very unstable.
2. It appeared to need more buoyancy forward (the best place — either side of the toilet).
3. With a heavy sea and the anchor from the bow, the anchor would tend to pull the boat down."

From the foregoing it would appear that most boat could benefit from the installation of more positive buoyancy to counteract the weight of bunk cushions, outboard motor and other gear. But at least the basis is there and Bruce Bowman is to be thanked for his generous gesture which contributed so dramatically to increasing our knowledge of the capacities of the RL24.

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After Alby flooded the boat



The Commodore emptied the bilge - downwind fortunately!

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A Question of Money

At a National Committee meeting held on 14/4/77 it was decided to streamline the collection of subscriptions for the National Association. Under the present arrangement subs are first due when membership is sought and annually thereafter. Clearly this is very messy from an administrative point of view though it does ensure our Treasurer has no time to be wandering the streets or work on his boat. Obviously a much better arrangement is for all subs to fall due at the same time and it is for this reason that the Committee has decided to introduce the new arrangements. To ensure that as many boats as possible are financial at the time of the National Championships it was agreed that subs should fall due on 1st July each year. In view of this decision, subscriptions which would normally be payable between July 77 and December 77 are now due and should be forwarded to Geoff Olney, Hon. Treasurer, RL24 Owners' Association, P.O. Box 202 Mount Evelyn, 3796.

Subscriptions for 1978 will be due on 1/7/78.

The subscription rate, despite the ravages of inflation, remains at \$6.00.

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Sailboat 77

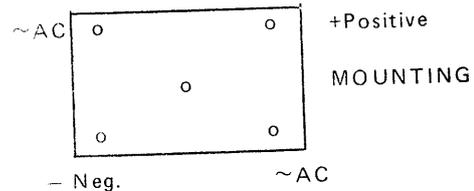
Once again Victoria's all-yacht boat show has been acclaimed an outstanding success. This year the show occupied all of Melbourne's vast Exhibition Building and attendance was up on last year by about 25%. The Association again displayed an RL24, this year's boat being kindly made available by Bruce Avery from Ebdon near Albury. *Happy Days*, which featured on the cover of April's *Modern Boating* is an all white boat with broad scarlet stripes down each side, flanked by narrower blue lines and she looked magnificent. Geoff Olney designed and built the stand and all credit must go to him for an outstanding display. Thanks also to the members who gave their time to attend the stand to represent the class in such an impartial, unbiased manner! At one stage we had enough members gathered around the boat to have a general meeting and it was nice to hear long time RL skipper Les Perrot (*Rebel* - Sail No. 5) say that RL24s "will still do me". Graham Laphorne was down from Brisbane and it was rumoured that Helen and Bill Waldby came across from Perth but sadly we didn't sight them at the Show. As usual it was an exciting, interesting and rewarding five days but it's a relief to know there's 12 months before the next one.

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Do-It-Yourself Battery Charger

Peter Trigger is joining the annual migration of southern sailors to the Queensland coast this year and has rigged up a simple and cheap battery charger on *Yogi Bear*. Here, Peter describes this very useful piece of equipment.

"If you have an outboard with a lighting outlet such as a Mariner or Volvo you may be able to top up your battery while you are cruising for a little effort and about \$5. In the Mariner the outlet leads are sitting just under the cutout switch and consist of a pair of bullet connector sockets. All you need is a Silicon Bridge Rectifier of at least 5 amperes rating and voltage of at least 100, a few yards of wire and two bullet connector plugs. The Rectifier may be purchased from any electronics supplier and will have four connections as shown



The AC connections are made to the Motor and the positive and negative to the battery. Simple isn't it? But remember you can expect only about three amperes so to fully charge would take about 24 hours for a 50 amp hour battery."

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News from W.A.

W.A. Association Secretary Helen Waldby sent me a most welcome account of the inaugural W.A. State Titles which is reproduced below. I understand Helen and husband Bill missed the series as they were over in the East checking out the RL28! Helen writes:—

"The first RL24 State Championships were held at Geraldton from 17th May—21st May. Six boats took part. It was disappointing for *Bushranger* (Mike Vandeleur) and *She's Apples* (Owen Johnstone) that they were unable to attend.

Our congratulations go to *Joken* (Ken Bartley) for his success in becoming the first RL24 State Champion of Western Australia.

Championship Results:

- 1st *Joken* - Ken Bartley (of Port Hedland)
- 2nd *Blyth Spirit* - John Blyth (of Carnarvon)
- 3rd *The Dobbie* - Tony Johnson (of So of P.Y.C.)

Consistency Results:

- 1st *The Dobbie*
- 2nd *Bahagai Dua* - Norm Griffiths (of S of P.Y.C.)

The championship consisted of seven heats, two of which had to be shortened courses, and one abandoned due to light winds. These light winds, (the best about 12 Kts) plagued the entire week with continual wind shifts of up to 40° or so and rather sloppy water. In some heats boats trying to go to windward found themselves sailing backwards with the sea. While sailing, not only did direction depend on the elements, but also on the position of crappots. Even with these problems the series was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The courses sailed were 60°-60° triangular Olympic courses of about ten nautical miles.

The Geraldton Yacht Club did a magnificent job of organising the series for us. The series commenced with an invitation race won in fine style by *The Dobbie Joken* sailed this in such a different manner to that of the championship heats, that it led the Commodore of G.Y.C. to comment (on presenting Ken with the trophy) "On first sight I thought you were really joken".

Another social event was a twilight sail. No RLs competed in this, but crews sailed on Geraldton boats — a very hectic and mad event with sailing becoming a 'contact sport', but all in good fun. John Blyth had quite a time with hassles on the launching ramp and an episode where he was led to protect *Blyth Spirit* with a spinnaker pole.

While the championship was taking place, a sailing seminar for youngsters was being held in Geraldton — with Rolly Tasker, Noel Robins, Jamie Wilmont, Gordon Lucas and all the sailing 'experts'! They all took quite an interest in the ability of the RLs.

The final day ended with an RL24 Presentation Night and cabaret, in conjunction with Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club's Perth to Geraldton cruise and also the seminar graduation. Late hours and good fun were had by all.

Our thanks must go to the Geraldton Yacht Club for their magnificent job done in their organisation of the championships.

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N.S.W. Titles

Paul Hopkins kindly sent the following details of the recent N.S.W. State Titles. A more comprehensive heat-by-heat description of the event appears in the June 3 issue of *Sea Spray* which, incidentally, has a magnificent shot of *Hot Prospect II* on the cover.

Lake Macquarie Yacht Club hosted the first ever N.S.W. RL24 Championships. Seventeen boats entered from Newcastle, Sydney, Lake Illawarra and Keepit Dam. Seventeen in total, that is!

Three heats were sailed on the Belmont course and breezes were light/moderate to drift (sometimes sideways!). The Lake waters are virtually tide-free and the lake is open and wide — a great place for any championship. Even Olympic trials.

Botany Bay Yacht Club entered four boats. They placed 1st, 2nd, 3rd and well back. Winner was *Maralinga*, Lou Bray, an ex NS14 man. Second was *Intrepid II*, Robert Lord, another ex NS14 man and third was Paul Hopkins, an ex-just-about-everything.

The racing was marred by the second heat being cancelled when the starters erred in finishing only two boats when IYRU Rule 10 applied (one in, all in) and then, in the decider which finished after dark, yachts not displaying navigation lights were disqualified by LMYC officials. Unfortunately the only boats not carrying nav. lights were local LMYC boats!

These were *Linall*, Peter Rundle, and *Dollamine*, Keith Sparkes. *Linall* dropped from equal second to fifth and *Dollamine* from equal fourth to seventh.

Linall and *Stormbringer* (the Hopkins' boat that was launched in a thunder storm — originally to be called Aunty Jack after June Legg — Paul's son's early attempt to say "Aunty June!") did not carry spinners. Just the same they did well on the works.

Of course, the spinnaker-carrying RLs had a big advantage in the light to moderate conditions.

Maralinga and *Intrepid II* sailed fast and consistently. Highest pointing boat was *Stormbringer* . . . with self-tacking jib and fully battened mainsail . . . loose foot too.

Botany Bay boats go for mast rake aft; Lake Macquarie boats have foreward mast rake and drop their centreboards down past vertical. The skipper of *Dollamine* dives under his boat before each race to attach an extra length of wire to enable him to drop his board further. And *Dollamine* is devastating in whisper-drift winds. Very fast.

RESULTS: *Maralinga*, Lou Bray, BBYC, 1.5 pts; *Intrepid II*, Robert Lord, BBYC, 5 pts; *Stormbringer*, Paul Hopkins, BBYC, 10 pts, followed by *Amazing Grace*, *Wall Curry*, *Port Kembla*, *Linall*, *Stranger*, *Oak Flats*, *Dollamine*, *Young Can*, *Baggy Wrinkle*, *Seagull*, *Cataline* and so forth.

NSW RLs will be travelling to country meets this year.

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Queensland Trailerable Yacht Championships

RL24s scooped the pool on Moreton Bay when they finished 1st, 2nd and 3rd and 4th in the Queensland Trailerable Yacht Championships. The first heat was a virtual drifter but the breeze freshened for the second while the third and final heat was sailed in very rough conditions. Winds were estimated to be in excess of 30 knots at times. There were 61 entries and the series was hosted by Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron at Manly. The results were:

- 1st Martin Taylor *La Mouette* (38) Brisbane
- 2nd Warren Walters *Sundance II* (188) Gladstone
- 3rd Rob Legg *Geronimo* (1) Southport
- 4th Des Stanaway *Scarlet Lady* (29) Rockhampton

Congratulations to skippers and crews for a splendid performance.

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Bowen-Hayman Island Race

In response to my note enquiring about his participation in the Bowen-Hayman Island Race, Don McLean sent me the following letter:

"I am only too happy to supply a few details, Ross, as long as members don't think that I'm trying to 'hog' the Newsletter. The reason I am so willing to rush into print is because I had a very brief experience many years ago trying to help somebody do much the same sort of job you are endeavouring to do now and know that unless members contribute something to the Newsletter it's just about an impossible task. So what about it readers? I know that the RL owners I've met have a wealth of cruising stories plus some wonderful hints on how to make the boat go faster instead of the hit and miss methods non-technical types like myself employ.

Actually the race we competed in recently was a revival of the Bowen-Hayman Island Race which had not been held since 1957. The fleet only numbered 13 but included a Top Hat, a 46 ft ketch (*Tawarri II* — originally from Melbourne), an Endeavour 26, some Boomerangs, Sunmaids, Hoods and a couple of one-off yachts. As it was a midnight start, there was a choice of having a go at the tricky Gloucester Passage in the dark or going around the top end. Those boats which took the risk came out best although the reverse could apply next year. We led to the Passage and the advantage of being a centre-boarder was to prove our downfall at that stage as being able to get in near the beach where I reckoned there would be an absence of current turned out to be the wrong decision. The Top Hat, well sailed by a local skiff crew, got past and held the lead to Hayman.

However we were fortunate in that the race was conducted on a short measurement handicap system and this gave us the overall trophy plus performance and class (trailerable yacht) trophies. It was a pleasing performance for us as we had broken the mast at the Bowen Easter Regatta and only had a few days to rig a new one.

The weather covered a range of breezes and we struck a squall of about 28-30 knots just near Hayman. I will let the Newsletter know the date of next year's race as the hospitality at the Island was magnificent and the management intend to make the race into a really big event. Off-shore racing is growing rapidly in the Townsville, Bowen, Mackay area and for the shorter races the safety requirements enable one to comply with an RL24. Our club is conducting night racing about once every 6 weeks and the experience is proving invaluable. If you haven't tried it, get into it — it's another world particularly in an RL24.

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For Your Diary

Bruce Avery tells me that his club, Albury YC, will be conducting its annual Albury to Tallangatta Sailability on the weekend of 22/23 October next. The fleet races to Tallangatta on the Saturday, stays overnight and cruises home to Albury on the Sunday — or is it the other way about? In either case the event is a very friendly family affair and provides some great sailing as a bonus. Interested starters can contact Bruce at Murray Valley Highway, Ebdon, 3691.

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Interesting (But Useless) Information Department

Robert Foulis, a Canadian music teacher who was also a civil engineer was returning to his home at St John, New Brunswick, through thick fog. As he drew close he listened for the notes of the piano he knew his daughter would be playing but to his surprise he could only hear the noise of the bass note. It sounded as if this was the only note she was playing.

Telling his daughter to carry on playing the scales slowly, Foulis again went out to listen.

Eventually, at about 1/2 mile only one note remained, the same bass note he'd heard earlier. Living near the coast Foulis had often thought about the problem of fog warnings and now he knew he had the answer. The fog horn had been invented. Despite the reluctance of maritimes to give a steam driven foghorn he'd built in his own workshop a trail which was an instant success. Today, although other fog warning methods are also used, the Foulis foghorn is by far the most penetrating of all with a range of up to 30 miles.

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Cruising Corner

After reading Col and Judy Murray's open water trip around Wilsons Promontory, Sandy and Peggy Penny were inspired to write of their return to the Abnolhas Islands some 35 miles west of Geraldton, WA in *Indaba* (Sail No. 132).

Sandy has by-lined his **delightful** account of this adventure
The Day We Missed the Islands — Well, Nearly!

It was after we had the good fortune to spend a couple of weeks at the Abnolhas Islands, some 35 miles west of Geraldton that we made the decision to sell our large catamaran and buy a trailerable yacht so as to get to the islands again.

May '76 found my wife Peggy, my 13 year old daughter Moira and myself bouncing in *Indaba* on an exposed mooring in Geraldton Harbour waiting for the weather to moderate. It did a bit and on the morning of the second day we moved behind a barge after a bad night to have breakfast and prepare for sea.

By 8 a.m., armed with sketch charts of the Islands made from aerial photographs, under reefed main and furled small jib we motor sailed out of the harbour. We reached to the channel buoy and then ran off in short rough seas. I then decided to stow the motor but while trying to clip in the hull plug my shoulder got in the way of the tiller and we gybed, all standing. The mainsheet block which was on a pendant caught Peggy, who was steering, a hell of a shot on the jaw. There was blood everywhere! I patched up the cut on her chin and shortly after we broached (because

we were unbalanced — that is the yacht though we were a bit too!) I let go the main and she righted herself. No water went below as two of the wash boards were in place.

I now reefed taking a further 2 ft 6 ins off the main and broke out the small jib and things started to settle down. We were now clear of the entrance channel and the seas while bigger were not so steep. After a couple of hours the wind had moderated and backed to the NW and we were able to hold a course to take us just south of Hammock Island in the Southern Group. The rest of the sail was pure pleasure.

By midday I had shaken out the reefs and changed to the big jib. It just didn't strike me to fix my position from the mainland. By 2.30 p.m. we had covered some 30 miles and I had started to look for Hammock Island and sure enough there it was — with a large pipe marker a couple of miles NW of us.

By 4.00 p.m. we had the island abeam but no other islands had appeared!! But we were sure we were on the right track for coming up astern of us was a large cray boat. "He must be heading for the islands."

When he drew alongside he asked us if we were the Pennys? He had been asked by radio to watch out for us by the friend we were to meet in the Southern Group. He asked where we were going as we had all but missed the islands — the island with the pole was not Hammock but Wreck Point of Pelsant Island with its light, the most southerly point of the islands. The next stop would have been Africa! Unknown to us we had been pushed some 10 miles south by a current plus leeway and bad steering.

With very little daylight left the crayboat skipper kindly gave us a tow. I was glad I had fitted a large, strong anchor cleat on the foredeck and a roller fairlead because in two shakes of an RL's rudder we were planing along at 12 knots. We were dropped off at a mooring in the last glimmer of light surrounded by islands and water as still as a millpond. We had arrived — but only just.

We woke to the roar and wash of cray boats going out to pull their pots and around us were coral reefs in the clearest water I have ever seen. The mooring belonged to a carrier boat and we were shown to a spare one among some small islands. We spend the rest of the day exploring in our rubber dinghy. In the evening our fisherman friend came around in his jet-boat and we were able to thank him for his radio call. He spent some time with us correcting my charts and suggesting where we could visit.

The next day we decided to go to Gum Island where the survivors of the Dutch East Indiaman *Zeevyk* which foundered on Half Moon Reef in 1727 set up camp. Later they built a boat from timber taken from the wreck. The island is some 8 miles away to the west and we motored clear of the coral before setting sail on a light no'easterly. The islands are very low and only appear as a line on the horizon but there was no mistaking White Island where we had to change course for Gum.

On arrival we anchored in about 6 ft of water near a rock groyne built by an oil exploration team. We explored the island hoping to find a pile of silver coins or a rusty cutlass but no luck — the guarno diggers had found it all years before.

Back aboard the motion was frightful with the wind back in the east. We moved in closer to the groyne, hoping to find some shelter but here I couldn't get my 30 lb fisherman anchor to hold. After a number of tries I stripped off, donned a mask and went down to see what the anchor was doing. Four p.m. is not the best time to swim in these waters but I was able to discover that we were trying to anchor on a sheet of old coral, not unlike a slab of concrete. With night setting in we motored out, tying off when we were opposite the end of the groyne. Peggy then paddled a light anchor and line ashore and made it fast to a rock on the end of the groyne. That night we stood anchor watch but there wasn't much sleep for the watch below either.

first light we were away shaping a course for Wreck
int on Pelsant Island which necessitated a 5 mile
at into short seas before running south. We were
o far east when we turned and had our first
ghtening experience of crashing through coral with
e centre board. We lifted the board and drifted over
d clear of the coral patch to run on without further
ouble, tying up to the remains of an old jetty at the
uthern end of Pelsant Island at 11 a.m: We had 16
les on the log. The wind by this time had gone into
e south and the area was like a millpond. After taking
walk and doing some beach combing we moved and
ed to a rock at the head of the pier with the 30lb
chor laid out astern again on a slab of coral. We
rned in early and slept 12 hours.

ext morning the wind was still in the south. So,
ter breakfast we set off to see more of the island
hich is some 6 miles long but only a few hundred
rds wide. Our main find was a beach covered with
rong white sea eggs, we ended up with our Esky full
them.

e were back on board by lunch time and on our way
ack to the mooring by 2.45 p.m. A course was set
nd we ran north. Moira, who was on the foredeck
arned us of shallows ahead — but too late. Crash,
ash, crash — and we were through! I was on the
bin top in a flash to find we were embayed by
oral: a beat to the east and then west and we were
ain in deep water. The message finally got through
"you have to have a lookout on deck all the time
coral areas". The rest of the 10 mile sail was real
cial sailing.

he next day we spent skindiving and relaxing in the
n. Our fisherman freind called in and invited us to
ea that evening. Before dark he came in his jetboat
o show us the way to a coral patch where we could
nchor near his island. During a very pleasant evening
nd after watching the TV weather report our friend
ressed the view that the weather wouldn't hold
uch longer so we decided to sail for Geraldton the
llowing morning.

fter a good night we were away by 7 a.m. motoring
W to clear the islands and then altering course to
E to pass near the Coral patches, an area of small
lands of dead coral. The short steep seas were very
ncomfortable and we were glad to bear away to the
E once past the Patches, setting the small jib and
ne teef in the main. With a dead beat to windward
kept the motor running slowly so we could point
igher. By 9.45 p.m. our plot put us south of King
eef and we then changed tacks every hour. By 11 a.m.
he wind had moderated so we shook out the reef and
et the big jib. By midday we had raised the mainland
nd got a good fix which put us some 20 miles from
eraldton and 7 miles south. With the wind slightly
n the south of east I shipped the outboard as we
ere able to shape a course direct to Geraldton where
ve arrived at 3.45 p.m., the log reading 42 miles.

t had been a most enjoyable passage which rounded
off a very pleasant holiday, not very restful, but well
worth the effort. We will certainly repeat it but when
he days are longer — May is a bit late in the season.
Our total distance sailed was 124 miles.

* * * * *

Personal Pars

* Ben and Teresa Sgalippa are rumoured to have
caught the racing bug in a big way. *White Pointer*
previously used only for the respectable pastime of
cruising, is being refitted for a no holds barred assault
on Southport Sailing Squadron's RL fleet. My spy has
the word that the Sgalippas mean business too!

* True to form Ken Hackett (Sasha) was first across
the starting line in the big fleet of Victorian boats
heading for the more habitable climate of North
Queensland. There were no recalls and we've heard he
and Ruth were lapping up the sunshine during a brief
stopover at Legg's Landing in Southport.

* Christine and Barry Arnold were also recent visitors
to the Leggs and while they didn't return to SA with
an RL28 they did buy a house just up the road from
Rob and June. With *Coolibah* amongst the Southport
fleet, there should be some fantastic racing there next
season.

* Chris McSorley, and Alan Richardson, joint owners
of *Mokera* (Sail No. 44) competed in the Latrobe
Valley Y.C. annual Sauna Sail. Held over the Queen's
Birthday weekend, this year's event attracted a fleet
of 404 (that's right!) boats. Racing is conducted
around the sticks on the Hazelwood Power Station
Pondage and because the water is quite warm (com-
pared with the frigid air) the pondage is usually eerily
blanketed in mist. This year, however, the air was
kept clear by a 20 knot breeze although I'm reliably
told that it went blue when *Mokera* lost her mast in
the last race.

* Finally, the next Newsletter which is due about
the end of August will almost certainly be late because
with our kids, Janice and I are joining the Olneys,
the Mahons, the Triggers, the Hacketts et al. in
exploring the Whitsunday Passage area. We're looking
forward to meeting some of the folk we've got to know
through the Newsletter and if the coast is as good as
we southerners dream about we just might not come
back.

Knoxfield 3180
June 1977

NATIONAL TITLES LAKE BONNEY Y.C.
BARMERA S.A.
4th — 11th JANUARY 1978
SEE YOU THERE!