



NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

RL24 - It's YOUR kind of boat

MAY 1998



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FROM THE BOSUN'S CHAIR

With the shortest day of the year only 48 hours away and today's top temperature in winter – bound Melbourne a bracing 13o C. , nothing could be further from my mind than sailing. However, as I returned to the city this afternoon across the West Gate Bridge I saw Hobsons Bay bespeckled with white confetti – the sails of the mid week fleet out of Royal Melbourne all slogging gamely into a bitterly cold and unrelenting nor' westerly. Having convinced myself that the “confetti” was a yacht fleet and not flakes of snow, I found myself suddenly yearning to be out with them. What an insane thought – particularly in one who becomes jelly – legged just hearing wind whistling through rigging in a yacht club yard. On the other hand, the miracle and magic of sailing is a powerfully addictive brew which cannot be repulsed and from which, for most of us, there is no release. How fortunate we are, then, that our cravings for a sailing “hit” can be satiated with an RL24 – arguably one of the most versatile yachts ever designed. William Lyons of Jaguar car fame coined the phrase “Grace, Space, Pace” to describe his worthy products. He could just as relevantly been talking about RL24s and for good measure thrown in a reference to easy handling, easy towing and easy on the wallet. But I digress! This was to be a short essay on winter sailing as a means of extending the use of and therefore the value received from your RL24. A number of clubs with active registers ofailable yachts conduct a winter racing series as well as organising day and overnight cruising opportunities. The Victorianailable Yacht Club and the Westernailable Yacht Club are two groups that do, for example. Should you be interested in making contact with them, talk to people like Lloyd Graham, Ron Mc.Crindle or Les Brown who are, with their respective RLs, all participants in activities organised by those clubs.

If you remain unconvinced about the merits and joys(?) of winter sailing, don't despair - help is at hand via the good offices of our President and Secretary who have arranged for *SOUTH LAKE MACQUARIE AMATEUR SAILING CLUB* to be our hosts for the next RL24 National Championship series. All the details appear in later paragraphs of this Newsletter. The RL24 Nationals have been held on Lake Macquarie (where it's *always* sunny and warm) at both northern and southern clubs on several occasions now and each time the quality of the competition, conditions and facilities has more than justified the selection of the venue. This year will be no exception and irrespective of whether you're a hotshot racer or an “also ran” (like me) you can be assured of great RL24 camaraderie on-shore and excellent competition on the water.

On the matter of competition, there was a degree of angst at the last Nationals at Lake Wellington where the Association requested the host club, in conjunction with our Measurers, to enforce the Class rules to the letter although boats which didn't measure were not on this occasion excluded. The general consensus among competitors was that the tightening up action was beneficial to the class in so far as it levelled the playing field and dismissed all those niggling little bits of innuendo that some how attach themselves to various boats. In light of the success of this strategy, it is anticipated that a similar approach will be employed at SLMASC with the added proviso that boats that fail to measure will be excluded from the results. The intention here is not about waving a big stick in order to intimidate members or to deter them from participating in what rightfully should be great fun. Rather, it is about encouraging members to participate by assuring them that our Class Rules will be

applied equally and evenly to all boats and that no one will reap an advantage by treating them in a cavalier manner. If you have any doubts about your boats' measurement status, now is the time to check with either of our Hon. Measurers, both of whom will be pleased to set you right. Most members will be aware that our Measurers are Lloyd Graham (03 9870 5439) and Bruce Castles (03 51442639). (RL24)

Ross Corben.

What goes down doesn't necessarily come up!

As one who has spent a number of anxious hours clinging desperately to an upside down RL24 I know a little of the personal despair and feeling of utter helplessness that follows a major capsizes. I'm sure similar feelings are shared by others who have had the same experience. RL24s are not inherently unstable or dangerous. On the contrary, they are amazingly tolerant of skipper stupidity, extraordinarily responsive and wonderfully quick. Unfortunately, we skippers are sometimes too slow to keep up and before we know it we've sailed ourselves into a really tricky situation. With the 1997/98 season notable for the number of our boats suffering capsizes of varying degrees of seriousness, it is timely to have our attention drawn to the following piece which appeared in the RL24 NEWSLETTER of February 1989. Written by our current President, Ken Hackett, the advice was excellent then and remains so today.

“ARE YOU BUOYANT?”

The new Class Rule, effective from 1st Feb 1989 requires that your RL24 be buoyant. The rule states: *Buoyancy in the form of sealed compartments or closed cell foam with a minimum volume of 0.55 cubic metres must be permanently built into the hull. The buoyancy must be approximately evenly distributed fore and aft and athwartships. Closed cell foam should not be used below bilge level.*

PLEASE..... CHECK YOUR HULL. It is in your own interests to be satisfied that if you do suffer the misfortune to be knocked flat and swamped that your boat will not sink with you and your crew. It is not easy to know when you have got a total of 0.55 cubic metres. It is a fair bet, though, that unless extra buoyancy was added after manufacture you will need more than you now have. Best approach is to try to be conservative in your estimates of volume and add buoyancy wherever you can. Closed cell foam can be used in two-pot liquid form and poured into all sorts of unused spaces. Try filling the gap in the gunwales above the quarter berths, the considerable space around the porta potti, under the cockpit floor (early Mk.1's), under the quarter berths (aft ends) etc. Have a good critical look around and you will find lots of spots that can become buoyant volume. Sometimes you may need to cut holes for pouring the foam into but these can readily be “made good” after the pour. Get advice from your supplier about using the foam – there are a few tricks. Try a small experimental pour first. The quantity of this costly product can be kept down by first filling larger spaces with any styrene foam packing and sealing it in with the closed cell foam.”

Another most relevant piece appearing in the same Newsletter was penned by long time RL24 stalwart and former owner of *SLIPPERY WHEN WET*, Kevin Troy. Kevin wrote from personal experience when he noted the following.

“With a recent capsized and eventual sinking by one of our members I have been prompted into putting pen to paper on RL24 buoyancy. I do not wish to alarm owners but ask all owners to check for a structural fault brought on by age, fatigue plus ignorance. The bottom line is this. The positive buoyancy tanks are in some cases failing. The for’ard and aft tanks are coming away from the hull sides. Some points to come out are:-

1. The RL must be trailed and stored on its keel.
2. Multi rollers should not be used.
3. Side skids or rails are to rest the boat on – not for the boat to sit on when being trailed. (there *is* a difference.)

All of these points contribute to side flex and the eventual fatigue of the bulkhead from the hull in small areas. The gunwhale of the RL can be hiding another problem in that where the deck sits over the hull and is siliconed and pop-riveted on – movement can take place. This is eventually discovered by sailing in conditions where there is a small steep wave which pushes up under the gunwhale finding its way eventually into the tank or under the cabin sole. Another practice is rolling the boat over on dry land with the mast up. Sure, it’s an easy way at getting at the keel or hull but use mattresses or a whole pile of cushions and get it on its gunwhale as soon as possible – not cocked halfway.

The quick fix method for the for’ard tank is to fit an inspection port in the anchor well if one is not already there and fill the tank with a form of positive buoyancy material which can be removed at some later stage if necessary. Another inspection port or drainage bung can be installed in the cabin at the base of the bulkhead for mopping up when required. Inspection ports can also be added to the aft lockers to give access for placing foam between them and the hull. Use chopped foam or pressure pack insulation (read the instructions) - makes them good Eskys.” (RL24)

VICTORIAN TRAILABLE YACHT CHAMPIONSHIPS1999.

The VYC has announced that its Trailable Yacht Championship regatta will be held on the weekend of 20th and 21st of March next year at a venue to be advised. In a move aimed at securing a top rating fleet of competitors, the VYC will invite all yacht clubs and class associations connected with trailable yachts to nominate a team of three boats to contest the championship on both an individual and team basis. One way or another, we ought to be able to have some highly competitive RLs to take on the rest of the trailable yacht world and to add to the record already established by the likes of *OHAU RUA* , *SASHA*, *LOWANNA VI* and *PEGASUS*. We’ll keep you informed as further details emerge. (RL24)

24TH. RL24 National Championships Preliminary Notice of Regatta

Venue: South Lake Macquarie Amateur Sailing Club, NSW.

SLMASC is situated at the western end of Sunshine Park, Sunshine, adjacent to Sunshine Reserve. Sunshine is at the end of the Morisset Peninsular in the South Lakes Area.

Dates: Between 28 December 1998 and 3 January 1999.

Accommodation: Most competitors prefer to camp in Sunshine Park beside the club rooms. This is not a public camping area and can therefore only be accessed by application to SLMASC. No caravans are allowed and there is no power in the camping area. Club toilets/showers are open 24 hours.

Caravan parks are 4 and 8 km away at Bonnells Bay (tel: 02/49733555) and Morisset (tel: 02/49731883). There are also a range of motels, short-term rental houses, bed & breakfasts and houseboats. Contact secretary Rachel for details. SLMASC contact is the secretary, PO Box 53 Morisset 2264.

What an ideal spot for RL families to get together –

- Superb lawn area in front of club rooms for rigging and launching
- Club verandah has excellent views for spectators
- Park along side provides safe, convenient, inexpensive and attractive means of accommodation and also includes double boat ramps
- Foreshore is clean and ideal for swimming
- Plenty of car and trailer parking
- Fantastic sailing water
- Very good shopping just 4 km away
- Large range of leisure activities; eg. ocean beach 20 min drive, Wattagen Forest 15 min drive (walks, views, picnic areas), Hunter Valley vineyards 30 min drive.

MARK IT IN YOUR DIARY NOW!!! (RL24)

V.Y.C. TRAILABLE YACHT COMMITTEE

Les Brown is our representative on this important committee of the V.Y.C. and the high level of credibility enjoyed by our class is largely a reflection of the excellent manner in which Les represents us in V.Y.C. forums. His report of recent T/Y committee activities is as follows.

As your V.Y.C. trailable yacht representative, I would like to bring you up to date with recent discussions that may affect our association. Bendigo Yacht Club wrote to the V.Y.C. race rules committee recently, requesting a ruling on the practice of some boats changing the number of crew while competing in a series of races for a championship. If the Bendigo Yacht Club were to adopt a system to control the

number of crew in a particular race series, the race rules committee posed the following questions:-

1. Is the restriction appropriate for normal club races or only regattas of a short duration?
2. Will the system disadvantage competitors who might have legitimate reasons to vary their crew configuration.(perhaps at short notice)
3. Will the system place an unnecessary burden on race officials?
4. Are you making a rod for your own back?
5. Will you alienate more people by imposing restrictions than you would be allowing the practice to continue?

Also- criteria for crew nomination may need to include.

1. Maximum number of persons
2. Minimum number of persons
3. Maximum crew weight
4. Minimum crew weight
5. Limited to persons nominated on entry form / must sail with all persons nominated on entry form
6. Crew should not be changed during a regatta, without prior written approval of the race committee.

Bendigo Yacht Club claim some competitors are increasing or decreasing crew according to wind strength, thus disadvantaging boats staying with their original crew number. We have had the same problem in some of our RL24 titles. I personally think, that at least we should consider the crew number entered for a series, should be retained for the duration of that series. Your thoughts would be appreciated, with the view of putting a proposal to the next annual general meeting.

At times it is necessary to make a snap decision and argue for what is thought to be in the best interests of RL24s and the association. We argued last year against the proposal put forward by Geelong that hiking should not be allowed beyond the sheer line. Many months of argument and discussion took place at the VYC meetings. With the able assistance of Ken Hackett, Mick Shannon, Peter McKay, Lloyd myself and other like minded associations, we were able to have the hiking rules retained more or less in line with our existing class rules.

A decision was necessary when a discussion commenced about the implications of the keel lock down rule (Addendum A.1 Rule 3.3b) in the AYF racing rules blue book. I maintained that there was no practical and safe way of locking the centre board of a RL24 swing keel in the fully down position. If the locked down keel were to hit something, it would mean that you would have 4ft 6 inches of keel levering against 20 inches at the top. I had a personal experience of this while racing on Ron Players' boat at Westernport Bay a few years ago. Ron had a lock down bolt located in the cut out at the top of his swing keel. We hit a sand bank. The centre case cracked and the bolt bent, making it difficult to remove the bolt. The boat was blown further onto the sand bank and lay on it's side. We eventually got the bolt out, allowing the keel to swing back. Water came in through the cracked centre case, making it necessary to bail out all the way back to the boat ramp.

At a later meeting and discussion on keel lock down, I suggested that the RL24 association may apply for dispensation from the keel lock down rule. It was indicated at a later meeting, dispensation may be considered if a boat had positive buoyancy. At the VYC meeting the next month it was stated dispensation to the lock down rule would not be allowed under any circumstances. Considering that the lock down bolt is at or just above the waterline, I protested I was not going to endanger my boat or crew. At this stage a person sitting next to me, and with some authority, whispered -“a rule is not a rule if it cannot be policed.” But remember you can be protested out of a race. That is the way things stand at the moment. It is over to you. (124)

Les Browne

STOP PRESS.....

Michael and Bradley Walsh of *OHAU RUA* fame are pleased to announce the arrival of their brother Charlie. They advise that both Charlie and their parents, Simon and Natalie are all doing well and the whole family is looking good for the next Nationals. Congratulations to all of them. (124)

STOP PRESS.....AGAIN!

Not content with blowing away all the D/Ks in the Marlay Point Overnighter earlier this year, Les Brown (*Alicia 2*) has added the Western Trailable yacht Club *WINTER CHAMPIONSHIP* to his trophy cabinet. *Alicia 2* is a swing keeler which was built up by its original owner primarily as a comfortable cruiser and while the quality of its internal fit – out is excellent, it's not the lightest RL around. However, Les has tidied up the rig extensively and among other things has matched a lovely set of sails cut by *Performance Sails* of Mornington with a Goldspar skiff mast. Just as importantly, he's worked very hard at his sailing and is now reaping the reward for his diligence. Congratulations, Les, although much more of this and the Stewards will want a swab. Second in the event was Lloyd Graham (*The Sting*) while 3rd was Geoff. Onions (*Cold Duck*). *Bunyip* (Ron Mc.Crindle) was next to finish while Don Lewis (*Lowana v*) was fifth. (124)