



**FEBRUARY 2008**

## **RL - it's YOUR kind of boat**

RL24 Owners Association of Australia Inc.  
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## Greetings

and earnest good wishes for an exciting, satisfying and rewarding 2008. I had an omen of how the New Year might shape up when a friend showed me the following which purportedly appeared the newsletter of a local church. "There will be a hymn-sing in the park opposite the church next Friday night at 7pm. Bring a blanket and be prepared to sin." Never happened when I went to Sunday School but this Thurbian-like gem is a great reminder that the absurd and off-beat is as necessary to our wellness as bread and water. I hope your New Year is characterized by plenty of absurdity and off-beatedness.

## The Old Order Changeth

After several seasons of very conscientious and successful service at the helm of the Association, both Bernie and Paul wanted a break and didn't seek re-election to the Association's executive in 2008. Trevor Jones, our long suffering but very competent Treasurer, wasn't all that keen to continue either but made the fatal error of agreeing to another term if no one else wanted the job. Guess what? No one did! Funny, that. So, as you will read in later paragraphs, Darren Dyer and Jane Davis have been elected Hon. President and Hon. Secretary respectively with Trev. as Treasurer. Both Jane and Darren were gracious volunteers and we are indeed fortunate to have people of their calibre running the show as they both have a passionate interest in the Class and have already demonstrated that they can represent us in the sport with great distinction. Congratulations to them both.

## National Championships 2008

With a week of perfect sailing conditions, a very hospitable and competent hosting Club and a fleet of 15 boats overall, it is little wonder that this year's National Championship regatta was such a success.

The racing fleet consisted of 6 Swing Keelers, 7 Drop Keelers and 2 in the Cruising Division (no spinnakers.) Boats came from Queensland (2) NSW (3) and Victoria (10). For Andrew Pike (*Sly Fox*), Ken Donaldson (*High Spirits*), Garry Carr (*Dream On Dump Truck*) and Simon Vaughan (*Lowana V*) it was their first attendance as skippers at our Nationals and each contributed substantially to the success of the event. It was great to have them join us and we welcome them warmly.

Andrew purchased *Sly Fox* a couple of years ago as a derelict. She had lain in a mangrove swamp for some years and the restoration job undertaken by him is little short of miraculous. We hope to bring you the story in the Newsletter soon as well as an inspirational piece written by Theresa, his very tolerant and loving wife but for the moment it suffices to say that *Sly Fox* (the boat's original name) is the best presented RL24 you will see anywhere. Furthermore, she carries all the top gear (Goldspar mast, North sails, Spunspar rudder etc.) and in due course you can expect Andrew's name to appear prominently in the Swing Keel results.

Ken brought *High Spirits* down from Gunnedah "just to poke around" and ended up winning the Cruising Division. Ken and his crew were great company around the regatta and we hope to see them at future events. *High Spirits* is a Mk3 Swing Keel and is kept in immaculate order. She regularly sails on Keepit Dam and on the Clarence River near Grafton, a possible location for a National series some time down the track.

Garry made his debut with the National Association at Mannering Park but for *Dream On Dump Truck* it was all old hat. As the very first Drop Keeler (and as simply *Dump Truck* in those days) she won a National Championship for Peter Yeomans in 1983 at Southport and backed up with another RL24 Championship the following year at Port Stephens sailed by her new owner Rod Young. It was really good to see the old warrior back on the track and it was particularly meritorious of Garry to make the effort to join us. We look forward

to getting together with him again. And why "*Dream On*" *Dump Truck*? Well, you'll have to talk to Garry's daughters but it has something to do with the reluctance of sophisticated young women being seen aboard a vessel named simply *Dump Truck*!

Simon is actually no stranger to the RL24 scene. Back in 1987 (or was it 1986?) his dad Geoff. set up a superb composite hulled boat which the family called *Liaison*. Sailed by Geoff., Simon and older brother David, the boat was always competitive and participated in Nationals at Gladstone, Eden, Lake Cootharabra, Lake Wellington and Rhyll to name just a few. Inevitably, as happens in most families, the boys set off on their own pathways and a crewless Geoff sold the boat. It is now in the hands of Adrian Cassar. But back to 1985 or thereabouts. The Grand Old Man of RL24's (he was grand then but not old!) Mick Shannon arranged with Rob to lay up a "lightweight" boat to replace *Lowana IV*. This, of course, became *Lowana V* (what else?) With this boat Mick and his crew of school kids blitzed the Trailable Yacht circuit around Victoria and earned not only the lasting admiration of many in the yachting fraternity but a nomination as Victorian Yachtsman of the Year. But the boat never won a National Championship so Mick talked to Rob again and arranged for the production of the first composite lay-up. Naturally, this boat became *Lowana VI* and *Lowana V* was sold to Barry Aitlen. Imagine Mick's chagrin when Barry won the Nationals with *Lowana V* in Adelaide the following year! However, you can't keep a champion down and Mick took the honours in 1991 at Mannering Park and again at Southport in 1996. But we digress. Barry sold the boat a couple of years or so after his Adelaide victory and it stayed in the hands of its new owner, Don Lewis for many years. Until quite recently, Don was an active member and competitor in the Melbourne Trailable Yacht Club and it was only advancing years which forced him to relinquish the tiller. Now enter young "Ludwig" (Luddy for short) aka Simon Vaughan, an up and coming young architect now domiciled in Sydney. Simon has never lost his interest in the sport and sails quite regularly in the 16ft. skiff class on Glitz City Harbour. Seizing the opportunity presented by the availability of *Lowana V*, a boat he knows very well, he is now a member of the Association and will be a keen and regular participant in our regattas. It's great to have him back in the fold and his second place in the Drop Keel Division suggests we will see him featuring in the results fairly often.

But enough of the history already! The regatta began with the usual Invitation Race on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and the serious stuff began the next day. By the end of the week there were quite a few fairly tired boat crews dragging themselves around the Club which if nothing else is an indicator of the intensity of the competition in all divisions. While the outright results weren't particularly close, there were some tense tussles back in the fleet and in most heats the dominant boats had to fight to get clear at the finish.

Among the Swing Keelers, Ian Lane (*This Way Up*) and Darren Dyer (*Whatever*) each won two of the first four Heats before Darren edged ahead with wins in Heats 5, 6, and 7 to retain the Swing Keel Championship he won last year in Paynesville. Steve Lymbrey (*Thinga Majig*) and Paul Davis (*Street Car*) swapped places regularly and at the end of hostilities only 2 points separated them, Steve getting the chocolates for third place, also for the second consecutive year. Ian Cook, aided and abetted by Bryan Cuthbertson and Paul Cabrie on *Screamin' Blue Murder* turned in their usual competent performance and had a good regatta while the afore mentioned Andrew Pike with his immaculate *Sly Fox* did well in those Heats in which he sailed.

In the Drop Keel Division, Simon Walsh was invincible in *O hau Rua*. Sailing with his three boys, Michael, Brad and Charlie and his good friend, "Stewie", he carried all before him in an inspirational demonstration of concentrated sailing skill, boat preparation and magnificent crew work. This is not to say that in the early stages of most races he wasn't challenged. Frequently he was behind other boats but it was always just a matter of time before he was in the lead and going away. Simon and his team thoroughly deserve this

win which marks the twelfth occasion he has earned the right to hold aloft the Rob Legg Perpetual Trophy. Coincidentally, the last time the RL's raced at Mannering Park was 1994 and there's no prize for guessing who won the Drop Keel Division that year too.

In the early stages of the regatta, the tussle between the other six boats was absorbing. For example, at the end of Heat 3, *Lowana V* and Bernie Ryan's *Spud Gun* were separated by a mere 20 seconds. Mick Shannon and *Lowana VI* simply got faster as the event progressed and down wind, particularly, were nigh on impossible to pass. Adam Chambers sailing Red Edwards' *Pipe Dream* was consistently fast and always in contention. Paul Corben's *Comic Sedso* was quite fast upwind and was often right on the pace at the first windward mark but gear failure and other problems down wind made it hard to maintain their advantage. Garry Carr (*Dream On Dump Truck*) sailed consistently and enjoyed the learning curve which comes from a National Championship debut. At the end of play, the runner up was *Lowana V* while the minor place went to a well sailed and consistent *Lowana VI*. Bernie Ryan, unfortunately, had his regatta seriously truncated when he was taken from the course and hospitalized during Heat 4 suffering from acute sun stroke and *Spud Gun* took no further part in the racing. To everyone's great relief, Bernie made a good recovery later in the week.

The Cruising Division was a match race between the Hetherington family sailing their long-serving *Miss Tress* and Ken Donaldson and his crew on *High Spirits*. As reported in earlier paragraphs, *High Spirits* won the day but it was good to see the Hetheringtons hanging in there, especially Cara and Howard who fearlessly tackle any situation Hugh throws their way. They represent the full spirit of family sailing and they extract the utmost value from their boat especially given that *Miss Tress* becomes a floating caravan at the conclusion of each day's competition.

Congratulations to the winners, of course, but more particularly to all participating competitors who demonstrated once again that the Class remains viable and attractive to many RL24 owners. A full list of results is attached.

### **Bruce Castles Participation Award**

This year the winner of the Bruce Castles trophy is Bernie Ryan. Bernie has served as Association President since his election to the position at the AGM held in Paynesville in January 2005. Since that time he has been a staunch and loyal advocate for the Class and a great ambassador in his travels with what began as *Almitra* then became *Monkey See Monkey Do* and is now *Spud Gun*. Bernie has given hours and hours of service to the Association in various administrative tasks but especially in following up leads on new owners or lapsed members in an effort to encourage them to connect with the RL family. He has been known to mercilessly badger people about coming to National titles and often, to their great delight, they did. His enthusiasm for the Association was once expressed in a concerted and very successful campaign to raise sponsorship dollars which has contributed substantially to the highly satisfactory financial situation we currently enjoy. The Association owes a considerable debt of gratitude to Bernie Ryan and his award is well deserved.

### **The Toad**

As members will know, the Toad Trophy is the most hotly contested prize the Association offers. It was first presented in 1978 by Lake Bonnie RL24 yachtsman and owner of *Toad of Barmera*, Craig Rooney, to recognize "Conclusive Consistency", a quality often exhibited by RL24 sailors but hitherto rarely recognized. Strangely, most winners are reluctant to have their identity revealed but, confidentially of course, the list includes such RL luminaries as Simon Walsh, Darryl Langdon, Mick Shannon, James Shannon, Brad Taylor,

Red Edwards, Ken Griffiths and many others. I have to confess that I, too have been its recipient but as a yachtsman, I am definitely not a luminary. This year, there was a strong field of contenders and the Selection Panel took some time to reach a decision. Paul Corben's ever-increasing list of breakages including a main halyard cleat which persisted in letting go and dumping the mainsail on the deck not once but THREE times and his altercation with a mooring which wrapped itself around the o/b prop. as he left for the start line made him an early favourite with the bookies. There were others but in the end they all got done for pace. Because, out of the blue came Adam Chambers sailing *Pipe Dream* under kite, having a wonderful ride and really hooting along. Such a good ride in fact and so fast that nobody on board noticed those Cardinal Marks flashing by which warn all mariners in the vicinity that a shallow reef lurks beneath the surface on the northwestern side of the Lake. When she hit, *Pipe Dream* stopped quicker than an odds-on favourite but fortunately without any damage to anything other than Adam's pride. In an interesting twist and having in mind *Oahu Rua's* success at Mannering Park back in 1994, the last time we sailed on Lake Macquarie was 1999 at South Lake Macquarie Amateur Sailing Club. The Toad Trophy that year was won by no less than Red Edwards sailing, you guessed it, *Pipe Dream*.

### **Annual General Meeting**

Held as advertised on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 at the Mannering Park Yacht Club, the meeting discussed a number of relevant issues but principally the matter of the power and weight of outboard motors appropriate to RL24's when racing. Opinion is divided and the way forward is not clear at this stage but there was consensus that, whatever shape the final decision took, it would have to strongly reflect safety considerations. James Shannon has undertaken to work up a Notice of Motion which will be published at an early date in the Newsletter and members are invited to express their views on the matter in its pages. The current intention is for the Motion to be put at the next AGM. The meeting also considered and passed the Treasurers Report and elected the following Office Bearers for 2008.

President:	Darren Dyer
Secretary:	Jane Davis
Treasurer:	Trevor Jones
Measurers:	Simon Walsh and Michael Shannon
Yachting Vic. Rep:	James Shannon
Newsletter:	Ross Corben

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the outgoing committee of Bernie Ryan, Paul Corben and Trevor Jones.

### **Bits and Pieces From Hear and There.**

- In addition to the new members who attended the Nationals (mentioned earlier) we have been rejoined by Don Pembleton of Wagga Wagga who sails *Peer Gynt*. Don was hoping to join us at Mannering Park but was asked to crew a Sydney-Hobart boat back to Sydney and the clash of dates couldn't be circumvented. Don was an active participant in Association regattas some years ago and sailed in an RL24 Nationals at Mannering Park but in more recent times has concentrated on local club racing and sailing instruction. Good to have you back on the mailing list, Don.

- While our numbers at this year's regatta were in line with what the Committee expected, we were very unlucky not to have had at least 3 more of our "regulars". For example, Michael Reid (*Sasha*) was all set to go but a severe back injury curtailed all but the most gentle of activities. With the prospect of a big vintage in a month or two it was essential that he regain his fitness so sailing was off limits. However, Mick was there in spirit, metaphorically and literally as he sent along a couple of dozen of his marvelous liqueur Muscats for use as participation prizes and gifts for club helpers, much to the delight of the recipients. I'm pleased to report that Michael is now looking pretty fit and is gearing up for a big yield. Brad Taylor (*F Troop*) and Trevor Jones (*Casper*) were also forced to be late withdrawals, in each case because of unexpected problems with crew availability. It was the spell of extremely hot weather in Melbourne which took out Wayne Hill (*Spiral Navigator*). It's not that Wayne can't handle the heat – in his job as a senior officer in Parks Victoria he gets plenty of that – but with temperatures soaring on the Mornington Peninsula and the fire danger extreme, Wayne had to be on standby in case of the outbreak of a major conflagration in one of his parks. Mercifully, it didn't happen.

\*How do you choose a name for a boat? I'm very reliably informed that this was how it was done in one Sale household I know of.

HE: (Triumphantly) What'll we call the new boat, Darl.?

SHE: (Peevishly) I was thinking it should be "GOTISOWNWAYAGEN"

HE: (Miffed) Well, Whatever!

And that, dear friends, is how RL24 No.159 was named. (Nearly) true story!!

### **A Sad Farewell**

After the Newsletter was written but before printing, we received word that Geoff. Olney, a founding member of the Association and our first Life Member had suffered a severe stroke. He was nearly 95 years of age but still very active and living independently. Sadly, Geoff died in hospital on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January last and so ended a life of extraordinary talent, diversity and adventure. He is survived by his wife, Arch., daughter Maree and sons John and Richard.

After two remarkable careers, the first culminating with his appointment as Chief Airframe Engineer with Australian National Airlines (ANA) and the second as the proprietor of a huge and successful agricultural, horticultural and fuel oil distribution business, he turned his attention to sailing. He took delivery of his first RL24 (*Scud*, sail No.35) at Rob's factory on the eve of the very first National gathering of RL's in 1974 on the Broadwater. Rob quickly recognized that neither Geoff nor his beautiful wife Archina had much sailing experience so he made it his business to keep a close eye on them when they joined the RL fleet on a cruise up into Morton Bay. He taught them well – this was the beginning of a cruising (and racing) relationship with RL24's and later a magnificent RL28, which lasted more than 20 years and ranged over most of the East Coast of Australia. Shortly after returning to Melbourne following that first foray in 1974, Geoff and a couple of other new RL owners initiated moves to form a Victorian RL24 Association and when it was formalized, he was its Hon. Treasurer, a position he held for many years. He was an ardent supporter of the Association and was always present wherever RL24's gathered even long after he'd stopped actively sailing. He had a colossal capacity to reach out to people and entwine their lives with his through his thoughtfulness, his graciousness, his preparedness to help in any situation, his integrity, his high moral calibre and the warmth of his friendship. He was meticulous in maintaining his relationships and it was this attitude to friends that explains why RL people like the Lewis's in Townsville (*Electra*), the Jackman's in Brisbane (*Stella Maris*), the Davenport's in Wyong (*September Song*), the Legg's in Southport and scores of others throughout Australia cherished him and Arch.

and looked forward to their visits. It is difficult here in a few words to do justice to a life lived so fully, a life underpinned by a colossal intellect which ranged freely and widely over fields such as technology, (he once built his own robot and building a computer was a breeze), philosophy, religion, the arts and much more. However, a story here of a recent event in Geoff's life might serve to illustrate the sort of man he was. Some two or three years ago he was required to renew his driving licence. After jumping all the bureaucratic hurdles placed in his way in an attempt to dissuade him, he was finally issued with a new licence which had a currency of TEN years! The fact that he would not have to renew it again until he was 102 or 103 appealed to Geoff enormously so he celebrated by buying yet another new Falcon! Life was for living and by golly, he was going to live it! Relish the new journey, Geoff – and thanks for having so many of us along for the last one.

## **SKANDIA GEELONG WEEK – Australia Day Weekend 2008**

What a weekend! RL24 sailors came home with grins all round as Darren Dyer and Simon Walsh won their respective Divisions of the Australian Trailer Yacht 2008 Championships.

Five RL24's contested the event held over 6 heats on 3 days at Geelong Skandia weekend.

Those entered were Ohua Rua DK(Simon Walsh), Whatever SK(Darren Dyer), Lowana V DK(Simon Vaughan), Pipe Dream DK(Adam Chambers) & Streetcar SK(Paul Davis).

They were split into 2 divisions – Div 1 included the two RL24 Swing Keels and 9 other boats including Noelex 25s, Castle 650s, Farr 7500 & a Zeemin.

- Div 2 included three RL24 Drop Keels and five other boats including Sonata 26, Ross 780, Elliott 5.9, Masrm 24 and a Magnum 8.5

The first race on Saturday afternoon (after a long postponement due to lack of wind) saw Lowana V break a goose neck, but still managed come equal 3<sup>rd</sup> with Pipe Dream. Ohua Rua was first over the line in every race. Whatever was also a winner in their race, with Street Car coming fifth.

The wind got up during the second race and every one on Ian Lane's spectator boat got a good long look at Street Car's keel as a big wind shift came through!! It helped though, as they sailed over the line for a 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Lowana V came 2<sup>nd</sup> in their division. Laney was heard to remark "a few crews need spinnaker gybing lessons!"

Race 3 - Sunday morning saw Lowana V break the goose neck AGAIN, ( I see a pattern starting to emerge!) They finished 2<sup>nd</sup> place again to Ohau Rua. In Div. 1 Whatever came 2<sup>nd</sup> again to the Noelex. The Pipe Dream boys dropped their mast, then couldn't fix it so missed the start. This was AFTER a huge night previously – young Damien Theodore was doing a lot of "reaching" down the side of the boat during the race. It was not a pretty sight.

Race 4 saw Whatever take line honors again over the Noelex, putting them both on equal scores going into the passage race on Sunday afternoon.

Back in the Marina for a lunch break, and we had just settled in for a bite to eat, when a sudden puff of breeze came out of nowhere down through the moorings and caught Lowana V by surprise – and yep, you guessed it - over she went – in full view of everyone having lunch!! Very embarrassing I'm sure, but the boys quickly had her up in no time, probably hoping no one would see. If there had been a TOAD award for this weekend, I feel sure they would have won it. RL sailors should know by now that there are eyes and ears everywhere.

The Sunday afternoon passage race was a long 3 hours plus, and everyone was very tired at the end. Except, of course, the Pipedream boys, who weren't quite feeling up to sailing by then, due the ongoing hangovers from the night before! They had some shut-eye during the afternoon, then were raring to go come dusk while the rest of us were exhausted and looking for an early night.

The last race of the series was held on Monday morning – with Whatever coming 3<sup>rd</sup> on handicap to take out the Championship over the Noelex25 (Executive Suite). Well done Darren!

Ohua Rua and Lowana V came 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively in their Division – congratulations to the two Simons!

All in all it was a great weekend – the entertainment including bands, fireworks, aerial displays etc. were top notch – with over 500 boats entered it was a well run event. Well done to all RL24 owners who entered – you have done the class proud!!

Thanks go to Ian Lane, he enabled us to keep in contact with all the boats and crews, and we now have a very experienced fishing boat driver – Annette Dyer drove us around the course exceptionally well. Thank you "Princess".

The RL contingent had a great family atmosphere, with just about every boat being crewed with relatives. We thoroughly recommend this weekend for RLs in the future.

Full race results for every boat in each race can be found on the Skandia Geelong website, under Trailer Yacht 2008 Championships.

<http://www.topyachtsoftware.com/results/2008/sgw/series/trail/series.htm>

And on a lighter note:

### **Old Beyond His Years**

**From the dock the woman watched as the salty old sailing captain skilfully docked his boat. She was impressed that such an old man would still be sailing at his age. She decided to wait until the sailing captain disembarked. As he did, she asked him, " Captain, what is your secret to leading such a long and productive life?" "Well," he said. "I would have to say it's because I smoke three packs of cigarettes a day, drink a case of whisky every week, eat a lot of fatty foods and I never exercise." "Wow, that's amazing," the woman said. "exactly how old are you?" He answered, "Thirty-one"**

Thanks, Jane

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## Membership details update

Could members please update their details and forward to the secretary, either by e-mail or post.

Could you also indicate if you are happy to receive your newsletter via e-mail or post - (e-mail saves the environment!)

Name:..... Address:.....

.....

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Boat Name:..... Sail No.....

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