



SEPTEMBER '08

RL - it's YOUR kind of boat

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Greetings...

and if this Newsletter seems rather more disjointed than usual it is because it is being written between requests to restore the wheels on an aging dolls pram and breathless summonses to watch any number of particularly captivating scenes on *Play School*. (ABC 1, 3.00pm daily if you care to join us!) Both the requests and the summonses come from the same little dynamo – my nearly 5 going on 15 year old grand-daughter, Sienna, who believes firmly that retirement is a time in a *child's* life when it has absolute and unrestricted access to its grandfather's love, time and attention. And aint it the truth!

As usual, at first blush there doesn't seem to be much happening on the RL24 front right now but in fact the Association is akin to the proverbial duck on the water. The bit you can see is very calm and isn't doing much but underneath it's paddling like crazy. As I write, our Committee is busy chasing down sponsorship deals for the forthcoming Nationals at Paynesville, (see below for further details) putting the finishing touches on the administration of the regatta with the people from GLYC, working with James Shannon on a recommendation to the next AGM with regard to outboard motors, corresponding with a number of non-Victorian Yacht Clubs with a view to hosting an Association Championship at a venue attractive to skippers from the 3 eastern mainland States and other administrative bits and pieces. I can't wait till it all comes together – at last I'll have something to write about!

What's in it for me?

It is a question asked countless times about countless organizations – “why should I belong?” The RL24 Association is not exempt from this query and indeed, as the nature of contemporary life in Australia changes, the question arises more frequently and a good deal more pointedly. Certainly this has been the experience of the newly appointed President of the RL24 Association, Darryn Dyer especially since the RL24 Newsletter is now available on the web and is most probably read by more non members than members. After giving the matter serious thought for some time, Darryn concluded that, at the very least, the issue as it applies to this Association should be confronted and given a public airing. What follows is his considered statement about the current nature of the Association and the advantages that flow from that to those owners of RL24's who choose to be members. Darryn and his Executive are hopeful that in raising the matter at this time some debate will ensue which will go towards shaping the Association as an even more effective vehicle for the promotion of the Class. He and Association Secretary Jane Davis would be very pleased to receive the opinions of any RL24 owner, Association member or not, regarding this important matter. Darryn writes:

“The RL24 Owners Association of Australia is an organization representing the interests of RL24 owners. It is responsible for organizing National Championships, arranging and conducting Annual General Meetings, maintaining the Class Rules as determined from time to time by members at AGMs, upholding the requirements of the Association's Constitution and promoting the virtues of the Class to the wider community.”

What are the benefits of being a member of the Association?

Among the benefits arising from membership of the Association are the following:

- Newsletters about the happenings of the Association.
- The opportunity (and the *right*) to compete in RL24 National and State championships.

- The opportunity (and the *right*) to propose a motion prior to AGM's and present it to the membership.
- The right to vote (1 vote per boat) on Class Rule changes, venues for national championships, alterations to the Constitution and the election of office bearers.
- To be in on discussions about the Class, where it is going and how it operates,
- To have a say in (and influence) discussions about owner's concerns eg. boat safety, permitted modifications etc.
- To keep up to date on cruising or racing developments, tuning tips, gear and systems ideas etc.

From my point of view the biggest benefit of being a member of the Association is the comradeship that comes from being involved with a Class that not only has a long and distinguished history but has a very bright and exciting future. This Association is based around family participation with many families having been involved since its inception, some of them owning three or four RL24s over the years. Others now have the third generation sailing on the same boat. This sort of commitment to a cause doesn't just happen unless there is some ingredient of substance and quality and while I can't define it, it is very real. It explains why the friendships forged in the Association over the years are so strong and enduring despite the level of combat on the water and remarkably, it is there for all RL24 people to enjoy.

So, for these reasons, I encourage all owners to become members of the Association not only to receive even greater pleasure from their RL24 experience but equally, to have a hand in shaping the future of this extraordinary sailing boat. If you're not a member but would like to be, just email any member of the Executive whose addresses are on the headboard of this Newsletter and we'll get back to you a.s.a.p.

Finally, let me say that it would be better if it were otherwise but it is a fact that, currently, the majority of active members are in Victoria and this is why 7 out of the last 9 National Championships have been conducted in Victoria. However the NSW & QLD interest seems to be building again, hence the last nationals at Lake Macquarie NSW saw 15 boats on the water with 2 from NSW & 2 from QLD. Although the Nationals are back in Victoria next January, we are actively trying to secure a venue that will appeal to owners in Qld and NSW for the 2010 Regatta in the hope that we can build on the numbers we had at Lake Macquarie. In this regard, your Committee would be delighted to hear of any venues which might be suitable for our championships and which could be considered along with those already under review.

Game, set and match to Kristy – one/love.

Those of you who have been around the RL scene for a while will remember an irrepressible little kid who'd scoot around the fleet constantly wearing the cheekiest grin that ever drew breath. He was known to all simply as Boppo and if he wasn't in your tucker bag pinching your fruit mince pies so carefully stowed for after the race, he was in your face with a million questions only one or two of which had anything to do with sailing. As often happens in life, this half-starved, impish little critter survived a rigorous childhood and adolescence and morphed into an adult form of childhood and adolescence, along the way taking up the persona of James Shannon. Footloose and fancy free and with the Boppo tag consigned to the darkest recesses of the collective RL memory, this young man has been roaring through life swinging from one adventure to another and always, despite the occasional slip, landing on his feet.

Well, it's happened again although it could be argued that on this occasion, far from landing on his feet, he's been swept off them by a nonsense-intolerant but delightful young woman whose name is Kristy. Kristy Hams is a member of the legal profession but far more impressive (and useful) is the fact that she is a Korumburra dairy farmer's daughter. Dairy farmer's sheds are great places to store the odd RL24, right James?? Not much sailing experience to date but that's something Jimmy will work on once he has *Warrigal* back in the water, an event he expects will happen before the next Nationals. Kristy and Boppo, sorry, make that James, announced their engagement a week or three ago and I'm sure the entire RL community joins with me in congratulating them and extending to them every good wish for their future together.

***Sly Fox* in Bay 2 Bay**

In a previous issue of the RL24 Newsletter, we brought you the remarkable story of the restoration of *Sly Fox*, the Mk.1 rescued from a mangrove swamp and given a new life by Andrew Pike from Brisbane. However, returning the boat to pristine condition didn't mean that Andrew, his wife Theresa and their boys were going to leave it in the shed stored in cotton wool. On the contrary, *Sly Fox* is pressed into competitive and social sailing duty at every opportunity and must be one of the most well-used RL24's in the country. Earlier this year, the Pike family participated in the Bay 2 Bay event and Andrew's account of the experience follows.

After sailing the Nationals at Christmas, the next major event on our sailing calendar had to be the Tin Can Bay to Hervey Bay Trailable Yacht Race otherwise known as the "Bay 2 Bay". After considerable thought (about 30 seconds) the decision was made, we're going! As the race drew closer the excitement grew to a feverish level and every spare moment was used looking at the course on charts and Google Earth, checking the tides and finding out the convergence point in the Great Sandy Strait. The next item of interest was a question. Who was going and on what? The entry list posted on the Hervey Bay Sailing club website revealed 18 RL24s and 5 RL28s, the largest class in a fleet of 170 boats. Friday 4.30am (the day before the race) the alarm did its merry little dance around the bedside table and I flew out of bed yelling "get up you lot, we're leaving in half an hour!" We didn't but the reason for the haste was that the Tin Can Bay Marina was not taking bookings so it was a case of first in best dressed if you wanted a berth for the night. We got there at 8.00am and for \$20 obtained a great marina berth for the Friday night. I secured the boat, made sure Theresa (she still won't be left behind) and Jason were settled in and headed off to Mum and Dad's at Hervey Bay with the car and trailer. Dad dropped me back at the boat at about 4.00pm. The Tin Can Bay Sailing Club put on a good feed that night and by 9 o'clock I was pretty tired so we walked back to the boat and went to bed.

Saturday morning, the day of the race, the wind forecast was 10-15 knots from the SE all weekend. Absolutely perfect. The race briefing was at 8.30am at the TCBSC. Michael and Gary, part of our crew, arrived from Brisbane and met us on the way to the briefing. The place was abuzz with people everywhere. We were told the rules of the game, amongst other things and the crowd dispersed back to the boats. We motored out to the start line and hoisted the main to get ready for a start. The multihulls were sent off in 3 knots of wind but the next start was delayed as the wind died. We were instructed to motor through to Inskip Point to start with a following tide. We had traveled about half way still with the main up sticking to one side of the course as we passed the multis when the wind started to funnel in. Then "bang," gusts of up to 25 knots. I looked down to leeward to see the top pulled clean off a trimaran's mast, then the whole lot came tumbling down. Gary looked behind to see another one with a huge kite up bearing down on us in a ball of spray that went 1/3 of the

way up the mast. Two guys were laying on the windward pontoon, I think they were velcro taped there! The boat must have been doing at least 25knots, a very spectacular sight. The wind settled and we got a start and had a great beam reach with the kite up all the way to within 1 mile of Gary's Anchorage when the brace let go and we lost the kite. Michael pulled it in and I fixed it over a nice scotch and coke after we had settled in for the night at Gary's. The sunset was beautiful, we had tea and after a few more scotch and cokes, went to sleep to the sounds of the guys on an RL28 beside us playing the guitar and singing.

Day 2 was upon us in a flash. With a start scheduled for 7.30am, we up anchored and motored north out of Gary's having brekky on the way. The wind was light and race control postponed the start and moved it forward to White Cliffs just south of Ungowa. By the time we started, the tide was with us and we continued north towards Hervey Bay. With the wind picking up still from the SE, the whole fleet ran under kite all the way to the finish. The Great Sandy Strait is a beautiful place to sail and to travel from one end to the other in the company of 170 other boats was a tremendous experience. This event is a *must* for anyone with a trailable yacht whether it is an RL or a Sabot with a cabin. The Hervey Bay Sailing Club are to be commended on the smooth running of the race as they made all the right calls when they were needed and a good time was had by all. We will certainly be there next year.

RL24 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Plans are well in hand for the upcoming National Championships, to be held at Paynesville, Vic. from Sunday 28th Dec '08 – Friday 2nd Jan '09.

Anyone wishing to book accommodation needs to do it ASAP, as Paynesville is nearly to capacity. (See April/May newsletter for accommodation suggestions). Skippers & crew who have not experienced a National Championship are especially encouraged to come and experience some great racing and social occasions.

Please find attached copy of the **Notice Of Race** and **Entry Form** for the above mentioned Championships. Could members **please note the change to Insurance requirements** : Third Party Insurance must be a minimum of \$5,000,000 dollars coverage (up from \$2,000,000). Any queries to either Darryn or myself please.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING :

of the RL24 Owner's Association of Australia will be held on Tuesday 30th December, 2008, at the Yacht Club rooms at Paynesville. – Remember – you *must* be financial member to be eligible to vote at this meeting, and that alterations to the Constitution or Rules will require 30 days notice to all members and be carried by a two-thirds majority at the meeting. We have been fortunate enough to obtain the generous sponsorship from several companies already, including Gippsland Lakes Escapes, Hamilton Sunscreen Company and the East Gippsland Regional Business and Tourism Association. We encourage you to support these businesses as they are happy to support your Association.

BOATS FOR SALE

We have had inquiries from prospective new RL owners, about any boats for sale - so if you know of anyone selling or buying please let us know and we can pass the information on. Please also remember that owners disposing of a registered RL24 shall notify the Secretary of the Association in writing giving the name & address of the new owner & the name of his/her club.

MARLAY POINT OVERNIGHT RACE :

is scheduled for March 7th 2009 and it would be good to see as many RL24's as possible attend. It's a fun weekend and provides the challenge of sailing and navigating at night. For Notice Of Race please contact Darryn Dyer.

RL24 STATE TITLES

The Association would like to encourage people to attend Skandia Geelong Week. This is held on the Australia Day long weekend in January 2009. RL24 State Titles will be decided using these results. It is a great fun weekend in Geelong that many RL sailors have already experienced. There is provision for boats to berth/raft-up close to amenities, with many crew living on board for the weekend. Contact the Royal Geelong Yacht Club for more details at:

- www.rgyc.com.au or
- Ph. 03 52293705

Finally : a few sailing terms you may or may not have heard:

Mate - the term used to refer to the skipper just before explaining that the hand bearing compass has fallen overboard

Landlubber - anyone on board who wishes he were not.

Gybe - A common way to get unruly guests off your boat.

Emergency Flares - old pair of trousers to change into if you fall overboard

Thank-you, Ross Corben, Darryn Dyer & Jane Davis