



Even Keel

The quarterly newsletter of the Geelong Trailable Yacht Club Inc.



Club members gather at St Helen's for the official opening of the GTYC's 2011-12 sailing season

Inside:

Commodore's Report
Committee News
Queenscliff to Geelong Race Report
GTYC Regular Race Reports
Upcoming Events ...

Summer 2011-12

GTYC Committee 2011-12

Club Flag Officers

Commodore Paul Graham 141 Horseshoe Bend Road, MARSHALL, Vic, 3216	commodore@gtyc.com.au (03) 5241 6604 or 0432 248969	<i>Athena</i>
Vice Commodore Dr Geoff Russell 72 Barwon Boulevard, HIGHTON, Vic, 3216	vicecommodore@gtyc.com.au (03) 5244 2193 or 0412 733802	<i>Qumbu</i>
Rear Commodore Chris Hancock 95 Horseshoe Bend Road, MARSHALL, Vic, 3216	rearcommodore@gtyc.com.au (03) 5243 878 or 0417 121016	<i>Beaujolais</i>

Committee Executive Members

Club Captain Jim Bland Victoria Street, NTH GEELONG, Vic, 3215	captain@gtyc.com.au (03) 52770207 or 0408 546193	<i>Beats Work</i>
Secretary Barry Palich 2 Margaret Street, RIPPLESIDE, Vic, 3215	secretary@gtyc.com.au (03) 5278 6408 or 0419 133276	<i>Charisma</i>
Treasurer John Mole 7/228 Mt Pleasant Road, HIGHTON, Vic, 3216	treasurer@gtyc.com.au (03) 5243 1109 or 0411 142917	<i>Vintage Red</i>

General Committee Members

Doug Gadd (Sponsorship)	sponsors@gtyc.com.au	0408 522685
Paul Webster		0438 882363
Jennifer Jenkinson (Membership)	membership@gtyc.com.au	0402 462724
Kevin O'Neill (Training)		0417 137808

The GTYC also maintains a phone for general and emergency inquiries on 0422 131 582

Even Keel is the official quarterly newsletter of the Geelong Trailable Yacht Club Inc.

Editor: Dr Geoff Russell
PO Box 899, GEELONG, Vic, 3220
www.gtyc.com.au info@gtyc.com.au

The editor welcomes all articles and photographs contributed by members. Content for the Autumn edition of *Even Keel* should be with the editor by 28 February 2012. Please send text in Word format.

Disclaimer:

The articles and advertisements published in *Even Keel* do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, Flag Officers, Committee Members, or general membership of the Geelong Trailable Yacht Club Inc.

Commodore's Report

Ahoy all!

The new sailing season for 2011-2012 has very much begun! Officially it started with our Open Day on Sunday, 30 October, and unofficially with the Queenscliff to Geelong race three weeks earlier.

I wish to thank all who were involved with making the Queenscliff to Geelong race the great success it was. While we weren't all that lucky with the weather, we still had close to 30 yachts competing in very challenging circumstances. The camaraderie at the presentations was just fantastic, hearing the sailors swap stories of how they battled the conditions. Thanks in particular to Jim Bland for the work in organising, Geoff Russell for videotaping parts of the race (while hanging on) and for continuing to promote the race through trailersailerplace.com.au, and Lee Palich and Pam Bland for the varied tasks they took on.

I would ask everyone in our club to seriously consider being part of next year's race, and also to promote it to everybody you know so that it becomes bigger and better. If you have any suggestions to help us improve the race or make it more inclusive, please contact any member of the committee.

Again, I'd like to thank all who were involved with our open day. Unfortunately, the weather was again a challenge (as it continued to rain all morning) so there wasn't a stern chaser race nor a traditional sail past. However, we are very thankful to Cr Eddie Kontelj for officially opening our season and the great support he has shown to our club in the past, and his pledge to continue to provide that support into the future. He was particularly enthusiastic for us to have a future clubhouse, in partnership with the Coast Guard. While the weather was poor, our spirits weren't dampened, and once again we had a good attendance and it was great to catch up with some people we hadn't seen for some time.

Regarding communication, your committee is working hard to provide a selection of great racing, cruising and social opportunities to give you value for money for being part of this great club. It can be a little discouraging when events

are organised and there is little if any interest shown in them. A case in point was the novelty cruise and social evening on the Saturday prior to the open day that had to be postponed. This social activity was organised after members indicated they wanted more social activities.

In this new season we have planned major cruises and races, fun and training activities and social evenings all organised for you and they have great potential to be fantastic events. But we need people to participate if we are to realise that potential. Your committee wants to make sure we are providing the sort of event you want to be part of.

To this end, every few months you'll receive a phone call touching base with you, highlighting the upcoming events, asking which events you are going to participate in and asking your point of view on how we can make things better for you. By now you should have received an e-mail inviting you to send in to our secretary, Barry Palich, any suggestions, concerns or any ideas you wish the committee to discuss. We are serious in wanting to know how we can make the club more like the kind of club you want to be part of ... regularly!

Our upcoming events are:

- Club Christmas party, to be held on Saturday, 10 December from 7:30 pm, at the Graham's residence, 141 Horseshoe Bend Rd, Marshall. Note: surnames A to L please bring salads; M to Z deserts. All attending to bring gifts of approximately \$5 each and please mark if they are for males or females. Cooked meat provided by the club, but drinks are BYO. We are also on the lookout for a Father Christmas if you know anyone! Lastly, we would welcome any musicians that could lead us in song
- Gippsland Lakes cruise, to be held from Monday 26 December for two weeks (see me, Paul Graham)
- Fireworks cruise on Corio Bay, to be held on New Year's Eve; meet at St Helens at 9 PM for pre-cruise celebrations.

I very much hope to see you on the water. In the meantime: fair winds and smooth seas!

Paul

Cluster Cup Report

24 September 2011

The weather for the day was cloudy with a 10 to 15 knot wind coming from the north channel. This meant it was a beat for the first leg of the race.

There were two boats in the 1st division and four boats in the 2nd division. The race started at 9.00am for the first division and first over the start line was Free Spirit, followed by Winebago.

There were four boats in the second division starting at 9.30. The first boat over the starting line was Vintage Red, followed by Dream On, Beats Work, and Hairy Legs.

The first boat round the Cluster mark was Free Spirit in 2 hours 20 minutes, followed by Beats Work, Vintage Red, Dream On, Hairy Legs, and bringing up the rear Winabago.

First over the finishing line in 3 hours 45 minutes was Beats Work, followed by Vintage Red, Free Spirit and Dream On.

When Glen Kewish was asked why he was so far behind Vintage Red, he informed us that when he jibed the spinnaker at the Curlew Pile, his crewman Colin had fallen overboard. It was a good day for sailing, although it was a poor turnout.

We would like to thank Leanne and Pam for a great B.B.Q.!

Chris Hancock OOD









Spring Series Race 4 Report

Sunday 18 September 2011

Moderate west to south-west winds prevailed. The course involved a beat from St Helens to the west cardinal mark, followed by a shy reach to the CB2, a broad reach to St. Helens, Twice around, all marks to port. Half an hour between Division E and F starts ensured that all would finish about the same time.

Division E competitors included Charisma, Oo La La, Seawind and Peccadillo. Sea Wind was participating in her first race. Peccadillo started first on starboard tack, well clear of the others. Charisma crossed the line 50 seconds later on port tack, followed by Oo La La some 70 seconds later. Seawind was having difficulty with her mainsail and appeared to delay her start to be with Division F. Seawind crossed the line at the first signal for Division F. Did she start 25 minutes late with Division E or 5 minutes early for Division F?

The wind shifted from west-south-west to south west for the Division F start, making a starboard tack start tricky, but Dream On and Five O'Clock Somewhere judged it perfectly and both crossed the line with only a fraction of a second between them. Beats Work and Beaujolais followed a few seconds later.

Meanwhile, Peccadillo led the fleet around the west cardinal mark, followed by Charisma and Oo La La. Five O'Clock Somewhere led the Division F boats' closely followed by Beats Work, then Dream On and Beaujolais, the light conditions favouring Dream On.

Immediately after the mark, Beats Work overtook Five O'Clock Somewhere and that was the way the order stayed to the finish. Sea Wind was sailing along very nicely but decided to cut her losses and shortened course.

After handicaps were applied, it was Peccadillo who won Division E, with Charisma second and Oo La La third for both YV and Club handicaps. In Division F, Five O'Clock Somewhere was first on YV, with Dream On second and Beaujolais third. Beaujolais was first on Club Handicap, with Five O'Clock Somewhere second and Dream On third. Times were taken for Sea Wind but she did not figure in the results.

John Mole and Barry Thompson OODs





Spring Series Race 5 Report

Sunday 2 October 2011

Mild weather greeted the four starters in Race 5 of the spring series with a South Easterly of between 5 to 10 knots at the start, which increased to about 18 knots during the race, only to abate again to 8 knots by the end of the race.

First across the line was Glen Hewish in his castle 650, Dream On, closely followed by Chris Hancock (Nolex 25) Beaujolais, then John Mole in Vintage Red, another Nolex, followed closely by Jim Bland in the Elliott 770, Beats Work.

The course took the boats to the Sand Islands at Limeburners Point, where Beats Work rounded in 27mins 5sec ahead of Dream On, 59 seconds later, then Vintage Red a further 55 secs back with Beaujolais only 43 seconds later, all quite close.

A reach out to CB2 near Point Henry saw the boats stay in the same order, and Beats Work reached this mark 38mins 55 secs after the start, Dream On was there in 41.22, Vintage Red in 41.33 and Beaujolais in 43.36. The fleet then reached down to the cardinal mark near Smorgies before turning for home and the finish at St Helens.

First across the Line in an elapsed time of 1 hr 16 mins and 44 secs was Jim Bland in Beats Work followed by Glen Hewish in Dream On in 1 hr 19 mins 57, who had overtaken Vintage Red in the spinnaker run home after Vintage Red had passed him on the reach down to Smorgies. John crossed next with an elapsed time of 1 hr 22 mins 53sec and Chris followed in 1 hr 26 mins 34 secs.

The results on club handicap were: Dream On 1st, Beaujolais 2nd, Vintage Red 3rd and Beats Work 4th, while the CBH results were Dream On 1st, Vintage Red 2nd, Beaujolais 3rd and Beats Work 4th.

Barry Palich OOD

PS: I would like to thank Leeanne for stepping in as assistant OOD on short notice!



**PROFESSIONAL
INSURANCE
BROKERS VIC
Pty Ltd**

**ANDREW
JOHNSTON**
andrew@profin.com.au

A note from your Committee ...

It's sometimes difficult to feel confident that we are covering all the items that are concerning all our members when the Committee discusses 'General Business items'. To address this, I invite you all to make any suggestions, raise concerns, propose new ideas, etc, so that we can discuss them at the next committee meeting on 13 December 2011.

You need to forward any items for consideration to our club secretary, Barry Palich, secretary@gtyc.com.au before the committee meeting.

Your committee is aiming to have its decisions from the 'General Business' of each month's meeting published on the web and emailed to all members, 10 days after the meeting.

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Regards, Paul Graham



FOUR WINDS MARINE

Chandlers of Distinction



- Yachting and Boating Supplies
- Wet Weather Gear & Clothing
- On Water safety Equipment
- Fibreglass Supplies and Marine Paints
- Kayaks, Canoes and Wave ski's
- Stainless Steel Balustrading

24 Bellerine St Geelong.
PH: (03) 5229 9200
Fax: (03) 5221 1455

Email: info@fourwindsmarine.com.au
Web: www.fourwindsmarine.com.au

Provenance Wines

www.provenancewines.com.au

Ph: 5281 2230

*Hand made wines
from Geelong.*

Special Mixed ½ dozen
3 x 2006 Kismet Rosé
3 x 2005 Kismet Pinot Noir
\$45.00

Drinking well, light body, full of flavour

From the Archives ... 30 Years Ago

A social event called 'Crazy Whist' was a great success. The first prize was a tin of peaches and consolation prize a tin of sardines.

A film night attracted 25 adults, the majority being members. The main attraction was 'Four Seasons' and part of the film depicted a bare boat sailing holiday for 3 couples highlighting the need to tolerate each other's good and bad points.

A perfect sunny, balmy Opening day saw 13 families launch their boats at St Helens and head to the Lagoon sandbar for lunch. After a stroll on the sand they had a good sail back via the north channel.

A pre-Christmas social event of Square Dancing attracted 70 members and friends. Dances included the 'Pride of Erin', 'Progressive Barn Dance', square dances called by Mike Scheen and the extensive supper was comprised of chicken, cold meats and salad followed by fresh fruit salad and cream sponges.

20 Years Ago

Every weekend in November, 1991 had an event allocated, starting with the Twilight Series Race 1, an overnight stay for Opening Day on the Sunday.

The following weekend was a social sail to the Werribee River attended by 4 boats despite a less than perfect forecast.

The third weekend was earmarked for Heat 1 of the Summer Season which was combined with the first leg of the Bellarine Challenge against Queenscliff, Portarlington and Indented Heads Yacht Clubs. GTYC ended up winning the challenge.

The last weekend of November was the annual Geelong to Queenscliff where GTYC dominated in the results. Beau Brummell (1st Division 4) was first overall skippered by owner Mike Allden, Lowana III (1st Division 3) was 2nd overall skippered by owner Len Spooner and Jake Postuma's Pavana won Division 1.

The first weekend in December was the Corio bay Teams Challenge between GTYC and Lagoon Boat club and the following weekend the Christmas party at The Hancock's.



RIPPLESIDE PARK
Motor Inn

Paul & Nola Patterson
Welcomes You

67 Princes Highway, North Geelong VIC 3215

Phone: (03) 5278 2017 • Fax: (03) 5278 8244

From the Archives ... 10 Years Ago

A good turn up of 15 boats lined up in procession and saluted the Commodore's anchored vessel in the time honoured way. Then the boats participated in a 'Great Race' requiring teams to work together, plan strategy and keep in radio contact. The 4 teams of 3 boats passed a baton to a different boat in their team at each change of lap. All boats had to finish the race and the team with the lowest average corrected time was the winner. The winning team beat the second team by 4 seconds over 72 minutes.

Jenny Wright
GTYC Historian



TEAM TYREPOWER
 Lewis Tyrepower 2 High St Belmont ph 5241 3808
 Geelong Tyrepower 246 Thompson Rd North Geelong ph 5277 9922
 Drysdale Tyrepower 25 Murradoc Rd Drysdale ph 5251 5232

**Best Prices for
Wheels - Tyres - Exhausts
Brakes - Servicing**



TYRES
From
\$65

Includes Fitting And Balancing



ALLOYS
15" From
\$95



TRAILER SALES, REPAIRS, SERVICE

**Trade & Wholesale
Enquiries Welcome**

**Providing Service to
Geelong & District
Since 1968**



THE ONE STOP TRAILER SHOP

F. SPARKS & SONS

Geelong's Towbar Specialists



5278 1713

**80 COWIE ST.
NORTH GEELONG**



- ELECTRIC BRAKES
- DRIVING LIGHTS
- ROOF RACKS
- BICYCLE RACKS
- LEVEL RIDES
- CARGO BARRIERS

PHONE: 5278 1713

**TRAILER
SALES
& REPAIRS**

Port Phillip and Western Port

Public Swing Moorings

Parks Victoria, in conjunction with the National Heritage Trust, has installed eighteen new environmentally friendly swing moorings around Port Phillip & Western Port.

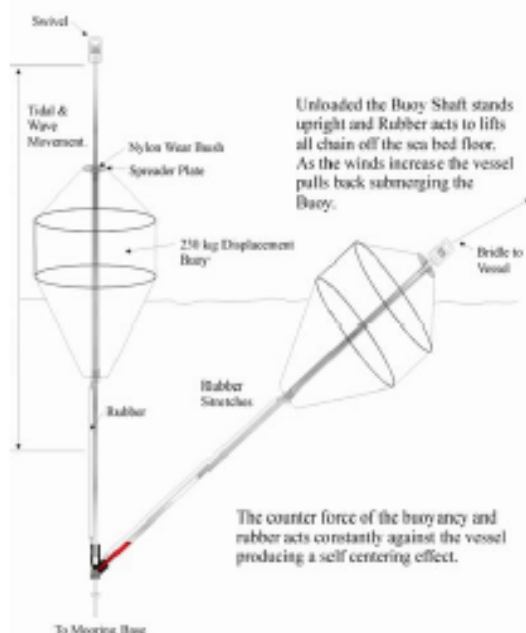
These moorings have been established as short term landing places for recreational boating enthusiasts in various locations.

A Better Environmental Mooring

The seabed damage caused by conventional swing moorings occurs as the chain connecting the ground weight to the buoy drags along the seabed as the vessel moves about due to wind and tidal influences.

How The New Moorings Work

As well as being convenient, the new model swing moorings protect the marine environment from the effects of anchor damage caused by more traditional swing mooring systems.



Locations and Site Information

The moorings clearly display the limits and use of conditions at each location on the buoy, including vessel size limits, and other relevant information.

Parks Victoria has installed the new environmentally friendly buoys at the following trial sites:

- Two at Queenscliff Harbour
- Two at Limeburners Bay, Geelong
- Two at Williamstown
- Five at Sorrento
- Three at San Remo
- Four at Cowes

Port Phillip Co-ordinates

Queenscliff Harbour
S 38 15.699 E 144 39.956
S 38 15.703 E 144 39.969

Lime Burners Bay
S 38 04.459 E 144 24.379
S 38 04.472 E 144 24.344

Williamstown
S 37 51.233 E 144 54.359
S 37 51.265 E 144 54.415

Sorrento
S 38 20.402 E 144 45.125
S 38 20.297 E 144 44.969
S 38 20.400 E 144 45.150
S 38 20.408 E 144 45.201
S 38 20.340 E 144 45.067

Western Port Co-ordinates

San Remo
S 38 32.017 E 145 20.533
S 38 32.076 E 145 20.531
S 38 32.004 E 145 20.562

Cowes
S 38 26.865 E 145 13.909
S 38 26.882 E 145 13.872
S 38 26.890 E 145 13.836
S 38 26.900 E 145 13.796

July 2004

Vic Government launches summer boating safety campaign

Monday 5 December 2011

Boaters have been urged to remain vigilant and safe while on the water this summer with the Victorian Coalition Government launching Transport Safety Victoria's (TSV) summer boating safety campaign.

Minister for Ports Denis Napthine predicted a busy boating season across Victoria with the year's rainfall returning many inland rivers, lakes and reservoirs to good health.

"It is important for all boaters to take care while out on the water regardless of whether they are on the coast or on a lake in central Victoria," Dr Napthine said.

"We want every boater to come home safely at the end of the day. Boaters need to follow some key safety rules."

The campaign is supported by the introduction TSV's maritime safety officers who will be on the water from today to help boaters understand safety requirements and promote compliance with safety rules.

Boating safety education officers will be at boat ramps, jetties and beaches across Victoria during this summer, talking to boaters about safety and distributing a range of safety information.

"We understand Victorians are keen to go out and enjoy their time on the water, but we want them to do it safely so they can return to their loved ones," Dr Napthine said.

"Since July 2005, there have been more than 260 incidents involving capsizings, floodings, swampings and loss of stability which have led to 24 fatalities."

TSV's Director of Maritime Safety, Mr Peter Corcoran, said these statistics were the key

impetus for focusing on buoyancy – both for people and boats – this summer.

"We know that when boaters suddenly and unexpectedly enter the water, a life jacket will greatly enhance the chances of them surviving," Mr Corcoran said.

"Ensuring that your vessel will float in the event that it is swamped or capsized is a key factor in contributing to your survival.

"A buoyant boat gives the occupants a chance to reach and use their emergency equipment to raise the alarm.

"Fitting additional buoyancy material to boats is an easy way to keep them on top of the water in an emergency, even when swamped.

"Boaters in trouble have a greater chance of survival if their boat is upright, floating and level on the surface of the water.

"Searchers find it easier to spot a boat than a person in the water," Mr Corcoran said.

For more information about safe boating visit the TSV website at:

www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au

Queenscliff to Geelong Yacht Race

9 October 2011

When planning any outdoor event, the one thing you just can't control is the weather, and seasoned sailors know this probably better than most. Sure, we need wind, but it has to be just the right amount and generally in the right direction! So those of us planning this year's Queenscliff to Geelong Trailable Yacht Race had been closely following the Bureau of Met's changing predictions for the past week in the run-up to the big day last Sunday, keeping our fingers crossed for just the right conditions.

By late Saturday we thought we'd had it made: a S-SW of 15-20 knots to start with, then supposedly easing through the day to a steady 10-15 knots from the SW. That would've made for a good run to start with – possibly with spinnakers ablaze – then west around Portarlington for a long passage home on a fast port reach into Corio Bay, then on to Geelong's St Helens Marina for the finish.

Unfortunately, those of us who gathered in the post-dawn gloom at the Queenscliff Marina on Sunday could already see that the Bureau had truly underestimated the conditions ahead. Instead of a few passing showers, the early morning began with several deluges arcing in across the Heads from Bass Strait, casting a sombre grey mood across the boats and their soggy owners bobbing about in their pens at the marina. So as we sipped our first coffees for the day at the nearby cafes, we talked not of enthusiastically hoisting kites in the sparkling morning sunshine, but regrettably of reefing mainsails and rigging storm jibs instead.

A good selection of trailable yachts and their crews had spent Saturday night at the marina, enjoying some exploratory sailing about the local waters the day before. Now they prepared for a much more challenging task: charting the fastest route to escape the

mounting swell building in through the Rip, before safely sailing on to Geelong ahead of a southerly wind that threatened to blow up into a real bluster!

Despite sailing for a dozen years, and having sailed a previous Q2G Race, I was nervous already. I felt fortunate to be crewing on a great sports boat – an Elliott Seven-Seventy appropriately named 'Beats Work' – with a very experienced skipper at the helm, Jim Bland; a great hand on the mainsheet in Ray Slee; and me on the jib sheets and bow work. But we also had my son James on board, and though he's sailed with me before, he was by no means used to sailing in the rough on such a long journey. Wisely, Jim decided to double reef our huge mainsail, and to keep our small No 3 jib furled on the deck. This would clearly be a day where less was more!

Our first challenge was to negotiate our passage under motor out through the Queenscliff 'Cut', with the steadily rising swell making it all but impossible for our outboard to bite with any real power. Somehow we got past the stern of the Sorrento car ferry (a VERY large vessel close-up), and out into the Bay proper. But as soon as we cleared the ferry's wind shadow, the southerly caught us and never let up for the next five or so hours!

Our second challenge was to head our boat into the southerly wind in order to raise our heavily reefed mainsail, without being broached by the giant waves now rolling in from the Rip. Then once we got the sail up, we decided it was too dangerous to gybe to head over to the start line, so our safest option was to tack back around through the wind, which by now was nudging around 20 knots. We then set course toward the start boat, tugging away at its anchor about 200 meters ahead of us further north inside the Bay.

Out to starboard we watched the rest of the fleet flounder about just like us, all trying to cope with the unexpectedly rough conditions – especially the huge swell and breaking white-caps rolling in from the south. Several of the 30 boats in the fleet clearly had prob-

lems with their rigging as they busily tried to haul in further rag to cope with the wind.

The start time of 10.15am came and went, but amidst the fleet's general confusion and the relentless buffeting of the wind, it was almost impossible to clearly see or hear any starting signals. A few more minutes passed before we all began to realise that the race had indeed started – leading then to a mad charge across the line to begin sailing proper and leave the Rip as quickly as possible.

With the southerly still blowing hard almost dead behind us, we rocketed north at about 10 knots – and I must admit it was genuinely exhilarating! As the wind pounded harder and the waves built in strength, many boats began to surf and plane, lifted only by their hard reefed mainsails. A pod of dolphins suddenly appeared under and around us, swimming and diving from east to west across the Bay. As I looked back across our sizeable wake, the bulk of the fleet was now hot in pursuit, plying through the metre deep swell, with white-caps sending spray flying everywhere. The sun even broke through for a few moments, turning the lead grey turbulence of the inner Bay into a patchwork of sparkling greens and blues littered with the striking white sails and hulls of the fleet. How good was this?

Perhaps 800 metres ahead of us raced three boats who'd clearly got away right on the start time and were now surfing on the pounding sets of waves rolling in behind us all. One of these trailables – a beautiful red hulled RL24 – decided to hoist a spinnaker to pick up even more pace. We just looked on in amazement. The red and white rag fluttered and caught the incredible breeze for a few minutes, seemingly pulling them along at great speed. Then, just as quickly, their bow plunged into a wave and the boat seemed to pivot and broach, with the spinnaker dragging them down to complete the roll. The boat turtled in barely seconds, with the centre-board clearly poking skywards: a complete 180 degrees!

We were still too far away to see if there was anyone in the water, but in these cold and

wet conditions we knew they'd need help fast. I jumped on our radio and raised the alarm at the Queenscliff Coastguard on Channel 16, giving them our position as best we could. We then watched as the boat's crew somehow got their yacht back onto its side and even started to right it again – despite the hull being broadside to the southerly waves. However, as soon as the spinnaker rose from the water it caught the blow and pulled the stricken vessel straight back over again.

About ten minutes later we finally came abreast of the upturned red whale as it bobbed about in the swell. Its four crew were hanging on around its sides, buoyed by their PFDs. We yelled out that the Coast Guard was on the way, and asked if they wanted us to hang about; they indicated they'd be fine and that we should keep going. Besides, a far larger, more stable catamaran was sailing up to assist, so we felt things were well in hand. Eventually, one of the larger keeled yachts from Geelong's Lagoon Boat Club (who were also sailing with the fleet in their own competition) hauled all four crew from the chilly brine, then took them safely back to Queenscliff, with their submerged boat towed in behind. It was a dramatic start to this year's race, and something every sailor probably thinks about but never wants to experience!

As we surfed N-NE up the West Channel into Port Phillip Bay proper, I hoped things might now calm down a bit and we could enjoy some less challenging sailing. Unfortunately, the weather gods had other plans for those of us heading out into more open water. As a sports boat and the only entry in our division, 'Beats Work' was sailing one of the longer courses, taking us up the West Channel towards the West Channel Pile – locally known as the 'White Lady'. Too rough for seals here today on this well-known platform below St Leonards, but there was a stinking dead shag hanging from one of the solar panels: an ominous sign if ever there was!

On the radio we monitored the fate of the soggy RL crew. A large catamaran named 'Petronus' had stopped and pulled all four

crew from the wet, and was now towing the vessel back to the marina. Meanwhile, the Queenscliff Coast Guard had cancelled the Police air-wing helicopter from continuing its flight down the Bay for a possible aerial rescue. At least the crew was safe and heading back to the warmth.

With the southerly wind still pumping the swell up behind us, after rounding the 'White Lady' we set a new course to N-NW to reach our next mark: the Prince George Light. Way out to starboard into Port Phillip Bay proper, we could see swells and whitecaps even bigger than those swirling about us. In contrast, about two kilometers away on our port side in the Coles Channel we watched with some envy as the smaller cruising boats sailed in much smoother conditions as they headed north on a parallel course to us. Like us, they were also being pushed up the coast past St Leonards by some pretty strong winds, but nothing like the 25 knot bullets that blasted our heavily reefed mainsail with rising ferocity. The upside of such winds and large following seas was that just about every boat managed to get up and plane, and when you're riding the crest of a big wave at about 12 knots it's pretty amazing. But then a sudden thud down into another trough quickly brings you back to reality! And that's pretty much how it was for the next hour until we rounded Prince George Light, about three kilometers off the Bellarine Peninsula, mid-way between Indented Head and Portarlington.

By this stage, the savage winds and pounding seas were starting to get us all down a bit, and I could feel sea-sickness rising in my empty gut. Son James also looked far too worse for wear, and sucking on some old ginger lollies I'd found melted deep in my coat pocket was bringing little relief. So I thought some music might cheer us up instead. I'd optimistically brought some CDs to play aboard (I know, I'm showing my age still carrying CDs), and decided to start with the crew's favourite: Creedence Clearwater Revival's Greatest Hits. Just loading the disc was hard enough, given we had the companion-

way hatch on to keep out the green stuff, and our boat was heeled right over to starboard on a port reach. We needed all the weight we had to be out on the port rail, so I had to be quick below deck. Ominously, the first track started playing was Bad Moon Rising, and there was an odd resonance in the lyrics that followed:

"Yeah, don't go out tonight, as they're bound to take your life, yeah there's a bad moon on the rise!"

Perhaps not the best choice of music and lyrics for the tumult we were now battling. Anyway, it did lift the spirits – as did the skipper's promise of lunch. But then to our horror, he realised he'd left our sandwiches on the back seat of his car! Fortunately, I had brought some home-made banana cake that my wife Pen had made, so we hungrily devoured that. And that's pretty much how those of us bigger boats sailing way off-shore passed the next few hours: on a hard full-and-by to port, pointing almost due west toward Geelong's Outer Harbour, somewhere through the spray in the distance. The only relief we got from the constant up and down pounding of the growing two metre swell was an occasional blast of horizontal rain storming in from a succession of cold fronts charging from the SW.

Another half hour, and we rounded the QBY mark to officially enter the Point Richards Channel, about three kilometres due north of Portarlington. As I caught glimpses of the Portarlington Hotel tower and wondered what was on the counter lunch menu today, it suddenly occurred to me that the Creedence tracks seemed as if they were repeating. Sure enough, when I'd put the CD in the player I must have knocked the repeat button, so for our whole voyage we heard that one hour CD five complete times. As a result, we're all now minor authorities on the group's playlist and lyrics, and will forever associate the rough and tumble on the Bay with 'Looking Out My Back Door'. Why didn't I just change the CD? The reality was that despite our fully reefed main (and still no jib up), our boat was heeled so steeply that I dared not leave the

port rail and go down inside, for fear of us all ending up in the foaming drink to starboard! So we hummed along with Willy and the Poor Boys for the next five hours!

As we started to head SW down the channel toward Clifton Springs, the wind rose another few notches to gust at what must have been 25–30 knots. With our boat heeling even harder, and skipper Jim having a pretty tough time manhandling the tiller, we now noticed with some horror that the top of our very tall, tapered aluminium mast was actually bending forward, instead of its normal rake aft that Jim maintains to keep his mainsail taught. As our boat does not have a backstay, this extraordinary forward bend was apparently due to us not flying a jib. The only safe remedy to counter this was to jury-rig a backstay, using the topping lift line currently clipped to the spinnaker ring on the mast – on the leeward side of the mainsail! Therein lay the problem: crawling up and around the mast on a slippery, wet, windy and plunging foredeck to undo this line, then somehow passing it back and along the lee side of the mainsail and boom.

Being closest to the mast, I thought about volunteering for this mercy mission – but several leg cramps from the cold and wet quickly foiled my attempts. Fortunately, our mainsheet wiz Ray was nimble enough to get up onto the heaving deck and, despite his frozen fingers, unclip the line and pass it back to Jim at the stern. During this delicate maneuver, my son James busied himself on the mainsheet, and I sat there praying no one would go overboard! The last thing we all wanted to practice out here in such rough conditions was a MOB drill – done for real! Once Jim got the line, he tied it to the starboard rear quarter pushpit and hauled away, gradually forcing the mast-top back to its usual aft leaning position, and greatly reducing the risk of the mast snapping off altogether. I mused then that perhaps boats have backstays for very good reasons!

Now all we had to worry about was surviving another few hours out in this thumping great washing machine! As we rose and fell

– actually more like rising and then crashing – into the deep troughs below our bow, I thought about the trust we instinctively place in our boats and gear when sailing in such conditions. Though certainly designed for speed, Jim's boat was not built for continuous pounding. Even so, it handled the rough wonderfully, which also says a lot about his skills at the helm. Still, I did wonder just how strong our deck fittings were under such pressure: the blocks, cleats and winches were taking an incredible and continuous pounding. As well, our weighty bulb keel was constantly thumping up and down as we rode the waves on toward Geelong.

These grim conditions were also a test for the crew. We were all dressed in what we thought was waterproof clothing – but given the constant spray, heavy rain squalls, and the frequent bow waves crashing and spilling back to where we were sitting along the port coaming, it was impossible to stay dry for long. I had thermals on as my base layer, and they were certainly soaked after the first few hours sailing. It was like wearing a wet suit: wet on both the outside and the inside, but at least the inside water layer was roughly at body temperature. At best, our outer layers kept out the wind, but not the chill. So my teeth soon began chattering almost uncontrollably, and I wondered where the 'fun' of passage racing had suddenly gone. I also hated Creedence well and truly by now!

Our only relief from the pounding on the port tack was to occasionally tack across the blow and over on to our starboard side, as we zig-zagged across the Outer Harbour toward home. With each tack we got the dubious opportunity to thoroughly soak the other side of our bodies that had previously been hidden from the green stuff coming in over the bow. And on some tacks we seemed to pick up even more speed – though really it was all huff and puff, and despite the ferocious wind we were barely nudging along at five or six knots. Given our lack of pace, and our increasing difficulty to point high into the wind, Jim decided it was time to hoist the jib. This was easier said than done, especially

with such a wet and slippery foredeck to work on. Somehow I crawled out past the mast to slowly undo the ties holding our wildly flapping jib to the pulpit rails. I then lurched back to the comparative safety of the cockpit as James and Ray hauled on the jib halyard. As soon as the jib shot up we gained much greater stability and higher pointing, so the effort was certainly worth it. Of course, raising the jib changed the strain again on our mast, making the makeshift backstay redundant. Jim tried to undo the wet knots holding this line in place, but to no avail. So, fearing our mast might snap in the opposite direction, Jim pulled his trusty 10-inch knife from its cockpit scabbard and deftly hacked through the rope – letting it fly with a sudden ping as the forestay and jib halyard took the mast tension loads as designed.

Now as we headed due west toward Point Henry, the smaller boats that had wisely hugged the more protected northern shoreline of the Bellarine Peninsula for most of their journey began to track north away from Curlewis to join us, as we all made a rhumb line for the Hopetoun Channel, and on to the entrance to Corio Bay. In the distance across the bay we could all see much larger boats from Royal Geelong out dancing about in the waves, busy readying themselves for the start of what promised to be some sprightly racing around the inner bay. We cut back through the assembled fleet toward the mark off Smorgy's Pier, then once at the mark somehow managed to gybe back for a starboard run due north toward the finish line at St Helens. Of course, the closer we got into Corio Bay, the more the prevailing southerly wind eased off, no doubt due to the rising wind shadow caused by the city buildings and hills around the southern bay area. So we began to drop a little pace, but after the pounding we'd endured for the last four hours, we were not complaining. I even found time now to crawl back inside and eject Creedence, so that Dire Straits and 'The Sultans of Swing' might have a go instead.

And that's how we thought we'd finish this very long and arduous race: with a fast run

north to cross the finish line. Sadly though, it was not to be. As we came up level with the boats moored on the Western Beach grid, the wind behind us suddenly began to ease up, before fading away to nothing altogether. Even the sun shone out weakly from behind the grey inferno of clouds above us. Our boat now cruised almost to a halt, propelled only by the wavelets lapping meekly at our transom. We could not believe what we were witnessing! And to add insult to injury, many of the smaller boats were by now starting to approach the Smorgy's mark about 500 metres behind us, readying their spinnakers for a safe and colourful run home. If nothing else, this demonstrated the fairness of the three different length courses from Queenscliff, in that the bulk of the fleet would finish within half an hour of the lead boats over the line.

But to be beaten now by the smaller boats for some shred of line honour glory was more than we could bear, so after a quick consultation we decided the only thing to do would be to also come home under spinnaker. So I hurriedly ducked below and grabbed the small kite bag, then hauled it back up onto the foredeck to wrestle into its hanging ring on the pushpit. By this stage the deck was stable and almost dry, so working forward was like a walk in the park! I just a minute or so I had the halyard and sheets rigged, and yelled back to Ray to start hauling her sky-high. Up she went in a blaze of red and white, catching and tearing momentarily on a jib hank as she tried to settle on the breeze. With a few quick adjustments of the pole she was full and flying, and we began to accelerate north again to reach about six knots for our final run home.

And that's how we finished five hours of combined misery and exhilaration on the water, to complete a race than none of us will forget in a hurry. As soon as we crossed the line and got the wave from the shore, Jim dropped the iron sail back into the brine and coughed her into action; meanwhile the rest of us busied ourselves hauling down the spinnaker, followed by a rough flaking of the

mainsail over the boom. Jim steered our tired boat back to the tranquility of St Helens Marina, where we dawdled into a vacant mooring at one of the floating pontoons. By now the breeze had almost died again – barely 5 knots, if that – so that the finishing boats behind us had a real struggle just to make the mark. It was like we were on a different planet, compared to how we started the day. But I guess that's both the joy and the frustration of sailing. And as I wrote right at the start of this overly long report: the one thing you just can't control is the weather, and seasoned sailors know this probably better than most!

Geoff Russell

Signific

TORÉ DESSANTI

0419 898 284

tore@signific.com.au

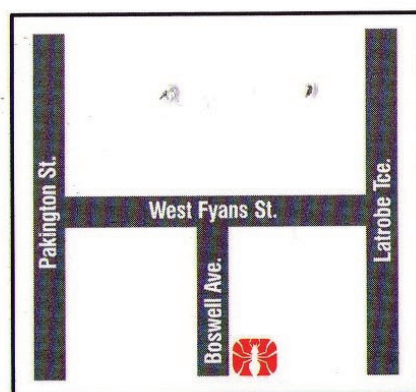
Phone: (03) 5223 2620

Fax: (03) 5223 3106

33 Boswell Avenue, Newtown 3220

SHOPS & FACTORIES
TRUCKS & VANS
A BOARDS & BANNERS
INDUSTRIAL & SAFETY DECALS
METAL, PLASTIC & TIMBER ENGRAVING
PAINTED MURALS & ARTWORK
ALL SIGNS MODERN & TRADITIONAL
LARGE FORMAT DIGITAL PRINTING

www.signific.com.au



Go to the ant! 

Final words from Kev!

Some members may be aware that our valued committee member and friend Kevin O'Neill recently struck some problems with his ticker. We're pleased to report that Kev is well on the mend again, as you'll read here ...

Thank you for your kind thoughts and words. Here is the latest update. I am above ground. I am home from hospital and I am resting. I will not go back to work this year...under very strict instructions from Nurse Ratchett, of course.

"How do I Feel? How am I going?" I hear you ask. Well, it is as if I am connected to a battery charger with a slow trickle. Everyday a little improved. Short walks, lots of nanna naps and dreams of chocolate and cheese... and that's before lunch.

Lunch is one of my daily highlights. Canned tuna, lettuce and tomato all on a rice biscuit. It's the stuff of dreams. It's all in the realm of lowered cholesterol. I have to drop my levels from 4.5 (which I thought were really good and they were until they changed the goal posts down to 3.5). Start buying shares in John West, my good friend...you'll quickly make lots of money from the heart patients.

The physicians have supplied me with medication that gives me the heart rate of an athlete (55bpm). Unfortunately they forgot to give me the performance of an athlete. So with a diminished heart rate and low blood pressure I am more in the category of a slow achiever. But walking slowly is in the nature of golf so I should be ok in that activity. Some of the drugs that I am ingesting contain beta-blockers, which, as you have astutely guessed, means that I will be even more laid back then ever.

I have been given a program that will see me walking three kms twice a day in four weeks time. It will not be at breakneck pace but at a good strolling gait. As with the cyclists who journey to Torquay on a daily basis, I will take my \$3.50 for a half way coffee on the morning jaunt. At least I won't be wearing lycra in public!!

Swimming is soon to be on the agenda but more of a beached whale activity than gambling dolphins... a more dignified approach, well suited to a man of my vintage, will be in order.

This enforced resting is good for both mind and body. As I will not be allowed to lift heavy weights for a while, I have used these horizontal moments to design a mast raising system that requires a minimum expenditure of effort. Of course a certain amount of credit/acknowledgement must go to those kind sailors who have put their attempts/efforts on mast raising on YouTube and other sailing forums for me to study.

So a 6:1 mechanical advantage system with appropriate launching/retrieval angles has been designed. My children do not realise it as yet but their Christmas present to me is the pulley system...he he he!!!!

Not only does the mast need to be raised and lowered in the vertical plane but also it needs to be contained in the horizontal plane during this potentially dangerous manoeuvre. You will be delighted that I have solved this problem with the same aplomb that I reserve for the more difficult Sudoku puzzles. Yes, two small fittings, two lengths of 6mm sheet, four sailor's knots and two deck fittings will steady the mast on its journey. Pirates cannot be landlocked for too long you know!

In the meantime, please visit your local bottle shop to help the ailing alcohol industry... they are struggling without my support. But good news awaits. On the Sunday before Christmas my self-imposed abstinence (longer than any Lenten sacrifice) stops. Red wine will once again course through these clogged veins and arteries, bringing a smile to my ravaged body and cheer to my soul.

Raise a glass with me on that day and celebrate the rich tapestry of life that encompasses us all!!

More soon.

Kev