

The Bluebird Newsletter

www.bluebirdsailing.org.au



The official newsletter of the Bluebird Yacht Association of Victoria Inc. The articles and opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the official views of the BYAV.

From the President

2009 began with a bang for Bluebirds with a highly successful **Skandia Geelong Week** in January. Thanks largely to the tireless efforts of our past President, Ivan Knight, and to the 9 Bluebirds that competed, Bluebirds were given their own class this year. Christian O'Halloran did a great job in liaising with the Geelong Yacht Club on behalf of the BYAV. Suffice it for me to say that having such a turn out of Bluebirds at such a prestigious event, helps to demonstrate the attributes of the class and further helps to achieve one of our aims – to increase the number of active Bluebirds on the water.

The **2009 State Championships** are done and dusted. Congratulations to the place getters and to all those who competed and had fun out there. Having sailors of the class of David Wallace and Craig Black on Drambuie competing with us should help us all to improve as they show us what is possible. After all, Drambuie is a Bluebird and the difference is not in the yachts, but in how we sail them. We are canvassing the idea of having a slightly different format for the State Titles next year. The Committee believes that having the first race a couple of weeks later to allow those that compete in the Skandia Week a bit more time to recover, and that having 3 race days, with 2 races on each day (best 4 of 6 races to count) will be more acceptable. Let us know what you think. Thanks to our Secretary Nick Findlay for organizing the NORs, SIs and the results for the 2009 State Titles.

The **Polly Woodside Long Course** event has but one race left - the HBYC St Leonard's Race on 18 April. Thanks again to Christian O'Halloran who has been in

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Presentation Night Friday 8th May 2009

STOP PRESS!!
Congratulations to Christian
O'Halloran—winner HBYC 2
handed 18 mile race



Christian with his crew on Manjimup happy to be in Geelong during Skandia Week.



Motley Crew Revived!!!!

By John Owens

The not so “Motley Crew” is up and sailing again!!

Michael Hanel and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Doug Otter for allowing us to take on “Motley Crew”, get her sailing and racing again and making this a reality for us.

Yes, Michael and I did say back in September 2008 that we would have the Motley ready for Skandia, although which Skandia in what year was never quite defined!! Well it was Skandia 2009 that she had her first big voyage.

Amazing how much time it takes to strip off all the paint, sand, sand and sand again, de-rust the keel and re-seal, refit cabin sides and windows, de-rig, de-mast and refit and then re-rig and re-stand the mast, sand/paint, sand/paint, sand/paint and sand/paint again, oh and probably sand/paint a bit more later on. Still needs another final coat – well maybe by Skandia.

We spent a lot of time down at the HBYC yard and have met plenty of club members and the experience of working on the boat has certainly been worth it just to meet many of the members you don't normally come across. Also it's amazing how many people know about Bluebirds, have raced them or have known someone who owns one etc. In the end we had to get there early in the day just so we would get some work done because there was always someone wanting a chat.

We appreciate the good will and advice we received along the way. Opinions and ideas about what to do and how to do it were many and varied – did I say many and varied? Confusing sometimes but we took it all into consideration and in the end we just decided on what we thought best. Much discussion went into how we should paint the boat, epoxy or good quality oil base paint? – we went for the latter and I reckon it soaked into the wood really good and looks pretty good as well. It was certainly easy to roll on. We added Penetrol to the sealant and undercoat and this really helped the paint penetrate into the wood.

The Friday before Skandia, we had her close to 96.7% finished. Many thanks to Peter Roberts for the loan of “Tandeka” sails whilst she is undergoing major renovations. I picked up the sails on Friday morning, worked out how they fitted with the new rig, grabbed Ian Lewis, craned Motley into the water, pulled up the sails and away we went for a quick sail over to Port Melbourne and back – “she sails!!” (thank goodness, a few beers and a sigh of relief).

Nothing for it now, we had paid the \$\$'s and had entered Skandia – The next day, throw 4 blokes onto the boat a bit of food and sail to Geelong with about 470 other boats!! Despite the trying conditions, we made it down there, a few gear breakages on the way but she ploughed through the water like a champion. We just need some more weight in her as she is a very light boat. Just as well there was 4 on board for that race. We handled the race next day and got a 4th over the line out of 8 Bluebirds so we were happy that she can be a very competitive boat in lighter



Motley Crew nears completion of her renovations.

conditions. With a bit more experience at the helm, who knows what she can do?!

We are looking forward to getting the Motley going and trying to keep up with “Drambuie”, keeping “Panacea” in our wake and looking out for everybody else. Just a typical Bluebird race day on the water.

Many thanks to all who have contributed in many ways with advice, bits and pieces of gear, time and support. Especially to Peter Roberts for the loan of the sails, John Erickson for some stainless steel pulpit material, Gerry Ward for advice on many things and Bluebird members who showed interest in our progress and advice. Thanks also to Kim and Judith for putting up with our blinkered vision of the world whilst we got Motley together (“brownie points” are in the negative for a while). “Tangles” was also particularly patient while we worked away on the boat, awaiting her customary walk along the pier at the end of the day.



Race Dates 2009

Polly Woodside Long Course - Final Race (St Leonard's) 18 April

Bluebird Cup Winter Series 2009					
Date	Heat	Start	Date	Heat	Start
May			August		
Saturday 9	1	1300 hrs	Saturday 1	6	1300 hrs
Saturday 23	2	1300 hrs	Saturday 15	7	1300 hrs
June			Saturday 29		
Saturday 20	3	1300 hrs	8	1300 hrs	
July			September		
Saturday 4	4	1300 hrs	Saturday 12	9	1300 hrs
Saturday 18	5	1300 hrs			

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charge of the Polly Woodside events – and congratulations to him for taking out 4th Polly Woodside event on March 29th (the Club 2– handed race).

The BYAV “Summer Series” Thursday Twilight races that have been hosted by Royals, who kindly allowed the Bluebirds to have our event in their twilight series, attracted a handful of Bluebirds over the series. It’s a relaxed non-spinnaker event that allows everyone to improve their skills and hopefully we can continue this with an increased participation next season.

The Bluebird Winter Cup begins on Saturday 9th May and we hope to see as many as possible competing. See the race dates above.

Warwick Norman is doing a great job as “webmaster” of our **website (www.bluebirdsailing.org.au)** with the site coming together really well, and not costing us an arm and a leg. He has included pictures of those yachts he has photos of. Those whose yacht does not have a picture attached on the website, please send a photo to Warwick (warwick.norman@rightship.com). We would also like to get a bit of a history of each Bluebird in the fleet, so please send Warwick snippets about your Bluey – year of construction, wood or glass, previous owners, notable successes and any other tasty titbits.

The “new” **BYAV Committee** elected last November has a great mix of ages and skills, which means that the views on

many issues are pretty varied. Despite this, the Committee meetings are friendly and productive with everyone airing their views forthrightly, but with consensus on most issues being reached amicably and relatively quickly. At this point I would like to thank all those on the Committee, both executive and non-executive, for their efforts on behalf of the BYAV.

Peter Roberts has informed us that due to his commitment with dinghy sailing, in which his children are very active, he has had to reluctantly resign as a BYAV Committee member. Thanks to Peter for all the time he has put in - as a gun sailor and someone who speaks his mind forthrightly and honestly he has been a great contributor to Bluebirds over the years. Peter’s efforts in getting the young generation into the joys of sailing are commendable. We hope he can continue to contribute his knowledge and ideas to the BYAV as and when he has the time - his views are always worth hearing.

See you on the water.

Regards

Ian Lewis

BYAV President



Coodabeen Champions by Ivan Knight

One day before Christmas 2008 while I was at home in Nun-gurner, I received a call on my mobile from Doug Jarvis. Doug informed me that he ran the promotion company for Skandia Geelong Week and that he was contacting all of the division winners of the 2008 series. He explained he was offering all winners and their crew a chance to compete in a series they would name 'King of the Docklands'. The sponsors would provide SB3 sports boats for the competition. The winning crew would receive an Audi car and the club they represented would receive an SB3 yacht; an all up value of \$100K. Doug claimed this would be the biggest prize yet offered in Australian yachting.

If you are wondering "what is an SB3?" as I did, I looked it up on Google: It's put out by the Laser company and except for its fixed dagger keel and 6m length, it looks rather like an enlarged Laser. It's sloop rigged with an isometric spinnaker. SB3's are now an international class with several hundred sailing in a number of countries.

Doug went on to explain that the heats would be sailed in Victoria Harbour on the evenings of the 21st & 22nd January, with practice sessions in the afternoons. A condition of racing was that the crew had to be chosen from the winners' yacht (in my case 'Paramour') or from the same division on another yacht.

My choice of crew were David Barnett who sailed with me on

'Paramour' and who has had extensive experience on racing catamarans, dinghies, dragons and now Bluebirds. As Paramour's third crew member was unavailable, I contacted Ryan Blackstock who seemed an obvious choice. Ryan, with his dad Andrew, was runner up in the same Skandia division in his Triton 28 'Big Blue'. Ryan has had experience on the sports boat 'Hiccup' as well as performance dinghies, keelboats and his own Bluebird 'Jay'. I managed to track Ryan down somewhere of the Tasmanian East Coast as he was returning from the West Coaster on 'Spirit of Downunder'.

There were to be three heats on each evening with four yachts in each heat and a time limit of 20 minutes. The six winners from the heats would go into a final for the big prize. Our heat was to be on Thursday 22nd which would give us a chance to watch the heats on the 21st. If we won our heat we would be up against some big names including the Australian SB3 champion.

Ryan and I watched the heats on the Wednesday evening. At the same time we picked the brains of the SB3 team who had brought the yachts down from Brisbane as part of a massive promotion of the class. We also registered for our heat the next night and found out for the first time that they needed my credit card details for a \$500 security deposit in case of damage. Hmmm...just a bit more stress to add to what was already at

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Drambuie takes the Bluebirds at Skandia Geelong Week

At Skandia Geelong Week nine Bluebird entrants competed in a three race series; eight members of the Hobson's Bay Yacht club and one RYCV member.

The Williamstown to Geelong Passage Race results count in the Bluebird Class association's long course series for the Polly Woodside perpetual trophy, and this year the long race was won by Craig Black and Drambuie.

In race two Warwick Norman's Revel was first over the line and on the final day of racing only one point separated Black, Norman and third placed Ivan Knight on Paramour.

The final race saw Drambuie win over Paramour which gave Drambuie the overall win in the series.

Text re-printed from Sail-World.com courtesy Traci Ayris and Skandia Media.



Craig Black and David Wallace show their winning form on Drambuie.



DAFFY'S MUSINGS ON RACING 'THE HOLDEN'S OF THE SEA'

At the conclusion of the recent State Titles, David (Daffy) Wallace sent a very gracious, constructive and heartening email to members of the Association. It generated a number of interesting replies including a few comments of worried empathy about 'use by dates'! Daffy was happy for his email to be shared with those who don't have email.

On behalf of Craig (Chinna) and I (Daffy) on Drambuie (R 57) a heart full thanks to all involved in organising and participating in the latest Bluebird series. Thanks also to the race officials too. Without them there is no race.

Both Chinna and I have a great time sailing our Bluebird and enjoying the team that makes up the Bluebird Class Association.

I share with you some thoughts if you wish to read on.

It is not all beer and skittles on our boat, as it may seem to some of you. One, we have not had a beer during a race yet; none on board most of the time. We must be getting old. We seem so interested in where and what the fleet is doing, and taking all the fun in that there is no time for drinking. There is some really great close racing going at times.

As far as skittles that's my department. For instance in the

last race on Sunday. We were on the last run with the jib goose-winged out and me holding the clew out, it being Chinna's turn to steer. Me, being the hopeless forward hand I am (being well past my use by date to be forward of the mast), tripped on the cabin top and fell on my side with my foot twisted and wedged between the cabin and side shrouds and me lying on the side deck half over the side gasping in agony trying to hold onto the boat.

I eventually got myself untangled and dragged myself back into the cockpit to figure out the damage to my leg. No cuts, no great swelling – at that point, that came later. But I couldn't put any weight on it at all. So Chinna says "so I suppose you better drive, and I will work the boat". To which we did, continuing on with the race, again looking at the positions as they unfolded behind us, ending a great day on the water and not a raised or cross word between us as usual. Chinna kindly unrigged the boat and packed it all away, while I watched and felt bad about him doing all the work.

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stake!

It was interesting watching the heats and it was obvious that any small mistake would be enough to put a team out of the running.

Thursday the 22nd came around and so did some very strong winds. First our 2pm practice session was cancelled, however we were told to attend a briefing at 1700 hrs and to expect a non-spinnaker race. While waiting for the briefing we were informed that because of the strong wind warning and their insurance policy conditions, the half-finished series had been cancelled. What a fizzer after all the promotion and hype.

Well, easy come easy go....the sponsors disappeared over the horizon with our prizes, not to be heard from again. It seems SB3 was just not meant to be. At least we got to keep the polo shirts they gave us!



Coodabeen champions Ivan Knight and Ryan Blackstock checking out the SB3 they nearly sailed.



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I must point out that we, like any body else, are not unbeatable. I must confess that we have both sailed on that little patch of water for many, many years and can read it sometimes, like the back of our hand. So "at the moment" we have an edge that can easily be reduced by you all. Just take some time to study the tides and stream, wind and waves to get the most from the conditions on the day.

For instance just cast your mind back to Sunday. The tide was flowing out all afternoon, the Yarra river only runs one way – *OUT*. Remember the dirty water out of the river from dredging and rain water flow. It gives you a hint where it's running the best. The waves in a southerly are less under the lee of the piers. Also don't try to lay the weather mark too soon in the beat, as when you clear the breakwater the wind "Will" vary in direction and strength or both.

In every race most importantly, don't over lay the mark - it's giving away time to your mates. Clear air is vital so keep out of the weather boats wind... and beware of ships they block and curl the wind too.

To go well and enjoy it you have to turn up to each race, practise your teamwork, increase your knowledge and put in an effort. These all will improve your result.

But really, is it "the result" or the 'occasion' that really matters. To me, to go for a sail with enjoyable company and have a good time on one of the best bays in the world for sailing – this can be more rewarding than any cup or trophy.

I have been on or involved with, some boats that have done very well, but were never happy boats. No matter how big the trophy, it never glosses over the bad memories of the

day. Then again, I have seen boats sail over the horizon with sails setting beautifully, forgetting the race but enjoying the moment, to see them return at the end of the day all with bigger smiles than the just announced race winner pot in hand. So who is the real winner?

So embrace the moment; yes be competitive if you feel inclined, but never lose sight of the real goal. Bluebirds should be enjoyed for all the right reasons.

Finally I must apologise for not coming around after the races in this series as in the Winter series. It was the highlight of that series to listen to the tales and have a quiet one, if not some soup, in good company. That part I have missed in this series.

Sundays in summer are a busy time for me. As my daughters sail their own two boats at the same time we go out Bluebirding. Thus I am bound to play shore crew, race officer and general dogs body when they too are sailing. So running off and leaving them to unrig isn't an option, as they would still be there at midnight socialising and having fun, with their boats still half unrigged and a cross mum sitting at home waiting for us all.

Bluebirds. Holdens of the sea, for all to enjoy.

Chinna's going to enter the Brass Monkey races over winter. Hopefully we can get my two daughters to help us out as we will enter the spinnaker division I think. They need the practise on the foredeck as that's where yachting started in keel boats for me.

We look forward to seeing you all out there soon.

Regards Daffy

OUR HELP IS REQUIRED!

Help is required on the start boat for yacht races held by the Club. As Club members, as well as Bluebird Association members who benefit from efficient racing at the Club, it is in our interests for each of us who enjoys racing to lend a hand on the start boat every so often when we can. It's quite good fun and there is a lot to be gleaned about some of the finer points of racing when you see it all from the water on the start boat.

Please contact John Owens (0417 147 764) or David Judge (0417 526 438) if you would be available for 1 or 2 days (Saturday or Sunday) during the season.



Getting ready for.....



Gaylene



Motley Crew & Jay

.....you guessed it....



Nunyarra



Paramour



Secret

.....Skandia Geelong Week



Bluebirders Across the Strait by Ian Lewis

A number of "Bluebirders" participated in yacht races across Bass Strait between Christmas and New Year.

Ryan Blackstock (on Spirit of Downunder) and Nick White (on 97) did the Westcoaster to Hobart, while Ian McGrath (Red Sky) and John Owens and me on Slinky Malinky sailed to Launceston in the Rudder Cup.

As a prelude to the crossing, yachts did the "Cock and of the Bay" (Melbourne to Williamstown) on Boxing day and over-nighted at the Blairgowrie Marina, courtesy of the Blairgowrie Yacht Club.

The races across the straight – the West Coaster and the East Coaster, both to Hobart and the Rudder Cup to Launceston - all began at midday on December 27th off Portsea. The Rudder Cup began one hundred and one years ago, and is named after an American yachting magazine whose editor was instrumental in getting the Cup up and running in 1907. I have watched the start from the spectator fleet on a number of occasions and to be part of the "real" action on the water, with 50+ yachts flying across the start line in increasing 20 knot winds, was exhilarating.

The crew on Slinky Malinky were nearly all from Hobbos (except one Geelong boy) and relatively inexperienced at ocean racing. In fact it was Slinky's first time to Tassie. However, our skipper, Eric Marsh, made us all feel very much at ease with just the right mix of competitive spirit and sense of care for his boat and crew. That's no easy task with an inexperienced crew and all on board gave Eric a big tick as a great skipper who we would all sail with any time. In addition, "Slinky", a Northshore 37, is a wonderful yacht that is well designed for both racing and comfort.

The trip down was relatively smooth sailing. As is the case with ocean racing, or at least so I am told (I am a novice), there was a mixture of conditions – all pretty benign on this trip fortunately. The winds varied from light to moderate, and predominantly abeam or astern. Thirty hours after setting off from Portsea - and after a fascinating duel for the last few hours with another yacht, Good News, who beat us across the line by around 60 seconds - we arrived in the Tamar river and made our way to the Tamar Yacht Club. Just time for a few beers, yarn swapping, an excellent feed in the pub overlooking the Tamar, some more yarn swapping over a few reds, then hit the sack and prepare for the local race in the Tamar the following day.

The "local race" was pretty interesting with winds increasing to around 25+ knots (or at least that is how I remember it), with all sorts of things happening on board Slinky to keep us all busy and amused (the "amused" bit mostly comes later over a few beers). Local knowledge is critical in such confined waters - as we discovered by cleaning the barnacles off our keel on Shag Rock which, as the locals proudly told us later, has taken the keel off many "blow ins" from the mainland. No damage done as an inspection of the keel later showed and we were ready for the return journey the following day – or so we thought.

The presentation night organized that evening by the Tamar Yacht Club in their new clubhouse was great and after many

yachting yarns, good food and wine and much "bon homie" we hit the hay.

The following morning saw a gale warning issued for Bass Strait and the decision was made to stay put until more clement weather arrived. So we took in the sights around Tamar, relaxed, had several beers, feeds and red wines in the now familiar pub overlooking the beautiful Tamar River and generally reflected on our bad luck!! So it went for the next few days and the phone calls to wives and girl friends explaining our "unfortunate situation" and trying to down-play the idyllic place we were "stuck" in became a test of our ability to put the correct spin on our "predicament".

Finally, after 3 days well spent, we farewelled the Tamar and the wonderful hospitality of those at the Tamar Yacht Club who had made our stay so enjoyable and easy.

Strong winds, abating during the day, with 2 to 3 metre waves were the conditions forecast for the return journey. When we got out of the Tamar and into the straight, we headed into 30-35 kt winds and 3+ metre waves. Slinky handled the conditions beautifully and pretty soon got into the rhythm of the conditions, as did the crew. The winds and seas had abated by late afternoon and a number of hours of very enjoyable sailing ensued. During the night the winds died completely and we were motoring - then the engine also died completely. Impeller caput! Drifting along without sail or engine power, hoping large ships could spot us as radio problems made for the trifecta of troubles (and we were close to the rhumb line for the Spirit of Tasmania). Eric again showed his mastery of the situation. He had not changed an impeller before, but being a well organized lad he had a spare and after 3 hours of aimless drifting and frantic work on the engine, we were again underway. As expected, just as the engine was fixed, so was the lack of wind and we sailed through the heads around midday, set the spinnaker and were in Williamstown exactly 4 hours after coming through the heads – all under sail.

So ended my first ocean racing experience. It may be in the blood as my grandfather did five Sydney to Hobarts and for me it was an amazing experience. It's hard to describe why such an activity - which at times has been described as like standing under a cold shower during an earthquake, and if you happen to be the yacht owner, ripping up \$100 notes at the same time - can be so enjoyable. However, when the sails are set fair, the wind steady off the quarter and the early morning sunlight sparkling off the water in the middle of the oceans with no land in sight, it would be difficult to imagine a better place to be. These times make all the rest easy to bear.

I was lucky to have been on a great yacht with an excellent skipper and crew – including our navigator John Owen (skipper of the Bluebird "Motley Crew") who demonstrated excellent navigational skills in his first Tassie race.

I am "hooked" I am happy to say and hopefully in another decade or so I will have many such adventures under my belt.



2009 State Championships FINAL RESULTS

Yacht & Final Placing	Sail No.	Skipper	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Race 5	Final Points*
Drambuie 1st	S57	David Wallace & Craig Black	1	1	2	DNC 11	1	4
Panacea 2nd	H711	Nick Findlay	2	2	2	3	5	9
Moody Blue	H1150	Ryan Blackstock	3	DNE	DNE	DNE		
Warranilla 5th	H271	Ian McGrath/ John Vermeulen	4	DNC 10	3	DNC 11	6	23
Nunyarra 3rd	H471	David Barnett	5	3	5	4	4	16
Revel Equal 6th	H292	Warwick Norman	6	5	6	DNC 11	DNC 11	28
Hanini 4th	H113	Dan Kennedy	7	7	DNF	1	3	18
Shadow Equal 6th	H241	Ian Lewis	8	6	7	DNC 11	7	2
Bounty	H56	Bruce Hocking/ Peter Hocking	DNE	8	DNC 10	DNC 11	DNC 11	40
Motley Crew Equal 6th	H158	John Owens	DNE	4	4	DNC 11	9	28
Paramour	H66	Ivan Knight	DNE	DNE	DNE	2	2	

DNF = did not finish
DNC = did not compete
DNE = did not enter