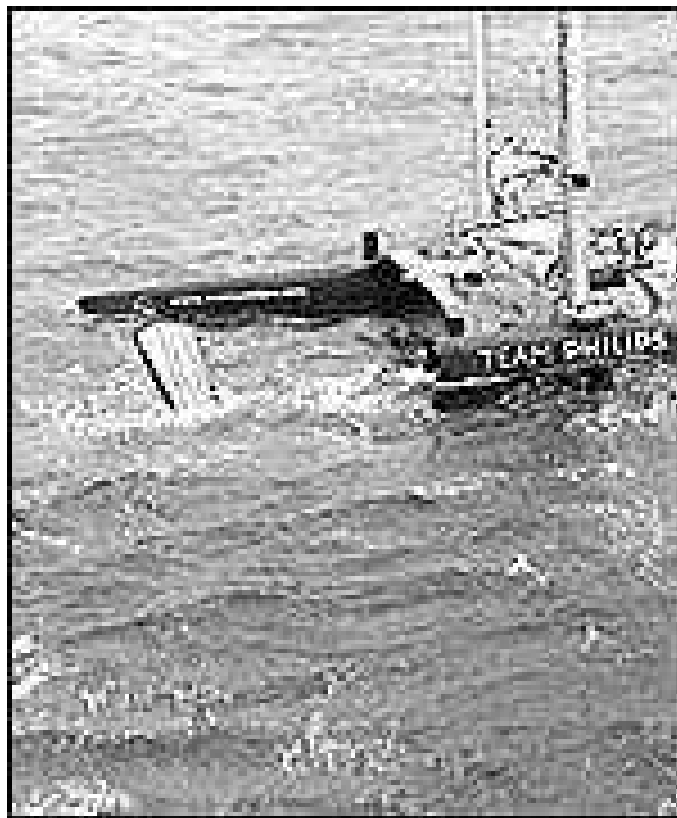


Multihull News

The Official Newsletter of the Multihull Yacht Club of Victoria
March/April 2000

TEAM PHILIPS LOSES PORT BOW



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BIG BAY RACE report**

MULTIHULL NEWS

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Phil Hames

News briefs:

Our next General Meeting will be the AGM held at Black Rock Yacht Club sometime in June. Members should consider nominating for committee and office bearing positions in the club.

We have the 'unedited' video from SOMR 2000 and copies can be ordered. We expect the approximately 26 minute video will cost \$20 delivered. Ring any committee member or Phil Hames to place your order.

The MYCV committee has developed a proposal regarding charges for slipping multihulls at Western Port Marina. The proposal is to be considered by the Marina and decisions will be advised shortly.

Hot Goss'

***Disaster upon disaster! Since our last issue we have had two major multihull disasters. Vince and Joyve Gardiners 'Searunner' tri has been lost (see article page 6) and the much vaunted Pete Goss' 'Team Phillips' giant 120' cat has lost one its noses!**

***Joy upon joy! Vince and Joyce Gardiner acquired a trailer tri 720 ("needs a bit of work") and George Bulka, the noted rhinoplasty specialist, has offered a free nose job to 'Team Phillips'! It might stave off the new name suggestions doing the rounds, such as 'One Phillips', 'Team Phiips' from New Zealand (Phillips less one 'ull)! (apologies to our Kiwi friends - Ed.)**

***Don Fulwoods' 40' cat is nearly ready to launch, wing mast included, and Wayne Huxleys' 41' cat hulls are finished and sitting proudly among the acreages surrounding his home.**

Dons boat looks much smaller than the 1 foot difference suggests but Wayne's boat is considerably lighter. Both should be very fast.

***Speaking of fast boats, Bruce Carter ('Shazam') has commissioned the building of a 53' power catamaran to include in his boating stable. The Scott Jutson design includes an 8m x 6.6m main cabin and a not much smaller flybridge. With only twin 230 h.p. motors can cruise at 18 knots and do the Melbourne - Brisbane in about 36 hours! Should be here later next year, probably in time to be a great committee boat for SOMR 2002! Incidentally, if it was the committee boat and Bruce hit it with 'Shazam' who would claim the insurance?**

***Isn't competition wonderful! Yaringa marina has acquired a multihull dolly similar in capacity to the Western Port Marina dolly. Whether**



Vince and Joyce Gardiner's Searunner trimaran under single headsail during WAFIR 2000.

Searunner was at it's peak performance under this rig. The Gardiner's had experimented with sails and eventually settled on this combination for racing.

Unfortunately, Searunner is no longer with us. Check out page 6 for the full story.

Photo by Robin Reiger.

Hot Goss' (continued)

either would have appeared without the continued popularity of multihulls is a moot point, but both are certainly a welcome development for multihull owners.

*There has been a noticeable silence from the human gender referred to as "cleaning animals" in the last issue - apart from the letters, faxes and e-mails all suggesting that the "owner of a small trimaran" should be referred to simply as "the animal" because nothing to do with cleanliness is associated with him!

-FLAMES

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VALE - Searunner

By Joyce Gardiner

By now most readers will have heard that Vince Gardner's trimaran Searunner will not sail again, having been forced onto rocks at Walkerville South, Waratah Bay, in conditions far removed from the weather forecast. She didn't break up or founder, and bad sailing can't be blamed. It was simply a freak of nature.

Searunner V. Gardiner was born in 1977 from a marriage of American design, international materials and Anglo-Australian craftsmanship. She grew up in our Glen Waverley backyard, expensive to raise like most growing youngsters, but a source of pride and joy as Vince learned new techniques in woodwork and other fields.

At seventeen she was considered

mature enough to leave home and went to live at the seaside in 1994, settling in Westernpost Marina. She competed in many events. A highlight was winning the SOMR in her first season. (In her last race, this year, she came 2nd on handicap out of a sizeable field, in a Yaringa series race.)

Searunner had been in the water for nearly 5 and a half years (with a facelift about two years ago) when she set off on her first modest cruise along the Victorian coast. All went well at first, with stops at Cape Woolamai and Walkerville South, in company with Simba. Oberon Bay or Refuge Cove was next.

But on the morning of the third day the engine wouldn't start. We eventually de-anchored by sail alone;

a tiny golf-cart battery eventually brought the motor to life, but soon after Bell Point the wind disappeared, leaving us stuck on 1.1 knots if we were to sail, not motor. We'd have been lucky to reach Cape Liptrap by dark. Vince didn't fancy another days motoring. South-easterlies of about 20 knots were forecast to come in later. According to our pilot manual, Walkerville South - a delightful spot - was an acceptable anchorage under such conditions, so we radioed Simba and turned back. Mid-afternoon, after lunching, reading and sketching, we found ourselves much nearer the shore despite and outgoing tide. Then followed two hours of setting and retrieving anchors in increasingly wild conditions of both wind and wave, to no avail. An attempt to latch to a permanent mooring only held us for a short time.

We decided to take our chances by motoring out to sea, but once past Bell Point squalls compounded the easterly gale, visibility was down to a few feet, and night was approaching. Maybe it would get worse. In one direction lay uncharted shoals for a mile off-shore.

It was like tossing a coin: heads you save the boat, tails you lose your lives. And we were already very tired. Vince had taken a larger anchor. At one stage we had three out. A heavy chain tangled around the prop prevented further attempts to motor towards the sandier section, and poor Searunner's fate was sealed.

If it had happened at all, we were very lucky that Searunner was forced on to rocks (a) before dark, and (b) in a place with a few inhabitants. They

shouted to get straight off, leaving everything behind, and helped us down in appalling conditions, the like of which haven't been seen in Walkerville for years.

Poor Searunner was declared a total loss by and assessor the next day, not through the damage she'd sustained, but because of her 'shelved' situation. The overnight battering had pushed her 30 or 40 feet further up among the rocks where no crane, low-loader or flotation device could place her in a towable position.

At dawn, after incredibly generous kindness from Ms. Sue Gaffy and her neighbour, we found Searunner was still and trimaran, with her underwings and main-strength bulkheads intact. We rescued our water-logged possessions and started the salvage process, helped by a son and daughter-in-law who drove down.

Searunner was a graceful, popular, user-friendly boat, exceedingly well built. Her centre cockpit kept me safe at the helm, while thanks to her reinforced stanchions Vince narrowly avoided being catapulted overboard in a state of exhaustion.

So VALE dear Searunner - we are very grateful for all the pleasure you've given, for the skills you allowed us to acquire, and for the fact that we are still here, with no broken bones, thanks to your sturdiness.

-JMG

Previous page: Searunner pictured the day after the grounding. Note the extensive damage to the starboard float.

Wings across the Bay

By Darryl Smith

The inaugural Big Bay Race was organised by the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron based at St Kilda and set down for a 1999 Boxing Day start. The Big Bay Race is a non stop 175 NM race that zig zags across Melbourne's Port Phillip Bay and includes the Cock of the Bay as its first section. It was bound to be a testing and interesting race with unlit buoys to be found in the middle of the night and a number of sandbanks and mussel colonies to avoid.

The course promised a mix of windward legs, reaches and down wind runs providing the wind direction was consistent. Following a start off St Kilda Beach the course was generally SSE following the Eastern Shore of Port Phillip Bay down to Sandringham. It then veered out the middle of the bay past the Spoil Ground mark on transit to the West Channel Pile off St Leonards to the finish of the Cock of the Bay. At this point competitors in the ORCV's Melbourne to Hobart and Melbourne to Devonport races parted company with the Big Bay entrants. The Big Bay course tracked back to the Eastern Shore of Port Phillip at Carrum and followed it down past Frankston to Dromana. After rounding the mark off Dromana Pier the course turned north to a mark 4 NM SE of Ricketts Point whereupon the course was west past Prince George Bank, Portarlington, Point Henry, and on to Geelong. A triangle within Corio Bay was completed before heading east back to Ricketts Point, turning NW to a mark off Point Cook, back to Sandringham, Brighton, Port Melbourne and the finish of St Kilda Pier.

In the Multihull Division the list of entrants included two Cat's, Fat Cat (Crowther 37) and Seatrek (Seawind 33), and five Tri's, Shanghaied (Crowther Buccaneer 36), Slick Willie (Grainger 920), Spirit of Emu (Grainger 43), Whisper (Nieul 7.95m), and Wings (Crowther Buccaneer 40).

The race started with intermittent showers, flat seas, and the wind at 5 knots from the SE so it was a beat to the first few marks. In the light airs there were numerous late starters, Wings and Spirit of Emu amongst them. The Tri's quickly showed their wares in the light breeze running down the 5 minute start of the slower monohulls on the first tack or two. The conditions were obviously to Slick Willie's liking as she glided towards the horizon in pursuit of the faster monohulls, and thus began a personal battle with Spirit of Downunder (designed for the Melbourne to Osaka Race) and Horizon Sprint (Radford 10.5), that was to last for over 30 hours.

By Sandringham the wind had increased to 10 knots and Wings was shy reaching to the next mark in company with Shanghaied, Seatrek, and a number of monohulls both large and small. The Cock of the Bay Race was well suited to the monohull fleet with two beats and a shy reach not allowing the multi's to show their wares. Seatrek pulled away from the two Crowther Tri's on this leg only to be caught on the beat to West Channel Pile.

As we approached the Bellarine Peninsula Wings had out-pointed Seatrek who was to leeward and now behind us, and Shanghaied crossed our path just ahead, tacking back out into the bay away from Prince George Bank. Wings chose to go over the bank as we had done many times before on route from Port Phillip Heads to Geelong. We were one of the few boats to choose this course and benefited from a lift off the land that allowed us to be the third multihull across the finish line for the Cock of the Bay behind Spirit of Emu and Slick Willie. We became quite 'Cocky' as we picked up second place behind Slick Willie on corrected time just ahead of Shanghaied.

The 'Big Bay' continued without a pause as spinnakers finally came out for the reach back to Carrum. A tidy set by Shanghaied and the failure (yet again) of the prodder pole on Wings saw Shanghaied skate past us whilst we reset the kite off a bow fitting. Shortly later a similar event on Shanghaied saw her drop her kite and whilst we closed in she quickly regained her speed with a No.1 in its place. Both Tri's watched as Seatrek first caught then pulled away to lead Shanghaied by 20 minutes at the Carrum mark, with Wings a further 4 minutes astern.

We were back beating to windward in very light airs towards Frankston. Wings again received the benefit of a lift off the shore and moved back in front of Shanghaied. As dusk approached the wind grew lighter with the strength now back to 5 knots or less. The words of an unknown 'Dromana forecaster' heard over the radio earlier in the day echoed in our minds, "the wind is zero knots from the east". Wings chose to stay more off-shore near Mount Martha to avoid the prophecy and watched as Shanghaied slipped through on our inside. Whilst she appeared to have a private breeze her lighter weight made her a faster boat than Wings in these breezes and she had been gaining ground since Frankston. Just before dark we came across firstly Slick Willie, in company with its mono-hull minders, then Spirit of Emu, who were by now all heading north again under spinnaker after rounding the mark at Dromana. Darkness fell before we could see Seatrek. Finding an unlit inflatable orange mark at night against the shore lights of Dromana was proving to be more difficult than first thought and we had lost the nav lights of the boats just ahead in the maze of house and street lights. We finally realised we were close when we spotted Shanghaied coming back towards us trying to set a spinnaker. The light breeze had veered to the E/NE and whilst we could lay the next mark on one tack we had lost our spinnaker run back up the bay.

By Mount Martha we again closed the gap on Shanghaied to less than 100 metres but then made no further impression. With the winds so light and scratching for ideas we decided to reduce drag by pulling up the centerboard. We were counting on the deeper V hulls of Wings to counteract leeway. Wings responded well and the extra half a knot or more of speed had immediate effect as we passed Shanghaied to windward and now clearly faster. We could not resist dropping down on her a little to say g'day. The call of competitive appreciation came back across the water from the helm of the other Tri, "Bugger off will ya".

We were able to pop the spinnaker on the next leg across to Prince George Bank but the sock decided it would come down rather than go up. By the time we removed the sock and re-hoisted the spinnaker Shanghaied was no more than a set of distant lights. The mussel colony off Portarlington was well lit and not as difficult to round as first thought, much easier to find than the mark off Portarlington Pier. As we approached the GPS waypoint we found a large monohull laying anchored across our path. Rounding both the yacht and the bouy in one sweep we realised we would not be the last to disturb their sleep that night. The remainder of the run into Corio Bay was uneventful except for the rain which was quite heavy.

Dawn saw us passing Point Henry where confined within Corio Bay we found Slick Willie, with minders Spirit of Downunder and Horizon Sprint. Spirit of Emu, Seatrek and Shanghaied were again within sight. The race was still alive for us after close to 20 hours but we had to catch Shanghaied and stay close to Seatrek.

During the leg out of Corio Bay the wind was again on the nose and we lost contact with both Seatrek and Shanghaied. 10 NM from the mark off Ricketts point we found them again only one mile or two ahead and we were to weather of both with potentially a faster sailing angle to the mark. That was not the only thing that sparked to life that afternoon. Thunderstorms approached Melbourne from the NE and one was (continued page 13)

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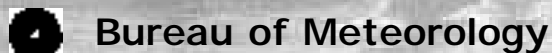
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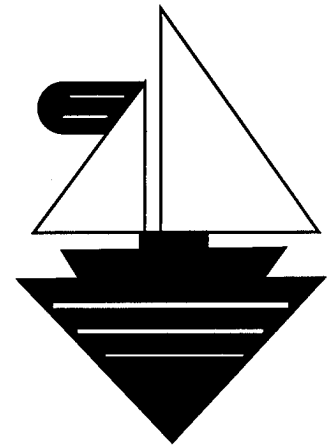


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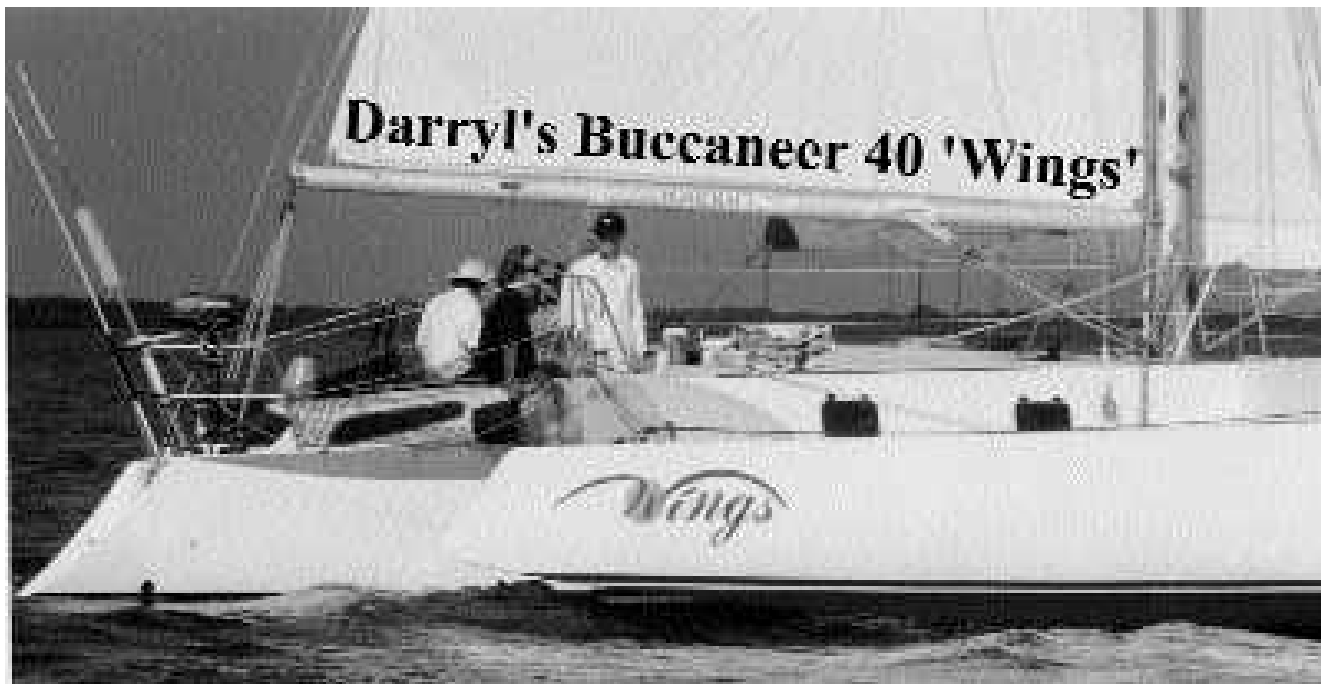
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preparing to explode over the mark ahead as we watched the leaders colourful spinnakers carry them away. Shanghaied reached the mark as the storm hit and took off on its leading edge. It was strange to watch her disappear into the rain like a mirage. Seatrek and Wings were still beating to the mark when behind the storm we found only rain, no wind. There we sat watching all others sail away along with our thoughts of second place or better. Twice more we were hit with isolated storms with the same effect, becalmed for 30 to 40 minutes after they left. During the last one we tore the number one genoa, and found ourselves under-powered with the number four as its replacement. The legs to Point Cook (Outer Anchorage), back to Sandringham, and towards Port Melbourne were very frustrating as they must have been for Seatrek as they retired whilst still ahead of Wings. A south-westerly change arrived as we approached Port Melbourne and quickly increased to 25 knots. Under-powered no more we covered the final ground to the finish very quickly. Spirit of Downunder finally overcame Slick Willie in the calms that they both encountered nearing the finish line, overcoming a one minute deficit at the Outer Anchorage. Full credit to the crew of Slick Willie, whilst they were the second boat across the line by a mere 2.5 minutes after 31 hours of racing, they were the fastest boat over the course when starting times are considered. They also beat Spirit of Emu across the line by 15 minutes. "Emu" was the second multihull and fourth boat across the line snapping on the heels of Horizon Sprint. This was the first time I had sailed against her and she is quite awesome when in full flight.

In the end Wings was the fourth multi to finish. Shanghaied won on corrected time. The southwesterly change that arrived too late for Wings to steal a top three finish did assist Fat Cat into second place on corrected time. Interestingly enough Fat Cat was the fastest multihull over the final legs from Point Cook to the finish. The seemingly constant windward legs found in the first 30 hours of the race no doubt frustrated Fat Cat prior to the change.

Many thanks to Lees Shopfitters for their sponsorship of the Multihull Division, and in the monohull divisions YEPP (AMS) and The Marketing Company (PHD). And of course thanks to the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron at St Kilda for organising the event.

Note: This is an edited version of the text supplied by Darryl Smith.



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