

The Bluebird & Top Hat Newsletter



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

It is most gratifying to report the success of yet another summer season of Bluebird sailing.

In January we saw four Bluebirds entered for the Passage race to Geelong. Everyone experienced excitement of one form or another, of which some personal accounts are recorded in this issue.

The Victorian Championships were well supported again with eleven entries and some most enjoyable sailing for everyone. A big thanks is extended to John Erickson for his well laid starts. I have included a brief account of the Championship further in this issue.

Inside this issue:

Warranilla's Passage Race to Geelong _____	2
Paramour's Geelong Challenge _	4
Secret's Almost Race to Geelong	6
2006 Bluebird State Championships Results _____	6
Winter Series Race Dates _____	8
Bluebird Sightings _____	8
For Sale _____	9

**FRIDAY 16 JUNE, 2006
BYAV PRESENTATION
NIGHT
YOUR INVITATION INSIDE**

We as an Association have also made our presence felt around the club by the wearing of our Bluebird polo shirts. You will notice in this issue that second round orders are now being taken.

At the time of writing, our secretary Ian Lewis, is preparing the "Notice of Race"

for the Bluebird Cup winter series. It is hoped that all those who can participate will be out there enjoying another series.

Finally I would like to thank your able Committee for their support in keeping the wheels in motion, especially our Secretary Ian Lewis who has taken to his role with great panache.

I will look forward to welcoming you all to our presentation night on Friday 16 June.

Ivan Knight



Tandeka in full flight during the 2006 Bluebird State Championships

Membership renewals

Membership subscriptions to the Association for the 2006/07 year fall due on 1 July 2006. To maintain your membership of the Association please complete the subscription form included with this newsletter and return to the Treasurer.



A Race, a Rescue and a Reef: Warranilla had it all down and back in the Geelong Passage Race

Doing the passage race to Geelong seemed like a good idea, particularly as last year we didn't make it. The day started well with a freshening breeze from the north and we were looking forward to a good trip. On the way out to the start we noticed something floating in the water and on closer inspection a couple of those things were people. Looking around it appeared either no one else had seen them or if they had they didn't want to help. Unfortunately being such a Good Samaritan crew on *Warranilla* we thought we should do something to help. So we started the engine and motored over to provide some assistance. Once we reached the people in the water we threw them a line and turned the engine off to get them into the boat. Sounds easy, but the two individuals would not be defined as athletic and with their inflated life jackets competing with their 'natural life jackets' around the waist, by the time we got them on board we were all exhausted.

Once on the boat we discovered they had set out early in the morning to do a spot of fishing, but got so involved catching their dinner they didn't bother to look at how the conditions were changing, and what a bad idea it may have been to have a

river type speed boat out in a reasonable swell. When they decided to head for home the swell had picked up considerably, so as you would (not) they sped up to get back more quickly. The rather unfortunate effect of this was the boat was swamped by a large wave.

After extracting them from the water we headed back to the HBYC and radioed race control regarding what had happened. Progress back to HBYC was very slow as we were heading



directly into the breeze so rather than delay our start even more we hailed a motor launch, who agreed to take our passengers to allow us to mark a start to Geelong (we had to get there as we had booked

accommodation in Geelong and our lovely wives were travelling down to meet us there).

So our passengers disembarked into the water and were eventually retrieved by the launch. Great, that meant we could start the race. However, a problem had arisen, as by the time we were finally able to start there was no starting line!!! We headed off in the Geelong direction anyway with all the other boats far off on the horizon. We put the kite up and settled in for a great long kite ride (about a 4 beer one anyway) down to the Richards channel mark. There were several boats in front that we appeared to be catching and by the time we reached the mark

we had caught up to two boats (theirs was probably a 8 beer leg). After rounding the mark the wind decided to disappear so we spent the next couple of hours drifting our way towards Geelong and discussing the



merits of the race with the other boats around us. With the light winds and warm weather the water was far too inviting so we refreshed our outsides with a dip in the water (we had already refreshed our insides).

After several hours of this the skipper spat the dummy (a very unusual event) and put the engine on so we could get to Geelong before midnight. So we were again rocketing off at 6 knots with the smell of exhaust fumes - a refreshing change. We made good time with the engine and as we neared Geelong we saw another Bluebird (Ivan) drifting towards the finish, we soon caught up to Ivan and circled him a couple of times offering beer and verbal support. After a couple of roundings of Ivan we headed toward the RGYC to get a spot for the night. We were about a kilometre from Geelong when the wind changed and picked up significantly. We looked back to see Ivan having a great ride and catching us rapidly. We both ended up reaching the club at about the same time (even though *Warranilla* didn't actually sail the whole way). Once there, we rafted up with 7 other boats for the night. Fortunately it was only one of the crew that was staying on board as John and I had arranged more comfortable lodgings.

It was great at Geelong. There were boats and people everywhere and what appeared

to be a significant amount of beer being consumed. We caught up with Ivan and Dan, who also arrived about the same time, but had been given alternate berthing arrangements.

The following morning as we were not going to race in any of the other events, we thought we would get an early start back to Williamstown. The wind was light and the day seemed great. We left at about 9am, motored out through the channel and hoisted the sails ready for a relaxing trip home. Again the wind seemed to drop out and we spent several hours traveling very slowly (giving time for another swim). Once around the end of the explosives pier we put up the spinnaker and headed straight for home. A very relaxing but slow pace. As the afternoon wore on the wind gradually picked up which was a nice change, but there was more of a change to come. Looking back the clouds were getting very dark indeed, so we turned off the CD and listened to the radio weather report, which was predicting strong winds and rains with squalls of up to 45 plus knots. On hearing this and looking at what was coming towards us we pulled in the kite and took down our new jib. A couple of boats around us must have heard the same report as they were also reducing sail. By the time we started to reef the main the weather had caught up with us. We managed to put one reef in the main when we

were hit by a squall with heavy rain and very strong winds (checked the internet for bay wind strengths when I got home they were off the scale!!!! 45+ around the area where we were).

In hindsight we probably should have taken the main down and put up a storm jib, but we didn't and I thought we would lose the mast. But everything seemed to hold and we were going at 9 knots downwind with only the reefed main. It was also somewhat comforting to have a couple of other boats around during this time.

The rain was so heavy we couldn't see more than about 100 metres ahead so we were sailing according to the compass and the GPS. Plus the wind was pushing us straight to Williamstown so I guess we couldn't go wrong. Fortunately the squall only lasted about 30 minutes and settled to a strong wind, so we also settled down with the main reefed and made good time. Unfortunately that wasn't the end of it; we had a couple more episodes of increased wind (nothing as bad as the first). As the wind increased it changed direction rather radically for a short while, shifting from a southerly to a westerly. As a consequence we did a gybe that was somewhat unexpected and disconcerting. This lasted for a short time when the wind swung back to the south. By this time we were all a little anxious about the weather so



we decided to take down the main and motor the remaining distance to Williamstown. Although a little uncomfortable with the rain and the swell we made reasonable time and were really happy to see Williamstown as the rain cleared.

So the sail to Geelong was great (perhaps we didn't think so at times) and a good experience but it would be good if the Bluebirds were about 8 ft longer!! Still thinking about next year, may be better now we nearly know what we are doing.

Warranilla

Ian McGrath, John Vermeulen and Ryan Vermeulen



Off to a great start: Race 1, 2006 State Championships



Bounty looking good before the start of Race 3 in the 2006 State Championships

Paramour's Geelong Challenge

The Passage Race to Geelong promised to be a very different event this year to the two previous years in which I have competed in *Paramour*.

My crew, Andrew Humblestone and Mandy Falkingham and I, slipped our lines at Hobson's Bay Yacht Club in the forecast 30ky northerly wind for what promised to be a very fast passage.

Downwind starting lines are always confusing and this one was no exception. Once we had located the starboard end of the line which happened to be HBYC's Shirley Freeman, we kept it in sight while we listened to the start countdown on the VHF radio. It seemed from our viewpoint that there must have

been a lot of yachts over the line at the start, but what the heck, in a 300 yacht fleet for a 34 mile course.

Soon after the start it appeared the wind may have been easing a little, so with a bone in my teeth, I went forward to crack the kite. The small one sets easily and we surged forward even faster while we watched the GPS with each surge often recording 9.9 knots, but never quite the 10. Some of the yachts close by were having lots of trouble with their kites and lying over on their sides at times. By the time we reached the Point Richards Channel mark and dropped the kite to head for Corio Bay, the wind had eased to below

15 knots. It continued to ease until off Point Henry when the wind had died out all together. We sat there drifting in the tide for what seemed like an eternity while the faster yachts had by now finished and taken out all the handicap placings. Meanwhile we drifted in the heat, hanging out for a cold one. I came as close as I ever have to abandoning a race, even attaching the outboard motor and starting it in neutral just to be sure. That's when we spotted *Warranilla* motoring at full speed toward us and they were an even more welcome sight when they passed each of us a cold beer. Even though it compromised my rule about staying a dry boat when racing, that beer sustained us until the finish, which wasn't far off.

Not only did a breeze spring up,

(Continued on page 7)



Some views of the 2006 Bluebird State Championships from the start boat



Race 5: Rounding the mark



Race 5: *Paramour, Tandeka and Secret*



Race 5: *Shadow*



Race 1: *Gaylene*



Shadow coming up to the finish line in Race 3



Moody Blue Race 3



Warranilla & Tandeka, Race 1



A Brief Overview of the 2006 State Championships

The five heats of the State Championships were well supported with a total of eleven yachts competing. Your newsletter editor Louise Avery was there on the scene to help John Erickson on the start boat and to take advantage of the photo opportunity it provided, as recorded in this issue.

Although a convincing series win by the skipper and crew of *Tandeka* (Peter Roberts, Glenn Hall and Doug Otter), they didn't have it all to themselves. My crew and I on *Paramour* managed to take out a win in the second heat being the long 18 mile course. Disappointingly for the crew of *Warranilla*, who were running second for most of this race, they tore their spinnaker, allowing *Tandeka* to pull away from them and take second place.

Meanwhile further back in the fleet some very close racing was recorded with finishing times only seconds apart.

In the final 5th heat, in moderately northerly winds, *Tandeka* and *Warranilla* seemed to be match racing very closely right around the course, until a lucky wind shift and prudent sailing saw *Warranilla* take a commanding lead. This resulted in *Warranilla* earning their first well deserved win.

Tandeka took out wins in heats one, three and four, but were always closely pursued. At different times in the series most of the competitors were seen to be well placed, particularly *Moody Blue* (Mike & Narelle Gray), which by the way gets

my vote for most improved performer, and *Secret* who looked very promising in the third and fourth heats.

The long course race added another dimension to the series and feedback was all positive and enthusiastic. The only disappointment being for the crew of *Bounty* when the Hockings thought they had missed a course mark (outer explosives) which they in fact hadn't and then sailed back looking for it. I'm sure Peter and Bruce will remember that course next summer.

Congratulations are in order to all competitors as enjoyment of the racing is a win in itself and if you were not in the trophy placings, better luck next series.

2006 State Championships Race Results

OVERALL PLACINGS*	Owner	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Race 5	Best 4 placings
1. <i>Tandeka</i>	P. Roberts & G. Hall	1	2	1	1	2	5
2. <i>Warranilla</i>	I. McGrath	5	3	2	2	1	8
3. <i>Paramour</i>	I. Knight	2	1	3	3	3	9
4. <i>Shadow</i>	I. Lewis	3	4	5	4	4	15
5. <i>Moody Blue</i>	M. Gray	6	12	4	5	6	21
6 (equal) <i>Bounty</i>	B. Hocking & P. Hocking	4	8	6	6	8	24
6 (equal) <i>Secret</i>	J. Murphy	8	5	7	7	5	24
8. <i>Revel</i>	W. Norman	7	6	12	12	7	32
9. <i>Gaylene</i>	T. Blunt	9	9	12	12	12	42
10. <i>Jay</i>	R. Blackstock	12	7	12	12	12	43
11. <i>Hanini II</i>	D. Kennedy	10	12	12	12	12	46



Secret's Out: Geelong Race 2006

Australia Day 2006 was hot and windy, blowing at least 25 knots from the north. On board *Secret* we prepared for what we hoped would be a fast trip to Geelong. Before we left the jetty at Hobson's Bay I radioed in as part of the roll call of yachts that were confirming their participation in the race.

We headed out under mainsail alone; passing a catamaran that had lost its mast immediately to the north of Royal Yacht Club. It turned out to be a bad omen! Just when we came level with Point Gellibrand we went about. A wave (they were large) hit the rudder and knocked the tiller out

of my hand and against the side of the cockpit. There did not seem to be that much force in the wave, but the tiller cracked immediately! Although it was not completely broken it was very weak. One of my crew, Kim Ho from Williamstown Sailing Club, lashed the tiller, and that stabilized it considerably. However, there really was no question that we were now out of the race.

We lowered the mainsail and dropped my trusty 4 hp Mercury into the well. I also radioed in to say that we were withdrawing with a broken tiller. I must say it was enormously reassuring to receive an immediate and clear reply, and

to know that if other things went wrong we could immediately summon assistance.

My outboard's work was well and truly cut out for it in these conditions. We literally inched our way back to the north, against the wind and waves which must have been a metre and a half high. Thinking ahead I wondered what else could go wrong. So I placed my brother on the foredeck, ready to let the anchor go if the engine failed at any stage. We were of course in the shipping channel - not a good place under these circumstances. As we tied up again at Hobson Bay Yacht Club I heard a call over the VHF radio from another yacht calling for "urgent assistance".

Jock Murphy

(Continued from page 4)

but a warning was issued over the VHF to expect 50 knots. As we screamed over the finishing line we radioed to be directed towards a mooring so as not to be caught out. The response came back to go and anchor west of the breakwater. Although not the response we were hoping for, it gave me the opportunity to try out the new Saka anchor which held us firmly until the blow had passed over and we were then directed to a berth alongside.

In such a large fleet it's not easy to spot other Bluebirds. Apart from *Warranilla* already mentioned, the only Bluebird to officially finish besides *Paramour*, was *Hannini II* sailed by Dan Kennedy and crew.

Geelong lived up to previous expectations of hospitality with

lots of socialising and eating out in the local restaurants.

Itching for revenge after such a poor handicap result, the next day we headed for the start of the Inner Harbour Race. With only about 30 seconds before the start, another competitor (an H28) who had gone over the start line early sailed back between the starting boat and crowding buoy, then tried to cross our bow on port tack. Even with helm hard over there was no escape from collision. Following the bang to his port quarter, his mizzen mast was seen to topple and he withdrew. Fortunately for us the damage was not structural and we were able to complete the race. The owner of the offending yacht met us on return to our berth to apologise and to take full responsibility for

the damage.

The third race in the series was a long one to the outer harbour and return, with a five hour time limit. It was a very slow race in light winds and drizzling rain. My crew for this race, Andrew Lucas, did a superb job of shy reaching the spinnaker on both the outwar dand return outer harbour legs and we passed just about everything in sight. Luckily the course was shortened and we finished just inside the time limit and fifth on handicap. The trip home the following day was totally windless until the last hour, but at least I was able to give my new outboard motor the recommended running in period.

Will we be there again next year? You bet!



Diary Dates

- ➔ **Presentation Night** **Friday 16 June**
- ➔ **Next Committee Meeting** **Wednesday 9 August**
- ➔ **2006 AGM** **Friday 6 October (tbc)**

2006 Winter Series Dates

Race No	Date	Type
1	Saturday, June 3 rd	non- spinnaker
2	Saturday, June 17 th	spinnaker
3	Saturday, July 1	non- spinnaker
4	Saturday, July 15 th	spinnaker
5	Saturday, July 29 th	non- spinnaker
6	Saturday, August 12 th	spinnaker
7	Saturday, August 26 th	non- spinnaker

Full details of the Series are available in the Notice of Race which will be sent out separately..

PLEASE TAKE NOTE

The Committee will be strictly enforcing the requirement for all race entrants to have completed and submitted a race entry form with payment prior to sailing in Association races. This is for both legal and insurance reasons.

A pre-Series briefing will be held prior to the first race of the Winter Series on 3 June.

Bluebird sightings

This Bluebird was spotted nestled at Cygnet Bay, Tasmania.





For Sale

Drambuie

Just the shot for those thirsting for fun.

For more details please ring **Ivan Knight** on **9398 2177**.

For Sale

- ➔ Bluebird mast and rigging
- ➔ Several sails including spinnaker
- ➔ Rudder and various fittings
- ➔ Ex-Trinket

All offers considered. Please contact **Andrew Rozwadowski**
Ph. 9399 9324

For Sale

Plywood Bluebird 'Jay'

- ➔ Complete and race-ready
- ➔ \$3,000 negotiable

Please contact **Andrew Blackstock**
Ph. 9397 0130

Polo Shirts

Orders are once again being taken for Bluebird Association polo shirts, so if you missed out in the first round or want to order another one, now's your chance.

At \$30 each they are a fashion statement you can't go past.

See order form enclosed with this newsletter for more detail.