

# THE 'UNOFFICIAL HISTORY' OF SAILING AT NCYC



With the publishing of our first 'Sailing Instructions and Courses' Manual, and the start of the Summer Pointscore Series for 2004/2005, sailing races at NCYC are now officially underway.

This then is an appropriate time to give mention to the 'unofficial racing' which has been a regular feature of interest on Newcastle Harbour for the past few years.

Sailing Cruisers have long been aware that having two yachts within sight of each other on an otherwise empty sea constitutes a race.

Obviously, the situation of two yachts in adjoining berths at the very new, and almost empty NCYC Marina, was destined to result in a challenge – 'The Rogues Lane Challenge', in fact. Scott Lawrence voiced the challenge Col Jordan purchased the Rogues Lane Cup; Scott posted the 'Challenge' on the Marina gate (our first Notice of Race), and the race was on!



Scott Lawrence's 'Lady Kara'

Anywhere up to thirteen yachts raced regularly on Monday evenings. The trouble was that everyone wanted to sail. No one wanted to officiate.

Subsequently, Bruce Bragg solved the problem by accepting the role of 'Unofficial Handicapper' for this 'Unofficial Series', on its 'Unofficial Course'. He used purely place penalties, with entirely satisfactory results for all.



Col Jordan's 'Rhiannon'

'Centurion', berthed at the end of D arm, as she was prepared for charter in Queensland, provided a wonderful venue for enthusiastic vocal supporters urging on their favourites during the handicap starts; and cheering home each vessel as it crossed the finish line. Everyone at the marina was involved: power boat owners, yachties, and visitors alike.



'Centurion' hosted our presentations

One particularly memorable and enchanting evening, despite becalming, all vessels continued to race, until eventually, around 9pm, 'Blue Moon' with John Peschar at the helm, silently emerged from the city-light studded velvety darkness.



John Peschar's 'Blue Moon'

Voices echoed eerily over the water as queries were made as to the progress of the rest of the fleet. This race and many more unique experiences made a lasting impression on so many of the visiting sailors who joined us from many far-flung locations.

Some visiting sailors delightedly laid claim to our precious Rogues Lane Cup for a week, eagerly complying with the requirement that each winning skipper arrange and pay for engraving the trophy (with their own bias on the notation of course!)

Lynne, aboard 'Centurion', continued to fine-tune her commercial galley, preparing a variety of sumptuous banquets – and banquets they really were. Garry, fishing while the sailors sailed out to sea, by his antics, provided much entertainment for the crowd, as he provided fresh squid, flathead, and the occasional really huge 'Jewie' to be baked whole. 'The Trawler which got away', is a story to dine out on.



Garry with one that didn't get away!

Marco presided over the raucous presentation ceremonies, attempting to maintain order as the highly prized Rogues Lane Cup was literally prised from the hands of the previous winner, and the crowd erupted in mirth during the speeches. "What can I say!" A statement, not a question.

Ernie's version of protest rules and such, brought howls of laughing objection. There was never a protest to test our "Unofficial" Race Organiser's demand for a carton of beer to go with it.

Gloria's video record of the previous week's highlights, edited to three or four minutes for each race and presentation, was played for the "presentation" crowd of often thirty people, involving regulars and visitors alike. The atmosphere of exuberant festivity was enhanced by the friendly rivalry, which extended to much teasing and laughter.



'Manu Lani II'



The crew of 'Blue Moon'



'Ms Asio'



Ric Bowker's '*Woodstock*'



Bruce Bragg's '*Taratibu*'



Peter Field's '*Mum's Taxi*'

During the course of these true Marina community events, '*Rhiannon*', skippered by Colin Jordan, won the first Summer Series, with an ebullient

Robin Hillery taking out the first Winter Series aboard '*Warrain*'.



True integration of the boating community – Greg and Katy, Skipper and Crew of a Trawler were among our most ardent sailors

Sadly the '*Centurion*' moved north as did the sun. With the shorter days, change of day from Monday to Sunday, and the lack of presentation venue, the Rogues Land Challenge faded into the pages of NCYCs short history, but will remain ever bright in our memories.

The second stage of our 'unofficial' racing history began with the appointment by the Board, of a Sailing Committee. The inaugural Australia Day Cup Regatta followed.



'Ovuka', shown here having had a beauty treatment at Noakes boatyard, prior to Start Boat duties

Warren Amos kindly allowed the use of 'Ovuka' as start boat, with Mick and Maree Eggleston taking the Official Party out to view the race from close quarters.



Gail & Simon's 'Scimitar II'



Peter Hirtes' 'Sea Stallion'



'Fortune of War' takes the Official Party past our sponsors, the Newcastle Brewery



Wally Branson's 'Slapdash'



The Australia Day Cup



Tom Michellis' 'Fast Eddy'



'Noakes Sailing School'



Norm and Gay aboard 'Northerner'

A first Cruising Division Event! What more perfect a destination than beautiful Broughton Island off Port Stephens. Despite having only two entries, NCYC Broughton Island Cruise that was held on the June long weekend 2004 was an unqualified success.

In perfect weather, 'Taratibu' with Bruce and Robyn Bragg aboard, and 'Etosha' crewed by Tony Purkiss and his family, sailed in company for a

relaxed and enjoyable social weekend.



'Etosha' heads for the open sea

The event is programmed to be repeated in 2005 and will be an annual event on our Sailing calendar.

A start boat was purchased, along with a set of signal flags, a horn and stopwatch. Steep learning curves were embarked upon, as records of elapsed times were kept, and a Y.A. Sailing Officer's course attended.

Our stalwarts sailed on with no prize or trophy other than the pleasure of friendly rivalry and the shared joy of time spent on the water.

These elapsed times were eventually processed as a Claytons Series to provide handicaps for the start of our first Official season, and a Claytons pointscore winner, 'Warrain', crewed by her skipper Robin Hillery, and Rob Barrett.