



NEWSLETTER ... FEBRUARY 2002



MELBOURNE TO LAUNCESTON BACK FOR CHRISTMAS 2002

After the successful staging of the Tamar Marine Melbourne to Launceston yacht race in November 2001, the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria has asked the Club to host a similar event this Christmas.

While the general committee was aware of the significance of moving the finish of this race from Devonport to Low Head it was decided to accept the invitation.

The most compelling reason was that the historic Rudder Cup would return to the Tamar

Yacht Club after a break of nearly one hundred years.

As members will be aware, Australia's first

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ocean yacht race was organised by the Royal Geelong Yacht Club and the Tamar Yacht Club in 1907 and sponsored by the American yachting magazine Rudder which provided the trophy.

The wife of the winning skipper of that original race, Mrs E. Newland was aboard the Thistle for the voyage and was so concerned at the safety of competitors in future events that she hid the Rudder Cup "so that yachtsmen might never be tempted to take on such a hazardous venture".

The trophy remained hidden despite infrequent attempts to revive the race until the Newland estate was dispersed in 1969. The Rudder Cup found its way to the ORCV who subsequently decided to allocate it to their Christmas race to Devonport which had been in existence since around 1948.

The Club's involvement in the ORCV's November race was financially break-even and it was thought that the Christmas race would provide an opportunity to promote our Club and sailing on the Tamar in general in a more significant way.

It also provides benefits to the Tamar Valley in promotional opportunities.

A committee headed by Rob Hill will oversee the Club's involvement in the Rudder Cup 2002 which will comprise the Cock of the Bay, the Melbourne to Launceston Yacht Race and a 'King of the Derwent' style race at Beauty Point on Monday, December 30.

As well the Club will be organising a land-based festival to cover the period the yachts arrive and the Monday race.

This event has provisionally been named the Beauty Point Maritime Festival and will use the presence of the racing yachts to showcase the outstanding history and activities of the Tamar River.

We will be involving a wide range of community organisations in this event and already we have attracted a major sponsor and numerous supporting sponsors.

It is worth pointing out that the Tamar Yacht Club can claim to have organised its first regatta in 1839 and is mentioned as being in existence in 1835. Despite the breaks in continuity until 1879 we are working to establish a legitimate claim to being Australia's oldest yacht club.

As co-organiser of the nation's oldest ocean yacht race it should be a source of pride to Club members that the Rudder Cup has returned to the Tamar.

In terms of promotion, the linking of Melbourne and Launceston has powerful historic and commercial significance as most members will be aware.

We expect to be able to announce the naming rights sponsor for the Rudder Cup 2002 in March.

To those many members and helpers who contributed (particularly Ron and Silvia Chandler and Grant Mansfield and Denise from the AMC) to the success of the race in November the committee would like to pay a particular tribute.

It was the reception provided to the race entrants, our facilities at Beauty Point and our general organisation that resulted in the Rudder Cup coming home.

The support of organisations like Tamar Marine, the Australian Maritime College, Port of Launceston Pty Ltd, the West Tamar Council and The Examiner also played a critical roll in the success of the race.

All the above organisations have pledged support for the Rudder Cup 2002 and more to boot.

The Club's organising committee for the 2001 event was chaired by Julian Burgess and comprised David Orpwood, Janette Elmore, Phil Hibbs, Peter Newman, Mitch Ranson, Jim Rogers and Ian Tilley.

The 2002 organising committee is chaired by Rob Hill and comprises David Orpwood, Janette Elmore, Phil Hibbs, Julian Burgess, Peter Newman and Jim Rogers. It is now their job to ensure that we continue the good work!

PS: There are an interesting range of rumours and stories doing the rounds in relation to the Mersey Yacht Club's reaction to losing its Christmas yacht race.

Club commodore Julian Burgess spoke to MYC commodore John Hiscock as soon as the ORCV's decision became public and was assured that relations between the two clubs would not be affected by the ORCV decision. Subsequent dealings have reinforced this assurance.

It is understood that Mersey is now keen to host the ORCV's November race and that it has