

Vintage Yacht Regatta

By Greg Doolan 'Phoenix Star'



After John Richardson from Balamara sang the praises of last year's Vintage Yacht Regatta (VYR) I made sure that Tom Thumb and I were there this year. I wasn't disappointed. The QCYC hosts the VYR each Queens Birthday long weekend and this year 33 yachts and their crews enjoyed 4 races over the weekend. There was a shared passion for classic boats and great camaraderie on and off the water. Big boats were split into pre 1968 Classics (13 boats) and Modern Classics (4 boats), and 16 small boats raced in a single division.

On each of the two racedays there was a triangle course and a windward/leeward course. These courses were quite short but the boats went around 3 times. All boats used the same start/finish line but with the large fleet the bigger boats started 5 minutes earlier and the smaller boats used closer marks for shorter legs.

The use of different course lengths within the same relatively small race area kept the fleet together and added to the atmosphere. Boats were close enough for plenty of upwind crosses and action around the marks. The weather was great for racing with 12 to 15 knots both days which generally suited the older, heavier boats quite well. Although there were only glimpses of sun at least the rain kept away.

It was interesting to see how the handicapping brought boats with very different performances quite close together on the scoreboard. We found a few boats with similar speed to us on the water and it was great being close to them all the way round. So different to SAGS where Tom Thumb spends so much time alone.

There was another big difference to SAGS, where there might only be 3 or 4 legs over 2 or 3 hours. VYR course legs only lasted 5 to 10 minutes and it seemed that no sooner had we got the spinnaker pole up than it was time to take it down again. We hardly had time to get our breath, but it was very exciting. Boy were we tired at the end of each day. Several boats used spinnakers and with the short legs there was a lot of pressure to set and douse these quickly. Not an easy task with inexperienced crews, so it was a great spectacle for the small spectator fleet which included an old life boat (steam powered I think). Reg and I were too busy working Tom Thumb to beat Tern, a Nordic Folk Boat and closest to us in boat speed, to watch much of the action.

Carmen Mira, the young skipper of Tern remarked to me that some of these boats are "achingly beautiful". And she was right, many of the boats were truly gorgeous with a few of the highlights for me being Achernar II, an Alden Ketch, Pagan, a Tasman Seabird and previous Brisbane to Gladstone race winner and of course WMYC's Balamara. Many of the skippers went to a lot of trouble to show their boats off to the best advantage. But this can mean different things to different skippers. For example my efforts in the final week focused on getting Tom Thumb to go faster and point higher (new antifoul, fitting a folding propeller and enlarging and fairing the prop aperture) while the owner of the boat on the hard next to us, Russ Daniels and his gaff cutter, Crackerjack, spent the week cleaning, painting, varnishing and polishing her till she shone. Russ bought Crackerjack as a hulk about to be burnt to recover the lead in her keel and spent 8 years rebuilding her. He did a fabulous job with her internal fit out just as impressive as her exterior.

One extraordinary feat was performed by Alby Jeays and two friends sailing Fiona, a small gaff rigged sailing skiff. A fitting on the mast failed and the boat capsized. The rescue boat raced over to assist but was waved away by her adamant crew who righted the boat, climbed in, bailed her out and jury rigged the sails to get back to the club on their own. The amazing bit - the crew had a combined age over 250 years - Alby is 92 and the other crew in their 80's. I am in awe of these guys - they are my role models.

This is a great weekend and not just for old gaffers. There was a Duncanson, a Cavalier and a Clansman. So if your boat was designed or built before 1983 come along next year for close quarter sailing with "achingly beautiful" boats and great festivities. But note that the Queens Birthday weekend might move to October next year and if it does the QCYC will move the VYR. Stay tuned.



The results were:

Division 1 Line Honours - Large Yachts: pre 1968

1st	Pagan	Peter Kerr	Tasman Seabird	1957 Masthead Sloop
2nd	Tequila	J & J Walker	Williams	1966 Masthead Sloop
3rd	Achernar II	Steve Lugge	Alden	1947 Cutter Rigged Ketch

Division 1 Handicap - Large Yachts: pre 1968

1st	Tequila	J & J Walker	Williams	1966 Masthead Sloop
2nd	Merry Mac	Tony Holm	Clansman	1960 Masthead Sloop
3rd	Pagan	Peter Kerr	Tasman Seabird	1957 Masthead Sloop

Division 2 Line Honours - Small Yachts

1st	Plan B	Bruce Wales	Hartley TS16	1950 Fractional Sloop
2nd	Tom Thumb	Paul Aroney	Frances 26	1975 Masthead Sloop
3rd	Tern	Carmen Mira	Nordic Folkboat	1947 Fractional Sloop

Division 2 Handicap - Small Yachts

1st	Pingu	Dinah Hall	Penguin	Late C20 Gaff Sloop
2nd	Tahua	Rick Humphries	Archie Barber	1939 Masthead Sloop
3rd	Carouse	Michael Franklin	RORC Hartley	1968 Masthead Sloop

Division 3 Line Honours - Large Yachts: Modern Classics

1st	Inisheer	Daniel Farmer	Duncanson 35	1978 Masthead Sloop
2nd	Manitou	Nick Martin	Cavalier 39	1969 Masthead Sloop

Division 3 Handicap - Large Yachts: Modern Classics

1st	Inisheer	Daniel Farmer	Duncanson 35	1978 Masthead Sloop
2nd	Seraya	Hank Kauffman	Kauffman 40	1982 Fractional Sloop
3rd	Manitou	Nick Martin	Cavalier 39	1969 Masthead Sloop

Best Presented Yacht Overall

1st	Seraya	Hank Kauffman	Kauffman 40	1982 Fractional Sloop
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Best Presented Vintage Yacht

1st	Balamara	John Richardson	S&S Design 1245	1957 Masthead Yawl
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Best Presented Gaff Rigged Yacht

1st	Four Winds	Randel		1960 Gaff Ketch
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Best Presented Small Yacht

1st	International Dragon Ivan Holm			1929 Fractional Sloop
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Note: Years above are the year of design, not the year of launching of the individual yacht.



3 boats from WMYC participated and we were well represented in the prizes:

Balamara

5th Line Honours Division 1
6th Handicap Division 1 (On count back from equal 3rd)
1st Best Presented Vintage Yacht

Tom Thumb

2nd Line Honours Division 2
4th Handicap Division 2
Runner Up Best Presented Small Yacht

Carouse

4th Line Honours Division 2
3rd Handicap Division 2