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Racing Penance

Wayne Knill

Practice makes perfect

Pointscore 3 was sailed on an idyllic November's day, with flat seas and a warm gentle breeze. So one just had to smile when hearing John Moffatt's response of, 'Crew training,' when questioned as to why his gybe took five minutes, with the spinnaker wrapping tightly round the forestay in the process. All that additional practice must mean that *Rimfire II* now has the best trained crew in Division II!

★ ★ ★

T-boner

But the best yarn of the day concerns our intrepid safety officer, Collin Todd (Just call me 'Toddle'), who may have to rethink his new method of random-applied buoyancy tests if the carnage at the start of Pointscore 3 is anything to go by.

Toddle was off to a roaring start in his yacht *Trick Cyclist*, but was forced on to port tack to avoid hitting the starting line pin. Should be no worries, as a quick glance around confirmed that the other yachts nearby were on port tack already. The only problem was that as Toddle hurled *Trick Cyclist* on to port, Darryl Emery was tacking *Resurrection* back on to starboard. The collision occurred before anyone could realise, and the bow of *Trick Cyclist* was embedded six inches into *Resurrection's* side. Both yachts remained locked together for close to a minute, which was long enough for Darryl to explain politely to Toddle the finer points about his parentage.

The post mortem was conducted at the bar. Of course an apologetic Toddle was shouting the drinks. Ted Sanderson, *Resurrection's* distinctive crew member, who does everything but is responsible for nothing, jokingly told Toddle that the force of the impact was so great he got a whiplash. 'That's impossible, Ted,' Toddle replied, eyeing Ted's generous frame, 'You need to have a neck.'

It was Darryl (or Dawwell to his crew) who served up the last laugh at the Squadron

barbecue the following Friday evening. As all the diners were tucking into their rump steak, Toddle was left to ponder the significance of his specially prepared T-bone!

★ ★ ★

A Minties moment

It can happen so easily! A split second's indecision cost Alan Smith, skipper of the *Etchell Hyjacker*, his mast during the start of Pointscore 4 in December. Seconds before the starting gun, Alan was driving for the line on port tack while *Crews Control* was bearing down on starboard. Alan was not unduly concerned, for by his estimate he was comfortably in front... to just in front... to maybe... Oh, hell! *Hyjacker* took evasive action to duck behind *Crews Control* at the last second. As the wind pressure was temporarily stolen from their sails, *Hyjacker* stood upright. At the same instant, *Crews Control* heeled over as the sheets were hardened in response to the starting gun. The tips of both masts hooked together, and in the blink of an eye *Hyjacker's* mast was turned into a walking stick.

The slow sail home left Alan to ponder the cost of one broken mast, one torn mainsail, and one wind indicator from the top of *Crews Control's* mast which now resembled some form of modern sculpture.

PS Double takes all round next Saturday when *Hyjacker* lined up for the start as though nothing had happened. In just a few days Alan and crew Dennis Fearnley had located, repaired and fitted a second-hand Etchell spar in order to be sailing again by the following weekend. They may not have been first over the line, but the effort to get back out there and compete meant they were winners anyway!

★ ★ ★

The Walrus vs The Great White

To escape the hustle and bustle of city life, *Stunned Mullet's* helmsman Tim Campion likes to unwind with his family at their holiday shack at Port Vincent. Tim's other favourite pastime is fishing. At the first opportunity he loads up his

17-foot runabout with the essentials, and with the outboard motor wailing blasts of to one of his secret fishing hotspots.

One day our hero chose a location near the Orontes beacon. To relieve the boredom of just bobbing around, the esky lid was periodically opened and closed. All lines were cast and a net full of burley hung lazily in the water, drifting on a line a few metres astern.

It was getting towards the end of the day and it was time to head in. No fish to speak of, but the multitude of empty cans rolling around the bottom of the boat bore testament to another successful expedition. There was a bit of commotion in a nearby boat, with some frantic activity and excited voices. The word 'Shark!' drifted across... Probably just a small bronze.

Suddenly the stern of the boat dipped. Tim looked back to see the outline of a *huge* shark tugging on the burley bag. Tim leaped to the bow with the speed and agility that sheer terror will bestow. At least this kept the boat balanced, although the stern was in danger of being pulled under water, swamping the boat. As the shark started to thrash, the anchor dislodged and the dinghy proceeded backwards at tremendous speed. From Tim's perch on the bow, the beast could now be clearly seen, with its fin and tail breaking the surface. You know it is a big one when it has a girth like a 44-gallon drum.

With another angry thrash of its head the burley line snapped and all was quiet. Wasting no time, Tim got the motor going and scrambled back to shore. Luckily, at the end of the day, the only damage was to the burley bag and Tim's undies.

SG

ENTRAPMENT BY POWER FAILURE

Entry to and exit from the Squadron premises require use of a swipe card or verbal contact with a member of staff to activate the electrically operated gates. In light of media reports highlighting the inevitability of power cuts in SA, it is timely to inform Members of the impact of a power cut at the Squadron which will affect the operation of the gates. During office hours, the gates will be opened manually by the staff, so Members need not be concerned about entering or leaving the grounds. After hours, however, the gates will be inoperable from outside the grounds unless Julian Murray is present and has opened the gate for the duration of the cut. Members inside the property will be able to leave once Julian is aware of the problem and opens a gate. Julian can be contacted on 8341 8600 or at the cottage adjacent to the Clubhouse.

The loss of MY Gelka

Jack Wood



Jack Wood wearing the distinctive Gelka cap, with the ship's insignia.

While there is a chance of saving the ship, be it big or little, it is the duty of sailor and pilot and every man in his station to work zealously to that end, but when once the sea has overwhelmed it, zeal is in vain.

Demosthenes BC385-322

Edited from *Seacraft* May 1957: 36.

On 26th January 1955, I was unfortunate enough to be an amateur skipper of a motor yacht which exploded, caught fire and sank in twenty fathoms of water, about six miles from the nearest point of land.

Professor ML Mitchell bought *Gelka* in England and had her shipped to Outer Harbor, where she arrived on 27 January 1927 as deck cargo aboard the Australian Commonwealth Line cargo ship *Ferndale*. She was built in 1910 by White Bros, Southampton, for the German Consul at Dover, and after impressment into the Royal Navy was sold as wartime booty. Built of wood, she was 55 ft long, with a beam of 10 ft 6 in and a draft of 4 ft 6 in. She was rigged as a ketch, but the sails were of limited value, usually only to try to reduce an unpleasant roll in a beam sea. Seafarers of Port Adelaide refitted her just before her end.

The engine room of *Gelka* housed an old 55 horsepower Parsons marine engine, which started on petrol and then ran on kerosene. The engine was in first-class condition, having recently been overhauled by a marine engineer of the same vintage, who deplored the 'screaming monstrosities' that powered boats of the present day. It had both magneto and battery ignition, with two sets of spark plugs. Fuel was stored in two 100-gallon tanks on either side of the engine. There was also a two-horsepower Lister lighting plant of 32 volts and its accompanying batteries, which was kept in a lead-lined box on the port side of the engine. A 12-volt generator ran off the engine for the starting batteries.

The engine room was amidships. It was originally waterproof and fireproof, as at each end there was a steel bulkhead. The only entrance was from on deck, through a hatch in the skylight and down a steel ladder. Unfortunately, however, an old paid hand who looked after the yacht in the early days and kept her in immaculate condition, was reputed to get a little tired of pumping her out from three positions. To remedy this he knocked lubber holes in the bulkheads, so he had to use only one pump.

There were two ventilators to the engine room, one on either side of the wheelhouse, which admitted air to the front of the engine. The amount entering depended on the velocity of the wind and the speed of the ship. [See cover]

Accommodation forward of the engine comprised first the skipper's cabin, with a passageway alongside it, then the forecabin, which was entered through a wooden bulkhead, then the head and chain locker. Access to the forward part of the ship was through the wheelhouse and down a hatch on the foredeck. Aft of the engine room bulkhead was a large saloon, a galley and an aft cabin with two bunks. Entrance to these was by a sliding hatch to the galley and a hatch aft to the main cabin.

Professor Mitchell had a holiday house on Strawbridge Point at American River. Each summer a group of amateurs, often drawn from his Department of Biochemistry at Adelaide University, took *Gelka* there as a base to go fishing in the area.

ONLY 6 SALES TO GO FOR PROJECT TO COMMENCE!

Marina Stage III Expression of Interest

The Management Committee seeks expressions of interest from Members for the purchase of marina licenses. The anticipated site for the new berths would replace chain mooring rows B & C and they are likely to extend from the north bank and as far south as necessary. For stage 3 to be cost effective, the number of berths needed is 15. Expressions of interest are to be sent to the General Manager indicating the type and size of vessel to be moored and whether you prefer a single or double berth. A 25% deposit is required for confirmation of interest.