

DRAMA AND EXCITEMENT ON *RIMFIRE II*

The 2011 Adelaide to Port Lincoln Blue Water Classic

The skipper and crew of *Rimfire II* combined to provide the SQ with an account of their experiences during this years' fairly willing Adelaide to Pt Lincoln race.

Excitement and tension mounted as the competitors sailed out to the line to form up for the start of the PLYC Lexus 2011 Adelaide to Port Lincoln Blue Water Classic, hosted this year by the CYCSA. Much joking, laughter and teasing had occurred amongst rival crew members of both clubs, as always, over lunch just prior to the start. Adrenalin mixed with anticipation; little did they know what lay ahead in this year's race.

As the crew of *Rimfire II* motored out to the start, our crusty old salt Skipper, John Moffatt, with that evil chuckle of his, vowed to beat his even crustier long time rival Jimmy Howell on *Sunburst*.

An hour or two into the race, the remnants of the cyclone coming down from the Northern Territory started to impact the conditions as winds were building up around 25 knots with rain setting in that crept inside the wet weather gear of many crew members. The crew of *Rimfire II* were handling the severe race conditions with an unusual spinnaker run from the start, achieving speeds up toward 15 knots. Other boats were rounding up and faced with ripped spinnakers. The crew counted 6 torn within a 20 minute period, including one of our rivals, *Sunburst*. The carnage was to impact the whole race and inevitably the end result.



John Moffatt receives his trophy from Rob Mundle

Between the scheds the radio crackled with reports of damage and injury, 2010 Sydney to Hobart Winner *Secret Men's Business* had two crew go overboard, Steve Kemp of PLYC and the Channel 10 reporter, *Quarante Deux* had pulled out with damage and *Kookaburra* with an injury. The damaged boats began heading for the safe refuge of Edithburgh and Port Vincent, deeming it too dangerous to continue. Visibility became nonexistent and the other competitors could no longer be seen. *Rimfire* sailed off into the mist.

Eric Trench, mainsheet hand on *Rimfire II*, described the carnage; "boats were ripping spinnakers all around us. We were the lucky ones, although we nearly lost Veteran Sydney to Hobart Yachting identity David Leslie, star of SBS documentary "Disabled Bodied Sailors" overboard". He went on to say "The speed of the wind picked up and was such we couldn't control our spinnaker, the boat was almost horizontal. David was almost knocked over the side into the treacherous waters; he clung perilously to the side while Pat Engels and I put our own lives in danger to drag him to safety."

Fellow crew member Kathy Kuchel said, "While all this was going on the rest of us had clipped on and held on for dear life. Thank God for the good seamanship of our Skipper and fellow crew, we got our spinnaker down, things back under control, popped the bulletproof spinny and off we went to once again pass our competitors. We were now clocking up to 12 knots, and all *Rimfire* lost was a \$10 shackle on the foredeck and a fair bit of time!"

Kathy went on to say, "Just goes to show how a spinnaker run can get out of control so easily. We were on a high for a while there when good ol' *Rimfire* was powering along – catching up to, then right on the tail of, Melbourne to Hobart winner *Enchantress*." This was short lived when *Enchantress* pulled away after our drama. They saw the whole dilemma at very close quarters and were quick to point it out at the Pt Lincoln Jetty as we arrived after racing for 21.5 hrs. *Enchantress* finished in 1 hr 32 mins ahead of us. They were in fine form once again. But we did beat Jimmy over the line by 40 mins...he he. .

Some boats were not so lucky. *Koolaburra* crew member Carol Haslam later reported. "Just got back from Port Vincent - we had a dreadful journey over there, nursing our injured crewman who could hardly sit up without being held, meant we were two crew down. He was out cold for several minutes, so it was very upsetting. We thought he had broken his neck. Paul has a serious head injury, concussion and suspected broken ribs. We had to try and sail the boat through 25+ knots of wind with everyone in the cockpit because we couldn't get him downstairs, trying to tack the boat without causing him undue stress..... Horrific! It took nearly 6 hours to get there."

"We had an ambulance waiting for him at the marina, and then he was transported to RAH where a cat scan has shown a fractured skull and bleeding on the brain." "Glad to be home today, safe, dry and well." Only days before Carol and the writer had been laughing and discussing the upcoming Lincoln Race and a future trip to a sailing regatta on the French Riviera.

As the 42 Racing Division Yachts who made it into Lincoln arrived, a sausage was eagerly wolfed down at the jetty and followed with the always welcome reward of a slab of beer, the celebrations ensued!! Though tired and a little washed out from the long journey, it was off to the Grand Tasman Hotel for yet another cleansing ale, dinner and lots of storytelling. Finally the crew of *Rimfire II* drifted off to gain some well earned rest in preparation for the big Presentation 'Party Day' on Sunday. The main event!

The rain had finally dissipated, the sun shone as the competitors, family and friends gathered at the Port Lincoln Yacht Club to hear the results. Dogs played along the shoreline while everyone told their tall tales of the high seas, soaked up the atmosphere enjoying the camaraderie, music, food, lots of beer and wine. All the while glad to be back on solid ground, until the next time...of course!!

This year's Lincoln race was a true testament to the resilience, physical and mental toughness of the sailing fraternity, from the bigwigs all the way to the little guy. And we'll come back and do it all again next year!

Results:-

Division 1 - The usual suspects. They always win everything. So we won't mention them here in favour of the unsung heroes. However we must mention *Enchantress* - J Muirhead & J Willoughby - RSAYS, 5th on Handicap.

Division 2 - A great result and cheers could be heard from all the crew; 1st across the line *Rimfire II* - John Moffatt - RSAYS; 1st on Handicap - *Locomotion* - Peter Hall - CYCSA; 2nd on Handicap - *Rimfire II* - John Moffatt; 3rd on Handicap - *Sunburst* - Jimmy Howell - RSAYS, also receiving an honorary mention for the 'Most Senior Skipper'.

Cruising Division - 1st on Handicap - *VeLoce* - Steve Perkins - CYCSA; 2nd on Handicap - *My Love II* - Albert Watson - RSAYS; 3rd on Handicap - *Milou* - John Sibly - CYCSA.

Multihull Division - 1st on Handicap - *Tearaway* - Geoff Kneebone - RSAYS; 2nd on Handicap *Hawkeye* - Peter Hawker - RSAYS; 3rd on Handicap *Hasta La Vista* - Gerald Valk - RSAYS.



Crew of *Rimfire II* Adelaide to Lincoln Race (1st across the line, 2nd on Handicap - DIV 2)

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