

Cavalcade

Spring 2015

What a uniquely satisfying experience it was on Saturday 12 September to be sailing in our first race of the 2015/16 Program on a perfect spring day in Sydney. A light north east breeze, clear blue water, sparkling sunshine and the knowledge that our long and very cold winter was now a thing of the past. I do however always counsel my wife who, at the first sign of a warm day in September, puts the heaters away and takes all the blankets off the beds going against my consistent advice that they should stay in place as we always get one or two cold snaps between now and mid October as witnessed by the weather during the week of 21 September when it definitely went back to winter. I can clearly remember some years back sitting huddled in front of the radiator in early November wearing a tracksuit and long socks.

Our sailing fleet for this season is now down to 7 entrants with the loss of U2 (temporarily only we hope) to the racing fleet with Brian McConachy selling the boat to our new member Andrew McPherson to allow Brian to concentrate upon sailing in the super 30 division. A courageous decision as Sir Humphrey Appleby would say. We do, of course, wish Brian and David Harvey and his crew all the best in their new venture, it will be interesting to hear from them how the racing compares with our fleet.

It would be great to see two very fine boats recently changing hands, U2 and CavSav return to the racing fleet in due course.

We had our second race of the season on Saturday, 26 September, a much cooler affair weatherwise with a moderate south east breeze. The SASC has reconfigured course "O" with the first windward mark now being naval buoy no. 2 instead of the white SASC rounding mark off Garden Island. For those of you like me who get the naval buoys in the harbour confused, it is the big white naval buoy about 150 metres north west of Clarke Island. Whilst our fleet is down to 7 entrants having had two races now, it is in my opinion still a viable and enjoyable racing program. You can have a very enjoyable race against 6 other boats! Races within a race develop and even though you may not be leading the pack, it is always enjoyable and challenging to have a close tussle with another competitor or two around the course.

The 2015/16 racing season marks 20 consecutive years for Blind Justice in the Cav 28 division. Whilst 20 consecutive seasons is a solid performance by any account, it is clearly overshadowed by Rod and Craig Mitchell in Centaurus and Andrew Christian in Christina 3

who would have clocked up 31 or 32 consecutive seasons! That is a truly remarkable effort. I am aware that there are a number of other boats out there that would have raced with the division fairly consistently from 1983/84 onwards and I would be very interested to know if there are any other boats out there that would have clocked up more than 20 consecutive seasons.

1995 seems a long time ago now and it is a pity that we seem to have lost most of those who were racing at the time. Names such as Trikiere Bay, Whisperer, Marabou, Joka, Cava, Antares, Cavort, and Ariki come to mind as boats that we raced against in our first season in 1995. In those days as a newcomer to the division, I always felt a degree of quiet satisfaction in just finding our way around the course, in one piece without hitting anything and having the crew still talking to one another at the end of the race! Despite the passage of the years, I still find the whole process of maintaining the boat in good racing condition, maintaining a relatively permanent crew and honing one's own skills as still extremely satisfying and rewarding. I don't think anyone would find the start of a race boring and approaching a downwind mark with a port hand spinnaker flying and a herd of other boats heading for the same mark on starboard is wonderful tonic for clearing the mind of all thoughts of difficult clients, fractious children and worries about how you're going to get the money together to pay the ATO!

Our spring season concludes with Race No. 7 on 12 December and the summer points score resumes with Race No. 8 on 16 January next.

At our last AGM in late July a number of issues were discussed including the venue for the annual prize giving and dinner.

Whilst the function at the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club in May this year went down splendidly, it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening and it was certainly extremely good value moneywise, the mood of the meeting was to revert the function back to the RSY for the dinner next year. The major factors determining this decision were the very large and heavy burden placed upon the President in having to physically assist the caterers with transport by water as well as the setting up and cleaning up of the premises. Additionally access to and from the club particularly at night is not easy not only with stairs but parking issues and the ever present threat of inclement weather making the long journey up and down the stairs not only potentially a wet one but possibly dangerous due to wet and slippery conditions.

The decision was no reflection at all upon the SASC with whom we have excellent relationships and indeed as a token of our appreciation for use of the premises, a donation of \$500 was made to the club. On a barmy summer's evening the venue at the SASC is magical however, on a wet cold night in May the security and warmth of the Squadron has a

distinct advantage. In any event, there will be further news about the annual dinner/prize giving in due course.

Our division has 5 races scheduled for the summer series plus the State championships weekend in March. In addition, a match racing day has been pencilled in for 6 December to be confirmed in due course. The match racing concept sounds extremely interesting as it will be a series of races between 6 boats, each boat racing against all competitors over a short course with no spinnakers. If you enjoy the excitement of the start this is the day not to be missed. More details later. Save the date.

On a final note, I will do my usual bit and remind members of some maintenance issues which as time goes by become more relevant as the years pass by for our fleet of boats. Bearing in mind the fact that the bulk of the fleet was constructed during the 1980s there are a few timely matters to be considered:

1. U bolts: There has in the past been a number of incidents where U bolts have failed. For peace of mind we had ours replaced a year or two ago. Not a huge job. You can do it yourself or have a rigger attend to it. The Ronstan RF544 appears to be the ones originally used. There appears to be no difficulty in securing replacements. A bit of peace of mind if you're off the Heads in a moderate breeze.
2. Rudders: The fleet has experienced one or two rudder failures over the years again, for peace of mind, we had ours replaced 4 or 5 years ago. We had one of the old Spitfire Wing rudders (still can't believe how big and heavy they are) with a carbon fibre square ended rudder. Considerably lighter and seems to give better grip in heavy weather going up wind.
3. Masthead: Easily forgotten, sitting up there out of sight and out of mind, however sheaves do wear out and it is better to have it inspected periodically and replacements made as required rather than finding out during the middle of a race that your spinnaker or headsail will not cooperate in going up when asked to do so.

With daylight saving now with us my thoughts turn to lovely afternoons on a Thursday taking BJ out with a few guests for a light cruise up and down the harbour under headsail only with some nice snacks and a glass or two of crisp riesling or a delicate chardonnay. It is amazing how quiet the harbour is on a Thursday night. Quite often we find ourselves the only boat on the harbour. If the conditions are right, it is magical. Unlike many modern yachts which have small headsails and large mains, a Cav 28 gets along very nicely thank you under headsail only.

Best wishes to all association members for the rest of the spring season and you'll hear from me via a summer addition of Cavalcade in due course. It is too early to be wishing people happy Christmas however on behalf of the Cav 28 Committee, we extend to all members our best wishes and hopes for enjoyable and safe sailing.

Stephen O'Halloran
Secretary, Cav 28 Association