

# Baggywrinkles

Volume 2012, Issue 2

May 2012

## ***PRESIDENT'S LOG***

It is that time of the year, with the close of the sailing events calendar, when we start to reflect on the strength of the Old Gaffers Association and what we need to achieve at the next Annual General Meeting to keep the organisation strong. From my perspective having OGA participate strongly in the successful Retro Series of races is one of the keys. The Retro Series organisers did a splendid job again this year, and were very accommodating of OGA yachts and competitors. OGA members responded well to that, as there were more gaffers who entered the races than there were non-gaffers.

So it seems to me that OGA's future strength can be enhanced by reaching out to other like-organisations (classic boats in general) to get the benefits of synergies. If OGA can keep a high profile at the South of Perth wooden boat festival race; the Commodores Cup and the Retro Series then we will have done well as an Association.

The end-of-season OGA Regatta was also, by its success, a key plank in what OGA does. The challenge now is to find the successor to Charles Knight as the secretary of that important event, so that we continue to build on that success.

I take this opportunity to thank Charles and Christine for all they have done for OGA over the years, and on behalf of OGA wish them both well in their move to Queensland.  
**Owen**

## ***Regatta runs out of puff***

**"The Fifteenth Anniversary OGA Swan River Regatta attracted fewer boats than was hoped for and even less wind", said Regatta Secretary Charles Knight.**

Sailed from Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2012, this lack of wind is a seasonal hazard in early May, but as the event is squeezed between the close of the river clubs' sailing season and the start of the power boat time-trialling season, there is little other time available on the sailing calendar.

Once again the 'couth fleet at RFBYC failed to appear, however, apparently only three or four regularly compete in club events anyway, and as soon as the season is over boats go into maintenance (or maybe even hibernation). Whatever the reason, the lack of participation of the largest gaff rigged fleet in Perth is a concern for the event and some have even questioned continuing to hold the regatta at RFBYC. However, it is a convenient

and central location on the river, the views of racing from the lawns are stunning and the staff and club volunteers have always been a helpful and hospitable lot. The regatta is already booked at the club for May 5<sup>th</sup> in 2013 and as usual RFBYC will apply for the water space approval from Swan River Racing.  
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*Weedy Sea Dragon*

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PRESERVING AND  
PROMOTING  
THE GAFF RIG

## Regatta continued from page one

Once again the entrants were invited to set their own handicaps at the race briefing, a method which establishes much banter between the crews and is intended to absolve the organisers of any post-race criticism. But the entrants are really too generous with each other and the resultant handicaps are usually wide of the mark. Next year it might be an idea if the organisers gave some guidance in this respect, based on elapsed times from this year's regatta if the weather is much the same.



*Nell's* skipper David Perlman receives the President's Trophy from Vice-president Brian Phillips

In the 'A' fleet for large gaffers only two boats fronted the start line, *Thera*, John Fitzhardinge and *Taru*, Chris Bowman. These two boats sailed an almost identical race to last year, with metres only separating them at the half way point but *Thera* managing to lose *Taru* over the final legs of the course. First and fastest went to *Thera* (the previous holder of the trophy) by 10 minutes on handicap.

In the 'B' fleet for medium gaffers five boats started with *Nell*, David Perlman holding out *Hebe*, Rowan Chick by 3 seconds on handicap to take first and fastest with



The winning crew of *Thera*, Mark and John Fitzhardinge, flanking the Fastest Gaffer Trophy

## Wayne Poulson (*Billy Goat*) and Brian

*Bicton Belle*, Barry Glazier coming third. The remaining boats to finish were *Genevieve*, Rory Argyle followed by *Rana*, Mike Beck.

'C' fleet, for small gaffers, saw the largest fleet with 7 entrants. This is where the growth of the OGA numbers has to come from because people are not building large gaffers any more. Initially it was thought that four sea scout boats would appear but on the day only one, *Sea Wind*, Max Godfrey made it. Another notable entrant was *Thermopylae*, an original 12 ft cadet dinghy skippered by Simon Dawkins. Unfortunately, light winds are not to this boat's liking at all.



First and fastest in 'C' fleet was *Kailani*, James Bennet followed two and a half minutes later on handicap by *Weedy Sea Dragon*, Tony O'Connor with *Billy Goat*, Wayne Poulson 50 seconds further back. Other finishers in order were *Wee Birlinn*, Jim Black, *Scrumpy*, Ian Garvin, *Thermopylae* and *Sea Wind*.



Ethan Prieto-Low "D" Fleet winner

'D' fleet is for non-gaffers but wooden boats with a distinguished pedigree. Three H28's from South of Perth Yacht Club joined a Dragon in this fleet, the latter, *Gustel XI*, John Low taking first and fastest from *Georgina*, Colin Youngs. The remaining H28's retired.

## Brian and John Fitzhardinge *Thera*







V-P Brian presents the "D" Fleet First and Fastest Trophy to John Low and Ethan Prieto-Low

Two additional trophy's were awarded, a 'Spirit of the Regatta' trophy won by *Georgina*, Colin Youngs for continuing to compete despite her two H28 companions heading for home before it got dark, and *Sea Wind*, Max Godfrey who won the trophy for the first boat home with an 'all under 16' youth crew. They made it to the finish line just before the time limit expired with the tide helping move the boat faster than the wind.

All skippers received a special medallion struck to mark the 15th anniversary of this regatta.



Brian with the crew of the Sea Scout boat *Sea Wind*, winner of the Doug Rickman trophy for the first boat crewed by under 16-year-olds. The skipper, Max Godfrey, is closest to V-P Brian.



Brian with Rowan Chick, *Hebe*, and David Perlman, *Nell*



RFBYC start box crew with their 15th Anniversary Regatta Medallions



Winners of "C" Fleet, James and Belinda Bennet, *Kailani*, with V-P Brian



Brian with Colin Young, winner of the Spirit of the Regatta Trophy

## Acknowledgement

All regatta pictures are courtesy of Paul Rickets.

## Persistent Barry breaks through

One of the keenest sailors on the river is the skipper of *Bicton Belle*, Barry Glazier. It is a rare weekend that does not see him competing in one event or another.

A stalwart of the OGA over many seasons he has fought hard over the past five years to overcome either his handicap or fierce competition from *Hughies' Girl*, Brian Phillips or *Hebe*, Rowan Chick, to win the Consistency Trophy.

This year he achieved it! By sailing in the Retro Fleet with persistence and consistency, which is what this trophy is all about, Barry finally pulled it off. His handsome trophy and a plaque to attach to *Bicton Belle* were awarded at the OGA Regatta presentations. Congratulations, Barry.

Mention should also be made of Barry's no mean feat of winning outright the Swan River Retro Yacht Series Trophy.



*Bicton Bell* skipper Barry Glazier receives the OGA Consistency Trophy for 2012 from Vice-President Brian Phillips at the OGA Regatta day held on May 6th at RFBYC.

## Old Gaffers at Albany

Where do dedicated Old Gaffers go to at Easter time? ALBANY!

Via our esteemed President Owen an invitation was received from the Albany Festival of the Sea to join them on Easter Saturday for a 'maritime event'. The end result was that 10 members of the OGA (5 couples – see below photo) and one well travelled boat in *Karina* made the trip south.

Much to our surprise we were then treated like visiting royalty! The simple effort of making an appearance and offering tacit support to the event resulted in our being afforded every assistance during the day and being invited to the end-of-day barbecue. This was put on for the local volunteer officials, and despite the fact that we had done nothing other than sit around drinking wine and sampling the local delicacies all day, we were accorded the privileged status of official volunteers. A free meal of 'kicking-fresh' shark fillets, a local bun and unlimited choice of local wine, beer or cider—and the T-shirt—is one heck of a way to finish a relaxing day by the sea.

The shed in which the event was held has a close attachment to one of our OGA members in Brian Phillips. It was originally used to build the *Dyffen* in Fremantle and was then relocated to Albany as the intended base for a boat building school. Brian worked on the *Dyffen* and was one of those subsequently invited to consider heading up the boat building school which did not eventuate. He did leave one memento in the shape of a whaleboat, two of which were constructed as part of the original boatshed project. Brian was mentor to the TAFE students who built them. One is still located at Albany and we were invited to row it around the new marina which now protects the foreshore buildings from the elements. An authentic, American-design whaleboat looks light and graceful from the shore, and apparently sails very well, but they are in fact hard work to row with long, heavy sweeps. Get out of synch with the timing and the end result is always a painful blow in the small of the back from the rower behind.

Albany at Easter was full of events with classic car shows, the two regular markets, the Wooden Boat Festival and myriad smaller events such that it was jam packed. The caravan park where six of us stayed bulged at the seams. Restaurants in the town were so full that one evening it took three attempts to find one that could take the six of us together. The weather was superb and those of us lucky enough to be spending a week there (most of us as it turned out – ain't retirement wonderful) thoroughly enjoyed not only the stay but the chance to chat and spend time together.

A special mention has to be made of Wally and Shirley Cook. These two inveterate travellers (who is aware that *Karina* has sailed on the Murray River in SA?) brought their boat to Albany and located it in front of the boatshed where it added a special touch to the event. As the tide went in and out the boat floated or not, and it narrowly avoided demolition during the mayhem that was the "build a boat in a day and prove it can float" event. Some of the craft that went to sea, constructed by local youth groups, almost defied description.

We have promised to support Albany again next year. Put it in your diary – it is a lot of fun.



Front: Muriel, Shirley, Karel, Mary, Christine.  
Back: Colin, Wally, Alan, Mike, Charles



## 'WEE BIRLINN' IN STARRING ROLE

The OGA had been approached by Louise Brady of KM Films who are making a documentary about the aboriginal warrior Yagan and were looking for an 1840s "settlement period" boat to be used in the filming, for Yagan's transportation to, and then escape from, Carnac Island. It was suggested that my Oughtred Ness Yawl *Wee Birlinn* might be suitable.

Louise came round to see the boat, seemed impressed, took a few photos including a couple of me (!), said she would talk to the director, and before I knew it, it was on. Suddenly I was committed and so I then had to find out what I had really let myself on for!

The first challenge was location: the "Carnac" beach scenes were to be shot at a location where the whole film unit could be located (and which was not overrun by snakes!), so they had decided on the bay on the western side of Point Peron. This was certainly a very suitable-looking bay with good, but hidden, road access but it had one rather major drawback that nobody on the production team seemed to have noticed - it is almost impossible to get a boat in there through the outlying reefs! After viewing the location for myself and then discussion with one of Rockingham Sea Rescue's skippers who said "well I wouldn't bloody take a boat in there", I advised KM Films that it might be wise to consider an alternative! This they did, and we ended up filming those scenes at "Pig Trough" bay on the north eastern corner of Garden Island courtesy of the Royal Australian Navy.



The next, and unexpected, step was "wardrobe" as it was decided that my crew Kim and I would have to be dressed as soldiers, so we had a fitting session where we were both kitted out with two sets of uniforms, one for the beach scenes and a larger one to cover our lifejackets when we were filming off Carnac. I have to admit it rather went against the grain as a Scotsman, to be dressed as a Redcoat but as they say, the show must go on!

Then all I had to do was dress *Wee Birlinn* for her part: remove the sail numbers, tape over the name, replace plastic bucket with galvanised pail (yes, I had one!), and rig a good tow line as there would likely be a lot of towing that day to get from location to location on schedule. All that remained then was to check the forecast (perfect!) and early to bed for an early start.



And early start it was: Thursday 26 April 2012, up at 0430, boat hitched up and ready to roll at 0530, arriving at Swan Yacht Club at 0600 for wardrobe, makeup (yes!), meet the cast, and then breakfast. Just as I was standing by the boat finishing my breakfast, an early morning walker stopped to chat and it turned out to be Wayne Poulsen, the owner of a Goat Island Skiff, who had lost touch with the OGA some time ago. He scribbled his email address on the back of an old parking ticket, I sent him the details of the OGA regatta, he entered on the day and took off third prize in Class C; a good result all round!

Then it was round to the Leeuwin launch ramp, rig, launch, de-rig to fit camera at top of mizzen, re-rig, meet the camera boat and the first escort / tow boat (DOT). After some thought, and although the wind was very light and we could have really done with full sail, we tucked in one reef and hoisted the rig to full

height to give maximum clearance under the main boom for both visual and safety reasons. The young aboriginal actors then came on board in neck irons and chains (really made you think what it must have been like for them), cameraman too for some close ups, and we cast off and sailed up and down the river above the bridges while the scene was set and the plot narrated. This was followed by a tow down to mid harbour where we were filmed against a background of container ships; not quite sure how that fits in to the 1840s story, but that's art for you.

On completion of the harbour scenes, the production crew headed back up river for transfer of the whole film unit to Garden Island while the cast were transferred on to a Fremantle Sea Rescue boat which then towed us all the way out towards Carnac. After some experimentation I can tell you that a Ness Yawl will tow very comfortably at 7.5 knots, but not any faster. The tow was a chance for Kim and I to loosen our uniforms, pour a cup of coffee and have a quick snack while sharing the steering. Then it was actors on board again, cast off the tow, sails up and head towards Carnac while being filmed from a helicopter. The cameraman was giving me directions by radio but it was a bit hard to comply at times as the wind had fallen so light that we hardly had steerage way, but somehow we managed, the helicopter flew off and we were then towed down to Garden Island for BBQ lunch followed by shooting of all the beach scenes.

*Continued page 6*

### *Starring Role continued*

I lost count of the number of times I rowed us in to that beach while we were filmed from every conceivable angle, but eventually the director was satisfied and we took a short break while planning the "escape" scenes.



The idea was that Yagan and his compatriots would run down the beach, leap on board, grab the oars as paddles and Yagan would be seen as trying to unfurl the sails as they disappeared from the shore. That was all very well, but how to bring the boat back in again when none of them had any boating skills whatsoever? (The lads had even taken Quells for the Carnac shoot; having spent most of my sailing life in small open boats I tend to forget just how challenging it can look to a novice.) We solved the problem by having me lie in the bottom of the boat under a hessian sack, with the radio; then every time the director shouted "cut" I popped my head up, grabbed the oars and rowed us back to shore for another take. I certainly got plenty of rowing exercise that day!

Back to the beach, shooting over for the day, the sun going down, we all packed up and took the last tow back over to Woodman's Point where Louise had brought my car and trailer round. So we recovered the boat, tied her down and headed home. I put her away in the boatshed (garage) with the promise of a good wash and polish the next morning, and settled down to supper and a well earned glass or two of red. A long day but a great one; something quite different and one I shall remember for a long time.

The Yagan drama documentary is due to be shown on the ABC some time in 2013.

Photos courtesy of Paul Ricketts and KM Films.

Jim Black

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**Old Gaffers Association  
Annual General Meeting  
Tuesday, July 24th  
East Fremantle YC  
1930 hrs**

### *A few Regatta photos from Paul Ricketts's gallery*



H28's *Swiftsure Saga*, Bill Richards and eventual winner of "D" Fleet Trophy *Gustel XI*, John Low



First and Fastest in  
"C" Fleet *Kailani*,  
James Bennet





*Minim Cove, Geoff Black*



*Thermopylae, Simon Benson*



Left: *Nell*, David Perlman, winner "B" Fleet



*Genevieve* (off wind), *Thera* and *Taru* (on wind)



*Billy Goat*, Wayne Poulsen



H28's, left to right, *Gustel XI*, *Georgina* and *Swiftsure Saga*

Paul spent the Regatta aboard *Scrumpy*, Ian Garvin, thus explaining why there are no shots of this enthusiastic competitor.



**Old Gaffers' Association of Western  
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Newsletter Editor  
Alan Abbott



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## Dates to remember

July 24, 2012

Annual General Meeting EFYC 1930 hrs

Sept. 25, 2012

General Meeting EFYC 1930 hrs

Nov. 27, 2012

General Meeting EFYC 1930 hrs