

1994

32nd Australian Flying 15 Championships Royal Yacht Club of Victoria, Williamstown

Gale force wind warnings and whistling in the rigging were what greeted us on most days during our 8 days in Melbourne for the Nationals. The sailing program was a fairly gentle one, with the invitation race on one day, heats 1 & 2 both on the next day, followed by a lay day, then one heat on each of 5 days. But, of course, programs are only that and can only be achieved if the elements cooperate, which in this series they did not do! We ended up sailing 2 races on each of 3 days, fortunately with one enforced lay day in between, and one race on each of only 2 days but as you will see from my day by day notes, there was a lot more activity than even that program would suggest.

The ACT was represented in the series by Peter Fullagar in *Seamist II* with Tim Dalton as crew, and Peter Forster in *The Boat Comes First* with Graham Giles (formerly of Canberra but now working in Melbourne) as crew. The Fullagars, with Tim as passenger, and the Forsters, travelled to Melbourne in convoy via Lakes Entrance. We took the opportunity while in Lakes to visit Bill Shand and have a chat before his departure for the World's in NZ and we were pulled over on the side of the road while driving through Bairnsdale by Victorian measurer Bill Beard (who also sailed in the Worlds). While we were driving we listened to the regular reports on the radio of gale force winds at sea for the Sydney and Melbourne to Hobart races, to the man overboard and other dramatic news reports, and we experienced ourselves en route strong winds and wet, cold weather. Needless to say, we were already apprehensive of what Port Phillip Bay might have in store for us, with both of us having experienced the bay at its worst in our Seafly days.

We arrived at the RYCV on the afternoon of Wednesday 29 December, unpacked the boats, rigged up the mast and had our sails measured and boats checked, fortunately with no problems. The club put on a reception for the Flying 15 fleet that evening and we were interested to see that in addition to us there was only one other non Victorian boat in the fleet (apart from Mick Joyce who had passed away after entering for the series), that being Chris Wells from Esperance. The Fullagars and Tim booked into their very comfortable B & B house at Williamstown (discovered from *The Australian Bed & Breakfast Book*) while Ailsa and I were very well looked after by the Giles'.

We had a shakedown sail, as did a number of the other competitors, on the Thursday, testing out the efficient and effective launching and retrieval arrangements in the process. Two cranes were available and it was a simple process, even for the uninitiated like me, to negotiate the short lift off the trailer, over the edge of the concrete wharf of the marina and into the water. Only on one day, because of the strength and direction of the wind on that particular day, did one of us need to get wet in either launching or retrieving the boat (and of course, it happened to be me, and Tim on the other ACT boat, who hooked on that day and who therefore had to jump in the water to swim the short distance to the ladder). The wind was really too light on this day to do very much but it was useful as a way of having a bit of a look at the area in which we might be racing and for Graham to

have a look at my boat. We had sailed together some 5 years before, on LBG, on my previous 15 but Graham's recent experience had been on keel boats, both on Port Phillip Bay and offshore - and he had to continually remind himself during the series that unlike keelboats, Flying 15s are best sailed flat. The one thing the practice sail did show was that Seamist had more boat speed on the day than The Boat Comes First!

During the afternoon, I also visited the Chelsea Yacht Club where our son, Andrew, was competing in the National Mirror titles and I was pleased to run into Geoff Totterdel who is known to at least some of the ACT fleet. Geoff's son was also competing in the Mirrors. Geoff is currently the Commodore of the Royal Freshwater bay Yacht Club (in Perth), and is sailing 505's because there is not a viable fleet of 15's at his Club these days. But he did indicate that when the Flying 15 Nationals were again held in Canberra he would think seriously about entering. Geoff wished to be remembered to those who know him.

Invitation Race, Friday 31 December

The weather could not have been more pleasant for sailing, with a fine day and a SE breeze at about 8 - 10 knots. My notes do not say very much about this race (probably because Seamist finished in 9th place and I could only manage 13th !) but it was sailed on a course on the St Kilda side of the bay and was won by David Meldrum in *Gunadoo* by less than 1 minute from the ultimate series winner Peter Watson in *Fifteen Carat*.

Sunday 2 January

After a relaxing New Year's Day, having seen in the New Year at a function at the Club, we had an early start expecting to sail heat 1 at 10am and heat 2 at 2pm. The fleet had a quick but safe sail in the 15-20 knot NW wind down to the starting area, again on the St Kilda side of the bay but with 10 minutes to go the wind strength had really become unmanageable to the extent that immediately after the 5 minute signal the race was postponed. This was the only decision the race officer could have made but of course, we then had to get back to the Club on the other side of the bay which meant a long punch to windward in winds gusting to 50 knots and quite big seas. Some boats capsized and had to be towed back, others dropped sails and were towed, but most struggled back on their own mostly using only a continually flogging mainsail. Needless to say, a number of leeches suffered, including mine, but all repairs were done overnight. When we reached the Club, my watch showed a time of 56 minutes since I had started it at the 10 minute signal - 50 or so minutes of sailing that I would not look forward to repeating. There was at least one broken mast, and a rudder accompanied by hull damage but the most worrying aspect was that one boat was not accounted for. The nearby Williamstown Sailing Club joined forces with RYCV to provide 5 rescue boats and the police Search and Rescue also assisted including their helicopter in the flotilla of search vehicles. After an intense couple of hours, a boat was sighted on the beach near Altona but with no apparent sign of life. But on closer inspection the male and female crew were found sunbathing on the beach.

They were no worse for the experience, and subsequently finished 4 races in the series - but the experience was valuable from the logistical point of view, especially in having a

record of which boats have started and which ones have come ashore. The sign on/off arrangements were voluntary in this series albeit with an incentive of 2 cans of beer for

signing off, but the check list enabled the officials to identify for whom and what they were looking. Racing for the day was eventually abandoned at about 3pm when the breeze swung suddenly to the south blowing just as hard as it had been from the north.

Monday 3 January

Heat 1 was resailed in the morning in moderate W to NW winds with the start not far from the St Kilda marina. We sailed a full course in an elapsed time of about 1 hr 45 mins for the winning boat, *Fifteen Carat*, which was 3 mins ahead of *Gunadoo* in second place. In this heat, I finished 11th and the other Peter was 20th. Luckily, the fleet had time to come ashore for lunch and a break and still start on time, at 2pm for what was in fact heat 3. The race started in similar conditions to the morning heat, with sun and a good sailing breeze but as the fleet neared the windward mark for the second time, we were hit by a southerly buster which blotted out all visibility for a time and gave us some exciting rides. Conditions were equally difficult for race officials because the wind swung dramatically on a couple of occasions during the course of the race, with buoys having to be relocated as a result.

We were in about 6th position approaching the leeward mark, but with the wind shifting all the time and the poor visibility, we had to put in a short tack in order to round the mark, in a strong breeze and with boats reaching down fast not far behind us. In our haste to tack cleanly, my crew missed the foot straps and fell overboard, fortunately hanging on to his jib sheet. We all but capsized but recovered with both of us on board, rounded the mark and had what turned out to be a quick reach to the finish. We had dropped several places and could manage only 11th place. But the shortened race was won by Rod Allsop, using his compass to great advantage in the low visibility conditions to work out the new location of buoys as the wind changed in an elapsed time of only 64 minutes, 1 min 40 secs ahead of *Fifteen Carat*. *Seamist 11* did not finish in this race. The results record two premature starters in this heat but apart from those two who did not respond to the recall signal, there were certainly no general recalls and I do not remember any other individual recalls.

Tuesday 4 January

We sailed heats 2 and 4 this day, both in light to moderate W winds - and very acceptable to us lake sailors! There was nothing exceptional about the morning race, with Peter Watson winning by 1 min 30 secs from Nick Peck, in an elapsed time of 1 hr 36 mins.

(The starter took good notice of the provision in the sailing instructions for a shorter course on days when we had two races.) I managed 8th place and *Seamist 11* was 19th.

We had our lunch break ashore and went out for a 2pm start - and then found ourselves following the committee boat around Port Phillip Bay, or part thereof, for some 90 minutes until the wind direction settled down. We had the classic situation of the seabreeze and the westerly competing against each other with the latter winning out in the end. The most memorable part of this race was the need for most of the fleet, that is, all but about the first 6 or 8 boats, to avoid a huge (Russian) freighter that sailed up the shipping channel, through *our* course, as the bulk of the fleet were either leaving or approaching the windward mark. Those of us who had rounded the mark were able to harden sheets

and sail a slightly longer course around the stern of the ship but those on the wrong side of

the channel actually had to stop and wait for the ship to pass by - and we complain about our little ferries from time to time! Craig Rainey, sailing *Think Big*, won this race by nearly 2 mins from (you guessed it) *Fifteen Carat*. I was 12th after a bad last beat and Peter Fullagar was 20th. We were on the water this day for some 7hrs 30 mins in all so we were pleased to have caught up with the number of heats we were supposed to have sailed and that we could arrive at the club as late as 12noon for a 2pm start the next day.

Wednesday 5 January

We woke up this day to gale force wind warnings and with winds gusting to 35 knots from the W with rain. Nevertheless, we did the right thing and went to the club although no one was keen enough in the conditions to rig their boats. Eventually, at about 2.30pm racing was abandoned for the day without a cover being taken off any of the boats.

Thursday 6 January

Again, we woke to gale force wind warnings and unpleasant looking weather - it was wet, cold and windy. Most of the fleet was rigged by 9am to sail heat 5 carried over from the previous day but there was a noticeable reluctance on the part of many of us to actually leave the marina. The wind was gusting to 30 knots or so and the weather was looking decidedly unpleasant. But, like faithful sheep, the fleet followed the committee boat out ready for the race. I must admit to leaving my decision to leave the shore until the last possible minute, to the extent that we arrived at the starting line with 30 secs to go! Sensibly, the starter had set a relatively compact course in the head of the bay with the windward mark in the mouth of the river where the conditions were as kind as they could be. Fortunately, the weather cleared early in the race and the wind settled down to a beautiful breeze; we were all overdressed but pleased to be out on the bay. Peter Watson had another win, by less than a minute from Craig Rainey with Nick Peck and David Meldrum having a close contest (less than 1 min between them) for 3rd and 4th placings. I was 9th with *Seamist 11* a non starter in this and the subsequent two heats.

It was just as well we had a break ashore before the afternoon heat because it was sailed in a good 20-25 knot breeze again from the west. The course was much the same as in the morning, that is, as close to the head of the bay as was feasible, with the windward mark not far from Station Pier for those who know Melbourne. Of the 22 starters, 18 finished and not many spinnakers were seen during the course of the race, most of us finding two sails quite enough to handle on the off wind legs. In fact, of those in the leading group that did fly kites, we were told afterwards by spectators that only Peter Watson on the eventual winning boat (of this heat and the series) had real control under spinnaker. Graham and I were struggling from the start (a bad one at that) and managed to distinguish ourselves by capsizing on one of the reaches. We did not broach but rather were simply blown over - to be told afterwards by Chris Wells and crew who were in close company with us that it was the most spectacular capsize they had seen, and that we had actually kept sailing while

Graham was standing on the keel. We recovered fairly quickly and soon bailed/drained the water but in the process of capsizing, the block for the mainsheet was washed off the end of the boom by the weight of the water. Despite the wind and waves, Graham managed to

refix the block and we continued on near the back of the fleet but finishing in 14th place. I learnt that releasing the boom vang might have prevented our capsize. Watson won from Rainey, Meldrum and Peck.

After all this activity on the bay, we had the AGM of the Association at 6pm (rescheduled from one of the mornings when we were not supposed to be racing) followed by a BBQ at the club.

Friday 7 January

We all looked forward to sailing only one race this day, that being the final heat. Peter Watson did not need to race and chose not to but there was a contest for the minor placings and, of course, there were contests down the fleet between individuals for a better overall placing. At last, the weather was ideal, with sun and a beautiful sailing breeze including some stronger puffs. *The Boat Comes First* managed a good start (for a change!) at the pin end and we stayed with the leading group throughout the race, as high as 6th at times but finishing 8th. We had some great reaches and runs, usually doing better than those close by - with David Meldrum suffering the most when we caught up on him by about half a kilometre on one fast reach. As in some of the other races, choosing whether to go right or left up the beat was critical and in this particular race, *Travelling Sailsman* (Peter Dusing, a new comer to the class from RYCV) and *City Lights* benefited from going more to the left than others and finished 2nd and 3rd respectively. Rainey won the race confirming him in 2nd place overall and Peck beat Meldrum by 2 places to give him 3rd place in the series. We were reasonably happy to finish less than 3 mins behind the leader in 8th place giving us 11th overall.

When the aggregated results became available, I learnt that we were runners up for a lot of the 'consolation' prizes such as the handicap race, non Victorian boat, skipper over age 50, combined crew age of more than 100. But one does not participate in these events to win trophies but rather to learn and enjoy. I certainly believe that I know a lot more about my boat, its capabilities and how to sail it as a result of this series, and I can look back on the series with a feeling of satisfaction knowing that we finished all the races, and were placed better than half way in the fleet. I had not flown a 15' in open water conditions before this and while I cannot say that I really enjoyed being out there on a couple of occasions, there was a real sense of achievement and exhilaration at the end of those days. And my admiration for the quality of the design has been enhanced considerably.

The only innovative rigging arrangement that we found was on the winning boat which carried and used twin spinnaker poles with a fixed height for the topping lift. I am told by those who watched some of the racing, including Peter and Tim, that the spinnaker work on *Fifteen Carat* was outstanding and that this could be due at least in part to not having to adjust the topping lift on hoisting the kite.

Peter Forster

Flying Fifteens

1993/94 National Championships

Two ACT Flying Fifteens represented Canberra Yacht Club in the 32nd Australian Championships sailed out of the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria from 29 December 1993 to 7 January 1994.

The championships were part of the 22-event International Nissan Regatta that was held on Port Phillip Bay.

The ACT competitors were *Seamist II*, sailed by Peter Fullagar with Tim Dalton as crew, and *The Boat Comes First* sailed by Peter Forster, with former CYC Club Captain, Graham Giles, now resident in Melbourne, as crew.

After delightful summer weather and kind winds for a shakedown sailed on 30 December and the Invitation Race on 31 December, gale warnings and continual whistling in the rigging around the yacht club became the norm for the remainder of the series.

After such intense activity, I was pleased to come home for a holiday.

The most dramatic day was when we attempted to sail heat 1 on the morning of 2 January. At the 5-minute signal the race was aborted when the wind increased from a reasonable 15 to 20 knots to a totally unreasonable 40 to 50 knots. (Heat 2, due to be sailed in the afternoon, was also postponed.) Needless to say it was fairly hard work slogging our way across the head of Port Phillip Bay from near the St Kilda marina to Williamstown, a direct beat into the westerly. Several boats capsized and were towed back, others dropped their sails and were towed. Some of us sailed back but it was not the easiest sailing we had ever done.

Several mainsails suffered from the continuing flogging, there was a broken mast and a broken rudder, and, more seriously, one boat was lost for a couple of hours. The rescue facilities of two clubs plus the Police Search and Rescue (including a chopper) conducted a search.

The missing boat and crew were eventually found safely on the beach near Altona.

The weather conditions on this afternoon, the difficulty of seeing boats

floating at water level, and the missing boat highlight for those of us involved in benefits of requiring competitors to sign on and off before a race so that officials have a check list.

We resailed heat 1 in reasonable conditions the next morning and experienced a southerly buster during heat 3 in the afternoon, causing poor visibility in high-speed sailing conditions. My crew fell overboard in a quick tack we needed to make to get to the wing mark.

We sailed two heats in light to moderate conditions the next day, with the highlight being a very large Russian ship sailing through the fleet in the afternoon race.

Racing was eventually abandoned for the day on the next day, with winds gusting to 35 knots but we sailed two races the day after, despite gale force wind warnings. In the morning the weather looked more unpleasant than what it turned out to be and we had a most pleasant race.

The afternoon race (heat 6) was sailed in 25 not winds and was hard work but exhilarating. Like the majority, I decided a spinnaker was not needed. The wind was such that in one of the reaches we were simply blown over — and we kept sailing with my

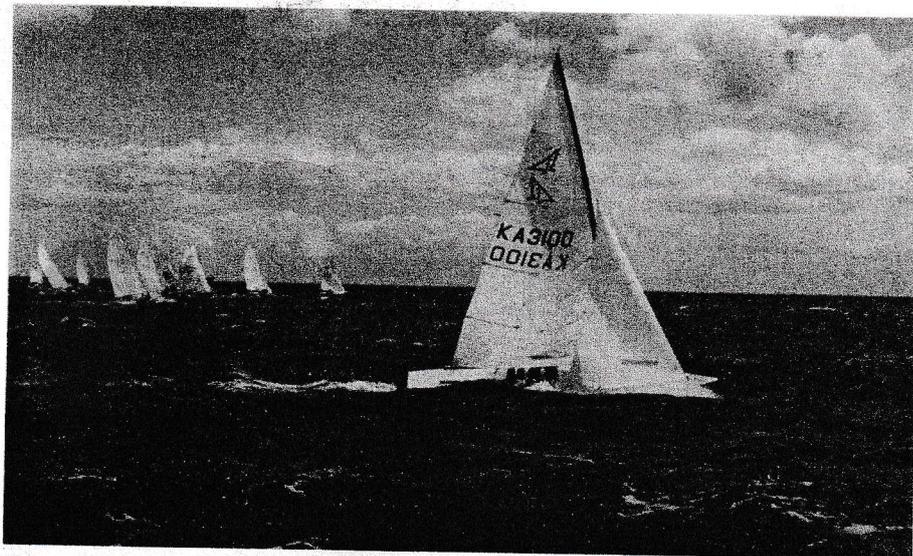
crew on the keel while flat on the water, according to a nearby competitor. We had our worst result of 18th on that day but we finished and we were not last.

We had a beaut last race on the Friday morning. With a good start we were in the leading group early and kept in touch throughout the race, with some exciting spinnaker rides on the reaches. In this heat we secured our second 8th placing in the heats, finishing 11th overall in a fleet of 27. Peter and Tim finished 24th overall, but did not complete in all heats.

Peter Watson from the Lake Learmonth Yacht Club won the series with wins in four heats.

For my part, I had not sailed a Flying 15 in coastal conditions before (I have sailed lots of other different types of boats in coastal waters) and I must say that I am impressed by the capabilities of the Flying 15.

The Flying 15 can be a challenge for younger and older sailors. If any CYC members (or their friends) want to test that proposition, we would be happy to arrange to take them for a trial sail. There are reasonable quality Flying 15s for sale in Canberra.



Peter Forster sailing "The Boat Comes Ffirst" at the start of heat 6 of the Flying Fifteen Nationals on Port Phillip Bay, January 1994, with 20-25 knot westerly winds.

FLYING FIFTEEN INTERNATIONAL - AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 1993 - 1994

CONDUCTED BY THE ROYAL YACHT CLUB OF VICTORIA

FINAL RESULTS

NUMBER	BOAT NAME	SKIPPER	CREW	CLUB	I N V I T A T I O N	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	P	FP									
															A	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	O
														T	LE								
																S							
														N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
3239	FIFTEEN CARAT	PETER WATSON	DEAN STEVENS	LLYC	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	DNC	6.0	1									
3257	THINK BIG	CRAIG RAINEY	IAN RAINEY	GLYC	3	3	5	3	1	2	2	1	17.4	2									
3262	FAST FORWARD	NICHOLAS PECK	MALCOLM SHAND	DBYC	10	4	2	PMS	5	3	4	4	42.7	3									
2755	GUNNADOO	DAVID MELDRUM	ROBERT SIGNORINI	GLYC	1	2	6	5	6	4	3	5	48.4	4									
3245	TRAVELLING SAILSMAN	PETER DUSTING	KIM IRVINE	RYCV	DNF	7	3	7	4	6	DNF	2	54.4	5									
2998	FRANTIC	PHILIP WILLIAMS	BILL FORREST	DBYC	5	5	4	6	3	10	5	7	58.4	6									
3241	CITY LIGHTS	MICHAEL CLARK	GRAHAM RUSH	DBYC	6	6	11	4	8	5	6	3	61.1	7									
3306	FFENOMINAL	RODNEY ALSOP	DUNCAN FRASER SMITH	DBYC	14	8	16	1	11	8	7	12	76.0	8									
2830	MEN AT WORK	CHRISTOPHER WELLS	MICHAEL BIRKS	EBYC	8	13	10	8	7	7	11	10	89.0	9									
3241	SUMMERTIME 1V	PETER JEAL	NICHOLAS JEAL	MYC	20	9	12	10	14	DNC	8	6	94.7	10									
3100	THE BOAT COMES FIRST	PETER FORSTER	GRAHAM GILES	CYC	13	11	8	11	12	9	14	8	95.0	11									
2675	WINDWARD SAUSAGE	PETER FALLA	JUSTIN SINGLETON	GLYC	4	12	9	12	10	DNC	10	9	98.0	12									
3309	CLOCKWORK V11	JOHN MANNING	ARTHUR CRUTCHLEY	MYC	11	14	7	9	9	15	9	17	99.0	13									
3489	MR MOJO RISIN	ALAN CARSON	IAN LOVELL	CCYC	DNC	10	13	PMS	17	11	12	16	115.0	14									
1673	FINNIGAN	PETER WARDLAW	GRAEME KILPATRICK	MYC	DNC	17	14	15	13	13	13	14	116.0	15									
1404	TOWN BIKE	DARREN HOCKING	ANDREW POLLARD	CCYC	16	15	22	13	18	14	15	13	126.0	16									
3314	DANGEROUS GOODS	ROBERT MOFFAT	GEOFF MOFFAT	BYC	12	19	17	16	16	12	DNF	15	131.0	17									
3096	RELIANCE X11	STRUAN GILFILLAN	MICHAEL LEYDEN	DBYC	17	18	20	18	19	16	16	18	141.0	18									
2678	BLUE LADY	CAROL GURNEY	ANDREW CLOSE	RYCV	21	22	23	19	24	DNC	17	19	160.0	19									
2832	PEKIM DUCK	DENNIS BAKER	FRED BAKER	VMYA	15	DNF	15	DNC	15	DNC	DNC	11	164.0	20									
3260	FFOXY 11	NIGEL PECK	GEOFF BUTT	DBYC	7	16	18	14	23	DNC	DNC	DNC	165.0	21									
1947	EFFERVESCENT	IAN GOULD	SUZANNE RYAN	DBYC	19	21	21	17	21	DNC	DNC	DNC	174.0	22									
1681	PEGASUS	PETER WEBSTER	TREVIS SIMPSON	RYCV	DNF	23	DNF	20	25	18	DNF	DNC	180.0	23									
1395	SEAMIST 11	PETER FULLAGAR	TIM DALTON	CYC	9	20	19	DNF	20	DNC	DNC	DNC	182.0	24									
2342	FFATHOM	KEITH STAITE	BARBARA STAITE	RYCV	DNF	DNF	24	DNC	22	DNC	18	DNC	187.0	25									
2826	SLIPPERY WHEN WET	JAMES BARROW	CATHY FARTHING-JOHNSON	RYCV	18	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	17	DNF	DNC	198.0	26									
1941	SUNDERLAND	HEATH BARKLAY	PETER FRENCH	RYCV	22	DNF	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	210.0	27									
2756	NCISY WELCOMES & FAREWELLS	MICHAEL JOYCE	WERNER MAAS	LMCO	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	210.0	28									

DOWESLIP TROPHY - 1st CHAMPIONSHIP: 3239 FIFTEEN CARAT
 CANBERRA PLATE - 2nd CHAMPIONSHIP: 3257 THINK BIG
 TEMPEST TROPHY - 3rd CHAMPIONSHIP: 3262 FAST FORWARD
 DEFFA FOX TROPHY - INVITATION RACE: 2755 GUNADOO
 BALBURN TROPHY - NUMBER 400 UNDER: 2755 GUNADOO
 MASTERS TROPHY - HELMSMAN OVER 50: RODNEY ALSOP

1st FIRST HELMSMAN UNDER 21
 2nd FIRST INTERSTATE ENTRANT
 3rd FIRST OVER 100 COMBINATION
 4th FIRST UNCUT MARK 1
 5th FIRST HANDICAP RACE

ROBERT MOFFAT
 2830 MEN AT WORK
 3306 FFENOMINAL
 1404 TOWN BIKE
 3241 SUMMERTIME 1V