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The Magazine of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia

Witchcraft II Sails Out of The Cauldron

By Geoff Errington

SPECTACULAR start to the 1989 Jupiters Classic race from Sydney to the Gold Coast saw a fresh sou'wester give the fleet a fast reach to the Heads. **LEFT:** Even Batman was there, about to zoom aboard Thirlmere to join the crew for the dash northwards. (Pics — David Clare)



PITTWATER yachtsman Bruce Staples and his crew of *Witchcraft II* have finally cracked it for the glory which has been eluding them for the last three years in the Jupiters Yacht Classic. *Witchcraft II* is the only boat to have competed in all Jupiters races from Sydney to the Gold Coast, gaining a place in each of them. This year ended the role of always the bridesmaid.

Staples usually keeps *Witchcraft II* at Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, but he is also a member of the Southport Yacht Club and with another Alfreds boat, *Seaquesta* sailed in the Queensland team of the last "Southern Cross Cup". This year she snatched the IOR handicap honours from long time rival, and ex-WA representative in the 1987 Southern Cross Cup, *Prime Factor* by minutes.

These boats had had a good race all the way north. Both had covered sufficient distance so as not to be too hampered by the calms at the end, taking a mere three hours longer to sail the 380 nautical miles than the maxi-chasers.

Some of the really small boats like *Half Hour* and *Leroy Brown* did quite well, but there were not enough holes for big boats to fall into and thereby open the door for a win like that of *Pemberton III* in 1988.

Pemberton III did not do well at all this



year. The crew insisted that they were hit by a meteorite, but that was not correct. In fact, the squalls on the first evening ripped her main out and she lost six hours while they made repairs. Later on in the race their problems were further compounded by the fact that they tried to emulate their tactics of last year as they hugged the coast through the Solitarys. It didn't pay off. They just sat there and waited for wind while the other boats sailed around them.

The weather conditions that met Arthur Bloore's *Hammer of Queensland* in the 1988 Jupiters Yacht Classic were a gift from heaven. Virtually constant gale force winds blowing offshore for the time they were at sea allowed *Hammer* to cross the finishing line in an almost unassailable 38 hours 57 minutes and 12 seconds. *Hammer* wasn't in this year's race, but the 50 odd hours following the start were to prove how challenging the record is.

As luck would have it, the weather wasn't looking too bad at the start of this year's Jupiters Classic. With southwest to west winds of up to 40 knots predicted there were a few people getting excited about having another go at the record.

In fact, in the earlier part of the race it looked like they might have a chance. However, the weather pattern was a

little unstable and when the leaders of the fleet reached Coffs Harbour, some 240 nautical miles to the north and 26 hours into the race, they found a wall of calm northerlies to hinder their progress through the night to follow.

From that point on the race became very much a tactical one. As virtually all

boats stayed within five miles of the shore, the unstable conditions subjected them to a quiet, windless, final night at sea.

When dawn came, their troubles were not over. The leading yachts had been becalmed on various occasions. Mike Clements on *Rager* said that they had a terrible time trying to round Point Danger. The local three knot current setting against them was difficult to stem. When they finally did get around the point on their final 19 mile sail to the finishing line the winds became so light that it would take them another seven hours to cover the final distance.

Clements said that wind shifts of 160 degrees were not uncommon and trying to work the boat onto the optimum apparent wind proved very difficult. While this was happening to the two leaders the other boats were bunching up behind them.

Of the larger boats, *Rager* with Hugh Treharne on board, got off to a really good start. *Walk on the Wild Side* soon sailed through and by the time they reached the heads, had opened up a lead of some 300 metres.

The tone of this year's Jupiters Yacht Race for these two boats had now been set. For the next forty-nine and one half hours the two boats would be locked in a close tussle for line honours, never more than three or four miles apart. *Rampant II* and *Animal Farm* were not to be discouraged either. They spent the larger part of their race snapping at the heels of the leaders.

By 1700 hrs on the second day, the SINGAPORE GIRL and friends two-sail reach towards the Heads, with the crews already rugged up for the cold night ahead in the race to the warmer climes of the Gold Coast. (Pic — David Clare)





DELIGHTED skipper Mike Clements on the bow of *Rager* after the Elliott 60 had taken line honours in the Jupiters Yacht Classic race from Sydney to the Gold Coast. (Pic — Geoff Errington)

ually open her lead to a commanding six miles.

The other interesting facet of this years race was that it was the first time a race has been held in Australia with an IMS division. Of the 30 boats measured so far, some 16 entered the Jupiters Race.

Apollo Batteries, a new Alan Warwick design, owned by Rod Hyman, won this division with *She's Apples* second and *Challenge II* third.

Although *Apollo Batteries* had been designed and built to compete under the new rating, there were nevertheless a lot of other boats that had not been built in this way that did quite well.

Examples of this are the veteran S&S 45 *Challenge II* (Jim Daley) and *Arabesque* (Norman Marr). *Challenge II* is an old war horse built to the IOR rule and *Arabesque*, built in New Zealand, and modelled along the lines of a Holland 43, is a fast cruising boat. The eventual results show that they are all quite competitive under the new rule.

At this point in time some 30 odd boats have been measured under the new system. With 50 others waiting in the wings to present their boat to the measurer, it has become apparent that the IMS system offers a lot of opportunity for some serious competitive sailing. The results of this division in the Jupiters Yacht Classic certainly demonstrate this.

leading boats were nearing the Solitary Islands just north of Coffs Harbour, and while there was still some daylight left *Rager* finally snatched a precious, albeit tenuous, lead from *Wild Side* which was not to be relinquished for the rest of the

race. Through the night Clements kept his field glasses glued to the high tech boat trying to sneak past him.

As day broke they were positioned off Cook Island and the light weather conditions were such that *Rager* could grad-

XXXX GOLD COAST WINTER REGATTA

By Ian Grant



Quarterflash Comeback

RUNAWAY Bay Marine industry identity Doug Brown and his seven-year-old Laurie Davidson Quarter Tonner, *Quarterflash*, literally climbed up from a concrete floor to

record a deserved win in the 1989 XXXX Gold Coast Winter Regatta.

Quarterflash, which previously represented Australia in world level rating championships with her previous owner

Peter Jones, of Melbourne, was never expected to race again when she crashed to the concrete in a marina travel lift accident earlier this year.

The damage to her kevlar hull was so extensive that she became another "write off" statistic in the marine insurer's records.

Brown had bought the high performance *Quarterflash* to race in Runaway Bay Yacht Club and Southport Yacht Club events on the Southport Broadwater, along with offshore passage races on the Gold Coast.

At the time of the accident the 26-footer was being prepared for the XXXX Gold Coast Classic, the interstate yacht racing series held off Southport each January and was hot favourite to win that series.

Doug Brown was left with a shattered wreck and a cheque, but he never gave up hope in perhaps racing the little sloop again. She was road freighted to the North Coast for specialist reconstructive "boat surgeon" Rod Dredge, in the hope he could put the boat together again. Dredge, owner-builder of another fast Quarter tonner, *Ocean Racer Chaser*, meticulously rebuilt the wreck