

Hit the Mark!

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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN J24 ASSOCIATION

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From the Editor...

So here we are in February already!! Time waits on no man, flies faster than a speeding bullet, leaves dreamers in its wake and only those without watches or clocks seem unaffected by it. There should be some sort of pause button, to give just enough time to draw breath... oh, and Happy New Year!!

It seems Geelong was hugely enjoyed by all who attended. As you may be aware the merry making and bar room antics are as much a part of the event as the racing. The latter was close and reflects a tightening of the fleet at the pointy end of the class. Who would have thought *Pacemaker* wouldn't win any of the races on the last day? Even the passage race (of some nine hours plus) involved only a difference of only one minute between first and second. Hugo Ottaway on *Vice Versa* took the line... I told you it was getting mean up there! Well done to all who sailed. It is a big commitment involving 5 days away from family, if not work. Comments from the sailors I chatted to suggested that perhaps the format could be looked at to accommodate or create a neater schedule which would be a bit more forgiving in terms of time away from the work place.

I crewed for Hugo on the last day, and in only two races. Crewing reminded me why I love being on the tiller so much. I came away with more bruises than a skydiver with no parachute. I know, I know... soft as s**t... work with me!! I'm a skipper!! Hey... there are 7 controls back in the cocktail bar... it's harder than it looks!!

The sail home was 'interesting'. *Make My Jay*, *Kicking Bottom* and *Excite Your Senses* all got a bit of a head start leaving *Vice Versa* and *Hyperactive* to bring up the rear. The latter boats sailed very close (close enough for Robyn and Hugo to swap stories, name calling and life details without having to shout. FYI; this went on for what seemed like hours!!) During

the sail home we enjoyed banter, beers, vodka, rum, food, the throwing (sharing) of lollies and one of the *Hyper* crew throwing up (to leeward, which was *W's* windward... thanks for that. Winds of 10kts nursed all of the craft back to SYC... that was until *Hyper* called a challenge on *W* and up went both spinnakers to make for an exciting last 30 minutes.

Which *W* won... er, with your editor at the helm and in receipt of superb coaching from Big H.

Elsewhere in this issue is a report by Ron Thompson... no I can't call it that... but let's say that Ron's piece makes *War and Peace* look like a classified advert! It is all about a thing called the *Thomo Cup* which is a tale woven into the fabric of the last few J24 regattas and also includes the nationals. Apologies from me as I didn't have the heart to edit it much and it is a bloody good read anyway! So get your cosy slippers on and snuggle up.

Talking of reports... check out the J24 website for an excellent article on how to win on a big boat by plundering the world of J24 crews to do it!!

I am just about to shut up but before I go, be aware that the state titles will be upon us before we know it. They are on the 16th and 17th April... which is the weekend after Jack Crawford (*Sanguine*) gets married!!

CONGRATULATIONS JACK AND LISA!!!!

Doug MacGregor, Editor

Audi Geelong Week 2011

by Hugo Ottaway

With one week to go the Victorian J24s, decimated by the rigors of a summer season of sailing, swung into action in preparation for the Audi Geelong Week 2011. Those who virtually rebuilt their boats included Warren, who had bent his mast a couple of weeks prior. He then 'sort of' straightened it two days before making the start line. Adam Evans on *Get Smart* was seen repairing a bad ding on his keel caused by hitting a reef on the Thursday before the Saturday morning warning signal. Add to these the brave hearts of Simon Grain and Ron Thompson and their battle scarred boats and crews who rushed back from the Australian



Championships in Sydney and put their boats together also with only a day or two to spare.

Those with less to do included David and Luke on *Pacemaker* but even they were spotted doing a little tweaking here and there. Robyn and Sarah led their female crew, plus Rob (the bloke version... Robyn is also called Rob), cleaning up *Hyperactive* and replacing a halyard. Peter Moulang, *Sanguine*, and Michael Lewenhagen, *Excite Your Senses*, both of who said they wouldn't miss Geelong for quids were seen polishing and checking. My crew and I gave *Vice Versa* her first polish since September.

Nine J24s made the start of the passage race. Warren turned for home after the first few hours as he was still unsure of how his rig would stand up given the 20kt South Westerly forecast. As it was this was a good decision as the passage race turned out to be the longest in living memory. 0930hrs start gun saw the J24s finishing at 1930hrs or so... though still in the front half of the three hundred boat fleet. This year the lead changed constantly and saw as many different leaders as there were wind shifts. The eventual winner for the J24 division was *Vice Versa* with *Pacemaker* one minute astern after a race that saw them only one boat length apart for the last half of the lengthy stint at sea. *Hyperactive* was third.

Stage two of the regatta had eight windward/leeward races over the following three days. Clearly some were in max race mode.

Pacemaker was in "Full race trim" to quote Mr Suda, who told me that they even checked their racing weight to make sure it was on the limit of 400kgs. *Hyperactive* had their worlds crew plus Ritcho Richardson. *Make My Jay* had Arthur "The True Legend" Corothers from Sydney. Ron "Thomo" Thomson also got keen after a shock on the Saturday sail and swam the boat to clean off the grim left on the hull from the trip back from NSW.

The first sprints were on Sunday and were held in 10-15 kts. There were two wins and a third for *Pacemaker* and one win, a third and a fourth by *Make My Jay*. The other boat in the hunt was *Vice Versa* with three second places.

The racing was very close with all three boats hitting the finishing line at the same time in the first race of the day.

Monday; 25 kts. *Pacemaker* won every race. She was higher, faster and very slick in operation. I however, claim the honours as my crew of old farts plus top Victorian Laser sailor; Sean Bly (24) were one crew short... until we spotted a real cutie walking past. It was suggested that maybe we should ask her to make up our numbers... she said yes and jumped on board (oh the innocence)... the rest is history... but boy could she sail!! Yep... *Hyperactive*, *Sanguine* and *Excite Your Senses* split the bottom half of the field.

Tuesday; 12 kts. *Make My Jay* and *Hyperactive* had a first place each. They sailed excellent downwind final legs to hold off challenges from *Pacemaker*, who were second in each race and *Vice Versa* third.

Regatta winner was *Pacemaker*, second was *Vice Versa* and third was *Make My Jay*. Fourth place went to *Hyperactive*, then *Kicking Bottom*, *Excite Your Senses* and *Sanguine*.

It was great to see Jack, Warren, Doug and Chris, all of whom couldn't get their boats to Geelong, sail on other J's to help make up the numbers.



Hyper crossing the bay... note Robyn sitting cross-legged at the stern... talking the hind legs off a donkey as usual!!

As always, the best part is left till last. The sail home was kinder this year with great yarns from Doug (despite living on only 3 hours sleep) and also from the girls on *Hyper*, which was the boat next door. Even though the girls disgraced themselves... Kirsty, Joelle and Robyn all had King Daddy hangovers but still managed a laugh and a spew!

This must be my 43rd year since my first Geelong Regatta, give or take, and next year I must remember to stop sleeping on the boat. Never learn!!!

J24 Passage Race 2nd - 3rd April

Please let Sarah know if you intend on taking part. The format is a passage race from SYC to who knows where but like to be one of three destinations, the most far away being Mornington. Sleeping on a boat, at a hotel, on someone's floor, on a park bench all being options for the slumber party that'll be involved.

Challenge Kids

6th March. 1pm till 3pm-ish.

Robyn is involved with this most worthy cause which sees kids affected by cancer, both through having or having had the disease and also by being related to a patient, getting some time out sailing. What are required are your time and or your boat to take two or three kids on board for a couple of hours. Call Robyn if you are able to help... 0419 561 565.

Important Dates

13th Feb	ODR
20th Feb	Self Start
27th Feb	ODR
6th March	Self Start and Challenge Kids
13th March	Self Start
20th March	Self Start
27th March	Self Start
2nd - 3rd April	Mystery Passage Race
9th April	Jack and Lisa get married!!!!
10th April	ODR
16 - 17th	State Titles

The Nationals...

by Simon Grain

Two regattas ago already

I guess you look back at life and tend to see the good things in it and shut out the not so good. And so it is with the Nationals this year, there were some things that didn't go quite right, like being 8th, my old green boat being 7th and like having a small green mark on my white boat. And Sydney Harbour... some like it.

Naturally if you live in Sydney, that's what you do and you enjoy the ferries, the million other cruising and racing yachts, the big and small powerboats, the hot bikini clad girls, the cold beers and surf beaches. I'm quieter these days and less excitable, so some things I notice and some I don't. But I did enjoy going to the Nationals even though it didn't all go according to plan. I do enjoy getting in the car or in a plane and going somewhere else to sail. Catching up with old and new friends, having a beer and a bitch about something to someone.

Sounds all very serene, but it's not really. The Nationals is a reasonable undertaking; getting the boat ready, the trailer ready, borrowing a car to tow with, packing all the things you need, realising later the things you forgot, getting those sent to you by friends at home and then getting on the water with a sensible mindset to go racing.

Sixteen boats did it this year and I think most of them had a great time and a good regatta, even if they didn't all win. Middle Harbour is a great little club in an idyllic spot and people I spoke to said they missed you, so I suggest you try to make it to the next one in Adelaide. In the meantime follow this link and read more about the racing, read about Kirj, Wallis, Wittey, West, Admiral Stevens, Bad Thai Ron and the gang in Sydney www.j24.com.au



2011 Thomo Cup

There was an air of excitement and expectation as the New Year came and went. Everything was getting into place for the BIG event:

- The 4WD had been purchased
- The boat had been cleaned and polished
- The ropes had been washed
- The new mainsail had arrived
- The trailer lights now worked

The psychology had already started as I received a wind tachometer for Christmas and I responded with a *Don't Give Up* cap. The pressure was building as the conversation over the dinner table went from the for and against the Oprah visit, why we need a new PM and the hassles of running a blood bank. Tempers were raised as the debates intensified. We even had the world ping pong championship which was won for the first time by young Max (son of brother Greg who did sail but decided family life was more important) in a thrilling game against the master.

What is this big event you may ask – silly question – it is the annual *Thomo Cup* – a prize every living Thomo dreams of holding. For those of you uninformed, the event this year was over three legs, 2010 VIC states, Gosford and then the Nationals. My sister, Janette, skippers *Kaotic* (Arthur Crothers boat in Sydney) and I skipper *Kicking Bottom* (the fastest green boat in the west or south or anywhere for that matter). Currently it stood at one a piece so it was to be the decider at the Nationals held at MHYC and raced between the heads in Sydney.

It was a sunny Saturday when we arrived in Sydney – two of the crew (Warren and Brad) did it in style flying first class and being chauffeured in from the airport. They stayed with Janette at Queenscliff; a home of magnificence and splendour (while I bunked down at some shack with a view—meditating with every spare moment—high on harbourside) The other crew member John, was a local Sydney import who I have known for 40 years or so.

At Rushcutters Bay there was much interest as the boats all weighed in. The opposition was

as heavy as us but I noticed its bottom had been recently cleaned although I did not look too closely. Have you ever done the Rushcutters Bay two step? It involves balancing on a moving boat in a chop, holding a mast, trying to fit it onto a two cent coin. They were fazed out with the ark! (the 2 cent coins that is) The mast and the boat were going in different directions not to mention my arms and legs. Eventually we made it thanks to help from the opposition team manager and then we were off down the Harbour to sunny Middle Harbour Yacht Club.

On Sunday we had a little practice sail, trying out the crew togetherness for the first time, putting up a kite etc. and shaping some sync with the skipper. We gave up as it was too difficult. Suddenly we saw the opposition and I immediately raised two protests. The grounds for the valid protests were:

- 1 The genoa was not white
- 2 A complete lack of imagination in the design and colour of their spinnaker.

We are waiting for a decision from the New York Yacht Squadron due in 2013.

There was a huge crowd on Sydney heads to watch the start of the big event – only they came two weeks early and ended up seeing that other race - the one to Hobart. Winds were out of the east, no north east, no north at 10 no 15 no 20 knots. Race one was off and to the surprise of everyone including myself the green machine was third at the first mark and with a quick spinnaker set flew downwind. The bottom mark was a turning point for the whole Event. This was the first time I met Neville Whittey... so after our 720 we dropped from our wonderful position and despite our best efforts we were happy with our 7th placing. BUT no, no, no, the opposition has beaten us. Yes, Janette finished 5th so started 1-up with 9 to go. A fact she broadcasted (in the nicest possible way) to remind us.

Race two was a tight affair with shifty winds. We found ourselves at the back end but slowly worked our way to 11th but to our delight *Kaotic* was 15th so it was one all. Race three

was better and after a good start we held our position well and finished an excellent 6th and *Kaotic* was behind in 11th so after the first day of racing the series stood at two one to KB.

Monday night was BBQ night and food was plentiful. I met with Ken (sailing on Sean's *Lunatic Asylum*) as we discussed the day's racing in the shower. It did not take him long for John to have a go at that nasty game played south of the border although credit to Warren for arguing back in a sensible manner. He was never going to win. From that time we became the Mexicans.

We awoke Tuesday to winds that were predicted to be strong but the day was similar to the previous day. Race four was the ultimate. "Did I tell you – we beat Sean Wallis, the National Champion?" What a race and what a finish. We had two boats to the right of us, with Peter Stevens just behind taking all our wind and two boats just in front. Neville was too far in front to be involved but then Sean Kirkjan sailed to the buoy end and came second, John Crawford followed to our left and then we had to hold our breaths and hoped the finished line eventually came. It did and we got 4th. A sly comment came from *Lunatic Asylum* – "NO More advice in the showers for you!"

Celebrations lasted a good hour 'cause the start of the next race was delayed due to a tanker coming thorough the Heads. We joined Neville sailing past Camp Cove and Lady Jane beach for the obvious reasons. Despite our extensive efforts nothing of interest was sighted.

Race Five take one, was abandoned after there was a change of the windward mark and movement of this mark (which was on the back of the committee boat) - sigh of relief as Janette was running 3rd when it was scrapped.

The wind had dropped for race five take two and there was plenty of slop. We had a dreadful start and struggled all race. The fleet was very close and we could not get close enough to attack Janette who ended up finishing 10th and beat us. One all, so far for the day. Peter Stevens had his best race finishing 4th.

Race six was another struggle after a poor start and we had difficulty in picking the lifts



through the slop in the Heads. We were running behind and in danger of allowing Janette to level the score when suddenly we pulled out a great last work to over take 4 boats to finish 8th –two spots in front of *Kaotic* and increase the lead in the Thomo cup to four – two. Simon Grain suddenly found some form and got a 3rd place – his first win over us. He must have got his new mainsail to work.

So after two days of exciting racing the Thomo cup stood at four–two with four races to go.

It was the lay day and we did not want to do any sailing. Our objective for the day was to shop for more green tee shirts at Vinnies in Brookie and the Salvos at Manly of course. I found some of my old sailing books there and reckon Mum must have thrown them out. Janette secretly found the Thomo Cup and bargained them down to \$1 (it had a scratch). We also found a "How to Sail" book, which we thought should be presented to the loser. In Manly we found two lime green tee shirts - a perfect match for the boat. They were \$5 each with no discount for buying two. We did continue to try finding another shirt for John but to no avail. So we had all we needed (bar one tee shirt) to tackle the rest of the regatta.

Day three arrived and the championship was open although Sean Wallis did not rate his

chances. Race seven was in slop again and the wind was all over the place. We had another poor start and struggled to stay with them. We were working our way up the first leg thinking who would be first round. Shock horror it wasn't (yes it was) *Kaotic* first. "Well done Janette!" I thought – no not really. Everyone was sailing close together but eventually the big three got away. We found ourselves running 9th on the last leg not far behind Janette who was 5th when suddenly only 100 metres from the finishing line *Kaotic* adopted a fighting tactic. With four boats going for the line, Janette wrote a new chapter in her latest book. 'How not to finish a race and get to know what your crew really think of you (all in one breath)' She lost three places within 100 metres. I wish it was four places as she still beat me by one and therefore got one back.

Race eight approach and we had to put in a better effort. We were fitted in our Wiggles gear Brad in Green, Warren in Red, John in Black and I was in Purple. As John in his distinct way said – we did not have a crew problem on KB; we have skipper issues. So I needed to pull out a big one. I needed to look at my website Ron.Thomson.com because it contains all the answers to every known problem.

A squall came through and we had to make a decision. Everyone seemed to be going for a

jib. We had a vote and I said it was a squall, John said it looked like a squall, Warren said it was windy and Brad said he'd go with the flow. So we went with a genoa – a master stroke as the wind dropped soon after the start. Another not so good start but we went right as that was the thing to do. We picked a few shifts and we were able to find ourselves at the pointy end of the fleet. It was great to be back there again and this time we did not try anything silly and finished 5th two places ahead of Janette. So the Thomo Cup was looking secure at 5 to 3 with two to go.

Friday arrived the last day and the wind started to blow. Everyone had jibs up being the sensible thing to do and we were in a fight for 6th place overall two points ahead of *Starpac*. We had a good race after a bad start again and tried our best to be up with the leaders. Downwind was boring and Brad decided to go for a swim. He just didn't tell anyone. We got him back on board with a little difficulty and a few heart tremors. Up the second work and running 6th we experienced a slight knock. A call was made to tack out to the heads. It was quietly pointed out that a three times National and ex World champ was going left, an ex-Olympian was going left and the current Three times National Champion is going left. Why do we want to go right??? We held our spot and came a credible 6th but lost one point to *Starpac*. However the main event The Thomo Cup was won as Janette finished a good 7th.

The final race arrived and the wind grew stronger from the north. We had to wait whilst the support vessel moved the top mark 200 metres. All the boats with less than 400 kgs crew weight struggled in the conditions. I was struggling downwind as we continued to sail deep and on the edge. It was at this time we decided to liven up the event and showed we do have a white not green bottom. Why is it called a Chinese jibe? Suddenly I was jumping straight up to reach the side of the boat. As a skipper sometimes you get your crew all looking with glazed eyes at you saying what the F..k are you doing. I just referred them to Ron.Thomson.com for all the answers. It was a big help!



So we were last, but determined to finish with dignity (upright!) because we knew we had done enough to secure the Thomo Cup and that was the bottom line really. It was a challenging series and I take away the knowledge that I need to practice heavy weather sailing (and starts). So we ended up 7th overall slightly disappointed but far exceeded our original expectations. The *Thomo Cup* result was:

Kaotic	4
Kicking Bottom	6

A 'two events to one championship' that came down to the final day. The trophy sits proudly on the television cabinet together with the white boat trophy for coming 2nd on handicap overall. Thank you to the NSW committee for organising a great championships and to Middle Harbour Yacht Club for hosting us. Unfortunately I had to rush back to Melbourne, boat in tow to get ready for the Geelong regatta, the following week.

J24 Vic Facebook!

Luke has got us our very own Facebook page... so I guess that means faster communications, greater exchanges of ideas... and of course being able to talk about what you dreamt about last night, what you are doing after your homework and of course what you'll be having for breakfast! Seriously, used properly it is a fantastic tool and I am sure we'll all make very good use of it. Check it out! Here's the address I have been given:

http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_199986830018634&ap=1-!/home.php?sk=group_199986830018634&ap=1