



Gra Rosser Match racing Series. Friday 2nd & 9th February



After an absence of a number of years, the Thunderbirds are back in the Gra Rosser. We were involved with this event from its inception and have committed to fielding the required 6 boats and as the series is set down for two late Friday afternoons this will take some organisation to meet this obligation.

The format has changed somewhat from our last foray in match racing. This year it will be just the Thunderbirds competing one on one for the two afternoons for which we are scheduled. Winners from all fleets within the series will compete for the overall cup on completion of fleet racing.

On water umpires will be ruling on infringements as they are claimed. To assist, each fleet has been scheduled to supply a number of suitably knowledgeable volunteers to help with umpiring the other competing fleets. – The Thunderbirds are expected to provide volunteers for the Endeavour racing on January 14th and 19th. More information from Chris Semmens

Remember there are supplementary rules that apply to match racing – these are in Appendix C of the Blue Book.

Read the Notice of Race AND Sailing Instructions

Racing Rules, Class Rules and Sailing Instructions.

There often is some confusion about the different rules that govern sailing. This may help some:

Blue Book – The Racing Rules of Sailing. It contains the rules of the game – ie how the race should be conducted, when boats have rights and basic safety requirements (AYF Addendum A). These rules form the basis for sailing around the world and are set by the International Sailing Federation (ISAF – note the “A” has been added to distinguish ISAF from the International Softball Federation!). AYF publish the book in Australia as they add and modify the sections that they are allowed under Rule 86 - very little effect on Thunderbird sailing.

Black Book – Thunderbird Class Rules. The main aim of the Black Book is to make the competing boats equal. It stipulates the form of the boat, its weight and sails. It also sets down certain requirements when racing such as crew, fuel, motor, anchors etc. The International Thunderbird Class Association (ITCA) publishes the Black Book. The requirements can be amended for local Fleet and State Championship events provide the State Association duly sanctions the changes. These changes should be noted as an addendum to any Sailing Instructions. The Black Book can no take precedence over the Blue Book except through Rule 86 and then limited to only the provisions of propulsion, crew position, settings sails, ballast and headsail tracks.

Sailing Instructions – for Saturday racing these are in the front of the Red Book. These contain the particular requirements of an event. The Sailing Instructions generally indicate how an event will be run within the requirements of the Blue Book. The Sailing Instructions usually contain any added requirements or clarifications of the Racing Rules to be used. They can vary limited areas of the Blue Book and should detail (usually as an addendum) any Class Rule variations. Another document, the Notice of Race can also hold important information and in many cases is referenced in the Sailing Instructions.

Basically it all boils down to reading all the relevant paperwork and appreciating how it all fits together.

A Little Bit of History From YAWA 1984/85 Year Book

"Ironically, this slab-sided Volkswagen of the sailing world was named for the same Indian legend that inspired Detroit's first luxury sports car".

The Father of Thunderbirds in Western Australia is Alan Hall. "Hally" saw an article about Thunderbirds in Yachting World Magazine and sent to the US for the plans. As a result the first "Bird" was built in his Wembley Downs garage in 1961. Incredible as it may seem now, he worked on a budget of One Thousand Pounds and believe it or not finished up with some change. "Piranha" as she was called, lived up to expectations and was a consistent winner of Division races at South of Perth Yacht Club, she is still raced today by her new owner Nigel Simpson from RPYC and was No 1 State qualifier for the Australian Championships held in January, she subsequently finished 4th in the Series. ***(Note: Piranha was purchased by Ben Blake who later sold her to Andrew Hebb who renamed her Thor after giving her a new Black paint job. Brian Connor purchased her in 1999 and repainted and renamed her Sirocco).***

In 1967 the evergreen Bill Fitzhardinge built "Vamoose" and has campaigned her ever since. It would be almost impossible to count the number of successes Bill has had in "Vamoose". She finished 2nd in this year's Australian Championships which is not bad for an 18 year old plywood boat.

"Metala" followed and is now raced by Noel Semmens, past Commodore of RPYC.

"Falcon" was built in 1974 in Perth, was sailed down to Bunbury and then bought by Dr John Wager of RPYC and sailed back to Perth again.

"Nimbus Cloud" was built in Bunbury in 1974 and was also sailed up to Perth by Nev Taylor and his two sons, which proves how versatile these remarkable 26ft sloops are. ***(David Orr took the boat over from Nev Taylor and called her Lyelta, as all his boats are named. In 2000 Andrew Hebb purchased her and is presently giving her a major refit – she is anticipated to hit the water early in 2001 as Killara)***

The last plywood boat was built by Terry Hebb of SPYC in 1979 for an all up cost of \$7000. Currently glass boats are being manufactured by Bruce King of Geelong, Victoria. Bruce trailed his "Bird", "Thunderation" over for this year's Australian Championships, which he easily won not having to sail the last heat. After the Series John Ingram, South Perth Yacht Club, bought "Thunderation". ***(Rob Wallace purchased Thunderation.)***

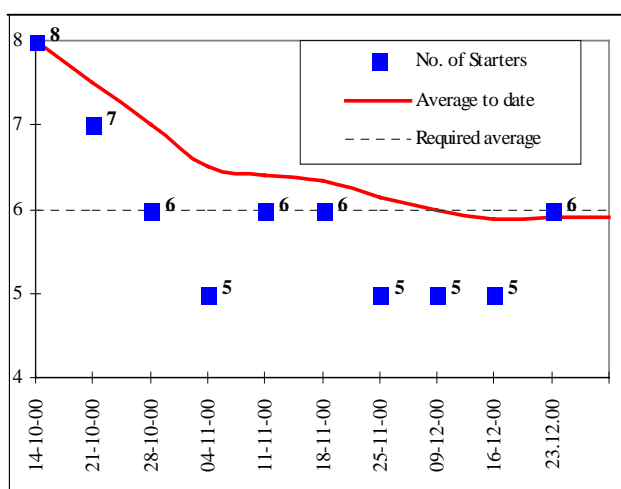
Glass "Birds" were also brought over in kit form by Alan Hall (***Magic - MBFitz***) and Riff Harrison (***Riff II and later Thunderstruck was purchased by Terry Hebb and later Andrew sold her to Ben Blake in 1999***), SPYC, for the Championships, however they failed to qualify and were loaned to the visitors. It is interesting to note that one of these boats "Magic" was sailed by the then Australian Champion, Laurie Schneider who introduced glass Thunderbirds into Australia and was beaten by the plywood "Vamoose" for 2nd place.

(Note: Magic for some time languished in the river. In the mid 90s she was purchased by Warren Morriston and used for cruising, Colin Smith purchased her in 1999 and brought her back to the Fleet. Blue Thunder is the latest Bird – she was built around 1988 in Bunbury. Rob Tippet owned her before Jim Baker took her over in 1996 – MBFitz)

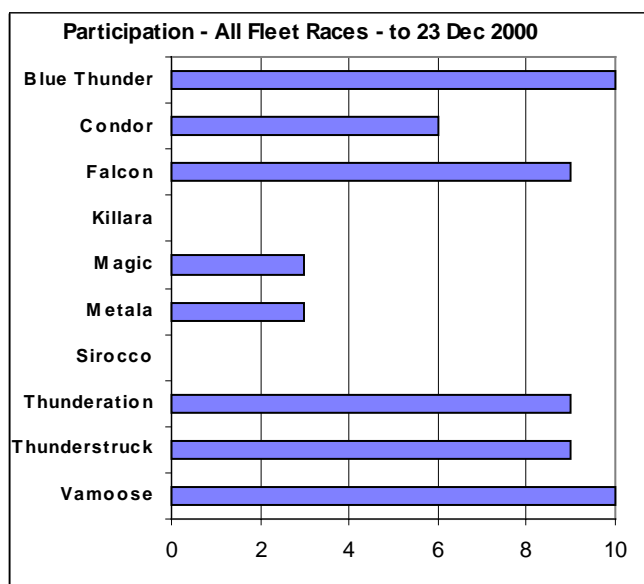
Fleet Participation - Time for Action:

The Thunderbirds enjoy being able to race as a Fleet on Saturdays – a position that not only makes for better sailing BUT also adds to the value of the boats. With recent addition of the J24s to the Saturday programme, the club will be looking for any opportunity to reduce the number of fleets.

It is in the interests of all those within the Fleet to ensure we meet our required average participation rate of 6. Both crews and skippers need to ensure each Bird is out on the water & at least cross the start line – if you are short handed and not confident in doing a full race, get the boat out for a Saturday cruise (taking in the start line of course!).



Participation is falling and despite promised action the trend has a worrying direction. Now is the time to get serious about your Fleet – if a skipper can't make it, surely a crew could take the helm for the day – it only needs a change of skipper lodged.



Condor has Good Start to Season

Despite the best efforts of the handicapper, Chris Semmens visited the podium on each of his starts picking up 4 firsts, 2 thirds and a fastest time – well done.

Thunderation has sailed extremely well this season picking 5 fastest times and 6 placing's. Rob has shown that he will be very difficult to catch and it is no surprise that he took out the first Mini Series.

Fleet Results up to 23 December	Sailed	Fastests	1sts	2nds	3rds
Blue Thunder	10		1	2	
Condor	6	1	4		2
Falcon	9		1	1	
Killara	0				
Magic	3				
Metala	3				1
Sirocco	0				
Thunderation	9	5	2	1	3
Thunderstruck	9		1	3	1
Vamoose	10	4	1	3	3

Fleet 27 Web Page

While we are talking statistics, the Fleet's own Web Page (<http://www.iinet.net.au/~fitzies/fleet27>) receives 20 to 40 hits per week and has had a total of 2,800 visitors. The page is kept up to date by Mark Fitzhardinge who is always looking for anything to include.



Legends of the Thunderbird

The Quillayute is a Chimakoan tribe living along the Quillayute River, a six-mile river on the Olympic Peninsula. The fishing village of Lapush is at its mouth. These stories are adapted from *Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest* by Ella E. Clark, University of California Press, 1953.



Naming of Thunderbird

Long ago, there was a sad time in the land of the Quillayute. For days and days, great storms blew. Rain and hail and then sleet and snow came down upon the land. The hailstones were so large that many of the people were killed. The other Quillayute were driven from their coast villages to the great prairie, which was the highest part of their land.

There the people grew thin and weak from hunger. The hailstones had beaten down the ferns, the camas, and the berries. Ice locked the rivers so the men could not fish. Storms rocked the ocean so the fishermen could not go out in their canoes for deep-sea fishing. Soon, the people had eaten all the grass and roots on the prairie; there was no food left. As children died without food, even the strongest and bravest of their fathers could do nothing. They called upon the Great Spirit for help, but no help came.

At last the Great Chief of the Quillayute called a meeting of his people. He was old and wise. "Take comfort, my people," the Chief said. "We will call again upon the Great Spirit for help. If no help comes, then we will know it is His will that we die. If it is not His will that we live, then we will die bravely, as brave Quillayute have always died. Let us talk with the Great Spirit."

So the weak and hungry people sat in silence while the Chief talked with the Great Spirit, who had looked kindly upon the Quillayute for hundreds of years.

When his prayer had ended, the Chief turned again to his people. "Now we will wait for the will of the One who is wise and all-powerful."

The people waited. No one spoke. There was nothing but silence and darkness. Suddenly, there came a great noise, and flashes of lightning cut the darkness. A deep whirring sound, like giant wings beating, came from the place of the setting sun. All of the people turned to gaze toward the sky above

the ocean as a huge, bird-shaped creature flew toward them.

This bird was larger than any they had ever seen. Its wings, from tip to tip, were twice as long as a war canoe. It had a huge, curving beak, and its eyes glowed like fire. The people saw that its great claws held a living, giant whale.

In silence, they watched while Thunderbird - for so the bird was named by everyone - carefully lowered the whale to the ground before them. Thunderbird then flew high in the sky, and went back to the thunder and lightning it had come from. Perhaps it flew back to its perch in the hunting grounds of the Great Spirit.

Thunderbird and Whale saved the Quillayute from dying. The people knew that the Great Spirit had heard their prayer. Even today they never forget that visit from Thunderbird, never forget that it ended long days of hunger and death. For on the prairie near their village are big, round stones that the grandfathers say are the hardened hailstones of that storm long ago.

Thunderbird and Killer Whale

Thunderbird is a very large bird, with feathers as long as a canoe paddle. When he flaps his wings, he makes thunder and the great winds. When he opens and shuts his eyes, he makes lightning. In stormy weather, he flies through the skies, flapping his wings and opening and closing his eyes.

Thunderbird's home is a cave in the Olympic Mountains, and he wants no one to come near it. If hunters get close enough so he can smell them, he makes thunder noise, and he rolls ice out of his cave. The ice rolls down the mountainside, and when it reaches a rocky place, it breaks into many pieces. The pieces rattle as they roll farther down into the valley.

All the hunters are so afraid of the Thunderbird and his noise and rolling ice that they never stay long near his home. No one ever sleeps near his cave.

Thunderbird keeps his food in a dark hole at the edge of a big field of ice and snow. His food is the whale. Thunderbird flies out of the ocean, catches a whale and hurries back to the mountains to eat it. One time Whale fought Thunderbird so hard that during the battle, trees were torn up by their roots. To this day there are no trees in Beaver Prairie because of the fight Whale and Thunderbird had that day.

(cont...)

At the time of the Great Flood, Thunderbird fought a long, long battle with Killer Whale. He would catch Killer Whale in his claws and start with him to the cave in the mountains. Killer Whale would escape and return to the water. Thunderbird would catch him again, all the time flashing lightning from his eyes and flapping his wings to create thunder. Mountains were shaken by the noise, and trees were uprooted in their struggle.

Again and again Killer Whale escaped. Again and again Thunderbird seized him. Many times they fought, in different places in the mountains. At last Killer Whale escaped to the middle of the ocean, and Thunderbird gave up the fight.

That is why Killer Whales live in the deep oceans today. That is why there are many prairies in the midst of the forests on the Olympic Peninsula.



Killara Refurbishment:

Andrew and Jane are presently spending their spare time (and money) on re-birthing the old Lyelta into a new Killara. Much marine ply, glue and paint are being spread about the back shed to replace all the sawdust, shavings and paint dust.

Andrew is keeping quite on the final colour for this 26 year old Bird - he assures me pink is now low on the list. Killara should be in the water just in time for the State Championships and our annual Rottneest run.

Annual Rottneest Weekend, 16-18th March 2001:

Don't forget about this weekend. Ben Blake has booked the Fleet's cottage and the Saturday racing has been cancelled for the weekend. A suitable Restaurant will be located for the traditional Friday evening meal in Fremantle. Further details as we get closer - Put it in your diary and organise a crew.



State Championships – Long Weekend 3rd-5th March:

A slightly different format this season which will allow for more family time as well as getting some competitive sailing in. We will once again be sailing with the Endeavours and the event will be conducted by RPYC. Dates and times:

- Sat 3 Mar : Heat 1: 0900
Heat 2: 1630**
- Sun 4 Mar : Heat 3: 1630**
- Mon 5 Mar : Heat 4: 1230
Heat 5: after heat 4**

Thunderbird Twilights – First Thursday of Each Month:

The first Thursday of each month is a special twilight – a night for the T'birders to get out in force on the water and after enjoy each other's company at communal tables. **Remember to let Colin Smith or Markl Fitz know how many seats are required so the T'bird table can be booked.**



What's on the Calender:

Thursday 4th January

Thunderbird Twilight Night

Thursday 1st February

Thunderbird Twilight Night

Friday 2nd and 9th February

Gra Rosser Match Racing Championships

Thursday 1st March

Thunderbird Twilight Night

Sat 3rd March

RPYC Concert on the Bay

Sat to Mon 3rd – 5th March

Thunderbird Sate Championships

Friday 16th March

Thunderbird Pre-Rottnest Dinner

Saturday and Sunday 17th & 18th March

Thunderbird Rottnest Weekend

Sat 19th March to Sunday 25th March

Sun Microsystems Australia Cup

Australia Day W/end Regatta – Claremont Yacht Club invitation



Claremont Yacht Club has invited class associations and divisions from clubs to their annual Australia Day Regatta – it comprises three races:

Sat 27 Jan 0930hrs

Sat 27 Jan 1400hrs

Sun 28 Jan 0930hrs

Further detail can be gained from the either RPYC or CYC. CYC's phone number is 9384 8226.

(Remember that our Fleet has a date with the RPYC start on that Saturday afternoon!)

Fleet 27 is the newsletter of the International Thunderbird Class Association's Fleet No.27 which is based in Perth Western Australia.

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