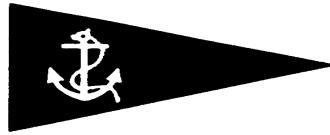


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# 2001 Indec Consulting Melbourne to Hobart Yacht Race



**Charlotte of Cerberus**

# The Vessel



## Charlotte of Cerberus 3810

Launched	1984
Length Overall	11.1m
Beam	3.4m
Draft	1.975m
Displacement	6 tonne
Callsign	VKDS

*Charlotte* is one of five keelboats designed and built in Western Australia by Kim Swarbrick in 1984, specifically for the RAN. Her sister-ships are *Scarborough*, *Lady Penrhyn*, *Alexander* and *Friendship*.

*Charlotte* derives her name from the vessel of the first fleet, *HMS Charlotte*. She weighed 335 tons, was 105 feet long, 28 feet wide and held 88 male and 20 female convicts. Built in 1784 and skippered by Master Thomas Gilbert, *HMS Charlotte* was eventually lost in 1818 off the coast of Newfoundland.



HMS Charlotte

# The Crew



The following is a brief outline of the experience and role of each crew member aboard. It should be stated however, that each crew member is multi skilled and may be called upon (and usually is) at any hour of day or night to perform the myriad of tasks required to keep *Charlotte* sailing.

**Daryl Thompson**, Skipper (rear, 2nd from left) - Employed by Defence Maritime Services at HMAS Cerberus and has been involved with Navy Sail Training since 1994. Daryl also skippered *Charlotte* in the 1997 Melbourne to Hobart Yacht Race.

**Jeff Nankervis**, Navigator (rear, 2nd from right) - Also employed by Defence Maritime Services. Jeff is the Sailing Supervisor at HMAS Cerberus and has participated in numerous Ocean Races including the Fastnet, Sydney to Hobart and Melbourne to Hobart.

**Scott (Willy) Wilmett**, Watchleader (front, 2nd from right) - Willy is a Petty Officer Bosun in the RAN and a gunnery instructor at HMAS Cerberus. Among his many talents aboard the yacht, none was appreciated more by the crew in general than his ability to cook in any weather.

**Jenni Thompson**, Watchleader (front, 2nd from left) - Jenni is an Able Seaman Stores Naval in the Royal Australian Navy Reserve. She has extensive sailing experience including National Titles in NS 14's and Victorian State Titles in Tasars, as well as offshore experience on *Charlotte* in previous ORCV series.

**Craig Hughes**, Foredeck (rear right) - Craig is an Electrical Technical trainee in the RAN and brought much experience to the team having, among other things, sailed extensively on the Sail Training Vessel *Leeuwin* in Western Australia.

**Murray Lund**, Mainsheet (rear left) - Murray is an RAN Chaplain of the Uniting Church at HMAS Cerberus. In addition to his sailing experience prior to joining the RAN, Murray has competed in a number of offshore races in the past couple of seasons. Crew have been known to ask Murray to speak to the man upstairs about wind conditions, though some may consider this 'outside assistance'

**Neil Platten**, Trimmer (front right) - Neil is a Petty Officer Electrical Technician and an instructor at the Engineering Faculty, HMAS Cerberus. Neil took up sailing at the beginning of the year with the stated goal of participating in this event. His personal zeal and attention to detail ensured that he realised this ambition.

**Chris Handke**, Trimmer (front left) - Chris is a trainee Marine Technician at HMAS Cerberus. Although a newcomer to the sport of sailing Chris quickly learnt the skills required to become a valued member of the team (particularly the finer art of leeward running backstay trimming).

# The Lead Up

The Melbourne to Hobart Yacht Race does not 'just happen' for the yacht and crew. Instead it is the culmination of almost twelve months effort in preparation and training. *Charlotte's* crew sacrificed many weekends during 2001 to enhance their sailing, seamanship and survival skills.

In addition, all of the crew have completed training under the Australian Yachting Federation scheme at various levels and hold qualifications ranging from Competent Crew to Offshore Yachtmaster.

## The Westernport Winter Series

*Charlotte* competed in the 2001 Westernport Marina Squadron winter series of races. The series consists of nine events raced fortnightly within the bounds of Westernport Bay. This served as a vital training ground for the crew prior to venturing offshore. *Scarborough*, skippered by Col Jones, the Commanding Officer of HMAS Cerberus, also competed in this series. The usual 'friendly rivalry' between the two identical vessels provided a little extra incentive to try harder.

Jen took the helm for one of these races and at the start line Col Jones decided to test her mettle by trying to barge between *Charlotte* and the start boat. Jen held her ground admirably and forced *Scarborough* to concede a 720° penalty. *Charlotte* went on to beat *Scarborough* over the line in this race although, due to an unfortunate mix-up with the handicap system, *Scarborough* achieved a better result on corrected time.

## Queenscliff to Hastings (Sat 8th Sep 2001)

The Queenscliff to Hastings Yacht Race is the first of the Ocean Racing series. It is a relatively short 45nm course that makes for a good introduction to Bass Strait. This years event was raced in strong north to nor-westerlies that offered some spectacular reaching conditions to Cape Schanck.

By the time *Charlotte* reached North Arm in Westernport Bay the wind had increased to 40kts across the deck and while peeling down headsails, Craig was reminded of the importance of 'clipping on' while on the foredeck as he hung over the side connected only by his harness. When told he had to shout the crew drinks for rescuing him, his response; "I always shout the drinks when I go over the side." *Charlotte's* result in this event was 6th on corrected time.

## Melbourne to Launceston (Fri 2nd Nov 2001)

This was the inaugural running of the 200nm Melbourne to Launceston Yacht Race replacing Stanley as the destination on Melbourne Cup weekend. This event is a prerequisite qualifier for crew participating in the Melbourne to Hobart race.

The race started on Friday evening off Shortland Bluff, Queenscliff with a moderate southerly breeze which lightened off throughout the morning. By midday *Charlotte* wallowed in the Bass Strait 'carpark'. The wind then shifted to the southeast then easterly and freshened to 20kts by Saturday evening providing a shy reach to the finish line at Low Head at the entrance to the Tamar River. *Charlotte* crossed the line at 12:07:15 on Sunday 03 Nov 01. Our result in this race, 17th on corrected time, did not reflect the efforts of the crew who put in an impeccable performance.

We then proceeded up the Tamar to enjoy the hospitality and festivities at the Beauty Point Marina before departing for home on Monday morning. Entering Westernport on Tuesday morning proved a challenge while running dead square in a strong breeze with wind against tide. After the boat broached on one particularly steep wave and semi-submerged the crew, Murray pointed out that a torrent of water had passed up one sleeve of his foul weather jacket and out the other leaving him saturated.



Photo of the fleet alongside in Beauty Point taken from the top of *Charlotte's* mast

# **Australian Yachting Federation**

## **Sea Safety and Survival Course**

As a result of the tragic 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria now insist that at least thirty percent of crew participating in the Melbourne to Hobart race must undertake the above AYF training. It was decided that of *Charlotte's* crew (apart from Willy who was duty interstate) all would complete this course.

Defence Maritime Services, an AYF Recognised Training Establishment, provided the training utilising the Seamanship School's 'Survival at Sea' classroom and the Cerberus swimming pool. This training was greatly enhanced by the voluntary input of the Navy's expert instructor, Petty Officer Bosun (Survival Equipment) Phil Durnan.

The Sea Safety and Survival Course comprised two main components. The 'dry phase' or theory sessions in the classroom and the 'wet phase' or practical sessions on the wharf and in the pool. This extensive course covered all aspects of sea survival including means of raising the alarm, attracting the attention of potential rescue vessels and aircraft, and surviving in a liferaft.



*Charlotte's crew learn the theory of Sea Safety and Survival*



It is important that every crew member knows how to use all of the safety equipment carried aboard the yacht. For this reason everyone is required to fire off a distress flare. Craig activates a hand-held day/night flare while shielding his eyes for protection against burns.



The 'wet phase' is conducted in full foul weather gear and inflated life jackets to give the crew an appreciation of the mobility (or lack of) that they will experience in the unlikely event they should find themselves in the water. It also teaches the wearer to have faith in the lifejacket's ability to keep them afloat. In this photo the 'Huddle' position is adopted to protect the group in the water against heat loss. Hypothermia is a very real threat in the latitudes that *Charlotte* is about to sail.



A liferaft may inflate upside down or be tipped over in large seas. Every crew member must know what to do in this situation. Chris attempts to right an upturned liferaft while Phil supervises in the foreground. The rest of the crew look on knowing they'll each have their turn.



Once in the liferaft, someone must keep a lookout for potential rescue. Jen draws the short straw while Phil simulates rough weather (or is he just tooling about?).

# The Sovereign Series

*Charlotte* is entered in the 2001 Ocean Racing Club of Victoria 'Sovereign Series' which comprises three events. They are;

1. **The Cock of the Bay** - This is a delivery race starting in Melbourne at Station Pier and this year finishing at Mornington. Vessels competing in this race include the Melbourne to Hobart and Devonport fleets as well as local club entrants.

2. **The Melbourne to Hobart** - The Westcoaster: the reason we're here. Starting at Portsea, this race takes us out through 'The Rip', across Bass Strait, down the West Coast of Tasmania and around its Southern tip then into Storm Bay and up the Derwent River to the finish line at Hobart.

3. **The King of the Derwent** - a 'Round the Sticks' event on the fickle Derwent River. Vessels competing in this race include the fleets from the Melbourne to Hobart and 'that other Hobart race', as well as local club entrants.



# The Journey

## The Pre-Race Delivery

At 0815 on Saturday the 22nd December 2001, *Charlotte* with Daryl, Jen and Willy aboard, departed Cerberus bound for the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria in Williamstown. With not a lot of wind about we motored until, at Cape Schanck, a light sou-westerly breeze began to fill in. We decided to put up the Spectra racing mainsail. When two-thirds of the way up, the bolt rope jammed in the luff track. We've just encountered our first hardware failure. Down it came and another attempt was made to hoist the main. No joy. A third unsuccessful attempt and it was decided that we couldn't trust this sail to hold out for the next 1,000nm.

Transport was organised to return the Spectra main to Cerberus and replace it with the Dacron backup. Willy put a positive spin on things by pointing out that it was better to discover and fix the problem now than be stuck with it when it was too late to do anything about it. We completed the 70nm trip under motor in a little less than 12 hrs.

Once *Charlotte* was secured alongside, and after a couple of pre-Christmas drinks in the clubhouse, it was time to go and enjoy a few days off before race time. The only formality remaining prior to race start was the very thorough pre-race brief presented by the ORCV at the Royal Brighton Yacht Club at 1100 on Sunday 23rd December. Daryl and Jeff represented *Charlotte* at this brief.

## The Cock of the Bay

The crew gathered aboard *Charlotte* on the morning of the 26th December: Boxing Day. Once the 'victuals' for the next five days had been stowed on board we departed for the start line of the Cock of the Bay race at Station Pier. With approximately 50 boats on the line and a moderate westerly blowing, *Charlotte* got away to a reasonable start at the windward end of the line.

The first mark at St.Kilda jetty had the wind on the beam and so the 1.5oz. reaching spinnaker was called for. It proved to be a little too shy and with no jockey pole on the brace, the spinnaker pole hit the forestay and opened up the Gemini foil like a tin can. Hardware problem number two and we haven't even left Port Phillip Bay. So down came the spinnaker and up with the No.1 heavy genoa. The boat performed admirably as she always does in moderate to heavy reaching conditions and we managed to pull back three or four boats before rounding the second mark at Sandringham.

As we altered course closer to the wind, and with the wind steadily increasing, we peeled to the number three jib and eventually needed two reefs in the main. The second reef was put in just in time as a succession of fronts passed over Port Phillip Bay bringing squalls to 35 kts and the odd sprinkling of hail (ah, summer in Melbourne).

After crossing the finish line at Mornington we motor-sailed South to berth alongside the recently completed marina complex at Blairgowrie. Our first priority here was to repair the damage to the foil on the forestay. A small breakage like this one, if not adequately repaired, could result in withdrawal from the race. In addition we had recently discovered hardware problem No.3. The seal around the main hinge of the forward hatch was leaking. The seal was removed and filled with Silicon, that 'wonder compound' that holds boats together, and when re-assembled was better than new.

Now that the day's work was complete it was time to enjoy the hospitality of the Blairgowrie Yacht Club. The convenience of having meals, drinks and hot showers right at the bottom of the jetty was much appreciated and the BYC were wonderful hosts. It was also pleasing to be informed that *Charlotte* had come 2nd on corrected time in the Cock of the Bay. A shower, a hot breakfast and a cup of coffee the next morning and we were ready to go.

## **The Melbourne to Hobart**

We departed Blairgowrie at 0915 on the morning of the 27th December and followed Sorrento Channel south toward the start line at Portsea. The weather forecast received that morning was for relatively favourable westerly winds tending nor-west later tomorrow. Always a good way to start your day in a yacht race.

Once in the vicinity of the start line, we were required to hoist our storm sails and sail past the race start vessel, *Enterprize*. This shows the race committee that we have these sails on board, that the crew know how to hoist them and that we intend to start the race. It is this attention to safety by the ORCV that has ensured the unblemished record of the Melbourne to Hobart in the thirty years it has been running.

After hoisting our mainsail we join in a casual sail past the Portsea pier to acknowledge the swelling crowd. Now its down to business with the race due to start at 1030. We use what time we have to take a look at the start line and devise some sort of plan for our start. The line is biased toward those boats starting on port tack and the windward end of the line is the pier end. We decide to run in on starboard tack, parallel to the line, then tack over on the start gun. The No.3 jib is hoisted.

The plan was a good one but the timing a little off and after calling starboard on *Wildcard* and giving *San Miguel* a reprieve by ducking under her slightly when we had right of way, we tacked over on to port tack in reasonably clean air. *Charlotte* is not renowned for her ability to sail to windward and we suffered a little trying to round the first mark.

We finally tacked over below Shortland Bluff, Queenscliff and rounded the first mark. We then cracked sheets a touch for the course out through the Port Phillip heads. Now that the boat and the wind had settled we decided to peel to the No.1 heavy genoa. Once clear of 'The Rip', we made our course 170° magnetic. Our first waypoint, South Black Rock, off the North-west coast of Tassie is 137nm distant. We now settled into watches with the crew working four hours on and four off during the day and three hours on and three off during the night, for the remainder of the race.



Talking tactics



Where the @#&\* are we? Jeff practices traditional navigation techniques.



Craig at the helm (it looks mighty cold out there!).

After changing headsails, the No.3 jib is passed down the forward hatch to be stowed. At this point Craig realised that the pins in the two outer hinges on the hatch had failed. This can seriously jeopardise the water-tight integrity of the boat and must be made secure. We have no spare pins on board and so a little ingenuity may be required. With the weather forecast to be fair for the remainder of the day we have a little time to think about how to repair the hatch.

It is 1300 on the first day of the race and the wind is now abating. Once again we peel headsails. This time from the No.1 heavy to the No.1 light genoa. This marks the beginning of a very frustrating six hours of battling extremely light and variable breezes. Light weather sailing can actually be more mentally fatiguing than heavy weather as the crew work hard to keep *Charlotte* moving along at a snails pace. Our best hour in these conditions saw us cover 2.5nm and at worst just 1.2nm. We are not alone though. The entire fleet is hindered by the same conditions and we find ourselves in a respectable position in company with the likes of *Yoko*, *Aggro*, *Under Capricorn*, *Ruffian II*, *Magazan 53* and *San Miguel*.

We took the opportunity during these light conditions to fix the forward hatch once and for all. Jen, Neil and Daryl removed the broken pins, cut away the broken sections and reinserted them the opposite way. They had to be forced into place but this ensured that the hatch was very secure. The down-side is that the hatch is now closed down and can only be used in an emergency. A minor inconvenience that means all sails must now be passed up or down the main companionway.

Throughout the race, each yacht must pass on their position to the race organisers through a designated Coast Station on HF radio. The allocated times for these 'scheds' each day are 0615, 1315 and 2115. *Charlotte's* position for the first sched at 1315 on Thursday 27th December was 38° 28' S, 144° 37' E. We are only 10nm from Port Phillip Heads. We lose the No.1 light in favour of the 0.5oz masthead spinnaker in an effort to gain every inch possible. Even so, by 1900 we are at 38° 35'S, 144° 36'E. This means we have covered only a little more than 7nm in 6 hours (A little early to be concerned about getting to Hobart before New Year's Eve, but it is definitely mentioned once or twice).

Around 2000 on Thursday the wind finally freshened a little from the west-souwest. At the second sched at 2115 on Thursday evening, *Charlotte's* position was 38° 49' S, 144° 34' E. This put us 31nm SSW of Port Phillip Heads. We now had the No.1 heavy genoa up again and settled down to a good nights sailing with a consistent, moderate westerly breeze, averaging between 6.0 and 7.5 nm travelled in each hour.

At the third sched at 0615 on Friday 28th December 2001, *Charlotte's* position was 39° 45' S, 144° 30'E. We now had King Island, in the middle of Bass Strait, 15nm to our west and have 48nm to run to our waypoint. We continued to peg back the miles, still averaging 6.0 to 7.5 kts. The morning was relatively uneventful and we reached South Black Rock at about 1330. We now altered course to 164° magnetic for our second waypoint, Bluff Hill Point. We cleared this waypoint, a distance of 27nm, at around 1745. About the same time that the breeze once again started to abate. Back to the No.1 light.



Willy, Jenni and Daryl on deck with the north-west coast of Tasmania faintly in the background

Our position at the fifth sched was  $41^{\circ} 15' S$ ,  $144^{\circ} 37' E$ . *Charlotte* had 10nm to run to her next waypoint at Sandy Cape. At 2300 this evening the wind shifted, as forecast, to the norwest and began to increase. The No.1 heavy was dropped for the 1.5oz spinnaker. This marked the beginning of some of the most exhilarating offshore sailing under spinnaker that the experienced members of the crew can recall, though the excitement of it all was not lost on the novices either.

At the 0615 sched on Saturday 29th December 01, *Charlotte's* position was recorded as  $42^{\circ} 04' S$ ,  $144^{\circ} 55' E$ . We were 14nm norwest of Cape Sorrell, which stands at the notorious entrance to Maquarie Harbour, Hell's Gates. In just fifteen hours time our position would be  $43^{\circ} 43' S$ ,  $146^{\circ} 20' E$ . This meant we had covered a phenomenal 125nm at an average of 8.3 kts. By now the wind speed was up around 30 kts from the nor-norwest. The top speed recorded on the yacht's log was 16kts with Daryl at the helm, although Willy, who may well have been delirious having been on the helm for some time, claims to have bettered this. He would later claim that someone knocked the main battery breaker, erasing his supposed record from the instruments memory. A likely story.

The sensational broad reach down Tassie's West Coast was incident free apart from being overpowered a couple of times resulting in the vessel rounding up. During one such incident the boom was dragged through the water and we managed to catch ourselves a school of nasty 'Portuguese Man of War', otherwise known as 'Bluebottle' jellyfish, which stayed with us suspended from the end of the boom, hanging from a staunchion and attached to a spinnaker brace.

We were not without sailing company at this stage of the race either. At the 1315 sched on Saturday 29th we were approximately 4nm norwest of Low Rocky Point. 280nm into the race and there are seven yachts within a 4nm radius of one another. They are *Charlotte*, *San Miguel*, *Morning Star*, *Ruffian II*, *Anaconda*, *Magazan 53* and *Island Trader*.

*Charlotte* was now well into the latitudes known as the roaring forties. Gale force winds are more the norm here than the exception and at 1945 on Saturday evening we received a gale warning for waters south of Low Rocky Point (surprise, surprise).

As we approached Maatsuyker Island, our most southerly waypoint and a mark of the course, we were forced to douse the 1.5oz spinnaker for the No.3 jib. Shortly after this, as the wind steadily increased, we put two reefs in the mainsail. Next we peeled to the No.4 jib as an ominous, dark frontal cloud approached from the sou-west. The moment the No.4 was up we were hit by the front and west to nor-west winds of up to 45kts and a stinging horizontal rain squall were upon us. It was fortunate we had reduced sail early. It was immediately decided it would be prudent to lose the double reefed mainsail for the trysail.

This is where the year-long training pays off for the crew. A sail change that can easily become a handful for any crew was carried out with the minimum of fuss and we were on our way once more. In the meantime, Maatsuyker Island that was visible a few mile on our port beam only moments ago, had now disappeared in the squall. The main front passed through eventually but the wind did not abate a great deal. The sky still looked menacing as the sun set and left a brownish-grey glow to the east. The wind was still howling through the rigging. We decided to run with the trysail a while longer.



Ample time to sit and contemplate.

It is now customary aboard *Charlotte*, whenever the conditions turn less than desirable, to accuse Willy of having thrown coin over the side as a sort of sacrifice to 'Huey the Wind God'. The suspicion is justified because on more than one occasion Willy has parted with a couple of dollars and a few less than kind words directed at Huey only to receive more than he, and in particular those members of the crew who suffer seasickness, have bargained for. He assured us that on this occasion he was innocent. Some of the crew weren't convinced and decided that Willy must be frisked for coin prior to sailing in future. We would later hear from other yachts that they had experienced 50 to 60kt winds and up to 10m seas. The conditions were so appealing that some of the crew were discussing buying a piece of real estate on Maatsuyker Island (best not to lose your sense of humour at a time like this).



South West Cape. The wind steadily increases and the seas begin to rise.

The wind abated to 20 to 25kts in the early hours of Sunday 30 Dec 2001. In hindsight, we may have held our trysail longer than necessary and some of our rivals had slipped away during the night. We eventually reverted to a reefed mainsail and the No.3 jib on Sunday morning. Our next waypoint was Tasman Head at the southern tip of South Bruny Island. We are on the home stretch. It is still exciting sailing with the yacht averaging 7 to 8 kts and Jen is fixed to the helm. Sail selection is frustrating as the wind dies down momentarily then comes back with a gust. We round Tasman Head at approximately 0400 on Sunday morning.

At the 0615 sched on Sunday our position was 43° 16' S 147° 26' E. We had Adventure Bay on our port beam and were approaching our first radio check in with 'Indec Race Control' once we are abeam Cape Queen Elizabeth on the southern tip of North Bruny Island. This call was made at 0640 and we now entered Storm Bay at the entrance to the Derwent River estuary. From here it is said that a new race begins as yachts must negotiate the unpredictable and all too often failing breezes of the Derwent River. We can certainly rest assured that we will make Hobart by New Year's Eve but there is still a long way to go. We had since reverted to a full mainsail and No.1 heavy genoa.



Cape Queen Elizabeth on North Bruny Island. We advise 'Indec Race Control' of our estimated time of arrival. Adventure Bay and South Bruny Island are to the left.

We cleared the Iron Pot at the mouth of the Derwent without too much fuss. To our utter amazement the breeze held out for the entire leg up the Derwent River. It was by no means a constant breeze with *Charlotte* being lifted and subsequently knocked by 60° every few minutes. The wind strength ranged from 5 to 25 kts as we made our way up the Eastern shore of the river. All hands were now on deck and trimming sails constantly. Crew sitting on the rail were reading the wind on the water and providing constant feedback to the trimmers and helmsman. Once again, the entire crew performed admirably.

A final call to 'Indec Race Control' was made at White Rock, 8nm from the finish line, to advise them of our pending arrival. The remainder of the race was a beat to windward to the finish line at Battery Point. *Charlotte of Cerberus* crossed the finish line at 10:53:39 on Sunday 30th Dec 2001 to take 4th place in the Performance Handicap Division. Outstanding! The race had taken us three days, twenty three minutes and thirty-nine seconds to complete. Suddenly the overwhelming sense of achievement set in and was emphasised by the rousing three cheers we received from fellow yachties and spectators alike as we pulled into Elizabeth Street pier.

2001 Melbourne to Hobart Performance Handicap Division Results					
Place	SAIL	YACHT	SKIPPER	CORRECTED TIME	FINISH TIME
1	S216	SAN MIGUEL	G CLAPHAM	55:30:58	71:15:58
2	B353	MAGAZAN 53	N MCGUIGAN	55:46:59	71:14:34
3	S1001	ANDROMEDA III	C DAWE	55:59:04	76:35:11
4	3810	CHARLOTTE OF CERBERUS	D THOMPSON	57:20:10	72:23:39
5	R550	RUFFIAN II	J OTTER	57:42:05	71:24:46
6	S521	NOT NEGOTIABLE	M DOLPHIN	57:54:42	77:06:47
7	SM7681	ISLAND TRADER	J CHATHAM	57:55:57	71:57:57
8	S1020	WAVELENGTH	K O'DONNELL	58:27:43	72:37:25
9	M511	MORNING STAR	T GRUNDY	58:43:26	70:55:22
10	SM431	ANACONDA	M CONTESSI	59:07:31	71:14:08
11	R1112	LAURELLE	R BORRETT	59:17:24	68:37:22
12	S91	SEA EAGLE	K CURTIS	59:25:03	70:04:05
13	S321	AGGRO	S COLLIS	59:38:46	71:10:37
14	R186	YOKO	R HEWITT	59:53:28	70:42:36
15	B120	ENTIRE UNDER CAPRICORN	BEDLINGTON/WISE	59:57:20	70:12:21
16	H101	TEVAKE	A FLETCHER	61:43:40	67:45:30
17	SM117	TILTING AT WINDMILLS	T GUNNERSEN	61:47:21	69:20:54
18	WS17	OUTLAW	R SEMMENS	65:52:11	70:26:57
19	PD8	WILD CARD	R EDMUNDS	66:09:01	67:46:37
20	SM541	SPIRIT OF ALICE	M PRESTON	66:22:55	68:55:57
21	SM1400	KONTROL	P BLAKE	69:10:03	64:02:39

## The King of the Derwent

Having achieved 2nd place in the Cock of the Bay and 4th in the Melbourne to Hobart, *Charlotte* was in good standing for the ORCV Sovereign Series, pending a good performance in the King of the Derwent race. About fifty yachts crossed the start line at 1400 on Wednesday 2nd January 2002. With a moderate and bitterly cold sou-westerly blowing, *Charlotte* got away to a good start at the windward end of the line. Our first lap was sailed well and in close quarters with our constant adversary, *San Miguel*. It took us 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete the first lap. This meant that if nothing changed, we would cross the finish line with 30 minutes to spare on the race time limit of 4 hours.



The start of the King of the Derwent with Hobart and Mount Wellington in the background.  
(photo courtesy of Lynne Vaudrey)

Unfortunately, as is typical of the Derwent River, the breeze began to fade on the second windward leg. Toward the top mark we were in a good position in front of *Island Trader*, *Wavelength* and *San Miguel*. The light breeze began to swing to the north and so it was decided to try the 0.5oz masthead spinnaker. The vagaries of the wind on the Derwent were now obvious as another yacht, already around the windward mark and heading in the opposite direction only 100 metres away, sailed by with a spinnaker up as well.



*Charlotte* prepares for the start of the King of the Derwent. There is a promising 15kt souwesterly blowing at this stage.  
(photo courtesy of Lynne Vaudrey)

We eventually rounded the windward mark but were struggling to achieve 1 knot of boat speed. It was now obvious that we could not possibly make the finish line in time. We pressed on regardless as did the remainder of the smaller yachts in the fleet, until a committee boat eventually removed the mark for which we were sailing. A disappointing DNF (did not finish) was the result.



Peter Blake's *Kontrol* (formerly *Cadibarra VII*). Line honours winner in the Melbourne to Hobart race and the only yacht contesting the ORCV Sovereign series to record a finish in the King of the Derwent.  
(photo courtesy of Lynne Vaudrey)

Only one yacht from the Melbourne to Hobart fleet recorded a result in the King of the Derwent. Consequently, Peter Blake's water ballasted yacht *Kontrol* won the Sovereign Series. Gary Clapham, the Commodore of the ORCV and skipper of the yacht *San Miguel*, spoke for all of the smaller yachts when he so diplomatically expressed his disappointment at the race committee for not having shortened the course as soon as it became obvious that more than half the fleet would not complete the race. Anyhow, that's yacht racing; and its also history.

The Swedish maxi *Nicorette* won line honours in the 2002 King of the Derwent. During the trophy presentation at the Wrest Point Casino, the skipper Ola Astraddson suggested they were lucky to finish due to the light winds. (photo courtesy of Lynne Vaudrey)



# The Return Passage

At 0810 on the morning of Thursday 3rd January, *Charlotte* departed Elizabeth Street pier. Two of the crew left us in Hobart. Jeff had to attend a wedding back home and Murray was off to enjoy more of Tasmania with his wife and children. In the mean time their replacements, Sub-lieutenant Steve Ford and Air Force Sergeant Kav Windsor, had flown in to join us. We made a brief stop at the Derwent Sailing Squadron to fuel and top up our food supplies before commencing our return journey up the east coast of Tasmania.

## Port Arthur

Having sailed out through Storm Bay and rounding Cape Raoul at the southern tip of the Tasman Peninsula, we came to our first port of call, Port Arthur. Here we once again rafted up with our friends on *Wavelength* and got to know some of the crew on *Spirit of Alice*, who rafted outboard of us. The crew took the opportunity to walk among the famous ruins before heading to the Port Arthur Hotel for an enjoyable dinner.



As we approach Port Arthur we must first round the Isle of the Dead (right foreground). This is where convicts were buried in unmarked graves.

Below – The ruins at Tasmania’s infamous penal settlement, Port Arthur



Above – *Charlotte* lies alongside directly below the ruins.

## **Wineglass Bay**

We departed Port Arthur at 0515 on Friday 4th January. Having rounded Tasman Island and Cape Pillar, we turned nor-east for Cape Sonnerat on Schouten Island. We then cleared Cape Forestier at the north-eastern tip of the Freycinet Peninsula and turned toward our next anchorage: the scenic, and very popular Wineglass Bay. As we lowered our mainsail to enter the bay we sighted a young Orca (killer whale) about 50 metres off our port bow and heading out to sea. Shortly after a couple of much larger relatives were spotted. We have no desire to get any closer as whales like to 'scratch their backs' on small boats and can cause damage.



Wineglass Bay, a popular anchorage for yachts returning from Hobart

Once safely at anchor we inflated our tender. After rowing Steve over to *Under Capricorn* to catch up with friends, Craig went ashore for a walk along the beach. The remainder of the crew stayed on board for a spot of fishing. Chris, who had never caught a fish before, pulled up a good sized Australian Salmon. While he 'tooled about' admiring his catch the fish took the opportunity to free itself and leap back over the side. One small Flathead and one same sized Salmon made up our catch and once filleted provided just enough meat to feed a small child. Regardless, a relaxing and enjoyable evening was had by all. As the sun went down the crew settled into an anchor watch. One person is on deck at all times throughout the night to ensure we do not drag our anchor.

## **Bicheno**

We departed Wineglass Bay at 0800 on Saturday 5th January. We headed north for the fishing port of Bicheno. This was to be a brief stop for a few more supplies. Some vigilant navigation was required as we negotiated our way through 'The Gulch', a very narrow stretch of water between Governor Island. While alongside we were almost deafened by the sound of the thousands of Crested Terns that breed on the tiny Governor Island. With everyone back on board we departed Bicheno at 1240. At this stage our next stop was planned for Refuge Cove at Wilson's Promontory.

As we passed Saint Helen's Point we listened in on a weather forecast that included a Gale warning for Bass Strait on Monday. If we continued to Refuge Cove we would be stuck there for a number of days. Neil had to be back for a flight out of Melbourne on Tuesday 8th January and as it is not prudent to try to outrun, nor sail into the face of a gale, we opted to head into Beauty Point on the Tamar River.

Our next challenge was to navigate Bank's Strait. This is the stretch of water between the north-eastern tip of Tasmania and Clarke Island in the Furneaux group. The tide can run through here at a rate of up to 3 knots and if the wind opposes it the sea becomes extremely short and steep. Fortunately for us on this occasion there was very little breeze and the tide pushed us through at a brisk 10 knots.



'The Gulch' at Bicheno with Governor Island opposite.

## ***Beauty Point / Launceston***

We arrived at Low Head on the ebb tide which slowed our passage to Beauty Point. At 1220 on Sunday 6th of January we pulled into our berth in the Beauty Point Marina. Neil organised a bus into Launceston then a flight to Melbourne for the next morning. Craig took the opportunity to catch up with a friend who lives on the north coast of Tassie. A wise move considering the lack of things to do in Beauty Point.



Cataract Gorge, Launceston

For the remainder of the crew the next two days passed slowly and we decided to spend our final day in Launceston. We caught a bus from Beauty Point on Tuesday morning and travelled the 50 kilometres to Launceston. Directly opposite the bus stop we found a sports store. After checking out the huge range of fishing tackle, Steve purchased a very impressive 'squid jigger' to stream behind the boat on the way home. We also visited Cataract Gorge, caught a movie and whiled away the time before the bus arrived to take us back to the boat.



We manage to get one last spinnaker run in on the way home. Low Head and the Tamar River are in the background

Although the weather had been pleasant enough during our stay, the wind had been blowing a gale with speeds of up to 45 knots across Bass Strait. Many returning yachts had also taken refuge in Beauty Point as well as Devonport and Flinders Island. Conditions finally abated on Wednesday 9th January and we bid our final farewell to Tassie for this trip and made our way up the Tamar River.



Steve keeps a close eye on our sail trim

The wind was light and variable at the start of our final leg and after a brief spinnaker run and a little more motor sailing a fresh breeze set in from the nor-east and we enjoyed a perfect reach for the remainder of the journey home. The only incident to occur was the loss of the 'squid jigger' to what must have been, going by the sever marks in the broken 80 pound line, some huge sea creature with big teeth.

We entered Westernport Bay at 1305 on Thursday 10th January and were pleased to be greeted by the DMS vessel *Reliance* bearing gifts of the liquid amber variety. At 1550 we pulled alongside HMAS Cerberus. *Charlotte* and her crew had completed an unforgettable adventure.



Home to 'Sunny Cerberus'.

### **A Special Note**

This journal would not be complete without recognising the contribution of the 9th member of *Charlotte's* team. Chief Petty Officer Fred Smoker commenced the 2001 sailing series as the mainsail trimmer aboard *Charlotte* and looked forward to competing in the Westcoaster. Fred is a competent and reliable crew member who in addition to his sailing skills, is appreciated for his sense of humour and kind demeanour. Unfortunately Fred had to withdraw from the campaign at the eleventh hour due to illness. A painful decision for anyone to have to make. We know that Fred was thinking of us while we were out there and I know I speak on behalf of all of the crew when I say we certainly missed him.



# The Map of Tassie

