

## Inverloch Classic Wooden Dinghy Regatta 2020

### Judging Panel Report

The members of this year's judging panel were:

Mark Rimington  
Geoff Cole  
Leo Lubransky  
Ian Jones  
Reuben Kent  
Leigh McNolty

Arriving at SGYC on the Saturday morning as the regatta opens is the beginning of the revelation of newly discovered boats and painstaking restorations that have occurred over the past year.

For our judges, the interest and excitement in seeing the array of boats entered in the regatta is tinged with a bit of nervousness about how we are going to choose award winners from such a high quality and diverse collection of entrants.

More than just the condition of the woodwork, sails and gear, the judges are also interested in the story of the boat and its owner. How did the owner find this boat? What was involved in getting the boat to this condition? What past glories, difficulties and near disasters are in the history of this boat? What research went into finding the boat and discovering its story.

These are not just stories of technical achievement, although there are plenty of those. They are stories about a passionate interest in restoring, sailing and racing these unique craft and a desire to share that passion, knowledge and experience with others.

For each award it is important to give recognition to the boats and owners the panel considered and shortlisted before coming to a decision. These are hard decisions when there is so much to admire about each boat and the stories behind them.

The first award on our list is the **Best sailing dinghy in original condition**. The panel see this award as going to a boat which has been found languishing unused, and is brought to the regatta without having much restoration work.

A previous winner, the VJ "Vengeance" has a stunning history, having belonged to champion Laurie Chivers in WA. Vengeance was in the yard again this year and was admired by the judges for originality and the careful stewardship of the owners.

We have a growing number of Rainbow class boats attending the regatta and they are an Australian design with an illustrious racing history. Trilby Parise's "Moonraker" made a great impression as a representative of the class, sailing in all the regatta events with a family crew.

We chose the 145 dinghy “The Alibi” owned by Pete Keily as the winner of this award. The boat was rescued from a shed where it had been stored for many years. The Keily brothers collected the boat and put it straight into action with some racing success over the regatta weekend. It is great to see a fast, Australian designed dinghy brought out of retirement and being sailed so well. It is the kind of story this regatta aims to promote.



*(Photo : Tim Wilson)*

The second award is the **Best presented sailing dinghy**. This is an award for a boat which has had significant restoration work to bring it back from being lost to use on the water. This award was the most difficult for the panel to decide due to the large number of high level contenders for the prize.

Andrew and Marion Chapman’s newly rebuilt and relaunched Gwen 12 graced the inlet with magnificently restored varnish work and all details as original as possible. It was great to see Andrew and Marion sailing together so well in a fast and challenging class of boat.

Mark Rimington arrived with his newly restored St Kilda 8 foot dinghy “Keith”. This boat was built by Mouldcraft using their hotmoulding technique. Excellent restoration work has been done on the boat and the sails are original. This must be the only example of the class still sailing.

The panel decided to present this award to John Fairfax and his VJ “Walkaway” for the story of rescue and renovation of this boat and John’s tireless involvement in promoting the classic Australian wooden racing dinghy scene. John found the boat in NSW and restored it to such a high standard that the previous owner asked how he had replaced the deck. He

hadn't, the original deck was painstakingly sanded and varnished. See more about VJ's and many other classes on John's Victorian Classic Dinghy Network website.

The photo shows John walking away with "Walkaway" on an Inverloch sandbank. Anderson's Inlet is a tricky place to sail a VJ singlehanded (Photo : Tim Wilson)



The award for the **Best Presented Sailing Boat** is aimed at the boats of older and more traditional design, not necessarily a racing class. The range of distinctive one off designs that participate in the regatta has been a feature every year.

Phil Jude brought his Wayfarer class dinghy from Northern Victoria to sail on the inlet and contend with the tides and shallows over the weekend events. Remarkable ocean voyages have been made in these large cruising dinghies, but there are very few examples in Australia.

Tony Landy's Ian Oughtred designed Arctic Tern is another large cruising dinghy that caught the eye of the judges with its sweeping sheerline and Scandinavian heritage. The new spars and sails looked perfectly suited to this modern interpretation of a clinker double ender.

This year the award went to Reuben Kent's "Gussie" which is an Arch Logan, Silver Fern design. The class is well known in New Zealand where Arch Logan was a legendary designer and boatbuilder. Reuben completed an extensive restoration of the boat a few years ago and sailed the boat hard in the regatta races (to the point of a capsize in the Sunday race). This is a brilliant example of a traditional carvel planked, copper fastened racing class.



*Photo : Oliver Hartas*

The **Best Moth Class Dinghy** award is made in recognition of the central role Inverloch has in the history of this international development class. The class has been well represented in the list of entries in the regatta every year.

Ralph Ballard exhibited (but did not sail) his Mark II Moth “Vixen” which is one of the oldest Moths still in sailing condition. The restoration included rebuilding the original mast which shows the complexity of the rigs used even in those early days.

There were a number of Moths sailing again this year but the boat that stood out for its originality and condition was the double chine scow Moth “Skeeta” owned and sailed by Graeme Cox. The boat has changed owners amongst the keen group of vintage Moth sailors but is now sailed regularly at Albert Park Lake as part of the group that is creating a revival of the class there.



This photo of “Skeeta” shows Graeme’s son Harry at the helm. ( *Photo : Tim Wilson* )

The Australian Sailfish class was well represented again this year making it a difficult task for the judges to choose a winner for the **Best Sailfish award**. However a boat and owner who had not attended the regatta before were the well-deserved recipients of this year’s prize.

Peter Weiss brought his “Fish and Chips” to the regatta to be part of the largest gathering of Sailfish sailors in Victoria. Peter is Treasurer of Cairn Curran Yacht Club, and also wanted to join the number of keen sailors from Central Victoria including Ralph Ballard who have been coming to the Inverloch regatta since it began.

The boat is the last known example of the boats built by David Parnaby who built a number of Australian Sailfish for members at Cairn Curran. Number 581 “Fish and Chips” is an interesting example of his work. David not only built the hull but also the mast, boom and sail. Some of the fittings were made by a local engineer who owned the boat from new.

A few years ago the boat was given to Ralph Ballard who passed it on to Peter. Peter has done a “back to bare wood” restoration and brought the boat to pristine condition.





(Photo : Greg Barwick)

As a final point, the panel would like to thank the sponsors who generously provide such the valuable and useful prizes to the award winners at the regatta. It is yet another incentive to find wonderful old boats, restore them and bring them to the regatta.

See you there next year.

Leigh McNolty