



THE RANGER SPRINT SERIES
SYDNEY AMATEUR SAILING CLUB

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Six races in two days: 20th July and 3rd August 2014



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"Cliff Gale left school in 1898 aged twelve, and knew arithmetic but had insufficient mathematics to be useful in boat design. As a boy he lived at Woolwich and the family owned a rowing skiff for transport and pleasure. From thirteen to nineteen he made in excess of one hundred rough sailing models, each one progressively different, which he tested from the skiff. At nineteen he felt he had completed his design self-education.

Prior to *Ranger* he had three boats built to his design. In *Ranger* he wanted a vessel with no handling vices, good sailing qualities, good under power, a good sea boat, capable of sleeping four, a big cockpit and a wide cabin sole. Having completed the plans he knew this would be his last boat.

An overriding requirement was to have a small vessel easy to rig, so he could enjoy his great passion of single handed sailing. With her original small lug main, she was ideal and he cruised her as such for thirty three years. *Ranger* is such a great load carrier, I once took seventeen adults to witness a ship launching. Cliff told me she would have had different lines if he had intended to race her. However he did in time start racing her, beginning in 1933."

* * *

"When I retired as skipper of *Ranger* last April, I was interested in proposing short windward leeward races for the Rangers, to establish relative boat speeds of the day. As a long time handicapper I have always been interested in viewing the whole event and I enjoyed these races much more than if I had been a competitor.

Rangers being short fat heavy boats, I have always been amazed at their speed under sail, and I saw this as an opportunity for anyone interested to judge them as a class fleet, a first for the type."

Bill Gale



Cliff Gale enjoying his passion for the single-handed sailing of *Ranger*

The Ranger Class Sprint Series

In the motor world, if you are a little unhinged or just part of the faithful, you would be riding a Harley, BSA or Norton; driving a Morgan, restoring an MG TC or TF, Austin Healey or XK, no matter what your everyday transport might be. There is a boating equivalent for the particularly unhinged: it revolves around maintaining and sailing an historic wooden eighteen footer, or Cousta Boat or even worse building or restoring a Ranger and then spending your spare time learning to race it.

Cliff Gale of course did not know this when he designed *Ranger* and her built in 1933. He wanted a cruising boat with working boat roots and a lug rig that he could handle himself plus some space below to accommodate Mrs. Gale - who had long suffered on his previous very spartan vessels. Little did he know that he was creating a Sydney Harbour legend; a deity to the particularly unhinged and an oddity to others. They have the lot. Not only are they built of wood, but they have a gaff/gunter rig, runners and a bowsprit, sub-adult headroom, some accommodation, space for a loo (not very private) and a decent cockpit crammed into their 24 foot length. Their spiritual home is Mosman Bay, home of the SASC; and the altar at which they practice is Sydney Harbour.

The faithful gathered at the altar on Saturday the 7th June 2014 for a very serious event: “The Ranger Class Sprint Series”. It was a crisp blue sky, Sydney winter day, with a breeze mainly from the south at about 8 knots at 10:30am building to 18 to 20 knots at 11:15, and 16 to 18 knots at midday; with absolutely flat water and a harbour devoid of boats owing to a long weekend coupled with an inclement forecast the previous evening. This kept the big power boats in their marina berths. Inclement forecasts do wonders for the serenity of Sydney Harbour and should be encouraged.

The participants in the ritual were *Ranger*, *Cherub*, *Vagrant* and *Vanity*; vessels of varying ages all the way back to 1933 (*Ranger*) and 2001 (*Vanity*). Absolutely similar in design concept with some differences, most of which are not discernible to the eye whether in profile or below the waterline. *Cherub* is of course a convert from bermudan to gaff rig, and has been accepted back into the fold. The ritual itself consisted of a three-race sprint series: a novel event for this kind of boat, and overseen by Billy Gale the anointed high priest of gaff-rigged boats on Sydney Harbour. What’s more, the ritual was amazing. There were even classic spectator craft in attendance out on the fringes, in the form of the 19th century cutter *Kelpie* (the Maple-Brown family), the recently restored 8 metre *Defiance* (Nicole Shrimpton), *Arinda* designed by Len Randall in W.A. (Leanne Gould), and the Walter Reeks designed, Sydney Heritage Fleet steam launch, the *Lady Hopetoun*. *Captain Amora* of course was the starters’ boat with a diligent and competent crew.

The instructions were simple: three short windward and leeward races (i.e. two legs only) with a scratch start, starboard rounding and no covering whether upwind or down. Each boat was required to carry a crew of five, plus spinnakers. The concept was to try and determine the relative speed differences between the four boats rather than the helm and crew. The instructions made it sound like a sedate picnic style outing in classic boats, a sort of passive comparative test. That notion of course could not have been further from the reality. The spectacle was nothing short of full scale racing. It was as if some ancient chariots had been put onto an oval track with aggressive drivers, spirited horses and the instruction “go for it”. The actual results are set out below and those present will attest that the racing was even closer than the times suggest.

A review of the email traffic that evening and the following day gives several versions of what actually took place, with some factual content - and of course considerable other matters that may be difficult to authenticate. However, the exchange that went on for several days was, or is, indicative of the fervour of the faithful. Starts were critical, particularly in Race 1, with a line heavily biased towards the pin end and a port-hand start in about 18 knots. In the same race, three boats converged on the first mark at the end of a one leg beat, within five to seven seconds of each other and the fourth boat very close behind. The pictures that accompany this article really tell the remainder of the racing story without many further words being required. Enough to say that the racing was aggressive and close, and as good as any one design racing in any class of boat whether classic or modern. The gathering back at the SASC was as euphoric as the racing with the younger Maple-Browns busy at the sausage sizzle, the Commodore handing out the hardware - with *Vagrant* being triumphant; and Billy Gale ably assisted by Sean Langman attending to the eulogies. A day to remember.

As for the boats and their relative speed, it is probably correct to say that there is little difference between *Vagrant*, *Vanity*, *Cherub* and *Ranger*; and in a proper full-length race, between the four of them, the probabilities are that helm crew and tactical choices will play a bigger role in determining the better boat on the day. The little difference in speed that did stand out was probably the result of differences in the MacDiarmid Sails on each of the boats that varied in age, amount of use, cloth type and roach shapes.

One last matter that does require words is the method by which the Commodore declared the winner. As this was a sprint series, I would have thought that the winner would have been the boat that spent the least time racing over the series. That result can be calculated by adding up the total of the elapsed times for each of the boats; this calculation gives a different result. Indeed the statistics generated by this particular result sheet can take up a lot of winter leisure time for the statistically-minded devotee.

PARTICIPANTS

Ranger: Marni Raprager, Merrill Barker, Ross Shaw, Greg Sproule, Ian Hansen.

Vanity: John Diacopoulos (in the absence of John Crawford), Liam Timms, Lise Mellor, David Drabble, Philip Kinsella.

Cherub: Peter Scott, Mark Pearse, Marika Pearse, Philip Jones, Ben Slee.

Vagrant: Sean Langman, Cathy Langman, Peter Langman, Belinda Tayler, Peter Inchbold.

STARTERS

Captain Amora: Charles Maclurcan, John Jeremy, Tony Clarkson, Frank Walsh.

IN ATTENDANCE

Kelpie: The Maple-Browns en masse, (Merrin, Dugald and 5 junior Maple-Browns)

Defiance: Nicole Shrimpton, Gordon Hind

Arinda: Leanne Gould, Bill Gale, Peter Young, Sue Coulson, Anita Willey, Jackie Hope-Alan.

Bordeaux: Peter Zehnder, Alice Murphy, Denny Keogh, Megan Keogh, Judy Wogowitsch, Mary Kinsella, Sally Shaw.

Lady Hopetoun: Sydney Heritage Fleet: crew unknown.

It doesn't come much better than that, no matter the forum.

Thank you Amateurs.

John A. Diacopoulos

sail number	name	place	start time	finish time	elapsed time
RACE 1					
112	<i>Vagrant</i>	1	11:05	11:25:59	0:20:59
A4	<i>Cberub</i>	2	11:05	11:26:25	0:21:25
A2	<i>Vanity</i>	3	11:05	11:26:27	0:21:27
A1	<i>Ranger</i>	4	11:05	11:26:46	0:21:46
RACE 2					
A2	<i>Vanity</i>	1	12:00	12:23:55	0:23:55
A4	<i>Cberub</i>	2	12:00	12:24:13	0:24:13
112	<i>Vagrant</i>	3	12:00	12:24:14	0:24:14
A1	<i>Ranger</i>	4	12:00	12:24:18	0:24:18
RACE 3					
112	<i>Vagrant</i>	1	12:40	13:04:11	0:24:11
A2	<i>Vanity</i>	2	12:40	13:04:33	0:24:33
A1	<i>Ranger</i>	3	12:40	13:05:23	0:25:23
A4	<i>Cberub</i>	4	12:40	13:05:24	0:25:24

RACE 4					
112	<i>Vagrant</i>	1	11:05	11:40:55	0:35:55
A4	<i>Cberub</i>	2	11:05	11:41:59	0:36:59
A2	<i>Vanity</i>	3	11:05	11:44:08	0:39:08
A1	<i>Ranger</i>	4	11:05	11:44:10	0:39:10
RACE 5					
112	<i>Vagrant</i>	1	12:20	12:55:06	0:35:06
A4	<i>Cberub</i>	2	12:20	12:59:51	0:39:51
A1	<i>Ranger</i>	3	12:20	13:04:23	0:44:23
A2	<i>Vanity</i>	4	12:20	13:05:22	0:45:22
RACE 6					
A1	<i>Ranger</i>	1	13:15	13:44:07	0:29:07
112	<i>Vagrant</i>	2	13:15	13:44:47	0:29:47
A2	<i>Vanity</i>	3	13:15	13:46:16	0:31:16
A4	<i>Cberub</i>	4	13:15	13:48:14	0:33:14





Ranger in the 1950's; Cliff Gale, with Bill doing the foredeck.



RACE 1











Ranger in the 1950's, Cliff Gale at the helm.



RACE 2



















Ranger in 1956, Bill Gale at the helm.



RACE 3









More Rangers

Why would one contemplate getting up early on a peaceful winter Sunday morning and pressuring oneself to don winter sailing gear and an overweight warm jumper, hop into a car, drive to the Amateurs, find a parking spot and ensure that the heavy load to be carried to the club consists of one way consumables - with very little thrown into the bag that has to be brought back up the hill. It must be the thought of a repeat mystical experience, as on the cold but sunny morning of 3rd of August at least thirty faithful devotees did exactly that; whether they be skippers and crew aboard participating Ranger class boats, the starters, or the dedicated spectators on the yachts *Bordeaux*, (Peter Zehnder, Alice Murphy, Gaffers' High Priest Gale plus faithful), *Arinda* (Leanne Gould and more Ranger devotees), *Mister Christian* (David Salter), or *Maris* (Tiare Tomaszkeski and crew). The mystical event or ritual was the second "Ranger Class Sprint Series".

Ranger, *Cherub* and *Vanity* were joined by *Vagrant*, which had ventured from west of the bridge on her own bottom, accompanied by a spectator entourage in the guise of John Westacott and guest crew on board the *Malveena*. The Harbour's fifth Ranger *Kilkie* (A3), restored by Alick and Genevieve Osborne, also joined the throng under motor, together with the wishbone ketch *Sana* (David Mathlin), the lovely *Hoana* (Martin van der Wal), and the Maurice Griffiths Gaffer *Reverie* (John and Helen Barclay). There was a rumour that the Cliff Gale designed *Mathana* was also out there somewhere.

The reward for the effort was yet another superb day of sailing on - or watching - four Rangers race three short windward leeward courses; to satisfy the enthusiasm of Billy Gale, who, having retired from racing has ardently taken up the pastime of spectating in much the same way as racehorse owners i.e. one-eyed with a very subjective verbal commentary. Having insisted that *Ranger* had endured bad luck in the first two races, word has it that he was excited beyond belief when Rob Brown (of 18 footer fame) steered his cherished boat to victory (assisted by Ross Shaw, Merrill Barker, Peter McCorquodale and Greg Sproule), ahead of the boat of the series *Vagrant* (Sean, Cathy and Peter Langman, Peter and Claire Inchbold).

The results over the three races of the second series put *Vagrant* in front, with *Ranger* and the always close *Cherub* (Peter Scott, Mark Pearse, Philip Jones, Philip and Ian Kinsella) equal 2nd and *Vanity* 3rd, with John and Holly (snowboarder) Crawford, Lise Mellor, Liam Timms and John Diacopoulos rendering what Crawford refers to as unsolicited and unhelpful gratuitous advice.

The wind was light and variable ranging from west through sou'west to south and south-east; with a short lived easterly slant in Race 1 that put *Vagrant* so far ahead that the rest looked like L-platers. The breeze hovered around 5 to 8 knots with a few puffs struggling to reach 10, and the start shifted from the vicinity of Steele Point in Race 1 to Athol Bay for Races 2 and 3 with clear wind at the correct end of the line being critical.

Once again the concept was to compare boat speed, and once again the grown up children who made up the crews had different thoughts as they tried to thrash each other in the variable breeze both upwind and down. The results for the day however reflect the slight speed difference between the four boats that is accentuated in light weather. *Vagrant* has slightly less wetted surface area and larger mainsail roach than the others, *Cherub* and *Ranger* being very similar and *Vanity* with a different ballast ratio and possibly a greater wetted surface being a smidgen faster in heavier breezes than in the light stuff.

Back at the Club, whilst Leanne Gould volunteered for BBQ duties; frivolity prevailed with the Commodore handing out the usual hardware, and Bill Gale reminding all and sundry how proud he was to see four boats of his father's design racing eighty one years after the launching of the original; and rightfully praising the Club, its staff and directors for the wonderful club spirit that prevails on the part of all involved in the Club's activities. Despite his usual rather lengthy delivery, Bill of course forgot to thank the starters. The team for the day was Charles Maclurcan, John Jeremy, Andre van Stom, Brian Guest and Tony Clarkson; and the job was carried out with the usual precision and lack of fanfare. Thank you starters. One of these days someone will remember you on the day.

Being at the Amateurs is like being in a village isolated from the rest of the world; and after a day like that, the climb back up the hill to reality is almost acceptable. The "Ranger Class Sprint Series" has been now been put back in the cupboard until the winter of 2015.

John A. Diacopoulos

P.S. *Ranger* was built in 1933, *Vanity* in 2001 and several others were built in between. At present there are two more "in build" and another is awaiting restoration by someone yearning for a project. Any takers?

PARTICIPANTS

Ranger: Rob Brown, Merrill Barker, Ross Shaw, Greg Sproule, Peter McCorquodale

Vanity: John Crawford, Holly Crawford, John Diacopoulos, Liam Timms, Lise Mellor

Cherub: Peter Scott, Mark Pearse, Philip Jones, Philip Kinsella, Ian Kinsella

Vagrant: Sean Langman, Cathy Langman, Peter Langman, Peter Inchbold, Claire Inchbold

STARTERS

Captain Amora: Charles Maclurcan, John Jeremy, Andre van Stom, Brian Guest, Tony Clarkson



Ranger in 1952, Bill & Cliff Gale



RACE 4



















*Cliff, Bill and crew watching the 18 footers, 1950's;
the tender was one of Cliff's dinghy designs.*



RACE 5















*Cliff with Mardie Hahn, 1944
(Ranger had been used for an advertisement)*



RACE 6











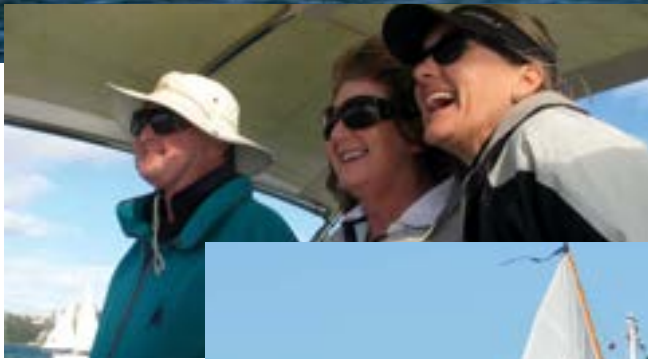




















RANGER
SASC

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PROBRIAL



Ranger A1, 1933





Vagrant 112, 1936





Cherub A4, 1948

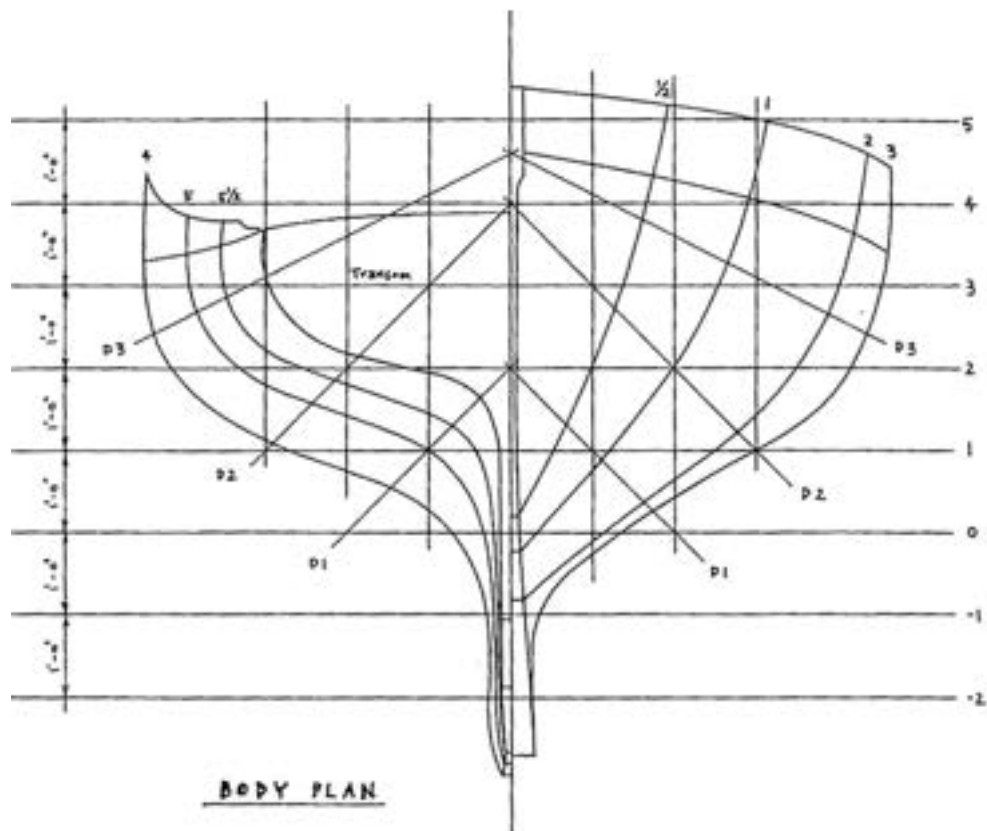




Vanity

S.A.S.C.
A2N

Vanity A2, 2001



BODY PLAN



