The Gorrangai Cup

I posed the question to the crew as we sailed in the Ray Maki series 1 "How about we do the Gorrangai Cup?" The Crew, Frank, Jodie, Keturah, Brian and Alex were all keen so arrangements were made to sail up to Melbourne on the Friday and race back to Queenscliff on the Saturday.

The Gorrangai cup is a race held by the Queenscliff cruising Yacht Club (QLYC) to commemorate the sinking of a mine sweeper sunk in a collision with a Troop Transport early in WW2. About 30 sailors died in the incident. The race is also used to bring Yachts from Melbourne clubs to Queenscliff for the official opening of the sailing season for the QCYC.

The weather promised some challenges, with a predicted head wind to Melbourne and a head wind on our return to Queenscliff. The delivery trip to Sandringham (our over night stop) was uneventful apart from the short steep seas that were encountered. The course was basically a beat to wind the whole way reaching land at Blackrock , then a couple of tacks into Sandringham. The wind was a steady 20 to 25 Kts.

The enthusiasm and anticipation on Jodie's face is obvious
Picture Brian Golland

On arrival at Sandringham we were give a visiting berth close to "Ventura", another Queenscliff yacht. The finger wharf we were on had such illustrious company as "Gold finger", a 60 ft racer and "Calm", a TP52

Sandringham Yacht Club has changed dramatically since I visited there last in the 90's. Commercialism has hit there big time, high class restaurant, function rooms and more boats than you can poke a stick at.

The crew had showers and proceeded up to the restaurant for the evening meal. During the meal we met with the crew of Kinsail and the usual prerace banter ensued.

The morning saw light winds from the North and overcast skies. The start was between the Brighton Yacht club starting tower and a laid buoy to the west of the tower. Nine yachts faced the starter who sounded the start at 10.00. Sundance got a dream start, first over the line with a bear head, in anticipation of a kite hoist.

The intrepid crew of Sundance heading to the start at Brighton
Picture Brian Golland

The race was then a procession on a course of 210m toward the first Mark. The course of the race was simple, West Channel Pile to Starboard, Swan Spit to Starboard, and Queenscliff crk to Port, the finish. The first half of the race had Sundance leading followed by "Kinsale" and "Impetuous". At the half way mark things changed when we all sailed into a hole off the top of the Bellarine Peninsular. We all fluffed around for an hour waiting for the change to come, and come it did, strait on the nose with increasing wind strength to average 30 kts.

The crew of Sundance in conference, preparing for the start
Picture Brian Golland

The crew of "Sundance" settled in for a tacking duel to regain our position at the front of the fleet, number 3 head sail and first reef in the main. Our first trouble began with the clew ring breaking on the number 3. A quick "dance of death" on the bow for a sail change to our number 3 high cut sail, great job and back into it. Buy this time Kinsale had taken over the lead and we were fighting to catch her. Sundance could sail higher and it was our expectation we could over haul her, especially as we were being affected by the flood tide and as long as you have speed height is everything else.

Just prior to the entering the West channel proper "Sundance" was hit by a gust in excess of 40 kts. The result was every hank torn out of the No3. As we struggled to clear the deck we were drifting sideways to starboard our likely destination a side swipe of the West channel pile. We could no make head way so on with the iron topsail and our race was over. A wet but uneventful motor sail to Queenscliff ensued. Of the 9 starters only 3 officially finished.

Kinsale with No4 tucked in and going for the line
Picture Brian Golland

Congratulations to Kinsale, Doug and the crew, the eventual winners on handy cap. A hard fought win in very ordinary conditions for sailing in the Bay.