

The Mirror dinghy is the family sailing class

“The spirit of sailing that brought keen sailors from all over Australia to mix in the warmth of family friendship, and to compete with members of their brotherhood, prevailed throughout the day.”

by Bob Birt “The Man in the Beanie”, 1970 Black Rock National championship invitation race report

Under the name “The Man in the Beanie”, Bob Birt was the tireless editor of MCAV Mirror Reflections for many years – his stories deserve another book. The Birt family regularly travelled from Healesville to Mirror events around Australia to sail their “snub-nosed redhead” – the family built six Mirror dinghies all named Bobalong.

Mirror Sailing in AUS

***The story of the Mirror dinghy in Australia from 1962 to 2012
compiled by Peter Russell, August 2012***

The Mirror dinghy enjoys spirited racing amongst mates

The quote of the day came from the champ (Ian Nichols) himself, in the dressing room after the aggregate race:

“Pity about Rex Fettell wasn’t it?” (a typical grin was evident)

“Pity!” came the astonished reply. “Blimey he only won by six minutes!”

“Yeah! but he sure missed out on some damn fine racing didn’t he?”

by Bob Birt “The Man in the Beanie”, 1970 Black Rock aggregate race meeting report

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Mirror Sailing in AUS

Cover Photo



2004 MacIntyre Cup, Tasmania

The last race of the series was a blast! Kamikaze, Kamikaze II, Pukeko, The Edge at full speed inside Quarterflash & Fantasmic as they bolt for the gybe mark. (photo story: Greg Pullen)

Chapter Photo



2006 Canberra Nationals

Red Hot Chilli Pepper, James Reynolds and Jacob Webster
(photo: Peter Russell)

Music to read by

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mirror mirror on the sea By Brittany Freeman

Baydz1 165 videos Subscribe

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PLEASE LISTEN!!!!

Mirror Mirror on the sea by Brittany Freeman

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=w-JpSi9HLZU

Dedication



For everyone who has enjoyed Mirror sailing in AUS

2003 Hobart World Championship, AUS Team, a portrait in green and gold

Mirror Sailing in AUS

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Mirror Sailing in AUS

INTRODUCTION

by Peter Russell, 2012

The 50th anniversary of Mirror sailing in Australia is 2014 – this record recognises the enjoyment that an inspirational plywood dinghy has given to generations of Australians.



1990 Hervey Bay Nationals, Russell family with Kaelle

My family started its Mirror affair with 41890 *Kaelle* in 1988 to keep me from working seven days a week! An introduction to Mirror rigging by Graeme Dennett at Lake Ginninderra led to over twenty years of Mirror competition and friendships across Australia.

We followed Mirror tradition with building a Blockey kit in 1991 and 69193 *Harmony* took us around Australia to 15 Nationals and to the 1997 Canada and 2003 Hobart World championships.

Our family holidays were Mirror events. The trophy shelf tells a story of enjoyable *Harmony*, Family and Ladies competition shared with Jean and our daughters Ellen and Kate.

Acknowledgements

Mirror Sailing in AUS started out with encouragement from former Mirror sailor Peter Forster as an Australian Capital Territory (ACT) history following Peter's valuable Canberra Yacht Club history released in 2009. I am indebted to Peter for his encouragement to produce a National history and for his contribution of Mirror records and patient editing.

The email record is testament to the belief that Peter Forster, Norm Deane, Mal Hutton and Celia May have shown in this project – without their encouragement this record would have been impossible to complete.

I have been fortunate that Norm Deane has written the Foreword, Norm has been an inspiration to the 'Mirror family' throughout the world.

I am also indebted to generations of State and IMCAA newsletter editors who have kept the Mirror sailing record alive. Jean Birt's gift of her family's MCAV newsletters has filled many gaps in the record.

The record relies on articles published by Australian Sailing, Modern Boating, Seacraft, Yachting World and Wooden Boat magazines telling the Mirror story in the words of the day. My thanks to the staff of the National Library of Australia who assisted my search for magazine and newspaper records.

Finally this record would not exist without the enthusiastic support of Mirror sailors who have contributed to its contents with stories, pictures and results. Some of the contributors include:

VIC Tom & Barbara Buxton, Jean & Lynda Birt, Mick Ralph, John & Christine Dance, Stan Mathieson, Rod & Mandy Thomas, Lesley Scott, Peter & Gigi Wright, Rob Cruse

NSW Peter Campbell, Ben Romcke, John Way, Greg Field, Ralph Newman, Andrew Harrop, Allan Jones, David Wormleaton, Celia May, Lachlan Gilbert

SA Mal Hutton, Bob Wright, Peter & David Williams, Susan Roberts, Tom Sag, Ron Fry, Jen Richardson

TAS Norm & Jean Deane, Ian Geard, Mac Story, Steve & Helen Walker, David & Jenny Graney, Mark Barrington, Graeme Moore, Grant Atherton, Greg Pullen, Leigh Edwards

WA John Sclater, Paul Eldrid, David Pilbeam, Julian Frayne, David Gellatly, Mark Pitt, Geoff Wilson, Paul Taylor, Rik Thornton, Jenny Honeybun

ACT Syd Comfort, John Kennedy, Graham Giles, Peter Forster, Graeme Dennett, Kate Russell

QLD John Broadbent, Brett Buckley, Kay West, Marc Randall, John Price, John & Katie Cook, Rob Sykes

I would be happy to correct any errors and omissions in future editions. After four years of compiling this record I am aware that this is just the beginning of telling the story of Mirror sailing in Australia.

Sailing Seasons

Please note that I have referred to sailing years by the second year of the sailing season to simplify event titling – sailing season 2009-10 is titled 2010.

Mirror Sailing in AUS

FOREWORD

by Norm Deane OAM, 2010

For tens of thousands of Australians of all ages the Mirror Sailing Dinghy has been one of the highlights of their lives. For almost all of those who have had the privilege of being part of the wonderful 'Mirror family', the Mirror stands out as a highlight of their lives.

One significant characteristic of the family has been the wide age range of its members. Fathers and mothers sailing with their children have had their family bonds strengthened and enriched by being together out on the water. With so much to learn and the joy of meeting others in a friendly environment, great and valuable associations have been experienced. Numerous life-long friendships have been developed.

This book, celebrating 50 years since the Mirror was introduced into Australia, records most of the important events that have been hallmarks over those years. It also covers the origins of the class in the UK. A number of prominent members have reviewed and contributed to its content, but the book only exists because of Peter Russell's vision, enthusiasm and hard work. Peter has put an enormous amount of time and effort in gathering information and researching all aspects of the class over the years. We all owe Peter a huge amount for all he has done to record our past and present and in so doing providing us with a wonderful record of one of the most important aspects of each of our lives.

Thank you Peter for everything.



2006 Tasmanian Mirror Legends Regatta, setting out for another sail, International and Montrose Bay Mirror great Norm Deane ready for the challenge with crew Rhys Witt (photo: Greg Pullen)