

Frank Russell, Designer / Sailmaker.

Frank has designed the whole gambit of boats including Scows as well as the more conventional types of International R/C yachts.

It wouldn't be possible to list all his designs here but some that I do remember vividly were the Marbleheads: Zero, Woodpecker, Abacus and Paper Tiger M and a whole host of 10 raters including the 'Larrikin Scow', 'Pandas' and Phoenix collection. A Class in ET, Alien and Spray Pak, to name just a few.

Frank was also into sail making in a big way. For he had a reputation for doing it right in everything he did. A little anecdote to this came my way, a tale was related to me many years ago by Phil Page (the Central Coast one). He said he was making a Phoenix 10 rater at home, for Phil lives near Frank and he was giving Phil a hand with making the boat. Phil said he took hours carefully gluing the deck beams in on the hull, making sure they were square and in the right place, wiping the excess glue away and positioning the keel box. Then he took the boat around to Frank to have his work checked so he could proceed to the next stage. Frank took one look at it and reefed them all out and told him to start again and it had to be done properly the next time!



One of the great things about the designs of Frank Russell's is that they always came with a set of drawings or a set of plans could be obtained for all his boats and still can. And another thing I liked was that he was trying to improve his designs gradually in a constructive way from say the 'Zero' through the 'Woodpecker' to the 'Abacus' boats.

I owned a 'Woodpecker' that Frank raced and won the Australian Marblehead Championship with (KA917). I bought it from him for some low ridiculous price (\$650). The 'Phoenix', a 10 rater seemed to be modeled after the 'Woodpecker' design for not only did it look similar but had the same distinctive wide, sloped transom. Frank used all the information he could gather from every source to design his boats and one notable theory was, that I remember and I quote (AMYA newsletter 1992) " it has become harder to design a hull that will porpoise when pressed off the wind rather than just bury. A trick borrowed from multi- hulls is to allow the Center of Balance to move forward as the hull is submerged by rig pressure. This was a technique perfected in the 'Woodpecker'....

I remember in the 1983 Nationals in Sydney, he and Mike Newman both entered Ten Rater Scows for the races and I suppose the only way to describe these boats is; that they looked to me like "flattened fruit boxes". Wide fronted and wide transoms with twin rudders for when these boats heeled, a normal positioned rudder wouldn't

function properly. Surprisingly these boats sailed very well and the speed down wind had to be seen, to be believed.

Again I don't think I can list all the championship he won for there are so many.

Later Frank went into the official side of sailing, served stints as technical officer with the ARYA. Formed the World Wide 10 Raters Owner Association. Ran a National Championship. Ran many NSW State championships.

After a long time service to the sport, fell in love with a beautiful lady and married her. They now reside in the Central Coast (of NSW) in the town of Umina. Keeps saying he would like to DO R/C again.....

Well it's been about 8 years now since Frank was on the R/C scene. Since writing this story about 12 months ago. I hear that Frank Russell is returning to R/C sailing and I believe, with strong encouragement from his lovely wife.

Frank said he would be concentrating on Sail Making and some new designs. His plans from his previous stint in R/C yachting, are still available, he said. His contact for sail making is per the ARYA web page "Manufacturers Links".

Stephen Crewes. National Historian 2006.