

The Ballarat Conference for Old Marbleheads.

1&2 October 05.

Did you know that there are groups of people round Australia interested in sailing their old Marbleheads.

Somehow as you go through your life you become attached to your favourite boat. There is just something about it that latches on to your imagination. To some, it has no connection with winning or things in that realm but more like a pleasure in owning it. For you feel as one with it while sailing.

The ones who have (as some people put it) “this weird connection” with their old Marblehead want to go out and tell the world that they like sailing it and actually do it. If this disease were just in a few sailors, then it would indeed be just that. But no, more want to join the fray as time goes by.

It has go to the stage where a whole new club was formed in Victoria recently to sail their old Marbleheads; Ron Attard’s design Maltese Falcons. Previously there was a club at Ballarat that sailed Marbleheads in the big lake there called Lake Wendourie in 1990 circa.

Previously there has been a resurgence in Queensland with their old Marbleheads, which they referred to them locally as the “Clubman” type boats. These proved a success over some time now. Also a new club has been started in Swansee (East Coast) in Tasmania with a really big fleet of Old Marbleheads.

Where it started to come together for us really, there were some local skippers talking in a forum on R/C sailing on the delights of sailing their old Marbleheads, when a plan was put forward to actually get together to race and talk about these old boats.

Now the thing with Old Marbleheads is that for all intents and purposes these Marblehead’s days as a national racing boat are over. But the dreams live on. And the fact remains that the Marblehead Rule has changed since these boats were first measured, when they were new. So much so that they would perhaps not measure under the new current rating rules in any case. Or they

would be too heavy. One of the major things with boats is that they are designed / aged over an extended time period of somewhere in the range of 55 odd years.

Now things change, boats come and go in fashion over an extended time period. So to race these sorts of boats so that they can compete in an equal fashion, needs some special type of racing. No doubt a type of Handicap racing to iron out the age differences of the boats, for a 1956 (circa) "China Boy" may not go as quick as a later Maltese Falcon, for instance. I don't know if you've done any 'Club' Handicap racing but I can tell you it is really great FUN and everybody has a good time.

The regatta that was being organized at Ballarat was done on the basis of the Old Marbleheaders 'getting together' and talking about it in a conference type get together. We don't know how it should be done? We don't know anybody who has run an event like this? But because the event is being run on a different basis to a "normal" racing type of event, we started to call it a conference, where we were going to confer to what or how we were going to do it.

One of the positive things that we think will come out of this is that there are about a 1000 OLD MARBLEHEADS out there right now. Maybe they're missing the sails or fittings or even their keels. The thing to keep in mind is the boats could be well on the way to being on the water again without too much trouble.

I heard that one of the old Marbleheads that sailed in the first Marblehead Vane National Championship in 1964/5(circa) is now running around again under radio. I've got the 1976 (circa) AMYA (USA) national championship Marblehead, Epic, the "476" that I will be sailing in Ballarat, Victoria in 1&2 Oct.05. Entries from 3 states have come in.

The Eureka Model Yacht Club joined the ARYA recently, so some good things are starting to happen within OLD MARBLEHEADS.

Have you got an Old Marblehead? Dust it off and come and join the 'fray.

Those people interested in Old Marbleheads should contact Dennis on www.radiosailing.ourhobby.com/ or myself shcrewes@bigpond.net.au

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