



Winter Series 2009



SECUMAR Pittwater - Botany Bay - Sydney race

Race Report

Well, what a way to start the 2009 season! Up to 25 knots or more from the south, 2 to 3 metre swells, and whose idea was it to start in Pittwater and go down to Botany Bay?

Anyway, three solo and one double-handed crew faced up to the start line – Lee Condell and Lik Lik the Starting Vessel (thanks Lee!). Eric Frank on Debonair, Tim Jones on Wideload, and yours truly on the renovated Torquil were the three solo skippers - David Bonallo was two-up on Rollercoaster – great to see David back with the fleet.

David set the early pace under spinnaker, with all four yachts bunching up around the windless Barrenjoey headland.

Then the fun started.

Out into a building southerly breeze. Wideload and Torquil under full mains – well for a while anyway...Rollercoaster seeming the most comfortable of the four yachts – sitting up straighter and pointing higher.

After that things went downhill – at least for me – brand new main ripping at 2nd reef point – at least ripping at slide car, so drop main and think for a while under jib alone (still doing over 6 knots) before electing to go back to one reef. (Why didn't I go to three reefs straight away?)

Debonair and Torquil then crossed tacks for a while – one or two of the tacks involuntary – autopilot not handling things very well. By the time I was level with the Heads it was around 1500 hours or later, and after a wave took the lifebouy and light off the transom, I decided to call it a day, and followed Debonair through the Heads.

Meanwhile Wideload and Rollercoaster were staging their own battle, but both eventually retired.

We all got home safely, and live to fight another day – hopefully Saturday 23rd May, racing to Newcastle!

Peter McCorquodale