

## **2016 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race on board Perpetual Loyal**

### **Bradshaw Kellett - 4/1/17**

What a year! We started our program for the 2016 RSHYR in September 2016 when we were given the go ahead to rebuild the forward structure of Perpetual Loyal and replace all running rigging and a small refit to the yacht. These works were completed by contractors Andy Dovell, Midcoast Boat Builders and Sydney Rigging Specialist by the end of November, where we had Loyal crew, myself and Chris Maxted working full time under Joe Akacich's management. We completed these works by the end of November and delivered her to Sydney with 40% of our Hobart squad and few mates.

The RSHYR team finally met together on board on the 12<sup>th</sup> December for the first time and we went sailing for a total of 1.5 hours before the SOLAS Big Boat Race, where we finished second to WOXI and we believe this was the start of our training road to the RSHYR start. We completed a week of solid training with the squad, with ups and downs along the way and then let all crew have a week off from the 20<sup>th</sup> December to race day.

We commenced Boxing Day by departing the dock at 1030 and did our storm sail fly by. With the storm sails packed away, we were sailing under mainsail by midday and did a few legs up and down the harbour to test the waters. Knowing exactly where we wanted to start, we did not rush into the pre-start area until quite late, tacked over and lined her up for the start line. With what now call the Slingsby Sling, we cranked off the start line at full pace and were called water by Scallywag, in which we tacked and burnt them off from to leeward. Perpetual Loyal was now in a solid position and were only succumbed to second position to WOXI once night fell and into the morning.

We had an issue deploying the A2 outside Sydney Harbour, where our bowman John Flannery spent 1.5 hours on the end of the bowsprit changing tacklines over. This was amazing endurance, considering that he was getting tea bagged at 20+ knots boat speed every few seconds. Well done Flanno. Once the tacklines and furlers were sorted, we pushed on to play our own boat race down wind, in which we had to throw a few gybes in, but still stayed in contact with WOXI into the light and fickle airs that presented themselves that night.

The light air was a chance for us to get the boat back into order and prepare ourselves for the drag race that we were expecting to Tasman Island. The breeze came in early on Tuesday morning from the south east and steadily went into the east. This is where Perpetual Loyal got into her groove and we started reeling in WOXI from their three mile advantage. We were at least 500 metres away from WOXI when their keel failed and they went from being fully within sight to us not being able to see them for a second or two. When they were back in visibility, they replied to our VHF calls and were informed to continue on and our assistance was not required.

Our leg across Bass Straight was amazing. Perfect conditions for our girl. R2 (FRO) J5 and full main, with full keel and water, just sending her. This is where we probably recorded our top boatspeed of 30 knots + in 20 knots TWS. We took these reaching conditions all the way across the paddock and ended up running down most of the Tasmanian coast. It was off Eddystone Point where we did not feel that the record was in our grasps, but the breeze filled in and we were informed of the average speeds required to get there and we all instantly knew that it was possible.

We gybed five times to shorten up to Tasman Island (fastest crew ever head to head in RSHYR), with the A2 and whilst preparing to peel to the J2, the breeze lifted up and we were able to carry the A2 all the way around past Cape Raoul and into Storm Bay. The breeze died off a little at the Raoul,

which we just hoisted the J2 and nothing else and then whoosh, breeze on all the way to the finish line. No tacks.

It was an amazing feeling sailing a few miles from the Iron Pot at 1230 in the morning with a spotlight shining onto your boat that is travelling at 20 knots. Thanks to the Tasmanian Water Police for lighting up the sail that Tony Mutter and I were trimming going up the river.

We finished at 0231 Wednesday morning to set a new Rolex SHYR record and what a sensational effort by Anthony Bell, the team and the yacht that I had major involvement in preparing. Job satisfaction, yes. Happy Boat Captain, yes.