

THEY MAY BE SLACK BUT THEY'RE NOT SLOW

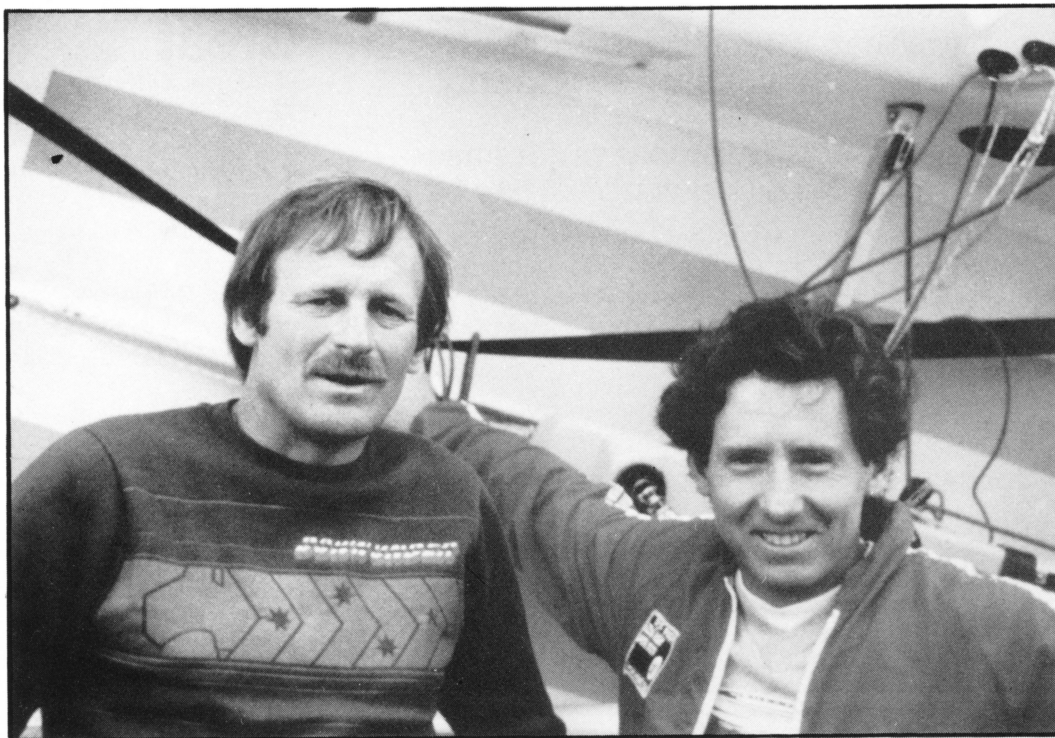
Peter Hewson describes the slack Aussie rig and sailor

The development of the Australian rig, WOW what's that? Maybe I should start with the development of the Australian 505 sailor. To understand us (some say it's impossible) you may have to understand our style of sailing, and our sailing conditions.

First of all we sail a season of approx. 22 point score races, plus national and state titles. Therefore you are meeting the same boats and crews every weekend for approximately six months and this results in a very close, friendly, competitive relationship, which shows in the lack of protests involving Australians at international events. Our whole idea is to stay out of trouble, and just sail the boat as fast as you can, for the longest possible period. Which leads to a high degree of sailing on that elusive edge, and in itself, is the whole fundamental of sailing a 505 fast over a whole course.

We feel it is not how many adjustments you have or how well you use them, it's just to get your boat going as fast as the others in your fleet and to learn to 'sail faster'. I'm sure every 505 sailor has experienced the feeling of working the boat through the gusts and waves and feeling the boat accelerate and stay on maximum speed for a short while, and then bog down again. Our whole basis of sailing every week helps to tune ourselves against opponents who are not going to bog you down and fight over every inch of water, which inevitably slows everybody down, but to keep the pressure of sailing the boat on that maximum edge right through an entire race, without any side tracks or mental blocks.

Right, well so much for the mental attitude. As for the boats, well they are just something you order from the Kyrwoods and just sit on! Well something like that, really us Aussies do not have the same preoccupation with adjustments and measurements that others seem to have a need for. If you ask an Aussie what his mast rake is, he would tell you



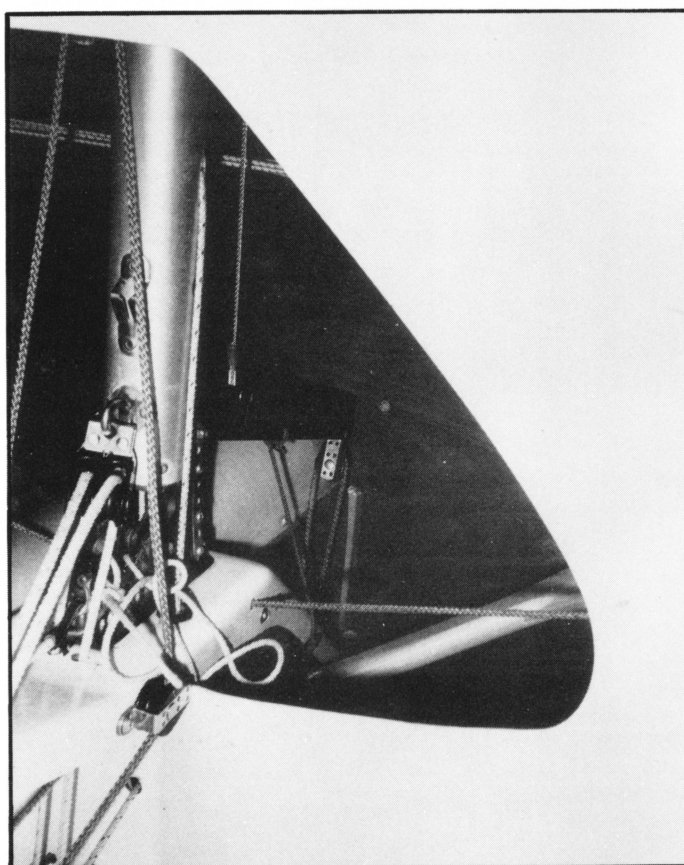
Eric Locketyear

Peter Hewson, right, and Alyn Ovenden in Japan after they tied for first place in the Pacific Championship. **Below:** Lever forward of the mast is for jib halyard adjustment on a Kyrwood boat. Very often it is the only means of adjusting the rig on Australian boats.

something like this, when the wind is blowing and you're vang'ing hard, your boom should be hitting the sidedecks (evident by the scars in the decks). We do not have measurements of our boats and rigs, we go by what we feel is right.

One of the things that stands out, in my mind, is the development in our masts since we started using Goldspar masts in 1983, the year that Lake Macquarie Fleet got 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th in the Worlds. Since then we have felt very versatile with our rigs which seem to work well with our small crews, depowering automatically as the wind blows. Goldspars are a spun, tapered, seamless, aluminium mast with a riveted track and a wall thickness of 1.7mm. It does not seem to matter how they are rigged as all our top boats are different, e.g:

Dean Blatchford and Tom Woods have hydraulics and an adjustable forestay. Paul Remington has a fixed rig, no adjustment at all.



Terry Lawton

We have an adjustable fore-stay and fixed side stays. We feel that these three boats have exactly the same speed depending on how well we sail them. Before we left for the Worlds in Germany, we each won the same amount of races, and since we have been home the same can be said, with the occasional win from Terry Kyrwood when he sails.

Another example of our attitude (if it feels right do it approach) is in our foils, most of which are home made or made by friends, all different shapes, sizes and weights, but no gybing boards.

Now for our secret weapon: BEER. At our Lake Macquarie Fleet it is quite common to have two, three or four schooners of beer before the race, and quite often the only way to get us out of the bar and onto the water is for our starter Linc (who happens to be my brother) to bring his boat into the Marina and, cursing us, fire the 10 min. gun right outside the club.

From then on it's a scramble to down drinks, rush for the door, launch boats and just make the gate start, as the pathfinder sails off. Hence the glass or can holders in our boat as Alyn my crew always manages to get that last shout



in, which we usually drink on the way to the start or the first available opportunity after that. (That's one way to learn to sail the boat flat). So you can see we are a pretty slack lot.

All I can say is see you in the bar at Enoshima '85 ●

Neil Harrison and Nick Paterson with their Australian rig on a two-sail reach at the Cork Worlds.

Peter Hewson and his crew Alyn have only been sailing together since 1983. Some say

that they were the first people to challenge the stiff American rig. With their loose, flexible rig in the 1983 Australian nationals they came second to Neil Harrison who everyone said was unbeatable with his stiff rig. In the following week, the 1983 Worlds, the real truth of the flexible rig came to the fore when there was a wider variety of breezes. Terry Kyrwood won a very close series from Gary Bruniges, Geoff Kyrwood and Peter and Alyn who had led for most of the series.

The close racing enjoyed by these crews can be seen by the results from the Pacific championship in Hong Kong in '83 - Kyrwood, Blatchford, Hewson and Bruniges; and in the Hong Kong championship it had been Bruniges, Hewson, Kyrwood and Blatchford.

Peter and Alyn's latest success - January this year - was to win the Australian championship. The first nine boats came from the Lake Macquarie fleet. Six races were sailed in medium conditions up to 25 knots. Hewson was first with 14.7 points; Terry Kyrwood second with 21; Bruniges third with 24.7; Blatchford fourth with 30.4; and Paul Remington fifth with 44.4 points ●

OUR SAILS ARE NEVER BORING!

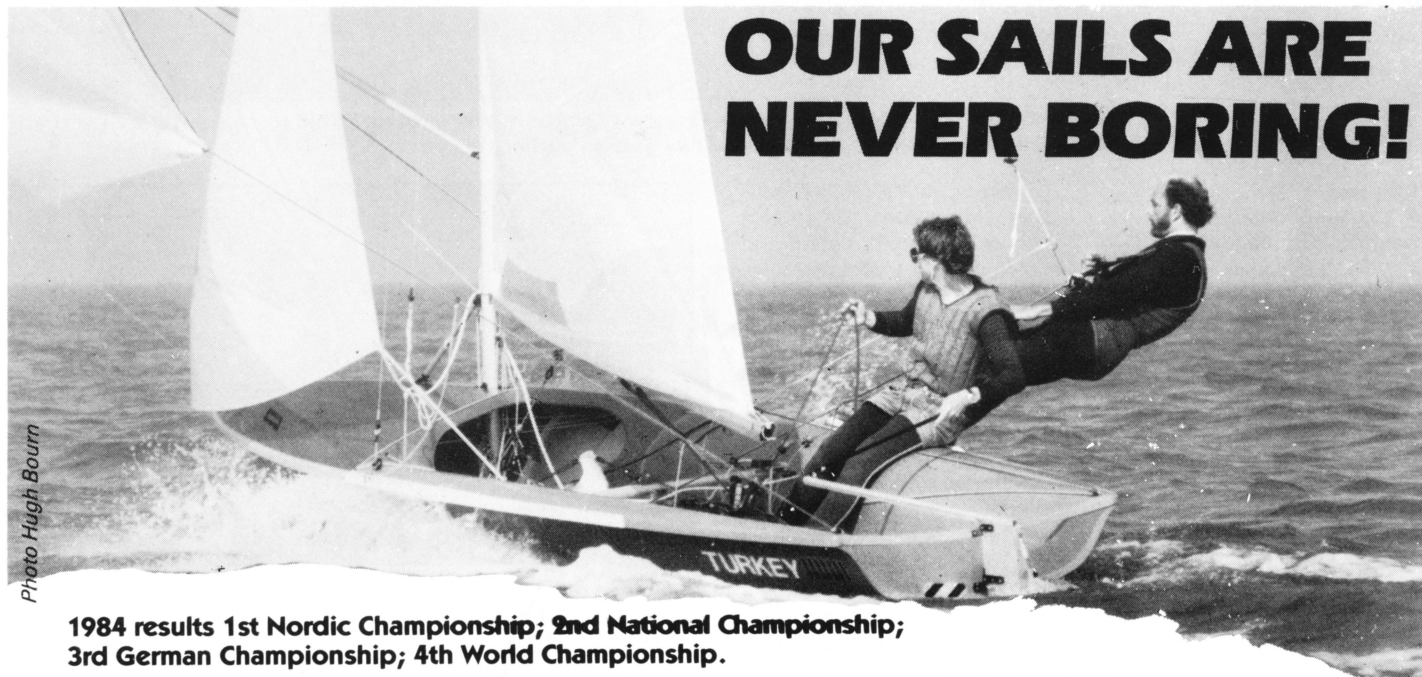


Photo Hugh Bourne

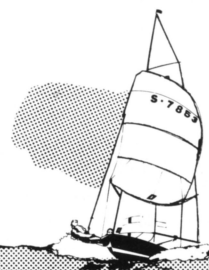
1984 results 1st Nordic Championship; 2nd National Championship; 3rd German Championship; 4th World Championship.

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