

## **Press Release:**

### **THE PARMELIA'S BALL TROPHY - OPENING DAY 2023**

The Parmelia's Ball Trophy Challenge race is held on each RFBYC Opening Day between various fleets at the Club. It is rowed in the Club's St Ayles Skiffs (SAS) over a reciprocal course of about 500m, watched by a significant crowd. A win guarantees yearlong bragging rights.

The challenge has now been running for 5 years and has been held by the Dragons and Couta fleets, with various challenges from Division 1 and others. It was held by the Couta's and last year there was no challenger.

The Parmelia's Ball trophy was created by Life member John Walsh. When Stirling's ship Parmelia ran aground in Cockburn Sound in 1829, she jettisoned cannons and cannon balls to refloat. John recovered one of these cannon balls and it was made into (a very heavy !) trophy.

This year we had three challengers to the Couta boys. A group of err...mature Dragon sailors formed a crew and were sighted in practicing the all-important 180 degree turns. The Etchell challengers turned up with not an ounce of fat between them. The Contenders were a late challenger and were scratched as there was no training days left before Opening Day.

The Row-off in the early morning of opening day between the maturity and wisdom of the Dragons against the skill of the Etchells was a close-run event with the Etchells by 2 boat lengths. And so the excitement built....exactly on time, the gun fired and off they went. The Etchells, stroked by Greg Carr, with lots of rowing under their belts, were a length ahead at the turn and with Bourby Webster steering an arrow straight course to the finish, they won by two lengths.

Thanks to all the Crews and volunteers.

The bookies are already starting to lay odds for next year's event, when the Etchells could face challenges from the Dragons, Coutas, Contenders and possibly the Juniors.

**Gerry McGann, Fleet Captain 2023-24**