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# Walpole Weekly

March 6th, 2013

Community News of Walpole,  
Nornalup, Peaceful Bay & Bow Bridge

Proudly published in *Litter Free Walpole*



## Yacht racing returns to Walpole

Submitted by Bernie Kaaks

After a thirteen year hiatus, a group of keen Walpole residents decided to reinstate what was once a thriving country sailing regatta. With their clubhouse in serious disrepair and virtually no support base to start with, the task of organising a regatta was daunting, to say the least. The fact that they pulled it off successfully is a tribute to the determination of the whole Walpole community. Business proprietors, retirees, and workers joined forces to make things happen, cajoled initially by Paralympic champion Jamie Dunross, who has made Walpole his home.

Central stage for the regatta belonged to the Moth class, which made an early decision to make the regatta the venue for its West Australian State Championship. The moth is a development dinghy, meaning that apart from length and sail area, there are very few design restrictions. Fully carbon fibre, these exciting yachts sail on foils, which lift the hull out of the water completely, allowing them to achieve speeds well in excess of the speed of the wind in which they are sailing.

Steve Thomas, already a world champion (twice) in the 29er dinghy, recently purchased a Moth and showed his versatile sailing talent by finishing second overall. Reigning State champion Tom Johnson was too good and very consistent to take yet another State Title. Many classes saw an enthusiastic mix of young and old sailors, which augurs well for the future.

While the Moths may have received the attention, there was an excellent mix of craft from Perth and from various spots along the south coast, split into a total of 6 divisions. In total more than 70 yachts took part, making this a hugely successful event – successful enough to suggest that it will lead to the resurgence of sailing in Walpole, the re-establishment of its yacht club and a spot for a similar event next year.



## What a weekend ...

To say the Regatta was a success would have to be the understatement of the decade!



Hundreds of spectators, many for the first time, were taken aback at the breathtaking sight of myriads of yachts taking part in the Walpole In the Trees Regatta. Hosted by the Walpole Yacht Club around seventy boats registered to take part, far in excess of the numbers the organisers expected. Six classes were raced, along with the WA Moth class State Titles.

Entrants came from just about everywhere—Esperance, Perth metropolitan area, Busselton, and there was even an entrant from Victoria.

Regatta Team Finance Officer, Ian Payton, could be seen at each venue busily overseeing the taking of monies which resulted in an extremely successful event financially. The Auction held on the Sunday night raised over \$3,000 alone. Joe Burton, Jnr, was the auctioneer and he deftly parted the bidders with their money. Many local businesses were responsible for the donation of the goods auctioned.



Behind the scenes the catering team performed several miracles in preparing delicious packed lunches, that were sold from the Food Van set up on the grassed area at Coalmine Beach. A tasty barbecue for over 200 people was held at the Rec Centre and the Country Club was the venue for the sit down dinner for two hundred and forty people superbly cooked by the Club's team together with the experts from the BTH Ladies Club.

Regatta Team Manager, Jamie Dunross said he felt the inlet provided excellent vantage point to view the sailing from the Knolls lookouts as well as from the beach. He said the Walpole In the Trees Regatta would end up being the second biggest Regatta in WA for 2013. Many visitors have already booked their accommodation for next year, ensuring they don't miss out on what is already shaping up to be bigger and better than this year—if that's possible!

Well done to all those involved. It just goes to show what is possible when the whole community gets behind an event like this, that has just huge benefits for the town.

