



SASC NEWS

The Newsletter of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club



October 2007

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Cover:

Yachts heading to
Lion Island shortly
after the start on 8
September
(Photo John Jeremy)

CONTENTS

Coming Events	3
Signals from the Commodore	4
Safe Sailing on Sydney Harbour	5
Sydney to Southport Tales	7
Flag Officers' Dinner	18
Boatshed Clean Up	19
Lion Island Start to Season	21
Sailing and Seamanship	26
<i>Vanity</i> to Tasmania	27
New Members	34
From the Archives	35

The SASC News is published six times per year.

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Print Post Approved PP 255003/01708

Printed by B. E. E. Printmail (02) 9437 6917

COMING EVENTS

October 2007

SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER 2007

Point score races for Division 1, Division 2, Super 30 Division, and Classic Division. Combined Clubs race for Division 1.

SATURDAY 20 OCTOBER 2007

Point score races for Division 2, Super 30 Division, Classic Division, Division 2 short series, Super 30 short series and Cavalier 28s.

SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER 2007

Point score races for Division 2, Super 30 Division and Classic Division. S80 Regatta race 1.

SUNDAY 28 OCTOBER 2007

S80 and Super 30 Regatta.

FRIDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2007

First twilight race.

SATURDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2007

Point score races for Division 1, Division 2, Super 30 Division, Classic Division, Division 2 short series, Super 30 short series and Cavalier 28s.

SUNDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2007

Point score race for Division 6 and Gaffers Division. Captain Slocum Trophy race.

SATURDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2007

Point score races for Division 2, Super 30 Division and Classic Division.

SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2007

Point score races for Division 1, Division 2, Super 30 Division, Division 2 short series and Super 30 short series.

SATURDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2007

Point score races for Division 2, Super 30 Division and Classic Division.

SUNDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2007

Point score races for Division 6 and Gaffers Division.

SATURDAY 1 DECEMBER 2007

Point score races for Division 1, Division 2, Super 30 Division, Classic Division, Division 2 short series, Super 30 short series and Cavalier 28s.

**WHERE'S
THE TEN-
DER?**

**Call Mike, Al-
lan or Craig
on
0418 678 690**

Sat: 0900-1800



SIGNALS FROM THE COMMODORE

Well the season has started with a bang. Strong westerlies, stronger south easterlies, feeble attempts at nor' easters and, during the Idle Hour Race on the recent long weekend, the compass was boxed a couple of times, leaving some skippers lamenting Huey's cruelty while others revelled in his kindness. Feather duster to hero and back inside an hour and a half, that's sailing. It was ever thus and it provided ample BBQ fodder back at the Club.

The Flag Officers' Dinner was a well attended event with Commodores and Presidents from all the major Sydney Yacht Clubs enjoying the evening. In an attempt to maintain or even promote some of the traditions associated with our sport your Commodore took the opportunity to remind the assembled worthies that not so long ago all ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication was by flags only (or lights).

The British Navy's domination of the high seas for well over 200 years is really down to their ships, their discipline and their ability to wave the right flag at the right time. We should all fly flags on our yachts. Apart from looking good it actually makes you feel good and at the SASC, if you didn't know, we have one of the best looking ensigns ever hoisted.

The Amateurs ensign (hanging in the clubhouse), developed from what was known as the NSW ensign, designed in 1831 by John Nicholson, Sydney's Harbour Master at the time. This flag had 5 white stars on the blue cross and in the 1890s it became known as the Australian Federation Flag. It was "Australia's" unofficial flag, Australia, before federation being largely a very big NSW. The flag was very popular until it was banned for use on vessels in the 1890s because it was felt by management that it looked too much like the British White Ensign and might lead to confusion at sea.

The Amateurs and the Prince Alfred Yacht Club shared the flag until Alfreds took on the "Royal" charter after which we have had exclusive use. I encourage you all to buy one and fly one. People on the water often ask about the flag because it is unique. No other club has a flag like it, which makes the Amateurs special. But we all know that!



As we all know, Sydney Harbour can be very busy on summer weekends and evenings during the week. Our continued enjoyment of the harbour for racing depends on all competitors being aware of the needs of other harbour users at all times. Give way when you are obliged to do so in good time and with clear intent. The harbour looks much smaller from the bridge of a Manly ferry or commercial ship and their manoeuvring room is limited. Do not put yourselves or others in danger by ‘cutting it fine’. Plan ahead and give room for other users of the harbour to go about their business in safety.

The plan at all times should be to have good situational awareness. There is no need to be caught by surprise by an incoming ship in the Western Channel. If you have a VHF radio on board, monitor Channel 13. Harbour Control regularly provides information on shipping movements as well as weather forecasts and other relevant information. Commercial shipping reports progress to Harbour Control on a regular basis and all this information can help skippers plan the next leg of the race to be safe.

Competitors must at all times comply with the requirements of NSW Boating Regulations, and abide by traffic directions of NSW Maritime Boating Service Officers. Note that the SASC General Sailing Instruction Clause 27.3 states “Any yacht reported by NSW Maritime as having contravened NSW Maritime Regulations shall be disqualified”. In such circumstances, disqualification will be automatic, although competitors who feel that they have been improperly treated have the right to lodge a protest and seek redress in accordance with Rule 60.1 of the Racing Rules of Sailing.

During and after weekday twilight races please be particularly aware of reduced visibility — yachts cannot always be easily seen and navigation lights can be obscured against the background. Don’t hesitate to shine a light on your sails to draw attention to your presence. Also, ferries have a need to meet schedules for commuters so give them a clear path.

We must all also be aware of choke points on the harbour. The recently introduced Transit Zone under the Bridge addresses one problem area. We all know how dense the traffic at Bradleys Head can become. On Saturday afternoons in particular, the large number of boats rounding Bradleys Head close in can be a significant problem for commercial shipping rounding the headland inbound. Skippers must take note of the following condition in the SASC Aquatic Licence: *“All vessels when heading down stream on Sydney Harbour, should leave Bradleys Head, Safe Water Mark to the West.”*







Azzurro (above) sailing north past Camp Cove after the start (opposite) of the Sydney to Southport Race on 28 July

As we reported in the August edition of SASC News, three SASC yachts, Azzurro, Après Vous and Impi sailed north to warmer weather in the Sydney to Southport Race. In this edition we have no less than two accounts of the voyages, by David Salter and Jim Lawler. We start with Jim Lawler's story of Azzurro's adventures.

Biggles does Southport

“Light to moderate south-west winds for the start, abating to soft sea breezes on day two”. Not a bad forecast for the 2007 Sydney to Southport Race, a bit slow but, hey, we do it in comfort these days. The race plan for *Azzurro* is to sail the rhumb line to at least Sugarloaf, with no adverse current expected and some indication of a north-setting eddy inside the 50 fathom line. More breeze out wide so straight line to start, then work the shore after Smokey. Seems like a familiar plan.... if we can stick to it!

On board we will have Coshy, skipper, with Snake, Cyril, Sean, Mel, Frosty, Shero, Dal and Biggles. On paper more experience than you could poke a stick at if some of us could recall the past experiences. Lucky we have Cyril, Sean and Mel! Snake orders minimum gear to be brought on board and threatens random inspections of toilet bags!

*by
Jim Lawler*

SASC NEWS

Several of us heave Biggle's bag on board as we decide to ditch the hard running kite and take minimum water and fuel. "No more food, Shero" orders Snake several days before departure. Shero has about 10 million miles to his name and is not long back from a heroic delivery from Yepoon to Bunderberg with the infamous "Chas from Tas" in a Tarten 30 — on the nose all the way. Apparently Chas has a meagre existence at sea with the day starting with a sumptuous breakfast consisting of a fag, a fart and a good look around! Anyway Shero seemed intent on taking the usual impeccable care of us in the galley and he ignored Snake's orders, arriving with several wagon loads of grub. He has established a curious relationship with a Vietnamese Bakery in Annandale where he has convinced them to make party pie versions of their fabulous meat pies which he offers as night-time snacks. No to be outdone, on recent trips he has taken to cooking muffins with a pre-mix provided by the Vietnamese. Well, Shero's Vietnamese is not what it used to be and the order for muffin and cup-cake mix appeared as three dozen cooked blueberry muffins, the same in cup cakes with a side of twenty four lamingtons! *Azzurro* looked like an emergency aid program for some Asian disaster relief.

Apart from the obvious talent of Sean, Mel and Cyril our guiding light was Biggles, aka Tony Purkis. Biggles is known and loved by many of us but, briefly, has one unfortunate trait — bad luck. After crashing his plane with the family on board he was badly injured in the 98 Hobart Race, suffered a near fatal heart attack in Constitution dock in 2003 and was a victim of the Bali bomb attack on 1 October 2005. He

Photos courtesy Jim Lawler

Snake after a rough off-watch



now has a tiny amount of vision from one eye but is determined to get on with anything and everything and leaves no stone unturned in getting technology to assist him in doing it. The white cane is just to get preferential service at the bar — it works, I tried it!

A conservative start gave us a clear run down the eastern shore and out through the heads without gybing. A gentle slide up through the central coast and across Stockton Bight with winds *moderating* from 15 to 20 knots to 25 to 30 knots!! By midnight *Azzurro* had 30 with the full-size 1.5 oz kite and was a handful on the helm. Either Frosty or *Azzurro* was going to blow a valve 25 miles off Port Stephens so off with the kite and up with the No. 3 and full main — no, No. 4 and full main — no, No. 4 and a reef!! Where did this come from?

The change of watch couldn't come fast enough and we collapsed below after the thundering past three hours. "What's burning" yelled Mel "THERE'S A FIRE". "Let it burn" groaned Frosty. A loose 12 volt adapter in the nav. station had suffered meltdown with the fumes obvious to the on-deck watch.

The great circle route did us no harm at all and gains were made out wide. The next day was more relaxing — except for the Biggles factor. The port watch consisted of Coshy, Mel Cyril and Biggles. After half a lifetime enduring the acoustics of ships' engine rooms, Coshy is a bit hard of hearing — SO YOU HAVE TO TALK REAL LOUD. Biggles talks long and loud because he can. Mel and Cyril were hoarse and the off-watch sleep deprived. After a couple of watches I had been everywhere with Biggles from my listless bunk below! To add to this, he has talking accessories — the talking watch, the talking phone which, when activated, announces in a 2001 Hal-type voice "Welcome back Tony"! Then we have the talking computer which enunciates each key stroke or cursor move in an Esperanto-style monolog, unintelligible to the rest of us.

Biggles knows
where we are

Biggles has mastered the process of getting about the boat and functioning by committing just about everything to memory. There are nine winches and thirteen jammers on *Azzurro* and he knows where every one is! Even the regulars have to read the labels. He has a piece of shrapnel impeded in his cheek which is very sensitive to the wind and he uses this like a vane or sensor to steer — "Up a bit Biggles, that's it" — and he's away!

Having mastered that and, in spite of his setbacks, he has decided he can navigate! Out comes the talking



SASC NEWS

computer, in goes the Blue Tooth ear piece and on with the monocular. Biggles has harnessed the power of modern technology and gained the assistance of Vision Australia and the Bali Fund to enable him to use navigation software, in this case SOB (Software on Board), by utilising the aural feedback and the very limited vision enhanced by the monocular. The software positions the boat on the electronic chart utilizing GPS data and transmits selected data to his ear piece via a Blue Tooth link. Biggles can then hear boat velocity and direction as a continuous data stream anywhere on the boat — “Yes Biggles, I know I’m low on course” — “Yes a bit slow at the moment” — “Why don’t you try to get some sleep down there”! Standing on deck in the dark with the protective clear glasses and ear piece with blue flashing light, he looks like a cyborg from Robo Cop! Cripes, all we had to contend with in the past was looking for Macca’s missing gout tablets!

Meanwhile Sean, Mel and Cyril dragged us up the coast while Dal had nightmares about defending the line against a giant Fijian Rugby player on Manly Oval, Snake making furtive inspections of toilet bags and Shero continually offering muffins, cup cakes or lamingtons. We had good company with the Swan *Leda*, the X44 *Great Expectations*, the Beneteau 47.7 *Kioni* and fellow SASC competitor *Apres Vous* safely astern. *Azzurro* made gains with an inshore course through the Solitary Islands with beautiful clear light to moderate SW breeze, full

Sean hauling us
up the coast



moon and flat water. We approached the Danger Reefs at night as usual with a square kite. Option A was through the gap between Fingal Head and Cook Islet — a wind change on final approach so option B through the outside gap — another change, bloody hell, option C — through the middle! A good fetch to the finish with the spectacular high-rise which is an amazing sight from offshore at night. “Aim for the last high-rise and the four bright lights” advises Biggles — don’t ask me, I thought he was blind! Smack on the money with a 2200 finish on Monday night.

Azzurro arrived with a crew of nine and returned with six, Shero had to get ready for Hamilton Island, Cyril had a commitment at the Boat Show and Snake was urgently required in Sydney. Unlike others struggling to get back with skeleton crews, the good humour and camaraderie guaranteed us plenty of company. Biggles guided (oops) us safely home, Coshy undertook a major refit, Frosty caught a tuna on Snake’s rod and we finally finished Shero’s muffins. Shero got man of the match for the twentieth time but Biggles again got the unwavering admiration of every one of us. It was an absolute privilege to have the company of such a LOUD and shining example.

Schmoozing to Southport

David Salter and some Amateurs mates helped a newcomer to the SASC offshore fleet tackle his first major race.

Enthusiasm is infectious, and sometimes there’s no antidote. When the irrepressible John Griffin declared that he wanted to race A70, his new *Après Vous*, to Southport some of the older hands around the club thought it would be churlish not to lend him a hand. Serious newcomers to the sport of offshore racing are pretty rare these days and should always be encouraged. (Not that we churls are usually such an easy touch, but promises of high topsides, plentiful rum and a soft bunk can be awfully persuasive.)

Après Vous is a gleaming new Beneteau Oceanis 50. Griffo was busting to race his big French-built yacht north as part of the delivery up to Hamilton Island for Race Week. He’d already retained Rob Evans, our Immediate Past Commodore, as the nominated skipper/naviguesser. All he needed now were a few experienced crew.

After one too many post-race Dark & Stormys I agreed to sail as trimmer/driver/cook — my usual blue-water roles. The annual rock-hopping race to the Gold Coast always provides some interesting sailing, and the club at Southport is one of the most welcoming destinations on the East Coast. I was delighted to learn that my longstanding ocean-racing crewmate, John Sturrock, had also signed on for the trip north. We’ve done so many offshore miles together now that not sharing a watch at sea with Johnno feels decidedly odd. Dave Lowe, a sold crewman normally seen amongst the spray of the Super 30 Division, also joined us for the race.

The Oceanis 50 is a beamy, comfortable, shallow-draft fractional cruising sloop that’s easy on the eye and modestly rigged. Straight off the showroom floor *Après Vous* was not really set up for serious offshore work, but a few weeks of concerted effort (and expenditure) soon raised her to Category Two standard. Griffin and his family and friends planned to live aboard at Hammo so the many creature comforts below — including the plasma TV and two hot-water showers — remained.



Getting *Après Vous* up to Cat 2 took plenty of work

John S had *Azzurro* safely behind on the first afternoon

All photos by David Salter

John Sturrock, Rob and I sealed a quiet understanding that there would be no point pushing the yacht too hard: it had a limited sail wardrobe and needed to stay in one piece for the delivery from Southport to the Whitsundays, plus the week of racing at Hamilton Island and the long trip home. 'Easy does it' was to be our watchword, but that didn't stop us placing the traditional bottle-of-Bundy wager with the *Azzurro* boys. A bloke has to have some incentive, after all.



Surprisingly, amongst a 70-strong fleet of far more manoeuvrable boats, we made a glamour pin-end start, reaching towards North Head under our hounds kite. The disparity between 'ordinary' and Grand Prix racing was swiftly underlined as the beefed-up Volvo boat *Ichi Ban* swept past at astonishing speed under one of her massive asymmetrics. Not to worry. *Azzurro* was safely tucked away to leeward and soon 200 yards behind.

Conditions lightened through the afternoon and the fleet split into those keeping to the coast in expectation of an evening land breeze and the gamblers who gybed offshore in search of more pressure and less current. Spinnakers began to drop as the wind came ahead of the beam and strengthened at nightfall. We settled into a romping two-sail reach with up to 30 knots of true SE. The boats that had gone further out got this

breeze later and softer, forcing them to waste time coming back in to search for more pressure.

Our only two kites – the hounds and a masthead – were both made from not much more than 1 ounce cloth. So, as the wind gradually went aft again in the early hours of Sunday morning, we called for a poled-out genoa rather than risk blowing out either spinnaker. Instead, we somehow managed to blow up the bell fitting that takes the mast end of the pole. This brand-new Harken casting fractured clean through, leaving the hinged slide on the mast track and the bell still attached to the butt of our only pole — now flailing wildly in the water. Not a pretty sight. At a stroke, and with more than 300 miles still to race, that single gear failure seemed to take extras entirely out of our repertoire. Damn and blast.

As we pondered our sad fate the breeze swiftly dropped away. Everyone else — including *Azzurro* — popped their kites and sailed serenely by. At the next sked we found ourselves in second last place. The injustice of it all! Successive watches passed glumly through the night and into the next day. But not everyone was prepared to surrender to such a cruel fate. Among our crew was Matthew Hunter, a resourceful young maintenance engineer at Qantas. Matt travels with a neat little black bag of his specialist tools, like an old-fashioned doctor on house calls. Maybe there was a way to bodgie up something to let us fly kites again? Everyone threw in their two-bob's worth, but the serious consultations were between Matt and John Sturrock.

Pleasant running
under the hounds
kite



SASC NEWS

Their prognosis wasn't encouraging. "Reckon there's any way to fix this?" "It'd need drilling through the casting to make some sort of temporary link to the slide hinge. Not easy" "Well, I reckon we could manage that, but the pole would still be free to jump out of the bell." "Hmmm, what about a bit of lashing?" etc. etc. Eventually, from all this bush-mechanic banter emerged an agreed repair strategy. Kneeling on the cabin sole, Matt used his cobalt-tipped bits and the boat's battery drill to make two neat holes through the casting. Then, using special aircraft pliers, he bound the parts together with tightly-wound aviation wire. It might just work.

With the fitting back on the mast and the pole lifted into place, John removed two of the screws securing the butt fitting and used those holes to lash the whole contraption together with a spare length of light spectra. After 12 hours of enforced two-sail running we could finally fly spinnakers again. You bloody beauty! Of course, the breeze chose precisely that moment to go light again. It took us three frustrating hours to clear Smoky Cape but, as the southerly finally filled again, the run from Cape Byron to Point Danger was glorious. The sheer beauty of sailing this coast in crisp sunshine with the wind on the aft quarter never palls.

Hunter, Sturrock
& Associates
perform onboard
engineering

Our big yellow masthead kite only came down at 2230 for the last few hundred metres as we squeezed up to the finishing line just before the Southport breakwater. "We're over, boys! Congratulations everyone — well sailed!" On cue, a pod of frisky dolphins swished past to wel-





come us to Queensland. We never quite clawed back the disadvantage of our 12 hours without a kite, but still managed 6th on PHS. *Azzurro* had finished 47 minutes ahead of us but we'd somehow managed to beat them on corrected time. "Gybe the fridge, lads! Beers and rumbos all round!"

All that remained now were the pleasant rituals of getting the sails off, tidying up the boat and following the leads for the long and tricky motor over the Southport bar and down the channel to our berth at the yacht club. We took the opportunity to remind Griffio that he would never again have such an easy offshore race. It was beginner's luck. We'd covered the entire distance without once having to tack, or taking water over the deck.

After a few celebratory ales in the spacious *Après Vous* cockpit John and I set off in search of our comrades on *Azzurro*. "What took you bastards so long? Where's our bottle of Bundy?" This was a situation that demanded all the diplomatic skills of a Henry Kissinger. "Hang on guys, the bet was never 'off the stick'. We beat you blokes on corrected time. Where's *our* bloody bottle of Bundy?" I shall spare you the remainder of this conversation. Suffice to say that the debate continues...

Held together for 200 miles by wire and spectra

Proud owner John Griffin driving to 6th on PHS



COME and ENJOY SASC FRIDAY TWILIGHT RACING 2007/2008

A FUN WAY TO WIND DOWN ON FRIDAY
NIGHTS AND A CHANCE TO BECOME ELLIGIBLE
TO



David Salter photo

Win a trip for 2
to
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ISLAND**
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FLAG OFFICERS' DINNER



A very successful Flag Officers' Dinner was held at the Club on the evening of Friday 21 September 2007. The clubhouse looked magnificent, as usual, and when welcoming the guests Commodore John Crawford took everyone back to a past age of flag signalling with the aid of a 1919 copy of *Brown's Signalling*

Photos by John Jeremy





Ian MacIntosh and Ian Anstee getting down and dirty in the skip during an energetic clean-up of the boatshed and surrounds on 11 August (above)

Mike deBurca at work beside the slipways (below)

All photos by John Jeremy





Seek and ye shall find — the Commodore on his knees in a small space (above)
The team in *Nancy K* with a tender and the load of rubbish from the Mosman Boatshed (below)



LION ISLAND START TO SEASON

October 2007

The first offshore race of Sydney's spring/summer sailing season, the SASC'ss Lion Island Race was sailed on Saturday 9 September and certainly augered well for the season with a fleet of 33 boats enjoying excellent conditions.

by
Peter
Campbell

With the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia's Short Ocean Points and Ocean Pointscore series not starting until 22 September, the Lion Island race attracted 37 entries from the SASC, CYCA, Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, Middle Harbour Yacht Club and the Manly Yacht Club.

The fleet enjoyed a fast spinnaker run northwards to round a buoy off Lion Island, but had a slower beat back down the coast, with line honours going to CYCA member Stephen Thomas' Cookson 12 *Blackadder* with a good time of 4 hours 46 minutes 08 seconds.

On PHS corrected time, first place went to the second boat to finish, Rod Willis' X43 *Great Xpectations*, also from the CYCA. *Great Xpectations* won Division 1 from the MHYC club entry *Merlin* (John Lehmann) and another CYCA boat *Love Byte*, skippered by Alison Pickering.

Manly Yacht Club's *Out There*, a Cavalier 375 skippered by Greg James, won Division 2 on handicap from the CYCA's *Out of Sight*, a Masrm 950 skippered by Matt Wilkinson. Third and best-placed Amateurs' boat was Peter McCorquodale's Adams 10 *Torquil*.

SASC yachts
preparing for the
race at the Club

Photo by David Salter







Photos by John Jeremy

SASC yacht *Wind Shadow*, photographed shortly after the start (left) was one of the smallest yachts in the Lion Island fleet

The Lion Island Race was also the first pointscore race for the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron's Offshore division.

First place on PHS went to *Zephyr*, James Connell and Alex Brandon's Farr 1020, from the veteran former ocean racer *Inch by Winch*, a Peterson 44 now owned by Alex Wenham and the J35 *Soundtrack*, skippered by Tim Cox.

On IRC handicap, *Zephyr* won from *Soundtrack* and *King Billy*.

The SASC's Lion Island Race was also the first ocean race of the season for the small but growing fleet of offshore racing boats with Manly Yacht Club, with eight boats in the fleet. Greg James' *Out There* continued the tradition set by Jim Nixon's *Carinya IV* by winning Division 2.

Manly Yacht Club Greg Zyner, skipper of *Morna*, said that the weather conditions for this year's race were "much less horrible" than at the same time last year, when the race was actually held on the Harbour.

The race started at with the wind picking up to a steady 10-12 knots from ESE. There was one early retirement with *TwoCan* having forestay problems. Describing the race, Greg Zyner said: "The leg to the mark north of Barrenjoey and east of Lion Island was very pleasant indeed with SE to ESE wind of 10-15 knots and slight and somewhat lumpy seas, with the sky showing a lot of large blue patches.



Photo John Jeremy

Ready for the Pilot? — *Great Xpectations* approaching the finish line

“A number of kites appeared well before Long Reef, one of them being *Carinya IV*, despite it being quite shy at times; this was the case at least somewhat further offshore, where about a third of the fleet decided to go in search of stronger breeze.

“Once past Whale Beach most everyone popped their kites up, on the square run towards the mark. The prevailing conditions allowed just about all of the yachts to get to the half-way point well before 1 pm. The breeze remained quite consistent and the SOG on *Morna* stayed in the 7-9 knot range.

“The second half of the race was a completely different story. The average wind speed did remain in the 10-15 knots from ESE/SE, however, early afternoon, the fleet was met by a number of unpleasant squalls coming from the SE with the wind increasing to 25 knots at times and backing as much as 15 degrees, especially two to three miles offshore.

“As the dark cumulonimbus clouds passed overhead so would the wind, dropping to 6-8 knots at times, and somewhat less closer to shore, with *Carinya IV* and *EOS* reported being becalmed at times.

“The crew on *Morna* ended up reefing and unreefing the main at least five to six times and making three to four headsail changes on the way back getting thoroughly drenched by salt as well as fresh water — the conditions were definitely much less agreeable compared to the first part of the day.



Photo John Jeremy

“Overall the race was quite challenging and at times frustrating, due to the variable conditions. On the bright side the yachts held up quite well to the conditions. It was the turn for some of the crew, however, to take most of the punishment; various levels of sea sickness among some were reported,” Zyner added.

Indulgence approaching the finish in the fading light

Of the Manly Yacht Club boats, Bruce Davis’ *Pensive* finished an impressive sixth, crossing the line some 4 minutes ahead of *Dances with Waves* which finished 13th in Division 1. As mentioned earlier, *Out There* won Division 2 with *Morna* coming 9th and *Carinya* 11th.

FRIDAY TWILIGHTS

Friday Twilights will start again on Friday 2 November 2007

If you plan to sail on Friday nights and to stay for dinner afterwards, please ring Megan or Maggie as soon as possible and definitely no later than Thursday when Megan will polish the Club’s crystal ball and order the food

No table bookings can be accepted after 1200 on Thursday

A booking sheet is also available on the notice board, and members are encouraged to use this facility when they are passing

Volunteers are also needed to help clean up and ensure a great evening for all — add your crew to the list on the notice board now!

One of the great strengths of the Amateurs has always been the depth of sailing knowledge and experience that resides within the club and the desire to promote not just sailing but good seamanship as well. The Directors are considering whether it might be to the advantage of members to organise a monthly “Amateurs Hour” at the club — a sort of informal gathering of like-minded sailors where we might all learn something from the “old salts” as well as share some of our own experiences.

Each evening would concentrate on a set topic — boat handling and manoeuvring, heavy weather sailing, racing tactics, anchoring and mooring (including tying up at the piles), GPS navigation, mainsail trim, splicing and swaging, sail repair etc. A panel of “experts” would be on hand to give advice but the idea is that members be encouraged to participate and share their knowledge and experience — tall tales and true!

The Directors would also be keen to gauge interest in the Club organising some formalised training sessions covering such facets as diesel maintenance, remote first aid (including suturing and administration of injections), sea safety and survival, meteorology, navigation etc. These would be paid courses conducted by professional instructors but using the Club as a training venue.

If you think you might be interested please send an email to Megan (office@sasc.com.au) and advise whether you think the monthly Amateur Hour might prove useful and if you would see the benefit in participating in some Club organised training and seamanship courses. We will also post a notice in the club where you can record your interest.



Photo Brian Clayton

The happy crew of *Caress*, captured passing the RSYS starter's boat during a recent race

VANITY TO TASMANIA

October 2007

It started out as a bit of an idle thought really. Take *Vanity* to Tasmania for the 2007 Australian Wooden Boat Festival? Must be joking? As the idea took shape other factors inserted themselves into the mix. Sean Langman had started the restoration of *Maluka*, a slightly bigger Ranger than *Vanity* and I had been offered a crew position as one of six for the Hobart Race. *Maluka* was also going to attend the Australian Wooden Boat Festival, to be held in Hobart in mid February.

Maluka to Hobart was an adventure I didn't want to miss. The oldest and smallest yacht in the race and gaff rigged to boot. On race day it would be the first time in 60 years that a gaff rigger had raced out of Sydney Harbour bound for Hobart. How many people had that opportunity (how many would want it?) — I felt very privileged. What's more I could use the *Maluka* experience to 'test drive' the thought of taking *Vanity* to Hobart and that that was an OK thing to do.

It was also my exit strategy. If the Hobart Race on *Maluka* was horrible then I could bail out of the *Vanity* trip with some semblance of honour and my bravado possibly intact? In the end I trapped myself. The more the trip with *Vanity* was discussed the more entrenched it became until after a while it took on a life of its own. People would open conversations with:

"I hear you're taking *Vanity* to Hobart for the Wooden Boat Festival?"

Photo Liam Timms

by
John Crawford

Ready for the
voyage — *Vanity*
alongside at the
SASC



SASC NEWS I would reply:

“Well, yes I was thinking of it but I’m using the Hobart Race on *Maluka* as my test sail”, Or with some disbelief the opener would be — “You’re not seriously thinking of sailing to Hobart on *Vanity*. Are you?”

Answer being:

“Well, yes I was actually. Do you think it’s a bad idea?”

On balance I think half my friends thought I was crazy and the other half thought the boat would be fine, but the crew, well, that was another question altogether.

While the *Maluka* re-build rushed ahead at a frenetic pace during the latter half of 2006, I spent time sorting out what was needed to convert *Vanity* (a 24’ 3” length-on-deck Sydney Harbour day boat) into a yacht capable of crossing Bass Strait. Category 7 safety requirements for harbour racing are hardly suitable for the Tasman Sea and I have experienced inclement weather in Bass Strait and have considerable respect (and fear) of its unpredictable moods.

Vanity has always been a minimalist boat, with nothing on board not deemed essential. She didn’t even have navigation lights. No electrical circuits, no head, no galley, no water tanks, no refrigeration, no radios, no compass, no lifelines, no cabin lights, no instruments, to say nothing of life rafts, EPIRBs, life rings, throw lines, charts, GPS, or flares. One of the great pleasures we get from *Vanity* is the fact she’s ‘junk free’. It goes back to the original design philosophy which was ‘if you think you need it, you don’t’, followed closely by ‘the difference between the dream and the reality’, which I estimate to be about 400 kilos.

For the trip to Tasmania, some things were deemed essential, in fact without some things the trip would have been regarded as foolhardy. The last thing we wanted was to be a liability to others, so we needed to be able to take care of ourselves. What you take is very much dictated by what you are doing. It was not our intention to be days and days at sea, so food supplies for example were minimal. Our aim was to wait for our weather and do the trip in a series of hops down the coast. Before that could happen we needed to make *Vanity* ready for sea.

On Deck

We decided to apply the minimalist approach to our sea safety decisions. Firstly we installed a cutter rig, which was more manageable and permitted smaller sails. This required the installation of an additional forestay from the hounds to the stem head. The plan was to cut down *Vanity*’s six-year-old mainsail to the first and only reef point and use that as our cruising main. Our six-year old No. 3 also went under the knife at Macdiarmid’s and re-appeared as a staysail, fitting neatly into the fore triangle created by the new forestay and the mast and sheeted onto the existing inner jib tracks.

Our new No. 3 was destined to reside at the end of the bowsprit for the trip down. It was sheeted outside the shrouds to give us enough angle and the sheets then ran aft to the spinnaker turning blocks and forward again to the leeward (lazy) runner winches. A new turning block was installed at the outboard end of the bowsprit and a retrieval line run from the cockpit, through the block and up to the second highest hank on the No. 3. This meant we could drop the jib, by releasing the halyard, hauling on the retrieval line, sheeting the jib on hard and then tying the sail off at the stem head, without having to go out on the

bowsprit. Mind you, in any sort of sea the stem head gyrated wildly in all directions at once — just add salt water.

The alternative to this was to fit a roller furler but I hate furlers with a passion and when they go wrong they are a big problem, so we stayed with hanks which are simple mechanical devices with one moving part. Additional runners were paired with the existing runners and terminated at the crosstrees to prevent the mast inverting due to the load from the new forestay position and the gaff which was lower on the mast due to the ‘permanent’ reef.

A jack stay safety line was run from our aft spinnaker turning block on port side, forward around the bowsprit and back to the starboard side block. The line was yellow 16 mm braided and harnesses could be clipped on in the cockpit before going forward. A strong point was fitted to the forward end of the cockpit easily reached from inside the cabin. On deck the existing traditional ventilated fore-hatch was replaced for the trip, with a simple sealed hatch which was tied down inside and taped up outside.

A horseshoe life ring and line with auto light was kept on the cockpit floor and a throw line was clipped to the hawse on the stern ready to deploy.

Finally a dodger was installed. Our number one boating rule, ‘never drill holes in boats’, was observed by welding the dodger hoop hinge points (thank you Michael) to Ronstan track slides and then fitting the slides to the existing genoa tracks which extended aft as far as the raised deck and the cockpit. This neat installation worked well, cleared the boom by about 25 mm (luck) and but for some minor water problems, provided good protection and a sense of security we didn’t deserve. You could also see around it and over it from the steering position.

Down Below

Down below we needed some electrics. We decided that three electrical circuits were it. One circuit for our navigation lights, a tri-colour at the masthead and a compass light in the cockpit. One circuit for the self-steering gear (Tiller Pilot SP 2000) and one circuit powering two cigarette-lighter plugs, used to charge our GPS, LED cabin lights, mobile phones, cameras and hand held VHF etc. The work was carried out quickly. Wiring for the masthead lights had been built into the mast six years ago when she was launched, but never connected, so we just had to complete the circuits and connect to our three gang switchboard. We also used the mast-top aerial to connect to the hand-held VHF for greater range.

Vanity has a single battery and it was decided that in spite of some fears that we might be stuck if the battery died, we would stay with one, albeit a new one for the trip. We were intending to motor sail whenever our



speed dropped below five knots, so we figured there would be plenty of charging time.

Cabin lighting was dealt with by two re-chargeable LED ‘trouble’ lights, which were a push fit into clips screwed above our chart table come galley. The light they cast was rather stark and they didn’t last as long we thought they would, but they worked and when the cabin you are lighting is miniscule you don’t need much light. Torches supplemented the LEDs.

Food and Cooking

Our galley comprised a two-burner metho stove, hanging from a simple bracket over the starboard bunk. This was a less-than-half satisfactory solution to a difficult problem particularly as the brackets stuck out over the bunk, as did the stove and the crew were in constant danger of being thrown across the cabin and spearing themselves on the stove and its brackets. In the event the crew were never that hungry. This was either because what was on offer wasn’t that compelling or the corkscrew motion of *Vanity* at sea was a constant reminder that dinner could wait. In any case we intended to coast hop rather than stay at sea so we were never too far from sustenance.

Because we had no refrigeration (an esky was it) the menu was slanted toward food that had inherent keeping qualities. Smoked salmon, for example, keeps well without refrigeration due to the high level of natural oils. Salamis and cured meats figured high on the preferred list. Nuts, dried fruits and lots of chocolate were carried. Bread was not carried — first it needs butter which is messy without a fridge and

Photos John Crawford

The navigation station in *Vanity*



breadcrumbs go everywhere. Ready-to-go gourmet soups which only required heating proved to be excellent value.

Finger food and table water biscuits were the go, easy to handle and no washing up. Since there was no running water, washing up wasn't possible apart from being an easily eliminated irrelevant task. Cucumbers, apples, oranges, lemons, and limes dealt with the scurvy and Bickfords Lime Juice Cordial was used to supplement the rum (rum, lime and water helped the inner man), along with two bottles of 12-year-old whisky,

Ginger ale for rum and ginger, Coke for rum and coke and numerous red and white wines for everything else plus some champagne to celebrate significant events.

Water was carried in a 60 L bladder which was placed under the aft starboard quarter berth. This had a flexible feed pipe and a tap that exited near the cabin sole. While this looked OK in theory, in practice the tap was exposed and got accidentally stood on late one night resulting in a bilge that filled very quickly with 60 litres of fresh water! The next half hour was spent with buckets putting things right. *Vanity* has a shallow bilge so a single bucket looks like the boat is about to sink, exciting stuff. She also has a bilge pump but because she is so flat the 60 L spreads over the 24 feet and you might as well bail.

Below in *Vanity*,
looking aft



SASC NEWS

Our bulk water supply was supplemented by a couple of 5 L bladder boxes of still water. We removed the cardboard box bit and stowed the foil bladders under the bunks, port and starboard. We were never short of water. Cardboard is not allowed on *Vanity* — it's like confetti and it gets everywhere.

Navigation

What do they say? Keep Australia on the right when going south and on the left when going north. Navigation is not one of my strong points. Yes, I have done a coastal navigation course and yes I know how to plot latitude and longitude on a chart and I know which way is up — but I cannot claim any great expertise.

For Hobart we decided that a hand held GPS (a Magellan Explorist 600) equipped with the supplementary electronic charts of the whole east coast of Australia would be the extent of our navigation equipment. In case of failure we carried hard-copy charts of the east coast, but we never really used them and we always knew where we were thanks to the GPS.

What we didn't have was a back-up and had our GPS failed we would have been a bit stuck, albeit we were never very far from land. At \$650 this was one of the best bits of kit that we had. Readily and quickly charged using the cigarette lighter plugs, the GPS proved amazingly accurate to the point where we had the confidence to navigate our way into Bateman's Bay after midnight. Every nav-aid appeared exactly on cue and all displayed on a tiny screen no bigger than four stamps. Talk

The owner concentrating on the task at hand — writing up the log



about holding the world in the palm of your hand. That's exactly what it was like. Batteries seemed to last forever, plus we could plot way points, distance travelled, speed, temperature, barometric pressure, distance to go, bearings to next way point or any point you selected.

A 75 mm Silva compass was vertically mounted in a Perspex bulkhead that occupied the starboard ventilation hatch position. Not perfect, hard to read at night (it was lit), but adequate and a simple installation that can be removed just like the hatch. The Perspex also gave us good natural light below, with protection from wind and water.

Our radio communication was limited to a waterproof handheld VHF which we could connect to our mast top aerial and theoretically increase our contact range. It didn't work very well so we didn't bother with it in the end. Weather reports were all we needed and apart from the middle of Bass Strait where nothing worked, we received all the information we required. The VHF was 'backed-up' with a CDMA mobile phone which surprised us with its range, even in quite poor reception areas such as Wineglass Bay.

So, that was it. *Vanity* was ready to go to sea. Liam Timms and Pete McCorquodale had their hands up for the first leg — Sydney Amateur Sailing Club to Batemans Bay — and all we needed was the weather and we were off down the harbour. "Don't turn left, turn right Mr Nicholson and out to the open sea....."

Vanity's intrepid first-leg crew ready for the high seas

To be continued

Photo courtesy Liam Timms



NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

Steven Gregg
John Musgrove
Stephen Prince
Martin Pryor

AN EVENING OF BOAT STORIES

On Thursday 29 November there will be a social meeting at the SASC commencing at 8 pm. Drinks and light refreshments will be available and two or three yachties will speak on the history of their boats with emphasis on restoration and usage. Everyone is welcome, including crews and visitors — it promises to be a very entertaining evening.

Southerly

ANCIENT MARINERS AHOY

This ancient mariner has raced regularly in SASC events since before Hitler's War and continues to do so today. I am just about to commence my sixty-second full season. It would appear that there are about four other regulars in the Harbour events over eighty years of age but it is possible that Southerly is the only person still racing who was doing so before WWII. Please let the editor know if you can throw any light on this speculation.

Southerly

NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR YACHTING NSW

The Board of Yachting NSW has announced the appointment of Adrian Steer as the new Chief Executive Officer of Yachting NSW.

Adrian comes from Australian Rugby Union where he was Operations Manager and where he was involved, amongst other things, with the Rugby World Cup in 2003. He is a recreational sailor and he says he is looking forward to the challenges that will be thrown his way.

At the recent 2007 NSW Yachting Awards the president, Lyndsay Brown thanked retiring CEO Stephen Leahy for his efforts over the last 18 months. "Stephen has been with us for only a brief time but during that time he has made a huge contribution to the sport through his knowledge and experience that he brought from Australian Surf Lifesaving and to which he now returns.

"We are all grateful to him for the fresh insights he has brought to the recreation and sport of sailing and his contribution over this period leaves us in good shape, Mr Brown said.





What a difference 27 years makes — Sail Boats Afloat in Farm Cove in 1980 (above) was a very modest affair compared with the sea-wall to sea-wall boats at the 2007 Boat Show in Cockle Bay earlier this year (below). Where will it all end?

Photos by John Jeremy



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The next SASC News will be the December 2007 edition. Contributions from members, which are always welcome, should reach the editor by Friday 23 November 2007. Contributions can be in hard copy or sent by email. Photographs are also very welcome.



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