



SASC NEWS

The Newsletter of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club



February 2006

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Cover:

Pinchgut (Garth Stewart) working to windward after the start on a stormy afternoon last December
(John Jeremy photo)

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COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 06

SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2006

Eighteenth point score race for Super 30s, Cavalier 28s, Division 2 and Classic Divisions. Fifteenth point score race for OK Dinghies and eighth point score race for Division 1 and Super 30 and Division 2 short series.

SUNDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2006

RANSA Regatta and OK Dinghies Sydney Harbour Championships race 3 and 4.

SATURDAY 4 MARCH AND SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2006

Audi Sydney Harbour Regatta

TUESDAY 7 MARCH

Last race on the Paul Slocombe Trophy Series.

SATURDAY 11 MARCH 2006

Nineteenth pointscore race for Super 30s, Cavalier 28s, Division 2 and Classic Divisions. Sixteenth point score race for OK Dinghies and ninth point score race for Division 1 and Super 30 and Division 2 short series.

SUNDAY 12 MARCH 2006

Seventh point score race for Division 6 and Gaffers Division.

SATURDAY 18 MARCH 2006

Twentieth point score race for Super 30s, Cavalier 28s, Division 2 and Classic Divisions. Seventeenth point score race for OK Dinghies.

SUNDAY 19 MARCH 2006

Ranger World Championships.

FRIDAY 24 MARCH 2006

Last Friday twilight race.

SATURDAY 25 MARCH 2006

Twenty-first point score race for Super 30s, Cavalier 28s, Division 2 and Classic Divisions. Eighteenth point score race for OK Dinghies.

SATURDAY 1 APRIL 2006

Summer Trophy Day. Twentny-second point score race for Super 30s, Cavalier 28s, Division 2 and Classic Divisions. Nineteenth point score race for OK Dinghies. Tenth point score race for Division 1 and Super 30 and Division 2 short series.

SUNDAY 2 APRIL 2006

Last point score race for Division 6 and Gaffers.

***NEED
THE TEN-
DER?***

***Call Mike or
Warwick on
0418 678 690***

Sat: 0900-1800
Sun: 0900-1700



SIGNALS FROM THE COMMODORE

In the Australia Day Honours list published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 26 January was a Donald William Gale — our very own Bill, awarded a Medal in the Order of Australia for services to sailing. I am sure all members will join with me in congratulating Bill on this award which recognises his life time of dedication to sailing and his part in preserving our sailing heritage.

Bill's contribution has been prodigious. His love affair with his yacht *Ranger* has led to a revival of interest in Australia's sailing past and the preservation of much of our sailing history that would otherwise have been lost.

The Supplement to *The Amateurs*, published in 1973, records that 'The idea of holding a race for Gaff Rigged Vessels was the brainchild of Bill Gale; and it was a stroke of genius'. The first Gaffers' Day held in October 1972 to commemorate the first 100 years of the Club was very much the start of the revival of interest in classic boats in Sydney. In 1972 the yachts competing were just thought of as old boats — my uncle had one of them, a lovely old ketch called *Bissy Girl*, which in those days was just an old boat nearing the end of her life, being used as a floating holiday home at Palm Beach. Like so many other yachts she was the beneficiary of this classic revival and was later restored. She will, hopefully, be one of the entrants in this year's event.

Bill has also been the strength behind the Classic Division. I doubt very much whether it would even exist without the enormous work that Bill has put into it over the years. It needed someone with Bill's amazing determination to get twenty or so boats to the starting line every Saturday when the average age of the yachts is usually well over fifty.

This year is a Gaffers' Day year and it would be nice to see all our members join in on 29 April — not just those of us who are lucky enough to own a classic yacht. There will be lots of things to do and see on the day — there will be a ferry to follow the race and I am sure there will be room on many of the competing yachts for those who would like to participate.

Rob Evans

Bill Gale OAM



John Jeremy photo



Once again life has been busy. No doubt you are all eager to hear how *Uniquely Singapore* ended up after race 1 from Liverpool to Cascais Portugal. Let's just say it was a nail biter.

After starting in 7th place, falling back to 9th place and ultimately last place in the heavy weather of the first couple of days of the 1200-mile leg it was always going to be tough to pull back any sort of favourable result. However — I was determined to stay out to the west and not get “sucked into” the Bay of Biscay. Following all my research, plenty of advice and a little dose of gut instinct we went west, further west and further west again. I started getting emails from friends and from the Clipper office asking me where I was going. Despite all of that we stuck to the plan and after about four days of sailing to windward we finally had an angle that allowed us to free sheets a little. As we approached the North of Spain we got the wind shift we had hoped for (and was forecast). We were able to pop a kite and begin what would be a slow run down the coasts of Spain and Portugal. Gradually we overtook boats. First there were two who decided to go into Biscay to try and sneak out on a light NE breeze that was forecast. Next we overtook *Qingdao* in the middle of the night. We ghosted past them under light-weight spinnaker and put 12 miles on them over the next eight hours. Finally we overtook *Cardiff* who got the shock of their lives when we drew up on them.

All photos courtesy Richard Falk

by
Richard Falk

The fleet moored
in Cascais,
Portugal



Connor Fogerty, skipper of *Cardiff*, is probably the skipper who likes to be beaten least of any of the ten of us. Clearly he saw red as we went past him (literally) and he put his foot down on the accelerator. For the next 36 hours to the finish we were engaged in a game of cat and mouse where we led by at times up to eight miles and at other times as little as 200 metres. As we closed on the headland 10 miles from our finish at Cascais the wind dropped to nothing. Connor closed on us from eight miles off and we managed to hold him off to beat him over the line by 400 metres. We had closed the gap on the lead boats and in the end we crossed only about 4 hours behind the first boat (*Liverpool*). The last boat came in about 12 hours behind us. One design racing is amazing in that we had 10 boats sailed flat out over 1200 miles and we all finished within about a 16 hour period. Given the differences in course, weather and individual issues on each boat it was an amazing outcome. We ended up in fourth position of ten and for a crew that had sailed together less than any other, was physically smaller than any other and had the least crew on board we were suitably pleased with our result. Most importantly it was a great confidence boost to the crew and sent a message to the rest of the fleet that *Uniquely Singapore* was a force to be reckoned with.

A birthday celebration for Richard Falk in mid Atlantic

We had a brief stopover in Cascais (about 2.5 days) most of which was taken up with repairs, further modifications and reprovisioning. Cascais



was a beautiful place rich in Portugese maritime history and filled with great places to eat and drink. After 36 hrs of no sleep during the end of the race the only logical thing to do was to go out with all of the other crews and get horribly drunk which of course we did in splendid fashion.

The start of the next leg was out the front of the harbour at Cascais. The conditions were very light which is standard for the area until mid afternoon when the wind generally kicks in. With only about 6 or 7 knots of breeze the start line was a challenge for ten 68 ft boats all jostling for position. Most boats opted for a genoa which on these boats is a monster. Unfortunately the fixed inner forestay makes tacking the genoa a nightmare so we along with *New York* opted for a Yankee No. 1 with a staysail. It paid off, as we were able to maintain better speed through the tacks. We crossed the start line first and were like a greyhound out of the blocks and bolting for the new breeze line five miles to seaward. Before we knew it we were in it with a mile lead on the closest boat and about three miles back to the tail of the fleet. The breeze quickly built to 35 knots and I elected (again) to adopt a conservative sail plan, with a still-inexperienced crew and another 34,000 miles to squeeze out of the sail wardrobe and the boat. Whilst we managed to avoid any damage or injuries (two other boats shredded spinnakers and one lost steering) our conservative approach again had us at the back of the fleet by 12 hours into the race.

Thereafter began a long old slog to regain the fleet. Initially we elected to two-sail reach prior to hoisting a spinnaker. With the wind easing off we found the fleet running away from us to the south and elected to go hunting for breeze to the west running angles with the spinnaker up. We were going significantly faster than the other boats but unfortunately our distance to finish line was not reducing at the same rate as the opposition. We were taking a huge gamble by sailing many extra miles again in the hope of picking up more wind and a better angle to the west. Ultimately we found ourselves sailing to the north of Madeira where we jibed and headed almost due south. Were now sailing vaguely in a straight line in the lovely trade winds of the east Atlantic. We were covering in excess of 220 miles per day in glorious sunshine in about 17 to 25 knots of N to NE wind. During this run down to Cape Verde we managed to pull back to about seventh.

The pack then split with most going west or through the Verde group whilst two of us went east. We managed to hold the fleet despite again sailing longer distances and then turned and headed SW for the ITCZ, the doldrums and ultimately Salvador in Brazil. As I start this article we are 7 degrees, 46 mins north of the equator. I am sitting in the nav. station (god pod) with sweat pouring off me. We have slowed to a crawl as we run in and out of squalls. The humidity is appalling with no ven-

tilation below decks. Rain squalls heavier than any I have ever seen even in the tropics come across us with monotonous regularity. Kite up, kite down, genoa up, genoa down, bare poles, main up, kite up — you get the picture. Yesterday we had our slowest day's progress to date. We made just 38 miles in 12 hours. We were delighted at this morning's position report to learn that the Western Australia boat which currently leads made only 22 miles in 12 hours.

After 2,300 miles of this race so far the fleet is spread out in a straight line across two degrees of longitude and with about 1,400 miles to go to Salvador it is still very much anyone's race.

The sealife has been steadily increasing as we move into warmer waters. We sighted two sharks yesterday. Porpoise have been commonplace for weeks now. Four- to five-foot Dorados swim under our bow every night. We average between five and 15 flying fish on deck every night. The first few nights were hilarious as shrieks would be issued from the deck. I would charge up on deck to see what was wrong think-

ing someone had amputated a limb only to find that a flying fish (sometimes up to half a kg) had committed suicide by leaping out of the water and hitting the helmsman or some other unsuspecting soul in the face.

We have had a couple of minor injuries on board this leg. One of our crew slipped on the companionway steps driving a tooth through her top lip. She needed seven stitches. Another crew member slipped at the mast yesterday and gashed her leg to the bone requiring 13 stitches. Other than that everyone seems to have gotten over their seasickness of the first week and has settled into the daily routine of on board life.

The tech heads getting serious when the SATCOMS failed



My birthday was last week and the crew baked a cake and gave me a present (a book on Australian to English translations). Our email and satellite phone systems failed last week and our SSB (HF radio) is not working properly either. As a consequence we have had no access to weather forecast information other than that which comes out in brief text format daily on Satcom C. On that basis I am quite happy that we are jostling at the front of the fleet. Our position sched at 1600 UTC today will tell us whether we have managed to hold onto or pull ahead of the rest of the fleet. Currently positioning ourselves at the eastern edge of the fleet we are trying to ensure that we get the new breeze ahead of any other boats. This leg to Brazil is really made up of two legs. One to the equator and then from the equator to the finish. The first boats to emerge from the doldrums and find fresh breeze will undoubtedly show a clean pair of heels to the boats drifting in the humidity and still airs behind them.

I will sign off now and head up on deck with my shampoo for a shower in the next downpour.

Best wishes and happy sailing to all at SASC.

Richard Falk

Skipper – Uniquely Singapore



GENERAL MEETING

A General meeting of the Club will be held in the Clubhouse on

**Wednesday 8 March 2006
at 8.00 pm**

The meeting will receive reports on the progress of the Club, following which a presentation will be given by an expert on the current racing rules. This will be an excellent opportunity to make sure you understand all the nuances of the rules, so don't miss it!

P. Chapman

Honorary Secretary

INTERNATIONAL CADET NATIONALS

*by
Charles
Maclurcan*

The International Cadet Class Association recently held its Nationals in NSW for the first time, at Woollahra Sailing Club, between 27 December and 4 January. SASC club members may be aware that the International Cadet has been adopted by Redlands as its training craft and quite a number operate from the Mosman Boatshed. It's a mighty fine training dinghy.

Each boat carries a main and jib and a fully-conventional spinnaker. The boat is not over canvassed and is normally sailed with an older larger child as skipper and a smaller crew. There are weight and age limits. The class is strongest elsewhere, mainly Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria and all these States were well represented on the water. This was the first time, I understand, that a Nationals had been held in Sydney, as the class has only been recently established by Martin Pryor at our very own premises.

The Redlands parents were responsible for the shore side operations and successfully managed a wide range of duties from manning rescue vessels, organising the launching, retrieving and storage of boats after racing and operating the canteen.

Cadets approaching the lower mark during the first race

Woollahra Sailing Club managed the on-water operations with yours truly staffing the start/finish pin boat and officiating on the national jury.

John Jeremy photo





John Jeremy photo

There was a rounding mark in there somewhere!

Eighty six entrants took part. Sydney Harbour played its usual tricks and with varying winds, strong tidal flows and with so many keen competitors on the line race management was challenging. On the first day a number of general recalls were required as the sailors became accustomed to the strong current carrying them over the line. A black flag finally sorted out the situation.

With a fleet such as this, inevitably some boats were called OCS and others got away with it. A tough, seemingly unfair call for kids who tend to perceive things in black and white but inevitable if racing is to be conducted in reasonable time. The national jury was kept busy affirming the actions of the race committee!

Finding my craft sunk after the first day I reverted to the largest of the School's aluminium boats which did sterling service for the rest of the week. One race was abandoned after a 90 degree wind shift which was disappointing for the leader at the time but fair for the majority.

The Tasmanian boat *Capricious*, brilliantly sailed by first-year skipper and crew Lucy Shephard and Sophie Chesterman (13 and 10 years old respectively) won the series. The girls had trained three times a week for some months and were always thoroughly prepared. Their success was a lesson from which all NSW crews can learn. The hotly contested interstate teams' competition was won by Victoria. Four previous Australian title holders were present, two of them supporting their children as the next generation emerges.

The impact on the NSW team of sailors and parents was very positive and two families have now purchased boats, bringing the fleet to a very healthy 19 boats.

The foresight of SASC in their encouragement of youth sailing is certainly paying dividends.

Overall it was quite an Event and I know that the young sailors enjoyed it immensely. I salute SASC member Martin Pryor and his dedicated volunteers for their determination and staying power that ensured it all happened.

CAUGHT BY THE WIND

by
Peter Keleman

As a young boy I grew up staring over the wall of Northbridge baths at the flotilla of moored boats dreaming that one day I'd have my own.

Last year I realised that dream. Some would say that in my 39th year it was a mid-life crisis. Whatever, I am not looking back.

Having learnt to sail on dinghies when I was 12 and then progressing to windsurfers in my teenage years I was fairly comfortable with my sailing abilities. Despite having had only a dozen or so experiences on a yacht before making my purchase of *A Fine Balance* early last year I was therefore reasonable confident at the helm.

I spent the autumn and winter months familiarising myself, my wife Sarah and two young boys (2 and 4 years old) with the boat. It soon became clear that sailing for longer than two hours with the boys was going to be painful, however the over-night experiences were much more successful with them.

A Fine Balance at
the start of the
2005 Architects'
race

John Jeremy photo



I felt like a child with a new toy and couldn't wait for the week to roll by so I could get back on the water. I think I missed just three weekends in six months on *AFB*, thanks in part to Sydney's magnificent winters.

As spring approached I realised I'd better start racing to enhance my skills and so decided to sign up for the Saturday spring series. I assembled a motley bunch of enthusiastic friends, colleagues and friends-of-as my crew and proceeded to really learn just how much I didn't know about sailing — or more specifically racing.

Our first challenge was to overcome the game of hide and seek with the starting boat. I couldn't believe that the course was not announced either at the Club or via radio.

Having also erroneously thought that we could just follow the fleet around the buoys, coming last we also soon found ourselves 'lost' on the harbour and scrambling for the course information. All this in up to 38 knots of wind and some close calls at marks with a few misinterpretations of the rules on our first race could have been the end of our racing desires. Conversely we were all pumped with adrenalin, if a little shaken and eager for more.

Our next few races were not much more successful. Going to the wrong starting line, more rule issues, some close calls with tankers, more near-40-knot winds and badly set sails and then learning how to fly a spinnaker as the winds settled in subsequent weeks all contributed to some dreadful results — but then things changed.

Peter Keleman
with crew Franz
and Daniel

Photo courtesy Peter Keleman



Our handicap kicked in as we got our act together and we won race 4 on handicap and even beat one boat on scratch. My crew and I were elated. This gig was fun!

The rest of the spring series was spent chasing our handicap as we improved incrementally and Bill Hogan struggled to wind up our handicap as fast as he could.

I also spent the series soaking up sailing tips at the post race BBQs like a sponge and have to thank Bill and Guy Irwin especially for their help.

I am going to miss Sydney Harbour, especially the hidden treasure that is the SASC and the great bunch of people I met there this year immensely, in particular my crew of Franz (most enthusiastic crew award nominee), Daniel, Darren and Chris, as I am now in the midst of packing up my possessions for a relocation to Fremantle where *AFB* and I have an appointment with The Doctor!

PS: Anyone heading west is welcome to contact me for a sail on 0425 293 745 or kelehawk@gmail.com

A CLASSIC YACHT

The fine yacht *Weene*, sailed by Mark Riley, has recently been on an Amateurs' mooring. She is one of six built to the design, initially being 32.67 feet long overall. The design lines were influenced by a William Hand creation published in the magazine *Rudder* about 1900. There was interest in Hobart at the time for a cruiser-racer class and local designer Alfred Blore produced a modified version considered more suitable for the Derwent.

Originally named *Spindrift*, she was built by Charles Lucas at Battery Point side-by-side with her sisters *Pandora* and *Curlew* — the others being *Canobie*, *Pilgrim* and *Vanity*. The boats began racing very successfully as a class in 1912/13, the name *Weene* (Aboriginal for 'trier', as in 'try hard') was bestowed on *Spindrift* by the renowned Batt family at an early date.

The yacht was converted to Bermudan rig in 1925 and was subsequently lengthened by three feet. One of her sisters came to Sydney decades ago and was renamed *Culwalla IV* — I remember her, does anyone know of her fate? *Weene* is a magnificent classic and it is to be hoped she will grace our classic fleet in future years.

History shows that in later years *Weene* and her sisters were totally outclassed by more modern yachts. This dinosaur wonders, in view of the stunning performance of the similar *Redpa*, if this would have occurred if *Weene* had retained the gaff?

Southerly



The next Gaffers' Day will be held on 29 April 2006 and I am confident it will be its usual success as it is in the hands of an expert committee. The first Gaffers' Day was in 1972 and I believe these events have become our shop window. One of the prime factors in this context during my chairmanship of the committee was the presence of a flagship — almost always provided free of charge by friends of mine. A prime example was the beautiful *Silver Cloud* provided by the Hon. and Mrs Derek Freeman. Derek's masterly handling of the 65 footer and Phyllis's hostess were a delight. Derek provided *Silver Cloud* several times as did Richard Wilson with his cruisers and Keith Storey and Les White on occasion.

Flag officers from all clubs were invited with their ladies, along with guests from State and local government, the Australian Defence Force, MSB, Water Police and other authorities. The SASC excelled itself providing wonderful lunches and looking to the wants and enquiries of our guests. These contacts were beneficial to the Club over the years.

On all occasions the guests were delighted with the day and thanked us sincerely and I believe an enormous amount of goodwill and respect for the SASC was created. Times and attitudes change greatly and our committee may decide that a flagship is no longer appropriate, however I wish to place on record what a great success the flagships were at the time.

Southerly

John Jeremy photo

Silver Cloud as SASC flagship for the 1990 Gaffers' Day





John Jeremy photo

Peter Campbell with a happy crew in *Hornblower* before the start of the last race in the Spring season (above)

Super 30s underway for the last race before Christmas (below)

John Jeremy photo





John Jeremy photo

Storm clouds over *Ranger*

FRIDAY TWILIGHTS

The Friday Twilight races are proving as popular as ever. If you plan to come sailing on Friday nights and to stay for dinner afterwards, please ring Patrick or Maggie as soon as possible and definitely no later than Thursday when Patrick polishes the Club's crystal ball and orders 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!

WAITERE is for sale

This fine Bermudan sloop, 31'8" long with **Huon pine hull** and **laid teak deck**, was designed by A.C. Barber, and built in the 1930s by Billy Fisher at La Perouse. Purchased by Harry Lloyd in 1947, *Waitere* remained in the Lloyd family until 1987 when Les, Peter and Jim Hamilton bought her from Harry's son, Stephen Lloyd.

- 20hp Bukh diesel with a folding propeller
- standing rigging completely replaced in 2003 by Noakes

Contact Jim Hamilton on 0418 453 531 to discuss how *Waitere* could give you years of sailing pleasure.



Price reduced from \$35,000 to \$28,500 for a quick sale!



John Jeremy photo

Wild Oats XI displaying her speed to the spectators before the start of the 2005 Sydney to Hobart yacht race (above). It is rumoured that Southerly has commented that she would be even faster with a gaff rig

The fast yachts on the way to Hobart as the smoke from the starting gun clears (below)

John Jeremy photo



Brian Clifford Gale, eldest son of Cliff Gale, slipped his moorings on 18 January aged 90 years and nine months. His great love in sailing was the 18 foot skiffs as forward hand and he sailed with old-time greats such as Chris Webb, Bill Hayward, Billy Fisher and others.

As forward hand he won many championships in 12, 16 and 18 footers. Many of the old hands told me that he was the best hand they ever sailed with. In World War II he skippered air-sea rescue boats with the RAAF and while based in Port Moresby rescued many Allied and Japanese airmen from ditched aircraft.

Having moved to Queensland in 1949 he taught sailing and rigging to many including the armed services people at Oakey. He came to Sydney quite a few times and sailed in *Southern Cross II* — many members will remember him, he had a Ned Kelly beard. He particularly enjoyed the time he spent at the SASC.

Southerly



John Jeremy photo

Nanygai (Mark Pearse) — one of the smaller gaffers in the SASC fleet

GAFFERS DAY

The next Gaffers Day will be held on 29 April this year. It is a great spectacle, a rally of gaffers and classic Bermudan-rigged vessels. A spectator boat will follow the events and a commentary will be given by an ancient mariner.

This is the best way to view the great day and I recommend it to members and their friends. The fee will be reasonable and bar service provided. Bookings through the office.

Southerly

SASC
2006

Vanity
SASC A2

34' RANGER TYPE

Built for
John Crawford
by
Newson
at
Berry Bay
in
2001



NATIONAL
GAFFERS DAY

SYDNEY AMATEUR SAILING CLUB - FOUNDED 1872

TO BE HELD

SATURDAY 29th. APRIL ON SYDNEY HARBOUR NSW AUSTRALIA

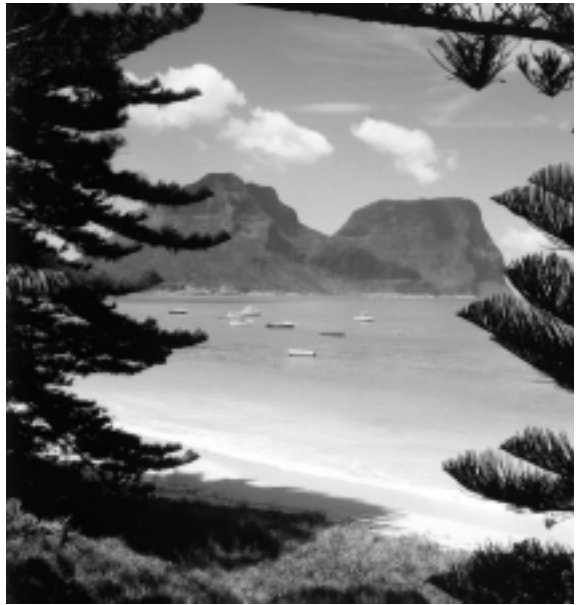
FOR INFORMATION PHONE 02 9953 1433 FAX 02 9953 0898

COME and ENJOY
SASC FRIDAY TWILIGHT
RACING 2005/2006

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

Win a trip for 2
to
LORD HOWE
ISLAND

(Valued at over \$2,000)



David Salter photo

HOW? Simply sail in the SASC Friday Twilight Series and when you make a season entry and complete 5 races your boat becomes eligible to enter the draw for a trip for 2 to Lord Howe Island. The

more races you compete in increases your chances of winning. Potentially you can be entered in the draw 12 times. The trip for two will be drawn at the completion of the last race in the series. Contact the Club and enter now!

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BEFORE AND AFTER



This is probably the last photograph of *Kismet* (Andrew Inwood) with her old mast — setting out for the start of the last race before Christmas (above). Unfortunately, not everything ends as planned and *Kismet* returned to her mooring later that day with a severely reduced rig (below)

John Jeremy photos



David Salter sailed the Sydney-Hobart with no instruments, but a dry bunk.

It was an odd feeling. For the first time in umpteen years I wouldn't be trundling down the club pontoon to go south in either *Mark Twain* or *Bright Morning Star*. (In fact, the only boat of note with an SASC sail number this year was Sean Langman's old *AAPT*, re-badged as *Coogans Stores*.) So, instead of swapping the usual pre-race bets and banter with Mosman Bay mates, I was on the wrong side of the harbour among the silvertails at the CYCA loading last-minute perishables onto *Inon*, my ride to Hobart for 2005.

It's Now Or Never ('*Inon*' for short) is big and comfortable. A custom Beneteau 64 built in France 10 years ago, she's set up for cruising and conservative passage-making. But the sloop's new owner, Bruce Gray, wants to go racing — and why not? I'd done Southport with him earlier in the year but we'd been awfully slow in the light stuff. Maybe the tougher conditions predicted for the Sydney-Hobart would suit us better.

To say that *Inon* isn't seriously equipped for racing is something of an understatement. Instead of the standard 4 or 5 headies, we had just one, on a power furler. (But we did have three separate heads, each with its own shower.) And instead of the standard 3 or 4 kites we again had just one, in a cumbersome snuffler. (But we did have a large galley in its own cabin, complete with a freezer and two fridges). There were power

Southern comfort... dry decks most of the way on the 28-tonne *Inon*

David Salter photo



winches for the jib, mainsheet and halyards — a welcome luxury for the decidedly middle-aged crew. We went with just seven POB, including the deeply experienced duo of Bill Riley (*Vanguard*) and Graham Fraser, Bob Swan (a Lord Howe regular from the Gosford Club), Mike Smith off the old *Loki* and an enthusiastic newcomer, James Bruce. Each of us had use of a dedicated bunk, loads of locker space and a spacious wet area to hang our oilies and safety gear. As a concession to racing conditions, the ducted air conditioning/heating system wasn't used during the trip. Such sacrifices!

The breeze was so light as we meandered out to the start that I broke an old habit and handed up lunch before the gun (hot dogs with a full range of condiments), rather than serve the traditional first snatched meal off Bondi. The basic tactical plan was to stay out of trouble and find a hole somewhere near the middle of the line. Keeping 28 tonnes of boat moving as we tacked gingerly up the harbour and around the two clearance marks tested our light-weather abilities and by the time we'd eased away onto the rhumbline there were only eight sails behind us. But waterline length has its privileges, and one by one we began to reel in yachts as the breeze freshened and *Inon* started to stretch her legs. By late afternoon we were pegging back the scrum of Sydney 38s and towards dusk it gave us some pleasure to eventually drive through the lee of *Bright Morning Star* as they held further out to seaward. My thoughts drifted across the water to Dal and Hughie. This would be V.H. O'Neill's 25th trip to Hobart and it was disappointing not to be with him for that special journey.

David Salter photo

Master &
Commander...
skipper Bruce
Gray drives with
Graham Fraser
on watch



The first night provided splendid two-sail reaching conditions as we gradually progressed to the middle of the fleet, making 9 knots with no great effort. We sat dry and warm on deck, tucking into bowls of ravioli and wondering when the wind would come far enough behind the beam for us to fly our big ass. This tactical discussion was soon interrupted by a terrific *whump!* as something solid fell at our feet in the aft cockpit. I had immediate fears of rig failure. “What the f—k was that?” The skipper sat transfixed, clutching at his throat in what seemed like a state of shock. “Quick! Put a torch on it!” And there it lay on the cockpit floor — a large, slimy flying fish that had sailed straight over our transom and collected the poor owner in the neck. James, apparently the resident Buddhist of the crew, carefully picked up the fish and threw it back in the tide. No matter how many thousands of sea miles you’ve sailed, there’s always something new to experience. Lame jokes about all owners being a pain in the neck kept us amused for the rest of the watch.

By the first morning sked at 0705 the extraordinary range of performance at each end of the fleet was starkly evident. The 30 m LOA canting-keel monsters were already 100 miles ahead while the tail-enders were not far past Port Kembla. As we’d hoped, the breeze slowly backed left and we soon had the big kite up and pulling us south at a heartening rate. Calm seas, fair winds — who could ask for anything better? We seemed set for a swift and comfortable trip. The true wind was now nudging 18 knots and as our watch began handing over to the other mob, I said to the new helmsman “Don’t get carried away with boat

Hard running... safety first with reefed main, staysail and partly furled, poled-out jib

David Salter photo



speed, mate. If the breeze makes 20 true, just take the kite down. It's only 1.5oz, and pretty old." (We'd be much safer — and almost as fast — under poled-out jib anyway.) "Where are we, Mr Naviguesser?" "About 15 miles North of Gabo. Plenty of sea room." "Great. Let's get some rack time." And so to bed.

"Fellas! Everyone on deck! We've lost the kite!" The shout was just audible over the frenzied flapping of what now remained of our only spinnaker. Scrambling on deck to take the wheel while the wreckage was cleared I glanced at the true wind speed. It was surging between 25 and 30 knots. No wonder the spinnaker had disintegrated. Time to re-think the rig. We took two quick reefs (a delightfully easy process using the pair of powered winches at the mast), and then hoist the staysail hanked to the inner forestay. The boat soon settled into balance and we romped along through the inky night. Down to the cot for the precious 30 minutes or so that were still left of our off watch.

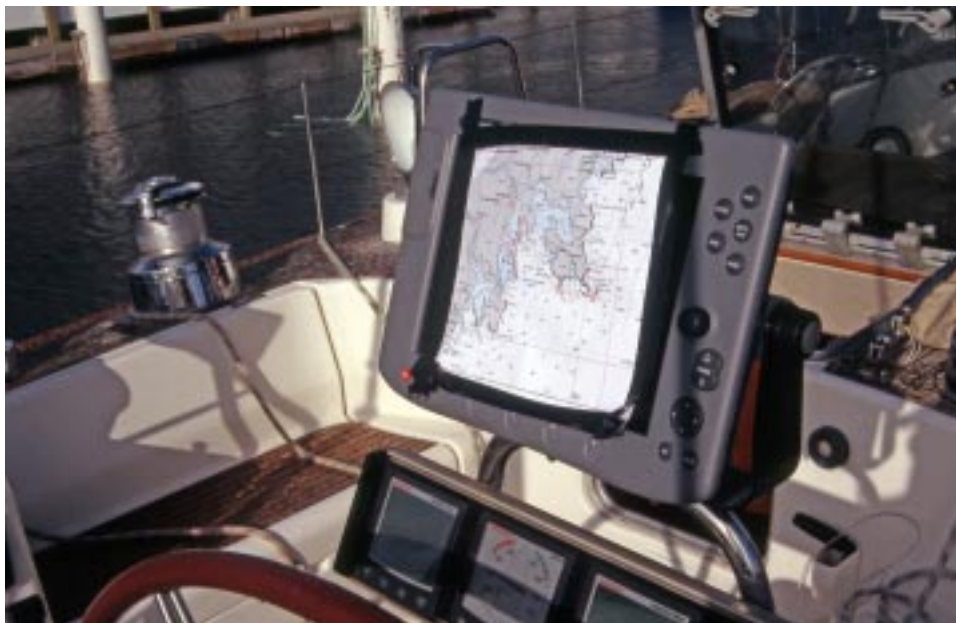
When we came back on deck conditions seemed even darker than usual. The reason was soon apparent. No instruments. The large displays at the twin wheels were completely black, as were the chart plotter and the repeaters at the mast. Below in the nav station the GPS showed a blank screen. Absolutely SFA. "Is it just the lights, or the instruments themselves?" "Sorry guys, it's the

David Salter photo

whole bloody shooting match. We've tried to fix it but we can't even find the central processor. There's some sort of power supply problem." Not exactly the type of news you want to hear at 0300 heading into Bass Strait with another 400 miles of hard offshore racing ahead. "Does the radio work?" "Yeah, the HF seems to be on a different circuit, thank Christ." Oh well, at least the compass lights were working and we could just see the Windex vane 70 feet above the deck. There were two backup GPS hand-helds on board, one of which was already fired up and hanging from the binnacle below the dead plotter screen. "We got plenty of AA batteries?" Good oh. This was now going to be an interesting challenge to our ba-

The spa bath...
64ft LOA allows
for a spacious
centre cockpit





David Salter photo

sic sailing and navigational skills. I was grateful that we'd kept to the traditional practice of making a 'mark on the chart' every hour. (Three days later in Hobart we discovered the cause of the failure: water had seeped into a poorly-placed junction box at the bottom of a galley locker.)

Just to underline the difficulties of our situation, the oncoming watch then discovered that there were problems with one of the lower main cars and the headboard. Best to get the big sail down and lashed until daylight. We did the rest of the night with just the staysail and the jib partly unfurled. Even on a 64-footer there was now plenty of water on deck, some of which found its way below (but — you beauty! — not into my bunk). By dawn, The Paddock was giving the Sydney-Hobart fleet its traditional welcome: heaps of breeze and a building sea. Fortunately, we were still broad reaching and grabbed the opportunity to let *Inon* really show us what she could do. Up went the main, triple reefed. We kept experimenting with our makeshift cutter rig but soon returned to the simple, safe staysail. What had really only been carried on the boat as a 'storm jib' to comply with the Category One regulations was now our favourite sail. "Don't leave home without it!" We'd become staysail junkies.

The lack of instruments had reduced the flow of normal tactical information to such an extent that we had no real option other than to stick with the fundamentals: steer straight down the rhumbline to Tasman Island, and trim for speed. This 'Keep It Simple, Stupid' approach proved amazingly effective and we had a straightforward, sheets-eased run along

Static display...
corner of
Tasmania air
navigation map
taped to cactus
chart plotter

the normally tricky Tasmanian coast. As his personal response to the instrument failure, Graham cheekily taped the ‘Maria Island to Hobart’ section of an air navigation chart over the screen of the dead plotter to comfort any fretting helmsman. There wasn’t a single star to pierce the blackness as we rounded Tasman, hardened up across Storm Bay and headed towards Betsey Island.

“Incoming!” Crisp trails of phosphorescence hurtled straight towards us through the dark water. A pod of athletic dolphins had decided to welcome us to 43° S by doing their famous impersonation of torpedoes. They repeatedly charged the boat, coming in at such speed and sharp angles that a collision seemed inevitable, yet never came. The scene was spectacular compensation for the three Hobart ‘virgins’ in the crew who’d been denied the beautiful sight of Cape Raoul and the Organ Pipes. Even better news was the realisation that the breeze seemed to be holding into the night and there was now a good chance we’d avoid the usual 2200-0600 parking lot in the Derwent and be finished by early morning.

And so it came to pass. We crossed the line off Battery Point at 0725 on the 30th with James on the foredeck in full Highland regalia belting out some woeful dirge on his bagpipes. The skirl would surely wake the dead, but you can’t keep an old Scots College boy down. In truth, we were all delighted to rekindle a tradition that had begun with the Livingston brothers of *Kurrewa IV*, who’d always piped themselves into Sullivan’s Cove at the end of the race. We’d finished creditably mid-fleet in PHS, a division that included two Volvo 60s. Well sailed,

David Salter photo

Dawn on the Derwent... James Bruce wakes Hobart with the skirl of the pipes





David Salter photo

lads. Off to the Customs House for some serious rehydration! And where's *Bright Morning Star*? Miles back. They didn't finish for another 11 hours and 39 minutes (not that anyone was counting).

Home and dry... the big boat finally gets a rest at Queen Elizabeth Wharf

WARNING

With the 2006 Gaffers Day almost upon us, plans are in hand to prepare the clubhouse and boatshed for this special event. Unfortunately, the boatshed is becoming choked by feral odds and ends of a nautical nature.

Owners of this itinerant equipment are warned that a clean-up of the boatshed will be carried out on

Sunday 5 March 2006

Equipment not identified and properly stowed will be disposed of — ruthlessly. So, if you don't want to find your spare oars, spinnaker pole, sail, bucket, old battery, useful lengths of rope etc. missing when you go looking for them some time in 2007, act now!

Those who enjoy the catharsis of boatshed clean-ups might prepare to volunteer. Please let the Vice-Commodore know that you will be there.

A LAZY AFTERNOON SAIL

by
Frank Talbot

It is a sparkling Sydney afternoon and with a light following wind Sue and I sail off our mooring in Tambourine Bay. We are sailing my new love — I mean my new boat. While Sue and I have coped with the vicissitudes of life and kept together for over a half century, I fear I have been frightfully fickle about boats — this being boat number ten. She is a bright-green International Folkboat we have renamed *Greensleeves*. As I am still getting used to *Greensleeves*' ways I lower the outboard just in case it should be needed to get me out of possible trouble as we thread through the moored boats in the bay. I think I shall soon be confident to skip this step as she seems beautifully mannered and quite without vices — she goes just about anywhere you point her. I thoroughly enjoy the variation in my afternoon sails — the shifts of tide (flooding or ebbing, neaps or springs) and the different strength and direction of wind make each sail distinct. I feel I could sail a few afternoons a week for the next 25 years (highly unlikely, as it would make me a hundred) and each sail would be different.

After the hard turn to port into the Lane Cove River we immediately run out of wind in the lee of the Longueville headland topped with its big houses. *Greensleeves* slows to a drift for a while, but keeps edging forward until the wind picks up to drive her into the wide stretch along the Hunter's Hill peninsula.

Today a moderate tide is flooding up the river, but once we are in the open stretch there is enough wind for the boat to put her shoulder down and move fast against it. In the gusts she sometimes heels so that my elbow on the gunnel is only inches from the water swishing past until

Greensleeves

Photo courtesy Frank Talbot



she picks up speed and the heavy keel (more than half the weight of the whole boat — she has a fifty eight percent ballast ratio) comes into play and stops her leaning further. She is so close winded that in spite of beating against wind and tide we make only three tacks before reaching the right-angled turn into Humbug, the final narrow stretch before the Lane Cove River enters Parramatta River and the main harbour. I have been told that Humbug's name comes from the cliffs on each side twisting the wind in perplexing directions. Going through on a beat you can suddenly be headed against a shore, or a fierce gust will try to knock you down, or the wind will perhaps just fall away and leave you drifting. Then just as suddenly it will come from dead ahead and put the boat in stays. One rarely has an easy beat through Humbug. Today, with the wind nearly aft, there are no surprises and *Greensleeves* slips out into the open harbour.

In spite of the glorious autumn weather there is not a single yacht in the river to match *Greensleeves* against. In the far distance near the Bridge and the Opera House there are one or two sails, but here there is only a working ferry and one man powering his kayak up the harbour close enough to give us a friendly nod. I don't envy his serious labour as I lie back, feet along the seat, totally at ease and letting the wind do all the work.

It is four o'clock, and the thought of tea is tempting, so on goes the kettle. We turn into Ball's Head Bay, dropping the main into its lazy jacks, and sail in under jib alone. It is a lovely place to anchor. Though it is in the middle of the city the bay has greenery on three sides and is sheltered from most winds. At the end of a few coastal cruises we have stayed here for a last peaceful night, delaying the return to the burdens of the shore. We drift in and I roll the jib and Sue slips the anchor over. We have only one companion in the bay — a fine motor yacht with one man reading in an easy chair in the stern, and another in the water on an air line scrubbing the boat. As we sip our tea and watch the energetic scrubber I think of the risk of sharks. I have had encounters with a few as a young marine biologist working on coral reefs. The worst of these, highly amusing to my friends but painful to me, was a bite on the chest and the loss of my right nipple to a small but aggressive shagreen shark. Big sharks are seen in the harbour now and then, but no-one has died from an attack since the fifties. This scrubber is clearly not worried, even though the autumn sun is lowering. Though the risk is slight, I prefer my occasional swims in the harbour to be at mid-day and in clearer water near the entrance.

As we laze, swirls of cloud appear in the upper sky. From a clear azure blue it has become a busy sky, and it looks as if there will be a change in the weather soon — but not yet. Though the breeze is gentler, it is still steady enough to take us home. Our return is slower and lazier, and with only two tacks through Humbug in this clever craft I crow aloud — but Sue tells me to touch wood. Humbug can be vindictive and a gust sank a small boat owned by a friend of ours. As it often does along our lovely coast the wind dies with the setting sun. *Greensleeves* slows and drifts, so we douse sails and then motor back into the bay in the twilight, and use torches for the climb through the trees up to the house.

A lifetime of sailing has given me huge enjoyment and wonderful memories. I still dream of earlier sails — greater in length and adventure certainly. The excitement of hissing along at 18 knots in *Janthina*, a fast Grainger cat, down the moon's path off Coffs on the way north to the Reef, or coming back from Cape Town running under storm jib before a gale in the southern ocean (with a solid dollop of real apprehension) in *Rainbird*, one of Joe Adams wonderful 40 footers, and looking *down* on gliding albatrosses from the top of huge waves, or trundling steadily along in the trades reading while 11 year old son Nick, with great care, cooks delicious pikelets for lunch, or the wonderful differences in sailing to those three great islands within our reach — Tassie, Lord Howe and New Caledonia. But don't knock the harbour. Old Josh Slocum loved his stay in Sydney perhaps more than most places in the first great yacht circumnavigation and in 1896 he spoke well of the 'circumnavigators of Sydney Harbor'. For pure sailing in a sweet boat it is difficult to better.

Dear Sir,

On page 32 of the December SASC News there was a photograph of an unusual rig on a cruising boat. In view of my preposterous antiquity my eyes could not be certain of the details however it appeared to me that there was a metal mast fabricated with two outer curving verticals with a supporting web inside. Further there seemed to be a topmast, possibly socketed into the head of the mast, with a gaff at a reasonably large angle offered to the mast and topmast.

In the teens of the twentieth century Charles Nicholson was commissioned by Sir Hercules Langrische to design a 15- or perhaps 19-metre yacht (I cannot be certain off the top of my head) to beat all others in the class. Charles came forth with a rowing skiff to fit precisely into the cockpit (the rules demanded that a skiff be carried) and also a topmast socketed into the masthead superseding the universal fidded topmast. The topsail was offered up onto the spar on a track, this innovation rendering all previous rigs uncompetitive.

In order to get all this to stand a very complex web of stays and shrouds was necessary and the wags of the day dubbed it a Marconi rig because the complex rigging of radio masts at the time exhibited all manner of wires. To my horror yachties called the Bermudan rig a Marconi right up to the late 1970s. Fortunately this misnomer has virtually died.

Sir Hercules was a hard-riding hard-drinking yachtie with a fierce beard and a very imposing personality. I wish I had known him.

As far as I can see the boat in the photo has a modified version of the Marconi rig. Any yacht racing in a division where sail area is not dictated would be devastating to the opposition with a true Marconi rig because of the immense sail area and the low centre of effort.

Southerly

Dear Sir,

Due to the disparate duration of the 2005 Lord Howe Island race for *Azzurro* and *Bright Morning Star*, your correspondent David Salter managed to produce copious pages on the *BMS* experience, whereas the *Azzurro* report consists of — ‘winners are grinners and fall over a lot’.

One issue of David Salter’s report demands correction. He refers to the *Azzurro* crew being “as close as you can get to a team of genuine ‘rock stars’ around the SASC”. I think that I can speak for the gentlemen on board in confidently stating that Mel Godfrey and Vanessa Dudley are ‘rock stars’ around any club.

Sean Kelly

[We would be delighted to publish tales of the adventures of the mighty Azzurro — surely there must be a literary genius on board! — Ed.]

Pioneers of the Pacific
Voyages of Exploration 1787-1810

Nigel Rigby, Pieter von der Merwe and Glyn Williams
Published by the National Maritime Museum, London, 2002

by
Greg Sproule

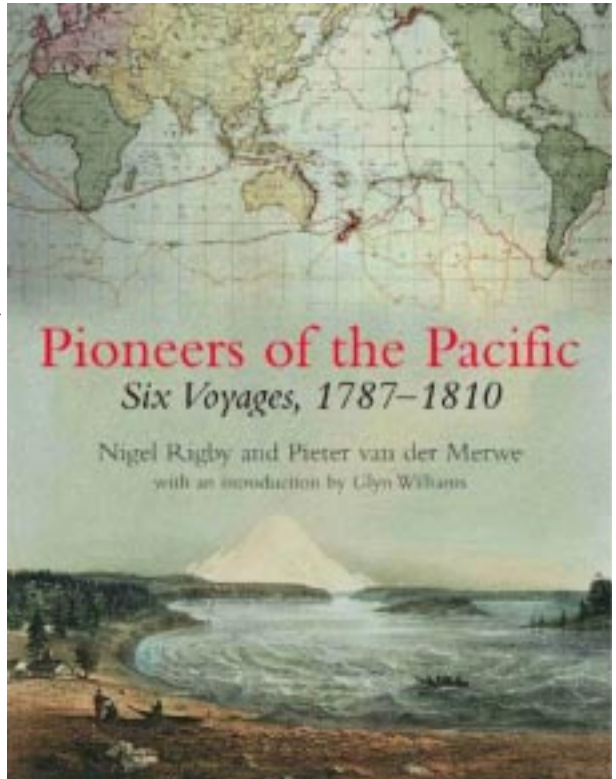
This publication follows *Captain Cook in the Pacific* and is a fascinating collection of six key explorative sea voyages about the time of the British colonisation of New South Wales.

Sydney soon became an important port, if not supply station in the Pacific and its first maritime events are described here in vivid detail. Historically significant individuals who have become part of our daily language — Sydney, Banks, Nepean, Pitt, La Perouse, Bligh, Macquarie, Macarthur etc. are described and put in historical context. The importance of science to maritime history is described and to this day a cannon is fired each day from Fort Denison to commemorate the importance of accuracy.

The book details their heroic achievements including interesting muses on the possible reasons for some of their failures. What would have happened if Napoleon Bonaparte, then only a mathematically gifted student at the Ecole Militaire, had been accepted for the prestigious expedition with the Comte de La Perouse? Perhaps the voyage would not have ended so disastrously, and did La Perouse's maritime problems mirror those befalling Louis XVI, the generous benefactor of the voyage?

The book outlines Britain's maritime legacy to the scientific community and has many simple practical examples, such as how scurvy casualties on the first fleet vindicate Governor Phillip, "is a good Man, remember me kindly to him" by Sir Horatio Nelson.

The authors also highlight the tensions between master of the ship and other shore based authorities. Experience and per-



sonal associations are a recurring theme. This is exemplified in the irony of the 18 year old midshipman George Vancouver's dash to the bowsprit in 1776 in *Discovery* to be the person who had been furthest when, at 71 Degrees 10 Minutes Cook ordered return from exploring North America — his midshipman waving goodbye to the most remote point on the explored map, and shouting "ne plus ultra", nothing further. Thirteen years later the Admiralty commissioned the then Captain Vancouver to explore the same area for the phantom North West Passage with his midshipman, and ashore nemesis, Thomas Pitt.

The influence of Cook and Banks highlights the persuasive impact of these individuals in maritime history and is a refreshing insight to their intelligence.

Seamanship is underlined by a story of La Perouse's advice to his first lieutenant d'Escures to approach the narrow entrance of Port Des Francais "only at slack tide without a swell". Ignored the order resulted in a monument on an island, at this dangerous entrance, named Cenotaph Island with the epitaph "At the entrance to this port twenty-one brave sailors perished. Whoever you may be, add your tears to ours."

The book is well written, useful and hints at the importance of history.

AROUND THE CLUB



John Jeremy photo

A large crowd of sailors on the wharf after the last race of the Spring season. The sausage sizzle has become a popular feature of Saturday afternoons at the SASC



The Australia Day Regatta this year was a great success with more boats sailing in the harbour events than for many years. Unfortunately the offshore race had to be cancelled for lack of wind but the north easterly wind arrived just in time for the warning signal for the harbour races. A wide range of boats took part from the most modern sloops to the growing fleet of historic skiffs (above) which this year welcomed some visitors from New Zealand.

The flagship for the regatta was HMAS *Stuart* and the guests on board were treated to the great spectacle of a magnificent Sydney sailing day. SASC boats were well represented — in the photograph below *Redpa* (A6) crosses the finish line to win the Traditional Division on handicap

John Jeremy photos



We welcome the following new members:

Sean Bungarner
Vin Gallagher
Jim Middleton
Edward O'Brien
Rick Shapter
Christopher Sligar
Dennis Wood
Alexander Zaininger

SASC SLOP CHEST

The SASC shop — otherwise known as the office, has a range of clothing and other useful items for sale. All prices include GST.

Polo shirts, two styles in navy and one in white:	\$36.00
Rugby shirt, navy with white collar:	\$49.00
Club sweatshirt, navy:	\$49.00
Club tie:	\$20.90
Club burgees:	Large: \$25.00 Small: \$21.00
Racing flag:	\$10.00
Laminated course map:	\$5.00



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The next SASC News will be the April 2006 edition. Contributions from members, which are always welcome, should reach the editor by Friday 30 March 2006. Contributions can be in hard copy or sent by email. Photographs are also very welcome.



John Jeremy Photo

The starter's boat for Gaffers day 2006 will be *Captain Amora*, but in past years other vessels have filled that role. In October 1983 the sailing ship *New Endeavour* was anchored at one end of the starting line and gave the starter the kind of view he could get used to. In the photograph *Playmate of Maldon* is crossing the starting line. Sadly neither *New Endeavour* or *Playmate* is with us any more.



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