



SASC NEWS

The Newsletter of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club



February 2011

SYDNEY AMATEUR SAILING CLUB

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Cover:

Windward sailing
past the Aus-
tralia Day Regatta
Flagship HMAS
Ballarat on 26
January
(Photo John Jeremy)

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COMING EVENTS

February 2011

SUNDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2011

Young 88 Regatta

TUESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2011

Paul Slocombe twilight series race five

SATURDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2011

Pointscore race for Super 30 Division (long series), Division 2 (long series) and Classic Divisions

SUNDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2011

RANSA Regatta

TUESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2011

Paul Slocombe twilight series race six

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2011

Pointscore race for Super 30 Division (long and short series) Division 2 (long and short series), Classic Divisions and Cavalier 28 Division

SUNDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2011

Pointscore race for Division 6 (non-spinnaker) and Gaffers Division

TUESDAY 1 MARCH 2011

Paul Slocombe twilight series race seven

THURSDAY 3 MARCH 2011

Classic twilight race

SATURDAY 5 MARCH AND SUNDAY 6 MARCH 2011

Audi Sydney Harbour Regatta

SATURDAY 12 MARCH 2011

Pointscore race for Super 30 Division (long and short series) Division 2 (long and short series) and Classic Divisions

FRIDAY 18 MARCH 2011

Last Friday twilight race for 2010–11 season

SATURDAY 19 MARCH 2011

Pointscore race for Super 30 Division (long series), Division 2 (long series), Classic Divisions and Cavalier 28 Division

SUNDAY 20 MARCH 2011

Pointscore race for Division 6 (non-spinnaker) and Gaffers Division

SATURDAY 26 MARCH 2011

Pointscore race for Super 30 Division (long and short series) Division 2 (long and short series) and Classic Divisions



**NEED
THE TEN-
DER?**

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

Sat: 0900-1800
Sun: 0900-1700

SIGNALS FROM THE COMMODORE

Sailing is in full swing after the Christmas break with Friday Twilights, Tuesday's Paul Slocombe Trophy and Saturday and Sunday pointscore series — not to mention the occasional Classic yacht race on Thursday evening. It is a pretty full race program and we must thank our race management team for their fine efforts and time.

The harbour has been full of shoaling fish, attracting seagulls and fishing kayakers who were seen sitting in the middle of a large splashing shoal unable to catch anything. It was also a pleasure to see the Club visited by little penguins catching small fry on the same day that the pontoon appeared to be under attack by kingfish chasing their dinner.

The SASC was happy to host the prize giving for the Classic Yacht division of the Australia Day Regatta. This was the 175th continuous year of this regatta. Sir James and Lady Joan Hardy were the guests of honour and presented the prizes, to close out a very interesting day that started with a sea fog which was still around at 1 pm. Then a light breeze came in to gently help the competitors around the course.

Whilst, as a Club, we would all prefer to have no rules to impede our messing about in boats over the years a number of rules have been developed to protect, members and the environment etc. The wharf rules as printed in the last edition of the *SASC News* also apply to Mosman Boatshed pontoons — which raises the condition of the decking and ramps at this facility. I would urge caution using this area and we will be looking for assistance to repair the decking later this year and information from any members with contacts with timber suppliers would be appreciated.

Four tenders were received for the slipway upgrade. All four are outside the original budgeted figures which we proposed to the membership. A number of variations to these tenders are being evaluated to bring these costs to within budget (which probably means more working bees).

Bill Hogan



FOGGY START FOR REGATTA

February 2011

The 175th Australia Day Regatta sailed into the nation's history when more than 160 harbour racing yachts, classic yachts, ocean racers and modern and historical skiffs celebrated this remarkable yachting anniversary on Sydney Harbour.

*by
Peter Campbell*

The regatta is the world's oldest, continuously-conducted annual sailing regatta, a celebration of the arrival in 1788 of the First Fleet to found the penal colony which eventually became the great Commonwealth of Australia.

The Regatta was the centrepiece of Australia Day celebrations on Sydney Harbour with other aquatic, dockside and aerial events adding colour to the day.

The 175th Australia Day Regatta is totally organised by a band of volunteer yachtsmen headed by the eminent international yachtsman, Sir James Hardy as president and naval architect and yachtsman, John Jeremy as chairman of the organising committee. The regatta is sponsored by Commonwealth Private Bank.

The fleet today included 49 mostly wooden yachts in the Classic Yacht division, many gaff-rigged and several built more than a century ago. Many crews dressed in period sailing gear and later rendezvoused at the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club to celebrate the regatta's history. Despite a morning sea fog which blanketed the city and suburbs and the harbour, the misty conditions cleared somewhat and a light east to north-easterly breeze cooled conditions and provided close racing around fixed marks.

The sea fog rolls in over Watsons Bay

All photos John Jeremy





Captain Amora, gleaming in her new paint work, alongside *Era* at the RSYS. The starter's crew took her to avoid parking problems and to transfer the numeral boards for the Classic start (above)

Warana and *Antares* (below)



On waterways along the New South Wales coast, Australia Day regattas were linked to the historic event on Sydney Harbour while ocean racing yachts sailed to Botany Bay and return, albeit slowly, covering the same course sailed by the First Fleet in 1788.

In Hobart, Australia's second oldest seaport, yachts, dinghies and windsurfers competed in the Australia Day Green Island race and the Sandy Bay Regatta.

Another icon of Australian yachting, the 1970 and 1977 America's Cup Challenger *Gretel II* took line honours in the 40 nautical mile Green Island Race, helmed by her 1977 skipper, 85-year-old Gordon Ingate.

On Sydney Harbour, winner of the 175th Australia Day Regatta Classic Yacht Race Trophy and the Australia Day Council Trophy was *Antares* (R. Keeson and D. Wood). The Centenary of Federation Gold Medal went to *Reverie*, owned by Nigel Berlyn and John Barclay.

Outside of the Classic Yacht division, the biggest line-ups were in the two non-spinnaker divisions, reflecting the family fun aspect of the regatta.

The handicapper's nightmare — *Fidelis* and *Yeromais V* raced in the same event!





The Tall Ships parade emerging from the fog on Australia Day



Antara

SASC NEWS

Division 1 non-spinnaker saw Peter Davenport's *Arcturus II* win from *Molly* (Frank Hetherton) and *Willyama* (R Barron/S Sanlorenzo/Trish Stanley). Division 2 non-spinnaker went the former Yachting NSW president Lyndsay Brown and Jim Nettlefold with their Folkboat *Dreamtime*. Second place went to *Intrepid* (Gary Ferres) and third to *Primary Wave* (Ronald Montague) which also took line honours.

Division 1 saw a win by *Barracuda* (Greg Nolan) from *Akela* (Alan Mather) and *Scarlett O'Hara* (Robert Skol) while in Division 2 line and handicap honours went to *Balmain Tiger* (Neil Hamilton and Brian Wood) from *Senta* (Terry and Julie Clarke) and *Brittania* (Glen Ilic).

In Division 3, *Gingerbread Man* (Doug Russell) won to the double of line and handicap honours from *The Holy Gale* (Paul Harris) and *Antares* (Costa Rozakis and Anthony Tyson). Winner of the International Ynglings was Hamish Jarrett's *Miss Pibb* from Karma (Gary Wogas) and *Black Adder* (Gary Pearce).

Only four Historical Skiffs turned out with *Tangalooma* (Peter Le Grove) winning from *Australia IV* (Eric Priestley) and *Australia* (Chris Haskard).

The Botany Bay race, conducted by the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, was a slow race with headwinds heading south and fickle breezes on the return leg, with some yacht not finishing until 1900, after more than eight hours at sea on a hot, humid and misty day.

Line honours went to Jim Cooney's famous conventional maxi, *Brindabella*, giving her the Geoff Lee Trophy, while the City of Sydney Sesquicentenary Trophy went to Rod Wills X43 *Great Expectations*.

In the PHS division which decided the City of Sydney Trophy, *Great Expectations* took just under seven hours to sail the course, winning on corrected time from *LIsdillon* (Desmond Fagan) third to *Solahart-Rum Jungle* (Scott Russell).

Classic yachts, including *Windward*, *Cherub* and *Tenacity*, approaching the start





Malohi, Wathara and Fidelis (above)

Antares, Warana, Malohi and Hoana (below)





Classic yachts approaching the start (above)

A crowded harbour (below)



FOR QUICK SALE

Beneteau First 40.7 (A147 — *Ticket of Leave*) sails:

No 1 Medium/heavy genoa: Macdiarmid D4 Premium moulded-membrane carbon/aramid

Used once only for Sydney to Coffs Harbour 2010 — \$3,500

Regatta main: Norths 3D⁺ moulded-membrane carbon/aramid

Used twice only for A147 Geelong Race Week and Sydney to Coffs Harbour 2010 — \$3,500

Contact Matt Prentice

matthewp@precipio.net.au

Mobile: 0425 257 507



Sydney leading the fleet across the finish line (above)

Mister Christian and Plym at the finish (below)



TWILIGHT SAILING IS HERE AGAIN!

Sailing in the SASC Friday Twilight Races is a great way to relax after a busy week. Sail with friends and enjoy a barbeque at the Club afterwards.

Sail regularly and you can win a trip for two to Lord Howe Island, valued at over \$2,000.

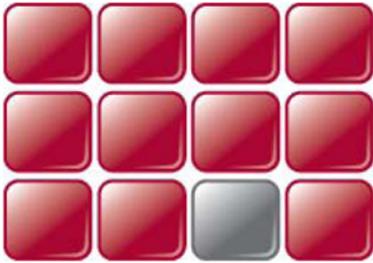
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To qualify for the draw you must enter for the whole season and complete at least five races. For each additional race which you complete your boat gains one entry in the draw for the trip to Lord Howe Island. The more races you complete, the more chances you have! The trip for two will be drawn after the last race of the series.

Friday Twilight sailing with the SASC is always popular and space at the barbeque is limited. Table bookings are essential and must be received no later than midday on the Wednesday of each week. Catering is based on the number of people booked — so don't miss out!



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AN AUSTRALIA DAY PERSPECTIVE

The 175th Australia Day Regatta was an outstanding success. SASC may be justifiably proud of their part in the proceedings. Members John Jeremy, Charles Maclurcan and Fred Bevis made huge contributions in general organisation, race starting and recruitment for the great Classic Fleet.

Antares won the Classic race overall and *Reverie* the Gaffers section, very satisfying results in very testing conditions. Post event at the SASC clubhouse there were drinks, a Pub band and barbed sausages provided by the Australia Day Regatta. The camaraderie and happy circumstance at the Club before and after the event were, as usual, first class.

The Commonwealth Private Bank was the sponsor for which we are all grateful. I first crewed in the Regatta in 1937 and have only missed a handful since, when overseas. We all look forward to the next.

Southerly

The success of the Australia Day Regatta was made possible by the volunteers from the Regatta management committee and the clubs, the RSYS, SASC, CYCA and other participating clubs, the handicapper, John Maclurcan (who was faced with a real challenge for the 175th Regatta), the principal sponsor Commonwealth Private Bank and the Australian Defence Force. Thank you all.

John Jeremy

Chairman, ADR Management Committee

Yeromais V, Hoana, Maris, Fidelis and Nerida at the SASC pontoon after the Regatta



I cannot really remember when I first met Kevin Rice. It must have been around 1969 because I had just finished my architecture course in 1969 and was working for an architect called Bob Murray in North Sydney. Bob was a larrikin architect. He chain smoked Chesterfields, had a beautiful mistress and sailed a Moth at Balmoral. He and Kevin were quite good friends and shortly after Kevin had formed Fombertaux Rice Hanly, Bob was invited to join the firm in a senior position and I, as Bob's sole employee, tagged along.

We moved into the Argyle Bond Store in the Rocks. The office was on the first level and it had this delicate aroma of rum which percolated through what must have been one of the earliest adaptive re-uses of a Heritage Building in Sydney.

As often happens Bob wasn't cut out for corporate life and Kevin, with a new company in hand, was very keen to run an architectural business. He was organised and he was organising. Bob departed and I stayed.

I remember those years very fondly. We had beautiful and trendy premises, coir floor matting, great lighting, exposed air-conditioning ducts and a pleasant and growing team of young architects and interesting work. We didn't fraternise with our bosses very much, but I recall that Kevin was very good at keeping in touch with all the staff and would go round the office from drawing board to drawing board with his tie tucked into his belt (he wasn't a tall person) smiling and asking you what you were doing and assisting where possible.

He had a fair hand and could draw a beautiful freehand straight line. I don't know if design was his greatest skill, but pragmatism, logic and an ability to be realistic about how things would work when built was certainly a talent he had in spades. He was also amusing and would often enquire about family and friends. When Fombertaux died, Kevin decided to open his own practice with John Daubney. He invited me to join, but I decided that if I didn't do my own thing then, I probably never would and we went our separate ways.

I know little of Kevin's sailing abilities. He was an SASC member when I joined in the mid eighties and I recall *Passepartout*, his Northshore 38, moored somewhere near where *Malohi* now lives. He was actively interested in the SASC and rarely missed the Annual General Meetings. He was always someone you could talk to and seek advice. I did this a number of times in my architectural life and he was always interested in how my practice was going and later what my wife and children were doing.

He is one of the people in my life I will not forget and I'm sorry that I wasn't able to have one last chat with him before he slipped out of our lives.

John Crawford

THE SCHOONER ATHENA

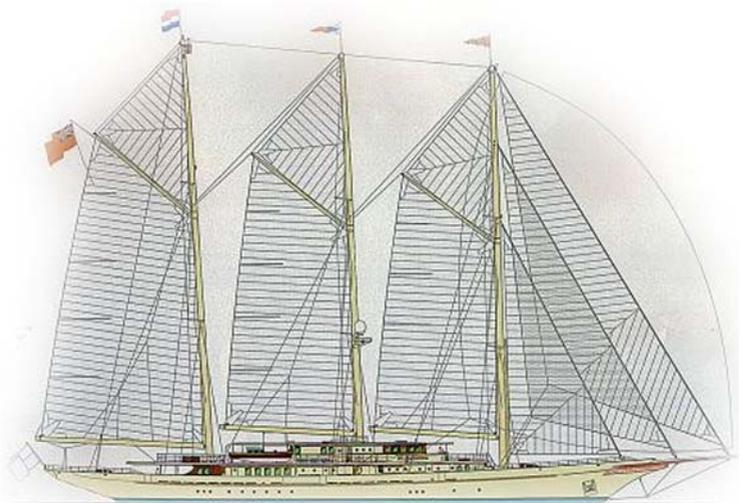
The magnificent schooner *Athena* recently graced our harbour with her presence. It appears to me that the two means of filling the two huge spaces between the three masts are firstly, a very split rig with many staysails and secondly, a series of gaff sails with topsails. The designer chose the second option — the gaff sails having leeches closer to the vertical than other rigs which, together with the topsails, gives the enormous sail area to drive this huge ship.

The gaffs and sails retract into the booms and the topsails into the upper mast. *Athena* will approach 15 knots in a 20 knot wind. With topsails set the speed is increased by 1.5 knots. This is an illustration of the awesome power of a topsail considering this displaces about 1,000 t.

Guess Who

Athena was built by the Dutch Shipyard Royal Huisman and was completed in 2004 for internet entrepreneur James H. Clark. Constructed of aluminium, she is 90 m long overall with a beam of 12 m and a maximum mast height of 60 m. She carries 2,500 square metres of sail and 217 tonnes of ballast. Her maximum speed is 19 knots. Accommodation includes a spacious owner's suite and four guest suites. The crew are provided with eight cabins with an independent galley, lounge and mess hall on the lower deck. The captain's cabin is fitted with a double bed and is convenient to the bridge. The ship carries four tenders.

Athena is available for charter for €275,000 per week, if you are interested.



Athena's sail plan



Photo John Jeremy

Athena anchored in Sydney Harbour

THE AMATEURS IN THE SOLOMONS

by
*Michal
 Tomaszewski*

Approaching the Solomon Islands from Vanuatu we sailed our 62 foot Polish designed and built catamaran some ten miles south of San Cristobal Island and into the strait between Malaita and Guadalcanal. In light south-easterly trade winds we were romping along at 8.5 knots with genoa and staysail set and one motor purring at less than 2000 rpm. Captain Ann, not having been to Honiara for some years, wanted to get in before dark to find a good anchorage or mooring.

Well, we got in just after sunset. We unsuccessfully tried to raise the Harbour Master but, being after five, they were closed — unbeknown to us it was also a day before presidential elections in the Solomons. A very obliging Kiwi yachting anchored in the bay saw us coming and led us on VHF to a very good laid mooring less than 100 metres from the yacht club. It was too late to visit the club where there did not seem to be any life anyway.

Next morning we were visited by a member of the Australian Peacekeeping Force stationed in Honiara. Being a yachting he was employed by the Commonwealth Police to drive their speed boats. Because of the elections, he said, the atmosphere in town was pretty tense and all the Australian and Kiwi peacekeepers, as well as local police were on full alert. He also told us that all public offices, including Customs and Quarantine were closed.

Tiare at Munda
 Airport terminal

All photos courtesy Michal Tomaszewski





Seghe Airport

As it turned out, the elections went quietly and there was no social unrest — just people milling around. As all liquor outlets were closed for three days except for the two international hotels there were no drunken louts causing trouble. We managed to make bookings for Uepi Resort at Marovo Lagoon and arranged to fly out early next day as soon as Captain Ann managed to clear Customs, Quarantine and Immigration.

Next morning, Customs etc. cleared, my daughter Tiare and I said farewell to Ann and caught a taxi to the Honiara Domestic Airport for the morning flight to Seghe in New Georgia Islands. Of course, our morning flight was cancelled but we took the next one at 1500 — an Otter Twin 300 seating twenty passengers.

By the afternoon the weather was closing in. The visibility was so bad that pilots could not find the bush strip at Seghe and decided to fly another one hundred or so miles north west to pick up more fuel on Munda's equally primitive airport. The refuelling was accomplished with a hand pump out of 44 gallon drums. We took off to try again but the weather did not improve and we did not get to Seghe that day. Some hours after taking off, just before dusk, we landed back at Honiara which is fortunately an all weather airport.

After dinner, a show and a good night's sleep at Honiara's waterfront Kitana Mandana Hotel, next morning we successfully landed at Seghe to be greeted by idle, curious locals and Seghe's dogs. A man with a tinnie and a 150 HP outboard took us on an unforgettable, hour-long ride



The view from
Tiare's bungalow

across beautiful Marovo Lagoon to Uepi. Unlike the day before, the weather was just perfect — water the most incredible blue and like glass. Marovo, one of the longest salt-water lagoons in the Southern hemisphere is often regarded as the pearl of the South Pacific. Uepi Island is on its northern rim and guards Marovo's exit to the "the slot", 2000 m deep New Georgia Sound. Uepi, a coral reef island is thickly wooded by rainforest surrounded by sandy beaches. The resort, owned for more than twenty years by an Australian husband and wife team, prides itself on being very eco-friendly and offers excellent and varied diving and snorkelling.

The accommodation for some 30 people is in very private bungalows scattered within walking distance of the communal common room cum kitchen, dining hall, bar and office. The buildings are primarily constructed of materials harvested on the island — each has a covered verandah overlooking the lagoon. The food, mainly fresh seafood and locally grown fruit and vegetables, was excellent. The atmosphere is one of serenity, no mobile telephones or television. You can do up to three dives or snorkelling trips per day or just relax and read a book — your own or one from the resort's library.

The qualified diving staff takes you diving and snorkelling to the most amazing locations where you can swim amongst huge but very shy butterfly rays, giant turtles, moray eels and huge shoals of multicoloured fish with beautiful corals as a backdrop. Occasionally you encounter a well-fed hammerhead shark. If you are game, you can explore underwater caves, all full of wonders, sleeping crabs and sea snakes. The island's guides take great care not to disturb the marine environment and ecology.



Cibu Kopi Village

Just off the dive jetty was a constant parade of beautiful white-tipped reef sharks. For me, one of the highlights was swimming with these beautiful creatures, all regarding you as one of their kind, sometimes coming to have a closer look and then gracefully swimming away. The drop off to the “slot”, also just on the island’s fringe, takes the diver into the world of fantasy — giant clams and deep water iridescent fish and surreal colours.

On the Sunday before our departure we took a canoe trip to listen to the children’s choir at Chubi Kopi village on Masoro Island, some ten miles away. The local recently-erected church was quite a massive steel-framed cyclone-proof affair. The pastor arrived topless in a dug out canoe, changed into “church” gear and proceeded with the service. The congregation consisted mainly of a few children and some old folk. The singing was not really what we expected. We were duly and very formally introduced to the congregation by the village Chief and gave some presents to the local school teacher and that was that. The islanders are obviously becoming a much more secular society.

One of the friendly reef sharks

Before returning to Uepi we met the local shipwright carving out another dug out canoe. We had met him on Uepi where he was employed as a carpenter building the new dive shop and doing maintenance work. He told us that on average he builds up to ten canoes each year and they usually last for at least ten years.



Uepi employs staff (mainly from local islands) on a rotating basis — six days on the resort and then back to their own village life.

It was my first, but certainly not last, visit to Uepi. We again motored back to Seghe to catch a plane back to Munda, our third visit there in the previous few days. This time our destination was Zipolo Habu Resort on Lola Island in Vona Vona Lagoon in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands. Munda is a town, not just a village like Seghe. It has a hotel or two, a tourists' information kiosk, a police shop, some restaurants and, unlike its airport, a fairly formal jetty servicing tourists interested in fishing and to a lesser extent diving.

After a few calls and a cold beer at the local hotel, we were picked up from Munda's jetty by a canoe from Zipolo Habu. The resort is owned and operated by Joe, an expat American and his beautiful wife Lisa who is a Solomon Islander but has Norwegian ancestry. We stayed in a brand-new two bedroom bungalow right at the beach, overlooking the turquoise waters of Vana Vana Lagoon. The resort's specialty is fishing. While we were there another group of guests went on a day-long fishing excursion. Their catch was our dinner that night.

Pre-dinner drinks were served in the common room adorned with fishing trophies, pennants and mementos from visiting yachts. Amongst them the name plate from 1959 Sydney to Hobart winner *Cherana* which, in 2004, was the handicap winner of the Brisbane to Gizo race before she visited Vana Vana. *Cherana*, a Tasman Seabird designed by Alan Payne, is like her sister ship *Maris* still winning races. It was a pleasant surprise for us as *Maris*, now owned by Ian Kiernan, my daughter Tiare and John Green from Lord Howe, used to tussle with *Cherana* all those years ago when owned by Jack Earl, Tiare's grandfather — a famous marine artist and one of the founding members of the CYCA.

One of our Lalo
Island hosts



Time was running out for us and on the last day we arranged a trip to one of the famous “skull islands”. On approach it looked like any of the hundreds of small islands scattered in the lagoon till we got closer and saw half a dozen or so mounds that at first sight looked like stones but were in fact hundreds of human skulls built into pyramids, braced by stones. Solomon Islanders, in the not too distant past — like two or three generations back, built these grizzly monuments from the heads of their notable slain enemies and own heroes.

Back in Munda again, we took a flight to Honiara in Guadalcanal our last night in the Solomons before flying on to Sydney via Brisbane. Our trip



would not have been complete without a party. We walked down from our rooms and found the hotel's waterfront courtyard full of people. Everybody who was anybody in Guadalcanal was there. There were two bars, a very good jazz band and waiters serving delicious finger food. I walked over and asked for a vodka and tonic offering to pay but the barman said no, no — it's on the house! He was then my friend for the evening! It was a promo night put on by a young Kiwi PR man for a New Guinea mobile-phone company trying to break into the Solomons' turf.

Our villa at Zipolo

An up-market fisherman



CHERUB — FROM BERMUDAN RIG TO GAFF

A follow up to a previous article describing Cherub's progress with her new gaff rig.

"I hope that she'll be more manageable and maybe just a little faster!" — *Mark Pearce*

Well we are now halfway through our second season with *Cherub's* gaff rig and the results have been better than we might have hoped for. *Cherub* had always been a fast boat in light air, but tender and prone to leeway in medium strength winds. On a typical summer Saturday we would race for two hours in a 15 knot nor'easter and finish 5–10 minutes behind *Ranger*. This was the weakness of the Bermudan set-up on *Cherub* and it could only be improved when the wind increased to 20 knots and we reefed the main.

With *Cherub* sporting her new gaff rig she has maintained her light air performance however, she can now match *Ranger* in wind strengths from 12–25 knots. We have noticed reduced leeway and increased boat speed which can both be attributed to the lower centre of effort and the efficiency of the gaff rig. The most pleasing aspect though is that we have noticed an improvement in *Cherub's* ability to point, where if needed she can sail higher towards the wind than she used to.

This has always been the nub of the age old dispute between the Bermudans and Gaffers, "aye she sails fast wind abeam, but ye cannae make her point!" Of course the language is often a little stronger and more colourful than that. So the record now shows *Cherub* giving *Ranger* a two-minute head start and racing competitively in anything the committee vessel will send us away in. More often than not there is only a difference of seconds between these two rivals who have been competing on the harbour for over 60 years. It has of course meant that we have little left to blame if we do have a poor result (except perhaps as our fellow competitors would point out, our overly generous handicap).

There have been two further benefits to having completed *Cherub's* gaff rig restoration. Firstly, with less time spent attending to the work of settling in and tuning up the gaff rig, Mark has had more time to restore *Cherub's* original teak hatches, which had been replaced years ago by lighter plastic hatches to reduce weight. As the story goes the teak was sourced from the deck timbers of the sailing ship *Sobraon*, later *Tingira* upon which many of Australia's settlers crossed the oceans and young sailors learnt their trade.

The second benefit of more "leisure" time has allowed Mark to perfect his brewing of the perfect glass of stout, the consumption of which (in moderation of course) is an equally important aspect of racing a classic wooden yacht. For it is a traditional ceremony each week on *Cherub* before setting sail that we raise our glasses to celebrate the skills and traditions involved in building and sailing wooden yachts and do honour to the heritage of the men who passed on these beautiful boats to our safe keeping.

Peter Scott

HMAS PSYCHE — THE FORGOTTEN CRUISER

February 2011

HMS *Psyche*, a Pelorus-class third-class protected cruiser named after the Greek mythological depiction of the soul, was laid down for the Royal Navy at the Devonport Dockyards on 15 November 1887 and was completed three years later. She served on the Australia Station from December 1903 and was one of just three RN cruisers still serving on the Station when the Australian Fleet Unit arrived in Sydney on 4 October 1913. She departed Australia shortly afterwards and was serving in New Zealand waters at the outbreak of World War I on 4 August 1914.

The early months of the War were busy for *Psyche* as the cruiser was involved in the capture of the German Protectorate of Samoa as well as other German assets in the Pacific. She also formed part of the escort force for troop convoys bound for the Middle East from New Zealand. She decommissioned on 22 January 1915 and was laid up in Sydney.

On 13 May 1915, the Prime Minister's Department requested that the Admiralty loan *Psyche* to the Royal Australian Navy as a training vessel. The Admiralty responded positively on 1 June and exactly a month later, on 1 July, HMAS *Psyche* commissioned into the RAN under the command of Commander (later Rear Admiral) Henry Feakes, RAN.

Before *Psyche* could be commissioned, however, the Admiralty enquired with the Naval Board as to whether the cruiser might take a more active role in the war in Asia. Although the Middle and Far East were remote from the European theatres of war, Germany had been actively fomenting sedition in India and Burma as early as 1911, controlled primarily through the German embassy in Washington, even planning to smuggle arms and propaganda in support of a general uprising.

While the Allies were aware that such activity was taking place, they remained unaware of its specifics. *Psyche* and HMAS *Fantome* (Lieutenant Commander Lewis Jones, RN), at that time an unarmed surveying ship, were hastily prepared to form part of a patrol in the Bay of Bengal. Both ships were necessarily manned by sailors still under training, augmented by experienced petty officers. *Psyche* departed Sydney on 16 August for Asian waters where she would remain for the next two years.

Psyche arrived at Singapore on 4 September and departed two days later for Rangoon with orders to organise a patrol scheme for the Burmese coast. Upon his arrival at Rangoon on 10 September, Feakes found three vessels of the British East India Company's fleet had already been taken up and were fitting out for patrol duties, each commanded by an officer of the Royal Indian Marine. He established a coastal patrol the very next day with a military detachment aboard each vessel.

Following a brief visit to Mandalay, where Feakes discussed his patrol scheme with the General Officer Commanding, Rangoon (Major-General Sir Herbert Raitt, KCIE, CB), *Psyche* returned to Rangoon and set about correcting various engine room defects. Upon HMS *Diana*'s arrival on 20 September, Captain George Hutton, RN, assumed command of the Burma Coast Patrol and appointed Feakes as Senior Naval Officer, Burma, with the three armed patrol vessels and ten coastal patrol launches under his command. *Psyche* proceeded to sea for her first patrol and inspection on 22 September.

SASC NEWS

Patrol and inspection duties remained the norm for *Psyche* for the remainder of the year. Patrols were typically of 10 to 12 days duration, at the conclusion of which the ship would return to Rangoon for two to four days for coal. Training classes, drills, evolutions and gunnery exercises continued during the patrols and variations in the weather, ranging from extreme heat in the north to heavy storms in the south, made conditions very difficult for the crew. A general malaise affected the ship during this period. From 14 October to 2 November, 12 crew members were admitted to hospital for various ailments while a further 14 were sick on board.

Psyche returned to Rangoon on 17 January 1916 where orders were received to demobilise the Burma Coast Patrol, which was completed a week later. By this time it had become apparent that any German plots in India and Burma had collapsed and that the centres of intrigue had shifted to the neutral territories of the Malay Peninsula. *Psyche* proceeded to Penang, where she arrived on 28 January, to await further orders. The following day eight ratings and an engineer midshipman were discharged to the sloop HMAS *Una* for passage back to Australia having been found unfit for service in the tropics. *Psyche* departed Penang at the end of the month for Port Blair where she was placed at short notice for service in the area as well as conducting periodical patrols off the east and west coasts of Sumatra.

On 12 February, while visiting Port Swettenham (Kelang), tensions aboard ship finally came to a head and seven stokers refused duty, an action that eventually led to their respective courts martial. There were a number of issues that led to this incident: *Psyche* was an old ship with little to alleviate the difficult conditions experienced in the tropics; the long and monotonous hours spent on patrol; an intensive training program; the malaise which affected the crew almost from commissioning; but the one thing which eventually brought these tensions to the surface was food.

Complaints about the food on board were common virtually from the time *Psyche* left Australian waters. Tinned fish, green or rotten meat and rotten eggs were all too common in *Psyche*'s mess with one stoker testifying that the food he himself obtained whilst in port was of a better quality than that served up by the mess.

At 10 pm on 12 February, Stoker Albert Hummerston refused duty in protest at the standard of food on board and was consequently placed under sentry's charge. Over the course of the evening six more stokers refused duty and all were consequently placed under sentry's charge. All seven were found guilty of wilful disobedience of a lawful command and received sentences ranging from 12 to 24 months imprisonment as well as dismissal from the RAN. With the stokehold operating with a reduced complement, 15 native stokers were taken on in Singapore until a draft of ten RAN stokers joined the ship on 25 April.

Psyche returned to patrol duties in the Gulf of Siam on 7 March before returning to Singapore on 17 March. She departed Singapore once again two weeks later acting as escort for a convoy of Russian military transports headed for Europe. Relieved by HMS *Venus* on 4 April, *Psyche* returned to Port Blair for patrol duties in the Bay of Bengal. Whilst at Port Blair, the opportunity was taken to land one watch every day, weather permitting, for rifle drills or a route march, and sea bathing. It was the monsoon season, however, and strong winds and heavy rain were common.

Psyche continued on patrol duties until 2 July when she arrived at Hong Kong for her annual inspection and refit. During this period, six officers and more than 70 ratings were

landed to the naval hospital at Hong Kong for treatment of various ailments. Combined with some 40 more ratings and an officer sick on board, around half of *Psyche's* complement were incapacitated due to illness. The situation prompted the ship's surgeon, Clifford Henry, to report that the crew was in urgent need of a spell in a cold climate.

Meanwhile on 6 July, Lieutenant Herbert Teale, RN, commissioned HMS *Moorhen* for local river service, crewed by 36 ratings from *Psyche* with Surgeon Henry acting as the ship's medical officer. *Moorhen* decommissioned on 23 July and the crew re-joined *Psyche*, which re-commenced patrol duties off the south coast of China, based at Hong Kong, on 14 August. These operations, once again, proved to be long and arduous, though Feakes was pleased to report a general improvement in the overall health of the ship's company, possibly due to the cooler conditions off the Chinese coast.

Operations in Chinese waters continued until 14 October 1916 when the ship was ordered to Singapore. Patrols in the Bay of Bengal and off the coast of Sumatra recommenced on 20 October, beginning with a patrol and flag-showing cruise taking in Penang, Port Blair, Rangoon, Calcutta, Madras and Colombo. These operations continued until late March 1917 when *Psyche* was detached for escort duties for military transports between Burma and India, which continued through April and May, before returning to patrol duties in June.

On 16 July 1917, *Psyche* returned to Singapore where she remained awaiting the arrival of her relief, the cruiser HMS *Suffolk*. *Suffolk* arrived on 11 August and *Psyche* departed Singapore on 31 August for Sydney via Dili, Thursday Island, Townsville and Brisbane. She arrived in Sydney, in dire need of a refit, on 28 September and was decommissioned on 16 October.

Psyche's service in Asia had come to an end more than two years after she had departed Sydney and the ship had not fired a shot in anger. The crew, however, had performed an arduous task, preventative in nature and typical of naval patrol work. On the surface the lack of enemy encounters may lead some to question the value of the work done by *Psyche* in Asia. Indeed, the crew themselves questioned its value and wondered what contribution had they made to the war effort. However, considering the evidence of German supported seditious activity which emerged after the War, that lack of enemy action is proof of the success of Allied operations in the area. The presence of *Psyche* and other Allied ships became well known in the Bay of Bengal and played a central role in preventing the very real possibility of a general uprising, which probably would have resulted in the redeployment of Allied forces away from the decisive struggle in Europe.

Psyche was recommissioned again on 20 November 1917 under the command of Commander George Curtis, RAN, for patrol duties primarily off the Queensland coast, prompted by the actions of German raiders in and around Australian waters in 1917. After a brief and largely uneventful commission of just five months, *Psyche* was decommissioned for the last time on 26 March 1918.

Psyche remained moored in Sydney Harbour and was eventually sold as a timber lighter on 21 July 1922. She later sank in Salamander Bay, Port Stephens.

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NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

Greg Ashcroft
 John Morton
 Nicholas Rowe

SEA SAFETY COURSE

As it is coming up to five years since we last ran a sea safety course would all those who would like to revalidate or obtain a YA Sea Safety Certificate register their interest with the office at the SASC. If you have any questions about the course contact Rob Evans on 0409 608 272.

BASIC RULES

There are many basic rules in life — whole books have been written on the subject over the last couple of thousand years or so — but few are as straightforward as those adopted by many in the military, which resurfaced recently and are worthy of repeating:

If it moves, salute it.
 If it does not move, paint it.
 If it moves but is not supposed to move, apply gaffer tape.
 If it does not move but should, squirt WD40 on it.
 For anything else, use a bigger hammer.

SASC SHOP

(AKA The Office)

The following items are available in stock:

Racing 'A' Flag	\$10.00
Burgee – Small – 25 cm x 42.5 cm	\$21.00
Burgee – Medium – 30 cm x 54 cm	\$30.00
Burgee – Large – 60 cm x 90 cm	\$60.00
Burgee – X Large – 160 cm x 290 cm	\$132.00
YA Blue Book (2009–2012)	\$37.50
Laminated Course Map	\$5.00
SASC Patch	\$6.00
Club Tie	\$25.00
Tee Shirt	\$25.00
Polo Shirt	\$36.00
Rugby Top	\$49.00
Sweat Shirt	\$40.00

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The next SASC News will be the April 2011 edition. Contributions from members, which are always welcome, should reach the editor by Friday 25 March 2011. Contributions can be in hard copy or sent by email. Photographs are also very welcome.

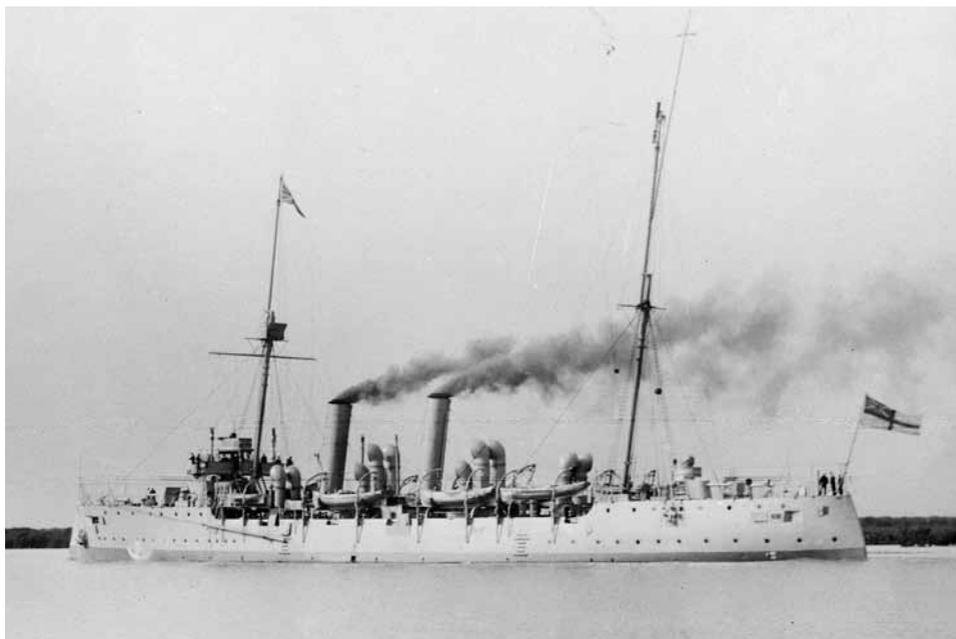




HMS *Psyche* as a cruiser of the Royal Navy on the Australia Station (above)

HMAS *Psyche* during World War I (below)

Photos Naval Historical Collection





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