



SASC NEWS

The Newsletter of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club



June 2023

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| Rear Commodore | Chris Manion |
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| Honorary Treasurer | John Brennan |
| Honorary Secretary | Leone Lorrimer |
| Executive Secretary | Karen Ewels |
| Finance Manager | Sophie Tong |
| Racing Secretary | David Pryke |

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It was a light weather start for *Fagel Grip*, *Vanity* and *May Be XI* on 3 June. Unfortunately the wind dropped further and none of the Classic Spinnaker Division were able to finish

(Photo Geraldine Wilkes)

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The SASC News is published six times per year.

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COMING EVENTS

June 2023

SATURDAY 24 JUNE 2023

Annual prizegiving at the Club

SATURDAY 8 JULY 2023

Fifth race in the SASC Winter Series

SATURDAY 22 JULY 2023

Sixth and last race in the SASC Winter Series

SATURDAY 12 AUGUST 2023

Equipment audits and fire extinguisher service

SUNDAY 13 AUGUST 2023

Water Womens Rally

SATURDAY 19 AUGUST 2023

Equipment audits and fire extinguisher service

THURSDAY 17 AUGUST 2023

First compulsory skippers briefing (by Zoom)

TUESDAY 22 AUGUST 2023

Second compulsory skippers briefing (at the Club)

SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2023

Lion Island Race

SATURDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2023

Opening Day Regatta and Spring pointscore race for Super 30 Division, Classic Division, Cruiser Racer Division and Cavalier 28 Division

SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2023

Pointscore race for Classic and Mixed Fleet Divisions

NEED THE TENDER?

Call

Nancy K

on

0418 678 690

or

Jack Millard

on

0418 678 819

(race days)

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS 2023–2024 SEASON

EQUIPMENT AUDITS AND FIRE EXTINGUISHER SERVICE AT THE CLUB

Saturday 12 August 2023

Saturday 19 August 2023



SIGNALS FROM THE COMMODORE

Thank you to all who attended the General Meeting held at the Club on 24 May 2023. As approved at the meeting our membership fees have increased but not to the extent that keeping parity with inflation would demand. The Club is experiencing an increase in operating costs and we are absorbing those as best we can. Fortunately, our overheads are comparatively modest and our financial management is exceptional. We are very well served by our honorary treasurer John Brennan and he, in turn, is reliant on the excellent support of Sophie Tong and Karen Ewels in the office.

The slipway has been very busy and I would like to thank Rod Phillips and his team for all the work they have done in the last financial year. The slipway is regarded as great asset for the Club and it is quite a complex operation to run.

At the General Meeting we also discussed the missing piles on the southern side of the wharf. The question of whether we replace the piles or look more generally at what we do to improve vessel access, is now being addressed by a team led by Vice Commodore Peter Scott. The time is coming when the working life of the main pontoon will come to an end and it seems prudent to develop some options. Any proposals will be subjected to the scrutiny of members whose input will be encouraged.

Any analysis of what makes this Club successful, leads to the conclusion that we are modest in what we attempt and highly reliant on volunteer labour. If possible, it would be great if we could have more vessels access the Club, including visitors post-race, but our location and finances will ultimately dictate what is feasible. We are unlikely to service cruise liners.

As I write, the third winter race, a drifter, has been completed, or retired from in the case of *Lonely*. This series has been extremely well patronised and I would like to thank all owners and their crews for their participation. The wind may not have blown last Saturday but it was a spectacular Sydney winter day. Club Captain Alice Murphy continues to drive our racing program with unparalleled enthusiasm. Alice devotes a huge amount of time to the Club's racing; this involves everything from scheduling and publicity through to organising or joining starting teams. Through the efforts of Alice and our hard-working Sailing Officer David Pryke, the Amateurs continues to offer the best racing on the harbour.

As mentioned at the General Meeting we experienced a few unexpected issues with insurance renewals for the upcoming year. After considerable effort the issues were resolved and we have secured all appropriate insurance for the next 12 months with only a modest increase in premiums. Consideration is being given to the matters that



were raised during this renewal period and will be reported to members.

Hopefully the Club is continuing to serve our members well, we are encouraging those who joined as crew members to consider upgrading to full membership when the current subscriptions fall due. It's very gratifying to meet the many members who are new to the Club and we look forward to your participation in all levels of the Club in the years ahead. Sarah Scott and the Women on Water team are congratulated on bring yoga to the Club and on the great efforts they are making to increase female participation at the Amateurs. They are making this a better Club.

Sean Kelly



Photo Geraldine Wilkes

Wind Shadow, Tingari, Le Mistral, Trixie and L'Oubli at the start of the Division 3 Non-sprinnaker race on Saturday 3 June. The light westerly faded away and all these competitors, like *Lonely*, retired or were unable to finish the shortened course before the time limit expired

21 SAILS SET — FULL AND BYE

by
Peter Scott

Whilst cruising up to Port Stephens in 35 knots of wind last October, the Hobart wooden boat festival was being discussed. I asked Clinton “What sort of adventure can you have in Tassie after the festival?” “Well here’s an idea,” he said. “I’m sailing back to Sydney on *James Craig* — they might have room for more passengers.” Sound of my head exploding

Wow, that would be fantastic; Sarah and I were on the wait list two days later. With three weeks to go one of us was booked and I said to Sarah that she should go, but she said that I should go, so I called the SHF office and said I was experienced in tall ships, having made three voyages previously. Another week went by and then the call — if I could do three days training prior to sailing I could go as crew!

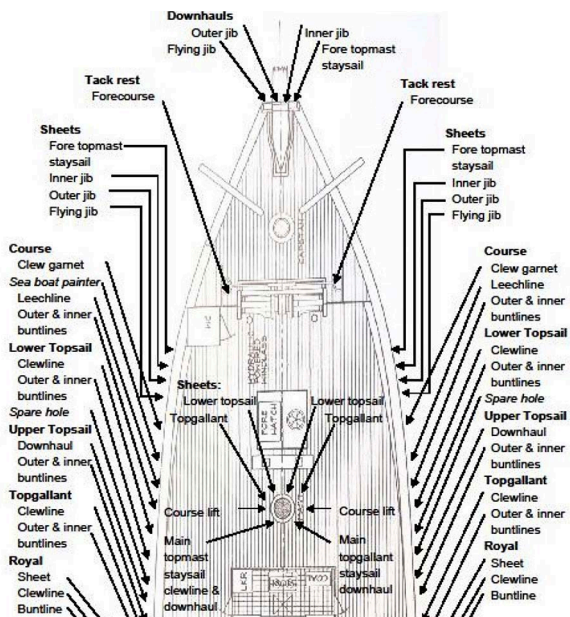
James Craig operates as a training ship and, whilst some are learning new skills, others are volunteering to repair the rig, hull and deck. There are people training in all aspects of maritime work from masters certificates through to riggers and marine engineers and for me, the climbing certificate. First, however, I had to learn the ropes — after 50 years sailing you might have imagined this would be easy. There are 21 sails on the *Craig* and a dozen other parts of the ship operated by manual efforts and ropes. A total of approx 260 ropes belayed to pins around the rails and masts of the mid deck, foredeck and quarterdeck. To sail the ship you have to learn the ropes.

James Craig putting
Cherub into
perspective

Photo John Jeremy



Two weeks later I joined ship in Hobart during the festival, *Craig* was there to entertain the crowds and earn her keep. Volunteers at all crew levels, from master to caterers made sure that everyone was safe and having a good time. Tugs towed the ship off the wharf, crew went aloft to set sail, bells were rung and others explained the history and parts of the ship to make a show of it. Sarah joined ship two days later, she would be a passenger and there was to be no fraternising. She reverted to crew at the first opportunity. We were put in the mizzen watch and started working to prepare the ship for the voyage.



James Craig has plenty of ropes to learn

Day 1: The crew and passengers totalled 68 persons of all ages, everyone lent a hand to stowing gear, fixing hammocks, clearing the museum layout, retrieving gantry's, handing down box after box of food, taking on water, bending sails, folding awnings, battening down the main hatch, preparing lines, fire patrols, safety drills, climbing out the jib boom, learning how to put on a harness in the dark and make no noise, hanging blackout curtains and the as the sun started to lower — off to the pub to get a good feed and a last drink for ten days.

No lack of opportunities for good exercise





Photos Peter and Sarah Scott

James Craig at sea

Day 2: A cold night sleeping on the stretcher, breakfast was great then all hands on deck. Tug alongside, pass out the towline, a heavy rope thicker than my forearm. Lines brought on board walked out along the deck, coiled on palettes. A light westerly wind and warm day as the ship motored SE into Storm Bay. Sails were set for exercising the crew, the watches started; the bosun and engineers worked on gear around the ship and mizzen watch were on the first dog. Several pods of dolphins raced up to the ship in the late afternoon, the MOB drill launched the seaboat and the dolphins danced to where the retrieval dummy had floated away. As we approached Tasman Island the sun lowered and the colours changed to night. A green glow over Bruny Island was the Southern Lights wishing us fair winds.

Dolphins putting on a show



Day 3: East Coast doldrums as we motor sailed towards the Furneaux Group. Ship life consisted of a four-hour watch every 12 hours, training, safety, meals, plenty of food, sketching. Quiet times to practice skills aloft, I was mentored in using the harness and had to climb to the first platform three times using double clips initially and an ascender on the last circuit. At 61 years I thought I would be the oldest aloft, not even close, two of the most skilled Topmen were in their late 70s and one was a woman.



Life in a square-rigger — all in a day's work

Day 4: *James Craig* needs at least 20 knots of wind to really get sailing, however, we were still only getting 10–15 knots from the SE. The forecast was for a stronger SW wind and as the sun set over Flinders Island the dark clouds and wind arrived. So too did a fierce electrical storm as all around us the sky lit up, nowhere to go but off across the Strait and over the largest waterfall in the world as the depth changed from 30 m to 3000 m.

Day 5: 30–35 knots, 3–4 m following sea, beautiful sailing conditions. The ship came alive, the master asked for as much sail as she could carry so about 15 sails were set, three headsails, eight square sails and four staysails. We kept to our watch tasks, fore and stern lookouts, quartermaster to take the wheel, Captain's runner, fire patrols and the hardest job of all — Peggy, the galley help.

Day 6: Averaging 8 knots, lifelines rigged, the SW wind moved to the South and eased into the East. We were joined by a three-masted yacht running up to the Whitsundays. Dolphins, gannets, flocks of mutton birds, an albatross kept us company as we approached and rounded Gabo Island, heading into Eden for a day to wait out the NE wind.

Day 7: Shore leave for those that wanted to test their sea legs. Eden is finding itself to be a sought-after stopover for cruise ships and yachties with a wonderful antique store and good coffee. On return to the ship the games had begun, heaving line accuracy, water-bucket filling and safety harness on and off.

Day 8: A strong Southerly powered us, rolling up the coast, lifelines rigged, shipping wave crests and keeping our watch focussed on the job. *Maluka* flashed past that night on her way back to Sydney and then off to race in the Fastnet. That morning, with 15 sails up, we were just coming off watch when a call came in — a boat had capsized offshore, four crew were in the water and we were the closest vessel. "All hands, all hands, we are going to take off all sail and motor back to aid the rescue." In 15 mins we performed a Rapid Sail Reduction.

The rescue helicopter got there before us of course but it did a close 360 around us as a friendly thank you.

Day 9: Back on course, that night showed us all the stars, and a beautiful sunrise as we approached Wollongong, the SE wind was dropping and off the quarter, just right to set all sails. The crew were ecstatic, 21 sails is a rare event and the pride in the achievement was felt by everyone aboard. As the sun set we entered the harbour and prepared to anchor in Rose Bay. The engineers lugged out their BBQ and that night we had a special meal on deck with beer and then a performance of the Sods Opera — who knew we had so many talented performers aboard!

Day 10: We awoke to a gentle sun-filled Rose Bay with a tinge of sadness as we knew that we were soon to disembark. Not until we



Perfect sailing conditions



Sunset at sea

had cleaned and prepped the ship and weighed anchor, of course. We motored towards the Bridge and the order was to dress ship, all climbing hands aloft. My climb took me higher than I had been previously, up the rat lines, past the futtocks, up Jacobs ladder and stepping out on the upper t' gallant yard, about thirty metres above the deck.

James Craig
under full sail

The voyage had been full of wonders — phosphorescent seas, the life within the ocean, and our life in service to the ship — new friends, new skills and lots of stories. *James Craig* is 150 years old next year and she is still training young sailors in the ways of the sea.

SHF photo



NORTH OR SOUTH?

June 2023

by
Tony Stephens

Since joining SASC three years ago, while embracing Friday twilight racing on *Red Cloud* (A379 — a Jeanneau SO 379) and the Club's facilities, I have remained an aspirational member of the SASC Cruising Division.

When I saw Chris Manion's invitation to join a group of SASC cruisers heading south to Jervis Bay it seemed an ideal warm-up for a planned trip to Lord Howe Island later in 2023 on *Weekend Option* — a Jeanneau 44i Performance, moored in Pittwater skippered by brothers Peter and Dave Clyne, members of RPAYC. When Peter reached out, Chris happily welcomed *Weekend Option* to the small flotilla of SASC sailors heading south. As a bonus I looked forward to getting to know some of the cruising sailors at SASC, and having an extended adventure with Clare and Matt, two of *Red Cloud's* courageous Friday twilight crew.

We agreed to monitor the weather for the short trip from Pittwater and be flexible when to join the SASC fleet and so it was with disappointment we observed the weather was on the nose at the start of the passage to Jervis Bay then rotating north for the trip home: a 100% head-on experience. Perhaps it was no surprise to Chris that the SASC cruisers unanimously decided to head north to cruise in Pittwater but for *Weekend Option* this was not a viable option so we headed south regardless.

While it was indeed on the nose both ways, *Weekend Option* motor sails at 6–7 knots at efficient revs however the oscillating breeze meant we also had some pleasant fetches to give the iron topsail a rest. Overall this did not make for fast journey, however we were blessed with fantastic weather at JB and with one exception — we were the only yacht in the entire bay.

At one of the public moorings near the Husky Hotel

Photos courtesy Tony Stephens





The author being rowed ashore in style to the Husky Hotel

capacity in excess of 200 boats when complete. Entry is straight forward — a breakwater offers protection from ocean swells and a dredged depth exceeding 3 m meant no challenges. The surrounds of the marina are a crane-lover's paradise with houses and apartments under construction. The marina already has an excellent Tavern and backs on to a major chain supermarket. An impressive facilities building is almost complete. As an interim, a demountable shower/toilet block was perfectly fine. There are wide walking paths around the water's edge and I enjoyed a beautiful 5 km morning run to Bass Point Reserve and back.

Our last passage was 42 n miles to JB arriving 1530 on Anzac Day afternoon to pick up one of the public moorings just off the beach from the Husky Hotel, a risky mooring as the *Two Up* was well within earshot. As this was the nearest pub to HMAS *Creswell*, the crowd bridged the full diversity of Anzac Day remembrance. Fortunately the pub did quieten down and we had another comfortable night.

One of the six bonito caught during the passage



Next morning in beautiful sunshine, we planned a short 6 n mile passage under spinnaker (JB being an ideal location!) heading across the bay to Murray's Beach near Bowen Island for a swim and a fantastic 5 km loop walk on the southern headland. While we did get the kite up, the wind glassed out making for great swimming conditions.

We spent the evening in Boat Harbour, protected from the now steady northerly breeze, anchored comfortably off Target Beach (yes Target).

We retraced our steps, motoring for several hours along the cliff edge of Beecroft Peninsula — with impressive ocean facing caves, then overnighting in the Shellharbour marina and then straight back to Sydney Harbour (55 n miles) for a two-day passage.

The WhatsApp channel was called the “Bonito Boys” as the skipper Peter Clyne and his brother Dave were very much fishermen. We did enjoy and excellent sashimi bonito on the first night and the entire offshore journey was punctuated by a sudden need to change direction to follow the fishing line’s squealing drag from the rod.

Would I do it again? Absolutely. I would allow more time at JB — we could have readily spent two full days and three nights swimming, walking and venturing around Husky, Callalah Bay and exploring the NE corner, and maybe squeeze in some kite practice — but perhaps both ways uphill was more fresh air than necessary!



Heading back from JB — Clare and Matt are regular crew on *Red Cloud's* Friday twilight adventures. Peter co-owns *Weekend Option* and planned the trip

A WORD ABOUT DINGHIES

I have acted as repairman on the Club dinghies for some years and want to make three points in relation to them:

1. If you notice a problem with a Club dinghy, please advise the Office and they will contact me. Otherwise the dinghy won't be repaired unless I happen to select it when I want one.
2. I am taller than most members and don't find the new dinghies comfortable to row. So, I am experimenting with a removable wooden thwart to go between the bow and middle thwart. This allows me to row with my bum further forward and my legs straighter. If you are of normal height and happen to select the dinghy with the prototype thwart which you won't need, please move it to another dinghy. If you are a tall member, please look for it and give me your feedback.
3. Earlier this year, a pair of newly-repaired oars were removed and replaced with one broken oar and a paddle. If the oars were taken by a member, and they should happen to read this, I would like to say your action was not what is expected from a member. Also, I am sorry that you are mean enough to rob the Club when a set from Whitworths cost about \$200 and come with a clear conscience.

John Pennefather



YOGA FOR SAILORS

Accredited Yoga teacher. Georgia Sinclair, from Flow Athletic, will take us through some gentle, healing stretches at the SASC clubhouse.

BYO mat & come in active wear/comfortable clothing

THURSDAYS



7pm-8pm



\$15/person

Activity organised by SASC Water Women Committee

Please **RSVP** by WEDNESDAY email to: Sarah Scott or Inés Benavente
scottssarah65@gmail.com / ines.benavente@me.com



REFLECTIONS: TONY CLARKSON

June 2023

Tony Clarkson was born and bred in Sydney. He attended Sydney Boys' High and then won a Commonwealth Scholarship to study Commerce at the University of New South Wales. Initially an accountant Tony soon moved into general management and ran companies in New Guinea and Victoria before moving back to Sydney. He was interviewed by David Salter for the 'Reflections' 150th anniversary archive project.

DAVID SALTER: Thanks for your time, Tony. Did you have sailing background?

TONY CLARKSON: No, but my father always had boats. As a kid we had a 12-foot boat with a little outboard on the back that I was allowed to take out. When you were 12, 13, 14 we had pretty well a free run. We had a house down at a place called Currarong on the Beecroft Peninsular which forms the North arm of Jervis Bay. We were into boats, and fishing, and whatever.

DS: Can we go back to when sailing started?

TC: Sailing started in Papua New Guinea where myself and two others bought a steel Thunderbird — a steel Thunderbird! (*laughs*) — which we sailed and kept running onto reefs and things, mainly because we were too drunk to know where we were going. When the wind was *really* strong we were able to win some races, too.

Tony Clarkson

Photo John Jeremy



How did that begin?

TC: Well, what happened was that in Victoria I decided I wanted to do a bit more serious sailing and I started sailing at the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria with a guy who had a Brolga. I spent five years sailing with him — Bass Strait races — getting right into it. Eventually I bought my first boat down there, a Top Hat. After a couple of years I wanted something a bit bigger and better so I bought an S&S 30 built by the Savage family which was a forerunner of the Defiance class. I sailed her competitively in Victoria for some years.

When I came back to Sydney I immediately put my hand up to join the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron. But no, they had a waiting list, and you had to have the seven references and comply with all these rules. So I bought another Top Hat and because it had a mooring that came with the boat in front of a house I'd bought up here it was suggested I join the Amateurs.

DS: So the Squadron's loss was the Amateurs' gain?

TC: It wasn't until 1994 that I became a member of the Squadron. By then I was heavily involved with the Amateurs. I think I became the Treasurer in '95 or '96 and became a Flag Officer in '98.

DS: How were you encouraged to take on Board responsibility at the Amateurs?

TC: All my life I've tried to make a commitment to the community wherever I am. Whether it was in Papua New Guinea, whether it was in Melbourne, even in the Scouts. In any organisation I've always said I should make a contribution to the community and, hopefully, leave the place a little better off for having been there.

DS: You'd had wide business experience, you'd had experience with the club in Victoria and obviously knew the Squadron. The Amateurs is a completely different animal.

TC: Absolutely!

DS: How did it strike you?

TC: I just loved the place. There may be two other clubs that are similar — RANSA and Balmain — but the Amateurs has this fantastic approach with volunteers, having a minimum of paid staff, and being able to run your racing program with one person who's only part time. It suggests that we've got a lot of things right.

We've got four or five hundred members so we're not that small, but we don't have a membership department. The Amateurs just seems to have the right mix. Every member has 24/7 use of the club which is something unique. But they're not to abuse it, of course — there are some rules!

DS: Where do you think that spirit comes from for the Amateurs?

TC: I think you'll find it comes from a long tradition. They didn't have a clubhouse for 80 years. It's a wonderful opportunity that they took. I don't think they had the money to get professionals to fix it all up so they got to and did it themselves. Putting in that huge beam was a big thing, then that first pontoon was another huge achievement. I think that when people join the club, even the newer members, they get captivated by this 'self-help' ethos. One of the other great things about the club is that it's never had factions. When you don't have factions you have the chance for the whole thing to enjoy a steady growth. The Amateurs has been very good at keeping stable over pretty well all of its history.

DS: Where do you think that stability comes from?

TC: It comes from having people coming in who say, 'We're not here to try and change everything.'

DS: But there *were* changes during the time you were responsible for the management of the club.

TC: Yes, well, the thing that I'm proud of is that we sorted out how to run that slipway and get a positive cash-flow. We changed a cash-flow of somewhere between \$3,000–15,000 to \$100,000 a year. And that revolutionised the way we were able to get the money together to replace the pontoon and the renovations to the club boats while I was Commodore.

DS: Why did you transition into race management — starting boat duty?

TC: Because I'd stopped racing. I did the first Race Management Course they had at the Squadron. A lot of our people were there — Tony Barry, Russ Chapman, Vic Dibben — we all went to the course. Then I slotted into doing the odd race, like starting the Bob Brown and the race for the barristers and judges. And then when Russ retired I put my hand up to go onto the start boat.

DS: Can you sum up for us what does the Amateurs mean to you?

TC: Well, to me, what I've got from the Amateurs is a brain full of wonderful memories. We've had good times, we've had some nasty little fights and spats, we've had some difficult decisions to make. But from just about all the decisions we've made (not only by me but by my predecessors on the Board and successors) we've probably got, eventually, in every case the right decisions made.

That gives me a lot of pleasure to think, 'Here's this old club — 150 years old — as long as we keep it on that same trajectory it should be here for another 150.' For that to happen it speaks of following your traditions, not being too brave, being solid on the decisions you want to make. And I like the idea that we're the centre of classic sailing on Sydney Harbour. I love that. I just hope that those traditions keep going on.



HOW FAR OUT TO SEA CAN WE SEE?

by
Stuart Anderson

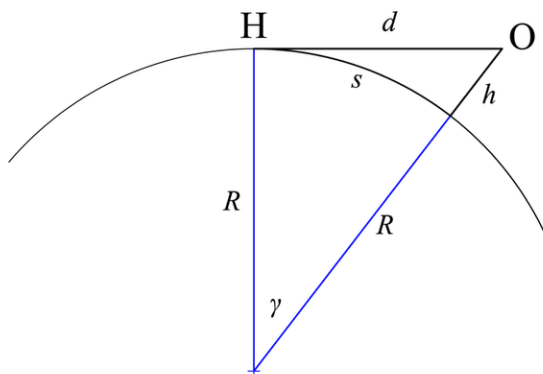
Most early sailors must have had a fair idea that the Earth was round. They could watch a ship leave port and slowly disappear over the horizon. First the hull and then after that the mast would pass from sight.

So how far out to sea can we see? The distance to the horizon is the maximum distance at which an observer on the Earth's surface can see before the curvature of the Earth obstructs their line of vision. The formula for judging the distance to the horizon can be derived using basic geometry.

Let's consider a simplified model of the Earth as a perfect sphere with radius "R". The observer's eye is located at a height above the Earth's surface, which we'll denote as "h".

Now, let's form a right triangle with the following components:

- The horizontal leg of the triangle is the distance from the observer's eye to the point on the Earth's surface where the horizon meets the sea, denoted as "d".
- The vertical leg of the triangle is at a right angle and is the radius of the Earth, denoted as "R".
- The hypotenuse of the triangle is the radius of the Earth plus the observers eye height "h + R".



Sketch of the distance to the horizon using
Pythagorean Theorem ($a^2 + b^2 = c^2$).

Using Pythagorean Theorem, we have:

$$d^2 + R^2 = (h + R)^2$$

Expanding the equation:

$$d^2 + R^2 = h^2 + 2hR + R^2$$

Subtracting R^2 from both sides of the equation and solving for d:

$$d = (2Rh + h^2)^{1/2}$$

The formula shows that the distance to the horizon (d) is dependent on the height of the observer's eye above the Earth's surface (h) and the radius of the Earth (R). It follows that as the observer's eye height increases the distance to the horizon increases.

We know from measurement that the circumference of Earth is 40,074,000 metres and so the radius, R, is 6,378,000 metres (circumference = $2\pi R$).

Putting the equation to work, as an example, the eye level of a sailor standing in the cockpit of a yacht is 2 metres (h) above sea level then the distance to the horizon is:

$$d = (2 \times 6378000 \times 2 + 2^2)^{1/2} = 5,052 \text{ m}$$

For a yacht travelling at 6 knots (3.1 metres per second) the distance of 5,052 m is covered in just 27 minutes.

For comparison, consider an observer at the level of the light at the Macquarie Lighthouse (built 1818) near South Head is 105 m (h) above sea level, the distance to the horizon is:

$$d = (2 \times 6378000 \times 105 + 105^2)^{1/2} = 36,598 \text{ m}$$

Those early sailors who did suspect the earth was round would not have been surprised when they observed a ship returning to port ... they would have seen the top of a mast first followed by the hull of the ship slowly come into view. Any sailor who did believe in a flat Earth must have found this observation difficult to explain!

RULES NIGHT AT THE CLUB



Photo Alice Murphy

With the new season approaching, a well-attended Rules Night was conducted by Peter McCorquodale at the Club on 3 May

AN EASY WAY UP THE MAST

*by
John
Pennefather*

This article is written to explain my system for climbing my mast. If you have electric winches or a crew of fit young men, you probably don't need to read on, but if you are short-handed, sail single handed, or suffer from approaching old age, my idea might be of use. I have winched people up, and been winched up, and found it to be hard work. My first attempt at easier climbing was a ladder with ropes at each end of timber rungs and sail slides in the middle of each rung to locate the ladder against the mast. It worked and was less effort than winching, but it was not easy to use as it was unstable because the rungs rotated as I ascended and as the waves moved me around. The other, less important problem was with the slides on the ladder, I had to drop my mainsail out of the track so I could feed the ladder slides in.

Before working on my ideas, I looked at what was available as I hoped to find a good answer on the market. There is a ladder made from webbing that slides in the mast track. It would be more stable than my ladder with timber steps, but I think it would be easy to miss one's footing as the openings in the webbing steps are not much larger than a large foot. There are also climbing outfits which provide a pair of stirrups for the feet and a harness for the body with slides to move up a rope. These seem to be hard work to use, and one might be swung around and risk injury. I prefer a system where I have something rigid to hang on to, and the mast is the obvious thing to grip. So, I developed the system described below.

The important part of my system is a triangular plywood plate about 20 mm thick that has two holes for my feet on the bottom edge, The dimensions are 45 cm along the foot hole edge and 40 cm from this side to the top corner. On the side facing the mast there are two slides which fit in the mast track and two wheels which limit the swinging from side to side. So I have a sliding footrest that can be moved up and down the mast.

The mast side of the plate is shown in Fig 1. In this figure, the top slide is split into the two halves and the bottom slide is assembled but positioned to show the lacing. The slides are made from L section aluminium, with one side shortened to fit in the sail track. Two L sections are bolted together to form a T section with the top of the T in the sail track. The vertical part of the Ts are joined to the plywood plate by lacings. Making the slides from L sections allows them to be inserted as two parts into the sail track above the stowed mainsail and then bolted together. If I had used a T section, I would have had to drop the mainsail out of the track for the slides to be inserted. A layer of material is glued to the parts of the T's that rub on the sail track to help preserve the paint there.

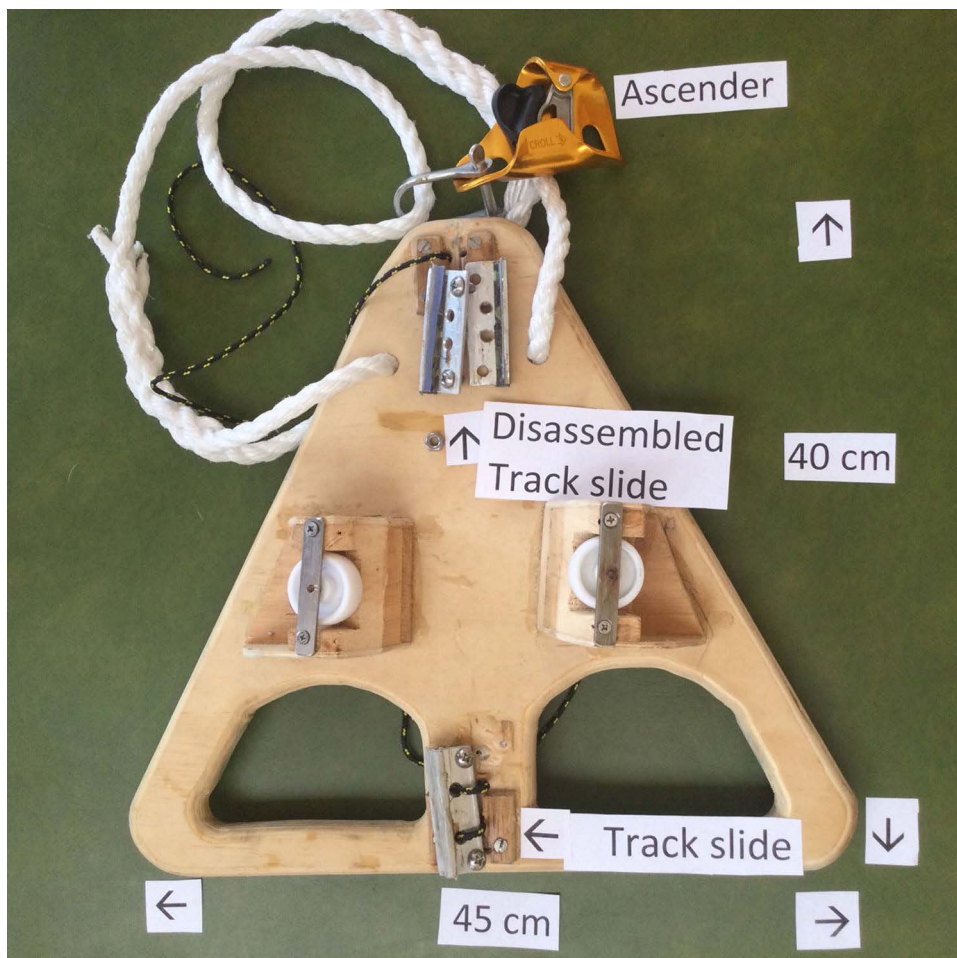


Figure 1. The mast side of the triangular plate. One of the track slides is in two parts, the other is bolted together. The two wheels are placed to limit rotational movement of the plate around the slides as pivot points.

There are several possible ways to use the sliding footrest: I have adopted a more expensive solution using a device sold to the rock climbers called an ascender. It is a cam cleat combined with a slide that fits round a rope. It slides easily in one direction and locks off when pulled the other direction. The cam can be opened by taking the load off the device and then retracting the cam. It is joined to the top corner of the plywood plate by a rope which locates the ascender at about my waist height when I am standing. In this position it is easy to move when needed.

The mainsail halyard and topping lift on my yacht are both woven polyester rope about 10 mm in diameter. When I want to go up the mast, I fit the triangular plate to the mast track and then bring the topping lift to the base of the mast and tension it. Then I join the ascender attached to the triangular plate to the topping lift. I get into the bosun's chair and connect it to the main halyard, and I am ready to climb.

I use a short rope ladder to climb up to the triangle plate, then I slide the ascender up and put my feet in the slots. I then stand with my weight on the triangular plate and my wife takes up the slack in the halyard linked to the chair. Then I sit in the chair and bring triangular plate up by sliding the ascender up and I am ready to repeat the cycle from bent knees to straight legs. With each cycle, I move up about 40 cm. I am doing a series of squats but instead of lowering my bottom in each squat, the floor/ plate is moving up to me as I bend my knees, so the energy used is less than in doing a series of normal squats. Figure 2 shows me at the beginning of an ascent. I am not discomforted by moderate boat movement as my feet remain in the foot holes and I can have one arm round the mast. It is not hard work for my wife as she is only taking up the slack in the halyard, not lifting my weight.

When I have finished and wish to come down, I sit in the chair and slide the ascender up to take the load off it, then I can open the cam cleat in it and my wife lets me down by easing the mainsail halyard. I leave my feet in the footrest to steady my feet, and this drags the triangle foot plate down.

I own a second ascender and could link it to the bosun's chair so I could climb the mast without an assistant. I would do so if I had to climb



Figure 2. I have climbed to the plate and my next move is to slide the ascender up the topping lift rope. I will then stand up and my wife will take up the slack in the halyard.

the mast while alone on board, but I am not keen to do this. A friend told me about a man who went up his mast at sea; he tied himself off to the mast to free his hands and then had a fatal heart attack. His widow had to sail to port with his body in the rigging. As a result, I am not keen to climb the mast when alone and we both like our system where my wife could lower me without assistance if I should become incapacitated.

The main cost of the system outlined is for the ascender(s). Currently they are about \$190 each for the model I used. But if you have two assistants, you could do without the ascenders by deploying one to the line linked to the triangular plate and one to the line to the bosuns chair and have them take up the

slack as the climber changes from standing to sitting and back. You probably could get by with one assistant and no ascenders if you were confident in their ability to operate the cleats or jammers. I commend the idea of the sliding plate footrest to the reader. It takes much less effort than grinding on a winch!

I have pondered on how this system might be used on a gaff rig with no track for the mainsail. Any system I have thought of would risk the climber being rotated to the lee side of the mast if his yacht rolled. But, with a hoop or series of beads on a line round the mast in place of the sail track slides, he would still be kept close to the mast, and this might be better than most alternatives.

As a safety note, I should mention that before climbing, I test the halyard and the topping lift. I tie a block to the rope being tested and run a rope from the deck, through the block and back to a stirrup. I then put all my weight on the foot in the stirrup. So I am pulling on a 2:1 purchase and the halyard and topping lift are tested to about twice the maximum likely load before use.



WINE AND CHEESE NIGHT

SASC WATER WOMEN



COME ALONG FOR A WINTER CATCHUP, CHINWAG, MEET AND GREET,
SKIPPERS AND CREW, RACERS AND CRUISERS!

TUESDAY

4TH JULY

7PM

\$25/hd All you can drink*plus cheese!

*max 4 glasses

PLEASE RSVP BY 21 JUNE

[SASC Water Women - Wine and Cheese Night - Sydney Amateur Sailing Club - revolutioniseSPORT](#)



Photo Ross Littlewood

The Bob Brown Trophy Race this year was beset by light winds. This is *Samphire* two hours after the start still inside North Head. All yachts retired and motored north for a great barbeque on Good Friday. The winner, decided by a draw, was declared as *Ping* and Dennis O'Donohue was presented with the winner's bottle of rum



Photos John Jeremy

The Club conducted the Karoo Trophy Race on 12 March as part of the usual Classic Sunday non-spinnaker race. Here the crew of *Little Bird* found themselves in an uncomfortable spot at the start of the preceding non-spinnaker race. *Little Bird* went on to come second in the Karoo Trophy Race



Seen shortly after the start, *Dreamkumtrue* was another competitor in the Karoo Trophy Race



Photos John Jeremy

Beowulf (1685) and *Caress* (15) approaching the finish of the Karoo Trophy Race.
Beowulf, skippered by Stafford Watts, won the Karoo Trophy



The Ranger/Couta and Folkboat Sprints were sailed in forbidding conditions on 2 April. Seen here are *Isabella* (A17), *Beowulf* (1685) and *Windermere* (3671) at the start of the first Folkboat race



Folk song, sailed by David Rockliff, was a newcomer to the Folkboat Sprints



Windermere, sailed by Miles Grant, about to finish in one of the three races of the series.
Windermere won the Folkboat Sprints



Makama, sailed by Fredrik Blencke, was one of two Couta boats entered in the Sprints



Cherub and *Beowulf* finishing in the second race in the Sprints. *Cherub* went on the win the Ranger/Couta series and *Beowulf* finished second in the Folkboat series



Windermere, Beowulf and Cherub approaching the finish in pouring rain.
Luckily it was the third and last race of the day



Captain Amora, gleaming after her recent slipping, starting the first races
in the Winter Series on 6 May



Photos Geraldine Wilkes

Daydream, sailed by Bob Langley, during the Winter Series race on 20 May



Windward II about to finish in the first Winter Series race.
Yes, that is Alice Murphy amongst the crew



Photo David Salter

Captain Amora was slipped unusually stern first recently to make access easier for repairs to some minor damage to the stern after an on-water incident



Photo John Jeremy

Treasurer John Brennan giving an update on the Club's finances at the well-attended General Meeting on 24 May



Photos John Jeremy

The Sydney Heritage Fleet's treasured barque *James Craig* arriving in Sydney after a tow from Hobart on 18 January 1981 to begin a long restoration



Nearly ready to sail again — *James Craig* in Rozelle Bay on 11 August 1998 with the schooner *Boomerang* ahead of her and *John Oxley* on the Sea Heritage Dock in the background

NEW MEMBERS

June 2023

We welcome the following new members:

Neil Cossor
Ben Deacon
Mark Dodgson
Mark Roberts
Darcey-Belle Roberts
Greta Stojanovic

SASC SHOP

Subject to availability — Check with the Office

SASC Branded Merchandise

| | |
|--|---------|
| Racing 'A' Flag | \$27.00 |
| Burgee (Medium – 30 cm x 54 cm) | \$41.00 |
| Club Tie | \$25.00 |
| Club Wide-Brimmed Hat | \$36.00 |
| Polo Shirt (short sleeve) | |
| — white and navy in limited sizes | \$75.00 |
| Polo Shirt Quick Dry (long sleeve) | |
| — white and navy in limited sizes | \$60.00 |
| Rugby Shirts <i>NEW</i> | \$82.00 |
| SASC Caps <i>NEW</i> | \$35.00 |
| T-shirt — Anniversary in limited sizes | \$30.00 |
| Stubbie Holder | \$7.50 |

LOCKERS FOR RENT

Some lockers are available to rent in the main boatshed. Please contact the office if you are interested.

TENDER HOURS

Members are reminded that the hours of operation of the

Club's tenders are:

Saturday/Sunday (EST) 0900–1700

Saturday/Sunday (DST) 0900–1800

Friday Twilights 1600–2100 (approx)

TENDER DRIVERS NEED A BREAK TOO

On some days the demands on the duty tender driver never slacken. They need a break just like everyone else, so please avoid calling them between 1245 and 1315 so they can grab some lunch.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The next *SASC News* will be the August 2023 edition. Contributions from members, which are always welcome, should reach the editor by Friday 28 July 2023. Contributions can be in hard copy or sent by email. Photographs are very welcome.



Ping enjoying a perfect Sydney
day during the winter race on
20 May
(Photo Geraldine Wilkes)

