September 2026

The Newsletter of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club

"A Strong Start to the Season"

Racing, volunteering and club life at the Amateurs.

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Cover photo - Cover Photo Zara racing in the Classics Division Opening Regatta Photo: Geraldine Wilkes

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NEED THE TENDER?

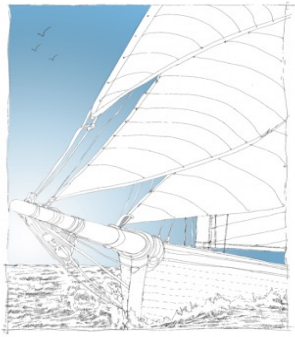
Nancy K
0418 678 690
or
Jack Millard on
0418 678 819
(race days)

Coming Events

OCTOBER	
Sat 3	October Long Weekend
Fri 9	Twilight
Sat 10	Saturday 1 (Muriel Trophy)
Sun 11	Gaffers Day 2026
Fri 16	Twilight
Sat 17	Saturday 2
Sun 18	Womens Keelboat Series
Fri 23	Twilight
Sat 24	Saturday 1 (CR Lady Helm)
Sun 25	Balmain Regatta
Fri 30	Twilight
Sat 31	Saturday 1
NOVEMBER	
Sun 1	Sunday Series - Platypus
Fri 6	Twilight
Sat 7	Saturday 2 (Port Stephens)
Fri 13	Twilight
Sat 14	Saturday 1
Sun 15	Sunday Series
Fri 20	Twilight
Sat 21	Saturday 2 (SS1)
Sun 22	Womens Keelboat Series
Fri 27	Twilight
Sat 28	Saturday 1
Sun 29	Sunday Series (RPEYC WOW)
DECEMBER	
Fri 4	Twilight
Sat 5	Saturday 2 (SS2)
Sun 6	IDLE HOUR (TBC)
Fri 11	Twilight
Sat 12	Saturday 1 - Spring Trophy
Sun 13	Womens Keelboat Series (SASC)

A RALLY for CLASSIC YACHTS

GAFFERS DAY 2026



Sunday 11 October - Sydney Harbour - Australia

SYDNEY AMATEUR SAILING CLUB founded 1872 Tel: 9953 1433 office@sasc.com.au sasc.com.au

10:00am	Yacht Review at SASC Mosman Bay Breakfast BBQ
11:30am	Piping in the Crews
11:45am	Welcome Speeches – Commodore, Patron Noon – Firing of the Les Ardouin Cannon
12.30pm	Ferry *Royale* leaves Old Cremorne Wharf to follow the fleet
1:00pm	Regatta Start in Athol Bight
3.00pm	Ferry returns to Old Cremorne Wharf
3:30pm	Refreshments at the clubhouse
4:00pm	Prizegiving
6:00pm	Close

Signals from the Commodore

Since the AGM, where more than 50 members welcomed me as the club's new Commodore and Board, it has been an especially busy period. For the first time in the club's history, the incoming Commodore was unable to attend in person, as I was recovering from back surgery and participated remotely. I extend my thanks to everyone who helped facilitate the meeting. I am now recovering well and look forward to racing *Samphire* in the coming weeks.

August commenced with safety audits, during which the auditors inspected 80 boats, followed by skippers' briefings ahead of the Lion Island race where several finishers encountered gusts of up to 55 knots near North Head. Fortunately, everyone remained safe, although several sails required repairs by a sailmaker. The opening weekend of the sailing season was highly successful, with the club decorated with flags and activities including a barbecue and cannon firing, all supported by excellent weather. Members enjoyed a Friday evening celebration, followed by strong fleet participation on both Saturday and Sunday.

Alice and Maz coordinated a highly successful program of working bees over four weeks. Members contributed to improvements involving the clubhouse windows, painting, the slipway area, gardens and paths, the main pontoon preservation works and at the Green Shed, where several deck timbers were replaced, painting walls and one sliding door was renewed. The list of completed tasks continues to expand. Between 70 and 80 members volunteered their time, demonstrating the strong community spirit at the Amateurs. Volunteers were thanked with a barbecue featuring sausages, onions and refreshments. Working bees provide an excellent opportunity to meet fellow members and contribute actively to the care of the club. Additionally, *Kareela* was cleaned and polished ready for the new season.

The Water Women secured a small grant through Australian Sailing's Sail Our Way program, specifically aimed at increasing women's participation in sailing.. With the assistance of club member Venessa Dudley, a keelboat and dinghy coach and instructor, the group developed a three-week course. More than 40 participants attended the first 2.5-hour session, which focused on becoming effective crew members. The second session, attended by 60, addressed ways to maximise boat performance, followed by a session on racing strategy and tactics. Many thanks to Kylie Twible for coordinating this initiative.

The success of the working bees and the Sail Our Way course demonstrates what can be achieved when members contribute their time and expertise. Building on this momentum, we can support new participants by connecting them with skippers through the crew concierge and encouraging more members to volunteer as tender drivers, race officials or officers of the day.

The club's next major event is Gaffers Day on 11 October. The event brings together sailors to celebrate the history and traditions of classic yachting. Participants and spectators can enjoy a magnificent display of sailing heritage, with more than 90 vessels having participated in previous years. Gaffers Day also includes social gatherings and activities that foster community and camaraderie among

sailing enthusiasts. Book onto the ferry to watch the action on the water-seats are available. Your Board's primary objective is to uphold the club's distingished reputation on Sydney Harbour. I encourage all members to participate actively in club activities.

Sailing remains central to club life, while volunteering strengthens unity and camaraderie throughout our boating and sailing community. Growing our membership and creating further opportunities for women remain strategic priorities. Achieving these objectives will require continued commitment and a sustained focus on volunteerism, which is essential to the club's ongoing success.

With twilights about to commence & as we may have inexperienced crews on our boats, as skipper you are responsible for informing any unfamiliar, new, or inexperienced guests and crew members about potential hazards on board. Provide a thorough orientation of the boat, including instructions for using the equipment, the location of life jackets and the first-aid kit and the safety risks they may encounter while on the water.

Share your knowledge and experience with everyone on board. Doing so will help promote safe boating practices and enable guests and crew to enjoy their time on the water with greater confidence.

Chris Manion

Commodore

153rd Annual General Meeting

The 153rd Annual General Meeting of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club was held on Wednesday 5th August 2026 at the clubhouse with 51 members attending.

The AGM presented the SASC as a financially sound, active and socially connected club, with strong sailing participation and a valuable volunteer culture. The main themes for the future are maintaining financial stability, growing and diversifying membership, encouraging crew into full membership, investing in facilities, supporting racing and continuing to strengthen the club's social and community culture.

The Commodore, Peter Scott, reported that the club is financially stable, participation in sailing is growing, membership is engaged and the club retains a strong reputation for friendliness and community spirit.

Overall membership is stable, with growth in Crew Membership offsetting a small decline in Full Membership. The club is encouraging crew members to progress to full membership, including removing the joining fee after three years.

Revenue increased by approximately $50,000, the club generated a $43,000 positive cash flow after $85,000 of capital expenditure and cash and investments increased to $1.43 million. Net assets were reported at $3.2 million. Moorings remained fully occupied with a waiting list, racing participation increased and slipway revenue improved.

Significant maintenance was undertaken on the slipway, pontoons, moorings, boatsheds and club vessels. Working bees remain an important part of keeping the club operating and have strengthened member camaraderie.

The clubhouse remains vibrant and financially healthy. The Centenarians Regatta was highlighted as a successful event that brought new people into the club.

Racing continues to encourage strong participation and a successful program supported by volunteers, staff, skippers, boat owners and sailors.

Sean Kelly presented the Vice Commodore burgee to Alice Murphy
Photo: Matthew Lorrimer

Sean Kelly presented the Rear Commodore burgee to Leone Lorrimer
Photo: Matthew Lorrimer

The Hyam Trophy presented to Trevor Cosh
Photo: Matthew Lorrimer

Following the reports, Chris Manion took the helm as Commodore, with Alice Murphy moving to Vice Commodore. New flag officers are Leone Lorrimer (Rear Commodore and Declan Brennan (Captain). Chris thanked our three retiring directors – David Brown, John Brady and Tony Cousins and welcomed new board members Letitia van der Walt, Dennis O'Donohue and Declan Brennan.

Outgoing Commodore Peter Scott was thanked for his three years as Commodore and longstanding contribution to the club. He was made an Honorary Life Member.

A strong theme throughout the meeting was the importance of volunteers. Trevor Cosh, recipient of the inaugural John Jeremy Perpetual Trophy, accepted the award on behalf of the many volunteers who maintain and operate the club.

51 members attended the 2026 AGM Photo: Matthew Lorrimer

Built By Its Own

Working bees are nothing new at the Amateurs. It's how the Club has always looked after itself - members turning out, year after year, to do the jobs a clubhouse and a boatshed always seem to generate. There's a particular kind of pride in that: a Club maintained not by invoice, but by its own people, on their own weekends.

The work itself is never just one thing. A single working bee might call for a shipwright's precision on one job and a gardener's patience on the next, someone comfortable on a ladder and someone else content to keep the tools organised and the team fed. None of it ranks above the rest - a clean gutter matters as much as a repaired winch and the volunteer running the BBQ is doing just as much for the day's success as the one wielding the drop saw.

It shows, too, in the way people linger afterwards. A shared lunch, or a drink at the end of a long day, does something a roster never could - it turns a list of jobs into a reason for people to sit still together for a while. Members give up their weekends because they want to be there and that willingness, more than anything on the task list, is what keeps this tradition alive.

In recent years, that spirit has produced some serious results. Back in 2021, members spent a working bee stripping the boatshed and workshop right back, safely removing old asbestos-related cladding and clearing the way for a full re-clad. More recently, working bees have rebuilt the boatshed, restored paths and gardens, extended the main deck and rebuilt the outdoor bar that now sits on it, repaired decking, replaced the entry pathway and installed a new awning and rehabilitated several ageing timber piles beneath the main deck and boatshed - splicing in new timber, fitting steel sleeves and concreting the surrounds to give them a fresh lease of life. Last year's stand-out project was the clubhouse's SE Wall - its 100-year-old timber frame badly compromised by decades of termite damage. With heritage obligations to the Council and a fair bit of technical know-how required to source and match the exact profile of the original weatherboards, it was a reminder that the Club draws on more than just tools and elbow grease when it needs to - there's a genuine depth of professional skill sitting within the membership, ready to be called on.

This year's effort belongs to that same tradition. Different jobs, different weekends, but the same instinct - when something needs doing, members turn up and do it themselves.

Two big weekends and the weeks that followed

The main Working Bee ran across two weekends in late July and early August, with 72 members and friends of the Club getting through roughly 776 volunteer-hours between them - and that's before counting the follow-up weekends and midweek sessions that have continued since, with smaller teams returning again and again to keep the momentum going.

The list of what got done is a long one. Bill Thompson and his team overhauled the Slipway's winch house, water pipes and wall sections. Sean Kelly led a thorough clean-up of the Green Shed and kept a watchful eye over the site throughout, while

the exterior walls were painted under Herschel Smith's direction, who set up access and directed the crew. The main pontoon's steelwork was grit-blasted, rust-treated and given three coats of epoxy, by hand, on a structure that never stops moving. MV Kareela came up gleaming. The Salvage Team replaced the Green Shed's deck planks and pontoon ramp slippers, then went on to fabricate, install and fully paint a new sliding door for the Green Shed. Matt Upton carried out make-safe electrical work and a floodlight upgrade at the Green Shed.

In a genuine highlight, member Lachlan Irwin and his Clewless crew installed a new ice maker in the Boat Shed - plumbed in beneath the deck, in tidal waters. Next time you're heading out on a warm day, you'll be able to grab free ice on your way to the boat. Lachlan also removed rust from and fibreglassed the two structural posts supporting the Boat Shed's roof trusses, carried out an emergency repair of the Men's Room waste pipe and spotted and repaired a few piles and piers supporting the clubhouse along the way - the kind of quiet initiative that's easy to miss and hard to properly thank someone for. If you see him around, say something.

The gable window

One job outlasted all the others. On the gable end of the clubhouse sits a three-sash window - the two outer panes fixed, the middle one operable, opening on its original rope-and-wheel mechanism to vent the roof space. That window - led by Mark Pearse, with Warwick Ellis alongside him for the duration - took close to six weekends and a string of midweek sessions to get right. It was restored at the Green Shed by Martin Van Der Wal before being brought back to the clubhouse, fitted with new flashing and finished with hand-cut timber shingles. Herschel Smith came in midweek to finish the prep and painting while the scaffold was still up and the scaffold itself came down on the Wednesday before the Suze Hardy Send-off - the team working right up against that deadline to have it clear in time.

Warwick working at height repairing the window

Lachlan at work on the boatshed posts

It wasn't the biggest job on the list, but it was the one that had to be done before the season starts and it's the one that best sums up what this year's Working Bee was really about. Not the scale of any single task, but the fact that the same people kept turning up, weekend after weekend, to see it through to the end. That kind of ownership doesn't get rostered - people just decide the job matters and show up until it's done.

Thank you!

To everyone who picked up a tool, wielded a paintbrush, or simply turned up to lend a hand - thank you. Particular mention to Herschel Smith for his enormous and ongoing effort on painting across the Club, to Sean Kelly, Bill Thompson, Michael Warner, Mark Pearse and Warwick Ellis for leading their respective jobs through to completion, to Peter Robinson for keeping everyone safe as our Safety Officer across both weekends and to Alice Murphy, who kept registrations, catering and the Garden team running smoothly throughout.

Katie painting the winch house machinery after repairs

The pontoon team

Stuart and James filling the gaps between the pavers

Bill and Volunteers painting the slipway and boatshed

A few members also deserve recognition for staying the distance well beyond the two main weekends. John Brady led his team on the very first day and kept coming back for the follow-up work that followed - helping Mark and Warwick with the shingles among other jobs, largely without anyone making a fuss about it. Neil Cossor and Beth Fitzpatrick were regular faces at the follow-up weekends too. Beth in particular took on the job of prepping and priming the shingles - each one measured, numbered and primed in the boatshed ahead of time, ready to go up in the precise pattern the gable wall called for. It was quiet, exacting work running in parallel with everything else and the window job wouldn't have come together on schedule without it.

It's also worth mentioning what this kind of weekend does for the Club beyond the jobs list. A couple of prospective members were shown around during the Working Bee and saw the place at its busiest and most communal - and by all accounts, it did nothing to talk them out of joining. One wrote to me afterwards to say it was his first real taste of the Amateurs' camaraderie and that seeing it in person had only strengthened his resolve to become a member. If you're wondering what makes this Club worth the effort, that's about as good an answer as any.

The Working Bee is done for another year, but the tradition never really stops - there's always another job on the list and always someone willing to turn up for it.

And working bees are only one way in. If tools aren't your thing, the Club runs on volunteers in plenty of other ways too - crewing the committee boat, driving a tender on race days, taking a turn as Officer of the Day, pouring drinks behind the bar, or lending a hand on Gaffers Day. Most of these run on a roster, so it might mean two shifts a season, not two a month - whatever you can genuinely spare. It's worth thinking about, even if you've never put your hand up before. The same small pool of people carrying most of the load year after year isn't something to take for granted and a Club with a healthy spread of volunteers is a stronger, more resilient one for everyone who sails from here. If you've been meaning to get involved, now's as good a time as any. And to everyone who already does, in ways big or small: thank you. It means more than you probably know and it's genuinely appreciated.

Maz Neyakivi

Good Luck Suze Hardy

In late August, the clubhouse took on a New York theme and was packed with members and friends wishing, Suze Hardy good luck as she prepared to travel to Newport Rhode Island to compete in the Inaugural New York Yacht Club Women's International Championship. Suze is a well-known member of the Clewless crew and has sailed at the Amateurs for most of her life.

Nicola Mepstead and Kim Hicks hosted the trivia evening with many dressing to impress in their best New York theme. Catherine Hepburn was spotted on the arm of a NYYC Flag Officer and a New York fireman turned up to oversee the celebrations.....pizza and all!

The inaugural edition of the New York Yacht Club Women's International Championship took place from 12th to 19th September, 2026, at the New York Yacht Club Harbour Court in Newport, R.I. The regatta utilised the Club's fleet of 20 IC37s. The 37-foot keelboat was designed by Mark Mills and is a powerful, sporty platform that rewards cohesive crew work and athleticism. Suze role is mast and she brings skill, strength and sailing nous to the boat, having honed her sailing skills on Clewless? and many other boats at the Amateurs.

The event features two days of mandatory practice and five days of racing. Impressive shore-side social activities on the new Harbour Court waterfront along with a formal prize giving banquet will create a truly memorable regatta experience.

We look forward to hearing all about the event when Suze returns.

Nicola Mepstead and Alice Murphy

Trivia Night Photo: Alice Murphy

Suze at NYYC wearing her Clewless tshirt

The boat

Catherine, Herschel and Freddy came in character for the New York theme

All Hail the Salvage Team

Working bees have been part of the Amateurs ethos from the time we acquired the current clubhouse in 1962. The massive steel I-beam that supports our roof was hand-carried all the way down from Green Street by a team of volunteers.

General working bees are still remarkably productive but they can also be inefficient and frustrating. We might see five people standing around while one drives a nail or paints a pile.

So, over recent decades, a group of retired, semi-retired, unemployed (or gentlemen-of-leisure) members formed themselves into an unofficial group. Their idea was to tackle the more complex individual tasks that required a smaller team with particular skills or equipment.

The first major job completed in that way was probably the new main slipway cradle in 2009. Many of the members who worked on that project realised that large tasks could be completed successfully by concentrated team effort. The "Salvage Team" was born.

Perhaps the greatest advantage for the group is that most of them no longer hold full-time jobs. That allows up to five clear days during the week during which they can work on maintenance or construction jobs that might otherwise inconvenience sailing activity over the weekend. It is amazing what has been achieved in these thoroughly planned projects.

Recent tasks completed by the Salvage Team include the highly complex underwater repair to the slipway rails, the re-build of the Green Shed sliding doors, the steel-and-concrete reinforcement of the piles beneath the club, the complete re-build of the SE wall and the extraction and repair of the *Nancy K* engine which was finished just in time for the Lion Island rush.

The money saved by the club by these contributions of voluntary labour and skill is considerable. The commercial quote for the wall re-build started at $270K.

The team all know who they are and need no special mention here. But three members stand out: Trevor Cosh for his inexhaustible energy and engineering knowledge, Bob Langley who seems a master of any building skill, and Bruce Dover whose quiet organisational talents keep the team heading in a productive direction.

Whats going on here

Trevor working on the *Nancy K* engine

Virtue, they say, is its own reward and the Salvage Team don't seek recognition. They have, however, allowed themselves the indulgence of a bespoke rugby top. Could they be the most unrecognised – yet exclusive – little group in the Sydney sailing community?

David Salter

Measure twice cut once

Salvage Team Rugby earned not bought

Sound Over Water

At the start of a sailing race, there are times when crews genuinely cannot hear the committee boat horn, even when the signal is loud and the boats are only a short distance away.

This happens because the starting line is set roughly perpendicular to the prevailing wind. Before the start, the fleet is usually positioned downwind of the committee boat, where wind, waves, sails and background noise all affect how sound travels.

A horn rated at 110 decibels (dB) sounds extremely loud when standing nearby on the committee boat. Yet a yacht only 120 metres away in a 20-knot breeze may hear it only faintly - or not at all. The reason comes down to how sound weakens over distance and competes with environmental noise.

A decibel is a unit used to measure sound intensity, named after Alexander Graham Bell. The decibel scale is logarithmic, which means an increase of 10 dB represents roughly ten times more sound energy. For comparison:

• Normal conversation: about 60 dB

• Busy road traffic: about 70–80 dB

• Chainsaw or loud motorcycle: about 110 dB

The important point is that sound loses intensity rapidly as it spreads away from its source. A horn rated at 110 dB is typically measured at a distance of one metre from the horn itself.

Sound at 120 m =110 dB -20log10(120 m) ≈ 68 dB

So by the time the sound reaches the sailboat, it may only be around 68 dB — similar to normal conversation or city traffic.

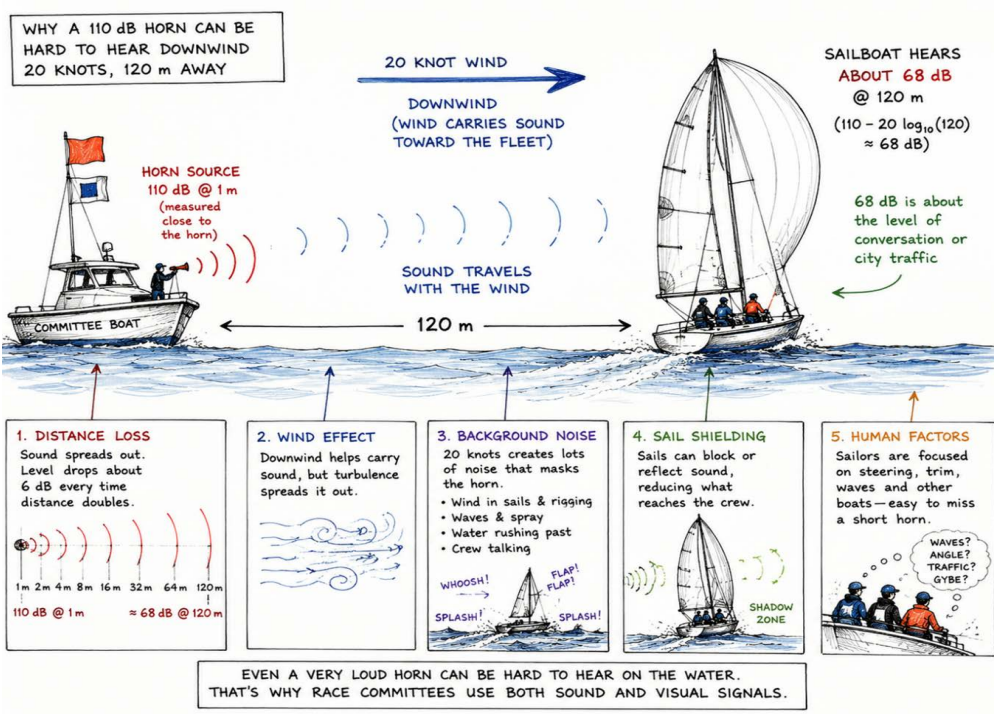
Even though the fleet is downwind, which can help carry sound toward the boats, the sailing environment is surprisingly noisy. In 20 knots of wind there is constant background sound from waves, water rushing past the hull, sails flogging, rigging vibrating and wind flowing across the sailors' ears. These sounds can easily mask a horn that has weakened to around 68 dB.

The sails themselves can also interfere with hearing. Large mainsails may partially block or reflect sound, particularly for crew members positioned on the opposite side of the sail from the committee boat. Add the concentration required for steering, trimming sails, avoiding nearby boats and watching the line and it becomes quite understandable that a short horn blast may be missed.

Takeaways

• Stay reasonably close to the committee boat before the start.

• Do not rely solely on the horn. If possible, assign one crew member to watch the flags throughout the countdown sequence.



Sound over water sketch

SASC Annual Prizegiving 2026

Enjoying perfect weather, 120 members and guests attended the Annual Prizegiving on Saturday 27th June. The traditional Les Ardouin cannon firing was a highlight in addition to a wonderful buffet lunch served by Jean-Paul and his team from Roo Brothers.

Thank you Liam Timms for the photos!

Volunteer of the Year Letitia van de Walt

'Vanity' 1st place Club Championship Kelly Cup

Skippers added to the Centenary Plate

'Shambles' Catherine Baker

SASC won the interclub Sheepstation Trophy accepted by the *'Clewless'* crew

'Samphire' Chris Manion

'Ronja' Chris Mifsud and Lindy Danvers

Sean Kelly and crew *Lonely* Photo: Maggie Loaney

John and Andrew Crawford serving the rum from the Kelly Cup

Isabella Bill Thompson

Fagel Grip Jerry Lees and crew

Cherub Mark Pearce and Peter Scott

A perfect day at the Club for the 2026 Prizegiving

The Punts of Cambridge

When I moved to Cambridge as a student, my water-based activities in term-time were restricted to punting up and down the river Cam. Although my college did not own any punts, some of the riverside colleges did and I sometimes "borrowed" one illicitly from Queen's College, via a friend who was a student there. Public punt hire was expensive, the punts were heavier than the private punts and they were hard work.

We learned very quickly that the pole was both an engine and a rudder. You stood on the stern deck, dropped the wooden pole down into the water until it hit the bottom, then gradually set your body weight down on the pole to propel the punt forwards. Throughout this sequence, you kept the pole against the side of the punt and finished the stroke with the minimum correction required to keep the boat on course. Then you threw the pole forward and up in a single movement and dropped it back in again. If you had way on and needed to steer a course, or avoid another punt or a bridge arch, you used the pole as a rudder. If a well-meaning passenger decided to "help" with the paddle they soon got told off, as they put the boat completely out of balance.

The paddle was the last resort if you lost the pole. This was not always due to carelessness. Often the bottom was mud and the pole could get stuck, in which case you had to let go of the pole, or it would pull you overboard. We learned to "read" the river bed: there was a satisfying crunch of gravel all along the centre of the King's College reach, so you were safe to push along. Past St John's College it was very deep: the bottom was soft, you didn't push hard and you twisted the pole at the end of the stroke to make sure it came free. There were other places were you hit bricks and you worried that the end of the pole might get caught in a hole. You kept way on before a bridge and did not put the pole up at the last moment, otherwise it would hit the arch and take you overboard. When you got through the bridge, you waited before you put the pole up again, otherwise some joker on the bridge could grab it and derail you. The longest bridge was beneath Silver Street, with the Mill Pond upstream. You might have a river current coming at you together with the wind funnelling through the arch. Then you had to get up as much speed as possible, punting hard and fast, as once under the arch it was almost impossible to get the pole up. There were many times when I crept out of the upstream portal with just enough way on to start poling again.

My "demonstration" move was downstream of Magdalene College, where the colleges reach ended at the Jesus Green lock. The punt needed to be turned around so it could go back upstream again. You kept some way on, then turned the pole through a decent angle and round she went; but you had to brace yourself hard against the stern deck to resist the torque. This left no doubt about how effective the pole was when used simply as a rudder, not in contact with anything apart from the water. Something that was never explained to the poor tourists (who are now, more sensibly, strongly encouraged to take the "chauffeur" punts). About five years ago, I went down to the hire wharf and announced that I wanted to take out a punt on my own. This attracted some quizzical looks from the staff. To which my response was "I learned to punt on this river before you were born. And can I have an age discount please". Which, to my amazement, I got!

Over the past few years, I have been helping a friend research the history of the waterways in the Fens – the vast expanse of tidal marshes and salt flats which extended from The Wash inland as far as Cambridge. Over recent centuries these have been drained and turned into farmland. But the network of ancient Saxon waterways survives

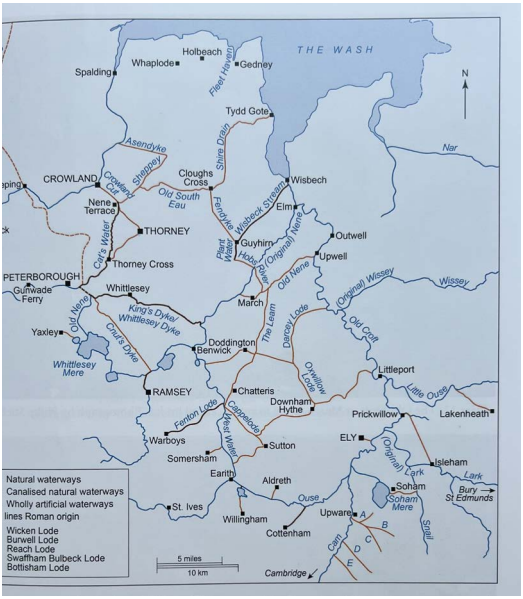
largely intact. The waterways which brought stone from the Barnack quarries down to Ely, for building the cathedral; then on to Cambridge, for building colleges; and all manner of goods through the sea port of Wisbech. It was only with the advent of the railways that there was a serious alternative. The reach of the river by Magdalene College is still called "Quayside" – coal for the boilers of Cambridge's first power station was brought up river by barge to be unloaded there.

The ancient waterways were shallow and were liable to become silted up, so were worked with flat bottomed boats, poled or simply allowed to run with the current. With the draining of the fens and solid banks for towpaths, horses (and more recently small tugs) were able to pull larger barges. But the punts we see on the Cam today are the direct descendants of a local way of transport that goes back at least a thousand years.

David Jones

Going upstream, shortly before Trinity Hall. 46 years ago, in quieter times.

Going downstream, alongside Magdalene College. Quayside is on the right, after the bridge



The Anglo-Saxon waterway network of the Fens
Michael Chisholm drawn by Philip Stickler

Don Deller Race 2026

Blues Point Yacht Club Don Deller Race 2026

The Blues Point Yacht Club holds a race from Sydney Harbour to inside Pittwater at Palm Beach every year in February.

It is usually a lovely sail up the coast in a good northeaster.

We stay at the Royal Motor Yacht Club on the Saturday night and have a combined dinner with all the crews and they present the prizes for the winning boats. The next day (Sunday) we get ourselves back into sailing mode and sail back to Sydney, usually, of course, into a southerly.

This year competing yachts from the Amateurs were *Delinquent*, *Lunacy, Lonely, Samphire, Double Dutch* and *Shambles*.

Shambles has managed to win the race the last two years. Equal first with Carl Braden on Blue Sky last year, so the competition is very good.

Catherine and myself wanted to go along to the Blues Point prize giving in July this year, as Carl and Bill Steenson, Commodore and Vice Commodore have come along to our prize giving previously.

We packed up quickly after our Saturday race and got over to the Blues Point Pub just in time to be presented with the trophy for the Don Deller race. A very impressive trophy it is, with a silver figure of a yacht on a wooden plinth.

Carl and Bill made us very welcome, so we enjoyed a few drinks with the Blues Point mob for the rest of the afternoon.

Blue Point sails with the Mixed Fleet as part of the "Sheep Stations Series". You may have met some of them at the SASC Prize Giving. If you've not yet seen the trophy, you don't know what you are missing! They are a friendly club with similar boats to the Cruiser Racer fleet, so it's a nice synergy sharing their offshore race as they join us for Sheep Station Series.

If you have Cat 4 or 5, I recommend coming along for a great weekend of sailing and friendship in February next year.

Herschel Smith

Don Deller presentation 2026 1st Place Shambles Photo: Catherine Baker

Lion Island Race - beware the Bogong moths!

Spring brings the beginning of the sailing season and 5 September was the offshore Lion Island race - a race from Watson's Bay, up to a buoy off Lion island. Approximately 40nm distance.

The forecast strong wind warning was downgraded the morning of the race and it looked like we'd have good conditions, with a top temperature forecast of just over 30 degrees - early summer!

16 boats comprising 3 divisions were entered and sailed out of the harbour on a good northerly breeze around the 15kt mark. Hardly any swell as the fleet headed north - lovely. The Division 1 boats flew up and back in the lovely conditions with all of them completing the race just before 3pm. *'Victoire'* looked impressive with their huge yellow spinnaker flying past us on their way back south as we worked out way north on *Shambles*.

We rounded the top mark after about 4 hours of working to the mark, had a quick bite to eat, then raised our Kawasaki green spinnaker for an exhilarating run back to the harbour. The wind was mostly north, with a bit of warm westerly breeze which brought a swam of Bogong moths. They were everywhere, all over the boat, sails and us! Somewhere around Warriewood we were met with a 25kt westerly gust which knocked us down, caused water to wash into the cockpit and put the spinnaker in the water. We eventually retrieved the spinnaker, then put two reefs in and the trusty no. 4 heady to continue our way back with the 25+ kt breeze.

Around Curl Curl / Manly, the breeze died out to around 10kt, so we had to shake out the reefs to continue on our way. We made it to the heads around 4.20pm and tacked to make our way back into the harbour. Then we were hit with a gust, actually it was a squall that knocked us down. The wind whipped up misty salt spray and hammered into us, leaving streaks on the water (looked like it was close to 60kt conditions) and making it near impossible to hear our crew mates as we scrambled to get the sails down. We released the halyards and had two crew at the mast trying desperately to get the main down. They dragged and clung and eventually managed to get the power out of the main. Getting the heady down was a real struggle too. The wind kept the sail whipping so hard and fast it was nearly impossible to get it down. The proximity of the rocks at north head increased the adrenaline levels and hank by hank, it was slowly retrieved. *Colleen III* was a few hundred metres away with their heady blown out of the track and being flung about in the wind. A huge cruise ship was coming out of the heads, seemingly oblivious to the wind. Herschel managed to get us out back out of the heads and into the shelter of north head where we assessed the situation on the boat and waited for the squall to abate. During the melee the headsail sheet went under the boat, still with the knot in the end of it attached in the block on deck and when Herschel went to start the engine, it caught around the prop! Nic managed to pull it free and we decided to call it a day and motor back into the harbour.

Colleen III kept sailing just under main and were the one and only boat to finish from division 2. Good on them! Amazing! The account for Division 2 was 1 finisher and 7 retired. The rest of the fleet was around Manly when they were knocked down by the squall. *'Lonely'* reported their mast top touched the water and they had a very busy 15 minutes dealing with the situation and reducing sails etc. Once they settled things down, Sean noticed that the retrieval device was no longer in its place in the pushpit. It had been secured reasonably well, but obviously not well enough. He wondered whether it would one day arrive in New Zealand. He was amazed to be contacted by a concerned Central Coast beach walker who found his retrieval device washed up on Birdie Beach a couple of days later! *Lonely* ended up towing *Paper Moon* back into the harbour. *Paper Moon* had not been in the race but was out doing their own thing in the weather. Good on you Sean and Lonely crew!

Mike on the start boat was very concerned for the fleet as they'd seen over 50kt on the instruments on *Kareela*. They stayed in place to check for all the boats to arrive and Chris Manion arranged for the tender driver to work overtime also checking everyone arrived safely and towed *Paper Moon* onto the pontoon. All the fleet were accounted for with varying degrees of repairs to be made to sails etc.

On the way past Bradleys Head, we noticed the remnants of an outdoor wedding service that had been abandoned during the squall. Hope their married life together is better than their actual wedding day!

And Freddy the Fireman couldn't sail with us that day. He was dealing with rescuing people from a brand new Tesla car from under fallen trees! (see picture)

We found later that Seabreeze had recorded 55kt in the harbour during the squall. What a day!

Catherine Baker

Crew of *Shambles* looking comfortable Photo: Catherine Baker

Victoire passing *Shambles* on her way back to Sydney Harbour Photo: Catherine Baker

Shambles under spinnaker before first knockdown Photo: Catherine Baker

On the water

Vanity leading *Hotspur* in the Opening Regatta Photo: Geraldine Wilkes

Start of the Cavalier 28 Division Opening Regatta Photo: Geraldine Wilkes

Flying the kite on *Clewless* Photo: Geraldine Wilkes

Division 1 and 2 Sunday fleets sailing abreast from Beashel to N3 Race 1 Photo: Philip Brown

Delinquent Photo: Geraldine Wilkes

Cool Runnings in the Super 30 Division Photo: Geraldine Wilkes

Anitra V and *Delinquent* Classic Division Photo: Geraldine Wilkes

Ping starting the Bob Brown Race. Photo: David Pryke

SASC Classroom Skills Development Series

Sail Our Way" Talks Led by Vanessa Dudley, SASC member

Earlier this year Leone Lorrimer successfully applied for a small grant from Australian Sailing to hold a series of female-led classroom theory sessions. They were designed to be held over the winter, targeting women who are wanting to develop their sailing skills, knowledge and build confidence.

Leone approached SASC Member and Senior Keelboat Instructor Vanessa Dudley, who, with an extensive list of sailing achievements and down to earth humble approach, serves as a fantastic inspiration and role model to other women in sailing.

Vanessa developed the content and three talks were held on evenings in September.

Talk 1 – All In focused on the often overlooked basics of how to be a good crew member. This was extremely well received by relative newcomers and a good reminder for those more experienced, including a few male skippers who gave positive feedback. With Vanessa's trademark humour, the key takeaways were qualified the following week with a "do as I say, not as I do" reflection.

Talk 2 – Fast Times was a more technical look at maximising boat speed and race performance by achieving and maintaining balance between the helm, sail trim and weight distribution. The focus was on simple practical adjustments rather than complex aerodynamics. The technical details were interspersed with some humous anecdotes which kept the audience both engaged and entertained. Sail shapes were introduced and an emphasis also given to the important elements of experience, practice and 'developing feel'. Vanessa quoted Michael Blackburn "You go upwind like a tiger and downwind like an eagle".

Talk 3 – Start to Finish covered practical race preparation and decision making from pre-start to mark rounding emphasising how to plan strategy (big picture) versus execute tactics (boat to boat), using wind, tide and local knowledge to optimise starts and legs. Key takeaways – do not let tactics override strategy, prepare beforehand and the importance of knowing rules and making confident calls early.

Each presentation was followed by an interactive Q & A, where Vanessa was joined by female SASC boat owners who regularly race, Tracy Richardson (Artemis) and Kylie Twible (Yvonne). The talks were extremely well attended with a full house registered for all three. Inclement weather on the first and last evening resulted in a few no shows although this did little to dent the enthusiasm of those who did venture along.

Water Women's Strategy

The Water Women held a strategy day in May, which identified skills and training development as a key priority for the female members and women who regularly sail at SASC.

We have been developing a complementary classroom and on-water program of activities to promote sailing participation, skills development and confidence. The program incorporates participation in other clubs' dedicated women's development events such as the Sydney Harbour Women's Keelboat Series, LOTS Ladies of the Sea Coaching Regatta and RSYS Tuesday Ladies Twilights. We are also piloting non-racing training sessions, run on an ad hoc volunteer basis.

Through increasing the visibility and awareness of female sailing opportunities, we aim to attract new members and promote a deeper pool of skilled crew, both male and female, for the benefit of everyone. Many of the new membership applications approved this month have arisen directly from or been involved in these WW initiatives.

Based on feedback from the participants, we will continue to build a program of practical activities to follow on from what has been an extremely well received talk series.

Thank you

Finally, we'd like to extend a warm thank you to Vanessa, Kylie and Tracy for all the work that went into making it such an inspiring and informative talk series. Also, to David Pryke for his support with RevSport, tech and OOD, Leone for securing the grant and everyone who stepped up to help during the talks including Tish, Ines, Amanda and Maz.

Feedback Received

It has been the most inspirational and informative event ever for me. You are incredible water women. Thank you for having me among you. – Tamara T

Sending my appreciation too. Not only was it informative and inspiring to hear from Vanessa but Kylie's story from crew to boat owner then helm was too and I found Tracy's personal reflections and expectations of crew beneficial and motivating. Thanks to everyone involved. – Victoria L

Thanks Vanessa, Kylie and Tracy and everyone involved in putting this awesome classroom series together. – Sarah D

Thank you all-huge effort and a great representation that you all love sailing! Vanessa was just perfect! It was also lovely to mingle. Thank you – Kim D

Vanessa Dudley presenting Photo: Ines Benavente Molina

Meet the new Board Members

Declan Brennan - Captain

Dennis O'Donohue - Director

Letitia (Tish) van der Walt – Director

Commodore: Chris Manion, *Samphire*

Vice Commodore: Alice Murphy, *Bordeaux*

Rear Commodore: Leone Lorrimer, *finesse*

Club Captain: Declan Brennan,

Honorary Treasurer: John Brennan, *Dancing with the Wind*

Honorary Secretary: Leone Lorrimer, *finesse*

Directors: Sean Kelly, Letitia (Tish) van der Walt, Maz Kivi, Dennis O'Donohue, Phil Tanner, Peter Scott

New Members

We welcome the following new members:

Full Member
Christopher Antico
Anthony Coleman
Richard Holland
Thomas Isbell
Andrew Chaffer
Graham Chaffey
Darren Livings
James Nixon

Crew
Anthemis Deschamps
Peter Davison
Emese Stoker
Aurore Dupuis
Sebastian Lacombe

Associate
Mathew Hudson
Dean McDonald

Youth Member
Cameron Haigh

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The next SASC News will be the December 2026 edition. Contributions from members, which are always welcome, should be sent to news@sasc.com.au by 29 November, 2026.

Articles and reports published in the SASC News reflect the views of the individuals who prepared them and unless indicated expressly in the text, do not necessarily represent the views of the Club. The Club, its officers and members make no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, completeness or correctness of information in articles or reports and accept no responsibility for any loss, damage or other liability arising from any use of this publication or the information which it contains.

WEDNESDAY TENDER SERVICE

The tender service will operate from 1000 to 1600 hours.

TENDER HOURS

Members are reminded that the normal hours of operation of the Club's tenders are:

Friday Twilight Races 1600 to 2100 hours.
Saturday/Sunday to Saturday/Sunday & Public Holidays 0900–1800 hours

1st Place Lion Island Race Division 2 *Colleen III* Photo: Mike Warner