



SASC NEWS

The Newsletter of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club



February 2001

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Cover:

Mark Twain and Polaris of Belmont preparing to depart for the start of the 2000 Sydney to Hobart race.

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COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 01

SATURDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2001

Sixteenth point score race for Cavalier 28 Division, Classic Division and Divisions 1 and 2. Thirteenth point score race for OK dinghies.

SUNDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2001

Cavalier 28 NSW State Championships. Eighth point score race for Metre Division and Division 4.

SATURDAY 3 MARCH 2001

Seventeenth point score race for Cavalier 28 Division, Classic Division and Divisions 1 and 2. Fourteenth point score race for OK dinghies and seventh race in Division 1 and 2 short series.

SUNDAY 4 MARCH 2001

Daydream Shield. OK Dinghies Sydney Harbour Championships, Heats 2 and 3.

SATURDAY 10 MARCH 2001

Eighteenth point score race for Cavalier 28 Division, Classic Division and Divisions 1 and 2. Seventh race in the Cavalier 28 short series. Fifteenth point score race for OK dinghies.

SUNDAY 11 MARCH 2001

Ninth point score race for metre Division and Division 4. Sixth point score race for Division 6, and fourth point score race for Gaffers.

SATURDAY 24 MARCH 2001

Twentieth point score race of Cavalier 28 Division, Classic Division and Divisions 1 and 2. Seventeenth point score race for OK Dinghies. Eighth race in the Cavalier 28, Division 1 and Division 2 short series.

SUNDAY 25 MARCH 2001

Tenth point score race for Metre Division and Division 4. Sixth point score race for Division 6.

SATURDAY 31 MARCH 2001

Twenty-first point score race for Cavalier 28 Division, Classic Division and Division 1 and 2. Eighteenth point score race for OK Dinghies.

SATURDAY 7 APRIL 2001

Last point score race for Cavalier 28 Division, Classic Division, Divisions 1 and 2 and OK Dinghies.

SUNDAY 8 APRIL 2001

Last point score race for Metre Division and Division 4.

**NEED TO
GET
ASHORE?**

**Call Robbie
on
0418 678 690**

Friday 1700-2100
(during Twilights)
Sat: 0900-1800
Sun: 0900-1700



SIGNALS FROM THE COMMODORE

The festive season is now behind us and I trust all members had an enjoyable and relaxing time.

During the holiday season, the Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championship 2000 was held on Sydney Harbour and it is pleasing to note that a number of SASC members were heavily involved. Fred Bevis was the Treasurer for the event with a budget of over \$600,000 and Charles Maclurcan was the Race Officer on course area A. A team from RSYS including John Jeremy, David Willis and myself assisted him. The series was conducted between 28 December and 6 January and was very successful.

On behalf of all members I would like to congratulate Charles Maclurcan for his award from the NSW Sports Federation as Official of the Year for 2000. The award recognises Charles' exceptional work in sailing race management including assembling and training a large team of volunteers for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, some of whom were also involved in the ISAF World Championships. The award is richly deserved.

Our summer season is now in full swing with good fleets competing on Friday nights, Saturdays and Tuesday nights. The Sunday fleet is substantially smaller than past years and thought will need to be given to its continuation.

One matter that continues to cause concern is the continued use of the *Nancy K* by unauthorised members. May I remind all members that you are required to use dinghies when there is no regular tender service available. It is not acceptable to see *Nancy K* being used at all hours of the day and night by members. The boat had been organised to be available in an emergency but it appears that this may have to be changed and the boat locked in some way.

Another matter that causes concern is the use of contractors on our slipway.

The Board has resolved that unless a contractor has the correct insurance (including Third Party) he will not be allowed to work. This is not only a rule from the Board, it is also a condition of our insurance policy. The slipway is a dangerous place and should a contractor cause an injury to a third party or cause damage to another's property, it is important that he be insured. Our members are covered by our insurance whilst working on their own boats, but their contractors are not.

Tony Clarkson



On 6 February, at a dinner at the Sydney Superdome at Homebush, Charles Maclurcan was presented with the NSW Sports Federation award of Official of the Year for 2000.

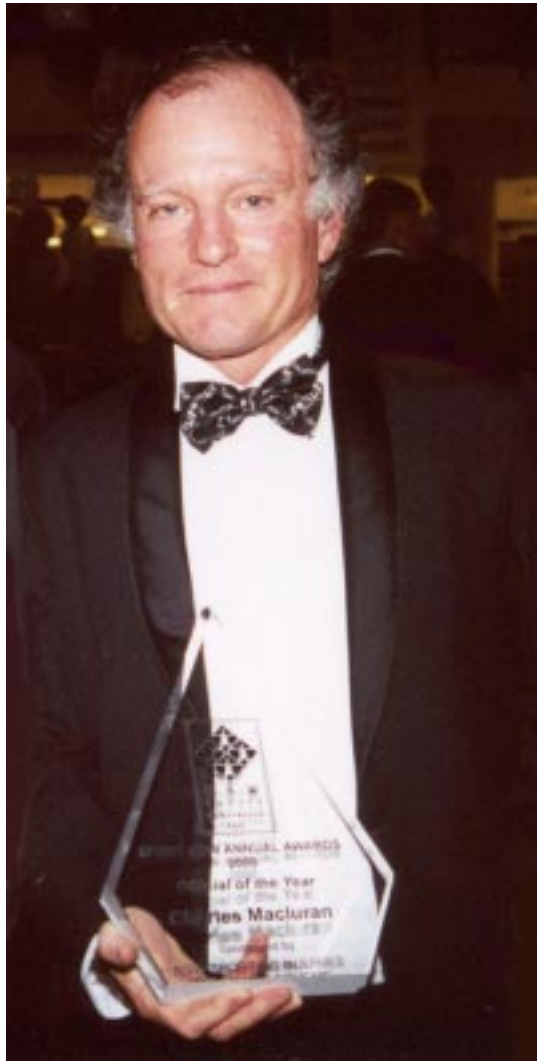
The NSW Sports Federation was established in 1991 by NSW State sporting organisations for the development and representation of NSW sport. The Federation aims to be a united voice for sport and to raise and respond to issues that impact on sport. It represents the majority of State sporting organisations including Olympic and non-Olympic, Commonwealth Games and high profile and minority sporting organisations.

In 1994 the Federation inaugurated the NSW Sports Awards to provide the opportunity to recognise the efforts and successes of NSW athletes, administrators, coaches and officials. The awards for 2000 in particular recalled the successes of the Olympic and Paralympic year.

The award of Official of the Year is made to an individual who has achieved outstanding performance in an international and/or national and/or state level. The award to Charles Maclurcan recognises his efforts and achievements in sailing race management over many years and in particular his role in race management during the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Charles was the Deputy Race Officer on Course Area B during the Olympics and Principal Race Officer during the Paralympics.

At the dinner on 6 February Charles was supported by 42 relatives, friends and members of his Olympic race management team. They included Ross Wilson from the Black Rock Yacht Club in Victoria who was the Course Area B Principal Race Officer during the Olympics and deputy to Charles during the Paralympics.

Charles Maclurcan with his award.



OFFSHORE ACTION

Congratulations to John Quinn and his crew for their excellent results in last year's Sydney to Hobart race. They won IRC Division 2, and came second to *Nicorette* on IRC overall. *Nicorette's* corrected time was 4 days 03:15:26 and *Polaris* finished with a corrected time of 4 days 05:14:19. Their corrected speeds were 6.35 kn and 6.23 kn respectively.

Polaris of Belmont is a Cole 43 and has proved once again that a well-sailed conventional yacht can do very well on handicap against the modern light-weight flyers.

Xena sailing during the Australia Day Regatta.



Despite equipment problems that forced Sean Langman's 60 foot *Xena* out of the Hobart, the boat and crew were ready for a start in the Strathfield Ptiiwater to Coffs Harbour Race early in the New Year.

Xena took line honours, crossing the line at Coffs Harbour 21 hours, 26 minutes and 24 seconds. The weather for the race was a challenge for many, with winds from the north east at up to 30 knots and seas of 3 metres. *Xena* completed the race without ever using a spinnaker, and only changed sails once when the wind dropped as they were approaching Coffs Harbour.

SOME SYDNEY HOBART MOMENTS

FEBRUARY 01

While Polaris of Belmont brought honour to the SASC with her outstanding performance in the 2000 Sydney-Hobart, Mark Twain headed towards Constitution Dock for a record 23rd time. David Salter recalls some moments from their long and often difficult trip South.

by
David Salter

‘Has anyone seen the jib sheets?’ It’s not the kind of question you expect to be asked with just over two hours to go before the start of a 630 n mile ocean race. Jib sheets tend to come in, well, rather handy for these sort of things.

‘Slammer’ and Reto searched *Mark Twain* from stem to stem as we lay alongside the SASC pontoon on Boxing Day morning, but to no avail. It gradually dawned on us that the mongrels who’d broken in and stolen the strobes and most of the tools a week earlier had also helped themselves to the sheets. Our normally cheerful skipper, Hugh O’Neil, tugged at his jaw in anguish and wondered out loud what we might do.

Which is where that wonderful, selfless mateship of the Amateurs stepped in. Trevor Cosh and Jim Lawler from *Azzurro* happened to be loitering nearby waiting for a ride from the tender. Entirely without prompting they offered to lend us their own, near-new sheets. Great! There was a long moment of anxiety while we wondered whether *Azzurro’s* stout lines would run through our turning blocks but within minutes we were rigged and ready. Eight worried crew members murmured their heartfelt thanks — and let out a collective sigh of relief.

All smiles for the skipper, Hugh O’Neill.



Meanwhile our unflappable guesser, Chris Oh, was having his patience severely tested by the onboard GPS. It seemed decidedly reluctant to display the programmed way-points for the trip. As the usual last-minute flurry of below-decks activity whirled around him, Chris was carefully — and manually — re-entering the coordinates from his own backup, hand-held GPS. Watching this meticulous ritual didn't exactly boost crew confidence in our navigational prospects.

Three hours later, with South Head well behind us and *Twain* bowling along under a three-quarter kite, Chris surfaced to make a brief announcement. 'Bad news, guys. Looks like the GPS is stuffed.' After two protracted attempts he'd been unable to get 'The Team from Micrologic' to pull down enough satellite reference to even give us a position. It looked like we'd be finding our way to Hobart courtesy of a device the size of a mobile phone.

But the engineering soul of Rear Commodore Oh still craved an explanation. He began a casual cross-examination of those who may have had anything to do with the onboard GPS over the past few weeks. Gradually it emerged that in converting *Twain* to the newly-mandated gel batteries a month earlier, the power to the navigation system may have been shut off in a manner not exactly consistent with the manual. No names no pack drill, but Chris deduced that the internal battery might then have worn itself out just trying to keep the whole system alive.

So, could the apparently dead Micrologic just need some quiet time to recover from the traumas of disconnection? Absolutely. A full 30 hours later — having taken a very long run-up — the LCD screen finally flickered back into life. And so it Came to Pass that on the Second Day the Magic Numbers appeared again on The Face of the GPS, and The Guesser saw that All was Good.

Mark Twain
departing.



It's not unreasonable to wonder what a halyard sheave is doing rolling around the cockpit floor during an ocean race. Nor did we require the forensic powers of Sherlock Holmes to figure that it must have come loose from the masthead and somehow slithered down the main. The big questions were why, and how much trouble could we now be in 50 feet above the deck?

This was only a day into the race and meant our starboard headsail halyard was, to use the technical term, cactus. Considering ourselves lucky to at least have the sheave, we ran a mouse line (more in hope than anger) and wondered what else might go wrong.

The answer came almost immediately, announced by a mighty 'sproinng' from up front. A fitting securing our inner forestay had parted leaving the rig dangerously weak for the coming rigours of Bass Strait. Steve Grellis further enhanced his reputation as our jury-rig wizard by quickly constructing a temporary baby stay from spare bits and pieces. With luck it might stop the mast inverting under all but the most extreme loads.

* * * * *

'The Paddock' was being its usual unpleasant self. After more than 12 hours punching into a stiffening Bass Strait southerly we'd just about exhausted *Mark Twain's* repertoire of reefing and headsail permutations. Now, at 0300 and with the B&G beginning to show regular gusts of 40 knots, the skipper prudently called for the storm jib.

Tethered to a strongpoint in the cockpit I was on my feet trying to haul the sail bag on deck through the companionway. At the exact apex of my heave a wave picked us up, lifted me clean off my feet and hurled my startled body (still clutching the sail) into the lee fence. These things happen. My shoulder smashed into a stanchion as I felt the runner winch crunch into my left thigh and a sudden pain in my right hand where I'd tried to break the fall.

Trish Osborne's sympathetic voice was in my ear within seconds. 'David! David! Tell us what you've done! Are you all right? Speak to us!' I was too shaken or shocked to respond to her concern. But a loud cry from Chris Oh at the mast soon wrenched me back to reality. 'Whatever you do, don't drop that f g jib!'

I didn't. A minute or two later I was sprawled amongst the sails on the cabin sole trying to recover my breath, dreaming of an ice-cold Victor Bravo and pondering the eternal differences between the sexes. Women are indeed from Venus and men are definitely from Mars - even at 40°S.

* * * * *

Did someone shoot an albatross? After two solid days of hard slog we

were (at last!) south of Cape Barren but still a good many miles out to sea, the preferred tactical position. Time for our next disaster. Right on cue the port headsail halyard parted. Clearly we now had major problems upstairs.

The wire failed a foot back from the swage, indicating that the sheave was most probably jammed so the halyard had simply chewed through itself as it worked back and forth over thousands of waves. Yet another mouse line was run and after a serious Council of War *Mark Twain's* tribal elders decided we should bear away for the Tasmanian coast and find a sheltered spot to make repairs.

What followed provided one of those enduring memories that make the sport of ocean racing unique. We reached the lee of Skeleton Bay just before dawn and hardly a word passed between us as the pick went over the side. Everyone seemed to know instinctively what to do — the entire crew took up their tasks with a minimum of discussion. People went up the mast and cobbled together a makeshift pin and sheave system. New loops were swaged and the repaired halyards moused back into position. A more solid alternative to the broken baby stay was constructed as a steady stream of bacon & egg sandwiches came up from the galley. Just 45 minutes after our arrival in Skeleton Bay the anchor was back on deck and we'd rejoined the race. A pit-stop to remember.

It's one of the immutable laws of nature that the Derwent shuts down at 2200. Between then and the following morning the river is like a sheet of black glass. We got to the Iron Pot around 2130. You can guess the rest.

After more than five days of predominantly heavy wind *Mark Twain* was now confronted by a dead drift for the last few miles. Step forward the Heroine of the Hour, Ms Melanie Godfrey! For the next seven hours she took a virtually unbroken trick at the helm in the faintest and most frustrating conditions, gently coaxing boat speed out of the old one-tonner and her crew.

Within clear sight of Tasman Bridge (and tantalising earshot of the New Year's Eve festivities we were missing ashore), Mel called a long succession of effective sail and trim changes. Maintaining a feather-light touch on the wheel she managed to keep finding the tiniest cat's paws in the dark as we tacked in painful slow motion up the Derwent.

It was a remarkable feat of concentration and sheer sailing skill. Finally, approaching the line off Battery Point, she insisted on the tradition that the skipper should have the honour of being at the helm for the finish. But Hughie, our owner/driver and a 19-time Hobart veteran, would have none of it. 'No, Mel. You got us here, you take her over'. And so said all of us.

Dear John,

Your article in the December *SASC NEWS* about the late Harold Halvorsen awakened in me a long association with the Halvorsen name.

It all began in the closing stages of World War II. As a member of the RAAF Marine Section I was posted to Rathmines. Here every effort was made to teach the basics of seamanship, boat handling, navigation and all those other subjects that only the RAAF could dream up.

We had some twenty different types of craft, all with special uses and as in most organisations one had to start on the bottom rung of the ladder.

The bottom rung covered 16 foot open single engine work boats, 22 foot work boats, even pulling dinghies and sailing dinghies. However none could compare with the 38 foot craft., which the late Harold Halvorsen designed. It was in RAAF parlance an *08 CLASS CRASH BOAT*.

Once in charge you had climbed the ladder. Subsequent charges such as bomb scows, torpedo recovery vessels, refuelling barges etc. did not compare.

Following discharge and return to civvy life the Halvorsen name persisted. At that stage construction of a charter fleet of cruisers had commenced. I chartered each of the first four 25 foot cruisers in turn. They carried the imaginative names of LHA, LHB, LHC and LHD.

Somewhat later, along with a friend recently discharged from the RAN, I was commissioned to sail a VS from the Spit to Bush's shed in Rushcutters Bay. It was midwinter and a strong cold southerly was blowing. I elected to go about near South Reef. The lower gudgeon let go and we swam for an eternity.

The name Halvorsen appeared in the form of *Silver Cloud*. We were taken aboard and along with the VS deposited on the beach at Balmoral together with our tram fare, a crisp Ten Pound note, courtesy of the owner.

More recently I was again aboard *Silver Cloud* at a Wooden Boat Show and read a recently restored plaque. It details the part she played on the night Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour during the War.

Finally, and to complete the circle, I was present on our yacht *Nirvana II* in Cowan Creek on 9 April 2000. We followed the 90 Halvorsen Vessels assembled for the occasion. There in the middle of the fleet, after some 55 years afloat, were two *08 CLASS CRASH BOATS!*

Brian Woods

AUSTRALIA DAY REGATTA

by
Peter Campbell

Sydney sailors, joined by crews from Sweden, Denmark and New Zealand, celebrated Australia Day 2001 and the Centenary of Federation on 26 January, when an appropriate fleet of 101 yachts contested the 165th Australia Day Regatta on the Harbour.

Offshore, a further 53 ocean racing yachts sailed in the traditional race to Botany Bay and return while hundreds more dinghies, skiffs and catamarans contested regattas organised under auspices of the 165th Australia Day Regatta at other coastal waterways in New South Wales.

The winners and placegetters will receive a specially struck Australia Day Regatta and Centenary of Federation Medallion, based on a gold medal won in the 1901 Federation Regatta by James MacIntosh, a member of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club, sailing the first *Sainora*.

Among those to win a medallion is MacIntosh's great grandson, SASC member Rob Evans, who 100 years later took line honours and finished second on corrected time with *Celeste* in the Classic Yachts spinnaker division of the 165th Australia Day Regatta. *[All results in this article are provisional due to a number of protests — Ed.]*

Ferries in the
ferry race
charging down
the harbour on
Australia Day.

The original gold medal, presented to the SASC by Rob Evans in 1997, has been re-dedicated as a perpetual trophy for a Gaff Rig or Classic division race in the Australia Day Regatta as the Centenary of Federation Trophy (Sainora Medal).



For the 2001 Regatta, the gold medal has been awarded to the winner of the Gaff Rig division, *Sylvia*, a replica of an historic Queenscliff 'couta boat owned and skippered by Sydney yachtsman Phillip Kinsella.

Yachts competing in the 165th Australia Day Regatta on Sydney Harbour ranged from the newest Olympic class, the Yngling, through Classic and Gaff Rig yachts, Etchells and Dragons to the Danish Volvo 60, *Nokia*, the record-slashing line honours winner of the 1999 Telstra Sydney to Hobart Race.

Offshore, the 53-boat fleet included the line honours and overall handicap winners of the recent 2000 Telstra Sydney to Hobart, the 80-footer *Nicorette* from Sweden and the Adelaide-owned *SAP Ausmaid*.

Neither won this race, sailed over a 25 nautical mile offshore course in light winds, line honours going to the 80-footer *Shockwave*, the odds-on line honours favourite which retired from the Sydney to Hobart soon after entering a gale-swept Bass Strait.

Shockwave, skippered by Sydney-based New Zealand yachtsman Neville Crichton, also won IRC division 1 on corrected time, while IMS division 1 went to *True North*, a Beneteau 40.7 owned by Howard and Susan Piggott.

On the Harbour, *Nokia* took line honours in Division 1, but placed last on corrected time, the winner being *Akela*, a Jutson-designed specialist harbour racer helmed by Steve Sweeney.



The Centenary of Federation Trophy (Sainora Medal).

The Australia Day Regatta start was busy for competitors and starters.



SASC NEWS

Celeste proudly flying the SASC ensign on Australia Day.



The Australia Day Regatta, with many crews comprising family and friends, includes non-spinnaker divisions and the Classic Yachts non-spinnaker division saw three famous former ocean racing yachts fight out the finish.

Fidelis, Nigel Stoke's former New Zealand 66-footer that took line honours in the 1966 Sydney to Hobart, finished first from David Champtaloup's *Caprice of Huon*, a member of the Australian team which won the Admiral's Cup in England in 1967, and Ken Pryor's *Struen Marie*, overall winner of the 1951 Sydney to Hobart.

On corrected time the winner was the classic 7-metre class boat, *Antara*, skippered by Ian Kortlang, with *Caprice of Huon* second and *Struen Marie* third.

Guests aboard the Regatta flagship, HMAS *Kanimbla*, included three of the four sailing gold medallists at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, Jenny Armstrong and Belinda Stowell (470 women) and Mark Turnbull who with Tom King won the 470 men.

The Olympic gold medallists had that morning been named in the Australia Day Honours list as receiving the OAM (Order of Australia Medal) for their performances.

For Sale

Autohelm ST 3000 Autopilot

Suitable for boats with wheel steering, up to 7 tonnes.

This unit is in very good condition and has had only eight weeks use during a solo trip to the Whitsundays in 1997.

All parts as well as additional accessories are included.

Price — \$700

Please contact Richard Falk
Telephone (02) 9569 7849

People sometimes ask me why I persist with gaff rig in my late father's boat *Ranger*. It was often said that he was one-eyed about the rig but he said the best yacht he ever skippered was the bermudan 9 metre *Josephine*. He thought the bermudan rig was excellent in suitable boats.

by
Bill Gale

Here are some of the advantages of the gaff rig:

1. The short mast enables a boat to pass under low bridges. The gaff can be laid back to horizontal if under sail.
2. If the peak halyard fall is taken back to the cockpit sail shape can be easily altered by adjusting the gaff angle. If a sudden squall occurs the sail can be scandalised in no time.
3. Working to windward the gaff will pulse to leeward and back in response to a puff or a sharp sea taking the strain off the rig and the boat.
4. Because of this ability to pulse, there is much less strain on the leech and therefore the sail has longer life than a bermudan main, important for cruising sailors.
5. Obviously there is more area in a four-sided main to drive a heavy boat.
6. Because of the low centre of effort a gaffer can carry full sail in a strong wind than a bermudan rig of similar area, which often has insufficient drive to punch through a sea as efficiently.
7. Gaff rig is faster with eased sheets under plain sail, and important factor for long-range cruising. You can also run by-the-lee with greater safety.
8. A properly rigged fat yacht will go to windward just as high and as fast as a bermudan-rigged sister in most wind strengths and faster in a blow.
9. In a gale of a wind a reefed gaffer lowers the height of the rig without having a length of naked mast, thus reducing windage and decreasing the heeling moment.
10. A gaffer is steadier at anchor because of the shorter mast.
11. If a mast breaks it is much easier to get the gear on deck. It can be difficult at times with a bermudan rig.
12. Many old blokes think gaff rig looks better!

These advantages mainly apply to heavy, fat cruising boats.

DIVISION 1 PROGRESS

As reported in the last issue Division One is up and running. The 16 December race saw eight starters, which is very encouraging. It's great to see Peter Pangas taking out Kevin Rice's *Passepartout*. Ivan Resnekov in *Farr Horizons* has also been giving us a hurry-up.

by
Peter
McCorquodale

During the latter part of last year we saw great support from some new crewmembers. In particular Gareth Thomas deserves our thanks for bringing most of his office out, allowing three yachts to start before Christmas. If there is anyone you know, including yourselves, who would like to get out racing in Division One, please let me know (0414 344 914). *The Amateurs*, *Chilly Bin*, and others have been short of crew.

Now that the Sydney to Hobart, and Coffs races are completed, we look forward to the participation of some of our successful ocean racing yachts. What better way to keep the crew skills up to scratch?

We also look forward to seeing new member Phil Kiely out with his new Swan 40, *Fontana*, in the Summer Series. Please let me know of anyone else out there with a suitable yacht who is looking for some competitive racing.

Peter Chapman with *Spectre* has taken out the Spring Pointscore, with Peter Horn in *Mezzaluna* close behind. The summer series is shaping up to be even better, with ten entries for the Short series.

MOSMAN BOATSHED CLEAN UP

A major clean up is planned for Sunday 11 March 2001 at the Mosman Boatshed (formerly the Mosman Amateur Sailing Club).

Any member who has gear in the boatshed that is unidentified should correctly mark it with their name or it may disappear!

Volunteers to help with the clean up are also required
— all welcome!



Nothing to do with me!

When the Sydney to Hobart race set off last year, recent snow in Tasmania warned competitors that they could be heading off into real ‘brass monkey’ weather. Now most people think that the origin of the frequently used expression to describe really cold weather is related to some connection (or lack of it) between round objects and cast metal primates. That is wrong, it has nothing to do with primates, whatever the species.

In the days of muzzle loaded cannons in ships, it was wise to have a ready use stock of ammunition near the guns, particularly round shot which was heavy and took time and effort to bring on deck. The challenge was to store the cannon balls in a way that they could be of instant use when needed, yet not roll around the gun deck. The solution was to stack them up in a square-based pyramid next to the gun. The top level of the stack had one ball, the next level down had four, the next had nine, the next had sixteen, and so on.

The only real problem was how to keep the bottom level from sliding out from under the weight of the higher levels. This was done by stacking the balls on a brass plate (known as a ‘brass monkey’) with one rounded indentation for each cannon ball in the bottom layer.

Brass was used because the cannon balls wouldn’t rust to the ‘brass monkey’, but could rust to an iron one. When temperature falls, brass contracts faster than iron. As it got cold, the indentations in the brass monkey would change in size at a different rate to the iron cannon balls they were holding. If the temperature got cold enough, the bottom layer would pop out of the indentations spilling the entire pyramid over the deck. Thus it was, quite literally, ‘cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.’

[I know there are other alleged origins — no correspondence will be entered into! — Ed.]

GENERAL MEETING

A general meeting of members will be held at the Club
on Wednesday 21 March 2001 at 2000.

After the meeting Nick Cassim will speak on *The Early History of Sailing*, a subject he has researched extensively.

by
Guy Irwin

The Division 2 Spring 2000 racing season finished with a party at the club after the last race - Robin Mitchell (a crewmember from *Riff Raff*) eloquently described the scene: 'The smell of sizzling sausages, the hiss of the keg, the plop of the cask and the crunch of the salads, was the scene back at the Amateurs that welcomed the tired, but exuberant crews after a wonderful race'.

'Well Done' to the Committee for organising such a celebration and for the innovative prizes of jugs and bottles of rum.

Our Commodore, Tony Clarkson said that such occasions should be perpetuated, and he would ensure a party is organised for future end-of-season race days.

Final results on handicap for the Spring series saw - *The Entertainer* first, *Clewless* second and *Impala* in third place. Congratulations to those crews and all the boats that competed.

The first race of the Summer commenced on Saturday 13 January. A healthy southerly breeze gusting to 25 knots greeted a fleet of 14 boats. Three boats in particular revelled in the conditions and included *Bandersnatch* finding form to take out first place on handicap, followed by *Impala*, then *Corrina* in third place. Frank Heatherton on *Bandersnatch* has really hit a purple patch; he also won the Friday night twilight race.

Unfortunately out of the 14 starters only 12 boats finished the race. Mishaps occurring to *Runamuk* who lost the top of their mast, and *Lap of the Gods*, who shredded their mainsail. Ian Poole (*Lap of the Gods*) said it was time he had a new mainsail so this was the excuse he needed. A similar comment came from Ian Hamilton (*Runamuk*). Ian said that he needed a new mast, but I am not so sure he wished to achieve this end in the manner the incident occurred. Also there were confusing reports on how Ian actually lost the top of the mast. I don't know if it was related, but it was noticed that the two black cones from the top of the eastern cardinal mark on Shark Island were gone. They were later reported seen floating down the harbour in the current.

Notably missing from the starting line were our RANSA entrants, they were busily contesting their own annual Admirals Trophy, The David Martin Memorial Race.

From reports I received, *Hoo Ha* thought they were leading the fleet to the second mark. Then skipper Peter Howes noticed that he was the only boat going to this particular mark. They really make those courses confusing - don't they Peter?

Welcome to four new entrants to Division 2. These include *Moonshine* a Sunbird 25, owned by Paul Ross, a new club member at the Amateurs; *Black Diamond* a Seaway 25 from RANSA owned jointly by R. Pickard and R. Walton; *Pajo* an Endeavour 24 owned by a long time campaigner in the division, Frank George; and *Riff Raff*, the blue Hood 23 of Paul and Suzie Haas.

Welcome also to Jack Stening, and his crew. Jack is a member of Middle Harbour Yacht Club. His yacht *Laramie* is a Beneteau 32.5. Jack regularly races with MHYC, but their race season doesn't start till the following Saturday so he decided to join us as a casual entry for the race. Hope to see you back again sometime Jack.

A loss to our fleet, unfortunately is *The Entertainer*. The joint owners Michael Morris and David Dale said they got an offer they couldn't refuse for her. This is bad luck as *The Entertainer* won the spring series, which is a good springboard to go on and take out the combined spring and summer series. Not all is lost however, as Michael and David are presently looking for another boat — something a bit faster — like a Seaway or a Sonata. I am sure it won't be too long before we see them back out, competitively racing in whatever they get.

Somebody must have spiked the water with jungle juice, or the heat of the sun was too intense. These reasons may explain the actions of some of the skippers at the start of race 12, 20 January 01. There was bargaining, collisions, yelling, screaming and boats crossing early. If you can imagine it, it happened. Who said there was no excitement in small boat racing? One would have thought it was the start of a Sydney to Hobart race.

Apart from the start, the race was a thriller. Both the long and short series boats combined to have 16 starters. Missing were three of the S 80's. *Hotspur*, (Bill Hogan has the boat up at Pittwater cruising); *Runamuk* (broken mast); and *Riff Raff* (Jim Chambers was still away on holiday with his family). This allowed *Hebe*, *Manhattan Transfer* and *Qui Vive* to fight out for line honours. *Hebe* skippered by Tim Wilson prevailed in the conditions to lead across the line, followed closely by *Manhattan Transfer* then *Qui Vive*. *Qui Vive* had a new skipper on the day. Charles Maclurcan was away so gave the boat to his brother John to sail. I am glad Charles told me of the switch, as he and his brother look so alike, nobody would have known. I understand there is a debate between the brothers, as to who is the best sailor. I guess we won't enter that debate.

Behind the leaders a number of boats were closely bunched. One of these boats included our new entrant from RANSA, *Black Diamond*, for their first race with the Amateurs. *Black Diamond* is a Seaway 25,





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the same as *Manhattan Transfer* so we know the potential of this boat. Unfortunately *Black Diamond* failed to recross the line after breaking the start, subsequently was disqualified.

Contesting in the group behind the leaders with *Black Diamond*, were *Clewless?*, *Impala*, *Orpheus*, *Wind Shadow* and *Hoo Ha*. Just behind them came *Riff Raff*, *Pajo*, *Corinna* and *It's Magic*. Sadly, and I repeat sadly, near the rear of the fleet came *Brigadoon*. Fred I must say this is embarrassing for an Endeavour 26 to be beaten by nearly every other boat in the fleet.

Bringing up the rear was *Bandersnatch* and *Wangi Girl*. *Wangi Girl's* owner David Brown (who always has a beaming smile on his face) said he couldn't seem to get the boat to go any faster but will keep trying. He said he and his crew were determined to beat a few boats across the line.

It was a day however, for the smaller boats in the fleet to take out the handicap honours. The results for the short series was — *Corinna* first, *Orpheus* second, *Riff Raff* third. These positions changed slightly in the long series with *Riff Raff* showing the way to *Corinna* then *Pajo*.

Division 2 has now grown to a combined fleet of 25 boats with 18 of those entered for the long series.

One boat still to join us is *Antares*, a Colleen 25, owned by Robert and Louise Keessen. Those who sailed last season will remember *Antares* joined us for one race and did very well. *Antares* crew was recently seen bailing a lot of water during a twilight race. A question was asked by a novice, reasonably new to sailing, observing this action from another boat.

'Is that one of the new type boats that have water ballast?' the novice asked.

'Why do you say that?' said a knowledgeable sailor in response.

'They seem to be moving a lot of water,' observed the novice.

It was later revealed that *Antares* timber seams had opened up due to the unusually hot weather.

Finally, a speedy recovery to Paul Haas, who had his appendix removed after being rushed to Mosman Hospital with acute appendicitis. Suzie Haas said Paul is fine but she was finding it hard keeping him away from sailing. He had the operation on the Tuesday and still wanted to race in the Australia Day regatta the following Friday.

About 100 miles off Aberdeen in Scotland, a 75-foot steel trawler is said to lie in a depression on the sea floor. The trawler, built some time between 1890 and 1930 is upright with nets still attached 450 feet below the surface. Just how the trawler came to lie in this crater on the sea floor has been the subject of speculation. Could the unlucky ship have steamed straight into a gas blowout?

Gas blowouts are not unknown in the offshore drilling industry, and several have occurred in the North Sea. Comprising methane gas, they cause the sea to boil in a tremendous upheaval as massive volumes of gas are released. The disturbance on the surface can cover an area several hundred metres in diameter. In addition to the turbulence, a ship sailing into such a disturbance would run the risk of severe and sudden loss of buoyancy. Could the unlucky trawler have encountered such a blowout and sunk suddenly to the sea floor?

Some people suggest that methane blowouts could account for the riddles of the so-called Bermuda Triangle, where ships have disappeared without trace and aircraft have vanished from the sky, possibly as their engines were starved of oxygen. Whilst the truth is probably much less dramatic (like running out fuel), in theory an unfortunate ship could be sunk suddenly if it happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong moment.

Where does the gas come from? There are enormous deposits of methane on the sea floor stored as hydrates. A gas hydrate is a crystalline solid consisting of gas molecules, usually methane; each surrounded by a cage of water molecules. It looks very much like water ice. Methane hydrate is stable in ocean floor sediments at water depths greater than 300 metres, and where it occurs, it is known to cement loose sediments in a surface layer several hundred metres thick.

The worldwide amounts of carbon bound in gas hydrates is conservatively estimated to total twice the amount of carbon to be found in all known fossil fuels on earth. The gas hydrates have the potential to provide an enormous store of energy and petroleum feedstock. Extraction can be hazardous as the gas molecules are more densely packed than in conventional gas traps in sediments, resulting in potential blowouts that could sink a drilling ship or destroy a drilling platform. Gas can also be released as a result of landslides on the seafloor, resulting in the phenomenon suggested as the cause of the loss of the trawler off Aberdeen

Methane is ten times more effective than carbon dioxide in causing climatic warming — the ‘greenhouse’ effect — and methane bound in hydrates in the sea floor amounts to approximately 3,000 times the volume of methane in the atmosphere. Methane released as a result of landslides caused by a sea-level fall (as will occur when the next ice age approaches) would warm the earth, as would methane released from gas hydrates in Arctic sediments as they become warmed during a sea-level rise. This global warming might counteract cooling trends and thereby stabilise climatic fluctuation, or it could exacerbate climatic warming and therefore destabilise the climate.

The possible role of these enormous deposits of methane in global climate change tends to put our concerns about man-made greenhouse gas emissions and the methane from flatulent

cattle into a different perspective. Certainly we can say that if you see the sea ahead of you boiling furiously a rapid change of course would seem to be prudent. And don't light that match!

Reference: *Gas (Methane) Hydrates — A New Frontier*, US Geological Survey at marine.usgs.gov/fact-sheets/gas-hydrates/

DAYDREAM SHIELD

At last we can announce that the regular competition between the SASC and the Middle harbour Yacht Club for the Daydream Shield will held again this year. Members with long memories will recall that the SASC suffered four losses on the trot in the early 1990s before the competition fell by the wayside when MHYC were unable to put a team on the water.

This year the competition will be held on 4 March. The MHYC is providing at least three J24s for SASC crews to race against their J24 crews. Other yachts to race will be Adams (Super) 10s, S80s and Cavalier 28s. The format will be different this year with a series of match races.

We will need to find willing crews and as many spectator boats as possible to cheers our crews along. More details will be announced in due course.

RANGER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Ranger World Championships will be held on Sunday 25 March starting shortly after noon. Up to ten boats could be sailing including the brand-new *Vanity* built at Noake's yard in Sydney for John Crawford. She is built of timber and is fully GRP sheathed. Her lines have been refined for speed but with a different cockpit and cabin layout loses nothing of her cruising accommodation, which has very probably been improved.

SASC spectator boats would be very welcome for this event which promises good sailing. The Ranger class boats will be gathering at the SASC before and after the event.

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Congratulations to SASC member R. O. (Otto) Albert AM RFD RD who has been made an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia, announced in the Australia Day Honours List. The award recognises his service to the community through programs providing support for charitable projects, cultural activities and educational institutions, and preservation of Australia's maritime heritage. He has been a longstanding member of the board of the Sydney Heritage Fleet.

THE AMATEURS

The Board and Members of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club would like to express their sincere appreciation to the following for their interest and generous support in the maintenance and running of the Club's training vessel, the Adams 10 - *The Amateurs*.

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Competitors in the 420's leave the starting line in a race in the very successful Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championships conducted in Sydney between 28 December and 6 January. SASC Commodore Tony Clarkson and Greg Hyde are shown handling some of the modest-sized marks used for the event in the photograph below.



NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new members:

John Brennan
Peter Girdis
Christopher Kloster
Roger Letherbarrow
Michael Maxwell
Craig Mitchell
Paul Ross

PRIZE WINNER SOUGHT

We are looking for the winner of the 8th prize in the 128th Anniversary Regatta raffle. A copy of *The Amateurs — The Second Century begins* is waiting in the office for the holder of ticket 71C, marked simply C&C.

YACHTING ASSOCIATION OF NSW

The Yachting Association of NSW held its Annual General Meeting on 10 October last year. At the meeting the 2000/2001 Council was announced and office bearers and committee chairman were appointed.

SASC Immediate Past Commodore Fred Bevis is Treasurer of the YANSW, and Commodore Tony Clarkson is Chairman of the Sydney Harbour Area Committee.

**YACHTING ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP CARDS**

Members are reminded to collect their YA of NSW membership cards from the office, if they have not already done so.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The next SASC News will be the April 2001 edition. Contributions from members, which are always welcome, should reach the editor by Wednesday 21 March 2001. Contributions can be in hard copy or sent by email. Photographs are also very welcome.

www.sasc.com.au

Race results, news, useful links and much more, including this edition of the SASC News in COLOUR!

In this edition we begin an occasional series of photographs of SASC boats of the past with this image of *Hoana* (A5) taken in about 1930. She is not the *Hoana* we know today, but a near sister built in 1924, two feet longer.

This *Hoana* was owned and raced by Lex Buckle (also the first owner of the original *Hoana*) between 1924 and 1931, when he sold her to R C Hughes. She remained in the Club until 1941. Bought by a Brisbane sailmaker in 1947 she was taken to Queensland, and as far as we know, never returned.





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