

# OFFSHORE

NUMBER 49

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1979

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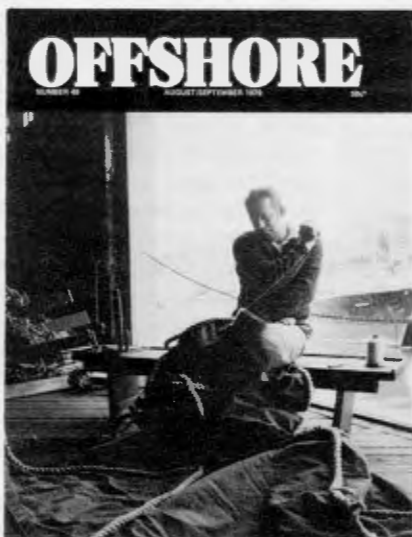
## inflatable liferafts



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*Cover: Traditional sailmaking trade skills are still in practice at the Woolloomooloo loft of McNeil & Sheeran. In the cover photograph, Peter McNeil puts the finishing touches on a parachute sling used by ships to load and unload cargo while at anchor. Photograph by David Colfelt.*



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# THREE GENERATIONS OF SAILMAKERS

## A look at one of Sydney's traditional sailmaking firms, where they sew anything from a stretcher to a stays'l

by Tony Cable

Sydney's historic and colourful Woolloomooloo has many seafaring links, and it is fitting that this should be the home of McNeill and Sheeran Pty Ltd, one of the oldest 'traditional' sailmaking firms in the city; the term 'traditional' implies certain special capabilities of this family company whose members span three generations.

These days there are any number of sailmakers 'making sails', but few of them are skilled in the wider range of work that was the trade of the old sailmakers. Today not many sailmakers would, for instance, be turning a hand to such things as pilot ladders, cargo nets, or rope buffers. Down at the 'Loo such things are being made daily.

Following such an introduction readers might think that I am writing from a P.R. handout, but I can assure you that there won't be any discount on my next suit of sails. I don't have a boat.

The founder of the dynasty is Bob McNeill, who is in his 70s, and despite a recent illness he is still to be seen down at the loft. Two of his sons, George and Peter, are active in the business while a third brother, Bob, is at sea as a shipwright. The third generation is represented by George's son, Paul, who finished his apprenticeship some two years ago. Another son, Robert, has his Second Mate's ticket and is with the BHP fleet.

I first came into contact with McNeills when I sailed with George on the 40ft Payne designed steel 'Sylph VI' in '62. We did many races together including the '64 Hobart. Since those days I have taken myself down to the loft many times finding it a novelty to sticky-beak at the unusual work that is often going on. One visit was to see some fancy work being done for the Hilton's America's Cup bar; on another they were doing a special run of 'sails' to be used as patio awnings for Warren Evans' bistro. Occasionally one would see Neill-Robertson stretchers being braced up with cane, or gangway nets being made 'to protect drunken sailors from falling overboard' (they should issue them to the boats in Hobart's Constitution Dock!). Sometimes I picked up little pieces of advice, such as the best part of the greenhide to use for leathering a steering wheel (the secret I have to keep). In answer to the query as to why they were still plaiting rope fenders for tug boats, the explanation was given that 'rope fenders don't grip the side of a ship as would a car tyre; a tug was once swamped when some tyres grabbed'.

One time George was complaining that his palm had collapsed after only 30 years work. He explained that to break in the new one it should be moistened overnight in a wet towel so that the next morning the pigskin would be supple and would readily mould into the hand. Also of interest was the equipment the old sailmakers used, such as whalebone fids for splicing. I was shown a beautifully carved seam rubber made out of lignum vitae, that iron-hard timber; it was used to turn the edges of the canvas before hand sewing the square rigger sails.

Bob McNeill is the son of a Liverpool Irishman who did quite a deal of time on the square riggers. His adventures on these included being adrift for 10 days in the Atlantic when the 'Falls





Of Afton' was lost after catching fire. Time was also spent on the wool clipper 'Brilliant'. He jumped ship in Sydney and spent the rest of his days here working around the water as a rouse. To avoid being picked up as a deserter, he had dropped the "Mc" from his name and it wasn't until Bob had his indenture papers drawn up that he learnt that his name was not just 'Neill'.

Bob was apprenticed to the old sail-making firm E.H. Brett & Sons, Balmain, which had the late Harry West as foreman. Life for a trainee was fairly strict in those days. A duty was to empty the spittoon, and one was never allowed to sit with the tradesmen at lunch. He almost gave it away wanting to join the 'Joseph Conrad', but his father prevented it.

Coming out of his time in the late 20s, Bob started getting a day's work here and there as he could find it. Jobs were done for Mr Lars Halvorsen and for the Red Funnel Line of trawlers. There were memories of cold mornings sitting down on the wharf at the 'Loo hand sewing No. 1 hurricane flax canvas into jigger sails for the trawlers. ('You had to wax along the seams so that you could get the needle in').

Bob married Annie in 1929 at 21. She was the daughter of Cameron Books, a very well known boatbuilder and pioneer of the Wiseman's Ferry region north of Sydney. They were descendants of Capt. John Bristow, who commanded H.M.S. 'Oceanic' under Nelson.

In '29 a couple of second hand sewing machines were bought, and business was set up in a loft above the ships chandlers, Corrigan's, on the corner of Market and Sussex Streets. Later, he moved to Riley Street, East Sydney joining with Joe Sheeran who was in the fishing tackle business. The association was to last 10 years when Bob bought him out.

Just after the war they moved down to Dowling Street in the 'Loo, where a former US Navy canteen was taken over. And recently they moved to No. 6 wharf, Cowper Road.

George joined the operation towards the end of the war and recalls that they were doing a lot of military work then for the Australian and US forces. His

first job was to make confidential bags for the navy. So that these would sink readily with their secret contents, they had eyelets punched all over them three inches apart. The punching machine is still in use, but George has no fondness for it after several thousand boring applications of it in '44.

George and Bob talk of the various fabrics used over the years. One such was 'Wileed' canvas which was used for hatch covers and army tents. This was proofed against rats, and the poison used to make them sick when they were working with it. Also used was 30 oz., 24 ft Arbroth flax from Scotland, for lifeboat covers and, in earlier times, for square rigger sails.

During the war sailcloth was hard to come by, and sometimes they had to settle for 6 or 8 oz. aeroplane fabric, which was rather stretchy. They remember just after the war getting hold of some beautiful 12 oz. Canadian duck for sails. Some flax was used for storm sails but as it became available again the cloth they found the best was Webster's Arbroth Egyptian cotton (japara). This Scottish product had a

beautiful weave, but it needed the skills of a top sailmaker to get the best from it.

Peter joined the firm in 1951 at 14 and has since tended to concentrate on the rigging side of the business. The third brother, Bob, meanwhile served his time as a shipwright at Morrison & Sinclair, Balmain. He then went to sea sailing at one time or another with the 'Empress Of France' on the Atlantic run, around the world on Norwegian ships and on the West African run on banana boats. He is now the shipwright on the 'Empress Of Australia', a ship he has been on since she was launched.

The family's sailing experience extends back to when Bob sailed on the old cedar planked Balmain 10s. George remembers the later 12 footers out of Balmain which were also cedar planked but sheathed in canvas; their steel centreboards were smoothed with boot polish.

Peter and George both started sailing VJs at the Balmain Club. The rules there allowed these craft to be sailed

*Bob McNeil examines a Neill-Robertson stretcher that has just come off the bench.*



one up with a spinnaker. Next, they both had gaff 16 footers at the Greenwich 16 footer Skiff Club, and after it folded up they moved on to the Drummoyne 16 footer Club. Peter later sailed there on one of the first cold moulded boats to be built locally. He then graduated to the 18 footers, and in the early '60s sailed a succession of his own 'Tip Top' boats.

George moved down to the Yarra Bay 10 footer Club, and in the '60s sailed his own boat there. Currently he sails on John Dibble's yacht 'Defiance' out of Middle Harbour.

Bob did the '48 Hobart on the steel 'Southern Maid'. During the race Jack Deegan went overboard during a reef, luckily grabbing a trailing sheet; McNeill heard his yell, and he was dragged in. Around the same year George did his first ocean race on the same boat, this time on the Brisbane-Gladstone.

Paul McNeill has in recent years done a deal of sailing on the 73 ft. ferro-cement 'Helsal', starting first as the ship's boy earning the nickname 'The Gopher'. He is now a very experienced and capable hand. Last year he did a trip Sydney-Los Angeles via Suva, Tahiti and Hawaii. While on the west coast he did some boat nigger work before returning for the '78 Hobart, which he did with his father on 'Helsal'.

'Helsal' was chosen to feature in the Hitachi/ABC film of the 1978 event, and George and Paul were given a fair amount of the footage doing sail repairs. Some years ago the ABC did some filming down at the loft as part of their 'Unusual Occupations' series.

Looking back again, Bob and George recollect that in the '40s they were one of only four sailmaking firms in Sydney along with Joe Pierce, Salton and Harry West. Their order book from that era makes interesting reading. There was work for such 18's as 'Allison', 'Jenny Too', Jack North's 'Nerang II' and for the ocean racers of the day such as a "mizzen staysail for 'Moonbi' " (Hobart winner 1955), "headsail and main for 'Defiance' ", "a full wardrobe for 'Southern Maid' ", "yankee jib for 'Gypsy Queen' ", "mainsail for 'Ripple' " (Hobart winner 1953) and "topsail and masthead flat spinnaker for 'Josephine' ". They rigged

'Christina' before her Hobart win (1946) and fitted out 'Mistral V' when she was gaff rigged. Vic Meyer was also one of their clients, having had sails cut for 'Solo' (Hobart winner 1956, 1962).

The type of sails they made makes interesting reading, too: "big sail and reaching jib" for 'Jenny Too'; 'Blue Nose' needed a "fisherman, main stay-sail and balloon staysail"; "ballooner for 12 foot skiff 'Frolic' "; "lugg sail for 16 foot boat"; "Marconi mainsail for 16 foot skiff". When Sir Claude Plowman needed some work done for 'Morna' (later named 'Kurrewa IV'), Bob McNeill was one of the few sail-makers around who could hand sew a new cotton panel into the Ratsey main. Indeed, today there would be few around who could do a good gaff main, yet last year there was a new one built for one of the harbour oldtimers.

The order book also records the change in the use of materials, for on one page there are measurements for a "large 80 sq. ft. Gwen 12 spinnaker (£15/2/- plus tax) in "japara". On the next page are two ballooners for 'The Fox' in "terylene". Actually, the first work they did in such a new exotic material was with nylon that Len Esdaile had acquired for his 'Serenade' (sister ship to 'Nocturne'). They recalled that in the early stages they had trouble adapting their sewing machines to handle synthetic thread which kept burning off the needles.

So much for a sketch of the McNeill family, none of their merits as sail-makers having been mentioned for I don't have the ability to appraise their skills. It says something to me, however, that many men in the trade have gained experience in their loft; their list of apprentices, for instance, includes such names as Peter Cole and Jack Hamilton. I suppose, too, that old Bob would have forgotten more about sails than some of the young fellows now know, his grandson Paul included, and with all the new technology in sails extending to computer applications there would be many who would still like to see what his eyes absorb when they squint up the leech of a sail.

*Top: Peter McNeill*

*Bottom: George McNeill*



# THE SINKING OF SNOW WHITE

## collision with a sperm whale, sinking, and a copybook rescue.

by Ken Searle

'Snow White' was a 13.05 metre mast-head sloop owned by Bob Graham of Auckland, designed by Laurie Davidson and built by Nigel Armitage and launched in 1974.

The owner was a boatbuilding tradesman turned engineer and saw that her construction was as strong as modern techniques could make a wooden yacht. Her construction was not heavy but extremely strong, and all who sailed in her appreciated the integrity of her hull. No sea would have sunk 'Snow White'.

So it was with complete confidence that I accepted Bob's offer to skipper 'Snow White' back to Auckland after the 1979 Auckland to Lautoka Race.

I joined 'Snow White' in Lautoka on Sunday, 20th May 1979 to spend the rest of the week cruising around Nandi waters. On board were all of the crew who were to sail on the return trip except Peter Hooper, who joined us at Malololailai two days later.

### The crew and its experience.

**Skipper/Navigator:** Ken Searle, aged 52. Sailing for about 30 years, including Trans-Pacific Cruises as navigator. Experience on 'Snow White' in three ocean races and two passage races, Auckland to Gisborne and coastal cruising as navigator.

**Watch Captains:** Kevin Graham, aged 17. Three ocean passages and considerable offshore and coastal experience on 'Snow White', 'Impact' and others. For'ard hand, helmsman and an excellent all-rounder.

Brian McCarthy, aged 25. Considerable harbour, coastal and offshore experience; raced to Lautoka on 'Snow White'.

Peter Hooper, aged 22. Considerable

harbour, coastal and offshore experience; raced to Lautoka on 'Quando'.

### Limited Experience

Paul Graham, aged 23. Had done return trip Fiji to Auckland on 'Snow White' in 1977.

### Comparative Novices

Stephen Brown, aged 18 and Rhys Davies, aged 21. Sailing experience limited to sheltered and coastal waters.

Owner Bob Graham left us at Malololailai on Friday, 25th May to return to Auckland by air. An hour before clearing Lautoka on Monday, 28th May at 1430 hrs NZST a petrol run-about blew up near to us, and there was a fire danger. The crew worked swiftly and calmly, and 'Snow White' was the first of nearly 10 yachts in the crowded area to be clear of danger.

'Snow White' cleared the Navula Passage at 0930 hrs NZST on Tuesday, 29th May, 1979 and set course for Auckland on a fine, sunny day and we were able to lay the course with slightly eased sheets in a SE. breeze of 10 to 15 knots.

Later that evening we were headed and forced, as I remember, 20 miles west of the rhumbline. But from noon on Wednesday when a new position was established we were able to comfortably lay the new rhumbline as the wind swung from SE. to E. and then NE. In fact, at daylight on Friday, 1st June, Kevin did suggest gybing or hardening up as the jib was on the point of collapsing at times as the wind came aft. But the wind swung again slightly to the east and we were belting along at seven to nine knots, bang on course. In easy seas and an apparent wind of 15 knots, at 0730 hrs I kept an unofficial radio position report sked with the yacht 'Offshore'.

At this stage it would be pertinent to go over some of the events of the previous three days, especially those that affected the final rescue and the condition of the crew.

Shortly after clearing Navula Passage two of the crew started sun bathing, rather excessively I thought, and one even had the soles of his feet facing the sun. One of the crew warned him of the dangers and pain of sun-burned feet, and he desisted.

At lunchtime the first day out, the same sun bather wouldn't eat; but none of the others was showing signs of seasickness, and he said that "he wasn't hungry", so I let it pass as we had all had a good breakfast while motor-sailing from the Regent to the open sea. However, when he didn't eat dinner that night I should have heeded the warnings and insisted on him eating something. His seasickness was such that, by Thursday evening, he was bringing up bile, and he was relieved of watch-keeping for that night in order to give him a good rest. I instructed the watch-keepers to make sure he had a cup of water hourly so that dehydration could be relieved. He chewed part of a dry biscuit, and on Friday morning he had a slice of canned peach which was part of a good breakfast the rest of us had that fateful Friday morning.

When the emergency happened, he did all that could be expected of any man. In the raft he kept his usual bright disposition and humour, but from midnight until we were finally on board 'Foxy Lady' his condition caused me deep concern, and it was obvious that dehydration had taken its toll. His pulse remained strong in spite of a rheumatic condition (that I wasn't aware of when he was selected as a crewman for the return voyage). His



was the only significant case of seasickness and was my greatest worry while in the raft. He recovered quickly with the excellent treatment we received on 'Foxy Lady' and 'Marama'.

#### Navigation

When I worked out a DR position for the 0730 report to 'Offshore' on Friday, 1st June, I was satisfied that the position was within five miles of actual position.

#### Radio

'Snow White' was equipped with a Stoner Goral single sideband set with xtals for 2182-2090-4125-4419.4 and a 5000 kHz xtal for receiving time signals from WWVH and some other common frequencies. We had no xtals in the 6000 kHz range.

We had had some trouble with the installation towards the end of the 1978 Tauranga to Port Vila race and traced part of the trouble to the fact that the lead in from the backstay antenna was attached to the swage fitting immediately above the insulator. When the lead was attached to the backstay itself just prior to the 1978 Auckland to Gisborne race, and a new antenna lead installed, the efficiency of the signal improved dramatically.

Just before the Lautoka race, the radio was sent to Southern Communications Ltd for a check over and fitting of the 4419.4 xtal. It was refitted to 'Snow White' and was excellent during the race, while cruising and on the return journey.

Perhaps the strongest signal it ever gave or received was that final burst on 4125 with Wellington Radio when the copper earth strap itself was immersed in the deepening salt water!

#### Weather

The weather for the three days prior to the accident had been excellent for a fast and reasonably comfortable passage with a fairly steady barometer.

The ZLO (Auckland Radio) 2218 hrs South Pacific Situation and Forecast had been an aid which I would urge all navigators to become familiar with. It enabled me to draw a rough weather map for the three nights 'Snow White' was at sea, and I was able to predict reasonable weather for Friday and Saturday in the positions we were likely to be in. And it was reassuring

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**"... in the future it will be my practice to give position, wind and sea conditions, course and speed. It had also been my practice to leave the radio switched to the frequency I had last used; in future I will make sure it is switched to the emergency frequency appropriate to the area, and also make sure that those emergency frequencies are well marked."**

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in the liferaft to know that there was nothing nasty in the area.

The position given to 'Offshore' and entered in the log for 0730 hrs on Friday was 24°59 S, 175°56 E.

I had arranged to talk to the Royal Akarana Yacht Club Racing Secretary, Graeme Orchard, at 0903 on 4419.4 kHz mainly to test the daylight capabilities of 'Snow White's' and Akarana's radios rather than for position reporting. I gave him the same position as I had given to 'Offshore' omitting to tell him that it was worked out for 0730 — one and a half hours earlier.

When ocean racing, it is standard practice in New Zealand to give only positions on compulsory radio reports. A racing yacht doesn't want to give too much information away. But in cruising in the future it will be my practice to give position, wind and sea conditions, course and speed. It had also been my practice to leave the radio switched to the frequency I had last used; in future I will make sure it is switched to the emergency frequency appropriate to the area, and also make sure that those emergency frequencies are well marked.

We closed down with Akarana Sports Radio at 0910 hrs, and the off-watch crew (including myself) prepared for a rest. I had taken off my spectacles and was just about to settle down in the bunk when there was an almighty crack! First thoughts were that we had fallen off a wave, but the sea conditions were too easy for that. 'Must be a stay or even the mast,' as the off-watch crew scrambled on deck. The mast was standing and the rigging OK, although Rhys on the helm looked bewildered. I went below and my feet

hit water. It was already over the floor boards; the yacht had little angle of heel, and the bilge had been pumped dry only some few hours beforehand, and since then no water had entered through the leak in the foreward hatch.

There could be only one answer: Somehow 'Snow White' had been badly holed! I called for the liferafts to be made ready while Kevin yelled back, 'Get on the radio'. I switched to 2182 and gave a 'PAN' call, quickly changing to 'MAYDAY', and called out the last position in the log, '2459 17556, 'Snow White' taking water fast'. There was no intelligible reply. I switched to what I thought was 4125 and repeated the call several times while grabbing my glasses and putting them on. Still no intelligible reply. Then I noticed that the set was on 4419.4, the working frequency instead of the calling frequency. The water was rising higher and I was conscious of activity on deck as I called for warm clothing.

As I made the 'MAYDAY' call on 4125, I remembered to add the 'south' and 'east' designations of latitude and longitude.

All thoughts of locating and blocking the inflow of water were dismissed as the water rose higher.

Wellington Radio came back indicating that they had heard the 'MAYDAY' and asked for confirmation of position. They had got it right! There was still time for me to confirm that the rafts were inflated, pass the message to Wellington that this was so, that there were seven persons on board and that they should add 10 miles south to the position I had given.

Kitbags and food were being passed up to the deck and there was someone looking for the jerrycan of water. I also confirmed (not with Wellington) that the Osborne bleeper was on the raft.

By now the water was above knee level, I reported to Wellington that I could smell chlorine gas as the salt water reached the top of the batteries. I heard the operator say, 'Get into the liferafts and good luck'. There was no way of replying as the transmission light did not come on when I pressed the button for the last time.

Peter was on deck holding the raft



painter. He helped me on board, clambered in himself, and I ordered a cast off.

As the buoyancy of the sailbags, squabs, and all the buoyant material in the yacht took over, her rate of sinking seemed to decrease, and we had the momentary thought — had we done the right thing in abandoning ship?

But the thought was only momentary. 'Snow White' was doomed and soon disappeared beneath the waves, with Paul taking a series of photographs of the sinking. Someone had passed up his case of camera equipment, and he recorded the last moments of the beautiful ocean racer that had been so much a part of Kevin and my lives for the last three years. I couldn't watch the final plunge, but at 0935 the crew reported that she was gone.

We are now all agreed on the sequence of events. At 0921 hrs 'Snow White' had a collision with a whale 35 to 45 feet long. The crew on deck saw a whale astern after the impact, lifeless and with blood streaming from a huge gash in its head. Part of the whale came in contact with the rudder and damaged it. Rhys, on the tiller, was thrown and reported that the rudder was stiff when he regained control and swung the tiller to bring her up into the wind. The injured whale was one of a school of at least five, all about the same size. From the raft we saw one (uninjured) up to windward and three to leeward.

By the time all were on deck after the impact until I went below to check and find water above the floorboards, it was 0924; we were all in the rafts and adrift by 0931, and 'Snow White' sank at 0935. We had a precious seven minutes to cut the lashings on the four-man RFO raft, throw it into the water and inflate it, remove the panel from the eight-man RFO liferaft locker (the panel was tight), remove the raft, throw it into the water and inflate it, make a radio 'MAYDAY' on three frequencies before acknowledgement, and to confirm and report before the batteries were covered, get the kitbags containing the warm woollen clothing, some food, the bleeper, the camera equipment and some odds and ends like a can opener and knife.

Kevin had the presence of mind to let the halyards go. The headsail, set on

the KAY-ZEE stay fell down unaided while the mainsail was still partly up to the last. Had the headsail been on a luff-grove device, a man would have been required to go for'ard to pull it down, losing precious time and putting further weight on the already sinking bow.

Before we had time to properly settle down in our inflated rubber homes, a new danger appeared. A couple of whale-lengths down to leeward were three whales, close together like giant sardines in a giant can, and a fourth up to windward. We were drifting fast towards the three, and for a few minutes it seemed as though we would drift onto them. Without any visible signs of movement, the gap closed — and then widened again as the drogues on the rafts began to grip. No more whales were seen. The rafts were tied together; both drogues worked.

The only wreckage that we saw from 'Snow White' was the empty outboard petrol can which had been stowed for'ard.

We saw a Hercules of the RNZAF three and a half hours after sending the 'MAYDAY' and half an hour before the earliest ETA.

What we didn't know was that another Hercules, already on a flight from Fiji to New Zealand, had picked up the bleeper at 1000 hrs but didn't have enough fuel for a finding.

On sighting the plane, about two miles away, we set off a rocket, a hand-held flare and an orange smoke signal. The Hercules banked, turned and flew straight over us.

By early afternoon the Hercules' watching brief was taken over by the Orions 03-04- and 05 'baby sitting job' as they later described it. The Orions dropped something to leeward.

While paddling for the drop, we had the second big fright while in the rafts. Suddenly one of the paddlers fell back into the body of the raft, his face ashen with fear. I asked him what the heck was the matter. He pointed down and whispered, 'Down there — sharks!' And sharks indeed there were swimming sinisterly close below. They had apparently been attracted by the paddling. I looked at Kevin. Minutes before he had offered to swim to the

sonar buoy, but fortunately he was talked out of it.

No more sharks were sighted and no phosphorescence of finny bodies could be seen at night but, I must admit I didn't look too often, on the old principle of 'don't look at it and it might go away'.

Sharks or no sharks, when the Orion made its next drop, which would have been almost impossible to miss, I ordered the paddles out again as we drifted towards a long yellow floating line beautifully placed to leeward. From the middle of the line blossomed another raft, while at each end of the line was a canister.

In the raft was another bleeper with the capability of two-way radio conversation with the Orion.

We established communication, learned that help was on the way in the form of 'Foxy Lady II', the Lyttleton yacht that had raced to Suva, and 'Marama', the Union Company's freighter enroute from Tonga to Auckland. Their ETA was 0800 hrs Saturday.

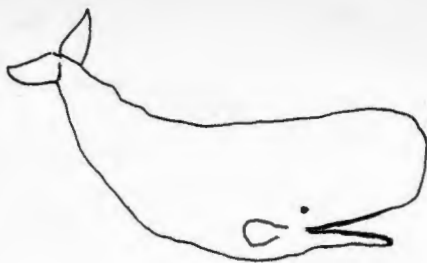
We arranged for a talk on the hour and we were able to report that the whole seven of 'Snow White's' crew were on the rafts and all were well and that 'Snow White' had sunk without wreckage.

The Orions, in their passes over us, had counted only six heads, and this had been reported rather dramatically by some of the press that there were only six survivors.

Night fell, but the friendly hum of aircraft engines and the hourly chat with the Orions kept our spirits up.

There were enough woollen sox and jerseys for all of us, and the only ones who felt cold were those who lay down in the raft, exposing a greater area of their bodies to the cold bottom of the raft.

At 0100 hrs on Saturday the Orion reported that a squall line was approaching. It would be at our position at approximately 0230 hrs and was four miles wide. Kevin and I discussed separating if the seas became too steep to stay together. We calculated that the squall would last for 12 minutes.



At 0233 it began to rain. The wind increased and the rain was at its heaviest at 0240 and I tried to remember the old sailor's poem, 'If it rains before the wind' but got it all hopelessly mixed up, and gave up the struggle. The rain stopped and we could see stars again by 0255. What little extra seas were built up by the squall were subdued by the rain. There was no need to separate and the Orion passed over the little flotilla at 0300 to hear our report that all was well.

During the night the wind decreased at times to what we estimated as less than five knots with a slight increase at daylight.

The Orion was still circling us and giving us messages on the hour. We were told that the final rescue had been put back to 1100 hrs and it was a race between the 36ft. Peterson designed yacht 'Foxy Lady II' and the freighter 'Marama'.

The Orion flew off to the north, then came back, laying a path of smoke signals for 'Foxy Lady' to follow. Then it flew high to get a radar fix on 'Marama'.

Shortly before 1100 hrs a sail appeared on the horizon and soon the red Peterson hull appeared underneath the sail. For a while we thought she had a man up the mast for a look-out, but on coming closer it was the proud burgee of the Banks Peninsula Cruising Club and a radar reflector that had been hoisted to aid the Orion.

By this time 'Marama' was on the horizon, and we heard that another vessel, the American cruising yacht 'Oleo' was also closing in.

'Foxy Lady' skilfully manoeuvred to throwing line distance and her crew helped us on board.

'Marama' positioned herself about 200 yards up to windward of us and

launched a motorised lifeboat which popped its way towards the flotilla of sloop and three rafts.

We boarded the lifeboat, thanked our rescuers and popped back towards the falls.

With extreme difficulty and great skill and seamanship, the falls were re-attached to the fibreglass lifeboat, while the lifeboat's crew warned us to keep our heads low. Securing the falls and being hoisted in the boat was one of the most frightening experiences of the whole rescue operation, as the lifeboat crashed against 'Marama's' steel plates.

The Captain had considered bringing us on board by bearding ladder, but thought that our legs may have been too weak after almost 26 hours cramped up in the rafts.

---

**"Night fell, but the friendly hum of aircraft engines and the hourly chat with the Orions kept our spirits up. There were enough woollen sox and jerseys for all of us, and the only ones who felt cold were those who lay down in the raft, exposing a greater area of their bodies to the cold bottom of the raft."**

---

He may have been right; even on the freighter's solid decks it took me a full day to get my sea legs.

The officers and crew of 'Marama' couldn't do enough for us. We were wine, dined, showered and clothed, entertained, shaved, put to bed and shown over the ship.

We spoke to family and friends, and the press through the ship's radio-telephone facilities and had the virtual run of the ship.

We were all impressed with the harmony between Captain, officers and crew.

And our seasick companion recovered miraculously!

#### **Observations on the sinking**

It has been said that our rescue was a copy-book affair, that we did everything right — but it could easily have been

otherwise. These observations are made in the hope that all rescues can be made as swiftly as ours.

#### **Navigation**

If the whale had struck at 0630, before the DR position was updated for the position report to 'Offshore', I could have given only a very approximate position in the time available, as the previous logging would have been 14½ hours old. A slate near the radio with the last DR, the log readings, and course sailed since, would be a definite help in a situation where co-ordinates are required quickly.

#### **Radiotelephone**

I shouldn't have wasted time with 2182 in that latitude in daylight when a higher frequency was available. Only the 2182 frequency was marked in red. The 4125 position should also be marked in some way.

It would be as well to check the calling and listening frequencies in the area of ocean you are in.

#### **Liferafts**

These were well positioned in 'Snow White'. The eight-man raft was in a hard case and conveniently stowed in its own compartment built into the bridge deck between the helmsman's and the crew's cockpit. The four-man raft was lashed directly in front of the main raft on the floor of the crew's cockpit and was also in a hard case.

#### **Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB, or Bleeper)**

This was stowed down below. Some authorities advocate that they should be packed in the raft to prevent accidental triggering, but I don't agree. I can think of many emergency situations where the bleeper could be required on the ship. None of the crew would go to sea without one again. It allowed the Orion to fly away and come back bang on target. The one we had had a battery life of 48 hours. Osborne is now producing a much bigger version with a six-day battery life. Check that yours has both military and civil frequencies.

#### **10 minute forms**

This was filled in and handed to the Customs Officer at Lautoka. In my hurry to get clearance I apparently forgot to mention that 'Snow White' was carrying a bleeper and there was some confusion when the Air Force

picked up the signal from it. For a while they thought they had two emergencies on their hands.

Also, again in haste, I didn't check if I had the crew's next-of-kin, addresses and phone numbers correctly listed, and it took unnecessary time for the next-of-kin to be informed of the sinking.

#### **Life in a liferaft**

Twenty-six and a half hours experience adrift doesn't make any of us experts on this subject, but obvious strong points on the rafts would be an advantage when you have the luxury of being able to tie two rafts together.

#### **Radar reflectors**

We had none in 'Snow White', but 'Foxy Lady II' used hers to help the aircraft pin-point her position. It was suggested at the de-briefing with S.A.R. that one of the metallised plastic thermal sheets may help an aircraft locate a liferaft in a radar search.

#### **Emergency drill and safety at sea**

Apart from making sure that all the crew knew where fire extinguishers, lifejackets and safety harnesses were

kept, I did not have a formal 'safety briefing' before we sailed. As it turned out only three of us knew positively where the bleeper was located, and at least two of the crew didn't know that there was a second raft on board.

#### **Valuable equipment**

It would have been wise to have had all valuable equipment not required on the voyage in a 'grab bag'. This could include watches, wallets, passports, jewellery, ship's papers, and so on.

Fortunately most of us had two kit-bags, one packed with good go-ashore and light clothing, the other with warm sea-going gear. Woollen sox, woollen jerseys and underclothes, etc. Fortunately, most of the warm clothing got on board the raft.

#### **Personal insurance**

I know this is a mundane subject but all of the crew were heavy personal losers. Some thought they were covered by comprehensive or household policies only to find that the cover was for New Zealand only. Others, like myself, had travel policies with not nearly enough cover when the losses were added up. The yacht itself was

insured but Bob would also be a heavy personal loser.

#### **Whale species**

At the time of the year the accident happened, whales are on their annual migration from the Antarctic to tropical waters. They are full of blubber and generally in no hurry. Having worked at a whaling station, I can say that the whales were neither Humpbacks nor Sai whales. The crew had a better look at the whales than I did, and after looking at a whale identification sheet on 'Marama' the consensus was that it was a school of Sperm whales.

#### **Crew compatibility**

One of the greatest things we had going for us was ourselves. We had been together for 12 days and were a compatible crew who could rely on each other. Too often have I seen crews who have been thrown together at the last moment end up as an unhappy, bickering and even dangerous crew.

On the other hand our crew's morale was high even at the most dangerous and frightening periods of our misadventure.

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# 1979 UTA-PEUGEOT SYDNEY-NOUMEA RACE



*Quiet Start of the 1979 UTA-Peugeot Sydney-Noumea Race.*



Photo: Modern Boating and Seacraft

*Alderman Nelson Meers, Lord Mayor of Sydney, and the skipper of the French escort vessel 'La Dieppoise' exchange gifts on behalf of Noumea and Sydney at the C.Y.C.A.*



**by Frank Sticovich**

A number of yachties reminiscing about an eight-day spinnaker run to Suva last year packed their sailing bags with T-shirts, shorts, sunhats and lotions for another escape from the Australian winter, this time to tropical Noumea.

But probably because of the lack of churchgoers amongst yachtsmen Hewey, in a sardonic mood, went contrary to the advertised brochure and sent down headwinds by the bagfull.

The starter of the 1080 mile race saw 51 yachts cross the line, most with spinnakers up, a light westerly behind them. This wind gave the foredeck crews a few moments of anxiety with peels and gybes before it died, leaving yachts becalmed some 500 yards from the starting line.

A nor'easter soon erupted and this wind 'paved' the way to Noumea!

Before the start of the race, as usual



there was a lot of speculation and bar talk about who was going to be there first. The line honours favourites were 'Willi Willi', 'Mary Muffin', 'Patrice III' (making a comeback to the racing scene) and 'Fanny Adams'. IOR handicap favourites were the 2-tonners 'Moonshadow', 'Sweet Caroline', 'Satin Sheets' and perhaps 'Scorpion'; the dark horses were the 1-tonners 'Huon Chief' and 'Cobbler' (ex-Hobart winner 'Piccolo'). Of course, all this speculation was dependant on the strength and direction of the wind.

At this time of year, the routing charts tell us that the predominant winds are from the southeast or the nor'west, the southeasterly trades guaranteed once past Lord Howe Island. The charts also indicated an eight per cent possibility of noreasterly winds.

The nor'easter that drew the yachts out of the Heads remained fairly constant for three days; the navigators, dependant on the weather forecasts for some strategy, had the fleet spread over one hundred miles across the rhumb line.

Once the leading yachts were past Lord Howe, the wind (still from the nor'east) strengthened to 25-30 knots with gusts to 45 to 50 knots. The Cruising Division yacht, 'Amazing Grace', reported gusts to 60 knots. The seas were lumpy, and falling off waves was common, particularly at night.

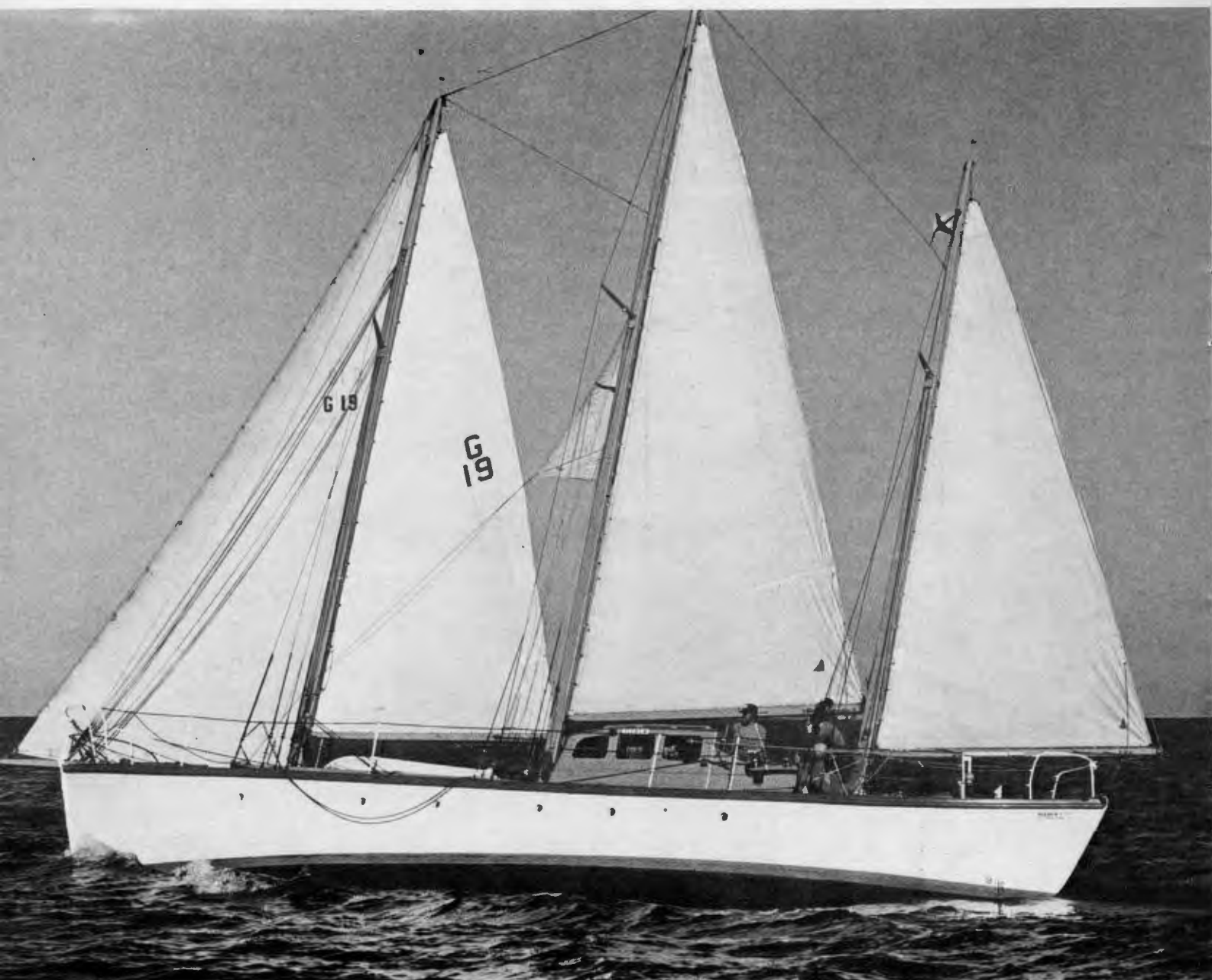
The strong winds and choppy seas remained for a lifetime and caused the dismasting of 'Claire de Lune', a 47 foot yacht from Melbourne, and seven other retirements, most of these yachts from the Cruising Division. The closest refuge was Lord Howe; two yachts further north headed for Coffs Harbour.

Jim Allen's 'Fanny Adams' suffered rudder damage which put paid to her chances to be amongst the leaders; she sailed the last 400 miles with some fancy ropework and attachments between the rudder and wheel.

It was also during this time that Russell Campbell, a crewmember on 'Onya of Gosford', came down with a reported hernia, a situation that created some drama. 'Rogue' had a doctor aboard, and a diagnosis was given over the radio,

*A piper played 'Road to the Isles' as 'Manu Kai' left the marina for the start of the 1979 UTA-Peugeot Sydney-Noumea race.*





*'Ile Ola', an unusual rig, participating in the Cruising Division.*

it was arranged with the French Navy escort 'La Depoise' to rendezvous with 'Onya of Gosford' and consider the transfer of the injured person aboard. The rendezvous took place some 18 hours later, but by then the emergency had passed, and Russell was lying comfortably in his bunk. He remained on board for the rest of the race.

The last two days saw the wind and seas moderate, swinging slightly to the east and becoming light and variable. This allowed us to crack the sheets, and it was a mad sprint to the finish, the most easterly yachts — 'Sweet Caroline', 'Satin Sheets' and 'Mary Muffin' — having the advantage.

12 — OFFSHORE, August-September 1979

On the Saturday evening sched 'Willi Willi' reported having the bulk of the Island in sight, but the fact that she finished some two hours behind us led us to guess that she must have spotted the same cloud bank reported by one of our lookouts on 'Patrice III'.

'Sweet Caroline' was first to finish at 0421 am Sunday followed by 'Satin Sheets', 'Mary Muffin' and 'Patrice III', all finishing within two hours.

Later, as more yachts arrived, the Tasmanian yachts 'Brer Fox' and 'Antagonist' crossed the line, eight seconds apart, quite extraordinary after more than one thousand miles of racing.

'Sweet Caroline' was declared handicap winner, thus getting the double.

The finishing line was across Amedee lighthouse, which marks the reef encircling the entrance to Noumea, the actual town being some 15 miles inshore.

Once across the finishing line, the yachts were escorted along the shipping channel by a fleet of pleasure yachts equivalent to a Sydney to Hobart Race start, full of arm waving Frenchmen and bikiniied girls, motor cruisers with bands on board playing native tunes, all welcoming us to Noumea. A reception that made the eight day slog to windward all worthwhile.

## Burns Philp Noumea-Vila Race 1979

### I.O.R. Division

Place	Yacht	Corrected Time
1.	Antagonist	49.50.42
2.	Brer Fox	50.06.36
3.	Spider	50.25.40
4.	Huon Chief	50.37.37
5.	Aphrodite	50.51.44
6.	Moonshadow	50.52.58
7.	Mary Muffin	51.30.22
8.	Satin Sheets	52.21.26
9.	Blue Panther	53.04.49
10.	Rogue	54.51.49
11.	Willi Willi	55.11.02
12.	Fanny Adams	56.25.26
13.	Freanda	57.11.30

Line Honours: Mary Muffin, 2D. 11H. 47M. 37S.

### Arbitrary Division

1.	Dianick II	52.59.58
2.	Quadrille II	54.19.34
3.	Josel III	57.21.90
4.	Helmsman	61.03.07
5.	Gwalarn	

### Cruising Division

	Points
1.	Sabaloo 229
2.	Bon Temps 174
3.	Seabird II 170
4.	Red Reef 154
5.	Maggie P 145
6.	Amazing Grace 142
7.	Ron Of Argyll 141

## UTA-Peugeot Sydney-Noumea Race 1979

Starting date 16.6.79

### I.O.R. Division Provisional

Place	Yacht	Corrected Time
1.	Sweet Caroline	6.7.33.21
2.	Satin Sheets	6.9.22.07
3.	Moonshadow	6.10.32.27
4.	Patrice III	6.13.30.49
5.	Mary Muffin	6.15.34.38
6.	Gelinotte	6.17.52.40
7.	Scorpion	6.22.54.26
8.	Amon-Re	6.23.04.54
9.	Willi Willi	6.23.41.23
10.	Huon Chief	7.00.43.11
11.	Antagonist	7.02.25.09
12.	Spider	7.02.29.11
13.	Brer Fox	7.02.39.46
14.	Aphrodite	7.02.41.00
15.	Wathara II	7.04.59.15
16.	Mystic Seven	7.05.13.38
17.	Cobbler	7.08.21.05
18.	Binda	7.11.04.31
19.	Rogue	7.11.48.12
20.	Onya Of Gosford	7.13.26.07
21.	Fanny Adams	7.16.38.49
22.	Gidgee	7.19.46.13
23.	Freanda	8.04.39.52

Line Honours: Sweet Caroline, 7D. 16H. 25M. 10S.

### Retired

Clare De Lune  
Manu Kai

## Arbitrary Division Provisional

1.	Quadrille II	7.04.18.08
2.	Catriona M	7.04.25.39
3.	Helmsman	7.02.45.53
4.	Quest	7.06.26.44
5.	Swiftly	7.10.14.31

### Retired

Wings  
Gymea V

### Cruising Division

	Points
1.	Mandalay II 361
2.	Xandra 334
3.	Sabaloo 315
4.	Maggie P 277
5.	Seabird II 267
6.	Beyond 247
7.	Red Reef 223
8.	Amazing Grace 217
9.	Bon Temps 184
10.	Makulu II 170
11.	Ile Ola 155
12.	Johanna Blue 152
13.	Orbit
	Sunchaser

### Retired

Ahimsa  
Cygnet III  
Phantom  
Rakiah  
Ron Of Argyll

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# TO NOUMEA, ARBITRARILY





What can you say about a race in which you spend the whole of the first week close hauled? Or, in linear terms, 800, count 'em, 800 nautical miles, and I was only in the damn race so I could go cruising in the Islands. Peter Rysdyk has a lot to answer for; "Come to Noumea", he said, "sunny, tradewind sailing, tropical islands, beautiful maidens, white beaches", he said, "all to be had after a gentle downhill slide to New Caledonia", he said, "sail Noumea 1979", and other clever propaganda. I notice that he sent 'Onya' but did not sail in the race himself because he was Directeur de la Course. A likely story! He knew all along we were in for a week of force 8 on the nose, and while we got the belting he was probably sitting in his lounge room in Gosford scoffing Sarah Lee pies and cakes.

However, I am supposed to be writing about the action in the Arbitrary Division according to my slave driving Yankee Editor (I can get away with that because I am writing from the safety of Noumea harbour).

The main contenders were 'Helmsman', a 44' cutter from New Zealand with a good reputation in passage races and a long waterline to show why. She looked as if she would fly running or reaching, and her crewmen were seasoned Kiwi veterans. She received a daunting TCF but over the 1080 miles to Noumea she could save her time given her favoured conditions, and those conditions were the accepted norm for most of the course. In the event she got the worst of the deal, and 'Helmsman' probably could not have encountered worse conditions.

'Wings' is a Mottle 33 and a good choice for this race if conditions were light. During the week leading up to the start it appeared as if that would be the case, so a lightweight with a long waterline would be well in the running; wrong again, light it was not.

At the last minute 'Catriona M' moved in to the Arbitrary Division. A handsome Warwick Hood 40 footer, she is a

solid cruising yawl in the traditional manner and a sea boat par excellence.

(Note to Yankee Editor: A Yawl is a two master with the mizzen mast aft of the rudder post, not a mountaineer from south of the Mason-Dixon Line. I'm still in Noumea harbour.) She reaches well but would need a lot of wind to stay close enough to be in a winning position even with her low TCF. She got all she needed, or almost all; she was pipped at the post by a mere 7½ minutes on corrected time after 9½ days at sea.

'Swiftly' and 'Quest' are Swanson double enders fitted out for cruising, and they, too, would need a lot of wind to make up for their high waterline-based TCF's. Which brings me to my own boat, 'Quadrille II', and because my modest part in this article is limited to 1,000 words, I cannot go on to describe this magnificent vessel to you to the extent she deserves. Suffice it to say that she is based on a Duncanson 35 hull, has a raised deck, is fitted out for cruising and was officially launched two days before the race. Cruising was what I had in mind and until the week of the race, I did not even have a No. 1 Genoa.

Although I had them whipped at least once a week the crew never stopped complaining about this state of affairs and in the end, just to keep the peace, I spent next month's salary on a new Hood No. 1, and then we only used it for 8 hours throughout the entire race. But that was enough, it put us to the northwest of the fleet, kept us out of some confusing shifts near Lord Howe Island and enabled us to stay closer to the rhumb line in more favourable winds until we popped out to the northwest of Middleton Reef.

We were limit boat for the division and had a break of over 50 miles on the scratch boat, 'Helmsman'. It was a huge break to have on Arbitrary Division at such an early stage of the race, and, in fact, we were pacing it with the IOR Division leaders. I expected the wind to shift to the northwest, which would have made us weather boat by about 75 miles and handed 'Quadrille II' a 600 mile reach to Amedee Light and the finishing line.

Naturally enough, that did not happen and like everyone else we had to suffer the rest of the week in a force 8 gale blowing straight down the rhumb line at us. I cannot recall ever experiencing

a wind which remained so consistently dead foul for so long and it was no consolation that it was totally unseasonable. Conditions were not really all that bad, its just that it seemed as if the bash to windward would never end.

When it did end it came to a dead halt leaving a very confused sea for a while. 'Helmsman' had got through us during the last day of the storm but not by enough to save her time; in our own minds we had the race won already. Then one morning, to our horror, we woke up to find 'Catriona M' ahead of us by 40 miles which was more than enough to give her the race. To make matters worse 'Catriona M' then went off the air with battery charging problems so while we worked non-stop to try and pull her back while the winds were light, we had no way of knowing if we were being successful.

Finally, she came back on the air during a radio schedule reporting 20 miles behind us and we breathed a sigh of relief. That was almost fatal to our prospects; we pulled in to the anchorage behind the Amedee Light to find 'Catriona M' waiting for us and her crew sporting smug grins.

They had won or we had won according to which navigator worked out the results. We spent an anxious night and half of the next day until the Race Centre confirmed that Greg Halls' calculator was more accurate than Jeremy Whitty's, and 'Quadrille II' had won the division in her first-ever ocean race. Just as important she had done it without breaking anything, a tribute to the skill and endurance of her crew. To say I was pleased with 'Q-II' when we arrived in Noumea would be an understatement. It got very hazy out that night.

John Brooks

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## HOBART RACE SKIPPERS

When you see a blank in the Hitachi Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race Program where the photo of an entry was supposed to be, or a photo of half a yacht, with bare poles, tied up to a jetty, doesn't it make you wonder how that skipper will ever make it to Hobart if he can't even organise a decent photograph of his own yacht?

Don't be a blank box in this year's program. If you haven't got a good shot of your yacht, get it organised *now*.

*On board 'Quadrille II' (left to right) John Brooks, Gill Carter and Greg Halls do a little dance of four with Grenouilles, their pet frog (who was later towed across the finishing line in Noumea). Quadrille II won the Arbitrary Division.*

# THE FIRST MILE TO NOUMEA

## a humble yotti does the first mile of the Noumea Race in style

by Tony Cable

I didn't do the Noumea race and regret, therefore, that I can't hold readers enthralled with harrowing tales of an idyllic bash up to the tropics; actually I covered just one mile of the track, and the story has been covered vividly by other members of the Publications Committee — Biggles, who won the Arbitrary Division with his 'Quadrille II', and Frank Sticovich, who came 4th on 'Patrice III'.

Those two had, for weeks before the event, been making me increasingly restless at not going. Why, I reasoned, with some agitation, do I spend my holidays each year getting increasingly punch drunk sailing to Tasmania? What I should do is become a real ocean racing passage racer and see native birds rather than mutton birds, get sunburnt rather than windburnt, and race to

leeward like a gentleman in preference to windward like an idiot.

The feeling of frustration only increased as more and more newsletters came out indicating the delights the boys were in for up there. I could imagine the stories that would come back of can can dancers named Fifi, and of how much plonk rouge was consumed. My disappointment reached its nadir when as a result of offering my services as a CYCA host to a visiting entrant, the one I drew was the Tasmanian with, of all things, a French name — 'Bon Temps'.

Being, thus, in this state of melancholy, imagine my delight when in the mail arrived an invitation: "The Commodore and Flag Officers of the CYCA request the pleasure of the company of Mr Tony Cable to witness the start of the

Noumea Race on the French navy Patrouilleur 'La Dieppoise'.

I was stunned: not only was I to join the ranks of the yachting dignitaries, but I would also be able to do an article on the race as I saw it, and not leave it to Brooks and Frank to get all the laurels from the Editor.

Just as I started to puff up with the importance of it all, I was suddenly seized with a panic. What would I wear? I knew that yachting dignitaries wore all sorts of special stuff, such as bus driver's hats with white covers, lots of greenish braid and club ties with no beer stains on them. Ordinary hands like me had often seen flocks of these birds roosting on awninged poop decks with their dignified wives wearing big hats that billowed like golliwobblers. These officials who were perched up there to witness some race or other always seemed to be more interested in peering into their gin and tonics than looking at the common sailors below them.

What would I wear? A Flag Officer once told me that there actually is an official CYCA dress, but the only one that I could picture as being worn consisted of jeans with no knees, seaboots with their holes patched with electrical tape and T-shirts advertising some other club's race.

Having none of the special gear, my first idea was to tart up my business suit with a couple of brass earrings for buttons and have my wife sew onto the pocket a First Class Seaman's badge which she would have to pick off my son's coogans. I also wanted to wear the inevitable Sperrys, but I am not allowed out in them much nowadays as my wife complains that they make my

*A 10% heavy chips in his two cents worth aboard 'La Dieppoise' (will somebody please tell that little short fat man to . . .)*



socks go red (it's been happening ever since I spent two days on 'Gretel's' bottom).

Actually, as it turned out, I didn't have time to get my suit converted. A second invitation arrived hard on the first; this was for a race eve cocktail party. Why me? I reflected that somebody was going to get me to vote for something. It was a great affair; I became a personage along with others such as the Lord Mayor, Nelson Meers. The Bollinger people had generously provided quantities of their excellent champagne and everyone was soon quite animated. (If the Editor will allow me to give them a plug, "When Boozing Buy Bollinger".)

At the function I put into practice my ideas on "subjects for yachting small talk". Not always successfully, I might add, for the odd French lady I approached didn't quite know what I was getting at when I would walk up and say, "Hi; reckon it would be a nice day for a race tomorrow?"

When the day dawned I was as excited as any Froggy midshipman who was about to go off to battle the English. The ship was at HMAS 'Waterhen', the minesweeper base at Ball's Head, and as I hurried along the wharf I was met by a very harrassed Alan Brown, another VIP like me from the CYCA. He was very keyed up and acting like a battery commander who had found that he had only 20 shells available for an impending 21 gun salute. The trouble was that some chap had gone to the effort of bringing his cruiser down from Newcastle way to accommodate an overflow of guests, but none had arrived. Also, as some anti-French-A-test protesters had threatened to paint 'La Dieppoise' green when she came out to the start, none other than French nationals would be allowed aboard her.

Well, that then panicked me, for I had told everyone I knew (and many that I didn't!) that they could see me as a VIP on the deck of the French ship of the line. It made me sorry that I was British; the loss of face would be considerable. However, with the most fruity 'bonjour' I could muster, and disguised in a black beret, I slipped aboard tout suite past the gangway guard just apres Monsieur J. Dirks-Dickey, the French Consul General.

As one likes to know details about an



ocean racer he is joining, similarly I had consulted *Jane's Fighting Ships* to get information on my boat. She was a "large patrol craft" of the La Dunkerquoise minesweeper class, built by the Port Arthur Shipbuilding Co. Ltd., Canada, in 1954 and commissioned as HMCS 'Chaleur'. The Executive Officer, Kerigward, told me that she had been presented to the French Navy along with five others as part of the Marshall Plan. She had seen service at Djibouti and around 1976 had been sent to Noumea. In 1969 her minesweeping equipment had been disembarked and she took up the roll of patrol boat.

The passengers had gathered around the afterdeck watching some of the 22 sailors in the crew getting the ship ready for sea. Just like on an ocean racer, they didn't have quite enough space to stow their initial stores, so there was quite a pile of boxes of fruit and vegetables stowed in an out of the way corner on deck. The engines were run on; the Blue Pierre hoisted, and with the command "front and derriere lines allez oop", we backed out of the berth.

As she headed down the Harbour in calm, sparkling weather, the crew got

busy with their cameras, and I took the opportunity to snoop around. At 164' in Oregon she would be a small ship to a naval man but a maxi to a yachtsman.

Her forepeak, for instance, seemed about the same size as 'Helsal's' and contained the heads with the novel feature of having the two toilet pans side by side with no screens. The sailors had tiered bunks in a mess which had the same stale smell as an ocean racer after a long race. The officers had a comfortable panelled wardroom decorated with various etchings, one depicting a 19th Century seabattle with the French who were giving the English heaps. On HMAS 'Perth' or somesuch their illustrations would probably show the reverse situation. C'est la guerre.

Down in the engine room the twin 1200 h.p. GM diesels, standing as high as a man, were roaring away, the crew protected from the din in a small space-capsule-like compartment. The ship could take 52 tonnes of fuel and could cover 4500 miles at 11 knots; her cruising speed was 13 knots with a maximum of 15 knots.

I found my way up to the Bridge and





there I felt as much at home as on a yacht. Most of the four officers and 12 petty officers were crowded there all yelling directions just like a cockpit full of heavies and, as usual, there were only four hands available to try to do everything that was shouted at them. My natural inclination being, as I was, about a 10% heavy, was to put my bit in also. As the vessel only drew 9' I was quite confident that I could give some advice also without making any mistakes, e.g. 'Watch the Sow and Pigs'. Eventually, however, I seemed to wear out my welcome, for while I don't understand French too well, I think someone said, "Why doesn't that short fat bald man shoot through to the foredeck avec the other passengers". Meanwhile, the ship had threaded its way through the milling starters and went on to stop off Neilsen Park. I had seen my two rival journalists as we passed by, Brooks yelling instructions to his crew, who were not paying any attention to him, and Frank Sticovich tending a jib sheet but not noticing that the leech was too slack.

Our skipper, Rene Voisin, had cunningly copied Rolly Tasker's start in 'Siska' in the last Hobart by crossing the line

minutes before everyone else, and we had clear water and did not have to stay around when all the shouting started. Capt. Voisin had graduated from the Naval Academy in 1965 and had specialised in anti-submarine warfare. A year previously he had been on the new ASW Frigate, 'De Geresse'.

As we sat in the sunshine waiting for the gun to go off, we were circled by two Water Police boats ready for the promised protesters, who actually didn't show themselves. If they had come, I thought a good defence to support the police would be to throw a couple of buckets of bilge water over them. If they were worried by pollution they would certainly get it with a brew containing old Gauloise butts, snail shells and sodden croissants. If things really got serious we could have relied on 2x20mm oerlikons and 81mm mortar and a 40mm Bofors. I would like to have heard the gunners singing in French "Praise The Lord and Pass the Ammunition" as they served them.

Well, for those readers who have persisted with this article wondering what I had to say about the race, I'm afraid that after all of this I can't relate too

much. Those yachts on the eastern end of the line did much better in light spinnaker conditions than those to the west, and 'Satin Sheets' got a good break on them all. But as the fleet took so long to come up the Harbour, we didn't have time left to follow them as they passed us, so I ended up covering only about one mile of the total course to Noumea, and one can't drag much of a story of the race out of that.

By this time cocktails were ready to be served on the poopdeck as we cruised back to the base. On the way I had a chat with one of the crew who was looking very weary. He had met Pearl from Punchbowl up at the Cross the night before, and later in the evening the language barrier got to him when he couldn't figure out whether she was saying "I'amour" or "more".

As I left the ship I took with me a note from another one of the crew with the promise that I would find a nice chap from the CYCA to show his young sister Yvette something of Sydney when she was on holidays from the Sorbonne (anyone from the Club who gives me 24 highballs can have the details).

As I travelled back to the Club for a smorgasbord, gear bone dry after my trip, I reflected on what an excellent life ocean racing dignitaries have and determined to try and repeat the exercise as soon as possible. Actually the Hobart would be as good a time as any for a repeat, as it is going to blow so hard this year that everyone out there will wish they had gone out only to witness the start.

---

## HOBART RACE SKIPPERS

One of the best-read sections of the Official Souvenir Program of the Hitachi Sydney-Hobart Race is the 'Entries' section. It is an historic record. Many crew members buy a program just to see their name next to that of the proud ship on which they will be sailing. Imagine the disappointment of the crewman who buys his program only to find that the skipper forgot to put his and the other crew members' names down. How would you feel about your skipper if he couldn't remember, or just couldn't be bothered, to get his crew list in in time for the program?



# NOUMEA-PORT VILA

by John Brooks

Noumea must be one of the lesser known paradises of this world, and during the week's stay of the Sydney-Noumea Race contestants, the sophisticated French population seemed determined to leave no stone unturned in the entertainment of its yachtie visitors. It was with some feelings of dazed relief, therefore, that the remaining fleet of 25 yachts turned its attention to the 335 nautical miles between Noumea and Port Vila in the New Hebrides.

From a start in Noumea harbour it is 40 miles east to the Havannah Passage, 80 miles northeast to the pass between Lifou and Ile Mare in the Loyalty Islands group. From Cape Pine on Lifou a final stretch of 215 miles NEE to Port Vila, situated on the south coast of Efate Island. Southeast trades all the way, they said, but we had heard all that somewhere before.

The only sour note: the start was at 0800. This was to enable the fleet to clear the narrow Havannah Passage before the tide turned to run foul at up to 5 knots. At 0600 those of us who were living aboard were awakened by the happy little French Mademoiselle who operated the race centre public address system at maximum strength throughout the week we were in port. I reflected with some satisfaction that this would be the last time that her cheery "Bon jour everybodeee!", first thing every morning, blasted through my hangover and left me gasping.

Somehow, everyone got their act together in time to make the start, all to no avail. One of the occupational hazards of 0800 starts, it seems, is that there is rarely any wind at that time of the morning; Hughie does not get up that early. We drifted across the starting line with zephyrs occasionally filling the spinnakers in a desultory fashion and spent an hour negotiating the one mile which constitutes Petit Passage, the harbour exit.

Once outside however, a useful breeze of 8 to 10 knots got everyone moving,

even if it was from the east and thus dead foul for Woodin Pass. The sailing was delightful in sunny weather over flat waters inside the main reef and 'Quadrille II' was lucky enough to be at the seaward end of a long tack when the wind shifted southeast and handed us a direct line for Woodin Pass with sprung sheets. We arrived to sight all of the IOR Division leaders tacking up the narrow passage between an offshore island and the main island of New Caledonia.

It was spectacular sailing in magnificent surroundings, unspoiled by the fact that nearly every boat that arrived after us sailed through the Woodin Pass with only a few tacks. 'Helmsman', hugging the lee shore, made it in one leg. We rounded Cap Ndua at nightfall in the middle of a bunched fleet and in sight of nearly all of it, which meant that the small boats were looking good and the IOR heavies had it all to do again.

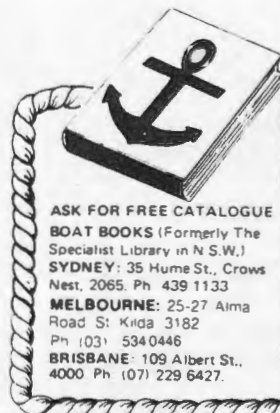
With only 12 miles to clear the main reef the breeze died away and we were left becalmed in Havannah Passage. A few puffs of wind off the land helped us along as Hughie tried to construct a land breeze out of unsuitable adiabatic conditions. The outgoing current helped also as we drifted through the exit from Havannah Passage about half an hour before the change. Those nearest us made it also but a few were left inside and I did not envy them the prospect of a strong foul tide and flukey breeze, all the while surrounded by a maze of reefs.

The light winds persisted and it took us 24 hours to cover the 80 miles to Cape Pine on Lifou. Up front, Geoff Blok in 'Mary Muffin' had a stranglehold on the line honours lead but the bulk of the IOR Division was not far behind, 'Satin Sheets', 'Moonshadow' and 'Willi Willi' amongst the closest. The fleet was still comparatively bunched up; it was obviously going to be a race for the small boats, and 'Antagonist' looked very strong even at that early stage, with 'Brer Fox' and 'Huon Chief' in the running.

Tearing away with the Arbitrary Division was 'Diannick II', a French Farr 1-tonner, sailing in Arbitrary Division only because she had not been measured. She opened up a lead of 35 miles on 'Quadrille II', which was limit boat for the division and still stood a chance, however slight. Apart from these two, the remainder of Arbitrary Division had blown it the first day and 'Helmsman' thought of retiring and would have, but the engine would not start. Lucky it didn't, the wind freshened from the southwest and everyone had a glorious spinnaker run all the way to the finish.

'Mary Muffin' took line honours with ease. 'Antagonist' sailed a fine race to be first overall on IOR; she had made all the right moves during the first third of the race and only had to hang in there when the spinnaker run started. 'Brer

Continued on page 30



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# SHOULD WE HANDICAP THE SACRED COW?

## Nev Gosson gives the pot a stir for changes in handicapping the Hobart Race

Not having raced since Suva my horizons have somewhat broadened to that of a follower of the sport. As a result, what I see now is quite enlightening. It would be fair to say that I have now joined some of the elite as a spectator in the Race Operations Room, swapping cryptic comments with gay abandon and from this vantage point sailing some of my better races.

With all this broadening education I was a little unprepared for some of the comments and attitudes to the sport of yachting by those who would like to be involved and those on the fringe prepared to be swayed.<sup>5</sup> In short 'spectators'.

The last Hobart Race, to me, was an excellent example where a full year's build up to a glamour race was practically over for spectators within a couple of hours of it starting.

Having followed the fleet out on 'Leda' and well down the coast, the talk on the way back was 'Well, that's that for another year.' Trying to point out that the race had just started and would be on for several days just fell on deaf ears.

The biggest boat would win, and 'we don't understand boats coming in days later winning races' was the feeling. No doubt these days that may be a fair statement. There are those who do not understand IOR ratings and those that do are only a handful that really care.

When one looks at the winter races and their tremendous success, perhaps one of the main ingredients is the clear-cut position of all competitors in the race and the obvious result at the finishing line. Throughout small boat racing we always reserved scratch starts for championship events and maintained handicap starts as the main theme for the majority of races for the benefit of competitors and spectators alike.

Looking realistically at the Hobart Race, the greatest attraction is the schemozzle in the harbour. From there on it's downhill all the way, with the finish a big fizzle. Now you may take some convincing if you're on the few early boats, but after that it is a slow procession for all concerned and damned lonely at the rear. Having been at both ends of the scale, there is cold comfort in knowing the party has started, the radio ship has closed down and you still have a day or so to go. One may as well be on the way to New Zealand. From a spectators point of view it's a real NO! NO! The winner doesn't necessarily win. Some boat days later often wins. How come?

So why not consider a change. A change in itself may be good for the sport. We are living in a constant change, and when we see what has happened in other sports it is hard to believe their concept of years ago. God Forbid!, people even watch cricket on TV for hours on end, so there must be a chance for yachting if changing attitudes can be applied. Yachting doesn't have to be like watching grass grow if the public can be educated to the sport as has been with cricket.

So should we start with the simple basics? First across the line wins the race. Nothing complicated. Just plain Jane observation.

By deduction, then, the start of the Hobart is great, the middle is 'out of sight out of mind' and the end a disaster. Then let's look at the handicap start in some depth.

What appears immediately is the even benefits it produces to most boats by way of starting, publicity, and race end participation. The pre race build up would be improved as the race would be different in concept, and those bored with the present scene may be revitalised.

Imagine: the start of the race would take all weekend and not just a couple of hours. This would allow most people to see the event and, in particular, their favourite boats. Even fellow competitors could watch their adversaries. Those who drew the short straw would be starting during the night, but it would add interest to the public who still think offshore yachting is a nine-to-five affair.

The smallest yacht would probably be first away, and the interest would build up to the final crescendo for the maxis some day or so later. Everyone would get an even break at the start and not fight some hundred odd yachts at close encounter. The safety in this is quite considerable, and as the fleet increases in numbers this aspect should not be ignored. Of course the adrenalin really runs in this kind of race for both competitors and spectators as it is a race of chase and not follow me.

Another advantage would be the sigh of relief by the Harbour Authorities who now must be having nightmares with the prediction of 200 starters or more for this year's event.

Weatherwise, the race would be spread out when the winds should be more consistent, and the bunching up would occur as the unpredictable approaches, and together the yachts would face the Derwent. Safety again would be prevalent as the togetherness off the Tasmanian coast could be of valuable assistance for those in need. The radio relay ship would be closer to all for better skeds and relaying.

It would be more difficult to cheat at skeds, as seems the going thing these days for some — an annoying habit which intimidates others into being dishonest to keep the status quo.

One can imagine with proper media

Continued on page 30



## BIGGLES' COLUMN

This is being written while at anchor in Sasake anchorage at Amae Island in the New Hebrides (for the mathematically minded, 17°03'S, 168°22'E). It is our second day hanging off the hook here, and while Amae is a very pretty little South Pacific island, the main reasons we are here is because outside it is force 8 with gusts to 45 knots and some of the worst seas I have encountered since the 1970 Sydney-Hobart. That is not my idea of cruising weather, so here we will stay until the situation improves.

On the other hand it is not really a place to gather ideas or inspiration for the

type of material, or rubbish if you like, normally included in Biggles' Column. I did think of recounting some of the anecdotes that surfaced during the Sydney-Noumea-Port Vila series of races, but, put on paper, most of them do not seem so funny after all and the really funny ones need editorial clearance from those on the receiving end, a requirement not easily fulfilled at Sasake anchorage. So, it seems I must ad lib the whole thing and hope I can string it out for an entire page of 'Offshore'.

First let me mention a feature of cruising up here which is a direct result of Australian ocean racing development, and I refer to the insistence of CYCA about efficient radio communication capability for all of its racing yachts. Throughout this cruise we have had continuous radio contact with CYCA boats ranging as far north as Santo and south to New Caledonia. We have had a twice daily schedule with 'Mary Muffin' and 'Spider' after we parted company, casual contact with 'Rogue' and 'Marabou' and passing radio contact with numerous other boats cruising after the Port Vila Race.

One night, due to the mysteries of radio propagation, we even made contact with a boat off Crowdy Head and had a friendly chat. We were in Port Sandwich (Ile Malekula) at the time, and that represented a great circle distance of over 1200 n.m. Well, you say, there is nothing so special about that! Ah! I say, there is when the contact is made on channel 2, 27.88 MHz, of a three watt marine CB set which has a broken aerial taped to the pushpit. On the same set, incidentally, we listened one night to Sydney Water Police base station directing traffic.

So although yachts and people are quite thinly spread in the New Hebrides, the wonders of the modern wireless gave us the company of friends and familiar voices separated merely by earth distance. It is a comforting sound in such a remote area and a positive safety factor in the absence of more official radio communications.

With little to do at Amae other than minor maintenance and keeping an eye peeled for moderation of the weather, there is plenty of time for idle speculation, or cards, and I hereby lay claim to the 1979 Amae Island 500 Cham-

pionship before anyone else gets her hands on the score sheet.

In the idle speculation department I ruminated on my experiences in racing as an owner and/or as crew hand, or navigator with other CYCA boat owners, and it seemed to me that, by any standards of logic, boat owners over the last five years or so have really been treated like a bunch of half-witted children by yachting administrators and boat designers alike. The cycle of so called design breakthroughs, matching, punitive and often doubtful, rule changes, more rule bending design and galloping obsolescence, none of it dignified by any hard technical research before the fact, really presents a sorry picture. When you add to that well-meant, but often half-cocked, proliferation of safety inspection rules, insurance hassles and inflation of running costs, it really is amazing that there are any owners left who will put up with it all, especially in the rating area below, say, 28.0 feet.

Fear of legal liability is undoubtedly causing yachting groups and clubs, including our own, so tie us up in a maze of regulations and safety requirements as a protection against any possibility of legal responsibility which leaves me with the feeling that we are close to defeating the entire object of the exercise which, when I last checked, was to 'enjoy life — go sailing'.

As to the future of the IOR in Australia it is of course too early to make any predictions but if overseas commentary and trends are any guide the scene here will polarise into a hard core of IOR protagonists, who may or may not be the boat owners, opposed, or complemented if you like, by a group favouring a less unstable handicap measurement system, or one design, or plain old-fashioned cruiser racer racing, a concept that seems to have completely eluded the gentlemen who shape the IOR.

Whatever happens, ocean racing in Australia is not big enough to support more than one system, so the PBO can only lose again, which means we all do.

Sooner or later, in the maze of committees which purport to govern and protect us ocean racers from ourselves, someone must wake up to the fact that, for far too long, administratively speaking, the tail has been wagging the dog.





# WATSON'S KNAVIGUESSING KNOWHOW

Having distributed a number of navigational plotters as trophies during the Winter Series, it is not inappropriate to discuss briefly some of their uses for the yacht navigator.

Quite apart from their obvious uses in laying off position lines and vectors, the major shore marks plus Mark A for S.O.P.S. races can be plotted before the race. The windward and wing marks can be plotted as soon as the course signal is flown, and from then on the entire plot can be carried out in the cockpit without having to refer to the chart. Bearings, courses and lay lines can be dialled quickly and drawn in freehand.

The order of work would go like this:

1. Select a convenient scale, say 1" = 1 mile.
2. Locate Mark A about 1 mile west of the centre.
3. From Mark A, locate the required shore objects by bearing and distance, e.g.,
 

Macquarie Light	250° 1 mile
Vent shaft	200° 3 mile
Blue fish	360° 2.2 mile

(Note: These are imaginary bearings)

SEE FIGURE 1

4. When the course is signalled, say, 125°M = 137°(T), locate the windward and wing marks. (The wing mark is drawn in by rotating 45° from 137° and placing it on the intersection of the horizontal and

vertical lines from the leeward and windward marks).

5. Dial back to zero, and the whole picture is before you.
6. To lay off compass bearings, say Macquarie Light 273°M = 285°(T), and vent shaft 195°M = 207°(T), merely rotate the dial to the true bearings and pencil in the bearings downwards until they intersect. This is the observed position, and the bearings of the windward mark can be found by rotating the dial until it is vertically above the observed position, and then reading off the true bearing. All this is done without leaving the cockpit.

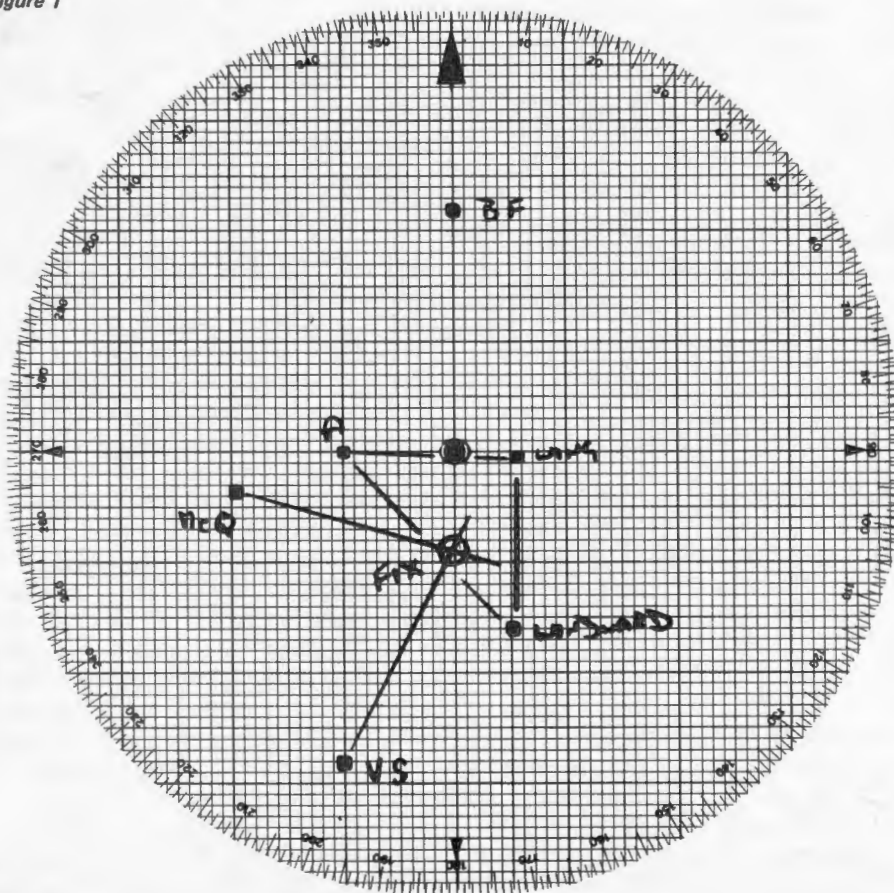
SEE FIGURE 2

For celestial work, chosen longitudes are easily plotted without the necessity of converting d'longs to departures. The chosen latitude is dialled, then d'longs plotted directly across the scale. Upon returning the scale to zero, the perpendiculars are dropped, representing the actual plotting points on the chosen latitude. Having found the position, the d'lat can be read directly, then, after once more dialling the chosen latitude, the d'long is also read off directly. Although the plotter has a longitude scale on the reverse, this method obviates the need for it.

When transferring a celestial position line, as from morning sun to afternoon sun, the plot is simplified by using the same basis for DR throughout. This applies, of course, only to sights for which the actual DR is used, not a chosen position.

For instance, suppose the last observed position was at morning stars. The DR is run up to the morning sun and an intercept found. The DR for the afternoon sun is run up from the star sights also, and another intercept found. Both these intercepts are then plotted from the centre of the plotter which is the afternoon DR position, and the observed position found. Try it, it works!

Figure 1





Reverting back to the use of a calculator for sun sights, for which it is ideally suited, this allows the use of the actual DR rather than a chosen position, and makes for shorter intercepts. The calculator then is available for calculations of courses and distances made good, and to go. The mean latitude can be used without significant error up to distances of about 600 miles.

For instance, suppose that the observed position during a return voyage to Sydney was  $31^{\circ} 20'S$ ,  $154^{\circ} 25'E$ . The previous observed position was  $30^{\circ} 22'S$ ,  $155^{\circ} 11'E$ , and the landfall position will be  $33^{\circ} 50'S$ ,  $151^{\circ} 20'E$ .

We have —

Obs. (1)  $30^{\circ} 22'S$        $155^{\circ} 11'E$   
 " (2)  $31^{\circ} 20'S$        $154^{\circ} 25'E$

d'lat  $58'$

d'long  $46'$

Mean lat  $30^{\circ} 51'$

We must convert d'long into departure to calculate course and distance made good.

Departure = d'long  $\times$  cos mean lat  
 = 46  $\times$  cos  $30^{\circ} 51'$   
 = 39.5 miles

Now, departure = tan course angle.

d'lat

= 39.5

58

= 0.68103

course angle =  $S34^{\circ} 15'W$

course made good =  $214^{\circ} 15'$

Distance = d'lat

cos course angle

= 58

cos  $34^{\circ} 15'$

= 70.2 miles

The same scheme is now used to calculate course and distance to go, resulting in answers of  $226^{\circ} 06'$ , and 216.3 miles.

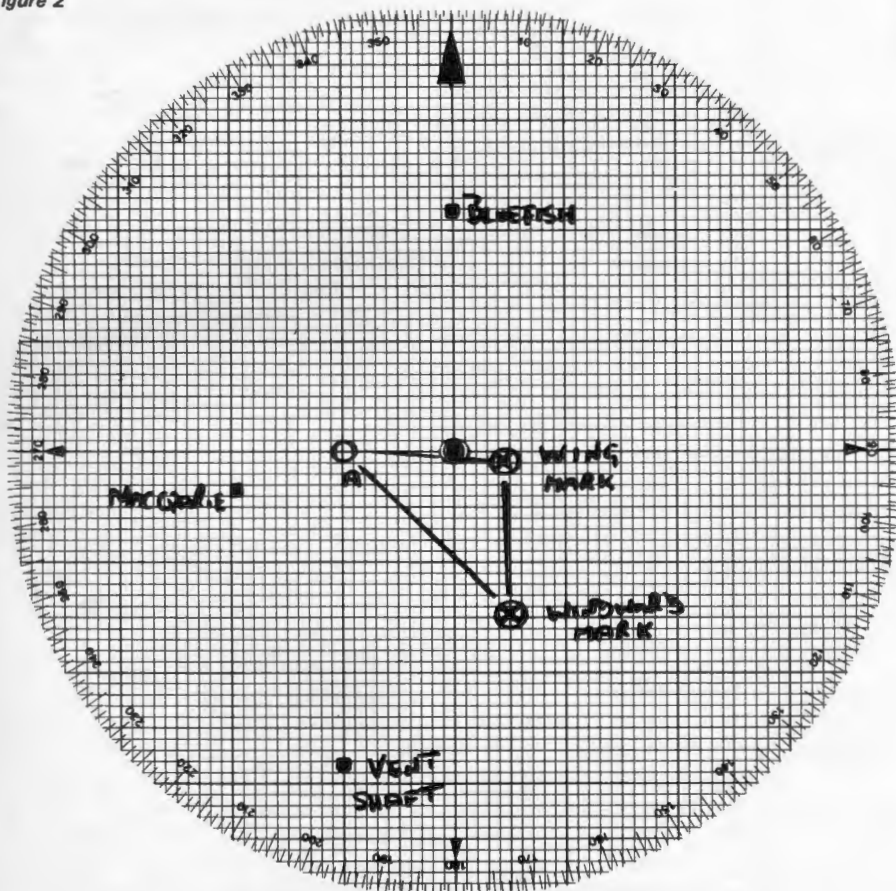
This information can be produced quickly without reference to the chart, which is handy at mealtimes if the chart table is also the lid of the icebox!

Next issue we'll deal with R.D.F. calibration, as between now and then we are going to experiment with the Editor's DF set.

See you then.

Hedley Watson

Figure 2



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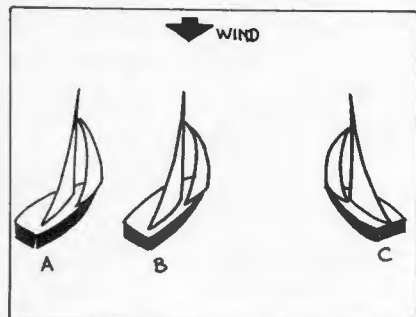
# PROTEST

by Steve Old

In this issue we will look at Rule 43, which covers the obstructions. To understand the rule, you must be fully familiar with the definition of an Obstruction.

*"Obstruction: an obstruction is an object, including a vessel under way, large enough to require a yacht, if less than one overall length away from it, to make a substantial alteration of course to pass on one side or the other, or any object which can be passed on one side only, including a buoy when the yacht in question cannot safely pass between it and the shoal or object which it marks".*

Obstructions include shorelines, fishing nets, heavy patches of seaweed, shallows, moored boats, motor boats, cruising boats and, in certain situations, other yachts that are racing. *Right-of-way yachts and yachts which refuse to give way, or are out of control or capsized, all rate as obstructions.*

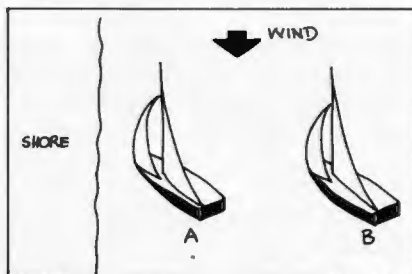


C is right-of-way boat, and is a legitimate obstruction to B.

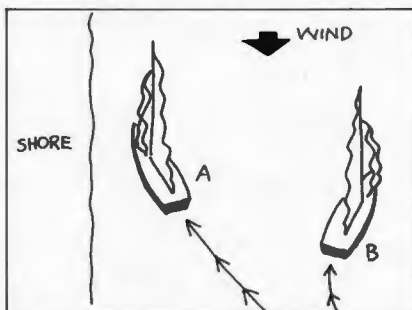
Let's look at some common situations that are covered by Rule 43.

## Calling for room at a continuous obstruction

If A carries on she will hit the shoreline; if she tacks she will hit B. Rule 43 provides a way out for A, provided both boats are on the same tack.

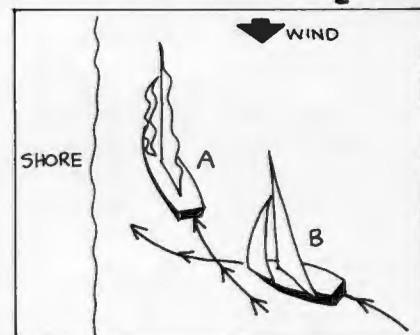


A hail for 'water' or 'sea room', or something similar, before tacking. (A cannot hail after she has tacked, nor can she tack and hail simultaneously). B must respond immediately by either 1. tacking, or 2. hailing 'you tack' (Rule 43.2).



If B elects to tack immediately, A must begin to tack before B's tack is finished. In the diagram A is starting to tack, while B's tack is almost completed. A's tack starts when she is head to wind. Until then she is luffing. If A curtails her tack, and B has completed her tack before A begins to tack, A can be disqualified (Rule 43.2[a]). If B wishes to let A tack and continue into the shore, she must hail 'you tack' to A, and also avoid her. The onus is now entirely with B to keep clear (Rule 43.2[b] ii and iii), but A must tack immediately B hails, otherwise A can be protested under Rule 43.2(b)(i).

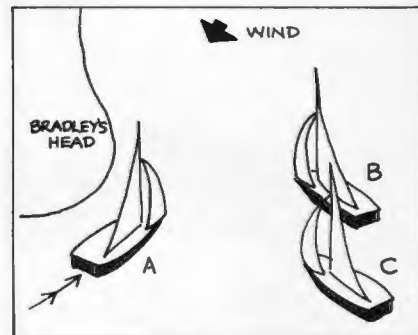
A tricky situation can arise here because if A can tack out from the shore, and then back on to her original tack without interfering with B, or if she can clearly tack and bear off behind B without colliding, then she is not



entitled to hail, but the onus is on B to prove that A could do either.

## Opposite tack boat requiring room for an obstruction

Under the rules there is no way a port tack yacht which is prevented from tacking by an obstruction can force starboard tack yachts to give her room. Rule 36, port and starboard, is the only rule that applies here. I'm sure many boats on Sydney Harbour have been in the situation in a nor'easter. The only way out for A is to go aground or (if A is a dinghy) capsize, presuming she cannot go between B and C, or behind C.

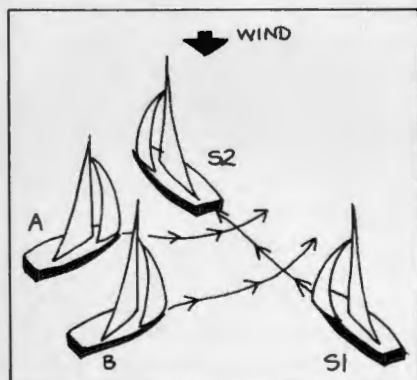


## Starboard tack boat as an obstruction

Although very few people realise it, a starboard tack yacht can also be an obstruction to sea room.

In the diagram S1 and S2 are the same boat. At S1, B can hail A for room, and A must respond in the same way that she would have to if S1 was

the shore line, by either tacking immediately or calling B to tack. B is quite entitled to hail A for room, even if she could bear off behind S1. Providing B hails clearly and in good time, the responsibility lies entirely with A, and if A fails to respond, no blame can be attached to B.



In situation S2 however, A can hail B for room, and B must allow A sufficient room to bear away and pass under S2's stern (Rule 42.1[a]).

So there it is. Rule 43 is probably the most complex rule in the book, and also the most difficult to apply on the water, but as I said last issue, if you have an intimate knowledge of the rules and how they apply on the race course, you can use them to a great advantage. Rule 43 is no exception.

#### Protests

Things have been quieter than usual for the Winter Series, but a couple of situations have emerged.

The first one has shown that a lot of people do not read their sailing instructions, and don't know what those two strange flags are on the Starter's Boat. They are Substitute Mark Signals! Enough said?

The second is a situation in which two protests have been lodged resulting from collisions before the start. The Committee has been unable to hear them because, although the yachts involved have been intending a race, they have not been racing according to the Definition, which says, in part, 'A yacht is *racing* from her preparatory signal,' etc. In the C.Y.C.A. Winter Series, the preparatory signal is five minutes before the yacht's starting time. The only way a protesting yacht can get a result (usually for insurance purposes) is in a Civil Court, and the yachts are subject to the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea. Sorry chaps!

## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE CHARTER GAME or How to Make Money Sailing Your Own Boat by Ross Norgrove, shortly to be published by IMPC.

Review by John Hawley

It is always difficult to believe you can do the things you want to do and make money at the same time. This book sets out to show that it can be done and offers much useful information as to how one should set about sailing the Oceans of the world and making it pay.

Ross Norgrove is a New Zealander who, with his American wife, has chartered his 70 foot schooner 'Wite Sqall' for nine years in the Caribbean and five years in the Pacific. His philosophy is 'If you enjoy the cruises as much as the passengers do, you're in the right business'.

He starts by relating encounters with others in the trade, how they have failed or succeeded. He explains in detail the areas for chartering and the types of boats which are most suitable.

The largest part of the book considers the logistics of the business, problems and their solutions, meals, activities, laundry, maintenance and seamanship.

The photographs and the standards of reproduction must be about the worst I have encountered in a recently published book and could happily have been omitted as they do nothing to enhance an otherwise interesting and informative text.

### THE CRUISING BOAT

by Alan Lucas; Horwitz; \$11.95

Review by John Hawley

This is Alan Lucas's ninth book in about ten years and it is interesting to note the improved writing and finesse of publication over this period. His cruising guides to the coral coast and the New South Wales coast are well known to all yachtsmen and are generally very well respected. This latest volume is aimed at people who are contemplating the purchase of a first

boat, but it could equally well be read and enjoyed by those who have been boat owners for many years. It could well explain the reason for some of their disappointments and failures.

The book is aimed at improving a yachtman's eye for design and his ability to assess and survey a boat from every angle regardless of type or the material from which it is constructed, and because it shows how a boat is put together it would be invaluable to anyone building their own.

This is not to say that I agree with everything Lucas has to say: in fact, there are points where I am in total disagreement — for instance, in the section on buying a boat where Lucas states 'A surveyor will find very little more by his probing through a vessel than will an amateur whose only contact with the world of surveying is through this book'. What arrogance!

Almost anyone reading the book will be wiser after so doing, but perhaps not so wise as the author suggests.

### THE RACING EDGE

by Ted Turner and Garry Jobson;

190 pages; \$16.95\*

Review by John Hawley

No authors are more suitably qualified to teach you 'how to become an instant heavy'. Turner ('the mouth of the South'), three times USA Yachtsman of the Year and winner of every American national and international race, took 'Courageous' (the underdog) and beat all opposition to win the 1977 America's Cup. Jobson, his co-author, was head sailing coach at the US Naval Academy as well as director of training programmes for the USYRU and Turner's tactician at the America's Cup.

*The Racing Edge* begins with a widely ranging conversation between Jobson and the colourful and outspoken Turner, in which they explore the many aspects of sailboat racing as they have experienced it. From here they cover all



phases of sailing beginning with boat handling techniques every sailor must master to get to the top.

In Tactics and Strategy they take the reader round the course from start to finish, isolating the tactical possibilities in all the key phases of the race — the pre-start tune up, the start, coming off the line, rounding the windward mark, sailing the leeward leg, rounding the leeward mark and finishing.

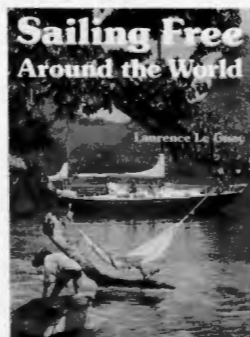
*The Racing Edge* is a book of facts based on wide (and winning) experience. The only note of humour is in the glossary of terms: "Fire Drill: the great activity (and usually confusion) when all crew members are scrambling to solve a sudden problem."

It is a pity that the binding is not better, for this will be a very well-thumbed volume by anyone who gets his hands on a copy.

#### SAILING FREE

by Laurence Le Guay; Ure-Smith;  
\$8.95\*

Review by Lesley Brydon



Like others bound to a city lifestyle, Laurie Le Guay had often dreamed of escaping "where there were empty white beaches, brown skinned smiling people, coconut palms and translucent jade green water with most of all the time to enjoy it".

*Sailing Free* is the story of his escape — how he dropped out of the ratrace for two years with an old friend Courtney Cains, and two young friends, to sail 35,000 miles around the globe.

The voyage in the 42ft steel hulled 'Eclipse' took him to the Barrier Reef, over the Indian Ocean to Africa, across the Atlantic to Brazil and the Caribbean, through the Panama Canal and home by the Islands of the Pacific.

Le Guay is a distinguished photographer who loves his work, and as a result his

book is packed with superb photographic illustrations.

As a fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and the International Federation of Geographic Art his work is known internationally. Assignments have taken him to the Antarctic and to North and Central Australia for the Geographical Society.

His account of the voyage is enriched with personal observations, with bits of history, the odd biography of people he met at sea and in port, as well as common sense advice to anyone planning a similar passage.

He deals with the business of preparing the boat and selecting the crew, observing most accurately that "most voyages are abandoned through crew failure rather than through failure of boat or gear".

His ideal crew has a wide divergence of age, personality and interests and perhaps also of colour and sex.

He feels that women are important on a long trip. "I'd noticed that male crew members are less likely to ape the worst habits of some animals when women are aboard", he comments.

Perhaps his photographer's eye for beauty may also have influenced the decision to include eighteen year old Susy Cook in the crew. The slender blonde enhances many of the photographs which illustrate the book.

His ideal cruising formula gives high priority to creature comforts — good food and wine and comfortable quarters ... and always a strict commitment to domestic order ... that way good spirits last longer.

Importantly, too, 'Eclipse's' route was carefully planned to take advantage of the prevailing winds and where possible to avoid the discomfort of a passage to windward.

Hence the book's title and Laurence Le Guay's personal philosophy of sailing "to embrace the prevailing winds of the world with all available sail and to run with them according to their mood and season ... when there is no fight, no feeling of annoyance or aggression with boat or shipmates" ... that's what he means by sailing free.

You can guess he is not a man who loves ocean racing. He's done his share, but his distaste for the aggressive instincts of racing men just about equals his scorn for the ratrace.

So, unexpectedly we find 'Eclipse' an entry in the Cape to Rio race ... but then this long passage attracts others of the cruising mentality ... if only to ease the boredom of the trans-Atlantic haul.

The book records some wonderful moments! The exhilarating downwind slides with music blaring; the memorable hospitality of remote islands; the exuberance of the Carnival in Rio.

The Caribbean brought "six months of calypso music ... the spices, orchids and parakeets of Granada, the green hills of Monsarrat, the wild limes and hibiscus of Dominica". There are strange cults, too, in these islands. They saw voodoo and violence.

He reflects on the things that sailors fear ... the tragedy of a friend washed overboard, the disaster of collisions at sea, perilous encounters with whales ... when a boat was sunk during the Cape to Rio she went down in minutes with all lights burning and a Mayday distress signal sending out a message which nobody heard.

It made Le Guay think a lot about luck, the element which pervades every sailor's calendar, but which may without warning desert him.

Le Guay managed to get a permit from the Equadorian Government to visit the Galapagos Islands ... a privilege denied to most these days, to protect the unique fauna and geography of these islands.

The month-long passage to the Marquesas, punctuated with the baffling calms of the doldrums, ended with the sighting of the high and beautiful peaks of Nuka Hiva. Le Guay still found a primitive charm in these islands despite the civilising campaign of the missionaries.

1,000 miles later, through the dangerous sprawling atolls of the Tua Motos, 'Eclipse' reached Tahiti. Le Guay found the myth of paradise fast disappearing, but the unforgettable beauty of these islands stamped them in his log as idyllic cruising territory.

The Cook Islands still hinted at their savage past. One anecdote recalls how a recent administrator had refused certain requests from the village elders, and how his young son had hysterically phoned neighbours one night saying "Come quickly — they are cutting up Daddy". And they had.

On the practical matters of cruising, Laurie says:

Watches. We found one hour on and three off suited us best.

Insurance. We had none. Apparently insurance companies are not yet aware that the majority of losses of small boats are not at sea but in harbour or too close to the coast. It's just too expensive.

Hull. A small, well-designed, well-built steel boat can cope with anything the ocean can dish up, where distances are great and coral reefs predominate.

Engines. Whichever you choose make it one which has universal use: spare parts in remote areas are hard to come by.

Money. One of the most important things about money is never to let anyone know you haven't any. The attitude of port officials to bedraggled and impoverished looking crews is always less hospitable. A Diners Card proved useful for obtaining both cash and credit in many isolated ports.

Refrigeration. Forget it. He met people who had lost their entire food supply through a fault with the deep freeze.

It's Le Guay's belief that "cruising sharpens the senses to a finer pitch than

possible in city or suburbia. Its alchemy quickly restores old instincts that have long remained moribund ... It also promotes that necessary challenge that all men instinctively desire at some point in their lives".

Perhaps his book will persuade others to meet this challenge.

**The Observer's Book of SAILING CRAFT of Australia & New Zealand**  
by Peter Campbell; Methuen; \$3.95\*.  
Review by John Hawley

The series of Observer's Books covers a wide range of subjects and this, the latest of the series, gives massive coverage to the subject despite its genuine pocket size.

Measuring little more than the size of a packet of king-size cigarettes, it is well bound and contains 262 pages of concise details and photographs of over 300 different types of craft from trailer dinghies to the America's Cup challengers and contains a comprehensive record of the international achievements of Australian and New Zealand yachtsmen.

**Ted Turner,  
The Man Behind The Mouth**

by Roger Vaughan; SAIL/Norton; \$15.35\*  
Review by David Kellett

Those who know Ted Turner are often overawed with his unusual character. Roger Vaughan, the author of *The Man Behind The Mouth* is no exception.

Where the book really shines is in the accounts of behind the scenes action in the defence camps for the 1977 America's Cup.

Many among us have had the privilege of representing our country and have approached our first endeavours thinking that it was the greatest thing since the wheel, only to be completely disillusioned when the pressures and politics started. Over half the book is spent on this subject, and Vaughan has been able to capture the pressures and back-stabbing so completely that this book should be compulsory reading to anyone thinking of representing his/her country.

The remainder of the book delves into Turner's life and business and makes an enjoyable insight to R.E. Turner III.

# CLUB NOTES

## Do the right thing

On race days the garbage bins on the marinas are often filled to overflowing, making an unsightly mess, and still more refuse is piled around them.

Steps have been taken to empty the cans more regularly, but if they are full, skippers please tell your crews to use the Dumpmaster in the yard.

Don't make a mess in your own Club.

## CYCA Member, Mike Fletcher, Yachtsman of the Year

The 1979 Yachtsman of the Year is Mike Fletcher, a prominent and active Club Member. He won his award in recognition of his total commitment to the improvement of yachting standards in Australia.

Mike's list of championships in a number of classes is a long one, and among his prominent past achievements are: Australian Olympic coach for '72 and '76; presently on the Olympic Planning Committee for Yachting; Captain of our '75 Admiral's Cup team, when he crewed on 'Bumblebee 3'. He is the instigator of the Youth Sail training program for Australia's young sailors.

Mike has honoured us by donating his trophy to the Club.

## All girl crew for Todd River

In 1977 the CYCA sent an ocean racing crew to compete in the Todd River Regatta, in Alice Springs, and this crew returned with the trophy after beating an American team of yachtsmen from the US base up there.

The Yanks were beaten by such a margin that we have condescended to give them a chance by sending up an all-girl crew to run against them on the 100 m sand track.

There is every confidence that we will win again, due to our superior sailing ability (Jill Carter, for instance, did the recent Noumea race), superior yacht design (Alan Payne did our last one), and greater knowledge of local conditions.

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## NOTICE

A team of nine experienced ocean racing guys from the Port Curtis Sailing Club, Gladstone, Queensland, wish to charter a yacht for the 1979 Sydney to Hobart Race.

If anyone is able to help us with a charter, would you kindly contact, for full details of crew experience and full details of any offer:

Brad Barker,  
P.O. Box 49,  
Gladstone, Qld.,

or

Lesley Brydon,  
Sydney 27 1181 (work),  
357 4909 (home).

# OFFSHORE SIGNALS

## Sailfast '79

CYCA Members will play a leading role in this year's Sailfast Seminar Series to be held at Woollahra Sailing Club.

Sailfast has been held each year since 1976 and has attracted an audience of 150 people over each of the four nights. It is on again this year over four Tuesday nights starting from October 9th.

An impressive line-up of speakers for this series includes Iain Murray, Hugh Treharne, Mike Fletcher, Tim Alexander, Andrew Buckland, Ben Lexcen, Vic Bahr, Rob Porter, Rob Antill and other top class helmsmen and crew from a variety of classes.

In putting together Sailfast '79, the organisers promise a wide range of topics starting with hull design and all facets of sailing to such things as boat building, tuning, wind patterns and racing rules.

Iain Murray and Andrew Buckland will be showing the films on the recent 18 Footers World Championship as well as discussing reasons for their success in 18 footers, J24s and larger yachts. At the time of the seminar, Buckland will have just returned from the Admiral's Cup where he is sailing on 'Ragamuffin'.

Hugh Treharne will be talking on tuning and in particular the efforts made to tune 'Impetuous' in the recent Admiral's Cup Trials, together with experiences from other boats including 'Sea Flyer'.

Mike Fletcher, Yachtsman of the Year and former Olympic coach will be talking on tactics from his vast experience on many classes of boats.

Rob Porter and Rob Antill, the current World Dragon champions, will be talking about boat preparation. They will also be showing films related to sail making and shaping, and Antill will have also just returned from sailing on 'Ragamuffin'.

Vic Bahr, the well known weatherman, 28 — OFFSHORE, August-September 1979

will be talking on reading and interpreting weather maps. Tim Alexander, Laser champion and current Olympic meteorologist, will be speaking on predicting the weather and how to use the wind shifts.

Tony Mooney will be speaking on the rules and protest procedures. In particular he will be elaborating on the theme that in recent years, protests are being won and lost much more on the basis of the presentations made in the committee hearing than on the things that actually happened on the water.

Ben Lexcen, designer of scores of boats from skiffs through racing and cruising yachts to the America's Cup 12 metres, will be talking about the current changes being made to the 12 metre 'Australia', plus his thoughts on future directions in yacht design.

Throughout the series, the speakers will be available to answer problems and queries. The series will be held over four Tuesday nights, October 9, 16, 23 and 30.

Tickets (\$10 for the complete series) are available from 58 Clarence Street, Sydney, or by phoning 371-5956 or 94-4346.

## New VDO Electronic Sumlog II

From the company whose mechanical Sumlog has earned a reputation for reliability comes the new VDO Electronic Sumlog II, a new electronic log with some attractive features.

When a fixed log impellor becomes fouled at sea it can be virtually impossible to un-foul while underway, and if you only have that one log, you've lost one of your most vital instruments.

The low drag paddle wheel sensor of the Sumlog II can be removed from the through-hull fitting while you are underway (in the event that this very 'low profile' impellor becomes fouled). A flap valve in the skin fitting inhibits the ingress of water when the unit is removed and the plug (A) is being put in its place; if you don't delay unduly you will ship only a couple of cupfuls of water in this operation.

The instrument head has an external adjustment for both the distance

counter and the speed (+5% to -20%). Four models — with 8, 12, 18 or 30 knot scales — are available for 12v (or 24v, with a resistor) operation. The instrument draws 0.15 amp.

Also available to accompany the Sumlog II is a trimming unit, which shows on its magnified scale ( $\pm 1$  knot) any slight change of speed, a useful feature for sail trimming (the trimming unit can be used with the 8, 12 or 18 knot Sumlog II). A push button resets the instrument as desired.

## Peter Green Ship Chandlers acquires another northside outlet

Peter Green Ship Chandlers Pty Ltd acquired on July 2nd, the Crows Nest Ship Chandlers shop at 9 Alexander Street, Crows Nest, NSW, giving Peter Green four outlets on the North side of the Sydney Harbour bridge — Crows Nest, Mosman, Mona Vale and Newport (at the RPAYC). Peter's son, Mike, is managing the new outlet, and he plans to build up inventories to provide a full range of chandlery items, from fastenings to paints to boatique-type gear.

## 'Club Mediterranee' for sale

The 72 metre, four-masted schooner 'Club Mediterranee', allegedly the biggest sailing vessel built in the last 50 years and runner-up in the 1976 Single-Handed Transatlantic Yacht Race, is for sale.

Completed in 1976 at a cost of \$1.2 million, she was designed and built by French navigator Alain Colas to beat the world record for a single-handed crossing of the Atlantic.

Following the race, the cavernous hull interior was partially rebuilt to provide cruising accommodation and the yacht was put into service sailing Club Med members, and others, around the Society Islands.

Owner Alain Colas disappeared last November while competing in another single-handed Trans-Atlantic ocean race, the Course du Rhum from St. Malo to Guadeloupe. He is presumed dead.

His widow Teura has decided to sell the vessel to the highest bidder.



## VM2PC Penta Base

A voice which is becoming familiar on the HF airwaves is that of Derek Barnard from Penta Base, Gosford. The Penta Fishing Club was formed by Gosford Chrysler Marine in 1976 to provide seven-day radio coverage on 27 MHz (27.88 and 27.91) for boating people who did not want to be an active member of a fishing club but who wanted to have a radio. Recently the Club installed an HF and VHF base station with a new radio tower, and it has been granted a Limited Coast Station License for 2524, 2182 and 2001 kHz and VHF channels 16, 67 and 73.

Derek Barnard has been active on the air and has provided assistance to a great many yachtsmen. He recently was a great help in relaying race sked information to the CYCA from the Noumea Race Fleet (Penta also monitors 4143.6 kHz during races). The CYCA is most appreciative of Penta Base's recent kind help.

Penta Base's efficient antenna system puts out a very strong signal (the Editor recently heard it [5s] on 2524 kHz in the Whitsunday Islands, about 1200 miles north.)

Anyone interested in details of the Penta Club can write or call Derek Barnard, 339 Mann Street, Gosford, 2250. Telephone (043) 24-2644.

## OTC introduces SEAPHONE — a new coastal communications system

A new public communications facility has commenced operation in Melbourne and Sydney and is planned to be available soon in other coastal areas of Australia to provide a direct, continuous and reliable high-quality VHF marine radio link between vessels off the Australian coast and any telephone installation in Australia or overseas.

The service will be known as SEAPHONE. The key to SEAPHONE is the use of VHF (Very High Frequency) radio, which provides clear, interference-free reception and reliability at moderate installation costs.

Owners and/or operators of marine craft who have VHF equipment connected through SEAPHONE channels will benefit from a cheaper, more efficient communications facility en-

abling people to make direct calls to or from any shore-based location which has a telephone. In the ship-to-shore direction, the time lapse in securing a person-to-person connection is expected to be less than a minute.

SEAPHONE will also provide emergency cover for marine craft during the hours when volunteer rescue organisations are normally inactive through its 24-hour surveillance program. SEA-

PHONE is on standby and ready to alert the necessary emergency services if and when required. At regular times, SEAPHONE will broadcast weather bulletins and navigation information over channel 67.

The operational range of SEAPHONE extends up to 150 km (80 NM) seaward. However, the range is largely governed by the height of the ship-board antenna.

## RACE CALENDAR

### Junior Offshore Group of N.S.W. Race Calendar for 1979/80

This season the J.O.G. Pointscore will require a separate block entry to the J.O.G., in addition to the normal club race entries. This will save a great deal of administration and collection of race fees from Clubs. Fifteen races have been nominated for the season, as below.

		DIST.	POINTS	CLUB
1979				
28/9	Sydney to Pittwater		Nil	R.S.Y.S.
28/9	Botany Bay to Pittwater		Nil	R.S.Y.S.
29/9	Broken Bay to Pittwater		x 1	R.S.Y.S.
30/9	Broken Bay/Bird Is/Sydney	70	x 1½	R.S.Y.S.
27/10	Off Sydney	20	x 1	R.S.Y.S.
				Top Dog Jog
24/11	Off Sydney	20	x 1	M.H.Y.C.
*25/11	Off Sydney	20	x 1	M.H.Y.C.
1/12	Botany Bay		x 1	B.B.Y.C.
2/12	Bate Bay		x 1	P.H.O.Y.C.
*8/12	Port Hacking/FIs/P. Hacking	60	x 1½	P.H.O.Y.C.
1980				
*6/1	Off Sydney	20	x 1	M.H.Y.C./C.Y.C.
*6/1	Sydney/L Is/Sydney	45	x 1	M.H.Y.C./C.Y.C.
8/1	Off Sydney	20	x 1	M.H.Y.C./C.Y.C.
9/1	Off Sydney	20	x 1	M.H.Y.C./C.Y.C.
11/1	Sydney/Bird Is/Sydney	90	x 1½	M.H.Y.C./C.Y.C.
2/2	Off Sydney	20	x 1	R.S.Y.S.
				Iduna Shield

\* Race cannot be dropped for pointscore purposes.

Of the 14 pointscore races, 10 will count. However, those races marked \* cannot be dropped. Similarly, a yacht must count any race where she is disqualified. Block entry fee for the series is \$12.

Trophies will be presented to 1st, 2nd and 3rd\*. Points will be calculated on the low scoring system, as in previous seasons. Details of pointscores will be issued regularly to all yachts.

Entries should be made to reach the Secretary not later than 14 days prior to the first race entered. Late entries will be received up to the Monday prior to the race, at a late entry fee of \$3 per race.

Trophies will be presented at the Annual Dinner, together with the perpetual trophies. Club trophies will be presented by the individual clubs.

Note that entries are restricted to J.O.G. members. Handicaps will be J.O.G.A. and the J.O.G. N.S.W. burgee must be flown from the backstay during all races.

Fox' was second, she sailed a very good race in conditions which did not really suit her initially, leaving a sister ship far behind. Third was 'Spider' and hers makes an interesting story.

'Spider' was caught going the wrong way at the start and was left posted when the wind died. It took her 52 minutes to cross the starting line, but things were not really as bad as they seemed from behind, the leaders were still only two miles away.

After that 'Spider' made no mistakes; the light conditions and flat seas suited this 3-tonner, one of the smallest boats in the fleet. Dave Curry picked the shifts cleverly through Woodin Pass and slipped out of the Havannah Passage glued to the tail of the 1-tonner, 'Huon Chief'. That was good tactics and Hedley Calvert in 'Huon Chief' could not shake 'Spider' in the flukey conditions for the next 80 miles. 'Spider' was third only by minutes and with a bit of luck could have won the division, but it was still a pretty good result for what was only her second race.

'Diannick II' won the arbitrary division easily having got well clear the first day.

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#### Should We Handicap the Sacred Cow continued from page 20

cover the race building up to a stage that would make the Melbourne Cup look second rate. For the Club officials trying to raise money for yachting an organised 'Sweep' on the event should prove unreal. This would add further impetus to the Hobart. I can just picture the new breed of bookmaker at the bar.

So it would be excitement down the coast as the bigger yacht tried to catch the smaller until, weather and handicapping permitting, all arrived in the Derwent together.

Now, that *would* be something! What if it happened at night? Tasmania would go mad, and so would Sydney, with the right TV coverage.

Everyone understands. First across the line wins the race and gets the prize.

With yachts arriving together, New

'Quadrille II' did not find the light airs to her liking but managed to stop the rot after the wind freshened to be rewarded with second place. After nearly retiring, 'Helmsman' found her favourite conditions at last and passed quite a few on her way to third place.

We raised Efate Island at dawn of the third day. It was a beautiful sight in the sunrise with added interest as an inbound French frigate passed us in the approaches. Port Vila is a picturesque little place in the classic South Pacific pattern, much beloved of tourist brochures, but this time for real and with familiar yachts swinging to moorings in front of the Hotel Rossi, an establishment which, I am sure, Somerset Maugham would have found to his liking.

The British and French residents of Port Vila lacked none of the enthusiastic hospitality of their neighbours in New Caledonia and presented us with a daunting social programme scheduled to last a full week up to the Bastille Day celebrations. I lasted four days but it was no use, my body could take no more; I escaped in 'Quadrille II' and in company with 'Mary Muffin' we spent an idyllic period exploring the magnificent cruising grounds of the New Hebrides.

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Year's Eve would be a gay affair. When small boat crews realised they had a chance for first crack at the birds and not the left overs from the big boats, their race performances would really be enhanced. Even those on the radio vessel would be in with a chance.

One's mind boggles at the thought of 200 yachts all trying to get into Constitution Dock together: the language; the keen ones running across bobbing decks jammed together from the middle of the river.

For the small boat owners and crews whose appetite may be whetted and see some merit in such an event, take heed. The blue bloods are not prepared at this stage to forsake IOR for Arbitrary even though other countries are moving in this direction.

It's a matter of dreaming at the moment and putting spectators aside.

So don't hold your breath.

## LETTERS

June 15, 1979

Dear Sir,

After reading the article "PROTEST" in the April/May issue of 'Offshore' I was somewhat disturbed by the concluding comments of the writer.

Having been a crew-member aboard 'Rogue' at the time, I witnessed the extreme pain and discomfort that the injured crew-member went through, and it did not help him at all by being told that a crew-member aboard the other yacht involved told the skipper of 'Rogue' to 'f--- off and go home'.

I have no doubt that that particular crew-member would have kept those words to himself if he realised that the collision caused a rather serious injury that resulted in the fellow being transferred ashore by a Police launch.

However I fail to see how Mr Old can regard a situation in which a crew-member on a yacht, after colliding with another yacht resulting in a crew-member being seriously injured, yells out to the skipper to "f--- off and go home" as being "quaintly humorous".

In my opinion the writer displayed a distinct lack of good taste in what was a fairly good article explaining a couple of fundamental yacht racing rules.

Yours sincerely,  
Neil Underhill

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The author's remarks about "go home" were quite an afterthought at the end of the article, and he did not intend any levity to be read into his discussion of the collision or rules governing right of way. The expression referred to dates back to the 18 footer days of the '40's, when incidents such as intentional cap-sizes of opposing vessels by grabbing a passing ringtail were commonplace, and full-scale brawls in the water between crews were not unknown. The "go home, ya mug" was a verbally economic way of shunning a lengthy argument, or more, at the time. Editor.

(Letter given to 'Offshore' by Peter Rysdyk)

*Aboard 'Cia-Maria',  
Port Vila.  
10/5/1979*

Dear Peter,

What a pleasant surprise it was to see you yesterday here in lovely Port Vila! It was a very happy moment for us to see a face from home. We wish you well with the race organisation.

As I have explained to you, I have given most of our news to the members of the CYC Women's Committee but shall briefly tell you the main facts of our voyage.

We left Sydney on September 11th, 1977 and had a very rough ride up the coast to Brisbane. We made our way through the great Sandy Strait, stopped at most harbours on the way up the coast and were really enthralled by the Great Barrier Reef. One of our highlights was Lizard Island, and Escape River was another. From there through Albany Passage, which is breathtakingly beautiful, to Cape York was perhaps one of our most emotional experiences. Not another living soul anywhere to be seen — the water so blue and the beaches so long and white.

We put our anchor down around the tip of Cape York on June 7th, 1978. Our trip from Sydney had been full of interest, and the wonderful hospitality we had received from all the yacht clubs on the way had encouraged us to stay longer in many places than we had intended to.

From Cape York we made for Thursday Island — a different little world, very harmonious and friendly but anchorages very poor. We had a very happy time on Thursday Island before making our customs clearance for Papua New Guinea, spending our final night in Australian waters at calm Horn Island.

We then carefully made our way across Torres Strait to Daru, the port of entry for western Papua New Guinea. Much kindness was shown us in Daru, and from there we sailed, what we now look upon as our 'horror stretch' of all times, the dreaded Gulf of Papua. I have a memory of great bashing on.

When we entered Port Moresby Harbour, the Vice Commodore of the Royal Papua Yacht Club came down the harbour in the yacht club tender to guide us in. We were very tired and shall always remember the smiling face of Trevor Kerr. He and the Commodore, Mr. Hugh Richardson, and the Club members made us feel so much at home that we look back upon our time spent there as a highlight of our trip. The wind never seemed to blow for us, but one day we said our sad farewells and sailed for Samarai, the Louisiade Archipelago to Misima, where we enjoyed some restful days in the calm waters of Bwagao Harbour.

Finally we made our way along the New Georgia Group and Russell Island to Honiara, which became like another home to us. We spent the cyclone season at Tulagi, where the people really made us very welcome. Leaving Tulagi was almost like leaving home all over again. We had become very fond of the shy children, who gradually became friendly. In fact all the people of Tulagi made our stay there a sojourn to remember.

Back in Honiara we found boats from various holing up places. One of the yachts with us in Tulagi was the great American schooner 'Constellation 76'. She had returned sometime before us — we were the last boat out of Tulagi.

We were very sad to say goodbye to the Solomon Islands, where life had been so restful and yet full of activity — and happy people. Point Cruz Yacht Club had become another home.

From Vila we hope to go to Uvea Atoll, Noumea, and then home by September, 1979.

What do you think of this for kindness from one yacht's crew to another? This morning, Robert, Garry and Geoff, the crew of Paul Weaver's yacht 'Dragonera', from Flagstaff, U.S.A., called with diving gear and with Paul, their skipper, took to cleaning the bottom of our boat. This really gave our spirits a lift, that one of the biggest yachts in the harbour should show such kindness to the smallest. May they always have fair winds and happy days. Wherever he goes Paul Weaver will give happiness and we hope one day to see him at the CYCA.

Hope to see you in Noumea, Peter. Best wishes to you and 'Onya of Gosford'. Greetings to all at the CYCA.

— *Cecelia and Paul Seifert*

Dear Editor,

It was a wonderful experience for me to witness the Sydney-Noumea and Noumea-Vila Races, at the finishing line.

The CNC (Cercle Nautique Caledonien) staff and volunteers had gone to untold preparation for this event. It was certainly an eye-opener and something we can dearly learn from these hospitable people; nothing was overlooked — free buses to convey skippers, crew, wives and friends to and from the port to the CNC or their hotels; bread deliveries (beautiful French bread); block ice; laundry, picked up from and delivered back to the Race Centre, all beautifully wrapped. This was all announced over a marvellous pa system, manned by two charming French girls.

The hospitality was simply overwhelming, and nothing was too much trouble. Each yacht on arrival received bottles of red wine, French bread and cheeses — what a wonderful way to welcome a stranger! At Vila, hospitality was the key word again. The PVYC (Port Vila Yacht Club) members had worked so hard to prepare the Club for the arrival of the fleet — the finishing line at the Club was something else. As the first yachts arrived in the evening, the Club had planned a marvellous system for just this purpose — two vertical fluorescent strip lights marked the line and directly behind these lights were three vertical spotlights on the Clubhouse building which flashed on and off in conjunction with a loud klaxon blast as each yacht crossed the line — most impressive.

We can all learn something from these two Clubs, I am sure.

— *Jill McLay*

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## HOBART RACE SKIPPERS

Don't draw a blank in this year's Hitachi Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race Program. Be sure the Office has a good photograph of your yacht. Be sure to submit your crew list, too.

OFFSHORE, August-September 1979 — 31



# AROUND THE SLIPWAY

with Peter Shipway

Returning to our marina in July was one of the former glamour boats of ocean racing in this country. She is the original 'Margaret Rintoul', presently on Bob Holmes' books for sale.

A 44 foot yawl from the design board of Phillip Rhodes, her racing record in the early days of the CYCA ranks among the best. Her first claim to fame was the 1949 Hobart Race, when she finished second across the line to the famous 'Waltzing Matilda' by only 1 minute 51 seconds, and fourth on corrected time. Amongst the present dusty CYCA records is a crew list for that Hobart Race, and among the crew were Stanley Edwards and the legendary Peter Green. Stan, whose father owned the boat is, of course, the present owner of 'Margaret Rintoul II', the ex 'Ragamuffin'.

The next Hobart she gained line honours in a race that started in the teeth of a southerly gale which blew for two and a half days, and another blow off Tasmania made it four days to windward out of five and a half. She finished second on corrected time that year behind 'Nerida'. The next Hobart in 1951 she set the race record which stood till broken by 'Kurrewa IV' in 1957. The 1951 race was described as virtually a run from start to finish, with 'Margaret Rintoul' covering the course in just two hours over four days.

\* \* \*

New boatowner of the month at the marina is Dave Fuller, with his yet unnamed Cavalier 32. Painted off-white with a heavy blue stripe and matching blue mast and boom, she looks most impressive. Her two spreader mast is 3'6" bigger than the original Cavalier design, but Dave insists that she will be used only for cruising with the occasional twilight and Wednesday afternoon race. Many names have been suggested, with the most popular at this stage being 'Full-as-a-Goog'.

First boat back to the marina after the Sydney-Noumea Race was the unlucky Victorian, the 48-footer 'Clare de Lune', who broke her mast 50 miles east of Lord Howe Island. The accident occurred at eight o'clock at night in NE. winds of 25-30 knots, and she was reaching hard at nine knots when the 60 foot spar crumpled at the lower spreaders. The top of the mast was cut away to firstly save the mast-head fitting, and secondly to stop it damaging the steel hull. Once this was accomplished the remainder of the mast was lashed to the deck, and some two days later, after riding out heavy seas and 40 knot winds, they struggled into Lord Howe Island. Loading up with fuel they motored back to Sydney in near-calm conditions, arriving back at the CYCA less than two weeks after they left.

\* \* \*

Further amongst our dusty records was a press release from the CYCA dated 13.5.47, and a few interesting points come forward, viewed some 22 years later. I quote: 'The CYCA has no Club house yet, nor even its own city office. The shortage of office space is acute, and home building has top priority on building materials. The office of an accountant, Mr. Ernest Le Brun — a land lover converted deeply to the sport's charm — is the CYCA meeting place and conference room. Three guineas a year is the Club subscription and entry into Club races costs only 10/6. To the Club, if not The Race, small boatowners are admitted on the theory that the small boatowner of today is the big boatowner of tomorrow'.

\* \* \*

Another interesting quote from the release was about the 'modern' yachts. It said: 'The yachts of the CYCA are Australian built and largely Australian designed, although the influence of

overseas designers in England, the US and Norway has been, and still is, felt. Australian designs, like the English, usually carry less canvas than the Americans. Yachts in the Club vary mostly between two and 30 tons displacement, and sail area ranges from 200 to 600 square feet.

'Australian material is used for storm sails and the heavier kinds of duck; English material for No. 1 work. Engines, either diesel or petrol, are generally fitted, but not to all craft. Under 50 hp most engines that Halvorsens fit are British; over 50 hp, American.

'Cost of a 40 footer now in Sydney is about £A3000, with engine. Other estimated costs, with pre-war figures in brackets, are:

30 footer — £A2,000 (£A1,000)

45 footer — £A3,600 (£A2,500)

60 footer — £A7,000 (£4,500)

'A sales tax of 25 per cent on craft is a big item in these figures. A new set of sails, needed every six or seven years in Australia, costs about £A130.

\* \* \*

The new extensions to our marina will be stretched to the limit at Christmas time if all the predictions as to the number of Southern Cross and Hobart entries come true. The latest move to attract entries is by the Royal Australian Navy. They are offering competitors in the Parmelia Race, who are wishing to take part in the Southern Cross Series and the Sydney-Hobart, shipping from Fremantle to Sydney. The 'Jervis Bay' will be transporting the yachts and can accommodate crew at a daily subsistence rate of \$9.90 in the officer's mess and \$7.00 in the rating mess. There is no charge for the portage, but construction of the cradles must be paid for. 'Jervis Bay' will sail from Fremantle on December 2nd.

# You're all settled in for the winter, but haven't you forgotten something?



The boat's laid up, the gear's stored, and the sleeping bags and linens have been sent to the cleaners. But have the sails been left to mildew in the forepeak or the locker? And what about those chafed seams in the headsails, tired batten pockets in the main, and pinholes in the spinnaker?

Little problems become big problems unless attended to professionally.

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- ☐ Check set of sails on the boat.
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