

# OFFSHORE

NUMBER 45

DECEMBER 1978/JANUARY 1979

50\*



# Maybe it isn't you!



We all know the feeling well — the sound of your competitor's bow wave coming closer and closer, the supercilious sneer as he grinds through your lee, or even worse, the "I'm faster than you look" he shoots at your bikini clad crew.

We would like to suggest to you, ever so kindly, that maybe it isn't you. As Australia's top 12 metre skipper has often been heard to say, "The sails are the engines of the ship". Maybe, if this is true, then just maybe, it could be your sails.

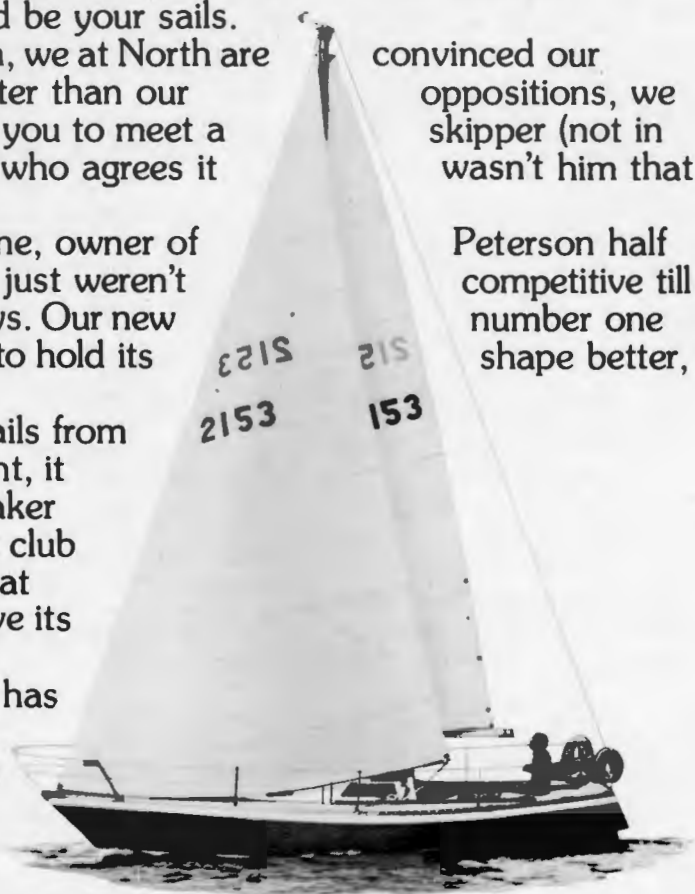
Although, we at North are convinced our sails are faster than our oppositions, we would like you to meet a skipper (not in wasn't him that our employ) who agrees it was slow.

convincing our oppositions, we skipper (not in wasn't him that

Ray Payne, owner of tonner "Fiction", says it this way. "We just weren't I took some advice from the North boys. Our new Genoa seems easier to set, it appears to hold its and it's certainly faster".

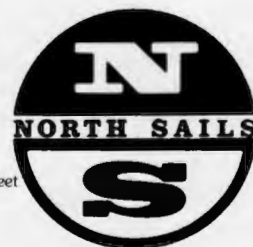
Once Ray had seen what the sails from the blue bags could do for him up front, it wasn't long before a main and spinnaker were in his inventory. Now the yacht club bar (an impeccable source) tells us that "Fiction" is performing up to and above its potential, and that's a fact.

This is just one local boat that has seen the advantage of North. Why don't you try North. We reckon it's a fairer bet than a cigar for the handicapper.



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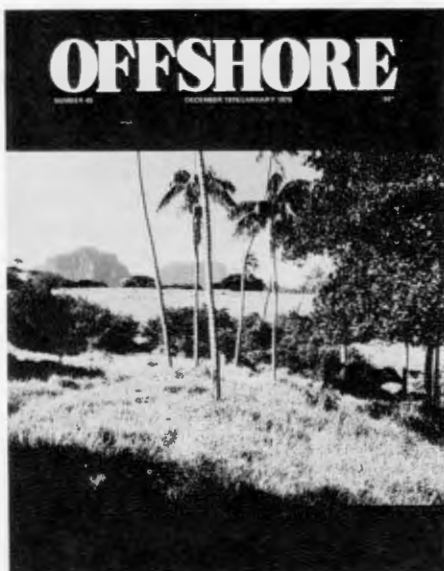
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*Cover: Amid the fever of the Hobart Race, State and National championships of many classes, there is also the tranquility of summer cruising, lazy days just messing about in boats. Whatever your inclinations in boating, 'Offshore' wishes you happy holidays and good sailing.*

Photograph by David Colfelt.

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### Editor's note

Just as the swallow is the harbinger of spring in England, so we have our own feathered folk that emerge from their places of hiding around Hobart Race time. At the right is pictured the hairy-breasted boat picker, known equally in these parts for its shrill proclamations about winners and for its tenacious adherence to a fundamental misunderstanding of the Theory of Probability particularly as this is applied to predicting the weather.

Those who are especially sharp-eyed will have spotted that the h.b.b.p. pictured at right is none other than the author himself, Tony Cable. "This year is a dead cinch," he has said, although those of you with even a flea's memory will know that his image is in tatters after last year's dismally inaccurate prediction. Then he predicted a blow, and when one occurred and knocked 45% of the fleet out of the race, he spent most of the ensuing months disclaiming that the blow really was a 'blow' of the kind he predicted; and if you'd bet on his placings last year, you would be selling pencils in George Street today.

Anyway, 'Offshore' is happy to introduce once again this year for your bedazzlement...



# THE WEATHER AND THE WINNER FOR HOBART

by Tony Cable

Mr Editor, herewith is my 4th annual article which predicts who will win the Hitachi Sydney-Hobart Race and what the weather will be. I submit this with a considerable degree of bad grace, for I feel that you take quite a liberty expecting me to do justice to this task when this copy is

due on November 21st, some five weeks before the event. Not even the weather bureau would be prepared to look so far ahead.

Further to this, you have cut me back on my allowance to pick from nine yachts to win, down to five out of 105. Even the horse tipsters for the Melbourne Cup, with 25 or so to pick from a day or so before the

gallop, can choose five at least without the punter being upset.

What you fail to realize, you inflated admiral of a 30' two-sticker, is that while it is entirely possible to pick both fast racehorses and yachts, there is a difference in that racehorses don't lose backstays, get seasick or have jockeys that only look good on paper.



O.K., I will play tout again with a warning that this may well be my last article on the subject. Readers will know that last year, of the nine picked to win, I only managed a 7th and 23rd (the others did not start or retired). I trust that, if I fail again, there will be an avalanche of stiff letters complaining that the amateur yachting writer Cable should henceforth not waste editorial space and that he be relegated to writing such pieces as 'Ladies Auxiliary Notes' or 'Highlights from the Treasurer's report'.

Having got all that off my chest, I must say that this year the task is dead easy. I've never been so confident of being spot on. The reason is that, while there is a very large entry, the overall quality of the fleet is unimpressive. There are no hot overseas boats, scarcely any brand new top-performing local boats and a very small turnout of good 1-tonners. The bulk is made up of serviceable designs, such as S&S 34's and East Coast 31's, along with many boats of yesteryear and some cement and cruising designs.

The fleet is so poor that, rather than the usual outstanding boat winning, it is highly possible that a second-ranker could take the prize, for example, the '74 winner, *Love & War*; well geared and strongly crewed, she is a real danger.

In picking the winner I am really in the hands of the boats and crews, some of which I have no personal knowledge, having just heard comments about them around the bar. I cannot anticipate which of these will fall apart through failings, such as lack of robust design; nor do I not know who will pull out because it is 'too rough', or through 'seasickness'.

Having given such preconditions, I will go on to pick as winner - the Farr design, *Piccolo* - (nee *Hecate*), which has aboard the nucleus of her '76 winning crew. For my four remaining choices, I go for the Peterson sister ships *Deception* and *Relentless*; then *Vanguard* (nee *Smirnoff-Agen*) - all 1-tonners (or thereabouts). Lastly, I go for Allan Bond's *Apollo IV* (nee *Williwaw*).

Had the Editor allowed me my additional four choices, these would have included *Superstar*, the Peterson 46' chartered by Syd Fischer; *Sweet Caroline*, the new Peterson design built in California and originally named *Big Schott*; and the new Victorian Holland 41' *Moonshadow*. To round off the top nine, included is *Love & War*. If we don't have a winner from among these, I'll give the game away.

Beyond this group there are several other good boats that will be ready to come up if

the above falter. Included will be *Margaret Rintoul II* (the first *Ragamuffin*); *Constellation* (the third *Ragamuffin*); the new Peterson 44' *Bacardi*, from Victoria; *Natelle II*, an older Peterson 2-tonner; *Dynamite*, a Farr 2-tonner; *Mirrabooka*, (formerly *Superstar* and *Pandora*). There is a new, but unknown, Holland 2-tonner, *Impetuous*, recently launched. Another two that could get respectable placings are *Matika II*, a ¾-tonner, and the 1-tonner *Streaker*.

If good crews alone had anything to do with it, some of the most experienced are on Lou Abraham's veteran, *Vittoria*, while Alan Murray's team on the S&S 34, *Zilvergeest III*, is also very competent; I do not, however, pick these boats as chances.

In regard to the line honours stakes, some interesting situations could develop if the largest yachts don't keep up to their potential speeds. The first-over slot is reserved for Rolly Tasker's new aluminium 77 footer, *Siska* (if she starts). Next should be the 72' *Helsal*, the Race record holder prior to *Kialoa*. The 83' *Anaconda II* has the waterline; it is up to her crew to use it. The U.S. ketch *Summer Wind*, while having the length, is apparently stronger on the cruising side. *Apollo* is entered, but at this date is a doubtful starter; if she does go she is very capable of giving the above a good chase. Following these should be the 12 metre *Gretel* and then the 49' *Casablanca*.

Turning to the prediction of the weather, this is quite an easy task also. This year, because we haven't had one for ages, we will have a hard southerly at the start. This will be followed by a couple of very calm days, for we haven't had any of these for a long time either. Finally, to round it off, as we haven't had a good sou'easter off Tasmania since 1970, we will have a beaut one this year. Indeed, I am so sure of this that I will try to prevail upon our navigator on *Gretel* to take us 100 miles out so that we can do a world championship reach in, while laughing at all those troops hard in on the coast.

Why is one so dogmatic about the weather? It is really to be a supplement to the weather bureau, which doesn't seem to be all that accurate even with all their scientific aids. Those who know Tasmania waters know, for instance, that what is officially forecast is generally 20 knots out in velocity, 24 hours out in timing, and 90° out in direction.

Dawson and I were discussing this phenomenon the other day. I had the view that the bureau couldn't tell what was coming up from the South of Tasmania because it was at the edge of the world.

Dawson's explanation was simply that they didn't have a weather man down there, as every chap they had sent down to man a station was immediately blown back again.

Right, that's it, Editor; have a pleasant sunny cruise this Xmas to Port Stephens, and think of me being cursed by all those sailors for predicting a hard sou'easter. □



# TASMANIANS IN THE SYDNEY—HOBART

by Peter Read

Photographs courtesy *The Mercury*, Hobart.

Tasmanians have been in the Sydney—Hobart Race from the start. In all, 65 boats have entered for two wins, two thirds, three fourths, four fifths and four sixths, plus three divisional wins. In every year, except 1961, there have been Tasmanian entries, and 1978 is no exception with a record 15 entries.

*Winston Churchill* was in the inaugural race in 1945. Perc Coverdale's 52' 6" cutter, one, if not the leading, ocean racer in Tasmania at the time, was known to be starting as early as 4 October 1945 and reached Sydney nearly a fortnight before the start, despite the fact that Coverdale had sustained a broken arm just before leaving Hobart.

We all know how *Rani* won the first race, but Tasmanians had had their taste of long ocean races, and five boats, including *Winston Churchill*, entered in 1946. It was a disaster, with *Winston Churchill*, breaking her mast off St Helens and *Active* being pooped in Bass Strait. That mast-breaking puts conditions into perspective when comparing 1946 with 1978.

*Winston Churchill* was a strong, heavy boat by today's standards. Her mast was 65 feet high and, even though hollow, would have weighed near half a tonne. Now Tasmanians had been quite insistent on sealing engines that year; indeed Coverdale had had *Winston Churchill*'s propeller removed. They had no radio and were out of sight of land. Instead of today's mandatory liferafts, each boat carried a dinghy.

How would any of today's crewmen like to set off from a dismasted yacht, out of sight of land, and row west? That is what was done.

Other Tasmanians to make history that year were Mrs Jane Tate, who sailed on her husband's cutter,



'*Winston Churchill*', Perc Coverdale's 52' cutter which competed in the inaugural 1945 race and broke her mast in 1946.



George Gibson's '*Westward*', winner in 1947 and 1948, designed and built by Jack Muir of Battery Point, Hobart.

*Active*. The oldest person to ever compete, 90-year-old 'Pop' Spaulding, helmed *Kalua*.

Eight Tasmanian boats sailed in 1947 in a fleet of 28, and George Gibson's 41 foot cutter, *Westward*, won!

*Westward* was also a strong, heavy boat, built to stand the sort of weather the roaring forties dish out. She had only just been completed a few months before and was designed and built by Jock Muir, of Battery Point. The 50 knot northerly suited *Westward* well and, hard-driven by George Gibson and Jock Muir, she beat *Moonbi* by 46 minutes on handicap.

George Gibson was a tall, handsome man born and bred in Hobart. He learned his sailing in a hard school on the windy Derwent in Cadet dinghies and heavyweight Sharpies. He liked his fishing too, and *Westward* must be the only Sydney—Hobart winner that boasted a functional 10 cubic metre fish-well.

In 1947, too, 12-year-old Colin Philp became the youngest crewman ever in the Race when he sailed on the Hobart 55 foot steel cutter, *Southern Maid*.

In 1948 *Westward* did it again in another hard run in which the fastest boat, *Morna*, clipped 22 hours off the race record. There were six Tasmanian boats that year.

Present-day sailors sometimes tend to scoff at the early races, but this only shows their ignorance. True, they were heavy boats, but this meant they had to be driven hard without most of the gear today's crewmen take for granted. Sails were canvas—quite heavy canvas on the bigger boats. With no roller reefing or jiffy slab reefing gear, it was a hard task to reef a heavy, wet, stiff canvas

sail. Double forestays were not invented and changing a head sail took some time, too. Sheet winches were almost unknown.

Heavy weather gear in those days was limited to a  $\frac{3}{4}$  length oilskin coat and perhaps a sou'wester. It was common practice to soak a large-size shirt in linseed oil and turps and when dry, wear it over a woollen singlet and under a woollen jumper; there were no waterproof trousers, boots or yachting gloves.



'Kintail', Duncan McCrae's 41' cutter which was always well placed when competing. Duncan was paralysed from the waist down by a bullet in the spine at Gallipoli.



'Mistrall II', biggest boat ever entered by a Tasmanian, this 64' schooner was skippered by Jim Payne in 1953.

Without refrigerators, food was rather basic. Most reports seem to speak of lots of bread and tinned meat, tinned fruit, potatoes, onions and fruit cake when the fresh meat ran out after the first day or so.

Safety gear was usually limited to a dinghy lashed upside down on the coach roof; two-way radio only became available in the '50s. (*Moonbi*, in 1947, took carrier pigeons), and there was no mother ship in attendance. If a boat was missing, an air search was organised. Once outside Sydney Heads a skipper and crew were almost on their own.

1948 saw the start of Frank Hickman's long association with the Race with *Nell Gwyn*. Since then he has started 10 times and will race his 40 foot sloop, *Antagonist*, in this year's Race. There was a hint of the future, too, with the sleek 8 metre *Sandra* helmed by Max Creese, finishing 6th.

1949 was a disaster for Tasmanians. *Wanderer*, owned by the Massey Brothers from Launceston, entered and retired. *Wanderer* is a study in persistence. She had first entered in 1947 and competed eight times between then and 1954. Her owners were both in their '70s, but even today no Tasmanian owned boat has started so often. She never finished better than 11th and that was in a small field of 14 in 1951.

1950 saw three Tasmanian entries with Guy Rex bringing *Mistral V* home third and Duncan McCrae 6th in *Kintail*. McCrae had already sailed in the 1947 Race and eventually notched an enviable record of two fourths, a fifth and a sixth from four races. He was a World War I veteran who had been paralysed from the waist down



'Hecate', Charles Davies' centre-boarder that competed in 1977.

by a bullet in the spine at Gallipoli, but in spite of that was an active crew member and could hoist big sails with the best.

Then came the lean years. The fleet steadily got bigger, but there were not many Tasmanian boats—two in 1953, four in 1954, three in 1955, four in 1955, one, *Kismet*, in 1957, two in 1958 and one in 1959, two in 1960 and at last in the 'credit squeeze' year of



'Huon Chief'. Hedley Calvert won the 1 ton Division in this boat in 1974 and has entered this year.



Frank Hickman's 'Antagonist'. 1978 will be his 11th race.





'Solandra'. Reg Escott's 33' sloop is nearly new and enters for the first time in 1978.

1961, none. Still there were some interesting boats. In 1953 John Payne sailed Tasmania's biggest-ever entry, the 64 foot schooner, *Mistral II*.

The '60s were lean too—one boat in 1962, two in 1963; John Bennetto came 8th out of 38 in 1964 and 8th again in 1965. That was Tasmania's best year since 1948, with five entries.

Hedley Calvert came 8th in 1966 in his first attempt in *Huon Lass*, and he came 6th the following year in the big fleet of 67 starters. In 1974 things started to pick up. From three starters out of 92 in 1973, suddenly in 1974 there were six Tasmanians out of 62, including Tasmania's biggest boat since, 1953, Guy Ellis' *Anaconda*, a 54 foot sloop, and *Binda*, from the Northwest coast. Evergreen Frank Hickman had a new boat, the 40' *Antagonist*. Hedley Calvert had a new boat, too, the bright red 36 foot sloop *Huon Chief* and won the 1 ton division.

1975 was better still with seven entries including Tasmania's smallest entry ever, R. Myler's 29 foot sloop, *Bravura*. Better yet, Ron Gender's *Dragon Fyre* made the fastest time of any Tasmanian yacht in the history of the Race, to finish 70 minutes behind *Rampage* on handicap. *Dragon Fyre* was a Gurney 'Hotfoot' design and very fast off the wind. The fresh northerly winds experienced that year suited *Dragon Fyre* admirably.

1976 saw seven starters, and 1977 13. Perhaps that 13 was unlucky, as no

less than seven retired, including Charles Davies' *Hecate*, Tasmania's first and only centreboard entry so far. *Mulberry*, from Launceston, was awarded time for searching for another boat in trouble, and Roger Jackman won 'B' Division in the 45 foot sloop *Brer Fox*.

1978 has a record 15 starters from Tasmania, including arch-rivals Frank Hickman, sailing his 11th Race in *Antanionist*, and Roger Jackman in *Brer Fox*. Hedley Calvert makes his 8th appearance in *Huon Chief*, and John Bennetto his fifth appearance in former Admirals Cup Yacht, the 44' sloop *Mirrabooka*, a Sparkman and Stephens 1972 design that came 3rd in 1975. First time starters include some diverse boats. One is Ron Bugg's 30 foot sloop *Humbug*, which he designed and built himself. *Humbug* rates above 1/2-ton, goes well in fresher breezes and has a keen crew that has been getting the right experience. Another is *The Sting*, an iridescent-silver 37 foot sloop owned by Tony Rundle of Devonport. She is a Kaufman 1-tonner built of diagonal-planked King Billy pine and was runner-up in the 1975 One Ton Championship, helmed by Chris Bouzoid. There are two cement boats. *Clicquot* (N.D. Innes), a 35 foot ketch, and *Cobweb*, Bill Griffiths 39 foot sloop from Launceston. Bill is the Rear Commodore of the Tamar Yacht Club. *Cobweb* will have many of *Dragon Fyre*'s crew aboard.



The Massey brother's schooner 'Wanderer' which competed eight times in early races. This is the most starts by one boat.

Two newish timber boats to compete for the first time are Reg Escott's 33 foot Huon Pine sloop, *Solandra*, a sleek boat that rates well, and *Runaway* (K.E. Millen), a Noel Jennings design similar to *Huon Chief*. Other Tasmanian entries are *Bravura* (C.K. Charles), 29' sloop, *Hornet* (D. Flecker and A. Hurburgh), 34' sloop, and the 37 foot sloop *Utiekah IV*, making the trip for the fourth time, helmed by G. Hennike.

There will always be Tasmanians in the Sydney—Hobart.

Peter Read is a member of the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania Newsletter Sub-Committee and will sail in the 1978 Hitachi Sydney—Hobart Race on *Solandra*. He would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance given by Bill Williams, who sailed in *Winston Churchill*, and Tony Neilson, R.Y.C.T. Secretary/Manager, and John Honeysett. □



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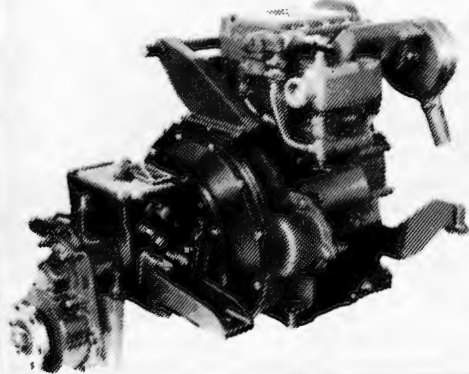


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## THE QUIET LITTLE DRINK

by Peter Cox

It was just after opening time, early in January. Down in Hobart a few of the regulars were starting out the day at the Shipwright's Arms. They didn't take much notice when a small bunch of yachtsmen walked in. They knew the Sydney-Hobart Race had just finished, and every pub near the docks had a few yachtsmen that morning. Mostly hair of the dog treatment.

Anyway, as I said, the regulars in the Shippies' weren't paying too much attention to anything in particular, when this yachtsman in the group walked over to the bar and ordered 200 beers.

Consternation.

The young barman dropped his towel in surprise. Flustered, he was. "Sorry, sir, I've got to go and ask the boss about this". And out the back he scampered.

One of the locals was very impressed – couldn't contain his curiosity, so he turned to the yachtie. "Listen mate", he said with feeling, "I've been drinking for a long time.

My parents even owned two pubs. And I've been in the police force for 30 years. But I've never heard anyone order 200 beers in a shout before. Who's going to drink them?" he finished, turning to look at the small bunch of grinning yachties.

"Well, you see, we're having a party here today, so I just wanted to kick it off to a good start".

"What party?"

Everybody soon found out. More and more yachties kept walking in, and those first 200 beers disappeared pretty fast. They were the beginning of a tradition.

At John Dawson's and Tony Cable's Quiet Little Drink, you only shout in hundreds of beers. And if you didn't know that, where've you been for the last ten years?

It all started in 1968 with Cable's and Dawson's nostalgia for the celebrations after earlier Hobart Races. They reckoned that in the old days of *Astor*, *Solo*, *Freya*,

raw meat and earrings (just in case anyone doesn't know, the first three are yachts and the last two some of their colourful crew), the parties were better. Of course, the waves were bigger, the wind was stronger and the tales were taller, too. Anyway, that's the way John and Tony remembered it.

Tony says, "We just wanted to recapture some of the old spirit that we found after our first races to Hobart. We reckoned that, with the pressure of bigger fleets and international competition, some of the after-the-race fun got squeezed out. So we wanted to put it back." And that's what moved them to make what even their friends say is their greatest contribution to yachting.

They knew the Shipwright's Arms had just the sort of atmosphere they were looking for, and the manager was a good sport. They wrote out an invitation that began 'This is a guilt-edged invitation', warned that it was confidential, and advised that it

would be wise to have wet weather gear handy for later in the day. Strangely, neither Marlin nor Taft seem to realise what sales potential they've missed out on at The Drink. Could be good for safety lines, too.

Anyway, they had the invites Roneoed off and distributed them to all of their friends they could find on Boxing Day. Along with the steaks and rolls of toilet paper being loaded onto the yachts went the 50 or 60 invitations.

Everyone who attended that first Quiet Little Drink reckoned it was a great success. "We wanted it to be a non-violent, happy-go-lucky gathering, and that's the way it turned out," Tony reminisced. "There were songs to sing, jokes to share and stories to tell. Everybody remembered acts like David Kilponen singing his version of 'Bye, bye Blackbird', so we decided to hold another party after the 1970 Race."



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"There were songs to sing, jokes to share and stories to tell. Everybody remembered acts like David Kilponen singing his version of 'Bye, bye Blackbird', so we decided to hold another party after the 1970 Race."

There was only one thing that Tony and John couldn't fathom about the first drink.



Exactly 1467 beers were bought, but who bought the odd 67? Naturally, I'm quite sure the tally was accurate. After all, David Hutchen was in charge. He got the job because he thought that first 200-beer shout was worth recording. So he grabbed the darts scoreboard and chalked up 'Dawson-Cable 200 beers'. Hence Dave's nickname, 'Chalky'.

As the party livened up and his copperplate turned to squiggleplate, he wrote up each boat's shout and the number of beers. With a man like Chalky on the job, the 1467 must have been right, I reckon.

Now The Drink is 10 years old and still going strong after each Hobart Race – even though some people still seem to think it's like the drinking scene from Star Wars, without the disco music.

Going to The Drink is as much a part of 'doing a Hobart' as a gale in Bass Straight or the welcome in Constitution Dock. And getting an invitation isn't too hard. "We only print 50 or 100 invitations", Tony said. "A few go to our friends, and we depend on them to invite their friends. Everyone else is invited by implication, but we try to make sure all the overseas yachts get an invite because we like to make them feel welcome."

Some of the internationally renowned entertainers you can see at The Drink would be worth paying Joan Sutherland prices for. The 'adults-only' version of 'Old MacDonald had a Farm' is always a winner. And one time the crew of the yacht *Miyakadoori* sang a special winch-winders' song in Japanese, with actions.

(continued next page)







The crew of *Sunbird* replied with 'You are my Sunshine' (in English). Then there's big Sid Brown, the table-top dancing champion. One year the table wasn't as strong as Sid is and it collapsed half-way through his famous tap dancing rendition of 'On the Good Ship Lollipop'.

"After a few years the crowd got too big for the Shipwright's Arms", Tony said, "so we had to look around again. We've moved a couple of times since, but we always look for a robust pub with an understanding manager. They've all been surprised at how well behaved the crowd is. There's never been any sign of trouble, and I've never met a yachtsman at The Drink who didn't approach it with the greatest of good humour".

Luckily for everyone who attends, John and Tony don't mind that the party after the 1969 Race 'just grew', like a tipsy topsy. It's still their party in Hobart, but overseas yachties who enjoyed it there have exported the idea.

Tony himself organised an English Quiet Little Drink after the 1971 Fastnet in a tiny



Plymouth pub. He told me, "They were standing two deep up the walls. The lady who owned the pub had to keep on buying in more kegs and the barmaid needed volunteers to help pull the beer fast enough. Although the pub had to close at 3 p.m., we still got through 2,500 half pints".

John Boulton held the first American version at St. Petersburg in 1972. At that one they managed to down 2,700 beers. The second American Drink was in Hawaii after the Clipper Cup this year at a place called Margy's. Sorry, but I don't know what the beer score was. I think Bob Cranse mistook the tally card for a 'puu-puu' (Hawaiian snack), and ate it.

If you like statistics, the largest-ever shout was *Rampage's* 1,300 in 1975. There have been a bunch of 1,000 shouts, too.



That *Rampage* shout did another thing as well – it kicked the total for that year up to the overall record, 9,450 beers. John is confident they'll top 10,000 this year. Guinness Book of Record material for sure.

Apart from a short piece in *The Mercury* after The 1971 Drink, there hasn't been any publicity other than just word of mouth amongst people who sail. "We don't want it any other way," said John and Tony together. "It's just for the sailing people to enjoy each other's company."

But a TV crew turned up at last year's Drink. And it seems a young lady admired Tony's colourful *Apollo* shirt so much she wanted to exchange hers for it. They worked out a deal – she had to collect \$100 round the bar for charity. She got



nearly \$200. So the cameras filmed the exchange of shirts. Neither Tony nor the girl wore a bra, and I'll bet that TV crew tries to get back again this year.

I asked Tony about it later that day. He just grinned and said "We shopped swirts." I thought he looked a bit tight. In the shirt.

Collections for charity have been a part of the Quiet Little Drink from the beginning. Tony: "It was John's idea, and a good one. Although we don't brag about it we've raised a lot of money. Apart from the \$400 for Darwin after Cyclone Tracy, the money usually goes to the Crippled Children's Society. It must be over four thousand dollars by now.

But we don't keep accounts. We just collect the money and give it to the publican's wife to send on. I suppose we could find out how much has been raised, but really we do it because we like to help the charities. We don't think we need to use that as justification for a drink, a chat, and a lot of laughs."





So there it is – yachting's biggest little party turns 10 this year. John and Tony will be down there even if they have to go by the TAA Maru, just to make sure the party swings.

And what's the bet the first shout will be 'Dawson-Cable 200 beers'?

See you at The Quiet Little Drink. □



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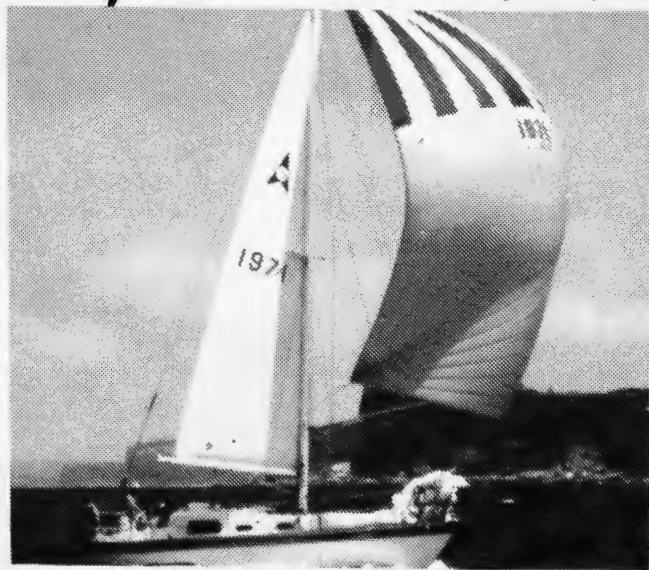
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It's Hobart time again, as you may have noticed from other articles in this issue!

So, about 100 hardworking knaviguersers will be doing their thing towards success in the race. One of them, at least, will be well rewarded for his efforts. As I shall be comfortably ensconced in the Press Centre while all the drama is going on, I feel I should make a little contribution towards making the navigator's lot a little easier.

To this end, then, I have constructed some tables showing the brightest stars available at morning and evening twilights. Jupiter is also shown, although it is a bit low in the higher latitudes. The altitudes and azimuths are based upon a steady progression down the rhumb line, arriving off Tasman on the 31st, a.m.

The moon will probably be too close to the sun to be of use, so I've ignored it. The second table, however, gives the times when the sun will be at right angles to, and on, the rhumb line. By making your position lines run parallel to or at right angles to the rhumb line, you will derive the most effective information from a single sight.

All times are given in Summer Time.

The G.E. computer is going to make things a bit easier for us this year, with the provision of an automatic plotter which will

(continued next page)

# WATSON'S KNAVIGUESSING KNOWHOW

## Hedley Watson's recommended stars for Dec. 1978

The data are based upon the following positions:

	A.M.	
Dec. 27th	35°S	151°E
28th	37°S	150°E
29th	39°S	149°E
30th	41°S	149°E
31st	43°S	148°E

	P.M.	
Dec. 26th	34°S	151°E
27th	36°S	151°E
28th	38°S	150°E
29th	40°S	149°E
30th	42°S	149°E

## EVENING SIGHTS

TWILIGHT	26th 2038hrs		27th 2049hrs		28th 2059hrs		29th 2108hrs		30th 2120hrs	
	ALT	AZ	ALT	AZ	ALT	AZ	ALT	AZ	ALT	AZ
ACHERNAR	66° 18'	188°	67° 30'	193°	68° 42'	198°	69° 54'	203°	71° 08'	210°
FOMALHAUT	51° 06'	263°	49° 03'	263°	47° 00'	264°	44° 57'	265°	42° 53'	266°
CANOPUS	40° 34'	133°	43° 43'	131°	46° 52'	129°	49° 59'	127°	53° 11'	124°
ALDEBARAN	27° 32'	042°	27° 02'	039°	26° 32'	036°	26° 02'	033°	25° 30'	030°
RIGEL	38° 42'	071°	39° 40'	067°	40° 38'	063°	41° 36'	059°	42° 35'	054°
SIRIUS	24° 45'	094°	26° 55'	091°	29° 05'	088°	31° 15'	085°	33° 25'	081°

## MORNING SIGHTS

TWILIGHT	0514 hrs	0510 hrs	0505 hrs	0502 hrs	0458 hrs
REGULUS	43° 22' 350°	41° 13' 351°	39° 04' 352°	36° 55' 353°	34° 47' 355°
ACRUX	56° 29' 158°	58° 15' 156°	60° 01' 154°	61° 47' 152°	63° 32' 150°
SIRIUS	35° 17' 273°	35° 35' 275°	35° 53' 277°	36° 11' 279°	36° 31' 281°
RIGIL KENT	43° 36' 144°	44° 59' 142°	46° 22' 140°	47° 45' 139°	49° 07' 138°
SPICA	45° 40' 069°	44° 13' 068°	42° 46' 067°	41° 19' 066°	39° 52' 065°
CANOPUS	41° 59' 226°	43° 53' 228°	45° 47' 230°	47° 41' 232°	49° 34' 234°
JUPITER	30° 03' 327°	28° 22' 328°	26° 41' 329°	25° 00' 330°	23° 18' 331°

## BEST TIMES FOR SUN SIGHTS

	AZIMUTH: 105°	AZIMUTH: 015°	AZIMUTH: 285°
27th	0728	1244	1453
28th	0729	1244	1509
29th	0730	1245	1525
30th	0730	1245	1542
31st	0731	1246	1559

print out the actual chart at each sked. No more sticking pins in the wall! How much plotting will you do? I hope that you will cover at least the yachts that are giving you handicap headaches.

The computer gives us corrected speeds for all yachts, including those which have finished, as this is the simplest way to assess the handicap situation during the race. We take the distance made good, divide it by the elapsed time and again by the T.C.F., i.e.

$$\text{Corrected speed} = \frac{\text{Distance}}{\text{Time} \times \text{T.C.F.}}$$

For yachts at sea, the elapsed time is taken to the sked time and for those who have finished, the actual finishing time is used.

Distance made good is best determined by subtracting distance to go from the total race distance. Again a little help is given. The latitude and longitude of the 'corner' at Tasman Island is 43° 15' S., 148° 00' E.; the distance from there to the finish is 40 miles, and the total race distance is 628 miles.

A quick brain teaser before I sign off for 1978. If Santa Claus is circumnavigating the Earth at an altitude of one mile, following a great circle track, how much extra distance will he travel, compared to the distance on the surface? The answer is given below.

Good sailing, Merry Xmas, see you next year,

Hedley Watson

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Extra Distance} &= 2\pi \text{ miles} \\ &= 6.3 \text{ miles approx.} \\ \text{Surface Distance} &= \pi D \\ \text{Distance 1 mile up} &= \pi(D+2) \\ \text{Answer: } &\square \end{aligned}$$



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# WHERE ARE WE GOING IN OCEAN RACING?

**Syd Fischer answers questions put by John Dawson in this second article of a series on Australia's current prospects in ocean racing.**

**This is the second in a series of articles examining Australia's present and future prospects in world ocean racing. The opinions expressed are those of the respondents and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia or Offshore.**

I have been asked to comment on three things. These are Australia's recent poor showing in the Admiral's Cup, the 58 retirements in the last Hobart Race and racing versus boat strength and design.

## **Admiral's Cup 1977**

My analysis of the Admiral's Cup would be as follows.

(a) The team suffered both from a general lack of sophistication of equipment and, because of our remote geographical situation, our inability to participate in a 'tuning up' series, such as the Onion Patch, the S.O.R.C. and the European Racing Circuits. These develop intense competition between designers and owners combined, resulting in minor modifications to team boats, particularly related to the light weather sailing.

(b) Our racing season is six months out of phase with those of the Northern Hemisphere, and communications with both Europe and the U.S.A. are not good enough for us to keep up with the latest innovations.

(c) We have lack of practice in sailing in very light, variable conditions, particularly the Solent where, according to Europeans, the only way to combat the Solent successfully is to sail in it a lot. Unfortunately, we can't do this.

(d) There was a lack of accurate weather information compared with the information we believe was available to the local team.

(e) The unfortunate disqualification of one of our yachts, due to an International Jury decision.

(f) The poor result of our team in the Fastnet Race, which was a very trying and difficult race in light conditions due to our team's misjudgement of what wind conditions would be on the other side of the course.

(g) The lack of incentive for new owners to come forward and build yachts in our country due to excessive age allowance.

On arrival in Cowes we found that our boats were on a par with many of the teams. However, the British, American and Hong Kong teams were ahead in the latest refinements and techniques available in lightweight construction, rule bending and light weather performance innovations.

*Superstar* was the nearest of our yachts to the latest in designs over there. However, *Ragamuffin* scored more points, I think mainly due to good fortune in picking the right side of the course in some of the races.

It seems that to overcome our problem, through the Technical Committee and O.R.C.A. we will need to monitor what is happening overseas and keep up with the latest innovations. We have, in fact, already instituted a system to feed back all the information on innovations so that our latest boats will be on a par, and competitive with, the latest in overseas boats. Many innovations which took advantage of the rule in the last Admiral's Cup have now resulted in penalties as a result of the latest amendment to the I.O.R. Rule, and we will monitor carefully the development and innovations that come from these changes.

## **The 58 Retirements in the last Hobart Race**

I was very vocal in my comments before the Hobart Race about design elements that had crept into the ocean racing scene, particularly light construction. I can always remember a story that Tryg Halvorsen told me when I first started ocean racing regarding the importance of strong deck beams. He told me of a case in the Trans Tasman where the whole deck of a New Zealand heavy-displacement boat was stove in by a rogue wave, and the crew had to bail for their lives. Fortunately they made it, but I doubt if the deck were stove in on one of the newer lightweight boats it could withstand the pressure of the sea inside it, and I believe the whole boat would split in two, similar to the fate of *Morning Cloud* when she got water inside her.

I also believe that the Cruising Yacht Club, or any other yacht club that allows these yachts to race, has a responsibility to face up to this; indeed, the C.Y.C. has taken a very strong stance, and its recommendations are being accepted internationally, about strength and stability. I believe this is good for ocean racing because we should be racing 'like with like'; yachts, such as *Kialoa*, *Windward Passage* and *Ragamuffin*, that can make international passages, and races should be raced against like boats and not lightweight gutless wonders that are safe at sea 90% of the time but would not race in a really hard blow because the crew has fears about the structural integrity of the yacht. The I.O.R. Rule was meant to race like with like; the structural components of all yachts should be comparable, if they are to race under this Rule.

I believe the retirements in the Hobart Race, according to the statistics, were the result of fear of structural failure, seasickness and lack of experience. I admit

that the weather we went through would be frightening to someone had he not seen it before and been able to realise that as long as the boat can withstand the pressure and you handle your gear carefully and with well-thought-out method, you will survive – apart, of course, from some unforeseen circumstance.

We have seen the amendment to the Rule, and let's hope the Rule goes from strength to strength and that we see as much of the risk element of ocean racing taken out as possible.

## Racing versus Boat Strength and Design

I have covered some of this previously. However, I would like to say that we should use the age allowance in the Rule as it has now been brought out, without any other age allowance tacked onto it, and see how it works out. It is essential that all boats with an I.O.R. rating are able to race equally with each other and have an equal chance of winning. It would be a retrograde step if only old boats were able to win races, because of excessive age allowance. It would also be a retrograde step if only new boats were allowed to win because of their modern up-to-date design. However, I believe, and I am sure the rulemakers believe, that we should take a

'suck-it-and-see' attitude; if the Rule is found to be wanting in any respect, the necessary amendments can be made. I do think there should be differentiation between a fin-keel yacht of a certain age and a long-keel yacht of the same age, as wetted-surface area is an important factor in the performance of a yacht in all weather. We have seen the instance where my old *Ragamuffin*, because of its great stability and its very kindly under-water shape, was almost impossible to beat in fresh weather, even against the latest designs, both upwind and downwind, being able to carry her spinnaker and chuter when the new Frers *Ragamuffin* couldn't. However, in 5-15 knot weather, which is average, she found it pretty hard to get anywhere near the up-to-date yachts, particularly to windward. Therefore, I feel that people who make outrageous comments about one crew being better than another should analyse their thoughts before they voice their opinions. In certain conditions, one boat will have a distinct advantage over another, and it has nothing to do with the ability of the crew or the skipper (provided they sail the boat reasonably well). The final overall year's results usually tell the tale.

In all, I feel that the Australian ocean racing fleet is gradually prising itself out of the slump it got into when so much was spent on out-designed yachts.

## O.R.C.A.'s Role

Now that O.R.C.A. is a maritime member of the A.Y.F. and has accepted responsibility for promotion and development of ocean racing, it is looking hard at the I.O.R. Rule and the promotion of the sport, particularly in relation to overseas challenges.

It will be of great assistance to O.R.C.A. if all yachtsmen join 'the green burgee with the gold kangaroo' team in their efforts to re-establish Australia at the top of the world ocean racing scale. □



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# BIGGLES' COLUMN

## The Hobart

At the time for deadline of this issue of *Offshore* there were 105 entries for the Hitachi Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race, which is quite outstanding for a non-Southern Cross Cup year. Even allowing for the usual crop of dropouts between now and the starting gun, we could still break the century for an off year. This is a milestone and suggests that next year should be a real dilly.

Amongst that big number there is a lot of class too; there are something like 15-20 new, almost new, or just plain good older boats – all with a chance of winning the race on handicap. That is something we would normally see only during the S.C.C. years. One week before entries closed only about 40 entries had been received, and the Sailing Committee was gloomily forecasting a starting line-up of around 60. Then came the deluge.

## C.Y.C. Racing

In the first half of this season the C.Y.C.A's second division is where all the action has been, with four or five hot boats fighting it out for the major prize in both long and short ocean races; only Syd Fischer, in the

chartered *Superstar*, Peter Kurts, in *Love and War* and Geoff Lee in *Natelle II* have been around to keep them honest. The second half of the season should see some changes, however, with *Sweet Caroline* (nee *Big Schott*), *Apollo IV* (nee *Williwaw*) and Nick Girdis' new Peterson 2-ton-sized boat all arriving from America. Locally, Syd Fischer's new Peterson 46 and a couple of Holland 2-tonners add up to a very interesting fleet of newcomers that should really recharge the C.Y.C.A's first division.

## Biggles' Award

A special for the column this issue is the revival of the Biggles' Award, long dormant for want of worthy recipients. The award goes to Kevin Shephard, of Hood's Sydney loft, for some outstanding research work resulting in yet another rule change to be considered by the O.R.C. It is in the form of a modification to the age allowance formula and is called the Geriatric Factor.

The Geriatric Factor is defined as the sum of the combined ages of the crew, plus the can capacity of the yacht's ice box, minus the total weight in kilograms of any 'heavies' on board (factored by 0.5 for imported overseas heavies), divided by the size of the owner's overdraft in Swiss francs.

Actually judging the award for this issue was very difficult in spite of Kevin's great work; on almost equal points was Peter Green, who put up a great challenge with a colourful demonstration of the N.S.W. thick skull of the year. Forgetting his age altogether, Peter stepped onto a ½-tonner for a championship race and got laid low in an all-standing gybe. Peter and another crewman suffered fractured skulls, and Peter's scalp took 25 stitches (I understand that the hospital had to send out for specially hardened needles). I rang his wife the next day to find out which hospital he was in and for how long, and who should answer the telephone but old Grandad himself. A normal human being would have been in hospital for at least a week. Peter's main complaint was that, in their concern for him and the other crewman during the incident, the remaining crew of the ½-tonner lost ground from second to third position.

## Crew shortages

A couple of issues back I referred to the shortage of crews throughout last season. It seems the problem is still with us and may have intensified if the following incident is any example. An hour before the start of a 90-miler early in the season, a well known C.Y.C.A. owner suddenly found himself short of a vital crew member for his half tonner. It turned out that

another owner, also short-handed, had poached the crewman at short notice with the promise of a berth in the Hitachi Sydney-Hobart Race, for which the ½-tonner was not entered. Naturally enough, the first owner was highly incensed at what he described as lack of sportsmanship on the part of the other owner. My own feeling is that it may not say much for the loyalty of the crewman involved, either, but surely demonstrates how serious the problem has become.

▷ A scheme put forward by O.R.C.A. is gathering support in ocean racing circles. It is a formula for a national ocean racing championship along the lines of that sponsored by the Ocean Racing Club of America and the R.O.R.C. The idea is for major ocean races across Australia to be the source of points towards a season point score with some races factored, as in ton cup series, according to length and degree of difficulty, and some, such as the Sydney-Hobart Race, being compulsory.

A variation on this theme, suggested by Syd Fischer, calls for the championship to be the result of points awarded during a major series such as the Southern Cross Cup or the Admiral's Cup trials. This would have the disadvantage of excluding yachts which do not qualify for the series for some reason, for example, by virtue of rating in, say, the Admiral's Cup trials. Although this would disadvantage a large part of our ocean racing fleet it can also be argued that boats rating less than 2-ton have plenty of championships of their own to contest.

It could also result in the prize being won by an overseas yacht, which is not necessarily a bad thing and could occur anyway. It might even pull in more visiting racers from overseas by sweetening the pot. However, the strongest support so far appears to be for the full season point score concept and, if adopted, would have the side effect of encouraging more top boats to take part in races interstate. To be a true national championship the contenders would have to meet head to head in more than just the Sydney-Hobart Race. □



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performance shapes with durable materials. Some of the sails we used in '77 were actually cut in '74! Total Approach means you get the performance you want, with the long life you need.



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# THE 1978 LORD HOWE RACE

by Peter Rysdyk.



D. Collett

The 1978 Lord Howe Island Race, organised by the Gosford Aquatic Club in conjunction with the Aquatic Club of Lord Howe Island, is again an event of the past.

Still regarded by some yachtsmen as a dangerous anchorage, the annual Lord Howe attracts more and more entries each year despite the fact that many are disappointed because of the 25 yacht fleet limited set by the Islanders.

The Lord Howe Island has recently been elevated to a Customs Port, which should be good news for those returning from Noumea and Suva Races, not to mention those who travel the oceans by pleasure craft; it is a well known fact that previously yachtsmen from overseas had to invent repairs to get in to the Lagoon and avoid being sent on their way by the efficient new island Administrator, Len Judd.

As many entrants in this Race were C.Y.C.A. members, I thought a description of the happenings as seen from Keith Storey's 66' *Marabou*, acting this year as Radio Relay Vessel for the fleet, might be appropriate.

The 2 p.m. start on Saturday 28th October was uneventful with rather unpleasant weather. A promised southerly only partly eventuated and soon petered out. However, this was sufficient to keep most of

the expected large spectator fleet away with the exception of the hardier ones, including the old warrior *The Krait*, immaculately kept by the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, who were again this year heavily involved in this Race.

With a steady 15 knots from the SSE, a smooth sea and low swell, most yachts started late with many too close to the wind shadow of Barranjoey for which they paid the slow start penalty. Those at the leeward end of the line shot away; the 49' *Casablanca* won the start from Joe Goddard's 53' *Willi Willi*. Others that started well were *Polaris*, the controversial lift-keeler *Piccolo II*, and surprisingly, the old fox Neville Sidgely was last over the line in *Mystic Seven*.

The starters boat was Ron Youngman's *South Pacific* and it was good to see this highly respected top seaman and his faithful ship back in action again.

It was obvious from the start that line honours would be between *Willi Willi*, *Casablanca*, *Mother Goose* and *Polaris*, with I.O.R. wins most likely for *Piccolo* of Lake Macquarie or Andrew Strachan's Gosford entry *Satin Sheets*. Indeed, it was musical chairs between *Casablanca* and *Willi Willi* all the way for line and the same for *Satin Sheets* and *Piccolo* for I.O.R.

Sunday night's sked gave a variety of over-optimistic D.R. positions by many; the reaching winds, however, had all the yachts going well.

This was the first time that a new radio reporting system was introduced with four sked times:

0130: safety sked for emergencies; duration, approx. 5 minutes

0730: position reports

1330: again, a safety sked.

1930: position reports.

This provides only six hours between possible assistance calls and only two position skeds, which creates far less work for radio operators and navigators. I feel that this system should become standard for all ocean races.

Sunday night, was a beautiful sunny day and ideal conditions with navigators having had ample opportunity for sights. *Willi Willi* was 30 miles from the Island, there was no report from *Casablanca*, and 25 miles back was *Piccolo* (which we passed in the afternoon, her whole crew at the windward rail, as usual for these light-weights).

*Garlic Prawn* started to get us seriously worried as she had not reported in since Sunday morning. We decided to call a 'PAM' asking *Garlic Prawn* that if she could receive but not transmit to light a white flare. Requesting all yachts to keep a sharp 360° lookout, no sighting was reported; however, *Gymea V* reported that she had sighted the *Prawn* the previous night when she closed in, shining a torch on her sail number. We then plotted her anticipated position establishing an E.T.A. which later proved to be correct.

Tuesday Morning, *Willi Willi* has done it! First over the line, beating her rival, *Casablanca*, (skippered by George Mottle) by 45 minutes.

And so during Tuesday at various intervals, yachts entered the lagoon shepherded by the yachtsmen's friend, Clive Wilson and his *Lulawai*. Elapsed times this year were shorter due to a changed course, direct from Broken Bay to Lord Howe Island. The old mark of the course, Ball's Pyramid, was deleted in view of the dangers rounding this rock during the hours of darkness.

(continued next page)

First to Finish were:

*Willi Willi, Casablanca, Piccolo, Satin Sheets, Ghengis Khan, Polaris, Mother Goose.* Placings given by the Gosford Aquatic Club were:

**Line Honours.** *Willi Willi*, C.Y.C.A. (Joe Goddard)

**I.O.R.** *Piccolo*, corrected time 47-43-26, L.M.Y.C. (John Pickles)

**2nd I.O.R.** *Satin Sheets*, corrected time 49-48-56, G.A.C. (Andrew Strachan)

**3rd I.O.R.** *Breakaway*, corrected time 50-04-38, M.H.Y.C. (Peter Mounsey)

**Arbitrary Division** *Garlic Prawn*, R.P.A.Y.C. (Ian Tringham)

**Overall Division** 1st *Piccolo*.

2nd *Satin Sheets*

3rd *Willi Willi*

**Cruising Division** *Xandra*, R.P.A.Y.C. (Peter McEnally)

In what must have been the best Lord Howe so far, Clive Wilson and his many helpers proved once again that hospitality is the key word at Lord Howe. The 1978 Race was incident and accident free, and the only damage reported was rudder failure on *Swiftly*, which was easily rectified at the Island.

The success of this year's event assures the future of this popular Race as one of the few remaining unspoiled islands in the Pacific.

Points of Criticism:

\*Offshore mark buoy too far out to sea at Lord Howe.

\*The number of radio failures by yachts during the Race.

\*Five engine failures on entering the lagoon.

\*The continued stealing of bicycles by yachtsmen causing increased resentment by the Islanders.



Above left: Marabou, radio relay ship for the 1978 Lord Howe Island Race, in the lagoon at the island. Below left: Ball's Pyramid, no longer a mark of the course because of the danger of finding and rounding it at night.

Above right: The faithful Lulawai, piloted by Clive Wilson.

# THE U.T.A. SYDNEY-NOUMEA

## Now a Top International Race

by Norman Milne, Noumea Press Officer

If there was any doubt in anybody's mind it is now apparent that the U.T.A. Sydney-Noumea Race is now the top race being sailed overseas from any Australian port.

A recent visit to Noumea certainly impressed on me the high degree of importance placed on the race by the sail-loving Noumeans. Race Director Peter Rysdyk, despite the fact that his French is nearly as bad as mine, somehow manages to communicate with the New Caledonians to achieve the highest standard of organisation laid on for any similar race. The Noumeans are behind the race to a man, and during the week we were there the UTA Sydney-Noumea Race was hardly out of the newspapers, with two big full-page spreads in both local newspapers.

But it is with the host Club, Cercle Nautique Caledonie, that you sense the excitement and enthusiasm they now have for this race. President Alain Genay, owner-skipper of *Dame de Corail*, and his committee are anxious to do their very best to ensure the success of the forthcoming UTA Sydney-Noumea. With this in mind they have asked that the race fleet be restricted to 50 yachts plus the New Caledonian entries, which now number five. The reason is that their marina accommodating 550 boats is so full that it is difficult to clear spaces for more than 50 visiting yachts. If the fleet were any larger the remaining yachts would have to be berthed around in the port, which would split the fleet and cause the event to lose a lot of its camarade.

The C.N.C. Members are arranging the erection of a portable toilet/shower building and the supply of a courtesy bus, free of charge, which will run continuously on a shuttle service to the town.

The CNC is one of the most friendly yacht clubs I have ever visited overseas. They all make you welcome despite the fact that you can't speak a word of French and communication is difficult. But that fine French custom of shaking hands with everybody when you enter speaks louder than words, and you immediately feel at home. I do suggest, however, to skippers and crews of yachts sailing in the 1979 race – at least try to learn a smattering of French as it will be a big help around the shops and restaurants.

The facilities at the CNC are the envy of every visiting Australian yachtsman. They have established a 550 berth marina by their own sheer hard work. It is well sheltered in all winds, and conditions there are usually like a mill pond. Back in 1962 they had only two small jetties to accommodate about 40 boats, but with weekend working bees they have built it up to its present high standard. They keep ten berths for visiting yachts, which are always full, and during the year they estimate that about 350 cruising yachts tie up at their marina flying the flags of all Nations. When Peter Rysdyk and I visited the 'visiting' berth there were two New Zealanders, one Australian, a German yacht heading for Sydney and a yacht from Tahiti.

One of the most enjoyable evenings I spent in Noumea was with some of the CNC Members out on the Club verandah sipping fine French wines and eating some of that famous French cooking. The reason I mention this is to draw attention to the cooking shack at the C.N.C., which produces delicious meals at the right price.

The organisation for the 1979 UTA Sydney-Noumea is now well advanced, and entries on a provisional basis now stand at more than 50 including the five New Caledonian entries. So if you are planning to join the fleet get your entry in quickly; the race limit will be filled very shortly.

Two entries for next year's race are certain to attract a lot of attention. One is the first all-girl crew to compete in an international event from an Australian port. Four of the girls will be Australian and one will be New Caledonian, with the other three most probably coming from France. And one yacht that will stop the traffic on Sydney Harbour when she arrives is the 236' schooner *Club Mediteranee* skippered by famous French sailor, Alain Colas. This unusual four-masted yacht was sailed by Colas in the 1976 Observer single-handed trans-Atlantic race. Designed by Michael Bigoin, who designed Eric Tabarly's *Pen Duick 5*, the craft was built by the French Naval Arsenal at Toulon at a cost in excess of \$1,000,000.

The French Navy is again making available an escort vessel for the fleet, and it is expected that the ship will make a courtesy visit to Sydney prior to the start of the race. Keith Storey is making *Marabou* available as the radio relay vessel and radio broadcasts will be in French as well as English. The English version will be given by ABC sporting commentator Bert Oliver, and the French version by Noumean radio executive Francois Coursin.

One unusual innovation is the introduction of a church service broadcast from the radio relay vessel on the Sunday morning that the yachts are at sea. There will be a Mass and Protestant service in both French and English.

In order to give the competing yachts up-to-date weather information, Keith Storey has installed a facsimile reception unit aboard *Marabou*. This will receive continuous satellite weather maps in printed form. Also, the New Caledonian and Australian meteorology offices will co-ordinate their activities to give the best weather information they can. Also for the first time international 'ham' radio operators will continuously monitor the frequencies being used by the yachts. Ham operators from Australia's east coast, New Zealand's west coast, Fiji and New Caledonia will be able to work as relay units for the yachts in the race.

Assistance to the race is also coming from the Australian Army Adventure Training Scheme, and this unit will supply crews to deliver the Noumean yachts to Sydney for the race and return the Australian yacht's to their home ports after the race.

There is no doubt in my mind that if I were racing a yacht to Noumea next year, I would endeavour to get a few more weeks leave to go cruising around the surrounding area. There are so many superb places to visit, even sailing around inside the reef surrounding Noumea. Then there is the Isle des Pins and the Loyalty Islands. But if you do decide to do this, have a long talk with the New Caledonians, such as Alain Genay and Noumean Pilot Jean-Claud Quintin. The area is studded with reefs just hidden under the water and it is regarded as hazardous to go sailing around after dark. The CNC President,



Alain Genay, advises sailing during the day only after the wind has come up so you can pick the reefs, and choose a good anchorage by night – of which there are plenty – but always be absolutely sure of your exact position. They regard the area as a challenge which must be tackled with great care, but not an impossibility, and the result is most rewarding. In fact, I flew out over the 60 miles to the Isle de Pins and saw the reefs which stretch right across from Noumea. They are frightening, but the locals told me they are negotiable with care. In fact, Peter Rysdyk took *Onya of Gosford* through there last year.

There are many more angles to the race and cruising, such as the right charts to obtain, and the French have recently produced some excellent ones, but details of these will be given in Peter Rysdyk's newsletter going to all provisional entries. Also, special banking and customs arrangements have been made, which will be of great convenience to competitors.

There's no doubt that the 1979 UTA Sydney-Noumea Race will be the means of creating greater understanding between Australia and New Caledonia and gain new friends for Australia. □

## OFFSHORE SIGNALS

Dear Sir,

Apropos the ingenious lunar distance solution as set out in 'Watson's Knaviguesing Know-How' – pp.30/31 October/November issue of *Offshore* – the enclosed photocopy of pages 170 and 171 from *Along the Clipper Way* by Francis Chichester may be of interest. Certainly the Chichester solution is much neater than the complicated 'clearing' required for lunar distance observations.

It is interesting to note that John S. Letcher in *Self-Contained Navigation with H.O.208* and Frances W. Wright in *Particularised Navigation* both give similar solutions to Chichester. Frances W. Wright's solution is particularly elegant in that it uses a two star fix worked for two different times in conjunction with the moon and thus obtains the latitude simultaneously with the longitude and/or time.

Yours

Frank Underdown

The following passage is from *Along the Clipper Way*, by Francis Chichester.

"I wondered what I would have done in the same place if I had been there single-handed in a yacht without time or radio on board. At that date, the only way of finding the longitude without knowing the correct time was to observe a 'lunar'. I turned up my 1840 edition of Raper's Navigation, the volume from which I first started to learn astronavigation in 1930, and the only text book I have which shows how to work out a lunar. I was horrified at the vast amount of calculation involved. To compute such a thing at sea in a small yacht, without making any mistake, especially if single-handed, would be most difficult and arduous. Surely there must be an easier way! I pondered the problem and then suddenly thought of a simple solution which I will explain briefly: make a simultaneous observation of the sun and the moon for altitude when the moon is nearly east or west of the ship. From this observation compute a sun-moon fix in the ordinary way, using a guessed-at Greenwich Mean Time. Now compute a second fix from the same observation but using a Greenwich Mean Time which differs from the first one by half an hour or an hour. Now establish the latitude by a meridian altitude of the sun or any other heavenly body as it crosses the meridian. This observation does not require accurate time. Now join the two sun-moon fixes and the point where the line joining them, produced if necessary, cuts the known latitude must be the correct longitude at the time of the observation. Knowing the longitude enables you also to know what the correct Greenwich Mean Time was at the time of the sun-moon fix.

"I fear the accuracy of this method, which depends on the rate of movement of the moon in its orbit, would be poor, but it could be a most valuable observation if, for example, one was trying to make a landfall at Cape Horn after a month at sea without having obtained a time check. Dr. D. H. Sadler, Superintendent of the Nautical Almanac Office and one of the top men on the theory of navigation, was kind enough to say, 'So far as I can discover, Mr. Chichester's actual method of determining positions at sea without reference to G.M.T. is new; and it is certainly elegant.'"

"The unfortunate thing about this method is that no one thought of it 300 years ago when it would have been a godsend to navigators."

### Supplement to Australia Pilot, Vol. II.

The following notice appeared in Admiralty Notices to Mariners No. 44 of 4th November 1978.

#### 2587. ADMIRALTY PUBLICATIONS – Supplement No. 7 to Australia Pilot, Vol. II (NP 14s).

The above supplement, corrected to 4th May 1978, has been published, price £0.30.

Supplement No. 6, 1976, is thereby cancelled. The following Admiralty Notices to Mariners affect this supplement:–

1978:– Aus 156, 170, 202, 203, 227, 233, 236, 256, 318, 332.

Hydrographic Department. (H. 4868/78.)

This will be on sale at 70 cents a copy

about the end of the year. However, Boat Books of Crows Nest will have air freighted copies at \$1 in late November.

This is the volume which covers the entire area of the Sydney-Hobart Race and should be purchased by all competitors.

### Christmas reading

Since most yachtsmen love to read about boats and boating, we asked John Ivimey, of Boat Books, to nominate the top selling books that Santa is likely to use to fill seaboots this Christmas.

Boat Books is Australia's only exclusive nautical bookseller and chart agent, with over 1,000 different books from which to choose – all on boating. The company is based at 35 Hume Street, Crows Nest (with branches in Brisbane and Melbourne for interstate readers).

Over the year Alan Lucas *Cruising the Coral Coast* and *Cruising the N.S.W. Coast* (both \$9.95) have headed the best seller list at Boat Books. As cruising guides, they are regarded as the yachtsman's Bible and deserve space on every cruising boat. Following hard behind are Jeff Toghil's Guides to the N.S.W. Coast which are written for the trailer boat owner. Priced at \$6.95 each, one covers the area from Sydney to the Tweed, the other Sydney to Eden. For bargain hunters, John has the two combined for \$10.00, a saving of \$3.90 and the ideal gift for those who plan to trail their boat on holidays.

For the serious yachtsman who is looking for performance in his craft, the top seller is undoubtedly *Best of Sail Trim* (\$19.50), which is a collection of some 50 articles from the highly respected *Sail* magazine on all aspects of the theory and practice of sail handling. On average not a day goes by without Boat Books selling at least one copy – and it is usually by customer recommendation.

Another performance book that is selling very well is the new edition of Bob Ross and Mike Fletcher's *Tuning a Racing Yacht* (\$12.95). Fully revised and written for Australian conditions, it is one of the few tuning books that apply to keelboats as well as dinghies.

The boatbuilding section of Boat Books is so diverse in its coverage that it is hard to pick a best seller because the choice of a book is so influenced by the hull material to be used. However, top of the general design section is the latest edition of Arthur Beiser's *The Proper Yacht*, not inex-



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pensive (\$35.00) but superbly illustrated with designs of 58 of the world's outstanding craft. The original edition of *The Proper Yacht* holds pride of place in many yachtsmen's bookshelves, and this totally new selection of craft and design ideas rightly belongs alongside the original.

Another 'book a day' seller is *117 Days Adrift* (\$7.95) by Maralyn and Maurice Bailey. It is an incredible true story of a couple who spent four months in an Avon liferaft. One is aware that they do, in fact, survive, but their method of doing so makes it a positive cliff hanger. The book has now become a classic of sea survival, and just to prove their utter faith in sailing, even during that nightmarish experience, they were planning their next boat and cruise! The story has just been released. Called *Second Chance* (\$18.00), it is a much quieter story but has equally interesting details of their voyage to Patagonia and back to England via the Pacific.

In previous years the top selling cruising author has been Eric Hiscock, particularly his *Cruising Under Sail*. This year he has been tumbled from that exalted position by his American counterpart, Hal Roth, whose *After 50,000 Miles* (\$21.00) has been acclaimed as the definitive authority on how to cruise and fit out a cruising boat. As the title implies, the book is based on the author's experience of over 50,000 miles of cruising. Incidentally, the Roth's first book *Two on a Big Ocean*, (\$16.50), which tells of their Pacific Island cruising, has just become available again at Boat Books after some three years of being out of print.

Amongst navigation books, the Nautical Almanac has to be the pick of the hits, but be warned, they are scarce because of a strike lasting quite a few months at the Government Printing Office in London and it is holding up deliveries in Australia.

Top selling navigation books are Jeff Toghill's trio, *Coastal Navigation for Beginners* (\$3.50), *Celestial Navigation for Beginners* (\$3.95) and *Yachtman's Navigation Manual* (\$14.95). All three are Australian and highly recommended.

For those who have done Gordon Marshall's courses, Bowditch's *American Practical Navigator* (\$23.50 gets you both Volumes 1 and 2) is now available again and will no doubt be expected under many member's Christmas trees. It is certainly not a beginner's book but definitely the most comprehensive work ever written on navigation, and it is incredible value for money.

*Grant's Guide to Fishes* (\$17.50) is a superb guide to Australian species identifying almost every possible Australian fish in full colour. It is not a book for light bedtime reading, though, because it happens to be 766 pages thick and weighs over 6 lbs! Strictly a keep-aboard book.

Another recommended keep-aboard book is Dr. Carl Edmonds' *Dangerous Marine Animals* (\$9.50 paperback, \$17.00 hardback), which illustrates in colour all the nasties of the Pacific and Indian oceans that either sting, bite or are poisonous to eat. Included are details of their habits and sound professional advice on treatment, antidotes and avoidance.

An excellent new book has just been released with the aim of encouraging youngsters to become involved in crewing a boat rather than becoming bored aboard (no pun intended). Called *The Young Yachtsman* it is well priced for Christmas at \$6.95 and is superbly illustrated by Peter Milne. The young person will learn the rudiments of all aspects of cruising in an interesting manner that will turn the young passenger into a useful crew member.

The selection of nautical history books at Boat Books is again so wide that, like the boatbuilding and design department, it is

difficult to define a best seller. However, if you love old ships, John Ivimey is predicting his best seller for Christmas will be a just-released, poster-sized pictorial coverage of the square riggers called *Tall Ships* (\$13.95). It has the history of 72 of the most famous of these craft, all fully illustrated, 24 of them in full colour from old paintings and photographs.

## More Christmas gift suggestions

Beware of the gift shop proprietor when he comes bearing gifts! Having claimed 'caveat emptor' The Chart Room suggests: for the sailing husband, boyfriend or whoever, a Memosail Bulkhead Chronometer (\$155.00), or a Memosail VIP Starting Watch (\$215.00). For the water widow or girlfriend or both, an H.M.S. 'Association' Piece of Eight Pendant, a reproduction in sterling silver of a Spanish Piece of Eight (\$75.00). For the navigating officer, H.M.S. 'Association' dividers - traditional dividers as used aboard British warships circa 1700 (\$20.00).

These and other gifts are available from The Chart Room, 1st Floor, 35 Hume Street, Crows Nest.



### The Cruising Yacht Club of Australia Blue Water Room Restaurant and Bar (bookings 32-9731)

#### Blue Water Restaurant

	Trading Hours	
	Lunch	Dinner
Wed.	12.00-2.30	7.00-10.00
Fri.	12.00-2.30	7.00-10.30
Sat.	12.00-2.30	7.00-10.30
Sun.	12.00-2.30	

Last orders must be in before closing times. Bookings preferred. Available for private functions.

#### Blue Water Bar Trading Hours

Mon.*	4.00 p.m.-10.00 p.m.
Tue.**	4.00 p.m.-10.00 p.m.
Wed.	11.00 a.m.-11.30 p.m.
Thu.**	4.00 p.m.-10.00 p.m.
Fri.	11.00 a.m.-12.30 a.m.
Sat.	8.00 a.m.-12.30 a.m.
Sun.*	9.00 a.m.-10.00 p.m.

\*Free Champagne during Happy Hour 6.30-7.30 p.m.  
\*\*Closes 11.00 p.m. after navigation and learn-to-sail.



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