# RRS

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# **OFFSHORE**

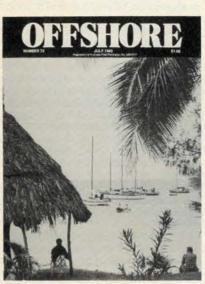


PHOTO BY PETER CAMPBELL

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# **OFFSHORE** SIGNALS



#### Letters

#### Tasman Cup

The Commodore

Cruising Yacht Club of Australia

On behalf of my wife, Dorothy, my family and myself I write to thank the CYCA and all members of the yachting fraternity for their messages of comfort and many acts of practical support which followed the loss of my son Richard after the sinking of *Montego Bay*.

It was a great comfort to us all to know that so many fellow yachtsmen felt this loss so deeply and that we were not alone in our grief.

Our thanks go to the Cruising Yacht Club and Middle Harbour Yacht Club for the memorial service and to the officials and Members of the CYCA who attended the service for Richard and to the yacht owners and crews who took part in the search.

It is in the nature of mankind for its members to test themselves and sadly this testing will take its toll. The great sadness is that those who are lost were so full of life.

Thank you for sharing in our sorrow.

Yours faithfully, Owen Connolly

The Editor, Offshore

Black Friday, and Australia's worst yachting tragedy are just some of the names given to that Friday night, April 15th.

That night I lost a great pal. He can never be replaced, boats can. It's a nightmare to all who lived and always will be. But still there's a message there, and something we all should look at and find the answer for.

I have written a simple verse to Richard and for all who knew him and also the ones who didn't, because he and I are the best of mates and because of the love he had for Montego Bay. The last real words I heard him say were when the boat was sinking and we both eased ourselves off the life lines, "Well, fellows, this is it."

#### For We were the Best of Mates Richard

He was short, while I am tall. He was tough, while I had puff. We were the best of mates.

He was shy, while I'm not. He was quiet, while I'm not. We were the best of mates.

He was not married, Yet children he loved. Uncle Richie, to many he was. We were the best of mates.

He loved all animals And they loved him. Oh how he loved his dog. Lucy, he named her. We were the best of mates.

He was kind, and gentle, And understanding too. His time was never his. To ladies, "Hello, Dear" you could hear him say.

We were the best of mates.

Richie Rich or Ricky Rick Affectionately called. Bluey was another. We were the best of mates.

Sailing was his love. He held that respect for the dangers And the powers of the sea. We were the best of mates.

You could count on him
At the oddest times
To produce something.
He did it again for all of us that night.
We were the best of mates.

Inner Circle he loved to drink. The times we had, well They'll never die. We were the best of mates.

Hiroshima or beautiful
He would call a beach.
That sea going man is going to reacy
For the ocean, his playground
Not his grave.
We were the best of mates.

- Chris Hatfield

The General Manager, Cruising Yacht Club of Australia Thank you very much for the donation you made to the Dockyard Chapel Fund on behalf of your yacht club.

It was my privilege to assist in the Memorial Service at St Stephens Uniting Church

> Yours sincerely, A.W. Rosier Principal Chaplain, RAN

> > 61 Stewart Street, Paddington, 2021

The Editor, Offshore

It seems likely that one result of the tragic yachting accidents that have occurred both in the harbour and more recently offshore will be to leave our sport wide open to calls for more regulations and more policing by the authorities. Even now according to Modern Boating, the MSB is looking at how

to virtually prevent yachts from ever heading towards commercial vessels on the harbour and at least one magazine has suggested the need to licence yacht skippers.

If that happens, I believe we will be the losers.

There can be few clubs that have done more to support safety and training in yachting – the CYCA has a history of innovation in safety and has, over the years, run a wide range of training courses for Members.

Perhaps, however, now is the time when some public relations activity needs to be undertaken by the Club to demonstrate just how much has already been done and what will be done in the future.

It is not, in my view, sufficient to just do things well, it is important to communicate to others how well they are done, otherwise there is a real risk of not being understood, or appreciated, outside the circle of people who really know what goes on.

For example, should the Club have a formal Training Committee whose task it would be to liaise on training matters with the AYF, other clubs and commercial training establishments, to organise CYCA training courses and crew experience programmes and to generally encourage and promote training as part of CYCA policy both inside and outside the Club?

Such a group would be well placed to make sure that our voice is heard when the authorities are considering initiatives vital to our sport.

Yours faithfully, W.S. Sherman

#### Thanks

On board Rollo IV, (from Amsterdam) in Rushcutters Bay

The Board of the CYCA,

As soon as the wind has changed to a southerly direction, we will hoist the sails of *Rollo IV* and leave Sydney to continue our voyage around the world.

We want to thank you for your hospitality. Although we have not made frequent use of the facilities of the CYCA, the times that we did we felt free to do so. You accepted me and my wife as Honorary Members of your Club.

We [would]like you to know that we would be happy to be of any help to whoever of your Members who is to enter my home harbour, Falmouth in Cornwall.

With our best wishes for you and for the future of the CYCA, we remain, Dear Sirs,

Yours sincerely, Siebe de Boer, Hennie de Boer Commodore of the SSCA (America), Members of the RCYC (Cornwall, England) Members of 'Het Y', Amsterdam, Holland

#### New Safety Harness Standard

The YA of NSW Yachting Association Proceedings of March 1983 notes that a new Australian Standard has been issued for safety harnesses. YAP noted: "The Royal Ocean Racing Club Inquiry into the 1979 Fastnet Race disaster found that six lives were lost as a result of failure of safety

harnesses or their attachment points. In all, 26 boats reported one or more cases of harness failure. Generally the harnesses which failed were not manufactured to any particular standard.

"There were no failures on the Australian team boats where all harnesses were approved under Australian Standard AS 2227-1978.

"A new editon of AS 2227 (1983) has just been issued by the Standards Association of Australia at the request of the AYF. This requires that safety lines be detachable at the wearer's end as well as at the deck end, thus allowing a yachtsman to free himself quickly, even though he cannot reach the anchorage point on deck because it is underwater or obstructed by debris as in a demasting.

"The new standard also includes requirements for children's safety harnesses and some changes to testing procedures."

#### New Rules from the Safety Committee

Safety Harnesses. All safety harnesses must now incorporate a hook at both ends of the tether line. Care should be taken to ensure that the attachment point at the harness can be freely operated under load. (The Committee suggests a metal ring, shackle or rope loop, etc. as it feels that it would be dangerous to attach the tether line hook directly to the webbing of the harness).

The Committee will not require that new harnesses be purchased; merely alter your existing harnesses. However, if you wish to purchase new harnesses, ensure that they are manufactured in compliance with the new Australian Standard [see above – Ed.].

Life Rafts for Category 3 races. Life rafts must now be carried in all Category 3 races, but a reduced standard is permitted as per CYCA Special Regulation 134 in the new 1983-'84 Sailing Program.

Radio for Category 3 and 4. The minimum radio requirement for Category 3 and 4 races is a 27 MHz set. Yachts fitted with VHF or SSB do not require 27 MHz.

# Annual Safety Inspections

The annual safety inspections will be carried out on the following days:

Saturday, July 30th Saturday, August 6th Saturday, August 13th Saturday, August 20th Sunday, August 21st.

Fourteen inspections will be carried out each day, so be sure to make an appointment now to obtain the most convenient time for yourself. Ring Jill McLay in the sailing office.

The first point score race of the season will be Saturday, August 27th, and entries will be accepted only from yachts with a valid Annual Safety Compliance Certificate. If you cannot make an appointment for your safety insepection on the above dates, we will carry out four inspections on each Sunday from August 28th until November. However, it is in your interest to make an appointment before the season commences so you do not miss any point score races.

Remember there is a re-inspection fee of \$10 if a yacht fails her initial inspection. This fee must be paid before a re-inspection appointment will be made. So please have your yacht ready. And book *now*.

Safety certificates will be accepted from the following clubs as long as an official CYCA compliance form is used: Middle Harbour Yacht Club, Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, Lake Macquarie Yacht Club.

#### CYCA Annual Meeting

At the Annual General Meeting held on June 20, 1983 the following were elected unopposed. Peter Hankin was the only newcomer.

G. Girdis (Commodore

J. Brooks (Vice Commodore)

G. Marshall (Rear Commodore)
P. Hankin (Rear Commodore)

D. Don (Treasurer)

A. Brown

A. Cable

A. Cooley

D. Kellett

K. Storey J. Whitty

# **Brits in for Southern Cross**

—from Peter Campbell. The Royal Ocean Racing Club has advised the CYCA of its intention to nominate a British team to contest the 1983 Hitachi Southern Cross Cup series. The team is certain to include one or two of the British boats chosen to defend the Admiral's Cup at Cowes in July/August and will be one of the strongest contenders for the prestigeous international event in December.

The British, strongest international supporters of the Southern Cross series and the Hitachi Sydney-Hobart Race, were also one of the prime advocates of one of the major changes introduced by the CYCA for this year's 9th Southern Cross series – reducing the IOR rating limit to between 30-40 feet, the same as for the Admiral's Cup.

The likely strength of the British team can be gauged from the fact that there are 24 boats, many of them brand new, contesting the Admiral's Cup selection trials.

Hong Kong is another likely challenger with, possibly, two teams.

The reduced rating limit is one of several major changes for this year's events, both of which are again being sponsored by Hitachi. This is the 8th year that Hitachi, the giant diversified Japanese manufacturing corporation, has sponsored the Hobart Race and Southern Cross series. For the first time, this year yachts will be permitted unrestricted use of electronic aids to navigation and performance computers.

The Southern Cross series has been extended to five races, with offshore starts (weather permitting) for all three round-the-buoys races off Sydney. Only team yachts will be permitted to contest the shorter events, i.e. no individual entries will be allowed, again bringing the Cup series into line with Admiral's Cup rules.

Announcing Hitachi's continuing support of the Southern Cross and Hobart Races,

CYCA Commodore George Girdis said that such support would allow the continuation of the highest standard of ocean racing organisation and administration in running these internationally- acclaimed events. He said the CYCA was expecting a record fleet of some 170 starters for the 39th Hitachi Sydney-Hobart Yacht Racea with strong international and interstate representation.

Several owners are building new boats for the events, including Ray Johnston, who won the 1982 Hobart Race in *Scallywag*. Johnston is building a new minimum-rater, a fractional 40-footer, from the drawing board of Bruce Farr.

The AYF has adopted a new age allowance system for the 1983-'84 season and details of this were sent out with the notices of races. Copies of these are available from the CYCA or from yacht clubs throughout Australia and overseas. Closing date for receipt of entry applications is at the CYCA, October 31, 1983. The first entry in this year was for Bernard Lewis' Vengeance.

The Hitachi Southern Cross Cup series will consist of:

- Race 1 Friday, December 16 offshore triangle (c. 30 miles) for the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club Centenary Bowl
- Race 2 Saturday, December 17 n offshore triangle (c. 30 miles) for MIddle Harbour Yacht Club Cup
- Race 3 Monday, December 19 Ocean race (c. 180 miles) for Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron Cup
- Race 4 Thursday, December 22 Offshore triangle (c. 30 miles) for Cruising Yacht Club of Australia Trophy
- Race 5 Monday December 26 Hitachi Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race (630 miles)

The short races will carry single points, with points for the 180 mile race being multiplied by 2 and those for the Hobart Race multiplied by 3. Age allowances will not apply to yachts contesting the Southern Cross Cup.

Most Australian States have already scheduled selection trials for the Southern Cross Cup teams, with W.A. selectors being given the opportunity to include yachts which may not be sailing at the time in W.A. waters.

#### **Twilight Races**

Twilight Racing will be extended for the forthcoming season. Commencing October 17th racing will start at 5.00 p.m. and will continue for the next three weeks, then revert to a 6.00 p.m. start when daylight saving time is introduced. At the end of daylight saving time for the following three weeks starting time will revert to 5.00 p.m.•

#### **Veterans Race**

The inaugural Veterans Race will be sailed on Sunday August 7, 1983 on Sydney Harbour. The race will be open to yachts that have competed in a Sydney-Hobart Race and which were built before 1966. The event will be conducted as part of the regular winter series starting from 1100 hrs with a handicap start system. Spinnakers will not be permitted, but headsails may be poled out. An arbitrary handicap will be allocated for the event.

#### Offshore Signals



#### Seifferts safe in the Sounds

Celia and Paul Seiffert, whom we have already reported as having reached New Zealand safely in their 28-foot Northerly, write from the Bay of Many Coves, Queen Charlotte Sound, South Island, New Zealand where they are waiting for the winter winds to abate before heading to the North Island anchorages. They report: "The CYCA burgee hands proudly in the Marlborough Cruising Club in Picton (clubhouse on the old scow Echo) and in Waikawa Boating Club, Waikawa. In return we have their burgees which entitle us to all mooring privileges in the Sounds and full use of the Clubs' facilities. They are the first 'foreign burgees' to be put up there, which surprised us. Plenty in the North Island, we have been told.

"The N.Z. cruising yachts wintering in the North Island have gone from here to Tauranga via Gisbourne and Napier, passing Wellington and Mana by. If it had not been for the Autohelm situation we would probably have gone with them, although Picton and the South Island have caught our interest. The kindness and hospitality from so many people has been continuous, from the marina supervisor, other sailors, the Harbour Master, the mayoral authorities and people who generously invite us to their houses.

"It is cold here but we have a good heater. The Picton autumn day is usually free of the high winds of summer, full of brilliant sunshine and invites one to walk briskly through the park. The foliage is that lovely bronze shade, very like on an autumn day in Melbourne. The recent blow up in Cook Strait, 90 K winds and 75 K in Wellington, still left Picton as a safe and comfortable anchorage in the high southerly. We need all our big woollies and especially I [Celia] need a woolen hat, which is a surprise to me.

"Greetings to all. - Celia and Paul Seiffert Aboard Cia Maria Poste Restante, Picton, New Zealand

#### Fraser/Elvstrom

Fraser Sails has assumed the operations of Elvstrom Sails Australia. The Elvstrom loft in Pyrmont has closed, and three of its staff -Brad Stephens, Gary Taylor and Andrew Parkes - have moved to the Fraser loft at Rushcutters Bay where they will continue to make sails to the Elvstrom One Design Class patterns.

Mike Fletcher, who has headed Elvstrom Sails Australia from its inception in 1962, has been retained by Fraser Sails as consultant, to update the patterns in the one design classes in which Elvstrom has been 1982-'83 Trophies so successful.

Fletcher is, however, leaving full-time sailmaking to pursue his already well established interests in yacht racing coaching. His first role in this new professional career is coach to the crew of the Victorian 12 metre Challenge 12, at present in Newport taking part in the America's Cup eliminations.

On his return to Australia. Mike intends setting up a new business specialising in yacht tuning and coaching such skills as race tactics, crew work, helming and sail trim. He is already well experienced in this field, having coached the 1976 Olympic vachting team. He has been appointed coach to the Australian team for the 1984 Olympic Regatta at Long Beach, California,

Fletcher, besides being a consultant to Fraser Sails, will be readily available to provide professional assistance on performance analysis and tuning.

Fraser Sails now moves into an even stronger position among Australian sailmakers. Bob Fraser has steadily demonstrated his intuitive ability as a sailmaker and as a good business manager, having weathered several economic storms since he started his Rushcutters Bay loft, emerging stronger each time. An all-Australian firm, Fraser Sails has demonstrated that you don't have to be big to be successful..



#### Product news Tamaya NC-88 Navigation Computer

Tamaya & Co was one of the first in the field of hard-wired navigation computers with the NC-2. This was followed by the NC-77, a computer with limited Almanac information (GHA and DEC Sun Equation of Time and GHA Aries). The NC-77 also incorporated a number of other programmes.

Now Tamaya has produced the NC-88, a hard-wired computer with a more than complete Nautical Almanac - the Sun, Moon, Planets and 63! stars. The computer can handle any number of position lines and the resultant fix can be advanced or retarded to any convenient time.

Ancillary programmes include DR and Course/Distance computation, Great Circle and Composite Sailing, etc.

The NC-88 has an inbuilt printer for recording all data and computations, plus a checking routine to allow easy review of inputs and the correction of incorrect entries.

The NC-88 comes in a wooden case (as did all previous Tamaya computers). It is well documented. The handbook is a concise, classical exposition of celestial navigation. AC and DC adaptors are available to supplement the on-board Ni-Cad batteries. Alternatively, standard batteries may be used.

The NC-88 is available from leading chandlers and instrument suppliers as well as from the importer, The Chart Room, 31 Albany Street, Crows Nest, 2065 (mail address: PO Box 229, Milson's Point, 2061).

Tradewinds Trophy 1982 Diaond Cutter (A.J. Sweeney) Janzoon Trophy 1983 Once More Dear Friends (P. Kurts) Woollahra Cup 1982-'83 Once More Dear Friends (P. Kurts) Endeavour Cup 1982-'83 Corfu (M. Green, A. Hancock, R. Ferrier) Zilvergeest Trophy 1982-'83 Corfu (M. Green, A. Hancock, R. Ferrier) Ron Robertson Memorial Cup 1983 Sweet Caroline (M. Phillips)

Police Car (Sir J. Hardy) Halvorsen Bros. Trophy 1983 Tashtego (C. Franklin)

Queen's Birthday Cup 1983

Rubber Kellaway Trophy 1982-'83 Police Car (Sir J. Hardy)

Flinders Cup 1983 Police Car (Sir J. Hardy)

Montego Bay Trophy 1982-'83 Corfu (M. Green, A. Hancock, R. Ferrier)

Paul Royle Trophy 1983 Police Car (Sir J. Hardy)

Commodore's Trophy 1982-'83 RSYS; Audacity, Much Ado, Nike

Zilvergeest II Trophy 1983 Corfu (M. Green, A. Hancock, R. Ferrier) Malcolm Halliday Trophy 1982-'83 Once More Dear Friends (P. Kurts)

John Burrow Trophy 1982 Diamond Cutter (A.J. Sweeney)

JOGA Trophy Police 1982-'83 Mululu (C. Montgomery)

Jack Halliday Trophy 1982-'83 Scallywag (R. Johnston) Blue Water Plaque, CYCA Blue Water Champion 1982-'83 Scallywag (R. Johnston)

#### **DIVISION 1**

Scallywag (R.E. Johnston). Winner Blue Water Trophy for overall LOPS; winner Jack Halliday Trophy; 2nd Division 1, LOPS; 2nd Division 1, SOPS; LOPS results: 1/1, 1/2, 2/ 3; SOPS results: 2/2. 1/3.

Once More Dear Friends (P.P. Kurts). Winner Janzoon Trophy; winner Woollahra Cup: winner Malcolm Halliday Trophy; 2nd overall LOPS; 1st Division 1 LOPS; LOPS results: 2/1, 2/2; SOPS results: 1/1.

Police Car (Sir James Hardy). Winner Flinders Cup; winner Queens Birthday Cup; winner Rubber Kellaway Trophy; winner Paul Royle Trophy: winner Divsion 1 Royal Clubs Trophy; LOPS results: 2/1; SOPS results: 1/ 1, 1/2, 1/3.

Sweet Caroline (M.W.D. Phillips). Winner, Ron Robertson Trophy; LOPS results: 1/1; SOPS results: 1/1, 1/2, 1/3.

The Roperunner (L. Green). 3rd overall LOPS: 3rd Division 1 LOPS: LOPS results: 1/1, 1/2, 2/3.

Satin Sheets (A.A. Strachan). Winner overall, SOPS; 1st Division 1, SOPS; LOPS results: 2/2, 1/3; SOPS results: 1/1, 1/2, 4/3.

Taurus II (A.G. Lee). 3rd overall SOPS; 3rd Division 1, SOPS; LOPS results: 1/3; SOPS results: 1/1, 1/2.

Mululu (C.R.L. Montgomery). Winner JOGA Trophy; LOPS results: 1/2.

Pacha (J. de la Vega), SOPS results: 3/1.

Vengeance (B. Lewis). SOPS results: 2/1, 1/2, 3/3.

Rager 1 (M.A. Clements). SOPS results: 2/

Inch by Winch (J. Goddard). SOPS results: 2/2, 2/3.

Big Schott (A. Pearson). SOPS results: 1/ 1, 1/2.

Adrenalin (B.C. Ryan). SOPS results: 1/1.

Meltemi (B.C. Psaltis). SOPS results: 1/2,

Parmelia (S.O. Stevenson). SOPS results:

Helsal II (A. Fisher). SOPS results: 1/2.

Margaret Rintoul III (S.R. Edwards). SOPS results: 1/1.

Impetuous (R. Roberts). LOPS results: 1/3.

Myuna (J.H. Bleakley). SOPS results: 1/3.

Bondi Tram (D.J. O'Neil). SOPS results: 1/2.

Marloo (G.S. Girdis). SOPS results: 1/3.

#### **DIVISION 2**

Diamond Cutter (A.J. Sweeney). Winner John Borrow Memorial Trophy; winner Tradewinds Trophy; 2nd overall SOPS; 3rd Division 2, SOPS; LOPS results: 5/1, 1/2; SOPS results: 2/1, 1/3

Impeccable (J.O. Walker). Winner Division 2 Royal Clubs' Trophy; 2nd Division 3, LOPS; 2nd Division 2 SOPS; LOPS results: 1/1, 1/ 2. 3/3.

Vanessa III (B. & K. Jaggar). 2nd Classic Division; 2nd Division 2 LOPS; LOPS results: 2/2, 3/3.

Much Ado (J.A. Rickard). Member of winning team for Commodore's Trophy; 3rd Division 2 LOPS; LOPS results: 2/2; SOPS results: 1/1, 2/2, 1/3.

Idle Vice (R. Tresidder & S. Williams). 1st Division 2 SOPS; LOPS results: 2/2; SOPS results: 5/1, 1/2, 2/3.

Piccolo (J. Pickles). LOPS results: 2/2; SOPS results: 1/1, 1/2.

Middle Harbour Express (B. Wade). LOPS results: 1/1, 1/3; SOPS results: 1/1, 1/2.

Phoenix (E. Vidor). LOPS results: 2/2; SOPS results: 1/3.

Farr Out (C.A. Troup).SOPS results: 2/1, 2/3. DIVISION 4 (JOG)

Audacity (N.W. Marr), Member, winning team for Commodore's Trophy; LOPS results: 2/1, 1/2; SOPS results: 3/2, 1/3.

Rebecca (C. Ward, V. O'Neill) SOPS results: 1/1 1/2 1/3

Hope and Glory (T.D. Loxton). SOPS re-

Saga (J. Ditmarsch). LOPS results: 2/3; SOPS results: 1/2.

Stormy Petrel (G.L. Day). SOPS results: 1/

Aphrodite (G.S. Girdis). SOPS results: 1/3.

White Pointer (K. Le Compte).SOPS results: 2/2, 1/3

Double Bogey (B. James, R. Landis). SOPS

#### **DIVISION 3**

Nike (J.A. Hunt). Member, winning team for Commodore's Trophy; 1st Classic Division; 1st, Division 3 LOPS; 1st Division 3, SOPS; LOPS results: 2/1: 3/2: SOPS results: 3/1, 3/ 2, 1/3

Tashtego (C. Franklin). Winner, Halvorsen Bros. Trophy; 3rd Division 3, LOPS; LOPS results: 2/1, 1/3; SOPS results: 1/2.

Wainunu (R.A. Lee). 2nd, Division SOPS; SOPS results: 1/1, 2/2.

Morag Bheag (D.C.B. Maclurcan), 3rd, Division 3 SOPS; SOPS results: 1/1, 2/2, 4/3.

Mishy (K.A. Munro). Winner, Division 3 Royal Clubs' Trophy; SOPS results: 1/2, 3/3.

Pippin (W.E. Sweetapple). LOPS results: 1/ 2; SOPS results: 4/1, 1/2, 1/3.

Saltpeta (P. Hintron). LOPS results: 1/3; 1/2.

Pawpaw (F. Snape). SOPS results: 1/1.

True Blue III (J.D. Kelly). SOPS results: 1/3

Chloe (D. Rourke). SOPS results: 1/2.

Moonshadow II (G.L. Bennett). SOPS results: 1/1, 1/3

Gambit (J.& L. Bailye). SOPS results: 2/2,

Pimpernel (H. Holland). SOPS results: 1/1,

Firetel (R. Lawler & K. Taylor). SOPS results: 1/1, 1/2.

Shenandoah (J.R. Charody). 3rd, Short Haul Division B; 5/2, 1/3; LOPS results: 1/2.

Tom Pudding (R.M. Clifton), SOPS results:

The General (D. Adams). SOPS results: 1/1.

Corfu (M. Green, A. Hancock, R. Ferrier). Winner Endeavour Cup: winner Zilvergeest Trophy; winner Montego Bay Trophy; winner Zilvergeest II Trophy; 1st Division 4 (JOG) Ocean Point Score; 1st Division 4 (JOG) SOPS; OPS results: 4/1; SOPS results: 6/1,

Lady Ann (J.R. Kirkjian). Winner, Division 4 (JOG) Royal Club's Trophy; 2nd, Division 4 (JOG) Ocean Point Score; 2nd, Division 4 (JOG) SOPS: OPS results: 1/1, 1/3; SOPS results: 3/1, 8/2, 1/3,

Sea Bear (E.A. Flanders). 3rd Division 4 (JOG) SOPS;; SOPS results: 4/1, 1/2, 2/3.

Barbados (R.A. Robson). 3rd Division 4 (JOG) OPS; SOPS results: 1/3.

Marabou (J. K. Morris). SOPS results: 1/1.

Patience (W. Sherman). SOPS results: 1/1,

#### SHORT HAUL DIVISION A

Cherana (J. Keelty). 1st Short Haul Division !; 4/1, 1/2, 3/3.

Quadrille II (J. Brooks). 2nd Short Haul Division A; 4/1, 2/3.

Davo XI (K. Davis). 3rd Short Divsion A: 1/ 1. 2/2. 1/3.

Sagittarius (B.C. Hudson), 1/1, 2/2, 1/3.

Trevassa (F.R. Duffield), 1/1, 3/2/

Starbuck (M.R.L. Dowling), 1/1, 1/3.

Najaat (N. Yared).1/1, 1/3.

Butterfly Bay (J.D. Ind). 1/1. Bagpipes (P.F. Toolan). 4/2.

Rabelais (P. Mills), 1/2, 1/3,

Yemanja (H.H. Bender), 1/2,

#### SHORT HAUL DIVISION B

Thomas's Promises (W. Thomas). 1st Short Haul Division B; 4/1, 1/2, 2/3.

Misty (A.L. Brown). 2nd Short Haul Division B; 2/1, 1/2, 2/3.

Christina (R.C. Christian), 2/1, 1/2,

Palijara II (R.H. Pursell), 2/1, 1/3.

Lindos (F. Huber). 1/1, 1/2.

Scallywag (R. Cortis), 1/1, 1/3.

Aurelia II (C.R. Climie). 1/1, 3/2.

Beaufort (F. Puddick). 1/1.

Paprika (J. Glass). 1/3.

Onakers (M. Mead & T. Sharples), 1/3. (continued on page 32)

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#### THE TASMAN CUP DISASTER

#### by John Brooks

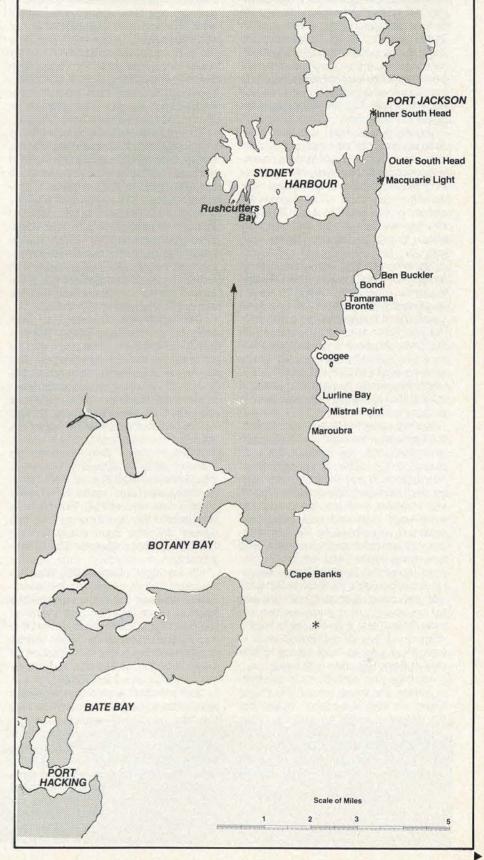
The Tasman Cup race for Division 4 (JOG) on April 15th 1983 will long be remembered as the most disastrous race in CYCA history. Two boats sank, four yachtsmen drowned and a massive sea search that lasted all weekend engaged the attention of hundreds of vachtsmen, naval personnel and police. At one stage there were over 50 yachts at sea participating in the search. in addition to numerous police and naval craft and helicopters. The search was only partially successful; out of nine crew members missing, five were picked up, one of those almost by chance by a fishing boat which was not even involved in the search.

The race started at 2030 hours on Friday night, and the forecast was for south to southwest winds. 20 to 30 knots and a southeasterly swell. The CYCA, already aware that conditions for Joggies would be lumpy, altered the course as requested by the JOG Association and signaled one which bypassed Botany Bay and took the division to a mark off Jibbon Beach in Port Hacking, then straight back to the finish in Sydney Harbour, a total distance of 44 nautical miles. It was not a night to be turning the fleet into Botany Bay.

At the start, no hint of the coming disaster disturbed the minds of either officials or competitors. Lulls of wind down to 15 knots in the harbour promised an easy running start, and the conditions outside the heads were nothing that the Joggies had not handled before. As the 15 boats punched out the heads into the strengthening southerly, they were faced with a beat to the south of 20 miles. It was very dark, and a nasty cross sea promised to make boat handling difficult for the next five hours. In fact, it was to make it difficult for the next two days.

Solitaire, which was to play a major role later on in the night, elected to set up for the conditions outside early by reefing the main and carrying a No. 4 jib in the harbour. As a result of this conservative approach she was last out of the heads and decided to track close inshore on the beat south. It was a tactical decision which was to have a profound effect on the drama to follow.

Montego Bay, a production Hood 23 owned by Chris Hatfield and one of the best known JOG boats in NSW for several years, took a tuck in the main and a No. 4 jib for the beat south and for the first hour handled the conditions easily enough. An experienced crew, who knew their boat and the conditions off



#### The Tasman Cup Disaster

the Sydney coast as well as anyone. they had no qualms about the condi-

Then they fell off a couple of waves and were engulfed by one big green one, experiencing the worst of a seaway set up by the heavy primary swell and a secondary that was running across it and kicking up some steep seas: things had started to get uncomfortable. About 2150 hrs the crew noticed that there was more water sloshing about down below than seemed warranted, and Richard Connelly went below to investigate.

Joggies are all fairly wet boats in a seaway, but this was out of the ordinary, and Connelly could see no obvious reason. Shortly after this the water increased noticeably and Michael Condon observed about 12" of water in the bottom of the oat. Montego Bay was moving well in spite of this, but they began to discuss returning to the mar-

Shortly after 2200 hrs, Chris Hatfield turned Montego Bay about and headed for home. The water below increased dramatically in a matter of minutes, and Condon was bucketing from below over the side in an attempt to keep up with the inflow. At about turnaround plus five minutes, Hatfield sent Connelly below to make a SECURITE call on the radio. Connelly queried this and suggested a PAN PAN call as the boat was now in obvious trouble.

Hatfield corrected himself and agreed. the PAN call went out but was changed to a MAYDAY just before the boat started to sink, although this was never heard. Condon and Connelly went back on deck and Connelly fired two flares. one of which went low out to sea, the other went high and was seen. The radio call was picked up by Barry Barker, an amateur radio operator who runs Bankstown Base for the Bankstown Bluewater Fishing Club. He copied Montego Bay's PAN call at 2218 hrs and responded. A second PAN call was cut off abruptly and there was no answer to Barker's subsequent calls. He telephoned the Water Police and at 2220 hrs the police launch Price left the Dawes Point HQ and put to sea.

Montego Bay went down in less than a minute, the crew scrambling to get lifejackets from the cockpit locker, but the weight of water against the hatch prevented them from opening it. They all jumped into the water as the boat sank. There was no panic, more an atmosphere of disbelief that it was all actually happening.

They were approximately 3 miles ESE of Ben Buckler, and initially they were able to keep together, but about 15 minutes after the sinking another vacht was sighted, and Chris Hatfield and Matt Hayes swam toward it, hoping to attract attention, and this separated them from the others.

Connelly, Condon and Robert Rush stayed together, clustered around a portable fuel tank which had surfaced after the sinking. They started breast stroking towards shore after shedding their oilskins, and for an hour or so they made slow progress towards Ben Buckler. Around midnight wave action separated Condon from his two companions but he was later rejoined by Rush. They never saw Connelly again.

They found themselves close in to Ben Buckler and were worried that the heavy seas could slam them against the rocks but they were swept out again by a strong current. They heard a helicopter about this time and saw its searchlight further out to sea, realised that a search was on and took hope. Chris Hatfield and Matt Hayes, meanwhile, had much the same experience. Battered by heavy seas they made it in to the vicinity of Ben Buckler about the same time as the others and had the same difficulty getting any further.

The flare fired by Connelly had been seen by at least two boats. Solitaire turned towards the flare and switched on radios. In the next 30 minutes some confused radio traffic led them to believe that the situation was under control and that no further assistance was required. They rejoined the race, a tragic mix-up which caused some bitterness later

Waikikamukau's story is somewhat different and, it appears, unrelated. Waikikamukau was the first Farr 727 in Australia and was made famous by Hugh Treharne and Rob Mundle, who slaughtered the opposition in their first season with the boat, easily winning the 1976 National Quarter Ton Championship.

On the night of April 15th, Waikikamukau had been handling the conditions with ease under the experienced hand of John Tavener, part owner of the boat and a leading light in the JOG Association. The crew was experienced offshore with the exception of 14 year old Phillip Baker, who was no raw beginner on a vacht either.

Neville Walters was on the main sheet which had to be worked constantly as the boat alternately crested 3-4 metre waves and dived into the troughs. Martin White and young Phillip were perched on the weather rail, all were wearing safety harnesses and all were clipped on, although up until this point the deck had been comparatively dry and there were no washboards in place in the main hatch.

Waikikamukau had reached a point

about 3-4 miles east of Coogee when suddenly a wave much larger than usual, steep-walled and breaking at the top, loomed over them. The boat went up the wave, then fell sideways down the face, landing heavily on its port topsides with the mast in the water and was buried as the wave rolled over them. All the crew were tumbled into the water, still attached by lifelines to the boat. The main sheet was free but the jib sheet was cleated.

Two of the crew managed to climb back on board the boat which swung stern on to the seas, the self-righted and almost immediately took another wave over the stern and fell over again onto its starboard side, making it difficult for Neville to get free of his safety harness. It sank very quickly after this.

Neville Walters concentrated first on getting out of his safety harness, then his oilskins, clinging to the upturned bow of the boat during the latter exercises. Neville and two others drifted away after the boat sank but were quickly separated in heavy seas. Neville found himself alone, stripped to shorts and a T-shirt and uncomfortably aware that no flare or radio message had gone out from Waikikamukau; there had simply been no chance. The sequence of events from beginning to end had taken only a couple of minutes.

Neville made a conscious decision after a while not to swim for shore. although he is a good swimmer and an experienced diver, therefore at home in the water. The long distance swim was not too daunting but his main reason lay in his knowledge that the rough onshore seas would give him little chance of a safe landing. Better to stay where he was and hope to be picked up by the returning JOG or other boats in daylight. He steeled himself to survive until dawn.

Solitaire had continued south, freed from responsibility, as previously noted. by a confused radio message that all was well. She had reached a point east of Botany Bay when failing battery power deprived her of instruments and navigation lights, and they decided to return to Sydney Harbour. They had stuck to their plan of staying closer in than the leading boats and found the going easy, picking up time on boats further out and only running into heavy seas when they tacked well offshore. This now influenced them to run for home close inshore, and at 0130 hrs they were only 150 metres off Ben Buckler when they heard a call for help in the darkness.

It seemed to come from the direction of the cliffs, but when they turned the boat around they spotted the orange oilskins of Hatfield and Hayes to seaward. They got them aboard on the second pass and learned that there three more crew from Montego Bay somewhere in the vicinity.

They got on the radio and fired flares. The police launch Price and the CYCA launch Offshore were on the scene in minutes and it was the Price which quickly found Condon and Rush, pulling them on board at 0156 hrs. The search continued for Richard Connelly.

For CYCA officials the tragedy announced itself on the committee boat radio, in the form of the radio traffic which broke out immediately following Montego Bay's emergency signal. Offshore, which had been starting boat for the JOG fleet and nearly 30 other yachts in the 90 mile Bird Island race fleet, was on standby duty in Rushcutters Bay awaiting the midnight radio schedule. The peaceful routine was shattered when the crew overheard the Water Police radio traffic and recognised Montego Bay as one of their own.

Offshore put to sea to assist in the search, joining the police launches Price. Doyle and Lees. Offshore is a Masters 34' diesel cruiser, well known for its sea keeping ability, but the crew found the conditions heavy going for a small motor launch. Nevertheless, they remained at sea until 0500 hrs when they were forced in to refuel, and at this time the crew decided to wake up other Club officials to provide some back-up.

By 0630 hrs a command centre had been set up at the CYCA sailing office and radio contact established with the search vessels and Water Police HQ. At the 0700 radio sked with the race fleet, the Bird Island race was abandoned and the yachts directed to join the search under the direction of the Water Police. As news of the disaster spread, the Club also began to handle what eventually became a flood of telephone enquiries from anxious relatives, friends and Club Members volunteering their boats and/or themselves as crew to help in the search. These additional yachts started to leave the CYCA marina about 0800, and by noon it was estimated that over 50 yachts were at sea and involved in the search.

The Navy joined in with the Patrol Boat Attack and the Torpedo Recovery Vessel Trevally. The duty helicopter took off from Nowra to join a growing fleet of

police and media helicopters. The Water Police now had an incredible array of craft to direct and the huge variations in speed and capability of these vessels presented great difficulties for the Price which was co-ordinating the search at

Nevertheless they marshalled boats ranging from slow-moving yachts to motor cruisers to warships into line abreast formations miles across and ran them slowly up and down the coast from close in to the cliffs to three miles and more out to sea. Eventually, the search area encompassed Botany Bay to Broken Bay and five miles out to sea. but they concentrated on an area within three miles of Ben Buckler.

Just after 0830 hrs the Club command centre was electrified by the news that a lone survivor had been picked up by the fishing boat Lomar about two miles east of Ben Buckler and that he would shortly be transferred to the Price. A radio recall went out to all yachts, and officials in the Club started to relax. Fifteen minutes later they found to their horror that the survivor was not Richard Connelly and learned for the first time that Waikikamukau had also sunk during the night. They now had four missing crew members, one from Montego Bay and three from Waikikamukau. The inbound yachts were turned around and sent out again.

Neville Walters was determined to survive, and survive he did. During the night he had seen the flares fired from Solitaire after they picked up Chris Hatfield and Matt Hayes and he was very encouraged by this, realising that another boat was in trouble and that a search would get underway. Shortly after this he heard a helicopter coming up from the south and saw its searchlight passing inshore. After this the helicopter often came near him and even passed right overhead on one sweep without spotting him.

Later, a police launch passed about two waves away but he was neither seen nor heard in the heavy seas. At dawn he dared hope that the boats which were obviously conducting a search of the are would eventually stumble across him and he drove himself to hold on for as long as it took. Vengeance passed him by about 200 metres away, and at about 0800 hrs

turned around and picked Neville Walters up at 0830 hrs; he had been in the water around 10 hours. At 1500 hrs some of the race fleet yachts started to come in, some short of fuel and some with crews exhausted after 12 hours of heavy racing followed by eight hours being tossed around in the search area. Many had not eaten since the night before and their haggard appearance told the story of the deteriorating conditions off the coast. Some boats, like Offshore, refuelled, changed crews and went out again.

The Tasman Cup Disaster

Not long after this he saw a fishing

boat coming straight at him from the

north and his fear of not being seen

was so real that he could not bear to

look at the boat for more than a few

seconds at a time. He closed his eyes,

then dared to look again and the boat

kept coming. It passed right alongside.

and an amateur fisherman, hanging

over the side in some distress, saw

Neville frantically waving his arms. He

smiled weakly and waved back before

it dawned on him that he was looking at

someone adrift in open sea. The Lomar

his frustration was intense.

On Saturday night the CYCA issued an appeal through the media for volunteers to continue the search on the Sunday and they started to arrive at the Club at 0630. Again, dozens of yachts joined the search, and many volunteers helped man them. It was no place for beginners, however, because conditions were, if anything, worse than on Saturday. More than one boat returned to the marina with seasick volunteers. only to change crews and try again.

The Water Police stayed out all night.

By mid Sunday all hope of finding the survivors had vanished, and early Sunday afternoon the weather deteriorated to the point where spotting anything more than 30 metres away became next to impossible. Mid afternoon, a heavy squall was reported moving up the coast from Port Kembla, and the Water Police ordered all small craft back into harbour. The stragglers got a taste of this storm front as they were lashed by 40-50 knot winds and wild seas.

For all practical purposes the search was now over, and a saddened yachting community withdrew to consider its worst ever racing accident and to study the lessons to be learned.



#### TEN HOURS IN THE WATER

# A story of survival as told to Offshore by Neville Walters

Neville Walters participated in the Tasman Cup on April 15, 1983 aboard Waikikamukau, which at was knocked down and lost. He was the only member of the crew to survive.

His story was told to two members of the Publications Committee, Duncan Van Woerden and Editor David Colfelt, only two days after he was pulled from the water. It is a gruelling tale, told with great candor; we have left Neville's words as they were informally spoken, at a table in Coaster's Retreat.

Neville talked freely because he wanted his fellow yachtsmen to learn as much as possible from the events, hoping that something positive might come from his experience, and wishing to spare others such loss and suffering as the relatives and friends of his crew mates have had to endure.

Nev's is an amazing story of fortitude, and it illustrates the importance of the 'will to survive'. We publish it here in full, with the hope that it may help, in some way, to prevent a recurrence.

OFFSHORE: Were you regular crew on Wai-kikamukau?

WALTERS: No, I have my own boat, a Sonata 8. I overlooked the entry for this particular race, so I was contacted on the Thursday to sail with them [Waikikamukau] because they were short, and I accepted. I know John [Tavener;]; Frank Martin owns the boat.

**OFFSHORE**: How many years have you been sailing, and what sort of experience have you had?

WALTERS: I come from Drummoyne, and we've always had boats in the water. I'm, 43 now, and I've been racing since I was 13-14, crewing in VJs, 16-foot skiffs, 18-foot skiffs. The first ocean race I went in was with Boy Messenger a couple of years ago, in a Swanson boat.

I think that experience – of capsizing in 18s, and this was before the [days of] buoyancy tanks – I wasn't as shocked as everyone else.

**OFFSHORE**: You'd had some experience of being in the water...?

**WALTERS:** Underneath sails and trying to get harnesses off, yes.

OFFSHORE: What about ocean racing experience, or any experience outside the Heads? WALTERS: I've never been to Hobart; I've done a few major races up and down the



coast – Bird Islet, Flinders. But I've had my own JOG boat for three seasons.

**OFFSHORE**: Have you been racing that offshore for three seasons?

WALTERS: Yes. I've done all the JOG series for the last two years, and the first year I had it I did the Short Ocean Point Score and Long Ocean Point Score with the CYCA, also sailed Alfie Hancock's boat in one long ocean race this year for him.

OFFSHORE: Could you describe the [Tasman Cup] race from the very beginning? When you started, when the weather started to pick up, and take us through the events as you recall them?

WALTERS: I arranged to be at Middle Harbour Yacht Club at 6.30 [p.m.]. We prepared the boat, and made it up to the start with the mainsail up, and coming out of Middle Harbour and down the harbour we got some bullets where normally the southerly builds up – in Rose Bay. We were actually coming down when the Division 1 boats started off, going north, and they were all carrying spinnakers. By the time we got round the start we realised the breeze had dropped a little bit and we could carry a spinnaker without much trouble to the heads.

**OFFSHORE:** Had you had a weather forecast at this time?

WALTERS: I'd been watching the weather all week; I fully expected what we got out there – SSW winds – they say 15-20, gusts 20-30 knots.

**OFFSHORE**: How did *Waikikamukau* happen to start in a CYCA race?

WALTERS: When I sailed Alf Hancock's boat in the long ocean points score, which was a Lion Island-Botany Bay affair, unfortunately we were the only boat that fronted up to start. So, stupid, I went right around the course – much to the disgust of the crew, but I had to

sign a declaration – and, so Frank Martin of the Junior Offshore Group Association said if you shorten the courses perhaps we could get some more numbers from the JOGs, and we put on a teams race for the different clubs – three boats representing CYC, Middle Harbour and Port Hacking fellows, and we'll make it a Sydney- Harbour-Port Hacking Race, make it a bit shorter. The fellows still like to do night races for experience, so that was agreed with Bernie Hamill.

OFFSHORE: Was there a special mark off Port Hacking?

**WALTERS:** Yes, there was a special mark with a Port Hacking fellow on the mark.

We observed the red light on South Reef to starboard, and out we went to sea, sailing with one reef in the mainsail and a No. 3 Mylar headsail that they had christened 'the silver bullet'. That sail has to be in the right spot, and after a few adjustments we got going. We got around the rocks and opened up Ben Buckler. The breeze freshened a little, a little bit from the west, I think, because I could feel the warmer gusts. So we had to put another reef in the mainsail

OFFSHORE: What were the sea conditions at this time?

WALTERS: The seas weren't very good, but they didn't alarm me – there was a swell; they were pretty close together – it wasn't a good sea, but no way I was alarmed that we should run for home. I was working the main sheet, and John and I got our combination, got the traveller in the right spot, and we got her in the groove, and we were thinking about winning.

**OFFSHORE:** How big were the seas at this time?

WALTERS: I'd say they were three metres, I suppose, fairly short; we saw a few white crests, and I think we both remarked...John Tavener remarked to me "I don't like those" and I screamed at him that I didn't [either]. Because I remember one Bird Islet race we came home in a black nor easter with spinnakers up, and we had the same problem -I think Alfie Hancock had the same problem that night - there the boats were actually hit by seas from behind and capsized and then came up again. So we discussed that. We sort of got to this position where the boys were remarking how warm the water was; they were sitting on the gunwale as ballast: myself and John were actually sitting on the edge of the cockpit. And we'd just got to the stage where we could see the flare of the refinery, we still could see Macquarie light OK. We decided - we were steering 150° magnetic - we fell down a little...we didn't hold our windward position with the reef in the sail, but we weren't concerned about that because we wanted to give Botany Bay a fairly wide berth because of the sea that runs in there, and we decided, too, that any tack back into land wouldn't be a gaining stretch because the seas pushed you sideways. The course out to sea, we thought, with steady. big rollers rather than the shorter chop...

OFFSHORE: Did you have any current?

WALTERS: No...when you're not sailing it's a bit hard to tell if you've got current. I know in fact from the position where I first went into the water and where they picked me up the following morning I didn't vary that much at

all [wasn't affected by much current]. No, I don't think we had much current

**OFFSHORE:** When we were out searching there was a northerly set close in shore and a southerly set three kilometres out.

WALTERS: I think we could have been getting a bit of chop from that.

**OFFSHORE:** It seemed that the further out you got the there was a sudden change as the southern current hit the wind and the more the sea stacked up.

WALTERS: That's virtually what happened. The waves stood up. The boat was going up in the air. I can still remember the white water curling like a dumper on the beach, and the boat fell sideways...sort of stalled and fell sideways...we were sailing on the starboard tack, steering 150°, and the boat has fallen on its port side down the front of the wave with the wave crashing on it. I fell from the starboard gunwale — everyone did — to the water over the port side.

OFFSHORE: Were you all clipped on at this stage?

WALTERS: Yes.

OFFSHORE: What other gear did you have on?

WALTERS: Sailing shoes, woolen socks, wet weather gear, trousers, coat, plus a woolen jumper, plus a pair of 'bib and brace' khaki overalls.

**OFFSHORE:** So you're over on your port side, and you've got four people in the water.

WALTERS: That's right. With the stern of the boat facing the oncoming seas. Then it stood up and fell the other way. We didn't have storm boards in; they had a setup where halfway down the rail is a piece of canvas where they stick all their ropes from the gofast gear on top of the coachhouse. This is because they only had one winch in the centre of the boat to do all these adjustments.

OFFSHORE: If you guys were harnessed onto the starboard side of the boat, when the boat came back up again and fell over the other way, how did you go on the end of your safety harnesses?

WALTERS: Two of them went up with the boat – they might have been further advanced at getting back on than the other two of us were, but I remember the sensation of suddenly realising that my life line was under the boat. Obviously the life line was very long...

OFFSHORE: How long would you have said?

WALTERS: It's a bit hard to judge...the point is that I realised I had to get my harness off over my shoulders and down my body to survive; the boat was sinking, and it was going to take me with it.

**OFFSHORE:** When did you first realise that the boat was sinking?

WALTERS: At that stage, because the stern of the boat was under water. The danbuoy and horseshoe buoy were in position [still in the original position].

**OFFSHORE:** So she'd come back up, gone down on the other side, and then you noticed that she looked like she was sinking.

WALTERS: That's right.

OFFSHORE: Were you getting dragged by the boat at all.

WALTERS: Yes, we were getting dragged and bashed against the boat. I think that was the point I realised...I nearly gave up at that point and said "I'll drown", and then I got myself going, and the boat moved, and I got another mouthful, but I was able to get the harness off

OFFSHORE: What sort of harness were you wearing?

WALTERS: The Australian Standard manufactured line by Burke Sails, the same as I have on my boat. It has a piece of rope spliced around your chest with a clip. I think the length of rope would have to be at least one and a half metres.

**OFFSHORE:** It would have been the standard length?

WALTERS: Yes. I know on my own boat that's one thing that I have never considered...whether the line was too long or too short

**OFFSHORE:** You said that you were able to slip out of this harness without undoing anything?

WALTERS: Yes, because, I think, with my sailing experience I never do anything up too tight, just tight enough to support me but still loose enough to get off.

**OFFSHORE:** To get your harness off, you were trying to get your arms out, and then push it down over your legs?

WALTERS: Right.

**OFFSHORE:** Is that how you would normally take it off?

WALTERS: Pull it back over my head. But that's on dry land. I had to make mine off that way [down over the legs] because the line was under the boat and dragging me down.

**OFFSHORE:** And you had no scope at all? **WALTERS:** That's right.

**OFFSHORE:** So somehow there must have been enough length to get...

WALTERS: Well, once I got it past my knees I was right...I was able to get another breath and then get the rest of it off.

**OFFSHORE:** What could you see happening at the same time? Did you notice where the other...

WALTERS: Yes, well unfortunately the young boy Phillip was still hooked on, and the poor kid didn't have a clue what to do. I realised then that before I could help him I'd have to get rid of some gear to make myself more manoeuvreable. By the time I went back for him his head was down in the water...

**OFFSHORE:** So he was being pulled beneath the water. Was the boat completely beneath the surface at this time?

WALTERS: Yes.

OFFSHORE: Was the mast still showing?

**WALTERS:** Yes. The boat went down last by the bow; the cockpit was just about submerged to the hatch.

OFFSHORE: Where were the life lines hooked on?

**WALTERS:** To the starboard stanchions, about near the cockpit.

**OFFSHORE:** At a strong point on the deck, or just onto the base of the stanchion. Was there a loop at the base of the stanchion?

**WALTERS:** Yes, [on a loop] on the base of the stanchion. I explained to the boys to take

a turn around and clip it on the rope...you know, young kids just put it straight through.

OFFSHORE: And why did you suggest putting it around like that?

WALTERS: Because it's easier to undo with the turn in the rope..it takes the weight, and you haven't got the weight on the clip.

OFFSHORE: So you normally take it around once or twice and then clip it onto the rope itself...or onto the stanchion?

WALTERS: Once is enough, and then onto the rope itself. I think it's normal...if you're tieing anything you always take a turn around something. I've worked a couple of years on tugs, the smaller ones, in the harbour, and that was always the way we did it; you've got to tie knots, but you've got to get the bloody things undone again. That precaution did us no good.

**OFFSHORE:** The question that the armchair expert asks is "So the boat's going down; why can't you pull yourself down on your line and unclip yourself?" That's probably a stupid question, but...

WALTERS: The reason is that you are being hit with the boat..one minute the boat is up riding with the swell, and the next minute it's...they move around...it's surprising. They jerk and move around a lot. It's dangerous to hang onto them. At one stage to help John I sort of wedged myself between the bloody life lines, and the jerking and the force of it was...unexplainable...it surprised me.

OFFSHORE: At what point was this?

WALTERS: This was when the boat was semisubmerged and was going to sink. The buffeting of what was an immovable object was taking from the seas, the jerking movement of the boat...When I knew that I would like to have got the horseshoe buoy and the danbuoy out, the tiller was swinging around, the rudder was swinging around, and you were up to your waist in water just standing on the tuck of the boat...then I would have had to hang on with one arm, and go down underwater to pull the danbuoy and horseshoe buoy out of the canvass bag...I just wasn't game to do that.

At this stage we've got one poor fellow still clipped on, John Tavener and Martin (Martin's the experienced hand that has sailed with them for a few seasons – only 20 years of age but a nice strong boy and keen as mustard, and capable) and it sort of never occurred to them that the boat was going to sink. I said "Come on, you've got to get your clothes off, you've got to get your harnesses off, we're going to be swimming to shore."

Particularly, I think, John Tavener, who realised that Phillip had gone, took a lot of coaxing to get going.

**OFFSHORE**: So the three of you are swimming in the water, and the boat has gone?

WALTERS: No. Then all of a sudden we realised that the boat was going. We got off the boat and away from it. They got out of their harnesses. When the boat actually went, yes, there were three of us in the water.

OFFSHORE: What time span would this have been?

WALTERS: I'd say about ten, fifteen minutes.

OFFSHORE: The boat did stay half afloat for that long?

#### Ten hours in the water

**WALTERS:** Yes. When the boat sank I was down to my costume and T-shirt, so I was able to use the still half-submerged boat as a leaning post.

OFFSHORE: What were your thoughts about getting your gear off. You said you realised that you'd have to take it off, and you first tried to take gear off so that you'd be more manoeuvreable. What did you take off?

WALTERS: The jacket first. I didn't have the bib and brace on, just [pants with] the normal elastic around the waist, so they came off. The deck shoes and socks [I took off]. Poor old John was having problems with his nice rubber boots, which are good I suppose on a bigger boat. Even my deck shoes were that big that I could do it [kick them off] even with my socks on. I had a bad experience off a VJ; my mother had bought me a lovely heavy jacket – to keep her little boy warm – and I fell off the VJ and nearly drowned. When we sailed in the 18s it was [we wore] just a flannel and a jacket.

OFFSHORE: You said John was having trouble; did he get his jacket off?

WALTERS: No, I don't think so. The last I saw him I could still see his white jacket. I'm not sure about Martin; he had red gear which was sort of hard to see. John was saying "come on we've got to stick together" so we were together, and we got separated when a wave broke on us, and we went underwater in the crest of the wave. It's hard when you come up in the dark, particularly if if you are not looking at shore...you're disorientated.

**OFFSHORE:** So they were, as far as you could see, still in their foul weather gear. And the others had their harnesses off.

**WALTERS:** Oh yes, they got them off in the boat. I helped John Tavener get his off.

I lost contact with the others.

OFFSHORE: How far out were you?

WALTERS: About three miles.

OFFSHORE: What were your thoughts?

WALTERS: Survive. I knew that no one knew that the boat had sunk because we didn't send up any flares or radio messages. I knew that if anyone was going to find out what happened I would have to survive. I wanted to survive. I didn't think that I couldn't. I sort of collected my thoughts and said 'Right. 'Now that's the Coogee Bay Hotel, and the Coogee Bay shopping centre, all I can do is tread water...I'm not going to be able to swim that far.' Fortunately the water temperature was about 19-20°; it wasn't initially cold, it wasn't a shock to get you gear off and be in the water. I had a costume and a T-shirt.

**OFFSHORE:** You felt that it was better to lighten yourself rather than to conserve heat by having clothing next to your skin.

**WALTERS:** Well that's why I left the T-shirt on. I set a pattern for Coogee Beach towards the lights...

**OFFSHORE:** You decided you were going to swim?

WALTERS: Yes, I decided that I wouldn't try overarm because it would exhaust me, so I opted for breast stroke. At this stage I had high hopes of walking up the beach at Coogee and saying "Excuse me, could you ring

the police for me, or get my wife to come and pick me up". Then level-headedness took over, and I thought that with these seas running, if you end up close to the rocks, how are you going to survive dumping sand at Coogee anyway?

OFFSHORE: What were the seas like at this

**WALTERS:** Every third or fourth sea was steep enough for me to go underwater.

**OFFSHORE:** Were they cresting...breaking? **WALTERS:** No they weren't cresting.

OFFSHORE: How high would you say they were?

**WALTERS:** It's hard to tell...two metres, three metres.

OFFSHORE: What time was it?

**WALTERS:** We estimated about 10.30 p.m. It could have been closer to midnight.

OFFSHORE:

**OFFSHORE:** And you were three miles east of Coogee.

WALTERS: No, I think I was in between Coogee and Bondi, off Bronte, I'd say, I realised that, having a course to Coogee, I was sort of swimming half into the breeze, which made breathing difficult, and I thought, 'You'd better swim more with the seas, cause they'll wash you, and even if you're being washed in towards the heads that's better, and also it was a lot more comfortable to have the breeze at the back of your head because it made your breathing a lot easier.' With that amount of slop around you never knew when you were going to get a decent good breath. By concentrating on a nice even intake, and realising that your can breathe out underwater anyway, and trying not to panic, I became preoccupied with the rhythm of strokes and resting every now and then.

**OFFSHORE:** What were you thinking at this point? Were you pretty confident?

WALTERS: Yes, I was confident.

**OFFSHORE:** Did you think about how long you might have to last?

WALTERS: Not at that stage. What happened to preoccupy me...it wasn't too long after I was in the water that I saw the two red flares go up from the *Solitaire*. That was a great relief; as bad as that is [sounds], I knew someone else was in trouble and I know that at least there'd be a search party out. *Solitaire* was the boat that spotted Chris Hatfield in the water, and they sent up two red flares. I thought 'You beaut, there's going to be a search on'.

OFFSHORE: Where was this Nev, relative to where you were?

WALTERS: It was inshore of me, directly in my line of vision at this stage – that's why I saw them. It was a terrific feeling, a booster. And then it was only a matter of minutes to me when the next thing I heard a chopper came south from Mascot and a big searchlight was out. I thought 'Good' because I realised no one would know the boat was missing until they counted heads at 8.00 or 9.00 in the morning, or at lunch time.

**OFFSHORE**: Do you guys have regular radio skeds on those Joggies?

WALTERS: No, it is not mandatory to have a radio capable of sending signals on a Cate-

gory 3 [race]. Then I spotted a police launch. I watched the copter go up and down, and it seemed to me that they paused over top of where I thought these flares were, and it looked to me that they picked someone up out of the water and took him ashore and then came back.

OFFSHORE: How far were you from them?

WALTERS: I'd say at least half a mile, a mile. Then the chopper made a couple of swoops around my direction, and I thought, and I hope this doesn't sound bad, 'Oh beaut, someone else is missing' and I was talking, 'a bit this way, mate, a bit this way, a bit this way' and then he sort of half got me in the light and I thought 'Oh yes'...I felt sure that he'd seen me and I thought 'This has got to be a miracle'. Sure enough, speaking to the pilots, they were upset that they saw a fellow and they thought the fellow had drowned. but when they met me today and I said "Yes that was me" and they described the way that I was swimming and the way waved...they were guite relieved.

OFFSHORE: They'd lost track of where you were?

WALTERS: Yes, they kept going east of me and north of me in the sweep. I amused myself by saying "Piss off, why don't you" and this sort of thing. But when they saw me one of the police boats came in my direction and he had his light on me, and I felt sure that he got me right in it [the light], and I tried to raise myself as far out of the water as I could, and I yelled and whistled, and the police fellow reckons he heard me...how he did I don't know. They missed me by a trough of the sea. I wasn't too disappointed, but I realised that if I could hold out till dawn they'd find me.

**OFFSHORE**: How may hours do you reckon you'd been in the water by this time?

**WALTERS:** The time had gone reasonably quickly, watching the goings on; I had something to occupy my mind.

OFFSHORE: Were you feeling cold?

WALTERS: No – the back of my head was. The breeze dropped in the early hours of the morning, and I got into a choppier situation – instead of the long rollers I got into that cross chop. That [made it] was hard to keep going, because I was getting mouthfuls and also getting a lot of water up my nose. I found by concentrating on my...a nice deep breath and a short out [exhale; to get the air out of your lungs quickly, I concentrated more on breathing in. I found after a mouthful I sort of belched and that made me feel a lot better. Later on in the morning the breeze dropped altogether and the seas calmed down a bit, and I was able to float on my back for a while.

OFFSHORE: Were you consciously trying to conserve energy?

WALTERS: Oh yes.

OFFSHORE: Were you still thinking of swimming to shore?

WALTERS: No, I was just staying afloat. I had sort of calculated that I was on the way out to The Peak – you know, where they fish – where the people take the RSL clubs out, and it was one of those sort of boats that picked me up.

When dawn came, the police launches

reappeared, the helicopter went back for fuel and it came back again, and that was the period of the awful chop, and that was very lonely, and at that stage I must admit I felt like saying "Well, another mouthful of water and I'll just end it all." Then I sort of got myself back into gear; the sky became grayer, and the wind dropped, and a lot of birds then came around to check me out. So that's interesting: if you're looking for anyone, always watch the birds.

Then it came dawn, and the things that go through your mind...what if it starts to rain...it's Saturday, and a lot of people go fishing...but what if it's not a good day? Sure enough, the sun came out, and it was a nice bright day.

Then I spotted the police launches going up and down, there was activity. I spotted a sloop coming down with just the mainsail up - I think, after talking to the boys, it was Vengeance - they went east and south of me. I knew from the way they were sailing that they were on a search pattern. So all this gave me a lift. And dawn gives you a lift; 'Well, I'm right now, and it's only a matter of time', and then I saw this white boat coming towards me, and I pretended not to look at it for a while ... and I kept looking, and it kept coming. When he eventually got 25-30 yards from me I sort of stood up and waved kicked my legs and waved like buggery. I think the fellow was having a big spit or something over the side; he looked up and saw me and waved back, and I'll tell you what, it was the beaut feeling I've ever had He ran into the coach house. He [the boat] turned to port and starboard and found its little spot; the skipper explained to me that he was trying to get his bearings off shore and he wasn't looking ahead. The boat came up alongside and put a pole down to me, and luckily the tyres were there, I put a foot into the tyre and thought 'Beauty, I can jump into his boat', and I was hanging onto the life rails, and I couldn't jump anywhere...I'd had

**OFFSHORE:** At dawn, were you conscious of feeling cold in your body at all?

WALTERS: Just before dawn I felt a bit cold, and I suddenly realised [this], so I took [so as I had taken] my T- shirt off to wave a couple of times, so I tucked it back into my costume to keep my kidneys warm, and that made a lot of difference. Regular movement of my feet got me warm again. But I could feel the skin on my feet all crinkled, and my hands...

Of course, when I was out of the water I felt a lot colder than when I was in it.

**OFFSHORE:** But you never were actually shivering in the water?

WALTERS: No. Another miracle, too, was that I have a history of asthma, and I never wheezed or anything like that.

OFFSHORE: There was no way you were going to wheeze...

WALTERS: No, I wouldn't let it.

I think it is important to keep the back of your head to the breeze – that helps your breathing a lot.

If you were out at sea and couldn't see the lights, it would be a different proposition.

**OFFSHORE:** Do you think you might have been tempted to give up?

WALTERS: Oh yes. There was one time I was

tempted to give up.

**OFFSHORE:** What were your thoughts at that time?

WALTERS: I've had it. I'm not going to get out of this?

OFFSHORE: Were you physically very tired? WALTERS: No, it wasn't that, I was just despondent – more despondent than physically tired.

OFFSHORE: Did you every feel like crying?

**WALTERS:** Yes. I was despondent; frustrated crying. Yes.

The doctor examined me in the hospital; they checked my heart out, my blood pressure was all 'spot on', much to their amazement. They were concerned about some of the chemical contents of the water – not from the sewerage schemes but from the saltwater.

**OFFSHORE:** Because you'd taken water into your lungs?

WALTERS: Yes, I had. I've got a pretty bad sore throat now. They took my temperature through the rectum; that was low, so they warmed me up with those aluminium blankets. When I said "Yes, I had two movements" they said "Was that when the shark went past, or the porpoise?"

OFFSHORE: Were you worried about sharks at all?

WALTERS: No. My wife is a keen SCUBA diver, and I've been doing a bit of SCUBA diving and I've never seen a shark; the only shark I've ever seen is when we've been out sailing, and that's only on overcast windy days with a lot of chop around – they get a bit gamer then. But sharks never occurred to me; it was just 'keep your head up' and 'keep warm'.

[I had] an interesting discussion with the

helicopter pilots and the police. They were grateful that I wasn't lost after all, but they suggested too that the 3M reflective tape they use...if you've got a pet jumper that, like me, you would have stripped down to...that reflective tape on the shoulders and on the back is very good. They can pick that up in the twilight zone of their light. They were saying that they could see the actual splash from my arm movements, and the splash of my legs. So that's something too. One fellow lin the helicopterl is working the light and another fellow is flying the plane, and they actually can see in the twilight area of the light as well as in the full beam. So if [you are in the water and] you see someone coming, try to kick a little more and make a

They showed me also the firefly rescue light – it's the first time I've seen it – made by ACR Electronics Inc. in America. It will fit in your hand...

OFFSHORE: It's a little, personal rescue light... WALTERS: Yes...it is probably expensive because it's made for the American Coast Guard OFFSHORE: About \$80...

WALTERS: They said that they'd hidden one in Centennial Park, and that they were able to see it from Rose Bay in the helicopter.

OFFSHORE: What are your thoughts about the ideal safety harness?

WALTERS: There are certainly some avail-

Ten hours in the water able with a clip at either end, and I think

that's an idea...a clip at either end...

OFFSHORE: I've got one of those, but I've been wondering...I thought it was a good idea, but I'm wondering from what you've been saying that if I'm being dragged, I still can't undo this clip, and the major thing, getting your gear off, even if I ditch my clip I've still got this harness around and over may wet weather gear, and I want to get this stuff off fast

WALTERS: Remember the life savers had this problem with their belts; they had a pin that they could pull out. I think it won't take us long to think one of those up.

[On the subject of anchor points for safety harnesses] I've always wanted to put some more fastening points around the boat for particular people; now I think they should all come from the centre of the cockpit floor. Those clips that they've got on them aren't real good either. The rope seems too thick for those clips [Walters explains earlier that he fastens the clip back onto the rope itself after taking two turns around the strong point].

OFFSHORE: What are your thoughts on wet weather gear?

WALTERS: I realise now that the elastic pants have an advantage over the 'bib and brace'. Let's be honest about wet weather gear: all it does is keep the chill off – I've never seen one that's completely waterproof, have you? So why have bib and braces?

**OFFSHORE:** I wear them mainly to keep my kidneys warm; you can also move around in reasonably wet weather without a coat on.

**WALTERS:** I saw an add in The *Open Road* for these thermal suits...but even the old panty hose will keep your kidneys warm.

I'm going to devote a lot of time to this safety...in fact, I'd like to become a Safety Officer. I know, when inspections come up, people say 'Christ...'. When I first brought my boat up here, the bloke said "I don't like your danbuoy system. Can you get it out in a hurry?" Well, he was right; you couldn't. So I had to alter it, and I'm glad he did it for me.

**OFFSHORE:** What other things would you do (changes in your safety equipment)?

WALTERS: I would change the position of the horseshoe buoy; instead of being to one side of the stern, I'd put it in the centre over the top of the tiller. I think if it had been in the centre of the boat [Waikikamukau] I would have had a chance of pulling it out.

OFFSHORE: I think you'd find if you went down and looked at the boats on the marina, in 75% of cases you'd have to physically undo something before you could get the horseshoe out.

WALTERS: I also think that if it looks like the sea is up, the storm boards should be in.

Another thing I'd like to bring up is this Friday night start. Invariably, you always have a bun fight at work Friday night; no matter how prepared you are during the week there's always something...

OFFSHORE: You leave in a fluster...

walters: ...from work, to go bloody sailing at half past eight. I think, for Division 4...I enjoy night sailing; we're all sailors, we love sailing, it's good to sail at night. But if you

(continued on page 32)



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# BIGGLES' COLUMN

#### by John Brooks

There can't be many sports which have to suffer the trauma of losing four of its enthusiasts in one tragic blow. The night of April 15th left the sport of ocean racer in NSW reeling as it contemplated the questions raised by the sinking of two well known JOG yachts. Should night JOG racing be banned? Should the wearing of life jackets be compulsory? Could something have been done that wasn't done? Will the Government step in and take the answers to these and other questions out of our hands? These were some of the thoughts which were circulated in the aftermath of the CY-CA's 'black weekend' in April.

All things considered the public reaction was fairly sympathetic, helped no doubt by the media which confined itself to straight, if sometimes inaccurate, reporting, foregoing the temptation to sensationalise things to the point of encouraging witch hunts. Politicians, too, generally refrained from any ill-informed outbursts, with the result that yachting authorities have been left to consider the lessons to be learned in an atmosphere of relative calm.

Just what form their reaction will take is, as yet, unknown. Some new safety regulations will come out of the investigation, but not, it is hoped, anything too Draconian. There have been a few calls to ban JOG offshore racing, an overreaction and a decision which would be better left to the Joggies themselves, but it seems that some of them are having second thoughts about night racing. It could happen that the cost of

satisfying new safety requirements will discourage night racing anyway.

The tragedy also revealed, yet again, the reluctance of yachties to wear life jackets at any time other than when their boat is about to sink under them. This is not surprising because approved life jackets are cumbersome, uncomfortable, difficult to work in and awkward to get in and out of. Most crewmen accept the wearing of safety harnesses when so ordered, but life jackets are rarely worn.

It can be argued that if conditions are such that safety harnesses should be worn then a life jacket is probably prudent too, particularly at night. However, experience has shown that when it comes to their own safety people tend to underrate the danger and therefore the necessity of wearing personal safety equipment, influenced no doubt by the clumsiness of such equipment. There is a glaring need for a research programme into a suitable lightweight life jacket that is comfortable and convenient to encourage regular use in the same manner that motor racers wear crash helmets

Some years ago in this column I suggested that personal safety equipment, such as life jackets, be made the responsibility of the crewman instead of the boat owner. That way the onus is on the individual to know where his safety equipment is stowed and to ensure that it is in serviceable condition. Making him wear it is something else again, but a comfortable, lightweight design, perhaps combined with a safety harness, would go a long way towards achieving this.

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As Offshore went to press seventeen entries had been received for the Admiral's Cup from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Sweden and the USA. Shockwave will lead a New Zealand team with two charters yet to be named, selected presumably from those yachts which fail to make the British team.

There are said to be 24 contenders for the British team including the latest 'hi-tech' Dubois design *Indulgence* (Graham Walker). *Indulgence*'s deck was cooked in an oven and the hull in a device called an Autoclave, which is a cross between an oven and a pressure cooker, all in the name of improved strength/weight ratio.

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The Mooloolaba Yacht Club is trying to organise a feeder race for the 1984 Sydney-Mooloolaba Race in the form

of a handicap start Mooloolaba to Sydney 'Grand Chase'. The handicap start is intended to result in a mass finish in Sydney Harbour about a week before the start of the Sydney-Mooloolaba and is aimed at encouraging more Queensland entries in the latter event. John Gleeson has written to various commercial firms seeking sponsorship for the event and hopes to get 100 firms to each contribute \$1,000 making it one of the richest yacht races in Australia. Good luck Gleeso.

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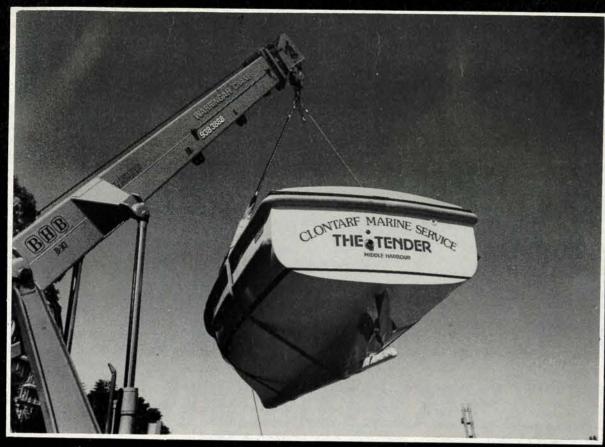
At the close of a very successful season Ray Johnston and his boys in Scallywag stood at the top of the ocean racing tree with Blue Water Championship scalp in their collective belt. In terms of points score Scallywag won only narrowly from Peter Kurts' Once More Dear Friends, but Scallywag achieved a 'grand slam' of the three biggest races on the east coast calendar, the Hobart, the Montagu and the Sydney-Mooloolaba. They must be delighted with those results.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Ray his having the latest Farr design built for next season. A 40 footer, it is a development of the 37 footer *Migizi* which won Class E at the SORC this year. The new boat rates at 30.5′, the new One Ton limit and the Admiral's Cup minimum rating. Designer's comments are that it should be very good to windward, especially in fresh conditions, and exceptionally fast downwind with the design slanted towards Australian and Hawaiian conditions.

If Division 4 could count towards the Blue Water Championship, Scallywag might have been eclipsed by Alf Hancock in Corfu. Alf had a sensational season winning the Endeavour Cup, the Zilvergeest Trophy, the Montego Bay Trophy and the Zilvergeest II Trophy. He was first in Division 4 of the Ocean Point Score with four firsts, first in Division 4 of the SOPS with six firsts, two seconds and one third. Alf needed a truck to carry away his prizes on trophy presentation night at the Hilton. Corfu is a near sister ship to the ill-fated Waikikamukau, and this long-lasting Farr quarter ton design has been preeminent in Division 4 racing since it was introduced to Australia in 1975. Nevertheless, what Alf Hancock achieved with Corfu this season in all respects.

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#### RACING ROUNDS by Duncan van Woerden

On various cures for premature ageing...

- ■After the final results of the Blue Water Championships were finalised, I'll bet the Old Age Pensioners Association wouldn't mind an age allowance formula adapated to the government's fortnightly handout! Old timers Scallywag (ex Smir-noff-agen, Satin Sheets, Nike, Cherana, Corfu and the not new OMDF really scooped the silverware at the Hilton on June 3rd. Congratulations to all.
- ■On a decidedly unpleasant note, tragedy struck the JOG fleet on the weekend of April 15th. I have no intention of preempting any CYCA Sailing Committee or AYF Safety Committee conclusions as to why or how such a tragedy can occur, save that it should be a constant reminder of the power and unpredictability of Mother Nature in her fluid state. To the guys who survived in the water that night, and especially Nev Walters (Waikikamukau), I 'dips me lid'.
- ■The loss of the Kiwi ocean racers Southern Raider and Lionheart have not exactly brightened the results of the recent Pacific passage races and add to an already hideous record of yachts returning from Noumea and Suva in recent years.

Probably one aspect of safety equipment that will come under review in light of the recent accidents is the design of safety harnesses. I've long had the view that most designs on the market are downright dangerous, as are the various of deck fastenings seen on the majority of yachts. It's a sad reflection when one sees snapshackles that are designed to be capable of hanging onto maxi boat spinnakers, yet can be released under a five ton load, with one finger, being confined to halyards and sheets becuase 'they're too expensive' to use on harnesses. What price your life?

I have no wish to see yacht owners forced into extra expense in this area as I see it as a 'personal safety' problem. I would envisage a proper safety harness ringing the till to the tune of about \$250, which would put Bernard Lewis or Jack Rooklyn \$5000 closer to financial despair. Personally, I am thankful that the aforementioned gentlemen provide my sporting pleasure in the form of their yachts, and I see no reason why I (the crew man) should not provide for my own safety.

I can remember paying over \$1000 for a set of golf clubs and ancillary hardward some 15 years ago to become properly equipped to compete in that quite ridiculous sport, and I am of the firm opinion that yacht crew should provide their own safety clothing at least.

So what design do we need? I've seen quite a few frightened men extricate themselves from smouldering racing cars after losing their sense of direction, in record time and at the press of a button on their harness, so maybe we ought to start looking at other sports for our ideas. I know from experience it doesn't take but fractions of a second to ditch a faulty parachute, but I'm damned if I can get out of most regulation yachting harnesses when stripping, off watch, let alone in the water being dragged behind a pilotless yacht.

Listening to Nev Walters' account of Waikikamukau's sinking, it also became apparent to me that a long safety line is going to improve your chances of being able to extricate your person from a yacht that is sinking or trying to drown you if pilotless.

■ Whilst on the subject of harnesses of varying description, I've always held contempt for the lack of safety and, indeed, workability of the average bosun's chair. I cannot fathom how some skippers could sanely send a crewman aloft on a backless plank of wood — in the marina, let alone at sea in foul conditions.

Climbing spars is a duty that I am called upon to perform almost daily in my chosen profession, but I refuse point blank to indulge in this process at sea unless I have my own chair. I literally searched the world for a proper bosun's chair and finally in exasperation commissioned sailmaker and friend Bob

Fraser to construct a device to suit my clumsiness. The major prerequisite was that if I went to sleep at the top of a 100' spar, through either boredom or accident, my return to deck would be via the same chair and halyard and not by freefall. I do not know one bosun's chair marketed that would contain an unconscious crewman aloft in any kind of a seaway. Bob skillfully provided me with a chair that is similar to a parachute harness in design which contains the body allowing an inverted descent if you are so inclined. This sort of equipment is expensive but, once again, what price your life?

Incidentally, on a professional basis I have found that this chair reduces time aloft by 50% by enabling full use of both hands whilst working.

Before dropping (the subject of) bosun's chairs, I wonder how many yachts carry two? I know of only two on the Club Register. There's a pretty good reason for this – if you've ever had the misfortune to retrieve an unconscious crewman aloft or indeed one with a fractured arm when the only chair on the yacht is 50 feet up the spar with the disabled body.

I would not be the least bit adverse to seeing the bosun's chair come under much closer scrutiy from our overworked safety inspectors.

- ■Before closing up the moan department, I was staggered recently to notice a somewhat inadequate compass used by a competitor in the last Hobart Race. The compass was of the flat, tactical, deck-mount type commonly used on Etchells and like harbour yachts. This compass has minimal damp, no lighting, and upon bemused enquiry to the owner, it turned out to boot that it had never been swung. I'm fully aware that it's pretty difficult to miss Tasmania even without a compass, but if this is the sort of seamanship the sport is fostering I'll try to get my golf clubs back from Mr Goldstein's pawn shop in Darlinghurst
- ■I was reminded recently of an anecdote from aboard *Apollo* during last year's Clipper Cup. A certain yachtsman 'Nigel' gained a reputation during the series for being extremely reluctant to part with his 'moolah' in the bar, preferring to hop from school to school without being caught in the chair. This habit solidified a few days later when the Nigel announced that his wallet had been lost or stolen whilst partying on a large American yacht.

Well, duly the wallet did in fact get returned intact to its rightful owner, along with an accompanying subtlety – presented to Nigel encased in a twelve-inch-square brick of ice!



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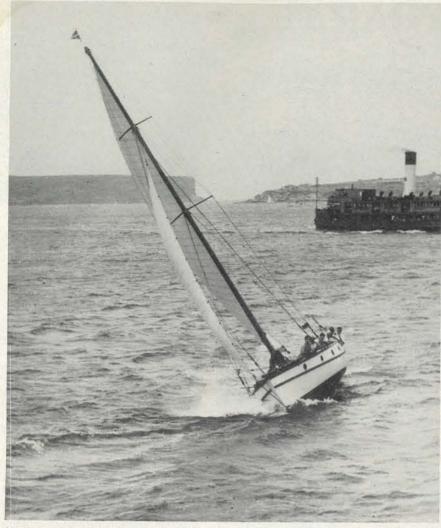
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Performance Sails

#### **VARUNA - GODDESS OF WATER**



Varuna, harbour racing in 1950. There was a bit more room on Saturday afternoon then.

#### by Bill Sherman

If you think you need a modern 'stateof-the-art' yacht to enjoy racing, then Varuna will prove you wrong. In fact, despite her 47 years she still races as hard, and as successfully, as most of her younger sisters.

Varuna is a 31'6" LOA cutter built in Sydney, at La Perouse, by C.A.M. Fisher. She is a Ranger type craft, being Cliff Gale's original Ranger and built for Cliffy's brother-in-law. They built Varuna by eye, to a design which had its foundations (loosely) in the hulls of Greek fishing boats.

Her raised deck is very functional. While it has many advantages it is rarely seen today - the Hood 20 and Hood 23 are perhaps the best known modern versions. The many benefits of the design are the high for ard freeboard, giving a very dry boat; fewer places on deck are likely to leak; and it provides maximum space below decks, as well

as ease and economy of construction, particularly in wood. It also provides greater strength, as all beams forward of the cockpit span the entire beam. Back in 1936 there was plenty of

timber (and no fibreglass) so she was built of full-length planks in huon pine, one inch thick, on spotted gum frames, with a teak deck. The frames, which are small to look at, were placed at 9" centres for strength. Copper fastenings were used throughout, with bronze bolts. all fastenings being roved. With an 11foot beam on a 30-foot waterline, she is a beamy boat, but it is mainly carried above the waterline and her wetted area is small for her era. A full-length keel with rudder on the back give good directional stability, and she is very fast. particularly when reaching in heavy

Working sail area is 700 ft<sup>2</sup> and she has a 1200 ft<sup>2</sup> spinnaker. The mast is

an original - a very tall piece of oregon. mounted on the keel. The rig is a twospreader arrangement, complete with runners

Early on, there was no backstay, and failure to pull on the windward runner quickly put the mast at risk, so her owner, Dr John Musgrove, had a Vshaped frame built off the stern to take a backstay. (The 19- foot boom is sufficiently long to foul a stern-mounted backstay.) The extension has other uses too; a hinged boom gallows folds down onto it when sails are set and, as it projects about four feet over the stern, it also makes a great diving and fishing platform.

Varuna was originally rigged as a sloop with a jib topsail, but she now has a cutter rig with roller furling headsails. Various other changes have been made over the years, including the reduction of sheeting angles to 10° to improve her pointing ability and updating other equipment to make her easier to sail. With this constant upgrading she has remained a competitive boat for harbour races, and with her crew of seven last year she came forth in Division 2 of the RSYS series.

Speaking to John Musgrove, it's easy to believe he liked the old style of racing better than the new, and he could be right. A jug of rum and coke served in a busy CYCA bar after a race can't compete with going to Store Beach, as they did after Squadron races in the early 50s, for beach picnics - serviced by white-coated Squadron waiters.

John started racing Varuna in 1945 after coming back from the service with the RAAF in Europe. His father, Jack. who ran the Sydney Trocadero, had purchased Varuna in 1943, and she had spend her war as a naval auxiliary patrol vessel, painted grey, fitted with bright lights, motoring backwards and forwards across the Heads looking for invaders

She was brought round to her present mooring around Christmas 1945 and put on Cyril Kelshaw's marina - 6d per foot per week, and that included having Cyril bring the boat to the wharf before a sail, clean her down, put ice in the chest and return her to the mooring when she came back.

When the CYCA was set up, in Kelshaw's home and boatshed, people on the marina paid for the building of their own part of the jetty. This was done by paying two years' rent in advance, and the same technique was later used to pay for the lockers now used by the Club (but originally put in for Members). For those they paid five years' rent in



Owner John Musgrove has owned Varuna since 1943.

Varuna is still in the same spot she occupied in 1945. If she were human we would probably have given her honorary membership by now!

Inside, Varuna is just what you would expect of a yacht of her vintage - beautifully crafted timber, glasses and decanters in their own fitted gimballed racks, and lots of space.

Up forward is a full-width toilet compartment, and the main cabin has four bunks with the upper one each side set well forward with storage underneath. The end of the upper bunks folds away to leave full-length lower bunks either side of the centre folding table.

Behind the bunks is more storage cupboards are built in Queenland maple - and the opening portholes which are a delighful feature of the hull. They are fully operational and, being reqularly underwater when sailing, need fre-

ALRIGHT THEN - WHERE'S THE BLOODY BOAT!

quent maintenance.

liahts.

one huge area.

eutectic fridge on the other.

At the rear of the cabin is the galley,

divided to place the gas stove on one

side of the gangway and the sink and

Varuna is equipped with a 25 hp die-

sel located under the cockpit floor Ac-

cess is behind the cockpit ladder, and

the whole area, about 10'x10'x3' deep.

is white painted and fitted with its own

The cockpit in Varuna is huge. In fact,

the lower bunk cushions can be fitted

side by side on its floor. It makes a

great entertaining area (the cockpit, that

is, not its floor) and can be covered with

awnings and covers to extend the living

area. The back bulkhead of the cabin

folds down to make cabin and cockpit

A cartoon from the crew. With this yacht's beam it would all fit easily.

There are not many boats around to compare with Varuna, and it is easy to use too many adjectives to describe her, just because she is old and unusual. In fact, she is a rare survivor of her age with enough space, comfort and speed to make her an excellent and distinctive harbour yacht for either cruising or racing.

It will be interesting to see what John Musgrove can come up with to celebrate her 50th anniversary in 1986.

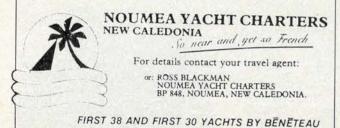


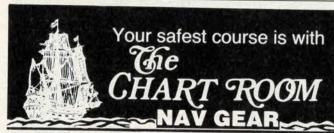
Varuna got her first big spinnaker in 1947. She was also the first cruising division yacht in the RSYS to



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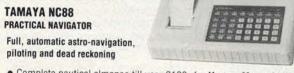




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We continue with the transcript of the handwritten account of Robert McNeill about his early life at sea in clipper ships. His story began last issue, in England, where in his early teens he left his job as an office boy and joined the crew of a barque heading for America. His experiences as deck boy on his first voyage ended when, having reached America, he jumped ship and signed onto a Russian barquentine heading back to Scotland. We rejoin him as they approach

**CLIPPER SHIP SAILING** 

(continued from previous issue)

the coast of Scotland.

The living conditions were fair, altogether not too much to grumble about. She proved to be a very leaky little vessel with one hour at the hand pump night and morning and was no easy task. What is most permanent in my memory of that passage was when we were beating around the North of Scotland we encountered continuous head winds and Scotch mists. These mists are very wet and intensly cold. Said fogs as these I had never experienced before and the number of hours I did duty on the lookout turning the hand fog signal were a great many. The signals warn other vessels which may be about what tack your ship is on so as to prevent collision when trying to discern each other in the Scottish

One day we sighted a big headland while I was at the wheel and the Captain said to me "That's the fatherland, Bob". Those words were a tonic to me, because I had no idea of the ships position, for the only English

ooken was between the Negro cook and myself. The weather eventually cleared and we got a good slant down the East coast of Scotland and were soon amongst the fleets of fishing smacks. What splendid little vessels they were and how the sight of them made me feel happier than I had felt for many a long day. The crews of them were my own countrymen and I was near home. They would sail very close to us and one morning I called out to one of them "How far are we from Dundee" and he answered "Two thousand miles" but as I was to find out shortly we were right at the Port. The fishermen evidently thought that I was having a joke, so he returned it on

Soon after this a tug boat came steaming out to us and after some bartering with Captain as to how much he would charge to tow us to Dundee he gave us his tow line and took us to an anchorage in the River Tay just off the Port of Dundee. The passage from Mobile had taken sixty-eight days.

Our cargo was consigned to Perth some miles up the River Tay so a considerable amount of work had to be done before we could leave the anchorage. The deck cargo had to be discharged and made up into rafts to be towed up the river to Perth. This lightened the vessel to allow her to pass the shallows in the upper reaches of the river. Then the topmasts had to be lowered to allow sufficient headroom for our masts to pass under the Tay Bridge. All these preparations complete, now commenced the tow of about twenty five miles up the river to our final port of discharge.

The scenery on the Banks of the River Tay still remains vividly in my mind. The undulating farms stretching for miles. Further on near our destination we passed a Bluff of Rocky Heights almost overhanging our ship as we slipped quietly by behind our tug. The water of the river as far as it is navigable for vessels of the size of our ship is so clear that the bottom is quite discernible as also are the fish with which it teems. I learned afterwards that the precipitous country which lay directly opposite where our ship was berthed is famous by the fact that Robert Bruce's cave is situated there. We were moored to a wharf attached to a timber yard in a small inlet off the

by Robert McNeill

with illustrations by Peter Harrigan.

Then commenced the arduous task of discharging our cargo of twelve by twelve oregon, by hand power of which I took no mean part, for I was on a hand winch all the time until the cargo was discharged. I had my diversions and pleasure when the days work was done having become friendly with some of the town boys who used to visit the ship. Many evenings and weekends they would take me to their homes for many a meal which was a very welcome change from ship's food. They would lend me a bicycle and we had some pleasant tours into the country during the weekends. It was very hard for me to understand their broad 'Scotch' accent and when they ask me "Do ye kin when you are gwan awa?" it took me quite a while to get the gist of it, and we would have many a good laugh over my noncomprehension. I in turn would give them a little enjoyment by taking them rowing in the ship's boat, and suppose I would feel quite proud of my own prowess in being able to teach the other boys the science of sculling. We would pull the boat to the town bridge, a very historical work of masonry, to

#### Clipper ship sailing

watch the fishermen hauling in their nets, and incidently to receive gratis part of their catch. For all-round good nature give me the 'Canny Scot' of Perthshire and for some considerable time from different parts of the world I correspond with my Scottish friends.

On arrival at Dundee I had written to my parents and given an explanation of my desertion from the St. Vincent and needless to say their reply was for me to come home as soon as possible, so I told the Captain I wanted to leave the ship. He asked me to stay and that we were bound for Burnt Island to load coal for some port in Sweden, but I refused. He then told me he would pay me off when we arrived at Burnt Island. With the cargo all discharged we were to be towed out the next day, and that evening previous to sailing I had a right royal send off from my friends.

The George was towed to Burnt Island and when she was moored. I lost no time packing up my belongings, for I was very glad to be going home to my people. To get there I took the train across to Glasgow and then per passenger steamer to Liverpool. On arrival at the Glasgow railway station I engaged a rather seedy looking individual to take my luggage to the steamer and when we got their the coin I gave him was not sufficient so commenced an argument. Now the Chief Officer must have been within hearing and seeing, I expect, that I was a young sailer by the appearance of my kit, lost no words and assisted him violently off the wharf. I have learnt many a time since by personal experience of the inherent feeling one has for a shipmates well being and that seems to extend to all men of the calling.

Home, the return of the 'Prodigal Son' could not have had a greater welcome than I had. I was the man of the hour and the anxiety that I had given my people was forgotten and forgiven. The Captain of the St. Vincent had written to them to say I had deserted the ship and he had done his best to find me, that I was a good boy and was sorry to lose me. It pleased me greatly to know that he bore me no ill will, for boy as I was my conscience pricked me occasionally for the trick I had served him.

Well my mother pleaded with me to give up the sea and to go to a trade before I got past the age to become apprenticed (my age was then sixteen), but it was of no avail, nothing but a Clipper would satisfy me, for by now had I not had some experience, the sea life suited me, I would not 'swallow the anchor'. My father first coaxed and then threatened me, and

in the end with thorough disgust, told me to do 'what the — I liked.' When I think – and I remember them clearly the pleadings of my mother and father of close upon forty years ago – what a determined young bugger I must have been, and what utter foolishness to go to sea contrary to their wishes, little knowing the hardship and peril I would experience before I was very much older. If one were gifted with foresight what a vast difference it would make in ones career.

Well I had a good holiday amongst my relations. I visited the home of my school chum Chris for he had already been to my people and had given them an account of my desertion. It seems that the St. Vincent had made a good passage to Cardiff and he arrived home six weeks before me, and that he had sailed again for the East Indies. He also deserted the St. Vincent but returned to the ship again. I don't know the full details because it has never been my good fortune to meet him again, for as it is explained later that our subsequent voyages lay thousands of miles apart.

Soon the 'wander lust' became an obsession with me again and I would make an occasional trip down amongst the shipping. My short experience had taught me to take notice of the size and various rigs of vessels. I would stand on the different wharves and feast my eyes as such ships as Claverdon and Plaindes. These two vessels I learnt were bound around Cape Horn to San Franscisco: the Torteth and Holt Hill to the west coast of South America and many more clipper ships, too numerous to mention, did I admire. These big iron ships were much larger vessels than either the St. Vincent or George. Their roomy and snow white decks and the gleaming brightness of their brasswork fairly held me spellbound.

How I would like to make a voyage around Cape Horn in any one of these ships were my dearest thoughts.

Arriving home one day from one of my shipping exploration, I told my parents of my decision and the class of ship I intended to sail on and the r voyage occupied one or two years. I did not meet with much opposition, I suppose they could see that it was of no avail opposing my wayward nature, so I commenced with earnest to try for a berth on one of those fine clippers.

The first ship I went on board was called *Tamar* and the Chief Officer told me she would not be ready to sail for at least a month. He proved to be a very congenial kind of man, as on hearing from me that I had done a voyage in sail we had quite a long

varn. This I might say gave me great encouragement, because in that day of rigid discipline a boy looked upon an officer as something of a fearsome individual, and when I left him it was with an assurance of a berth as deck boy when the vessel would sign on for the next voyage. I was not destined to sail in the Tamar, as it so happened that a friend of my family knew personally Mr. R.W. Levland, the Liverpool ship owner of a very big fleet of ships. These vessels were named after suburbs of Liverpool such as Liverpool (I believe she was the largest British ship afloat at that time), Wavertee, Allerton, Torteth, Dittor, Spike, Roby.

This friend of ours gave me a letter of introduction to Mr Leyland and he in turn gave me a letter to the Chief Officer of the full rigged ship Roby informing him to employ me as deck boy. What pleasure it gave me to be told "All right my boy, you can turn to as soon as you like." A casual look around was enough to let me know that she was just the type of ship I wished to sail in, so I lost no time in getting home to let my parents know of my good fortune, for was I not going on a voyage around Cape Horn in a fine big iron clipper ship.

My sea outfit had to be replenished so the next day was occupied attending to these wants, and visiting relations with whom I had become quite popular. I think I gained quite a lot of needless notoriety through my obstinacy to my parents.

Well the following day I reported for duty on board the *Roby* full of enthusiasm but which as after events will prove turned out to be despair. The few days I was on board previous to signing on were busy days, for coal was being loaded into the ship at the Bramby Moore Dock, Liverpool and my job was continual cleaning away of coal dust, and when my days work was finished, I imagine there was a strong resemblance between myself and the Negroes of the Southern States.

The vessel was now loaded and hatches battened down. The sails were bent (sent up aloft and secured to the yards and stays) by shore riggers who had been working aboard for some time renewing rigging on the main mast. Then the ships stores commenced to arrive and what a conglomeration, all to be manhandled by five hands all told (the ship had not yet signed on the crew) so labour consisted of Chief Officer, Second Officer, the apprentice, and ordinary seaman who had already made two voyages in the ship so he was very efficient at his work and myself.



Many coils of rope of various dimensions, blocks, cordage, canvas, drums of tar, paint, oil are only a few of the deck stores required for a long voyage. Then the victualling department with practically all preserved foodstuffs to feed twentyeight men. I say preserved foodstuffs because such a thing as refrigerators were never carried in cargo carrying sailing ships. Consequently beef and pork were contained in casks of brine. Also in canned form was butter and vegetables in tins, but more about these luxuries will be written later. The final item on the store list was two small black pigs and they were duly installed in the pen to be fatened up for Christmas or at some convenient date, when all hands would get one or two 'real' meals. The stores all aboard and the ship was washed down everything was now taking shape to engage the

On the fourteenth of August in the year Nineteen Hundred (I having just attained by seventeenth birthday) a full crew were signed on at the Liverpool Shipping Office for the full rigged ship Roby and bound to Pesagua on the West Coast of South America with a cargo of four thousand tons of coal. The crew consisted of Captain, 1st Mate, 2nd Mate, Boatswain, Sailmaker, Carpenter, sixteen Able Seamen, one Ordinary Seaman, one Apprentice, two Deck Boys, Cook and one Steward. This ship's tonnage was two thousand one hundred and eighteen tons registered and capable

of carrying almost four thousand tons deadweight. She had: painted ports (that is, imitation old fashion gun ports in black and white around the hull); white painted masts and yard and carried a main skysail yard; one large house on deck between number one and two hatches housed the crew; port and starboard forcastles at the forward end, then an athwartship allyway for the seaman's oilskins etc.: abaft this came the gally and abaft that again on the port after corner was berthed the Petty Officers, i.e. Boatswain, Sailmaker and Carpenter. Then, on the starboard after corner, [was that] which is termed the Half Deck in which we boys were housed.

I had my final leave-taking of my parents that morning and with a solemn promise to them that I would not desert ship again but remain on the Roby until she came home again, no doubt eased their worry a little over my departure, but their worry concerning me were greatly increased by later events.

The crew commenced to arrive on board, some of whom were none to steady having imbibed too freely, no doubt on the strength of their months advance. All crews signing on this class of vessel were allowed one months 'advance note' payable about ten days after the ship had sailed, and in most cases that money would be owing for board money and in others would be cashed by the boarding masters or publicans for allowance of a large percentage, some as high as

#### Clipper ship sailing

thirty three per cent. The old-time genuine seaman and his hard-earned money was easy prey for unprincipled people all over the globe, for the truth and actual facts of the lot of those men has seldom been written.

The ship's moorings were singled up, that is to say all extra ropes and wires taken in and the tugboat William Joliffe alongside. The Captain and Pilot were on the 'Poop' deck together with some of the company's officials. The Chief Officer and the Second Officer were with us young fellows doing this and that coiling this up here, lashing that there and a hundred and one jobs preparing the ship for sea.

one jobs preparing the ship for sea. Then came a roar from the Captain "Are they all aboard yet, Master?" of course meaning all hands. The Mate went forward and found three were still missing. I happened to be within hearing of the Master's reply to the Mate's report; it would not be etiquette to commit his words to paper. You see the ship was ready for sea, and as soon as the tide was sufficiently high to allow the dock gates to be opened, the tugboat would then tow us into the river and then out to sea providing all hands were aboard, but if the crew were short, then it meant letting the anchor go in the river until we got a full complement of men. Anchor work in a big sailing ship is slow arduous work. However, the three men arrived with the assistance of two or three policemen, who were treating them good naturedly maybe owing to the strains of 'Whisky Johnny' which the men were singing; a true indication of the sailing ship man. All aboard and visitors ashore, the usual good bye and good luck, the tug boat in position and the tow lines made fast - the Captain shouts "Let go for ard" then a short interval "Let go aft". The tug boat strains at her lines and we are under weigh passing out of the dock and into the swift running River Mersey. Once in position in mid river for our tow out to sea the William Jolliffe, known in both hemispheres for some wonderful towing feats, lengthened her tow line to the regulation length. All hands are now employed with the sheets, halliards and braces cleared for running preparatory to loosening sails, in which I found myself fairly handy, vastly different from my first voyage for I felt no pangs of home sicknesses or sea sickness now. The weather being fine with a slight breeze, our tug boat made good progress and we were soon clear of the Northwest Lightship where we discharged our pilot. Now commenced the task of loosening our sails and setting the lower ones, before we cast off the William Jolliffe.



The lower topsails, foresails and fore topmast staysail set, yards trimmed to a steady fair wind, the upper topsail halliards to the capstan and yards hoisted to the tunes of the "Black Ball Line' where I served my time. Our vessel was not gathering way which meant we were slackening the tow line, our speed was greater than the tug boats so the orders were to stand by the tow line' then 'let go' and as we sailed majestically past the William Jolliffe she gave us the usual good bye signal from her siren and a cheer from her crew. Top gallant sails, royals, skysail and fore and aft sails were set. My orders from the bosun "Up and loose the main royal and skysail sonny" he must have noticed that I was slightly experienced, for was I not a 'second voyager' and my enthusiasm in this fine big clipper helped quite a lot. The vessel was now under full sail with a moderate breeze and bowling along at about ten or eleven knots an hour. The ropes coiled up everything was now looking trim and shipshape so a short respite was given to us, which was occupied by me in admiring the ship. As I looked aloft at that towering mass of white canvas with the summer's setting sun shining on the billowing sails made me feel

All hands were now ordered to muster aft on the quarter deck to be allotted to their respective watches.

proud of the small part that I had taken

What is meant by this is that the men line up on deck faced by the Chief Officer and Second Officer. The Chief Officer then has first pick of one man. then the Second Officer does likewise and so on until all the men and boys are evenly divided into two watches. The Chief Officer is the Port Watch and the Second Officer is the Starboard Watch. I was picked out for the Chief Officers watch and considered myself lucky, for he turned out to be a first class seaman and was also very popular with the men, a matter that was not always apparent in the old time ships, but which creates smooth running in a calling that often has ones herves and energy at straining point. This Officer to whom I am referring is at present Master of a big liner trading between Great Britain and the Colonies.

Our watch consisted of Chief Officer, eight able seamen, one apprentice and myself as deck boy. Many nationalities were represented amongst the men. One West Indian Negro, a Dane, a Swede, an Italian with the rest being Britishers. But whatever colour or caste they were all real sailormen, and from each and every one of them I learnt to become a more efficient seaman. The first night at sea and on all subsequent nights watches it was my duty to keep the time on the lee side of the poop deck, that is strike the bells every half hour in addition to attending to the Chief Officers wants,

also assisting with anything appertaining to sails. I was not allowed to take a wheel in this ship, at least not in the higher latitudes, but when we got down into the tropics I took my regular trick.

In the day watches we lads were kept up to scratch by a big Liverpool Irish bosun shinning and climbing overhauling buntlines, which are handled from the deck and are used to haul the sail up to the yard to keep it from flapping and billowing out too much when making it fast. Overhauling the buntlines is always the boy's job and consists of: letting the rope go off the belaying pin on the deck, stop it with a single turn of twine. The idea of the single turn is, when taking the sail in in a hurry, it is easily broken, the slack part up aloft logs over the forepart of the sail and is not so liable to chafe the sail. Any loose ends of cordage - 'Irish Pennants' as they are called - must be cut off or rectified. No matter what position aloft they are in amongst the maze of rigging and woe betide us youngsters if we were slipshod in our duties.

We had a very good start and carried a fair wind for a number of days, which took us well clear of the land and out into the Atlantic Ocean. When aloft I used to admire our fine vessel with the enormous spread of canvas, having a slight list due to the steady quartering wind. It is a sight not to be forgotten to view a sailing ship

from aloft as she cuts her way through the water under the pressure of thousands of yards of canvas turning the sea to a frothy white foam. Well we were having an extraordinary good passage and were not long getting down into what felt like tropical weather, the Captain and Officers, likewise the men all in the best of humours due no doubt to the splendid start we were getting. The ship was doing regularly ten or eleven knots an hour, I assisting to heave the log line in my watch on deck, hence my knowledge of the speed we were travelling. Heaving the log line is also the boys regular job every two or four hours, and such practice enables one to be able to judge a vessel's speed to within a fraction by watching the foam pass the ship's side.

As I have already stated we had a fine bunch of sailormen and a musical lot to boot and they soon had the 'Foo Foo Band' in full swing. Bennett was a fair 'tenor', Sam the West Indian man – the 'banjoist', Car, a Swede – 'accordian', Johnston – the 'drum major' – the drum composed of an empty cask with canvas ends, and a young Scotsman, McDougal, the mouth organ, Consequently the six to eight dog watch was looked forward to by all hands including officers.

Sometimes there would be a variation from vaudeville to aerobatics One item especially caused lots of fun and pain too, to the man who did not manipulate the trick properly. It consisted of hanging by either your chin or the back of your neck in the noose of a rope made fast to the backstay and well clear of the deck, then let your hands go and hold your weight by your head, but if you slip out a nasty graze with the rope on your ears or cheeks will be your reward. This was only one of many dare devil tricks of the programme. At other times there would be competition in weight lifting and gambling with plugs of tobacco on various climbing feats. Tobacco was always the form of currency, for money was an unknown quantity when at sea in sailing ships and for that matter also in great scarcity in ports. Some of these watches would be spent with the men spinning yarns about different ships they had sailed in, hard case ships, hungry ships and the varied news and experiences of the general run of sail trained men would make volumes of facts far stranger than fiction.

One man amongst our crew, a Swede by the name of Olson was a real 'Hans Anderson' for fairy tales, marked with an occasional ghost yarn of the 'Flying Dutchman' series. Some of these ghost stories were positively hair raising for anybody with a superstitious nature and these were the means of quite a lot of devilment and fun to the detriment of a young Italian Able Seaman, who was nick named 'Domo' because his correct name was 'Dominic'. Well Domo did not like the ghost stories which sometimes would have a religious strain about them, and he would remonstrate and sometimes blaspheme in his own language which would often create roars of laughter and at times would assume almost a serious aspect which at the same time only tended to accentuate the source of diversion. One story in particular I well remember which nearly brought on war between Scandanavia and

Italy. Runs as follows: Olson to Domo: "I dreamt about you last watch, Domo."

"What you dream?"

"Vell, I dream you come and say to me 'Olson, I die in three days'. Den on de next day you come to me and say 'Olson I die in two days'. Den on de next day you say 'Olson I die tomorrow'. Next day I keep watch over you, you are working out on the jib boom and you fall overboard. I rush across the foc'sle head to dive over for you but you call out "Don't come, Olson, someting pull me down".

"By Cristo" fairly yelled Domo, "You squarehead, I killen den you" but his

quick move towards Olson was

intercepted by some of the other men.

#### Clipper ship sailing

Now Olson was a fine sailorman and could no doubt have taken care of himself, good natured but I suppose seeing that 'Domo' was susceptable to his eerie yarns, he no doubt made them very pointed, to the detriment of Domo's firey temper, who I might say apart from this weakness, was a good shipmate. Although I was only a boy I used to advise him to take no notice of the yarns. Maybe due to the Domo's temper a series of tricks were played on him very detrimental to his nerves. Mind you there was no question of malice, but pure school boy devilment. The practical joke played on him was when he was doing his turn on the lookout on a dark night. A dummy man made of white canvas was lowered over the fore yard by means of a rope leading from the deck with the legs dangling below the front of the sail. This was too much for Domo. He came flying down the Forecastle ladder. exclaiming to the rest of the watch "Dis ship no good" evidently thinking he had seen one of Olson's ghosts. So to appease his now badly frayed nerves all hands went forward in a body to lay the nocturnal visitor by the heels, but found none, certainly not. The dummy had been well and truely stowed away in the mean time. This was not the finish of Domo's troubles for on the following night when he was going to the wheel the dummy was put alongside the lee ladder leading up to the poop deck. Now it is unforgiveable for any member of the crew to ascend



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in the setting of them.

#### **NOUMEA '83**

#### by Peter Cambpell

There have been great ocean races from Australia to exotic Pacific seaports such as Noumea, Port Vila, Suva, Lord Howe Island, Port Moresby, but there has been no welcome, I think, to equal that which Australian yachtsmen received in the inaugural La Route du Paradis which followed this year's Club Med New Caledonia races from Sydney and Brisbane.

For most of the Australians, La Route du Paradis gave them their first experience of the magnificent cruising waters which lie beyond Noumea, taking them to the unspoilt island of Ouvea in the Loyalty Islands Group, to the northeast of New Caledonia, and then back to the Melanesian village of Touho, nestling among the palm trees below the towering green mountains of the east coast. Introduced by the Cercle Nautique Caledonien (CNC), the host Club in Noumea, and the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, La Route du Paradis became the palliative to vachtsmen who had endured between a week and 12 days of bashing to windward in the Club Med races this year. Unfortunately, 'unseasonable' weather produced rain and only light winds instead of promised southeast trades for the 'second leg', but for those who completed it La Route du Paradis will no doubt remain the highlight of their Pacific experience for 1983.

The arrival of the fleet in Touho will also be long remembered by the native people living in the little villages along the coast, certainly by those who had their first-ever opportunity to go aboard a large racing yacht. Among them were some 80 children from the local school who were shown, in groups, over Peter Rysdyk's *Onya of Gosford*. For the first time in 40 years the local tribes there agreed to conduct a traditional welcome for the visiting yachtsmen, with the town hall of Touho packed to capacity for speeches of welcome followed by a spectacular dance outside, in which most of the yachtsmen and women later joined in.

#### First leg a bash

Unfortunately, the hard beat to windward in the fresh to strong easterly winds and rough seas took its toll on the record 50 boats of the two fleets which set sail from Sydney and Brisbane. Fifteen retired; several of the Cruising Division sailed again when the weather improved.

Despite the long hard beat, virtually on one tack from both Sydney and Brisbane, there were few lasting complaints from the crews once they reached Noumea. But, then, for most the wind eased for the last couple of days, the seas flattened, the sun shone warmly, so the pains of the long bash were



The Cercle Nautique Caledonien's modern marina on the southern end of Noumea.

soothed by the time most stepped ashore in Noumea's old harbour to a warm welcome from the local French community and members of the CNC.

First to reach the finish line (this year moved from Amedee Lighthouse to the Petite Pass into Noumea Harbour) was Sydney yachtsman Marshall Phillips in his latest Sweet Caroline, giving him a unique 'double' in races to Noumea (he also took the double in '79) and the unofficial title of champion ocean racing yachtsman of the southwest Pacific. After a slow beginning — "We were all a little seasick for the first couple of days and sailed the boat badly" — Sweet Caroline took over the lead from Satin Sheets, and these two sloops led the way across on the 1060 nautical mile course from Sydney to

Less than 35 miles apart on the final morning of the race, the corrected time result was wide open between *Sweet Caroline* and *Satin Sheets*, but in the final few miles the Dubois 44 was able to close reach to the finish while the Peterson 2-tonner ended with a beat all the way after a wind shift. Andrew Strachan in *Satin Sheets* had about six hours in hand to win the race on corrected time but could not quite make it, *Sweet Caroline* finally winning by only 42 minutes 44 seconds.

They were followed in by Pacha, Sangaree and Meltemi, with Meltemi taking third place on corrected time for her Canberra crew skippered by Gunnar Tuisk. It was a fine effort by her 'lake' crew in this 1971-vintage design.

With three yachts named Sweet Caroline
Phillips has been what some would call the
most successful Australian yachtsman in international racing in the Pacific. Apart from
his two Sydney-Noumea Race wins he has
won the Sydney-Suva Race and has repre-

sented Australia in three Pan Am Clipper Cup series in Hawaii, twice being a member of the winning team, in 1978 and 1980, with his previous boats.

In his latest Sweet Caroline, as sistership to the English Admiral's Cup star, Victory, Phillips raced in the CYCA Clipper Cup team last year, and this past summer has won Division A of both the Hitachi Sydney-Hobart and Marine Hull Sydney-Mooloolaba races.

Third boat to reach Noumea was the leader of the Brisbane fleet, Mal Hewitt's Peterson 2-tonner Envy. Like Sweet Caroline, she took out the line/handicap double, but by even greater margins.

The only significant retirement from the Sydney racing fleet was the French yacht Pomme d'Api which twisted her mast and damaged her rigging and sailed more than 200 miles back to Mooloolaba.

#### Brisbane fleet

The Brisbane fleet set sail 26 hours after the Sydney boats, and for the most part it encountered worse weather. Only two Cruising Division yachts finished within the time limit, and at least two boats never got outside Moreton Bay. Another early casualty was the powerful Coffs Harbour sloop *Virgo*, sailed by local Club Commodore John Williamson, which broke her mast the first night at sea.

Envy sailed a powerful race, revelling in the hard conditions more than 8½ hours ahead of Paul Kent's Aztec, skippered by Mooloolaba yachtsman Lloyd Maher. Envy averaged 6.7 knots over the ground for the 800 mile course, but her time for the race – 6 days 5 hours 30 minutes 41 seconds – was well outside the time set by Siska II in the inaugural race from Brisbane two years ago. She beat Aztec on corrected time by under

seven hours. Third place went to the Tasmanian 1/2-tonner Hotshot, a Carter 30 owned by the Prescott family of Hobart and skippered in this race by 20-year-old Greg Prescott, already a veteran of three Sydney-Hobarts. His crew, which included one girl, were all under 25 years of age. Also a member was a rising Tasmanian star of offshore racing, 23-year-old Craig Escott, skipper of the ill-fated sloop Solandra which was wrecked on Cat Island in Bass Strait on its way to Sydney for the race to Noumea. Craig and another crew member hitch-hiked to Brisbane to join Hotshot after salvaging all possible gear from the timber-hulled Solandra, winner of the 1982 Melbourne-Hobart

#### **Arbitrary Divisions**

Both fleets had an Arbitrary Division (primarily for yachts without IOR ratings but open for IOR yachts, too). The majority of racing yachts entered both divisions. Winner of the Sydney fleet was Peter Rysdyk's Onya of Gosford, the 10th to carry the name of either Onya or Onya of Gosford. It was a fitting reward for the man who revived interest in the Sydney-Noumea Race, enlisted sponsorship from UTA, Peugeot, Club Med and others, and who has in the past been (three times) a Noumea Race Director. This was Rysdyk's first race to Noumea in his own vacht, and the Miller 40 performed well, finishing sixth in the IOR Division as well. She won the Arbitrary from Meltemi and from Kanga Birtles' Holland 2-tonner Sangaree. Lotus was fourth, followed by Pacha, and the little Tasmanian sloop Thylacine.

The IOR winner of the Brisbane fleet, Envy, entered both divisions and won both. Second place in Arbitrary went to Carinya IV, John Burkitt's lovingly restored and expertly sailed little Carmen class timber sloop, while third went to Vivace, a steel hulled Joe Adams cruising sloop owned and skippered by Seaforth Matheson. Amon Re, being sailed for the last time by Queensland Yachting Association President Dayle Smith, finished fourth, while in fifth place was the first Mackay yacht to contest this race, Aegir, skippered by Neville Edwards.

#### **Cruising Divisions**

The strong headwinds and rough seas took a toll of the Cruising Divisions in both fleets. The last to finish was the Swanson 36, Senang, which finally reached Noumea 13 days out of Sydney, after a zig-zag course across the Pacific, including a rather close encounter with Elizabeth Reef. The Cruising Division was judged by Race Director Alan Brown on a point score system which included a predicted average speed for the course, the use of sail and motor, and other general factors of good seamanship.

Winner of the Sydney division was David Beer in his comfortable 15.2 metre aluminium ketch Mandalay III, a Peter Cole design. (Beer also won the Cruising Division in the 1979 Race with Mandalay III.) The point score was remarkably close, with Mandalay III scoring 327.12 points from Wyuna II (Bill Arnold), with Shiraz (Col Green) third with 299.54 points.

Brian Willey's big cruising sloop *Banjo* from Brisbane was the only boat to finish within the time limit in the Brisbane fleet scoring 325.17 points.

#### La Dieppoise

For the third time, the French Navy provided an escort vessel for the two fleets, with La Dieppoise sailing from Noumea to Sydney especially under the command of Lieutenant Commander Gille de France. La Dieppoise was also the radio relay ship; she passed position reports back to the CYCA through Penta Base and also to the CNC in Noumea. Radio operator aboard was Captain Jean-Louis Boglio, the Harbour Master of the Port of Noumea.

"The Cruising Yacht Club of Australia greatly appreciates the fine efforts of La Dieppoise, her captain and his crew", race director Alan Brown said in Noumea, after presenting a commemorative race plaque to the French Ship.

"The role of the French Navy in providing an escort vessel for this long ocean race was vital to the safety and communications of this record fleet and was a gesture which must cement the good relations between Australia and New Caledonia."

Alan spoke highly of the efforts of the Port Authority of Noumea which organised the loan of large barges from private companies to form a special harbour for the yachts.

Club Med's John Youngman presented the major trophies, which included two fine paintings, to the owners of the winning IOR Division yachts in each fleet. Among the trophies were several special ones from the French Navy and from La Dieppoise itself.

#### Route du Paradis

The highlight of the 1983 race and cruise to Noumea was the inaugural La Route du Paradis, starting from Noumea, two days after the trophy presentation and providing the opportunity to race and cruise to the beautiful coral island of Ouvea and then back



Ouvea Atoll, in the Loyalty Islands Group

to Touho. Sponsored by Air Caledonie and owners of the Ouvea Village Resort and the Coco Beach Resort hotels, the event attracted 18 starters in two divisions – Racing (arbitrary handicaps) and Cruising. The first leg of some 110 miles from Noumea to Ouvea was marred by drizzling rain and little wind. After starting off the Noumea Beach Hotel the fleet motor sailed to the Baie de Prony on the southern end of New Caledonia and then reassembled for the start of the overnight sail to Ouvea.

The steady drizzle and little wind caused several boats to turn back and others to transfer from the Racing to the Cruising Division – by the simple method of motor sailing to Ouvea, led by the three-masted schooner *Ile Ola* from Geelong.

Ile Ola was built by Geoff Wood in 1953, and the 66-year-old Geelong grocer has sailed the unique Herreschoff schooner in



Peter Rysdyk and school children from Touho Village aboard Onya of Gosford.

four Sydney-Noumea Races, three Sydney-Suvas, ten Melbourne-Hobarts and Three Sydney Hobart Races. At the presentation night (marking completion of his fourth Sydney-Noumea) Wood and Ile Ola received a special Half Million Sea Miles trophy

While most boats motor sailed to Ouvea, several enthusiasts persisted with sailing, Aztec and Meltemi actually dead-heating across the line at the Coetlogan Passage into the atoll: on corrected time Aztec won Third place went to a Mooloolaba boat, Graham Savage's Galatea. Winner of the Cruising Division was Frank Buckland's comfortable cruising cutter, Passport, a centrecockpit 13-metre design by Doug Brooker. Second went to Noel Bradly's Gomorrah and third to Bill Oxley's cutter Knots.

Race Director Alan Brown flew to the island, finishing the fleet off a rocky point with the aid of the local chief's son. Host to the fleet was the newly opened Ouvea Village Resort, a traditional thatched-hut hotel set amid coconut palms about midway up the island with its superb white beachsweeping in a semi-circle some 34 kilometres. Developed by Air Caledonie, the hotel hosted the crews to a relaxed poolside cocktail party and trophy presentation, the winning boats receiving native carved wooden figures.

With the attraction of diving and just relaxing on the beach, several yachts elected to stay on a few days at Ouvea, but ten set off on the second leg of La Route du Paradis, a 65-mile course back to the mainland of New Caledonia. After an exciting midnight start through a narrow passage in the reef, in 25 knots, the wind once again died away, and the majority of boats finally motor sailed to reach Touho in time for a magnificent welcome by the Melanesian tribespeople of this beautiful village on the mountainous east

This time the fleet was led to the finish by the big Queensland ketch Windsong III, skippered by John Goss of Mermaid Beach. but the winner of the Arbitrary Division was the Sydney sloop Double Bogie, skippered by Robbie Landis, with second place going to the big Geelong ketch Wyndham, owned and skippered by Geoff Graham.

In the Cruising Division the first two boats were from Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, with Bill Oxley's Knots winning from Frank Buckland's Passport.

At Touho the vachtsmen were entertained by race sponsors, the Coco Beach Resort. another native-style hotel on the edge of the lagoon. The prizegiving feast was prepared in traditional style, and there was a magnificent array of trophies.

The 1983 Club Med New Caledonia Ocean Race may have been a hard slog to windward, wet and uncomfortable for many a day, but for those yachtsmen who went on to sail La Route du Paradis, it was made worthwhile.



Robbie Landis and a Noumean friend.



Ouvea Village Resort.

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#### CAPTAIN SEAWEED's **NAUTIWORDS**

#### By John Hawley

#### ACROSS

- 1. The Tasman is one.
- 5. What goes with Love.
- 7. Half a yacht (or half a big wind).
- 9. Let's go by tram.
- 10. Sir Jim's second name, for short.
- 12. Old English compass point.
- 13. Any size rum.
- 15. A classic international series.
- 16. Lend them to Caesar.
- 18. Requisite for putting up Zs.
- 19. An anaesthetic or yore. 20. Make off that sheet.
- 22. A foot bone.
- 23. Ron Swanson's boat, 5th in 1963.
- 26. The big gherkin.
- 29. Heroin does this to those who can't
- 32. A bull, a steak house, or the beginning of a publisher.
- 33. They make our path rough.
- 35. A base for communication.
- 36. First in the first Sydney-Hobart.
- 37. A shy kite makes it hard to handle.
- 38. A sponsor of the Noumea Race.
- 40. A prefix that signals a revival. 41. First mate's number
- 43. Co-founder of the Q.L.D.
- 44. Blue coated neighbour of the CYCA.
- 45. Essential for a Sportsman's Luncheon.
- 46. Dry disease of timber boats.

#### DOWN

- 1. Tension at the back prevents this.
- 2. A boring thing.
- 3. Descriptive of most racing yachts today
- 4. Result of 18 across.
- 5. Knit this for a change of character.
- 6. He guits a sinking ship.
- 8. Get these by winches.
- 9. Bob, owner of Capucine, 15th in 1970.
- 11. Flinders has one.
- 14. Two on a big one, by Hal Roth.
- 15. Scorch.
- 17. Far from stern
- 20. Jolly good in Suva.
- 21. Thank goodness modern vachts do not have them
- 23. Cleopatra clutched one in the end.

- 25. Sydney time in winter (you guessed it).
- 26. Slightly astern.
- 27. Famous Solent lightship.
- 28. First to Hobart in 1962. 29. Colfelt is one, especially of the
- Whitsundays.
- 30. He Masters and Surveys.
- 31. Slippery sheets.
- 34. West Indian dance.
- 35. Found on many a yacht, but not Police Car.
- 38. Long life milk.
- 39. Ubiquitous harbour snapper.
- 41. One of a pair in a tender behind. 42. Do it well in the Blue Water Room.
- Answers on page 32

(continued from page 5)

#### Brokerage off to good start

Maurice Drent Boat Sales, CYCA franchaise vacht broker, is off to a good start, according to Maurie Drent, proprietor of the yacht brokerage located at the CYCA. "The first six months have gone very smoothly," Drent told Offshore. "Boat sales are improving, mainly due to the fact that we're open seven days a week." A number of Members have commented favourably on the blackboards located on A and C marinas, which give the daily weather report and tidal information compliments of the brokerage.

Apart from sales of new and used boats, Maurice Drent Boat Sales offers competitive insurance rates, a boat delivery service, and the company is a charter agent for Magic Flute, a 65' Irwin stationed at Hamilton Island in the Whitsundays.

#### Clipper ship sailing

(continued from page 27)

the poop by means of the weather ladder, that being reserved for the Captain and Officers. On reaching the lee ladder and perceiving the dummy he raced across to the other side of the deck and up the weather ladder, there to be met by the Officer of the Watch wanting to know "What do you mean by coming up this ladder?". The Officer had been put up to the joke. Domo's reply was "Dis ship no good" and explaining to the Mate what he had seen at the foot of the lee ladder, of course the Mate crossed the deck but could see nothing unusual. It had been taken away in the darkness. He then

called me to tell a couple of the men to come aft and sent them in search of the ghost. Of course it was not to be found. Domo was sent away from the wheel that watch.

To be continued.

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(continued from page 13)

started them [the races] on Saturday afternoon and finished them in the night it would be a lot better than night starts. And then you've got Sunday to get over it...a good sleep Sunday night and start fresh again.

Because I wasn't on my own boat, too, I went home from work, and I was relaxed; I had a nice feed before sailing.

OFFSHORE: What are your thoughts on Category 3 for these sorts of races, Nev?

WALTERS: Well, obviously we've got to look at the position where the life jackets are carried and where the flares are carried – whether they should be somewhere in the cockpit.

Neville Walters was back in hospital nine days after his rescue, with pneumonia. The doctors said they expected that to happen; the sea is a soup of marine bacteria (as well as other things in the area where Walters spent the night in the water). He spent a week in hospital and some further time recuperating at home. We spoke with him again briefly just before going to press. OFFSHORE: Having now had six weeks to mull it over, and to have nightmares because of your fulminating pneumonia, is there anything particular that has solidified in your thoughts about it all? The lessons of it, or results of discussions you've had?

WALTERS: I've decided in my own mind that I will be making my own boat more buoyant, by making some of its lockers airtight and building an airtight compartment in the bow.

Even if it will float half submerged it's a better target than a black head like mine.

The other important thing is that I feel that the safety harness, if you put it on, should have some buoyancy attached to it. If you have your harness sewn into a buoyancy vest – normally you only use your harness in rough conditions – if you fall overboard the buoyancy vest will offset the weight of the warm clothing that you have on.

I've been going through a lot of English and overseas magazines; they have, because of their larger boating populations, a lot more boating equipment available. And I've since been talking to manufacturers in Australia, who have sought me out to ask my opinion, and I think there will be a better range of buoyancy coats and inflatable vests on the market here in the future

I've also given thought to pumps. Mine are installed so that the intake is on one side of the boat; if the boat were lying on its other side you'd be just pumping air.

In general, what price is safety? Is \$100 too much to pay for safety gear? In my crew I'm sure that every one of us will be buying his own, and that's a point I'd like to make—to impress upon crew members that once they hit that water they're on their own. It doesn't matter what the owner has supposed to have done; what life jackets etc. there are may be up in the forward locker where they won't get damaged. And you can talk about \$80 personal strobe lights, but there is available a tube with a chemical that you can break and that glows underwater; they cost about \$3, and one of them in your pocket, and a seventy-cent whistle, could be

afforded by every crew member.

Another thing. While the police do a very good job, we can't expect that they will be there all the time, just for our exclusive use. And they're not as experienced seamen as half the fellows racing on the boats. So if you have built-in buoyancy incorporated with your safety harness, you will have built-in warmth as well, and you may need it.

The position where flares are stowed and where the radio is located is also important. You have to think of the worst conditions in which you are likely to need them.

Whatever you think about what safety gear to have and what not to have, whatever safety gear you finally end up with, all your planning is combined with just plain luck out there. Still, I think it's best to have the dice loaded in your favour.

#### Answers to Captain Seaweed's



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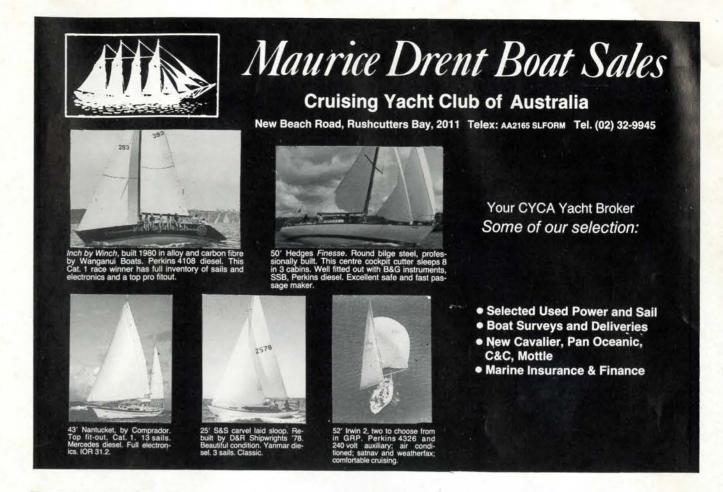
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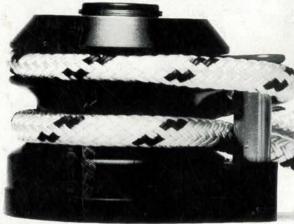
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