

The Magazine of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia

OFFSHORE

NUMBER 82

MARCH 1985

\$1.00*

Registered by Australia Post Publication No. NBH011



1400



OFFSHORE

Number 82

February–March 1985



Cover: The calm before the storm, although at the time no one would have called the CYCA marina in Boxing Day morning anything resembling calm. The atmosphere before the start of the AWA Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race is always highly charged, as last minute preparations are made amidst milling throngs and piping musicians. A sunny start to the 1984 event soon became clouded, and the largest ever non-southern Cross Cup fleet, for the next several days, took a proper dusting. Not all of the dust has yet settled, and in our next issue Offshore will report on the results of the Sailing Committee inquiry into this year's race. PHOTO BY DAVID COLFELT.

OFFSHORE is produced by the Publications Committee and published every two months by the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, New Beach Road, Darling Point, New South Wales 2027.

Telephone (02) 32 9731

Cables 'SEAWYSEA'

Telex AA 72278 'SEWYSE'

EDITOR: David Colfelt

Advertising and Editorial Correspondence

The Editor, OFFSHORE, 67 Beresford Road, Rose Bay, NSW 2029. Tel. (02) 327 1152

Subscriptions

Australia \$16.00 for six issues (one year)

Overseas \$A19.95 (surface post). Air mail rate on application.

Publications Committee

A. Cable (chairman); D. Colfelt (Editor); J. Brooks, R. Copeland, S. Peacock, M. Power, W. Sherman, P. Simms, F. Sticovich; J. Woodford.

*Recommended price only

Registered by Australia Post Publication No. NBH001

Printed by Maxwell Printing Company Pty. Ltd., Waterloo, NSW.

CONTENTS

Offshore Signals

Letters: thanks to our major sponsor, AWA; more about QLD; Great Champagne Yacht Race. Hobart retirements inquiry. New CYCA Yard/Marina Manager. 1985 Ulladulla series. Noumea Race cancelled. Southport Race set for '86. Bicycle thefts threaten LHI Race. Maxi duel expected at Hamilton Is. series. Product News: new AWA Pilotphone XI VHF; new Sydney Harbour book; Shag/Off; pre-cooked meals in pouches; surplus chandlery.

Why weather beat the Hobart fleet

Bruce Stannard raises some interesting questions about this year's Hobart Race; a reprint from *The Bulletin*.

Biggles' Column

Columnist Commodore John Brooks puts the 1984 Hobart in perspective.

To Hobart (via New Zealand) with Indian Pacific

Two-times prize winning Navigator Lindsay May looks at the Hobart Race from the deck of the winning yacht, and has doubts of his own about the incredulity of officials.

Is the alternative way the right way?

Tony Cable investigates alternative penalties awarded in this year's Hobart and questions the long term viability of alternative penalties.

As a matter of fact

Frank Sticovich reviews the press on this year's Hobart and presses a point of his own.

A meteorological post mortem of the Hobart

Weatherman Roger Badham has a look in depth at why the weather cut up so rough after Boxing Day 1984 and why the seas were as bad as they were.

Beam Ends

Reporter/photographer Robin Copeland covers this and that around the Club, and takes a passing look at the anniversary of Greenwich Mean Time.



Cruising Yacht Club of Australia

NEW BEACH ROAD, DARLING POINT, N.S.W. 2027

ADDRESS ALL
CORRESPONDENCE
TO THE
GENERAL MANAGER

TELEPHONE: 32-9731
TELEGRAMS: "SEAWYSEA".
SYDNEY.
TELEX: 72278

28th February, 1985

Mr. John Hooke,
Chairman,
Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd.,
47 York Street,
Sydney, 2000

Dear John,

The 1984 A.W.A. Sydney-Hobart Race is now history and one which will long be remembered at the C.Y.C., not least for the solid financial support and technical assistance rendered by your Company.

The 1984 race benefited from the greatest publicity it has ever received and through the new association with A.W.A., took on the attributes of an all-Australian event and one with unparalleled appeal to the Australian public.

With what the A.W.A./C.Y.C. team has learned over the last year, I am certain that the 1985 race organisation and promotion will be even more successful, and I am confident that we will see a record entry for the Southern Cross Cup and the Sydney-Hobart race.

On behalf of the C.Y.C., I would like to extend our sincere thanks to you and the people of A.W.A. for your generous sponsorship, and especially for your efforts in forging, what is already, a close and highly efficient partnership.

Yours sincerely,
CRUISING YACHT CLUB OF AUSTRALIA

JOHN BROOKS
Commodore

Offshore Signals

Lost Offshore?

CYCA Members may well have thought the December/January issue of *Offshore* was lost at sea, and we apologise to readers, advertisers and contributors for its lateness. Fate conspired against us in December. We had everything well under control – in fact, the magazine was delivered to the Club earlier than it has ever been in December – on the 12th. Unfortunately, we understand that, with the pre-Christmas panic in the office, no staff was available to put the magazine into envelopes and to post it until after Christmas. Australia Post then conspired to compound the injury; our copy did not arrive until January 10th, and we believe some were later than that. ■

Letters

The QLD

The Editor, *Offshore*

I refer to the December 1984/January 1985 issue of *Offshore* and the letter to the Editor titled "Quiet Little Drink" written by Mr Olaf Hedberg, Commodore, RYCT. I would like to make the following comments.

Back in the sixties, as a fairly relaxed bachelor I noticed to my dismay that on many occasions when one was just starting to enjoy a few snorts (quiet drinks) with friends, in places such as the CYC bar, how many times, family, business, women commitments etc. came up with members of the group and how often the fellowship had to be terminated at the expense of joviality and increasing good humour. The people so affected by this adversity came from a pretty broad spectrum – paid hands, company directors, professional tennis coaches, interstate yachtsmen, airline pilots, up-and-coming clerks, millionaires, butchers, stock brokers, journalists, and even the odd knight of the realm – real ocean racers.

Obviously this was a serious situation, and perhaps when William Shakespeare had Hamlet say, a few hundred years ago, "What a weary, stale, flat and unprofitable world it is. To be or not to be, that is the question.", he was close to the mark. (Do we really need navigators?!)

Because of the important nature of the matter and the necessity of confidentiality, I approached that well known short fat bald man, raconteur, bespectacled yachtsman and good friend, Anthony Leigh Cable. I had first met 'Top Cat' in 1965 in Bicheno on the way back after that year's Hobart Race. At the time he impressed me with his open-mindedness and the way he could tell a good story, gesticulating wildly but still managing to get through a can of Cascade at a reasonable pace. So, strangely

enough, over a few quiet drinks a few years later, in 1969, it was agreed that the problem could be solved in Hobart Town after that year's blue water classic. The advantages were pretty obvious:

A location 600-odd miles from home, on an island what's more. Pretty hard to be nabbed by untoward mothers-in-law or disgruntled bank managers!;

Timewise, normally a little up one's sleeve before returning to Sydney and the mundane aspects of next year's commitments;

Surely the place to swap stories of the Race as well as sharing a few yarns without any time limit.

So, an invitation was issued to a few of our friends. I think I should, respectfully, point out to Commodore Hedberg that the Quiet Little Drink (QLD) has never had, and has never sought, any affiliation with either the CYCA or the RYCT. In fact, on the initial invitation only the time, date and dress regulations were listed; no venue was indicated in order to maintain anonymity. Furthermore, considerable (enjoyable) effort was spent by both of us touring possible watering holes to ensure that the original get-together was held away from Constitution Dock so as not to get yachtsmen in general involved and to maintain privacy and decorum for our selected guests,

It is now part of history that the first QLD was held at the Shipwrights Arms in 1969, after consultation with the management.

The scene is still very vivid in my mind. A cold, fresh sou'easter blowing across the river as we arrive at 1000 sharp and from the little back bar, the walls lined with pictures of sailing vessels dating back to the beginning of Hobart itself. There were only a couple of locals in the beautiful stone pub when we put the money down to buy 100 beers for our friends (if and when they arrive). I think the rest is common knowledge.

The tradition remains, and in order to keep the number of 'local residents' (referred to in Commodore Hedberg's letter) to a minimum, or unwanted gate crashers away (local or foreign), the venue still remains unannounced each year and, on top of this, it is regularly changed.

It is unfortunate that perhaps a few people, and perhaps not always yachtsmen, bring discredit to these discreet functions. However, I do recall the odd Sunday school picnic in years gone by not having always gone according to plan.

Although, for mainly business and family reasons, I have not made the trip for a couple of years, I would point out to the Commodore that the only publicity I have seen here has been good and it has come to my attention as a part of general post-Race activities.

I feel that people should also be aware that, right from the start, yachtsmen at the QLD have always contributed to those less fortunate, by donations. Considerable funds have been given to the Tasmanian Crippled Childrens Association, and a sizeable amount has been raised to send a young Tasmanian ocean racer overseas to a major regatta each year. The first recipient may well go this year.

Furthermore, I must say how disappointed I am in the Commodore's attitude overall. I say this as this country goes downhill at a great rate of knots because of the knockers and the do-gooders – the negative thinkers, people who want to make black people white and men into women or vice versa. Those who discriminate against effort and talent because it is different from the norm. Soon we will all be grey.

Let's keep this out of ocean racing, for the sea treats everyone the same.

Perhaps Huey did not take Commodore Hedberg's letter too lightly either. It was not published until after the fleet had left, and then a lot of them did not arrive in Hobart.

In conclusion, I quote that famous saying, "Stand aside you shallow draft men and let a true deep blue swell pass you by".

Yours faithfully
John Dawson

Great Champagne Race

The Editor, *Offshore*

It was a sparkling summer day on Sydney Harbour Sunday 16th December for the Laurent Perrier Great Champagne Yacht Race. More than 110 yachts and 2000 people participated in a 15 knot NE breeze and perfect sailing conditions.



The Race was conducted by the Ocean Racing Club of Australia as a fund raiser to help send crews to the Admiral's Cup in the UK this August.

Thanks to the support of the sponsor and the generosity of yacht owners who made their vessels and crews available, and to the guests who participated, we have raised over \$20,000.

Four maxis took part in an exciting Maxi Division contest, and some 14 yachts started in the Vintage Division, some sailing from Pittwater, Botany Bay and Port Hacking to compete.

After the race the yachts rafted up with spectator craft and the Laurent Perrier Flagship *Emma*, in Athol Bay. Prizes were presented by the Hon Laurie Brereton, MP, Minister for Ports.

Sincere thanks to the CYCA for providing the starter's boat and for generally assisting the race, the sponsor and the participants on this great day.

Yours sincerely,
Geoff Lee
Organiser

Great Champagne Race Results

Vintage Division

Huon Lass (J. Allanson), Cherana (J. Keelty), Lorita Maria (P. Smith)

A Division

Centrefold (B. Folbigg), Encore (W. Anderson), Mercedes IV (T. Dalton).

B Division

Justus (R. Fowler), Middle Harbour Express (P. Nicholson), Concubine (J. Parker).

Cruising Division

Catironia M (J. Christoffersen), Kingurra (Sir W. Pettingell), Tic Tac (B. Griffin)

Maxi Division

Freight Train (R. Williams), Dr Dan (R. Muir), Condor (R. Bell).

Hobart retirements subject of CYCA inquiry

As a result of the heavy retirement rate for this year's AWA Sydney-Hobart Race, the Sailing Committee has sent out confidential questionnaires to all participants in an effort to better understand the circumstances in which some 106 yachts retired from the Race. Two different questionnaires were sent out, one to skippers of yachts which finished the race, and one to those which retired. The Sailing Committee is currently evaluating the responses and will be issuing its official report through the April issue of *Offshore*.

The questionnaires that were sent out are detailed below.

Questionnaire sent to finishers

- What were the wind and sea conditions at the time when other yachts were retiring?
- Did you contemplate retiring? If 'yes', please elaborate.
- What sails were you using when conditions were at their worst and how long did you carry them?
- If you sheltered, for how long and at what port?
- What purpose was served in sheltering, i.e., repairs, rest, etc?
- Please comment on the adequacy of the radio communications during the race.

- Please comment on the adequacy of our standard safety equipment (bilge pumps, storm boards, bolt cutters, emergency steering, etc.).
- What damage to sails or rig did you suffer during the race?
- If you used storm sails during the race, please comment on their suitability in respect to both size and construction.
- What damage if any was occasioned to the yacht's hull?
- Did seasickness affect you or your crew significantly during the race? Please elaborate.
- As a result of your experience in this race, is there anything you would do before starting, say, in next year's race, assuming that the same weather and sea conditions were anticipated?
- This year's race has been compared to those in 1970 and 1977. Did you have any crew members who had sailed in either of these two races and, if so, did their experience contribute to your finishing?
- Have you any comments to make which have not been adequately covered in the foregoing and which you may think to be of interest to the Sailing Committee?
- Whilst this has nothing to do with retirement, there were a number of cases of men overboard, which occasions the question: What is your experience as to whether crewmen wear and use safety harnesses whilst on deck? Please comment in detail.□

New CYCA yard/marina manager

Phil Thompson has recently been appointed Yard & Marina Manager. Phil is an experienced yachtsman and manager, having sailed on and looked after such yachts as *Gretel*, *Vengeance*, *Margaret Rintoul*, *Pacha*, *Sweet Caroline*.

CYCA General Manager Michael Polkinghorne told *Offshore* that he was very pleased with Thompson's appointment and that Phil has all of the necessary qualifications to make him a first-class yard operator.

With Thompson's appointment new emphasis will be placed on efficiency and service in the CYCA yard. Members are invited to inquire or seek quotations for all jobs, big or small. Ring Phil Thompson on ☎ 32-9731.●

Ulladulla series, Easter, 1985

The CYCA is conducting another Race/Cruise to Ulladulla over the Easter weekend, and event designed for fun rather than serious bloodthirsty competition, although that is available too.

The Fleet will start from Clark Island at 2000 hrs on the Thursday before Good Friday, April 4th – under a full moon, promises Race Director Peter Rysdyk. Three divisions – IOR, Arbitrary, and Cruising (engines may be used in this division) are available to cater for all tastes and comers. The first stop scheduled is Jervis Bay, some 80 miles south, where the fleet will stay as guests of the Royal Australian Naval College HMAS Creswell until 0900 hrs Saturday morning. It will then set off for Ulladulla harbour, 18 miles further south, to arrive around noon.

Festivities that weekend will include a Rodeo, Princess Competition, Potters Exhibition, Navy Display and Exhibition, Float Parade, Fun Run, Windsurfer Race, Skydiver display, Water Ski Show, etc.

On Sunday at midday the traditional 'Blessing of the Fleet' will take place; at 1900 hrs that night there will be a big fireworks display.

Yachts wishing to race back to Sydney will start after the fireworks (2200 hrs).●

Noumea Race cancelled

With sincere regret the CYCA has announced the cancellation of the 1985 Australia New Caledonia Yacht Race.



Left to right: CYCA Race Director Peter Rysdyk, Ron Suares and Ron MacMaster, Bayview Harbour Development.

Southport Race set for 1986

Race Director Peter Rysdyk has just returned from a meeting with the sponsors of the 1986 Bayview Harbour Sydney-Gold Coast Yacht Race and a visit to the mammoth new bar improvement works, an enormous undertaking and attempt to tame the infamous Southport Bar.

The Race, now definitely set to start on Saturday, 16 August 1986, promises to be a success timed to fill a gap between the end of our Winter Series and the start of the summer season. The Club expects some 100 yachts to cross the starting line in three divisions: IOR, Performance Handicap Division, and Cruising Division. The fleet will be considerably swelled by a great number of motor cruisers intending to come to Sydney to escort the fleet up the coast to the Southport Yacht Club.

After a few lay days, the IOR yachts will start in the Surfer's Paradise Gold Cup Series, a series of two short and one long ocean race organised by the Southport Yacht Club and the CYCA.

Special events will be organised for non-IOR yachts. Tremendously attractive Gold Coast travel packages will be arranged by sub-sponsors TAA, Quality Inns and Herts Rent-a-car.

You will find in this issue of *Offshore* a special reply card which, if returned to the Club, will ensure that you receive future newsletters about this exciting new CYCA event. •

participants through most of the waters charted in the late 1770s and early 1800s by Bass and Flinders and other famous navigators. Each stage will be named after one of these great sailors.

The stages of the race will be:

From-to (nautical miles)	Start
Sydney-Mooloolaba (480 nm)	20/8/88
Brisbane-Cairns (700 nm)	28/8/88
Cairns-Darwin (1400 nm)	10/9/88
Darwin-Dampier (865 nm)	25/9/88
Fremantle-Adelaide (1340 nm)	22/10/88
Adelaide-Hobart (530 nm)	5/11/88
Hobart-Melbourne (490 nm)	16/11/88
Melbourne-Sydney (640 nm)	26/11/88

The AYF has delegated the conduct of the race to a committee of six prominent yachtsmen who have experience in race organisation, safety and promotion. David Holloway, immediate past President of the AYF, is Chairman. The Race Director is Geoff Foster, immediate past Commodore of MHYC and an experienced passage race director. Sponsorship is under the guidance of CYCA Rear Commodore and Sailing Committee Chairman, David Kellett. Frank Likely, Chairman of the YA of NSW Safety Committee, will look after safety. Executive Director is Ian Pullar, retired RAN Captain and past Hydrographer of the Navy, now Coaching Director of the AYF. •

Bicycle thefts put LHI Race at risk

The future of the popular Lord Howe Island Yacht Race, sponsored by Sylvania-GTE and organised by the Gosford Aquatic Club, is in serious doubt, and the absurd reason is pushbike stealing by yachtsmen.

There were some 71 applications for entry in the 1984 Race to fill a mere 25 places, the limit imposed because of logistical difficulties on this small island with a local population of only 280.

The pushbike is the mode of transport on Lord Howe. Young and old, residents and

tourists, pedal their way along palm lined lanes in the delightful unmotorised atmosphere of this paradise island. Cars are almost unknown. Yachtsmen, perhaps not appreciating the significance of the bicycle on the island, 'borrow' them, which is on the island akin to stealing a car on the mainland. This year 'borrowing' infuriated islanders and tourists alike. Some 70 instances of disappeared bikes were reported.

To aggravate the matter, many of the misappropriated two-wheelers were simply dumped in the bushes, some twenty not being found until after the yachts had sailed out of the lagoon and over the horizon.

Race Director Peter Rysdyk has been advised that should this recur, the 1985 Lord Howe Race will be the last.

That will indeed be a shame. •

Maxi duel set for Hamilton Island

After being blown out of the Hobart Race, two of the world's fastest maxi yachts, Condor and Ragamuffin, have decided to have a showdown during Hamilton Island Race Week in April. Condor was forced out of the Hobart by steering problems and Ragamuffin retired with a damaged rig and an injured crewman. Neither had a chance, therefore, to settle the argument as to who's fastest.

With a smaller rig last year, Ragamuffin completely dominated the line honours contests during the inaugural Hamilton Island Race Week in 1984. Apollo couldn't hold her. The series attracted some 92 yachts last year, and organisers expect a fleet of 120 this year.

A new Farr 55-footer from New Zealand, Cotton Blossom, will be there to keep the other maxis honest. Superbly built in Kauri and fitted out to the highest standards, Cotton Blossom is capable of speeds over 20 knots and can be expected to be snapping at the heels of the bigger yachts.



Bicentenary 'Round Australia Race

What is being billed as the "greatest sailing adventure since the times of Bass and Flinders - a 7000 nautical mile race around the Australian continent" - has been scheduled for August 1988, the AYF recently announced. The race will be in nine stages, the first to leave from Sydney (August 20, 1988) and the last to finish there in December of the same year. The course will take the

Five races from April 13–20 make up the series, which is centered around the beautiful unspoiled islands of the Whitsunday Passage in Queensland's south-central coast. Competitors will also have a full social agenda, the highlight being a beach party on the fabulous Whitehaven Beach.

Radio station 4CA Cairns has announced that it and Shell Australia will sponsor a race from Hamilton Island to Cairns to start on April 25 after the Hamilton Island series. The 300 nautical mile event will be conducted by the Cairns Cruising Yacht Squadron and the Hamilton Island yacht Club and will serve as a feeder race for the annual Cairns–Port Moresby Race. •

Product News

New AWA low-cost Pilotphone

AWA has recently announced the arrival of the new low cost Pilotphone XI, the eleventh generation marine transceiver which reflects some 22 years of AWA experience with VHF marine communications.

The new Pilotphone XI offers 55 channel operation, including all Australian Seaphone frequencies and the new channel 87A, the AYF yachting channel. It is compact in size and easy to install. The unit is expected to sell for \$399 plus tax. •

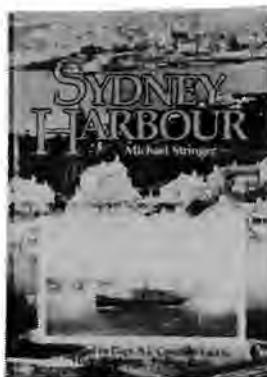


New book about Sydney Harbour

Sydney Harbour is a new book by Michael Stringer, who is well known around the CYCA through his Boxing Day duties of many years, at which time he has organised the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in its role as guardian of the spectator fleet.

Michael's new book is a fascinating pictorial history of arguably the greatest natural harbour in the world, Sydney Harbour, which has as colourful a past as it is beautiful today. Did you know that they used to pull up 12" prawns off Vaucluse?

Anyone with an interest in Sydney Harbour will want to get a copy of this book. You will become a font of lore with which to bedazzle your weekend guests. You will find answers to questions that have been bugging you for years. The book is available



only by mail order through Rankin & Company of Mosman. See the insert in this issue of *Offshore*, or write to Rankin & Company, 109 Raglan St., Mosman, 2088. A copy is on display outside the CYCA office. •

Shag Off!

We are all familiar with the decorative (and often futile) attempts of poor bloody owners to dissuade feathered squatters from decorating the coachhouse or sail covers on their yachts, e.g. flags, rotors, cardboard cats, plastic hawks, snakes, scarecrows, recorded distress calls etc.

A new Australian invention now claims to have the solution to the problem. Called Shag/Off, it is an electronic system that works on the principle of the 'electrified fence'. According to the manufacturers, it gets results. They quote one ecstatic owner, whose Hood 23 had never been free from birds for twenty minutes, as saying that since he installed Shag/Off, there hasn't been a little round white body on his boat.



Shag/Off consists of custom-sized sections of plastic matting embedded with a conductive mesh which is hitched up to an electronic pulse generator. The mesh is placed where birds like to roost. Birds need only make contact once to get the message and look for less uncomfortable resting sites. The electrical system is totally isolated (no electrolysis worries) and the current drain is

negligible – for the most part about the same as a battery sitting idle, so say the agents.

Shag/Off is being distributed through Jentec (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. (02) 929-4311 and is available through selected ships chandlers (for CYCA Members, Sturrocks Ship Chandlers, a few doors from the Clubhouse, can make arrangements). •

Pre-cooked meals in pouches

Meridian Holdings Ltd. of Sydney is now importing a range of pre-cooked, vacuum sealed pouches offering a variety of main courses for racing and cruising yachtsmen. Those who existed on muesli bars and Coke for days during this year's Hobart Race would appreciate the simplicity preparing these meals; if you can heat water, you can have hot Venison casserole or Ragout of Veal. The vacuum sealed pouches require no refrigeration, no can opener, they are easy to store and easier to prepare (heat in boiling water for 7 minutes). They are currently available in 226 g pouches, although other sizes are available by arrangement.

The Company is making a special offer to CYCA Members – a variety pack of ten different meals for just \$22.00 delivered to the CYCA. Ragout of Veal, Chilli con Carne, Lamb Curry, Venison Casserole – Knockers, eat your heart out! For more information, see advertisement in this issue or contact Peter Hannan at Meridian Holdings Limited, 7th Floor, Bridge House, 52 Clarence St., Sydney (PO Box 90, Mosman 2088) 29-3880 a.h. 969-5648.

Surplus chandlery

For those who rue the passing of the 'yachty sale' that used to be held at the CYCA, Captain Watts Chandlery at Rydalmer may be what you have been looking for, either to pick up a bargain or to get rid of one of your own. Capt. Watts operates a surplus chandlery where, he says, there is a useful range of items in discontinued and bankrupt stock as well as a good range of used items bought for reconditioning and resale. A wardrobe of good cruising sails complements this section together with a collection of marine antiquaria, brassware, lamps, etc. The wholesale chandlery offers direct, low prices on cordage, chain, anchors, stainless steel fastenings, wire rope. Rear 11 Clyde St., Rydalmer 2116. 638-7717.



TAURUS TRAVEL

Townhall House, 456 Kent Street, Sydney, 2000

(Adjacent to St Andrews Public Carpark)

(02) 267 5477 (10 lines) TLX AA75120 TARB Lic No B1605

SPECIAL EVENTS IN BRITAIN

TAURUS TRAVEL IN CONJUNCTION WITH
BRITISH AIRWAYS



★ ADMIRAL'S CUP

COWES, ENGLAND — 24 July to 10 August 1985

As the Official Agent for the Australian Team we have negotiated some great airfare, hotel and tour deals. For optional extensions we are offering **Free return flights** from London to many European destinations, including Paris, Frankfurt and Amsterdam.



★ COMMONWEALTH GAMES

EDINBURGH, 24 July to 2 August 1986

First release — Be early. Seven night packages at the Games are now available. We have a choice of either hotel or private accommodation, but hurry, the hotel rooms, which are right in Edinburgh, are limited. London stopovers and optional tour extensions can also be arranged.



★ THE BRITISH OPEN GOLF TOURNAMENT

TURNBERRY, SCOTLAND — 17–20 July 1986

★ GOLDEN OLDIES 4th WORLD RUGBY TOURNAMENT

TWICKENHAM, 27 September to 4 October 1985

London Accommodation (20 minutes from Twickenham) and an excellent air fare is available from Taurus Travel. Attend the ever popular Golden Oldies Rugby Tournament held in the UK this year. Optional tours and **free return flights** from London to certain European cities can also be offered to those wishing to extend their stay.



THE WINNER

Mr Ray Roberts (*Impetuous*), Managing Director of Skilled Engineering Pty. Ltd., won a trip to San Francisco in our December lottery draw.

All clients who book or refer others to Taurus Travel receive a ticket in our lottery. The next draw will be on 28th June. The prize is two return tickets to Singapore plus three nights at the Goodwood Park Hotel.
Ray Roberts.

FOR A FULL LIST OF COMING EVENTS OR TRADE FAIRS IN THE U.K.

Contact **TAURUS TRAVEL**
267 5477 (10 LINES)



Ansett



WHY WEATHER BEAT THE HOBART FLEET

by Bruce Stannard

We are indebted to the author, Bruce Stannard, and to the Editor and Management of The Bulletin for their kind permission and assistance in our reproducing the following article, which appeared in that magazine earlier this year (in the January 9, 1985 issue).

Introduction by CYCA Commodore John Brooks

During and immediately after the 1984 AWA Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race the Australian media succumbed to the temptation to sensationalise the high race retirement figures, almost always laying the 'blame' for the 'disaster' on 'high tech' yachts. Most of the stuff was ill informed and generally wide of the mark in seeking explanations.

Out of 106 retirements, less than half could truly be described as 'high tech' and they all shared damage or retirement reasons with the remainder. Rig loss or damage, structural damage, crew injury or seasickness – you name it, it was spread right across the fleet. So it takes a huge leap in logic to arrive at the conclusion that 'high tech's the culprit, mate', even if you forget about the fact that both major winners (line honours and handicap) were typical state-of-the-art yachts.

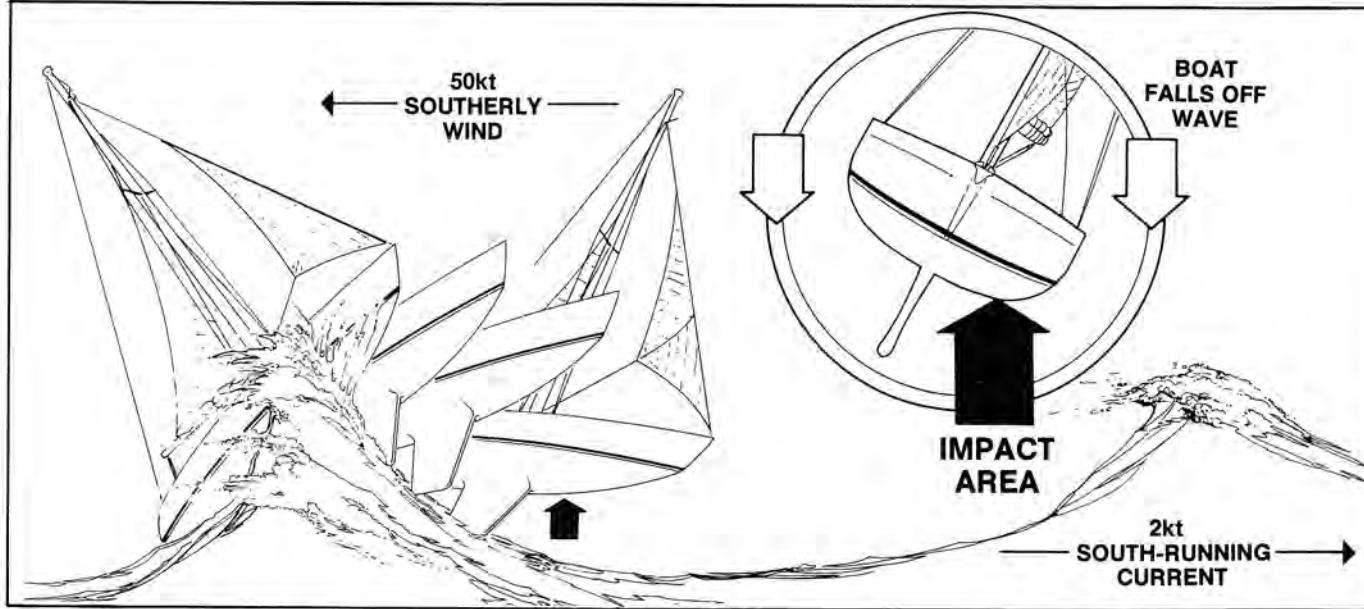
The following piece appeared in The Bulletin in early January. It was the only article published at the time which made any attempt to look behind the sensationalism, and it raised some very valid points, even if it did make the same leap in logic to conclude that the latest ocean racers are accidents going somewhere to happen. It quotes me as agreeing 100% with the designers' sentiments expressed in the article, which is not quite true, and my "... confidence in the miraculous materials Kevlar and carbon fibre" was definitely not "... knocked as flat as they were in the howling wind", although I do admire Bruce's way with words.

The article raised points which had long needed airing and as a starting point for debate it is almost ideal. We reprint it for that reason and invite you to answer in the same spirit of debate. My own thoughts have been fairly accurately summed up, in his usual bumbling manner, by 'Biggles' [see page 13 this issue - Editor].

When something goes dramatically awry in sport, instant experts howl for blood. Armchair admirals have been quick to seize on the latest Sydney-Hobart yacht race as a nautical debacle. More rational minds have been looking beyond the headlines. BRUCE STANNARD spoke to leading designers and sailors to discover why two-thirds of the multi-million-dollar fleet was disabled, damaged or forced to retire with sick and injured crewmen.

HOBART'S "Quiet Little Drink" — that extraordinary post-race beerfest where bravado, back-slapping and boozing traditionally go hand in rowdy hand — this year resembled nothing more than a tea party at the All-England Croquet Club.

On the surface, the reasons seemed pretty obvious. Constitution Dock and Elizabeth Wharf which on New Year's Eve normally are crammed solid with the rafted hulls of at least a hundred salt-encrusted, gear-littered yachts stood silent and all but empty save for the triumphant *New Zealand*, *Indian Pacific* and the few others which had the struggle across Bass Strait behind them.



Slamming impact. A modern ocean racer leaps through the crest of a big, steep sea and slams down hard on the flat forward sections – creating a tremendous bang and enormous pressures which can lead to badly cracked hulls and frames in the new high-tech Kevlar and carbon fibre hulls.



New Zealand PHOTO BY IAN MAINSBIDGE COURTESY NEWS LTD.

Somewhere in the gale-lashed Tasman was the body of 70-year-old Wally Russell, lost in mountainous seas.

The mood in Hobart was sombre and reflective. A sea change had overtaken those who had made it just as it had overwhelmed those who had turned back. Russell's sudden, lonely death at sea evoked a universal melancholy. The shared experience of perhaps the wildest weather they were ever likely to encounter had left them awestruck at the sheer destructive power of wind and waves.

They were emotions which must have ebbed and flowed up and down the 630 miles from Sydney to Hobart as the remnants of the 155-strong fleet which had set out so confidently in bright Boxing Day sunshine limped back, battered and broken.

But, carefully hidden beneath the surface, emotions far more fundamental were at work. A great myth had been exploded. Even if they were afloat in the world's most sophisticated

high-tech boats, the men and women who sailed them no longer seemed so rock-solid certain of their ability to survive. Their confidence in the miraculous materials Kevlar and carbon fibre and all the scientific gadgetry that made their boats the fastest, lightest, most exciting ocean racing machines the world has seen had been knocked as flat as they were in the howling wind.

Word had filtered through from Sydney that two crack crewmen from the new Farr 43, *Drake's Prayer*, Peter Kurts' highly fancied Admiral's Cup contender, had been swept into the sea — and rescued — when the boat was pooped by a gigantic sea and knocked on her beam ends off Gabo Island. If that sort of thing could happen to one of the very best equipped and best manned of all the racing yachts, what price the smaller and more vulnerable boats?

Sensing the dangers of a conservative backlash, there were those who sought to smooth over what had hap-

pened to the fleet. Kurts, a former Hobart winner and one of the most distinguished figures in world ocean racing, was first among those who dismissed any suggestion that the new boats might be unsound. David Forbes, the Star Class Olympic gold medallist who had been with him and who has just ordered a similar Farr 50, backed him up. They took the view that, far from being a signal of inadequacy or vulnerability, the withdrawal of two thirds of the fleet was testimony to the great good sense and seamanship of the competitors. That was certainly a reasonable view. Yet there could be no denying the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA) retirement tally:

Loss of rig, nine; rig damage, eight; sail failure, six; structural or hull damage, eight; steering failure, three; gear damage, two; unspecified damage, three; electrical failure, three; seasickness, four; crew ill (glandular fever) one; unspecified reasons, 57.

That grim litany prompted immediate assurances that there would be a

Why weather beat the Hobart fleet (*Bulletin* reprint)

CYCA inquiry — not a "witch hunt," Commodore John Brookes promised, but a carefully conducted post-mortem.

It was in that spirit that *The Bulletin* sought the opinions of Australia's leading naval architects, designers and sailors. It is true that Ben Lexcen, Alan Payne and Peter Joubert are not exactly at the epicentre of the revolution in offshore yacht design. But it was precisely because of that that their opinions, free from personal involvement and bias, were more likely to be frankly independent. The three men — all veteran yachtmen — are among the most distinguished figures in international yacht design. All came up with remarkably similar explanations when asked to explain, in the simplest possible terms, what went wrong with the 40th annual Sydney-Hobart fleet.

Lexcen, who designed the America's Cup winner *Australia II*, said the old Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) rule encouraged construction of strong boats by giving them a rating bonus. "But then people started to cheat," he said, "by putting big stringers (beams fore and aft) around the waterline. The rule-makers cut that out altogether and boats started to get weaker and weaker and weaker. That's okay for boats that tootle around the Mediterranean or off the California coast where there's no bloody wind. Ninety percent of the world's boats get away with it. But not in Australia. Here, when we get bad weather, we really get bad weather. In the English Channel when it gets tough you just pull into the nearest port which is usually no more than 10 miles away. But when you're in the middle of Bass Strait you're in the middle of the ocean. Here, when we get a decent blow, boats go missing and there have been quite a few over the past 10 years."

Lexcen blames administrators of the International Offshore Rule. "Very few of the blokes who actually formulate the rules know anything about boat structures," he said. "They don't seem to know anything about safety. Go to any IOR meeting and you would swear you were looking at a bunch of London bankers. They are the guys who have to sit down and think hard about the lessons of this Hobart race. Something has to be done but it's got to be something practical, something that can be policed."

Lexcen said boat owners should not be blamed because "they're usually dummies, rich blokes and corporate executive types who wouldn't know the sharp end from the blunt end. They just sign cheques and allow themselves to be led by the designers."

Payne, who designed the America's Cup challengers *Gretel* and *Gretel II*, is convinced that much of the responsi-

bility lies with international design rules which encourage super-lightweight construction in high-tech materials. He is also highly critical of what he describes as a widespread ignorance among boatbuilders of modern engineering practice.

Payne, however, is very much for the new hull materials — particularly the extremely strong and rigid Kevlar, a bulletproof fibre said to be five times stronger than steel, which is potted (set) in resin and laid up sandwich style either side of a core of balsa, honeycombed cardboard or fine aluminium.

"There's nothing wrong with the new materials," Payne said. "They must be, potentially, the best building materials we have ever had but the use of them in sandwich construction calls for a knowledge of engineering design. Without flying to the view that the boatbuilders are a bunch of uneducated idiots, which they're not, I think that design in these materials calls for greater knowledge than people are currently putting into it. For instance, with all these fibre materials laid on spacing cores, there is a difficulty putting into them any heavy load. A backstay plate, for example, bolts through this sort of material. It's not easy to transfer a heavy load through it. It can be done but it's moderately complicated and expensive, so that's where there tends to be problems."

"There are also problems in the attachment of keels to hulls. Because of the favored fluid dynamic design of the keels, they are pretty narrow where they join the hull. So, inevitably, there are some heavily loaded bolts there. You get high stresses which are not understood and therefore not allowed for. It wasn't so long ago that one of these high-tech boats lost her keel altogether. It just fell off."

According to Payne, the high-tech hulls are particularly vulnerable in the very big, steep and close seas which characterised this year's Hobart race.

He said: "It's pretty obvious that when a yacht fast on the wind as these modern yachts are flies out through the top of a wave and falls down through the air with the flat surface hitting the water at the worst possible angle you will get tremendously high (pressure) loadings. I'm not sure it's totally practical to allow for those loadings. Perhaps it has to be understood with these modern yachts that they have to be sailed cautiously so that that doesn't happen. After the disastrous 79 Fastnet race (in which 15 crewmen were killed) the crew aboard Jim Hardy's boat (*Police Car*) talked about a technique they developed which they referred to as 'keeping water under the bow'. Modern yachts are so manoeuvrable that

they can sail fast up the face of a wave and then be pulled away suddenly to slide down the far side rather than simply crashing through the crest and out into thin air.

"When you get down to all these things it's a matter of knowledge versus ignorance and no doubt after the last Hobart race there are quite a few skippers who have learned not only the correct technique but also the limitations of their boats in these conditions."

Payne said the critical impact area was forward of amidships and depended on the flatness of the structure. "If the yacht falls off the wave and lands on a rounded surface it is nowhere near as bad as landing on a flattish surface," he said. "While the sections of the modern boats are reasonably round they do have flat areas on the sides of the bow and they are also flat fore and aft. They lack the total egg shape of the old boats. This is where they experience what we call impact slamming loads."

Peter Joubert, professor of Mechanical Engineering at Melbourne University — a noted yacht designer, adviser to the CYCA on safety and a former Hobart race winner — had made an examination of what he calls "failed yachts" to find the loads imposed by impact slamming.

Joubert calculated that the pressures generated in slamming were about 60lb a square inch (depending on the size of the boat and the wave speed and height) — four to five times higher than had been assumed by yacht designers. His findings led him to link slamming with the mysterious disappearance of the Tasmanian yacht *Charleston* which vanished with all hands off Flinders Island in December 1979. *Charleston* was on her way to Sydney to compete in the Hobart race. Joubert believes her bottom simply caved in.

"People become so obsessed with lightness," he said, "that they don't allow sufficiently large safety factors in their design. I think the modern method of construction with sandwich skins makes a very stiff panel (the space between frames) but people confuse stiffness with strength. They are not the same thing at all. As a result of that confusion they leave out ribs that are required to multiply the safety factor. The weight saving and labor costs they save are so minimal as to be absolutely insignificant. On one fairly typical boat, I estimated they saved only 50lb (22.7kg) by leaving the ribs out. That's the kind of saving that's wiped out when the crew ship an extra case of beer on board."

Joubert said boat-building standards in Australia "varied from the professional to the appalling."

Why weather beat the Hobart fleet (*Bulletin* reprint)

the world has got to follow suit."

Payne said the yachts were being built to compete in the frequently experienced conditions of light to moderate winds and with virtually no margin of safety. "That is where the problem lies," he said. "The pressures on competitors are to win races in frequently experienced conditions and to simply hope for the best where bad weather is concerned. If every ocean race contained a burst of the weather we saw in the last Hobart race I think you'd find successful ocean racing yachts would be rather different. They would be more like *New Zealand*." (*New Zealand*, the line honors winner, is tremendously strong since she was purpose-built for the Whitbread Round-the-World Race.)

Payne added: "Because of the pressure not to spend too much money on yachts and not to introduce too many administrative difficulties, I fear we will have to wait for 10 or 15 people to be drowned before there will be a change in the administration of ocean racing.

"The change which I think is needed and which I don't think will come about is the establishment of an independent authority to survey the construction of the yachts while they are being built . . .

"They would control all these boats to a margin of strength more than is needed in normal conditions to provide safety in extreme conditions and to get rid of that situation where daddy doesn't come home because he went out in this particular sport. I am not suggesting that people have necessarily been wrong-headed about this in the past. They have not been criminally negligent; they have just been responding to a set of circumstances which will require a brave effort to change. The CYC over the years has been very good about safety. They certainly haven't pushed safety on to the back burner. They have shown concern but they have not confronted the situation head-on. Because of the pressures and the lack of administrative controls, people keep on building boats which are less than they should be for the reality of sea-going conditions."

CYCA Commodore John Brookes said he agreed "100 percent" with the comments made by Lexcen, Payne and Joubert. However, he pointed out that the club had been pushing hard for many years for stronger hull construction standards. But, he said, only the Australian Yachting Federation had the measurement authority to do anything about it and only the federation had the power to push such a policy with the International Yacht Racing Union, the sport's world governing body.



Apollo PHOTO BY IAN MAINSBIDGE COURTESY NEWS LTD.

"I have seen some disgraceful examples of cheap construction slapped together in a manner calculated to attract customers at so-called bargain prices," he said.

"This kind of boat appeals to people who want to go ocean racing on the cheap. People go to extraordinary lengths to get a hull cheaply." Joubert said "shonky" was the wrong term for some of the boat-builders. "I call them uneducated," he said "and I see them everywhere. I see poor engineering everywhere I look these days."

According to Peter Green, one of Australia's most experienced ocean racing hands, there is a widespread practice in which owners and builders deliberately alter yachts under construction — without the knowledge of the designers — to save a few kilograms.

David Kellett, CYCA's Rear Commodore, is chairman of the club's sailing committee, chairman of the safety committee and also serves as sailing master aboard the Sydney-based maxi-boat *Vengeance*. Kellett is responsible for the club's construction and safety checks on all entrants.

He says that the club has to rely on the honesty of those applying to race, despite pre-race on-board checks. Kellett recalled rejecting one British-designed yacht in 1980 because the midship frames within its Kevlar hull were well over two metres apart. It was discovered subsequently that a vital ring frame had been left out without the designer's knowledge.

Lexcen is convinced that nothing about boatbuilders can be taken for granted. "The guys putting some boats together," he said, "have got no idea of engineering principles. They have

never learned properly. They just bungle along from one boat to the next. They do some terrible damned things. They don't do them maliciously; it's just that they don't know. Most of the builders are bloody hopeless. There is no such thing as qualified tradesmen in many of these yards. In fact, I'd say all boats are to some extent built by non-tradesmen these days. Last week they were on the dole; this week they've got a pot of resin and a paintbrush and they're building your boat under the direction of someone who isn't qualified. The great master boatbuilders are gone.

"Boat owners aren't interested in high quality workmanship today because it costs too much. These days, everyone is into high-tech for high-tech's sake. But, when builders without any real understanding or skill start using high-tech materials, it suddenly becomes low-tech and a waste of money."

Lexcen pointed out that, by the International Offshore Rule under which all ocean racing yachts are rated or handicapped, boats are supposed to be built to American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) standards. "Hardly any of them are," he said. "Not one of the new boats comes even half-way to ABS and yet they give them a certificate. When a bloke goes ahead and spends \$200,000 to \$300,000 on a new boat the measurers aren't going to say, 'Sorry, mate, your boat's not strong enough. You're not getting a certificate.' The national authority (the Australian Yachting Federation) is supposed to check that the boats are built to ABS. If they were, there's no way in the world they would fall to bits. The Australians have got to insist on it and the rest of

You find the boat. We'll find the money.



Associated Midland will help you launch your boat by helping you with your finance. You deal directly with the decision makers. We'll give you an answer. Quickly. And we'll tailor a package to suit your needs. Then you're off and sailing. Call Trevor Clark for a quote on 635 5044.

Weekes Morris & Osborn AM12

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MODERN BOATING



**Associated
Midland
Limited**
INC. IN VIC.



BIGGLES' COLUMN

by John Brooks

Every once in a while the Tasman Sea gets up and bites people. It does it fairly often, but where the Sydney-Hobart Race is concerned it does it with uncanny regularity, like every seven years, viz. 1970, 1977, 1984, although I would not let that mislead you into believing, or perhaps hoping, that it won't happen again this year.

Each time it seeks out every weak point in an ocean racer and lays it bare – hull, rigging, sails, crew, the lot. Any little weakness will be found and magnified and that applies regardless of age (boat or crew) and whether or not they are so called 'high tech' (boat or crew). In short, the Tasman or the sea anywhere is very unforgiving of any carelessness, incapacity or neglect, and as far as offshore yachtsmen are concerned, a Tasman gale can prove that point like no other.

Why then the great media furore about the 'failure' of modern design and construction, and did the yachts in fact fail? A preliminary CYCA survey

shows that the retirements cover the entire spectrum of breakdowns which render an otherwise well prepared racing yacht hors de combat, with rig damage (12.2%) and loss of rig (9.3%) adding up to the largest area of failure.

Nevertheless, a few people leapt into print with startling revelations concerning the seaworthiness of the modern high tech yacht, most of them in the 'knee jerk reaction' category. "Hi tech's the culprit, mate, you mark my words." In the absence of any real facts at the time, a few tended to dramatise their statements on the basis, perhaps, that they should not let the truth spoil a good story.

The fact is, it was one nasty little gale, only 40-50 knots, but with wind against set the confused seas were big, backless and were uncommonly close together, so if you had a problem coming off one wave, the next one was on you very quickly. Such conditions would have taken their toll of any race fleet over the last forty years; it was not only Kevlar that caused problems out there.

As for claims that crews were lacking in toughness, many kept pushing so hard that they broke something irreplaceable, when the smart move was to slow down as much as possible. Lacking in finer judgement, perhaps, but not in toughness. But there is no avoiding the conclusion that several years of relative comfort had perhaps lulled us into accepting lighter gear than was wise in the continuing compromise of strength versus lightness/speed.

Another problem was that the gale hit the first night before the rockies in the crews got a chance to settle down, and with 152 starters, the experienced hands were spread fairly thinly across the fleet. When a crew is reduced by seasickness, it is only a matter of time before the rest start to succumb to fatigue in gale conditions, and that is when the modern boat is reaching the limits of control. A missed cue in a tack, slow response to controlling even simple breakage and the damage quickly multiplies out of all proportion to the original incident.

To return to the media reaction to the retirements, a few of our most respected yacht designers relieved themselves of some pent up misgivings about IOR design trends. A lot of what they had to say was quite valid, but I thought they had a bit much on the boat builders and the poor bloody owners. So what if a boat builder does not have a degree in

structural engineering; so what if a boat owner knows nothing about boat building or IOR design? If there is such a thing as collusion between builder and owner to save weight or money to the detriment of the design then the designer should stop them or dob them in to the measurement office.

Who, if not the architect, is responsible for ensuring that his design is structurally sound and that it is followed closely by the building contractor? Who, if not the architect, is responsible if the house falls down due to design weakness. Rarely would an architect design a new building and not closely supervise its construction; after all, that is part of what they are paid to do.

If marine architects do not follow this principle then they can hardly bleat about boat builders not understanding modern structural materials, if that is in fact the case. Yet, many of the world's top yacht designers blithely hand out plans for some pretty sophisticated racing boats and often do not even see the finished product, let alone supervise its construction.

However, designers do have a point when they complain that the IOR has failed to ensure that hull shapes generated by the rule are sea kindly wherever they are raced. What is acceptable for racing off Florida or the Costa Smerelda occasionally can't cut the mustard off Gabo, an anomaly which places Australian yachting in a dilemma. Should you try to modify or strengthen a design to take the extremes of Australian conditions and lose the rating battle? Or should you leave it as it is, remain competitive and handle any heavy weather shortcomings as they arise?

Getting the compromise right has been the secret of success since long before the IOR came into force. Whatever the answer, it is drawing a very long bow to go from there to the conclusion that modern racing yachts are dangerous at sea, and an even longer one to suggest that further regulation at local level is going to solve the dilemma.

All the rules in the world will not make racing yachts 100% safe or the sea a safe place for yachtsmen. Ocean racing has always had an element of danger and always will and only the naive believe that it can be regulated out. One thing is certain. We now have around 1,500 Aussie yachtsmen who have experienced about the worst the Tasman has to offer. Those who continue racing will be better seamen for it. □



**Sooner or later, every rum drinker discovers
the satisfaction of the Inner Circle.**

Winner of more local and international medals than any other rum in the world.

TOM McCARVILL'S ADMIRAL'S CUP TOUR

**31 DAYS FROM JULY 29, 1985,
INCLUDING COWES WEEK,
THE FASTNET RACE, THE
SOUTH OF ENGLAND AND
THE IRISH COAST.**

This tour has been planned by people who know and love yachting and who have insight into what every yachtie and his Lady would like to see and do on a trip to the "Old Dart".

We fly British Airways 747 all the way and stopover in Singapore for shopping and sightseeing and resting for the night at one of that city's famous luxury hotels.

In London a variety of marine-oriented tours are arranged; Greenwich Maritime Museum, the "Cutty Sark" and "Gypsy Moth IV" and of course a trip down Thames are all included.

A few days later we go by luxury coach to Portsmouth, home of Nelson's Flagship "Victory". Portsmouth becomes our base for Cowes on the Isle of Wight, only 20 minutes away by Hovercraft.

Cowes during Cowes Week is a happening which you have to experience to believe. We mix not only with our own sailors but also with people from all the yachting nations. We'll visit the clubs, the pubs and also shop for those great Pommie boating gear bargains. There are great nautical paintings too. We move on to Plymouth for the finish of the Fastnet Race. Let's hope we'll be welcoming a victorious Aussie team back from this classic. No doubt during the festivities we'll find time to take a look at Drake's Drum and Plymouth Hoe, where the famous game of bowls was played.

Next to Bristol, a look at Brunel's "Great Britain" and, after a short stay, to Fishguard to cross the Irish Sea by car ferry to Rosslare and Crosshaven in County Cork — known as one of the most beautiful and historic areas in the world.

En route we visit Blarney Castle and Youghal to dine at the world's oldest yacht club, The Royal Irish.

At Crosshaven, and perhaps Kinsale, there will be some yachts chartered to give the group a taste of sailing in these waters. This is the area selected for just relaxing for a few days and sampling the many great restaurants and pubs.

Some very good arrangements have been made and we are able to pass the savings on to you. This is reflected in the total price of \$4,850 per person on a twin share basis. Our brochure provides the full details of the package.

For information/bookings please phone Mary Lee of Eblana Travel on 232 8144 or Tom McCarvill, your tour leader, on 93 1261, call at Eblana Travel or mail this coupon:



The seafood here is magnificent. With a relaxed atmosphere and friendly natives you'll find no high pressure tourism here. This is Spanish Armada country and it takes but a little imagination to see the days when the ambitions of Spain were wrecked with the little ships desperately trying to claw off a fearsome lee shore.

When we have seen as much as we can of West Cork, we'll make a leisurely tour through Killarney, Dingle, Galway, Connemara, Westport, Athlone and into Dublin's Fair City. On our walking tours of this ancient Viking stronghold, you will see the Viking artefacts and sample wonderful hospitality. Our Irish farewell dinner will be held at the most revered National Yacht Club, Dunleary.

We know you'll bring back your sailing bags filled with wonderful, colourful memories and you'll always be glad that you've been to Cowes.

Tom McCarvill

P.S. Hurry! This tour is restricted to a maximum of 45 people.

BTA **Irish Tourist Board** **British airways**

To Mary Lee, Eblana Travel, 4th Floor, Culwulla Chambers, 67 Castlereagh Street, Sydney 2000

Please send me further details of Tom McCarvill's Admiral's Cup Tour

Please reserve me places on the Tour

Name Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

(Reservations will only be confirmed on receipt of a deposit of \$200 per person. Balance to be paid not later than 60 days before departure. A cancellation fee of \$50 will apply from time of booking to 60 days before date of departure. Thereafter a \$200 cancellation fee will apply.)

TO HOBART (via New Zealand) ON INDIAN PACIFIC

by Lindsay May

The Sailor

I'd like to be a sailor – a sailor bold and bluff –
Calling out 'Ship Ahoy!' in manly tones and gruff.
I'd learn to box the compass, and to reef and tack and luff
I'd sniff and sniff the briny breeze and never get enough.
Perhaps I'd chew tobacco, or an old black pipe I'd puff;
But I wouldn't be a sailor if . . .
The sea was very rough.

Would you?

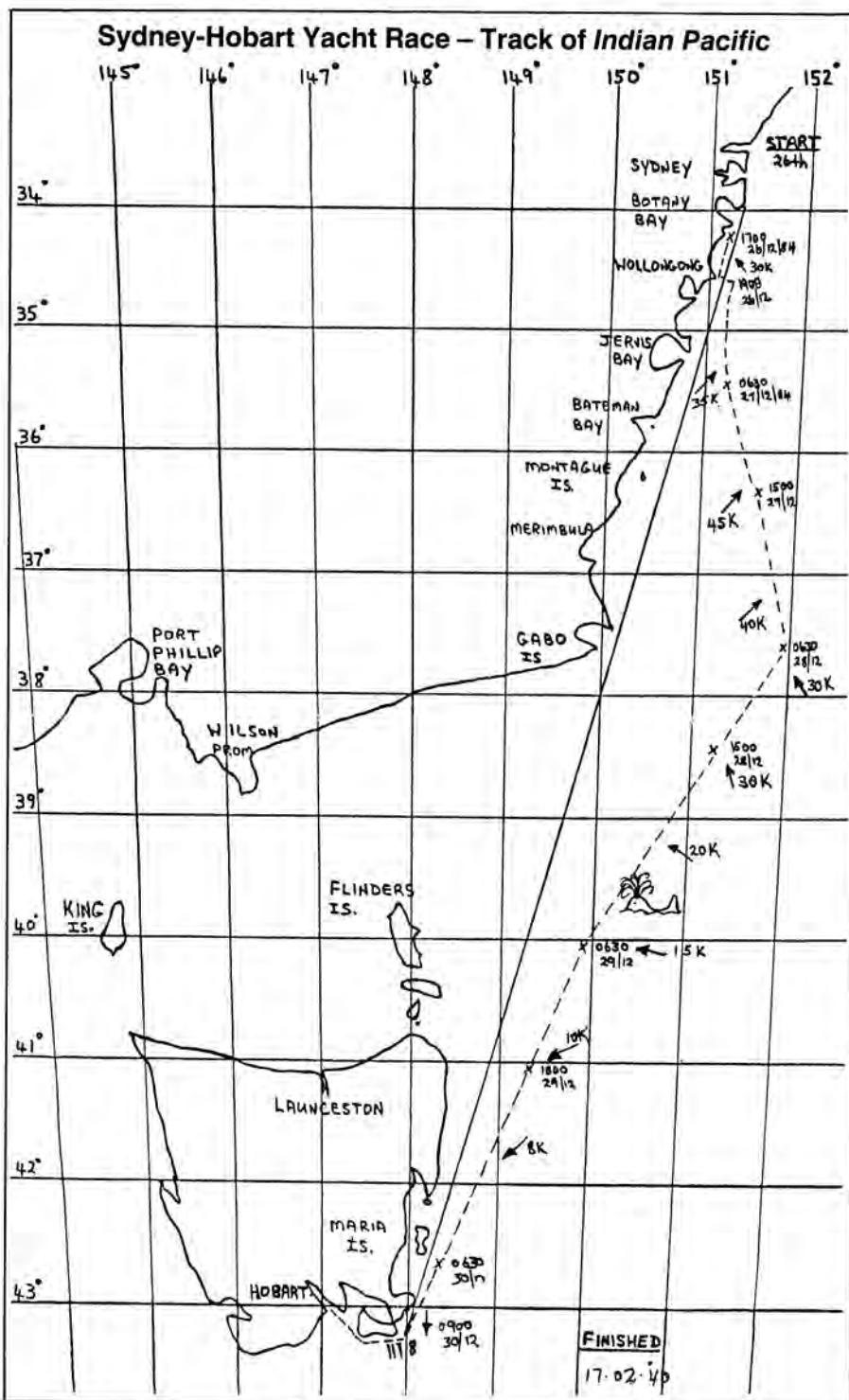
"The Sailor", from *A book for Kids* by C.J. Dennis, © Angus & Robertson Publishers. Reproduced with permission.

It has been said that a story about the moon by someone who hasn't been there is only half as interesting as one written by someone who has. Our Editor must have had that in mind when he asked me to put together an article on this year's memorable race.

This season was the first in many in which I didn't organise a 'ride' to Hobart, and so the family had demanded a holiday. Ian 'Bugs' Potter had obviously received his long range weather forecast and had decided that his business needed his photographic skills over the Christmas break. Just 24 hours before booking airline tickets for our trip to Perth, I was asked, and accepted, to navigate *Indian Pacific*. The decision was not difficult. I'd sailed many miles with the crew, and in my book, *Indian Pacific* was one of my pre-race favourites.

The briefing was certainly ominous and was indicative of the accurate weather forecasts that were to continue for the duration of the race. I love that 'buzz' and nervous laughter that reverberates around the room when the forecaster pops a few lows in the Bight. In discussions with people who observed the weather during the race period, some of them have been critical of the weather forecasts. Technically this may be so but from a practical viewpoint they were most helpful.

The one thing that I knew well was the personality of the crew. Those of you who have sailed with Steve Kulmar, Ron Jacobs and Leigh Minehan will know of their keen and aggressive attitude towards yacht racing. The two short ocean races in the AWA Championship that were held prior to the Hobart were certainly most enjoyable and, from our standpoint, fairly successful (2nd and 7th). However, with the aggressive nature of the crew coming to the fore, I felt some positive action was necessary. With this in mind I suggested that we should try to keep this aggression in check and, furthermore, suggested that the baby's dummy that was tied to the pushpit be awarded to any crew member whose 'aggro' got the better of him. Guess who ended up with the dummy?



Anyone who has sailed in a Hobart Race will know full well the adrenalin pumping moments from the time the ten minute gun is sounded. Our pre-race manoeuvres were most successful in getting us into a good position to be at the weather end of the start. With about two minutes and thirty seconds to go, as we were reaching across on starboard tack we noticed that Aphrodite was approaching us on a port gybe. We hailed her a number of times and, quite frankly, I thought she was going to hit us amidships. However, with some deft helmwork by Steve Kulmar, a major collision was avoided, but Aphrodite still hit us on the starboard quarter. In retrospect the damage was amazingly minimal. At the time it looked very serious, but the Kevlar, of which the hull is constructed, suffered only a hairline fracture. Most of the damage was cosmetic.

Immediately after the impact and before we had inspected the damage I assumed that our race was over. With only one minute thirty seconds to go we decided we'd at least get through the start because there was no way we could stop where we were with the rest of the fleet still coming down on our stern. Ron Jacobs grabbed the sail repair cloth, and John Eyles (owner of Indian Pacific) and I commenced drying the hull and cutting up bits of stickyback.

Our start was brilliant; we were the first to set a kit and set off down the eastern end of the line. About 400 metres from the start a small MSB motor boat that had been marking the limits of the course suffered an engine failure, and with the southeasterly wind, it had drifted onto the course. Even if it was obviously out of position we still felt that this indicated the course limits, and we decided that we should go below him. Unfortunately another boat was just underneath us, and in those conditions manoeuvring was very difficult. 'Eylesy' and I just managed to pull our heads and arms out of the road as we struck the motor boat a glancing blow on our starboard beam. What a start! Four minutes and two prangs!! We finished the patching of the hull just before reaching the tug. In the process a slip of the knife had opened up Eyles' thumb to the bone.

We rounded the tug in 11th position right on the stern of Drake's Prayer and clear ahead of any of our rivals. We did a short port tack to clear bad air from Drake's Prayer and then commenced a tack of about four miles to sea. As soon as we were certain that we could clear Cape Bailey we then went onto a port tack and laid one leg right down to Woolongong.

At dusk and in close company with Scallywag II we tacked onto starboard and proceeded to sea on a course of about

145°. As we wished to make sea room to clear Jervis Bay we held that course and in a short time were sailing up to 155°. It put us right on the break-even of the making leg. During the night the breeze increased in intensity and we remained on starboard tack; at this case we had lifted to about 160°.

Early in the morning of the 27th we heard on the sked that Margaret Rintoul IV had retired along with, of course, many other boats. The steadily building breeze prompted us to reef the main, and eventually we had three reefs in it. During this time considerable water was coming into the boat, mainly through the hatch and via a number of small leaks that had developed. As a result we lost the use of all of our instruments. The continual thumping of the seaway had also caused some electrical leads from the power supply to the SATNAV to come adrift, and that also went on the blink. Considering that it really wasn't needed at that time, it was switched off. We would worry about it when conditions improved. At about 0900 on the 27th we tore our No. 3 headsail and changed down to the No. 4. We should have changed much earlier; obviously we underestimated the wind. With this rig the boat was out of balance and the wind velocity was continually increasing, so we lowered the main and set the storm trysail. For most of the crew a storm trysail was quite a novelty, but I had seen one set on about 1974, and we rigged this one without too many problems. We used the traditional method whereby the spinnaker sheets were used to secure the clew. We were unable to achieve sufficient windward ability with the sail rigged in that position, and Greg Downes set to work and made a bridle with the tail of the brace and secured that around the mainsheet traveller. With the use of a snatch block and another sheet we were able to haul the clew of the sail to the windward genoa winch. This immediately improved our pointing ability. From then on whilst under trysail we were achieving 30° apparent or better.

During the day of the 27th we sailed a fairly steady course of 160°. Tasman Island was still some 500 miles away, and so the course to the mark remained fairly constant at 195°.

About 1100 on the 27th we decided to change down to storm jib, and in the process of hanking on this sail John Vale ('Rigor Mortis' to most of us) was sent flying by a wave and he smashed against the forestay. From my position in the cockpit I saw him throw his head back in agony, and I immediately with Greg Downes raced forward and held a 'consultation' on the heaving foredeck. Mort diagnosed himself as having broken ribs, and when asked how he knew

they were broken, he said because he had broken one rib two weeks earlier. My first thoughts were that we would have to take him to shore which, at that time, was 50 miles distant, and great was our concern for his safety. However, he assured us that he would be quite O.K. as he was already strapped from his previous fracture! He went below and sat out the rest of that watch, but from that point on he never missed a watch, never missed a sail change and assisted in every task that had to be done including making lunch the next day. In Hobart X-rays confirmed that he had broken two ribs.

The early afternoon of the 27th was possibly the closest we came to retiring. The breeze was, in our opinion, over the 50 knot mark (our instruments had gone much earlier), and you could tell it was blowing because the spray was no longer coming over the boat but being whipped around the front of the forestay. The tops of the waves had started to flatten a little bit, but the seas were still huge. A breaking crest sent us sideways down the face of a wave. As everybody hung on for dear life I felt certain that there was no way the rudder could withstand that sort of pressure. The hull, the rig, the sails and, more important, the crew held together, and we maintained a steady six knots on a making leg. For Gunter Heuchmer, the builder, skipper, charterer, it must have been very satisfying to see his boat stand up to the incredible torture that was being continually inflicted upon it. During the day the Kevlar genoa sheet chafed on the shrouds and it parted on three occasions.

It was fabulous to see the way this exceptional crew adapted to the conditions. Everyone was backed up and encouraged, and it was almost like we were really enjoying ourselves in a masochistic way.

A short discussion was held about tacking and heading for the coast where, hopefully, the seas would be a little easier, but we were 70 miles from the coast and it would be 24 hours before we were in any position to find a better seaway. This course would also put us 60° off the mark, and for a 24-hour period there was no way that the decision could be justified. I indicated that if we were going to tack and go inshore, we may as well turn and go home. Moreover, there was no way in the world anyone fancied going downhill in those conditions. We achieved a consensus and pressed on into the night with only two people standing a 2 hour watch and the rest of the crew pumping regularly to stem the steady

(Continued 6)



Condor PHOTO BY IAN MAINSBIDGE COURTESY NEWS LTD.

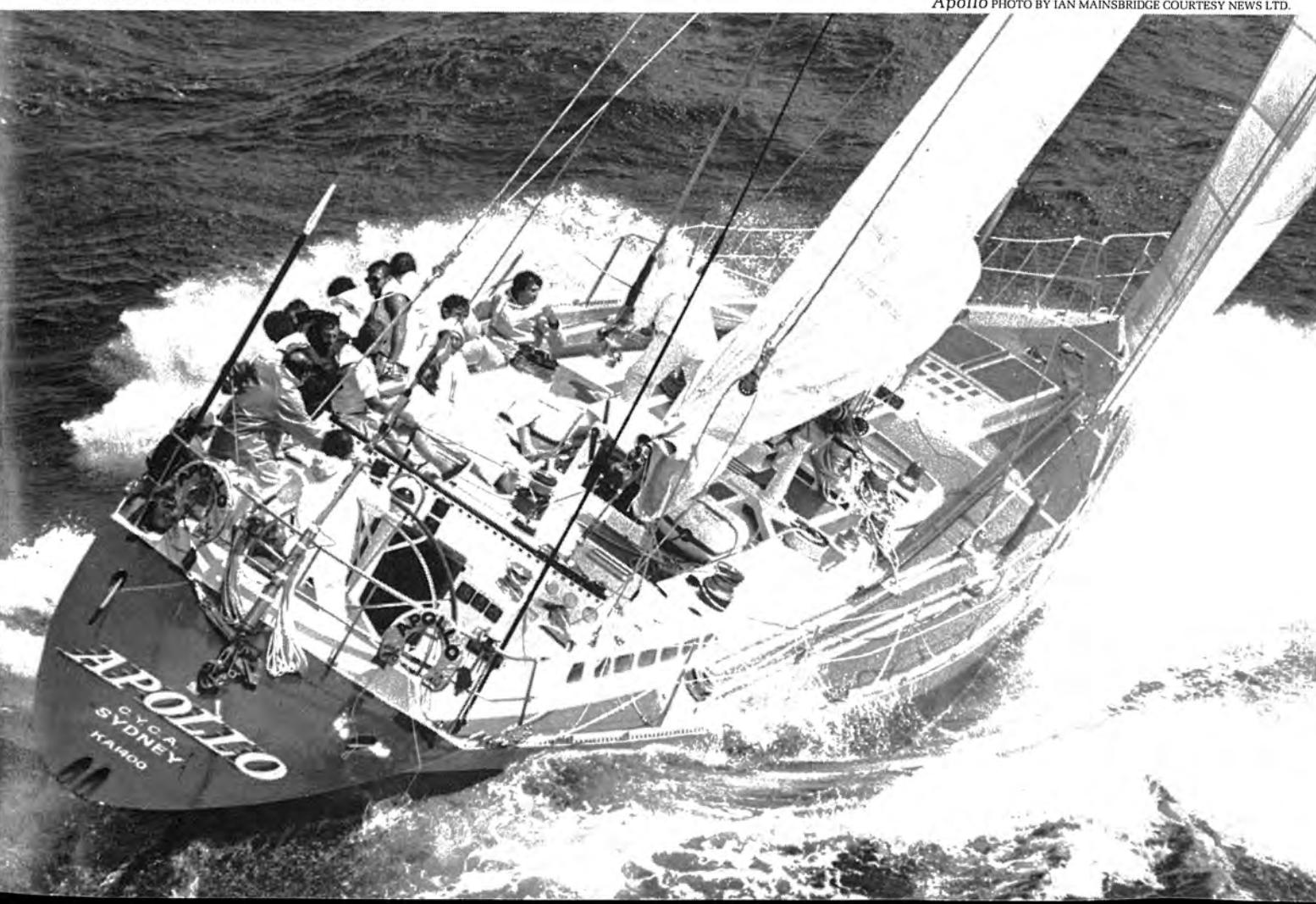
Condor PHOTO BY IAN MAINSBIDGE COURTESY NEWS LTD.





Condor PHOTO BY IAN MAINSBIDGE COURTESY NEWS LTD

Apollo PHOTO BY IAN MAINSBIDGE COURTESY NEWS LTD.



To Hobart with *Indian Pacific*

influx of water cascading down the hatch. It was fabulous to see the way this exceptional crew adapted to the conditions. Everyone was backed up and encouraged, and it was almost like we were really enjoying ourselves in a masochistic way.

The sked on the morning of the 28th saw us in an extremely good position. New Zealand was only 20 miles ahead although she was well inshore. Vengeance was 28 miles astern and Bewinched 30 miles astern. Our position relative to the maxis obviously raised a query in everyone's mind, but it was not at all difficult to understand why we would be in such a good position. We had travelled continually at a speed of six knots or better (again an estimation) and one could imagine the conditions that would be experienced aboard a maxi and the sort of sail damage that had most probably occurred.

The boats that did well went to sea on starboard tack whereas the port tack, shore-bound boats suffered.

In retrospect the ABC documentary showed quite clearly the maxi Vengeance battling off Montagu Island with only a storm trysail set. Under that rig she was hardly making much ground to windward. There were a few boats who gave their position inshore and well down the track, and some of these were quite small boats. They certainly were a worry. In hindsight, however, I find it very difficult to believe that they were in the positions that they reported. The documentary also highlighted that the boats that did well went to sea on starboard tack whereas the port tack, shore-bound boats suffered.

As previously mentioned it was always our intention to sail the making leg, and even though this was taking us well to sea, our assessment of the weather was that the low pressure system, of which we were in the north-western quadrant, was steadily moving in a northeasterly direction. At some stage we should sail into the southerly section of that pressure system and consequently into a southeasterly air stream. All crew were aware of this, and at about 0800 on the 28th we started to knock from our heading of 160° down to about 150°. We decided to tack immediately, but before doing so we dropped the trysail, reset the reefed mainsail and changed the storm jib to the No. 4. By the time these tasks had been completed we'd been knocked down to about 145°. Our tack set us on about 240° but within an hour we were sailing at 230°. By this time Tasman Island was bearing about 200° so we'd certainly tacked onto a really good course.

All the crew were aware of our excellent position and impressed upon each other the importance of percentage sailing and that any mistake, no matter how slight, could see us snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

The 1500 sked on the 28th indicated that we had the best position in the fleet. New Zealand was now 33 miles ahead, but both Vengeance and Bewinched had slipped back to 33 and 38 miles respectively. The position again was almost unbelievable. At that time I knew we were going to win the race. All the crew were aware of our excellent position and impressed upon each other the importance of percentage sailing and that any mistake, no matter how slight, could see us snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

At about 1700 Ron Jacobs noticed that the lower port spreader had slipped down the cap shroud, and we were very fortunate indeed that the mast had not suffered. He immediately went aloft and, in very trying circumstances, repositioned and secured the spreader. This was just the sort of thing that could have put paid to our excellent prospects. Had that happened later in the evening it is most likely that it would not have been detected until the morning.

The change in wind direction and a reduction in velocity immediately improved sea conditions, and with that the conditions below were also a little more pleasant. Rod Johnston, sailing in his first Hobart, and Pat St John immediately set to work and cleaned the boat as best they could. They cleaned up the remainder of a stew that had been scattered around the cabin two days earlier, we pumped the bilge and fed ourselves with hot food and drink. For 48 hours prior to this we had only sipped water, nibbled muesli bars and sucked barley sugar. Only two crew had not suffered any seasickness and the rest of us had suffered it in varying degrees. Seasickness really had no effect on the efforts of the crew.

It was obvious that the breeze was backing to the southeast, and instead of coming up to our course we decided to reach in the freee breeze. Using the performance figures that had been calculated for the boat we did everything possible to achieve those figures. In the early hours of the 29th the instruments had dried out sufficiently to begin working again. The SATNAV was also switched on permanently and was giving regular positions. We tried a kite at about 0800 but found the course wasn't as favourable as we required.

That morning I listened to the ABC Race Broadcast and discovered to my

amazement that the CYCA officials had not accepted our reported position of the 28th but had put us back one degree of latitude. (If you haven't already guessed, you should know now who received the dummy!) Under the circumstances it was understandable that a query could be raised in their minds about our position relative to the maxis. But retarding our position by 60 miles put us well behind boats like Mirrabooka, Shogun, Patrice III, Mercedes IV, and Newcastle Flyer. That was a little puzzling to say the least. Of course, on our boat there was great consternation, and the first thing I did was to recheck our position on a DR basis and to check the SATNAV, which entailed virtually rereading the entire manual. I assured the crew that it made absolutely no difference to our position in the Race and that when we hit the Derwent our fantastic progress would be even more memorable.

I then called the Radio Relay Vessel, Wyuna, and advised them that our position was, in fact, as had been reported and would they kindly advise the CYCA of that fact. Whilst waiting to establish contact with Wyuna, Bewinched was heard endeavouring to make contact with the ABC helicopter, and so I advised Wyuna that should they have any doubts themselves about our position, the might like to ask the chopper to fly out a further 15 miles ahead of Bewinched and verify it. During this time I also heard New Zealand establishing contact with Wyuna so that they could relay a voice report from a journalist who was aboard. The frequency they were using for the relay was not one on the ship's radio, but I had with me a small receiver capable of listening to any frequency from 150 to 20,000 kHz. With this we were able to ascertain that, at that time, New Zealand, which was some 80 miles ahead of us, was reaching down the Tassie coast with a shy spinnaker. Within minutes we had pulled away some 15° and cracked a kite.

In every race to date we have seen boats go backwards and forwards with monotonous regularity. Over the years we have come to know and expect this of certain people.

Our ETA at Tasman Island was 1230 on the 30th, and it was quite simple to estimate that New Zealand was going to be there in the evening. Having been in the Storm Bay/Derwent estuary areas in the night or early hours of the morning for the last six years, I well knew of the hopeless conditions that awaited them. By the same token I was extremely hopeful that the sea breeze would assist our passage across Storm Bay. In fact we rounded Tasman Island

To Hobart with Indian Pacific

our position put back by one degree. In every race to date we have seen boats go backwards and forwards with monotonous regularity. Over the years we have come to know and expect this of certain people. I believe that if the race officials think that a position warrants a query, then that vessel should be queried at the end of the sked. By this I mean, if someone gives a position which plots out putting them on the Hume Highway approaching Albury, then surely this warrants a query rather than accepting the position. In most cases one can detect a mistake in the reporting of positions and the correct figures can usually be guessed.

As a safety issue I think the querying of reports needs to be aired and a decision made for future races. If something serious had happened to *Indian Pacific*, where would the authorities have commenced their search? How many hours could be wasted searching in the wrong area, eventually realising that the position, in this case assumed, was in error, then having to start again elsewhere. I would suggest that an entire day could be wasted, and in conditions such as we experienced, that would be disastrous.

The safety regulations that we sail under seem to be quite adequate to cover our sport. They have evolved over many years and have enabled us to race in relative safety. However, position reporting or, more important, misreporting, has never really been a serious issue. With satellite navigation systems, position accuracy is greatly enhanced, so we need a clear policy that enables the Radio Relay Vessel to query a questionable position. At the moment I understand they must relay positions as reported and are not allowed to query them.

How does one sum up a report such as this. The only way I can think of is to congratulate those who endured the conditions and managed to finish. At the same time those who retired should also be congratulated on their seamanship as they have played an important part in guarding the safety record of this race. The unfortunate loss of Wal Russell is indeed a blemish but, in my opinion, in those conditions – not just in 1984 – it is not a matter of ‘if’ but ‘when’. Wal’s loss must be a permanent reminder of the merciless nature of this medium in which we enjoy ourselves.

To thank people for their effort is dangerous because omissions are easy to make, so if you were involved in the organisation of this race, take a bow. You did a great job.

Finally, to John Eyles, the owner, and to Gunter Heuchmer, the builder, congratulations on a great combination. Congratulations to Bob Fraser, our sailmaker – they don’t make sails faster or tougher than he does. The tremendous effort of the crew earned them membership in a very exclusive club.

It certainly doesn’t come easy, and to many of us the waiting period is exceedingly long. □



ACE MARINE PHOTOGRAPHY

Indian Pacific

at 1118 on the 30th, approximately one mile astern of Bewinched. For all of us it was a great thrill, and at long last we put to rest any doubts that anyone might have had about our position.

From Tasman Island to Cape Raoul we were surfing and occasionally hitting 10 knots. It is interesting to note that in the race so far, we rarely went below 6 knots; this was the only occasion that we ever got to more than 8 knots. For a very short time we fell into a soft patch, just off Cape Raoul, and this enabled Bewinched to steadily move away from us.

We entered the Derwent a little after 1500 and had a very fast reach up the river in a breeze that went from the north around to the northeast. About a mile from the John Garrow Shoal Light John Eyles was determined to get the kite up, so we set our spinnaker one more and stormed across the finish line at 1702, accompanied by a large flotilla of spectator craft.

Our entry into Constitution Dock was certainly the most memorable in my experience. To even finish the race was a great feat, but to motor past the three

maxis and enter a totally empty dock to the cheers and applause of hundreds of people was a great thrill. Before we had even secured the boat alongside, we were inundated with media people.

A lot has been made of the distance we travelled to seaward of Gabo Island. In fact, most of the boats that did well in the Race took a similar track. In following the first principles of yacht racing, we sailed the making leg and sailed in the conditions that existed at the time. Our position east was exaggerated by the fact that we reported our position at 0630 on the 28th, tacked an hour or so later, so we had just reached the eastern extremity of our course. The boats following had still to reach that turning point and consequently our position seemed so much more prominent.

The querying of reports needs to be aired and a decision made for future races. If something serious had happened to *Indian Pacific*, where would the authorities have commenced their search?

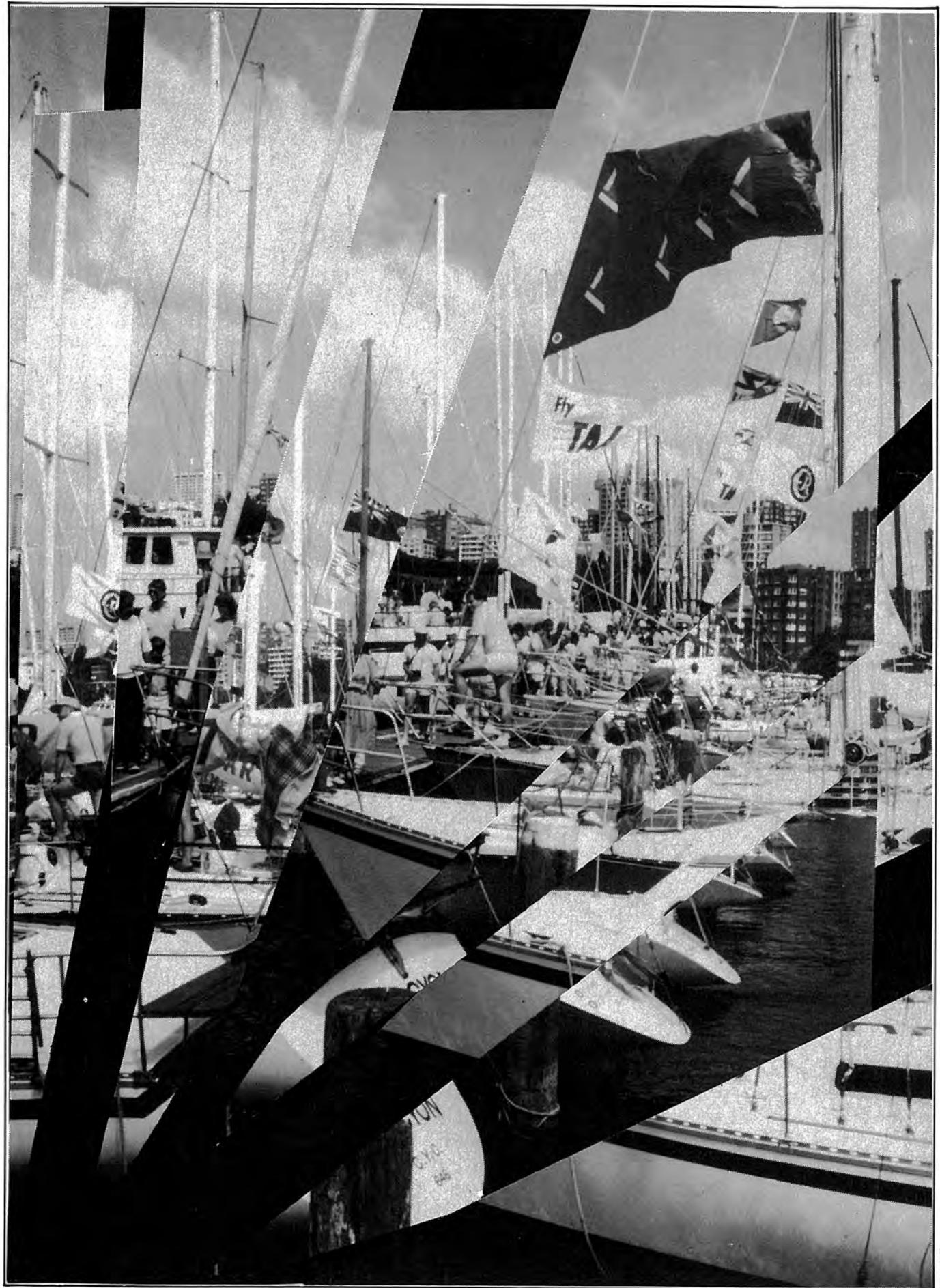
The one issue that is of most relevance to a navigator is that which saw

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE –



© King Syndicate Features Inc. All rights reserved.

Is the alternative way the right way?



IS THE 'ALTERNATIVE' WAY THE RIGHT WAY?

a look at alternative penalties applied in this year's Hobart Race

by Tony Cable

Summary

Four yachts in the AWA Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race were penalised 10-40% by way of the newly introduced "Alternative Penalties to Disqualification". These were outlined over a number of paragraphs in the Sailing Instructions for the Race.

I think the application and administration of alternative penalties needs a very solid review, for among the four examples from this Race there are, in my view, some very controversial decisions.

I believe that the matters discussed here will cause no little debate, some criticism of CYCA officials, and confusion amongst yachtsmen as to the future application of such penalties.

The chief proponent of alternative penalties I believe was our very able Race Director Keith Storey, who is a member of and responsible to the CYCA Sailing Committee. My interpretation of his views as he expressed them to the CYCA Board is that it is a pity that a vessel, say from England, might mount a campaign in Australian waters (for example *Panda* two years ago) and end up being disqualified in the Hobart, say, for a port/starboard incident at the start. Or a disqualification might result from an incident a few hundred metres from the finish, as was the case in the *Nirvana/Condor* clash a year ago. Some alternative to such severe penalties should be on offer, I believe is the view.

I was particularly persuaded by this theme when thinking of the crowded conditions at the start in Sydney Harbour where the fleet has artificially restricted areas made necessary by the need to give Sydney the traditional Boxing Day spectacle. A port/starboard here under such pressure could surely not be seen as such a heinous crime as to warrant disqualification, particularly for a yacht that has come all the way from England or America to contest the Race.

I think, however, that this sentiment was in practice taken far beyond the original intention, so much so that many sailors here and overseas may be critical of the CYCA. The following, if it has any merit, might well prove as the journalists say to be one of the 'sleeper' stories of the Race.

At the outset, I am not immediately ducking for cover in saying two things. Firstly, I am not a rules buff. This issue should be reviewed by rules experts. I am merely raising a question and asserting that something, I think, needs a major review. Secondly, I have am not on a mission to attack officials. The CYCA and its officers have won too many pluses over the years to be much concerned about this criticism. It can readily be dealt with. What I am trying to do is to give the story some air, leaving others to debate and resolve it. I first took interest when I heard that *Margaret Rintoul II* had berthed at Ulladulla during the Race and had sent a crewman back to Sydney to get a lower repaired by a professional rigger. Furthermore, the crewman had even spent a night in a motel in the process!

What has happened to ocean racing, I pondered? Motels, hot showers, room service, and even not having to eat baked beans for breakfast! What about the factor of 'outside assistance'?

I obtained copies of all the declarations, and sure enough, the Protest Committee noted "*Margaret Rintoul* breach of Rule 59 to repair shroud. Penalised 20%". Extracts from the declaration stated: "MRII arrived at Ulladulla at 1600 hrs on 27/12/84 and secured alongside the yacht *Mandrake* at the wharf. The motor was used to slow the yacht when pulling alongside. It was ascertained that the lower shroud was damaged and this was taken to Sydney by a crewman, renewed and returned 1800 hrs 29/12/84. The motor was used to reverse from the jetty . . .".

I noticed that the 'penalty' did not mention the use of the motor (Rule 62, Manual Power) or pulling alongside

and not anchoring.

Arthur Masters, the navigator, had signed the declaration, ending with the paragraph:

The crew of *Margaret Rintoul II* accepts the decision of the Race Committee on their interpretation of this declaration as final and do not request a hearing."

Arthur commented that with this declaration their intention was to "test the interpretation of the Race Committee and we were surprised with their leniency".

In the case of *Galaxy III*, their declaration only stated that "engine used at Ulladulla to berth for minor repairs". Race Committee notes state "Started engine to berth at Ulladulla, Penalty 10%, Rule 62".

Again, the fact that they berthed (and did not anchor) did not arise.

In *The Roperunner's* case: "On 29 Dec 1984, while anchored in shelter off Brush Is., anchor warp parted. Engine was used for 5 minutes between 0755-0800 to maintain station and to keep of Bawley Point while sail was hoisted and the race resumed. Anchor was not able to be recovered".

The Race Committee's notes include the comments: "1) Started engine to avoid grounding while at anchor. 5% penalty. Rule 62. 2) Rule 63.3. No action by penalty required other than minimum 5% = 10%."

As a bush lawyer I reckon they should not have lost the second 5% for losing the anchor in clearly dangerous circumstances.

The last case was that of the Tasmanian yacht *Chaos*. She too came into Ulladulla at 0845 27/12/84, initially to shelter but found defects in navigation lights, wind gear, log impeller and motor. Her declaration stated "Crew went ashore to buy a siphon pump to siphon off water in bottom of fuel tank and to borrow soldering iron to repair nav. lights and therefore possibly broke rule 59. On leaving harbour using engine the motor was used for 20 minutes on full power to test effectiveness of my

(Continued)

Is the alternative way the right way?

diesel engine repairs. These tests were necessary for safety purposes as were the repairs to nav. lights. I radioed Wyuna and said we were continuing to Hobart at 1100 hrs 29/12/84 and were retiring because of Rule 59. Subsequently I heard a commercial radio broadcast which acquainted me with the fact that yachts in Ulladulla were rejoining the Race. Upon rereading the race rules decided to reapply for racing status . . .".

The above situation resulted in the Race Committee 'fining' Chaos "1) Outside repairs, penalised 20%; 2) Motor used, penalised 20%. Total 40%."

I only add here that obviously her use of the motor was worth 20% whereas in other cases it did not seem to be so severe.

What comes out of all of this?

1. I'm sure that many yachtsmen will now take much interest in the topic and by no means will this be the last word written.
2. Tasmanian yachts Margaret Rintoul II and Chaos were involved; in talking to Messrs. Masters & Lockley from these yachts respectively, they did not appear to be happy about this alternative penalties scheme and official complaints might well come from that State.
3. The CYCA Sailing Committee is already reviewing the situation and my guess is that they will tighten up the regulations.

What seemed to have started as not a bad idea to avoid disqualification for minor transgressions (whatever they could be viewed as being) has blown out to the situation where (1) a man stayed in a motel (is he the first in ocean racing history?) on a trip to Sydney for repairs; (2) a yacht retired and was reinstated some 28 hours later.

I criticise our Race Committee for being far too paternalistic. The Hobart is a major international event, and the fleet should not be cosseted with easy options. I'm not even so sure (to take a radical view for the moment) that the alternative penalties idea should not be completely done away with, for the following reasons:

- (a) The Hobart is a major international event where the traditional and well proven rule book should not be corrupted by our provincial sentiments;
- (b) There is not a ground swell of opinion from the large body of yachtsmen that alternatives should apply. They have sailed for years by the rule book. They know that if they infringe they are out, and that is bad luck;
- (c) To have a 'finish' recorded after some of the circumstances enumerated above gives a 'Clayton's' result. Do the crews feel better off still getting a result on the books after, say, sending a man to Sydney for help?

(d) I'm not sure that international crews would be all that grateful for 'reinstatement' from watered down international rules;

- (e) The CYCA Sailing Committee has rather a task to 'rewrite the rule book'. Already they have debated whether to cast aside the known 'anchoring' rules and allow yachts to come along side wharves using their motors. Do yachtsmen want this to happen? They are also debating at which point an engine can be started - one mile or five miles etc. - from a breakwater.

You see my point? This Committee, by trying to modify the well established rule, will now get itself into an endless round of apportioning guilt and meting out sentences (5% for this, 10% for that), trying to figure out how 'bad' you have to be before being disqualified, completely changing the rules for such things as anchoring and outside assistance to an extent which some might agree has, in the last Hobart, become ridiculous.

It might be worth mentioning at this time that I have been informed that alternative penalties are available in

the Fastnet series. I know no details, but critics of this article might wish to look at UK precedents.

It will doubtless be argued that alternative penalties are necessary for the sake of 'safety'. Yachts should not be discouraged, the argument will go, from sheltering to effect repairs. Now, to criticise safety is arguing against motherhood. I feel that making the options easier should not automatically be linked with safety. If a yacht is in a parlous situation and has to use the motor or has to seek professional help from a port, when should she ultimately be put out of the race? The rule book is the easy answer.

What should now happen?

1. The CYCA Sailing Committee should go straight back and start again with the rule book.
2. Limit the 'easy options', say, to the start and in the harbour. Forget such things as groundings in the Derwent.
3. Repair the confusion that has now arisen, and this should be done quickly and not as late as the next Race briefing. Admit that what has just happened shows that things have got out of control and the strictness of the race rules should again be reinforced.

As I have already said, this strikes me as a 'sleeper'. I don't think we've heard the end of it. □

<p>* SEWYSE AA176749 1543303 VLLV X</p> <p>FOR RACE DIRECTOR FROM HYUNA 301345LT</p> <p>YACHT CHAOS CALLED HYUNA AT 301339LT ASKING IF SHE CAN RESUME RACING AFTER PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCING RETIREMENT YESTERDAY AT 291135LT. CHAOS SAID THAT ACCORDING TO MEDIA BROADCASTS IT APPEARED THAT OTHER RETIREES HAVE ONCE AGAIN RESUMED RACING. CHAOS WOULD EXPLAIN CIRCUMSTANCES LATER AFTER RACE.</p> <p>COULD HYUNA HAVE DECISION TO INCLUDE IN 3PM SKED?</p> <p>RGDS ROB</p> <p>ENDS.</p> <p>* SEWYSE AA176749</p> <p><i>Code 13 Chaos - Branch 1.</i></p>	<p>30/12/84</p> <p>Received : 1.55pm.</p> <p><i>Robby : 30/12/84 2.45pm.</i></p> <p>GA O20 INTLX 3651446 + SEWYSE AA26900 GA 582 1543303+ RCA DEC 29 2247 1543303 VLLV X SEWYSE AA26900</p> <p>THE RACE COMMITTEE WILL REINSTATE A RETIRED YACHT TO RACING STATUS UPON REQUEST AND WILL EXPECT THAT ANY RULE INFRACTION WHICH MAY HAVE OCCURRED WILL BE DISCLOSED ON THE YACHT'S DECLARATION.</p> <p>KEITH STOREY</p> <p>SEWYSE AA26900* 1543303 VLLV X</p>
---	---

Exchange of Telexes between Radio Relay Vessel Wyuna and Race Committee concerning Chaos' retirement and reinstatement.

Magna Charter



yachting

NEW ADDRESS

**Level 11, Townhall House
456 Kent Street, Sydney,**

NSW 2000, AUSTRALIA

(adjacent to St. Andrews car park, behind Sydney Town Hall)

Telephone: (02) 264 1747

Telex: AA75120

**"We offer personalised service to plan your
sailing holiday... anywhere.
All YOU need to do is pack your bags"**



EYE OF THE WIND

- **EXPLORE THE WESTERN PACIFIC**

Escape to the real tropics in winter. On a two or three week cruise, June and November, through Vanuatu, Solomons or New Guinea aboard the square rigger EYE OF THE WIND or the 60ft catamaran TAFUA.

- **MEDITERRANEAN CRUISING**

Sail a charter yacht in Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Italy or Sardinia. Self-sail or fully crewed.

- **BARGE ABOUT EUROPE**

Meander through the canals of France, Germany, Holland or Britain at a leisurely pace.

- **TURKISH DELIGHT**

Discover the Turkish coast under sail aboard a choice of 4 Australian owned and crewed charter yachts.

- **WHITSUNDAY SAILING ADVENTURES**

Seven day set departure aboard 75ft Ketch PEGASUS. Choose from a range of charter yachts to sail yourself.

- **ASIA**

Cruise the exotic waters of Thailand or East Coast Malaysia on one of our set departure or private group charters.

CALL THE CHARTER SPECIALISTS

Telephone: (02) 264 1747

Magna Charter



yachting

A Division of  TAURUS TRAVEL Lic No B1605
Level 11, Town Hall House, 456 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW,
2000, Australia

AS A MATTER OF FACT . . .

a look at what the media said about the Hobart

by Frank Sticovich

Some will recognise Frank Sticovich as the author of "Real Yachties Don't Eat Quiche" which appeared in the 1984 Hobart Race Program, a guide to what's 'cool' in ocean racing and an exposé of offshore posturing. In this article Frank, in his capacity as Publications Committee reporter, takes some of his fellow journalists to task for what he feels was 'posturing in print' about this year's Hobart Race.

Frank's opinions do not necessarily represent the views of the Publications Committee, the CYCA or the Editor, and he might be accused of 'cruelty to animals' in his criticisms of reporters' attempts at colourful turns of phrase. In finding fault with the press we all have to remember that newspapers are not just written for yachting aficionados. However, what Frank says is 'fair comment' and, particularly as regards media disinterest in the 'little guys' in the race (which is tantamount to missing the point of the whole Race story), reflects a line of thinking that has been prevalent in these columns after almost every Hobart Race.

One of the duties my wife has to perform whilst I am out enjoying myself in the Hobart Race and on the days that follow it is to collect morning and afternoon newspapers. She also has to videotape the start of the Race, organise relatives to tape other channels and to gather as many news reports as possible on the VCR for my reading and viewing pleasure later on.

I am now the proud proprietor of a foot-high pile of newspapers and of two and a half three-hour video cassettes full of Hobart Race trivia. Seeing it all made me comment "Was I in that?". It made me realise that the media, both paper and electronic, really goes to town in reporting – it fantasises, dramatises, emotionalises (is there such a word?) without fear or favour whilst we poor yachties are out there having a good time, not realising that our relatives, friends, and workmates are chewing rosary beads with worry over our wellbeing. They are thinking that we are in the middle of a major catastrophe, and they have just heard, seen or read about it.

I have now seen the tapes a couple of

times. Well armed with my stock of newspapers and spending some time at the CYCA office reading all the Australia-wide clippings which are religiously collected by the Club, I have extracted a mixture of drama, fantasy and 'what-was-that-again?' gems which were aplenty.

One must forgive, I suppose, the poor reporters who are assigned by their editors the task of providing copy for the week and a half or so that the Hobart is reported, and are then thrust into reporting the polo or Sheffield Shield cricket, or what the eastern suburbs set are wearing at the Black and White Ball. All the same, the experienced yachting writers should know better. Take Mundie, for instance, who in one report described the Hobart as "the toughest race in the world".

Having done all the reading and viewing that was sanely possible, I am firmly convinced that media editors are indecently infatuated with puns, 'you beaut' clangers and one-liners supplied by the journos. An example of this style of news was demonstrated by a reported who described maxi boats as "incredible hulls". Another began "Behind the maxis, whose halyard for leather plunge down the coast grabs the headlines . . .".

The TV commentators weren't bad either. Take Gordon Bray: "and one of

the smallest entries, Endless Advice, from Sydney [pause] – the endless advice has turned into stony silence." Good stuff!

The television broadcasting, in particular, and the print press concentrated, as usual, on the big boats. As far as they were concerned the boat that got there first won. The skippers of the first three handicap placings were interviewed, but more in amazement of their finishing. Perhaps it is time for the CYCA to push for a change in this traditional reporting.

Imagine the concern of the mother of a young forward hand on a 32-footer. Her son's boat doesn't get a mention; all she sees are headlines like "HOBART HAVOC – Fleet Decimated". The poor bugger won't be allowed to go next year!

The telecast of the start of the race was offered by Channels 2, 7 and 9. Channel 7 had advertised for days before that their's would be a 3-hour extravaganza, the best ever. Alas, what I saw was one hour (or possibly more) of the seven 1983 America's Cup races. The America's Cup and the Hobart Race is about the same as a rodeo at Flemington on Melbourne Cup Day. Once Channel 7 got into the business of the day, all the concentration was on Apollo, which happened to have one of its cameramen aboard. Their commentator was

Writing was on the wall



□ Mr Polkinghorne

THE Sydney-Montague Is yacht race in October gave a strong and clear warning of what could happen in a Sydney-Hobart race, Cruising Yacht Club manager Mr Michael Polkinghorne said.

"Every one of the 25 Sydney-Montague Is entrants was forced out because of rough weather, an indication that the space-age generation of Australian yachts is not as strong as it might be.

"Designers are going to have to look at the current crop's ability to stand up to heavy weather," Mr Polkinghorne said.

"The enormous number of breakdowns in the current Sydney-Hobart is not so much due to freakish weather conditions – it's not all that bad – but design faults and flaws.

"The trouble is, we've had a remarkable spell of mild off-shore weather," Mr Polkinghorne said.

"For years now, there hasn't been a big-blow during a major race to test and show up the flaws in the space-age generation of yachts.

"This is the first time they've been fully tried out, and they've been falling down by the roadside like flies.

"Some of the biggest names in the 1984 Sydney-Hobart yacht race have dropped out because of previously-unheard-of structural damage."

"On the other hand, some of the oldest boats are still going along like steam trains because they were built to last."

Mr Polkinghorne said he did not think most retirements could be blamed on gear.

"More than half the crews have pulled out because of seasickness, fatigue, plummeting morale and other problems," he said.

Steve Robilliard, whose knowledge of sailing and recognition of boats was somewhat dim. His 'guest' commentator was Ben Lexcen, who seemed to be having a good time but, I imagine, was sick and tired by now of answering 'wing keel' questions.

Channel 9's commentary was headed by Bruce Ramsden (Bruce who? Not 'Rammo') and was assisted by Bruce Stannard whose job it was to comment on all the action shots (from a wet rubber ducky). Ramsden had the bad habit of confusing his boats. At one stage he had *Bumblebee 4* surging through the field not far from the green hulled *Condor*.

Gordon Bray was at the reins of the ABC's coverage of the start. His only flaw was perhaps confusing Dr. Dan with Margaret Rintoul IV. Poor old Gordon was supported by guest heavies Tony Mooney and Alastair Mitchell. These two fellows gave their host a hard time with their technically accurate, to-the-point answers which left the commentary with plenty of pregnant pauses.

The TV news reports concentrated on the leaders, as usual, but plenty of attention was given to the loss of Wal Russell and to shots of damaged boats returning to the CYCA. Their on the spot reporters often began their reports with the classic "amazing scenes at the CYC . . .".

But back to the newspapers. The instant experts were busy at their typewriters with gems like these:

"The Sydney-Hobart Race will attract attention from lounge sailors who criticise the so-called yachting millionaires when they test their skill over 630 nautical miles of inhospitable ocean just to win relatively inexpensive trophies."

"This Classic is recognised as yachting's Melbourne Cup."

"Despite their sophistication, racing yachts will never be able to sail directly into the wind. Because of this they will have to zig zag their way to Hobart."

"Ninety-nine percent of people who venture into the Harbour today know what to do and there will be no problems."

These three comments were published in daily newspapers on the day of the Race, so you can imagine what followed. At the same time, of course, there were the usual errors in boat sizes, boat names — like *Condor of Bermuda* — which were very popular, and the quoting of kilometres instead of nautical miles, which was also popular. The *Sydney Daily Telegraph* did a good job of confusing their photographs; *Apollo* was Alan Bond's *Apollo V*, and

Ragamuffin was clearly Syd Fischer's *Peterson 43*, the one that was a member of the 1981 Admiral's Cup team.

The next day's papers produced some more gems:

"Smaller yachts tend to 'hot bunk' with the crew sleeping in relays in the 'weather' (downside) bunks."

"As the boats turned into the wind at the Heads the spinnakers would not set."

"The first casualty of the race was a yacht called *The Office* which ripped her mainsail just after Mr Wran fired the starter's gun."

THE SUN, Friday, December 28, 1984

SOME boats struck trouble with waves which washed over their hulls from bow to stern.

At the same time, they screwed up into the wind with such force that the yachts lay over and their masts struck the water, suffering either severe rigging or structural damage. Crews in the cockpits were swamped and many found themselves washed overboard, scrambling back on board with the help of their lifelines and other crew members.

As the Race and the bad weather went on and the retirements list grew longer, the headlines and reports grew more dramatic, and John Dikkenberg of the *Sunday Telegraph* reported:

"the wildest and wooliest Sydney Hobart Blue Water Classic in history"

"106 yachts were forced to retire because of breakdowns or seasickness."

Some journalists were quite pontificating in their reports. Adrian Swift of the *Sydney Morning Herald* said:

"This, the 40th Hobart Race, has raised many questions about the ability of Australian yachts to handle heavy conditions — conditions they were renowned for weathering in the past, especially after winning the disastrous Fastnet Race in which 19 people died."

(For Mr Swift's benefit, Australia won the Admiral's Cup that year; the Fastnet Race was won by *Tenacious*, skippered by Ted Turner, and line honours

went to *Condor of Bermuda* with a record time. At last count, 15 people died in that Fastnet.)

Campbell Reid of the *Daily Telegraph* had this to say on December 29th:

"In the wake of the huge winds and tragedy which has struck this year's Sydney to Hobart Race, the wisdom of such events and the people who take part have to be questioned."

"Or, as one woman who called the Race Control centre in Hobart put it last night — 'those yachtsmen should all be told to go home — they obviously don't know what's good for them'."

Other people put in their two bob's worth. This comment, which speaks for itself, was publicised Australiawide:

"John Hampson of Montagu Island, on the NSW coast, said he had watched a red hulled sloop, thought to be *Vengeance*, struggling across the horizon for most of the day."

"I saw a big container ship just struggling through the same conditions today, so if I was on a yacht tonight, I'd forget the race and head to the mainland", he said.

"Mr Hampson, a lighthouse keeper for 20 years, lives on the island with his wife Nance and another keeper and his wife plus a small herd of sheep."

Sensational stories were appearing when the press began to interview returning skippers and crews. Even Munno was quoted a few times, but this little beauty I had to read at least twice:

"The wave came over the bow and carried the full length of a 62 ft wave."

And this very solemn one:

"We had a chance, we had a vision. Unfortunately it didn't come off."

Some newspapers offered solutions and reasoning for the devastation of the fleet. The *Sun* (Sydney), for instance, professed this, on December 28th:

"Some boats struck trouble with waves which washed over their hulls from bow to stern."

"At the same time, they screwed up into the wind with such force that the yachts lay over and their masts struck the water, suffering either severe rigging or structural damage. Crews in the cockpits were swamped and many found themselves washed overboard, scrambling back on board with the help of their lifelines and other crew members."

The press really went for the jugular when CYCA General Manager Mike Polkinghorne's statement regarding Kevlar and space-age materials was released. The next morning most newspapers carried editorials on the subject.

"The Sydney Water Police have slammed the CYCA for allowing the Race to pro-

(Continued)

As a matter of fact

THE AUSTRALIAN

FRIDAY DECEMBER 28 1984

High seas still beat high technology

WHEN does a sporting race become a test to destruction? At what stage do the competitors voluntarily withdraw, or the organisers order a stop? Just how bad does it have to become? These and other questions will be asked about this year's Sydney to Hobart yacht race. Last night one man had been reported lost overboard, 70 yachts had been withdrawn, and what was left of the fleet was pressing into the teeth of a howling gale in Bass Strait.

The race began, a generation of sailors ago in 1945, as a kind of nautical fun-run to give keen blue-water men something to do over the Christmas holidays. In the intervening years, it has become an ocean racing classic, and now attracts enormously expensive boats crammed with all kinds of miraculously costly and state-of-the-art electronics and rigging, provided by owners and skippers for whom, quite clearly, expense is no object.

But as this year's race has proved, space-age technology is no match for an angry sea. Has the race to become another Fastnet before the safety requirements are improved? Obviously there needs to be some rethinking. Among the many yachts forced to withdraw are some of the big pre-race favorites, costing millions of dollars a year to sail. The strong southerly winds and rough seas took a savage toll of yachts: some dismasted, others with sails ripped apart, others with equipment failures or crew injuries.

Among the boats out of the race are Victoria's Challenge III and the NSW boat Margaret Rintoul IV. Yet they are only a few months old, built

specifically for the next Admiral's Cup selection trials. How is it that strong winds and such seas, big but hardly cyclonic in scale, can knock out so many yachts?

It cannot be that crews are timid or unskilled. All are experienced and courageous sailors; many are professional yachtsmen, sailing year-round in races all over the globe, in a variety of conditions. Most have sailed in worst weather than yesterday's.

The answer may lie in the boats themselves. Michael Polkinghorne, the general manager of Sydney's Cruising Yacht Club, which conducts the race, suggests that technological advance has outstripped the ability of some yachts to cope with heavy weather. New materials and techniques to make boats lighter have perhaps sacrificed strength for speed. Many of the Hobart-bound yachts, he says, are carrying "super sails" which in heavy winds transfer too heavy a load to spars, rigging and hulls. And this, he suggests, is why yachts are breaking. This, of course, is one of the lessons learned from the Fastnet tragedy. Yachting, avidly quick to accept technological innovations such as winged keels, space metals and sails, has apparently shaved the safety margin too narrowly.

There is always an element of risk in such sports. That, paradoxically, is much of their attraction. But the organisers and the competitors should not need to be reminded so forcibly that the ocean and its winds do not change and have the power to wreck boats designed by the computers and built of the materials which have sent men to the moon.

ceed in extremely treacherous conditions."

I found it very irritating that, even after all the hoo-ha was over, some journos were still going strong. Adrian Swift, of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, on January 28th, 1985, reviewing the ABC's 50-minute documentary, wrote:

"One man was dead, hundreds of crewmen injured and 106 boats damaged"

But in conclusion, I think this quotation says it all:

"I reckon there'll be a few blokes who'll have a long hard think about racing in 1991."

And this one takes the prize:

"One Hobart publican yesterday called the retirement of almost 70 yachts devastating." □

1984 Results

YACHT & Owner/Charterer	ELAPSED TIME	TCF	CORR TIME
1 INDIAN PACIFIC J. Eyles/G. Heuchmer	4-04-03-49	.7970	3-07-45-03
2 LAWLESS R. Green	4-18-39-38	.7028	3-08-35-00
3 PERIE BANDU J. Sanders	4-19-39-09	.7165	3-10-51-54
4 PRIME SUSPECT J. Milne	4-11-33-31	.7980	3-13-37-00
5 MIRRABOOKA J. Bennetto/J. Lucas	4-09-10-09	.8192	3-14-09-16
6 MERCEDES IV Canberra OSC	4-10-23-34	.8101	3-14-11-20
7 NEWCASTLE FLYER P. Rundle	4-11-33-17	.8026	3-14-19-24
8 CITY LIMITS H. Knoop	4-19-08-40	.7542	3-14-50-31
9 SHOGUN J. Low	4-11-34-17	.8110	3-15-14-25
10 REVELATION B. Moore	4-13-46-16	.7950	3-15-16-05
11 LION NEW ZEALAND NZIYRT	3-11-31-21	1.0456	3-15-19-52
12 JISUMA W. Rockliff	5-00-02-24	.7307	3-15-42-48
13 HUON SPIRIT H. Calvert	4-14-34-17	.7970	3-16-07-31
14 SCALLYWAG II R. Johnston	4-15-13-04	.7960	3-16-31-46
15 POLICE CAR M. Purcell	4-13-39-15	.8156	3-17-26-02
16 NATELLE II A. Cole-Cook	4-15-30-08	.8026	3-17-29-30
17 PATRICE III P. King	4-11-29-09	.8341	3-17-39-14
18 MYUNA J. Bleakley	4-14-36-51	.8219	3-18-54-50
19 BILLABONG P. Joubert	5-05-44-26	.7318	3-20-44-55
20 APOLLO III A. Fox	4-09-22-41	.8609	3-20-49-39
21 BEWINCHED W. Ferris/S. Gazal	4-02-31-36	.9579	3-22-22-43
22 PREDATOR D. Millikan	5-04-09-45	.7638	3-22-50-07
23 MARARA A. Ratcliff	5-12-52-10	.7140	3-22-52-08
24 SODISAL F. Leonard	5-05-54-37	.7892	4-03-22-06
25 VENGEANCE B. Lewis	3-23-58-58	1.0476	4-04-33-06
26 ROLLER COASTER J. Fuglsang	5-12-50-53	.7575	4-04-37-57
27 PADAM K. Quinert	6-02-51-22	.7165	4-09-13-21
28 PACHA Capt. P. Ross	5-03-19-13	.8771	4-12-09-51
29 PARMELIA B. Woods	5-09-42-19	.8391	4-12-51-42
30 MYSTIC SEVEN N. Chidgey	6-04-13-33	.7376	4-13-19-53
31 MOONLIGHTER K. Wood	6-06-34-53	.7330	4-14-22-34
32 JUSTINE II B. van Driel	6-06-01-26	.7364	4-14-28-39
33 ANACONDA II J. Grubic	4-11-27-35	1.0291	4-14-35-12
34 AFTER U D. Black	6-11-30-55	.7284	4-17-16-38
35 LOT'S WIFE I. Smith	7-01-05-15	.6738	4-17-55-52
36 CHINESE FIRE DRILL J. Hughes/D. Herilly	6-14-03-20	.7542	4-23-12-20
37 LEVEN B. Cunneen	7-02-21-34	.7140	5-01-38-12
38 MORNING SWAN B. Arthur	7-04-57-15	.7128	5-03-16-54
39 SCALLYWAG G. Meyer	6-21-51-47	.7833	5-09-55-14
40 HUON CHIEF B. Morton	7-04-16-57	.7596	5-10-51-57
41 TRIAD P. Coombs/J. Vickery	6-07-42-33	.8869	5-14-33-03
42 RAMAQUA J. Batten	8-00-43-44	.8017	6-10-30-48
43 THE ROPERUNNER* P. Robinson	6-11-23-30	.7931	5-03-14-28
44 GALAXY III* D. Langford	6-18-38-35	.7607	5-03-43-21
45 MARGARET RINTOUL II* R. Jackman	6-17-38-30	.8324	5-14-33-03
46 CHAOS* C. Lockley	6-19-03-05	.7701	5-05-33-57

THE ROPERUNNER penalised 10%.
GALAXY III penalised 10%.
MARGARET RINTOUL II penalised 20%.
CHAOS penalised 40%.

FASTEAST TIME: NEW ZEALAND 3-11-31-21

DIVISION RESULTS:

MAXI DIVISION: NEW ZEALAND

DIVISION A: PATRICE III

DIVISION B: INDIAN PACIFIC

DIVISION C: CITY LIMITS

DIVISION D: LAWLESS

RETIRED

ADRIA, AMAROO, ANDROMEDA, APHRODITE, APOLLO, APOLLO II, AQUILA, AUDACITY, CAPRICE OF HUON, CENTREFOLD, CHALLENGE II, CHALLENGE III, CHRISTA-FARR, COBWEB, CONDOR, CRUSADER OF BRIGHTON, CYBELE, DANCING MOUSE, DERWENT LASS, DESTINY, DI HARD, DIAMOND CUTTER, DRAKE'S PRAYER, DR DAN, DRY WHITE, DYNAMITE, ENCORE, ENDLESS ADVICE, ENIGMA, EUREKA, EVELYN, FANNY ADAMS, FARR FETCHED, FARR OUT, FIRETEL, FLY BY NIGHT, FREIGHT TRAIN, GROUNDSFOR, HALCYON, HULLABALOO, IMPATIENCE, IMPECCABLE, INCA, INCH BY WINCH, INTRIGUE, ISLE OF LUING, JORIA, KIA TERI, LADY ANN, LADY PENRHYN, LARRIKIN, MANDALA, MANDRAKE, MARGARET RINTOUL IV, MARLOO, MARY MUFFIN, MORNING TIDE, MUCH ADO, NADIA, NYNJA-GO, ONCE MORE DEAR FRIENDS, OSPREY III, OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND, OUTRAGEOUS, OVERDRAFT, PATROL, PHYLLISE, PICCOLO, PIET HEIN, PIPPIN, PUBLIC NUISANCE, PUNCH, PUNCH, QUETZAL, RAGAMUFFIN, REBECCA II, RED FACES, RESTLESS IV, RUFF 'N TUMBLE, RUNAWAY, SAGAR PANI, SANGAREE, SEAQUESTA, SHENANDOAH III, SOLANDRA, SOUTHERN CROSS, SPIDER, SPIRIT OF QUEENSLAND, SUNBURST, SUNSEEKER, THE GAMBLER, THE OFFICE, THE SWAGMAN, THIRLMERE, TOO FARR OUT, TOO IMPETUOUS, TOPAZ, TRADITION, UPTOWN GIRL, VANESSA III, WATER FRONTIER, WITCHCRAFT, WITCHDOCTOR, WY-AR-GINE IV, YAHOO II, ZAP.



Your safest course is with
The CHART ROOM
NAV GEAR

NOW! FROM **TAMAYA**

The latest word
in navigation computers

TAMAYA NC88
PRACTICAL NAVIGATOR

Full, automatic astro-navigation,
piloting and dead reckoning



- Complete nautical almanac till year 2100, for Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Moon, Sun and 63 stars
- Printer provides optional written record for checking and reference
- LCD display; easy to understand input/output dialogue
- Plots unlimited number of position lines
- Check feature allows review/edit of entries before computation
- Star finder program
- Ancillary programs for DR, Great Circle, Time/Arc, etc.
- Rechargeable batteries with AC charger standard; optional 12/12 V DC charger
- Hard wired, dependable, backed by TAMAYA quality. Wooden case.

• Showroom: 31 Albany Street, Crows Nest, NSW 2065
Telephone (02) 922-3378

Postal Address: Box 229, P.O. Milsons Point, 2061

WRITE FOR ADDRESS OF YOUR NEAREST CHART ROOM STOCKIST

**Don't read this
unless you're
a real lover . . .**

of ships and the sea and of books on every aspect of boating. Nautical history, boat design, building, tuning, racing, cruising, power and sail, ropework, canoeing, maintenance, fishing, cooking afloat, navigation etc.

We have over 1500 titles covering virtually everything in print on just one fascinating subject - BOATING.

In fact, we are now the world's largest Boat Book Shop with Sydney's only Commercial A class CHART AGENCY and a range of Navigation Instruments. Come in and browse or send for FREE 16 page catalogue.



BOAT BOOKS

SYDNEY: 31 Albany Street, Crows Nest 2065
Phone (02) 439 1133
MELBOURNE: 25/27 Alma Road, St. Kilda 3182
Phone (03) 534 0446
BRISBANE: 109 Albert Street, Brisbane 4000
Phone (07) 229 6427
PERTH: 131 Stirling Highway, Nedlands, 6009
Phone (09) 366 7423



MAURICE DRENT BOATING SERVICES

Cruising Yacht Club of Australia

New Beach Road, Rushcutters Bay • Phone (02) 32-9945, (02) 32-2653 • Telex AA72278 'SEWYSE'

NOW!
From the world's
largest yacht builder
BENETEAU
Inspect the range
at the CYCA



For the best in new and used sail and power.

We also offer professional services and can organise your

- Delivery
- Valuations
- Finance
- Charters
- Insurance
- Surveys

**OPEN
EVERY DAY**

THE '84 HOBART: A METEOROLOGICAL POST MORTEM

a look at why the conditions were so bad

by Roger Badham

In a similar vein to the 1979 Fastnet Race, the 1984 Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race will, in this country, become somewhat a yardstick for rough weather sailing. However, no real comparisons can be made between those races, but the crews who made it through the Hobart can justly wear their T-shirts emblazoned with the words "I survived!". Unlike most yachting disasters, the feature of the Race was not the strength of the wind but rather the nasty seas whipped up by the gale force southerly winds, and subsequently confused by an interesting, but not too unusual, set of circumstances.

The whole meteorological situation was quite extraordinary during December and January. The mood of the weather during those two months was rather spring-like, featuring at times a strong upper jet stream resulting in many intense low pressure systems maturing near Tasmania. It was also Sydney's driest January since record began in 1858.

The low pressure system that brought devastation can be traced back to an easterly 'heat' trough over Western Australia on 21-22nd of December (see Figure 1 for MSL weather maps 24-29 December). Troughs like that are a regular occurrence during summer, the troughs normally being captured by a Southern Ocean cold front, the two then sweeping eastwards over south-east Australia bringing a cooler change with perhaps some thundery weather. However, in this situation, the trough and subsequent low pressure system moved quickly eastwards without a major cold front. The low matured near Melbourne on Christmas day, bringing very windy and miserable weather to Bass Strait and Tasmania. By late Christmas day and early Boxing day, it appeared as though the low pressure system was going to continue to move eastwards quite quickly, and also weaken. (This would occur as the associated upper trough slowed and shifted north). All of this occurred, but the low weakened in a rather messy manner - slowing down, changing course and, for a time, becoming double centred.

Forecasting the demise of such low pressure systems, and getting the shape of the nearby high pressure ridge correct, is not an easy task. For these complex systems, forecasters take most guidance from computer prognoses,

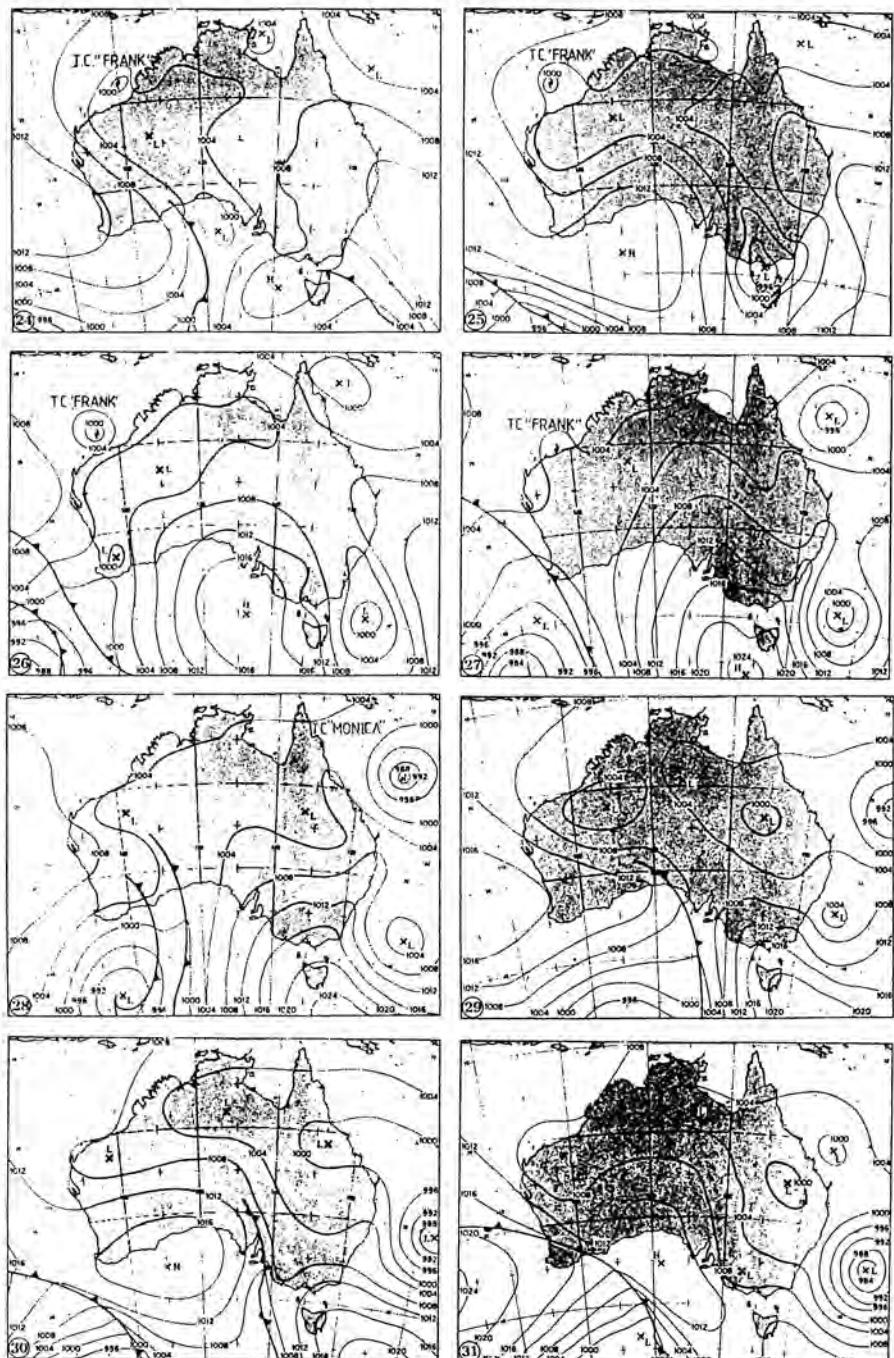


Figure 1. The 9.00 a.m. MSL weather maps for the period 24-31 December 1984. The low is first seen at the top of the Bight on the 24th and last seen just east of Sydney on the 29th. The low on 30-31st is ex-tropical cyclone Monica.

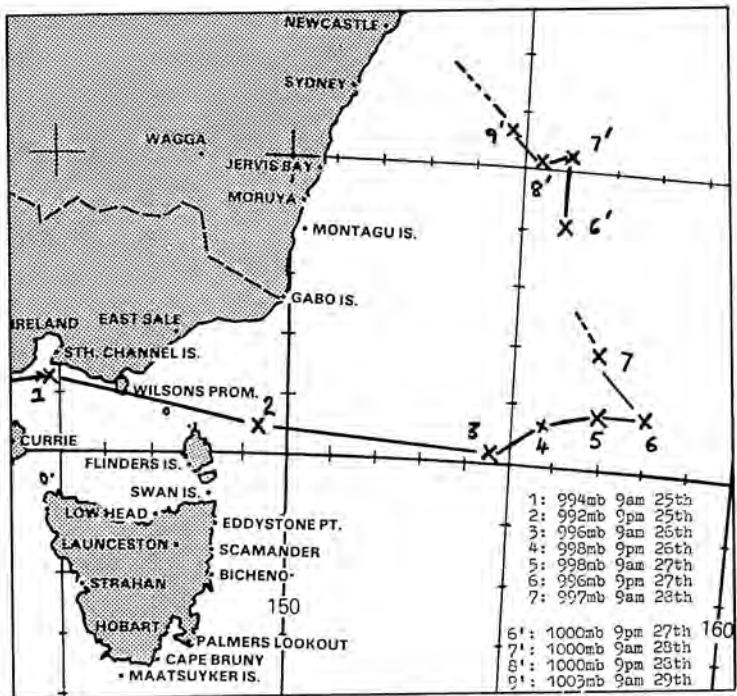


Figure 2. A continuity chart showing the 12-hourly movements of the low pressure system as it moved east from Bass Strait and weakened over the Tasman Sea. The dashed figures (6'-9') refer to the position of the short lived secondary centre.

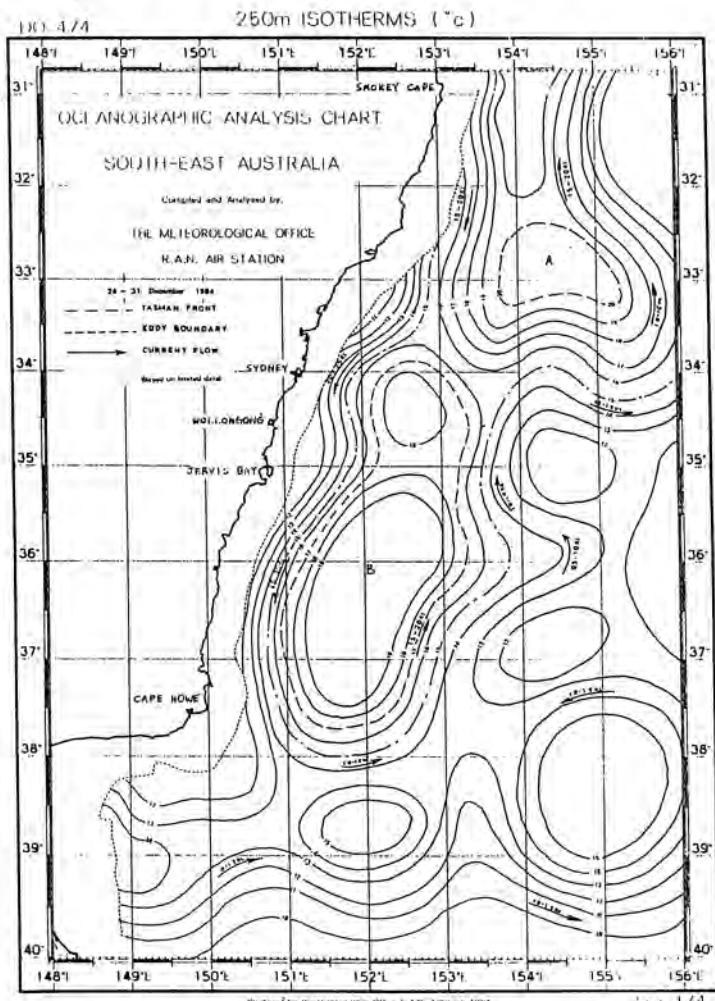


Figure 3. The RAN oceanographic analysis chart showing the current flow along the NSW coast. The major eddies flow anticlockwise, and it is Eddy B at 36°S/152°E that is driving the strong flow along the NSW south coast.

and there are several computer model outputs available to the duty forecasters at the Bureau's Regional Offices. One of the available computer outputs comes from a global model run by the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (EDMWF) – and it has proved to be very reliable in correctly picking the outcome of such events, several days beforehand. This was the case on this occasion. In fact, all computer prognoses gave the same message – the low would weaken and subsequently fade into a less harmful trough. However, much of the bad Tasman Sea weather is not generated within the bounds of the low pressure system, rather between the low and the surrounding high pressure region.

The problem for the yachts was not the gale force southerly winds, but rather the very short and very heavy southerly swell, enhanced by the hap-hazard movements of the low, and also an opposing ocean current flow. As the low moved eastwards from Bass Strait, there were northerly winds of 20-40 knots on the eastern side of the low and sou'west to sou'east winds of 20-60 knots on the western side. Until Boxing day, the low had been moving eastwards quite quickly (15-20 knots), leaving a heavy southerly swell in its wake. From midday (Boxing Day) the low slowed to around 5 knots, changing the available fetch and duration of the gale force winds over the ocean areas east of Bass Strait. (The low also slowed at approximately 155°E, not nearer 160°E as has been indicated earlier.) Until Boxing Day, the major swell on the western side of the low was short (6 second period), heavy (4-5 metres) and from a southerly direction. The stronger winds would have generated a longer period swell which would have propagated northwards at a faster rate. The critical swell is the shorter period one, as it moved slower – around 15-20 knots. At that rate, the short period swell would take nearly 24 hours to travel from east of Bass Strait to a position east of Jervis Bay. During that time the low pressure system slowed (see continuity chart, Figure 2), increasing the fetch and duration of the southerly winds east of Bass Strait. Accordingly, a faster and longer period swell would have followed, catching the slower swell trains off the NSW coast. This alone would make the seas treacherous for the yachts beating into the southerly gale, but there appear yet another two complicating factors.

The first was the development of the secondary low pressure centre, seawards of Jervis Bay (not shown on main weather maps in Figure 1, but referenced in Figure 2). This development occurred late on Thursday 27th and

Hobart: a meteorological post mortem

persisted until the morning of Saturday 29th, when it disappeared completely. This second centre increased the winds over the ocean areas between 151°E and 153°E during the night of the 27th and the morning of the 28th. The winds backed from sou'west to south and strengthened from 20-30 knots to 30-45 knots, whipping the tops off the large swell waves, as well as creating a nastier local sea state. By the morning of the 29th, the low centres weakened away and the winds backed further while easing dramatically.

The second factor has to do with the currents flowing in the area. It was no secret before the start of the Race that RAN oceanographic analysis charts showed a strong southerly set some distance off the coast, the strongest flow being 2.5 knots between Sydney and Jervis Bay and some 20-40 nautical miles off the coast. That information is always a week or two late; the actual currents for the Race time only became available during January 1985. Those RAN charts showed an even stronger East Coast Current, reaching 3 knots off most of the south coast of NSW, particularly between Jervis Bay and Montagu Is. and closer to the coast than previously indicated (Figure 3). The flow was around Eddy B, centred at approximately 36°S/152°E. Such an opposing flow must have contributed quite significantly to the steepening of the waves in the region. It also explains to some degree why yachts further seawards generally fared better with fewer retirements. (As the RAN Charts do not consider the more transient current flows within the continental shelf, no conclusions can be drawn about the yachts very close to the coast).

The behaviour of the low pressure system from the 26th-29th was unusual. Over ocean areas, where there are no exact pressure tendencies, it is almost impossible to forecast such a path by manual methods. However, the computer models did latch onto the situation fairly well, though they tended to kill the low too quickly. The NSW Regional Office of the Weather Bureau tended to place the relevant wind warnings in a 'knee-jerk reaction' fashion with, it seems, a statement of the present rather than a stab at the future conditions. Unlike aviation forecasting, there are no specialist marine marine forecasting sections within the Bureau of Meteorology. The duty forecaster at the Regional Office has to contend with both public weather forecasts and marine matters. This workload does not allow the forecaster time to dwell on matters to any great degree. Forecasters do receive good computer guidance on both sea state and swell waves for the Australian region from the Bureau's

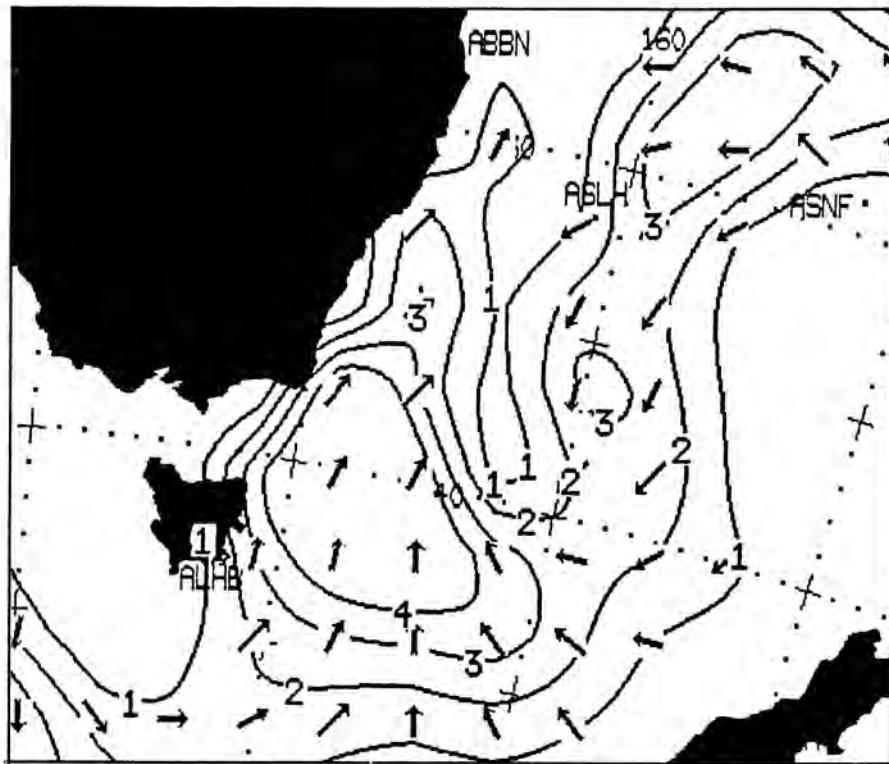


Figure 4. The 24 hour forecast of wind generated waves, the forecast valid for 9.00 a.m. on the 28th. The forecast is only as accurate as the forecast winds; the 3-4 metre waves are 25% down on those observed.

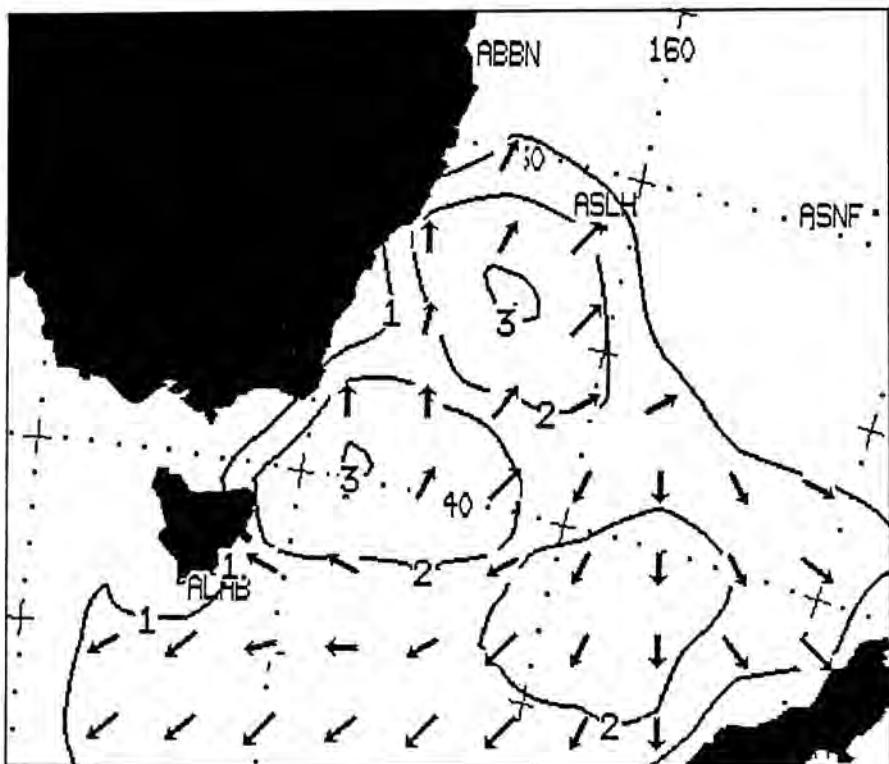


Figure 5. The 24 hour forecast of swell waves, the forecast valid for 9.00 a.m. on the 28th. The peak 3-metre swell waves are well down on those observed, and the 1-metre waves near the coast doesn't give any real guidance to forecasters. However, actual reports from coastal stations quickly showed the real situation.

Hobart: a meteorological post mortem

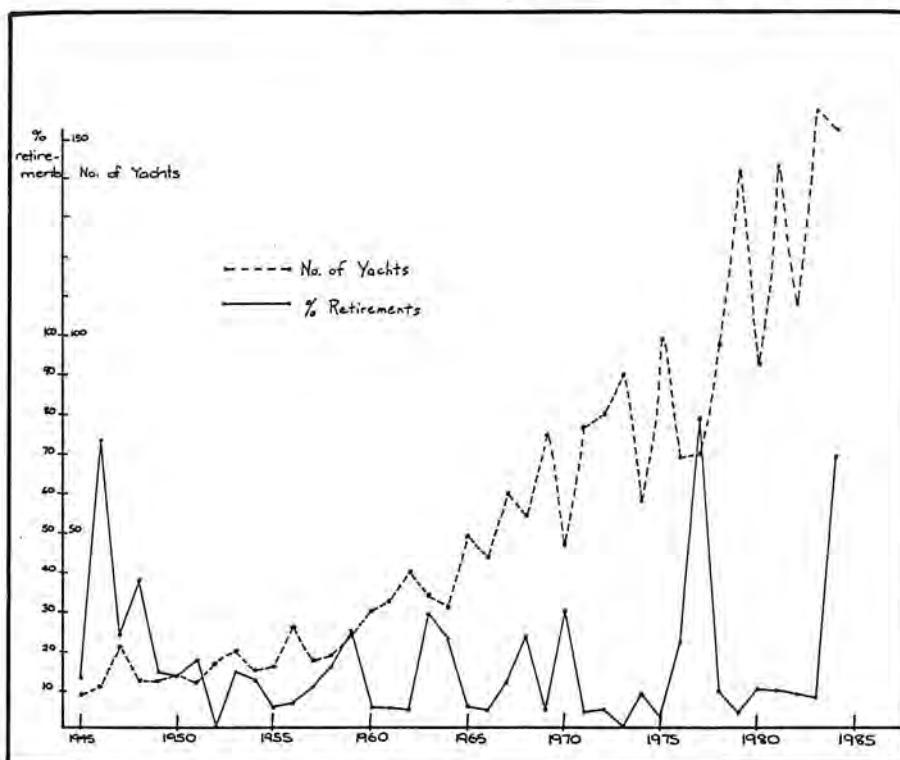


Figure 6. The number of yachts and percentage withdrawals from the race during the 40-year history. The Southern Cross Cup entries tends to oscillate the numbers. The percentage withdrawals or retirements must be weather related, but the exact relationship is not known.

own computing models. The 24-hour forecasts for both are shown in Figures 4 and 5; they are valid for 9.00 a.m. Friday 28th, and although they underestimate the situation (especially the swell forecast) they are useful to a busy forecaster. However, as far as I am aware, the computer model does not provide any output of the period of these waves – yet the model mathematics allows for it, and better forecasting demands it. There is no more crucial factor for mariners than the height/period ratio of the waves to be encountered. Even the regular terminology of 'short', 'average' or 'long' must be better; yet I can find no mention of the wave periods in any of the warnings or forecasts during those days.¹

In the future, with better computing systems, forecasts will improve, particularly over the 3-5 day period. Wave and swell patterns will also become much better forecasted. As for long range forecasting, I've yet to find a reliable system. Many yachties say that because 1984 lay in a 'bad weather' seven year cycle it would be a good blow, but Figure 6 shows that over the 40-year history of the Race, extracting such a statistic is rather doubtful.

1. For swell, 'short' refers to wavelengths less than 100 metres (or less than 8 second period), 'average' of 100-200 metres (8-11 seconds) and 'long' greater than 200 metres (over 11 seconds).

While the number of competing yachts escalates, the percentage withdrawals or retirements from the Race varies between 5% and 30%. The average retirement is actually 17%, with a standard deviation of 18%. These statistics purport that there is only a one in a hundred chance of retirements reaching 70% – yet it has occurred three times in 20 years! This can only be explained by the data being somehow atypical, probably because such retirements are weather related, and after some threshold conditions are reached, widespread withdrawals follow, not only from gear failure but also from seasickness. These conditions have been reached on three occasions – 1946, 1977 and 1984.²

2. With two thirds of the fleet safely in NSW ports, and the remainder heading down along the Tasmanian coast, ex-tropical cyclone Monica swept down from the north, across the central Tasman Sea. That depression was east of Sydney on the last day of 1984 (see Figure 1) causing much worse conditions. Storm force 60 knot sou'east winds howled across 12-15 metre waves – how fortunate it wasn't a Norfolk Island race!

ATTENTION ADVERTISERS

This space could be selling your service or product to a highly select audience of prospective purchasers.

Offshore readers are, typically, professionals and business decision makers. A significant portion are also yacht owners.

Reach your best prospects when they are in a receptive frame of mind – reading about their sport in their Club magazine. Ring the Editor (327-1152) or the CYCA Office (32-9731) today for an Offshore advertising information sheet.

HULL CLEANING

Now available at the CYCA, the best underwater hull cleaning at reasonable rates.

Why race your boat when it's not performing at its best? Just one phone call will set up regular cleans, either at the marina or at your mooring, totally hassle free.

PHONE NOW

Sam 95 1312 or Mark 938 3035

BOATECH REFRIGERATION

Finest Quality Refrigeration

CUSTOMISED EUTECTIC SYSTEMS

- Design
- Manufacture
- Installation

To find out why we say our systems are the best available, ring

Terry Robinson

BOATECH REFRIGERATION

Cronulla Marine Centre

Tonkin Street, Cronulla, NSW

527-3292

527-3292

NOW IN AUSTRALIA

VACUUM SEALED SOFT POUCH PRE-COOKED MEALS

- Ideal for offshore racing and cruising
- Easy to prepare in a pitching sea
- Eat it hot or cold
- Even heat it in salt water
- No artificial preservatives
- No dehydration
- No freezing or refrigeration
- Heat only what you eat
- Long life storage is a bonus

Try a variety pack of 10 different meals for \$22,
delivered free to the Club. Or be tempted by:

Venison casserole
Lamb Curry
Ox Liver & Onion
Beef Casserole

Ragout of Veal
Mince & Onion
Chilli con Carne
Spicy Beef

Contact Meridian Holdings Ltd. for a price list and full range.

MERIDIAN HOLDINGS LIMITED
7th Floor, Bridge House
52 Clarence St., Sydney
(PO Box 90, Mosman 2088)

☎ 29-3880a.h. 969-5648 ☎

CAPTAIN WATTS WHOLESALE SHIPCHANDLER SURPLUS SHIPCHANDLER



Buy direct at low importer prices

- Stainless fastenings, tube, wire rope, etc.
- Teak mouldings • cabin furniture • plywood • boat plumbing
- electrics • safety equipment • marine cordages • fenders
- sundry basic equipment

We buy and sell

ALL SURPLUS FITTINGS, SAILS, ETC.

Good range of old marine brassware, antiquaria

CAPTAIN WATTS

Rear 11 Clyde St., Rydalmerle 2116

Wednesday to Saturday 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

☎ 638-7717

*For Your Next Luncheon or Dinner Engagement
The U. New Cruising Yacht Club of Australia Dining Room*

The Freya Room

Specialising in the Finest Fresh Sea Foods

*U. New Menu
by Malcolm Kennedy and Max Sinclair*

Chef's Suggestions

Grilled Salmon (unquestionable) ☐ Canadian Salmon Cutlets ☐ Whiting Fillets in Fresh Herb Butter and Lemon and Parsley-Sauce ☐ John Dory Fillets with Oysters and Hollandaise-Sauce ☐ Tuna-Burgess-Salad, Honey and Lemon ☐ Lobster - every way dry and juicy baked with Boudin Butter-Sauce ☐ Scallop Butter ☐ Salmon Wedges, Brown Lobster, Crabs, Oysters ☐ Tuna in Surf Staff Lobster and Tuna Steak with Hollandaise-Sauce ☐ Tuna with New Shredded Lettuce with Herbulsion of Tuna Paste ☐ Tuna and Tomato Grilled Tuna with Salad, Avocado and Cheese-Sauce ☐ Tuna & Peas with Creamy Cerry-Sauce

Captain Seaweed's Nautiwords

Here is the answer to Captain Seaweed's cryptic crossword puzzle of the January 1985 issue. Unfortunately, Capt. Seaweed was sufficiently cryptic to prevent anyone from coming up with a completely correct solution. One entry was largely correct, and perhaps we should have allowed extra leniency for Capt. Seaweed's cryptic spelling of Pago (Pango) in clue No. 6 across. "No," we hear you say, "we don't want Clayton's results here. No more tearing up the rule book. What is this world coming to?" Thus, because you feel that way, we are unable to award to another lucky winner a free subscription to *Australian Nautical News*.

MONTEGO BAY

Diving & Hull Cleaning Services

- *Inspections*
 - *Moorings*
 - *Racing Yachts*
a specialty

Brian Ashton
32-9256



**ATTENTION
ADVERTISERS**

This space could be selling your service or product to a highly select audience of prospective purchasers.

Offshore readers are, typically, professionals and business decision makers. A significant portion are also yacht owners.

Reach your best prospects when they are in a receptive frame of mind — reading about their sport in their Club magazine. Ring the Editor (327-1152) or the CYCA Office (32-9731) today for an Offshore advertising information sheet □



by Robin Copeland



GMT centenary

An event of major importance to navigators celebrated its centenary at the end of last year. On October 1st, 1884, delegates from 26 countries assembled in Washington D.C. for an International Meridian Conference "... for the purpose of discussing and, if possible, fixing upon a meridian proper to be employed as a common zero of longitude and standard of time-reckoning throughout the whole world . . .". During the course of the month long conference the following points were agreed upon:

- a single prime meridian should be adopted internationally, in lieu of the multiplicity of meridians then in existence;
 - The meridian through the observatory at Greenwich should be adopted as the initial meridian;
 - Longitude should be counted in both directions up to 180°;
 - A universal day should be adopted, which is to be a mean solar day, commencing at midnight at the initial meridian, and is to be counted from zero up to twenty-four hours.

The importance of these resolutions to navigators is obvious. The Greenwich Meridian became longitude '0' on the chart of all nations, and charts on which longitude had been based on a variety of other European observatories gradually disappeared. GMT became established as a universal time, and the traveller no longer found that local time varied from town to town, where it was the practice to base it on the apparent solar time at each town. Instead, local time became based on the time zones that are in use today, where all times correspond to GMT plus or minus a differential measured in hours and/or half hours.

(Continued ▲)

*Conference Room Facilities for 80 people
Restaurant seats 100*



COPELAND

The christening of Drake's Prayer, Peter Kurt's new Farr 43.

Kurts' Prayer

"It is not the beginning, but the continuing of same, until it is thoroughly finished which yields the true glory." Thus, in part, Sir Francis Drake (1540-1596), circumnavigator, Admiral and right arm slow bowler wrote in a prayer for his crew nearly half a millennium ago.

Drake's Prayer, Peter Kurts' new Farr 43, was christened by his daughter at the CYCA just prior to the Sydney-Hobart Race. The fractionally rigged yacht was built by McConaghy of Kevlar sandwiching Tremonto foam with Nomex honeycomb and Kevlar deck. Interestingly the whole boat was baked in an oven at the factory in Brookvale. Kurtsy will be praying she maintains the heat throughout the Admiral's Cup trials in Melbourne.

"Presse a bord"

Lone sailor Vincent Moreau is due to continue his voyage around the world at the end of March, via the northern coast of Australia and across the Indian Ocean to Africa.

Adding to the international list of solo yachtsmen passing through the CYCA this summer, among them a Japanese, a Spaniard, a Pole, an Australian and an American, Vincent, forty, arrived in Sydney last November two and a half years ago after leaving his home in Paris.

"Presse a bord", a 42 ft cold moulded ketch, was built by the owner in Burgundy in 1979. After her launching she was sailed down the River Seine to Paris where Vincent worked as an etching printer with a top Paris art gallery. The name refers to the printing press he has on board which he uses to make prints of etchings which he sells to help finance the trip.

Vincent, who hadn't been on board a sailing boat until he was 32, used a 3000 nm round trip to the Azores as his shakedown cruise, in 1980. Leaving the mouth of the Seine in March 1981, he sailed south to Spain, Portugal and the west coast of Africa before crossing the line to Brazil. Thence he went to the West Indies, where his twelve year old son, Pierre, joined him before the trip across the Pacific.

As interesting innovation: when his log packed up, he used a tennis ball tied to a string to gauge speed. I must talk to my daughter to see what she can do to arrange for some used Dunlops.

Hitachi honoured

On December 5, 1984 the CYCA presented to Hitachi, previous Sydney-Hobart Race sponsor (since 1976), a specially commissioned painting by Brian Baigent. In his remarks at the Sportsman's Luncheon at which the presentation was made, CYCA Commodore John Brooks said:

"To understand the significance of Hitachi's contribution to the Sydney-Hobart Race, it must be remembered that, in the early seventies, sponsorship of sport of any kind was a very controversial matter, and sponsorship of yachting in particular was considered the beginning of the end by some of our more conservative Members."

However, at that time it was also becoming obvious that the cost of staging a major sporting event such as the Sydney-Hobart Race was rapidly exceeding the resources of a club as small as ours, to the point that the Club could easily be bankrupted by the increasing costs of that commitment.

Then, in 1976 the late Ken Caldicott stepped in on behalf of Hitachi Australia to offer the Club substantial sponsorship, this at a time when rugby league was only flirting with commercial sponsorship.

To give some idea of how novel a project this was, I would like to read you part of the then Commodore's message to Sydney-Hobart competitors before the Race.

'For our Sponsor, Hitachi, we have nothing but praise. Sponsorship is a contentious matter in a sport as untouched by commercialism as offshore racing. The costs of staging an event of the international importance of the Sydney-Hobart Race has become greater than we can expect to defray from our Club finances. Hitachi has helped close the financial gap with a dignity and respect for the traditions of the Race that has pleased all.'

The ensuing years of sponsorship enabled the CYCA to build the race organisation to a level that is the envy of yachting authorities around the world, and it is much emulated. We now have a sporting spectacular which is not only a Mecca for Australian and overseas yachtsmen but a major event of interest to all Australians, and it is doubtful that we could have achieved this without the long term financial umbrella provided by Hitachi.

In recognition of this, therefore, I would like to call upon the Managing Director of Hitachi Sales Australia, Mr Steve Suzuki, to accept on behalf of Hitachi this specially commissioned painting, by Brian Baigent, as a token of the CYCA's gratitude.'



CYCA Commodore John Brooks (right) presents a painting by Brian Baigent to Steve Suzuki, Managing Director of Hitachi (Sales) Australia, as a token of the Club's appreciation of Hitachi's contribution to the Club and its development of the Sydney-Hobart Race.



The new wave of Barlow winches . . .



- Outstanding performance.
- Superior mechanical advantage.
- Australian design award for self-tailing winches.
- Unbeatable service and parts network.
- Advantageous to yacht resale value.



Barlow Marine Limited,

52 Wentworth Street, Granville. NSW. 2142. Tel. (02) 637-9333. Telex AA 24301.