



Pictured is Kevin Le Poidevin in his yacht, Roaring Forty, competing in the Global Solo Challenge. Kevin was the only Australian to endeavour to sail solo from La Coruna in Northern Spain and return via the Three Capes. Kevin has an exciting story to tell and sadly has had to retire after reaching Hobart this week. Kevin's story is printed below.

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## VALE LIFE MEMBER – Bill Haskell

Sadly Bill passed way at home on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024.



Bill is pictured with our Club Starter, Heather Atkins.

At the Club after racing on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February many gathered to toast Bill and remember him.

His long-term friend; our Club Starter, Heather Hunter had this to say in a moving speech.

“First things first!” (Bill's favourite saying). Said, Heather.

“Bill was a good friend to us all. Well: What can I say; he was one of life's gentlemen. Bill put his heart and soul into everything he did for this Club, the Marine Rescue and everything in between. Bill was my good friend and mate. He loved helping with the starting caravan and fixed so many things for us. As his friend for over 20 years, Bill and I shared some sad times and some truly fun times. RIP my friend at peace now.”

# Vale Stephen Woodley - Skipper of Hoodlum



It is with much sadness we announce the death of Stephen Woodley aged 69. Stephen owned and raced Hoodlum; a 23 ft Hood which he sailed in the Hey-Day of Hood owner-ship at PSYC. There was up to 6 Hoods competing. Unlike Some of us, he was always a cheerful skipper.

A funeral service was held for Stephen at All Saints Anglican Church, Church St, Nelson Bay at on Friday 23 February, 2024. Six PSYC members and over Thirty RAAF personnel honoured his passing. Much was said of his love of his family life with his wife Roz and the worker camaraderie during his 29 years in the Air Force.

Stephen left school at 16 to gain an apprenticeship in Spray Painting and Panel Beating. This led him into the Royal Australian Air Force where he rose to the rank of Flight Sergeant. He later joined the Air Force Reserves and was responsible for the ongoing maintenance and preservation of historical aircraft. As normal, he had several postings around Australia but planned always to come back to yachting in his eventual retirement. He had purchased a Spacesailer yacht which he moored at Soldiers Point. Sadly, he seldom got to use it.

The yacht Hoodlum had seen many seas and was eventually sold for scrap because the lead keel was worth more than the hull. As for nick names the Air-force called him a Tin Basher, but our Life Member, John Sharp called him rocky after a particular nasty altercation in his yacht close to shore.



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## Commodore's Report

Hello all, it's been a couple of months since the last update and a lot has happened since then. On the not good side, we had two of our members pass. Always a sad thing and especially for Bill Haskell, a life member and Commodore of 7 years, and also Stephen Woodley who is a past member and multiple club champion on his Hood. Our condolences go to both their family and friends, and its pleasing that PSYC has hopefully been a positive part of their lives.



On a positive note, there has been lots of sailing happening in the usual strange not quite as predicted weather, including teams competing in the Hunter Sailing League. Plus progress of the previous board's work in progressing the exterior clubhouse painting, cool room cleaning and changes, social events, skippers' meetings and upcoming information on wind farm projects and the strategic planning workshop. The big club improvement actions through the grants continues to be pushed along with the council and builders. We hope to get back to you with more information as this takes shape.

On the 'how can you help side' the club is total dependent on the voluntary contributions of members to operate and grow. We are looking for a treasurer or bookkeeper to assist on the finance side and people to assist with starters and finishers along with people happy to do a couple of hours, as available, to do the bar (the more the merrier to spread the load thinly).

the Board has now met twice since the AGM. The first was to address the structure of the Board and to move forward on managing vacancies and second to ratify positions. This was really positive and placed the club in a great position with the following board established:



I look forward to an exciting year of clubhouse development through our Rear Commodore and more great sailing through our Vice Commodore.

Thanks to all who took the time to complete the survey upstairs/downstairs. There was a high preference for downstairs also noting various reasons mainly around disability access.

Many other valid opinions were also provided. The results of the survey and comments provided are posted on the members section of the website. With the upgraded cool room downstairs is now the go-to place for race presentations.

Thanks to all. Rick Pacey.

## Vice Commodore's Report

It has been a busy few weeks in terms of administration with several planning meetings conducted and a list of to-do's created. Some of these involve minor changes to notices of race and sailing instructions that will roll out in due course.

More immediately, our long serving and reliable starters are retiring and we have an urgent need to find a solution. After discussion at the Skippers' Meeting recently, the suggested approach is to roster boats to provide 2 persons to support a regular starter with appropriate compensation for races missed. There is some detail to work out but the search for volunteers for the part-time regular has started!

Another change is the format of the Skippers' Meetings such that all members with an interest in hearing discussions on sailing matters will be invited to the next one. We may refer to that as a 'Sailing Townhall' rather than a purely Skipper's meeting. These meetings are intended to be information gathering exercises and no formal voting will take place. Instead, anything requiring a formal vote will be sent to the relevant group via an online portal like 'Survey Monkey'.

Another change is to the organisation of communications via the various WhatsApp groups. With the goal to provide more focussed communications for some and the opportunity for open exchange for those who want that, I am currently testing a Port Stephens Yacht Club "Community" with WhatsApp.

The minutes of the skippers meeting and outcome will be published in the members only section of the Website.

More news on that later. Happy sailing! Richard Kerr.

## Rear Commodore's Report

Approval for the Club Toilets Upgrade continues at a glacial pace. Port Stephens Council require us to obtain a Certificate 50 from Hunter Water which will allow the connection to the sewerage system. Registration to obtain the Certificate is being done by me and entails establishing the Port Stephens Yacht Club as a developer. Hopefully we will see some real action soon.

Club members may have noticed that the exterior painting is greatly advanced with only the roof fascia and guttering to be painted. The Club is greatly indebted to Roger Dunwell and Ian Horrocks for their fine work, and in volunteering to do this work, have saved the Club a tidy sum

## Club Captain's Report.

No urgent matters to report from the Club Captain perspective, All Marks and moorings are currently in position and faring well with Sail boat registrations are mostly current minus a few exceptions. The Caravan is working well and remains in good condition.

## SYDNEY HOBART YACHT RACE DECEMBER 2023



The Newcastle yacht, Mako, approaching the notorious cliffs of Tasman Island in the Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race.

Aboard Mako is PSYC member Greg Busch (part owner) and his son Marcus. This was the most challenging part of the race for many of the smaller fleet. They rounded the island into gale force head winds then into the aptly named Storm Bay heading to the calm waters of the Derwent River to Hobart.

**The yacht MAKO was 43rd over the line, second in the Performance Handicap and 5<sup>th</sup> in the Corinthian series.**

# Australian Sailing League Regatta-Newcastle.



Photos by Jack Buchan

On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> Jan, 12 of our sailors competed in the NSW Sailing League event hosted by Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club. This event is the qualifying event for the Australian Sailing League Regatta, which in turn feeds the world championship later in the year. In previous years, this event was a regional one with clubs from the Hunter district only. This year there were teams from the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, Royal Cruising, Royal Prince Alfred and Newcastle Cruising Yacht Clubs so the standard was particularly high. Our club was represented by 3 boats and The Bay Sailing Centre also entered a boat with our club members crewing it. Identical Elliott 6m dinghies – a former women’s Olympic keelboat boat - were allocated by ‘drawing straws’ with PSYC drawing boats #2 (Nikki Bethwaite, Julian Bell and Tim Peachey), #5 (Richard Kerr, Rowan McGregor and Peta Oliver) and #6 (Rick Pacey, and our new members, Dave and Katie McManus). The Bay Sailing Centre drew boat #3 (Ross Bell, Dennis Hume and Lottie Baker).

The races were short, windward-leeward courses lasting approx. 20 minutes and were conducted in Throsby Creek as it enters the southern arm of the Hunter River in front of the Honeysuckle Hotel. The conditions were generally very good (and very hot) but the breeze became shifty and at times very light during the event. The last few races were conducted in the opposite direction as the wind changed through 180 degrees. 9 fleet races were held with a ‘final’ race for the top 4 boats. The format rewards a good start and crisp manoeuvres with little time to recover from a mistake and this showed with the more practiced teams from Sydney occupying most of the podiums during the day. Considering the lack of experience of some of our boats though, there were some encouraging results with a sprinkle of 4ths, 5ths and 6ths. The standout boat from our club though was boat number #2 (Nikki, Julian and Tim) with a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and a 3<sup>rd</sup> their best placings putting them in 4<sup>th</sup> place overall heading into the final race. The Bay Sailing Centre entry (Ross, Dennis and Lotte) also looked good in the early races but had to retire from the event due to illness. Did I mention that it was very hot!

The winner of the overall event was the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club who came from behind to win the last race and the regatta by 2 points from RSYS with another 2 points to RPA. Our competitors showed improvement throughout the day with Nikki, Julian and Tim scoring a 2<sup>nd</sup> in the final race against the 3 top teams. Well done to them!

Congratulations to the organisers for a flawless event and based on conversations in the club after racing, all participants enjoyed the format and (in some cases) the opportunity to learn a new boat. I believe everyone who attended would sign up again for next year so here’s hoping our club will once again be ably represented. **Richard Kerr, Vice Commodore**

## **Club Captain Tim Peachey added the following:**

The NSW Sailing League provides a level playing field for clubs to compete using supplied boat fleets, allowing them to vie for the title of the best club in the state. It also serves as a pathway for the top clubs to qualify for the SAILING Champions League - Asia Pacific (SCL:AP), where they can compete against elite clubs from across Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

The boat of choice for this year, the Elliot 6 added to the excitement of match racing, with crewmanship and a bit of luck playing a role in the races. Congratulations to the winners of the NSW Sailing League, Joe de Kock, Karma Randall, and Harry Miller from Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club in the challenging heatwave conditions.

## **The painting of the Club. (Not Tom Roberts).**

Whilst going over some paperwork as a new appointee [Director 1] to the board of PSYC at the turn of the year I had sighted a quote for the exterior painting of the clubhouse dating back to Nov. 22. The work had not gone ahead and Ken Peachey [Rear Commodore] got a negative response a year later when seeking to resurrect the improvements.

At the first board meeting this year I suggested that we could potentially save the membership \$5000 if a working bee was organised to at least paint the safely accessible areas. So; the plan was hatched to paint the deck and patio ceilings with a natural white, three coats where BBQ soot had stuck, all the stair rails, down pipes, gutters and columns in Ironstone, and the weather boards all round in Timeless Grey.

This commenced with a trip to Bunnings for supplies. Preparations were made, and between heat waves and with invaluable assistance from Ian Horrocks, a crew regular on Una Vita, and Ken Peachey the three of us have pretty well completed what we could reach, over and above the original specs. Now, we will take on the anchor, some remedial carpentry, main signage, and parking area sometime soon.

### **Roger Dunwell and Ian Horricks are pictured with their handywork. (Before and after)**





## Clippers around the world at Newcastle.

Thanks to Roger Yeo promoting the event several Club members visited the Clippers at the Newcastle Yacht Club. Many were kind enough to send photos for me to use in the Bilge. A great response, thanks guys.



John Humphreys reckons they had enough sails aboard.

## Comment from Bill Andrews

The tour of the UNICEF Clipper yacht was intriguing.



Life on board seems a hair more luxurious than on a Volvo Ocean Racer, which I toured a number of years ago, but still pretty spartan. The boat seems built for safety, but reaches 25-30 knot downwind



in a good blow under asymmetrical and staysail. They do not carry a symmetrical spinnaker. Eleven sails in total, around 12 crew, 2 professionals, the rest paying (a lot) amateurs. A husband and wife team from British Columbia sailing on UNICEF from Uruguay to Airlie Beach said they get off and have to go back to work 😞. Looks like an amazing adventure!



)Roger Yeo got to have a sail.



## Trivia night success.

Following a lengthy hibernation, Port Stephens Yacht Club held a highly successful Trivia Night on 2 February last when over 80 members and visitors participated enthusiastically in a fun evening. In what has been described by some as the most trivial of questions, quizmaster Philip Bendeich (BYO) introduced a range of topics that had some folks groaning and others shrieking with laughter. Topics presented on the night were: [Obscure Knowledge](#); [The Built Environment](#); [Countries of the World](#); [Sports with Balls](#); Who's face is that?; [Science and Nature](#); [Literature and Movies](#); and [History](#). Commencing just after seven o'clock, due to the popularity of the event that saw one table sitting on the upstairs balcony, teams were given the choice to "Double Up" one of the topics, then the questions rolled and the scores tallied.

Congratulations to Team DARK CORNER who scored 55 (including 9/10 in their double up topic "Science and Nature"), closely followed by DRUNKEN SAILORS on 52.5 and THE COALITION on 49.

Philip Bendeich

**Peter S Williams reports.** Trivia night was a great success with near record 86 contestants and a generous bar gross. The next social function is a Friday night BBQ. The date is to be finalised?



# Decommissioning of the cool room.

Club volunteers lifted the glass panelled refrigerator into a new space created by decommissioning the cool room.

The refrigeration cabinet can be set at a cold temperature and kept there much more efficiently than using the inefficient old compressor to cool the whole room.

The pictures tell it all with Graeme Ellis brandishing a grinder and Commodore Rick drilling out pop-rivets to make way for the cold cabinet Richard Kerr was supervisor. Never

before has such a drastic change to the Club facilities been achieved before lunch. (lunch was about 4.00pm!)



Photos by John Grainger, assistant supervisor.



# Kevin Le Poidevin – Roaring 40



## (Kevin Le Poidevin Roaring 40 continued)

Many of you have been following our club member Kevin Le Poidevin in his quest to circle the world solo and unassisted via the three Capes. Everyday there seems to be an interesting incident. All this is possible by tracking the progress of all the yachts and direct internet links even when the boats enter near the ice zone of the Southern Ocean.

Kevin has been beset with a series of bad luck. This started even before the start when he encountered wild weather in the notorious Bay of Biscay heading for the start at A Coruna in Spain.

Kevin fell from the companionway and injured his back. That, and the time to repair damage received, he set off last; three weeks after his scheduled start. If this was not enough, he encountered unusual calms punctuated with squalls on the way South to the equator and into the doldrum area itself. It was there a sudden unpredicted squall destroyed his biggest headsail (a Code Zero used in light winds).

Pressing on he was amazed to find yet another storm tore away a new sail bag containing a new spinnaker and snuffer cover from the foredeck.

It was the week of his and wife Narrell's Fortieth Wedding Anniversary. Kevin had not even reached into the Roaring Forties of the Southern Ocean. That far south powerful weather systems abound. Even with three reefs in the sail, Kevin had a third reef clutch explode and let go. Kevin quickly hauled in the fourth reef averting damage.

While this was happening several yachts ahead were experiencing worse mishaps. Often this was because of damaged or faulty autohelms. Kev had his own moment with "Ray" the autohelm but Ray Marine were able to help him repair the electronic link with sat phone instructions. But it did not last.

Of the initial 16th starters three of the skippers had retired early. Juan Merediz on Sorolla a week after departure due to autopilot issues, Dafydd Hughes on Bendigedig headed for Hobart due to autopilot issues and retired. (In an old S&S 34, he was leading the fleet and made Hobart in 100 days). Ari Kansakoski was dismasted on the 21 December and after an epic 25 day, 1200 mile journey under jury rig, he reached Durban in South Africa where he is evaluating his options including the possible repair of his mast. (The epic story of Ari managing to sail from 45 degrees South back to Durban in South Africa by rigging a small mast from the wrecked one and obtaining fuel from two different ships he encountered, is simply amazing reading too!)

Two other participants had their autohelms repaired at Cape Town, South Africa: Another managed to get to Stewart Island NZ, to clear a rope from the propeller and other repairs, yet another is at Port Lincoln Aus. with a broken starboard rudder, a failed motor and damaged mainsail track. He hoped to continue with Kiwi engineering help, but has run out of time.

Louis Robein too faced a difficult challenge. Due to issues with his hydro-generators the French skipper stopped in Hobart to sort the issues on board

Further South and ahead, Francis Gouin on Unicancer was the furthest from land in the deep South on 28<sup>th</sup> January when he suffered a knock down smashing a window and having to remove ankle deep water from the yacht but has managed to continue on to round Cape Horn.

Recently the faster boats at the rear caught up with each-other and will soon vie for the third placing as they all get to the Atlantic, but then they were met with the notorious storms.

Things progressively deteriorated on Le Souffle de La Mer III and ultimately Louis lost all power on board. He skilfully alternated days of hand-steering to nights heaving-to and finally reached Tasmania safely and without any outside assistance, even sailing up the river Derwent. David Linger on Koloa Maoli suffered a knock down when rounding the horn and scrambled around and along Drake's Passage, just around the Horn to repair a broken boom.

On 10<sup>th</sup> February Kevin finally passed Cape Leeuwen WA albeit 46 degrees south just outside the ice zone. Already six yachts ahead had rounded the Horn and another due in two days. Two had stopped in Hobart and another headed for Stewart Is. NZ for repairs only to head for Auckland hospital days later after passing a kidney stone.



Two days later, on the 12<sup>th</sup> February, American, Ronnie Simpson in Shipyard Brewing already around Cape Horn; was sailing fast in third place in the mid-Atlantic some 1200 nm East of Buenos Airies when a monster wave picked up his 50ft yacht, dumping it into a trough in the middle of the night; smashing the mast and

rig just as a huge storm was approaching. He had not enough fuel to motor away ahead of a storm and was rescued by a commercial ship after scuttling the Yacht.

**THEN!!** On February 14th at 02:50 UTC disaster struck on board Phoenix. Canadian skipper William MacBrien had activated his Emergency Position Locator Beacon (EPIRB). He was in distress.

William was over 1300 nautical miles west of Cape Horn and over 3000 miles from New Zealand. William had sailed past Point Nemo just a few days before, the remotest point from any emerging land on our planet. He was closer to Antarctica than to South America.

Out of reach of helicopters, rescue can only come from another competitor or a commercial vessel. The closest ship was over 400 miles away. It took 46 hours of waiting in 7 degree temperatures with a flooded hull for him to be rescued. He had run out of fuel and total power trying to stem the water, even using a bucket and all communications were lost. A ship arrived just in time. It was then he dropped his phone!! From the ship he was able to email that he had been holed by a floating object.

Meanwhile, Kevin had organised repair parts etc for a quick stop at Hobart, alas he has had to except it is now too late to sail to Cape Horn before the cut off season time and has decided to retire home with the yacht. No doubt the loss of two yachts ahead of him has weighed on his mind.

The leader Philippe Delamare from France, has dramatically just finished but not before being knocked down in the last storm and the boom broken only two days before the finishing at La Coruna. He was able to continue without the mainsail.

Coming second is the youngest and only female competitor, the diminutive Cole Brauer, (5ft 2in) has rounded the storm ridden Cape Horn and sailed North toward the Azores. In her lighter faster boat, she has had to travel further to avoid weather systems.

She hopes to be the first female American Sailor to circumnavigate the globe single handed via the three Capes.

Now as I write this another competitor Alessandro Tosetti from Italy on Aspra, has reported rigging failure West of New Zealand and will be likely to try and limp back 650 nautical miles under reduced rig and retire.

Marco Nannini the official organiser summed the event up. He said. "The Global Solo Challenge is delivering all we were hoping for with a mix of truly fascinating stories of human resilience, ingenuity, drama, difficulties as well as achievements and exhilarating epic fast sailing. Stay tuned."

**Kevin's sailing track (and remaining participants routes) can be found on the App. YB Races Global Solo Racing.**

## Reminder.

# SAIL PORT STEPHENS starts 15<sup>th</sup> April

The Commodore's Cup will be run over five days. The Winward Leeward Series, the TP52 and the Rob Hampshire Cup the following weekend and the dinghy events from the Bay Sailing Club, 3-5 May.

# Port Stephens Yacht Club Board Members

Commodore	Rick Pacey	<a href="mailto:commodore@psyc.com.au">commodore@psyc.com.au</a>	0417.544.230
Vice Commodore	Richard Kerr	<a href="mailto:vice.commodore@psyc.com.au">vice.commodore@psyc.com.au</a>	0490.459.926
Rear Commodore	Ken Peachey	<a href="mailto:rear.commodore@psyc.com.au">rear.commodore@psyc.com.au</a>	0413.651.369
Club Captain	Tim Peachey	<a href="mailto:club.captain@psyc.com.au">club.captain@psyc.com.au</a>	0439 172 833
Treasurer	Vacant	<a href="mailto:treasurer@psyc.com.au">treasurer@psyc.com.au</a>	04
Secretary	Cherylle Stone	<a href="mailto:secretary@psyc.com.au">secretary@psyc.com.au</a>	0407.984.113
Director 1	Roger Dunwell	<a href="mailto:director1@psyc.com.au">director1@psyc.com.au</a>	0403.754.390
Director 2	Peter Saxon Williams	<a href="mailto:director2@psyc.com.au">director2@psyc.com.au</a>	0414.498.720
Director	Vacant.....	<a href="mailto:director3@psyc.com.au">director3@psyc.com.au</a>	04

## Other Committee Contacts

Newsletter Editor	John Grainger	<a href="mailto:gringoig@yahoo.com">gringoig@yahoo.com</a>	0429 842 476
SheSails Representative	Cherylle Stone	<a href="mailto:cheryllest@bigpond.com">cheryllest@bigpond.com</a>	0407 984 113
SheSails Representative	Deb Wellwood	<a href="mailto:sheSails@psyc.com.au">sheSails@psyc.com.au</a>	0400.193.461