



Three of the remaining yachts on moorings in Shoal Bay July 2025

Commodore's Report

Once again, there's a lot happening: bathroom upgrade, progress with the moorings issue, the Australian Sailing Conference, and unpredictable weather.

As we reach midwinter, I'm pleased to share this update with Port Stephens Yacht Club members and friends. Your dedication supports our progress both on the water and in the clubhouse. We are saddened by the loss of former member Bill Vale and extend our condolences to his friends and family.

On the Water

The Winter Series continues to deliver spirited racing and crisp conditions. It's been heartening to see strong participation from our seasoned sailors in testing and frustrating conditions alike.

Australian Sailing Conference

Earlier this month, I had the honour of attending the Australian Sailing Conference on behalf of PSYC. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet with like-minded club leaders, exchange ideas, and discuss the future of sailing in Australia. Key themes included club development, community engagement, safety, and inclusivity.

One key takeaway was Australian Sailing's support for clubs to **review and enhance their Membership Protection Policies**—an essential step in building a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for all. A copy of our membership protection guidance is attached at the end of this newsletter for your review.

Moorings Management


The club is currently working alongside neighbouring clubs to engage with **Maritime NSW** on the increasingly important issue of moorings access and management. I recently attended a joint meeting to represent PSYC's interests and help develop a united response. We're now assembling a summary outlining the **current process, its impact on PSYC**, and an **approach to assist and encourage progress** on behalf of all stakeholders.

This collaboration is a positive step toward ensuring fair, sustainable, and transparent outcomes that will benefit the broader sailing community in our region. A separate summary is included below with updates to follow as this progresses.

Facilities Upgrade & Australian Sports Foundation

We're thrilled to see progress on our much-needed **bathroom upgrade project**, which will deliver **accessible, disability-friendly, and female-friendly amenities**. This important improvement will modernise our facilities and ensure they serve the full range of our community.

To help make this vision a reality, with the help of Australian Sailing we've launched a tax-deductible donation campaign through the **Australian Sports Foundation**. Every donation makes a difference—whether large or small. You can contribute and learn more at:

 asf.org.au/campaigns/port-stephens-yacht-club/nsw-office-of-sport-upgrade-to-enable-disability-female-friendly-bathrooms

A sincere thank you to all who have supported the project so far—your generosity helps shape a more inclusive future at PSYC.

What's Next

Planning is in progress for the upcoming Open Day, which has been postponed for various reasons and is now expected to take place on 4 October this year. The Trailable Marathon continues to be promoted with local and East Coast clubs. Participation opportunities include racing, volunteering, or spectating. Additional information will be provided through the club noticeboard and newsletters.

Hang in there, keep sailing

Rick Pacey

Commodore, Port Stephens Yacht Club

Vice Commodore's Report

I hope to see as many active sailors as possible come to the club on Thursday 17th July 7pm to hear a presentation on the changes made to the Sailing Instructions and Notices of Race for the 2025-26 sailing season. While these are proposed changes, the expectation is that we will move forward with the amendments as presented on the night.

There are several 'open' items where feedback will be sought prior to making a final decision.

The Sailing Program for next season will also be discussed with the aim of producing the final documents for publication at the end of July.

Regards, Richard Kerr

Rear Commodore's Report

Toilet Facilities Upgrade Progress

Update on Works, Challenges, and Volunteer Involvement

Project Progress

The ongoing upgrade of the club's toilet facilities has reached several important milestones. Notably, the plastering of the cubicle walls has been completed, marking a significant step forward in the refurbishment process. Currently, work is focused on the waterproofing of the wet areas to ensure the durability and longevity of the new facilities.

Challenges Encountered

Recent bouts of adverse weather have highlighted a new issue: a water leak has been discovered in the roof above the upstairs facility. This complication must be addressed before the installation of a new ceiling can proceed. The club is actively collaborating with the council to identify the source of the leak and determine the most effective solution. Resolving this issue is a priority, as it directly impacts the project's timeline and the overall success of the renovation.

Volunteer-Led Painting Initiative

In an effort to involve club members and foster a spirit of community, the board has opted to undertake the painting of the new facilities using volunteer labour. Doug Cross has kindly offered to lead the painting team and will, in due course, be reaching out to members for assistance. The club extends sincere thanks to Doug for stepping into this leadership role and encourages members to support this initiative when the call comes.

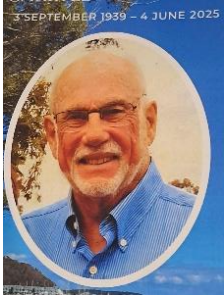
It is important to note that painting cannot commence until the builder has fully completed all required construction work. The coordination between professional trades and volunteer efforts is essential to ensure a smooth and orderly progression of the project.

Looking Ahead

The club remains committed to delivering upgraded, reliable, and welcoming toilet facilities for all members. The combination of professional expertise and volunteer spirit continues to drive the project forward, even in the face of unforeseen challenges. Further updates will be provided as work continues and as opportunities for member involvement arise.

Social Report

VALE: William Carlyle Armstrong (Bill)



Bill passed away on June 4th at the Tanilba aged care home after a short illness aged 85. I first met Bill at Lake Eildon in Victoria when I moved to the next town, Alexandra and joined the rival tennis team. Nobody locally had any yachts sailing on Lake Eildon, so I built a Mirror Kit purchased from Blocky the Boat Builder which I subsequently sold to Bill for his son David and daughter Cathrine. Bill and David even entered the Mirror in the Australian Titles on Port Philip Bay, receiving a trophy for coming last in the competition. Twenty-five years later, I came to settle in Port Stephens where surprisingly, Bill had gone. Where is the yacht? Oh, I sold it to my mate Andy at Taylors Beach. It's still under his house unused! He's going to sell it!

The Mirror yacht is now at my place. It was Bill's first yacht and one which started Bill's family love of yachting. Bill was a member of PSYC for over twenty years and was also a member of Port Stephens Sister Cities. He sailed on Yulunga and helped me deliver some yachts along the East Coast, crewed in the Melbourne Osaka Race, and represented our club in all the Pacific Rim Races in Nakhodka Russia, Tatiama Japan, Tauronga NZ, Victoria Canada, Bellingham US and Port Stephens Aus. Additionally, Bill and son David came first in the cruising division of the Darwin to Ambon Race. The family now share a cruising catamaran at Port Stephens.



The Mirror yacht may now go back to David.

Hunter Region Moorings Special Interest Group

During attendance at the AS conference, I met up with Wangi, Lake Macquarie and Newcastle yacht clubs to discuss the current issues around moorings. These clubs share our concerns.

The approach is to for PSYC to take the lead in collating the impacts to our clubs and to make representations as a joint interest group in the support of the future of sailing in the Hunter region. If the Club is to adopt a view and make representations, it is essential they are based on credible and accurate data that assists agency and departments decision making and not unduly criticises these bodies or individuals. I seek your support in building this case.

The process is to:

- **Map the process** as advised by the relevant authorities
- Identify the **current impediments** to the progression of mooring licence and permit issue.
- **Identify the impacts** to the environment and future of sailing in the Hunter region.
- **Collate the findings** into a logical data-based case study for the progression to appropriate government authorities and agencies.
- **Promote options and support agencies** in developing a long-term mooring strategy and process to meet the needs of the environment and enable boating to continue.

Moorings Change Approval Process

This draft guide attempts to outline the process for handling mooring changes through transfer, acquisition, sub-vessel arrangement, deceased estate, or resale. It captures interactions between members, Service NSW, Transport NSW, local councils, DPI, and Marine Parks authorities. The specific application type does bring specific variations of the process.

1. Trigger Event

A mooring change is initiated due to:

- Ownership transfer
- Acquisition (new applicant)
- Sub-vessel sharing
- Deceased estate resolution
- Re-sale or allocation shift

2. Application to Transport NSW

The applicant submits:

- Formal online application via the Transport NSW portal
- Supporting documentation, such as:
 - Proof of vessel ownership
 - Identification
 - Existing mooring number (if applicable)

3. Assessment by Transport NSW inclusive of Boating Safety Officer and delegates

Transport NSW reviews the application against:

- Moorings Priority List
- Waiting lists and allocation status
- Applicant's eligibility, vessel fit, and past compliance

4. Transport NSW Boating Safety Officer Review

A Boating Officer:

- Proposes a suitable mooring position
- Conducts **desktop environmental impact assessment** using the joint-agency **Review of Environmental Factors (REF) database**, considering:
 - Seagrass and marine habitat zones
 - Navigation channels
 - Heritage overlays
 - Environmental risk or zoning conflict

5. Marine Parks Assessment – Department of Primary Industries

If mooring falls within or near a Marine Park, sent to Marine Parks for assessment:

- DPI conducts ecological and zoning review
- If compliant, issues a **Marine Parks Permit**
- This permit is sent to back to the Boating Officer for final determination

6. Boating Office advises Recipient & enable Private Tackle Negotiation

Once approvals are in place:

- Applicant is **formally advised** that a mooring is available
- Given **28 days to accept or decline**
- Responsible for **privately negotiating** acquisition or installation of mooring tackle (e.g. ground tackle, riser, buoy)

7. Permit and Licence Issued

If accepted:

- Transport NSW **issues the official Mooring Permit and Licence**
 - Confirms legal occupancy
 - Outlines usage terms and compliance expectations
- Applicant becomes the authorised mooring holder

Current Situation and Impediments

My inquiries via NSW Maritime suggest that the local councils driven by the Marine Parks Estate State Management Act 2014, requiring Part 4 or Part 5 DA approval, do not want to be included in the process. This has resulted in a hold on mooring applications progression by DPI in issuing Marine Parks Permits since March 2023.

Owners wanting change boats on moorings for like for like are being approved at this time.

Current mooring holders are grandfathered and permitted to remain until an event triggers the change application process.

Satellite imagery suggests mooring areas encroach on 5% of Seagrass areas.

Imagery suggests, moorings contribute to an estimated 1.5% of scaring damage to seagrass within designated areas. As such it is possible to conclude that moorings damage 0.08% of Seagrass areas.

Imagery, suggests that the majority of damage (loosely estimated at 30%) to Seagrass, has been caused by drag line fishing across these areas, elimination of seagrass around land stormwater drainage.

Of note, the areas within the designated mooring areas appear to be less damaged. I suggest this is due to the inability to conduct drag line fishing and limited and reluctance for visiting boats to anchor in these sensitive areas.

Concluded Yacht Club impacts

The Club has been in continuous existence for 54 years (Registered since 1971) acknowledged as a community sporting body and contributing to tourism and the environment of Port Stephens.

PSYC historically has 40 boats on the club register. 35 of these boats utilise moorings with the remainder of boats in marinas. The average tenure of 7 years per boat involvement in Club activities suggests that without moorings access, the Club would **no longer be able to practically function beyond 5 years (2030)**.

Likely Next Steps

I am advised that an inter government department workshop is being held in September this year. I am requesting attendance to deliver a joint Clubs view of impacts and contribute, if possible, to solutions to meet departments and boating interests.

A potential petition seeking signatures has been mooted as a means of supporting further representations.

Please forward all and any impacts, ideas, past representations for inclusion to my email address below.

Rick Pacey

Commodore

Port Stephens Yacht Club commodore@psyc.com.au 0438406855

The Max and Edna Race



Now changed to the **Founder's Race**. The Max and Edna Berman Trophy is seen here being presented by Vice Commodore Richard Kerr to Michael Kirby Skipper of the winning yacht, *She's The One*. Second was Ken Peachey/David Rumble on *Una Vita* and third Graeme Ellis' *Adios*.

The Trophy is named after the founding members of the Club, Max and Edna Berman in recognition of the effort put into establishing the Club and keeping it running for over twenty years.

Below is the deed of Gift written by Past Commodore Peter Chappelow.

When memories started to fade in 2004, Commodore Peter contacted The Berman's daughter and brought the history and meaning of the Trophy up to date. It is now in the Trophy Cabinet to refer to.

The Max and Edna Berman Memorial Trophy Gift of Deed

Max and Edna Berman initiated a meeting to form the Soldiers Point Yacht Club at their East Maitland home on 31 March 1972, inviting 11 founding members to join them in building a clubhouse. Max was a local builder and elected the Squadron's first Commodore. He did much of the ground work in obtaining a land lease, NSW Government grant and development approval for the clubhouse building. He was a charismatic and dynamic character who lived life to the full. The Club's name was subsequently changed to Port Stephens Yacht Club but the business name had already been registered, so it became "Squadron" until 2003, when with a further name change to Port Stephens Yacht Club it regained its identity as the home of yachting on Port Stephens. Max and Edna would have been pleased.

Edna was a long-term editor of the Squadron magazine "Quadrant" and was well known for forceful editorial comment, usually ending with a comment that, if readers did not like her style, "feel free to take over". Her tactic did not work and she continued to produce Quadrant for about 15 years on an old Gestetner machine in her lounge room. She was an extremely active and able lady, who was still adventuring (scuba diving trips to Vanuatu in her mid-80s).

Edna passed away in 1996 and instructed her daughter to provide a sum of \$1500 to the Squadron, the interest from which was to be used to fund prizes for an annual sailing event. Founding member, Henry Bremberger, made a beautiful wooden perpetual trophy and presented it to the Squadron for posterity.

The criteria for the Max and Edna Berman Trophy was developed around an event which they would have approved of, as follows:

- While the event was to be a race, it was to be family oriented and preferably, a non-spinnaker social day. In accordance with custom, all entrants were to raft up at Fame Cove after the event to continue festivities to celebrate the sport of sailing.
- Prizes were to be awarded for first, second and third placings, with the winner's name to be inscribed on the perpetual trophy.
- The event was to be run on the day following the AGM, after the Commodore's sail-past. Failing this, it would be run on the first day of the new summer sailing season.
- The original principal of \$1,500 was to be held in trust and not be reduced.

Signed: Peter Chappelow, Commodore 18 June 2004.

Bill Haskel awarded National Emergency Medal

By Riko



Past Commodore Bill Haskel was awarded the National Emergency Medal in recognition of his service during the 2019-2020 Black Summer Bush fires. The Rural Fire Service Communications for the Lower Hunter and the Upper Hunter Valley at that time was manned by Marine Rescue Port Stephens overnight seven days a week. During the fires, the fire service put out a call for radio operators to relieve their fatigued radio operators at night. Bill and others travelled back and forth to the radio base at Bulga for around a fortnight.

Bill's vast contribution to the safety of our community and commitment to our unit still survives. Bill was the head engineer when I was studying for my Leading Crew Rating and he patiently taught me a lot about diesel engines explained. Riko Euch, Deputy Unit Commander.



Woops! See what happens when you put an aluminium leg on a steel hull without rubber isolation of the dissimilar metals. Note the brass propeller was protected by the aluminium leg's sacrificial corrosion. Not a Port Stephens yacht.



Andrew Parsons photo of his model yacht in the floods. The sign says Bore Water in Use. I suggested he turn the automatic pump off!!

Defending the Berman Trophy - Yulunga

We had to sail the Bergman Trophy race because we had won it the two years before. We tried on Easter Monday but the race was cancelled because of only three yacht entries. Not enough for such an auspicious Club Trophy Race. This was the repeat race.

This time it may have gone the same way, because only two yachts had informed John Humphreys (the race starter), of their intention to sail by 11 am, by noon, fortunately eight yachts turned up.

Poor John Humphreys was on his own and had only the radio to inform the participants of the start procedure and remind them of the changed course and that spinnakers were allowed.

In all other years we traditionally sailed without spinnakers from Soldiers Point to our Shoal Bay Mark and return; simple. Due to earlier storms, the Shoal Bay Mark had gone missing so instead, the marker buoy at Pindimar was chosen but we had to sail to Wedding Cake Mark first. We lined up at Noon with a light Westerly wind behind us. The big boats hoisted their spinnakers and set off with *Yulunga* and *Thief of Time* in the rear.

It was not to be such an auspicious start for *Yulunga* as one crew member pulled out and that left John Cooper and I to get the spinnaker up as the only other small boat, *Thief of Time*, polled out her Jib. The two boats sailed neck and neck East to the Wedding Cake Mark then South to the main Channel before following *Exulte*, down the full length of the channel to Nelson Bay then North to round the Pindimar Mark to port and then return to the Main channel to sail back, to the finish at Soldiers Point.

By the time we got to the Pindimar Mark the outflowing tide had strengthened and was aided by the recent floodwaters leaving the Bay. So, with a lessening breeze it was hard to stem the tide and get around the mark. *Exulte* was carried down tide and had to tack three times to make the last rounding. This allowed us to catch up, but we also had to tack again but still kept just in front of *Thief of Time*. When we were within three boat lengths of the rounding buoy *Exulte* had rounded and called Starboard right of way, thus forcing us to turn back yet again and then we had to give way to *Thief of Time* just behind us. We rounded last!

Then it was a hard slog back up the channel to Soldiers point against the lessening breeze. When we got within two hundred metres of the finish, the wind threatened to die altogether, fortunately John Humphreys was kind enough to wait at the finish as we ghosted across.

Back at the Club we arrived at 5.30pm just as the ceremony had finished, but as I entered the Club House, the crew of our rival *Exalte* with Vice Commodore Richard, suddenly had enormous big grins over their faces. I said. "Does the boat on starboard have right of way even if we were within three boat lengths of the rounding mark".

"Yes!! They said, as they burst out laughing.

Such is life on the water!!

John Grainger

Those May - June Floods

By the end of May we had already had the year's average rainfall and it has rained ever since! Most of us live amongst the sand dunes of Port Stephens and escaped the inundation of the river valleys elsewhere. The picture here of the Queens Wharf Ferry docking in Newcastle Harbour, shows the extent of the debris clogging up our streams and major rivers and indeed the risk to racing yachts on our bay from hitting logs in the water. Not to mention the murky water in our bay that persists today. Storm surges have damaged our beaches and once again undercut the beach approaching the roadway at Shoal Bay.



Boats on Moorings Graeme Ellis owner of Adios.

Hi folks I would just like to show you what we owners of yacht moorings are grumbling about down at the club and boring the others to death. But it is serious.

Since the Bay has been declared a Marine Park, five different authorities have a say in whether we continue to have moorings in future. Hence, we are never sure if we can sell boats, exchange boats or purchase another; or even shift the mooring to another site.

Below is the letter sent to me as my registration fees are due.

MARITIME PRODUCT SERVICES
Locked Bag 5100 CAMPERDOWN NSW 1450
13 12 36
nsw.gov.au


Renewal

NSW
Government

Date: 22/06/2025
Mooring ID number
To be displayed on buoy/pole/post
TH023

Location
SOLDIERS POINT WEST

Transport for NSW
Private Mooring Licence
(A licence issued under the Ports and Maritime Administration Regulation 2021)

What does this mean for me? 

If you are not making any changes to a vessel or the mooring, no immediate action is required at this time. Changes to your mooring, mooring licence or moored vessel may trigger a review. This may result in the proposed change being refused, or the mooring being relocated, or cancelled. We recommend you contact us to seek advice before:

- purchasing a new vessel you intend to place on this mooring
- selling the mooring apparatus and attached vessel with the intent to transfer your licence to another person
- changing the existing mooring apparatus
- requesting to relocate your mooring site within the same bay.

Small yacht changing to electric. By John Grainger

I received the following account from a skipper of Enchantee, a Spacesailer 27, the same as Yulunga.



Could you power your Yacht with a motor this small, weighing only 16 KG? Well; that depends and for how long?

A member of the WA Spacesailer club has ditched his worn-out diesel motor for an electric motor such as the one pictured. It is coupled directly in-line with the propeller shaft and is powered by 16 Lithium Ferric Potassium batteries arranged in two rows of eight and is driven through a controller. The batteries deliver 48amp hours current at 48 Volts. This gives 15 KW hours. The motor was a 5KW Montenergy ME 1718 which cost about \$1,600. It comes with a gear harness and controller for around \$8,000. An electrical Smart Management System cost \$160.

No need for diesel pumps and filters, water pumps and alternators or indeed intake and exhaust systems. No oil and no Diesel fumes either. This is a simplified view however, because he had to upgrade to two, 200W solar Panels giving 37Volts. These large solar panels are capable of charging the flat battery array from flat, in one week. Shore power takes three days and requires an inverter

Motor Trials.

At full throttle power the yacht speed was 5 Knots and consumed about 100 amps of power giving five hours cruising time, but at 3.5 Knots the power consumption was down to 20 amps giving a more reasonable Ten hours cruising.

Enough they calculated to holiday at Rottnest Island from their Perth base or race during the week on the Swan River then return to their marina berth with shore power. At full continuous power, however, the motor exceeded the temperature limiter at 85 Degrees C.

Henry Hickling has put together this summary (attached) and a video

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/mZdY91wqJwbeWT6D7>.

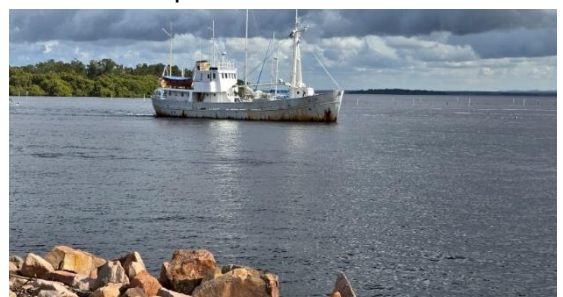
MV Recife, leaving Port Stephens after many years on the wharf at Soldiers Point.

The Recife has an interesting history, it's hull is made of riveted heavy steel plate and it may look derelict as its sides show ugly rust patches. Inside is another story.

The owner, Captain Clive Rolfe, has kept the boat as a holiday home. He has maintained the engine in immaculate condition. He was prevented from scraping the rust last slip because of environmental restraints in the marina he chose.

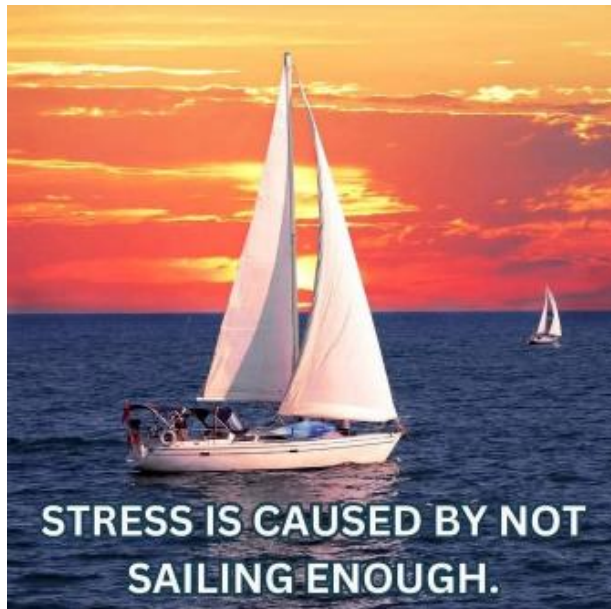
(See Photo Right: taken by Rossco on Sat June 31st 2025).

The riveted thick hull plates were built to withstand the ice flows of the Norwegian Fjords. They are not going to rust out any time soon. For full info on the boat, google the vessel Recife. It's a good read.





The huge three cylinder two-stroke diesel motor with its magnificently maintained brass work.



Melbourne to Osaka – Roaring Forty

The Melbourne to Osaka (M2O) Race is the longest race in the world that runs south to north or vice versa. The course encompasses several weather areas, Melbourne local, Bass Strait, Tasman Sea, Coral Sea, Solomons Sea, North Pacific, Philippine Sea and Japan Sea. Each region has masses of currents flowing in all directions and weather systems of varying intensity from 0-50 knots, that can park you up for many days, or break your boat if you get it wrong.

As you read in the last edition of the *Bilge*, *Roaring Forty* suffered a catastrophic carbon boom breakage 200nm east of Jervis Bay.



Fortunately, it was repairable and Joe and his team at Mid Coast Boatyard in Newcastle, sleeved and re-laminated the boom in just four days! Then the East Coast Low trapped us for nearly a week, so by the time co-skipper Darrell 'Daz' Greig and I restarted the race, competitors were in the Solomon Islands!

But, lets quickly jump back in time to Feb 25.

Daz and I flew into Hobart to pick up Roaring Forty after we had competed the Sydney Hobart. Unfortunately, we trashed two sails on days 1 and 2 of the race, so it was like sailing with the handbrake on for the remainder of the race.

We departed Hobart and sailed Roaring Forty to the M2O host port at Sandringham Yacht Club (SYC) Melbourne. We were making good speed up the east coast of Tassie and rounded the NE corner into Banks Strait, nailing the tidal gate entry perfectly. We sailed WNW to avoid the large swell coming from the SW, but as we started to clear land and head NW, the slamming increased. Into the night we were sailing at 7-9 knots, tight reached toward The Rip guarding the entrance to Port Phillip Bay. Inside *Roaring Forty* was like a drummer's jam session, very noisy, but one particular slam seemed a lot louder than the others. I was below and after a quick check of the bilge, there was no water ingress, so we pressed on.

On arrival at SYC, we hauled out for a bottom wash and ORCi Hull Offset File Laser Scan for our ORCi rating certificate. I noticed a long, deep battle scar on the forward underside of the starboard bow, and a small impact point. We had hit an unidentified floating object. The carbon composite guys ground back the outer laminate to reveal a 400mm crack in the structural foam core. The team set to work routing out the old core and vacuum bagging the new core into place. Providing the team with the original structural engineering composite laminate schedule made it easy to order materials and next day the repair was underway. After 9 days on the hardstand, we re-launched and set about preparing for the M2O race.

Fast forward to our transit through the Coral Sea SE trade winds.

We had blown up the old 2006 A5 reaching spinnaker on day one of the Hobart race. I had Phil at Zoom Sails design me a new Asymmetrical Spinnaker (A6) so we could sail deeper angles in medium/heavy air. Once we hoisted the A6 with double reefed mainsail we took off polling several days at circa 200nm a day, making for fantastic sailing. We opted for an eastern lane through the Solomon Islands group, and we only parked up for hours at a time, instead of days like the rest of the fleet who sailed the main corridor to the west.

On entering the North Pacific, we were greeted by an overly aggressive and sudden squall at the trailing edge of a Low-Pressure system that delivered 50 knots for about 10-15 mins and very steep, short seas. This was Daz's first big crash gybe, and these gybes are pretty intense compared to conventional ballasted boats. This means the boom is pressed hard against one running backstay, headsail backwinded and 1000 litres of water ballast is now on the low side (ie wrong side) of the boat. This puts the boat at around 60-80 degrees incline. By the time we had her back on her feet running with the breeze, we had covered about 10nm in the wrong direction. Once the boat was settled, we turned the bow to windward and started heading toward Osaka. Slowly the breeze moderated only to leave a sloppy sea state.

The ride through the North Pacific Trade Wind belt was fast and uneventful. We passed Sailor Moon as we approached Japan where you must cross the Kuroshio Current, known as the Black Tide, that guard Osaka Bay. Before the current is a huge stationary anticlockwise eddy you can slingshot off the eastern side, before crossing the main northerly flowing current running strongly at up to 5-6 knots. It's about 40nm wide so you need to get it right or end up in Tokyo not Osaka!

I don't know who we upset, but as we shot out of the eddy, a 30knot front we were expecting turned into a 50 knot front! By the time we reefed down to just the 4th reef and went bare headed, *Roaring Forty* was headed for Tokyo!

We comfortably fore-reached across the steep 4m waves in 40 knots making 7-9 knots toward Osaka Bay. Unfortunately, "Sailor Moon", a Northshore 37, had to keep running off, hence they went from a couple of hours behind us, to over a day behind. As we crossed Wakayama Bay, the breeze moderated and we had a great run through to the Yuraseto Strait tidal gate, hitting double digit speeds, only to promptly park up in zero breeze as we entered Osaka Bay, just 25nm from the finish line.

Our race did certainly not go as planned, but I am happy with our recovery and completion of the race. I am also proud of Daz and how he has developed his sailing since he first came onboard in 2011.

Larry: Sailor extraordinaire



Have you met Larry? You cannot miss Larry with his grey hair, moustache and generous beard. He did not immediately join the Club, he just happened. He is one of those larger-than-life characters that happen into a place. He, with a generous smile and easy go style, just became part of the furniture. Strange you may think, but it happens all over the world. Why, because it just does. Larry never chose to be here in Port Stephens. He was blown here.

His story starts in the middle of the Tasman Sea. You see, he says. "I was trying to sail to Vanuatu on my own and the water pump on my motor stopped and I kept sailing, then a succession of storms hit my yacht for five days." "Then the sails started to shred." "The worst was when the head-board on the mainsail ripped out, then the halyard went up the mast and was unretrievable." "I tried sailing with my Yankee Jib until it too was lost and I was left to manage only downwind with the sails I had left". "I was heading Easterly to Brisbane, but I discovered that thing called the South Flowing East Australia Current, then the wind took me South and I ended up 40 Nautical Miles off Port Stephens." "I was then able to rig up a jury water pump using the fresh water pump to motor ashore." "So, I guess, here I am."

I asked him to write a story for the Bilge Newsletter. "You will have to get it out yourself." He said.

Well, I tried. Larry has a prodigious memory and penchant for detail. When I asked how he got be ocean sailing he said it all started in Kansas City Missouri, about as far away from the ocean as you can get in USA.

"I had several yachts, the best early one was a 29ft Islander bought in 1967." "But then I moved to Lake Michigan and purchased *Blue Star*, a 44ft long Centre Cockpit ketch, a Constellation, made in Sri Lanka. I then decided to see New York and the world."

"You mean you sailed it from the Great Lakes?" Yes, he said. "I sailed at 10am on July 14, 2022 to Lake Huron into Lake Erie then through the Wellington Canal to Kingston Ontario. There, the mast was taken down. Then down the Erie Canal South, into the Hudson River." "From New York State, I raised the mast again and sailed to New York City itself." He explained.



I knew right then it was going to be more than a quick sip of beer to get the story.

Larry was headed to Key West Florida down the Eastern Canal system south along the US Coast; but first it was New York, Manhattan Island. There he found a mooring for \$10 a day while working for a ship chandler. Then he met Charley and Ben who were going to kayak from there to the Everglade swamps of South Florida. "You have the wrong season for that trip." Said Larry. They and their kayaks were subsequently recruited as Larry's crew.

On the way South, Larry was able to anchor in sight of a rocket Launch at Cape Canaveral. "The whole sky lit up and I followed it and before I lost sight of its trail, the rocket was reported to be over Spain!" JUST LOOK AT THAT PUPPY Go!!! Came the shout.

The next destination was to cross the Gulf Stream to Nassau in the Bahamas. There, after some time, Larry became familiar with one of the local street Gangs. "They weren't killers, just trouble rousers using fisticuffs." He said. "They used me as a backup in the get-away car just in case they had to retreat. That never happened".

Larry's wife now decided that ocean sailing was not for her, so one morning they packed up all her belongings ready for the 5am dinghy trip to transport to the airport. They arose to find the dinghy gone along with all his wife's luggage including the American airline ticket and her passport!

Quickly they called some Michigan boating friends over and somehow, she managed to board the plane without a ticket and without the passport and fly out.

Later, when Charley's Kayak broke loose. Charley and Larry went drifting down stream looking to recover the dinghy by going with the flow, along the shore. Miraculously they found it just as it was being pulled up onto the beach by a hopeful Bahamas local. "It's mine". The local said. "Oh no it's not." "I can name everything contained within that kayak". Yelled Charley: Charley won!

Larry turned back and over-summered, North to New Brunswick and Maine. "I passed the largest whirlpool in the Western Hemisphere, called the Old Sow. The centre vortex is a meter deep." He said.

Then in Portland Maine he secured a free dock alongside to celebrated his Uncle's 80th birthday. There he visited a man who was farming sea Urchins. Thousands of them for the Japanese market.

Larry took on Peg as a crew member who became his First Mate and deckhand, but was an "awful cook"! She was to stay as crew off and on, for the next 14 years.

Larry decided to go South down the East Coast for the winter and headed past Key West and down to Mexico and Guatemala.

Guatemala was interesting and also a little scary for Larry as he was there for their Easter parade procession. According to Larry the place was so full of bandits that you had to check your fire arms into a safe to enter the bank to do your banking business. A little scary!

It was time to tackle the Atlantic and Larry took on a sailmaker called Jim to sail North East, to the Azores. They stayed three weeks in the Azores. When I asked, why three weeks, I needed to repair my steering cable and those volcanoes were interesting, you could climb right down into the caldera.

Gibraltar and the Mediterranean was the next stop by way of Portugal. Larry was proud the he made it to the top of the Gibraltar Mount and did it by way of a more secret **free** stairway as well as the Caves and the gun emplacements. Of course, he had a port in Porto Portugal too.

Winter was endured at Maris in Southern Turkey. Then moving East through the Bosphorus one has to stay at Istanbul for a Turkish Delight. This time Peg returned as first mate and Uncle, who was now a fit 82YO joined the crew. Uncle helped with the drinking holes but an acquaintance took them to a very sleazy Disco Club! After two drinks Larry was shown (Strong armed) to a back room to pay the bill. The Russian

security goons demanded \$980.00! Larry refused to pay but quickly fish out over \$200.00 from his wallet and decided to retreat with uncle, but uncle said he had already paid, by credit card. That cost Uncle a mere \$1830! They escaped by jumping into a taxi and demanded the driver take them anywhere, fast!

Next stop was the Republic of Georgia in the Black Sea. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, they were the first American yacht to visit. Such a novelty warranted a mention on the Russian TV.

Everything was cheap, the docking charge was \$20 a month and young boys would look after the yacht for the sum of \$5 a day, so Larry and Jim, hit the Crimean Naval Officers Club for a vodka or three. Of course, escorted by the compulsory Government Minder. Larry said he did not mind being tracked by minders because the minders were always the best tourist guides and no locals would mess with their escorts.

It was the lead up to the Navy Day celebrations in Sebastopol. How times have changed. As a show of strength, the Russian Navy held joint naval exercises with the Ukrainian Navy!

On one occasion, Jim the sailmaker and Larry, lunched with the Captain of the Black Sea Fleet and the Chief engineer until the Admiral came and said "We go now!" The others left their unfinished vodka's and followed. Amazing; Larry reckons the Russians were sure they could out-drink an American; but they failed.

Later, it was a two-day trip down the Suez Canal into the Red Sea after a stop off at Alexandria.

By now, my mind was in overload. We needed a lunch break. We opened a bottle of red wine Larry had smuggled from France. When was Larry's story ever to get back to Australia? I despaired.

Aqabar in Jordon was interesting Larry continued, with its off-shore coral reefs; however at this stage my notes became some-what less decipherable. Something about camping in the desert, and Pirates for company.

Eritrea. Larry said. "Man, this Eritrea place is where the only vehicles are white 4X4's with **UN** written on them; still we had a party on the beach with other sailors. "Going ashore next morning, Larry saw fresh Lion tracks in the sand. We were going to Mt. Doo Doo!" Explained Larry. Well what else would you do! He said he saw no lions!

Then there was Yemen where Ohmar ruled as Prince of the Red Sea. There were camel markets and Somalis shipping them. This was another place where Peg, stood out with her white hair.

Yemen. Larry said that the boat was slipped in Yemen because the propeller shaft had sheared. Fortunately, the skeg kept the propeller from sliding out and the inboard part of the shaft remained to keep the water seal intact. Three replacement shafts were made before Larry was satisfied the machinist had one straight enough to fit!

Finally, they sailed into the Gulf of Aden. The clear water was remarkable for the bioluminescence in the clear waters. Fantastic green flecks of light were visible in the ocean depths.

Then, out into the Pacific, Larry sailed North West to the Seychelles. "That's where they speak three languages". "The newspaper is written in French, English and Creole." "We also stayed in Chagos Archipelago for four months." Larry offered.

I had another sip of wine and asked. "Hey Larry, where else did you visit?"

"Well Let's see; altogether; by sea, 72 countries!"

There was the Maldives, the Andaman Is., Thailand, Phuket and Sri Lanka.

He said. "We sailed to Sri Lanka just after the Tamil war ended. That's where my boat was built. We were in the North and the people there were only so glad to have the beginning of the tourist visits again."

“We also sailed through the Malacca Straits to Malacca then headed East in a 1200 Nautical Mile spinnaker run to Borneo. The visit coincided with the World Music Festival. This was not the music of List or Chopin, this was native music; music styles from all over the world: Marvellous”. He enthused, then continued.

“We went to Rajah Ampat (Four Kings) Beautiful tropical Islands, now part of West Papua.”

By then my notes were totally inadequate, there was mention of Philippines, Japan, Alaska, the Sea of Cortez, Hawaii, Christmas Island, even Kiribati (the island is sinking as the ocean levels rise), the Fanning Islands and its barter system currency in only Coconuts, the Cook islands where a man had pet sharks and even Niue Island, that tiny speck north of NZ, then Tonga and South to Whangarei, NZ.

My friends, it would take a fortnight to get the story from Larry and then only part of it. This would then be a book, not a newsletter article. My advice is just buy him a drink if ever you meet up and have a chat, he possesses a remarkable memory and a remarkable lifestyle.

Where Next? Well, that depends. Larry has a sailing friend maybe coming, maybe not coming, in a couple of weeks and they may just head for the Soloman Islands; or where-ever there is left in the world to visit.

John Grainger.

CRUISING THE WHITSUNDAYS PART 3.

PAUL and BEV SINCLAIR



In our last article we had arrived in Bundaberg with the windlass leaking oil. The good news was the local marine engineer was able to fit new seals and bearing in two days after I removed it from the boat and delivered it. And, at a reasonable price! Bundaberg Port Marina is a great place to stay with a courtesy bus to town, excellent fish and chips, cafe, facilities and the Burnet Heads IGA will come and pick you up.

Monday Sep. 2, we departed Burnet Heads at 5:15 am and cruised up the coast at over 7KN except for some motor sailing in the early morning and mid-afternoon. The trusty ecopot delivered a tasty Indian curry for dinner. The next day it was on to Gladstone with very light winds. As we were traveling on the following day we stopped off at Facing Island, Observation Point, across the channel from the Boyne Island smelter. A good anchorage in light winds or stronger easterlies. It enabled an easy departure for the Kepples via the East Channel the next day. Mostly motor sailing in light winds we anchored in West Bay, Great Kepple Island at 3:30 after 9 ½ hours. The highlight was toasting our entry into the tropics at 10:17 am Cape Capricorn.

We spent 3 days at GK, swimming, snorkelling, walking and chilling out. With the wind picking up and going to the west the anchorage was going to get unpleasant, so we made the trip across to Rosslyn Bay (Yeppoon). Another great marina although the shower facilities are definitely tired, but were clean. We stayed a couple of days waiting for the strong SE front to move through.

Tuesday 17th we departed Keppel Bay Marina at 6:30am for the 45 NM trip to Pearl Bay. It was a good day of sailing with winds 15-25kn with us averaging more than 7kn. It was not a great anchorage, so we were quite happy to be up at 5:30 am for an early departure for the Percy Islands. We raised the anchor and then the mainsail, when suddenly the boom went flying with the main sheet and pulley block whizzing past

my head; fortunately, without hitting me. The shackle holding it to the traveller had come undone. Bev brought Rascal around into the wind and I grabbed the mainsheet, found the shackle and pin and screwed it back together. It was a close call. With 55 NM to cover we enjoyed some good sailing but resorted to motor sailing in the afternoon to arrive at Middle Percy Island around 3:00pm. We should have made the trek to the beach to view the memorabilia left by passing yachties but succumbed to the need for a nap after two early mornings and lengthy sails, knowing that we were to be up even earlier the next day. Again, it was a very rocky and rolly night.

Thu 19th Sep. we raised anchor for the trip to St Bees Island with winds under 7 Kn the whole day. The moorings in Homestead Bay were all occupied, and a depth of 20+m meant going back to Homestead Bay South. It was a bit daunting picking an anchorage with sand interspersed with coral, depth ranging from 3-9m and a tide variation of 4.3m. We picked a spot which proved to be ok although the drying rocks at low tide were closer than anticipated.

Friday 20th, we set off to Thomas Island. at a civilised 8:30am after a lux breakfast of scrambled eggs, toast, crispy chilli oil and fresh coffee. Most travel days it is an instant coffee in thermomugs once the sail is up and some muffins/crumpets around 7 or 8.

We were now in the Whitsundays! Thomas Is was a lovely anchorage with clear water and sandy beach, so we stayed for 2 days enjoying a swim and some down time. Without internet, we are back to old school pursuits, crossword, wordle, and puzzle books.

The next few weeks we potted around the islands picking overnight anchorages based on the days wind direction and strength. With very strong SE winds forecast we decamped to Refuge Cove, Nara Inlet for 3 days. I used the downtime to try baking bread. It worked out well.



A good change from wraps!

Oct 4th again saw us holed up in Refuge Cove and baking bread. Over dinner and wine, we decided it we had had enough, and it was time to turn for home.

Sat 5th Oct, we retraced our steps to Thomas, St Bees and Percy Islands and then Pearl Bay. Winds were constantly in the 5 Kn range so the trip was accompanied by the constant putter of the engine. Our previous visit to Pearl Bay was very rocky and rolly, so we were very pleased at how calm the bay was. Having sundowners, we watched turtles and dugongs swimming around the boat. Mostly you hear the dugong's heavy breath and a glimpse of head and back, but Bev saw one right at the back of the boat appearing to check us out. Unfortunately, at about 3 am the rolling commenced, significantly impacting the rest of our night's sleep.

Wednesday 9th was a great day of sailing, only using the engine to get us underway and bring us in to anchor eventually at Great Keppel Island around 3 pm. With the wind in the NE we stopped at Fisherman's Bay for the best protection. As the evening progressed, we could see thunderstorms heading our way, so a boisterous evening was expected. The front that moved in around 8 pm was not in the forecast. I could hear the wind rising so went on deck to watch speed and direction from the chart plotter. It went from 7 to 22 KN in about 5 minutes and then to 33 in the next 5 minutes and then hovered in the mid-20s for 30 minutes before gradually dropping back to mid-teens. Instead of enjoying a hot chocolate and a nightcap I spent an hour on deck at anchor watch and then sat below with my secondary anchor app on the phone. Bev kept me company for the first hour and did supply the hot chocolate despite the rough conditions. I felt it was safe to go to bed around 11, but the boat continued to pitch and roll violently all night.

The revised forecast the next day showed the strong wind was continuing so decided to head to Kepple Bay marina for fuel and provisioning rather than enjoying a couple of days R & R.

Oct 14th was wet and grey with 2m swells but we completed the trip to Gladstone at 5:00pm after 11 hours. A lamb shank ecopot dinner and a wine warmed us up somewhat.

The next day we made the 5 hr trip to Pancake Creek which is a beautiful, isolated anchorage. Nothing except water, trees, sand and a sprinkling of boats. With a 3 metre tide there is a vastly different view between high and low tides. At low tide it looks like boats are sitting on the sand and there is no way out. Oct 18 was to be a lay day but when we ran the engine to cool the fridge there was no water output. Hours were spent checking the cooling circuits revealed no issues. Going over the side in a 2-3 kn current was daunting but with a tether for safety it was worthwhile. A mass of soft seaweed was blocking the cooling water inlet, and it was swiftly removed. We stayed another day to enjoy the ambience of Pancake Creek following the previous day's stress.

Fri 18th Oct we made the 10 hr journey down to Bundaberg where we sheltered in the marina while a 30 Kn SE front passed through over a couple of days. Mon 21st we set off for Gary's Anchorage on Fraser Island. With forecast winds and swell on the nose it was a slow and uncomfortable day of motoring. About 20 NM out of Bundaberg I heard a flappy, rattly sound which was strange as we didn't have a sail up. A split second later I realised it was the anchor chain rolling out. I was at the helm, so it was engine off and as quickly as possible while trying to be safe in a still roly sea I made it to the bow and put on the brake. Only about 60 m of chain had gone over in a water depth of about 20 m. With Bev managing the helm, it took a while to retrieve the anchor, as I hung on with one hand while stopping the chain stacking up under the hawse pipe with the other. I think with the pounding into the waves, the safety rope had come undone, and the clutch had loosened. We continued uneventfully but slowly. At around 4:30 we dropped anchor just south of Kingfisher resort for the evening and then travelled on to Gary's Anchorage the next morning. Gary's is quite sheltered but the strong winds and thunderstorms over the next couple of days was not restful.

The journey down to Mooloolaba, commencing on Oct 25th was uneventful. We crossed Wide Bay bar with 0.5m swell with breakers clearly marking the channel. Overnight at Double Island point was again very roly and uncomfortable prompting a 4:30 departure for Mooloolaba. A good day's sail saw us arrive around 1:30 pm giving plenty of time to find the fuel wharf up in the canal estate (the grapevine indicated the main fuel depot had contaminated fuel) before coming back to the main channel and finding a spot to drop anchor in "the pond".

After reprovisioning and some R & R we departed Mooloolaba at 5:00am on the 28th. We reached Peel Island (Morton Bay) around 3:30 sailing/motoring/sailing as wind rose/fell, changed direction under a drab, brooding grey sky. Around 5:30 a thunderstorm with a fabulous lightning show rolled through, fortunately without strong winds. The next day was a quiet run down the inland waterway to Tipplers Resort and then on to Boatworks.

Our refrigeration was playing up, we were slowly taking on water around the rudder shaft and we needed to repairs to lazy jacks, so we had the boat booked in to Boatworks for Oct 31st (My 70th Birthday present 😞). We booked an apartment and a hire car so that we could have a "mini vacation" from the boat.

The boat was hauled out and the engineer who had done the previous work quickly dropped the rudder and confirmed bearing wear as the issue. We just needed to wait for parts to arrive. The refrigeration mechanic was screwing us around, no-showing/delaying. New rudder bearings arrived overnight, and the rudder reinstalled on the Friday, so we organised for the boat to go back into the water on Saturday and

into a berth (cheaper than the hardstand). The rigger doing the lazy jacks also screwed us by not coming on Friday to reinstall, but we managed to find another to do the job on the Saturday before the boat went back in. The refrigeration mechanic did not arrive as expected on the Monday and would not come until Wednesday. We now had to find an extra 2 days accommodation as our current Air B&B did not have a vacancy. Wednesday the mechanic arrived and advised that it was probably moisture in the refrigerant and to just wrap a hot cloth around the expansion point when it stopped working. It definitely wasn't the controller.

Friday Nov 8th, we were back on Rascal and anchored off Seaworld (Bum's Bay) with plans to depart for Coff's on the Sunday. By Sunday morning it was obvious that the refrigeration had completely died as the controller was dead! I taxied to the closest Anaconda and brought a portable car fridge so that we could at least keep some basics cold.

We departed on Monday 11th as planned but did not make it to Coff's. We had the worst 30+ hours ever! With virtually no wind, we were motoring just south of Cape Byron when a traveller block came loose and that was fixed while Bev helmed. Bev then advised that the engine was starting to overheat. Having replaced the water pump at Pancake Creek it was most likely an inlet blockage. We decided that I would not go overboard to check. The forecast was for a NE wind 10-15 Kn to come in we decided that we would sail on to Yamba. We had been having conversations with Marine Rescue and they confirmed that they would be able to tow us over the bar and into the marina.

Although the wind at that stage was negligible and we were basically drifting with the EAC, we put a reef in the main for the overnight period. By 9:00pm the wind was building and now NW. Not ideal but we could work with it. It just kept building and for next 5 hours raged at 25/30 Kn with higher gusts and enormous seas. I was wishing that I had put in a second reef as we were sailing at over 7 Kn and surfing down waves at 9+ Kn. With the physicality required to manage the boat I remained at the helm almost grateful that I could not really see how bad it was. At 3:30 am a loo break was required so Bev took the helm and we hove too. Back on deck I again took to sailing with the wind slowly starting to abate when with a might bang the boom went thrashing. The mainsheet block had broken. Bev took the helm and got us into the wind while I grabbed the main sheet and tied it down as best as I could. No engine, no main, we were now in deep shit. Despite the churning seas, we got the main down. We then made a PAN PAN to Marine Rescue and consulted. We were drifting toward Evans head at 3 Kn and it was 7 NM away. They organised for a nearby yacht to standby. By now, having had a chance to calm and talk with Bev, I realised that we could still make our way to Yamba on genoa and this was agreed with MR. By now it was becoming light, the wind was now in the low teens, it looked like we could make the Yamba bar by about 9:30. But the wind was not done with us yet, it now swung to the SE onto the nose and back to the high teens. We were tacking back and forth and by about 9 am we were still 5 NM north of the river entrance and after 30 hours without sleep I was exhausted. We called MR and they said they could collect us from there. So grateful! By 10am we were under tow and by 1:00 pm we were in the marina. We had some food and slept, had food and then slept until morning.

Scooter the local rigger/sailmaker was able provide advice and between his spares and mine, jury rigged a mainsheet system. Testing the engine, water was flowing freely through the cooling system, whatever had caused the blockage had obviously come free during the thrashing out at sea.

The rest from here was all pretty plan sailing in comparison.

16th November, having recovered from the ordeal we headed on to Coffs. We had a few days there as I recovered from a heavy cold. Although not initially planned, we then made the 14 hour overnight trip from Coffs to Port Stephens, finally passing through the heads on 23rd at 10:30 am on a bright sunny day. HOME!



Yacht For Sale. HOOD 23 – KARDINIA.

PRICE REDUCED FOR CLUB MEMBERS TO \$5,000

The ideal small yacht for Wednesday and Saturday club races and family outings on Port Stephens waters. Hull in good condition with recent (Nov 2024) 'Insurance Risk Report'. Insured with Club Marine for \$8k. This vessel is moored at Soldiers Point and is one of the last Hood 23's built. It features improved cockpit, strengthened deck structure and full internal hull moulding. The mast and rigging are in good condition and the sail wardrobe includes fully battened mainsail, number 1, 2 and 3 headsails, plus spinnaker. Powered by 8Hp long shaft outboard motor. Last slipped and antifouled in November 2024.

Further details and/or inspection can be easily arranged.
Contact Ted Bowen by phone or msg on 0437 985 431.



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PORT STEPHENS YACHT CLUB

Maintaining a positive culture for all

A respectful and supportive environment is fundamental to the success of our club, and we must be unwavering in our commitment to uphold these standards. Tolerance for abusive behaviour undermines the values we promote and can have a detrimental effect on our community and operations. Therefore, we must take a firm stance against such conduct, ensuring that all members and guests understand that respect and professionalism are non-negotiable traits and contribute to the positive culture we strive to maintain.

By fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect, we can protect the well-being of our members, volunteers, and directors and create a thriving environment for all members and guests.

The Board acknowledges that any disrespectful behaviour directed towards volunteers, management, directors, or fellow members and guests is unacceptable. Therefore, we hereby reaffirm that such conduct will not be tolerated. Members found in violation of the policy will face suspension or revocation of their membership, in accordance with the provisions outlined in the constitution. Guests who violate this policy will be promptly escorted from the premises and prohibited from returning.

Yours sincerely,

The Board of Directors