

Greenwich Flying Squadron

e - Humbug

Members' Newsletter



February 2008

Clubhouse: Bay Street Wharf, Greenwich. PO Box 5092 Greenwich 2065. Phone/FAX 9436 1901.

Web Site: www.gfs.org.au

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| Saturday | Keelboat Racing - Mixed Divisions and Etchells' Class |
| Wednesday | Twilight Keelboat Racing during Daylight Saving. |
| Sunday | Sabot and Laser Classes Keelboat Cruising Division. |

Editor's Comment.

The holiday season is past and we are well into the 2008 part of the sailing season. Nevertheless we are privileged to include our commodore's account of his participation onboard Stormy Petrel in the 2007 Sydney to Hobart, a race that probably most of us would consider the ultimate of off-shore events. Congratulation to all the club members who took part in the Boxing Day 2007 classic event*. We also feature the sailing secretary's report and a rundown on the Laser fleet activities. In this issue we also have our first racing rule entry, which we hope to continue in following issues in an effort to make our members more familiar with the rules and to promote safe sailing. A reminder that a big social night is coming soon. Back to Broadway – revisited is taking place at the clubhouse 23 February 2008. It is promising to be as successful as last year's event. And finally a thanks to our sponsors for their support of our club and members.

Johan Brinch

Dolphin II

Contributions welcome to
gfishumbug@bigpond.com

* Sydney to Hobart 1945 -

In 1945 the maritime artist Jack Earl, in his 44' Colin Archer design, double ender, Kathleen Gillette, organized a Christmas holiday cruise to Hobart with friends. Captain John Illingworth, on Rani, declared "Let's make it a race" and the Sydney to Hobart classic was initiated. The rest is history. Kathleen Gillette is restored and is moored at the Australian Maritime Museum in Sydney.



Commodore's Cockpit.

Rather than bore you with the usual diatribe pertaining to the administration of our great club, in this addition I have written a tale of my experience aboard Stormy Petrel in the Sydney to Hobart.

Martin Sheppard

Commodore

Sydney to Hobart 2007 – Go Stormy Petrel Go!

I grew up by the boat harbour in Wollongong and our family life revolved around water based activities. Our family's Boxing Day custom was to watch the start of the Sydney to Hobart on TV and then in the early evening venture across the road to watch the boats pass on the horizon.

As adults with our own yachts, my brother and I venture out onto Sydney Harbour every year without fail to be amongst the excitement of the start of the race. With the yachts now tracked on the internet we log on daily to watch the progress of the fleet and in particular we watch the battle amongst the little boats. It is against this background that my desire to compete in the great race grew and this year was my first race south aboard the seasoned, but accomplished "Stormy Petrel".



(Stormy Petrel at the CYCA on Christmas afternoon 2007)

The campaign aboard Stormy kicked off earlier this year with an introduction to Kevin O'Shea, the owner, by my friend the well known handicapper John Maclurcan. I took an instant liking to Kevin who I find affable and quiet but a real gentleman in every sense and a committed sailor. There are not many people that seem to get such satisfaction by just being at sea as Kevin does. His and John Maclurcan's passion for the boat and their focus on ensuring they and the crew did justice to the boat drew me in and their enthusiasm was infectious.

Warm up races included the Bird Island, Flinders Island and Cabbage Tree Island races as well as the SOPS races run by the CYCA. In the warm up races our performance was pretty average, in part due to a new crew but also because the conditions were in the main light or reaching conditions which do not suit Stormy. She really needs hard working conditions to do well on IRC.

Kevin took me into the crew to be one of three helmsman and it did not take long to realise I had a lot to learn. Kevin was easy and relaxed on the helm but John could squeeze so much out of her it

wasn't true. For me the challenge was to learn how to helm Stormy and make her go fast. She was very different to the modern light displacement boats I have helmed. In the early races I also realised that it is very hard to keep a yacht going fast in the dark.

There can be no doubt that "Stormy Petrel" is a race boat. Pipe cots, minimal storage, lots of safety gear and whilst well maintained, evidence everywhere of many hard years of sea miles. We joke on board that she is a great boat on which to go to sea, but not much chop when in pursuit of a romantic evening.

About the boat

"Stormy Petrel" was launched in the 1970 and she is a classic Sparkman and Stephens designed 36 footer with a Swanson 36 cabin top. Her hull is GRP and the deck timber. Stormy has had an illustrious career spanning 38 years since being built originally for Charles Curran (Owner of the 60 foot yacht "Sydney"). After damage to the boat in her first Hobart, the boat is rumoured to have been acquired cheaply by Syd Fischer who skippered her to victory in the 1971 One Ton Cup in New Zealand. Stormy's first Hobart was in 1970 and the recent Hobart was her 10th.

The boat has had much success, too much to outline here. Her long time owner, the late Tony Pearson, won just about everything with her and ensured that she will be indelibly printed in the Australian record books. Her success in recent years and return to her best as an ocean racer is a real tribute to the current owner Kevin O'Shea.

Preparation



(One of several sessions to prepare the boat for the Hobart)

I am firmly of the view that any individual contemplating their first Hobart should set themselves up for a full year of preparation and preferably two. It is easy to underestimate what is required and whilst it is possible to step on a boat at the last minute I don't believe that you would get the most of the experience. So why so much time for preparation – well its all about time and money as follows:

- Safety survival at sea course – two days with preparation (more than \$400)
- HF Radio Operators certificate – Full day, pre reading and exam (more than \$200)
- First Aid course – Full day at least (\$200+)
- Safety gear – quality wet weather gear, strobe, personal EPIRB, knife etc (\$2,000+)



(Kevin O'Shea – the owner and restorer of Stormy Petrel)

Experience

As the saying goes there is no substitute for experience. Before embarking on the Hobart I had sailed many ocean miles including about 20 Wollongong to Sydney trips and return in every sort of conditions. This even included bare poling in a Cav 28 in a 50+ knot southerly for a couple of hours one afternoon. I have also been to Lord Howe and back, to Qld and various other deliveries and coastal trips.

Whilst this experience is valuable it is ocean racing miles that really count.

The Hobart preparation races such as Bird Island, Flinders Island and Cabbage Tree Island taught me a lot about managing fatigue, dealing with wetness and coldness, anxiety and excitement and importantly about maintaining energy by eating. In many ways these challenges are harder to deal with than navigation, steering fast and sail changes etc.



(Life at sea – it takes time to adjust to the cramped and sparse interior)

The trip south

Well it was fantastic. The excitement aboard the boat before the start was measured and the feeling between the crew was great. Not everything was perfect, but it never is. The crew were competent, all safety gear was well prepared and drills rehearsed and after leaving the CYCA at about 11:30am we all enjoyed a quiet sandwich and sailed around sucking up the excitement.



(The full crew for the Sydney to Hobart – L to R Martin Sheppard, Steve Harries, Katy Coote, Werner Stayer, Jason Kolsky, Ben Hunter, Kevin O'Shea, Derek Sheppard)



(Mulling around before the start)

We were buried and late on the start but then managed to tack away to the Eastern shore and did well sailing through quite a few boats on the way to the Heads . When the race is 628 nautical miles there is something to be said for a safe start. The first 24 hours were a ball with hard running conditions. The 1.5oz kite served us well and we were up towards the top of the leaderboard. A southerly change slowed things a bit but Stormy just loves to work upwind and whilst wet and cooler we were trucking along. A return to Northerly winds again saw us smoking down the coast and according to yacht tracker we were 2nd on handicap to Wild Oats – go Stormy Go. Then the excitement started with the helm going slack as a result of a broken steering cable. As we scrambled to get hands on deck we sailed under kite for about a quarter of a mile with no steering. To our great relief she gently rounded up and we were able to get the kite down and install the emergency tiller. It could have been quite messy if she had turned to leeward resulting in a Chinese jibe.

With the sea state messy and it being night we assessed the damage to the steering and determined to carry on overnight with a poled headsail using the emergency tiller and then attempt to effect a repair in the daylight.

The night was a challenge with the tiller more like a surf boat sweep oar rather than a tiller. At times we had two on the helm as the following seas pushed the boat around. At daybreak the engineers on board set to work. We had 5 so skills were not lacking. After about an hour and a half the call was made for the wheel to go back on and with Spectra and Octopus straps in place we got back to racing. We had moved down the placings to 63rd but with steely determination we pushed on.

Bass Strait was very friendly really although the sea state was confused with waves coming from all directions. With the benefit of hindsight we should have sailed a little more conservatively in the conditions as whilst running very square we managed to get the kite wrapped around the forestay and it took some persuading to come down. After a quick repack we had it up again but immediately got another wrap. This was due at least in some part to the kite being very wet as the foredeck was awash when we dropped it. Caution became the better part of valour and we decided that a poled headsail was the go until the sea state improved.

After a 170nm's of running we had Flinders Island in sight after what was a largely uneventful crossing. We were really lucky as I must say I have experienced worse conditions sailing on Lake Macquarie.

As we started down the Tassie coast we hit our second southerly and for about 20 hours we were again hard on the breeze. Over night it was wet cold and moderately windy with sail reduced to 2 reefs in the main and a #3 headsail.



(Working down the Tasmanian coast – a dramatic drop in temperature!)

Stormy charged on and after a deliberate move to go out to sea we made up more than twenty eight miles overnight on “Impeccable” our biggest rival. As early morning passed and we put up a shy kite, we had “Impeccable”, “Tartan” and other boats in sight. It was all set for a drag race to the finish.

Rounding Tasman Island was a real buzz. “Impeccable” ran deep before reaching across in Storm Bay. We took a less conservative route and whilst giving room to the cliffs stayed closer to shore. With the kite very shy and the wind gusting to 30 Knots a big round up helped make the decision to lose the

kite. The round up was the catalyst for a special and memorable moment on the voyage. The magic moment developed as follows:

..... in the wet and heavy southerly conditions the previous night, we on deck were debating the merits of older IOR boats against lighter displacement boats of the modern era. Kevin O'Shea the owner passionate as always espoused the virtues of Stormy and explained how hardy she was and said”she is steady on her feet and doesn't round up like those modern boats”..... the debate continued

Fourteen hours later in the drag race across Storm Bay, the boat rounded up not once but three times. Kevin O'Shea, to his great credit remained at the navigation table and left the crazy Wollongong siblings (Derek and me) and friends to push the boat hard, but the third round up was enough. Kevin appeared at the companion way after the kite had been pulled down and we were



(The home straight across Storm Bay)

two sail reaching. He was slightly pale, visibly tired and we all knew we were due a bollicking. After a significant pause and before Kevin could speak, Derek on the helm said casually – “Hey Kevin – I thought you said last night that this boat wouldn’t round up!” The crew erupted into laughter, as did Kevin and the tension abated. It was one of those great moments.

The race continued up the Derwent and with the fresh Northerly blowing us up the River at 8:30pm the finish line was in sight. Celebration started as “Impeccable” was just a few minutes ahead of us but then suddenly the celebrations ceased and the boat went quiet. Almost like magic, the 20+ Nor Easter evaporated. We reacted quickly with the #1 peeled over the #3 and all weight sent to leeward. It was a classic twilight drifter of Humbug proportions. In the last of the daylight we ghosted across the line just four minutes behind “Impeccable” ending a truly great race.



(Kevin O'Shea – our fearless skipper guides us into the Derwent)

We ended up 4th in our division and 31st overall. In the overall standings with the weather conditions we could never have been amongst the places as we would need to have finished 19 hours earlier to place. This would have been impossible for Stormy in predominantly

running conditions.

In Constitution Dock a case of beer was passed aboard and the cheers of the welcoming crowd



(Who says yachts don't leak)

were fantastic. A few too many beers, a great New Year's Eve, a thorough clean out of the boat and we left Kevin and the delivery team to sail home – but that's another story I will leave Kevin to tell.

To Kevin O'Shea I can only say thank you for having me aboard your yacht and for trusting the Wollongong boys on the helm. It was great fun, a terrific learning experience and I feel very satisfied to have raced to Hobart on such a well recognised and accomplished yacht. Congratulations Kevin O'Shea.

Sailing Secretary's report

Both the Saturday Spring and Summer Series have now been completed. We have experienced the worst weather for a number of seasons for Saturday racing with strong winds and often rain. I hope that it improves for the coming Autumn Series and remaining Down Harbour Races.

Thanks to the duty crews who have performed their duty in an exemplary manner. There have been no instances where a crew has failed to materialise. Remaining rostered crews are –

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| February | 16 | Autumn Race 1 | <i>Cav Sav</i> |
| | 23 | Autumn Race 2 | <i>Joka (Etchell)</i> |
| March | 1 | Autumn Race 3 | <i>Tyrant</i> |
| | 8 | Autumn Race 4 | <i>Pistol Dawn</i> |
| | 15 | Joe Walsh Down Harbour Race 7 | <i>Forte Forever</i> |
| | 22 | Easter - no race | |
| | 29 | Autumn Race 5 | <i>Velocity</i> |
| April | 5 | Autumn Race 6 | <i>Lunasea</i> |
| | 12 | Autumn Race 7 | <i>Gatsby</i> |
| | 19 | Autumn Race 8 | <i>Murrurundi</i> |
| | 26 | Joe Walsh Down Harbour Race 8 | <i>Raptor</i> |

Australia Day 2008 fell on a Saturday and the Saturday sailors enjoyed the added attractions it provided on the harbour. Jets and aerobatics provided a bit of a distraction but it felt good to be actually competing on the day.

The Course 44 added to the Twilight list is incorrect and cannot be used. When it was printed Spectacle, Snapper and Cockatoo Islands lost their (P). It will be fixed for next season and will not be used until then.

Although the Saturday fleets remain small racing is keen. It would be great to have a few more boats regularly sailing. I guess family commitments on the weekend prevent skippers and crews from sailing. Keep in mind that with fewer boats on the water racing is often less hectic than on Wednesday nights. We would welcome any twilight skippers and crews who can sail on Saturday.

Our small scale sausage sizzle after Saturday racing is a good way to meet others and to discuss the day's racing. Cost is minimal and all skippers and their crew are welcome to come back to the club.

Best wishes for the remainder of races in the 2007 - 2008 season.

pH

Flair

Lasers – Mid Season Update



A fantastic season of Laser sailing is unfolding, with racing continuing right through the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Several GFS sailors will be competing in the Laser Master World Championships off Terrigal, and preparations are underway. Recently some of us ventured out Sydney Heads into a sizable swell – not quite Humbug conditions – and we now know what happens when Lasers fall off waves. They survive. Just.

Meanwhile, racing continues apace at GFS each Sunday. In the spirit of keeping everything as simple, fun and relaxing as possible, we're experimenting with new formats. Recently we've been running 3 or 4 very short races back to back – ending each race as soon as the fleet spreads out. We've been trialing gate starts and forced ranking starts (starting in reverse order from the previous finish). We've pretty much given up the need to record results or set handicaps – true minimalists.

If you're interested in dingy sailing, why not drop down to the club on Sundays. The sabots are there from around midday, and the lasers start rigging up around 3 pm. Several parents of the sabot sailors are now racing lasers, so its on for young and old. To learn more about lasers, contact Ken Gibson at ken_gibson@mckinsey.com.

Racing Rules

Our racing is generally governed by the “Blue Book”, Yachting Australia’s “Racing Rules of Sailing”. Sometimes, clubs vary from these rules, notified by the clubs’ Sailing Instructions. Rarely would a club vary Part 2 of the rules, “When Boats Meet”. This comprises five and a half pages (Rules 10 to 22), which skippers (and crew?) should know backwards!

Australia’s rules are based, in turn, on the International Sailing Federation’s rules, updated quadrennially. Interpretation of the rules is guided by a 200-page Casebook of precedents (see following website), updated annually. These precedents have come mostly from incidents where a club/regatta protest committee’s decision has been appealed to a higher level authority.

[http://www.isaf.com/tools/documents/Casebook%20updated%2001112007-\[4098\].pdf?PHPSESSID=9162b6b16021b12183e9a5abc3bbfc2b](http://www.isaf.com/tools/documents/Casebook%20updated%2001112007-[4098].pdf?PHPSESSID=9162b6b16021b12183e9a5abc3bbfc2b)

There are 109 well-diagrammed cases, fortunately cross-referenced according to the rules that were applied. Note that the Casebook includes some match-racing incidents. Match-racing rules vary slightly, as listed in Appendix C of the Blue Book (pp 70-71).

In a skirmish with another boat, it’s upmarket to yell “Read rule 17.2 you ...!”. But it’s vastly superior to call “What about Case 33, MAY-ATE!”.

In case(!) you have a life and cannot study all 200 pages, I’ll highlight an interesting case in this and subsequent Humbugs. See Case 27 (below), which highlights that a “giveway” boat must be given “room and opportunity” to give way.

Cheers,
Richard Kelly
LunaSea

CASE 27

Rule 2, Fair Sailing

Rule 14, Avoiding Contact

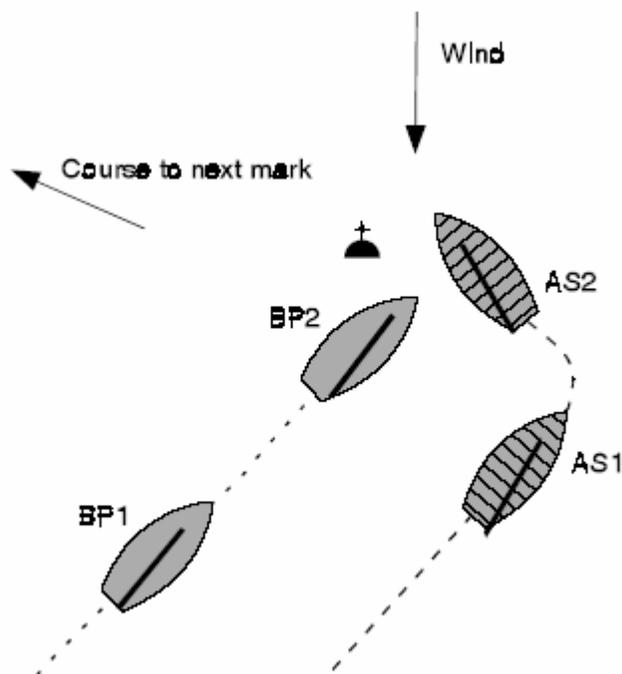
Rule 15, Acquiring Right of Way

A boat is not required to anticipate that another boat will break a rule. When a boat acquires right of way as a result of her own actions, the other boat is entitled to room to keep clear.

Summary of the Facts

AS, a hull length to leeward and a hull length ahead of BP, tacked as soon as she reached the starboard layline. Almost immediately she was hit and holed by BP travelling at about ten knots. The protest committee disqualified AS for breaking rule 15. It also disqualified BP under rule 2, pointing out that she knew AS was going to tack but did nothing to avoid

collision. BP appealed, asserting that she was not obligated to anticipate an illegal tack.



Decision

Appeal upheld. BP is reinstated.

When AS passed through head to wind, BP became the right-of-way boat and held right of way until AS assumed a close-hauled course on starboard tack. At that moment AS, having just acquired right of way under rule 10, was required by rule 15 to give BP room to keep clear. BP took no action to avoid a collision, but what could she have done? Given her speed and the distance involved, she had perhaps one to two seconds to decide what to do and then do it. It is a long-established underlying principle of the right-of-way rules, as stated in rule 15, that a boat that becomes obligated to keep clear by an action of another boat is entitled to sufficient time for response. Also, while it was obvious that AS would have to tack to round the mark, BP was under no obligation to anticipate that AS would break rule 15, or indeed any other rule. BP broke neither rule 2 nor rule 14

Junior Sailing.

Useful information can be obtained from the following websites:

<http://www.gfs.org.au>

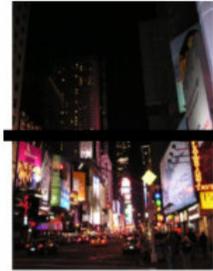
<http://www.sabot.com.au>

<http://www.sabot.au.com>

GFS Web Site: www.gfs.org.au

It is important to regularly check the club web site. There are results to check, club information, rosters, and warnings of up-coming events.

As the season progresses 'Humbug' will be posted on the web. 'Humbug' mail-outs will be restricted. Notification of a 'new' edition will come via email.



“Back to Broadway!”

GFS Social Night

Saturday, 23rd February 2008 at 6.30pm

- BYO picnic (fresh oysters provided on arrival)
 - Bar open (drinks only)
- Feel free to come by boat and raft up in the same manner as Wednesday nights, however, we encourage everyone to disembark and mingle with other members.....at least for the dancing !
 - \$20 per head (tickets to be purchased in advance) at twilight dinners from Michael Williams or Ross Taylor
- **Entertainment on the deck – same as last year.....** by Meredith O’Reilly, Helpman and Green Room Award nominated Music Theatre performer, and her accompanist, barrister and raconteur, Richard Horsley, for an evening of song and dance
 - Any queries please call Michael Williams on 0417745511 or email mjw@wproperty.com.au

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HOUSE POLICY

When our restricted licence permits the club to serve alcohol, Greenwich Flying Squadron Inc. has a policy to serve patrons in a responsible, friendly and professional manner.

Our staff are on hand to assist patrons in their decision to drink alcohol in moderation and where appropriate avoid the dilemmas of combining drinking with driving. Staff will not serve any person under the age of 18 years or any patron to an intoxicating level.

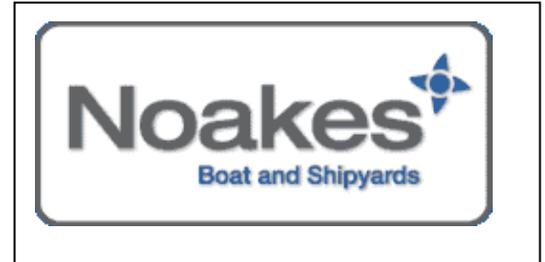
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