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GFS Twilight Racing. Photograph by Andrew Richardson, [Crossfire Photography](#)

Commodore's Compass

As Christmas approaches we are well settled
into the new season of sailing at Greenwich
Flying Squadron. **Phil Hare** is providing

informative reports on the Saturday yacht racing which is keeping our web page current and interesting, and our drive to recruit members under the leadership of **Chris Gaskell** is showing good results across all the divisions (as he **reports** in this issue). We will be supporting junior sailing with a small RHIB to replace one of the veteran tinnies and I thank **Don Ridley** for his leadership of the Sunday sailing. Clubhouse manager, **Mark Rhodes**, has also organised and completed a very substantial improvement to the support structure for the pontoon that should last us many years.

Many members are off to national titles over Christmas and the New Year and some will be traveling long distances to their chosen events. Some members will be cruising the coast and the really keen ones will be **racing south to Hobart**. On behalf of the Committee I wish all members a very happy and safe Christmas. To the travelers especially: may you have safe journeys and great tales to tell on your return.



David Edmiston - GFS commodore, is skipper on *Passion*.



Editor's Quiz

Can you dig up clues in the articles below? Scroll to the end for answers.

1. Which GFS member will be competing in this year's Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race? What is the sail number?
2. Which alternative epithets for a lifebuoy are derived from the name of a British naval officer?
3. Define the expression: 'A sheet in the wind's eye.'



GFS News

Jackpot heading to Hobart

GFS member **Adrian van Bellen** will be skippering his J122 *Jackpot* in this year's Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. It will be *Jackpot's* first Sydney to Hobart, and Adrian has promised to report on his adventures for *Humbug* on his triumphant return. Be sure to look out for sail number 6774 at the starting line on Boxing Day. You can read more about *Jackpot* and her crew [here](#).

Expired Flare Collection Schedule

In January Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is running a program to help boaters dispose of expired flares, with a [schedule of mobile collections](#) set up along the NSW coastline. The following collection points are highlighted for GFS members:

- Kissing Point Park Boat Ramp, Putney Tuesday 24 January 6.30am–10am
- Taplin Park Boat Ramp, Drummoyne Wednesday 25 January 6.30am–10am
- Tunks Park Boat Ramp, Cammeray Thursday 26 January 6.30am–10am
- Davidson Park Boat Ramp, Killarney Heights Saturday 28 January 6.30am–10am

GFS Membership Drive

Chris Gaskell *reports on the latest successful membership drive.*

Many thanks to all GFS members who have renewed their memberships for the current financial year and those who have joined for the first time.

We have recently sent our list of financial members to Sailing Australia so that full, crew and youth members have personal accident insurance cover while participating in races conducted under the auspices of GFS and races conducted by other clubs. Many of our active sailors avail themselves of this facility. Financial members of other clubs are also covered sailing at GFS, if they have a current membership of another club. This cover is an important feature of racing and one of the benefits of GFS (and Sailing Australia) membership.

A reminder to Skippers: the GFS club rules state that crew members should join the club after participating in three races in any one season. So regular crew should join GFS (if not members of another club).

GFS membership stands at 362, comprising: 167 full members, 169 crew members and 25 youth members. Plus John Notley, our esteemed life member. There are also another nine members whose applications have been approved by the committee, but who are yet to pay their membership fees. We are expecting to soon have over 370 members, up more than 100 from the 269 members registered last year. Thanks again to the skippers and crew who have responded to the call to join.

There are still a number of crew and full members who were members last year (or the year before) who have yet to join up this year, so I'd like to request that all skippers please ask their crews whether they are current members of other clubs, or if not, have simply forgotten to attend to their GFS renewals this year.

If I can be of assistance on any membership matters please feel free to contact me on 0432 018 081, gfsmembership@gmail.com or through the [contact page on the GFS website](#).

I would like to wish all GFS members a joyous and safe festive season, and look forward to seeing you on the water for the final twilight event of the season and in the New Year.



Little Johnny: Mummy, when I grow up I want to be a sailor.

Mother: Well Johnny, you have to pick one or the other, you can't do both.

Man Overboard!

An anonymous GFS member shares a cautionary tale.



On my return home after the hair-raising event I am about to recount, my wife knew that something was amiss as I was wearing the skipper's wet weather pants and not much else!

The evening had started out beautifully. With a nor'easter blowing at about 12 knots we got off to a good start and were goose-winged coming out through the Humbug. I was delegated to holding the boom over on port, and we were making good progress near the head of the division.

The drama started as we cleared Greenwich Point. The breeze suddenly swung from a nor'nor'easter to an easterly and we suffered an involuntary gybe. I was unable to hold the boom and was pushed very quickly across the boat. My efforts to grab onto the stays and rails failed, and before I knew it I became a man overboard!

What happened next remains a bit of a blur. I do recall that, apart from the skipper, the rest of the experienced crew froze in shock. This incident occurred a few years ago before we had a lifebuoy hung off the stern, and we had no predetermined drill to follow under the circumstances.

The skipper kept his head, reacting very well. He threw the lazy sheet out and I was able to grab hold of it. He started the motor and put it into reverse. This action slowed us from around eight knots to about four. The crew were instructed to loosen sheets as well.

I was able to work myself around to the stern of the boat. In doing so I lost my cap – which was actually a relief, as I was able to see what was going on around me as the race continued. Unfortunately, my shorts and underpants then parted company with me. The crew were obliged to drag me aboard wearing only a polo shirt and boat shoes! Fortunately, our female crew member was able to look away to prevent a shock to her system. We also had Black division bearing down on us, and I am sure they saw more than they bargained for.

Once I was back on board, and I'd followed the skipper's directions to put on his wet weather pants, we stopped the motor and trimmed the sheets. We still managed to complete the race, and learnt the following lessons:

1. Be ready to duck during an unplanned gybe!
2. There should be a 'man overboard' drill known to all on board.
3. It is essential to have a lifebuoy on the stern.
4. Just in case numbers 1, 2 and 3 fail: have a spare pair of undies and shorts in your bag.

Lifebuoys are also known as 'kisby' or 'kisbie' rings, which are reputed to be named after nineteenth century British Naval officer Thomas Kisbee.

Trading Up

James Kearney *describes how buying a larger boat led to an unexpected journey – from self-delusion to reality.*



Unfortunately, this boat wasn't for sale



The boat that won the author's heart: Red William

Was it a mid-life crisis? Or maybe group hysteria?

Three blokes of a certain age were having a beer on the GFS deck after a race. They had sailed Twilights for years in a J24. One of them spoke the fateful words: "Wouldn't it be nice to have a bigger boat?"

Peter said: "We could cruise the Pacific Islands."

Graeme said: "The Mediterranean."

James said: "Maybe Pittwater."

They looked at one another, and nodded wistfully. Nothing more was said just then, but like a splinter under the skin, the idea was stuck fast.

Some months later (at our age, new ideas take time) the topic was broached again. Arguments in favour of a bigger boat tumbled out. At the top of the list was the Arctic Fox – this was our nickname for the rival J24 skipper who beat us consistently for years in an identical boat at twilight races. The only escape from a lifetime of continuing defeat and humiliation at the hands of the Arctic Fox was to trade up.

Then there were the undoubted potential travel and holiday advantages: Vanuatu! Greece! Pittwater! We had bought the dream and were hooked.

Searching for boats on the internet took over Peter's life. The American dollar had tanked and we could afford something over 40 feet, but that meant buying in the USA and sailing the boat back. That pernicious dream took hold with a vengeance. A return to earth had to happen.

We decided to inspect the local examples of the boats we were ogling on the internet. We looked at a Valiant 40. This proved to be a watershed moment because the boat had all the features we saw in the advertisements. But the condition was simply depressing – damp below and every one of the fittings needed repair or replacement. This triggered a reality check: chances were this was what we were likely to find overseas. Meanwhile the logistics of buying overseas, and the risks – personal and financial – also began to sink in.

This experience changed our whole approach. We started to look for smaller boats, this time in Australia. The classic blue water designs gave way to more practical compromises. We liked the look of the Cavalier 32 and there were plenty of them on the east coast.

We went up and down the NSW coast looking at Cav32s. Some were really great boats, but nothing seemed quite good enough to buy. There was something that stopped us – maybe it was the limited range. That siren song of the ocean going boat was still there.

Now we examined other designs in earnest. The Sparkman & Stephens 34 seemed to tick all the boxes and had the dream factor: Jessica Watson had chosen it for her circumnavigation of the globe. However, a problem was that there were plenty of boats in WA but not many on the east coast. We checked out all the S&S34s for sale in Sydney, and even some that weren't. Zinging around the harbour in salesmens' runabouts was fun, seeing how different owners had worked the same design into various end results. We even had coffee on the water. One boat was in memorably appalling condition: cockpit half full of dirty water and about two years of bird droppings on the deck. The owner still wanted real money for it. We sighed and shook our heads – some people are just dreamers!



Unsuccessful candidate: bird droppings on the deck



Water in the cockpit

We decided none of the Sydney S&Ss were right, and the big fleet of S&S34s in WA were just too far away. It would be a logistical nightmare to get a boat back to home base in Sydney. It had to be the east coast. A little interstate trip was called for. Cheap online air tickets helped us on our way.

The Tasmanian boat was the saddest we had seen, a former prominent racing boat ruined by a misguided 'renovation'. It had all the charm of a caravan. On the other hand, the Melbourne boat – named *Red William* – had an odd red-coloured hull, but ticked most of the boxes. It needed a lot of work but that was an advantage after seeing the Tasmanian boat. Sometimes 'original' is good. *Red William* was built in 1975 so was not young – it had a motor past its use by date, but it had been regularly sailed. It also had that special snugness down below that comes from wood paneling and dark colours. A survey revealed no hidden disasters.

The asking price seemed cheap for what it was. A solid well built boat that shouted old-fashioned quality. There was no trouble making a decision. This one felt right. Negotiations for the purchase began. It didn't take long. The team were over the moon.

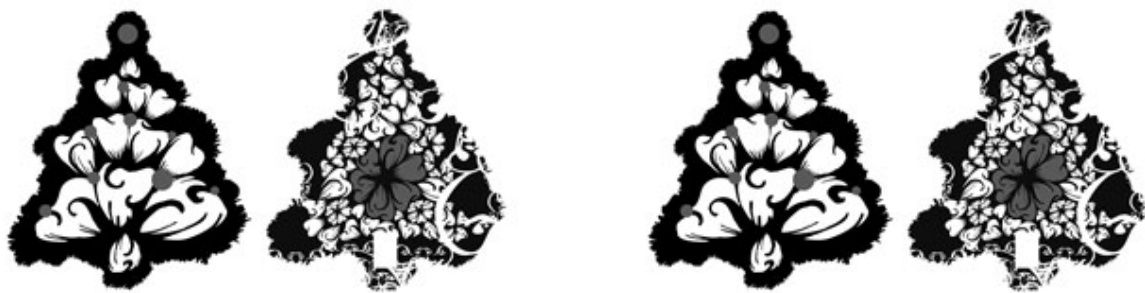
We wanted to sail our new boat from Melbourne to Sydney ourselves. The logistics proved too difficult. It was a good decision to engage professional boat deliverers. We would not have coped if that old motor were to die while in a shipping lane just outside Port Phillip Bay (which it did). The delivery was good value for the service provided.

The boat arrived in Sydney just after dusk one Sunday night. Peter was so excited that in the rush to meet the boat, he drove his car into the gatepost at home. We watched *Red William's* navigation lights approach our clubhouse across glassy waters after an epic journey from Melbourne. It was a magical moment to secure the boat to its mooring in Sydney for the first time.

The first job was to replace that motor – expensive but worth every penny. Ditto for the rig and wiring. Despite its age (40 plus years) and weight (about 6 tons), *Red William* has proved competitive in Twilight sailing, especially if the wind gets up over 20 knots. It was second overall in Red Division in the 2015-2016 season, and first on scratch and handicap in the first couple of races of the current season. We now enjoy holidays in Pittwater every January. The trip there and back is when *Red William* shines – beautifully balanced slicing to windward in heavy wind and swell – a delight to sail outside: solid, predictable and trustworthy.

The reason to trade up might be mid-life crisis or group hysteria, but what does it matter? We are happy. We may never sail an ocean but we live the dream knowing that we can, if we want. And the Arctic Fox has been to visit our snug cabin on *Red William*. Unfortunately he wants to trade up now. We hope he doesn't buy an S&S34.

The expression 'three sheets to the wind' (originally 'three sheets in the wind') came from a nautical expression used by sailors to express how intoxicated they were. Originally, there was a scale of drunkenness, with an increasing number of loose sheets representing how much a sail would flap in the wind (like a drunken sailor). So 'one sheet in the wind' (or 'a sheet in the wind's eye') was slightly tipsy; two sheets – a bit more merry; and three sheets – falling over drunk.



Editor's Quiz Answers

1. Adrian van Bellen. Sail number 6774.
2. 'Kisby' or 'kisbie' ring.
3. Slightly tipsy.



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