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Humbug - March 2016

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GFS Laser Fleet: Ray Vaughan (left) and Bill Haughton (right). Photo by Ken Gibson

Commodore's Compass

Congratulations to **all the GFS sailors** who participated in major sailing events or national titles over the Christmas New Year period. Be it a Sydney to Hobart, a Pittwater to Coffs, or a national championship, these are great tests of

Editor's Echo

In this issue, we are experimenting with an electronic version of *Humbug*. Last issue, we printed 50 copies and distributed one per table at the club. Although a pdf version was posted

commitment and skill. Congratulations are due not just to the winners, but to all the participants that make these events worthwhile.

Special thanks also to the club members who volunteered to run these events. Without the volunteer race officers, measurers, finishers, recorders and mark layers, and jury there would be no championships.

Finally, these events would not be possible without the organisational skills of the committees of major races and national class titles. It is no easy task finding volunteers for all the roles needed, so if you get an opportunity to help please say "yes".



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. When was GFS founded and what was it originally called?
2. What is another name for a ship's sick list?
3. Which well-known misfortune befell Bruce Johnston's boat *Laughing*?

onto the website for all members to read, not everyone saw *Humbug* or was aware it had been distributed. To resolve this issue, we could either print enough copies for all members, or email an electronic version.

An electronic newsletter can be delivered to all members at essentially no cost. We can link to stories on the internet and our website, which can be accessed if you are interested, or scrolled past if you are not. The disadvantages: many people prefer to read a hard copy; issues will be shorter – a long email newsletter can be taxing to read, and we will need to archive *Humbug* electronically rather than in hard copy.

A print version offers increased options for an appealing graphic design that better reflects the spirit of the club. Long feature articles can be included and read at leisure. Research shows that a print version is more likely to be read if enough copies are printed and delivered. However, the cost of designing and printing one copy for each member will need to be covered by an increase in membership fees.

The question is: would you be prepared to pay approximately \$20 per year in your membership fees in order to receive four print issues of *Humbug* per year, or would you prefer an electronic newsletter? Once you have read this issue, please complete this [survey](#) to let me know your views.



Tim Kannegieter is *Humbug* editor and crews *Force Four*.

GFS News

Rule Changes

Following the 2015 World Sailing (ISAF) conference in November, some [changes](#) were made to the RRS and became effective from 1 January 2016.

Vale Alan Hunt

We are sad to report the passing of former member **Alan Hunt**. Alan served as GFS president and sailed 12ft skiffs during the 1960s.



Peter Miller, a friend of John Mackay, took this fabulous image of the last twilight of 2015 from the ferry.

A binnacle is the stand upon which a ship's compass is mounted. A list of crew unfit for duty is called a binnacle list as it was given to the officer of the watch by the ship's surgeon and left on the binnacle.

GFS Skipper Discovering Asia

In January, GFS Member **Paul Atwood** was called in at short notice to take over as skipper on 70ft clipper *Unicef* in the Clipper Round the World Race when Jim Prendergast stood down after being treated for kidney stones. Paul trained many of the members of the 2015-16 Clipper Race crew in his role as training skipper at the race's centre in Gosport. Paul led the crew for Race 7 – from Airlie Beach to Da Nang, Vietnam, and is currently embarked on Race 8, which departed Da Nang on 27 February for Qingdao, China. Martin Clough will take over as skipper for the remainder of the racing legs. In his [blog](#), Paul has reported that *Unicef* wrapped and badly damaged their heavyweight spinnaker enroute to Da Nang, and weathered an onslaught of over-familiar flying fish.

The **Clipper Race** is an annual challenge open to applications from the public, not pro sailors, so a top notch skipper is essential to safety. It consists of eight legs and 14-16 individual races. The 2015-16 race started in the UK on 30 August, and will finish at St Katherine's Dock, London on 30 July.



Paul Atwood (courtesy of Second Star Sailing)



The *Unicef* crew depart Airlie Beach for Vietnam (courtesy of The Clipper Race)

History of GFS Clubhouse

Rosalie Lucas *recounts the history and her memories of the evolution of the GFS clubhouse*

Greenwich 12ft Flying Squadron was formed in 1924, and in 1974 re-named Greenwich Flying Squadron. The current site has housed GFS for 87 years. It is worth noting that the club's centenary is only eight years away!

Committee members initially met in the classroom of the local school. However in 1928, when boat builders Tass and Shrewdy relinquished their tenancy of the shed at the foot of Bay Street, Alf Jerrems – who was the club's President and also a Lane Cove Council alderman – persuaded Council to lease the building to GFS. The first GFS committee meeting on site was held in December 1928 in a shed built with a Council grant. That original shed is part of the current clubhouse structure. In the early 1950s, members extended the clubhouse by incorporating part of the wharf's ferry waiting shed, which was once occupied by a barber. The clubhouse has undergone some wonderful improvements since those times and credit is due to members who volunteered, and continue to volunteer, to take care of clubhouse alterations and maintenance.

The GFS clubhouse has served many purposes aside from storing boats – in the Depression it was a

place where disadvantaged people could sleep. It has also been the venue for regular meetings of groups such as the Short Handed Sailing Association of Australia and the Boat Owners Association. Social events have been many and varied: dances were held regularly in early times and some events I recall over the last 20 years include pirate dress-up nights; chicken and seafood nights; and nights where club members have treated their fellow sailors to Super8 films of sea-going travels. The clubhouse has also seen its fair share of weddings and 'special' birthdays.

On page 12 of the club's history book *Greenwich Flying Squadron: The First 75 Years* is a 1912 photo of the clubhouse when it was a boat shed with adjacent ferry waiting shelter. The photo here shows the GFS clubhouse as it looked in 1972, and of course we all know what it looks like today!



The GFS clubhouse pictured in 1972

“I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied...”

- From the poem *Sea-Fever* by John Masefield

How Things Have Changed

The discovery of an old racing results sheet brought back memories for John Pymble

Every twenty years or so I feel the urge to have a bit of a house clean up, whether it needs it or not. During one such a recent event, stuffed amongst a bunch of decaying sailing mags, I came across the results for the GFS Saturday Race of 22 October 1988, a copy of which is included for your amusement.

Now this got me to thinking about how things have changed. The first thing I noticed was how the result sheet appears to be a form from a very early version of the computer, likely pressed into service when the club typewriter finally died. The handwritten results add a homely touch, and I seem to recall numerous visits to the letter box in the days following the race, as results were dispatched via the Post Master General's Department. Also, the handicap numbers appear to be a work of fiction, but to many of us a more easily understood system than we have today.

The second thing I noticed was that the boats are all so small. Back then the biggest yacht in the fleet was my old mate Bruce Johnston's Cavalier 28, named *Laughing*. This boat shot to fame when some young nutter pinched it and set out for New Zealand, only to need rescuing on the high seas. Bruce did eventually get his beloved Cav back, but I digress.

I noticed with pride that dear old *Saltbush Bill*, my faithful PR 25, pulled off a first on handicap. This must have been an unusual event back in 88 for me to put that scrap of paper aside in a safe place amongst those old sailing rags. Come to think of it, a win in 2015 is an unusual event as well, but these days any such result would be put aside electronically in the cloud. Oh, how things have changed.

So it seems the only thing that hasn't changed at GFS is the boat that I sail. Some may say I'm a sentimental old fool at heart and others that I'm a slow learner for keeping the old girl for the best part of 30 years, but I'm really trying to win the award for the longest serving member with the same boat! Any other contenders?

John Pymble is skipper on *Saltbush Bill*.

We had a few weeks waiting for the rest of the crew to be made up. Unfortunately "old mate" Jim Lelliot had to pull out and Ian was busy making a living selling his cars and Mahindas. So the appointed captain was **Glen Sanford**, Ian's regular navigator and an experienced offshore sailor. Glen is **Ian Sanford's** brother and they sail *Tartan* regularly in the Twilights. Joining us was a mate of Glen's: Ron Geekie of Amber Tiles fame, from Dural. I had met Glen on my sail back from Hobart on *Caliban* back in March.

We flew to Proserpine and picked up the ginormous quantity of food ordered from Woolworths Online in Cannonvale, and spent an hour or so stowing the food in the various hidey holes in the yacht. By mid-afternoon we were ready to leave the Port of Airlie marina and head for Hamilton Island.

Leaving Airlie Beach we rounded Pioneer Point and, heading into a stiff southerly, entered Molle Channel and travelled south past Daydream Island, Molle Island and then into Whitsunday Passage. We passed Dent Island where a beautiful ketch was moored on the northern side. I found out subsequently that this boat is called *Ron of Argyll* and operates as a charter boat.

We got into Hammo after 5 o'clock, topped up with diesel and water, and collected Mal who had spent the day sussing out the birdlife and the bay. A late walk, dodging the myriad electric buggies carrying guests to dinner appointments, found us on the top of the ridge in a total darkness – not much point in going down to Catseye Bay in those conditions. We went back to *Caliban* and put a dent in the huge victualing stockpile.

Next day we were up at 'sparrows' to get off the marina, down Dent Passage and on our way to Scawfell Island. Near Cowrie Island we ran the tidal surge.

The journey through the Whitsunday Islands was just fabulous. With blue skies and seas we wended our way between beautiful pine-clad islands. The pine up there is the native Hoop Pine, *Araucaria cunninghamii*, which has a wide range of uses including musical instruments.

With the 20 knot southeasterly we were motor sailing with just the main up. At least that meant we got hot showers that night.

Late in the day we anchored at Scawfell Island. Scawfell is the largest island in the Cumberland Group and part of the Great Barrier Reef National Park. Like the other islands in the Whitsundays it is granite with a mixture of eucalypt and Hoop Pine forest. It is a turtle hatchery but we saw none at this time of the year. We dropped the kellick amongst a collection of yachts, catamarans and powerboats all sheltering from the southerlies.

Ron worked out how to set up the barbecue on the transom rails and we got stuck into some steak with a choice of white or red, and fresh fruit and yoghurt for afters. This kind of sailing can be tough. Rising before dawn we had the anchor up just as the sky started to lighten and were on our way southeast again.

The next stretch called for some vigilance with the myriad islands and a shipping channel. Coal carriers are heading into and out of the coal-exporting terminal at Hay Point. We headed for Middle Percy Island where we planned to go ashore for a walk. Arriving after lunch we launched our rubber ducky and motored into the beach. After a refreshing swim followed by a cold beer we started exploring.



Coal Carrier bound for Hay Point



A-frame on Middle Percy Island

Middle Percy was named by Mathew Flinders in 1802 after the Duke of Northumberland's family name. The island has a colourful history too detailed to mention here. Behind the beach is an A-frame construction, called the Middle Percy Yacht Club, which sports memorabilia from passing travelers. The A-frame is 'free to use by all seafarers' – as long as you take your rubbish with you.

We walked up a slight hill, past a treehouse built of bits and pieces, and down to a lagoon, which at low tide was bone dry. Against the 'shore' was a remarkable boat sitting on the mud. The owner was up on the bow and I hailed him. After a brief conversation about the weather, as you do, I asked if we could come aboard. He welcomed us with true nautical friendliness. He was a shipwright who built the boat himself. It was a 'dead-head schooner'. The fibreglass hull looked good and sound. The rest of the boat looked like it was constructed from Telecom left overs and junk. Down below his wife was resting a roast beef she had just taken out of the oven. They proudly showed us into every corner of their home, and I even glimpsed the huge Detroit Diesel (from a trawler) nestled under the double bed in the aft cabin. After a fascinating discussion about boats and timber we left them and returned to our boat for barbecue steak and some wine.

The following day we were up again before dawn and in failing winds headed to Yeppoon for a break at a marina. The Queensland coast reappeared and I was most surprised at the height and ruggedness of the Peninsular Range as we headed south towards Rosslyn Bay.

The coastline was marked by uninhabited stretches with sparkling deserted beaches. By the time we got to Rosslyn Bay, south of Yeppoon, it was pitch black. We had to find our way into the marina in the dark, which was most interesting, if a little nerve wracking. We used the Navionics phone app to get into the harbour, as it has very up to date charting, contours and light flash definitions. The next day, after showering and refueling, we headed over to Great Keppel Island for a late lunch and a swim.

Great Keppel was touted as a great Queensland resort back in the 70s and 80s, but since a cyclone tore through the island it is a pretty sad affair. The major resort is boarded up and closed, awaiting its fate. The other resort, which is much more down-market, seems to be struggling along. It is quite a pretty place though.

Our next destination was Lady Musgrave Island – an overnight sail away. Imagine my surprise as, in the early dawn light, I saw a fleet of boats anchored in the middle of the Coral Sea. The island is a coral cay, with a lagoon inside an enclosing reef. It is tiny, host to about a million Noddies and a remarkable community of plants including pisonia, and pandanus. There is a composting toilet but no water. Campers come and stay for a week at a time.

Ron donned snorkel gear and Mal took him off in the dinghy to the edge of the lagoon. They came back with lunch.

The weather report forecast a big blow to come in overnight so we decided to skeddadle and get as far as we could past Fraser Island before it hit. We had a very pleasant sail with a northeaster behind us to the top of Fraser Island. We waited expectantly for the southerly.

And did it hit! At about 1am, after we gybed the main coming round Waddy Point, the southerly hit as a wall of water. We furled the jib and dropped the main and continued under motor – bashing into 35-40 knot winds and 3.5m waves for the next 18 hours. We were very, very glad to get into Mooloolooba late in the afternoon and retire to the surf club for a slap up meal.

Thanks Glen, Ron and Mal for a great experience and to Ian for the loan of your boat.

Editor's Quiz Answers

1. 1924. Greenwich 12ft Flying Squadron.
2. A binnacle list.
3. It was stolen and sailed towards New Zealand.

Member Survey - Electronic or Print?

How would you like to receive future issues of *Humbug*?
(Please click on your answer below):

- a. Electronically**
- b. In print**
- c. Either electronic or print, I don't mind**

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