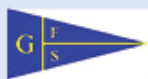


## Humbug - Spring 2019

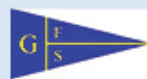
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Greenwich Flying Squadron



# HUMBUG



GFS Patron **Geoff Lucas** on the water in the 2016 Middle Harbour Amateur Sailing Club Race. You can read more about his sailing journey [later](#) in this issue of *Humbug*.

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## Commodore's Compass

Welcome to our first *Humbug* of the 2019/20 sailing season. While some of us have enjoyed sailing during winter in the West Harbour Series and at RANSA it is good to be back at GFS and to have our new race season well under way.

With fewer sailing activities at GFS during the winter, the Committee has had time to focus on a range of Clubhouse and organisational matters which you can read about in the [news section](#) of this issue. I would like to thank them for their efforts.

Our racing season is now well under way and there are currently 26 yachts registered for Saturday races and 77 yachts for Twilights. Wednesday nights have been well attended and are running smoothly. It is great to have ML and the catering team back. **Marie Van Bellen** and **Glenda Cameron-Strange** have negotiated with our sponsors, and all of them have agreed to continue to support GFS for another season.

This year, **Harvey Porter**, our chief course-setter, is being ably assisted by **Mark Rhodes** and **Sam**

**Thompson. Danni Birchall** and **Nick Murphy** are back on deck on Wednesday nights, keeping us well informed about events and race results. I would like to thank all of them for their efforts and support in ensuring the success of our Twilight evenings

I am pleased that **David Mclean** has agreed to continue as our trainer for the juniors and thank him, along with **Richard Hawkins** (Rear Commodore Junior Sailing), for making sure that our young sailors are not only learning to sail but also having fun on the water.

Finally, I would like to welcome **Geoff Lucas** as our new Patron. Geoff's contributions to GFS and sailing history are profiled [later](#) in this issue. I wish all of you a successful and safe sailing season.



**Pam Joy** - GFS Commodore, is skipper on *TANA*.

## GFS News

### Pre-season Activities and Sailing Instructions

GFS would like to welcome **Rob Hale** as Clubhouse Manager and **David Leslie** as Safety Officer. Both have been kept busy with pre-season activities including a very successful working bee, skippers briefing, and safety audits of yachts and Lasers. **Phil Hare**, Rear Commodore Sailing, has put in an enormous effort to make sure that our aquatic license is current and put together our courses and sailing program for this season. There have been a number of changes to the Sailing Instructions, and the Commodore has asked that all skippers read them to stay up to date.

### Clubhouse Security System and Lease

The GFS Clubhouse has a new, upgraded security system. **Rob Hale** has overseen the installation of the system – which includes new smoke and fire detectors, security cameras and a swipe card entry system. He is currently working with **Chris Gaskell** and **Dion Weston** to establish a register of access cards before distributing them to eligible key holders.

Thanks also to **James Kearney** for negotiating the renewal of the GFS Clubhouse lease. He convened a very successful meeting with representatives from Lane Cove Council and RMS. This was the first time that we have been able to hold joint discussions with both organisations to clarify lease requirements, and there was much goodwill between all parties. We have submitted a formal request to secure our tenure of the Clubhouse for a further five-year term. The Committee is awaiting a response and is optimistic that the lease will be signed off in the near future.

### EFTPOS Payment System for Twilights

GFS Treasurer **Martin Kluckow** has set up an EFTPOS payment system for Twilight meals and drinks. We hope that this will provide a convenient option for members as well as streamlining purchasing and record keeping.

## Why your grandchild needs a wetsuit for Christmas

**Tim Kannegieter** shares his thoughts on the importance of supporting the next generation of GFS sailors



*Tim Kannegieter on the water with his daughter Olivia*

Do you have a grandchild you would love to see get off their electronic device and out into the water? If so, now is the time to act.

The junior sailing season has commenced and we need more juniors to join the club. We have Sabots for younger children and Lasers for older ones. We are trialling some innovative ways to get kids enthusiastic and confident and will support them in learning to sail independently. We even have a professional coach on hand to teach the correct technique.

All you have to do is bring them along at 12.30pm on any Sunday and we will introduce them what sailing is all about. Consider an early Christmas present of a wetsuit, booties, gloves and life jacket.

It's important for children to spend time in meaningful activities with their extended family and this is a great opportunity to do so. Ideally, you will help them rig, give tips and encouragement, help them unrig at the end, then spend some quality time enjoying our traditional snacks and drinks.

This is more than a routine start-of-season call. The junior program has struggled in recent years to attract new sailors. Societal changes have contributed to the problem – kids are far more interested in YouTube, social media, and other online entertainment.

We have hundreds of parents and grandparents in the club, but few are actively encouraging their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews to get active in the outdoors. So, what are you waiting for? Let's get our junior program humming.

*Tim Kannegieter is Humbug Editor and skipper on Force Four.*

Do you have an epic voyage, thrilling tale, or personal reflection to share with your fellow GFS members? We are looking for to more wonderful contributions for the next issue of *Humbug*. Please send your articles [togfshumbug@gmail.com](mailto:togfshumbug@gmail.com)

## Falling in Love With GFS

Member **Graeme Innes** shares some of his early GFS memories



*Graeme Innes at the helm*

We also brought *Serenity* to Sydney by truck. As she was a wooden-hulled boat, I was very worried when the prime mover on the truck broke down, and she was parked in a truck stop in the dry South Australian heat for a week while it was repaired. I had visions of timbers shrinking and cracking, and her sinking to the bottom the first time she was put in the water. But when the crane at Woolwich lowered her into Sydney Harbour, she floated as well as she ever had – full marks to Van de Stadt design and hull building.

The next question was where we should keep her. Maureen and I decided to visit some of the local sailing clubs to find out about moorings and the processes involved. The first on the list was the Greenwich Flying Squadron (GFS), an unprepossessing white shed hiding quietly at the bottom of Bay Street. We walked in one Saturday afternoon as weekend racing was coming to an end. The welcome we received was so warm and friendly, and the setting and view so perfect, that we did not continue down the list. We knew that this was the right place for our boat, and it has been right ever since.

As well as working and playing on my own boat, I started to sail in GFS Twilights and on Saturday afternoons.

## *GFS became a place of solace for me. The surroundings, the water, and the friendly atmosphere made it a place where I could slough off the stresses of my work, and really relax*

In fact, on occasions when I used to get grumpy, Maureen would suggest that it was time I went down to the sailing club.

I was keen to be able to reach my boat independently so that I could carry out work and maintenance on her by myself. I approached Technical Aids for the Disabled for a solution. One of their volunteers constructed two battery-powered and salt-resistant boxes, controlled by a garage door opener, and which made a loud bird whistling noise. I left one on the boat, and placed the other on the club pontoon, and rowed happily between them.

This worked well on most occasions. On one day, when the wind was blowing dogs off chains and I probably should not have rowed out to the boat in the first place, I could not hear the club beacon when I wanted to row back. Based on the direction of the wind, I worked out where the shoreline was, and rowed directly towards it, on the theory that I could then row along it until I heard the noise. After travelling along the shore for some time, avoiding rocks and overhanging jetties, I realised that I must have been swept past the club, and turned around before being swept out of the Lane Cove river and into the harbour proper. After a lot of hard paddling against the wind, I heard the sound I was seeking and, tired but triumphant, reached my goal.

"We wondered if you were coming back," said some of my new clubmates. "We've been watching you, and were about to get a motorboat out and come and pick you up when you turned around. All that rowing against the wind will have done you good, though," they said.

I loved crewing on other boats in Twilights and Saturday afternoon races and made a number of good friends in the process. But I yearned to have my own boat competing. Maureen's university friend Shir Guhl had moved to Sydney some years before, and married a barrister, **James Kearney**. James had done a lot of sailing earlier in his life, and I persuaded him to come and sail with me on *Serenity*. He brought his school friend, who was also a good sailor, and the three of us formed a crew to enter *Serenity* in the Twilights.

We have sailed together ever since, become good friends, and now co-own our third boat. James jokes that it is the only partnership he has known where there has never been a disagreement – if one of us does something on the boat which the others regard as a little extreme, the others just smile and shake our heads, and learn from the experience. I view our success as the product of the joy we all gain from sailing.

*Graeme kindly shared the preceding extract from his memoir, Finding a Way.*

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## A Life-changing Event

For **Andrew Nelson**, a hair-raising sailing experience was a wake-up call to increase his fitness level



Andrew Nelson and his partner, Barbara Bohdanowicz, competing in the National Heron Titles on the Derwent at Lindisfarne in December 2014.

You don't have to be very fit to sail. That was certainly my state when I took it up as a middle-aged adult. It's almost a sedentary sport, with short moments of furious activity interspersed with long intervals of not doing very much – beyond paying attention. It helps to be fit, but you can get away with a very modest level of robustness. I was several kilos over my optimum weight and not exercising regularly when I was introduced to Heron sailing at Middle Harbour on inheriting a boat from my son. After a season or two, I could sail the courses single-handed with some degree of confidence, even if there were still capsizes. Some very skilled sailors were on hand in the club to offer gratefully received advice.

One blustery afternoon though, I had trouble righting the boat after a capsize – it took several attempts, and when the boat was finally upright I was exhausted and no longer had the strength to pull myself aboard. The jib was still poled out, and we were headed with speed on a run towards the Heads, with me clutching the transom. I was not in danger, I had my lifejacket on, and the rescue boat was aware of my predicament. Eventually, my strength returned and I was able to haul myself back on board. It was a big wake-up call – I should have had the endurance to get straight back in that boat.

Shortly after that, I bought myself a bike. After some training, I started riding to work and continued doing so for the rest of my working life. My weight came down and my cardiac health returned. My sons went out and bought bikes too.

This year I have had heart surgery to correct a heart defect, likely genetic. I went into surgery fit, and my recovery has been gratifyingly rapid. I can point to my experience in Middle Harbour and the subsequent change of lifestyle as a significant contributing factors to that good recovery. The bonus has been the making of many good friends through sailing, an introduction to GFS, and the many benefits that membership and regular participation in events at the club brings. In 2017 my partner and I chartered a yacht with **John and Lesley Veale** in Croatia and sailed the Limestone Coast, but that's another story.

*Andrew Nelson crews on Hasta La Vista*

**“Sailors, with their built-in sense of order, service and discipline, should really be running the world.”**

**Nicholas Monsarrat**

## **An Enjoyable Life: On and Off the Water**

At the Annual General Meeting on 9 July 2019, **Geoff Lucas** was appointed as GFS Patron for the next three years. **Tim Kannegieter** interviewed Geoff and wrote this profile



Picture the small village of Balmoral in the late 1940s, tucked away in a remote corner of Sydney's North Shore. The landscape to the south was dominated by the Naval depot HMAS Penguin – winding down activities after feverish wartime activity. Some of Geoff's earliest memories are of the air raid sirens going off every morning at 8.00 am to test the system.

Moving north, the 1st Port Jackson Sea Scouts shed was the first structure, followed by the Balmoral sailing club and the public baths. Accessible by tram, Balmoral Beach had become a favoured recreation destination for people all over the North Shore – but still retained an unpretentious, suburban feel. It was into this halcyon environment that Geoff Lucas was born in 1939, growing up at the bottom of Awaba Street, a stone's throw from the beach. Within a few short years, he was taking full advantage of life in and on the waters of Sydney Harbour – taking swimming lessons on the beach from the age of four.

At around the age of seven, Geoff was learning to sail at the Sea Scouts in clinker-built whaling boats – which had five rows of oars, a mizzen mast and gaff rig. At the beginning of each season, these heavy boats would be caulked and sunk for a week to expand the timbers. Later, a range of boats and dinghies were supplied by the Navy as excess to requirements. Races across to Grotto Point were the norm. A highlight was an excursion through the Sydney Heads aboard a Navy submarine – something Geoff dryly noted is not likely to happen in today's world.

When not sailing, Geoff was exploring – checking out the historical defence tunnels (from the Crimean War) on Georges Head or swimming in the Navy pool which was open to local kids – who generally had free run of the base.



*An all-round sports person: Geoff (L) at Mt Kosciuszko in the 1980s*

Geoff's life was not all joy. In 1952, while playing on the rocks of Wyargine Point just north of Balmoral, he was a firsthand witness to a friend being taken and killed by a shark. However, the trauma of that experience did not deter the enterprising youth from venturing onto the Harbour again. In fact, he joined a shark patrol which rang bells if any sharks were spotted cruising the area.

A curious side note is that the shark patrol situated themselves in a 20m high Roman-style amphitheatre

erected at the north end of Balmoral by a religious sect in the 1920s. The sect believed that the second coming of Christ would occur with him entering Sydney Heads, and the sect members at the amphitheatre would be the first to greet him.

Another water-based activity Geoff became passionate about was canoeing. From initial forays around Balmoral, he built his own canoes and later became involved with the Cruising Canoe Club of NSW, a club that organised long tours down virtually every river in NSW. A highlight was an eight-day navigation of the Snowy River from Jindabyne down to the coast.

In addition to water sports, Geoff could be described as an all-round sports person – playing third-grade cricket, undertaking extensive back-country cross-country skiing tours, and playing social golf and tennis.

## *Geoff began competitive sailing when he bought a VJ and moved to Middle Harbour Amateur Sailing Club (MHASC) at The Spit*

He sailed there from 1952 to 1958, honing his skills. Like many, Geoff then took a break from sailing as he started his working career and raised a family of four children. He graduated as a chartered accountant but never really practised, as he quickly transitioned to business roles. Not surprisingly, he found a connection to the sea – joining a pearl-farming venture. He eventually became the general manager of a string of pearl farms across northern Australia – including Albany Island on the tip of Cape York, Croker Island north-east of Darwin, and Cygnet Bay at the top of King Sound. He was with this business for 35 years, a defining part of his life. He divided his time in pearling with a family business importing architectural products.

He returned to sailing in the 1980s, initially joining Hunters Hill Sailing Club sailing Lasers but returning to MHASC as it was the most competitive club at the time, with a number of world champions and Olympic medallists. Over the next 20 years, he competed in numerous club, state and national championships. In 2001, Geoff went to his first World Masters in Lasers and has returned most years since – an interest taking him to a range of exotic locations around the world. His best world result was third place in Spain in 2007.

Geoff joined GFS in the mid-1980s – crewing for **John Moffat** aboard *Scorpio*. In 1995, he purchased his Cavalier 28 *Capriole* and began racing it at the club. He has crewed at a number of regattas on other yachts. These include the last six or so annual Sail Port Stephens events – on these occasions aboard David Edmiston's yachts – but he has largely reserved his competitive drive for Lasers.



*Geoff at the helm in Sydney Harbour*

Asked about his most adventurous experience, Geoff recalls bringing an X-class yacht back from Coffs Harbour in “a howling black nor’easter at night time”. Gybing was not possible, nor could the crew bring the boat around into the wind. Geoff said the noise was horrendous, but that it was not any different from what everyone else has experienced at one time or another.

Over the years, Geoff has held a number of GFS roles including Treasurer and Vice Commodore and served as Commodore from 2012 through to 2014. He said the 75th-anniversary celebrations were magnificent with lots of great participation. Another highlight was his son **Phil Lucas**’s round-the-world sailing trip. On his return to Sydney Harbour in 1998, Phil was escorted from the Heads by GFS club members and welcomed back at the Clubhouse with great fanfare. Another son, Roger, also followed his father onto the water, becoming a highly-competitive Formula Windsurfer and taking over management of the family business.

Geoff’s family has played a big part in his life. He met his wife **Rosalie** at piano lessons at 15 years of age and married her in 1963. They moved to Lane Cove where they have lived for over 50 years. For a number of years in the 1990s, Geoff and Rosalie saw to the catering for the Twilight Series post-race BBQ.

Talking to Geoff, one gains the impression of a person who has enjoyed his life – both on and off the water – and aimed to compete as well as he can without it becoming all-consuming or hampering his participation in all aspects of club life.

**I’ve never been up there with the top guys in sailing because my business meant I never had enough time to devote to serious training. However, I have developed my skills to a point where I am comfortable**

sailing in any wind and really enjoy competing. I will keep sailing my Laser until I can't right the boat and have to be rescued.

- Geoff Lucas, GFS Patron

## Slipping on the Central Coast

Christian Charalambous reports the pros and cons of slipping further afield



AETOS on the slip (photo: Christian Charalambous)

Thinking about getting some work done on your boat while slipped? Well if you're anything like me, you'll do anything to get the best possible outcome for your boat at the best price. That's why I decided to slip my boat at the Central Coast instead of here in Sydney.

That and sheer desperation. My boat – a Northshore 380 called *AETOS* – was in desperate need of an antifoul in summer, and all the local marinas were booked out for months! Was it worth it? Read on and make up your own mind.

After calling around a few places I settled on booking the boat in at Killcare Marina. I dealt with Michael and Andrew who were friendly and helpful. It's worth mentioning at this point that when there's work to be done on the boat, I like to get as involved as I can by calling, inspecting and asking lots of questions. Michael and Andrew never showed any signs of frustration and always seemed happy to explain things. In fact, they encouraged it. Crazy right? I don't know many other places that would do that.

One of the biggest benefits of taking the boat up to the Central Coast or even Pittwater is the significantly reduced cost. Killcare's website claims that some work can be half the price of slipping in Sydney. While I don't have enough experience to verify this fact, my guesstimate would be that it would be at least three-

quarters of the cost depending on what work is done. The other thing I liked about Killcare's policy was that if it rains, they won't work on the boat – and they won't charge you the daily slipping fee for the day either.

The Central Coast is much further away than going somewhere local so you have to be willing and able to make the trip.

## *Let's make a weekend of it – I said to my wife Holly – it'll be fun!*

Well, I was wrong. A big storm blew up with 30 knots of wind, two-metre waves and lightning all around us. I was terrified surfing down those huge waves and Holly was busy chucking up her guts. I guess I felt like we had to go when we did because it would have been hard to make the trip at any other time with my schedule. If you have nice weather, it could be a dream weekend away.

Another thing to mention is that you must keep a close eye on the tide going in and out of Brisbane waters (the passageway into the Central Coast). *AETOS* has a two-metre draft and we wouldn't have made it through at low tide. So make sure you have your timing right – we ended up having to turn around on our first attempt and wait for the tide to get higher.

A final consideration is that once you drop off your boat, you need to be able to get back home. There is a bus to Woy Woy station and you can catch a train on the way back – but the bus only runs a couple of times a day. The worst-case scenario is that you'll have to call a taxi to the train station.


The work we did to *AETOS* was quite extensive and it was slipped for two weeks to get it all done. I think we saved thousands of dollars, so for me was a real win doing it this way. Will I do it again? Yes, because it's cheaper, the quality of the work is good, and it gives me an excuse to take the boat out cruising for the weekend.

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