

Humbug - Spring 2019

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Greenwich Flying Squadron



HUMBUG



GFS Safety Officer **David Leslie** trimming jib on the TP52 class yacht *Wotever* while competing for Sailors With Disabilities in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht race, circa 2014. David shares more of his sailing adventures [later](#) in this issue of *Humbug*.



Commodore's Compass

Christmas and New Year seem to have come around very quickly and it is hard to believe we are nearly halfway through our sailing season. Thus far we have had good fleet numbers in both Saturday and Twilight races. While two Saturday races have been abandoned due to heavy winds, Wednesday sailors have fared better – with little to no wind in only one race resulting in DNFs for a number of divisions. We continue to have around 60 yachts racing each week in the Twilights series and Dinner on the Deck has been very well attended.

The new Twilight Summer Pursuit races have started and hopefully skippers are enjoying the challenge of 'pursuing' their rivals and adopting new tactics for the starts and finishes. For those who are usually trying to catch the leaders of the fleet it will be an opportunity to enjoy some clear air at the start and then coming in with the rest of their division for some very close finishes. A reminder to all Twilight skippers that during the pursuit series you must keep clear of the starting box/exclusion zone until three minutes prior to your starting time.

I am pleased to advise that security cards for Clubhouse entry are currently being issued and we expect the new much-awaited system to be activated in the new year. Members will still need a key to enter or exit the Clubhouse, but will scan a card rather than punch in a code to deactivate and activate the alarm. A big thank you to **Rob Hale** and **Dion Weston** for all their work behind the scenes in setting up the card register to enable a smooth roll out of cards to eligible members.

On behalf of the Committee I wish all members and their families a happy festive season, fair winds and safe sailing over the holiday period.



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



GFS News

Water Restrictions

As Sydney is currently on Level 2 water restrictions, the GFS Committee urges all skippers to refrain from using the hose at the club to wash boats. It is still permissible to fill water tanks as long as the hose is not left unattended.

Vale Keith McAlpine

It is with sadness that we acknowledge the passing of staunch GFS member Keith McAlpine on 23 November. Keith and his wife Diana were active sailors at the club in their yacht *Perquisite*. Keith later volunteered as the club driver and custodian of *Pegasus* for Saturday starts.

Ausreo's Sydney to Gold Coast Experience

GFS member **Nick Murphy** reports on his offshore adventure.



Ausreo crew outside the GFS Clubhouse

Ausreo recently completed the Sydney to Gold Coast yacht race. For those of you who don't know, *Ausreo* is a Beneteau 47.7 registered with GFS and owned by **Ian Creak**. I was honoured to join his crew for the race this year.

The Sydney to Gold Coast is one of the biggest events in the Australian sailing calendar. It is hosted by CYCA. This year was the 34th race with 76 yachts competing. The *Ausreo* crew proudly collected two trophies: third place in IRC Division 4 and third place in IRC Corinthian. There were 10 crew on the boat: **Ian Creak, Glen Sanford, Andrew Lelliott, Alex Douglas, David North, Ian Arnold, Dan Ussher, Lucas Roe, Luke Murphy** and myself. Nine of them are GFS members! Our main sponsor – Dennis Crestani, founder of the Ausreo company – came down to GFS to see off the boat on the morning of the race. If you need reinforcing steel, check out his company.

Ian is a veteran of the Gold Coast race and this was his 23rd expedition. He was very pleased to win the trophies but was hoping to do even better. The conditions were predominantly a light, following breeze, which some would call "champagne sailing". *Ausreo* however, tends to out-perform in more challenging headwind conditions. Andrew organised the crew preparation and practice days. He put a huge amount of time into the preparation and was frustrated to find us just inching forward in the light wind patches towards the end of the race. All the practice with sail changes and other drills meant we were well prepared, but we couldn't change the weather.

David is another Gold Coast veteran with nine Gold Coast races behind him. He thought we did well, considering the conditions. The boat preparation was good, the sail suite was used well and the crew adapted to the conditions better than they would have in previous years. I was very happy to be able to bring my son Luke on board as one of the crew. Some of you might remember him from Start Desk duties in the GFS Twilight Races a few years ago. There have been other father-son double acts in the *Ausreocrew* before: Andrew Lelliott's father Jim has sailed with the crew in previous events and Lucas Roe's father Malcolm has sailed with the crew.

The clear conditions made it easy to spot the whales. Lots of them were sighted, along with dolphins and albatrosses. One whale blocked our path whilst I was on the helm and I had to swerve to keep clear. Luckily it was in daylight. At night we were treated to a surprising number of shooting stars. When we finally crossed the finish line at 12.30am on Tuesday, Ian cranked up the stereo with "Eye of the Tiger" and we cracked open a few well-earned beers. Spirits were high and the jokes were flying. By the time we got to the Southport Yacht Club it was nearly 3am. The club was prepared, with the bar and kitchen working 24 hours a day. The camaraderie amongst all the different crews was fantastic. Stories were told and plenty of beer and rum was consumed. Some of the sailors heading back to their boats afterwards appeared to find the finger wharves were getting a bit narrow for their walking style, but no-one fell in.

It was a fantastic experience, despite light conditions towards the end. At least the light conditions meant that we didn't break anything, which pleased Ian as the owner. We were also lucky not to experience any serious injuries during the race. Ironically, though, on the afternoon after the race Andrew tore a ligament in his ankle whilst stepping off the boat. He was sober, so it was just very bad luck. GFS members are a friendly mob and you couldn't do better than Ian and the crew of *Ausreo*.

Nick Murphy is the GFS Rear Commodore – Twilight Racing and crews on Ausreo.

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 2020 issues of *Humbug*. Please send your articles togfshumbug@gmail.com

From Adelaide to GFS

From his early days in Adelaide to Hobart and the Harbour, incoming GFS Safety Officer **David Leslie** has enjoyed sailing since childhood. He shares some of his highlights so far.



David and Victoria celebrate aboard Koko after a challenging but successful day at Sail Port Stephens 2019

As a child, David started sailing keel boats with his father at the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron. At the age of 10 or 11, he became the proud owner of his first boat – an International Cadet Dinghy. David sailed 'off the beach' in Adelaide in Sharpies, Mosquito Catamarans and International 505s – competing in state and national titles along the way.

In the early 90s, some of David's mates invited him to return to keel boats and go offshore sailing. The skipper of the team turned out to be Adelaide yachtsman Geoff Boettcher of **Secret Mens Business** fame. Geoff's team won all the offshore series in South Australia, and David joined them for the first of two Sydney to Hobart campaigns.

In 2000, David relocated from Adelaide to Sydney for business reasons and found a welcoming and exciting sailing community. With his friend and fellow-sailor Tracy Ashton, David visited most major clubs around the Harbour. After a warm welcome at GFS, they decided it was the best, friendliest, and most relaxed club for sailing and socialising. In 2003, David and Victoria purchased property in Greenwich and made the community their Sydney home. David started sailing with GFS around that time and has gone on to race his own yachts at the club. The first of these was the strangely named Umzimkulu II – a Holland 30. David's current yacht is Koko – an Elan 37 which he owns and sails jointly with **Jim Igoe**.

As a disabled sailor, David has been active in Sailors with Disabilities (SWD) for many years and is now a life member. He competed in a further five Hobart campaigns with SWD – who trained and supported disabled and able-bodied crews to test themselves aboard Lyons 54 and TP52 class yachts. David managed to pick up a couple of division podiums, and he also holds a YA Yachtmaster Coastal accreditation.

Professionally, David is a medical imaging technologist and radiation safety expert with qualifications and experience in radiography, radiation regulation, public health and medical physics. He currently runs a radiation consultancy service specialising in design, accreditation and education in medical and environmental radiation and nuclear medicine.

The Greenwich community and GFS have given us happy times and wonderful friendships and shipmates. Being able to give something back to GFS in the role of Safety Officer and Committee participation is a privilege.

- David Leslie, GFS

Sixty-eight years of sailing memories

GFS member **Alan Grundy** shares some rich recollections.



Alan Grundy (in yellow) enjoying a day on the Harbour with friends.

Today, if asked the question *what is your sport?* and you reply *sailing*, the response may well be: *that's a slow activity, why not tennis, football or cricket?*

In my era, most teenagers took to the water in a VJ or Manly Junior. We tried all those other sports – but as our skills developed, the challenge to go further and try sailing in different strengths of wind meant sailing became ever more addictive.

I started out riding a pushbike from Willoughby over the bridge to Balmain, where Ian Harper kept his VJ. I learned the ropes from him and it wasn't long before I graduated to a 12ft skiff, racing on Paramatta River with a colleague at River Sailing Club.

When I brought my wife Marion back over the bridge to Greenwich in 1959, it wasn't long before the Grundies attached themselves to the Greenwich 16ft Skiff Club, where the **Tierneys** and **Kannegieters** were regulars. It was a time when MHYC and the MH 16s were attracting up-harbour sailors, and so a vacancy was offered by **Keith Tierney**, our late Patron, to me as a bailer boy – using a baking dish, no less. They were exciting times when the wind lifted. Life jackets were non-existent, you just had to swim!

Then Keith also left for 'down harbour', and I crewed with other 16s – mostly from Drummoyne Sailing Club. Harvey will remember our racing with Geoff Ottowell, a great sailor now sadly passed away. Then John Douglas launched his Bluebird at MHYC where I sailed for many seasons, only to return to GFS where a meal was on offer post-race. Cooked prawns from a plastic tub and not much else – how our dinners have grown! I then purchased my first yacht, *Mistrada*, which some described as a block of flats

on water. That was followed by *Farrst Company*, more of a race – at least when the bottom is clean.

Over the years I have been a committee member, including social secretary, and helped out in various ways – such as cleaning and painting the roof with the current patron **Geoff Lucas**. To balance our competitive racing, we spent Easters cruising to Pittwater, under the stewardship of **Bill McLaughlin**, and finishing at my family house on Scotland Island with boats moored just offshore. This would be followed by wood-fired barbecues and much good company.



Alan Grundy's yacht *Farrst Company* in action on Watson's Bay in 2014.

My GFS

Incoming Clubhouse Manager **Rob Hale** recounts his GFS journey.



Rob Hale in 1976 on his self-built skiff Conquista

My relationship with GFS started with an ultimatum from my mother.

I was aged about 12 and we just moved to Sydney from Brisbane. It was 1966. We were having a picnic at the Spit and watching boats sailing in Middle Harbour. Out of the blue, my mother said to me: *if you join a sailing club I will buy you a boat*. This was really out of the blue, because our family had no history of sailing and it had never been discussed before.

The next day I mentioned this ultimatum to a friend at school who happened to be a member of a small club called the Greenwich 12 Foot Flying Squadron. The following weekend I went for a sail in his Sabot and joined the club. The following weekend, my mum came good and we purchased an old Sabot for \$60. It was a totally open boat, no flotation tanks, no foredeck, and gunwales (where you sit and hike out) that were about 25mm wide.

For the next couple of weekends, my father and I worked on the boat. We added a foredeck and 75mm wide gunwales. The boat, called *Topaz*, was now ready to sail. In those days the Sabots raced in the main Harbour – out through Humbug, down to Beacon Pole at Spectacle Island, up to Mann's Point, around Cove Street buoy near Balmain, and back to the club. My twin sister, Faye, came as crew. It was her first time in a boat and my second. We followed the boats around the course and managed to finish the race.

My brother-in-law, **Warren Richards** (who currently sails the Cavalier 28 *Pejo Lark* and is married to my twin sister), won the National Titles in his boat and I came third. I had that Sabot for about two years, then moved on to a Flying 11 – which was the intermediate class at Greenwich 12 Foot Flying Squadron. We had about eight boats racing in the club and we were quite competitive.

The club in those days was purely a skiff or dinghy club. The senior members sailed 12ft skiffs and the juniors sailed Sabots and Flying 11s. There was no rigging deck and the ramp to the pontoon commenced at the large external doors.

The Sabot and Flying 11 sailors would launch their boats off the pontoon and row them over to the beach to the west of the club, where they were rigged (we no longer have access to this beach). The 12ft skiff sailors would carry their boats out through the double doors at the front of the club and up to the park. They were rigged on the grass and carried – fully rigged – down the concrete stairs to be launched at the beach below the park.

The club was never a dingy and skiff powerhouse like Lane Cove, Hunters Hill or Greenwich Sailing Club, but there were always a reasonable number of boats in each of the three classes. The club would hold Upper Harbour championships for the 12-footers every second year, alternating with Lane Cove. There would be 15 boats rigging in the park and 30 boats on the water. Quite a spectacle.

After the Flying 11, I purchased an old 12ft skiff, which I sailed for about one and a half years until I built a new skiff. It was a time when skiff designs were changing rapidly and the new boats were a stitch and glue design. This is where the boat is made from one large sheet of ply, which is then cut to a pattern and stitched together with aluminium wire. Then front and rear flotation tanks are added, mast brace structure and gunwales are added, and all seams are fibreglass taped. This produced a very light and rigid structure.

The boat we built – *Conquista* – proved to be fast, and we had some great sailing in her over many years. We sailed in many state and national titles and usually put in a respectable performance. One of our bragging moments was beating **Ian Murray** in a heat of an Australian Championship. We were leading the race until about 100m from the finish, where we were passed by **John Winning** in *Travelodge*. We managed to hold second, with Murray third. During this period, I ran the 12s for many years and was club Treasurer for a number of years.

Yachts at GFS grew from boat-owning parents of junior sailors deciding to hold a race series on Saturday afternoons. It started with about five 22ft long Bluebirds and has grown from there. While I was racing skiffs, I also did some offshore sailing. I did three Hobarts in the early 1980s, two Lord Howe Island races, a Gold Coast Race, and numerous weekend Junior Offshore Group (JOG) races up and down the coast from Sydney.



Rob on his current yacht Jackpot in 2018

After I was married and started a family, it was time for the skiff to be pensioned off. When looking for a boat that would provide some exhilarating sailing at a reasonable cost, it was hard to go past an Etchell. *Streaker* was the first Etchell at Greenwich. This boat provided some great sailing and even

worked with the family. We used to go sailing with a travel cot for the baby and the high combings for the older children.

At one stage we had about 14 Etchells at GFS, with seven to eight regulars on Saturday afternoons. It was good racing. I raced *Streaker* for about 25 years, then started to think about Twilight racing and a boat that offered some cruising capability. We purchased *Conquista*, a Farr 36, and raced her for about nine years. More recently, we purchased *Jackpot*, a J122, with two of *Conquista*'s crew – **Matt Gooden** and **Pete McNamee**. Last year, we took *Jackpot* to Hamilton Island Race Week and also did the Sydney-Hobart Race.


I have been a continuous boat owner and sailor at GFS for 54 years – since joining at age 12. Having retired last year I certainly had no excuses when **Pam Joy** contacted me to say that after many, many years **Mark Rhodes** was looking to have a break and would I be interested in taking up his role as Clubhouse Manager? I was happy to take on the role and certainly happy to contribute something back to a club that has provided me with wonderful exposure to our great sport of sailing.

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