

thirty two° fifty five

newcastle cruising
yacht club journal

WINTER 2024

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A CLIPPER JOURNEY
SAIL PORT STEPHENS



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Opinions of contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Board or the Club.
While articles and correspondence are welcomed, the Editor reserves the right to decline to publish.

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In this edition: Carpark progress; so far so good in the new financial year; Winter has come to the Club; and very busy in the sailing department. Also, required repairs and maintenance commences, with more to come.

Carpark

The Board has signed off on our carpark access solution. This is an automated number plate recognition system. The exact periods of free access will be based on variables recommended to us by the vendors, and also tailored to our specific circumstances. We will communicate this to you when we set the initial policy.

The solution allows tailored access for our members, tenants and customers but will result in charges being levied for all-day parking for others. The system requires a member to be associated with a number plate for access to be free (up to the determined limits), and for a valid credit/debit card to be held securely on file.

Access by other vehicle plates would result in normal charges after a period of free access. Security is provided by a low-light continuously recorded system, and 24-hour help is available through a help button on the entry and exit pillars.

If you have not already provided your credit/debit card and plate details (to be recognised as a member by the system), please do so to get the benefit of your membership.

The civil works (trenches and cabling) will commence soon. We expect operation to start early August depending on weather.

Operations

We're pleased with April's financials. Although we're below budget, this is due to structural and timing issues rather than non-performance. The effect of no loan payments is resulting in an increasing bank balance but this will be countered over time with outgoings related to our assets repair and maintenance program on our buildings and over water assets.

Clubhouse

Look out for the Winter Season Theme Lounge if you haven't already seen it. Rugs, an electric fireplace, and curtains are in place with existing sofas, tub chairs, books, magazines, and games. There are also outside heaters and festoon lighting in the Grass Bar.

We are looking into providing a more flexible space upstairs on the north side of the club building. This could provide a space double the size of our current rooms for an event if required and could be easily achieved through the use of a ceiling hung, soundproof bi-fold door. More to come on this if it proves feasible.

We are also researching the provision of bathrooms adjacent to the main restaurant. This would allow better access for restaurant and function patrons alike.

Membership

We had a small decline in membership, which is normal as people get around to remembering to renew. We are collating the results of our 2024 membership survey. We'll let you know about them soon. As I have outlined above, we are working to make sure that parking at the club is improved.

Sailing

The Summer Short Ocean and Ocean Pointscores have ended. The last race of Summer provided some absolutely picturesque conditions and champagne sailing, complete with a flyby of two F35 Lightning IIs. After a short break for Easter, we were back into it with a "bang". SailFest, incorporating the Australian Sailing IRC National Championships, took place 5-7 April and was a huge success.

This was followed on Sunday 14 April with the Newcastle Port Stephens Race where we had upwards of 40 entries. Then on to Sail Port Stephens 15-20 April, 26-28 April and 3-5 May. NCYC hosted and was the Organising Authority for it all.

This year, Port Stephens Council helped with the highly successful Nelson Bay Steet Party. Meanwhile, our Winter series is well underway.

Marina

Our Marina income continues to be strong. This will underpin our Marina Maintenance Program. Additionally, we continue the removal of shell growth on the marina piles as the low tides occur during daylight hours. Perhaps you have noticed an extensive corrosion rectification program underway on our building housing Midcoast Boatyard.

The marina occupancy was very high during SailFest and SPS. Marina revenue was over budget and fuel sales on budget.

We will also be commencing the repairs to the travellift overwater runway in the coming months.



– Barry Kelly



We have just completed an extremely busy Autumn both on and off the water at NCYC, including a hectic regatta season.

Our home regatta, SailFest Newcastle, incorporated the Australian Yachting Championship. It was another huge success with the largest fleet of TP52s assembled in

Australia. It attracted the top sailors in the country and raised the profile of sailing and the Club within the Newcastle community.

The Newcastle to Port Stephens event attracted another big fleet of 40+ boats. This year, NCYC was the Organising Authority for Sail Port Stephens. It was great to see 20 NCYC boats flying the burgee at the event.

It was held over three weekends and helped deliver the biggest and best event yet. A special shout out to our Sailing Department and Club Volunteers who helped deliver this massive month of sailing.

We have had some great club sailing. The Lasers returned for Friday nights in Newcastle and Sundays at the Bay. The Offshore fleet were out Wednesday nights and Sunday with the Summer Short Ocean Point Score series. Our Youth team have started their 2024 campaign with training sessions in the Basin.

We had three boats in the Pittwater to Coffs Harbour race but, unfortunately, the wind gods didn't turn up.

The Reflections Tackers fleet and keelboat learn-to-sail continues to grow in popularity.

The Cruising fleet has some very enjoyable outings on and off the water. The Newcastle Game Fishing Club held their annual tournament.

The Bay Sailing Centre proved a great hosting venue both on and off the water during the 3rd weekend of Sail Port Stephens. It continues to be a hit with the locals enjoying their morning coffees and taking in the stunning view.

Off the water we have also been very busy with great growth in membership and a record trading year for the licensed club. We have also hosted a Founders, Life, and Seniors Lunch and a new members welcome drinks.

We look forward to the starting preparation for the Founders Day Celebration to commence the new season on 8 September.

We have also continued our asset management program around the club including a re-roof of the Boatyard offices, upgrades to the travel lift runway and preparation for installation of carpark boom gates.

As we all know the carpark access is a major issue for all stakeholders of the site. Unfortunately, it's a real challenge to squeeze 1,700 members, 180 berth holders, 11 tenants, and visitors to the club and tenancies into just 100 parking spots.

All of this on and off water activity relies on a great team so special thanks to all the staff and volunteers here at NCYC.

– Paul O'Rourke

STEPS TO STAY SAFE NEAR SEAGOING SHIPS

- Always keep a lookout for seagoing ships.
- Determine if the vessel is moving towards you or away from you.
- Always keep a safe distance away from a large vessel.
- From the ship's bridge, it is hard to see smaller boats. Some ships will have blind spots ahead of up to 100 metres. Stay far enough away to be in sight.
- Act early so you can move away from these seagoing ships.
- Familiarise yourself with the shipping channels or fairways.
- Stay clear of the channels or fairways when seagoing ships are entering or departing the port and harbour.
- Be aware of wakes of seagoing ships, particularly when the large vessel is in relatively shallow water and moving at higher speeds.
- Always have your navigation lights on at night so other vessels can clearly see you.

Map of Newcastle Harbour showing shipping channels and fairways. Key locations include Newcastle, Carrington, and the Harbour Bridge.

SAFETY NOTICE TO ALL BOAT OPERATORS

Newcastle Harbour VHF 09

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We are in the midst of Winter with its shorter days, cooler weather, and a slight change of lifestyle.

There is still much hospitality on offer at the Club and we hope that Members will come in to enjoy a coffee or drink in the cosy ambiance of our newly decorated Winter lounge.

Members are sure to be tempted to try some of the delicious winter dishes offered by Nautica Dining. There is a more intimate, candlelit setting for diners in the Club.

The view to the outside is stunning with beautiful harbour lights reflected on the water, gas heaters and festoon lighting in the trees.

It was great to see many Club Members volunteering with the busy five-week sailing program of SailFest and Sail Port Stephens.

These were very successful and enjoyable events. Volunteering is great way to learn more about sailing, regatta management, and to make new friends and enjoy some socialising. Please let us know if you are interested in helping.

Our six-monthly New Member Welcome drinks was enjoyed by about 20 new Members on 18 April and many folks stayed on to meet other members and enjoy dinner together.

Meanwhile, 30 Founding, Senior, and Life Members enjoyed a delicious Special 30th Anniversary Lunch on Friday 19 April.

We have several Member Events on the social program over the next few months starting with the appropriately themed Winter Solstice Dinner on Friday 21 June.

This evening was a great success last year and we hope for another good roll up this year. On Saturday 20 July we will welcome all members to our glamour 30th Anniversary Celebration and Presentation Night.

This will be an opportunity for all Members to dress up and celebrate the outstanding growth and development of NCYC over the past 30 years.

At the April Board Meeting the membership of the Club totalled 1,732. This comprised 37 Senior Members, 258 General Members, 262 Crew Members, 1150 Social Members, 6 Youth Members, 7 Junior Members, 11 Life Members, and 1 Honorary Member.



– Jan Howard



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Newcastle-Port Stephens race start.

Images by Promoclean Media



The past quarter since our last report has been jam-packed with regattas and events. We've had some big highlights to be proud of, with SailFest including the Australian Yachting Championship at Newcastle and our Sail Port Stephens Regatta at Nelson Bay and our Bay Sailing Centre venue.

Newcastle SailFest Regatta

April began with a wet and wild start to the annual SailFest Regatta at Newcastle (incorporating the Australian Yachting Championship).

The extreme weather system forced us to cancel the first day of racing, and the big swell from Friday remained throughout the weekend, even as the wind dropped, creating a challenging environment for sailors and race management volunteers.

Congratulations to Joe de Kock and the *KDI* team for winning their division and claiming the Division 2 first place prize for the Australian Yachting Championship, and to *She's the Culprit* for winning the Cruising Class. Congratulations also to all our other members for their participation.



Above: The *KDI* crew, national champions. Top: Big seas and wild conditions during Sail Port Stephens.

Marina Report

The marina remains a busy space for the Club with lots of casual visitors and a growing list of long-term vessels.

Over winter, we'll be revisiting housekeeping on the marina as it remains an important safety and accessibility requirement to ensure we have clear walkways.

On the marina, you'll see our team continuing to check and tighten the marina dock connections and cleaning the growth off marina piles.

The carpark boom gate project is also progressing with work expected to begin in the coming weeks – promising to make the club and marina precinct more accessible.

We're regularly out on the dock, so we absolutely welcome you to introduce yourself and to let us know if there's anything of concern for us to follow up.

Sail Port Stephens

We had 14 NCYC entrants to Sail Port Stephens this year across all the events that ran for three weeks throughout April-May. The Port Stephens racetrack is spectacular, especially sailing out around the islands.

Among the NCYC entries, we awarded Commodores Cup prizes to Scott Knights *Ataraxia II* (3rd place PHS division 3), *MWF-Joy* (1st place Non-Spin division), and *MWF-Joy* and Kyle Hancock's *Neverland* were awarded the Pantaenius Team Cup!

In the Bay Series, Adrian Kiely and the *Mako* team scored 2nd place CBH and 3rd place LPT for the Sportsboat division. Michael Babbage on his 505 finished 4th overall on yardstick in the Off-the-Beach regatta.

We appreciate the enormous contributions of our volunteer race management teams that make the whole month of regattas possible...

Winter Sailing Returns

Racing is now underway for our Winter Short Ocean Pointscore supported by One Tribe Health & Fitness. Races start at 11.30am on Sundays in winter and will continue through to 7 July.

The Sailing Committee has also been working on an initiative to work with owners of sailboats in the marina to encourage participation in Club activities. So I'm looking forward to meeting some new members as we prepare for the next summer season.

The Clubs' annual awards night and celebration will be on Saturday 20 July. Get in early to secure a booking at a table with the rest of your group. I'm looking forward to celebrating the end of another season to cast into the history books.

As we sail into the next quarter, let us continue to uphold the spirit of friendship, sportsmanship, and camaraderie that defines our club.

Fair winds and following seas.

– Jack Buchan


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Welcome readers. We've had a busy Autumn with many signature events already held this year.

Our submission of a Gumbo dish for Newcastle Food Month, along with our signature six-course dinner event hosted by Peter Drayton Wines, was a hit with the Newcastle community during April.

We have just finished the ClubsNSW Perfect Plate Awards competition with our Slow-Cooked Black Berkshire Pork Neck with Mustard Crust dish.

We hope to regain our title of best dish in Newcastle and Hunter Valley, which we won in 2022.

Our Winter warmers cocktail menu has been a big success, adding to our warm feel in the Clubhouse.

All of these are mixed and served warm, enhancing the aromas, and flavours:

Warm Toblerone – Baileys, Frangelico, Kahlua, oat milk and choc syrup

Dirty Chai Latte – Butterscotch schnapps, Baileys, Vanilla Galliano, oat milk, chai topped with whipped cream and cinnamon sugar

Orange Infused Hot Chocolate – Baileys, chocolate, Cointreau, oat milk topped with whipped cream and choc powder.

Warm Apple Toddy – Batlow Apple Cider, Fireball Whiskey, sugar syrup, cinnamon, lemon, apple and bitters

Mulled wine – Cabernet Sauvignon, brandy, orange, cloves, cinnamon, star anise and honey.

These winter warmers are available every day during winter, be sure to try them and find your favourite one.

We are also happy to announce that NCYC won the 'Employer of the Year' Award at the NTIG Hospitality Awards this year and was also a finalist in the Social Inclusion category in the 2024 ClubsNSW Awards.

Finally, a special mention to Roy Baker upon his recent retirement. Roy has been a pillar of the NCYC Clubhouse since it opened in 2008. He will be missed, and we wish him all the best.

Here's to a great regatta season.

– Matt Stamp

Chef's Report



As we come into the colder months, we start to feel the need for more comfort-based food. To celebrate the change in seasons, we are excited to announce a special selection of hearty dishes available throughout June. These dishes are perfect for sharing and are crafted to provide warmth and satisfaction during the chilly winter.

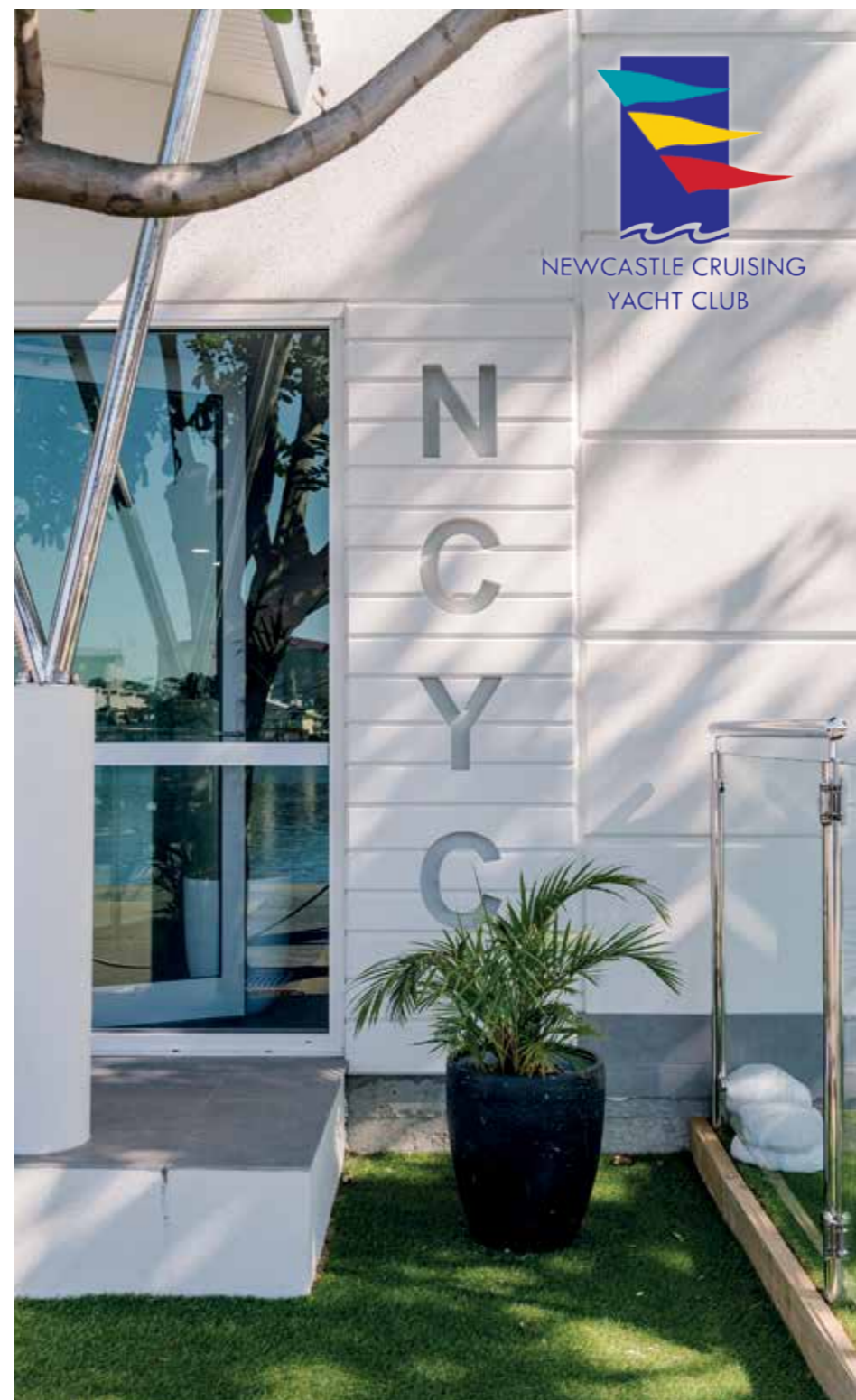
Additionally, we are thrilled to highlight our entry for the Perfect Plate competition this year. This dish has been carefully created by our talented chefs to showcase the best of our culinary skills and seasonal ingredients.

Many of our Members tried our Perfect Plate entry and found it to be an exceptional dining experience while also having the chance to win fantastic prizes.

We want to extend a heart-felt thank you to everyone for their patience and support over a very busy summer. Your continued patronage and enthusiasm mean the world to us, and we are grateful for the community that has formed around our restaurant.

We look forward to welcoming you this winter and sharing these special moments with you.

– Luke Carpenter



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Airlie Beach to Zhuhai

Post COVID, I decided that I needed a bit of an adventure, so I signed up for a leg of the Clipper Race 23/24. After a phone interview, I was assigned to team *Zhuhai* for Leg 5, Airlie Beach to Zhuhai, China.

I arrived in Gosport, UK, for training where I met lots of like-minded travellers from all over the world and we started the serious business of living on board a racing yacht and learning how to sail and maintain both the yacht and ourselves.

The training skippers were fabulous, with hundreds of thousands of sea miles between them, and the Clipper training program was both hard work and great fun. Week 1 focused on safety, boat familiarisation, rope work, deck roles, boat evolutions, and got us undertaking all the basic sailing skills.

Some people who were new to sailing decided it was not for them, while others repeated Week 1 until they passed the mandatory exit test. We sailed every day and rotated



Above: Memorable times during and after the race.

Right: The Zhuhai crew became family.

through all the jobs on the boat, from bow to helm, coached closely by our skipper and first mate. Every evolution on a 70ft boat has many more steps than a 40ft yacht, there was a lot to learn. Man overboard was a daily occurrence and we got really good at retrieving our long-suffering dummy “Bob” from the water. During our downtime we met up with the other training crews in the pubs of Gosport and Cowes ...

Week 2 training started with Sea Safety Survival and the next day we went to sea to put it all into practice. I suddenly found myself on the helm, heading out past the needles of the Isle of Wight in 25 knots of breeze, an incoming tide and a huge swell. I discovered very quickly just how good these big boats were at punching through the waves and I was loving it!

Week 3 we moved on to spinnakers and week 4 we completed some trial races in the English Channel, coached by our skipper and first mate. Our sailing skills and our sea legs were really tested. We had all been bitten by the racing bug and knew we were ready to join a real crew.

I joined team *Zhuhai* in Airlie Beach. We finally got started on Australia Day 2023, four days later than expected due to the arrival of Cyclone Kirrily. The first two days sailing down to Mackay to clear Customs were unbearably hot and we abandoned all inhibitions and started wearing only bikini tops below deck. Once outside the Great Barrier Reef, we lined up for the Le Mans start.

This involved a 10-minute start sequence with just our main up, and all the crew behind the coffee grinders.

Sailing in formation, there is a countdown to “go” on four minutes at which time you run forward and start hoisting both headsails as fast as you can. I was tailing the staysail, fast and furious.

We made a good start and were the first to hoist our Code 3 spinnaker, edging our way into the front pack of boats. We settled into our watches and the business of sailing, sleeping, eating, and taking our weekly turn at cooking for 22. Our skipper and first mate focused on navigation and the crew rotated through all other roles as needed.

We made our way to the Doldrums Corridor in record time, but eventually found our first wind hole with other boats still in sight. Frustration soon turned to joy when hundreds of dolphins showed up to accompany the boat for many miles. We spotted a sleeping blue whale shooting the occasional waterspout skywards, and enjoyed the most gorgeous sunsets, one unforgettable one with *Perseverance* sitting as a small black triangle in the burning red horizon.

There were some memorable storms, one with a twister fingering its way down from the sky ahead to create a waterspout that came towards us for a while, before veering off towards *Perseverance* and *Qingdao*. We powered on through the storm, changing headsails and reefing as needed. Another storm lasted for 48 hours and provided breaking waves over the length of the boat that felt like a much-needed warm bath.

My favourite moments, though, were some of the quieter times ... Sitting with a cup of tea on deck at night trimming the spinnaker and chatting to my watch

mates. Helming with the kite up at sunset with a perfect 17-knot breeze and a balanced boat. Listening to the power of the boat moving through the water from the safety of my bunk. Eating Chinese food for Chinese New Year. Baking bread and making muesli at 4am.

By the end of the race, you know your team mates so well you can switch jobs without talking to pass food and drink the length of the boat. Sailing becomes part of everyday life, and your watch is your family.

I completed 29 days at sea, 5335nm and two races where we came 2nd and 5th. The racing was interesting and we were always excited for our 12 hourly position updates, but the experience was about so much more than a race. It was about the people, the different cultures, the nature, the power of the boats, the heat, the cold, the hard work and how it brought you together as a team.

– Bronwen Crosby



43° SOUTH

21 March | Derwent Sailing Squadron

42°54.027'S 147°20.106'E

A rather late start to our adventure as we loaded *KD4* with countless barrow-loads of goods and refuelled in a strong breeze. We cast our lines at 1100 hrs and headed south towards Recherche Bay. Down the river, through the Bay and into D'Entrecasteaux Channel. With Partridge Island on our port beam, the motor suddenly dropped revs. It sounded like it was being starved for fuel. A change of tanks did not resolve the issue, suggesting it perhaps a filter or water in the fuel. Some decisions needed to be made and we agreed that the south and southwest coast was no place for a yacht with a question mark over the engine. We knew that our weather window was small. We had to leave SE Cape on Friday morning and be safely anchored in Port Davey Friday night in order to avoid an approaching front that promised strong westerly winds.

We decided to make for Deephole Bay, south of Pelican Island in Southport. Following a beautiful dinner prepared by Kris, accompanied by Tasmanian wine and a G&T or two, we discussed our options. We had really lost our weather window for Port Davey and so decided to explore the Channel and East Coast.



22 March | Deephole Bay

43°27.196'S 146°58.097'E

Early next morning, Rob and Joe set out to walk to Southport Bluff Beach and reflected on the tragedy of the convict ship *George III*.

With scurvy rife aboard, the captain decided to make for Hobart through the D'Entrecasteaux Channel as opposed to the normal route up the east coast. The ship ran aground on what is now known as *George III* Rock. In the panic as the ship sank, convicts were shot or left chained down below. Only one convict, a 10-year-old



boy, survived by hiding under the Captain's wife's dress. Of the 295 people on board, 134 perished.

We left Deephole Bay at noon, reaching with a headsail and made our way out of the Bay making sure Southport Island, Blanche Rock and, of course, George III Rock were well to starboard.

Wind was 5-20 knots and seas were flat, but we could see the seas around Actaeon Islands were littered with reefs and shallow banks. We safely navigated between the two islands, tacked, and made our way west.

Kellys Rocks and the dangerous Denmark Reef were passed safely as we made our way to a beautiful anchorage at Cockle Creek tucked in behind Pearl Rock. We dropped anchor in about 7 metres of water at 1430.

Rob and Joe went ashore and walked to the whale sculptures at Adams Point. In 1837, 1,000 Southern Right whales were killed in this small bay.

Dinner that night was accompanied by stories and tall tales as we were reminded of friends. We drank a toast of Drambuie to Jim and Mary Holley and shared more stories and the idea of Mary's book, *Mary's Boots*, about all the people who have borrowed her DuBarry boots.

23 March | Cockle Creek

43°34.814'S 146°53.570'E

Scrambled chilli eggs for breakfast and then Joe set out on the SUP and Rob, Kris, and Richard went ashore in the dinghy. At Fishing Point, some ruins were evident of an old Pilot Station. A sign explaining the history had a photo of a letter sent to the Governor complaining that the men (probably whalers) were using obscene language, exposing themselves and were behaving just as badly on a Sunday as they did on Saturday. The letter



implored the Governor to address "this great evil".

We then set out for Dover in winds gusting to 35 knots and a rising swell coming from the Southern Ocean and marvelled at the breaking waves and reefs to our left and right. Blind Reef and Black Reef were spectacular, but it was wise to stay well clear.

When we reached a point off Dover, the wind was 35 knots straight out of Port Esperance on our port beam and, given the doubtful anchorages, the thought of spending a night there was somewhat uninviting. So, we headed for Randalls Bay.

Our dinghy was often airborne in the strong westerlies and Richard bravely climbed in twice to better secure the motor while Joe held the boat into the wind. We eventually made Randalls Bay after dodging salmon farms and dropped anchor.

The Randalls Bay anchorage was quite uncomfortable, but we were safe from the gale that continued just beyond the rocky point.

24 March | Randalls Bay

43°14.707'S 147°7.334'E

We set off early heading for Kettering in the hope of getting the engine some attention and conscious of the increasing wind forecast. With Huon Island on our starboard and then Arch Rock on our port we sailed happily along under just a headsail.

Past Pensioners Bay on port and then passing Green Island to starboard, a yearning for a fresh coffee was experienced and so we headed into Peppermint Bay where Kris and Rob jumped into the dinghy and went ashore and purchased coffees at the restaurant. It was only about 2nm to Kettering and we called ahead to

Bruce Morley to check on available berths.

Bruce was waiting to catch our lines as we motored in on an increasing breeze. Bruce and Thelma came for dinner, bringing fresh vegetables from the garden including a giant zucchini. Another Drambuie might have been consumed.

The wind howled all through the night, with gusts to 45+ knots. The Bruny Island Ferry stopped running due to high winds and locals tell us this is quite rare.

The following day, Joe needed to attend to some work responsibilities and he and Rob headed back to Hobart while Kris and Richard stayed with *KD4*.

27 March | Kettering

43°7.533'S 147°15.080'E

Joe returned to the boat in Kettering with Belinda, who had flown into Hobart. We headed off shortly afterwards to the most southern anchorage on Bruny Island – Taylors Reef in the southern end of Great Taylors Bay.

A 20-knot southerly had set in and we didn't attempt to sail into it. Arriving late in the afternoon, we had the magnificent anchorage all to ourselves. A quiet night was interrupted by the mosquitos. Joe left before sunrise for a walk/run to South Bruny light house.

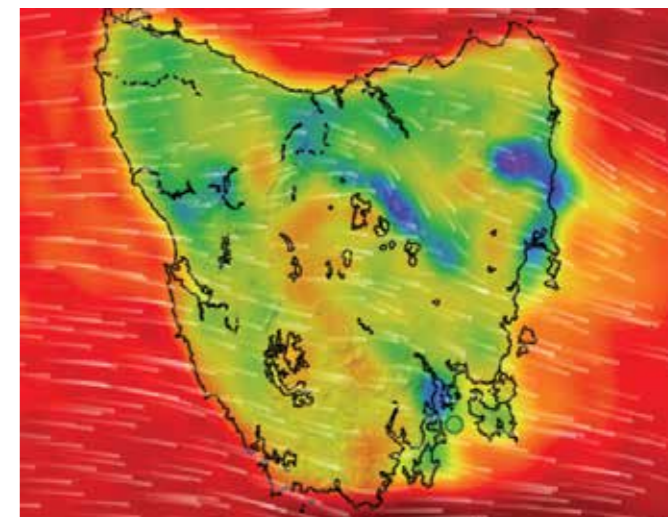
28 March | Taylors Reef, Southern Bruny Island

43° 26.848 S 147°8.690 E

After an impressive breakfast Belinda and Joe left to circumnavigate the Labillardiere Peninsula, a 16km bush walk. Kris and Richard walked to the south Bruny Light house. We convened late afternoon for another magnificent meal prepared by Belinda.

29 March 2024 | 43° 26.848 S 147°8.690 E

Pre-dawn departure to Hobart. Calm sea and no wind. Made for an easy day. Berthed at DSS12:30pm.



Sail Port Stephens 2024 wrapped up after 11 huge days of sailing, spanning three weeks and involving 215 boats. It culminated with the inshore series held by NCYC's Bay Sailing Centre, comprising J70s, sports boats and off-the-beach classes.

Among the J70s were TP52 luminaries Sam Haynes (*Celestial*) and David Doherty (*Matador*) who'd contested the NSW Yachting Championships and TP52 Gold Cup the prior weekend. Queenslander Gary Holt was one of three sailors to complete every race of the three-part regatta, after buying a J70 immediately after the Windward-Leeward series to extend his stay.

The final day's conditions brought torrential rain to test the mettle but also providing memorable rides. In the final wash-up, no pun intended, Haynes edged out Doherty by a solitary point, with Holt third.

Malcolm Dean clocked another ASBA state title with consistent sailing in the cross-section of conditions.

Yardstick results in the RS Aeros saw the gong going to former world champion and Olympic 49er sailor Ben Austin. Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club's Ian McKillip claimed the Finn division.

Toxic, helmed by Paul Foster from Wangi Amateur Sailing Club, prevailed in the OKs, while Craig Phillips piloted the canoe *Black Pearl* to win the Mixed.

The Windward-Leeward Series proved that age hasn't wearied two veterans of Australian sailing, with Marcus Blackmore and Ray Roberts winning NSW IRC titles.

Blackmore's new TP52 *Hooligan* claimed Division 1 honours against arguably the strongest fleet of TP52s assembled in Australia, handing David Doherty's *Matador* a rare defeat, while Roberts' Botin Fast 40 *Team Hollywood* prevailed in Division 2 against Gary Holt's *Let's Get It On*.

The six-race series was sailed in a range of conditions, beginning with a 20-knot southerly and high seas on Friday, through to a gentle passage race on Saturday then an idyllic nor-easter of 10-12 knots.

At 79, Blackmore is relishing his third stint in the TP52 class aboard his newly built boat, having previously bought yachts with world-title form.

"It's a new boat and we're still learning," he said. "After SailFest Newcastle we had a reset and that's delivered for us in this regatta."

The Passage Series had also been a closely fought affair, with only a few points separating rivals across each of the five divisions before the final race.

Robert Kelly's RP52 *Virago* secured the Commodores Cup for Division 1, with *Little Nico* not far behind in second and Peter Byford's Mylius 50 *Daguet 2* rounding-out the podium in third.



Division Two saw a close battle between the Farr 44 *Sea Hawk* and Lisa Callaghan's well-campaigned Sydney 38 *Mondo*, with *Sea Hawk* from the Cronulla Sailing Club acquiring more Sail Port Stephens silverware.

Ralf Moller's Hanse 400 *Kookaburra* captured top honours in Division 3. *Absolut*, an Archambault A35, was consistent all week and was rewarded with second, and Newcastle's *Ataraxia II* placed third.

The crew of *Midnight's Promise*, a Jeanneau 37, sailed to a comprehensive win in Division 4. In the Non-Spinnaker Division the *MWF Joy* were thrilled with their win on a countback over *Allsail Leeward*.

The winner in Division 1 of the Port Stephens Trophy sailed under ORC was Garry Holt's *Let's Get it On*. Division 2 ORC winner was Simon Grosser's Young 88 *Young at Heart*.

During the event, Port Stephens MP Kate Washington confirmed that the NSW Government, via Destination NSW, will continue its commitment to the event.

Dates for the 2025 Sail Port Stephens Passage Series are March 31-April 5, followed by the Windward-Leeward Series 25-27 April and the Bay Series 2-4 May.

Sail Port Stephens is generously supported by Destination NSW, Port Stephens Council, Pantaenius Insurance and subsidiary sponsors.



The Newcastle Making Waves Foundation yacht *Joy* was entered into the Newcastle to Port Stephens offshore race and Sail Port Stephens non-spinnaker division of the Commodores Cup.

Crewed by regular volunteers from Newcastle and supplemented by a few Sydney volunteers, the team represented the Foundation in spectacular fashion.

With a light but building breeze, *Joy* led the fleet out of the Harbour in the lead-in race, beating the professional racing yachts, and managed a very respectful 6th place overall out of a fleet of 42.

Port Stephens turned it on with excellent weather for all but the last day, with three offshore passages and two bay courses. Will Broad, one of the students who participated in both our Winds of Change program last year and the Twilight racing season, joined the crew for the Tuesday.

Will threw his weight behind the sail trimming and general crewing and thoroughly enjoyed his first offshore race in a regatta. Mum Amanda said, "his confidence is growing, as is his love of sailing". The weather was varied and often light, but excellent sail trimming and advice from Bridget Canham and co-skipper Greg Pugh saw *Joy* sail well in all conditions.

Taking the gun in all five of the non-spinnaker division races, the handicap soon started to catch up with *Joy* and the crew ended up level pegging with a Pittwater yacht

Above: Joy leaving Newcastle Harbour and, below, leading the way at Sail Port Stephens.



in the final race however, we took out the first prize on countback with two firsts to *Leeward Sails'* one.

The Commodores Cup Perpetual trophy is now proudly on show in the NCYC trophy cabinet. *Joy* also won the Pantaenius Team Cup, with a clear lead established with their team partner, *Neverland*.

We would like to thank all our supporters, in particular the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club and D'Albora Marina for the opportunity to participate in the racing.

– Ian Murray (Co-skipper)

Where are they now?

Alicia (Ali) Watt

Over the years we have been fortunate to have many wonderful young people work as casual staff at NCYC in the bar, restaurant, and Sailing Academy. Many are university students and employment at the Club is very important for them.

As Members, we have come to know these folk well, and we think that most would be interested to hear about their pathways after completing their university studies, and leaving NCYC to embark on careers.

Alicia (Ali) Watt commenced working at NCYC in 2019. Originally from Sydney, Ali has come to love Newcastle and doesn't see herself wanting to live anywhere else. She plans to complete her Honours research year of a Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management Degree with a study of microbots.

Ali has worked as an Instructor in the Sailing Academy and also in the Bar and Restaurant. She has also provided photography services to the Club – the beautiful black-and-white photo on the window in the Foredeck Bar was taken by Ali.

Ali has many talents. She is a clever musician, playing guitar, flute and piano, while also singing and writing her own songs. Ali's most recent music gig at NCYC was last Christmas when she played on the pontoon, establishing a popular new Summertime tradition at the Club.

In June last year, Ali had the opportunity to join the luxury small cruise vessel *Le Laperouse*, operated by Ponant. The vessel operates in the Kimberley Region between Darwin and Broome and Ali's role has been as a naturalist, environmental educator, RIB driver, and tour guide.



The 131m ship takes only 100 to 150 guests and almost as many crew.

Ali presents lectures on the history, geology, ecology, and culture of the Kimberley area and takes guests on field trips to spot wildlife and learn about the environment. This work fits in perfectly with Ali's cheerful, outgoing personality, and combines her knowledge, love of nature and photography.

Ali is hoping that next Summer, she will be invited to join a vessel visiting Antarctica. It is always great to see Ali when she comes back to Newcastle between her assignments as a tour guide with Ponant.

In memoriam

Howard John Bakewell

14/12/1935 – 13/01/2024

It was with sadness that we learnt of the death of NCYC Founding Member, Howard Bakewell, on 13 January this year.

Howard was a well-known businessman and sailor in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. With his wife, Margaret, he undertook some amazing cruising adventures during the 1990s and early 2000s.

They started sailing on Lake Macquarie and were regular competitors in Lake Macquarie Yacht Club events in the 1970s and 80s. In 1988 and 1989, Howard and his son Peter built an Adams Radford 57 which they called *Margarita I*.

In 1994, he and Peter and a crew from Lake Macquarie competed in the 50th Sydney Hobart Race. In 1995, Howard and Margaret cruised to northern Australia and spent time in Darwin.

This was followed by two and a half years exploring South East Asia. From there, they ventured across the Indian Ocean, into the Red Sea and to the Mediterranean where they cruised for over 10 years.

During that time, they purchased a brand new Beneteau 57 in France, calling her *Margarita II*.

Margarita I returned to Australia and has since been sailed on Lake Macquarie by Peter. *Margarita II* has been sold.

NCYC member, Helen Griffin and her late husband Len, knew Howard and Margaret well. Helen said: "They were an inspiration to us in our decision to purchase our yacht *Fourth Dimension*, and to embark on a similar journey of the liveaboard cruising life, exploring the world.

"They shared many stories of their sailing adventures with us over the years. Although we were sailing in the Mediterranean at the same time, we unfortunately did not catch up with them on *Margarita II*, but we were nevertheless in regular contact."

Howard will be greatly missed by his wife Margaret, his three children, nine grandchildren and all his friends.

Top right: Photo of Howard and Margaret taken in 1995, aboard Margarita I, before setting off on their cruise to Europe.



LEARN TO SAIL COURSES FOR KIDS

The NCYC Sailing Academy is a registered provider with Service NSW and accepts the \$100 ACTIVE KIDS vouchers.

For further information, contact our Sailing Academy
Tel: (02) 4940 8188 or
email: sailingacademy@ncyc.net.au

An infographic with a dark blue background and white text. It is divided into three main sections: 'ALWAYS LOOKOUT FOR SEAGOING SHIPS', 'STAY FAR AWAY TO BE IN SIGHT', and 'BE AWARE IT'S THE LAW'. The first section includes a diagram of a ship with a 30m safety zone and instructions to check the Daily Vessel Movements at portauthority.com.au/lookoutnewcastle. The second section shows a diagram of a ship's blind spot and advises staying 30m away. The third section lists legal requirements under NSW marine legislation, such as never obstructing access to fairways and harbours, and operating vessels responsibly. The website portauthority.com.au/lookoutnewcastle is mentioned at the bottom.

Look out - whales about!

As we head into Winter those boating along the NSW coastline, including the Hunter Region, will start noticing new friendly faces out in the water. Whales start their migration north to warmer waters, with the peak season being around the end of June and throughout July.

It's important that us boaters play our part in protecting our marine ecosystem, this includes keeping a proper lookout and a safe distance to avoid harming whales and any other marine animals you are lucky to come across.

While you may want to get a closer look at these majestic creatures, it's important to understand that doing so not only interferes with the whale migration, it's also very risky and unsafe for all.

Powerboats and sailing boaters must keep a minimum distance from whales of 100m or 300m if there are calves. If there are predominantly white whales all vessels must keep a distance of 500m – these species are currently endangered.

You must travel at a constant slow speed and leave

minimal wash within 300m of whales. If you think you see a whale, or any marine animal, and there's a risk of collision, put your engine in idle until the animal moves away. Once it's safe, move off slowly and carefully.

Remember even the most experienced boaters can face unexpected risks on the water. You may have skipped a boat more times than you can count, however it's important to always keep a proper lookout and if you come across any on-water risks apply good judgement to manage them safely.



Have you planned ahead for your day out?



You're the skipper, you're responsible. Visit lifejacketwearit.com.au to plan your day and prepare for common risks.



ARE YOU BOAT READY?
PLAN ○ PREPARE ○ PREDICT



This edition of *Thirty-Two Fifty-Five*, we have decided to cover a few night-time assists and to point out a very handy piece of advice.

Throughout the months of March to May, Marine Rescue Newcastle (MRNC) has been involved in several night

operations assisting the boating public with breakdowns.

Probably the most interesting, and certainly the longest job, was on Good Friday. Newcastle Base received a call from the wife of a boatie who had broken down. The vessel, a 6.4m cuddy cabin had suffered fuel issues some 42 nautical miles to sea. Unfortunately, our vessel is only approved by AMSA to go 30 miles to sea. This meant that one of the Marine Area Command (Water Police) large vessels (WP21 *Vigilant*) had to be tasked from the MAC's base at the southern end of Pittwater, an approximately 4- to-5-hour trip from Pittwater.

Newcastle Base was told to wait for further updates and have *NC30* on standby to rendezvous with Police once back inside the 30nm range.

NC30 left Newcastle on dusk, after completing an assist at sea off Stockton, rendezvousing with *WP21* some two and a half hours later. The coxswain, Terry Reynolds, reported that the trip out and back was like Hunter Street on a morning peak time with numerous Bulk Carriers drifting about as well as other vessels.

Once on scene *NC30* took over the tow for the long trip back to Carrington Ramp.

Not long after we entered the harbour, *NC30* was tasked to assist a tinnie up near the old BHP wharves where a man and his grandson had suffered engine issues. They were towed back to Carrington.

Easter Saturday again had *NC30* on the water at night with a sloop transiting from Broken Bay to Port Stephens. The couple onboard had sail-furling problems and exhaustion. *NC30* arrived on scene off Redhead, and after talking to the two people on board via phone, decided to follow the distressed vessel as they were sailing OK, however, were concerned with venturing up to the bow at night to try and sort out the furling issue.

NC30 used its pan/tilt spotlight to illuminate the sail area to see if anything concerning the furling issue was obvious, but nothing was found.

A call to VTS (Vessel Traffic Services Newcastle) for a shipping update revealed there were two bulk carriers due out just before 2300 and the second before midnight. *NC30* was forced to have the distressed vessel

do a 180-degree turn near the entry to keep clear of the large ship. Once inside the breakwall, the vessel was able to lower all sails and berth at NCYC.

Since Easter, MRNC has had three more-night jobs from up the river to south of the entry to assist a broken-down fishing vessel. One worth mentioning was an assist at night where a vessel was broken down on the Hexham side of the Ash Island bridge. *NC30* is not able to pass under this bridge and as the tide was way too low to pass through the shallow channel between the North & South Arm, near Hexham Island, we were not able to assist this person and passed it onto Police.



1. As mentioned above, *NC30* is only permitted to go 30 miles to sea. So, if you are venturing out further, you may have to accept a long wait if you break down. Newcastle Base received that call at 1145 and *NC30* got the distressed vessel alongside at around 2230.

2. If you are venturing upriver into the south arm. *NC30* cannot get under Ash Island bridge (near McDonalds on Maitland Rd) at any time or any tide. It is also often impossible for *NC30* to traverse the very shallow area between the North and South Arm near Hexham Island. If in the areas mentioned upriver, have a paddle with you so you can row to *NC30* and stay clear of that shallow area between the two arms.

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Marine Rescue Newcastle
Community Organization

Timeline About Photos Likes Videos

To receive up-to-date information on weather warnings, safety tips, boating tips and more.
www.facebook.com/MarineRescueNewcastle

Save the Dates

8-11 July	School Holiday Youth Program
20 Jul	Presentation Evening
27-28 Jul	Sailing Coach Course
3-4 Aug	Keelboat Instructor Course
16-18 Aug	Dinghy Instructor Course
8 Sep	Founders Day
24 Nov	SSSC Full Course
25-26 Nov	She Sails Open Regatta

2025

22-24 Mar	SailFest Newcastle
30 Mar	Newcastle-Port Stephens Race
31 Mar - Apr 5	Sail Port Stephens Passage Series
25-27 Apr	Sail Port Stephens W/L Series
2-4 May	Sail Port Stephens Bay Series

Security Phone Numbers

Emergency

- **Police** – (02) 4929 0999
- **Water Police** – (02) 4984 9012
- **Fire Department** – 000
- **Dockmaster** – 0408 299 512

Club Directory

- **General Inquiries** (9am - 5pm)
(02) 4940 8188 – info@ncyc.net.au
- **Licensed Club**
(02) 4940 8188 – barmanager@ncyc.net.au
- **Marina Manager** (8am - 4pm 7 days)
0408 299 512 – dockmaster@ncyc.net.au
- **Administration** (9am - 5pm 5 days)
(02) 4940 8188 – info@ncyc.net.au
- **Functions** (9am - 5pm)
(02) 4940 8188 – functions@ncyc.net.au





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