

thirty two° fifty five

newcastle cruising
yacht club journal

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october 2011



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Image by Greg Jackson.



The Rear Commodore's Burgee – Image by Paul Gleeson.



Image by Derek Francis.

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Full directory: p 4 of this edition.

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.

NEWCASTLE CRUISING
YACHT CLUB**In this issue****October 2011 Journal****A bi-monthly publication****EVERY MONTH**

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Editor: Gloria Thirkell

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The serious side of our season has finally arrived with the Spring Series commencement in September. All sailors are looking forward to a busy season with some innovations planned by the Sailing Committee. The season commenced in the traditional way with Founders Day on the first weekend in September. It is reported in detail in this newsletter and was a great success.

On my part I would like to thank Reverend Garry and Father Stefan (our Club Chaplains), Mary Holley, Dianne Fitzgerald and other volunteers who made the day a success as well as all who participated in the Harbour spectacle (see page 7).

Among the many activities around the Club this winter, was a charity lunch organized by the club to raise funds for the Children's Hospitals in the Hunter under the direction of the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. I am proud to say that through our efforts \$22,000 worth of much needed equipment will go to our kid's wards in the Hunter. A very big thank you is extended to the organizers and staff responsible. These initiatives demonstrate our support for, and involvement in, the greater Hunter community (see page 16).

On behalf of your Club I would like to wish Captain Tim Turner well in his new position with the Newcastle Port Corporation following his retirement as Harbourmaster. Tim is a strong supporter of our Club and a wise counsel to us regarding our activities in the Harbour. I further extend the congratulations of NCYC



members and staff to Peter Dwyer, who in early November, will take up his appointment as the new Harbour Master for The Port of Newcastle. I am looking forward to a continuation of the strong association between The Newcastle Port Corporation and NCYC, through active communication with Peter (see page 16).

Phil Arnall Commodore.

Firstly, thank you to all the members' encouragement and support in my new role as CEO of NCYC. I am finding the role both challenging and rewarding.

I am also pleased to announce that we have secured the services of Howard Keegan to fill the newly created position of Marina and Assets Manager. Many of you will already know Howard who comes to us with fabulous credentials and a broad range of experience in the maritime industry. This brings the number of full time staff positions at NCYC to 8.

A further change is proposed for your club journal, thirty two fifty five, to bring it in line with publications of the larger, longer established yacht clubs. This is to commence printing quarterly issues rather than a bi-monthly journal as is currently the case.

Purchased advertising space will continue to allow printing of the magazine at no cost to members. This change will ideally occur with the December publication becoming the "Summer 2011" issue.

With so many sailing and non-sailing events being held over the winter I would like to thank all the members who volunteer their time to serve on the various committees, and who support various projects and regattas held by the club. Volunteers play a vital role in NCYC's operations without which many of our events would not be feasible.



Meeting members has been a rewarding aspect of my position so far, and I look forward to a continuation of this in the months to come.

We have an exciting summer of sailing in front of us as well as many other club activities and initiatives so please get involved as much or as little as suits you.

Richard Howard, CEO.

NCYC Founders Day 2011



The trawler "Cock of the Harbour" event, has been a highlight of the celebrations since the inception of Founders Day in 2005 – Image by Kaz Crump.

NCYC – Our Club

STAFF PROFILE

Mark Harper

Mark, who has been a member of NCYC bar staff for the past eighteen months, has an active lifestyle, being involved in a wide variety of sports including tennis soccer and Rugby Union. He regularly arrives at work on his chosen mode of transport, his bicycle.



Considering his keen interest in ecology, Mark's degree in "Environmental Science Management" was a logical choice. He is currently taking a year off between University and looking for full time employment in his chosen career.

Throughout his studies, Mark has gained valuable hands on experience in this area as a volunteer in flora and fauna research involving trapping and tagging for species ID and population studies. To date, his casual employment has been in cafés and restaurants until taking his first bar job here at NCYC.

Mark wears a couple of wooden pendants. How he came by these is an interesting story of a unique Malaysian holiday. Mark's Dad Ian, knew someone, who knew someone, who knew a friend of a Borneo village elder. The exceptional travel experience was organised through this chain of connections.

Ian drove a suitable rough terrain vehicle over 5 hours on a single lane, unkempt, potholed road to leave Mark in the care of Nooh Dawa and his family in the remote village, with a promise to collect him six weeks later. When the time came, Mark and Ian looked like being stranded, as the single road connecting the village to civilization proved to be flood prone as well.

Because of the total lack of shops or supermarkets and the long trip to the nearest town, the villagers lived off the land. Mark was taken in as a member of the family, and lived as they lived, helping out with the subsistence farming with duties such as cutting rice, and was included in all other aspects of village life.

Living in the home of the self-appointed forest guardian, Mark was given a rare view into a past world. Nooh Dawa professed devout Christianity, and joined the rest of the community at the Sunday church service which occupied the entire day, including much singing and dancing. With his weekly Sunday devotions behind him, it was Nooh Dawa's practice to go into the jungle, reverting to the original tribal culture. He has written a book about the tribal spiritual heritage, stories and beliefs. As an adopted son, Mark was given the two symbolic wooden pendant charms which he wears proudly.

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A Parade, a Blessing and a Ballet.

A boat parade, a blessing, a tug ballet and a diverse harbour was the theme of the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club Founders Day Celebration on 4 September 2011. NCYC Commodore Phil Arnall welcomed the Club Chaplains Reverend Garry Dodd and Father Stefan Sapun who conducted the Blessing, and also NCYC Guests and spectators.

The Newcastle Lord Mayor John Tate spoke of the diversity of the Port of Newcastle with its commercial shipping, established fishing fleet and lately, recreational boating. He highlighted the well run NCYC Marina that is a draw card for visiting boats, and which has the advantage of being close to offshore.

Harbour Master Captain Tim Turner was pleased to represent the Newcastle Port Corporation at the Celebration and spoke of the unique nature of Newcastle in its proximity to the shipping movements.

Trevor Moffat spoke of the Tradition of Fishing Trawlers being Blessed at the commencement of their season and Mrs Jenny Keegan was honorary judge for the Best Dressed Boat and Best Dressed Crew categories.

The celebration concluded with a Presentation of Prizes at the NCYC clubhouse. Prizes were awarded to "She's The Culprit" for Best Dressed Boat, "Marta Jean" for the Best Dressed Crew and to fishing trawler "Ellie K" went the Cock of the Harbour Trophy. "Anger Management" and "Woodstock" were presented with the Founders Day Shield. A big thanks to NSW Maritime, Svitzer Marine, Newcastle Marine Rescue, the Newcastle Port Corporation and to all participants.

The Founders Day celebrations also signalled the opening of the Sailing Season 2011- 2012. The Spring Short Ocean Pointscore commenced on 11 September and continues till the Christmas break. Good luck everyone.

Dianne Fitzgerald, Sailing Secretary.



Marta Jean – Image by Ray Blackburn.



Sydney Seaplanes Inner Spring Regatta 2011.
Start of race two on the second exciting day of racing – Image by Mike Eggleston.



Left to Right: NCYC CEO, Mr Richard Howard; Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor John Tate; NCYC Commodore Phil Arnall, Chaplains to the Port of Newcastle / NCYC Honorary Chaplains, Reverend Garry Dodd and Father Stefan Sapun.
Background: Harbour Master to the Port of Newcastle, Captain Tim Turner representing Newcastle Port Corporation – Image by Kaz Crump.

Social Highlights

From the Vice Commodore
and the Social Committee



Newcastle School Portraits



Winners of NCYC
Major trophies,
as well as winner of the
Social Committee raffle are
pictured.

Overall positions were
determined by a complex
formula (borrowed from the
national IRC titles).

1. Impressive line up of
Trophies and prizes.

2. Gun Trophy for overall
fastest boat across the line
(Donated by Allen Fairhall):
Anger Management -
Skipper P. Arnall.

3. NCYC Cup for overall
winner of PHS Div 2
(Donated by Bruce Hansen
and Tom Michilis). Tamarillo
- skipper R. Knights.

4. Founders Bowl for
overall winner of PHS Div
1 (Donated by Paul Hannan
and George Keegan OAM).
Summer Salt - Skipper P.
Gleeson.

5. IRC Trophy for overall
winner of IRC Div (Donated
by Michael Eggleston).
Raging Bull - Skipper
J. Streeter.

6. Tom Panton, Winner of
the Social Committee's
fundraising raffle - Sydney
Harbour Bridge Climb.



From the Club Captain

Our display of Burgees creates a lot of interest. A burgee is a distinguishing flag, (regardless of its shape), of a recreational boating organisation.

Members with yachts fly the burgee from the main masthead or from a lanyard under the starboard spreader on the mast. Powerboats fly the burgee on a short staff on the bow.

Traditionally, the first time a member of one club visits another, there is an exchange of burgees. Exchanged burgees are then often displayed on the premises of each, such as in our licensed club.

Flag Officers may fly various burgees appropriate to their rank. NCYC has burgees for each rank of Flag Officer, (Commodore, Vice Commodore, Rear Commodore and Club Captain), and one for Past Commodores.

Ernie Thirkell, Club Captain.



Anthony Ross presents to Commodore Phil Arnall, the Burgee of White River Yacht Club, Illinois, USA. He had on a recent visit, presented an NCYC Burgee to the WRYC Commodore.

ON THE BRIDGE with Paul McGrath

Problem: The yacht's skipper needs to be able to make well-calculated decisions while at the same time being alert to any dangers when negotiating a racing course. One wrong move may have disastrous consequences. With that in mind take up the helm in the North seat on the deal shown and map out a course to bring home nine tricks in a contract of 3NT. East leads the heart jack. How will you manoeuvre to secure the requisite number of tricks and avoid any potential dangers that may overturn your plans?

NORTH

♠ QT2

♥ KQ5

♦ A654

♣ AQ8

WEST

♠ A974

♥ 82

♦ T9832

♣ 96

EAST

♠ 653

♥ AJT43

♦ Q

♣ T542

SOUTH

♠ KJ8

♥ 976

♦ KJ7

♣ KJ73

Solution: page 19



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Firstly thank you to the club board for giving me the opportunity to perform the new role of NCYC Marina & Assets Manager. My focus will be to provide a strong customer service to all permanent & transient vessel owners in running the marina as a business plus oversee all maintenance functions on the marina & all club assets being buildings, car park, gardens, vessels etc .

If you notice anything that requires our attention on the marina or within the facility please report it to the office so we can attend to it plus if you have any reasonable suggestions for improvement I am happy to listen & make changes where possible with the aim of providing a better facility for all to use & enjoy safely.

On only my second day here we had strong winds gusting to over 45 knots so the marina staff were kept busy running the docks checking the safety of the vessels & the marina. In doing so I made the following observations:

- A number of MOTORBOATS moored stern in were crashing their duck boards against the corner of their berth as they swayed so a few may have damage of at least scratching or possibly worse. I suggest you look at your stern lines and where possible cross them to pull the stern away from the corner of the berth. I know this is difficult if you have a dinghy or jet ski on the duck board so in which case better fenders may be required.
- In regard to YACHTS a number of boats have awnings to protect from UV. Unfortunately some of these awnings were tied loosely & became a sail in the strong winds putting load on the boat & the marina. We removed some covers but could not get to all in time so you may have some damage to the covers & attached lines. If possible awnings and covers should be tied firmly to strong points on the boat (not loosely to lifelines as this allows for movement causing hooks to release & knots to undo). If you only have lifelines to tie the awning to then please ensure the anchorage of the line is secure.
- I also noticed many yachts had halyards loosely tied off & rattling against the mast with some breaking free. Please ensure that all halyards are

"A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY"

Answer to question posed in the August 2011 issue.

The photo of "wall to wall" flotsam where our marina now stands was taken on 12 February 1992.

The Floating dock in the background was the predecessor to the current one.

securely tied off & where possible separated from the mast so they do not rattle in a breeze. This is a common courtesy in a marina in consideration of the landlubbers sleeping in close proximity and the people sleeping in other vessels moored on the marina. Even better, I suggest you consider 'mousing' your spinnaker and headsail halyards to the top of the mast as this will reduce the likelihood of them coming loose and making lots of noise as well as providing the added benefit of keeping them out of the sun when not in use which will enhance their longevity.

I rang some owners on the day and will continue to do so should a problem occur with their boat but if you could attend to any of these issues on your boat there will be less chance of damage to your vessel during severe conditions in the future.

Howard Keegan.





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NCYC Photo Competition

Category: "Maritime"

Judged by Peter Field.

Newcastle School Portraits

Conditions of Entry for the December Competition:

- Photographer must be a current member of NCYC.
- One entry per person per issue.
- High resolution image to be sent in electronic format to: info@ncyc.net.au, or to the editor.
- Email subject line: photographic competition.
- Entries are to be received by the last day of the month preceding publication.

October 2011 Winning Entry

"King Rock" by Kaz Crump.


Congratulations to Kaz (Karyn) who, courtesy of Newcastle School Portraits, will receive a lovely 12 x 18 inch colour print of her winning photograph.

Peter commended all the entrants for the high quality of their work. "It was so hard to pick a best one as all were very different, and really good." said Peter.


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Len Griffin & Ian Harper

This is the first of a few articles about the Eastern Mediterranean Yacht Rally (EMYR) held over 8 weeks in May & June this year. The NCYC was represented in this year's fleet by Len & Helen Griffin skippering "Fourth Dimension" (4D) with crew members Ben Griffin and Ian and Debbie Harper for part of the rally.

The first article will outline how the lead up was affected by the political uncertainty and the chance the event would not take place at all and details about the Turkish leg of the Rally.

Future articles will outline events in Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt and Jordan. We didn't go to Egypt as we preferred to go to Jordan by ourselves but we have some stories from the main fleet of the rally that did.

Helen has been keeping a blog about the 4D odyssey which outlines their Med travels over 4 years and more recently the EMYR Rally with many photos attached. This article will try to outline many of the details not covered in that blog and is an attempt by the males on board to prove we can be useful.

Life over the last year or so has become very different now we are married to celebrity 'skirts'. Several international incidents will not be reported as they will only be blown out of proportion – what goes on tour stays on tour. See; web.me.com/helen.griffin/Med_Sailing_2011

The Prologue

The process began in 2010 when Len & Helen became aware of the rally and the opportunities to cruise to places you would not normally consider. It included 3 continents and 12 UNESCO World heritage sites in Lebanon, Israel and Egypt. The route is shown on the map enclosed.

4D's application was sent through in late 2010 and joined the waiting list at position 124 for a possible 80 positions in the rally. They were assured there was a possibility of being accepted as there were always dropouts as the deadline approached.

By early 2011 4D's position had moved down the list slightly however the political instability around in the Med had thrown a considerable shadow

over whether the Rally would proceed at all. The news coming out of our intended stopovers in Egypt and Syria was not good. The organisers kept advising the participants that they were keeping their options open to see if things would settle down. By this time most Governments had issued travel warnings for most of the countries we were visiting. Making the short list was now not a problem.

The organisers of the Rally were people from Marinas in Turkey who began the rally as a way to promote their venues to the cruising world and they had longstanding connections with all the Marinas to be visited. Events in various countries meant the Rally program was revised several times and about a month out it was finalised with Syria out but Egypt remained in. As most boats heeded the travel warnings of their governments, the final number of boats was 50 from 16 countries. We relied on the advice they were getting from on the ground and decided it presented too good an opportunity to miss.

Their prognosis proved to be good and we had no problems or felt concerned at any stage apart from the process of travelling in strict corridors, security searches upon arrival at ports and the constant support of gunships and military aircraft to make us feel welcome.

Continued on page 15.



The criteria for participants was that the boats must be privately owned. It was deemed that only owners would have the required level of respect for their vessels and the skills in some testing berthing conditions.

The 22nd EMYR sailed forth in May 2011 from Istanbul with 2 boats and collected boats along the way down the Turkish coast. It was obvious that most of the participants were not really interested in revisiting Turkey or the total of 8 weeks was too long for experienced cruising folk to be constrained to a program of being at their destination at a certain time irrespective of the weather.

4D joined the fleet at Gocek on the southern coast of Turkey and after stops in Kemer and Alanya the fleet was complete and ready to head offshore, south to the Girne in the Federal Republic of Northern Cyprus (FRNC - Turkish Cyprus).

The 4D crew started arriving. With a typical "skirt" outlook Deb advised the husband that she didn't have any work commitments like he did, so she was going sailing and flew in to meet the boat in Kemer and Ian and Ben flew in a week later to meet the boat in Girne.

For management purposes the fleet was divided into 5 groups of 10 boats, generally based on size, with a lead boat in each group to attend Rally briefings, brief their group, manage the group scheds and report back.

With the personalities, egos and idiosyncracies of 50 skippers and crews from different countries, it made for some interesting times but overall it worked well. There were only a few crew mutinies but unlike previous rallies there were no marriage break-ups (that we were aware of).

To be continued.



Flying the flag for Newcastle – Image by Ian Harper.



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Tall Tales and True

Tenacious: persistent in maintaining, adhering to, or seeking something valued or desired (<http://www.merriam-webster.com>). Many of the individuals I sailed with on Tenacious epitomise 'tenacious' as they live out their lives through a maze of life experiences and abilities. I was privileged to sail on two back-to-back voyages, equally brilliant but significantly different in learning.

Voyage One was a journey of self-discovery, pushing the comfort zone, team work as a watch and crew and sail operations we sailed from Lavrio, Greece to Monaco, docking in Gytheio, Greece and Messina, Sicily along the way. I'd come back 'home', for the first time, to the land, Greece, where part of my heritage was formed and in the process fulfilled a life dream of seeing Kythera, the island some of my family called home before immigrating to Australia.

Without my great-grandparent's courage, foresight and desire to build a better life in Australia for their family and the generations to come I would not have had this experience. Nearing the end of the voyage I was given the privilege of leading a watch which gave me the opportunity to put into practice the skills I'd been learning and observing. This vote of confidence and belief in me by my watch leader and some other crew members assisted in developing some self-esteem and confidence.

My learning in Voyage One held me in good stead for Voyage Two, Monaco to Monaco. I was honoured to be buddies with a truly inspiring young lady who, although blind, moderate-severely hearing impaired and suffers from short term memory loss, embraces life and loves adventure.



Flying the flag for Newcastle – Image by Ian Harper.

We were thankful for the specialist assistive equipment on Tenacious which helped us actively contribute to our watch and Tenacious' operations. This voyage, with explorations in the ports of Calvi on the island of Corsica, Portoferraio on the island of Isola d'Elba, and Genoa on mainland Italy, saw me stretched and moulded in ways I had not known possible and caused me to intently reflect on the purpose of my work with people with disabilities back in Australia and ways in which communities and society should, and could, provide greater support to carers and families who have a person with a disability. It also reinforced the importance of providing people with disabilities experiences to push them to new heights because their abilities, strengths and worth are greater than their disability. I learnt so much from my buddy about positivity in the face of adversity, how to overcome challenges thrown at us and taking life as it comes.

Sarah Howard.



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Offshore Etchells Regatta

Three great days of racing

NCYC was the host club for three exceptional days of Forgas Newcastle Offshore Etchells sailing over the October long weekend, Saturday 1st, Sunday 2nd, and Monday 3rd of October 2011. Once again there was a wonderful response from volunteers from both NCYC and the host fleet, Lake Macquarie, as well as others from further afield, ensuring a successful and enjoyable regatta for competitors.



The three scheduled races were completed offshore on Saturday, before the forecast heavy weather set in – Image by Kevin Abrahamson.

Strong winds, large swell and poor visibility due to torrential rain, confined the Etchells fleet to short course harbour racing on Sunday. This was prudently cancelled for the day after race 4, with competitors and officials alike wasting no time to beat the developing electrical storm. Hot showers, dry clothes and the comforts of the clubhouse became top priority.



Heading seaward from Queen's Wharf. Competition was fierce despite the conditions – Image by Rear Commodore Paul Gleeson



Even the officials were soaking wet! Regatta Handicap team, Mark Richards, Rod McCubbin and his wife Lesley, looked happier in the comfort of the club – Image by Greg Jackson.



Spectators in hard hats were also perched high on the ship – Image by Paul Gleeson.

On Day 3, PRO Tony Outteridge set a course in the Basin on the Hunter River resulting in tight windward leeward contests directly off Newcastle's Honeysuckle foreshore. Racing in the harbour confines allowed a significant crowd to congregate on the shoreline a mere 35 meters from the top mark and cheer on the fleet each time they converged at the windward end of the course in the shifty conditions. Newby sailed by Richard Howard, Joel Skelton and Greg Torpy clinched 1st place overall on 17 points from B Squared and Critical Balance (Mark Langford) who finished second and third after a count back equal on 18 points. Peter McNeil's Iris III and Tom Braidwood's Fantasia rounded out 4th and 5th overall, respectively. Roger 'Hicko' Hickman (Sun Tzu) summed up the general feeling: "I love getting up to Newcastle. It is such a great place to go racing given its ease of access to a great offshore track and fantastic facilities and great hospitality".

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NEW HARBOUR MASTER FOR NEWCASTLE

Peter Dwyer



NSW Minister for Roads and Ports, Duncan Gay, said Peter would take up his appointment in early November to build on 30 years of maritime experience.

Mr Gay, who has authority under the

Marine Safety Act to appoint Harbour Masters in NSW, said Newcastle Port Corporation advertised extensively to attract suitably qualified and experienced candidates for the Newcastle position.

Peter has been a Marine Pilot at the Port of Newcastle for the past 10 years and previously was employed by BHP Transport for 20 years. His roles included six years as a Ship's Master and three years as a Chief Officer.

He holds a Master Class 1 and a Diploma in Applied Science (Nautical Science) and his experience and skills include ship handling, marine pilotage, emergency response, environmental management and occupational health and safety.

Peter impressed the selection committee with his knowledge of the Port of Newcastle and its future direction, his strategic intentions for the next 12 and 24 month periods and his skills in working with of an increasing number of Marine Pilots at the port.

The Port of Newcastle is one of the world's largest coal export ports and recorded nearly 3,900 ships movements in the past year. Trade throughput reached more than 114 million tonnes in 2010-11 with forecasts for exports to double in the next five years.

Peter will replace Tim Turner who has been Harbour Master since 2000 in a maritime career spanning more than four decades. Although Tim will retire as Harbour Master in early November, his experience and knowledge will not be immediately lost to Newcastle.

CEO of Newcastle Port Corporation Gary Webb, said the Corporation was managing a growing and diversifying port and that Tim would move into a new role of Manager Navigational Projects to complement the Corporation's plans for the long term future development of the port.

"Tim's enormous experience will be extremely valuable during the next 12 months where he will concentrate on navigational matters for existing and new port related developments," said Gary.

Humpty Dumpty Children's Charity luncheon Guest speaker, Phil Kearns

This event was a sellout largely owing to the drawing power of our charismatic guest speaker, former Australian rugby union star Phil Kearns. The event was a success in every way: prime location with excellent food, drink and company, and the relaxed and humorous delivery by Phil. The substantial funds raised, can be attributed to both the liberal support of the diners, and the generosity of our sponsors who are listed below.

NCYC extends sincere gratitude to Carlton & United Breweries; Tyrrell's Vineyard; Caves Beachside Resort; Bacchus; Nor'East; Rustica, Newcastle Beach; rocksalt; Sprout Dining; Ghost Elite Charters; Svitzer; Heliservices Newcastle & Hunter; Shortland Waters Golf Club and Max Bailey First National. (Who provided the much appreciated expertise of auctioneer Nathan Thirkell).



NCYC marquee, on Friday 19 August, during the Humpty Dumpty Children's Charity luncheon – Image by Gloria Thirkell.

Social Committee fundraising Trivia nights have been a huge success, during the past two months, enabling cheques to be presented to Newcastle Dragon Boats, Newcastle Rowing Club, TS Tobruk Naval Cadets and Newcastle Special Needs Sailing. We extend special thanks to Heliservices for the raffle prize to boost our fundraising efforts for Newcastle Special Needs Sailing. The winner of the two quarter hour helicopter flights, was NCYC member Margaret Fleming.



International Talk like a pirated day provided the theme for our Pirate Trivia in aid of TS Tobruk – Image by Gloria Thirkell.

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PART 2—Home:

Cathy's birthplace, Sidea Island, Oba Bay, PNG

Background to the story: Part 1 covered Cathy's sailing quest from Newcastle to South Eastern PNG to find her father, Boland, and to visit her home village. Cathy left there at the age of 12 in search of him. The story left off as Cathy and Paul found Boland's village.

Boland and four of the boys came on board in Argyle Bay and we headed out around the point to the next bay to visit the neighbouring village. As "Jemima's" lee side gunnel pressed down, the boys, convinced we were about to capsize, bolted to the windward rail, ready to climb onto the bottom of the boat's hull. Wind bullets from the hills kept the boys on their toes. Suddenly the situation reversed and I was on my toes when one of the boys dove over the side! An extra strong gust had sent our paw paws rolling into the water, and he went in after them!

Our days and nights in the village were occupied with telling stories, kai kai (village tucker) music and laughter. Goodbyes were heartfelt and difficult but the won talks (relative / friend) were waiting for the local girl to come home to Oba Bay, Sidea Island.

Heading back east it was all fresh headwinds, solid seas and rain squalls. We tacked & tacked & tacked, then sheltered in Baxtor Harbour. This was the first stiff windward passage since departing NCYC, we completed over 600nm of short-handed windward sailing before returning to Newcastle. At anchor in Baxter we considered our options. We had gained some knowledge of the track to Oba Bay on the way down and decided to take a night passage and more favourable seas. Derek was at anchor in Oba Bay this was to be our guide. As we approached Sidea Island our track led us between islands. We slowly, slowly inched through the darkness into Oba Bay until we were in 20mtrs of water. The torch beam searched across calm tropical waters and we strained our eyes until "Windstormer" appeared and we let go the anchor, happy to see the end of that passage.

Daylight uncovered an exotic tropical paradise of emerald waters, coconut palms and dramatic forest, a massive tree towered from the beach its canopy dwarfing all those under it. Soon the dugouts were alongside and what a place for a toothpaste advert perfect smiles all around. On the beach many people gathered inviting us through an archway they had constructed from tropical flowers and palm fronds. Cathy met old friends from schooldays, and also a new generation of won talks.

During our stay we were treated to a grand feast that saw the local pig and fowl population take a dive. We had visitors on board every day. The young girls giggled endlessly at their reflections in the large mirror on board.

Often in the evening people wandered the beach singing and a dugout would come alongside with a hot meal prepared for us. We graciously accepted and passed back rice and teabags.

With the locals on board we headed off to Cathy's old school at Sawa Sawaga. It would either be a long way around the island, or take the narrow passage between Sariba Is and Sidea Is. The chart indicated flows up to 7kts and the tidal flows were a puzzle that had yet to be understood.

We entered the fast flowing passage where bomies (bomboras) built standing waves, and large powerful eddies kept the helm busy, and the bow plunging deep into the short cranky seas. Under full power we managed two knots across the bottom until clearing the turbulence into the flat waters of Sawa Sawaga.



Outside the school, a group of children in traditional dress sang with unique island harmonies that had been around almost as long as the coconuts and coral. Cathy said the school had grown and there were many more people on the island, we walked out to the point. The current didn't actually go slack, but the slackest period lasted about ten minutes whilst it changed direction.

We had experienced how these people who have very, very little can give so much of what money can't buy. The time had come to say our goodbyes, a young won talk, Essay, joined John & Derek on board "Windstormer". Our heading was east to the Engineer Group then east South-East to the Conflict Group, then towards the Louisiade Archipelago. All of the anchorages involved dodging coral heads and reefs, not all were charted, and strong currents frequently played a role. We tuned to H.F. 8161, and at 0800 hours, we established contact with yachts to the east and looked forward to meeting other cruising folk. We had seen only two yachts in over hundred miles of anchorages.

By Paul Green and Cathy Owens.

Coming Events...

OCTOBER

- HRMI Cup
Saturday 22nd October 2011
Supported by NCYC yachts and power boats
- Rotary Calcutta
Monday 31st October 2011

NOVEMBER

- Melbourne Cup
Tuesday 1st November 2011
Tickets start at \$25 – see page 6 for details
- Bimbagen Wine Tasting
Thursday 17th November 2011
- Newcastle Craft Beer Week
21st-27th November 2011
- NCYC Craft Beer Week Dinner
Wednesday 23rd November 2011

DECEMBER

- NCYC Christmas Party
Sunday 18th December 2011

EVERY WEEK

- Friday Night Raffles
Tickets on sale 6pm, Draw starts 7pm
- Saturday and Sunday Breakfast
Great new menu! 8am – 10.30am
- Sunday Live Music
3pm – 6pm

EVERY MONTH

- Trivia
Last Thursday, starts 7pm
Skins: min \$200, Jackpots: \$100

ON THE BRIDGE with Paul McGrath

Solution: You can see that you have four clubs, two diamonds and at least one heart trick 'off the top'. A successful finesse of the diamond jack would provide another trick and once the spade ace is knocked out there will be two more tricks there – yielding more than enough tricks. Can you see any dangers? Yes, an alert skipper will duck the first heart. Look at what will happen if you win the first trick – when you play on spades West will win the ace and return a heart. The defence can take four heart tricks to scuttle the contract. If you duck the first heart and win the second West will be out of hearts when in with the spade ace and your opponents will be left floundering in your wake!

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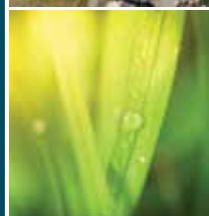
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