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SQUADRON

Seamanship & Fellowship

Quarterly



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FROM THE ACTING EDITOR Tim Whitrow



WHEN I stepped into this role, the first thing I realised is that a magazine like the *Squadron Quarterly* doesn't just happen, it's built on the shoulders of volunteers. The *SQ* crew have put in countless unseen hours: writing, proofing, chasing photos, checking facts, and pulling it all together so that, when the issue lands in your hands, it feels effortless. They deserve every bit of recognition, and my thanks go out to each of them.

But there are two people who truly carry the heartbeat of this magazine: Fay Duncan and Roger Oaten. Fay's eye for detail and Roger's quiet dedication in production are the reason the *SQ* exists in the shape it does today. They are, without question, the heroes of this publication. I'm simply the lucky one who gets to steer the ship for a while.

As we look ahead, my hope is that we can keep the *SQ* in print. Not everything needs to glow on a screen. There's something to be said for picking up a magazine on a lazy Sunday afternoon, sitting back with a coffee (or something stronger), and giving your eyes a break from the endless scroll. Printed pages let you pause, breathe, and remember that slowing down is part of the pleasure.

So here it is: another issue filled with stories, reports, and reflections from our Squadron community. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we've enjoyed putting it together.

See you on the water!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REPORTS

From the Commodore	5
From the General Manager	5
RSAYS Limited Report	6
Racing Report	8
Junior Development Report	10
SheSails@RSAYS Report	11
Cruising Report	12
House and Social Report	14

REGULAR ARTICLES

About the Squadron	4
Welcome to New Members	5
Members Profile – Under the Spell	16
Senior Member Profile – Neil Dell	18
Sail Drive	24
In Tranquil Waters	
Allan Ross Clyde Osmond	28
Geoffrey Vinall Wallbridge	30
Phillip John Moody	31

FEATURES

Navy Commander Visits the Squadron	7
I Wish to go Sailing	9
The Spirit of the Yacht <i>Youth</i> Trophy	13
Bass Strait Idyll	15
Mini Globe 5.80 Race Update – Fiji Edition	17
When Plan A Goes Awry	20
Volvo Gearbox Warning	22
Don't Forget to Lubricate Your Seacocks	22
An Act of Piracy?	23
Think Like a Sailor ... Keyway Crisis	23
The Fish Factory	26
The Cape Horners and the RSAYS	27
Tidetech Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation	27
Excerpt from the Memoirs of a Cape Horner	29

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Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC

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COVER PHOTO

Fabio Fragiaco and Rosemary Carindali sailing *Strega* on Australia Day.

Photo: Peter Rowlands

Read their article *Under the Spell* on page 16

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Advertisements, editorial and photographs can be sent to:

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- left at the Squadron Office.

Notes for Contributors

- Articles submitted should be typed as a Word or plain text document. Up to 1,500 words and four to six photos will cover two pages, 750 words and two or three photos will cover one page
- Photos should be (a) in focus, (b) JPEG format at high resolution and (c) sent separately and not embedded in a Word or text document or downloaded from the internet

DINING FACILITIES

Dining Room

Available for functions and for hire

Jimmy's Bar

Please refer to the RSAYS website: About > Club Facilities for current bar and dining times

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By Alan Down, Commodore

THE attendance at the Inc AGM was a sure sign how interested Members are in the governing of the Squadron. There were 102 Voting and 27 Non-Voting Members who braved the wintry evening to attend.

All the Flag positions were filled this year with Owen Haskett elected as Vice Commodore and Stephen Martin as Rear Commodore respectively. Campbell Mackie has joined the Management Committee and is a welcome member of the Committee. I am looking forward to continuing the good work of the Committee which will be less time-consuming now that the financial matters of the Club are well under control and the marina repair project has been contracted out to a well-known firm, Bellingham Marine, with work commencing in September and scheduled to finish in about 4-6 weeks.

I regret to report that the newly-appointed Rear Commodore has resigned his position as Rear Commodore along with other administrative roles at the Club, citing irreconcilable personal matters. This was from 13 August. Stephen has worked hard to promote the interests of the Racing group, especially for the sailors new to the Club.

Our new Food and Beverage Manager, Tim Rogers, has been pleasantly surprised by the reception he has been given by the Club, and his personality and industry is showing. The Dining Room and Jimmy's Bar facilities will be ramped up with the arrival of the sailing season not far away, and the function bookings that are now in demand up to November and into December.

Through long-standing Senior Member, Colin Fraser, the Club hosted a private luncheon for Commander Tony Ryder in the Library recently. He is an active member of the RAN and planning on retiring to Adelaide soon.

Since the Winter edition of the magazine in June, we have the long-awaited new Acting Editor in Tim Whitrow (*Sea Dragon*), who has grasped the nettle with both hands, to the relief of his predecessor Fay Duncan! Tim has wide community connections and will be a great asset to the Club in many ways as I am sure we will soon appreciate. He is keen to promote the hard copies of the magazine which are a valuable and portable record that Members often refer to.

Over the past few weeks, Ian Roberts (*Bowline*), Scott Mutton (*Cool C4ts*) and *CarbonTest.au* (Neil Young), have been enjoying competitive sailing on the Eastern Seaboard with varying success and have acquitted themselves with distinction. Reports confirm the crews are having the best time and we wish them a safe return with a locker full of silverware.



From the General Manager

Hayley Hunt, General Manager

LOOKING ahead to the 2025/26 year, I'm excited to share that work will soon commence on upgrading the Marina. We've engaged Bellingham Marine to replace all of H Row, with construction expected to begin in mid-to-late September and be completed by October.

This project is an important step forward. Delivering H Row on time and within budget will set the standard for future marina upgrades. While our current budget doesn't allow for all the necessary work to be done at once, we anticipate continuing with a staged approach – completing one key project each year.

We also have some exciting news: several large vessels will soon be joining the RSAYS pool. Interest in berth sub-licenses and marina licenses has increased recently, particularly in the 18-25 metre range. We wish we had more berths of this size available to meet demand.

I'm looking forward to continuing my work alongside the Commodore and the Management Committee as we move through this exciting period of development.

Planning is already underway for the upcoming Flag Raising Ceremony on Saturday, 13 September, followed by Opening Day on Saturday, 1 November.

As always, I welcome the opportunity to meet with Members. I'm available on Wednesdays and Fridays each week – just send me an email or phone the Office to arrange a suitable time.



We welcome New Members who have recently joined the Squadron

Family:

David Boyce & Dean Hiscock, Charlotte & Hannah Hiscock
Michael Edgar & Jacqueline Woodhead (*Skylark*)
Angela & Robin Smith (*Mameena*)

Associate:

Peter Ween (*Savage*)

Senior:

Bek Wiggall (*Moongara*)

By Chris Mandalov, Chair



Directors L-R: Chris Mandalov (Chair), Stuart Johnson, Peter Kelly, Ned Dally

Absent: Padraic Conneely, Scott Mutton

THIS is a summary of the report for the 2024-25 year that was presented at the RSAYS Limited AGM on 14 August.

Stressed Tenant

The Squadron started the 2025 financial year in a tough situation. Losses over the previous two years had left them with a very small cash reserve. Added to that, there was now a new Management Committee and a new General Manager. Fortunately, a high priority for this new group was to get the Squadron back in the black.

The RSAYS Inc (INC) Management Committee approached the Board of RSAYS Limited (LTD) for rent relief which was granted for the 12-month period, from September 2024 to September 2025. This was on the proviso that INC could show that the relief was needed, and that there was a plan to show how INC would recover to a full rent situation.

The rent relief roughly equates to a \$80k rent reduction in the 2025 FY and a further \$40k reduction in 2026. This flows through to a loss in the main revenue stream for LTD.

This situation was exacerbated even further because roughly four months of rent backpay was also owed to LTD. While this was accounted for correctly as a receivable, this is not the same as having the cash in the bank to invest.

INC, to its credit, provided LTD with regular monthly cash flow reports and these eventually showed a return to profit.

The impact of all of this was that LTD's income was reduced, and it barely covered its depreciation costs. LTD was only able to report a small profit for the year.

Accounting Approach

In past years, Squadron staff have looked after the accounts for both INC and LTD. The end of the 2024 FY was a difficult time for INC. The bookkeeping workload was such that LTD couldn't get access to any financial reports for 4 to 5 months leading up to the end of the 2024 FY.

The decision was made last year to run a separate set of accounts for LTD. The LTD Directors now have direct access to the accounts at any time. Some of our Directors have the skills needed to manage the LTD accounts, pay bills, create budgets, etc.

New Auditors

Last year, LTD changed its auditors and this year it engaged Young, Martin and Associates. This was at the recommendation of the Squadron's General Manager who had used this company in the past.

This change saved on audit fees and the auditors did a good job. LTD plan to use Young, Martin and Associates for our 2026 accounts. As a side note, LTD's turnover falls below ASIC's threshold for needing an independent audit.

New IAP Charter

After a long pause, the Infrastructure Advisory Panel (IAP), which looks at infrastructure investments, was resurrected again in early 2025.

The IAP Charter has been re-written to make IAP a bi-partisan Committee, reporting equally to INC and LTD. Previously it was an advisory panel only for the Management Committee. This change was needed to make sure that IAP considered the interests of both INC and LTD.

An important role of LTD is to develop its assets and ensure its precious funds are managed properly. This is not the same as asset maintenance, which is the responsibility of INC under the lease.

Infrastructure developments need to be planned, budgeted for and have a solid business case. LTD must maintain a 'war chest' for the occasional crisis. The Company can only afford a finite spend each FY. The LTD Financial Report included a 5-year cash and Capex budget that constrains IAP.

IAP Projects

There are two projects that IAP is presently looking at:

Balcony Stairs. The first project is the replacement of the balcony stairs which are now beyond economic repair. It is a legal requirement that an area like the upstairs Dining Room has a second emergency exit. A Statement of Work has been prepared by Scott Mutton and the GM is getting quotes for this work.

H Row Replacement. The second project is the replacement of H Row section of the marina.

H Row is made up of seven large fingers which will be completely replaced. LTD approved a 'not-to-exceed' budget of \$300k for this work. The GM has engaged Bellingham Marine to do this work. INC will manage this task and supply labour for associated ad hoc work. The replacement is scheduled to start and finish in the September-October period, ideally before the busy sailing season starts.

Financial Summary

The audited financial report had been sent to all Members.

RSAYS Ltd performed financially in line with expectations during 2024/25 but profit and cash generation were negatively impacted by the RSAYS Inc rent relief.

If the reserve cash level is to be held:

- RSAYS Inc rent will need to return to normal levels, and
- Future capital expenditure will need to be properly timed to match revenues

New Company Logo

Last year LTD received a legal opinion on the protection of assets from litigation action on the Squadron. It was recommended that LTD use a different logo to the Squadron. LTD doesn't have a royal warrant and needs to operate independently of the Squadron.

The new logo has been resurrected from an old S.A. Yacht Club logo, with the company name added. The idea was put forward by Peter Kelly who found this logo in some old archives.



Stuart Johnson



I WAS born in Tasmania and moved to South Australia with my family when I was seven. After leaving Scotch College in Launceston, I completed my junior school education at St Andrew's School Walkerville and then attended senior school at St Peters College. I'm married to Libby Jones and have two boys, Angus and William.

I started sailing on the family trailer sailer and soon moved to windsurfing, dinghies, then inshore and offshore keel boat racing. Before Libby and I were married we cruised and raced my trailer sailer on the Lower Murray at Clayton Bay and later with our two boys, making many trips to the Coorong.

Our boys were keen on sailing, so I put my sailing on hold to concentrate on youth sailing, and with a good mate founded the SA Optimist Dinghy Association. This was and still is the fastest growing class in Australia. Serving as president of the Optimist Dinghy association I became involved in SA Youth Sailing and The National Optimist Dinghy Association committees. Over this period, I was involved in organising State, National and International championships at Adelaide Sailing Club, attracting fleets of more than 100 boats. I completed my term as president, leaving the association in the capable hands of Andrew Short who had joined the class with his daughters.

After my involvement in youth sailing concluded, I joined RSAYS and purchased *WazaZulu* from Rex and Ryan Godfrey. This was a great introduction to the Club, and we enjoyed Twilight racing. Looking at a bigger boat I decided a Sydney 38 would be suitable and brought *Audacious* to RSAYS and started a campaign concentrating on offshore racing. The Club provides a good offshore program, and we enjoyed the training ground to develop the crew skills allowing us to compete in seven Adelaide Lincoln Races, two Sydney to Hobart races and a Melbourne to Hobart race.

My working career was influenced by working on the construction of the *One and All* while at school. I was involved in making patterns for the bronze floors and fittings and after leaving school completed a patternmaking apprenticeship with the Electricity Trust of SA. Shortly after completing the apprenticeship, I started a cadetship as a designer. I enjoyed the study and subsequently completed two engineering degrees in Manufacture and Mechanical Engineering at the University of South Australia. While studying I worked in technical engineering but soon moved into asset management and project management. After many years working for asset owners I moved to an engineering consulting business. Having a background in asset management, I became involved in leading and setting up project governance systems for growth and sustaining capital programs for minerals and metals industry clients in Australia and overseas. My current role involves management of projects in the pyrometallurgy, minerals processing and hydrocarbons industries.



Navy Commander Visits the Squadron

By Alan Down, Commodore

LAST month Commander Tony Ryder, ADC, Royal Australian Navy, accepted our invitation to the Squadron. The Commodore and Colin Fraser hosted an informal luncheon in his honour as part of a goodwill visit to encourage a long-term Navy/Squadron collaboration. Commander Ryder is in charge of all Navy concerns in South Australia and has seen active service in many parts of the world. He is now based at HMAS Encounter at Osborne Naval Shipyard.

Colin and Barry Allison, both ex-RAN Reservists and as a consequence connected to HMAS Encounter, invited Commander Ryder to the Squadron. We took the opportunity to present him with an Honorary Membership Certificate of the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron to mark the occasion.

He is very keen to promote mutual interests between us, and already we have had preliminary meetings to forward these initiatives. In the very near future, there will be many hundreds of Navy staff and their families living and working in North Haven who might be interested in Squadron activities. We look forward to welcoming them to the Club.



Guests at the lunch: L-R Cathy Branson & Alan Down, Dorrit & Tony Ryder, Sally & Colin Fraser, Carmen & Barry Allison



Commander Ryder being presented with the Honorary Membership Certificate by the Commodore and Colin Fraser

Racing Report

By Kevin Kelly, Chair



As the mercury dropped and many of our fleet slipped into hibernation for the winter, a hardy band of skippers and crew kept the Squadron colours flying high in the SD Marine Winter Series and the Two-Handed Series.

Winter Racing – Small Fleets, Plenty of Action

Six races were scheduled, three of them Trophy races, and while July's wild weather claimed two races, the competition stayed fierce. Nine Squadron boats lined up alongside a similar number from the CYCSA, with a few 'trophy hunters' joining for the big events.

- Division 1: *Nerana* continued her unstoppable form from the summer season, taking out both the series and the Hawse Cup
- Division 2: *Freedom* claimed the series, while the Hawse Cup went to *Passport*

The Plympton Cup also delivered a rare treat this year: enough breeze to carry the entire fleet to Adelaide Shores and back. Twenty-nine boats fought it out for the prestigious trophy, with Squadron Member Derek Morrison's *Silent Partner* taking the win. Fastest boat honours went to Caillin Howard's *Pace*, proving once again why she is a force to be reckoned with.

Two-Handed Series – Double the Fun

The Two-Handed Series drew a solid fleet of six boats, including three from the Squadron. The CYCSA's *Ocean Hawk* claimed first place, followed by *Enchantress* in second and *Freedom* in third. *Freedom* also topped the AMS standings, edging out *Inukshuk* for the Series.

East Coast Campaign – Flying the Squadron Flag

While the rest of us layered up and braved the winter chill, several of our Squadron crews were chasing sun, salt spray and silverware on the east coast and making us proud in the process.

Cool C4TS and *Bowline* tackled the Sydney to Gold Coast Race, providing a thrilling show for those of us glued to the live start feed on YouTube. Though they didn't quite crack the podium, they were often right up there with the leaders, proving they belong among Australia's best.

Meanwhile, Squadron Member Sebastian Bohm, based in Sydney, had a blinder with *Smuggler* taking second in line honours, first in IRC, and first in their Division. Incredible results!

Both *Cool C4TS* and *Bowline* carried that form north to the Gold Coast to Mackay Race, setting the stage for the Airlie Beach Regatta, where the Squadron featured strongly:

- *CarbonTest.au* – 1st PHS
- *Cool C4TS* – 2nd PHS
- *Bowline* – 12th PHS, including a 1st in Race 7

And then, the big one – Hamilton Island Race Week. With frequent Facebook posts from our boats we were able to virtually go with them for the ride and track their performances. Ian Roberts and the *Bowline* crew took 3rd place in their division for the series and 1st in one race; Scott Mutton and the *Cool C4TS* crew finished 13th in their series and also 1st in one race, Neil Young and the *CarbonTest.au* crew finished 6th in their series in from another Squadron Member Peter Mumford on *Carte Blanche*. From all reports our teams featured strongly in celebratory activities over the regatta.

Port Line Cup – Light Breezes, Tight Racing

Closer to home, the Port Line Cup, hosted by PASC on 10 August, brought light breezes, a big incoming tide, and plenty of shallow-water 'surprises' to keep skippers on their toes.

Among the highlights for Squadron boats:

- Overall Winner: *Why* – Warren Carey
- Division 2: 1st *Divine Madness* – Kaz Eaton
- AMS: 1st *Freedom* – Bob Schahinger; 2nd *Silent Partner* – Derek Morrison; 4th *Nerana* – Chris Perry
- Division 1: 3rd *Silent Partner* – Derek Morrison
- Trailer Sailors: 1st *Why* – Warren Carey; 3rd *Passport* – Kevin Kelly

Looking Ahead – Summer Racing is Coming

Your Racing Committee has been working hard behind the scenes to deliver a bigger and better summer program, with exciting new events including:

- Coasters Series
- River Races
- Tri-Series
- Non-Spinnaker Series for those wanting a more relaxed racing option.

We're also planning to lay two new fixed marks, funded by the Multihull Association, and have secured sponsorships from Bravo Sails, WealthGen, Binks, and Zambrero to make this season one to remember.

The action kicks off with the SA Women's Keelboat Regatta on 4 October, followed by the first Twilight Race on 8 October. The full program and entry links are live now on the Squadron website. So, whether you're a regular on the start line or thinking about joining in for the first time, now's the time to sign up.

See you on the water!



Cool C4ts - Scott Mutton and crew



Bowline - Ian Roberts



Andrew and support at Goolwa

THE other day I was in deep thought, daydreaming perhaps, 'There are things in life that stay with you forever, events that have some influence that change how you see things.' The following is one such event.

The Sailability volunteers were busy setting up the boats for our usual Sunday sailing program. I was approached by a person who said, "I wish to go sailing." In front of me was a tallish man in an electric wheelchair. You might think, 'What is so unusual about that, many people use wheelchairs.' Eventually, after some discussion with him and his carers, I discovered his name was Andrew and he was a ventilated-dependent quadriplegic. 'Oh!' I thought. "How much movement do you have?" I asked, to which Andrew indignantly replied "Only my head." After some consultation with the volunteers, I said, "Okay, no problem. Let's talk some more."

The boats that Sailability use were manufactured in Victoria using the Universal Design concept, so I contacted them for their advice. Almost immediately I received the recommendation that the Liberty model would be the most suitable boat which included servo controls to control the steering and sails, almost the same as Andrew used to control his wheelchair. After some intense fund-raising I received the boat which was white with a burgundy deck and sails to match.

Prior to Sailability's next sailing day I sorted out the controls and set up the boat as best I could. But how do I get Andrew into the boat? The personal lifter on the pontoon would enable the volunteers to place him in the boat. But what about his ventilator, can he do without it while loading him into the boat? All these questions were filling my head! Andrew's carers came to the rescue and showed me and the volunteers how to transfer him into the boat.

Sunday was sunny and warm with a nice breeze and small wavelets dancing on the ocean. This was the day to set Andrew sailing, free from his wheelchair. He arrived full of wonder and looking forward

to the challenge of being on the water. The Liberty was launched and moored by the pontoon. Andrew was suited up with warm clothing and a life jacket, then guided down onto the pontoon followed by his carers. He seemed unfazed about what was going to happen to board the boat.

Prior to lifting him out of his wheelchair the ventilator machine was disconnected from his breathing pipe at his neck and replaced by a manual ventilator operated by a volunteer during his transfer onto the boat. Once he was transferred and seated the ventilator machine was placed into a special waterproof compartment and reconnected to his breathing pipe. Also, being so tall he sat upright and was safety-harnessed to the seat as he had no trunk strength. I tested the servo controls as a check to make sure they were okay.

"Are you comfortable and ready to go sailing?" I asked. Andrew answered quite cheekily, "Yes, but I have an itchy nose, can you scratch it?" I did. As this was his maiden voyage a support boat, crewed by me and his carers, was also ready to accompany him. The mooring lines were let go. The support boat towed him away from the pontoon towards the open sea. Andrew steered the boat quite well with his chin, just like his wheelchair. The wind caught the sails. The boat heeled gently and moved forward, the tow rope was disconnected, and Andrew was sailing, free of any restraints. At that moment my emotions came to the fore with a few tears welling up. I believe many of the volunteers and Andrew's father were also caught up with that very emotional occasion.

It was an unbelievable task and achievement. I look back thinking, 'Is it possible?' With the help of positive thinking people and a 'Nothing is impossible, we will find a way' attitude Andrew got his wish – "I wish to go sailing."

[Andrew did know how to sail prior to his unfortunate accident. I asked him one day, "How long can you last without the ventilator?" His answer was, "Oh, about 3 minutes."]



Junior Development Report

By Anna-Mieke Kappelle, Chair



Building the Next Generation of Sailors

FOR the Juniors program at RSAYS, this summer is more than just another training season – it's the start of a refreshed, re-energised pathway for young sailors.

Our aim has been to get everything in place so the kids have the best experience possible. We've spent the past few months getting our ducks in a row, and we're ready to launch into an exciting season ahead.

That preparation has included significant investment from both the Juniors fund and the RSAYS Foundation, directed toward long-overdue maintenance on the Club's J24s and jinkers. Just as important has been the dedicated effort of volunteers, who rolled up their sleeves to bring the boats back to top form. Special thanks go to Bob Williams, Kingsley Haskett, Bob Schahinger, Naomi Fewings, Steve Martin and SheSails Chair Sophie Bishop, who gave generously of their time both during and outside of the working bees.

With that foundation laid, the program is set to offer plenty of opportunities for 12-17 year olds this summer:

- School Holiday Experience: A three-day program at the start of the October break
- Sunday Morning Training: Six-week blocks of beginner and intermediate courses in Term 4, 2025, and Term 1, 2026.
- Advanced Training & Twilight Racing: Wednesday night sessions throughout both terms.
- End-of-Term Fun Days: A chance for all Juniors to come together and celebrate.
- J24 Intensive (January): Leading to Junior J24 entries in the Coopers Small Boat Series.
- The Pacer Cup (29 March): A chance for the Juniors to give Derek some proper competition!

Beyond the training itself, the program is about building community. The new Juniors Instagram account @RSAYS.juniors will share updates, stories and successes, helping to bring more teens into sailing and into the life of the Club.

This season is about giving young sailors real pathways into the Club and its events. We want them to feel connected, supported and excited about where sailing can take them.

With fresh opportunities, revitalised boats, and a strong community behind them, RSAYS Juniors are ready to make this summer one to remember.



Volunteers completing maintenance of the J24s



By Sophie Bishop, Chair

ALTHOUGH many sailing activities around the Squadron are a bit dormant throughout winter, the SheSails Committee has continued its work behind the scenes to plan and organise the regular events that SheSails hosts at the Club. This includes *Something on Friday* sessions which usually involve speakers giving interesting presentations or sometimes a movie night. There's also the Women on Water (WOW) program that is similar to the Come and Try days but is specifically targeted at women. Across the board, the SheSails Committee is continually working on activities that will encourage more women to get into sailing and ultimately join and enjoy our wonderful Club.

June started off with a *Something on Friday* movie night entitled *In Her Ocean Wake: Sydney to Hobart 2024*. With close to 30 attendees rugged up in their warmest clothes, the Dinghy Shed was the chosen venue to watch the story of Annette and Sophie: the mother-daughter team who won last year's double-handed division of the S2H Yacht Race. It was made up of footage taken by Sophie herself, making viewers feel like they were onboard for the race! The personalised intro that was recorded by Annette and Sophie for us to play before the movie was an extra special touch.

In July and August, the Juniors Committee organised working bees to help fix up the Squadron's three J24s. These boats will be used for further Juniors training programs, as well as for the SheSails WOW sessions. After attending the first working bee myself, I was very impressed by the willingness of our Club Members to volunteer their time and expertise to get these boats back in tip-top shape. It was a productive afternoon, with the list of jobs/parts getting slightly smaller, but it also turned out to be a great social activity that ended with a delicious sausage sizzle. I want to say a HUGE thank you to Anna-Mieke, the Chair of the Juniors Committee, who has been working tirelessly to organise volunteers and fundraising, and to sort out parts and repairs to get these J24s ready for the coming season.

Currently, the SheSails Committee is hard at work on the next WOW session that will take place over the third weekend of September. The Committee and I really appreciate how many Members are enthusiastic and supportive of this initiative. It is thanks to all of you sharing our online posts and telling your friends and family about WOW that the event books out every time.

The Committee and I would like to take this chance to wish 'best of luck' to the team of women competing in this year's Townsville Yacht Club GaLS Regatta taking place 5-7 September. The squad representing SA includes the SheSails Committee's very own Janet, and many of our WOW mentors. The team is made up of Janet Thornley, Helen Willmer, Candice Cushway, Tracy McInerney, Naomi Fewings, Ligita Bligzina, Amelia Clements, Lisa Bettcher and Jodie Roberts.

The current SheSails Committee members are Juanita Ottaway, Emma Watson, Julie Bennett, Sophie Bishop, Janet Thornley, Jeanne Harrison, Helen Kearney, Helen Moody and Carolyn Sugars.



Annette and Sophie introducing their movie at *Something on a Friday*



Movie night in the Dinghy Shed.



The team competing in the GaLS regatta in Townsville

Inland Cruise By David Eldridge, for the Cruising Committee

IT'S a pleasure to report that the Squadron's third Inland Cruise was another resounding success – and a testament to the friendships and community spirit that make these trips so special.

The Inland Cruise started with a simple idea: support the town of Mannum after the devastating river floods, by spending a weekend there. The response from Members was overwhelming, with caravans, RVs, B&B bookings, and motel stays filling the town. It was such a great success that the Cruising Committee decided to make it an annual Winter Solstice tradition. A chance for Members and friends to explore new places, share good food and wine, and simply enjoy time together!

This Year: The Barossa Valley

THIS year's cruise took us to the heart of the Barossa Valley, with our headquarters set up at the Big4 Caravan Park in Nuriootpa. More than 50 Members took part, with the first arrivals rolling in as early as Wednesday, keen to make the most of the weekend.

Friday night set the tone for the trip, with a big barbecue in the camp kitchen followed by a lively gathering around the fire pit. As the flames flickered, so did the stories, some true, others perhaps ... enhanced by the wine, and plenty of laughs that carried late into the evening.

Saturday saw Members scatter across the Barossa. Some toured wineries and chocolate factories, others explored local walking trails, and a few found their way to the A-grade football match next to the caravan park, joining the locals for some grassroots footy atmosphere.

Saturday night was another highlight: a private room at the community-owned Vine Inn, where great food, good wine and better company turned the evening into something truly memorable. On Sunday, the group made the short trip to Stockwell for a long, lazy lunch at a beautifully renovated hotel. The perfect way to wrap up the weekend!

Looking Ahead: Hahndorf 2026

The Winter Solstice Inland Cruise just keeps growing in popularity, and next year's event is already locked in for Hahndorf, from Friday 19 June to Sunday 21 June.

We'll be based at the Discovery Park in Hahndorf, which offers everything from luxury cabins to caravan sites. The weekend promises a feast of local experiences:

- The charm of Hahndorf village itself
- Cheesemakers and the famous Melba Chocolate Factory
- Cellar doors at some of the Adelaide Hills' most iconic wineries
- The Heysen Gallery and Beerenberg Farm
- And one of the best farmers' produce markets in South Australia, just across the road

As always, while the official event runs Friday through Sunday, many Members arrive early or stay on afterwards, and that flexibility is part of what makes these weekends so relaxed and enjoyable. For those who can only make it for a day trip, you're more than welcome. Just let us know, and we'll book you in for the Saturday night dinner or the Sunday lunch.

The Inland Cruise has become far more than a weekend away. It's about connection, shared experiences, and the kind of camaraderie that makes the Squadron feel like a second family. Whether you're a regular or thinking about joining us for the first time, next year's event promises great company, plenty of laughs, and memories you'll carry long after the weekend ends.



How to Join the Next Inland Cruise

The Winter Solstice Inland Cruise – Hahndorf 2026 is set for Friday 19 June to Sunday 21 June.

- **Where:** Discovery Park, Hahndorf – options from luxury cabins to caravan sites
- **What's included:** Saturday night dinner, Sunday lunch, and a weekend of relaxed fun, local adventures, and great company
- **Flexible options:** Come for the full weekend or join us just for a day – we'll save you a seat at the table

To book your spot or to find out more, simply contact the Cruising Committee at cruising@rsays.com.au.

First-timers are warmly welcomed – this is the perfect way to meet new friends and discover why the Inland Cruise has become a favourite on the Squadron calendar.



By Tim Whitrow



Vice Commodore Owen Haskett presenting the Trophy

A FEW weeks ago, I was honoured to be awarded the RSAYS Yacht *Youth* Trophy. The Trophy is for personal achievement in cruising with regard to seamanship, and which demonstrates personal endeavour and enterprise. For me it represents something far deeper: courage, resilience and the belief that a dream is worth chasing, no matter the setbacks.

For those who don't know my story, a few years ago a plane crash changed my life forever. I lost my leg and with it, for a time, I thought I'd lost the future I had imagined for myself. Sailing had always been part of my DNA: the freedom, the challenge, the connection to the sea – suddenly I felt like that part of me had been stripped away.

But dreams have a way of calling you back. A year after my accident and 10 months in a wheelchair, my partner Leanne and I bought *Sea Dragon*, a strong and capable Bluewater Ketch, and set out to sail her home from the Bay of Islands NZ back to Australia. It wasn't just a delivery voyage: it was a statement to myself more than anyone that this amputation wasn't going to be the end of my story. That I could still push through fear, uncertainty, and discomfort, and keep chasing that horizon.

The journey home was tough. There were moments where I questioned myself, times when exhaustion or pain made it tempting to turn back. But there were also moments of pure magic: dawns at sea that painted the sky in colours you can't describe, nights under a million stars, and the deep, rhythmic intoxicating motion of the ocean.

That's what makes this Yacht *Youth* Trophy so meaningful. It's not about me alone. It's about the spirit this trophy represents, the courage to take a leap, the perseverance to keep going when things get hard, and the belief that adventure is for anyone willing to embrace it.

I hope my story reminds others that setbacks don't define you. The ocean doesn't care what limits you think you have: it just asks you to show up, respect her, and keep learning.

So, to the Squadron, thank you for this honour. And to the next sailor standing at the edge of their own 'what if ...', wondering if they're ready take the leap. You'll never regret the courage it takes to begin.

[Tim's article *The Winemaker's Wake after Broken Wings* was published in the Winter edition of the *Squadron Quarterly*.]



Tim with the Dream Team - Sue, Colin and Leanne



Tim describing his experiences



Fay Duncan, Tim and Leanne, Leanne's parents



Colin (crew), Tim's parents, Tim's brother and wife

House and Social Report

By Annie Wilkins, Chair



Pink & Black Casino Night

ON FRIDAY 13 June, the Squadron dazzled in pink and black, as Members gathered for one of the most anticipated social nights of the year, the Pink & Black Casino Night. And what a night it was!

Dressed to impress in the evening's theme colours, guests arrived to a transformed Dining Room, complete with pink-and-black balloons, crisp tablecloths, and the unmistakable sound of shuffling chips and laughter filling the air.

The casino floor was the star of the show. From the spin of the roulette wheel to the intensity of the blackjack tables, the room pulsed with excitement. Cheers erupted as players hit 21 or landed that perfect number, and the friendly rivalry was matched only by the camaraderie. Seasoned players shared tips with newcomers, and every big win or bold attempt drew applause and smiles from the crowd.

By the end of the night, a few lucky members left with armfuls of chips (and bragging rights), but everyone left with memories of an evening filled with laughter, connection and a shared sense of fun.

A huge thank you goes to the House and Social Committee and to David Eldridge for organising and running such a spectacular event. The night was proof, once again, that the Squadron knows how to throw a party to remember.



Sunday Music on the Deck

THIS winter, the Sunday Music on the Deck series once again proved to be the perfect recipe for a relaxed, memorable afternoon at the Squadron.

Under sunny skies, Members, families and friends gathered on the Quarterdeck to enjoy live music, delicious food and good company. Performances by T-Junction, Flaming Zambucas Duo, and Back to Back set the perfect soundtrack as people mingled, laughed, and soaked up the beautiful waterfront views.

The atmosphere was electric but laid-back, with clinking glasses, chatter and the hum of music carrying across the deck. Guests were treated to a served lunch and a wide range of cocktails and drinks, while umbrellas provided just enough shade for everyone to relax and savour the moment.

Raffles added an extra spark of excitement, with prizes ranging from Club merchandise to generous gift baskets, courtesy of the House and Social Committee.

It's afternoons like these that highlight what makes the Squadron so special: a perfect mix of community, beautiful surroundings, and events designed to bring people together.

The next Music on the Deck is set for Sunday, 12 October – mark your calendars, invite your friends, and come to see why this event has become a Member favourite.



By Jenny Geytenbeek



Andrew on the cliffs of Deal Island, overlooking Dover Island

DEAL Island rises out of Bass Strait about half-way between Wilson's Promontory and Flinders Island. On earlier forays through the Strait, I had only seen Deal Island from afar to wonder, as one does of distant islands, what would it be like ashore. In Autumn of 2024, my husband Andrew and I sailed *Meander*, our Bavaria Vision 46 cruising yacht, to Deal Island for a sneak peek as we had successfully applied to the Tasmanian National Parks to be caretakers over the winter of 2025. We left *Meander* in the safety of Prince of Wales Bay Marina in Hobart and shopped for groceries to last 100 days. Unlike the era of paid lighthouse keepers who received supplies fortnightly by ship or helicopter, we had only one chance to get everything we needed. We were limited to a 500 kg airlift including our own body weights. Hmmm – take chocolate or cheese? We got ourselves and our provisions to Flinders Island. On 3 June, the wind was of strength and direction to the liking of our pilot who flew us from Whitemark on Flinders Island to the uphill and dog-legged grass airstrip of Deal Island, landing carefully enough between the casuarina-forested hills.

Light has shone for 146 years from the tower built with convict labour in 1846. When the station was de-commissioned in 1992 the Australian Maritime Safety Authority acknowledged the surviving heritage buildings and required the new Tasmanian authorities to maintain a continuous residential presence on the island. The light tower and superintendent's cottage are part of the oldest group of lighthouse station buildings surviving in Australia. A leasing arrangement was initially considered, as was commercial potential for tourism, but better interest and oversight has been achieved with public funds and the volunteer caretaker program, now in its 25th year.

Of the chain of islands which are the remnant of the land bridge joining Tasmania to the mainland, we can see 24 from the top of the lighthouse including Craggy, Curtis, Hogan, Rodondo, the Bass Pyramid and Devils Tower. Four kilometres across, 1,500 hectares

in area, Deal Island boasts three beaches, five coves, and four anchorages covering all directions of weather. More than 120 vessels and 300 people visited the island from spring through autumn before we arrived, mostly cruising yachts passing between Victoria and Tasmania. We, however, were lucky enough to maintain our solitude ashore until our 68th day. In a maddening world of distant wars and collapsing democratic institutions, big tech, pervasive screen images, traffic, schedules, regulations, materialism and consumerism, an escape to island serenity had appeal. Summer caretakers might enjoy exclusive beaches and lazy barbecues with passing sailors, but for me it is the wild of winter, fortifying a blockade of social exchange, that both tests and salves with delight. We have rules by which to abide and work to do but there are more freedoms than constraints. We live in the newest residence of the old lightkeepers – a prefabricated house of 1969 with all the essentials. There is a library of 300, titles of fiction themed around lighthouses, islands and seafaring, guidebooks on weather, seabirds, fauna and flora, breadmaking and gardening, and, most interestingly, historical journals of keepers and caretakers. We have a flat screen TV, HF and VHF radio, a scratchy telephone, a satellite phone and, sadly though convenient, Starlink. Deal Island is no longer a weather station though some of the old equipment remains, and we still keep daily rain records for the BoM. There's a workshop of tools and parts, mowers and brush cutters, and a Polaris ATV. We gambled on the previous caretaker's competence as gardeners, and unfortunately lost. We have what we have and make-do with that.

Living on a deserted island accords space and time for reflection wherever your mind wanders; essentials, resources, ecology, conservation, the good life, virtues, individualism, interdependence, wonder and nothingness. This idyll has a price, however, and it is no surprise, that dear family and friends are out of reach. If only they could sail by. We would love them as much for their touch as any treats they might bring.



Inside the lighthouse

Members Profile – Under the Spell

By Rosemary Carindali and Fabio Fragiacomio



IT is almost impossible to separate sailing from both of our lives.

Fabio began as an 8-year-old, learning to sail and navigate dinghies around Sydney Harbour.

His father comes from Trieste in the eastern corner of Italy which boasts a spectacular gulf and long tradition of fine sailing. In the mid-1970s he built two dinghies and later bought a 12 metre blue water ocean-going cutter that became the family boat. Moored at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron until last year *Bora 2* taught many, including myself, the love of sailing and the lure of the sea.

Strega has happily taken over that role in South Australia.

She is a sleek Duncanson 34 made to comfortably cruise and race in most winds with a versatile sail wardrobe. *Strega* amply cohabits both worlds: whether heeling to windward, under spinnaker in a broad reach (praying she doesn't broach), playing tag with the ever-

present and annoyingly timetabled *Accolade*, or rocking gently at anchor with a glass of *Strega* liqueur. She has enough mod cons to make her fun and enjoyable for the 'lower performance' orientated members of our crew.

More importantly, our boat openly invites the many friends and family, often timid and unaccustomed to sailing, to be introduced to the joy and adventure of being on the water.

We have worked and lived all over the world, principally in Italy and America. We chose to settle in my hometown of Adelaide where we have based our Engineering and Software company, conveniently a quick 25-minute drive to the boat.

Given the long family affiliation with the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, it was only natural to become Members at the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron. From purchasing *Strega* over a year ago our experience since joining the Club has always been welcoming. Members have openly offered the hand of friendship, giving advice and resources, are ready to help, and always with a smiling comment on how often we are out – 85 sails written in our log to date!

This year we received an honourable mention of inclusion at the King of the Gulf dinner. We were cheered despite coming second-to-last in our first race across the Gulf!

In the spirit of *Bora 2*, *Strega* challenges us and offers us a means to enjoy the beauty of our coastline and the Port River. She is named 'the witch' in Italian and has certainly bewitched us – *Strega* has opened a world of bewitching opportunity! All with the wonderful warmth of Jimmy's Bar matched to that of its Members' welcome.

Strega is also a liquor made in the south of Italy, coincidentally in the town where my grandmother was born!



By David Ingleton



Dan Turner, David Ingleton, Carolyn Sugars

Fiji is a yachties' paradise! Warm winds, islands and anchorages, as well as sandy beaches, are a huge drawcard. The Mamanuca and Yasawa Islands lay to the west of Viti Levu and are a magnet for cruisers from all over the world. Some of the boats we saw were huge. No wonder this area was chosen as the stopover point between Legs 2 and 3 of the Mini Globe Race. Carolyn and I decided to combine a tropical holiday with the restart of the race in late July so that we could catch up with Dan Turner, one of the five Australians in the race. RSAYS Member, Mark Sinclair, was also following the fleet on *Coconut* in a support role.

We were able to secure accommodation next to the Vuda Marina at the northern end of Nadi Bay, which was an easy walk to the hub of activity. Fifteen boats had left Panama and made their way across the Pacific. One had withdrawn in Tonga and two others were withdrawing in Fiji, so that left twelve starters including Dan Turner from Adelaide. Race organiser and former Squadron Member, Don McIntyre, was running the administrative matters and coordinating media.

Most of the racing boats took the opportunity to make repairs and adjustments, as the marina offered a full range of services. There were boats from all over the world as well as yachts stored in large holes in the ground, in what I called 'cyclone pits'. This provided protection from tipping over in strong winds.

We were invited on board an Amel 53 ketch owned by a New Zealand couple who cruised up to Fiji every year. It was a floating home-away-from-home with a dishwasher, washing machine and three air conditioners. It was certainly very comfortable!

The race was restarted on the 26 July. We watched, as an armada of non-racing boats went out to accompany the racing fleet. A large ceremonial canoe was used as a start boat with a conch shell blown to sound signals. The fleet sailed off in a light breeze, headed in the direction of Vanuatu.

The fleet has made good progress and has now arrived at Thursday Island. Leading boats have left Thursday Island and are transiting the north coast, heading towards Darwin and then to the Cocos Keeling Islands. Beyond that lies the Indian Ocean – the longest leg of the race.

The world of technology is providing easy contact with the fleet through social media. Most boats have Starlink and many are posting photos and videos of their adventures online. For race updates, look on Facebook page 'Mini Globe Race' or go to <http://miniglobelrace.com>.

The fleet has now successfully sailed over 180 degrees of longitude, but challenges lay ahead, including rounding the southern tip of Africa. The race is due to end in Antigua in late March 2026.

We are now back in chilly Adelaide dreaming of the South Seas and wishing that there was a way to pack our boat into a suitcase and take it with us to Fiji!



MINI°GLOBE°RACE

McIntyre Mini Globe Race 2029

Pre-NOTICE OF RACE
10TH AUGUST, 2025



Senior Member Profile – Neil Dell

By Barry Allison

THIS is another in the series of articles by Barry Allison recounting some of the many and varied adventures of our Senior Members of the Squadron. This time we review a well-known and respected long-time Member who joined the Squadron on 8 March 1989 and has accumulated many years of building boats and sailing our numerous waters.



NEIL was born at Wilcannia in NSW and his mother and sister Marie moved to Glenelg early in his life. He well remembers the small boats he produced at home made out of galvanised roofing iron with joints puttied with tar scrounged from the roads. These were paddled competitively in the nearby Darling River. His grandfather built rowing skiffs and also rowed for the Wilcannia Rowing Club, and this is obviously where Neil's love of the sea originated.

The Dell family moved to Glenelg and Neil took on an apprenticeship as an electrician at Berks Electrical Services, now defunct, and he later formed his own electrical contracting business. It was not long before Neil made his presence known at the Brighton and Seacliff Yacht Club where he began crewing in a 12 sq m Sharpie number SA12 that he believes was named *Wyvern*. The boat was owned by Keith Burrows, and in the off-season Neil assisted in replacing the heavy Australian oak decking with a much lighter tongue-and-grooved Meranti timber that proved to be successful. Some of the identities sailing at that time were Don Crawford, Mike Faraday, Alan 'Chippy' Barclay and Fred Neils and his brothers who provided many words of 'advice'. Neil played lacrosse with the Glenelg Lacrosse Club in the winter months, where he formed a strong bond with Fred Neils and his brothers, who were champion players with the Brighton Lacrosse Club as well as champion yachtsmen.

After three years in the Sharpies, Neil decided to try his hand at single-handed sailing and bought the plans for an 11 foot Neil Cormack design Moth Class. The traditional scow type Moth of the day had very minimal restrictions – maximum 11 feet in length and 80 square feet of sail and did allow hull design changes, so Neil Cormack and Norm Butcher from the Largs Bay Sailing Club designed variations to the conventional scow shape. Neil decided to build a Cormack hull, named her *Daddy* and successfully competed at Brighton Club in their Moth fleet. He ventured across to St Kilda in Melbourne, and to Perth to compete in the Australian Championships. While sailing in one heat in Melbourne he managed to gain advantage from the rest of the fleet with a major wind shift caused by the ocean liner *Himalaya* coming into port, and was able to lead the fleet to the first mark. However, this advantage was soon lost with a broken gooseneck fitting which meant an early retirement. Neil met many characters of the day

while in the Moth fleet, including Peter Burford, 'Erky' Mitton and Ross Knapman who all provided valuable advice.

His marriage to Fay in 1964 tended to slow down his sailing activities for a short while and were revived when he came in contact with John Deniet at the Port Adelaide Sailing Club in the early 1960s. John had just finished building a Dowding 9.6 named *Aquarius* and was looking for crew. *Aquarius* sailed over the next three years in many Gulf races and the Adelaide to Port Lincoln race with Neil, John's son Scott and Greg Pickford as crew, and were very successful in several events. Sailing with John developed a certain desire to have one's own yacht, and so a Peter Dowding design was chosen in 1970 to be built at Neil's home in Glengowrie, as Neil had previously studied the techniques of building timber yachts. The main timber used was Western Red Cedar to keep down the hull weight, and also Kauri, which was acquired from the Wool Stores being demolished at Port Adelaide. She was christened *Rag Doll* and participated in many of the popular events being organised by the Squadron Cruising Committee of that time, including the local Sundowner events. His crew in these years comprised his daughter Louise, his wife Fay, Perry Warren and Wally Hampster. However, during one particular Cruising race to Port Vincent in January 1996 with a similar crew, the race was marred by *Rag Doll* hitting a submerged object – most likely a shipping container – and *Rag Doll* was holed on her fore'd under-water hull, and began to slowly sink. Frantic efforts were made to stem the flow of water but the inflow was too great and Neil decided to abandon ship, ensuring all aboard had life jackets. As every crew was accounted for, the humour of the occasion was made when one of the crew who was floating with an Esky asked whether there was any beer left in the Esky! Fortunately, racing nearby was Michael Fowler on his Roberts 36 *Piping Shrike*, who had heard the VHF distress call and he was able to converge on the location of the sinking *Rag Doll* and managed to rescue the crew – and the Esky.

So Neil then sadly became a Member without a yacht for the next three or four years. He crewed on several Squadron yachts competing in races, including Robert Henshall's *Sapphire* and *Luna Blue*, and also on Rick Halliday's *Pronto*. He became involved in a project organised by John Deniet to purchase moulds for a Whiting 11 from a bankrupt estate. The hull and deck moulds were lying in a paddock at Port Arlington, near Geelong. So John, Neil and Graham Morris arranged to have the hull and deck moulds transported from Port Arlington to Beswick's Port River Boatyard. Neil ably assisted in the preparation of the moulds for fibreglassing and the eventual transport to John Deniet's home at Warradale.



Rag Doll

Neil then bought a mould for the Whiting designed 36-footer, to be transported initially to Graham Moritz's factory and then to be laid up at Beswick's Port Adelaide Boatyard by Peter Strangways. The system Peter used was a balsa-cored fibreglass construction which proved to be exceptionally strong. After a lengthy fit-out, the yacht was launched at Outer Harbor at Bolton's Boatyard and christened *Here An Now*. She was sailed successfully over the next six years, competing in many of the Squadron races and many cruises in our Gulf, including the Adelaide to Port Lincoln Classic.

There were many cruises in those years with Ray and Varnie Partridge and Neil's wife, Fay. One cruise in particular was to the West Coast where they met up with a local fisherman who managed tuna farms at Louth Bay. While anchored in Louth Bay, they were taught how to catch the abundant tuna by using a line attached to the boat, with a rubber ring attached to the line with a hook at the other end. Many fish were caught. Fortunately, the fisherman had advised Neil as to the best anchorage, which proved to be invaluable as 50 kt winds were experienced while at this small anchorage, without any anchor dragging or grounding.

In 2002, *Here An Now* entered the Australian Keelboat Championships conducted at the RSAYS. The crew on this series was Neil as skipper with John Brooks, Glen Emery, Rob Knowle, John Folly and Perry Warren as crew and they finished a creditable 4th placing in a large fleet of yachts with entries from NSW, Victoria and Western Australia. After many more races and cruises, *Here An Now* was eventually sold in 2004.

Neil continued to sail from the Squadron in a variety of yachts, including Rick Halliday's *Pronto*, Ray Partridge's *Morruiva* and an Adelaide to Port Lincoln race on Joska Grubic's *Anaconda*.

Sadly Neil's wife, Fay, died in 1996 and was sadly missed, having accompanied Neil on many cruises across the Gulf and to Kangaroo Island, as well as a cruise to Port Lincoln and the Spencer Gulf islands. With the diagnosis of early strains of arthritis being felt, Neil decided to 'retire' from racing and to assist more with the administration and running of races. He joined the Outer Harbor Committee for several years and crewed with John Ellison on the Racing Committee boat. He later crewed with Roger Oaten on *Miss Robyn* until she was sold, and then with Brian Sutherland on his boat *Wilbur*.

Neil was able to assist with several delivery voyages of yachts to Adelaide, including a cruise from Sydney to Adelaide in Brett Allison's Brewster's 41 foot centre-cockpit yacht and on Graham Mortiz's yacht *Finibardia* from Hamilton Island to Cairns. He later cruised for a month on Wally Hamster's yacht *Bess* in the Whitsunday Islands cruising grounds before assisting in trucking the yacht back to Adelaide.



Here An Now

Today, Neil is busy in a retired mode, pottering around his home and attending the Wednesday barbecues at the Squadron and generally enjoying the friendship of his Squadron mates. We wish him many, many more years of happy retirement.



Opening Day on board *Silver Fox* with Christine Henshall



Volunteer race management on *Wilbur*

When Plan A Goes Awry

By Jeanne Harrison



Harrisons on *Dakota* at Holyhead, Wales

ROBERT Burns is well known for his quote, “The best laid plans of mice and men, often go awry.” This should be a primary consideration for all extended cruising. It is imperative to have alternative options when Plan A goes awry.

Ask any experienced cruiser, and they will have numerous examples of what went wrong with plans: weather, sea state, or tidal anomalies; an urgent need for repairs to the yacht or medical attention for the crew; government regulatory changes; or an unexpected invitation to a party not located on the route plan rhumb line.

Wind and weather planning in the tropics is far easier than in the variable winds of South Australia. Historical probabilities show that between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, SE to NE Tradewinds of 10-20 knots are most likely. But there will often be an exception to this rule, requiring a reassessment of a destination's time or location.

On several occasions we have sailed into a wind void on the open ocean. Days have passed as we drifted and read novels. On our way to Easter Island one time, we were becalmed for five days, reminiscent of the movie *Dead Calm*.

By the third day, we dropped the flogging sails. By the fourth day, the ocean was so flat, that it was impossible to determine where the sky ended and its reflection began on the far ocean horizon. Even more astonishing were the stars. The night was moonless, so the stars' reflections in the ocean below, left us with a sense that we were suspended in the universe.

A strong frontal system which eventually pushed us onwards to Easter Island helped us recover some of the lost time. However, the resulting sea state made it impossible to go ashore by dinghy at the exposed Hanga Roa town anchorage.



Hanga Roa, Easter Island

Luckily, we were not on a tight time schedule. We gradually moved anti-clockwise, to anchorages around Easter Island, with the changing wind directions, eventually anchoring in Hanga Roa five days after our initial arrival.

Sometimes an ominous sky warns of pending changes. If you look up at clouds and think, “Gee, I’ve never seen that before,” it might be time to think of a Plan B. This happened to me in Sydney when a strange green sky filled the western horizon, announcing a pending arrival of what I was later to learn, was called a Southerly Buster. We took in the sails and returned to Middle Harbour. The resultant wind was gale force and the rain, which destroyed all visibility, was torrential. We rode out the deluge, safely at anchor.

Another strange sky was merely a thick, long, single, flat-bottomed line of high clouds in an otherwise beautiful blue sky. We watched as it slowly inched towards us from the west in the open waters of the Atlantic. Our eyes were still looking up at the sky as the yacht rounded up and was laid over in gale force winds. These winds lasted for only about fifteen minutes, but jolted us with total surprise. To this day, I do not know what caused that wind shear experience and have never seen a similar cloud formation again.

One eye on the sky and one eye on the barometer can provide an early warning of frontal changes. I often feel a migraine coming on, even before the barometer drops, so listening to your head can also help. On most open ocean passages, a cruiser has the luxury to reef and perhaps alter course slightly to make the yacht both safe and more comfortable. Thus, the destination and time schedule both need to be flexible enough to handle course alterations.

When Colin and I left the USA in 2012, bound for Gibraltar, the NOAA (US weather forecasting agency) showed no tropical cyclone activity in the entire North Atlantic Basin. One week later, a hurricane began forming near Bermuda. We were eventually caught by Hurricane Chris in the open ocean, 1,400 nm into our 3,100 nm journey, with nowhere to hide.

We were hammered by hurricane force winds for several days, and then hit a second time as the downgraded Tropical Storm circled back to slam us again. Our planned destination had to be amended to include a stop in the Azores.

With a non-working engine, we were towed the last mile into the marina at Horta on the island of Faial. Unsurprisingly, numerous other boat repairs were needed whilst in the Azores, not the least of which were new masthead wind instruments. The original instruments had been lost overboard when the masthead bolts were sheared off by the extraordinary forces of nature.

Besides wind and weather considerations, there are several places around the world which require alternatives to a single planned, definitive sailing destination, due to extreme currents and tides. One of these locations is the Irish Sea. Even a one-day sail can (and did for us) go awry.



Towed into Azores



Rogers Beach Bar, Grenada

In the UK, the International Convention on Safety and Life at Sea (SOLAS V) requires every yacht to prepare a written passage plan which addresses: Route; Tides and Currents; Navigation Dangers; Constraints (Plans for the unexpected); Daylight; Refuge; and Weather. We prepared passage plans regularly as we sailed around the challenging British coastline.

In 2019 we departed Bangor, Northern Ireland, planning to stop that night at the Isle of Man. Quickly passing the Mull of Galloway and entering the Irish Sea with the tide, we enjoyed an exhilarating sail at over 12 knots. Our optimism enticed us to reset our destination. We slightly altered course to Plan B, setting our sights much further south, on the Holyhead Marina on the Isle of Anglesey, Wales.

It was a brilliant day. The sky was clear. The sun was shining. The wind was gentle. The seas were friendly. Our progress exceeded expectations. But with only 6 nm to go to the marina at Holyhead, the tide turned against us. The northeast setting current quickly increased to over 8 knots and the afternoon sea breeze dropped out. Thus, we began sailing backwards as the sun touched the western horizon.

It was time to adopt Plan C. By motor-sailing at an angle across the tidal flow, we slowly closed on the coast, but were forced to sail away from Holyhead. As darkness descended, we eventually meandered into a small bay with adequate anchoring depth, out of the tidal mainstream. Our anchor dropped and we settled down for the night, about 12 nm east of Holyhead.

In the morning, it was an easy sail westward with the tide to the marina. The journey was finally completed as we secured ourselves to the last remaining berth on the Holyhead Marina pontoon, with a renewed appreciation for Irish Sea currents.

In addition to tidal flows, tidal ranges should have been more closely considered on several of our early sailing adventures. The 62' mast with an added 2' VHF antenna on our Little Harbor 44 became an issue in the US Intercoastal Waterway (ICW).

Most bridges along this 3000-mile waterway were engineered to be 65' above mean-high-water, but exceptional flooding and spring high tides sent our antenna swinging on two occasions. We realised that we needed to be far more attentive to tide tables; moon phases; rain forecasts; and water level gauges on bridge piles when passing under fixed bridges. Our daily run schedules were altered accordingly.

When filling diesel tanks at low tide on the commercial wharf at Koolan Island in the Kimberleys, we quickly learned that a 12 m tidal drop could have a significant impact on fuel flow. A long, large diameter hose was dropped slowly down to our small yacht at the barnacle-encrusted low tide level of the wharf. With gravity assistance, the flow from a single squeeze of the nozzle virtually filled our tank to overflowing.

Plan B for fuelling the yacht at Koolan Island meant that we waited until slack high tide, when the yacht was nearly the same level as the wharf pump, so that the fuel flow was far more controllable.

Even the steps from the floating dinghy pontoon to the Koolan Island wharf were unique. They were rounded half-piped shapes, so that a foothold purchase was provided at all states of the tide, as the ladder angle rode up and down every six hours.

In addition to wind, weather, tides, currents and boat repairs, we have also altered Plan A destinations when social occasions enticed us elsewhere. One time, when we sailed westward across the Atlantic, we had three possible destinations in mind: Barbados, Tobago or Grenada.

Our first choice was Barbados, until we learned that friends would be in Grenada. We could rendezvous with them, if we could be in Grenada in time for the Friday night party at Roger's Barefoot Beach Bar. After 22 days at sea, we cleared customs in the morning at Prickly Bay, beat our way around to Hog Island, and anchored behind our friend's yacht. We then stepped ashore from our dinghy at Rogers Beach Bar just as the party started, amazing our friends, and even ourselves.

To be honest, meeting a specific time deadline has rarely been a reality for us. Guests during our cruising years have always been told that they could choose either the time or the place to sail with us, but never both. In 1992, Colin's daughter and her travelling mate patiently waited and toured other parts of Egypt for nearly a month as Col single-handed up the Red Sea without an engine. Easy communication at that time was non-existent and patience was their virtue.

An interesting sailing character, whom we met at Grand Turk, named A O Halsey once said, "Power boats head **to** a destination. Sailors go **towards** a destination." A O was a charming, philosophical, paraplegic single-hander who taught us much about sailing, camaraderie, flexibility and life.

Do you have any interesting occasions where your initial plans went awry? Please let the SQ team know. We'd love to feature more Members' cruising stories in this magazine.



Low Tide at Koolan Island

Volvo Gearbox Warning

By Mike Lewis, past Member



OUR Volvo gearbox failed at only 1,200 hours usage, but we have heard tales from other Volvo owners of failure after only a few hundred hours. In one case, the gearbox was replaced under warranty only to fail again, in short order. If you have a Volvo badged gearbox (formerly Hurth) ZF10, ZF15, ZF20, etc, this could happen to you.

Here are suggestions which may help prevent premature gearbox failure for these models:

- It IS okay to motor firmly while sailing in light winds.
- It is NOT okay to motor in a freshening breeze in which you begin to sail faster than the motor is driving you.

If you are in light winds and motor-sailing firmly, everything is okay. The motor is driving the propeller through the gearbox and the clutch plates are pushed hard together. So, motoring in light winds is fine.

However, if you are motoring gently, at idle or low RPMs, and have sails up with an increasing wind, you may begin to sail faster than your motoring speed. This causes the propeller to push faster than the RPMs being delivered by the motor. This shaft movement causes the ball bearings that apply clutch pressure to be driven away from the clutch plates, which then causes the clutch plates to slip against each other and against the thrust washer. This wears out both the plates and the washer, resulting in a loss of forward drive, often occurring quite quickly. This was how our gearbox failed after only 1,200 hours. We were moving nicely one minute, then with costly repairs to the gearbox in the next.

Hopefully, this information might help prevent Volvo gearbox damage to other Squadron yachts.



Don't Forget to Lubricate Your Seacocks

By Mark Cant, Dockyard Services Manager



YES, the name always raises an eyebrow, but the advice is serious. A seacock that never gets turned will eventually seize solid, and when that happens the temptation is to force it. Nine times out of ten, that ends in a broken handle or worse – a broken valve below the waterline. The other trap is replacing a seized fitting with shiny hardware-store brass instead of genuine marine grade 316 stainless steel, or new high density plastic fittings. Brass looks fine on day one, but in seawater it slowly dezincifies until it becomes brittle and dangerously weak.

Stainless Steel offers superior strength and longer product lifespan, and is aesthetic with a high-quality look for the exterior of the boat.

The fix is simple: every few weeks, give your seacocks a turn, keep them lubricated, and when the time comes to replace them, use only 316 Stainless Steel, proper marine-grade silicon bronze, or the new plastic fantastic high-density polyethylene. But keep them moving – a little attention now saves a lot of panic later, and makes sure your boat stays on top of the water, not under it.



by Bernie Matzat



Carmon and Bernie (centre) on Opening Day 2003

WHEN I was asked to write a few words about a boating mishap, a very unusual incident on Kangaroo Island over 20 years ago sprang to mind.

With our wonderful *MV Camelot* we ventured on many cruises down Gulf St Vincent to Kangaroo Island and beyond. Those who are not familiar with our cruising history at the RSAYS can refer to a brief summary in the Spring 2022 edition of the *Squadron Quarterly* (Volume 36 Issue 3).

On a sunny day and in calm waters we arrived at Eastern Cove with the intention to anchor inside American River. We approached the entrance of the channel at the first marker. A little tinny was anchored on the side of the channel taking advantage of the tidal current. There was plenty of clearance, but for good measure I gave him a long blast with the horn before proceeding at very slow speed. Checking the approach again through my binoculars I was horrified to see that the tinny was not anchored but tied to the navigation marker with a thin line reaching across the channel! Immediately I put both engines into reverse and came to a complete stop just in time.

What happened next was unexpected and quite dramatic. Within seconds a man appeared on deck yelling "You hit me, you hit me!!" and physically threatening me and the crew. I tried to explain that

by cutting the engines I had lost steering, slowly drifting towards the tinny with the current and had just made contact. It turned out later that there was no damage to either vessel and no injuries. Had I not seen the line and stopped in time the outcome would have been much more serious.

However, this did not stop the physically impressive male from abusing us nor following my request to step off the boat. He would not give me his name and the tinny had no registration number. I cannot remember what or who eventually persuaded him to return to his tinny without further escalation.

Finally, *Camelot* was able to proceed and safely anchor in the river close to the entrance of Pelican Lagoon. However, this incident raises a number of interesting questions – was this 'water rage' and was a person boarding my vessel without permission an act of piracy? What are my rights and duties? Can I defend myself or force a person off my vessel? Am I allowed to carry a weapon on the vessel? What to do if the identity of the person or vessel cannot be obtained? What if such a situation occurs in another country or in international waters?

Anyway, the lessons learned: always keep a good lookout and be prepared for the unexpected! When going ashore later in our tender I spotted the tinny in question tied up to a sizeable, good-looking yacht hanging off a mooring near the wharf! Surely, that skipper should have known better



Camelot anchored at Island Beach, Kangaroo Island 1998



Think Like a Sailor ... Keyway Crisis

By Tomas Golej, Ariel



MOST boat owners know the saying: 'All boats are broken in some way, we just don't know it yet.'

That's why a proper tool space on board isn't just useful, it's essential. Mine is simple: a rock-solid vice, tools, a grinder, and a box of stainless bits that 'might be useful one day'. As it usually goes, that day arrived when my helm keyway, a humble 6 x 6 x 50 mm piece of stainless steel, vanished during pack-up, courtesy of some well-meaning guests. This keyway is essential in holding the steering wheel to the spline of the rudder control mechanics to steer the boat.

Replacing it sounded easy, but it wasn't. This simple part was a nightmare to even source. Some people didn't even know what I was talking about. So, I did what I always do, I made it myself.

From my stainless spares stash came an 8 mm rod with a 90-degree bend. That 90-degree bend became the jig that I clamped in to the vice. I then ground the top surface flat, flipped

it for the second, and soon had two perfectly parallel faces to work with. After cutting off the bent end, I indexed the piece on those flats and formed the remaining sides until it matched the keyway dimensions exactly.

A quick test fit proved, as most sailors know, that nothing on a boat is square. A few passes with 180-grit wet-and-dry brought it to a snug, almost perfect fit. This time, I glued it in place after a lesson well learned.

Moments like these remind me why the tool room setup is worth every moment of thought that has gone into this boat. When needed and when the proverbial hits the fan, a well-mounted vice and a bit of know-how turned what could be a costly delay into nothing more than an afternoon well spent. Think like a sailor!



Darling River Expedition



HEAVY rain in Queensland in early 2025 motivated two of our friends to put together a cruise on the Darling River in NSW in anticipation of increased flow and correspondingly high water levels. A start date was set in early June 2025, at short notice, to take advantage of the conditions from Wentworth upstream. The Riverland can get pretty cold at that time of the year, especially overnight so it was only the hardy that enlisted for the trip.

Squadron Members who signed up were Rob Hutson and his sister Vanessa in *Silver Gull*, Roy Martin in *Dazza's Heaven* and Lorraine and me in *Grey Nurse*. Our fleet comprised eight boats, the remaining five being made up of Members of the Trailer Sailer Association of SA (TSASA) from Adelaide or Regional SA.

The plan was to wend our way up-river to see just how far we could go in one week before turning back. The expectation was that we might be able to navigate some 60 km from the Murray Darling Junction, being the limit of our charts which were last revised in 2001. My understanding is that the Lock 10 pool extends to roughly this distance, depending of course upon the pool level at the time. The Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) website and indeed the Lock 10 Lockmaster both confirmed that the pool level was 'normal' – but hang on a minute, we were expecting a higher level or at least a greater flow.

As we researched further we found that much of the Queensland floodwaters had been and were continuing to be used to fill the lake system at Menindee, with the balance diverted into Lake Victoria via the Great Darling Anabranch (GDA) and the River Murray, effectively by-passing the Darling River. The MDBA, along with the various Queensland, NSW and Victorian water authorities, are responsible for balancing the needs of all water users in the Basin including the environment, so a percentage of the flood waters was being used to provide this 'environmental' flow. The GDA is geographically south of the Menindee Lakes and west of the Darling River between Menindee and Wentworth, by-passing lock 10 on the Murray.

I can remember my father romancing about exploring this anabranch when we were kids. Unfortunately we never made it to the area as a young family in the 60s and maybe our current generation has just missed out on a perfect opportunity to do so

by kayak. Not to worry, exploring the Darling River by trailer sailer is undoubtedly much more comfortable, especially if one has a small ducted gas heater for the below-zero mornings.

Local information regarding the river depth and width varied, with most landowners only familiar with the situation in the vicinity of their own property; however one common myth that couldn't be ignored was the presence of a 'Big Snag' somewhere upstream. Would this be impassable and lead to our downfall after only a few kilometres? My understanding is that in the early days of paddle steamers a purpose-made barge would steam ahead and remove fallen trees from the path of the trading vessels on their way to Bourke some 1,420 km from Wentworth. The current situation is that all trees are left where they fall, to provide a fish habitat for native species. There are literally hundreds of fallen River Red Gums that have succumbed to the gouging effects of bank erosion over the years, not the least during the increased flows associated with high river events in recent years.

A hearty pub meal put us in good shape for an orderly departure under the Wentworth Bridge, all boats sporting shortened rigs to negotiate the 5.5 m clearance and any unforeseen overhanging obstacles that lay ahead.

We generally aim to stop at a sandy bank overnight but a careful examination of the charts coupled with a Google satellite search proved them to be absent in the lower reaches, and rare at best further upstream. Rain on our first night upstream found us negotiating muddy banks – the type of mud that sticks to the underside of your boots as you grow taller and taller.

Somehow, prior to embarking on this journey, I had conjured up a vision of an ancient river flowing through a wooded wilderness but this quickly proved to be false. Much of the lower reaches are lined with small landholdings that are fully developed with farmlets, homes and holiday houses. This follows the subdivision and sale of some former sheep stations along the way which is still happening today. Certainly the river itself looked ancient with sometimes steep banks and thousands of gnarled red gums – no two the same, most with their roots exposed, many hanging on for dear life and just as many that had fallen into the water.



On the river



Pizza night



Trevor at the helm



Narrow river

The days that followed saw us progressing at a leisurely speed of around 2-3 kts upstream covering between 5 and 7 nm each day. A late start, sometimes after bacon and eggs and a warming campfire, became the norm. The aim was to enjoy cruising while taking in our surroundings and observing the bird life. Pelican numbers were lower than expected. Had many of them flown inland toward Kati Thanda (Lake Eyre)? One observation that we did make was that lots of tiny fish kept breaking the surface of the water, indication perhaps of a new breeding cycle.

If possible we nosed into the bank at the end of each day to leave our stern facing north-east to capture and make the best of the rising sun in the morning. Short but sunny days kept up the charge on our battery, as was the case with everyone in our group. Of course the mild days and cold nights ensured that our fridge didn't need to work hard either.

The going got slower as the river narrowed and the snags projecting from each bank became more frequent. It was an achievement to reach the limit of our charts but as predicted we could sense that we were nearing the limit of the Lock 10 pool, evidenced by an obvious flow and some bumping on the bottom. By the time that we reached the small settlement of Palinyewah we had our keel fully retracted and our rudder horizontal, and were still able to navigate slowly with care. Some sections were less than two boat widths and only around 500 mm deep.



Conversation after cooking

We found the so-called 'Big Snag' at 75 km from Wentworth in an area known as Ellerslie, and knew immediately that our progress upstream had come to an end. Cheers all round, photos of the big red gum that spanned the width of the river and a short walk gave us all time to reflect on our achievement before turning downstream.

Our evening campfires were one of the highlights of the trip: pre-dinner drinks and delights while the camp ovens warmed; pizza night, damper night and a jumbuck roast night with all the trimmings topped off with apple crumble, custard and cream. Everything was cooked over the coals. Then bush poetry reading and story-telling to round off the evening with everyone taking it in turns to play a part. Dorothea McKellar, Henry Lawson, Banjo Patterson and many others would have been so proud of us.

The run downstream saw us covering between 7 and 14 km each day with newly-earned knowledge of the twists, turns and snags still fresh in our memory.

All in all, it was a remarkable and very memorable trip, one that has magnified our desire to do more of the same. We are so lucky to live where we live!

Acknowledgements:

River Murray Charts (including 60 km of River Darling) by Maureen Wright
River distance to Bourke (Wikipedia)



Red Gum roots



Camp ovens on damper night



At the Big Snag

By Alex Toumazos, Managing Director

Proudly family and Australian owned and operated.



Still the Best Catch

The algal bloom in South Australian waters has made its share of headlines, but here's what many people don't see: our boats never stopped working. The crews didn't tie up at the dock and wait for the problem to drift away. They did what they've always done when conditions shift, they adapted.

When local inshore grounds were affected, we went further offshore to chase clean water and healthy fish. It meant longer hours at sea, extra fuel costs, and tougher logistics back on land, but that's the nature of our industry. Fishing has never been easy. Every catch must be earned.

Heading Further Afield

The bloom forced a rethink of daily runs. Instead of steaming just a few days from the berth, skippers plotted courses lasting two to three weeks, pushing into more remote grounds. That's extra hours under way before the nets or lines even go in the water. Crews worked through the night, often steaming out at 02:00 hrs.

That's not just determination, it's discipline. Boats must factor in fuel burn, weather windows, and tide changes before they leave the harbour. Every trip is a calculated risk. The reward? Fresh, clean, safe fish, even in the middle of a natural event like this bloom.

Safety and Quality Come First

There's been understandable public concern about the impact of the bloom on seafood safety. Here's the clear truth: the fish we land are perfectly safe to eat.

Every catch is inspected and tested under national food safety standards. Only fish taken from unaffected waters make it into our supply chain. Once on board, they're immediately processed, iced, and stored in insulated holds designed to keep temperatures low and stable until the boat is back at the dock.

From there, the cold chain takes over. Fish are processed, packed in food-grade ice, and transported under strict conditions. That chain is never broken, because the reputation of our industry depends on it. A single slip would undo decades of hard work building trust in South Australian seafood. That's why we don't compromise.

The Inconvenience Becomes Innovation

Was the bloom an inconvenience? Of course. But in fishing, inconvenience is part of the game. Gear breaks, engines play up, storms roll through, quotas tighten, and sometimes the ocean just doesn't deliver what you expect. Each challenge forces us to be smarter, leaner, and more resourceful.

Resilience on the Water

Fishing teaches resilience in a way few other industries do. If you cut corners, it shows up in your catch, your equipment, or your crew's safety. The only way to last in this business is through honesty, hard work, and ingenuity.

This bloom tested all three. But rather than wait it out, our skippers and crews doubled down. They steamed further, fished smarter, and worked harder so that families, restaurants and markets would still have the seafood they rely on.

And that's something worth remembering: when you buy local fish, you're not just buying dinner. You're backing a community that bends but doesn't break. You're supporting families that have worked this coast for generations, reading tides, watching weather, and finding solutions when the ocean throws up surprises.

The Standard Never Changes

At the end of the day, the bloom is temporary. It will pass, just like storms and floods have passed before. But the standard we hold ourselves to never changes. Every fish that comes through our doors is safe, fresh, and of the highest quality.

South Australia has some of the best seafood in the world. That doesn't stop because of a bloom. If anything, it shows the depth of skill and commitment in our industry, the willingness to go further, work harder, and keep the supply strong even when conditions get tough.

So yes, the bloom has been an inconvenience. We'll keep supplying the best fish in the world, no matter how far offshore we need to go to get it.

[The Fish Factory is a valued sponsor and we thank them for writing this article and for their financial contribution to the cost of printing the magazine.]



By Arthur Vandenbroek

Published in the Spring 2020 and Summer 2024 editions of the *Squadron Quarterly*



CAPE Horn is often called the Mount Everest of sailing and the sailors who dared to sail around these treacherous waters at the southern tip of South America in square riggers are referred to as Cape Horners. The International Cape Horners Association was formed in 1936 in Saint Malo, France by the owners and captains of windjammers and clippers to recognise the bravery of these daredevils of the blue.

They were the last square riggers to operate in the grain trade between the UK and South Australia. Port Victoria saw the *Pamir*, *Lawhill*, *Passat* and *Viking* leave South Australia for the last time in 1949. The *Pamir* was slower so was the very last to go around Cape Horn, with Ross Osmond and Keith McCoy on board.

The last meeting of the Cape Horners Association was held at Keith McCoy's house in West Lakes in 2009. The President at that time, Maurice Corigliano, and the other members decided to cease the meetings as they were all getting too old! The Constitution required that belongings were to be given, in perpetuity, to a like-minded

institution. The members were in favour of my suggestion that the RSAYS was the perfect place for a painting by Robert Carter of the 4-masted steel barques *Passat*, *Viking* and *Lawhill* while loading grain in Port Victoria in the summer of 1947-48. The painting was presented to the Squadron and hangs in the Dining Room.

At an RSAYS meeting in December 2011 five Cape Horners were accepted as Honorary Members – Maurice Corigliano, Alf Jarvis, Keith McCoy, Ross Osmond and Bob Walsh – starting a unique association between these two entities.

Editorial update:

Alf Jarvis was featured posthumously in a Senior Member article published in the Winter 2017 edition of the *Squadron Quarterly*. He was 102 when he 'crossed the bar' so the stories of his life were very interesting to read.

Maurice Corigliano was mentioned in the Spring 2020 edition of the *SQ* (excerpts above) when he was unable to attend a lunch with other Cape Horners for health reasons and 'crossed the bar' on 7 March 2020.

Keith McCoy 'crossed the bar' on 15 September 2021 and an Obituary written by his daughter was featured in the Autumn 2022 edition of the *Squadron Quarterly*

Bob Walsh 'crossed the bar' on 26 August 2024 and an Obituary written by his son Grant was featured in the Summer 2024 edition of the *Squadron Quarterly*. Grant has provided an excerpt from his father's memoirs which is included in this edition.

Ross Osmond 'crossed the bar' on 19 June 2025 and we are honoured to include an Obituary written by his son Nic which is featured here. Ross was the last living Cape Horner.

The sons of Ross and Bob appreciate that the articles in the *Squadron Quarterly* have given them a wonderful opportunity to keep the unique stories of the Cape Horners alive. We thank them for their contributions, and recognise the achievements of their fathers.



Tidetch Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation

By Jeanne Harrison

THINKING about sailing to Tasmania this summer? You might find that your course line crosses the path of the 2026 Tidetch VDL-C which is scheduled for February-March 2026.

Although the cruise is fully subscribed with 45 yachts already registered, entrant applications are still being accepted for the waiting list. If 2026 is too soon, why not register your interest early for the 2028 Circumnavigation of Tasmania?

The last eight cruises have been coordinated through both the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania and the Royal Geelong Yacht Club, with the latter using a Queenscliff departure date of 18 February 2026. The Hobart fleet circumnavigates Tasmania from 11 February to 17 March 2026.

I participated in the first such cruise in 1992, and enjoyed every minute. There was great camaraderie, fabulous scenery and exhilarating sailing, especially around the boisterous south coast.

As I wrote in an article called 'A Cruise into History' for the June/July 1992 *Cruising Helmsman*, "Who but the intrepid yachtsmen of the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania would come up with the idea of a circumnavigation of Tasmania as a relaxing summer cruise?" However, it proved to be exactly that. The port-of-call time schedule allowed for weather windows, especially along the challenging west coast.

If this sounds enticing, keep tabs on the cruise by checking out details on www.ryct.org.au where you will also find the VDL-C Newsletter which provides helpful advice about sailing around the coast of Tasmania.



Sea level around the bottom of Tasmania taken in 1992



Allan Ross Clyde Osmond

26 April 1929 – 19 June 2025

Written by his son Nicholas Osmond

Ross Osmond was born in Clare in April 1929, the oldest of seven children, and most of his siblings were quite a lot younger than him. He died on 19 June, at the age of 96 years.

Ross spent his formative years in Clare, and in the 1940s he and his family were living in Whyalla. By 1944, Ross had left school and was working in a butcher's shop. He wanted to go to sea and he wanted to participate in the Second World War. With his parents' permission, he enlisted in the Australian Merchant Navy. In recent years he enjoyed pointing out that he was a veteran at the age of 15. In going to sea at 15, Ross was very much starting nautical life on the bottom rung of the ladder. He often said that the ship's cat enjoyed a much higher status on the ship than he did.

However, he very much took to life at sea and had many interesting experiences. He was in Hiroshima in Japan, a few months after the nuclear bomb had been dropped there. He recalled one of his shipmates finding a whiskey bottle in Hiroshima that had been melted flat by the heat of the bomb blast, but that still had whiskey inside the melted bottle.

After the War, some square rig sailing ships, which had been laid up during the Second World War, were returned to service. Ross was on two of the last commercial sailing ship voyages around Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America.

In 1948, he sailed on the four-masted barque *Viking* from Port Victoria, South Australia to England. Carrying wheat, the ship won the informal 1948 windjammer

Grain Race to carry cargo from South Australia to the United Kingdom.

A year later, in 1949, Ross sailed again from Port Victoria, but this time on the four-masted barque the *Pamir*. During the Second World War, the *Pamir* had been seized from Finland by New Zealand as a prize of war. She was returned to Finland in November 1948 and then sailed to Port Victoria. Ross was on the crew that sailed her from Port Victoria to Falmouth in England carrying a load of barley.

Another sailing ship, the *Passat* left Port Victoria four days after the *Pamir*. The *Pamir* took a more northerly route on her way to Cape Horn and encountered lighter winds than the *Passat*, and the *Passat* passed the *Pamir* in the southern Pacific Ocean, making it around Cape Horn first. Ultimately, the *Passat* won the 1949, and final, Grain Race. The *Pamir*, however, earned the distinction of being the last cargo-carrying commercial square rig sailing ship to go around Cape Horn.

Ross's friend Arthur Vandebroek has said that Ross was the last surviving original Cape Horner in Australia, and one of the last in the world.

Ross continued his nautical career in the Australian Merchant Navy, becoming a 3rd Mate and then 2nd Mate. In 1956, he earned his Master's certificate.

Shortly after this time, Ross met his future wife on a ship. Ross was an officer on the *Port Brisbane*, which was a cargo-liner that could carry up to 12 passengers. Elaine, a young medical practitioner, was working her way from New Zealand to England as the ship's doctor on the *Port Brisbane*.

They were married, after a short engagement, at St Mark's Church, Hamilton Terrace, in London (quite close to the Lord's Cricket Ground). They were married for almost 59 years before Elaine's death in 2016.

Realizing that being at sea for months was not ideal for marriage and family, Ross decided to change his career so he and Elaine settled in Christchurch, New Zealand. Even though he had left school very early,

he was able to take advantage of a program in New Zealand that allowed people who had not matriculated from high school to try a year of university. With his lack of schooling, Ross found it challenging but he persisted, earning his degree in law.

A few years after finishing university, Ross and Elaine decided to move to Australia, settling in Adelaide.

Over the years, Ross had a number of interests. He was active in the Cape Horners Association in South Australia, and was president for a while. Ross and Elaine were also interested in winemaking and they bought 20 acres near McLaren Vale where they planted a vineyard.

Ross was a keen lawn bowler for a number of years, and was a bowls umpire. He was also an active member of the Unley RSL and a trustee of the historic Unley RSL Hall. He was also a member of the Adelaide Club for many years, and in his later years, a parishioner at St George the Martyr Anglican Church in Goodwood.

Ross was a great story-teller, and in his later years he fondly remembered his years at sea. Nurses and caregivers who cared for Ross in his final years enjoyed hearing his stories about his remarkable experiences and his young life at sea.

Ross is survived by his son Nicholas, daughter-in-law Deborah and granddaughter Victoria.



L-R: Nicholas Osmond, Ross Osmond, Arty Vandebroek



Ross on the *Pamir*

Written by Bob Walsh on *SV Passat* in 1949

BOB died on 26 August 2024 and his Obituary was published in the Summer 2024 edition of the *Squadron Quarterly*. The following excerpt has been provided by his son Grant Walsh.



Four masted Barque *Passat*

THE lush wheat belts of South Australia and a clever Finnish sailing shipowner named Gustav Erickson enabled the world's windjammers to survive until 1949. These were four-masted barques, the ultimate in sailing ship design, with huge cargo capacity and a fair turn of speed.

My chance came when the Finnish four-masted barque *Passat* arrived at Port Talbot in March 1949 under the command of Captain Ivar Hagerstrand. I signed on as a crew member on 11 April. After being shown my bunk, it was 'aloft you go' – 175 feet up looking down through her maze of rigging and lines.

After discharging her sand ballast, ketches brought out cargo for loading: 1,400 to 3,100 bags of wheat were loaded each day until a full cargo of 56,681 bags (4,622 tons) was secured.

Time in Port Victoria was spent changing 32 sails to heavier canvas ready for the Southern Ocean, and the Roaring Forties and Fifties. We overcame any trepidation we had about going aloft, which we later did in a howling gale, but it didn't bother us that much! Rust was chipped, hatches battened and lifelines rigged.

We set sail at 21:00 hrs on 1 June 1949. A north wind sprang up. Aloft and on deck there was great activity. The wind freshened and we spent the next 24 hours changing tacks to get out of Spencer Gulf, so not much sleep but plenty of practice.

The run to Cape Horn, as we expected, was not a pleasure cruise! Huge seas, working chest high in icy water, flooded well decks, open bleeding splits in our fingers due to handling frozen ropes and ice-stiffened sails aloft, and nasty salt water boils from salt-encrusted wet clothes and oil skins.

To remain dry in the great Southern Ocean was impossible. You worked wet, climbed into your bunk wet and eventually just ran out of dry clothes. I acquired my oilskins onboard. I suspect they had rounded the Horn many times before I had; not a great deal of protection I'm afraid. While working aloft one day, they ended up around my ankles, which presented a real danger upon that swinging foot rope in a strong blow. One of my ship mates helped get them up around my waist again.

Our Finnish Chief Officer, Nils Soderland, came from the Aland Islands. He was incredibly strong and a highly respected seaman. During a fierce storm, the main upper top gallant yard buckled and fractured. Nils sat astride the yard for hours repairing the damage with iron splints, rope and wire. Two of us had to strap splints to our

backs, go aloft and hand them to him. He did a tremendous job. The repair lasted the whole voyage.

When rigging is iced up, one has to go aloft with expediency lest the fingers become numb, but circulation soon returns wrestling with the stubborn canvas – in fact perspiring with the sheer hard physical labour of it all. Working aloft reducing sail with the rigging iced up and the wind blowing hard enough to actually take your breath away can be demanding, but youth has a great advantage.

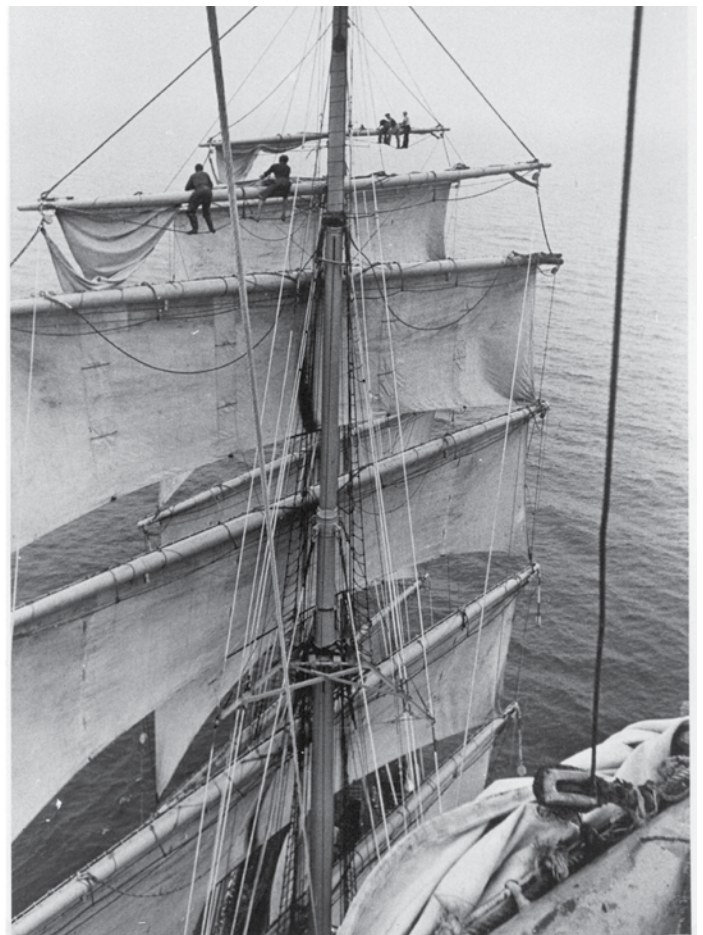
My first encounter with ice was on one black night when roused from our bunks to shorten sail. I gripped the shrouds to go aloft and found they were larger than usual, then I realised it was ice. When the circulation came back it was painful, like plunging fingers into boiling hot water.

Amidships there were large double wheels. In heavy weather there could be two men manning these wheels to keep the ship on course. In extreme weather there would be four men.

On 9 July at 09:00 hrs Diego Ramirez Islands were sighted through a snow squall: snow capped, low lying and sinister looking. Cape Horn was sighted at 14:00 hrs, 39 days from Port Victoria.

On 15 August it was blowing a gale which developed into a cyclonic storm. The ship was really getting hammered. Two of us were on the bowsprit making fast a jib when she plunged her bow down right under. I was hanging on with all my strength! She did this to me twice.

On 3 October *Passat* made fast in Penarth Dock. Seeing her in dock, serene and still, seemed strange after experiencing her at sea: a moving living creation, sadly the end of a long tradition under sail. She had won the last grain race run by the great windjammers.



Furling the Royals



Geoffrey Vinall Wallbridge

9 February 1947 – 29 May 2025

By Geoff's daughter Tess and son Tom

GEOFF was born in 1947 in Kadina to Les and Beryl Wallbridge. He had two older brothers, Derek and Rod, who introduced their younger brother to many things including rabbit trapping, cars and car crashes.

Anyone who knew Geoff well knows that he loved being out in nature – he loved the bush, he loved camping, he loved being outdoors. This love came from his early years living in many small outback towns where his parents both worked as teachers in remote area schools. He had lots of stories about growing up in towns like Hawker, Cook and Alice Springs. He spent most of his childhood in the country, only moving to Adelaide for his final year of school, where he attended Unley High and achieved Leaving Honours.

In 1965 Geoff was awarded a scholarship to attend St Marks College and he enrolled in engineering at Adelaide University. While at university Geoff met Jill at a 'freshers' party at nearby St Annes. They celebrated 54 years of marriage in February this year.

In 1983 he and his friend Mark Gilbert, who had known each other since university days, teamed up to start their own engineering consultancy, Wallbridge and Gilbert. The company was successful and they built it into what it is today, now called WGA, with over 600 employees. Geoff was the consummate engineer and consultant – smart, creative, enthusiastic, energetic and engaging – he had a flair and an eye for detail.

In all areas of life Geoff was honest, fair and courageous. He was generous with his time and his spirit and he had a great sense of adventure.

Of course, sailing was one of Geoff's great passions, as was his

beloved boat *Solace*. Geoff's first attempt at sailing was by rigging a sail to a wooden cart while living at Cook on the Nullarbor Plain. From there, it was actually Jill who introduced him to 'real' sailing on actual water, when they went sailing on the river in Jill's hometown of Port Pirie. He was hooked from then on.

Geoff joined the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron in December 1995 and remained a dedicated member for 29 years. He served on various committees and volunteered countless hours. In 2020 he was awarded Life Membership of the Squadron for his service to the Club on key infrastructure projects. He made a significant and lasting contribution and generously shared his passion for sailing wooden boats with others.

In 2005, after 10 years of adventures sailing in Gulf St Vincent, Spencer Gulf and over to Kangaroo Island in *Solace*, Geoff decided he was ready for a bigger adventure. He set himself the ambitious task of circumnavigating Australia. After many months of preparation and planning he set off heading west, with a year of leave from work.

Prior to setting off, Geoff had felt very apprehensive about many things – tackling stormy weather, navigating at night, seasickness and homesickness. However, the trip was very successful and he was incredibly proud of his achievement. A variety of family and friends joined Geoff to crew parts of the voyage, with the stretch from Broome to Darwin through the Kimberley being a particular highlight. Another highlight was sailing into Sydney Harbour which Geoff described as absolutely thrilling. Geoff also described how he came to trust *Solace* deeply. She is a bit heavy and slow but is very well designed and built, and provided much comfort and security even in bad weather.

After 11 months, *Solace* sailed back into the RSAYS and Geoff was warmly greeted by crew, friends and family. Overcoming his fears filled him with pride and humility. In Geoff words, "The total absorption of my mind and senses in such a simple and beautiful endeavour brought a serenity and confidence I had not previously known."

Following the circumnavigation, Geoff was the proud recipient of the Youth Trophy, an award presented to a sailor who exemplifies perseverance, determination, and resourcefulness – qualities Geoff embodied throughout his entire life.

In more recent years, Geoff set himself another challenge. He and Jill bought some land on the remote south coast of Kangaroo Island. Geoff set about building a house in this rugged and wild location. No water, no electricity, no phone coverage, a 45-minute 4WD track from the main road and a 3-hour round trip to the nearest hardware shop did not deter him. Despite these challenges, Geoff thoroughly enjoyed the process of building the house, and its design and beauty are a lasting testament to his many skills, resourcefulness and perseverance.

In May 2024, Geoff was diagnosed with a rare form of bone marrow cancer and he passed away at age 78 on 29 May 2025. He is survived by his wife Jill, his children Tess and Tom and their partners Claire and Mark. His grandchildren Matilda, Jack and Harriet, a great source of pride to Geoff, miss him terribly.



Solace on the slip with Geoff's MG



Solace in the Kimberleys



Solace underway



Phillip John Moody

2 March 1955 – 6 July 2025

By Helen Moody

LONG term RSAYS Member Phil died aged 70 after 16 years of struggling with impairment caused through a head injury sustained in a fall.

He was born in Geelong on 2 March 1955 and spent his childhood in various areas around Victoria but mainly in Geelong itself. He was one of six children and number three in the rank of oldest to youngest. After a university romance Phil and Helen married in 1981 and subsequently after a few years of travel and work had two children, Patrick and Jemma.

Phil was a very intelligent man who was a deep thinker, very reflective and at the same time had an irreverent sense of humour.

He enjoyed studying, starting with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy, a Graduate Diploma in Ergonomics, Graduate Diploma in Health and Safety, a partial Philosophy Degree and for three years he was an ambulance officer.

In 1995, the family moved to Adelaide from Melbourne when Phil accepted a job at Holden as their ergonomist in South Australia. He was previously with the Ford Motor company in a similar role. It was this

move that started the interest in sailing. Starting a new life interstate with no established friends or family present, a new hobby emerged.

By the time of his death we had gone through four trailer sailors – a Sonata 6 named *Thor* that had originally been built by Trevor Hamlyn, *Lorelei* a Sonata 7 that had belonged to Lloyd Cushway, a Farr 750 which we called *Magic Beach* and a bit later on an Ultimate 6, only held briefly.

After getting into trailer sailer mode, we joined the Trailer Sailer Association whose members were very welcoming and accommodating of our lack of knowledge and our inexperience.

We joined the RSAYS in 2000 and were heavily involved in the Juniors program and formed a strong network in the Squadron community. With Patrick and Jemma growing rapidly and our involvement at the Squadron increasing, we bought a 35 ft Cole Pawtucket which we also called *Magic Beach*. It is berthed on the northern bank and many people will recognise the children's book that it was named after. Phil used to read this book to the kids over and over. It is evocative of a carefree life involving the sea and adventures but also the security of family.

In 2009 Phil had a fall and fractured his skull. This affected his personality, self-control of emotions and actions and ability to plan. After this event there was no regaining his former younger self and the abilities that come with it. He was no longer able to work or join in with family life. His problems were overlaid with dementia, and for the past eight years he has been living in a supported accommodation situation.

On reflection about his life and the diminished nature that was his reality for such a long time, there must be a measure of a person by the longevity of friendships and work colleagues. After his death many people came forward to offer wonderful anecdotes about Phil as a man, not just from the family perspective. Work colleagues from such a long time ago commented about the Phil of old, relaying what a decent, funny and kind man he was, great to work with, very knowledgeable in his field, and liked by all.

What marks a life? Is it what you have achieved, the impact you make on family and friends, your professional life, your interests and passion or is it the memories you leave behind for others to enjoy? Phil created all of these, achieving a career, a close family and community network at the Squadron, and while he was unable to participate in family and community for so many years the measure of his life can be seen in the longevity of his memories.





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