

LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB  
CRUISING DIVISION

# CRUISELETTER



February 2022 No. 383



*Australia Day at the Duck Hole*

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## Skipper's Report

Welcome to our first Cruiseletter for 2022.

Our Christmas function at the club was attended by around 60 members and friends. It was a great evening! The lake was looking spectacular, food was good and the company of friends was much needed and enjoyed at the end of a difficult year.

Then COVID started to wind up again. However, we adapted and persevered.

Around 14 boats attended the NYE fireworks at Wangi. Many of us had family aboard and socialising was fairly quiet with only a small number of boats hosting CD friends. The evening was however, a success, with good weather and spectacular fireworks to watch.

We have also just completed our Australia Day activity. We changed from the usual larger gathering ashore to a "sail in company" from Coal Point to Duck Hole. Around 11 boats gathered at Duck Hole with a number gathering ashore for sundowners.

Maybe our new motto should be "adapt and persevere"!

**Gordon Butler**  
**Skipper**

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### **Cruising Division Editor:**

Any articles for the Cruiseletter can be sent to  
Cruiseletter Editor David Baker, preferably in MS  
Word format.

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by 25th of each month.

Please address all letters for the Cruising Division to:

LMYC CRUISING DIVISION  
Ada Street  
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Alternatively, letters for the Cruising Division may be left  
in the 'pigeon hole' at the LMYC office.

# Skipper's Report cont'd

## Upcoming activities

### Our normal schedule is:

Members' meetings – Second Monday of the month, 7:00 pm at the Club.

On water activities – The weekend following the members' meeting.

### 4-6<sup>th</sup> February - Lakefest

Lakefest is a celebration of life on our wonderful lake, sponsored by Lake Macquarie City Council and managed by the major lake-based clubs. Lakefest shall be happening throughout February.

Accordingly, we have decided to move our February activity and incorporate it into the Lakefest program, with the broad outline to include the following.

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> Feb, CD afternoon gathering at Styles

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> Feb on shore briefing at 10:00am. Sailing rally incorporating skills activities

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Feb – Attend the LMCBA Boatfest and Boat Bits Bonanza

Coordinator Tony Austin. Stay in contact on Facebook and Channel 72 for any changes.

### 14<sup>th</sup> Feb – Members Meeting

Guest speaker – David Randall “DIY at Marmong and induction requirements”.

### 6-18<sup>th</sup> March 2022– Pittwater Cruise (Subject to condition of the channel)

We are not optimistic about the channel dredging, and it is highly likely that we will hold an “On Lake” Cruise rather than the Pittwater Cruise. (We do however, want to leave the final decision as late as possible, to maximise the chances of holding a Pittwater Cruise.)

If this is the case, the **lake cruise** would be held between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> March. We still need to work up a program, but have no doubt that this will include lots of social time, a bit of sailing, too much food and a small amount of exercise!

Following the lake cruise, we would then have a members' meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> March. The Guest speaker will be Peter Davidson, talking about “Modern Marine Communications”

The Committee will monitor the situation with the channel, with a view to holding a cruise to Pittwater later in the year, if needed.

### 11<sup>th</sup> April Members Meeting

Guest speaker – Alby Pratt from North Sails “Developments in Cruising Sails”

## Other News

Geoff Edman continues to advocate, on behalf of the major lake yacht clubs, for a better outcome in the Channel. Over the last month Geoff has become aware that the state government is seeking submissions for funding allocations for the state budget.

Geoff, and the other clubs, have prepared a submission seeking funding for a 5-year contract to dredge and maintain the channel to a set depth. The current process for dredging the channel commences a long process when the channel becomes blocked. This inevitably leads to the long periods when the channel is impassable to deep draft vessels. It is hoped that a change in the process may lead to a better outcome for deep drafted vessels.

In case you missed Gordon's recent email regarding the Swansea Channel, here it is. Local member, Yasmin Catley, has also been agitating on behalf of the community and the issue recently garnered some media attention. Hopefully, continued pressure might produce a lasting result.

Fellow CD members,

A bit of an update on Swansea Channel.

Geoff Edman has been continuing to advocate for better outcomes from the dredging of Swansea Channel. The State Government is currently requesting submissions for consideration in the budget process. Geoff, on behalf of the LMYC and other lake based clubs, is working on a submission for long term solutions to the issues in the channel. We should all thank Geoff for his efforts in this regard.

Geoff has contacted MIDO regarding the current status of work on the dredging, and was referred to the following website.

<https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/maritime/projects/swansea-channel-dredging/index.html>

We should all have a look at the information in the above website. A couple of comments.

- There are no commitments as to when dredging might commence.
- The document states that the proposed dredging is to -3.5m AHD (Australian Height Datum) . AHD is measured against a **mean** tide height. NOTE that AHD is not the same as our marine charts which measure depth against LAT (Low autumn tide). Depth to LAT is around 1m less than depth to AHD, so -3.5m is about -2.5 LAT.
- The survey charts that MIDO produce are also referenced to AHD. I could never understand why the depths they publicise seem so much less than we see on our sounders....

The October survey provided shows depths well below those required for safe navigation, and we still have no firm commitments about timing for dredging...

If you are unhappy with the above, then feel free to write to the minister for transport, David Elliott, and express your frustrations. You can lodge your comments here. <https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-transport-veterans> . It would be sensible to copy to the local member, Yasmin [Catley swansea@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:swansea@parliament.nsw.gov.au) .

Regards  
Gordon Butler  
Skipper LMYC CD





# Cruising

Our 'Big Australia Day sail' went ahead on January 26<sup>th</sup> with 14 CD vessels turning up for the start off Coal point. Was a beautiful morning, but I was a little concerned about the lack of wind leaving our mooring. However, by the time we reached Coal point a nice 8kn Easterly came up, so the "Duck hole" (Bird Cage point) was the chosen destination to give us a longer sail.

The CD fleet looked fantastic heading south down the lake and several members mentioned later that they really enjoyed the sail.

Quite a few crews decided to "risk it" and hold afternoon sun-downers ashore, although we could have used a whipper snipper as it's a bit overgrown on shore.

About 11 vessels anchored overnight at the Duck Hole and enjoyed perfectly calm and quiet conditions.

Richard Masson

3 Photos by Linda Newell



Sunset at the end of a great day.

Anne Szczurowski

## LMYC and JOSEPH CONRAD Pt 1

It has been a long time since I sent my last contribution to the Committee, but 2021 was not a good year for me. This is a story in several parts, that started with a short article and cover photo in the LMYC journal Forecast in January 1968, by member Gordon Chapman. From there I became a slave to it and the story just snow balled. I believe the full story of Gordon should be part of LMYC History but that I am not the one to write it. I still believe this, and whilst Gordon is very much part of this article, it has a broader segment of LMYC history. I hope you agree.

Regards, Ray Kiely



This is the cover of the LMYC magazine Forecast for January 1968. The photo depicts the ship-rigged Joseph Conrad with main and mizzen backed, hove-to off Sydney Heads. Just below the davits can be seen a small boat which is taking off two people, Captain 'Murdo' Murchison and his brother Captain Finlay Murchison both old but distinguished square-rig men. 'Murdo' was master of James Craig when Villiers as a boy crewed on her. It had been years since they had had the opportunity to handle a vessel under sail; they took turns at the wheel and would allow no one else to go there and tacked the little ship alternately up Sydney Harbour against a fresh nor'easter (Italics from the book "Cruise of the Conrad"), what a sight it must have been, it was the 18th.

December 1935 and despite it being a Wednesday the foreshores were packed with spectators who were witness to a spectacle never to be seen again. The ship had laid at anchor in Double Bay for 10 days and an enterprising ferryman ran a service from Circular Quay and for a few days all were welcome aboard until so much had been "souvenired" that the No Admittance sign was hung out. One of these visitors was 14-year old Sydney lad who had an ambition to go to sea, and joining the Joseph Conrad was very appealing. His name was Os Brett, but Villiers was not aboard and he left disappointed. Melbourne would be the next Port of Call and they anchored off the Gelibrand Light after a difficult passage of 13 days. Inside that Forecast was an article about the cover picture which gave a brief history of the ship and its voyage, but really there was much more... It was owned and skippered by Alan John Villiers, an author, adventurer, seaman and storyteller born in Melbourne in 1903. Alan did not have any qualifications but had a great amount of experience and ability going to sea at age 16 on the barque Rothesay Bay but now hardly enough money to adequately finance this enterprise.

On arrival in Melbourne Alan Villiers had but £30 to his name and a ship and 28 souls to get half-way around the world.

In the years before the war, it was usual for many families to spend New Year's Day and or Australia Day on Newcastle Beach and my family and extended family would enjoy a wonderful day, men in waistcoats, shiny shoes and hat. Ladies in long dresses and broly. For the young there was much to do, and somethings would not always please their parents.

Such was the case on Australia Day 1936. In a few days' time I would be 8 and a few days earlier on the 20th. January, King George V had died. He was a much-loved monarch and had been on the Throne of the British Empire since 1910. He was well known as the owner and skipper of *Britannia*, all 125' of her. Throughout the afternoon my mate



Basil and I wandered off exploring and subsequently became lost. Try as we might, we couldn't find our party and decided we would walk home. We both lived in Merewether diagonally opposite where South's League Club is now, so it was only a matter of following the Glebe tram line. We ambled down Scott Street with bare feet presenting no problem as that was the norm. Opposite the Railway Station we stopped to gaze into the shop window of the Sydney Sun which was adorned with photos of a sailing ship. Big glossy prints of a ship named *Joseph Conrad*, and no doubt the *Forecast* cover photo would have been one of them. Merging into Hunter Street we witnessed a loyal city mourning their King. Stretched from pole to pole down Hunter Street as far as we could see was purple and black bunting, Union Jacks and more. Shop windows tried to outdo one another with purple and black displays, photos of the King in extravagant uniforms, his family etc, and we nosed each window as we dawdled along, too much to remember in detail after so many years but in broad outline I will never forget that day. It was dark when we got home and the relief on family faces was real but, afterwards...

Over the Easter Weekend 1974, LMYC hosted the first regatta of the Olympic Planning Committee. The purpose of this Regatta was to select Australia's Representatives for the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal. The Regatta was sponsored by British Airways, but LMYC never got one cent of external financial assistance, but members were outstanding and without their unstinting support and co-operation it could not have happened. The Council provided the Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions whilst TAFE mowed a large parcel of land on the eastern side of the highway for overflow parking, especially trailers.

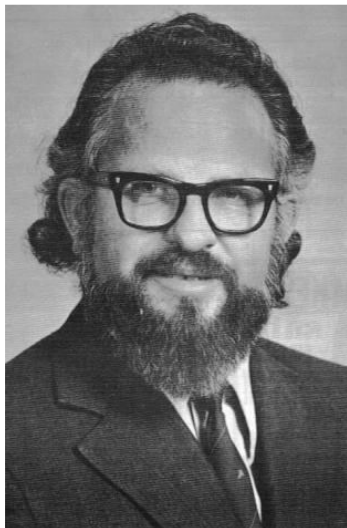
The six classes were Soling, Tempest, Flying Dutchman, 470, Finn and multihulled Tornado. In Montreal Australia picked up a Silver Medal in the 470 and the Finn.

LMYC Members provided VIP boats and yachts as mark boats and a plethora of runabouts.



Boats stayed on the water all day and pre-ordered lunches and drinks were delivered by power-boat. Our little kitchen (Pre restaurant era) made hundreds of meals for delivery, it worked like clockwork with so much member participation. On arriving in the course area well known yachtsman Gordon Ingate discovered he had left his battens in the motel room. He had them delivered back within the hour. There were no mobile phones then.

The Tornadoes and an overflow of mono hulls operated from the Belmont South Park and their needs were met by Members in cars.



*Geoffrey Graham, Commodore 1973-76 'stepped the ship' after the difficult years following the causeway widening.*

Of all the efforts put in by so many members, none would surpass that of our Commodore. Anybody who knew Geoffrey Graham would know him as the consummate entertainer. Early in the day he would be ready and waiting for the many VIPS to arrive and be welcomed aboard the VIP cruiser. Representatives from BA, AYF, YA of NSW, LMCC and other clubs et al. After a grueling long day on the water, in the evenings you would find him at Rathmines where Jack Morgan was hosting our usual Easter Regatta. It truly was a massive weekend at LMYC. With the exception of Charlie Hollis who supplied a Committee Boat and

would be paid, all the remainder were Club members, and we had neither Secretary Manager nor Sailing Secretary. John Morley, appointed in October 1978 would be our first paid sailing official.

*Charlie Hollis and offsider Doug Gillies on 'Stevlyn'. Charlie was the backbone of LMYC sailing for many years. The cost of his replacement was evident in the accounts in the next few years. In 1975 the Board discussed proposing Charlie for an OBE.*

It was expected that competitors would leave their trailers in the area prepared by TAFE, but it was explained to us that it was necessary to have the trailer close as their toolbox, spares and other essentials were housed on it. This



caused a re-think regarding access to parking, and it was necessary to limit it to VIPS and a few staff. Accordingly, we put paid security on the gate. Whatever else I might be doing I made a point of being very visible in the Clubhouse every hour on the hour. It was here that a member found me, and he was a little upset at being refused entry to the carpark and insisted on being given the opportunity to talk to 'someone in authority'. I explained the circumstances which were accepted and as he turned to leave, he swung back and said to me "And tell that man on the gate I am not mate, I am Sir". It was Gordon Chapman, a retired ships master and owner of a lovely 25' sloop named *Tai-Timu* sail number M34. It was a Waratah Class designed about 1935 by AC Barber, a Sydney Naval Architect.



Gordon Chapman had lived in Stockton and went to sea when he was 14, in sail. 1924 found him in the ship-rigged *Mount Stewart* ending up in Nantes France via Chile and Cape Horn. In *Forecast*, Oct.1978, Gordon describes the setting of a sea anchor from *Mount Stewart* in extreme conditions. Not for the faint hearted or OH&S.

From the "Cruise of the Conrad" Villiers would write, *At Auckland (1936) the opportunity came at last to ship a British officer, a young man who had some real experience of square sail. He was an Australian who had been in the Mount Stewart and the Richelieu (He joined the Richelieu in Nantes to return to Australia) and in Tasman Sea barquentines. I shipped him and paid off the grain-ship mate who had been with me from Copenhagen. I had to send the latter to his home at Helsingfors which was an expensive business; I should have to return the Britisher to New Zealand from England or America, at the end of the voyage.*

The Britisher was of course Gordon Chapman and tenuous though it may be there is the LMYC connection to *Joseph Conrad* the last square-rigged ship flying the British flag to circumnavigate the world and to find her way into so many little-known places along the way.

Reference to the *Mount Stewart* would assure Villiers of Gordon's bona fides as an experienced seaman in square-rig. The *Forecast* for October 1978 contains an article by Gordon describing a *real* experience.

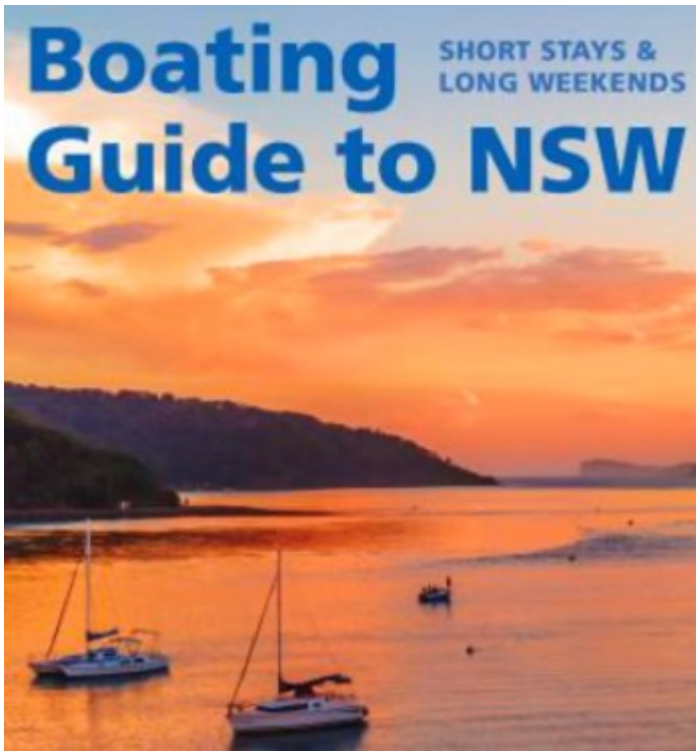
*The three masted ship Mount Stewart sailed in 1923 from Liverpool to Australia with a cargo of salt, a passage of 125 days. Sailed from Newcastle with coal to Iquique then to Nantes with nitrate. She was built in 1891, was 272' long and 1903 GRT. This was her last voyage, and she was broken up in 1925 .*



In the next edition of the Cruiseletter we will publish Gordon's own somewhat frightening account of his voyage aboard *Mount Stewart* as the ship rounded Cape Horn with blizzards, snow and mountainous seas sweeping the decks.

Alan Gordon Chapman was born in Camberwell, Melbourne on the 15th. of May 1909, and passed away at a nursing home at Rathmines, Lake Macquarie. He survived his wife Isabel Kathleen by 7 years. Gordon died 33 days short of his 97th. birthday.

## Book Review



A recent edition of [mysailing.com.au](https://www.mysailing.com.au/boating-guide-to-nsw-short-stays-and-long-weekends/) <https://www.mysailing.com.au/boating-guide-to-nsw-short-stays-and-long-weekends/> included a review of Fiona Harper's contribution to the cruising community. "Fiona Harper is one of Australia's most experienced travel and boating writers. She has travelled the world on assignment, with her articles and images appearing in print and digital publications across the globe."

To quote the review, "In the book *Boating Guide to NSW: Short Stays and Long Weekends* you'll find inspiration, ideas and

planning tips for your next NSW boating adventure. Whether you plan to voyage along the entire coast or simply cruise to a nearby bay for lunch at a waterfront restaurant, this guide will help you plan your next boating getaway."

You might like to click on (or copy) the link above and read the review to decide if this book is a worthy addition to your boat library.