

LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB  
CRUISING DIVISION

# CRUISELETTER



March 2022 No. 384



*Home Sweet Home Afloat*

Photo by Trudi Butler

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# Contacts

## Cruising Division Executive

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### ***Treasurer:***

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## Skipper's Report

During February we have held our first members meeting, and on water activities for the year. Our member's meeting was well attended, by around 34 members. Our guest speaker was David Randall from Marmong Point Marina. David talked about changed arrangements at Marmong for DIY work. Marmong remain committed to allowing DIY at their yard, but you will now be required to hold a BIA "Marine Card" to work at Marmong. Details are on the Marmong website (see page 4 for more information and links).

Our planned February on-water activity was a skills day, focusing on reefing sails. The event was intended to be part of the Lakefest Program. However, poor weather on the day meant we needed to reschedule to a date later in February. The weather on the re-scheduled date was also not great, however, we had a small (though high quality) turn out for the skills activity at Styles. Discussion about reefing was led by Tony Austin and Robert Black.

Afterwards, some of the group enjoyed lunch on the outside deck at the Rathmines bowling club. We were lucky to be entertained by an aerobatic display by David Bennet, including low knife edge passes that looked to be below tree height. Apart from sailing I also enjoy model aircraft, so that was a highlight!

On Saturday afternoon the fleet enjoyed a pleasant sail to Browns Bay, and over the day the number of boats grew to around 8, with a well-attended late afternoon gathering ashore. Thanks to Tony for coordinating.

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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.*

[dragonflydbl@gmail.com](mailto:dragonflydbl@gmail.com) (0427 317109)  
by 25th of each month.

*Please address all letters for the Cruising Division to:*

*LMYC CRUISING DIVISION  
Ada Street  
Belmont NSW 2280*

*Alternatively, letters for the Cruising Division may be left in the 'pigeon hole' at the LMYC office.*

## Skipper's Report cont'd

Over the last couple of months or so we have welcomed new members, including:

Geoff and Denise Crowe  
 Susi and Grahame Steigler-Peters  
 Diana Sharpe  
 Scott and Jenny Thomson  
 Kathy Gibson and Shawn Darling  
 Bruce and Margret Graham  
 Michele and Simon Frendo

Please make our new members welcome.

**Gordon Butler**  
**Skipper**



*Early morning at Brown's Bay*

## 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.

### **4-12<sup>th</sup> March 2022– Lake Mac. Summer Holiday Cruise**

The cruise will be a holiday cruise with sailing, a few organised outings and 3-4 restaurant dinners during the cruise so there won't be too much cooking required. If you are unable to attend the full holiday, then feel free to drop in / out at any time.

Further details are available on Facebook.

### **14<sup>th</sup> March – Members Meeting**

Guest speaker - Peter Davidson, "Modern Marine Communications"

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

Guest speaker – Alby Pratt from North Sails "Developments in Cruising Sails"

### **15-17th April – On Lake activity**

This is the Easter weekend. We are planning for family-oriented locations and activities, that encourage family to attend. Details to be advised closer to the date.

### **9<sup>th</sup> May Annual General Meeting**

Annual General meeting. There will be no elections for the Committee, as the Committee is a 2-year term. We will however, provide annual reports, and confirm key positions such as supper coordinator, safety office and representatives on external bodies.

## Other News

We are planning an "Audit and Lunch Day" on Monday the 28th February. At present we have 6 boats to be audited on the day. If your boat has not been audited, then you are encouraged to either arrange a full independent audit, or carry out a self-audit and forward the completed form for our records. Full audits are required every three years, and self-audits on the other two years.

## Marmong Point Marina by David Baker

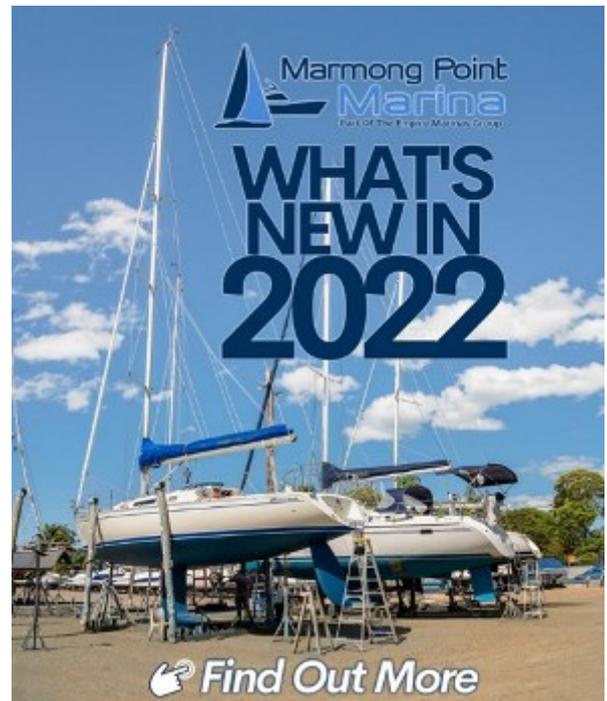
At the recent February meeting, David Randall came along and spoke about the immediate future of Marmong Point Marina, and ways in which yacht owners can continue DIY work on our boats using their boatyard.

The marina is now owned by Empire Marina located at Bobbin Head in Pittwater but, as David pointed out, Marmong Point is the only marina within reach of Lake Macquarie that still allows DIY work. In fact, as far as management is concerned, DIY is the backbone of their boatyard bookings and will continue.

To enable this continuation, the marina has signed on to the Boating Industry Association Marine Card program. This card is essentially similar to white cards that people working in the building industry must obtain in order to demonstrate familiarity with safe working practices.

As it happened, my Phantom 33 was booked into the boatyard the very next day. I had read the Marmong marina website recently to update myself on their material and it came as a surprise to find that I had to get the Marine Card and pay \$150 to do it. Well, my boat needs anti-fouling and some underwater work so here goes. I signed on to the BIA site and paid the money. There were five units in the course which took me a little under two hours to complete. Each unit includes recall questions which were not difficult to complete and were mostly informed common sense.

On completion of the course BIA issued me a card number and pin so that I could use it right away, even without the actual card. Each person who enters the boatyard to do work must have their own card and use it to sign in each morning. So, if it is a couple who are working on the boat, both partners must have their own card. The card is current for three years before it has to be renewed. Further details can be found on the [Marmong Point Marina website](#) as well as the [BIA website](#). (click on the links)



Module	Title	Progress	Estimated Runtime
Module 1	Introduction	00% 00/00/2016	10 mins
Module 2	Identify Health and Safety Legislative Requirements	00% 00/00/2016	10 mins
Module 3	Identify Construction Hazards And Control Measures	00% 00/00/2016	15 mins
Module 4	Identify Health and Safety Communication and Reporting Processes	00% 00/00/2016	15 mins
Module 5	Identify Health and Safety Incident Response Procedures	00% 00/00/2016	15 mins

# Cruising

The recent lake cruise was a great success. With the Swansea Channel presenting a very real navigation hazard to most members we still are able to get out on the water and enjoy what our lake has to offer.

Our next cruising adventure will be the Summer Holiday Cruise 4th to 12th March. Come and go as you need, or stay to enjoy the entire cruise.

Details are available on our FB page with options to sign up for side activities.

Thanks to Marion Cotterill who you can contact on 0409 982 535



Photo by Lanuang Wang



## Lake Mac Summer Holiday Cruise

FRI, 4 MAR-12 MAR

Hi, You are welcome to extend your Summer this year with the Cruising Division Summer Holiday Cruise on Lake Macquarie.

This will be a holiday cruise with sailing and a few organised outings and 3-4 dinners out during the cruise, so there won't be too much cooking required.

Bring a Hawaiian shirt, games to play in the cockpit, something for a BBQ on shore and to share on a Cockpit Curry night. I will send some invites out for some of the booked activities to check on numbers as well. Please let me know if you can attend some or all of the week long holiday. I am the organiser so please call me on 0409982535 if you have any queries. When we can see the weather I will let you know the starting point.

## NIGHT TIME BOAT USE

One of the joys of sailing is to undertake a night voyage once one is confident with the boat and one's own understanding of navigation. Choose a calm night and head out for a short passage to start developing night passage skills. To help us get started, Rob Black has put together a few pointers from his extensive cruising experience.



### 1. SLOW DOWN

Visibility is reduced at night. Distances are harder to judge, obstacles are difficult to see, and moisture and temperature changes create distortion. Boats can come out of nowhere and debris and crab pots are nearly invisible on inky black water.

A safe speed is defined as a speed that allows the operator to take proper and effective action to avoid collisions. That will allow the operator to stop within a safe distance that is appropriate under each circumstance or condition.

This means that the operator will need to take certain factors into account when determining the proper speed.

Traffic Density, Maneuverability of the vessel, Background light available at night, the proximity of potential hazards, Vessel's draft, Weather conditions including wind, sea, and current.

### 2. SHARE THE LOOKOUT DUTIES

The driver has much to do including keeping an eye on gauges, checking the Chartplotter and actually driving. If you have someone along, keep that second pair of eyes strictly on the horizon with a periodic 360-degree scan to ensure no one is coming up from behind or at an angle.

Don't spend time looking at the stars or moon, looking up can give you vertigo and may diminish your night vision.

### 3. PREPARATION

- Before ever setting out in the dark, you should have refreshed the batteries in your flashlights and headlamps, put binoculars close to the helm and located the PFD's. You may consider wearing PFDs with an attached strobe light or glow stick in case someone goes overboard.
- A nice beach towel has lots of uses at night. You can drape it over yourself to stay warm and dry, you can toss it over parts of your console to cut down on ambient onboard light, and you can use it wipe a fogged windshield.
- Check that your communication device(s) are working, check portable equipment batteries.
- Refresh your understanding of Navigational marks and Aids and their flashing lights

### 4. PRESERVE YOUR NIGHT VISION

Dim all the onboard lights including courtesy lights, instrument and chartplotter backlighting and cabin lights. Your night vision can take 20 minutes to adapt back to darkness after a flash of light. Use flashlights with a vision-preserving red filter and check the plotter only when needed because even when dimmed, it will impact your ability to see out of the boat.

## 5. DON'T USE SPOTLIGHTS/TORCHES

You're not in a car and the reflective water kills the benefits of bright forward lights.

Using a spotlight may impair the vision of other users.

As a last resort you can use a spotlight to signal another vessel

– 5 flashes meaning you are unaware of their intentions, assuming they are aware of the signals meaning.

You can also shine the light onto your sail(s) to highlight your position by illuminating them.

## 6. LOOK FOR RED AND GREEN LIGHTS

Running and marker lights are red and green. Entering a harbor in Australia, follow the rule: Green, Right, Re-turning which means keep the green lights to starboard when entering harbour. Consider what a boat looks like under way on the water:

Red and green lights are forward on either side of the bow and a white light is aft at the stern.

If you see both red and green, the boat is coming head on.

If you see white, the boat is ahead of you and/or moving away.

If in doubt and you see red, stop. That means a boat is crossing your bow and it has the right of way.

Before departing on your voyage, check to make sure your navigation lights are operable so you're visible to others.

## 7. LISTEN

Turn off the stereo and listen. You may hear fog horns, bells or other boats approaching. Use your hearing, which may seem more acute in the dark when you can't rely on your eyes.

## 8. TRUST YOUR NAVIGATION INSTRUMENTS

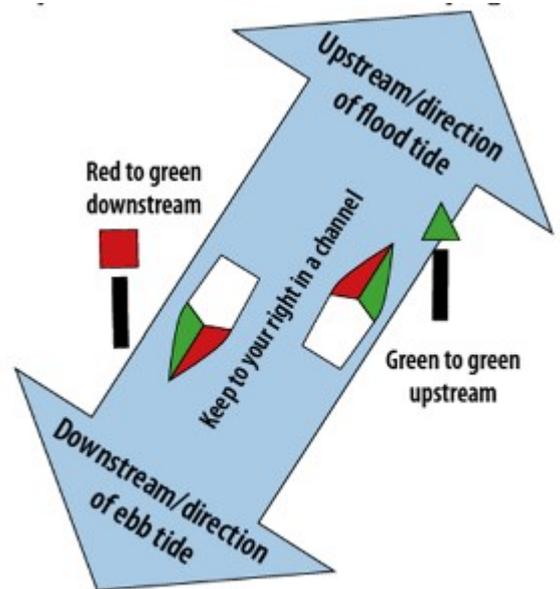
Your eyes can play tricks on you in the dark so if your chartplotter is trustworthy normally, don't suddenly decide it must be wrong. If your chartplotter hasn't been updated or you're not all that familiar with its use, slow down and approach with caution until you figure out whether your eyes and ears or your electronics are right.

## 9. ANCHOR OR APPROACH THE DOCK WITH CAUTION

Again, distances are distorted at night so only approach an anchorage or dock as fast as you're willing to hit anything.

Ask crew not to jump onto a dock but rather step off calmly when the boat is close enough. Double-check snubber lines/bridles, knots and hitches, before leaving the boat or settling in for the night.

Night boating was once described as "riding a giant worm through Disneyland's Space Mountain" that's not an exaggeration. However, if you're prepared, vigilant and cautious, you'll find that night time excursions can be quite pleasant.



## LMYC and JOSEPH CONRAD Pt 2

Alan Gordon Chapman was born in Camberwell, Melbourne on the 15th. of May 1909 and served aboard the Mount Stewart of Aberdeen, among others, as well as the Joseph Conrad. Here is Gordon's account of rounding the Horn in Mount Stewart.

*The British full rigged ship **Mount Stewart** of Aberdeen in which I served left Iquique on the 19th. July 1924 for Nantes where the ship arrived after a passage of 115 days. The passage to Cape Horn was just the usual winter one, plenty of snow and blizzardly weather very high seas running at 6 to the mile and around 60' high. After passing Cape Horn, which was shrouded and we did not sight, course was altered to enter the Scotia Sea.*



*This takes one into the area of the Birdwood Bank, an area of shoal waters of around 600 feet from 6000 and coming up very quickly. In clear and fine weather, it is clearly visible that a ship has come into 'soundings'.*

*In August 1924 the weather here was terrible, blizzards, snow and a mountainous sea sweeping the decks. The master decided it is imperative to heave to which was done, having reduced canvas to a goose-winged main lower topsail and a staysail. A further deterioration of weather caused the master, Captain WC McColm to resort to the use of the Sea Anchor. This was made up of three flitches each around 18 feet by 6 inches by 4 inches on the end.*

*These flitches were carried in the forward 'tween deck and had to be got up on deck and put together in the form of a triangle, a struggle itself on the sea wind swept deck. To this triangle of timber was lashed a similarly shaped canvas of '00' grade cotton not flax.*

*The timber frame was secured at the centres by forged bolts and square iron plate washers*

*with an eye in each bolt, to each eye was shackled a three-legged bridle coming to a ring. Into this ring was shackled a new coil of 2½" F.S.W. 120 fathoms passed through a fairlead on the weather side of the forecastle head (port side, the ship being hove to on port tack) and the end brought aft to the port fore rigging and secured to the bridle. A length of chain was then shackled to the lower corner of the whole contraption as ballast, the horizontal being the upper part.*

*The first attempt to launch this over the rail was disastrous as an enormous sea just rolled on board and completely engulfed the fore part of the ship, it did not crash on board just rolled on us.*

*The Sea Anchor was washed back on board, there was also much consternation, three men were missing. One, the Bosun Chesworth by name, a Swede Engkirst and a young Norwegian whose name was Erling Raidar Haglan. The Bosun was located hanging upside down several feet up inside low port rigging quite unharmed, Haglan and Engkirst were found jammed by the legs under the poop ladder having been washed the full sweep of the main deck, the 'donkey' which secured by many chains to the fore part of the forward house which was also dislodged but fortunately did not get adrift. A second attempt was more successful and over the side it went, and the wire strained, the ship rode somewhat more comfortably as a direct result and of course the southerly drift was arrested.*

During this active period the new 'OO' foresail blew adrift from the gaskets and was soon shredded to ribbons, there was nothing we could do to save it, just empty boltropes, naught else. Oakum was placed in the WC's fore and aft and oil allowed to ooze through, this helped the crests of the seas a little. The mainsail commenced to blow adrift and it was when going aloft to resecure it that we really became aware that the rigging was iced up, the sea spray having frozen.

The glass fell to 27.88 mercury inches which is quite low. By daylight it was seen that the three topsails, fore sail, main and mizzen, each had about a foot of solid frozen snow on them. Captain McColm had not left the poop for three days, our situation was somewhat more comfortable than his, although saturated and no change of clothing left at least we did have the shelter of our quarters when off watch for 4 hours. With moderating weather, sail was made, and the ship got back on her course into the South Atlantic Ocean proper. The Sea Anchor was recovered but there was no canvas, no chain and only one small piece of wood. The rest had gone except the wire bridle and the bolts. It had been a very savage episode one would not wish to repeat, and I hope I never have to.

The area of the Birdwood Bank is approximately 54° S. lat and 58° W lon. and consists extensively of shallow water. When passing this way in 1936 (in **Joseph Conrad**) I passed a huge 'Ice Island' stranded on the Easterly extremity 50°S. 54°W, it was 20 miles long and 300 feet high. No sea anchor, Praise the Lord.

An oil painting by New Yorker Oswald L Brett of **Joseph Conrad**. On the back is the notation *This special print for AG Chapman First Officer.*

The painting depicts the little ship on the 31st. of May 1936 running towards Tahiti under the three topsails, foresail and staysail with the crew aloft preparing to hand the fore topsail, and after weathering an 8-day gale arriving there in the middle of June. After 2 weeks in Papeete, they sailed for Cape Horn which they rounded on August 8th. 1936, but not before they were subject to what Villiers called a great storm and the worst, he had encountered



Gordon's second ship was *Richelieu* in which he returned to Australia, after only a few days in France, and where he was known as the 'Kid'. He would have found it so much different to the *Stewart* being 378' long and a GRT of 3104, a 4 masted barque built for the Laeiz Line as *Pola*, as part of the famous Flying 'P' Line. She would have been as modern as any sailing ship ever got to be only launched in 1916. She was renamed when awarded to France as reparations at the end of WW1. Gordon's third ship was a 4 masted gaff schooner, *Holmwood* (Ex *Forrest Home*) and the fourth a 3 masted brigantine *Louis Theriault*. Both these vessels were much smaller. The *Mount Stewart* had a crew of 24 and the *Richelieu* 53.

Many thanks to Ray Kiely for researching and writing about a slice of maritime history with a connection to our club, LMYC.