

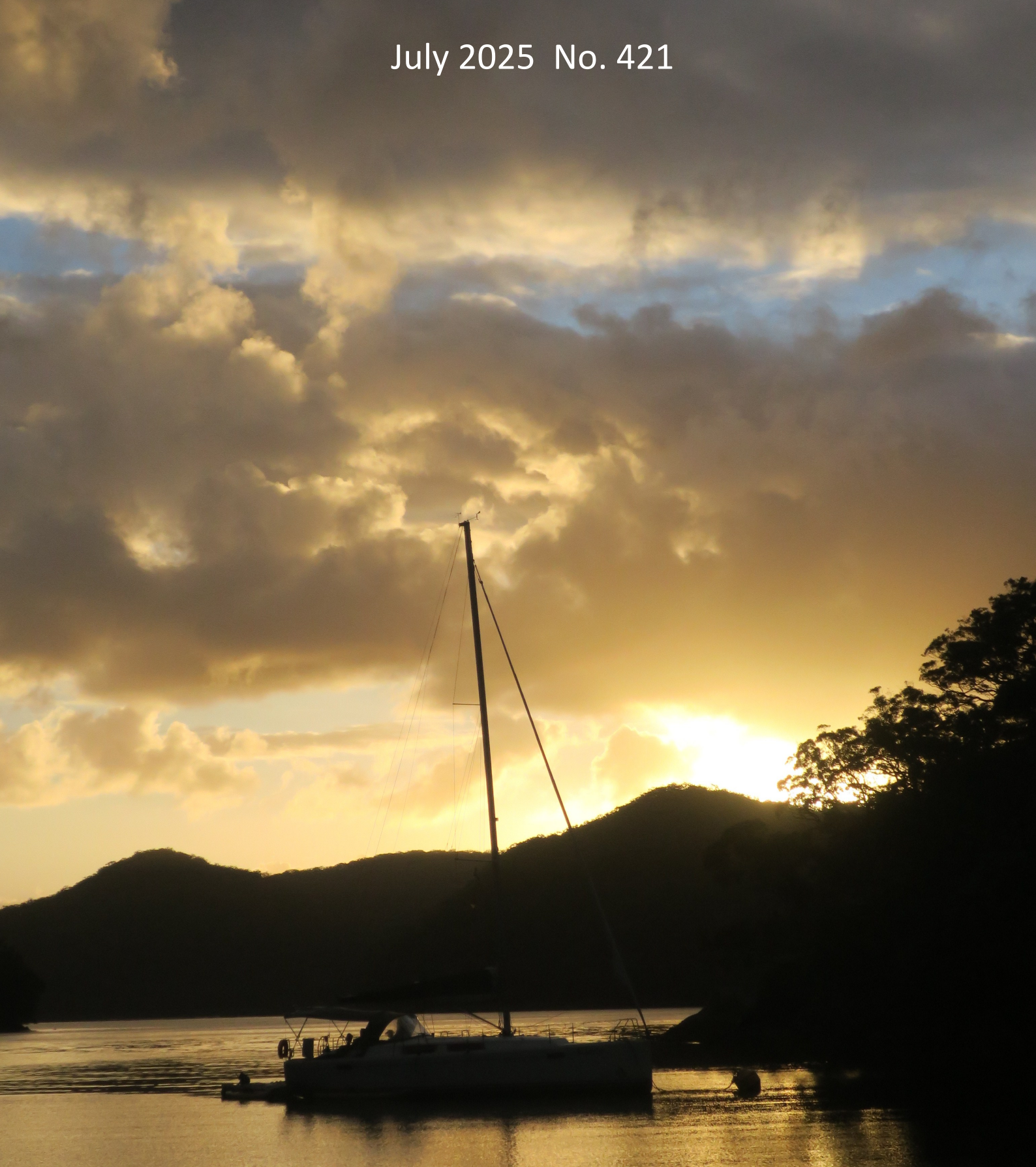


LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB
CRUISING DIVISION



CRUISELETTER

July 2025 No. 421



GENERAL MEETING MONDAY 14TH JULY

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Please address all letters for the Cruising Division to: LMYC CRUISING DIVISION, Ada Street, Belmont NSW 2280

Cover - Sunset - Castle Lagoon, Broken Bay

Skipper's Report

Tony Austin



I must be getting old! Either my memory is failing me or our winters are getting colder and wetter! It has certainly not been a great time to get out on the boat and enjoy our lovely lake. I am rather envious of our colleagues who have made the effort to go north this season. Whilst they have not been spared the vagaries of our rather wet and unstable weather at least they are doing it in a warmer place.

The June 'on-water' activity was the annual Soup Day ashore. With the weather again looking very ominous all but one of the six couples attending arrived by car. The rain God's smiled upon us and we all had a great time sampling the offerings. As a retired safety Officer I was very relieved to note that none of the soups contained mushrooms!

The main piece of good news recently has been the announcement that the tender for the 'permanent' Swansea Channel dredge has been let. The dredge, along with a permanent sand redistribution system, should give us much needed confidence that the channel will remain navigable for many years to come. This is something that has been sought by both recreational and professional boat users ever since the first European settlers came to the lake. Hopefully this is the beginning of a new era for boat users, especially us yachties.

The CD and the broader LMYC community continue to work closely together to enhance the amenity of the Club. Recently the CD made a cash donation to upgrade the fender system at the marina sewerage pumpout. This will make it easier and safer for LMYC vessels to come alongside and 'do the right' thing in keeping our lake clean and healthy.

CD General Meetings remain well attended with many members coming along for dinner at the Club prior to the meeting. Our July meeting should be a bit different and I encourage you all to attend. One of our most famous local Belmont sailors, Tony Mowbray, will be joining us for the evening. Tony has an amazing sailing background from skippering his yacht in the infamous 1998 Sydney—Hobart race through to completing a 181 day solo, unassisted, circumnavigation to running yacht charters down to Antarctica. Tony is a renowned public speaker and has just released his first book that gives a fascinating insight into his life as a sailor. I have just finished reading the book and it is a fascinating tale that really got me thinking about what makes elite sailors do what they do.

On a sadder note the LMYC sailing community lost two more stalwarts in June. Margaret (Margie) Blakewell passed away at the age of 90. Howard and Margie had been very active members of the CD, as is their son Peter. Howard and Margie were true sailing adventurers who had sailed their boat (Margarita—guess where that name came from) around the world and many other places. Margie's funeral was very well attended with family, friends and a large contingent of LMYC members.

A week after Margie passed the club suffered another loss with the unexpected passing of Bryan Phillips. Bryan had been associated with LMYC for more years than anyone could remember. As the founder of Phillips Sails he had become 'The Man' for any LMYC sailors who aspired to win races, cruise the lake or cross oceans. While he had passed the reigns at Phillips Sails to his son Craig many years ago he was still working as a rigger and could be seen around the club on an almost daily basis. I am sure that Bryan would have been embarrassed to see the very large LMYC contingent at his funeral - I know his family was very grateful and is so, so proud of Bryan the man and his legacy.

June Outing - Annual Soup Day



Marion and John did an outstanding job in organising the weather for this major event. Despite bitterly cold winds and a short rain shower in the morning six couples gathered together at Rathmines F Jetty for our annual Soup Day. Unfortunately only one couple came by boat and that was because they needed a hand to get up their mast to replace a broken anemometer. The rest came by car and looked happier for it.

Chris, who is a man of much more brain than brawn, had brought his electric winch winder so getting Joe to the top of the Kimberley Dreaming mast was much easier than it could have been. Suffice to say that the new anemometer worked a treat so it was a very successful mission.

Meanwhile the other intrepid CD members shared their favourite soups and I was greatly relieved to notice that no-one had included mushrooms in their recipes.

Despite the weather it was a very successful day.



Where are they now?

Quite a few CD members are cruising north. Apologies if I have left you out:

Renaissance	Mackay
Rio	Southport
Give and Take	Airlie Beach
Sheer Pleasure	Laurieton
Allaban	Laurieton
Sea Change	Horseshoe Bay, Magnetic Island

Renaissance Heads North

Steve & Natalie Meisenhelter

Hi Cruising Division,

We left Swansea heads on a high tide on May 14 and sailed to Port Stephens where we spent a few days at Nelson Bay at anchor. The weather wasn't great and with bad weather forecast, we decided to head north in an attempt to get away from the rain & high seas. We arrived in Coffs Harbour at 11.30am after 26 hrs at sea. However, conditions were not great in the outer harbour and we couldn't secure a berth in the inner harbour, so we decided to push north again, leaving at 2230 that evening after a meal and rest. We arrived in Yamba after a 16 hr sail at 8.30am in time for the high tide at Yamba



bar. This decision to leave Coffs proved fortuitous as the weather deteriorated south of Yamba for the next week, and spending a week at Coffs in the outer harbour wouldn't have been much fun. We stayed in Yamba for a week enjoying the sunshine. Our favourite activity was walking out to the break wall to see the bar conditions, which gave us appreciation of the importance of timing the tide & weather conditions. We then left Yamba Sunday 25 May & travelled to Southport.

Crossing the bar at 2030. We spent a lovely 5 days anchored in Marine Stadium Bay and then travelled on high tide through the inner passage, where we were required to travel under electrical wires (lucky we measured the mast height in Yamba). We are currently anchored at Macleay Island at the southern entry to Moreton Bay, hiding from a strong southerly wind. Next stop Bribie Island, Tangalooma Wreck and a week at Mooloolaba, before tackling the Wide Bay .

Update:

Renaissance is currently in Mackay.



The One That Didn't Get Away

Geoff and Lisa have been having an 'interesting time' since leaving the lake on 16 June. With several technical issues slowing their progress they have still managed to safely visit Broughton Island and several NSW ports as they head north to the sunnier climes of Queensland.

One of the highlights of the trip has been Geoff's success as a game fisherman. His prize catch has been a magnificent blue fin tuna. Unable to have it stuffed and mounted on a prominent bulkhead it was cooked and consumed. By all reports it was delicious!



Safety Snippets

Navigating Swansea Channel

While for some of us navigating the Swansea Channel is a well entrenched skill, for others it can remain a bit of a challenge. Recently two vessels managed to run aground when they missed the entry to the 'Dogleg' whilst attempting to depart the lake. One vessel was able to power off the sand bank whilst the other required a tow from Marine Rescue. How could this happen you ask? Surprisingly easily, actually.

When navigating out of the lake along the western edge of Swan Bay there is a series of star-board channel markers that run parallel with the shore. These markers extend well to the south before the navigable channel crosses to the Swansea shore. If you are not careful you can miss the port markers that show the channel deviating to the west into the Dogleg deviation. Needless to say all chart plotters show the 'old' channel and thus cannot be relied upon for getting you through the Dogleg deviation. A strong outgoing current in the channel further complicates matters as it reduces your decision making time.

Lesson: BEWARE THE DOGLEG!

In a similar vein I am also aware of two yachts that, whilst attempting to leave the lake, managed to hit the Swansea Bridge. In both cases there was a strong outgoing current and they had difficulty lining themselves up with the centreline through the bridge opening. All boats rely on speed through the water to get rudder effectiveness. With an outgoing flow of up to 4kts or more a vessel may need to be travelling at 8knots or more over the ground to have precise steerage. This can be a bit daunting when you are approaching the bridge but is essential for safety. In these conditions it is imperative that you remain well clear of other vessels and do not slow down until you are well clear of the entry and exit areas on either side of the bridge.

Lesson: Carefully plan your transit noting the conditions on the day. Travel at a speed that guarantees you adequate steerage. Start your approach far enough away from the open bridge to ensure no last minute changes are needed to maintain your transit course.

Manoeuvring around Dredges

Now that Stage 3 of the current dredging program has commenced in the vicinity of the Dogleg all vessels will need to pass the dredge (and associated sand pipes) when navigating Swansea channel. This can be quite a challenge at times as the channel is less than 30m wide and it is not always immediately obvious where the pipeline is running. Suffice to say it is imperative that you are fully familiar with the day shapes and lights fitted to a dredge. The dredge should also be monitoring VHF Channel 16 so when in doubt you could hail the vessel and seek specific guidance.

Lesson: Carefully plan your route past the dredge and remember that the current operation has the sand being transferred to the sand storage area on Elizabeth Island. Also remember that current may flow diagonally across the Dogleg channel.

In anticipation of seeing a dredge in the channel much more frequently than in the past we to run a comprehensive Safety Brief session later in the year.

For Your Calendar



On water and Practical Events:

July 18th-20th	On water Event - Campfire at the Duck Hole/Birdcage Point
August 16th	Practical Rope Workshop at LMYC
September	LMYC Sail Past for the start of the LMYC Sailing Season. Cruise to follow. (Date TBA)
October	Ivan Irwin Cruise—Lake Mac (Date TBA)
November	Cruise to Sydney, Botany Bay and Port Hacking. (TBA)

General Meetings – Bridgedeck Room

The General Meetings will start at 7pm in the Bridgedeck Room. A table will be booked for dinner from 5.30pm onwards for those wishing to share a meal prior to the meeting.

Dates for 2025 General Meetings:-

July 14th	Guest Speaker—Tony Mowbray
August 11th	Everything you ever wanted to know about ropes—Panel Discussion
September 8th	Guest Speaker—NSW Maritime Boating Safety Officer (TBC)

Our meetings are a great way to find out what's happening and to get to know your fellow CD members a little better.

Thank you!

Our Cruiseletter is enriched by your contributions —

all items of interest or handy hints are always gratefully received! Ed.

My thanks this month to:-Steve and Natalie Meisenhelter, Geoff and Lisa Allen