

LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB CRUISING DIVISION



CRUISELETTER

JULY 2026 | ISSUE NO. 432



What's on this month

- **General Meeting: 13th July 2026, 7:00 pm .**
Guest Speaker: Akin Donmez , Ala Dive Services.
- **Outing: Saturday July 17th: Firepit at the Duck Hole.**

Contents:

Skipper's Report:

2

June Meeting:

3

Safety Snippet:

4

Lake Matters:

6

Soup Day Outing Report:

7

Club Information:

9

Page:



**Damien Boldyrew was our
June Guest Speaker**

SKIPPER'S REPORT

Greetings fellow CD members,

Is it just me or is there a widening gap between the local BOM forecast and what we actually see out on the water? I find it very frustrating as a prediction of rain is usually enough for me to defer going out to the boat to do external maintenance. I think a good psychologist would have a field day exploring my thought processes on this one but suffice to say I have been on the boat every day this week and much has finally been achieved.

Our last meeting went well with a good winter attendance. Damien's presentation was well received and covered some very interesting points. After telling us a bit about the trials and tribulations of being one of the top international judges and umpires (one of only eight in the world and the only one in the southern hemisphere!) he talked about the major differences between cruising and racing.

His point was that both groups are often operating to totally different rules and expectations. While technically all sailors are bound by the international Collision Regulations (COLREGS) the reality is that racers do have exemptions and their priorities are often markedly at variance with their cruising colleagues. Racers make snap decisions based on a myriad of factors that are not always apparent to a cruiser e.g. the actions of other racers spread across the course. For this reason it is both courteous and prudent for cruisers to avoid getting anywhere near a fleet of racing yachts. At the end of the day we are out there to have fun!

The Soup Day organised by Ralph and Angela was a great success (see report page 7).

Our next meeting (Monday 15 July) should be a doozy! Our guest speaker will be Akin Donmez. Akin is a passionate local commercial diver who specialises in hull cleaning recreational vessels. He will share some of his experiences with us and give us an opportunity to learn a bit about what we can do to get the maximum life out of our expensive antifouling.

Our next onwater event (17-18 July) will be a cruise to the Duck Hole followed by a campfire ashore. Fred and Maureen have kindly offered to host this event and will bring along Fred's magical, portable firepit. Don't forget to bring your warm clothes and marshmallows!

Best wishes and safe sailing,
Tony



TONY AUSTIN

June 15th General Meeting

The Guest Speaker at the June 15th General Meeting was Damien Boldyrew who is an international sailing judge and umpire. Tony has outlined aspects of his presentation in his Skipper's Report. Some photos below are from the meeting, which was held in the Pavilion.



Safety Snippet - Be nice to your Anchor Windlass - or else!

The art of anchoring is probably the most important skill that you can develop as a sailing cruiser. I suspect that there are not enough years in your life to read everything that has been written about this 'art'. Rather than trying to distill this complex subject into a digestible bite, I only want to address one important component - staying in love with your anchor windlass (aka winch). Most modern cruisers rely exclusively on a modern anchor and lots of chain. This makes sense - it works well in most situations and lets you sleep soundly regardless of the anchorage. Unfortunately chain has a cost - weight! No sane sailor wants to manhandle kilos of chain back into the anchor well after a secure night in some exotic location. So how do we manage this situation? We buy/install/inherit an electric anchor windlass. These devices are game changers! But do we really appreciate what they do, or do we just take them for granted? When did you last think about your winch and give it a serious service? Do you really know how to look after it and make sure that it is still as happy as the day that it was installed? My winch would cost just short of \$3,000 to replace!

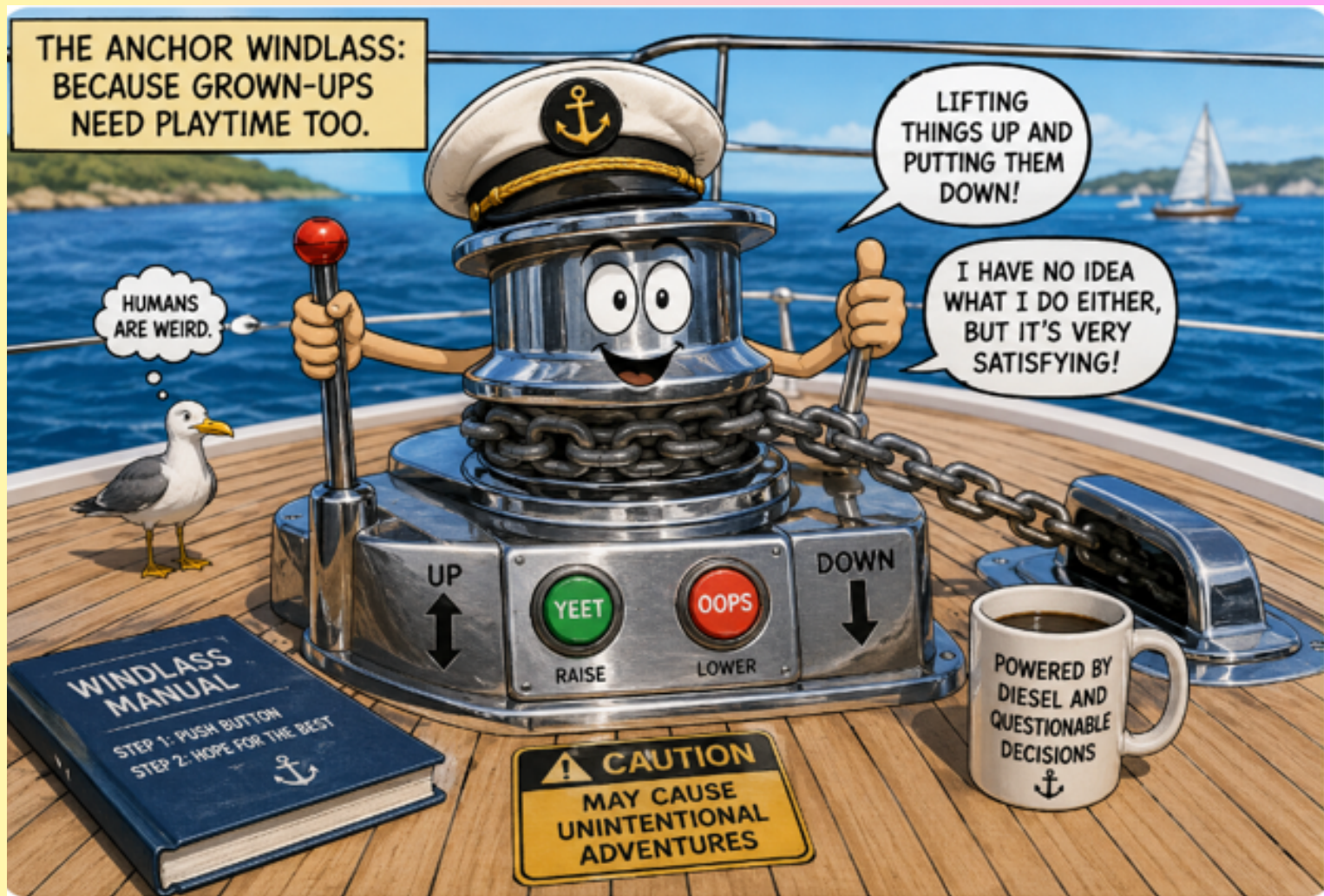
Like all systems on your boat your winch works best when it has had a bit of TLC. Ideally you will flush it with fresh water after every cruise and you will even do an annual basic service - break down the capstan and chain stripper, wash and clean all clutch components and cover all internal components with a marine grade grease before re-assembly. You should also visually inspect the gearbox and motor along with the electrical contacts and switches. Most winches have sealed gearboxes but some do require periodic oil changes. Hopefully your system was installed by a professional and you have a suitable circuit breaker (NOT FUSE), an isolation switch and a means of powering it up and down. Ideally you have a switch at the helm for short-handed sailing and a method you can use on the foredeck. I have a wireless remote controller that gives me total control when trying to retrieve a snagged anchor. All crew members need to be aware of the location of the circuit breaker as losing control of the winch can be a tad stressful when you need to vacate an anchorage in a hurry.

While the pulling power of your winch may be very impressive, the reality is that a windlass is not designed to take the full load of your vessel under extreme conditions. My Muir VRC1250 is designed for keelboats in the 11-13m range. It is rated at a maximum load of 621kg and a working load of 207kg. My cat weighs 4.5 tonnes! For this reason we need to protect the winch from shock loads that could result in significant damage. My suggestions are:

1. Always secure the anchor chain with a snubber or bridle to take the load off the winch
2. Don't use the winch drum/capstan as a strong point for towing the vessel
3. Don't use the winch to drag the vessel forward as you retrieve the anchor
4. Don't use the anchor winch to break an anchor free from the bottom - lock off the chain and use the buoyancy of the hull(s) or engine power to break free.

Ideally you will use your engine(s) to move the boat over the anchor chain as it is retrieved thus limiting the load to the weight of the chain hanging in the water column. If you lose your winch you have to have an alternative plan to get the anchoring gear back onboard. If the chain is too heavy to lift by hand you can use a genoa winch but you need to have a plan. Dragging chain across your deck is OK in a real emergency but it will do damage. An alternative is to use a halyard line and winch the chain up the mast thus keeping clear of the deck. The chain can then be locked off by a snubber, chain hook or running hitch and the process repeated as the chain is lowered into the locker .

In conclusion, give your anchor winch a bit of TLC and he/she should serve you well for many decades. (See picture next page).



CD Merchandise for Sale:

The CD has some “MUST HAVE” items for your Club boating needs so avail yourselves of these most desirable items while stocks last!



CD Shirts: \$30
or 2 for \$50.



CD Pennants \$10.

For the purchase of any items, contact our Treasurer Ralph. Shirts can now be purchased at the LMYC club front desk, and all items are available at Club Meetings. You can now also pay using your Credit or Debit cards.

Personalise your shirts: If you would like to put your boat's name or some other insignia on your shirts, Ralph can also provide details as to where this can be done.

Lake Matters

On Friday 12 June Yasmin Catley (Minister for the Hunter) held a press conference formally announcing the 10-year approval for the Swansea Channel dredging program. Funding has been confirmed for the next five years and once the dredge and sand distribution system have been commissioned, they will be handed over to NSW Maritime to manage. The commitment is to widen the channel to 60m and maintain a channel depth of 2.7m or greater. This is great news, and we look forward to seeing the dredge start work over the next few months.

Following a recent meeting between the representatives of the Hunter Region Special Interest Group for Moorings and the Minister for Roads and Regional Transport's chief of staff we have been invited to provide a 'witness' to the NSW parliamentary Select Committee on Access Restrictions to Public Lands and Waterways. This will take place on Friday 3 July in Sydney. This is an excellent opportunity to highlight the complexities of the current mooring allocation system and the problems that we are experiencing here on Lake Macquarie.

Work on Belmont Jetty continues at an impressive pace although the contractors failed to make the proposed opening date of 18 June. The only major work remaining is the installation of the sewage pump out system (see photo below).

Last week Minister Catley also announced that NSW Maritime had approved \$7.5 million for remediation of the channel seawall at Swansea adjacent to the bridge. This will hopefully restore the foreshore to its original condition and open it up for public access after being closed for five years.

Finally, the 'Float your Boat' festival has come and gone. There was an excellent turn out this year with 22 vessels in the parade. The displays were very impressive and the public really appreciated the efforts of the participating skippers. The only 'oops' occurred when a participating vessel managed to tangle with an empty mooring line off the Valentine boat ramp. It was not able to get free until the following morning and there is now a very new mooring apparatus marking the place!



Partially completed Belmont jetty taken 12th June

The Famous Annual Soup Day Outing - 20th June

One of the historical highlights of the CD year is the Annual Soup Day. Held in winter it is a great excuse to get together with friends and enjoy a wide range of soups. To the best of my knowledge no-one has ever suffered a permanent harm and it usually results in plans for dinner being cancelled. Our hosts for the event, Ralph and Angela, did a great job in choosing the venue and arranging the weather.

Four vessels (2Dream, Double Fun, Isla Breeze and Renaissance) anchored off Thomas Halton Park (Croudace Bay) while the crews of Jodi, Equinox, Beyond Cool, and Xanadu arrived by car. The group quickly 'claimed' the large shelter shed that was perfect for the task. The weather was excellent for nice hot soup and there was much discussion as to who had brought what. Ralph very kindly delegated the judging of the soups and yet again the Skipper was thrown into the deep end. Judging was extremely challenging as there was quite a range of different styles and flavours. After much deliberation (and unfortunately no bribery!) the winner was Richard and Jennifer (Jodi) with their Prawn and Fish Seafood Bisque. Congratulations to the winners and a big 'Thank You' to all the other contestants. I very much doubt that anyone went home hungry!

Just before we packed up to leave, we saw something very unusual. Graham had forsaken his usual 50HP on his tender for a pair of oars. He and Linda decided to share the workload which resulted in some very interesting manoeuvres. I suggest that they should sing some sea shanties to keep them in time, but it sounded more like an attempt at opera! Despite this lack of rhythm they did make it safely back to their boat! (See photo on front cover).

Tony



Annual Soup Day Outing - 20th June



Contact Details

Executives:

Skipper: Tony Austin 0416 266 947
Secretary: Richard Masson 0422 347 875
Treasurer: Ralph Asquith 0409 318 230

Committee:

Eleanor Cunningham (LMYC Board Rep) 0416 258 461
Phil Cunningham 0416 078 461
Ken Archer (Cruiseletter Editor) 0428 785 459
Angela Asquith 0408 479 228
Mark Clement 0400 716 756
Steve Meisenhelter..... 0413 368 232
Natalie Meisenhelter..... 0410 649 543



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

For Your Calendar

JULY:

13th: General Meeting. Guest Speaker - Akin Donmez, ALA Dive Services.

17th: Outing: Duck Hole campfire. Coordinator Fred and Maureen.

AUGUST:

10th: General Meeting: Guest Speaker - TBA.

15th: Outing: Tea Gardens ferry from Nelsons Bay. Coordinator - Eleanor Cunningham.

SEPTEMBER:

14th: General Meeting: Guest Speaker - TBC.

5th: Outing: LMYC Sail Past - TBC.

THANK YOU!

A special thanks to Tony this month for all his contributions to the Cruiseletter. Also to Ralph and Angela for organising the Soup Day Outing.

CRUISELETTER EDITOR

Any articles for the Cruiseletter can be sent to the Cruiseletter Editor, Ken Archer, preferably in MS Word format at archerken90@gmail.com (M: 0428 785 459) by 25th of each month.

Please address all letters for the Cruising Division to:

LMYC CRUISING DIVISION
Ada Street
Belmont NSW 2280

