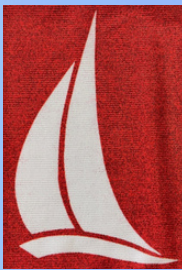


LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB
CRUISING DIVISION



CRUISELETTER

AUGUST 2026 | ISSUE NO. 433



What's on this month

- **General Meeting:** 10th August 2026, 7:00 pm; Bridgedeck Room.
Guest Speaker: Discussion on Crossing Bars.
- **Outing:** Saturday 15th August: Lunch at Tea Gardens via Ferry from Nelsons Bay.

<u>Contents:</u>	<u>Page:</u>
Skipper's Report:	2
July Meeting Report:	3
July Guest Speaker:	4
Sydney Boat Show:	5
Lake Matters:	6
What's Happening at LMYC:	6
Bar Crossings:	7-10
Vale Jack Garaty:	10
Safety Snippet:	11
July Outing Report:	12
Cruising Corner:	13
Club Information:	14



Pictures are from the July outing to the Duckhole.

SKIPPER'S REPORT

Greetings fellow CD members,

If you are like me your boat is probably feeling a tad neglected. Despite making many resolutions for this year to be a major maintenance opportunity it has not quite turned out that way. How come retirement is so busy????

Cath and I were able to get out for the Fireside Cruise down to the Duck Hole. Despite the rather depressing weather that greeted us on Saturday morning, things did improve and by the time we went ashore we had 9 boats anchored off Bird Cage Point. Fred's home built firepit worked its magic and everyone had a fantastic time. This cruise needs to be bolted in as an annual event!

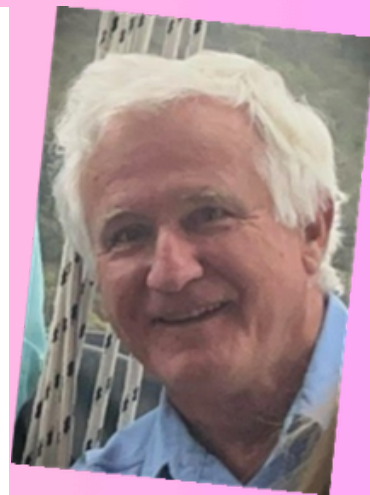
Our general meetings continue to go well albeit many of our regular attendees have been away over the past few months. The July meeting was a little bit different with our guest speaker (Akin Donmez) bringing along his partner, his sister and several friends. They joined us for dinner and even stayed for the whole meeting. Now that is loyalty, but once you have met Akin you will understand. He really is a gentleman! Akin's presentation was great – I think most of us were very surprised to learn how comprehensively he checks out our underwater hulls, props and fittings. If you need any underwater work done on your boat, then Akin is your man!

Hopefully you will really enjoy our August program. Instead of a guest speaker we have adopted a theme for the month – How to safely cross a bar. Ken has written a great article for this Cruiseletter and we will have a Panel Discussion from people who have 'been there, done that'. I am sure that even the most experienced coastal sailor will learn a few valuable tricks.

The issue of mandatory CD boat audits has been a contentious topic for some years. The committee has been reviewing the matter, and a proposal has been submitted to the LMYC Board for their consideration. Hopefully we will have an agreed way ahead before the start of the next sailing season.

Finally, the committee is very keen to make sure that the programs that we offer best meet the needs of our members. Given the wide range of skills, experience and aspirations of our members we are keen to get feedback from as many crews as possible. We have done surveys in the past, but sample sizes were small and mainly came from our most active members. Most were happy with how things are going but we did not really hear from those who would like to see something different. Please share your thoughts/suggestions with any member of the committee.

**Best wishes and safe sailing,
Tony**



TONY AUSTIN

Cruising Division General Meeting -13th July 2026

The Club's General Meeting was held on Monday 13th July with 23 members and 6 visitors in attendance. Most of the visitors came to support the Guest Speaker, Mr Akin Donmez, who gave a presentation on his hull cleaning business (see separate report below).

A presentation of a club flag and shirt was made to our new member Chris Burgess.

It was also announced that the Ivan Irwin Lake Cruise will be held on the 3rd-9th of October with Phil and Eleanor in charge once again!

Next month's guest speaker slot at the meeting will be a discussion on crossing bars, so please have a read through the article on this subject below.

A presentation was also made to Marine Rescue by Tony to MRLM's representative, Ross Shirtley.

A talk was also given on heavy weather sailing by Ralph Asquith.



Ralph gave a safety talk on "Heavy Weather Sailing".



Tony presents an annual donation to Marine Rescue's member Ross Shirtley.

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.

Guest Speaker at July Meeting - 13th July 2026

The guest speaker at our July meeting was Akin Donmez. Akin is the owner/operator of ALA Dive Services and specialises in hull cleaning commercial and recreational vessels. Akin is well known to many CD members as he has been offering his hull cleaning and underwater servicing here on Lake Mac for the past year. Akin comes from a family of commercial divers (his father is a diver and Akin got his commercial dive ticket at the age of 15 in his native Turkiye). He remains passionate about all facets of diving. Akin specialises in hull cleaning and offers a highly professional service that goes well beyond just scraping stuff off hulls.



Akin giving his presentation at the meeting.

ALA DIVE SERVICES	AKIN ALARGA DONMEZ Commercial Diver 0452 584 436 akinalarga@gmail.com @aladiving
----------------------------------	---



Double Fun's hull cleaned from thisto this!

Sydney Boat Show

Steve and Natalie Meisenhelter, Angela and I attended the Sydney Boat Show.

After picking up some free Pantaenius Caps and having a flutter on the maritime chocolate wheel we got down to some serious boat shopping. Thought about putting a deposit on a new “shark” tender until I had a look at the price!

On a more serious note we had a discussion with the maritime representative who stated that all vessels carrying fuel (including tenders) must now carry a fire extinguisher. We pointed out this was not in the handbook nor on the signs that they were displaying, but he insisted that it is a regulation that they are now educating the boating public on and will be issuing fines if not complied with. We will check this with other maritime sources to confirm.

Overall we were disappointed with the boat show as it has been moved from Darling Harbour to the Olympic show ground and therefore only trailer boats are being displayed rather than the yachts etc that were part of previous years shows.

Ralph.



Lake Matters

The commissioning of the new dredge and sand distribution system for Swansea Channel are progressing smoothly. The contractor (Birdon) has three work sites ashore in Marks Point and the pipeline is being assembled. It is expected that dredging of the channel will commence as soon as the commissioning process has been completed. It is all very exciting!

Belmont Jetty has finally opened and promises to be an excellent facility for boaters wanting to access the Belmont Shopping Centre or Belmont Hospital. The jetty is fitted with a new sewage pump-out system that uses the latest technology. Hopefully it will prove to be a reliable and easy to use system thus encouraging boaters to 'do the right thing' rather than dump their waste overboard whilst underway. Please note the yellow buoys adjacent to the jetty – they designate sensitive seagrass areas so please do not anchor or use high engine thrust when manoeuvring near the jetty.

The issue of sewage pump outs for boats comes up regularly at the LMCC Aquatic Services Committee meetings. The law is very clear – it is illegal for any vessel to pump out any sewage into Lake Macquarie regardless of how much it has been treated or processed. All vessels with a fixed toilet must have a 'black water' holding tank and must use an approved shore-based pump out. The questions that arise are: Do we have enough pump outs on the lake, is the distribution appropriate, are they accessible and do they work? I would very much appreciate CD members sharing their experiences with me along with their suggestions for improvement.

Tony



New dredge being assembled at Rathmines.

Whats Happening at LMYC

LMYC Wedding Open Day - 16 August from 10 am -2 pm.

Shesails Regatta at NCYC - 29 & 30th August.

LMYC Open Day - Saturday 5th September.

The theme for the day is your favorite Superhero. Prizes will be given for "Best Dressed Boat" and "Best Dressed Crew". The CD joins in the fun, so get your boat and crew dressed up for a sailpast, and later festivities - details to be announced.

Visit the LMYC website for more information.

Safety for Yachts Crossing Coastal Bars

Crossing a coastal bar is one of the most demanding and potentially dangerous manoeuvres a yacht skipper can undertake. NSW bars have especially claimed vessels and lives despite advances in navigation and safety equipment. Vessels can be swamped, damaged or wrecked even in conditions that appear manageable from shore.

A coastal bar forms where ocean swell meets shallow sandbanks at the entrance to rivers, lakes and estuaries. The interaction between tide, swell, wind and current can create steep breaking seas, standing waves and unpredictable channels. Conditions can change within hours — sometimes within minutes.

In his book “Cruising the NSW Coast”, Alan Lucas lists all the Ports and Anchorages in NSW, and describes all those which have bars to cross. While most are navigable, many can be regarded as dangerous and should be avoided unless absolutely necessary to cross. According to the experience of Cruising Division members who have personal knowledge of bar crossings along the NSW coast, the following bars/ports are considered the safest to cross or enter going north: Newcastle, Port Stephens, Broughton Island, Laurieton, Coffs Harbour and the Clarence River (Yamba, Iluka). The best advice for our CD members is to seek the knowledge of fellow members who have experience crossing particular bars.

As the more suitable bars for crossing can be some distance apart, this may require overnight passages between these safer crossings.

Why Coastal Bars Are Dangerous

Bars are dynamic environments. Sandbanks shift regularly, channels move after storms, and swell direction can completely alter wave behaviour. Even experienced skippers can be caught out. The greatest dangers include:

- Breaking waves capable of rolling or pitch-poling a yacht.
- Strong ebb currents opposing ocean swell.
- Winds opposing tidal flow.
- Shallow water and moving sandbanks.
- Loss of steering or propulsion in critical areas.
- Reduced manoeuvrability in following seas.
- Conflict with other vessels or water users (surfers, swimmers, kayaks etc).
- Panic decisions such as turning broadside mid-crossing.

Preparation Before Crossing a Bar

Study Conditions Thoroughly. Preparation begins well before leaving the marina, obtaining local knowledge before attempting any crossing. Experienced skippers observe a bar from shore prior to the voyage or from the water well before crossing, especially after weather events or long periods away from the area. A prudent skipper should check:

- Swell height, direction and period.
- Tide times and local over-run.
- The presence of any cross currents to avoid being dragged onto breakwater walls.
- Wind direction and strength.
- Local bar camera footage.
- Recent reports from local operators.
- Marine Rescue NSW advice.

Time the Crossing Correctly.

The safest time to cross is generally on an incoming (flood) tide. An outgoing (ebb) tide opposing incoming swell produces short, steep and dangerous standing waves. Boating guidance specifically warns against crossing on an ebb tide whenever possible. Alan Lucas also points out that an ebb tide flow may occur for as long as four hours after low tide data (over-run). He also suggests that when in doubt about the conditions on a bar, wait until the fourth hour of a rising tide to ensure that the flow is running into the river.



Likewise, winds blowing against tidal flow can cause increase in wave heights and standing waves. For yachts, which are heavier and less responsive than trailer boats, timing is especially critical because acceleration options are limited once committed.

Know Your Yacht's Limitations.

Not all yachts are suitable for all bars. Factors affecting bar-crossing capability include:

- draft, engine reliability,
- power-to-weight ratio,
- rudder size and authority,
- hull form,
- visibility from the helm and crew experience.

Deep-keeled yachts can struggle in shallow shifting channels. Heavy displacement vessels may respond slowly in breaking seas. Mechanical reliability becomes paramount because losing propulsion in the impact zone can quickly become catastrophic. Even seasoned operators can be overwhelmed if mechanical failure occurs at the wrong moment. Rudder size/authority is another issue which can affect steerage capability especially over waves.

Before approaching the bar:

Ensure every person aboard is wearing a lifejacket when crossing a coastal bar. In NSW, it is against the law not to wear a lifejacket when crossing bars. Also,

- Secure all loose gear.
- Close hatches and insert companionway washboards.
- Ensure cockpit drains are clean.
- Brief crew on procedures.
- Assign lookout responsibilities.

Techniques for Crossing Bars

Observe Before Committing. Never rush directly into a bar crossing. Watch wave patterns carefully and identify the deepest channel, areas of least breaking activity, timing between larger sets and escape routes if conditions deteriorate.

Maintain positive control. Once committed, a skipper should continue the crossing rather than attempting dangerous mid-bar turns. Whether going out or coming in cross with an incoming tide. Avoid an outgoing tide as dangerous waves are more likely. Once you start crossing, keep going. Turning around in the middle of a bar increases the risk of being swamped or rolled.

When going out:

- Keep the bow square to approaching seas and take the waves head on.
- Avoid hitting waves at high speed to limit pitching.
- Approach waves relatively slowly, especially breaking waves, but use enough throttle to maintain steerage.
- Speed up through flat spots.

When coming back in if safe to do so. Inbound crossings are often more difficult because yachts may surf on following seas. If unsure:

- Wait for conditions to improve.
- Wait for tide to change; it is always best to come in on a flood (incoming) tide.
- Seek an alternative crossing elsewhere.

If it is safe to come in:

- Pick the spot with least wave activity to avoid launching off wave crests.
- Observe and keep in line with any lead marks.
- Position vessel on the back of a swell and maintain speed to avoid overtaking and running down the face of the wave while staying ahead of waves behind.
- Prevent the stern from being lifted sideways.
- Maintain enough speed for steering control.
- Accelerate smoothly through white water.
- Use engine in reverse to prevent unwanted acceleration on wave front.
- Beware of steep waves bouncing back off the entrance sea walls or shore.

A yacht should never allow breaking seas to strike broadside. Use the “Lull”. Experienced skippers often wait for a lull between larger wave sets before crossing. Timing can dramatically reduce exposure to breaking water.

The Importance of Local Knowledge.

Every NSW coastal bar behaves differently. Local operators frequently stress that bars can change shape weekly. First-time skippers should ideally:

- Cross with an experienced local.
- Follow a local vessel where safe.
- Study bar camera footage regularly.
- Build experience gradually in benign conditions.
- Do not make decisions of desperation. Staying at sea may be the safest option.

Decision-Making Saves Lives

Marine Rescue NSW promotes a simple principle: “Plan, Prepare, Proceed.” For yacht skippers, that often means accepting that delaying a crossing is the safest and most professional decision available. The most important safety tool is judgment. Many bar incidents occur because skippers feel pressured to return home, underestimate swell conditions, overestimate vessel capability, continue after conditions worsen and ignore mechanical warning signs.



Ralph and crew on “2Dream” crossing an unusually rough bar into Lake Macquarie Channel earlier this year after returning from Lord Howe Island.

Crossing the Bar into Lake Macquarie Channel

The bar at the channel is generally not a major concern as the sea swell, particularly from the southeast, is often protected by Moon Island. However, it can still get rough if winds, waves and tides are unfavourable, as described above. There is also a “coal seam” at the bar which can get shallow at low tides and in the troughs of waves. When approaching the bar from the seaside, lead marks (leads) designate the safest line of approach for the deepest part of the channel. A second set of leads situated on the southern bank of the channel indicate where to cross the channel to enter the deepest section of the channel along the northern side heading towards the bridge. The channel also has a bar camera which can be accessed on the internet. Lucas suggests that when negotiating the bar in poor conditions of wind and swell, do not enter until the fifth hour of a rising or flood tide. He indicates that the over-run can prevail for four hours after the tide turns.

Conclusion

Crossing a coastal bar in New South Wales demands preparation, patience, vessel knowledge and disciplined seamanship. No two crossings are identical, and even experienced skippers treat bars with caution and respect. By carefully studying conditions, using proper equipment, seeking local knowledge and refusing to take unnecessary risks, yacht crews can significantly improve their safety when entering or leaving the open ocean.

References:

Transport for NSW Boating Handbook.

Lucas, Alan. (2005). Cruising the NSW Coast.

Vale John Reginald (Jack) Garaty

Jack Garaty was a man of passion - passionate about cricket, sailing and his much loved Lake Macquarie. Jack was a very active member of the Cruising Division and was made a Life Member in 2005. In 2009 he was awarded a Maritime NSW medal (Community and Environment) to recognise his 10 year membership of three major committees that were working to improve the boating environment, lake facilities and the strategy for the dredging of Swansea Channel.

A memorial service for Jack was held at Lake Macquarie Memorial Park (Ryehope) on Wednesday 5 August at 11.00am.



Safety Snippet

Medical Kits for Boats.

CD members may have become aware that Australian Sailing plans to change the schedules for the medical kits required to comply with the various racing categories. Rather than linking a kit to each audit category they now have a basic 'inshore' kit that can be incrementally upgraded. While this makes a lot of sense (by reducing duplication and making the kits more appropriate for the actual risks) it will increase their cost and complexity. These new schedules will not be mandatory for racers until December 2028.

While few of us need to comply with the AS racing category audits I do have one suggestion for CD cruisers. The new schedules include a 'new' item - the so-called Israeli Bandage (aka Emergency or Trauma Bandage). These types of bandage have been in military medical kits since World War I but have rarely been seen in civilian kits despite their proven efficacy controlling bleeding from traumatic injuries.

Needless to say my interest is based on a recent real-world experience! My eldest son had borrowed my boat a few months ago and was returning it to our mooring along with his 11 year old daughter. Going forward (without shoes) he slipped and gouged a very deep tear into the sole of his foot. It was bleeding profusely and they had quite a challenge to control the bleeding. He was eventually admitted to JHH for surgical cleanup and closure of the wound. The Israeli Bandage would have been perfect for managing this wound.

These items are very effective and quite cheap (I bought mine online for roughly \$8 each) so I urge you to consider getting a few for your boat first aid kit and perhaps even a few for your car(s).

Tony



Monthly Lake Outing - 17th-19th July

A Winter Escape – Campfire at the Duckhole

It took quite a dose of optimism and faith in the weather forecasters to pack up the boat and head out on Saturday morning (18th July) for the CD monthly outing.

Grey skies and drizzle quickly turned into rain squalls and showers as *Rio*, *Double Fun*, *Renaissance*, *Stoked*, *Jodi*, *Kimberly Dreaming*, *2 Dream*, *Wind Chill* and *Equinox* made their way to the Duckhole (officially Birdcage Point) for an afternoon gathering round the campfire.

However, as predicted, by 3pm the skies had cleared, a rainbow arched gracefully across the sky and the on-shore gathering spot was well protected from the cool southerly breeze.

A very enjoyable afternoon followed with great company, lively conversation, delicious food and the odd glass of cheer.

Sunday morning saw gatherings for morning tea on board *Stoked* and *2 Dream* before a gentle sail back up the lake with an obliging following breeze.

Thanks to all for braving the winter weather and for proving that, even despite the bleakest of outlooks, a fantastic weekend can be enjoyed on our magnificent lake!

Maureen



Technical Tip

Recently I have noticed a fair amount of freshwater pooling in my battery compartments. It appears to be tracking in through the cable conduits that run from the mast. This has not happened in the past, so I had a more careful look for possible causes. To cut a long story short I found that the drainage holes in my deck-stepped mast had become blocked and filled the mast to the point that water was overflowing into the cable conduits. A piece of wire twirled in the mast baseplate removed the blockage and delivered a litre or more of water! So – if you find unexpected fresh water anywhere near your mast step, I suggest you check those drainage holes.

Tony



August General Meeting:

Instead of having a guest speaker for the August general meeting we have decided to hold a panel discussion on 'How to cross a coastal bar safely'. Many international blue water cruisers rate the NSW coast as being extremely challenging and frankly quite dangerous. The main reason for this assessment is the number of bars that have to be crossed to reach safe anchorages. Despite the enormous improvements in weather forecasting, web cam coverage and Marine Rescue reporting we still see regular news stories of vessels coming to grief in attempting to cross bars in less-than-ideal conditions. Our panel will take us through the challenges of assessing bar safety and offer suggestions on how best to safely navigate these challenges.

Tony



August On-water Activity - Ferry from Nelsons Bay to Tea Gardens:

Given the vagaries of winter weather on the lake, we have decided to explore a new activity for CD members. Eleanor Cunningham has very kindly offered to organise an expedition to Nelson Bay on Saturday 15 August. The plan is to catch the 'The Original Tea Gardens Ferry' (a delightful and historic vessel) from Nelson Bay to Tea Gardens followed by lunch at the Tea Gardens Hotel. There will be a fixed menu with 4 choices for a total cost (ferry and meal) of \$58.

The ferry will depart from 40 Victoria Parade, Nelson Bay at 11.30am and depart Tea Gardens at 2.30pm. We have invited local members of SICYC (aka 'Shaggers') to join us and encourage you to spread the word amongst past members of the LMYC CD. Please let Eleanor (0416258461) know (ASAP) if you would like to attend as places are becoming limited. Hopefully we will be able to do a bit of carpooling to help get people there and back.

Tony



Cruising Corner

Who has Coastal Cruising Plans to Share?

Are you planning your next adventure?? Let Ken know at kenlibarcher@gmail.com.

"Beyond Cool" with Mark and Carolanne are looking to head to Queensland in June/July 2027 for approximately 4 months.

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



Firepit outing.

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

AUGUST:

10th: General Meeting: Discussion on Crossing Bars.

15th: Outing: Visit to Tea Gardens for Lunch: Eleanor.

SEPTEMBER:

5th: Sail Past Opening Day for LMYC.

14th : General Meeting. Speaker TBA.

OCTOBER:

3rd-9th: Ivan Irwin Lake Cruise: Phil and Eleanor coordinating.

12th: General Meeting. Speaker TBA.

THANK YOU!

To all our contributors this month: Tony Austin, Maureen Seysener,
Angela and Ralph Asquith, Mark Clement.

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

