

FORECAST

Monthly Newsletter from Lake Macquarie Yacht Club



COMMODORE'S MESSAGE

FORECAST – SEPTEMBER 2026

Season Opening Day

Due to forecast strong winds for our first day of racing we decided to postpone the Sail Past for one week. That turned out to be the best decision as the following Saturday was an absolute pearler and what a spectacle as all boats and crew dressed up as their favourite Superheroes. The Flag officers were impressed with the variety of costumes and the overall display. The preparation and work put in by so many along with their imagination made it quite a challenge to pick the winners. The Flag Officers chose So Farr, Willpower and 2 Dream as the winners of the Sail Past. Thanks to Crusoe's and LMYC for providing the prizes.



Australia Sailing Awards

It is with immense pride and honour I report that at last week's Awards held at Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron LMYC was awarded the NSW & ACT Club of the Year (Category A) for 2026. Other finalists were Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club, Cruising Yacht Club Australia, and Canberra Yacht Club. The event was well attended with well over a hundred guests from all over NSW and ACT there to support their nominees in many categories. I quote Australian Sailing

This award recognises, and is a tribute to all, our volunteers, and staff. Including the current and past boards who have supported the development of the Discover Sailing Centre and inter club cooperation we currently enjoy.

The Discover Sailing Centre was developed and is driven by our Sailing Manager Simon Turpin. Simon was recognised at the awards evening winning the Sports Professional Award. Simon is a great asset to our club. His passion and experience certainly contributed to LMYC winning Club of the Year.

Congratulations to others from our area that also won awards. Evan McHugh from NCYC and RMYC Toronto received the official of the year, Connor Radford from Belmont 16's winner of the Youth sailor of the year and Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club received the Sports Promotion award for Sail Port Stephens Regatta.

LMYC Foredeck Union – foredeck training.

We held our first practical training session for this season Saturday morning 26th September. The session was well attended with close to twenty attendees with a wide range of experience including a couple of skippers who wanted to understand "what happens up front" and a couple of very experienced bowmen there to offer their help.

We went through the basics of setting up, gybing, and retrieving a kite. See elsewhere in this Forecast for details in gybing both end for end and dip pole.

Centenary celebrations

*Do you have any suggestions on activities and/or events to celebrate 100th Anniversary?
Pass your ideas onto one of our directors.*

See you around the Club

Geoff Edman

Commodore

Commodore@lmyc.com.au



REAR COMMODORE'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2026

RULES NIGHT WITH DAMIEN BOLDYREW

The Rules Night that Damien presented on Wednesday September 2nd went off extremely well as usual. A big thank you to Damien for doing these presentations for us over the years.



10th SHE SAILS OPEN REGATTA – NCYC

On the 29th and 30th of August Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club (NCYC) held the 10th She Sails Open Regatta using their fleet of Elliott 6s.

LMYC had 2 teams in the She Sails Open Regatta this year.

LMYC 1 - Caoimhe Lalor, Rona Bell and Alexis Henderson.

LMYC 2 - Natalie Butterworth, Eleanor Cunningham and Joanne Jones

The Belmont 16s had a team, Mooloolaba Yacht Club had 2 teams and NCYC also had 2 teams.

The Belmont 16s team of Kim, Ellen, Penny and Beth took out the regatta scoring 22 points. Mooloolaba YC 2 came a close second on 23 points. Mooloolaba YC has a fleet of four Elliotts 6s too, so their ladies are well versed in these vessels.

LMYC 2 came third on 33 points.

The complete results can be found with this link.

<https://app.sailsys.com.au/club/22/results/series/5800/races>



The NCYC fleet of Elliotts were used for the female match racing in the London Olympics of 2012. The fleet of Elliotts were sold to Sheboygan Yacht Club after the Olympics and NCYC bought from there.

LMYC CRUISING DIVISION – IVAN IRWIN CRUISE 3rd to 9th OCTOBER

A weeklong cruise of Lake Macquarie

Morning VHF sked – 09:00 on channel 72

Saturday 3rd October – Sail to Bardens Bay.

Anchor here, or you may wish to try for a marina berth in Trinity Point Marina. \$88 – 12m boat and \$98 – 14m. Contact 0474 012 888.

13:00 dinghy cruise to Lake Petite and surrounds.

17:30 go ashore for Takeaway Pizza from 8 at Trinity. Can land dinghy on beach between fuel wharf and marina. Bring chairs etc and we'll "squat" on the lawn near the fuel wharf.

Link to [8 at Trinity Takeaway Menu](#) or Google search it.

Overnight here.

Sunday 4th October – Sail to Rathmines.

17:30 head to Club Catalina (Rathmines Bowlo) for 18:00 dinner.

19:30 NRL Grand Final kick off. For those interested the Pool Room is a good venue.

Overnight here.



Monday 5th October – Daylight Savings started last night.

Destination Joshua Porter Reserve, Chain Valley Bay.

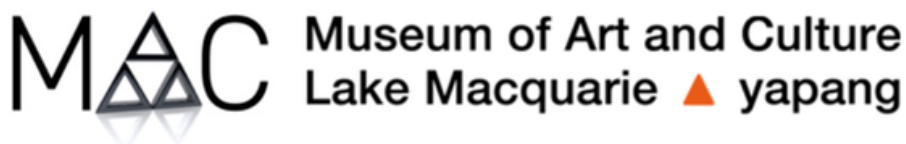
CAUTION: UNDER WATER CABLE REPORTED IN THIS AREA. Not shown on Navionics chart or NSW Maritime Boating Maps. Check location of cable by signs on shoreline. Anchor 200m from cable. (NSW regulation distance.)

Access to park via public jetty NW end of park, or beach near boat ramp SE end. 14:00 Beach Boules in sand on point near boat ramp.

BBQ dinner afterwards. (Bottle Shop is near-by).

Tuesday 6th October – Sail to Speers Point Park/ Cockle Creek area.

Head to MAC Yapang – Art and Cultural Centre. Can check out if Awaba House is ever going to be finished, expected to re-open mid 2026???



Exhibitions as advertised are OF THE EARTH by aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and CLAPSTICK MEDITATION by Adam Manning. Closing time 15:00

16:30 Into the dinghy and up Cockle Creek to Club Macquarie, just past the railway bridge – about 1.8nm (30 minutes). No jetty here, but reasonable access on the bank. Walk up carpark to club.

Dinner here. Bistro 458 opens at 17:30. [Menu link](#)

Happy Hour 16:00 – 18:00

Chefs special for Tuesday – Pasta Night.

Sunset tonight is 18:58 and last light approximately 19:20.



Wednesday 7th October - Free day to make your way to Rathmines for 17:00 Boules in the Park.
(drop into LMYC for Wednesday Race, 14:00 scratch start)

19:00 Pot-Luck Dinner – boats and guests announced in morning sked.

Thursday 8th October - Make your way to Bonnell's Bay and anchor near the jetty. Tony has said that it is ear marked to be removed so it may not be there. Lat s33°6.268' e151°32.234'.

13:00 Go ashore for Trivia in the Park.

16:33 Catch bus to the Bay Hotel Motel for dinner. This is the last bus for the day. 7minute bus ride up the hill, but it's a walk back.



Friday 9th October- Last day today. Anchor in Wangi Bay or tie up to the Workers Club wharf. If you are a member, it's \$10 per night. A bit cheaper than Trinity Point Marina. Try the Stone Grill Rib Eye Fillet - superb and cooked just the way you want or blame the cook.

COURTESY BUS

DECK BAR

OPEN

FRIDAY & SATURDAY
5PM TILL LATE

SUNDAY
12.30PM TILL LATE

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LAKE MACQUARIE
YACHT CLUB

Shooting the breeze with a legend



HISTORY

MIKE
SCANLON

It's not every day you're privileged to shoot the breeze with a legend.

Meet old salt Albert "Alby" Mitchell, 92, and a veteran of the Sydney to Hobart yacht race in which he competed 32 times as either a crew member, tactician, sailing master or skipper.

Besides sailing in 32 Hobart blue water classics, he helped win two of them, sailing on handicap winners - Rival in 1961 and Piccolo in 1976 - for his Lake Macquarie Yacht Club (LMYC) at Belmont.

And from his elevated suburban home, his waterfront eyrie, built by another lake yachting legend Alby Burgin, he can see the thicket of yacht masts at his beloved club in the distance.

Not so visible these days because of building work nearby obscuring some of his view of Belmont Bay (even with a spyglass), is a final navigation marker called "Albert" in his honour.

It's very befitting, as Albert Mitchell began sailing on the lake when he was aged about nine, and besides being a LMYC life member, he's also a past club commodore, serving between 1985 and 1987.

Albert Mitchell has also sailed competitively around the world, once even representing Australia in Sardinia. And in recognition of his long career and a formidable set of sailing skills, he was even asked to fire the starter's gun for the 2011 Sydney-Hobart yacht race. This Boxing Day task is usually reserved for premiers, prime ministers or governors-general.

That prestigious honour marked the 50th anniversary of Rival's success and was entirely appropriate as he's the only surviving crewman from the 1961 Sydney to Hobart handicap-winning boat.

And yet, he's not one to blow his own trumpet, a close relative confided to Weekender just before the retired yachtsman was to be interviewed recently.

"As far as I know, the safety harness on ocean yachts, which is now mandatory, was introduced by Albert and others. They got the idea from coal miners down the pit. And to measure their yacht's speed they once put a bucket over the side," she said.

"He has an amazing memory, but he's shy to express what he's achieved. He's not one to boast, but he has great stories."

Later, meeting Albert Mitchell in the flesh doesn't disappoint as he greets me with a solid handshake and broad smile. "Do you mind if I call you Alby?" I venture to the yachtsman, now a widower, as we are about to explore his life and times.

"Call me anything you like. Albert, Alby. They call me lots of things, including chicken-man," he replies.

Chicken-man?

"It was a nickname I picked up later while racing," the ocean taskmaster remembers with a soft chuckle.

"I was here, there and everywhere. Like a chicken without its head. I had to keep the crew occupied so I kept them busy. Five crew would be on the gunwale (yacht edge)



Master mariner Albert "Alby" Mitchell at his Belmont home with some of his yachting memorabilia. Picture: Mike Scanlon

Artwork by then-Herald cartoonist Lumsdon celebrating the success of the Lake Macquarie yacht Rival in the 1961 Sydney to Hobart ocean race.

with one sleeping below. You couldn't cook with the weather so I fed them Mars bars. It was only four-and-a-half days at sea after all. It wasn't a easy job.

"Ocean racing isn't simple," Alby says.

"It was easy going early on once on a trip to Lord Howe Island but then we got hit by a gale and 10-metre seas. Then we were going backward. We were going 50 metres astern," then about the yacht safety harness story, Alby says the story is true.

"We were the first boat to know of to use safety harnesses in Australia. Maybe there's others, but we were the first probably. We were certainly the one that promoted the idea," Alby says proudly.

The sailor believes the occasion was sailing with Nelson Rundle in his yacht Defiance to Hobart in 1957. It was a wet boat, leaky with the bilge pump working overtime.

"There was no motor and no electrics. The battery failed the first night. There were no lights. It leaked like a sieve because every time our timber boat hit a wave seawater came in. The wave squished water in between the planks as the caulking gave way," Alby said.

The veteran mariner remembered their boat though had lifelines with the crew all wearing miners' pit belt spliced with two-inch sisal rope attached to a steel spring clip at one end. No aluminium in those days.

"Arriving later in Tasmania, Rival made headlines in the Hobart Mercury. We were called the Newcastle coal miners as the newspaper headline read: 'Coal Miners Strapped To Deck'."

"Another time we were near Bass Strait with a patent log (a nautical tool to measure speed) trailing behind telling us how fast we were going. And that's very important in a Sydney-Hobart race," he says.

"There was about 25 metres of line out when all of a sudden we lost it. There was a big pod of killer whales (orcas) behind and they had bitten off four line. Now, in a race down the NSW coast you're always chasing the north-south tropical current off shore so you can gain an extra two to three knots of speed when you get into it."

Losing the advantage of this current needed some quick, ingenious thinking to stay ahead of competitors, who were hot on their heels.

"What we did was to trail a bucket on a line behind the yacht and put a thermometer in it every watch.

"Towards Bass Strait the current divides

to go east and west. So, we'd recover the bucket once in a while to see if it was registering hot or cold water inside. If the water was warm, we'd know we were still in the current giving us some extra speed and didn't have to change course to chase the current," Alby says.

The lake mariner's career started when he used to go sailing as a bailer boy in 16-footers, waiting around Belmont waterfront for aridewith other kids, all with their improvised "bailers" - mum's shallow 12-inch by 12-inch baicanpan.

Around 1943 he became a foundation member of the Belmont VJ Sailing Club, then worked at Stewarts and Lloyds, before joining Lambton B Colliery ("Lambton By The Sea") at Redhead as a mechanical fitter, rising to become its engineer-in-charge, then retiring in 1986.

But sailing always beckoned. His first big break with ocean racing came when he became friends with Nelson Rundle and first sailed in his yacht Defiance to Hobart in 1954. Later, aged 27, he sailed on board the 37-foot (11.3 metre) sloop Rival, co-owned by Nelson Rundle and another legendary yachtsman, Alby Burgin, to go on to win handicap honours in the 1961 Sydney to Hobart race.

Rival was a great yacht built on the cheap by crew and friends, according to lake yachting historian Fred Thomas.

Alby Mitchell readily agrees. He helped with the boat, which was actually constructed by prominent boat builders Les and Barry Steele of Speers Point. Alby and others scrounged enough scrap lead to smelt down in the bus to be made into ingots, then melted down again and poured into the keel mould.

The yacht's hull and coachhouse came from rare teak timbers kept at Sydney's Mort Dock, in Balmain. Interestingly, this teak had been recycled from the historic Australian navy sail training ship, the massive 1886 clipper Sobranon.

The 97-metre long vessel was renamed HMAS Tingira in 1911, becoming a static training ship for naval seamen before being decommissioned in 1927.



"The heavy teak planks were seven to eight inches thick and cutting this seasoned wood caused so much trouble for our steel saw blades back then at Gateshead. Sparks went everywhere," Alby says.

But this story can only scratch the surface of the life of the remarkable Albert Mitchell, who also sailed in the tragic 1979 Fastnet ocean classic in England. This storm took 13 lives and is described often as the worst disaster in yachting history.

In that race, Alby was crewing on the yacht Marloo in atrocious conditions with steep seas. Coming around Fastnet Rock, maybe too close, on the lee shore, they laid the ship's mast into the water and feared pitch-poling, going end over end. The boat survived. Many didn't.

"We finished the race but everyone thought we were lost at sea at first. The trouble with the Fastnet race is that the sea there is very shallow and very tidal. Smaller boats get lost. It's a short and confusing passage, then sailors abandon ship," Alby says. Closer to home, disaster also struck Alby while sailing Ozfire home after the 1992 Sydney-Hobart race. Near Gabo Island and exhausted after steering for seven hours, he wanted a break and let someone else steer the vessel. Soon, a momentary loss of concentration by his relief meant the yacht started shooting down a wave, doing 20-odd knots, then broaching and laying its mast in the water.

"That could have happened to anyone. We were lucky we were OK," Alby says.

Despite having six yachts in the past, including Justus, Albert Mitchell now no longer sails, blaming poor balance and noting the \$10,000-a-year cost of his last yacht. "I've had a lucky life I guess. I've won races and been in the blue water classics so many times. Yes, I've been very fortunate," he says.

LMYC Foredeck Training

In this article I will go through both dip pole and end for end gybing.

Dip Pole gybing, step by step process and important points:

- Requires double sheet & brace and a spinnaker pole that can slide up the mast enough to allow the pole to pass inside the forestay.
- As with all spinnaker setups, make sure the sheets/braces run outside everything especially the stays and lifelines.
- When setting up to hoist the spinnaker pay particular attention to getting the lazy spinnaker sheet over the spinnaker pole. If the sheet ends up under the pole it will make it more difficult to gybe.
- At all times, good clear communications with all other crew is important.
- Preparing for the gybe take the lazy brace forward, ensure the jib is low enough to allow the spinnaker pole to pass under the forestay.
- The trimmers will take the spinnaker up on both sheets freeing both braces as the helm bears away to square down wind floating the spinnaker on the sheets only.
- Mast crew raises the pole up the mast to the required height. Trip open the pole beak and lower the topping lift enough to get the pole inside the forestay. Bowman puts the new brace into the beak pushing the pole to the new Windward side. Ensure that the new brace is not wrapped around the pole end, this often happens.
- Topping lift up and pole down the mast as the new (now Windward) brace is taken up and old sheet is eased.

A couple of tips

It will be easier to control the spinnaker under sheet only if both tweakers are pulled down tight.

Be careful to not bring the pole down the mast until the brace is at the clew, too early and you run the risk of poking the pole through the spinnaker. Skipper will not be happy.

After the gybe, depending on your set-up and whether there will be another gybe, you may need to move the heady over and re-run sheets.

End for End Gybing

Step by step process and important points:

- Can be single sheet/brace where the Windward sheet is the brace.
- Can also be double sheet and brace which makes it easier for larger yachts as the braces are free. Topping lift and kicker need to be eased only, as the pole remains at its set height. Usually can be handled with one foredeck crew at the mast.
- Setup to hoist as dip pole gybing including getting the lazy sheet over the pole but not as important.
- At all times, good clear communications with all other crew is important.
- When preparing to gybe stand on the Windward side of the mast facing forward keeping behind the spinnaker pole or stand forward of the spinnaker pole facing the mast.
- With double sheet & brace have the lazy sheet and the jib sheet over your shoulder.
- The trimmers will take up the spinnaker on both sheets as the helm bears away square downwind floating the spinnaker on the sheets only.
- When skipper calls gybe, remove the spinnaker pole from the mast and release spinnaker brace and put new brace, if doubled sheet and brace, into the new Windward end of the pole, push the pole forward and to the new Windward side. If single sheet setup, grab the new Windward sheet and clip into the pole pushing forward and to Windward.
- During that process you will have stepped around the front of the mast and now on the new Windward side of the mast and behind the spinnaker pole facing forward. Clip the mast end of the spinnaker pole back onto the mast.
- Trimmers will now take up the new brace and ease the old sheet.

A Couple of tips.

- Before putting the new brace into the pole beak throw the jib sheet over the pole. If you miss this step you will need to sort the sheet out later when you drop the pole and spinnaker.
- As with dip pole gybing, pulling the tweekers down will help control the spinnaker while gybing.
- Double sheet and brace is physically easier as you won't be fighting with the loaded sheet while getting the pole back onto the mast.
- Discuss with the skipper and trimmers regarding the timing of gybing the spinnaker with gybing the main sail. Some prefer gybing the main first, others gybing the spinnaker first and others gybing both together.

I hope you find this helpful. They are my own thoughts. If you have anything that you would like to add I would appreciate your input.

If you are on Facebook, there is a Facebook group called LMYC Foredeck Union.

volunteers needed please consider joining

Help wanted at Sailability Toronto Australia. If you have a few hours to spare on a Thursday or Saturday, a wonderful group of people would love to have you join us. Our objective is to provide facilities and personnel to make sailing available to people living with disabilities in the region we serve, doing so safely and giving them an enjoyable sailing experience. A number of our people with disabilities sail by themselves, but most often, volunteer sailors take our clients sailing. We serve both children (from special schools) and adults with disabilities. We need more volunteers, so please consider joining us. Whether you sail or help onshore, it's something you won't regret. Contact Lyn on 0428416660 for more information.



CHRISTMAS PARTY

MON-THURS LUNCH & DINNER

CHRISTMAS 3 HOUR
BUFFET DRINK
PACKAGE



\$75

PP



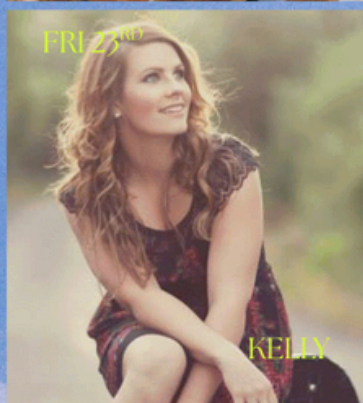
30 guests min
Room hire not included

LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB

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LIVE MUSIC OCTOBER

Fridays 6:30-9:30pm | Sundays 1:30-5pm



FRIDAY TO SUNDAY COURTESY BUS FRIDAY TO SUNDAY COURTESY BUS