



SYDNEY FLYING SQUADRON LTD

Australia's oldest open boat sailing club
Founded in 1891

THE RINGTALE

RACE 16: SATURDAY 14TH FEBRUARY 2026

**SOMETIMES EVERYTHING GOES RIGHT ...
ALRUTH WINS AND LILLY IS QUEEN OF THE HARBOUR**



Photo of the 2026 Queen of the Harbour – Lilly Thompson and all the Queens (Photo and decorations thanks to Barley Stewart)

According to David Swales the “youthful”, or is it “ageless” forw’d hand on Alruth, there are some days when the stars align and everything just goes right. Such was the case on Saturday when the mighty Alruth scored a decisive win in the annual Queen of the Harbour Race. Skippered by Scott Spackman in the absence of regular skipper, Alan Robertson, Alruth won by over 2 minutes from Yendys (Warren “Wazza” Miller) and Scot (David Paget), with her legion of trainees getting better and better, coming in third.

The key to Alruth’s success was, of course, Lilly Thompson, on board to take the crown for 2026.



Photo thanks to Christopher Clear Photography

Throughout the week, the forecasts were confidently predicting a gentle easterly for the race. The cooler day and slow-moving clouds seemed to indorse the forecasts as the fleet assembled off Kirribilli for the traditional Mark Foy handicap start. Presiding in the start boat was our new PRO, Steve Kidson, who had signalled a No.2 Course for the race. A little late to the start due to a mishap boarding the ferry patrons, was the Heritage Fleet vessel, Berrima, hired for a small and exclusive compliment of spectators. Welcomed by volunteer Susan Alexander and hosted by Eloise Clarke and Ben Powell, they piloted the Berrima and provided information on the skiffs (and on the Sydney Harbour highlights).

The Mistake (Jerry Tickner) led the fleet away from her 16 minute handicap. Tangalooma (Neville Turbit) and Scot followed off 14 minutes with Australia (Marshall Flanagan) close behind off 12 minutes. Alruth, on 11 minutes, was soon away off 11 minutes leaving Aberdare (Michael "Flipper" Carter), Australia IV (Terry Stewart) and Yendys on 7 minutes, 6 minutes and scratch respectively, to watch the fleet ahead handle the squirrely breeze en route to the Shark Island top mark.

This year the easterlies seem to hold a fair bit of north in the gusts. The 8-10 knots can quickly become 15 knots and at times 20 degrees or more to the left on the way up to the mark. And this is where Alruth caught the skiffs first away and managed on both upwind legs to make Shark Island in one tack. Others sailed much further, with four or more tacks and soon saw Alruth with a very substantial lead that was never to be headed in the race.

Meanwhile, rounding the Shark Island mark, all skiffs went for starboard poles and their biggest kites on board and enjoyed two excellent three-quarter shy runs on the long legs back to the Kirribilli bottom mark. There the breeze softened considerably on the first rounding enabling the back markers to gain ground.

The second work up to the top mark gave Yendys a chance to pick the shifts and move into second place at the rounding. From there it was a close drag race among the fleet to get on the podium - other than for Alruth who made no mistakes and had "gone". Yendys, with her prominent red and white ringtail and matching kite took off but was only able to reduce the margin to the winner, Alruth, to just over 2 minutes. Scot held on really well to finish third a further 2 minutes behind (and only seconds ahead of The Mistake in fourth place). A4 and Aberdare also were in a two-boat scuffle with A4 triumphing by a mere 3 seconds. Australia and Tangalooma trailed in that order, but with the pleasing result that the entire fleet finished within 10 minutes of each other.

But it was Alruth's day. And as Swalesy reported, a day when everything went right.

One of the characteristics of the easterly breeze is that it makes the arrival of the fleet back at the launching ramp quite a spectacle for the patrons on the deck and verandah of our clubhouse. For some boats, de-powering the mainsail is the way to go. For others, the round up is an occasion for cheers and excitement from the crowd. Or in the case of our Commodore, Marshall Flanagan and crew, a chance to enhance their membership application to the Careening Cove Swimming Club. Metres from the ramp, Australia capsized to end their adventures for the day. Nothing that beer and a rum cannot fix!

The traditional ceremony to crown the Queen of the Harbour followed on a busy Saturday afternoon deck. Congratulations to Queen Lilly and all of the gals for making this annual event a really fun day. Special thanks to Barley for providing the props, and volunteers, Susan and Sharon, for decorating the "throne" creating the theatrical stage to crown the Queen.

Special mention also to Lilly's grandad and Alruth crew member, Leigh Thompson, who seemed to enjoy Lilly's victory at least as much as she did!



Photos above with thanks to Christopher Clear Photography

BOUDOIR OF HAIR

Thanks to Boudoir of Hair located in Mosman for their generous donation for the Queen of the Harbour prize this year (and thanks to Phil Franklin for organising it)

<https://www.boudirofhair.com.au/>



These photos thanks to Christopher Clear Photography





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Thanks to the volunteers who helped with the spectator ferry, Susan Alexander, Eloise Clarke and Ben Powell, as well as thanks to the Sydney Heritage Fleet's Berrima (skipper Ray Jenkinson and crew).
And thanks to our spectacular rescue boat volunteers!!

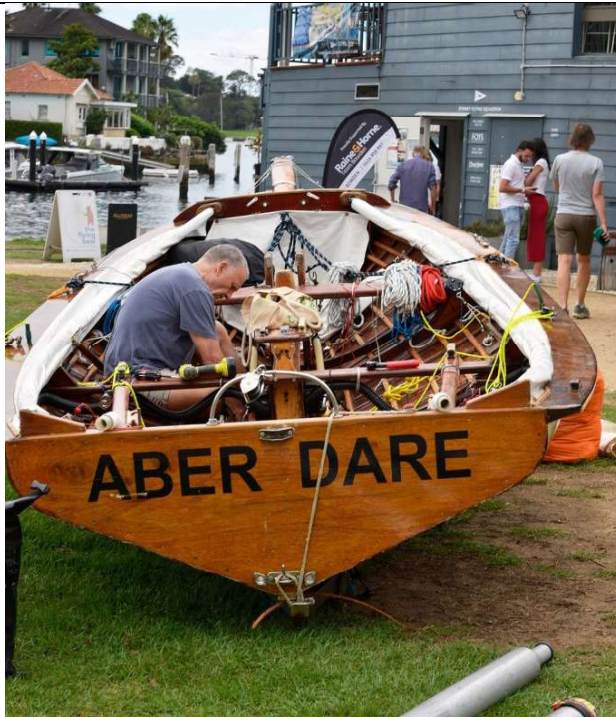
Final results can be found here: <https://app.sailsys.com.au/club/15/results/series/5054/races>

Results for Saturday 14th February 2026 : QUEEN OF THE HARBOUR

Autumn Series Heat 1

Start Time:	2:30PM	Start	Course	Breeze	Strength	Tide
Fastest Time:	Yendys 1:35:31	Handicap	2	E	10-12kt	flood

Skiff	Skipper	Handicap (Mins)	Start Time	Finish Time	Race Time	Handicap Place	Ringtail
Alruth	Scott Spackman	11	2:19:00 PM	4:03:12 PM	1:44:12	2	
Yendys	Warren Miller	0	2:30:00 PM	4:05:31 PM	1:35:31	1	1
Scot	David Paget	14	2:16:00 PM	4:07:24 PM	1:51:24	5	
The Mistake	Jerry Tickner	16	2:14:00 PM	4:07:29 PM	1:53:29	6	
Australia IV	Terry Stewart	6	2:24:00 PM	4:09:48 PM	1:45:48	3	1
Aberdare	Michael Carter	7	2:23:00 PM	4:09:51 PM	1:46:51	4	
Australia	Marshall Flanagan	12	2:18:00 PM	4:11:59 PM	1:53:59	7	
Tangalooma	Neville Turbit	14	2:16:00 PM	4:13:58 PM	1:57:58	8	
Britannia				DNC			
Myra Too				DNC			



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SCOT IS GOING TO PAYNESVILLE

Weekend after next, Jamie Watt is taking Scot down to the Paynesville Classic Boat Rally in Victoria to show off the traditional 18 footer among all manner of classic seacraft. This is a biennial regatta on the Gippsland Lakes of boats more than 25 years old and this year it will be held on the weekend of 27 February – 1 March. Britannia has been a regular participant in previous years (featuring in the Rally's promotional material as well) and this year, it is Scot.

Jamie is looking for crew and supporters to enjoy a fab weekend away. If you are interested, contact Jamie or the club.

SQUADDIE MERCH



- **POLOS (WHITE, BLACK AND NAVY) \$45**
- **RUGBY TOP \$90**
- **CAPS (WHITE AND NAVY) \$30**

SAILING CALENDAR

Date	Day	Historic 18ft Skiffs	12ft Skiffs
21-Feb	Sat	Autumn series Ht2	
28-Feb	Sat	NO SAILING	Sail GP
7-Mar	Sat	Sydney Harbour Regatta and Autumn series Ht3	
8-Mar	Sun		Club Champ Ht3
14-Mar	Sat	Matthew Flinders Cup and Autumn series Ht4	
15-Mar	Sun		NSW Sprint Series Champ
21-Mar	Sat	Port Jackson Champ and Autumn series Ht5	
22-Mar	Sun		Port Jackson Champ
28-Mar	Sat	Club Championship Ht3 and Autumn series Ht6	
29-Mar	Sun		Club Champ Ht4
18-Apr	Sat	Presentation Night 6pm	Pres Night 6pm

**SQUADDIE OPEN LATE ON SATURDAYS
UNTIL THE END OF THE SAILING SEASON**

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