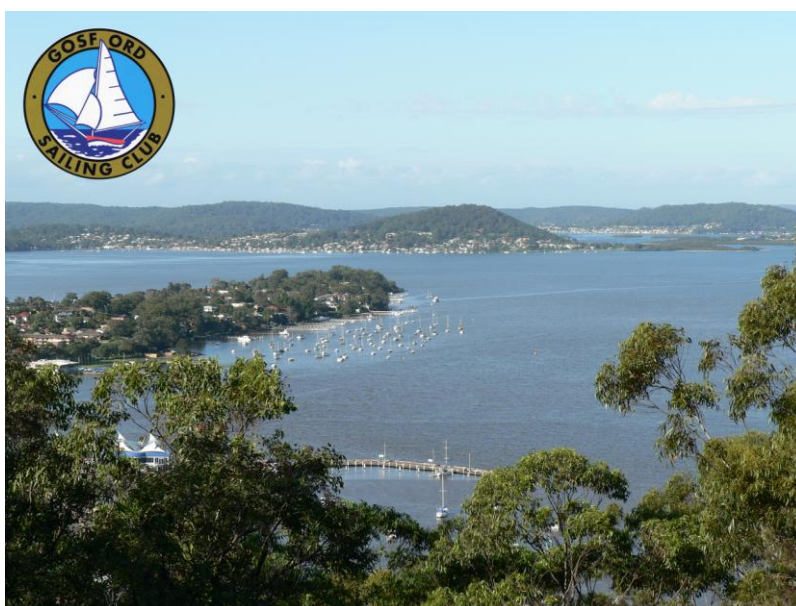


WELCOME TO THE GOSFORD ETHELLS FLEET



Gosford is situated on the east coast of Australia about 1 hours drive north of Sydney. The Gosford Sailing Club is located on the Brisbane Water , a scenic stretch of water surrounded by low hills and joining the ocean through a series of channels connecting to Broken Bay where Pittwater Fleet holds their racing. There is a long history of boat building and sail racing in the area dating back to the 1840's and Gosford Club was established in 1932 as a skiff racing club. The ensuing years saw numerous classes added to the Club and in the 1980's, with the demise of the 16 foot skiffs, Etchells first made their appearance in the area.



The fleet was formed after a number of local sailors bought Etchells to sail in the mixed yacht fleet Sunday races. As the numbers increased the Australian Etchells Association was approached and the Gosford Etchells Fleet came into being in 1987 and at the same time Gosford Club accepted it as a separate class.

Racing developed with a wet sailed fleet, the boats being moored at a number of locations around the bay. The geography of the Brisbane Water is fortuitous in that all points of the shore are only a short sail of 1 to 1.5 nautical miles from the starting area in the middle of the bay. Every effort was made from the earliest days to develop a fleet spirit with barbecues and after race get togethers at the Club. Each winter the boats were craned out and stored on trolleys at the back of a local factory. The annual movements of the boats to and from the water were very much team building and social occasions.

After reaching a peak of 13 boats the Fleet numbers fell away in the late 1990's for various reasons, not least of which was the lack of enthusiasm for upgrading a boat then having to put it on a mooring when the trend with all other fleets was to dry standing. As a result the Fleet, and the Club, made the commitment to develop a small hardstand and crane and this was completed in 1999. This decision proved the salvation of the Fleet with numbers steadily increasing over the years. More recently the completion of the Club's Marina has been a boon to the Fleet with generous mooring areas as opposed to the previous small finger wharf. At we start the 2009-2010 Season we have 9 Etechells on the hardstand but more importantly, in true Gosford tradition, we will have 9 boats on the water in each and every race.

During this period Gosford has successfully hosted the NSW State Championships on three separate occasions, 1996 , 2003 and 2008. In addition to providing excellent racing Gosford gained a reputation for its hospitality on each occasion.

Gosford Club sails in predominantly flat waters with the local topography making the conditions particularly challenging in many wind conditions. The prevailing wind direction is from the north-east and fortunately this coincides with the best course in the bay with a leg length of up to 2 nautical miles. Winds from the south are also common and these blow virtually unimpeded off the ocean, over the low lying estuarine channels and up the middle of the Brisbane Water, these winds inevitably result in some of our most exciting sailing.

The Etechells are now the established senior class in the Club and we share the waters with fleets of Sabots, Flying Elevens, Lasers, MG's, Fireballs and Catamarans. Due to the limited course options the Classes use a common start line with 5 minute intervals between the fleets. There is a genuine challenge for the Etechells sailors to thread their way through the smaller dinghies while, at the other end of the spectrum, the juniors learn to hold their nerve and their rights when confronted by flying Etechells. There is a particular pleasure in being a part of Club that caters to the full range of ages and also a confidence in the future that these same juniors may, one day, move up to the senior fleet.

The fleet continues the traditions established early on in the Club with after race drinks and regular fleet social functions. Our attitude to sailing is well expressed in the Preamble to our Sailing Instructions "The spirit of the Gosford Etechells fleet is to promote, develop and expand the enjoyment of sailing and the class by the exercise of due tolerance and latitude in the application of the sailing instructions." But that is not to say we take our sailing lightly, the racing is hard and fast but we always remember that we are sailing because we enjoy it.

We will never be a big fleet but we take pride in our ability to run a successful Etechells fleet on our small waterway, and any Etechells sailor will get the warmest of welcomes if he chooses to visit Gosford Club.