



Ian Anstee – Sailing Memoir

Ian Anstee: This is a recollection of Ian Anstee's life of boating and sailing. My boating sailing commenced with 3rd Mosman Bay Sea Scouts when I joined the troop's Cub pack in 1951. Cubs' boating activities were very restricted, and it was 1954 before I started sailing in the troop's gaff rigged open timber clinker 12-foot and 16-foot skiffs.

We camped and raced these boats all around Sydney and Middle Harbour. The most memorable experience with these boats was being rescued by a lifeboat from the German freighter Essen following a small hurricane that hit Sydney in the 50s. We were out training for a scouting regatta.

A natural geographic progression from the Scouts in 1958 was to join Mosman Amateur Sailing Club, from where I raced a VJ for one year then two Gwen 12s until 1963. During this time I represented New South Wales in national titles in Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart and Perth.

We raced every Saturday out of Mosman Bay and nearly every second Sunday of these summers we had inter-club races which included racing on Lake Illawarra, Lake George, Keepit and Wyangala dams, North Harbour, Parramatta, Georges and Lane Cove rivers.

I was elected by the Mosman Amateur Sailing Club members as club captain in 1959 for two years, during which time I was also state treasurer and then national treasurer for the Gwen 12 association.

In 1963-64 I travelled and worked in UK, and upon my return I crewed on Lightweight Sharpies for three years before crewing out of Middle Harbour Yacht Club on a Yachting World Diamond Bounty and a Triton.

The 1970s started my ocean racing on a yacht called Basilisk, a Compass 27, as well as harbour racing on Balandra, Margaret Rintoul and Warri until 1976 when I crewed on the East Coast 31 Chauvinist for the year, training for the 1976 Sydney-Hobart in which we won our Division D (also placing 11th overall and winning the Half Ton class).

In 1977 I crewed on Casablanca with John Biddlecombe training for the 1977 Sydney-Hobart but travelling for work stopped this ambition.

My work at WR Carpenter & Company Limited and my family took precedence over sailing for a few years until I was transferred to Fiji for work in 1979 for four years as data processing manager.

Sailing in Fiji was a dream come true when work allowed.

I raced a Laser on Saturday afternoons and on a 42-foot timber yacht Quinquereme on Sundays with the family. Long weekends there were ocean races to Beqa Island and cruising around the coast. During 1980 we purchased a beat-up Hartley 16 which we sailed to coastal islands around Suva for weekends between racing.

In 1982 I crewed on a yacht called Widgeon, a Peter Joubert 'Wombat' design, as the Royal Suva Yacht Club's entry in the (last) Sydney Suva race as it was their 50th year and we fortunately came second in that race.

Returning from Fiji, I raced a Laser for two seasons then bought an old rundown East Coast 31 Ankira which we raced with the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club for 15 years competing in twilights, Saturday Division 7 races and many Bob Brown races to Pittwater.

Some good results ensued with lots of encouragement from Charles Maclurcan and John Jeremy. Our racing was a family affair with our son Stephen and daughter Sally as crew and alternatively steering in twilight races.

We also joined the Coastal Cruising Club of Australia participating in monthly sail-aways. During these years Wendy and I were on Coastal Cruising Club committees where I was cruising officer and treasurer for a number of years.

As we hoped to do some coastal cruising and continue with racing, we purchased the Cavalier 37 Caballero in 1994, cruising and racing her until 2005 when we upgraded to a Cavalier 43 called Mystic which we mostly cruised until 2011.

Our final yacht a Moody 41 (AC) Mystic II was our dream yacht and kept us cruising with occasional races until 2020. During this nine years with Mystic II our trips included Pittwater, Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie, Hobart, Port Davey Tasmania and the Whitsundays.

Due to health and safety reasons in 2020 Mystic II was replaced by m.v. Willo, a Palm Beach 38, which keeps us on the water and is capable of short coastal trips.

I'm fortunate to be invited sailing on club members yachts and that keeps my hand in at yachting.

I continue sailing monthly with radio controlled one metre yachts on Narrabeen Lakes with past members of the Mosman Amateur Sailing Club plus some other old salts.

Sydney Amateur Sailing Club. We joined the club soon after purchasing Ankira and knew several members at the time. Wendy's father Raymond Cane and brother Peter Cane were past members racing a Bluebird Gem and a Daydream Venture. Peter was editor of the Sydney Amateur News for several years.

The Sydney Amateur Sailing Club became our home away from home, being a smaller friendly club, although in the early days it was difficult for Wendy as part of our crew because there were very few female members in the Sydney Amateurs.