





Talking over old times—Cliff Gale and Harry Lloyd.
Photo courtesy J. A. Middleton.

H. S. LLOYD

Harold Septimus Lloyd, despite his position and dignified bearing, was seldom, if ever, referred to or addressed as Mr. Lloyd during his 33 years as a Club member. His cheerful disposition and friendliness were such that he was always known, to old and young alike, simply as "Harry".

He started sailing at the age of 10 when he joined the Parramatta River Naval Cadets and learnt the rudiments of sailing from Harry Shelley, who had founded the group and taught his young charges in his own boat "Waimea".

Harry's first taste of ownership came when he acquired a share in a 6-ft. canvas dinghy called "Umsloppogas", which he sailed until circumstances forced him to temporarily give up sailing after the death of his father in World War I.

His temporary retirement lasted longer than expected because, despite his keenness to get back to sailing, it was not until 1931 that he was finally able to return to the love of his early years.

In that year he purchased the 22 footer "Mercedes" and sailed her with his two friends, Dr. Hamilton Kirkland and John Allsop, as crew. But even with their expert assistance he was unable to transform "Mercedes" into a racing yacht, so in 1933 he sold her and bought the 25-ft. centreboard coach-house auxiliary, "Foam", from Les Buckingham. Les had been racing "Foam" with the Amateurs and Harry decided she should stay with the Club. He became a member the same year and retained "Foam's" number—A46.

He met with immediate success. In his first season he won the Tempest Memorial Trophy, and the following season he won the Second Division Gold Medal.

It was during this season—1934-35—that one of Harry's crew, Harry Maxwell, had a yacht designed for him by A. C. Barber, and built by Billy Fisher. He called her "Koonya" and commenced racing with the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron. Harry Lloyd was so taken with her that in 1936 he bought her from his former crew member, renamed her "Waimea" and registered her with the S.A.S.C. with his own sail number—A46.

1936 was a good year for Harry Lloyd. He acquired a new yacht. He moved up to No. 1 Division, and he was elected Rear-Commodore. The following year he was made Vice-Commodore and in 1938 he became Commodore, a position he held with dignity and success for ten years.

During World War II Harry sold "Waimea" to his life-long friend Eric Shelley, a son of Harry Shelley, and then in 1944 bought the New Zealand 18 footer "Manaia", which he raced for one season in No. 3 Division. In 1947 he found that a sister ship to "Waimea" was available, so he bought her from John Benn and changed her name to "Waitere"—sometimes facetiously referred to as Tram Stop.

Harry was remarkably successful with "Waitere", winning the First Division Point Score on five occasions: 1952-53, 1954-55, 1956-57, 1958-59 and 1961-62. The first three of these five Gold Medals also won him the Jubilee Plate, which he re-presented.

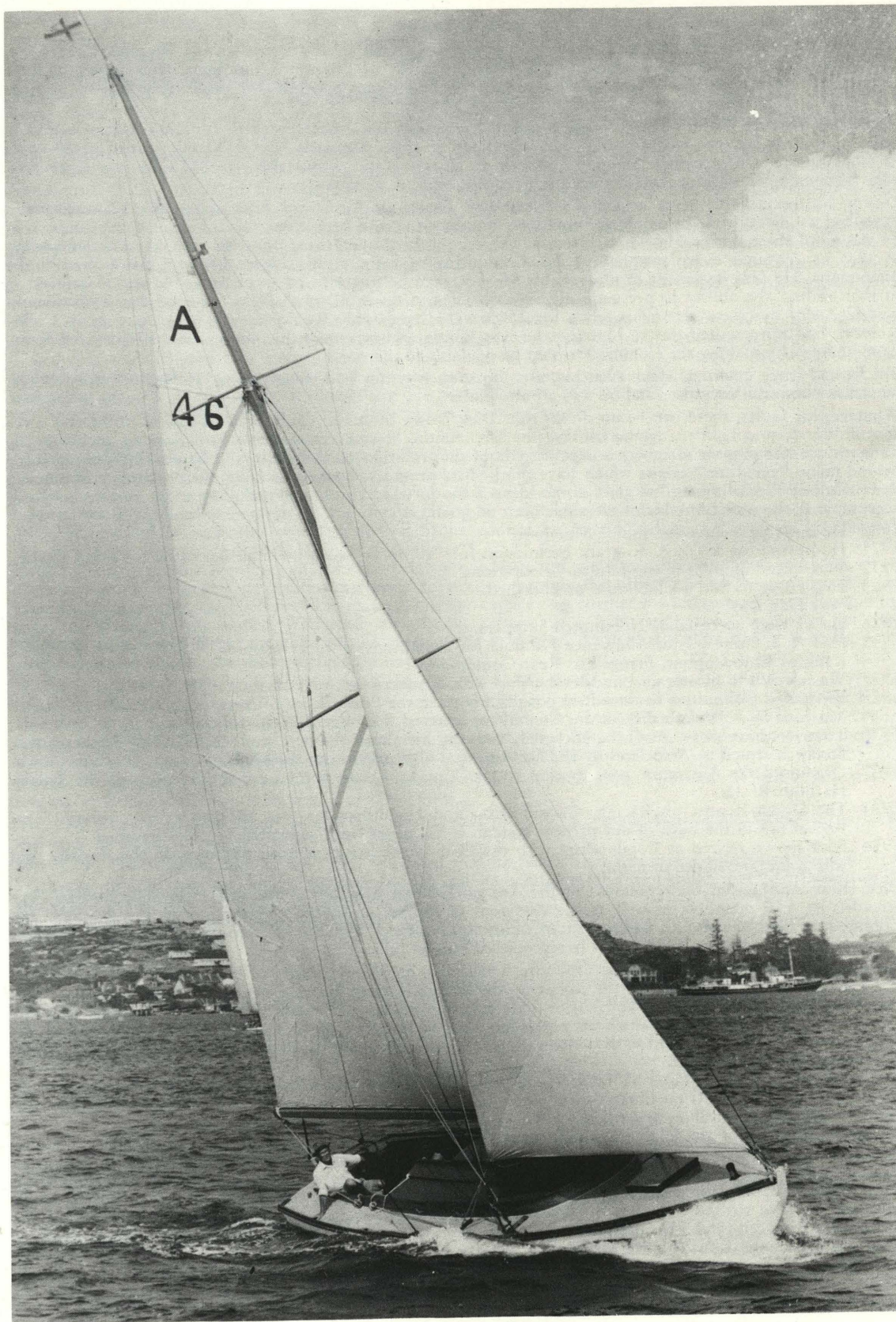
Harry's success was due not only to his ability as a skipper, but also to his persistence and determination. There would be very few skippers with a better record for consistent starts, and probably none with his determination to finish any race in which he started. A typical example was an occasion when his weather rigging parted in a strong westerly blow. He immediately put "Waitere" about, sheltered under Bradley's while temporary repairs were made, and went on to finish the race. He was unplaced, but the points he scored for finishing helped to win his Gold Medal at the end of the season. It is hard to beat that sort of a man.

The Club lost a valuable and enthusiastic member when Harry Lloyd died on Opening Day in 1966.

But although Harry Lloyd has sailed his last race, his memory and his spirit are still very much a part of the fabric of the Amateurs. His memory is perpetuated by the Silver Medals presented each year to the runner-up in each Division, and his spirit still sails with "Waitere", which is now owned and raced by his son Stephen, who was for'd hand for his father in both "Waimea" and "Waitere".

Not only is Stephen emulating his father by demonstrating that the name of Lloyd is still a force to be reckoned with in First Division, but he is also following in his footsteps by being an enthusiastic member active in the affairs of the Club. He has served on the Development Committee. He was Rear-Commodore in 1968-69, Vice-Commodore in 1969-70-71 and is our present Commodore.

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"WAITERE"—H. S. Lloyd at helm,
S. B. Lloyd crewing.

Photo courtesy S. B. Lloyd.

R. H. C. DOWN

Although Richard Henry Charles Down has not been connected in any way with the Olympic Games, he, nevertheless, has something in common with a large number of Olympic champions. Dick Down and the champions referred to all hold records which can never be broken. It is not true of all records that "records are made to be broken".

When the Western World changed over to the metric system the current records for distances measured in miles and yards became records which will stand for all time. Similarly, Dick Down's record of 20 years as Commodore of the Sydney Amateurs became an all-time—and unbeatable—record when the Amateurs' rules were changed to limit the Commodore's term of office to three years.

During his remarkable term as Commodore, Dick Down—it infuriated him to be called Downs—was described as dictatorial, demanding, impatient, domineering and ambitious, and there is little doubt that he was all of these things. He was dictatorial in that he wanted everything done his way. He was demanding in that he required every member of his Committee to support his ideas. Every decision had to be unanimous. He was impatient in that all his ideas had to be put into effect at once. He was domineering in that he had the ability to persuade all his associates to do it "Down's Way" and he was ambitious in wanting, very much, to retain his office for 25 years. He probably would have if his close friend, C. W. Robson, had not pointed out to him that he was killing enthusiasm in his succession of Vice- and Rear-Commodores by making the Commodoreship unavailable to them.

But he had three qualities which even his most outspoken critics had to recognise. He was a hard worker, he was a wonderful organiser and he was a born leader.

Whatever his faults, there can be no doubt that Dick Down built the Club from its lowest point ever after World War I, and held it together during the Depression. He was responsible for initiating many of the things which the present members accept as part of the tradition of the Club, and he was the driving force behind many "one-time" events which have marked its progress. Space precludes the possibility of naming them all, but the following list gives some idea of his forward thinking—including some which were not acceptable at the time but which have since been adopted.

1920 He initiated a drive for Junior Members.

1921 He persuaded S.Y.R.A. to grant permission for "A" to be worn on mainsail of all Amateur yachts.

1922 Was a leading light in the Jubilee Celebrations.

1925 First move to find a Clubhouse or Boatshed.

First Flag Day.

1926 Ladies were accepted as Nominated Skippers.

Had A. J. Stone's Time Allowance Formula for championship races adopted.

Rank of Club Captain changed to Rear-Commodore.

1927 Was elected to Honorary Life Membership with membership at an all-time high of 247.

1929 Persuaded Committee to introduce penalty points in the Point Score to force boats to sail.

Much to Dick Down's disgust the Committee reversed their decision the following year.

1930 Tried to have lady members accepted, but the members rejected the idea. (Lady members were finally accepted as Associates in 1957 and proved a great asset to the Club.)

1932 Organised the Amateurs' contribution to the Aquatic Carnival to mark the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

1933 The Down Report on Racing, Classification and Handicapping was adopted in its entirety. (This Report is still the basis of our present system. It has never been superseded—only modified.)

1934 Dick Down retired as Commodore with the Club membership at 309, 85 boats on the Register and with a credit balance of £500.

Dick Down announced his retirement at the Annual General Meeting in August, 1934. The meeting was attended by 150 members as well as the President of the S.Y.R.A., the Commodore of the R.S.Y.S., the Commodore of the L.M.Y.C. and the Vice-Commodore of the R.P.A.Y.C. His address covered the progress of the Club from 1914 to 1934 and it is reproduced here in full.

"In retiring from the position of Commodore, I take this final opportunity of thanking first the members, not only for having given me all the honours within their power, but for having so loyally accepted and supported the various schemes and suggestions that have been put forward from time to time with the object of advancing the sport which we represent, and the building up of the S.A.S.C. to its present proud position in the yachting world with a name that is honoured and respected in yachting centres within the Commonwealth and beyond.

It is no secret that at the close of the 1912/13 season the affairs of S.A.S.C. were just about awash at dead low tide, with about 120 members on the roll—but with numbers in arrears and no funds in hand—and with a racing fleet dwindling towards a parallel with today's position of the older Sydney Clubs.

In the building up of the Club, to which I have referred, it is my opinion that the admittance of junior members was one of the Club's outstanding successes as it gave a fine body of young enthusiasts a personal interest in the Club. As they attained adult status, an overwhelming percentage has continued in membership, consequently the venture has brought into and retained in yachting many whose interest would, in all probability, have drifted into other sports ashore. My appreciation of the solid support given by the members to myself and the officials who have been associated with me during the twenty years is emphasised because it has enabled the Club to achieve the following successes:

1. A membership of keen sailing men, all of good repute—in excess of 300 good sportsmen.

2. A fine reserve partially invested in Consolidated Treasury Bonds, which produce in excess of £20 per annum towards each season's Prize Fund.

3. The largest Racing Fleet for any one Club in N.S.W. The Fleet, although mixed in design, is mainly representative of good, seaworthy craft and in its present divisions gives interesting and fairly even racing. During my period of office I have also been ably supported in two very vital positions, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary. The Treasurer in office when I was elected was 'Jack' Asher, whose aggregate service was 17 years, and after one or two, including Mr. Plowman, had filled the position, our good friend Walter Rayment carried on, and, not only from the Club's standpoint, but also from the Auditor's point of view, the Treasurer's records have never been better.

The Honorary Secretary's work was principally carried on in the earlier years by Jack Gray, Stan Spain and Tom Sorrell respectively and subsequently by that prince of workers for the Club, Syd. Wenborn. Stan Spain and Walter Rayment have during the period flown the flags of Vice- and Rear-Commodores with distinction and have always been solid workers in the interests of S.A.S.C.

Subsequently, the Commodore-elect came into the picture as a Flag Officer and the amount of work which he has carried out as Handicapper, in the Sailing and Protest Committees and in the preparation of Annual Reports, etc., has been a wonderful help and is an index to the future. The Club is certainly fortunate in having an officer with Mr. Robson's ability and personality ready and willing to give of his not too many spare hours to carry on in the position of Commodore.

The Committee has always been a harmonious body and every member has always been ready to listen to and respect the other's point of view and to pull his weight within his ability and opportunity.

The combined objective has always been the general good of the S.A.S.C. Consequently, where all have been working, each in his own way, for the one main object, there naturally has been no room for 'log rolling' or dissension. My personal thanks are due particularly to Mr. Walter Dendy for his ready assistance on many important occasions.

I would not want to forget the Starters, who have rendered outstanding service during my term, particularly Messrs. F. F. Buchanan, Wenborn, Sorrell, Plowman and others who gave up their Saturdays (in some cases continuously) to carry out the duties of Starter and Judge.

Lastly, because he is still on the job, to Mr. Spence, not only in that he does all that has been done before, but in addition he carries on the details falling to the Racing Secretary and that in itself is no small job. The special interest and work of Arthur Stone cannot be overlooked in the attempts to elucidate the difficulties of applying Rating Rules to the diverse S.A.S.C. fleet.

Finally I would remind members that their officials are human and, therefore, not infallible, and while errors of omission or judgment can and sometimes do occur, there is the other side of the picture, that the officials are giving of their leisure time in an honorary capacity to further the interests of the Club and the sport in which we are joined. Fair and constructive critics are a help, and always welcome, but 'pin-pricking' as a hobby does not make for progress nor is it 'sporty'. I ask that you accord at least the same confidence and help to my successor as you have to me."

At the conclusion of the address the new Commodore—C. W. Robson—was elected and installed. Having taken the Chair he presented Mr. Down with a cut glass spirit set mounted on a silver salver which was inscribed with the dates of his election and retirement, and also with a bound copy of the last Annual Report and Balance Sheet. In his speech he stated, *inter alia*, "that Mr. Down's record of service to the Club would probably never be equalled and could well be a world record".

Mr. L. Waterman, President of S.Y.R.A., said that he had not been able to find any record of one person serving as Commodore for as long as had Mr. Down.

Mr. Paul Ross, Commodore of the R.S.Y.S., stated that the S.A.S.C. would stand as a lasting memorial to the work of R. H. C. Down.

Mr. A. V. Toll, Commodore of the L.M.Y.C., said that he hoped that the advice which had been of great assistance to him and his club in the past would still be available, and he trusted that Mr. Down would still visit Lake Macquarie as often as previously.

Mr. R. F. Graham, Vice-Commodore of the R.P.A.Y.C., invited Mr. Down to race, in future, as a guest with all other yacht clubs.

The Club Flag Officers, both past and present, then spoke in support of the Commodore and the other official speakers and Mr. Down, in a brief reply, said "that his proudest moment in a lifetime of sailing was when he was elected to Honorary Life Membership, and that his Honorary Life Membership Badge was his most prized possession".

In addition to his record with the Amateurs, Dick Down also represented the Club for 30 years on the Sydney Yacht Racing Association—later to become the Yachting Association of N.S.W., and was a Foundation Member of the Middle Harbour Cruising Club, which later became the Middle Harbour Yacht Club.

He died in 1963 at the age of 91.

GALES A Force to be Reckoned With

To the ordinary sailing man a GALE is a wind of force 8 on the Beaufort Scale causing "moderately high waves of great length. Crests begin to break into spindrift. Foam is blown in well-marked streaks along the direction of the wind. Most smacks seek shelter", but to members of the Sydney Amateurs a GALE is a person—a member of one, of two unrelated families whose name has been associated with the Club since 1883.

Before dealing with their individual histories let us list the members of the two families:

A. T. (Alf) Gale, 1883-1943	E. C. (Cliff) Gale, 1910-1969
C. H. (Harry) Gale, 1883-1884	A. E. (Eric) Gale, 1933-
J. W. (John) Gale, 1905-1920	C. M. (Milton) Gale, 1950-1953
	R. V. (Roger) Gale, 1933-
	D. W. (Bill) Gale, 1948-

Alf and Harry Gale joined the Amateurs in 1883, but Harry's interest in sailing was short-lived and he resigned the following year. Alf, however, was an active sailing man for the rest of his life. He enjoyed the courtesy title of "Captain", a name bestowed on him by his friends following twelve months he spent aboard a windjammer in the 1890s. John joined in 1905 and sailed with Alf until his death in 1920. He served on the Committee in 1912.

Alf's first boat was a 22-ft. fishing boat type called "Tempest". He sold her in 1905, when John joined the Club, and bought a 24 footer which he also called "Tempest".

In these two boats Alf, who was a born instructor, trained over forty young men in sailing and seamanship, many of whom he introduced to the Club. Fifteen of his pupils lost their lives in the Great War and after the cessation of hostilities he and John donated the Tempest Trophy as a memorial to their sacrifice. (Refer Stanley Spain.)

Their third boat, which they bought in 1912, they again renamed "Tempest". She was originally called "Jam Satis". Her owner, who had watched her being built, was a Latin scholar and at her launching he looked at her floating for the first time and remarked "Jam Satis" (I am satisfied). The name stuck.

The "Tempests" were all kept at Rasmussen's shed in Rushcutter's Bay and they were perfect examples of having "a place for everything and everything in its place". Alf and John were methodical to a fault and their Sunday sails to Castle Rock, including the ritual of making the tea, followed a set pattern from which they never deviated. They were never known to tow or carry a dinghy.

During the years 1918-19-20, A. P. Mackerras sailed with them, but when John died in 1920 Alf sold "Tempest"—formerly "Jam Satis"—to W. J. Creagh, who changed her name to "Ianthé" and had a coach-house fitted. Alf sailed with Dick Windeyer in "Bluebird" until 1936, and then with Dr. Furber in "Cuthonna" until he finally retired from active sailing.

A. T. (Alf) Gale was Assistant Honorary Secretary of the S.A.S.C. from 1887 to 1889, and Auditor from 1888 to 1889. He became a Life Member in 1922.

E. C. (Cliff) Gale was born in Balmain in 1887, and christened Edwin Clifford by parents who had a habit of calling their children by their second names. His father, Claude Gale, introduced Cliff to sailing at the age of two months and started him on the way to becoming a legend in his own lifetime, and one of the best known and most respected skippers ever to sail on Sydney Harbour.

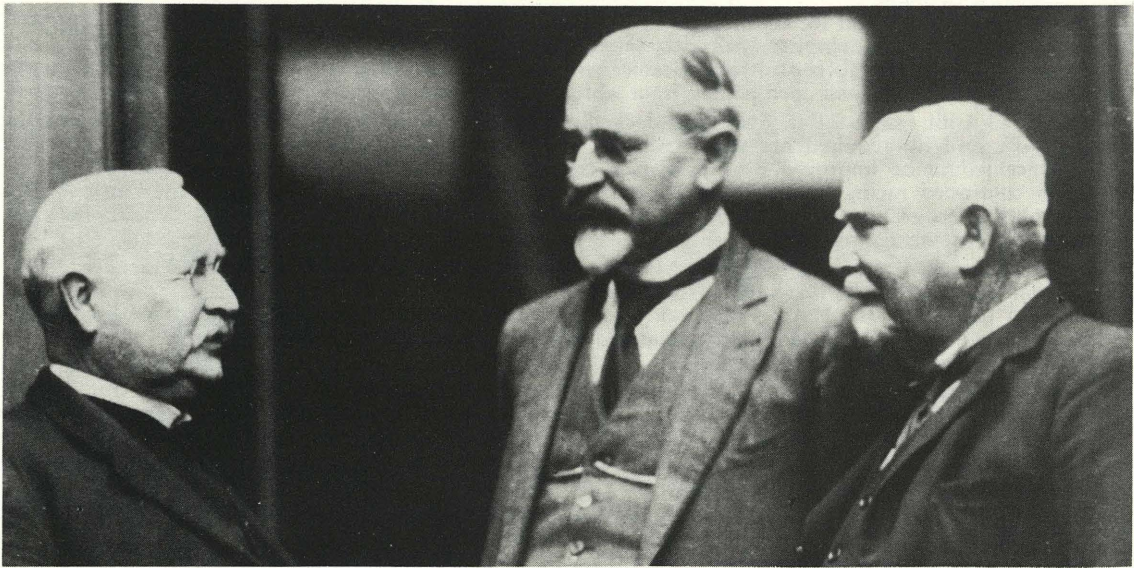
His very early years were devoted to building and sailing canoes made from unbleached calico stretched over a light timber frame, with centreboards fashioned from "borrowed" metal display boards. The one nearest to the required size was that advertising FRY'S COCOA.

He took part in his first canoe race at the age of eight. The same year, 1895, his father gave him an 8-ft. dinghy for his birthday and Cliff, despite his extreme youth, spent long hours following pieces of wood around and watching the way the tides ran round the points and bays of the harbour. The "local knowledge" he gained by these, and later, observations was a contributing factor to his success as a racing skipper in later years.

At the age of ten Cliff was crewing in the 6-ft. skiffs (these boats had a beam of 5 ft.!) and graduated from them to the 8 footers and then the 10 footers. He was bailer boy in the 10-ft. "Crescent" when she won the Interstate Championship in 1901 with Billy Dunn at the helm. These 10 footers were remarkable boats and very difficult to handle. And no wonder. They had a beam of 8 ft. with two tillers about 6 ft. apart. Their masts were over 20 ft., and they carried a 16-ft. bowsprit and an 18-ft. boom. Their spinnaker poles were up to 22 ft. long and it took 5 very agile and athletic crewmen to handle the gear and keep them from capsizing.

From the skiffs Cliff moved up to the snapper boats. These craft were very seaworthy, being copies of an "outside" fishing boat but with a yacht finish and equipped for racing. His two favourites were "Tempest" (after Alf Gale had sold her) and "Mischief".

His next step was up to the large keel yachts—"Jenny Wren" and "Sayonara". Cliff always enjoyed sailing in "Sayonara" as her owner, Paul Ross, was a hard-driving skipper who preferred to "lump" it rather than reef it.



Harry, Walter and Alfred Gale.

Photo courtesy A. P. Mackerras.



"THE GRAND OLD MAN OF YACHTING"
—E. C. Gale at the helm of "RANGER".

Photo Jack Wood.

1908 was a momentous year for Cliff. He turned 21 and he bought a boat of his own—the 17-ft. “Lorelei”, for which he paid £20, complete with two suits of sails. Two years later he joined the S.A.S.C. and commenced his long and successful racing career with the Club. An accident in 1912 put a stop to active sailing so Cliff bought a small open launch from which he could watch others race.

Then in 1913 Cliff saw a 21 ft. 6 in. half-decked, clinker-built boat which took his fancy. She was the “Vagabond”, and he acquired her with a dinghy and three suits of sails for £50. Convinced that her performance would be improved by modifying her keel, Cliff sold his launch, put “Vagabond” in the shed and continued racing “Lorelei”. When the new keel proved to be a success—to the surprise of a number of scoffers—Cliff sold “Lorelei” to Charles Barton and the following season “Vagabond” and “Lorelei” were racing against each other.

In 1914 Cliff married and took his bride, Marguerite, for a honeymoon in “Vagabond”. Marguerite Gale was undoubtedly one of the first women to be seen aboard a yacht in the yachtsmen’s paradise of Broken Bay, Cowan Creek and the Hawkesbury, and she tells many a story of the reaction of other boatowners at this invasion of what they had always considered to be a “strictly males only” world.

Cliff raced and cruised in “Vagabond” for nine years and during those years introduced all his children to sailing. They all sailed from the age of one month in their baskets lashed to the mast under the foredeck. It is also a matter of history that “Vagabond” had never retired from a race and had never been reefed while racing. After “Vagabond” Cliff designed, and had built, two yachts, but neither came up to his expectations and he sold them. The first he called “Vagabond II”, and the second “Wanderer”. The latter was sold to a Mr. Winn, who took her to Lake Macquarie.

In 1922 Cliff bought a boat in Rushcutter’s Bay and named her “June Bird” after his daughter. As with “Lorelei”, he did not sell “Vagabond” until he was sure his new boat would suit him. He was more than satisfied with his choice and “June Bird” has always been known to the Gale family as the “happy ship”.

Cliff raced “June Bird” consistently and with success. He won many races with her and for seven years she was scratch boat in her division. He sold her in 1928. He was Vice-Commodore at the time and had to resign from office as he was no longer a boatowner.

But being boatless did not mean that Cliff was on the beach. He accepted Lex Buckle’s offer to skipper “Hoana”, and in five races brought her back from sixteen minutes to scratch. A report of the racing on 28th January, 1929, read, *inter alia*, “Cliff Gale as skipper of Lex Buckle’s ‘Hoana’ was seen at his best in the blow at the Anniversary Regatta, putting up a remarkable performance. Compelled to allow starts of up to 25 minutes, he won the cruiser’s race with ease.”

In that same year Cliff bought a boat called “Wendy”. But she did not measure up and was sold again a few months later. Next he designed and built “Karoo” (White Cloud) but she, too, was not just right and was also sold.

1932 saw Cliff once again skippering for Lex Buckle. This time in the Fife designed, nine-metre “Josephine”. And the touch of the Master again became evident. “Josephine’s” handicap came down, she started to win races and finally took the point score.

By 1933 Cliff had completed another design and had commissioned Billy Fisher to build the hull. She was a 24 ft. 3 in. raised decker and he called her “Ranger”. This boat looked right, she felt right and she was right. He had incorporated in her design all the good points of all the boats he had owned, designed or sailed in and he was completely satisfied with a boat at last. “This one really is A1”, he said.

“Ranger” carries the number A1 to this day. She is now sailed by Cliff’s son Bill, and is still a force to be reckoned with in her division. The proof of the soundness of her design is the fact that seven other boats have been built off her lines, making her the prototype of a class.

Cliff’s success as a designer is the more remarkable in that he produced all his designs by eye. He had no training and no mathematical background. His method was to build a “bread and butter” or “layer cake” model of pine and cedar, and whittle it down till he had the shape he wanted. Often he would hand his models round to other sailing enthusiasts for comment or criticism during the ferry trip from Mosman to the Quay, and they became known affectionately as “Cliff’s Creations”.

His greatest success was the designing of “Mathana” for the Clark Brothers in 1939. Because of her size and the cost involved in building her he insisted that the finished model be submitted to a naval architect for checking before they started to build. They agreed, so from the model Cliff drew up her plans, made a profile sketch and drew in, again by eye, her spars, rigging and sail plan. This was all submitted to Mr. Blackman, a leading naval architect, who carried out a complete design calculation. His report was that the centre of lateral resistance was slightly out of place, but as the yacht had been designed for overseas cruising, this had no doubt been done to ensure that she would heave-to under sail. He recommended that she be built exactly as Cliff had designed her.

Cliff Gale was made an Honorary Life Member of the Club in 1939, and was elected Commodore in 1948, having served on the Committee for 33 years and held office as Captain, Rear-Commodore and Vice-Commodore.

In 1950, when he retired as Commodore, many members rose to speak in his honour. Among them was the late Stanley Spain who told of an occasion, many years before, when he and Cliff, having beaten the rest of the fleet, were beating to the finish in a howling westerly with nothing between them. Suddenly Cliff’s tiller broke and his boat threw in irons. Stan immediately luffed up and threw a spare tiller to Cliff with a “See if this fits”.

It did, and away they went again, hammer and tongs. Cliff just beat Stan to the finish, but he did not cross the line. He sailed the wrong side of the Starter’s boat and allowed “Mischieff” to get the gun. As Stan said before he sat down, “No more need be said”.



"VAGABOND"—Cliff Gale.

Photo courtesy Mrs. M. J. Gale.

Cliff spent all of his 81 years of life on salt water, 72 of them under sail and 69 of them in active competition. His wins over that period have been estimated at more than 400. His success was due as much to his ability to tune a boat as to sail one. His uncanny ability to look at a boat's lines and sail plan, and alter either or both to improve her performance, amounted almost to genius.

But Cliff was not just a racing man. He has cruised as many miles as he has raced, and over the years he has sailed up every river on the N.S.W. coast. Count has been lost of the number of times he sailed between Sydney and Broken Bay, but it is on record that his fastest time was two hours and his slowest thirty. There is also no record of how many boats he has towed off a lee shore, or how many people he has rescued or assisted when they were in difficulties.

Cliff was always helping someone. Whether getting them out of trouble or offering advice and assistance on some boat or boating problem. No one who asked Cliff for anything was ever refused.

At the Annual General Meeting on the 21st September, 1966, Cliff announced that he was retiring from racing and handing the helm over to Bill. But he continued to sail in "Ranger" up till Christmas 1967.

When he died on the 22nd April, 1968, not only the Amateurs, but the whole sailing fraternity lost a friend, because Cliff Gale was "The Grand Old Man of Yachting" in the fullest sense of the phrase.

Arthur Eric Gale (always called Eric) was born in 1893 and, like his brothers, sailed in his father's boat from a very early age. He graduated through canoes and small dinghies to the skiffs which he sailed with the Lane Cove River Club and the Johnson's Bay Club. He was a foundation member of the Snail's Bay Amateur Sailing Club where he sailed his father's boat, "Swansea", against brother Cliff in "Lorelei".

When Cliff joined the S.A.S.C. in 1910, Eric joined his crew as for'd hand. He sailed with Cliff in "Lorelei", "Vagabond" and "Ranger", and Cliff always claimed that Eric was his secret weapon.

Being a seagoing marine engineer with C.S.R., Eric's sailing was restricted to when his ship was in port until 1933, when he joined the Port Jackson and Manly Steamship Company. But in 1937 he had to give up sailing altogether when he accepted "weekend and holiday shift". From then until he retired he never had a weekend or a public holiday off.

He tells an interesting and amusing story of the day the Manly Ferry "Bellubera" caught fire while moored at Kurraba Point. He and a greaser were alone aboard "Dee Why" which, being to leeward of "Bellubera", was in danger of being involved in the blaze. So they cast off and with Eric at the wheel and the greaser manning the engines, "Dee Why" was moved up Neutral Bay to safety. The Captain, arriving as they moved away, was put aboard by launch and "Dee Why", with Eric and the greaser back at their normal stations, was taken to Circular Quay. By the time they were back at Kurraba Point the fire was under control and the police were in charge, and Eric, with his intimate knowledge of the vessel, was detailed to escort the police in a search for a missing man. After a very thorough search had proved fruitless Eric asked, "Who are we looking for, anyway?" "Bloke by the name of Gale!" he was told. The amazement of the police, when he told them who he was, was nothing compared to his own amazement when he was reprimanded next day for taking "Dee Why" to sea without a Master's Ticket.

When Eric retired from the Port Jackson Company, engineers with a Chief's Steam Ticket were difficult to find and he was approached by two marine bodies who wanted his services. He obliged both and as a result he operated the Pilot Steamer "Captain Cook" for the last months of her career, and also the Show Boat "Kalang" (later "Sydney Queen") until her retirement.

Eric Gale is enjoying his retirement living in Cremorne. He is still agile and would undoubtedly give a good account of himself in an Old Buffers' Race.

Claude Milton (Milt) Gale was one of the first Australians to enlist in the AIF for the Great War. He enlisted in Queensland and his Army number was 86. He always said (perhaps as a joke) that he wanted to live to his AIF number in years. He made it by 18 days.

Milt joined the Club in 1950 and supplied the Starter's boat until he retired in 1953.

R. V. (Roger) Gale, Cliff Gale's second son, sailed in his father's boats till he was six years old, when he took to dinghies and divided his time between Cadet dinghies and 12-ft. skiffs until 1932, when he joined his father again as for'd hand in "Josephine".

But Roger's first—and best—love was open boats, and when he was transferred to Mackay, Queensland, in 1939, he sailed in the 16-ft. skiffs until the War interrupted sport everywhere.

Back in Sydney in 1945, after five years' War Service, he stayed with open boats and sailed in the 16's and 18's, both as crew and helmsman, until 1947 when he again joined the crew of "Josephine" as for'd hand and nightwatch helmsman. It is perhaps significant that with Roger Gale filling these two important roles, "Josephine" won the Montague Island Race.

He stayed with "Josephine" for the 1948 Hobart Race, but his first love was calling, and in 1950 he returned to open boats and sailed a 16-ft. skiff in Middle Harbour for the next three years with some success. Then, in 1955, the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron purchased six Finns and commenced a series of races to choose a helmsman to represent Australia at the 1956 Olympic Games. There were 80 candidates, and Roger was one of the three who went to Melbourne for the final trials. Colin Ryrie was the successful competitor, but Roger had finally found the answer to his love for open boats. He had found the Finn, and he has been involved with them ever since.

From then on Roger has sailed in every State and Australian Championship for Finns and has represented this country in New Zealand.



"GALES"—left to right: R. V. (Roger) Gale,
Mrs. M. J. Gale, E. C. (Cliff) Gale and
D. W. (Bill) Gale.

Photo courtesy Mrs. M. J. Gale.

He is currently President of the N.S.W. Finn Association, having formerly been Secretary and President of the Australian Finn Association. He is also an Instructor in the R.S.Y.S. Junior Sailing Scheme, which was formed some eight years ago. He has also served as a Committeeman with both the S.A.S.C. and the R.S.Y.S. His undoubted administrative ability has been of great value to both Clubs.

Boats are his hobby, and he has inherited his father's facility for modifying and tuning sailing craft. But Roger is also handy with tools and he carries out his alterations without professional assistance.

Roger's son, John, is following in the footsteps of his grandfather and his father. In 1969 he won the State 12-ft. skiff championship in his "Josephine", which he designed and built himself.

Another son, Stephen, served his time as a boatbuilder with Halvorsen's and is also an outstanding for'd hand in open boats. His daughter, Carolyn, sails a Moth and won the R.S.Y.S. Championship in 1970.

D. W. (Bill) Gale admits to a feeling of guilt or "letting the side down" when he recalls his early youth. In the Gale tradition he sailed with his father from a very early age, but he also remembers how disappointed he was whenever the sails were hoisted—it spoilt his fishing.

But luckily for the Gale image, he grew out of this strange obsession and at 11 years of age he began crewing in "Ranger". Also in the crew were Eric Gale and another 11 year old, Geoff McCorquodale. Their introduction to racing might have turned lesser youngsters off for life. They were treated to a 60 knot westerly which had "Ranger's" lee cockpit seat under water all the time they were beating to windward. Perhaps the fact that they won by an enormous margin made it all worth while. In any case Bill, like the rest of the Gale family, was hooked for life.

His sailing was interrupted by the Second World War, but on his return in 1946 he picked up where he had left off and joined the S.A.S.C. in 1948.

Four years later he was elected to the Committee, another two years and he was Handicapper for Division 2, and the following year he accepted the onerous task of Racing Secretary. While Handicapper for Division 2, Bill introduced bold and revolutionary handicapping by giving and taking time in big lumps. It caused quite a stir at first, and a deal of opposition, but Bill's concept is now generally accepted practice in all the Club's divisions.

1955 saw Bill working hard to organise a Bluebird Championship on Sydney Harbour. He was successful and his efforts resulted in the Club forming a Bluebird Division. Bill Gale thus became the father of class racing for Bluebirds as the S.A.S.C. was the first ever to race these yachts as a separate division.

After another trip overseas—this time to the U.K.—Bill returned in 1961 to racing, to the Sailing Committee, and to handicapping. He is, to this day, carrying out all three activities with equal success.

In 1967 Bill skippered the 24-ft. "Sparkle" at the request of the owner. He proved that some of his father's touch had rubbed off by winning the Silver Medal for 3rd Division, and also the Kelly Cup. It was at the end of this season that Cliff Gale announced his retirement, and Bill took over the helm of "Ranger"—with a mighty tough job ahead of him trying to live up to his father.

He made a good start, and proved he was a worthy son of his father, by winning the 3rd Division Point Score from scratch in his second season. "Ranger", with Bill at the helm, was still on top, despite the fact that she was one of the pre-World War II boats in 3rd Division, and was 1½ tons heavier than her average competitor.

Bill doubts if he can do it again—but he will certainly be trying. "Ranger" has been racing with the Club continuously since 1936 and Bill says will continue to race "whilst ever I can hold a tiller". He has also stated that if he can teach or help one quarter of the number of people that his father did, he will be content.

His own family is following in his footsteps, so there will be Gales around for many years to come.

Gales—a force to be reckoned with.

"JUNE BIRD" AND THE COLO

(Mrs. M. J. Gale's own story of the 1927 Easter gale and floods—Ed.)

Having decided on a holiday on our own, we were able to arrange for happy care of our family at home. We planned to leave at daylight on Good Friday.

"June Bird" was provisioned and made ready for the trip, but Thursday evening brought torrential rain and a howling southerly which lasted till Saturday evening.

Sunday dawned with clear skies and rapidly lessening wind so we set off early, our goal being a few of the out-of-the-way places I had not seen before in the Broken Bay-Hawkesbury River area.

The Skipper set sail on the way down harbour, but we found a heavy sea coming in and two motor cruisers turning back as it was too uncomfortable. We joined the fleet at Quarantine, all waiting to get away. Cliff was watching the weather and the sea seemed to be abating so we motored over to Watsons Bay, where I was taken up to the Gap to see long unbroken rollers with no white caps. As I knew by experience that "June Bird" was a good sea boat, I was easily persuaded to "give it a go".

I was given the tiller, while the Skip took a reef down and made everything secure for a rough trip. I was handed a packet of chewing gum, not one of my vices, and told to head straight out a bit, then to go through Blue Fish. I knew we'd get "a bit of a dusting" but was promised a good trip from Manly on.

Cliff kept very busy leaving me with the tiller and chewing gum, which one chews madly when a big'un comes at you; great for relieving tension. Try it sometime!

As promised, when we got off the Cardinal's Palace, the turbulence eased and our little ship settled down to the long rolling seas like the little lady she was.

With sail tied and the boat listing to a comfortable angle, I was able to see the lights come on along the shore. From my position at the Skipper's feet, snug with rug and cushions, the moon was high in the sky and I cannot imagine a more beautiful scene.



"RANGER"—E. C. Gale at helm, D. W. Gale
and G. McCorquodale crewing.

Photo Lovell-Simons.

When off Palm Beach, we noticed heavy clouds rolling up from the S.W. and when we rounded the "Joe" I again took the tiller while Skip took the sails down and stowed them. He expected more bad weather, so up went the awning and we made a quick passage over to The Basin. We anchored in close to Bonnie Doon and were enjoying a cup of tea when down came the rain and howling wind.

Next morning we donned oilskins and walked up to the Trig Station from where we could see the seas piling up and no sign of a break, so we thought—Refuge for us.

On our way out, we saw two very distressed old chaps in one of the old small yachts, I think, maybe, the "Jenny Wren". They were off the rocky end of Mackerel Beach; their anchor wasn't holding and they were in the teeth of the southerly. Going as close as we dared, Cliff shouted that we'd come round again and throw a rope, which they must wind around the mast several times and both hold on. They sprang to obey instructions and we hauled them away to safety. We saw that their anchor was secured and left them close in to Bonnie Doon, with a loaf of bread and strict instructions to stay put till the storm passed.

We'd a quick trip to Refuge with rising tide and following wind. We were amazed to see the cliff face completely covered with roaring water, every vestige of sand being washed from the beach. We anchored in the right hand corner, letting out plenty of line and a stern line to a rock ashore, which kept us comfortable through a night of wind and torrential rain. Our dinghy being full of water in the morning Skipper must have a bath in it. I firmly refused his ecstatic invitation to join him, preferring a basin of warm water.

The weather was improving, but very cold, and while I prepared a hot breakfast, Cliff rowed to pay his respects to Mr. Paul, a dentist, who owned a roomy old-style launch. They had a radio and were listening to news; the "Riverina" had been wrecked on the south coast, many boats were adrift in the harbour, a couple of pontoons at the wharves had been sunk and some of Manly's pines had gone down. Also there was a request from police asking if anyone had seen two old men in a yacht who had not been heard of for several days, relatives being anxious about them. As we knew that these were the two left sheltering at The Basin and also anxious to let our folks know we were O.K., we lost no time in getting away to Brooklyn. Arriving there we found all lines down and little hope of getting a message through. We persuaded the one policeman to leave a note on the first train coming down, to be given to police at Central requesting them to advise both families of our safety.

We bought freshly baked bread at the bakery and set off up river. Turning off to go into Berowra Waters, we pulled into a small wharf, where we went ashore and were served the largest platter of oysters and the best I've seen either before or since. This man had a contract to supply someone in the city and wasn't allowed to sell any to be taken away. We were certainly favoured guests that day!

We went off, after the inevitable swapping of tales, up to the head of Berowra Waters, to find still another chap and his wife, known to Cliff. They had the boatshed and had a cosy dwelling. We had a cup of tea there and later they came aboard for drinks and more anecdotes.

Next morning at sun-up there was the usual chore of rubbing the varnish work with a chamois and after early breakfast off to our goal, the Colo. We were astonished to see the main river running "a banka". Opposition always a spur to "the old man of the 'June'", we set off against the rushing, brawling river. When we got out to mid stream the debris was appalling; melons, pumpkins—some of which we collected—sheep, cases, a garden seat, many small trees and lastly a cow. I was greatly relieved when we saw the entrance to the Colo. We found it much easier going and very little debris.

It was very beautiful with the water right up to the trees—many of them autumn tinted. By this time I was a bit apprehensive as there seemed to be no place for a safe anchorage. Cliff was sure we'd find a spot round the next bend. There were a few, a gorgeous red tree lured us on and when we reached the bend, the river had narrowed so suddenly we decided to turn back. As we did the engine stopped and bingo!—we were ashore amongst the fire-blackened trees. In a wink, the Skipper threw the anchor down stream to keep her head that way. In a few minutes a man appeared over the high bank opposite. He called "What the — are you doing up here? You're seven miles above navigation and if you don't get out now, you won't for another seven years". He started to strip off coat and shoes, followed by a big, strong youth, his son. They began swimming towards the boat, but were taken downstream by the strong current, so Cliff had to go in the dinghy to their rescue. By the time they were all aboard, the boat was listing to starboard, a fine sand-bank building under her. The men were fine workers and obeyed instructions without question and before long we had blocks and tackle up the trees. The dinghy was lashed to the boom with me in it and the boom swung out over the side, with orders to hop out and down into the cabin when we came off and the boom swung in. After much pushing and pulling and heave-hoing we came off with a rush, the boom swung in and I was down in the cabin very smartly. The mast broke down the tops of branches as we cleared and ropes and blocks were left hanging there.

We went down stream in fine style with water power, till we suddenly pulled up. Our farmer friends said, "Don't worry, it's only the old two-rail fence." Dad hopped over onto the top rail and pushed us off. The run of water had eased considerably and as the tide was rising Cliff was able to land our good Samaritans, who assured us they had indeed enjoyed the excitement and were only worried about Mum as they would be late for lunch. As they had quite a way to go, they set off at a brisk trot.

We carried on a little way till we found a little bay on which had been built up an outcrop of rock, and was just the place to anchor. The Skip then went back up the road a couple of miles to get our gear left up the trees. I did my best to clear up the ship a bit, but was too nervous to wash down the decks, as every now and then a rush of water would make her tremble and strain at the leash.

I'd never seen "a wild man from Borneo", but I thought this surely must be he when I saw the apparition coming down the road, black with soot and bare back bleeding from scratches, with ropes, etc., draped over his shoulders. I don't wonder that a passing motorist refused him a lift.

We soon had the "June" ship-shape, and after a hot wash and clean clothes for us, we made for the main river, where we were glad to see the riverboat "Erina" tied alongside a wharf unloading supplies and ready to take on farm produce for Palm Beach and Newport. We knew the Captain and we gladly tied alongside



"JUNE BIRD"—The Happy Ship—Cliff Gale
at helm with Mick Aspinall and J. Best crewing.

Photo courtesy Mrs. M. J. Gale.

and bought eggs, fruit and tomatoes from the farmer. The Captain gave us some bacon when he heard that we had not had time to think of food since early breakfast. What a meal that was! The sun was setting as we sat down and we were ready for bed as soon as we cleared up. We decided we'd had a really fun day! Early next morning as the tide was high and the river much clearer we went up to a farm we had visited before where we were always able to get cream, milk and fruit. We had promised to call sometime and take them for a run up river.

They were glad to see us and we took them for an outing. We enjoyed a picnic lunch and the kids had great fun in the dinghy. We left for home next morning, as we felt our folks may be worried if they had not received our message. Incidentally, they had not!

We anchored under Barrenjoey that night after a most uneventful trip and morning brought the hoped for nor-easter. We had a lovely run home and soon after we came alongside the boatshed, the two boys came flying down with their billy-cart; their bright, happy faces made us feel it was well worthwhile giving up a couple of days of our holiday. They had great fun loading up the pumpkins and coming down for another load and we were happy to finish our holiday on the harbour with them.

This was just one of the many exciting incidents in my life with E.C.G. His instant reaction and unfailing knowledge of what to do gave me complete confidence and many a laugh over our various scrapes together.

H. M. SHELLEY

Harry Mansfield Shelley has been variously described by people who knew him as a humanitarian, as a disciplinarian and as a humorist. In fact, he was all three; a blend of qualities which produced a strong and likeable personality, and made Harry Shelley an unforgettable character.

It was the humanitarian in Harry that prompted him, in 1900, to found the Parramatta River Naval Cadets, using his beautiful home, "Glendoon", at Henley as headquarters. He provided all the equipment, including the boats. He built and maintained a large camp on his own land at North Harbour, where he took the entire company on a training exercise each Christmas and Easter. The lads had to provide only two things—their uniforms and the desire to learn.

It was the disciplinarian in him that made him such a success as Scoutmaster to the group, which grew from 14 foundation members to over 100 cadets. There were many who, later in life, thanked Harry Shelley for their early training.

The success of the venture, and the soundness of the training the boys received, was shown in a very strange way in the year 1946. In that year the Commodore of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron gave a dinner to the Flag Officers of all the Sydney Yacht Clubs. Four of his guests—Dr. Tom Furber, Commodore R.P.E.Y.C.; Harry Lloyd, Commodore S.A.S.C.; D'Arcy Shelley, Vice-Commodore R.S.Y.S.; and Keith Adams, Vice-Commodore M.H.Y.C.—were all Foundation Members of the Parramatta River Naval Cadets.

The Foundation Members did their early training in sailing and seamanship aboard Harry's old half rater "Waimea", which he had been racing with the Amateurs through the 1890s, but in 1902 he had the 25-ft. half decker "Vailele" built at Henley by Fred de Russett and Walter Verrell, and the cadets had a new ship.

"Vailele" raced with the Club for six years under Harry's ownership, though she was raced as often by Fred Doran as by Harry. She was sold to Judge Fitzhardinge in 1908 and re-named "Mia", a name she retained when later purchased by Gordon Allard. She has been referred to as the original of her type.

Harry replaced her with a new "Vailele", also built specially for him. This new ship was 28 feet overall and had a coach-house. She was a comfortable, solid seaboat, somewhat similar to the "Sea Rover" type, but Harry kept her for only three years, replacing her in 1911 with a motor boat called "Sea Scout".

In 1920 he built a new "Sea Scout", a 48-ft. sailing craft of what was, in those days, known as the "cruiser class". Harry used her constantly throughout the twenties, and she was well known both on the harbour and in Broken Bay. She was laid up during the Depression and never used again by the family.

About the year 1926 Harry moved from Henley to Hunter's Hill, from where each morning Fred de Russett would run him to the City in a 22-ft. cedar boat called "Porpoise", putting him ashore at Erskine Street Wharf. "Porpoise" was originally a sailing cutter which had been presented to Harry by the parents of the boys of the P.R.N.C. He had her converted to a launch when the group disbanded in 1925.

The humorist in Harry Shelley was never far from the surface. And his lifelong friend and sailing companion Fred de Russett always rose to the occasion whenever Harry decided to put on an impromptu "act". A typical example occurred one Christmas on a popular beach in Pittwater.

Harry, walking along the beach, let out a yell as he stubbed his toe, then hopping to the water's edge he hailed Fred, who was still on board.

"What do you want?" shouted Fred.

"Bring some gelignite. That's the third time I've stubbed my toe on that rock and I'm going to shift it."

"What did you say?"

"BRING SOME GELIGNITE. I'M GOING TO BLOW UP THIS ROCK."

With the whole bay now alerted, as he had intended, Harry began scooping out sand from the side of the rock, and by the time Fred arrived he had the beach almost to himself. The few who remained to watch saw Fred produce the stick of "gelignite", a length of "fuse" and a "detonator" from his pocket, and stared—still unbelieving—while Harry assembled and placed his charge. But when he lit the fuse and scuttled for cover with Fred, they took to their heels and ran.

When, after thirty seconds, nothing had happened, heads began to appear, and Harry, sure of his audience, went cautiously back to his "bomb", cut a piece off the fuse and re-lit it. Again nothing happened, and this time both Fred and Harry went back. They dug the thing up, examined it carefully, shook their heads in disgust and, with a shrug of their shoulders, strolled off up the beach—leaving their "bomb" on the rock where anyone brave enough to take a closer look could see it was made up of a sausage, a piece of cord and a copper tack.

Harry delighted in this type of joke. But Harry was not a practical joker. He was a humorist, whose only desire was to amuse people—and the more people the better. Particularly if by amusing them he could bring strangers together and start them talking on common ground. He firmly believed that a lack of communication was to blame for much of the world's trouble, and was convinced that most misunderstandings could be avoided if people with different ideas would just talk to each other. He always deplored the tendency of some Club members to sit in groups with their own division at monthly meetings. He believed the divisions should apply only to racing and had no place at social gatherings. Ideas should be shared with everyone, not just immediate competitors, and to encourage this he proposed holding handicap races between the divisions.

It was because he saw such value in sharing knowledge and passing on experience—particularly to the young—that he was prompted to found the P.R.N.C. for the benefit of the youngsters in his area. And it was for the same reason that he supported any other organisation which was doing a similar job. He accepted the vice-presidency of practically every sailing and canoe club in Sydney, covering each with an



"WAIMEA"—Harry Shelley.

Photo courtesy E. Shelley.

annual donation, and assisting all of them in any way he could. He did it for years. It was his way of helping to train the boys of today to be the men of tomorrow.

The sport of sailing and the youth of his day both owe a great deal to Harry Shelley.

Harry had two sons—D'Arcy and Eric—and it is said they started their sailing careers in the bathtub, from where they graduated to a dinghy named "Bluebell". After "Bluebell" they became otherwise occupied and did not sail again until the thirties, when Eric started again with "Wingi", and then bought "Waimea" from Harry Lloyd. D'Arcy also came back into the sport with a 25-ft. raised decker called "Quest", which he sold after the war and bought "Jane Kay".

D'Arcy's son, John, also started sailing in a dinghy from Hunter's Hill, but acquired the 18-ft. coach-house yacht "Spindrift" in his early twenties and raced her with some success in Third Division. In the late thirties he built one of Sydney's first Jubilees. He called her "White Maa" and when war broke out he sold her to Stuart Doyle who took her to Pittwater. After the war John did not immediately buy another boat, but spent the next twelve years crewing—six years in "Thetis" and six years in "Wendy". Then in 1967 he built a Lazy E—"White Maa II"—in which he taught his own sons to sail.

These lads are the fourth generation of Shelleys, and it is reasonable to suppose that having cut their teeth on a mainsheet, and been brought up from an early age on the ideals laid down by their great-grandfather, they will be worthy descendants of Harry Shelley—humanitarian, disciplinarian and humorist.

MERRINGTONS Of the Sydney Amateurs

The name Merrington has been so closely associated with the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club over a number of years that when the name is mentioned to any sailing man who is not a Club member, the reply is invariably "You mean the Merringtons of the Sydney Amateurs?"

Who else would we mean? Because the name has become almost synonymous with the Amateurs. You might mention the Amateurs without invoking thoughts of the Merringtons, but you cannot mention the Merringtons without someone mentally coupling the name with the Amateurs. History has recorded several similar couplings: Kitchener of Khartoum; Lawrence of Arabia; Clive of India, just to mention a few. And now—The Merringtons of the Sydney Amateurs.

There have been other names associated with the Club for much longer periods, but none has been listed for such a long and continuous period in some official capacity as the name Merrington.

It was started by Arthur Mayfield Merrington—"A.M." to his friends—who joined the Club in 1928, having been nominated by Seppie Stevens.

"A.M." was a big man. He stood 6 ft. 2 ins. and weighed over 15 stone. From his early youth he had been messing about in boats. His boyhood days were spent on the shores of Snail's Bay as a crew member of his father's 16-ft. sailing boat. His own first boat was a canvas dinghy which he built himself. He graduated from this to a 14 footer called "Kestrel".

After selling "Kestrel" he sailed as mainsheet hand in J. Moffett's "Murcia" when she won the Port Jackson and State Championships.

His next—and favourite—boat was the 18 footer "Merlin". He watched her being built by Hardman in Snails Bay, and skippered her to many victories in the Balmain Amateur Sailing Club, the Mosman Club and the Sydney Flying Squadron. He was forced to sell her when a bout of rheumatics put a stop to his racing activities.

In 1918 "A.M.", with his young family, moved to a waterfront residence on Huntley's Point, where his sons grew up in an atmosphere of boats and boating. "A.M." could not sail open boats. But his love of salt water was too strong to be denied. So he bought the launch "Gumnut" and watched others race.

His one regret was that he could not teach his sons to sail in his own open boat. But he did the next best thing. He interested them in sailing model yachts and was to see them win several Anniversary Regattas in "the models". He became President of the Drummoyne 2-ft. Model Yacht Club and spent a lot of time organising model yacht racing and training youngsters in the art of the sport.

But he never lost his interest in open boat sailing and for five years he was President of the 16-ft. Skiffs Interstate Committee.

In addition to his interest in sailing, "A.M." was also very active in the world of rowing. Before his illness he had been an active racing member of the Glebe Rowing Club for 14 years, and he maintained his interest long after he had given up competitive rowing. He was President-Patron of the Club for 50 years.

Although "A.M." was resigned to never again sailing open boats, by 1928 the urge to again "feel a tiller" was so strong that he purchased the 26-ft. raised decker "Wanderer" and joined the S.A.S.C. "Wanderer" was an early Cliff Gale design, which "A.M." bought from Mr. Winn of Newcastle.

He skippered "Wanderer", A38, to many successes over the years. He won the Anniversary Regatta for S.A.S.C. boats for three years in succession—1933-34-35. Also the Don Taylor Memorial Race, Pittwater Regatta, in 1935, and numerous Club events up to the outbreak of the Second World War.

In 1946 "A.M." took delivery of a modified Julnar class yacht, designed by the late George Griffin and built by Jim Perry. She was oregon planked over spotted gum frames, and it is interesting to note—26 years later—that the 35-ft. hull was delivered for only £700 (\$1,400).

Being 68 years of age when she was delivered, "A.M." named her appropriately. He called her "Eventide", and under his old number A38 she raced very successfully until he retired in 1954. He died in 1957 at the age of 79.

Ernest Joseph Merrington ("A.M.'s" eldest son) was born in 1911 and spent his early years sailing models. His first experience of active sailing was with his father in the 18 footer "Merlin".

His first independent command was a small sailing dinghy, which he later sold and built a 15-ft. clinker, centreboard canoe.

He joined the S.A.S.C. in 1929 and won his first Gold Medal in 1934 when he skippered his father's yacht "Wanderer" to victory.

In 1934 he commissioned J. Lucas to build a 21-ft. three-quarter deck yacht which he called "Thurloo" (camp by the water). She was a Bermudan rigged, modified English Bembridge Class boat, and cost him a modest £115 (\$230). She performed well and won her share of races, but Ernest outgrew her and sold her to Arthur Prigge in 1938.

Then, in 1945, Ernest made history. He commissioned young Alan Payne to design him a steel yacht. It was to be the first steel yacht on the S.A.S.C. register, but it was also the first yacht ever to come from the board of Alan Payne. And it was one of the first yachts to have the mast stepped on deck. Although designed to 38 ft., "Thurloo" was originally cut off at 35 ft. to comply with the S.A.S.C. limit, but had 3 ft. welded onto her stern when the rule was abandoned.

Her launching in 1946 coincided with Ernest's election to the Committee, and since that time HE HAS NEVER BEEN OUT OF OFFICE!



"WANDERER"—A. M. Merrington at helm
—a family outing.

Photo courtesy J. C. Merrington.

That's right. Ernest has served the Club continuously for 26 years. He has been Committeeman, Rear-Commodore, Vice-Commodore, Commodore, Chairman of the Sailing Committee, Chairman of the Protest Committee, Delegate to the Sydney Yacht Racing Association, Delegate to the Yachting Association of N.S.W., President of the Australian Yachting Federation, and still a member of the Board of Directors. An impressive record indeed. A record which would perhaps seem to indicate that Ernest was one of those dominating, forceful characters with a superiority complex who love the limelight.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Ernest Merrington is the living proof that the quietly spoken word is more effective than the bellow. Ernest has that strange quality which compels people to listen, even though he speaks softly. And he does speak softly. In all his racing career, including the 1960 Hobart Race when "Thurloo" was hove-to for 24 hours in a sixty knot gale, Ernest has never been known to raise his voice. And yet nobody in his crew—or even in his presence—has ever been in doubt that Ernest was in command, either of the ship or of the situation. He is the perfect example of how quiet confidence in one's own ability can inspire confidence in others, and to crew with Ernest Merrington or to serve under him on a committee is to know that one has met a "born leader".

He was elected to Honorary Life Membership in 1958 after his eight year term of office as Commodore. Ernest married Mary Robson, daughter of C. W. Robson, another S.A.S.C. Commodore, and they had three sons and a daughter. Over the years they have all crewed with their father in "Thurloo". David and Robert both bought Finns after the Melbourne Olympic Games. They acquitted themselves very well but both have temporarily retired from sailing. Stephen has crewed with his father constantly for many years, and Joyce has skippered "Thurloo" to victory in a Ladies' Race, proving that her touch was as good as her mother's who sailed Walter Rayment's "Snowdrop" into first place in a similar race in 1933.

The Club lost a keen supporter when Mary Merrington died suddenly in 1959.

Dianne and Lynne, the daughters of Ernest's second marriage, are real little sea nymphs who are fast learning the ways of a ship under sail from a gentle but thorough teacher.

Arthur William Merrington (Bill) took over the helm of "Eventide" when his father retired in 1954 and is still sailing her to this day.

Like his father, Bill has continued to win races. He won the Club's Gold Medal for 1st Division in 1958-59, and the Kelly Cup at the end of the same season. He won his second Gold Medal in the 1967-68 season.

After winning his last Gold Medal Bill said: "It amazes me, with the enormous extensions of 'knowledge' in hull design and sailmaking, that 'Eventide' can acquit herself so well against far more modern yachts. Particularly as she is adequately equipped with comfortable accommodation for cruising, and has installed an 8-hp Stuart Turner engine".

Bill first joined the Club as a junior member in 1932, but allowed his membership to lapse during the economic troubles of the 30s. However, he continued to crew in "Wanderer" and rejoined in 1946 when he transferred to "Eventide".

Bill was elected to the Committee in 1958, became Vice-Commodore in 1959 and in 1960 he was elected Commodore. He held the rank of Commodore for the next four years, and they were vital years for the Club. It was during Bill's term of office that the Clubhouse was acquired, and we were lucky to have a man of his calibre at the helm during those difficult days. He was an energetic worker and a progressive thinker who always kept the members informed of what was being done and what had to be done, and he gained their complete confidence. This confidence was amply demonstrated when he called an Extraordinary Meeting and told them how much money was needed to purchase the Green Street property. They subscribed or donated the lot.

"This trust and response from the members was the proudest moment of my time as Commodore", said Bill. When he retired as Commodore in 1964 he was made an Honorary Life Member and elected to the Board of Directors. He has served on the Board ever since.

Bill's daughters, Barbara and Frances, have both won Ladies' Day Trophies, and his son, James William, has sailed in "Eventide" from the time he could crawl. He has crewed with his father since the age of ten and will soon be a contender for the Nominated Skippers' Race.

John Cossor Merrington grew up in an atmosphere of boats and boating and at the age of ten began serious sailing in a 9-ft. clinker dinghy.

With this boat he became a Foundation Member of a Club at Huntley's Point, of which his father was the first Patron. It later became the River Sailing Club.

As the Club grew John changed to other boats and ultimately became the proud owner of a 12-ft. skiff which he raced consistently until 1942, by which time the River Sailing Club had over twenty skiffs and VJ's racing on the Parramatta River above Gladesville Bridge.

In 1942 he bought his first 16-ft. skiff, "Cynisca", and joined the Greenwich 16-ft. Skiff Club. Over the next twenty years he not only owned and raced such champion boats as "Meteor" and "Viking", but he also took a very active part in the administration of both the Club and the N.S.W. 16-ft. Skiff Association, of which he was State Treasurer from 1957 to 1962. He was made a Life Member of the Association in 1962 when he moved up from the skiffs to his first deep keel yacht.

That same year he bought the "Jolie Brise" from the estate of the late Dick Moore and renamed her "Warana" (Blue Skies). He joined the S.A.S.C. at the same time and retained her old number A37. He engaged David Fraser to reconstruct the deck house, restep the mast on deck and convert her from gaff rig to a mast head bermuda sloop.

"Warana" races regularly with the Club and has won her share of races. She has been placed second in the 1st Division Point Score.



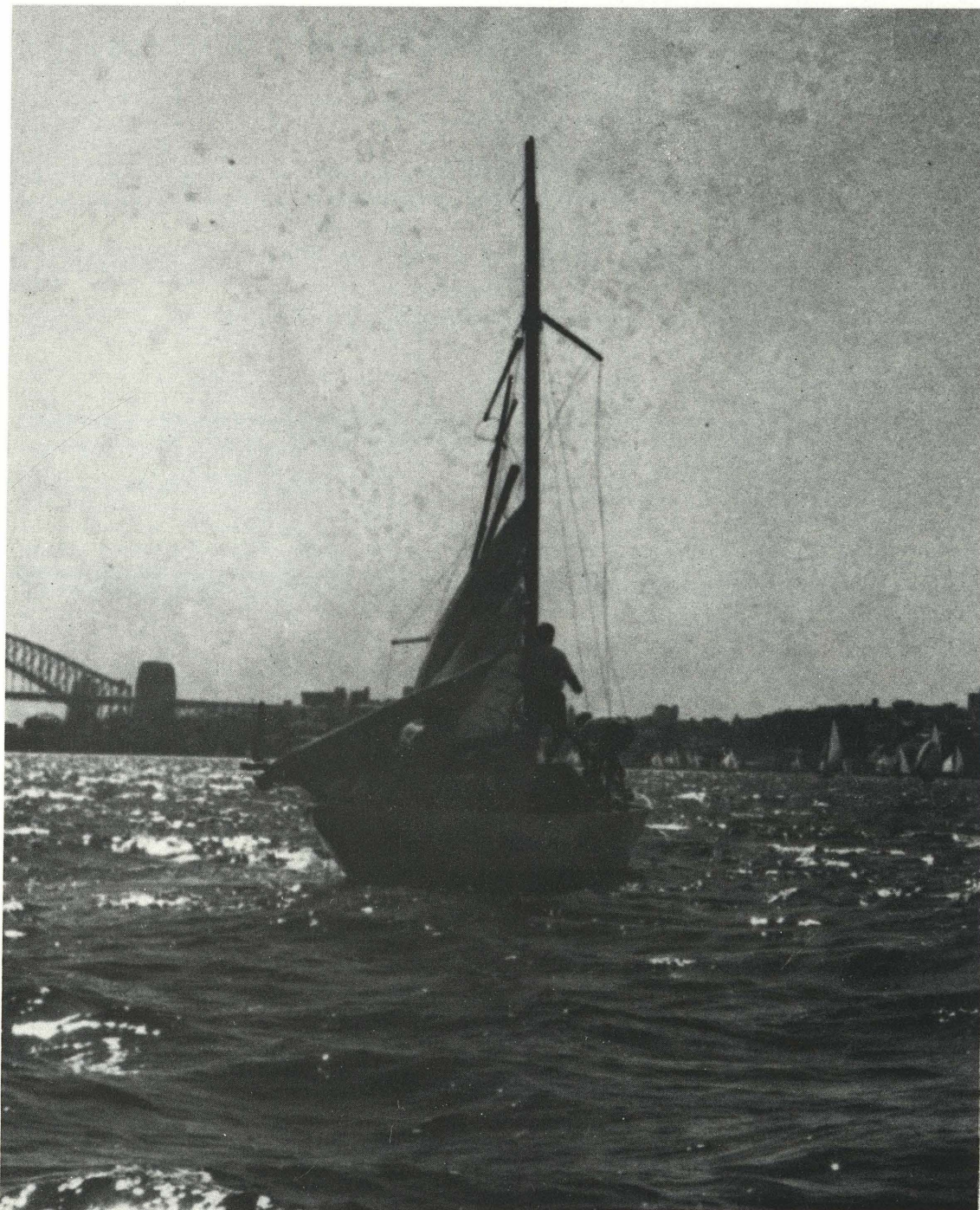
"EVENTIDE"—A. W. (Bill) Merrington at helm,
B. Hislop, J. (James) Merrington and G. Walker
crewing.

Photo: Photo Patrol.

John's three children, Peter, Jennifer and Wendy, like all Merringtons, were born with a certain amount of salt water in their veins.

Peter has sailed and raced all types of boats and in 1969 won the 12-ft. Skiffs Upper Harbour Championship. He is at present overseas. Jennifer is also keeping up the tradition and for the last two seasons has won the Hunter's Hill Sailing Club Championship. Wendy is being taught the rudiments of the sport by her father and sails her own Manly Junior.

With five grandsons and seven grand-daughters following in "A.M.'s" footsteps it should be many years before there is not a Merrington of the Sydney Amateurs on the Club Register.



Struggling home—"EVENTIDE" after her second dismasting.

Photo courtesy A. W. Merrington.



"WARANA"—J. C. (John) Merrington at helm,
P. Knight, I. Hamilton, Dr. J. Nield and
R. Johnston crewing.

Photo: Photo Patrol.

TO HOBART IN "THURLOO" 1960

The Official Programme of the Sydney-Hobart Race, in all subsequent years, describes the 1960 event simply by listing 30 finishers and two retirements, and stating that it started in a light nor'easter, followed by several days of light, favourable breezes which turned to south off the Tasmanian coast and continued until the finish.

A factual report without doubt, but perhaps a little over-simplified. For a start it fails to mention the fog, which covered the whole south-east coast of Tasmania and separated the navigators from the novices. And there is no mention of the fact that the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club was represented for the first time.

The entrant was Ernest Merrington's 40-ft. steel sloop "Thurloo", and her crew were all members of the Club. Ernest took with him Geoff (Joe) de Tores and Geoff Piper of his regular crew. Roger Hopkins sailed as navigator, and the writer (David Rayment) was signed on to make up the numbers.

Although "Thurloo" had competed in a number of minor ocean races over the years, this was her first major event and a lot of work was needed to fit her out to C.Y.C.A. standards. Pulpits, life-rails and navigation lights had to be fitted above decks, and below, a chart table, a two-way radio and a gymballed galley were high on a long list of requirements. We were busy boys during the weeks preceding the race.

On Boxing Morning I joined the ship at 7.30, having picked up a copy of the Sailing Instructions from the C.Y.C. on the way from home. With all the last-minute jobs to be attended to they were put aside to be read later. And that, as you will learn if you read on, was a mistake.

With 32 boats milling around at the start, Ernest decided to cross at the leeward end of the line, to keep clear of the ruck near the Starter's boat. And it paid off. "Thurloo" was first away, crossing, as Roger said, "between the smoke and the bang", and fifth round South Reef behind "Kurrewa II", "Solo", "Astor" and "Archina".

And what a perfect day for the start. The nor'easter was 8-12 knots, the sky was clear and the sea, after several days of calm weather, was almost flat. Our spinnaker was set and drawing by 12.10 and settling down on a course of 180 degrees (compass) we were on our way.

The first Radio Sched was at 1300, and brought us our first bit of trouble. We could hear everybody else, but nobody else could hear us. The second time round "Lauriana" said she could hear us but not read us. Later, with the aid of wires, globes, torch batteries, perseverance and witchcraft, Roger located a broken wire in the mike, which he replaced and put us back in business. Roger is a handy man to have around.

By 1500, when Roger and I (the Port watch) left the deck for our watch below, the fleet was well spread out with "Thurloo", doing a steady 6 knots, at the tail of the leading bunch. Another group was well astern, and a third further out to sea. Identification was virtually impossible.

The system of watches was three hours on and three hours off with Joe, who did the cooking, being attached to the Starboard watch. Roger and I divided our three hours into half hour tricks at the tiller. We found the short stretches the best way to combat drowsiness, particularly on an overcast night when concentrating on a compass course can be pretty tiring. A clear night is a very different thing, for then you can hang a star in the rigging and follow it happily along with only an occasional glance at the compass to make a slight correction for its progression across the sky.

All through Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday the perfect conditions stayed with us as we sailed steadily down the coast, marking off our progress by bearings of the prominent points. Everybody wanted to be in on the pilotage, but Roger trusted only his own work. And rightly so. I remember young Geoff coming below with the hand-bearing compass and saying to Roger:

"Cook's Pigeon House is bearing 280. Can I lay it off on the chart?"

"O.K.," said Roger, "but don't forget the Variation. Use the centre scale."

"That's an old chart", I interrupted. "That Variation is not dead accurate."

"But it's dead accurate enough, isn't it?" asked Geoff!!

There was constant interest during those first three idyllic days. We were always in sight of at least one other competitor. There were bearings to be taken and laid off. After each Sched there were positions to be plotted and compared with last time. Sail trimming kept us busy, as the breeze, though always favourable, was also variable. The only discomfort was the unmitigated heat during most of the day, but the early mornings and the evenings were quite beautiful. And the nights were warm and balmy—and very romantic.

But nothing lasts forever, and shortly after dark on Wednesday the breeze began to haul ahead until it was broad on the Port bow and freshening. The spinnaker pole was shied right for'd, sheets were hardened in, and soon "Thurloo" was heeling for the first time since squaring away round South Reef. When the Starboard watch relieved us at 9 p.m. they wore safety harnesses for the first time.

The breeze stayed in the sou'east all night, but there was very little sea so it was quite comfortable. And then, at 4.30 in the morning—just when Roger and I were in our deepest sleep—there came two calls from the deck:

"Hey, you fellows. Take a look at this." Joe's voice.

"All hands. Get the spinnaker off her. Quick." The Skipper.

We were out like a shot and up on deck before the others had reached the halyard.

It was just daylight. But grey. And in the south, extending right across the sky, was a copy book southerly cloud roll. It was a beauty. And looked exactly like the photograph in the Pilot Book that frightens every yachtsman in Sydney. We knocked the spinnaker off, dug out the roller reefing handle and waited. But nothing happened. The cloud roll passed harmlessly overhead and another took its place—and another—and another.