

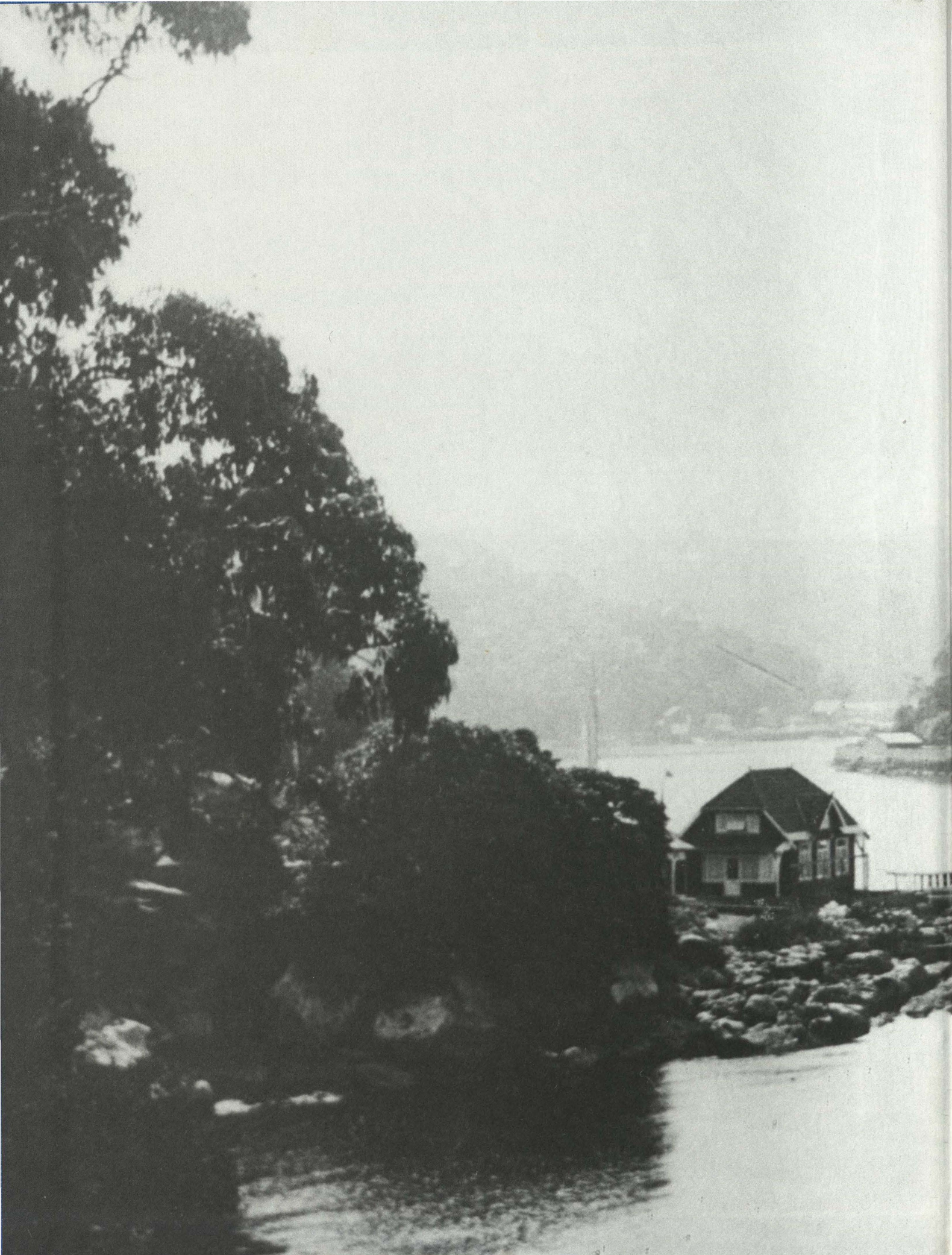


THE AMATEURS



The Second Century Begins
1972–1997





The Amateurs

The Second Century Begins
1972-1997

The Amateurs
The Second Century Begins
1972–1997

Compiled by Members of
Sydney Amateur Sailing Club



Edited by
John Ferguson



MARITIME HERITAGE PRESS
SYDNEY

First published in 1997 by
Maritime Heritage Press Pty Ltd
80A Queen St
Woollahra NSW 2025

© Sydney Amateur Sailing Club Ltd

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

The amateurs: the second century begins, 1972-1997.

ISBN 1 876059 02 8.

1. Sydney Amateur Sailing Club (N.S.W.) - History. 2. Boats and boating - New South Wales - Sydney - History. 3. Sailing - New South Wales - Sydney - History. 4. Yacht clubs - New South Wales - Sydney - History. I. Ferguson, John R. (John Raymond), 1937-. II. Sydney Amateur Sailing Club (N.S.W.).

797.12560609441

Typeset by Ian MacArthur Book Production, Hornsby
Printed by Ligare Printers, Riverwood, NSW

Contents

Foreword	vi
Introduction	vii
Editorial Note	viii
1. The First Century 1872–1972	1
2. The Spirit of The Amateurs	11
3. The Clubhouse	23
4. Racing	32
5. Cruising	62
6. Social Events	78
7. Some Boats and Sailors	95
Appendices	
Office Bearers and Directors of SASC for Season 1997/98	133
Patrons	134
Trophies	135
Yachts and Owners	139
List of Members	141
Office Bearers of SASC 1972–97	143

Foreword

It is a sad confession for the Patron of a sailing club to make, but I am no sailor. Perhaps that is the reason why I read the first draft of this book with such intense interest and admiration. It covers a wide range of experience, from a gripping account of the 1979 Fastnet to the romantic idyll of "The Wrong Way Home from Hobart".

The inclusion of the word "amateur" in the Club's title is a little misleading. It may have derived from the distinction to be made between the amateur and professional fishermen who encountered one another at Blackwall, under what is now the Spit bridge. The amateurs' Blackwall Sailing Club was, in a sense, a precursor of the present Club. I do not know whether there was in 1872 a professional sailing club from which the new club was to be set apart. Perhaps the title was influenced by the early type of craft favoured by those who formed the Club. They were called "fishing boats", but those who sailed them did not do so for professional fishing, but for racing.

At all events "amateur" cannot be regarded here as denoting any lack of skill or commitment, as "The Search for *Pacific Breeze*" thrillingly makes clear.

Racing at sea is highly competitive. It involves (and this is plain even to a landlubber) a contest between highly developed equipment and between those with the nerve and skill necessary to direct it. But, above all, the competition takes place in an environment which exerts a significant influence on the outcome. Opposing crews battle not only each other but the sea, and the sea may turn out to be the most powerful and uncompromising opponent of all.

I believe that sailing, alike with other sporting activities which include a spice of danger, develops a remarkably close comradeship and sense of community. It tends also to foster courage and endurance and, although some of the Amateurs may dispute this, a sense of poetry. Many of the pieces in "The Second Century Begins" carry an evocative feeling for the beauty and wonder of the world with which sailors live so closely.

These attitudes convey qualities of responsibility, perseverance and imagination which makes good citizens of which our society can be proud. I offer my warmest wishes to the Amateurs for a second century as successful and honourable as the first.

His Excellency The Honourable Gordon Samuels AC
Governor of New South Wales
Patron Sydney Amateur Sailing Club.

Introduction

The work to produce this book has been shared amongst the members, because it is largely a collection of their sailing experiences over the past 25 years from our centenary in 1972. It has been difficult to obtain some of the stories as many members were reluctant to appear forward or self-promoting. Persistent pressure, largely by Vic Dibben, helped overcome this reluctance, or where shyness or stubbornness won, the articles have been written by others.

This book is not intended to be a detailed chronological history of the past 25 years, but rather a collection of accounts, stories and experiences that can be shared by members and crews. It is hoped that the stories in each chapter will give an insight into the nature of the Club, its activities, its members and the Club ethos of self help. I think what comes through strongly is the benefit of a membership which shares a common interest in yachts of all ages and types, and in their racing and cruising activities.

Without the enthusiasm and guiding hand of our editor, John Ferguson, the book would not have been possible. I would also like to thank all those who contributed with articles, suggestions, research and encouragement.

Fred Bevis

Commodore Sydney Amateur Sailing Club.

Editorial Note

This book continues the story of the Amateurs from 1972 into the first 25 years of its second century. *The Amateurs*, the story of the first one hundred years was published in that year and is now quite difficult to obtain. It is a marvellous account of the formation of the Club and its subsequent activities. The first chapter of this book draws on it for background information; and historical snippets have been included as marginal notes by way of a reminder of the Club's heritage.

To compile this book much research has been done by a number of members. Old records and files have been reviewed, photographs have been acquired, donated or specially taken, and many members have contributed articles either directly as a response to our request or inadvertently from our burrowing among the records. All the subjects requested by members have been incorporated in one way or another. The response has been so enthusiastic that the book has grown somewhat from the original specifications. In the spirit of the Amateurs this book has been written by the members.

Sometimes articles were received on one topic by two members. These have mostly been edited together. We did receive a number of articles on events such as the Sydney-Hobart race which for reasons of space could not all be included. The thrust of the text is to reflect the variety of the Club's activities over the past 25 years; racing, cruising and social. The same criterion has been applied to photograph selection so that a range of boats and member profiles reflect the activities and spirit of the Club. We have not attempted another chronology of committee reports; these are all available in the archives anyway.

It has been a privilege to have had the opportunity to work on this book, to have had the assistance of a keen committee and the generous support of so many members. The outstanding features of this Club throughout its history have been the cooperation, the generosity, the unfailing good will, the unselfishness and the great sense of fun of its members both past and present. This continuing spirit will be obvious from the contributions to this book.

John Ferguson

Chapter 1

The First Century

1872-1972

The year 1872 was a quiet one on the international scene. Ulysses S Grant was re-elected President of the Union, The Brooklyn Bridge in New York was opened, Bertrand Russell and Roald Amundsen were born and Jules Verne published *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Japan introduced compulsory military service, England played Scotland in the first International Association soccer match, electric filament lighting was installed at the St Petersburg docks, and the proclamation of Don Carlos as Charles VII of Spain led to civil war.

1872 was a much more eventful year in Australia! The Prince of Wales theatre, Sydney, burnt down – for the second time. The first sheepdog trial, held at Forbes, was won by a collie named Kelpie. Ethel Turner, the writer, was born, and the population of NSW was 534 194.

In February the brig *Maria* with 70 prospectors ran onto a reef near Cardwell, North Queensland where 21 were drowned, 14 killed by Aborigines and among the survivors Lawrence Hargrave was rescued by John Moresby in HMS *Basilik*.

In March tin was discovered at Stanthorpe in Queensland, the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, was gutted by fire and Ralph Milner took 1000 sheep, the first overlanded stock, from South Australia to the Northern Territory.

In May, Thursday Is. and other islands within 60 miles of the mainland were annexed to Queensland. June saw Sir Hercules Robinson appointed Governor of NSW, while women at Clunes in Victoria, attacked Chinese miners and drove them out of town.

In July A G Scott, aka Captain Moonlight, was sentenced in Ballarat to 11 years gaol for the Egerton bank robbery, and in August the Overland Telegraph Line was completed.

On Tuesday the 1st October in Tom Keary's hotel on the corner of William and Brougham Streets, Sydney, a meeting culminated in the formation of Sydney Amateur Sailing Club with four boats and twelve members.

These were:

Capt. J H Amora R N (Commodore)	<i>Inca</i>
C Bransby (Vice-Commodore)	
C B Boake	<i>Zingara</i>
W B Melville	<i>Firefly</i>
F Bremner	<i>Cynthia</i>
J B Holdsworth	
S H Hyam	
J Newton	
W J McLeod (Hon. Treasurer)	
J S Garling (Hon. Secretary)	
B Backhouse	
H Clarke	

There is a legend which led to the foundation of the Club. The story was passed down to Jim Middleton by his grandfather, James Middleton (1850-1935).

Captain J H Amora R N





James Middleton



James Arthur (Jim) Middleton was chairman of the historical committee who produced *The Amateurs for the centenary* in 1972

Text on the plaque near the Spit Bridge

BLACKWALL
SITE OF THE FIRST
AMATEUR SAILING CLUB
ON SYDNEY HARBOUR
1865

It goes back to the 1860s when that part of the Harbour, then known as Blackwall, was without doubt the best place to catch bream and snapper. Blackwall is the area immediately on the starboard side travelling west under what is now the Spit Bridge. The distance from the city and the time involved precluded visitations by amateur fisherman except at the weekend, but those amateurs and professionals alike who constantly made the journey from the southern end of the harbour became known as the "Blackwall Boys". Over the years the practice evolved of having boat races to pass the time on the long run home from the fishing grounds. Races were initially individual challenges to destinations such as Shark or Clarke Island, Bradley's Head, Pinch Gut, Blues Point, or any other place where two or more boats were returning to anchorage. Slower boats were given a start; this start was not in minutes but was, "down to the point", "till you get around the Spit", or "till you are out of sight"! There were bets for shillings between crew members and pounds between owners and skippers.

In 1862 when the Australian Yacht Squadron was formed these fisherman, more out of devilment than anything else, began to refer to themselves as "The Blackwall Sailing Club". This informal group flourished for about 10 years. Its membership was never known, its subscriptions were nil, it had no overhead, no books, no records and no costs. Its rules were simple; you were a regular, you made your wages, sailed your race and paid your debts. Friendship, the helping of one another, the love of a "flutter", honesty and the common bond of Blackwall kept it together.

It was not until October 1872 that these open boat enthusiasts with a sprinkling of yacht owners who had been in the habit of meeting in Rose Bay and having the occasional race, met together and formed the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club. Captain Amora and Mr. Bransby were appointed Commodore and Vice Commodore respectively and Messrs. J S Garling and J McLeod become Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. Tom Keary's hostelry was the headquarters of the Club for about a year but later, owing to the distance that the North Shore and Balmain members had to travel, there being no trams in those days, the meeting place was changed to the Oxford Hotel and again, a couple of years later, to Aarons Exchange Hotel.

During the first few years of the Club's existence almost all the open boat sailing races with the exception of the Annual Regattas, were carried out under the auspices of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club. Perhaps the most important classes in those days were the 19ft and 22ft boats and the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club was responsible in no small measure for the degree of popularity which these two types of craft enjoyed in the 70s and early 80s. The Club originally fostered a class of centre-board boats called fishing boats.

Typical was the *Curlew* type which was primarily designed for fishing and general pleasure purposes. It was described in "The Anchor" of February 1912 as a boat of a fine, wholesome type that had justly earned the reputation for seaworthiness and handiness. It was said to have considerably more "power" than the ordinary fishing boat, whereas in her prototype rowing was equally as important (before the advent of the motor engine) as sailing. The boat was of fairly heavy construction and built of varnished cedar with Kauri combings and Kauri moulding at the gunwhale. Principal dimensions were- length on deck 22ft; waterline 22ft; maximum beam 8ft; beam at waterline 6ft 10.5 inches; draught with centre-board down 5ft 8 inches; freeboard at bow beam 2ft 8 inches and at stern 2ft; carrying an inside ballast of 672 lbs; the boat had a displacement of 3409 lbs; mainsail area 205 sq ft; jib 130 sq ft; topsail 38 sq ft. These dimensions, incidently, are almost the same as *Wungara* A30 which was built in Perth in 1912 as a 'gentleman's day boat' and which now regularly sails in the Traditional Division, making a direct link with the early type of boats on which the Amateurs was based.

On the 19th October, three weeks after this inaugural meeting the "fleet" met and held a short race. (It may be noted that Gaffers' Day 1997 is to be held on



Wungara A30, 1996. Very similar to the early Curlew class boats on which the Club was based. Wungara is seen here in Taylor Bay during the inaugural Slocum Trophy race in which she gained second place by 17 seconds to Hoana A100 (Photo: Rex Dupain)

19th October 1997 exactly 125 years from this first race!) A year later on 2nd October 1873 the first Annual Meeting was held in the Oxford Hotel in King Street. The club had grown to 120 members and 24 boats. In November of this year SASC boats filled seven of the first 12 places in the Balmain Regatta 1st, 2nd and 3rd class races and first and second in the Fishing Boat Race. (*Kingfisher* broke her mast when in the lead). In November a reunion was held at Chowder Bay. In December, in the Woolloomooloo Regatta SASC did well, one race being abandoned when the redoubtable *Kingfisher* sank whilst racing against *Bronte*. She was re-floated and later in the day won the 24ft Fishing Boat Race. It seems as if the spirit of the Amateurs was established early in the piece!

The Amateurs, published in 1972, being a documentation of the first hundred years, is an excellent reference book on the Club containing details of meetings, events and social affairs, early photographs, stories about boats and owners, lists of committees, members and so on. It is not the purpose of this book to dwell too much on this early period, but some extracts might serve well to help introduce the first 25 years of the Club's second century.

In its early years the Club's fortunes fluctuated somewhat, although a core of keen members always seemed to come forward to keep things going. In 1875 at the 3rd Annual Meeting at the Exchange Hotel, T Marshall was elected to the chair and announced that most of the members had neglected to pay their subscriptions! A revision of the rules followed and by 1878 at the Annual Meeting, affairs had been consolidated with 70 financial members on the register and a credit balance of £35.

What's in a name?

Why *Amateurs*? is often asked in relation to the Club's name. At the annual meeting in October 1880 Mr W Johnson gave notice of a motion that "members of this Club do not allow their boats to compete in any public or other Regatta unless manned by amateur crews". On the 5th November at a well attended monthly meeting the motion was opened for discussion. Mr Johnson said he had no personal objection to professionals and he was sorry if any member considered the proceedings harsh; his only object was to promote the interests of the Club. He considered that when they handed their boats to the professionals to race they violated one of the fundamental principles of the organisation. There was sufficient talent amongst them to man their own boats with amateurs without having to pay professionals the large demands they made. It had been argued that amateurs did not get the same pace out of the boats; perhaps not, but they had quite as much excitement in the races as did the professionals. The motion was seconded by the Hon Secretary E M Dietrich.

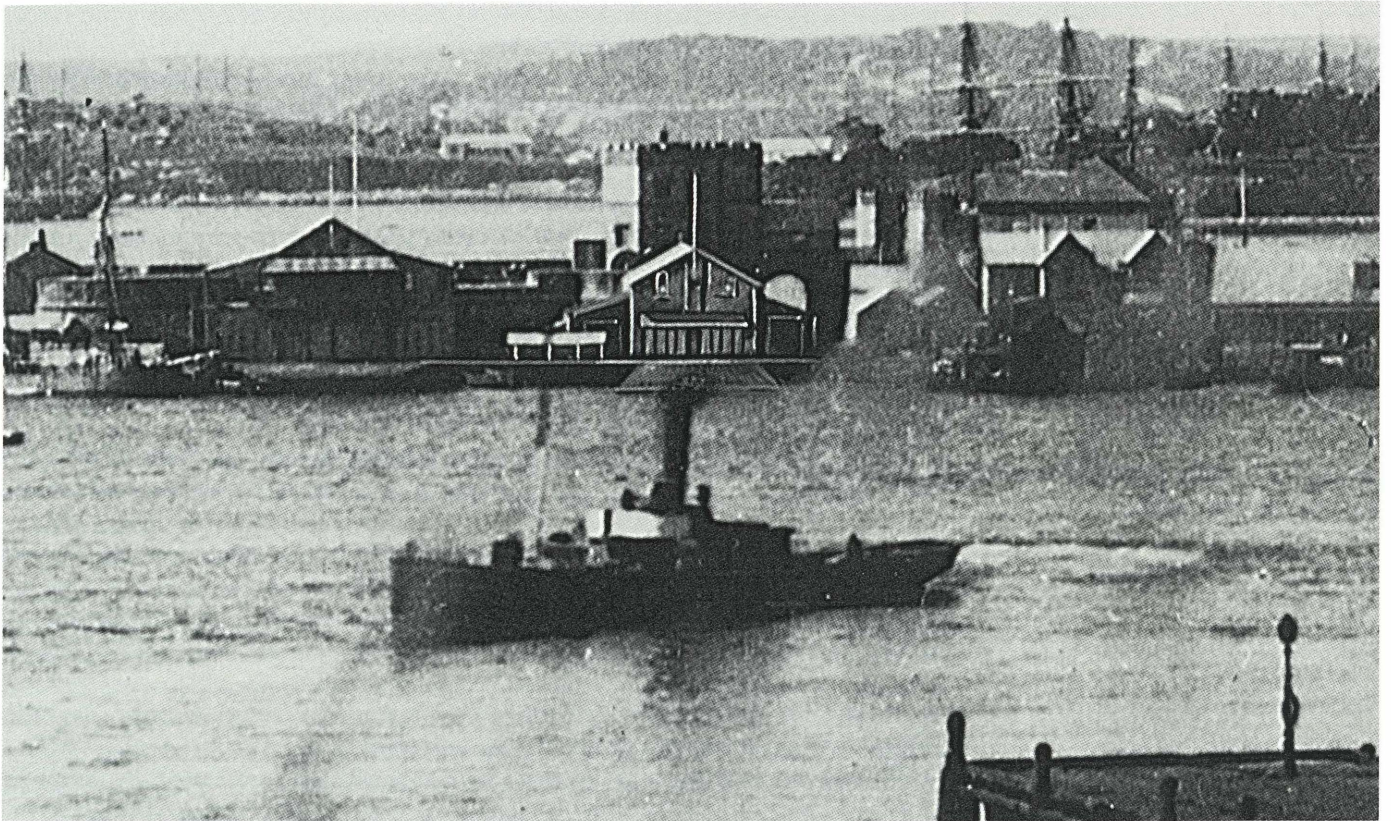
Mr P Williams opposed the motion on the grounds that it would split the Club although most were in fact in favour of encouraging amateur competition. By 1884 the matter appears to have been resolved when the newly published Rules were altered for rule 6 to read; "The word *amateur* shall exclude all fishermen, oystermen, boatbuilders, sailmakers and persons gaining or having gained their living on the water or any person who is or has been employed in or about yachts, boats or ships as a means of livelihood or any person who has received any monetary consideration for his professional knowledge". (So there!)

1876

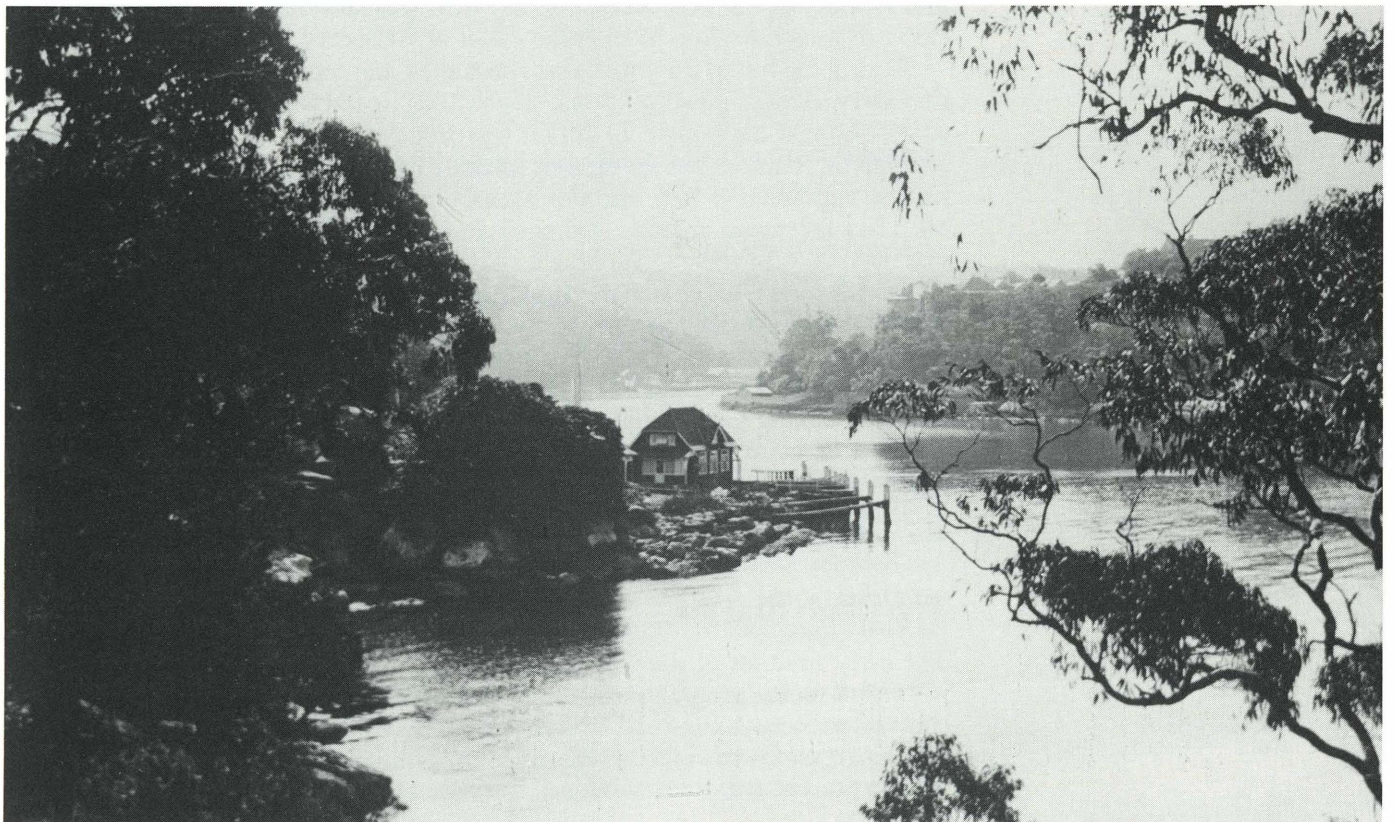
All regattas had their own courses but the Club course was from moorings in Farm Cove, round a boat off Manly Beach, round the flagboat off Fort Macquarie, round Fort Denison and back to the flagboat.

The Clubhouse

The subject of a clubhouse occupied the minds of the early committees and has continued almost to the present day when the Amateurs finds itself in an enviable



Detail from photograph of the Clubhouse and Boatshed on Bennelong Point (above), and Mosman Bay about 1915 showing the original building that became the present Clubhouse in 1962 (below)



1881

January: Race entrance fees increased from threepence to sixpence a foot and no prize to be less than £5.5.0.

position in Mosman Bay. At a monthly meeting in April 1879 the secretary, E M Dietrich moved that the Commodore and Vice Commodore and himself be formed into a sub-committee to approach the authorities to ask for a grant of land for the purpose of erecting a clubhouse on the waterfront. Imagine doing that to-day!

A month later on 24th May at a Club picnic at Chowder Bay Mr Dietrich said that he hoped they would get a grant and if this could be done, and a boathouse built, SASC would flourish forever. By October at the Annual Meeting at Aarons Hotel it was announced that a block of land adjacent to the Sydney Racing Club's Boathouse on Bennelong Point facing Circular Quay had been granted to the Club. (Perhaps we could put in a land grant claim on the Opera House!)

After some uncertainty about tenure of this land it was decided to proceed and it was reported in October 1881 that a design be prepared. In March 1882 Thomas Rowe, architect, was requested to prepare plans and call for tenders. On 23 February 1883 the boathouse was completed, at a cost of just over £1000.

It was opened on 21 April 1883 and described by the Sydney Morning Herald on the 31st March, as "a most commodious 60ft x 45ft and well appointed building, certainly the best boatshed in Sydney. It is of two storeys, being constructed of wood and iron and has two splendid balconies, one at either side and a third smaller one in front. The two larger balconies will be found of great convenience for hanging and drying sails. In the upper storey there are lockers, baths and other conveniences and gas is laid on throughout the building. The staging in front of the shed is not yet complete, but shortly will be so, when the Club will have every reason to congratulate itself upon the completeness, commodiousness and excellent situation of its Clubhouse and shed".

However the earlier fears over the tenure on the land were realised when the Club received a letter from the Colonial Secretary dated 13 July 1883 offering £650 for the Club shed, the ground being wanted for development to Circular Quay. The Club had to carry a loss of £200 after donations from members to make up the shortfall, but after 12 months with a continuous racing programme and support of the stoic members, the club was solvent again. At this time the club had a membership of 160 and a fleet of 70 boats.

During the rest of the 1880s and 1890s the Club continued to consider various sites and proposals for a Clubhouse and in 1901 a fund was established to purchase a Clubhouse at a later date. In 1911 it was proposed at the AGM that a Clubhouse or room be acquired but the motion received little support. In 1914 a sub-committee was appointed to look into this again, but the outbreak of war put the matter off. They met again in 1925. And again in 1954! In 1957 it was finally established that members *did* want a Clubhouse and more investigation took place.

At this time a letter was received suggesting amalgamation of the CYC and SASC which was deferred, whilst the Sites Committee were busy looking at all possible sites on the north side. Finally a deal was made to purchase the Cremorne Club Ltd and Clover Equipment Pty Ltd for the boatshed and to form the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club Limited. Contracts were exchanged in January 1962 at which time Club membership was 320 of which 98 had contributed £500 in donations and £2200 in loans to this cause. On the 8th August 1962 the Inaugural Meeting was held in the Clubhouse attended by 93 members and guests.

The Club Starter

The early minutes of the Club indicate that a keen membership was occupied with a full racing programme and an equally full social programme. One of their constant preoccupations was with the Starter or lack of one and a boat for the use of. On occasions the Race Committee took turns at being starter and in 1912 when a Starter could not be found, one was hired at a cost of 10/- per Saturday.

However so many complaints were received about him that his services were dispensed with and Mr Asher took over using Mr Barker's launch. In 1919 Mr Stannard offered a launch each Saturday afternoon of the season for £1 for the day. This was accepted and racing continued as usual.

In 1931 a flagpole was erected on the rocks at Kurraba Point and used to fly flags to start races thereby saving the expense of a Starter's boat! This may not have lasted for long for in 1933 crowding on the weather end of the line again forced the use of a line buoy off the Starter's boat. More problems in 1935 when a Starter was urgently required and it was decided to hire someone. After advertising in the Sydney Morning Herald, three applicants were interviewed but found to be unsatisfactory. In 1936 starting from the shore had finally proved unworkable and it was decided to hire a launch. This did not seem to work too well either because the Starter was sworn at by members who thought he had selected the incorrect handicap! The matter was settled with apologies all round.

With the approach of war the Club battled on at first using a member's launch as a Starter's boat and then as petrol became scarce members started their own races. In 1940 activities were suspended for the duration of the war until in October 1945 a victory regatta was held. The Harbour Master gave permission for racing to continue in January 1946. Still there were Starter problems for in 1948 the Flag Officers and Committee were again taking turns as Starter.

In the years that followed occasional mention is made of problems with a Starter or usually lack of one, but the presence of J Millard on the scene obviously had the desired effect and in 1969 a presentation was made to him for his services as Club Starter. It has now become a professional occupation and no unseemly incident such as calling into question his parentage has befallen the Starter ever since.

The Racing programme

Captain Amora had said that the Amateurs was formed to race the open boats that other clubs did not cater for. These were usually 18ft, 19ft and 24ft boats. Through the 1880s 19ft and 22ft boats became the most popular in the Club and reclassification into five categories had been carried out. At this time the racing programme had grown to 16 races. In 1883 a new set of Club rules was printed. This was printed in full in the earlier book *The Amateurs*, and is wonderful insight into the racing etiquette of the day.

Changes occurred over the years either by classification in length, or the number of hands carried. "30 raters" became popular for a time and in 1909 an ocean race was held to Long Reef and back. By 1920 there were 169 boats on the register and 20 races were held averaging 12 starters per race. On 20th December 1921 the SYRA advised that letter "A" be granted to all boats on the Club's register.

In 1922 the Club was 50 years old and Closing Day was chosen for the celebrations. A steamer was hired for entertainment and refreshments, a silver cup to be known as the Jubilee Cup was purchased and a Hurry Scurry race was held. For this, boats were anchored on a line and a crew member started off the beach in the dinghy when the gun was fired, rowing 150 yards to his boat, secured the dinghy to the buoy, the sails were hoisted and the course sailed. Upon returning the boat was sailed onto the mooring and the crewman rowed the dinghy back to the starting point.

The Club came through the depression and had an ambitious programme for the 1932-33 season with 33 races, 20 for "A" class, 10 for "B" class, 7 regattas, 4 invitation and 2 special races. At this time a new handicapping system was introduced with automatic adjustments for placings. This system was still in place at

the Club's centenary in 1972. By 1939 there were 336 members and 99 boats on the register. This dropped off after the war and in 1954 there were 283 members and 87 boats on the register.

In 1952 a notice of motion was carried abandoning Rule 16, the length limit which had hitherto classified all boats. The new rule provided for boats to be grouped into numbered divisions according to their estimated speed and seaworthiness at the Commodore's discretion. Later divisions were created for individual classes such as Bluebirds, Thunderbirds, Endeavours, Southerlys and so on.

In 1972 the Club had grown to 407 members with 114 boats on the register with "A" and 43 unprefix sail numbers. By this time the Club was well established with a proud history of racing, cruising and social activities. It has adhered to the early principles of self-help, good sportsmanship, friendship and generosity amongst its members and has always been flexible in meeting new challenges and the demands of changing social and technological times.

Social activities

In May 1879 a picnic was held at Chowder Bay for the Commodore S H Hyam. 100 ladies and gentlemen turned up and learnt that the club had held 18 races in the last season and distributed £54 in prizes, plus trophies and not a single protest! After a toast to the "Press", (I have never heard of this before!), various amusements such as dancing, fern gathering, walking and sketching were indulged in before the steamer left for town at 6 pm.

The early accounts of the Amateurs indicates as much enthusiasm for social activities as for racing. Without the benefit of the Clubhouse we enjoy, the members held their functions at various beaches around the Harbour. In April 1889 the season closed with a dinner at Athol Gardens attended by 138 members and 69 boats. The following year the season closed with a luncheon at Chowder Bay.

For most of these occasions a steamer was hired and many a time musicians were hired also for general entertainment. One intriguing entry for 1904 says that a letter had been received from the Professional Musicians Association and it was decided that no further music would be provided on Club steamers. Unfortunately it doesn't tell us why. Perhaps some members thought the musicians were on a par with some of the starters! By 1910 music was back at a function for Opening Day. This was to be a combined effort shared by RSYS, PAYC and SASC, costing £75, but RSYS withdrew as it was too expensive! The others went ahead and hired a large steamer and a band. Never let it be said that a few shillings would get in the way of a good party for the Amateurs!

Left: Picnic party on board Wungara about 1915

Right: Same boat 1995 Gaffers Day, Anthony Brockhouse, Barbara Jones, Nell Payne and John Ferguson



Such activities appear right through the history of the Club. In 1951 the Sydney Showboat was hired for the Annual Ball and for those who do not remember it, she was one of the large ferries with a capacity of about 2000 people. In 1958 the CYC made its Clubhouse available for a cocktail party. Now our own Clubhouse has rightly become the focus for our entertaining which continues with as much enthusiasm as our forebears displayed.

I have included the following piece from the archives more as an indulgence than anything else. It was not in the *The Amateurs*, although it took place in the 1934. It was provided by Peter Luke, *Stardust A94*, who was a member at that time. It is the story of a voyage from Mosman Bay to Broken Bay by SASC member Norm Brooker, *Niad II*, with Bill Manning, *Ariel*, and Bob Sloman. It seemed to me to be a good introduction to the Spirit of The Amateurs for it includes all the elements of the sailing life we all enjoy, a sense of adventure, good company, a little drink or two, getting out of trouble when it comes along, and living to tell the tale afterwards; well at least to those who'll listen!

Unfortunate Episode of *Niad II*

It was the cutter *Niad* that sailed the summer sea,
 And Norman had shipped a couple of pals to bear him company.
 Calm were their eyes with trust and hope when they sailed from
 Mosman Bay,
 Shangai'd for a voyage in an ancient crate that wouldn't wear or stay.
 The skipper he stood beside the helm, a tops'l cap on his ear,
 And he said "my boys we've a can of beans, some rum and a dozen beer
 And a good sound ship and some Sargents pies, and look, what
 a lovely day,
 And Sullivan's catching our tea for us tonight in Broken Bay".
 Then up spoke Eye Splice Sloman, he'd sailed the stormy coast,
 "I'm a modest rig of a tary salt and not a feller to boast
 But the moon last night had a misty ring, and tonight no moon we see."
 "No you stupid bugger," the skipper said, "you won't till after tea."
 The breeze went cold and then went warm, and backed to
 a north west gale,
 "Blowed if I know" the skipper said, "if we ought'nt to take in sail.
 But we'd better break out the KB first, and get it across our chest,
 If it fetches adrift in a sea like this it's a cert she'll all go west".
 Down came the storm and smote amain the vessel in all its strength,
 And that lolloping heap of paint and worms shot loo'ard a cable's length.
 "Come hither, come hither, my Eye Splice Bob, and try not to stagger so
 For out to the bumpkin's rotten end I'm afraid you'll have to go.

So wrap yourself in your oilskin coat you pinched off a pal ashore".
 And Eye Splice answered, "OK skip, hold fast till I have one more".
 "Clap a stopper on that" the skipper cried, "no boozing aboard this tub
 You know what happened the other night in the lift at Aaron's pub".
 Said bosun Bruce as he broke adrift from his clutch on the starboard bunk,
 "She may be OK in Taylor Bay, but at sea by cripes she's punk.
 It's a frightful risk in a sea like this when she lies on her blinkin' ear
 And the bottles clink in the bilges, skip, I'm scared she'll bust our beer."
 And it looked to the skipper of the *Niad II* as she dived through
 a bursting wave
 That he and the bosun and Eye Splice Bob were bound for a watery grave.
 But Eye Splice said "well Davey Jones or the port of Kingdom Come
 Blow high, blow low before I go, I'll tuck an eye in the rum".
 Then the bosun yells in his tops'l roar, "Yo ho you buggers, yo ho

 1889

*Neutral Bay Amateur Sailing Club
 formed by a breakaway group who
 objected to "non-standard" or "freak"
 boats.*

 1894

The Club forwarded an emphatic public protest against the action of the Government in granting a lease of the Public Reserve (Cremorne Point) to a private company and permitting disfigurement of one of the most prominent points of the harbour by the establishment of a coal mine.

You can shiver me timbers and spring me spars but here comes
a flamin' tow.

She's only a lousy coastal barge, which is just our rotten luck
And she's got a funnel that's red and black and *Nimbin* across her tuck".
High on the *Nimbin's* reeling bridge her gallant skipper stood,
And he dreamed of his latest Lismore blond and he wondered if she would,
And he thought of all the nifty things he'd say to her on Wednesday night
And the yarns he'd spin to his Grafton girl when he raised
the Clarence light.

When the Mate burst in on the Captain's dream and yelled "a ship
in distress.

Look, scanties afoul the mizzen shrouds, it's the yacht club's SOS".
"Turn out the guard, I mean, call the men, stand by to take a tow",
The skipper yelled as he rang half slow " Oi, where do you want to go?"
And borne over the watery wastes by the gale to the *Nimbin* deck
Came the plaintiff call like the curlew's cry from the mate on
the drifting wreck

"We're battered and bugged and far from home and we've lost
our bloody way

But the prime idea of this blasted trip was to cruise to Broken Bay".
The *Nimbin* heaved on the heaving swell and the AB heaved a line
And the seasick passengers heaved as well and heaved all three in time,
"Gawd strike me pink" the skipper cried as he clutched his head in pain,
"Wind your line orf me flamin' neck, have a shuffle and heave again"
"Here's the chance of a life to to make your name for bravery at sea
There'll be grog for all at the Grafton Pub, and Lloyd's Gold Medal
for me."

"Aye aye Commander ", the bosun cried, " that man can't throw for nuts"
And chucking his line with deadly aim hit Eye Splice in the guts.
And that's how Norm and Bruce and Bob at the peaceful end of the day
Arrived at the end of the *Nimbin's* line at the port of Broken Bay.
And the yarns they tell and the tales they spin of the perils met at sea,
Well, they might go down with the Horse Marines, but they won't go
down with me!