

S.A.S.C. NEWS

Congratulations to the Ernest Merringtons on the birth of a daughter, Dianne May Merrington, on Tuesday 5th December, 1961.

The purchase of the Boatshed Clubhouse is progressing along very sound lines with no stones left unturned to fully cover and protect the Members and the Club assets. The problems associated with procuring agreement from a number of Government Departments at the same time are more tedious and frustrating than difficult, but it is estimated that, before the end of February, 1962, the Club will be the owners. The Committee are so confident of this that they have taken out an insurance cover. The Commodore announced at the January General Meeting that 110 donors had contributed £500. 0. 0 as outright donations and £2,200. 0. 0 on loan. Included in these amounts are 10 promises - will these Members please send along their cheques so that the newly formed Finance Committee will know exactly where they stand.

Three Committees have been formed, each one headed by a Flag Officer:-

Finance:	A.W. Merrington
Boatshed:	W.S. Chambers
Clubhouse:	B. Wild.

They will take up their duties upon completion of the purchase.

The Committee wishes to make it quite clear to all Members that, when the new constitution is adopted and S.A.S.C. Ltd. comes into being, a full list of all FINANCIAL MEMBERS has to be forwarded to a Government Department and these names become the Members of the said Company. If you are not financial you cannot be considered. Make yourself financial now and, if in any doubt, contact our Hon. Treasurer, W. Oxby, at WX 1486.

The Champion of the Do-it-yourself Brigade, Jack Maynard, has done it again. His latest boat is Buchanan, designed "Viking". It took Jack fourteen months to build the 31 ft. long, 9 ft. beam, 4 ft. 10 in. draught, 5 tonner, she sleeps six, has large galley, ice chest, toilet and a cocktail cabinet, is beautifully finished and, with her simple mast head sloop rig, will no doubt show her paces in the first division.

The crew of "Ranger" spent a few anxious minutes on the 2nd December when she went aground; their efforts to free her failed. "Degra" gallantly abandoned the race temporarily and went to the rescue but a launch who saw her plight raced across and pulled "Ranger" off the rocks.

"Eventide" lost her mast when it exploded under excessive compression while racing on the 9th December.

Bob Warren reports that, on a recent visit to Auckland and Suva, he noticed four Bluebirds moored in Auckland Harbour and one moored off the Royal Suva Yacht Club.

Whilst our Official Starter had a well earned holiday, our Acting Starters have been doing a very fine job and our thanks and acknowledgment to Eric and Marg. Upward, John and Jeanne Jackson and Les Jones.

Your Racing Committee has been particularly busy of late organising the Bluebird Championships, assisting with the R.N.S.A. and R.S.A.R. programmes and a big hand for a job well done.

Saturday, 10th February, 1962, - this Season's Rendezvous, tickets 15/-d. per head on the beach - come along and join the crowd for "fun and games".

Mark it off now - a date to remember - Ladies Day, Sunday 4th March, 1962.

If you have a serviceable piece of equipment that you wish to sell or exchange, send the full information to News Sheet, we will publish it for you and this gives your fellow Members first chance at the bargains.

New Members elected 31st January, 1962, - K. Murray, C.J. Rickard, J.M. Corbett, J.R. Forsyth, welcome to our happy growing band.

M.G. Scholer resigned 5th January, 1962.

Mr. Norman Wallis has submitted a copy of an entry in the log of his Yacht "Wanderer" covering the Easter cruise to Lake Macquarie 29 years ago. We feel this will be of interest to Members and reproduce it below in full.

"10-4-1932, LAKE MACQUARIE." Being an account of the Sydney Amateurs Easter Cruising Race to Lake Macquarie, and of the Adventures that befell some of the Vessels and their Crews. By a Supercargo aboard the Schooner "Wanderer".

This tale concerns those who escaped the rigours and trials of home for the solace of sea and the langour of a lake. The vessels concerned included Thelma (Vic Toll), Goora, Niobe, (Jack Backhouse) Olive (Seppy Stevens), San Pan, Lena, Caprice (Arthur Stone) Wirraminna (Max Cooley) St. Thais (Ted Little) and Pixie.

"Wanderer", unwilling to risk defeat at the hands of San Pan, proceeded independently yet intending to cruise in company. So at 10.30 p.m. on Thursday, Easter Eve, she stood into Double Bay looking for her consorts. Since none were there she figured that the race had started. It hadn't. There wasn't enough wind to blow out a match, the starters were drifting and ghosting all over the harbour, unable to make the rendezvous. But the big boat, with her engine whirring, couldn't be expected to do any sensible reasoning like that and went off by herself snarling.

The remainder of the fleet eventually got to the start and spent the next five hours zephyring to the Heads. The next time such a race is planned the planners will do well to arrange the start from Watson's Bay from where, in very light airs, the fleet will be able to make the open sea before the grog runs out. Such a sad fate befell Goora for, when off Terrigal, she turned about and headed for Broken Bay, clearly to replenish supplies.

The rest of the fleet dashed up the coast under a four knot southerly. By Friday afternoon the leaders arrived off Moon Islet and commenced to approach the bar. Wanderer had already passed over on the top of the morning's flood and was waiting for the racing yachts at the Pile Light. She had signalled for the depth of water over the bar and had been promptly answered by the local signal station:-

"Eleven degrees Fahrenheit."

That simplified things, so she sailed across confidently, burying a couple of feet into sand on the inshore side. There she stuck, like a bit of real estate, until Ben Cliff, of the Lake Macquarie Yacht Club, who had gone out to sea looking for shrimps, yachts and things, came in from seaward and advised her how to behave.

Some of the racing craft, as they arrived, though drawing far less water than did "Wanderer", approached the bar with some anxiety. To others, however, the word "bar" simply conjured up associations of brass rails and bent elbows. These characters sailed in with that confidence born of long experience.

After handicaps had been deducted it was found that Lena had won the race. This was a very popular win for, after all, someone had to win and be toasted so why not Lena. Consequently, the whole fleet toasted Lena, and everybody was very happy about it all. Thelma (Lake Macquarie Yacht Club) however, actually made the fastest time, and arrived first at the Heads. Obviously she knew the way better than the others. Still, it was a very popular performance and Thelma was likewise toasted by everybody and all became very happy indeed.

But, I'll say the Captain of the Wirraminna (P38) gets the most out of yachting. He makes the flavour last, he does! Long after the others had crossed the bar, he and his crew stayed out at sea for no other purpose than to enjoy the rolling billows and the briny air.

So that just before 6 p.m. when the tide was at lowest ebb, Wirraminna dashed in towards the bar through sheer force of habit, in order to join the others in time for a spot!

Alas! Time and tide waiteth not for tardy yachtsmen. Warraminna's keel bit the dust - I mean the sand. And there she stuck, bumping all the peace of mind out of her crew, who called upon Allah and others for assistance. Allah was at once forthcoming in the person of Mr. Adams of Toronto, who proceeded to the distressed ketch in his fine big motor launch. After some barney as to the terms of salvage, under which it was agreed that the crew of Wirraminna should explain their racing number of P38, Mr. Adams towed the wreck out to sea again and admonished the crew with an emphasis which no yachtsman could misunderstand, that the bar would not open again until the whole crew were sober.

By six-thirty p.m. all the other yachts had safely negotiated the three miles of tortuous channel to the Lake. One of Wanderer's skippers (there were six of them) ordered a rocket to be fired to signify to the locality that the yachts had arrived. The extinct rocket fell close to a party of Swansea fishermen, and the verbal fireworks which ensued were more lurid than the one we had just witnessed. Niobe's crew listened attentively to this tirade, but admitted later that they had learnt nothing new!

At 11 a.m. the next day (Easter Saturday) all the boats assembled at Toronto for the first of the three races arranged by the local Club. Lake Macquarie is as fine a sheet of water as can be imagined by sailing men. The local fleet was augmented by the eight visiting

raft and made a picturesque sight as they jockeyed for positions at the start. Interest in the morning race suffered through lack of wind, but a brisk Nor'easter in the afternoon provided a stirring race.

The local fleet consisted of a number of fine coach-house type cruisers. It was a surprise for the Sydney men to see such a number of sturdy boats on the Lake.

Of the visiting boats, the tall Caprice and the graceful Niobe were generally admired. St. Thais was remembered in these very waters by George Potter, of the Toronto Sailing Club. He had saved her from shipwreck in Toronto Bay eight years ago. Pixie, and the quaint San Pan, were both deservedly commended for making the ocean trip. Everyone of course expected to see the redoubtable Olive there, and they were not disappointed. Conversation at the Club House fell to discussion of her pending round-the-world cruise.

In addition to the above yachts were the fine fleet of 16 ft. skiffs of the Toronto Club, and the motor cruisers and speedboats of the Newcastle branch of the Royal Motor Yacht Club. The brisk Nor'easter ensured success and the afternoon was memorable.

In the evening a dance was held at the Toronto Hotel. Wirraminna's crew arrived two hours late: Wanderer's four hours late. Both had been engaged in getting their respective craft off sand banks. The former had gone ashore in Toronto Bay: the latter had struck a shoal near Bury your own Island!

After the dance there was much merry making, and a display of fireworks from Wanderer disturbed the General Hon-Secretary of the local Y.C. He was about to enjoy the fruits of his labours and take a well earned rest when he concluded that the whole fleet had blown up. So he dashed over in a dinghy to find that the fleet was lit up all right, but hardly ablaze! Wirraminna's mate shanghaied him, and that vessel then proceeded 12 miles to Morisset for breakfast. But she ran on to a mud bank, so the venture was a wash out! O Mudbank Max, how could you!

And sir! You should have seen the mix-up the next day. Skippers were searching for crews, and crews looking for skippers. For hours, Masters, mates, and men sorted themselves out, and eventually succeeded in time for the race off Belmont in the afternoon.

After the race, a cosy Bay off Green Point was selected, and Whoopee was made ashore there. A sheep was roasted over a huge fire, and a cask broached in the good old fashioned way. There is no doubt about the hospitality of these Lake men. No sir! They put up as fine a show for the Sydney-siders as you could wish. The novelty of this great campfire on the lakeside appealed to all of us. Over one hundred men ranged round the fire and the evening passed in story and song.

And such songs! Each boat's crew rendered one item. You have never heard such songs and, I trust, you never will. All the same there were some very fine renderings of higher class musical comedy, such as the modernised version of "Abdul Abdul Bul Amir", "Farmer Gray" and "Ringa-danga-doo"!

And the singing. I'll say it was fine. Commencing in soft melodious notes which rose and fell in decorous cadence across the placid lake, it mounted in restrained crescendo, to the orchestration of the murmuring forest. After a time it did more than that. Ah, sir, you should have heard that singing! It rivalled the Freebooter's Foghorn Band and fairly shivered the timbers of the forest itself.

And all this time Sep Stevens was making a soap box oration and giving his listeners (if any) the good olive oil!

It was a stunning evening, and a fitting climax to a splendid carnival. Our hats went off and three cheers rose for our hosts, Commodore Vic-Toll and the members of the Lake Macquarie Yacht Club.

All this hornswoggling ceased at 9.30 and Wirraminna, Wanderer and San Pan made off for the Entrance, for they had arranged to attempt the crossing of the bar on the midnight tide. The Yacht Club had very kindly provided a pilot who was waiting at the Pile Light for the three yachts.

Upon arrival there was the devil to pay. A hundred fishing boats were moored about the Entrance, all of their occupants howling out what to do, where to go, and how! Some had lights; some had not. Some advised us to get to blazes; some to get a bit further. In a trice our pilot was lost amongst them. The yachts blundered on until the Pile Light became confused among the winking lights of the skiffs. Engines were stopped, reversed. Sandbanks lay ahead, abeam and abaft. Suddenly one skipper sighted what he believed to be the winking beacon and made for it. Alas! it was a fisherman holding up his lantern

The Wanderer went on the mud. Wirraminna towed her off. Wirraminna went on the mud; Wanderer towed her off. Then both went on the mud, and the pilot's launch returned at last and towed them all off. San Pan meanwhile remained exclusive - high and dry on her own selective sand bank.

The fishing boats were now all highly excited, pulling in every conceivable direction, while their occupants listed our vices and overlooked our virtues. Wanderer nearly upset one accidentally, and her irate skipper threatened to charge the whole lot of them, unless they desisted. They did. The Lake water is very wet.

San Pan and her consort somehow found their way behind the pilot launch into the channel. Wirraminna was suddenly found to be absent. A lusty hail, "Where are you, Wirraminna?" elicited a distraught and agonised cry across the night air: "On the mud, blast you!"

Half a mile down the channel Wanderer stranded again. So the pilot returned for Wirraminna and soon afterwards she passed down the channel and tied up to a wharf near the Swansea Bridge. All hands then turned to getting Wanderer off. Fourteen men and a launch accomplished this in four hours!

Having lost the tide, all hands turned in about 4 a.m. and an attempt was made on the bar at midday on Easter Monday. The Wirraminna and San Pan sailed across, but Wanderer, having sounded the bar all over with her keel, returned to the Lake. Here she will doubtless stay for the rest of her life, unless the owner really wants to cross the bar again and at length leave the lovely Lake and its hospitable people. To do this he'll have to chop a couple of feet off his keel.