



Ladies' Day, 2nd March, 1964.

*Photo courtesy S.A.S.C.*



## JIB 'AND

"Let go that jib!" 'e yells. Now I should know  
The way an eighteen footer ought to go.  
"W'y don't you ease 'er 'ead in them 'ard squalls?  
W'y don't you this? W'y don't you that?" 'e bawls.  
Now I been in the eighteens since a lad.  
I follered in the footsteps of me Dad,  
Who sailed with Ellis, Robbo and Chris Webb.  
I know the 'arbour tides, both flood and ebb.  
I work our eighteen right into the breeze,  
By knowin' w'en to 'old, and w'en to ease,  
W'ile that mug lare, our skipper, squats down aft,  
Just frozen stiff at every fluky draught.  
"You'll 'ave us in the drink!" 'e bellyaches,  
But 'e's just coverin' 'is own mistakes.  
A catspaw smackin' down off Bradley's 'Ead,  
Strikes terror in 'is 'eart, till it's like lead.  
To sail our boat you've got to know just how  
She likes 'er 'eadsail pinnin' down the bow.  
If I go payin' out the bloody sheet,  
She gripes—and shivers in the wind a treat.  
I've got to nail 'er down, or she won't sail,  
But all I get from Muggins is a wail:  
"You'd think you got a grey nurse on that line.  
You'll swim the mob—and think yer doin' fine!"  
But what's the use of tryin' to explain?  
'E wouldn't understand, though its quite plain,  
That if 'e simply steers, and 'olds 'is bib,  
We're in the money—with me on the jib.  
And when we get the gun, the papers say:  
"E sailed a crafty race, the other day."  
'E sailed the race! Well, I am askin' you;  
TO WHICH BLOKE IN THE BOAT IS CREDIT DUE?

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## MELBOURNE REGATTA 1888

Following an invitation from Melbourne the Commodore, E. M. Dietrich, asked the Hon. Secretary, H. Carpenter, to take a boat to Melbourne to race in their International Regatta and as there were no restrictions to the race (in the invitation) "Itonia" was selected.

She was a 20 footer built by Golding with sails by Carter, and she was duly shipped to Melbourne by the Associated Steamship Company. The Captain of the ship gave the crew a champagne supper to wish them good luck and carefully unloaded "Itonia".

When Harry Carpenter reported to the Regatta Committee he found that the crew was limited to four (4) hands and that they were housed in a shed 200 yds. from the water, and worse still, over rocks.

The race took place on the hottest day in Melbourne for twenty (20) years, the course was vaguely marked with flags, which appeared to be a great distance apart, with no clear instructions for the course issued, so the only method available was to closely follow a Victorian boat.

At the conclusion of the race "Itonia" protested against "Katie" as she had not sailed the course set down in the rules and programme. The Committee considered the protest and admitted that "Katie" had not sailed the correct course but ruled that if she had she would still have won. The official placings were: 1st "Katie", 2nd "Itonia".

H. Carpenter returned to Sydney vowing that he would never again represent S.A.S.C. at a Melbourne Regatta and upon arrival back in Sydney, submitted his report. At a special meeting held 12.12.1888, it was decided to write to the Melbourne Race Committee deploring their action in altering the conditions of their programme of 21st August by limiting crews of boats competing in certain races, stating that it was unsportsmanlike, unfair and prejudicial to the interests of best and best sailing and manifestly favouring the Melbourne boats.

There is no record of the letter being answered but at a Committee Meeting on 26th February 1889, H. Carpenter thanked the Club for procuring for him the prize won at the Melbourne International Regatta of August 1888.

(There is no later recorded case of an S.A.S.C. boat being taken to Melbourne for competition. Ed.)



## SNAILS BAY AMATEUR SAILING CLUB

This Club was formed in February 1911 and held its first race on 18th February 1911 and it continued to provide races till the outbreak of war in 1914. At the conclusion of hostilities it suspended operations and disbanded as its members voted against reforming it.

Amongst its members and the boats they owned were the following:—

*Lay Fogg	"Berenice II"
*Walter Preston }	"Ru-Ru"
*Arthur Preston }	"Gee Whizz"
*Sep. Stevens	"Niobe"
John Hindmarsh	"Zephyr"
Capt. Bennett	"Lorelei"
*Cliff Gale	"Laulie"
Athol Cockron	"Rua"
*George Pooley	"Arthur"
Arthur Roderick	

Changes of ownership within the Club:—

*W. & A. Preston	"Frolic"
*Chas. Barton	"Lorelei"
*Cliff Gale	"Vagabond"

Members—boats not owned or known:—

*Eric Gale	Doug Huntley
Roy Taylor	Jim Gray
Alan Kirby	Pete Thomas
Pop Epps	*Harold Saxton
Merv Evans	*Alva Likely
Son Rosebay	

All the members marked \* if they were not already S.A.S.C. members, became, and brought their boats with them. Arthur Roderick went to the Drummoyne Club and will figure prominently in its history. The Lane Cove Club also benefited as Arthur Preston and Lay Fogg sailed with them on occasions.

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## THE VERNON REGATTA HELD SATURDAY 17TH MAY 1879

This was a special regatta, the only one ever held, and reproduced here are extracts from the report published in The Sydney Morning Herald, Monday 19th May 1879.

"The disappointment experienced last Saturday fortnight when the above regatta was to have taken place, but had to be postponed due to inclement weather, was fully compensated for by the success which attended Saturday's proceedings. The weather was not, it is true, everything that could be desired, so far as personal comfort was concerned, there being not only a somewhat chilly wind, but rather ominous looking clouds, however, there was breeze enough to display the sailing qualities of the various craft to the utmost advantage. Perhaps, after all, this state of things is to be preferred to a broiling hot day when there is scarcely a puff of wind to be obtained and sails hang as limp as sheets on a clothes line.

There was certainly no cause for complaint on this score on Saturday, if anything the lively state of the wind made sailing rather too unpleasant to some, and, although a few may have escaped the inconvenience of getting wet through, the seamanship of all was put to a crucial test. The number of people who patronised the flagship was far beyond the most sanguine expectations, there being, according to the estimates of some, close upon 3900, but a few hundred less would doubtless be nearer the mark.

The 'Vernon' was moored at her usual station, a short distance from Cockatoo Island. The majority of visitors were conveyed thither by steam launches from various parts of the harbour—the 'Thetis' on her second journey taking 500.

The 'Vernon', which for nonce had been converted into the flagship, was gaily dressed with flags in arch and rainbow shape; and it is more than probable that the old man-of-war had never, even in her palmiest days, presented such a bright and lively appearance as she did on Saturday, in her best holiday attire. Her decks were of course crowded, but the two points of 'vantage—the poop and the forecastle—were literally packed, so that a promenade was rendered impossible. This could hardly have been looked upon as a drawback to the afternoon's enjoyment, as everyone present knew that the number of visitors, far more than the excellence of the sport, constituted the very essence of success.

The result must be as gratifying to the public generally as to those gentlemen forming the committee, who took so much trouble to benefit the little waifs and strays on whose behalf the Regatta was held. Fortunately the success was not limited to the attendance; as a matter of fact, the programme included events of more than ordinary interest and the number of entries was above average.



Beyond this, among the competitors were to be found some of our best yachtsmen, who handled their 'crack' craft in a wonderfully dexterous manner, under occasionally very trying circumstances. Notwithstanding the terrific gusts of wind which continuously swept over the harbour during the afternoon; no casualty involving loss of life has, happily, to be recorded; and this is doubtless due to a great extent to the thorough knowledge of seamanship possessed by most of our amateur sailors. As will be seen, two or three mishaps occurred, but nothing beyond what is looked upon as incidental to yachting.

The general arrangements gave great satisfaction to all. One or two members of the Committee were on a punt alongside to receive visitors and others did everything in their power to make things as comfortable as possible. Everyone connected with the 'Vernon'—from the Commander, Captain Neitenstein, down to the veriest little fellow of 2 ft. 6 ins.—were unremitting in the attentions, and freely gave information concerning the details of the training ship, to all who had any curiosity to satisfy.

It must certainly have been a red letter day to those youngsters, who were to be found here, there and everywhere, and whose happy faces spoke far more plainly than volumes of official reports could do of the excellence of the system under which they were trained and of the beneficial effect which kind and humane, yet withal judicious, treatment has upon those who have been rescued at an early age from a life of abject misery, and whose infantile associations would otherwise, in most cases, have fitted them for a career of vice and crime. No-one on board could have begrudged the price paid for the afternoon's enjoyment, when it was known that the whole of the profits were to be devoted to the purchase of musical instruments for these lads; and it is a happy sign of the times to find that we have among us gentlemen occupying high positions in the Legislature, as well as in professions, and merchants who generously gave time and money to promote such a laudable object.

As before stated, the success of the Regatta far exceeded the most sanguine anticipations, and the Committee must be heartily congratulated on the result. During the afternoon the Albion Band played appropriate music in excellent style under the leadership of Mr. J. Devlin. Mr. Edward Trickett (the champion) rowed round the course to display his skill, which was as masterly as his most ardent admirers could wish.

Before the company separated, Mr. Hurley proposed three cheers for Captain Neitenstein, which were given vigorously, and later the same honour was done the organisers: President—Sir H. Parkes, K.C.M.G.; Vice-Presidents—The Hon. Sir G. W. Allen (Speaker of the Legislative Assembly), Mr. C. J. Roberts (Mayor of Sydney) and Mr. J. Macdonald (Mayor of Balmain); Starters—Mr. M. A. H. Fitzhardinge for sailing races, Mr. P. Anderson for rowing races; Hon. Secretary—Mr. I. B. Bossley; Hon. Treasurer—Mr. J. Gardyne.

Following is a list of the day's racing:—

1. All yachts (handicapped). 1st 'Meteor' won by 30 secs., 2nd 'La Belle', 3rd 'Ione'.
  2. Pair-oared. Race for Vernon Boys. 1st 'Swift' won by eight lengths.
  3. Twenty Four Feet Open Boats—Course from moorings, round boat off entrance to Lane Cove River, round boat in Sugar Works Bay, round boat off Fig Tree Point and back to flagship (twice over). 'Lizzie'—W. Johnson; 'Lottie'—R. Moodie; 'Deronda'—Dr. C. Belisarie. This race excited the keenest interest, not only on account of the 'crack' boats engaged, but because of the events that occurred during its progress. 'Lizzie' took the lead at the start with 'Lottie' close behind. At Greenwich Point 'Lottie' ran ashore and 'Deronda' almost filled with water, however, both recovered themselves in very short time and stood out. On rounding the flagship first time 'Lizzie' carried away her main sheet and she had to haul to wind to repair same. At Lane Cove 'Lottie' was again in trouble but again surmounted it, but 'Deronda' was not so fortunate and capsized at Fig Tree Point. The seamanship displayed throughout the race elicited much admiration and the 'Lizzie' admirably sailed by her owner won easily. 'Deronda' entered a protest against 'Lizzie' for a foul.
  4. Nineteen Feet Boats. Same course as (3). 'Anthea'—P. O. Williams; 'Lucia'—A. J. Soutar; 'Bronzewing'—C. J. Saunders; 'Pandora'—G. Elliott. 'Pandora' was well in the lead and capsized off Fig Tree Point. 'Anthea' then won as she liked.
  5. Open Boats Twenty Feet and Upwards. Time allowance one minute per foot. Crew limit four. Mainsail and working jib only. Course same as (3). 'Waitau'—22 ft.—W. Gray; 'Effie'—23 ft.—W. West; 'Florrie'—22 ft. J. C. Abbott; was the order in which they finished an excellent race. 'Effie' entered a protest against 'Waitau' for having a professional on board. 'Waitau' entered a protest against 'Effie' for jamming her round the flagboat at Lane Cove.
  6. Eighteen Feet Boats. Any sails. Crew limit three. Course same as (3). 'Naiad'—G. L. Cooper 1st; 'Alcyone'—W. A. Macdonald 2nd; 'Alert'—Q. L. Deloitte 3rd followed by 'Arrow'—'Pyrrha'. Won by about 50 yds.
  7. Double Sculls in Skiffs for Vernon Boys. 1st 'Swordfish'.
  8. Sixteen Feet Dinghies—Course once round (3). 'Acme'—J. Drake 1st; 'Young Jack'—Dr. Milford 2nd; 'Young Sid'—T. Love 3rd. Won with absolute ease.
  9. All dinghies, under canvas, not exceeding 15 ft. Course as (3). 1st 'Swallow' 14 ft.; 2nd 'Winnie' 14 ft.; 3rd 'Demon' 15 ft. A very even race, 'Winnie' being second only by time allowance of one minute per foot.
  10. Ships' gigs pulled by ships' crews. 1st 'Agnes'—Capt. Sims; 2nd 'Vernon'—Capt. Neitenstein.
  11. Four Oared Scratch Race won by Mosman Rowing Club.
  12. Men-of-War Cutters won by 'Vernon' No. 1 crew.
  13. Gig and Dinghy Race for Vernon Boys.
  14. Supplementary Race—Ships, boats under canvas, course same as (3). Won by 'Gladstone'—Capt. Jackson.
- Protests will be considered by Committee at next meeting and prizes presented to the decided winners."



## THE GREEN STREET BOATSHED

by Geoff McCorquodale

In 1937 the boatshed at Cremorne belonged to Keith McKenzie and was known as McKenzie's Boatshed. Keith McKenzie was a Flying Corps ace from the First World War and was not a very well man. He bought the shed from McPherson somewhere about this time.

It was divided into three separate parts. A pontoon quite similar to ours, led to the main boatshed, which had a slat floor at least a foot nearer the water than ours. Racks held dinghies and sailing boats at the southern and western ends.

Immediately north of the pontoon was a small slipway, used to pull launches up into the shed. McKenzie had up to four open launches, fourteen or sixteen feet long with inboard engines, which were hired out to fishermen and picnic parties.

North of this slipway was the second part of the shed, a "private" shed for two boats, each with a cradle on wooden rails to let it into the water.

There was a few feet of vacant space north of this shed before the "Desdemona" shed—a one boat shed—again with its own cradle and wooden rails into the water. Next to it was the main slipway, identical to our No. 1 slipway in position and size.

Like hundreds of others, my first sail was with the late Cliff Gale, in "Ranger". It was a birthday party outing for his youngest son, Donald William called Bill.

My family moved into Oswald Street, Cremorne in 1932. The Gales lived opposite and down a few doors, and Bill and I were in the same class at Mosman Public School. We became best friends, and I had many outings in "Ranger". Cliff Gale first raced her, with the Amateurs, in 1936-37, and I was often in the crew. She was then a centreboard yacht and I still have a photo and vivid memories of a gale, with gusts of up to 64 mph. At times we could not reach the jib sheets which were cleated to leeward (no winches in those days) and the mainsheet hand was sitting on the cockpit floor with water over his knees. We won by nearly 15 minutes, and only two others finished.

For some extraordinary reason this made me interested in sailing. About this time my father and a friend, Kipps Campbell, started to build a 20 ft. raised deck yacht from a design in "How to build 20 yachts". The keel was laid in the backyard of the Campbell's house in Kareela Road, Cremorne. I began following my father down there then hanging around the boatshed at the foot of Green Street.

The sailing craft at the shed at this time were quite varied. "Joan" was an ancient twelve footer, clinker built and was not being raced. "Donnelly" was an ex Australian champion 12 ft. skiff, sailing with the Cadet Dinghies and owned by Woodle, which just may have been his surname.

Two 16 ft. skiffs were racing with the Port Jackson Skiff Club, "Wake" was owned by Fred Brown and his brother Doug, while "Gnome" was owned by Buster Brown.

"Desdemona" was the pride of the shed, sailing in the Flying Squadron on Saturdays. She was a very old eighteen footer built in 1911, with a keel that was at least twelve inches deep forming quite a well in the after end of the boat. While very beamy by modern standards, she was not as big as a lot of her competitors.

But she was heavy! Each year she had to be refastened, and the weight of copper nails and roves was enormous. She had big gear, and she used to "work" in strong winds.

"Dessie" had a crew of seven or eight. They were big men, and strong men, and needed to be. But they had many willing young hands in the shed, and we used to vie for the honour of helping to stop the spinnakers, and to bootpolish the enormous steel centreboard. We helped put on the bowsprit, lace the "whiskers" and then lace the shrouds when the mast was stepped. The mainsail had to be laced to the gaff and the boom, and if there was doubt about the wind strength, both the big mainsail and the No. 2 mainsail would be laced on and prepared.

When it blew hard the eighteens would often take one or two extra men, usually taking them from the crew of the sixteens. The sixteens would take a "fifth man" and the twelve would either not go out, or use some of us boys. Firstly, I learnt to bail. "Joan" used to leak so much that you had to bail all the time. This was mainly as a result of running onto the rocks in front of the steps area, driving the centreboard straight through the back of the fin case.

On one of my first trips in "Donnelly" we filled up, out in Athol Bight. "Jump overboard", I was ordered. I didn't believe it, so I was swiftly kicked overboard. Two of us, held her up while the skipper bailed like mad. At other times we took jumpers off and stuffed them down the fin case to stop the water pouring in, while someone bailed.

When war broke out, quite a few of the sailing fraternity went into the Navy right away, including Fred Brown and Woodle. By this time I was a "disciple" of Tom Doyle, the skipper of "Desdemona" and he was commissioned by Woodle to sell "Donnelly". I had the joy of taking prospective customers out for a sail. However, on one outing (without any potential customers) I capsized her, off Clark Island. A Stannard launch took us in tow, and went so fast that "Donnelly" came up out of the water, tore the mainsail badly and lost the mainsheet. I was frantic, being a school boy with no money. From memory I managed to pay for the sail repair and Cliff Gale came to my rescue with another mainsheet.

At this time I became a regular crew hand on "Wake", now sailed by Doug Brown, and spent my first season in sixteen foot skiffs, a class of boat in which I was to race on and off for at least twenty years.



After the Japanese came into the war, a lot of men went into the services. In 1942, all the sailing craft were having crew problems, and I became a regular hand in "Dessie". This was the last season of "the old girl", she was then sold to become a fishing launch and the "Collaroy" was bought and renamed "Desdemona II". She was bigger than "Dessie I", but much lighter and newer. At this stage 7 ft. was the minimum beam, and most of the eighteens were exactly seven feet wide. Some of the big ones were more than eight feet wide.

The "two boat" shed also used to hold eighteen footers, but they all sailed on Sundays in the League Club. The boats there changed quite a few times, but "Dee Why" was there for a long time, and "Coronet", and for a while "Ada-A", lived in the main shed. Old Chris Webb sailed her a few times, and he had to be lifted in and out of her.

Russ Bendall was sheethand in "Desdemona" and bought an 18, "Trade Wind", which he kept in the shed and raced on Sundays. For a short while most of us were sailing both Saturday and Sunday, but it was far too strenuous for me, if there were two heavy days.

Forward hands were the main difficulty with crew—good ones were scarce, and seemed to be "prima donnas". Most of them would refuse to help rig or unrig the boat. The most amusing one I remember actually tried to come aboard with an umbrella up, because it was raining.

In another race, I think on "Dee Why", in a championship start, we got a magnificent start, right to windward next to the starter's boat. "Bang" went the gun, and our forward hand (Brian Gale, I think) collapsed into the boat. He had been hit on the face by the wad from the blank cartridge.

In the winter of 1943, Tom Doyle and Laurie Blake built "Desdemona III" at Putney. She was the smallest size allowable, though still 7 ft. beam, and was a really light construction. I worked with them, as "boy" labourer. "Dessie III" was very fast, but we had great troubles keeping her afloat until we got used to her lack of stability.

However, before this, probably somewhere in 1942, races on the main harbour were forbidden, and the eighteens moved "up the river". "Desdemona" moved to Lan Taylor's boatshed in Lavender Bay. We all had to have "permits" to be on the harbour, and we carefully put these in a bottle, and tied it in somewhere. The first time we capsized we lost the bottle and all the permits.

We sailed around Cockatoo Island on most courses, and on one occasion as we sailed in at a warship alongside the island, a sentry called out to us "stop or I'll fire". I can still remember the reply he got, but it doesn't stand printing.

Early in 1940 my father and Kipps Campbell launched their boat "Moana". A mobile crane with a long jib lifted her out of the backyard up on to the road, onto a low loader. She was taken to Mosman Bay, behind the ferry wharf, where the coke wharf was—now a block of home units. The crane deposited her into the water, and we began bailing.

"Moana" was moored in Mosman Bay for some years and for a while the dinghy was kept at McKenzie's shed, and she was slipped and painted there. The shed seemed to run down quite quickly, I suppose because the war and the restrictions on going on the harbour made business very poor. McKenzie got back into uniform, as a Wing-Commander, in the Air Training Corps. However, he was not at the shed long after we left, and died before the war ended. As far as I know, Max Emken took over the shed from him.

"Moana" was moved to Balmoral. I went into the army, so for many years I did not go near Mosman Bay or the Cremorne Boatshed, though I sailed in a sixteen footer out of Sirius Cove from 1947 till 1949. There was a lack of small sailing craft in the area until the Mosman Amateur Sailing Club was formed. I do not remember going to the boatshed again until the Amateurs had built the present shed. However, I helped pull down the "Dessie's Shed" to make way for the No. 2 slip, and was surprised to realise that it was more than 30 years earlier that I had started sailing from that spot.

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Dessie's Shed—1913. "DESDOMONA"—18 foot—  
outside her shed with A. C. Roberts, the Crown  
Solicitor, owner (moustache).

*Photo courtesy D. W. Gale.*



## THE SILENT ONES

Three men sailed a yacht to victory on many occasions, and to pick up some points a gentleman (now Sir Frank Packer) requested to be allowed to join them. After the firing of the finishing gun he turned to the skipper and said, "How do you three communicate—you don't talk?" Stan Stevens replied, "Arthur and Harry know exactly what to do and when to do it and if the adjacent boat doesn't know what you are doing, you have the advantage."

How very true.

The yacht in which they sailed was "Iolaire" (formerly "Awanui III") and their exploits in the Northcote Cup have been recorded in other Clubs' Histories but the men themselves were Amateurs. S. N. (Stan) Stevens joined S.A.S.C. in 1899 at the age of 24. He had had plenty of experience prior to that as he joined the crew of his father's yacht "Australian" in 1884. He is credited with winning 200 races and in 1932 held the record for Northcote Cup Victories—four. In the initial Forster Cup Race for 21-ft. restricted class he sailed "Gumleaf" to victory. In the Northcote Series his crew were both for'ard hands of considerable experience, A. A. (Arthur) Preston and H. G. (Harry) Campbell. Stan was Joint Hon. Secretary, 1899-1900.

Arthur Preston joined S.A.S.C. after he returned from World War I, and in pre-war days won the Snails Bay Club Championship in his 17-ft. "Frolic" and had remarkable experience in all types of sailing craft. After several seasons in various S.A.S.C. boats (mainly "Wirraminna") he worked for'ard hand in "Aoma"—"Iolaire"—"Bona" (skipped by Stan Stevens). He resigned due to ill health in 1955.

Harry Campbell has been associated with Stevens in many yachts since 1911 ("Yeulba"—"Magic"—"Aoma"—"Leuralla"—"Iolaire"—"Gumleaf"). He joined S.A.S.C. in 1920 and is a Life Member today, and was a silent but active member as he was Joint Auditor from 1925 to 1961, retiring from the position when the Club became a Limited Company. In his heyday, in the setting of jibs, spinnakers and ballooners, he was considered a master.

Stan—Arthur—Harry were known as "The Silent Ones".

Arthur has received one other honour that is almost unique during his sailing career in that he is the holder of Quarantine Surveillance Certificate No. 5 issued 21.4.1912. The reason is explained in a paragraph in the Evening News 25.4.1912.

## "CAUGHT boating party vaccinated

The quarantine officials apparently are determined that boating parties will in future steer clear of the restricted waters inside North Head. Two boats belonging to the Snails Bay Club were caught in the big blow and they put in under Green Point—the spot where the quarantine flag is hoisted—for shelter after taking a severe battering between the Heads. After bailing out their boats, making minor repairs and reefing their sails, they made ready to depart when they were ordered to land by the quarantine officials, owing to their being inside the buoys and consequently breaking the regulations.

After landing they were duly informed that they had been trespassing and as a safeguard, owing to quarantined passengers of the S.S. Malwa being detained at the station, it was desirable that they be vaccinated. This having been done they were allowed to depart with their Certificates which instructed them to report to the Customs House on 23rd, 25th, 27th April 1912 at 11.00 a.m. for examination by a Medical Officer of Health.

The general opinion is that the whole thing was done as a warning to those who repeatedly sail inside the buoys, not to do it again."

"Frolic" owned and skippered by Arthur Preston was one of the boats.

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"IOLAIRE"—Stan Stevens, Arthur Preston and  
Harry Campbell.

*Photo courtesy H. Campbell.*



### ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CLUBHOUSE

When, in 1883, the Amateurs' first clubhouse at Benelong Point, the site of the Sydney Opera House, was resumed for the development of Circular Quay, the members found that being a sailing club without a home had certain advantages. The work of administration was reduced to a minimum and the cost of running the club was correspondingly low. This made it possible to keep the Annual Subscription well within the reach of the many sailing enthusiasts, with the result that the Amateurs was soon the largest and keenest racing club on the harbour.

Apart from racing and the monthly meetings, which were held in a variety of venues over the years, other Club activities were rendezvous at such places as Store Beach, Reef Beach, Forty Baskets or Taylor Bay, the annual Club Night Afloat and the Christmas cruise to Pittwater. The members were all sailing men and their boats were their club. There were no "social" members and it was largely because of this that the Amateurs retained their strength through two wars and a depression.

With the object of keeping the cost of racing from getting out of hand, rules were introduced limiting boats to 35 feet overall with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  rig and disallowing masthead spinnakers. The "Colleen", designed by Barber, was one of many yachts built to conform with the Amateurs' rules.

But while this, and the idea of "our boats being our club", had the effect of keeping the Amateurs within the financial reach of practically anyone who could afford the smallest 3rd division boat, there were also disadvantages which became more apparent as the years went by.

The Club began to find that many members, as their financial positions improved with advancing years, were leaving to join other clubs where there were no restrictions, and where they could entertain their families and friends without taking them out for a sail on Sunday afternoon. This loss of senior and experienced members was highlighted as a number of our former members went on to Flag Rank. Every other yacht club in Sydney has, at one time or another, had a Commodore who commenced his sailing career with the Amateurs and this Club is proud to record the fact.

Although it was not until 1952 that the length limit was abandoned, and 1955 before the restriction on spinnakers was lifted, it was in the early 30's that some of the members began to discuss the advantages of finding another clubhouse.

The first definite move was made during Harry Lloyd's term of office. But tradition dies hard, and at a packed meeting the suggestion was thrown out of court.

The next move was made by C. W. Robson, who suggested starting a branch of the club at the Spit to cater for the members from Middle Harbour, North Harbour and Manly, but this idea was also over-ruled.

But times change, and with the emergence of the affluent society after the Second World War, more and more members began to see merit in the idea of finding a new home, and in the late 50's Commodore Ernest Merrington and Secretary Tony Furse were commissioned to investigate possible sites.

One of them was our present clubhouse, which was then owned—boatshed and all—by the Cremorne Club, of which Billy Hughes was at one time a member.

Ownership was supposed to be in the hands of the members, each one holding a small parcel of shares. But it was found on investigation that most of the shares had been acquired by two brothers—solicitors who shared an office, but it is said were not on speaking terms. The remainder were still held by the descendants of the original members, or the very few original members who were still living. Most of these could not be traced. The boatshed was leased to Max Emken with whom the brothers, singly and collectively, were at loggerheads and there was some confusion with the local council over the matter of maintenance.

Not surprisingly the attempts to unravel this tangled skein and negotiate a sale were a complete and utter failure, the only result being that the council divided the property and gave Max Emken an independent lease of the boatshed.

But the search went on. For the remainder of Ernest Merrington's term of office and for the two years when Tony Furse was Commodore, every possible site was investigated. It was a fruitless search. The ones the Amateurs could afford were unsuitable for one reason or another, and the ones which were suitable were far beyond our limited means. By the time Bill Merrington was elected Commodore in 1960, all avenues had been explored and the matter was temporarily shelved.

This, it must be recorded, did not disappoint all the members. There were still some, mostly older members, who were convinced that the reputation which the Amateurs had earned for keenness and sportsmanship was the result of having, over the years, concentrated solely on sailing without becoming involved in the social and allied aspects of "clubbery" which went hand in hand with having a clubhouse. These members—and they had been the backbone of the Amateurs for years—were prepared to go along with the wishes of the majority, but it is understandable that they were relieved when the attempts to find a clubhouse failed.

Then, just when it seemed that all doors were closed, the door to success opened in a rather strange and roundabout way.

In addition to the need for having a clubhouse in order to retain our identity, there were other more practical reasons why some members were in favour of acquiring their own premises.

Firstly, it was becoming more and more difficult to find suitable moorings and accommodation on the waterfront, and, secondly, the cost of keeping and maintaining a boat at a commercial boatshed was becoming exorbitant.

To overcome these problems, a body of 20 boatowners, mostly from Mosman and nearly all Amateurs, formed a co-operative with the object of finding a spot where they could lay 20 moorings and erect a shed to house their dinghies and gear and, if possible, build their own slip.





Max's Shed in the 1950's.

*Photo courtesy S.A.S.C.*



The Maritime Services Board was very helpful and offered a variety of sites. Most proved unsuitable but one in Sirius Cove had possibilities and plans were drawn up for a modest shed.

Before a start had been made, however, it was learnt that Cremorne Yacht Services shed was available and should go for a song, as the proprietor had been trying to sell the badly deteriorated shed and virtually defunct business without success. He was also under notice to carry out extensive repairs as it was a public shed, but this notice would not apply to the co-operative, who, being a private body, could carry out the repairs in their own good time.

A suitably low offer was made which the vendor considered for a week or so and then rejected because—to quote him—“I’ve had a better offer from the Sydney Amateurs.” He was, however, unaware that one of the negotiators for the co-operative was also a member of the Amateurs Committee who knew that this claim was not strictly in accordance with the facts.

The truth was that he had written to the Amateurs offering to sell to them at a figure considerably above the co-operative’s offer, and claiming that he had another interested party who was prepared to pay the price he quoted.

Knowing that they were the other “interested party” the co-operative told the Club how much they had offered and agreed to retire from the scene if the Amateurs were interested. They were, and began negotiations a little below the co-operative’s price. An agreement was reached, but subject to the Club being able to also acquire the premises owned by the Cremorne Club, as a shed without a clubhouse would have been of little use.

Then the fun started. In addition to the difficulties already mentioned it was found that the Cremorne Club was built on land which was, according to the Lands Department, right in the middle of Green Street. Apparently the cartographer who had drawn up the original plans of the district, had drawn Green Street right down to the water’s edge, and before a sale could be approved it was necessary to have the area re-zoned. No one in authority could explain how the Cremorne Club had managed to acquire a lease of a public highway in the first place, but they were quite prepared to re-zone to make the sale possible.

This, however, was not as easy as it sounded.

First the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Maritime Services Board, Dept. of Mines, the Water Board, the Town Planning Authority, and any other official body who might be interested, had to be approached and asked to state officially that they did not require the land for any national purpose.

Such a momentous decision could not, of course, be made by any Government body lightly and, judging by the time it took to get any action, it seems reasonable to suppose that they all put the matter in the “Too Hard” file and forgot it.

That all these difficulties were overcome and the purchase finally accomplished reflects great credit on the tenacity and determination of the members who were handling the negotiations. Bill Merrington, Commodore; Nick Cassim, Hon. Solicitor; Jim Middleton, Hon. Secretary and Brian Woods, Financial Advisor.

Meantime, the shed, now unoccupied except by a few of the vendor’s former customers, who were keeping their dinghies there rent-free, was rapidly deteriorating. All but two of the moorings sank, and all movable gear—including a work boat, a pontoon for servicing moorings, and a new winch—mysteriously disappeared. The slipway and cradle, through long neglect, had become quite unserviceable, the dinghy pontoon had subsided to the harbour floor and the ramp had broken away from the shed. The floor of the shed, because it was below high water mark, was almost hidden under a pile of flotsam and debris, and in some places was rotten and dangerous.

To prevent further deterioration during the long negotiations, two members, Eric Upward and David Rayment—who had also been the prime movers in the formation of the co-operative—moved their boats, “Rambler” and “Stardust”, onto the two remaining moorings, which they had serviced at their own expense, and began clearing up the mess.

The Club was changed from an unincorporated body to a limited company on the 13th October 1962 and the purchase finalised. The bulk of the purchase money came from the members either in the form of direct donations, or by the purchase of short term notes.

Three committees were immediately formed:—

**Finance and Administration:** Chairman A. W. Merrington, J. A. Middleton, R. A. Lee, A. W. Furse, B. Woods.

**Boatshed:** Chairman C. R. E. Warren, E. L. Upward, W. D. Rayment, D. W. Gale, B. Wild, G. Brackenbury.

**Clubhouse—Social:** Chairman N. G. Cassim, A. W. Furse, P. Lawson, K. Hammond.

It was obvious that the boatshed could not hope to pay its way until a prodigious amount of work had been done, so the Clubhouse Committee did the most urgent repairs on its long list and then began running social functions to help offset the cost of getting the boatshed into running order. They were ably assisted in this by an active and enthusiastic Ladies’ Auxiliary comprising President H. Merrington, M. Warren, J. Cassim, J. Howe and M. Upward.

Their joint efforts were so successful that by the time of the next Annual Report they had made a profit which exceeded by more than three times the amount of the loss incurred by the boatshed. They had in fact “carried” the boatshed while it was getting on its feet.

To describe in any detail the work done on the boatshed over the next few months would require much more space than is available here and it is probably best covered by quoting from the report which Chairman Bab Warren presented to the members at the General Meeting of the 24th July 1963.

“A rather sorry sight greeted the members of the committee when they held their first meeting in the boatshed last year.

The shed itself had an alarming lean; doors would not close and it was filled with the strangest collection of junk.





Closing Day Frolics, 1963.

*Photo courtesy J. A. Middleton.*



The slipway was far from serviceable; the landing ramp had sunk and was in a dangerous condition. The so-called equipment and tools were either absent or in disrepair. Moorings, on examination, were virtually non-existent...

To cap this rather bleak outlook we were advised by the Finance-Administration Committee that funds were severely limited.

With the assistance of voluntary labour and under the active leadership of Eric Upward and David Rayment, we proceeded to knock things into shape.

It would be impossible to list in the space available the names of the members who have given such valuable assistance both in labour and materials during the year. Gentlemen, the Committee joins me in thanking you for making our work so much easier.

Beset by various trials and tribulations, the facilities have steadily improved.

The employment of a skilled part-time boatshed hand—Tony Ashleigh—since last January has been most successful.

We now have twenty-one serviceable moorings, of which nineteen are occupied and are shedding twenty-seven dinghies and small boats.

The building and ramps, if not in perfect order, are at least tidy and reasonably functional.

The slipway and cradle, which has never been entirely satisfactory, is at present undergoing extensive repairs and renovations.

A plan of proposed alterations to the boatshed which envisages demolishing the present large shed and replacing it with a new structure is at present being investigated by a select committee.

The boatshed is supplying members with shedding and moorings at a reasonable cost and at the same time laying the foundations of a new era in the history of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club."

When Bob Warren wrote that report in 1963, the boatshed had just started to pay its way and it is interesting to note that the Club's total expenditure in putting it on a paying basis was only \$1604. The balance—and it was considerable—had been contributed by members either in labour or in materials. It was a wonderful example from "The Amateurs".

The solid foundation laid in those early days was as solidly built on by a succession of equally dedicated committees, and in 1964 the old boatshed was replaced by the present structure.

Between 1964 and 1966, while C. F. C. Crisp was Rear Commodore and Chairman of Boatshed Committee, the pontoon and ramp to the design of G. Brackenbury were installed, and the shed fitted out with an office which served as a home for the Club's paid Secretary for several years. During this period the Club's moorings increased from 21 to 36.

The more recent development followed the appointment of a Development Committee to consider all possible trends of development and the means of carrying out the work.

Its inaugural meeting was under the Chairmanship of N. G. Cassim—Commodore in 1964. It met spasmodically from then on until more regular meetings were held under Commodore J. Jackson who had been a strong supporter of the move to obtain Green Street. From its inception the Committee pushed for developing a master plan of action for the future growth of the Club—this after all is the very nature of "development".

It became evident early in this meeting that members generally favoured the development of the Green Street site. At the time the old Manly Ferry Depot on Kurraba Point was a possible alternative, but this apparent opportunity was not, in fact, ever available because the site was dedicated as parkland.

Having established that it should study how best to develop the Green Street site, the committee decided that since sailing was our prime function, the highest priority was to be given to the development of facilities for the maintenance of yachts.

The shed was fitted with dinghy racks and lockers. The men's toilet block was built. The office was equipped and a lock-up store for starting gear and equipment was installed. And Tony Ashleigh was employed on a full-time basis.

Next, the remaining portion of the old boatshed was demolished and the No. 2 slipway was built. A tender was also built in 1968 with some of the work again being done on a voluntary basis.

In 1970 the fitting out wharf was constructed by J. Bailey Constructions Pty. Ltd., and No. 1 slipway was extended to allow for slipping at all states of the tide. In 1971 the crane was added for the lifting out of masts, engines, etc. These improvements greatly assisted the members to maintain their boats easily and economically.

Development of the clubhouse facilities was carried out concurrently with the development of the boating facilities.

In 1967 the new main entrance and committee room were constructed. Improved and enlarged amenities were provided for lady members and visitors in 1968, and in 1969 the clubhouse roof was renewed. The Development Committee has maintained a consistent policy of improving the Club's facilities on positive lines with an ultimate objective in mind.

It is obvious that the present building has a limited life and will ultimately have to be replaced. During recent years adjacent properties have been examined and feasibility studies in respect of acquiring them carried out. But the answer has always been the same and attention is now directed solely towards the development of the Green Street site.

One thing is certain. The Club enjoys a wonderful location and has an enviable reputation of being a pleasant organisation to belong to, free from the pressures and attitudes which are so much the bane of many other clubs, and is unique in the respect that it must be the only club of its size and consequence which has not overspent itself, still has a credit balance at the bank and still runs profitably.

May it always remain that way.





Ladies' Day, 1964.

*Photo courtesy J. A. Middleton.*





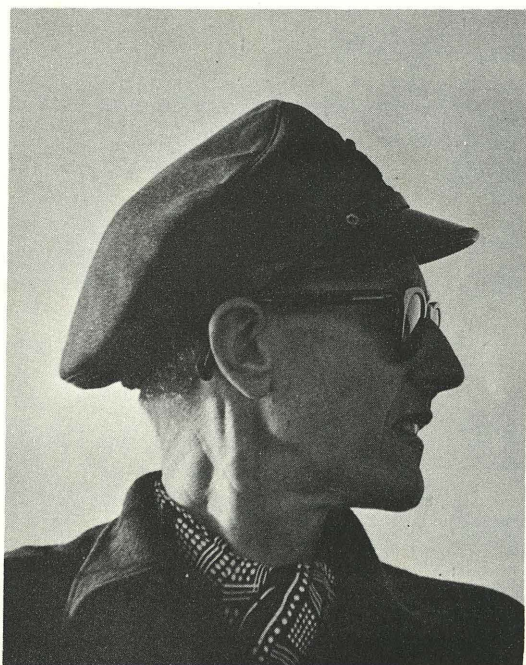
J. A. Middleton



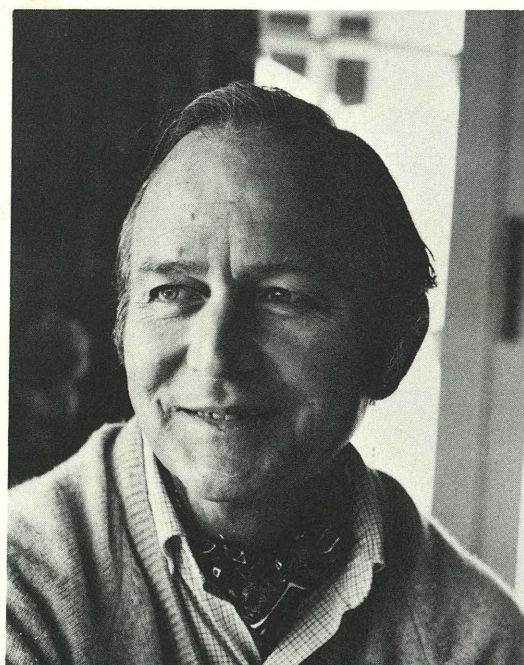
L. P. Jones

HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE.

*Photo Young & Richardson.*



W. D. Rayment



J. V. Raffan



In producing this book, an attempt has been made to review the outstanding events and members of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club since its foundation in 1872. It has been compiled from a painstaking search of records, minutes, annual reports, newspaper articles and government files; and from information supplied by members. The statistical and historical segments provide a complete record, but in the segment on articles and anecdotes it has not been possible to include every boat and every member over a period of one hundred years. The articles cover only those whose careers or length of membership have earned them a place, and those who have, in response to numerous requests, submitted material from which articles could be written.

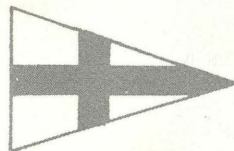
The story of the Amateurs does not end with the publication of this book. History is a continuing thing and is still being made. It is our hope that any member who has information which would be of interest to the Club will forward it to the Historical Committee who will place it in the records for the use of future historians.

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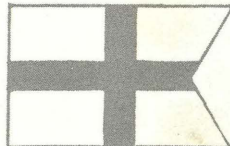




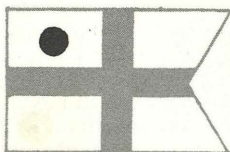
# BURGEES.



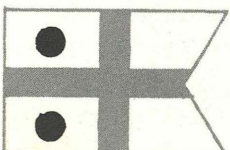
CLUB



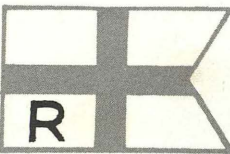
COMMODORE



VICE COMMODORE



REAR COMMODORE



PAST COMMODORES

Cross Blue, Emblem Black.







