

## Chapter Seven

### *Some Boats and Sailors*

#### **Ramblings of an Old Salt. September 1996**

(This is a true story of an early introduction to sailing by an anonymous member, widely thought to be Mr Bean.)

It was approximately 30 years ago. My father was visiting from overseas and I arranged to hire a yacht and take out him, my secretary and her husband for a pleasant Saturday afternoon sail. I had only sailed once before, in a Heron but I had read all the books.

We were dropped on board by the boatshed tender at a mooring in Balmoral Bay. The yacht was 24 feet long and in a sorry state. There was no motor, all we had were old sails, an anchor and a dinghy with two different length oars (this turned out to be a bit of a blessing). I thought the boatshed was most trusting in just leaving us on board to do our own thing.

We managed to sail off the mooring without too great a drama and started to head towards Manly. We were a quarter of a mile from shore when all of a sudden we got hit by a bullet, and as I was somewhat inexperienced we rounded up. In the ensuing drama, the tiller which was not fixed into the rudder, came free and went over the side. We managed to pull the dinghy alongside, grabbed the short oar and stuck it into the hole in the rudder to use as a tiller. It was like a decapitating sweep. We sailed back towards the boatshed, got somewhere close to Balmoral Baths, rounded up, and dropped anchor, not wanting to risk sailing through crowded moorings with an oar for a tiller, particularly as it was discovered there was no boathook! We also discovered there were no dinghy rowlocks, so we hailed somebody on the beach and they went to the boatshed.

Shortly thereafter, out came the tender. Back at the boatshed the manager was most annoyed with us for having lost his tiller. He proceeded to take a piece of scrap wood and fashioned something which could be stuck in the hole in the rudder. He also gave us some rowlocks but had no boathook. Whilst we were in the boatshed, a message came through that the yacht was now scraping alongside Balmoral Baths. (I hadn't put out enough scope.) This made the manager even more annoyed and he sent out the tender to retrieve the yacht.

Eventually, we boarded again, jammed the make-shift tiller into the rudder, and had the tender tow us out into the open to set sail. After this drama we decided to have a few drinks to calm our shattered nerves. In mid-afternoon, we had sailed around Watsons Bay and having run out of liquid refreshments, decided we would drop anchor and row ashore to the hotel. There was a large square-rigged vessel in Watsons Bay from Norway, over a hundred foot long moored in front of the hotel. I cleverly dropped anchor just in front of this Norwegian vessel (those drinks had really made me confident) and as the dinghy could only hold three, it was decided that my secretary, her husband and myself would go to the hotel leaving my father on board. We decided to have a drink whilst we were at the hotel, so it was half an hour before we set out from the shore to row back to our yacht. It was nowhere to be seen.

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 1986
 

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*18th January: Nominated skippers' race—while there were a number of starters in this annual event unfortunately there were no winners! Due to lack of breeze no yachts finished within the specified time*

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Finally we noticed a mast on the other side of the square-rigger and rowed around to see my father fending off from this massive hull. Again I had failed to put out enough scope and we had dragged anchor. We raised the sails, started pulling in the anchor but it was stuck solid. It was later realised that the fluke of our anchor was caught up with the enormous anchor chain of the square-rigger. We hailed a passing speed boat and he started to tow us forward in front of the square-rigger to pull the anchor free. After many attempts he stated that he had to leave and released the tow rope. We drifted back and the bowsprit of the square-rigger went in between the starboard cap shroud and the mast just above the spreaders. By this time a bunch of curious Norwegian sailors on board started to take notice. We shouted to the speed boat not to leave us in this predicament so he decided to give it one more go. Having now realised our problem with the anchor, we firstly cut the anchor rope, a fatal mistake. The speedboat again took the tow line, and this time proceeded to pull us sideways. I shouted at him to pull us forward, but he kept going. The strain was too much. Next thing we knew the mast had fallen over and in the ensuing drama the boom hit my secretary on the head.

Our new friend in the speed boat immediately shouted that he had to get home and headed off at a rate of knots. As we were now free, we started to drift back towards the Pilot Station in Watsons Bay. So there we were; no motor, no sails, no anchor, no boathook trying to grab a passing mooring, and no more power boats to give us a hand. We tried lassoing as we drifted past moored yachts; no go. I eventually jumped into the dinghy, and as we were drifting back, I managed to drag the vessel over towards the pilot jetty. Eventually we came alongside and tied up. I was absolutely exhausted having dragged the yacht in a cross wind so that we could bump into the jetty, and being such a well equipped vessel, of course, we found out there weren't any fenders either to protect the topside. There were some pilots in an office at the shore end of the jetty and they were most surprised when four bedraggled sailors walked through from the wrong way (from the ocean side), saying "good afternoon".

It was then over to the hotel for a beverage for shattered nerves, whilst I made a phone call to the boatshed. The words of the boatshed manager are unprintable. I told him that the mast had "just fallen down" and neglected to mention the bowsprit on the square-rigger incident. The next day he gave me a call to tell me I had lost my \$20 deposit. My father never went sailing again, my secretary had a couple of stitches to her forehead and also never went sailing again but I had the strength of character to return to the sea, eventually gaining a TL4 Certificate! I presume our anchor was taken aboard the square rigger and ended up in Norway.

## **Thunderbird, *Kaldari* 1965/72**

**Richard Wilson**

It is amazing to me how much influence the Gale family has had on the SASC not least of all Bill Gale who has been a close friend and great guiding influence to me. This recollection has been brought about by Bill's insistence that I should put something down on the time that I spent sailing in the Thunderbird class with the Sydney Amateurs. I had sailed for quite a number of years in small boats, a number of which I had built myself. After meeting Bill in the early 60s I started sailing with his father, Cliff, in *Ranger* and while with him learnt a tremendous amount about all aspects of sailing. During this time I also become aware of the strong Thunderbird fleet and this appealed to me as I wanted to do some class racing and the thought of being able to build my own boat had even more appeal. Another Gale, Roger, also showed great interest in the building of the boat and gave guidance and assistance over the nine months it took to build.

The people involved in the class were also of great assistance and were always willing to help in any way. People like Fred Wrobel, Dick Christian who had Boy Messenger sailing with him, Laurie Schnieder, Rob Skinner, Grahame Day, Peter Gregory, among many others. The racing was always very competitive and I enjoyed so many aspects of it. My youthful enthusiasm and the assistance of so many all went to make up a tremendous seven years in the Thunderbirds.

I am not comfortable with putting some of the results down but through Bill's persuasion here are some:

We won three point scores with the club to give us the Jubilee Plate in the year the Club had its centenary. I then presented a Trophy as is customary which became the Centenary Plate. We were lucky enough to win three state titles and were placed in the top three in every other of the seven years.

We were also placed second with the help and guidance of Roger Gale in the world Championships that were held on the Harbour, finishing behind Tony Parkes with Mike Fletcher aboard calling the shots.

They were great times with the Club and although I am no longer a member I still enjoy being able to help the Club out in making available my motor cruiser for the purpose of taking their guests around on special occasions and enabling me to still enjoy what sailing is all about.

## Arthur Prigge 1939–1989

Vic Dibben

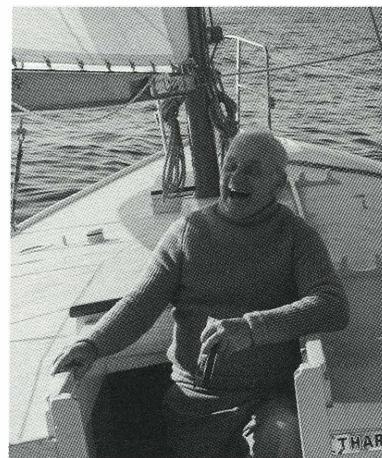
Arthur Prigge, a Life Member, joined the Club in 1939.

He purchased a yacht *Thurloo* about 1937 from Ern Merrington. Then he built *Thara* MH 82 launched in 1948. Readers may wonder about the MH sail number. This was brought about because Arthur, like a number of others who were members of the SASC or raced with the SASC, moored their yachts at the Spit. To get to the Spit after work on Saturday mornings and sail around to the SASC in time to start in the races was difficult so a number of yacht owners including Arthur started the Middle Harbour Yacht Club so they could race there. Arthur won many events and a bulkhead of skite plates to prove it. Although he was a foundation member of MHYC he was very attached to the SASC.

He was Secretary of the SASC from January 1979 to July, 1984. Arthur in business was a Company Secretary and his professional skills were very advantageous to the SASC. It was during his term of office the Government tightened many controls and changed the regulations governing Clubs. This meant we had to change our Articles of Association to bring them up to date. Working with Nick Cassim, the Club Honorary Solicitor, Arthur was able to satisfy the Corporate Affairs Commission on this matter.

When the Club started the AYF TL4 sail training courses Arthur was an enthusiastic supporter as a lecturer and using *Thara* for practical exercise on the water, where he always emphasised safe sailing.

Cruising as often as possible in Pittwater, *Thara* was always in contact with other SASC yachts and I have many happy memories of sailing with Arthur from Sydney Harbour to Pittwater and back again.



A jovial Arthur Prigge at sea in his yacht *Thara* on a beautiful day in August 1983 (Photo: John Jeremy)

## E J Merrington. Past Commodore and Honorary Life Member

Whilst the history of the Merringtons is set out in *The Amateurs*, it seems appropriate to outline some of the details of Ern's most interesting life.

He commenced a lifelong association with yachting from childhood at Huntley's Point, picnic sailing in his father's 18 footer *Merlin* and then as skipper in their



Bill Merrington (right) with son James on Eventide A38, 1997. Bill is Ern Merrington's brother. The family has been involved with The Amateurs since the early days. Bill is on the Board of Directors and has just entered his 50th racing season (Photo: Martin Van der Wal)

Ranger class *Wanderer*, winning the 1934 point score gold medal. At the age of 18 Ern joined the Amateurs in 1929. Throughout his membership he has continually worked for yachting, serving on the Committee for 26 years. He has held the office of Rear Commodore, Vice Commodore and Commodore from 1950 to 1958. He has been Chairman of the Protest Committee, Club delegate to the SYRA (from which the AYF developed), YA of NSW 1952-72 and President 1966-68, President of the AYF 1968-69 and elected to Honorary Life Membership of SASC in 1958.

He represented the AYF at the Pacific Games in Port Moresby and for the selection trials for the Olympic Games in Botany bay. During his term as Commodore he vigorously pursued investigations for possible Clubhouse sites.

Commissioning his first *Thurloo*, a modified Bambridge class three quarter decked Bermuda rigged yacht, built by Jack Lucas at Drumoyne and raced successfully with the Amateurs, he sold her to the late Arthur Prigge, who like most who worked on Saturday mornings, would catch a tram after work to the Spit where she was moored, sail around to Shell Cove to the Amateurs start.

Ern graduated in optometry in 1932 and commenced business in 1938 which continued until his retirement in 1984. In the late thirties Ern bought from the Navy a damaged whaler. With a crew of half a dozen and several empty fuel drums it was towed from Clifton Gardens to the Lane Cove River, carried across the flats at low tide and onto the land in front of his house. She was repaired, fitted out internally, mast, rigging and an engine fitted. She served as a family holiday and cruising vessel for several years. In 1966 he acquired the *Bellbird* a 22ft half decked yacht probably well known to members. She had successfully sailed with the Amateurs for many years. This was inadequate accommodation for his growing family, and he sold it.

In 1947 Alan Payne was given his first commission to design the steel *Thurloo*. She was built in Alexandria by Fabricated Products and was immediately successful, not only providing full family accommodation with Mary and the four children but capable of winning races, including the Division 1 Point Score in 1960-61. She took part in many off shore events and was the first yacht to carry the Amateur's burgee to Hobart in 1960. After a trip to the Reef in 1976 she was sold to a Queenslander who has since sailed her around the Pacific.

He then acquired the Cavalier 32 *Forte* (which he said looked like a yacht ought), successfully campaigning with the Club for many years, again winning the 1978–79 Point Score.

At Past Commodores' Dinner at the SASC Ern was given the honour of being the first speaker and later happily joined in the discussions on the Club and its activities. Ern Crossed the Bar on 16 October 1996.

## W.A.(Tony) Ashleigh

Peter Wargent

As the history of the SASC lengthens, the list of those who had more than a passing influence on it grows; thus the second volume contains this reflection of Tony Ashleigh, who ran the Boatshed from 1965 to 1983.

Tony (or "Cracker" to his mates in Squadron days), was a Queenslander. Information on when he deserted his Brisbane family is not readily available, suffice to say that he left home at an early age to seek his fortunes in the world at large, and mostly at sea. He gradually worked his way north, mainly as a deckhand on fishing boats and traders, and spent some time in Papua New Guinea waters, especially around the Fly River. Of fair complexion and known as "Snowy" in those days (1940s), Tony was often the only white man in an area covering thousands of square miles, and, dealing and trading in anything and everything to make a quid. Learning to live off the land in such circumstances sharpened his survival instincts and his powers of improvisation were quick and ever creative, faculties that were to be of enormous benefit to the SASC in the early years at Green Street when money and material were in very short supply.

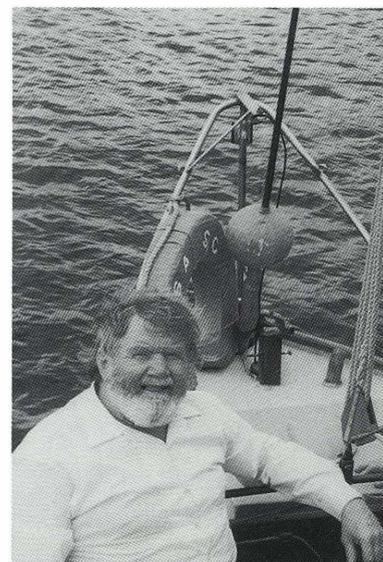
Returning south, Tony worked for Queensland Harbour and Lights servicing navigational aids up and down the coast. By early 1950s he had scraped together enough money to buy his own trader, an old Colin Archer style of vessel, hugely strong and voluminous, and ideal as a work vessel and home (he was now married and had a young son and daughter). Fate then turned heavily against him and he was caught in a tropical cyclone off the Queensland coast. His strength and toughness enabled him to save his wife and daughter, but the boat went down (including of course all his worldly possessions), and his baby son died before reaching shore.

Wishing and willing to start afresh Tony sent his wife and daughter down to Sydney, arriving himself as crew on the big yacht *Active*. Within a few days he managed to find work as a yard hand at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, under the capable and caring eye of Ron Aitken. This was about 1954.

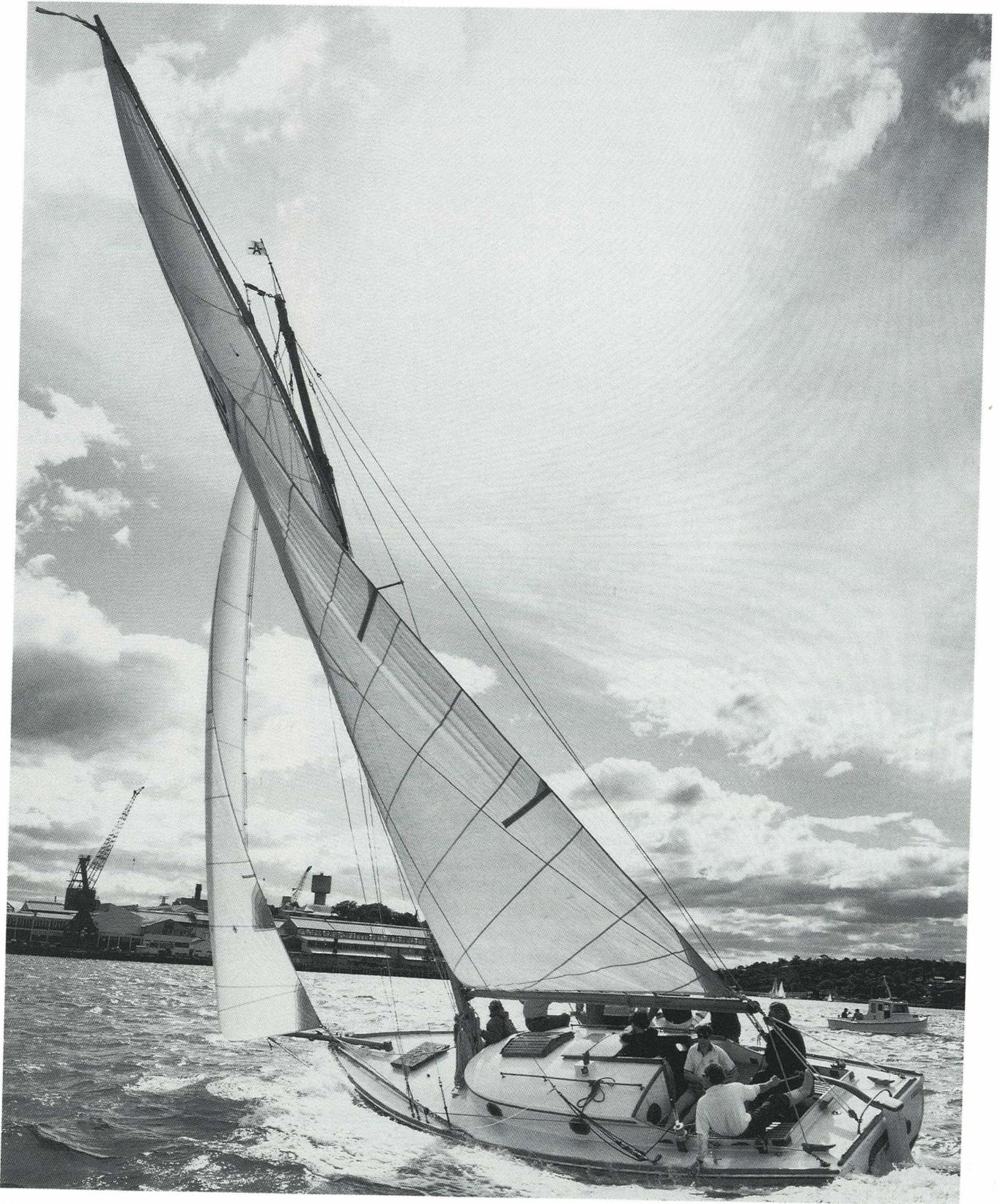
Although his wife and daughter eventually tired of Sydney, Tony slowly started to rebuild his life. His enthusiasm and willingness to pitch in to any work presented to him won respect and friends at the Squadron and around the waterfront that would last until the end of his days. He lived for a while at Elizabeth Bay House, and rowed to work every day for a couple of years, always equipped with newspaper and matches to use as a beacon if a ferry came too close. Later he sailed to work in *Dolphin*, an old 22 ft Colleen class yacht he managed to acquire and restore.

Also working at the RSYS at that time was a young skiff sailor and yardhand called Alan Lucas. Ashleigh's stories of sailing and life in the tropics contributed to firing the Lucas imagination, culminating in much travel and Alan's famous and informative books on cruising.

As time progressed another twist in the tale occurred. *Junebird*, a fast little yacht originally owned and successfully raced by EC Gale in the twenties, lay wasting away in Woodford Bay. Mick Earl (son of the irrepressible Jack) the current owner, had run out of funds to rebuild her. Approximately of the same style and nature, Cracker and Earl had become great sailing and drinking mates.



Tony "Cracker" Ashleigh at the helm of Carefree A96 in 1988



*Hoana A100, Martin Van der Wal. Built in 1920 this 30ft boat was the original Hoana. In 1924 another 32ft version was built leading to some confusion over the two. From 1947 Hoana has been on the Club register. In 1965 she left Sydney on a world cruise with Joe and Anne Adams for three years. Martin Van der Wal retains Hoana in superb condition and is a regular competitor in Traditional and Gaffers Divisions (Photo: Peter Bateman)*

What quantity of alcohol consumated the deal is not recorded, but Tony exchanged £50 for *Junebird* and a bucket of screws and nails. As one famous Sydney shipwright said "about the only plank left on the stem was the garboard, and the centreboard case was a bonus".

Unperturbed, Tony Ashleigh lashed a couple of 44 gallon drums to what was now "his" yacht, and floated her up to the old ANW wharf and shed at Careening Cove (later rebuilt to the plans of SASC member Charles Maclurcan, and currently the site of Geoff Tyers' yard). Within a matter of months, improvisation to the fore, he had her shipshape, sailing again, and his "taxi" to the Squadron. Tony had become an Ordinary Member of the SASC in 1958, and in 1960 *Junebird* reappeared on the Club Register under her original sailnumber of A19. She was to be Cracker's sometimes flagship, sometimes home, and sometimes bolthole, for about twenty years.

The Amateurs acquired the current site at Green Street in the early sixties. It was ramshackle, very run down, and only even partially habitable after enormous voluntary effort by many members. In January 1963 they started hiring Tony Ashleigh on a part time basis. He was still permanently employed by the Squadron, but gradually started putting in more and more weekend and evening time at Green Street; driving the tender for weekend racing, assisting repair the shed, Clubhouse, slips, and attending to a myriad of jobs as the SASC gradually clawed its way upwards at what was hopefully to be a permanent home. As mentioned before, his powers of improvisation were exceptional, and at Green Street they were tested and used to the limit.

In 1965, John Jackson then Commodore, Tony became a full time SASC employee, in charge of the Boatshed. (This involved some delicate discussions as the SASC has always had cordial relations with the RSY and didn't want to appear to be pinching one of their valuable men!) Slipway work initially involved just slipping and anti-fouling boats, but Crackers' talents and self sufficient philosophies soon enabled general repair work to come under the SASC's wing, and "The Boatshed" became his working home and living for the next 18 years. In the early days a great many of the Boatshed tools were out of Tony's personal kit. He was an amateur yachtsman himself, from personal experience he knew what it was like to be without, and lent his tools and gear continually and unstintingly. But, like most, he disliked having his generosity abused, and "how are you off for socks and underpants?" would be growled at those who tried to borrow a screw-driver five times too often!

Cracker, as his nickname implied, was often an impatient man, although in fact it derived from his family, he was born Anthony Crack. He had survived and made his living by getting on with the job; this sometimes caused consternation to those running the Club, used to long deliberations at committee meetings and considering wider implications. From time to time there would be adverse comment from both sides, but compromise and a willingness to keep the interests of the SASC to the forefront remedied abrasive situations. Certainly most directors and members recognised that Tony's methods were ultimately beneficial to an impoverished and struggling sailing club, for Tony's part, after living and working with a variety of native settlements for many years, the SASC were a relatively amenable bunch (and they didn't throw real spears!).

In later years, modern yachts, their materials and building, bothered him. He had cut his teeth on working boats and working sail. If a boat couldn't sit in a cradle on her own bottom or keel, without supporting ropes or slings, she was an abortion. He accepted winches, but fibreglass was regarded as messy and smelly stuff (correct of course), and masking tape was of more use as a quick and cheap elastoplast than to give a straight line. Paint rollers were OK, but who really needed them (Tony had an incredibly quick brush action and the strength of wrist to go with it, a necessity learnt when having to beach a vessel and antifoul

between tides.) This and much more he contemplated as the SASC grew into the 20th century. But Tony couldn't and wouldn't slow down, regardless of what "abortions" were filling the slips the boatshed went on apace. Ever loyal to the Club and generous with his time, he was always behind major club functions, supporting and working tirelessly, and the Northcott Days for handicapped children especially exposed the charitable side of his nature.

For all the usual and valid reasons, Tony Ashleigh was voted an Honourary Life Member of the SASC in 1988. Along with the other life members he should have been able to live into retirement with the satisfaction of a great contribution. It was not to be. Whilst slipping a boat single handed in 1983, his foot got trapped under a cradle wheel. Although discharged from hospital as an amputee and no longer able to work the slips, Cracker carried on, extracting what he could from life, always improvising ways and means of continuing to sail *Care-free*. But it was an accident from which he never fully recovered. It slowed him down considerably, something which he was not used to and which his fighting spirit never fully accepted. He passed away on 2nd July 1990. In his own words, "I'm off on my last spinnaker run". The SASC had finally lost a great and loyal crewman.

The above has been written from the memories of many people with particular thanks to some of Tony's oldest friends:

Ron Aitken, for many years Foreman par excellence at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron.

Ron Balkwell, one of Sydney's great shipwrights, and for many years custodian of the Albert's 'fleet'.

Alf Lean, originally shipwright at the RSYS, later draughtsman for Alan Payne and chief draughtsman and designer for Warwick Hood, especially during the *Dame Pattie* 12 metre years.

Alan Lucas, sometime Sydney water rat, Tony's informal "apprentice" at the Squadron, and well known cruising author.

## Jack Earl – Artist, Sailor and Father

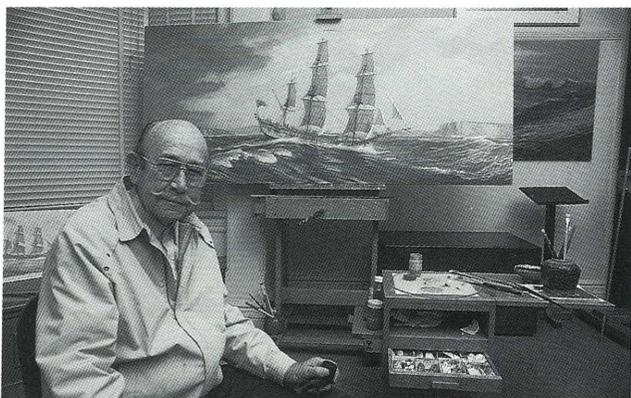
Michael Tomaszewski, May 1994

It was a moonlit ominous night, rain squalls and lightning on the horizon. It was a long weekend in October, perhaps 1957, somewhere off Shellharbour. We were sailing Jack Earl's recently launched Tasman Seabird *Maris* for a family weekend in Kiama. Jack, Kosti Simonds and my brother Matt were down below, off watch; Maris and I, on the helm for an hour or so, spellbound by the shore lights, the lightning and the clouds, sailing before a dying Nor'easter; the lights before me veered, the boat jibed; from below came Jack's calm voice "are you OK Mick?" "Yes", I replied, and Jack went back to sleep; we sailed on.

Jack Earl had that rare gift and enormous capacity of character to inspire confidence and give strength to those he came in contact with. He never knocked people, those he didn't respect he just dismissed. Jack Earl was the man who taught me humility, love and respect for the sea; gave me understanding, and above all Maris, my mate.

Jack Earl, joined the SASC 1970. He was one of the great pioneers, adventurers, seamen, artists and characters of Australian sailing. He was a legend in his own life time and his contribution to the sport in Australia and particularly in Sydney was huge. He was a founding member of the Cruising Yacht Club. There would be no annual pilgrimage to Hobart if Jack hadn't been the first of a bunch of friends to say that he was thinking of taking a trip south around Boxing day in 1945.

Jack Earl with his painting of Endeavour (Photo: Valerie Martin)



He was one of the first Australians to circumnavigate the globe in 1947 in his Colin Archer designed ketch, *Kathleen Gillett*, a bold adventure in a world only just out of the grip of war, he and his three crew were treated as heroes wherever they went and especially in their homeland. The voyage lasted two years. *The Kathleen Gillett* is now fully restored and maintained at the National Maritime Museum in Darling Harbour as a tribute to her voyage, her designer and especially old Jack.

As an artist of the sea Jack is thought by many to be one of the greatest. He had an amazing ability to capture the true feeling and motion of the sea. He had meticulous attention to detail and would spend literally months researching a boat before he'd even begin to lay brush to canvas. Jack Earl's paintings grace the walls of yacht clubs around the world and are in private collections of people such as Dennis Conner as well as the many people who were fortunate enough to know and love him as a friend. His life has been documented in books and film, but he will always be remembered around Sydney Harbour not only for his vast talent as an artist and seaman, his warm smiling heart.

Jack moved to Mosman Bay on board the *Kathleen* late in the second world war with his wife, after whom he named the boat, and their two children, Michael and Maris before setting off around the world. And it was to the Bay that he returned after the trip as well, living first on the eastern shore and then on the western where he lived for the many years until he died at the age of 86.

The *Kathleen* was sold not long after her historic voyage, but was soon replaced by the beautiful Alan Payne designed Tasman Seabird named *Maris*. After thousands of miles of sailing all over the Pacific, *Maris* was sold and replaced by a little ketch called *Smoky Cape*. She was the little boat that Jack grew old in, meticulously kept and always had a good supply of rum and coffee on board.

Jack Earl, OAM, Honorary Life Member of the Amateurs, died on the 14th of April 1994 at the summit of his remarkable life, aged eighty five years and 11 months. On Sunday the 24th April, many Amateurs joined the Governor of NSW, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, his wife, and some 400 other people at our family home in celebration of Jack's life. We are all grateful for what he has given us.

## **"Tom" Selby (Member 1964-86)**

### **Colin Bull**

One of the most respected and affectionately remembered SASC members of the period now under review was "Tom" Selby, alias Lt Colonel Dr CH Selby MID. The nickname Tom was dubbed on the baby Charles Herbert by his grandfather and remained for ever.

Tom sadly passed away in 1996 having retired from sailing and parted with his *Maide Maryke*, A21, some years earlier. Seeking information about any memorable event associated with Tom and his yacht I found the answer was that every outing seemed to be an adventure. This may or may not have been true, but on the water Tom was noted for his sporting and gentlemanly behaviour, rarely if ever, pushing for his right of way. Tom was known also for his sense of humour. Who else would wear a red sock on his left foot and a green one on the other?

Being a doctor in general practice, as he was in Cremorne for many years, Tom Selby was occasionally called to advise on First Aid. He wrote a paper "Medical Emergencies on Boats" and at one time gave a talk to members on First Aid. Remembered from this talk was his advice that First Aiders should always carry brandy, never to be given to the patient, but to be kept for the First Aider whose need could be greater!

Decorating the wall of the Club House is a painting of the sail training ship *Tingira*. This forms a perpetual trophy given by Dr Selby in recognition of the part played by crews in the successful racing performance of yachts. It is awarded to the nominated forward hand of the winning yacht in No. 2 Division. An appropriate engraved plate is attached to the painting each year. This gesture tells something of the nature of the donor. Another gift to the Club from Tom Selby is the "knot board", samples of artistic creations made of ropes and cords.

Meeting Tom Selby in the boat shed one could be forgiven for not knowing that he had given distinguished service to his fellow man as a front line doctor during World War II. Tom was three times Mentioned in Dispatches. After graduating in 1932, Tom Selby worked for some years in England, returning to Australia in 1938. At the outbreak of war he was quick to enlist in a combat unit and had the low AIF number NX22. Captain, later Lt Colonel, Selby served with the 6th Division in Libya, Greece, Crete and Ceylon, spent time as DADMS Second Australian Army, and later served in New Guinea, notably in Milne Bay. Here Dr Selby did a great deal to improve hygiene, argued for and won better conditions for convalescents and considerably reduced the incidence of malaria. Finally Lt. Colonel Selby commanded the 2/7 Field Ambulance at Aitape and Wewak.

After the war, Tom Selby practised in Cremorne and among other things, raised funds to supply text books to a village in Greece and to another in New Guinea. A quiet, even shy, but fun-loving man, Tom was the kind of man we were privileged to have as a friend and fellow member.

### **Ian Macdiarmid**

Doc. Selby delivered me into this world in May 1951. From an early age he attended to everything from tonsils, measles and appendixes and was always available when needed. As I was a kid from a poor family Doc supplied almost all medication from the top drawer behind his desk, a generous gesture to keep the cost down.

He was a man of great humour and loved to hear a good joke. I remember him saying that the matrons of Cremorne and Neutral Bay were not a good source for off-colour humour!

His Top Hat, *Maid Maryke* was a great joy to him and I had the pleasure of making the odd sail for her. This diversion from the old 24 hour a day style medical practice allowed him to relax amongst his friends at the SASC. In his later years when his sailing days were over, he and his wife would often take walks in the park around the Club and were always willing to stop for a chat about life in general.

Doc Selby was a man who gave so much to this country and to his community; he influenced people wherever he went, a truly great man.

### **Rod Mitchell**

In the interim between selling my yacht *Careel* and buying *Centaurus*, I was asked by Bill Gale to sail a season with Tom Selby as his sailing master. Tom had not done a lot of sailing but was very keen and Bill felt that with a bit of experience that I had, we could help to improve Tom's performance. We had a wonderful season. Tom was a man of great humour and Saturday afternoon was a great social occasion as well as a fun day.

I remember a very funny day on a very strong NE and we'd all bashed our way to Manly in *Maid Maryke* and were coming back with spinnaker up (it was very square) and we were hit by a tremendous clout about 30° from the north. We were knocked completely flat. Tom was quite astounded that the boat didn't sink, the mast hit the water (we even had water in the cockpit), but we righted her

and sailed off and there was not much spoken. However, the next week Tom had his inclinometer pasted over with dymotape and it also had on the inclinometer a sign that showed "upside down".

As a medico, he was a very precise and careful man and was not likely to do anything irrational or foolish. We had some experiences in that year that I will remember for a long time. At the end of it all when we did actually win the gold medal, I have never seen anybody as happy as Tom.

## Colin Crisp

Charles Maclurcan

Colin Crisp was born on the 17th November 1928 in Adelaide where he completed his tertiary education in engineering. In the mid fifties he took a job in Sydney and lived at the Alexa Boarding House on Cremorne Point. He and his long time friend Rinus Barneveltdt watched the weekend yachting activities from the lodging and determined that they would join in. Colin purchased a VS and taught himself to sail with Rinus. On one occasion he was heading for the rocks and told Rinus to fend off. Rinus jumped off whereupon Colin found out how to go about and left Rinus stranded.

Colin sailed from the Amateurs and was on the Committee for some years.

He then assembled a Flying Fifteen named *Currawong* under John Riley's house in Lower Boyle Street. They sailed it together and moored it at the Amateurs. Colin spent part of his honeymoon with wife Connie cleaning its bottom and sailing it around to Clontarf where they lived at the time.

*Currawong* was sold to finance a move to private consulting and Colin joined with Geoffrey Hughes and others to buy a Bluebird *Finnegans Wake*. He joined the SASC in January 1962 and raced the boat with modest success there. The mast was subsequently rebuilt in the hallway of his new home in Guthrie Street, Cremorne. Colin joined the SASC Board in 1964.

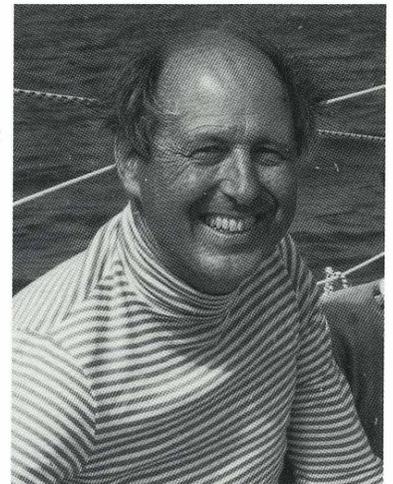
The Bluebird syndicate folded and Colin, unable to afford a boat of his own, sailed for awhile with Rob and Val Skinner in their Thunderbird *Mehitabel*.

In 1972 Colin heard that the well known 5.5 Metre *Buradoo* was for sale. He purchased it and sailed from Pittwater to Sydney with Rinus and George Brakenbury. Rob Skinner photographed them leaving from West Head. George was later heard to say it was lucky that they survived as *Buradoo* leaked a great deal. In fact, she had been built to a Luders design, in a great hurry, by Savage in Melbourne for the 1956 Olympics. She was lightly built of poor mahogany and her planks would constantly split when she was out of the water. Colin had her placed in a neighbour's yard where he and Keith Ravell worked on her. After replacement of cracked ribs, stabilisation of the hull by splining and a new deck, the whole structure was Dynelled. Colin built the neighbour's garden wall which was part of the deal and *Buradoo* was re-launched.

Colin had some success in this boat. He won the Tempest Trophy and the 5.5 Silver Cup (handicap) in the 77-78 Season. *Buradoo* was eventually sold in 1979 to Club member David Davis. About 1981, with Colin's son Frank at the helm, *Buradoo* was hit by an Etchell in a strong westerly. Almost cut in two, she quickly sank beside one of the naval buoys. Her location and raising caused some inconvenience to the Navy. Bill Barnett subsequently repaired her at Waverton and Davis quickly sold, her purchasing something smaller in fibreglass.

1978 was a big year for Colin on the yachting front. He was elected Commodore of the SASC. They were changing times and Colin was required to conscript a new Race Committee. Never set back by such prospects he quickly organised Charles Maclurcan and Rosemary Hay to take over the Race Organisation. They were new members to the Club and found themselves on the Board almost

Colin Crisp



immediately. Colin did his utmost to smooth over the ensuing period of adjustment, but it was many years, if ever, before older members of the Club accepted the fresh faces, especially the female one!

More importantly, in 1978, Colin began the design of his ultimate yacht, *Aroona*. It was his own work although it is rumoured that Ben Lexcen had offered advice. Keith Ravell began the mould for the hull in a factory unit at Manly Vale in 1979. Colin built the mast in the backyard. Charles Maclurcan carried out the electrical installation and *Aroona* was launched in winter 1981. Much of *Aroona's* internal joinery was constructed from cedar rescued from old Government furniture. The whole exercise was a great tribute to Colin's wife, Connie, who as an accomplished draughtswoman/architect designed the interior fit out.

*Aroona* showed promise almost immediately. She had of course cost far more than anticipated and was a little undercapitalised in terms of experimental development. In 1982 she was slipped at Birkenhead and Colin began to apply sheet lead to her keel to stiffen her slightly. A failure of the cradle occurred and *Aroona* fell destroying the mast and loosening the keel. The excellent Klegcell hull, however, survived virtually undamaged. A revised keel and new mast were subsequently fitted and despite losing that mast *Aroona* went on to prove herself a very capable harbour and ocean racer.

Colin's formal sailing involvement did not end with the SASC. He had joined the Council of the Yachting Association in 1980 becoming the President soon after. He was also on the Board of the AYF, and President in 1990. He took part in the selection of the 1984 Olympic yachting team. He was for a long while, the SASC's most prominent member in Yachting Administration.

*Aroona* remains on the Club Register to this day but not so Colin.

Shortly after his involvement with the YA came to an end, Colin's life took a new direction. *Aroona* languished on the mooring and Colin was noted playing tennis on Saturday mornings! Although he now lived up the road from the Club, he was a rare visitor and had reduced contact with many of his old friends. A farm subsequently took the boat's place and Colin settled comfortably in a new berth. In 1991 his cradle failed like *Aroona's* a decade before. Unfortunately for him new parts were not available and, sadly, he died on the 23rd of November 1991 shortly after his 63rd birthday. He will be remembered by his sailing mates for his boyish grin, wry chuckle and businesslike determination to succeed against the greatest of odds.

## Sir Alexis Albert

The SASC has been honoured to have Sir Alexis Albert as a Member for 75 years having joined the Club in 1921; possibly a record for a club membership.

One of Sir Alex's early yachts was *Boomerang* a 21 footer designed to comply with the new restricted class agreed on by the SASC, RSY, and the RPAYC in the early 20s. Another was the 8 metre *Norm* (7) in which he had competed regularly and successfully on Sydney Harbour for over 30 years, including a defence of the Sayonara Cup in 1931-2. Lex was well known for his good sportsmanship when sailing.

He was elected a Life Member of the SASC in 1953 and was knighted in 1972. A member of Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, he was their Commodore from 1971 to 1975.

Sir Alexis passed away in 1996 and a Memorial Service was held at the Parish Church of St James in King Street, Sydney at which the Club was represented by Bill Gale and Vic Dibben. During the service Tony and Robert Albert reflected on the life of their father and his influence on them and how he maintained a great interest in all things until his last days. During the service, grandson David

read an extract from the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by CT Coleridge changing the last paragraph to reflect the family feelings ;

The Mariner, whose eye is bright  
Whose beard with age is hoar  
Is' gone.  
But we're the richer for life  
We'll miss him evermore.

*Norn*, still No 7, now a competitive modern yacht with skipper Robert Albert, SASC member, has been racing regularly with the Half Ton Division, winning the Clarke Island Trophy and a Silver Medal in the SASC 1995/96 racing programme.

## Roger Vining Gale 1917-1994

### Bill Gale and Charles Maclurcan

Many of us have come to know Bill Gale. He skippers the yacht *Ranger* with a jovial crew and a strange rig. But what of his brother Roger? Roger enjoyed a large profile and contributed a great deal to yachting for many years and his death prompted these few notes.

Roger was born to Cliff and Marge Gale in 1917. From early childhood he spent time on Cliff's yachts and in the family sailing dinghy. With his older brother Brian he competed in Vacluse 12ft Club events skippering the clinker dinghy *Geebung* with some success. At 16 years of age he became for'ard hand in Lex Buckle's Fife designed cruising 9 metre, *Josephine* (later owned by John Quinn's father). She was named after Lex's daughter who subsequently became Roger's wife. Skippered by Cliff Gale *Josephine* was scratch boat in Division 1 of the Royal Clubs for the three years he sailed her.

Roger remained for'ard hand until WW11 except for a break in Queensland. One day at Bowen, in a 16 footer they were capsized and swept out to sea being rescued the following day. He spent his working life in the Bank of New South Wales except for Army service commencing in 1940. He rose to Battery Sergeant Major. In 1941 he transferred to the RAAF becoming a Flying Officer Navigator, returning to the Bank in 1945. During the 40s he skippered the 16 footer *Forward* belonging to Russ Pearson at Middle Harbour 16 ft Sailing Club. In 1956 he tried out for the Finn Class dinghy at the RSYS. He was one of three selected for the Olympic Trials. Subsequently, Colin Ryrie represented Australia. Roger continued in Finns sailing *RSYS One* until 1968. He was considered old for the Class when he began in 1956 but despite this, he went on to win a NSW Championship. He claimed he enjoyed this sailing more than any other.

His contemporaries speak of his tireless efforts helping others and passing on his knowledge to new and particularly young people. He is also remembered for his ability to take the difficult Finn Class dinghy to windward in strong winds effortlessly. He joined the SASC on 1st January 1933, appointed a Life Member in 1968 and remained a loyal member up to his death in 1994. A member for 61 years. Always interested in the Amateurs, with regular attendance at our Annual General Meetings, asking questions and not hesitating to direct thanks and congratulations when he felt it was due.

He skippered *Ranger* on many occasions in Club events and showed his wide range of skills as a yachtsman in the repair and maintenance of the yacht. In 1968 Roger helped Tony Hudson fit out the Swanson 27, *Yolanda* and designed a fractional rig for her. It was contrary to all current expert opinion, masthead being commonly acceptable as unbeatable. She went on to win the Second Division Pointscore for 1969-1970 in Roger's hands and was later promoted to Division One. She was a very successful boat.

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1986

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*February: On Saturday 1st February steaks were available at the Club for cooking on the gas barbecue and many members and their crews took advantage of the opportunity.*

*Members are recommended to try this new innovation arranged by the Rear Commodore and the Clubhouse Committee.*

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In 1974 Roger and Bill shared the skippering of the 5.5 metre *Southern Cross 11*. She was nearly always scratch boat in the popular Metre Division and there were great sailing days with Bikky Arnot as forward hand.

In 1957 Roger was elected a member of the RSYS. He sailed from there in the Finn Class for some years and later at Botany Bay when the Class moved there. In 1961 he became Joint Chief Instructor for Junior Sailing at the RSYS. He insisted on very high standards and strict discipline. Many well known sailors of today jumped and shook at his direction in the early sixties in the Squadron Moths. Many have since realised the value of his approach and have expressed gratitude and appreciation. He subsequently joined the Boatshed Committee becoming Chairman in 1969. He served two terms on the General Committee and many other terms on various Committees. In 1981 he became the RSYS Delegate to YA. Such was his contribution to the RSYS that in 1980 he was elected a Life Member of the RSYS. Roger was rightly very proud of this as his first association with the RSYS was in 1933 through *Josephine*.

Roger passed away at the end of July 1994 after a very long and debilitating illness. He was tough and courageous to the end.

## Victor Dibben

Vic Dibben, well known to members, is possibly the only member to have passed through so many offices at the Club. Vic became a member of the Club in 1973, the proud owner of a Bluebird yacht *Marauder A130*.

In 1975 he was elected to the Board of Directors and in the same year was appointed Secretary of the Club. With the move he purchased a Daydream yacht *Salamander A17* from Geoff McCorquodale, who had sailed it very successfully with the Amateurs.

Then in 1976 Vic was elected Rear Commodore and with his Clubhouse committee set the objectives to improve Clubhouse facilities, general meetings and social functions at the Club.

1977 he was appointed Chairman of the Membership Committee which he has been on ever since. 1978 he was elected as Vice Commodore and again made a change of yacht to *Stella Claire* sail No 1037.

1979 he was elected Commodore. Vic completed his term of office in 1982 ensuring continuing good rapport with other major Sydney Yacht Clubs.

All Club social functions had maximum capacity attendances, the Saturday racing fleet numbers successful. The annual Northcott days for crippled children, usually 95 children and 100 adults, were well supported by members.

1984 Vic qualified as an AYF instructor for the TL4 sailing training programme and the SASC became an approved AYF Training Establishment. Assisted by Arthur Prigge, Brian Woods and John Jeremy Vic saw many members and Flag Officers successfully complete a number of courses.

1985 Vic was appointed by the Board as Commodore again, as the elected Commodore, David Willis, had to resign due to business pressure. He continued in this position until the Annual General Meeting in 1986, at which he was elected as an Honorary Life Member.

A number of major works of importance that had been started were completed during this period, comprising the new pontoon, wharf and ramp, wharf improvements and slipways upgrade. A Committee was formed to refurbish the Clubhouse and a "furniture fund" started to provide the finance for this purpose.

Vic made another change of yacht to a Top Hat *Silver Gull 1122*.

1986 to 1989 After completing his second term as Immediate Past Commodore Vic continued on, a tireless worker for the Club, always available to assist in any project.

Beryl and Vic Dibben at the 1986 SASC Dinner dance and prize giving night



His current activities are Director, Editor of the SASC since 1979, Honorary Race Starter since 1990, Chairman of Membership Committee since 1977, SASC Representative YA Harbour Area Committee, SASC Delegate to YA of NSW, Committee Member SASC National Gaffers Regatta

## VH O'Neill

### Charles Maclurcan

No description of the SASC's offshore yachting exploits would be complete without mention of one Hugh O'Neill, arguably the Club's greatest all round sailor in recent times.

"Hughie" as he is known to one and all, started sailing in VJ dinghies. He played football and cricket with a sailing mate, and, as he was a strong swimmer was conscripted as crew. They sailed for fun from Hen and Chicked Bay. He purchased a Northbridge Senior and raced for three years from Western Suburbs Sailing Club. A Flying Fifteen followed which he campaigned at Pittwater and Yowie Bay for a few years.

Mrs O'Neill sold both boats and home duties and business conspired to keep him off the water for the next ten years. He was to return with a vengeance. In 1979, O'Neill met Bob Lawler at Navigation Classes at Sydney Tech. An invitation followed and he sailed with Bob on *Bettina*. A year later he purchased the Duncanson *Rebecca*. It was off to Hobart in 1981 for the first time with Bob and Patrick Lawler on board. Hugh sailed *Rebecca* to Noumea subsequently, and in successive Hobarts until 1985 when he purchased the *Mark Twain*, a Sparkman and Stephens 39 ft IOR racer.

*Hugh O'Neill and crew in a typical stance on Sydney Harbour on Mark Twain (Photo: Martin Van der Wal)*



Over the years O'Neill has raced and cruised *Mark Twain* consistently. To date 11 Hobart races (the yacht has completed 18), numerous Lord Howe Island races, a race to Nelson in New Zealand and one to Perth for the Bicentenary in 1988.

Highlights for O'Neill include this race to Perth. Five crew members came from an advertisement in the paper. He remembers the hospitality offered in the West with fondness and swears that the return cruise, via Adelaide, with Don Lang as navigator, was one of his best seagoing experiences. The race to New Zealand with Club members, Keith Radford, Peter Pangas, Rod Whereat and Bob Kenyon was a triumph for *Twain* as she won the event! Hugh cruised through the Sounds, voyaged north to Auckland, explored the Bay of Islands and returned home via Lord Howe Island. As recently as 1996 Hugh completed a wrong way return from Hobart with other Club members aboard. Apart from visiting Port Davey he took the boat right up the Gordon River almost to the falls.

O'Neill's worst moment? He remembers approaching the Hippolytes off Tasman Island in thick fog, completely lost, as a very unpleasant experience and feels that night-time entries to Perth and Adelaide leave a lot to be desired.

O'Neill's ancestors were publicans, whalers, farmers and others with a strong Irish connection thrown in. His Dad was a Master Mariner. He is normally mild mannered and unobtrusive but given a head of steam or the challenge of a voyage to a distant destination, he blossoms, typifies the adventuring spirit, blustering bravado, brave deeds and beautiful company that must have been prevalent in the days of windjammers. Hugh often advertises for personnel, rather than filch others' fellows' crews. Consequently, he has introduced large numbers of disparate beings to the sport and in many cases to Club membership. O'Neill has given the opportunity to more men and women to sail on a well-found yacht than any other Club member. The legacy of his generosity and infectious laugh will benefit the SASC for many years.

## The Tomos

### Matt Tomaszewski

This is a brief ramble about the Tomaszewski family and their relationship with the SASC, Sydney Harbour, and sailing in general.

The Tomaszewskis are one of the family units at the Amateurs. Every one of them is a dedicated and competent sailor. The Amateurs is a major part of this whole family's life.

Just up from the Club house sitting amongst the trees on top of the hill, overlooking Mosman Bay and out to the Harbour is the house lived in by the Tomos. It's a big old place with walls echoing with tales of countless sea miles, races and adventures by sailors from all over the world, of all ages, sexes, colours and shapes.

Central to most of these stories and the characters telling them is the family itself. Formed by the marriage of Michael, to Maris, the daughter of Jack Earl, one of Australia's great sailing pioneers, they raised four children; Ben Hawke, the twin girls Lani and Tiare, and Matthew, all of whom were raised on and around boats. Together and apart they've crewed on champion boats in most of the major Australian off-shore races, have been State and National JOG class champions in their own little 24ft Allen Warwick designed *Trangie* and have a few CYCA winter series point score wins under their belts. Lani has raced aboard the legendary *Wild Thing* in Kenwood Cup in Hawaii and received the prestigious Chako cup for all-round sailing commitment; Matthew has raced on Sydney Harbour icons like *Ragamuffin* and *Love and War*.

They hold dear the passion and the spirit of sailing. The Amateurs is a club that embraces this and as such all of the Tomos call it their own.

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1987

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*March: We are sorry to report that "Twain" A8 skippered by Stewart Chambers foundered near the Eastern Channel Mark following a collision when racing in No. 2 Division on Saturday, 28th March.*

*Fortunately no one was injured although Stewart and crew worked hard to get the sails down and don lifejackets. Stewart said he was sucked down about 2 metres as the yacht sank.*

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Trangie A747, Michael Tomaszewski reaching across Athol Bight

## John Jeremy

John Jeremy started sailing with the Amateurs in the early 1960s as crew in Mac Shannon's *Chione*. He joined the club in 1971, and soon after, in 1972, took the helm of his first yacht, *Tiarri*, which he sailed with some success in Division 4. *Tantani*, a quarter tonner, followed in 1977, and in 1981 John bought *Tingari*, which he has sailed in the Half Ton division ever since.

John soon became active in Club affairs on the Racing Committee as Safety Officer. In 1977 he led a small sub-committee of the Racing Committee which examined the possibility of acquiring a new starter's boat. His report and specification was endorsed by the board, and in due course LFB 445 was bought, which, after much voluntary work by Club members, became our present Starter's boat *Captain Amora*. John has had plenty of opportunity to assess the value of this

choice, taking on the job as Starter for many special events and championships over the years.

John was elected a director of the SASC in 1978, and in 1979 he was persuaded by the Commodore, the late Colin Crisp, to stand for election as Vice Commodore. As chairman of the Boatshed Committee he oversaw the operation of what he often called his "second dockyard", the first being the rather larger Cockatoo Dockyard. He succeeded Vic Dibben as Commodore in 1982.

As Commodore John supported Vic in the introduction of the A.Y.F. TLA training courses, and helped Vic as trainer when the courses were run. He initiated the project to replace our small dinghy launching pontoon with the larger pontoon which is such a major asset of the Club today. John has continued as a director of the club since he joined the ranks of Past Commodores in 1985, and has been active on the Development Committee, working to ensure the future of the Club we all value so much.

John's role in the maritime world through his "other" dockyard enabled him to assist the Club in a number of ways. Both *Captain Amora* and *Nancy K* visited Cockatoo Island at times, and when that dockyard closed at the end of 1991, John was able to divert to Mosman Bay a range of useful tools and equipment for the boatshed, together with a few novelty items he felt should be preserved in an appropriate place. John is not the only member to have worked at Cockatoo over the years, and to recognise the connections he donated the Codock Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the Half Ton division competition each year. His contacts also helped during 1988 when he took on the task of preparing the sailing directions, in close liaison with the MSB, for the Parade of Sail which was a dramatic part of our Bicentennial Gaffers' Day.

## Romance of the Rangers

**John Crawford and Bill Gale**

18th June 1997

Since the late seventies, all around the world there has been a growing interest in wooden boats. They have been recognised as a repository of history, beauty, lost skills and of an era that has passed. They have become sought after by those with an appreciation of the finer things in life and those that recognise that "old boats" have a great contribution to make in this modern era, in which rather sterile mass produced plastic boats are perceived to be of low maintenance.

The SASC has perhaps made the most significant contribution to the promotion and revival of the interest in wooden boats in Sydney. Continuing to host, manage and encourage the racing of traditional yachts with the Traditional Division, Gaffers Day events, and more recently the Metre boat racing. While there has always been an interest in wooden boats, the Amateurs active role has acted as a catalyst for the re-building and restoration of a number of yachts that without such support and interest may have been lost. The best possible way to keep a wooden boat alive is to use it.

The Rangers are perhaps the most identifiable group as they are similar in appearance. Seen together they look identical at first glance, gaff rig, raised deck, bowsprits, three portholes, varnished sponsons and all around 24ft (7.3 m) LOD and 30ft (9.1 m) LOA.

Built between 1933 and 1953, they are the archetypal Sydney harbour day boat with their huge cockpits and handy size, good for fishing, racing, sailing and motoring. *Ranger* (1933), *Vagrant* (1937), *Valiant* (1938), *Etrenne* (1946), *Cherub* (1948/49), *Careel* (1948) and *Kilkie* (1953) each is a copy of *Ranger* herself, but each carries modifications and "improvements" by owners and their boat builders,



which add a personal touch. In addition there are the “big Rangers” *Mathana*, *Maluka* and *Retreat*.

Few of the Rangers are in their original condition. *Ranger* herself was designed in 1933 by SASC Honorary Life Member EC (Cliff) Gale as a centreboarder with a lug rig. Over the years the quest for greater speed has resulted in continuing changes to both hull and rig. Gaff rig replaced lug, and the centreboard gave way to a full length keel. Cotton sails were replaced with synthetic cloth, more lead was required to counter-act the greater loads and so on. Still more lead, an aluminium gaff, a folding propeller, a modern light weight rudder, faired hull and a skilled and competitive crew, led by the indomitable Bill

*Vagrant 112, Sean Langman, closes on Ranger A1, Bill Gale, during the inaugural Slocum Trophy race in October 1996 (Photo: Rex Dupain)*



Bill Gale on board his beloved Ranger A1 (Photo: Martin Van der Wal)

Gale, have kept *Ranger* at the front of the fleet, and provided a benchmark for all Ranger owners.

Having been raced continuously and hard for over 60 years, *Ranger* understandably is a little tired and in need of restoration to enable her to race for another 60 years. Bill Gale's friends (of which there are very few) have been pleading with him to spend a little money on *Ranger* and it appears that that come summer 1998 he will do just that – *Ranger* will have a new coat of paint.

The last seven years has seen the restoration and rebuilding of several of the Rangers. The first was *Kilkie*. Built by W Holmes for the late Dr M Deck, to Ranger specifications and now owned by Alick Osbourne, who has restored her to a very high standard, setting an example to all other Ranger owners. Alick also raced *Kilkie* for a very competitive season, giving *Ranger* a big fright on more than one occasion.

This competition between the Rangers sparked more interest in the "class". Dermer Bennett, owner of *Etrenne*, based at Elvina Bay on Pittwater, has one of the most original Rangers which is kept in pristine condition. *Etrenne* was built in 1946 by Les Steele at Lake Macquarie for the late Bert Grout. She has recently had a lead shoe added to her keel, which has transformed her performance and made her unbeatable amongst the wooden boat fraternity on Pittwater, and an unknown quantity amongst the Sydney Harbour contingent. *Etrenne* is a regular Gaffers' Day participant and like her owner is a dark horse (or black sheep?).

In 1993 Sean Langman acquired *Vagrant*. Previously owned by the Langman family in the fifties, *Vagrant* was nearly lost on North Head during a rescue attempt in the early sixties. *Vagrant*, at nearly 60 years old, was very tired and a little rotten. Under Sean's skilled guidance she was completely stripped and rebuilt. The deck and hull (to the waterline) was clad in a heavy duty fibreglass cloth and epoxy coated, faired and filled. Laminated ring frames were installed at the shroud positions internally and the mast step increased in size to cover more floors. Known as the "million dollar Ranger", *Vagrant* with her buff sails and gleaming brightwork, not only looks superb, but has proved very fast in the expert hands of Sean and his crew. So fast, that she has displaced *Ranger* as the Ranger benchmark during the 1997 sailing season.

*Valiant* was the next candidate for a major restoration. Built by Vic Hoyle at Drummoyne for Life Member Oz Dowling, *Valiant* has been owned and sailed by

John Crawford for the last nine years. Like all Rangers, *Valiant* had undergone a number of improvements. New and bigger sails, extended gaff, increased internal ballast, followed by the addition of a lead shoe to the keel. This, plus some hard racing and 60 years on Sydney Harbour resulted in another tired Ranger.

Under the guiding hands of Sean Langman and John Crawford, *Valiant* has become the "second million dollar Ranger". Completely stripped and allowed to dry out, caulking removed, epoxy filled, fibre-glassed from deck to keel, filled, faired and re-assembled with new ring frames, mast step and additional floors, plus a lightweight rudder and feathering propeller she is virtually a new boat. *Valiant's* performance in recent times has improved dramatically as she becomes increasingly competitive with both *Ranger* and *Vagrant*.

More recently *Cherub*, owned since new by Lou d'Alpuget has been purchased by John Westacott. Bermudan rigged (at present), *Cherub's* arrival on Sydney harbour from Pittwater, has revived a spirited debate about the merits of gaff *v* bermudan. *Cherub* has had little use in the past 20 years and is in very sound condition, requiring cosmetic rather than major work at this stage. It is expected that growing pressure on the new owner will eventually see *Cherub* with her proper gaff rig.

Also on Pittwater are *Careel* and *Retreat*. *Retreat*, owned by Graeme Proctor is a slightly longer Ranger at 26ft and has the potential to be an extremely quick boat. Apart from a new suit of sails and an extended gaff in 1993, *Retreat* is maintained in excellent original condition. She is a candidate for future restoration, but in the mean time she is in good hands.

*Careel*, owned by Linton Morris, is one of the smallest Rangers. Rumoured to be for sale she has been little used in recent times, however she is in good condition and will no doubt undergo a full restoration in the next few years. *Careel* has been a regular at the SASC Gaffers' Day events.

*Mathana* and *Maluka* are the big Rangers. At 35 feet *Mathana* was built for the Clark brothers by Vic Hoyle at Drummoyne. Originally gaff rigged, she was converted to bermudan rig in the sixties. A magnificent yacht she is today owned by Peter McCallum who intends to participate in SASC events in due course. *Maluka*, who was also owned by the Clark brothers, is a 28 footer, similar to Ranger. The Clarks completed many significant voyages in *Maluka*, which are recorded in the SASC's one hundred year history. She appears at most wooden boat events each year and is undergoing a gradual restoration.

Depending on the original condition of the boat the cost of these major rebuilds is between \$30,000 and \$60,000 and while this might sound expensive the estimated price of a new Ranger in 1997 is over \$100,000. The use of modern boat building techniques and materials in the restoration of these boats has divided the wooden boat fraternity. The traditionalists claim they should be rebuilt in the same manner as the original construction, while the others claim that if the original builders had the technology we now have they would have used every bit of it. Given the hard racing it is doubtful that traditional methods of construction would stand the strains of synthetic sails, wire-strong kevlar sheets and powerful two speed winches. Whatever your view, nobody would disagree with the fact that constant and frequent use is the very best method of restoration, and if the Rangers are an example they will go on forever.

## Warren Anderson, A16

*Granny Smith*, A16, was a 30 ft Currawong designed by Prof. Peter Joubert of Melbourne to the Half Ton level rating rule of that time. She was launched in 1972 and while working up for the Hobart Race it was obvious that she would be very competitive. In the Hobart Race she had her first success, coming second in



Granny Smith A16

the Half Ton Division. *Mark Twain*, then owned by Ron Langman of Victoria won the One Ton Cup division; now owned of course by Hugh O'Neill of the SASC.

In 1973 *Granny Smith* started the new season with a 2nd overall in the Montague Island Race, then went on to win the International Half Ton series run by the RSYS. In between these major events she was regularly placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd in the CYCA's Long Ocean Point Score races. In 1974 she came 3rd overall on handicap in the Hobart Race, also winning the Half Ton division. *Saracen II* from the SASC also sailed in this Hobart Race.

In 1975 *Granny Smith* came 2nd overall in the second Lord Howe Island race. On the trips back from Hobart and Lord Howe Island, my wife Verna used to sail with us and, as my daughters Seaforth and Leonie,

became a little older they also joined us. Returning from the early Hobart Races we had no trouble catching large flathead and so on but this has changed dramatically over the years. We also called into the old settlement on Maria Island which was mainly deserted. It has now been restored and is serviced by a regular ferry. There was also a concern at that time that Cape Barren Geese were becoming extinct, so several were placed on Maria Island. When we called in this year (1997) with *Wide Load* they were everywhere – no worry about extinction!

As I like to cruise with my family, I was worried about the safety of the design trends from 1975 on and therefore the yachts that we built at that time were a heavier displacement and not competitive. During this time I mainly sailed with other people in the Hobart Race – on the Swarbrick's S&S 34 in the Three quarter Ton series and the Hobart Race, with Peter Joubert in his 34ft *Magpie*. I also navigated the original *Apollo* to Hobart in 1976 when we came second over the line behind the maxi *Ballyhoo*. This became a race of attrition for *Apollo* as on the first night all the bunks on the starboard side collapsed (they had just been rebuilt before the start of the race); the cook was seasick and not seen until we arrived in Storm Bay; my bunk and clothes were saturated on the first night by a solid stream of water through a hole over the bunk that had not been sealed; the boat started to work and we had to be careful where we walked as the flooring could easily cut off our toes; the mast started to work down into the boat (about 1 1/2 inches) – it was found after the race that the stainless steel bracing had broken; and finally, the hydraulic ram on the backstay was damaged when the lazarette hatch came open due to a large wave. To finish the race, I suggested triangulating the backstay to the deck, but we pulled out a cleat, and then used the genoa winches, which proved strong enough.

In 1982 we built *Encore II*, again designed by Prof. Peter Joubert, in which we had a reasonable amount of success, including third overall in the race from Hobart to Perth (for the 1987 America's Cup). Hugh O'Neill in *Mark Twain* gave us a hard time in this race. During the race I had my longest spinnaker run, over 700 nm. I could not be on the boat for the return trip from Perth to Sydney, but my eldest daughter, Seaforth, was one of the crew. From Albany, WA, to Portland, Victoria, they had a continuous wind of over 60 knots and at times up to 70 knots – a very hard trip.

In 1993 we launched *Wide Load*, a two-handed yacht designed by Kim Swarbrick and based on the BOC single handed yachts. Verna and I sail her regularly



*Phantom A27, John Morris, Past Commodore (Photo: Martin Van der Wal)*

together, but have decided not to race the boat two-handed – we race it fully crewed, winning the PHS division of the Coffs Harbour regatta in 1995 and coming 2nd in the Coffs Harbour race itself. The boat rates very poorly under IMS so we mostly race PHS. We were very pleased to win this year's Bob Brown Memorial race to Pittwater. *Wide Load* is an exceptionally exciting boat to sail with few vices. On the trip back from Hobart this year we did 18.9 knots with a triple-reefed main and no headsail in about 45 knots of wind!

Because I have sailed in 23 Hobart races I would like to do at least another two to complete twenty-five races – so *Wide Load* at this stage will be entering the next two Hobart races.

We have had the sail number A16 on all our yachts. I originally chose this number as at that time I was skiing on A16 Attenhoefer skis!

## *King Hit*

### George Kompolthy

Here is an account of *King Hit's* adventures/misadventures on how to sail a boat at 180 degrees.

Ingredients: one new boat very light in weight and a 240kg keel. One new skipper, two crew from *Emma*, one opera singer/sailing student and one robust female from parts unknown. This was the first race *King Hit* had attempted; 25 knots plus with a ring-in crew. Everything went well, with the boat reaching and running at between 8–12 knots during the first few legs and everyone settled down. At this stage we hadn't attempted a gybe in such gusty conditions. We approached the mark west of Shark Island at about 9 knots and tried to slow the boat to a manageable speed. The turn happened and the gybe didn't quite work out as we expected. The mainsheet hand, God bless her, had tried a heavy displacement gybe; you know, centre the main then ease through the gybe, release the main. The release part didn't happen. Well all of a sudden the boat was on its side with crew trying to clamber up and stay dry by standing on the mast and boom. This only aggravated the situation. The boat started to turn turtle and within no time was upside down with keel taking the place of mast and sail.

Hello, we are one crew short and a few seconds later we realised Jenny was below. She shouted that she was all right and still dry and staying put out of the weather and keeping things from falling through the hatch and thus adding to the bottom of the harbour deals of the mid-eighties. Now we were sailing/drift-ing down the harbour when Bill Merrington came up and offered to tow us in, but his bow thudded into our side during the manoeuvre so it was decided to right the boat first. Well three of us grabbed the keel and heaved. Blow me down the boat came upright with only about one foot of water in her which was bailed within 15 minutes. Jenny emerged dry from the knees up and said the spinnaker was packed while upside down and we were ready to continue. However it was decided that enough was enough and we gratefully accepted Bill's offer of a tow.

Arriving at the Club pontoon every one abandoned ship and went to the bar for a stiff drink. We hosed out *King Hit* and vowed not to race in its current configuration without the water ballast if Huie was over 20 knots. This crew never returned to sail *King Hit* again except for myself and our intrepid submariner Jenny. Funny about that.

Three months later an additional 100 kgs were added to the keel. Since then *King Hit* has performed well within the Club winning the Performance Trophy 95–96 season, numerous 1996 Trailer Sailer titles and decisively winning the 1997 NSW Titles on Botany Bay with a great crew effort. Sailing is without doubt a character building experience and I will continue this sport till the day I cross the bar.

## The *Kelpie*

John Wood

One yacht which has been a familiar sight in Mosman Bay in past years is *Kelpie*, A188. Built in Balmain in 1884 by George Ellis, she is owned and raced by SASC member John Wood. A gaff cutter of 21 ft waterline, she was designed by William Fife of Scotland in the English classic tradition, clipper bow, counter stern, flush decks, a narrow 6ft 6in beam and long lead keel. Ray Hollingsworth, a former crewman, remembers *Kelpie* in 1924 in Mosman Bay, when she lay on one of Bert Collie's moorings between Old Cremorne wharf and Corner Beach.

The name "The Kelpie" is that of a mythical Scottish water faerie. The Kelpie haunts the waterways, and allows unsuspecting humans to board, but will then dash through the water to give them a ducking. And this indeed is what she has given many a crew when sailed through storms on her many blue water voyages during the past 113 years. Her original log has been lost, but past owners, relatives and crew, have come forward to relate some fascinating voyages. A number of sources have confirmed that during the 1920s, she sailed from Sydney to Perth and back across the Bight, with a crew of three. The story goes that on the return trip, they were becalmed mid-way across, as they were passing the majestic coastal cliffs which drop to the sea from the arid central desert plains. It was decided to launch the dinghy and photograph *Kelpie* with the spectacular cliffs towering in the background. All sails were set, the sea like a lake, with a wisp of breeze hardly moving the yacht forward on a balanced helm. The crew rowed abeam about 30 yards and started taking photos. Unfortunately the little breeze sprung up, and *Kelpie* duly responded. Our crew took a minute or so to realise that the yacht was now out of frame. It required three hours of rowing by an exhausted crew to catch *Kelpie*, as she effortlessly sailed herself ever closer to the looming cliffs.

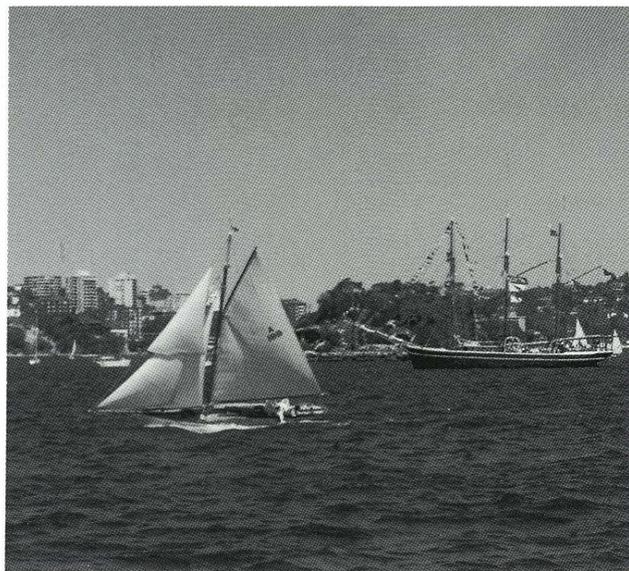
The *Kelpie* is generally recognised as the oldest yacht surviving in Australia. One of the reasons she has continued to be loved and sailed by her 13 or so owners is due to her fast sailing ability, classic lines, her compact size, and the fact that she was built with the best available timbers by Ellis, a master boat builder. George Ellis operated his boatyard in Mort Bay Balmain, and built some notable vessels in the 1870s and 80s.

Ellis knew how to construct a strong vessel. For *Kelpie*, he gave her planking of one inch thick teak in single lengths, copper fastened to sawn blue gum, with steam bent intermediate frames of flooded gum, locked into keel, stem and stern post of iron bark. Her original deck was seven eighths thick NZ Kauri. All deck furniture is original, and is constructed in teak.

The gaff rig of course has special capabilities, as all SASC members are reminded by Bill Gale. In the early 1960s Bob Millar (the late Ben Lexen), sailed *Kelpie* on Pittwater, and became fascinated in her ability to point high when heeled over in a strong breeze. Bill Gale will also relate how Ben Lexen once proposed a gaff rig for the 12 metre America's Cup challenge, until the NY Yacht Club Committee ruled it illegal (after all, Ben was right, because the modern fully battened radial rigs today are only the next technological step up from the gaff!).

In the 1950s, *Kelpie* made her home on Pittwater, and was cruised extensively for the next 22 years by Peter Leigh from the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club. Peter fitted a 'dog house' over the companionway and enlarged the cockpit, to give him protection at sea, allowing him to make many single handed coastal trips, and voyages to Middleton Reef (about three times), Lord Howe Island, and once by misadventure, almost to New Zealand, when he was caught for three weeks in gale

*Kelpie* sailing to windward on Gaffers Day 1981. The Starter's "boat" New Endeavour is in the background (Photo: John Jeremy)



conditions, hundreds of miles East of the coast. Peter also added a complete set of secondary steam bent frames in spotted gum, as the original frames constructed in flooded gum, were 70 years old and near the end of their life.

Reluctantly Peter sold *Kelpie* because she became too much to manage on his own, and Brian Hunter made her his home for a while at Palm Beach Marina. Brian sailed her in the first SASC Gaffers Day in 1972 and she has raced in every Gaffers event since, winning her Division twice. In 1974 *Kelpie* returned to her mooring in Mosman Bay under the ownership of William Baker, and he had the doghouse removed and the cockpit restored. Bill Baker placed his own identification number on the sail as Ano 1884, to reflect her Balmain launch date. Some years later when I brought her into the Club, Bill Gale suggested removing a few digits, so it became A188, and she has carried that number ever since.

Bill Baker sold *Kelpie* to Tim Lloyd of Matilda Cruises in 1977, but he found he was not using the boat, and she passed to me. For a number of years in the early 1980s I raced her in the SASC Second Division Point Score, winning races and the occasional Spring or Summer Point score series. I intend to actively bring her back into racing again with the Traditional Division in 1998.

The *Kelpie* is currently in excellent order, having undergone an extensive restoration programme during 1986–87, by shipwright Rick Wood, with interior fitout in Australian cedar and casuarina by Larry Pardy. She has the ability to survive and sail for another century, as all her many owners have appreciated her style, easy sailing ability and unique character, and hence have been kind and caring to her upkeep. *Kelpie* gives you a true sense of yachting history once you step aboard, and each owner appreciates the fact that they are merely temporary custodians of a special little historic yacht.

## *Mystic Seven*

Neville and Val Chidgey

In the 1960s, Val and I were racing *Mystic III*, a timber Tophat to the original Illingworth design in the JOG, on the SASC register. This gave us a yen to make longer passages together. So, in 1974 we commissioned *Mystic Seven* from the Swanson yard. She was built off the Swanson 36 mould, but with some design



*Mystic Seven has rounded Tasman Island and is changing course to cross Storm Bay towards Hobart in the 1982 race from Sydney*

and structural modifications to suit our ideas of a strong, medium displacement passagemaker.

Being higher wooded, she was perhaps not as pretty as the original sleek 36s but she has turned out to be a damn good boat in a seaway with airy cabin spaces and reasonable load carrying capacity desirable on longer passages. The outfitting was done on our own slipway at Hunters Hill.

In 1976 she made her shake-down cruise. Her racing programme opened with the Montague. She then settled down to a steady annual racing and cruising schedule which included the Lord Howe Island and Hobart races and periodic race/cruise visits to New Caledonia and the surrounding Pacific Islands. This programme completed with the Tall Ships Race from Hobart to Sydney in 1988. *Mystic Seven* had logged about 45,000 sailing miles of combined cruising and racing.

By 1990, a calculated decision had to be made. Val and I loved the association with our young crews working at sea but *Mystic Seven* was no longer rating well enough to race successfully. Her hull shape was influenced by the RORC rule. She was measured and raced under the IOR rule and was facing re-measurement under the IMS rule. The family really needed a yacht suited to our Sydney location, where some of the best cruising and racing is south of 40 degrees in the summer and north of 33 degrees latitude in the winter. That is, a vessel suited to longer passages with reasonable speed, able to sustain unlimited heavy weather conditions in safety and in reasonable comfort.

On balance, as she had the capacity to absorb the additional weight, *Mystic Seven* was re-outfitted for passage making having regard to the changing needs of the family and experience gained in the past decade. This included a new engine, alternative cutter rig and a whisker pole arrangement, the emphasis being on comfortable cruising and sea-keeping. Val and I visited old friends on Lord Howe Island with her in 1993. She joined a Naval sail training exercise to Queensland, did some coastal cruising and introduced the grandchildren to yachting.

In late 1997, she is scheduled to sail to Hobart to cruise south then to circumnavigate Tasmania in the RYCT Bass and Flinders Bi-Centenary Cruise, returning to Sydney in March 1998. This should further test her newly arranged two up qualities.

## Letter from Donald Titchen August 1994

I am reminded by the belated receipt of correspondence sent to our former address in Sydney, that I have both neglected to resign from the Amateurs and express my appreciation of the various phases of membership I have enjoyed.

We have moved here to Sandy Bay in Tasmania and do not intend spending any significant amount of time in Sydney, therefore I have to submit my resignation.

I was initially a member of the SASC in the latter forties although we sailed with the then reviving MHYC. My father and I enjoyed meetings in the RAHS rooms in the company of such as Keith Adams, the brothers Clark, Cliff Gale, Alva (father of Frank Likely) and many others. To us, all of them were wonderful company and remarkable in that all of them seemed to have designed their own boats and to different degrees, supervised their construction, perhaps none as closely as the engineer, Wally Ward, who was reputed to have weighed the fastenings used in his lovely double ender, *Janaway*.

We were very pleased to collect a trophy for the SASC's invitation race to MHYC (in the B Division) on 4th October 1947. This, added to a trophy we had received from the RSYS for a similar invitation race on their opening day that year 27th September 1947, led to us sailing pretty hard and spectacularly losing our mast on our way back to the Wedding Cake from Manly in a MHYC club race sailed in a black nor-easter.

I went to the UK for what I planned to be a tour of study for a year or two, was regarded as going on leave, or onto absentee list, but we did not return until 1979. We started sailing with the SASC again, this time in a boat my family and I had built in Melbourne, but rigged and launched in Sydney. After many changes to her keel and rudder we got *Emma* going and did well enough to be awarded a gold medal for the 81-82 season. In that period, and subsequently, when we sailed our Swanson Dart, *Data*, we especially enjoyed the encouragement we received. My family and I were uniformly impressed with how we always got a greeting and appropriate comment from the Starter and crew whenever afloat or ashore.

It was thus particularly pleasing in the third phase of my membership with the Amateurs to be one of the Starter's mates, first with Vic Dibben and Bob Skinner and then with Vic in the chair (if that's what Starters have) on his own. This association proved easily one of the most enjoyable I have ever had. Although I was struggling a lot of the time to keep going in the face of reactions to environment pollution in Sydney I think that, with one exception, I always found our Starters' activities a source of interest, fun and information.

With my kindest regards to you all and my very best wishes.

*Donald Titchen*



*Jack Millard (second from the right) on board Captain Amora with his starters team for the day (left to right) Peter New, John Jeremy, Jon Talbot and Charles Maclurcan. The photograph was taken during the SASC Endeavour 26 and Timpenny Championships in January 1980 (Photo: Colin Crisp)*

## The view from the Starter's boat

### Jack Millard June 1990

Jack started sailing with the Amateurs in 1924 and except for several spells in the country enjoyed mucking about on the Harbour.

He joined the Club in 1929 and became the Starter in 1955. There were very few absences from the boat from that time. We are told that the first Starter's boat, was a temperamental 20 footer with a temperamental driver, who did not always turn up. On these occasions Jack did the whole job. His knowledge of the Harbour, its tides and breezes, the boats, their skippers and crews, as well as the Racing Rules, was outstanding. He was a quiet cheerful man, with high standards.

## Les Ardouin June 1990

Mr Les Ardouin became a member in 1978 and then with his Columbia 27, *Lakatoi* became well known in the Club as a very enthusiastic cruising member. He was a regular amongst the SASC members who used to meet at the Castle Lagoon in Pittwater during holiday periods. This group formed a social club with the SASC which was known as the Castle Lagoon Sailing Club and Les was elected "Commodore".

His efforts contributed greatly towards good camaraderie within the SASC.

When the SASC entertained the Northcott Homes for Crippled Children, Les was always there with his barbeque and ample donations of steak and sausages.

One of his last gestures to the SASC was to donate a cannon as a perpetual trophy. This is known as the Les Ardouin Cannon and is awarded to second place in the Idle Hour race. Les also donated a number of nautical items which have been put to good use in the club. His cheerful presence is missed by all.

## Daydreams and the Daydream Shield March 1991

**John Jackson**

Following the SASC victory in the Daydream Shield this year, members might be interested in a little information about the late Peter Fletcher, donor of the Shield.

Peter joined the Amateurs in 1950, coming from a seafaring family. His father was a Master Mariner who spent some of his early life in the polar region and later along the coast. My brother George and I were next door neighbours of the Fletchers in Fletchers Glen at Tamarama Beach. His family were pioneers of the area and as children we used the glen and beach as our back yard, sending mirror signals to his father as he sailed past the beach.

Our first venture into boating was with a corrugated iron canoe which we launched into the surf with the inevitable result. Peter bought a VJ when he was about 18 and subsequently sold it to me for £11. He crewed for several years before buying a very pretty 20ft sloop which brother George and I helped sail and paddle from Como to Double Bay. This also finished up in my hands some years later and was then bought by SASC member Rose Boxham.

Peter was a very popular addition to many a crew, with his mouth organ and never ending tales and songs, he livened up many a crew below decks and around the yacht clubs. It was always his ambition to cruise, so after selling his yacht he set about building a Daydream at his home at Tamarama and many an hour was spent by his friends sitting in the cockpit of the unfinished yacht dreaming and planning grand cruises, as well as helping to hold the odd piece of timber.

*Left: Ichabod competing in the Daydream Shield competition against the Middle Harbour Yacht Club in February 1981. Peter Gregory sailed his Holland 25 in the Quarter Ton Division in the 1977/78 to 1981/82 seasons*  
*Right: Bob Skinner sailing Aleena A9 in the Daydream Shield competition in February 1981*  
 (Photos: John Jeremy)



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 1987
 

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*April: Sharks-crocodiles.  
Swimmers in Mosman Bay beware. A  
shark was caught in the Bay last week.*

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Peter was never an enthusiastic Harbour racer and he built the Daydream to fulfil his dream. He did this by sailing his new boat to Lord Howe Island in preparation for his big voyage.

On a Saturday afternoon in the fifties, Peter, his brother Doug, an ex RAAF navigator and two other, crossed the SASC starting line heading for New Zealand. This voyage completed, his brother returned to Sydney and the rest cruised before starting in a race to Fiji. This was an eventful voyage and Peter later on his return stated that though not a religious man, when caught in a gale with the cockpit full of water, he and the crew resorted to the Lord's Prayer. They subsequently finished the race and cruising home Peter collected the turtle shell which he donated to the Club for SASC - MHYC competition.

Peter sold the Daydream and built a Blyth Spirit and he also formed a company selling boat plans and kit boats. It was one of his boats that Past Commodore Laurie Schneider built to become the first Club tender.

Peter died rather tragically some years ago, but I am sure he is remembered by many yachtsmen of his era with great affection.

## Waitangi

### Tony Clarkson

Although comparatively new to the Club, we are pleased to have *Waitangi*, one of the oldest yachts in pristine condition in Australian waters, on our register.

The story of the restoration of *Waitangi* began with a small luncheon party which met on inclement Saturdays at the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria. It had been suggested that a group of members should form a syndicate and buy or build a maxi yacht. Whilst there was some support for the idea, nothing ever really happened.

One rainy Saturday in 1986, Hanke Shilte, who later became chairman of the syndicate, announced he had found a yacht. It was smaller than a maxi and much older than we had planned, but it was very cheap. After some discussion it was suggested that a few of us should have a look at the boat which would be on the slips in Sydney in the next week. After inspection it was agreed that the boat was in good condition for its age, 92 years, and the following weekend the syndicate was born and the yacht purchased.

Over the next few years the boat lay at Williamstown, Victoria, having limited use and receiving basic maintenance. During this period some discussions were held about carrying out a restoration in time for its 100th birthday. In early 1993 a budget was prepared and the go-ahead was given by the syndicate for the restoration.

We were lucky to get permission to use an old cargo shed at Victoria Dock so that *Waitangi* was lifted from the water in October of that year and restoration began. Fifteen months later the boat was relaunched in time for its 100th birthday party. Then having been completely restored and celebrated its 100th birthday in December 1994, it immediately sailed for Sydney. On board was our Vice Commodore, Tony Clarkson, one of the syndicate responsible for the restoration.

Taking a stopover in Eden and arriving in Sydney, *Waitangi* berthed at the Australian National Maritime Museum marina. While it was there SASC members Bill Gale, Philip Brown, Ross Munn and Vic Dibben arrived to go sailing one afternoon, an experience to remember! *Waitangi* attracted considerable attention with its gaff rig, black hull and superb lines. The overall restoration could only be described as *magnificent*. It has to be seen to be believed and is a great credit to Australian craftsmen.

During the restoration pretty well everything on the boat apart from the hull was scrapped, a complete new deck installed, the entire hull re-fastened, a complete new interior in a similar layout to the original was crafted, and the sail plan reverted to the original gaff rigged specifications. The winches were all sold off and heaps of blocks made so that the boat would be sailed the same as when first launched.

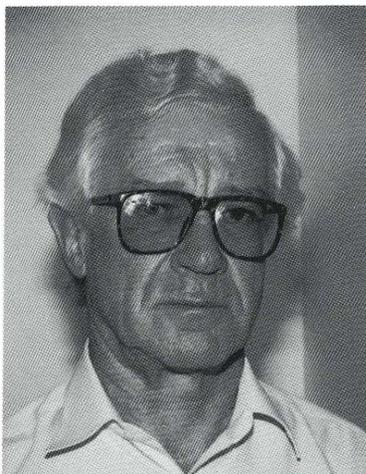


Since the restoration *Waitangi* has made three voyages to Sydney and has made the Amateurs its Sydney base. The boat has been entered on the Club register and given the sail number A6 (its original number in NZ was A6), and the entire syndicate has joined SASC. Needless to say the syndicate, having all stuck by the project, have a great sense of pride and satisfaction in the restored vessel.

A lot to handle without winches, *Waitangi's* major specifications are:

Sparred length 75 ft	Boom 43 ft	Length of deck 58 ft
Spinnaker pole 30 ft	Beam 11 ft 6 in	Gaff 26 ft
Draught 9 ft 6 in	Mainsail 1200 sq ft	Displacement 22 tons
Spinnaker 2300 sq ft	Mast 49 ft above deck	Genoa 585 sq ft

*Waitangi* approaching the Taylor Bay mark in pouring rain on Gaffers Day 1995 (Photo: John Jeremy)



Brian Sproule

## *Tamaris* A64

### Brian Sproule

*Tamaris* was designed as a 6 1/2 ton cruising Marconi yawl for himself by the English naval architect Maurice Griffiths. She is one of his Dreamship series and very representative in style of the more than 140 boats he was to design.

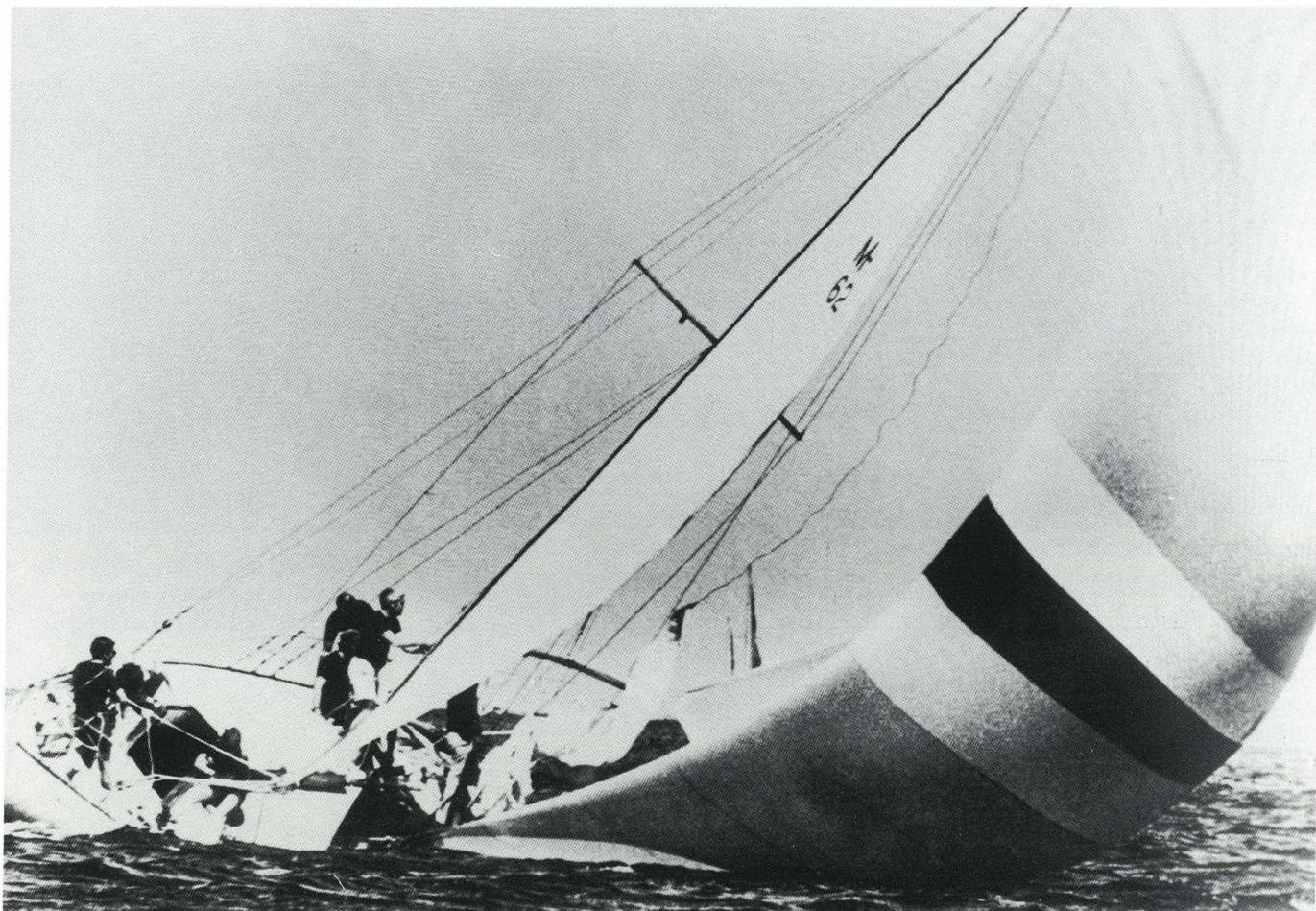
Built in 1949 by F Masters, she was purchased by Dr Brian Sproule in 1960. At that time she was rigged as a masthead cutter. Rigging modifications to make her more competitive in racing were carried out by the naval architect Warwick Hood and the late Cliff Gale. Two of Cliff Gale's sons, the late Roger Gale and Bill (Gaffer) Gale have also contributed greatly both in suggesting modifications and ongoing improvement.

*Tamaris* is a full-bodied wooden boat weighing 7 1/2 tons. With her three portholes, raised deck amidships, cutter rig and canoe stern she is a distinctive figure in the Amateurs traditional racing division. She is 28 ft. by 8 ft 2 in and draws 4 ft 8 in. Planked with Queensland maple of 7/8 in scantling and timbered with laminated spotted gum, she has a cast iron keel of 2 1/2 tons. Standing headroom of 5 ft 10 in throughout gives an impression of great roominess and comfort below, with a skylight in the deck providing plenty of light.

*Tamaris's* original lines were featured in Peter Heaton's Penguin book classic *Cruising*. A dramatic photo of the boat, under full spinnaker suffering a knock-down leaving Middle Harbour in 1956 has been reproduced in many yachting magazines (once with the caption "How to lose your mast!"), see below.

Over her many years of constant racing with the Amateurs *Tamaris* has managed to acquire a respectable share of prizes and trophies, including 1981-82 Idle

A well publicised photograph of *Tamaris* sailing at the limit



Hour and silver medal, 1984–85 H.S. Lloyd Trophy and gold medal, 1986–87 bronze medal, 1987–78 The Jack Millard Trophy, 1991–92 The Spray Trophy and gold medal, 1994–95 silver medal, and in 1995–96 won the Gale Trophy, in addition to seasonal point score wins. She also holds five RANSA Traditional division 1st Prize Trophies (including two 1st Prizes in 1994 when the race was re-scheduled to coincide with Navy Week).

Three generations of the Sproule family now sail regularly on *Tamaris*. Brian Sproule's eldest son Greg is the usual helmsman nowadays, with his son Mark acting as forward hand.

## The Foundering of *Peregrine* 25 September 1976

Harold Goulder

The *Peregrine*, a modified Star class yacht, was sailing in Division 5 with Club member Robyn Miles and Frances Johnson and Margaret Price on Course "V" in a steady 15–20 knot breeze, when approaching Chowder Head the sky gave the impression of a terrific storm approaching. At that stage *Currency Lass*, sail No. 88, sailing close-hauled on port tack tipped her mast in the turbulent air when abeam of *Peregrine* and both masts collided.

The skipper of *Currency Lass* later reported he presumed *Peregrine* was OK as she was still upstanding with main set, however, the crew on *Peregrine* found water entering the hull rapidly and donned life jackets. In the process the mast toppled, the crew gathered what personal belongings they could and were soon left floating above a disappearing deck, but were able to hail *Kalinda* who immediately responded by gybing, starting her motor and proceeding to rescue stations. Two small army boats under power also headed for the scene.

*Kalinda*, skippered by Harold Goulder, by this time had returned to the scene and recovered some personal possessions, and *Tafareel* with Peter Chesser remained in the area in case anything else appeared. It is estimated the whole incident took place in about two minutes and demonstrates the necessity for extreme vigilance at all times.

*Peregrine* sank in about 80 feet of water in a tidal stream, and despite considerable efforts has not been located.

## *Qui Vive*, A160

The history of a typical Amateurs Boat

*Qui Vive* 2 m wide and 9 m long with reverse sheer was built by Bill Pepper on O'Rourke's Slipway at the Spit in 1963. She is an Illingworth and Primrose derivative with many of her features able to be traced back to the famous *Myth of Malham*. She was built as a flyer to capture the honours in the Middle Harbour 2nd Division.

Bill constructed her of 3 layers of 3/16th 3 ply and she suffered her first rot problems when illness interrupted her building on the slip and fresh water damaged the plywood layers. He subsequently modified the boat, fitting a spade rudder. He later built a similar, slightly wider yacht incorporating these changes. He also named this boat *Qui Vive*, as he had all his vessels since the 1930s. This has led to some confusion over the years.

*Qui Vive* was purchased by Charles Maclurcan in 1976. It was an immediate love affair and he has owned her ever since. She has suffered problems with her construction typical of many of the Daydreams, Bluebirds and Thunderbirds of the

*Qui Vive* A160



time. Marine plywoods tend to be very susceptible to dry rot and *Qui Vive's* hull has been no exception. Consequently, over the years extensive work to her hull has seen all oil based paints removed inside and out and the whole structure coated with modern epoxy finishes. Rot in the hull has been removed and the plywood replaced with oregon strips where necessary. She is now clad externally with fibreglass. Like the old axe, *Qui Vive* has had just about everything renewed including the rudder, cockpit and mast. A 7 hp. inboard Vire engine was fitted in 1981.

*Qui Vive* has raced in most Divisions over the years. Among her victories are the following: HS Lloyd Memorial Trophy, Bob Brown Trophy, Tempest Memorial Trophy, Ida Trophy twice, the Centenary Plate outright, the Cliff Gale Medal, three bronze medals, three silver medals, and six gold medals. She has been successful at other clubs as well and has won the New York Yacht Club Trophy as overall winner of the RSYS Cruise twice.

At time of writing she is still afloat in Shellcove looking better than ever. It would be lovely if her original builder could see her today!

### *Emma*

**Michael deBurca**

*Emma* was designed and built by John Ducanson in Adelaide in early 1977 and raced there for 12 months. In 1978 *Emma* was sailed down the west coast of Tasmania and up the east coast to the Whitsunday Islands where she cruised for a short period.

*Emma A194, Mike deBurca, finely tuned on Sydney Harbour (Photo: Martin Van der Wal)*



She was sailed down to Sydney, then back up to Forster where she stayed until 1986. In 1987 *Emma* was purchased by Michael deBurca. She was in a very run-down condition; Mike had her restored, giving her a new deck, a complete repaint and refitting her from a cruising vessel, to a Category 2 in preparation for offshore racing. Her inaugural, long offshore race, was from Pittwater to Coffs Harbour in 1988.

In 1989 *Emma* was entered in her first Sydney-Hobart race, under the guidance of the late Paul Slocombe who showed Michael deBurca the way to Constitution Dock! In 1990 *Emma* returned to Hobart.

In 1994 she competed in the 50th Sydney-Hobart, arriving in Constitution Dock early in the morning to find it almost empty, which was no mean feat considering the number of starters were about 300 boats.

She has done four Sydney to Southport races. *Emma* has competed in offshore racing from 1989 till 1997, nine years in total. *Emma* has received three Gold, one Silver and one Bronze Off Shore Medals. Also in 1991 she won the Kelly Cup, the SASC, Club Champion Trophy. Under the guidance of her owner-skipper Michael deBurca, *Emma* has been a very active competitor, both in offshore and interclub racing.

## The First Outing

### Tony Curtis

Tony Curtis (*Anonyma II*) won an essay competition at Burnie High School with this story when he was 12 years old in 1951.

The last flag fluttered down and the sound of the gun echoed across the water as the yachts converged on the starting line. We were off on the first race of Dad's 36 ft Bermudan sloop *Anonyma*. The race was from Lagoon Bay to Devonport, a distance of 25 miles, and our crew consisted of Dad, Graeme Muir and yours truly, rather a small crew as we were to find out about ten minutes later. *Alceste* led over the line, followed by us, then *Kathleen*, *Jason Pinga*, *Wanderer*, and well up the river could be seen a sail which we correctly guessed as the *Vite*, late as usual. The wind was a light southerly of force 1-2, so on signs of activity on *Jason*, Dad gave us the order to get our spinnaker up. Our spinnaker was of 1915 vintage, but still had the main characteristic of modern spinnakers, the habit of filling at the wrong moment and dragging one overboard.

But to our eternal pride, we hoisted it smartly, hooked it onto the spinnaker boom, poled it out, and broke it out. To our great admiration it filled and we returned to the cockpit to control it from there and gaze with admiration at it.

Our joy was shortlived however, as the wind veered to the east and we had to sheet the spinnaker so that it was shy. No sooner had we adjusted the sheets than the spinnaker pole decided that it would go for a fly in the air. We rushed forward to prevent this, and after a little gentle persuasion followed by brute force, we lowered the boom so that it was horizontal. Did I say it was horizontal? No fear! This 12 foot length of 3 1/2 in. by 2 1/2 in. King Billy was horizontal to the position to where we set, but forward of that was a curve that Mr Walker would describe as a perfect hyperbole.

Graeme and I went for about a mile sitting on that boom as we reached for Hebe's Reef, when with a warning screech

*Anonyma II* A131, Tony Curtis, launched in Launceston 23 December 1950, seen here in her first race on 20 January 1951. She is still sailed by Tony Curtis



the boom snapped, letting the spinnaker go until it fluttered useless in the backwind of the mainsail. We hauled in the spinnaker and stowed it below, and squared off after rounding Hebe's Reef at last. Taking stock, we found we had passed *Alceste*, but *Jason* and *Kathleen* had passed us and we were now without a spinnaker with a following wind.

We "spliced the mainbrace" and discussed the problem, finally solving it by securing one end of what was left of the spinnaker boom to the spinnaker, then placing a cushion on the pole and making Graeme sit on it. While we had made up this scheme, *Alceste* had passed us again, but with our kite flying we caught up with and passed him again, as he was only sporting a poled out genoa.

But despite all frantic efforts we could not catch *Jason* or *Kathleen*. *Jason* beat us to Devonport by about 15 minutes and *Kathleen* by ten. We had no chance in the prizes as we were almost scratch boat, as expected for our first race.

On arriving we moored alongside the other yachts, but perceiving that there were some "menaces" in the fleet we retired up the river and dropped our pick. Later on we were joined by *Vite* who also wanted a quiet and reasonably dry night.

## Sydney Amateurs in Southport, 1997

### Michael Tomaszewski

The club sent off eight boats north to Southport ending up with two division wins, a second and a third overall in PHF.

Past commodore Bob Lawler didn't pack the scrum in the bar like he did five years ago but he was there in body and in spirits and so was the Lawlers' *Firetel*—probably the only boat that has so far participated in every one of the twelve Gold Coast Races.

The Rear Commodore Rob Evans nearly didn't make it after his "flying splinter", the beautiful varnished hulled double ender *Celeste* sank on its mooring in Mosman Bay some two months before the race. Rob said "... at least she won't get dry rot ... its beech being soaked in salt water ...". And after having, almost single handedly, rebuilt the ship for last year's Gold Coast race he again got into her, ripped out and rebuilt all the damaged furniture, linings, electrics etc. and got her to the start line.

Having blown some gear and ripped the spinnaker pole track off the mast the first night out, *Celeste*, crewed by club stalwarts "El Ricardo" Fitzgerald, Dal Wilson and Commodore's son, MacDiarmid apprentice James Bevis, didn't finish up in the money in the Veterans' Division. The baton was nimbly picked up by another Amateur, "Mudguard" Phillip Brown, coming second on Handicap in his beautiful veteran *Anitra V*.

The best performed Amateur was laconic Warren Anderson's Steinman ULW one-off forty footer *Wide Load*. With less than half his regular crew, Warren sailed an exemplary race, didn't break any gear and finished first in division and third overall on PHF.

As is her habit, Warren's watch captain Lani Tomaszewski greeted her father "Tomo", on the dockside in Southport with a bottle of Champers when he arrived in Jim Davern's *Ratu VI* some hours after her.

*Ratu*, having previously won this race a couple of times, was first in and again won her division on PHF. Jim in his deceptively fast elderly Kiwi Stewart 34, with his well tried crew of the two Kelly boys; Sean and Chris, "Tomo" and previous owner Ken Peterson revelled in the reaching conditions. When the big blue, asymmetrical kite disintegrated sometime on Saturday evening; Davern came up the companionway, saw us retrieving the bits and pieces; quick as a flash came up again holding the next biggest shute saying with a smile "... you better put this up ...".

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### 1996

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*The lost Rolex: John Pennefather August: I had just finished scrubbing the Anstee's yacht, 'Caballero', before the 1996 Bob Brown race when I was asked to look for Peter Gray's Rolex. Peter, a senior and great Club member, had slipped whilst launching his dinghy from the pontoon. With visions of a delightful man losing a treasured retirement gift, I swam over and spent about ten minutes searching the area. After not finding anything shiny, I went to say I was sorry but he needed a diver with tanks and possibly an underwater metal detector. Peter seemed in good heart and said he would not worry as they were only \$3 a pair. Realising that Rolexes did not come in pairs I sought more details of the loss. It seemed that the member who had asked me to help had misheard; the lost articles were a pair of rowlocks!*

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*Bob Lawler and crew concentrate on getting the best out of Firetel  
(Photo: Martin Van der Wal)*

The “almost” Sydney Amateurs’, Ian Kiernan’s Canon *Maris*, chasing her second win in the Veteran’s division did not have such a rosy run. Having fuel problems, *Maris* was somewhat late for the start and the boys were pushing the elegant old lady hard passing quite a few boats that did start on time.

Kiernan’s “heavy” crew including “Sightie” Hammond, Kiwi importation Marty Farnad, Queensland skiffie Jamie and late Jack Earl’s grandsons, Amateur’s members (and late *Maris*’ sons) Ben Hawke and Matt Tomaszewski, just rounded Seal Rocks and were contemplating change of shute when the Mick Earl built thirty year old Oregon mast decided to call it a day.

Bikkie and the crew were sadly missed in Southport’s post race celebrations. Sightie drove up and at each headland looked out to see if he could sight Mickleborough. On arrival at Southport he poured over *Southerly*’s charts to see how much *Maris* would have beaten them by “... if not ...”. Nautical gourmet Ben Hawke was more philosophical about it ...to save weight *Maris* had not pots – only a bucket to cook in.

*FarrHorizons* ... Jim “the Viking” Anderson somehow got this lovely Farr 11.06 to the start and eventually in bits and pieces up to Southport and back ...



Above, Penny Evans, the Club's latest member as this book goes to print is also the Club's first fifth generation member

Right, Celeste A26, Rob Evans, makes a fine sight on the Harbour, winter 1997. Celeste races with both inshore and offshore fleets. She is a Knud Reimers design 33 ft double ender, built by Alan Jordon from white beech on monel metal frames in Adelaide in 1953. The Amateurs has become home to many classic yachts like Celeste (Photo: Martin Van der Wal)




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### 1997

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A small boy, when caught helping himself to the chips behind the bar, said, pointing to senior citizen Bob Lawler, "The man who owns the club said I could".

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