

**ROYAL NAVAL SAILING ASSOCIATION  
AUSTRALIA STATION  
BRANCH CAPTAINS**

June 1947	Royal Naval Sailing Association appoints the Naval Officers' Club (NSW) as Branch Secretariat on the Australian Station.
October 1947	Royal Naval Sailing Association - Australia Branch formed.
1951	CAPT. C.H. BROOKS OBE RAN
1951-53	CAPT. E.A. GOOD CBE RAN
1953-56	CAPT.(E) K. McK. URQUHART RAN
1956-56	RADM. H.J. BUCHANAN CBE DSO RAN
1956-58	CAPT. R.J. ROBERTSON DSC RAN
1958-58	CAPT.(E) R.L. SHIMMIN RAN
1958-59	CAPT.(E) B.W. MUSSARED RAN
1959-60	CAPT. F. STOVIN-BRADFORD DSC* RN
1960-63	CMDR. J.L. BATH OBE RAN (Rtd)
1963-65	VADM. SIR W.H. HARRINGTON KBE CB DSO RAN
1965-65	VADM. A.W.R. McNICOLL CBE GM RAN
1965-66	CMDR. J.L. BATH OBE RAN (Rtd)

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVAL SAILING  
ASSOCIATION  
SYDNEY SQUADRON

COMMODORES

1966-68	CAPT. J.F. BELL RAN
1968-69	CAPT. A.H. COOPER RAN
1969-70	LEUT. F.S. SHARP VRD** RANVR
1970-73	LCDR. J.B. MARTIN VRD RANR (Rtd)
1973-75	CAPT. J.A. GLEDHILL DSC RAN
1975-76	CAPT. J.A. GLEDHILL DSC RAN (Rtd)
1976-78	CMDR. P.G. DUNCAN MVO RAN
1978-79	CAPT. P.G. DUNCAN MVO RAN
1979-80	CAPT. M. CALDER AM RAN
1980-81	CAPT. J.A. GLEDHILL DSC RANEM
1981-83	CDRE. T.R. FISHER AM RAN
1983-87	CAPT. R.T. RICHARDSON AM RAN (Rtd)
1987-90	LCDR. J.G. BIRD RN
1990-91	M. BLOW ESQ.
1991-92	CDRE. T.R. FISHER AM RAN (Rtd)
1992-97	LEUT. M.J. KEAN RANEM
1997	LCDR. R.D. WILLIAMS RAN

RUSHCUTTER REFLECTIONS

Dick Cowdery

To commemorate our 50 years, we have assembled a number of contributions with a common theme; they are all concerned, in different ways, with the genesis of RANSA.

Our inestimable Commodore leads off with a thumbnail sketch. This is followed by a piece from Lawrence Hinchliffe which is of particular interest as he is mentioned by both the Commodore and Aurian Bird in their respective articles. Aurian merits a second mention as she supplied the extract from the spring issue of the RNSA journal in 1974. This concerned the Whitbread Race held in 1973.

Syd Sharp recalls some nostalgic moments and his contribution makes great reading.

Bill Ford's item evoked even more memories. I had quite forgotten that I had succumbed to an emotional moment and paid for a crew dinner ashore to celebrate the conclusion of a rough passage. Recognition has been a long time coming.

All contributors deserve heartfelt thanks for their efforts.

To all members: enjoy your "Rushcutter Reflections"

## THE WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE COMES TO SYDNEY

On December 7th, 1973, the first yacht sailing in the Whitbread Round the World Race arrived at Sydney. The following account is an extract from the Spring (N.Hemisphere) issue of the RNSA Journal.

The Competitors in this race, the first of its kind to reach us, commenced to arrive on December 7, when *Penduick VI* (Eric Tabarly) crossed the finishing line between Hornby Light and North Head, followed by *Great Britain II* and *Second Life*.

The Royal Australian Navy's decision to allow the yachts to berth alongside the Naval Establishment in Rushcutters Bay and the generous assistance given by the Navy was the key to the success of the Sydney visit.

Before the arrivals, a considerable amount of groundwork was done by the RANSA Committee, under the Chairmanship of Captain L.M.Hinchliffe, DSC. RAN (Rtd). A pontoon was borrowed from the Dockyard, which extended the line of one of our jetties to which the competitors secured. Three main RANSA teams were required to deal with the situation, in addition to the part played by RAN officers and sailors.

The finishing line team with Major L.B.Peek and W.H.H.Brown, Ron Donovan and other volunteers, took the times of arrival on the finish line, often early in the morning or late at night. South Head Signal Station contacted the Race Control Caravan in Rushcutter Depot, formerly HMAS RUSHCUTTER, who alerted this team, and Health and Customs authorities, who were always on the top line to look after the visitors. On completing these formalities, the workboat team took over.

This team, with Lt.Cdr.B.H.Dick and Lieut.F.S.Sharp and Professor Phipps in the University Research Boat *Unilead* and Army and Navy workboats, escorted or towed the yachts to the Race Depot at RANSA, where hot showers and toilet facilities, which stayed reasonably still, were available, and "fungus" removal was the order of the day.

The Race Control Centre was set up in a caravan within the Depot manned by Surg Lt. Cdr. J.T.Clift, Air Cdre G.Steege and a willing band of helpers, and was manned throughout the period.

The Boatshed and Clubroom team, chaired by Lt. Cdr.P.Pedersen, with an energetic ladies team, provided light meals, drinks, barbecue steaks and other food, which contributed greatly to the success of the show. The bar was open at all reasonable hours and did a roaring trade with no-one being the worse for wear.

It was ironical that, having come through heavy gales, rain, snow, sleet and similar discomforts most of the competitors finished the leg of the race in calm and frustratingly light conditions.

The spirit among the competitors was excellent, and although one heard at least six different languages spoken, everybody got on well and managed to make themselves understood. The 'cheering ship', fireworks, hooters, national songs and others, which welcomed each yacht on arrival was a moving experience. Arrangements were made through RANSA for slipping and refit facilities, with contacts for sailmaking, ship-chandlers, sparmaking and medical and dental services.

The day of departure (twice postponed) came on December 29 (a Saturday) at 1800, in glorious summer weather and a light SE wind. The Navy provided a saluting gun on South Head when Rear Admiral W.J.Dovers, Flag Office Commanding, East Australian Area fired the Starting gun and Rear Admiral O.H.St.J.Steiner manned the starting line.

All in all, this was a memorable and worthwhile experience for those who took an active part in it. Although Sydney Squadron has settled back into its normal routine, members still talk about it. We all felt very sorry for "Penduck", who having got off to a good start, broke her mast some two hundred miles from Sydney and had to return. With his usual gallantry, Eric Tabarly restarted over a month late to go it alone, and we all wish him Godspeed in his endeavour to follow on and complete all the legs of this remarkable race.

## **THE BEGINNINGS OF THE RNSA (AUSTRALIA BRANCH) LATER RANSA**

**Lawrence Hinchliffe**

The "creator" was Roy H.Goddard - a member of the Naval Auxiliary Patrol (entitled to be known as "Honorary Sub-Lieutenant R.A.N.V.R.) a leading member of the Union Club, a Chartered Accountant - and friend of Rear Admiral Muirhead-Gould (F.O.C.E.A.). How he became "commissioned" to act as "founder" I have forgotten; and his son Keith H.Goddard) has not been able to help me.

At the cessation of hostilities for World War II, I was appointed "RAN Senior Rehabilitation Officer N.S.W." and attached to HMAS RUSHCUTTER (to demobilize wartime Naval personnel). There, I discovered (serving in Rushcutter) a group of ordinary seamen, whose home addresses were not in New South Wales, and whose circumstances did not provide for much amusement in their spare time. I offered to take them out on Saturday afternoons to enjoy, and learn about, sailing on Sydney Harbour (the plan was as much for my benefit as theirs. I had been sailing service boats since I was thirteen years of age, and had developed a passion for it.) The offer was enthusiastically accepted. Max Hinchliffe, who was serving in the A/S School (attached to Rushcutter) and also a "keen sailor" soon joined in the fun; and there developed an unofficial rivalry between the two boats (whalers).

One day Roy Goddard - accompanied by another NAP officer - Charles LePaire ("Pat") Terry visited me at Rushcutter. Roy told me that he was in the process of establishing an Australian Branch of the RNSA, and was seeking my assistance. I was willing to help anything which promoted the sailing of service boats - provided I was not an "office bearer" or involved in "the politics". For a time however, acting for Rushcutter, I was in charge of the allocation of boats to "would-be" coxswains. We built up a complement of five whalers and several dinghies - adding to Rushcutter's by borrowing from the supply depot at Garden Island. We made arrangements to borrow a work boat from Garden Island on Saturday (for the Judge-Umpire, and manned by R.N.S.A. members).

Later on, Roy arranged for several "war prize" yachts (taken from Germany by Britain) to be allocated to the Australian Branch of the RNSA and had them shipped here as "deck cargo" in HM Vessels. Only one of these "prizes" proved to be an asset. It was manned by RNSA members - and raced with one of the Sydney yacht squadrons. There was one "lean period" when the C.O. Rushcutter banished the RNSA from his premises, and it had to function from a barge moored off Garden Island. This was of short duration; a change of C.O. saw RNSA welcomed back to the fold.

## **1946 AND ALL THAT**

### **A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVAL SAILING ASSOCIATION**

**Aurian Bird**

To appreciate the RANSA of today one must refer back to 1935 when the Royal Naval Sailing Association (RNSA) was formed. Within two years its membership had grown to over 1,000.

In early January, 1937, Eng.Lieut.Cmdr.N.Warren-Waterhouse RANR joined RNSA and was invited to become the Hon. Local Officer of the Association. Enthusiastically under the auspices of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron he organised whaler races between RAN ships and the RANR and arranged that Naval Officers be offered the opportunity to acquire experience by sailing with yachts of the RSYS and also encouraging them to join RNSA. Of interest is that a current member of RANSA, LCDR L.E.C. Hinchliffe, VRD BA RANR and Captain S.Darling DSC\*\* VRD RANR, a well known Australian yachtsman and member of CYCA, as young officers crewed in the Reserve whalers. During the war years, from 1939, the activities of the RNSA were curtailed but re-assembled in 1946.

In early 1946, a group of Naval Reserve Officers formed the Naval Reserve Officers' Association (NSW), now known as the Naval Officers's Club, their meetings being held aboard HMAS RUSHCUTTER. The First Lieutenant of the latter was Lieut.Cmdr., now Capt.L.M.Hinchliffe, DSC RAN (Rtd) a Life Vice Commodore of RANSA.

Within the Naval Officers' Association were members involved in organising sailing and crewing, also taking part in regattas and cruising on the harbour and competing in various club races. In addition to two Island class dinghies, eight yachts were on the members' register.

With the threatened extinction of the Whalers, the Naval Officers' Association, raised the idea of forming an Australian branch of the R.N.S.A. and in late 1946 RANSA was approached. The response was encouraging and on the 25th October, 1946 the Naval Officers' Association passed the resolution to form a Branch of the RNSA, the annual subscription to be one guinea to be held at the Branch and a Capitation fee to be paid to the RNSA in U.K. The RNSA offered a Sailing Trophy known as a Torch trophy and the Naval Officers' Association suggested that it be competed for annually in the Anniversary Regatta held in January. Eventually six trophies in all were donated by RNSA, the most prestigious being the Braemar Jug. Of these six trophies four are still being awarded. Unfortunately two are unaccounted for. At this time seven members of the Association were members of RNSA including Lieut.K.J.G.Bromley. RANR the RNSA HLO for Sydney.

With the added approval of the Flag Officer in Charge, N.S.W., the Admiral Superintendant, Sydney, Rear Admiral G.D.Moore, CBE RAN and the offer of slipping facilities at HMAS RUSHCUTTER by Capt. H.N. (Sinbad) Newcombe, RN, the RNSA Australia Branch became established with S/Lieut.R.H.Goddard RANVR absorbing the administration of the Branch into his role as Hon. Secretary of the Naval Officers' Association. After his death his work for the RNSA Australia Branch was commemorated by a plaque, erected by members of the RNSA in All Saints Church Woollahra.

Over the next twenty years the Branch became increasingly involved with sailing on the Harbour, acquired two yachts *SCHWALBE* and *SWANDERWITT* both ex German war reparation yachts known as "Windfalls". The latter did not survive long as she was in poor condition but the former was sailed and raced successfully. *WHITE WINGS*, a local Division One yacht was presented to RNSA, a Diamond class and an Endeavour 24 were purchased. *SAMUEL PEPYS*, a well known yacht, was lent by RNSA (UK) for over two years during which time she also competed in the Sydney-Hobart race. The trophy bearing her name and presented by RNSA, - Australia Branch to the CYCA. is still competed for in the Sydney-

Hobart race. Nine Montague whalers were available for use by members, two Island Class dinghies were added, these, also being used by the Command Sailing Association, an annual Regatta to coincide with the Australia Day Holiday was organised. The Branch was also given the privilege of being invited to be one of the seven signatories when the Yacht Racing Association of N.S.W. was formed.

During this period, for a time, boats and gear were removed from the RUSHCUTTER site and until their return, found a home at GARDEN ISLAND. In 1965 the Naval Board suggested to the Committee that better facilities and cooperation would be theirs if, instead of being RNSA Australia Branch, they change the name to RANSA and become official advisers to the Naval Board on sailing. RNSA Council approved and a new Constitution following closely on that of RNSA was drawn up, the name changed to A.N.S.A. then officially recognised as the Royal Australian Naval Sailing Association by the Minister of Defence in 1974. With the adoption of the new constitution, membership was widened to include other than Navy. RNSA also gave permission for RANSA to fly the RNSA burgee. Commander John Bath OBE RAN (Rtd) steered the Branch through the transformation and the first meeting of RANSA - Australia was held on 14th March, 1966, closely followed by that of RANSA Sydney Squadron on 13th July 1966. Over the years other Squadrons have been formed but at the present, apart from Sydney there remains just a nucleus at Canberra and Melbourne and with the possibility of reforming a Squadron in the West. Sydney Squadron remains with a strong membership which includes Army and Air Force both serving and ex personnel, Local members, Associates and Sailing Associates.

In the years since RANSA was formed it has continued to encourage Naval sailing including conducting TL4 courses for members and Service personnel. It now organises one Twilight Series in the summer and two daytime races in the winter having taken on the Army's Wednesday race when the latter were no longer, due to Service commitments, able to carry on. It has provided logistic and "On water" assistance for the Hardy Challenge Series and for other Defence Forces challenges. At one time RANSA Sydney Squadron owned two Bluebird yachts and an Endeavour 24 which were available to members for charter and for racing.

The Army Sailing Club also kept its yachts at RANSA some notable ones being *BALANDRA*, *QUADRILLE* and *PATRICIA* and for a period, in conjunction with RANSA ran very successful sailing courses for members.

The apprentices from HMAS NIRIMBA regularly sailed the Bosun dinghies - recommended by RANSA to the Navy Board as the Navy's approved dinghy - which replaced the Island class dinghies from the R.A.N. Sailing Centre at RUSHCUTTER. The Command Centre had returned to RUSHCUTTER after a period at HMAS PENGUIN.

The Naval Cadets of HMAS CRESWELL and RANSA members met twice a year to compete for the John Curtis trophy, sailing both keel boats and dinghies. This trophy is, at present, held at HMAS CRESWELL but has not been challenged for a few years.

In 1973, in conjunction with the RAN, RANSA provided berthing and local administration for the inaugural Whitbread Round the World Race organised by RANSA

In 1974 the same was provided for the Financial Times Round the World entailing a great deal of organisation under the leadership of Capt.J.A.Gledhill DSC RAN (Rtd) and Capt. L.M.Hinchliffe DSC RAN (Rtd) whilst members rallied around providing their usual voluntary help.

The Annual Regatta continues to be the highlight of RANSA's racing calendar but has changed its traditional date to coincide with Navy Week in October. The Navy continues to give its support to RANSA by providing a vessel as the Committee boat together with Naval workboats. Once upon a time Navy also supplied a Flagship but this hasn't been possible for some years. The Regatta trophy presented by RANSA is competed for by Service Tasars. These replaced the Bosun dinghy and are more competitive. Another prestigious trophy, the Admiral's Trophy, so named to commemorate RANSA's Admiral, is competed for by teams from major yacht clubs. It is at present in the safe keeping of Royal Prince Edward's and has been since the inception of the trophy.

From the earliest days, even apart from the racing programme, RANSA - Australia Branch and then RANSA have organised many enjoyable social functions, both formal and casual and theme nights, all either partially or fully run by volunteer members. Bill Ford has been a stalwart in this area for many years.

The bid for the SYDNEY 2000 OLYMPICS was sponsored by the Association. Charities have benefited from members' participation. The Sir David Martin Foundation receives an annual donation from RANSA.

Many RANSA members flying their burgee have and are cruising extensively within Australian waters and overseas.

In 1976 the Rushcutter site was returned to the N.S.W. Government, but under an agreement which lasted almost ten years the Commonwealth leased back the site to enable the ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY (RANEL) - the Establishment the brick building - the Command Sailing Centre, RANSA and at the time, the Army Sailing Club to continue using the boatshed and wharves. Over more recent years, after the relocation of RANEL, a Trust was formed to administer the site. The situation at present is that RANSA pays an annual rental whilst still negotiating a permanent lease.

So to the middle nineties with the next challenge being the SYDNEY OLYMPICS 2000 in which RANSA expects to take a significant role.

## MEMORIES

Syd Sharp

I joined Royal Naval Sailing Association, Sydney Squadron in the early 1950s, the Branch Captain was Commander John Bath RAN and the Secretary Roy Goddard. In those days the members were only RAN or RANR. Permanent or retired. There was a proportion of one in ten of the full members called "Local Members" either civilian or other services. I had been sailing with Bill Fesq in his yacht *Fortuna*. Bill was an RANR Officer and it was through him that I joined the Royal Prince Edward Yacht Club.

After a few seasons with Bill, I met Leigh Cranch who at that time was the skipper of *Schwalbe*. At the time he was looking for a for'ard hand, and he asked me to join his crew as such. So this I did and at the same time joined Royal Naval Sailing Association. Leigh was an excellent skipper and a great promoter of RANSA. Whilst sailing with him we won two Summer Season Point Scores. He was well known in the sailing world for his "guitar playing" at the overnight get togethers held at Store Beach. Especially his rendition of "Mac the Knife", helped with his gravelly voice.

At the end of the Summer Season the Cruising Yacht Club held a "Fun Race". The condition was that each yacht participating had to be sailed in some odd way. Such as, head sail upside down or any other peculiar way. Leigh had the bright idea that we could sail *Schwalbe* around the course stern first and this we did. The course was short - from Rushcutters Bay around Shark Island over to Clifton Gardens and return to finishing line in Rushcutters Bay. So we fixed the rudder, ran the headsail up the back-stay, obtained a large sweep oar for steering. We made it and won a prize.

In March, 1956, I bought an old 30ft. spoon bow yacht named *Apache*. RNSA issued me with a Lloyds Registration Certificate Reg. No.117675 permitting me to fly the Blue Ensign.

In those years, the last race in December was to Pittwater, arranged by the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club. The finishing line was off their Club house at Newport. After which a very good party was held at the Club house.

On this particular race, after arrival *Apache* and *Schwalbe* rafted up together. We were then picked up by the RPAYC tender, taken ashore, and a very pleasant evening was had by all. On our return to our respective yachts, Leigh said we are going to proceed back overnight to Sydney. I said you are "Nuts" we intend to have a good nights sleep and return in the morning. So *Schwalbe* left us.

The next morning we duly left. On passing the Royal Motor Yacht Club, on the sandbank that comes out for approximately 50 yards from the shore was *Schwalbe* high and dry.

Speaking to Leigh later, he said "Johnny Walker" was on the helm and went the wrong side of the pile. They had a shocking night shoring *Schwalbe* up as the tide receded.

It was on one of these races that Haydon Farr lost his yacht *Malaki* on the rocks under Barrenjoey Light House.

After selling *Apache* I returned to sail in "Schwalbe", by this time Leigh had been transferred by his employer to Melbourne and the yacht was now skippered by Tony Dibbs and a very fine helmsman he was. Whilst sailing with him we won both the Summer and Winter Point Score.

We were written up in the RNSA Journal as "The Yacht that won a race with a broken mast". It happened in the CYC Winter Race. The wind was blowing from the Sou' West. We were leading the race and were within 200 yards of the last rounding mark, which was in Neutral Bay. The break was approximately eighteen inches from the top of the mast. Although the sails were limp, we made every effort to make this mark which was to windward. For on rounding this mark, we could ease sails and be on a broad reach to the finishing line at Clark Island. We made it and remained in a leading position to the finish.

Tony Dibbs was transferred overseas by his employer. I was then asked to skipper *Schwalbe*.

At Reserve Training one evening in the wardroom after parade, Commander Ray Williams, who was then Commanding Officer Sydney Reserves, approached me and said "Syd, the new Captain of "Rushcutter" - Commander Scrivenor, would like to speak to you." I thought what the devil does he wish to speak to me about. So I proceeded to where he was standing, although leaning would have been more appropriate, on a bulkhead.

My words were "Sharp Sir, you wish to speak to me?"

His reply "You are the skipper of *Schwalbe*?"

My reply "Yes Sir".

His reply "I will be sailing with you on Saturday. What time do you slip?" (Not may I, or have you a place in the crew.) Half jokingly I replied "We arrive at 1100 hrs, rig, have lunch and slip at 1300hrs. No further discussion.

Anyway Saturday came, he arrived at about 1115 hrs, said "are you O.K.", I replied "Yes". He then said "I will see you at 1300" and disappeared, I presume to the Bar.

He duly arrived and said "where do you want me?". I said "For'ard with Vic Jones". Well it blew a gale from the Sou'East; he proved to be an excellent sailor. We became good friends from then on.

Whilst skippering *Schwalbe*, I had the honour of taking Admiral Sir John Collins RAN out on two occasions as a non working guest. He appreciated it and on meeting him on several occasions socially, he would refer to those races.

The Six Metre yacht *Mavis* was presented to the Naval Reserve by the late Sam Sterling. (At the time he was Managing Director of Ready Mix Concrete.) The Reserve passed her on to RNSA. She was skippered by Vice Admiral Buchanan until he decided to buy and race a Dragon Class yacht.

Adrian Gray then skippered her for a season. He left for some reason or other and I was asked to skipper her and this I did for a season.

We won the first race of the Summer Season. I still have the paper cutting which reads "Surprise in Yachting". In almost perfect conditions the yachting season opened with Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron Regatta, with more than 500 boats competing on the harbour yesterday. The surprise of the Regatta was the win by the RNSA yacht *Mavis*. She won by 1m.19s. from the more favoured *Jazzier*, Bill Northam, with *Laroo* G.Dusseldrop 52s astern in third place.

As little interest was being shown by the members in *Schwalbe*, the committee decided to donate her to Snapper Island Sea Cadets. She was skippered by Allan Richardson, but Allan suffered ill health - interest waned and I believe she just fell apart through lack of maintenance.

A similar fate befell *Mavis*. She was put on Garden Island and literally forgotten.

In an endeavour to regain members' interest in Club yachts, RANSA Committee decided to invest in a Yachting World Keel Boat which was designed by Kevin Ellis. I have a paper clipping with photo dated 18th October, 1963, taking delivery of this yacht.

RNSA and the Naval College at Jervis Bay had a Dinghy Challenge twice each season. One on Sydney Harbour and one at Jervis Bay. Over the years I have had many happy visits to Jervis Bay. In the early years we, with our wives, were accommodated at the College, but in later years we had to arrange our own accommodation at Huskison.

One memorable occasion was with the late John Barry. We arrived at the College rather late on the Saturday morning, to find that all but one of the Island Class dinghies had been allotted. On placing the dinghy in the water and leaving the shed, we soon found out why. This dinghy really leaked, then to make it worse, there was no bailer. Luckily we had bought a few cans of beer to be consumed during the race. So we promptly consumed one each and used the empty cans as bailers. John skippered the first day and we won. As the dinghies had to be swapped on the Sunday Race, we watched the performance of the dinghies sailed by the College team; picked one out and made certain we were allocated that dinghy. I skippered on the Sunday and we won again.

Permanent or Reserve Members of RNSA who were qualified to handle the Naval workboats were rostered to start the dinghy and whaler races on Saturday afternoon and then act as safety boat and follow them around the course.

One funny experience that I recall was when the late John Martin was "Officer of the Day" in charge of the work boat, he had invited a friend (non member) to join him. His friend was Rear Commodore of the Royal Motor Yacht Club, Rose Bay. The friend arrived at Rushcutter dressed in his Rear Commodore uniform. They left RNSA Jetty and as they approached the pole at the end of Nola's Shoal (which has since been replaced with a buoy) the workboat always secured to this pole to start the races, John's friend offered to go for'ard and secure. He was standing in the bow as the boat approached the pole. For some unknown reason John decided the boat was proceeding too fast and went astern rather sharply. Hence his friend went straight over the side in full uniform. Being a big man and what with the high freeboard of the boat, it took some time to get him back on board.

In the early years, we were never really financial, so to raise enough money to enable us to buy prizes for our Annual Regatta and entertain the winners and Officials of the other Clubs, we held a Games Night once each year. Games such as "Under & Overs" (as an old Darwinian it is known to me as "Inns & Outs"). This game was very ably conducted by Athol Lyons. "Crown & Anchor" also Roulette. We also charged for drinks etc., luckily we always made sufficient money to pay for Prize Night.



One well-remembered night was held on Garden Island. The Club had to raise money to return the yacht "Samuel Pepys" to England. She had been on loan to RNSA Sydney Squadron from the Mother Fraternity. It was a wild night and RNSA was named in Federal Parliament by Edie Ward.

In 1976 Captain Scrivenor decided to raise money for RANSA by obtaining a cask of wine, bottling it and selling the bottles. He even had a special label printed and pasted onto the bottles. I still have a bottle, perhaps the contents would taste like vinegar; I have never been game to try it.

The label is as follows:-

RANSA

WALKABOUT ROUGH RED

PICTURE OF A FELLOW WITH HAT BLOWN ABOUT HIS HEAD

BOTTLED BY THE MASTERS

20th March, 1976

In 1978 the Committee decided to hold a "Scottish Night". As I held the recipe for "Athol Brose" they asked me to make approximately six bottles. They engaged a Piper to pipe in the Haggis. This was duly done and one of the members "addressed the Haggis". The Piper enjoyed the "Athol Brose" so much he exceeded his capacity so much so, that walking along the jetty he fell in the Harbour. My close association with RNSA and RANSA was from 1950 to 1983 - over which period I have very happy memories and would love to live it all over again.

## RANSA Recollections

Bill Ford

It was quite a quirk of fate that led me to become a member of RANSA. In 1965 the SS *Himalaya* arrived in Sydney from UK and I received a phone call from the Chief Steward, who was a personal friend, inviting my wife and me to dinner aboard, to meet one of the passengers who had travelled on the voyage. It happened to be Margaret Scrivenor, Captain Bob Scrivenor's spouse, who had made the trip with her son and daughter. As her son Robert was to attend the Scots' College in the same year as my son Peter, we shared a common interest and subsequently became firm friends.

Bob Scrivenor arrived in Australia at a later date and we also developed a close friendship and frequently met for a quiet drink at the Club bar. After a few meetings Bob proposed me for membership of the RNSA a step that was about to alter my whole life style.

Although I had spent fifteen years in the RN I knew nothing of sailing, my closest contact with boats was pulling a whaler's oar in a Fleet Regatta.

Again, fate stepped in. One Saturday afternoon, while having a quiet one with "Scriv", when Max Kean came into the bar, looking for crew for *Roebuck* one of the Club's Bluebirds. Without much thought I told him, I wouldn't mind joining him, but I had never sailed before. He immediately left to look for someone more useful, but apparently without success as he returned to the bar and said to me "come on then".

I can't remember much about the race, but obviously, I couldn't have been too useless, as when we got back to the club, Max asked me what I was doing next Saturday.

Since then I've been bitten by the bug and have sailed regularly for the past thirty years. When Max took off overseas, I skippered *Roebuck* and had many enjoyable seasons racing with the "Amateurs". I also subsequently skippered our other Bluebird *Berrimilla* which was bequeathed to RANSA by a loyal member and friend, Bill Brown and finally *Investigator* a 24ft. Endeavour which was also a club boat.

I have very fond memories of sailing with John Barry in *Manukai* his 35ft. Duncanson and participated in quite a few ocean races. One of my lasting memories was a Lord Howe Island race, when *Manukai* spent the night in Gosford and motored the next day for the start off Lion Island. We were lucky to make it as we ran aground a couple of times and had to be towed off. Then a few minutes after the gun, the steering gave way and on investigating we found the chain in the pedestal had come adrift. While trying to fix the problem, we managed to keep sailing by dint of Bob Scrivenor junior, lying below holding the steering quadrant with one hand and a compass with the other.

Having fixed the steering, all went well until we were in sight of Lord Howe, when we were hit by a violent N.E. storm. The weather closed in and we were forced to sail back and forth all night keeping clear of Ball's

Pyramid, which was a rounding mark, at that time. Fortunately, we had Mike Calder aboard as Navigator and so it was no surprise when at first light we sighted Ball's Pyramid on our beam.

Later, following the lead boat into the harbour, we saw an unfortunate sight, ; one of the competing yachts high and dry on the rocks.

After a few days ashore on the island *Manukai* entered in the first and what was to be the final Lord Howe to Coff's Harbour Race, which was skippered by Mike Calder, we managed to win.

Returning to Sydney from Coffs Harbour, I was alone on deck having the middle watch, on a pitch black night, when I observed a large dark object looming out of the water on the starboard beam. It wasn't until a searchlight hit me that I realised it was a submarine and the next moment a voice on a loud hailer came forth "Did you fire a green flare? if so raise your arms in a positive". So I called to Mike Calder who was halfway up the deck ladder, saying, "we've been asked if we fired a flare". Mike immediately raised both arms and said "No no it wasn't us!" Somehow I don't think Mike was heard as the sub started to close on us and it took some time to establish the fact, we were blameless.

There are many other incidents I could relate such as sailing with Dick Cowdery in *Woden II*, an Adams 33, to visit Middleton Reef. After a week of continuous head winds and rough seas we were forced to retreat to Coffs Harbour, where we nearly broached just inside the Harbour. We were all mightily relieved when we finally moored alongside the marina, none more than Dick who shouted us dinner ashore to celebrate our safe arrival.

These days I confine myself to harbour racing and the occasional Sunday R & R having sailed with Peter Duncan in *Sassafras* and currently in *Spitfire* with Haydon Skudder. With Dave Healey in *Klee Wyck* when we won the Winter Point Score in 1989 and John Lenehan in *Desire*. With all my sailing and duties as Rear Commodore I seem to spend more time at RANSA than elsewhere, but in retrospect, I wouldn't have my life any different - I'm sure that the club has kept me young in spirit, if not bodily and what is more important, has gained me many fine friends.