

Some Yachts Relevant to Glenelg

Peter Last

Edith

The Right Honourable Sir James Fergusson Bart (1832–1907) was Governor of South Australia from 16 February 1869 to 18 April 1873, being the only Governor to be sworn into office in the presence of a member of the Royal family (Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh). He was the first Patron of the South Australian Yacht Club (founded 5 November 1869), which became Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron in 1890.

On 9 August 1859 Sir James Fergusson married Edith Christian, daughter of James Andrew Ramsay, Marquis of Dalhousie.

He commissioned Mr Taylor of Birkenhead to design and build a yacht, which he named for his wife. She was originally *Edith*, but in other hands was also called *Lady Edith*. She was 53ft 2in long, with a beam of 14ft 3in, and rated 42 1/94 tons SAYC measurement.

The Mortlock Library holds a Lett's Diary for 1871, in which Captain John Lindsay made notes on his activities as captain of the *Edith* during that year. (PRG 1047, Series 2) This has been copied *verbatim*. They made cruises to Sturt Bay and to Robe, as well as short trips to fish and to visit Semaphore and Glenelg. On Friday 28 April 1871 there was a nasty collision with the schooner *Amelia*, in which the *Edith's* bowsprit was broken.

Captain Lindsay's laconic entry for Saturday 28 October is : 'Lady Edith Fergusson died at 1 am this morning. Strong SW winds and squally.' She was 32 and never recovered from her last childbirth. She left two sons and two daughters.

The *Edith* passed to Sir Thomas Elder and then to JH Sheridan, both of whom were Members of the SAYC/RSAYS. She was wrecked at Spilsby Island on 3 August 1897. [Chapman, Gifford. *Wooden Fishing Boats*: 224.]