

COMMODORE'S REPORT.

In bringing to you what I may refer to as an Interim Report on our Centenary Year I do so for a principal reason.

You have all probably been aware, in varying degrees, of a considerable amount of activity in the Squadron over the past few months. What I will summarize for you is the result of the efforts of a number of Members, and it is to pay tribute to these Members that is the principal reason for this report.

About 18 months ago it became obvious to me that to lend proper emphasis to our Centenary and to the prestige of the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron, our sailing celebrations should be conducted at the highest possible level. Because of this, two steps were then taken.

Firstly, we were able to establish excellent relations with the Royal Australian Navy to lend their support. Through the Office of N.O.I.C., South Australia, Commander J. Lancaster, to whom the Squadron is indebted for his support, the Navy have given assistance in the most practical manner. Secondly, as the only deep-keel National class supported by the Squadron, the Dragon class yacht was the logical medium whereby we, as a Royal Club, could evidence our status. Accordingly, the financial support of Squadron Members was sought, and freely given to send "NAN II" to Queensland in January, 1969. Forthcoming from that trip was the Prince Philip Cup series so successfully concluded recently here at the Squadron.

And here is the point of my report to you as Members.

As a Squadron, by the efforts principally of Members in no way connected with any particular class of yacht, we turned on a Regatta of international standard. The Dragon class was the medium whereby Members were able to express their pride in their Club and we are grateful and proud to be associated with those Members. They have widened the spirit on which the R.S.A.Y.S. has grown and will continue to grow.

COMMODORE'S REPORT (Contd)

South Australia, through a number of Yachting Clubs, including the Squadron, has established an excellent reputation in yachting administration. We are ideally situated both geographically and in our Gulf waters to continue to conduct National titles.

I consider we must, to be worthy of our title, be prepared to continue to lend our support to the conduct of National and International titles. I say this not from any other reason than we have a debt to meet for having such a grand Club. Whether in Dragons, Solings, Half-ton or One-ton Cuppers, or whatever deep-keel class, we should continue our efforts to maintain our prestige by supporting National and International titles in South Australia.

I do not mean we should look to do this every year. We have yachting facilities here though which are second to none in Australia and I fancy Overseas, and we should, by our constitution - "foster and develop the sport of yachting".

On behalf of the R.S.A.Y.S. I express the sincerest gratitude to all those Members who gave so much of their time and effort into making our Centenary Year such a rattling success.

HEAVY WEATHER CRUISING - by Dr. Peter Last

PART I.

By unhappy chance, on each of our last three Christmas cruises we have struck gale conditions stronger than anything that I have known in any of the offshore races in which I have taken part since 1962. I must stress that I want to convey only personal experience in local waters, and I certainly don't pretend that a thrice-repeated annual event gives encyclopaedic authority. All that I want to do is to describe our experiences and how we learned from them.

HEAVY WEATHER CRUISING (Contd)1967-1968.

On 27th December we went down Sultana Passage and along the Foot. A fresh westerly came up and we found good holding at Davenport Point, which was very clearly described by Alan Smith in a cruising talk a few years ago, and is also in Colin Haselgrove's cruising notes.

The forecast was relatively good (W - SW, with no strong wind warnings) so we decided to face a beat to catch up with our friends a day ahead of us. We set out in the early hours of 28th December in 15-20 knots, a little north of west, but as the morning came on the wind steadily freshened into gale conditions, with very rough seas and strong squalls.

By 0700 we were well south of Althorpe, and had to settle where to go. It seemed a pity to retreat to Davenport, and I was reluctant to try Stenhouse Bay in unknown tidal conditions and which seemed a confined and to me totally unfamiliar anchorage. Later we had plenty of people tell us that we should have gone to Althorpe Island itself, but only one (Colin Haselgrove) had ever actually anchored there. So we bashed all day to Wedge, where we were delighted to see others finding shelter from the little reef running out from the unusable jetty there.

We were pretty tired and had a boatload of cold, sick, dispirited children, ready to abandon all further cruising there and then, had it been possible. It had been a violent day, on which two men were lost trying to cross from Marion Bay to Snug Cove - a tragic example of the folly of believing implicitly in a weather forecast.

From this experience we learned the value of effectively caulking all definable leaks, careful stowage of gear (for clothing and blankets were soaked), and the wisdom of changing down early to storm headsail, (which I left rather late on this occasion).

HEAVY WEATHER CRUISING (Contd)1968-1969.

We spent an idyllic day at Whaler's Bay, beginning with a trip around Thistle Island in Theo Modra's aeroplane. Visibility was superb, with not a cloud in the sky. All day we enjoyed clear heat and glassy calm, as the barometer steadily fell and the radio broadcast strong-wind warnings. At this time Althorpe and Neptune had 15-20 knots, and it was a striking example of the degree to which a large land mass can distort the local weather pattern.

About 2230 at last a little NE breeze came in, enough to sail by, so we set out for Kangaroo Island under a reefed mainsail and, by intuition, not setting a headsail. The mirage effect was so great that a little later I was able to fix on no fewer than seven lights simultaneously - Dangerous Reef, Corny Point, Wedge Island (six miles away), Althorpe, Borda, Neptune and Williams Islands.

Only a few minutes later, with no more warning than the wind backing a little, we were hit by a squall which was measured at Port Lincoln at over 50 knots. Instantly all lights (including Wedge) vanished, although there was no cloud and above us the stars were as bright as ever.

The wind settled down to a steady 25-30 knots, with stronger squalls, and in a vicious cross sea we had a long, tedious sail to Emu Bay. With only two of us to work the ship we tacked down wind, and I did not pole out a headsail as a storm spinnaker as I might otherwise have tried.

We were certainly glad to be at sea for this one, especially when we heard of an anchor temporarily abandoned at Taylor Island. Without that freak fix from having seen all those lights at once, it would have been pretty worrying to have lost a light as close and as high as Wedge Island. The clear night sky had given us no warning as to when the anticipated front might arrive.