

SENIOR MEMBERS

Dr Peter Last OAM.

by Barry Allison

This is the next in a series of articles by Barry Allison recording some of the experiences and adventures of the Squadron's prominent Senior Members. This time we read of the racing and cruising activities of life member Dr. Peter Last, OAM.

Peter grew up in the Brighton and Glenelg area and escaped from tennis by venturing to the beach, where his cousin David Judell sailed from the Broadway Sailing Squadron, which was founded by Arthur Searcy during the war and subsequently became the Somerton Yacht Club. At the age of 14, Peter was for'd hand in the cadet dinghy *Ripple*, skippered by Dick Clampett. In 1946, he became David Judell's for'd hand on the 12 square metre *Ecstasy* and won the Somerton Club Championship in that year.

Christmas 1948 was an eventful time when Peter and David were invited on Doug Verco's *Nautilus* to Kangaroo Island for a Christmas cruise, with Doug's wife, Gwenneth and their son Richard. *Nautilus*, a large timber cutter, was Peter's introduction to off shore sailing with the Squadron. This was followed by crewing in races, particularly the Easter Regattas at Port Vincent. Doug later sold *Nautilus* and bought *Anyndah* with Peter continuing as for'd hand and by this time was studying medicine. Changing a jib on the long bowsprit was cold and wet work, as self-clipping shackles had not been invented. The return voyage to the Squadron after an Easter Regatta was relaxing when *Anyndah* steered herself from the Middle Spit Beacon direct to the Fairway Beacon without a hand on the helm!

Norm Howard had a Derwent 24 called *Neried* at this time and Peter joined David Judell as crew. They regularly cruised to Nepean Bay and American River over Christmas - New Year period. In the early fifties, Norm decided to build at Searles, the Illingworth designed *Southern Myth*. Peter suggested that there should be a 10 degree tilt on the toilet, because Norm was convinced that a major factor in sea sickness was constipation and Peter claimed that a tilt helped relaxation under way.

An interesting aspect of Squadron membership in the fifties was the introduction of Intermediate membership until 23 year of age to give relief to University students until they were elected to senior membership. Thus Peter's senior membership commenced on the 10th of February 1953, but in today's rules it would be dated earlier in 1948 or 1949. Peter graduated in 1953 and in 1955 took up medical appointments in Melbourne and later in London. He was wisely advised by Secretary Hal Jacobs not to resign from the Squadron, but to take leave of absence, and so retained continuous membership. He returned to Adelaide in 1960 to set up the kidney dialysis unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Jedda and Enchantress

Peter was not long away from boats, teaming up as for'd hand in David Judell's new Black Soo *Jedda*, built by David Binks in tandem with John Muirhead's *Enchantress*. Ian Dow was the main sheet hand. They raced successfully and the 1963 Adelaide to Port Lincoln race remains memorable, as they started the race in the Port River, hauled up a spinnaker and carried it all the way to Port Lincoln. They broke the record and won the Pier Hotel and Verco Trophies, being one of the smaller boats in the race. The wives flew over, complete with gas bottle and heavy anchor and then commenced a leisurely cruise of the Sir Joseph Banks Group of islands and the north coast of Kangaroo Island. They won again the following year. This race/cruise combination became the pattern of sailing for the next four years - often with different couples on board.



Kareelah and the Lasts

In 1967, Peter with his wife Jenny and children, became proud owners of the Dutch designed *Kareelah*, built for then Commodore Dick Fidock, who sailed her in the 1964 Sydney-Hobart race and then the Queenscliff-Port Lincoln race. Van De Stadt intended this hull design for the short seas of the North Sea and thus she tended to favour the waters in our Gulfs. *Kareelah* was the first of the thirty foot "super-doggers" and had an unusual coach house with good standing room to provide comfortable racing and cruising over the next nine years. Four weeks every year was spent cruising Spencer Gulf, including the Banks Group and the northern coast of Kangaroo Island with their four children.

Peter pays testimony to his wife Jenny as a superb companion and memorable sea cook in all their marine and other adventures.

In 1964, Peter left the demanding roster systems at the Queen Elizabeth and Royal Adelaide Hospitals and became Senior Consultant Physician at the Repatriation Hospital at Daw Park. Later he wrote a detailed history of this hospital and the Repatriation system in S.A. In 1972, he became a medical administrator and concluded at the Julia Farr Centre in 1983 as the first Clinical Superintendent, until his retirement in 1990.

Satyricon and the Lasts

John Duncanson built some beautiful timber yachts in the seventies, including Ron Boswarva's *Gambian* and Chappy Charlesworth's *Tiriki*, before trying his skills in fibreglass. Alan Cotton engaged him to build a thirty four foot GRP hull and so *Satyricon* was launched. But Alan wanted a slightly larger craft, and David Judell took over and sailed *Satyricon* for several years. Meanwhile, Alan had a GRP hull laid up to become *Circus* which was fitted out and ready to depart Australia in a remarkable time of six weeks! *Satyricon* changed hands again in 1976 when David Judell sold her to Jenny and Peter. David's new yacht was the beautiful *Sarina* which was fitted out for a world circumnavigation.

Thus Jenny and Peter were able to enjoy memorable overseas cruises, particularly six weeks in the Mediterranean with the Judells on the Italian coast, Corsica, Sardinia, and San Tropez. They also cruised with the Cottons through French Polynesia and with Ion and Margaret Ullett, in PNG, the Solomons Islands and areas of Australian waters.

Mary Ann and the Lasts

Satyricon raced and cruised from the Squadron for the next twelve years, providing tremendous enjoyment for the family. However increased safety requirements placed demands and added expense on all boat owners. Peter gave up racing, before selling *Satyricon* in 1988. He continues boating on the Murray River on the houseboat *Mary Ann*.

Peter's interest and involvement in Squadron administration has been spread over many years commencing way back in the days when the Squadron club rooms were in the basement of the T & G Building on the corner of King William and Grenfell Streets. Meeting rules and procedures were practiced with great enthusiasm then, challenging Commodores at General Meetings. The move from the City Club rooms to Outer Harbor in 1967-68 provided many headaches, including an illegal 'comfort station' that preceded the liquor licence. During the war, toilets and a shower were built upstairs in the Squadron 'tin shed' for the Army women involved with an artillery unit sited near the Squadron basin. This crude facility was replaced and moved downstairs, and the space became the basis of the current kitchen at Outer Harbor, as there wasn't one when Members first congregated there.

In 1990, early in his retirement, Peter offered to draft a revised Constitution, as the existing one contained some anomalies and inconsistencies. Then in December 1992, Commodore Tim Williams asked Peter to take over the production of the quarterly magazine, *Squadron Quarterly*, which he edited for the next thirteen years. This allowed him to record lots of our history, which he has continued in other publications on many topics.

SA MOTOR TRIMMING CENTRE



Arthur Vandenbroek – Prop RSAYS Member 30+ years

Shed 1, No 2 King Street, Alberton SA 5014
Phone: (08) 8447 8154 Mobile 0428 841 935

Tacking in the Port River

Some of Peter's more vivid memories include racing on Norm Howard's *Nereid* on the Port River and subsequent yachts as crew and owner. On Saturday 'round the cans' races they sailed out of the River from a line near the southern end of the container wharf. In standard seabreeze conditions, there was usually a flooding tide, so they would take short tacks as close as they dared to the 'northern' breakwater (revetment) of the river to exploit the re-entrant eddy beside the rocks, which carried them to windward. When they caught others on the port tack, they would force them out into the tidal stream to fall off to leeward. Again and again there were exciting but tiring encounters that were great fun. Unhandy boats were obliged to take long tacks, which greatly disadvantaged them. By contrast, as they came into the finish, they went to the middle of the river for the flooding tide.

Kareelah near miss at Neptune Island

One particularly wild day, Norm was a bit late in calling for the spinnaker to be hauled down and so rounded a mark with a part lowered sail and Peter over the side. Norm managed to grab him by the ankle as they sailed past and pull him back across the counter to complete the race – although rather wet and miserable. A frightening incident occurred while competing in a Neptune Island race. *Kareelah* was sailing nicely in the early hours of the morning with a light breeze abaft the beam and approaching the reefs on the north-western side of South Neptune Island. With no moon to assist vision, Peter suddenly saw how close they were to the rocks when a large wave silently crashed on to the nearby reef dead ahead. With the helm hard down, they managed to avoid a catastrophe. With no other yachts nearby they would not have been discovered for some considerable time, had there been a grounding. He was well aware of the 1959 race, when sea fog quite obscured the light on South Neptune and *MV Yandra* was wrecked by striking the western side of the island. The crew were rescued by Jim Polson's *Iliana*. *Tahuna* was fortunate, because they missed South Neptune altogether and navigated round the North Neptunes by the sound of the breakers.

Today, Jenny and Peter lead a quieter life in their new home at Kingswood and are very much involved with their family of two sons and two daughters, five grandsons, five grand daughters and one great grand daughter. Their eldest son, Robert, crews on *True North* at the Cruising Yacht Club.

Update your thinking on life rafts

QUALITY | PRICE | SERVICE

GREAT
Circle
LIFE RAFTS



Buy or Hire



Marine Safety
Equipment



Locator
Beacons



EPIRBs



Immersion
Suits



ph 1300 306 381 www.greatcircleliferafts.com.au