

ANCHORS AWEIGH

By Gill Baker



REMEMBER those exciting adventure movies that were very popular back in the 50s? The classic Captain Horatio Hornblower, All the Brothers were Valiant and Captain Courageous to name a few. Apart from very handsome and swashbuckling heroes, they all featured wonderful four-masted sailing ships with billowing clouds of white sail. What were all those different sails for? How did they work? How were they controlled? The soundtracks were loud with romantic, stirring music such as Anchors Aweigh! In the 70s, The Onedin Line was popular, featuring the stunning music from the ballet Spartacus.

I saw these movies as a child and later on television, and always found them very exciting and adventurous, but from a completely foreign world. I had had the adventure as a child coming on a big liner from England to South Australia. That had been very exciting, but had nothing to do with sail; the stirring music was not a background to that voyage! How do you translate an ordinary suburban life in modern times to the actual reality of such endeavours? Little did I know what fate had in store for me!

I didn't do any boating until the age of 18 when I went in a race on a 20 ft sailing dinghy at Tumby Bay. It looked a lot of fun, but was absolutely terrifying and I decided then that sailing was not for me. Then I met Rick. His father was building a fishing boat, but it was still in the yard, so no worries there. We were married a couple of years later and about six weeks later we were sunbaking on the beach and looking out at the pretty little yachts on the horizon and Rick said the fateful words to me "I think we will buy a boat". So we did and we both learnt to sail together and had a series of sailing dinghies. He wanted to race and I did not, and eventually when I became pregnant I stopped sailing and he bought a faster boat and I was left on the beach again but now with the children, looking out to sea at the

pretty little yachts. We eventually bought a racing keel boat which Rick raced and we managed to enjoy it as a family and had a lot of fun out on the water.

We read many books about sailing adventures. Rick had loved Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* when he was a child and we both read Joshua Slocum's story of sailing around the world, the first single-handed person to do so. The idea of sailing away and having some adventures ourselves took hold. So we decided we would like a cruising boat, but there was not much on offer and we didn't have much money.

One day there were more fateful words from Rick. "I think we will build a boat". Of course he didn't want to build a small boat. It had to be a big one, 53 ft long. I argued for about three months but that didn't get me anywhere, so the endeavour finally began.

The actual building of the boat involved many hours of hard, sticky unpleasant work with fibreglass, standing on scaffolding high in the air, spending all our weekends and holidays working on it. We built a wooden cradle on the upturned boat, and tried to find the money to buy the components. We moved the boat twice in the building phase which involved cranes and low loaders. The tasks were endless – melting lead for the keel, installing the diesel engine, making the rudder. We did all this with both of us working and bringing up a family of four children, but over the years we had massive help from friends.

We moved to Sydney for work and intended to move the boat there to finish building but plans changed and we would come back to Adelaide in our holidays and continue to work on the boat. After 13 years it was finally ready to launch! We slipped it into the Port River one very cold December morning with a large gathering of family and friends and I was given the honour of launching her. I hit the bow with a champagne bottle and proclaimed "I name this ship *Margarita*. May the Goddess bless her and all who sail in her!" It was a wonderful moment.

Over the next three weeks we rapidly got her ready for sea, as we had to sail her to Sydney where we were still living. The masts had to be stepped, provisions bought and stowed away, the galley equipped and hundreds of little jobs with fittings and rigging finished. We had a crew of six altogether to make the delivery journey.

On the designated day friends came down to the boat to wave us goodbye, but we had so much to do that they ended up quickly saying goodbye and leaving us still trying to get ready to leave. We finally left the dock in the Port River in the late afternoon, motoring out towards the sea. On the wharf at Outer Harbor were the stalwarts, friends Rosemary and John and our son Greg, who were all that were left to wave goodbye.

Many thoughts went through our minds as we hoisted our sails and headed out into the unknown seas. How would we cope with this new creature we had built. Would she be safe? Would the weather be good or bad? How would we cope with the motion of the boat? Would we be seasick? Would the mast be strong enough? Would we be able to handle the sails? Sydney was many miles away through the dreaded Bass Strait!

All these questions! As *Margarita* set out into the sunset we realised how small she really was, but we felt the waves around the hull and the wind in her sails and realised the hard work had been done and all we had to do was to put our trust in her and sail her. We had the wonderful feeling of letting go from the land and being in another world, the ocean. The stirring theme of The Onedin Line had done its work and we were ready to go – Anchors Aweigh! Let the adventure begin! It did for many happy years.

Ed: The adventures on *Margarita*, their 53' Bruce Roberts ketch, are sadly coming to an end for the Bakers as they have decided to put her on the market. Contact Rick on m: 0418 248 022 if you are interested in checking her over.



Anchored at Line Reef, outer Barrier Reef

IN TRANQUIL WATERS



Mary Hotham Howie

3 April 1922 – 4 August 2015

MARY, or Mem as she was affectionately called, was born at home in Foster Street, Parkside. She was the second daughter of Janet (nee Davidson) and Laurie Howie, her older sister also called Janet. Her mother was artistic and an exceptional weaver. Laurie was Principal of the School of Arts and Craft, and was well known for his paintings, wood sculptures and china artwork.



Andrew John Ellison

19 October 1980 - 5 November 2015

ANDREW was born into a family that loved and respected the sea. His grandfathers were William (Jack) Ellison, ex Royal Australian Navy, and John Robb, sailmaker.

Mem was introduced to sailing at an early age as Laurie and his brother Perce sailed, cruised and raced their yacht *Katie* from the Squadron. In those times it was deemed proper for girls to spend more time on education and doing 'ladylike things'. With her sister, and some cousins and friends, Mary was home schooled by her mother, later attending Walford Grammar School before gaining a Bachelor of Arts Degree at The University of Adelaide in 1939. She returned to Walford and taught Leaving Honours Maths and English. Much later Mary undertook a degree in librarianship and was second in charge at the University's Barr Smith Library for many years.

Mem and Janet enjoyed Scottish dancing and playing the bagpipes with the Royal Caledonian Society and were honoured to be in the first girls' pipe band in Australia.

After World War II, Janet married Keith Flint, an avid Squadron member and boat owner. Mem's interest in sailing was renewed and at last she really experienced life on the water. She especially enjoyed Opening Day, Port Vincent at Easter, and cruising and exploring the islands in Spencer Gulf. However she probably derived the most pleasure in just going out for a sail with family and friends.

Mary never married but was always busy doing the sort of things we all say we will do when we get time and which never

His father, John, was heavily involved with the RSAYS from his youth, and was well known in later years for his 22 years of voluntary work as OOD on *Miss Robyn*. It was only natural that Andrew should follow and have an undeniable calling for the sea and sailing.

The day that Andrew came out of hospital, when he was a few days old, he was off to the 'club' in a carry basket for a day out aboard Bill Yard's *Bird of Dawning*. At only 10 weeks he had his first trip to Kangaroo Island. He learned to sail by joining the juniors' programme, skippering Holdfast Trainers and 12ft Cadets, and later becoming a juniors' coach.

His first paid job, while he was still at high school, was as a weekend tender driver at the Squadron.

His most memorable and extended sea voyage was bringing David Henshall's boat, *Lara III*, back down the east coast from Queensland in his final year of high school. What an experience for a youth!

Andrew sailed with many well-known and experienced skippers over the years, first with the Etchells class with skippers David Henshall and Andrew Waterman, then to keel boats,

happen. She spent many years tending her invalid father, at the same time researching both Howie and Davidson family history. She published several books about the Howie family: A copy of *Laurie's World* is in the RSAYS Library. Other interests were collecting stamps, bush walking, and visiting relations and ancestral places of meaning in England and Scotland. She was especially fond of her god daughter Janette and nephews, Ian and Graham, often helping care for them when they were young if Keith was busy at work or away sailing.

Mary had some notable relations. Uncle James Edward Davidson founded *The News* in 1923; Uncle Alan Davidson was an outback explorer and mapper. Mount Davidson in the Tanami Desert is named after him, and he is still remembered and respected by the indigenous people.

At St Andrew's Hospital in 2013, Mary suffered a stroke while awaiting tests. Unable to walk and with failing eyesight, she spent her remaining years in high care at Estia Health, Kensington Gardens. Life was a struggle.

Mem will always be remembered with affection by her family, friends and neighbours for her caring attitude, generosity and love.

again with David & Dee on *Lara III*. He also sailed with David Morphet (*True Blue*), Keith Flint (*Helsal II*), John Moffatt (*Rimfire*), Colin Fraser (*Kaesler*), and Jim Howell (*Sunburst*) amongst others. In the last couple of years he opted for a faster pace and crewed with Seb Bohm on *Marabunta* and then *Slipknot*.

Andrew brought music, his other passion, to the Squadron too. He played trombone and keyboard in various ensembles including the Lindy Hip Big Band, and quartets which played at Squadron Balls and Opening Days.

He was often found up a mast or crusted in a fine layer of salt on the foredeck waiting impatiently for another spinnaker hoist or gybe, dressed in shorts and t-shirt irrespective of the conditions. Andrew dreamed of completing a Sydney-Hobart however he never quite got there.

His passion for sailing was second to none and there is definitely one thing to be certain: if he called starboard, be pretty sure he meant it!

The family would also like to thank their many friends and members of the RSAYS for respecting their privacy.

RIP Andrew