

Here's another in the series of articles by Barry Allison recording some of the experiences and adventures of our many prominent Senior Members of the Squadron. This time we focus on the long yachting activities of Past Commodore Peter Cooling who has been a member of the Squadron for 40 years since joining in December 1967.



PETER first became involved in sailing when, as an eight-year-old, his parents were invited to the Squadron by members Harry Cook and Harold McDonald to experience the club camaraderie. Peter's parents, Max and Joan Cooling, later purchased their first boat, a 22 ft cabin cruiser *Marlin* which formed part of the motor boat group and was kept on chain moorings at the Squadron. As the family grew out of *Marlin*, Max bought the 38 ft motor sailer *Glemona* from Harold McDonald on 18 August 1967 and renamed her *Carinya*. She was originally built in 1928 by J P Clausen & Sons at Birkenhead and launched as Pioneer. She saw service with the RAN as a Naval Auxiliary Patrol boat and was decommissioned on 3 April 1944 and renamed *Glenmona*. The Cooling family, with Peter's sisters Annie, Josie, Julie and Kate, were regularly seen at Squadron events and enjoyed many cruises, in company with the Paterson family in *Pauline*, to Port Vincent and to Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln.

Peter spent many weekends and school holidays messing about in boats at the Squadron, and very early learnt to row a dinghy, which provided some independence in exploring the waters in and around the Port River. He often manned the Squadron tenders on Opening Day to ferry yachtsmen to and from their moored yachts. He was also actively involved in assisting Squadron staff and boat owners in restoring damaged moorings after severe westerly winter

storms sent rolling seas into the then unprotected mooring basin. September was always occupied in slipping the boat, either at the Squadron or at Searles Boatyard, in order to scrape down the timber hull and topsides to apply a fresh coat of paint and anti-fouling.

It was not long before Peter had acquired the International Cadet *Corroboree*. After some basic maintenance and a repaint it was decided that she needed a new suit of sails. Squadron member Ivan Godfrey provided a main, jib and a spinnaker, which helped to win quite a few races. Peter initially crewed for Chris Woods, and he later skippered his own Cadet with Mark Charlesworth and Tracey Wooding as crew and they won many trophies. The shed at the eastern end of the Squadron was built specifically for housing the Juniors fleet of Cadets and Holdfast Trainers and was always a hive of activity. His sister Kate was also sailing a Cadet at this time. A typical weekend in those days would be a bus and train to the Squadron on a Friday night or Saturday morning to prepare the Cadet for racing, or just for mucking around. They were joined by his parents after Max finished his consulting as a doctor on Saturday to stay aboard *Carinya* for the weekend. When not on the water they would spend hours on the Squadron grounds or in the Juniors clubrooms, where the original Squadron caretaker's house used to be.

At eighteen years of age, Peter had to leave the Cadets because of the age limit and moved on to sailing in larger yachts. In those years he would often crew aboard Laurie (the Baron) Deacon's Dragon, *Eros*, and crewed for him when the Prince Philip Cup Regatta was conducted from the Squadron in 1977.

Peter's father, who had been the Squadron Commodore from 1974 to 1976, passed away in April 1981 and Peter became joint owner of *Carinya* with his mother. After several more years of boating, *Carinya* was sold in November 1986 to Wayne Lowen, who moved her to the CYCSA. She was then sold to Mike Roderick who lived aboard, and then resold to Peter Gibbard who sent her to Goolwa by road transport. She is now floating in fresh water with many previous Squadron motor boats, including *Pauline*, *Princess*, *Pedare* and *Cooralea*.

Peter then had a change in boats and club as he decided to venture into the fast Mosquito catamaran fleet being sailed at the Glenelg Sailing Club. He became involved with a group of enthusiasts, including Squadron identities and life friends, Phil Stump and David Eldridge, to build these 16 ft cats. Initially, these hulls were built out of timber frames and the skin and decking were from expensive brunzeel gaboon plywood. Today, they are built from a fibreglass mould. Peter built three Mosquitoes named *Echoes*, *Sailore* and *Regatta Blues* and all sailed successfully over the next ten years.



Carinya moored at the Squadron



Mosquito Regatta Blues – National Champion



Junior presentation

Peter won various club championships and gained second placing twice at National Championships before winning the National Mosquito Championships at Henley Beach in 1986 sailing *Regatta Blues* with his sister Kate as for'd hand. Peter worked part-time with Ray Brown in those days and so used Ray Brown sails on his cat. Ray was always looking for crew on his yachts *Quarter Pounder* and *Minimum Chips* and asked Peter to fill in as crew, and so began the taste of sailing on fast trailer sailers.

Another Glenelg identity in the trailer-sailer fleet was Lightweight Sharpie sailor Mike Badenoch who was skipper of a sports trailer-sailer and asked Peter to crew. Peter will always remember the hair-raising race one Sunday afternoon in strong sou-westerly winds off Glenelg. Peter was on the fore-deck when a particularly strong gust pushed the boat over on its ear, with the mast touching the water. Water began pouring into the stern cockpit area. They were in 12 m of water and this had happened so fast that all the crew could do was to think about how to get off the sinking boat – there were no life jackets worn in those days and survival was paramount in their minds. Fortunately another yacht nearby rescued all of the crew and averted a near disaster. A buoy attached to the mast of the sinking yacht for later retrieval proved to be useless, as the only part of the yacht found many weeks later on the beach at West Beach was the transom.

Peter continued his involvement in yachting over the next ten years. He married Noeline in 1988 and began settling down to a quieter married life and the establishment of a lovely home at Springfield. However, the lure of the sea is always present and one day, while touring the Goolwa area, he noticed a Ross 780 in a boatyard. This particular 780 had been previously owned by Chris Tillett, who is a well-known Olympic and World Champion yachtsman. Chris had been racing this yacht in the popular trailer-sailer series. After many later ownerships, she was in very poor condition and was the perfect project for the family to put on the water again. After two years in the front yard and a total refit and paint, Peter renamed her *Seven Eighty*. She raced and cruised in company with the Stump's Farr 750 at Goolwa for several years until the reduced level of water on the Murray forced many yachts to move to deeper waters in other clubs. And so, a new craft entered the Outer Harbor Squadron fleet and was raced successfully over the next ten years in the Twilight races and was involved in the Flotilla for Kids events. Peter was elected as Rear Commodore of the Squadron in 2010 and progressed to Vice Commodore in 2012 and to Commodore

from 2013 to 2015. Peter was also on the Limited Board and was Chairman from 2012 to 2015. He contributed to many of the Squadron's projects being undertaken in those years, including the refurbishment of the Squadron Clubhouse.

Seven Eighty was sold and shipped to Cairns in 2014 and the search commenced for another yacht – the next one to be slightly larger. After exhaustive searching for a twin wheel open transom cruiser racer, *Last Tango* was found. She is a Jeanneau Sun Fast 40 and was moored in the beautiful Townsville Yacht Club. After slipping, a survey and a short shake-down cruise with Phil Stump and Keith Teagle, it was time to bring her home. Due to work commitments, it was a short cruise with the Stumps and Helen Moody to Mackay. From there Peter was very fortunate to have the delivery crew of Roger and Marion Holden who sailed her home with the occasional help from Warwick Williams and John Wickham. Unfortunately, the weather gods delayed the delivery to miss the final Squadron Opening Day under Peter as Commodore.

Now back at the Squadron, *Last Tango* has competed in Twilight races, and more recently the Friday night races. She has a Yanmar 56 engine and has been refurbished with the latest Raymarine instruments, new upholstery, dodger, biminis, rigging, etc.

Peter has been involved in Juniors training over many years and has been a committee member, chairman and instructor with the Junior Development Committee, particularly when his daughter Maddie was learning to sail. Maddie spent ten years in the Juniors sailing group and developed many friendships and her skill and love of sailing. After finishing school, she studied medicine at the University of Adelaide and has now qualified as a doctor and is an intern at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Maddie has a strong desire to travel and already has seen a lot of the world, including Cambodia, Vietnam, UK, Europe, USA and Croatia, as well as a couple of yacht charters. Recently she has spent time in both Africa and Samoa working as a student doctor. Peter takes pride in that it was her experiences in learning to sail that stoked the fire for her desire to travel.

Today, Peter and Noeline participate in Friday night races and social and cruising events. They enjoy the company of the many fellow yachtsies who have become their lifelong friends. Their plans, after they retire, are to participate in exploring many of the anchorages in our gulfs and the north coast of Kangaroo Island and further. We wish them well in their adventures.



Last Tango, Easter 2019