

Some Yachts Relevant to Glenelg

Peter Last

Hygiea

From the material at present available, I have not been able to find out much about *Hygiea*. In particular, I have yet to identify a photograph of her. Sir Henry Bunday casually alludes to her in *Yachting in Australia* —

At this time [1874] the schooner *Hygiea* was building in Port Adelaide for my father-in-law, Sir W Milne, and the Mr George Simmonds already referred to was waiting her completion to take command of her.

Sir William Milne (1822–1895) was born in Glasgow and came to South Australia in 1839 as a farm servant. In 1842 he married Eliza Disher of Nairne, who arrived on the same ship. With his brother-in-law John Disher of Oakbank, Milne started a business as importers of wines and spirits, the name of which survived for many years. He was elected to the House of Assembly and first became a Minister in 1857. Having served in successive governments headed by Baker, Hanson, Boucaut, Waterhouse, Blyth and Hart, in 1873 he became President of the Legislative Council and was knighted in 1876. He had widespread business interests and was one of the most prominent citizens of his day.

On 2 September, probably 1876 [no year being stated] a Sub-committee of the South Australian Yacht Club reported:

Express 19.10 x 6.2 61/94; *Isabella* 17.8 x 6.1½ 2 29/94; *Banshee* 20.11 x 7.3 59/94; *Ada & Amy* 19.1 x 6.2 2 57/94; *Vivid* 20.4½ x 7.6½ 3 83/94; *Weeteena* [?] 23.9½ x 8.4½ 5 70/94; *White Cloud* 27.5 x 8.6 57/94; *Xanthe* 32.2 x 9.11 11 60/94; *Zephyr* 40.8½ x 12.1½ 22 21/94; *Edith* 53.2 x 14.3 42 1/94; *Hygiea* 71 x 17.6 87 16/94.

[The punctuation points refer to feet and inches, not decimals. Draft was not recorded and from time to time sundry differences were adopted to measure rated tonnage for racing and other purposes. Sometimes these were expressed as fractions of 94, sometimes as fractions of 100, and we do not know when or why the changes were made. William Russell tried in vain to have draft or depth taken into account in measuring yachts for rating purposes. The first records refer to measurement to the calculations of the Royal Thames Yacht Club, and later ones to those of SAYC. Minutes record that rating rules changed, but no copies have survived of what they actually were.]

One matter is certain. Sir William Milne's *Hygiea* was the largest yacht in South Australia of the time.

2nd September 1876

Vice Commodore HD O'Halloran (chair), W Russell, J Playfair, Captain J Bickers, Webb, King, W Christie and Secretary (AP Hall).

Subcommittee reported measurements:

<i>Hygiea</i>	71 x 17.6 = 87 16/94	Sir William Milne
<i>Edith</i>	53.2 x 14.3 = 42 1/94	Hon Thomas Elder
<i>Zephyr</i>	40.8½ x 12.1½ = 22 21/94	Commodore Bunday
<i>Xanthe</i>	32.2 x 9.11 = 11 60/94	HJD Munton
<i>Wileena</i>	23.9½ x 8.4½ = 5 70/94	J Bickers, JB Blair
[?Weeteena]		
<i>Vivid</i>	20.4½ x 7.6½ = 3 83/94	W Russell
<i>Banshee</i>	20.11 x 7 = 3 59/94	Vice-Commodore O'Halloran, George De Mole, AP Hall
<i>White Cloud</i>	27.5 x 8 = 6 57/94	WG Luxmore
<i>Express</i>	19.10 x 6 = 2 61/94	W Jacobsen
<i>Ada & Amy</i>	19.1 x 6.2 = 2 57/94	W Squires, G Hall
<i>Isabella</i>	17.8 x 6.1½ = 2 29/94	W Christie

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GULF DISASTERS

Yachting half a Century Ago

(By “Vagrant”)

Yachting, like all other sports, has its calamities. Fortunately there are in South Australia fewer in these days of small yachts than in earlier times. The explanation seems to be that years ago there was more deep sea cruising in large yachts, whereas small craft now rarely go far from the shore.

Yacht *Hygiea* Collision

The late Sir William Milne, Vice Commodore of the Glenelg Yacht Club, had a schooner of 84 tons built and beautifully fitted. During the summer months every weekend he and his family and friends used to sail from Glenelg across the Gulf or to Kangaroo Island. She used to look a picture with her white sails as she sailed away.

About 45 years ago, Sir William decided to take a trip in her to Melbourne with some friends on board, the only one I can remember was Mr Bussell, then a clerical student and now Archdeacon Bussell. They left Glenelg about 6 o'clock in the evening in a light breeze, and with all sails set that evening was partially moonlight, and when in Backstairs Passage the captain of the *Hygiea*, thinking he had enough moonlight, did not show his red and green lights. The steamers running to and from Melbourne in those days were not the palatial boats they are now. They included the old *Aldinga*, *Adelaide* and *Penola*, and others from 300 to 1,100 tons.

That night the *Penola* on her regular course was steaming inward. Captain Snewin was on the bridge. Suddenly the bowsprit of the *Hygiea* loomed over the side of steamer. It knocked Captain Snewin into the sea. The Captain was picked up injured. The bowsprit raked the *Penola*, doing considerable damage, besides injuring herself. The *Penola* proceeded to Adelaide, as did the *Hygiea*. Litigation arose, but I think the matter was settled amicably between the parties. It cost a good deal in repairs, and Sir William Milne sold the *Hygiea* to a wealthy Victorian yachtsman.

[Other headings describe Wreck of Schooner *Postboy*; Yacht *Haidee* (Calamity) and Wreck of *Stella*.]

I have not found the fate of *Hygiea*, and she does not appear in the early copies of *Lloyd's Register of Yachts*, dating from the 1890s and held at the Squadron.
