

involved, or for those Members who just want to learn some new skills (and you don't have to be involved in racing to benefit from this, although you may change your mind once you are involved!), we will arrange to get you on

boats. Alternatively you may just wish to just attend the theory sessions.

Keep posted for more news about this exciting new program.

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Rock 'n' Rollers with Beehives and Bow Ties at the Squadron Ball, were Helen and Phil Moody with Anne Bisset and Anne Lewis. Little fur wraps and delustered satin, high fashion in Adelaide's ballrooms during the 1960's, emerged to star again.



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The Forster Cup Revisited

Chris Pratt and Peter Last



Lord Forster, Governor-General 1920-25. Lord Stonehaven, who donated the national trophy for cadet dinghies, succeeded him.



Bill Powell, Commodore Port Adelaide Sailing Club, who brought Gynea to SA in 1923.



Life Member Bruce Tunbridge, one of the skippers of Nerana.



Professor Sir Mark Mitchell, owner of Nerana and its special shed and slip on the east bank. He did not race yachts himself, but generously provided them for many others to do so, including cadet dinghies at Largs Bay Sailing Club.



Stan Medwell was the last skipper before Chris Pratt to sail Gynea in local waters. He raced her against Nerana and Carina in two Forster Cups, and continued to sail her after the class no longer existed and he had no equivalent competition.



Life Member and sometime Commodore Dr Geoff Verco, who owned Carina. She had a shed and slip beside Mitchell's



Ken McLaren had a distinguished war record after his spell as skipper of Nerana.



Len Wigan, whose sportsmanship cost him and the Squadron the 1933 Forster Cup.



Harry Perry, last winner of the Twenty-one Footer Forster and Albert Cups, with his grandsons. Chris Perry is a current Member.

Forster Cup History

The restricted Twenty-ones began on Hobson's Bay in about 1908, where there were a few yachts of similar design called 24-foot (overall) square-sterners. A boatbuilder called Charles Peel built one for himself (*Naomi*), followed by a second (*Idler*), and they performed well in the short steep seas of Port Phillip. In 1913 the Victorian Yacht Racing Association adopted for five years a restricted class based on the lines of *Naomi* and *Idler*. In 1920 William Taylor introduced the class to Sydney, three of which were designed by Peel. They included *Corella*, which was raced in several states by the Governor-General, Lord Forster; followed by his successor, Lord Stonehaven. The class extended from Sydney and Melbourne to Hobart, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth.

Lord Forster endowed his gold cup by a deed of gift dated on Australia Day 1923. This is a perpetual trophy for interstate competition by the Twenty-one foot restricted class of yachts, or such other class as may be determined by the trustees, who are the flag officers of the Royal

Sydney Yacht Squadron. Originally contests were to be held annually in the various states.

Each contest shall be without handicap or time allowance and the yachts shall be sailed and manned only by members of a Recognised Yacht Club. The races shall be held over a distance of twelve miles approximately and two of the courses shall be windward or leeward and return and one shall be triangular.

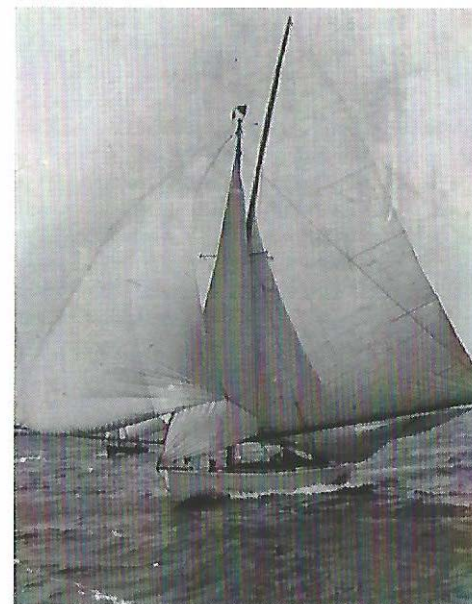
The specifications of the class were LWL 21 ft maximum, LOA 25 ft maximum; beam 7 ft minimum, 8 ft maximum; draft 20 in minimum at a maximum beam and at heel; sail 450 sq ft; ballast inside only; plate 3/8 in drop outside keel 3 ft 6 in; crew maximum six persons; stern square; spars all solid except gaff or yard.

Each state was allowed three participants, thereby introducing team racing. Mr Frank Albert donated a gold trophy, the Albert Cup, for an invitation race to be held prior to the Forster Cup. Life Member and sometime Commodore Dr Geoffrey Verco won it for the Squadron in Carina in 1933, as did Harry Perry in *Nerana* three times in his years of triumph. This Albert

Cup for restricted Twenty-ones is not to be confused with the Albert Cup for hydroplanes, frequently won by the Rymill brothers.

The Forster and Albert Cups became the most hotly contested annual yachting trophies in the country, with extensive coverage in the three Adelaide papers: *The Register*, *The Advertiser* and *The Observer*. Each year they reported full details of every race as the series moved from one state to the next. Unfortunately the old photographs cannot be adequately reproduced, and the state of the News Cuttings books prevents photocopying. Extensive non-illustrated extracts are included in the electronic publication *News Cuttings Text Only Updated*, a copy of which can be sent by E-mail to any interested Member.

For the first half of the last century the Forster and Albert Cups were the peak events in Australian yachting. Skippers such as James Milson, Frank Albert, 'Skipper' Batt, Jack Savage, Bill Powell, Alec Rose, Geoff Verco, Harry Perry and Len Wigan became the idols of young yachtsmen around the country.



'Leading almost from start to finish, the 21-footer Lady Alice won and gained fastest time in the 61-mile Orontes Bank Race on 7 March 1931.'

According to Denis Winterbottom (whose father built *Lady Alice*), Tom Hardy was the instigator of the class in South Australia. He obtained plans with detailed and meticulous specifications from the celebrated nautical architect William Fife Junior of Fairlie, Scotland, but decided not to proceed and he gave them to Lance Bennett of Brighton. Searles built *Fife* for him, and in time she passed to Jamie and Anthea Cowell. Tom Hardy participated only by being a race official whenever the series came to Adelaide. Sometime Commodore Arthur G Rymill had actively but unsuccessfully campaigned to establish one-design small racing and cruising yachts, but by then he had forsaken sailing for hydroplane racing.

The costs of transporting boats interstate became prohibitive, especially for the Tasmanians, who produced the innovative designs nicknamed butterboxes, and they dropped out in 1950. *Nerana* from Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron, owned and sailed by Harry Perry, won both Forster and Albert Cups in Adelaide in 1953, in Sydney in 1954, and the final contest for Twenty-ones in Melbourne in 1955.



Stan Medwell and Gynea's crew saluting Commodore Henry Rymill on Opening Day 1952.

Authentic Cuban Rum



The trustees then agreed that the Forster Cup could be competed for by Solings, but when they were dropped from the Olympics the class and the Forster Cup lapsed. Most of the boats that survived were adapted with outside ballast and cabins for cruising. Now the Cup is again to be competed for once again by restricted Twenty-one Footers. The races for the revived Forster Cup will be held as key exhibits in the Volvo Round-the-World Race stopover in the Melbourne Docklands in February 2006. They will attract significant publicity in Australia and in other countries.

The Challenge for 2006

Gymea has been nominated as the South Australian representative, with owner Chris Pratt as Team Captain and Skipper. Hayes Bros of Sydney built her in 1922, and Bill Powell, Commodore of the Port Adelaide Sailing Club and a Member of the Squadron, brought her to Adelaide at the end of the 1923-24 season. He took her to Sydney in 1928, and she competed in two other Forster Cups, her best result being a second in 1953. In 1946 she passed to Stan Medwell, who had Bill Powell steer the boat in the 1949 series, held in Adelaide. Stan was helmsman in the next two Forster Cup events in which *Gymea* competed. He continued to race her at PASC and the Squadron for many years, as well as sailing her across the Gulf for the Port Vincent Easter regattas, but at the end there was no proper competition.

After being rebuilt in the late 1990s, *Gymea* has recently raced in Perth and at Goolwa. In Perth she won the 1999 Fastest Gaffer on the Swan trophy, and at Goolwa, where there is a small fleet of Marconi-rigged Twenty-ones, she has won her class in the Milang to Goolwa Race. Chris Pratt, Stan Medwell's grandson, is a dual Olympian and a highly regarded national and international sailor. He currently races Etchells and recently finished 6th in their World Championship. *Gymea's* crew must be nominated through recognised yacht clubs and they will be encouraged to join the Squadron.

Nerana was owned by sometime Commodore Professor Sir Mark Mitchell, but he did not personally participate in sailing races. He was extremely generous to those who did, and those who sailed her for him included Len Wigan, Life

Member Bruce Tunbridge, and Ken McLaren. She was bought by Harry Perry, who three times won both Cups in her. Recently she has been bought and restored by a syndicate connected with the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, so in the revived series she will compete against the RSAYS nominee, *Gymea*.

The 2006 Forster Cup Challenge Series will be held in Melbourne from 2-5 February 2006. The host club is Royal Yacht Club of Victoria, and the other challenges will be mounted on behalf of senior yacht clubs in each state, according to the Deed of Gift — Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron, Royal Perth Yacht Club, Royal Queensland Yacht Club, Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron and Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania.

As in the original events, there will be three races under the class rules. The sail plan must be



Nerana off Semaphore 1942.

gaff rig, with no winches, and sails will be of cotton or dacron. Within the constraints of the specifications listed above, many hull shapes appeared. The fastest had canoe bows that extended over the water at rest, but under way they submerged to increase the effective waterline length. *Gymea* is of this design. There will be a requirement for six crew, including the skipper, and a bailer boy position is being considered.

This is a wonderful opportunity for keen young sailors to relive the intense and hectic contests of their predecessors of a couple of generations ago, and to prove that they can be as robust and as keenly competitive.

A definitive history of South Australian involvement in the Forster Cup, including winners in all races for both cups, was published in *Squadron Quarterly*, March 1995: 15-25. A copy is available from the Editor on request. Anyone interested in the race can obtain more information from the Squadron Office.

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John Phillips arrived at the Squadron Ball with his wife and vice commodore Annie Rogers on his arm. Annie's shimmering 60's outfit included a Jacki O pillbox jauntily perched upon her head.



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Racing

Caillin Howard (*Zaphod*)



So what's the reason some of us at the RSAYS are addicted to taking our vessels out, usually twice a week, to do battle on the water against those whom we also enjoy a drink and eat a meal with on a Saturday and Wednesday evening?

Is it about testing yourself on each occasion to see if you can better last week's performance or to test a new theory in varying conditions? Is it about hitting the sea with a group of hand-picked friends and enjoying some needed time away from everyday life with the mobile phone turned off and a team of like minded individuals working together at a common goal? Is it simply a matter of indulging your love for sailing and combining it with the natural urge for competition? Or is it seeing where the resident seals have perched themselves on the way out through the heads and being surprised on a drifter when a pod of dolphins decide to surface under your backside?

I believe it is all of this and more — racing yachts and sharing the experience with your crew and fellow competitors; learning from each other's experiences; building strong friendships and generally having a great time. These are the corner stones of the Club's existence and future. Now, to all of the cruising Members amongst us who have got this far into the article, don't tune out just yet. You are also important and the Cruising Committee's efforts in arranging evening talks, website updates and club events have been nothing short of excellent. Many of you are seen partaking in trophy races and twilights (and doing pretty well). This article is pitched at the joys of racing and aims to encourage future participation and undo any misconceptions of needing to be a 'world's best' sailor to get involved in racing and enjoying it.

To digress briefly for those of you that don't know me, I'm the tall guy who races on *Zaphod*, that bright blue yacht that slips around the Squadron. I have been known to spend some time on Ric Halliday's *Pronto* and I am also planning to go to Hobart this year with Bob Francis on *Renegade*. I grew up at the Squadron and my youth is full of memories of sneaking out on Club dinghies, spending days rowing around the swing moorings, fishing along the northern bank beach and messing about in the old Dragon basin. I disappeared to Western Australia for 15 years, and on returning to South Australia for work, brought back a little *S80*, *Kaltara*, which fitted in nicely at the Club. Now the reason for this side story is to share the experience of coming back to Adelaide and starting to race at the Club, without having a network of people ready to race with me and having all the usual excuses of how it's difficult to get on the water each Saturday and go racing.

If you come down to the Club and introduce yourself at the bar on a Saturday you quickly become aware of the characters who underpin our Club. These are the Members who are more than willing to help you to get a crew together and go racing, whether through their own involvement, or putting you in touch with available crew, or offering you the opportunity to expand your sailing experience on their boats.

To these Members my fellow young Members and I are eternally grateful. If you feel awkward about approaching some of these guys (and many of them do look a little crusty these days) there is always the club website 'crew list and Paul Goode (Racing Office), Vice Commodore Annie Rogers or Sue Buckley, who seem to always have a list of people keen to go sailing.

So getting back to the racing, let's de-bug the myth that you need to be an expert to get out there and go racing. Sure, possessing knowledge of the basic rules and having reasonable boat handling skills are helpful, all of which are available through some of the evening seminars being run by the House and Social Committee. In addition, through a new initiative that we are working hard at launching, a race-training program will be implemented in the new season to provide opportunities for everyone at all levels to improve their sailing skills. Our aim is to try and create a low stress environment where participants will learn the basics on race strategies (to advanced level), how to start, what to do when your pinned up against the breakwater, where to go when a 40-footer is bearing down on you with screaming crew! Sounds terrifying? It's really not — in fact it's all good fun and with some basic skills and understanding you'll have a blast. In no time you'll be throwing the spinnaker up and gybing your way down to the bottom mark.

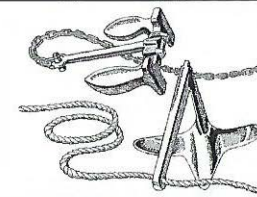
It's not too difficult to have a sufficient appreciation of racing that you will be well able to get out there and participate. From there and,

in my view, one of the great beauties of this particular sport, is the phenomenal exponential growth you can experience, if you so choose. Ask any experienced yachting and they'll be happy to agree that the journey of knowledge in this sport is never-ending. It takes more than one lifetime to know how to get the most out of every boat in every condition with every crew. This should always be our barometer of humility and keep us forever willing to discuss new ideas and the experiences of our fellow yachting in the hope of learning and improving. How involved you get in this side of the game is completely up to you.

Racing comes in many forms, and it is important to acknowledge that not all of them necessarily appeal to everyone, so firstly come down and give a few of them a go and work out which you most prefer. Have a go at a Wednesday night twilight race, and then have a go at a Saturday beacon race. There's also the inshore point score series filled with double-header races on up and back windward leeward courses; you might get giddy but I can assure you that after two races in a day with up to eight laps overall your skills and boat handling cannot help but improve. And lastly but not in any means least, get a spot on an offshore race. There's a few to choose from, some as small 60 nm that you knock off in a day and see the Gulf; or some of the longer ones that depart Friday night and return sometime before Sunday. Give it a go, and I'm sure you'll find something you like.

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