friends of his who would come along (it being Saturday) and give a hand if there was anything forthcoming for their trouble! Good heavens! I would give untold gold rather than go back, and speeded him on his way with large promises and a three-finger nip of whisky as an earnest of good things to come. So off he went, and we began to strip the boat and carry the things beyond the lock. Presently he returned with four other men like unto himself in stature. The five of them solemnly undertook to haul the Cherub over the bank, along the lock side, and launch her again for the sum of two shillings each and a quart of beer apiece, and to exercise all due care in the operation. We had only the oars to roll her on and our own cables to haul with, but, after much pulling, splashing, and sweating, we succeeded in getting that 8 cwt. of bare boat out of the river, dragged her some hundred yards through nettles, weeds and rushes, and launched her into her native element below the lock. Never was boat fitted out in so short a time. In half an hour or so we were being towed down the river to a little "pub" that must have depended upon the beasts of the field and the birds of the air for its customers, for it stood quite alone, hiding behind the riverbank, and in its modest parlour I settled up with my helpers, the sum of 11s.8d. satisfying all their claims, and, to judge by their remarks, leaving them my debtors. A little breeze springing up, we went on our way, the five stalwarts lined up on the bank watching us disappear into the rain and mist, and the crew of the Cherub certainly very light-hearted.'

By way of conclusion, I can do no better than quote Bill James from his footnote to the list of 86 known A.S. yachts:-

"Having written the list out, I am wondering where on earth A.S. found the time! Designing a yacht is no five minutes job and it wasn't as if he was a Naval Architect employing a staff of draftsmen. He was teaching full-time, writing and painting prolificly, getting more cruising in than most of us manage, and all the while was deeply involved in the Scarborough Yacht and Humber Yawl Clubs."

Truly a remarkable man!

BLYTHE LINDSAY.

THE DIRE RESULTS OF INEXPERIENCE AND OVER-CONFIDENCE or

THE LOSS OF THE MERALTE (pronounced Meralty)

This recounts an adventure of my early sailing career which I would rather forget, but never shall. It began on a Saturday, towards the end of September, 1918.

My elder brother Frank, the keenest and most experienced yachtsman in the family to that time, although Guy ran him a close second, had recently been invalided home from France and discharged from the Australian Army. You will remember that the Armistice was signed on 11th November, 1918. Frank was the owner of a 25 foot relatively light displacement canoe-bodied gaff sloop named MERALTE. She was designed by and built for that master of yacht designing in S.A. Mr. R.V. Sanderson, father of the late Judge Ken Sanderson, who will be remembered by many of the older members as the owner of WYLO for some years. He (Ken Sanderson) had the delightful habit, whenever a court was scheduled to sit at Kingscote, K.I., of sailing WYLO to Kingscote for the sittings, after instructing Harold Dicker, who was Clerk of the Adelaide Police Court at the time, that his services would be required at Kingscote for the sitting!

MERALTE was a very pretty little boat, not dissimilar to Dr. Geoff Verco's VANESSA, except for the rig, and she also was built of teak. Her rig was rather like that of the 21 ft. Restricted Class yachts GYMEA and NERANA, with a high-peaked mainsail but somewhat less sail area. She had a ton of lead on her keel which was fairly long and shallow, being almost traingular in shape, with the rudder hung on its after end. She was originally designed as a centreboarder, but had to have the ballasted keel added to make her stand up to her sail. She had about eight feet beam, 4 ft. draft and displaced about 2 tons. She sailed like a witch and there was great rivalry before the war (1914-18) between MERALTE and FIDENA owned by Syd Tolley of G. & R. Wills. FIDENA was also, some years later, lost at Glenelg.

MERALTE was laid up on the Squadron moorings at Port Adelaide during the war. This was about where Searles & Partners sheds and slipways are now. Shortly after Frank had arrived home, he had bought from my brother Guy the beautiful clipper-bowed, gaff-and-jackyard topsail cutter MIRANDA. Guy had bought her pretty cheaply in Port Pirie in a somewhat run-down condition the year before, sailed her back and had been working on her ever since in his spare time. He had removed the three tons of lead from her keel and replaced it with a bigger section reinforced concrete keel of the same weight, using boiler plate punchings in lieu of gravel in the concrete mixture. She also had a ton of lead inside ballast which Guy replaced with similar boiler punchings-concrete plastered smooth up to the level of the top of the keelson. He restored the mahogany cabin panelling to its pristine beauty, fitted a convenient galley (he was an experienced sea cook) and even a small insulated ice box, which was unusual in those days. I often think that Guy got more fun out of building and repairing yachts than he did from sailing them. Frank was the keener sailing man.

I know as much as I do about these happenings because I spent most weekends with Guy at the Port, helping (the little I could) in these projects. Before the war I had sailed with Frank in MERALTE as often as he would ask me from the age of about five years onwards, until he joined the army in 1915, when I was eleven.

In 1918 I had a 15 foot cat-rigged, more or less flat-bottomed boat built by Guy in 1916 with me helping as best I could, from a design in the American yachting journal "Rudder" and called (rather cruelly I thought) FLATTIE JUNKO! Dad bought her from Guy for me for the cost of materials and I called her FLAT CAT. She was kept on moorings at Seacliff in the summer and at the Squadron at Port Adelaide in the winter. Guy taught me to sail in the choppy seas off Seacliff and I would take her out in any conditions in which I could get out to her moorings in the "flattie" we kept on the beach all summer, and sometimes

when I couldn't, by swimming out to her and in again after the sail. She had a 3/4 in. jarrah bottom and, with the weighted jarrah pivoted centreboard, was very stiff and able. I learnt a lot about rough weather sailing in her, although of course her speed and windward ability would not compare with the 14 footers which were fast becoming fashionable. Most of the foregoing may seem to have been a digression, but much of it has some bearing on what happened later.

I had two close friends living at Seacliff, both a year older than I was, who crewed on MERALTE during the fateful weekend. One was Ron Benny who was a natty dresser and, later, acquired the apparently ill-assorted past-times of signing on for long voyages in sailing ships and hanging around the stage doors of theatres. Perhaps after all they weren't so ill-assorted! He was the son of an Adelaide solicitor and Senator in the Commonwealth Parliament, Benjamin Benny, whose later history was quite unsavory, but at that time he owned a 32 foot, plumb stem, short counter stern, narrow-beamed and deep-draft cutter named SOLACE. She, by the way, a couple of years before this had received Guy's famous surgical removal of the lead ballast treatment and its sale at the tremendously inflated prices of the day and replacement with reinforced concrete. Guy must have been making more money in his spare time, buying and selling yachts and dealing in scrap lead than he did working full time for Dad 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. Fridays and 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays in his hardware store or rather "ironmongers shop" as it was known in the English spoken in those days!

The other friend involved in this sad tale was Alec Hay, son of reputedly wealthy and certainly very strict parents. Alec had reacted by growing up with a slight stutter and was a bit of a "harum-scarum", to use a term of those days.

Well, the stage is now nearly set for the drama to unfold.

Brother Frank had cleaned up and painted MERALTE all over and had rigged her with all her old pre-war sails and gear (by now, of course, pretty ripe) and was offering her for sale. You will remember that he had recently bought MIRANDA from Guy.

I asked Frank if I could borrow MERALTE for the particular weekend mentioned at the beginning and he, very generously but foolishly as it turned out, agreed, not for a moment imagining that we could be considering going outside the Port River, which we had already decided to do, to show off to our co-members (about six in number) of the budding Seacliff Yacht Club. We got to the Port as soon as we could on the Saturday morning after raiding the home larders for some basic stores, and set about getting the boat ready for sea.

It was a bright sunny day of Spring-like weather with a fresh (about 20 knots) north westerly wind and, we found later, a steeply falling glass, but at that age we pay little heed to such things! We had a smart sail down the Port River and reached the Outer Harbor in the early evening with the tide on the ebb. We had borrowed SOLACE'S new Searles-built 9 ft. dinghy (without the Senator's permission!) and were towing it, as it was too big to put aboard MERALTE. We had a few moments of doubt when, as we were reaching along swiftly with the wind abeam and nearly into the Harbor mouth, the ship was swept by a breaking wave caused by the swell coming in against the tide and the wind blowing across the swell. We didn't get much water below although she didn't have a self-draining cockpit, but the dinghy was half filled with water. Fortunately we had taken the oars aboard MERALTE and stowed them below. We nearly turned back at that time, which was one of those "if onlys" that keep on cropping up throughout a lifetime. However, we didn't and that was where the over-confidence came into it.

It was a tricky job getting a man (? boy) into the dinghy to bail it out and to get him back aboard again when it was done, although we had some shelter from the southern break-

water by then, having luffed up outside close to its southern side.

We had a glorious run to Seacliff with the wind on the quarter and anchored there about 10 p.m. After a sandwich and a "cuppa" we turned in, to spend as uncomfortable a night as I have ever had, pitching and rolling with the wind and tide at odds. Having shallow bilges, it took very little water in her when she was rolling so wildly for it to slop up over the hull-side edges of the bunks and soak the blankets.

Soon after dawn we rowed ashore and had a run on the beach to get warm, but didn't make our presence known at home because we were starting to realise that we may have done a pretty stupid thing and that it was best to get on our way back as soon as possible, which we did, putting a couple of reefs in the mainsail first just in case, before leaving for the beat back to the Harbor at about 8 a.m. on the Sunday.

The breeze was freshening and there was a big cross swell from the S.W. (which should have warned us too) but the ship was sailing and handling beautifully until, about a mile west of the Glenelg jetty, the throat halyard broke just below the block at the hounds. We dropped and furled the flapping mainsail, reached in for the jetty under the jib and anchored on the south side of the jetty, where with the north westerly wind, we were fairly well sheltered by the sheet-piling which used to be on the T-end of the old jetty, where the S.S. KARATTA berthed on her way to and from Kangaroo Island. Our anchor was about a 30 lb. pick, which was adequate, but the warp was 2½ in. diameter coir rope of uncertain vintage and certainly more than four years old. I didn't then know of its liability to rot.

I managed to shin up the mast with the broken end of the throat halyard (after whipping it) and knotted it back on to the becket on the block at the hounds, where the splice had chafed through on some ironwork on the mast.

It was just as well that I was pretty fit and active, because that mast was mighty slippery, the ship was very lively and I didn't have any hands left while I was passing the halyard through the thimble on the becket and knotting it. My hobbies of gymnasium, boxing and swimming helped, I expect.

When all was ready to make sail, the crew voted that we wait for a rain squall, which was blotting out the horizon, to pass before getting under way and, in the meantime, to have a brew, which we did of cocoa laced with plenty of condensed milk. Then came the squall which wasn't rain, but hail and with it a wind change to south west at certainly no less than forty knots, and were we in trouble then! When we anchored we had given plenty of scope on the warp to make sure of holding and now with the wind change we swung in until the piles of the jetty were no more than twenty feet behind the dinghy, pitching madly on its painter.

So, what to do? Now we see the horrible results of in-experience.

Over the years I have realised that my more or less instinctive thoughts of the action to take were right: to make sail immediately, back the jib until we were on star-board tack heading diagonally for the shore south of the jetty, then cut the anchor rope and sheet in the jib. If we could beat out of it and clear the end of the jetty, we had a free reach for the Harbor. If not, sail her ashore close-hauled on the starboard tack, letting to the main halyards just before getting into the breakers and leaving the jib close sheeted to keep her heeled. On her beam ends and with her wedge-shaped underwater profile, I think she would have skidded up nearly to the water's edge with little damage.

I can still remember the possibilities running through my mind, but unfortunately, what had been three reasonably competent young sailors a scant half hour before, had been turned by a heavy fall of hail and a very strong squall, into three shivering and useless 14 and 15 year old school-

boys! Alas, in the event we did nothing but sit as if petrified, watching the coir anchor-warp fray little by little in the bow fairlead until, when only one strand was left, we came to life and scrambled madly into the dinghy, to capsize in the surf and be hauled out by on-lookers on the beach who had been watching our plight. One kind lady, living in a big house on the esplanade, whose name, alas, eludes me, took us to her home, gave us hot soup and put us in a huge old bed with, of all things, flannel nightgowns to warm us up! Then she telephoned our parents to tell them we were safe, although they didn't know we had been in any danger. I was far more scared of Frank's wrath than I had been of the perils of the sea!

Just after the rats had quit, the anchor warp parted and MERALTE crashed through under the jetty, stripping the mast and spars out as clean as a whistle, other than which, apart from the lead on the keel and SOLACE'S dinghy, nothing was salvaged. Of course, yachts were not insured in those days, so it was almost a dead loss for Frank. That's where FLAT CAT comes into the story. I had to hand her over to Frank, as she was the only thing of value I had. Incidentally, he didn't speak to me for two years thereafter!

Frank must have been unlucky with boats. He only enjoyed MIRANDA for some three or four years after that, when one night vandals broke into her cabin when on the Squadron moorings at Port Adelaide and set her on fire (probably accidentally) so that she "burned to the water's edge" and sank.

The other vessel mentioned, Benny's SOLACE, also came to a sticky end. After the Senator's troubles, his brother, who was a farmer at Morphett Vale, took her over and against lots of advice (from me for one) put down moorings at Port Noarlunga, from which she broke away at high tide in a westerly storm and was smashed to pieces on the rocks at the foot of Witton Bluff - another sacrifice to in-experience and over-confidence!

C.P. HASELGROVE