

By Chris Mandalov

Miss Robyn has been sold and, sadly, will leave the Squadron in 2021. At this time, she will be 49 years old and would have been an integral part of Squadron life for more than 30 years.

This timeline has been put together from the recollections of members, past *Squadron Quarterly* articles and from an article on *Miss Robyn* published in the July 2011 *SQ* by Dick Richards.



Miss Robyn in her final Opening Day Sail Past – 7 November 2020

1970s

MISS Robyn was built way back in 1972. To put this date into perspective, in the same year the Munich Olympics massacre occurred, Richard Nixon was caught with his fingerprints on Watergate and Gough Whitlam became our first Labor Prime Minister since 1949.

Miss Robyn's hull was made by Peter Kruger in Port Lincoln as the plug for the Kruger 40 work boat, and the fit-out was completed by Austral Yachts of Hackham. She is 12 m (40 ft) in length overall and weighs 12 tonnes.

The boat finally launched in May 1974 for the late feisty Mount Gambier businessman Alan Scott, best known for founding the truck organisation Scott's Transport in Mount Gambier. With typical bravado, Alan named her *Enola Gay* after the aircraft that dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima in WWII.

1980s

THIS was a decade of big hair, big mobile phones and pastel suits. It was an era where greed was good. The Squadron bucked this trend by relying on the generosity of members to make their boats available for official duties.

This continued until 1988 when Alan Scott made *Enola Gay* available to the Squadron for official duties for five years, reducing the need to rely on members' boats. The boat was refurbished and then renamed *Miss 5DN* in recognition of sponsorship from a local radio station. She continued under the captaincy of Bunny Preston as the PRO's vessel, running all the combined RSAYS and CYCSA racing fleets.

Before this happened, in 1985 *Enola Gay* was put forward as a duty boat for *South Australia*, our entry for the America's Cup to be held in Perth in 1987. On the day that the Cup Committee was to visit the Squadron to inspect the *Enola Gay*, Julian Murray, now our Slipmaster, and his partner Wendy were hastily asked to paint out the politically controversial name. In the end, the Cup Committee rejected the offer of our duty boat. When Alan Scott heard that the name of the boat had been obscured, he was furious and insisted that the old name be restored. Perhaps he held the old superstition about boat name changes carried out without appropriate ceremony!

1990s

IN the early 1990s Germany reunified, the Cold War defrosted, and the Internet started its humble beginnings as a single login from a computer terminal in Los Angeles to a computer in San Francisco.

During this period, in recognition of the generous support of Alan Scott, the boat was purchased by the Squadron and renamed *Scotty*. The Squadron continued to use her as the Official Boat for racing and for other Squadron events under the guidance of John Ellison who took over as PRO from Bruce Tunbridge.

The mid-nineties saw the Squadron in great financial difficulties. The Club was near bankrupt – Marina Stages 1 and 2 were not selling well and the Flag Officers and Management Committee were worried by the remote possibility that the property lease could be terminated. Spending was drastically cut and any economies possible were instigated.

David Henshall realised that racing had to continue and that a large expense was the Official Boat, so he bought her, renamed her *Miss Robyn* after his daughter, and maintained her with the special help of

John Ellison. A 'loan-back' arrangement was offered by David to the Squadron, at no cost, for two years.

In March 1997, race results started being computed and printed aboard *Miss Robyn* for the first time and were available immediately on docking after each race.

In June 1998, after the loan-back agreement with David Henshall had expired, he agreed to still provide the Squadron the use of *Miss Robyn* at cost. This meant that those who raced their vessels at the Squadron had to cover the full operating costs of the start vessel via racing fees. This arrangement lasted for nearly 20 years with substantial sponsorship deals defraying the costs.

2000s

THE start of this decade was marked by the Sydney Olympic Games, the introduction of GST and the dot.com bubble burst (ironically, just 10 years after the birth of the Internet).

In 2001, *Miss Robyn* finally gained a corporate sponsor, Copyworld, who remained a sponsor until the end of 2003. Another generous sponsor was Frank Bamford, Dealer Principal of Main North Nissan, who was also a sponsor of our Juniors programme.

In 2003 *Miss Robyn* suffered major damage while being slipped at the Squadron. With her two stern drives and large engines she had to be manoeuvred well forward in the cradle because she was heavy by the stern. On the day of the accident, watchers on the shore were horrified to see the boat sink onto the cradle with a heart-rending crunch as the keel collapsed and the bearers ripped into her hull. At first it was thought that she was a total write-off but following an assessment by the shipwright Bill Porter and much wringing of hands, David Henshall decided to commission Bill Porter to restore her. Bill spent long hours, initially on his back shoring up the boat, stripping and repairing and fitting a new, stronger keel.

The original engines were a pair of a Volvo Penta 250 hp TAMD 70 turbo charged diesels driving through stern drives. They were very powerful and manoeuvrable but wretched

things to maintain! The engines were habitual 'slow starters', which resulted in new battery banks being installed with monotonous regularity due to the strain of starting.

In 2006, the decision was made to take *Miss Robyn* to Bill Porter's boatyard to replace the engines and also to burn and scrape decades of anti-fouling from the hull and also topsides. Many Club members volunteered in this hapless job. The new engines were 'preloved' Nissan 180 hp naturally aspirated engines. While the original engines enabled *Miss Robyn* to reach 19.5 kts, the new engines can reach only 12 kts. However, they start very easily and are very modest in their fuel consumption – a definite improvement.

There was a launch drama when the motor stalled; a block of wood had wedged itself between the hull and shaft. This was freed off and *Miss Robyn* then returned to RSAYS, where over another couple of weeks most things were tidied up and she was ready for the 2006-2007 sailing season.

One of the many pleasures on race days was to see *Miss Robyn*, followed by her escorts loaded with marker buoys, steaming out of the pool, flags flying, crews busy, against the background of the race crews madly preparing for the start.

2010s

JULIA Gillard was sworn in as Australia's 27th Prime Minister, a tsunami created a nuclear disaster in Fukushima and Donald Trump entered the race for US Presidency.

In the face of some of these looming disasters (choose your own), *Miss Robyn* continued to work as the Squadron's Official Boat. She was ably assisted by Brian Sutherland's *Wilbur*, a large, seaworthy 11 m aluminium fishing boat along with Robert and Chris Henshall's *Macro*, a rugged Arvor 23. *Macro* and *Wilbur* worked as mark and rescue boats, and assisted with Etchells racing.

Throughout this decade, *Miss Robyn* continued as our main start boat for Wednesday Twilight Series races, Women's Series races on Sundays, Offshore Races and shared Saturday Inshore duties, alternating with the CYCSA. She was

also the Official Boat for the annual Adelaide to Port Lincoln race, the King of the Gulf Regatta at Port Vincent, and our Easter Weekend Regatta at Port Vincent.

Miss Robyn had an exterior refurbishment, including a re-fibreglassed foredeck and cabin top. Eventually her bilge pump seemed to remain on more often than off. Her hull bottom needed to be shored up with a fibreglass cover over her weakening timber sections. This work was performed by Steve Dunn in our slip yard.

A common sight on *Miss Robyn* at this time was an image of John Ellison calling out finishing times, his wife Helen recording the times, and Milly the poodle making sure everything was done by the book. John passed away in 2015 and Roger Oaten and Stewart Ross have been our OODs since that time.

Miss Robyn's cabin is adorned with plaques of appreciation from many events, including The Computer Associated Regatta (1994), Clipsal Flinders Port Regatta (2003), Stonehaven Cup (1991, 1992, 1994 and 1998), Opening Day Official Vessel (1991, 2000, 2001 and 2007).

The RSAYS Foundation has supported *Miss Robyn* over the years through the provision of new anchor chain, wind instruments, first aid kits and life jackets.

In 2012 Mario Minuzzo purchased *Miss Robyn* from David Henshall. Mario continued to allow her to be used by the Squadron and shared the maintenance costs with the Squadron despite her being used mainly for Squadron duties. Mario was also a strong supporter and sponsor of the King of the Gulf Regatta.

Miss Robyn was sold to Nives Vincent and Bill Bybee in June 2020. Both Nives and Bill had been regular assistants to Roger Oaten on *Miss Robyn*, often helping out several times a week.

Nives and Bill have very kindly allowed the Squadron to continue to use *Miss Robyn* until the end of the 2020-2021 racing season. Following that, *Miss Robyn*'s new home will be in Western Australia where she will be used as a family pleasure craft.

Farewell *Miss Robyn*. Enjoy your retirement.



David Henshall



Mario Minuzzo, Nives Vincent, Pat Minuzzo



Bill Bybee and Nives Vincent

By Mario Minuzzo



Mario Minuzzo, Roger Oaten and Nives Vincent

MARIO worked after school and on weekends for the family business Minuzzo Brothers Builders, and then entered an apprenticeship as a carpenter and joiner while studying at nights at the School of Mines, now UniSA. When Mario was working on building sites overlooking the Gulf he would often see Squadron boats sailing past. This started a passion for sailing single-handed dinghy class International Moths. Mario went on to build a new development class Moth each year and represented South Australia at four Australian Titles.

In 1982 he procured a Van Der Stat 12 metre monohull that was launched at the Squadron. The boat was named *Waterfrontier* after a restaurant Mario had an interest in on Glen Osmond Road. Mario's building company grew and prospered, allowing Mario to enter the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race in 1985 and 1986, and then in a new Beneteau named *Wild First* in 1987. They were awarded a third place in the Melbourne to Hobart Race in 1988. In this race the fleet endured winds up to 60 knots and a lot of the fleet was pushed below the rhumb line. Mario's navigator advised him to reduce sails down to a storm jib and maintain the rhumb line. After the front had passed *Wild First* was up with the leaders, and this helped to obtain a third place in their division. Patricia, Mario's wife of over 25 years, was one of the first women to represent South Australia in the Hobart races, and today there are many excellent women sailors.

In 1975 Mario incorporated his own building company situated at Payneham, where it still operates under the management of his son Steve. Mario was elected a Councillor at the Master Builders Association and chaired the Commercial Contracts sector for eight

years. Commercial Contracts was the main source of income for MBA and he enjoyed the challenges of tight programmes and stiff penalties. The hospitality sector was added to the construction group, commencing with Regines, a nightclub in Light Square opened in 1976, followed by the Waterfront seafood restaurant, then the Crown Hotel at Victor Harbor, The Oaks Tavern in Pirie Street and the Port Dock Hotel and mini-brewery in Port Adelaide.

In 2001 Mario was given medical advice to slow down and enter early retirement. He was then asked to be President of the Marryatville Old Scholars Association after one of his former school mates became ill. He headed up the Old Scholars for eight years and handed over the reins and a very much improved bank balance on his departure. Because of the advice on his health, yacht racing came to an end until in 2012 the Squadron asked Mario to buy *Miss Robyn* and provide a \$10,000 sponsorship over three years which was renewed. Over time the crew consisted of Roger Oaten, Nives Vincent, Bill

Bybee, Barry Lane, Peter Boyd, Sue Soukoulis, Mario and mates. During Mario's ownership of *Miss Robyn* many and much-needed improvements were made. *Miss Robyn* always leaked, with the bilge pumps constantly being checked. This problem was eventually solved by Mario spending nearly \$30,000 to strip, sand, fill and re-sand the hull to above the water line. It has been repainted every three years, windscreen wipers have been added, new bilge pumps and engine sumps have been installed, the galley has been extended, hydraulic oil lines have been replaced, as well as a new captain's seat and anchor winch. The list is not complete, as he didn't want Patricia to be bothered with the costs of owning and sponsoring a boat. *Miss Robyn* was sold to Nives Vincent and Bill Bybee in June 2020.





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‘To Promote and Foster the Comradeship of the Sea’

By Barry Allison

There have been several enquiries from Squadron members recently about the background and functioning of the Seven Seas Club of Australia, and several of our Squadron members are already involved. There are only three Seven Seas Clubs in the world—London (UK) Simon's Town (South Africa) and Adelaide.



The Seven Seas Club of Australia Plaque

THE Australian Chapter of the Seven Seas Club was formed in 1968 on a cold, stormy June night at a meeting in the Feathers Hotel in the Adelaide suburb of Burnside. There were about 15 men present, who had responded to a small advertisement which appeared in the previous weekend's newspaper, simply asking for persons interested in 'Fostering the Comradeship of the Sea' to attend.

The advertisement had been placed by Lt Commander Malcolm Mayhew, CMG, RNVR (ret), who was a Past President of the Seven Seas Club of London and had moved to Adelaide to enjoy his retirement. Malcolm, who was a very likeable English gentleman, in the truest sense, was very keen to establish a club in SA, composed of those with a true love of the sea. The club would be linked to the London group and have the same social and charitable aims.

Naturally Malcolm was elected as the first President and was assisted by a Committee made up of volunteers at the meeting. It was decided that the Club would hold a dinner meeting on the third Wednesday of each month in a small area closed off from the main dining room. Thus the Club was born.

Contact was made with the London Club advising them of the establishment of the Club and asking for permission to use their name 'Seven Seas Club' and also to adopt their tie, which is a seahorse on a cresting wave. An answer was soon received implying that we were a little presumptuous in using the name, and refusing to allow us to adopt their tie. As a result it was decided that the words 'of Australia' would be added to our name and our own design for a tie featuring a crown and anchor was adopted.

It is pleasing to note that over the years a very friendly relationship has been established with the Club in London, with many of our Officers and Members receiving a very warm welcome from their English counterparts when visiting the UK and attending their meetings.

Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, was approached to be our first Patron but unfortunately replied stating that he was not accepting any such appointments at that time and to try again in a few years. Subsequently, an approach was made to Sir Alec Rose, a greengrocer who had been a single-handed, around-the-world yachtsman, and he graciously accepted. Our present patron is His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AO, the current Governor of South Australia.



Ken Messenger, current President