

In Tranquil Waters

Peter Kerr Osborne

5 April 1919–9 June 2000



Distinguished descendant of an old and dual nautical ancestry, Peter Osborne was one of the last Members able to recall the Squadron when AG Rymill was Commodore (1923–31). Osbornes were Scots, with a coat-of-arms registered in Edinburgh in 1672. Peter's grandfather, Alexander Mann Osborne and his four brothers were all sea captains. He married Isabella Quin in 1879, sixth of the nine children of Captain Hugh Quin and Isabella Lockhart. Hugh Quin, second mate on the *Cygnets*, was present at the Proclamation of the Province of South Australia in 1836 and was Commodore of the South Australian Yacht Club 1871–2. [*Squadron Quarterly* December 1994: 33–6.]

Peter Osborne's family had an unbroken association with the Squadron since the election of Hugh Quin as a Member on 3 June 1870 and Captain JA Osborne on 8 August 1874. Then came S Osborne on 7 November 1889 and PC Osborne on 7 August 1890. Captain Robert Osborne commanded the sailing ship *Jane Bell* from 1865 to 1872, and in 1877 entered a partnership with Hugh Quin and others to establish the Euro steamship Company. Robert

William Osborne established the South Australian Stevedoring Company at Port Adelaide and built the grand old house to the west of Victoria Road that is now the I.e Fevre Recreation Centre. The suburb of Osborne was named after him. One of his partners and eventual proprietor of the stevedoring company was William Fisher, Commodore 1901–2 and a Life Member. The company Secretary was Magnus Wald, Honorary Secretary of the Squadron and also a Life Member.

Peter's father, JE Osborne (1880–1969) was involved with the Squadron for most of his life. In the late 1890s the Squadron introduced a 12-foot dinghy class (not the cadet dinghies, which arrived in the 1920s), and JE Osborne owned one called *Midge*. She was one of seven contestants in the first race of the season on 22 November 1900. He later moved up to a centreboard sloop, the *Weeraopa*, shown on the Squadron register for 1920. At that time, JE Osborne was a member of the Sailing Committee and subsequently was Treasurer. He sailed interstate several times on the celebrated yacht *Malangi*, of which there is a half-model in the Club House. She was built for Commodore FV Sanderson some time before 1900, and was destroyed dragging ashore in a gale at Glenelg on 4 April 1922, being then owned by WT Horricks.

With that background, it is not surprising that Peter Osborne began at the Squadron as a Saint Peter's College schoolboy. He became a Junior Member in 1931 or 1932, as skipper of *Maluna*, one of Mark Mitchell's cadet dinghies. He sailed with the Burnley brothers and in at least one of the many vessels named *Wylo*, as well as with Dr Bill Ray in *Soliloquy*. In 1935 he moved to *Nerana*, the 21-foot Forster Cup contender skippered by Ken McLaren.

Peter and Ken joined the RANR in 1936, at a time when more wanted to do so than there were places for. They trained at Birkenhead one night a week, and got to sea once a year, when a vessel came from Sydney for the purpose. Peter was accepted for officer training, and passed for Sub-Lieutenant just before the outbreak of the Second World War. He served first in HMS *Moreton Bay*, an armed merchant cruiser based

in Hong Kong. She escorted Atlantic convoys, when the Battle of the Atlantic was at its height. In their last and worst voyage, they lost 13 out of 21 ships.

Peter returned to Australia and married Barbara Roake in intense summer heat, before promotion to Lieutenant and posting to HMAS *Geraldton*, which took him away from Australia for almost three years, engaged in hectic work in the Mediterranean. This was followed by the Indian Ocean and a temporary appointment to an aircraft carrier, HMS *Attacker*, which went to Antarctic waters to escape the threat of submarines.

Peter was posted to HMAS *Broome* as First Lieutenant, which required him to be a firm disciplinarian. He was promoted to become the youngest Lieutenant Commander and corvette captain in the RAN. After participating in the invasion of Balikpapan and Borneo, HMAS *Broome* went to Hong Kong for the Japanese surrender there, and subsequently he had the pleasure of taking her to her namesake port. The

ship paid off in Fremantle, and Peter was discharged.

After the War, Peter returned to the Executor Trustee Company. He and Barbara bought *Scylla*, a Jubilee, which they raced and cruised across the Gulf. Work took him to Mount Gambier for 17 years, where he became much involved with horses. Consequently, for some years he saw little of the Squadron, but in 1950 he was a member of the crew of our first Sydney–Hobart Race winner, Colin Haselgrove's *Nerida*.

On returning to Adelaide, Peter sailed in Sir Magnus Cormack's *Tanui* for 17 years, until she was sold in 1985. He and Barbara then bought the Blythe Spirit *Ranger* from Robert Henshall, which they sailed until the end.

Peter Osborne was one of the longest serving Members of the Squadron, and we will miss his quiet participation in our activities. We extend our sincere sympathy to Barbara and her family at this sad time for them. SC

Tamryn and Daniel Snewin of Ponde with a friendly pelican on the north bank. One dark night in the late nineteenth century, Captain Frederick Snewin of SS Penola was swept from his bridge by the bowsprit of Sir William Milne's unlit schooner Hygiea, the largest yacht in South Australia (87 ft overall). He spent a lonely time in Backstairs Passage before he was rescued. Captain Snewin was elected a Member of the South Australian Yacht Club on 4 October 1873. (RSAYS)

