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THE FIRST CRUISE OF THE NERIDA -- 1934

Mrs. Judy Judell has presented to the Squadron a copy of the log of the first cruise of the yacht NERIDA which is of great historical interest, quite apart from providing a delightful insight into yachting at the time.

THE VESSEL

NERIDA deserves her own biographer, and hopefully one day we will have a full account of her for addition to the Squadron archives. For the present purposes it suffices to record that she was built in 1933 as a gaff-rigged cutter by R. Searles and Sons of Birkenhead to a design of a Scot, A. Milne, for Vice-Commodore, T.M. Hardy, holder of the unusual qualification of a yacht master's certificate. Later she passed to the ownership of Mr. C.P. Haselgrove, O.B.E., who won the Sydney-Hobart Race in her in 1950, having been re-rigged in 1947 as a Bermudan yawl. Now she has been restored, and is back in Hardy ownership on Sydney Harbor. NERIDA is commemorated in the handicap trophy for the Neptune Island Race.

THE PARTICIPANTS

TOM HARDY, Vice-Commodore of the day, prominent vigneron and yachtsman. He established the family wine company on its present footing, and was a man of great charm and ability. He was killed, together with several other South Australian representatives of the wine industry and G.S. Hawker, prominent politician, in the crash of the aeroplane KYEEMA on 26th October, 1938. His wife Eileen, who survived to the age of 87, and who died in April 1980, became the much-loved matriarch of South Australian yachting. She is alluded to in the log, and also in the 1935 log. In those days, ladies didn't do much cruising, and the Squadron was in every sense a gentleman's club.

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Their sons have all been much involved in yachting. Tom, who with Don Haselgrove, built LIALEETA, has also been Vice-Commodore. David owns the happy trimaran SEMELE, moored in front of LAURIANA, and Jim is celebrated as world champion, Olympian and America's Cup challenger. To complete the picture, Pamela married a naval officer.

GEORGE EIMER was Chief Engineer of South Australian Railways. Later he owned NYPHEA, and became one of our most experienced cruising and fishing yachtsmen. He is commemorated in a racing trophy.

G.C. DEMPSTER. More information concerning this crew member would be appreciated.

L.J.C. WIGAN was Chief Engineer of the Adelaide Electric Supply Company, Osborne, and later of the Electricity Trust. He never owned his own vessel on the Squadron register but was a celebrated racing and cruising man, at the end on NYPHEA. He is commemorated in a trophy for the Neptune Island Race.

NORMAN FORD, builder of ANYNDAH, was an expert on nautical protocol, closely studied the life and work of Matthew Flinders, and at his death was our oldest member. He had been Treasurer for many years.

THE TIMES

1929 was one of the worst drought years that the State has ever suffered. Almost immediately the whole world was plunged into the Great Depression. In 1926/27 Holden's produced over 50,000 car bodies; in 1931/32 the figure was 3,245. When NERIDA was launched 16,923 men were drawing unemployment rations in Adelaide. This was at a time when

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those on annual salaries (like the two engineers) had to face the prospect of reduced benefits, including annual leave, and nobody was immune from retrenchment. By modern standards technology, nautical and domestic, was primitive. Rope was natural fibre, sails were of canvas, with all the problems of wet storage, mildew and rot. There was no refrigeration, ice was strictly limited, plastic had not been dreamed of, and stainless steel was not yet an element in yachting. Engines, of course, were petrol, and with no echo sounders, depth was literally a matter of swinging the lead. At sea the ketch fleet was thriving, still by far the cheapest transport in the days before silos and when all grain went in hand-sewn bags. The journey was a great adventure for the participants, and the log captures something of the exhilaration that they must have felt.

R.S.A.Y.S.

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3RD - 24TH FEBRUARY, 1934

HARDY, TOM M.	Owner, and otherwise described as the Master
EIMER, Geo.	Engineer, etc. etc.
DEMPSTER, G.C.	Cook and sometimes Chef, but only when dressed for the part
WIGAN, L.J.C.	On deck, second engineer etc. etc.
FORD, NORMAN	Scribe, and on deck.

When, under the hands of R.T. Searles & Sons, NERIDA commenced to take shape, it was agreed that five of us, who appeared to be most interested in her coming into being, should make up her crew when she set out on her

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first voyage. The date of departure was fixed, more or less tentatively, at 3rd February 1934 and strange to relate, all of us were able, finally, to fix this date on which to start our annual leave.

Saturday - 3rd February duly arrived and much stowing of gear and groceries (wet and dry varieties) occupied the greater part of the afternoon, the Master's wife in the meantime trying to win for the umpteenth time the Ladies' Bracelet. She didn't succeed, but her strenuous efforts demanded that she should be fed and so she, accompanied by Mrs. Wigan and Miss Somerville, stayed to dine on porterhouse steak with the usual trimmings. The ladies were finally disposed of and at 9.30 p.m. the deck became active and at 10.15 NERIDA was outside the Basin ready and prepared to go wherever the wind, and occasionally the engine, were willing to take her. Outside the Revetment Mound at 10.35 p.m. Wind right ahead and a considerable joggle as the aftermath of the strong Sou'Wester which had been much in evidence throughout the afternoon. It was decided to work down the Eastern side of St. Vincent's Gulf in the hope that the wind would have some East in it. lower down. Short tacks were persisted in down to Glenelg when the wind veered into the South East; and with a small moon in the Western sky and the seas going down a delightful sail followed.

Sunday - 4th February. The sun rose in an almost cloudless sky and as we approached Backstairs Passage the wind gathered force. At 11.30 a.m., with Rapid Head abeam, a course was laid for Pt. Marsden, distant 26 miles W. by S. NERIDA going well in a calm sea, had Pt. Marsden abeam at 3.35 p.m.: half a mile off shore. Rounded White Point into Emu Bay - then giving the reef on Cape Destaing a wide berth skirted Smith's Bay and Dashwood's Bay, fairly close in and came abreast of Cape Cassini at 6.15 p.m. The log was streamed and we proceeded W. by S. with the idea of having a close up view of the North coast of Kangaroo Island. Sailing con-

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ditions perfect - temperature a little on the cool side (after the recent burst of heat) a cloudless sky and excellent visibility. Just as night was falling, or to be more exact at 7.30 p.m., we came to anchor in Stokes Bay. The Pilot correctly says "Foul ground", but with the wind off shore and neither the sky nor the barometer saying anything to indicate any other conditions, we were content to rest awhile. The angling experts busy squidding and one large creature was added to the bait supply.

Monday - 5th February. Coffee on the table at 5 a.m. by which time the clean members of the crew had "abluted". Then the anchor was got and before a light wind from the E.S.E. we sailed due West to Cape Dutton, the idea being to explore Snelling's Beach against its probable use in the near future. Another beautiful day with a clear sky and a smooth sea. Snelling's Cove found to be an excellent anchorage with the wind anywhere from S.E. round by S. to S.W. The wind here failed us - under engine and very close inshore, we inspected Western River and then passed on in search of Snug Cove. Saw it but could not reconcile it with what had been described to us, so went on West to Cape Forbin - rounded the corner and having put the position beyond doubt, turned East and checked the distance run on the log. Snug Cove it was. The "outboard" was called into service and Eimer and Ford went ashore. They found the cove quite an attractive spot - for photographers - and perhaps reasonably safe in some weathers for a boat with considerable engine power. For sails only, No! The dinghy was put aboard at 12.40 p.m. and a course was laid N.N.W. for Wedge Island, distant 37 miles N.W. by N. The glass falling, sky overcast and a light rain, suggested the approach of a minor change. It fizzled out however, and we proceeded under power over a sea that filled Masefield's description "like a strip of steel". The Wedge in sight at 3 p.m. - porpoises playing all around us and a snapshot enthusiast out on the bowsprit exercising his patience in an

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endeavour to get a picture of the playful creatures. Darkness fell and although the moon was hidden behind the clouds the visibility was quite good enabling us to keep the Wedge well in sight. Came to anchor at 10.30 p.m. in 4 fathoms with the fishing cutter JENNIFER close by. Under the lee of the Island the water was calm as a mill pond, the Westerly swell noticed on the way across failing to get round the corners.

Tuesday - 6th. The sun rose in a cloudless sky - a faint air blowing from the East. All members of the crew showed a cleanly habit by pouring copious supplies of water over themselves before sun up. Cheers! Early breakfast and then Dempster and Ford went ashore. Hardy, Eimer and Wigan off to North Island, fishing. Rymill's ground on S.E. side opposite a sand patch high on the hillside (clearly visible from the anchorage) was not tried but several very large fish were obtained on the N.E. side (with Thistle Island just opened up) about 40/50 yards from the shore and almost opposite a prominent sandy patch.

Met Andrew Golley, the sole occupant of the Island, excepting of course his hundred head of horses, a large herd of goats, numbers of pigs, all shapes and sizes and decidedly variegated as to colour, turkeys, fowls, quail (in hundreds) and the usual complement of sea fowl, and one Mr. Neilson, alleged to have been marooned by the fishing cutter SEA HAWK. Mr. Neilson (or Nelson) did not appear to be worrying overmuch and his chief needs appeared to be a shave and tobacco. He was plentifully supplied, by the NERIDA crew, with the latter, which makes it difficult to understand the tale told by the "Advertiser's" special reporter on the CAPE YORK, that the castaway had had nothing to smoke but tea leaves during his "enforced" sojourn on the Island.

The Wedge is a most interesting island - the West coast about as rugged as one could wish to see. The Eastern side has a

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most beautiful beach which affords excellent bathing. Quail are present in hundreds and in addition there were observed many spurwing plover (a wise bird that never rises without warning everything in the vicinity that he has been disturbed), one sea eagle, restless flycatchers, red capped dotterels, sandpipers, ground larks and wrens: also one very prettily marked small lizard of active habit.

Messrs. A. Knapman, F. Bromley, H. Mumme and J. Green ex JENNIFER this day made an early morning call with whiting for breakfast and for a listen to Gracie Fields. In the afternoon the outboard took us to the entrance of West Bay - sloppy conditions prevented us from doing exploratory work, so went ashore again to introduce the Master to the proprietor, the aforesaid Golley. This man, born on the Island, has known no other home. Over it he roams hatless and bootless - and as that curse boxthorn is flourishing, he must have some exciting moments when in pursuit of a goat, which is apparently his main article of diet. Eimer and Ford climbed to the highest point of the Island - 662 feet - from which altitude a splendid view is to be had. The mainland on each side of the Gulf plainly visible. In the N.W. Thistle Island very prominent. In the South the coast of Kangaroo Island from Borda to Cape Cassini and beyond to Pt. Marsden. In the middle distance the Althorpes and the Yorke's Peninsula coast from Cape Spencer to Royston Head. Aboard again and at 9.20 p.m. Chef Dempster put before us one of his waterless cooker efforts. These performances on the part of Dempster bulk so largely in these records as to demand the reminder that hunger is the best sauce after all.

Wednesday. In the night the wind backed into the North and caused a considerable range to set in shore, but beyond a little pitching there was nothing to complain of. Coffee at dawn and just as the sun rose in a sky all scarlet and gold, we left the Wedge with a light North Easter and in the company of thousands of small flies. On clearing North

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Island quite a nice little breeze came in but it died on us and approaching Thistle Island the engine's aid was invoked. Passing close by Horney Point we looked in on Whalers Bay, which the Northerly range made untenable, skirted the high cliffs, rounded Observatory Point, leaving Black Rock well to starboard and stood across to Taylor Island, leaving Grindal Island to port. Visibility good and as we moved in the direction of our intended anchorage, all the Islands of the Group came into view - Williams, Smith, Hopkins, Lewis, Little, Grindal, Taylor and all of them dominated by Thistle Island lying right behind us and conjuring up recollections of our reading of the tragic fate that overtook the unfortunate party from the INVESTIGATOR on 22nd February 1802.

Approaching Taylor Island, the wind came in suddenly out of the Nor'West. The jib was taken off and one reef tied down in the mainsail. For the next two hours it blew hard and the wind was extraordinarily hot, suggesting bush fires inland or a day of quite abnormal temperature. There followed an exhilarating beat up the Thorny Passage, with the spray flying, and at 4 p.m. the anchor was let go at the Southern end of a white beach, with little Taylor bearing "damned near East," which is literally as the skipper put it when appealed to for information as to the position.

Thursday. Barometer 29.80 and still falling. After an oppressive hot night with hardly a movement in the air, we awoke to find a flat calm and a clearing sky. Dempster and Hardy with Ford at the oars (a position he was destined to occupy for the rest of the day, or so it seemed) went in pursuit of sweep. They were found all right, but they were keeping company with too many Rock Cod. After breakfast, a light Easterly set in so the anchor was got and we proceeded to McLaren Point where the skipper betrayed a fondness for a lamentable local habit of substituting "better" names for those figured on the chart. At "Lodge Point" snapper are said to abound so he and Ford (the latter at the oars) went in search of a sunken rock which proved to be as

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elusive as Potters Rock. Back and forth went the dinghy until there had been worked on an area, many acres in extent, a pattern that would have put a patchwork quilt to shame. At long last, broken ground was found and off it 3 Snapper and 1 large Garnard were fished. But it took time and when the yacht was again boarded one member of the fishing party had earned his beer: and he had it. Then on to Cape Donington, passing between it and Donington Reef (not Snapper Rocks, if you please) and Pt. Lincoln Harbor. At the entrance to Spalding Cove the OLIVEBANK (4 M. Barque) was at anchor, discharging ballast. The engine this day misbehaved itself and after well nigh crippling Eimer and Wigan, decided of its own free will, (if engines possess such a commodity) to go again just to deprive them of the pleasure of dismantling it.

Stopped for the night in Porter Bay, the anchor being dropped a quarter of a mile inside Pt. Kirton. Eimer and Ford (the latter still qualifying for a position as assistant to Charon) set the gill net. Their enterprise produced 20 fine Tommy Roughts - Arripis Georgianus, native name Wankaldi and for further information see Waite's "Fishes of South Australia". Barometer this night fell to its lowest point during the three weeks cruise - 29.70. Every appearance of a change close at hand.

Friday - 9th February. Change arrived at 5 a.m., with wind of moderate gale force from S.W.; the yacht riding easily to 30 fathoms of chain. Wind died down quickly and by 11 a.m. was blowing fresh from the S.W. All hands ashore after lunch, in search of provisions, a search that brought us into touch with a Greek who emerged from behind a sign that told all and sundry that G. MAREOLAS was prepared to sell Fruit, Vegetables, Sweets, Fish and Chips, Oysters and Dairy Produce. Mareolas, or perhaps it was his deputy, preferred not to sell any eggs because he couldn't "garntee" them. Poking a not too attractive face up to within an inch

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or so of the Master's nose, he explained in a voice that could be heard very plainly that he couldn't "garntee" the eggs - "you go away, - you break one - you find 'un not fresh - and you say "That --"". And the blanks represent exactly what any one of us would have said in the circumstances.

The sortie on the food supplies necessitated hiring a car to get us and the goods back to the waiting dinghy. Lifted the anchor and went across to Fisherman's Point in Spalding Cove - a beautiful little anchorage in 2½ fathoms of water over sand. Eimer took advantage of the stillness to shatter the tranquility of the evening by charging the batteries. Gill net set by the Master and Ford - catch Tommies, Mullet, Flathead and Whiting. Chef Dempster this night prepared a meal of Stewed Lamb garnished with a wide range of vegetables (including Green Peas, Celery, Carrots, Onions etc. etc.) - a meal that made such an appeal to all hands that the Master ordered it to be logged. So here it is.

Saturday - 10th February. Rose at daylight. Early breakfast and an early departure for the Islands of Sir Joseph Banks Group. Wind very light from the South East. On arrival at English Island the dinghy put out so that the Master might satisfy a life long ambition by catching some large sweep and a black bream of quite respectable dimensions. Dempster, Eimer and Ford were then allowed to try their skill, but the fish having in mind their experience at the hands and lines of Hardy and Wigan, refused to bite. A landing was made on the Islet to the consternation of some hundreds of nesting Cormorants who deserted their eggs to the joy of the Gulls which immediately invaded the nests. A number of seals, sunning themselves on the rocks, put their safety beyond doubt by taking to the water. The behaviour of these harmless creatures suggested a recent visit from some one who would come under the newspaper description of a "sportsman".

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At 5 p.m. the anchor was put over in $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms at the Northern end of Spilsby. Went ashore to verify the statements re the offspring of a pair of Chinchilla rabbits which some misguided person had liberated on this island. The information was found to be true as to numbers, but the rabbits are not so tame as was represented. They are there in thousands: Dempster gave a wonderful imitation of a certain gentleman stalking and finally falling on bunny, but when the startled creature was let go just to see if Dempster could repeat the performance, it was found to be quite easy as rabbits suffering from paralysis in the hind quarters are not so spry as they might be.

The new owner, a Mr. Scruby, was moving in: he is used to the island, having been in occupation some 25 years ago, and has a high opinion of it as a fat lamb raising proposition and also for barley growing. He has a job of work ahead of him clearing up after years of neglect and it is to be hoped that he will not have to burn off all the growth in order to clear out the rabbits. Just enough cloud in the sky this evening to make a very beautiful sunset.

(To be continued.....)