

THE STORY OF THE FIRST *NYROCA*

1. *Southern Argus* report of Milang Regatta 20th April, 1889

First class handicap sailing race, three times around the course, open to Subscribers of not less than 10s 6d. First prize £10, second £5, third £2, fourth £1. Entrance 10s 6d.

Mr J Bonnin's <i>Nyroca</i>	23 ft 0 inches	Sailed (and built) by F Potts	1
Mr A McFarlane's <i>Pasquin</i>	25 ft 0 inches	Sailed by owner	2
Mr M Moore's <i>Giroffla</i>		Sailed by owner	3
Mr W Woodrow's <i>Challenger</i>		Sailed by owner	4
Mr W Young's <i>Galatea</i>		Sailed by owner	

... The *Pasquin* and the *Giroffla* had already established their capabilities: the *Nyroca* was a new boat, but one in which owner and builder placed full confidence, which turned out well placed. A time allowance of two-and-a-half minutes was allowed the new craft by the handicapper, but Mr Bonnin was anxious to try conclusion with the formidable rival the *Pasquin* on level terms, and conceded his handicap.

	H m sec
<i>Nyroca</i>	2 58 38
<i>Pasquin</i>	2 59 0
<i>Giroffla</i>	3 14 35
<i>Challenger</i>	3 24 38

The *Pasquin* was designed and built by Mr Frank Potts, in the year 1869 at Langhorne's Creek, and is in every respect but the stern, something similar to the English racers of a little before that time. The stern above water is novel, and originated entirely with the builders.

The *Nyroca* was designed and built by Frederick Potts (son of the above named), at Langhorne's Creek in the year 1888, and has some of the points of both English and American deep boats of the day with lessened draft owing to her having to sail in limited depths of water. The most striking difference between the two boats is that *Nyroca* has her greatest beam or bulk further aft, which gives her a finer entrance, but somewhat shorter run. Her quarters at the extreme end are much more cut away, and she carries a higher bridge with more hollow in rise of floor.

The relative dimensions are as follow:—

	<i>Pasquin</i>	<i>Nyroca</i>
Length of waterline	25 ft	23 ft
Length overall	28 ft	26 ft 6 in
Beam	6 ft 8 in	7 ft
Draft	4 ft 9 in	4 ft
Ballast total	3½ tons	2 tons 11 cwt
Ballast on keel	7 cwt	1 ton 8 cwt
Mast deck to hounds	21 ft	19 ft
Diameter	6 in	5 in
Bowsprit outboard	2 ft	11 ft
Boom length	23 ft	22 ft
Gaff length	16 ft	15 ft
Topsail yard	21 ft	22 ft
Area of sail square feet	713	600
Tonnage according to SA Yacht Club rules	3.85	3.60

2. *Mt Barker Courier* report of Milang Regatta 26th April 1889

[A similar less statistical report.]

... All carried topsails with the exception of the *Galatea*, and as they stood away for the first buoy they felt the influence of the nice southerly breeze and laid over with the lee rails awash and the foam curling up their stems. *Galatea* and *Challenger* soon dropped hopelessly out of the race. *Nyroca* got away from *Pasquin* at the start and rounded the first buoy with a lead of a few lengths. On the lead to the second buoy she increased the distance. The two yachts pulled up their handicap on the other yachts and they rounded the second buoy within a few lengths of each other. ...*Pasquin* carried a square sail and she seemed better off the wind than *Nyroca*, which carried only a small spinnaker.

... The wind now fell away considerably, and *Pasquin's* immense and beautifully setting mainsail gave her an advantage over her snugger canvassed opponent, on whom she drew upon rapidly. As the pair neared the third buoy it was seen that there would be a keen struggle, and the favorite was looked upon as the winner. *Nyroca* got round the mark with half a minute to the good, and her spinnaker was smartly set for the run home. *Pasquin* again carried her square sail and came up so rapidly on *Nyroca* that the latter luffed to save being blanketed by her opponent, who swept out on her weather, apparently with that object. A luffing match ensued, and the yachts ran off their course until they were compelled to keep away for the winning post. The excitement was intense as *Pasquin* was seen to slowly but surely creep up on the new yacht, and their progress was watched with the keenest interest. *Nyroca* however managed to get home first, and as she rounded the buoy the *Pasquin's* bowsprit almost reached her counter.

3. *SA Advertiser* had a brief report of the race. ... In addition to the fleet of sailing craft there was the beautiful steam yacht *Alexandrina* present with a party on board. ... The morning train brought a number of visitors, including the Chief Secretary, the Minister of Education, Dr Cockburn MP and Mr AH Landseer MP. There was not an accident of any kind during the day, and all seemed to enjoy themselves. A special train, which left Milang about 6 pm, enabled the visitors from Adelaide and the hills to return home at the close of the day's outing. ...

4. Handwritten notes in the Log —

Height Murray Bridge summer low water bottom of longitudinal girders 34 feet

Dimensions of *Nyroca* (handwritten) with a note '*Nyroca* launched Nov 1888.'

Length load line	23 feet
Greatest breadth	7 feet
Least freeboard	15 inches
Length overall	26 ft 9 inches
Boom	22 feet
Gaff	15 ft 6 in
Bowsprit outboard	13 ft 0 in
Mast to stem	8 ft 7 in
Mast diameter	0.5 (feet) [= 6 in]
Lead ballast on keel	28 cwt
Lead ballast inside	29 cwt
Height of cabin	4 ft 7 in
Area mainsail	350 sq ft

Area jib	100 sq ft
Area foresail	70 sq ft
Area topsail	100 sq ft
Jack yarder	150 sq ft

Log of the
Nyroca
from
24th Decr 1891.

Long foretold long last.
Short notice soon past.
Fast rise after low,
Foretells a stronger blow.

~~~~~  
Fall for  
N.E.W. or N.W.  
with  
Rising Thermometer.

Rise for  
S.W.S or S.E.  
with  
falling Thermometer.

## TRANSCRIPTION OF THE *NYROCA* LOG

In the transcription, some full stops after abbreviations etc are omitted. Punctuation and paragraphing have been varied. Spelling of the original has been closely followed.

### 1st Cruise of *Nyroca*. From Nalpa to Port Adelaide 1891

December 23

Spent the day in Bonnin's Harbour, taking over the boat & getting sails and gear aboard, ready to make a start next day.<sup>1</sup>

Crew AG Rymill

G Acraman

C Horn

1891 December 24th.

Left Bonnin's Harbor at 9:5 am (shortly after the *Brigand*) for Milang, arriving there at 1 pm, distance 25 miles. (The *Brigand* reaching Milang at 1:25.) Wished Mr Bonnin goodbye & waited for the 1st Mate, who was to come from town the next day.

1891 December 25th

First Mate came aboard at 1:30. After having dinner left Milang for Goolwa, where we were to pick up the cook that night, but not knowing the channel ran the boat aground off Point Sturt & had to stay the night stuck hard & fast in the mud.

1891 December 26th

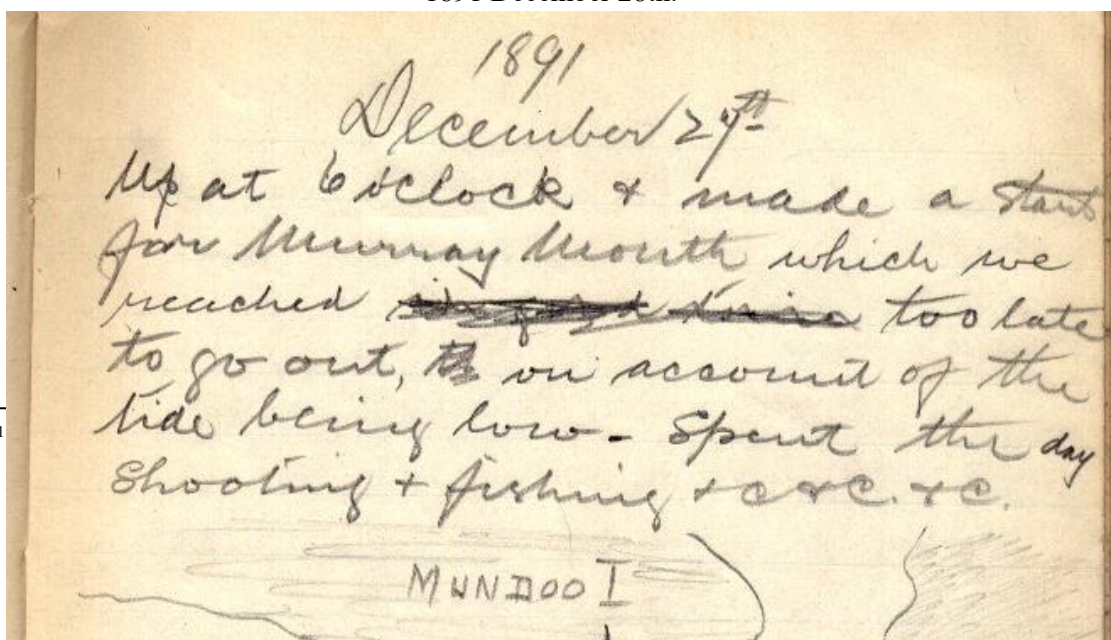
Got off this morning & made a fresh start for Goolwa, but had not gone far before we stuck a mud bank (that should not have been there). Two hours hard work set us going again, & after grounding twice more we made Goolwa, where we picked up the Cook, who had given us up as lost &c &c. camped night at Goolwa.

1891 December 27th

Up at 6 o'clock & made a start for Murray Mouth, which we reached too late to go out, on account of the tide being low. Spent the day shooting & fishing &c &c.

[*Australia Pilot. Volume 1. South Coast of Australia from Cape Leeuwin to Green Point* (1973): 116. 'Murray river Light is exhibited at the SW end of Mundoo Island. ... Without local knowledge of the bar no attempt should be made to enter Murray River. The best time to pass through the entrance is from 2 hours before to 2 hours after the time of high water.']

1891 December 28th.



Up early this morning, expecting to find a North wind, but it was 'blowing a dead calm', so we decided to drift through the Mouth with the current, and keep her head to the breakers with oars & poles. After a ¼ of an hour of jumping about in the breakers managed to get through safely & made Port Victor by 11 o'clock. Saluted by cheers of admiring spectators as we ran in. Hung on a buoy. Snugged the ship down. 11:30 Climbed into our dress suits and went ashore to be feted. Cricket match [?] afternoon under patronage of officers and crew. Ladies and men.

1891 December 29th

Out in the bay at Port Victor. In the afternoon had a party of ladies aboard & gave them tea and bread & butter, etc. Judging from the time they spent on board, think they must have enjoyed it. Party numbered 12 in all. In the evening went ashore and stocked up with provisions for the trip [to] Kangaroo I.

1891 December 30th.

Left Port Victor 8:30 am for Antechamber B, reached there at 6 o'clock pm. Voyage across the Passage was uneventful. Found Antech B a good place to put in for the night, with plenty of firewood to be had on shore. In the evening put over a line and caught 2 sharks abt 5 feet long. A third one carried away line & left us the winder.

1891 December 31st.

Left Antechamber Bay at 11 o'clock for American R. When rounding into Eastern Cove, a fresh S westerly sprang up & we had to beat into the River, brought up at 5 o'clock just off Buick's Sand Hills. Soon after arriving, the ketch *Sailor Prince* (with 'young blades' from the City on board) brought up close to us. Being New Year's Eve, the crew of the *Nyroca* were invited aboard to see the old year out etc 'with musical honours'.

1892 January 1st

Came aboard at an early hour this morning & had a good sleep till about 11 o'clock, had a breakfast of fried snook &c &c, & started up the River, where we spent the day schnapper fishing.

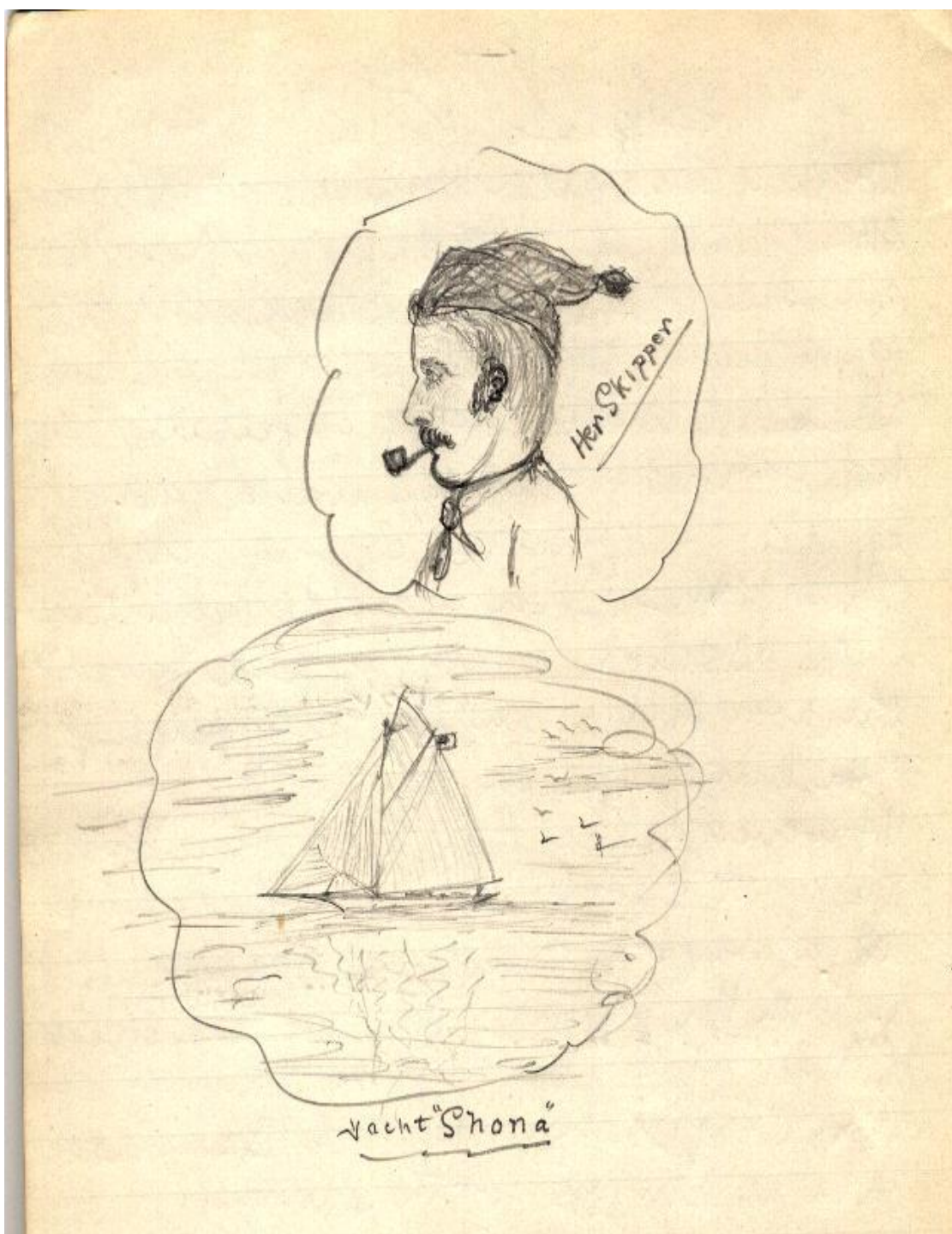
1892. January 2nd.

Wishing the *Sailor Prince* goodbye we made a start for Kingscote, arriving there at 1 o'clock. All the crew feeling equal to a good dinner. The First Mate, seeing a fishing boat not far off, said he would row off in the dinghy & purchase some fish. Soon after he returned with 3 snook, which he had 'Jewed' the poor fisherman out of, only paying him \_\_ for the lot. However, since that time, whenever the word snook is mentioned, there is always a snigger. Here we fell in with the *Shona* (who we had expected to meet at Port Victor). The skipper of this craft keeps very good rum aboard & he is always worth meeting.

31 Oct 1904 [*The Register*, from Dr Hill's *Miranda Musings*.] Participants in RSAYS Opening Day: Commodore Sanderson's *Daralie*, Mr W Russell's *Magic*, Vice-Commodore Cruickshank's *Satanella*, Mr W Fisher's *Reverie*, Dr AW Hill's *Miranda*, Mr AG Rymill's *Valeria*, Mr H Formby's *Solace*, Mr A Tennant's *Tarcoola*, Mr JM Brown's *Maggie*, Mr J Crowther's *Shona*, Mr EN Dewhirst's *Doris*, Mr LW Walter's *Caprice*, Mr E Yeo's *Florence*, Mr TH Webb's *Leisure Hour*, Mr J William's *Yvonne*, Mr G Jenkin's *Helen M*, Mr W Fisher's *Acme*, Mr E Farrow's *Niricha*, Mr T Boyce's *Britannia*, Mr LH Howie's *Katie*, Mr P Goudie's *Mia Mia*, Mr M Wald's *Coryphee* and Mr W Slade's *Electric*.

17 December 1904 The third series of races in connection with the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron on the Port River on Saturday was the most successful of this season's events. There was a fine breeze, which allowed Mr Fisher's *Reverie* to cover the course in capital time and win easily. *Shona*, with a handicap of 13 m, was second home; *Doris* with 10 m third; and *Maggie* 13 m fourth. *Shona*, it is said, had a narrow escape of losing her mast through a collision with a ketch. Her jib was damaged and her bulwarks slightly chafed.

30 December 1905 J Crowther's *Shona* sank at Outer Harbor on Christmas night after colliding with a lighter towed by the tug *Wato*. No personal injury to Mr Crowther or his two companions. Same day yacht *Pixie* capsized in Spencer Gulf, but nobody was hurt and she competed in a New Year regatta. *Shona* was found with difficulty and raised, but 'it will cost a big sum to repair her.' (Lowest tender said to be £124) Litigation commenced for £158, and judgment reported in Jan (undated). *Shona*, *Wato* and lighters all at fault, and *Shona's* owner awarded £48/8/4. Yacht valued at £80. Mr Crowther sold the hull to Pickhaver the boat builder and promptly left for England.



1892 January 3rd (Sunday).

After giving the crew a little Holy reading on deck, made a start for Emu Bay in company with the *Shona*. Getting in here pretty early, the Cook thought it as good chance to set the pot going & give us what he called 'a good hot feed' in the shape of a stew. Turned in pretty early & could do nothing but dream stew all night. *Shona's* skipper said he would call us in the morning to go fishing.

1892 January 4th.

Lost the dinghy's paddles today, but don't know how [we] had them on deck, so suppose they slipped overboard. Glass pretty low tonight. Started off with the *Shona* for the fishing ground off Cape D'Estaing. Here we got some fine salmon fishing, which is real [*sic*] good sport, but they are very dry eating. Left the *Shona* in the afternoon & started for Dashwood Bay (where I am now writing). There is a nasty swell coming into this Bay and the old *Nyroca* is laying broadside on, rolling about like the duce [*sic*]. This is a frightful place for sharks. We have already caught two, fully the size of a well-grown man. Just now we heard a lot of water dashing about like the sea breaking over a rock, & on going on deck saw a huge shark with one of the dead ones in his mouth, which he had just grabbed off our counter.

1892 January 5th.

Strong gust came up early this morning, so we all turned out to see that the anchor was holding & gave her another six fathoms of cable & turned in again. Made a start about 11 o'clock for Troubridge Light, which we made at 5 after a pretty rough time coming across. Stood on for Edithburg, where we stocked up with bread, eggs, &c &c. Had a jolly rough night anchored off jetty end & had to hold all the tea things such as frypan, teapot, cups, plates, jam, etc in our hands while eating to keep them from being upset.

1892 January 6th.

Left the cook ashore this morning, as he wanted to catch the steamer back to town. First mate & self started off for Stansbury. Here we fell in with some oyster boats. The skipper of one lent us a dredge & we got ready to do a little oystering in the morning. Went ashore & had a walk round the city.



A typical trading ketch, 1913 (Birnie album)

1892 January 7th.

Started out for the oyster beds & after dragging for abt 2 hours managed to get a bag. Went back to Stansbury, returned dredge & made sail for Port Vincent. Here we fell in with some very good sort of fellows on a ketch, who invited us to take tea with them, after which we yarned till pretty late.

1892 January 8th.

Made a start for home across the Gulf 30 miles, which distance we covered in 5¼ hours, which was not bad time considering we were on the wind all the way. Reached the Yacht Club moorings, snugged the ship & made for home after having a ripping cruise of 2 weeks & 3 days.

And so ends the first salt water cruise of the *Nyroca* & I hope by no means the last.



SAYC/RSAYS Moorings at Birkenhead

**2nd Cruise** of *Nyroca* to American River, Kangaroo Island 14th April to 19th April 92.

Thursday 14th [April 1892]

Left the Port at ¼ to six pm with the wind behind us. A bad start was made to the trip, owing to Hill upsetting all the baggage into the water at the ferry steps. We rounded the light at ¼ past 7 & set out for Largs Bay to pick up Powker [*sic*]. Here we landed and went to C Walcot's [*sic*] to telephone P. He said he would be down at 12, so we waited. He turned up at the said hour, and we made a start under topsail, & when the first watch turned in, the ship was off Glenelg, running with a free sheet.<sup>2</sup>

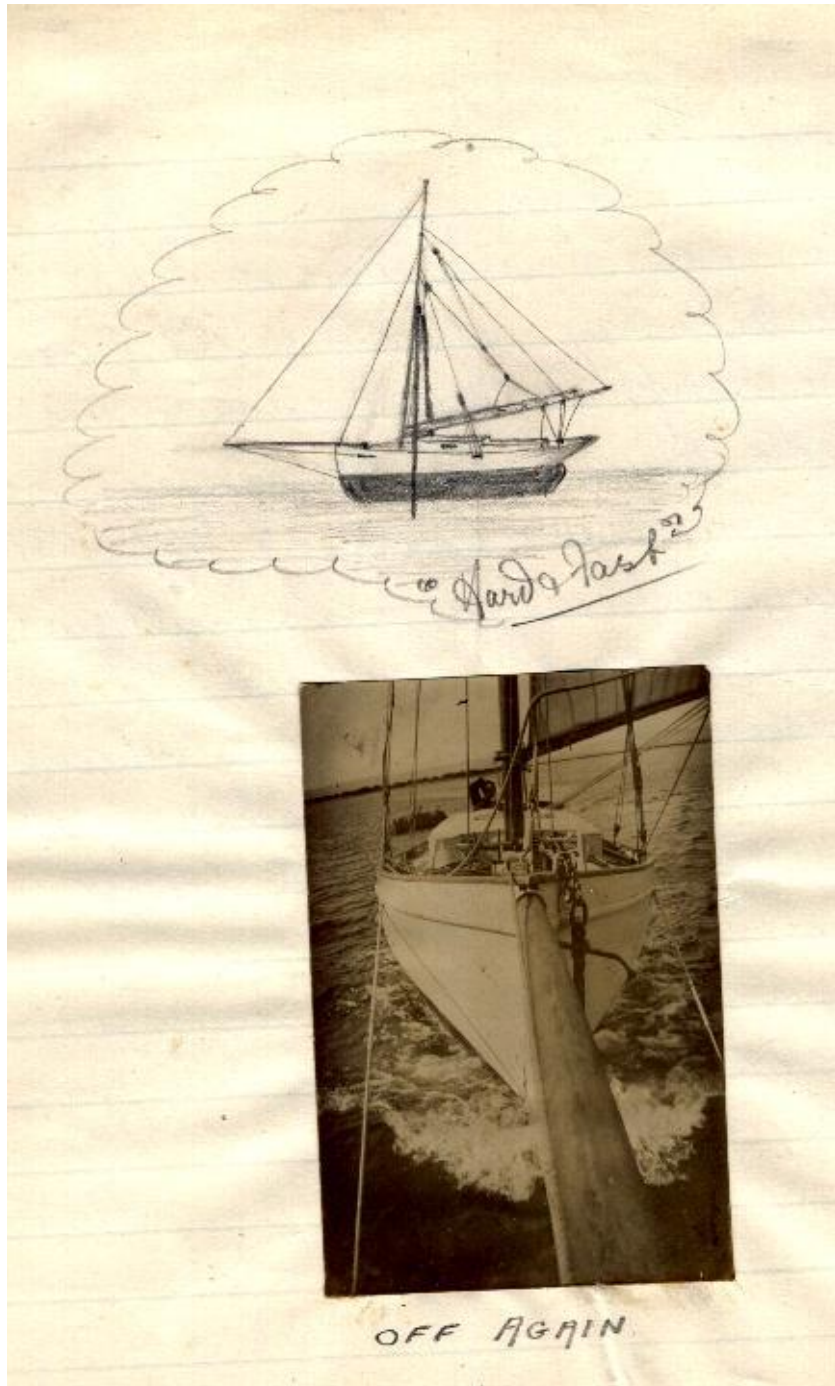
Crew AG Rymill, G Acraman, A Hill, ES Rymill.

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<sup>2</sup> . Captain J Walcot RN, owner of the *Edith*, was Commodore 1889–91.



The Ferry Steps in 1889. The usual fare was a penny.



Friday 15th [April 1892]

At six this morning we were sailing off Yankalilla Bay, with the wind freshening from the N. after 4 hours sailing we sighted the Jervis Light. Soon afterwards the Island was visible, lying off Rapid Head. Here the wind freshened to a small gale, & rounding the Head we entered the Passage & were within 5 miles of the cove when the sun set. We stood on into the bay in the dark, & not being able to see the buoys, we ran aground just as we were bringing up. As the tide was ebbing, shears were rigged & we decided to wait till daylight before doing anything further.

Saturday 16th [April 1892]

The ship was still hard aground this morning. We waited for the tide to rise to its highest & then every expedient was tried, but of no use. As a last resource the inside ballast was taken ashore. By this time the tide was again running out & we decided to wait for the evening.

Meantime we all went ashore, shooting & exploring a bit. However, after staying here for some time, the boat was seen to be moving, so we rowed back just in time to find her afloat. She was then sailed up the River without further mishap & got anchored snugly about 1 o'clock. Some fish were purchased from a fishing cutter for tea & we turned in for the night.

Sunday 17th [April] 1892

Up at 8 this morning & started to sail further up the River to see the country further inland. We had not gone far when we grounded again. We soon got off this time & got into the channel & went up as far as the Lagoon.

At 10 o'clock we started off for a walk to the other side of the Island. We reached Pennington Bay at about 12, had a bathe & walked along the coast some way. On the way back we went to have a look at the country from Prospect Hill. Got back to the ship at about 4 & started to row for an island. Some pelicans were shot here, and we came back to the mouth of the River again. We had to turn out in the night, as a gale sprung up & we began to drag. More cable was paid out & we turned in once more.

Monday 18th [April] 1892

Breakfast over this morning, we had to start our return journey, this being the last of the holidays.

Left the River at 8 am & stood out for Ballast Head & then on to Rapid Head.

It was very rough in the Passage, the wind blowing strong from the SW.

We soon brought the Jervis Light in sight, & when fairly in the middle of the Passage a stiff gale sprang up from the S, which raised a very fair sea. The peak was lowered several times on the run home, & as the wind seemed inclined to freshen we stood in closer to the land. The seas became bigger, so the dingy [*sic*] was hauled inboard. We were off Aldinga Bay at 5 o'clock & at 9 we reached Largs, thus doing the trip in exactly 13 hours. Hill & Powker left the ship here for town at 11 o'clock.

Tuesday 19th [April] 1892

Up at 6:30 this morning, had breakfast of fried sardines & started for Port at 8. Rounded Light at 8:30, & when off No 11 the wind failed us. Made the ship fast to the beacon & went ashore for a bathe. The wind had sprung up again when we got aboard & we started off once more. Ran up the River with the wind aft & reached the Port at 2 o'clock & thus ended 'The 2nd Cruise of the *Nyroca*'.

**3rd Cruise** of *Nyroca* to Port Lincoln. 23rd December 1892 to 11th January 1893.

Friday 23rd [December] 1892

Left Port at 4:30 pm, & after rounding the Light squared away for Largs to pick up Powker. Got here at 7:30, picked him up & started down the Gulf. Got opposite the Grange & the wind fell. Waited for several hours here, & then started away again under topsails at 2 in the morning for Troubridge with a fresh northerly wind.

Crew: AG Rymill, G Acraman, ES Rymill. Mr Henry Rymill joined the ship at Lincoln.

Saturday 24th [December] 1892

Sighted Troubridge Light at 9 & rounded up at 10:30. Here the wind changed & gave us another free run to the Althorpes.

These hove in sight about an hour before sunset & we were within 3 miles of them when the wind fell altogether. The ship was allowed to drift & we all turned in about 12.

At 3 the wind came up again & we made another start for the Islands. Had narrow shave of being run down by a steamer when all hands were asleep. Shows necessity of keeping a watch.

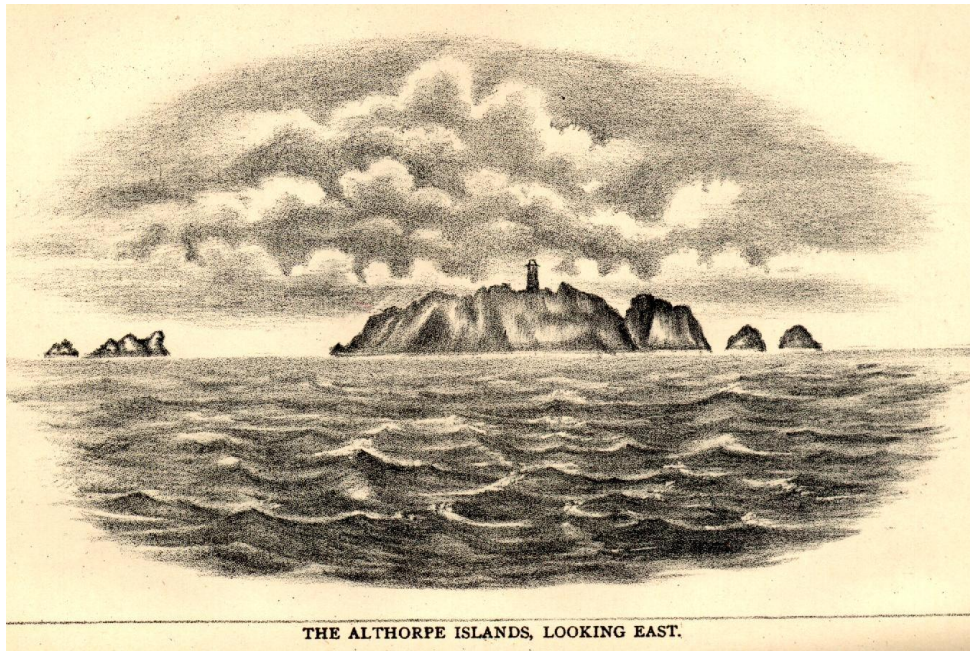


Althorpe Lighthouse & keepers' cottages, 1919 (Rymill Gifts)

Sunday 25th [December] 1892

The Althorpes were reached at 7:30 & we dropped anchor in a snug bay off the northern side of the largest Island.

Breakfast over, we went up to the Lighthouse people, who showed us over the Island & the Light. This being Christmas Day, they asked us to stay to the dinner with them, which we did. After dinner we inspected the giant caves & then returned to the ship. Towards evening the wind chopped round to the SE & came right into the Bay. Another anchor was let go & we rode out the night under a couple of anchors, driving bows under, till daylight.



Althorpe Islands, looking east (Bundey, *Yachting in Australia*)

Monday 26th [December] 1892

We were glad to clear out of the bay this morning, and at 7 o'clock shaped a course for the Wedge, passing Emmes Reef on the way. We were off the Wedge at 10 o'clock & then cleared away for Thistle Island. Got here at 3:30 & dropped anchor in Snug Cove on the SE [*sic*] corner of the Island. No fishing was obtainable here, so we went ashore to a house which we had seen & ran into some ostriches. The man was not home, so we returned to the boat with a very poor idea of Thistle Is.

Tuesday 27th [December] 1892

Left the Island at 6:30 this morning & started away for Cape Donnington, with the wind again over the taffrail. We reached the Cape at 9:30, & passing inside Snapper Rock rounded away for Lincoln. Port Lincoln was reached at 10 o'clock.

In the afternoon we went to Kirton Point. Landed here and shot some wallabies, which were very numerous on this Point.

Soon after we got back to the township, the *Pastline* came in with some fish, of which we got some.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> . Possibly *Pastime*, WH Bundey's last yacht, subsequently a fishing boat.



Port Lincoln in 1921.

Wednesday 28th [December] 1892

Up this morning at 7 o'clock, in time to meet the *Ferret*, who got in at 9 o'clock. After rowing the 'Gov' aboard, we started away for the Grantham Island in the Proper [Bay]. Here some rabbits etc were shot, & then we ran over to Horse Rock, where we obtained about 2 dozen large whiting.<sup>4</sup>

After a rabbit and whiting tea we turned in.

Thursday 29th [December] 1892

This morning we set out from Horse Rock for the larger island of the Brothers.<sup>5</sup> Reaching here in about 2 hours time, had lunch & then went ashore. Plenty of rabbits and plover were shot, & then we ran up into Spalding Cove for the night. Abundance of whiting and flounder were caught here.

Friday 30th [December] 1892

After breakfast we made for Donnington Head with a strong south westerly wind blowing. Got here at 12. Plenty of fishing was obtained, & also a shark about 10 ft long. As we were running low in the bread line, we were obliged to return to the jetty for the night.

Saturday 31st [December] 1892

Got up at 5 this morning & went wallabying with P to Kirton Pt. Got back in time for breakfast with a big bag. The bread was shipped, & we ran across to Boston Island. Got here at 11, but then decided to go to Stamford Hill.

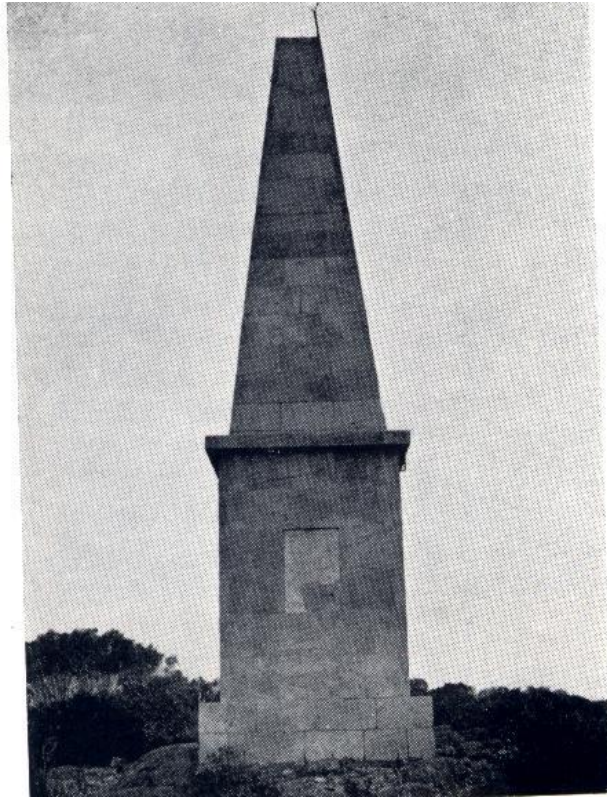
We had lunch in the Bay at the foot of the Mt & then started the climb. Got to the top after an hour's walk, & cut our names on the Franklin Monument. Returned to the boat in time for 'An egg & bacon tea made by P.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>. The 'Gov' was Henry Rymill (1836–1927), father of AG and ES Rymill.

<sup>5</sup>. Horse Rock has not been identified.

<sup>6</sup>. This is the monument to Matthew Flinders, erected by Sir John and Lady Franklin in 1842.



Sir John Franklin's monument to Flinders on Stamford Hill

Sunday 1st [January] 1893

This morning we decided to go to Schnapper Rock again. Passing the Brothers, we brought up off the Rock.

After catching a great variety of fish, including a 20 lb snapper, & a large shark, we crossed over to a bay on the Peninsula. Here we found the Thistle Island boat, & gave them some of the fish we had caught.<sup>7</sup>

In the evening they came over and visited us.

Monday 2nd [January] 1893

We set out this morning, shooting on the Peninsula. Some kangaroos and wallaby were shot before returning to the boat.

At 3 o'clock we ran over to Boston Island. Here we had our Christmas dinner, consisting of Plover & Red Bill fried, Kangaroo Steak roasted & Plum pudding.<sup>8</sup>

At 10 we returned to the jetty for more bread & to get the water tanks replenished.

Tuesday 3rd [January] 1893

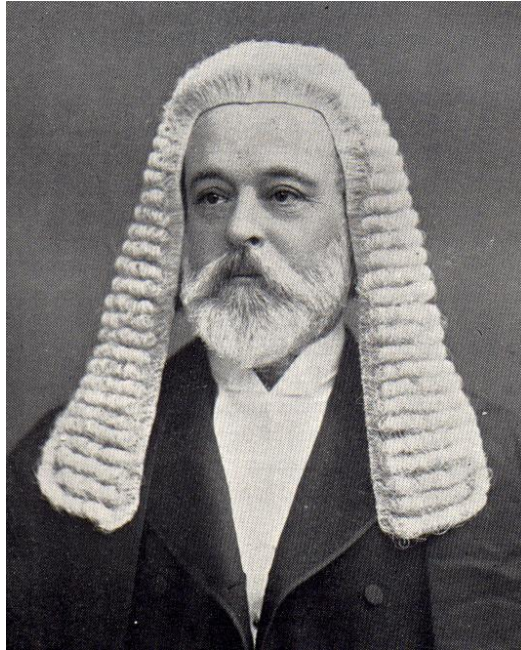
All the morning was spent in getting the bread aboard & the water tanks filled.

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<sup>7</sup>. The Peninsula seems to have been the eastern shore of Spalding Cove, terminating in Cape Donington.

<sup>8</sup>. Probably *Nyroca* had no stove, so cooking was done ashore.

At 2 we went round to Porter Bay. Here we found Judge B[undey] in the *Bronzewing*.<sup>9</sup> We had a look over the ketch & then went off to catch a fish tea.<sup>10</sup>



Judge Bunday in formal mode.

Wednesday 4th [January] 1893

We went back to the township this morning to get letters, after which at half past one we cleared out for Stickney Island, about 20 miles out in the Gulf. Got here after 4 hours sailing. It was very rough crossing & everything got wet. Getting some firewood off the island we started away fishing.

Thursday 5th [January] 1893

After breakfast we went off fishing again, & then went ashore. At 3 we returned to the boat & made a start back to Lincoln, which we reached at 6 o'clock, deciding to make a start for home next day.

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<sup>9</sup>. Sir (William) Henry Bunday (1838–1909) was left fatherless, the eldest of five children, soon after arrival in South Australia in 1848 at the age of ten. He immediately went to work in a solicitor's office for 7/6 a week. In 1857 he was articled to a solicitor and was admitted to practice in 1865. As an MP (1871–1881) he introduced the Bill to establish the University of Adelaide. In 1884 he was appointed the third judge of the Supreme Court and was knighted in 1904.

He was the inaugural Vice-Commodore of the South Australian Yacht Club and was Commodore 1873–1884. He commissioned several notable yachts, including the *White Cloud*, *Zephyr* and *Wanderer*. He is best remembered for a trophy mounted above the bar in the Club House, the Bunday Cup (which he won; the one he donated has disappeared) and his book *Reminiscences of Twenty-Five Years' Yachting in Australia: An Essay on Manly Sports, A Cruise on Shore, &C., &C.; Notes of a Voyage to China and Japan. By W.H. Bunday, For Four Years Vice-Commodore and Ten Years Commodore of the South Australian Yacht Club. Adelaide: Published by E.S. Wigg & Son, 12 Rundle Street. 1888.*

<sup>10</sup>. *Bronzewing* was a two-masted ketch, built in Tasmania in 1873, 78.5 ft long, and owned by WH Bunday from 1874 to 1897.

Friday 6th [January] 1893

More water was got aboard this morning, & after putting the G ashore, we started the return trip at 1 o'clock. We reached the Cape at 2 and had to beat down the Coast. We got as far as Lodge Point before dark, just in time to catch some splendid schnapper.<sup>11</sup>

Saturday 7th [January] 1893

Left Lodge Point this morning at ¼ to 6. After rounding Taylor Island, we sighted the *Musgrave* running up to Lincoln. At 9 o'clock we reached Snug Cove, Thistle Island, with the first head wind we had got since the start.

From here we ran round to the other end of the Island and brought up in Whalers Bay at 2. Plenty of crayfish and schnapper we caught here before tea.

Sunday 8th [January] 1893

This morning, as there was a head wind, we did not make a start for the Wedge till 1 o'clock, when the wind came round to the NW. We set out with a close-reefed mainsail and No 3 jib. Reach[ed] the Wedge & picked up some moorings at 4 o'clock. Just as we rounded on to the buoy, we were caught in a gale o' wind from the westward, & it took us all our time to get the ship made fast. Here we hung out the night first diving [?] & then rolling decks under.

Monday 9th [January] 1893

Left the Wedge at 10:30, under three reefed mainsail & storm jib, with wind still blowing strong from the W.

When half way between the Wedge and Althorpes, the dingey [*sic*] swamped. The ship had to be hove to, & after half an hour, the boat was got aboard in a very heavy sea. Soon afterwards Emmes Reef was reached & then Sou' West Rock was seen breaking. At ¼ past 2 we brought up in the same bay as before, on the larger Althorpe, & we were very glad to get here. We went ashore as soon as the ship was snug and had tea with the Althorpians.

Tuesday 10th [January] 1893

Started away from the Althorpes with the wind still at the west & in half an hour passed between the two Little Althorpes & stood on for the Peninsula.<sup>12</sup>

After skirting the coast all day, we rounded the Troubridge shoals at 5 o'clock & stood in for Edithburg. Got here at 5:30 & landed for provisions.

Wednesday 11th [January] 1893

Left Edithburg for the Port at 7:30 with a very light breeze & did not sight the Light till 4 o'clock. We ran up near the shore of the Gulf as far as Port Vincent, and then crossed over to the Light, which we reached at 5 & a quarter, & after a dead beat up the River, reached Port at 7 o'clock, & so ended the 3rd Cruise of *Nyroca*.

To American River, Kangaroo Island

**4th cruise of *Nyroca***

From April 30th to May 9th 1893.

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<sup>11</sup> . Lodge Point has not been identified. It is not listed in *Australia Pilot* or in the data base of the Australian Surveying and Land Information Group, the definitive national authority of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources.

<sup>12</sup> . 'Little Althorpes' has lost currency. They are Haystack and Seal Islands.

Thursday 30th [April] 1893

Left the Port at ¼ past six with a very light breeze blowing from the NE, but soon after rounding the Light at 8 o'clock it came up strong from the westward. Passed off the Semaphore at 9 & decided to sail on all night.

Crew: AG Rymill, E Bell, ES Rymill.

Friday 31st [sic] [April] 1893

At daylight this morning we found ourselves somewhere off Yankalilla, with the wind blowing very fresh from the same quarter.

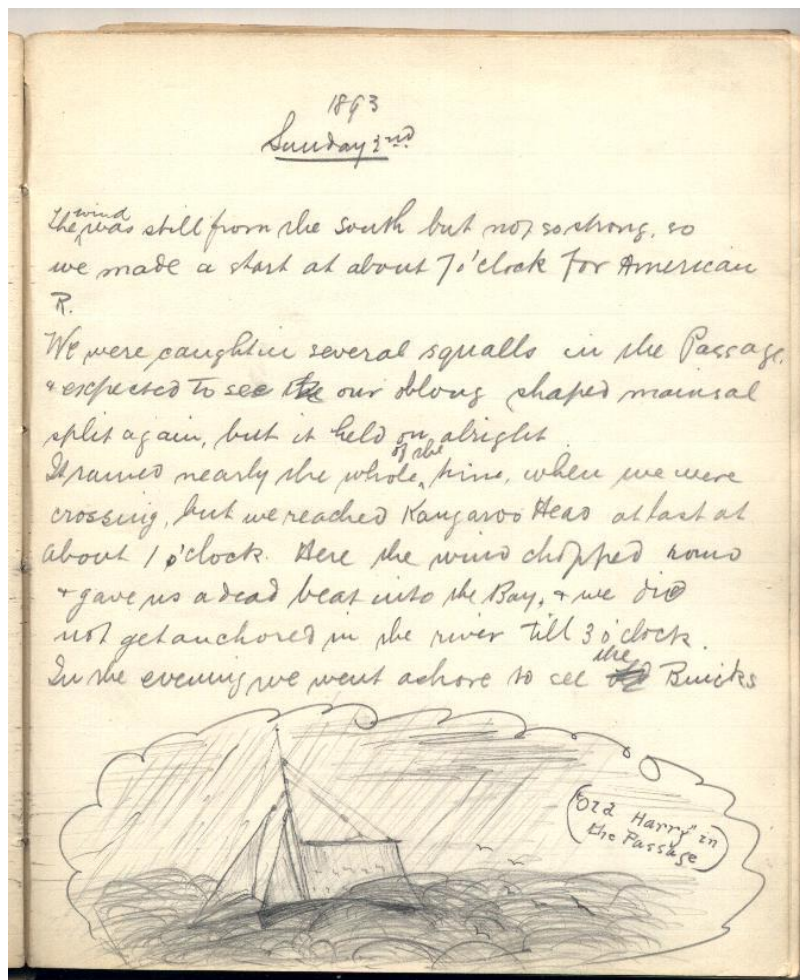
When passing off Second Valley the mainsail cracked & then split right across. A trysail was then rigged up, & not long afterwards the jib went into ribbons. We then made for Rapid Bay, with a very big sea running. We were just able to lay this place under a staysail, so the upper sail was taken in. Reached Rapid Bay at about 12 midday, and brought up off the jetty.

Saturday 1st [May] 1893

When we got up this morning, the wind was still blowing hard at the W, & the seas were rolling well into the Bay. The whole day was spent in patching and repairing the sail, during the time it was not raining. The mainsail was cut right across at the 3rd set of reef points & a patch put in along the bottom, while the gaff was lashed in with the reefs. In the afternoon the wind veered to the S & we got it a bit smoother in the bay.

Sunday 2nd [May] 1893.

The wind was still from the south, but not so strong, so we made a start at about 7 o'clock for American R.

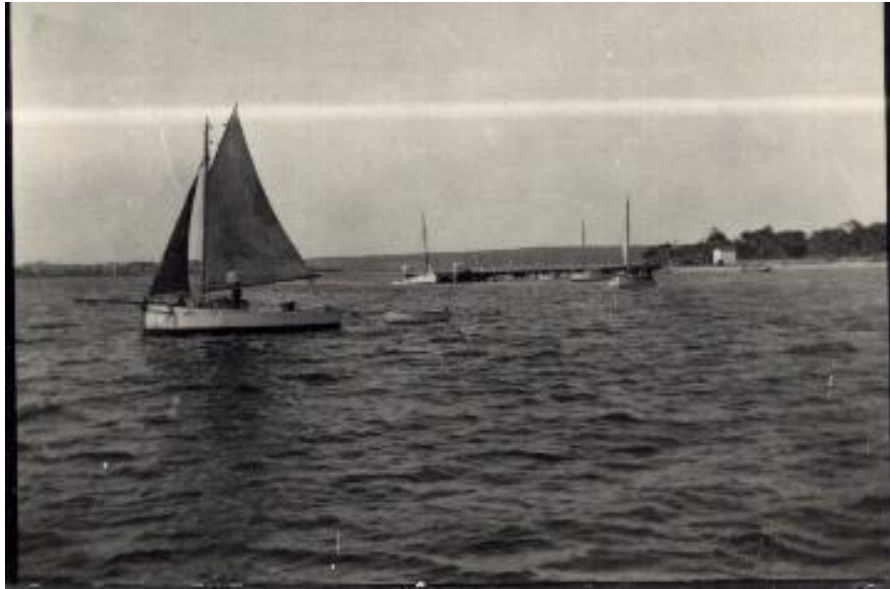


We were caught in several squalls in the Passage & expected to see our oblong shaped mainsail split again, but it held on alright. It rained nearly the whole time when we were crossing, but we reached Kangaroo Head at last at about 1 o'clock. Here the wind chopped round & gave us a dead beat into the Bay, and we did not get anchored in the River till 3 o'clock.

In the evening we went ashore to see the Buicks.

Monday 3rd [May] 1893

This morning some fishing and shooting was done, & after lunch we cleared out for a fishing ground in the bay outside. Got here at about 3 o'clock & hauled up plenty of whiting and schnapper before dinner time.



American River, date unknown

Tuesday 4th [May] 1893

More fish were caught this morning after breakfast, & then at 10 we ran back into the river.

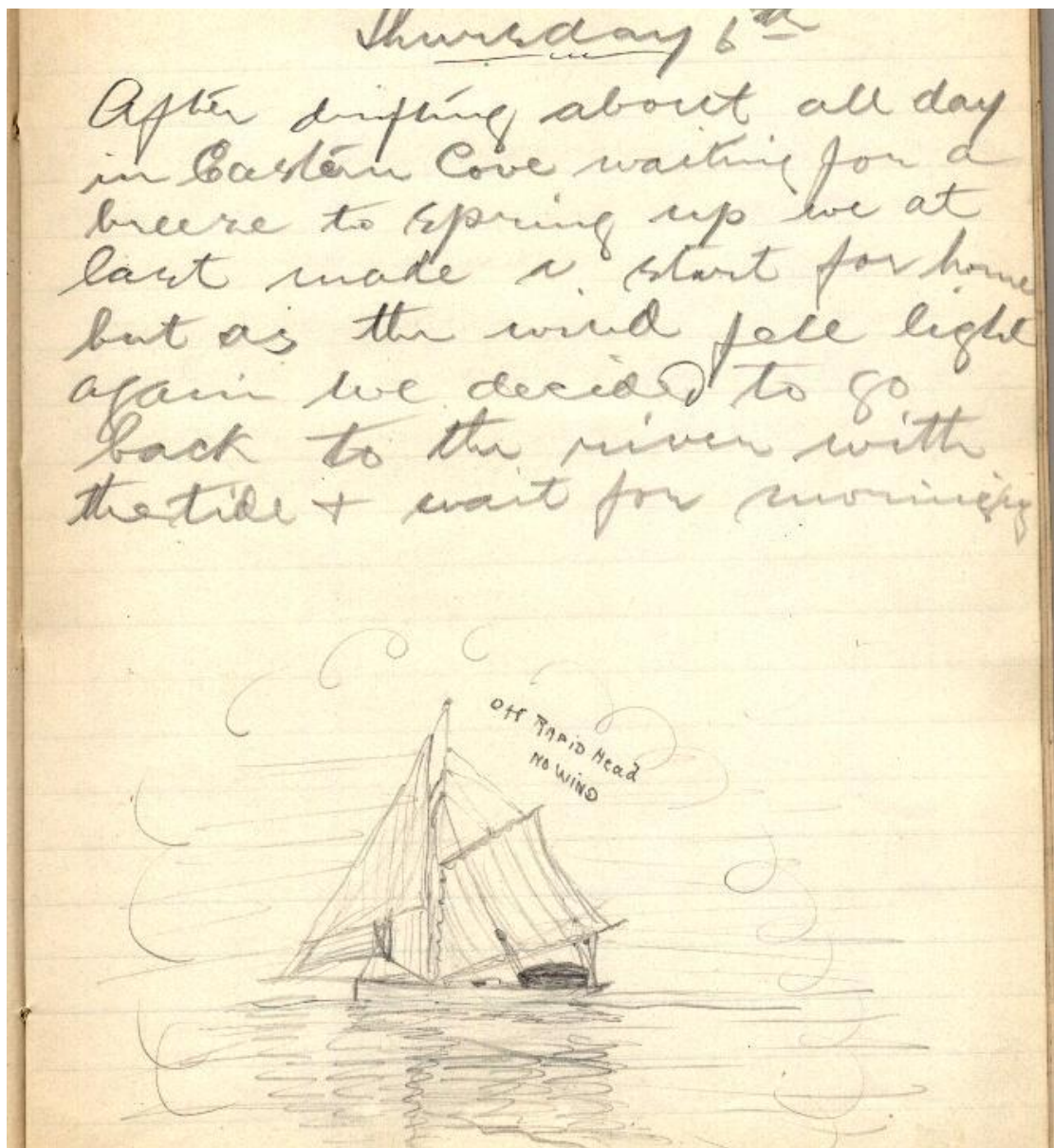
Provisions were obtained from Buicks & then we ran further up the River as far as the Lagoon with the tide at our back.

Wednesday 5th [May] 1893

Did some shooting in the rain [and] got a few black swan & duck. After lunch we started for Ballast Head, & brought up for the night in a very snug little harbour among a lot of fishing cutters, which had run in for shelter.

Thursday 6th [May] 1893

After drifting about all day in Eastern Cove waiting for a breeze to spring up, we at last made a start for home, but as the wind fell light again we decided to go back to the river with the tide and wait for morning.



Friday 7th [May] 1893

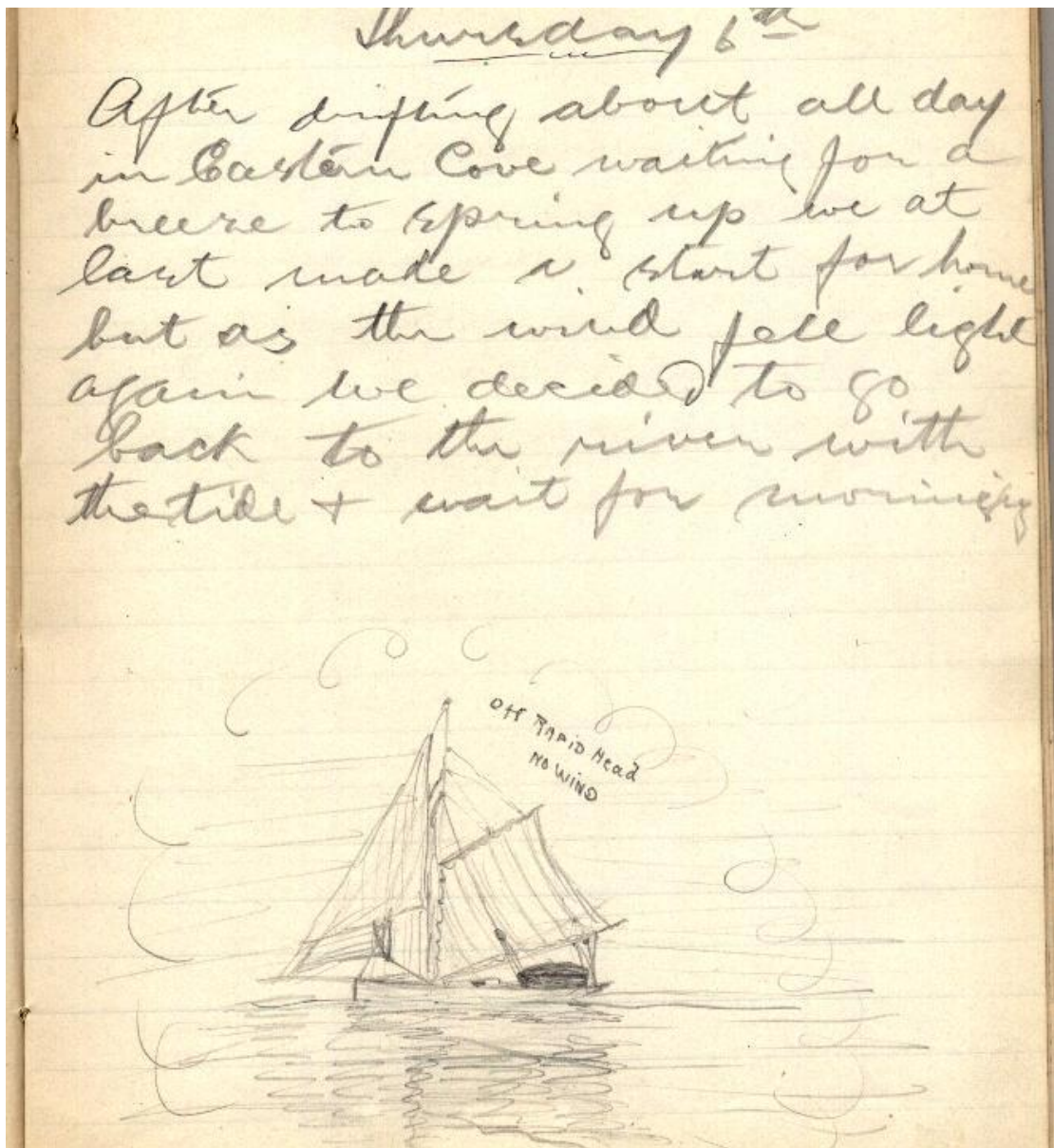
Made an early start for home, in our disabled state, on passing Kangaroo Head hauled the dingey on deck & headed up the Gulf. Sailed all night, very cold & light wind.

Saturday 8th [May 1893]

Wind still light this morn, but getting along at a fair pace. Midday off Noarlunga. Brought up inside Port Light at 9 pm.

Sunday 9th [May 1893]

Reached moorings at 12 o'clock. Snugged the ship & started for home after having a real good cruise.



**Cruise across the Gulf of Nyroca**

From November 17th to Nov 19th 1893.

FR & ES joined the boat at Largs at 6 o'clock & set out at once for Black Pt. There was a fair wind from ESE, & with a full mainsail, the gulf was crossed in 5 hours. At about 10:30 land was sighted, & by 11 o'clock, the ship was made snug for the night in Pt Alfred.<sup>13</sup>

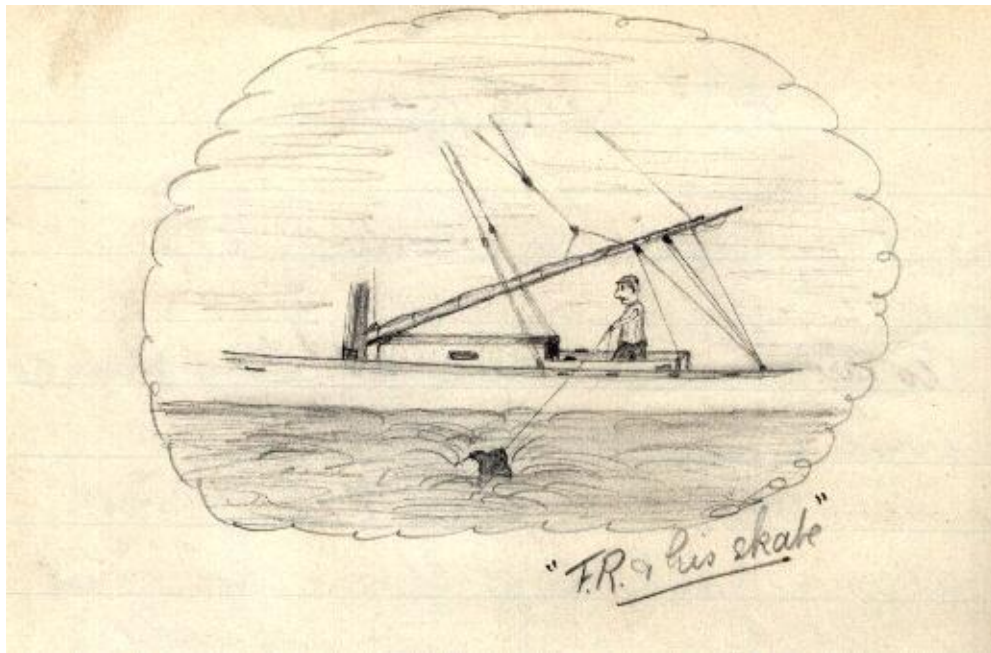
Crew: AG Rymill, FW Rymill, ES Rymill.

Saturday 18th [November] 1893

All hands were up at sunrise this morning & with a light breeze from the S, we were just able to lay our course for Black Point itself. Got here at breakfast time, & after a good meal, we caught some fish & then went for a walk on shore.

<sup>13</sup> . Port Alfred is the formal designation of the anchorage at Black Point.

In the afternoon had a bathe, & FR did some more fishing & managed to hook a large skate.



Sunday 19th [November] 1893

It was blowing pretty hard this morning, with occasional showers from the SW. as the sea was too rough to do any fishing on the Orontes Bank, the dinghy was hauled inboard, 3 reefs put in the mains'el, & we made a start homewards at  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 11. After passing the buoy, we steered a course for the Port Light, which was rounded at 4 o'clock, after a rather rough passage across the gulf. The Port was reached at about 6 o'clock, after having to beat up the River.

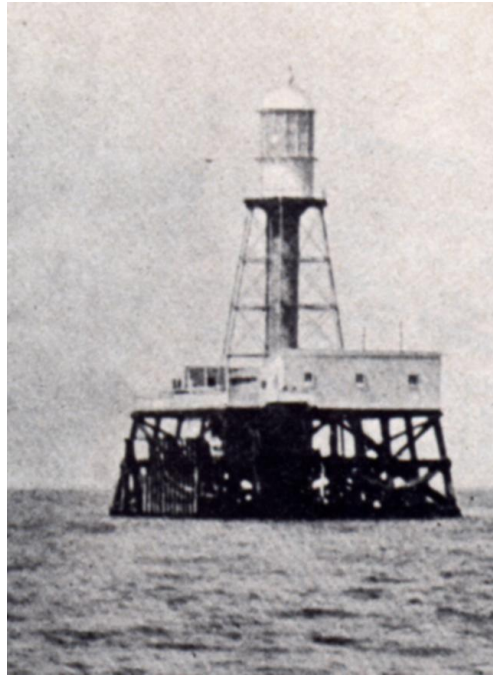
**5th cruise** of *Nyroca* to Port Lincoln

From December 22nd 1893 to January 11th 1894

Friday 22nd December 1893

Left the Port at 5:15 and with a fair wind down the River rounded the Light and stood on for the Semaphore. Did not get here till 9 o'clock, as the wind fell light when off Largs.

Crew: AG Rymill, G Acraman, ES Rymill



The Lighthouse outside the Port River as AG Rymill knew it in 1893. It was dismantled and sent to South Neptune Island, before returning as part of the historical display on the wharf of the Inner Harbor at Port Adelaide.

Saturday 23rd [December] 1893

Left the Semaphore at 8 o'clock this morning and made a start for Glenelg. Carried a light breeze with us all the way, and brought up at one o'clock. P arrived on board in the afternoon at 4:30, and we set out for Salt Creek, with a wind from the SE.<sup>14</sup>

Brought up at Salt Creek at about one o'clock, after getting a good wetting coming across. Decks leaking very much.

Sunday 24th [December] 1893

Left the Creek at 9 this morn & went through the passage at the back of Troubridge & then followed the coast down as far as Foul Bay. We had just got snug here as a thunder storm began at about 6 o'clock.

Monday 25th [December] 1893

Left Foul Bay this morning at 10 o'clock, and as the wind was from the westward, we had to beat down the coast. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon we brought up in Marion Bay.

Went ashore in evening and walked inland to the Gypsum Works, a distance of 8 miles there and back.

Tuesday 26th [December] 1893

Cleared out from Marion Bay at 9:30 & shaped a course for the Althorpes. There was a light wind blowing from the southard when we set out, but after passing the smaller Althorpes at about 2 o'clock it freshened and we stood in for the larger island, which was reached at 4:30.

In the evening we went up & had tea with the lighthouse keeper.

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<sup>14</sup> . Salt Creek (a favourite anchorage of AGR and his contemporaries) is 2½ miles N of Edithburgh , at the small settlement of Coobowie.

Wednesday 27th [December] 1893

As the wind was a muzzler for us this morning, it was decided to put in a day at the Althorpes, and we accordingly went ashore and caught some fish off the rocks. At midday we went up to the house & had the remains of Christmas dinner.

In the afternoon the *Edith* came in the Bay, having just come from Cape Cassini.

Newspaper report of 8 November 1919

JUBILEE OF ROYAL SA YACHT SQUADRON

...Yachting in South Australia received an uplift through the interest in it by the Governor (Sir James Fergusson) [16 February 1869–18 April 1873], and he became a very active patron and subscriber to the club. On his entering into the club he had the cutter *Edith* built. Subsequently she passed into the possession of Sir Thomas Elder, and thereafter carried his flag. She was a fine cruiser, but was eventually converted into a fishing boat, in which occupation many of the best yachts had ended their days.

Gifford Chapman records that the *Edith* was lost on a sunken rock close to Spilsby Island on 3 August 1897. He was unable to trace a photograph of her.

Thursday 28th [December] 1893

With a fair wind we cleared out for the Gambier Islands at 8 o'clock, and reached here at 12. Went ashore in afternoon and obtained some excellent wild goat, shooting on the smaller of the islands. A supply of goat flesh was accordingly got on board, which kept us going for several days.<sup>15</sup>

Friday 29th [December] 1893

Left here at 5 o'clock this morning, and with a good breeze made a start for Cape Donnington. This was rounded at 12 o'clock and we brought up off Snapper Rock, and obtained some fishing in the afternoon.



Port Lincoln from Bunday's *Yachting in Australia* (1888)

Saturday 30th [December] 1893

From today up to the following Saturday was spent in cruising round the many different bays and Islands of Port Lincoln.

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<sup>15</sup> . The dominant component of the Gambier Islands is Wedge Island.

Saturday 16th [January] 1894

With the wind from the SE, & after having got the provisions aboard, we left Boston Bay and got out as far as Snapper Rock preparatory to making a start back on the following day. During the afternoon plenty of snapper were caught, & these lasted till we got to the Port.

Sunday 7th [January] 1894

Left Cape Donnington at 10 o'clock, & as the wind was in the SE, we had a beat down to Thistle Island. Passed Black Rock on the way down, where some seals were shot.

Got off Snug Cove about 3:30, but did not reach Whaler's Bay till 7 o'clock.



The east coast of Thistle island, with Whaler's Bay in the distance.

Monday 8th [January] 1894

We decided to put in a day at the Island, and after breakfast went ashore & looked up the Tapleys. In the afternoon they gave us a horse apiece, & we went for a ride round the Island. Stayed to tea at the Tapleys & then drove back to the boat in the evening.

Tuesday 9th [January] 1894

Cleared out from the Bay this morn at 9:30 & shaped a course for the Wedge. The wind was very light, & we did not get abreast of the Gambier Is till 2. We could not reach the Althorpes that night, so we ran into Pondalowie Bay & brought up at the back of Middle Is at 8:30 pm.

Wednesday 10th [January] 1894

Left Pondalowie Bay this morn at 6 o'clock, and after rounding C Spencer, stood on for the Smaller Althorpes. Landed here at midday and did some sealing for about an hour. In the afternoon we got the wind from the W & had a free run to Troubridge. Reached Troubridge Hill at sundown & were able to run through the passage by keeping the lead going.



**Troubridge Shoals Lighthouse**  
(Original dated prior to 1928.)

Passing Edithburg we stood in for Salt Creek & brought up at about 9.

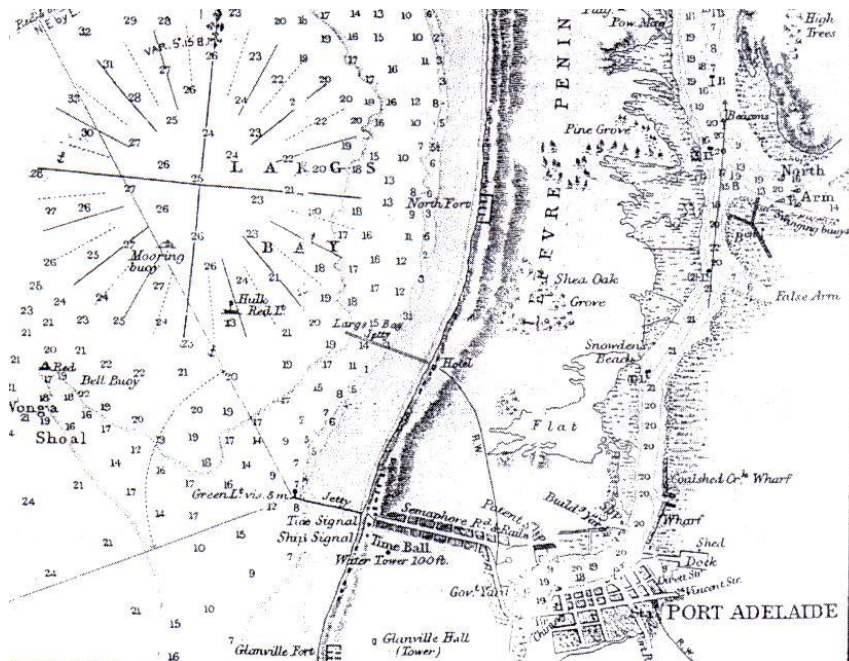
Thursday 11th [January] 1894

Left the Creek at 7 this morn, & with the wind blowing fresh from the SW, we stood across the gulf. Half way across the wind chopped into the NE, and then into the N, but on rounding the Light at 2:30 it changed back into the SW & we had a beat up the River.

Reached the Port at 4:30, & so ended a very enjoyable cruise (as usual).

To Kangaroo Island

**6th cruise of *Nyroca* January 19th to January 28th 1894.**



Semaphore and Largs are open roadsteads, with no proper protection

Friday 19th [January] 1894

Left the Port at 5 o'clock this afternoon, & with a fair wind downstream soon passed the Light & beat down to the Semaphore.

Did not arrive here till 9 o'clock, as there was no wind for some time between Largs and Semaphore.

Crew: AG Rymill, ES Rymill

Saturday 20th [January] 1894

Left the Semaphore at 8:30 this morn, & as the wind was southerly had to beat down the coast.

About 5 o'clock we were off Noarlunga, & as the wind had very nearly dropped altogether, we decided to bring up behind the reef for the night. Next day we put into Rapid Bay, & then on to the Island.

Sunday 22nd [January] 1894

Put in abt week at the Island, visiting Hog Bay, Antechamber Bay, &c. Then set out for Rapid Bay with a stiff S Easterly blowing. Off the Jervis Light it came down a regular gale. Had 3 reefs in at this time. Storm jib. Getting abreast of the heads it came on a regular hurricane. Dinghy swamped & we could not make hardly any headway at all. At last we got in a bit closer & let go both anchors & rode it out.

This was the hardest blow the old ship has ever been in. Next morning it had cleared up & we set sail for the Port. Reached Light at 6 & Port at 8. & came up to town.

Loose in the log is a carbon of three typed pages. **Log of yacht *Nyroca* for part of 10th, 11th and 12th November 1894.** Names are not given, only pseudonyms. Paragraphing has been altered and punctuation is adjusted to modern usage.

Ern Spinnaker and Harry Reefer left port in the above tight little 3 rater at 5 pm on the 10th, with a gentle air from SE for Largs, and from an air the wind changed into a nice easterly breeze. The destination was duly reached about 8:30 the same evening, and after tiffin, a yarn and a smoke, the bunks were occupied.

Saturday morning turned out rough, with a strong Norwester blowing, and our tight little packet was trying to keep a little water under her keel while rising over a wave, and endeavouring to prevent drowning herself and crew while plunging into the trough of the next roller. Things looked ugly without shelter and the visages of the crew gradually changed to a greener hue, and occasional visits to the side with heads well craned over the bulwarks was found necessary. Chops were fried under difficulties and the tea made, but the appetites were wanting, the crew being very cheap.

As the wind seemed inclined to keep from the only quarter in which there is no shelter on the north side of the Largs jetty, the canvas was hoisted and the other side of the jetty tried, but the sojourn was a short one, for the sea seemed just as heavy and with shallow water and the possibility of the wind shifting to SW (making the jetty a lee shore) the position taken up was not fair to the owner of the ship, and the former moorings were again occupied. With an increased wind and a correspondingly heavier sea, things were not over pleasant for our smooth water yachtsmen.

About midday our mate (for whom we had been waiting) turned up, Alf Jackyard to wit, and sail was promptly hoisted and smooth water near the North Bank next visited and breakfast (2 pm) partaken of; followed by the usual three draws of the pipe and a pleasant yarn.

The wind had lulled, but now changed to the SW and came down channel with its former power, making our position again somewhat uncomfortable, and another spot close to No 9 beacon was picked up, but not sufficient allowance was made for the rise and fall of the spring tides. While the *Etna* was under weigh the remark was made that this ship was very still, and we found that the soft muddy bottom and the yacht's keel had met and this well known and proved of its usual pertinacity, for no efforts of the crew could induce the mud and the keel to dissolve partnership.

The anchor and chain cable was taken out in the dinghy and all available line bent on and the end of the line then taken round the mast and a strain put on it as soon as possible to keep the yacht on an even keel, but the wind was so strong that the ship would list, so the purchase was applied as well as the direct strain. The latter was also made fast to the mast above the gaff of the stowed mainsail. The jib halyards had been carried away during the day, also one of the topping lifts.

The anchor dragged and the wind was so fresh that the yacht listed to such an extent that sitting on a weather bunk was a matter of impossibility and the crew could not lie down with anything like comfort on the cabin floor.

The most elderly and perhaps most wiry bird of the trio, after having had his legs cramped for about an hour, plugged all the many loose sails and pieces of wearing apparel under one side of the mattress in the foc'sle bunk and crawled into a bed in which it was just possible to keep in place if his legs were kept on the high side of the king post. Jackyard curled himself into a quaint position on the floor, and the other orphan just slept on Jack's chest, and so quickly went (or pretended) to sleep that poor old Jackyard did not like to disturb him.

About 2 am, when the storm was at its height, the tide had risen enough for the boat to get on her legs again, and as rain began to fall oils were put on by Reefer and Spinnaker (the latter essaying to drop the mud hook again nearer the channel). The anchor was buried in the mud, and even by exerting all his manly strength [? — typing error, illegible] could not drag it up, by the fluke, shank or tripping ring and in making a mighty heave the dinghy filled and capsized and left Spupendike [*sic* ?] struggling in the water, and as luck would have it with about 4 pairs of everything on as well as a suit of oilskins. He got hold of the upturned dinghy and drifted along past the yacht but not quite near enough to catch the mainsheet, which ran out without foul, and this was the last that was seen of him for some time. [Underlined in the original]

The crew then consisted of two, and both in a green funk, for the wind was howling and the dinghy and its rather damp-by-this-time occupant drifting away very fast with the making tide. The tide in this portion of our very fine river is like a millrace under certain conditions of wind etc. To bend on the jib, drag in the 30 fathoms of line and the 10 fathoms of chain took considerable time, and must have seemed hours to the poor devil in the water. The jib was partly hoisted and we were going in something like the proved right direction, the staysail was added, and part of the mainsail hurriedly hoisted. Our remaining topping lift then carried away and the boom descended on the head of Jackyard and would have laid him out under any ordinary circumstances. 'Boat ahoy!' was yelled out at short intervals, but no response until we had sailed about two miles, when at last there was a feeble welcome responding cry.

The boat was put about and the upturned dinghy fetched in, and, oh, how gladly were two pairs of arms extended and how quickly was our half-drowned shipmate, (who had been in the angry sea for about half an hour) hauled aboard. He had been carried over two miles with the current. He tried to get hold of a channel buoy, but the tide swept him away. His legs were cramped and he tried to dive from the deck to the cabin floor. How quickly were his sodden clothes off, and, lor', how he was rubbed and how the whisky was poured down his throat, and how deftly were all the blankets rolled round him and his cold legs rubbed with spirit. A snug berth was fixed up and all made snug till daybreak.

An early breakfast and a quiet morning spent, bending halyard, topping lift, etc. The Port was reached in the afternoon and the cruise ended, the ship stowed away for a week, and the three mates returned to their respective homes thinking, 'By jove, that was a narrow shave.'



The Rymills raced *Nyroca* with considerable success

**7th cruise** of *Nyroca* to Moonta via Althorpes, Corny Point 2 weeks. AG Rymill, T Richmond, T Kennedy<sup>16</sup>

**8th cruise** of *Nyroca* from Saturday December 21st 1895 to Monday, 20th January 1896. To Melbourne.

Left Adelaide Saturday 21st Dec 95, reached Antechamber Bay KI Sunday & left Monday. Reached Kingston Tuesday (where I left the ship) & left again on Wednesday. Reached Robe Wednesday. Left Thursday & reached Beachport Thursday & left Monday, reached Warrnambool Tuesday. Left Wednesday. Reached Melbourne Thursday.

Left Melbourne on the return trip on Thursday, 9 January '96. Reached Portland Monday & left Wednesday. Reached Kingston on Thursday & left Saturday. Reached Jervis Saturday night & left Sunday morn. Reached Adelaide Monday morning.

12 days to Melbourne, 11 ditto to Adelaide.

Crew AG Rymill, AP Cox, ES Rymill as far as Kingston.

**For more details of the trip to Melbourne, see below**

To Port Lincoln

**9th cruise** of *Nyroca* <sup>17</sup>

From 16th Jany 97

Leaving Pt Adelaide at 5 pm on Saturday 16th Jany, we passed several yachts that had been taking part in a race, with no improvement in some cases to gear, as the fresh SW breeze wrought a deal of damage to the *Satanella*, *Meralte*, *Tern*, *Maggie* and *Water Lily*. Anchored at No 10 beacon for the night.

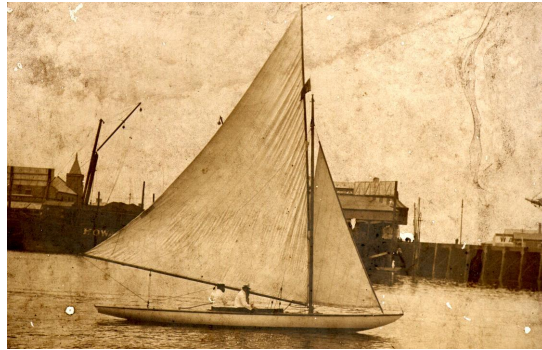
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<sup>16</sup> . Unfortunately there are no further details of this cruise.

<sup>17</sup> . Participants not listed. Handwriting is not that of Commodore AG Rymill. There are no cuttings pasted into the News Cuttings book for this date for information on the race.



Probably *Meralte* (D Haselgrove)



*Tern*

Sunday 17th [January] 1897

Up anchor at 5:30. Strong SE blowing, & when fairly in the gulf the wind shifted a point to S & blew fresh. Results disastrous for one of the crew — to wit JR — arrived at Wool Beach at 2 o'clock after a thorough soaking. Left Wool Beach about 4 o'clock & arrived Troubridge Light at 6:30, where we lay for the night. Good shelter here from SW by S to SE.<sup>18</sup>

Monday 18th [January 1897]

Started from Troubridge at 6:30 & stood along coast as far as Sturt Bay, where we anchored to await more favorable wind than the SW which was blowing. Excellent shelter here from SW weather.

Tuesday 19th [January 1897]

Weighed anchor at 6:45 am. Had not gone more [than]  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile when we piled up — usual anathemas as a matter of course.

9:20 am still fast as I write, so this will be continued when the aspect is changed.

2:10 pm got off at last.

Reached Rhino Head at 8:35 pm, Cape Spencer 9:30. Shaped a course for the Wedge Island, which was reached at 1:45 am on —

Wednesday 20th [January 1897]

After the excellent run to the Wedge, the wind died away to the merest zephyr. While baffling about, the SS *Ferret* was sighted steaming into Port Lincoln. The wind then died away altogether, & as the skipper said, we lay, 'like a painted ship upon a painted ocean,' quoting good old Coleridge.

At last the wind came, but, to be quite in keeping with our average luck up to now, it came from dead ahead.

Consequently it was 4:15 pm before we were abreast of Kirton Point. At this place we heard a coo-eeing, & looking towards the shore we saw Mr Rymill Sr sitting Robinson Crusoe-like upon a rock, anxiously awaiting our arrival.

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<sup>18</sup> . Probably the anchorage we know as the Cutter Patch.

Having snuggled down, we partook of some of the good things that had arrived per steamer, which were unanimously appreciated after our 'fo'cle fare', as it was termed. Early to roost, tired out.

Thursday 21st [January 1897]

After Breakfast we went to the Horse Rock fishing ground, spoken of by Judge Bunday as being sometimes good and sometimes bad. We had the 'bad' all day: never a nibble.

In the evening sailed down to Bickers Island, bad luck with the fish again, whereupon one of the crew confesses to being a Jonah, & was to have been flung overboard next morning, which brings us to —

Friday 22nd [January 1897]

The Jonah referred to, viz JR, & ER went off in the dingy early in the morning & caught 2 sweep & several rock cod, thus gaining a reprieve.

Went to Schnapper Rock — tried fishing again — no success.

In the evening sailed to a very comfortable cove at Boston Is, where we lay till 10 next morning.

Saturday 23rd [January 1897]

Called in at Pt Lincoln to get the mail. Remained there till 4 o'clock. Sailed for Porter's Bay, anchored for the night.



WH Bunday the yachtsman

Sunday 24th [January 1897]

ER went off at the first streak of dawn with his gun & succeeded in getting 3 ducks, 2 redbills and 1 crane. In the forenoon Judge B[unday] sent his large dingy, when Mr R, AR & ER went shooting with no luck, notwithstanding Judge B's assurances that native pheasants were in the vicinity.

In the afternoon a small haul of fish, sufficient for breakfast, was caught. Had the game for supper. Verdict: very good.

Monday 25th [January 1897]

Went into Pt Lincoln to take in water & afterwards proceeded to Fanny Bay. Good anchorage, but no fish.<sup>19</sup>

Tuesday 26th [January 1897]

Left Fanny Bay for Bickers I<sup>d</sup>. Here we got 2 rabbits, but as in the afternoon, we went to Snapper Rock & caught the first of the snapper. They were not called into use.<sup>20</sup>

Wednesday 27th [January 1897]

Went to Pt Lincoln to get bread and also the mail, thence to Spalding Cove.

Thursday 28th [January 1897]

Sailed down to Snapper Rock to the old ground. Caught enough snapper for Breakfast next morning — rather a rocky sleep, however.

Friday 29th [January 1897]

Put into Spalding Cove to have a quiet breakfast. Got a few fish during the day. In the afternoon sailed to Pt Lincoln & in the evening AR & JR went ashore to hear a lecture on 'Adam Lindsay Gordon' by HW Varley. The lecturer was assisted by a local storekeeper reading a selection or two from Gordon's poems. There was no mistaking his nationality. His accent was redolent of the porridge and heather to such an extent did the Land o' Cakes protrude that his reading was the funniest thing of the evening.

Saturday 30th [January 1897]

Received mail & papers & afterwards sailed for the Proper, where we heard there were ducks to be had.

Sunday 31st [January 1897]

AR succeeded in shooting two of the above-mentioned ducks. In the afternoon another attempt was made to bring the wily duck within reach of the [?] X, but no result.

Monday 1st February [1897]

AR & JR walked over to Sleaford Mere, a beautiful little lake about a couple of miles from our anchorage. No game on it, however, with the exception of a few swans. In the evening another unsuccessful attempt to bring the wary duck down.

Tuesday 2nd February [1897]

Sailed to Horse Rock, [but] fish not simple enough to be hooked. Bread ran out here, so had to again call at the Port. Caught a few whiting off [the] jetty.

Wednesday 3rd February [1897]

After receipt of mail & newspaper, sailed to Bickers Island, where we lay all night.

Thursday 4th February [1897]

Went to Schnapper Rock. Good fishing; 1 small shark caught & an immense one after [illegible] small shark hook got away — like most big fish.

In the evening sailed across to bay just inside the first point, where we lay that night.



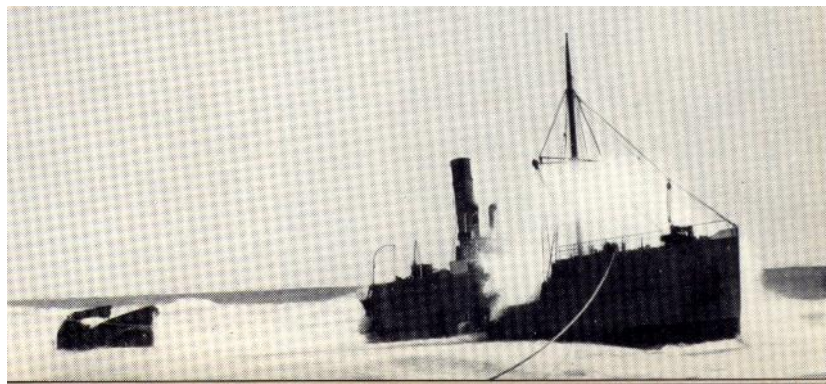
Friday 5th February [1897]

Went back again to Schnapper Rock & put a large shark hook (Winnininnie [?] manufacture) in the hopes of getting the large sharks above mentioned and it was not long before the drum used as a buoy was bobbing up & down. It turned out that the big fellow was not on, but one [which] turned out to be 9-ft 8-in when measured on board was attached, was securely attached to the Hook. (with a large H) When triced up alongside the mast with the jib halyard a few snap shots were taken of it — with what success remains to be seen.

In the evening sailed to Pt Lincoln as two of the party have to catch the *Ferret* to proceed to Adelaide.

Saturday 6th February [1897]

Mr R & JR left by *Ferret*. AGR & ESR sailed the 'Poker' back to Port Adelaide, where they arrived on Thursday 11th Feb 97.<sup>21</sup>



SS *Ferret* aground at Reef Head, 14 November 1920.

[10th cruise of *Nyroca*]

To Coffins Bay & Lincoln, 1897.

[Handwriting not that of AGR, and after 29th December continued in another hand.]

Leaving Port Adelaide on Xmas Eve the *Nyroca* with Ted Richman, ES Rymill and AGR aboard, fetched up at Largs B for the night.

25 Dec. [1897] Stood down the Gulf with a light westerly breeze (having made an early start) as far as Fields River. The wind coming in SE made across to Troubridge light, where we brought up at 5 o'clock pm & stayed for the night.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> . For 'Poker' see the Introduction.

<sup>22</sup> . Captain WG Field RN was described as First Mate of the *Rapid*, and discovered the river named for him in 1837, but it had already been mapped by Captain Collet Barker. Sturt called it the Ponkepurunga Creek. (*Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia during the Years 1828, 1829, 1830, and 1831: with observations on the Soil, Climate and General Resources of the Colony of New South Wales*. 1833) It has had many variations in spelling, and is known today as the Onkaparinga.

26 Dec. [1897] Light northerly at 5 am to get under way & after safely navigating the inner passage headed for Althorpe Island, wind having freshened very much from the same quarter and as she was just able to stagger under a full mainsail, we made a fast run and brought up in the little Althorpe Bay at 4 pm. Very hot.

27th [December 1897] Spent the day fishing at the Is<sup>d</sup> & had pretty good luck off the Southern point of the Bay close in. At 7 pm the wind came in fresh from SE, & as this knocks up a nasty sea at the Anchorage, we stood across to Pondalowie Bay — distance 10 miles — where we lay very snug. In the night caught a huge Stingree measuring 7-ft 6-in across the wings.

28th [December 1897] A very hot day. Wind still SE. Shaped a course to clear the Wedge & Thistle for Williams Id, but on nearing the Wedge I<sup>d</sup> found our fresh water tank had burst & let all the water out. Then altered our course & made for Snug Cove, Thistle I to get more water. Luckily we had 2 gallons of water left in another drum. So by being careful with it we were able to make it last out.

Having fallen in with a calm could not reach Snug Cove that day, so brought up in Whaler's B late at night.

29th [December 1897] [Different hand] Made a start for Snug Cove, distance 6 miles, arrived there 7 pm, becalmed nearly all day. Ted R harpooned a Porpoise & managed to land it. Filled up the water drum.<sup>23</sup>

30 [December 1897] Under way early [and] stood across to Williams Id. Strong northerly blowing. ESR & AGR landed on the Island to shoot [and] got capsized when landing in the surf. Shot a bull seal 8 ft long on the N Eastern [?] of the Island.

Midday set sail for Fishery Bay, where we anchored at 3:15. Very hot until the change came up from West at 4:30, when it blew very hard.

31st [December 1897] Hung on all day at Fishery B, as it was blowing very fresh & dead ahead. Went ashore & bathed in the beautiful fresh water creek at south end of bay.

1st Jan 98. Rolled down 3 reefs in mainsail, put dingey on house, and made a start at 8 am up the coast. Lumpy water outside. Abt midday wind fell light & came into NW. Tried for an anchorage under an Island off Avoid P, but the sea was too rough & got into a little bay formed by the reef (not shown on chart) running off Avoid Pt. This is a perfect anchorage [*sic*] for small boats — from west round by S to north (only open to NW).

2nd Jan [1897] Made early Start & rounded Widby Pt 12:30 & made a nice run to Sir Isaac Pt. Then sailed right across Coffins bay & fetched up close to the buoy marking the entrance to Pt Douglas. Went ashore at 6 pm up to a house at the foot of a big hill to ask the best way to Coffin Station at the Head of the Bay, as the channel looked very intricate. Could not find anyone at the house, so returned to boat, had a feed & turned in.

3rd [January 1897] Made a start at 8 am, & by the aid of chart & compass & a sharp lookout from the mast head were able to work up the channel without once taking the ground. Arrived off Mr Mortlock's Station at 2 pm, which is about 25 miles from Pt Sir Isaac. Here we struck a real good pal in Bill Mortlock MP, who did everything in his power to make our stay most enjoyable.

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<sup>23</sup> . They would have got water from the well used by Theo Modra to pump water to Whaler's Bay. If Flinders had dug here, there wouldn't have been a Catastrophe on 22 February 1802. The tall trees nearby should have indicated the presence of water beneath them.

William Ranson Mortlock settled in Adelaide in 1844, but when one of his two flour mills was burned down he moved to Yalluna Station surrounding Tumby Bay. He added land at and beyond Coffin Bay, and acquired about half of the Flinders Ranges. On Yudnapinna alone he sheared 100,000 sheep a year from 1,600 square miles of land. His wife was a sister of Andrew Tennant, a man with similar vast holdings in Australia and New Zealand. WR Mortlock was prominent in horse racing and was a MHA from 1868 to 1884.

South Australia's best-known country mansion is Martindale Hall at Mintaro. This was built in 1880 by Edmund Bowman (the Second), but he over-reached himself and was obliged to sell the property at great loss to the newly married William Andrew Tennant Mortlock in 1892. (The price of £30,000 was less than the cost of erecting the building, not counting the land.) WAT was the elder son of WR and his successor as MHA. He married his cousin Rosye Tennant in the most lavish such event of the day in St Peter's Church Glenelg on 30 January 1891. Their son, JT Mortlock, built two yachts named *Martindale* and a hydroplane called *Wizzo*. He died without issue and he and his widow bequeathed their considerable wealth to, *inter alia*, the State Library, the University of Adelaide and the Botanic Garden.

Spent a week at Coffin's Bay with the Member on board & had plenty of sport &c.

8th [January 1897] Took our friend Bill M back to his station, as he has to return to the City, & made a start for home by way of Lincoln.

10th [January 1897] Cleared Pt Sir Isaac early morn & stood round the coast as far as Black Rocks (half way between Pt Widby & Avoid Pt). Here we found splendid shelter & good whiting fishing.

11th [January 1897] Got an early start & fetched Fishery B at 7:30 pm, having had a fresh breeze during the afternoon & it was now blowing strong from SE, which comes right into the Bay, but the sea was not very rough & we lay fairly snug.

12th [January 1897] Had a nasty doing crossing Sleaford Bay & shipped a lot of water. Midday brought up at Williams I & had dinner and then started for Pt Lincoln with a nice S Easter. Arrived there abt 5 o'clock.<sup>24</sup>

After spending a few days here, we made start back. Had a head wind as far as the Wedge I, which took from the 16th to the 18th.

Left the Wedge Id 7 o'clock on the 18th & arrived at the Port Light at 11 o'clock same night, being a run of 120 miles in 16 hours. Brought up in the River & made up to the moorings in Port next morning — having been away just a month.

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There are no more log entries in this book. Inside the back cover are two pencil sketches. There is a relevant news cutting —

22 December 1900

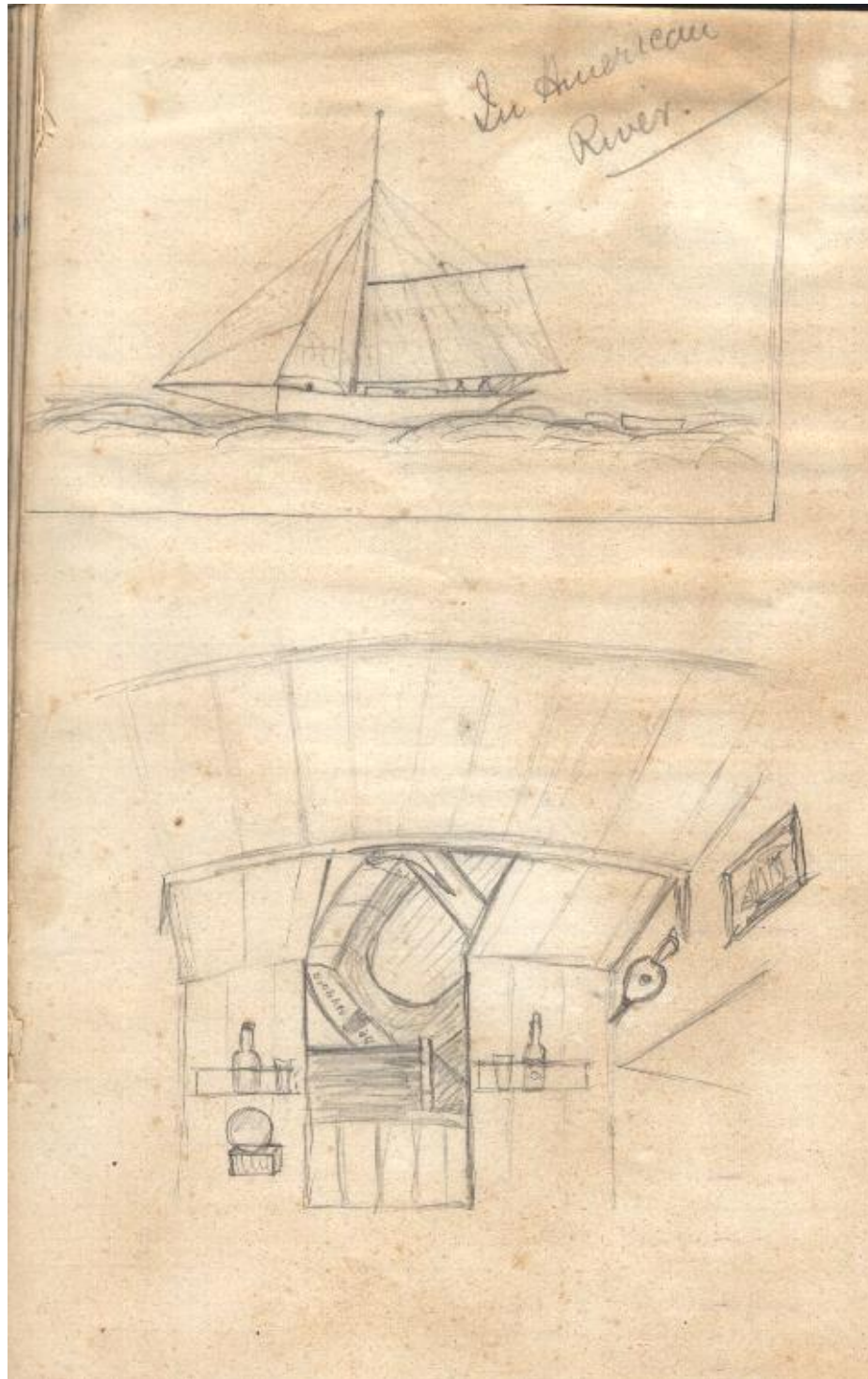
[Referring to holiday cruising,] In all probability the longest cruise will be made by Mr AG Rymill and party in the *Nyroca*. They intend being away about a month. ...

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<sup>24</sup> . They probably went ashore to cook, as it seems that there were no facilities on *Nyroca*



AG Rymill as a young man



*Nyroca* aground (3.19, detached from the log)



*Nyroca* in the Port River (H Loveder)



Port Adelaide in 1884

#### THE CRUISE OF *NYROCA* TO MELBOURNE AND RETURN.

Sir Arthur Rymill's reminiscences include —

'My father was a mad-keen yachtsman. When he started the practice I do not know, but he must have been very young. One of his ancestors, namely his grandmother on the maternal side, was a Potts and they were great sailors. A Potts [Fred] built out of redgum the *Nyroca*, which was my father's first cruising yacht. (I was referring to the Langhorne Creek family.)

'My father was not only a great sailer of yachts, but he was also a very early motor boat owner and he also built several yachts with his own hands. He sailed the *Nyroca* to Melbourne and back for a bet. He was boasting at the Royal Yacht Squadron that the *Nyroca* would go anywhere, and a friend said, "Well, would she go to Melbourne?"

'My father replied, "Yes. I'll bet you £10 I can sail her to Melbourne and back!"

"Alright," said his friend, "When do you start?"

"Tomorrow," and he did.

'It took him seven days to get there and eight days to get back, or vice versa — I cannot remember which.'

*The Register* 12 January 1896 [AG Rymill's *Literary Cuttings*]

A BOLD YACHTING CRUISE — The little yacht *Nyroca*, three tons, which was lately sailed from Melbourne to Port Adelaide, left for the return voyage on Wednesday January 8.

A contributor to the *Warrnambool Standard* of January 2 writes, 'A tiny nautical stranger entered the harbour of Warrnambool on New Year's Eve in the shape of the little cutter-yacht *Nyroca*, flying the burgee of the RSAYS. She is sailed by her owner, Mr AG Rymill of the Adelaide Yacht Club, who is accompanied by Mr Cox, these two gentlemen constituting "all hands"

'Mr Rymill is making a pleasure trip to Melbourne, and reports leaving Adelaide on December 21, with the wind fresh at south-east. A call was made at Antechamber Bay Kangaroo Island, and then the *Nyroca* had to thresh to windward across the Bight to Kingston, reaching there on December 24. Robe was then touched at, and finally Beachport, where a couple of days were spent...

'The *Nyroca* is named after a peculiar white-eyed duck on the River Murray, and is undoubtedly the smallest craft that has ever made the voyage. It is somewhat strange that although lines were out nearly all the way from Adelaide, not a single barracouta was caught.'

AG Rymill's letter, printed in one of the papers, is undated, and from the type used, this was probably *The Advertiser* or possibly the Melbourne *Argus* of 4 January 1896.

By this you will have heard we have arrived at St Kilda well, taking all things into consideration. We got round pretty easily, and only struck one bad day on the whole trip. I asked my brother to look you up to let you know how we got on as far as Kingston, and as he has no doubt done so, I will get under weigh from there.

With a fresh sou'-easter blowing, which, of course, was dead ahead for Robe, we made out to the Jaffa light, where we fell in with a real good old ocean roll, and on rounding the light, slogged down the coast to Robe, where we arrived at about 5 pm. This was on Christmas Day. We were snug enough here for the night, and first thing Thursday morning started for Beachport with the wind still south-east. We arrived at 7 pm.

There is good shelter in Beachport, so we decided to wait until we got a fair wind, even if it was a week in coming. The people on shore were very kind to us, trotting us round to picnics &c on Friday the glass fell about 1 in, and in the night it blew very hard from the south-west; so next morning (still blowing) we put in four reefs in the mainsail, hoisted No 3 jib, and gave her the staysail and made a start for Melbourne.

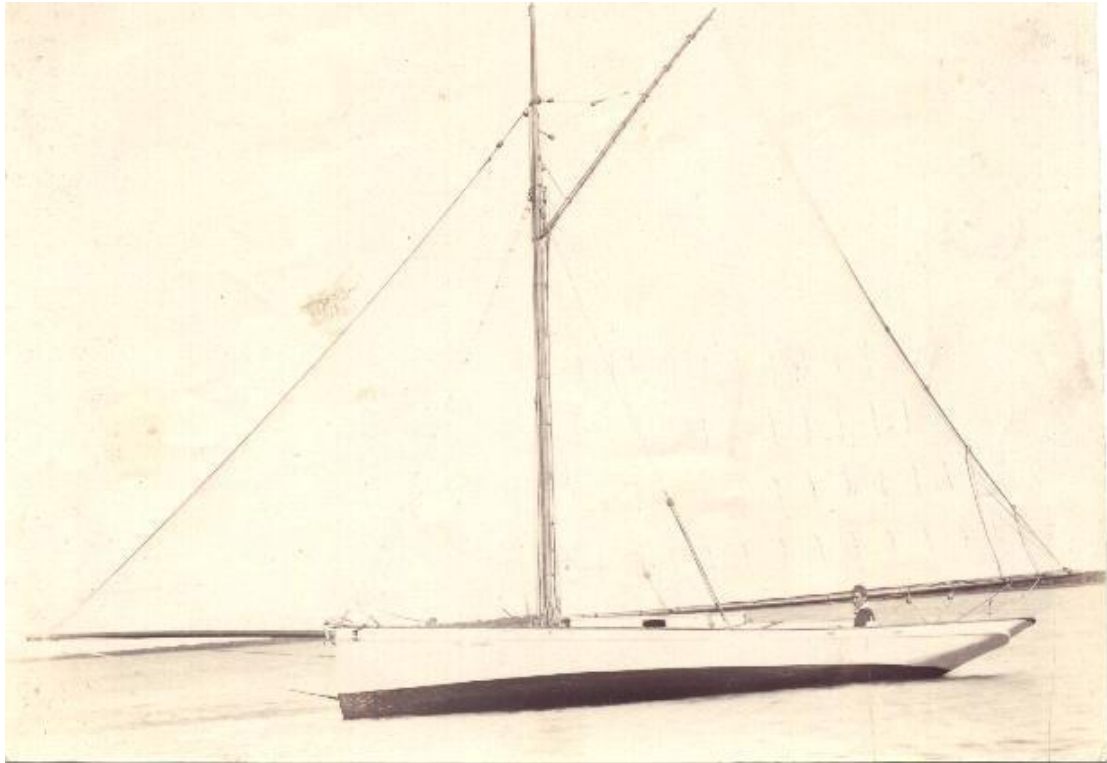
We fell in with a lot of broken water getting out of the bay, but the old ship came through all right. When well off land we were not so bad, and so shaped a course to clear Cape Banks and were getting along well until we were off Carpenter Rocks, where the wind came in from the south. Soon after this, when plunging into the head sea, we carried away the bobstay, and the lug that takes the shackle parted from the cransiron. We fixed up a bobstay with a piece of line so as to save the bowsprit. I was wet to the skin, having shipped seas down the neck of my oilskin.

We got going again without jib. As soon as we began to dive into the head sea once more, away went our forestay. This put the strain on the luff rope of the staysail, and crack it went and away blew the staysail, split right across. We had no headsail now, and it looked as though we were going to follow the *Admella* and try to get over the Carpenter Rocks; so I kept her away and made for Beachport again, 25 miles distant.

SS *Admella* was the crack vessel on the run from Adelaide to Melbourne when she went up on Carpenter's Rocks on Saturday 6 August 1859. Only 24 of the 113 souls aboard were saved, after clinging to the wreck for a week with little food or water. Heroic rescue attempts were made, both from the shore and sea, where several vessels arrived to do their best to help. Benjamin Germein, keeper of the newly commissioned light on Cape Northumberland, was awarded a special medal for his gallantry. He saved three, including Captain Hugh McEwan. The lifeboat from Portland, commanded by Captain Lawthrop, rescued the rest, including Miss Ledwith, who wore only a nightdress throughout.

The *Admella* inspired verse and paintings, as a sort of colonial *Titanic* disaster of its day.

See *Squadron Quarterly* March 1994: 40–1. The cutting of 14 January 1905 refers to the yacht *Gladys* designed and built by Ben Germein for cruising.



*Nyroca's* long and vulnerable bowsprit

We had to feel our way all among the reefs in the dark, and brought up off the jetty at 10 pm that night. I was not sorry, I can tell you, to get the anchor down again.

Next day (Sunday) we repaired damages.

On Monday morning a breeze arrived from the south-west just strong enough, and at 9 am we cleared the bay. At midday we were off our old friend the 'Carpenters'. At sundown we passed the Cape Northumberland light; at midnight we sighted Cape Nelson light, and at daylight we were off the Julia Percy Island. We had no sleep that night, but were doing well though and did not mind. The wind was till holding good, and we made on for Warnnambool, where we arrived at 1 pm. We had a feed, then slipped ashore and wired to friends. We went back to the boat and turned in as tired as could be. We set the alarm clock for 3 am, never heard it, woke at 6 and were under weigh at 6:10, the wind still being south-west.

We were off Cape Otway at 4:30 (Adelaide time). There was a nasty hollow sea running here, but it was dead aft. We were not long in sighting the Eagle's Nest light, and at 2 am we could see the leading lights of the Heads. I was now quite satisfied I had won my hats. [*sic*, possibly bets intended] We entered the Heads at 3:30 am on Thursday. There were no pilots about at that time, so we went in without, and struck it right, as there was no rip to speak of. We spotted the black and red channel buoys of the western channel, and in seven hours from the Heads we brought up off St Kilda. Here some of the St Kilda Yacht Club fellows took charge of us and put the ship into a really snug mooring.

Since our arrival we have had a really good look round their boats. Their type of boat, with a few exceptions, is the old *Haidee* style. Yesterday some of the Royal fellows took us out for a spin in the crack of the Bay, the *Waratah*. We think of leaving here about Wednesday next on our way home, and if we are as lucky as we were coming round we will do very well.

*The Advertiser* 21 January 1896

#### THE YACHT *NYROCA*

#### A VENTURESOME TRIP

Messrs AG Rymill and AP Cox returned to Port Adelaide in the yacht *Nyroca*, a little vessel of less than 3 tons rating, from a holiday trip to Melbourne on Monday morning. As soon as the *Nyroca* was moored alongside the yacht *Magic* at the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron's moorings on the Birkenhead side of the Port River, an *Advertiser* representative boarded her and asked for an account of the trip.

'We left St Kilda,' said Mr Rymill, 'on our return journey on Thursday, January 9, and that night brought up at Queenscliffe inside of the Heads. Next day we sailed through the Rip before a light northerly wind, and when we reached abreast of the Eagle's Nest light the wind fell away and we lay all the Friday afternoon and night becalmed.

'On Saturday morning we experienced a fresh south-westerly breeze, and we took in three reefs of the mainsail. The wind got so strong that we hove-to and remained so from 10 o'clock Saturday morning till 8 o'clock that night. All that night the wind blew from the south-west, so we decided to run back to Loutit Bay, which is about 50 miles from the entrance to the Heads. We stayed there during Saturday night, and on Sunday morning made another start with the wind blowing from the north-east.

'At 12 o'clock we had rounded Cape Otway. Later the wind shifted round to the west and during the night it blew hard and rain also fell. The sea also became rough, so we put on the hatches, took in four reefs of the mainsail, and hoisted a small jibsail. It was moist all that night. We got into Portland on Monday, January 13, at 2 o'clock. Thrashing through the sea from the Otway to Portland we experienced the worst time we had during the whole of the trip. At Portland we sent telegrams to relatives and had a good rest and were able to dry our clothes. Several of the residents took an interest in the *Nyroca* during her stay, and we had a number of visitors.

'We left Portland on Wednesday morning at about 6 o'clock with a south-easterly wind blowing. The wind continued in that direction all that day and night, so that when it fell away on Thursday morning we had reached the Cape Jaffa light. We were for a while becalmed, but that night managed to sail to Kingston, where we stayed until Saturday morning.

‘Leaving there at 7 o’clock we shaped a course for Cape Willoughby. Before the fresh sou’-wester [*sic* ?SE intended] we scudded along at an excellent rate and reached Cape Willoughby at half-past 11 o’clock the same night, the *Nyroca* having made a run of nearly a hundred miles in 16½ hours. At 1:30 on Sunday morning we brought up under Cape Jervis light and left there at about 8 o’clock on the same morning. All Sunday we came slowly up the gulf, and anchored at half-past 12 o’clock on Monday morning awaiting daylight to come up the River.’

The yacht left for Melbourne on Saturday evening, December 21, so that Messrs Rymill and Cox were away a little more than four weeks. The only fear they entertained was that of being run down by one of the large steamers whilst becalmed at night. To avoid any such disaster a substantial light was displayed when a vessel’s light was observed approaching.

*The Register* had a closely similar report, concluding —

...‘We lay outside until half-past 7 on Monday morning, and anchored at the moorings of the Squadron at 11 o’clock.’

The sunburnt and healthy appearance of the plucky voyagers bears out their statement that they had a most enjoyable cruise. The *Nyroca* proved herself to be a really good little seaboat, and behaved admirably right through the trip, though some heavy weather was met with on several occasions.

15 January 1927

*The News* [Loose cutting in AG Rymill’s *Literary Cuttings*]

### **By Yacht to Melbourne**

#### **Fearless Amateur Sailor**

#### ***Record of Mr AG Rymill***

On Thursday Mr AG Rymill, who the day previously had been re-elected Commodore of the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron, left in the *Orama* on a trip to Colombo...

...In December 1895, AG Rymill and APO Cox, now an officer in the Lands Titles Office, cruised from Port Adelaide to Melbourne in the yacht *Nyroca*, built by a Mr Potts, a relation of the Rymills, at Langhorne’s Creek...

[Repeating information recorded elsewhere]

...Ernest Rymill was not a good sailor and left the boat at Kingston...

...With his own hands Mr AG Rymill built a small boat as far back as 1884, and launched and sailed it at Glenelg. Two years later he built another boat, which was 16 ft in length and called the *Sorcerer*. Later he bought a good-sized half-deck boat called the *Corella*, and in 1889 acquired the *Nyroca*.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> . In the account of the Opening and Closing of the season 1888–89, the *Corella* is identified as formerly the *Triplet* of the SA Yacht Club. ‘This is the boat from which young Scott got drowned on New Year’s Day. She has already won prizes for her new owner.’ She is not to be confused with the 21-footer *Corella* raced by Lord Forster as Governor-General, which he passed on to his successor, Lord Stonehaven. Tom Flint gave that name to a small yacht he sailed to and from Kangaroo Island single-handed.

Even the *Nyroca* could not satisfy the Rymill boys for long, and in 1899 they built a 32-ft boat which they called the *Geisha*. In the *Geisha* they did a lot of racing in South Australia, and in 1900 took her to New Zealand to compete in races, but were unsuccessful.<sup>26</sup>

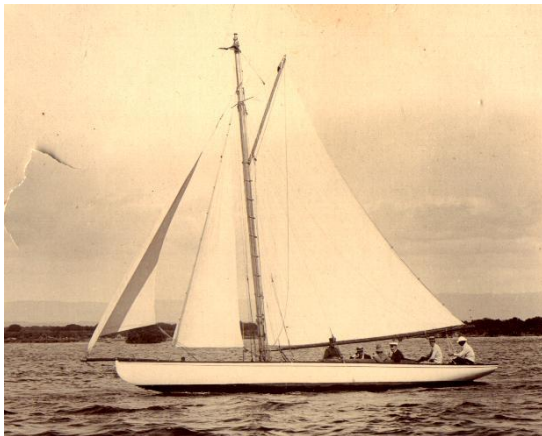


*Geisha*

In 1901 motor boats were coming under notice, and in that year AG and Ernest Rymill purchased the sailing yacht *Valeria* from Mr CH Angas and had an engine installed in her.

In that boat they cruised about the South Australian coast, almost as much as they did in the old *Nyroca*.

It was not long before the Rymill brothers turned their attention to yet another phase of boating — hydroplaning. The *Viper*, the first hydroplane they owned, attained a speed of 12 miles an hour. That boat was quickly followed by *Bulldozer I, II* and *III*, all flat-bottomed boats whose speeds ranged from 19 to 28 miles an hour.



*Valeria*



*Valeria* as an oil launch

Early in 1914 Mr Ernest Rymill purchased in America a hydroplane which was christened *Tortoise I*, and in 1916 in Melbourne won the Griffith Cup, attaining a speed of 48 miles an hour.

A hydroplane called the *Greyhound* came from Sydney to try and lift the Griffith Cup from *Tortoise I* in 1922, but was unsuccessful. Fearing that another challenger might do better, the Rymills imported an engine, which, when installed, increased the speed of *Tortoise I* from 48 miles an hour to 60 miles an hour.

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<sup>26</sup> . AG Rymill's memory was repeatedly shown to be unreliable. He went to Auckland in 1898.

Later the Rymill brothers found that the 60 miles an hour of *Tortoise I* was not likely to suffice to hold off challengers, and Mr Ernest Rymill went to America for still another hydroplane, which was christened *Tortoise II*. Though defeated once by *Century Tire*, this boat, in which the Rymills attained a speed of 72 miles an hour, brought the Griffith Cup back to South Australia in 1925, and has not suffered defeat since then.

*The Register* Saturday May 18, 1929

## ***Out among the People***

By

Rufus

A big adventure has been arranged for the week-end. The programme is for Mr HA (Johnnie) Behrens in the *Baby Buzz* to pilot Mr JB Phillips in the outboard motor boat *Miss Beda*, which has just completed a long journey down the river from Albury, through the Murray mouth, and for the craft to come on to Glenelg.

### **A Hazardous Undertaking**

Mr Behrens, who is a hydroplane enthusiast and a member of the Outboard Motor Club of SA, said to me yesterday:— “I and a crew comprising my son Alan, Eric Richards, and WB Randell, in a fast runabout the *Baby Buzz*, built by Mr E Richards, and fitted with a four-cylinder engine, intend leaving Goolwa, weather permitting, on Sunday morning, with the idea of piloting Mr Phillips, driving the *Miss Beda*, through the Murray mouth. I realize the risk of taking a small boat through this treacherous channel, which as far as I can gather has never been attempted before in an outboard hydroplane. The current is fast and the breakers at times tremendous. It is a question of waiting for the psychological moment to make the dash to the open sea.

“I have every confidence in our own craft and equipment, but I would not like to hazard an opinion concerning the smaller boat, and I shall be very pleased when we are passing Victor Harbour safely and preparing for another fight against the winds in Backstairs Passage, which often the fishermen in their cutters treat with the greatest respect when there is a northerly wind with a making tide. The Outboard Motor Club of SA propose to meet the *Miss Beda* and her convoy at Glenelg, either on Sunday afternoon or some time on Monday. The time will depend on the hour of departure and the weather conditions.

“The idea of the trip is to bring before the public the possible accomplishments of the modern outboard hydroplane and engine.”

### **Five Times Through The Mouth**

Remembering that Mr AG Rymill (Commodore of the SA Yacht Squadron) had had considerable experience in navigating the Murray mouth, I had a chat with my friend on the subject.

Mr Rymill said:— “I remember well that in about 1888 two men came down the Murray in a beautifully finished 18-ft canoe. They took the craft through the mouth and paddled and sailed up to Glenelg. I have been through the mouth five times. I came out in the *Nyroca* in 1895 [actually 1891] and sailed to Port Adelaide. We went to Melbourne in the *Nyroca*. It took 13 days to get there and 12 days to come back. Mr AP Cox was with me. The *Nyroca* was 23 ft long on the waterline. She was rather a frail craft. There were no motor boats in those days. I saw the first motor boat about 1901.

### **A Memorable Experience**

“I went in next in the *Avocet*. Frank Sanderson and my brother Ern were with me. We got through all right, and then we thought we would explore the mouth in the *Avocet's* dinghy. We went out all right, but when coming in the rudder broke and the dinghy capsized. The three of us were battling in the surf for three-quarters of an hour. Frank Sanderson had hold of the painter, but Ern and I clung to the boat and she turned over and over. Once Ern was underneath and could not get out. A curler of a wave came and liberated him. We were eventually washed up on the Coorong Beach and struggled ashore through the surf to collapse on the beach. About a dozen fishermen were on the beach and they gave us dry clothes. Then I went out again through the mouth in the *Avocet*.

### **Wait for Favourable Day.**

“I have seen the Murray mouth as calm as this table with a blind swell in the channel, and in these conditions it is quite easy to navigate it, but one is apt to get caught at a moment's notice as the tide flowing out against the wind knocks up a nasty hollow break. They should wait for a favourable day, probably with the wind off the land. Then they will be all right. Cavill, the swimmer, and another man were in a boat which capsized at the mouth. Cavill managed to swim ashore, but the other man was drowned. The men you speak of will know what they are up against if they pick the wrong time to come out.”

### **A Risky Business**

Later in the day I met Mr Frank Verco, who has just returned from a cruise to Kangaroo Island with some friends in the boat the *Ventura*.

Mr Verco said:— “Several months ago Dick Lindstrom and I brought the *Ventura* through the mouth and on to Port Adelaide. We had just got through the breakers when the pump broke and we had to up sail. It was a nasty business, but we got the engine going again in an hour's time. Once the boat stood on her head and then came down with a crash behind and broke all the glasses and crockery on board. My son Brian and young Anderson from Port Adelaide were with us. We left at 4 pm and reached Port Adelaide at 8:30 the next morning. The *Ventura* is a 48-footer, and quite small enough to be fooling about the Murray mouth in. You want a strong north wind and a high tide to enable you to navigate the mouth safely. It is a risky business. If you get turned over, you have to swim ashore, as you cannot expect any one to come and rescue you.”

### **NOTES**

1. Alan Behrens continued to operate the engineering business at Queen Street, Norwood until his father died when well into the nineties. Alan then moved to Queensland, where he died. His first yacht at the Squadron was the H28 *Monsoon*, which he built himself. He cruised and raced *Monsoon* as far as Port Lincoln. He built the large plywood ‘splinter’ *Caravel*, of New Zealand design, which he raced and cruised before selling it to Dr Keith McKenna. After that we didn't see much of him at the Squadron.

2. From the log of *Nyroca* —

1891 December 28th. Up early this morning, expecting to find a North wind, but it was ‘blowing a dead calm’, so we decided to drift through the Mouth with the current, and keep her head to the breakers with oars & poles. After a ¼ of an hour of jumping about in the breakers managed to get through safely & made Port Victor by 11 o'clock.

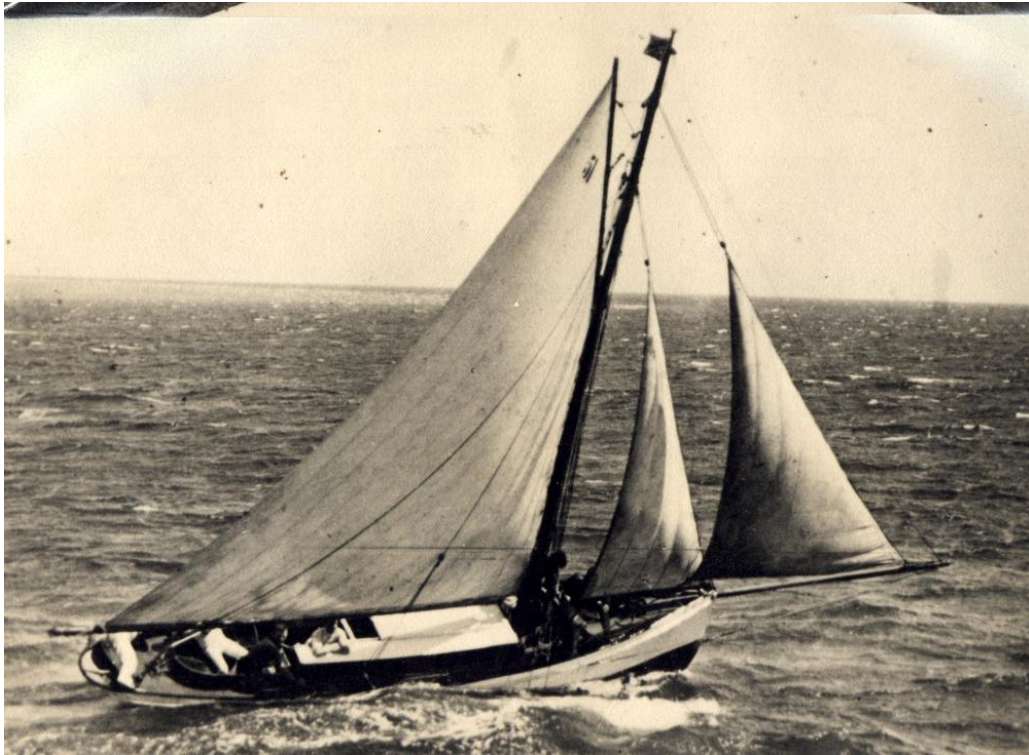
3. Brian Verco was sometime Commodore of Port Lincoln Yacht Club and the donor of the Verco Trophy for the annual race from Outer Harbor to Port Lincoln, usually sailed in February. The first was conducted in 1950. He participated in a notable incident in the Second World War, when a Lockheed Hudson, piloted by FO Peter Gibbes, flew non-stop from Bandung in Java to Roeburne in Western Australia. This required refuelling en route, which was accomplished by FO Peter Jay reaching out from the cabin to the fuel tank on the wing.



Commodore AG Rymill



Murray Mouth from the Air (D Darian Smith)



*Nyroca* winning the Le Hunte Cup, 1914

From *Australia Pilot. Volume 1. South Coast of Australia from Cape Leeuwin to Green Point* (1973): 115 —

### **Murray River**

**Murray River**, the largest river in Australia, rises close under Mount Kosciusko (36° 28' S, 148° 17' E) in the Australian Alps; it is part snow fed, and flows in a general W and NW direction as far as Morgan, in South Australia, where it bends sharply S and enters the sea through the large and shallow lagoon of **Lake Alexandrina**. Its length, until it enters Lake Alexandrina, is 1,600 miles, and it navigable for small light-draught craft as far as Albury (36° 05' S, 146° 51' E) in New South Wales.

The Murray valley is of immense economic significance, lying across the great wheat-sheep belt of its climactically most reliable sector. During the second half of the 19th century shipping was of great importance, but thereafter, with the competition of the railways and the demands for irrigation water, navigation practically ceased.

A system of barrages, designed for irrigation purposes, also includes locks, providing a 1.8 m (6 ft) navigable channel between Goolwa (35° 20' S, 138° 47' E), 7 miles within the mouth of the river, and Mildura, a town situated on the river, and about 300 miles from the mouth.

**Caution.** There has been no recent hydrographic survey of the entrance to Murray River, which is subject to change in form and appearance, following variations in the wind.

The entrance, now but rarely used, lies between the SE extremity of **Sir Richard Peninsula** and the NW extremity of **Younghusband Peninsula**. It is obstructed by a bar that extends  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile seaward of it, and is constantly shifting and altering in extent, depth and position. The bar, which consists of sand, shells and small stones, is hard on its E side and moderately firm on its W side. The surf usually breaks heavily across the entrance, except in exceptionally quiet weather. It has been observed that the heaviest rollers break well outside the bar, in depths of 6.4 m to 8.2 m (21 ft to 27 ft), whilst the bar itself is tolerably free from rollers of any considerable height.

The depth on the bar was 2.1 m to 2.4 m (7 ft to 8 ft) within 2 hours, either before or after high water, from 3 m to 3.4 m (10 ft to 11 ft) might be depended on as the least water on the bar, except for three or four days, during neap tides with SE winds, when there would be depths of barely 3 m (10 ft) at high water.

During exceptionally quiet weather, when there was no break on the bar, the height of the swell on it was from 1 m to 1.2 m (3 ft to 4 ft), the average break being 1.8 m (6 ft); the ordinary outer break was in depths of about 3.7 m (12 ft), and was from 1.5 m to 2.4 m (5 ft to 8 ft) high. On the W side of the bar, the waves gradually curled round at right angles to the spit at the end of the peninsula on that side, decreasing in height, but breaking over it, sometimes in Goolwa Channel. On the E side, the breakers did not extend to the shore farther than the SW point of the drying bank, which forms the extremity of Younghusband Peninsula. This bank is only covered at spring tides and during strong NW winds, but the breakers were the same height close to the beach as on the bar. Although the sea was very confused, it never broke in the channel inside the bar. In the heaviest seas, caused by W gales, or by heavy gales which do not always reach the coast, although the swell does, the sea broke in depths of 9.1 m (30 ft), the waves being from 5.5 to 6.1 m (18 ft to 20 ft) high.

Within the bar the channel was about 1 cable (100 fathoms or 183 m) wide; on the E side there were depths of from 5.5 m to 9.1 m (18 ft to 30 ft) over a hard bottom, close to the drying bank; on the W side, the spit at the end of Sir Richard Peninsula was more shelving and the bottom softer, it being kept continually in motion by the breakers. The depths and direction of the channel vary, according to the season, and local knowledge is essential.

A chain of low islands and islets fronts the NE sides of Sir Richard and Younghusband Peninsulas, in the SW corner of Lake Alexandrina; a system of barrages that extend across the waterways between the islands of the chain linking the isthmus of Sir Richard Peninsula 2 miles SE of Goolwa (35° 30' S, 138° 47' E) with the mainland at **Pelican Point**, 13 miles ESE of Goolwa.

A lock in the Goolwa Barrage, with a width of 16 m and a least depth of 1.8 m over the sills, gives access to Murray River.

**Murray River Light** is exhibited at the SW end of **Mundoo Island**, one of the chain described above.

**Goolwa Channel**, the principal channel leading into Lake Alexandrina, lies between Sir Richard Peninsula and **Hindmarsh Island**, the largest of the chain described above; it runs WNW, roughly parallel with the coast, for a distance of 6 miles from the entrance; it then turns N and E and runs along the N coasts of Hindmarsh and Mundoo Islands into Lake Alexandrina. **Port Pullen** is that part of the channel which lies ½ mile within the entrance. ...

**Tidal streams.** In the entrance to Murray River, the outgoing stream is strongest at low water, the ordinary rate then being 3 knots on the surface in the deep part and 4 knots on the bar.

If the tide does not rise more than 0.6 m (2 ft), the outgoing stream runs on the surface during the whole of the rising tide, its strength being less than 1 knot at high water. The incoming stream ordinarily makes from SE, running below the outgoing fresh water on the E side of the bar, and not coming to the surface until it has entered **Coorong Channel**, between Younghusband Peninsula and Mundoo Island.

When the range of the tide is greater than 0.6 m (2 ft), the incoming stream does not generally run on the surface until about 2 hours before the time of high water, except during NW gales when it begins at half flood; the outgoing stream commences to make out about 1 hour after the time of high water.

In Goolwa Channel the outgoing stream runs continuously on the surface when the tide does not rise more than 0.6 m (2 ft); when the range of the tide is greater than 0.6 m (2 ft), the tidal stream commences to flow along the bottom at half flood, but does not flow on the surface until 1 hour before the time of high water.

In **Mundoo Channel**, between Hindmarsh and Mundoo Islands, the stream turns at about the same time as in Goolwa Channel, except that the sea breeze blows up the channel and retards the outgoing stream on the surface.

In Coorong Channel, the incoming stream makes underneath directly after low water, but does not flow on the surface at once; the outgoing stream commences to make soon after high water.

## PART TWO: THE SECOND *NYROCA*

Dr AL Tostevin graduated in medicine from Adelaide University in 1923 and obtained a specialist qualification in ophthalmology from the University of Oxford. He was the senior honorary eye specialist at the Royal Adelaide Hospital of his day, with an extensive private practice.

In 1934 George Ross of Woodville completed what was described as a wooden screw yacht of 25.72 gross tonnage for Dr Tostevin. She was 44 ft long, with a beam of 12 ft 6 in, a maximum draft of 5 ft 6 in and a depth of 8 ft. She was capable of a speed of 7–8 knots from a 36 hp Russell Newberry engine, and sailed under ketch rig. *Nyroca* was designed by Mr W.D.Bailey, Naval Architect, of Sydney.

Peter Dermott supplied a cutting describing preparations for Opening Day 1934 —

Unfortunately Dr AL Tostevin's new auxiliary yacht will not be completed in time for the Squadron opening on Saturday. It is truly a luxury vessel of beautiful lines, and its owner hopes to launch it next month.

It is to be christened the *Nyroca*, which is the name of a white-billed duck that inhabits the Murray, and which was also the name of a yacht once owned by the late AG Rymill.

Friends of Dr and Mrs Tostevin who are fortunate enough to accompany the *Nyroca* on her maiden trip will find many delightful appointments on her, including a refrigerator and a stainless steel sink, eight nicely equipped berths and modernistic 'strip' lighting, which gives a charmingly subdued effect.



Dr Tostevin on the newly commissioned *Nyroca* (James Cowell, taken by  
Darian Smith, 1935)

Dr Tostevin cruised in his new vessel in local waters, and became seriously interested in big game fishing.



Dr Tostevin took *Nyroca* to Snug Cove, Kangaroo Island. (Henry Rymill's album)



Dr Tostevin's son Mark chatting to the celebrated one-armed fisherman Horrie Radcliffe at American River, January 1950. The spar at the stern dangles bait to attract sharks. Alf Green leans over the rail to scrub the topsides. (Jack Wood)

With the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, many Squadron vessels were acquired by the Royal Australian Navy, both through voluntary offers by their owners and by compulsory acquisition. *Nyroca* was requisitioned on 28 August 1942 and was formally commissioned on 29 September. She served as a unit of the Naval Auxiliary Patrol at Adelaide, Whyalla and Fremantle. According to a letter (32/52/132 HIST) from the Department of the Navy, dated 18 February 1971, 'She was employed on harbour patrols and as a guardship tender.' She was paid off on 2 July 1945.

Peter Dermott wrote —

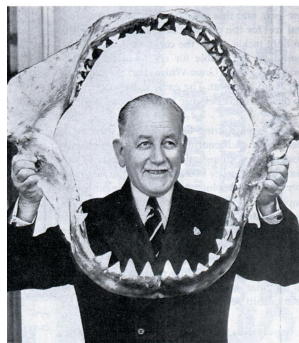
[The] vessel was shipped to and from Fremantle as deck cargo. RSAYS Members who served aboard her included Jim Taylor and Doug Jarvis. In Fremantle she was for a time commanded by JS Taylor, twice Commodore and a Life Member of the Squadron. The masts were removed and she was employed in carrying stores to Rottneest Island.

The former HMAS *Nyroca* was reconditioned by RT Searles & Son of Port Adelaide, which included Dr Tostevin meeting the costs of replacing her engine with a later Gardiner diesel. She was returned to him on 24 December 1947.

For a time Dr Tostevin resumed cruising and fishing, until early 1955, when he was Rear Commodore of the Squadron. A regular member of his crew was Murray Gowling, who for many years conducted a boat maintenance and repair business at the Squadron premises at Outer Harbor. During a rough passage from Kangaroo Island to Rapid Bay a rubber exhaust line fractured, which filled the aft cabin with foul diesel fumes. Perhaps this experience led to Dr Tostevin selling *Nyroca* to Henry Rymill, who owned a smaller motor-sailer, *Beth*.

Lieutenant-General Sir CWM Norrie GCMG GCVO CB DSO MC was born on 26 September 1893. After service in the Great War, he was appointed to command 1 Armoured Brigade, British Army in 1938, and in 1941 commanded XXX Corps in the North African campaign.

Sir Willoughby Norrie was Governor of South Australia from 19 December 1944 to 19 June 1952. He was popular, energetic and travelled widely throughout the State. On several occasions the Governor was a guest of Dr Tostevin on *Nyroca*, from which he fished for *Carcharodon carcharias*, commonly known as the white-pointer shark. He caught one weighing 1,713 lbs on 24-thread line, and then his best-known, off Winceby Island. This was 15 ft 7 in long, weighed 2,225 lbs and took one hour and 52 min to land. A fisherman 'guide' from Port Lincoln, Jim Green, assisted by adjusting the brake on his reel, which was a small technical infringement of the rules. Nevertheless, Sir Willoughby refused to claim what would otherwise have been a world record.



Sir Willoughby Norrie with the jaws of his largest shark.

Three relevant articles in *Squadron Quarterly* are 'The Governor's Shark' by Jack Wood (September 1995: 43–4); 'The Governor's Shark and Other Tales' by JH Cowell (December 1995: 29–31); and 'Hunting the Great White Shark in South Australian Waters' by GR Cowell (March 1996: 21–23.)

Sir Willoughby Norrie left South Australia to become Governor-General of New Zealand, for which he was raised to the House of Lords.

Henry Rymill at once took *Nyroca* across the Gulf for the traditional Squadron racing and cruising excursion to Port Vincent. During the winter of 1955 he altered the cabin to resemble that of *Beth*. The toilet and hand basin were moved aft, bunks were moved forward, the engine silencer was removed, reduced in size and mounted on the after end of the main engine. There was a terrible tragedy in the Squadron pool, in which a vessel burst into flames soon after refuelling, with at least one death from burns. Deeply impressed by this event, Henry Rymill removed the petrol auxiliary engine used for battery charging, and installed a 'free-light' generator beneath the floor boards, which was driven by the main engine.



Opening Day 1954, with McGregor's *Suzelle* (Rupert Murdoch's *Ilina*) prominent in the front row. (Henry Rymill's album)

The rig was altered. The mainmast was removed, and the mizzen was stepped as a main. A new mizzen was stepped on the cabin top against the wheelhouse. This increased room below and allowed the dinghy to be stowed on the aft cabin top. A large icebox was fitted to the after deck.

Under Henry Rymill, *Nyroca* was used extensively in local waters, including Sea Scout activities, as well as cruising Saint Vincent Gulf, Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln. Henry died in Sydney in January 1971, and in September of that year the vessel was bought by Jim Stump.

He did not have her long before selling her to Bill Harniman, who was Commodore 1978–80. Bill in turn sold her to Tony Flint, who took her with him when he moved to Tasmania in 1988. So far as we know, he still has her there.



"Oh Happy Days!!"



*Nyroca* on the old Number One slip. (Henry Rymill's album)



Past Commodore Henry Rymill leads the cheers for his successor, 1967.  
(Henry Rymill's album)



Henry Rymill hoisting his burgee for Opening Day, with AG Rymill's *Tortoise*  
(by now a workboat) in the background, 1938. (Henry Rymill's album)



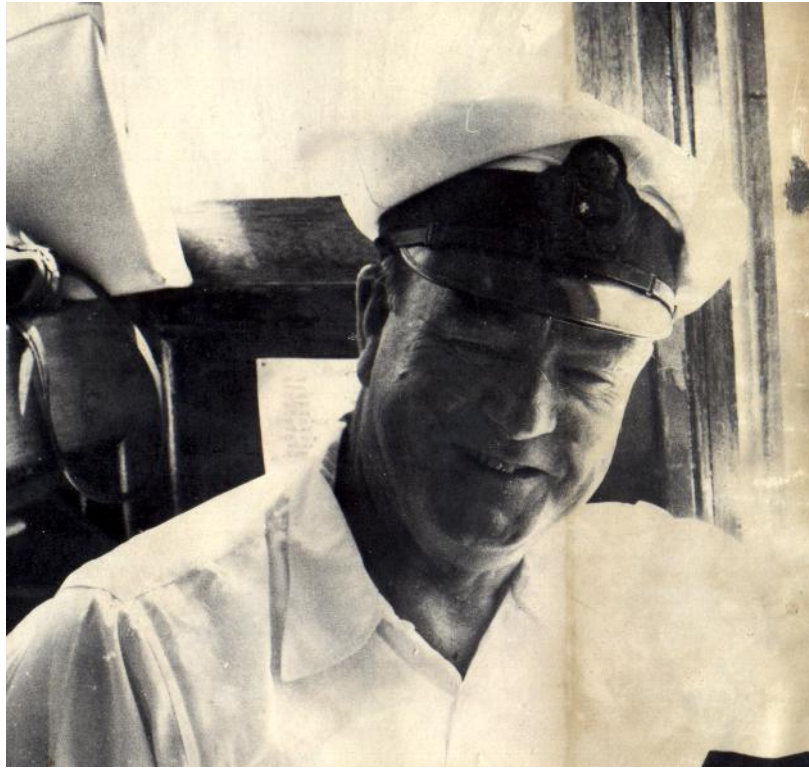
Henry Rymill on *Nyroca* off Snug Cove (Henry Rymill's album)



*Nyroca* under sail



Bay of Shoals (well named!) 1957



Henry Rymill, as we best remember him (from his album)