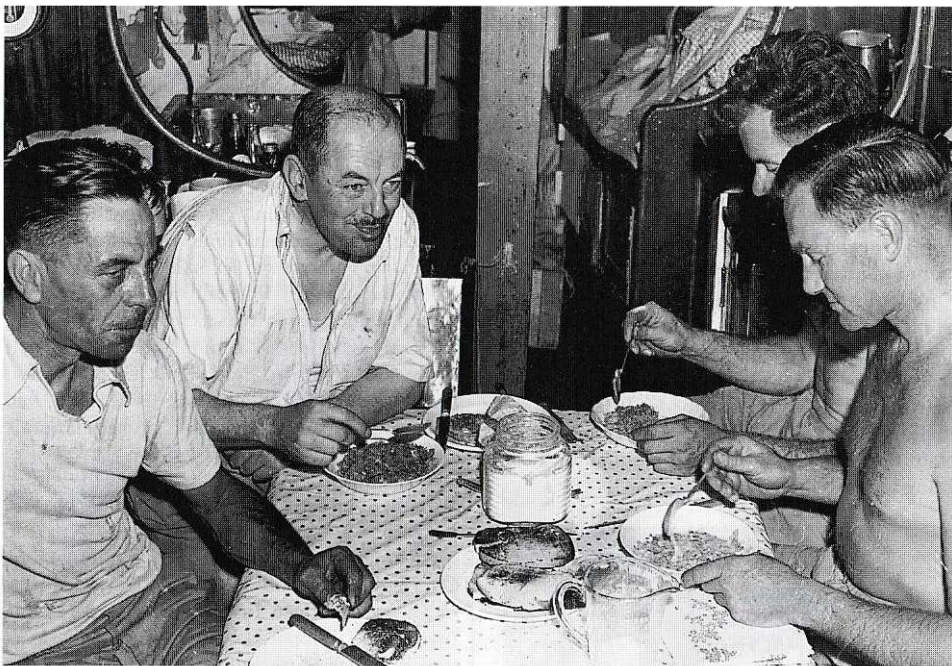




Len Wigan, Johnny Walker, [unidentified] and Harcourt Doherty, probably in Seasalter before the start of the Sydney-Hobart race, 1949 (Judith Judell)

We had a pleasant trip to Port Lincoln via Emu Bay and Whaler's Bay. Here we met Alan and Marjorie Smith in Cooina. He gave us good advice on what rocks not to hit, and we spent New Year with the Squadron at Port Lincoln. We beached the little boat at high water alongside the jetty, and repaired a leaking rudder stock with friendly help from a local engineering firm, regardless of it being holiday time. We continued via Reevesby Island to Kangaroo Island, stopping at Snug Cove on Thistle Island. The family thoroughly enjoyed exploring that end of the island.

Sailing overnight, we arrived at Emu Bay about 0700, again alongside *Tanui*. Len presented us with the biggest snook he'd ever caught and we'd ever seen! It was beautifully cooked in the frying pan, which was a welcome breakfast for our starving family. We sailed round Point Marsden and Beatrice Island to anchor in the Bay of Shoals about two miles from Kingscote jetty. *Tanui* anchored nearby shortly afterwards. Of course we all went aboard again, and learned

that Magnus had to go ashore at first light on the morrow to catch an early plane to Adelaide and then Canberra. He played a leading part in the election of John Gorton to be Prime Minister, replacing Harold Holt, who was drowned swimming off the Victorian coast.

At about 0600 next morning I was awakened by a noisy discussion aboard *Tanui*. There was Len Wigan, starko, knife between teeth, trying to unravel the dinghy painter wrapped round *Tanui's* prop. Magnus, elegantly dressed in a dark suit and Homburg hat, was impatiently pacing the deck. Waving his brief-case at us, he shouted, "Can you get me ashore straight away, or I shall miss my plane!"

We had a full muster on deck in next to no time, started Arona, raised the anchor, rescued Magnus and safely delivered him to Kingscote jetty in good time. He courteously thanked us, and Mike carried his heavy brief case to the waiting taxi. He was curious to know what it contained. [Probably fish fillets - Ed.] We felt

very proud to have played such a small but important part in the history of Australia. Had *Wyuna* not been there, John Gorton might not have become Prime Minister and Magnus Cormack Sir Magnus. Incidentally, Len Wigan was not gobbled up by a shark. He lived to swim another day.

[We had *Kareelahi* in Spalding Cove at that time. As *Wyuna* motored towards the very bottom end, where it shelves a good way from the shore, we shouted warnings, only to feel foolish as the little vessel quietly sat on her bilge keels. It was remarkable to see such large numbers of people emerge on deck to wade ashore.

Tanui had the unusual distinction of being the victim of piracy. Two prisoners escaped from Port Lincoln Gaol, found her unattended tied to the Town Jetty, and set off for India. They knew nothing of sailing, and a fresh nor-wester blew up ahead of a change. They were badly seasick and frightened by the time that their escapade ended a couple of days later at Middle River on

the north coast of Kangaroo Island. They did not know that they had to travel west to reach their intended destination.

On the death of Harold Holt on 17 December 1967, the Governor-General, Lord Casey, had a great problem in appointing his successor. John McEwin, as Holt's Deputy, publicly declared that the Country Party would refuse to serve under William McMahon. To give the Liberal Party time to sort this out, Casey appointed McEwin Prime Minister, on the understanding that he would promptly resign. Because of the holiday season, the election of a new leader was deferred until 9 January 1968. There were four candidates, Gorton being the first Senator ever to contest the post. Bury and Snedden were eliminated on the first ballot, and Gorton defeated Hasluck (preferred by Menzies) 43 votes to 38. Undoubtedly Magnus Cormack was a major power broker in these events. Keith Adams is quite right in stating that getting him to Canberra on time was a significant, and possibly essential, factor in determining the outcome. - Ed.]

SQ

The Governor's Shark

Jack Wood

In January 1950 we made one of our annual cruises to American River, Kangaroo Island in the *Grelka*. Mark Mitchell owned a holiday home, *Camacoo*, on the eastern side of American River. The Governor of South Australia, Sir Willoughby Norrie, had a very lucky catch in the way of a large shark. Dr AL Tostevin had put his motor-sailer *Nyroca* at the disposal of the Governor to do some big game fishing in local waters. The yacht was crewed by Mark Tostevin, the doctor's son, Murray Gowling and Alf Green from Port Lincoln. He was a professional fisherman and an expert on sharks who was known for his assistance to big game fishermen.

Nyroca picked up the Governor's party at Kingscote, where they had arrived by air. On the way to American River the lines were hung over the stern baited with "horse meat". [Jack thought that some modern sensitivities would be offended to know of the practice of the time. The "horse meat" came from dolphins, which



Alf Green, Mark Tostevin and Horrie Radcliffe at American River with shark bait ready to be dropped from *Nyroca* (Jack Wood)

were shot for the purpose. - Ed.] About half way there, they saw the fin of a big shark, and closed in on it. It was soon hooked by the Governor. After a long battle with a big game rod fitted with a light line, he brought it alongside. It was lashed there to be towed to American River.

Grelka had been alongside the wharf that morning, where there was the weighing station. Horrie Radcliffe was the Official Weigher for the Big Game Fishing Club, and Sir Willoughby Norrie's shark was a world record for the thread that was used. He went on to catch others.

Yachting California Style

Brendan Hunt

Twelve days to acquaint myself with yachting in California seemed like quite a challenge. My charter was to inspect boats over a cruising/racing range; to explore the market; meet various people; and to watch the first of the America's Cup finals.

In simple terms, the west coast of America is about the size of our east coast, with a population greater than that of Australia living on a coastal strip the size of that in New South Wales. Their weather is quite moderate in our terms, and a windy day is twenty knots. There is much fog and the water is quite cool. Major cruising destinations are Santa Catalina Island ("Twenty-six miles across the sea"); and south to the extensive cruising grounds of Mexico. Racing is centred in three major areas: San Francisco in the north; Newport Beach just south of Los Angeles; and San Diego, 2½ hours drive further south.

My visit began in Los Angeles, where I spent days wandering through the American version of a Venetian nightmare - Marina Del Rey. The sheer size is staggering. Thousands of boats of every shape and size are moored in a series of man-made harbours. Generally, the quality of boats was quite good. There were virtually no racing yachts as we know them, and I found only three fractional rigs in the whole place.

[Sir Willoughby had an unfortunate frustration on this or another similar trip. He had hooked a large shark and played it for a long time. The rules required him to bring it alongside unaided. An over-enthusiastic member of his staff tried to help him. I do not know exactly what he did, whether he pulled it in or used a gaff prematurely. The result was disqualification of what would otherwise have been a record. In 1950 *The Advertiser* reported that Sir Willoughby Norrie caught a white pointer shark weighing 2,225 lb on a 54 thread line off Winceby Island, while a guest of Dr AL Tostevin on *Nyroca*. This was believed to be a world record (Rymill album) - Ed.] SQ

South of Los Angeles is **Newport Longbeach**. This is home to most of the Sleds, of which there are about twenty in California. They are a seventy-foot hybrid style racing boat developed round the Trans Pacific Race to Hawaii.



A medieval premonition for challengers for the America's Cup, by courtesy of Tim Young

They are moderately beamed masthead boats, which are quite conventional by our standards. Although they are somewhat old fashioned when compared with modern IMS boats, the Sleds race in fleets of up to twelve boats, which makes for very close racing. A recent rule change has allowed for a 'turbo' version of the Sleds, and two have been changed to carbon fractional rigs with deeper keels. This will fit them into the Maxi ILC rule, under which major regattas like the Sydney-Hobart and Fastnet races are run.

My next stop was **San Francisco**, about 700 km north, which I had long wanted to visit as home to the famous 'big boat series'. Sausalito is just over the Golden Gate Bridge, and with Alameda across the Bay form the major yachting spots. Sausalito has a string of small marinas, most of which may be browsed, as there is a pleasing absence of gates and guards. A lot of good quality cruising boats are based here: good solid Creslock designs, Ericsons and Tartars. The Americans are very happy to stay with the more moderate keels and displacement hulls for their cruising boats. Although there are many modern Benetau and Catalina type yachts, the market is so great that the more conventional heavier boats can still find a place. At Sausalito I met two of the larger brokers and inspected a number of boats for clients in Australia. I made a flying visit to **Santa Cruz**, two hours south. This small town is home to the famous Santa Cruz 50s and 70s, which are reported to be amongst the fastest yachts in the country. They are typically a moderate beam low volume masthead boat, and recent ones are built in carbon. The harbour is very small, but is very oriented to yachting.

San Diego has a huge naval presence, and proximity to the Mexican cruising grounds result in a multitude of marinas. *America's Cup* fever pervaded the place, as the finals were about to begin. I was Chris Dickson's guest aboard the Official Charter of *Challenge*, on a fantastic day, which was a bit rough. It was a great experience, and there were some notable luminaries aboard.

Visits to brokers showed a style of operation very similar to our own. Most are two to four person offices, and only half are organised with computers. Our own set-up is as good as or better than all observed. Brokerage rates are a 10%

across the board, and new boat sales are increasing following a flat four years. Conjunctive dealing is quite common. In general, they sell fewer boats and make more out of them. All brokers place great faith in the boat shows, of which there are many, supported by new boat agents and brokers. I also had meetings with new boat agents. All maintain a stock level. The Benetau agent is one of eight in California, and has sold fifteen new boats in the past year.

My conclusion from the San Diego visit is that the New Zealanders deserved to win. The lessons for Australia are obvious. We need to encourage a greater presence in world sailing events. Match racing and Grand Prix events encourage excellence in the sport. It is time that Australia mounted a serious campaign for the Whitbread Round the World Race. I believe that success in that is the reason the Kiwis won the *America's Cup*. They had the experience of a campaign which was project driven. I predict a massive *America's Cup* in Auckland in 1999, and I further predict a growth in yachting through the same period. In Auckland we have a better chance of winning the Cup than in San Diego, with a tight grass roots campaign. We have much to learn from the approach to yachting of our cousins across the Tasman. SQ

We are grateful to Keith Flint for the contact which allows publication of an edited version of a report dated May 1995. Brendan Hunt operates **Vicsail, Yacht Brokers** and Marine Insurance, St Kilda Marina, Marine Parade Elwood 3184; telephone 03 525 3669, fax 03 525 3687.

Irish
CHRISTMAS
FRIDAY
13 OCTOBER
BE SURE TO BOOK!