

1798. The large French battleship *L'Orient*, to which they were grappled, caught fire. This was commanded by Captain Casabianca, whose son was the boy who 'stood on the burning deck'. Hindmarsh, the only surviving officer on deck and a very junior one at that, not only ordered the grappling to be cut away, but did much of it himself. As a result, when *L'Orient* dramatically exploded, *Bellepheron* had drifted far enough from her to escape further damage. Hindmarsh had saved *Bellepheron*, and in a later age he would deservedly have been awarded a Victoria Cross.

His physical courage, however, did not endow him with either high intelligence or diplomatic tact, and in South Australia his pride in his gubernatorial status wasn't a help either. He delighted in recounting the incident at the Battle of the Nile, and spent the rest of his life trying in vain to obtain a pension for the loss of sight in one eye which resulted. Hindmarsh also served at Trafalgar and at the capture of Mauritius. This was after Lord Nelson appointed him Lieutenant in 1803, although he was under the required age.

Critical components of the bad feeling between Light and Hindmarsh were that in Egypt Hindmarsh served under Light as his superior officer, together with the sequence of events leading to senior appointments in the new colony of South Australia.

After the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, Hindmarsh, Light and others of their kind found employment where they could, and a colonial governorship was a potentially invaluable prize. It provided status, power and an opportunity to obtain land, thereby accumulating capital worth. South Australia was first offered to Colonel Sir Charles James Napier, but he refused it in favour of something better in India. Light had introduced Hindmarsh to Napier, and thereby he was the first to hear of the prospect for another deserving officer.

In May 1835 Hindmarsh rushed to Westminster and obtained the appointment as Governor of the new colony from the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, even though Napier's own recommendation was that Light was the best man available. Hindmarsh no doubt felt a sense of obligation to Light, and nominated him as Surveyor-General at a salary of £400 per annum.

As is well known, Light's commission gave him sole responsibility to fix the site of the capital, with huge potential for conflict that both he and Hindmarsh exploited.

Hindmarsh as Governor was commissioned a post-captain. The equivalent Army rank was Colonel, and I think that explains Light's insistence on his self-conferred rank, to make him appear equal in at least one respect. They were proud men to whom such matters were very important, and on the other side of the world far away from Horseguards Parade, who would bother about a small matter of terminological inexactitude by a brevet major (substantively a retired captain). On the other hand, it could excite sneers from a Governor who did at least hold the King's commission and who was noted to lack tact.

Hindmarsh was frustrated not to receive his commission as Governor until 14 July 1836, and he sailed three weeks later in HMS *Buffalo*. Eight ships carrying migrants and two for surveying had already left. His insistence on travelling by warship, complete with marines to keep order, together with his autocratic ways began the destruction of his office which led to his unfair and premature departure from South Australia in July 1838.

Light's instructions were impossible to fulfill. He was directed to examine the South Australian coast from Port Lincoln to the Murray mouth, including Kangaroo Island. He was to choose and survey a capital, the land round any good harbour and allocate 100,000 acres of country selections. This was all to be done before the first settlers could take up their land.

The first surveying ship to depart on 24 March 1836 was the barque *Cygnet* (239 tons), carrying Light's deputy, GS Kingston. He was the architect of the grand Treasury on the NE corner of Victoria Square and other notable buildings in Adelaide, but like Light was not a surveyor. In Rio de Janeiro the *Cygnet* picked up an able young second mate, Hugh Quin, Commodore of the South Australian Yacht Club 1871-2 [*Squadron Quarterly* December 1994: 33-5.] The *Cygnet* did not arrive at Kangaroo Island until 11 September 1836.

*To be continued in a future issue*

## Letter to the Editor

*Suzelle and Ilina*

45 Braeside Road  
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29 June 2000

Recently James Cowell was kind enough to let me browse through a batch of *Squadron Quarterly* magazines, and I found them most interesting reading — to such an extent that I suggest that such informative and entertaining articles could well provide the material for a hardcover book, which undoubtedly would be well received by cruising boatowners world-wide.

My reason for writing is in relation to the issue of December 1997, in which Mr Roger K Dunn endeavoured to trace the history of various boats photographed in the Squadron pool at that time. One boat he particularly mentioned was *Suzelle*. She was a magnificent yacht, on which I crewed on a number of occasions and one with a very interesting and surprising history.

Here's her story. She was built by Clausens at Port Adelaide in 1948 for the then well known McGregor family, who had done reasonably well out of their pastoral holdings and wool broking interests. Her designer was the famed John Alden and was similar to his Malabar boats, only a little larger at 59ft 10in overall. In the early fifties she was the largest vessel to occupy the Squadron pool. At times her various skippers and crews found her quite a handful to manoeuvre in such a confined space. This may account for the fact that she tended to languish on her mooring, with dust in the bilge and swallows in the sail covers, and was eventually used more for entertaining there than sailing.

But that was soon to change. In the late fifties she was purchased by Jim Polson, an energetic self-made businessman, who established Polson Refrigeration. A condition of sale was that the name *Suzelle* was to remain with the McGregor family and not go with the boat.



*Yachts in the Squadron pool at an unknown date. (SH Chapman)*



*Ilina*

Jim Polson renamed her *Ilina*, which is Aboriginal for 'we two' — not *Ilena*, as suggested by both your correspondents. With Polson as skipper and Murray Gowing as sailing master, *Ilina*, often

with a crew press-ganged from the skipper's business, took on a new lease of life. She took part in most of the Squadron races and cruised extensively, often with a crew of sea scouts or anyone else who had a bit of spare time. She always seemed to be coming and going, and attracted media interest with her role in rescuing shipwrecked sailors and boats in distress.

In 1960 the World big Game Fishing Championships were to be held off the North Island of New Zealand. Jim Polson, by then better known as the Master, decided he had to be there, and, of course, one needed a boat, and what better than his own. So six of us were invited to help him take her to New Zealand, which we did. We covered Adelaide to Mercury Bay, Whitianga (the last resting place of HMS *Buffalo*) in just sixteen fairly interesting days.

On her return to Adelaide, *Ilina* carried on cruising, and at one stage took on the role of coastal freighter. The Master decided to build a holiday house at American River, so nearly all the timber, roofing material and fittings were shipped over, along with some helpers. It took a number of trips, but it was done.

During the sixties the Master won an aeroplane in a lottery, learnt to fly, became hooked and decided to sell *Ilina*. At the same time he gave thought to winning a Sydney-Hobart Race with a new boat. That's another story.

A young Rupert Murdoch became her new

owner. He sailed her extensively out of Sydney. She did several Sydney-Hobart Races and cruised to New Zealand before he sold her. He told me this was to a group intending to sail her to South Africa, which they did. Unfortunately she piled up on a reef off the coast of Africa and was declared a total loss. It was a sad end for such a magnificent ship.

About two years ago I was reading an English yachting magazine and noticed an advertisement for charters in the Virgin Islands, complete with photographs. To my surprise, there she was, storming along under spinnaker and mizzen staysail, manned by a lusty looking crew, obviously on the lookout for virgins. She was advertised as the famous Australian built Alden ketch *Ilina*, now fully restored, once owned by media baron, Rupert Murdoch.

Brian Taylor

According to Gifford Chapman's magisterial book *Wooden Fishing Boats*, Peter Clausen set up a boat building business on Fletcher Road, Birkenhead in 1916. In 1923 he built a vessel named *Four Winds* on the bank of the River Murray at Mannum for Captain JG Arnold. Quite likely it was his first large keelboat. One of the newspapers, frustratingly not identified in the Large Red Newsclippings Book, reported, 'The staunch little vessel, which will be yawl rigged, is built of Australian timber, the hull being of

well-seasoned jarrah and the deck and fittings of kauri pine. She measures 51ft 6in overall, with a 15ft beam and a 46ft 11in waterline. She has a moulded depth of 4ft 9in and a draught of 7ft 2in, and her sail area is 1,561 square feet. The vessel will be fitted with a 15hp petrol engine, built by the Berguis Launch Company of Glasgow. The yacht will have cabin accommodation, including the necessary cook's galley.'

Her proud new owner took her through the Murray Mouth to Port Adelaide, before setting out to cruise the Pacific and the islands of the Dutch East Indies. He never got there. On 1 July 1923 *Four Winds* was dismasted in a gale off Cape Liptrap and driven ashore, to become a total loss. Captain Arnold was washed overboard and was lucky to survive. He bought a second vessel in Sydney, also called *Four Winds*. In January 1928, off Henley Beach, she burned to the waterline and sank. There is no record that Captain Arnold tried again.

The shed expressly built on Fletcher Road for the construction of *Suzelle* is still there. Her length of 59ft 10in was deliberate, as at that time vessels 60ft and over required a pilot or a pilot's exemption to enter and leave the Port River for the Gulf.

Jim Polson named *Gip* for his three sons, Geoffrey, Ian and Peter. She passed to Don Taylor, was sold to Sydney and brought back to the pool as *Reprise*. Polson's motor boat *Pegria* similarly derived her name from his sons. *Yampi* was South Australia's first aluminium yacht and her name was an acronym for the company used as a vehicle to build her — Yachts Aluminium Pty Ltd. Advertising in yachting was then strictly forbidden, and Jim Polson wanted a name that would place him at the end of the radio skeds for the Sydney-Hobart Race. He installed the Squadron's first refrigeration unit in the Clubhouse for what were then illegal drinks in about 1963. For all we know, parts of it may still be working. — Ed.



Mock Sarah, Owen Trewartha, Jim Polson, Jim Howell, Brian Taylor, Paul Bruer, Reg MacDonald, delivery crew to New Zealand in 1960. (Brian Taylor)

## New Vessels on the Squadron Register

|                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Family Matters</i>            | Andrew Holmes                     |
| <i>Hoodwink</i> (change of name) | Donald Halley                     |
| <i>Its Magic</i>                 | John Deniet                       |
| <i>Kinetic Energy</i>            | Andy Shipp & Lesley Smith         |
| <i>Livingstone</i>               | Kevin Read                        |
| <i>Mereki</i> (new owners)       | David & Madeleine Searle          |
| <i>Oberon</i> (new owners)       | Warwick Williams & Linda Tuckwell |
| <i>Obsidieme</i> (new owners)    | Kevin & Mariana Ormsby            |
| <i>Sea Lark</i>                  | Rod & Chris Evans                 |
| <i>Sole Trader</i>               | Ross & Karyn Almond               |
| <i>Southern Myth</i>             | Peter Riddell                     |
| <i>Spindrift of Belair</i>       | John Mc Donald                    |
| <i>The Other Annie III</i>       | John Phillips & Annette Rogers    |
| <i>Windsong</i> (new owner)      | Trevor Chilman                    |