

The Expulsion of Reverie

Jack Wood

Reverie was a forty-foot centreboard sloop designed by W Fife of Fairlie. The strong influence of the Fife family on yacht design is worth a separate article in its own right. She was built in 1899 by Alex MacFarlane of Port Adelaide for Mr W Fisher, Commodore of Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron 1901-02. He raced her successfully. The first available report is of her winning first prize of £12/12/- from *Valeria* (Rear-Commodore R Cruickshank) and *Matangi* (Vice-Commodore FV Sanderson). *Matangi's* half model is in the Clubroom. This was over a course, "From the starting line to a buoy with a red flag off Largs, around a buoy with a red flag near the new lighthouse, to and around a buoy with a red flag to the southward of Semaphore jetty, three times around, about 18 miles." The clipping is undated, and lies between 30 October 1897 and 12 November 1901.

In January 1902 there was a severe storm, which played havoc along the coast. At Brighton, "The magnificent yacht *Alfreda*, belonging to Mr HJD Munton, Commodore of the Holdfast Bay Yacht Club, went ashore in Tuesday night's storm and become a total wreck." That is another story, a copy of which is available from the Office with the accounts of the wrecks of the *Ethel* and the *Kona*. The newspaper also reported, "To the north of Largs Bay jetty the yacht *Reverie*, belonging to Mr W Fisher, Commodore of the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron, lies high and dry on the beach. She was driven ashore on Tuesday night, but she has not sustained great damage, and will be floated shortly." This was confirmed on 1 February 1902.

In 1910 *Reverie* won the Kintore Cup under the ownership of AJ Fisher. Her fate over the next few years has not been traced. Gifford Chapman says that Fred Brinkworth owned her at one time. She was also used for professional fishing off Kangaroo Island. — Ed.

Reverie was a very fast and sea-kindly vessel, and gave her owners many years of pleasant sailing. I first saw her before the Second World War, but like most other yachts she spent the war years moored in No 3 Dock in the Port River. The basin at the Outer Harbor was taken over by the Navy for the vessels of the Naval Auxiliary Patrol RANR. After the war she returned to the Squadron with the rest of the yachts, and

continued to give pleasure to her owners.

In the early fifties she was sold to an American, who said he was ex US Navy. He got permission to live aboard while he fitted her out for a voyage he said he was about to make to the Philippines.¹ The late Captain Frank Duplock also lived aboard his yacht *Norallie*. He befriended the American and gave him assistance, but the American outlived his welcome. He settled in for a long stay, despite many notices to move on from the Squadron.

Finally D (for Departure) Day came. When I arrived one Saturday morning to go aboard *Grelka*, *Reverie* was not in her berth. She was tied up on the end of the Outer Harbor wharf. All sails were up and the engine was running, with the bow pointed westwards towards the breakwater.

Gromley Morris owned an Albatross (an overgrown Tumblaren) moored alongside *Grelka*. The pair of us, with some of our children walked down to see what was happening, namely the ejection of *Reverie* by some of the Committee and Members. She had a stern line to a pile, sails up and engine running. They were not taking any chances of her returning. The American was waiting for Captain Duplock to arrive in *Norallie*. The Captain was going to escort him down the Gulf. His girlfriend was on board to see him off. All we could see in the way of provisions were a couple of pounds of cherries and a dozen or so bottles of Coca Cola. We asked him about stores, and he said he was going to stock up at American River.²

In due course *Norallie* was seen coming out of the basin. When she came abeam the Captain told the American to cast off and follow. He gave his girlfriend a big kiss, stepped back and fell overboard. He clambered back on board, passed her ashore and tried to undo the stern line. When he found that to be impossible, he pulled out his enormous sheath knife and sawed through it. *Reverie* took off like a torpedo, heading straight for the breakwater. The Captain shouted, "Go about, man!" but our Yank looked at him in bewilderment. "Push the bloody stick alongside

you the other way!" the Captain called. It finally sank in, so he tacked under power and sail all the way out to the entrance.

The weather turned a bit sour that night. Captain Duplock returned to the Squadron next morning, having lost him in the darkness. We thought we wouldn't hear from him again. I have a friend, Max Wall, who was one of *Grelka's* crew. At that time he lived at Cape Jervis, and he filled me in on the consequences. Well, our Yank seafarer made his way down the Gulf. The sea and the wind were doing him no good, so when he saw a concentration of lights, having no idea where he was headed, he carried on until it became calm and he dropped his anchor. On waking next morning, he was on the shore side of the reef at Port Noarlunga. He had simply surfed over it.

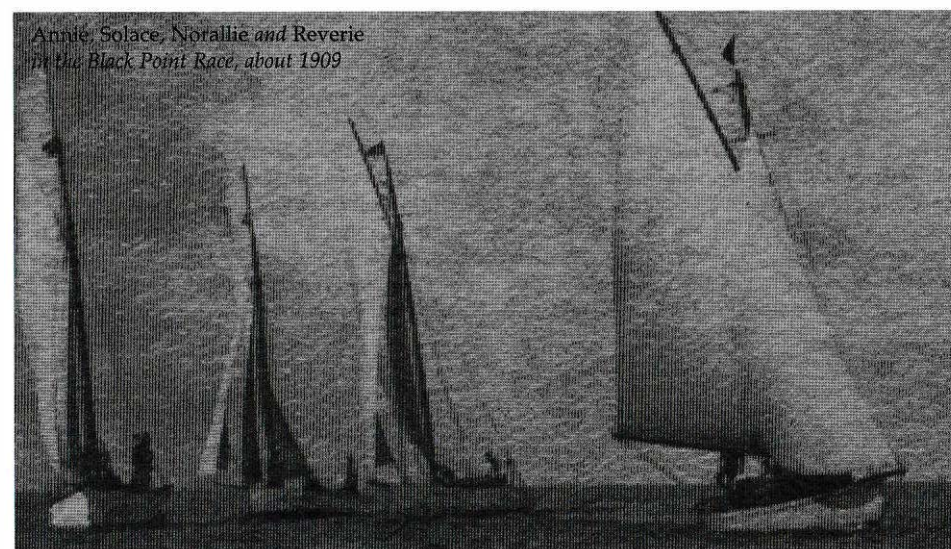
The next day saw him make it to Second Valley. He spent the night there, as he had to get a mechanic to fix his engine. Continuing after that, he must have struck some more heavy weather, which probably caused him to lose his way, because that night saw *Reverie* on the beach at Rapid Bay. The American could not get away from the boat quickly enough. He sold her to Leo Scott, a fisherman who lived at Rapid Bay for £350. He is now 84 years old. With the help

of a BHP bulldozer and 44 gallon drums he got her above the high tide line. He did some recaulking on her, and spent a month in his spare time before getting her in the water again. He sailed her up to MacFarlane's slip at Port Adelaide, and sold her for £700 to a Mr Kaufman, who was a baker on Torrens Road.

I lost track of her, but in 1969 she was owned by Dr JR Casely-Smith, a Member of the Squadron. She was back in the pool. In 1995 I set out to try to track down her whereabouts. I found out from Neil Cormack that she caught fire at a slip and finished as ashes. I don't know just when this was. She had a long life of 75 years or so, and gave a lot of happiness to a lot of people.

[I remember *Reverie* in the sixties, when she had become pretty neglected. Originally she would have had internal lead ballast in pigs. Somebody sold this, possibly after the salvage incident described by Jack. She was then ballasted by having had concrete poured into the hull. It was a very rough job. So far as I know, she never had the lifelines ('fence') or pulpits which have long been universal on our yachts. With an open non-self-draining cockpit, if she had shipped a series of heavy seas she would have foundered quite quickly. — Ed.]

1. At that time the Squadron Constitution confined membership to British gentlemen, so presumably he was ineligible.
2. There wasn't much of a store there in those days.



Annie, Solace, Norallie and Reverie
in the Black Point Race, about 1909