

THE STORY OF *PAVANA*

Based on an interview with Colin Angas, 11 February 2000

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1. The Angas family

The South Australian component of the Angas clan dates from **George Fife Angas** (1789–1879). He was a merchant banker, landowner, philanthropist and devout Baptist Christian. He came from Northumberland, but his family were originally Scots, and he is often referred to as being such himself. His father traded in Honduras mahogany, and George was apprenticed to him as a coach-builder in Newcastle-on-Tyne. He rose rapidly to carry the main burden of his father's extensive interests.¹

After his father's death, GF Angas expanded his interests into banking, and applied his deep Christian principles to almost compulsive participation in charities. Amongst others, he was a founder of the Bethel Mission for Seaman and was a director of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society. He was attracted to the antipodes as missions, which drew him into the group lobbying for South Australia as a prospective colony for Protestants who were non-conformist and dissented from the established Church of England.²

In 1836 GF Angas bought land in the not-yet settled colony, and sent out two whalers, a storeship and a coastal trader. Through his influence, the South Australian Company dominated Port Adelaide and its road. He recruited colonists of like Christian persuasion, and underwrote the two batches of dissenting Lutherans who migrated under the leadership of Pastors Kavel and Fritzsche.

George Fife Angas had two sons and three daughters. **George French Angas** became a painter and naturalist, apparently not much involved in the family's business affairs. That responsibility fell to his younger brother, **John Howard Angas**. Their father migrated in 1851 and became a reactionary Member of the Legislative Council, implacably opposed to the expansion of any Roman Catholic influence in South Australia.

John Howard Angas had a son, **Charles H Angas** and a daughter **Gertrude**. She lived in London, and during the Great War emulated her grandfather in her lavish generosity to worthy causes. Inheriting the family's interest in the sea, she paid £7,000 a year to support a hospital ship on the Tigris, together with ten launches supplied by Red Cross.

¹. This and subsequent information is taken from the entry on George Fife Angas by EJR Morgan in *Australian Dictionary of Biography on CD-ROM*.

². Hence the title of Geoffrey Pike's magisterial *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829–1857*. Melbourne, Longmans, Green and Co. 1957.

Australian trained nurses ('sisters') who volunteered to serve in Mesopotamia were shabbily treated by the British authorities, who made no attempt to conceal their qualified contempt for colonials.³ They were told that they were to go first to India for six months, but some stayed there for several dreary years, subject to harsh discipline and deprived of leave. This was in spite of the fact that, 'The English sisters have been there [Mesopotamia] over two years, and their only chance of relief is from England, while many Australian nurses are only too anxious to go.'⁴ In more ways than one, the campaign in Mesopotamia was a serious blight on the reputation of the British Army, which was shown at its worst again and again, culminating in the surrender of General Townshend at Kut.⁵

Charles Angas imported into South Australia the three-rater *Valeria* in 1897, 'having purchased her of the Earl of Albermarle.'⁶ He was active in the races and served on the Committee of the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron, as will be recounted when a dossier on *Valeria* has been compiled.



Valeria

The children of Charles Angas were Beryl, Ronald, Dudley and (John) Keith, who was knighted and was sometime Chairman of the Council of the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science. His son, Henry Angas, lives at Meningie and has inherited a yachting trophy, the provenance of which has not yet been ascertained. It may be one referred to in the minutes of a regular monthly meeting held on 9 June 1898:

³. Goodman RD *Our War Nurses. The History of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps 1902–1988*. Brisbane, Boolarong Publications, 1988.

⁴. Butler AG. *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914–1918*. Australian War Memorial, Canberra 1943, Volume III: 568 and *passim*. The quotation is from a letter dated 22 January 1918 from Miss E Tracy Richardson, Matron-in-Chief, Australia to General Fetherston.

⁵. Dixon Norman F. *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*. London, Jonathan Cape, 1976: 95–109. A chapter is devoted to the campaign at Kut.

⁶. Newspaper cutting (*The Advertiser* or *The Register*) 1 October 1897.

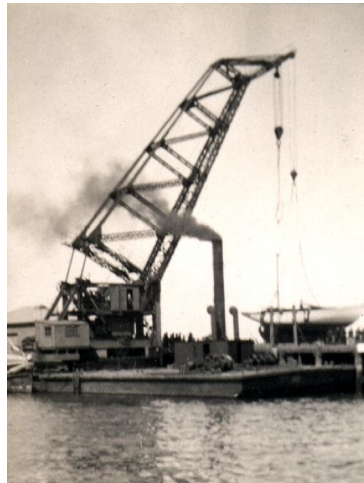
Vice Commodore Fisher on behalf of the Flag Officers presented the owner of the *Valeria*, Mr CH Angas, with a beautiful trophy for having scored during the season 17 points out of a possible 24. The owner's health was proposed and Mr Angas responded.⁷

Ronald Angas in his turn had a son Robert, a son Colin and a daughter Susanne.



Ronald Angas at the wheel of *Pavana*.

2. *Pavana*



Pavana on the way to the water.

⁷. My letter of 4 February 2000 enquiring about this was not answered as at 13 February, 2000.

Colin Angas was born in 1920, so he was only a schoolboy when *Pavana* was commissioned and built.⁸ **Ronald Angas** chose the American marine architect, John G Alden of Boston Mass, who was prominent between the wars for his elegant designs. Colin felt that they developed a close relationship through correspondence, and he recalled the masses of blueprints which resulted. Alden strongly favoured a schooner rig, although in local waters there were overwhelmingly more ketches.

Pavana was built at Fletcher Road, Birkenhead by Peter Clausen and his son Harold.⁹ Construction time was of the order of two years, and she was launched using the large Harbors Board floating crane in 1932 or 1933.

Ronald Angas was good with his hands. He did much of the metal work himself, such as mast and boom fittings. These were of mild steel, which was then galvanised. Colin did not see stainless steel until after the Second World War and the only similar material they had was an alloy called Monel. This was popular for propeller shafts. There was some brass and a good deal of Admiralty bronze.

Sails were all by Rex of Hobart, who had a high national reputation at the time, and which survived into the 1950s. The engine was a 'marinised' Essex car engine, with a locally built reduction gearbox, the source of a lot of trouble. Colin recalled a conversation with Commodore AG Rymill, then an old man. They stood on the wharf at Outer Harbor, watching *Pavana* put to sea. Mr Rymill remarked that it was surprising to see such a large vessel so well propelled by a little engine. He talked of some engine problems of his own in *Avocet*. AG Rymill died in 1934, so *Pavana* was then a very new boat, one of the largest in the pool.

There were no sheet winches, so a lot depended on the cooperation of skipper and crew to hand and bind sheets precisely in time with tacking and gybing. Ronald Angas made his own halyard winches from steering boxes of Model-T Fords, which had epicyclic gears.¹⁰

⁸ . Provenance details will be sought in *Lloyd's Register of Yachts* at the next opportunity.

⁹ . Peter Clausen, then a young man, was employed by 'Captain' JG Arnold to build a cruising ketch *Four Winds* for a passage to the Pacific. She was taken through the Murray Mouth, but was promptly lost near Cape Liptrap on the western side of Wilson's Promontory in July 1923. Captain Arnold obtained a replacement vessel with the same name, which burned to the waterline and sank off Semaphore on 4 January 1928. By then Peter Clausen had left Mannum to start his own business. Nothing is known of Captain Arnold's subsequent yachting ventures (if any).

¹⁰ . Epicycle: A small circle, having its centre on the circumference of a greater circle. Chiefly Astronomical. In the Ptolemaic system of astronomy each of the planets was supposed to revolve in an epicycle, the centre of which moved along a greater circle called a deferent. This conception, though superseded as a physical explanation, describes with approximate correctness the relative motion of a planet when the earth is assumed as fixed; and it is therefore still occasionally used for this purpose by modern astronomers. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)



All sails set, including topsails and the Fisherman's Staysail on a triatic halyard. There were no sheet winches or lifelines above the low bulwarks.

The boat was maintained by a full-time hand, Clarence Todd, who was a former ketch skipper. In addition to knowing the two Gulfs intimately, he had the added asset of being an excellent sea cook.



Clarrie Todd climbing the foremast

They raced in Squadron events, including the Island Cup, and cruised to Spencer Gulf. Colin didn't much enjoy these experiences, perhaps in part because the ship had only low bulwarks and no standing lifelines, as is universal modern practice. It seems that no logs or similar records have survived.

The RSAYS 160 mile race to Kangaroo Island and return this year attracted seven contestants. A well-timed long leg out to sea gave the race to the latest [?largest intended, as *Nerida* was probably launched after her and *Seevogel* certainly was.] craft in the fleet — the Alden-designed 52 ft schooner *Pavana*, owned and skippered by Ronald Angas. ... After rounding the Island (*sic*), *Pavana* picked up a sou'westerly and romped home in record time, followed by *Seevogel*. *Norallie* and *Nerida* finished third and fourth, well behind the first two, while the remainder had to use their engines to complete the course.¹¹

Originally both masts were gaff-rigged, with topsails. The mast hoops acted as convenient ladders to climb aloft when the vessel was on a wind. Before the Second World War, Ronald Angas converted the mainsail to Bermudan rig.

In the 1950s *Pavana* was sold to George Mayne of Port Lincoln. This would explain why there is a scale model of her in a glass case in the Club House of Port Lincoln Sailing Club. She was last heard of, well maintained at Townsville in 1998.



¹¹ . *Seacraft* March-April 1947 (Volume 1, Number 5): 71. The course is (and, so far as I know always has been) from Outer Harbor to American River, thence to Orontes Beacon, thence home: about 160 miles.

