

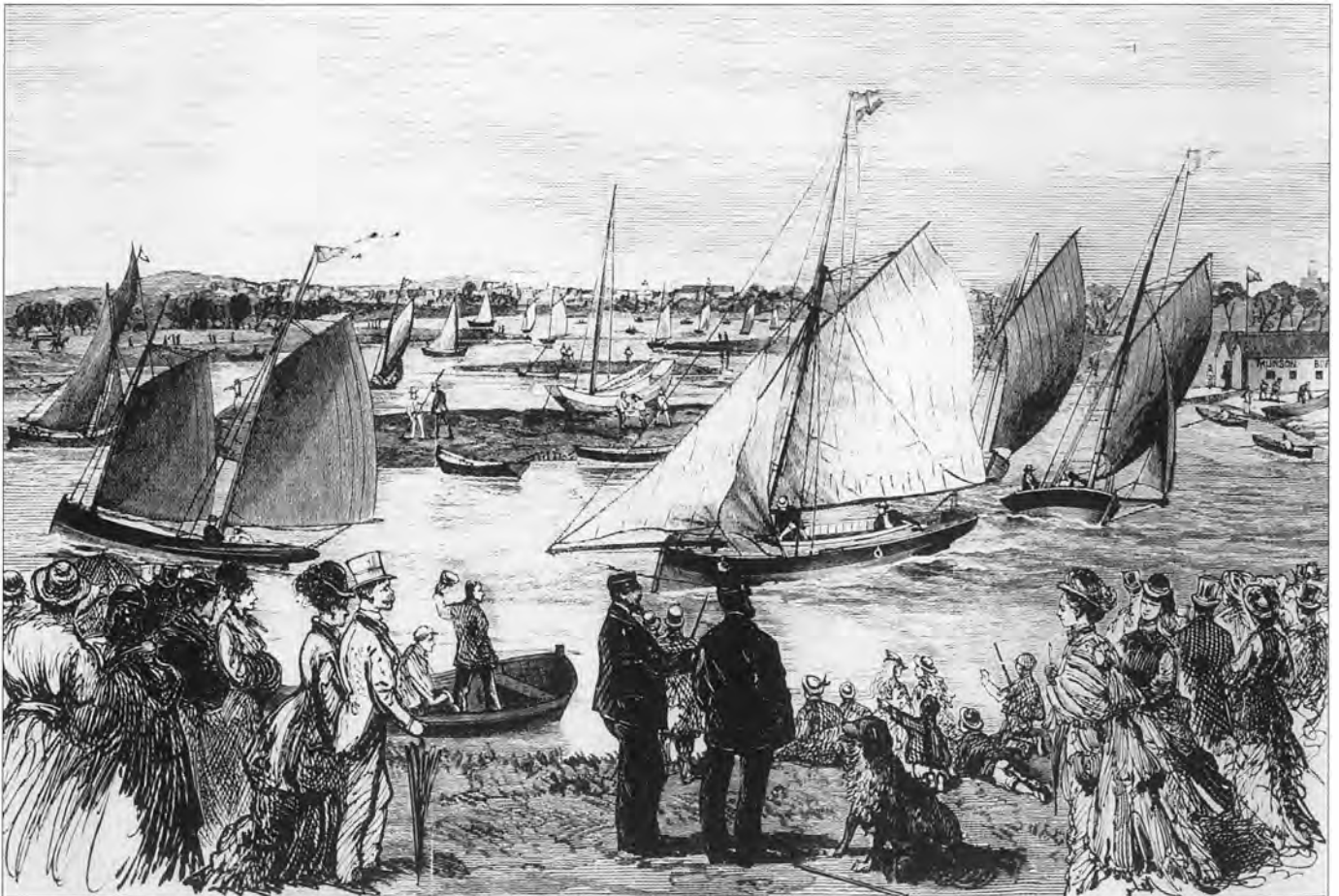


The History of The Albert Park Yacht Club

1871 – 1996

*One hundred and twenty-five years of
yacht racing*

By Ralph P. Neale



Acknowledgements

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R.P.N.

Conversions

Currency

Australian currency was pounds, shillings and pence until 1966 when decimal currency was introduced. £1 then became \$2, 10 shillings became \$1, 12 pence became ten cents.

Measurements

After decimal currency was introduced, metric measurements replaced imperial measurements. One yard or three feet equals 0.91 metres, one metre equals 3.28 feet.

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Cover

The Albert Park Lagoon on a Saturday afternoon, October 1877

The artist has engraved this print from a viewpoint at St. Kilda looking northwards. The island in the foreground was at this time called St. Kilda Island. A Chinese sampan, owned by Mr. Van Wyck (ladies' favourite craft) can be seen by the island, but what the five people are doing on the island is a mystery. The large cutter in the centre of the picture is Mr. Wm. Reddish's *Martha* which was 27 feet long and could carry 20 people. Its bowsprit was 18 feet long. Keelson to topmost was 40 feet. However, with iron centreboard drawn up, the *Martha* only drew fifteen inches. The small schooner is Mr. Glenn Knight's *Marianne*.

The two portly gentlemen in the foreground are undoubtedly members of the APYC wearing Club uniform, but what they are doing at St. Kilda is another mystery. The boathouse on the right is Munson's Boat House. On the horizon to the right is the newly built Government House.

The dog is begging the APYC members to throw the stick again – but their attention is elsewhere.

The ladies and gentlemen, it must be remarked, do seem a little overdressed for the occasion. However, ordinary people would have been elsewhere working, it being Saturday – a normal working day in 1877.

Reproduced from *Australian Sketcher* 27 October 1877 (State Library of Victoria).

Foreword



*Today
well lived
makes every yesterday
a dream of happiness
and every tomorrow
a vision of hope*

The History of Albert Park Yacht Club

This splendid account of the APYC has evolved over many years. Initially material had been gathered around the time of the Club's centenary year and now, in the 125th year, some more recent stories and events have been documented.

The Club has always, and continues to be, innovative, pioneering and public-spirited. Perhaps these attributes have arisen from the Lake's unique environment. Once just a winter lagoon providing a safer alternative than Port Phillip, today the Lake is praised by overseas and interstate sailors as a very special sailing playground. The Club continues to harness and provide great opportunities for *all* people to 'mess around in boats', at any level.

Past and present members, committees and associates of the Club have always had 'dreams' or visions about the future development of sailing on the Lake. The Club, with its history and spirit, has wonderful opportunities ahead. To read this history about the Club's past will be an inspiration to all future members to carry on and ensure the APYC spirit is kept alive.

Ronald S. Parker
Commodore (1994-1997)

"There is nothing worth living for but Christian architecture and a boat"

— Auguste Pugin, 19th century architect.

"God bless my soul, it was this morning I met my boy Auguste in the disguise of a common sailor, carrying on his head a tub of water"

— Father of Auguste Pugin, 19th century architect.

Preface

The average yacht club is an organisation of surprising intricacy, yet most of the operations are, as in an ants' nest, largely hidden from public view. And even the observable activities, to the people walking around our Lake, remain very mysterious or are mistakenly regarded as simply 'messaging about in boats'.

A yacht club cannot function if its members think only of their own enjoyment. Service to one's fellow-members is learnt at an early age. You cannot launch your boat unaided most of the time, so you learn to help others so that they will help you.

Within the yacht club are other enterprises, the offshoots of class associations, which aim to keep the class viable, always opposing the forces of evolution, for each one-design class has building rules that are unchanging.

The activity that is most unobservable is the work of the honorary secretary. If he or she gets to sail, good luck to them! With memberships now in big numbers, this work has become a real challenge. The secretary is usually a silent worker and their work is often overlooked, but it is of the greatest importance and it is regretted that the names of secretaries do not often appear in this history. The treasurer is also an unsung hero. The social secretary must be acknowledged, for he or she can make a happy club, and of course we must not forget the club captain who has to keep the clubhouse in order, and the class captains who assist. The newsletter editor and the people who help keep communications going between members, are essential.

There are other inconspicuous workers like race officials, rescue boat operators and shore-based helpers such as duty officers and galley attendants – and of course, those ordinary members who always roll up to working bees to keep the clubhouse spick and span, or even take part in building operations. Regrettably, most of these people have not been named in this book.

Descriptions of races do not appear in this history, but there is a list of champions, to show that the Club has achieved success on the water as well as providing recreation for all ages. The author regrets that this is an incomplete history, but it would be dull reading if every

detail appeared, and also very long. The Club's Commodores are listed, as far as known, and also the Honorary Life-members. If you are wondering about Vice-commodores, probably most of them finished up as Commodores, and the Commodores usually finished up as Rear-commodores.

The author hopes he has conveyed the vitality of the Club, which has survived for 125 years. With the public-spirited nature of many of the Club's recent activities, and with a deepened and weed-free lake, the Club will surely go on, as long as people sail boats.

In The Beginning

The history of a place is influenced by geography and the cultural antecedents of its people. Though Melbourne is beside the sea, the Bay was long considered a place it was best to avoid. But Melbourne was founded by English, Scots and Irish with a strong naval tradition, and they brought with them the idea that the safety of the kingdom depended very much on every man being more or less a sailor. For this reason regattas were held several times a year, the first being held in 1838, only three years after first settlement by the Yarra.

Such regattas depended for the most part on professional seamen, fishermen and workers of the port called watermen. There were some amateurs, a very few the equal of the professionals.

At times amateurs banded together to form clubs but none survived long for various reasons. There was the reality of a vast stretch of water which could turn dangerous in a changeable climate, unless ballasted yachts were fully decked. But such vessels demanded sheltered anchorages handy to owners' homes, and these did not exist until the 1870s.

Long before our own code of football began, the most popular sport apart from horse racing was rowing, which boomed in the 1860s. It was in search of a better rowing venue than the winding, snag-filled and polluted Yarra that the rowing enthusiasts turned their eyes to the lagoon in Albert Park, as a possible site for improvement.

In 1870 an energetic and ambitious Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) property developer, William

Buckhurst, toured the world and returned to Melbourne with ideas for Melbourne's improvement. The provision of an ornamental lake for water sports within a pleasant park, like Hyde Park in London, was his vision, and he saw Albert Park as providing the site. To get things moving he ordered the building of a light-draft yacht at 'Jem' Edwards's boat-building works by the Yarra at Princes Bridge. It was launched on Albert Park lagoon at the end of January 1871 and christened *Pioneer*.

At about the same time two Chinese sampans were imported from Foochow in China, and after trials on the Bay and on Lake Wendouree, finished up on Albert Park lagoon.

The lagoon was then two lakes which after winter rains became one sheet of water shallowing around the edges. At Buckhurst's expense some improvements were carried out and two boat hirers began building sheds. The first sailing race ever held on the lagoon took place in May 1871 after autumn rains, between hired boats from Edwards's and Greenland's boatsheds, which had been established earlier that year.

In the summer of 1871-1872 the water level on the lagoon was insufficient for sailing, but when rain had filled the lake in 1872, 9 skiffs and 12 yachts on hire from the two boat sheds raced, with skippers balloting for boats, surely yachting for the proletariat at 3/- a day for each boat hire.

The Club is Born

On 15 September 1872, at Taylor's Clarendon Hotel, Emerald Hill, a meeting was held to form the Albert Park Yacht Club, and 50 members were enrolled. It was announced at this meeting that plans for lagoon improvement had been completed.

This was not the first permanent yacht club to be formed in Victoria; the Victoria Yacht Club (now RYCV) had been founded only five months earlier in April 1872. The APYC was, however, the first permanent inland waters yacht club to be founded in Australia.

In March 1873 the tender of 4,625 pounds 17 shillings and 7 pence for lagoon improvements by Packham and Faram, was accepted by the Victorian Government.

By September 1873 after six months' work it was clear the lake construction was not going well. A dispute had arisen and work ceased while the contractors sued the Queen. It was not until late 1874 that the contractors were awarded damages and the work resumed, but it was never satisfactorily completed.

In November 1874 the APYC burst into life again, the interval having been used to construct yachts which were far too large for the water they had to sail on. Most ambitious of all was the *Martha*, which was 27 feet long, 8



John Cosgrave, 'Father of yachting on Port Phillip Bay'

feet beam, keelson to topmast 40 feet, and with a bowsprit of 18 feet.

The first President of the APYC was John Cosgrave. He came to Melbourne soon after it was founded, as an Irish boy apprenticed to Melbourne's first doctor. Then he became a boat building apprentice, hotel owner during the gold rush, and finally Treasurer of Melbourne Town. Because of his activities on Bay waters he became known as the 'Father of Yachting on Port Phillip Bay'.

The activities at Albert Park Lake attracted considerable attention and popularised the sport to such an extent that other yacht clubs began on Port Phillip Bay. In 1875 the Brighton Sailing Club was founded (now RBYC), followed by the St. Kilda Sailing club in 1876 (now RMYS).

By December 1875 the recurring problem of lack of water in summertime led to an outcry. A newspaper report:

The lake was: "... a sheet of water obstructed by heaps of mud and grass, so thick that a boat can scarcely make headway through it. Don't the woodenheads know that grass grows faster and thicker the more shallow the water? "

One answer was sailing in lightly ballasted skiffs which could race on a mere 25 inches of water.

By 1876 the lake was described as:

"... neither more than less a puddle of the dirtiest and dangerous kind, its surface covered over with green slime, and it may at any moment become the cause of widespread disease. The Albert Park Yacht Club should not be left to fight alone the battle of having the lagoon put in order."

It had always been part of the plan in the creation of Albert Park Lake to provide a pipeline and pump to replenish the lake each summer. In 1878 there was a report of the pumping engine in use bringing fresh water from the Yarra at Brander's Ferry, but there were inadequate funds for it to cope with the problem for the whole summer.

On Queen's Birthday 24 May 1877, 3000 spectators lined the shores of Lake Wendouree in Ballarat to see the yachtsmen from the Albert Park Yacht Club race against Ballarat residents. Earlier the visiting yachts had been unloaded from railway trucks and were paraded through the town to the Lake. The Ballarat yachts were too good for the visitors, the local opinion being that the APYC boats "looked like common ships' boats". However, the smart blue gold-braided uniforms of the members of the APYC, particularly that of the Commodore, William Reddish, excited comment.

Following this regatta the Ballarat Yacht Club was brought into being and the APYC returned for the Club's

30 November 1877 regatta to begin a tradition which continued for years.

The President of the APYC in 1878 was the Hon William John Clarke MLC (later to become Sir W.J. Clarke, Baronet) who was probably at this time the richest man in Australia. He was keen to become a true yachtsman, having been a foundation member of the APYC, and wished to introduce his son Ernest to sailing a centre-board yacht on the lake. He was about to commission the construction of the *Janet*, a 64 foot vessel that became a household name in Victoria in the 1880s for its feats on Port Phillip Bay and its races on Sydney Harbour in 1887, when several APYC members made up part of the crew, including the Captain, Dick Banner.

In 1879 a club member, Edward Edgley, contracted to build the APYC clubhouse on a filled site on the north-western shore of the lake. What made it unusual was that it was the first yacht clubhouse (as distinct from a club shed) to be built in Australia. It survived until 1957 when it was consumed by a mysterious fire.

In 1880 the surroundings of Albert Park Lake were vastly improved. Piles were driven, red-gum breastworks were built and a promenade 17 feet wide and 1,000 feet long provided. This was given a layer of 4 inches of coke ash covered by 3 inches of sand, which put an end to muddy boots for ever.

At about this time a move was made to squeeze out the professional watermen from the APYC by conducting 'Corinthian' races for amateurs only. This led to many professionals splitting off and forming the South Melbourne Yacht Club.

However, the APYC rules provided for a professional to join as an amateur three years after leaving his job as a waterman. Midshipmen, officers in the Navy or masters or mates of vessels exceeding 500 tons were still welcome.

Although the APYC now shared the Lake with other yacht clubs, in 1884 it had about 50 members.

In 1886 'double boats' sailed in separate races at the APYC with exciting names like *Highflyer*, *Lightning*, *Mirage*, *Flash*, *Flying Scud* and *Excelsior*. These were the first catamarans on the lake but they seem to have vanished by 1888, no doubt due to lack of manoeuvrability in confined waters.

The late 1880s were boom times in Melbourne with land prices escalating, railways extending all over the State and Melbournians spending money on new houses as though the boom would go on for ever. But there seems to have been no great prosperity at the APYC. The minute books mention that the Albert Park Trust was impounding boats whose owners had not paid their licence fees (1887). There were bad drought years in 1888



William Parton Buckhurst is the bearded man in the centre

and 1892. Because of weed problems in 1892, boats were permitted to use 'weed cutters'. There were several proposals to amalgamate with other Lake clubs (Trident Amateur YC and Federal Club) which came to nothing, and in 1889 the club had an overdraft.

Reading between the lines one can see that with the growth of yachting in the 1880s on Port Phillip Bay, the more ambitious members graduated seawards to clubs with a higher social standing, hence the urge to exclude the fishermen and watermen from the APYC. But this also lost them members, although the APYC continued against all difficulties, as it has always done, with a core of members who for one reason or another liked the lakeside venue.

The Depression of 1892

A boom is always followed by a bust, and 1892 was a terrible year in Melbourne. Businesses, banks and building societies were collapsing and the ranks of the unemployed increased every day, to be followed by an exodus to other colonies where circumstances were not so grave.

The minute books record that the APYC continued with its lakeside activities. The caretaker at the clubhouse was told that his room was to be vacated so that the ladies could use it on Saturdays, while another room was being built for him.

Water pipes were bought and installed by Mr Shand, a member, to connect the club to the Yan Yean water system.

Sailing continued through the winter, when the club was sure of water in the lake, but on Saturday, 12 June 1893, it was decided to commence the race at 10 a.m. so members could complete the race in order to watch the football match at 3 p.m.

Smoke nights at this time were a popular social activity, but for men only. In 1893 the APYC held such a function and invited members from 7 yacht clubs and 3 rowing clubs to join in.

There is further reference to the Club uniform which was obviously important – white trousers in summer, blue in winter, the buttons on their reefer jackets were polished brass, embossed with an anchor. They wore a blue navy cap with a gold badge 'APYC'. And the Club Officers wore much gold braid.

By late 1894 the annual subscription had been reduced from 10 shillings and 6 pence to 5 shillings.

At this time it is clear there was no laid down racing program. People came to light with a trophy, and then races were planned to see who could win it. But in 1895 the club seems to have had a bad year, as no quorum for



Photograph by Nettleton of newly improved Lake in 1874. James Edwards' boatshed later run by Bill Kenny, but structure replaced (State Library of Victoria)

a meeting could be obtained between January and September. But for Opening Day of 1895, members donated ale, cakes, wine, cheese, aerated waters, fruit, whisky, sandwiches, tea, milk and sugar, and the season went ahead.

In 1896 conditions for a race were:

- boats under 18 feet
- canvas to be carried no more than 270 sq ft
- no time allowances

- two shillings and sixpence entry fee

The entries on 6 January were: *Orizaba*, *The Ulster*, *Navigator*, *Dione*, *Kelpie*.

The year of 1896 turned out to be a poor year for the APYC, for we read in the Minute Book of 7 December 1896 of an attempt to revive the Club. It was decided to provide handicaps so that boat owners would have a better chance against outside boats (hired from boat-houses on the Lake). At this time it seems that many

North end of Albert Park Lake in 1876. Left to right, the boat houses were operated by Jones, Smith and Edwards



(State Library of Victoria)



The Club members about 1908 standing on the Club jetty

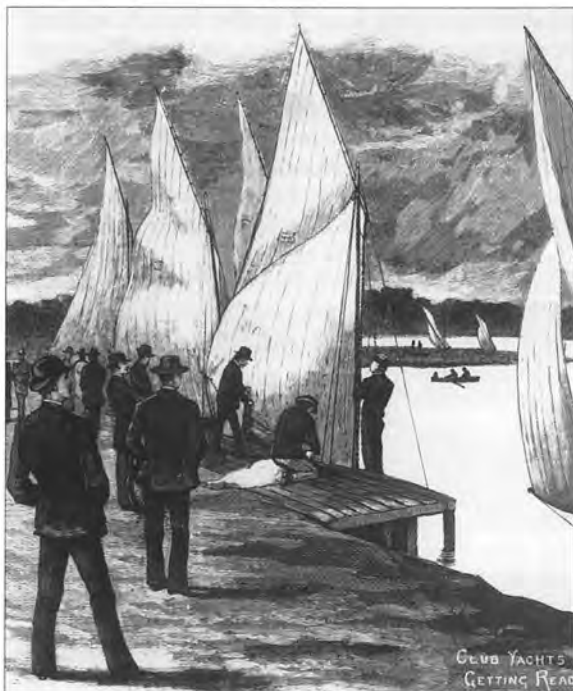
members were too poor to own boats and that the old practice of hiring yachts from the lakeside boathouses (Jones, Edwards and Smith) had been revived, bringing forth scorn from other clubs.

Now a practice began of appointing many Vice-presidents from lists of the wealthy, to ensure a decent number of annual donations. These included Lord Brassey (the

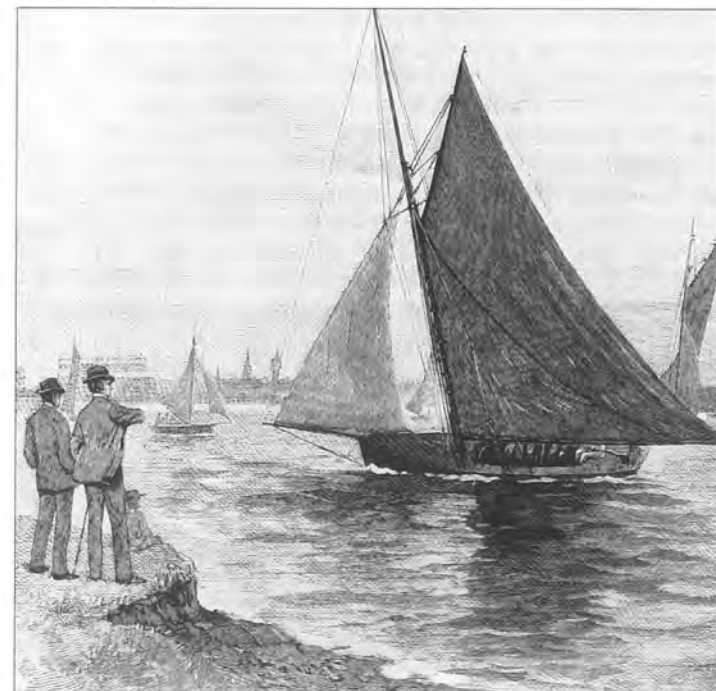
yachtsman Governor of Victoria), Sir F.T. Sargood, and Mars Buckley (of Buckley and Nunn). In 1897 as many as 23 Vice-presidents were nominated, though perhaps not all accepted the honour.

Another new idea to help revive the Club and move with the times was the admission of ladies to the Club at half the usual subscription (25/1/1897).

Club yachts getting ready



The Lake in 1885



The Albert Park Yacht Club Easter Regatta of 1909. Running before a brisk northerly. Photograph by Mr. Goslet

In 1897 a future champion, Arthur Surry, joined the APYC. His influence was soon apparent and by 17 May 1897 he was Vice-commodore and chairing meetings and winning races too in his *Vagabond*.

For the annual meeting in 1897, 100 small posters were printed, to post up in the streets of Albert Park and South Melbourne, which resulted in a turnout of 12 people.

An indication of the Club's organisation at this time was revealed in a letter from Mr H. Kaye to the Club. He wrote criticising the unique handicapping system, in that he was on scratch in *Orizaba*, although a new skipper. The reply was that Mr Kaye had not paid his subscription; the handicapper said he could handicap as he thought fit and had no fixed rules to go by (28/3/98).

In 1900 the British Parliament legislated to make Australia one nation and the first Federal Parliament of Australia was opened in 1901. It seems that celebrations of these events were marked by yacht races, for we hear of the APYC's contribution in the form of a sail measurer, but the APYC did not enter a boat.

By 1903 the APYC had begun an event which continued for a number of years and was well supported by other clubs. This was the annual Easter Regatta. In 1903 there were 15 entries from various clubs un-named. The skippers included names which were later to become quite famous (if they were not already) such as Arthur Surry in *Chance*, Charlie Buchanan in *Navigator*, Joe White in *Acrospire I* (from Ballarat) and R. Temple in *Spark*. The winner's prize was 10 pounds which was really quite a princely sum in those days, being the equivalent of more than two weeks' wages.

An unusual event of January 1905 was a moonlight

concert on Pagoda Island, so named because it originally had an ornamental summerhouse on its northernmost bank. This event was planned in conjunction with the Model Yacht Club, the APYC providing the boats for the occasion. However, the event was ruined because of the low state of the water. Feelings of anger were raised in the minds of yachtsmen when they saw the local fire brigade pumping water out of the lake to dampen down the speedway. This was a ninety-day wonder constructed for horse-drawn vehicle races, alongside the south-western shore of the Lake. It was built from money donated by wealthy sportsmen, but they soon lost interest.

In 1906 the Colac Regatta is first mentioned and the APYC decided to send the *Dorothy* (W. Stone) and the *Bonito* (T. Saunders). The latter it seems "upheld the honour of the Club" on that occasion.

We know that the APYC was up to this time unconnected with sewerage and electric light, by the accounts passed for payment. Kerosene was a regular purchase as well as lamp chimneys (cost one shilling). One can only wonder at the air quality at those smoke nights – cigar, cigarette and pipe smoke in clouds, added to which must have been a dozen smoking kerosene lamps!

But brilliant lights were about to burst into life at the APYC. In 1908 Captain Goodrham installed electric light to the clubhouse and the first bill of 2 shillings and 2 pence was paid! This was such a momentous event that a special celebration was planned with a chain of lanterns formed from boat to boat, east to west across the Lake, with the chain to be broken at 9 p.m. – no doubt with some climax planned for that moment, perhaps the



The Boys' Junior Dinghy Club in 1911

Commodore throwing a switch. Such a big crowd was expected that quotes were obtained for erection of a grandstand to seat 250 to 500 people. It is in this way that we learn how much we now take for granted.

In 1910 five boys spent a lot of time sailing model boats from one side of the Lake to the other. Among them was a boy named Reg Day, who later was known as 'Chummy' Day. A Mr. McRitchie took an interest in them and called a meeting to form the Albert Park Model Dinghy Club.

The Boys in an Opening Day Sail-past - 1912



ghy Club. Soon it had 25 members, all with 2 foot yachts. In a year they had all grown and Commodore McRitchie suggested they should think about boats they could sail in. He had in mind an eight-foot one-design class. A design was drawn up and soon the *Nellie* had been launched and boat building was in progress, no doubt with the boys' fathers well and truly involved now. June 1911 saw the first Opening Day of the Albert Park Boys' Dinghy Club. The dinghys were 8 ft LOA, 4 ft beam, sail

area 72 sq ft. They had steel centreplates and a tall wooden mast. Each boat had a prominent emblem on the sail, usually connected with the boat name, and the boys wore white jumpers with the same emblem attached. When the APYC went to Colac, the APBDC went too. The boys set up their tents to camp by Lake Colac and raced the whole weekend. These boys saw the top skipper of the APYC as role models and men worthy of the greatest admiration. When Arthur Surry from the APYC won the Costello trophy at Colac in 1913, it was 20 of the dinghy boys who pulled him through the streets of Colac in a jinker (light horse-drawn vehicle). 'Chummy' Day must have been one of them. The same Costello Trophy won in the 1913-1914 season at Colac by Arthur Surry now rests in our Clubhouse. It is a large silver plated model of a yacht. In a dilapidated condition, it was donated to the Club by Arthur Surry's



grand-daughter, Mrs June Fawell, in the seventies, and the Club has had it restored to its original splendour. The Costellos ran the Hotel at Colac and were obviously great supporters of the annual Colac Regatta.

'Chummy' Day and his fellow Dinghy Club members soon graduated to the APYC, being the natural thing to do. In 'Chummy's' case it was to be a lifelong association, except for a period when he 'went down the Bay'.

The Twenty-fives and World War I

From a 1911 report of the Colac Regatta we learn that there were always three races, each named for the participating Clubs:

Colac, Ballarat and Albert Park - the 'Lake Club Association' as they were collectively named. At the 1912 Colac Regatta a stir was caused by the appearance of a



APYC members, family and friends - Opening Day, possibly 1914

beautiful new white-hulled boat with a crimson waterline and a pink deck, built by Charles Peel, possibly to a design of the owner. This was Joe White's *Acrospire II*. This was 25 feet LOA, but it looked much longer, and the opposing yachtsmen wanted it measured on the spot, a request which was rejected by Joe White and his crew from Ballarat. Later the APYC demanded to have someone present to represent them, when it was officially measured. Eventually the APYC had to be satisfied with a measurement certificate enclosed with a letter from Joe White, but it is clear from the evidence that they were still unsatisfied. From the Ballarat Yacht Club Centenary Programme of 1977, we have learnt of the old secret that to get the *Acrospire II* to come within the waterline measurement, it was necessary to seat two men on the bow while the measurement was taken!



A puff! Out-on-her!. Photograph: W.D. Nicholl, 1918-19

The new restrictions on yachts in 1913 were:

- LOA not more than 25 feet
- LWL not more than 20 feet
- Max beam not more than 8 feet
- Sail area not more than 66 sq yards
- Square-bilged boats were allowed provided they had a minimum freeboard of 14 inches

At this stage in our history some of the young men of this period are remembered by at least a few older APYC members still alive today. They are fortunate enough to have heard them talk about their experiences, which we are able to include in our account.

One man who made an enormous contribution to small boat yacht racing in Australia, and is still well remembered, was Len Morris. He was elected a member of the APYC on 28 December 1909. There was an active sailing canoe club on the Lake at that time, and one fateful day a friend took Len out on the Lake, and as he put it: "I said to myself 'this is it' and it was!" He built himself a canvas sailing canoe and joined the APYC at about the age of 15. He went to the Colac Regatta in 1912 and remembered the sensation that *Acrospire II* created. Mainly this was because it was so different to the existing lake boats which had square stems and no overhangs. As a young man of about 19 years he determined to own a similar boat and with another man, went to Peel the boat builder, and asked him to build a boat for them that could beat the *Acrospire II*. The result was the *Metis* which was launched in September 1913. Unfortunately, in the many duels between the two revolutionary boats in the two following years, the *Metis* was not quite the equal of the "Acky". By this time Len Morris was Club Secretary, but World War I had begun and Len resigned to join the AIF. He served in France as a despatch rider and signalman and won a Military Medal for laying lines

under fire, but fortunately came home safe and sound at war's end.

Returning to January 1914, in this month Joe White joined the APYC and brought with him *Acrospire II*. White was at this time a successful business man, having taken over the running of a family malting enterprise which expanded from Ballarat to Melbourne. His stay at the APYC was short. Following the War he was prominent on the Bay as the owner/skipper of *Acrospire III* (1923) and became Commodore of St. Kilda Club 1926-1931 and also for two other terms.

On 5 October 1914 Mr Saunders, former Secretary and Caretaker of the Club, was presented with a gold watch, as he was going away with the First Expeditionary Force, as was also member W. Moore. That year there was no official opening day and Colac announced there would be no regatta in 1915, but the usual Easter Regatta was held at the APYC. However, a regatta was held at Colac in early 1916. At a reduced level operations continued until the War had ended and survivors of the conflict returned to their homes to take up the threads of an urban existence again, no doubt with some difficulty.

In 1915 the Club's rule book mentions the 14 ft Class, and as it was the only class mentioned in the book, it must have been important. It had a max. sail area of 240 sq ft (spinnakers exempt). Planking was not less than $\frac{3}{8}$ ins. finished, timbers (ribs) were $\frac{3}{8} \times \frac{3}{4}$ ins. spaced at 6 ins. centre to centre.

At this time there was no restriction on women members, the annual fees being men 10/6d and women at 5/3d. All prizes with the exception of special prizes were paid in money. The Club flag at that time was the 'Victorian Red Ensign', the Club burgee a blue flag with five white stars.

On 12 February 1918, seven months before the armistice, the Club unveiled its Club Honor Board for those members serving 'at the front'. The names read: W. Saunders, Sgt. R. Moore, L. Morris, H. Aldred, V. Hannan (killed), P. Eames, J. Patterson, W. Hill, J. Fife, R. Chugg, H. Barnes (killed), T. Keiller, H. Hall, Lieut., and W. Veitch.

Sadly, Sergeant W. Saunders, who had been the Hon Sec when he enlisted, died in October 1918 whilst on leave after four years' active service.

After the War

Towards the end of 1919, Len Morris was back in the Club and was elected Treasurer, and a month later became Honorary Secretary.

The Club seemed to take on new life again and the Opening Day of 1920 was voted a great success. The catering was for 100, new curtains were put up, and the

program laid down: flag unfurled, speech, procession of boats, best-decorated boat (prize of a clock), ladies and gents partake of refreshments, short race during refreshments, then short race twice around second island with boys' dinghy race (prize 5/-).

The Club premises were being tidied up. A patent 'Kaustine' sewerage system was installed, which became a regular subject of complaint in the Minute Book.

To the old fleet of *Parana*, *Dixie*, *Acrospire II*, *Metis*, *Non Such*, were added new boats: *Elgin*, *May*, *Nelson*, *Navigator* and *Ancient Mariner*. The last named boat appears to have been from the Sea Scouts and Captain Safern (sic) appears in the minute book at this time as Rear Commodore. His correct name is almost certainly Captain Suffern, as it was he who at that time conducted a school on Albert Park Lake for youths who wanted to go to sea in sailing ships. It was called 'The Ancient Mariners', and Captain Suffern was also involved with the Sea Scouts. A famous graduate of The Ancient Mariners was Captain Alan Villiers, later Captain of tall ships and author.

The Club was admitting new members, and among them in late 1922 were three ladies, Miss N. and Miss V. Cedarholme and Miss McDonald, who were nominated by Mr Blackmore. He provided a trophy for a ladies' race. A month later there was another ladies' race, with a clock for a prize and also a silver medal. In the space of only a few months, ten lady sailing members had joined.

In 1923, the best performing boats in the APYC were Bill Kenny in *Acrospire II*, Dave Tulloch in *Metis*, and T. Saunders in *Dione*. Len Morris, who no longer owned *Metis*, went away to Gippsland.

Old members of the APYC have talked about the at-

tempts to beat the railway train which ran parallel with a large part of the lake. The train, then drawn by a steam engine, provided a challenge for a 25-footer in a fresh south-westerly – or so the story goes. Probably the annual Easter Regatta was the main event in the Club's calendar at this time, and there was no winter sailing.

In 1924 the Club had a motor truck. There was some concern when it was sighted outside the Victoria Hotel one day and Charlie Buchanan was asked to make enquiries.

Another event of 1924 was the horrible discovery that there was a plan to put a causeway and footpath across the narrows, so Prahran residents could shorten their walk to the beach. Naturally the Club sprang into action to prevent this.

The type of boats then racing were expensive to build, so the launching of a new boat was the occasion for a celebration. On 2 February 1924 a successful social event saw the *Cygnnet* launched by the Cooper family. Fred Cooper shortly afterwards became the Club caretaker, and with Mrs Cooper and family added to the life of the Club. Fred Cooper also became the Club Secretary later in 1924.

The Governor-General, Lord Forster, who had presented the Forster Cup for inter-State competition in 21 ft class yachts in 1920, was a successful yachtsman himself.

In March 1923, the Club received advice that the Governor-General was going to donate to the Club a cup to be raced for. It duly arrived and 'The Forster Cup' became a regular event on the APYC calendar. The first time it was raced for was in April 1924, when seven boats raced. Fred Cooper in *Cygnnet* won both line honours and



APYC Members, family and friends – Opening Day, possibly 1920. 'Chummy' Day is last dark suit on right in front row. Len Morris is in the centre of the second row with RSL badge. Fred Temple is in centre of front row with boy on lap. Arthur Surry is the man in the front row with bow tie and hat off.

handicap events, finishing 1 minute ahead of *Metis*. Lord Forster was made Chief Patron of the Club in 1924. The Forster Cup, a solid silver cup, now rests in the Club's trophy cabinet.

Donald Stevens, JP, retired school teacher, of Highett, who sailed yachts at the APYC in the twenties, has filled in some gaps in our history. In 1978 he wrote an account of the story behind the 'FEM' Shield.

He remembers there was a post-war resurgence in the Club with an influx of new members. The clubhouse and boatshed were repainted, lawns brought back from dereliction and the ground dug and flowers planted; Robert H. Stevens of South Melbourne, official handicapper, did the gardening work. In the process he discovered pieces of copper plate left from the ashes of burnt boats. The Club had then been going about 50 years. Being a turner and fitter by trade, Bob Stevens made from these pieces a wonderful model yacht about 8 inches long with a beam of 3 inches, complete with copper spars and rigging. The corrosion and effects of the fire gave it an attractive patina. This model yacht was used to surmount a frame within which was placed a shield, the object being to produce a trophy in memory of his daughter, Florence Ethel May, who died from diphtheria as a child of 4 years in 1907. A photo of the young Florence was added to the frame. So the 'FEM' Shield was created.

The 'FEM' Shield was first contested on 6 December 1924 and was won by Ernie Cooper, son of Fred Cooper, who was designer-builder and owner of the famous *Cygnets*, an 18 footer said to be the fastest boat ever sailed

on the Lake. In medium or heavy weather she could beat the *Acrospire II* (with Bill Kenny at the helm) and also the *Metis* (Dave Tulloch). In light weather the two 25 footers would step taller masts and lace on their biggest sails, called in those days 'kites'.

The second race for the Shield was on 5 December 1925, when Dave Tulloch won in the *Metis*. At that time he was manager of J.S. Kitchen's soapworks at Port Melbourne. He had as his mainsheet hand Charlie Buchanan ('Bew'), known as the most experienced and wily tactician in lake racing. Later he was to be a successful helmsman himself.

The third race for the Shield, on 13 November 1926, was won by Aubrey Dyson (of Dyson timber company, South Wharf). He sailed *Mercedes*, a sturdy 21 footer. He was to become a well-regarded Commodore of the APYC for many years.

The fourth race, on 19 November 1927, was won by Don Stevens, eldest son of the trophy's creator, sailing the *Signet* (not to be confused with the *Cygnets* – designers in those days were not beyond playing a few mind-games). The *Signet* was a hard-chine slightly vee-bottomed boat with a snub bow, measuring only 14 foot over all.

The fifth race, held on 24 November 1928, was won by the redoubtable Fred Cooper, who bought his pot-bellied 16 foot *Ella* from Bill Hooper (boat hirer and father of the Bill Hooper who died only a few years ago).

The sixth race, held on Boxing Day 1929, was won by Frank Langsford, a Swanston Street tailor ("Where the

little man taps on the window") in *Signet I* (a *Signet II* had now been launched).

The seventh race, on 18 October 1930, was won by Jack Evans in *Lesur Our* (Leisure Hour).

This is an appropriate place to mention the duels between the two most famous boats of the 25 footers, *Acrospire II* and *Metis*. They were both built just before World War 1.

Acrospire II was bought from Joe White by Bill Kenny, who conducted one of the boat hiring establishments. He seems to have sold it to T. Saunders senior who sailed it regularly until he died about mid-1927.

The *Metis* was sold by Len Morris to Dave Tulloch who usually helmed it, and successfully too. The *Acrospire II* and *Metis* raced against one another from 1913 to Easter 1927 when *Acrospire II* left the Lake. But Dave Tulloch when he died, willed *Metis* to George Ellis, who when he married in 1941, sold it to Ted Davis of Ballarat Y.C.

Acrospire II was sold to the Ballarat Yacht Club where it was helmed by Bill Wheeler senior, with Bevan John as his mainsheet hand. For many years the two boats duelled on Wendouree after 1941. Bill Wheeler senior purchased *Acrospire II* from the BYC in 1945, and extensively renovated it. We will pick up the rest of this little story later, of how the old boat returned to our Lake.

The lake edge at this time was held back in places by old red-gum which was partly decaying, allowing little ponds to form which were filled with water plants and no doubt appreciated by the ducks. In other places the concrete edging we have today was being constructed, but it was not completed until 1945.

Both Bill Hooper Senior and Bill Hooper Junior became members of the APYC on 12 November 1928. 'Pop' Hooper conducted the boatshed near the site of the Jolly Roger Sailing School which operates today, now conducted by his grandson. 'Pop' was made a Vice-president of the APYC shortly afterwards. He built a yacht in his boatshed named the *Mystery*, which in the hands of G. Wilson won the Cooper Cup at the 1931 Easter Regatta.

In 1929, with the advent of the depression, no doubt the Club was hard pressed to make ends meet, which was probably the reason why at this time the Club Officers made a pact with the devil – the Victorian Motorboat Association. For a fee of ten pounds a year the club would allow 20 speedboats the use of the Club facilities (and 10/- for each extra boat). A petrol bowser



'Chummy' Reg Day and friends in his gunter-rigged Snipe, the Swan. Thought to be about 1938.

was installed. After a few months, the Albert Park Trust brought in a ban on outboard motors, but no doubt inboard engined boats continued to use the Lake for some time. In March 1932 the VMA was in arrears of rent. Some sort of motor-boat racing continued, using the APYC clubrooms on a fairly regular basis, until 1952 when the Victorian Speedboat Club (it seems to have changed its name) then built its own tower and clubhouse on the point.

After the depression of 1929, the Club struggled to survive. Sailing continued, but no one had much money. The Albert Park Trust summoned the Secretary, George Ellis, and the Commodore, Frank Offen, to a meeting at which they had to show cause why the Club should not be shut down. With the outbreak of war there was more money about, but the day of the big yachts was over. If sailing was to continue it would be in small one-man or two-

man boats, possibly home-built, using new glues and marine plywood which was becoming available in Australia, having been invented about 1935. These materials revolutionised the sport of small boat sailing.

There were other new ideas. In the late 1930s there seems to have been a move away from restricted class yachts to one-design sailing boats. It appears that several yacht clubs thought this was a very good idea, and it is clear that in 1939 there were several one-designs adopted by yacht clubs. There was, for example, the 'Port Melbourne Class', and the 'Sandridge Sharpie' (which did not resemble the Sharpies of the 1956 Olympic Games). The APYC apparently decided to favour an Australian version of the USA designed Snipe, but measurements were not enforced, and the sail area often exceeded the designed sail plan.

A sad event occurred on Sunday 22 October 1939 when Club member Gordon Beresford Offen drowned off Mordialloc. His relatives provided a memorial trophy in the form of the 'Offen Shield' on which is engraved 'Home is the sailor, home from the sea'.

The Nineteen-Forties

The APYC in the forties never rushed into adopting new designs, and the Club would refuse to accept boats that the officials did not approve of. At times this caused animosity. The Club seems to have decided at this time that one-design class racing was the



APYC Members and families – c 1930, Old boatshed in distance



L to R: Chummy Reg Day, Len Oliver junior, Charlie Buchanan

future direction it should follow. In regard to the Club Snipes, which may have had different sail areas, it was decided something should be done. This resulted in a meeting being held at the APYC in April 1940 for club members who wished to promote the Snipe as a Club class. The idea was to stimulate the desire to build Snipes, which would be measured and weighed by the APYC to conditions set down by the Club. Messrs J. Baker, Fred Cooper and Aubrey Dyson were appointed as a committee to handle affairs for the time being. Six Snipes were already on the Club register: *Nomad*, *Shamrock*, *Scamp*, *Ellen May*, *Cygnat* and *Blue Peter*. Their owners agreed to modify their boats to conform with the new measurements laid down.

The Club further encouraged the class by offering a trophy for Snipes only, provided three boats started, every second week, alternating with a Snipe sweepstakes race (entry fee, winner take all).

Wally Woolnough, member 1939 to 1948, advises that in 1944 the Moth Class yacht, the *Cygnat*, sail number A 1, with US Moth insignia (M in a circle), was sailed at the APYC by his son Trevor, and he has supplied a photo to prove it. These facts are indisputable, but Len Morris had built a Moth in 1929 at Inverloch, no doubt based on plans he had seen in the US yachting magazine *Rudder*, but with his inimitable stamp upon it, as it was a restricted type design. At first he called the boat the 'Inverloch 11 footer' but changed the class name to 'Moth' a few years later. This was the *Olive*, which is now in the APYC boatshed in 1996. Len must have designed the Moth insignia we know today, which ultimately was adopted world-wide.

The Moth *Cygnat* was joined by *I.O. Silver*, *Thorn*, *Flying Cloud* and *Victor* and the five boats raced every Sunday in August and September 1944. In 1951, the

Albert Park Yacht Club took a number of these Moths to Sydney to demonstrate on Sydney Harbour.

During World War II the APYC continued to operate. Usually there were 12 or 13 boats starting each Saturday – about half were 'Open Class' and the others were 'Snipe-type'. Some members of military age and not in protected industries volunteered for service and were given a hearty send-off and went off to war. No doubt some never came back to the Club. But Club life went on. There were Opening Day celebrations, social functions, working bees and racing. On Opening Day in 1940 as many as 14 dozen cakes were ordered.

But around the Club, evidence of wartime activities was visible on every side, with Army barracks, offices and storehouses for war materials such as food and clothing. There were slit trenches all over the park as a civil defence measure, to shelter occupiers of weatherboard houses nearby, should an air-raid occur.

Towards the end of the war there was a discussion on which boats the Club should foster and it seemed to be now between the 14 Foot Class, the 15 ft 6 ins Swallow-Snipe and the 16 ft Restricted Moth. It was at this time that the Club decided to commence a re-building fund, suggesting that the Clubhouse (built 1879) was becoming very dilapidated.

What were the Club buildings like at this time?

Norm Hammon, in 1996 the oldest person still active in the Club who has had a continuous connection with the APYC, has provided us with his memories of the Club in the mid-1940s:

'The weatherboard clubhouse built on filled ground was then 66 years old and had subsided about a foot into the ground; you could tell because the fireplace was no longer at floor level, and the mantelpiece was at eyebrow level, the chimney not

having sunk with the building. There was a verandah in the front on which dignitaries would sit for Opening Days and celebrations.

'Underneath the building was a space between the stumps in which boats could be worked on, but you had to be very careful not to knock away the props which supported the legs of the very heavy billiard table in the room above, or it might come crashing through the floor. The billiard table was used at meetings, those present seated around it in very old leather-covered lounge chairs.

'The change room was an old bungalow at the rear under some pine trees, with one open cold-shower cubicle. I never remember anyone using it. There was room for about 10 people to change.

'The boat-shed was a separate building with boat racks at the rear, plus stand-on-end racks for 11 foot Moths.

'The Albert Park Rowing Clubhouse was built alongside and they actually knocked a corner from our boatshed to allow the wall to be built.

'The Club had a resident caretaker who lived in very primitive conditions, and appeared to do nothing for the Club.

'Every member had his photograph taken in the same white windcheater and the photo was displayed in a large frame in the frontroom of the clubhouse.

'There were lawns in the club grounds on which

no boats were allowed to be washed down, as they were kept for drying the sails. It was ruled that ladies were allowed on the lawns, and nowhere else, unless being shown over the premises by an official or responsible member.

'The Club then had a jetty which was very rickety and from the end of which races were started. A flag on a stake was driven into the mud off the end of the jetty, and each starter was hailed by the official to get ready to start and flagged through at the person's handicap time – handicaps were given at the start – like a modern sternchaser event.

'The sailing season always started in October but was all over by Easter, unlike the early days when the Lake could only be sailed on in winter.

'The Lake then had three islands (two were removed as part of an army engineers' exercise some time later). There was Gun Island (not Gunn Island as it seems to have been named recently), Centre Island at the start of the narrows, and Mud Island at the southern end of the narrows. This was usually submerged and had a notice reading "Shallows" on it. Trees around the Lake were small and there was a horrible stench floating on the wind from the tip areas on the west side of the park.

'Opening Days were always a grand affair with decorations and a wonderful selection of home-made cakes served in the boat-shed for members and their



The jetty is the same but everything else has changed. The APYC about 1948. The tall man in the suit is "Chummy" Reg Day. Norm Hammon and Geoff Hurren are in white near the end of the jetty

guests. Dignitaries (Commodores from other clubs, Mayors and Councillors, Vice-presidents etc) were feasted in the Clubhouse and they were served with beer.

'I remember young members would ride their bikes from Newport, Coburg or eastern suburbs with their sails parcelled up on their handlebars, preferring this to public transport – cars were rare in the Club in the 1940s.

'There were some wonderful characters among the members:

'Bill Silver was a real worker and livewire. He sailed a Snipe, *Bermel*, on which I crewed.

'Fred Temple was a rather strange friendly man who, up until about 1970, rode his bike to watch the APYC sail every Saturday. He always dressed in a dark suit and wore big heavy boots.

'Fred Watson was an old Queenscliff fisherman who knew boats, and who designed two 16 ft Moths, the last being a real flyer, similar in shape to a Fireball and named *D.J.W.* In his later years he appeared with a lovely little 12 ft boat which also was extremely fast, as an answer to Charlie Cunningham's *Gwen-12* which he considered to be a bad design. Fred's boat looked like an early Cherub. It had galvanized fencing wire for rigging (which was not uncommon) and he made the sails himself.

'"Chummy" Day, already mentioned as a dinghy club boy in 1911-1913, was the original founder of the 16 ft Moth named the *Swan* which was light, with a gunter rig, and which twisted on a tack. He was known to talk quite a bit.

'All of these characters would sail in their suits and ties, and often a felt hat, just as they arrived, from the train or tram.'

In *On The Lake*, June 1987, Norm Hammon wrote about his experiences in building a Snipe in 1946. Here is an abbreviated version:

'In 1946 I bought an American oiled-silk slicker – sticky, stiff, oversized and uncomfortable – at an army disposals store. I was going to sail a Snipe, but I had to build it first. It was not easy. I found a book in McGill's bookstore on "How to build a Snipe". It specified $\frac{3}{4}$ inch planking, but because Victorians made their Snipes of lighter material, I had to alter the measurements on the plan for framing. The timber, because of World War II was almost impossible to obtain. I cycled around to all the timber suppliers and finally found one at Northcote that had a fitch of spruce that had been lying in the yard since before the war.

Now for the 'bondwood' – $\frac{1}{4}$ inch plywood which was made with casein glue – it was not water proof, but merely water-resistant. I had to wait 9 months for my order to be delivered. I had long ago finished the frame, so now I set about covering it, using $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 6 brass screws, as boat nails other than copper nails were not then made. The glue used was red-lead mixed with linseed oil, and slopped on to the frames to seal the plywood joints.

'Fittings for small yachts were not made then, other than heavy timber or brass pulley blocks and large galvanized shackles. So I had to make my own steel shackles and brass mast step, rudder gudgeons and

pintles etc. There was no stainless steel available. The only rigging was large diameter galvanized wire rope which needed to be hand spliced as swaging was unknown. Small wires for diamond stays etc were usually galvanized steel wire which you bent back, bound with copper wire, and soldered. All ropes were sisal, or manilla, if you could find it. It was not unusual to see your mainsheet gradually disintegrate and part, because of wear, during a race.

'The only sail makers in Melbourne in 1946 were 'Issie' Prior and Radins, the latter having made canvas sails for square riggers in the 19th century. Therefore Priors was the place to go. Sails were made of Japara silk or cotton, and you had to wait many weeks. The size and shape of your sails depended a lot on 'Issie' Prior's memory when he got to work on them. Of course you told him what you wanted, but he never wrote anything down! You took what you got, and were thankful.

'Masts were all made of oregon timber, in box form, or if you had the time to spare, hollowed-out in two sections which were glued together with Beetle cement, which was like honey mixed with cocoa powder. For some reason it was never used on hulls.

'Then at last, there was my boat, *Katrena* – and she did look beautiful.'

The APYC attended the Colac Regatta every Australia Day weekend in those times (It was called ANA Day then). A furniture van would be hired, three boats would be put in the van lying on their gunnels then secured. The masts would be tied on the roof of the van. The yachties would make themselves as comfortable as possible in the Colac Yacht Club boatshed each night. But this was very difficult because of the shed being built up on stilts and the cold draught coming up between the floorboards. There were also water-rats scampering around. Not surprisingly some of the lads, unable to sleep and for something to do, once went for a sail in the middle of the night.

There were visits to the Frankston Yacht Club too, for an Easter regatta in 1948. The whole regatta sailed there 'under their own steam'. APYC members lifted their boats on to trolleys and wheeled them down Albert Road to Kerferd Road (trying to avoid getting wheels stuck in tram lines) to the beach at Middle Park, rigged up their Snipes, 16 ft Moths and Sharpies, and the five boats attempted to sail in convoy down the Bay. However, the Sharpies being faster drew away and Norm Hammon in his Snipe seeing a threatening squall in the distance, put in to Black Rock, and the crew went home by train. The next day was better and they returned to Black Rock and sailed the Snipe to Frankston. The regatta was blown out so they left their boats at Frankston and came home by train, returning the following weekend to sail the APYC boats back. It was rough and it took half an hour to get the boats out through the rollers. The boats were half full of water and the crews were wet-through. They sailed straight across the Bay towards Ricketts Point, and in Norm Hammon's Snipe (Norm was 17, crew Geoff Hurren, then 20, and Bill Cherry, 17) no one spoke the whole way. The Sharpies sailed only under jibs, but Norm carried both sails and the Snipe left the other four boats behind, the for'd hand pumping the whole way.



The old clubhouse about 1950 with flags flying for the opening of the season

The Snipe dropped mains'l and put into Black Rock under jib, where they left *Katrena* at 9 pm, and went home by train. It took another weekend to get the boat back to the lakeside.

About 1948, the Albert Sailing Club was founded. Bill Hooper, founder of the Jolly Roger Sailing School, played a leading role in its establishment, 'because the APYC did not admit women of any age as members', it has been written. 'Bill wanted his daughter Sue to be able to race in sailing boats as his sons were able to do'. However, clearly women were an important part of the APYC since before World War 1, so this reason cannot be correct. Our research reveals that in June 1948 an APYC member gave notice of motion 'that women be admitted to the Club'. This never proceeded, because of course the Club rules already allowed for this. But it does indicate that at that time women had stopped coming into the Club.

Norm Hammon remembers there were young women sailing on APYC boats when he was a young man, and surely during World-War II they would have been crewing boats while the young men were away?

The APYC seems to have been trying in the late forties to improve the racing by controlling admission of classes. The Club still had the Snipes, a number of 16 ft Moths, some H.W. 12 sq m Sharpies, and some 11 ft Moths. But there were a number of other owners wanting to sail on the Lake who, perhaps, were not welcome at the APYC because of the class of boats they owned.

To join the APYC then, you had to be voted in at a meeting.

Charlie Cunningham, yacht designer, brought along a 20 ft *Gwen* to demonstrate to the Club. It was remarkably fast but received the thumbs down. He later came along with his *Gwen-12*, but Fred Watson and others did not like the look of that either.

There were some of the old eight foot boats from the Boys' Dinghy Club still sailing in 1948, as well as VJs, Moths, Sabots and others that had some connection with Bill Hooper's Jolly Roger Sailing School. And so it was that on the night of 15 September 1948 a meeting was held at the Hooper Boat Shed to form the Albert Sailing Club, with a 5/- (50c) a year subscription. In March 1949, Bill Hooper was elected Commodore, and Dern Langlands, President and Publicity Officer.

In June 1949 it was decided to ask the ASC to take part in the races on the APYC Opening Day. At the same meeting a sub-committee was appointed to negotiate with the Albert Park Ladies Rowing Club regarding amalgamation with the APYC, but nothing came of this.

The Nineteen-fifties

The Albert Sailing Club, being situated at the north end of the Lake, had an advantage in recruiting because it was the first yacht club visitors came to, whilst the APYC was then around the corner, near Aughtie Drive, and a long way away from Albert Road and Aquatic Drive.

The ASC grew steadily and following the Olympic Games the Finn Class came into the Club, and also Moths, Gwen-12s and ultimately the OK Dinghy in 1960.

Perhaps because of the competition from the new yacht club, the APYC seemed to lose some ground in the mid-1950s. However they still had young Norm Hammon and he was appointed to the Committee in 1950. There were plans for revival, centred on a new building, a fund for which had been established in the forties. The Club members were also making cement bricks for the new clubhouse in late 1947. On 27 July 1951 it was resolved that 20 Life Memberships would be sold for six guineas each, the money to be put into the building fund. At this time the annual Club fee was 25/-.

In 1951 the Club was looking for a suitable training boat for cadets, and 19 members donated a total of 16 pounds and 15 shillings to buy a Vee-Jay (Vaucluse Junior), a small boat equipped with a sliding plank.

In 1943, the Hon P.J. Kennelly, MLC, was appointed to the Albert Park Committee of Management (APCOM). In January 1947 he became the Chairman of APCOM and retained this position until his death in 1981. Pat Kennelly has always been said to have been a very loyal person to his friends. No doubt this was true. But he was also a very good hater, and for some reason, he hated the APYC. He was a dogged and dominant person who had his own ideas, and anyone who didn't go along with them was bound to have difficulties, especially at Albert Park, of which he was king.

APCOM, after seeking the advice of some clubs, pointed out the desirability of separating the different sports so that the rowing clubs were on one part of the lakeside, and the yachting clubs were together on another part of the lakeside. Another APCOM ruling was that all the buildings in the park were to be faced with cream brick to achieve uniformity, and at the north end of the Lake, all buildings were to be moved back from the shoreline by 15 feet.

The APYC had been on their site since 1879, by now over 70 years, and they saw no reason at all why they should be moved. Besides, in a quiet spot, it was the best place for a yacht club. There was a belief that the original yacht club founders would have negotiated a 99 year lease before they built the clubhouse. (Recent research has revealed that this was certainly not likely, most clubhouses being granted only as 'permissive occupancy') A solicitor was found to act for the Club without fee, but his efforts to find evidence of the lease were fruitless, for he was told that no record could be found in the Department of Crown Lands and Survey.

The proposal was for the APYC to move into the vacant Melbourne Grammar School boathouse, near to the ASC's present location. But this building was too small.

There was an area of land at the back, which if added may have sufficed, but this was not on offer. The APYC thought that they needed a 90 ft X 90 ft site such as they had already.

In February 1956, the minute book records that the Club was waiting for the Albert Park Rowing Club to finish its new building, before proceeding with their own re-building plans – on their existing site, for which they had accumulated substantial funds.

While this was going on (minutes of meetings of this period are missing) the Club suffered the loss of their President/Commodore, Len Oliver, who died in about 1955. This was compounded by the death of Jack Rose,

Hon Sec, in mid 1956. To make matters even worse, Bill Silver, the new Commodore, 'a real worker and a livewire' as Norm Hammon described him, was quite devastated by the death of his wife about the same time. The young Norm Hammon, then 26, was asked to take over the office of Commodore at this critical time in the Club's history and he was duly appointed at a Special General Meeting on 26 August 1956. This was not an appointment that Norm welcomed. He was building his house at the time and had family commitments as is common with someone his age. But he shouldered the burden because he loved the old Club and could see it would disappear, as others were predicting, if he did not do so. There were no new members joining and the situation was

becoming bleak. But the new building was 'just about to begin', the late Secretary having managed to accumulate funds in the building account. Mr King was asked to draw up the building plans – it would seem for the old site.

But sooner or later it dawned on the officers of the APYC that the Chairman, Senator P.J. Kennelly, was not going to listen to their pleas to stay where they were.

There seemed to be some acute dislike of the APYC by the Senator. Jack Rose was a staunch Labor Party supporter, as were many residents of South Melbourne. At this time the Labor Party was in the process of splitting down the middle, and there may have been some animosity between the late Club Secretary and the Senator. Pat Kennelly was until 1954 the Secretary of the Australian Labor Party and played a prominent part in the 'split', which altered Australian politics and led to Liberal/Country Party dominance for many years both in Victoria (the Henry Bolte government) and federally.

Early in 1957 the APYC wrote to APCOM accepting the offer of the former Melbourne Grammar boatshed (which stood just south of the Police Boys Club of today) providing they could shift the old boathouse and skillion from their present site to the rear of the new site, and obtain a 1,000 pound loan. The Club's honorary architect, Mr King drew up a plan, quotes were sought and everything seemed set to go. However the Club then

received a telegram from APCOM stating that the Committee would do the work, and charge the APYC 800 pounds for it (which happened to be the amount in the Club's building fund). The APYC discussed this at a meeting and decided that the proposal was unacceptable.

However, five or six months later on a winter's night, the first ever yacht club-house built in Australia, the clubhouse of the APYC, was burnt to a cinder – and what a merry blaze it must have been. Cause? – unknown.

Without a clubhouse, the APYC could no longer operate. Overnight the APYC was out of business. It would not be allowed to rebuild on the old site, it would have to move. There is circumstantial evidence that the fire was deliberately lit.

By now, the Melbourne Grammar Boat Shed had been renovated, with a brick facing in front added. The APCOM again offered it to the APYC at the same price as before – 800 pounds. Unhappy following the fire, but feeling the building should at least be inspected, the Club officers obtained the key and entered the empty building. To their surprise, scattered about in a back room they came upon a collection of minute books, trophies, framed photographs and half models of boats that looked very familiar. They belonged to the APYC and had previously been in the old clubhouse. Obviously the person who had removed them had known the building was going to be destroyed and must have broken into the clubhouse to remove them. If the fire had been lit by an APYC member, these relics would not have been hidden in a lakeside shed to which they had no access anyway, but would have been secreted away in a member's home, or well away from the site. And of course, had the fire been lit by a vagrant or caused by an electrical wiring failure, the Club records would have been burnt.

The most interesting object, however, was missing. That was the first minute book of the APYC.

The Albert Sailing Club wrote to the APYC suggesting an amalgamation, but the APYC replied saying the time was not propitious.

The lowest point ever in the APYC's history must surely have been the Annual General Meeting of the 10 August 1957. The meeting lacked a quorum, but went on anyway, there being only eight present: N. Hammon, A. Cross, G. Mead, R. Cowell, R. Winston, A. Gayleard, K. Hearn and F. Pound. The Commodore reported the building fund had been increased by social functions and probably at this time stood at 800 pounds. (Bill Silver had married again and with Mrs Silver had held social functions to help the Club.) The Club's insurers however, offered only a very small sum for the loss of the clubhouse, the loss assessors regarding the clubhouse as in need of replacement.

Senator Kennelly continued to harass the APYC and its Commodore, frequently visiting the site of the old clubhouse and telling the members to leave. He once told Norm Hammon that the APYC would not be offered any further sites by the Lake, for as far as he was concerned, there was room for only one sailing club on the Lake and that he would evict them.

In December 1957, the APYC received notice from APCOM to quit the site. The Club wrote to APCOM asking what other sites were available.

Whelan the Wrecker cleared the debris from the old site at the end of 1957 for the sum of 10 pounds.

On Saturday 25 January 1958, Norm Hammon was confronted by Senator Kennelly who told him that he wanted the Club out of the site, and that they should accept the offer of the site immediately to the north of Walsh's hire Boathouse (where the Club is today).

This was accepted, provided the APYC could get first preference, should the Albert Park Ladies Rowing Club, to the north, cease to operate. Ultimately this occurred.

Now the Club organised a working bee and dismantled the old boatshed, storing the timbers in the space kindly supplied by the Victorian Speedboat Club. Ultimately this found its way into boat-racks in the new premises.

Plans for a small clubhouse capable of later expansion were then drawn up, the APCOM provided a loan of 1,000 pounds, and the building fund must have been adequate, for the quote for the new building of 1,850 pounds of H.E. Zegelis & Co was accepted.

The Club is Reborn

The first meeting in the new clubhouse was held on 7 March 1959 attended by 18 members. The Club had survived in spite of predictions by some members who had left.

There was no racing from the APYC following the fire and the few faithful and dedicated members would have been kept busy with working bees before, during and after the embryo clubhouse was completed. What boats the APYC could muster took to the water again on the 14 November 1959 for the Opening Day sail-past. Cr. D. McK. Patrick, the Mayor of South Melbourne, opened the 1959-60 season and the clubhouse too. A report of the day's proceedings reads – 'The greatest event in our 89 years – We all hope that this Club will now operate without any further interruption from outside influences'.

In 1959 a 'Promotion Committee' was set up. In June it produced a report. There were at that time 'approximately six boats' in the Club. Four were 16 ft (Snipe, Vee Ess,) one was 11 ft (Moth) and one was 20 ft (Payne-Mortlock). It was felt that Gwen-12s and Moths, built under group schemes, would help rejuvenate the racing. However, none of the committee seemed too enthusiastic, as they wanted a senior boat, yet could not think of a class that met all the requirements. There was talk of a Club designed boat but it was thought the matter was too urgent to allow time for such a development. The report included the opinion that the Lake should be dredged.

Ladies could, as in the past, join the Club at a fee of one pound and five shillings per year, the same as juniors, (males paid three pounds and three shillings). In August 1959, the first lady to join the club as a sailor for some time was Miss P. Langewarthy who sailed a Vee Ess (Vaucluse Senior) – or at least intended to. Unfortunately she didn't, and was asked to take her boat away in 1960. But she could not be blamed as there was no launching ramp until well into 1963, although the Club had continuously pressed the APCOM to provide such facilities. And when a ramp was built, the Club had to do it themselves.



Early picture of the Melbourne Grammar School Boathouse



The newly completed embryonic clubhouse in 1959

Within three years there were 12 Associate and Lady Members.

The new embryonic clubhouse was seriously lacking in boat storage space. It was agreed this should be expanded as soon as 500 pounds in debentures could be raised from members. Len Morris promised 100 pounds as a gift if needed. It was not until the end of 1962 that the planned extension could be built, as apart from the finance, APCOM had been dilatory in giving approval.

APCOM was under stress, particularly the now irascible Chairman. Following an arrangement with a commercial enterprise to build a large indoor bowling alley to the north of the Lake, some 50 (or more) fine trees were bulldozed from the site. Sir Keith Williams of the *Herald* began a newspaper campaign about park alienation for private profit, prompted by Mr Reimann-Basch of the Progress Associations. The fat was in the fire. Suddenly every sporting club in the park with a grievance against the APCOM, and there were many, weighed in. Oliver J. Gillard QC was asked by the Government, in 1961, to conduct a Board of Inquiry into the management of Albert Park. Finally a very thick Report was produced which while giving some praise to APCOM, ruled that in the future no buildings should be placed in the park that were not connected with park use, on land or water. And all buildings and car-parks had to receive the approval of the Minister for Lands first. The bowling alley was not approved and the space became a vacant stretch of grass – no trees were ever replanted. (It was seven years before the Chairman thought of a loophole – the island was not being used by anyone!)

Adjoining the embryonic yacht clubhouse on the south side was the Walsh's ancient wooden boathouse. It was run by 'Pop' and Mrs Walsh, a very respectable elderly couple who were made honorary members of the Club and who were very good neighbours. They rescued sailing gear members left by the lakeside. They saw the gates

were locked after everyone had gone, and supplied milk for the afternoon tea. On Opening Day Mrs Walsh would be given a large bunch of flowers, presented by Commodore's daughter, Wendy. Of course our members would patronise the refreshment department of the boathouse, and it was a very nice untidy place with all sorts of water craft hanging from the rafters. How we wish we could see such things again. Mrs Walsh was sometimes cross with the members, and would raise her voice (but never with Commodores). Cec Walsh, would sit in his canvas chair outside the boatshed and watch the sailing boats on Saturday, and if he was seen to go inside, it was time to look out for gusts of wind.

At this time the Hon Sec, Geoff Hurren, was sometimes in sole charge on Saturdays. He would arrive early, help his crew rig up his boat, spend an hour talking to prospective members, organise the race, turn on the tea-urn, ring the starting bell and jump into his Gwen-12 and try and catch up. If he forgot to turn on the hot-water urn, there would be no afternoon tea! The starting line was between the clubhouse and the opposite bank, whichever way the wind was blowing.

New members were trickling into the Club, but it had so few members after the fire that something more was needed to speed up the process. In 1961 there was no club in Victoria with a regular winter-time sailing program. Wet-suits were newly invented, or about to be, so the time was right for a yacht club to take the plunge and where better than our Lake? Norm Hammon had the bright idea to have a regatta and Alan Gayleard suggested the name 'Frostbite Regatta'. In 1961 it was held over the two last weekends of May; the first weekend for Moths, the second for Gwen-12s, OKs, and junior boats. An electric klaxon horn was installed for the occasion, races previously having been started with a brass school-bell. At the regatta it was advertised that winter-membership was available at reduced cost.

The regatta was a modest success and was thencefor-



14 November 1959 – The opening of the new Clubhouse and the 59-60 season by Cr. D. Mck.Patrick. (LtoR) Len Morris (back to camera), Norm Hammon, Cr. Patrick and Mrs. Patrick

ward a permanent event every May, although held only over one weekend. It did show, however, that our members were wanting in skills. It was about five years before Albert Sailing Club conducted a winter sailing program.

When the Club moved to the new site it was decided not to accept experimental yachts unless approval was given by the committee, and to make the Moth and Gwen-12 the classes to be fostered. In the years to come, an enlightened policy of letting classes come and go as members desired, served the Club well. The Gwen-12 building scheme did not result in many boats staying in

the Club, except the *Defiance II*, the Hon Sec Geoff Hurren's boat. Later Norm Price also sailed a Gwen-12 with wife Jean. A 12 ft catamaran came in. The hoped for Moth fleet did not develop and by March 1961 the Moth had been declared 'unsuitable for training'. There was a search for a junior boat, but no one seemed to like the Sabot, possibly because of lack of built-in buoyancy. It did not appear until 1962, when a building scheme helped to get a fleet going.

However, the Club must have had a few smart boats,



November 1962: Sail-past on Opening Day



1962 – Glorious April weather – southerly blows the breeze

because in 1961 and 1962 the Club had a stand at the winter Boat Show.

An Enterprise came in 1961, and its younger sister the GP-14 a year later, in early '62. This was *Aquila Aurea* owned by the Shackelton-Fergus family. The same year the Herons of Len Rieper and Alan Clift arrived. Jack Holt was in business. Trevor Richardson brought in a red-sailed Cherub, but for some reason it didn't catch on, although he won many races and no doubt it was more stable than the Gwen-12.

By the AGM on 10 August 1962 there were 78 members, as compared with 45 the previous year. If the weed didn't get too bad, or the lake didn't dry up, we were on the way to being 'the best small boat club in Victoria' as Norm Hammon was constantly telling us. In 1962 a modest training program was conducted, and in 1963 the Club sponsored the Sabot class, and the fleet grew rapidly. Then the Club issued invitations to both the Heron and GP-14 Class Associations to join our club.

In the mid-sixties there was a boom in small boat sailing throughout Australia and one could point to a number of possible explanations for this. One factor was that the baby-boomers born in the late forties, were now reaching adolescence. There was also the growth of one-design classes and better organisation of yacht racing through class associations, all possibly stimulated by the 1956 Olympic Regatta held on Port Phillip Bay in mainly one-design boats.

Another factor was the work of Jack Holt, an English yacht designer who designed one-design boats that could be home-built from marine ply, bought in kit-form or mass produced by commercial boat builders. This brought the sport within the budget of the average fam-

ily, particularly if the whole family could take part in the sport – and in many cases they did. Though not all particularly fast or demanding, most of them would plane in a good breeze and provide enough of a challenge for a skipper approaching middle age with one, two or three children. And women and girls could join in.

But something else helped too. The Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron mounted a challenge for the America's Cup in 1962. This put yachting on the front pages and may have attracted family groups to the sport who had tried (and tired of) power boating and were looking for something to interest the whole family.

At the same time there were annual boat shows which were supported by clubs and class associations – and the APYC was always there. In 1966 they made a special effort. A 20 ft tower was built on the top of which were the letters 'APYC' and above that a fully rigged Sabot was placed.

Daily newspapers had good reports of yachting activities every Friday, something that does not happen today. The APYC made sure that their activities were often in the news, particularly at 'Frostbite Regatta' time.

A new member, Ralph Neale, decided in 1964 that the Club needed a newsletter to keep everyone informed of what was happening and to improve Club spirit. A monthly newsletter came out entitled 'On The Lake' which was full of trivia and sometimes quite amusing in a schoolboyish sort of way. Almost every capsizing was reported with lurid details, but the idea communicated was that yacht racing was all fun at the APYC. The standard of production judged from 1996 looks very poor, but as a record of events – everything is there.

In 1964 the APYC had three racing classes: Gwen-12(6), Heron(5) and GP-14(6), plus one Cherub, one Snipe, one VS, one Payne-Mortlock Canoe and a few early Moths. Catamarans were banned from the Lake in 1964.

By March 1965 as many as 35 boats were starting each Saturday and class racing was still growing.

It should be mentioned here, that though the Club sailed through the winter, there was no rescue boat of any kind, the only showers were freezing cold, and the starts were still out in front of the clubhouse, per flag mast on shore.

When the officers of the Club first set eyes on the Holt designed Yachting World Heron in 1962, they did not regard it as a suitable boat (and perhaps time proved them right). Slowly this class grew in the Club until in the late sixties they were by far the biggest class in the Club. They were a wonderful club builder in that they brought in the women folk, either as crews or much needed support groups on shore, in the canteen or the racebox. The Yachting World GP 14 was a larger version which suited heftier (and older) people, and provided similar benefits to the Club. The age spread of membership was now from 7 to 70! The Club was a whole community and a wonderful atmosphere developed that brought out the very best in everyone. It was a time when young people stayed closer to home and family, than perhaps is the case in the nineties.

Families became owners of two or more boats as the younger members went into Sabots, Sailfish or Moths. The Club promoted the building of Sabots and by 1965 there was a good fleet sailing every week. In this year the Club Captain system was begun.

The once sleepy struggling Club by the Lake now be-

came a hive of activity on Saturdays. But at the end of each year there were exits to bayside clubs. Whole families had learnt to sail and were looking for new experiences on the Bay. So the Club justified its existence as a nursery for dinghy and later keelboat sailors, over and over again.

The Moth was also now popular at the APYC. The development of this class owed a lot to Len Morris (former owner of *Metis* of pre-World War 1). After leaving the APYC to go to Gippsland, Len, and later his son Brian, put all their spare time into perfecting the design and how to sail it to get the best out of it. The Moth is a class that has few restrictions on design and is therefore more suited to someone who likes to design boats and tinker with them. Often these ideas are appropriated by other designers. Len Morris was the first man in Australia to introduce fully battened mainsails (which he saw in photographs of German 12 sq m Sharpies). He pioneered waterproof plywood construction in Australia (as used in the Mosquito bombing plane) after building his own veneer press. He devised knock-up rudders and self draining cockpits for small boats. Lightness and high finishes were other things he sought. He became first International President of the Moth Class in 1968, and for his work with small boats and the VYC, he was the logical person to be invited to open the season at the APYC in the 1950s and 1960s. Len Morris lived until 1974 and died at the age of 81, his epitaph: "He brought a lot of joy to sailing".

The Moth at the APYC was by now favoured by young men and a few adventurous young women who became very proficient in the challenging wind conditions of the Lake.



On a quiet day in May – GP-14 left, Herons right





Above: Club Sabots about 1968
Left: Sue Morris's Scamp, a Moth sailed by Dennis Hammon

In the mid-sixties another significant development was the introduction of the Peter Milne (UK) designed Fireball. This was a high performance boat, 16 ft 2 ins long, for seniors with a spinnaker and trapeze, and was introduced at the suggestion of Norm Hammon. Up to 12 Fireballs used to start on summer Saturdays in the mid-1970s. It was sufficiently forgiving to allow quite senior people to helm with the aid of an agile for'd hand, and provided great fleet racing on the Lake and elsewhere from 1970 to about 1990, when singlehanded boats became more popular. Easily built, it missed out on becoming an Olympic Class by a whisker, close behind the voting for the 470.

The Frostbite Regatta every May continued. In 1964 there were 50 entries, in 1965, 113 and in 1966, 188! These regattas made people from other clubs aware of winter sailing programs of the APYC.

The Club introduced a change in the Constitution at this time to limit the Commodore's term to three years at most, although it was possible to re-elect the same person after an interval of one year. The idea behind this was to set up what may be called a 'career structure'. There was movement through the ranks and Commodores had three years to advance the Club before handing over to someone else.

The Albert Sailing Club also expanded in the 1960s but in different classes. The two clubs provided fleets that made the Lake quite a busy place in summer, so that knowledge of the sailing rules had to be impressed on members.

In 1966 the APYC instituted training sessions for novices and new recruits (50 pupils instructed by 15) which continue until this day. Generally sailing and racing techniques improved, many members taking part in Victorian and Australian Championships with results recorded on the honour boards in the club, and elsewhere in this publication.

Another change was introduced in 1966. Previously presentation of trophies was made at a night-time function – a successful dance was held in 1965, but of the 100 people present, only about half were members. There were now many young members. So in 1966 a dinner function was held at the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron. Noel Brooke presented the trophies and 132 people attended, everyone seemed to think the format was ideal, and it continued so in later years.

Further Expansion

The membership had grown to 300 in 1967. Naturally all these people with their boats required enlarged premises. The move for improvements was strongly supported by members and began in 1965 with a debenture scheme and the agreement of the Albert Park Committee of Management (APCOM) to lend money and allow the APYC to extend onto the adjoining Ladies Rowing Club site which was vacant. The weatherboard structure was demolished, leaving a brick front wall standing. It was intended to utilise this, and it was struttled, but plans were altered when a fierce gale blew the wall down, fortunately without anyone being nearby at the time. However, Mrs Walsh's dog Tim got a nasty fright.

The new extensions were completed in 1966 with the aid of members' working bees, many with building skills directing the teams. The blessing of hot-water showers came in May 1966. The boat storage space was now doubled. At this time there were 163 boats on the Club register. In 1967 the changing rooms were completed. And by then we had a rescue boat of sorts. The Club-owned Vacluse Senior, *Sirocco* (with a Masonite transom) was fitted with a Seagull outboard motor.

In 1967 a severe drought began in Victoria. Weeds grew apace and the Lake became unsailable. In the warm weather of 1967-68 summer the Lake simply evaporated.

Members resented the pumping of lake water on to golf courses. But Jim Dailey did a study of rainfall, where it went, possible result if water was bored for, and assured us the golf courses were actually using very little. The Club transferred operations to Port Melbourne Yacht Club, which extended a warm welcome. Rains fell again in the winter of 1968, allowing reservoir water to be used for topping up, and sailing resumed in late 1968. In spite of this bad season the Club retained its membership, a measure of the solidarity within the Club at that time.

Our Future in Jeopardy

At a time when the APYC should have been enjoying a summer season, early in February 1968, had there been any water to sail on, the APCOM announced through the daily papers a big idea. A large restaurant would be erected on the island, in the Lake, in recent years known as Gun Island (because of a wartime souvenir on it). To get to the island there would be a causeway from the east from Lakeside Drive. It would have a bridge in the middle with two spans each 33 feet, and a clearance above the water of 8 feet. The island was to have a car park for 250 cars on it. The restaurant would be five floors, circular in plan with a revolving restaurant on the top floor. At the northern end of the island there would be a fountain shooting water 87 feet in the air which would be the highest waterwork in Australia.

At an APYC General Meeting on 9 February 1968 the Committee was authorised to use every means possible to stop the scheme. The Committee duly delivered a letter of objection to the Minister for Lands at the time, Sir William McDonald. The Club delegates were not permitted an interview, but obviously Sir William read their letter.

The Chairman of APCOM, Senator P.J. Kennelly, who was the main supporter of the proposal, said he had sought advice from yachting people. But it was said at the time that 'his yachting adviser had slipped up'. He sent telegrams to both yacht clubs asking them to meet him at the Albert Sailing Club on Sunday morning, 18 February 1968. It was a hot gusty north-wind day, the temperature around 35C degrees, not the best of weather for a cool-headed discussion.

The Chairman and park manager (who happened to be the Chairman's son-in-law) brought with them a scale model of the tower which they put down on the table, as though this would sway the judgement of those present. It seemed not to sway them one little bit. Why were they objecting? Surely if they could negotiate the



1968 – The tide went out

narrows which were only 292 feet wide, they could negotiate the 330 feet wide channel between the western side of the island and the Speedboat Clubhouse? This argument failed to take into account that many classes sailed on the Lake, did not go down the narrows but they did sail around the island. A report written of this meeting ends with the words 'we all parted on good terms'. However, at least one person seems to remember the Chairman leaving, muttering 'Selfish yachting people'.

This was of course a serious threat to the existence of both yacht clubs, and because of what happened in 1995 and 1996, no one could say the plan would not have gone ahead if a number of APYC members and others had not conducted an all-out war on the proposal, which they did. Sailors' mothers rang talk-back radio stations, sailors' fathers wrote letters to the papers, and some

members went into top gear and wrote to anyone of importance they could think of.

In a radio interview Senator Kennelly said that because of the yacht clubs' objections he thought a tunnel to the island could overcome the problem, but Sir William McDonald, the Minister for Lands, saw that the idea had no public support and declined to give his approval.

With the ending of the drought, the lake level was restored by reservoir water in late October, the APYC 1968-69 Opening Day was held on 2 November and it was declared the best Opening Day anyone could remember. There was a full lake, a good breeze and a large gathering. Len Morris opened the season by pulling a rope which broke out the flag, there was the usual sail-past of boats of the Club, a wonderful afternoon tea, followed by 50 junior boats in a balloon race, a barbecue attended by over 100, and a night race for 20 boats in a balmy breeze. Everyone went home tired but happy.

About this time the APYC decided to buy a better rescue boat and a 15 ft 6 ins De Havilland Aztec was purchased. Crew training for it was undertaken.

By now the Fireball class was beginning to grow, having been proved a suitable boat for a wide range of ages. Arthur Palmer, veteran and yachting enthusiast, introduced the Jack Holt designed Solo in 1969, another class set to expand, while for the young men the rather wet Sailfish class was also established. This was more like a long surfboard than a boat but was easily built and inexpensive.

In the summer of 1969-1970 the weed problem was as bad as ever. Experts were called in. Chemical treatments had resulted in some alleviation in the past but APCOM was loth to spend money on the problem. The Shell Com-



Back again! Weed fills the lake

pany thought it was a matter of better management. But APCOM was seeking a biological control, which was however denied them by the Dept of Wildlife and Fisheries under Mr Butcher, who did not get on well with the Senator. The yachting fraternity feared that the situation was being exploited to get rid of them. There may have been no truth in this, but it was the way they put the facts together. Get rid of the yachtsmen and then it would be possible to build an island restaurant without too many objections.

Towards the end of 1969 the Club decided to move the racing to Garden City Beach, running our own races with the help of our crash boat and George Davis's power-boat. This worked quite well although the effort of launching boats and taking them home again, as many yachting people do all the time, made our members appreciate the comforts of our own club waters.

In December 1969, a few members of the APYC, acting outside the Club and on their own initiative, founded the Albert Park Protection League, believing that APCOM was not serving the best interests of the public and lake users. APPLE, as it was called, received considerable support from local residents and took matters up with the new Minister of Lands, Mr Bill Borthwick, and received a good hearing. Subsequently a number of ambitious schemes which would have affected passive recreation in the park were denied APCOM. In this APPLE relied very much on the recommendations of Oliver Gillard QC following his Board of Inquiry into Albert Park held in 1961. The President of APPLE was member Eric Flynn, and he was assisted by the APPLE Public Relations Officer, Ralph Neale, but there were other members involved, too many to mention. APPLE believed that the Lake should be dredged, and said so. Jim Dailey, Max Caffin and Eric Flynn even sampled the mud to see if it might have any commercial value. It was thought that the lake weed problem was connected with the accumulation of fertiliser in the run-off from the golf course, which was the main revenue raiser for park maintenance. According to a report in *On The Lake*, the mud was declared 'rubbish'!

APCOM claimed then that the Lake had been formed by lining its bottom with clay, and that any attempt to dredge it might lead to its water leaking away! Twenty-five years later, this was proved to be false. When the Lake was cleaned out in 1992, bulldozers moved safely

around on a natural bed of thick impervious clay! Of course before they began work they had found out exactly what was under the Lake.

A temporary chemical solution to the weeds growing in Albert Park Lake was very quickly found when APCOM was informed that Her Majesty, The Queen, would be visiting Albert Park on her forthcoming visit to Victoria in February 1970. However it would be another twenty-four years before the lake problems would be dealt with properly by removing the sludge from the bottom of the Lake and deepening it.

The APYC resumed sailing on the lake in April 1970, but APCOM believed that as every part of the park had to pay its way, the lake users would have to pay an annual fee, to cover the maintenance of the lake. There was at first some opposition to this, but the VYC sided with APCOM, and so the ground was cut from beneath the feet of objectors. Generally most people were happy that APCOM was going to keep the lake open by some means or another and cheerfully paid their annual licence fee, which gave them a sticker for their boat transom.

In late 1970 the Puffin Pacer fibreglass family boat was introduced and began to grow. Also the OK Dinghy (sailed by our friends at the ASC too) was introduced as an advanced singlehander. The three classes which had stood the Club in good stead for the previous 7 to 10 years – the Gwen-12, Heron and GP-14 were now fading fast.

The APYC – One Hundred Years Old

In 1971 it was realised that the APYC was almost 100 years old. Ralph Neale was asked by the Commodore, Norm Hammon to find out more about the Club origins.

After some reading at the Latrobe Library, it was found that the records were very complete in the newspapers of the early years, but insufficient time was available to do a thorough job. However, some details were unearthed to include in a souvenir program for the 1971-1972 One-hundredth Opening Day.

Something else happened in 1971, it was heard that the *Acrospire II* still intact, though in poor shape, was lying waterlogged at the Ballarat Yacht Club and up for sale. Its owners who had bought it from Mr Wheeler senior, with the object of restoring it, had for some reason

abandoned the project. Norm Hammon and Ralph Neale went up to Ballarat on a cold day and decided to buy it for \$50. It cost at least that much to truck it to Melbourne. Mr Hilton White, younger brother of Joe White, generously donated \$50 for the restoration.

Another valuable old relic came back to the Club at the time of its centenary. This was what is now termed Cosgrave's Cup. Mr Leo McDonald, hearing of our anniversary, contacted the Club and presented it with an Australian silver cup made by famed Melbourne silversmith, William Edwards, in 1872. William Edwards lived in Albert Road in 1872 and was a foundation member of the APYC. Leo McDonald was John Cosgrave senior's grandson. The cup had been won by his uncle John Cosgrave junior in 1872 and was probably one of the first trophies ever presented by the Club.

On 6 November 1971, the One Hundredth Season of the APYC was opened by Hon Mr William Borthwick, MLA, Minister for Lands at that time. The Navy provided a brass band for the occasion. Norm Hammon, Commodore, welcomed the large crowd including the old members from days gone by who had been contacted, many of them quite elderly. The speeches were given and then the Club sail-past was led by *Acrospire II* in the hands of Norm Price, with an impressive fleet of

small boats following. The spectators all went in to the boatshed, spruced up for the occasion, to enjoy the magnificent spread for afternoon tea, glad that the weather had held off for the proceedings. However, then the wind began to howl and the rain came down in torrents so that a number of boats including *Acrospire II* were in need of rescuing.

Another event of an unusual nature was undertaken in late summer of 1972 as another centenary celebration for the Club. Norm Hammon had seen an event taking place on a small lake in England termed a Sailathon, a name coined to describe a 24 hour continuous race in which yachts were crewed by either a team taking it in turns, or an individual. This went ahead successfully, with all proceeds going to charity, organised by Dave Hackworth. This event was repeated regularly in future years. We record just some of the results:

- April 1976, \$3,500 raised. Arthur Palmer sailed 24 laps in a Solo and Don Sutherland sailed for 24 hours. 82 boats sailed a total of 1236 laps. Stephen Hackworth and Harry Box organised this one with club helpers.
- March 1979, \$2,500 raised. This time the Albert Sailing Club helped us to run the event.



After the racing – The Club in September 1971



Acrospire II returns to the Lake – 1971



Cosgrave's Cup held by a young Elizabeth Wellman

- March 1982, \$7,000 raised. 140 boats in 29 classes took part. A Fireball (10215) completed 36 laps. Doug Watt was in charge.
- The most recent such event was organised by Peter Naismith in March 1995 and raised \$2,500.

Such ventures have resulted in raising quite a lot of money for good causes, while creating an atmosphere and spirit of friendliness which is good for the Club.

In mid-1973, Jack Holt, UK designer of so many boats that were numerous in the APYC and helped to make it

successful in the previous 10 years, visited our Club at the invitation of the Club Solo fleet. He sailed on the Lake in Jim Paxton's Solo.

With weed under control, club racing at the APYC went ahead, and sailing talent was nurtured. Members took part in many regattas and championships with increasing success.

But by 1974 with 449 members on the books, there was some congestion at times. Classes now sailed were: Fireball, Moth, Solo, OK, GP-14, Pacer, Heron, Sparrow and Sabot.



Norm Hammon and Bill Wheeler working on Acrospire II, 1976

The Sparrow, a fibreglass sloop of small size, was a new family sailing boat which managed to accommodate some tall people and was another good Club builder.

Jim Paxton, born 1900, who saw wartime service in the Navy, re-joined the APYC after an absence of some 15 years, and brought to the Club his unique sense of humour, went on to become a Club favourite. He was to found a veterans' group who sailed on Wednesdays each week and dubbed themselves 'Dad's Navy'. The group included Stace Howden (ex Army) and Arthur Palmer (ex Airforce). They helped to popularise the Solos. Most members probably thought that Jim Paxton had been a member continuously since he was a 10 year old boy, but in November 1955 he wrote to the Club explaining that because of the weed in the Lake, and the necessity for him to get in as much training as possible in the Finn Class, for the Olympic yachting trials, he had become a member of the Albert Sailing Club. This was because the ASC had taken their sailing fleet to the Bay until the weed cleared. This may not seem an unusual thing to have done, until you learn that Jim was at this time 55 years of age and the Finn Class (sail area 108 sq ft) is probably the hardest boat of all to sail!

Acrospire II was in bad shape and in need of complete restoration work and many thought beyond repair. It lay in the boat shed for a year or more, awaiting some enthusiasts to work on it. Norm Hammon and Ralph Neale began to replace the ribs one winter. They were then

joined by Bill Wheeler, who as a boy had pumped it out for his father, Bill Wheeler senior, at Ballarat. Many members looked at it with distain because it needed so much work done on it. However, interest grew slowly.

Over the winter of 1977, the *Acrospire II* re-ribbing was completed, its planking patched up, and of course completely recaulked and painted. About a dozen members worked on it and paint suppliers and sailmakers assisted in reducing costs. It was re-launched in time to take part in the Ballarat Yacht Club's 100th Anniversary. We name just a few of those who worked on her: Norm Hammon, Ralph Neale, Bill Wheeler, Ken Wellman, Ross Worden and Rick Parker.

One of the big events for Ballarat's celebrations was the challenge between the BYC's chartered *Valdera* and the APYC's own patched up *Acrospire II*, which was held on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 of December 1977 on Lake Wendouree. It is not proposed to describe the races here, except to say honours were even, but one race that *Acrospire II* won had to be resailed because of course confusion, and therefore Ballarat won the newly presented Challenge Shield. In the years since this time, the two clubs have raced in the old boats on many occasions, alternating between our Lake and their Lake. Although the old boats are somewhat different and have their individual preferences as regards weather, APYC skippers Norm Hammon and Jim French have sometimes surprised Club watchers. Bill Wheeler and Peter Thomas have also captained challenges.



Fireballs sailing on the Lake about 1978



Acrospire on Albert Park Lake in 1979

In retrospect, some members would say that the old boats were a distraction from normal Saturday class racing and the purchase of the *Acrospire II* (even at a bargain price) was not in the best interests of the Club, because of the amount of work in maintaining her and also expenditure on materials, only to have a museum-piece on the Club's lakeside.

As against this, there is a strong argument that as a Club icon, a sign that our club has had a long (though checkered) history – a way of showing the world we were a Club that was prepared to take up interesting and unusual challenges – it could be said the veteran was just what was needed. It is necessary to have such objects for members to gather around, when a Club is vulnerable to outside interests which may take away the very ground the clubhouse stands on, the water we sail on and even the wind that propels our boats.

But the old boat (now 85 years old) had its carers who worked on it at every spare moment, sometimes at night in the freezing cold boatshed, when everyone else was warm and snug at home. And the fact that it only measures correctly with two men sitting on the foredeck somehow seems to add to the legend.

About 1978 the Sabre class yacht began to expand within the APYC. Designed by Rex Fettell, its ease of construction and lightness made it a popular single-handed boat.

Another class to gain support in the Club was the Laser, an Olympic Class single-hander.

The Club membership in November 1978 stood at 600, but only 50-60 boats were racing each Saturday.

To summarise the main classes in the Club at this time, these were (VYC yardstick rating in brackets): Fireball (104), Laser (114), Moth (115), Solo (122), Sabre (128), Pacer (128), Sparrow (144) and Sabot (170).

On Saturday 16 January 1979, before the racing started, a birthday cake was presented to Jim Paxton on the occasion of his 79th birthday and all members present sang



"Happy Birthday Jim". At this time it was said that he sailed more regularly than any other member. This was repeated on Jim's birthday every year until his death in 1984.

The Clubrooms Expanded

At this time the Club prepared plans for extensions to the upper floor to provide an adequate meeting room looking south over the Lake, and other major improvements. This was later built by club member Chris Wellman working under contract, aided by Jim French, and completed on time and to budget to a high standard. John Hilton provided the structural design, computations and negotiated the building permits, with Ivor Hutchinson providing advice on electrical matters and revamping the public address system. Work commenced in mid-1979 with members working voluntarily to prepare the site for the builder.

During 1979, a great step forward in the comfort area began with the formation of a Galley Auxiliary to provide a comprehensive catering service for members. Over many years, wives and mothers had spent a lot of their spare time in providing afternoon tea facilities which were greatly appreciated. The provision of lunches too was another step forward which proved enormously popular and was warmly welcomed.

The membership of the Club in June 1979 was 343 seniors, 142 juniors and 53 cadets, a total of 538. They were in 62 family units and 23 student members. They owned 268 boats.

The 108th Opening Day in November 1979 included a ceremony for opening the new clubroom extensions and the new Club season, both performed by Norm Hammon whose long continuous association with the Club over a period of 33 years well qualified him for the office. He was also designer, advisor and supervisor for the whole project. However, it was another ten years before the building was completed as planned.

The Decade of 1980 to 1989

Early in 1980 weed in the Lake reappeared, as it did every few years, but APCOM carried out weed control measures and the season continued.

In February 1980 the Club organised a new training program for Club members as well as others. This was a 6 weeks course under the Training Officer, Graham O'Meara. Final enrolments were 98 with 32 instructors. On the day that 'Bottling' Practice was scheduled, as many as 85 students and 25 instructors turned up. The exercises carried out with 25 boats at a time, capsizing intentionally and being righted, were quite something to see. As well as the voluntary work of the instructors there was the work of the ladies in the Galley, and the rescue boat operators. From this program the Club gained many new replacements to maintain the Club strength. It was all a commendable operation. Subsequently a new member wrote "... we have been somewhat overwhelmed by the warmth and sincerity that permeates the Club and truly appreciate the way in which we have been welcomed and accepted".

A series of Twilight races was also conducted in late 1980, starting at 7.00 pm. The Albert Sailing Club also joined in the program. This became an annual series made possible through the advent of daylight saving, and became a permanent feature of summer sailing.

The 1980 Frostbite Regatta had 170 starters in light weather, as May sometimes brings. The boats came

mainly from the two Lake Clubs, the most numerous classes being Lasers, Sabres and Mirrors.

In 1980 there was an attempt by wind-surfing boat owners to get permission to use the Lake. This was refused by the Lake Advisory Committee as it was thought they were unsuitable.

The Trophy Presentation Night was for the first time held in the Club's own Meeting Room. As many as 130 members and guests attended and this was the first of many social functions held in the Club's new premises.

In 1981 a computer found its way into the Racebox. From that time onwards no one could do the necessary calculations without it.

Another innovation was a fireworks display (Chris Wellman and David Lewis) on the opening of the Club season for 1981-1982 on a day that was described as a 'huge success' by Jim Paxton. Doug Davey performed the opening ceremony and was afterwards made a presentation for 17 years' service on the Club committee.

Due to the work of the Club Publicity Officer, Derek Henderson, the Club was able to attract 110 new members in the space of 6 months.

We are perhaps too close in time to this period to judge the significance of the quality of club life at the APYC during the early eighties. But it may in the future be judged the best of times the club has experienced in its history, for club members of all ages.

Of special note was the year 1981 to 1982 when Social Secretary, Kerry Scott, with the help of the Ladies' So-



The Pacer fleet in the 1980s



The Sabres



The Solos

The rise of the single-handed sailing boat

cial Committee, organised 7 functions during the season which were well attended. Such functions were more successful because the Club now had its own facilities for such events. Later, other people also organised good social programs, much more successful than previously in the Club's history, and which rate so much better than the all-male smoke nights of the early part of this century, which they did not resemble in any way. How things have changed!

As regards the regular club sailing on Saturdays, the *raison d'être* for the APYC, perhaps the high point was Saturday 29 May 1982 when the Club had 94 boats on the water. In the season 1981-1982 there was an average of 57 starters in the summer, and 66 starters in the winter.

But things did not always go so well. In the season of 1982 - 1983 a terrible drought struck south-eastern Australia and the Club had to gratefully accept the offer of the Port Melbourne Yacht Club to sail on Hobsons Bay. Throughout the winter of 1983 the water level in the Lake remained so low that the Fireballs did not sail and other classes sailed with plate half-up to windward. There was no Frostbite, no Sailathon.

The VYC Youth Regatta (94 entries in 4 races over 2 days) was first held on the Lake in the autumn of 1984 and managed by the APYC Vice-commodore, Ern Minnett, assisted by 50 APYC members. This regatta was to be run every year henceforth, but with the ASC and the APYC alternating as host clubs.

In 1985 to conclude Victoria's 150th Anniversary an

Activities Day was held at Albert Park. The Club manned a Coca-Cola stand and everyone enjoyed a sensational fireworks display in the evening.

In 1985 a decline in boats racing was noted, and because of falling membership, fund raising was resorted to. In the 1986 - 1987 season there was a poor attendance at the Opening Day and also the Presentation Dinner. The senior 2 person boat, the Fireball Class, was down to 4 boats racing, and the Moths only 1 or 2. The opinion was held that the membership numbers were falling because the family-type boats and 2-person classes were being superseded by single-handed boats such as Sabres and Solos. It seemed that the sport was losing the battle with allied sports such as sail-boarding and surfing, particularly in summer. Youth was now more independent of family, and families were no longer staying together in the same sporting sphere for long. And of course there were all those games played with a pumped-up leather ball of some shape or other.

The effects of this were that if persons asked the race officials to help them find a boat to crew in, it was impossible to manage. The old apprenticeship system, by which a young person crewed for an older person for four or five years before they got to hold a tiller, seemed now to be over. In many classes there were single-handed boats advertised in the *Trading-Post* at a fraction of their real value or replacement cost and the Club usually provided a training program to get you started. Between 1974 and 1987 - 13 years - the classes sailed went from 10 down to 6 classes, and in 1987 only two of those classes were 2-person boats.



Big yachts on the Lake - 1988

Ross Worden, who had held all Flag Officer positions and was Training Officer and permanent Officer of The Day, was made a Life Member in 1986.

The Club became 'Incorporated' under the new name Albert Park Lake Yacht Club Incorporated in 1986.

Blessed by the Bicentennial Authority, the APYC held a race for 25 veteran yachts, all built before 1950, on 5 and 6 November 1988. There were 3 Restricted Class 21 ft yachts, *Dolphin* and *Endeavour* from Goolwa in South Australia and *Altair* from Royal Melbourne Y.S. *Valdera* came from Ballarat and *Acrospire II* was there.

There was an Elwood Seahorse *Nautilus* built in 1936 and an original 12 Square Metre Heavy Weight Sharpie as well as a number of old cadet dinghies from Royal clubs. Melbourne Water filled the Lake for the occasion. The main event was won by Jock Veenstra in *Dolphin* from Goolwa Y.C.

The Challenge Shield was raced for within the regatta and *Valdera* took it back to Ballarat.

Bill Wheeler, Graham Witt and Terry Ritson organised this regatta on behalf of the APYC and many members provided the back-up services.

Though weed problems threatened, generally APCOM kept things under control. However, there was a time when in the summer of early 1989 the weed had filled the Lake on the eastern side of the island, and the controlling government body refused to issue a permit to enable APCOM to treat the weed, for environmental reasons. Things were looking black when the problem suddenly disappeared, due no doubt to hot weather.

In the last few years of the eighties, there were many boats in the clubhouse but very few boats racing. There were only 15 starters on the 8 July 1989 whilst there were 148 boats in the boatshed. When Graeme Reynolds, Editor of *On The Lake*, looked at the plans for Melbourne's Olympic bid, he saw that the roads and park where our clubhouse was, were just shown as grass and trees. This was alarming as the State Government had given the Club the impression they would be allowed to stay in spruced-up buildings. To show the Government the APYC was viable, more people would have to sail. However, the Club still had 300 members.

The Club lost a few members in the decade of the eighties. Jim Paxton died at 84 in 1984. Ross Worden died in late 1987. He was a Life Member, *Acrospire II* enthusiast, and former Commodore and Training Officer, and bravely spent his last years in the service of the Club, though fighting a crippling disease. He will be long remembered for his humour and his inspiring example. An old member from the forties, Wally Woolnough died in 1987. Ron Read, who was the Club's Hon Sec for many years when the Club was very big, died in 1989, leaving the Club in his debt.

The Nineteen Nineties

In September 1990, the decision to award the 1996 Olympic Games to Atlanta was greeted by the APYC with great relief. However, it was announced the park would be upgraded.



Hot Lasers – A visiting fleet of Lasers on a Short Course Racing Regatta, May 1996

What happened from this date on is so involved that we have to abbreviate it as much as we can.

- There were many problems in the park and with the lake.
- By late September 1990 the weed had filled the lake.
- It was removed from the lake with a weed cutting machine brought from Ballarat.
- Within three weeks it had grown back and a toxic algae bloom emerged.
- The lake was treated with copper-sulphate and was closed for two weeks.
- The Minister, Steve Crabbe, now decided the Lake would have to be dredged.
- A bureaucratic bungle was discovered in that the chemical which had been used successfully in the past, 'Diquat' had been withdrawn by the EPA, mistaking it for 'Diruron'. Now it seemed it could be used, and dredging costs avoided.
- APCOM applied the 'Diquat'.
- In June 1991 APCOM were told by the government that dredging would begin in July 1991. Tests were conducted, tenders were invited in November 1991.
- APCOM had its last meeting in December 1991.
- Management of the park was handed over to Melbourne Water on 1 January 1992.
- At the same time a report 'Albert Park the Vision' was released after six years' study
- The new Committee was advised that John Holland Ltd had won the contract for dredging. (The \$2.6 m contract eventually blew out to \$5 m).

- Work began in mid-1992. The sludge was pumped from the Lake into pits, but wet weather caused problems and eventually the material was scooped up and removed in trucks to the pits.
- In September 1992 Melbourne Water had complete control of the park and disbanded the old organisation.
- In December 1992 Hassell Group, consultants, were asked to draw up a new plan.
- 'Albert Park Draft Strategy Plan' appeared in December 1993.
- Unknown to only a few people, the Victorian Government had signed a conditional agreement in Britain in March 1993, to hold the International Grand Prix Motor Race in Australia in Albert Park from 1996 onwards.
- This was announced on 17 December 1993 and all existing plans for Albert Park were more or less thrown out.
- The Hassell Group now had to produce a different plan, called 'Realising the Vision: Final Proposed Strategy Plan for Albert Park', which was released in May 1994.
- The International Grand Prix Motor Race was held in Melbourne in March 1996, in Albert Park.

Through all this the APYC endeavoured to maintain enthusiasm for yacht racing, and the Club Officers strove to maintain level heads. Early reorganisation plans had envisaged the yacht club buildings being demolished



A Sailability outing in a Dolphin loaned by the Sea Scouts – with Ken Riley and Terry Hart, April 1996

and both yacht clubs being amalgamated in a clubhouse without the amenities of the APYC. Objections were raised to this, but generally the Club seems to have been ignored and earlier submissions appear also to have been put to one side.

A 21 ft Restricted Class yacht *Nautilus* was purchased in Metung in early 1990 and in the winter of 1990 a team worked on restoring it with the expectation that it could be launched in November 1990. Ray and Dot Maus put a lot of time into this and were rewarded by the outcome. The yacht gave a lot of enjoyment to Club members.

During the weed fiasco the APYC took the opportunity to sail with the Port Melbourne Club, but after the resumption of the Diquat treatment, by the end of 1990 the season went ahead on the Lake.

The Club made the most of the rest of the season in 1991, and in anticipation of the dredging beginning, working bees were deferred. However, when dredging did not start as expected, the working bees were organised and a tentative winter sailing program was publicised, subject to water. Rescue Boat Endorsement Courses, First Aid Courses and Power Boat Handling Classes were also conducted.

In fact the dredging did not begin until mid-1992, and was not completed until January 1993.

During the time of the dredging, the APYC sailed from the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron's West Beach Boatshed. This began a relationship with the Squadron which has continued, particularly in regard to training.

Sailability

In 1991, Alan Rose through the Victorian Yachting Federation approached the APYC regarding sailing for people with disabilities. The restored *Nautilus*, the Club's 21 footer, has proved invaluable in this program and a large number of organisations that cater for people with disabilities have attended the Club on Wednesdays and the last Sunday of each month, to sail. This continues in 1996 under the organisation of Ken Riley and volunteers.

In addition to the above, a VYC sponsored Sailability group run by Club member Colin Lampshire operates at the Club premises on Tuesdays, using the VYC's Access dinghies.

The Club has also provided a program for the vision-impaired on its own initiative, sending teams to World Championships in Auckland in 1990 and Perth in 1992/93. These teams were led by Club Officers Ron Parker and John Frigo.

The Club's latest initiative in helping the disabled is the modification in 1996 of a Corsair dinghy for sailing by paraplegics.

The Aquatic Drive Precinct Changes 1995-1996

After many plans were proposed for the precinct, in which the Club had provided an input, a new plan was proposed on 1 June 1995. This was unrelated to previous plans and it proposed modifications to the



A1 is Acrospire II, V is Valdera. Classic yachts competing in the Grand Prix Regatta – March 1996.

Clubhouse without prior discussion. The new plan went ahead, but for some reason the changes to the APYC Clubhouse were omitted from the works. Attempts by the Club to negotiate with Melbourne Parks and Waterways were ignored and at one time the Club was isolated by a fence and a locked gate. The site office did not know that there was more than one yacht club on the lakeside.

Melbourne Parks and Waterways had a tight deadline to complete works prior to the holding of the first Melbourne International Grand Prix Formula 1 Motor Race in March 1996 and funds were limited. The other occupiers of lakeside buildings had inferior structures which had to be replaced, but the APYC Clubhouse was regarded as of an acceptable standard and so it was retained.

However, the Clubhouse in 1996 is hemmed in by other buildings, with limited access and rigging areas, while the neighbouring yacht club has been provided with new buildings at extraordinary public expense. But what seemed far more unjust was the notice to increase annual rental for the APYC to seven times what had previously been paid. Fortunately reason prevailed and the increase was made in line with other sporting clubhouses.

Recent Special Events

In 1993, with the water depth substantially increased, the Lake was now more suitable for serious yacht racing, and the club started running a number of short

course training days for the Laser Class Association (an Olympic Class). These continue, but in addition the Club has run the Laser Mid-Winter Championships in August, since 1993. This class is one of the most competitive of the off-the-beach classes in Victoria, and setting courses and managing races for them is a most exacting task.

In 1994 the Club hosted the Solo State titles on a Labour Day weekend that saw many championships cancelled at other clubs. By Monday at lunchtime, seven races had been completed and the title decided.

In September 1996, the Club hosted Lex Bertrand and the Victorian Institute of Sport Olympic Athlete Program for Sailing. This also required exacting race management.

The Grand Prix Regatta

A joint committee was established by the APYC and the Albert Sailing Club to run the Grand Prix Regatta on the four days of the Grand Prix Motor Race in March 1996. Three months' prior work ensured a successful event, aided by excellent weather. Over 250 boats competed and seven schools participated in the school teams event. Four Restricted 21 Foot yachts came from South Australia and *Valdera* came down from Ballarat.

David Atkins of the Grand Prix Company facilitated the sailing event, and his insistence on involving the two clubs in the organisation resulted in a significant level of co-operation being established between the two clubs.



The Clubhouse in September 1996

Acrospire II Flies Anew

Since 1993, the Ballarat Yacht Club, sailing *Valdera*, won only one race from the *Acrospire II*. Jim French as new skipper of *Acrospire II* introduced some modifications, and with Chris Davey on the main sheet, Sue Smith on the foredeck and Robyn Primrose on the mid-deck, the *Acrospire II* has performed at her peak.

Sharing

The Albert Park Yacht Club from the very earliest days has always been a sharing sort of club. In the early part of this century, when the South Melbourne Brass Band wanted a place to practise, where did they find it? – in the old APYC boatshed!

When the APYC's new Clubhouse was completed in 1959, in the interests of the yachting community, the various class associations were allowed to use the Clubhouse for their meetings, and they were never charged a cent. And it suited all classes because of its central locality and it was well used, and still is.

This sharing with various other organisations is still very much the Club spirit.

In *On The Lake* (November 1993) Christopher Davey, then Commodore, wrote about the problems of the time and pointed out that the Club had always been 'the protector of the Lake'. He pointed out there had been numerous threats to the Lake over the years. In the very early days it was the Club which bore the burden of get-

ting the authorities to complete the construction of the Lake. When there was a threat of a causeway across the narrows, the club swung into action. When there was the island restaurant proposal with a bridge across the Lake, Club members led the attack. Then there was the do-nothing attitude towards the weed problem in 1970 which needed redressing and Club members provided leadership. Chris Davey thought that for these reasons the bureaucracy felt they could not automatically count on our submission, and this could explain why things did not always go smoothly for us.

But all APYC members realise they are on public land and the Lake belongs to everyone, so everyone is welcome to share all of it. The organisation is necessary to make it possible to get the best use of all there is to offer, and the feeling is that we should be helped to maximise that benefit.

One hundred and twenty years ago in August 1876, the APYC held a meeting in Smith's Boathouse. John Cosgrave took the Chair and it was decided to hold an Opening Day that would be the mother of all Opening Days. Why, as much as 200 to 300 pounds by way of subscriptions was to be raised to hold a regatta worthy of the occasion! (Lack of water and weed saw that it did not go ahead.) The same week someone under the pen-name 'Nauticus' wrote to the *Emerald Hill Recorder*:



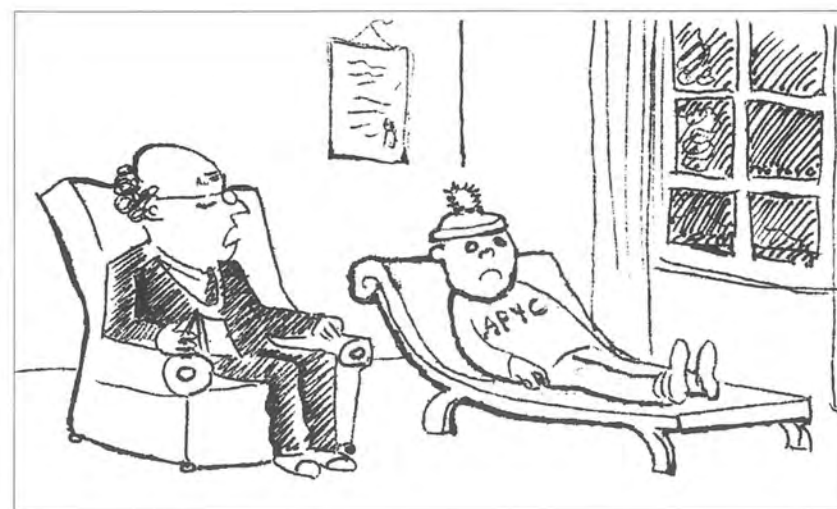
The Clubhouse from Aquatic Drive, September 1996

'...But the day that sees the Hill (Emerald Hill) with a real Lake (must) be made such an event that our children shall talk about it in the next century, and through the agency of the spirits, advise us of the great benefit bestowed upon them by the wisdom and energy of their ancestors.'

Well, it had to wait until the children's children's children came on the scene before it was made a real Lake, but we honour our ancestors' wisdom, energy and fore-

sight, and through the spirits send them our message of gratitude. But had bumbling officialdom shown the same wisdom, energy and foresight, we would have had a real Lake much sooner!

Long may the Albert Park Yacht Club survive!



From On the Lake November 1968



The Clubhouse, September 1996

Past Commodores

1872	T.C.King	1941-45	F.Offen
1875	Wm. Reddish	1946-47	G.Chapman
1878	Judge Cope	1948	L.Oliver
1880-81	Wm. Reddish	1949-50	Reg. Day
1882	Fredk. Mackay	1951	F.Watson
1882	A.Lewis	1952-54	L.Oliver (Snr)
1882-83	D.Edelston	1955	W.Silver
1884-85	G.Bruce	1955-65	N.Hammon
1886	G.Duke	1965-67	R.Neale
1887-88	Mr.Scothorn	1967-69	G.Hurren
1889-93	G.Fawcett	1970	N.Price
1897-98	E.G.Ulm	1971	G.Hurren
1899	T.Keiller	1971-73	N.Hammon
1900	M.Ehrenberg	1973-74	D.Hackworth
1901	E.McRitchie	1975-78	K.Greenwood
1902-07	T.G.Keiller	1978-81	D.Lewis
1908-10	E.D.M.Thomson	1981-84	R.Worden
1911-23	Capt. H. Goodrham	1984-86	E.R.Minett
1924-25	G.Marshall	1986-89	G.Kirkham
1926	E.Cowie	1989-91	T.Ritson
1926-28	R.Stevens	1991-94	C.J.Davey
1929-30	G.Marshall	1994-	R.Parker
1931	R.Stevens		
1940	F.Offen		
1941	G.V.Budge		

Honorary Life Members

1946	L.W.Morris
1954	R. August
1965	N.L.Hammon
1972	R.P.Neale
1972	D.J.Davey
1972	G.H.Hurren
1972	N.H.Price
1977	G.H.Lewis
1977	D.P.Hackworth
1984	D.G.Lewis
1989	R.C.Worden
1991	E.R.Minett
1994	G. Kirkham

Distinguished Service Awards

1993	G.H.Warr
1994	H.A.Box
1994	G.J.Reynolds

Championship Honour Board

Name	Class	Boat Name	Year	Title
L.W.Morris	Moth	Flutterby	1933/47	State
P.Gerrard	Moth	Twinkle	1949/50	State
J.B.French	Sailfish	Hustler	1969	State (Jnr.)
M.S.Davis	Sabot	Revenge II	1971/72	State
J.B.French	OK	Excalibur	1972	State (Jnr.)
M.S.Davis	Cherub	Harnessed Insanity	1972/73	State (Jnr. & Snr.)
R.D.Thomas	Fairy Penguin	Merlin	1973	State
M.S.Davis	Moth	Chameleon	1973/74	State (Jnr.)
G.N.Hammon	Moth	The Sting	1976/77	State (Jnr.)
J.L. Adams	Solo	Skol	1977	State
C.K.Wellman	Moth	Momentum	1977/78	State
D.C.Betts	Solo	Rufus	1978	State
A.G.McDougall	Moth	Wild Wombat	1978/79	State
A.G.McDougall	Moth	Wally Wombat	1979/80	State
C.C.Hearne	Solo	Nancy	1980	State
J.B.French	Moth	Champagne	1980/81	State
C.C.Hearne	Solo	Nancy	1981	State
R.C.Cross	Sailfish	Tanelorn	1982	State
P.Darroch	Sparrow	Sarek	1982	State
C.C.Hearne	Solo	Red Baron	1982	State
J.B.French	Moth	Napoleon	1982/93	State
J.A.Burgess	Solo	Red Peppa	1983	State
P.Darroch	Sparrow	Sarek	1983	State
B.P.Twentyman	Sailfish	Tequila Sunrise	1983	State (Jnr. & Snr.)
P.Darroch	Sparrow	Sarek	1984	State
G.J.McMahon	Solo	Blue Bear	1984	State
J.B.French	Moth	French Fry	1984/85	State
P.Darroch	Sparrow	Sarek	1985	State
G.J.McMahon	Solo	Blue Bear	1985	State
G.R.Wood	Sabre	Time Machine	1985/86	National (Jnr.)
G.J.McMahon	Solo	Blue Bear	1986	State
L.C.Smith	Solo	Blue Max	1987	NSW
G.R.Wood	Laser	Laser Knives	1987	National (Youth)
L.C.Smith	Solo	Blue Max	1987/88	National
L.C.Smith	Solo	Blue Max	1988	State
G.R.Wood	Laser	Laser Knives	1989	State
S.A.Ritson	Impulse	I'm A Taipan Two	1988/89	National (Jnr.)
S.A.Ritson	Impulse	I'm A Taipan Two	1989/90	National (Jnr. & Snr.)
W.C.Hooper	Bluebird	Anne	1990	State
W.C.Hooper	Sabre	Taipan II	1991	State (Jnr.)
A.J.Davey	Impulse	Kermit	1991/92	National (Jnr.)
B.J.Hooper	Minnow	Hang Loose	1991/92	National
L.E.Western	Solo	Trombolo	1992	State
A.J.Davey	Impulse	Kermit	1992/93	National (Jnr.)
L.E.Western	Solo	Trombolo	1993	State
A.J.Davey	Impulse	Kermit	1993	State (Jnr. & Snr.)
J.Howell	Pacer	Sailability	1993	State (VIP Sail)
J.Howell	Pacer	Sailability	1994	State (VIP Sail)
J.B.French	Pacer	Fred	1994/95	National
M.B.Taylor	Solo	Blue Bear	1995	State

Reference Works

1. *People's Playground – a History of Albert Park* by Jill Barnard and Jenny Keating
2. *Jolly Dogs Are We – the History of Yachting in Victoria 1838-1894* by Ralph P. Neale
3. *On The Lake* – Newsletters of the Albert Park Yacht Club 1964 to 1996