

# Mud Flats and Flowing Tides

The History of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron

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## Chapter 3

1973 – 1982

### *Pauline* – Wooden Marinas

Neil [Lacco] tells us that *Pauline* was built circa 1967/68, from a timber called Damar Minyak, a Malaysian variant of Kauri. She is 25'4" LOA [length overall] and draws 2'6".

*Pauline* was Neil's professional fishing boat and she trolled the waters of Bass Strait for barracouta and crayfish. In season, she was used for netting and dredging of scallops in Western Port and she followed the annual Spring run of flathead.

Neil's best memories are of course of the good times, with many, many memorable catches. Although pulling up 25 craypots by hand to achieve these was indeed very hard labour. Of course, while many good cray spots were common knowledge, there were other very productive places that were 'Lacco Family Secrets'.

*Pauline's* longest journey was to Cape Paterson, which, because of her economical diesel engine, or rather her 'economical speed', took two and a half hours each way.

Diesel at 11 cents a gallon is another fond memory. Her original motor, a 20 hp Lister diesel was replaced by a 20 hp Kubota after the Lister gave way for the third time. 'Gave way' being the operative phrase. As a result of these engine failures Neil reports he had long trips home under sail from Rhyll, Kilcunda and Pyramid Rock, respectively. There was little doubt he would make it, as the sail was made by his grandfather, Mitch!

Usually, *Pauline* was a hard working lady of the sea and did not fail her captain. A memorable return under power from Kilcunda was the occasion when, trying to beat a tide change and impending bad weather, Neil 'cut the corner' down by Griffith Point. He apparently got in a bit too close to the surf break, as before he could turn bow on to it, a huge wave reared up behind him. *Pauline* got over it OK, but Neil distinctly remembers seeing lots of sky, as her bow was pointed skywards by the back of the wave!

Although, Neil Lacco remembers her as 'an honest servant to the Lacco family in good times and bad' there were occasions when she was also a 'naughty girl' and she 'ran away from home'. On each of these three occasions she broke her moorings off Newhaven because of bad weather, ending up in the eastern entrance, drifting in Cleeland Bight, or up near the top light and, on the last occasion, on the mud bank near the Newhaven jetty.

When her professional fishing days ended she became a fishing charter. Finally, in the late 1990s Neil Lacco decided to retire from professional fishing and he handed in his professional fishing licence. Neil and *Pauline* both retired soon after and these days, this well known craft with the colourful history, has become a family pleasure boat and vehicle for youngsters like his grandson Rowan, to follow in his grandpa's wake as a leading 'piscatorial assassin' and prize-winner in the junior section of our Newhaven Yacht Squadron Fishing Comps.<sup>1</sup>

## Chapter 3

1973 – 1982

### *Pauline – Wooden Marinas*

‘If a man has anything in him, the sea will bring it out.’<sup>2</sup>

The months leading up to Christmas 1972 and the New Year of 1973 were frantically busy for the committee as they dealt with the disappointment of the contractor pulling out and the need for a new one to be appointed. The committee meeting minutes record what can only be considered as a delusional degree of optimism in view of the events that had occurred – the purchase of more timber poles for the building of the marina. However, the committee’s optimism was ultimately well founded. On 3 January 1973 a new contract for marina excavation work was ratified with Bergamier of Leongatha. Work finally commenced on the safe boat haven on 21 February 1973.

Two months later bills for the marina works began to arrive. In a bid to cover costs without applying for a loan, a further one thousand shares were issued by the co-operative and a charge of \$100 per annum was set for the rental of berths. In the tradition set by the founding members, working bees continued to be the main reason behind the speedy progress of the project, with most of the one hundred or so members regularly participating. Attendance at the weekend working bees remained at up to seventy per cent of the membership in the 1980s. By the twenty-first century, attendances at working bees dropped to below ten per cent of the membership. Inevitably, the same dedicated, and now aging stalwarts, continue to return regularly for the working bees.

The original lease documents indicate that the club was given ten acres of mud flats in which to create the proposed marina; however, due to the costs of excavation only five acres were eventually used. Work occurred mainly at low tide. Ultimately, forty thousand cubic yards (30.5 cubic meters) of spoil (mud from the mud flats) was pushed out by bulldozers and heavy earth moving equipment into Western Port creating a dam wall that separated the work area from the sea, preventing the sea water from entering the sectioned off area. ‘The net result was no change – all we had was the stuff that was on the bottom [of the marina that] was [used] in fact [to build] the walls.’<sup>3</sup> This barrier allowed the earth moving machinery to work in a dry marina, slowly deepening it to the required depth of 6 feet (1.8 meters) below mean low water level and, in doing so, exposing the sand beneath the mud. The mud wall was further reinforced by rocks and cement blocks from the old San Remo Bridge creating the outer wall of the marina.

Another beaut working bee we attended was picking up rocks from someone’s farm and loading them into George Mapleson’s old truck. The rocks were used to line the outer wall of the marina to cut erosion, I think.<sup>4</sup>

The rocks were collected from Sir Charles McGrath’s farm. Sir Charles was chairman of Repco, an automotive parts company as well as of Petersville, a dairy food product manufacturer where Mervyn Horan was company secretary. Merv Horan later became a rear commodore in the early 1980s. Sir Charles joined the Newhaven Yacht Squadron where he called himself Dave McGrath. He was a friend and business associate of Eric Clark, Purchasing Director of General Motors Holden, who

was also a Foundation Member of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron. The squadron may have considered itself to be composed of 'ordinary folk'<sup>5</sup> but in truth there were several movers and shakers from the commercial and political world amongst the membership.

Negotiations with the Department of Ports and Harbours took place in order to obtain permission to drive in piles that would support the marina walkways and jetties. Their approval was finally gained in April 1973. Squadron member Bert Smith, who was also a timber merchant, donated the messmate poles. Then one memorable weekend the members excelled themselves by driving into the marina floor seventy-four 25-foot tall poles. A State Electricity Company drill post-hole digger was used and the piles were driven into mud and rock. 'It had rained and they had to pump it out. You'd be working in mud up to there! See all them poles – they were lucky there was a couple of blokes on the committee that worked at the State Electricity Company and they got them in and they came in with their trucks, mud everywhere, and drilled the holes and put the poles in for them.'<sup>6</sup> The construction was of such high quality that, years later, when those same wooden piles were removed to be replaced by concrete piles for a floating marina, the future contractors had an extremely difficult job removing the old piles. 'So that was the marina, basically a hole with dry pole births.'<sup>7</sup>

Work started on building the crossheads and walkways in the dry marina but in fact the marina bed was never really dry. In spite of pumps working overtime, the sea continued to seep through the wall of the 'farmer's dam' so that the floor of the marina was a muddy quagmire, making the work of pile driving extremely difficult. Each weekend brought a working bee at which members did much of the work by hand. 'Lyn and I put in money for the marina and worked on the marina jetties at weekends. I remember drilling holes in the planking salvaged from the old bridge and Lyn was hammering six inch spikes.'<sup>8</sup>

By the end of the three months that it took to construct the marina, approximately five tons of galvanised steel, bolts and nuts from disposal sources had been used. The iron-hard timber from the old San Remo Bridge that new member Harold Waldron, had arranged for the club to acquire and stock pile, was chain-sawed to size and used to build the jetties and walkways.

It was all done by hand – except for the drills. I remember one big drill Huther had. One of the big ones and whoosh! Twisted around and got him on the ground. He must have pushed a bit hard. Should have fed it in. Someone should have got hurt but no bugger got hurt – most of the old fellows were too cunning. I was the silly bugger that fell in the water. Anyway you had to drive a lot of nails in. You'd just get the hammer and bang in. You had to drive every nail and they were big six inch nails.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, no doubt to the great delight of the many regular workers at the site, indoor toilets were installed in the clubhouse, thereby relegating the walk to the public toilets in the car park to the pages of history.

With the onset of the Winter rains, there was no respite from the mud and 'they realised that twenty-five foot is a hell of a long way up'<sup>10</sup> to be building walkways. The committee decided that the wall was to be breached and the marina allowed to flood. The remainder of the work on the walkways was to be completed from punts and a floating Ports and Harbours construction pontoon.

The exact date that the dam was breached is not recorded in the club minutes but it was around October/November 1973. 'Bob Hughes recalls that he received a call one morning from George Mapleson that the entrance was to be breached. He collected his yacht *Trevally* from the jetty and with George crewing was the first boat to enter the newly flooded marina. There were a number of people on the Club Verandah cheering and acknowledging this event. Bob says that this cost him a fair amount of champagne up in the Clubhouse later.'<sup>11</sup> The entrance was cut in the seaward wall of the 'farmer's dam' with a backhoe from the club house side of the marina. This explains why the entrance is slightly deeper on the club side. The waters of Western Port rushed in, filling the marina and creating the stretch of water that members use today, albeit an empty stretch of water unlike the heavily populated stretch of walkways and floating pontoons that is there today, but popular right from the start.

The remainder of the work was completed from floating barges. 'We used my boat with a big tyre over the front and used it as a tug to put all those sections in place.'<sup>12</sup> 'Working at heights of six feet above the water level, cross trees were nailed or bolted and then the planks were laid on top of the bearers and that was the marina – end of story.'<sup>13</sup> The original marina structure was a fixed jetty on wooden piles set to be just above maximum high tide. In fact, very high seasonal high tides would occasionally flood over the walkways, which necessitated visiting your boat in sea boots. 'Naturally, when it was low tide your boat was way down there. You had to climb down the ladder and get on the boat...Quite a few people fell in the water.'<sup>14</sup> At low tide members had to climb down ladders to reach their boats which had dropped on slipper bars to low tide, often two metres or more below the walkways. With the rise and fall of the tides, ropes increasingly became frayed and this resulted in craft breaking loose and, in some cases, being damaged by jamming under the marina jetty. 'A bloke knocked on the door. He says your boat is caught under the pier. Oh geez, I went down there and it was down to the numbers on the bow. I tried everything. I was gonna saw the rung out of the ladder and I got half way through, anyhow, I levered on it and it broke.'<sup>15</sup>

The committee made it mandatory that all craft in the marina be moored with Silver Polyethelyne rope, available from San Remo Fishermen's Co-op, rather than natural fibre ropes which are less resilient.<sup>16</sup>

As the fixed walkways only took up a third of the marina, the remainder of the safe haven had swing moorings, which created some problems because the closely moored boats swung around on their moorings with the movement of the tide. Boats anchored at chain berths still had to be rowed out too, albeit in the safety of the marina. The squadron acquired several dinghies for this purpose. They were moored to the pontoon and accessible from the walkway, but obviously others had different ideas about their uses and members were reminded that children were not allowed to use the dinghies for 'casual rowing'.

That [marina] was the most wonderful thing that happened...We had a mooring out here actually and we lost it [the boat] a couple of times but then we moved into the marina.<sup>17</sup>

The ladies committee, now known as the social committee, continued to support members working on the marina and provide hot meals in the clubhouse. In particular, at the end of the day when the workers downed tools, food and drink were ready for them. The tradition of a post-working bee or

post-race gathering developed and to this day all working bees and race meetings are celebrated by a well deserved get-together. The tradition of Saturday evening drinks was also well established.

Each Saturday evening a number of our members foregather at the Clubhouse to exchange news and views over a convivial glass. Since additional heating was installed the Club is cosy on even the bleakest night. These evenings commence at 6pm during the winter so that those who have a "Counter Meal" at San Remo may leave the Club at an appropriate time.<sup>18</sup>

Very soon after the marina wall was breached and while work on the piers and walkways continued, the committee announced that Sunday 2 December 1973 was to be the First Opening Day of the marina and it would be marked by official celebrations. This gave added impetus to the building of the walkways and everyone was stretched to the limit as work progressed to complete the marina in time for the opening. Behind the scenes, starting in June of that year, Fraser and the committee planned an impressive Opening Day. Robert (Bob) Hughes was to be the master of ceremonies and once more Fraser's political connections were helpful – Rupert Hamer, now Premier of Victoria, was invited to officially open the marina on Sunday 2 December 1973.

On the appointed day, all boats left the marina and the Honourable R J Rupert Hamer, ED MLA officially opened the Safe Boat Haven. From the bow of the official boat he cut a ribbon across the entrance of the marina and then led the members' boats into the marina while the crowd cheered them in from the banks of the marina and the clubhouse balcony.

Later that day in the clubhouse, at the official opening function attended by three hundred members and guests, Mr Hamer paid tribute to the club and its members for their wonderful tradition of selfless service to the club, and to their belief that with patience and persistence ordinary men and women can achieve great things and bend the dictates of rigid bureaucracy to their bidding. In particular, he paid tribute to their magnificent do-it-yourself attitude, which had resulted in the outstanding achievement of developing a club and building a clubhouse and marina in the space of only ten years.

The Premier alluded to having been intimately involved with many of the petitions and submissions that the club had to enter into in order to successfully develop the marina. And he concluded his speech with the comment that 'You've no idea what a relief it is to Parliament to have it [the marina] opened.'<sup>19</sup>

Shire of Phillip Island President, Cr Trafford Morgan-Payler, commended the squadron 'for an achievement which had practically no assistance from any other area of the municipality and he expressed the hope that this practise would be copied by other sporting organisations.'<sup>20</sup>

Flinders MLA, Roberts Dunstan, acknowledged that 'A special Bill had annexed ten acres of foreshore land for the marina and squadron commodore and Percy Fraser, reckoned it was the most important legislation Parliament had ever passed.'<sup>21</sup>

Percy Fraser also addressed the gathered crowd. He mainly concentrated on the importance of the marina to the members and the community.

The marina is the first man-made haven in Westernport Bay, a shelter for Bass Strait yachts and with the squadron, useful for Westernport Bay rescue. Membership had jumped from 160 to 300 with the marina. All 70 berths had been taken. There is a waiting list. There are also moorings for up to 35 visiting craft. A \$26,000 government-guaranteed loan, repayable over 10 years, financed the work. Members did much of the work voluntarily. When we pay for the marina we'll extend it.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, the club was promised future assistance when Mr R Dunstan, Minister for Public Works said in his speech that 'he would try to get money to deepen and provide a permanent access channel to the marina.'<sup>23</sup>

Boat owners had to time their travels to and from the marina with the high tide as the access channel was only 2 ft 6 in in depth at low tide and many boats had a larger draft than this. There was a real risk of being stranded on the mud until the tide turned. The Premier had the final say, adding with typical political circumspection and therefore promising nothing, that 'We will try to help with the entrance which, I understand, will cost almost as much as the marina.'<sup>24</sup>

Mr Hamer, a Metung Yacht Club member, was made a life member of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron in recognition of the services he had rendered to the club. He was presented with a squadron tie and tie pin. Soon after the ceremony, according to newspaper reports, he left by helicopter for another function.

Over the Summer of 1973 and well into the following year, new improvements were made to the marina. Given the fanfare of the opening and the promises made, Ports and Harbours were cajoled into providing two Port Hand markers to mark the entry of the channel into the marina. The club's share of the cost was \$1,260 for these works. In the following months volunteers completed the concrete paving of footpaths on the embankment. The marina walkways were supplied with piped water, fire extinguishers and life buoys as well as light and power. This work was carried out by a new member, Jack Dunn of Dunn and Kavanagh, who was obviously so busy with the electrical work that he was not given much of a chance to relish his new membership or use of his boat. With the addition of electricity, more work was done using electric tools rather than screwing every bolt and screw in by hand, as so many members had done during the building of the marina.

The environment was not forgotten in the process and working bees were spent planting suitable shrubs on the banks. Apart from beautifying the area the replanting prevented soil erosion of the steep sides of the bank that sloped down to the path encircling the marina. The plants chosen were native to Phillip Island. This was a pragmatic decision and it relieved the members of any up-keep of the shrubs once they were established.

All sixty-six berths were rapidly filled at \$120 per year. Later it was agreed that an entrance fee of \$150 was to be charged for a member to have a boat placed on the waiting list of the marina. By April 1974 rules were set down for use of the marina to ensure the safety of members and also to promote polite and practical behaviour within the marina and through the approach to the marina entry, which lay in close proximity to the public launching ramp.

Fred Arblaster and Mervyn Horan were involved in rewriting the Newhaven Yacht Squadron Statement of Purposes and Rules and also writing the By-Laws of the Newhaven Safe Boat Haven.

Both documents were updated in later years but still remain largely the work of these two members and continue to be the basis of the squadron's governance.

The squadron and public launching areas were now seeing an increase in activities concentrated into this narrow space. Weekends and public holidays would result in frayed tempers and bitter words as owners with trailable boats jockeyed for position to gain access to the public and private boat ramps so that they could make a speedy escape to the beckoning blue waters. Even today the public is guaranteed of a 'Keystone Cops' comedy on busy days when members who are on their way to the squadron's boat ramp can be accused of jumping the queue as they bypass the traffic jam to the public boat ramp, and arguments about queue position still occur regularly.

In February 1974, after twelve years at the helm, Percy Fraser tabled his resignation. However, the committee asked Fraser to stay on as commodore for another year and help them redraft the constitution, which he had written ten years previously. Other issues also required Percy Fraser's ongoing involvement. The depth of the marine access channel continued to be a problem, preventing members from leaving the marina except at high tide. Although the marina had a depth of over 6 feet, the entrance channel had only 2 feet of water at low tide. 'It was Easter and we were going to take the boat out. The tide was going out and we were supposed to take it out at four in the morning. We woke up at four thirty and tried to do it and the tide was going out and we got stuck and we had to wait the whole day so then we went back home and had breakfast.'<sup>25</sup> Given Percy Fraser's political connections the committee asked him to contact Mr Dunstan and pursue the promises that had been made on Opening Day.

The minutes of June 1974 note that members were asked to consider the purchase of the house and block of land for sale opposite the club. Unfortunately for the squadron's future expansion, this purchase was never made. An astute businessman such as Percy Fraser would not previously have let such a golden opportunity pass. This was probably an indication of Fraser's state of health at the time, in his last year as commodore.

Percy Fraser officially retired as commodore of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron, in December 1974. George Taylor, his friend and co-founder, replaced him. Fraser continued to serve the club for a number of years in many capacities, including sailing secretary, sharing that position with Harold Waldron who was rear commodore at the time. Percy's interests in the club and its activities never flagged in spite of his failing health. He retired from the family business in Melbourne in 1975 and moved permanently to Newhaven. This gave him the chance to become involved in the day-to-day minutiae of the club.

In December 1975 Fraser proposed that flashing lights be set up at the entrance to the marina, making the entrance visible at night. The minutes note that the proposal was carried but not proceeded with for some years. He also set up a back-up radio base station – 3ND - in his home and at his own expense. At the time, there was no twenty-four hour, seven day a week emergency service in the Western Port area so the safety service depended on volunteers having radio stations in their own homes and listening to calls for help. Vessels were equipped with radios; however, these were only active while the boat was at sea. Vessel to vessel communication was standard protocol but depended on knowledge of another boat's radio signal. Later, the radio station was moved into the clubhouse's radio room but it still depended on members being rostered for radio duty. The squadron's standby radio base call sign was registered as 3ND on 27-88 MHz marine radios. Other



bases in the Western Port area were 3QR Corinella, 3CK Cowes, CK2 Cowes, 3WV Warneet and 3RH Rhyll. The September 1980 newsletter reported that Ken White, who later took over Fraser's duties, endeavoured to remain on air during daylight hours and that he was prepared to relay member's messages by phone or by hand where possible. At this time, the club also acquired a telephone.

This is located just inside the main doors of the Clubrooms. Primarily it was installed for use in cases of emergency. The number is (059) 5675515. However members are welcome to use it for phone calls. Payment is at the rate of 10 cents per unit of call, which is recorded on a telemetre adjacent to the phone. Full instructions are affixed to the wall. All we ask is that you deposit payment for your call in the honour box provided.<sup>26</sup>

January 1976 saw Percy Fraser reporting on two police-activated search and rescue incidents from the Marine Operations centre. Both were successfully concluded with the assistance of squadron members. He continued in his position as Sailing Secretary throughout 1977, reporting the Round Phillip Island Race, which was held on 26 February 1977 and in which nine yachts participated. He also reported on arrangements to run the Junior Offshore Group State titles.

With new commodore George Taylor at the helm, business continued as usual for the club. Plans were drawn up for increasing the size of the clubhouse by extending the balcony and the area underneath it. This work was completed in three months and included bird- proofing the clubhouse after an episode of avian invasion and squatting.

The heat of the day in no way detracted from the vigorous application of all their allocated tasks, and the Clubhouse finished up being a better place for the enjoyment of our members and friends. The only party which did not appreciate the occasion must be the birds, who, due to the efforts of the working bee, have been denied access to the building.<sup>27</sup>

By this stage the clubhouse had become quite large in area, which necessitated the design and building of a fire escape. The new expanded area was carpeted although the central dance floor area was left uncovered, its use being well and truly entrenched. A tape deck and sound equipment were installed. The interior walls were covered with cork so as not to disturb the neighbours. Sound-absorbing drapes and indirect lighting were also ordered. Obviously, plans were afoot to have mood lighting for evening activities. Strip heaters were installed and were no doubt appreciated during the colder months. Club member Arthur Foster built a barbeque in the area that is now known as The Lawn. This became, and remains, the main gathering point for the traditional after-competition barbeque and race analysis – the epicentre of all tall tales. In October 1976, Percy celebrated two major milestones – his sixty-fourth birthday and his thirty-seventh wedding anniversary – which were naturally held at the newly upgraded clubhouse.

In March 1977 the Boomerang 20 Association approached the Newhaven Yacht Squadron with the proposition to hold the 1978 State Championships there on the Labour Day Weekend. This reflected the fact that the club had earned its position of respect in the ten years of its existence. In 1978, in appreciation of the squadron's management of the State Championships, the Boomerang Association presented the squadron with an engraved ship's bell. Following this, the squadron gained new members as several of the sailors who sailed Boomerangs in Western Port or who were

members of the C-division at Carrum Sailing Club, moved to the Newhaven Yacht Squadron. Among them were Ron Affleck (whose company was appointed in 1969 to prepare the marina plans), Ian Jemmeson (who apart from his involvement on various committees was the club's dedicated honorary archivist for many years), Stan Phillips and Ken Matthe. Having heard of the Boomerang Association's positive experience, the organisers of the January 1979 Javelin State Championships, requested that their competitions be held at Newhaven. 'Nearly every weekend during the Summer there'd be a race on up towards Bass on the course that they had set up there, which was pretty good. It would take you half an hour to sail up some days just to get to the course.'<sup>28</sup>

To cope with the increase in sailing competitions and to nurture the younger generation and new members, further Junior Learn to Sail Days were organised. A large official notice board was installed below the clubhouse to keep the membership informed of the increasing number of activities now being held during the official yachting season. Newhaven Yacht Squadron was not the only club in Western Port experiencing a surge of activity and enthusiasm in racing and competitions, in December 1978 Rhyll Sailing Club received approval to build a clubhouse.

With the increasing number of Western Port clubs and their associated activities, it was hardly surprising that clashes in their Opening Days occurred. The Western Port Safety Council, another of Percy Fraser's innovations (although actually started as a result of the dedicated work of Captain Frank Hart) was asked to coordinate the club dates and fixtures to avoid these clashes. The Western Port Safety Council continues to act as coordinator of this activity to this day. Recognising the increasing importance of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron, Westernport Safety Council replaced the club's base radio equipment. Given the number of inter-club competitions, the Westernport Association of Yacht Clubs investigated a common handicap system for all Westernport Clubs' racing yachts. This would allow for inter-club racing to be held using common rules rather than club specific rules.

Safety issues were reviewed by the Victorian Yachting Council because of the increase in water activities of all types, not only in Western Port but also in all Victorian waters. It now became mandatory for all yachts to have valid Safety Certificates before participating in competitions. Having no certificate meant that the boat could not participate in the race and, since points were counted on aggregated wins, disqualification from participating affected the club's, and the boat's, position in the season's placing – a heavy penalty to pay for not registering. The water police also recognised the risks of this increased activity and San Remo Police issued boating emergency posters. The Newhaven Yacht Squadron also played its role in water safety by purchasing a safety boat and a rubber dinghy that met the World Sailing Council's specifications.

With the resurging interest in sailing, perpetual trophies were dusted off and restored. A list of missing trophies was circulated. This included the Dusting Rose Bowl, the Lyle Williams around Phillip Island Trophy (which had been donated by the San Remo hotelier, Lyle Williams, in June 1976), the Tom Ryan Power Boat Trophy, the Tom Wight Memorial Trophy, the P Fraser Shield (which was originally presented to Cherub race winners) and the Club Championship Trophy (which was a gift from Newhaven in the United Kingdom). In anticipation of the return of these trophies, Don Sherriff built a glass-fronted cabinet for their display. It remained in place until July 2008 when it was replaced by a new trophy cabinet, which was purchased rather than made by a member of the club.

With the improvements in the clubhouse the untidy state of the historical photographs of the construction of the club (on display in the foyer) were making a poor impression. As uncomplimentary comments increased, the committee asked Hugh Stuchbery to provide the original slides so that copies could be made and framed under glass. These framed photographs remain on display at the clubhouse today.

The areas outside the marina and clubhouse also underwent expansion works. The boat park area, which later became the boat repair yard, was covered with crushed rock and quotes were obtained to fence it off from the public. The sub-committee arranged for chain wire fencing and a lock-up area to increase the secure storage capacity of the squadron. Ken White provided the locks for the boat yard. Later, the off-the-beach sailing boats were stored there. The gate to the trailer park boat yard was widened to 20 feet to allow access for the large trailers transporting the bigger boats that were becoming popular. A new all-weather boat ramp into the marina was built as the public boat ramp was in great demand. 'Having put it in I have to tell you that the membership doubled because suddenly we were catering for a whole lot of powerboat owners who were sick and tired of the queues at the public boat ramp.'<sup>29</sup>

Refuelling of boats at the marina continued to be a problem for at least 23 years. Spillage was the biggest issue as well as the hazards of pouring flammable liquids in less than safe circumstances. It was agreed that a floating platform should act as a fuelling station. This was placed in the south-east corner of the marina. Several years later, it was converted to a passenger landing platform after discussions with Ports and Harbours about the inappropriateness of refuelling in the marina.

To accommodate the increasing number of member requests to moor their boats in the marina, eighteen chain-berths were installed and leased at a lower rental fee than the moorings off the walkways, which had the luxury of electrical points and lighting. Chain berths were possible in those early days of the marina as the walkways only took up part of its area. One boat belonging to member R Delbridge, the S & S 34 *Icthus*, a Sydney to Hobart race participant, was moved to a chain mooring as the boat was deemed too big for the standard 31-foot marina berth. The owner registered his objection to the committee's high-handed approach but to no avail and the boat remained on a chain mooring until it left the club. However, while still at the squadron, it sailed a number of successful ocean-going races.

Inside the clubhouse, the kitchen was enlarged by reducing the size of the adjacent office. Obviously food took priority over paperwork. For years afterwards, the roof beam was visible in the ceiling of the kitchen as a reminder of its expansion. A new oven, hot plates and double sink were installed. The corner window was removed to make way for more wall storage space and the kitchen floor was raised to the level of the main clubhouse floor. New floor coverings were bought for the kitchen. New drapes were purchased for the clubhouse windows and Ken White installed internal urinals on the upper level – a great benefit for those attending club functions as they no longer had to leave the upper floor and walk down the outside stairs to get to the ground floor toilet – potentially a difficult feat for those in party mode. Club members became snappier dressers as new zip jumpers (\$27.00) and crew-neck wool jumpers (\$23.00) boasting the club's monogram became available for purchase. All these activities reflected the increase in member numbers and the demand for better facilities and squadron paraphernalia.

Review of the squadron's constitution proved to be an onerous task. A sub-committee was formed in October 1980 headed by Ken Stuchbery and Frank Murphy. They presented the final draft to members at a special meeting on 28 August 1982. With the increased demands of a growing membership, governance and management were separated. The draft was immediately accepted and brought into action with three committee members, Don Manning, Ian Jemmeson and R Daff, volunteering to stand for re-election at the end of the squadron year to facilitate the new constitution arrangements for staggered elections. This rule ensured that committees did not lose all of their members simultaneously and that corporate history was maintained. The increasingly important roles of safety officer and cadet captain were also recognised. In their final recommendation, the constitution committee recommended that the squadron constitution be separated from the by-laws. This would allow the committee to alter the by-laws from time to time without affecting the constitution. The era of the 'she'll be right' attitude was rapidly coming to an end. Occupational health and safety were paramount. 'In the early days it was all done by amateur labour but then all the amateurs were very capable in their field and standards were a lot lower in those days – including safety, hygiene, aesthetics.'<sup>30</sup>

And, while all these modern developments were occurring, harking back to a different era, Harold Waldron arranged for his wife to sew a further thirty burgees and one large burgee on the understanding that other members would cut the materials. Percy Fraser offered to sell the burgees for \$2.00 each. The large Newhaven Yacht Squadron burgee was installed on the wall of the clubhouse. Mrs Waldron had made many burgees over the years and would continue to do so until March 1982 when Hammond Sails started to take the club's orders. The first order placed with them was for five years' supply of burgees and included flag officer burgees.

Not content with his sailing committee duties and the self-imposed duty of radio officer, Percy Fraser took on the challenge of improving the format of the newsletter. Up to 1978 the newsletter had been printed on a duplicator but this was an unsatisfactory arrangement. Only one copy of the newsletter from that time exists in the squadron archive, which possibly confirms the unsatisfactory format and transient nature of this publication. With the help of Colin Martin, a club member associated with Colna Printing Pty Ltd, wrappers for a new newsletter of three-colour format were developed. These were quoted at \$149.50 for two thousand three-colour wrappers. For the first time in its history, the club approved the sale of advertising to offset the cost of producing the newsletter. The first edition in the new format was published in August 1978.

Dear Member,

I do hope you like the new format of your Newsletter. We are indebted to Col Martin for a magnificent job on the covers and wrappers. More importantly from my point of view, cost of production is down, likewise postage etc. PLEASE DO NOT DISCARD, BUT READ AND KEEP FOR REFERENCE, AS IT IS CHOCKFUL OF DATES AND EVENTS FOR 1978/79.

Percy A. Fraser

PRODUCER OF NEWSLETTER

With the club was experiencing a resurgence in sailing interest, the newsletter noted a special meeting of sailing members and cadets. During the meeting, elections were held for the positions of officer-in-charge of patrol and rescue boats (Fred Arblaster), of cadets (Bernie Hayen), of keel boats and trailable yachts (Harold Waldron) and sailing secretary and radio officer (Percy A Fraser).

Improvements to facilities for launching off-the-beach and trailable yachts were planned. Extra ladders were planned to improve access to boats moored at the fixed marina. Additional mooring chains would also be laid to accommodate the extra boats. Members were exhorted about 'the old evergreen of Water Safety', and the issue of compulsory Third Party Insurance raised its head (the committee suggesting that it cover to a value of \$200,000). Annual Subscriptions were the bane of the secretary and treasurer's lives since no method for collecting them had been developed and the rising number of members prompted the following comment by the secretary in the newsletter:

Prompt payment of accounts rendered will make the Secretary/Treasurer's life much easier, but PLEASE do not thrust cash at the nearest officer unless it is in an envelope with your name on it and the account as rendered enclosed. Please make payment to the Newhaven Yacht Squadron...If possible through the Secretary so that records can be kept and handed to the Hon Treasurer.<sup>31</sup>

According to the newsletter, plans for the yachting season of 1978/1979 were robust. 'If the forward planning is any criterion, we should be in for the best of years in all departments – with the possible exception of the powerboat boys who just 'wanna go fishing' – fair enough, but if a yacht or boat is in trouble we can rely on them and their radios.'<sup>32</sup>

Equally, the social scene was booming with a 'Yotties Evening' planned for Saturday 2 September – a 'bring your own' (BYO) drink and a light meal provided by the club. The entertainment included a film of the 1977/1978 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race followed by 'dancing to ear thumping music' from 11.30 pm onwards. Other events planned included a Beef and Pudding Dinner/Dance, a Guy Fawkes Basket Cabaret with a request for 'BYO Drinks, Food and Masks'.<sup>33</sup>

For the Christmas Eve Social Evening the organising committee requested that members 'BYO Cold Platter and Drinks' and were advised that 'dancing after Dinner till 11.45 pm and a drawing of Christmas Hamper' would occur. A week later the New Year's Eve Party was to be a 'BYO Basket Supper and Drinks'. The highlight was the drawing of a 'Monster Lobster Raffle' and entertainment was provided by Clem Nolan's band from '8.30 pm to 2.00 am'. Obviously it was going to be a long night of partying. The Sixteenth Annual Opening Day and Sailpast were to be held on Saturday 2 December and were restricted to members and officially invited guests. A further request asked that all the lady members bring a plate for afternoon tea. This was the tradition dating back to the early days of the club as well as being a societal norm in Australia at a time when the women provided the food and the menfolk consumed it.<sup>34</sup>

Plans for January were to be 'played off the cuff' but already such treats as 'Boating picnics, excursions and impromptus over the Christmas/Holiday period will be announced from day to day on the Club Notice Board if weather conditions permit, BUT January 27<sup>th</sup> will be 'PIG ON A SPIT' BBQ DINNER.'<sup>35</sup>

The Club had a rich social life over the holidays with many members staying in the area. There were few distractions such as television or radio and computers did not exist. Adults and children made their own entertainment. This no doubt gave the area a holiday-camp atmosphere with notices going up daily to inform members of new and exciting activities.

Percy Fraser's work on the new newsletter format was recognised at a committee meeting in May 1978. In the August newsletter, Percy also alluded to his health problems: 'Most members know that I have been a fairly sick boy for some months, happily, I think I am on the road back, not quite as fit, able and aggressive as I used to be! To those members, and it must be near 100%, who expressed their concern, good wishes by card, phone and visiting, I, along with Dottie, say a very humble THANK YOU.'<sup>36</sup>

In September 1978 Percy Fraser officially retired from the committee after sixteen years of service. He had been instrumental in starting the club from an idea and now it was firmly established and a vibrant focal point in the life of the sailing and boating fraternity of Western Port. Percy Fraser died on 15 April 1979. His wife, Dot Fraser, remembered that he continued to enjoy total retirement and messing about in boats until the day he died.<sup>37</sup>

Fraser had left instructions that when he died there was to be no service at Newhaven. A small service was held at the Springvale Crematorium and his ashes were later cast into the waters of Western Port by his friend George Armstrong. Members of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron organised a small wake at the Fraser household to say goodbye to the man who had been so intimately linked with the club.

There is no doubt in reading these Minutes that Percy Fraser was the pusher and shover of getting the sailing going, formation of the club and in particular the approval of the Marina...As our interviews with Ken Lacco and the Talbots and others confirm - Percy had the push in high places of Government and the organising ability to make things happen.<sup>38</sup>

In spite of all these accolades and achievements, Percy Fraser would always be remembered as 'Percy'. Following his death, the newsletter of November 1979 notes that according to the constitution Albert Edwin (Bert) Smith, Commodore, and William Douglas (Bill) Moat were appointed trustees of the squadron. At the same time life memberships were presented to AH (Hugh) Stuchbery for his many years of work as honorary secretary and to WD (Bill) Moat for his services associated with the marina. The squadron has always recognised that, although Percy Fraser was a major driving force, the membership played an equally important role.

It is also obvious that the Club would not have developed to what it is today without the help of the many loyal and hardworking members named in the committees and working groups of the day. These are the members who built the clubhouse and to a large extent the marina structure with their bare hands.<sup>39</sup>

Opening Day on 7 October 1979 was 'rather spoilt by bad weather, but I was pleased to see so many Members and Associates come along to witness the Opening.'<sup>40</sup> The Sail Past was postponed but celebrations continued on in the clubhouse. This was the first time since the inception of the squadron that Percy Fraser did not preside over the festivities – no doubt an unusual experience for many of the members. In spite of the inclement conditions, the day was still a success with a large number of members, friends and representatives from other yacht clubs gathering in the clubhouse for the formal opening. Hugh Stuchbery acted as of master ceremonies. Commodore AE Smith briefly sketched a history of the squadron from its inception to the present day, no doubt reminiscing about Percy Fraser's activities as well as those of the foundation members. He thanked the ladies for their organisation of the day and, in anticipation, also thanked Geoff and Chris White and Alan (Os) Oswald

for 'their services as dispensers of hospitality'<sup>41</sup> at the bar. The guest of honour, Alan Brown MLA, spoke of the increase in leisure time in the general community and the need for something constructive to do with that time. In yachting, he saw an answer to the problem. He congratulated the club on its family atmosphere and its community involvement.

Doug Bigby, Commodore of Hastings Yacht Club, on behalf of the visitors from other yacht clubs, further cemented the squadron's reputation by commenting on the progress that had been made at Newhaven over the preceding years. He congratulated the club on its enviable position – no doubt a sentiment that Percy Fraser would have been totally in agreement with.

The newsletters of the late 1970s and early 1980s highlight the vibrant social life within the club, the many interests of its members and the far-reaching travels they undertook.

On a recent Saturday evening our jovial member Bob Hughes treated those present at the Club to a bountiful supply of champers. The reason – Bob was celebrating the fact that he was 70 years young – Congratulations Bob and thanks for including your friends at N.Y.S.<sup>42</sup>

Over the Winter, four Newhaven boats and families have been cruising the Whitsunday Passage while we slaves have been freezing. A seagull told me about one skipper (nameless) who drove his boat into a jetty wedging it between two piles. The message is don't let the Bikini Birds distract you, Ron.<sup>43</sup>

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, Hobsons Bay Yacht Club ran a successful race from Queenscliff to Newhaven when a number of skippers and crews visited the Club on the Saturday evening.<sup>44</sup>

We understand that Ron Affleck has found it advisable to untie the dinghy from the pontoon before attempting to row to his Yacht.<sup>45</sup>

The newsletters carried information on individual members and always mentioned sick ones. George Mapleson, Lindsay Talbot, Bess Coomers, Lim Legg, Helen Shugg, Don Manning and Bruce Talbot were mentioned in the newsletter of November 1980. As were Jack and Laurel Telling who were involved in a car accident while returning from holiday up north. Some comments were more cryptic such as: 'Two of our members who journeyed to warmer climates are prepared to vouch that it is much safer to fish at Newhaven than northern New South Wales – ask Sam Huther and Les Thomas.'<sup>46</sup>

Fishing stories started to appear in later issues of the newsletter. The March 1981 edition suggested that fishing was better off the pier than on the bay with good catches of mackerel and snook being taken from the Newhaven Jetty in January. Alan Curtis made headlines in the local paper with his catch of a 23-pound snapper. When he threw down the gauntlet, it was picked up by challenger Stan Broad, who caught a 17-pound snapper. No doubt members read with interest about Alan Curtis's favourite fishing spot 'located by lining up the conspicuous pine tree at Rhyll with the Light on Cape Woolamai and the Top Light at Newhaven in line with the Reservoir between Anderson and Newhaven.'<sup>47</sup>

Unfortunately death notices also began to appear in the newsletter. Past Commodore Albert Edwin Smith died in 1981.

Bert joined the Squadron shortly after it was founded and played a major role in the construction of our Marina...Those of us who were actively involved in the trauma of obtaining approval from various government and semi-government bodies for the construction of the Marina, followed by problems with a Contractor and finally the twenty-one weekends of physical labour in the building of the jetties will remember the contribution which Bert made...Bert and Nell enjoyed boating and fishing, firstly in "*Bernel*" and of later years in "*Merrie England*". ...Vale Bert.<sup>48</sup>

And later that year, the death of Ken White was noted. He had served for many years on both the building and marina management sub-committees. 'The present high standard of maintenance of the Clubhouse and numerous improvements (including the new kitchen and the area under the Clubhouse) are the result of his foresight and planning.'<sup>49</sup> Even when he suffered a stroke he continued to use *Rebecca* for fishing and remained busy in his workshop carving such items as wooden sheaves and bait boards, which he made for his friends. 'He even found time to act in the capacity of area co-ordinator for Search and Rescue and in doing so to operate the Squadron's stand by Radio.'<sup>50</sup>

During the 1980s, occupational health and safety was in the forefront of the minds of committee members. The need for safe boating was paramount and the Victorian Yachting Council led the way. Newhaven elected its own safety officer, Ian Jemmeson, who was busy ensuring that all boats – whether sailing or boating, competing or pleasure craft, trailer sailors or off-the-beach boats – completed their declaration of safety compliance. To assist members with this new regulation a declaration form was enclosed with the newsletter and Ian Jemmeson advertised his willingness to be available to discuss the interpretation of the new regulations. Fred Arblaster provided members with a copy of the Victorian Yachting Council's year book. To focus members' attention on the importance of these new regulations, and to stress the squadron's support for member safety, the safety officer advertised that he would do spot checks on boats. He had the committee's full support for these actions.

This approach was obviously successful as the minutes of December 1979 note that 'safety declarations had been received from all boats for the first time in the Clubs [sic] history'.<sup>51</sup>

In spite of all the good work that the Victorian Yachting Council had done in safety, its relations with the clubs were worsening. Several years previously it had decided, despite objections from clubs, to levy an annual fee (initially fifty cents) payable by each senior member. The Newhaven Yacht Squadron, along with other clubs, only remitted the monies paid by members. In 1980 the Victorian Yachting Council insisted that all monies should be remitted by the clubs, whether collected or not. At that stage the levies were \$4.00 per senior member. These monies would have had to come from general revenue and would have affected the club's bank balance. Discussions were at a standstill and the Newhaven Yacht Squadron committee regretfully withdrew their membership of the Victorian Yachting Council. This had been the state of affairs until late 1981 when external events played a role in enabling the Victorian Yacht Council's president, Ron White, and the immediate past-president, Eden Allica, to visit the Newhaven Yacht Squadron.

As foreshore rentals rose and rates for clubs escalated the Public Works Department through the Ports and Harbours Authority started to take an interest in them. Rumours circulated that two clubs with marinas had apparently been informed that at the expiry of their leases their properties would



be taken over, without compensation, by the Public Works Department and then leased back to individual boat owners at higher rates, with these monies accruing to the Public Works Department. These rumours naturally created great concern so when the Victorian Yachting Council invited clubs to send a representative to a meeting regarding the issue of rentals and marina acquisitions by the Public Works Department, even though the squadron was not a member of the Victorian Yachting Council, Rear Commodore Ken Stuchbery attended. By this time, the Minister of Public Works had confirmed these intentions. At some speed the Council convened a sub-committee and meetings were arranged to oppose the action of the Department and suggest other proposals. The Newhaven Yacht Squadron applied for re-affiliation with the Victorian Yachting Council. In late 1981 the squadron received a letter confirming the Public Works Department would not be taking over the operation and maintenance of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron marina. This issue of leasehold rates and historical ownership continues to exercise the minds of both government and clubs to this day.

Western Port clubs also came under the influence of international maritime rules. The International Association of Lighthouse Authorities, of which Australia is a member, designed a uniform scheme of marine buoyage. Therefore beacons and buoys that marked the channels had their shape and colour changed to comply with the new international standards. To prevent confusion, the Ports and Harbours Department produced an explanatory booklet and the squadron procured copies for each boat owner.

Also at this time, the previously purchased club safety dinghy was deemed unsuitable for rough conditions and, although several members' boats were available for search and rescue duties, the club decided that these boats were not suited to activities over the shallow low-tide banks around Newhaven. The sailing committee requested permission to purchase a shallow draft, flat-based aluminium boat with trailer, motor (15 horsepower) and safety gear including radio and antenna, for these activities. With a grant of \$1,000 from the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation and further monies from the Westernport Safety Council's Youth, Sport and Recreation Grant the club was able to go ahead with their plans. By December 1982 they had also prepared a roster for the operation of the club rescue boat and fitted out a safety corner notice board in the downstairs area.

A further sign of bureaucratic control is evident from the note made in the September 1980 minutes that a shooter's licence was required to operate the starting gun and not without good reason. 'You had to know how to use it, well some of them didn't and I think Bill Moat put a hole in the side of one of the boats with the wad...Then they started to use the bell.'<sup>52</sup> Members explored alternative methods of signalling the start of a race that would comply with safety requirements, although it was another ten years before a change was finally made. 'We used to have a gun to start them, an old gun. Then we chucked it into the sea.'<sup>53</sup> After that, flag signals were alerted by the sounding of a horn or siren.

Boating interests among the youngsters at the squadron were also changing. 'Later on instead of yachties the kids became surfies because all you had to have was a surf board.'<sup>54</sup> The June 1982 minutes note that the club Cherub, donated by the Hughes family some fifteen years previously, was to be sold. Two other squadron off-the-beach boats were sold to the local technical school. 'Then all the kids got a bit bigger and discovered cars and girls and slowly slipped away.'<sup>55</sup> For many families the Cherub had been a cheap way of experiencing yachting but they became a development class that was expensive to maintain with constantly changing requirements – plywood was replaced by

fibreglass, wooden masts by aluminium ones. In spite of the demise of the off-the-beach boats, yacht racing, boating and fishing competitions were in full swing.

The squadron started promoting new events. The Easter Around Phillip Island Race was scheduled for its inaugural sail at 10.00 am on Sunday 19 April 1981. However, in anticipation of the variable weather conditions that can plague a race, an alternative course within the Bay was suggested should weather conditions be unsuitable on the day. This pragmatic view of the weather proved correct as two races were abandoned due to lack of wind and it wasn't until the third race, with extreme wind conditions, that a result was achieved. Charles and Barbara Cantrill in their TS16 *Pip* came first on corrected time in the Club Championship. *Kestrel* (John and Helen Shugg) came second, with *Impulse* third.

The Lyall Williams Trophy Race around Phillip Island was held on January 25, and was won by Tony James skippering "L'oeuf D'or", this race allowed for an almost complete range of varying sailing conditions.<sup>56</sup>

Members did not just confine their racing to local waters. A Newhaven fleet sailed to competitions at Eden in New South Wales to compete in the 1975 Australia JOG Championship. Cliff Wilkinson's Endeavour 30 *Buccaneer*, Bob Hughe's Columbia 27 *Trevally 2* and Keith Jones Tasman 26 *Tasqua* made that journey and apparently '*Tasqua* and *Buccaneer* were both highly competitive but alas *Trevally* was usually the last one home.'<sup>57</sup> The 1981 Marley Point Overnight Race ran on a Labour Day weekend and was attended by seven Newhaven Yacht Squadron boats.

And it wasn't just the sailors who were enthusiastic; powerboat races were also popular. For one powerboat race Arthur Foster in *Viking* was the official rescue boat stationed off Cape Schanck. 'Arthur reports that it was an unforgettable sight to see *Slingshot* the winner, racing over the waters at 10 knots.'<sup>58</sup> Foster, accompanied by Bob Donovan and Peter McLennon (World Sailing Council) were also able to catch a few fish while attending to their official duties.

Apart from racing their yachts, members found cruising an enjoyable pastime. Over Easter 1981, Gary and Jenny Croom (*Bumblebee*), Ken and Kath Matthews (*Dolphin*), Stan and Margaret Phillips (*Turtle*) and Ian Jemmeson with Margaret, Andrew and Sean (*Topaz*) enjoyed an extended bay cruise.<sup>59</sup>

If the weather proved too difficult for racing, other club activities got underway. 'On a recent Sunday it was considered too windy for our Cadet members to sail. Under the guidance of Captain Bruce Talbot the lads carried out two very important jobs at the Squadron.'<sup>60</sup> The cadets replaced all the rocks that had fallen, or had been thrown, from the banks of the marina perimeter. They also cleaned the dinghy ramp and the main ramp of accumulated silt and rocks. 'All of this was indeed very hard work. They were rewarded with a Sail on "Brumby" and some Squadron lemonade.'<sup>61</sup>

Sometimes it was the vagaries of world politics rather than weather that impacted on club activities as in 1978 when the world petrol shortage resulted in the cancellation of races. But mostly their competitive nature was spurred on by rumour and gossip around the clubhouse. 'There is also a rumour that many of the "big-boat skippers" will be venturing out in the real boats to show the "small-boat skippers" how it's done. Only time will tell.'<sup>62</sup> Another time the club's four Sunbirds came

to the attention of the squadron handicapper as the spray dodgers they were carrying were thought to unfairly assist their downwind performance.

Much interest was shown in Hardy Weller's new Cole 26 "Columbia" launched on Saturday November 16 and more interest shown the next day when it was retrieved (due to a small leak in the keel area). It was launched again on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>. The boat looks really great and could upset a few people if he races it.<sup>63</sup>

From the very early days of the squadron's foundation, the social program continued unabated. The arrival of Father Christmas by boat, the Easter egg hunt and the Easter fancy dress ball were popular. The New Year's Eve party, where members were threatened with the possibility of being given 'any old bag or rag'<sup>64</sup> at the door if they failed to turn up in fancy dress was a must to attend. The Annual Dinner Dance was another event that was well supported. 'We used to have dances there. All long dresses – oh hell yes, you wouldn't go down there in our days without a long dress and spruced up a bit. They used to do it all themselves – beautiful meals – cooked chooks, cooked meat and everything! And they'd deliver it themselves. In our days they used to bring it around to us cos we didn't get hundreds. Might have got fifty. Now you have to line up and go along.'<sup>65</sup>

As usual our Social Committee excelled themselves. The Soup was a delight – so full of vegetables! The entree of Spaghetti and home-made Italian style Sauce was almost a meal in itself. What a mouth-watering array of goodies for the Main Course – choice of Chicken, Corned Beef and Roast Beef complimented with every conceivable salad. The Sweets, for those who could do justice to them, were luscious pavlovas and fruit salad.<sup>66</sup>

Vice Commodore Arthur Foster paid tribute the social committee: Betty Dunn, Dot Fraser, Betty Murphy, Steve and Sue Strudwick, Carol Talbot, Dot White and Joy Wright. The Shalimars provided the evening's entertainment and as always midnight came too soon for everyone.

Less formal gatherings such as the Annual barbecue at Steve and Sue Strudwick's Swan Bay Caravan Park in Rhyll<sup>67</sup> were extremely popular and had the added pleasure of cruising there by boat from Newhaven to the venue. The spontaneous Saturday night gatherings after Happy Hour were fun too. 'I'm sure we had a piano. My old man was always telling stories. He told a very good story and his particular one was the banana story. It was his actions and everything that he was renowned for. And John Ingham was always singing and carrying on.'<sup>68</sup>

By the end of 1982 membership of the club was reported at 417 with six life members, nine life spouse members, 187 senior members, 173 senior spouse members, 16 associates, 18 juniors, four absentees and four spouse absentees. Marine rentals would increase from \$100 to \$125 in 1982/83 and to \$150 in 1983/84 and the entry fee was fixed at \$600 to help absorb the cost of construction of new berths that were planned for the following year.

The Opening Day speech of Robert (Bob) Hughes on Sunday 14 November 1982 carries special significance – several landmark events were reached that year and Bob Hughes alluded to them in his opening lines.

To be invited to officially open the season is a great honour for me, the Ancient Mariner of the NYS.

Even more so, since Trevally's misadventure in the last race could have earned me a reputation as a stick-in-the-mud.

It is 20 years ago that this club was born.

12 years ago, the Newhaven Land Bill was passed.

9 years ago, the State Premier stood here and officially opened our home-made Marina – or safe Boat Haven.

This year we shall have completely paid back the loan we received to build it.

We shall almost double the previous number of berths.

We have acquired a large active fleet of yachts.

AND the second-largest fleet of motor boats in any VYC club.

Our subscriptions are tiny and our marina fees are low. And I believe we have quite a few bikkies in the bank.

We have a great social program, with most events sold out in advance.

Our children are being taught to handle boats and our grandchildren too.

I'm not a piscator, but I am told that some of the fishing members have even been known to tell other fishermen where the fish are biting.

I asked some committee men why they think things are going so well.

They said they looked on the squadron as a bit like one big family. Togetherness.

We're all in it together. The young and the old. The townies and the country folk. The men of sail and the men of power.

We all work together. We all play together. We all drink together.

And we all help each other, to a remarkable degree.

I believe this "togetherness" is a legacy of those early days when the men – and the women – of this squadron built the marina with their own hands.

And that tradition in our squadron won't die in a hurry. Certainly not in my time and I'm keeping my hand on the helm for a long time yet.

"Togetherness", based on our mutual interest in each other and in seafaring.

The sea...The sea...As the old Scots comedian Will Fyffe used to say –  
"If a man has anything in him,  
The sea will bring it out."

Will Fyffe wasn't a poet. But John Masefield was the Poet Laureate. And he wrote a little verse that goes something like this –  
I must go down to the sea again,  
To the lonely sea and the sky.  
And all I ask is a tall ship  
And a star to steer her by.

Or a friendly voice on the radio,  
From the Western Safety rosters,  
And a true haven

In Newhaven,  
And a glass of Commodore's Fosters.

Ladies and Gentlemen...I declare the Newhaven Yacht Squadron Season  
OPEN!

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from *The Perils of "Pauline"* by Kevin Chambers, NYS Quarterly Summer 2004

<sup>2</sup> Will Fyffe

<sup>3</sup> Ken Stuchbery interview with Wanda Stelmach, April 2011

<sup>4</sup> Gus and Lyn Hughes, email, 12 December 2011

<sup>5</sup> Percy A Fraser, *Power and Boating Magazine*, November 1963

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Fraser interview with Wanda Stelmach, January 2009

<sup>7</sup> Ken Stuchbery interview with Wanda Stelmach, April 2011

<sup>8</sup> Gus and Lyn Hughes, email, 12 December 2011

<sup>9</sup> Arthur Foster interview with Wanda Stelmach, January 2009

<sup>10</sup> Ken Stuchbery interview with Wanda Stelmach, April 2011

<sup>11</sup> Ian Jemmeson, *NYS Marina Construction*, 20 August 2002

<sup>12</sup> Herb Fowler interview with Wanda Stelmach, April 2012

<sup>13</sup> Ken Stuchbery interview with Wanda Stelmach, April 2011

<sup>14</sup> Herb Fowler interview with Wanda Stelmach, April 2012

<sup>15</sup> John Mitchell interview with Wanda Stelmach, April 2009

<sup>16</sup> *NYS Newsletter*, November 1980

<sup>17</sup> Marge Horan interview with Wanda Stelmach, January 2009

<sup>18</sup> *NYS Newsletter*, June 1981

<sup>19</sup> *South Gippsland Sentinel Times*, 6 December 1973

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>25</sup> Hamish Hughes interview with Wanda Stelmach, June 2010

<sup>26</sup> *NYS Newsletter*, September 1980

<sup>27</sup> *NYS Newsletter*, March 1982

<sup>28</sup> Butch Legge interview with Wanda Stelmach, March 2010

<sup>29</sup> Ken Stuchbery interview with Wanda Stelmach, April 2011

<sup>30</sup> Hamish Hughes interview with Wanda Stelmach, June 2010

<sup>31</sup> *NYS Newsletter*, August 1978

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>36</sup> Percy Fraser, *NYS Newsletter*, August 1978

<sup>37</sup> Dot Fraser interview with Ian Jemmeson, July 2002

<sup>38</sup> Ian Jemmeson, *NYS Archivist*, Personal Note in Summary of Minutes

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>40</sup> Bert Smith, Commodore, *NYS Newsletter*, November 1979

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>42</sup> Jottings and Personal Pars, *NYS Newsletter*, November 1979

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>45</sup> Jottings and Personal Pars, *NYS Newsletter*, March 1981

<sup>46</sup> *NYS Newsletter*, September 1980

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>48</sup> WD (Bill) Moet, Commodore, *NYS Newsletter*, March 1981

<sup>49</sup> WD (Bill) Moet, Commodore, *NYS Newsletter*, September 1981

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>51</sup> Ian Jemmeson, *NYS Minutes*, December 1979

<sup>52</sup> Arthur Foster interview with Wanda Stelmach, January 2009

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>54</sup> John Mitchell interview with Wanda Stelmach, April 2009

<sup>55</sup> Neil Lacco interview with Wanda Stelmach, September 2011

<sup>56</sup> *NYS Newsletter*, March 1981

<sup>57</sup> Hamish Hughes, Commodore, Autumn 2008

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- <sup>58</sup> NYS Newsletter, June 1981  
<sup>59</sup> Ibid  
<sup>60</sup> NYS Newsletter, December 1981  
<sup>61</sup> Ibid  
<sup>62</sup> NYS Newsletter, September 1981  
<sup>63</sup> NYS Newsletter, December 1981  
<sup>64</sup> NYS Newsletter, November 1979  
<sup>65</sup> Arthur Foster interview with Wanda Stelmach, January 2009  
<sup>66</sup> NYS Newsletter, June 1981  
<sup>67</sup> NYS Newsletter November 1979  
<sup>68</sup> Marge Horan interview with Wanda Stelmach, January 2009