

Mud Flats and Flowing Tides

The History of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron

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Chapter 5

1993 – 1999

Freebooter – Shifting Sands

‘Sandy and I made the momentous decision to sell our much loved and well-travelled H28, *Sandpiper*.’

The Patkins had owned the Walker H28 for fifteen years but now they were looking for a larger boat to do more extended cruising. She had to be a motor sailer, have a well protected wheelhouse as well as ‘the sea-kindly qualities of a long keel that we had experienced with our H28.’

And so they found *Freebooter*, a Salar 40 designed by the English naval architect, Laurant Giles, in the late 1960s ‘for the boisterous conditions of the North Sea’. *Freebooter* had been owned by Jeff and Carole Bigg for twenty six years. She was a comfortable home with three different types of refrigeration systems, solar panel electric power generation and an alternator and smart charging system that gave the Pitkins the luxury of 1,000 litres of hot and cold water. The Biggs had cruised on her for eight months each year and she was well known along the east coast. ‘For that reason we were reluctant to change her name which, on first hearing, fell a little awkwardly on our ears. However, we have since found out that the name means ‘pirate ship’, or ‘privateer’ in Dutch. Out of respect for her history and good reputation, and not wanting to bring bad luck, we have chosen to keep her name.’

Freebooter was based at the new Mackay Marina on the doorstep to the Whitsundays so, with Neville and Helve Cann, owners of *Alana* (a H28) they set off in mid-October to sail the Whitsundays. Their two months of cruising took them to Port Newry, the Goldsmith group of islands, where they were introduced to anchoring near coral and were reminded that ‘it’s not simply a matter of nosing into the beach with an eye on the depth sounder and dropping the anchor!’

Approaching Bowen boat harbour at the bottom of the tide they experienced a Newhaven low-tide moment. ‘With *Sandpiper*, we would sometimes skid over the shallow spots, trusting the boat would maintain its momentum and carry us through. This time *Freebooter* was registering a mere 0.1m (4 inches in the old language!) under her keel, so it was a case of giving full power and hoping.’ They spent a week in Bowen enjoying the hospitality of the area. Their departure was timed for full tide and with a generous four metres under the keel their exit was uneventful. They travelled further south, finally ending their trip back in Mackay just before the start of the wet season. This was only the first of many cruises aboard *Freebooter*.¹

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Lessons from Geese by Angeles Arrien based on the work of Milton Olson:

Fact 4: *The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.*

Lesson: *We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking.²*

True to George Bass's observations, over time Western Port waters slowly changed the under-sea landscape by dragging mud and sand in and out of the Narrows with each tide. Although the marina was a 'safe haven' for boats it was not immune to the effects of shifting sands and mud – the marina was becoming shallower and it needed to be dredged to improve access. The practices of the past, of digging up the newly deposited mud and dumping it in Western Port or Cleeland Bight, were no longer permitted.

At the annual general meeting in 1993 options were discussed but the only feasible one that stood a chance of approval by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) was the formation of bunds or silting ponds to hold the dredged mud and allow it to settle. The committee recommended that it would be prudent if \$100,000 were put aside for the purpose of bund construction and the cost of pumping silt in the event that this project were approved by the authorities. Previously, in 1991, the then commodore, KE (Ken) Stuchbery, had been optimistic about the prospect of dredging the marina as chemical studies showed that the mud was not significantly contaminated with organic or inorganic compounds.

A year later, with environmental issues growing in importance in the general community, Commodore Fred Arblaster was less sanguine about the prospects of approval, informing the membership that 'after two and a half years of procrastination the Department of C. & E. [Department of Conservation and Environment] had now handed the matter to the E.P.A. [Environmental Protection Authority]!!!'³ Finally, four years later, approval was gained but not without the club having pursued the issue vigorously.

As a result of the club's work ethos the project moved at speed and the *Quarterly* of March 1994 not only announced the approval of the works but optimistically carried an advertisement stating that 'There will be an informal CELEBRATION to mark the completion of the Marina Dredging – keep an eye on the Notice Board for further info and date.' In spite of inclement weather, which brought the marina improvements to a standstill over Winter, the June 1994 *Quarterly* noted that '...Marina Members report very favourably on the much improved water depth and the much larger manoeuvring areas around the perimeter.'⁴ Although a professional contractor completed the

dredging, members carried out much of the associated work, such as the day by day moving and relocating of boats while the suction dredge was in operation. The benefits of member involvement were once more obvious as the project came well within the budget of \$100,000 – the final bill for the dredging works was \$78,000.⁵ The foresight shown by the committee in putting aside funds for this major project once more ensured that the squadron remained out of debt. Dredging of the marina to clear the constant influx of mud would continue to exercise the minds of the marina committee for years to come, as this note in the minutes of November 1998 attests, ‘Additional dredging carried out inside the Marina entrance.’⁶

During the 1994 dredging project, the squadron took the opportunity to manage several other marina and boat yard maintenance projects. The landscaping of the bund walls was part of the conditions of approval for the dredging project. Don Manning, with the assistance of club members, completed this together with the landscaping of the land around the boat yard. The squadron spent more than \$2,000 on shrubs and plants over two years to revegetate the marina and settlement pond walls. It was Don Manning, however, who chose the plants and spent time nurturing them. These plants were supplemented by a good growth of self-generated ones, including Pigface (Noon Flower), Saltbush and Boobialla, in soil that had come from the bottom of the marina.

The marina was also a haven for birds. A large colony of seagulls was nesting on the northern edge of the marina wall, with one member counting over 200 eggs during the breeding season. Pelicans came to roost but were not nesting. There were many other varieties of bird life seeking shelter in the lee of the marina, including penguins and seals that intermittently spent time in the waters of the marina.

Ducks had been a fixture at the club for many years and many members and their children considered them to be surrogate pets. Peter Rainford was their first carer. He fed them daily and set up a breeding pen in the maintenance yard to protect the numerous ducklings that inevitably appeared each Spring. ‘I guess the cute fluffy yellow pet who grows to become a messy adult bird sometimes did not suit the suburban garden.’⁷ Terry Harris took over when Peter Rainford moved away and when Terry Harris became too unwell to continue, David Blackmore took on the responsibilities of ‘mother duck’. Their numbers fluctuated over the years, slowly dwindling from a flock of twenty-five birds ‘until recently the very last of them disappeared. We don’t know for sure what fate overtook him, but as he was of a considerable age, we presume he also has gone to be with his duck friends.’⁸

Don Manning went on to plant shrubs along the east side of the concrete steps leading down to the marina from the car park. This significantly improved an area that, although visible to all, was often left to grow untidily. The club was becoming an icon in the area.

It should be of interest for members to be aware that a number of the tourist buses en route to the Penguin Parade call in to our area to allow their passengers to take snaps and briefly experience the delights of the marina and surrounds.⁹

Club members became increasingly interested in maintaining their squadron’s grounds and support was growing to ensure the planting of local vegetation during working bees. Local botanist Bronwyn Teasdale pointed out the prolific spread of broom that was taking over the native vegetation. This

resulted in a very productive working bee in the Spring of 1998 when much of the broom on squadron grounds was removed. Bronwyn Teasdale was then commissioned to draw up a report and provide advice on the restoration of natural vegetation on the embankments surrounding the settlement ponds, as well as for the rest of the club's leasehold property. Future planting and weed eradication was to be guided by this report and its environmental plan.

Although some areas around the marina were well maintained, after almost twenty years of being subjected to strong tides, the marina banks were showing the inevitable effects of erosion and required reinforcing. When the dredging works began it became obvious that the committee had underestimated the extent of deterioration to the walls surrounding the marina.

The north-west corner of the outer wall of the marina was in danger of being washed away; therefore it was strengthened and covered with spall, as was the north-east end of the mole, which was subject to severe tide erosion. As the mole was generally subject to the effects of severe south-east tides, the committee took the opportunity to grade the entire inner north wall of the mole and cover it with spall. Seabed work was also part of this extensive project. Seabed areas in the north fairway of the marina, where obstructions were noted, were flattened with a dragline. However, the most impressive work was carried out on the north-west fairway when a reef of rock in the seabed was removed by the excavator working in the seabed at low tide.

By the end of the project, about 912 tonnes of rock spall had been used to repair the damage to the walls. The committee was confident that major erosion had been halted; however, this insurance against the ravages of the sea did not come cheaply. The final cost of the works was \$20,700, which, when added to the cost of the marina works over the preceding two years, brought the total expenditure to \$97,700. This was still within the planned expenditure of \$100,000 that had been approved for works in 1993 but it had an impact on other works that the squadron may have wished to undertake around the marina and clubhouse. One of these included improvements to the squadron's launching ramp.

In May 1994 the Shire of Phillip Island invited the Newhaven Yacht Squadron to comment on a council proposal to redevelop the Newhaven public boat ramp. The ramp was no longer adequately servicing the increasing needs of the fishing and sailing community. This invitation to comment set off a chain of events that resulted in the squadron and the council working together to the benefit of both entities. In fact the squadron had already recognised the problems surrounding the public launching ramp and had requested the Shire of Phillip Island to have the rocks near the launching ramp identified with an isolated danger mark.¹⁰ In May 1994 a report to redevelop the Newhaven boat ramp into an all-tide facility was commissioned by the Shires of Bass and Phillip Island, and the San Remo fishing club. Macknight Pty Ltd, the company that was commissioned, presented the study to members of council and to representatives of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron.

The company outlined three options. The first was the development of a two-lane ramp. The second suggested a three-lane ramp with infill earth works to extend the car park. The third option also suggested a three-lane ramp but included more extensive infill that would result in the building of a restaurant and public recreation areas as well as improved parking. Costs varied from around \$500,00 to \$2,000,000.

The presentation resulted in robust debate. Councillor Graham Burgan argued for approval of Option A as this was the one most easily and quickly achievable with the funds available to the community. The larger projects would require commercial support and in his opinion would lead to inaction for years. However, there were other voices supporting the more expensive options because they would ultimately lead to a better community development and add greater value to the region. Needless to say, no formal decision was made and the plans were put on display at the Shire of Phillip Island offices for public comment.

As a result of these events, the club examined its own launching ramp, which had for some years been the subject of adverse comments. A special meeting of committee was held in June 1995 to discuss the extension of the squadron ramp to an all-tide ramp. Concerns were being raised that the development of the public ramp might draw members away from the club. At that June meeting the squadron, well known for its decisive decision-making processes, discussed, voted and passed the motion that \$15,800 was to be spent on extending the squadron ramp into the marina by 3.6 metres. The construction firm of KV Johnson Constructions Pty Ltd Marina Piling & Dredging was approached.

The notice in the newsletter of September 1995 to all powerboat owners and ramp users informed members that the club was also forced to rebuild the tyre wall on the east side of the marina and replace the sand which had eroded through the practice of driving boats onto the sand and holding them in position by the propeller. To prevent further erosion and damage to club facilities, the marina committee instituted a number of control measures such as banning power-driving of boats onto trailers. Boats were also to be nosed up to the sand or the tyre wall, then secured and the motor turned off rather than kept in gear. These edicts did not pass unchallenged and the sub-committee promised to review these by-laws after the launching ramp extension was completed.

The ramp works were approved by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, a contract was signed and work was planned to commence in October of 1995. The works were postponed until 6 May 1996 due to contractor delays. Ultimately, they were carried out under the scrutiny of a very diligent band of sidewalk supervisors made up of senior club members who monitored each stage of the work very closely.¹¹

The work consisted of creating a dam by constructing a retaining wall at the foot of the ramp at low tide and then pumping the area dry. Two concrete slabs were laid at the end of the existing ramp after foundations had been dug. The equipment used to carry out this work was very impressive and the sidewalk supervisors estimated its total value to be in excess of one million dollars.¹² Given the presence of the digging equipment, the committee took the opportunity to upgrade the careening berth base at a cost of \$3,700. This improvement fulfilled one of the objectives of the newly promulgated Future Directions Plan.

The careening base had been the thorn in the side of many a marina committee member since the birth of the floating marina. Before it existed, keeled boats were strapped to jetties and as the tide fell their keels and motors were exposed allowing maintenance work to be carried out between the tides. Keel boat owners had on several occasions petitioned the marina committee to construct a careening berth to allow them to maintain their boats. The committee's stance had been that the boat yard with its attendant tractor, trailers and boat cradles was adequate and safer than a

careening berth. Finally, in 1990, a petition of twenty members raised the issue once more. The marina committee responded to the petition by describing the form a careening berth might take.

The article then went on to present arguments against the construction of the berth. These included the fact that a ten minute job became a twelve hour exercise as the owner needed to wait to the next high tide to float his boat out; that tide heights varied considerably and were affected by such factors as wind, irrespective of what the tide charts might predict; that the use of electrical equipment in a wet area, irrespective of whether it was a concrete slab, was dangerous; that jobs, such as changing the sea cock or propeller, initially appearing quite simple but could in fact result in days of work with the boat subject to the possibility of flooding; and finally that each type of keel boat required a particular careening berth and with over twenty-one keel yachts on the register it was impossible to satisfy every keel boat owner's requirements. Members were asked to think about these issues and submit their thoughts to the boat yard committee. In this case, the keel boat owners got their wish and the careening berth was in use by early 1991.

By 1996, when the committee started looking at developing a five-year plan of maintenance works, the careening berth came under scrutiny as it, like the marina retaining walls, was subject to the ravages of use and tide and required an up-grade. The presence of the digging equipment for the ramp was the necessary spur to action.

A new concrete base has been laid since the old base (which consisted of old tyres filled with mud and rubble) was considered to be hazardous as well as unsightly. This new base measuring 6m x 3.3m has been laid to be awash at 0.7m water height as shown on our water level marker...Skippers should remember, when using this base, that we no longer have a mud bottom; therefore it will be necessary to allow plenty of water beneath the keel when floating onto the facility.¹³

While the club was busy with its launching ramp and maintenance works, the council too had been in further discussions with the community about the development of the Newhaven boat ramp. Finally, a decision was made in favour of the first option and the shire engineers held meetings with the squadron throughout 1996 about the proposed ramp development. Although this was the least extensive development it would still impact on the squadron's land, and also on the squadron's activities. Access to the boat yard and the squadron boat ramp would be compromised and there would be an effect on parking.

The Bass Shire announced on 27 May 1998 that the upgrade of the public ramp would take place with a completion date expected in November of that year. This announcement was a disappointment to the squadron as they had lobbied Bass Coast Shire Council, State Boating Council, local members of parliament and the Minister of Roads and Ports to change the position of the public boat ramp, and relocate it a further one hundred metres to the south of the existing ramp.

The squadron committee believed that the then current location of the public ramp was unacceptable on the grounds of safety, both to the general public and to club members. The two ramps, public and squadron, were in close proximity to each other and the depth of the water was inadequate at times. Users of the ramps were thus subjected to unacceptably high risk of collisions

between craft on the water or cars on land as a result of the increased activity at the launching sites. Representations were urgently made to the Minister for Roads and Ports, as well as to Bass Coast Shire Council.

The committee was able to report to members in the June 1998 *Quarterly* that assurances had been given that the channel to the south of the boat ramp would be widened, that all dredging would be carried out concurrently with the redevelopment of the ramp and that there would be ongoing dredging of the holding area at the marina entrance and at the end of the ramp to remove the constant build up of silt in these areas. In respect to the works planned on land, the turning and manoeuvring area at the top of the ramp would be increased in size and one-way traffic on the road leading up to the clubhouse from the ramp would be trialled, initially to coincide with the heavy Summer season use as well as on weekends. This was later changed to permanent one-way traffic.

However, the committee still had concerns about the depth of the water space to the east and to the south-east of the ramp and was lobbying for extra dredging to further deepen those areas. The depth of waters leading into and out of the marina varied considerably depending on the tides so these concerns were justified. Boats requiring deeper water were restricted to the times at which they could enter or leave the marina and a miscalculation would often leave the boats stranded on the rocks or mud until the next high tide.

In mid-1995 the squadron installed a water level marker (WLM) on the pole that supported the first or lower lead light. This marker reflected the water level at the benchmark marker at Stoney Point against which the official Western Port tide times and levels are measured. However, the water level marker did not indicate the actual depth of water at the marina, which no doubt led to some confusion and an article, written by Neville Harsant, in the newsletter of June 1995 tried to resolve this. It reminded members that they had to verify their boat's draught against water depth before entering or leaving the marina. However, these calculations were not always successful, as several members have verified when their boats became stranded on the mud between tides.

Ultimately, though, the committee was able to have the entrance to the marina dragline dredged, resulting in the 'removal of the hump just inside the marina',¹⁴ which now allowed full entry into the marina by aligning the leads all the way into the marina. This resulted in a depth of 1.37 metres or 4 feet 6 inches along the lead lines when the tide gauge in the marina read 0.8 metres off low tide. The rules of etiquette regarding entry and exist had always been that outgoing boats gave way to incoming boats as the strong cross-tides made it difficult for an incoming boat to move out of the way of an outgoing boat. Now the dredged area at the marina entrance allowed room for the outgoing vessel to easily manoeuvre out of the way.

In spite of all the disagreements during these developments, relations between the squadron and the council remained cordial. Agreement was reached to permit the council to use the squadron's settlement ponds for disposal of silt so long as squadron interests and property were properly protected. The squadron also offered the use of its ramp to the delegates of the Angling Convention whose event in February 1999 might have been disrupted by ongoing ramp works.

On 5 February 1999 the Bass Coast Shire Council held a ceremony in the squadron clubhouse to officially open the Newhaven public boat ramp.

At short notice, two members of the Social Sub-Committee; Marie Lacco and Judy Lee provided a fine morning tea for the function to mark the opening of the new public boat ramp...The Honourable Geoff Graige, Minister for Roads and Ports, officially opened the ramp. Judi and Marie's efforts created a very favourable impression with the Council's guests and was consistent with the cooperation the Squadron has provided throughout the design and construction phases of this project. I believe this underlines the fact that the Squadron provides benefits not only for the membership, but also the wider community in which it resides.¹⁵

Unfortunately, the event was soured by the theft of the Australian flag that club member Graham Nankervis had loaned for the occasion. Graham Nankervis had carried his flag on his person while he represented Australia in international cycling races so his disappointment was probably only partly lessened by the fact that the Honourable Peter Reith, MHR for Flinders and Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, presented Nankervis with a replacement flag. At the same time, the minister also presented the squadron with a new flag.

Although, the squadron and the public boat ramps took a lot of the club's attention, other areas of the marina were not forgotten. When the last of the squadron off-the-beach boats had been sold, the boat yard became the squadron's maintenance hub. The tractor, which hauled the boats in and out of the water, was upgraded. A roll bar was added to the cabin. The boat cradles were given major overhauls and chains were fitted to the supporting arms for added safety. Plans were developed to install a triple interceptor in the boat yard. This was to meet the EPA's requirements to prevent waste matter entering Western Port. A new notice board was placed on the boat yard fence to keep members abreast of activities occurring in the yard. As the numbers of members increased so the demands on the boat yard escalated. The need to develop usage rules became a priority.

The maintenance yard is primarily for the provision of maintenance of marina-based vessels...The yard is not to be used for the storage of vessels...The yard is not available for the washing down and/or cleaning of boats which are normally trailed, nor is it available for fish cleaning purposes...

Any boat owner wishing to use the yard facilities must obtain prior permission for each entry. Such permission can only be given by a Committee member or its agent...Our Squadron is financially organised on a "user pays" basis, therefore every boat occupancy of the yard incurs a charge.¹⁶

Such was the camaraderie that members could easily request the help of other members when they encountered problems with their boats. One such member was Charles Woods, a retired engineer who had moved to Newhaven with his wife, Ruth, and joined the squadron. His love of anything mechanical was well known as was his well fitted large garage containing, amongst other things, his favourite equipment that included a heavy lathe. He offered the squadron his services in any engineering capacity and very soon 'we took full advantage. The local fishing fraternity soon found his services of great use with repairs and improvements to their equipment.'¹⁷

SAFETY ISSUES

By far the biggest issue facing the squadron was that of safety within the marina, due to growth in membership numbers and increasing usage of the club's premises. From the early 1980s, as larger motorised boats became popular, concerns were raised about refuelling at the jetties. Rules were suggested regarding the size of containers brought into the marina and the site for refuelling boats.

Because there are over a hundred boats in our Marina, I want to draw your attention to this hazard...all petrol handling, decanting of petrol, or any pouring of petrol on boats in the Marina, should only be carried out at the visitor berths on the east end of the floating section of the Marina.¹⁸

As more jetties were converted to floating marina, extra fire extinguishers were fitted to the marina walkways. By 1989, the safety supervisor suggested to the executive committee that open pouring of petrol from can to funnel or from can to can introduced unacceptable hazards. Members were asked to use a commercial portable petrol can, which was filled at the petrol station, properly capped and came with its own flexible spout.¹⁹

An article entitled 'That Dreaded Call...FIRE!!' and written by safety officer, Noel Street, appeared in the June 1996 *Quarterly*, reminding members of the risks of fire and the actions to be taken should a fire occur in the marina. Members were also informed that with the assistance of the San Remo fire brigade, a fire extinguisher check would be held at the marina. They were encouraged to participate and bring their boat's extinguishers for a check-up.

Safety improvements to the facilities and the surrounding areas had continued on an ad hoc basis until November 1992 when a disaster plan for the marina area was proposed.²⁰ However, it was not until November 1994 that a safety officer was actually commissioned to draw up a disaster plan for all squadron property. Following this decision, the 'Displan proposals', as the disaster plan became known, were presented to executive committee in January 1995. The proposals put forward had come about as a result of meetings with the Country Fire Authority (CFA). Suggestions included additional fire hydrants to the marina, an emergency phone on the marina, a separate fuelling berth, water supply for fire hoses, hatchets on the marina and fire access for fire appliances to be maintained on the marina banks.

In June 1995, the San Remo fire brigade advised the council to install a fire hydrant near the public toilet to serve the marina and its surrounding area. This was not acted on until November 1998 when 'the Club [was] advised that installation of the fire hydrant near the toilet block for Marina use, is to be installed during the public ramp upgrade works'.²¹

In 1999 the fire and emergency contingency plan was further developed and an emergency management-training seminar was conducted to ensure that fire hazardous goods were appropriately stored and handled, and that all emergency plans were properly developed. As a result of the deliberations, the powers of the safety officer were reinforced allowing the person appointed to that position to make a more thorough survey of squadron boats and ensure that marina rules were being complied with.

The newsletter was used as a conduit for the dissemination of safety information. An article in March 1996 reminded readers that there were three radio systems for communication in an emergency.

These were listed as 27 MHz marine radio (channel 88), which was the cheapest and the most commonly used radio on the coastal waters of Australia. Marine radio had a range of forty kilometres, depending on weather, and was monitored by Westernport Safety Council twenty-four hours a day. The VHF/27 MHz system (channel 16) was the next most popular but required a radio operator's licence and registration as the boat was issued with a call-sign. The HF radio (channel 2182) also required a licence and had a range of several thousand kilometres.

Safety Officer Noel Street reminded members that although mobile phones were very popular, they were not waterproof, they had limited battery power and range, and that their owners had to know the number of the nearest boat to get keys. In short, their sole use was not recommended.

Noel Street went on to say that he carried a 27 MHz set, a VHF set and a mobile phone on board his boat 'as the bay is very lonely when you are in trouble'.²² Other safety issues reviewed in the newsletter were 'Electrical Housekeeping for boaties, in simple terms'²³, and 'Search and Rescue (SAR) Resources'.²⁴

The squadron committees were also becoming interested in environmental safety, although admittedly this was in part as a result of the EPA's increasing powers of policing and fining transgressors. Areas around Western Port were earmarked for restricted access so as to give endangered bird species a haven. Bag limits for fish were set as fish numbers were decreasing around the heavily inhabited areas of coastal Australia. Around the marina, the EPA was taking interest in maintenance activities especially with regards to scraping off old anti-fouling paint and its disposal. Spillage was a concern and water and soil were regularly monitored for contaminants. Analysis of the silt in the marina in the early 1990s indicated that contaminants were near the upper acceptable level, so maintenance practices of boat owners were now being more strictly observed. Out on the waters, the EPA was also having an impact.

A Signal from the "Poop" Deck

The time appears to be fast approaching when owners of craft fitted with "Porta Potties" will have to seriously consider installing holding tanks in their boats for sewerage.

Apparently the EPA takes a dim view of the practice of emptying the contents of this equipment into Port Phillip Bay...It's [sic] main recommendation is to flush the contents of the "Porta Potties" into the sewerage system. It is recommended that members owning boats with this facility use the Newhaven public toilets to undertake this task.²⁵

However, not all EPA edicts were punitive or cautionary. Its charter also encouraged a proactive approach to study the environment and develop management plans that encouraged rejuvenation of the land and sea. The seagrass-monitoring program was one of these examples and members were invited to monitor designated seagrass meadows on a regular basis and to record observations and data.

Squadron members could in fact be proud of the way they were managing the marina. This was confirmed in a letter from Mr John Spragg, General Manager of Bellingham Marina (a large American manufacturer of marinas) following a visit on 4 June 1998 – a fine Thursday morning – in which he complimented members on the excellent maintenance of their ten-year-old marina. The work

required for this level of maintenance was duly noted. John Spragg went on to suggest further maintenance possibilities such as bolt and timber replacement. His letter to Neville Harsant and the squadron concluded:

The club in my opinion has a very well managed marina that is in exceptional condition for its age, which is unfortunate for Bellingham Marina as we sell marinas.²⁶

THE CLUBHOUSE

Regular maintenance and facility upgrades were also features within the clubhouse, although such improvements were not always easily achieved. It took fifteen months of frustrating negotiations before all approvals were obtained for construction of the much needed toilet block on the ground floor.

It was a proud moment for all the members present on Trophy Presentation Night when Rear Commodore Neville (*N Harsant*) declared the recently constructed Toilet Block and Foyer officially opened. We now have an entrance befitting the Squadron. Neville particularly thanked those who had contributed greatly to this project including Stuart Hancock, John Hennessey, Bruce Talbot and Stan Broad, all of whom gave freely of their time and talents.²⁷

Also recognised that night were squadron members Geoff and Jan Daff. Geoff Daff was commended for his co-operation and workmanship as the builder of the project and also for including in the contract, but not charging for the work, the Newhaven Yacht Squadron pennant and logo on the glass section of the clubhouse entrance doors. Following this upgrade, a new carpet was installed in the club function area, together with a runner in the new foyer to protect the floor. At the same time, 'no smoking' signage appeared and the club adopted a 'no smoking' ban on club premises.

In quick succession, several other projects were also given approval after years of writing submissions and were quickly completed. The First Aid meeting room on the ground floor was particularly popular as it freed the upper deck for members and permitted meetings to be held without interruption from other club activities.

At the same time, the downstairs showers were upgraded and toilets were built into the shower block facility. The lower deck sullage from sinks and showers, which had previously drained into the marina, was connected to a sewer pit. As a result of the building extensions, a fire escape stairway was installed at the west end of the upstairs deck, allowing access to the sliding wire gate adjacent to the first aid/meeting room.

Marina and clubhouse projects are commented upon in a separate article, but many thanks to the members who contributed to these works and especially to Vice-Commodore "Henno" (*EJ (John) Hennessey*) (who has been a driving force in the improvements) and Graham Nankervis, who between them completed all the electrical work and much of the painting.²⁸

Members were no doubt pleased with the improvements but requests for further luxuries were received and resulted in the purchase of a water-heating urn for tea and coffee, a refrigerator for the storage of milk and sandwiches, and a heater. In August 1995 sailors used the meeting room for the first time to hold a post-race gathering. No complaints followed this meeting; probably because after a day out on the cold Winter waters of Western Port, just being indoors was a luxury.

Developments also included simpler items such as the making and affixing of notice boards and expanding the photograph gallery so that pictures of all former commodores could be hung. Club numbers continued to increase – by 1996 there were over 760 members – and mundane matters needed to be dealt with as urgently as exciting developments. Issues relating to rubbish accumulation resulted in members being asked to take their rubbish home with them since the club's recycle bins and general rubbish bins were unable to cope. A snapshot of the activities occurring around the club during the Winter months is seen in this report in the September 1996 *Quarterly*.

No major projects this year, just the usual, which is to keep the Club premises up to scratch and carry out maintenance and minor upgrades. Included in this lot is:

- a) Complete overhaul of our tractor and mobile boat cradles (thank you, Ken Niere);
- b) Installation of larger triangles on our Marina Leads (thanks to Ken Matthews and Charles Woods);
- c) Electrification of the lead lights (thanks to John Hennessey, Charles Woods, GraemeNankervis and Alan Hazeldene);
- d) Insurance review (thanks to Ken Niere and Lyle Wilson).²⁹

Members were reminded that a lot of the small maintenance work around the squadron went unnoticed 'but in total add up to a significant amount of labour input, most of which has been voluntary. The bulk of the membership owes much to these volunteers because their input keeps our costs, hence our fees, down.'³⁰

Club members also donated memorabilia. In April 1995 Herb Fowler gave the squadron a ship's anchor, which he had dragged out of the mud at Inverloch. It now graces the entrance to the marina walkway.

It was hand forged in the south of England in 1864. The iron was mined in Germany. Carried by a 128ft Schooner, which would have up to 50 anchors of this type in the bilges. The anchor rope was cut and the anchor left behind in storms. This one was lost in Anderson Inlet in 1874.³¹

With the squadron gaining members and developing at such a rapid rate, the idea of a roster for duty officers on weekends was suggested in early 1981. This was not proceeded with at the time; however, by 1996 there was so much activity year-round at the club that the committee expressed the need for an authority figure to whom members of the public could turn for information. A job description was developed and published in the March 1996 *Quarterly*. Due to the support of

members for this project, a sub-committee comprising Ian Jemmeson and Ken Niere was appointed. A letter of invitation to participate was sent out to the membership and Geoff Crockford and Harold Waldron had the distinction of being on duty for the first weekend of the Spring season. The paraphernalia of the duty officer included a duty officer instruction book, duty diary and armband, all of which were kept in the radio room and were available for each duty officer on duty. Members were encouraged to view the instruction book and consider volunteering. Duty was rostered from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm on Saturdays and Sundays as well as public holidays (except Christmas day or in the Winter months). The duty officer opened the club, raised and lowered the flag and attended the telephone, greeted visitors and answered queries from members or dealt with emergencies as they arose.

I recently rang John Campbell on his duty day thinking it would be quiet for him with the day cold and windy. He reported that he had had numerous visitors. A boat had run into another in the marina, causing some minor damage. John was able to facilitate quick notification to the owner of the damaged boat.

John had been advised by Westernport Safety Council that Tom Lainson was sailing around from Port Phillip in the day's heavy conditions and he was therefore aware of their pending arrival and was able to assist them to berth in the windy conditions. So much for the quiet day!³²

The roster ran from September 1996 to April 1997 and was so successful that the committee decided that this activity would resume in late September of 1997. Max Stephenson was now arranging it. Unfortunately, when the novelty of the roster wore off, the committee had difficulty obtaining sufficient numbers of volunteers to complete the duties. This was the pattern in following years, notwithstanding the fact that the committee encouraged rostered members to bring their family with them for the day's activities. It was pointed out that no special skills were required and that members needed only to volunteer for one day in the year, which was not as onerous a requirement as being an elected committee member. By December 1999, in an attempt to raise interest, Bob King, who had inherited the job of developing the roster, was contacting individual members by mail, asking them to act as a duty officer on nominated days.

The club was also being constantly updated in terms of electricity. A cordless phone was purchased and proved valuable in several ways. Members used it in the maintenance yard when the club was unoccupied and it assisted them with their duties as marina berth management when speaking with visitors. Club work grew to such a point that in August 1994, when Ken Niere, P Bagley, Greg Stuart and other club computer experts could no longer keep up with the various entries required to record club activities, Mrs Carla Ellison was employed as a computer operator. In January 1999, the finance sub-committee changed the club's financial records from Quicken to the commercial Quickbooks system. This then resulted in the purchase, for around \$3,000, of a more modern computer and printer to facilitate the upgrading of all club programs. Shortly afterwards an advertisement appeared in the *Quarterly*:

An Urgent Request for Help

Your treasurer is currently converting the Squadron's accounting system from QUICKEN to the more complex system called QUICKBOOKS. Should any member be familiar with QUICKBOOKS, a call to Tim Patkin would be most appreciated. Several Minor points remain to be sorted out so that this new system can be utilised fully.³³

The telephone in the radio room was also upgraded for use on STD by duty staff. To prevent abuse of the system, as had previously occurred when the honour system failed, each user was required to use a PIN number and this number was recorded in the duty book. Westernport Safety Council also installed an HF radio in the Cowes Yacht Club and members from Newhaven and Rhyll were invited to participate in the rostered radio network service. Westernport Safety Council also broadcast routine up-to-date weather forecasts at specified times, as well as on request. *Boatweather* was the Bureau of Meteorology's weather forecast information service, which was available by fax and which the squadron posted each weekend on the club bulletin board.

By 1999 the club was considering other ways of communicating and exploring the possibilities of joining an internet group to arrange a club website. A draft discussion paper on the development of a squadron internet site was presented to the committee at their January 2000 meeting. By then the community's fears of a general computer and internet meltdown with the change of century had been unrealised.

THE NEWSLETTER

OVERHEARD!

"That Newhaven crowd are a mob of Silvertails".

This sort of remark can only create the wrong impression...the truth. Which is that the club was formed by people who know how to "Do It Themselves", Members had working Bees, The Ladies ran social events to help build the club funds.

This tradition carries through today...That is our strength – Prudent use of our funds by those elected to office keeps us financially sound, not a bottomless pit of money.³⁴

In this edition of the *Quarterly* (the Newhaven Yacht Squadron newsletter) editor Col Martin quoted Percy Fraser when explaining the success of the squadron. He was reminding members about how their club managed to develop successfully; yet at the same time stay out of debt. It would be interesting to know the reason why such a statement needed to be made. One can only surmise that with the immense progress and the apparent infinite number of projects being developed, members had forgotten or did not realise that it was the hard work of the volunteers that made this success possible.

A series of stories recounting both the history of the formation of the squadron and the early history of Bass coast preceded and followed these comments. The newsletter was the primary method by which the executive committee promulgated its opinions and the direction the club was taking.

Perhaps now is the time for our Squadron after 35 years to revisit the past and take note of the foresight and unselfish dedication of our founders, of their enthusiasm and concern for the youth of the area and also to revisit their aims and aspirations as enshrined in our constitution.³⁵

With the increasing number of members, the strength of the *Quarterly* grew as the principle source of conveying boating information and stories of interest to squadron members.

Longer articles of interest also started appearing; many of them written by members about their exploits and their sailing expeditions. Alfred Zuegn wrote about the pleasures and rigours of single-handed sailing:

Good preparation of your boat, good charts and knowledge of the area you sail in is essential for any successful passage. This applies even more when you are short handed...Once under way, all your mental and physical energy has to be conserved for handling the boat.³⁶

Alfred Zuegn was well able to give this advice, having sailed over 4,000 nautical miles single-handed during a trip that covered 13,000 nautical miles.

Most members, however, preferred to sail with crew, although some crew members chose which legs they sailed. Ian and Heather Twyerould sailed the east coast of Australia in their boat *Tardis* in 1993, accompanied by their 'young Maltese-type sea dog, Raffles'.³⁷ The trip started from Newhaven on 5 March.

Heather (my good wife) decided that Bass Strait was not the way for her to be initiated as my crew and reneged on the first leg, Newhaven to Eden. Fortunately, three 'semi-professional' members of our yacht squadron, being Dean, Rob and Warren volunteered and did a thorough job too, as I was, as usual very sea sick for the first 24 hours. They took over the running of 'Tardis' and left me to my misery.³⁸

Given the state of the weather and the fact that the captain became unwell, Heather Twyerould probably made the correct decision. Later, they were joined for part of the trip along the east coast by Alfred Zuegn on *Emma Too*. They caught up with Tim Patkin, Peter Watson and Don Wilson in *Sandpiper* at the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia in Rushcutters Bay, Sydney; at the Southport Yacht Club in Queensland and finally at Mooloolaba in May. This was obviously another squadron boat escaping the cold Newhaven Winter. They met many other boats from various clubs around Australia and overseas as *Tardis* made her way to the Whitsundays.

Other members made the delivery of their boat the excuse for a cruise. After months of testing and comparing, Peter Watson found his dream boat *Ankira*, an Eastcoast 31, at Royal Prime Alfred Yacht Club in Pittwater. Together with Graham Gillies, Tim Patkin and Ken Matthews rented a station wagon, he loaded it with sailing gear and headed off from the Croydon Hills in Melbourne to Sydney at five o'clock in the morning on 11 June 1994. In Sydney, having equipped his new yacht for the ocean-going voyage, he and the crew set sail for Newhaven. A combination of sailing and motoring

got them to Eden where they stayed for four days because of 'the abysmal weather that was being dished out in Bass Strait, SW front after SW front all moving fast, with oil rigs giving reports of 30 to 40 knots, up to 4 metre swells. All the fishing boats were coming in, and we thought we would never leave Eden.'³⁹

Finally, they motor sailed out of Eden and with a mixture of motoring and sailing they finally made it back to Newhaven, but not without the help of the skipper of *Wombat* whom they had met for the first time over the radio and who gave them a twenty-litre drum of diesel that was passed from gunwale to gunwale in the calm waters off Wilsons Promontory. Naturally, there had also been the anxious moments as they calculated the height of the mast compared to the height of the tide under the Phillip Island Bridge, and debated whether they should anchor in Cleeland Bight before attempting the passage under the bridge in daylight. Their worries proved needless as *Ankira* motored slowly under the bridge and safely docked at her new berth at the marina.

Four years later, Peter Watson and his crew set off on their own cruise along the east coast of Australia. At the time he marvelled that the new GPS, which he had installed in *Ankira* for the trip, only cost him \$700 whereas eight years previously he would have paid \$5,000. Along the way he met other Newhaven squadron boats – *Tondalao* (Gary and Mary Ann Hoath), *El Sao* (Malcolm and Joan Adams) and *Sandpiper* (Tim Patkin) at Refuge Cove with *Yendor* (Ken and Kath Matthews, son Brent and grandchildren Andrew and Kate Matthews) arriving later. This Winter exodus was a common event and one that had been occurring from the days before the formation of the squadron.

In previous decades when the club was smaller and all the members knew each other, jaunts up north or overseas were described in detail but as the club grew and members no longer knew everybody this practice slowly declined. In the section of the newsletter entitled Commodore's Comments, the commodore would often write 'with Autumn now upon us, no doubt those members who forsake us for warmer places during the Winter, will soon be heading north. We wish you Bon Voyage and a safe return'⁴⁰ and he reminded those remaining in Newhaven that 'there is still a great deal happening around the Squadron, so please make the most of it'.⁴¹

Other members took their boats even further afield and kept the club informed of their activities through the newsletter. Peter and Sylvia Talbot, after residing in Hong Kong for many years, decided to sail back to Australia in their yacht *Saboteur*. Unfortunately, they came to grief when their yacht collided with a freighter in the Java Sea.

The Talbots wrote about their 'Trauma at Sea', which was published in the *Quarterly* of September 1998. Their yacht *Saboteur* collided with an unknown ship, which did not stop to assist them, north of Selat Gelasa, off the north coast of Banka Island, Indonesia. Their mayday calls and distress flares all went unanswered throughout the night and it was not until the next morning that they were able to radio Rowdy'Net in Hong Kong and inform the authorities of their predicament. Once they had docked at Belitung in the Port of Tanjongpandan, they decided to ship *Saboteur* back to Melbourne; but the potential costs of \$50,000 were more than they could afford. It took them two months to motor the 3,500 miles to Darwin and then have the yacht transported by road to the Sandringham Yacht Club in Melbourne. Over a year later, they finally had *Saboteur* ready to make her maiden voyage to the Newhaven Yacht Squadron. As they indicated in their story, they could not have made

the journey without the support of their sailing friends in Indonesia, Australia and England who made this 'very stressful time for both of us easier to bear'.⁴²

The social calendar of the squadron also starred in the newsletter. There was the usual round of Christmas parties with Father Christmas arriving by boat to surprise the children and the Easter Bunny hiding eggs for the Easter egg hunt. Melbourne Cup Day gatherings were fun for young and old as bets were placed on the runners of various races and members pretended to win and lose fortunes on various sweeps. The social committee decorated tables with racing motifs so that members could enjoy their 'bring your own' (BYO) lunches and drinks in an atmosphere that captured the excitement of the enclosure in Flemington. Other old stalwarts, which fluctuated in popularity, were the Winter dinner, the casserole dinners, and the film night. But new attractions were also being developed such as a Salamagrundi Games Night and Beach Picnics.

Happy hour remained a regular, popular Saturday evening activity. Two ex-members, Jock and Scotty Berry, who had moved to Victor Harbour in South Australia, telephoned the clubhouse during one Happy Hour to wish squadron members the best and obviously to re-live the bonhomie that this gathering was known for.⁴³ Visitors were also welcomed to the club. In June 1998 Charles Craven, a Texan and former commodore of the Bayview Boat Club in Dallas, visited. This resulted in the swapping of club burgees, caps and other paraphernalia. There was also the more informal morning tea crowd of which Terry Harris 'was a keen member' and 'for whom he cooked luncheon each fortnight'.⁴⁴

Trophy night and the annual squadron dinner marked the official racing and fishing year. Again the *Quarterly* recorded stories of these activities. Most trophy nights, which were held in June during the cold Winter months, attracted up to eighty attendees. These functions were followed by either a 'bring your own' (BYO) dinner or casseroles whipped up by the social committee. The presentation night of June 1999 was made memorable by the fact that the squadron received a new fishing trophy from Lillian Spence in memory of her late husband Jim Spence.

Numbers attending annual squadron dinners varied; although they were always greatly enjoyed by those who did come along. These were generally casual affairs where the social committee provided the dinner. However, following the low attendance in 1996 some thought was given to changing the format and making the Christmas dinner the squadron's formal annual dinner. This was not acted upon and in June 1999 the annual dinner was an outstanding success – possibly because of the excitement about the turn of the century.

To our delight we can report that we were booked out five weeks in advance and we have a waiting list in case of cancellations, isn't that great! This provides a pertinent reminder to book early when our Club Christmas Dinner comes around.⁴⁵

In the September 1999 newsletter Commodore Matt Ingham congratulated Judi Lee and the social committee for having disregarded the executive committee's reservations and for planning a formal annual dinner. This was a magnificent occasion and whetted the members' appetite for grand millennium celebrations. Plans were being made for a New Year barbeque at the club, followed by a convoy of boats sailing to Cowes and rafting up to watch the fireworks.

Opening Day always received special mention in the newsletter. During the 1990s, these were generally blessed with good weather, with up to thirty-five yachts and fifteen powerboats dressed in their nautical best taking part in the Sail Past of the commodore's boat. Guest speakers featured members of parliament such as Alan Brown MP or the Hon Ron Bowden; the Mayor of the Bass Coast Shire Council, Councillor Don Cameron and Local Councillors John Duscher, John Hulley and Jack Dunn, who was coincidentally a squadron member. Another member, John Carruthers, was a popular speaker when he retold the history of the formation of the squadron at the thirtieth anniversary celebrations. Other guests included sailing captain Elizabeth Mitchell from Cowes Yacht Club and Max Griffiths MBE, co-ordinator of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Often, too, the commodores and members from other Western Port yacht and angling clubs would attend. The Sail Past in 1996 was memorable because of the unusual weather conditions, which resulted in an 'exhilarating Sail Past as the rain and wind pummelled the procession of boats.'⁴⁶

The last Opening Day and Sail Past of the twentieth century was recorded as a beautiful day with plenty of food and a great turnout, both on the water and in the clubhouse afterwards. Members were probably wondering what the founding members would have thought of the fact that their squadron was approaching the new millennium in such a hale and hearty state.

This fortunate state of club affairs had been brought about by the thoughtful work of the various committees but more particularly by the voluntary work of the members. The major annual working bee was planned for the month before Opening Day and Sail Past so that the club and grounds shone on that day. Many times the Commodore, in his opening speech, would take note of this activity and praise those who gave so generously of their time. The dates of all working bees were routinely advertised in the newsletter and generally the turnout was good irrespective of the weather. Work activities were determined by the weather, especially when it came to painting and carpentry; however, the working bee committee was never short of a plan to suit any conditions that Mother Nature might throw at them. Some working bees were more memorable than others and occasionally for the wrong reasons.

My first job as commodore was at the working bee. Minutes after starting work with the whipper snipper it sprayed my face with fresh, smelly dog poo. It must have been a big dog, because it went everywhere. Thank God, Noel Street and Ken Niere had sent me home first to pick up my safety goggles. After that initiation I am confident that all my other jobs will be far more enjoyable.⁴⁷

The *Quarterly* continued to carry informative articles on safe practices such as the use of flares,⁴⁸ practical electrical hints on board (March 1997), and first aid at sea (September 1997). It also advertised practical books like *Creeks and Harbours of Western Port* (December 1993).

As in previous decades, death notices for members of the squadron appeared in the *Quarterly*. Often the commodore of the day would inform readers of the death of a member in the Commodore's Comments section of the newsletter. Don Sherriff was remembered in 1995 and Hugh Stuchbery in 1998. Less well-known members, such as Jim Cupper and Alan Carson, who were remembered as quiet achievers, were mentioned in 1997. In the December 1999 newsletter, prominent and long-standing member Don Manning was commemorated in a special article that recognised his friendship

with the Frasers in the early 1960s as well as his love of sailing Western Port and of the Cherubs. His various official capacities were noted, as was his love of gardening, which resulted in his enthusiastic replanting of the squadron grounds. Don Manning's contributions to the squadron were further recognised by the commissioning of a trophy to commemorate the man. The trophy was to be awarded to the winner of the Triangular Race series between the three Phillip Island clubs.⁴⁹

By the end of the 1990s, articles became so numerous and lengthy that the editor developed guidelines regarding submissions.

Ultimately, the work of collating the newsletter was too much for one person. Col Martin had been editor almost continuously from the days of the newly formatted newsletter in 1978. He intermittently stepped out of the job during those years and the editing was taken on by various members including Mervin Horan, Neville Harsant and John Neire. Col Martin loyally served the squadron in the capacity of editor for nearly twenty years. In early 1997 he became unwell and the first inkling members had of his ill health was the late publication of the March 1997 edition. Col Martin officially retired in June 1997. He was replaced by Kevin Chambers who introduced himself to the readership in the December *Quarterly*.

For those of you who do not know my background, I am a long time member of the Squadron with a deep love of the environment and history of Western Port Bay. My parents established our first holiday home at San Remo in the early '50's and as a small boy my mother introduced me to the delights of fishing via catching leatherjackets off the pier. These days I have a 4.8 metre Savage "tinnie" (the one with the big rod rack right across the stern, looks like an overgrown rear spoiler on a hot rod).⁵⁰

By mid-1999, because of the workload, an editorial sub-committee was resurrected to oversee the production of the newsletter. Strict publication guidelines were advertised in the June 1999 *Quarterly*. A balance between powerboat, sailing and items of general interest was planned with the published articles not promoting any personal opinions or political or religious viewpoints. Submissions of articles on disk rather than typed or even handwritten were strongly encouraged but it was recognised that not all members would be electronically literate and this should not exclude them from presenting articles of interest for publication. Concurrently, the editor started to write a section in the *Quarterly* that sometimes dealt with humorous topics and at other times with the history of the squadron and the region. An example is the article by the then editor, Kevin Chambers, entitled 'Tales from our Maritime Past'.⁵¹ It was also at this time that the segment 'From the Secretary's Desk' was included in the *Quarterly*.

This is a new column for the newsletter, to give members an overview of the business that has been discussed by your committee on your behalf over the last three months.

Always remember, if you are interested in any of the subjects mentioned, and would like to have more information, or wish to view the actual committee meeting minutes, you are welcome to arrange a time with me. Pat Street, Secretary.⁵²

COMMITTEES

As always, much that the club achieved was the result of careful planning in previous years. In 1994, members were requested to submit ideas for a five-year plan to the secretary, Shelton Foster, in an attempt to determine the direction the squadron was to take in the future.

The stimulus behind the request was in part because of the Victorian state premier's (Jeff Kennett) privatisation policies and also because the squadron's lease would expire in the next four years. The response to Commodore FA (Fred) Arblaster's invitation published in the newsletter was very satisfactory. A sub-committee was formed in July 1995 to develop the five-year plan, which became known as the Future Directions Plan. The name was considered to better represent what the committee was trying to achieve. It was a dynamic plan that would be revised annually to keep pace with changing requirements.

The Future Directions Plan was published in full in the December 1995 *Quarterly*. First it summarised the current state of affairs, which was that most members were satisfied with the facilities and management of the club, that they received value for money, that the majority of members used the club for boating activities and that the club was being developed for middle-aged or older members. It then went on to suggest general future objectives, for example continuing to upgrade existing facilities and providing new facilities as in accordance with the needs and expectations of members. These were followed by more specific subsections, such investigating the repositioning of the marina gate and improving the careening berth base.

This document is not an all-inclusive statement of every likely future action but rather a mix of general guidance as to the future directions and/or developments and some more specific projects which will be investigated by the Committee and Flag Officers at an appropriate future time.

Overall, there are no drastic changes in direction but more a "steady as she goes" philosophy. After the considerable amounts of money expended in the last eighteen months, your Committee feels we must pause to catch our breath before embarking on more major expenditure.⁵³

The plan recognised the importance of public relations. It stressed to members the need to conduct their activities with sensitivity to the environment and with awareness of reasonable public concerns. The club, having been previously only concerned with the interests of its members, now recognised that its survival depended on its good citizenship.

This document obviously caused some comment because the commodore was forced to remind members, in the following *Quarterly*, of the protocol of the annual general meeting when a member raised an item not listed on the agenda. Members were admonished that given the procedures laid down in the Incorporation's Act no item of business could be raised unless notice had been given prior to the meeting. From these difficulties arose the idea of a forum, the first of which was held at the clubhouse on Saturday 8 February 1997 at 5.00 pm. This was to be an informal gathering to allow members to exchange views on club matters and to discuss possible new initiatives. The forum was to be followed by the traditional Happy Hour and on this occasion the evening was also advertised as

a 'bring your own' (BYO) casserole night for those who wished to remain longer and make a night of it.

This meeting was attended by 21 members plus Committee members and a pleasant and cordial evening was enjoyed by all. From the small attendance and the nature of items raised it is very evident that the members are happy with the direction in which the Club is heading.⁵⁴

A report on the forum was included in the newsletter. Items discussed included the difficulty of seeing the triangles on the lead lights when approaching the marina with the sun in the west and the need for another flare demonstration. A follow-up report in the June 1997 *Quarterly* indicated to members that Kevin Luckman was organising the supply of fluorescent orange anodised aluminium triangles, which were to be screwed to the face of existing triangles, to make the triangles conspicuous at all times of the day. A combined safety day and equipment sale was also planned for later in the year. The success of that forum led to another one being planned for February of the following year. More importantly, the interest and comment resulted in the committee deciding to establish a sub-committee, chaired by Rear Commodore John Swarbrick, to consider the question of a hard stand area and future marina expansion.

While occupational health and safety issues, problems of silting within the marina and maintenance of the levees had been exercising the minds of the marina committee, the executive committee had been grappling with the issue of the club's lease expiring in early 1997. As part of the club's five-year plan, they determined that it would be prudent to purchase the leasehold on which the club stood, under the Victorian State Government's Sale of Assets Scheme. Representations were made to the Minister of Conservation and Lands by the squadron committee and by the local member of Parliament, Alan Brown, who at the time was the Minister for Public Transport. Unfortunately, these representations were unsuccessful as a result of the Mabo Decision in the High Court of Australia, which recognised the Aboriginal Peoples as the original landowners of Terra Australis and raised the issue of reparation to the native title owners for loss of their lands.

The squadron was then informed that the Department of Conservation and Lands would proceed with a review into the terms of rental regarding the lease of the land. Finally, in January 1997, the committee was advised that the Bass Coast Shire would become their new landlord. A new lease was negotiated and signed.

The lease was for twenty-one years commencing on 1 March 1997. There would be no change in rental for the following three years which, at that stage was \$416 per month, and the settlement ponds were now included in the leasehold where they had not been previously. The new lease required the club to considerably upgrade their environment protection practices; however, it was well positioned to do this due to the forward planning of past committees who had worked on the five-year plan. In this plan, many of the new requirements were already included or could be achieved with minimal expense; therefore 'there were no real "nasties" which would cripple us financially'.⁵⁵

It would be very remiss of me not to mention that this Squadron is greatly indebted to Victoria's new Agent-General in London, The Hon.

Alan Brown, who was of tremendous assistance in bringing the final stages of our lease negotiations to a quick and decisive conclusion.⁵⁶

In fact, the committee believed that Alan Brown had played such an important role in these negotiations that in recognition of his endeavours it unanimously passed the motion at its January meeting: 'That Honorary Membership be conferred on Alan Brown for representing the interests of this Squadron with determination, dedication and timely assistance over many years and that at the next Annual General Meeting he be recommended for Life Membership'.⁵⁷

A year later, with Commodore Matthew Ingham at the helm of a newly elected committee, and with the impetus of the changes in the preceding years, the committee went on to review the Statement of Purposes, Rules and By-laws of the Newhaven Safe Boat Haven.

Don Manning was the convenor of the working party, which also included George O'Brien, Fiona Smith and Brian Lee. With the deadline being set as 31 July 1999, members were asked to contribute so that the amendments could be compiled in time for consideration by the annual general meeting. This was a very ambitious project as Commodore Matt Ingham admitted in the September 1999 issue of the *Quarterly* and as a result the following year was to be dedicated to the review of the 'Yellow Book' as the Statement of Purposes was also known. In that same issue, Commodore Ingham indicated that he would not be standing for any of the committee positions in the annual elections. He encouraged all squadron members to support the newly elected committee fully. In 2007, in recognition of his meritorious services to the squadron as commodore, treasurer and committee member, Matt Ingham was awarded Life Membership of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron. He was the third member of his family to receive this honour. The first was his grandmother and founding member Gracie White in 1962, then his father John Ingham in 1985.

As somebody who has been involved with the Squadron since its inception, I know that it has only been through the willingness of a number of members to take on the responsibilities, hard work and time commitment associated with committee duties that our sporting club is able to service its members, through the provision of affordable and accessible facilities and activities.⁵⁸

The squadron approached the new millennium with a new committee and a renewed zest for developing the squadron further.

YACHT RACING – Division 1

Throughout the last decade of the century both the Summer series and the Winter series fluctuated in popularity. Early on in that decade there were so many participants in Division 1 races and sailing such a great variety of boat types that the organisers split the division into two fleets based on speed. The Summer series of 1993/1994 was run in two divisions and both were well supported and favourably received. Interest grew in the following season.

Crews would meet after the races in the new first aid room/meeting room. 'This was done after the Winter races and proved very successful in allowing crews to swap lies, promote egos and generally get to know one another.'⁵⁹ The post-race debriefing continued to be a popular activity. Race winners

were announced at the meeting and day prizes (usually a glass engraved with the squadron burgee) were awarded. A raffle or door prize was introduced in 1995 as suggested by members. The prize was usually an item that could be included in a sailor's racing gear. This raffle proved popular and the proceeds went towards sailing expenses.

Unfortunately, numbers of participants in each of the divisions fell over the years and by season 1998/1999 the favoured two-division system had to be reduced to a single fleet. This situation did not last long, in part due to the efforts of George Reek and Ray Frith who arranged sail training days and chased up new entrants so that the number of entries in the Winter 1999 series was the highest for many years.

If this interest continues into Summer we will certainly be reinstating the A and B division System and plan to hold a further sail training day for those sailors seeking some further assistance prior to the main races commencing.⁶⁰

This proved to be the case and once more the two-division system was used for the first two Summer aggregate series races. Summer and Winter racing were such permanent fixtures in the squadron's calendar that at various times over the years the club had applied to the Ports and Harbours Authority to have permanent race buoys installed. The request was first mentioned in the minutes of February 1981. In November 1983 the minutes record that the Ports and Harbours Authority had granted permission for permanent marker buoys to be laid at the race marks. All went well until 1998.

It is possible, but we hold little hope that our red conical "B" buoy, that was previously half way between the top light and Rhyll, is floating about on Western Port Bay. There have been a number of reported sightings, but all have been found to be false alarms. We have also now lost the temporary flag buoy which was put in the same position to replace the original buoy. This is creating suspicion in some minds that these losses are not accidental, but deliberate.⁶¹

These losses so incensed two members – Graham Nankervis and Alan Hazeldine – that they did something about it, with the help of Ken Martin who shipped the buoy into position.

The absence of "B" buoy has inspired two boys who were so buoyed up that they decided to take some action. Whist others (me included) were thinking of putting pen to paper to design a "B" buoy, these two buoys have done it, made it, installed it and it is ready for the next race.⁶²

In June 1999, Parks Victoria stepped into the picture and questioned the placing of the race buoys, which were then removed pending a formal application process. Applications were made for the placement of two permanent race buoys and were approved in October 1999. The positions of the two buoys were advertised in notices to mariners and were marked on charts as permanent race buoys. This exercise did not come cheaply and was noted to be one of the major costs of the 1999/2000 sailing season.

The 1990s saw the addition of two new races to the squadron's itinerary – the Single-Handed race and the Three-Humps race. The first Single-Handed yacht race was sailed on Sunday 24 February 1991.

The race became a regular fixture on the calendar due to its popularity and because it stretched the skills of sailors who more frequently sailed with crew rather than solo. In 1997, Rear Commodore John Swarbrick was a participant in the race where wind speeds rose up to forty knots. He admitted in the March *Quarterly* that unfortunately he had to return to the marina because his yacht was inadequately prepared.

The concept of the Three-Humps Race was not new; it was based on the Three Peaks Race. The original one had run in Scotland and others took place in Tasmania and on Port Phillip Bay. These races were often televised so the community was aware of them. At the Presentation Night of 1997, two members – Henry Hammond and Dean Carter – with the help of other members 'began waxing lyrical about this concept. With the aid of a few inspirational beers, a number of ideas and proposals were discussed. After Presentation Night and further informal meetings, usually over a beer, a number of aims became clear.⁶³ The event was to coincide with the Bass Coast Shire Festival, which was held in November. The idea was to get people from outside the club involved. Therefore, three running legs of about six kilometres each were proposed with three sailing legs starting at Cowes, going to Rhyll and finally finishing at Newhaven with the runners finishing in front of the clubhouse. The race would take advantage of the tides so that it could easily be completed in eight hours during daylight.

The race was run on 8th November, the first weekend of what was a fairly low-key Bass Coast Shire Beach Festival. There were nine entries: "Tanakee", "Joalda", "Wyndham", "Sandpiper", "Tulani", "Happy days", "Mulloka II", "Liesel" and "Oana".

The weather and wind were perfect for the event. At 11.30 the runners and yachts were massed at Cowes jetty. At noon, two runners from each yacht set off for a leisurely 6 km jog along the beach towards Silverleaves. Peter Hollins from "Happy Days" sprinted to the lead and lead a disillusioned group of runners back to Cowes jetty. (I say "disillusioned" because the run was more like 8-9 km.)⁶⁴

Back at the jetty the runners joined their yachts, which then sailed across the start line to Rhyll led by *Ankira*. At Rhyll two runners from each boat went ashore and ran to Conservation Hill lookout tower and back to the boats, which then sailed from Rhyll to Newhaven. At this stage the faster boats and runners had gained advantage from what was a decreasing breeze. The slower boats also had to contend with a decreasing wind as well as the heat and the slowing tide. All yachts finally arrived at the marina and once more two runners from each boat ran to Churchill Island and back to the yacht club. After this there was a sausage sizzle and drinks with club facilities being available to those who wished to avail themselves of them. During the sausage sizzle, results were announced and presentations made. Placings from first to last were *Happy Days* (Dean Carter), *Liesel* (Henry Hammond), *Wyndham* (John Swarbrick), *Joalda* (Ian Jemmeson), *Mulloka II* (Arthur Hughes), *Tulani* (Graham Nankervis), *Tanakee* (George Reek), *Sandpiper* (Tim Patkin) and finally *Oana* (Bruce Matthews).

There were also several other awards. The fastest running team was awarded to *Happy Days*, with the fastest female running team being *Sandpiper* and the oldest runner being awarded to George Reek. Although every participant received a certificate, two incidents were given unofficial recognition. *Happy Days* had an unfortunate but lucky scrape with *Joalda* in the Rhyll channel and was given the unofficial 'Humpo Bumpo' award, whilst *Tulani* received the 'Mudskipper's' award for briefly running aground while on her approach to the finish line at Newhaven.

The second three humps race was held on 18th November 1998. The Thursday and Friday before the race were very Wintery, with winds of up to 40 knots. It was a relief that the weather had moderated on Saturday and the procession of 9 yachts left Newhaven for the start at Cowes in a light breeze of 3-4 knots.⁶⁵

In fact, weather conditions were so light that the fleet motored to the start at Cowes. The runners set off on their run from Cowes and by the time they returned the wind had dropped off completely. As a result the yachts began to drift towards the Nobbies. After an hour of no wind, the officer of the day (OOD) Peter Watson decided that the first sailing leg was to be abandoned and the fleet motored to Rhyll for the second running leg. After the second running leg, wind conditions were light and this tested the talent and luck of the various skippers.

Apricot Free got the line honours and was first to Newhaven in a light wind that was getting lighter. The wind died completely as *Joalda* approached the finish line and took 19 minutes to cross the line even though she was only one boat length away. Don't you hate flood tides at the end of a race!⁶⁶

Three more boats – *Chardonnay*, *Tanakee* and *Hidden Agenda* – just managed to cross the finish line before the wind completely died and becalmed *Liesel*, *Sandpiper*, *Hot Pepper* and *Tulani*. All four boats retired from the final sailing leg.

The other innovation introduced during this time was a new handicap system that Melbourne yacht clubs used for their Winter series and stern chaser events. The aim was to have all the competing boats arrive at the finish fairly close together so handicaps were automatically adjusted depending on where the boat finished in the fleet, rather than being issued by the handicapper at the start of each race. This system was first trialled during the Winter series of 1998. Ten boats contested this series in conditions ranging from reasonably heavy to very light winds in the last race.

I would like to thank all the OODs who ran the races so skilfully and to Bob Donovan who manned the radio for us in his usual efficient way once again. I know I speak for all of the skippers and crews, in passing a big thank you to Pat and Noel Street, who assisted tirelessly though-out the series in taking entries, chasing up sign-offs, guiding OODs with courses, running the door prizes and having a cheery cup of coffee ready after the races, for the Tee shirt presentations.⁶⁷

Pat and Noel Street also donated and prepared the hot finger food, which was enjoyed by up to fifty crew and visitors in the clubrooms during the presentations. In spite of having been motorboat enthusiasts until then, the excitement of yacht racing must have rubbed off on Pat and Noel Street because they bought their own yacht and joined the sailors. In doing so, the motorboat sub-

committee lost their regular long serving race starters and were forced to advertise for new volunteers.⁶⁸

The new races added to an already busy calendar. The Commodore's Cup of 1993 was enlivened by the Knox Photographic Society. Fifteen members of the society attended the race on Sunday 14 February. The aim of the exercise was for the 'shutterbugs' to take photographs of racing yachts as well as any other boats that were on the water. 'Well, the calm sea was good for something. The Knox Photographic Society was able to hold their cameras still. They have taken some good shots of the entrants in this event.'⁶⁹ The photographs went on display during Presentation Night on 22 May 1993. Also included in the photographs were the powerboats of Noel Street, Hamish Hughes, Kevin Luckman, Robert Bryce and Geoff Crockford, who officiated during the race. Attendance at races was variable over this decade. Ian Jemmeson, who was the sailing secretary in 1997, tried to improve numbers in all races. He was also the instigator of the race spreadsheet, which was displayed on the sailing notice board in an attempt to stimulate interest. George Reek and Ray Frith also promulgated joint sailing activities among boat owners in an attempt to promote interest in club racing activities.

Unfortunately, there were insufficient entries for the Waratah Bay Race and an alternative date was being considered. Division B also had insufficient entries and this too looked like as though it would be cancelled as it had in season 1998. The Lyle Williams around Phillip Island Races and the single-handed races however were all well attended. The competitors in the 1997 Around Phillip Island Race enjoyed themselves but they enjoyed the views of Cape Woolamai for longer than expected when the wind dropped off close to shore. The triangular series of races between the Phillip Island yacht clubs of Cowes, Rhyll and Newhaven was better represented toward the end of the decade, and the Winter series remained very popular.

SOCIAL EVENTS – YACHTING

The sailing events that continued to be popular with members were the cruises. The Australia Day cruise was a three-day event held over the Australia Day long weekend. Often this cruise was marked by a pleasant, meandering sail to Hastings taking in scenic sites such as Observation Point, Rhyll or Cowes – weather permitting. Once the boats had berthed at Westhaven, Saturday evening social activities followed.

...after a chin wag and the usual wander about checking on Boats (what else) we settled in to nibbles and drinkies at the bow of Franklin 11. A bit of a clean up and off on foot to the pub for a great meal and a very relaxed fun night with lots of mixing of groups. We even had a singing Dutchies Group!!⁷⁰

Sunday was a quiet day, spent resting in the marina, 'reading books, maintaining boats, gossiping or just wandering around looking at the various other craft in the marina'.⁷¹ The return trip to Newhaven was blessed with good weather in some years. At other times conditions could get out of hand as they did in 1998 when members ended up returning to Newhaven in very windy conditions, with gusts up to forty-five knots. The Labour Day or Moomba long weekend cruise in March also proved very popular, as did the night race, although the number of members taking part in this was low each year. Part of the problem for night racing was the extensive and expensive equipment

requirements. These without doubt limited the number of participants; however, for those sailors interested in long distance cruising the night race experience was invaluable.

The conditions for sailing were quite good with strong winds, but the rain came down in buckets and at times it felt more like hailstones than rain. A number of us questioned our sanity in the morning, soaked through and rather tired. It was a very good test of wet weather clothing – mine failed the test!⁷²

The night race was one that could not be run without adequate support and the OOD for the race in 1998, Sandy and Tim Patkin in *Sandpiper*, were recognised for their support in taking out their boat and anchoring off Silverleaves near Cowes until the last boat had passed them on the way home to Newhaven. The start boat, raffle organisers and radio operators were never forgotten in the votes of thank that occurred during the presentations at the end of the race.

Some cruises were once-in-a-lifetime events. The Bass Bicentennial Celebrations on 4 January 1998 are an example of this. Preparations by Bass Shire, the squadron and many other local organisations had started in the previous year. At a public meeting held at San Remo on 29 April 1997, Dr Ken Morris reminded the crowd of over one hundred people of the significance of this event, not only to Victoria but also to the Bass region. William Wilson, a Bass River resident, advised that he had various memorabilia of George Bass, including ‘marriage certificate, compass, Times ships news 8/8/1798’ and that he was willing to hold an exhibition of the material. A co-ordinating committee was appointed with Maree Tyndall of Bass Coast Shire as secretary. Shortly afterwards, the Bass 200 Years Re-Enactment Committee was formed with the Honourable Peter Reith MHR as patron and Sir Peter Derham as chairman. The squadron committed two flotillas of boats to escort the re-enactment whale boat into San Remo on Sunday 4 January 1998.

On the day, celebrations went according to plan in perfect sunny weather with a stiff breeze blowing and, having very little swell to contend with, the yachts were at their best. Squadron boats were joined by local boats and visiting ones, creating ‘organised chaos’ at the southern end of the Eastern entrance where they lunched while waiting for the whale boat *Elizabeth* and the replica schooner *Enterprize* to arrive. Ron van Rennes was declared ‘winner of the unofficial Bass Bicentennial Fishing Comp!! By dint of hooking a small couta’.⁷³ The flotilla of squadron boats and others escorted *Elizabeth* as planned.

Peter Craig’s kite trailing about fifty feet up and astern of his boat seemed to attract the attention of the Channel 7 Chopper and as we headed for the whaleboat, the two Tiger Moths making passes overhead added additional, “colour and movement”.⁷⁴

It was a proud moment for squadron members to be involved with rowing the *Elizabeth* the last two hundred metres onto the sand at Bonwick Beach, San Remo. The moment would live on in the memories of the crowd waving and cheering on the beach and it was recorded, and later televised, on the evening news. As Newhaven Yacht Squadron was the closest club to the landing point, it proudly played host to the captain and sailors of the *Elizabeth*. The club also played host to boats from Cowes, Rhyll and Warneet yacht clubs. The excitement of these celebrations and their success

whetted the appetites of squadron members and locals alike for the next important bi-centennial event – the celebrations to mark the arrival of the *Lady Nelson* into Western Port in 1801.

YACHT RACING – OTHER CLUBS

In its infancy Newhaven Yacht Squadron had hosted other clubs' races and this tradition continued. The State Championships of the Sonata Association of Victoria were once more held at the club in 1999. Over the two days of 20 and 21 February, a fleet of eighteen boats and fifty crew with support personnel descended on Newhaven Yacht Squadron. The club was a gracious host and the weather, with light to moderate wind conditions, also came to the party. Sonata boats and crews began arriving on Friday night and were still settling in at 1.30 am, ably supported by squadron members Pat and Noel Street and Ian Jemmeson. There were four sets of races held over two days with a barbeque and salad meal held on Saturday night. There was a vibrant busy atmosphere about the club as squadron members and Sonata Association members alike pitched in to make the racing and festivities work, and all were involved in the clean-up activities afterwards.

Club members also joined other races away from Newhaven waters. Dean Carter on *Tulani*, with a crew comprising Matt Ingham, Rob Aitken and Henry Hammond, sailed in the 1993 Flinders Island Discovery Race which was memorable for its high seas, heavy swells and strong wind warnings and gales. The race took place over three days starting at Refuge Cove with fifty-knot westerly winds blowing off Waratah Bay. The course took in Deal Island, Prime Seal Island, Franklin Sound and Lady Baron at the southern tip of Flinders Island where the race finished on the afternoon of 31 December, New Year's Eve 1993. When the awards were distributed two days later, *Tulani* came first, *Adam's Rib* second and *Cut Loose* third in the Victorian segment of the 1993

Bad weather also played a part in the Noelex Interdominion New Zealand versus Australia Teams Race in early 1996. Six crews from each country competed for the Trans Tasman Trophy. The twelve crews were to sail each of the twelve boats loaned by Australians, one of which was Don Manning's Noelex *Veteran Affair*, once in each of the twelve scheduled races. Australia won the series two to one with bad weather bringing the event to a close after only six races.

During the series, I saw some very skilful sailing from both teams, in particular the spinnaker work. The most remarkable feat I saw was during the last race when the wind freshened to over 25 knots. A NZ yacht lost a spinnaker halyard to the top of the mast. The forward hand scaled the thin mast like a monkey, retrieved the halyard, connected and re-hoisted the sail and lost only one place in the process...What did I learn about sailing my Noelex from my experience sailing with the champions? Nothing! They do much the same as we do except that they do it SO MUCH BETTER.⁷⁵

Although the racing was very competitive, the onshore activity was extremely convivial. This was in part due to the adventures of the New Zealand team's mascot, a teddy bear named 'Tum' who was dressed in the New Zealand team uniform. The Australians promptly assumed that his name was a New Zealand distortion of 'Tim'. The New Zealanders blamed this mascot for all their misfortunes; however, his bad luck was compounded when the Australians kidnapped him and demanded a ransom of

Sux million dollars

Sux million red socks (Part of NZ uniform)

Sux million sheep

Withdrawal of all protests⁷⁶

Tum was finally restored to the New Zealand club and recounted his adventures during his captivity at the Presentation Night dinner with the assistance of the New Zealand team captain as ventriloquist.

On 8 and 9 June 1996, *Emma Too*, skippered by Alfred Zuegn and crewed by Elizabeth Zuegn, John and Brenda O'Callaghan, joined a fleet of twenty-five racing and cruising yachts from the Whitsunday Islands and the Mackay Yacht Club for the Laguna Quays Yacht Race. In a race that took two hours with wind speeds of between fifteen to twenty knots, they successfully used wind shifts and currents to their advantage. Using their initiative and guile, as their yacht did not have a spinnaker, they kept up to the leaders on the spinnaker runs by poling out the genoa sail. Although weighted down by two tonnes of cruising gear and a dirty bottom, they did very well winning on handicap.

BOATING AND FISHING

Fishing continued to be the lifeblood of the club throughout the last decade of the century, but the number of fish caught was tempered by the awareness that this was a limited resource. The club played its part in supporting the restrictions proscribed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, although not all members agreed with the restrictions. New regulations introduced on 1 July 1992 included a restriction of up to four fishing lines, with no more than two hooks on each line, for each angler in Victorian marine waters. There were also bag limits and size limits per day on sea life such as abalone, Chinook salmon, King George whiting and snapper within the South Gippsland Marine and Coastal Parks (which included Western Port, Anderson's Inlet and Venus Bay). Further regulations in 1998 required that

A person who takes fish that are not required to be retained, other than noxious aquatic species, must immediately return that fish to the water with the least possible injury or damage.⁷⁷

By July 1999 anyone taking part in recreational fishing activities, or even carrying a rod in their boat, was required to carry on their person a current recreational fishing licence. This applied to all Victorian marine, estuary and freshwaters and applied to the taking of any species of fish, by any method including bait collection, gathering shellfish or yabbies, fishing and spear fishing. Members were warned that fisheries officers were becoming increasingly active in the area.

These restrictions were in place for good reason as fish numbers had been declining over the years with more people fishing recreationally and commercially in the area. Commodore Fred Arblaster was heard to remark on his return from a fishing competition that he knew 'how A.B. feels after a duck in both innings'⁷⁸ as he commented both on the paucity of fish in Western Port and the paucity of runs made by the Australian team and by captain Alan Border.

However, not all was doom and gloom as there were success stories during some fishing competitions even when the successful angler needed to travel further afield.

What we lacked in quantity of anglers we picked up in quality of fish with some nice bags weighted in, especially Ron's (Chambers) heaviest flathead at 680gm...Since it was caught off Kilcunda, we are expecting his next radio call to be at least from Liptrap.⁷⁹

Weather conditions did not deter the enthusiastic when some 'nice whiting, pike, couta, flathead and salmon trout were weighed in by the elite of N.Y.S. anglers notwithstanding the foggy conditions, which goes to show that you don't have to see fish to catch them.'⁸⁰ The successful fishermen in that competition – held on Sunday 27 March 1994 – were Norm Dowel, Jack Telling, Charles Foster and Ray Male. Equally, the size and age of fisherman were not necessarily detrimental to success.

The young fishing enthusiast also made the highest score for whiting – a fine effort... Particular applause went to our Junior Member Jay Fowler, who received a fishing rod and reel rather taller than himself.⁸¹

Jay no doubt owed some of his success to his genes because his grandfather Herb Fowler, a long-time local resident and professional fisherman had coached him.

Not only were the juniors making headway; so was one female angler. The squadron's Angler of the Year in 1998 was Laurel Telling. Her success was advertised in the newsletter with the headline 'Laurel's Queen of the Bay!'⁸² and members were further informed that she fished daily alongside her husband 'Gentleman Jack Telling'. She won with a score of 110 points despite missing the first round due to ill health. Her closest competitors were Jenny Niere, with 95.5 points, and Ron van Rennes with 80 points.

In other years numbers exceeded expectations such as during the 1996/1997 fishing competitions where over sixty anglers over four events presented, despite fairly off-putting weather. The Wonthaggi Angling club joined the squadron that year and this made for some fierce competition. The catch of that fishing competition season went undoubtedly to club member and fishing enthusiast, Steve 'Hagar' Rasmussen.

Using fresh couta for bait, a quiet two hours with no bites quickly turned into an epic fifteen-minute struggle to boat the fish. His landing net was not big enough so the cliffs at Cobb Bluff were soon echoing to his frantic cries for help. Two helpful fellow anglers anchored nearby came over and gaffed the fish and in doing so cut the line and claimed the prize for themselves, All in jest of course.⁸³

The sport of fishing was becoming so popular at the squadron that the motorboat sub-committee, which also looked after the fishing competitions, was renamed the motorboat and angling sub-committee in June 1999 so as to better represent the interests of the group. The Newhaven Yacht Squadron Under 19s group was then formed in 1998. Initially this name confused members who believed that it referred to the age of members in the group. All was explained in the newsletter. The invitation was to the one hundred and fifty members who owned trailable boats of around nineteen feet (four to six metres). The committee had noted that most were owned by keen fishermen who

appeared to be content to fish alone or with their families and friends, often only venturing to their regular favourite spot. These outings were to be a convivial gathering of like-minded spirits who were interested in venturing further afield and exploring the scenic areas of Western Port such as Gardiner's Channel or the Volcanic Plug on the western side of Woolamai or Cat Bay, renowned for its monster whiting. The Under 19s group was to complement rather than compete with the established fishing competitions. Several improvements were made to the fishing competition rules and a junior competition was also added to the season's activities so as to encourage the young.

However, not all the best fishing stories required a boat or even a decent rod and, in this case, it was no doubt felt by senior members that the young did not require any further encouragement.

Nine-year-old Ben Mattock (son of cabinet maker and sometimes fisherman Wayne, and Glenys) complete with bamboo rod and old cord line, fished alongside a couple of knowledgeable old salts on the Newhaven jetty – Alan (Mr Woodwork) McFayden and Peter (Pirate Pete) Clarke.

Nobody was catching anything. Then Ben beached an 8kg Snapper, then a 10kg Snapper. A visitor wandering along the jetty remarked on the beautiful Snapper.

"They're not Snapper," quipped Ben. "Oh! Yes they are; I know Snapper when I see them!" the visitor retorted. "So do Alan and Peter over there," Ben insisted, "They reckon they've been fishing off this jetty for over 20 years and these two fish are the biggest bloody Flukes they've ever seen!"⁸⁴

¹ Excerpts from 'Our Shakedown Cruise Aboard *Freebooter*', by Tim Patkin, NYS Quarterly, Autumn 2002

² NYS Quarterly, June 1996

³ FA (Fred) Arblaster, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, March 1992

⁴ FA (Fred) Arblaster, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, June 1994

⁵ Ian Jemmeson, Archivist, NYS Archive Notes, August 1994

⁶ Ian Jemmeson, Archivist, NYS Archive Notes, November 1998

⁷ Pat Street, Secretary, NYS Quarterly, Spring 2012

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Nature Corner, NYS Quarterly, December 1996

¹⁰ NYS Archive Notes 1991-2003, Ian Jemmeson's Minutes, September 1993

¹¹ N (Nev) Harsant, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, June 1996

¹² Ibid

¹³ NYS Quarterly, June 1996

¹⁴ NYS Quarterly, December 1998

¹⁵ MJ (Matt) Ingham, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, March 1999

¹⁶ Maintenance Yard, NYS Quarterly, June 1997

¹⁷ Ken Stuchbery, Member NYS, NYS Quarterly, Spring 2010

¹⁸ MMcG (Greg) Stuart, Safety Officer, NYS Quarterly, December 1987

¹⁹ NYS Quarterly, March 1989

²⁰ Ian Jemmeson, Archivist, NYS Archive Notes, 1991-2003

²¹ Ibid

²² NYS Quarterly March 1996
²³ NYS Quarterly March 1997
²⁴ Noel Street, Safety Supervisor, NYS Quarterly, March 1996
²⁵ NYS Quarterly, June 1999
²⁶ John Spragg, General Manager, Bellingham Marina, NYS Quarterly, June 1998
²⁷ FA (Fred) Arblaster, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, June 1993
²⁸ N (Nev) Harsant, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, December 1995
²⁹ NYS Quarterly, December 1996
³⁰ N (Nev) Harsant, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, March 1996)
³¹ NYS Quarterly, Summer 2006
³² Ian Jemmeson, Cadet Captain, NYS Quarterly, September 1996
³³ NYS Quarterly, December 1999
³⁴ Editor, NYS Quarterly, December 1995
³⁵ Ken Matthews, Member NYS, NYS Quarterly, June 1998
³⁶ Alfred Zeugn, *Emma Too*, NYS Quarterly, September 1993
³⁷ Ian Twyerould, Member NYS, NYS Quarterly, June 1994
³⁸ Ibid
³⁹ Peter Watson, Member NYS, NYS Quarterly, March 1995
⁴⁰ FA (Fred) Arblaster, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, March 1995
⁴¹ MJ (Matt) Ingham, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, June 1999
⁴² Sylvia and Peter Talbot, Members NYS, NYS Quarterly, September 1998
⁴³ NYS Quarterly, March 1994
⁴⁴ John Campbell OAM, NYS Quarterly, Autumn 2011
⁴⁵ Judi Lee, Social Secretary, NYS Quarterly, June 1999
⁴⁶ N (Nev) Harsant, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, December 1996
⁴⁷ Hamish Hughes, Commodore, NYS Squadron, December 1999
⁴⁸ Noel Street, Safety Supervisor, NYS Quarterly, September 1997
⁴⁹ Ian Jemmeson, Archivist, NYS Archive Notes 1991-2003, March 2000
⁵⁰ Kevin Chambers, Editor, NYS Quarterly, December 1997
⁵¹ Kevin Chambers, Editor, NYS Quarterly, June 1999
⁵² Pat Street, Secretary, NYS Quarterly, March 1999
⁵³ NYS Quarterly December 1995
⁵⁴ N (Nev) Harsant, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, March 1997
⁵⁵ Ibid
⁵⁶ Ibid
⁵⁷ Ibid
⁵⁸ MJ (Matt) Ingham, Commodore, NYS Quarterly, September 1999
⁵⁹ Sailing Notes, NYS Quarterly, September 1995
⁶⁰ Ian Jemmeson, Rear Commodore, NYS Quarterly, September 1999
⁶¹ John Swarbrick, Rear Commodore, NYS Quarterly, June 1998
⁶² Stop Press!!, NYS Quarterly, June 1998
⁶³ Henry Hammond, Member NYS, NYS Quarterly, December 1997
⁶⁴ Ibid
⁶⁵ Noel Street, Boating Secretary, NYS Quarterly, December 1998
⁶⁶ Ibid
⁶⁷ Ian Jemmeson, Boating Secretary, NYS Quarterly, September 1998
⁶⁸ NYS March, 2000
⁶⁹ NYS Quarterly, March 1993
⁷⁰ Ian Jemmeson, Rear Commodore, NYS Quarterly, March 1999
⁷¹ Ian Jemmeson, Boating Secretary, NYS Quarterly, March 1998
⁷² John Swarbrick, Rear Commodore, NYS Quarterly, March 1998
⁷³ Kevin Chambers, Motorboat Sub-Committee, NYS Quarterly, March 1998
⁷⁴ Ibid
⁷⁵ Don Manning, Boating Secretary, NYS Quarterly, March 1996
⁷⁶ Ibid
⁷⁷ Fisheries Regulation 1998 S.R. No. 23/1998 NYS Quarterly, September 1998
⁷⁸ NYS Quarterly, March 1993
⁷⁹ Kevin Chambers, Motorboat Sub-Committee, NYS Quarterly, December 1993
⁸⁰ NYS Quarterly, June 1994
⁸¹ John Campbell, Motorboat Sub Committee, NYS Quarterly, June 1995

⁸² NYS Quarterly, September 1998

⁸³ 'Hagar's Piscatorial Happening', NYS Quarterly, December 1997

⁸⁴ 'Courtesy Wonthaggi Angling Club', NYS Quarterly, June 1998