

East Perth Sailing Club (EPSC) – A Potted History

Pre-dating the Maylands Sailing Club – whose races commenced in the 1913-14 summer from the extended Maylands jetty – another sailing club actually conducted yacht races over the current Maylands courses. This was the East Perth Sailing Club.

The earliest newspaper reports from the inaugural 1909-10 season stated that the opening race was held on October 30th, 1909. The report said: “The course will be from the Bunbury Bridge to a buoy a mile past the Sandringham Hotel and back, making a distance of about 9 miles.” (*West Australian*, 30th October, 1909, page 13). The following week’s report stated that a large number of spectators assembled on the banks of the river and the Bunbury Bridge to witness the start and finish and “a handsome gold medal for first prize and a silver one for second, were presented”.

The first annual meeting of the club was held on 11th August, 1910 “at the clubhouse” and a generous donation from the Perth Lord Mayor was acknowledged. We now know the site of that clubhouse. On Saturday, 25th February, 1911, an Invitation Race was held for 10ft and 14ft skiffs. A Yachting Notice for the race stated that a spectator launch would leave from “the clubhouse, Kensington Street, East Perth”. Today, only the jetty survives at the foot of Kensington Street, between Claisebrook Inlet and the Bunbury Bridge (*now called Goongoonup Bridge, the railway bridge. The road bridge alongside is called Windan Bridge*).

The Sunday Times published a race report the next day: “The boats of the Perth Dinghy Club were seen in an entirely novel setting yesterday, when at the invitation of the East Perth Sailing Club practically the whole fleet journeyed up to the Bunbury Bridge, towed per motor launch and raced over the junior club's course, extending from the bridge to a mark half a mile above the Sandringham Hotel (*in Rivervale*). Two launch-loads of spectators followed the boats, and despite rather indifferent official arrangements, the afternoon's sport proved enjoyable.”

In a familiar-sounding race report : “There was a good deal of interest attached to the work back for the reason that few of the skippers knew the course, and therefore found many a bank on the way. Nearing the Maylands bend, when Jessie was pressing Rene, both boats ran on a bank, and Gover's boat getting off first, obtained a good half-minute lead.”

Interestingly, H. Sims was the Commodore of the East Perth Sailing Club in that year, 1911. Today, we still have a silver cup won by him in his boat *Cedric* in 1923 at Maylands Sailing Club. This cup will be on permanent display in our clubrooms, our oldest tangible link to a long-forgotten era of sailing at Maylands.

It appears that the East Perth Sailing Club had about 10 yachts racing regularly (presumably 10ft and 14ft skiffs) until several members of the Waverley Boating Club threw in their lot and their boats with the East Perth Sailing Club. A report said that “it appears that Monger's Lake does not offer sufficient inducement to these

votaries of the sport, and they have, therefore, sought the keen competition and deep water to be found on the upper reaches of the Swan River”.



Sailing at Lake Monger about 1910 - Waverley Boating Club

At the end of the 1912 season, a “smoke social” was held (*prize night?*) at St Bartholomews Hall, Claisebrook Road. A newspaper report noted: “The Chairman congratulated the club on the strides it was making and said that in 1910 there were only 40 members, in 1911 there were 52, and last year they had 64, and he trusted that they would still further increase membership next year. This, he thought, was due to the good fellowship which existed amongst all and to good management. During the year the club had given £25 in prizes and had sailed 11 races. There were many beauty spots on the river above the Bunbury Bridge, and he thought the Government should be approached with the object of getting a portion of the foreshore for a permanent boat shed.”

Yacht races continued until late 1914 from the Kensington Street clubhouse. At that time, the Maylands Sailing Club was conducting its second season of racing from the Maylands jetty, the names of a number of EPSC boats then appeared in the results of the Maylands Sailing Club, and WW1 seemed to bring on the demise of the East Perth Sailing Club.

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