

MORE NATIONAL TITLES – CLIFF BURTON

By Chris Holyday



Cliff Burton grew up in East Street, Maylands. As an 8 or 9 year old in 1960, his father, Archie Burton, took him down to the Maylands Yacht Club to try sailing. He remembers the kids that day took turns to take out a club Mudlark. He liked it but waited until he was 15 or 16 to return to sailing with a Moth. Ten years later he would snare his first National Moth Title at Speers Point, NSW – and then another in 1979/80 in Perth. His Speers Point, NSW victory was the first by a

West Australian in a National Moth Title held at an Interstate venue.

Cliff's brother Roy would also sail a Moth at Maylands and his father Archie became the club's handicapper, conducting the races for many years. Cliff recalls that both he and Rob O'Sullivan were encouraged to sail at downriver clubs on Saturdays to gain additional experience – plus regular Sunday racing at Maylands. It proved to be good advice and with Brian Plumb fighting out the podium places, it must have been some of Australia's most competitive Moth racing that took place at Maylands Yacht Club by the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Cliff built a new boat nearly every new season; his first was built with the help of Curley Markey, and later he was pushed by Rob O'Sullivan who was already busy building Moths for himself and others. The golden era for Moth sailing in Western Australia unfolded as the "Maylands Trio" were dominant, starting with Brian Plumb scoring Nationals runner-up in 1967/68 in Perth and winning the Pan Pacific Moth Championships in 1968. For a period of years, from the time Rob O'Sullivan won the Nationals in 1973/74, only Peter Moor from NSW was able to keep Western Australian boats from taking out the National Titles for two years in 1974/75 and 1975/76. Cliff and Rob were joined by Greg Hilton from South of Perth YC and WA sailors went on to clinch every other title until 1980/81! Cliff Burton had won a couple of Nationals heats at McCrae, Victoria in 1975/76, going on to dominate the following year at Speers Point, NSW.

1976-77	Cliff Burton	M.Y.C. (WA)	Red Ned	Red Ned (Scow)	Speers Point, NSW
1977-78	Robert O'Sullivan	M.Y.C. (WA)	Gidget	Gidget (Scow)	Brisbane, QLD
1978-79	Greg Hilton	S. of P.Y.C. (WA)	Bunyip	Bunyip (Scow)	Montrose Bay, TAS
1979-80	Cliff Burton	M.Y.C. (WA)	Red Ned	Red Ned (Scow)	Perth, WA
1980-81	Greg Hilton	S. of P.Y.C. (WA)	Bunyip	Bunyip (Scow)	Largs Bay, SA

The Western Australian dominance in National Titles was so profound that the press enthusiastically covered the O'Sullivan, Burton, Hilton trios' world travels to compete at the highest level in 1979.



After sharing following Nationals with Greg Hilton, both Cliff and Rob switched to 14 foot dinghies at PDSC. Cliff went on to win the 14's Nationals in Perth in only his second season, then he won again the following year, 1983/84 in Brisbane. We salute Cliff, and his great competitor, Rob O'Sullivan for a sustained period of unequalled success at the top level of Australian and World Moth sailing.

Maylands Yacht Club had climbed the pinnacle of sailing achievement in every decade since the 1940s until



1980, firstly with Terry Gaunt Snr and Gordon Collins in the VJ class and Terry again in the Gwen 12 class. Maylands Australian and International success was extended into the Moth class through Brian Plumb, Rob O'Sullivan and finally, Cliff Burton. Commodore Max Moore was right on the money when he said at the club's opening of its new clubrooms in 1971: "I can assure Councillors of the City of Stirling that their investment in these premises, which in essence is an investment in the youth of this district, will be one that should cause no regret."

Cliff Burton sailing at Maylands, trying out a new sail in one of his many new Moths.