

Maylands Yacht Club History

Since its establishment in 1946, Maylands Yacht Club has developed a rich history of producing State, National and International sailing champions. This tradition of sailing development continues through the training program, which is designed for people who want to learn to sail so they can race, or just have fun on boats with family and friends.

Maylands has the distinction of being at the "top" of the Swan River. Its history dates back to the 1940s when its members' needs were served by a corrugated-iron shed on the river bank. Some army barracks buildings came on the market and under the leadership of foundation commodore Wally Gaunt, a successful fundraising drive resulted in the purchase of a building that was transported and erected adjacent to the Maylands jetty.

The Maylands Yacht Club was established on the foreshore in 1946. MYC is the home of the "Mudlark", a class of boat for juniors designed and built by Wally Gaunt, father of Terry Gaunt who was Club Patron for many years.

Early photographs of the jetty and a painting of the old shed are displayed in the clubhouse. The current buildings were completed in 1971 with the help of the City of Stirling and are now leased by the Club from the City of Bayswater.



Maylands Yacht Club Racing Champions

This is a short list. Over time we will try to add more details.

- **MOTHS:** 2 World Championships; Rob O'Sullivan 1974-75 in Sweden; 1977-78 in Brisbane; 1 Pan Pacific Championship, Brian Plumb, 1968 in Wellington, NZ; 3 National Championships; Rob O'Sullivan 1973-74 in Perth; 1977-78 in Brisbane; Cliff Burton 1976-77 and 1979-80; 3 National Runners-Up; 9 State Championships.
- **CATAMARAN:** World Champion, Kim Stephens.
- **VEE JAY:** 5 National Championships: Terry Gaunt Snr, Junior Champion 1950-51, 1951-52; Senior Champion 1955-56. Gordon Collins, Senior Champion 1957-58, 1958-59.
- **GWEN 12:** 2 National Championships.
- **LASERS:** State Championships; John Gaunt 1974-75, 1975-76; 1977-78, 1978-79.
- **HERONS:** 24 State Championships.

Our Club Treasure

Members have probably glanced at the central painting displayed over the bar in the club hall and not given it much thought. It is, in fact, a painting by Stewart Cownie and John Gaunt reveals its history and says a similar drawing in black and white appears in the book "Yacht Clubs of WA". Stewart was a member of the club when his son began sailing in Mudlarks. He illustrated the original Mudlark building plans on one large sheet in an effective magazine style. Many would have seen Stewart's drawings and paintings in book illustrations, perhaps without knowing the artist's name. He is often the artist who created those line drawings of historic WA buildings seen on walls, from cafes to museums and galleries. He was director of the WA Newspapers art department and is respected in art circles. Our painting is a club treasure. It went missing for some years after the hall was trashed by hirers and was given to a framer to repair and was not collected. The framer was having a throw-out and happened to be a friend of club veteran Max Bennett. He recognised the club building and called Max to ask if we wanted it back . . .



There is a tangible link to the earliest competitive sailing in the Maylands district - a silver cup from the 1923 season. The following is from The West Australian, 13 January, 1923. It was the Maylands Sailing Club's first annual regatta. It must have been some regatta, it even featured duck hunting!:

“The Maylands Sailing Club will hold its first annual regatta this afternoon at the Maylands Jetty. The programme is a good one, including swimming, canoeing, duck hunting, and yachting and all events can be seen from the jetty. Gold and silver medals and other trophies will be awarded to the winners of the minor events, whilst the winner of the yacht race will receive a silver cup, donated by Mr. R. T. Robinson, K.C.”



The winner of the silver cup above was H. Sims in "Cedric" which was listed as owned by a T. Davis in 1921. T. Davis and H. Sims were, at a very early date, connected with the Maylands Sailing Club. In The West Australian of 5 October, 1916, the full committee was listed, along with: Vice-Commodore, Mr T. Davis; Rear-Commodore, Mr. H. Sims. Maylands had 8 skiffs in 1924. In a 24 February, 1923 "Yachting Yelps" column in the Perth Mirror: "The Maylands Sailing Club, having disposed of their fleet, have decided to adopt the 16ft. Skiff for their waters; and have taken the moulds of several of the Mosman's Bay skiffs. They are also making use of the set of drawings of the Intrepid (interstate champion for three years), which was presented to the club by Mr. George Press, of Sydney. Any yachting enthusiasts may also have these moulds free of charge. A gala day will be held at Mosman's Bay on Saturday, March 10. An open yacht race will also be held — prizes 10 pounds". Mr. H. Sims is mentioned later, in 1930, as being from the Mosman Bay Skiff Club. It is likely that this is where the Maylands skiffs relocated, apparently in the late 1920s.

The Maylands Clubhouse



A panorama of the Maylands foreshore before any sailing club premises (or even many houses) existed in Maylands. Our best guess as to the date of this photo, according to our resident Maylands patriarch Terry Gaunt Snr, is around 1920. The structure at the end of the jetty was a diving tower, and an annual swim through Maylands was held, becoming very popular in the 1930s. Research has revealed that about the time of this photo, a sailing club was operating from the jetty. The Maylands Sailing Club conducted handicap racing on Saturday afternoons starting at either 2.30 or 3pm. Following the jetty construction, in 1912 extension of the jetty, out to the main channel, took place. In late 1912 it was reported that "Enthusiasts in the suburb are now making preliminary arrangements for the formation of a local sailing and motor launch club." As reported in *The West Australian*, the initial races were held on 18th January, 1913. The initial race was won by Niroka, second place went to Cedric and Wedouree third. A December 1922 race report stated: "The Maylands Sailing Club held its second race of the season on Saturday, when the following boats competed: Aurora, 20 min.; Araluen (K Johnson), 11 min; Breeze (E. Barnett), 12 min; Echuca (J. Campbell), 8 min; Cedric (H. Sims), 3 min; Groper (T. Davies), scratch". The course marks for the race were named as Belmont, Duck Farm, Pottery and Bunbury buoys. The club flourished in the mid-1920s, after adopting 12 and 14 foot skiffs, and became known as The Maylands Skiff Club.

The jetty has been in its current position for more than 103 years now - albeit very much shorter today than in 1913. It was built out to mid-stream more than 100 years ago due to the low water depth and this enabled the beginning of organised sailing events with the formation of the inaugural Maylands Sailing Club. It was again shortened after dredging of the channel, but by 1932, vandals had damaged it, removing the planking and "rendering it unfit for use" as reported by *The Daily News*. The hardwood planks would have been highly treasured for re-sale or to keep some home fires burning during the tough years of the Depression:



A GENERAL VIEW OF THE MAYLANDS JETTY, which has been rendered unfit for use. The planking at the shore end has been entirely removed, and it would be necessary to wade through mud to reach even the skeleton of the main structure.—“The Daily News” special photograph.



Before our present clubhouse, this is a colour view of the old club, with narrow jetty, low city skyline and the powerhouse is the biggest structure maybe early 1960s?

Fortunately, we now have a very sturdy jetty in 2016 and a wonderful viewing point for the club and the public to continue to enjoy fishing and watching our sailing and no missing planks!!



Lost Maylands 1914



YACHTSMEN AND ANGLERS—SCENE ON THE SWAN BETWEEN MAYLANDS AND BAYSWATER. O. H. Park.

**YACHTSMEN AND ANGLERS—SCENE ON THE SWAN BETWEEN MAYLANDS AND BAYSWATER.,
WESTERN MAIL, 6 FEBRUARY, 1914**

This is one of the earliest photos yet to hand showing organised racing in the MYC waters. These boats were part of the Maylands Sailing Club which operated from the Maylands jetty, extended to the middle of the river from 1913. These were likely to have been 16 foot skiffs, more popular at the time than the later 14 foot skiffs that became more prevalent in the 1920s. It appears to be in the vicinity of the current Aerodrome mark in an easterly breeze. Significantly, this would have been the last Summer that fleets would race until after WWI. An article in The West Australian in October 1916 stated: "The general meeting of the Maylands Sailing Club was held at the Central Hotel, Maylands, on Thursday evening last. As more than 75 per cent of the 1914 members had enlisted with the A.I.F, the club's operations were suspended entirely during the past season, and the meeting was therefore made up with an almost complete change of personnel. The following officers were elected - Commodore, Mr. T. L. Buckenara; Vice-Commodore, Mr.T. Davis; rear-commodore, Mr. H. Sims; handicapper, Mr. E. Lessels; judge and starter, and H. Sims; patron."

Maylands 1965



From the locker of 50 years ago..... Brian Plumb has confirmed this photo was taken in 1965 - when Maylands YC was conducting races from the old tin shed on the foreshore. That's Brian holding his Moth, number 6454 and he is wearing his Perth football club jumper. Wally Gaunt's runabout is anchored at the left of photo. (Thanks to Terry Gaunt Snr for this photo).



The Vee Jay Class



Launching to the east of the jetty, Maylands - 1940s. Terry Gaunt Snr says that the Vee Jay on the box trailer in the foreground is Peter Reid's "Raider". Peter was a valuable member of the Maylands Yacht Club in the '40s & '50s. He was Club Secretary for a number of years and his father, Bill, was Commodore of the club in the early days (1940s). Terry himself had great success in his Vee Jay, "Villain" - see below. Terry says: "This photo was taken in about 1947. That was my first boat "Villain" (M3) when VeeJay's were introduced to Maylands (eventually the MYC fleet built up to between 20 to 30 boats). My father Wally was skippering the boat (with his foot) as you can see. I think I was crewing for him (can't be certain of that.) It could have been Bert Harris who was my Vee Jay crew in those early days." Terry went on to win three National Vee Jay Titles (including one as a Junior) and another MYC member, Gordon Collins, won two Nationals in the class.



Not many MYC members would remember the Vee Jay Class (Vaucluse Junior). Designed at Vaucluse, Sydney, in 1931 by Charles Sparrow and Sil Rohu this 11ft 6in (3.5m) little rocketship of a dinghy was once the most popular and most numerous sailing boat in Australia and was also built in many countries around the world. Times have changed, sporting interests and activities of families have changed, other sailing classes have come and gone, and today the once dominant Vee Jay has almost died out.



Impala skippered by Warren Nupier in Perth 1966/67 Interestingly, inspired by how challenging and how much fun to sail this wonderful boat is, and by what a healthy and invigorating sport sailing is, a group of older Vee Jay sailors returned to the Vee Jay in October 2010 from other classes and are now sailing and racing the Vee Jays again at Teralba Sailing Club at Lake Macquarie NSW.



Grant and Ross McInnes in the impressive Big Mac, 1969 (Photo Georges River SC, Sydney) My involvement in the Vee Jays was to crew at the Kogarah Bay Sailing Club in Sydney in the early 1960s when Grant McInnes began sailing in the class. Grant was my next-door neighbour at the time - he lived on one side and on the other side of our house was the KBSC clubhouse, and we used to regularly practise our sailing together. Grant went on, with his brother Ross, to win three consecutive National Vee Jay Championships from 1967/68 - I bought a motor bike and only came back to sailing when I moved to Perth ten years later!

****Thanks to Terry Gaunt Snr, Brian Plumb and Chris Holyday for helping compile this club history.***