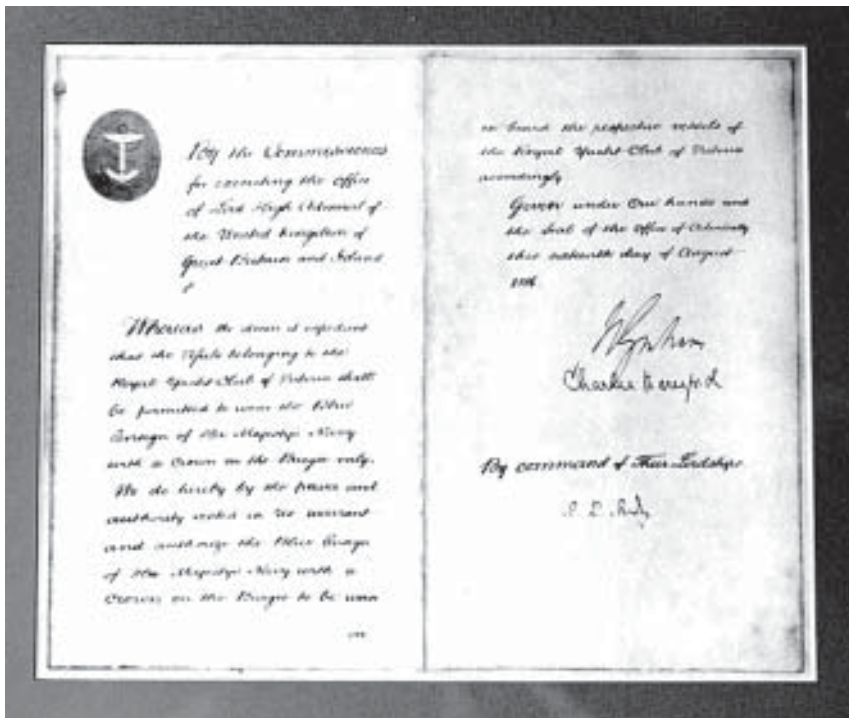




# Souvenir Program for 150th Jubilee Ball 22 March 2003

Incorporating a brief history of  
Royal Yacht Club of Victoria



Royal Warrant issued in 1886

## The club's beginnings...

**R**eceived wisdom has it that Royal Yacht Club of Victoria was founded in May 1853 as the Port Phillip Yacht Club. A combination of time, clubhouse relocations and the 1970 fire have managed to obscure this early period which consequently awaits the efforts of a patient researcher willing to trawl the rich treasures of the State Library. It will no doubt be a fascinating story, linked closely to the rise of the city of Melbourne which was in the 1850s being transformed by gold to a position of new-found wealth and status. As Melbourne became a metropolis, it's not hard to imagine the enthusiasm with which men of money tried to recreate in the colony the life of a gentleman from 'Home'.

In that ferment of change, the club's existence seems to have been precarious, since three years later an advertisement was placed in *The Argus* for 'The Victorian Yacht Club', inviting interest from potential members and listing the names of those who had already joined – including George Verdon, his partner Probert, and George Mansfield. *The Argus* of 12 February 1856 reported that on 11 February a general meeting of the club was held at Tattersalls Hotel and a program drawn up for the first regatta to be held on Easter Monday in 1856.



*George (later Sir George) Verdon, Melbourne merchant: a founder of the Victoria Yacht Club. Originally a ship chandler and sail maker, Verdon was elected to represent Williamstown in the Legislative Assembly between 1859 and 1868 and was twice Treasurer of Victoria, in 1861 and 1868.*

Shortly thereafter Victoria Yacht Club, as it had become known, could boast a membership of 139 – seven Melbourne yacht owners and 132 ‘other interested persons’. The Commodore was William Foster Stawell.

Most of the other members, whose names and suburbs are all listed in the 1856 Laws, come from Melbourne, Williamstown and St Kilda. It was the first such body, of which there are positive records, formed on the Australian mainland.

It was determined that the club button bear the initials VYC and Foul Anchor, and that the club uniform be a plain blue dress-coat, a white or buff waistcoat, each with the club buttons, and trousers blue or white. For Full Dress, flag officers were decked out in ‘two inch gold lace down the outside seams of the trousers’.

The club had at least six meeting places in various parts of Melbourne and suburbs. ‘Club houses’ were designated as Tattersall’s Hotel (Melbourne), the Bathing Ship (St Kilda), the Chusan Hotel (Sandridge), the Albion Hotel (Williamstown), Mack’s Hotel (Geelong), and the Royal Hotel (Brighton).

Starting procedures for yacht races, or ‘sailing matches’ as they were called in those days, were rather different from those we are familiar with. The first gun from the Commodore was the signal to take stations, and all yachts had to be at station within a quarter hour of that signal. The second gun was to prepare, and the third was the signal to hoist sails and then start. All yachts sailing in a match had to carry a ‘distinguishing color’ at the topmast head.

Club races were held most often on Corio Bay, where many of the club’s fleet were moored from 1856-64, and at St Kilda. References to the Geelong Regatta go back to December 1849. There was also a local club at Geelong at this time, but as most yachtsmen were members of both clubs, the local club was absorbed in VYC in 1860. At a regatta on Corio Bay held in 1861 a £100 silver cup was presented as a perpetual trophy for a race over 40 miles – a valuable prize. It was won by *Mystery* in the first year, *Secret* the following year. The *Southern Cross*, built in 1857 by Lieut.-Col. Heath, a prominent member of the club for the next 40 years, secured it permanently by three successive wins in 1863, 1864, and 1865. Colonel Heath was still a hale and hearty member of the club in 1911.

Perhaps an even bigger and more satisfying ‘win’, at least from the point of view of interstate rivalry, was the fact that in 1863, by having already been founded, the VYC prevented the newly formed Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron from calling itself the Royal Australian Yacht Squadron, as it had originally intended!

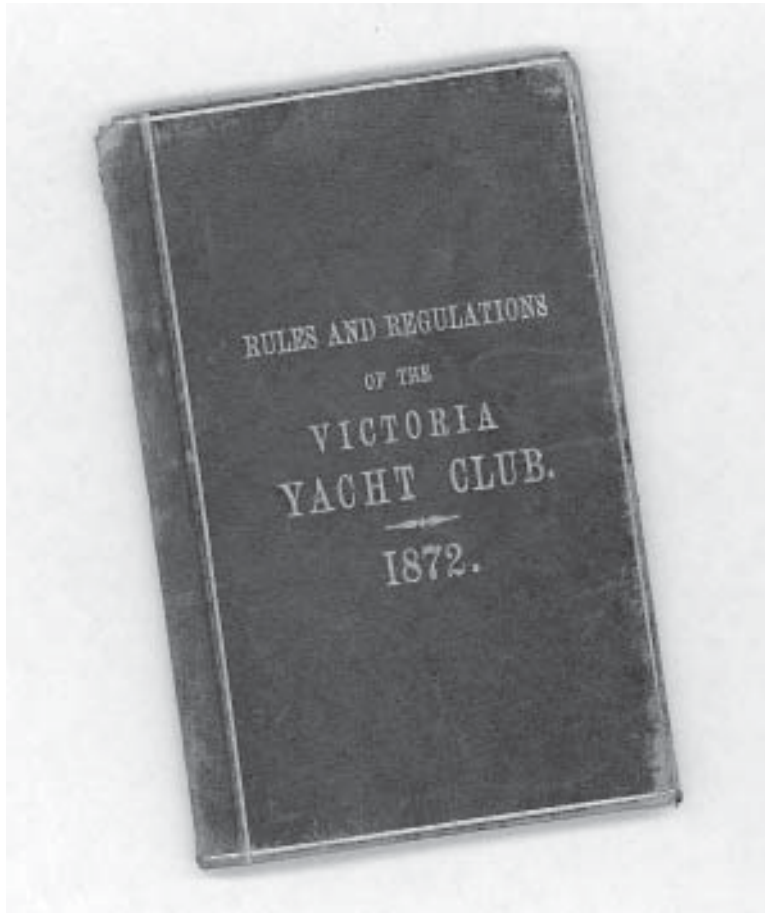
## ...and reinvigoration

From 1865 to 1872 only meagre details are to be had of the club’s doings, and it would seem that during the period it had a moribund existence. In 1872 a new era was entered upon. Looking back on it some years later, John Turnbull described the reactivation of the club in this way:

‘Leaving off the digger’s life and settling down amongst shipping business in Melbourne an old love for the briny led me to sailing some of the ships’ boats, and gradually gathering young friends of like tastes, we extended our trips along the shores of Port Phillip Bay... [We re-launched] the Victoria Yacht Club at a meeting held at the Port Phillip Club Hotel on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 1872. A number of influential gentlemen joined early to countenance the institution of one of the worthiest and most manly of British sports, but an active interest in sailing was of slower growth, perhaps attributable to distance between Melbourne homes and safe moorings for the yachts.’

A photograph of Captain Coffey, the new Commodore, hangs in the clubhouse.

While similar to the 1856 Laws, the later ones were more explicit, particularly as regards Sailing Rules and ‘Evolutions’, which were complex manoeuvres carried out in fleet formations and controlled by flag signals. This was of course before the days of auxiliary engines, when the safety of a yacht depended on its crew’s sail handling.



*The 1872 Laws of the Victoria Yacht Club*

## **Land at Williamstown**

In keeping with the new spirit of enthusiasm, the club at this time applied for permission to use some beach frontage at Williamstown. On 9 May 1873, on plain paper, the Honorary Secretary of the Victoria Yacht Club, James Thorne, wrote to the Minister of Lands and Survey asking for the use of beachfront land recently vacated by the Dredging Department.

The site referred to on an accompanying plan is the present site of Hobson's Bay Yacht Club. With remarkable speed – did Mr Horne have special access to the Minister? – already by 15 May advice was being prepared for the Minister, and the club was granted permissive occupancy of the land by June 1873. However, a memo within the Office of Lands and Survey of March 1876 notes that 'although the Yachts are moored and anchored in the Bay opposite this site, the land which comprises the site has never been occupied or fenced in'.

According to Captain Turnbull, vice captain of the club, at the previously agreed site 'the water was so shallow that the yachts could not approach nearer than three or four hundred yards off, rendering the land practically useless to the club'. Instead, the club had erected a two-storey boat-house and sail loft on a portion of reclaimed land immediately at the rear of the Water Police quarters. In the end, this was the land which the club gained permission to occupy – in lieu of the land already granted. The boat-house survived nearly a century – it was demolished by the club in 1967.

Fort Phillip, Great Strait  
9 May 1873  
Melbourne

Sir,

I have the honor by direction  
of the Commodore and Members of  
the Victoria Yacht Club to request  
your favorable consideration for the  
application for the Beach postage  
taken from Williamstown for the use  
of the Yacht, and recently visited  
by the Dredging Dept

I am directed to respectfully  
submit that we have no safe  
anchorage ground or locality where

the vessels may moor, reef or  
sundry necessary repairs of a trifling  
nature and that a congenial position  
or anchorage would be of the greatest  
importance to the Club

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your most obedient servant

James A. Stone

Secretary

V. Y. C.

The Commodore

The Members

Land & Seaway

&c

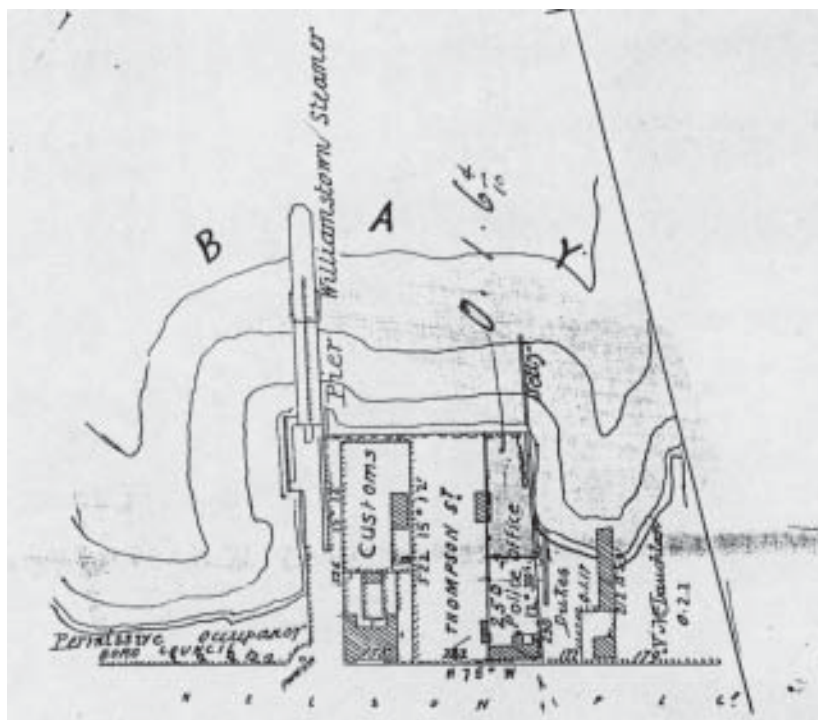
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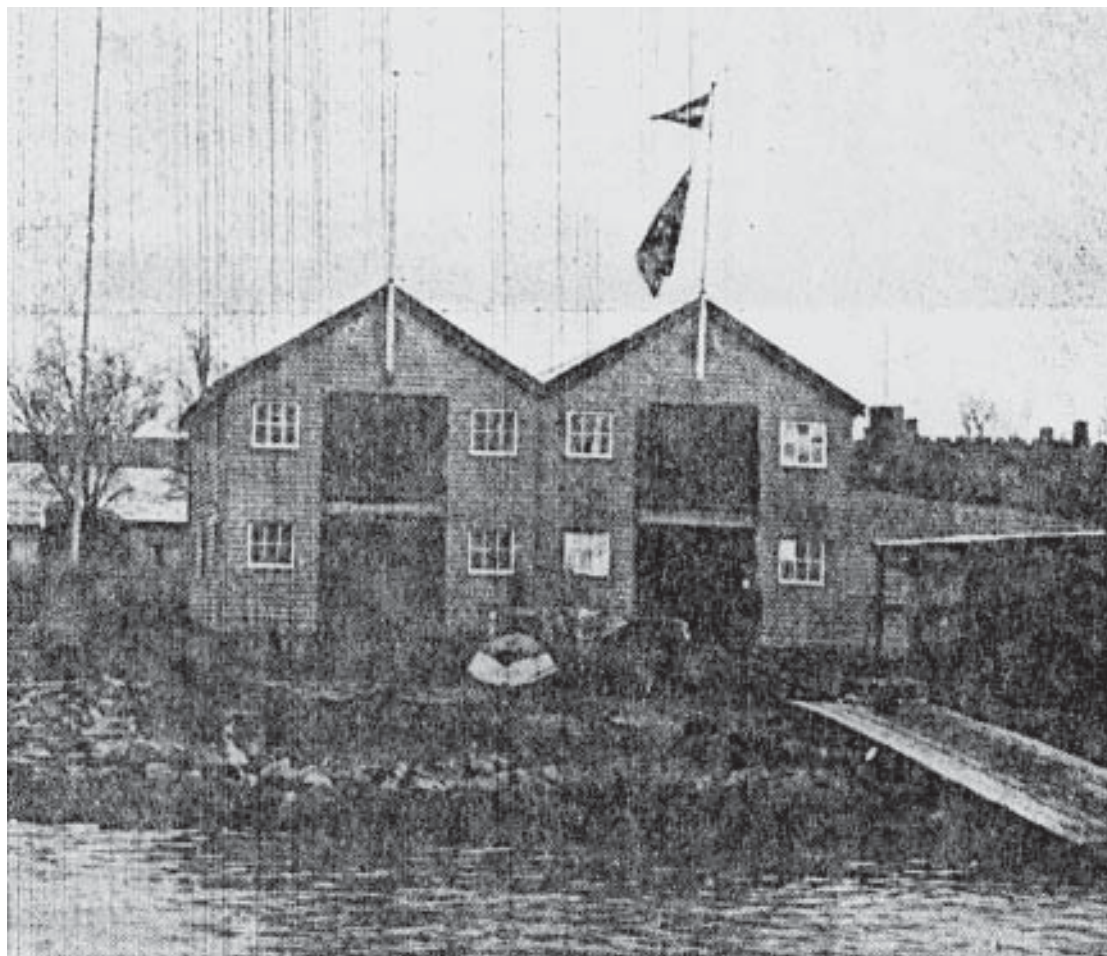
Melbourne

Letter from VYC requesting  
land at Williamstown





Two early plans showing land occupied by the Victoria Yacht Club. The earlier plan clearly shows that the Customs House was almost on the waterfront. The club occupied land previously used by the water police. Note that much of the land we now occupy was originally a road reserve intended for Thompson St.



*The original boathouse, photographed in 1911*

The land at that time was used mainly for the storage of masts, spars, sails and rigging. However, in October 1874 the minutes of the monthly meeting recorded that Major Stokes urged on the meeting the desirability of obtaining a club house as soon as possible, but while the general sense of the meeting appeared to be in favour of the proposition, it was felt that the state of the funds prevented its assuming any definite shape at present'. The land at Williamstown continued to be used for strictly sailing purposes. From 1872-80, the club met mainly at the Port Phillip Club Hotel in Flinders St.

With Williamstown as its headquarters on account of the sheltered anchorage, the average class of yacht on the club register were straight-stemmed, deep-keel cutters of from 6 to 40 tons. Among the big cutters whose owners chiefly relegated their handling and upkeep to professional skippers and crews (at a wage of around £6 a month) were *Janet* (built at Emerald Hill), *Taniwha*, *Wanderer*, *Iduna*, *Secret*, *Magnolia*, *Crusader*; plus the schooners *May Queen* (30 tons) and *Red Gauntlet* (90 tons). The *May Queen* was launched in 1879, designed by AH Murray and built in R White's boot factory in Fitzroy. She was the most famous yacht in Port Phillip from 1879 until she was sold early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For her launching she was carried through the city streets late at night on a huge trolley, drawn by 80 draught horses, and lifted into the water by a crane located near the present Queen St Bridge.



*A pleasant day on Port Phillip around the turn of the century.  
May Queen, Uira, and Crusader, each towing a dinghy.*

Most of the famous yachts seen in Port Phillip have been on the Royals register, including the 400 ton schooner *Undine*, owned by the Millar brothers, the beautiful 350 ton *Cushie Doo*, and Lord Brassey's *Sunbeam*.

In the early days most of the yachts were copper sheathed below the waterline, and painted black with gold embellishments. Large sums were spent on equipment and furnishings. Professional decorators furnished the cabin of the *Minnehaha*, owned by JH Alley, a 12 ton cutter; it was panelled with mahogany outlined in cream and gold, the stanchions were French polished mahogany, and the settees upholstered in moquette. Red carpeting completed the furnishings. However, it was the *May Queen* that was regarded as the most splendid yacht of all.

In the 1880s most of the VYC lived at or near St Kilda. The practice was for their paid crew to board the yachts at Williamstown, then sail over to pick up the owners and their friends at St Kilda pier. After the race the reverse process would occur. In 1886 it was suggested that a ship's hulk should be bought and permanently moored at the end of the St Kilda pier; later, plans were drawn up for a clubhouse to be erected on piles between the pier and Kenny's Baths.

On 12 November 1885 the Victoria Yacht Club was advised that His Excellency the Governor had received a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies advising that Her Majesty the Queen had been graciously pleased to grant permission for the club to assume the title of 'The Royal Yacht Club of Victoria'. The first celebration was a cruise to Snapper Point (Mornington) on 28 November; however, use of the new title was deferred until receipt of letters patent from Queen Victoria. The Royal Warrant finally arrived in October 1886.

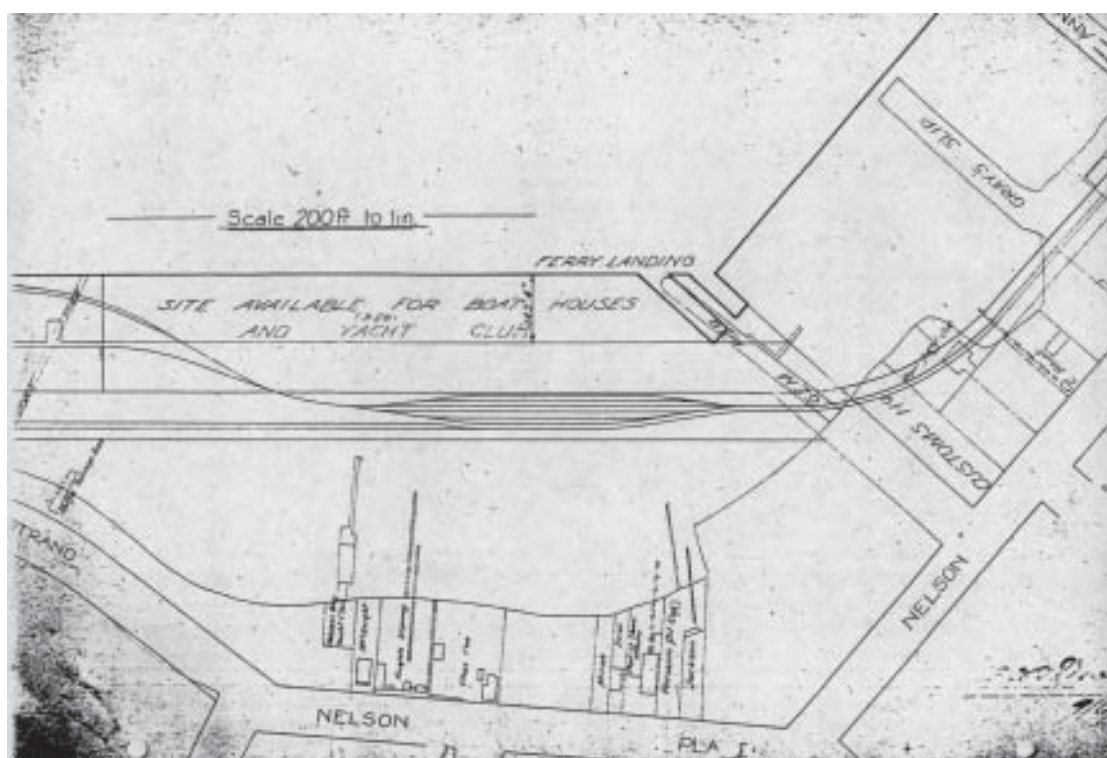


By then the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria had begun to establish a reputation for good attendances at balls and picnics rather than yacht races. The September ball in 1886, which 450 attended, was a brilliant occasion in the Melbourne Town Hall, with Herr Plock's eight piece orchestra providing excellent dance music. To encourage more racing, Mr Alley, the Police Magistrate, offered a trophy valued at 10 pounds 10 shillings for a contest in seamanship to be decided by some manoeuvres around buoys. But the proposal attracted the interest only of the *Pert* and *Erin*, and the contest was changed to a race around buoys with handicaps on sail area/tonnage. The truth was that RYCV had become more of a cruising club than a racing club.

In 1888 another yacht club was formed in Williamstown to cater for smaller boats based in Williamstown – Hobson's Bay Yacht Club, which was granted the land originally offered to Royals in 1873.

## Clubhouses

From the 1890s to the early 1920s a major issue for the club was the basis of its occupation of the land at Williamstown. An accident of timing meant that the permission it had gained from the Department of Lands and Survey had not been consummated in a formal grant before the inauguration of the new Melbourne Harbor Trust in 1877. No-one appeared to much care about this until the turn of the century, when big plans were afoot for port improvements. A railway line was planned right along the Nelson Place water frontage, and in the short term land was required for residences for senior port personnel. Matters came to a head in somewhat acrimonious circumstances in 1920 when a notice was served to the club on behalf of the Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioners 'to quit and deliver up possession of the land at the rear of the Police Reserve' – in other words, the entire site used by the club. It was 1922 before the issue was resolved and the club secured a reliable lease.



*A Harbor Trust sketch from 1916, showing proposed land reclamation and railway line. The original two-storey boatshed is marked on the sketch, as are Blunt's boathouse and slipway right next door.*

The headquarters of the club were for a long time in the Old Temple Court, Collins St. It was not until 1905 that the club moved into a home of its own, when it obtained a lease on a grand Italianate building, Wickcliffe House, on the Upper Esplanade, St Kilda, until 1912. This splendid building offered a reading room, billiard room, library, 'culinary offices', and seven bedrooms for the use of members – all maintained by six servants. The dining room accommodated 20. Visitors noted how 'that good ship Sayonara seems to permeate the whole atmosphere of the club house', with her racing flags hung on either side of the fireplace and photos and half-models in every room.

A beautiful new building was planned next to the St Kilda Yacht Club on the Lower Esplanade, but these plans came to nought. From 1912 to 1922 the clubrooms were back in the city, at 375 Collins St.

*RYCV's first clubhouse,  
on the Upper Esplanade, St Kilda*



## Racing – the famous cups



The annual 'Smoke Nights' were the occasion on which prizes were awarded for sailing achievements through the season. In the early years of the twentieth century, there were as many trophies awarded for cruising races as for 'round the buoys' races. Thanks to flag officer Mr E Newlands of Atlas Press, programs for the events were beautifully designed and printed.

The famous Sayonara Cup began when Mr Alfred Gollin, a well-to-do Melbourne businessman and Commodore of the club, issued a challenge to the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron to race any local yacht over three heats in open waters. In 1904 a 'Challenge Race' was sailed between Gollin's *Sayonara* and Mr Binnie's *Bona*, with *Sayonara* winning two races to one.

*The so-called 'Sayonara' Cup, originally  
the 'Inter State Yacht Race Cup'.*



Prize Winners, 1902.	
***	
LINEAR RATING SWEEPSTAKES	UIRA
HANDICAP TROPHY	
Presented by Commodore A. Goulin.	
1. UIRA	
2. SAYONARA	
OPEN CRUISERS TROPHY	
Withdrawable to Commodore.	
1. UIRA, R.Y.C.V.	
2. ELLIDA, S.K.Y.C.	
3. SAYONARA, R.Y.C.V.	
OPEN CRUISERS TROPHY	
Commodore to Commodore.	
1. ELLIDA, S.K.Y.C.	
2. HRIN, R.Y.C.V.	
3. ATLAS, R.Y.C.V.	
HANDICAP TROPHY	
Presented by Vice-Commodore Corrie.	
1. SAYONARA	
2. UIRA	
HANDICAP TROPHY	
Presented by Rear-Commodore Walker.	
1. UIRA	
2. AOTEA	
LINEAR RATING TROPHY	
Presented by Messrs. Terry and S. Goulin.	
1. UIRA	
2. SAYONARA	
CLUB OPEN RACE	
1. SAYONARA, R.Y.C.V.	
2. KALACIA, S.K.Y.C.	
LINEAR RATING RACE	
Presented by Commodore A. Goulin.	
1. UIRA	
2. WHITE WINGS	
HANDICAP TROPHY	
Presented by C. D. Wallace, Esq.	
1. AOTEA	
2. GITANA	
ASSOCIATED CLUBS REGATTA.	
LINEAR RATING RACE	
1. UIRA	
CRUISERS RACE	
1. GITANA	
2. ATLAS	
YACHTS 26 ft. L.W.L. AND UNDER	
1. SEA BREEZE	
GEELONG REGATTA.	
OPEN RACE	
1. UIRA	
BILLIARD TOURNAMENT.	
1st—Trophy presented by the Club.	
2nd—Trophy presented by Vice-Commodore.	
1. R. MOFFAT	
2. G. MILLS	
THE ATLAS PRESS (E. Newlands), Melb.	

This and following page: Program for Smoke Night in 1902.  
Note the variety of entertainment offered by club members on the evening.



**Royal Yacht Club**  
**OF VICTORIA.**

**OFFICE-BEARERS.**

1901-02.

**COMMODORE:**  
ALFRED COLLIN.

**VICE-COMMODORE:**  
A. CURRIE, JUNR.

**REAR-COMMODORE:**  
W. H. WALKER.

**COMMITTEE:**  
G. BELL. F. DAVIES.  
W. P. LANGDON. R. MOFFAT.  
W. ROBB. F. RICHARDSON.  
J. WALKER.

**HON. TREASURER:**  
A. L. SCOTT.

**HON. SECRETARY:**  
G. W. HENTY.

**ASST. HON. SECRETARY:**  
S. AMESS.

**CLUB ROOMS:**  
TEMPLE COURT, COLLINS STREET,  
MELBOURNE.

**CLUB HOUSE:**  
WILLIAMSTOWN.

The following gentlemen will  
contribute to programme:—

**Instrumental Quintette**

Messrs. DAWSON, CONOLLY, PERSCH,  
JOHNSON, WRIGHT, and H. MORRIS.

**Songs by**

DR. O'HARA, C. BOSTWICK KELLY,  
WALTER KIRBY, H. MCKINNEY,  
and H. DAVIES.

**Humorous Recitations by**

Messrs. E. J. JACOBS and A. W. TUTTON.

**Magic and Mystery by**  
C. ESKELL.

**Animated Pictures by**  
MR. MILLARD JOHNSON.

**Accompanist**  
H. MORRIS.



**Toasts.**

**The King.**

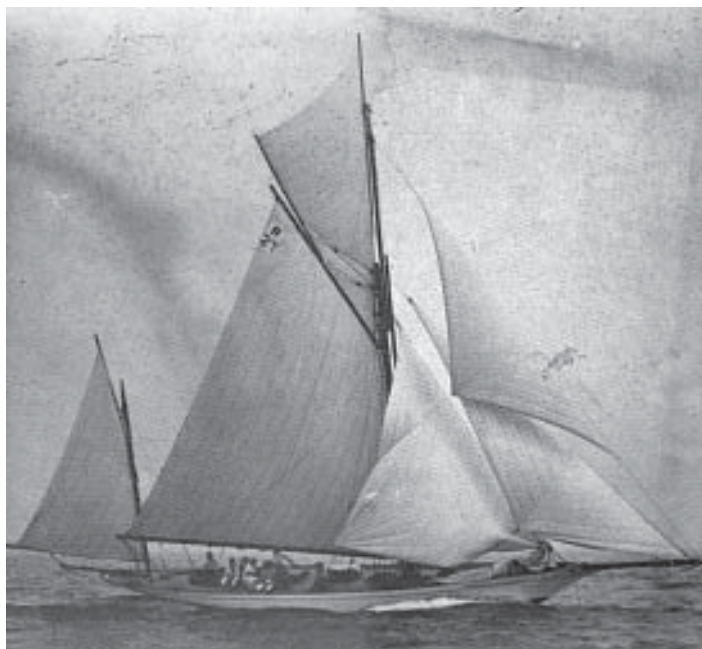
**The Royal Military Forces.**

**The Kindred Clubs.**

**Yachting.**

**The Chairman.**





*The famous yacht Sayonara*

Another Sayonara Cup contender and winner was Mr Ernest Digby, of the Melbourne Harbor Trust, who was slipmaster of Williamstown Slipway and Dockyard. Digby designed, built and sailed famous yachts such as *Independence*, *Defiance* and *Frances*.

The club was also closely associated with the instigation of the Northcote and Forster Cups, originally for competition in 6 metre and 21 foot restricted classes respectively. The Forster Cup was revived after World War 2 at the end of the 1948-49 season, when a race was organised for veteran Forster Cup skippers.



*A start in the 1948-49 Forster Cup; Royals' Edalgo (R35) shows Tassie Too (T2) her stern.*

By 1932 yachting in Victoria was very strong, with the four principal Australian championships held by Victorian representatives – the Sayonara Cup, the Northcote Cup, the 14-foot Championship, and the Stonehaven Cup. The Forster Cup eluded us until the Adelaide competition of 1933, after a Victorian syndicate bought a successful Peel yacht from NSW and renamed it *Milsonia* after her former owner, the famous yachtsman J. Milson from Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron. During the 1930s Royals was renowned as the home of the biggest, proudest yachts on the Bay.

Recognition of the club's seniority was its hosting in 1934 of Victoria's Centenary Regatta.

## First clubhouse at Williamstown

It being felt that city rooms tended to make the club more of a social than a sailing club, it was decided to make Williamstown the sole clubhouse. For this it needed more land. In its submission to the Harbor Trust the club pointed out that 'it always has been, and still is, considered the senior club'; and furthermore that even though it was not numerically as strong as other clubs such as Royal St Kilda and Royal Brighton it had the largest sailing fleet and the largest number of actual sailing members.

The Trust agreed to erect a new slipway and grant the club an additional area of land with a frontage of 100 feet to Nelson Place (sea frontage of 241 feet), with a 21 year lease from 1 July 1935. The annual rental was set at £20 for the leasehold and £56 for use of the slipway, plus £1 for the slipway and jetty site and 5 shillings for the electricity line across Trust land. Given that the previous lease and licences had amounted to £9:5:0 per annum, this was a huge commitment, especially when added to the capital works on clubhouse and grounds that the club had promised – predicted to be £1300.

Finally in 1935 the club had its own building – a superb achievement.



*The first clubhouse at Williamstown, photographed in about 1948. The original boatshed is on the right. In the foreground are the dinghy jetty and slipway.*

Boats by this time included *Maysie*, *Acrospire III* and *IV*, *Rawhiti*, *Utiekah III*, *Thistle*, *Niree*, *Revonah*, *Hurrica V*, *Adele* (130 tons) and *Boomerang*. (In 1951 it was suggested by a member with a keen eye for heritage that the ageing *Maysie* be preserved in the club's grounds as a reminder of the earlier days of the club and an example of a 'now extinct type of yacht'; unfortunately, the committee decided the idea was impractical.)

The years of the Second World War were difficult; according to one source, the club was only narrowly 'saved from extinction by various interfering authorities'. One highlight was that the club's motorboats were co-opted to assist in the defence of the Port of Melbourne.

In 1950 the Trust was again approached regarding increasing the area of land held by the club, and asking if a new 21 year lease could be granted so that a new building program could be undertaken. According to the club, the present premises had become inadequate for the increasing membership.



*RYCV in 1944. Hemmed in by the Customs House land on the east and by Harbor Trust land to the south and west, the club needed room to grow.*

There was lengthy discussion on the desirability of 'social' members, given that 'the Canteen was one good reason why gentlemen were eager to join the club' and that perhaps non-sailing members should incur additional fees.

In those days there were certainly no female members. In 1951 a circular was sent to members reminding them of the by-law concerning Lady Visitors: '1. No Lady shall be permitted on the club premises, except at the invitation of a member. 2. Except on official Ladies Days, or at dances or social committee meetings, or similar functions, no Ladies shall be permitted on the club premises except whilst accompanying a member on yachting business, in which case they may not be on the club premises longer than is reasonably necessary. 3. Ladies waiting for members must do so on the veranda or in the Ladies Room...' The restrictions ran to six paragraphs.





*Women may not have been allowed to be members but they look welcome enough aboard Edalgo in 1948*

## 100th anniversary

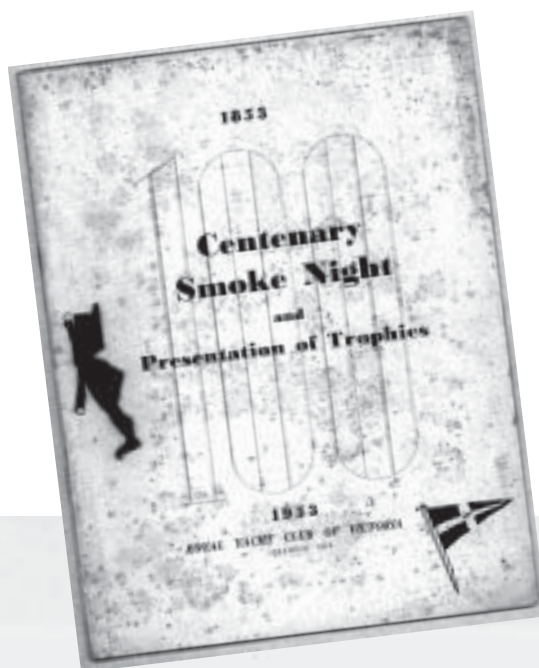
At the club's centenary in 1953 the main classes sailed were 6 and 8 metres, Dragons, Albatrosses, Tumlarens, 21-footers, Stars, and 12 square metres – along with a 'splendid fleet' of auxiliary powered cruisers which made the crossing across Bass Strait to Tasmania year after year. To celebrate the centenary, RYCV won the Sayonara Cup for 8 metre yachts back from Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, in the challenger *Frances*. The Centenary Regatta featured A class competitions (for 21 footers, 12 square metres, and 14 ft dinghies) and B and C class races (for Tumlarens, Jubes and Elwood Canoes); plus there were Dragons, Stars, Sandridge Sharpies and Cadet Dinghies.

But life at Royals in the centenary year was apparently not easy. In 1952 a subscription had been taken up to eliminate an overdraft and debt, and in May 1953 the minutes record that an excess of expenditure over revenue is foreseen for the 53/54 season. Solutions suggested were to raise subs, decrease the value of trophies, sell the club's Cadets and issue debentures. There was also a proposal to admit non-sailing members. Centenary celebrations were held in the clubhouse – an At Home on 22 May 1953 at 6pm, dress dinner jackets, high tea and supper combined.

As a senior club, it is no surprise that the two biggest sailing events in Australia's history, the 1956 Olympics and the 1983 America's Cup, both featured RYCV. To Royals went the honor of hosting the 5.5 metre yachts in the Olympics. At the club a new landing stage was built along the sea wall, and new racks to dry sails. Extensive improvements were made to the clubhouse including the laying of lino at the entrance and having the club insignia represented on the glass sidelights at the entrance.



The Centenary Smoke Night program



## TROPHY WINNERS SEASON 1952-53

### "FRANCES"—Commodore E. O. DIGBY

First, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	22nd Nov., '52
First, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	13th Dec., '52
First, "A" Class, V.Y.C.	7th Mar., '53
First, "A" Class, V.Y.C.	8th Mar., '53
First, "A" Class, V.Y.C.	9th Mar., '53
First, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	14th Mar., '53
George Low Cup, Aggregate Points, 1952/53	
Second, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	17th Jan., '53
Second, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	28th Feb., '53
Second, "A" Class, V.Y.C.	9th Mar., '53
Third, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	10th Apr., '53

### "JUDITH PINL"—D. BUSHTON

Second, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	22nd Nov., '52
Second, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	13th Dec., '52
Second, "A" Class, V.Y.C.	9th Mar., '53
Third, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	28th Feb., '53
Third, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	14th Mar., '53

### "ACROSPHERE"—J. WHITE

First, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	17th Jan., '53
Second, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	14th Mar., '53
Third, Elwood Huan Cup	7th Feb., '53

### "VENGER"—B. LADD

First, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	28th Feb., '53
Second, Elwood Huan Cup	7th Feb., '53
Third, "A" Class, V.Y.C.	9th Mar., '53
Third, "A" Class, V.Y.C.	9th Mar., '53

### "PANAMUHA"—A. C. FINLEY

Third, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	13th Dec., '52
Third, "A" Class, R.Y.C.V.	17th Jan., '53

### "WILD GOOSE"—W. LOW

First, "B" and "C" Class, R.Y.C.V.	22nd Nov., '52
Winner Elwood Huan Cup, R.Y.C.V.	7th Feb., '53
First, Senior Skippers, R.Y.C.V. (Cedar Dinghies)	22nd Feb., '53
Third, "B" Class, V.Y.C.	

### "MIRANDA"—B. SARGOOD

First, "B" Class, V.Y.C.	8th Mar., '53
First, "B" Class, V.Y.C.	9th Mar., '53
Second, "B" Class, V.Y.C.	9th Mar., '53

### "LORRAINE CLIPPER"—M. A. GLOVER

Second, "B" Class, V.Y.C.	7th Mar., '53
Second, "B" Class, V.Y.C.	8th Mar., '53

### "CAROLA"—T. P. G. CLARE

Second, "C" Class, V.Y.C.	9th Mar., '53
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### "TROMIE II"—D. Mcgregor

First, "B" and "C" Class, R.Y.C.V.	14th Feb., '53
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### "SASKIA"—M. NORDSTROM

Second, "B" and "C" Class, R.Y.C.V.	14th Feb., '53
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### "MILSONIA"—E. E. and P. X. CASE

First, 21 Footers, Restricted, V.Y.C.	7th Mar., '53
Second, 21 Footers, Restricted, V.Y.C.	8th Mar., '53

### "ISIE"—B. MAY

First, Livingston Cup	14th Mar., '53
Second, "Marie Louise"—C. O. White and A. E. Gibbs	
Third, "Scholar"—J. H. Weiss	

The following completed the course:

- "Joashere"—R. H. Walsh.
- "Antares"—A. Gesser.
- "Faylene"—N. Linahan.
- "Haworth"—G. G. Owen.
- "Zara"—G. Anderson.
- "Carola"—T. P. G. Clark.
- "Tom O'Shanley"—A. D. MacKenzie.
- "Alfred"—M. Dowd.
- "Hesterlie"—Dr. F. H. Moran.

### "ALTAIR"—B. B. SAVAGE

Third, 21 Footers, Restricted, V.Y.C.	9th Mar., '53
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### DRAGONS

"KUMMULA"—A. S. STURROCK	First, R.Y.C.V.	22nd Nov., '52
"CAROL ANN"—L. COOKE	Second, R.Y.C.V.	17th Jan., '53
"SABANDI"—A. ROSE	Second, R.Y.C.V.	22nd Nov., '52
"LEANDER V"—E. D. FRANKLIN	Third, R.Y.C.V.	17th Jan., '53
"ZEST"—O. D. TUCK	Third, R.Y.C.V.	22nd Nov., '52

### TUMBLARERS

"TYONNE"—S. MURKINEN	First, R.Y.C.V.	28th Feb., '53
"PIST"—S. P. JONES and B. CAROLAN	Second, R.Y.C.V.	28th Feb., '53
"AYLAN"—B. WHITE	Third, R.Y.C.V.	28th Feb., '53

### STARS

"NAIAD"—B. E. FRENCH	First, 1st heat Club Championships	12th Dec., '52
	First, 2nd heat Club Championships	14th Dec., '52
	First, R.Y.C.V. Scratch	14th Feb., '53
	First, R.Y.C.V. Special	10th Apr., '53
	Second, Awinya Cup	28th Mar., '53
"BYDAND"—J. J. JOHNSTON	First, R.Y.C.V.	14th Mar., '53
	Second, R.Y.C.V.	10th Apr., '53
"TOUCAN"—W. J. WALKER	Winner, Awinya Cup, R.Y.C.V.	28th Mar., '53
"TEMPO"—M. ANDERSON	Second, 1st heat Club Championships	13th Dec., '52
	Second, R.Y.C.V.	14th Mar., '53
	Third, Awinya Cup	28th Mar., '53

### 12 SQUARE METRE

"NORONH"—W. OWEN	First, 1st heat Club Championships	17th Jan., '53
	First, 2nd heat Club Championships	31st Jan., '53
	First, R.Y.C.V.	7th Feb., '53
	First, R.Y.C.V.	14th Mar., '53
"TIARR"—W. BOTTICA	First, R.Y.C.V.	13th Dec., '52
	Third, 2nd heat Club Championships	14th Feb., '53
	Third, R.Y.C.V.	14th Mar., '53
"EAS WIE"—A. HILL	First, 2nd heat Club Championships	28th Feb., '53
	Second, 1st heat Club Championships	17th Feb., '53
	Second, 2nd heat Club Championships	31st Jan., '53
"VIKING"—J. SHIELDS	First, R.Y.C.V.	22nd Nov., '52
"CORSAIR"—C. W. GIESON	Second, R.Y.C.V.	22nd Nov., '52
	Second, R.Y.C.V.	13th Dec., '52
"GAZELLE"—I. MUGLASHAN	Second, R.Y.C.V.	14th Mar., '53
"JOYETTE"—B. H. LAIRD	Third, R.Y.C.V.	13th Dec., '52
"REVENGE"—S. T. HALL	Third, R.Y.C.V.	22nd Nov., '52
"STORMY WEATHER"—D. BROWNING	Third, R.Y.C.V.	17th Jan., '53

In 1957 the establishment of a new Cadet Section, using the new Yachting World International Cadet dinghies, was approved.

In 1958 there were 79 yachts on the register – ‘probably a record’, according to minutes of the time. However, among all those sailors it wasn’t easy to find racing officials – in desperation there was even a serious suggestion that our races be started by Royal St Kilda Yacht Club. The suggestion was vetoed by the Commodore who warned that our reputation was already low with the Victorian Yachting Council and that we should lose all prestige if we turned to St Kilda to run races for which we had accepted responsibility. One solution was that each racing crew in turn allocate one of their members to be on the starting team.

In 1967 the club began construction of a marina and the hundred-year-old two-storey boathouse was demolished to make room for an extended hardstand.

Intentional demolition was one thing. The loss by fire, at 11.57am on Saturday 5 September 1970, of the clubhouse itself, was quite another. The fire began in the kitchen and raced through the old wooden building. Although the damage was assessed on the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board Fire Report as ‘slight’, the club decided to redevelop the clubhouse into a more modern amenity. A little over a year later a new brick building had been constructed for the benefit of the 350 members. However, it was difficult to recreate the unique atmosphere of the old building, with its pictures of the club’s yachts over the century, half models and flags, and honor boards. The fire destroyed virtually all these relics, and members appealed to Melbourne families who over the years had had associations with RYCV. Some historical records were preserved, among them a few old minute books and other relics included in this souvenir program.



*The fire brigade attends the fire in the old clubhouse, 5 September 1970*

In the late 1970s and early 1980s major works were carried out in reclamation, hardstand development and slipping facilities. A necessary step taken by the club at this time was the initiation of a Planning Sub-Committee to look into 'forward planning for all facets of the club on as broad a concept as possible, ie not just yard but all facilities of the club and club amenities' – with a brief to project the club's requirements 5, 10 and 15 years hence. With its demands on club infrastructure and financing, the 1983 Australian challenge for the America's Cup was perhaps the most significant commitment ever entered into by the club over its long history. Unfortunately this occurred at a time of rising interest rates – from 12% in 1981 to 16% in 1982 – with a corresponding rise in members unable to pay their accounts. The development of the western hardstand and installation of the travelift cost over \$310,000. The strain on the club's leadership at the time must have been tremendous.

Although the Williamstown-sponsored *Challenge 12* was not successful in defeating *Australia II* for the right to challenge, some members of the Victorian team were co-opted into the victorious Bond syndicate which wrested the America's Cup from New York.

In 1984, after enquiries from the Equal Opportunity Board, the club decided to open its membership to women. One member of the General Committee, although not entirely happy with the decision, felt 'it was something that would happen and should be accepted gracefully and prior to any outside influence'.

Although an informal, typed and photocopied newsletter had been in existence since about the time of the Olympics, it was not till 1983 that it was resolved that the newsletter would bear the name 'Royals'. In 1992 there arrived a new-look, more regular Royals, bound and extensively illustrated.



*A Royals race in the mid 1970s. Note the nearly-completed Westgate Bridge in the background.*

The early 1980s were a time of renewed government interest in crown lands, and many yacht clubs found themselves in potentially serious financial difficulties as a result of the government's desire to exact market rentals from the properties. For Royals this necessitated much negotiation with the Port of Melbourne Authority, with discussions proceeding regarding the possibility of acquiring some of the PMA land to east of club. Unfortunately in 1992 the Customs House and its land, on which the junior section of the club had operated for many years, were sold.

Although a number of Royals crews had competed in the Sydney-Hobart race, including Messrs AG Warner and R May in 1954 and Frank and John Livingston in 1957, it wasn't till 1996 that a Royals boat won: *Terra Firma*, sailed by clubmen Dean Wilson, Scott Carlisle and, as principal helmsman, Ian 'Barney' Walker.

The club's long association with metre boats continued in 1997 with the arrival of two classic 12 metre yachts and the newest member of the class, 2.4 metre yachts.



At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we have recently completed further hardstand improvements to the east, and are negotiating with Parks Victoria for an extension to the marina. Discussions are under way as to the possibility of replacing the piled marina with floating pontoons. The future of the current junior sailing area on crown land to the east is uncertain pending the re-development of the seafront land between us and Tenix. Membership categories are constantly under review in order to achieve the right mix of members at the right cost. The new veranda has been a great boon to after-sail activities – a perfect spot in which to relax while observing the shipping channel and the city. The Development Committee is undertaking a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and consultation with members which will lead to a strategic plan which will help guide the club into the future.

On the boat register is a great variety of boats in A, B and C Divisions. In addition there are significant numbers in classes such as Diamonds, 2.4 metres, S80s, Adams 10s, Noelexes, Elliotts and 49ers, and a strong junior section comprising International Cadets and Optimists.



*Clubhouse from the marina, showing new veranda and barbecue – February 2003*

## **Into the future**

As we look forward, it is appropriate that so many of the issues that confront us are ones earlier members would recognise – title and access to land, suitable categories and pricing of membership, plans for the future. The hours we spend on planning for the future of RYCV in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should remind us of the great debt we owe to the hardworking members and committees of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries who enabled us to experience the wonderful facilities, atmosphere and traditions we enjoy today.