

DID YOU KNOW

The first floating Marina of the type now in almost universal use was developed by the late Keith Lawrie and he built it in Jessica Haven at Buddina on the Sunshine Coast. The Marina was opened at Easter in 1973 and provided moorings for about forty boats of up to 10m in length.

Keith operated an earth – moving business and constructed the canals and roads in Kawana Waters on the Sunshine Coast. Jessica Haven, where Keith built his Marina, was part of the canal complex he had created for the Developers. After selling his business to the Thiess organisation in 1970 and travelling widely in the United States, Keith developed the technology for floating marinas from what he had seen being used in California during his travels.

I first met Keith in 1978 and had the good fortune to work with him on Marina and waterfront projects on the east coast of Australia and other countries from 1982 until 2009. That is when we were involved in our last job overseas and the project related to facilities in the Han River in Seoul, South Korea.

Keith passed away in 2017.

“A sailor is an artist whose medium is the wind.” Anon.

Bill Kirby

FLOATING MARINAS AT THE SQUADRON

A major part of the evolution of the use and enjoyment of small boats, particularly recreational vessels, in Australia commencing in the 1970s and continuing unabated for many years was the development of floating Marinas. Being able to step on and off a boat at the same level at all stages of the tide, in complete safety and comfort and not having to use a dinghy, quickly became popular.

As I have commented in an earlier article, there was a shortage of moorings for boats in Manly Boat Harbour from the earliest time of its operation. When that continued to have an adverse impact on the sustainability of Squadron activities, in 1975 I made submissions to Government through the Department of Harbours & Marine for approval for the Squadron to build a Marina in the Harbour.

The submissions were rejected on the grounds it was contrary to Government policy for a private Marina to be built in the Harbour - it was for public use.

Also as I have commented in an earlier article, Government policy prohibiting the building of a private Marina in Manly Boat Harbour was changed in 1979. That was after the Squadron had obtained approval in principle in 1978 to build its own Harbour to the south of what is now Davenport Drive.

We will never know if there was a connection between the Squadron obtaining approval in principle in 1978 to build its own Harbour and the change in Government policy in 1979. In any event, the Squadron agreed to the request not to proceed with building its own Harbour but rather, tender for the use of areas Manly Harbour.

The actions of some Members

Notwithstanding the change in Government policy allowing for private Marinas in Manly Harbour, there was a group of Members who were opposed to the concept and particularly, to the Squadron being involved in any way. The two major concerns expressed by the gentlemen in question were:

- (i) Manly Boat Harbour was too exposed to be a suitable site for a floating Marina – the fetch would destroy the structures; and
- (ii) The business models I had developed under which Members would pay rent in advance for the use of Berths for fixed periods, with the money being used to cover development costs, were commercially flawed and would be an economic failure.

The Members concerned were only able to be placated by being given a guarantee the Squadron would not be associated with the development and that was the reason for RQYS Marina Limited coming into existence. After I prepared the draft documents for the incorporation of the Marina Company, on 18 March 1981 arrangements were able to be made for the Australian Taxation Office to confirm in a letter it would be able to operate under the *“principles of mutuality”* for Taxation purposes.

Marina 1

After designing and building the first section of his own Marina in 1973, Keith Lawrie continued doing similar work for others, until he sold the construction side of the business to Rocla Monier in, to the best of my recollection, the second half of 1981. Rocla Monier was the manufacturer of the spun concrete steel reinforced piles which were popular at the time and are still in use today and they wanted to expand the market for their product. Keith continued designing Marinas, both in Australia and overseas, until 2009.

RQYS Marina Limited completed the developed Stage 1 of Marina 1, that is A to J Rows, in August 1981. Both the design and construction works were carried out by Keith Lawrie.

Stage 2 of Marina 1, K to P Rows was developed in four sections between 1984 and 1992 and took the total number of Berths to four hundred and sixty-four (464). Much of the construction of Stage 2 was carried out by Bob McKay.

Both Keith Lawrie and Bob McKay were Squadron Members and had berths in N Row. Stages 1 and 2 of Marina 1 cured the long - standing problem of the lack of moorings for Squadron Members in Manly Boat Harbour.

The origins of Marina 2

In 2002 Manly Boat Harbour was operated by Port of Brisbane Corporation on behalf of Government and in that year, the Port called for expressions of interest for the development of additional facilities in and on land adjacent to the Harbour.

RQYS Marina Limited made a submission to expand Marina 1 by in the order of 50 Berths. That involved extending some of the Rows and a similar submission was made by Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club to expand their Marina. Submissions for high rise residential development on the northern peninsula of the Harbour resulted in a significant degree of controversy and the Port "shelved" the plans for additional facilities.

For the next three years, RQYS Marina Limited continued the dialogue with the Port concerning further Berths. In 2005, the Harbour Master of the day indicated the then eastern and western access channels were to be combined into a single central channel. Following that, the Port made it known those wanting any further Berths would have to pay the cost of the works involved in creating the single channel, plus those associated with the removal of the pile berths in the north eastern section of the Harbour.

The requirements of the Harbour Master and the insistence of the Port that those developing further Berths would have to pay the cost of the works, plus pay rent to Government at commercial rates made the economics of any development on the eastern side of the new single channel required by the Harbour Master highly questionable. It also emerged there were significant issues associated with access, which would add further to costs.

In another article, I'll provide information on how the issues associated with Marina 2 were dealt with. P/C Kevin Miller was extensively involved in the ongoing negotiations with all arms

of Government over quite a long time and was instrumental in many of the solutions being found. Kevin also made major contributions to a number of other RQYS projects beyond Marina 2, including and to name but a few, the YQ Building, the Motel, the new Clubhouse and the Olympic Foundation.

In 1981, Marina 1 at RQYS was the first in Australia where Berths were able to be “bought and sold” as items of property by users and in 1982, Keith Lawrie’s at Buddina became the first commercial one where that could be done. As it may be of interest to some, in another article I’ll provide information on these aspects.



Marina 1 completed and the pile berths are still in place.

Bill Kirby