

DID YOU KNOW?

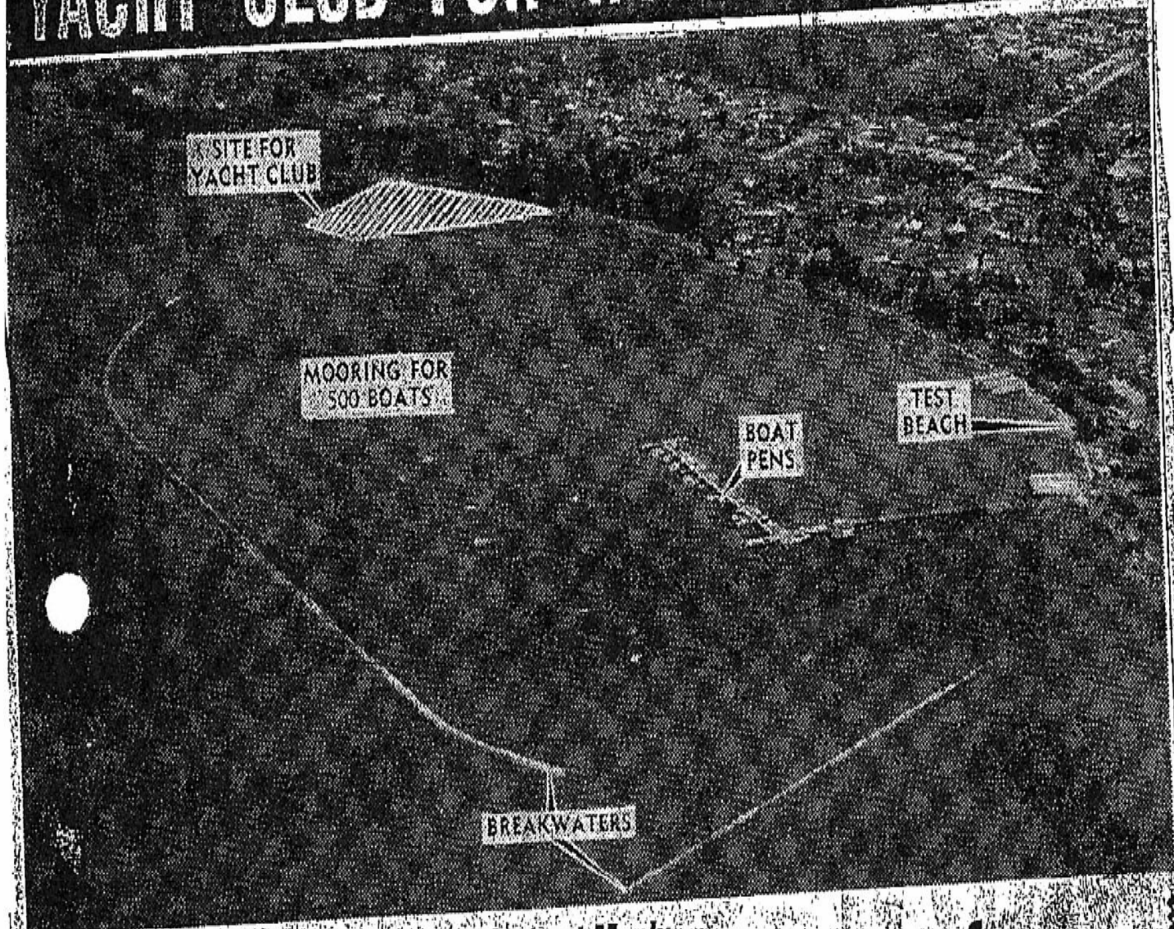
Manly Boat Harbour had its origins in discussions between representatives of Government and members of the recreational boating community during the first half of the 1950s.

However, final decisions to proceed with the project and commence construction were not made until the then Royal Queensland Yacht Club, the predecessor of the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, gave a commitment to build a clubhouse on land to be reclaimed and use dredged areas of navigable waterways to establish a headquarters for sailing and recreational boating activities.



The original clubhouse and what we now know as the “Greg Cavill Building” built in 1964 is in the centre and I believe the photo was taken in about 1965. The ponds of water in what is now the public car park, with the reeds growing in them shows what conditions at the Harbour were like in the early days.

YACHT CLUB FOR WYNNUM 'WAIKIKI'



A Bayside Riviera is taking shape at Manly, one of the Cinderellas of near-Brisbane Moreton Bay beaches.

A Harbours and Marine Department spokesman said yesterday that the reclamation of the site for the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron's new clubhouse should be finished by Christ-

mas. The dredging is reclaiming a four-acre area at the southern end of the 183-acre harbour.

The £30,000 clubhouse, standing right at the entrance to the harbour, will make Manly the head-

quarters of Brisbane sailing.

A Yacht Squadron official said yesterday the club hoped to start building in March.

No more

Next step will be the dredging of the whole remaining 129 acres to at least six feet.

At present, nearly half the area is exposed mudflat at low tide.

The Harbours and

Marine Department spokesman said: "At present it is not planned to build any more boat pens. The first 54 pens opened in November 1960 are all booked and there is a waiting list of 12."

The plan is to make the whole harbour deep enough to keep boats afloat at low tide. There will be room for 500 boats to swing at anchor.

"It will mean that people will have to come ashore from their boats in dinghies, but that is al-

Beauty for a "Cinderella"

ready general practice in many other boat harbours."

Big problem

Final step in the project will be to import sand, as the city of Hawaii did for Waikiki, to turn the muddy shoreline into a beach.

"A sample beach we put down at the northern end of the harbour over a year

ago is still holding up," the Department spokesman said.

"Finding the sand will be our biggest problem. There's some beautiful stuff on Stradbroke Island, but it would cost a fortune to move it this far."

"We are hoping to find some closer. Manly will be a real showplace when we've finished."

This report relating to Manly Boat Harbour was published in The Sunday Mail on 7 October 1962.

Bill Kirby

THE ORIGINS OF MANLY BOAT HARBOUR

How did it happen?

This article traces the origins of the involvement of the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron and entities associated with it in Manly Boat Harbour and the Harbour becoming the base for all recreational boating activities, both sail and power.

Until the early to mid - 1960s, Squadron boating activities were largely conducted in or from the Brisbane River and dinghy sailing was conducted from premises at Byron Street, Bulimba, which I believe were purchased in 1955.

The first regatta I'm aware of being conducted by RQYS in the Manly area was run by the International Flying Dutchman Class Association during December 1960 – January 1961 and P/C Denis Land was one of the participants.

A single lane ramp at Darling Point was used for launching and retrieval of most of the boats. The ramp was great at high water, but when the tide was out, trailers had to be pulled through the mud for as much as 200 meters – dedication to the sport was required in those days!

On some occasions the Flying Dutchmen also sailed out of Wynnum Creek and the shelter shed in the park near the mouth of the creek on the northern side was where “refreshments” were taken after an afternoon sailing. Ahhhhhhhhhhhh, how things have changed at Manly over the last 60 plus years!

In the mid 1950s Government, through the Department of Harbours & Marine, indicated it was prepared to consider building a Harbour at Manly, to the south of Darling Point. In 1957 and before making the final decision to proceed, H & M required a commitment from an organisation of substance which would use such a Harbour for its recreational boating activities. The then Royal Queensland Yacht Club and now the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron had been searching for “Bayside premises” since 1950 and made the required commitment. Construction of the Harbour commenced in 1958.

Appearing below is an extract of comments made by the late Doug Kemp. In 1957 Doug was the Chairman of the Queensland Yachting Association, now Yachting Queensland and was also involved in the administration of the Club. The material quoted is from page 74 of the Squadron's 1885 - 2005 History, published in 2006 under the title ***“Up the River & Down the Bay”***:

But even if Tom Hiley was very supportive, Harbours & Marine moved cautiously. They did eventually agree to build a Yacht Harbour at Manly, but only if there was a firm guarantee that a Club or organisation of substance would contribute a handsome investment into associated development. They were not about to build a harbour which nobody might use.

That's how it started out at Manly, said Doug. I had to front both the RQ Committee and the members at Kemp Place – especially the city members – and let them know they should be prepared to put their money into a building down at Manly We had £60,000 to spend, just and that was enough.

In today's terms £60,000 pounds is the equivalent of in the order of \$2,600,000.

Club to Squadron

While it's not relevant in relation to matters associated with the Harbour, it was at a Special Meeting in 1961 the Members resolved to change the name of our institution from "**Club**" to "**Squadron**". It was felt "**Squadron**" was more in keeping with the traditions of the sea.

The Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron Limited was incorporated in November 1991. Prior to that time and since it was established in 1885, the Squadron was an Unincorporated Association. Among other things, I recall experiencing some difficulties with the Authorities in London during the late 1980s about the Royal Warrants being held by a corporation.

Opening of the Harbour and the work by Harbours & Marine

Construction of the Harbour commenced in 1958 and the following quotes about the opening in 1962 and other matters are from page 78 of "**Up the River & Down the Bay**":

Also in 1962 the Manly Boat Harbour was officially opened on November 26 under the auspices of the Queensland Smallcraft Coordination Committee and the Queensland Yachting Association. Considerable effort had been made to introduce local colour to a rather dull sweep of mudflats and naked, reclaimed land. Vessels in their pens were decorated overall, a regatta took place, marching girls performed to a brass band and the Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club demonstrated their skills in formation, the Manly Sea Rangers gave a signaling demonstration and after Tom Hiley had cut a ribbon he was piped aboard QYA's official yacht "Floodtide" by a Guard of Honor of the 1st Bayside Sea Scouts.

But a great amount remained to be done, and Greg Cavill's comments take on a touch of irony: "Harbours & Marine promised that if they pumped up land and we built a clubhouse there, they would do a lot of further dredging so we set about spending all this money building the clubhouse on the small piece of land they'd pumped up. It was just mud, topped with tonnes of industrial ash we brought in so you could walk around without sinking up to your armpits, so we had to put down 45-foot Frankie piles for the clubhouse to sit on."

The move to Manly completed

At the time of making the commitment with H & M in 1957 to build a clubhouse at the new Manly Boat Harbour and conduct competitive sailing and recreational boating from there, the Squadron's sporting activities were largely operated in and from the Brisbane River. That had been the case since our institution came into existence in 1885. In addition to dinghy sailing being conducted from Byron Street, the Clubhouse was located at Kemp Place, adjacent to the end of the Story Bridge.

As mentioned above, the first regatta I'm aware of being conducted in the Manly area was in December 1960/January 1961 and after the clubhouse was built at the Harbour in 1964, over time sailing was moved from the River and the Byron Street premises were disposed of.

The Manly Yacht Squadron was established in 1963 and after leasing the premises from the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, it conducted the operations there until 1976.

Clubhouse operations continued at Kemp Place, jointly with those at the Harbour until July 1976 when all Squadron activities, including sporting, social and administrative were moved to Manly. The Kemp Place property was leased for three years for the operation of a restaurant named "Muddies" by Alf Zeller. When the Lease expired and the Option wasn't exercised, the property was sold to Pontello Constructions Pty Ltd for, I recall, in excess of \$900,000. The site remained vacant for quite a number of years after the sale.

Manly Boat Harbour circa 1964



The "Greg Cavill Building" built by RQYS is the circular white roofed structure in the top left of centre – it was opened in September 1964. The mooring pens are in the bottom right. The reclamation of the land and dredging was carried out by the Department of Harbours & Marine.

Bill Kirby