

# Centennial Celebrations

# ROYAL PAPUA YACHT CLUB

# LIFE MEMBERS

## BRUCE TARDREW



Two of the more momentous events that occurred in 1945 were the end of World War II and birth in Victoria, Australia, of a small and presumably unbearded Bruce Tardrew. Bruce Tardrew was PNG's leading yachtsman for nearly a decade at the time of writing this profile in 1981; owning, racing and invariably winning in a variety of sailing classes from Lasers to 46-footers.

In his early days at school, Bruce developed his interest in computers and was a Systems Analyst at the National Computer Centre where he was employed as Operations Manager at the time. Although a well-known yachtsman, Bruce's first sporting interest was swimming, stimulated in part by the need to exercise following a bout of polio. The strong body and even stronger competitive spirit resulted in Bruce making the Victorian State swimming team at a time when Aussie swimmers were the best in the world. His other sporting interests included baseball and Bruce even confessed to being a surffie during his youth.

The sailing bug bit Bruce when he turned 18 years of age and joined the Chelsea Yacht Club in Victoria, sailing the VJ (Vaucluse Junior) dinghy. He graduated to the Lightweight Sharpie and became State title holder in 1966, maintaining his supremacy in the class until leaving Victoria for PNG in 1973. With the Sharpie the senior dinghy class at the RPYC, Bruce was immediately in his element and not surprisingly won the PNG Yachting association Easter regatta at his first attempt. Indeed, Bruce won the trophy for three successive years in the old "Frenzy". When Sharpies faded, Bruce took to Fireballing in "Ruff as Guts", started the Laser boom and was a prime mover in getting the Hobie 16 movement under-way.

Although Bruce was essentially a dinghy sailor, he took to keel boats in a big way in PNG applying his skill and knowledge of the rules to the big boat scene. In 1975 Bruce's initiative led to the chartering of three Victorian yachts to make up a PNG team in the Southern Cross Cup, which included the Sydney-Hobart as the final race in the series. Bruce skippered "Apollo II" and placed very creditably, the experience for him and the Club having a profound effect on the future of keel boat racing and organisation in PNG.

The first Formosan 46, "Obsession", arrived in PNG the following year and Bruce took her to Sydney for the 1977 Hobart. Set up more for racing than cruising and with a set of sails from "Apollo II", the "Obsession" was raced hard for several seasons and also in the Air Niugini Cairns-Port Moresby Race later that year. As an invited skipper, Bruce Tardrew won the Rabaul-Kavieng Yacht Race in three successive years on three different yachts "Valete" in 1975, "Fair Dinkum" in 1976 and his own Laurie Davidson ¼ tonner, "Velocity". In fact "Velocity" was the latest in I.O.R design at the time and reckoned to be one of the fastest competitors in the World ¼ Ton Championship in Japan in 1978 where Bruce completed in the World Titles.

It was Bruce Tardrew who first proposed a yacht Chandlers' store on the Club's premises and Speed marine was born in 1974 and the Club Chandlers grew enormously providing an invaluable service to boat owners.

In recognition of his outstanding achievements in sailing, Bruce was awarded the coveted Yachtsman of the Year award in 1975 and in 1978 was the first recipient of the David Purdy Memorial Trophy which honours a Club Member who makes a significant and sustained contribution to the sport.

Bruce was awarded Life Membership by the members of the RPYC in 1982.

