

Centennial Celebrations

ROYAL PAPUA YACHT CLUB

LIFE MEMBERS

DAVID WARDLEY



David Wardley was born in Stockport, England, the son of corner store shopkeepers and life was akin then, to “open all hours”. He recalls the customers bringing in their World War II ration books to allow them to purchase goods and his family were the first in the village to own a car; a television and have an indoor toilet. As a child, he played lacrosse, messed about with vintage motor cars, and first encountered sailing on a school trip to the Norfolk Broads, where the boys were taught sailing on a thirty-foot yacht.

David’s first job was as an articled clerk in an accounting office and while working and studying to become an accountant, he met his wife, Irene. From these quiet beginnings, the offer of a post, from an accounting firm in Hong Kong, seemed an adventure he and his young family could not refuse. It was a great escape from the fog and rain of North West England. From Asia it was a hop, skip and jump, via a four-year stint in Sydney, to Rabaul, PNG, with the number of daughters doubling to four in that time.

So it was in October 1979, David and family arrived in Rabaul where David had accepting the position of manager of Touche Ross Accountants, for a two-year stint. With his work attire of shorts, long socks and absolutely no ties, David was quickly converted to PNG being the place to be. He bought his daughters a sailing dinghy, which was stored on the grass of Rabaul Yacht Club, and he bought himself the first in what would be a long line (no pun intended) of game fishing boats. The family were so successful at game fishing, that at one of the Game Fishing annual presentation nights, they won a wheelbarrow to carry all their prizes home!

In 1989 the family moved to Port Moresby and the RPYC where David joined the newly formed RPYC Financial Advisory Board (“FAB”). This Board oversaw the planning, financing, and construction of the new marina in its new location and then the construction of the clubhouse in the years following.

These were long tough years. Financing the club’s move was fraught, especially at that time, as the previously strong PNG Kina currency started its slide. The club did not have massive reserves; membership was in the hundreds and not the thousands that it is today.

The FAB together with the Construction Sub Committee spent hours dreaming up innovative ways to raise funds including the pre-selling of 25-year leases and the “Gold Key” concept. David moved to the position of Treasurer, a more hands on role, as the Club revenues blossomed.

David was also a long-term committee member of the Port Moresby Game Fishing Club spending many hours on fishing and weighing in catches on the gantry, as well as carrying out its treasury work.

David and Irene believed in the new marina project, taking up one of the first 25-year leases for their much-loved liveaboard, ‘Tusitala’, Millcraft classic wooden boat built in the Brisbane River boatyards, that they and their girls sailed up to PNG, in 1994.

In 2007, David retired with his wife Irene to the small coastal town of Toogoom, near Hervey Bay, Queensland. He hung up his boathook but remains active as a volunteer with the local community association which runs market stalls, tennis, and basketball facilities, and even a sports fishing club. David was awarded Life Membership of the RPYC in 2008 in recognition of his tireless work for the Club.

A huge thank you to David and best wishes for a well-earned retirement. Thank you also to Nicola and Tamzin, David’s daughters, for their assistance with this profile.

