

# Centennial Celebrations

# ROYAL PAPUA YACHT CLUB

# LIFE MEMBERS

## JACK DRAKE



Jack William Drake was born in Brisbane on the 2nd of September 1916 and educated at New Farm State School. He then completed a cabinet maker / joiner apprenticeship with James Campbell & Sons in Brisbane and met and married Phillis May Bacon on the 20th of December 1941.

Jack came from a sailing family: his Father was Commodore of the Queensland Flying Squadron originally known as the City of Brisbane Sailing Club formed in 1895. Jack was therefore well known in Brisbane and owned 13ft Skiffs 'Resolve' and 'Fury' and crewed on 16ft and 18ft Skiff is now in Brisbane Maritime Museum. After being demobbed from the Army, Jack worked with Norman Wright Boatbuilders in Brisbane for a number of years and then applied for a supervisory position with John Stubbs around 1957 or 1958 to establish his own building company - JW Drake Builders and then Territory Joinery Pty Ltd and he also formed a partnership with Les Giles Pty Ltd to build the University of PNG.

Upon settling in Port Moresby in 1954, Jack immediately joined the Papua Yacht Club as it was known then and soon became Vice Commodore Sail to the then Commodore Bill Nicholas. He held that position for a number of years and when Bill Nicholas left PNG, Jack became Commodore in 1962 and 1963. Jack was elected building supervisor at the PYC AGM on 7th February 1958, responsible for the maintenance of the building and in November that year, he suggested the building be demolished as the wiring was substandard and part of it had been condemned. It took another 2 years to eventuate but in 1961 Jack personally razed the building to the ground with many an onlooker choking back the lump in their throats. It is recorded that some of the rocks in the area to be excavated were so big, that fires had to be built around them and then saturated with cold water to crack them. The new building was completed by early 1962.

In Jan 1960, Jack proposed the Executive Committee member, be revised to remove the division of three committeemen for Sailing and three for Power Boating. His proposal was agreed to. Jack was also instrumental in stopping a notion to build a squash court within the Club house by seeking legal counsel that it was unconstitutional: squash was not an aquatic sport. Even though Jack was an active committee member, he still found time to sail and did so until 1963/64. Both his sons were also active sailors and owned a VS boar called "Ace Hi". Jack owned "Sirius" which Geoff eventually owned until he gave up sailing for rugby league. Jack was responsible for introducing the lightweight sharpie class to PNG, in which his son Peter excelled in. Jack loved sailing and he wanted to teach youngsters how to sail so he also devoted time to fostering Junior and Cadet sailing with Sabot Class. In July 1968, he started a learn to sail training program for children with Greg Sheehan and the number of participants grew quickly from 14 - 40.

The Macdhui mast had been installed in 1967 in front of the former clubhouse but it was not until early 1970 that work begun to transform the base area into a garden. Jack provided the topsoil for this work and in time the area became an attractive spot. Jack owned two motorboats and was also active in the Game Fishing Scene and he was out on the water every weekend sailing or fishing. At the 10th of February 1971, AGM Jack was made a life member for his long and active participation and contributions to the Papua Yacht Club.

Jack and Phillis left PNG in 1971 to re-settle in Woody Point. Unfortunately, Phillis passed away in September 1997 and Jack passed in 1984.

An acknowledgement to Valeri Thornton's manuscript as well as to Geoff Drake for foregoing information.

