



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

### Commodores of the Squadron

By John Maclurcan

#### 4. William Oswald Gilchrist (1875 – 1882)



**Wednesday, 3rd January, 1866 – The Sydney Morning Herald**

*To the Editor of the Herald*

*Sir, - I notice in your paper this morning a public challenge from the owner of the Alerte to the Xarifa, to race on certain terms there named, which I am sure Mr. Charles Parbury, her spirited owner, would have accepted without hesitation if he had been here, but as he left his boat in my charge, requesting that she should only be entered for public sailing matches; and in a letter he wrote from England in October, he expressed a wish that she should not be entered for any private match until his return, I do not feel myself at liberty to accept the challenge of the owner of the Alerte, as I would do at once if the Xarifa belonged to me. Apart from the above consideration it would be*



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*impossible to have the Xarifa ready for another race on Thursday next, as she sustained some damage at Hunter's Hill Regatta yesterday, which must be attended to at once.*

*As the owner of the Alerte appears so very anxious to retrieve his defeat of the 30th ultimo, I may take the opportunity of informing him and the yachting community that the Xarifa will start for the race of next Saturday, the 6th instant, for the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron Cup of 1866, over the new course adopted by the Committee at his suggestion, in order to give the large yachts every chance of deploying their powers outside the Heads in a long run and I sincerely trust that the "Alerte," "Era," "Vivid," "Peri," and "Xarifa," may all meet in friendly contest, and that the best boat may gain the cup.*

*I am, Sir, your obedient servant.*

**W. O. GILCHRIST.**

*Sydney, 2nd January, 1866.*

### **Saturday, 6th October, 1866 – Sydney Mail**

#### *Launch of the Yacht Lydia*

*This beautiful little craft, built by Mr. Shea, of Woolloomooloo, for Mr. Gilchrist, was successfully launched on Saturday afternoon. She is the first of the new class of 12-ton boats, and, if appearance is anything, ought to hold the premier position for many seasons to come. With all the lines of the Xarifa, Mr. Shea has combined the delicate tracery of a clipper, and, without drawing invidious remarks, she will bear comparison for both model and finish with any that will have to compete in the first club match. The Xarifa principle, as it is now generally called, has, on several occasions, passed through the ordeal of severe criticism, but the prejudice is fast passing away, and even those yachtsmen strongest to favour of the English style are compelled to acknowledge the great powers possessed by our colonial-modelled craft; at any rate, Mr. Shea has succeeded in building yachts that can out-sail and out-carry in weight of cargo on a less register tonnage any vessel from the old country, where it may be presumed yachting is in the ascendant. The Lydia was launched with the usual ceremonies in the presence of several members of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron and was named by Mrs. Cox. The fittings of the cabin are all complete, and it is expected she will be in racing trim within a fortnight.*

### **Sydney Sails (1870)**

*With the sale of Xarifa in 1870, Charles Parbury, now no longer a yacht owner, resigned the office of vice-commadore and was succeeded by William O. Gilchrist, owner of Vivienne. Commadore Dangar, perhaps because he no longer had an opponent worthy of the name, sold Mistral in the following year to Gilchrist. The commadore was thenceforth content to hoist his pennant in Ella, 11 tons, which he bought from Colonel Richardson.*

### **Saturday, 30th May, 1874 – Illustrated Sydney News and New South Wales Agriculturist and Grazier**

*Mr. W. O. Gilchrist, on leaving Sydney for the Home country, gave the sum of £670 to be distributed among the following charities: - the Benevolent Asylum, Home Visiting Society, Sydney Infirmary, Randwick Asylum, Female Refuge, St. Vincent's Hospital, £100 each; to the Clergy Widow and Orphans' Fund £50, and to the King's School Chapel, £20. Benevolence of this character is rare, and its example one worthy of being followed by others.*

### **Sydney Sails (1875)**

*Dangar's successor as commadore of the Squadron was William O. Gilchrist, the owner of Mistral. The new vice-commadore was Alfred Fairfax, owner of Magic. So the Squadron's two best yachts*



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were owned and sailed by the Squadron's senior flag officers, a situation that added piquancy to their keen contests.

### ***Saturday, 14th August, 1875 – The Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser***

#### ***AQUATICS***

*Balmain has put forth its usual programme as the precursor of the aquatic season and hopes to induce a contest between the Mistral and Magic. We hope it may be successful. If they do not meet now, we may safely predict that the latter will not prove the dissenting party. Mr. W. O. Gilchrist, the commodore elect of the R. S. Y. S., has the Mistral at present under offer to him, and failing to secure a suitable craft in England, is almost certain to secure her if the price suits. Should he get her, we may look for sport, as Mr. Gilchrist is a thorough yachtsman, who likes and makes yachting his special sport. It would be a disgrace to our men of means and leisure if the handsome Mistral should, like other flyers that have hailed from Sydney, be turned to the ignoble uses they have been devoted to. That the yachting spirit has been on the wane for several seasons cannot be denied, but we feel sure that it only wants a combined effort on the part of a few, and a few such races as that on Anniversary Day, and the old love of aquatic contests is revived. No pair of thoroughbreds that ever-tossed mane to the breeze over Randwick or Homebush were watched more excitingly than the pair of yachts that went by the flagship neck-and-neck, and came home finishing their course almost side by side. They are so equally matched that the slightest mistake made by the one will inevitably result in defeat.*

*By an oversight, when writing for last week's Mail a report of the R. S. Y. S. annual meeting, the owner of the Mistral was mentioned instead of the owner of the Magic. It was the latter owner failed to submit a case, for reasons stated at the meeting; that of Mr. Dangar was sent in months ago.*

### ***Monday, 3rd April, 1876 – The Sydney Morning Herald***

#### ***THE MAGIC V. MISTRAL MATCH.***

*The yachts of the Commodore and Vice-commodore of the Royal Sydney Yacht Club had their merits tested on Saturday, in a private match for £50 aside, when for the third time Magic came in the winner, and by none was there a heartier cheer raised for the victor than by the owner of the vanquished clipper. It was thought by many that it was rather venturesome for the Magic of 28 tons to sail the Mistral of 35 tons on equal terms, yet the result shows that the confidence reposed in the speed of the colonial craft was not misplaced.*

*It was arranged that, instead of having an acting commodore for the day, the yachts should be started by mutual consent, in fact, to Mr. Gilchrist himself was left the start, and he, not to be outdone, in the spirit of a true yachtsman placed Magic in the best position for the start. At thirty seconds to noon the Commodore gave notice to prepare and at twelve the word "off" saw the rival yachts falling away on their springs, with head sails flying up. Both had single-reefed mainsails with square headed topsails aloft, and No 1 jibs, the wind from west, fresh and squally. At first Mistral seemed drawing closer to Magic, holding a position close on her starboard quarter.*

*After passing Garden Island the breeze seemed inclined to become a little more southerly and they jibed booms to port before they got to Bradley's, Mistral's mainsail going over rather more sharply than necessary. There was only a short run to the eastward before Magic again jibed, while Mistral hung on a little longer, and lost a length or two by the way in which she performed the same manoeuvre. Off Lang's Point the leader shifted large jib for No 2, Mistral's skipper changing his for a spitfire. Both had bones in their teeth as they passed out by South reef, after their third jibe, with plenty of beef on their mainsheets flattening in for the stretch to Botany.*



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*When passing the Gap, the breeze was found hardening and Magic shifted top sails, the jibheader being considered safest and best. Mistral followed suit, but after something having apparently gone wrong aloft, housed topmast, shook the reef out of her mainsail, and set a larger jib. Magic was ripping along like a steamer, getting the breeze stronger and with more southing in it. There was now a pull on the sheets, and all hands to windward, the puffs following in quick succession, Magic holding the best wind and heading well up for the flagboat, while the other was sagging off to leeward, and falling astern slowly.*

*Magic took in her topsail off Coogee. As the yachts neared Botany, it was seen that the flagboat was a little beyond east of the South Head, Magic had a few feet of sheet off as her helm went down, and she shot round the boat exactly at 2h. 15m.; Mistral had to stand to the southward in order to make a board to weather and round; the latter being accomplished at 2h. 31m. Mistral sped the flyers in the homeward stretch, doing a good ten; Magic slowly drawing out her lead after setting her jib-headed gafftopsail off Long Bay. Magic then quickly sent her topmast up, and her jib-header followed it.*

*There was no change until South reef was rounded, and then, as white caps were seen curling all round the harbour, Magic's topsail came on deck. A board to Middle Head and about, standing to S.E., until abreast of Chowder - just as Mistral came in sight round South Reef - Magic's jib was seen to part about four feet from the head, and drop to leeward under her bows. To take it in, get another out of the locker, to set it, and get going again, was as smart a piece of work as ever a yacht's crew accomplished; and, after going in stays off Point Piper, she laid right up to windward of Fort Denison past the Red Buoy at 4h. 29m. 10s., Mistral following at 4h. 49m. 5s. The match was thus won by 19m. 35s. without any time allowance. The race caused great excitement, a regular fleet of yachts being down the harbour to watch the finish. Several steamers were also out, and, as on the previous Saturday the Hon J. Robertson and a party of friends patronised the race by accompanying the yachts in a steamer to the heads at the start and meeting the winner outside returning escorted her to the finish. Vice-Commodore Fairfax may be complimented on the result of the race, it being the eighteenth he has won in succession in the Nereid and his present craft. Nor can we omit the services of Hellins - skipper of both - for the able manner in which he sailed the Magic until when well on the homestretch he resigned the tiller to her owner.*

*The championship of the club is not likely to be left to its present holder without a struggle, for although Mistral may not be able to wrest it from her there is a forty or two in England that may be here next season, and we hope to see so thorough a yachtsman as Mr. Gilchrist have the best of them. Be this as it may, and a larger craft defeat her it will not destroy her reputation as being the crack of Australian clippers up to the end of the yachting seasons 1875-6.*

### **Monday, 2nd October, 1876 – Evening News**

*Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron Evolutions.*

*The opening yachting cruise of the season came off on Saturday under most favourable conditions of weather and water, and the Sydney yachting world is now happy in the prospect of more exciting events.*

*The little fleet took up their moorings in Farm Cove at noon, in two divisions, Magic, Pert, Meteor, Osprey, Ione, comprising the port one, and Mistral, Peri, Ella, Pleiades and Weirang comprised the starboard one.*

*The flag on the Mistral (Commodore W. O. Gilchrist), having been saluted, they followed in line towards Kirribilli, thence round Sydney Cove, where the signal "rendezvous in Middle Harbour" was hoisted and the fleet left the Cove to work down against a moderate north-easter, or perhaps a little*





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*more easterly. The Magic crept away to windward, followed by the Mistral, Peri coming third. In this order they rounded Middle Head, the others forming a very long tail of which Weirang was the tip. Middle Harbour, the much-favoured resort of yachtsmen, presented quite a lively picture by the presence of the squadron.*

*Their snowy canvas glinted in strong relief to the deep blue, rippling waters, contrasting well with the deeper green of the abruptly rising hills, which made up a scene that was picturesque and grand. The yachts having all anchored off Clontarf, their owners, at the invitation of Commodore Gilchrist, landed for lunch, and joined a large party of gentlemen who had come down from Sydney in the steamer Victoria. The company, comprising about 60 or 70 in number, sat down to an excellent dinner, provided by Messrs. Stanley and Cripps, Commodore Gilchrist filling the chair, and Mr. A. J. Fairfax in the vice-chair.*

*Full justice having been done to the good things provided, the toasts of "The Queen," "The Prince of Wales (patron of the club) and the other members of the royal family," were given with the usual enthusiasm. The Chairman, in proposing "Success to the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron" (cheers), said that they had met on a good many previous occasions like the present, at some of which it transpired that the mining mania had taken its effect - on the club, and, consequently, retarded its progress; as that was, however, over now, and the population increasing (laughter), he hoped for greater success than ever. With the excellent yacht builders that Sydney boasted of, and its beautiful harbour, he was content to base his hopes on the prosperous future of the club. Let them, drink success to the "Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron," (Cheers). The Vice-Commodore was very desirous for Mr. Milson to return thanks, he being the respected father of the R. S. Y. Squadron. (Cheers.) He was sanguine that the immediate future would give much more life and energy to yacht racing than they had hitherto had.*

*Mr. H. C. Dangar rose and said that he did not know how it came to pass that whenever he came to these entertainments he got let into a speech, a thing he entirely abominated. (Cheers and laughter.) But he did not think they ought to separate without one toast more, which would come with peculiar propriety from him, because he was going to propose the health of the gentleman who now filled the position, he (Mr. Dangar) occupied last year — their worthy Commodore. (Cheers.) That gentleman had displayed three essential qualifications as a yachtsman. One of these was the knack of knowing how to pick up a good old boat dirt cheap (laughter); and though he had yet to find out wherein consists the 'magic' of a yacht's speed, he hoped he would someday find it out, and do what he (Mr. Dangar) had failed to do— give the Magic a good hammering. (Cheers). Till then he hoped the Magic would maintain her laurels. Their Commodore had also developed the qualification of knowing how to take a good licking. (Applause). He found himself seated beside a gentleman who, like himself, was an obsolete officer of the club (laughter); well, a retired officer who had given him more lickings than any man at the table. But he was aware they could not revive the good old times of the contests between the Xarifa and the Peri. He had referred to two of the qualifications of their Commodore, but he had also developed a third very essential qualification — the ability and power to give them one of the best lunches to which he had ever sat down — (applause)— and to collect around him all the best yachting element that Sydney possesses. (Cheers.) He was sure that, in Mr. Gilchrist's accession to office, they had the best possible augury for the success of the Yacht Club, whose interests they all had at heart. He felt that he need say no more to induce them to join him in drinking their Commodore's health. (Cheers.)*

*The Commodore, in returning thanks for the manner in which the toast had been received, said that they had done him an unexpected honour. He thanked them indeed very much for it. He had always taken a great interest in yachting. When he arrived in the colony, he thought he knew something about*



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*it. He went to England in the hope of getting a boat that would beat creation on this side of the globe. He saw all the boats. He saw all the boats at the Thames; and at Cowes they went more under than over water, and he did not think them as well handled as yachts were here. He again thanked them. Cheers.)*

*Towards evening the party re-embarked on board the Victoria, and the yachtsmen steered homeward under the influence of a softening north-easter, just sufficient to enable them to make their respective moorings at sunset. Thus ended the very pleasant inaugural opening of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron.*

### **Friday, 2nd February, 1877 – The Sydney Morning Herald** **THE ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON**

*A committee meeting was held at the Club Rooms, yesterday afternoon, to arrange for the forthcoming matches. It was resolved that the steamer Empress of India should be engaged for the use of members and friends, to accompany the Mistral and Magic in their race tomorrow. Tickets to be obtained from the secretary of the club.*

*A letter was read from Commodore Gilchrist offering a prize of \$25, and a locket for the helmsman, to be sailed for on the 24th, by the yachts of the squadron, handicapped. Course: From Lavender Bay round boat off Manly, round Goat Island, boat off Manly, and back to the red buoy. Mr. G. S. Caird honorary treasurer intimated his intention of giving a prize, value £40, to be called the Treasurer's Cup, also for a handicap race, which will take place on the first Saturday in March. In the two latter matches the yachts are to be steered and sailed by amateurs, aided only by the men regularly in charge of the yachts.*

### **Monday, 30th September, 1878 – The Sydney Morning Herald** **OPENING DAY OF THE ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON.**

*SATURDAY was the day appointed for the inauguration of the season by the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, and a worse one could scarcely have been. The morning opened with indications of beautiful yachting weather, but, as the day wore on a stiff south-westerly breeze sprang up, and it was accompanied by periodical squalls and heavy showers, that proved the reverse of pleasant. The members of the club, however, proved that they were not fair-weather sailors, for shortly after the time announced the different yachts commenced to show around the Zealandia, the flagship of the day. The wind blew a half gale, but for all that there were only two absent yachts, and the crews of those that were out deserve considerable credit for their pluck. The Prince of Wales steam-launch, had been chartered for the occasion and conveyed members and their friends to the flagship, where Commodore W. O. Gilchrist entertained them at lunch, himself presiding. Over 60 gentlemen sat down to the repast, which was a most excellent one.*

*On the right of the Commodore of the Yacht Squadron was Commodore Hoskins, and Vice-Commodore Fairfax occupied the head of the second table, and Captain Chevalier, of the Zealandia, the post of vice-chairman. Commander Bridges, of H.M.S. Wolverine, was amongst the guests.*

*Due attention having been given to the viands and their concomitants, The CHAIRMAN said he was not going to trouble them with long speeches, but there was one toast they always drank, and that was the "Queen." He asked them to drink it now.*

*The toast was duly honoured.*

*Commodore HOSKINS then rose and said he had a toast to propose, which he did with very great*



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*pleasure and satisfaction on this occasion. He would be able to do it all the more justice that, although an honorary member of the club, he was not really connected with it. It was gratifying also to him to do so now, because this was perhaps the last occasion on which he would have an opportunity of acknowledging the unvarying kindness with which he had been treated not only by the Commodore and members of the Sydney Royal Yacht Squadron, but also by everyone with whom he had come in contact here. He therefore proposed the toast, "The Commodore and the Sydney Royal Yacht Squadron."*

*Commodore GILCHRIST responded. He was very glad today that they had been able to change the order of affairs heretofore and not propose their noble selves. He begged to thank them on behalf of the Sydney Yacht Squadron for the way in which the toast had been drunk.*

*The formal part of the proceedings over, the Commodore set about preparing for the evolutions. A squall, however, was observed to be coming up from the south-west, and it got abroad amongst those on the Zealandia that the evolutions would not come off. In consequence of this the Prince of Wales, which it was arranged should follow the squadron, conveyed the intending spectators back to Circular Quay. Though not purposed as the real evolutions, which have been reserved for another day, the Commodore did succeed in showing some very nice yachting amongst his squadron, which comprised the Mistral (Commodore's ship), the Magic (vice-commodore's ship), the Peri (Mr. W. Laidley), the Pert (Mr. E. Kirchner), the Ella (Mr. J. Gilchrist), the Daphne (Sir. C. T. Gedye), the Pleiades (Messrs. E. and T. Knox), the Mabel (Mr. W. Trickett), and the Ione (Mr. W. Wilson).*

*All were of necessity under light canvas, most of the mainsails being reefed. The first signal given was "Follow Commodore in line," which was complied with, and then came "form in line abreast to port of Commodore," and "form in line abreast to starboard of Commodore." Next succeeded "salute Commodore" and "part company," which terminated the movements. The fleet did not attempt to go any distance from the harbour. It is probable that the Commodore will arrange for an afternoon's evolution shortly."*

### **Sydney Sails (1881)**

At the turn of the year 1881, the Squadron made a serious attempt to revive interest in racing, by introducing a system of handicapping based on tonnage modified by performance. All yachts on the Squadron's register thus became eligible for a race for the Commodore's Cup (donated by Commodore Gilchrist). This race was sailed at the Squadron's meeting on 22nd January and was won for her new owner by the redoubtable Magic, with Mackellar's Oithona second and E. W. Knox's Pleiades third.

In the first-class race at the Anniversary Day Regatta, held four days later, the new system of handicapping was brilliantly demonstrated in a close finish. Mistral defeated Waitangi by 20 seconds only, Magic by 50 seconds, and Oithona by 83 seconds. A writer in the Sydney Mail commented, "Between fickle Dame Fortune and the handicappers, the glories of the sport are getting pretty evenly distributed among the yachting thoroughbreds."

Early in February 1881, the new handicapping system was applied also in a Squadron race for a cup donated by Vice-Commodore Mackellar, in which it was stipulated that each yacht should be steered by a member of the Squadron. The result was a much-cheered win for the 12-ton yawl Daphne, which had never previously won a race, and was now steered to victory over Magic, Waitangi, and Mistral in that order.



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On 24th February Commodore Gilchrist, "with every good wish for the success and prosperity of the Squadron", resigned his office, on the eve of his departure for England. A valedictory luncheon was tendered to him in a marquee on the lawn at the Hon. J. White's home at Double Bay. Vice-Commodore Mackellar, as Chairman, eulogized Gilchrist's services for the previous five years, and mentioned that membership of the Squadron had increased during that period from forty-five to seventy.

### **Monday, 21st February, 1881 – The Sydney Morning Herald**

#### **ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON.**

*On Saturday afternoon the vice-commodore and members of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron entertained the commodore, Mr. W. O. Gilchrist, at luncheon, at Double Bay, the occasion being a valedictory one, as Mr. Gilchrist intends very shortly to leave Sydney for a European tour. Of the many yachts which the club possesses, twelve of the best, fully manned, assembled at 1 o'clock in Farm Cove. They were: - Oithona, Magic, Waitangi, Peri, Pert, Violet, Daphne, Guinevere, Harpy, Erin, Pleiades, Mabel, Ione, Doris, and a number of gentlemen left the Circular Quay for Double Bay in the steamer Prince of Wales. The yachts formed in line after the commodore formed abreast, and then beat down to the rendezvous their appearance, as they glided in line or followed each other on successive tacks, being unusually attractive. Luncheon was spread in a pretty marquee erected upon a plot of ground belonging to Hon. James White a sloping lawn, ending in the bright pure beach of Double Bay. The Compagnoni Catering Co. had supplied an excellent collation, and the arrangements made by Mr. Tandy were faultlessly carried out. Dr Mackellar, the vice-commodore of the squadron, occupied the chair, having on his right the guest of the day, commodore W. O. Gilchrist. In all, about sixty gentlemen were present and the cordiality and good fellowship so characteristic of this club were displayed to their fullest extent in the friendly merry conversation which was general during the repast.*

*Luncheon being over, The CHAIRMAN proposed the toast of "The Queen," which was drunk with cheers. The CHAIRMAN said that those present must all be aware of the object for which they had met - that of doing honour to their commodore - (cheers) - and more especially, to mark their appreciation of his services to the club. From the time when Mr Gilchrist took office, five years ago, they had had a period of considerable prosperity, but at the time he had alluded to, they had only 45 members on their roll. Now they had upwards of 70, a fact which of itself was an indication that the commodore's services were appreciated, not only by the club but by many persons outside. (Applause.) If he were to seek for a point to cavil at in Mr. Gilchrist's career he could only find it in the fact that his name had not appeared often enough in their regattas - (Hear, hear.) though he had done the next best thing, in giving a huge number of prizes for others to compete for. He regretted that the task of proposing Mr. Gilchrist's health had not fallen to someone else who could have done it better - (Cries of No No) - someone of those who might be said to have promoter's shares in the club but he could assure them that no one could wish Mr. Gilchrist more hearty success and a more speedy return to Australia than he did. He proposed "The health of the Commodore."*

*Mr. Gilchrist, who rose amid applause, said he thanked them most warmly for the kind sentiments the chairman had expressed and for the very cordial way in which they had been received. The entertainment given him today was one of the pleasantest episodes in his yachting experiences in Sydney Harbour, and in taking his trip [A member: Make it short.] - he should bid them farewell, since he should resign his official position in the squadron - (Cries of No, No) - thinking, as he did, that it could be managed better by a younger man. He thought he should have competed more often but that he found there was somebody better than himself, and so he had laid his old boat up in lavender (Laughter.) If some more spirited and enterprising owner would take her he might get another boat to beat this wonderful Magic, and without saying more he would propose the toast of*





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*"The Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron," coupled with the name of the vice commodore, Dr. Mackellar. (Applause.)*

*Dr. Mackellar, after saying a few words in reply, proposed the health of Mr. H. C. Dangar, one of the fathers of the club.*

*Mr. Dangar said that his speech would be but brief. The vice commodore might consider that some of them were growing into the sear and yellow leaf - indeed he and others were so growing - but though their blood did not run so hotly in their veins as it did in the days of Sir John Young - Consule Planco, when Plancus was Consul - their interest in yachting was in no way abated (Cheers.) If in the sear and yellow leaf, he would avail himself of the privilege of age and speak of the time when the club was started - of the advent of William Walker and his beautiful schooner Chance, when they inaugurated the club (Hear, hear.) He must acknowledge having been instrumental in giving it its somewhat ugly name, for he hoped that one day this club would rival the Royal Yacht Squadron, the leading yachting club of the world - (applause) - and as he had worked to accomplish that end, so he felt sure that as far as the officers of the club were concerned, their hearts were too much bound up in their work not to do so. He was delighted to see the progress which had taken place within his knowledge of the club. He would remind them of some of the by-gone events of its career, from the days when William Walker brought out here the yacht which had been the pride of England and when Charles Parbury promoted the Reefer, and in her sailed a match to Newcastle and back and won it. He might tell them how he built the Peri nineteen years ago and was beaten times out of number by that very Reefer (Laughter.) He was sorry to hear the commodore talk about being choked off racing for no one should allow that. He himself raced that Reefer time after time, in the hope that she would carry away her mast (Laughter.) But she did not, and if Mr. Charles Parbury's sideboard could be shown, it would scarcely contain the prizes which he put into the owner's hands. Then he built the Mistral, and was beaten very much at first, more by bad luck than by anything else. For seven years after she was without a competitor, seven years which he looked upon as the dark ages, the medieval days of yachting (Laughter.) He was not beaten then, but at last a competitor came and, in the Magic, he caught a tartar. He could not but express his intense admiration of the Magic's build, and he was deeply sorry that this club, the oldest in Australia, was not represented at Fort Phillip in the recent match. (Applause.) He did not blame anyone here for the omission, because our own racing interests clashed with theirs, but if the Magic or the Mistral, and especially the Magic, had met the best craft of any in the waters of Port Phillip, they would have beaten in the contest. Well, that brought them almost down to the present, and he saw nothing but encouragement and pleasurable excitement as to the future of yachting here, for he never saw races better contested in these waters than those which had taken place during the last few months. It was true they had to have recourse to handicapping, which was not an altogether satisfactory way of racing yachts, but it had led to fun and good fellowship and it would puzzle people to find better racing than had been done here. Nothing whatever had happened to destroy the harmony and chivalry which was a characteristic of yachting - a pastime which was more than a pastime, so rough were some of its incidents. He had now come down to the present and although he was grieved to have to speak of anything sorrowful at such a time, he was compelled to refer in terms of deep regret to the loss they had sustained in the death of William Longford (Applause.) He possessed in a remarkable degree the knowledge of that mysterious secret of producing speed in connection with form in yacht-building (Applause). He never turned out a bad yacht, he often built very good ones, and he always put into them faithful work. Let them look at the beautiful lines of the Magic, and at the graceful Guinevere - one of the best second-class yachts in Australia. Indeed, there were few yachts of any kind to equal her and only that day he had directed a friend's attention to her many beauties. But, apart from his admiration of Langford as a yacht designer, he could not but record his admiration of him as a thoroughly honest man, whose work never needed watching (Applause.) He ever consulted the interests of his employer rather than his own, and if it should happen that his family, those he left behind him, required that help which widows*



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*often required, he hoped the yachtsmen of Sydney would remember that they had made it one of their rules to render help to vessels in distress, weaker vessels and he could only say that he should be one to do so (Applause.) In conclusion he had only to thank them for their kindness in drinking his health so heartily (Cheers.)*

*Mr Caird proposed "The Ladies, coupled with the name of Mrs. Gilchrist," and Mr. Gilchrist and Mr. J. M'Donald having responded the toast list closed. Those present then amused themselves in various ways for a little time and on re-embarking many of them engaged in scratch matches against one another.*

### **Sydney Sails (1881)**

At a meeting of the Squadron on 3rd March 1881 James R. Fairfax was elected commodore in succession to Gilchrist, and Dr Mackellar continued in the office of vice-commodore. The appointment of J. R. Fairfax was an agreed temporary arrangement during Gilchrist's absence. In fact, when Gilchrist returned, six months later, J. R. Fairfax stood down, and, at the annual meeting in August 1881, Gilchrist was reappointed commodore.

Evidently Gilchrist had brought back from England the latest ideas of classifying and handicapping yachts. At the annual meeting which reappointed him as commodore it was decided to reclassify the Squadron's yachts, few as they were, into four classes, viz., first class, over 20 tons; second class, between 10 and 20 tons; third class, between 7 and 10 tons; fourth class, between 5 and 7 tons. Handicapping was to be on the principle recognized by the British yachting authorities, i.e., a time allowance of half a minute per registered ton, irrespective of other considerations; but in all races under these rules, yachts would be permitted to enter above their own class.

***Saturday, 21st February, 1920 – The Sydney Morning Herald***



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

*LATE W. O. GILCHRIST.*

*CAPTAIN OF EARLY AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY.*

*The death of Mr. William Oswald Gilchrist in London, as announced in yesterday's "Herald," removes another of the early captains of Australian industry. As a partner in the firm of Gilchrist, Watt, and Co., he was from 1864 intimately associated with the progress of the country and did much towards its development. The firm of Gilchrist, Watt, and Co. was founded in 1828, in Sydney, by the late John Gilchrist to do general, pastoral, mercantile, and shipping business, under the style of "J. Gilchrist." Shortly afterwards the founder was joined by the late Mr. John Alexander, and the business became known as "Gilchrist and Alexander." In 1852 Mr. J. B. Watt, a nephew of Mr. Gilchrist, joined the company, and in the following year Mr. Alexander retired, when the firm assumed its present name of Gilchrist, Watt, and Co. Since then many changes have taken place in the personnel of the company, but throughout it has remained in the Gilchrist and Watt families.*



*Mr. William Oswald Gilchrist was a son of the founder, and though born in Scotland came to New South Wales when he was 21. For 10 years he remained here an active partner in the business. Its ramifications extended throughout the country, the pastoral interests being very large. In the early days it was not the practice of the banks to give assistance to settlers. This department of finance came within the scope of the great business houses, which in turn were assisted by the banks. In this way a large proportion of the company's funds was invested in the land, thereby helping to establish the great primary industries.*

*Gilchrist, Watt, and Co., established a shipping line between England and Australia, and helped in the establishment of another line, and acted as managing agents for many companies. This part of the company's business, however, was transferred to a new company, owned by the company and John Sanderson and Co. which is now known as Gilchrist, Watt, and Sanderson, Ltd. This firm acts as agents for the P. and O. Branch Line, the Blue Funnel Line, and other shipping companies.*

*Mr. W. O. Gilchrist went to England in 1883. He returned in 1886, and remained in Australia for about a year, but although residing in England since he retained an active interest in the firm and became senior partner upon the death of Mr. J. B. Watt in 1897.*

*Mr. Gilchrist was a director of the Union Bank, a director of the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company, and a director of the North Coast S.N. Company, besides having financial interests in a number of other commercial firms. In the pastoral industry he was a director of many station properties, both in New South Wales and Queensland. He held large interests in Llandillo (sheep) Station, near Walgett, New South Wales, and Glenprairie (cattle) Station, near Broadstone, Queensland, and Strathmore (cattle) Station, on the Burdekin River, Queensland.*



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

*Mr. Gilchrist, though personally a man of retiring disposition, was well known throughout Australia and widely esteemed. He was a keen yachtsman, and with the yacht Mistral, built by the late Mr. Henry Dangar and sold by him to Mr. Gilchrist, he won many races. In 1876 Mr. Gilchrist married Miss Clara Knox, daughter of the late Sir Edward Knox, and sister of the Chief Justice of the High Court, and of Mr. E. W. Knox, general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.*

*Mr. Gilchrist had one son and four daughters. The son was killed in an accident early in 1914, and two sons-in-law were killed in the war— Colonel Geddes, of the Buffs, and the Rev. Rupert Inglis, a son of Sir John Inglis, of Lucknow. The daughters are all married.*

***Monday, 5th July, 1920 – The Grafton Daily Examiner***

***AUSTRALIAN MERCHANT'S ESTATE.***

***NEARLY HALF A MILLION.***

***LONDON, Saturday.***

*The estate of the late W. O. Gilchrist, merchant, of Sydney, has been valued for probate at £496,430. The testator bequeathed £1000 each to Messrs. Eckhardy, accountant, Slade, solicitor, and Chase, manager of the Llanillo estate; £700 each to Messrs. Hugh Hoskins and Alfred Simpson; £500 to Mr. George Hewison; various sums to his wife and relatives, and the residue to his four daughters equally. The duties amount to £128,000.*