

Basic Detail Report



ANMS1323

Title

Yachting and boating on Sydney Harbour

Date

1950s-1970s

Primary Maker

Geoff Lee (1928-2007)

Name

Archive series

History

Geoff Lee (1928 - 2007) was a businessman and amateur photographer who developed an interest in sailing in the 1950s. He owned 15 yachts from the late 1950s to 2000s beginning with the 30-Square-Metre yacht SKYE. Lee sailed with the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, Cruising Yacht Club of Australia and the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron. Dragon keel yachts were initially built by Anker and Jensen. When the design was submitted to the International Yacht Racing Union (IYRU) now known as the International Sailing Federation (ISAF), the designer's name Anker was translated into Norwegian as Draggen and then into English as Dragon. The first Dragons were built in the early 1930s and sailed in Norway, Germany and Holland. In 1935, the class was introduced to Scotland and then England in 1938. The Dragon became the Olympic three-person keel boat in 1948, leading to a rise of interest in the class in Australia. In 1948 Jack Linacre began building the first Dragon yacht in Australia from plans he found in an Uffa Fox book. It was built with a small cabin with the idea of cruising around Port Phillip Bay, as well as racing. The keel was laid but work commitments sent him overseas in 1950. Construction was delayed and SKAAL was not to be the first Dragon launched in Australia. Dragons launched in 1950 were HEATHER (DKA 3) for E R Scott of the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria and PLATYPUS (DKA 1) for K C K Dalton of Royal Prince Edward Yacht Club (RPAYC). The Dragon class was found to be ideally suited to Australian sailing conditions, and at least nine boats were launched in 1951. When Jack Linacre returned to Australia he had FLICKA built in 1954. Following the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne he bought HOLMAN GUSTL XI. With Jock Sturrock and Rolly Tasker he contested the Europeans in 1959. Linacre was runner-up in the Rome Olympic trials and won the 1962 English Speaking Union Trophy in Poole, England. He contested the Edinburgh Cup in Wales, the Gold Cup in Norway and won the silver medal at the European Championship in Copenhagen. In the same year he won the Prince Philip Cup in Perth. Ted Albert owner of the 1964 Bill Barnett built RAWHITI, was a dual Prince Philip Cup winner and twice successful defender of the Sayonara Cup. The International 5.5-Metre Class was created as a cheaper alternative to the International 6-Metre Class. The first boats conforming to the 5.5 metre rule were built in 1949 and the class quickly became popular and was raced for first time in 1952 Summer Olympics. The Scandinavian Gold Cup has also been competed with 5.5m boats since 1953.

5.5-Metre yachts replaced the International 6-Metre at the 1956 Olympic Games held in Melbourne, Australia. The 5.5-Metre participation in the Olympic sailing events continued at the 1960 and 1964 Olympic Games. During 1960s it however began to draw similar criticism as preceding 6-metre class - namely, increasing costs - and the boat lost Olympic status after 1968 Olympic Games, due to excessive design and building costs of one off boats, marking the end of development class keel boats in Olympic regattas. However, the class remained active thereafter and 5.5-Metre yachts are still very actively raced in 2007 due to an organisational structure which encourages boats of all ages to compete: the class has been divided to Modern, Evolution and Classic subclasses. The Thunderbird is a one-design class, designed in Canada in 1955 by Ben Seaborn. It was intended to be an amateur-built, plywood cruising boat. The design was commissioned by the Douglas Fir Plywood Association and plans were sold at affordable prices through Canadian timber yards. The Thunderbird turned out to be easy to build and proved to be extremely fast and seaworthy. By the early 1960s, Thunderbirds were recognized as the fastest 26' sailboat around. Although relatively rare in Australia, there are small fleets in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia.