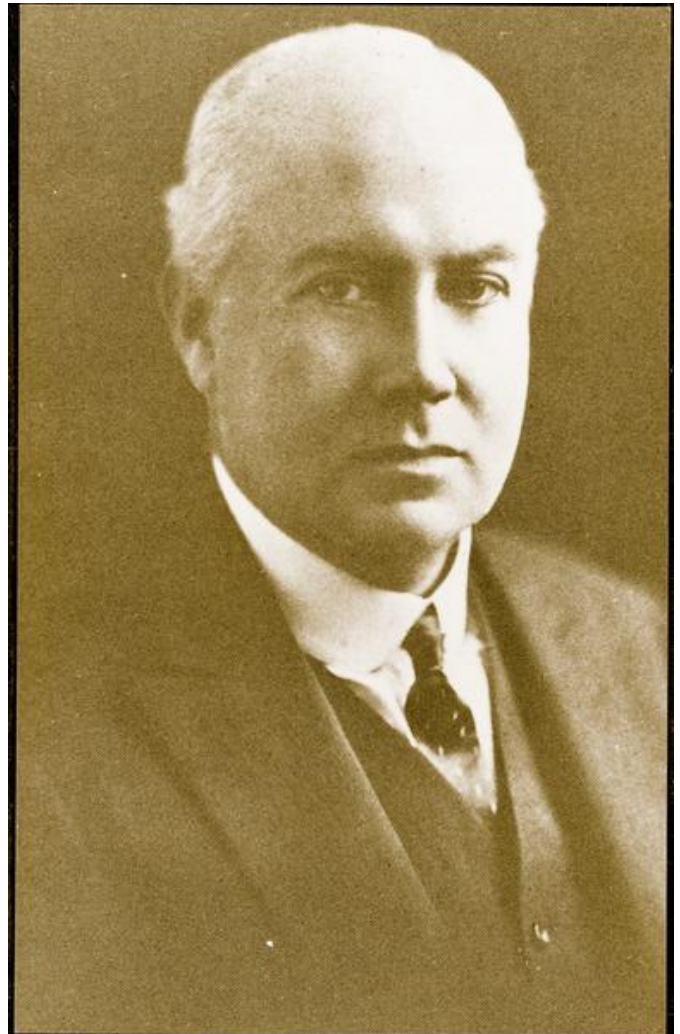
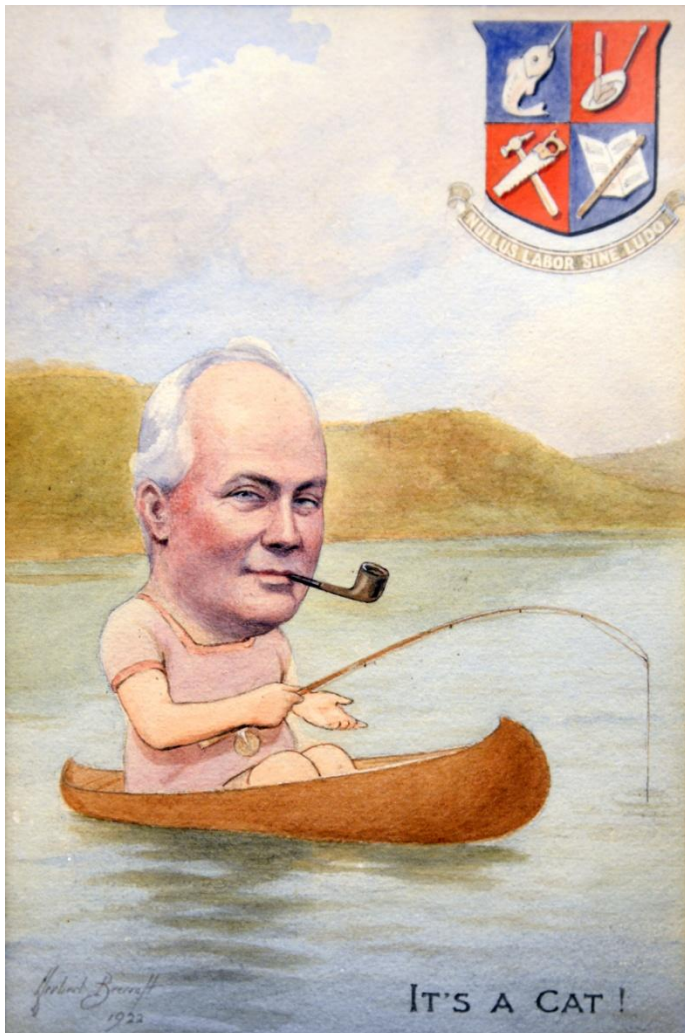


M C Lidwell

Not all of the subjects of L. Herbert Beecroft's paintings commissioned by the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron between 1908 and 1933 were yachties. Take Dr. Mark Cowley Lidwell. He was a fisherman of some repute but there is no evidence of him participating in any yacht racing at all, and so for fishing enthusiasts among the Squadron members, I dedicate this essay.

When Beecroft painted Dr. Lidwell in 1922, the Club was in full swing after the deprivations of war time. The roaring twenties were underway with a vengeance. I located a photo of Dr. Lidwell on the internet and the resemblance captured by Beecroft is to his usual standard.



The painting illustrates Dr. Lidwell at his favourite hobby, fishing in a canoe in his bathing suit, smoking a pipe of course and with a sly look of satisfaction on his face. His left hand is gesturing and the exclamation at the bottom right is "It's a Cat!" This must refer to what's on the end of the line because the fishing rod is severely arched under the weight of the cat fish.

At the top right hand side, Beecroft has depicted a heraldry crest with 4 sections – we already know Dr. Lidwell was a fisherman so the swordfish is obvious, particularly when you read about his exploits landing such a fish in 1913 (see below). The pan of sausages suggest Dr. Lidwell liked cooking, maybe while outdoors, the music suggests he played a flute or recorder, and the tools suggest he might have been quite a handyman.

The caption underneath says "Nullus Labor Sine Ludo", Latin for "No work without play." Since Dr. Lidwell

had such a prolific career, he clearly valued highly his fishing.

Thursday, 20th February, 1913 - Evening News

A LARGE SWORDFISH.

Dr. Lidwell, of Strathfield, who is fishing at Broughton Island, recently caught a large swordfish on rod and line. The rod he used is 3ft in length, and weighs 16oz, the winch a double multiplier, with strong brake of his own design, and the line a 200 yard 18-cord "Cutty-hunk." The fish, which was 7ft 1in long, and weighed 90lb. was sent to Eastway's, in Sydney, and they forwarded it to the Museum, where it is intended to be set up.

Wednesday, 1st April, 1914 - Referee

FISHING,

(BY PISCATOR)

BIG GAME FISHING AT PORT STEPHENS

Dr. Mark Lidwell, of Strathfield, with Mr. C. Todman, has just returned from a 17 days' visit to Port Stephens, where they have been in search of the big-game fish which past experience taught them were to be caught at this time of the year. It was with extreme difficulty that Dr. Lidwell could be prevailed upon to allow his experiences to be published, not with any idea of keeping "good things" to himself, but his natural dislike to publicity of any kind being the sole cause of his reluctance. His experiences are, however, full of interest to those in search of the sport provided by the 'tunny,' Spanish mackerel, and kingfish. To conform with the rules of the Club, and thus entitle them to the medallions in the event of catching fish up to a specified weight, it was necessary that the rods used should not be shorter than 6ft, and the butt or reel-holder not to be longer than 14in, thus allowing for the top joint, which should not weigh more than 6oz, being 5ft long. The line used was an American 'Cuttyhunk' nine-cord, 600yds long, and tested to a breaking strain of 18lb. Dr. Lidwell used a special multiplying reel fitted with two patent brakes designed by himself; while Mr. Todman used a "Hardy Pomeroy" reel, also fitted with two brakes. The bait was generally garfish, mullet, or a piece of tunny mounted on a flight made of three stout 3/0 treble hooks on piano wire. The fish were found to be plentiful. On one occasion the launch, which was in charge of Jack Lund and Dick Watterson, passed through a school of tunny three-quarters of a mile long, but, strange to say, where the fish were thickest not one was hooked. And although more fish were seen on this trip than on any previous visit made by Dr. Lidwell, the sport was not quite so good.

Salamander Bay, in Port Stephens, is a favorite schooling ground for the tunny, and they were mostly hooked on the outer edge of the school. The weather, on the whole, was rough, and it was only when the sea moderated that it was possible to fish. On one occasion in an hour Dr. Lidwell and Mr. Todman landed 47 kingfish up to 10lb in weight. One afternoon's catch, among the big ones realised two large Spanish mackerel, the largest of which weighed 30lb, and five southern tunny, the largest weighing 27lb, and the smallest 22lb. These were all caught on the 6oz. red and nine-cord line.

The greatest number of fish caught were kingfish. This is accounted for by the fact that garfish were very scarce, tunny and Spanish mackerel being particularly partial to these, while the kingfish were not so particular. The largest kingfish caught was 17lb, Mr. Todman landing one 13lb, while plenty from 10lb down were caught. The photo of the fish by itself is that of a tunny caught by Dr. Lidwell and weighed 30lb; it took an hour and a quarter of hard fighting to bring it to gaff, and at one time had the full 600yds of line out. This was the largest tunny caught on the trip. The largest fish was a Spanish mackerel which weighed 37½ lb. On one occasion when the game fish could not be located a run was made to Broughton Island in search of schnapper. The sea was, however, too rough to allow the party to fish inshore, but good results were obtained on the wide grounds, the party catching three baskets in an hour and a half. On occasions when it was too rough to venture outside at all, trips were made to Tea Gardens for black-bream fishing, and to anyone who is proof against sandflies no better black-bream spot is to be found. In three visits the party caught 30 dozen black bream, the largest of which weighed 3¼ lb. On the whole the trip was not quite up to previous visits of the doctor. This is accounted for by the adverse weather conditions. The fish are just as plentiful, if not more so, while on several

occasions some very big fish were hooked, but on account of the light gear and big sea, managed to effect their escape.

The tactic used by Dr. Lidwell and Mr. Todman was exceptionally light, too light for any but an expert with rod and reel; and the average fisherman who goes in quest of this class of fish would do well to go fitted with heavy gear. The rods and reels, together with the lines used, were in conformity with the rules of the Anglers' Casting Club, salt-water section, which have been founded on the rules of the famous Tuna Club of America. The conditions here are, however, different to the conditions to be met with at Santa Catalina, the headquarters of the American Club. There the water fished is comparatively calm, and the fishing is done from a dinghy, which is in tow of a launch. Immediately a fish is struck, the small boat is cast adrift, and the fight begins. Off Port Stephens the conditions do not allow of this; the fighting has to be done from the launch itself, which is naturally much harder to manipulate in a sea-way; consequently heavier tackle is required here than at Santa Catalina.

Wednesday, 26th September, 1917 - Referee

FISHING

BIG GAME ON THE AUSTRALIAN COASTS

By **RAMBLER**,

Dr. Mark Lidwell, in an address before the Rod Fishers' Society of N.S.W. a few years ago, stated the sport beggared description. He continued: 'I hunted about the coast for a long while till I found them. I went to Broughton Island, and pretty soon all my spinners (specially imported) proved to be useless. The big fish came on the job, and they smashed things to bits. I designed two or three kinds of reels, until at last I made one which gave all the break power I wanted, and which ran freely when I wanted to reel in line.' He then gave details of some very strenuous fights with big fish about Broughton Island; so that, in addition to proving attractive from a trout fishing point of view, Australasia will hold its own as far as game fishing is concerned.

Dr. Lidwell's professional reputation was as large as his fishing prowess. Here are a few examples.

Lidwell, Mark C

MD ad eundem gradum 1911 MB ChB Hons (Melb) MD (Melb)

*In 1913 **Mark Lidwell** was the first Lecturer in Anaesthetics in the Faculty of Medicine, and became the first Honorary Director of Anaesthetics at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in 1930. He designed and patented the 'Lidwill Anaesthetic machine for insufflation anaesthesia', and carried out the first successful pacing of the heart using an insulated needle in 1926.*

Mark, known to his friends as 'Bunny', was born in England in 1878 and migrated to Melbourne with his parents in 1894. He graduated with honours from the University of Melbourne in 1902, and gained his Doctorate in Medicine in 1905. Soon after, he moved to Sydney, first entering general practice and later becoming a specialist physician. He gained his MD from the University of Sydney in 1911.

In 1913 he was appointed to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital as Honorary Assistant Physician and, in the same year, became the first Lecturer in Anaesthetics in the Faculty of Medicine and the first Tutor in Anaesthetics at the Hospital. During this time, he designed the 'Lidwill Anaesthetic Machine for insufflational endotracheal and endopharyngeal ether anaesthesia', an apparatus which was extensively used throughout Sydney for the next 30 years. His machine was patented in 1921 (Australian Patent No. 1593/21) and produced and sold by Elliot Brothers, Sydney. Barry Baker, in his history of Anaesthesia at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, states that the "surgeons of the day were most impressed because this innovation allowed them continuous access to the patient for operations on the face and pharynx, when previously they had an episodic mask-operation-mask-operation sequence".....

The next article describes an invention which is still used today.

Tuesday, 17th September, 1929 - The Scone Advocate

Dr. Lidwell's Device

FOR RESTORING THE SUPPOSED DEAD. SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENTS.

*A remarkable electrical device to stimulate the action of the heart after a person has been dead, or supposed to be dead, for several minutes was one of the subjects of discussion at the Recent Medical Congress. The instrument was perfected by **Dr. Lidwell**, the prominent Sydney heart specialist. By its aid a still born child was brought to life at a Sydney maternity hospital after stimulation by the machine for about 15 minutes. The child is still alive, and is 18 months old. All other methods had failed. Particulars concerning the structure and efficiency of this amazing device have been revealed, as the subject was one for private discussion during the course of the congress. Dr. Lidwell is believed to have devoted a great deal of his leisure to the perfection of the machine, of which there are similar versions in Europe and the United States, and to have completed it with the aid of specialists at Sydney University. The method has been applied in Sydney, in some cases with success, during the last two years. Cases of drowning, sudden death from heart disease, certain cases of death by accident, and babies born dead, are likely to benefit by this new instrument.*

Dr. Lidwell is understood to have improved upon other devices which aim at the same results by making his instrument easily carried — in fact, it is said to be about the size of a portable wireless set, and weighs only seven or eight pounds. It is a highly complicated affair, with electric motors, transformers and diodes, and electric power is secured by plugging into an ordinary socket. The heart of the person to be revived is simply stimulated by a direct current, a special-needle connected with the apparatus being plunged into the inactive organs. It is understood that, although the machine has proved its value in certain cases, it has to be employed not more than 10 or, at the most, 15 minutes after presumed death, and by no means every 'dead' person will respond to the stimulus.

Dr. Lidwell died in 1969, aged 91.

September, 2015