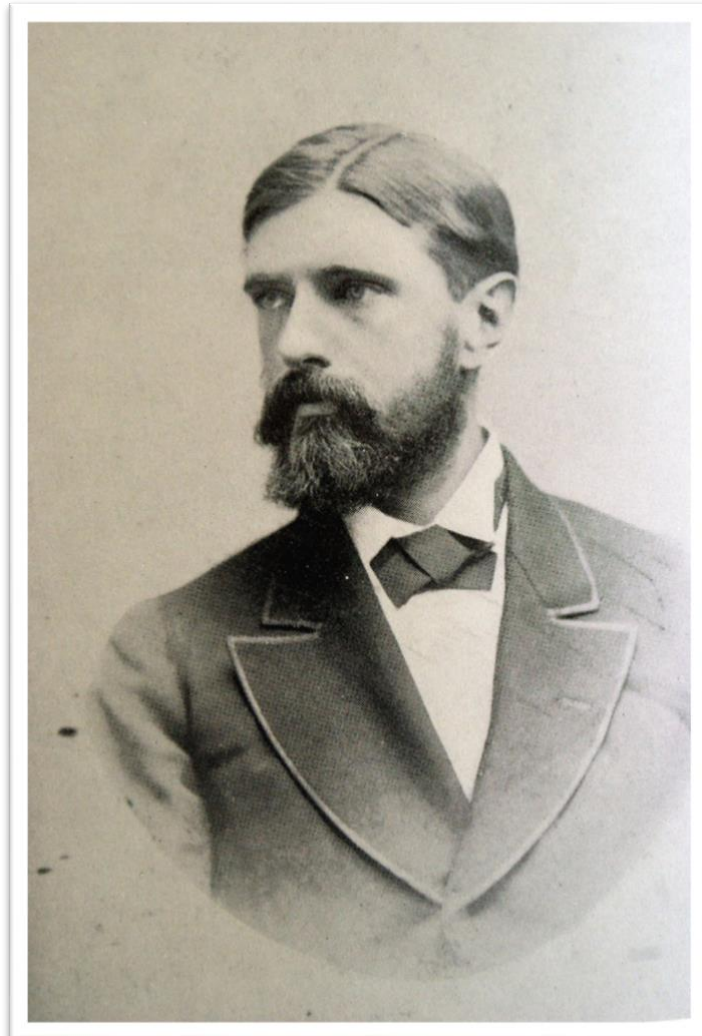




## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

### Commodores of the Squadron By John Maclurcan

#### 5. Edward William Knox (1883-1884)



#### **Sydney Sails (1876)**

Pleiades was a 9-ton cutter designed and built by W. Langford at Berry's Bay in 1874. Her owner was E. W. Knox, Australian-born son of Edward (later Sir Edward) Knox, Danish-born manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Ltd. Meteor, 10 tons, also newly built at Sydney, was owned by Samuel (later Sir Samuel) Hordern. The frequent races between these two new medium-size yachts, which were evenly matched, aroused almost as much public interest as the rivalry between Mistral and Magic. On this occasion (Anniversary Day 1876) Pleiades won, with Meteor second. Peri's masthead carried away, and she abandoned the race.

In a return match in March 1876 Knox's Pleiades again won. It was said that, although she had only



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

two-thirds of the spread of sail of her slightly bigger opponent, she was as speedy “and twice as lively”. E. W. Knox, like several other yachtsmen, was a member of both the Squadron and the “Prince Alfreds”.

**Thursday, 28th November, 1878 – The Sydney Morning Herald**

R. S. Y. S. THIRD CLASS RACE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

Sir, - We have no wish to enter into a newspaper controversy with Mr. F. J. Jackson, with reference to the protest made by us against the prize for this race, being forwarded to the Violet, but would ask you to publish the decision of the committee, which was communicated to us in the following words:

*"The Committee of the R. S. Y. S. having carefully considered all the evidence, have unanimously decided that the Violet by not going about when she ought to have done so, improperly caused the Pleiades to luff in the wind to avoid a collision, and under the 53rd rule is disqualified, and forfeits all claim to the prize."*

We may add, that as the protest was made to show Mr. Jackson that he was in the wrong, and not to obtain the money, we return the prize to the committee.

Yours obediently, EDWARD W. KNOX, T. F. KNOX,  
Sydney, 27th November. Owners of the Pleiades.

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

Among these enthusiasts, Alfred G. Milson in 1881 purchased Waitangi from John Newton, and began to refit her to improve her racing ability. In that year also, E. W. Knox became the proud owner of a 13-ton cutter, Sirocco, built for him at Sydney by W. M. Ford, from designs by Dan Thatcher of Southampton. It was said that Sirocco was “of the true modern type, with nearly all her ballast outside, and the greatest possible displacement for the least possible tonnage, and, in fact, with all the advantages that being built in 1881 instead of 1874 can bestow”.

**Saturday, 28th October, 1882 – Australian Town and Country Journal**

ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON.

OPENING CRUISE OF THE SEASON.

The opening of the yachting season at this port was inaugurated on Saturday afternoon by a cruise to and luncheon at Cremorne, one of the prettiest places in our beautiful harbour. The weather all the morning had been very threatening, and a fresh southerly began to blow at noon, raising a choppy sea. Shortly after 1 o'clock the yachts of the squadron were soon making for the rendezvous in Farm Cove, Commodore Knox's yacht, the Sirocco, leading down the fairway. The steamer Pacific left the Circular Quay at half-past 1 o'clock, conveying a number of visitors, on the invitation of the Club, to join the party at Cremorne. Proceeding to the rendezvous, the following yachts took up their positions: - Starboard Division: Sirocco, 10 tons, Commodore Knox; Daphne, 10 tons, Mr. Underwood; Meteor, 10 tons. Mr. J. Gilchrist; Mabel, 7 tons, Mr. J. R. Love. Port Division: Waitangi, 22 tons, Vice-commodore Wilson; Oithona, 15 tons, Dr. Mackellar; Guinevere, 10 tons, Mr. Sydney Want; Pleiades, 9 tons, Mr. Lark; Doris, 6 tons, Dr. Milford.

No time was lost by the Commodore, and the signals were hoisted to follow in order of division, and the yachts bowled away at a strong pace under a freshening breeze for the east side of Cremorne, where they took up anchorage in Mossman's Bay, and the Commodore's boat dressed ship in honour of the event. At Cremorne, after a stroll round, to give sufficient time for the crews to assemble, the company sat down to luncheon, catered for by the City Company, and laid out in a large marquee.



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

*Commodore Knox presided, and amongst those present were: - Vice-Commodore Milson (R.S.Y.S.), the Hon. J. H. Watt, Commander Henderson, H.M.S. Nelson, Hon. E. Knox, Captain Symons (H.M.C.S. Wolverene), Captain Osborne (H.M.S. Nelson), Charles G. Miller, Esq. (Commodore Victorian Yacht Squadron), Dr. Milford (Commodore P.A.Y. Club), H. Underwood, Vice-Commodore (P.A.Y. Club), Dr. M'Kellar, Dr. Evans, Captain Smith, Dr. Bedford, Messrs. W. J. Trickett, M.P., Sydney Want, G. S. Caird, W. Kilgour, Lark, E. B. Holt, C. S. Sahl, S. Stephen, A. Mackay, Q. L. Deloitte, T. A. Dibbs, P. F. Adams, J. Cornwall, J. R. Love, H. Raymond, J. Mitchell, P. O. Williams, R. J. Black, G. Lewis, G. Knox, G. Miller, Barker, T. F. Knox, J. Gilchrist, H. E. A. Allan, Frank King, Vincent Browne, Fred King, C. King, R. Binney, Ferguson, A. Tooth, W. C. Willes, Grant, W. H. Rothie.*

*After ample justice had been done to the very excellent luncheon provided, the toasts of "Her Majesty the Queen," and "the Prince of Wales, the patron of yachting and of all other manly sports," was proposed by the chairman and enthusiastically responded to. The chairman then said that he had only one more toast to propose, and that was "Prosperity to the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron." He said that it was rather a matter of regret to him, that he had been called to the office of Commodore at a time when the yachting interest in Sydney seemed to be waning, and he regretted this the more because the tendency here nowadays was decidedly to make all kinds of manly sports more matters of gain. Yachting, however, fortunately could not be carried on in a money-grubbing spirit, and gambling could have no possible connection with it. There were two kinds of sport which he regretted had recently come into much favour, that was coursing and pigeon shooting. The one he looked upon as effeminate, and the other as effeminate and gambling; in fact, the latter had not even the merits of cockfighting. Yachting possessed all the merits of true and manly sport, with more of the disadvantages attached to many other kinds of sport, and it was well worth the support of the press. He gave a tribute of praise to the proprietors of the "Town and Country Journal." He was glad, to welcome that day two gentlemen to the club who had previously confined themselves to open boat sailing; and now that 3-ton yachts were becoming the fashion and the antiquated 24ft boats going out, he hoped to see a number of 3-ton boats built at the port; and if this were the case, he thought it might be easily arranged to so alter the rules that they could under the club's regulations. He would conclude by again wishing prosperity and long life to the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron. The toast was received most enthusiastically and drunk with musical honours.*

*Mr. W. J. Trickett, M.P., in responding for the Club, said that although as a yacht owner he had given it up, nothing would please him better than to occasionally take a cruise, and this he would point out was one of the advantages of the club. No member would ever be refused passage in a yacht, when they were going on a cruise; in fact, the yacht owners were only too glad to interest and encourage members in any way possible. He thought Commodore Knox would have no reason to regret his taking office, because he was a young man and would certainly infuse new life into the proceedings. The Royal Yacht Squadron had plenty of boats and plenty of funds, and all they asked for was public encouragement, and he thought the club was bound to go ahead in the future, much greater than it had in the past. They would, he was sure, all hail with much pleasure the presence of Mr. Miller, Commodore of the Victorian Yacht Club, with them that day (loud cheers), and he was exceedingly glad to hear that there was a probability of his well-known yacht, the Red Gauntlet, being with them during the present season, and he was quite certain that Mr. Miller would here find quite as good fellows as he met in Melbourne. Before sitting down, he would ask them to drink the health of the chairman and could assure him they were proud to see such a man at the head of the squadron. The toast was drunk with loud cheers, and an extra one for the Sirocco. By this time, the rain which had been gently falling for some time, came down in torrents, but no yachtsman minds a good natters, and after a short spell discussing yachting matters generally over cigars and cognac, it was decided that*



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

*the praise would not be carried much further that afternoon.*

*The yachtsmen, therefore, returned to their vessels, while some of the visitors returned to the Pacific, and "sought the seclusion which the cabin grants," and about 4 o'clock & return was made for town, after a very enjoyable outing, notwithstanding the weather, everyone being convinced of the immense value of the rain to the country's good.*

### **Sydney Sails (1883)**

At the Squadron's annual meeting in August 1883 Edward William Knox, owner of Sirocco, was appointed commodore. Only three years previously E. W. Knox had become general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, in succession to his father, who was one of the founders of that company.

#### **Tuesday, 23rd January, 1883 – The Evening News**

ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON.

COMMODORE KNOX'S PRIZE.

*A handicap yacht race for a prize of £15, presented by Commodore Knox, together with a second prize of £5 5s, presented by the club, came off on Saturday afternoon, and was competed for by four yachts manned by amateur crews and sailed by members of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron. The rendezvous was in Farm Cove at 2.30 p.m., and a flying start took place at 2.36 p.m., the course being from a line between a flagboat off Fort Macquarie and the beacon on Kirribilli Point, round the south side of Clark and Shark Islands, round boat off Manly, round Shark Island, passing lightship and Sow and Pigs on starboard hand, round Clark Island, lightship, Sow and Pigs, and Shark Island, back to Fort Macquarie. The yachts entered were the Pleiades, 9 tons, Mr. F. B. Lock, scratch; the Mabel, Mr. J. E. Love, 7 tons, 2min. 15sec.; Ione, 6 tons, Mr. P. O. Williams, 3min. 35sec.; and the Doris, 5 tons, Dr. Milford, 5min. 10sec.*

*There was a strong north easterly blowing, and the yachts crossed the line to a good start, the Pleiades leading, and all under mainsail and jibs. The Doris had the lee side at the start with the Ione, Mabel, and Pleiades, in order named, the latter soon going to the front. Passing Point Piper the Pleiades was leading by about a minute, the Ione and Doris following at a distance, and the Mabel had to make a tack to clear Point Piper. The same order was maintained past Shark Island, when the vessels went about and worked along the eastern shore up to the South Head. At South Head the yachts went on the starboard tack, the Pleiades and Ione going about again off Middle Head, and the Doris making over for Dobroyd. The flagboat at Manly was rounded in the following order: — Pleiades, at 4h 13m 30s; Ione, 4h 15m; Doris, 4h 20m 15s; and Mabel, 4h 22m. After rounding, the Pleiades and Ione sent up square sails, and the Doris sent up a spinnaker and topsail, and the Mabel, shortly after passing, gave up the race. In rounding the different islands during the remainder of the course, the three yachts left in the race were well handled, and the finish was made in the following order and time: — Pleiades, 6h 6m 20s; Ione, 6h 7m 45s; Doris, 6h 17m. The Ione, therefore, won the race by time allowance, and the Pleiades second prize.*

*The steam launch Agenoria, with a party of ladies and members of the club, followed the race over the first part of the course, and the fresh breeze and lively sea made the trip a very enjoyable one. Mr. Milson was the commodore for the day.*

#### **Monday, 8th October, 1883 – Evening News**

ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON.

OPENING OF THE SEASON.

*The weather on Saturday afternoon was most unpropitious for the opening of the yachting season,*





## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

nevertheless any postponement was out of the question, and as the weather cleared a little later in the afternoon matters were not nearly so unpleasant as might have been expected. Rain commenced to fall steadily at 11 a.m., with a southerly wind, and continued without interruption until nearly 3 o'clock, but this did not prevent the members of the R.S.Y.S. from being present, and although the attendance was not so numerous as would have been the case had fine weather prevailed, yet it was sufficiently large to make the affair go off most pleasantly.

The rendezvous was in Farm Cove, and nine yachts assembled there at 1 o'clock under the command of Commodore Knox and Vice-commodore Milson. The yachts were the Sirocco, Waitangi, Guinevere, Daphne, Doris, Mabel, Pleiades, Oithona, and Mr. T. A. Dibbs's new steam yacht Ena. No time was lost by the yachts in getting under way and making sail for Cremorne. Meanwhile a number of gentlemen left the Circular Quay in the launch Elaine for the Cremorne Pier, and the yachts having anchored and made all snug, the crews came ashore to the pavilion. Amongst the company present were Commodore Knox, Vice-commodore Milson, vice-commodore Underwood (P. A. Y. C), Captain Hixson, Captain Geiseler (H. I. M. S. Hyene), Dr. Mackellar, Messrs. S. A. Want, A. Tooth, H. Roth, T. W. King, T. B. Lark, C. H. Sahl, P. O. Williams, T. A. Dibbs, H. Raymond, T. E. Joseph, B. Laidley, Alfred Fairfax, A. Soutar, T. Lowry, T. B. Dibbs, H. E. A. Allan, J. Gilchrist, W. C. Willis, B. Binnie, jun., George Knox, T. T. Knox, C. King, H. Tucker, W. C. Tucker, J. B. Love, C. W. Middleton, T. King, Q. L. Deloitte, Croaker, J. M. Curtis, B. E. Wise, F. Pruch, A. Finlayson, H. H. Kater, H. Cornwell (secretary R.S.Y.S.), and others. At this juncture a description of the latest addition to the vessels of the club, and the first steam yacht which has joined a club in Australia will no doubt prove interesting.

### *The NEW STEAM YACHT ENA,*

which made her first official appearance under the flag of the R.S.Y.S. on Saturday, is the property of Mr. T. A. Dibbs, manager of the Commercial Bank, and is one of the finest of her class in the colonies. As a specimen of workmanship, she is throughout a credit alike to her designer and builder; and she was built by Mr. William Dunn, of Berry's Bay, under the supervision of Mr. Dibbs. She is a vessel of 53½ tons, 82ft in length, with a beam of 12ft 6in. The engines are 70 horse-power nominal, certified to carry 100lb of steam, and were supplied by Pleaty and Son, England. She is built on beautiful lines, copper fastened throughout, with deck planking of 2½in. Kauri pine. Although not quite finished, she has had one or two trials, and readily ran up to a speed of 11 knots. Her fittings are very handsome and substantial. Forward is a very fine saloon cabin, lined with walnut, panelled with bird's eye maple, which has a charming effect; also fitted, with pier glasses, marble top sideboard, velvet cushioned seats, plenty of lockers, a Mason and Hamlin organ, lavatory, and everything most convenient; in fact, throughout the vessel there is not an inch of room lost. In this apartment there is ample room for sleeping accommodation for 10 ladies, and all the necessary bedding is contained in the lockers. Amidships are the engine house and cooking gallery. On the after deck is a 'well,' in which is fitted tables and seats capable of accommodating 20 persons, and at the forward end of the 'well' is the pantry and storeroom, also supplied with every convenience. Over the after deck is an awning of cedar planks, braced with elm, and at night the whole of the after deck can be covered in at the sides with canvas, thereby giving a comfortable room 40 x 12, while there is a clear deck promenade of 100ft. Altogether she is a very nice vessel, and has already proved herself a thorough good sea boat, and is in every way a great acquisition to the club fleet.

### *THE LUNCHEON.*

Shortly after 2 o'clock the company, on the invitation of Commodore Knox, who presided, sat down in the pavilion, to luncheon, for which the run across had provided good appetites. After luncheon the toast of "The Queen," proposed by Commodore Knox, was drunk with all honours.



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

*Captain Hixson then said that although their worthy Commodore had ordered that there was to be no speechifying, he felt bound to disobey this to a limited extent, and say a word or two in favour of Commodore Knox, as it was the second year in which he had presided at the inauguration of the season; and he would therefore ask the company to drink to the good health of Commodore Knox, and that he might long continue in his present position. The toast was heartily received, and in replying, Mr. Knox said that if he had succeeded in giving them satisfaction, it was evident that he had not done so to the clerk of the weather, as on the previous occasion they had had a wet afternoon. However, the rain was general, and would do an immense amount of good to the colony. He should continue to do all that was possible for the progress of the club.*

*Mr. Alfred Fairfax, in proposing "Prosperity to the squadron," said that he had watched the proceedings of the club with very considerable interest and was delighted to find a gentleman amongst them who had shown them the way to turn out so beautiful a model of a steam yacht, while he quite endorsed all that had been said about their beautiful sailing vessels. Mr. T. A. Dibbs, as one of the oldest members of the club, had much pleasure in responding, and felt glad to see at the head of affairs so good a man as their worthy Commodore. He was proud to say that he had got a fine steam yacht, and he thought he should never regret building her, and his pleasure in her would be greatly enhanced, if at any time he could give pleasure to his friends by having them on board, and if any of their sailing yachts should get on to the rocks he should be glad to give them a tow off; and at any time he could place his yacht at the disposal of members, he should be most willing to do so.*

*Mr. Lark thought they had made good progress by producing the fastest 10-tonner in these waters, and they had also a new five tonner, measuring six tons, however, by their rules, which would probably give a good account of herself. He was glad to see Mr. Curtis, the new owner of the Doris present, and if he did as well with the boat as its previous owner, they would be very proud of him. He was also pleased to say that their finances were in a very flourishing condition and he was sure the club would continue to flourish.*

*Vice Commodore Milson also replied, and in thanking them for the manner in which the toast had been received said that it was expected that Dr. Milford's new boat would be ready in two months.*

*This closed the formal proceedings, and the several crews having returned to their boats, a short cruise was made down the harbour; and the weather having cleared up, on the invitation of Mr. Dibbs, a number of members, accompanied him down the harbour in the Ena, when the good qualities of the handsome craft were fairly tested. She steamed round and up to the head of Middle Harbour in capital time, and in returning steamed round the oversea ship, Ravenswood, just arrived, thence to Double Bay to land some residents, and where, by-the-bye, general regret was expressed as seeing the yachts Magic and Mistral still "laid up in Lavender."*

*Returning to Circular Quay the yacht Oithona was seen ashore under Lady Macquarie's Chair. It being found, however, that she was on the rocks, with a kedge out on a falling tide, it was deemed advisable not to attempt to tow her off, but to allow her to float off on the next rise of tide. Circular Quay being reached, the thanks of the company were given to Mr. Dibbs for the very pleasant trip he had afforded, and the Ena then returned to her moorings in Berry's Bay.*

*Altogether the outing was a very pleasant one, considering the weather; and the Mr. Cornwell, the worthy secretary of the club, is to be complimented on his arrangements for the convenience of members and visitors.*

**Monday, 28th April, 1884 – The Sydney Morning Herald**



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

### *THE ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON.*

*In the close of the yachting season, time has once again given us a reminder that it is on the wing. Verify, time and tide wait for no man, and no one knows this better than the yachtsman, especially when he is constrained by stress of weather to give up his pleasant summer outings.*

*In matters of this kind, things that are stationary are subject to changes of condition and "contrariness," they must follow the changes if they would have their conditions remain the same. Therefore, as "summer flowers are faded now, and summer airs no longer blow," there is nothing for it but to run into winter quarters among the coves of Port Jackson, unless we migrate with the fleeting season, like the plucky "Corinthian" of 'Frisco, whose inland experience does not deter him from braving the oceans of the world; or the Bohemian of the English Channel when he puts up his helm before the gloomy eyes of the north and runs for the bright waters" of the Mediterranean. With such good humour as is available, we must wait the return of brighter days, content to yield for the present to the force of time and change, which, like the singing brook, unhindered by the deeds of men, pursues its course for ever.*

*It fell to the lot of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron to hold its closing ceremony and weep its farewell tears over the departing season on last Saturday afternoon. The weather was highly suitable to the occasion - a light breeze, a bright sky, and a smooth sea. The shores of the harbour, with then bright green covering freshened by recent rain, appeared very beautiful and made a splendid background for the fleet of white wings that gathered in Farm Cove for their closing flutter. There was a good turnout, only one yacht, the Peri, being absent from the rendezvous at Cremorne. The yachts taking part in the proceedings were the Waitangi, Mystery, Magic, Oithona, Sirocco, Meteor, Guinevere, Daphne, Pleiades, Mabel, Ione, Doris, and Eva. Mr. Dibbs' steam yacht, the Ena, and the club steamer were also on the water.*

*Vice Commodore Milson was in charge for the day and led the movements from the Waitangi. The majority of the yachts having assembled about 1 o'clock, the signal was given to form squadron. This was carried out by the boats then on the spot, the divisions having been previously arranged. The Commodore then signalled for the squadron to follow him in line and this was prettily executed. The boats passed over into Neutral Bay and round Fort Denison, heading again across the harbour. As the wind was rather light, the contemplated evolutions were not undertaken and the next signal that flew from the Waitangi's masthead called in the boats to rendezvous in Mossman's Bay. This order was obeyed with marked rapidity and precision, and very soon the squadron glided quietly round the head into the bay where the crews dropped anchor and pulled ashore. The flags of the Waitangi were hoisted, making a bright centre in the picturesque group.*

*After a short interval, the yachtsmen and their friends assembled on the top of the hill and sat down to an excellent luncheon prepared in the Compagnoni kitchen and laid in the pavilion. There were about 75 gentlemen present. The chair was occupied by Vice-Commodore A. G. Milson. Among the company were the commodore (Mr. Edward Knox), the Hon. W. J. Trickett, M. L. A., Mr. W. R. Campbell, M. L. A., Mr. W. J. Fergusson, M. L. A., Dr. Mackellar, Mr. James Milson, Mr. Alfred Fairfax, Mr. T. A. Dibbs, Mr. J. R. Fairfax, Mr. John Gilchrist, Mr. F. B. Lark, Mr. J. R. Love, Mr. C. L. Sahl, Captain Geiseler (of H. I. G. M. S. Hyena), Mr. W. C. Willis, Mr. Robert King, Mr. F. W. King, and other gentlemen intimately associated with yachting and yachtsmen. When that impulse which prompted such ready obedience to the rendezvous signal had been satisfied, several toasts were proposed and honoured.*

*The first were those of "The Queen" and "The Patron, H. R. H. the Prince of Wales," proposed by the Chairman and the Commodore respectively. The Chairman then rose to propose the toast of the day.*



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

*He said he wished it had fallen into more able hands but trusted they would assist him to instil into it the utmost enthusiasm, which he was sure they would when he told them the toast was that of "The Commodore of the Club, Mr Edward Knox" (Hear, hear.) No words of his could describe to them the energy Mr. Knox had displayed in advancing the interests of the club and of yachting generally, not only by giving prizes to be sailed for, but by his pluck in entering into the contests with his little clipper, and nearly on all occasions, except when his (the speaker's) old craft had given him the pleasure of seeing the Commodore behind him, winning prizes himself. (Laughter and applause.) Mr. Knox had been most hospitable to members of this club (applause) - and had almost extended that hospitality to inviting them there that day to celebrate the closing of the season, but at a meeting in March last it was agreed that they should entertain the Commodore instead of his entertaining them. He hoped Mr. Knox would be satisfied with the entertainment that had been got up. The good qualities of the Commodore were too well known for him to need to expatiate on them, and he would simply ask the company to drink the health with all honours (Applause.) The toast was drunk amid loud cheering, with "He's a jolly good fellow."*

*The COMMODORE, on rising to respond, was warmly received. He said that this was the second occasion on which he had been the recipient of their hospitality and he thought they valued far too highly whatever he had been able to do for the squadron and yachting generally in Sydney. However, that was a matter for themselves. He thanked Mr. Milson for the manner in which he had proposed the toast and the company for the way they had honoured it. He would say a few words about certain occurrences during the past season that should be noticed at that closing meeting. The first was the unfortunate collision off Bradley's Head when the Deronda was sunk by a steamer. He would say nothing about the merits or demerits of that case, or give any opinion as to whether the boat or the steamer was in the wrong, but he would observe that yachtsmen, whether in open or decked boats did not recollect that people who ran steamers had to earn their living by it, while the yachtsmen went out merely for their own pleasure - (hear, hear) - and it was therefore their duty to keep out of the way of the steamers. He hoped something would be done in the ensuing season to alter the usual course, so that the boats would be out of the way of the excursion steamers. They could get quite as good a course, that would not interfere with the traffic of the harbour. The other matter was one about which he felt some diffidence in speaking. On occasions during the past season there was some little dispute about yacht races and one boat had been withdrawn from this squadron, and one from the Prince Alfred, because their owners thought that the committees in awarding the prizes to other boats (on account of some trifling breach of the rules of racing) had exceeded their powers or not dealt fairly with them. He would not say anything about the merits of these cases either, but he hoped that the two gentlemen who had thus shown their disapprobation of the decisions of the committee - decisions which were not arrived at without some thought and some trouble - would reconsider their determination and re-join the clubs they had left (Applause.) If they were to do anything towards promoting aquatic sports here they could only do it by a long pull, a strong pull and a pull all together, for any little squabbles they had among them would only do harm to the sport they had at heart. He had spoken of this matter because he had been concerned in three such cases. In one the committee decided against him, and he had since come to the conclusion that he had been in the wrong and deserved to be "slated" (Laughter and applause.) In the other two the committee thought he was in the right, nevertheless he now considered it would have been better to have put up with the result as it stood at first because his action might have caused dissatisfaction among the members, and he desired to do nothing that would interfere with the amity that characterised their meetings. These remarks had come from him rather late, as the events referred to occurred some years back but as this might be the last occasion on which he would have the pleasure of receiving their hospitality - (No, no) - although he might join in giving an entertainment to some better man, he would say that if he were in a like position again he would not protest unless he thought the result of the race would be affected by the foul, or whatever else occurred. It was his sole end to avoid squabbles which would*





## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

*only cause annoyance and trouble amongst them. He thanked them heartily for the honour they had shown him and hoped that next season they would have someone to fill his place -(No) - better than he had done. (Loud applause.)*

*Mr. Alfred FAIRFAX proposed "Success and prosperity to the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron." What that might mean they all understood, because they were all either yachting men themselves or in sympathy with yachting. He had been for many years connected with the squadron, and he had one (Mr. James Milson) sitting alongside of him who was almost the founder of it (Applause.) When he arrived in the colony, he dared not tell them how long ago - (laughter) - he took very little interest in aquatics. But he remembered being present at a race on Anniversary Day, the 26th January, 1841, when he witnessed a contest between the Friendship and the Ariel. The proprietor of the Friendship was Mr. Milson. He had then, as he said, no sympathy with boating or yachting, but the sight of that race, with the crews in their bright caps, and trousers turned up to the knees, handling their boats as they dashed gaily through the water, roused in him a spirit of enthusiasm with yachting that has never left him. (Hear, hear.) Regarding the position of the squadron he knew nothing, but he hoped they would succeed as they had done in the past. (Applause.)*

*Mr. TRICKETT responded as a member of the squadron committee, and it gave him great pleasure to do so, especially when the toast had been so well proposed by their friend and veteran yachtsman, Mr. Fairfax. The squadron was now, as it always was, in a most prosperous and satisfactory condition. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Perhaps they could not now, as they could years ago, point to vessels of very large tonnage as belonging to their squadron, but they could with pride point to the number of boats assembled there on this festive occasion to tender a compliment to Mr. Knox. The boats which composed the fleet at that time were boats which he thought specially suited for the requirements of our harbour. Boats ranging from 10 to 30 tons were quite large enough for the requirements of the Sydney yachtsmen, because, unfortunately they could not go any distance from home, at any rate, not further than Broken Bay. It was very gratifying to see gentlemen who years ago took an interest in yachting come there again and join in that meeting. (Hear, hear.) He took it that the pastime of yachting was one of the healthiest, pleasantest, and manliest in which a man could indulge. (Hear, hear.) Whether as young men with time to spare, or as the heads of families with cares which always came sooner or later (laughter) - they could take an active interest in this pastime, which was so invigorating and health-giving. Personally, he had formerly taken part in yachting, but lately, owing to other engagements which occupied his attention, he was unable to do so. If he wanted to sail now, he was obliged to accept the hospitality of his fellow-yachtsmen. But it was well known that if a man was a member of a yacht club and a respectable member of society, he was always welcome on board the boats of the squadron (Hear, hear.) He used to be the skipper of his own boat, but now he was one of a very different crew - (loud laughter) - and in helping to guide the ship of State he found much greater difficulty in getting along than in handling his own little craft. He was sorry to say also, that he did not meet with that sense of honour to which his friend the Commodore had alluded. On the water there was a hard and fast rule that boats on the starboard tack should give way - (loud laughter) - no, that boats on the port tack should give way to boats on the starboard tack. But in sailing the boat to which he now belonged there was no giving way on the part of those who crossed their course. There was always somebody ready to sink them. The squadron was in a flourishing condition and it was very gratifying to see so many gentlemen take an interest in it. Yachting was a sport that deserved encouragement, and when it was presided over by gentlemen who, like the Commodore and Vice-commodore, were always ready to take out friends in their capital yachts, it would go ahead. And with regard to the clubs of yachts, they could point with pride to the vessels forming their fleet. Without making invidious comparisons, they could point to the Sirocco, the Commodore's yacht which was designed in England, and built by one of the best English yacht-builders, sails and all, and which had always maintained a good position. There was another, the*



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*Iolanthe, which was celebrated by name but had not as yet come into competition with others of her class, and he hoped her spirited owner would give them an opportunity of seeing what she could do. (Hear, hear and applause.) When they remembered how the old fashioned Australian, which had been sailing for about 20 years, had taken the prizes from the best English boats, it made them very anxious to see the Iolanthe take part in a contest. (Loud applause.) Among the larger boats he could point to the Magic. Between that boat and the Mistral, they had seen some of the pleasantest and closest races that had taken place for a long time and he hoped they would see those boats racing again, together with the Vice-commodore's yacht the Waitangi. He welcomed Mr. James Fairfax on his return amongst them as a yachtsman. He thanked Mr. Alfred Fairfax and the company for the hearty manner in which the toast of prosperity to the club had been proposed and honoured (Applause.)*

*The COMMODORE then proposed "the health of the Vice-commodore," whom he considered to be the right man in the right place. They were pleased to see there the Vice-commodore's father.*

*The toast was drunk amid loud cheering.*

*The Vice-commodore briefly responded.*

*The company then rose from the table and presently dispersed for the return journey. By this time, the wind had become very light and the sky darkened, as if in sympathy with the purpose of the ceremony. The proceedings were marked by an absence of jubilant enthusiasm - a very natural circumstance - but for all that the day passed off agreeably and as the yachts quietly floated homewards up the harbour, everyone seemed to feel that the close of the season had been most pleasant and appropriate.*

### **Sydney Sails (1912)**

As a memento of the Jubilee, ex-Commodore E. W. Knox presented to the Squadron a silver loving cup and salver. This gift became known as the Knox Cup, but it was not for competition, and has been preserved as a reminder not only of an historic occasion, but also in memory of the donor who was one of the Squadron's most enthusiastic active sailing members during its formative, and many subsequent, years.

### **Sydney Sails (1912)**

At the Squadron's annual meeting in August 1928 Lord Stonehaven was re-elected commodore, but E. P. Simpson retired as vice-commodore, and Paul Ross was elected as his successor in that office. H. H. York (who had bought Awanui IV after A. C. Saxton's death and renamed her Carinya), was elected rear-commodore. Another change was the retirement of J. M. Goddard as honorary treasurer. His successor in that office was F. White. At that meeting, members passed a resolution in the most cordial terms, congratulating E. W. Knox on his sixty years' membership. He had joined the Squadron in 1868.

### **Tuesday, 27th June, 1933 – Sydney Morning Herald**

#### **DEATH OF GREAT CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY**

*Mr. Edward William Knox, who retired from the position of chairman and managing director of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co., Ltd., in February, died at his home, Rona, Bellevue Hill, early yesterday morning. He had been in indifferent health for many months. He was aged 86 years.*

*Mr. Knox, who was born in Sydney, became general manager of the company in 1881, and had been managing director and chair- man of it since 1920. The Colonial Sugar Refining Co., with its widespread operations, stands witness to the capacity for organisation and the far-seeing vision*



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*largely of two men—Sir Edward Knox and the son who followed in his footsteps, Mr. Edward W. Knox. It was as a young man that the responsibility first fell to Mr. Knox of guiding the destinies of the company, only a comparatively few years after he had entered the office in 1864.*

*On February 20, 1914, at a meeting of officers and ex-officers of the company to wish Mr. Knox a pleasant holiday on the eve of his departure on extended leave of absence, advantage was taken of the opportunity to present him with an address in celebration of the completion of 50 years of service in the company. In acknowledging the address, Mr. Knox spoke of the early history of the company.*

*"My first recollection," he said, "is that of being taken, as a very little boy, to see the refineries then working in Liverpool-street and at Cook's River. I cannot tell you any-thing about the process except that the old loaves were being made, and I am not sure whether the third house, in Parramatta-street (now George-street West), was then also at work. The whole produce was then much less than 100 tons a week.*

*After the visit just referred to the new company was formed by my father, and the house in Parramatta-street alone was worked. During the first two or three years the business was very profitable, and when my father left for England at the end of 1857 with his family, he was more than well off. However, before we got to Europe, there was a collapse of the sugar market. We had to return without delay, and, on arriving in Sydney in August, 1858, the fortune had gone, and my father had 20 years of work before he could again take a holiday. Of course, as a boy of 11, I did not understand then all that was happening, but the close and careful economy of the next five years made me realise what the change had been. That time I spent at the Grammar School, and, on leaving at the end of 1863, I was sent to the country to see if that life would suit me better than clerical work. This was not the case, and on April 3, just as I was 17, I entered on my duties in the Bridge-street office. When I joined, the business was a very small one, the yearly output of the refinery being about 5000 tons of sugar. It was, moreover, in anything but a thriving condition, and, two years later, it was very hard hit by large failures in a commercial crisis. Nor did things improve for some years, and attention was consequently turned to the possibility of making sugar in New South Wales, which promised to be a paying speculation. In 1869 mills were erected, and in the following year, at the age of 23, I was sent to the Clarence to look after two mills that had been placed there. All that could be said in my favour on taking up this work was that no one in the service knew more, or much less, than I did about making sugar, and my feelings for the first year were those of a motherless foal turned out to pick up a living in the cold, hard world."*

### **ANOTHER CRISIS.**

*Shortly after his appointment as manager, the company built the mills in North Queensland, and the mills also at Nausori, Fiji, and the refinery in Auckland. Thus Mr. Knox found himself, along with Mr. German, charged with all the details of six big factories within a few years. When the factories were built the price of sugar was high. "And everything," Mr. Knox added in his recital of the company's struggles, "went like an express train—even the increase of the indebtedness of the company for the new ventures. The times, however, were too good to last, and in 1904 there was a crisis in the sugar trade which brought about a permanent fall of about £10 a ton in the value of sugar, and, for a time, it was impossible to produce sugar at the new mills except at a loss. This was a very serious check. I remember now, as if it took place yesterday, how, at the end of 1883, Mr. Rothe and I made calculations showing that in a certain period the company must make £200,000. When that date came, we had lost £100,000, and no one could say when the position would be improved. Meantime, the shareholders went for 18 months without a dividend."*

*In 1885, on the return of his father from England, Mr. Knox went away for a year's leave. On the latter's return in 1885 the company began to derive advantage from the chemical check in improving*



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*the work of the factories, the company then taking in hand the amalgamation of three companies, which was accomplished in 1887 and 1888. Mr. Knox's father died in 1901, and Mr. Knox then realised more than ever what an important part his father had played in the progress of the company. "By far the ablest businessman I have known," said Mr. Knox. "I could not fail to learn from his storehouse of wisdom and experience, and what success has come to me is all more or less the result of his training and advice."*

*Mr. Knox was a member of the University Senate from 1894 until 1919. He succeeded his father as president of the Union Club, which he joined in 1868, and resigned from that position a few years ago. The golden weddings of both Mr. Knox and his father were celebrated by the company with which their names will always be associated.*

*Mr. Knox was one of the oldest members of the Australian Jockey Club. In his younger days he was a keen yachtsman, first with his brother, the late Mr. T. F. Knox, in the Pleiades and later in the Sirocco. He was a member of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron for a great number of years. He was formerly a trustee of the Art Gallery and of the Sydney Grammar School and was ever an active supporter of the Church of England.*

*Mr. Knox is survived by Mrs. Knox and a family of four daughters—Mrs. Colin Stephen, Mrs. Adams, and the Misses Barbara and Janet Knox, the last named of whom is in England. There will be a funeral service at All Saints, Woollahra, at 10.30 o'clock this morning, and the interment will take place subsequently in the Waverley Cemetery.*

### **AN APPRECIATION.**

*(BY P. T. WHEEN, A MEMBER OF HIS STAFF.)*

*E. W. Knox's great originating mind knew no sham; falseness was too small a field for his mentality. Edward Knox, affectionately known among the officers of his staff as "The Old Man," was born with a pioneering spirit. He has established his own monument—the Colonial Sugar Refining Company—so well that it must endure through time. He was the great champion of the sugar industry in Australia and Fiji. He never "nursed" the industry into existence; with dynamic energy rarely surpassed in the history of Australia he built it! He was a born fighter. Like all geniuses, Mr. Knox's code was 99 per cent. perspiration and 1 per cent. inspiration, but he never asked anyone to work harder than he was prepared to work himself. His claim to the title of genius lay in an extraordinary ability to arrive at the correct decision—herein lies the secret of his success. Perhaps his greatest contribution to humanity is to be found in his institution of the policy of scientific control in industry. The present general manager of the company at a recent meeting of shareholders, speaking of Mr. Knox, said: "I believe he was one of the first to introduce science into an industry, when he established chemical control in the company's factories." This policy was adopted only after a great tactical battle, and its now general world-wide acceptance is a tribute to the determination and indomitable will of the man. He was the perfect manager, who so thoroughly deputed responsibility that he could walk out and not be missed. Some years ago, he chose and trained those who were to follow him, and time again has proved, in his last important decisions, that he made no errors. His followers were not necessarily University students; he had more faith in "inherited experience" than in any text-book. The officers of the company will mourn their loss, but the name of that wide-visioned man, Edward Knox, will live for ever-more.*

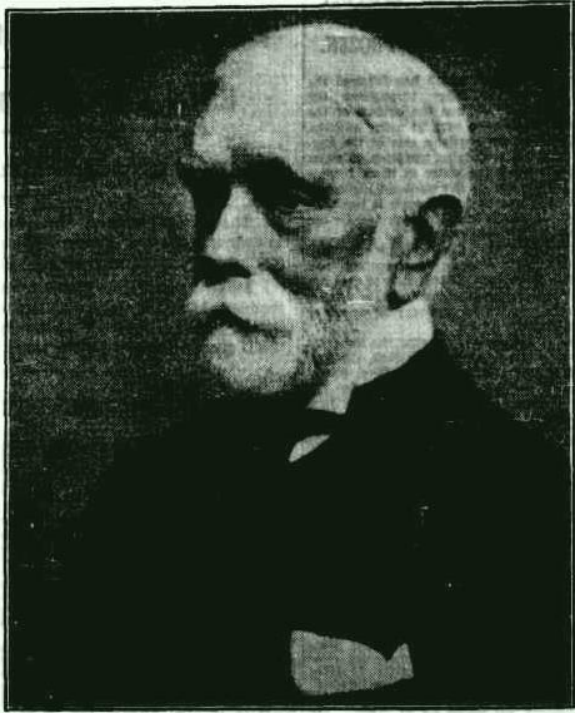
*He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again.*





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LATE MR. E. W. KNOX.



BUST OF MR. E. W. KNOX.



The salaried staff of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co., Ltd., have subscribed for this bust (the work of Mr. Lyndon R. Dadswell), which is to be placed in the office of the company.



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**Knox, Edward William (1847–1933)**

By **Martha Rutledge**

This article was published in *[Australian Dictionary of Biography](#)*,

Edward William Knox (1847-1933), industrialist, was born on 1 April 1847 in Sydney, second of four surviving sons of Sir Edward Knox, founder of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co., and his Irish wife Martha, sister of William Rutledge. Educated at Sydney Grammar School, in 1863 he won the senior Knox prize. He refused a university education and joined C.S.R. in April 1864 as a junior clerk.

In 1870 Knox took charge of the company's crushing mills on the Clarence. Inheriting 'his father's drive, his integrity and his uncanny intuition', he sought many improvements in management and encouraged the cane-farmers to improve their agricultural methods and to grow sweeter cane. In 1876 he visited the West Indies to study milling: next year double crushing was adopted. He later visited sugar-beet factories in Germany and France. At St Matthew's Church, Manly, he married Edith (d.1942), daughter of J. S. Willis on 30 January 1878.

Appointed general manager of C.S.R. in 1880, Knox 'surrounded himself with able lieutenants'. During his first five years C.S.R. expanded its operations into Queensland and Fiji and built seven new mills and a refinery at Auckland, New Zealand. He realized that profits depended on increased efficiency through the application of science to every aspect of the industry.

In the early 1880s the company recruited chemists from Scotland and Germany and, after the slump of 1884, Knox introduced a system of chemical book-keeping. In 1890 he addressed the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science 'On an application of chemical control to a manufacturing business'.

The company's size, efficiency and tendency to absorb competitors laid it open to criticism, particularly by politicians raising the cry of monopoly, especially after Federation and the payment of the Commonwealth sugar bounty. The attacks culminated in the royal commission on the sugar industry in 1911-12. Knox categorically refused to answer questions about costs or to produce the company's books, as he believed publication would damage the company. He was vindicated when C.S.R. successfully challenged an amendment to the Royal Commissions Act in the High Court of Australia and was upheld by the Privy Council. A stubborn free trader, he desired 'a uniform absence of [government] interference in industrial matters'. (He was again to refuse to give information to the royal commission chaired by A. B. Piddington in 1920.)

However, in May 1915 W. M. Hughes and Knox met to draft the principles of the Commonwealth's wartime control of the industry. In 1920 Knox became chairman and managing director of C.S.R. He visited London in 1922 at the request of the British government to discuss the problem of Indian labourers in Fiji. He resigned as managing director in December 1932.

Although diffident about his 'inability to speak in public' and his civic achievements, he served on four royal commissions, including the Sydney water supply (1902), and as an alderman on Woollahra Municipal Council in 1887-1902. A member of the Board of Health in 1888-1902, he found its work interesting and varied.

He was a fellow of the Senate of the University of Sydney in 1894-1919 and a trustee of Sydney



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Grammar School in 1884-1924 and of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales from 1907. He served on the committee of the Union Club for forty years (president in 1908-21) and was a member of the Australian Jockey Club.

His gabled stone house, Rona, on Bellevue Hill, was completed in 1883. His great pleasure was sailing: in 1875 he and his brother Tom bought and raced *Pleiades*. In 1881 he had built *Sirocco*, a ten-ton cutter, won many races in her over twenty years, and continued to be a familiar sight on the harbour until he sold her in 1927. He was commodore of Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron in 1883-84. Ned, as he was known in the family, enjoyed dancing, attending the theatre and opera, and frequent foreign travel from which he brought home many *objets d'art*. He was guided by his friend George, son of S. K. Salting, in buying Chinese porcelain and ivories, but paintings 'he chose for himself'. A shy man, who would never speak on the telephone, he was happiest among his relations.

In old age Knox wrote some random recollections. He resigned from the board of C.S.R. in February 1933, died at Rona on 26 June and was buried in Waverley cemetery after a service at All Saints Anglican Church, Woollahra, where he had worshipped all his life. He was survived by his wife and four daughters; the eldest Dorothy married (Sir) Colin Stephen. His younger brothers were Thomas Forster (1849-1919), managing director of the Sydney branch of Dalgety & Co. Ltd for many years, and Sir Adrian, chief justice of the High Court.

Knox's 'intuitive knowledge of the course to be taken in emergencies' enabled the 'Sugar Company' to surmount the crises and fluctuations in price that beset the industry. As a salaried man he thought it wrong to speculate and his fortune derived from shares in the company. His estate was valued for probate at £223,701 in New South Wales and £4,066 in Victoria. His portrait by Longstaff, in the Union Club, emphasized his glistening white hair and beard, 'the face so full of health and open air vitality', and his piercing china-blue eyes. Portraits of him and Mrs Knox by McInnes, painted for their golden wedding in 1928, are held by the family, and a bronze bust by Lyndon Dadswell is in the Art Gallery of New South Wales.