



## ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

### Art Treasures of the Squadron

***Gretel Wins Race Two America's Cup, 1962***  
by John Allcot  
Carrabella Room entrance



'It was blowing 20 to 25 knots with large seas...foul weather for 12 Metres in anyone's language. We both reached across the second leg and at the last mark we were about three boat lengths astern. From this mark to the finish, the seas were rolling in from astern and we hoisted our spinnaker shortly after rounding. It filled beautifully whilst still about 30 feet from the masthead and, while we were struggling to hoist it, a wave lifted our stern and the bow went about two feet underwater with yours truly struggling to close the fo'ard hatch with half the Atlantic Ocean pouring in. This wave carried us up alongside the enemy as they were still struggling to hoist their kite. We caught another similar wave, and the Australian spirits were let loose as we surged down this chute with water flooding about 11 inches deep back at the grinders. We let out a "Ya-hoo!" which threw the Yanks off guard, and as they turned around to see us shooting past, they saw one of our lads whipping the deck with the rope's end. We sailed through to win this race by 47 seconds and also establish a course record'.



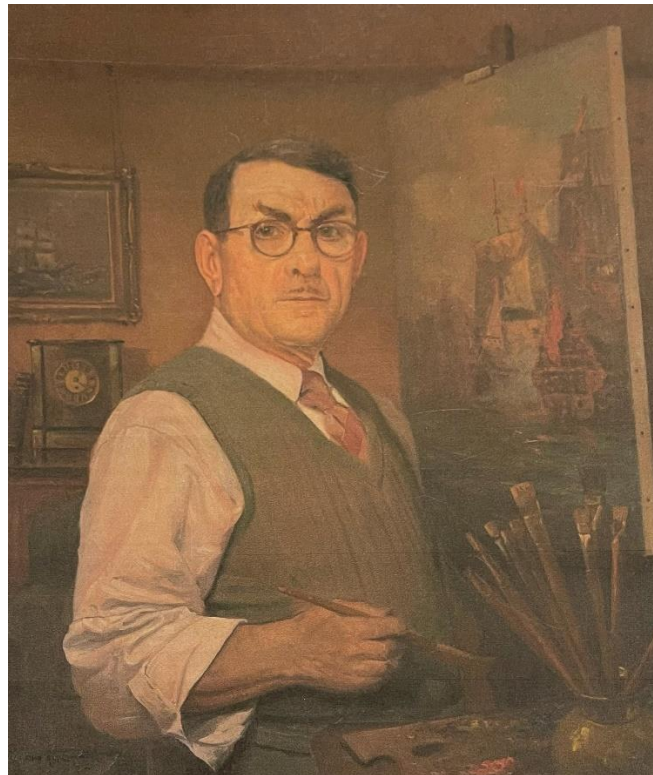
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These were the remarks by young Mick York, a crew member of *Gretel*, recorded in a fascinating diary about the America's Cup Challenge by the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron in 1962 against *Weatherly* and the New York Yacht Club. They are wonderfully detailed in Peter Campbell's report titled 'The America's Cup - The Squadron Challenges' in the [RSYS Logbook Sesquicentenary Edition](#).

Another John Allcot (1888-1973) 'Gretel Wins Race Two America's Cup' (59 x 74cm) dated 1962 hangs at the entry to the Carrabella Room or main dining room on the right hand side as you enter from the main lounge.

It captures the extraordinary moment in time when Australia won its first race in the America's Cup in profile, emphasising *Gretel's* length of win. It beautifully illustrates the fierce competition between the two boats. The heavy seas and strong winds are evident, setting the atmosphere. You can see *Weatherly* struggling with their kite at the bow of the boat. It is a dramatic scene with the fully hoisted spinnakers and the spectator boats. The Destroyer *Robert Kennedy* is depicted with President Kennedy on board on the right hand side of the painting.

Allcot has painted the sea in his signature 'romantic style' - which is so expressive - with the blue green waves in rough oil brush strokes on board to evoke the feel of the strong conditions. He has captured *Gretel* surging down the wave that powered her to victory in this race against *Weatherly*. *Weatherly's* spectacular red spinnaker is positioned in the painting to focus the eye, making a strong composition. It is in direct contrast to the bright sky behind it and *Gretel's* bright white spinnaker.



'Self-portrait' 1952 by John Allcot



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The dark and diminutive Allcot (153 cm tall) was born in Britain and trained there as an artist but got his experience at sea in commercial shipping as a deckhand before becoming a full time artist in Sydney. He became a Fellow of the Royal Art Society and exhibited prolific landscape and marine work. His studio at North Sydney became a meeting place for those interested in ships, paintings and models. Regular visitors included Ian Hansen, probably our best living Australian marine artist who also painted 'The Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron' for the Sesquicentenary, which hangs in the main lounge room opposite the fireplace. Allcot was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1970 and became known as the 'Father' of marine art in Australia,

The America's Cup is the Holy Grail of sailing challenges, being the oldest competition in international sport. 1962 was the inaugural Australian challenge by an Australian yacht club. The Squadron Member and newspaper magnate, Frank Packer, after returning from the 1958 America's Cup when the British were defeated four-nil declared, "Anything the Poms can do, we can do better!" He formed a syndicate over a quiet lunch at the Squadron and instructed Alan Payne to design a 12 Metre yacht for the 1962 America's Cup. *Greتل* was the first Australian boat to win a race in the America's Cup. *Weatherly*, the American defender, ultimately went on to retain the Cup in closely fought races, but it whetted the appetite for the Australian challenges and underlined the skill and determination of her sailors and innovation of designers which ultimately led to the extraordinary victory of *Australia II* of the Royal Perth Yacht Club in 1983.



The crew of *Greتل* celebrating

By Robyn Coleman, Exhibiting Member of the Royal Art Society NSW