



ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

Art Treasures of the Squadron

Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, 2011
by Ian Hansen
Neutral Bay Verandah lounge



The beautiful 'Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron' painting by Ian Hansen commemorates the Sesquicentenary of the Squadron in 2012. It hangs in the Neutral Bay Verandah lounge, opposite the fireplace. Painted from a viewpoint at sea level just off the shoreline of Sydney Harbour at Kirribilli, it brings to life the delightful features of the original north-east facing club built in 1862 with the modern adaptations of the Careening Cove Anchorage and the lawns leading down to the hardstand and boatyard area.

The splendid light focuses on the clubhouse, with the North Sydney skyline fading into the background. In the foreground, the yacht with red sail cover is heading out for a sail. The artist has also captured the variety of one design boats on the hardstand, as well as the dinghies being launched from the pontoon by the Youth sailors. That pontoon and the tree on the lawn are of particular interest, as both have been destroyed by storms since 2012. The light on the water in front of the Squadron magnificently draws the eye on the large yacht. The variety of colours and textures in the water are extraordinarily rich, with reds, blues, greens and yellows in thick brush strokes of oil on linen in the Romantic expressive style.

The atmosphere is light and airy, reminiscent of the official opening of the new clubhouse on 24 January 1903, with a garden party in the grounds, shortly after the flagstaff from the collier *Bellambi*



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and the whale jawbones from Twofold Bay were erected. The two field guns shown have graced the lawn since 1909. They are treasured Squadron artefacts and of considerable historical significance as they were the only relics of the first Military contingent to depart Australian shores for active service in the Sudan in 1885. The Sesquicentenary was likewise marked with a traditional garden party on the sweeping lawns and terraces below the clubhouse on 8 July 2012.



The original Field Guns. Photo Sam Hood, Powerhouse Museum Collection.

Ian Hansen was born in 1948 in Bordertown, SA and spent his childhood on the foreshore of Hervey Bay in QLD where he gained a deep love for the sea and painting. He joined the Navy at age 15 as an apprentice shipwright and continued to paint in his off-duty hours, becoming a full-time artist in 1975 when his service time expired. He saw active service in Vietnam from 1967-68 and was appointed as an artist to the Navy in 2000 in East Timor. In 2002 Ian joined the Ice Ship *Sir Hubert Wilkins* for a five week voyage to Antarctica. His logbooks can be viewed on his website. Ian's studio is in a converted stable in the rear garden of his home in Hunter's Hill, Sydney.

Ian is nationally and internationally recognised as an outstanding marine artist. He is a Fellow of The Royal Art Society and Australian Society of Marine Artists. He exhibits with The Maritime Gallery at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut, USA. The gallery considers him one of their Premier Artists, only 20 are appointed worldwide! Ian is a member of 'Kevin Hills Top 10 Australian Artists' who exhibit their work several times a year.



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Ian Hansen in his studio at Hunter's Hill

Ian regularly sails his two classic wooden yachts *Karalee* and *Smokey Cape* on Sydney Harbour. He has also sailed both boats numerous times to Lord Howe Island and the Wooden Boat Festival in Hobart. Ian still does all his own shipwright work. He also crews on board the Barque *James Craig*, whose illustrated logbooks are always viewed with great interest by visitors to his studio and can be viewed on his website.

Ian generously recounted to me the process of the commission of our painting on 10 July 2021:

'The Squadron commission is an oil on linen 120 x 90 cm, painted in 2011. Initially, I did a small study which the Committee approved. It included *Margaret Rintoul* (a beautiful wooden classic yacht) in the foreground, as Club Member Bruce Gould was the driving force behind the commission, and given the yacht's history with the Squadron. Once the painting was completed, the Committee decided to repaint the Squadron for the upcoming Sesquicentenary celebrations with a new colour scheme. "Mr Hansen, would you mind changing your wonderful painting to the new colour?" they asked. Once this was accomplished and the painting re-scanned, they returned, "Ah, Mr Hansen, one of our committee members has brought forward the motion, that as the painting is meant to depict the Squadron as it is today - a modern yacht should be in pride of place." Back to the easel I went and scanned again.'

Despite these changes, Ian produced a magnificent painting to commemorate a very significant milestone in the Squadron's history. He captured the splendour, grace, style and elegance that characterises our Club ... and if you look closely, you can see *Margaret Rintoul* in the Pond!

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