

E. Hungerford

Members may have noticed that the northern entrance to the Club has recently been enhanced by the addition of framed caricatures which used to be hidden in some of the rooms upstairs. I first noticed them while chairing protests 30 years ago. While awaiting the protagonists, I would study the art work. I always was amused by the number of gents smoking pipes.

The caricatures are the work of Lawrence Herbert Beecroft. Beecroft was born in Reading in England in 1864 and immigrated to Australia in 1905. He is recorded in the National Library of Australia as a “Widely printed early 20th century Sydney painter, miniaturist, postcard artist and theatrical lightning sketch artist and lecturer.” As a result of my research, I learnt that between his arrival in 1905 and 1920, he made many detailed portraits of the La Perouse Aboriginal community and became a handwriting expert called upon to give evidence in court cases. He dabbled in miniature works, etchings and landscapes. His sister and 2 of his uncles were missionaries and he became a painter of religious pictures in the 1920s. He died in 1951.

Only 2 months after his arrival in Sydney, the following appeared in the paper:

Friday, 26th April, 1905 - The Sydney Morning Herald
THE BEECROFT ENTERTAINMENT.

Mr. Herbert Beecroft's second entertainment at the Centenary Hall last night enabled him to bring forward a series of humorous lightning sketches of characters in Charles Dickens' novels, and again his vivid caricatures of gentlemen in the audience won him deserved applause.

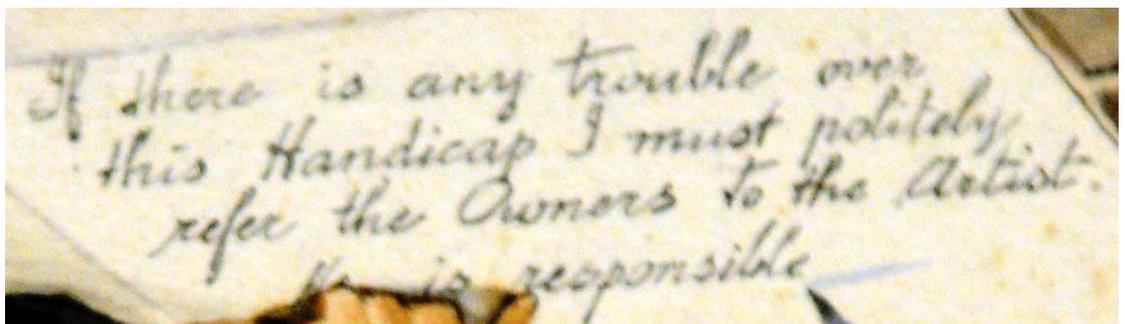
Of particular interest to us is that he was invited in 1908 by Frank Albert, a surname that lives on today at the Club, to begin a series of humorous but genteel studies of members of the Club. The last of these portraits is dated 1933. Each portrait usually has a suitably chosen nautical background, reflecting the personality or the role at the Club of the subject. Recently, my favourite marine photographer and RSYS member, John Jeremy, met me at the Club and we chose 6 pictures at random to photograph. These were to be the start of research on the stories behind the images.

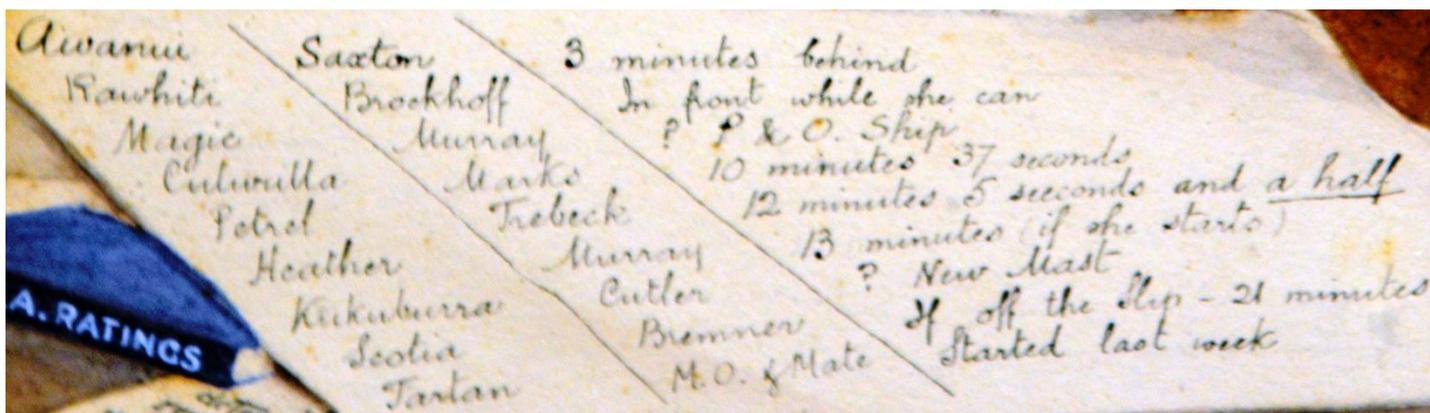


I chose Mr. E. Hungerford as the first to research and I laughed out loud as I studied the painting. It is titled “A Thankless Job.” The painting dates to 1908 and guess what: he was a Race Officer and **the Club Handicapper**. There was sinister work at hand with my choice.

Edward (Ned) Hungerford joined the Club in 1896. He died in 1956 so he was a member for 60 years. In fact, he was a resident for over 50 years and thereby active in everything for the Club’s welfare. To quote from “**Sydney Sails**”, the Squadron’s History book, 1862 to 1962, in 1954, he was “ninety years of age and never neglected to criticize the committees, declaring stoutly ‘That is what committees are for.’”

In the painting, he is writing “If there is any trouble with this handicap I must politely refer the Owners to the Artist. He is responsible.”



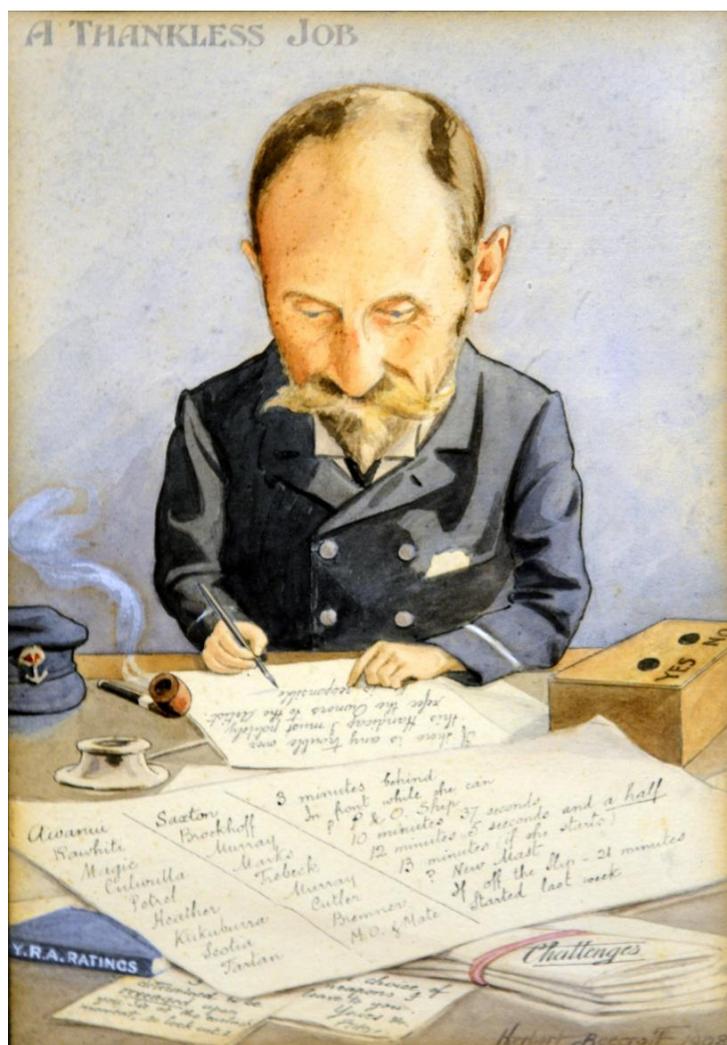


The other page lists the competitors, owners and comments as follows:

- Awanui – Saxton – 3 minutes behind
- Rawhiti – Brockoff – in front while she can
- Magic – Murray – ? P & O Ship
- Culwulla – Marks – 10 minutes 37 seconds
- Petrel – Trebeck – 12 minutes 5 seconds and a half
- Heather – Murray – 13 minutes (if she starts)
- Kukuburra – Cutler – ? New Mast
- Scotia – Bremner – if off the slips – 21 minutes
- Tartan – M.O & Mate – Started last week

Underneath this list, the papers say “determined to be revenged upon you, Sir, at the earliest moment, so look out..... Choice of weapons I leave to you, Yours etc” and the banded sheaf of papers is titled “Challenges.” Maybe they were challenges to the handicapper or maybe they were protests. Don Taylor, nonagenarian member, suggests they might be challenges for the Sayonara Cup. He tells me the ratings were always contentious and that may explain on the left the blue book of Y.R.A. ratings (today we have IRC).

The wooden box on the right is a ballot box. Maybe the competitors voted on their handicap. God help Mr. Hungerford if so. Once again, Don Taylor suggests it would have been a ballot box for the election committee which seems much more likely.



Here is a description of Closing Day, 1905.

25th March, 1905 - The Sydney Morning Herald
SAILING.

ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON.

The Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron will close their season this afternoon with a ladies yacht race, and a sweepstakes for boats on the supplementary list. In the first event sails are limited to fore and aft canvas, and no booming out. Ladies must be at the helm, but in the boat race it is optional for them to be in charge. The

handicaps are: Yachts: *Sirocco* (E. W. Knox), *Culwulla* (W. M. Marks), and *Scotia* (T. W. Bremner), scratch; *Actaea* (E. C. Jones), 5m; *Gulnare* (C. E. Waters), *Bull-Bull* (C. W. Barker), and *Lah Loo* (W. C. Heron), 9m; *Golarmi* (G. A. Heath), 11m. Boat race: *Vailele* (H. M. Shelley), scratch; *Iris* (B. J. Newmarch), 8m; *Mischief* (D. Roxburgh), 4m; **Tartan (E. Hungerford)** and *G. Henty*, 9m. The first event will start at 2.45, and the second at 3.15, both being sailed over a course starting from Neutral Bay, round Pilelight, back round Fort Denison to starting point. As the handicaps are to be given at the start luffing when off the wind cannot be indulged in. The prizes will be presented at the Clubhouse immediately after the races. No steamer will follow the races, but a very fair view will be obtained from the Club lawn.

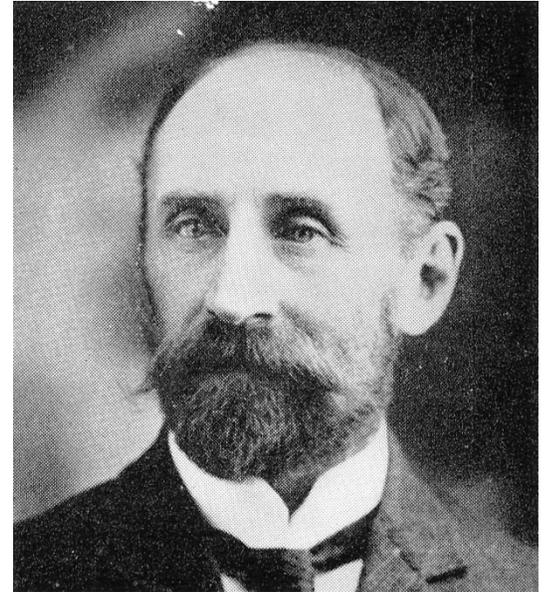
The following has a delightful reference to Mr. Hungerford.

Monday, 22nd October, 1945 - The Sydney Morning Herald

AT VICTORY REGATTA

GUESTS ARRIVE BY YACHT

*Gay flags which "dressed the ship" of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, Kirribilli, on Saturday afternoon, fluttered in a good sailing breeze for the Victory Regatta, which marked the opening of the sailing season. It was the first opening regatta held since the 1938 season, and many of the guests arrived in yachts which later took part in the races. The Commodore of the squadron, the Duke of Gloucester, sent a telegram with best wishes for the sailing season. Members sat in the waterfront gardens of the Clubhouse to watch the 143 yachts, from 12 to 32 footers, which took part in the races. Mr. and Mrs. Claude Plowman anchored their yacht, Morna, near the squadron Clubhouse, and Mr. and Mrs. F. B. Clapp also watched the races from their yacht, Westwind. After sailing across to Kirribilli with Mr. James Hardy in his yacht, Windward, Miss Pamela Bushell and her father, Mr. Percy Bushell, arrived at the Clubhouse rather wet, because a small naval craft had partly swamped the dinghy bringing them ashore. Miss Bushell was wearing a large scarf gaily printed with the regimental badges of the British Army, which her sister, Mrs. Anthony Oxley, sent her from England. Wearing a yachting cap which he acquired in 1877, **Mr. Edward Hungerford** was one of the oldest members of the squadron present. The last important occasion on which he wore the cap was when he started the last Sayonara Cup ocean race in 1932. Mr. W. L. Dendy, who won the last Victory Regatta race on February 8, 1919, in his yacht Magic, also attended.*



The last reference to Mr. Hungerford comes from “**Sydney Sails.**” In 1892, the Club meetings were held in the Post Office Chambers, Pitt Street, opposite the G.P.O. on the site where the Commonwealth Bank was erected in 1917.

“A humorous comment on this Clubroom was made in 1953 by a veteran yachtsman, **Edward Hungerford**, who had joined the Squadron as a young man in the 1890s: ‘The Squadron met in a little upstairs room in the Post Office Chambers, where twenty people could assemble. The members used to go up there, and occasionally the honorary secretary was present. It had as a bar a small locker in which were a bottle of whisky and a couple of bottles of beer, some glasses and a money-box. The Squadron stayed there many years,’ the veteran whimsically added, ‘there were some stirring meetings upon which the libel law prevents me from dwelling.’”

Their emergence of this artwork to a proud location in the Club is welcome. There is a wealth of history behind each painting and the Archive Committee has undertaken to unlock this history in future editions of the Logbook. We hope you enjoy the journey of discovery with us.