

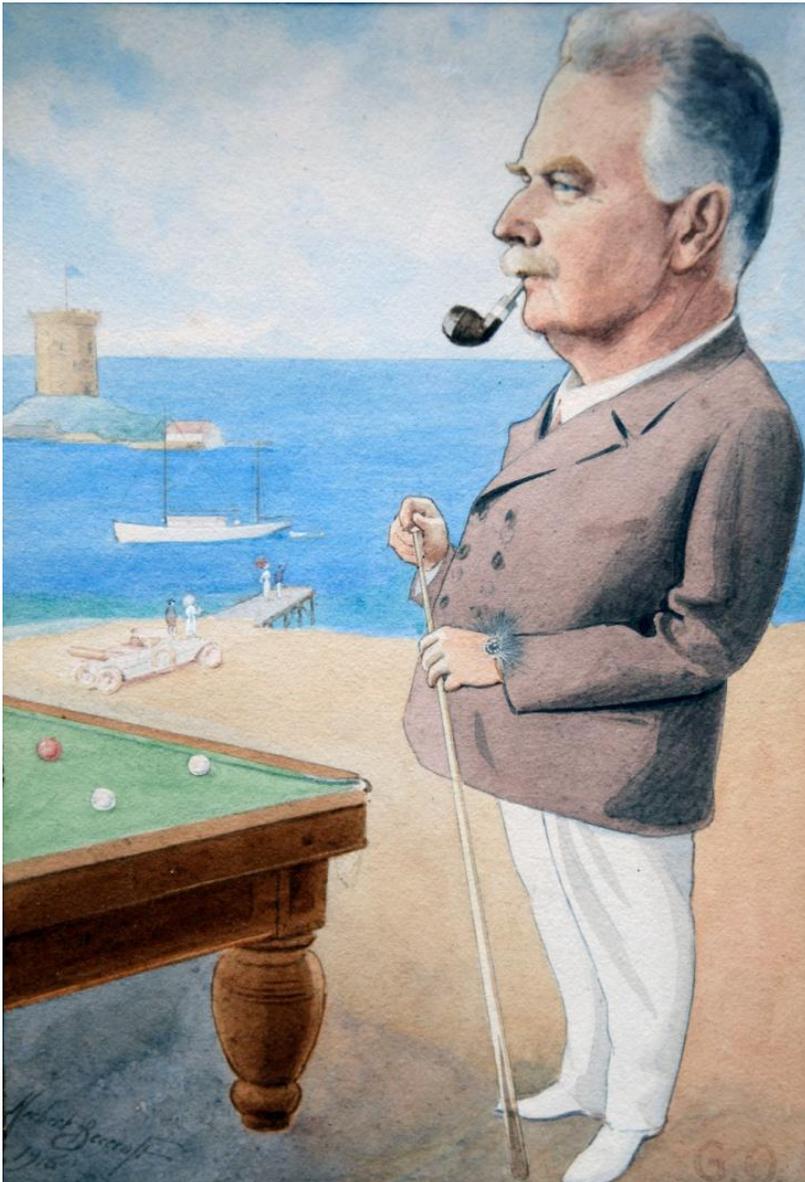
G Hyde

When J. Herbert Beecroft first came to Australia, he made his name with his “entertainments” when he would draw caricatures of members of his audience. His comical drawings became quite famous. Beecroft’s artwork is still in copyright so with the permission of the “Look and Learn History Picture Library” based in London, I am able to show you his drawing of “The Paid Companion” and it is obvious Mr. Beecroft’s humour is in play here. The face has the mark of a “Professional Dissapprover.” A companion such as this would have to be paid.

This essay looks at Beecroft’s painting of Commander George F. Hyde, a gentleman who would never have required a “Paid Companion.” In 1916, when Beecroft painted George Hyde, Hyde was well on the way towards an illustrious marine career. The painting is full of obscure detail. Commander Hyde is chalking his cue for his next billiard shot. On the wrist of his left arm, his watch is glowing, probably with an alarm. In the distance a veteran car has delivered 2 elegant couples to a wharf. The



women are carrying parasols and the gent on the wharf is waving. In the distance is a schooner motoring past and further out on an island or maybe a headland there is a boatshed at sea level and a turret with a blue flag flying from the top. At the bottom right hand side, there are the letters G.O. What does it all mean?



Well here is my interpretation. As I pursued my research, I learnt that in 1915, Commander Hyde was appointed in command of the light cruiser *HMS Adventure*. That ship served in the English Channel and in patrol and escort work in the Western Approaches as the Flagship of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, who was Commander-in-chief in that area. Hyde, in addition to being Flag Captain, was also Chief Staff Officer, an invaluable experience. He became a substantive Captain on 1st April 1917, having acted in the rank of Captain since assuming command of *Adventure*, the first officer of the RAN to command a Royal Navy Ship.

I think Beecroft has depicted Hyde’s departure from Australia. His watch is telling him it is time to leave the billiard table (probably at the RSYS) and G.O. (Go Overseas). Eminent colleagues have arrived at the wharf to wave him off and he will be in the English Channel doing his duty.

Commander Hyde was not a yacht owner. He would not have had time; however, he did attend functions at the Club and in the following description of the Anniversary Regatta in 1929, he is among the honoured guests.

Monday, 28th January, 1929 - Sydney Morning Herald

THE REGATTA.

HISTORIC DAY.

Variable Weather.

Sydney's great regatta was held on the Harbour on Saturday - Anniversary Day. Brilliant sunshine and a light zephyr of the morning gave way later in the day to grey skies and a freshening breeze. The afternoon was ideal for racing. By courtesy of the Orient S. N. Co., the liner Orsova was made available as a flagship, and from her deck a large crowd of well-known yachtsmen and the Governor-General (Lord Stonehaven) watched with interest the yachts, motor yachts, and rowing races.

When the first Anniversary Regatta was held, 92 years ago, probably it was more of a regatta and less of a celebration of an important anniversary. The colony of New South Wales then was only 50 years old. But, gradually, as one generation of Sydney folk succeeded another, the Anniversary Regatta has become not only notable for aquatic competitions, but as an occasion when the health, growth, and progress of the State are surveyed and made the subject of rejoicing.

There is only one other annual event comparable with it - that is, the Royal Show. But the Royal Show is a solemn, business-like review of our wealth and resources, a sort of stocktaking. The Anniversary Regatta, on the other hand, is more of a birthday party, a joyous function in which the representatives of all interests join in honouring the forces which gave birth to the State, and in giving thanks to the Providence which has allowed the young nation to grow and prosper.

That the Anniversary celebrations should be allied with a regatta is singularly appropriate. It was the beauty and extraordinary navigable character of the harbour which brought Phillip here to found the city of Sydney; the harbour carries a great proportion of the traffic which has made the State wealthy. It lies at the very heart of the biggest British city outside Britain.

Saturday's proceedings did not differ in character from scores of other anniversary celebrations. The Orsova, anchored at Neutral Bay, was the scene of the various official functions. The committee's guests were entertained aboard at a formal luncheon, and the whole programme was carried through without a hitch. From the Orsova's high decks, large numbers of persons watched the various races. In spite of a strong gusty, uncertain wind, the races were carried through with punctuality. Minor accidents were inevitable under the squally conditions, but nothing of an alarming character occurred.

The weather, for a time, caused the officials a good deal of anxiety. The day opened with hot sunshine and a strong north-easter; but later on southerly conditions manifested themselves, and a fierce battle of the elements culminated in the middle of the afternoon in a thunderstorm, and brief heavy rain. The skies soon cleared, however, and there was little interruption of the programme. The thunderstorm probably discouraged a good many people, who otherwise would have visited the flagship.

*With the assistance of Commander G. C. Thorne (of the Orsova), and the co-operation of the Ferry Company's staffs, splendid work was done by the regatta officials. The arrangements were supervised by the president of the regatta (Mr. John Garlick), assisted by Colonel A. Spain, Judge Backhouse, and Mr. A. Consett Stephen (vice-presidents). Among others present were the Archbishop of Sydney (Dr. Wright), the Town Clerk (Mr. Layton), Sir Alfred Meeks, Sir George Mason Allard, Mr. William Brooks. M.L.C., General A. T. Anderson, Lieut. Commander R. B. Leggatt, Commander P. Auverney (of the Cassiopee), **Rear-Admiral G. F. Hyde**, Lieut. Colonel J. Selater, Brigadier-General T. H. Dodds, Commander C. R. H. Garsia, Commander C. H. Ringrose, Commander D. A. Henderson, Commander Quick, Lieutenant-Commander A. R. M. Black, Dr. J. C. Bradfield, Captain G. D. Williams (Deputy Director of Navigation), Mr. W. D. Loveridge (president of the Sydney*

Harbour Trust), Captain C. P. Hildebrand, Captain J. R. Stringer, Captain D. S. Phillips, Captain F. W. Hixson, Dr. Wheatley, Dr. S. Hinder, Dr. H. Humphreys, Dr. George Abbott, Dr. Robertson Crawford, Messrs. W. H. Barkley (Collector of Customs), Geoffrey Fairfax, G. H. Faulks, R. T. McKay, W. P. O'Connor, W. J. Creagh, R. H. C. Down, J. Paton, S. G. Coggins, C. W. Alexander, G. F. Bellsario, Duncan Carson, Stuart F. Doyle, Kelso King, Archdale Parkhill, Justly Rawlings, S. W. Spain, George Wright, R. Walder, F. B. S. Falkiner, and D. D. Dowdell.

Admiral Hyde's illustrious career ended in July, 1937.

Thursday, 19th July, 1937 - Brisbane Courier Mail.

GREAT SAILOR GOES ON HIS LAST CRUISE

RAN. Was His 'Own Navy'

By J. A. BLAIKIE, Paymaster Lieutenant, R. A.N. R.

*With the death in Melbourne yesterday of **Admiral Sir George Francis Hyde, K.C.B., C.V.O., C.B.E.**, first naval member of the Naval Board, the Australian Navy mourns one of its founders, its most ardent protagonist, and a man who was as popular on the lower deck as in the ward room. His term of office would have expired in October, and the appointment of Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin as his successor was recommended early this month. Although a native of England, Admiral Hyde was attached to the Australian Navy while still a young man, and liked nothing better than to be regarded by his men as a fellow Australian. He was the first officer of the Australian Navy to receive a flag rank appointment with the Royal Navy, and behind that honour there lies the story of a determination and optimism which explains why one biographer has described Hyde as a man of 'cheerful yesterdays and confident to-morrows.'*

Joined 'Regulars' - *It was appropriate that the old sea faring town of Portsmouth should have been the birthplace, in 1877, of this man, whose first experience of the sea was marked by the 'salt horse' and hard biscuit of the old windjammer, Mount Stewart, in which he served as a cadet. Hyde obtained a commission in the Royal Naval Reserve in the days when that branch of the service was eyed askance by the 'regulars,' but that served only to strengthen his determination to succeed in the career he had mapped out for himself. Lord Charles Beresford was in command of the Mediterranean fleet when Hyde, as a reserve officer, was doing an annual cruise. At the end of the training one of the subjects set was an essay on the naval tactics of the Russo — Japanese war and their bearing on future naval engagements. Hyde's winning paper was of such merit that he was appointed to the permanent naval forces. With his foot on the first rung of the ladder he was sent to Australia in 1911 as one of the officers charged with the task of forming the Royal Australian Navy. He devoted himself to the work with the enthusiasm which marked his every undertaking, and three years later he was appointed permanently to the new navy. His ability had already won for him the command of the first torpedo flotilla in these waters, but the outbreak of the war saw him with the rank of Commander in the flagship, H.M.A.S. Australia.*



He saw considerable service in the Australia in the North Sea before being given command of the scout ship Adventure, which lived up to her name in anti-submarine work off the coast of Ireland. He was promoted captain in 1916, and after the war returned to Australia. He received his first taste of administrative experience

on the Naval Board before taking command of H.M.S. Vindictive for a year on the China station as the first officer of a Dominion navy to command an Imperial warship under peace-time conditions. It was when he was taking the old cruiser Melbourne to ship-breakers in England that he was elevated to the rank of rear-admiral, achieving the distinction of being the first officer of the Australian Navy to attain flag rank in Britain. Fresh honours followed quickly, for in 1928 he was made Commodore of the Australian Squadron — the navy which he had helped to form. He hoisted his flag in the new Australia, commanding her on her maiden voyage from England. In 1930 it seemed that Hyde had said farewell to the land of his adoption, for he was appointed to the command of the third battle squadron. But two years later he became first naval member of the Australian Naval Board, the administrative head of what he always termed his 'own navy.'

Awarded Knighthood

His civil decorations already included C.V.O. and C.B.E., and in the New Year honours of 1934 he was knighted - Congratulatory messages came to him from all parts of the Empire, but none were more sincere, or more appreciated, than those from the men he had led in peace and war. On July 12, 1936, he was promoted to Admiral. As first naval member, he was one of the men who inspired the present defence policy of Australia. His ability as an administrator resulted in a year's extension of his appointment. His death marks the passing not only of a great sailor but of a man honoured and admired by all with whom he came in contact.

August, 2015