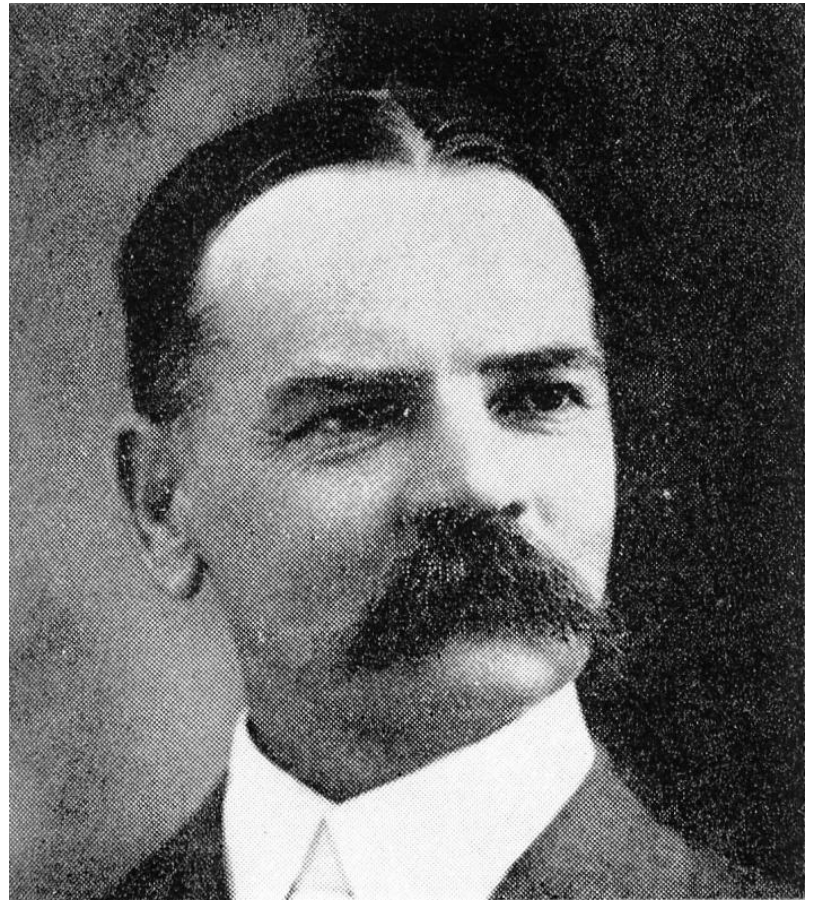
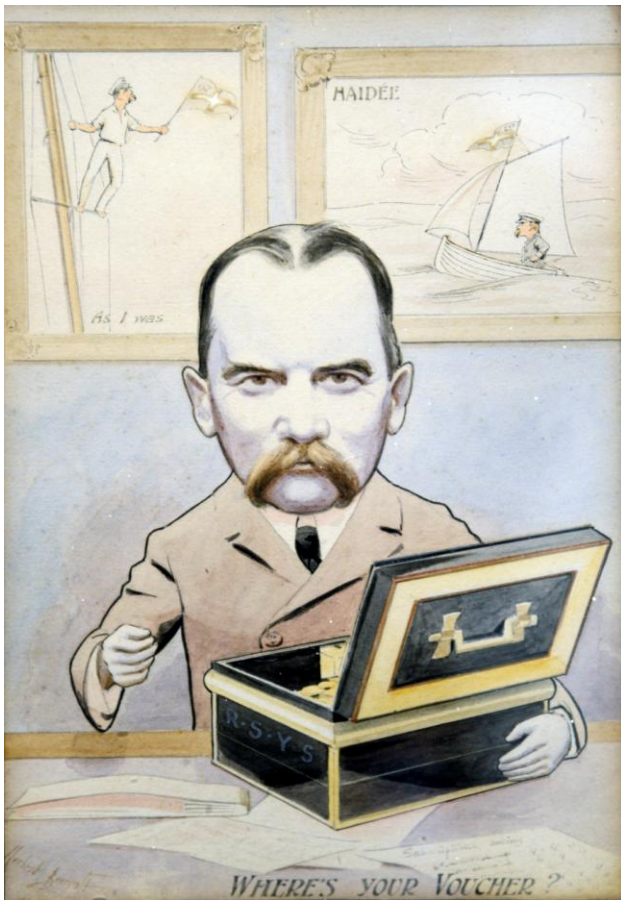


J. A. V. Minnett

You don't have to be Einstein to work out from L. Herbert Beecroft's caricature of John Alma Villiers Minnett that he acted as honorary treasurer for the Club for many years. Mr. Minnett is asking "Where's your voucher?" I have been in the office when accounting staff have been wading through the chits or vouchers to collate the member's monthly bills. While it has taken just about a century since the painting was done for the Club to automate payments to some degree, the vouchers of sorts still exist. The painting is undated but I have determined that it would be probably 1908, not only because Mr. Minnett was active at this time but because the painting has the mischievous humour which dates all the pre First World War ones.

The gold painted money box has R.S.Y.S. written on the side but it is hard to see. Next to the box is a cheque book and in front is a piece of paper with the heading "Subscriptions Owing" listing who and the amount £4 4s 4d.



When I studied Beecroft's depiction of Mr. Minnett's face, the hair parted in the middle and the moustache were unmistakable. I noticed he had painted the eyes a little sterner than in the photo, maybe to reflect the seriousness of the role of Treasurer as he asks with a direct stare "Where's your Voucher?" with outstretched right hand.

The etchings on either side are intriguing. The left hand one shows Mr. Minnett standing on the cross trees of a vessel holding an RSYS burgee and the caption says "As I was." The second drawing shows Mr. Minnett at the helm of his dinghy named "Haidee" which he raced at the Sydney Amateurs. An RSYS



burgee flies from the masthead. In both drawings, Mr. Minnett is recognisable by his walrus moustache.

I was mystified by the meaning of the first drawing until I located the following article from 1907.

Saturday, 16th November, 1907 - The Arrow

Mr. J. A. Minnett is the honorary treasurer of the RSYS of which he has been a member for nearly 20 years. Mr. Minnett has been in his time, a crack forward hand. In the early seventies he obtained a general knowledge of seamanship, aboard small vessels trading between Tasmania and the other Australian States, which he has since put to good service. Coming to Sydney as a youth, his worth was soon recognised in the sailing arena, where he was not long in making his mark. In the spirited days of the 24-footers he sailed many a race in the 'Lottie', and in the no less famous 'Carlotta' under such skippers as Montgomery and George Ellis. Later on, when 10-footers were in vogue, he sailed with Mr. P. O. Williams in the 'Anthea' and 'Desdemona'. To us, however, Mr. Minnett is best known as a yachtsman. His first yacht was the 'Ione'. Afterwards he belonged to the crews, generally as a forward hand, of the 'Waitangi', 'Magic', 'Miranda', 'Electra', 'Assegai', 'Thelma', and 'Era'. Mast head work was Mr. Minnett's specialty and many a risk he took of delivering himself over to old Davy Jones. Once, while sailing a race in 'Waitangi' against 'Magic', when it was blowing hard from the S.E., Mr. Minnett experienced perhaps his narrowest escape. He had been sent aloft to take in the topsail when the skipper changed his mind, and called him down just as the yacht put her nose round South Reef. His feet had hardly touched the deck before the mast went overboard, carrying everything with it. A few moments earlier and Mr. Minnett would have gone too. But he has come through all the dangers of the deep unharmed and all the better for his experiences.



In “Sydney Sails”, I found the following photo which only identifies 3 of its subjects. Look closely. That’s John Minnett in the second row on the left.



R.S.Y.S. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE, 1895-96

Commodore R. H. D. White is seated in the centre, with Vice-Commodore MacCormick on his right, and Rear-Commodore Cameron on his left

Mr. Minnett was also an active member of both the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club and the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club. He often acted as "Officer of the Day" on a steam launch which followed the Club's racing. He also served as president of the North Sydney Baseball Club and the North Sydney Orphan's Club for a period. In 1913, he was elected to the committee of the newly formed Automobile Club of Australia.

Here is a sample of newspaper articles referring to Mr. Minnett. Like so many Squadron members of the period, he had multiple interests. His sons were famous cricketers.

Friday, 3rd November, 1899 - Evening News

*A pleasing ceremony, took place on Thursday at the offices of the New Zealand Insurance Company, when **Mr. J. A. Minnett**, the newly appointed manager of the company, was the recipient of a framed group of the officers of the Sydney branch, bearing the following inscription: 'Presented to Mr. J. A. V. Minnett by the staff of the Sydney branch of the New Zealand Insurance Company, upon the occasion of his appointment as manager for New South Wales.' The recipient expressed himself pleased at the good feeling exhibited by the staff upon his appointment, which augured well for the future success of the company.*

Thursday, 21st September, 1905 - Evening News

MR. J. A. MINNETT.

***Mr. J. A. Minnett**, Sydney manager of the New Zealand Fire and Marine Insurance, to-day celebrates his 32nd anniversary in the service of the company. Mr. Minnett entered the company in the humble capacity of boy, and by strict adherence to duty and business principles, rose step by step to positions of higher responsibility, finally being appointed to the managerial chair, which he has occupied for several years past.*

Wednesday, 12th June, 1907 - The Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser

A PECULIAR INCIDENT.

*In the match at Petersham Oval between Petersham and Chatswood, a peculiar incident, which fortunately carried with it no serious result, occurred. **Mr. J. A. Minnett**, vice-president of the New South Wales Baseball Association, and one of the keenest supporters of the game, was a spectator. A ball from the striker came at a terrific rate, and struck an umbrella which Mr. Minnett was holding, breaking it into two portions. The end portion was knocked several yards away; the top of the handle was left in his hand. Whilst he was trying to realise what had happened, the next ball delivered by the pitcher struck the remaining portion of the umbrella held by him and this time his thumb required bandaging.*

The following is an extract from a lengthy article titled "Yachting Past and Present" about the development of yachting in Sydney:

Wednesday, 6th November, 1907 - The Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser

*.....After the retirement of its first treasurer, Mr. Dangar, the Squadron had many honorary treasurers, but since **Mr. J. A. Minnett** was elected, nineteen years ago, there has been no change, and no desire for change. Year in and year out Mr. Minnett has endured the drudgery of bookkeeping which his important office entails. The treasurer has his fingers on the pulse of a Club, and it is he who can tell, on the basis of the hard facts of credit or debit, what its health really is, and so it is that the position is such an important one. And for just that reason the Squadron elected Mr. Minnett its treasurer, and wishes to keep him at his post as long as he can be induced to stop.....*

Wednesday, 25th October, 1911 - Referee

THE MINNETTS IN CRICKET.

***Mr. J. A. Minnett**, the father of the three brothers, has every reason to be proud of them. He is a light of the yachting world, and an automobilist, and yet his enthusiasm in cricket is so keen that he generally finds it convenient to see the Shoremen playing, though I have seen him drawn out to the 'Varsity matches. He must find it difficult at times to determine whither he must travel.*

The three Minnetts are probably superior all round to any other three brothers New South Wales has produced. The Gregorys were a wonderful set of brothers in cricket, but they were principally noted for batting and fielding, Dave, who captained the first Australian Eleven, being the only one who was a bowler of note, whereas L. A. and R. B. Minnett are first-rate bowlers. And although some of the Gregorys were before my time, I am inclined to think that the three Minnetts are at present a better collection of batsmen than any three of the Gregory brothers were, though in the days of the latter wickets were not so good as they are now. The Minnett brothers have come on the scene when a higher standard of play exists in New South Wales. And all three are fit for any team in the country.....

When Mr. Minnett retired as Treasurer, he was awarded Life Membership by the Committee.

Thursday, 23rd January, 1936 - Sydney Morning Herald

OBITUARY.

MR. J. A. V. MINNETT.

Mr. John Alma Villiers Minnett, who was well known in business and sporting circles in Sydney died at North Sydney yesterday morning, at the age of 81 years. Born in New Zealand, Mr. Minnett came to Sydney Harbour 60 years ago. For most of his business career he was associated with the New Zealand Insurance Co Ltd, being for many years up to his retirement in 1912 manager of the company's business in Sydney. More recently he was a member of the Sydney Stock Exchange and a director of the North Shore Gas Co Ltd and of the New South Wales Mont de Piete Deposit and Investment Co Ltd. He became a member of the Stock Exchange in September 1934 in order to maintain the continuity of the business of his son Mr. L. A. Minnett who was killed in a motor accident. Keenly interested in cricket himself, Mr. Minnett's three sons, the late Mr. L. A. Minnett, Mr. Rupert V. Minnett, and Dr. Roy Minnett, achieved either international or interstate honours in the game. His chief other pastimes were baseball and yachting. In addition to having an interest in the yacht 'Era', he was honorary treasurer of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron for 25 years. Mr. Minnett married Miss Milson, a member of the well-known North Shore family, who died in 1910. He had one daughter Mrs. N. C. Oakes. As a mark of respect for Mr. Minnett, the Stock Exchange suspended business of the noon call yesterday.

After Mr. Minnett died, a trophy was instituted in his memory. From **"Sydney Sails"**:

"Some new yachts came to the fore in the 1938-39 season, when F. C. McKillop's 'Judith Pihl' won the J. V. Minnett Memorial trophy, presented in memory of the Squadron's long term honorary treasurer of bygone years, for the yacht with the best record in all races throughout the season."

The J.A.V. Minnett Memorial Trophy is currently awarded to the winner of the Division 2 pointscore.

February, 2015