

J Alderton

The caricatures painted by Herbert Beecroft for the RSYs after the First World War generally lack the impish humour of the pre-war ones. One notable exception is the painting of James (Jimmy) Alderton, the subject of this essay. Mr. Alderton was a very successful skipper and 1922 was a banner year for him, the year Beecroft painted his caricature.



In the painting, Mr. Alderton is holding the Waley and Forster Cups both of which he won in 1922. The boat is Mr. Alderton's 21 foot Restricted Class called "Gumleaf." I was able to find descriptions of both these events and have included them below.

The 21 foot Restricted Class for almost 40 years was a very popular class throughout Australia, not unlike the vintage 18 footers we see locally. The first were designed by Charles Peel, an Australian designer better known for the Jubilee class which raced at the RSYs for many years. The late ex-Commodore Sam Freeman, father of current members Marge Coleman and Eve Sheppard, raced a Charles Peel design for many years with great success. That was the 31 foot "Waimea" and there is a painting of her at the top of the main stairwell in the Club house.

The prototypes of the Restricted Class were launched around 1914, although the fleet did not take off until after the First World War. The class faded away in the early 1950s, overtaken by such designs as the Dragon.

Note the sly look that Beecroft has given Mr. Alderton, the wry smile of the victor. He has also put the bow of a boat on the

left with the subtle emphasis that "Gumleaf" is in front, a not infrequent occurrence for Mr. Alderton.

The most intriguing feature of the painting is the insignia on the top left-hand side. This is one mystery I have not been able to solve and the Archive Committee would be grateful if any member can provide the solution. Another interesting thing is that I have been unable to find any evidence that Mr. Alderton was, in fact, a member of the RSYs. He certainly was active within the Alfreds and at one time was a member of the Amateurs.

I have noticed that the journalists who wrote about yachting activities often had amusing "nom de plumes." I have located a column in the Evening News by Bob Backstay. The following article, also for the "Evening News", is written by Ben Bobstay so someone is having a joke at someone else's expense.

Tuesday, 2nd December, 1919 - Evening News
YACHTING

New Cruiser

BY BEN BOBSTAY

Another addition to the fleet of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club is to be made in a week or two. **Mr. James Alderton**, a member of the committee of the Club, has had a 27ft. coach-house cruiser built. The yacht, which has been named *Gum Leaf II*, is a roomy and comfortable type of cruiser, and should possess a good turn of speed.

Wednesday, 8th February, 1922 - Referee

THE WALEY CUP.

In this race for the restricted class conducted by the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, there were only six starters: Lord Forster's *Corella*; Mr. F. Albert's *Boomerang*; Mr. J. Milson's *E.O.J.*; **Mr. J. Alderton's** *Gumleaf*; Mr. F. Doran's *Inez*; and Mr. A. Davies' *Cherry too*, representing New South Wales; the Queensland boats not putting in an appearance. The event was the first of the Interstate series. At the start the breeze was very light. *E.O.J.*, was first away, followed by *Gumleaf* and *Inez*. On the stretch to Shark Island there was a rain squall with a blow from the south-east. Rounding the island *Gumleaf*, *E.O.J.*, *Inez*, and *Corella* were almost dangerously close together. With *Gumleaf* leading, spinnakers were set for the run to Manly.



HIT BY A SQUALL. When abreast of Steel Point, the fleet was struck by a strong southerly squall, which was the means of bringing *Boomerang* and *Cherrytoo* closer to the other four in the lead. In Manly Cove the breeze was from the south-south-west, and *Gumleaf* increased her lead. Rounding the buoy off the pier the times recorded were: *Gumleaf* 3.40.0, *E.O.J.* 3.42.32, *Inez* 3.42.38, *Corella* 3.42.45, *Boomerang* 3.44.45, and *Cherrytoo* 3.46.58. *E.O.J.*, *Inez*, and *Corella* were close together. The breeze was now very light, and the boats for a time just drifted. At last there came a steady blow from E.S.E., the first benefits of which were received by *Gumleaf* and *E.O.J.*, which at the time were under North Head. *Inez* was off Dobroyd, and *Corella* under the western shore.

A MERRY GO. *E.O.J.* and *Gumleaf* sped along merrily together to Bradley's Head, where the former had a slight advantage. On the run to the finishing line all canvas was set, and the race between the two yachts in the lead afforded much excitement. First *E.O.J.* was in front, and then *Gumleaf*, and so they sailed ding dong and neck to neck, till at the finish Mr. Alderton's boat secured the victory. Times taken as the boats crossed the line were: *Gumleaf* 5.7.31, *E.O.J.* 5.7.32, *Corella* 5.8.7, *Inez*, 5.9.45, *Cherrytoo* 5.10.52, *Boomerang* 5.11.24. Won by 1 sec, with 35sec between second and third. Thus ended one of the best and most interesting races sailed by the class.

Wednesday, 15th February, 1922 - Sydney Mail

GUMLEAF WINS THE FORSTER CUP

Three races were sailed last week to decide which of the 21ft restricted class yachts should have the honour of holding the Forster Cup presented by his Excellency the Governor-General. Eight yachts competed. Two — *Maroomba* (Mr. D. MacTaggart) and *Lakatoi* (Mr. J. Clark) — represented Queensland, and the others, representing New South Wales, were *Corella* (Lord Forster), *E.O.J.* (Mr. J. L. Milson), *Boomerang* (Mr. F. Albert), *Inez* (Mr. F. J. Doran), *Gumleaf* (**Mr. J. Alderton**), *Cherry-too* (Mr. A. H. Davies). The first race, sailed on Tuesday, was won by *Gumleaf* (10 points), *Lakatoi* (4 points) being second and *Inez* (2 points) third. In the second race sailed on Thursday, *Lakatoi* finished first, *Inez* being second and *Cherry-too* third, the result of the two days' racing placing *Lakatoi* (14) four points ahead of *Gumleaf* (10), with *Inez* next (6). The final race, on Saturday, created a lot of enthusiasm. It was won by *Gumleaf* (owned by Mr. James Alderton and sailed by Mr. Stan Stevens), with *Boomerang* second and *Inez* third. *Gumleaf* thus secured two wins out of the three races with a total of 20 points, *Lakatoi* being second with 14 and *Inez* third with 8.



VICTORY FOR GUMLEAF SATURDAY'S FINISH.

Sunday, 9th April, 1922 - Sunday Times

MR. ALDERTON TO RETIRE.

Mr. James Alderton, whose craft, Gumleaf, won the championship of Australia for the 21ft class and Lord Forster's Cup, announced yesterday that he has retired from racing, and intends to dispose of Gumleaf. Mr. Alderton also had a wonderful run of successes in Club events, and his decision to give up active racing will come as a big surprise to yachtsmen.

From the next article, it is clear that while Mr. Alderton may have sold his own boat, he was still on the water as a keen competitor and took umbrage at any suggestion that he was anything but fair.

Wednesday, 14th November, 1924 - Sydney Morning Herald

YACHTING.

Mr. James Alderton, of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, in a statement in regard to our report of last Saturday's 21ft Restricted class yachting race, points out: - "As the deputy of his Excellency the Governor, whose yacht, Cherry-O, was sailed by me in the race in question, I beg to draw your attention to the following: On being hailed by Mr. Taylor, the skipper of the Corella, I immediately gave way and was not struck by that yacht. I committed no breach of the rules then, or at any other time during the race, and did not seriously, or otherwise, interfere with Lord Forster's yacht securing a place; vide finishing times. Apart from the responsibility of representing his Excellency in such a manner as he desires, my position on the committee of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, and on the Yacht Racing Association (the governing body of yachting) makes it imperative that I play the game, quite apart from one's own natural wish to do so."

The following article describes a most unusual prank that could have ended very badly.

Wednesday, 14th November, 1924 - Sydney Morning Herald

A STOLEN LAUNCH

FOUND MOORED IN SURF CLOSE TO BONDI BEACH

Sydney, Saturday.

The novelty of joy riding in motor cars is apparently wearing off. The latest escapade of those who travel in other people's property was revealed last night when a 35ft. auxiliary yacht, which had been stolen from Middle Harbor in the early hours of the morning, was found moored in the surf 60 yards off Bondi Beach.

*The persons who had taken the yacht had sailed the vessel out through the Heads, and on arriving at Bondi had rowed ashore in a dinghy which was subsequently found among the rocks. Residents going to work expressed surprise that the yacht should have been moored so close in, but it was not until it was reported missing last night that the police made investigations. Fortunately the sea was very calm, and the launch was not damaged. It is the property of **Mr. James Alderton**, of Mosman, and is valued at £1200.*

Jimmy Alderton died on the 10th of May, 1936.

Tuesday, 12th May, 1936 - Sydney Morning Herald

MR. JAMES ALDERTON.

***Mr. James Alderton**, who died at his home in Mosman on Sunday, was prominent in yachting circles. He was a member of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club for more than 20 years, served on its committee, represented it on the Sydney Yacht Racing Association, and was the Club's hon. official measurer. He was the originator and designer of the cadet dinghy class, interstate races for which take place annually in the contest for the Stonehaven Cup, and he won the first contest for the Forster Cup in the 21-footer Gumleaf, a boat of his own designing. Two of his boats, racing on the harbour last season, were Epacris and Currawong. Mr. Alderton, who was born in North Sydney, was founder of Malleable Castings, Ltd., of Marrickville. He was at one time a director of K.F.B. (Foundry), and was also associated with Metters, Ltd.*

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