

## R L Massie

When L. Herbert Beecroft came to Australia in 1905, it is not clear why, but he certainly “fell on his feet” when he was commissioned by the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron to produce paintings of prominent members. It is worth remembering that he was an established illustrator in his homeland. Here is an advertisement for an apprentice in 1897.

**Monday, 13th December, 1897 – Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser**  
*APPRENTICES.*

*APPLIED ART - ARTICLED PUPIL WANTED in lithographic studio, where thorough knowledge of drawing for process work &c. may be acquired; aptitude for drawing essential — Address HERBERT BEECROFT, Garrard Chambers, Reading.*

Sadly, some of the caricatures on display in the northern entrance to the Squadron have deteriorated badly. The painting of Robert Lee Massie has considerable water damage although the image of Mr. Massie is clear enough. It is indicative of Beecroft’s skill that one can easily match the painting to a photo of Mr. Massie which I discovered upstairs at the Club, in spite of one being a portrait and the other a profile.





The painting was completed in 1909, Mr. Massie being 37 at the time. Mr. Massie is at the helm of his yacht and smokes the compulsory pipe. On the top left hand side there is the faint remains of some writing but the damage has made it illegible. The yacht is cutting through choppy waters so it may be Mr. Massie is steering out the Heads. The faint outline of a coastline is also visible. At the time of the painting, Mr. Massie owned a tuck boat called "Jam Satis" which is Latin for "Enough Already." The term "Tuck Boat" is explained in the following article from Closing Day at the Club in April, 1907.

**Sunday, 14th April, 1907 – Sunday Times**

*TUCK or COACH-HOUSE BOATS. 20ft and over, handicap; open to boats on the Squadron register, boats of the Prince Alfred Yacht Club and Sydney A.S. Club; any sails; crews limited to five hands under 22ft., 6 hands under 24ft, 7 hands 24ft and over. First prize £3, second £1. Course: From starting line off Club-house, round Pile-light, Watson's Bay, round Shark Island (outside beacon and*

*buoy), round flag-mark off Club-house in Neutral Bay, thence round P. and O. buoy, back to, and finish across, starting line.*

*The result was: Adelphi (M. A. H. Fitzhardinge), 7min - 1; J.B.J. (F. A. Lomer), 5min - 2; Olive (H. Walters), 8min - 3. The others included : Mia (G. H. Fitzhardinge) scr, Brothers (T. B. Dibbs) 3min, Jam Satis (**R. L. Massie**) 1min, Senga (R. H. Massie) 5min, Gilleena (R. E. Patrick) 7min, Miranda (McLaurin and Leibius) 12min, Doreen (J. Walters) 16min, Netta (J. Gray) 18min.*

*They were sent away to a flying start, and, with the exception of Doreen and Netta, both of which were some five minutes late, all got away to a good start. The finishing times were: J.B.J. 4.46.47, Brothers 4.47.2, Adelphi 4.47.43, Senga 4.48.57, Olive 4.50.39, Gilleena 4.50.53, Jam Satis 4.51.50.*

Mr. Massie was elected to the Squadron in 1894. The following clipping describes the pomp and ceremony of Opening Day in 1902, with the use of flags, the VHF radio of the day, to direct the

proceedings.

**Wednesday, 22nd October, 1902 – The Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser**

**OPENING OF ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON SEASON.**

*THERE was a very good attendance of yachts at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron's opening ceremony on Saturday. The wind was light, but the manoeuvres were well carried out, the various craft taking up their positions in very fair order. The yachts assembled in Farm Cove about half-past 2 o'clock, the handsome steam yacht Ena, belonging to the commodore (Mr. T. A. Dibbs), lay out in the bay, looking exceptionally graceful with her brass work shining like burnished gold. As each yacht approached her ensign was dipped, and acknowledged from the flagship. After the yachts had all saluted, the signal, 'Form squadron' was shown, then came 'Follow me in line in order of tonnage.' This manoeuvre having been carried out, the next order was 'Rendezvous at Bradley's Head,' then 'Anchor as most convenient,' which was promptly carried out, and the yachts bedecked with flags, after which the ever-welcome signal, 'Attend on board,' was displayed. Amongst those who put off to the commodore's vessel were Dr. J. E. Elliott (vice-commodore), Messrs. T. H. Kelly (rear-commodore), J. A. Minnett (hon. treasurer) of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, W. M. Marks (vice-commodore), C. T. Brockhoff (rear-commodore of the Prince Alfred Yacht Club), A. W. Crane (commodore Sydney Amateur Sailing Club), H. Binnie, Dr. M'Cormick, Dr. C. MacLaurin, A. R. Marks, R. Massey, W. Cope, S. M. Dempster, A. J. Soutar, J. Thompson, W. H. Hallett (of the Clontarf, Ireland, Yacht Club), W. H. Gritton, R. B. Scott, and G. H. Leibius. After half an hour or so pleasantly spent on board partaking of the commodore's hospitality and generally looking over the ship the crews rejoined their vessels, and shaped a course for their moorings, all apparently well pleased with the outing. The following craft took part in the proceedings: Ena (Mr. T. A. Dibbs), Electra (Mr. T. H. Kelly), Thelma (Dr. M'Cormick), Oithona (Mr. A. J. Soutar), Petrel (Mr. S. M. Dempster), Cooya (Mr. A. W. Crane), Oenone (Messrs. Marks and Reading), Culwulla (Mr. W. M. Marks), Fleetwing (Mr. C. T. Brockhoff), Bronzewing (Messrs. Manson and Young), Lahloo, Albicore (Dr. C. MacLaurin), Ada, SY (Mr. Josephson), and Mr. Joseph Thompson's motor yacht. The Club steamer followed the yachts during the manoeuvres, and afterwards anchored close to the flagship, the guests being ferried over to the commodore's yacht. Amongst those on board the Ena were, in addition to the commodore, the following gentlemen: Captain T. B. Dibbs, Messrs. R. P. Hickson, H. S. Dalrymple Hay, James Grant, J. O. Fairfax, C. Dalrymple Hay, Alfred Milson (ex-commodore), Arthur Milson, Leslie Milson, William Hixson, **Robert Massie**, T. W. Bremner, Henty (Royal Victorian Yacht Club), Graham, Evans, and Dudley, and Captain Christie, D.S.O. Mr. W. M. Marks vice-commodore of the day who represented that Club in the absence in England of the Commodore (Mr. S. Hordern) proposed the health of Mr. Dibbs. The toast was received with ringing cheers, supplemented by cheers from all on board the assembled yachts. The commodore, responding, referred to the pleasure he felt at having aboard the commodore's yacht of the R.S.Y.S. the vice-commodore of the rival Club. The incident appeared to him to be a true indication of the community of interests which exists among true sportsmen.*

Mr. Massie's other sporting interest was golf.

**Tuesday, 22nd August, 1911 – The Sun (Sydney)**

**Golf Notes - Suburban Club Competition**

*The competition for the trophy presented by Sir James Fairfax, the president of the Royal Sydney Club, was completed at Rose Bay on Saturday. The conditions were 36 holes of stroke play, and the winner was R. L. Massie, who, on the fourteen mark, put in net scores of 77 and 81. As was only right and proper, the best returns were those of the scratch men, W. S. Laidley and C. H. Reading, with 162 and 168 respectively.*

Sailing seemed to take a back seat for Mr. Massie progressively after the First World War. He purchased "Shona" from the estate of his good friend and yachting identity, John Williamson Manson in 1922 but only owned it for 6 years. He was more frequently on the golf links at the Royal Sydney Golf Club.

### **Wednesday, 11th April, 1928 – Referee**

*Mr. R. L. Massie has sold his cruiser, Shona, one of the best known on Sydney Harbour.*

After his long career at the Perpetual Trustee Company ended in 1937, among other things, Mr. Massie did voluntary work during the war and like other committed citizens did not miss an opportunity to write to the papers on an issue in need of attention.

### **Thursday, 16th December, 1937 – Sydney Morning Herald**

*COMPANY NEWS.*

*Mr. R. L. Massie, secretary of the Perpetual Trustee Company (Limited) will on January 31 next enter upon six months leave of absence prior to retirement. Mr. Massie was appointed secretary in January 1912 and at the date of his retirement will have completed more than 48 years service with the company.*

### **Wednesday, 4th November, 1942 – Sydney Morning Herald**

*APPOINTMENTS FOR RED CROSS*

*Hospital Library Facilities*

*Mrs. Margaret Fielding Jones, who is welfare officer for the women personnel of the Services for the New South Wales division of the Red Cross, was yesterday appointed honorary director of hospital visiting. This appointment, which was announced at a meeting of the Divisional Council of the Red Cross yesterday, has been made as a result of a conference of the Australian divisions held recently, when it was decided that some uniformity in this service was desirable.*

*Appointments made by the New South Wales Lines of Communication Area Commissioner include Mrs. John Moore as honorary Red Cross representative at the 113th A.G.H. and honorary secretary of Field Services; Mr. A. H. Goodall as honorary director of camp services, and Mr. R. L. Massie as assistant honorary director of camp services.*

### **Monday, 27th January, 1947 – Sydney Morning Herald**

*LORD'S SCOREBOARD*

*Sir,-I have read with much interest Mr. D. Hope Johnston's letter, which suggests presenting the M.C.C. with up to-date scoreboards at Lord's. It recalled to my memory that, while on a visit to England in 1938, the late Mr. H. R. Lysaght and I wrote a letter to the London "Daily Telegraph" criticising the scoreboard at Lord's.*

*This provoked a rather scathing letter in reply to the "Daily Telegraph" from Mr. Howard Marshall, the well-known English sporting commentator, in which he pointed out the difficulties which in his opinion lay in the way of installing at Lord's a scoreboard modelled on the Australian pattern. Mr. Marshall concluded his letter by saying: "Apart from practical considerations, may I suggest to our Australian friends that we manage very contentedly with the present scoreboards and that we like Lord's as it is?"*

**R. L. MASSIE.**

*Sydney.*

Robert Massie died in 1956, aged 84.

**August, 2015**