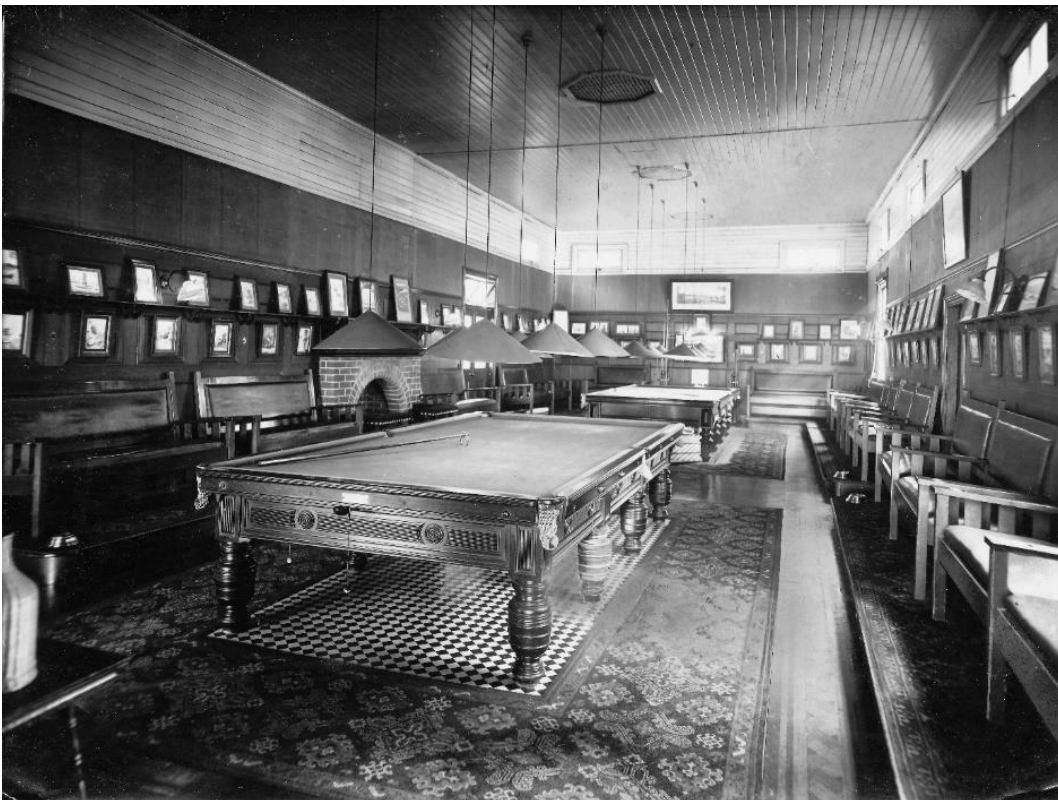




TREASURES FROM THE ARCHIVES – Billiards at the Squadron

When the RSYs leased the current premises in 1901, there was only a certain amount which could be done to the property and that was largely confined to the gardens and waterfront. However, when they purchased the Leasehold in 1911, they could do what they wished and development of the premises was undertaken, including a verandah across the eastern side of the building and expansion of accommodation for staff.

100 years ago, it was mandatory at a Gentleman's Club to have a Billiard Room. Billiards was a serious competitive sport. While there is evidence that there was dedicated space for this purpose as early as 1904, it was sometime later that the space was refurbished.



Here is a photo of the newly refurbished Billiard Room which the History Committee have dated to this period. The room was located on the north western side of the site where the kitchens are now located. The entrance was on the left just out of view with a fireplace and bright natural lighting from windows on either side.

Note the seating for spectators and the heavily patterned carpet. Best of all, around the walls are the Beecroft Caricatures currently on display in the northern entrance to the club.

Billiard Competition was frequently reported in the Press.



Wednesday, 5th April, 1911 – Sydney Sportsman

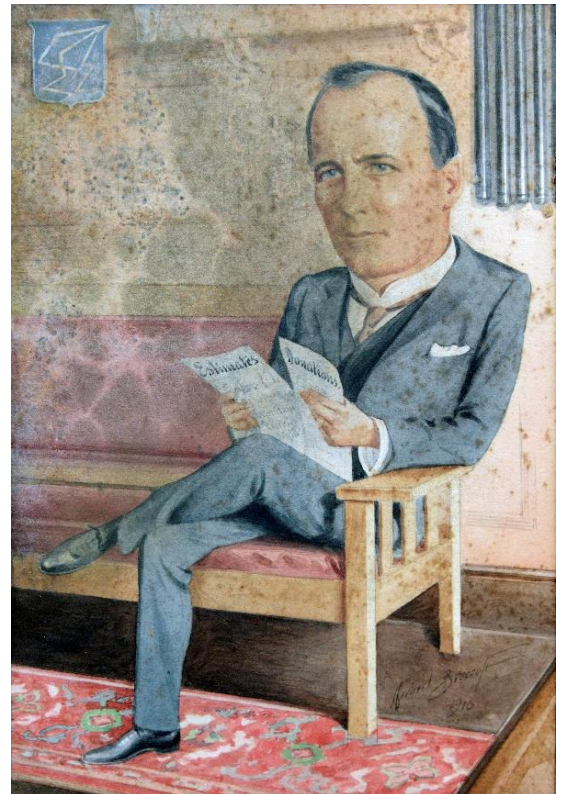
BILLIARDS.

(By 'Hazard.')

A rather remarkable ten shot was played last week by a member of the Royal Sydney Yacht Club. The object white was a little outside the right-hand side of baulk, the red higher up and towards the left middle pocket, and the player's ball above the right middle pocket. A screw cannon brought the two whites into the right corner pocket, and the red ball doubled across from the opposite cushion and found the same pocket, all three balls being in the one pocket.

Now refer to the painting of G. R. Robertson shown here, dating to 1916. This was a Beecroft which was heavily water damaged. It has been hidden from members for many years but the recent digital restoration has allowed it to be placed on display, so take a moment to check it out in the northern entrance. Mr. Robertson appears in the Billiard Room seated on one of the viewing benches. Study the carpet. It matches that in the photo and those are billiard cues over his left shoulder.

Billiards is no longer popular. The last Billiard Room at the club was located in the Youth Sailing Room underneath the Careening Cove Anchorage.



Postscript April 2021

Further research by the History Committee has unearthed evidence that nails the opening of the Billiard Room to the 9th of July, 1903, less than 6 months from the official opening of the Club at the premises.

Saturday, 11th July, 1903 – The Sydney Morning Herald

ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON.

On Thursday evening last the recently erected billiard-room attached to the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron's clubhouse, Carabella, Neutral Bay, was formally opened in the presence of a large number of members and their friends. The function took the form of a smoke concert, which was successfully carried through. Amongst those who contributed either musical items or humorous sketches were Messrs T. H. Kelly, C. S. Cape, W. Reeks, F. H. Brownlow, L. Goodwin, and J. E. Sykes. During the evening the prizes won last season, and also at the recently held "squadron afternoon," were presented by Mr. T. H. Kelly, rear-commadore. Mr. Dempster (Petrel) headed the list with £41, and the Squadron and Gascoigne Cups; Mr. W. M. Marks (Culwulla) was next with £24 and the Beauchamp Cup. The next in order were: - Mr. Murray (Heather), £10 and Rawson Cup, Mr. T. W. Bremner (Scotia), £20; Mr. C. T. Brockhoff (Fleetwing), £11; Mr. T. H. Kelly (Electra), £10; Mr. A. W. Crane (Sunbeam), £5. Several handsome cups were presented to the winners of the motor launch, sailing, and rowing races held lately. At the conclusion of the prize-giving Mr. Kelly removed the blue ensign covering the billiard table and declared the room open. Mr. R Pitt announced that he would give a donation of £10 10s for a prize for motor launch racing. The hon. secretary, Mr. S. T. Wilson, was assiduous in his attentions to the visitors.