



ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

Treasures of the Squadron – Trophies

The Varuna Cup By John Maclurcan



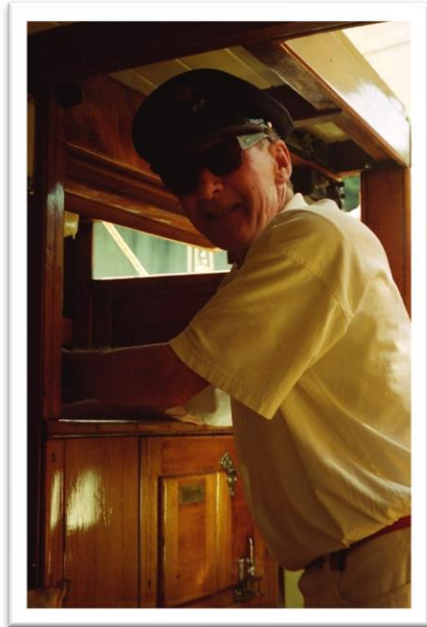
In 1986, I was approached by John McConnell, a long-standing member of the crew of *Varuna*, concerning a celebration of the 50th birthday of the yacht. He wished to organise a Cup to be presented to the Club to commemorate the milestone but without the knowledge of the owner, John Musgrove, who had owned the boat for almost all of her life. *Varuna* had been a regular competitor in RSY racing since racing resumed after the war in the late 1940s.

I knew that the Club would only consider a trophy if there was a purpose for it. I suggested an end-of-season 'Champion of Champions' event which appealed to the crew. I made a submission to the Sailing Committee which was unanimously supported.

John and friends proceeded with the purchase of a silver cup. Almost 100 people associated with *Varuna* and John Musgrove were invited to a cocktail party at our Club for the official presentation.



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John Musgrove



Varuna

In order to keep John Musgrove in the dark, he and his wife Liz were invited to dinner at the Club supposedly to celebrate my father's 70th birthday. We met on the top car park, entered the clubhouse and proceeded up to the Shel Cove Room. John Musgrove was gobsmacked to see so many old crew and friends – it was a complete surprise.

The formal presentation was made to John, and then he officially presented the Cup to the Commodore, his brother-in-law, Norm Longworth. He laughingly said that in days of old, when such a trophy was presented, there was a tacit understanding that all yachts would sand-bag and let the donor be the first to have his name on it. In fact, it took John some years to win the Cup.

The criterion for inclusion in the event was settled on the first two boats in the Main Pointscore scored on Performance Handicapping. Quickly, it was realised that this created anomalies because some divisions only had six boats and some had more than 15. Accordingly, the eligibility was changed to tier the number of entries from each division dependent on the number of block entries for the season. A further addition was made when the Mini Regattas evolved.