

W. M. Cameron

It is worth remembering that when L. Herbert Beecroft arrived in Australia in 1905, he was aged 41. He had an established career and a fine reputation in London so he was quickly able to establish his reputation “down-under.”

Thursday, 20th April, 1905 - Evening News

NOVEL LECTURE ENTERTAINMENT.

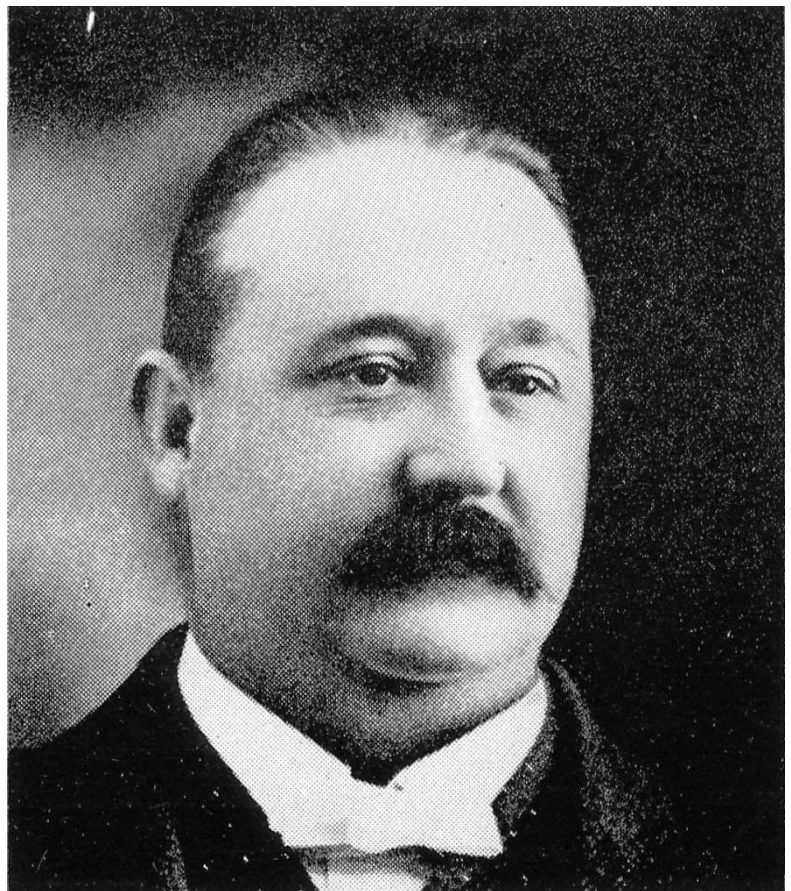
*An attractive sketch lecture entertainment has been arranged by Mr. H. N. Southwell, for Easter Monday night, at Centenary Hall, York-street, to introduce **Mr. Herbert Beecroft**. This artist has recently arrived from England, with a good reputation as a novel entertainer. He illustrates people met with every day, and caricatures them; also any of the audience who seek such distinction. His work is highly spoken of. Variety will be added to the programme by the aid of George P. Boyle, the popular pianist, Miss Ethel Uggins, contralto, Miss Florrie Flett, soprano, and Mr. H. Fahy, accompanist.*

The following article is the earliest reference I have been able to locate linking Beecroft to the water. It refers to a meeting of the Motor Boat Club. This might have been what prompted RSYS member, Frank Albert, who was in attendance at the meeting, to recommend Beecroft to the Squadron's committee.

Wednesday, 25th March, 1908 - The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser

MOTOR BOAT CLUB.

*The complimentary dinner given by the Club on Wednesday night to Mr. P. C. Mitchell, the commodore, on the eve of his departure for England, was a success. The evening was filled in with characteristic sketches by Mr. **Herbert Beecroft**, humorous addresses by Mr. Empson, and songs. Mr. F. Albert, who presided, proposed the toast of 'The King,' and Mr. Empson that of 'The Commodore.' Mr. Mitchell was presented with a framed illuminated menu card to commemorate the function.*



For this essay about Beecroft's caricatures, I have chosen **Wallace McPherson Cameron**. The caricature is undated but I think it is likely to be an early drawing, maybe 1908, because Mr. Cameron was Vice Commodore from 1897 to 1902. I was interested in my research to learn that quite often Vice Commodores did not progress to Commodore as was the case with Mr. Cameron. Mr. Cameron was also a member of the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club. He started sailing at Balmain in the 1880s in his 16 foot "Sophia."

I have included a photo of Mr. Cameron with Beecroft's caricature to illustrate just how accurately he captured his subject; in Mr. Cameron's case, heavy jowls, a thick neck and a roguish moustache. The drawing indicates that Mr. Cameron was a musician. Note the violin on the piano top, the box with the broken string on the floor and the banjo leaning against the piano. The lyrics of the sheet music start with "Whenever I meet her..." and on the floor "Ta Ran Ta Ra." The latter is a chorus from the "Pirates of Penzance", a popular Gilbert and Sullivan operetta of the period. At the top right hand side of the painting appear the words "Chorus Boys!" My interpretation is that Mr. Cameron is asking his audience to join in on the chorus. Note too the portholes. This implies that the piano was inside a motor vessel, probably Mr. Cameron's. A piano playing sing-a-long is now obsolete. In the early days of the twilight racing in the 1970s and 1980s, Al Willis, a loyal race official and an accomplished pianist, would play a white piano and Gordon Ingate was always keen to add his vocal talents to the crowd.

Many RSYS Members at the turn of the last Century were notable characters in Sydney society. Furthermore, they often came from families who really contributed to the growth and development of the city. Wallace Cameron was such a man and therefore I have included an article about his father which is most interesting. The letter is signed "Descendant" who might have been Wallace Cameron himself.

Tuesday, 4th March, 1924 - Sydney Morning Herald

BALMAIN PIONEERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

Sir, - I hardly think the list of Balmain pioneers would be complete without the name of Ewen Wallace Cameron. Mr. Cameron came to Van Diemen's land in 1822 with his father, Lieut-Colonel Cameron, who brought a detachment of the Buffs in charge of convicts. He resided at Darling Point, but in 1860 bought a large property in Balmain, now known as Ewenton, from the late R. Blake (strange to say, his grandson and Mr. Blake's granddaughter have recently been married). Shortly after he became a partner in the firm of Thos Mort and Co. (now Goldsbrough, Mort, and Co.).

Mr. Cameron not only took a great interest in all public affairs, but gave freely of his time and his money for the advancement of Balmain, and many of its streets now bear the names of members of his family. Always an enthusiast in military matters, Mr. Cameron founded No. 2 Company of the old NSW Volunteers, and became its first captain, his officers being the late Lieut-Colonel Longfield, Major G. Bagot Slack, Under-Major Theodore Jaques, then Registrar General. The band was almost wholly supported by the captain. In the year 1845, Captain Cameron (always interested in the working man), in conjunction with Lieut. Wilkinson, convened a public meeting, with the result that the Balmain Working Men's Institute was formed, the first subsidy to which was given by the late Sir Henry Parkes.

Captain Cameron's portrait in oils, given by the people of Balmain, still hangs in the institute. He took a great interest in church matters, and on one occasion, hearing an appeal for the church debt on St. Mary's, Balmain, wrote a cheque on the leaf of his prayer book, and paid off the entire debt (over four figures). His tablet, erected by the people of Balmain, now hangs in the old church, together with the stained glass window given by his family, and the carved oak pulpit given by his widow, as also a lectern to match, given by his friend, Mr. T. I. Jaques. His tablet as a lay canon is on the walls of St. Andrews Cathedral. He died at Ewenton, Balmain, in 1876, in his 59th year.

I could mention the names of many other Balmain pioneers, but feel that their friends will see that honour is given where honour is due.

I am, etc.,

March 3. DESCENDANT.

It has been noted that Mr. Cameron owned some fine vessels, one being "Iduna." The Iduna Shield is another trophy which is familiar to current Club members.

Monday, 5th February, 1894 - Sydney Morning Herald

THE YACHT IDUNA.

The yacht 'Iduna', which was built for Mr. J. A. Gurner, of Victoria, in the year 1888, from designs furnished by Mr. Reeks, naval architect, has, we understand, been purchased by a gentleman well known in aquatic circles here. The 'Iduna's' principal dimensions are:- l.o.a., 49ft. 5in.; beam, 12ft. 1in.; and depth, 8ft. 4in., registering 30 tons. At present she is being docked and overhauled generally, and will it is expected, leave the Southern capital early next month. Her inventory is very complete for cruising. She will be yawl rigged, but for racing purposes will appear as a cutter. All her canvas is from Ratsey and Lapthorne's loft, and is in the best of order. It will be remembered that in the race for all yachts at the regatta held in Victoria in 1888 she was a competitor, having as opponent the 'Era', 'Volunteer', 'Wanderer', 'Janet', 'Taniwha', &c. On that occasion the 'Iduna' showed her sailing qualities. Yachting in Sydney Harbour has during the present season - or rather since the departure of the 'Volunteer' - fallen off considerably, that is amongst the larger yachts. The arrival of the craft under notice will, no doubt, give a fillip to yachting, and next season we may expect to see both 'Era' and 'Thelma' with their big canvas set trying conclusions with the newcomer.

Newspaper reporting has never been known for 100% accuracy. In the next article a month after the first, "Iduna" has grown 7 feet!

Thursday, 29th March, 1894 - Evening News

The Yacht 'Iduna'.

*The yacht 'Iduna' is once more in Sydney waters, having arrived from Melbourne after a somewhat lengthy passage. The 'Iduna', it will be remembered, was built in 1888 by Ellis from drawings furnished by Mr. Walter Reeks. Her dimensions are: Length overall, 56ft 6in; l.w.l., 46ft 6in; extreme beam, 12ft 1in; draught. 8ft. Her spars under cutter rig are: Mast, deck to hounds, 33ft; topmast fid to sheare hole, 29ft; boom, 42ft; gaff, 30ft; bowsprit, 20ft 6in; outboard spinnaker boom, 37ft ; topsailyard, 26ft; and jackyard, 20ft — which gives her a rating of 23. For cruising she is yawl-rigged, her spars being: Main boom, 33ft 6in: gaff, 27ft; mizzen-mast, 18ft from deck to truck; boom, 14ft 6in and gaff, 10ft 6in. **Mr. W. M. Cameron** is the owner of the 'Iduna'.*

Wednesday, 29th April, 1896 - Referee

SAILING

SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON'S CLOSING RACE. WON BY IDUNA.

(By 'Weather-Eye'.)

*It is strange that at the eleventh hour so big a fleet as that which mustered for the closing race last Saturday of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron could be enticed from their moorings at a time when it could reasonably be expected that they would be dismantled for the Winter. Did conscience reproach some owners for lack of enthusiasm, and impel those who were seemingly loathe at an early stage in the season to help the Club in getting through with its programme, to rally up for once, if only for appearance sake? It would seem so. However, the dilettante yachtsman was found slashing down to Manly in an exhilarating breeze from the south-west, and no doubt he considered he was doing his duty. In the race both 'Era' and 'Iduna', with all the canvas they were allowed to carry spread to the favorable breeze, soon forced their way to the front. 'Electra' had the ill luck of a bad start, which hampered her considerably whilst away, but this perhaps was partly due to Mr. Dalley's crew, which consisted of ladies as well as men. 'Iduna' held 'Era' better than I thought she would on the beat up from Manly, and **Mr. Cameron's** win may be considered a very creditable one indeed. Herreshoff's designer must have felt as pleased with himself as he was over the sloop's performance, for after giving 'Isea' 33secs at the Manly buoy she beat her home by over 6min. 'Iolanthe' should have been well to the fore had the jaws of her gaff held out until after the race. Everybody felt sorry to see the old favorite left behind off Taylor*

Bay. However, Mr. Maclardy's was not the only casualty during the afternoon, for both 'Electra' and 'Archina' met with some mishap, and consequently did not finish. On the home tussle the small yachts, with one exception, and that, of course, 'Bronzewing', were all left far behind. A noticeable feature at the Manly buoy was the manner in which some of the crews flattened down their mainsheets long before there was any occasion.

Wednesday, 19th May, 1897 - Evening News

A YACHT PILLAGED. THE THIEF CONVICTED.

William Jones pleaded not guilty today in an indictment charging him with having on April 6 stolen a pair of marine glasses, a barometer, and other articles, the property of **Wallace M'Pherson Cameron**, from a vessel in port. On the night of the date mentioned the 'Iduna', a yacht, the property of the prosecutor, while lying in Snail's Bay, was boarded, and the articles stolen. The accused was subsequently arrested by Detective Brown, and identified as the person who had pawned the marine glasses. The jury found the prisoner guilty, and he was remanded for sentence.

Wednesday, 14th November, 1906 - Sydney Morning Herald

SAILING.

IDUNA SOLD.

Mr. W. M. Cameron's fine 20-ton yawl 'Iduna', which has been lying at Ford's yard, in Berry's Bay, has been sold to an Adelaide yachtsman. Captain Baker will shortly sail her round to her new quarters. The racing gear and spars will be sent round by steamer.

Mr. Cameron died the 24th of April, 1928.

Thursday, 26th April, 1928 - Sydney Morning Herald

OBITUARY.

MR. WALLACE MCPHERSON CAMERON.

The death occurred at his residence at Wollstonecraft on Tuesday of **Mr. Wallace McPherson Cameron**, at one time a very prominent yachtsman. Deceased, who was 62 years of age, was the third son of the late Mr. Ewan Wallace Cameron, of Balmain, and a grandson of Colonel Charles Cameron, an officer of one of the British regiments stationed in Australia in the early days of settlement. Mr. Cameron carried on business as a merchant in the city until four or five years ago, when he retired. In his young days he owned the yachts 'Iduna' and 'Sophia', and the racing boat 'Genesta'. He is survived by Mrs. Cameron, one son, and two daughters. His brother is the Rev. Ronald Cameron, of Turramurra, and his two surviving sisters are Mrs. John Waugh, of Mosman, and Mrs. Arthur Kingston Moore, of Hunter's Hill. The funeral will take place this morning.

February, 2015

