



## REFLECTIONS 150 YEARS

### Ian and Wendy Anstee

**Ian Anstee:** I started with the Scouts as a Cub, the Mosman Bay Sea Scouts, and I progressed from there. We weren't allowed to go out on boats as Cubs, but after three years in the Cubs, I progressed to Scouts. Really, it just started from there, in Mosman Bay.

**Wendy Anstee:** Didn't they let you go a bit early because you had an older brother?

**IA:** Yes, that's right. And our first experience in boating was in old wooden skiff boats. There's a 12-footer and a 16-footer, gaff-rigged. Yeah, we raced those all around the Harbour in Scouting events.

**Richard Palfreyman:** And then you moved on to join the Mosman Sailing Club down at the end of the bay?

**IA:** Yes, Mosman Amateur Sailing Club was a progression from the Scouts. I bought a VJ, and with my size...I was far too big for that...so upgraded to a Gwen 12. I owned two of those. They were terrific boats, travelled all over Australia sailing those, representing New South Wales.

**RP:** So you sailed in Australian championships?

**IA:** Yes.

**RP:** And with some success?

**IA:** My best success was in Tasmania, in Hobart. I came second, I think it was. I was always up in contention, but never the prime spot.

**RP:** And so these were national championships in both VJs and Gwen 12s?

**IA:** No, just Gwen 12s. I didn't go far in VJs.

**RP:** And Wendy, I think you joined the Sailing Club at Mosman at about the same time?

**WA:** I didn't join it, but my brother sailed sort of a Gwen 12 down there, and I used to go down with him, and that's how I met Ian. I don't actually remember meeting him, but we did meet down there.

**RP:** How long after that did it take you to get together?

**WA:** Not until we were, I was about 20. So yes, quite some time later, several years.

**IA:** Yeah, five, six, seven years.

**RP:** And from sailing in Gwen 12s, Ian, where did you go from there?

**IA:** After a brief stint overseas, I came back and I didn't own a boat, but I sailed with other people on Lightweight Sharpies in a number of state and national championships.

But I was crew, with my wife, I was always on the trapeze. That was good sailing and still friends with most of the people I sailed against and with.

**RP:** Now part of your time overseas, I think, was spent in Fiji. Did you sail there?

**IA:** Oh yes. It was major recreation because there's so much water around.

**WA:** And it was warm.

**IA:** I bought a Laser and that got me out on the water on Saturday racing. And then, (as) it was a bit selfish, I got in touch with a guy at the club, one of the work colleagues, and he had a lovely 42-foot timber boat and he and our family used to go racing and cruising out to islands.

**RP:** Would that have been the first contact you had with sailing in keelboats and a larger boat rather than the dinghies that you've been sailing?

**IA:** Pretty much. Yes.

**WA:** Hadn't you sailed on big boats in Sydney before we went? When you sailed with Bill and *Balandra* and...

**IA:** Oh yes.

**WA:** You did a lot of ocean racing before we went.

**RP:** You had done a little bit of sailing in big boats before Suva.

**IA:** Yes, some...

**WA:** ...ocean racing.

**RP:** And so was it after you came back from Suva that you first joined the Amateurs?

**IA:** Yes.

**WA:** I said if he wants me to come sailing, we needed something that was at least 30 feet long. I wasn't into small boat sailing.

**RP:** And you ended up buying?

**IA:** *Ankira* (A78)...an East Coast 31.

**WA:** A very grotty boat with weed on it about 18 inches long and it had been very unloved and unwanted.

**IA:** We managed to restore it, so to speak, and with a lot of encouragement from John Jeremy, as you can imagine...

**RP:** Because he's got an East Coast 31 as well.

**IA:** He was very pleased to see another one coming into the club. And that was the beginning of a long-term relationship. 15 years we owned *Ankira*. I managed to beat John two or three times, but not very often.

**RP:** I think you won a Division 7 gold medal in '87, which was only a year or two after you joined the club.

**IA:** Yes.

**WA:** We raced it as a family with our son and daughter, and John Pennefather joined us. To keep the peace amongst the family, he always said.

**IA:** He acted as an arbitrator because the kids always knew what should be done and I disagreed (laughs). And John would stand in and get them to do what I asked, and then we carried on.

**RP:** Well, *Ankira* obviously was a very, very successful boat and you've gone on to own a succession of others. But before we talk about them, I think your son Stephen would have learned to sail at about that time or maybe earlier and has gone on to be a sailor in his own right.

**IA:** Yes, his foray into sailing started really in Fiji. Then he got the taste of open water and freedom out on the water, and that continued on.

He wasn't a mad keen sailor with us. He wasn't an aggressive skipper. But once he went to university, he ended up as club captain of the university sailing club, and sailing Lasers, and went on from there.

**RP:** And his interest in sailing and his own sailing career has given you lots of opportunities to go sailing in places where you might not have expected to go.

**IA:** Never in my wildest dreams did I think I'd be ever sailing in Mexico, Tahiti and New Zealand...I had already sailed lasers there, representing Fiji when we lived there.

**RP:** So tell me a little bit more about those trips in the Pacific and in the States, and then later in the Pacific, with Stephen.

**WA:** The first one we went sailing with (them) was in Canada. They sailed their yacht over to Canada, and they lived on it on Vancouver Island, and we sailed up on the Inside Passage with them, which was wonderful. Cold, but no other boats, very few other yachts around.

**IA:** Average temperature, six degrees...daytime temperatures.

**WA:** They had a warm heater overnight.

**RP:** And in later trips?

**IA:** When they were sailing the boat back to Australia, they came down the west coast of America to Mexico, across to the Marquesas, Tahiti, New Zealand and back into Australia.

**WA:** But we sailed with them in the Sea of Cortez.

**IA:** Down in Mexico, a fascinating place to sail. Lots of wildlife and snorkelling every day. We could just drop over the side. My first major experience was seeing a blue whale. To sail up beside a blue whale is awe-inspiring. You feel so insignificant. They are huge!

**RP:** And what was the name of and what type of yacht was that?

**IA:** Stephen and Heidi (Krajewski), his wife, had a Brolga 33, and that was called *Narama*.

**RP:** It's a Joubert?

**IA:** Yes, Peter Joubert.

**RP:** Lovely, lovely boat, but a long way to sail in a relatively small boat.

**IA:** Yeah, but an extremely solid boat. Having a shipwright do a survey on it before they left Australia, he said, "You may not get there, but the boat will. It's as solid as a brick."

**RP:** Before we come back to some of your own boats, just tell me a little bit more about what Stephen has gone on to do with his sailing. I know he's been doing some chartering work and Antarctic voyages and a lot of work around Tasmania.

**IA:** Well, Stephen really got into sailing and met his wife on a big 90-foot schooner called *Maple Leaf*, sailing the inside waters of the west coast of Canada.

**WA:** And he sailed on another larger yacht also on the west coast. And then they started sailing, working for G Expeditions, and they worked in the Arctic and the Antarctic on small cruise ships. Heidi's a biologist, and she did the lectures. Stephen did a variety of jobs from the expedition leader, to looking after the Zodiacs, to guiding, to general dog's body. Since all that dried up with COVID, they've worked on the land, taking adventure tours.

**RP:** And all out of coming out of an interest in sailing, and sailing that started in Suva and continued through with the Amateurs?

**WA:** Yes.

**RP:** Now, at the Amateurs, when you had *Ankira*, I think you had it for quite a number of years and raced it very successfully. You then bought another boat, *Caballero* (A150)?

**IA:** Yes, a Cavalier 37. And it's subsequently been sold a few times, and it's now back in the club as *Indefensible* (Hugh O'Neill). It's nice to see that it's still on the water and sailing well.

And we went from there to a Cavalier 43 (*Mystic* - A150), which was more of a cruising boat. We were planning or wanting to go cruising. And we realized it was far too big for our ability for just Wendy and I to sail it.

So at a boat show, we managed to find a Moody 41 (*Mystic II* - A150) with electric winches, very easily managed, and continued from there.

**RP:** So you were mainly cruising by this stage, or racing?

**IA:** Yes, very few races. We enjoyed the Bob Brown races, but the cruising was more our forte. We had joined the Coastal Cruising Club, and we were involved in cruising with people from there, up and down the coast.

Our long cruise was to Tasmania for three months. And we got right down to Port Davey, down in the Southern Ocean. Subsequently, we cruised to the Whitsundays.

**RP:** And Wendy, you were on board on all those trips as well.

**WA:** Yes, I was on board, but I also said to Ian that I wasn't happy just the two of us going, because of my lack of ability. So we were fortunate enough to have Stephen and Heidi be able to join us on both of those long trips, which was fantastic.

**RP:** So another family trip, but this time around Australia, or on the Australian coast, rather than overseas.

**WA:** Yes, that's right. Yes. They were terrific. I really enjoyed the trip to Tasmania. The sailing waters down there are beautiful, even though it's cold.

**RP:** And then at some stage, not that long ago, you gave up sail and moved into a lovely Palm Beach 38 (*m.v. Willo*). A big transition.

**IA:** Yes, in a number of ways. It doesn't have an auxiliary, such as sails or a motor. It has a motor, but it sleeps four. It's an all-electric galley, shower, toilet, hot water. And apart from being a nice-looking boat, it's very comfortable, certainly at sea. It does handle rough weather very well.

**RP:** It sounds after all those years under sail, Wendy, you got your reward.

**WA:** Yes, I enjoyed sailing, but I'm very happy just being with the motorboat now. It's just nice being able to get out on the water. We take a lot of friends out. We always have, and so we continue to do that.

**RP:** How do you find being a continuing member of the Amateurs with a powerboat? Is there a place for power as well as sail at the Amateurs?

**IA:** Not really. I get my kicks out of doing work down at the club, and I'm fortunate still knowing people there that are willing to take me for a sail. I get the enjoyment out of that. And going into smaller boats, I've got a radio-controlled One Metre (yacht). I meet up with some of my old Mosman Amateur Sailing Club people once a month.

**RP:** And so, do you belong to a club, and do you race the radio-controlled boats?

**IA:** "We race" is a very open term. We do lay a buoy and do a few laps, but there's no prizes.

**RP:** Whereabouts? A village pond somewhere, or...?

**IA:** Narrabeen Lakes. One of our old members has a house there. Very convenient, and we have a morning of sailing and then a barbecue lunch.

**RP:** And something you enjoy as well, Wendy, or...?

**WA:** No, no, it's not that. No, that's one of Ian's hobbies. I have my own hobbies.

**RP:** Ian, you talked about volunteering and working down at the club, and volunteering is very much part of the Amateurs, isn't it? How much do we, or have we in the past, depended on the time and efforts of members to keep the club going?

**IA:** I don't think the club would exist without the volunteers. Well, it may exist if people had deep pockets, because the work that is done by the volunteers has always blown me away with the capacity of a group of guys being directed on what to do and how to do it, rebuilding deckings, and putting pontoons in, and ripping asbestos off the club and replacing that, down to the boats themselves. Some volunteers are capable of doing work on the boats. I was lucky enough to be nominated to replace all the electrics in the *Captain (Amora)*. But the boat probably wouldn't be kept going if we didn't have volunteers, all of the boats.

**RP:** And not only the volunteers but, as you said earlier, specifically people who had really big skills to be able to do major engineering type projects.

**IA:** Or rebuilding the *Nancy K's* engine, more than once, has kept that boat running for however many years and hundreds of thousands of hours.

**RP:** And then the work on the slipways and on the pontoons.

**IA:** That was one of the big reasons, or one of the reasons, I joined the club...that we had a slipway that we could put our own boat up and work on it on weekends. I wouldn't have been able to afford a yacht if we couldn't do our own work on it.

**RP:** And I think a lot of the members are in exactly the same position.

**IA:** Yeah.

**RP:** Going back to the Green Shed, which was your first yacht club, and it's now part of the Amateurs. How big a role does that play now in the life of the club?

**IA:** I think it's used as a base for people rejuvenating their boats. It's fairly sheltered down there and that gives them the ability to have materials and power and water to clean and maintain their boats.

**WA:** And it's such good access, too. It's really easy to get to from the parking.

**RP:** The parking and the tender has been a boon for members being able to access the main club, to be picked up at the Greens Shed...it's been fantastic.

**WA:** Can I just add one thing with the volunteering down there. I think it brings a lot of people in who don't necessarily know each other. And it seems to me to be a good camaraderie between them. And they usually have a sausage sizzle after. And it's good working with other people. You don't mind doing a job if you've got lots of people helping.

**IA:** Get to know other club members you wouldn't normally talk to, even from different divisions.

**RP:** Swapping a paintbrush, sure.

**IA:** (laughs)

**RP:** As well as volunteering, Ian, you've also been on the Board for quite a long time. I think from between about 1987 through to '93, that's seven, six years. What was your role on the board?

**IA:** Why did I do it?

**RP:** Well, yes, good question.

**IA:** I could say I was railroaded into it. They needed people to fulfill some positions. And I said, "Well, I'll give it a go. No promises". And they put up with me for several years.

I ended up as Secretary when Colin Bull sort of retired, which was a real honour that I did that. I don't think I did a very good job. But I was happy to hand it over after 12 months. I filled the gap as needed.

**RP:** Can I conclude by asking both of you really what the Amateurs has meant to you over 30, almost 40 years?

**WA:** I found it a bit difficult early on because we sailed as a family. And in those days, there were very few other women participating in sailing, particularly families. But as the years have gone on, it's become a far more family-oriented club. They've done a lot to encourage families down there.

**IA:** And female members.

**WA:** And female members. And there are a lot more females sailing now. And I feel a lot more comfortable there now than I did when we first joined.

**RP:** So you found it very much a male bastion when you first started?

**WA:** Yes, yes, very much a racing club.