

Seacraft April 1964

● VICTORIAN'S BEST IN 15s

SANDRINGHAM Yacht Club was host for Flying Fifteen class competitors vying for honors in the second National championship held for this class in Australia. The inaugural series was held in Perth during the previous season.

Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh expressed keen interest in the expansion of this class in Australia when he donated the "Coweslip Trophy" for perpetual Flying Fifteen class competition in this country, to be awarded annually to the winner of the National Championship.

All heats were keenly fought, but strong winds and heavy seas encountered toward the end of the series seemed to favor the locals, who were more experienced in these conditions.

FIRST HEAT—

Near gale conditions with winds gusting to 30 knot was the highlight of this heat. Sea Weed and Sina were well placed at the start, but dropped back as the breeze freshened. Ffalanger held the lead for some time until Molly o IV put in a strong challenge and won the heat.

SECOND HEAT

The starter sent the fleet away in ideal sailing conditions, with McCutcheon getting the best start in Molly-O IV. Merle and Julia fought out a close duel around the first leg of the course, but Molly-O IV was too well placed for the leaders to make any impression and went on to win.

THIRD HEAT

After two days of postponements due to strong winds, officials decided to hold the third heat. Competitors commenced racing in a bunched fleet with the breeze hovering around 25 knots. Sea Weed was well placed for most of the race, but as the breeze freshened to near gale force of over 35 knots, Merle took a commanding lead which Eric Mazey held right to the finish line.

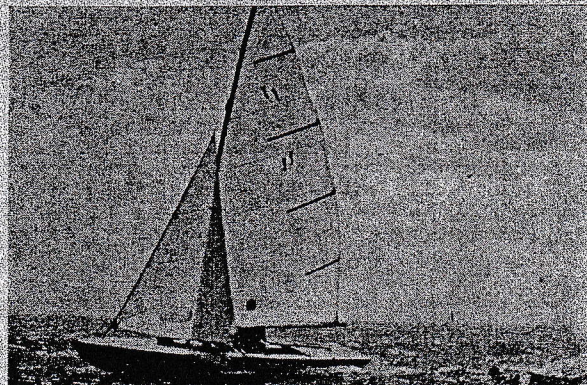
FOURTH HEAT

The two final heats were conducted on the same day. The fourth heat being sailed in the morning in a light 6-12 mph breeze which was ideal for racing. Molly-O IV quickly got the lead and held it throughout.

FIFTH HEAT

By the afternoon the steady southerly had freshened to 12-14 mph. Merle chose the best end of the starting line to secure a good lead early in the race from Julia (D. Wood). Merle further increased her lead while running under spinnaker as the breeze freshened, to win the last heat by 1 minute 28 seconds from Sea Weed and Molly-O IV. Ossie McCutcheon, by gaining third placing in this heat, made sure of winning the Flying 15 title.

Final Points: Molly-O IV (Vic) 3423 pts, 1st. Merle (Vic) 2581 pts, 2nd. Sea Weed (Vic) 2520 pts, 3rd. Ffalanger (Vic) 2279 pts, 4th. Shamara (WA) 1201 pts, 5th. Julia (Vic) 825 pts, 6th.



Molly-O, 1964 Flying Fifteen champion.

Fortissimo Feb. 1996

MEMORIES AND REMINISCENCES FROM EARLY CHAMPIONSHIPS
PART 1 SANDRINGHAM YACHT CLUB 1963-64

*1964
National*

As a build up to the 1997/98 National Flying Fifteen Championships at Mornington Yacht Club, each issue of *Fortissimo* will present memories and reminiscences of early championships. We'll tell of the characters involved, the camaraderie, the humour and drama and the many other aspects that make sailing in general and Flying Fifteens in particular, part of our lives.

In the Flying Fifteen Handbook, Tally Hobbs has thoroughly documented the early years of the class in Australia, leading up to the first National Championships in Perth in 1963.

My first involvement in the Flying Fifteen class came later in that year. I was 16 years old and just out of Sabots. I introduced myself to the late Sir Osborne McCutcheon on the jetty at Mornington and asked to go for a sail in his Flying Fifteen. He readily agreed and sensing my keen interest during the sail he asked me to crew for him in the coming season. This, he explained, included the National Championships at Sandringham to be held after Christmas that year. I naturally agreed immediately.

Our first race together in "Molly O II" was a Mornington Yacht Club event on November 22nd 1963. The reason I remember the exact date was because of the world wide significance of that particular day. The day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. My vivid memory of that was waking to the household a-buzz with the shock news. The atmosphere was the same down the yacht club later that morning. Sir Ossie remarked on the assassination and told me that he had met the President some weeks earlier. As a senior partner of architects Bates Smart McCutcheon he often travelled to America during this period while designing the new Australian Embassy in Washington.

Sailing with Sir Osborne back in those days was a pure delight. Despite our age difference, two complete generations in

fact, we became firm friends and sailed together for several years. In our first few races I strongly suspected that he'd had a solid background in single handers. He would often not warn me before tacking, resulting in me being completely pinned to leeward with my head under water and being shouted at to let the jib off. After a while even the slightest movement at the stern of the boat put me on alert ready to leap across the boat to successfully complete an unannounced tack.

At this point I'll explain some of the differences between the boats back then and today. All boats had heavy standing and running rigging and in some cases had winches mounted on the traveller bridge. The jib was

sheeted on the gunwhale, outside the shrouds. Spinnaker chutes were yet to be invented so spinnakers were packed in holes in the deck next to the mast or in plastic washing baskets back in the cockpit. The decks were solid, very flat and covered with a non-slip material, ideal for walking on. Many boats had antifouling below the water line and were moored. The rudder posts were vertical producing fearsome weather helm in fresh breezes. The boat was looked upon as a mini keelboat in the early 1960's but by 1965 attitudes were changing and the Flying Fifteen was starting to adopt the racing dinghy concept.

My recollections of the 1964 Australian Championships are still quite strong. The series started on Boxing Day, with races held in a variety of conditions from less than 5 knots to over 20 knots of breeze. Molly O won the Cowslip Trophy that year sailing with a three man crew. Andrew McCutcheon was the other member of the crew, giving us a combined weight of around 28 stone (178kg), not a particularly heavy crew in those days.

"Molly O II" was an imported English hull using Proctor spars and Bruce Banks sails. Several boats carried timber spars and continued to do so until the mid 1960's.

**I introduced myself
to the late Sir
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It is interesting to note that the next 5 places in that series were filled by either highly competent or professional boat builders:

•2nd Place - "Merle" Eric Maizie (sailed 3 up). Designer and builder of the "Boomerang" - the virtual pioneer of the trailer sailer boom. He was also involved with Inglis-Smith.

•3rd Place - "Seaweed" Rob Legg (sailed 2 up) Champion Flying Dutchman skipper and founder of Mouldcraft Timber Boats in Frankston. He later moved to Southport Qld. Where he designed and built the well known RL range of trailer sailers.

•4th Place - "Ffalanger" Bill and Hal Shand (sailed 2 up). No explanation required here for anyone even vaguely involved in Flying Fifteens.

•5th Place - "Sheeba" John (Tally) Hobbs (sailed 3 up) Our class handbook deals with Tally Hobbs' background, with building the first Flying Fifteen in Australia and his involvement in getting National Competition up and running.

•6th Place - "Julia" David Hinkley (sailed 3 up). Builder of Flying Fifteens near Pittwater NSW. Most of the fleet at Avalon used Hinkley hulls matched with untapered masts and full sails. This was fine for the flat water and lighter winds of Pittwater, but these boats really struggled in open waters.

The talent and efforts of all these people gave the class a great start in

Australia and ensured steady growth during a period when many other classes struggled and in some cases died out completely.

Another interesting entry in the Championships was "Sina", sailed by a female crew and skippered by June Stainforth. Sina was carvel construction and had been built on a beach in the Solomon Islands. Originally she was fitted with a steel plate keel and rudder. These were replaced by the regulation keel and rudder when she was brought to Melbourne by the Stainforths.

The series and the class attracted some solid publicity when radio station 3AK included Championship heat results and interviews as part of their bay reports. Brian Naylor, then a young announcer with the station ran the bay reports from a cabin cruiser based at Sandringham. As a keen yachtsman he showed much interest in the Flying Fifteen and gave enthusiastic coverage whenever possible.

With the completion of the Sandringham series the Championships were headed for venues at Avalon NSW in 1965 and Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania in Hobart in 1966.

In the next issues of *Ffortissimo* these venues will be discussed, again with emphasis on the people involved.

Howard Proctor
Molly O



Australian National Championship Results

1963 - 1964 sailed under the Burgee of Sandringham Yacht Club

Sailors endured near gale conditions for heat one and two days of postponements due to strong winds, with race three over 25 knots.

Molly-O IV sailed by Sir Osborne (Ossie) McCutcheon was most consistent winning 3 heats ahead of Merle sailed by Eric Maizey with two wins.

Of the first six place getters second and fourth sailed two up, the remainder three up.

Rob Legg was the founder of Mouldcraft Timber boats an early builder of Flying Fifteens.

Bill and Hal Shand became the dominant builder of Australian for many years building several hundred boats. They also went on to win five Australian Championships together.

Unfortunately we do not have a full set of results for this series, however, the first place getters were:

Place	Boat #	Boat Name	Helm	Crew	Home State
1	572	Molly-O IV	Sir Osborne McCutcheon	Andrew McCutcheon/ Howard Proctor	Vic
2	585	Merle	Eric Maizey	<i>no record</i>	Vic
3	575	Seaweed	Rob Legg	David Mathews	Vic

