

Chapter 3

TO THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

On September 2, 1880, the following notice appeared in the Geelong Advertiser:-

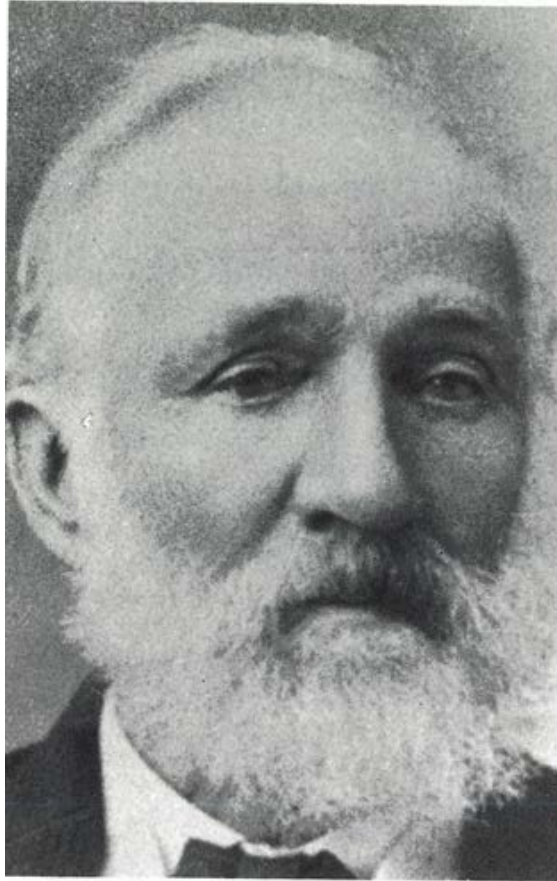
"A meeting of all interested in forming a Sailing Club will be held at the Victoria Hotel, Friday evening at 8 o'clock."

This meeting, convened by Mr. Arthur Speed, took place and the Geelong Sailing Club was constituted.

In order to provide members, who did not own yachts of their own, with boats to sail, arrangements were made with Mr. Clement Blunt by which the Sailing Club was provided with three yachts for the use of members and a club room was rented at his (Blunt's), boatshed on the Eastern Beach. A set of rules for the new club were formulated as follows:-

SAILING CLUB RULES

1. **SAILING CLUB.** The club shall be called The Geelong Sailing Club.
2. **COLOURS.** The club flag shall be red with a white cross.
3. **ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION.** The annual subscription shall be three guineas per annum payable as follows. One half on the 1st of October and the balance on the 1st February. In the event of any member's removal from Geelong before the 1st of February in any year, the second half of his subscription shall not become payable. Any new arrival in the town, elected a member after the 1st of January shall pay a subscription of two guineas instead of three.
4. **SEASON.** The season shall commence on the 1st of September and end on the 30th April.
5. **MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES.** Any member shall be entitled to take a boat out on any day except Sunday, subject to Rule No. 8. The following charges shall be made for members' friends:
 - Ladies.** Members shall be entitled to take one lady free with a charge of sixpence per head for each lady after the first.
 - Non-resident Gentlemen.** At the rate of one shilling per head.
 - Resident gentlemen.** At the rate of one shilling an evening. Two shillings and sixpence for a Saturday afternoon.
6. **ELECTION of MEMBERS.** Joining members must be proposed and seconded at a general or special meeting, (5 to form a quorum) and elected by a show of hands. Any member present shall be entitled to demand a recount
7. **ENGAGING BOATS.** Any member aspiring to engage a boat for a holiday is to put a request to that effect in the club dressing room. No boat to be engaged for a day by less than three members.
8. Any member taking a boat without a full crew (4 on any day or 8 on Saturdays), to sail about in the vicinity of the moorings and on signal being given to stand in and take up passengers.



Clement Blunt



Sarah Blunt

The following extract from the Blunt Family History reveals the nature of Mr. Clement Blunt and certainly has a niche in the history of the Royal Geelong Yacht Club.

"Son of Clement and Mary Blunt (nee Brand), Clement Blunt was born in Cambridge, England on January 22, 1824. On March 7, 1838 when aged 14, he was apprenticed to Thomas Woolf, tailor, but an 1841 census paper shows him to be an apprentice boat builder. His brother, George was doing a Master's apprenticeship. They lived with their father and stepmother at Shadwell in Middlesex. Clement and his friend, George Thain, worked their passages to Australia, Clement as a ship's carpenter and George as sailmaker. It is impossible to find out for sure which ship they came on as lists of crews were not kept until about 1855. The ship was either the 'Barque Eden' or a private ship called the 'Isabella'. His wife, Sarah Josephine Emerson, (born in London 22-2- 1834, died in Geelong 11-7-1911), was the second daughter of Joseph and Isabella Emerson. She and her friend, Susan Thomas, came to Australia in 1850, on her father's ship, 'The Isabella'. Travelling with her and her friend were her father and her elder sister, Isabella. While in Melbourne they stayed with a Doctor Embling, a surgeon of 31 Gore Street, Fitzroy, whom her father had known in England. According to family stories passed down, this was the ship on which the two boys, Clement and George, worked their passages and met the two girls, Sarah and Susan, who they eventually married. Isabella sailed for England with her father on his return journey but took ill and died of fever at Sierra Leone. After Clement and Sarah's marriage they travelled to Lorne and camped while he built a boat for a Mr. Russell, a squatter of Barunah Plains. They lost all their belongings in a bush fire and walked round the coast back to Geelong, where he set up a boat building business. First entry of his business in the Directory was 1858 and gives Corio Terrace as his address. They moved to Melbourne before 1860 as this was where their next four children were born. In Melbourne, his first boat building was conducted on the bank of the Yarra River -south side of the river - east side of Princes Bridge. After being flooded, they moved to Port Melbourne but went back to Geelong before 1870, going by dray around the bay. In Geelong he had been granted a site on the Eastern Beach that was set aside for boat builders. He built his home and boat sheds there. He applied many times to the Geelong Council for permission to run a pleasure boat on the Barwon River, but this was never granted."

EXTRACTS FROM GEELONG NEWSPAPERS

1/5/1874. *Another addition has been made to our local fleet of yachts, a yawl named "Polly", is 24 ft. overall with a 20 foot keel and skims o'er the water like a thing of life. It was built by Mr. Blunt for Dr. Reid and although the owner states she was not built for racing purposes it has been noticed that he never allows any other boat to pass him.*

3/3/1879. *A splendid centre-board boat, 25 ft. in length with a beam of 7 ft. 3 ins., has been built by Mr. C. Blunt of the Eastern Beach, to take part in the regatta on the Colac Lake at the end of this month. The boat is a 6 ton and will carry 20 passengers. When ballasted she will draw 12 ins. of water and she will be fitted with a French lug, jib and staysails. The boat, which cost about £65, is very strongly built of kauri pine, red gum and blackwood.*

1899. *The well-known boat builder, Mr. Clement Blunt, died last Friday (Sept. 9). The deceased was a very old resident of Geelong, having arrived here 49 years ago.*

The following was printed in a later edition:-

'One of the oldest and best known yacht builders in the Colony, Mr. C. Blunt of Geelong, died last week aged over 70. For as many years as I can remember he has been building yachts and

boats at the Pivot, and he has turned out many serviceable craft (some of them with no mean tum of speed) in his time, notably the old "Psyche" and the "Galatea". The old man had his own ideas of form and design. He took unkindly to the modern shaped bow and long overhanging counter, and manys the fight an intending owner (who insisted on having these "abominations" fitted to his vessel), had with him before he consented to fall in with the new-fangled notions. A superior workman, with a thorough knowledge of his trade, he was besides a great favourite with all classes of yachting men, few of whom ever put in a day at Geelong without whiling away half an hour "yarning" to the old man. He has left several sons, Charlie, who worked with him, and Clem, who has a yacht building business of his own in Williamstown, being amongst the number."

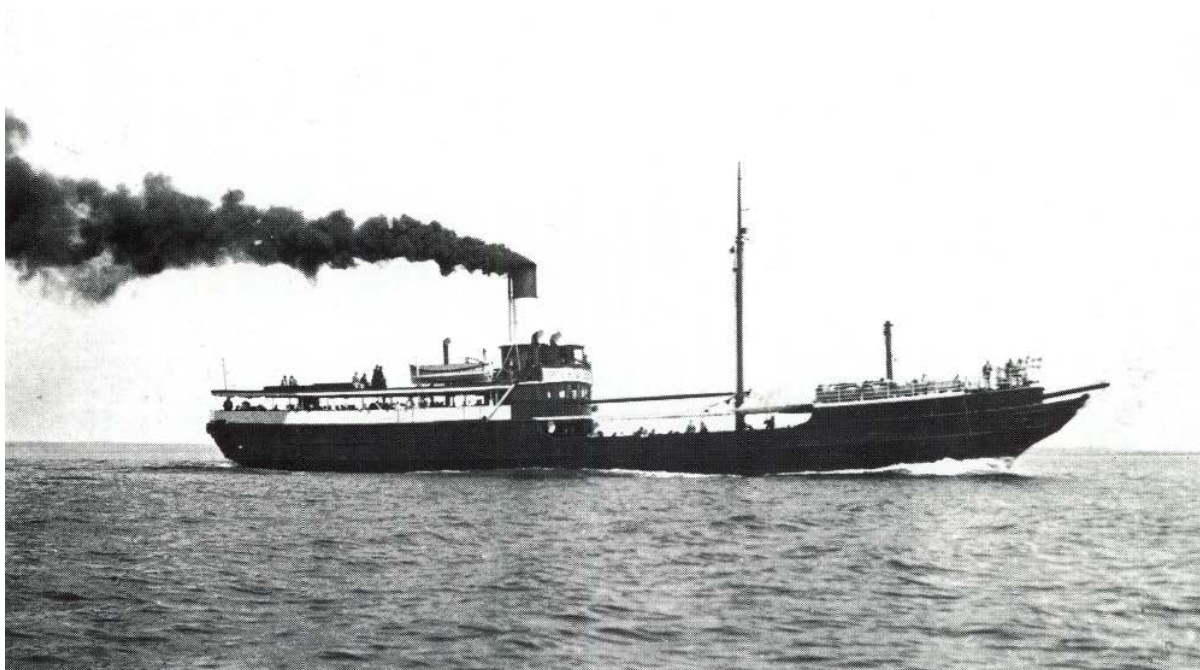
It is apparent from the text of the rules that the activities of the Sailing Club were mainly of a recreational and social nature, with little attention being given to racing. But in 1881, when the name of the club was changed to the Geelong Yacht Club, there is evidence that members participated in yacht races, particularly at the Geelong regattas, which were to become an annual event for the next three years. There was a break in the sequence of Geelong regattas from 1885 to 1891. But they were reintroduced in 1892. On this occasion, for what would appear to be the first time, the regatta was conducted under the auspices of the Geelong Yacht Club and not, as previously, by a specially convened local regatta committee.

But let us go back to 1881 and examine the regatta which took place on Corio Bay on January 10 that year. Here we find that the Commodore was the Hon. W. J. Clarke, M.L.C., and the Vice-Commodores, the Hon. Sir Charles Sladen, K.C.M.G. and Mr. Geo. Cunningham, Mayor of Geelong. And on the eight-member sailing committee the names of Messrs. C. Shannon and A. Speed, both members of the Geelong Yacht Club, are listed.

The Geelong Advertiser reporter described the weather on the day as follows:-

"A pleasanter day for the sailing and rowing regatta on Corio Bay, which took place yesterday, could not have been wished for, and the large assemblage of spectators will have pleasing recollections of the great event of 1881. The weather was in every way suitable; although the scorching rays of the morning sun betokened a very warm day, a cool southerly breeze, light in its character, relieved the atmosphere of its previous warmth shortly before eleven o'clock. At times during the day there were stronger puffs of wind from the southward and eastward and besides being agreeable to the promenaders on the shores of the bay, they were eminently satisfactory to those engaged in the management of sailing craft. It is seven years since the bay was the scene of a regatta, and the one held yesterday eclipsed in magnitude and brilliancy any previous aquatic display in the waters of Corio.

There was a very large crowd in attendance and they lined the shore from the Western Beach right through to the Eastern Gardens, with a number taking up vantage spots on the Railway, Moorabool and Yarra Street piers. Several points of criticism arose. The flagship, Victoria, was stationed about half a mile from Limeburner's Point, quite a distance from where the majority of spectators were assembled and the publicans' booths were located near the powder magazines, "some distance beyond the flagship and very few persons, comparatively speaking, had the hardihood to perspire their way to them along the loose metalled, dusty road, and those who did were too exhausted to indulge in refreshments to an extent which would prove payable to the caterers."



The S. S. "Edina"

A famous Melbourne – Geelong Passenger Steamer

The steamers, Edina and Golden Crown, filled almost to capacity with visitors from Melbourne, added to the scene and sweet music was discoursed by the Bavarian Reed Band on the latter vessel. Entries for the First Class Yacht Race, to be sailed over four rounds of a nine mile course for a silver cup valued at 50 guineas were as follows :-

Name	Rig	Tons	Owner	Club
"Edith"	Cutter	43	Sir Thos. Elder	Glenelg
"Janet"	Cutter	38	Hon. W.J. Clarke	V Y C
"Zephyr"	Cutter	23	R. Honey Esq.	Sth Aust YC
"Corio"	Cutter	11	Jno. Balfour	Geelong
"Taniwah"	Cutter	38	Thos. Niccol	Auckland, N.Z.

The "Edith", "Zephyr" and "Taniwah" (Sea Monster) had come to Victoria to compete in the Grand Intercolonial Yacht Race but when this event took place is not disclosed.

Here is how the Geelong Advertiser reporter saw the race :-

"First Class Yacht Race -for yachts of 15 tons and upward prize silver cup, value 50 guineas

"Janet", 38 tons, Hon. W.J. Clarke, V.Y.C . 1st.

"Taniwah", 38 tons, Thomas Niccol, Auckland, N.Z. 2nd.

At the start the Zephyr, when rounding the buoy at the flagship, carried away her topmast and after sailing as far as the Yarra Street wharf, she ran inshore and came to an anchor. The Janet was first to round the buoy off the Yarra Street pier, followed by the Taniwah, Corio and Edith, in that order. When off the bluff near the gasworks, the Edith carried away her top-mast and

then erected a ringtail sail which answered well. After struggling up to the north shore, the Corio gave in and came back to the Flagship in order to take part in the Second Class race. The Janet kept the lead the first time round and went over the course passing the flagship as follows:-

12 h. 3 min. 39 sec; Taniwah, 12 h. 9 min. 4 secs., Edith, 12h. 10 mins. 43 secs. As the race started at 11 o'clock, the times obviously refer to the time of the day.

When off the Yarra Street pier the Edith retired from the contest, being unable to overhaul the Taniwah. The position of the boats was unchanged, the Taniwah slightly gaining ground. The flagship was passed the second time as follows:-

Janet, 1 h. 5 min. 8 secs; Taniwah, 1 h. 9 min. 45 secs.

In the third time round the flagship was passed as follows:- Janet, 2 h. 7 mins. 34 secs; Taniwah, 2 h. 13 mins. 7 secs.

In the fourth and final round the breeze freshened from the south east and the yachts lay to the wind in fine style and they crossed the finishing line as follows:-

Janet, 3 h. 20 min. 48 secs; Taniwah, 3 h. 28 min. 45 secs."

Captain Balfour's 11 ton yacht, "Corio", gained second place in the race for second class yachts and there were two Geelong entries in the race for Third Class Yachts. The 414 ton "Water Sprite" from the G.S.C., and J. B. Wilson's 7 ton "Oriana". The "Water Sprite" was sailed into second placing behind the Ballarat boat, "Viola".

In the open boat race, W. Curnow of Geelong came second in his 24 footer, 'Why Not'."

The following year, 1882, the Geelong regatta was held on February 28. This time the Commodore was Mr. J.R. Hopkins and the Vice Commodores, Messrs. G. Cunningham, C.G. Millar, P. Turnbull and E. Morey. But the weather was not entirely suitable for sailing. The southerly wind was at times so light that the yachts became becalmed and courses had to be shortened in three of the events.

And overhead the sky was threatening, deterring many persons from visiting the shores of the bay, But despite all of this, some 5000 spectators were in attendance, on the piers and on the slopes of the Western and Eastern beaches. The steamer, Despatch acted as flagship and the Cerberus band dispensed lively music.

At this regatta all three entrants in the first class yacht race were from the Victoria Yacht Club. They were the Janet, the Taniwah, now owned by Mr. P. Turnbull and the Minnehaha an 11Yz ton cutter owned by Messrs. J. Huddart and F. Mackay. But under the rules of the race, which was for yachts of 20 tons and upward, the Minnehaha was classed as a 20 tonner.

During the race the breeze fell away and the committee shortened the course to three rounds, making it 27 miles. The Janet ran out an easy winner from the Taniwah, with the Minnehaha third.

In the Second Class yacht race, Captain Balfour's Corio, sailing under the flag of the V.Y.C. was second to the Grand Flaneur from Brighton. But Geelong boats featured strongly in the race for Third Class yachts with the first two placings from a field of four going to Mr. H. G. Roebuck's 3 1/2 ton lug rigged, 24 footer, Siren. The little clipper, as she was referred to, had been built by Mr.

Clement Blunt and only finished a few days before the regatta. Mr. C. Shannon's 8 ton cutter, Undine, was a close second just 1 minute and 5 seconds behind the winner.

Three weeks later, on Saturday, March 18, 1882, the Geelong Yacht Club conducted a race for club members for a clock valued at £8/10/0, donated by Mr. J. B. Wilson. The race, which was open to all boats with counters or square sterns, also carried points for Mr. Chas. Shannon's silver cup, presented to members of the club. The race was sailed in a moderate breeze which freshened from the south towards the finish. The Undine crossed the line first but lost the race to the Siren on handicap by one minute. Third placing went to Mr. C. Blunt's Viola. After this race the points for the cup stood: Siren 10, Undine 6, Oriana 4. But there is no apparent record of which boat became the ultimate winner of the cup.

The next RECORDED race conducted by the Geelong Yacht Club took place on December 8, 1882, for a silver tea and coffee service given by the club Commodore, Mr. J. R. Hopkins. Six boats faced the starter; Mr. J. B. Wilson's Oriana, Mr. Faulkner's Why Not, Mr. C. Shannon's Undine, Mr. Roebuck's Siren, Mr. Gilbert's Spray and the G.Y.C.'s new boat, Volante. A strong southerly wind prevailed for some time before the start of the 20 mile event, causing most of the competitors to go out under cruising or storm canvas. This time the Undine came in an easy winner by 16 minutes from the Spray, the other four boats having retired when the wind lightened off and they found themselves grossly under-canvassed.

There is no doubt that the Geelong Yacht Club had continuity of existence from this time on. This is evidenced by a statutory declaration by one, Harry Fielder made on November 20 1902 in which he listed entries from his private cash book showing annual subscriptions aid to the Yacht Club from 1881 through to 1890. At the time of making the declaration, Mr. Fielder, a wholesale stationer, was Vice Commodore of the Geelong Yacht Club.

But from 1882 to late 1884, there is no evidence of competitive sailing on Corio Bay, although, of course, this may have taken place but is not recorded.

Then on December, 12, 1884, a regatta was held and it would appear that this was conducted under the auspices of the Geelong Yacht Club as the Commodore of the regatta was none other than Mr. J.R. Hopkins, the G.Y.C. Commodore at the time.

Also, other officials of the regatta, namely Messrs. C. Shannon, H.G. Roebuck, D. Strachan and Wm. Jackson were all members of the Yacht Club.

Although a half holiday was declared, apart from the banks and public offices, very few business houses were closed for the afternoon. This resulted in a comparatively small attendance of about 3,000 spectators.

None of the larger yachts came down from Melbourne and the main race, for yachts not exceeding 15 tons, attracted only three starters; The Assegai, 6 tons, from the Victoria Yacht Club', The Ballarat, 5-6/10 tons, from Ballarat and Mr. C. Blunt Junior's 5 1/2 ton, Excelsior from Geelong.

This event was sailed over a 22 1/2 mile rectangular course in fresh westerly conditions and was won by the Ballarat in the time of 4 hours 50 min and 56 secs.. In the race for yachts not exceeding 26 feet, the Kay Bros. Waterwitch from St. Kilda beat Mr. Roebuck's Siren by 1min. 33 secs. in the time of 5 hours 47 mins. 27 secs. For the next few years, the sport of yachting in Geelong seems to have lapsed, or certainly from a competitive point of view. The following report from a Melbourne newspaper (circa 1887-88) serves to lay emphasis on this point:-

"Our yachting correspondent writes that a successful attempt was made on Saturday afternoon to revive yachting interests on Corio Bay. For the past two seasons the sport has been almost entirely neglected and the various sailing craft have remained idle. The members of the Geelong Sailing Club have, however exhibited a little more spirit this year and on Saturday they made a kind of formal opening of the season by arranging a match for a sweepstakes, the course travelled being about five miles in length. Six boats were entered for the competition, which proved an exciting one and spectators were permitted to enjoy it through the course being marked off within easy viewing distance of the shore. A capital breeze prevailed and the yachtsmen exhibited considerable skill in the handling of their boats. The event was won by Mr. J. Bannister's Thelba with Mr. H.G. Roebuck's Siren second and Mr. F. W. Scott's Iolanthe third, the first yacht finishing, after a good contest, about 200 yards ahead of the second."

It would seem that this opening match must have re-kindled interest in the sport because in 1890, an overdraft on behalf of the club was arranged with its bankers secured by the guarantee of a few of the members. The money thus obtained .was invested in the purchase of three boats, May, Iolanthe and Mikado, for the use of members.

In the same year, in order to provide a site for a clubhouse on the Eastern Beach, permissive occupancy was obtained from the Lands Department and 12 months later, funds were raised to enable the club to build its own boatshed. By this time, the committee found that keeping yachts for the use of members, without individual responsibility, was not the answer and caused problems and so disposed of the three boats.

There was no regatta in 1892, but on January 26 that year a sailing match was conducted by the Geelong Yacht Club on Corio Bay. This was an open race for boats not exceeding 30 feet in length and attracted 13 entries. Four of these were owned by Geelong Yacht Club members, Messrs. Hope and Douglass's Mayflower, 22' 6", Mr. T. Deubry's St. Kitts, 27', Mr. P.J. Whitfield's Beta, 24' and Mr. C. Blunt's Circe, 20'.

In this race, sailed over a course of 27 miles, the Sunbeam from Hobsons Bay Yacht Club gained line honours but lost on handicap to the Athlete from Brighton by five seconds. None of the Geelong boats completed the course. That same season, the Geelong Yacht Club conducted three races for club boats in March-April for the Orchard Trophy valued at ten guineas. The first two of these races, for which there were five entries, were won by the Siren. There is no record of the result of the third race, but in any case, the Siren had the trophy in her keeping.

The following year, on January 26, 1893, the club again conducted an open race sailed over a 25 mile course. Eight boats faced the starter in light conditions. But a fresh southerly soon developed causing the Corio to lose her yard and the St. Kitts to break her bob-stay.

The race was won by the Geelong boat, Beta, owned by Dr. Kennedy, with the Hyacinth from Robson's Bay second and the Corio third. The Athlete was disqualified on protest for fouling a course marker off Dann's Bluff.

Then, on December 21, 1893, a public meeting was held at the Victoria Hotel for the purpose of deciding whether a Grand Regatta should be held on Corio Bay during that season. Dr. T. C. Hope, Commodore of the Geelong Yacht Club, was in the chair and with very little discussion, it was unanimously decided that a regatta should be held on Anniversary Day, January 26, 1894. A committee was formed, officials elected and a comprehensive programme drawn up.

It is apparent that yachting in Geelong was now attracting more attention and it is interesting to note that the Geelong Advertiser now had a yachting correspondent. Writing under the pseudonym of "Close Hauled", this correspondent filed the following report on the day of the regatta:-

"YACHTING NOTES (by 'Close Hauled')

The regatta which takes place on Corio Bay today is looked upon by yachtsmen in Victoria as the principal meeting of the season. This regatta is the result of an effort made by several gentlemen to resuscitate the old Geelong regatta, which, in years gone by, was an annual event. The large number of entries received for today's racing is due, to a certain extent, to the 26th falling on a Friday, thus giving visiting yachtsmen two days in which to return home. But the 26th will not always fall on a Friday, and if the Geelong regatta is to meet with outside support a new date should be chosen, and for this purpose Easter Monday seems most suitable.

The Queenscliff regatta might be held on Easter Saturday, and the Geelong regatta on the following Monday, a double inducement thus being held out to yachtsmen to place their boats under racing canvas.

For the past week active preparations have been made by local enthusiasts to prepare for the struggle, and the merry ring of a hammer, or the creaking of a block might often have been heard at midnight.

A glance at the programme shows a splendid list of entries for the first race, all the large racing yachts in the bay having entered, except two, viz., the Archdale and the Waratah. The absence of the latter is generally regretted, as there is every reason to believe she would have competed had the handicapping been on L.W.L., instead of rating, which penalises the Waratah most harshly, and gives lug boats such as the Kawar and Starlight a prepondering advantage.

In the race for yachts under 26ft. neither the Queenie nor the Athlete have been entered. This race will be of great interest to Geelong yachtsmen, as it will show if the Beta has really been improved by the alterations made to her bows during the winter. In fine weather she seems to move fairly fast, but in a sea she appears to onlookers to punch very heavily, which is neither here nor there if she gets home first.

The entries are very modest for the race for 22 footers, the only visitors being the Genesta and the Sorais, the other five being local boats. This, I believe, is the Sorais' first race. She is overhung fore and aft, which has earned her the nickname of Young Waratah.

Owners of boats must bear in mind that any protests must be lodged with the secretary within two hours of the arrival of the protesting boat.

It has been arranged to hold two sweepstakes races tomorrow (Saturday) afternoon. The entrance is 5s for each boat, to be handed to the secretary, £1 being added to the stakes in each race. The third boat saves her stake, the second takes one-quarter of the money and the first the remaining three quarters. The first race is for boats 23 ft. and over, and starts at 2.45 p.m. The handicapping is on L.W.L., and the distance 14 miles.

The race for Mr. Miller's trophy at St. Kilda was won by Kawau, Camilla being 20 minutes later. Several cruising yachts are expected down to follow the races, for which purpose the steamer Sprightly has been chartered by the Victorian Yachting Association.

The question as to whether the Volley is qualified to compete in the race No. 2 (under 26ft.) has been settled by her representatives agreeing to have her entry transferred to the first race."

The regatta took place as scheduled, and what a gay affair it must have been. Once again the Geelong Advertiser gave full coverage of the event and reported as follows the next day, January 27, 1894:-

"SPORTING INTELLIGENCE GEELONG YACHT CLUB

Very great interest was taken yesterday in the above regatta -rather hurriedly arranged for a few weeks since -which took place in Corio Bay. Every exertion had been made by the energetic committee of management appointed to carry out the details of the grand aquatic event to ensure its success, and the way they performed the arduous duties at short notice was most creditable. It is many years since the quiet waters of Corio Bay have been disturbed by yachtsmen from a distance, and the splendid gathering witnessed yesterday was one which appeared to thoroughly revive the former enthusiasm in yachting sport. With the assistance of the residents of the town and suburbs, the committee were enabled to offer for competition in the sailing events the sum of £70, and with that slender amount they secured for Geelong sightseers a very excellent representative attendance of yachtsmen. The six events on the programme of sailing matches induced the large entry of 59 boats, viz., No. 1 race, 6; No. 2 race, 11; No 3 race 7; No. 4 race, 12; No. 5, 5; and No. 6 race, 18; and in nearly every instance there was a large fleet ready to start at the signal given to let go from the moorings. The sight viewed from the beach slopes and from the wharves as the various vessels spread their white or brown tanned wings to the breeze was of a most pleasing description, and although it was difficult to the inexperienced eye once the boats started on their aquatic flight, to distinguish the individual competing craft, still the whole flotilla was under observation. The varying changes in the positions of the boats gave an animated appearance to the bay for, in addition to the yachts and fishermen's boats engaged in the several competitions, there were numerous other small craft under sail darting to- and-fro in such a way that whilst not interfering with the races, greatly assisted in sustaining the interest in the sailing contests. At intervals the paddle steamer Bellarine and the screw steamers Amy and Eclipse, all well filled with eager sightseers, crossed and re-crossed the bay, and in the afternoon the splendid excursion steamer Courier, skilfully piloted by Captain Gillois, joined in the general exhibition. Close in shore the scene was one of gaiety, the large sailing ships, barques and steamers lying alongside the Railway pier and Yarra Street wharf, all arrayed in their gayest holiday costume of bunting, materially assisting in the event specially designed to celebrate the 106th anniversary of the settlement of Australia. In the bay, on either sides of the wharves, were many yachts lying at anchor or at their moorings, each displaying strings of the gayest coloured flags, which decorated the craft fore and aft, and among those specially conspicuous were the steam yacht Firefly, of the Royal Yacht Club, and the sailing craft Galatea, Waratah, Pert and Ada, Mr. Wetcalfe's pretty cruising yacht from Melbourne, and last, but not least, the harbourmaster's boat, which, with Captain Parson's permission, was used as the flagship.

During the whole of the day a strong southerly breeze prevailed just the very thing for the complete enjoyment of yachting, and all engaged in the sailing of boats appeared to be

thoroughly delighted with it. The breeze was exactly the right strength to make the boat dance merrily through the water, and beyond the small mishaps to sails and light spars on some of the tiny craft engaged in the contests no accident occurred to mar the sport. Although the attendance of the public up to one o'clock in the afternoon was rather limited, it was greatly increased after luncheon, many thousands of persons visiting the beach slopes and the wharves to view the regatta, and the crowd of local sightseers .was greatly added to when the steamers Courier and Edina landed on the Moorabool street wharf about 1000 passengers brought from Melbourne and Portarlington.

Mindful of the amusement of everyone, the committee of management very thoughtfully provided a separate programme of events in the shallow waters on the eastern side of the Yarra street wharf close to the fishermen's and harbourmaster's jetties and the Corio Bay Rowing Club's boathouse. These included walking the greasy pole, tub, dinghy and sea-horse races, an aquatic tug-of-war in boats, which for over three hours created the utmost merriment, the shallow water sports concluding with an event entitled a duck hunt provocative of the greatest hilarity. The members of the Corio Bay Rowing Club indulged in some four-oared boat races of an exciting kind, the rowing events finishing up with a very laughable natatory exhibition by many of the skilful divers and swimmers connected with the rowing club.

The utmost good order was manifested by the enormous crowd of spectators, and the services of Senior-Constable White, and the couple of constables under his control were not once required to check the spirits of the crowd of merry holiday seekers, and when the day's successful programme of pleasure and amusement was finished, everyone deserted the beach slopes and the wharves with the feeling that they had spent a highly enjoyable day by the rippling waters.

The regatta was admirably carried out by the sailing committee, consisting of Messrs. H. Speed, J. F. Dentry, W. Rooke, W. Curnow, R. H. B. Downes and F. Dentry, and Dr. Kennedy, whilst the official positions were very ably filled by the following:- Starter, Captain Parsons (harbourmaster); judges and timekeeper, Messrs. C. Shannon and Langhorne and Major-General Downes, C.M.G.; superintendent of wharf contests, Mr. W. Curnow; and hon. secretary and treasurer, Mr. R.H.B. Downes. The sailing events were very spiritedly contested, some of the finishes being remarkably close, showing that the handicapping of the yachts was exceedingly well performed.

The following are the results of the regatta, which it is intended shall be made an annual event in Corio Bay, probably at Easter time, commencing next year:-

NO. 1 RACE:

For yachts 26ft. L.W.L. and over. Distance 21 miles.

First Round (Time of Day)

H. Press	Kawau	Williamstown	12 h 10 m 30 s
L. Grant	Cooena	H.B.Y.C.	12 h 13 m 25 s
F. J. Jennings	Volley	St.K.Y.C	12 h 19 m 22 s
C. J. Cottell	Starlight	Brighton Y.C	12 h 56 m 22 s

The only other starter was the Mayflower, which, however, did not complete the first round, whilst the St. Kitts and Starlight gave up after finishing the round.

Second Round (Time of Day)

Coena		1 h 20 m 19 s
Volley,		1 h 29 m 08 s
Kawau,		1 h 37 m 17 s

Second Round (Time of Day)

Coena		2 h 28 m 34 s
Volley,		2 h 59 m 06 s
Kawau,		3 h 13 m 30 s

A protest was lodged by the owner of Volley against the Coena on the ground of a foul at one of the buoys. The protest was considered at the Victoria Hotel in the evening, and was eventually dismissed

NO. 2 RACE:

For yachts under 26ft L.W.L.: Distance 14 miles

First Round (Time of Day)

J. O'Callaghan	Leisure Hour	Port Melb. Y. C.	12 h 49 m 52 s
P. F. Grut	Traveller	Port Melb. Y. C.	12 h 13 m 25 s
J. Sandry	E.M.G,	Port Melb. Y. C.	12 h 52 m 27 s
J. Broadbent	Fugitive	St. K. Y.C	12 h 55 m 33 s
McLean	Hyacinth	H.B.Y.C	12 h 55 m 56 s

The other starters were: Beta and Rita, both locally owned yachts.

When the signal to start was given, the Beta, Rita and Traveller fouled each other, with the result that the Beta's sails were tom to pieces and she was thus thrown out of the race, whilst the Rita lost so much time in getting clear of the wreckage that she did not take any part in the event.

Second (Final) Round (Time of Day)

Leisure Hour		2 h 06 m 54 s
Traveller		2 h 11 m 02 s
E.M.G,		2 h 13 m 16 s
Fugitive		2 h 18 m 13 s
Hyacinth		2 h 18 m 56 s

NO. 3 RACE:

For yachts under 22ft L.W.L. and under Distance 14 miles

First Round (Time of Day)

E.N. Collin	Vera	G. Y. C.	1 h 09 m 33 s
D. Robinson	Genesta	St. K. Y.C	1 h 10 m 13 s
G. H. Speed	Mikado	G. Y. C.	1 h 13 m 04 s

There were only three starters for this event.

Second (Final) Round (Time of Day)

Genesta		2 h 33 m 34 s
Vera		2 h 35 m 25 s
Mikado		2 h 42 m 04 s

NO. 4 RACE:

Open to all comers (irrespective of size): Distance 14 miles.

First Round (Time of Day)

H. Press	Cooena	Williamstown.	4 h 13 m 08 s
D. Watson	Volunteer	Queenscliff	4 h 16 m 33 s
J. Sandry	E.M.G,	Port Melb. Y. C.	4 h 18 m 34 s
J. O'Callaghan	Leisure Hour	Pt. Melb. Y. C.	4 h 18 m 53 s
W. Rooksn	Beta	G.Y..C	4 h 21 m 09 s
J. P. Dentry	St. Kitts	G.Y.C.	4 h 26 m 10 s

Among other starters was Mr. C. Blunt's yacht, which held position very well until a mishap occurred to her rigging, and she had to retire.

Second (Final) Round (Time of Day)

Cooena		5 h 26 m 26 s
Volunteer		5 h 33 m 16 s
E.M.G,		5 h 36 m 03 s
Leisure Hour		5 h 37 m 43 s
Beta		5 h 44 m 17 s
St. Kitts		5 h 45 m 28 s

NO. 5 RACE:

Fishermen's Event. Open only to Geelong and Portarlington (double-ended boats). Distance, 11 miles.

J. Wilson	Violet	Portarlington.	3 h 14 m 28 s
C. Semsen	Courier	Geelong	3 h 17 m 57 s

NO. 6 RACE:

Fishermen's Event. Open only to Geelong and Portarlington (Square stem fishing boats). Distance, 11 miles.

N. Sievers	Hygea	Portarlington.	3 h 59 m 39 s
A. Wagner	Rover	Geelong	4 h 01 m 53 s
Wm. Lee	Victory	Geelong	4 h 03 m 35 s
J. Bargery	Pearl of Geelong	Geelong	4 h 08 m 14 s
D. Spence	Betsey	Geelong	4 h 12 m 20 s
N. Townsend	Flora	Geelong	4 h 12 m 27 s
A. Cherty	May Queen	Geelong	4 h 20 m 15 s
E. Cherty	Alert	Geelong	4 h 21 m 16 s

SPORTS NEAR THE WHARF

TUG-OF-WAR (In Boats)

Messrs. Norris and Viking

TUB RACE

Marrion 1

Woods 2

SEA-HORSE RACE (On barrels).

Tang Sing 1

WALKING THE GREASY POLE (men).

Werry 1

Marrion 2

WALKING THE GREASY POLE (boys).

Massy 2

DINGHY RACE.

"Viking" 1

DUCK HUNT.

Geo. Monsoon 1

SCRATCH FOUR-OARED RACES

FIRST HEAT

Young's Crew 1

Jarman's Crew 2

SECOND HEAT

Demllo's Crew 1

McKenzie's Crew 2

FINAL HEAT

Young's Crew 1

Young's Crew 2



Ernie Brockman's "Rover"

A Prolific winner of Geelong Yacht Club's races in the early 1900s

It will be noted that the heading for the report read:-

**"SPORTING INTELLIGENCE"
GEELONG YACHT CLUB"**

It is also apparent that the entertainment of those spectators ashore, who would have had difficulty following the fortunes of the yachts was well catered for with sporting events in the shallow water near the shore. These included a tug-of-war in boats, sea horse race on barrels, walking the greasy pole etc.

The Geelong Advertiser correspondent, "Close Hauled's" prediction, that a regatta would be held at Easter in 1895, proved to be without foundation. There was no regatta in 1895, but there is a report that the opening cruise of the Geelong Yacht Club took place on the weekend, November 30-December 1, when the yachts sailed to Swan Bay on the Saturday and returned to Geelong on Sunday.

At the same time, a new boat was being built for a Mr. Fletcher of Kilgour St. it was reported to be 34'6" on the water-line with a moderate overhang forward. She had a beam of 9'9" and a draught of about 6' with the centre-plate down.

The first race for the season took place on December 22. Four boats faced the starter in favourable conditions. They were restricted to main sail and jib only, running canvas being interdicted. Captain Rooke's 24 footer, Iolanthe, was first home over the 25 mile course in 5 hours 7 minutes, with Mikado, Captain Curnow, 3 minutes 22 seconds away second; but on handicap, the Mikado won by 38 seconds. The Rover, sailed by Captain E. Brockman, who later was to play an important role in club affairs, was third.

There is no record of any further activity by the Geelong Yacht Club during that season but on November 29, 1895, a Public Meeting was held at the Victoria Hotel with the Commodore of the G.Y.C., Mr. H. P. Douglass, in the chair. The meeting decided that a regatta should be held in Geelong on Monday, January 27, 1896, and Mr. H. P. Richardson, Mayor of Geelong, was elected President of the Regatta.

But at a Regatta Committee meeting on December 17, a letter was received 'from the Geelong Town Clerk requesting the committee to advance the date of the regatta to February 4, to coincide with the visit to Geelong of His Excellency the Governor of Victoria, Lord Brassey, himself a keen yachtsman. This request was agreed to unanimously and Commodore H. P. Douglass and Vice Commodore, C. W. Poynter were appointed to represent the Regatta Committee at the meeting of the Geelong Town Council sub-committee for the Governor's visit, to be held the following day, December 18.

Further meetings took place when the programme for the regatta was decided upon and the rules under which the races were to be conducted were determined.

The regatta took place as scheduled and once again the Geelong Advertiser 5/2/1896 gave it full coverage:-

"SAILING REGATTA ON THE BAY

It was a pleasing complement to our nautical Governor to transfer the annual sailing regatta from Anniversary Day to that day fixed by His Excellency as the occasion of his first official visit to Geelong, and the event should give a considerable fillip to yachting at this port. The liberal

assistance which the corporation felt justified in extending to the regatta committee under the circumstances enabled the latter to prepare a programme of great attraction to yachtsmen, and Corio Bay certainly never before presented such an animated appearance, its waters being covered with the white winged racers which assembled to take part in the various events. The thousands who gathered on the bay frontages during the day had a very charming scene presented to them, and though a sailing regatta is not calculated to inspire those on shore with profound enthusiasm, the movements of the competing boats were decidedly interesting. The weather was delightfully fine and bright, revealing the harbor in its most charming aspect, and there was sufficient wind about to ensure the success of the regatta from a boatman's point of view, the breeze in the afternoon being set fair and steady. The first race was started as soon as His Excellency and Lady Brassey landed at the Yarra-street wharf, and the contests were kept going till evening. Ordinarily there are very wearisome intervals for the spectators on shore between the time that the competing boats get away on the course and then return to the starting point, but it was otherwise yesterday. So many races were in progress simultaneously that there was a regular succession of boats within view, and an entertaining programme of water sports carried out in the neighbourhood of the Yarra- street pier was an additional source of amusement to the spectators massed in the vicinity. It was in fact a real nautical gala, and numbers of people who rarely venture upon the water entered so thoroughly into the spirit of the affair that they made excursions in pleasure boats on their own account. The profuse display of bunting from buildings fronting the water, and from boats on the bay, lent a good deal of colour to the scene, and the Sunbeam, decked out in holiday attire, was the cynosure of all eyes. The steamers Courier and Edina made special trips round the bay, and the opportunities which were thus afforded of following the progress of the sailing events were availed of by crowds of people, both vessels being crowded with passengers of each occasion. The Bellarine was also largely patronised by those desirous of enjoying a short marine trip amidst the exhilarating surroundings with which they were favoured. The invitations issued in respect to the flagship Cerberus were availed of to a very large extent, the visitors being conveyed to and from the man-of-war by the picket launch, which was also employed to keep up communication between the Governor's yacht, the Government steamer Lady Loch, and the Ironclad. The visitors were very hospitably received, afternoon tea being provided, and the band of the naval brigade played at intervals. An excellent view of the whole proceedings was enjoyed by those on board, whose position was a very advantageous one. The racing events were carried out with thorough satisfaction to everybody concerned by the gentlemen in charge of the arrangements for the day, and no accidents occurred to mar the general enjoyment. The results of the day's racing are as under, the handicaps of the placed boats being shown in parentheses:

FIRST-CLASS RACE

Twenty-seven miles. First prize: £30, Second prize: £10.

J.R. Press' Coena, H.B.Y.C. (23m.32s.)	3h 54m 25s	.	1
J. Parker's Waratah, Royal Y.C. (scr.)	3h 55m 04s		2

YACHT RACE

Eighteen miles. First prize: £15, Second prize: £7, Third prize: £3.

Howlett's Mystery, Port Melb. Y.C. (53s.)	3h 10m. 54s		1
Dr. Kennedy's Beta, Geelong Y.C.(53s.)	3h 14m 52s		2
Sandry's E.M.G. Port Melb.Y.C. (53s.)	3h 17m 06s	.	3

The Zenobia, Athlete, Leisure Hour and Wild Wave also started.

CRUISING YACHTS

Eighteen miles. First prize: £15, Second prize: £8, Third prize: £4.

<i>A. Shea's Eileen, Geelong Y.C. (5m)</i>	<i>3h 30m 09s</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Seiver's Volley, St.Kilda Y.C. (4m)</i>	<i>3h 53m 03s</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>H. Dentry's St.Kitts, Geelong Y.C. (11m)</i>	<i>4h 15m 11s ..</i>	<i>3</i>

The Galatea, Iris, Cacique, Mayflower, Wenonua, Gitana also started.

YACHT RACE

Twelve miles. First prize: £10, Second prize: £5, Third prize: £2.

<i>Cameron's Jessie, H.B.Y.C. (1m 25s)</i>	<i>3h 15m 10s</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Telchi's Katie, H.B.Y.C. (6m 20s)</i>	<i>3h 18m 41s</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Collins' Vera, Geelong Y.C. (scr)</i>	<i>3h 14m 54s</i>	<i>3</i>

FISHERMAN'S RACE

Twelve miles. First prize: £8, Second prize: £4, Third prize: £2.

<i>Wilson's Alberta, Portarlington (2m 25s)</i>	<i>3h 19m 14s</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Rydberg's Star of Mornington, Mornington (27s)</i>	<i>3h 20m 23s</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Richard's IXL, Portarlington (1m 55s)</i>	<i>3h 22m 08s</i>	<i>3</i>

CUTTER'S RACE (Men of War)

Six miles.

<i>Cerberus cutter (Blair)</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Nelson cutter (White)</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Nelson cutter (Keams)</i>	<i>3</i>

OPEN RACE. (all comers)

Eighteen miles. First prize: £15, Second prize: £8, Third prize: £4.

OPEN RACE. (21 ft a.u.)

Twelve miles. First prize: £6, Second prize: £3, Third prize: £1.

<i>Jarron's Eiffel Tower, Portarlington, scr.</i>	<i>5h 52m 56s</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Cameron's Jessie, H.B.Y.C. (scr.)</i>	<i>5h 59m 01s</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Virtue's Perseverance, Geelong (45s.)</i>	<i>6h 01m 02s</i>	<i>3</i>

Scout, Rose, Hilda, Rover, Miss Low, Alert, Katie and Secret also took part .

FISHERMEN'S ROWING RACE

(Four Oars).

One mile and a half. First prize, £3, Second, £1.

<i>Lake's crew</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Monteith's crew</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Wilton's crew</i>	<i>3</i>

The committee met in the evening at the Victoria Hotel to deal with a number of protests. It was decided in regard to the protest of Mr. E. N: Collins, of the Vera, against the owner of the Jessie, for not passing on the right side of the buoy off the railway pier, to request the Hobson's Bay Yacht club to take the evidence of the Jessie's crew. A protest by Mr. H. P. Douglass, of the Mayflower, against Mr. C. O. Seivers, owner of the Volley, on the ground that the latter was

not eligible for the race for cruising yachts, was not sustained. The protest lodged against the owner of the E.M.G. by the owner of the Wild Wave, for fouling at the finish of the Open Race for all comers, was not entertained, the latter having been disqualified on a similar ground earlier in the same race. A protest arising out of the Fishermen's Race was also considered. The owner of Petrel alleged that the measurement of the Alberta had been incorrectly given, and it was decided that the boat should be measured on the following day, with an understanding that if it did not exceed 27 feet, the time allowance should be amended, without disqualification.

SCRATCH FOURS

This event was rowed off by crews selected from the Corio Bay and Barwon Rowing Clubs for trophies valued at £5. Five crews competed, the course being from Limeburner's wharf to Yarra Street. The final was as under:-

<i>Gardiner (str.) McKenzie, S. Young and F. Fox</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>H. Young (str.), Purser, J. Donaghy, W. Mathews</i>	<i>2</i>

Won by half a length.

WATER SPORTS

These comprised a duck hunt, greasy pole contest, Seahorse race and dinghy race, the events being a source of great mirth to the spectators."

Although it was no doubt in existence there is no record of any "On the water" activity by the Geelong Yacht Club for the remainder of the season. But a public meeting was held at the Victoria Hotel on December 3, 1896 with Mr. H.P. Douglass in the chair to make arrangements for a regatta to be held on January 27, 1897, Anniversary Day.

This regatta took place in fine conditions with a brisk southerly breeze. Once again the Governor, Lord Brassey, was in attendance but, this time, as a competitor. The large number of spectators saw the Governor take out the First Class Yacht Race for boats 28 feet and over in his yacht, Helen. Mr. G. Palmer's Uria, from the Royal Yacht Club was placed second and the other three starters, the Archdale, the Eileen and the Alexa, from South Australia all retired. Mr. C. Shannon's Thistle, G.Y.C., won the Cruisers Race, and Mr. P. Virute's Perseverance, G.Y.C. was second in the Open Race.

The following year, 1898, the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria conducted an inter-colonial regatta during the Anniversary weekend in January and, at their request, the Geelong Regatta Committee agreed to hold their regatta on Easter Monday, April 11.

The Governor, Lord Brassey, made his yacht, the Sunbeam, available as flagship and also donated the trophy for the principal event, for First Class yachts. This was won by the Uria from the R.Y.C. and Geelong's only starter, Mr. C. Shannon's Thistle, which sailed from scratch, was fourth. Ernie Brockman's Rover was placed third in the Open race for square sterned boats 20 feet and under on the waterline. An interesting competitor on this occasion was the Aorere from the St. Kilda Yacht Club which won the Cruisers race of 20 miles by 10 minutes on handicap. Many years later, in the 1950's, the Aorere was to race in Geelong under the ownership of Randal McAllister.

The regatta was also held on Easter Monday in the following two years. The

Governor was a competitor in the Helen in 1899, but this time, was beaten on handicap by the Uria. The Geelong Advertiser reported that in this race there was a foul between the Hurricane and the Uria, "but this did not give concern to the sightseers to whom it was invisible. Brockman's Rover won the Open Race.

An interesting competitor in the Cruisers race at the 1900 Regatta in which there were 10 entries was Mr. T.A. Dickson's Shamrock. The Shamrock is listed as being 22 feet on the waterline and it is apparent that this boat was the predecessor of the Shamrock which competed in the inaugural Rudder Cup race across Bass Strait in 1907. For the ocean racing Shamrock was 38'6" overall and 31' on the waterline.

Geelong boats which competed in the 1900 regatta were:-

NAME	OWNER	L.W.L
St. Kitts	J. A. Strong	26' 11"
Shamrock	T. A. Dickson	22'
Mayflower	H. P. Douglass	27' 6"
Caress	W. & E. Curnow	34' 3"
*Loma	J. Belcher	18' 4"
*Perseverance	P. Virtue	20'
Mystery	W. Libby	20'
*Venus	W. A. Kitchen	18'
Rover	E. Brockman	20'

But those marked with an asterisk are not shown as being on the register of the G.Y.C.

However, as the 19th century drew to a close it is evident that yachting in Geelong was on a firm footing and with the steady growth of the town and the increasing affluence of professional and business men, the future of the sport seemed to be assured. But apart from the annual regattas there was, apparently, limited competitive sailing activity by members of the Geelong Yacht Club. But this was to come, and before very long, so let us press on and follow the progress of yachting on Corio Bay in the next chapter which takes us up to the year 1906.