

Do you know.....

WHERE DID WE COME FROM?

Sandgate was first settled in 1853, in the area now known as Shorncliffe, by Tom Dowse, and other settlers whose family names continue to be known round the district today, soon followed.

Some of the first buildings on the banks of Cabbage Tree Creek included Baxters Oyster Saloon (Shelley Inn) and Musgrave House, once a sanatorium, then a crab and oyster supper café, and later a men's boarding house. Dinah Island near the junction of our two creeks was the burial site of the last Aboriginal 'king' in the Sandgate area.

Until 1901 each state of Australia was responsible for its own defence and the Moreton Regiment practised firing their muzzle-loading canons across Cabbage Tree Creek from the area where VMR has its base today to where they had set up their targets on the sand flats out from Nudgee beach. There was also a large Rifle Range established on the south bank of the creek near Nundah Creek. A Rifle Club was formed in April 1901 and the shooting practice and competitions made for a great spectator sport until the regiment moved to the Drill Hall in Sandgate around 1915.

From the Depression years around 1929 to the early 1950s many disadvantaged people erected tents and humpies on the banks of Cabbage Tree Creek. The area was known as 'White City' and was only demolished after some heavy cyclonic weather in 1944 and 1953. Sailing Regattas began in the district around 1888 and became more organised when the Gordon Club, a promoter of sporting activities, was formed by St Nicholas Anglican Church in 1897 and formally constituted in 1902. This club generated social and sporting activities including football, cricket, gymnasium activities, athletics and swimming in the Sandgate district for many years.

There was a serious boating accident during a race in 1911 in which two young men drowned. This tragedy caused a group of club members to form an independent sailing club, the Sandgate Yacht Club, on 14 February 1912. The club was quite progressive for its time as it actively encouraged participation by ladies as crew members, though the attitude of officials of other clubs was that "*yacht racing is a serious business with no place for ladies in racing yachts*". Sandgate Yacht Club has operated continuously since then with an unavoidable recess from 1942 till the end of World War 2.

Over the years the classes of boats sailed by members of Sandgate Yacht Club have changed but included carvels, sharpies, raters (which were based in a shed near where QCYC are today), skiffs, thorpe trainees, moths, sabots and OKs to name just a few.

The 16 foot Skiff was the most popular open boat class between 1901 and the late 1960s, and the size of the Sandgate fleet in 1948 saw the need to acquire a Club House. A lease was obtained opposite the Golf Club, Council permission was gained to erect a building and the Club was able to purchase the Church Sunday School Hall at St Margaret's Church of England in Sandgate. It was pulled down and reconstructed on the present VMR site in 1948.



Following amalgamations of sailing divisions over the years, the club now covered a number of groups, and, due to the increasing popularity of boating in general, also incorporated a power division and formally continued under the name Sandgate Yacht Club.

The Power section of the club held its first meeting on 13 May 1969 and the first 'Boat Talk' was produced in June of that year.

In a matter of years the size of the Club House doubled and has continued to develop from that time. It was a popular venue for dances and social activities for the whole Sandgate district for many decades.

By 1973 membership had increased greatly with an emphasis falling on the Power section of the club. It was felt that a need existed for a Rescue service in the northern waters of Moreton Bay, and the Sandgate Yacht Club Search & Rescue Squad was formed, with volunteers using their own boats to supply this service whenever the need arose, saving both lives and equipment in cooperation with the Water Police. In 1974 the squad also assisted in rescue work during the serious flooding in South-east Queensland areas.

A vessel, the bright yellow 'Zest' was acquired and soon became a familiar sight around the local waters.

Extra land was leased to provide for a 'hard stand' area and member parking, and security fencing erected to protect valuable property. A boat ramp, pontoon, improved facilities in and around the building were built and it soon became evident that the Club was once again entering a period of change.

Next Month:

The birth of Sandgate Air Sea Rescue and its transition to Volunteer Marine Rescue Brisbane.

We hope you will enjoy some of these glimpses into the past and, by looking back to where we came from, can see the origin and value of some of our plans for the future.