

2024 QUEEN OF THE HARBOUR

Saturday 17th February 2024

The annual Queen of the Harbour race - an institution of the Sydney Flying Squadron since 1926. On this weekend.

On Saturday 4th December 1926, the Squaddie held the inaugural "Queen of Port Jackson" race. Prior to this, female involvement was mostly limited to working for the clubs ladies auxiliary or looking after the children while the men folk enjoyed their sport. Many clubs held a "ladies day" where each boat would carry a lady in the racing crew, most often being the wife or daughter of the boat owner. The creation of the "Queen of the Port Jackson" race took involvement of the ladies to a new level!

Queen candidates were assigned to boats by a draw and the lady aboard the winning boat won the coveted title of "Queen of the Harbour"!

QUEEN OF PORT JACKSON.
Vic. Utick, a member of the crew of Arline, and who represents Jim Pritchard on the committee of the Sydney Flying Squadron, is endeavouring to locate the Queen of Port Jackson. He has placed a unique proposal before the club, which agreed to allot a race on its programme in which each boat is to carry a member of the fair sex in its crew. The girl in the winning boat is to receive a handsome prize, while trophies are also to be handed over to the fair ones in the next four placed.

Utick, who is a nephew of the traffic cop, "Bunny" Shepherd, and who has taken up a position in the crew of Arline, has already been promised the trophies; in fact, he has the girls of Balmain clamouring for a position in the boats.

Utick, who, like Shepherd, weighs over 18st, does not want all the maidens from Balmain. He is seeking applications from all suburbs, and once he gets the Queen established, he intends to work for a committee of girls to organize for sailing, as is done in other States.

KING, AND HIS "QUEEN"



Stanley KING, part-owner of the 18ft. Avalon, and Miss E. Bell, representing Bloomfield's, Ltd., a candidate for the Queen of Port Jackson Competition.

Reported in The Arrow on Friday October 1, 1926 and Friday 29th October, 1926, respectively, the announcement of the inaugural Queen of Port Jackson race by Vic Utick from Arline; and Stanley King, part owner of Avalon with Miss E. Bell, representing Bloomfield's Ltd. Read the original newspaper article here in The Arrow: trove.nla.gov.au.

The "Queen of Port Jackson" race was a hugely successful charity event with funds raised by the Queen candidates and supported by local business houses. The event went from strength to strength and for the 1929/1930 season, J.J Giltinan, the then Commodore of the SFS, changed the format naming it the

"Queen of the Harbour".

The race format was so popular, that in 1938, the 18 footer league in Double Bay, copied the SFS format naming theirs "Queen of the Waves".

The Queen of the Harbour continued to be a successful fundraiser throughout the following decades.



Long lost trophy located by Barley Stewart



Legendary Yendys crew member, Anne Prosser, restored the trophy - it is ready for the presentation next week.



2020 Queen Ombeline (where are you Ombeline – we miss you)



Queen Stephanie (The Mistake) in 2023



Queen Betsy in 2021 (The Scot)



Queen Kerrie in 2022 (Yendys)

These days we continue the tradition of this great race at the Sydney Flying Squadron in the Historic 18 ft skiffs. We will be awarding the 'scratch' title to the 'Queen of the Harbour' and the title, 'Queen of Port Jackson' to the 'handicap' winner.

As always, life member Barley Stewart, takes this day very seriously and every year provides the fabulous props and decorations. Traditionally, the funds raised on Saturday from the sausage sizzle and raffles are used by the social committee for the maintenance of the historical fleet.

Thanks to all the volunteers who make racing possible. Come and join us!!