

Life membership for Arty

By KYLIE BYFIELD

IT'S taken 60 years, but Arthur 'Arty' Williams has now been awarded a life-membership by the Cruising Yacht Club of WA.

Mr Williams was being put on the Special Service Members list. Although Arty's sailing days are almost over, his association with the TCYC still runs deep. He bought a boat for use by junior sailors, and he and wife Elsie still pack up the campervan and head toe join in the fun at weekend regattas in the south-west.

Arty, long-time yachting enthusiast, now aged 83, says he has been fostering the sport of yachting for more than 60 years — and he "still sails ... sometimes".

He has been a member of the Perth Dinghy Club for 64 years, where he has also obtained a life-membership.

Arty was among the foundation members of the South Perth Yacht Club, which started back in 1946. He has earned the equivalent of a life-membership there by

Mr Williams has been a member of the Cruising Yacht Club for 16 years, and has made many friends in that time.

"Some of the boys still invite me to have a sail now and again," says Arty.



• ARTHUR Williams crossed the line first in just two of many yacht races. No mean feat when you consider the races were held 60 years apart. Here Arthur proudly displays the two pennants for those races — the large framed flag for gaining first place in the State championships in 1922, and the smaller one for the State Diamond Class Handicap race held last Easter. Picture, Norm Dellow.

THE SIGNET STORY

The Sunday Times (U.K.) commissioned Ian Proctor to design an easily constructed and inexpensive sailing dinghy that would be fun to sail for both beginners and experienced sailors. Ian Proctor came up with the SIGNET. The ST which features as it's sail insignia, referring to the Sunday Times involvement. I don't know when this historic event happened but the first Signet was introduced in Perth in September, 1967 when ST 255 was built by John Robinson. He was so impressed that he took on the agency in W.A. for the plans.

ST 255 is still sailing and is now named "Deja Vu" and is owned by Alan Sobey. Alan probably does not realise that he owns such a valuable vintage Signet and I am sure that it's value will skyrocket after this article has gone to press!

Two more Signets were completed in 1968 after which a number of enthusiastic sailors decided to build eight Signets as a project to start the class in the West.

An inaugural meeting took place in 1968 of what was to become the Signet Class Owners Association and the decision to go ahead and build eight Signets was confirmed. Some of the original builders and owners were the late Con McKenna, Jim Halse (past Commodore of the 14ft Dinghy Club) and Stan Moore, who until a couple of years ago still sailed his Signet from Maylands Yacht Club.

Shortly after that meeting the Dinghy Club officially adopted the Signet Class even though the eight boats were still a long way from being completed.

The Signet was given a fair bit of publicity, with the result that a further two boats were started.

Some of the now existing accommodation in the Club's boatshed was built to house a number of the new boats. The ten boats were given the sailnumbers 547 to 556 and all are still sailing, with the exception of No. 549 which belongs to Con McKenna. This boat "Video", was given to the Lincoln Yacht Club after the 1979-80 Australian Championships held there.

The Signet official Opening Day was to coincide with the then 14ft Dinghy Club Opening Day for the 1969-70 season. But well before that day, the Signet skippers organised lectures on yacht racing. The first lecture was given by Stan Moore on the subject "The Port and Starboard Rule". When I look at the scars on my boat, it is obvious that there are not many of the original skippers left!

In 1970 Brian Kerman joined the Signet owners and as Brian is still with us he must be the skipper with the most Signet years behind the belt.

During the early years, one of the main problems was broken rudders. This was partly overcome by using a different timber, but the main problem was the design of the blade which was angled backwards. This caused a fair amount of weather helm with a resultant increase in pressure on the blade, particularly off the wind. This was solved by the improved design of the rudder blade and although broken rudders still happen, they are fairly rare nowadays.

Heron sailors, please skip the following painful paragraph!

A milestone was reached in November, 1971 when it was reported that, "Signet numbers at the Dinghy Club were now greater than Herons".

Perth has been the Australian Signet stronghold ever since the introduction of the class here. Although still sailed in other states, the class outside Western Australia has declined and is mainly sailed in mixed fleets.

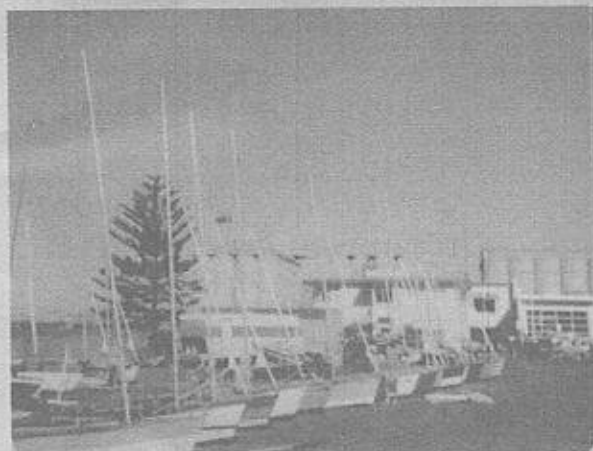
In the West, Signets are sailed from the Perth Dinghy Club and Maylands Yacht Club. There are more than 60 Signets registered in W.A., of which 40 are regularly raced. We have recently attracted a number of keen new skippers. This is keeping existing boats on the water and also stimulates a healthy competition.

Signets are fun to sail; there are some boats for sale (sail?) and anybody interested can ring Graham Palmer on 447 3291. Graham knows the boats that are currently on the market.

BERT PIELAGE



Junior Sailing at P.D.S.C. 1978



Last Signet National Titles at Port Lincoln, South Australia



Signet Sing-a-long at Safety Bay, March 1982

Tent City, Busselton, January 1982

