

# TRIAD

## -AN ASTONISHING RECORD

What must be one of the most remarkable records for small boat sailing anywhere in the world is held by the former Australian 14' champion, Triad, of Victoria.



Triad won the Australian Championship no fewer than seven times — from 1931 to 1936 consecutively, and again in 1948.

She won all heats of the 1931, 1935 and 1936 championships, and led all the way in all three heats of the 1936 contest.

In the Victorian 14' Championships, Triad was champion in every contest from 1927 to 1948, notching up a total of 22 wins in championship races over that period.

Triad was built in 1927 by W. H. Drane and W. Osborne, to a design by the latter.

The name, meaning "union of three," was derived from her triple ownership by Messrs. Osborne and W. H. and A. Drane.

## THE OUTSTANDING CHAMPION 14-FOOTER

### 'TRIAD'

Triad was undoubtedly the most famous and successful 14 foot (4.27m) dinghy ever in the annals of Australian yachting history, skilfully skippered by William (Billy) Osborne of the St Kilda 14-ft Sailing Club, she was retired undefeated in Victorian Championships, along with the St Kilda 14-ft Sailing Club's prestigious Club Championships for the Lord Forster Cup, winning both 22 times in succession.

In addition, starting in 15 Australian Championships, Australia's oldest established class championship's, she won on seven occasions, Six of which were in succession, along with being runner up on six occasions. A record unequalled by any other dinghy in any Class in Australia. To accomplish this, she travelled over 20,000 Interstate miles by steamer.

Designed by Billy Osborne on the lines of the successful weatherly snub-nosed type dinghies, first introduced into Victoria season 1910-1911, by designer/builder, Charlie Peel of Albert Park (Victoria), who to reap the benefit of extra waterline length, designed at 14 foot 3 inches (4.34m) to 14 foot 6 inches (4.23m), then cut blunt at the bow to bring them down to the maximum of 14 feet (4.27m) specified.

Triad constructed of Philippine Mahogany over ribs of Victorian White Mountain Ash and knees of grown Wimmera Bull Oak, fastened with copper nails and brass screws, was built during season 1926-1927, in a shed at Elwood of William Drane's, by syndicate members, Billy Osborne, William and Athol Drane

An improvement on his previous dinghy, Scandal, she was as it turned out, the first 14-foot dinghy ever to be successfully rigged with the then revolutionary Bermudian rig, which was chosen for her moderate and heavy weather rigs of 265 sq feet (24.6 sq m) and 190 sq feet (17.5 sq m) respectively. However for reason of less strain on her 30 foot (9.14 m) mast, the traditional gunter rig of the day was decided upon for her light weather rig, totalling 450 sq feet (41.8 sq m), which off the wind with spinnaker and ring-tail added, became 800 sq feet (74.32 sq m). In agreement to latter day Class Rulings, her rig was reduced by stages down to 220 sq feet (20.43 sq m) and crew from 6 to a limit of 4 persons.

The name Triad was chosen following the re-arranging of the letters in Bill Drane's youngest daughter's name, RITA Drane, which in Irish and Welsh literature is a medieval statement illustrated by three examples, uniquely coinciding with the three of the syndicate, to result in her Black sail insignia symbolically being an inverted "Y". Triad was launched for season 1927-1928, to become an immediate success, defeating the then long reigning champion John Nimmo, skippered by H.C. (Mick) Brooke in both the Club

and State Championships., and came second to John Nimmo in the Australian Championships..

The new season 1928-1929, saw Triad owned by Billy Osborne and Wally Hill, later on in 1934 Andy Vallin's was to become a part owner until 1938. In time when Triad's aged cotton mainsail became more difficult to hold good shape, Billy built a more flexible mast, with the result he was able to get several more seasons use out of it. At the same time he varnished the leeches of his sails to reduce flutter to the ageing cloths.

Season 1947-1948, with the lightest crew ever shipped, the remarkable 20 year old Triad, every inch the champion of her former day's, continued to win against more modern opponents. The following season Triad was retired from sailing and proudly allocated a permanent position of honour in the clubhouse.

Following the amalgamation in 1961, of the St Kilda 14-ft Sailing Club with Royal St Kilda Yacht Club, to become Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron. Triad was put in storage until Billy retired from work to reside at Rye, when he became a keen fisherman, adopting Triad as tender to his 24 foot Motor Launch, Vandra, moored at Sorrento until being badly damaged during a storm.

In 1973, Billy decided to have Triad bisected down the centre-line and have each half suitably mounted. The 'Starboard' half he presented to R.M.Y.S., initially as a Bistro Bar, later to become the centre for Race Notices. On the 15th July 1973, the Annual Meeting of the Blairgowrie Yacht Squadron saw the Commodore sitting behind the 'Port' half section of Triad, and every Commodore since during his term of office, has chaired General Meetings whilst sitting behind Triad. In addition the half section also serves the purpose as a Perpetual Trophy for the Junior Members of the Club.

Compiled entirely from personal papers and memorabilia of Billy Osborne's. History of St Kilda 14-ft Sailing Club, also correspondence with Blairgowrie Yacht Squadron.

J.H. (Bert) Ferris.  
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