

The Weebo Sailing Club ©P. O'Shaughnessy2021

Way out past Yackabindie where there are no posh resorts
the boys on Weebo Station formed a sailing club of sorts.
The workers at the homestead suffered boredom and they knew
that if they didn't sort it out they'd lose a bloke or two.
So in their outback wisdom, with some cold beer rhetoric,
they found an odd solution that they thought might do the trick.

The station had a salt-lake that just happened to be dry,
so one bright spark suggested they give dry-land boats a try.
He'd seen them racing land yachts on the flats at Lake Lefroy
and thought it might be just the sport their young blokes might enjoy.
Though few had seen this sort of stuff, all thought it might be fun
to have a go and give this dry lake sailing thing a run.

They then set out and formed a club, so they could do things right,
with members and committees, from the drunks on Friday night.
Then from this mob they picked a bloke – a squatter out of work –
for Commodore because he said he'd done this sort of lurk.
And Captain of this motley crew was chosen for his hat.
A sailor's hat, he'd pinched it. It was white, and peaked, and flat.

One Friday night it was discussed, as beer began to flow,
how they could make some sort of yacht and how the thing might go.
A team was formed to sort it out. They made a proper plan.
They didn't want just any boat – they needed one that ran.
The boys then went and made one with some bits of tin and stuff,
it had a seat, some wooden wheels, but strewth the ride was rough.

As now the yacht-club had a boat they hoped that they might find
someone of note to launch the thing. The Queen of course declined.
But then they thought that smashing grog on boats might cause distaste,
so captain and committee thought a race might be embraced.
They sent out invitations to the towns and to the pub
to race against the flagship of the Weebo Sailing Club.

The rules were fairly simple. All the teams would need a boat,
but craft that have no water do not have a need to float,
so as there'd been a drought round here – for seven years or more –
the yacht club had decided their boats need not have a floor,
but each must have a pointy end and one end that is not
and each must have a sail of sorts, just like a proper yacht.

By now the word had got around, the news was commonplace,
about the Weebo Sailing Club's bold plan to stage the race.
A racing date decided. Entries came from near and far.
They hired a huge, enormous, tent and fitted out a bar.
The entries came, in formal form, from little outback pubs,
from out-camps and from shearing sheds – all promised home-made tubs.

One boat was made in Alice Springs. It ran on legs alone
and though it won the great Todd race, it didn't set the tone.
For most boats here were made to run on Weebo's dry salt lake,
so all had wheels and most of them would make real sailors quake.
One 'sailed' down from Carnegie, on the gravel road no less,
and how the mob from Meeka. came, the club could only guess.

The outfits that the teams all wore were varied, some obscene,
as crewmen sought to win a prize and show that they were keen.
Mankini's made a fearsome sight as some were fairly spare
and judging was made difficult by tufts of ginger hair.
But one young lass would win the prize, on this they all agreed.
She wore no more than high heeled shoes and nothing else, indeed!

These motley crews were lined up on the dry, parched Weebo salt
by several half drunk shearers, who were stewards, by default.
The Commodore and Captain then said welcome to the crews
and kindly showed the ladies the bush dunnies they should use.
But then a note of menace as the speakers rambled on –
the rumbling sound of thunder spoiled their verbal marathon.

The start was set. One yacht collapsed. Recovery – in vain,
for as the starter fired his gun down came the pouring rain.
At this the racing teams took off. Their craft all rolled along,
but as the muddy waters rose things started going wrong.
The boats they made weren't built to float and soon got waterlogged.
And stockmen laughed – as most blokes would – when Weebo's boat got bogged.

By now the lake was three feet deep and still the rain came down.
From Cunyu Creek the waters flowed right down through Menzies Town.
Some boats were sunk. The crews escaped. They swam to higher ground.
The squatter lost a thousand sheep. A kelpie dog was drowned.
Some drinkers charged into the fray and joined the muddy mess.
They sank some boats. They had some fun and that's what spelled success.

Now round the outback camps at night, yarns of the race are told,
of how they sank the stockmen's boats and Weebo's boys got rolled.
They tell tall tales of mischief and of mud and what they drank
as they got drunk and cheered like mad while yachts got bogged or sank.
And now, at night, some see strange sights, there's spectres in the scrub –
the muddy ghosts and wreckage of the Weebo Sailing Club.