

Rule 1: There shall be no rules.

Rule 2: See Rule 1.

wheezy Rider

Newsletter of the Fremantle group

Mar 2012
Special

Newsletter of the Fremantle Branch of the Ulysses Club of Australia Inc

Price
\$1.00

VALE STEPHEN DEARNLEY OAM

November 27th 1922 – 11th February 2012

The Ulysses Club Incorporated mourns the passing of its founder and member #1.

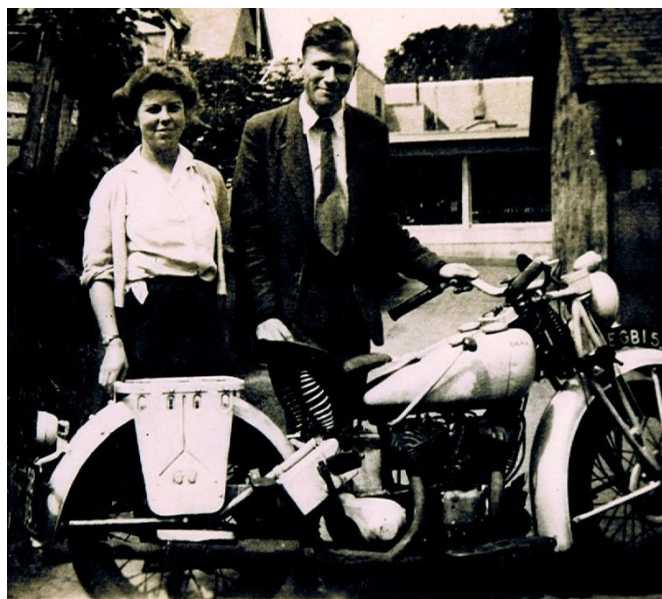
After completing his Royal Navy service as a First Lieutenant in 1945, Stephen and his wife Jo migrated to Australia in 1947 where he began a long and successful career in the publishing industry.

As well as studying fine arts at East Sydney Tech College he was active in the sport of yachting where he founded the Heron Association and later the Lazy E Class Association. His other great passion was motorcycling resulting in Stephen founding the Ulysses Club, a club for people over 40 whose common interest was motorcycling. In 1999, Stephen was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his services to both yachting and motorcycling.

The Ulysses Club has grown since it was founded in 1983 and, with a current membership of around 30,000 and branches around the world, has provided many older motorcyclists with a valuable social network. The Ulysses Club is also active in raising finances for various charities and directly funds arthritis research through the Ulysses Club Arthritis Research Fund.

Stephen Dearnley approached life with enthusiasm and drive. He was a man who got things done and has left lasting legacies that have made a positive contribution to the lives of many people.

Society has lost a very special person who will be sorely missed by his family and many friends.



We don't care....We ride there



Memorial Service Mildura

Dear members,

The National Committee of the Ulysses Club Inc advises all members that a Service to Celebrate Stephen Dearnley's life will be held on the Thursday of the AGM Event Week, (29th March) at the beautiful Nowingi Place Performance Venue, Hugh King Drive, with the Murray River providing a backdrop.

The service will be open to all members irrespective of registering for the AGM Event.

The Service will commence at 2pm sharp and members are asked to gather in front of the Sound Shell. Some seating will be available on either side of the Sound Shell for invited guests and members with accessibility needs. Consider bringing a picnic blanket to sit on and in case Mildura turns on a sunny day, a hat and sunscreen would also be appropriate.

Marshalling will be provided to assist members to the parking areas in Cureton Ave and along Hugh King drive. Memorial Service parking signs will be in place. Parking in the car park directly behind the Sound Shell is available for members with accessibility needs only; a sign will be in place. We encourage members to arrive in enough time to park, sign the book, grab a drink and have chat whilst waiting for the service to commence. Water, food and drink vans will be available from 12noon.

Members are asked to walk to the Marquees that will be set up and take advantage of adding their name and a brief message into the Sign in Books. Order of Service booklets will be available and can be collected from one of the trestle tables after signing in.

A Memorial Badge in honour of Stephen Dearnley #1, will be available for purchase; these will also be on sale from the Gear Shop throughout the AGM Event week. The proceeds from the sales of the badges will go to UCARF.

We hope that members can be there to celebrate Stephen's life and his legacy.

As a sign of respect to Stephen, members could pre purchase Club coloured ribbon (black or black & white) in preparation for the grand parade on Saturday.

Yours sincerely

**The National Committee
Ulysses Club Inc.**

Stephen Dearnley OAM



Stephen was born on the 27th of November 1922 in the little English village of Little Drayton, Shropshire, the eldest son of a vicar.

After a relatively normal childhood Stephen found himself in a British public school's Officer's Training Corps just as the Second World War became serious in 1940. Along with other senior cadets who were too young to join the army, Stephen was enrolled in the Local Defence Volunteers, an organisation that soon became the Home Guard.

After obtaining employment in Manchester, Stephen served in the Home Guard through the blitz until he was able to volunteer for the Navy at the age of eighteen.

He joined the minesweeper HMS Fitzroy at the age of nineteen as an Ordinary Seaman and served on that ship until it was sunk six months later in May 1942. Stephen was soon judged to be officer material and, after three months training, was granted a commission in the RNVR as a midshipman. After completing training Stephen elected to serve on submarines, which he did with distinction until 1946 when, as a First lieutenant, he finished up on the U class submarine HMS Universal. It was at this time that Stephen met a pretty WRAN, Jo, who was to become his wife in December 1945.

After being demobbed in June 1946 Stephen went to work with Collins, the book publishers. It was during this time that Stephen and Jo became the owners of an ex-US Army 500cc Indian Scout that they christened Dora. In 1947, Stephen and Jo decided that their prospects would be better overseas and set out for Australia in September of that year.

Arriving in Sydney, Stephen continued his career with Collins and, after finding kindred spirits in Royal Navy personnel who had chosen to take their demobilisation in Sydney, was introduced to what was to become a life-long interest after taking up with the Sydney branch of the Royal Navy Sailing Association.

In 1951, Stephen enrolled in the art school at East Sydney Tech to further his interest in painting and sculpture. By this time Stephen and Jo had brought their sons Martin and Hugh and daughter Clemency into the world.

Stephen's employment then took the family to Queensland to handle Collins affairs in Brisbane. In 1956 Stephen and Jo were able to return to Britain for a three-month visit and on their return settled back in Sydney.

They purchased a home in Northwood and its proximity to the water soon had Stephen looking around for a yacht. A new design in the UK magazine Yachting World soon had Stephen working to build his 3.4 metre Heron class yacht that was finally launched in 1958. Stephen was instrumental in founding the national Heron Association that by the mid '60s had become the largest single class in Australia.

Stephen remained heavily involved in sailing, later starting the Lazy E class association. His Lazy E craft took him to victory in the 1965 annual yacht race of the Imperial Service Club, much to the chagrin of owners of larger, more expensive vessels.

In 1959, the Dearnley family was increased with the arrival of Alexa, a bouncing baby girl. By this time Stephen was Sydney Sales manager for Collins and was actively involved in the Children's Book Council. When Stephen finally retired from Collins in 1978, he and Jo moved to Newport and the tranquil waters of Pittwater and also purchased a bushland retreat at Bucketty near the Hawkesbury River.

Stephen also had another great passion, motorcycling, and in 1983, after some correspondence with Peter Thoeming in Bike Magazine, he decided that there was a need to cater for older riders and set in motion the idea that was to become the Ulysses Club.

Since the inaugural meeting of five members at a Sydney Hotel in December 1983, the Ulysses Club has grown to a national body with over 30,000 members. Its stated aim is provide a social club for older people whose common interest is motorcycling.

Today the Ulysses Club is a respected member of the motorcycling community, is consulted by both state and federal governments and contributes to a range of charitable and community organisations. The Ulysses Club also sponsors a Motorcycle Apprentice of the Year award to encourage young people to involve themselves in the motorcycle trade.

As Stephen lost his companion of fifty-one years to arthritis in 1996, the Ulysses Club, through the Ulysses Club Arthritis Research Fund, directly funds researchers working in the arthritis area. In 2009 the club was funding one research student in Sydney and another in Melbourne as well as providing necessary equipment.

In 1999, Stephen was awarded the Order Of Australia medal for services to yachting and motorcycling and in 2002, at the age of 80 undertook a sixty-day, 16,000 k trip around Australia, raising \$34,000 for arthritis research along the way.

The Ulysses Club has now spread worldwide with clubs in New Zealand, South Africa, Germany, Norway, England, Zimbabwe & Vietnam

A fitting legacy to a very special man who has given so much to his community.

THE OLD AND THE BOLD ...

Stephen Dearnley: survivor, publisher, motorcyclist, yachtsman and boatbuilder

(This article first appeared in NOCN 84, 1 March 2011.)



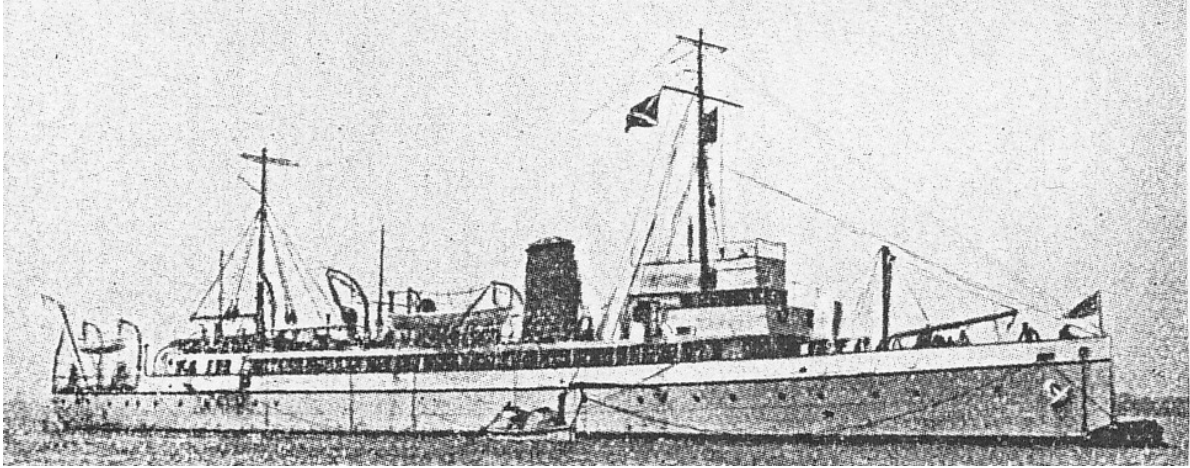
Stephen Dearnley's life has been full of excitement, variety and adventure — yet on first meeting, this calm, courtly and articulate man can seem like a person whose life has been measured, placid, predictable and very run-of-the-mill. Nothing could be further from the truth.

He was born in Shropshire in 1922, the son of a country parson. The regular house moves necessitated by his father's vocation didn't interfere with Stephen's traditional classical education. World War II had begun when he finished school, but by then he'd already started patrols with the Local Defence Volunteers, predecessor to the Home Guard.

Stephen was working in Manchester when he had a close experience with the blitz: walking home from work, he heard a bomb coming and dived into an adjacent pill box. The bomb landed on the other side of the road; it ruptured a gas main and created a spectacular fire.

Joining the navy

In August 1941 he joined the Royal Navy and completed basic seamanship training at HMS *Ganges*. His first ship, HMS *Fitzroy*, the RN's last coal-burner, was leader of the 4th Minesweeping Flotilla. The flotilla was working from the Faeroe Islands, Danish territory. Later they moved to the southern extremity of the North Sea, sweeping out-dated "friendly" mines off the Dutch coast. *Fitzroy* never finished the job.



Minesweeper-leader HMS Fitzroy — sunk

Stephen was on the bridge when it happened. He heard a loud explosion from aft; he looked and saw the ship's boats hanging from their davits and a large hole in the deck. Everybody around him was already blowing up their lifebelts; the ship was clearly going down — and it did. It was late May, but still cold. And rough. Stephen was in the water about 45 minutes, and was revived with a very large tot of rum when he was safely on board one of the other ships in the flotilla. They had probably been sunk by a "friendly" mine.

Promotion, and submarines

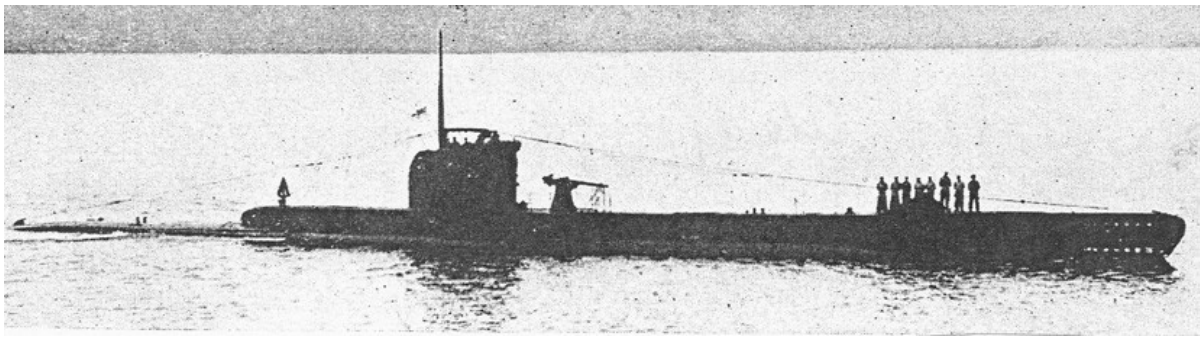
Soon, Stephen was sent on officer training at Lancing College. He graduated as Midshipman RNVR on November 1942. Pilotage training followed, from RNC Greenwich. In January 1943 Stephen, now a Sub Lieutenant, began submarine training in Northumberland.

His submarine career started in depot ships as spare crew. In Dundee there were some Dutch submarines that had escaped from Java and made their way back to Europe to fight on the Allied side. They had been built in Germany, and carried a strange device called a "schnorkel". Local experts examined this gadget, declared it inherently unsafe, and welded up the holes it had made in the pressure hull.

Operations

Eventually Stephen was posted to HMS *Maidstone*, stationed in Algiers. His first operational patrol was in HMS *Universal*, in the western Mediterranean. After she torpedoed a large merchantman, the counter-attacking escorts forced *Universal* well below her designed depth. Fortunately they found a good layer and lurked beneath it for four hours.

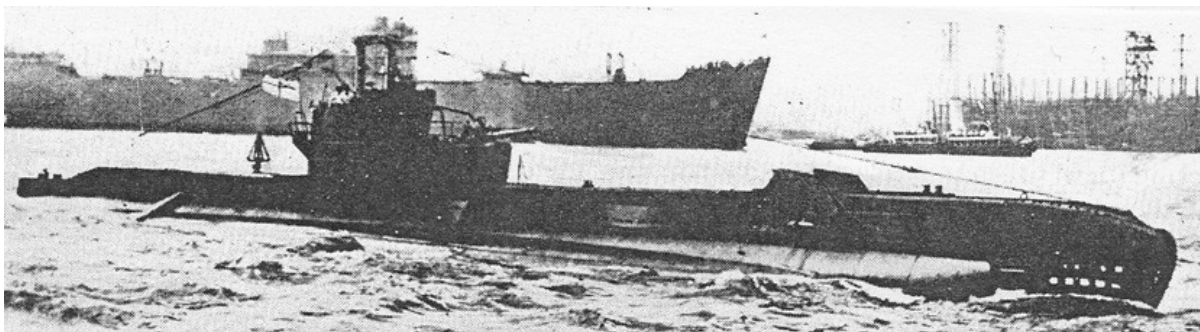
Maidstone was ordered to the east; Stephen disembarked in Alexandria (where he celebrated his 21st birthday), and travelled from there by train to Beirut to join his new depot ship, HMS *Medway*. A quiet patrol in HMS *Upholder* followed, then he was sent to Haifa for sick leave, and took recreation leave in Damascus.



U-class submarine, similar to HMS Universal and HMS Upholder

An eventful patrol

Stephen joined his new submarine, HMS *Sportsman*, in Port Said in January 1944 as 4th Hand; an eventful patrol around the Greek coast followed. With a well-drilled gun's crew, they had several successful surface actions against local caiques (wooden-hulled sailing vessels) that the Germans were using to supply their more remote coastal outposts. (After a warning shot, they always allowed the Greek crews to take to the boats before proceeding with the sinking.) They were ordered to intercept a German troopship off northern Crete; the trooper came through on time, but was very heavily escorted. *Sportsman* fired from outside the screen and sank the target. Finally, they were ordered to attack shipping in the tiny port of Monemvasia in the Peloponnese. As well as being navigationally difficult, the port was protected by a boom. *Sportsman*'s skipper found a gap in the boom, fired through it, and sank a 5000 ton freighter.



S-class submarine, similar to HMS Sportsman

Homeward-bound

They returned to Malta, and soon were homeward-bound for Britain via Gibraltar. In Gibraltar, they heard news of the D-Day landings.

Their new depot ship was HMS *Forth* in the Holy Loch near Glasgow. A new captain and crew came on board, but Stephen stayed on for the new commission as navigator.

Soon they were at sea again, making a trans-Atlantic surface passage to Philadelphia, for a major 'first': refit, then working up with USN submarines out of New London CT. The return passage across the Atlantic was enlivened by a stop in the Azores en route. They arrived in the Holy Loch in March 1945; VE Day was only a few weeks away.

Winding down

Having been fully refitted, *Sportsman* paid off. Stephen, last to leave the boat, took its Jolly Roger flag. He re-joined his first submarine, HMS *Universal*, operating out of Larne in Northern Ireland. They were used as a "clockwork mouse", or mobile target, to train escorts in anti-submarine tactics. The personal importance to Stephen of this relatively short period was that during it he met Jo, then in the Wrens. She soon became a permanent part of his life and they were married in December 1945 — but Stephen still had another six months to serve in the RN before demobilisation.

Publishing, and migration

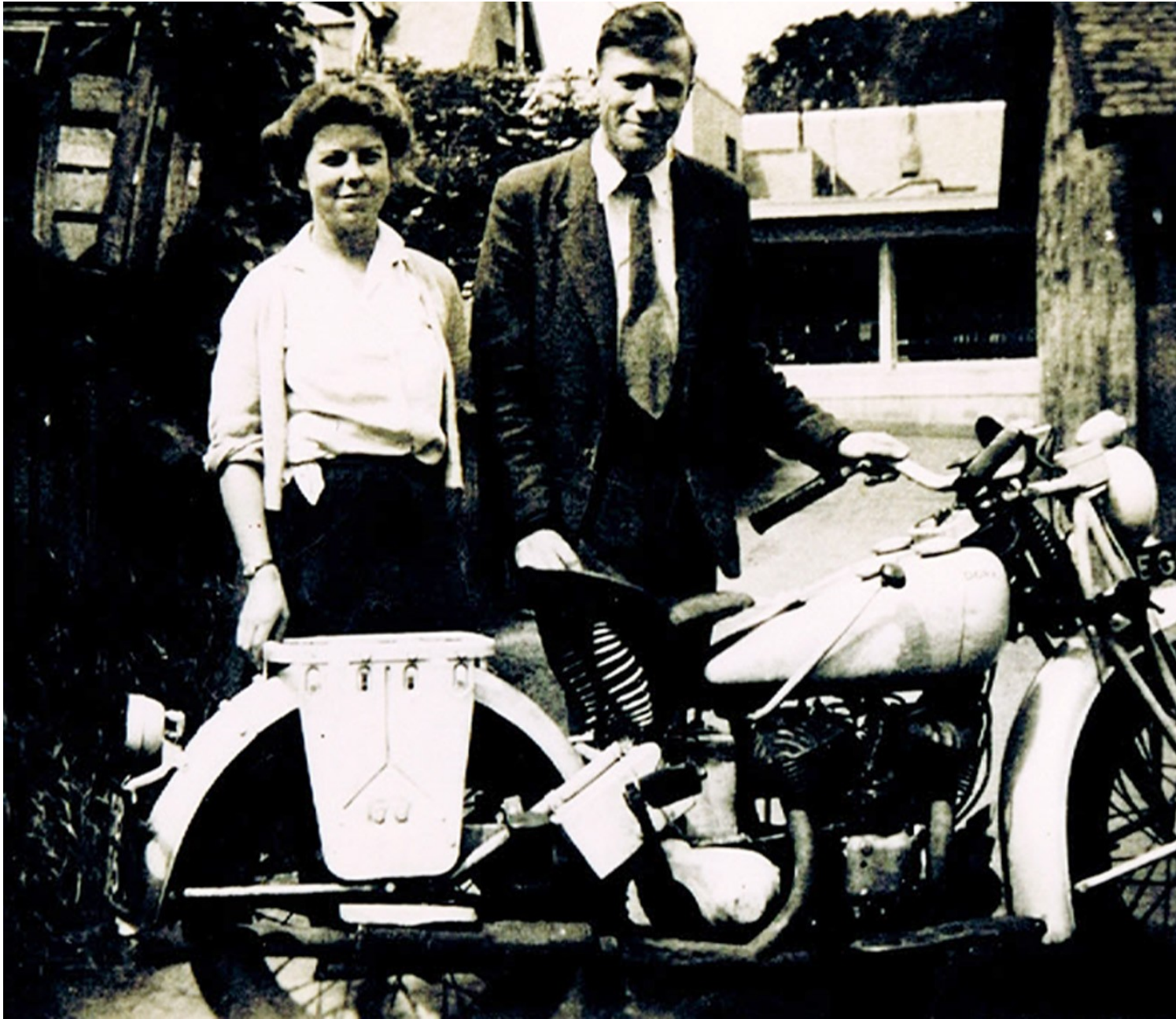
As a civilian, he moved into publishing with some help from a fellow-submariner, Teddy Young — well known as the only Reserve officer to command an operational submarine — who was also in the business. Stephen worked with the publishers William Collins, but within a year or so he and Jo became concerned about prospects for bringing up a family in Britain; recovery from the war was slow, and economic signs were not good. He applied to be transferred to the Collins operation in Australia. He and Jo migrated here in October 1947, with permanent employment already secured. This has been his home ever since. He retired from Collins in 1979.

Boats ...

Stephen's life away from work has been full of variety, in two main fields. Firstly, he became a keen small-boat sailor and a boat-builder as well. He was instrumental in getting the Heron and Lazy E classes established in Australia, and in forming local Class associations for both of them. He built two Herons, a Lazy E, a Northbridge Junior, and two Moths. He raced when he could; he took out the Herons National Championship once in the early 1960s, and freakishly, twice won from a huge field of all-comers the Imperial Services Club's annual race from RSYS Kirribilli to Quarantine in Sydney, once in a Heron, once in a Lazy E.

... and bikes

Stephen's other major extra-curricular activity has been in a very different field: on two wheels — with an engine between them. He has always loved motor bikes, though not always has his domestic situation permitted him to indulge his passion as much as he'd have liked. Most of his demobilisation gratuity went on 'Dora' the ex-US Army Indian Scout seen in the picture overleaf, taken in Glasgow with Stephen and Jo the year after they were married. But motor bikes don't mix well with raising children, and Dora didn't come to Australia. So Stephen stuck to four wheels for about 20 years, until the offspring were independent.



Jo and Stephen Dearnley with 'Dora', the ex-US Army Indian Scout which absorbed most of Stephen's demobilisation gratuity.

When he returned to motorcycling in the early 1970s the scene had changed somewhat. There was by this time some quite attractive Japanese machinery around; he had several Japanese bikes, which he used to commute to work for the very convenience of it. Soon, as a mature-age motorcyclist, he got involved in long-distance touring as well.

Ulysses Club is formed

And so it was that, through a light-hearted correspondence through the pages of *Bike Australia*, an Australian motor bike magazine, Stephen ended up as a founder member, and for four years, President, of the Ulysses Club - whose motto is "Grow old disgracefully". The club was formed in December 1983 with just five people at the inaugural meeting at a Sydney pub; by the time Stephen vacated the chair in 1986 there were several hundred on the books. The club has continued to prosper ever since, with membership over 29,000 in 2010.

The basic objectives of the club were threefold: foster contact and mutual support between older motorcyclists; show by example that motorcycling can be fun for all ages; and let other institutions know the views of older riders. The club has its AGM in a different spot each year, usually pretty remote, and riders converge from all over the country. The club magazine, *Riding On*, has been a significant factor in the club's success. The club is a formidable charity fundraiser, devoting funds raised to arthritis research. Stephen thinks that the atmosphere of consensus and goodwill in which the Ulysses Club began, and continues to function, are the cornerstones of its success. Stephen says: "It operates in an atmosphere of organised anarchy — but it works".

Another extra-curricular activity that occupied Stephen in recent years was proof-reader for this Newsletter, in which he provided invaluable and expert service drawn from his long experience in publishing. He withdrew from his responsibilities in that field only last year, when he moved into serviced hostel accommodation on Sydney's northern beaches.

Queen's birthday honours

In the Queen's Birthday Honours list of 1999 Stephen Dearnley was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia — OAM — for "services to sailing and motorcycling". Columnist and veteran reporter David McNicoll described the award as "a victory for larrikinism" and Stephen as "the leader of the largest motorcycle gang in Australia". Stephen regarded the coverage as a compliment and great publicity for Ulysses.

*

Stephen Dearnley has had a rich and full life. Sadly, he lost Jo in 1996 after her long struggle with rheumatoid arthritis, but their four offspring and 12 grandchildren are constant reminders of her.

Stephen has put more in to everything he's been associated with than he has taken out. With his organisational flair, common sense, and abundant energy he has made a difference to things and initiated change and development in several fields for the enjoyment and benefit of many others. In his highly individualistic way, he has made the world a better place — and, importantly, he's had a lot of fun doing it.

Reference: Dearnley, S; *The Ulysses Story*; Ulysses Club Revised Ed, 2003.

(The photograph with the motor bike is from Stephen's own collection, and those of the three RN units are from the 1939 and 1944 editions of Jane's Fighting Ships. The assistance of the Naval Historical Society of Australia with this article is acknowledged with thanks.)