

SIR THOMAS LIPTON'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD SAILING

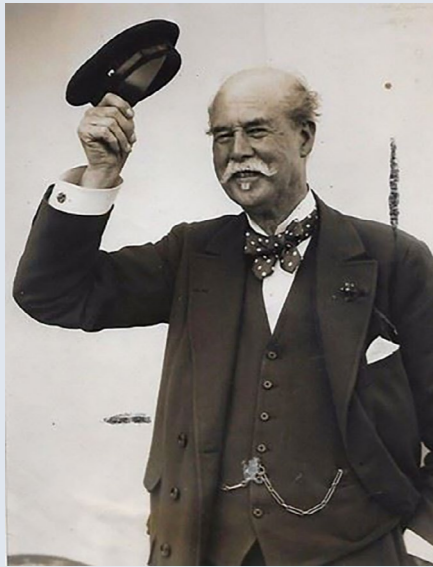
Past Commodore Ray Matthews was surprised to learn that the iconic Lipton Cup (the most prestigious sailing sporting trophy in South Africa) wasn't the only trophy Sir Thomas Lipton donated. This fascination took him down a long road of interesting discoveries liaising with yacht clubs around the world.

The magnificent Lipton Cup, presented by Sir Thomas Lipton to our Club as Trustees in 1908 for offshore interclub racing in Southern Africa, holds pride of place in the Royal Cape Yacht Club trophy cabinet. Legend has it that Sir Thomas had donated quite a number of these challenge-type cups, known as "100 guinea cups", to yacht clubs around the world.



Above: The RCYC team wins the 2018 Lipton Challenge Cup. Left: The Royal Cape Yacht Club is proud to hold the Deed of Gift drawn up by Sir Thomas Lipton. The Lipton Challenge Cup has been sailed on various one-design boats over the years, the L26 being one of them (Lipton Challenge Cup, 2018).





Who was Sir Thomas Lipton?

Why did this entrepreneurial Scottish grocer donate such an expensive trophy to a fledgling club at the tip of Africa to promote offshore sailing in Southern Africa? Who was he and why did he donate such lavish trophies?

James Mackay's book *The Man who Invented Himself: A Life of Sir Thomas Lipton* goes a long way to understanding who Thomas Lipton was. He built a grocery store empire, acting as advertising expert – and showman – in his stores, which numbered more than 500 at one time. It seems that Sir Thomas may have embellished his story a little, but his was a one-man business until 1925 when he listed his company. It's understandable that to set up this business empire he travelled extensively, and so it's not surprising that these 100 guinea cups followed him on these travels.

Sir Thomas Lipton became an international celebrity, and a friend of Queen Victoria's son, King Edward VII. Aside from being a tea merchant and a philanthropist, Sir Thomas Lipton was also an avid yachtsman and donated trophies to yacht clubs in various countries including the US and New Zealand.

Fortunately for the sailing world, Sir Thomas purchased a steam yacht in 1898, a palatial vessel capable of 17 knots, which he named *Erin*. It was during the time he was using *Erin* to entertain the rich and famous in England and along the East Coast of America that Sir Thomas decided to challenge for the America's Cup and enter the world of competitive ocean sailing. Sir Thomas's five attempts, starting in 1899, are well documented: four were under the burgee of the Royal Ulster Yacht Club (Belfast) and the final one with the Royal Yacht Squadron (Isle of Wight). All his yachts were named *Shamrock*, and all his attempts were unsuccessful. *What follows is an edited version of a more comprehensive research document that the RCYC will publish on their website after the publication of this magazine.*

Casting the net wide

The first Lipton Cup seems to have been donated to Columbia Yacht Club. This Deed of Gift was used as a template for all the deeds to follow and was sent together with the championship cup.

The format of the Deed of Gift was generally as follows:

- The gifted club became the Trustee or custodian of the cup
- Perpetual interclub competition
- Distance of each race was specified
- The winning club could hold the cup till the next event
- Sailing waters may be mentioned
- Courses were set out

Columbia Yacht Club (1901) and Chicago Yacht Club (1922), Chicago, USA

Sir Thomas gifted the Lipton Competition Cup to Columbia Yacht Club in 1901 with a Deed of Gift for sailing on the great lakes at that time. It was valued at \$4 000 and reputed to be the most expensive trophy in America.

In the early 1920s, Columbia Yacht Club underwent a temporary fiscal crisis, and the cup was transferred to Chicago Yacht Club. During 1923, Sir Thomas was asked to draft a new deed in the name of Chicago Yacht Club. With the change in trusteeship, Chicago Yacht Club elected to use the cup as a club trophy and not for interclub events.



San Diego Yacht Club (1903), California, USA

During 1902, the committee of the Corinthian Yacht Club San Diego, which was later to merge with the San Diego Yacht Club, wrote to Sir Thomas requesting a trophy. He agreed, and Elkington & Co of Birmingham was commissioned. The trophy was completed in 1903 and the first competition took place in 1904. It was sailed offshore over three races in one-design yachts per the original Deed of Gift.

Over the years, various changes to the class of yachts, venues and the number of races were tried, even a handicap with IOR. Today the J105, which is a popular yacht in Southern California, is the elected yacht to race in a one-design fleet to determine the winner over three races in San Diego waters.



Newport Bermuda Race (1906)

The cup proposed by Thomas Flemming Day and donated in 1906 by Sir Thomas for the 635-mile ocean race for yachts under 80 foot from Newport to Bermuda now resides at the Mariners Museum in Newport News, Virginia.

The first race was won by Commodore Frank Maier on the 38-foot yawl *Tamerlane*. Nothing is known about the cup from then until it was bought by the museum in 1982 and restored. The original cup featured the burgees of Brooklyn Yacht Club and Bermuda Yacht Club.

The Newport Bermuda Race is now under the organisation of the Cruising Club of America (CCA). It is held bi-annually and attracts between 150 and 200 yachts. The two major trophies contested since 1954 are the St Davids Lighthouse Trophy and the Sir Thomas Lipton Memorial Trophy donated by Robert B Smallwood.

Boston Yacht Club (1907), Quincy, USA

This cup was presented for the Boston to Gloucester Yacht Race.

Royal Yacht Club of Victoria (1908), Australia

The Lipton Cup was donated to the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria by Sir Thomas, along with a Deed of Gift. The first regatta was sailed in March 1909, with four one-design yachts taking part in that first challenge. The eventual winner was *Helen* (owned by the Church Brothers). The cup then went missing for 90 years. It seems it found its way into the possession of the Church family who, in the early 2000s, returned the cup to the club. The Interclub Lipton Challenge was resumed in 2006 and is still sailed today.



Lake Michigan Yachting Association (1910) and the Chicago Yacht Club (1936), USA

This trophy was originally presented to the Lake Michigan Yachting Association in 1910 by Sir Thomas Lipton as a challenge cup. Provisions in the deed awarded the trophy permanently to the first three-time winner. Racing began in 1911. Fred Price won in 1912, 1914 and 1915 and thus took ownership of the cup.

In 1936 the widow of Fred Price presented the Lipton Cup to the Chicago Yacht Club, and it was renamed The Fred A Price Memorial Trophy.

The cup has been sailed for annually since 1940.



Royal Cape Yacht Club (1908), Cape Town, South Africa

From 1907, progress was being made on the preparation of the rules for the Lipton Challenge Cup, after Sir Thomas Lipton's very generous donation of the silver and enamel trophy that stands in our club today. The trophy was made by the famous English silversmiths Elkington & Co, the hallmarking on the cup indicating that its manufacture was completed by 1908. Its workmanship showcases the very best of British craftsmanship of the time. This is evident in the many features on this magnificent trophy. Surrounding the base are repoussé waves and dolphins representing the sea. Higher up are exquisite carved leaves and handles in the shape of figurehead maidens. Around the base of the lid are four cherub faces on top of which is a yacht with sails set. Adorning the lid is the winged Victory, believed to have been sculptured in 190 BC to commemorate a naval victory. What could be more representative of a yachting trophy?

An intriguing piece of history is captured in the enamel plates around the cup in the form of the coats of arms of the five colonies: South West Africa (now Namibia), the Cape, Natal, Mozambique and, strangely, given that the cup was deeded to promote deep-sea sailing, Rhodesia (now Zambia/Zimbabwe).

The finalisation of the rules of the class and the design parameters of the boats that would be sailed took four years to complete, with an eventual decision made on the 8-Metre Rule. From reports in *A History of the Royal Cape Yacht Club 1904-1990* by JS Rabinowitz, the first event was held in 1911 in Table Bay. The Lipton races captivated Capetonians; there were displays in the window of Cartwrights, an erstwhile major retailer in the city, while news of the results dominated the headlines of the daily papers. Prior to the first Lipton Cup races, club races in Table Bay were raced on courses that were similar to those adopted in the Deed of Gift.

After a hiatus during the interwar years, the races have been contested annually since 1952.

A number of boat designs or classes have been used since 1911. These are the 8-Metre Rule, 30-Squares, IOR Quarter Tonners, L26s, Cape 31s and ORCs. This year the competition will be sailed on J22s.

St Francis Bay Yacht Club (1911), San Francisco, USA

Sir Thomas Lipton first came to San Francisco Bay in 1912 to compete in 12-metre-class racing at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PICYA) in 1915. World War I interrupted his plans but the Lipton Cup was raced in 1916, 1918, 1919 and 1920. At that time, the cup was won by John Hanify. When Hanify died, the 12-metre class also collapsed and the cup itself was "lost" for 40 years.

PICYA regained control of the cup in 1960 when it was found at the Olympic Club.

Tragedy struck in 1976 when the cup was destroyed in a fire at St Francis Yacht Club. A new trophy was made in the image of one of the 12-metre yachts and is on display at the club today.

The contest continues using J22s. The format of racing is interesting. On day one, a Friday afternoon, female skippers sail from St Francis Bay to the host venue. Saturday, which is open to all, features round-the-buoy racing. And on the Sunday, over-60s enjoy two short races and a return race to St Francis Bay.

Comyns Silversmiths of London

One of Sir Thomas's favourite sources of silver, Comyns Silversmiths of London has a heritage dating back nearly 400 years, and is ranked among history's finest silversmiths. Hallmarks can be traced back to the 17th century when the company began by specialising in decorative dressing tableware. Comyns masterpieces are in the collections of the Great Houses of Britain and the Victoria and Albert Museum of London. The company still operates today.



Royal Victoria Yacht Club (1912), British Columbia, Canada

In December 1912, Sir Thomas Lipton visited Victoria and felt it had the potential to become a centre for international yacht racing. The *Colonist* reported that "it may be taken for granted that when the next regatta of the Victoria Yacht Club comes around, there will be a Lipton Cup". Sir Thomas did present a cup, but he donated it to the city rather than the yacht club.

In an effort to promote the yachting scene, the city chose to support a maritime carnival week in August 1913 and the Royal Victoria Yacht Club was asked to take complete charge of all water events. Then the city decided not to sponsor the festival and in December 1913 deeded the Lipton Cup to the Royal Victoria Yacht Club.

The intention was to award it to the winner of future international races hosted by the club.

The Great War prevented any regattas from being organised between 1914 and 1918. Between 1919 and 1940 the Lipton Cup was awarded for a longer distance race among yawls, ketches and schooners, with an LWL ranging from 25 to 40 feet. (7.6m to 12m) at PIYA regattas.

After World War II, the race for the cup was among class cruisers at the Maple Bay Labour Day Regatta. In 1967 the Royal Victoria Yacht Club reverted to having the cup competed for off the waterfront on a course of at least 12 miles. Between 1972 and 1983, IOR-rated boats competed, and, since then, PHRF-rated boats have contended for the cup.

They still sail for this cup today.



Seattle Yacht Club (1912), USA

While visiting Seattle in 1912 on his way to San Francisco, Sir Thomas Lipton was so impressed with what he saw as perfect sailing waters that he promised to commemorate his visit by donating a perpetual challenge cup to the Seattle Yacht Club. Upon his return to London, Sir Thomas commissioned the cup, which arrived in 1913 and was first contested in 1914 by the "R" boats, *Sir Tom* of Seattle and *Turenga* of Vancouver, Canada. With the demise of the "R" class, the Lipton Cup became the main trophy for the International 6-Metre Class in the Northwest. The cup itself was made by Garrard & Co. of London in sterling silver, weighed about 5 or 6 pounds and stood approximately 4 feet (1.3 metres) tall, base included. Winners of the cup, including boat name, skipper and crew, have been inscribed on the cup or on small plaques encircling the base, for the past 85 years.

Elkington & Co.

Elkington & Co. was a renowned British silver and silver-plated metalware manufacturer, founded in Birmingham in the 1830s by George Richards Elkington and his cousin, Henry Elkington. The company became a pioneer and leading producer of electroplated items after patenting the electroplating process in the 1840s and are most famous for producing high-quality tableware and decorative works.



Grand Lake Yacht Club (1913), USA

The great-grandson of the person who arranged this cup was able to share some personal information about it.

"My great-grandfather, Harry Bryant, founded the club in 1902 and was the first Commodore. He and a few other members hosted a big event for Sir Thomas Lipton in 1913 in Denver in the middle of winter. He was travelling across the US on a train from New York City to San Francisco. Our club is two hours from Denver and is frozen solid in the winter. Harry and friends told tall tales about our sailing programmes and our 'famous' high alpine club. After many libations, Sir Thomas announced he would donate a Lipton Cup. And months later a large package arrived at my grandparents' home."

Grand Lake Yacht Club is currently preparing a tribute video to commemorate this cup, which is still sailed for annually.



Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania (1914), Australia, and the Royal Hobart Regatta Association

Sir Thomas presented this trophy to the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania in 1914 as a Perpetual Challenge Cup for a Tasmanian One Design Class. *Weene*, the original yacht built to this rule, won the Sir Thomas Lipton Trophy 13 times over a 30-year period.

Originally a trophy for the Tasmanian one-design yachting class, it was re-dedicated as a major trophy for the Royal Hobart Regatta and has since been put to use for this sailing event that bears the Lipton name.

The regatta is a handicap event. There are two racing categories, one for spinnakers and the other for those skippers who prefer to sail without a spinnaker. Each category is separated into two divisions. The start line for all races is directly in front of the Regatta grounds, which serves as a fantastic vantage point for spectators.



Southern Yacht Club (1919, 1928, 1943 and 1957), New Orleans, US

Sir Thomas was particularly generous to the Southern Yacht Club and the Gulf Yachting Association. The Southern Yacht Club were gifted four Lipton Cups.

A major tragedy befell the Southern Yacht Club during hurricane Katrina in 2005. Although only moderately damaged by wind and flood waters, Southern's clubhouse was ultimately destroyed by a massive fire that burned unchecked in the hours following the storm. Sadly, many historic trophies and other priceless artifacts were lost including the four Lipton trophies.

The Sir Thomas J Lipton Challenge Cup presented to the Southern Yacht Club in 1919 was for one-design competition and contested for annually by member clubs of the Gulf Yachting Association.

The original 1919 trophy was replaced by one crafted by the same silversmith and with all the original hallmarks, except, of course, for the date. (Read the story on page 86.)

Ponsonby Cruising Club (1920), Auckland New Zealand

During 1905 the Ponsonby Cruising Club (PCC), established in 1900, elected Sir Thomas Lipton as Vice President of their club. In acknowledgement, Sir Thomas sent the club photographs of *Shamrock I, II and III* over the years, which still hang proudly in the clubhouse. A Ponsonby club member, aware that Sir Thomas had donated a World Cup Trophy for football, asked why they should not seek a similar trophy for their club. The club duly wrote to Sir Thomas who had been patron of the club since 1905.

In a letter, dated 29 April 1920, Sir Thomas offered the PCC a silver cup that he had commissioned from Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Co. of Regent Street (manufacturers of the America's Cup), London, as follows: "A special design that would be typical of New Zealand and also embody the burgee of the PCC, its general character to be appropriate to yachting."

He left the allocation of the competition for the cup to the club but asked that it be competed for by a specific class as an interclub trophy. The cup did not arrive until September 1920 but the club must have been ecstatic when the magnificent trophy was received. It is a most elegant trophy with mermaids, ferns and seahorses, coloured enamel flags and surmounted with a Viking ship and, forever watching over the club, the gentleman himself, embossed in silver (a tradition followed on a number of the trophies he presented to worldwide sports).

In April 1922, the 22-foot L Class Mullet boat fleet was chosen to race for the inaugural Lipton Cup event held by the Ponsonby Cruising Club over a harbour course.

The Lipton Cup race has since been hotly contested as an annual interclub challenge race, sailed in the same Mullet boat class. The race is administered by the Ponsonby Cruising Club and has been sailed every year since 1922. On one occasion in 1940, all sailing on the harbour was cancelled because of the stormy weather, except for the Lipton Cup! These proud little vessels just reefed their mains and sailed through.



Manufacturer
of windlasses
& anchor management
solutions



Manufacturer
of boat thrusters
& maneuvering
solutions



Manufacturer
of safety equipment



Manufacturer
of liferafts
& inflatable boats



Manufacturer
of plastic accessories
for marine use



Manufacturer
of boat fenders
implementing unique
technology

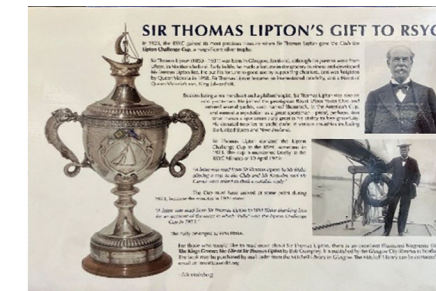


Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club (1920), NSW, Australia

In September 1913, Sir Thomas invited club member Walter Marks (Commodore 1914-1921) to join the crew of *Shamrock IV* for his 1914 America's Cup challenge. Marks accepted and was in the mid-Atlantic delivering *Shamrock IV* to New York when World War 1 was declared and the challenge was abandoned. At that time challengers had to sail to the challenge venue.

Marks became a highly regarded friend of Sir Thomas who presented a Lipton Cup to the club.

Initially, the cup was awarded to the yacht with the best record for all the club's harbour races for the season, then to the winner of the season's blue-water-sailing point scorer, and, most recently, to the handicap winner of the club's Sydney to Auckland Ocean Race.



Republic of Singapore Yacht Club (1923), Singapore

Formerly Royal Singapore Yacht Club, Singapore

In 1923, the Republic of Singapore Yacht Club (RSYC) gained its most precious treasure when Sir Thomas Lipton gave the club the Lipton Challenge Cup, a magnificent silver trophy. Today, the Lipton Cup is given pride of place at the Singapore Sports Museum.

Although not organised by the Republic of Singapore Yacht Club, the trophy is still awarded annually for a regatta.

Model Yacht Association of Scotland (1922)

On 5 September 1922, Sir Thomas Lipton presented this prestigious trophy to the Scottish Model Yacht Association (SMYA). Upon the demise of the SMYA, the Lipton Trophy reverted to the MYA Scottish District as the successor of the SMYA.

The trophy is presented to the annual winner of the MYA Scottish District IOM Travellers Series.

In 2023, thanks to the financial support of the MYA and the help of Colin McGinnis, the Lipton Trophy underwent repairs and much-needed attention.

The work was completed at the end of April 2023.



Smyrna Yacht Club (1922), Florida, US

In 1922, Sir Thomas Lipton donated a beautiful sterling silver cup to perpetuate the sport of yacht racing in the Central Florida area. The history of this cup is shrouded in mystery. John Jacobs writes: "Where this trophy came from is unclear, and all that is known is that it did not belong to Smyrna Yacht Club (SYC). In 1981, the Southeast Bank of New Smyrna Beach, contacted the SYC and asked them to take possession of a Lipton Cup Trophy that had been in their vault since 1941. The inscription on the trophy reads: 'Presented by Sir Thomas J Lipton, BART, K.C.V.O. to the Yalaha Yacht Club Florida Challenge Cup, 1922.'" The cup had been placed in a bank vault for safety during World War II and forgotten about until 1982. Having sponsored international Lipton Cup regattas in the early 1930s, Smyrna Yacht Club adopted the cup in order to preserve the tradition. The trophy now resides in the club's exclusive trophy case.

Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Co. of Regent Street

Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Co. of Regent Street was established in 1880 at 112 Regent Street by William Gibson and John Lawrence Langman. The company produced items ranging from silverware to jewellery and watches, and became well-known for its advertising and high-quality products, including its "Regent Plate". The company eventually merged with Garrard & Co. in 1952.

Santa Barbara Yacht Club (1927), Southern California, US

The Star Lipton Trophy was specifically designed for the Santa Barbara Yacht Club for the annual 1923 race from Santa Barbara to Honolulu. The trophy arrived after the race and was then used as a Perpetual Challenge Cup for Star Class yachts.

In 1927, the Santa Barbara Yacht Club members voted to restrict the competition for the Lipton Cup Star Boat Trophy to just Star boats competing in local waters, as per the Deed of Gift. From the 1930s to the 1940s, the Thomas Lipton Star Boat Race was held during the Semana Nautica festival.

The International Star Class Yacht Racing Association categorises the Santa Barbara race as a Class C event. Their yearly log publishes the results of this event and has listed trophy winners since the first regatta in 1924.

Famous winners of this regatta are Paul Cayard (2006), Dennis Conner (1972, 1973 and 1977) and Lowell North (1947, 1948, 1950, 1951, 1956, 1963, 1966 and 1967).



CONGRATULATIONS

North Powered Teams
win over 90% of RCYC
races 2024/25

**JOIN THE
NORTH CREW!**



MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE
LEISURE
MARINE MARKET



MASTERVOLT

Complete Power Management Systems with High Amp Chargers, Batteries and Power Conversion Products.

A wide selection of Mastervolt batteries are offered for any application, including Lithium Ion, Gel, AGM and Traction ranges.



BEP

Battery Management Systems, Connectors, Switches, Panels and Accessories.



MARINCO

AC Shore Power, DC Power Connection and Accessories.



Hella marine

Navigation Lamps, Deck Floodlights, Utility Lighting and Switches.

ABSOLUTE RELIABILITY
IN THE HARSHTEST CONDITIONS

Our brands and ranges are international leaders in their fields and comply with appropriate certification standards.

They are renowned for their high level of quality, advanced technology and robust construction. We offer a wide range of products to meet a variety of customer requirements.

All our brands are represented and distributed internationally, and thus offer a world-wide support structure.



Tel: +27 (021) 555 3232 | contact@c-dynamics.co.za

www.c-dynamics.co.za

VITRIFRIGO
COOL AND BEYOND



ANDERSEN STAINLESS STEEL WINCHES®



Ronstan Orbit Winches

Quick trim on the 30QT, 40QT



LED lights: BCM, Frensch Bluefin, and Altigi



Falx Trading cc

sales@falx.co.za

WhatsApp +27 832 999 775



Auckland Sailing Association (1923), Auckland, New Zealand

The X Class was a 14-foot one-design clinker-built sailing dinghy. During his tenure as Governor General of New Zealand, Lord Jellicoe sailed and raced his boat regularly in Auckland.

It became an Auckland Anniversary Regatta Trophy and was first won by *Iona* in 1925. It was last sailed for by the X Class in 1964.

Waikiki Yacht Club (1930), Hawaii

While visiting Hawaii (a US Territory at the time) in 1930, Sir Thomas Lipton, presented a trophy to the local yachtsmen. It subsequently became an annual prize for their Star Boat fleet until the onset of World War II. By the time recreational boats were allowed to race post war, the Lipton Cup had disappeared and remained in hiding for the next 40 years. With the cup missing, a replacement cup was obtained. When the original cup was returned in 1987, it was immediately reinstated as the prize for an annual, all-state yacht club challenge.

The replacement cup was designated as the Sir Thomas Lipton One Design Challenge Cup.

Each year, the defending and challenging yacht clubs select their best racing boat and best crew (one boat per club). Although the annual competition is open to Hawaii Yacht Racing Association (HYRA) clubs on all the islands, O'ahu clubs have dominated the races.

The Hawaii Historical Trophy Committee administers the Sir Thomas Lipton Cup Challenge.



Squantum Yacht Club (1930), Massachusetts, US

In early 1930, George H Voter, Chairman of the Tercentenary Committee of the Massachusetts Bay Yacht Club Association contacted Sir Thomas Lipton requesting a trophy suitable for a yacht race. Sir Thomas contracted Goldsmiths & Company London to design and manufacture the sterling silver trophy. On 6 December 1930, the awards ceremony at the Point of Pines Yacht club saw the cup presented to Mr Allbright to process for life as per the Deed of Gift. In 1986, the Massachusetts Bay Yachting association persuaded Mr Allbright to deed the cup to them and then, in turn, appointed Squantum Yacht Club as custodians of the cup. The first regatta took place in 1987.



Other Lipton Cups around the world

- 1904 Rhode Island Yacht Club
- 1907 Brooklyn Yacht Club
- 1907 Provincetown Yacht Club
- 1928 Southern Yacht Club Star Class Trophy
- 1943 Southern Yacht Club Ludners 16 Trophy
- 1957 Southern Yacht Club Lipton Memorial Cup
- 1923 Royal Cork Yacht Club O'Regan Cup
- 1952 Inter Collegiate Sailing Association
- 1969 Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club

Although we believe much still needs to be discovered and documented about Sir Thomas Lipton's contributions, thus concludes the relevant records we have of these magnificent cups. To all the yacht clubs that have taken the time to support this research, we appreciate your time and efforts.



Saving a piece of history

Rubble of the burned-out Southern Yacht Club (SYC) building still scattered the grounds on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain in January 2006. Fire had destroyed the building and virtually all its contents in the aftermath of Katrina on 29 August 2005.

Commodore Hjalmar Breit commiserated with SYC member Thomas Long about the tragedy. They lamented not so much the building, but about the loss of so many of the club's trophies that had been collected over more than 150 years.

Perhaps the most tragic loss of all was the collection given to the club by Sir Thomas Lipton, especially the original Lipton Challenge Cup. Sir Thomas had donated the ornate silver trophy in 1919 for the purpose of establishing a race among clubs along the Gulf Coast in the newly formed Gulf Yachting Association (GYA). All that remained of the original Lipton Cup were a few charred shards that had been unearthed in the ruins of the clubhouse.

Commodore Breit suggested to Long that he contact Lipton to see if they would like to

donate a new trophy to the club. Long agreed to make a few phone calls.

There were a few challenges: 1) There was no trophy to copy. 2) Who could craft one? 3) Sir Thomas was long gone and his Lipton Tea Company was now owned by the worldwide conglomerate Unilever, headquartered in the Netherlands and London. 4) There would not be enough money from the insurance proceeds to afford anything like the original.

Luckily, the club's archives were maintained high and dry on the upper floor of a remote storage facility located well out of the flooded suburbs of New Orleans. The original production files of Commodore Oliver Counce's 1998 masterpiece history book *The Sesquicentennial of the Southern Yacht Club of New Orleans* helped identify and locate the original Lipton Cup records among the hundreds of faded manila folders stowed in dozens of vintage green metal filing cabinets.

Long's research into the provenance of the Lipton Cup revealed the original silver-

smith was still in existence. The nearly 100-year-old files indicated the trophy Sir Thomas gave to Southern Yacht Club in 1919 had been created by Comyns Silversmiths of London, Sir Thomas's favourite source of silver.

Peter Coleman was identified as the then president of Comyns, which to this day operates a shop inside Harrods department store in London. Long tracked down Coleman, introduced himself via email, and related the story of the trophy and the club's desire to reproduce it.

Long used his contacts from his career in the public relations and advertising industry to locate an official connected with the Lipton Tea Company. The trail led to Lipton's PR firm, Ogilvy & Mather, and their service office in Dallas. Long contacted an executive on the agency's Lipton team and related the story about the yacht club's loss and a simple request that Lipton Tea pay for a new trophy.

As fate and timing would have it, the Royal Thames Yacht Club (England's second oldest) was hosting its inaugural Cumberland

Cup team regatta in the spring of 2007. Southern was invited. Long enjoyed team racing and now had the means and method to meet Peter Coleman in person.

Harrods is only two blocks from Royal Thames, so after a day of team racing, Long walked over and met with Coleman over tea. Surrounded by six-figure silver and gold Comyns creations, Coleman repeated his company's enthusiastic interest in the project. He said he felt confident the company's archives probably still held the original drawings for the trophy. Coleman would research his company's records and reply later with an estimated price.

When Long returned to New Orleans, he received an email from Ogilvy & Mather saying that the Lipton Tea Company was interested in underwriting the cost as part of its commitment to rebuilding New Orleans. They felt that recreating a lost piece of yachting history would be a perfect gesture, one their founder certainly would have endorsed.

About a month later, Long received word from Peter Coleman that even though they had not located the original patterns, they were still confident they could produce a new Lipton Cup exactly like the original, using photographs from the SYC archives. But the price would be a princely £50 000 British sterling. At the time the exchange rate was about \$2 to the pound, so Coleman was quoting a cost of \$100 000.

By now, Long's discussions with Ogilvy/Lipton were progressing to the point the company was committed to contributing to the project. The agency recognised the post-Katrina PR value of replacing such a valuable piece of the Lipton heritage and history. Long hadn't yet mentioned the initial price tag was \$100 000, but ensuing conversations placed Lipton's contribution in the range of \$50 000.

In response to Comyns's initial estimate of £50 000, Long explained such an amount would be beyond the club's means. Coleman responded that Comyns was concerned about the potentially high cost of creating the trophy from photographs and drawings.

And then the Eureka moment hit: the Lipton Cup half-model had survived Katrina. Bay-Waveland Yacht Club held it because they had won the regatta in 2004 and had moved it to safety from the storm that wiped out their club as well. The half-model would make a perfectly accurate mold of at least the trophy's front.

Long posed this avenue to Coleman, who agreed such a mold would facilitate the

production and reduce the estimated cost. Long had a target price of £25 000 or \$50 000. More discussions ensued.

On 29 August 2007, ironically two years to the day the original Lipton Cup had been destroyed, Peter Coleman emailed the good news that they would accept £25 000 for the commission to replace the Sir Thomas Lipton Cup. They factored in that the wooden plinth and shields would be supplied.

Harry Chapman of Bay-Waveland Yacht Club, at that time the GYA trophy chairman, agreed to lend GYA's half-model to have a latex "mask" made to serve as the mold for the major casting of the trophy. After all the GYA documents related to trophy-borrowing were signed; the half-model, in its case, was squeezed into the back seat of Long's car and driven from Bay St Louis to New Orleans where a small shop on Magazine Street would fashion the latex mould.

Meanwhile, discussions with Ogilvy/Lipton had reached a most satisfactory conclusion: the company was willing to contribute up to \$50 000 to replace the lost Lipton Cup. Exactly what Comyns had finally agreed to charge. The deal was set. All that was left to do was to navigate masses of paperwork and craft a nearly century-old trophy from scratch.

The deposit of £12 500 was paid to Comyns on 30 October 2007. And so, the crafting began.

The team in Malaysia sent photos of the process, showing the pieces being formed, polished, and finally assembled into the fully formed trophy.

Because they only had the front portion of the statuette for reference, their sculptor had to recreate the back, and enhance the front details by hand.

By March 2008, the trophy was complete, ready to be paid for, and ready to ship.

Once again, Comyns was most gracious by covering the transport and insurance costs.

Finally, in May, the new Lipton Cup flew to the United States where it was delayed in a US Customs warehouse in Houston pending payment of duty. More paperwork ensued.

The trophy finally arrived in New Orleans several days later, having been accepted by Customs as an artwork and therefore not subject to duty. The trophy had been packed in several pieces securely embedded in custom, form-cut foam molds, all carefully enclosed in, of all things, a plain cardboard box. Since the Southern Yacht Club was still operating in a complex of trailers and temporary buildings without adequate security, the trophy travelled one more time: to Long's home for storage in a spare bedroom until the new clubhouse was finished.

The formal and first public presentation of the new Lipton Cup was held in SYC's temporary "five-wide" clubhouse in July 2008. It was unveiled as part of the Junior Lipton Regatta that year, highlighted by an appearance from the "ghost of Sir Thomas", played by the late architect Ian Thompson.

The new Lipton Cup had remained in its cardboard box, tucked away in the spare bedroom, until it could be put on display in the new Southern Yacht Club building, which opened in September 2009.

Today, the gift from Sir Thomas and the Lipton Tea Company stands in the club's third-floor lobby prominently on display, flanked in its handmade case by models of the Fish Class sloop, the Flying Scot and the Viper 640.

By Thomas J Long



PHOTOGRAPHS THOMAS LONG (BURNT BUILDING), SYC (NEW BUILDING)