THE TOM BENTLEY TROPHY

- The Man from Murray River

It was the opening of the Boat Club; Tom had passed the word around
That a race for boats across the Clayton Bay
Would be good for budding boaties (Power and Sailing did abound)
It could happen every year on Opening day.

So he called the cracks together -Commodores of this and that
And outlined his scheme for racing at the Bay
And Guy Marshall, a real bright one with his Sailing Commodore's Hat
Designed the rules that stand until this day

"Boats proceed upon the water in a roughly circular course
START and FINISH the same line down near the Club.
Each circumnavigation shall be timed and then compared,
The percentage difference then shall be the 'rub'

No timepiece shall be carried aboard competing boats
Competitors shall simply estimate
The distance and time taken for each race-leg while afloat
And try not to be too early nor too late!"

And so through this novel method neither sail nor power prevail
Each boat would stand an equal chance of gain
On the first day of the season when the wind can blow a gale
Or participants refreshed by flooding rain!

Each year at the conclusion of this most ingenious race
When the boat with closest times had been proclaimed
And the trophy'd been presented to the winner with good grace
Then Tom the purpose of the race explained.

"The Clayton Boat Club's famous for its friendliness" he said
"Competition and aggression aren't our thing!
We really do not like to race, we like to cruise instead.
We prefer a drink, a poem or a sing!"

Then old Tom recited poems -he was famous for this skill.
And his passion and his memory were renowned!
When there's a barbie at the Boat Club they say you can hear him still
And the Sentimental Bloke can still be found.

Rob Jones
October 1st 1997