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The Coastal Passage

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35th Edition
Mar. - Apr. 2009



The 2009 Wooden Boat Festival!

Stuart Mears Photo

PJ is.. The Spread Sheet Queen



Steve Halter photo



Stuart Buchanan on Andy Martin

Reflections by Alan Lucas

Postal Blues

Remember the days when you could walk into a newsagent to buy a paper or magazine and do just that? Now days you select your reading matter then join a queue of desperados trying to win Lotto. You wait for ages while everyone from street kids to dear old grannies spend ages dipping cards into hope-machines before dejectedly surrendering to their impoverished realities. While waiting you feel like running outside with a paintbrush to redesignate the shop as 'Gambling Casino' in bold font with a bracketed subheading saying, 'Also Newsagent - if you're lucky'.

Similarly with post offices: Remember when they concentrated on post and telegrams and were open five and a half days a week with two home deliveries a day carried out by fit young men on pushbikes whose whistles alerted you to a delivery? Now days you get less than half the number of deliveries by private subcontractors weaving through parked cars and recycling bins on motorbikes who all too often ram your mail into the slot as if loading a cannon. And when you complain about terminally damaged or missing mail at the local post office, you invariably get the line, 'Sorry, but we have no direct control over our private contractors'.

This corporate-style management offers a convenient escape hatch for its every failure whilst obliging genuine mail customers to queue behind swarms of people paying bills, doing their banking, buying stationery, koala bears, books, football bric-a-brac and everything this side of chandlery while you kill time idly popping bubble wrap and forgetting what you came in for.

So what's this got to do with cruising? Well a lot, actually, because despite modern communication alternatives, our transient lifestyle still has us depending on mail, especially on reliable transfers from one town to another. The success of this basic operation was once taken for granted: now days it is in the category of 'gambling'.

Having been dependent on reliable mail transfers for nearly fifty years now, I can categorically state that postal services have deteriorated from absolute certainty to probable failure. Up until twenty-odd years ago (about when Australia Post expanded into peripheral services, dumping on a lot of small businesses as it did so), mail transfers never failed. They started and ended on time. Now days there is every chance of transfers failing to start in the first place and then, once kick-started by an irritated customer, failing to cease according to instructions. Collectively, Patricia and I have spent months in various ports waiting for transferred mail to stop being sent to the last post office and start being transferred to the new one. Oz Post's highly detailed transfer forms seem to be mostly rhetoric.

For many years our son lived at our base address from where he forwarded mail in pre-purchased express bags. Yet even this simple system was periodically derailed by good old Oz Post whose most dramatic moment came when Innisfail Post Office presented us with a dripping wet bag of pulped and missing mail. The bag was so badly damaged that we only just managed to read that wonderful expression of corporate optimism declaring, 'Guaranteed next day delivery'.

We were told that it must have been wet before posting because, quote, 'All mail travels under cover'. Knowing

that Ben never dips our mail in a bucket of water before dispatch we knew it to be a blatant cop-out, so were delighted when one of the clerks caught us outside the post office to tell the truth, which was that it had been pouring rain in Brisbane where interstate mail was transferred across the tarmac in *uncovered* trolleys.

And as for that bold, wild promise on express post-bags saying, 'Guaranteed next day delivery': doesn't that rate as dishonest advertising? Sure, the small print on the back has a shot at the truth, but shouldn't truth dominate the front? Even in declared overnight areas we have waited three days, and in non-designated areas up to ten days. Performance this poor would shame yesteryear's postal service when it easily matched these times without special bags, excess charges or extravagant and often misleading claims.

Down near Ulmarra, on the Clarence River, an Oz Post B-Double failed to take a bend in the Pacific Highway and rolled onto its side in a paddock, stunning grazing cattle and passing drivers by the amount of mail it spewed over the countryside. Okay, so accidents happen and mail goes missing, but the incident highlighted something that has worried me for years: this being the method of handling delicate items. Most - if not all - mail is stuffed into bags irrespective of its nature, with no guarantee of special care unless registered, an insurance that scarcely covers the value of most items deserving such treatment.

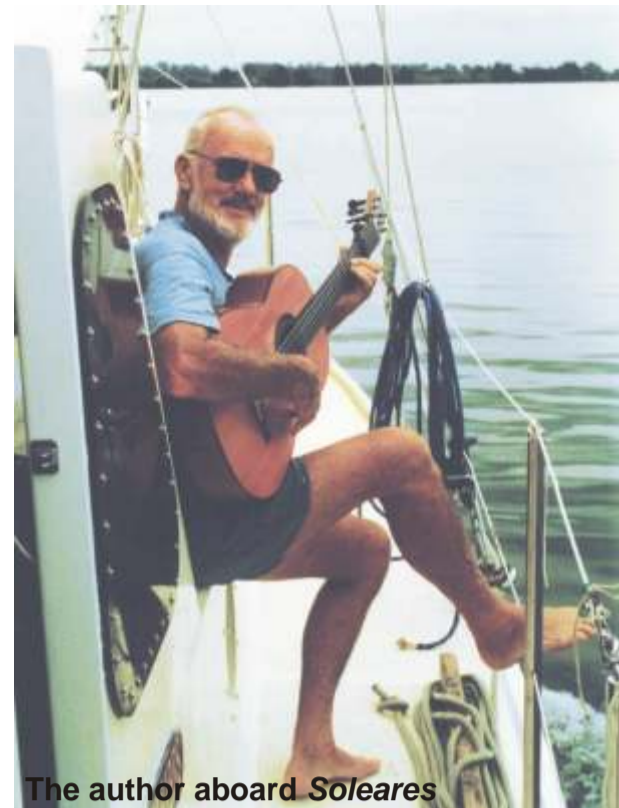
This truth was confirmed a few years back whilst sending books from Paradise Point Post Office to Cairns. Presenting my double-thickness cardboard package to the teller, with bright red stickers all over it shouting 'BOOKS WITH CARE PLEASE', I was taken aback when the clerk said: 'Those stickers are a waste of time: once mail is in the bag there's no telling how it'll be treated'.

I gave him full marks for honesty, but couldn't help asking if Oz Post was still in the business of responsible mail transport, to which he responded; 'Yes, of course, but there's nothing we can do to prevent damage. Fragile signs might work at the counter, but they're not seen once in the bag and bags get thrown everywhere' (especially when a B-Double rolls!).

He said nothing about duty of care or special methods for fragile goods delivery, just the inference that 'You pay your money and hope for the best'. I was reminded of a wonderful Saturday Evening Post cartoon of my youth depicting a postal clerk holding a 'Fragile' stamp high above his head about to slam it down on a parcel. It needed no caption to say it all for the degree of care we can expect for precious items in transit.

Up until the mid-1980s Patricia and I had never experienced mail failure at any level, but since corporation there aren't enough fingers and toes to count the number of times our mail has been lost, damaged, not transferred or transferred but not terminated when requested. Could it be that Oz Post has too many irons in the fire to keep its eye on the main game? Perhaps it should be renamed 'Office Works' with a sub heading saying, 'Also random mail deliveries'.

All of the above is with sincere apologies to those friendly Oz Post staff members throughout the nation who have battled against their own system on our behalf to make



The author aboard *Soleares*

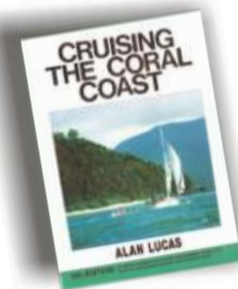
amends. I thank you all and regret that your efforts sometimes failed against an administration in denial. Special thanks to that hero who risked her job by slipping me a direct-access phone number to a certain mail room: it achieved nothing, I regret to say, but you went out on a limb for a customer, and doing your job properly is risky now days.

To those clerks who toe the party line and fob off our concerns about unreliable transfers, I thank you for unwittingly encouraging us to use a private mail forwarder. The system works well now, although Oz Post still tests our patience by occasionally sending items to our base address where their survival is entirely dependent on a watchful neighbour who holds them for our three monthly visit. He reposted an item once and you guessed it - it ended up back at our base address!

In 1974, Italian Post overcame a problem of backlogged mail and pesky transfers by selling 400 tons of undelivered mail to a paper recycler! Let's hope Oz-Post hasn't become that green yet.

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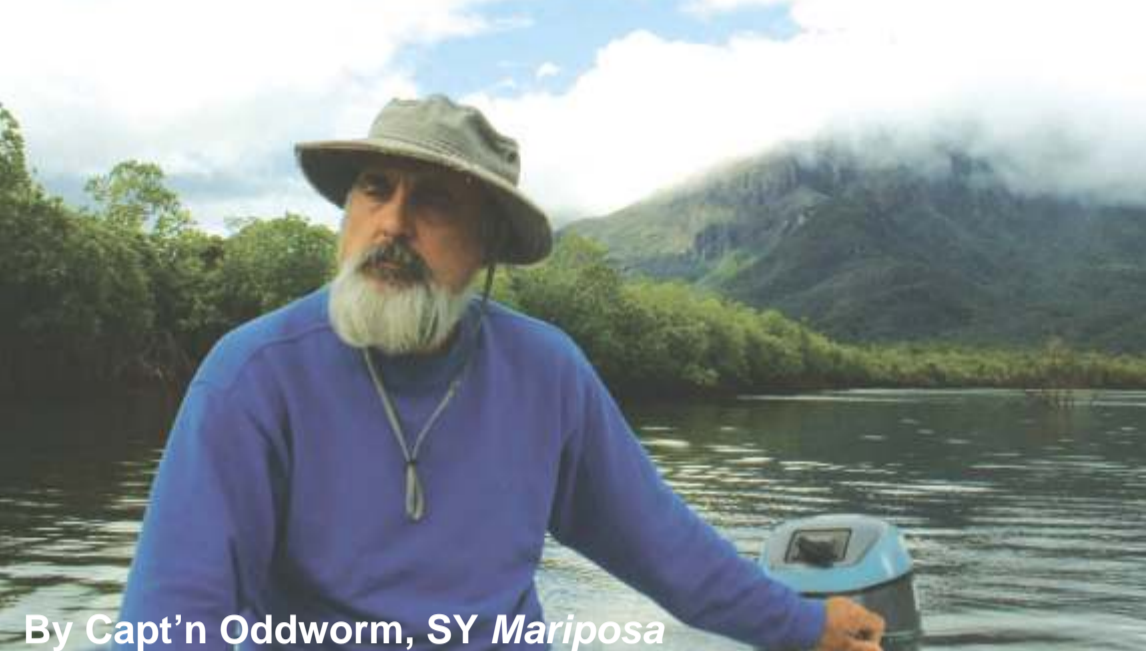
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Roos, Crocks & the long arm of the law...Part 2

The continuing saga of the Caribbean cruiser in the land of OZ



By Capt'n Oddworm, SY Mariposa

She dubiously eyed her little plastic paddle. "Now, this would be a really good time to chuckle and say you're joking....and turn back, ya know? But You won't, will you Bwana Dan."

How could I? We were really trapped, unable to use the motor or even turn around. I kept what look-out I could, but with the branches intertwining just at head level I was more concerned with poisonous spiders and snakes.

So I polled us along, pushing my paddle into the mucky bottom, all the while expecting to be devoured by some Jurassic throw-back. You hear these stories all the time. Some guy goes off to photograph Grizzly Bears, sees nothing, then gets eaten climbing into his car. In fact, only a few days earlier, I was joking around with some Aussie tour guides about "stupid tourists" being eaten by crocks. In their view, feeding a tourist or two to the crocks, every year, was good for business. It kept the thrill of crock spotting alive and thus earned them a living. Of course, if it got out of hand- say a couple hundred or so- well, that might be a bit much. But as it stood, they were quite pleased.

Like a Kamikaze for the tourist industry, I pushed ahead looking for a clearing in which to turn around. Then the scrapping branches parted and we were back in a clear, wide channel. The sudden brightness made the day seem younger. On the opposite bank we saw a husky, mud covered fellow setting traps from a banged- up "Tinny". Obviously, this guy would know the swamp and know how to spot crocks; so we motored over for a chat.

He showed us his catch of large black crabs, each tied in a macramé harness.

"I guess they must be pretty aggressive", I said.

"Aggressive?" He scoffed, "Hell mate, they'll tear yer bloody finger off!"

That's when I noticed the bucket containing what looked to be the sectioned- up rib cage of some lightly built animal.

"What's that bait there...sheep parts?" I asked.

"Sheep? No way mate. That's Wallaby."

"Wallaby? Like, the little kangaroo?"

"The same." He said with a nod. "I buy the odd bits from the pet food canners, ya know, the bits they can't use."

Unable to imagine exactly what "bits" were too lowly for dog food, I bid him said "G'day", and headed up stream. Assured by the crabber that we would, in deed, encounter crocks on this tributary, we again began poking around in the mangroves to no avail. We returned to Mariposa just ahead of dusk without a single sighting. I thought about going back out that night, but running down twenty-foot salt water crocodiles with a "rubber duck" inflatable seemed a bit reckless, so I stayed aboard and re-watched an old movie on DVD. In the morning, we moved on.

continued on page 28.....

Where this story left off in TCP #32:

I knew I had a lot to learn about this place and my first lesson was not a pleasant one. I also knew that several days of rest and relaxation would improve my disposition; so I just sat there with my wife, in the shade of the banyan at the market, and tried to feel grateful for the beautiful day, the android singer, and the stillness of the bench. Little did I suspect just how invasive the Long Arm of Australian Law would become.

Several weeks later and a long way up the coast, we decided to do some "gunk holing" on one of Queensland's muddy rivers. Intent on seeing a giant crocodile up close, we launch our dinghy and motored deep into the mangrove swamplands. What had at first appeared to be a large tributary quickly narrowed into a twisting black vane. Dense green thickets surrounded us and, here and there, the sticky clay banks showed the tell-tale markings of crocks. As the water shoaled, I kicked up the out-board motor and the mangrove branches closed around us, swallowing us in misty green twilight.

"Maybe this isn't such a good idea after all." Sandra ventured, "I mean, one of those suckers could leap right in here and get us."

"That's what your paddle's for!" I said in stout bravado, though I was beginning to appreciate her position.



21 DAYS



This is just another example of the Fusion 40 Kit assembly programme.

Nothing compares

www.fusioncats.com - email: jim@fusioncats.com

Contributors!

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 Stuart Buchanan, SY Pluto
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"It can't be about you without you!"

And as always, TCP very much appreciates your letters and other contributions that provides the rich forum of ideas that sustains the rag. For information on feature contribution requirements and awards, see the TCP web site, "contributions" page.

Where can I get copies of The Coastal Passage???

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 Darwin Sailing Club
 *G O V E
 Yacht Club
 QUEENSLAND.....
 *P O R T D O U G L A S
 Port Douglas Yacht Club
 Port Douglas Combined Club
 *Y O R K E Y S K N O B
 Yorkeys Knob Boating Club
 +C A I R N S
 Blue Water Marina
 Cairns Yacht Club, Wharf St
 Cairns Marlin Marina Office
 Cairns Cruising Yacht Squadron
 *C A R D W E L L
 Hinchinbrook Marina
 *M A G N E T I C I S L A N D
 Iga, Horseshoe Bay Supermarket,
 RSL, Maroon'd and "TraxsAshore"
 *T O W N S V I L L E
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 Breakwater Marina office
 Breakwater Chandlery Café
 BIAS Boating Warehouse
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 North Qld. Cruising Yacht Club
 Harbour Office
 Summergarden Cinema (Q.B.)
 *A I R L I E B E A C H and surrounds
 Whitsunday Sailing Club
 Abel Point Marina Office
 Whitsunday Ocean Services
 Marlin Marine
 Shute Harbour Chandlery & Slipway
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 Fishabout Marine Technologies
 Mackay's Boat Yard
 *P E R C Y I S L A N D
 A frame
 *R O S S L Y N B A Y
 Capricornia Cruising Yacht Club
 *R O C K H A M P T O N
 Fitzroy Motor Boat Club
 *G L A D S T O N E
 Gladstone Marina Office
 Gladstone Yacht Club
 *1770 AND BUSTARD HEADS
 1770 LARC tours
 *B U N D A B E R G
 Midtown Marina
 *H E R V E Y B A Y / U R A N G A N
 Great Sandy Straits Marina Office
 Fishermans Wharf Marina
 The Boat Club Marina
 *M A R Y B O R O U G H
 Boaties Warehouse
 Muddy Waters Café
 *T I N C A N B A Y
 Tin Can Bay Yacht Club
 Tin Can Bay Marina
 Tin Can Bay Boat Sales

M O O L O O L A B A
 Kawana Waters Marina
 Mooloolaba Marina Office
 Whitworth's (Minyama)
 *N O O S A
 Noosa Yacht & Rowing Club
 *S C A R B O R O U G H
 Scarborough Marina
 Moreton Bay Boat Club
 *N E W P O R T
 Australiawide Brokerage
 *S A N D G A T E
 Queensland Cruising Yacht Club
 *B R I S B A N E
 Whitworths (Woolloongabba)
 Whitworths (Breakfast Creek)
 Boat Books
 Glascraft Marine Supplies,
 (Rivergate Marina)
 *M A N L Y
 Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club
 East Coast Marina
 Royal QLD Yacht Squadron
 Wynnum Manly YC, Marina Office
 Moreton Bay Marine Supplies
 *R A B Y B A Y
 Raby Bay Marina
 *C O O M E R A / H O P E I S L A N D
 Outback Marine
 Gold Coast City Marina Office
 Marina Foods and Takeaway
 Hope Island Resort Marina
 *S O U T H P O R T
 Southport Yacht Club, Marina Office
 Whitworth's (Warehouse Rd.)
 ... N E W S O U T H W A L E S
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 Yamba Marina
 *C O F F S H A R B O U R
 Coffs Harbour Marina
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 *P O R T S T E P H E N S
 Lemon Tree Passage Marina
 *C E N T R A L C O A S T
 Gosford Sailing Club
 *N E W C A S T L E
 Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club
 *S Y D N E Y & S U R R O U N D S
 Boat Books
 Middle Harbour Yacht Club
 Cruising Yacht Club Australia,
 Rushcutters Bay
 Royal Motor Yacht Club Broken Bay
C A N B E R R A
 Canberra Yacht Club
V I C T O R I A
 Royal Yacht Club (Williamstown)
 Royal Geelong Yacht Club
 Sandringham Yacht Club
 Royal Brighton Yacht Club
 Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron
 Hastings Yacht Club
S O U T H A U S T R A L I A
 (Northhaven)
 Cruising Yacht Club of S.A.
 Royal S.A. Yacht Squadron
W E S T E R N A U S T R A L I A
 Boating Hardware-Prosail -
 O'Connor (near Fremantle)

Editors page... by Bob Norson

Minutes before putting this edition to bed, an agreement was reached between TCP and Yaffa Publishing/Cruising Helmsman to correct an item in an article in their February edition and Yaffa to pay for TCP's legal costs. A modest outcome but TCP understands the difficulties in accurately reporting contentious issues. Contributors can sometimes fail to reveal a vested interest that may colour their material, or the contributor may just be over their head. A million things can go wrong. Everything has to be so carefully checked. TCP is proud of our record in reportage of issues, but it hasn't been easy to keep the facts right on contentious issues. Touch wood and let's move forward....

Crocs in Space?! A few months ago a croc sighted near Magnetic Island caused much anger when it was found to have been caught by the EPA in the far north and transported south to be released in a creek near Townsville by Queensland Parks and Wildlife without telling the public! Townsville marine scientist, Walter Starck was quoted on the Brisbane Times web site as saying it was "criminal stupidity". The croc nicknamed "Whitey" was re-caught and died in the custody of EPA whilst they were trying to work out how to dispose of the creature. The government claimed plastic killed the croc, hmmm. The program that saw this come about was called "Crocs in Space" (no, we didn't make this up) and the department claims the project has been discontinued and there are not other crocs released. But then what about...?

Crocs sighted in Sandy Straits and Burrum River! There has been croc sightings in several unusual places lately, possibly as a result of extraordinary rains but because the creatures are known to be very territorial, many are asking if the EPA is telling all. In any case great caution is urged this cruising season as no area should be assumed "safe" in Queensland from these predators. In the last two weeks there have been several credible sightings in the Sandy Straits of a large, adult croc. The Burrum River croc has only one sighting known to TCP so far.

Andrew MacNamara is Queensland's minister for "Sustainability" (?) which includes EPA and Parks. Besides the embarrassing issue above the EPA could do so much more for protection of the environment. Residents in Mt Isa, Bowen, Bundaberg Port and Gladstone, among others feel the absence of leadership from the EPA. Our issue is the EPA's lack of interest in noise pollution.

There is no pursuit that inflicts more harm on so many for the frivolous convenience of a few as aviation. Especially "recreational" aviation. Not in any place I've lived have I seen such an assault on the environment of a community as I have recently seen in Hervey Bay/Wide bay region. This is a top down disaster with the aviation lobby in apparent control of the regulatory agencies, filtering information down to local bureaucrats who in turn advise councilors of the new amalgamated shires that own these regional airports. Councilors can be very good but they can also be ignorant, lazy, pro noise or maybe even corrupt. In any case, often not up to the job, What just a few months ago, was one of the best places to live in Queensland is turning into an aviation slum and councils deny the planes are there or that anything has changed... like we wouldn't notice!! In Bundaberg a retirement home has in the last few months been inundated with flights of small craft beginning at 0500 everyday.. as many as 20 flights before 0800, right over their roofs according to one resident. 80 of them signed a petition asking for relief which will be ignored by the pro noise council. In Hervey Bay I have seen a plane fly as low as 50 feet over a roof top. Every day we see planes flying less than 500 feet above homes and schools kilometres away from the airport. Maybe when enough lives and homes have been wrecked by constant noise or innocent people are killed in the accident that will eventually happen.... then they will close that barn door in true political fashion. In the meantime....

Letter sent to Queensland opposition requesting relief...

From a letter (edited for space) sent to To; Lawrence Springborg, opposition leader and Fiona Simpson, shadow minister for transport, on behalf of Readers;

Greetings

I publish a newspaper for the boating public, The Coastal Passage, distributed heavily in Queensland.

The Labor party has done nothing but aggravate my readership and there are currently a couple of specific issues that could sway a block of voters your way if the LNP would take them on.

First, a recent horrendous increase in the registration fees for cruising type vessels has created much anger. A promise of removal of this new tax would be very favourably looked upon by readers of this publication.

Second, 15 metre vessels have been arbitrarily saddled with new fees, licensing requirements and mandatory insurance that many vessels can not obtain should they be able to afford the mandature and other costs involved in obtaining it. (Vessel survey etc) A law that is impossible for even the most diligent operator to comply with.

And their reply?

Leader of the LNP

Leader of the Opposition

Member for Southern Downs

28 February 2009

LNP to build better boat ramps

Queensland boaties can expect less congestion at boat ramps and better boating facilities under a LNP Government....

The press release goes on to discuss more about boat ramps and establishing ramp cops to encourage people to be courteous. No mention of the 15 metre issue.

Conclusion? Vote Independent! Nobody could possibly be worse! A lot of people I talk to have just about had it with every professional politician.

Computer Stuff 101, Computer Security, Before you start rolling your eyes and saying 'here we go again'... CNN reports; An American company recently found the complete plans and specs for President Obama's helicopter on a file sharing computer in Tehran, Iran! This important security breach could have been avoided if the operator of a computer at a defence contractor in Maryland had read TCP's warnings on this. The IT company that discovered the files in Iran said that an employee at a US defence contractor had apparently downloaded a file sharing program typically used to copy music files. He warned, "When downloading one of these file sharing programs you are effectively allowing others around the world access to your hard drive." They say China, Pakistan and Yemen also are engaged in this activity.

Any program you download from the web can be a disaster for your computer. From US defence secrets to your bank account details and emailing lists, everyone wants your private information and there are no laws to regulate the content of programs.. they can be anything.

Victoria... It goes without saying that every Australian is devastated by the horrors of the fires there.



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Bob Norson: Publisher, Editor, journalist, advertising, photographer, computer & marine heads technician, etc., etc....

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LETTERS

Notice to contributors: All contributions that purport facts in a matter of possible contention, should be ready to provide support for their assertions or additional information or the contribution may be refused at the discretion of the editor. Anyone disputing a matter of fact in any part of TCP is **invited** to respond as long as the discussion remains one of fact and the responding writer must also be ready to provide support for their assertions or additional information if requested. It's about a fair go for boaties.

LONE SAILORS

In answer to Alexandra Connolly (TCP # 34). Her observations are correct about solitary yachtsmen. We have been on the water for 30 years and 29 years ago we came to the conclusion that "the lone sailor is alone for a reason". Refer to the article by captain B.S.Nautical.

We also have another saying "The second wife enjoys the boat".

We have met a few ex-wives that are now 2nd wives to a different yachtie. These wives put up with a husband who would only let them have a bucket for a toilet and a bucket for the dishes, no covers on the foam rubber seats or bed (weigh too much), 5 litres of water a day - for cooking, washing dishes and clothes and hygiene. The boat leaked constantly and were not to use battery power unless he said she could. One even had to, at night, sit up on the bow of the boat with a green and red bucket and a torch, shinning the torch in the right colour bucket on the appropriate side of the bow if a ship came. Another had her hair falling out because she had to use salt water to wash it!

After the divorce she finds a fellow that knows how to treat a good first mate.

And he with half the divorce settlement, fixes up the boat with an electric toilet, TV installed, sink and 12 volt water pump, diamond buttoned seats, (well something like that), mattress covers, inverter and no leaks no matter how hard it rains or bad the weather is. Installed big water tanks, electric windlass, auto pilot etc. He also stops sailing the boat on a 45 degree angle.

Amazing is it not!

We also when meeting up with a yachtie we have not seen for a while, never ask him how his partner is. He probably has a new one by now...be careful!

Fortunately for me, my skipper says I can have whatever I want as long as I sail with him.....He says there is an easy and hard way, he just does it the easy way! I think I am one of the rare 1st wives and loving it!

Carole Hall, SY "Chantilly"

PS: love your paper Bob, thanks for the great job you are doing with it, we both appreciate it.

Wonderful letter Carole!

Thanks for that... and yes, WE agree perfectly with you. We think a good relationship is a good relationship but there are so many so-so relationships that muddle along for years until finally being tested... then... solo sailing begins...

KK was so involved with the rebuild of our old boat that we both knew what was needed to accomplish the various creature comforts. So, prioritising was mutual and understood. We had a brilliant galley, except the waste water had to be hauled out every night as it was drained into a 25 litre jug instead of pumped out via a through hull. One of those felly jobs that required putting a hole in a perfectly good piece of steel. So we had the little game... who would do the duty this time..

Thanks for the lovely words on the paper. It is a labour of love so very happy to hear when it satisfies.

**Cheers,
Bob**

MORE ABOUT SOLITARY SAILORS

Alexandra Connolly's observations on solitary yachtsmen had me thinking back on my 10 years as a solitary Yachtswoman. One of the first thing I noticed when thrust into the company of single handed sailors, they definitely have more than one hand. It pays to watch them both. Be aware. I found it a dicey operation accepting favours from men when you are female boat owner. At least in the beginning when lots of help is sought, and a desperate need to learn causes you to listen intently and innocently to almost everyone's opinion and except help indiscriminately.

Quite quickly I located an industrial sewing machine. In exchange for expertise I could offer to repair sails, awnings and interiors of the said expert's yacht. I also adopted rather less than flattering, baggy, stained clothing and a determined air. Nothing attracts men more, I've noticed, than a scantily clad damsel in distress. It didn't occur to me how butch I'd become until the elderly captain of the Spirit of 1770 one day, after I emerged from the showers at the marina, exclaimed, 'My God! You are a woman. I always took you for a bloke'. Only then did it occur to me that I had been overdoing the daggy bit.

Learning to sail was a tricky situation because to come and offer my services as crew made me look rather desperate and suggested I had my eye on the captain instead of the many attributes of the boat in question. I often took one look at a boat and decided to sail on it, rarely because of the captain, often despite him. Some of the captains looked like hardcore cases and I would weigh up how much I really wanted to sail on that particular boat. Usually after extensive questioning around the marina and keeping my ear to the ground I found out if the captain was sound of mind. Sanity was on the top of my list of what I could hope for in a person I was about to entrust with my life. Sometimes impossible to tell until out of sight of land, unfortunately.

Next was a sense of humour. This helps when shut up in close quarters with a virtual stranger often with different tastes in music, reading literature, entertainment, conversation, sleeping arrangements etc. This also was difficult to tell until out of sight of land. So it was up to me to concentrate on developing a sense of humour.

My next question was, 'Can he cook?' Very few solo sailors do poorly in this area I found. He had to be willing to let me sail his boat while he handed up the tasty treats. So it was usually only sailors whose autohelm was on the blink and wanted someone, anyone, who could hold a compass course, and available without much warning, who agreed to let me sail their boat. They were usually glad to just hand up treats and check up on the boats position.

Any more qualifications than that was pushing my luck so with this limited minimum requirement from a captain I often held my own counsel, smiled, kept my sharp tongue in check and all hours of the day and night tried to help and not groan. Without question I put up with the many quirks of a boat, mentioned by Alexandra; Trickleing showers, heeling, cramped quarters with the ensuing lack of privacy and even my turn in the hell hole that is cutely named "the galley". This was not done to impress the captain but generally I gave what I would one day like to see in my own crew members.

It was astonishing to me how many marriage proposal this behaviour elicited. Also how truly blind can be a lonely man on a boat. Although I am a wiz in the galley and look and feel better with salty wind in my hair and on my skin, as well as wearing swimmers instead of dirty work clothes, I am anything but a longsuffering, obedient sailor with a sunny disposition and ability to entertain through conversation. I am, in my own space, a downright moody, troublesome female dog at times and have NO tolerance for being ordered about.

As I learnt to operate my own yacht I sailed less and less on other yachts. Over the years of feeling no need for a permanent partner, I had been endlessly amused, entertained and perplexed by solo yachtsmen. However after 8years or so my turn came. I became one of those solo boat owners dreaming about a life mate. Considering my odds were 99 men to every woman solo on a boat (or should that read 999 men to every woman?) I thought it wouldn't be long before someone suitable came along.

The biggest trouble I seemed to face is that all the men without exception seemed to think it only right and proper that I be the one to give up the dream of sailing my own yacht. After all, I was there as an answer to their dreams, wasn't I? Often they had no life outside of sailing so were limited in terms of worldly experience, social issues and interests. I knew I wanted half my time on the water and the other on fertile land flowing with lots of pristine freshwater. Therefore I am a woman of expensive tastes.

Perhaps men on land would be a better bet, I reasoned. Surely there were men ashore who not only desired, but were free to sail, which meant of independent means. More than that, they had to look good in swimmers be able to catch a feed not to mention be a great cook with an engaging sense of humour, and not feel threatened by my making the decisions on my own boat. Don't forget compassionate, spiritual and sensible with huge amounts of tolerance toward a woman who turns into a downright moody, troublesome she dog at times. He had to be sexy as hell as well. I did say at the outset I was 10 years solo. Surprisingly few men, I found ashore and even fewer on yachts.

Steffen had obviously been very impressed by my adopted attributes as a crew member as I had been of his sailing skills and we loved the magic of our sailing adventures. Out of the blue he asked me to seriously consider throwing in my lot with his. The silly, dear man phoned me after a 10 year absence in my life. After many searching questions which revealed some major changes we had gone through, I said 'lets go sailing'. Wow have we ever. Denmark, the Qld. coastline, Vanuatua, not to mention the Keppel Islands. (see article inside TCP).

Vicki J, SY Shomi

WOW! I knew Alexandra's story was hot but it appears to have touched buttons to an extent beyond my expectations. To be fair I think there is another category of solo sailor and that is the ones who came through a bitter and financially ruinous divorce to late in life to start over. Now those guys may be found up the mangroves somewhere, living on a small boat and pension. They might enjoy female company as long as the applicant is willing to pay the price of their predecessors transgressions and they can hang from the cabin sole when not in use because that is the only space left on his 24 foot boat. I guess the point I make is that there can be more to the solo sailor's story than meets the eye sometimes.

**Cheers,
Bob**

Hi Bob,

Thanks for a wonderful paper, always a great read. I thought I'll respond to 2 of the letters in TPC 34.

First to 'rubbish pickup' by Keith Owen. Enclosed photo we took in Sept. 2004 from same beach on the southern side of Thomas Is. It seems as if some rubbish was removed since, and more flotsam / jetsam & general STUFF got washed on the Island. We found it to be a general problem with most other southern anchorages we visited, that year and since, and almost all of it is foreign packaging. I would like to suggest that if the sailing / yachting / fishing community will make an effort to pick up some of this rubbish; i.e.. one rubbish bag per vessel, when encountering those remote beaches; than, taking it with them to a suitable dump or rubbish bin, we'll have a much better chance of reducing this environmental / pollution / visual problem. I believe that will be far more effective than the expectation that some suitable government department, council, Fisheries or Parks will do it for us. If we don't like it, we should do something about it, it's hard to imagine that someone else will. By the way, we met Keith, Pattie & Su-chi (the cat) on the southern anchorage of Thomas Island in Sept. 2000. We were on our first foray to the Whitsundays on our R.L 24 *Geronimo*, and they were (I believe) on their maiden voyage on *Speranza*. We had some lovely time, having sundowners on *Speranza*, in a spectacular setting. We have fond memories of that evening, and generally follow *Spearza's* adventures and Keith's musings in the TCP'. So hello from us in the little orange TS *Geronimo*.

On Vitamin C and snake bite...

The following should be regarded as information and not medical advice.

Secondly, to Julius of MV *Nova Keria*, re. snakebites & Vit C. The '50 mg' is a spelling mistake, and should read 50 gram or 50,000 mg. 50 mg (which you will get from about 1 & half good quality, tree ripened oranges) is a minimal amount, not much more than you need on a daily basis to prevent scurvy. 500 / 1000 mg orally will act as a preventative for colds / flu's if taken on a daily basis from autumn to spring. If you get sick, you need appreciably higher daily doses.

The ability to ingest Vit C, is limited by bowel tolerance, which for most adults kicks in at about 5,000 - 15,000 mg. With the resultant heavy dose of the runs. So when a condition calls for much higher doses of Vit. C, (as in severe / acute illness or poisoning) the only way of administration is intravenously, thereby circumventing the digestive system, and preventing a gut reaction.

I hope this clear the issue for you.

**Cheers,
Ada & Charlie TS Geronimo**

Greetings Geronimo,

Thanks for the great letter and I think you are right that we shouldn't expect room service! So.. I gave it a little thought and sent an email to parks. I got a response and I think we are going to work something out.

So... Lets Help! We are currently in discussion on how to provide bags for yachts to collect rubbish from those beaches and find drop-off points that best suit the fleet. Besides getting rid of the rubbish, a friendly working relationship with Parks and the cruising fleet could have other benefits in future. Cruisers are generally green so this may be a good thing! Expect details in next edition.

Great info on the Vit C... And of course... thank you for the kind words. they are appreciated.

**Cheers,
Bob**

More LETTERS



Hi Bob,

Living on a rural property we have only just found out about the sad passing of our old mate Geoff. He was an indomitable spirit, an inspiration to us and we can only echo the heartfelt thoughts and tributes of others. Unique is a much abused word but to us Geoff personified it.

He was our guide in the novice years and the first voice we heard returning from the Louisiades at dawn in Hydrographer's Passage. We heard Geoff and all was well with the world.

Our visits in person are something we will always treasure. When Geoff went into hospital a few years back a group of yachties got together in the North Queensland Yacht Club at Bowen and produced a gigantic card with all our 'get well' thoughts and creative artwork.

He told us later that the nurses in the hospital would look at that card and the many others and ask, 'Who are you?' Well we knew, lest we forget you Geoff

**David Daniel & Heather Krebs,
'SV 'The Catch'**

Greetings David and Heather,

Thanks for your letter. Yes, we agree the gentleman was unique. With your cartoonists skill I bet that was a very entertaining card. We received several letters and quite a few phone calls regarding Geoff from people who had known and appreciated this extraordinary gentleman. A remark I particularly recall was from a sailor who had not known Geoff but was so taken with the accounts that were published in last edition the he admitted being touched by their words and feeling the loss somewhat by osmosis. Words from the heart are that powerful.

**Cheers,
Bob**

Regarding The Burnt Hills of Macona Inlet (TCP 33),

This year marks the start of my twenty eighth year sailing the Whitsunday Islands and I have seen a lot of changes here, not all for the good. One thing I have often remarked on to visitors though is the amount of undergrowth that has spread over the islands in that time.

I know QNPWS doesn't really want people wandering around off their own little walking paths for various reasons, but lets face it, having an island to explore used to be great fun.

In the early days we were encouraged to be responsible with fire and there were even proper fireplaces on several islands where one could burn freshly caught fish or wallaby. Now, gathering wood for a fire is seen as destroying breeding habitat for, well, things that breed in old pieces of wood I suppose.

However, back to QNPWS burning off on the islands. Recently I went for one of my little wanders around Nara Inlet for the first time since parts of that area were burned off. Wonder of wonders, it is now possible to actually explore a few of the old spots we used to visit back in 'ye olde days'. The combination of the burn off and a pretty dry season has opened up the bush so it is now more like the open wooded forests that Cook described as covering the islands on his journey through the Whitsunday Passage.

To quote from Cook's journal *"The land, both on the Main and Islands, especially on the former, is Tolerably high, and distinguished by Hills and Vallies, which are diversified with Woods and Lawns that looked green and pleasant."* Reading this and comparing it to what we see in the national parks, I should think the mainland could do with a fire or two as well.

Once in a while the undergrowth has to be cleared. I haven't been to Macona since the burn, because I have been too busy exploring the hills around Nara Inlet since then, but with any luck Macona will be just now starting to look wonderful. I am looking forward to finding a few of the old walks and lookouts we used to be able to visit.

One quote suggests of the local Aboriginal people *"The Ngaro actively managed their environment through CONSTANT burning, and conservation practises. Burning allowed easier access through otherwise dense rainforest, promoted new growth and stimulated animal activity."* I imagine running like hell from the flames would constitute activity. Anyway, all I can say to QNPWS is 'go for it' light up a few more islands and let the bush breathe again.

As for not allowing visitors to light fires in national parks. I recently picked up a public mooring off Henning Island while waiting for entry to Hamilton Island. As I was arriving, some people in a large tinny were leaving. One of the last things they did before they left was to pour sand over a large fire they had lit in the camping area there - right next to a big sign telling them that they should not light fires....After they left, the fire was still burning nicely around the sand.

**Ross Devitt
Shute Harbour**

Thanks for your letter Ross,

This letter was received on the eve of publication of TCP # 34 but notified the writer it was in the hopper for next edition. .

Thanks Bob,

Just thought you might like the other view. If you cruised the Whitsunday's back in the 80's when it was possible to hike up to the rest of the Aboriginal caves and to some of the more outstanding lookouts around Nara and Macona you will understand what I am getting at.

The undergrowth has run wild in the last 25 years. Thick vines and creepers and grass that never used to be there as well as many young trees crowding out the forest.

I will check Macona next time I have a chance. Since the Nara fires I've been having too much fun poking around the old haunts there. And at December 2009 unless you knew the fires had been lit in Nara you would hardly know it - except that the bush looks much more natural now.

**Cheers,
Ross D**

Great e-magazine - I read it avidly.

One topic I do not see discussed often if at all, is how other cruisers wash clothes etc. when on extended blue-water cruises.? Naturally, marina users make use of shore facilities, but what is the situation when in transit 2000 miles from the next port of call? I have heard of everything from a Fisher & Paykell washer powered by an engine alternator, to a plastic rubbish bin loaded with clothes and soap towed in the wake for an hour or so.

I would be interested in hearing how your readers cope, short of ditching smelly gear overboard!

**Kind regards,
Doug Hutcheson**

Greetings Doug

For our part.. one thing good about cruising in the tropics is the laundry problem is of less consequence! In fact I know boats where the problem is strictly a seasonal one as clothes are only worn on the coldest days of winter (25 degrees and below) or for those forays into civilisation for provisions. So, ours was a paint bucket with sea water for overnight soaking and then a quick fresh water wash and rinse with least water possible. Marinas were the place of indulgences of course.. then we would use the laundromat like everyone else. That's how we did it but.. what are the other ways?? Lets hear from boats out there...

**Cheers
Bob**

Hi there,

I was reading (with amusement) the cockroach story over in your "fun" section (TCP website). Having battled the little critters most of my natural born life (born and raised in Louisiana) - I immediately saw the problem these poor folks had.

To put it simply, the roaches were hanging out in all the gear they removed from the boat. The bug bombs killed everything ON the boat, but when they put their stuff back they simply moved in again. I wanted to reply to them, but I didn't notice an email link.

**Cheers,
Dallas Babineaux**

Greetings Dallas

Always good to hear from the other side of the pond. That article was in TCP # 19 and stirred up a good response from readers. Bob Buick of SV Bonaventure came up with the answer for the problem. In addition to your point, which is probably correct, he instructed to use a paste of boric acid and glycerine shoved into corners and dark places. The roaches like the sweet taste but the boric kills them later. It works for ants as well. Bob said he gained the insight in Cyprus so the word goes round the globe.. just like it should.

**Cheers
Bob**



Hey, that's our old boat on the cover of TCP!

Hi Bob,

Love reading The Coastal Passage.

We are half way round the globe in Turkey and it keeps us in touch with what happens in Queensland.

We sold *Vanda III* to Kay Ezzy in 2004 and I would like to make contact again.

Vanda III is a beautiful ketch and we loved her to death. She was built in Mackay to a design by Dick Zaal (Contest Yachts Holland) for Rowan Croker in Mackay and we bought her from him about 1995. You may be interested to know that the hull shape designed in the late 1970s was still current up to a couple of years ago in the Contest 42 CC, including the number and location of her ports. I have attached a copy of her under sail coming into Lizard Island in 2004(*see below*).

Apart from up and down the eastern sea board many times, we sailed her from Brisbane to the Louisiades and back in 2002 and from Brisbane to Darwin and back in 2004. She is an excellent sea boat and we found her very comfortable as a coastal cruiser for two although she was in survey with us for many years as part of our sailing school with an overnight approval for 6 plus two crew. With her swing keel raised she only draws about four feet, and she has huge storage and water capacity, in fact she can carry so much water (approx 1300litres) we never filled more than 3/4 capacity for fear of overloading the front of the yacht and making her a little bow heavy. Her forepeak is a workshop behind a watertight bulkhead, and this makes her saloon design unique for a yacht.

Keep up the good work

Many thanks,
Robin Roots

Thanks Robin..

Message forwarded as asked. She is a lovely vessel and I am particularly fond of a ketch rigged cruiser. . sorry we missed you at Lizard in 04. That was the year of the big Olympics.. really good! See the web site "fun" page for the report and gallery.

**Cheers
Bob**



More LETTERS

Cruising Kids!

Dear Bob,

I am undertaking a research project into 'yachties' who have already opted to home school their kids on board; or are looking to do so in the future. Whilst travelling throughout SE Asia for the past two years I was astounded by the resilience, knowledge and social development of some of kids I met who were schooled aboard and want to look at reasons for the difference between these and 'mainstream' suburban kids. This study may also benefit cruising parents who are still in decision mode. I am happy to share my findings with all participants and of course with Coastal Passage. Anyone interested in participating in this study can contact me at:

tientos_darwin@hotmail.com

Cheers,
Lea Pennicott, SY Tientos
Darwin

Bob's note: TCP did ask how the information would be used and Lea's response is below.

Hi Bob,

Initially this will be a Master's research paper which I intend to expand upon for my PhD. Aside from the academic publication, I foresee informative publications for both parents considering this option and for state governments in enabling the provision of homeschooling options.

Cheers,
Lea

From Natasha & Matthew:



Hi everyone!

We now walk 17kms over a 5 day week to and from the school. That's 6520 steps each day (In the heat rain flash flooding or cyclones)

Dad walks 34kms as he has to go to the school twice.

Our day starts from getting ready after breakfast to returning home and doing homework average 50 hours in a 5 day week, compared to our home schooling of about 20 hours and no travel.

Just thought we would share it with you all.

Matthew and Natasha, SY Kalida

(PS from senior crew)

PS: On the first day of school the teachers gave the children homework and one of the questions was; "Write down one of the best things that happened today"?

Both children said taking their shoes off!

The Last Days and the Best Days of Empress

The extraordinary response to the letter in last edition from Bob Critchly, responding to Bev Alexander from TCP 32, makes a dramatic case for how much passion and love people develop for certain vessels. I have included most letters below (regrettably a couple were missed in the editing), to illustrate that point and because recollections vary. But this is not a science quiz so the facts may not be as important as the passion.

G'day Bob,

Perusing the latest edition of TCP, I noticed a letter from Bob Critchley (G'day Bob) about the lovely old Norman Wright gaffer "Empress", written in response to Bev's request for information.

Sadly, I must report that "Empress" was lost in the storms at Airlie Beach last February, having been driven onto the rocks and smashed to matchwood by the surf.

I also had a personal association with "Empress" through Ian and Viv Woods, who bought the boat in Bowen around 1980-82. Although she had obviously been well-loved, she had some structural problems, the most serious being the leaky centreboard case, which caused her to make water when underway - alarmingly so when beating!

Ian and Viv began a restoration project on her - more a labour of love I guess, which included removing the centreboard and installing a full length keel and shoe for shoal-draught work, refastening the hull, installing the rakish saloon cabin to allow standing headroom for cruising, and refitting the interior. Over the period of their stewardship, I don't think there was any part of the hull, mechanicals, spars, rigging and sails that they didn't either refurbish or replace.

They cruised the east coast extensively during the 80's from the Whitsundays to southern NSW and far north Qld., and I believe that they even sailed as far as the Louisiades, but I am not certain of this. I, sadly lost track of Ian and Viv after they sold "Empress" and moved to Sydney. The last I heard, one or both of them had moved to the southern NSW coast.

Subsequently, "Empress" had several owners. Russell Hubbert sailed her for a number of years, and was probably the owner when Bob took his photo (TCP34) in 2000. Russell and Claire are still here in Airlie and they can probably provide details of her more recent history. I also believe there may be photos of her on the history wall of Port Denison Sailing Club in Bowen.

Bob, I hope this is of assistance. I would be happy to provide any further details I have. Keep up the good work...

Regards,
Jim Hayes

Hi Bob,

Empress I believe to be a vessel wrecked last year in the Feb storm in Airlie. Not sure of the real story but this appears to be a vessel I walked passed many times in edges boat yard. There was I family of 6 I believe. I can not recall their names. They were living on the vessel for several months before it was lost to the rocks next to Coral Sea Resort. The vessel was in very poor condition but I believe this was the vessel that some are looking for in the latest TCP not sure if this info helps.

If you or whoever is looking for the vessel needs more assistance please ask.

Peter Johnson

The vessel EMPRESS saw its last day on the 12/2/08. It was washed onto the rocks just near Coral Sea resort at Airlie Beach in a bad



John Champion Photo



Ann's Photo

storm....there was very little left. I have attached a picture taken 2 months prior. Hope this gives closure.

Ann

Giddy Bob,

Thought I could fill in some gaps on the history and final fate of the lovely 26ft gaff cutter Empress built by Norman Wright in 1926. I had the pleasure and privilege to live aboard Empress of Airlie for three years and became well acquainted with her history. With great regret I must let you know she was wrecked in the Whitsunday's storm of February 11th 2008. However the true story of her fate relates to the valour and heroism shown by local police to rescue her last owners and their miraculous escape.

Empress was originally named "Verona" and was commissioned by the people of Brisbane to present to Lew Twigg after he swam three miles to alert rescuers to his yacht capsize. I believe Lew Twigg was either harbour master or a pilot of the Brisbane port. 500 pounds were raised via a Courier Mail subscription and Norman Wright was asked to provide a day sailer suited to Moreton Bay conditions. I have been told this was N Wright snrs. penultimate boat (?) and there was a half size model of the vessel decorated the shipyard offices as much pride was taken in her design and build. I am not familiar with N Wright's history but I am sure they can clarify any of this. She had a drop keel fitted and lacked the cabin top seen in the tcp photo of her at Armit island. The drop keel was later replaced by G Hawkes in Airlie Beach circa 1970 and a hard wood skeg fitted. The main boom and rig had been reduced over the years in acknowledgment of her age but she could still turn a pretty 8 knots with no effort at 80years. She was a relic of a golden age of sailing on Brisbane waters in the tween war years and the boom times of the late twenties before the great depression. I believe she was the oldest sailing Wright's boat left, now to Josh and Sirius j I think, although I would love to know if there are any other Wright's boats of this era still alive. She would have made a sight with her main boom hanging 8ft astern and a cloud of bloopers and staysails and topsails aloft wafting through Moreton Bay, what a loss to Queensland boat building history her destruction brings. The boat only changed hands half a dozen times in her life which shows how much regard each of her owners had for her.

In response to Bev Alexander and her query, I can't say where Empress was during Ada. She came north and was "of Bowen" then "of Airlie". Almost wrecked in 54 in a Bowen blow, holed amidships and repaired. I wonder where a vessel the size of Empress would have to be to ride out Ada?. She was the first yacht registered with the NQCYC and proudly flew NQCYC1 while campaigning in racing events and was a consistent performer. Then came south to Airlie around 30-35 years ago where she finished her time just below the coral seas jetty where thankfully Omra, Ange and crew were rescued by police risking their lives in the surf to reach the stricken yacht. Of all the boats lost that night and harrowing stories from feb 11th the loss of Empress was perhaps the saddest in terms of what cannot be replaced. I saw another of her ex owners on the beach there the next day also come to pay his last respects to a grand old lady of Queensland yachting, hard to see her gone.

I wonder if Bev is the granddaughter of Greg Cavell of breakfast creek hotel fame. I meet Greg one occasion aboard Empress. He owned the boat during and after world war two. He was in Airlie and wanted to see his old boat again. He was in his own words an OBE (over bloody eighty!) and shared a beer and a yarn about old days in Brisbane sailing the boat. Another example of how fond people were of her. I know Greg would be another saddened by her loss.

Kind Regards,
Matt Fetzer
PS: Thanks very much for TCP Bob great mag.

Hi,

The yacht Empress as pictured in your latest edition is no more. She was destroyed in the Feb 08 storms in Airlie Beach. Washed up just west of Coral Sea resort. Her owners were rescued by Water Police minutes before the end. Sorry.

Regards,
John Champion

Thanks John
Great photo, pretty informal sailing.
Cheers
Bob

LETTERS

Hi Bob,

Empress 1927 – 2008

I am writing to fill in the last piece of your puzzle about the yacht Empress (Bev Alexander's letter TCP #32 and Bob Critchley's letter TCP#34). Unfortunately it has a sad ending.

My family and I bought Empress around 1997 and started the long process of restoring her at Airlie Beach. The work we carried out on her was complete by the time Bob took the photo of her, while we were staying at Armit Island (TCP#34). We sailed her extensively during the five years of our custodianship, including sailing her to Armit in 2000 and 2001. We have a lot of fond memories from those times. I also met Betsy Hansen when she was writing her book and provided her with information and photographs of Empress. I sold Empress in 2002 to a lady called Kate, who continued with further improvements to her. Sadly Kate's work commitments left Empress alone for long periods. She was eventually sold to a family with three children who lived on her, anchored off Coral Sea Resort in Airlie Beach.

Unfortunately on Tuesday 12 February 2008, during the storm that wrecked or sank 38 boats at Airlie Beach, the family living on Empress were rescued from her only minutes before she was smashed on the rocks of Coral Sea Resort.

Members of the Arlie Beach community, my wife and I picked up all the pieces of Empress and other boats from the Coral Sea Resort Beach on the clean up day that followed. It still brings tears to my eyes. I kept a couple of pieces of her as keepsakes, with the permission of the family who owned her, including part of the transom with the name Empress. These are the only remnants of a beautiful old boat in which generations of North Queenslanders appreciated the joys of sailing.

Regards

Russell Hubbert

Thanks Russell. As readers can see this

vessels and others like her leave an indelible mark on the coast they sail. These boats are more than sticks and screws. I am pleased to see the individual perspectives... in this venue these perspectives may be in conflict at times without losing any validity. She was certainly a "Good Old Boat" and no wonder that one of the best boating mags around carries that label.

And on the romance that these old boats impart;

An excerpt from; BY WAY OF CAPE HORN,
Alan Villers

"There is little man has made that approaches anything in Nature, but the sailing ship does. There is not much that man has made that calls to all the best in him, afterwards; but the sailing ship does. There is little man has done, these modern years of rush and nerve-rack when beauty is sacrificed to useless hideousness and art to the monstrosity of the daubers, when books are churned out as soullessly as the presses that print them, and the theatre is given up to bawling shadows there is little that man has to inspire generations, and carry on the loveliness and sweetness of glorious and efficient beauty."

"The sailing ship does these things; old, and battered, and sea-worn, and a little unsafe too, if one is frank about it, as the *Grace Harwar* was that voyage, there was an inspiring loveliness and a grand pursuit of difficult and dangerous duty about her, and loyal devotion, and steadfast, noble carrying-on through all obstacles and despite all difficulties, that lifted one completely from the misery of the sodden gale and compensated a million-fold for whatever hardships there might have been associated with it."

Cheers
Bob

Bob,

Alan Lucas couldn't find the wreck of a claimed galleon at the Gold Coast, but there's more compelling evidence that the

Portuguese sailed down Australia's east coast hundreds of years before James Cook. This includes a fishing net sinker turned up in 1976 by environmental scientists taking core samples at the southern end of Fraser Island. At 2.2m they found a 120g lead weight, 6cm by 4cm, with a hole drilled through it. Employing radio isotope analysis, they traced the lead to southern France. Such lead was commonly used at that time by French, Portuguese and Spanish fisherman. Chemical analysis showed the pumice stone in which the weight was lying was washed up on Fraser Island between 1410 and 1630 - at least 140 years before Cook was there.

This story is in the book *Beyond Capricorn* by Peter Trickett that challenges historical accounts of Dutch and British discoveries of the east coast. As Allan Lucas does, Trickett refers to the work of Collingridge and McIntyre, as well as Lawrence Fitzgerald. He says their views were ignored because of, for among other reasons, ingrained opposition then to any suggestion that early discoverers were other than the Dutch and, of course, the British.

As well the Portuguese were very secretive, as their objective was to corner the fabulously rich spice trade - and any other treasures that might be found in this area. But for his research Trickett, himself a recreational sailor, turned to the Vallard Atlas, rather than British sources. Comprising 15 maps drawn in the 16th century, they show all the Portuguese voyages of that time, and are in the Huntington Library, Los Angeles. They were largely ignored, even scorned, by other researchers, for a couple of reasons, including they are read upside down: Like some other atlases of the period, south is at the top of the page. But Trickett also found that three "turn overs", or page joins, of the A3 sized sheets had been misplaced. With these adjustments he found "an astonishing wealth of accurate (Australian) coastal detail ... liberally bestowed with Portuguese-origin placenames". Two British historians, Thomas Phillipps and Richard Major, had noted the similarities with the Australian coastline in the 1850's, but had not recognised the displacement that Trickett picked up.

For those of us cruising the Australian coast, this is an especially fascinating book.

Rowland Hill

SV Stoli

Dear TCP,

I am not cruising as yet but love to read the stories and articles in TCP.

I do share the passion for 'messing around in boats' and envy you guys who make it part of your lifestyle.

I also dream of one day unshackling the ties to shore based life and take to the water. At the moment part of that dream is reviewing the classified ads for a boat. Currently I am looking at a Martzcraft 35 and was wondering if there is anybody out there that could help with some 'inside' information about these boats.

Thanks for listening, hopefully here from you soon.

Alan Booth

Lake Macquarie NSW

TCP was able to put Alan in touch with Brent Martz, who better to advise... But it is a good inquiry to make in general.. TCP would like to hear from sailors of this remarkable vessel. I know almost all of them are still around.

Cheers,

Bob

Cyclone Ada, settling facts...

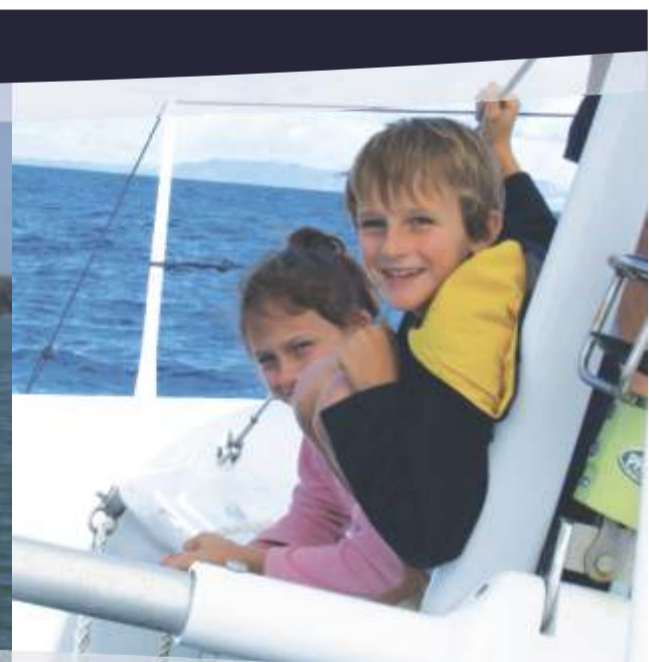
In TCP # 30 Alan Lucas referred to some common historical errors about the event. So.. Alan has been investigating and here is the update for those interested parties;

Hi Bob,

Have tracked down information about Cyclone Ada. Whoever thought that a cruise ship took guests off Hayman Island after the cyclone was right, however she and *HMAS Lae* merely transhipped them to nearby *Clutha Oceanic* the bulk ore carrier that then delivered them to Cleveland bay where I was involved in their final transhipment into Townsville. As for the 13 dead the correct figure appears to be 14 and I was certainly wrong about them all occurring in Nara Inlet

Cheers,

Alan



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By Bob Norson

In the February issue of Cruising Helmsman, page 6, there is an article that refers to emails sent to www.noonsite.com from "a Queensland marine writer" concerning the Customs incident at Bundaberg with the vessel *Friction*. There is only one such article on that web site and it is signed by yours truly of The Coastal Passage. The article contained errors of fact that should be addressed.

For example, Cruising Helmsman stated that "The writer inferred that part of the reason for the search may have been because the owner's wife was Columbian". Absolutely false. No such remark or inference was made.

Your editor did not state that the crew of the vessel *Friction* were "prevented from filming or photographing the search", as stated in the article. How could they? They were not on the boat! What was clearly stated in the notice provided for www.noonsite.com was that the local TV station did cover the incident (an important point ignored in the CH article) showing some of the damage and disarray of the interior after the search.

The claim made in the Cruising Helmsman article that the *Friction* crew made "no complaint" is inaccurate. They complained to the TV station, they complained to the police, they complained directly to the customs and immigration officials involved, and they complained to TCP. The report in Cruising Helmsman excluded all that and other information on the report on www.noonsite.com that didn't support the view of their sources, whom may have had vested interests to protect.

No comment was sought by Cruising Helmsman from TCP or the *Friction* crew.

TCP finds the quote in the article attributed to L. Grimminck that "For every bad story there are 100 positive stories, and it is a shame these are never printed," is an inference of unfairness directed at TCP. If that is the case it is certainly false. TCP has printed pages of positive reports by cruisers satisfied with their experience with Customs. TCP is informed that L. Grimminck is a former Quarantine agent (TCP sought confirmation or denial of this by email but have not received a reply).

The Coastal Passage stands by the facts as reported and always has. See below, the complete, unedited emails sent to noonsite. Decide for yourself who has the facts right!

Sent 31 October 08, 07:22 AM

Greetings Noonsite

Yesterday I received two reports of a new tactic from Australian Customs. I received an email reporting a boat that landed in Brisbane was ransacked by customs after ordering the crew to leave the vessel. Dogs and teams of personnel taking turns.

Then a phone call from a TCP contributor and volunteer working with the Port 2 Port rally in Bundaberg, the vessel "Friction" was given the same treatment.

This vessel reported extensive damage to the vessel and personal property as a result.

A powerful personal story here as the vessel left Australia 9 years ago and enroute the skipper met a new bride in Columbia. She was particularly traumatised as she had fear of police and authorities in Columbia but was reassured by her new husband that things were different in Australia.

One other boat in the fleet that came in with the rally was searched this way as well but do not have the particulars yet.

Most reported a thorough search but courteous treatment otherwise. Some were selected at random for this.

The officer in charge of the search that caused this latest controversy is the same individual that processed the Manzari's.

The incident was reported last night on a local TV station. In response to the inquiry by Channel 7 news team, Customs promised that they would pay for damage to personal property and to repair the damaged electronics on the vessel.

No contraband was reported found in any of these searches.

Quotes from the Channel 7 Local News, Oct 30 08

It's been 9 long years since David Morrow left Australia and this is the welcome he got.

"The cupboards were emptied out, the beds were upturned and the electrical wires were pulled out."

Mr. Murrow says, "customs officers treated me like a criminal", ordering him from his home and sending two sniffer dogs in, his boat was searched for more than an hour by three teams of inspectors and they left virtually nothing untouched. His wife's prescription glass's were broken, personal items damaged and electrical equipment unresponsive. Altogether thousands of dollars damage.

"The upshot is it is probably worse than that, my wife has been sick following along this."

Now he wants an explanation; "They had an attitude that it wasn't a problem, wasn't a big deal."

Port to Port volunteers say it is not an isolated incident, Chris Ennor says Australia has a terrible reputation among boaties who often by-pass us to avoid trouble.

"I'm just terribly embarrassed and it makes me angry because I'm a very proud Australian."

Later this afternoon after being contacted by 7 local news, Australian Customs said it would repair the owners glasses and electrical wiring but Customs says the origin of the damage to the vessel is still unknown.

TCP contacted David Morrow about the Cruising Helmsman article but he hadn't seen it so couldn't make comment. Because comments in the Cruising Helmsman article attributed to a Port 2 Port rally official were very supportive of local Customs officials, TCP inquired how the Rally organisation and participants reacted to the *Friction* crew regarding the incident. "Normal boaty support," from participants and volunteers said Dave. He explained how volunteers helped comfort his wife Sonia and other crews were sympathetic. As far as the rally organisation, "they didn't want to know about it, like it didn't happen." He went on to speculate it had to do with the marina management that he described as "extremely unhelpful", and that may have been worried about negative impacts on business due to the publicity of the incident. Dave Murrow described the manager, Geoff Beyer as "antagonistic" toward him. Mr. Beyer's concern for loss of business due to publicity of the incident was expressed to TCP at the time.



Dear Bob,

Thank you for the fantastic, honest and open approach in the articles concerning customs/quarantine attitudes and methods with arriving yachts.

While we have no personal factual story of interest fortunately, I have been privy to many discussions prior to and since your last few issues, so just want to offer moral support.

Many yachtmen, especially European, that we talked with crossing the pacific this past year have excluded Australia from their itinerary citing the heavy handed attitudes in general in Australia versus the welcoming nature elsewhere (except maybe Fiji recently).

Over the past eleven years we have sailed to just over 60 countries and just want to advise Australians that not only is this the most expensive country by far to clear into, but also was the biggest worry of possible huge fines from the many strict rules and regulations on sailing vessels. Many arriving Australians that I have spoken with have also experienced this control freak, penalty mindset and unnecessary heavy handedness over what I consider one of the most well intentioned segments of society boaties!

We enjoy and admire Australia and hope to extend our stay and your paper is comforting to know that these issues are being highlighted towards possible change of methods too protect and promote fairness for everyone.

Regards,
George Philips

TCP note: One of the great losses to Australia because of this border paranoia, is the reduction in mingling of foreign sailors. Without a point to compare some Aussie sailors may conclude that our Custom's style of heavy handed bureaucracy is normal! When of course it is not. Internationally, Australia is becoming a destination suited only to those with a strange sense of adventure and plenty of money but too risky for many. Entering Australia may be perfectly harmless, though expensive, but you could be that "1 in 100". Thanks for the kind words George.

Bob,

It was interesting to read the letter from Alan Lucas concerning the location of the Brisbane "Port of Entry".

It is added to by the fact that the big yellow quarantine sign still exists on the Manly Harbour breakwater (December 2008).

The Queensland Government - Notices to Mariners which I understand is the official "legal notice" still features a 2005 notice as yet unsurpassed that states Manly to be the point of entry.

http://www.msq.qld.gov.au/resources/file/eb07150d637c725/Pdf_ntm_048_2005.pdf

In fairness the customs website does state Rivergate Marina is the "Boarding Station for Arrival". Unfortunately for unsuspecting visitors who have absolutely no idea where that is the waypoint Latitude: 27 deg 27.6'S Longitude: 153 deg 11.6'E given is for, you guessed it Manly.

You could click on the link to Rivergate Marina and use the waypoint given there Latitude 27 deg 26.418'S Longitude 153 deg 06.518'E but then you would end up at the Northern Queensport Ferry, departure wharf for the Tangalooma Ferry.

Thank you for a good read,
Peter

From Bram Goedhart, skipper of Saluut and convicted criminal

Dear Bob,

I sailed from The Netherlands to Thailand and doing so I cleared in and out in about 20 countries. I never had a reception like I had in Australia. Normally Customs do introduce themselves when they come on board, in Australia the first thing they did was reading my rights without telling why.

Twelve hours before I entered the port of Brisbane I had contact with Customs and they ordered me to go to the quarantine jetty in Manly. They knew they had a catch and they did not tell the option to stay on sea and give notice 96 hours before entering,

I had to go to court and I was convicted. It was a pity for Australia and bad for me.

I had a lot of stress before the administration of justice and it did cost me money.

For Australia it was one more thing to make it less popular on the cruiser tam tam.

Recently I did hear worse things did happen afterwards to other cruisers. Among cruisers there is talk to compare Australia with 'Das Dritte Reich'

The time I was in Australia I made a tour and I came to like the people and the land. Please do not spoil your public relations with acting like cruisers are terrorist.

When a terrorist comes by plane and book a last minute you do not have 96 hours to check, do you really think terrorist do come on a slow sailing yacht?

Best regards,
Bram Goedhart
(Since Australia with criminal record)

TCP note: Bram's Saluut, was the second vessel prosecuted. What was especially unfair in Bram's case was that when he contacted Customs he could have stood off for the required time. Instead of advising him, Customs lured them in. Our thanks to Bram for staying in touch.

Why is Australia discouraging foreign tourists?

And Why is Queensland (“The Smart State”?) the Worst?

comment by Bob Norson

The World Knows

A quote from the Seven Seas Cruising Association, Commodores Bulletin (feb 09 page 9).; *“In the 46 countries we’ve visited in our ten years of cruising this (Australian) visa is by far the most difficult and costly we’ve encountered. The attitude conveyed by the rules and procedure is one of mistrust, bureaucracy and one-sided heavy handedness.”*

From the Sun Herald (May 4, 08); *“Boaties set Sail for NZ to Avoid Aussie Customs. Strict boating laws might be costing Queensland a fortune.”*

From Channel 7 local news, Wide Bay (Oct 30, 08); *It’s been 9 long years since David Morrow left Australia and this is the welcome he got.*

Mr. Murrow says, “customs officers treated me like a criminal”, ordering him from his home and sending two sniffer dogs in, his boat was searched for more than an hour by three teams of inspectors and they left virtually nothing untouched.

From a letter this edition (page 10); *Many yachtsmen, especially European, that we talked with crossing the pacific this past year have excluded Australia from their itinerary citing the heavy handed attitudes in general in Australia versus the welcoming nature elsewhere.*

Countries that remove crew from a yacht to be searched

Australia..

Yup, only us. TCP has never heard of another one. Have you? Please tell us if you have. This seems to be unique to Queensland so far.

According to the crew of *Iron Bark*, Cuba was more even-handed and politely insisted on crew accompanying any search.

MSQ adds their 2 cents worth of Trouble

TCP has been covering this issue since 2005. From edition # 15 page 14;

MSQ seeks to eliminate or restrict recreational vessels over 15 metres

“The information (supplied by MSQ) suggests that larger craft are often operated illegally, operating charter business’s while registered as a recreation craft and usually are hard to trace ownership when liability for salvage is required. It is also stated that there are 91 vessels (as of 2001) that have been identified as “abandon, wrecked or derelict vessels spread along the coastline. The common pattern with these vessels is that they are unregistered or inappropriately registered - for example, an ex-commercial vessel registered as a recreational vessel.”

TCP went on to refute every claim used to justify the program and alerted the fleet. TCP warned that this could be a very serious problem. The disappointment was that the boating industry and other media did little to assist. Entering Australia via Queensland in a 50 foot boat would take a brave skipper indeed. Entering craft are required to have the unique salvage/liability insurance upon arrival in Queensland waters. Even some Australian vessels, particularly ferro, find this difficult.

Why Entering Vessels Still need to Worry

Most of the rules that caused so much trouble are still on the books and new threats continue to be developed (the *Friction* style of search for example). Australian Customs Service has designed the rules to be discretionary, that is, an individual agent is not in a “must” do situation but a “may” do one.

An example of this is the letter published in TCP # 33 from Wendy of SV *Outsider*. Their experience with Mackay and Townsville Customs was excellent. Even though the vessels information to customs was very rubbery, not even sure of the port of arrival, Customs was satisfied because they had “tried their best”. That is in sharp contrast to the report of the vessel *Karma Winds* from TCP # 23. That vessel was one of the first to enter under the new 96 hour rule. It was by chance they found out about the new rule in the Louisiades and the skipper was able to have a German boat with sailmail forward their information to Customs. Skippers should read that story on the web (see *issues, customs, brutal*) to know what it “may” be like...

So entering Australia has better odds lately but the threat remains. No matter what you do, you may come to grief as a matter of random chance. Customs assertion that they “risk assess” every vessel is unbelievable. In the last several years, despite the extraordinary scrutiny applied to entering yachts, TCP knows of none charged with a crime more serious than failure to do the paperwork. But in Queensland, that’s serious!

An Inhospitable State of Affairs

By Chris Ayres

Oh, dear, why don't we just give up and surround the coast with razor wire and put up 'Keep Out' signs? Firstly, Customs at it again. Ordering owners of the aptly named yacht *Friction* off their vessel before according to a TV report, ransacking the vessel and according to a statement by the owners, apparently moving valuables from where the owners' had left them to another part of the yacht? Why? To destroy credibility of the witnesses not that they were there to witness anything it seems! Now, fly into to any major airport as did I last year and a more welcoming, helpful and professional group of people of Australian Customs would be hard to find. It seems we have a few rogues in Queensland like the characters that frightened the hell out of my partner and I when we were anchored off St Bees in the Whitsundays a few years ago. I looked up from having lunch to see six goons dressed in black in an unmarked RIB peering in through our port-light. I sent them packing and received a grudging apology from the then Minister. I worked for the same Public Service, as do these characters, prosecuting tax cheats. Somehow, we had the training and experience to discern the good guys from the bad. Certain Customs officers in Queensland seem unable to do this. No wonder they don't get the love and respect of yachties!

The 96 Hour Rule is always going to be a source of difficulty to all visiting yachts not equipped with \$10k satellite phones. Now those who enter with rally groups will of course have access to this equipment. For these few, the Rule can easily be complied with. God love the organisers, no one else will! But I feel it is also not only an imposition but a signal failure of Customs to rely on the over-worked and under-resourced volunteer services of VMR to act as de-facto communications officers for a department too incompetent to employ properly trained and equipped radio officers. Yes it is the question of training of these people that worries me. Did they receive their training from the Stasi or the CIA, I sometimes wonder?

And now, having entered Queensland, disposed of the extra flare required by NSW but not by Queensland, as we frantically search for somewhere to empty our bulging holding tank, careful to avoid those coloured patches of water on the charts (but strangely not on the ocean like the yellow roads of road maps that are always black when you drive on them) that proclaim a financial death penalty for anyone even thinking about fishing, trying to work out why AMSA have given our EPIRB a different number and expiry date from our MIMSI number and from the expiry date on the device, we now have to check the length of our vessel to see if we need 'extra' insurance for pollution or abandonment of our dearly loved vessel under that favourite piece of legislation of mine the TOMPA 1995 now welcome Section 67A. Fortunately for most of us, most insurance companies will cover this delightful legal peccadillo at no extra cost to our premiums. I am a great believer in insurance. And Insurance companies are the ultimate pragmatists. No doubt they haven't read the same stories Queensland legislators have found about thousands of yachts of 15 metres (but curiously none under?) or over being abandoned on pristine beaches throughout Queensland. But of course you can always apply for exemption under the four convoluted pages of regulation.

And here lies another problem for a visiting yachtsperson. Many but not all foreign yachts carry insurance. It is usually passage insurance and is unlikely to satisfy the full terms of Section 67A. There is also the point that 'foreign' yachts from other states may have difficulties depending on their insurer and remembering most policies are renewed annually and the terms and conditions offer changed year by year (now I told you the Insurance companies are the ultimate pragmatists didn't I?) what applies in NSW differs from Queensland. Vaguely I recall something in the Australian Constitution about “Section 109. When a law of a State is inconsistent with a law of the Commonwealth, the latter shall prevail, and the former shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be invalid. “. Hmm can't be serious can it now?

So what to do? You can't go fishing, you cant 'relax go sailing', you can't swim if the beach inspectors don't get you, the sharks and crocodiles will! Hide! Emigrate! Keep away! Go somewhere else! At least in South-east Asia, foreign yachts are welcome, the environment every bit as nice as Queensland and the food better. And if Men in Black do board your vessel you will know who they are, they will fly Skull and Crossbones, not sneak around in unmarked RIBS!

Chris Ayres Lady Lonsdale (and please Customs don't board me. I am a harmless old retiree ex teacher ex solicitor (please don't laugh - Human Rights yes *Human Rights!* - before my time in Tax) ex public servant with a dodgy heart!

If you have been told that Prosecuted yachts had a fair go, read this...

A critical issue against Custom's 96 hour protocol was the lack of notice of it's implementation. No one knew! In pursuit of information on behalf of the fleet TCP (Issue # 26) questioned Customs and received a statement by the Minister that the protocol had been “widely advertised”. TCP questioned that. In response to inquiry, a link to the following notice was provided. Below is a copy of the notice available only from (a rather obscure place in..) the Customs web site. This is apparently the equivalent of “widely advertised”. If you *had* seen this document would you have thought it was meant to apply to a yacht? Other information for entering craft on the Customs web site was incorrect and/or obsolete at the time of the early prosecutions. When New Zealand introduced their 48 hour rule they shipped pamphlets to marinas and ports all over the pacific to let people know. The early yachts weren't negligent, they just had no idea and had the bad luck to enter via Queensland. TCP received reports of yachts entering in other ports without compliance to the new rule and were not charged.

AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS NOTICE NO. 2005/31

Commencement of 96 hour Pre-Arrival Reporting

On 26 April 2005 Customs advised industry that from July 2005 vessel pre-arrival and passenger and crew reporting would be required 96 hours in advance of a vessel's arrival. It was also the intention that shorter periods would be prescribed depending on the length of the voyage.

Since the date of that advice the Minister for Justice and Customs has agreed with industry to seek a longer transitional period for the purposes of the Integrated Cargo System (ICS). The cut-over to the ICS is now planned to be 12 October.

In examining the legislative implications of this transitional period it is now apparent that requiring 96 hour pre-arrival reporting from July 2005 would need a series of amendments to be made to the Customs Regulations. In view of this Customs believes that matters will be simplified for industry if 96 hour pre-arrival reporting becomes effective from 12 October 2005.

A fact sheet on the ICS transitional arrangements is available at www.customs.gov.au, following the links to the CMR pages.

Customs is examining the forms currently used to supply vessel and crew pre-arrival information. Some rationalisation is necessary to ensure Customs continues to receive reports, on vessels in particular, required by it and other Government Departments. You will appreciate that information required on a vessel (such as ISPS and levy information) is substantially different from the information being collected through the (ICS) Sea Impending Arrival Report and the (ICS) Sea Actual Arrival Report. A further Australian Customs Notice will be issued giving details of a national simplified requirement. Until then the current Impending Arrival Report must still be lodged.

It is important to note that the Sea Impending Arrival report cannot be lodged in the ICS any earlier than 10 days before the expected arrival of the vessel.

For those companies reporting the Sea Actual Arrival Report on or after the cut-over date, the current arrival report, Form 5 Part One, will no longer be required to be lodged manually. From 12 October the manual lodgement of this form will cease.

The contact for these matters is Manager, Enforcement Operations on 02 6245 5431 or jennifer.robinson@customs.gov.au.

Brian Hurrell

National Manager

Enforcement Operations

CANBERRA ACT

The way the protocol was introduced should serve to demonstrate what the general approach was and is, to spring a sudden, unexpected and many would say, unwarranted demonstration of power.... like introducing a search routine as was demonstrated with the vessel *Friction*. **An entering yacht really cannot know what they may face.**

How The Coastal Passage Has fought to Improve Customs and a Progress Report

comment by Bob Norson

What Has Changed as a Result of TCP coverage?

Random Boardings of domestic vessels. Curtailed. No recent reports though coast watch flights continue to demand info via radio on a daily basis in some areas. This may also be improving and is being monitored.

Maximum 10 day notice. Result? GONE! TCP pointed out that sailing vessels often require more than 10 days for a passage and are not usually equipped to communicate on passage.

Strict notification requirements. The Fax, Phone or Email requirements were watered down to include messages left with marina staff or other third parties in recognition that yachts do not have commercial shipping type means of communication.

Strict ETA. Customs made to understand that sailing vessels do not have control over conditions and can not hold to a strict schedule.

Reliability of notification. After exposure in TCP that notice provided by yachts was not being forwarded to the nominated port of entry and arriving yachts were being threatened with prosecution, Customs addressed this embarrassing flaw and complaints of this have ceased so far.

Strict Port of Entry. According to reports from yachts, It is now apparently acceptable if yachts have to change entry port due to conditions in spite of not being able to notify customs of that until within communication range.

Attitude of agents. Agents that were once notoriously ill-tempered are now smiling and accommodating. TCP advises to smile back but remember Customs track record. The "*Friction*" incident indicates there may still be cause for concern.

The most important thing? Alerting Cruisers everywhere that our country is suspicious, heavy handed and costly to visit. With few exceptions, other Australian publications have ignored or even tried to hide or dispute that, perhaps on behalf of advertisers. Customs has disputed it but information received by TCP strongly indicates visiting yachts are down and they don't stay as long. **If the same energy put into the PR campaign to deny these issues, were directed at curing them we would all be better off. A few loose cannons in Customs are undoing the work of those that would improve the system and some short-sighted business interests fail to understand they can't hide the inconvenient truth.**

Regarding Customs, What TCP stands for

Facts! Reports made by TCP are carefully prepared and independent contribution is questioned.

Fairness! Anyone who says TCP does not publish positive accounts of dealings with customs is simply not telling you the truth. See TCP # 27 for the first bunch and a whole page in TCP # 29. The letter in # 33 was particularly good.

Every Sailor is Important. We have heard it said that Customs should not be criticised because only one in a hundred get abused. To that person or persons, how about 1 in 50? 1 in 10? What is the correct ratio before it becomes injustice? Tell us so we can start living *down* to your standard!

You aren't Alone with TCP. If anyone comes to TCP with a report of injustice, TCP will try to help. We are a community. It is not a matter between you alone versus the government. Secrecy in prosecution is the goal of every arbitrary government but the responsibility of the press is to inform. Does that mean TCP is pro boaty regardless? No! However, in none of the incidents with customs that has occurred since TCP has existed and reported, has contraband or other crime been reported as a factor. It has been a matter of bureaucracy.

What the crew of *Sohcahtoa*, the first vessel prosecuted, had to say about Australia

Here is an Ayn Rand quote from Atlas Shrugged that describes how I sometimes feel about our experience in Australia: "**Did you really think that we want those laws to be observed?... We want them broken... We're after power and we mean it... There's no way to rule innocent men. The only power any government has is the power to crack down on criminals. Well, when there aren't enough criminals, one makes them. One declares so many things to be a crime that it becomes impossible for men to live without breaking laws. Who wants a nation of law-abiding citizens? What's there in that for anyone? But just pass the kind of laws that can neither be observed nor enforced nor objectively interpreted - and you create a nation of law-breakers - and then you cash in on guilt.**"

A Customs Entry Alert

Update from the Vessel *Friction* of the recent Bundaberg incident

In a recent phone call with Dave Morrow, skipper of *Friction*, we discussed an anomaly concerning the search on entry in Bundaberg where he and his wife Sonia, were removed from the vessel during the search that caused such controversy (See TCP # 34). Working on the boat they discovered that Sonia's jewellery, that had been stashed in a particular place was missing from the usual spot but found later in "the back corner of a cupboard", like it had "been hidden".

Stuff Up or Set Up? This is speculation... What would happen if a party subjected to such a search as occurred with *Friction* discovered missing property (jewellery for example) after the search and made immediate complaint? Then how would it make the various parties look if Customs or police came aboard the boat and "found" the missing property on the vessel. No crime would have been committed. Customs would have appeared to be unfairly accused and the cruising community would have been painted as unreliable and prone to frivolous accusation. Regardless of motivation the result would be the same.

Lets Celebrate! Without Balloons!



Lyndie holding a small hawkbill turtle - she died here of starvation from rubbish ingestion. Lyndie says they find quite a few of these sick & dying turtles.

By Lyndie Malan

I have in front of me a photograph of a small dead turtle. She is 20 cm long, which means she would fit onto a dinner plate, yet this little creature, once she had died, was found to have 40 bits of rubbish in her stomach. She died a slow and painful death from starvation, as the bits of plastic rubbish slowly blocked her digestive system. The rubbish included ... Three of these bits of rubbish were those fashionably new stupidities the "Release into the air Balloon".

Nowadays, whenever someone dies, or is born, or has a wedding anniversary, the fashion of the people on the planet with more money than brains, is to release helium filled balloons. (Thousands of these things were recently released to raise awareness of child sexual abuse; one hundred thousand were released at the McCain and Palin Republic Convention in the US)

I have also watched turtles die slowly here at Keppel. (see photograph) The turtle in the photo was one of 17 that died in a two year period around the Keppel Islands mainly on Great Keppel Island, where I live. She was a hawkbill turtle, and all the vets,

and turtle experts that I phoned said "Oh, she probably has a gut full of fishing line and plastics, nothing you can do for her, put her in the shade to die".

So, the balloons go up, thenwhat? They of course burst, and fall back to earth, often into the oceans, where some unsuspecting turtle takes a nip which is a death sentence. Turtles have spines in their mouths and throats that stop slimy jellyfish from sliding out of the mouth, and unfortunately also prevents a turtle from "spitting out" an unwanted balloon, or plastic bag. These balloons are nothing more than aerial litter and should be illegal. Thousands of them were released at Steve Erwin's funeral. Crickey!! I wonder what he would have said about that.

Whatever happened to the great old fashioned notion of lighting a candle in remembrance of someone you loved, or wearing a flower on your lapel or even sitting quietly or saying a prayer? There are too many people on this planet and too many stupid balloons. I have been into the new "Balloons" Shop in town and told them about my reservations and they say, "oh the balloons are biodegradable", so will break down. This is not good enough. Human waste is far more biodegradable, so are tampons, or some plastic bags, but no one would suggest simply littering the oceans with them. The fact is, once the balloons have been released, they are at the mercy of the winds and are simply either land or sea litter.

NEWS!

Printable

Solar Power??

Breakthrough could see solar power revolution!

Our own CSIRO has devised a way to make solar panels like we print money. That is, the process in producing the plastic cash can be used to make a solar generating film.

According to a recent ABC report, the CSIRO conducted trials on a machine using technology already developed by CSIRO for the latest banknote production, that can print 200 metres a minute or 100 kilometres a day!

A CSIRO spokesperson said once the printable cells reach the market in about five years, the cells will probably be much more efficient.

The new type of cells can be made transparent. They could even be used over windows in homes. The ABC quoted Dr Gerry Wilson;

"You could obviously put them on the roof or any other solid frontage like walls and things like that," he said.

"But because we can lay down these polymer films with different thicknesses you could make them transparent or semi-transparent so even windows or architectural features like that could all be used."

And very relevant to boats, the films can be made to float on water. "These plastic films that we're making now also float you don't necessarily have to be constrained on putting them on land," he said.

"When you consider the amount of water we lose through evaporation on dams, wouldn't it be smart to put a whole heap of films on top of your dam."

Imagine a boat with a deck covered in low cost solar film. Or maybe sails made with the film... or no sails at all for power but for generation to run electric motors? This could profoundly change boat building and cruising.

Friends of Percy Island... It Is Time to Lend a Hand!

Dear Coastal Passage Readership:

During the second and third weeks in April, which includes the Easter break, we at Middle Percy Island are hoping to replace the roof on the Aframe in West Bay. We have just taken delivery of new second hand iron for the job. It was donated by Lendlease Caneland Shopping Town, prepared by Midcoast Plumbing & Roofing, stored at the Mackay Marina Boatyard, loaded at the Mackay Marina Mega Berth and delivered on the decks of Ruby Charlotte by Jon & Liz Hickling and crew. (All at no cost to us) Fixing screws and an assortment of other hardware have been donated by Ernst's dad who lives on the Gold Coast and operates a hardware wholesale supply agency.

We still need about 150M of 5x2 hardwood (36 x 4M lengths) and someone to bring it out to the island. The current purloins are only 4x2 and are badly bowed. We will leave them in place (as they have hundreds of items of memorabilia attached) and will install the new ones beside them. We also require approximately 80 of 6mm galvanized splice plates and 10mm fastening bolts to join the purloins together and a similar number of 6mm angle brackets and 10mm fastening bolts to fasten the purloins to the rafters. If these items have to be purchased new, they will cost approximately \$2500.00 (money we don't have)

So, Dear Coastal Passage readers, we invite your participation in this project as it is too big (physically and financially) for the small Middle Percy Island

community to bring to fruition without it. If you turn up in sufficient numbers, we will also take on a few other projects which may include; a new "Long Drop" toilet, a shower facility, fresh water piping works for the A frame and we might slap some iron on the boat shed.

We have had very fruitful discussions with National Parks / Marine Parks and we genuinely believe that they are striving

for the very best outcome possible within the sometimes draconian legislation under which they operate. We anticipate that 90% of the island will become National Park and the rest will be designated a Conservation Lease. This lease will include all of West bay in one section and the homestead and other infrastructure at the top of the island in the second section. We are hoping that the road that connects the two will also be included in the conservation lease so that dog owners can walk there dogs on the "Long Track" between the bay and the homestead.

There is now a well defined walking track that runs from the top of the bluff in the middle of Whites Bay which joins the airstrip road near Mount Armitage so we can now welcome visitors from Whites Bay during the northerly season as well now. The total length of the walk (one way) is 2.5km.

And finally, thank you to Coastal Passage editorial staff for your support and thank you to 100% of all the visitors to Middle Percy Island who have also given us marvellous support and encouragement during the last 6 months.

Cate, John, Ernst, Steve, Jeff, Katerina



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As Time Goes By

By Stuart Buchanan, SY Pluto

With crazily fluctuating fuel and food costs, worldwide economic turmoil, ever increasing traffic congestion, more and more bureaucratic restraints and the constant battle to adapt to new technology, it's often appealing to think of giving it all away and becoming a hermit on a deserted tropical island. Well, regular readers of *The Coastal Passage (TCP)* will be aware that Englishman Andy Martin did that in 1964 when he purchased the lease of beautiful Middle Percy Island 76 nautical miles south-east of Mackay. For 32 years, Andy was self-sufficient, growing his own fruit and vegetables, producing honey, eggs, goat meat and a foul tasting mead that could double for paint stripper.

He sold his excess produce to cruising yachties who called in to West Bay to experience the delights of the island and to leave plaques with their boat's name in the 'Percy Hilton', a large A-frame structure built beside the beach. Andy displayed and sold his produce there with an honesty box for yachties to leave their money. The Percy Hilton had a mezzanine floor almost covered with mattresses, where yachties could sleep in peace away from the sometimes uncomfortable swell that sweeps in to West Bay.

I first met Andy at Middle Percy in 1980 when my wife and I were lightkeepers at nearby Pine Islet. Andy was then an extremely fit fifty-three year old. He rarely wore anything but a brief pair of Speedos, which he even wore into Mackay on his infrequent trips to civilisation. On one trip to that then conservative city he was warned by police to "cover up" as he was a hair's-breadth away from indecent exposure.

Andy was extremely religious and believed that the end of the world was nigh. He told us that Middle Percy Island would be one of the few places on earth to survive and he, as a prophet from God, would feed and rule his followers in the Promised Land. There would be no doctors or lawyers in Andy's brave new world, because you see, Andy didn't like doctors or lawyers.

Andy's ramshackle homestead, built high on timber stumps, was 4 kilometres up a steep track from the beach. It was completely utilitarian, serving as a farmyard as well as a home. A dozen or so chooks and a few goats were always roaming around the kitchen. Birds flew in and out at will to nest on Andy's extensive book collection. During one of our visits to Andy's house a bird kept flying into a wall cupboard to steal peanuts from a bowl. Andy stood up, waited until the bird was in the cupboard, slammed the door shut and thumped the hell out of the door with his fist. He then opened the door; the bird, dazed and disorientated, took off like a rocket, but five minutes later it was back again.

We arrived at the homestead one day just as Andy returned from somewhere deep in the bush. His two Labrador dogs were panting with exhaustion, long trails of saliva hanging from their mouths.

"Come up and have a cup of tea," Andy said.

We walked up the stairs to the kitchen. Beside the old wood stove, which belched out clouds of black smoke, was an old metal bucket filled with water. The

dogs made for this and began frantically lapping up the water. Andy picked up a pot, scooped up some water from the same bucket and put it on the stove.

"This won't take long to boil," he said. "We'll have a cup of tea in no time."

Hygiene wasn't high on Andy's list of priorities.

One day Andy arrived unannounced at the lighthouse; he was carrying a large box of paw paws, limes, tomatoes and honey.

"I've brought over some fresh fruit and vegetables for you," he said.

"Oh, that's very kind of you Andy," I replied. "Thanks very much."

"Yes," Andy continued, "that'll be \$15.20."

We paid him what else could we do.

Although Andy was almost self-sufficient in the food line, the fortnightly lighthouse stores boat sometimes delivered items such as fuel and flour. His homestead was visible from Pine Islet lighthouse and on stores day if Andy wanted the stores boat to call he would hang two bedsheets from his verandah railing one bedsheets meant he didn't want anything.

To make communications easier, I arranged for an old two-way radio to be sent over to his island. The lightkeepers installed it for him and tuned it so he could call Pine Islet lighthouse. But Andy kept fiddling with the knobs until it was unworkable and eventually we reverted to the old bedsheets system.

Every so often, someone from a yacht would be captivated by the beauty of Percy Island. They'd abandon the yachting life to live with Andy. But there was no lolling around on Middle Percy. Andy saw to that. He would work them hard from morning till night six days a week. Saturday, Andy's Sabbath, was their only time off. Andy wasn't the easiest person to get along with and so most visitors didn't stay long on the island.

One female visitor had a terrible argument with Andy. She packed her two suitcases and walked down the track to West Bay hoping that some kind yachtie would take her to the nearest port. There were no yachts there, so she spent the night on the beach. Next day, as she was just about to swim 2 miles across the channel to Pine Islet lighthouse, she saw a dinghy heading towards the beach. It was Ted Myers, the Head Lightkeeper. Ted took her back to the lightstation, where she stayed until the lighthouse stores boat arrived the following week.

Andy had a few emus on the island, one of which he called his 'dancing emu'.

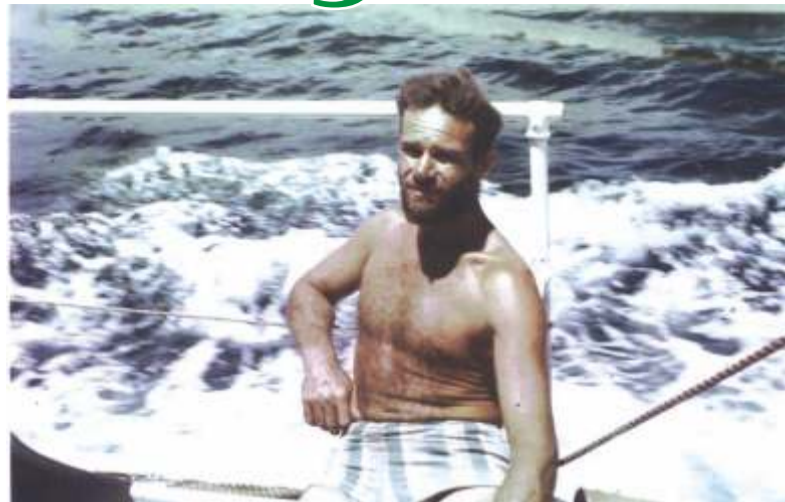
Andy would squat down on the ground with a bowl of seed in front of him. The emu would stroll over to the bowl and begin to eat. Suddenly, with one hand, Andy would grab the emu by its long neck, jump to his feet and hold the giant bird at arm's length. As the emu tried to break free, lashing out its huge powerful claws in an attempt to disembowel his captor, Andy would hop from one foot to the other while going around in circles, singing:

"Take your partner by the hand!"

Eventually Andy would release his grip; the emu would vigorously ruffle its feathers and disappear into the bush, while Andy rolled on the ground convulsed with laughter.

Another emu had the bad habit of trying to mount anyone who crouched down. One bloke who was staying with Andy, was bending over cutting firewood with a chainsaw, when the emu did his thing. The bloke got the shock of his life, stood up and quickly turned round, accidentally cutting off the emu's head with the chainsaw. Well, that's his story - and he's sticking to it.

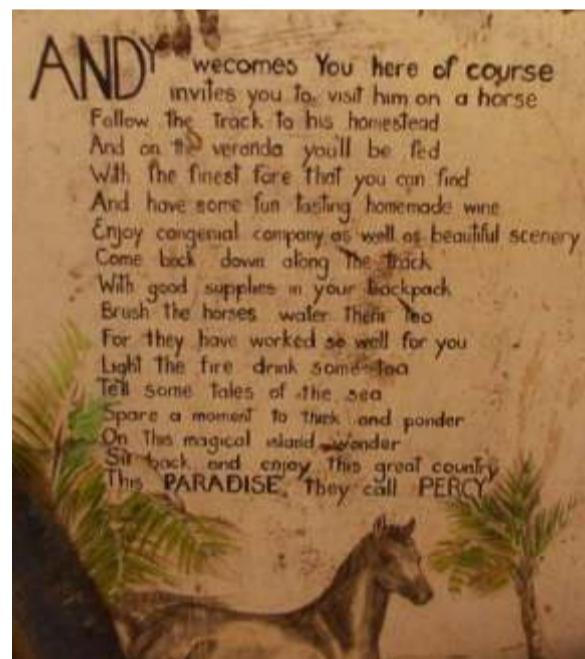
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Above: Andy in the early days aboard "Islander" and below, a photo with the two Chocolate Labradors that were pets of the island and a couple mates over from Mackay.



And below: a little message left behind at West Beach, Percy



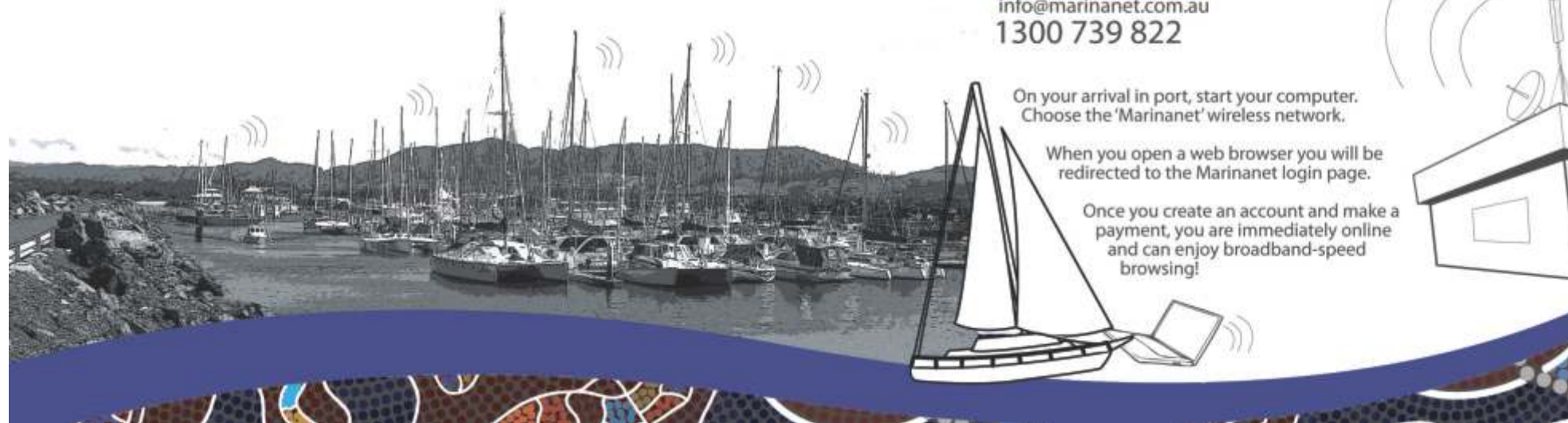
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As Time Goes By continued...

During one visit to Andy's, a young, refined and well-spoken couple arrived at the homestead. They told us they were returning to Sydney on a racing yacht that had taken part in the Hamilton Island Race Week.

"We've been told that you sell goat meat here," the young man enquired politely.

"Yes, that's right," Andy replied. "Would you like some?"

"Yes please," the young man and woman said enthusiastically.

"Well," Andy continued, "come up and have a cup of tea before I get it."

After the tea was drunk, Andy said:

"I'll go and get that goat meat."

A few minutes later there was a loud rifle shot that made everyone jump from their seats. Shortly afterwards, Andy, covered in blood, walked into the kitchen carrying two goat legs that still had the hide on. He tossed them into the stainless steel sink, where the legs continued to twitch, producing a nervous tap dance with their hooves.

"I've given you the back legs," Andy said. "They're the best bits."

The young couple's eyes were nearly popping out of their heads and their mouths were hanging open in disbelief. To them, meat came in neat little polystyrene trays covered with clear plastic.

Shortly after my first book *The Lighthouse Keepers* was published in which I described visiting Middle Percy and meeting Andy, Andy wrote to me saying he had been offended by my description of him as a 'hermit', and demanded that I never refer to him as that again. I replied saying that in the Macquarie Dictionary a hermit is described as 'any person living in seclusion' and thought that aptly described him. However, I continued, out of goodwill I'll agree to your request and from now on refer to you as a NUD (Non Urban Dweller). I didn't receive a reply.

The last time I saw Andy was in 1996. Years of hard physical work had taken its toll. He could do little more than hobble around aided by a walking stick. Fortunately for Andy, eight years earlier a young couple, Jonathan and Liz Hickling interrupted their cruising lifestyle to reside on the island and help Andy; they were now doing all the work.

Towards the end of 1996, Andy, who had written a manuscript about the approaching end of the world, returned to England in an attempt to have the book published. Before leaving Middle Percy he told the Hicklings that he would sign over the lease of the island to them.

Then along came Mick Cotter who, as a teenager, had lived for a while on Middle Percy Island with Andy. Cotter got

Andy's address in England and flew over to see him. Cotter told Andy that the Hicklings weren't looking after his island properly and persuaded Andy to return to Australia and sign over the lease to him. He paid \$10, with the promise of a further large sum that was never paid. At the time, the lease of the island was valued at \$320,000.

Disillusioned and dispirited, the Hicklings left the island. Cotter moved in and according to a television current affairs program he and some friends began growing a certain plant more valuable than vegetables. Andy, after receiving some medical treatment for schizophrenia, sought legal advice about overturning the lease agreement. Andy died in 2003 a sad and broken man, but before he did, he bequeathed the island lease "if it was ever won back" to his cousin Cathryn Radcliffe.

After five years of legal proceedings, on 19 June 2008 a judge found that Cotter had exploited Andy. He ordered that Cotter leave the island by 31 July 2008 and that the lease be transferred to Andy's cousin Cathryn.

However, it's not yet time to break out the Percy Island mead to celebrate. The island's lease expires in March 2009 and the Environmental Protection Agency has expressed interest in taking over the island.

Whatever happens, Andy's era has gone forever. He might have been as mad as a hatter, but he was a unique and colourful character who, over the years, provided much enjoyment and hospitality to thousands of visitors. I feel privileged to have known him. There is no doubt the Queensland coast is a poorer place without Andy Martin.



The Author, Stuart Buchanan

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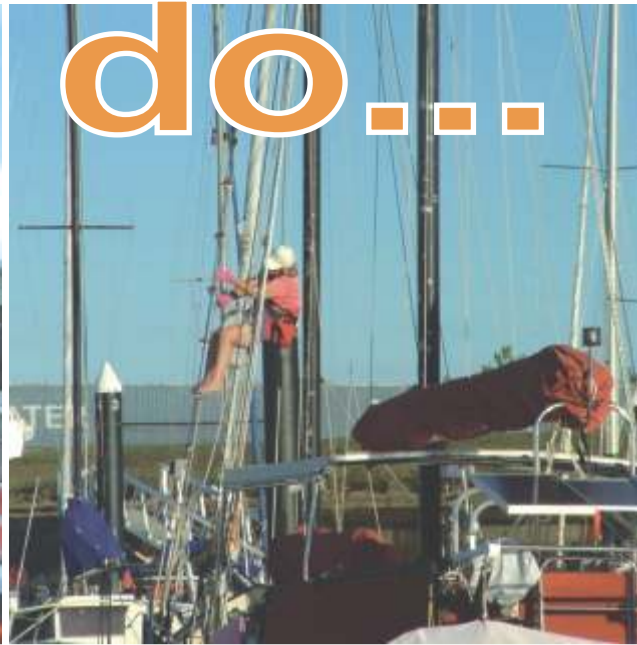
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Making do...



By Wendy, SY *Absolutely*

We all make do at some stage of our lives, usually early on. Who remembers turning collars and cuffs on shirts, melting all those little bits of leftover soap into a useable size block or serving up mince disguised as something else for the fourth time in a week? Stripping and repainting that chest of drawers from the junk shop, borrowing Dad's barby for that special party and the washing machine in bits for a week while TOH (the other half) figures out how to make it go again. The list is endless, but the point is, as youngsters, we expected to have to do it. As we got older, things eased a bit, the niceties of life crept in/ A new shirt when the old ones collar frayed, soap added to the weekly shopping list without a second thought and God bless that big piece of rump steak from the butcher. Nice dip and bikkies, three different types of cheese and prawns



on the barby, and, even better, a tradesman to fix the washing machine. I have found it quite a shock to have to revert to 'making do' when it comes to our boat. Sure, we still have prawns on the barby and soap will remain on my weekly list, but anything to do with the boat means we 'make do'.

It never ceases to amaze me how inventive boaties can be when it comes to making do or saving money. Of course, necessity is the mother of invention, and that phrase may well have been coined with sailors specifically in mind; after all, everyone knows that yachties don't have any money. Broke and Boat just go together so well. Sending the galley wench up the mast, screwdriver/paintbrush/multimeter clenched firmly between her teeth whilst furiously muttering instructions under her breath so as not to forget them in the terror of being so high up, is only one example. The galley wench not only doesn't cost upwards of \$80 per hour for the privilege of a nice view, she may even return happily to the galley that same evening. The bonus is she may also be able to do the job on high.

Need a paint job on the hull above the waterline? Easy. Don't bother with an expensive haul out, simply balance a tin of paint somewhere in your tender, add a roller and a willing participant and the job will be finished in no time. There are several requirements to ensure success.

Pick a volunteer who has good balance and exceptional hand/eye coordination or you may end up with the inside of your tender and your legs from the knees down matching the outside of your boat. Little or no wind and completely flat water are recommended, especially when it comes to those straight lines. Best done while tied up in a marina. This technique can also be used when polishing the boat although one has to be a bit careful with keeping the 240v power cord away from any water.

One chap I know went to extraordinary lengths to get better reception on his TV. First he had to get the aerial to the top of the mast. Turns out that was the easy bit as one of his mates volunteered to go up in the chair and attach it in an appropriate place. The next stage was dropping the cable down the centre of the mast. Easy, I hear you say. Well, yes, except the mast has been foam filled to stop those little rattles and plinks you tend to get from the existing hardware already in there. Hmm. Turns out the foam had collapsed and most of it had collected at the bottom anyway. This was pulled out in handfuls leaving, theoretically, a clear passage from top to bottom. It only took an entire day, one handful at a time, to clear it all out. With a small sinker on the end of the drop line the epic began. It got

snagged only a few feet from the top and when pulled sharply, promptly dropped off to land somewhere within the mast. Oops. 'Need a heavier weight', came the cry from above. Okay, a bigger sinker. That got caught about half way down and when tugged a trifle too hard, it also dropped off the end of the line to the bottom, never to be seen again. Perhaps an even heavier weight would do the trick.

After asking around and discovering no one had quite the right size or weight, it was off to the shops for a bigger sinker. Of course the really heavy ones are also quite wide. My intrepid friend carefully sawed it in half lengthways with a hacksaw and off they went again. After a couple of goes it clunked in what sounded like the right place at the bottom, inside the cabin. When this was inspected, it turns out that the half sinker had actually come off the line and had jammed itself somewhere in the bottom of the mast, unretrievable. Aha, at least my friend had the other half of the separated sinker to use for yet another go. Several shots later, the thing got to the bottom of the mast, but as luck would have it, it had also jammed tight against something, this time with the line firmly attached and would go neither up nor down. Did I mention that it jammed about six inches from its intended destination in just the right spot where nothing could reach it?

After due consideration (called 'sleeping on it'), the next step was to get hold of a

length of tubing through which the cable could be threaded, the idea being that the rigid pipe could be forced through any remnants of foam and past any other obstructions to the exact place it needed to come out of the mast. A small wire hook was duly fashioned to hook out the cable as it appeared at the bottom of the mast at the end of the tubing. Upon further consideration the idea was scrapped given the propensity for things to disappear down the inside of the mast, never to be seen again.

With the water line two inches lower from all the excess lead the boat was now carrying, and the TV reception still fuzzy, the only thing my intrepid friend could do was drag out the old telly, fit the bunny ears and settle back with a beer to watch the news.

I haven't had an update on the next step but wait with bated breath and I can't help wondering what approach a professional aerial fitter would have taken.

Another friend who is on a catamaran had to have one of the motors taken out of his boat, so was facing a haul out plus the expense of a crane. He reckoned he might be able to go about it by thinking outside the square. He rigged up a pulley system on his boom which included a halyard from the free end to the mast for extra strength, swung on it himself to test its strength. He reckoned he weighed a fraction more than the motor - then attached a chain block to the end. After stripping all possible externals off the motor so it would fit through the deck hatch, a sling system was put around and under the motor, the lifting chain attached and up she came. It did take all morning with TOH making coffees and fetching cool drinks and of course the help and advice of several onlookers...er, I mean helpers, but the end result was the safe (and relatively inexpensive) removal of the motor.

I guess my definition of 'making do' includes being inventive, being able to think outside the square and being able to make something fit or work where it didn't before.



From Wendy (above): A big thank you to Wal & Gina off 'Konan', Bert and Cindy off 'Oruga' Hamish and Sheena off 'Hidden Dragon' and Mal and Sharon off 'Ulurkura' for allowing me to use their ideas in this story.

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Letter from the Deep South
By Stuart Mears SY *Veleva*

Whereupon your southern correspondent
*blesses his deliverance ... unto the island of
real wooden boats and the 2009 Wooden
Boat Festival!*

It's curious what sticks in your mind from childhood. Your once innocent correspondent at the age of eight, had an uncle; a doctor who ran a psychiatric hospital. One day on a visit, he and I are walking in the grounds of this venerable institution as he points to various buildings and things of interest. Suddenly from behind a bush, a woman inmate appears ... *buck naked*, her face glowing, feverish with excitement! Your juvenile reporter is gob smacked! Uncle's attention meanwhile barely misses a beat. "Morning Alice", he says, the ghost of a smile flickering across his face, while calmly resuming his recitation of the history and function of the institution.

Son, he said a little later; "we all have our peccadilloes...one day you'll understand"

You see...given that production boats nowadays are spewed out like model T Fords on factory assembly lines...it's a commonly held view north of latitude 38', that the notion that actually *owning* a wooden one is just one of those...peculiar *peccadilloes*... impractical, irrational and a hiding to no-where.

OK ...so we woodies might be out there on the edge of the bell curve, but obviously *there are thousands of us afflicted with the same disease! We all love wooden boats!*

Looking around the 2009 Hobart Wooden Boat Festival the wharves, the pavilion buildings, they're packed with line-ups 50 deep, merely to get onto the marina and the finger wharves. It's worth the waiting.

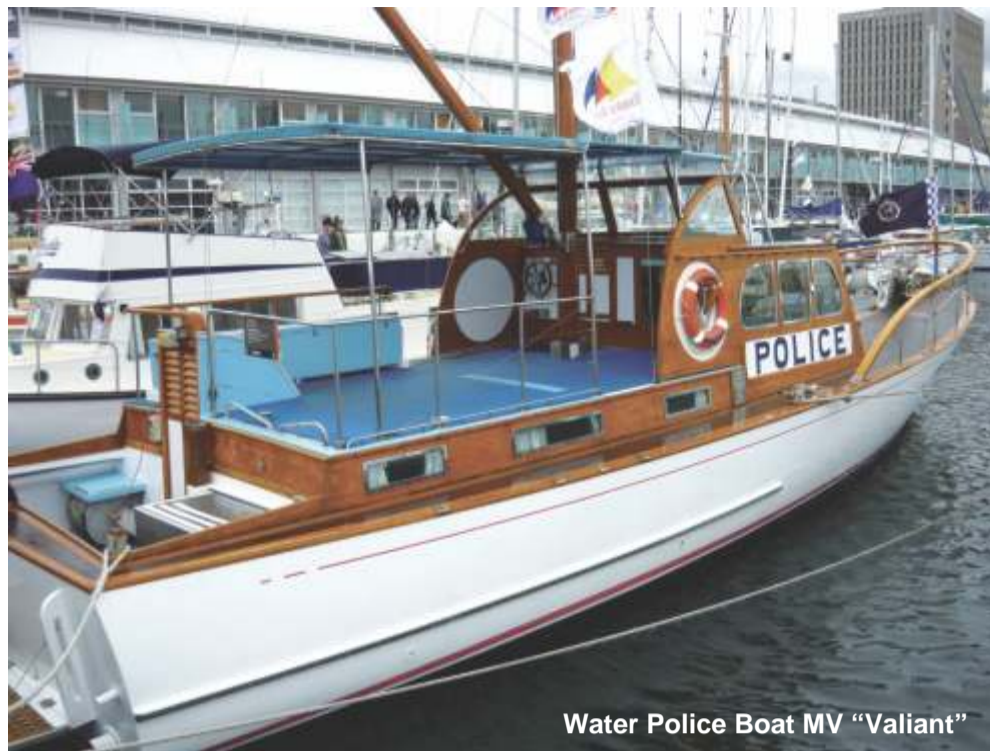
Over the three days of the festival, attendance reportedly reaches some 40,000 people, over half of whom travel from inter-state.

For all of us true believers, the Bi-Annual Hobart Wooden Boat Festival is the biggest and best boat show in Australia. Tasmania is after all the final redoubt of traditional wooden boat culture. Pretty much everywhere else in this wide brown land; wooden boats have been displaced by marinas full of white plastic, steel and aluminum, not to mention the really exotic stuff, the mere vibes from which are guaranteed to alter the DNA of fifteen unborn generations. To be truthful, your out of sync., nautical retro correspondent, has been known to attend conventional boat shows and walk past acres of floating white gel coated exhibits, not registering a single heart beat of *positive* interest. As to *negative* interest...that's ...well...ahem... an entirely different story.

But here at the Wooden Boat Festival, the reverse is true. So what's missing from the offerings of nautical modernity? Perhaps it's that traditional wooden boat building embodies *art* and *craft* as well as function. In these terms, a '*real boat*' is more than simply a vessel that displaces water and performs efficiently under sail and power. She has to sail beautifully, look after the crew in the worst weather and *pull at the heart strings*. Traditionalists might argue that modern yachts perform the first function superbly, but that's all. The art, the craft, the soul factor is missing.

Of course many people feel the same about the modern built environment; that it's functional but somehow spiritually bankrupt.

Hobart on the other hand, is a town where the pace of things is a tad less frenetic and values are a little more centered. There is a lot of history remaining in the colonial buildings that escaped the frenzy of demolition that destroyed much of Sydney's colonial heritage in the '60's. In this town, even the Plods (police) get about in a real classy wooden boat.



Water Police Boat MV "Valiant"



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More of "Disease"

It might even be kinda pleasurable to be pulled over, just for the opportunity to get a close up geek at MV "Valiant", a classic bridge-deck number sporting sexy lines and some damn nice varnished bright-work.

For the occasion of the 2009 Wooden Boat Festival, Victoria dock is largely reserved for working boats where the traditional Tasmanian Cray Boat is well represented. While the majority of timber Cray Boats, are clearly designed to be power boats from the get go, with nominal resort to steadying sails in extremis, there are a few exquisite examples of these working commercial boats, sporting sexy yacht lines. One of the most well known of this genre is the beautiful 54' "Storm Bay", faithfully restored to museum quality standards over a ten year period by Tim Phillips. Built by the renowned Hobart boat-builder Percy Coverdale in 1926 (who also built the famous Winston Churchill, alas now at the bottom of Bass Strait), "Storm Bay" had fallen into serious neglect before she was discovered by Phillips, on a slipway in St Helens, way back in the early seventies. Thus was planted the seed of a dream, that would take up a swag of sweat, life and treasure in it's ultimate realization. Understated but powerful, authentic and very beautiful she is indeed, a sight to see.



On Kings Pier Marina the majority of recreational craft on display, are packed in tight like sardines in a can. For the punter, this means a vast array of boats, tall ships, traditional gear and crafts to see and appreciate. Boat entries for the most part, have achieved a tremendously high standard of presentation. Anyone familiar with the hard graft involved in producing high standard bright-work, has to be awestruck by the attention to detail in evidence with some of the exhibits;

the steam boats being particular examples.

In addition to steam engines from the last century, there's a working display of marine put-puts that your aged correspondent remembers from his childhood; fly wheeled relics with names like: Vinco, Blaxland-Chapman and Clae.

Mind you what he really lusted over in those days, but never got his mitts on; was something like a magnificent Chris Craft or John Hacker replica, in the spirit of the famous race boats of the nineteen twenties and thirties, sporting a burbling, bum tingling vee-eight motor.

Of the smaller craft, there are boats by Ned Trewartha a legendary Tasmanian builder of the clinker dingy genre. These items constitute heirlooms of maritime art, in high form. Equally beautiful are Andrew Denman's more modern stitch and glue interpretations of traditional themes.

Canoes and Kayaks are well represented from wooden framed and fabric clad, ultra lites to wooden strip planked versions of the Inuit seal hunter's kayak with it's ice breaking cut-water. When first sighted as museum exhibits, your slow on the uptake correspondent, couldn't understand the reason for the strange bow design on Inuit Kayaks until it struck him that these boats with their seal skin cladding, were designed to *operate amid floating ice*. Eskimos...ice...I get it!



Steam vessel PREANA...Wow!



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Disease... continues

Speaking of minimalist solutions; some years ago, our boat was slipped on one of our favorite old Sydney railway slipways. The place was then owned by a seriously 'heavily freighted' (wealthy) gentleman. He liked to chat while we worked.

"Gee", he said once day... "She's a beautiful boat."

'Course! ...much as I love wooden boats, he said... never be silly enough to own a big one meself!"

"Oh... I said... does that mean.. you own a small one?"

He then retrieved his *small one*. It was an exquisite strip planked wooden kayak, polished like a grand piano just like this one. He used the kayak regularly on Sydney Harbor & stored it in the ceiling of his lounge room. 'Over boated' he was not. But as our economy conscious friend demonstrated; it's not difficult or expensive to be minimally 'boated' in real wooden boat style, particularly if you build it yourself.

The truth that you'll probably never hear from a boat broker, is that *all boats and all forms of boat construction* come with a commitment to maintenance. It's a bit like marriage. Buy a boat and you buy into that commitment, end of story! Ideas to the contrary are pure delusion. And sure enough, wooden boats require a greater commitment to maintenance, but this is also a function of many things, one of which is the extent of bright-work. Another is latitude! But there are many examples here at the Wooden Boat Festival, of wooden boats in

impeccable condition, that are well over 100 years old.

In truth, the commitment to maintenance doesn't just go with the territory, its part of the fun. You merely have to look at the pride written all over the faces of so many owners.

"Come aboard!" Leonie Scobie said as your correspondent was ogling the lines of "Sea Imp", their beautiful Williams Bridge-deck Cruiser built in 1939. To Tony and Leonie, "Sea Imp" is clearly part of the family and central to their way of life. Rendered magnificently in Ironbark, Kauri and



Classic Halverson

Queensland Beech with copper roving's; materials that would be difficult to replicate today, it's more than likely that this wonderful little ship will outlive her present owners *and* their children.

Settling back into one of Sea Imp's comfortable thirties style chairs in the saloon: "Yeah I thought...this'd do!"

TCP note; Stuart took a fathom of great photos that couldn't fit here. Look on the TCP web site. We'll post the lot. www.thecoastalpassage.com

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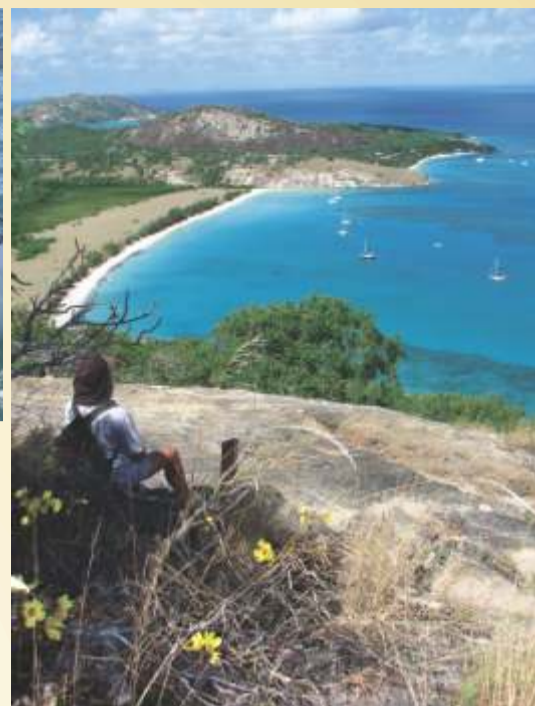
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Who's getting wrecked on Keppel Island ???

Having a Merry Christmas amidst the ruins...

By Vicki J., SY Shomi

It's true. We'd become River Rats. A friend who himself lives at Balimba Reach on his Cat. told us so. Well, it is not precisely true, John. No Rats survive the Crocks in Rocky. Besides it is only *Shomi* who lives beside the crocks.

We have moved back into our 70ies hippy shack in the rainforested mountains to keep chickens, grow food and sit under our own private waterfall. Also to renovate! (as I write I'm being called to hold sheets for walls, shift the cast iron stove and remove 20 year old soot blackened shelves which requires a scrub up each time before I can resume writing).

As well as renovating we are here to earn money and tackle some local social issues. We see the islands shimmering alluringly on the distant horizon and the familiar craving sets in; to be on the water being rocked to sleep each night, catching fresh seafood and catching up with friends and some reading (Thanks T.C.P. for some great reads).

Time to slip the boat, do a few repairs and set off.

Sailing down the Fitzroy isn't such a bad way to start a trip and Sea Hill is not a bad place to wait till the SE change comes through and an even better anchorage in Pacific Creek when the SE come in at 30 knots gusting 40. We played around fishing, crabbing and trying to master the art of cast netting. In the gusty wind I succeeded in creating some interesting new net gowns dripping with diamonds of water.

Ah ha. 10 to 15 knots SE. tomorrow, the weather forecast tells us. We are off with the tide. Rocky Met was still insisting it was SE but we had NE (on the nose again).

Ahhh! Keppels at last. It seems like years since we have been to these islands. When I think back it has been two and a half years since we last set foot on the islands and we had been only partly prepared for the changes. The resort looking more like a detention center that is eerily deserted. No bars are open (occasionally the Pizza shack is open and cold beer available), no people, almost no vehicles on the beach, no buzzing boats dragging screaming tourists about. Very few people are on the beach or in the water. Sea grass, dugongs, turtles and dolphins have replaced them.

Almost every paper we opened when we'd returned home from sailing to Vanuatu was filled with the ongoing saga of the future development of Great Keppel Is. Below I have reproduced part of a letter by one of the campaigners, also a part time yachtie, who shall remain nameless:

There are all sorts of misleading media articles appearing - (info supplied by the developer), trying to give the impression that Great Keppel Island is some kind of ecological wasteland (totally denuded and destroyed), and that a massive airstrip, thousands of apartments, two 18 hole golf courses, marinas, 40 km of roads, shopping centres etc will "rejuvenate" the island! This is crazy stuff and inaccurate. (An example of this is the Developer's claim, in their promotion brochure that "The entire island is currently zoned for Comprehensive Development", p6. This is



NOT TRUE. Lot 21, i.e. most of the island - is currently zoned for Recreation and Conservation!

However just before we sailed this article appeared in the local rag:

**Media Release:
PAUL HOOLIHAN MP, Member for Keppel
GREAT KEPPEL ISLAND LOT 21 TO BE PROTECTED
Member for Keppel Paul Hoolihan today welcomed the announcement by the Department of Natural Resources and Water (NRW) that Lot 21 on Great Keppel Island would be protected for conservation**

purposes.

"I am pleased to advise that NRW's assessment of Lot 21 has determined that it is most appropriate to have the site remain as a conservation area," Mr Hoolihan said.

"This is a big win for the environment and a big win for the community who have come out in support of saving this area for environmental purposes."

"There has been overwhelming public support for the protection of Lot 21," Mr Hoolihan said.

"I am advised that the Department of Natural Resources and Water received over 300 public submissions (more than the Franklin River in Tassy) on this study and over 97% received were in favour of protection.

Mr Hoolihan said that the site had a strong reputation locally for its environmental values. I'm pleased that the decision to have this site remain a conservation area reflects the views of the Keppel Island community.

"This site has significant environmental and cultural values including the presence of rare, endangered and vulnerable species present on the land."

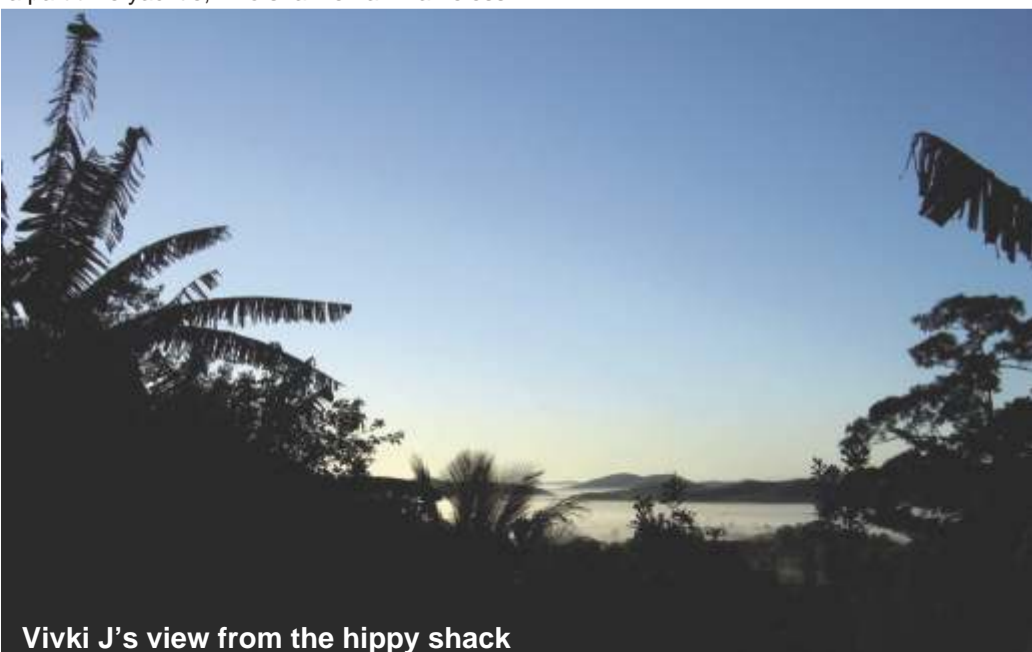
"The Bligh Government is protecting more areas of the environment as we head towards Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland.

"One of the ambitions of Q2 is a green ambition to further protect Queensland's lifestyle and natural environment from the pressures of a growing population and climate change. The Queensland Government is playing its part by protecting more areas to secure Queensland's unique biodiversity.

Tower Holdings went public in an interview on Rocky radio, in which they claimed they will not be coming back to do any work on the Island. Let us hope this is true. Meanwhile I've heard squatters have moved into some of the apartments and the rest, without any upkeep will go to wreck and ruin. The old media line of **'Get Wrecked on Keppel Island'** will now, it seems, only apply to the buildings.

Boats rule on Keppel with most of the people gathered at the watersports shelter for a Christmas Eve BBQ, being yachties. So all's well that ends well. Our sail into Keppel Bay and up the Fitzroy River with 15 to 20 knots NE and a fast running tide made the banks wiz by.

Post Script; There is noise that Tower Holdings have lost the contract on Lot 21. An update will follow as soon as "Deep Throat" calls. *"Follow the money..."*



Vivki J's view from the hippy shack

Down the muddy Fitzroy..

The Birdsville Regatta!

OR... The Blow Fly Classic...



Story & photos by Kay Ezzy, (ex) SY Vanda III

The tides of change have cast the crew of SY Vanda III up high and dry in the desert, but we have found a way to continue sailing while working in the remote western town of Birdsville, in Queensland's famous channel country.

Kay and Russ moved to Birdsville 11 months ago, and with "Vanda" up on the hard at Scarborough, we were missing the fun of cruising and weekend sailing, which we have been doing since 1996. While on holidays we picked up our tender from Vanda - a 10 foot Walker Bay Dinghy with sail kit - and brought it back to our new home which

overlooks a beautiful lagoon on the edge of the Caravan park. The prevailing wind habitually blows along this narrow and shallow stretch of water with its occasional rocks, so we have been really honing our skills in tacking ever since. It's quite a change from setting the auto pilot on a 41 foot ketch and sitting back with a cold glass of water for ten or twenty miles.

The skipper sticks the winch wench up forward for ballast (plenty of that these days so he tells me) and off we go on twenty metre tacks, while the prolific but somewhat naive local birdlife look on with amazement. It is truly a bird watchers paradise, and never ceases to astound us.

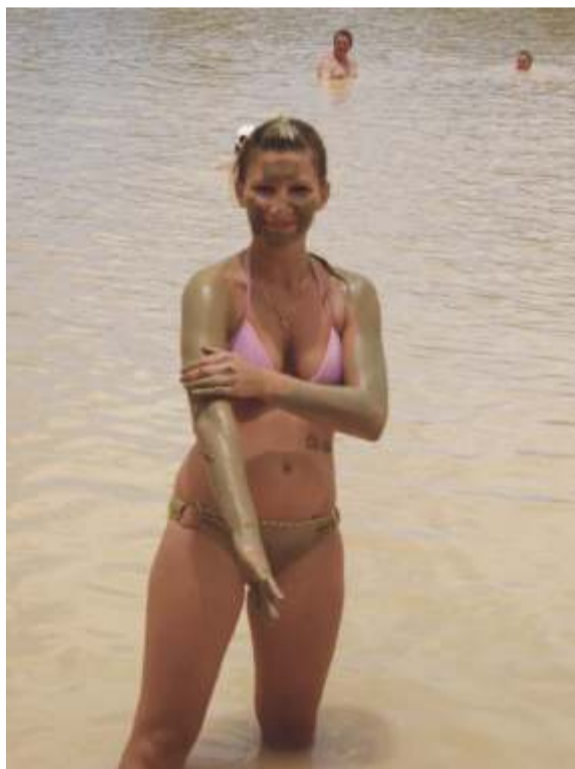
Last weekend we held the inaugural Birdsville Sailing regatta on an unbelievably huge water hole way out in the desert. Another couple of sailors who are spending a year out here are Michelle & Evan off "Slightly Underrated" from Balmain Sailing Club. They have borrowed a couple of Lasers and joined us for a great time sailing in light winds and 40+ degrees. Unfortunately, like our 16 tonne ketch, the Walker Bay needs a bit more than five knots of wind to get it performing, so of course there was no competition with the lasers sailing rings around little Vanda.

We also had a mixed group of visitors plus our local gendarme and wife who tried their hand at sailing under the tutoring of Captain Evan Bligh, with some entertaining results. Next time we will pick a windier day and they will be upside down more and we will have the upper hand. Hopefully!

So all you yachties facing hard times, don't despair. You can always come to Birdsville to continue your sailing career. Hope you enjoy our photos.



Stuff the Epirb and PFD's...
Fly mask and cold water saves the day!



Will the mud keep the flies away?
Maybe not but it's a good look Emma!



Thanks to Kay and Russ (above) for a unique feature.
Good fun!

These photos were taken just before the worst rains came and TCP acknowledges that for many in the channel country, it was no joke. But perhaps it is good to have a laugh when you can and the lesson learned may be that in the new reality of climate change... it may make as much sense to have a sail boat regatta at Birdsville as it does a horse race.. hmmm a horse race regatta?? Anything's possible anymore.

Seriously, our best wishes to those recovering from the flood of 08-09.



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Notes from the Deep South

By Stuart Mears, SY *Veleva*

My God... What Will Happen Next?

The Carefree Cruising Life...Is it ...All Over Red Rover?

In which your correspondent wonders if ...having a boat might be great start point for ...Depression Survival 101.

"There was a merchant in Baghdad who went to the market with his servant. There they saw Death, who stared at the servant in what seemed a threatening way. Later the servant said "Master, lend me a horse. I shall ride to Samara, and there Death will not find me." The merchant did so, then returned to the market, where he again saw Death, whom he approached and asked why he had stared at his servant in such a threatening way. Death responded, "I wasn't threatening him. I was just very surprised to see him here in Baghdad, since I have an appointment with him in Samara later this afternoon."

From John O'Hara's novel "Appointment in Samara"

Neither on the water, nor on the dock, nor in the dark cloistered recesses of your Bank's Boardroom...we may never know ...what tomorrow will bring.

Your deeply secular southern correspondent makes no claim to know God...except to observe that she has a sense of humor. History suggests that all mighty empires overextend themselves in hubris, to the point of eventual collapse. Yet the collapse of Rome took some 400 years with a little help from the likes of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, et al, not to mention the sundry Gothic tribes of Europe.

The US Dollar Empire on the other hand has progressed from magisterial wealth post WW2, to the verge of collapse in just 50 years, with a little help from the R. Nixon, R. Reagan, the Bush family and the Wall Street financial establishment not to mention the US Federal Reserve. Regrettably, Obama's election won't alter this seeming inevitability.

Your humble southern correspondent claims to be no expert in matters financial. If evidence were required, he holds an obsolete qualification in economics; the most pointless of disciplines, predicated upon the absurd Keynesian notion that mass behavior and markets can be mathematically modeled and controlled by central bank interventions. The idea that such interventions actually work, is as ridiculous as Soviet style central planning! Sadly the conventional wisdom driving the proliferation of Government bail-outs and half-wit stimulus schemes are all of them, stock standard Keynesian prescriptions ... and doomed to failure!

What does all this mean for yours and my freedom, sailing carefree seas? Sadly the answer is...a lot! It's simply not possible to ignore these events in the hope that it'll all go away. It holds enormous danger for the individual and it won't go away!!

Consequent to decades of central bank *intervention* (read monetary debasement) which has largely created the mess we're now in, what we're witnessing in the credit markets and in the real economy, is no garden variety cyclical downturn. It is rather as James Howard Kunstler quaintly puts it, a 'cluster-fuck' of converging calamities, from which there's no way back. Not that going back is desirably anyway; as if the idea of being dead drunk and binged out on credit, is a sustainable condition. Many industries are as good as dead, notably those related to finance and many services. Others constitute the 'walking wounded'. Some may survive. The US banking system according to Nouriel Roubini is close to being technically insolvent. He figures losses in the US might rise to \$US3.6 trillion, half of it in banks and broker/dealers which leaves the sector a little short. The banking system in the US has only \$US1.4

trillion in capital. The US motor vehicle industry is functionally bankrupt and finished. The US Government already carries a multi-trillion dollar debt load in relation to GDP that is unupportable, unsustainable and can never be repaid except by means of debasement of the World's reserve currency. By all accounts this is already underway. The impacts of Peak Oil have taken a momentary breather but it is only that...*momentary!* Our society is entirely predicated upon abundant cheap energy. The present oil price of \$US40 odd a barrel notwithstanding, those days are over. While the Australian economy is a pimple upon a pumpkin, it has enjoyed a delayed reaction to the plunge into depression. However this is likely to be temporary. It's clear that this country is fast accelerating into the black hole of deflationary wealth destruction, mass unemployment and the real prospect of a monetary reversal in the form of destructive inflation, somewhat down the track; the same calamities in other words that face the UK, Europe and the US. Then there is the climate issue, the water issue, the war(s) issue and all the other issues.

What does this augur for the carefree cruising lifestyle? For some, already it's all over! For many others however, events mark a sustainable new beginning. This is the era of what might be called: *'reductionism'*...a time to focus on what really matters, side stepping that which doesn't add to the sustainability and richness of life, including the *confiscatory predations of Government*. Among our *reductionist* thoughts pertinent to the future are the following:

- Depression can be a great time to... *go sailing (subject to ...see below!)*
- Depression demands a Dickensian style *balanced budget!*
- Depression is a bad time to be looking for a job...unless your skills are specialized and in high demand.
- Oddly...depression *can be* a great time to *start* a business because resources are abundant and cheap.
- Depression is a bad time to be carrying *debt*.
- Don't bet on *asset values* coming back any time soon. We may be in for several decades of falling asset values. Japan has been (and still is) in recession for 17years, during which time real estate in Tokyo has fallen by two thirds, from its peak.
- Depression is a great time to contemplate *communal living* with the economic benefits of communal cost sharing.
- Depression is a good time to be as free as possible from the burden of financial *overheads*
- Depression is a good time to move out of the house and *onto the boat*. A boat is not only a great place to live; it provides the opportunity for low overhead living and elimination of land based taxation (rates, land tax etc). Of course, marina occupancy costs, as does boat maintenance, but there are opportunities to anchor up for free in suitable locations and of course, do the maintenance yourself.
- Depression is not a good time to be feeding *fuel guzzling boat engines*...if you plan upon going anywhere that is. Easy driven displacement hulls and slow revving engines are the go! If your boat is a sail boat, use the sails!
- *New age technologies* that will re-shape our society will get their start in depression conditions. It's a good time to



hold shares in these technologies if you have spare capital and can dig up the opportunities and do the homework.

• Depression is a bad time to be *dependent upon Government*. Government intervention and so called 'assistance', obstructs economic recovery at every level, particularly the personal level.

• In the deflationary stage of wealth destruction, fiat money appears to *appreciate* because asset values (and possibly... prices generally) are falling. However wealth stored in fiat money is vulnerable to central bank orchestrated, confiscation via monetary inflation, which is likely to be next wealth destruction cab off the rank. Inflation is by far more politically acceptable than deflation. This is the argument for having on hand, a *stash of real money in the form of gold and or silver* in a place that is not available for confiscation by the agencies of Government.

Alan Greenspan ex Federal Reserve Chief regarded by many as the principal (and un-principled) architect of the current World crisis, was evidently not always an apologist for, fiat money and politically driven central bank manipulation of same. Back in 1966 he had one or two worthwhile things to say:

"Deficit spending is simply a scheme for the confiscation of wealth. Gold stands in the way of this insidious process. It stands as a protector of property rights. If one grasps this, one has no difficulty in understanding the statist's antagonism toward the gold standard".

Alan Greenspan 1966

The point to be recognized we think, is that the World we all knew is changing. Like a slow moving seismic event that shifts the very ground from under our feet; in a decade many aspects of our way of life will be unrecognizable. Among World citizens, we in the Anglo Saxon world are likely to emerge a lot poorer and a lot less influential than we have been habituated to be. We may even emerge the better for it. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross the Swiss born psychiatrist famously identified the five stages of grief as being: *anger, denial, bargaining, depression* and finally...*acceptance*. The World is stuck for the time being in anger and denial. It has a long, long way to go before acceptance. Far better we think for the enlightened individual to make the life changes necessary for survival in the new epoch, and to move to *acceptance* without delay.

Once accomplished ...it's a great time to move onto the boat and *go sailing*.

TCP note; Stuart is considering coming out of 'retirement' to once more get in the business of financial and investment advise. And why not, his advise to "go sailing" makes sense! Seriously, now may be the time..



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Sailors Welcome



By Phil Crane, SY *Kailani*

Visiting Palm Island on our trip north had always been part of the plan. After two years of gradually getting the boat, an 31 foot Adams centre cockpit sloop called *Kailani*, into coastal cruising shape, we headed off from Scarborough in June last year. For the most part heading north my son Dan, aged 11, was my only crew. A colleague at work had said we should stop at Palm Island on the way up. He had relatives there and further up the coast- his own country was north of Cooktown around Cape Bedford.

I rang Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council from Airlie Beach (my intermittently trusty old Volvo Penta was playing up). The receptionist said 'I'll put you through to the Mayor'. And so I had the first of numerous conversations with Alf Lacey. I told Alf how my colleague had told me I should visit. Alf said he knew him; I asked if it would be OK for me to come to Palm and Alf said that would be fine. I asked if it was possible for Dan my son to go to school while we were there and he asked whether I would prefer the Community (state) school or the Catholic primary. So next I rang the Principal of the Bwgcolman Community School who was very positive. We decided on a likely date for Dan to start.

Taking note of the Lucas guide we anchored in Casement Bay on the Sunday and the next morning made the rather long trip in our bath-like handling inflatable over to the main channel. We pulled it up onto the beach in front of the Barge Company shed beside the wharf. The Community School is just a short walk from the beach and by 8.30 I had done the paperwork, Dan had met his teacher, and he was off to class. The stereotypes of Palm are that it is full of crime and that yachties are not welcome. A walk around town and there is visible evidence of a strong government presence- a new police compound, a new government offices building under construction (now finished), a 'community centre' behind barbed wire, as well as the succession of planes each morning and afternoon bringing in and out largely white professional workers. I was certainly aware of being an outsider.



At 2.30 Dan finished school and walked out the front gate- his first words were **'Dad this is the best- you don't have to wear shoes!'**

In hind sight Dan was the key- he is a great kid and like many kids has a wonderful way of joining with others. He

was warmly welcomed at school by children and staff alike. It didn't take long before he had invited some of his classmates back to the boat after school to fish. And then there was a BBQ we were invited to at the home of his new friends- everyone brought and shared food. While Dan was at school I walked around the town, visited the Council and some of the community services (my day job is as a social work and human services lecturer). One day I walked over to the airport- quite a few kilometres. Exhausted I managed to get a lift back to town- turned out to be with Ray the Deputy Mayor.



One day Dan came back from school saying he had lunch at the fish and chip shop with his classmates and how great it was. The next day I kept an eye out for the shop while walking around- ended up asking Dan more about its location as I could not see any sign. After school the next day Dan said he had asked his friends why the shop didn't have a sign- 'Dad they just looked at me and said that it didn't need one because everyone knew where it was!' And so it is with a community that has been closed for many years and has had little need to direct strangers.

We left Palm with real sadness- Dan had been incredibly happy there. He suggested we should come back to live. Even though we had experienced some amazing places Palm was the highlight of our trip so far.

On our return trip south from Lizard in early October another week at Palm was our goal. Again we talked on the phone with the School and as luck would have it the week Dan was going to be there involved 2 days at Palm then 3 days on the annual Grade 6 excursion to Townsville where the students' digital art was being exhibited as part of a regional project.

During the two days anchored at Challenger Bay the 'Welcome to boaties' statement you can read below was written. I had been trying to think of what as a yachtie I could do to repay the hospitality and generosity of the people and wondered out loud to the Mayor about trying to do something positive. We yarned and over two days the text below was developed and endorsed by him.

Meanwhile my 4 stroke dingy outboard had been immersed in sea water (not a proud moment). The mechanic at workshop beside the Council service station set me up out the back so I could try to get it going and when I failed he sorted it out for me at a very reasonable cost. Likewise the man at the Barge Company near the wharf was incredibly helpful- he was the one who suggested I come up from the distant Casement Bay anchorage and drop the anchor right off the front of town. When I asked about getting the Community bus to the airport to pick up someone flying in to join the crew I was told it wasn't running at that time but was then taken across the road to borrow a relative's car. At every turn people were helpful and gracious. Particular thanks to Virginia and her family, the school staff at Bwgcolman Community School, the staff at the Barge Company, the mechanic, and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Since leaving Palm numbers of cruising yachties have encouraged me to tell this story. I am fortunate to have a number of Indigenous friends who have helped me engage with their people over the years, though I don't pretend to have any particular expertise in this. For what it is worth here are some personal reflections on engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

- * To give some prior thought to how as an individual I can contribute something positive to reconciliation- to recognise I have a culture too, and that it is very easy for me to do things that reflect in subtle ways the narrow and historically hurtful relationship that has existed with Indigenous people's
- * That Indigenous communities are all different and have their own histories and preferred approaches
- * That I can start by giving respect recognising I have much to learn. A tangible initial way I can give respect is for my boat to fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags as courtesy flags. This signals my recognition that I am in their 'country'
- * Introduce myself, letting people know where I come from and if I have any friends or links to their people. Rather than assume I know what is respectful I try to ask permission (is it OK to ...?), and ask advice on what is the right thing to do (what do I need to do ... ? how should I go about ...? what is the best way to ?)
- * Spend a lot more time more time listening than talking, remember names, have fun and enjoy people's company
- * Not be intrusive with cameras and not to photograph people without permission
- * Consciously manage my expectations- not to expect gratitude, not to expect to be made welcome by everyone or invited in, expect to be surprised, expect to feel a little of what it is like to be in a minority group, expect to wonder about what I have seen and experienced, and expect to not really understand
- * Realise I will most probably benefit more from the exchange than Indigenous people do- I get stories to tell, and I need to ask what do these communities gain from my visiting?
- * Finally, I find it useful to do some reading from credible sources (besides newspapers) on the history and culture of Indigenous communities like Palm Island. We do this when we travel overseas, why not do it here as well. The *Going Troppo* guide by Haynes and Mulvany is an excellent start and can be supplemented with more detailed accounts.

These are personal reflections. I don't pretend to speak for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's but look forward to the next time I can visit and have a yarn. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags can be purchased from The Navigation Centre in Townsville or ordered through the chandlery at Townsville marina. If stuck you can always purchase smaller flags at a minimal cost from some tourist outlets and put grommets in the corners.

to Palm Island!

Here is the welcome from the Mayor of Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council. Please pass this on.

Boats visiting Great Palm Island

The Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council warmly welcomes boats visiting the Island. The Palm islands are part of the traditional lands and sea country of the Manbarra people, as well as home to Bwngcolman people from many other places.

Visiting boats are encouraged to fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait flags as courtesy flags. This is understood as recognition of the Island being in an Indigenous community. Naturally visiting boats continue to fly their national flags from the stern.

The Council is responsible for 12 islands in the Palm group including Great Palm Island, Curacao (Noogoo) and Fantome (Eumilli) Islands. The main township is at Challenger Bay on the west side of Great Palm Island.

Visiting boats are welcome to anchor off the township outside and clear of the marked channel. Vessels should stay clear of the wreck which is marked by a yellow isolated danger marker. Anchoring between this yellow marker and the green channel marker may suit.

Dinghies are welcome to use the beach beside the boat ramp. Crew from visiting boats are invited to visit the Council offices on arrival. This is not a requirement but reflects a long held tradition in Indigenous communities of making oneself known when visiting another's country. The Council is located in a one story blue building just north and across the road from the jetty. The Council is happy to provide information to assist visitors, including where particular facilities and services are located on the Island. In particular visiting boats are able to access;

- * Unleaded and diesel fuel from the Council service station across the road from the jetty
- * Water from the tap on the jetty or the Council service station
- * Provisions, ice and various other items from the General Store which is behind the Council building
- * A butcher and post office adjacent to the General Store
- * Modest amounts of rubbish can be placed in public rubbish bins.

A Boating Education Fund has been established by Council at the suggestion of a visiting yachtsman to support local young people learn about, and develop skills relevant to, the marine environment eg young people gaining various boating licences. The Fund provides one opportunity for visiting boats to make a positive contribution to the Island and its people. If visiting boats wish to make a donation to the Fund they may do so through the Council. Boats should feel no obligation to do so.

Other anchorages in the Palm Group are detailed in various boating guides. Visiting boats should be aware that some sites have special significance to Indigenous people's of the Island. Council is developing further strategies for going ashore and camping at particular places and the latest information is available from the Council office on request.

If you wish to ring Council ahead of, or during your visit, please feel free to do so on 07 47701177.

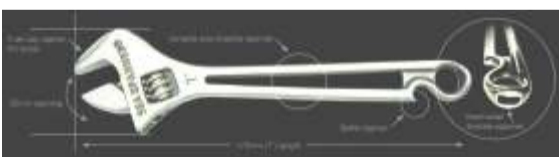


TCP is very pleased to have a part in this and hopes this initiative is the beginning of a new relationship between passing yachties and the Bwngcolman and Manbarra people. Besides the chandlery in Townsville, the TCPShips Store (www.thecoastalpassage.com) will be providing suitable courtesy flags if a source can be found. Our thanks to the author, Phil Crane, his son Dan for his diplomatic abilities, the crew of Tryphena for helping connect the dots and the residents of the island for their welcome.

About the author: Phil started sailing herons aged 10 at the Port Hacking Open Sailing Club in Sydney. Whilst he crewed extensively from the 1970's including two Atlantic crossings, and has owned a number of trailer sailers, *Kailani* is his first keelboat. Phil works at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane in the Faculty of Health, and can be contacted at kailani2008@hotmail.com



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Roos, Crocks and the long arm of the law..

continued from page 3

We sailed north under clear blue skies and each night the waning September moon found *Mariposa* in a different anchorage. I was again trying to find a "good" mechanic, and on the recommendation of a friend, I decided to put in at Cairns.

Unlike the painted over, tumble down tourist traps I had become accustomed to in the Caribbean, Cairns is new and modern and very clean. It felt great to wander the spacious side-walks through bustling galleries and arcades. There were, of course, the gift shops crammed with cheap (and not so cheap) souvenirs but even these typical establishments felt cheerful. At Sandra's insistence we went browsing, and in so doing I made this startling discovery. The shops were overflowing with souvenirs made from various bits of kangaroo. Sure enough, there were the tanned scrotum pouches she had warned me about; but there was so much more. They had fur covered scrotums, stuffed with synthetic gonads, attached to bottle openers and key rings. There was a rack of back-scratchers manufactured from kangaroo paws; their stubby black-clawed fingers reached out stiffly while the stump end of the grizzly hand tapered into half a meter of garishly painted lath. Ears, noses, tails: You name it - They had it! I even found a Roo rear foot attached to a chain. It looked so much like a colossal rabbit's foot that I imagine I could sell them back in the States as "Texas Jackrabbits". You know, display them right next to the "Jack-alopec" post cards. And then we found the pelts; piles and piles of them. These were soft white, deer-like hides with thick, plush fur and the characteristic tail. Sandra found their feel alluring and wanted one. Personally, I found their price a bit too dear so I slipped off to wait outside. A while later she emerged from the store but decided to take a quick peek at the post card carousel before moving on. She paused a moment, then pulled a card off the rack.

"Jeez...., look at this guy!" she said, holding the card up for my inspection. "I wonder what he is?"

Since I wasn't reading at that precise moment, I wasn't wearing my reading glasses. All I could see on the card was a blurry kangaroo-like creature. Its proportions looked a bit odd with huge feet, and ears sticking out like wings. So I said, "I think it's a rat."

What I meant was, Kangaroo Rat. I stood there trying to recall whether or not a Kangaroo Rat was even a kangaroo. Maybe it was just a rat with big rear legs; and come to think of it, maybe they're not even Australian. As I puzzled it out, I heard the cooing voice of a young woman.

"That's not a rat. That's a Joe-eee!"

She was using that voice peculiar to teenage girls, old ladies, and affected homosexuals. That "Oh it's so cute I could just die" whine. I looked over at this adorable blond gum-drop of a check-out girl and smiled. She grinned back at me playfully so I decided to tease her.

"Well," I said, "ya might as well stomp it while it's little, before it grows into a nuisance."

"Nooo!" cooed the grinning gum-drop. "You couldn't stomp a little Joe-eee!"

Sandra, feigning womanly support, joined in with the same tone.

"Yeah...., you couldn't stomp a little Joe-eee."

About one heart beat later she sprang her trap. Addressing the gum-drop in a straight business-like voice, she said, "On the other hand, you might as well stomp it. I mean, he's only going to end up over there."

She gestured toward the wall of gruesome souvenirs.

The poor girl slumped as if struck and moaned, "Yeah, I guess you're right." But then she brightened. "They really are a problem, you know. The sugar planters hate them!"

"I know the sheep-people have it in for Roos," I said, "but now the sugar planters want them gone as well?"

"Yes!" she exclaimed. "This is sugar country! And the Wallabies eat the young shoots. They do lots of damage and they're over running some places. I've seen pictures of thousands of them just lying in the fields."

"Dead?" I asked with alarm.

"No! Alive!" she giggled.

Thousands seemed a bit dubious but I let it go. We did the small-talk thing for a few more minutes before I headed out the door. I wanted to see just how prevalent this kangaroo/souvenir business was.

As we walked about, poking our heads into the various shops, the answer to my question became evident. Kangaroo parts were being sold almost everywhere. I didn't know how to feel. On the one hand, if they are overpopulating, why not kill them off for pet food and trinkets. It's as good a use as any, I supposed. But was that really the case? With paranoiac hives abscessing on the back of my brain, I began to scratch my head and wonder. And then, with cheeky indifference, I shrugged off the whole thing.

I mean, after-all, it's just wasn't my problem; and besides, I had "bigger fish to fry".

With *Mariposa's* ailing engine calling my attention and making demands upon my rapidly waning resources, I began searching out an engineering shop. Cairns offered a fair selection of shops, the only drawback being limited water access to these facilities. After several days of exploring various options I gave up on the place and decided to try my luck farther south, in Bundaberg. This turned out to me the right move.

As we retraced our route, the weather went totally flat with scorching days and calm, hazy nights. We were forced to burn our precious fuel and listen to smoky protestations from *Mariposa's* decrepit old engine. The going was slow. But it often happens that a shift in attitude can transform a short-coming into an asset.

Years ago, when cruising Queensland was only a distant dream, I spoke with several sailors who assured me that the QLD coast was too windy for reef exploration by sailboat. The water was murky; the wind unpredictable; deep anchoring on untenable bottom; sharks; crocodiles; jelly fish; and blah, blah, blah.... Clearly, these windging pessimists never saw the opportunity I was granted. The weather was crap for sailing but perfect for Reefing. So I headed her east until we found a wall of coral; sniffed my way up an arbitrary channel to a likely looking spot, and dropped my hook on a patch of sand. Short scoped and close to, we settled in for the night with high anticipation of the adventure ahead.

Early the next morning, as the rising sun burnt away the haze, we were "Buzzed" by our old friends in the Coast Watch airplane. They come in low and loud enough to rattle our coffee cups then swung through a slow bank and hailed us on the VHF radio. We went through the "name, number, destination", drill for their records; were officially photographed; officially thanked; and left in peace. We had a great day snorkeling the reef.

Early the next morning, as the sun burnt off the haze, we were again "Buzzed" by our old friends in the Coast Watch airplane. They come in low and loud, to rattle our coffee cups, then swung through a slow bank and hailed us on the VHF radio. Again, we went through the "name, number, destination", drill for their records; were officially photographed again; officially thanked; and left in peace. We had another great day snorkeling the reef.

Early the next morning, as the sun burnt off the haze, we were again "Buzzed" by our old friends in the Coast Watch airplane. They come in low and loud enough to rattle our coffee cups then....

Wait a minute! Is this saga getting tedious or what? I began to wonder if the sky cops really do have cameras and computers and all that other fancy crime-fighting stuff. Do they not communicate with each other? Can they not determine that my little sailboat is in the exact same spot it has been in for the past three days and that, out here on the reef, we have not had a crew change? Enough already!

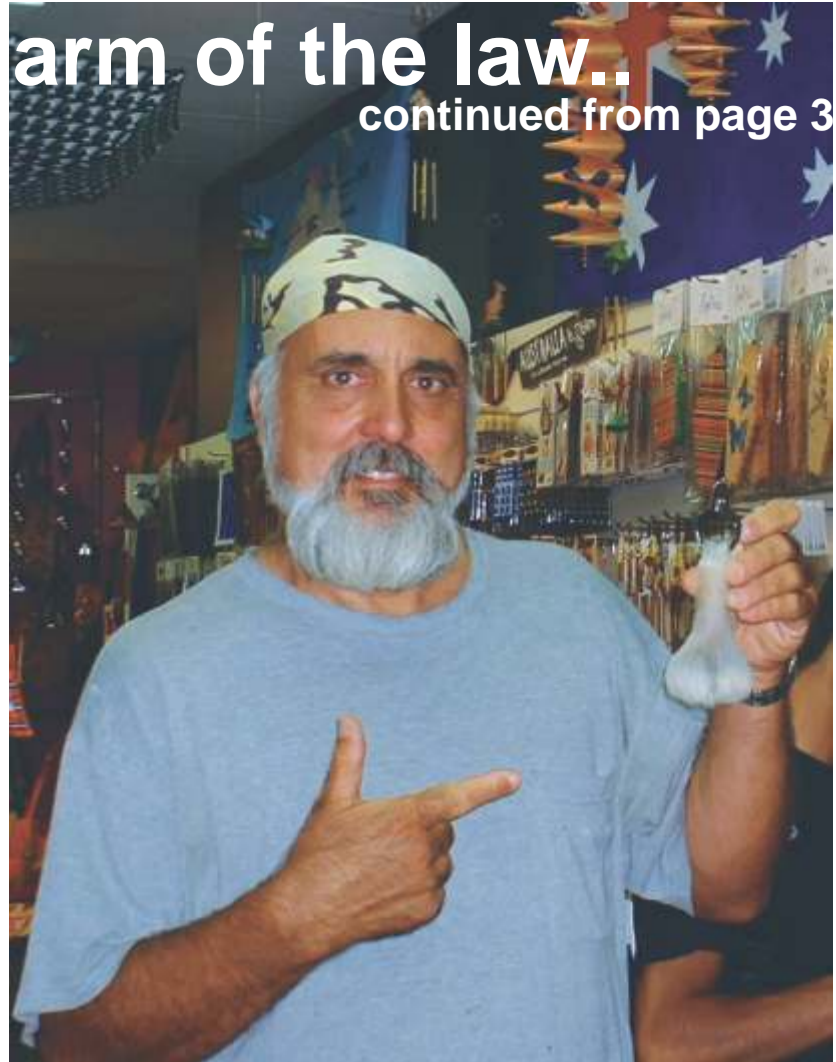
At this point, my annoyance was still rather trifling. Of course, I felt for the poor Australian tax payers who had to foot the bill for all this ridiculous, redundant "protection". After all, airplanes and officers don't come cheap. But that, like eradicating kangaroos, was their problem and basically none of my business. I decided against working-up a resentment and had a laugh instead. Little did I know then just how major a resentment I would develop a by month's end; but I'll save that yarn for later.

On our fourth morning on the reef, as the sun burnt off the haze, we were again "Buzzed" by our old friends in the Coast Watch airplane. Clearly, it was time to leave. We set sail for Bundaberg.

Under the advisement of a "Bundy" sailor and professional mechanic, I contracted a rebuild shop to over haul my engine. Crane access at Midtown Marina's work dock was easy and I felt comfortable tethering an engineless *Mariposa* to their fore-and-aft moorings. So now, all I had to do was wait for the shop to sort things out.

Sandra and I spent several days exploring "Bundy" before we discovered the little zoo on the west side of town. It held your basic menagerie of tropical birds, a corral with three deer, and a tall mesh cage where two emus served time. Beyond these enclosures, was a large pen set around several old shade trees. A small brook ran through this pen, past the trees, and fell in cascades to a pond on a lower level. An array of ducks and chickens gathered along this artificial water course which also attracted wild birds and lizards. It was upon this stage that we viewed our first live kangaroos.

continued page 30.....



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Roos, Crocks & the long arm of the law...

If I were to proclaim the encounter "exciting" or "fulfilling", I'd be lying to you. In fact, the Zoo Roos were a real disappointment.

From the various photos I had seen over the years, I had somehow gotten the impression that Kangaroos were deer-like in their features. Now, staring face to face with these peculiar creatures, I could see how appallingly mistaken I was. Sure, their stiff oval ears protrude deer-like from the tops of their heads, but there the resemblance ends. These beasts were positively rodentesque.

Rather than possessing the large, sad, limped eyes of a watch-full doe, their dull little rat eyes gazed off blankly. The truth is, the longer I evaluated the bizarre creatures, the more rat-like they began to appear.

They had pinched, narrow, Guinea Pig mouths with protruding front teeth. And then there's that long tapering tail. Sure it's big and developed certainly a kangaroo trade mark - but it shouted "Rat" to me. And how about those hind legs, locked in perpetual synchronization like a grotesque Jack rabbit's.

Again I toyed with the idea of exporting Roo feet to America, to be sold in Texas truck stops. "Yess Suh, everythin's bigguh heya in Texas! Them's the luckiest rabbit's feet on da planet!" Well, I figured with the Aussies exterminating the beasts to beat the band, why not turn a profit on Roo Feet while they lasted. I knew better than to mention this scheme to my vegetarian wife.

Sandra tossed a thick cabbage leave over the fence. It fell close to the dull witted Roo but went ignored. In the adjacent pen, the clear eyed deer caught her action and wandered over to the bars, twitching noses held aloft.

I made a few barking calls to the benumbed little Roo but he wouldn't even give me the satisfaction of flicking his ear. So I threw a big chunk of cabbage over the fence and nailed him in the ribs. He didn't move; not a muscle. He refused to even flinch. Amazing!

"Jeezum..., do you think he's drugged?" asked Sandra.

"I don't know but, if they're all this sedate in the wild... well, I guess their days are truly numbered."

"Maybe they don't like cabbage?", she offered.

"Yeah well..., Like it or not - you'd a thought the thing would move a little when hit with a cabbage," I said.

And then he did move. Not suddenly, but ever so slowly, by degrees, like watching someone come out of anesthesia.

First his nose made a barely perceptible twitch. Then it began twitching in earnest. A dull little light seemed to flick in his eyes, like an indicator lamp saying, "Yup, I'm alive in here."

He leaned down to the proffered cabbage and sniffed. Then he picked it up, or tried to, at any rate. His front paws - his hands - were no more supple or articulate than the mummified souvenirs we saw on display in Cairns. His ridged little fingers were all but useless!

I was reminded of my Great Aunt, now long deceased. Her hands were deformed and crippled with arthritis; as useless and pathetic as a kangaroos.

We watched the creature struggle with his treat, repeatedly dropping it in the dirt, and I said, "Ya know, these critters are a lot more appealing on post cards than they are in the flesh."

"Yeah," Sandra agreed. "Maybe they're better in the wild."

"Let's hope so!"

But how were we going to find "The Wild" without a car?

Since every Australian we consulted on the subject of Roo spotting seemed to agree that, without an automobile, the quest was hopeless. I decided to make some calls.

Wow! I couldn't believe the prices I was quoted on short-term car rentals. The local auto guys were all demanding a king's ransom, plus my first born child and left nut as security. I figured I'd have to rely on charity. But where does one apply for that?

A few weeks later, that helping hand was offered by the owner of a shabby little boat-yard on the banks of the Mary River. His name was Lyn, and he was only too pleased to show his tidy little town and its hinterlands to a couple of foreigners. This was sugar country.

We rattled along the top of a man-made berm in Lyn's hot old truck with the undulating plain stretching out before us. It ran off, green and soft, to a hazy, wooded horizon. Here and there, a slender, ancient Coolibah tree stood solitary watch over the sun-burnt land; its gnarled branches offering little shade and no relief from the relentless heat. Below us, irrigation ditches cut the open country into an intricately checkered game-board. Bright new cane stood about chest high in the neat patchwork of fields.

It was early evening now and the heavy air of afternoon was lifting. We had the windows down and a warm breeze came boiling through the cab. It felt cool by comparison and good. Lyn drove slowly, raising little dust, while Sandra and I scanned the fields for kangaroos. I wasn't sure what to expect.

Then Lyn braked to an easy stop. "Over there" he said, softly.

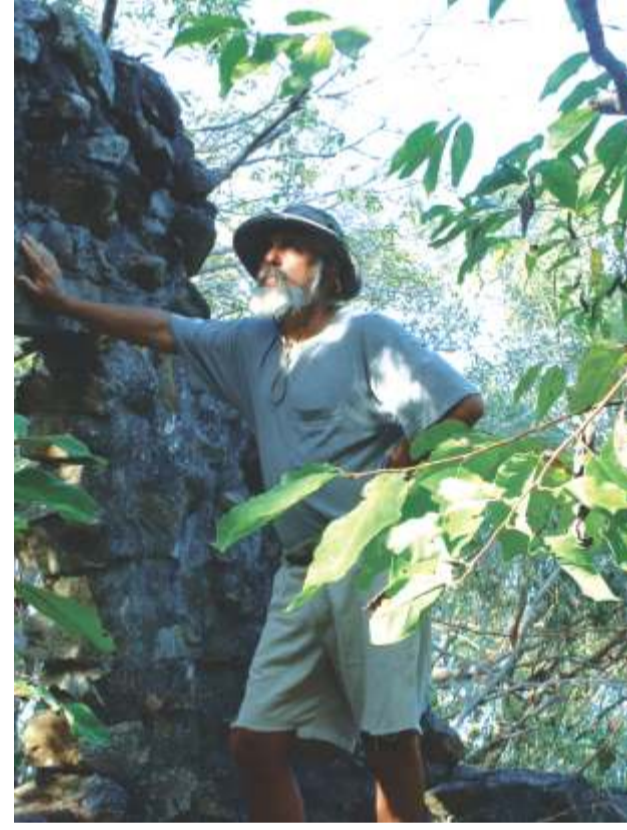
I followed his finger out across the plain to a tangled stand of brush crowding a watercourse. There, half a dozen big kangaroos stood erect, watching us. These guys were defiantly alert and evidently, very cautious. Lyn killed the engine. I slipped out the door on the far side of the cab with my camera in hand, but as I came into the open from behind the truck, one of the larger Roos made a few tentative hops toward the bush. This must have been the group's leader because his movement instantly triggered the others. They sprang. I zoomed in and clicked away. The results were not good but there it was: Our first "Wild Kangaroo" spotting.

Sandra had slipped up beside me. She was smiling. We piled back into the truck and moved on, chatting excitedly. Lyn entertained us with local legends and dubious tales of Australia "back when I was a lad". We spotted several more "Big Reds" but they were always on the move; noses out, ears back, and those heavy tails countering their tremendous momentum. We drove about for a while before heading back. It was dark and cool when we reached the boat yard and we were all laughing. We thanked Lyn for the tour, then made our way down the muddy river bank to our dinghy. It had been a rewarding day.

We would have liked to stay on longer, exploring the muddy river and the Great Sandy Straight but, like a traffic cop at a crash scene, the Long Arm of the Law kept waving us on. It seemed that, after three months of freely touring the QLD coast, we had suddenly become a threat to the health and well being of the nation; at least that was the feeling at the Bureau of Immigration. We were ordered to present ourselves for physical examinations and X-rays before our tourist visas could be



A "Zoo Roo"



extended. And of course, we would foot the bill for this disservice.

When phone calls and letters availed us no reprieve, I decided to take the proverbial "Bull by the Horns" and plea my case before the powers-to-be in Brisbane. We were granted a temporary visa extension (go figure?) and were summoned to headquarters.

It looked like our time in Australia was running out.

TCP note; Indeed it had. How would our fearless explorer dodge the long arm? And why does our government chase away paying tourists? Stay tuned dear reader... When Oddworm gets around to finishing this story it should be a ripper!

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To Rally or not to Rally

and ten tips if you do



Sunset in Indonesia

By Chris White, SY Chamar

Sailors, by their nature, tend to be somewhat independent persons who enjoy the challenge of the elements and often like to take the elements on alone. There is, just as on the land with the “grey nomads” with their caravans, campervans and mobile homes however, a growing international fleet of “greying nomads” pursuing their dreams on the water.

We are seeing rallies like that of Sail Indonesia with 120 participants this year, the Darwin to Ambon, both sponsored by the Indonesian Government, Sail Malaysia East and West, Sail Thailand, World circumnavigation rallies like the ARC Rally and now the Cairns to Louisiades Rally running for the first time this year.

This is a change from years gone when, if the desire struck strongly enough, individual yachts, or in some cases a couple of friends joined up, and off they went.

So the question now is, “To Rally or Not to Rally” and go it alone. Certainly this year saw a number of vessels first choosing to go through Indonesia alone but then actually joining the Rally. The Sail Indonesia Rally 2008 had participants from 14 countries, some round the world solo sailors, and many joining it as part of a bigger adventure on the high seas. There is more and more participation in these ‘organised’ cruising events.

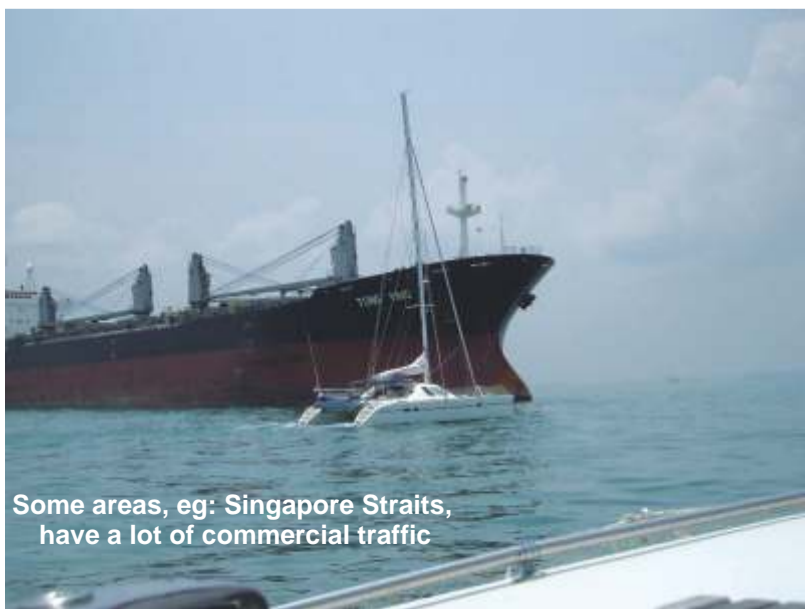
There is no doubt that it is great to get away in small bays, inlets and anchorages on your own boat, and to unleash that pioneering spirit and explore new areas. The desire to travel to different and exotic places is the dream that leads many of us to tirelessly work away to get the yacht, almost of our dreams, and to prepare it as best we can for ocean passages and distant destinations, be it the next bay up the coast, the Whitsundays, the Kimberlies or offshore.

We often lament that when we sailed the coast some twenty and thirty years ago, when Alan Lucas first started producing the Coastal Guides, most boats were owned and crewed by quite young people. Now the majority are those at or approaching early retirement maybe they are the same people! A quick browse of the skippers and crew of this year’s Sail Indonesia reveals a lot of greying hair!

Many of these sailors have time and also want to enjoy the cultural experience of distant and foreign lands. To experience unique cultures first hand by immersing themselves into these communities.

So just what are some of the advantages of joining a rally as opposed to “doing it yourself”? From our experience with the Sail Indonesia Rally this year we have been converted to strong advocates of the “Rally” for at least some of our offshore sailing for the following key reasons:

- It provides a focus on time and place, that is, it has a destination and departure date to work towards.
- It facilitates customs and clearance to countries like Indonesia which otherwise can be a bureaucratic nightmare



Some areas, eg: Singapore Straits, have a lot of commercial traffic

and possibly involve paying things like a bond of 20% of the value of the boat.

- Access to otherwise non accessible areas.
- Support from those who have done it before and from the organisers.
- Information, and this is one of best attributes. There is lots of information about the area, destinations within the area, things to do, does and don'ts, anchorages, radio nets and so on.
- In the case of Sail Indonesia, it certainly adds another dimension to the entire experience in that it provides a marvellous cultural experience along the way that words just cannot describe. We certainly gained exponentially more from the

experience than we ever anticipated. We accessed remote villages, attended welcome ceremonies, attended civic functions, feasts in every location that were just overwhelming and quite unexpected. We didn't just sail through the archipelago we were engaged in a most fascinating and wonderful cultural experience and welcomed every where we went.

• The opportunity to go off by ourselves as often and for and as long as we chose to so we really had the best of both worlds!

• Why re-invent the wheel let's benefit from the experiences of those who have gone before to get the most from our trip.



Sailing in company makes sunset anchorages just that bit better

The Sail Indonesia Rally, for example, takes a zig zag course through the Indonesia archipelago. All the key destination in the program have welcome festivities, cultural displays and programs, and welcome and departure dinners and functions for all the participants. It is easy to assume that these may be all similar but each area has its own culture, often its own language, and is quite unique in what and how they conduct these functions. Just when you think you are just about “welcomed out” the next one provides a unique experience you would not want to miss. In between the key destinations there is superb sailing, anchorages, bays and beaches, snorkelling and diving, remote villages, pristine waters like the Whitsundays of 30 years ago but 1000 times bigger and so much variety.

However with the growing following and support for Rallies now just might be the time to do it before they get too popular! If you are going to “Rally” the following ten tips might help your dream holiday to be just that much better:-

1. Information; get as much information as you can, from the web, past participants, cruising guides, and a myriad of publications that are available we have a box full of guides, prior participant's notes, and regional sailing information.
2. Anchoring; currents and tides run fast and irregularly in some overseas areas, make sure that you have a good anchor more than suitable for the size of your boat and at least 60 metres of chain preferably 100 metres, or warp to suit. You may be anchoring in reasonably deep water, and among other vessels. The vessel that drifts on anchor is not popular! We have found over the years that “brand name” anchors, whilst slightly more expensive are often better than their cheaper copies and a good investment. You and your boat are dependent on your anchor, and make sure you have a spare!
3. Dinghy and outboard; if the outboard on your tender is prone to play up, replace it. It is unlikely that you will be able to get parts (even spark plugs) or repairs done in many remote destinations to enjoy your cruising

you need a good dinghy of your preference and a reliable and suitable outboard.

4. Power; solar, wind, generators, batteries... make sure all are in good condition and it is good to average no more than 20% of your reserve capacity within each 24 hours.
5. Refrigeration; make sure it is right. Perishables are hard to come by in remote places
6. If you carry a laptop or PC on board get a combined printer/copier/fax you will be able to print photos out. The locals will love them but more importantly many ports require multiple copies of passports, cruising permits, crew lists and it is great to be able to print them out and copy them as required. For a couple of hundred dollars, well worthwhile and cryovac supplies of paper in small packs to keep the moisture out.
7. Cryovac machine; now available as small domestic units, are great not only for keeping your paper dry but cryovacing your supplies will help them last longer and you won't get blood from meat packs or worse still, juice from bait packs in your fridge or freezer. You can even cryovac bread type products but don't let too much air get drawn out or will they compress into heavy damper!
8. Sailmail via HF radio, can also be updated via internet or Satphone and is fantastic for keeping email contact, updating blogsites to keep friends and relatives aware of your position and activities, and for getting weather GRIB files and reports. In Indonesia, even at the Telkom sites quite frequently we could not get web pages to load due to their slow speeds and poor quality or standard email but the Sailmail went through in a flash. If all else failed we just sent it via HF radio which cost nothing. Sailmail is great when you are offshore.
9. Take your own dive and snorkel equipment. There are great sites to visit.
10. Sense of Humour/Patience; when dealing with bureaucrats in these countries the only person that will suffer if you are impatient, get aggravated or demanding is yourself. You have to take it as it comes, EXPECT delays, and you won't always get your own way. If you upset the fuelling people and they put a bit of water in it, whose fault is that? When sailing in fleets you are unlikely to get on with everyone, whilst you will make some great lifelong friends along the way you should also tolerate “the fools” gladly as they are just as entitled to be there as you. A smile at the locals will always get the best result!

In countries like Indonesia where you can still buy diesel, or Solar as it is called locally, for less than 90 cents a litre including delivery, have a great meal for two for less than \$3 and a days entertainment and tour including lunch for less than \$20, a few dollars spent on joining a rally is very cheap. In the case of Sail Indonesia we have had exponential value returned many times over from the entry cost, I cannot believe how much value it has been to us. Much of the benefit is sponsored by the Indonesian Government to encourage tourism and by the regional and local authorities.

We spent a month with the Rally, a month with a few other boats from the Rally and a few weeks sailing with one other boat. Every different experience was great!

The last piece of advice is “Just Do It!” adjectives cannot do justice to just how fantastic it is!



The authors boat, Chamar.

Contributor:
(Dr) Chris White Yachtmaster Instructor and Examiner and Master Class 5. Chris has undertaken a number of national and international trips both alone and in company with other vessels over many years. He is an advocate of having as much information as possible before going on any voyage and of sharing that information with others. Chris has owned numerous vessels both monohulls and catamarans.

So... What's it like up there...?



What a huge difference in behaviour at the block of flats in Parap, which I was staying at previously. In these flats drunken fights were a nightly occurrence. Drug dealing common if furtive and drug fuelled rages a regular feature. One "family" consisting of a mother, stricken with cancer, and her son in his twenties has the added horror of the son forcing his mother to go and buy his drugs at the expense of her medication. And I have deliberately omitted mentioning skin colour. In my sixty years on this earth I have not seen one single shred of evidence to show that the colour of one's skin is in any way related to one's behaviour. And what I have observed recently in Darwin and surrounding parts has only strengthened that opinion.

Where did all this come from and what has it got to do with a boating newspaper? Bugged if I know and probably very little. But you did ask where I was and what I was up to. And maybe I just felt like screaming it out loud and wrote it down instead.

Anyhow, moving right along! There has to be a boat story here somewhere.

Alyalunga and Umbakumba are on Groot Eyelandt in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Groot Eyelandt is, of course, Dutch for big island and it is the biggest around these parts. Umbakumba is a whitefella made up word that doesn't mean anything in the local language. It is near the south east tip of the island and has a great bay and even better fishing. Alyalunga is the main town and the name means something like 'a place where there is not much water.' It is basically a mining colony, with all the comforts. Open air movies on Saturday, swimming pool, tennis and squash courts (all free of charge), supermarket, post office, banks and various other shops.

Not to mention the watering holes like the ARC (Alyalunga Recreation Club) and the Golf Club. Alcohol may not be bought to the island nor consumed even in your own home, unless you have a permit or are on licensed premises. Licensed Premises has a strict meaning in law. The Arc and the Golf Club are both on the beach. You may consume alcohol on the licensed premises which extend to the grassed end of the property. You may not consume alcohol on the beach. Even with a permit you are only permitted to consume alcohol at home or the home of someone that has a permit. (You can get exemptions for special functions.) You may not consume alcohol even if you are a guest at the home of someone who has a permit. Strictly enforced. If you supply alcohol to a guest who does not have a permit then your permit is revoked automatically.

You may not live on the island unless you are working here or belong to a family that works here. And put one foot wrong and you're out. On the plane! Gone! For example, two girls decided to go visit a beach and have a quiet day out. They took a few drinks with them and then the silly buggers couldn't find the right track and decided to make their own through the scrub. The ecosystem is fragile, the mine is doing all the right things and of course the locals would like to keep what remains as natural as possible. Irresponsible four wheel driving through the scrub would very soon destroy what there is. So, it is not surprising that one of the inhabitants follows this very new track to find out what the emergency is. He couldn't think of any other reason for it. He was very surprised to find two girls having a picnic and about to crack open the first bottle of red. Upon gentle enquiry he was informed not to be so uptight and please sit and join in having a drink.

Whoops! The enquirer was a respected elder and council member. Mistake, big mistake! They're gone! While it all sounds draconian, it works, and works to the benefit of all. I have had friends that have reformed their alcoholism. I respect their willpower. It is something that I probably am not strong enough to do myself and I would never offer them alcohol. It is no secret that in many small communities alcohol is a curse and these two should have known better. A thoughtless act like that could have had terrible repercussions, never mind the ecological vandalism.

Knowing how easily you could be removed from this island paradise keeps every one honest, considerate on the road and remarkably well behaved. And island paradise it is. There is one resort on the island and it charges \$300 per night as a minimum. Crystal clear water, an abundance of sand and lots of hidden coves, plenty of sunlight and great sailing.

continued next page.....

By Julius Saunders, MY Nova Keria

Bob's note; Julius Sanders is one of those teachers that seeks the remote and sometimes troubled locations to work. I was curious to be told what these places may be like from a source I know.. so for the sailors that may pass this way... here tis; Photos by Julius and Jon

I'm at Alyalunga which is 50 k west of Umbakumba and 400k east of Nganmaryanga.

Well, you did ask.

Nganmaryanga is a small community in the Northern Territory, near the cattle station, Palumpa and close to Port Keats, otherwise known as Wadeye.

Port Keats consists of one concrete jetty near the end of a miserable, muddy, five mile stretch of water that has an eight metre tidal range and can leave the unwary stuck for hours in the middle of a croc and sandfly infested swamp. Not much difference as both bugs and crocs will eat you alive. Wadeye is about a kilometre down the road from Port Keats and is the community that made headlines around Australia for the gang related violence that flares up occasionally.

Nganmaryanga, which means "near the billabong", is a community of about 200 beautiful people, 50k from Wadeye, and they are as different as chalk and cheese. The only thing the same is their height above sea level, which is about two metres. That means that in the wet, things get very wet indeed. What makes the two towns so different is the people. Nganmaryanga has strong parents and strong community leaders that said NO to alcohol a long time before Little Johnny's governmental intervention. Where parenting was concerned, these parents did not take the easy way out and let the kids roam and do their thing. These young people are taught by the greatest teacher of all, by example. Very young children will mimic their older siblings. The older kids mimic the young adults. If the young adults are violent then the little ones will reproduce that behaviour. It is then made obvious on even casual acquaintance that these children are loved and guided until they are old enough to make informed choices about their behaviour. Even tobacco is an exception rather than the rule. In my two weeks there I only saw six people smoking. Absolutely zero alcohol and not a single voice raised in altercation. Most of the houses are in a 200 metre radius from the school and shrill voices would carry a long way on a still night.

About the noisiest bloke in the community was my neighbour across the street. He shoots crows from his front veranda. His stated reason is that he is preventing bird strike on his helicopter as he lands. Yep. Seen him landing several times about 20 metres from my back door. First time I thought it was an accident about to happen. His yard is full of junk! Discarded graders, wrecked trucks, broken down forklifts and other assorted bits of very heavy and very solid metal. Not to mention the odd gum tree or two. And he lands in the middle of it! As for the crows, the more he shoots, the more stench and flies and more crows that are attracted to the smell of carrion. Maybe he just likes shooting things. With the junk he has lying around, bird strike would be the least of his worries.

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Nothing like a beach cat!



Told you I'd get around to it eventually.

When I arrived, the first thing I noticed was a great big bay with two catamarans moored off the beach. To my great delight one of them was a Seawind 24. I have owned two of these great "bang for buck" boats and I could not wait to beg, borrow or steal a ride. Jon Johnson owns 2by4 as it is aptly named. It took me a week to track him down. My request was answered with resounding "yes" as he gets busy teaching and needs every excuse he can get to for a sail.

Our party consisted of Jon, the skipper, Craig who came along to see what sailing was all about and yours truly as ballast. Ahhhh... memories. There is a unique fibreglass sort of smell to a SeaWind24 interior that never goes away and is never forgotten. The three of us set off on a Saturday afternoon with a 12 knot northerly that backed to the east later and finally gave up altogether at sunset. There were few dark clouds that promised rain but failed to deliver. We soon settled down to a close reach towards Conexion Island that sped us along at about six knots under full main and a number 2 jib. My self imposed role as ballast was too soon interrupted. I was asked to take the tiller while Jon went looking for something. I asked if there was anything I needed to know about our course and was told "all serene". I thought Jon went looking for a spinnaker. Fortunately laziness prevailed. It was just too comfortable lounging about yarning on the wide open deck to mess with that four letter word, kite. I asked him about the sailing he does around here. Jon spoke of picnics on the beach, cave paintings, great fishing and island hopping. Of the old QANTAS flying boat base that still has the rails that they used to roll 44 gal drums down and a huge brick watertank, as well as assorted WWII bits and pieces. Makes your mouth water just thinking about it.

That morning I memorised the appropriate bit of the rusty but trusty Russian Cmap that I always carry around on my laptop. Not much needed remembering. A gutter between Burley Shoal and the south side of Conexion together with a south cardinal mark that showed the south end of Burley shoal. The rest of Millner Bay is between 4 and 22 metres deep. Nothing to get in our way. We had reached the end of the gutter and I suggested a gentle gybe to put us on a southerly course. This was voted on and passed unanimously. We barely had to shift our bums to get on the new course. Very easy and very restful. The happy sound of water whispering past the hulls and Jon's description of the waters around Groote adding a note of wistful contentment. Wish I could stay a bit longer.

Of course, I am here on a near perfect afternoon. With the wide expanse of relatively shallow water things are not always so. Jon confirms with his local knowledge that in anything over twenty knots, a short sharp chop makes things very uncomfortable and a blow brings tall steep waves that can tear boats off their moorings. A rocky bottom means the average anchor won't hold in such conditions. This is what had Jon out in the middle of the night last year as 2by4 was dragged towards the rocks at the north end of Millner Bay. He couldn't lift the anchor by himself in such conditions. Being side on to steep waves had him tossed about on deck. After battling for a couple of hours, his solution was to beach it. The joys of a

SeaWind24. An off the beach cat that can take you to Thailand.

Once on our new heading I offered the tiller to Craig and he accepted, with reservations. It turns out that he has never had the helm of anything but a tinnie and he has never been on a boat with sails. After a couple of minutes he looked like an expert, looking back at the scenery, up at the sails, lounging back and chatting, with one hand on the tiller extension. My only comment was that for someone that wasn't looking where he was going, he was steering a remarkably straight course. We'll make a sailor out of him for sure.

And as the sun sinks slowly in the west.... we sail past the ore carrier (Well, it is a mining town) and on to our mooring. Jon matter-of-factly mentions that there is a crocodile between us and the beach. I keep forgetting, the waters in this part of the world are full of snapping handbags. Sure enough, about 12 foot long and swimming slowly against the current, parallel to and 30 metres off the beach. People (I think there were three last year) are regularly taken by crocs around here and usually it is due to an alcohol induced lack of caution. Not to mention the prize idiot of a few months ago. It happened on this very beach. Yes, this one, where I am looking at a 12 foot monster between me and the beach and only a ten foot dinghy to get ashore in. And the bloody thing weighs more than the three of us and the dinghy put together.

(What a curious phrase "not to mention". When the whole purpose of the phrase is to introduce a topic to "mention") Any how, back to our prize specimen. This happened about six months ago. He waked down to the beach in an inebriated state, disrobed, and with alcohol fuelled bravado declaimed to all and sundry that he was going to swim to the croc trap, 100 metres off the beach, and back. Croc trap! I mean, hello..... they put croc traps where there are crocodiles to trap. If there were no crocodiles, they wouldn't go to the trouble and expense of laying a croc trap. So, if there are crocodiles..... why would you want to swim there?? Anyway, after swimming a few metres the first crocodile appeared. The police were called immediately. By the time he was half way there, there were three crocodiles surrounding him. That there were three crocodiles and not just one, is probably what saved him long enough for the police to come down. Crocodiles do not like getting into fights with other crocodiles (of similar size). Lunch was being served and they were probably sussing each other out to see who would take the first bite. What definitely saved him were the police attending the scene. They made a very fast and very accurate decision to fire at the crocodiles. The crocodiles then disappeared and our idiot swimmer returned to the beach. Idiot is too mild a word as on his return he started arguing with the police along the lines of... I know crocs, I've been here for years, I was in no danger, mind your own business. No, I am not making this up. I saw the picture of him about ten metres from the croc trap and

surrounded by three crocs. Look it up yourself in the Northern Territory News archives. A definite contender for a mention in The Annual Darwinian Awards and if the crocs had got him then he would have been uncontested for first prize.

So back to us and our pitiful little tinnie. (Word of caution. If you are coming this way for any sort of extended cruising or gunk-holing away from the main ports, bring a substantial aluminium tender with high sides. Leave the light little fibreglass tenders or rubber ducks at home.) We watched as the croc cruised slowly past us and past the children's Christmas party on the back lawn of the ARC. It continued past people fishing on the beach. Very aware people. They continued with the fishing but continuously tracked the croc with their eyes. By the time we did all the necessary tidying on 2by4 the croc was well up towards the loading wharf and well away from us. By the time we had the tinnie on the trailer it was dark. My last glimpse of it showed that it was very close to the beach but away from people.

And so to bed. On the drive home I asked Jon how he got 2by4 to Groote. His reply "I sailed it here from Darwin"

But that, gentle reader, is another story.

Jon and Julius cheese it up for the camera!



Craig seems to be getting the hang of it...



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HELPERS

By Allan McCarragher, SY Zenataos

Ever notice the photos of boat launchings, hull turn overs, sheathing jobs etc.? There is the harried owner, thinning hair, clothes in tatters, relationship on the rocks, all the usual stuff, and there in the background, quietly standing, or more likely, doing the last of the million and one jobs that still need to be done, is the helper.

Rarely does he/she hog the camera, too busy ensuring a successful outcome. Be they the inquisitive kid from next door who has an infuriating way of looking at a problem and solving it, the mate who will never get to build a boat of his own but can be a part of what you are doing, the knowledgeable guy whose insights and humour, skill and patience, can be the saviour of a project.

I've been involved in a few boat building exercises. I have limited skills and only moderate knowledge of the craft. I take on projects in much the same way as you eat a shit sandwich. Much bravado, take big bites and swallow like crazy. The last project was nearly the death of me. I was saved by two unlikely angels. One was a roly poly guy with an encyclopaedic knowledge of boat building and an uncanny ability to visualise a job and to utilise product in a way that saved me thousands.

I'm a romantic; I see the finished project skimming across the waves, carving a path to far off lands. Ed is a realist, he too sees the finished project but also all the steps in between in a manner that ensures that the job gets done. The second guy was someone I met on another job. Because of a car accident injury, he was awkward, and I at first thought of him as a liability. That guy, Brendo, worked harder than anyone I have ever met. He was ever reliable, positive and cheerful, despite some pretty bad things going down in his life. He also had that ability to look at a problem laterally, and quite often offering solutions that were elegant in their simplicity, whilst Ed and I mired ourselves down in how things



Zenataos, ex John Hitch boat *Wired*, modified with a little help...

"should be done".

Of course, there are rules in these relationships. Helpers get to put the owner down at every opportunity, mostly they were right. They get to say things like "It's all right, it's only Al's boat, when things go a bit awry. They get beers at the end of the week, and barbeques, when there is enough money, and when there isn't they provide tools, work sometimes for free, they work on weekend, they demonstrate the true meaning of mateship, and the Aussie spirit.

I've been criticised for taking on projects way beyond my means, but then I am a dreamer, and I believe in Angels, whatever their guise. Don't think for a moment

that a helper will work his butt off while the owner stands around puffing his chest out or chatting with mates. That's also in the rules. You have to get as dirty as everyone else, take the bruises and cuts, and glue in your hair, be prepared to spend all that you have and do without on lifes luxuries. If you show commitment and willingness a helper will be there and willing also.

Most of the amateur boats built, owe part of their success to a helper or two. I know that I could never have rebuilt "Zenataos" without Eddie and Brendo. I hope that if you are building a boat, that there is an Eddie or Brendo in your life, don't take them for granted. Credit where credit's due.



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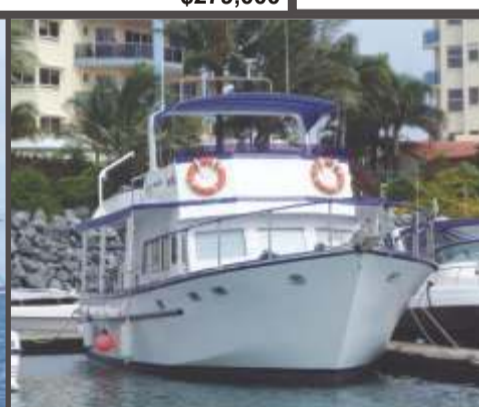
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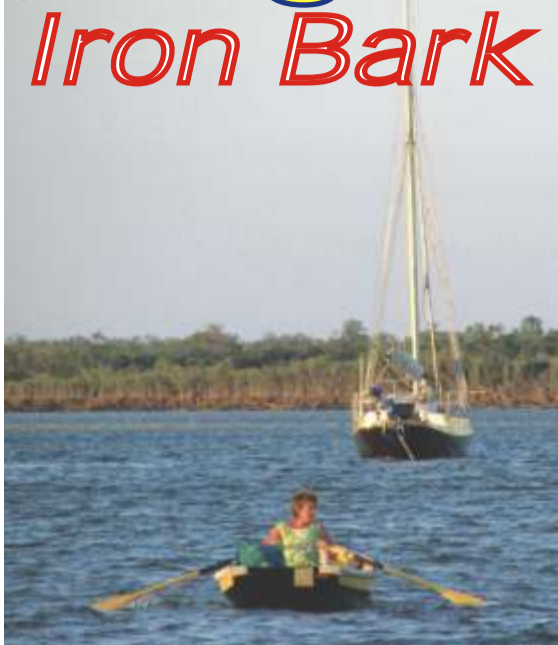


Passage People



Taking a sundowner at an anchorage not to be revealed... I watched from my perch next to my esky, a woman approaching a dinghy well up from the tide. I was about to offer a hand and then a set of wheels popped out of the dinghy and presto! She was at the waters edge ready to go! Hey! Wait a minute... I rushed over to make acquaintance. Annie Hill is the name.(wait.. I know that name.. Annie Hall? no no..) She laughed and the penny dropped! Annie has written a few books, "Voyaging on a Small Income" is one of them. She got in the boat and rowed straight out without missing a lick. Kay and I visited later aboard *Iron Bark* and there met Trevor. In conversation Good Old Boat came up and it turns out *Iron Bark* was on perhaps the most dramatic cover GOB ever had.. with the steel boat enveloped in ice of the glacial Arctic background! We had a delightful visit and learned much about this duo and if you wish to know more, Annie keeps a very interesting blogsite, just pop the name in a search engine. Trevor and Annie have a wealth of cruising knowledge and share very generously....

Iron Bark



Tonic



We are Tony, Lisa, Grace and Emma and have lived on "TONIC", our 10.6m Exodus cat, for over three years. In that time, we've sailed from Hervey Bay, over the top to Exmouth, Western Australia where we were living. Six months later, we had sold everything and were enjoying the slow road north around to the east coast. We've spent most of last year in the Whitsunday's and are currently in Sydney. We will be cruising back north soon to spend the rest of the year cruising "somewhere". Thanks for that Lisa and crew! In the photo above taken by PJ Halter in Sydney are from left, Emma (8) and Grace (10) and Lisa and Tony.. The photo under sail is supplied from the crew.

Patagonia Passage with...

Westerly Serenade

Frank Holden is a name that was regular in Aussie boating press but he got fed up with it so he decided to go sailing.. to South America.. I mean really **South**, in South America! And he somehow finds sailors willing to crew! But there are benefits. You never run out of ice for drinks... Hope you readers enjoy the pics as much as I do. Thanks Again Frank!



Jo and Frank with whiskey and ice

Hola Bob,

Just back from a recent 2 month spin down through the Canales Patagonicos. Usual stuff, coolish, wettish but lots of centolla (crab) and lots of fun. Finally found a crew that is happy living at ambient... The Kiwi sheila is Jo Mahoney..... an old Spitzbergen hand. The bloke from Cairns is Geoff Crowther..one of the Crowther mob... I reckon he caught the wrong 'plane... Bali...Chile...its an easy mistake

That is a small fraction of the crab we scored this trip... in this case one of the fishermen had a massive tooth abscess so we traded antibiotics and painkillers.. it was a feelgood sort of a day. Heading up the Atlantic coast to the River Plate this autumn to dry out (the boat) and get some work done.

Saludos,
Frank

Geoff with the ice for the Whiskey!



Another Queenslander gone wrong..SPLASH!

