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41st Edition
Mar. - Apr. 2010

The Coastal Passage

The Voice of the Boating Community

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SV Ise Pearl

Sailing in Pioneer Bay, Whitsundays



Photo courtesy of Whitsunday Traditional Boat Club

Australia Day at Tin Can Bay!



Julie Hartwig photos



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Reflections

By Alan Lucas, SY Soleares

Telstra Overheads

Hating Telstra is a national sport, the genesis of which probably lies in its privatisation a couple of decades ago. Then, as always, public outcry was totally ignored by governments of the day hell bent on selling off our country's infrastructure. And as for Telecom, as Telstra was once known, the question was why sell a publicly-owned entity that was leading in the world of communication technology, was making a profit, employed thousands of technicians and, most importantly, was obliged to be answerable to the public, not some imported CEO who sacked thousands, scrapped half our public phones, did not finish his contracted term (thank goodness) then grabbed a 30 million dollar bonus before calling us all racists?

Like most of us, I have a number of personal beefs about Telstra's attitude towards its customers, but recently it was my civil duty to warn Telstra of a dangerous practice that threatened all boaties. It had to do with low overhead cables, and for my trouble I was given the good old phone-menu run-around. I found myself spending collective hours on hold, dealing with staff unable to comprehend my information, or fobbing me off as if I were some deranged fool.

It started when Patricia and I were surveying rivers in our dinghy upstream of fixed bridges. A vital part of the surveys was to note overhead cable heights for the information of trailer-sailors launching into the upper reaches. As we all know, overhead cables carry high-voltage electricity and thus have nothing to do with Telstra: however, in many places we found single optic cables had been slung from the same poles a few metres below existing

electricity lines but *without new signage regarding their lower height*. The worst example was a cable so low that I could almost reach it by standing on the dinghy's thwart, yet it was still signed for the height of the original electricity cables of over ten metres! In one river alone we found six such breaches of the law.

If we, the common people, bring down an overhead cable with our masts, we are fined thousands of dollars (one mate copped an \$11,000 fine), but optic cables, apparently, can be flung across rivers without a statement of their lower height. Inequalities like this bring out the Irish in me so I called Telstra's thirteen hundred number and followed the prompts through countless menus and sub-menus that listed everything but the subject in question. With uncharacteristic patience, I worked through them over and over again until I knew I was getting nowhere.

That's when I did my nana and flung a few choice words at the phone, an uncharacteristic lapse that exposed something worth noting by all frustrated, fit-to-kill Telstra customers: Apparently certain hysterically delivered words automatically attract human intervention because a male voice suddenly asked if I was having trouble, to which I choked back my rage and politely said, 'You must get a lot of abuse if everyone with a problem gets this sort of run-around', to which he very honestly confessed, 'Yes I do. I'm the end of the line'.

We became firm mates for the few minutes it took to discuss the dangerous, illegal cables, to which he politely and apologetically said, 'This is a new one for

me; I'm sorry but I'll have to put you on hold while I check around for the relevant officer'.

I never heard from him again; but after fifty minutes waiting a very officious woman came on the line saying, 'Please state your complaint', to which I responded, 'I am not complaining, I am merely trying to warn Telstra of a dangerous practice with its cables over certain rivers', to which she replied, 'I can only handle complaints, and to do so I must have the address of the complainant before a technician can be sent'. Try as I might, she simply could not comprehend the nature of my call so she solved the problem by terminating it with a frigid, 'Thank you for calling Telstra', and slammed the phone down!

With half my afternoon shot down in flames and my heart threatening to fibrillate, I took a few days off then started the same insane roundabout again with exactly the same results; albeit, with just one small and interesting detail: I was passed to an Indian girl, a move that convinced me I was being fobbed off: not because she was Indian or a girl, but because she was almost certainly in an Indian call-centre where, if Australians in Australia could not comprehend the problem, what chance she?

That was when I remembered I had a friend deep in Testra, so I called him at home and ran the whole sorry mess by him and was rewarded (a month or two later) by a call from a young lady who would you believe, ran through the same Telstra company line of 'needing my address before a technician could be despatched'.

That was it: I gave up. I had done my best at being a concerned, responsible citizen and had hit the brick wall of a closed, self-serving system in denial. Months later, however, Telstra left a curt message saying the 'matter had been dealt with'. No admission of guilt or regrets for my permanently lost grey cells, just 'the matter had been dealt with'.

The separation of privatised government departments and the public that once owned them is a worrying trend because it denies input even when that input is important and well meant. I had struck it a few years ago with Sydney electricity when I phoned to request the height of unsigned power cables above a certain navigable channel (for my book, *Cruising the NSW Coast*), and had a similar battle with irrelevant menus, people who refused to understand the question and, ultimately, with a technician who said, and I quote; 'I'm not at liberty to give you that sort of information', as if I were some Cold War spy rather than a publicly spirited person anxious to save their cables and our masts.

And as if all of the above is not bad enough, there is the tragic story of a fellow sailor whose mast was brought down by cables that had been wrongly signed. He suffered serious injuries and took the matter to court, prior to which the company re-signed the height then challenged him to prove otherwise. The court case went on for years during which time - as I understand it, he died of his injuries.

And therein lies the bottom line: Corporations can afford our legal system: we cannot, and that's the real bottom line of our new world order.



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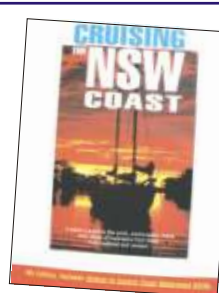


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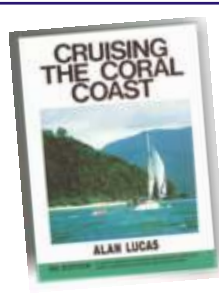
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Darwin to Ambon Yacht Race & Rally 2010

It's time to start planning your next adventure

Expressions of interest for the historic Darwin to Ambon Yacht Race/Rally are now open, with the event scheduled to start on July 24, 2010.

The fleet will leave from Darwin Harbour, travelling 600 nautical miles to the race finish in Ambon Harbour, at the village of Amahusu in the Spice Islands.

Participants then have the option to tailor their own holiday by continuing to sail through the Indonesian region and beyond.

Possible destinations include the picturesque Banda Islands, Komodo and its dragons, the coloured lakes and savannah-type country of the Flores group. Activities include plenty of hiking, sailing, diving, snorkelling, sightseeing and importantly, meeting the wonderful, smiling people of Indonesia.

Watch the website for further details on post-race destinations.

The Darwin to Ambon Race is the only international yacht race organised and run from Australia.

Started in 1976, it ran until 1998 before a break of several years. The race recommenced in 2007 at the request of the Indonesian Government and has been run three times since then by the Dinah Beach Cruising Yacht Association.

Yachts in the first two divisions will be treated as the premier contenders in the fleet and prizes will be awarded accordingly.

Send expressions of interest to info@darwinambonrace.com.au

Further information available from www.darwinambonrace.com.au

Incentives offered by the Indonesian Government for the 2010 race include:

- Free Cruising Permits (CAITS)
- \$100 Ambon Port entry levy waived
- Boat bond not an issue for participants

THREE DIVISIONS

Multihull Racing
Monohull Racing

and for cruisers..

a non-handicapped
'Rally' division



Contributors!

Stuart Buchanan, SY *Pluto*
Andrew Crawford, SY *Dilligara*
Dianne Challis, Boat Builder for now
Guy Chester, SY *Sanctuary*
Bob Fenney, SY *'Elcho'*
Jan Forsyth, SY *Sea Wanderer*
Johnny Gurr, ex SY *Mary Estelle*
Julie Hartwig, Tin Can Bay Yacht Club
Petrea Heathwood, SY *Talisman*
Alan Lucas, SY *Soleares*
Bob Norson, *issues, technical, & PP contributor*
Capt'm Oddworm, SY *Mariposa*
Keith Owen, SY *Speranza*
Julius Sanders, MY *Nova Kerria*
Harry Smith, MY *Melaleuca*
Carmen Walker, SY *Dreamweaver*
Vicki J., SY *Shomi*



What's your story?
"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.



Bob & Kay visiting Sandy & Julian on SY *Cat'Chus*

Every story has its story...

Its becoming just like a "family". It would be a pleasure to be able to cruise the world meeting all these contributors Bob & I have become close to over the years producing TCP. Many that I socialize with over e-mails and phone calls become instant mates. Along with the stories and photos sent our way we learn much more about TCP's contributors & readers as many have very interesting lives, past and present!

As we work on "The Boat" we reminisce about the days on *White Bird* cruising around meeting and enjoying the company while "out there". We are truly looking forward to days when we are out there again getting to meet you all!

As TCP begins its 7th year (yes, 7th! whowuddathunkit?!), I feel honoured to have met so many and heard the stories - so many I feel I have known all my "life as a boatie".

So here we go - another year, another great bunch of stories, photos, news, issues, and of course a **thank-you** to the advertisers who support TCP and make this all do-able!

Speaking of Advertisers, to all you readers that are downloading this paper to PDF: On the advertisers ads, **all the webs site & email text is "hot"**. Just hover over and **CLICK** to take you to their web site or email! Try this: www.thecoastalpassage.com/sundowners.html

Kay (the apprentice editor)

COULD BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY (BOM) BE PLANNING A VHF WEATHER BUMMER?

We were in Pancake Creek. As always, our day began by tuning into Rocky Met for the weather forecast on VHF Channel 82. The usual comprehensive, informative broadcast followed. At the end of the transmission, Mike informed listeners that BOM Queensland was to conduct a review/survey of VHF weather broadcasts. Listeners were invited to access details on the BOM website and put forward their comments.

So, I had a go at the BOM website to try to see what the VHF review was all about. Well, my "technical by-pass at birth" condition kicked in and I came up with a zero result. I could not find any reference to what was alluded to on the morning weather broadcast. Now, this created some confusion. The only mention of a review of broadcasts on the BOM website related to HF, not VHF. The last issue of *TCP* highlighted the HF review.

Next day, I asked Rocky Met where I could find out about the VHF review on their website. The weatherman who was on that day said he did not know about the website. But he did say that Rocky Met had received some emails with comments about the service. He gave out the address and again invited contributions.

Now being an ex-bureaucrat, I am inherently suspicious of reviews. With falling departmental budgets, reviews are often designed with a view to cutting services. "Rationalisation" is often put forward as the justification. Heard that before?

So I decided to pursue the matter further and rang Rocky Met by phone. The man I spoke to was most helpful. He said there was an officer at BOM HQ in Brisbane who was new to his job and wanted to have a look at the VHF service through fresh eyes. He gave me a name and number to contact. This I did.

I called BOM Brisbane. Yes, he said, there was a "review" being undertaken and discussions were being held with various consultative groups. The BOM web page would be updated to reflect this before Christmas and he would send me a copy (nothing to date). He inferred that responsibility for VHF broadcasts could pass to Marine Safety Queensland or other agencies, but was quick to assure me that it was early days and nothing had yet been decided. (Mmmmmm!) Consultations were continuing.

The BOM VHF weather reports we listen to are currently broadcast by the Weather Offices in Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns. There are also numerous other weather broadcasts from VMR's, etc. The BOM Website is excellent.

So would it be the end of Western civilisation as we know it if BOM were to stop their current broadcasts and leave it to others?

Answer: If BOM were to pull out, it would be impossible to interact with a professional weather forecaster and seek further information or clarification of the straight 3-day forecast. And that would be a significant loss in my view. There would be no opportunity to ask about the timing of approaching fronts, the likelihood of northerlies outside the 3-day period and other matters which affect the planning of safe passages for cruisers.

Ask yourself honestly, what would life be without Rocky Met?

So, I decided to go to print and have sent a letter to BOM. No response to date. I encourage *TCP* readers to do likewise. It is only by telling BOM how much their VHF services are appreciated and needed that the current broadcasts can be justified and retained.

A deafening silence on the part of yachties will only be replicated by an equal silence on the present BOM VHF weather report frequencies.

Keith Owen
SY *Speranza*.

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The Coffee Bean Estate

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Tin Can Bay Boat Sales

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Kawana Waters Marina

Mooloolaba Marina Office

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*N O O S A

Noosa Yacht & Rowing Club

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Bob Norson: sometime publisher, editor, journalist, advertising,
photographer, computer & marine heads technician, etc., etc..

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G'Day Kay & Bob,

Thank you for your inclusion of our team at Mourilyan Harbour is always good to get a plug for Coast Guard and we are pleased to be able to be a distributor of the Coastal Passage.

I read with a players interest your article about cyclone "Larry", and we've just stuck our heads up after two cyclones made threats and noises in our patch. Lucky for us neither came to much in the big wind department but we all got lots & and lots of lovely rain. Larry did not initially deliver much rain, (it did continue to rain for weeks after the event impacting on damaged buildings through water ingressing and causing permanent damage that would have otherwise been salvageable).



It also came in at low tide so the surge did not do the same coast/shore line damage done by Olga. QF15 had a cyclone mooring up the Moresby River on the western side of Maize Island. It had been in use for over sixteen years, the surge from Larry caused the anchor to lift out of the mud, the wind sent our vessel down stream over half a mile and up the far bank, over mature mangroves by 15m beam on. Some of the mangroves had 20cm plus diameter trunks.

The hull was not compromised at all but the port rudderpost & prop shaft were slightly bent. See the pic above; the anchor line is visible going from the bow to the anchor all still attached (anchor consisted of a large tractor tyre filled with concrete a 12m length of 14mm chain set in the concrete and a line of 28mm nylon rope

**Yours in Safe Boating,
Rob Bryant, Commander QF15**

Hi Rob,

We can thank Keith & Pattie of SY Speranza for taking time to include Mourilyan Harbour Coast Guard as TCP Distributors. Thanks again K&P!

And yes, Bob was up in Innisfail in the first lot of traffic they allowed past Cardwell after cyclone Larry. Petrea Heathwood had "Talisman" in the creek and sent us her account (TCP #19), along with a picture of your Coast Guard boat in the mangroves.

When Larry hit the coast, we were living in Bowen, Queens Beach, a block from the beach, and were cheering when Larry changed course away from us. Then the cold hard realisation that our good fortune was our

mates disaster. Be careful what you wish for. We did everything in our power to help where we could. Bob delivered a load of generators, tarps, gas.. etc.. to contacts up there to disperse. Also had a look around and took many photos. So many homes damaged by wind but ruined by rain.

Very pleased to work with and associate with a fine organisation. You people look after yachties. You are friends..!!! Need a favour? Just ask.

**Regards,
Kay & Bob**

G'day Kay,

Congratulations on another blockbuster edition of TCP!

Loved your coverage of the Sydney Hobart Race - particularly (tucked away at the bottom of Page 31) the result of the PHS Division which was won by a boat called SHE.

Speranza is a sistership to SHE, both being Olsen 40's. Peter Rodgers, owner/skipper of SHE has done the Sydney Hobart in her on a remarkable 15 occasions. SHE was placed 4th in her Division in the 2004 race.

Because of Speranza's connection, we always follow the progress of SHE on the Rolex race website - particularly the "yacht tracker" which gives real time updates of boat speed and position. Our experience on Speranza is that she likes fresh breezes but tends to struggle a bit in drifter conditions. As the report of the race says, the wind was up and down like a fiddler's elbow for most of the race.

We watched SHE as she went from 10 knots to 1.1 kts and then back up to 8.5 kts for most of the race. Her place on the leader board also went on a roller coaster. So her win is a real tribute to boat and crew.

So when Speranza sails by at high speed and one of your crew says -"Gee that's a fast boat!", you can respond authoritatively "Yes, she's the sistership that won the Hobart".

**Cheers,
Keith Owen, SY Speranza**

Editor:

Recently, my companion and I had the enjoyment of visiting Sydney and going sailing, which is a passion of ours.

Before visiting we contacted a number of yacht clubs in the area and received invitations from three, the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, the Sydney Amateur Yacht Club and RANSA, to check in with them when we arrived.

During our seven-day visit we managed to go sailing with the clubs on three occasions. We were thrilled to have the opportunity.

So we wanted to send a big thank-you to the individuals and clubs that extended such Aussie hospitality and kindness to a couple of sailors from the United States.

**Thanks, much!
Baxter Smith and Anne Morrison
Baltimore, Md. USA**

Hi Baxter and Anne,

It is so nice to get a letter like yours. The Australian sailing community is friendly and welcoming. We've known it, now you do and we are happy to share you letter with TCP readers.

**Cheers,
Bob and Kay Norson**

Those bikes on boats!



**The Mary Estelle in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand.
The arrow marks the "yellow bike's resting place."**

Dear Everyone,

Alan Lucas' item in the 40th edition of the TCP on the advantages and disadvantages of a bike on board a yacht sparked memories of my experiences.

It was an ordinary bike, yellow in color, which had to be lashed to the outside of the safety rails where it was exposed to everything the elements could throw at it. Medicinal wipes of diesel over the frame were meant to prevent rust. It didn't.

The useless piece of equipment was part of the "must have on board" items by the owners of the Transpac 49, built in Taiwan, and which we collected from the company's boat yard there in the mid eighties.. I was one of the crew, purser but more like dogsbody, for I was involved in every part of the action on board, and there was plenty of that! (But that's another story.)

The bike remained lashed to the rails until we reached Singapore, where Bill, the owner, and wife Lois, decided we needed a proper roof over our heads in the cockpit. The original bimini was in tatters after only a couple of months at sea.

It entailed a seven week stay at a boat yard on the insalubrious Kalang Canal, where craftsmen built the doghouse perfectly. It gave us shelter when we encountered even worse storms than those already experienced.

Singapore was where the yellow peril was unshipped for the first time, although I was the only member of the crew game enough to tackle the local traffic snarls.

On my forages to the markets in Mountbatten, one of the suburbs nearest the boat yard, drivers of large buses, or taxis, took great delight in coming quietly up behind me as I waited obediently at the red stop light, then blasting their horns the moment they changed to green. My legs whirled like a windmill in a gale once my backside was back on the saddle, while the drivers laughed uproariously at the female "round eyes" out of whom they'd scared the living daylight.

The navigator on board the "Mary Estelle" was a fanatic ham radio operator and was always grumbling about his lack of a decent aerial. Spotting some long bamboo poles being sold by a vendor for clothes lines out of upstairs windows in blocks of flats, I kindly bought him a pretty pink one.

But how to get it back to the boat? I had to carry it under one arm of course. In dense traffic. On a bike.

Nothing ventured nothing gained, and off I pedalled, the four metre pink bamboo under one arm, one end resting on the handlebars. Guess what? It was the perfect cure for aggressive bus and taxi drivers! They avoided me like the plague! If they advanced too close they'd get it through their windscreens. Those in front might even get it up their exhausts. Whatever, I was safe on the traffic packed roads.

Closer to the boatyard, however, there had been an accident. Two policemen stood by a car which lay on its side down a slight embankment. Oh oh, I thought, they'll get me for dangerous driving. I decided to be positive.

"Anyone hurt?" I called.

"One dead," was the reply, rather cheerily, I thought.

"Tsk, tsk," I said solemnly, shaking my head, and pedalled on. At the first corner I swung out of their sight and pedalled like the clappers in case they decided to ping me for carrying my weapon of mass destruction. Fortunately, they had more important matters on their mind, and I regained the safety of the boatyard.

My travelling companions were in fits of laughter when I recounted my expedition on the yellow peril, and the navigator was absolutely delighted with his pink aerial.

The only other time the bike was used was in Cairns. Bill decided to make a quick trip ashore with it, and just the effort of getting it into the dinghy had us cursing the space-taking contraption.

Bill must have done something wrong at the traffic lights, for a motorist yelled "You stupid old bastard!" Bill grinned, and said, "That's right!"

PS: The Mary Estelle has, with new owners, circumnavigated the world twice. Bill and Deb Hawkins and their three young children, Edward, Alice, and Wil, completed their circum last year. She's now called Vagabond Heart. The Transpac 49 is a strong seaworthy boat.

Y. M. "Johnny" GURR, Renmark SA

More on those bikes next page...

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more LETTERS...

What are the Facts..?

Dear TCP,

In response to the letter from John Herlihen in TCP #40, I would like to offer a different perspective..

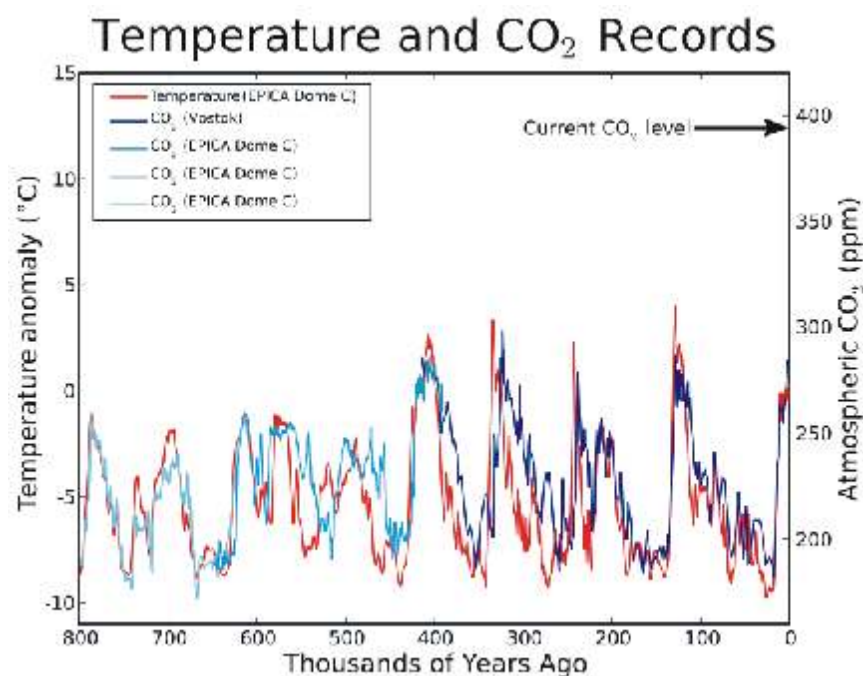
John referred to a hot summer in Sydney, 1790 to support the idea that climate change is exaggerated but I contend that a single event, though interesting, doesn't tell the story.

In the year 1816 the world went through particular hardship when summer barely existed in the northern hemisphere. Blizzards were occurring in June of that year and freezing temperatures destroyed crops, creating food shortages and 8 fold increases in prices. [1] And all because of one volcano in Indonesia. Shows how vulnerable we really are. One really big dust cloud can wreak temporary havoc; wonder what a few million smokestacks can do over a 100 years?

In numerous studies of atmospheric gases trapped in ancient ice flows and glaciers, the content of Co2(carbon dioxide) has been measured and plotted against known climatic events going back 800,000 years. This information has been duplicated in a great variety of locations and involving a great number of people employing scientific method. [2]

You may notice I use wikipedia for much of my references. That is because the site is subject to peer review. The information is scrutinized by the best and must be accurate and supported with outside reference material.

According to wikipedia, the Co2 content in our atmosphere for the last 100,000 years has varied between about 200 parts per million (PPM) to 280 PPM except for very recently. Current is 380 PPM. Most of this wild increase has occurred in the last 50 years. A blink in earth terms. This is why many believe that it is already too late to prevent change. The earth may not have caught up to the existing levels let alone the future additions to it. The natural cycles that had occurred normally took thousands of years, there may be no precedent for the rapidity and magnitude of the most recent change in Co2. I don't think anyone really knows for sure what to expect.



This figure was produced by [Leland McInnes](#) using python and matplotlib and is licensed under the [GFDL](#). All data is from publicly available sources. See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Co2-temperature-plot.svg>

As the graph above illustrates, over time, Co2 and temperature follow about the same curve. For hundreds of millions of years, plant life has been concentrating carbon from the atmosphere through photosynthesis and that carbon was buried with the dying plant life. Every year we may be bringing up as much stored carbon in fossil fuel as it took nature a million years to put underground.

There has been a mountain of misinformation and intentional misdirection on this debate. What to watch for? The public figures that invent quotes or distortions. For example, an important figure in the debate, John Houghton, first head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC) has been quoted thousands of times from a book he wrote as saying, "Unless we announce disasters, no one will listen". This line has been used to indicate that scientists exaggerate to make their point. The problem is he never said it. Watch for those that attack the man instead of the science.

I can't know what the exact consequences are if the figures above are correct, but those that deny loudest, that do express certainty on the subject, seem to have the weakest case upon examination. In absence of certainty, shouldn't we behave most conservatively? What if we have it wrong? We know WE will be OK but what of future generations? How will history judge us?

It's entirely understandable that there is a lot of confusion on the subject but this may be the most important debate of the last 1000 years, we have to get it right.

Regards,
Bob Norson

[1] See wikipedia "the year of no summer"

[2] See wikipedia "Carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere"

Those Bikes on Boats!

Hi TCP,

On reading Alan Lucas on Bicycles reminded me of our friend many years ago (maybe 30 years), who always had a nice looking bike where ever we met up with him in a town or city.

He explained it was easy, you just go to the local police station and tell them you had your bike stolen. Then described it as colour Blue and a Malvern Star and lost from a nearby street (usually Station Street if the train ran through the place)....

There was always plenty of blue Malvern Star bikes then at any police station so he chose one he liked! Then on leaving the town would just leave it near the police station to be found again.

We still go to the "Salvo's" when we arrive; it helps the charity and we return the bike to resell or give it on to some "yachties kids".

Carole, Yacht Chantilly, Cairns

Cheap or not in Asia???

Dear TCP,

After spending the past 6 years cruising around SE Asia, in particular Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines we have returned to Australia. We are still scraping ourselves off the floor over the cost of everything.

Then we picked up Coastal Passage and read that Anne on *Hybreasail* thinks things aren't so cheap in Asia.

Maybe some prices have gone up, but so has everything all around the world.

Maybe chandlery prices aren't cheap but almost without fail the chandlery in Asia are owned and run by Westerners: Aussies, Brits, Yanks. Who do we point the finger at for that??

Unless you like fine dining, meals are a third of the price. We have found that fresh vegetables bought in Asia at the open markets keep three times longer than our so called 'fresh food people' and at a third the price.

Even to buy a good steak in Phuket, while expensive on Thai standards, was still vastly cheaper than Australian prices.

We had to haul out shortly after arriving back and have been gobsmacked at the prices, nearly \$1000 per day including the work done, and a weekend where nothing was done. \$1000 would more than adequately cover a week's hardstand and work from our experience, in Phuket, Malaysia and Philippines.

Marinas are another case in point. Australia has a lot to learn about looking after cruising yachties with swimming pools, tennis courts, rubbish service, trolleys, restaurants, mini-stores, and cocktail parties included in the fee and the maximum we paid in 6 years with a catamaran was \$30 per day!!!! (and that included the daily paper being delivered to the boat every morning)

My husband assures me that the 12 year Philippine rum bought at \$3.50 a bottle is excellent, and as Anne mentioned beer, wine and spirits are incredibly cheap at the Malaysian duty free islands (Ironical that Malaysia is Muslim!!)

We did not have any extra costs incurred when involved with Immigration or Customs. We were only ever asked for the going Government rates.

We had our catamaran re-painted in the Philippines with Dupont paint, it cost around a third the going Australian prices, (quite apart from hardstand costs). It has gone up in Phuket admittedly.

The best antifouling paint we had was the cheapest available in Malaysia and that was approximately half the Australian price.

We weren't aware of having kerosene enhanced diesel we may have but after all our time in the area, we've never heard of that happening.

Yes, the phone calls costs are phenomenal. Telstra's International Roaming is ridiculous we kept our Telstra number purely for emergencies and used the **local sim cards** everywhere.

The Philippines puts Aussie to shame too in its amazing mobile phone coverage and therefore internet. We were in some pretty remote spots in Palawan and still had phone service and cheap.

While we haven't been in Thailand, peninsular Malaysia, or Indonesia in 15 months (we were in the Philippines) I don't imagine that everything has become anywhere near as expensive as good ole Aussie. We love Australia, but boy, it is expensive.

My husband's comment of "we can't afford it" when I decided it was time to go home certainly rings true our budget has had to be doubled.

Ruth & Jock Main, SY *Backchat*
Feb 2010

Dear Ruth & Jock,

Thank-you for your input. Your comments on Asia will be helpful to the cruisers thinking of making that trip.

It should be noted that Anne Wilson did say in her article (TCP #40) that she did find the food prices were great and the pre paid phone cards are the way to go for calling overseas.

It was interesting that you noticed that many Chandlerys are run by "Westerners". Hmmmm....

Also I hear there can be great disparity in cost from one place to another. So local knowledge and dumb luck can play a part.

As far as I can see is its important to be aware of who you are dealing with, and be respectful to the "locals", as it is their country.

Regards,
Kay

WOOPSIE - aka "Correction"

I my article on "Tempest Tantrums" (TCP #40) I said:

"I learnt that between 10 degrees either side of the Equator, in what is traditionally called the Horse latitudes there are rarely cyclones or typhoons"

This is incorrect. The latitudes 10 degrees either side of the Equator are called "The Doldrums" not the Horse Latitudes.

The Horse latitudes are in fact between 30 and 35 degrees. This region, under a ridge of high pressure called the subtropical high, is an area which receives little precipitation and has variable winds mixed with calm.

One theory as to the name is that the term horse latitudes originate from when Spanish sailing vessels transported horses to the West Indies. Ships would often become becalmed in mid-ocean in this latitude, thus severely prolonging the voyage; the resulting water shortages would make it necessary for crews to throw their horses overboard.

Tropical meteorologists long believed the belt 10 degrees either side of the Equator was cyclone-free because the Coriolis effect was too weak to spin a budding tropical depression enough to form or sustain an organized storm rotation.

The Coriolis effect, produced by the Earth's rotation, is non-existent directly on the Equator and increases in magnitude as one travels toward the Poles. It's the force that gives mid-latitude cyclones their spin and veers all large-scale motion toward the right in the Northern Hemisphere.

(Source: Wikipedia)

Jan Forsyth, SY *Sea Wanderer*

letters continued page 9...

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News... and views

Port Binnli seething over marina cash grab

A Berth Owner Says...

LETTER TO EDITOR

Last Monday night, 15th February, as the owner of a berth at Mackay Marina I attended a meeting to discuss the proposed 900% Seabed Rental increase that The North Queensland Ports Corporation (Queensland Government Agency) proposes to levy on Mackay Marina Pty Ltd (Port Binnli) who will then have to pass on the increase to berth owners.

Firstly I must question the use of public money by North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation

in taking out a full two column advertisement in the Daily Mercury on Saturday, 13th February, of which over two thirds directly related to the proposed rental increase and how fair it was and what good guys they are as they only have the future of Mackay at heart.

How their figures are arrived at is beyond belief. Quoting from NQBP's own Valuation Report which says "As a check to our primary approach we have utilised the direct comparison method of valuation whereby we have assessed the value of the land using our knowledge of land values in the surrounding locality and making adjustments for shape, size, zoning and access and for the fact the property is below the high water mark."

With my limited knowledge of valuation I am of the belief that the First Rule of Valuation is "Compare Like With Like". Nowhere in that extract is there any mention of a comparison with other marinas. All it says is that land values in Mackay were taken into consideration. And I was of the belief that by berth was below water.

Here is a comparison of other marinas in Regional Queensland as provided and verified by Port Binnli without actually naming the marinas:

Marina 1, No. of Berths 500, Annual rent per berth paid to Government \$500

Marina 2, No. of Berths 240, Annual rent per berth paid to Government \$414

Marina 3 (Proposed), No. of berths 600, Annual rent per berth paid to Government \$250

Marina 4, No. of berths 275, Annual rent per berth paid to Government \$60

Marina 5, No. of berths 110, Annual rent per berth paid to Government \$27.50

Mackay Marina, No. of berths 479, Annual rent per berth paid to Government (existing \$136) Proposed \$1,878.92

All leases vary from between 75 years and 100 years.

Mackay was becoming a Destination Port (Cruising boats stopping off here to get supplies and do maintenance). If the proposed increase goes ahead this will no longer be the case, as it will be cheaper to call in somewhere else. Therefore businesses will suffer, Hotels, Restaurants, Marine Hardware Stores, Grocery Shops, allied Tradesmen to the marine industry etc. The list goes on. Mackay's tourism reputation suffers again.

Also in its advertisement the North Queensland Bulk Ports corporation states that the increase will be used for engineering maintenance of the breakwater which is estimated (another guesstimate) to cost approximately \$1 million per year. The marina only takes up half of the southern breakwater as the other half is in the commercial precinct belonging to the Bulk Ports Corporation (Sugar, Grain, Fuel loading facilities), does this mean that the actual cost of maintenance is \$2 million or is the Marina being asked to pay for all of the maintenance. Also seeing that the roadway is used by the public is the Department of Transport being asked to contribute to the annual maintenance. (TCP note: What is involved in maintaining a rock wall and how would you spend a million \$\$ doing it?)

An increase of 900% is being shortsighted, stupid and greedy.

It is hoped that our State Member, The Honourable Tim Mulherin will represent his constituents and do his utmost to see this matter settled in a fair and equitable way.

Richard McGuire,

"Bad Habits",

Mackay Marina.

Mackay Marina operator Port Binnli has joined berth owners in slamming a proposed hike in seabed lease payments that it says threatens the viability of the marina

The rents paid to the State Government for each berth are set to rise **from \$100 a year to \$1878.92 a year** based on a new valuation system and angry berth owners say they are being gouged.

Port Binnli director Malcolm Hall-Brown said annual rents paid in other marinas in the region ranged from \$27.50 to \$414.00 per berth and that contrast was ridiculous and unfair.

The Mackay Marina is the only facility in the region controlled by NQBP and the only marina subject to the new valuations.

North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation (NQBP) has advised Port Binnli of the likely increase, a charge the operator will have to pass on to the berth owners.

"NQBP is forcing berth owners to make a loss, eroding the value of their asset because no yacht is going to cop those fees when they can go to any of six marinas in the Whitsunday-Mackay region."

"I accept that the rents were due to go up, perhaps to as much as \$275 a year, but this is outrageous, inequitable and out of step with the market," he said.

Mr Hall-Brown said NQBP was looking to recoup costs of maintaining the seawall, but he argued that was in breach of the original undertakings made by the former Mackay Port Authority ten years ago.

"Port Binnli came to Mackay as a small company with a lot of imagination and took a lot of risk to build the marina facility," he said.

"That maintenance cost has always been the port's responsibility and should not be passed on to operators or owners," he said.

Berth owner Syd McKenzie said the pain of the fees hike would also be felt by local businesses as yachties bypassed Mackay.

"My two berths, which I had hoped would be an investment for my children, will be worthless when that happens," he said.

"But it's not just berth owners who will feel the pinch every business associated with the marina is going to suffer," he said.

TCP note: The state is trying to portray this as a tax on the rich that have had it good too long. The fact this amounts to a new fee on top of already high fees by world standards, is ignored or obfuscated and of course yachties are rarely "rich". If this precedent succeeds most berths in Queensland can look at a huge increase in cost to owners the next time their seabed lease comes up for review. The impact on the marine industry in Queensland would be felt and small investors will be disadvantaged by the devaluation of their berths. Development of new marinas may be discouraged. It's too bad Queensland doesn't have a genuine industry representative body to support the fleet and supporting industry. **Bob Norson**

TIDE BOOK ERRORS

Peter Kerr of Lizard Yachts asks and is answered

Have you read the new tide book 2010?

Check out safety equipment page 152-153.

Go to PFDs and read about tenders.

The main issue is the difference between Division 5 (Tenders that don't have to be registered) and Division 6 for tenders that have to be registered. I have been asking Martine Safety Queensland (MSQ) about this. Below my email to MSQ. How many cruisers will be fined for this???

Peter asks:

Question: Why have MSQ placed in the Queensland tide tables 2010, Information under the heading Safety equipment - PDFs, an extract from the transport opts 2004 regulations under section Part 2 safety equipment -division 6 Other safety Equipment for tenders.

Section 34 - states that this division applies to a tender, if the tender is required to be registered. This is for Commercial vessels not private Tenders.

I need confirmation of exactly what is required of a private tender. This is a serious matter and I hope you can help.

What does a member of the public tell the Water Police or fisheries patrol people, if they demand compliance or try to prosecute anyone on the Life Jacket information in the Tide Book in relation to tenders?

MSQ ANSWER

Hello Peter,

Maritime Safety Queensland's people who look after our publishing have been advised of the miss-information in the tide tables/rec boat guide and will make the appropriate amendments. This should alert enforcement officers to the anomalies in the published information.

Regards,

Ken Gray Senior Advisor (Maritime) | Safety Standards Branch Maritime Safety Queensland | Department of Transport and Main Roads

TCP thanks to Peter of Lizard Yachts for the information and MSQ for initiating the correction.

Watch Out

For "GO SLOW"



There was some confusion in the Sandy Straits recently when the "Go Slow" beacons were deployed in some areas. When the EPA web site was examined it stated:

"Vessels must travel off-the-plane in go slow areas to reduce the risk of striking turtles and dugong, and avoid damaging surrounding habitats with boat wake and wash. All vessels, including personal watercraft, must also not undertake motorised water sports in go slow areas."

This 'advise' seemed to indicate all vessels in the prescribed area.

However, according to The Marine Parks Act 2004, page 28, Division 4, section 28 (3); This section does not apply to—
(a) a navigation channel; or
(b) an area in a go slow area to which a transit lane notice applies.

So, it appears a skipper is allowed to plane in a marked channel in these areas but should slow immediately upon leaving the channel. As these markers are there to warn of times and places of particular risk to wildlife, TCP advises great care regardless.

Thanks to Peter Lamond for assisting in the research for this.

and even more **LETTERS!**

More on anchor lights

Hi Bob & Readers,

I have just read letter from SY *White Horse* in issue 39 regarding anchor lights & your editorial footnote.

I was so disturbed by your stance on anchor lights I felt compelled to comment. May be next you will champion that cars don't need headlights where there are street lights, because hey, we all know that other cars are on the road.

The "rest of the world" follows USL Code as does Australia, all vessels must be lit between sundown & sunrise [local law can deviate].

Light must be visible for 2 nm, hence garden lights are non compliant and the vessel is unseaworthy [being unseaworthy is also an offence].

We can go even further because vessels are required by law to exhibit day shapes as well. Even if certain anchorages did not require an anchor light, in my opinion your duty of care would override this and you would still require an anchor light, & I bet the insurance companies would agree. If you own a vessel that cannot power an anchor light overnight whilst unattended [or attended for that matter], I doubt its ability to operate a bilge pump efficiently either, people like this expect other people to "keep an eye" on their property.

The number of boats that are left unattended, not used [some for years on end], nor maintained is ever increasing. Unlit & unmaintained vessels become navigational hazards for responsible boats.

To all boats, I say this: you are not the only person who owns a boat, you do not hold exclusive right to the waters, hence there are rules to make boating safer and enjoyable for all! Bob you say "If you don't like it piss off", and I say if you don't like rules that are reasonable for the safety of all, then ditto and go back to being a land lubber where you obviously belong. Your vessel is your responsibility! These **vessels** are **unseaworthy**, and should be **removed from the water**.

That would free up some mooring/anchoring spaces wouldn't it!!!

PS. I am also sick to death of vessels anchoring [usually unlit at night] in marked navigational channels. This is the equivalent to parking in the middle of the bloody hiway because you don't want to drive any further so lets not let anyone else either.

Regards & safe boating to all,

Lorna,
[20years boating, 15years live aboard for you whom want to know]

MV *Torrespearl*

Lorna,

In the letter and response you refer to, I agreed with most of what Barry of SY White Horse had to say but "very respectfully" disagreed on the point of required lights in a mooring field. Lets try to keep our disagreements in that tone Lorna.

But to address your points; I did not state and do not recommend that boats not use lights at night when anchored or underway. But using your car analogy, neither would I accept a requirement for parked cars to display lights. Just as in boating, when you are taking your craft into an area reserved for 'parked' cars or boats, the responsibility for avoiding a collision is the moving craft/car, not the parked one.

Your assertions on the regulations are incorrect. From the MSQ "Collision Rules": "Mooring areas": Special mooring areas are located around Queensland and are shown on boating safety charts (shown below marked 'Small Craft Anchorage'). Be aware of these areas as moored boats are not required to be lit at night. When navigating near, in or through a mooring area drive slowly, keep wash to a minimum and keep a lookout for people in the water, small dinghies and trailing ropes."

I would also take issue with your assertion that a boat that has blown out its anchor light is "unseaworthy and should be removed from the water". Lights can fail at any time.

You can steam into Airlie Beach or Nara Inlet at night if you like, putting your welfare in the hands of a filament of tungsten wire but I will navigate with greatest care and if I note a vessel without lights near where I anchor, I may paddle over in the morning to alert the skipper his light had failed last night (or to gently remind skipper to remember this time).

And the remark you attributed to me "...piss off"?? Please read the 'editorial footnote' again. It isn't there.

I believe the rules and normal conventions regarding anchor lights are sensible and proper. We adhere to them and encourage others to as well. Using an anchor ball during daylight, especially in an area not normally used for anchoring is good sense. Anchoring in a channel should be avoided.

I do not believe the rules should be changed and let's avoid inventing rules out of thin air. I'll look out for myself and encourage others to make that as easy as possible, but I will look after myself.

Safe boating begins with you, not the other guy. Lighten up and enjoy the cruise.

Regards,
Bob

Hi Bob and Kay,

I am hoping some of your readers might have some advice for me, since they are such a knowledgeable and helpful bunch.

I am looking to get my boat certified for telecommuting, working from home, but the Workplace Health & Safety inspector only has experience with office buildings. Have any of your readers been through this process, and may be able to point me in the right direction to find the appropriate guidelines for computer workstations onboard vessels? Your assistance would be much appreciated,

Regards,
Les, SY *Fairwind*

Hi Bob and Kay,

Thanks for the great rag. I would like to ask your readers if anyone knows who owns the grassy area in between the old Mooloolaba Yacht club building and the marina?

I have been launching my sailing dinghys from the little ramp here since 1988 when I first joined the now demolished dinghy sailing club.

I am aware that there has been much conflict between the marina and the yacht club over recent years but up until last weekend nobody has ever questioned me continuing to rig and launch my laser sailboat in this area.

Regards,

Peter

Hi Peter,

We did ask the Mooloolaba Marina management about the use of the area you are referring to and they stated:

The marina owns and is responsible to maintain and insure premises including the grassy area adjacent to the old dinghy ramp. The marina will allow dinghy sailors to use that area for rigging and launching for a fee of \$10 per day per dinghy which includes use of the car park and toilets.

The management states there was a disagreement with an individual that was asked to leave after informing them of the fee which the sailor refused to pay.

So, hopefully this will help the users of the area have a better understanding of what you can expect when its time to launch your sailing dinghy there.

Regards,

Kay

MINING ANNOUNCEMENT PREMATURE

Dear TCP Readers,

Conservation and community groups in Queensland have responded with grave concerns to the recently announced coal mining deal in the Galilee Basin in Central Queensland between China and mining magnate Clive Palmer, and the speed with which Premier Bligh has jumped on the bandwagon. The groups say that it would be premature to assume an automatic green light.

"The project has not yet secured mining leases", says Mackay Conservation Group's Patricia Julien who heads up the alliance of regional groups. "Its holdings are only coal mining exploration permits according to the Queensland Department of Mines and Energy Mining Tenure online maps. Yet reports state that the mining will begin at the end of 2010 or in 2014". The impact assessment for Waratah's development began only late last year, and due to the scale of their proposal it will require years of assessment for it to be at all credible.

"This would be a massive project so its environmental impact assessment should not be fast tracked. Under threat of adverse impacts are a Nature Refuge, grazing and agricultural lands, stock routes, towns and ecosystems in a region where less than 3% of the land is in protected conservation areas. We do not want to see further environmental losses in Central Queensland because of exports of more carbon pollution to China. This is a strategy which will come back to haunt us as climate change causes decline of the Reef and our tourism, grazing and agricultural industries and loss of our woodland bird and other arboreal species. Neither do we want to see the usual check the box approach to community engagement by the coal industry and the State government".

"As this project and the adjacent Hancock projects plan to export 100 million tonnes of coal a year, that represents the release ~300 million tonnes of carbon pollution annually. These mines will produce around 30 million tonnes per year each of export coal. By comparison most mines in the neighbouring Bowen Basin each produce between 2-9 million tonnes a year of coal."

The larger size means larger scale impacts on the environment, communities and coastal ports and marine areas. Proposed port development at Abbot Point to accommodate the mining industry is out of scale with the site.

Environmental reports also identify mining's heavy reliance on water supplies and that the sector has always taken inexpensive water for granted. Less water, declining water quality and growing water demand and costs are creating challenges in the mining sector.

"These are already being felt here, Mrs Julien confirms. "Water taken for mines means less or no water available for development of other industries and pressure for more dams such as the current Connors Dam project for water for coal mining."

"In pre-empting the process, the Premier is sending mixed messages by behaving on the one hand as though the Government's own processes and climate change are minor considerations when it comes to mines and on the other saying people and business must take steps to reduce their carbon footprints. It is a high risk strategy to put all your eggs in the coal basket"

"We want sustainable proactive rather than reactive leadership and planning for Queensland."

From,

Mackay Conservation Group / Residents Action Association Inc. Bowen / Save Our Foreshore Whitsunday Inc / Bimblebox Nature Refuge . Contact details for these organizations available upon request.

TCP NOTE: Our investigations into coal mine water use has revealed disturbing facts. We do not believe the state is being honest about where our water goes and what happens to it after use. See the TCP website "issues" section for more. According to wikipedia China has about 50% more coal reserves than us yet they buy our coal now. Who's smarter?

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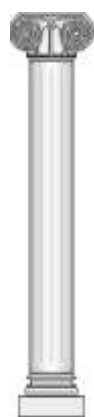
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TCP's Forum

Drinking, Yachting and Anchoring

By Andrew Crawford, SC Dilligara



Recently there has been significant discussion in the yachting community about the law in relation to consuming alcohol whilst operating a vessel. The vast majority of people understand and readily accept that if you are under way and you are the operator of a vessel and over the limit then you are liable for prosecution. No real debate there at all. And neither should there be.

Further, I and most people I know strongly accept that navigating under the influence is a silly and dangerous thing to do, and nothing in this article should be construed as excusing dangerous or risky behaviour. To the contrary, I and others like me are scrupulous about ensuring we don't put ourselves and others in danger.

It is interesting to follow the history of drink driving legislation. Not that long ago the law considered that vessels should be treated differently to cars. It used to be the case that you were in trouble with the courts if you operated a vessel under the influence of liquor or a drug (this was a matter of fact, but the law also deemed that you were *Under the Influence* if you had a blood alcohol concentration of point 15 or higher).

It was only the operators vehicles on roads that had to consider the issue of being "over the limit" that is having a blood alcohol concentration of over point 05.

Over the years the laws that regulate vehicles being driven within metres of each other at 100 kilometres per hour became applied to vessels as well.

Interestingly as well is that the law makes no differentiation between the 25 foot sailboat operating at 6 knots flat out and the 50 foot motor boat moving along at 15 knots, or the large container ship at nearly 1000 feet operating at 22 knots.

Where however the law gets really interesting is when we start to consider your liability as a skipper when you may be over the limit but safely connected to planet earth.

The key concern here is what constitutes being "in charge of a vessel that is being used or apparently about to be used in navigation". It is on this point that the law is very confusing, those that administer it are confused, and we the poor public are left scratching our head.

At this stage I should indicate that the basis for this examination is the law as it is written in Queensland. However, most traffic type legislation has been harmonised over recent years (fancy public service term for being made pretty much the same across Australia).

Also I should issue a very strong warning I am not a solicitor or any other form of legal practitioner. I do not hold out the content of this article as any form of legal advice. I am however a citizen who should be able to have an understanding of the laws that apply to me.

A very short review of a couple of the provisions of the law is relevant here. The issues connected with being under the influence of liquor or a drug and or "being over the limit" are contained in the Transport Operations Road Use Management Act.

Section 79 of that Act is mentioned in part below (the full extent of the act and section is available on the internet at www.legislation.qld.gov.au and from that home page follow the links to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act). In the excerpt below I have taken out the references to trams, trains and vehicles to make it a little easy to follow.

So another disclaimer, if you want the exact text of the legislation you need to go to the government web site.

Driving etc. whilst under influence of liquor or drugs or with prescribed concentration of alcohol in blood or breath

(1) Any person who whilst under the influence of liquor or a drug(a) drives a vessel; or (b) attempts to put in motion a vessel; or (c) is in charge of vessel;

(2) Any person who, while the person is over the general alcohol limit but is not over the high alcohol limit (a) drives

vessel; or (b) attempts to put in motion a vessel; or (c) is in charge of a vessel; is guilty of an offence

(11) Subsections (1) to (2J) apply to and with respect to any person (e) who drives or is in charge of or attempts to put in motion a vessel that is being used, or is apparently about to be used, in navigation.

What the guts of section 79 means is that if you drive or attempt to put into motion, a vessel over the limit you're in trouble, as you should be. What it also means is that if you are in charge of a vessel over the limit then you are in trouble.

The key concern here is what constitutes being "in charge of a vessel that is being used or apparently about to be used in navigation". It is on this point that the law is very confusing, those that administer it are confused, and we the poor public are left scratching our head.

The popular view espoused by the authorities is that you are caught by this section in the following circumstances (text taken from Maritime Safety Queensland web site):

Skippers of recreational boats should also be aware that, when their boat is anchored, it may still be considered to be used for navigation, and the blood alcohol limit applies. The limit does not change unless the boat is securely moored in a marina, to a jetty or wharf or on a swing mooring.

So the MSQ advice (and its only their opinion and not law) is that if you are anchored you must stay below the limit, but if you are in a berth, tied to a wharf or on a swing mooring you are okay. The theory behind that is that you may have to shift your vessel if it is at anchor whereas the other circumstances would not require you to be in a position to move your vessel.

Whilst that is what the authorities say it isn't what is written in the law. It is simply their interpretation of the law, an interpretation that is not binding on the courts. In researching this article the only case law I could find on what amounts to being in charge of vessel being used or apparently about to be used in navigation, is a case from 1878. Yep that's 1878.

For those who are interested the relevant case citation is *Hayn v Culliford* (1878) 3 CPD 410 at 417 where the court held that a ship need not be in a state of motion to be in a state of navigation. It is interesting to note that this case doesn't appear to mention being anchored or not, what it does appear to say, in nautical terms, is that if a vessel is under way it need not be making way to be navigating.

The definition of navigation in contemporary literature, for example the Macquarie dictionary, is "the act or practice of passing on water". So the old case suggests that a vessel need not be moving to be navigating and the contemporary dictionary interpretation is that navigation involves motion.

When one reflects on the 1878 case and the dictionary definition one is struck by the thought that what both definitions really say is that if you are under way then you are navigating irrespective of whether or not you are making way. It would appear to me that this is a much more sensible basis upon which we should consider the application of the drink driving (navigating) laws.

Conversations with Police and Transport department officers indicates that both organisation believe that being anchored renders you liable but interestingly, I am advised that there is a Crown Law advice to these organisations which indicates that being on a mooring could also render you liable.

continued next page...

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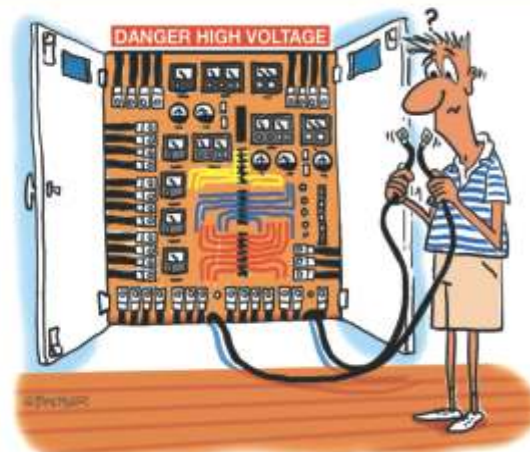
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Drinking, Yachting and Anchoring cont...

So in summary: the law about being over the limit is related to the following concept:

IN CHARGE OF A VESSEL BEING USED, OR APPARENTLY ABOUT TO BE USED, IN NAVIGATION.

There is no statutory definition of what the term used in navigation means, so we have advice from Qld Transport, differing advice from Crown Law, and reference to old cases. Further, it gets very confusing when talking to officers of both organisations, as they quote randomly from a range of other provisions, e.g. USL codes and the like.

The reality of criminal law is that the prosecution must prove each and every element of any offence beyond reasonable doubt.

I really think the time has come to make this law clear. What the law should say is that a vessel underway is captured in regard these laws. That would appear to be more sensible than the current dog's breakfast.

I mean the really scary thing is if you accept the Transport Queensland view that being used in navigation means being anchored, then someone who is on shore at a party some 20 kilometres away from their boat may still technically be "in-charge" and thus liable.

The law actually recognises this as a stupid concept. It actually recognises that if a person has parked their car and is not in it then they should not be held to be "in charge". Subsection (6) of section

79 says that a court is not to convict the person in charge of a motor vehicle if all of the following issues exist concurrently:

- the person in charge was not in a compartment of the vehicle containing the driving seat, or not being in the vehicle the person had manifested an intention to not drive, and
- was not so horribly affected by the alcohol as to be unable to understand what he was doing, and
- the vehicle was properly and safely parked, and
- the person didn't have a history of drink driving.

So taking that section, if you park your car safely and legally and get in the back seat, you don't have a horrible drink driving history and whilst you are reasonably well affected, you aren't so sloshed as to be clueless, then no offence. All terribly reasonable really. It encourages people to choose not to drive.

The yachting analogy is to consider that you are anchored legally and safely, lights on etc, you have a wonderfully clean record and you are two or three drinks over the limit but far from legless.

In the car, fine no dramas, in the boat, liable for prosecution and conviction, if you believe the MSQ web site.

Remember that your 4 knot clunker goes a little slower than your family sedan. It is beyond me why the government seeks to extend the net this wide, whilst providing a defence clause when it comes to cars.

Its also interesting to note that if you are over point 05 but not under the influence of liquor you can legally ride your horse down the road, and belt along on your pushbike in peak hour traffic. (see section 79 subsection7)

Two more things:

Firstly, the powers that police have to enforce these laws are very wide.

Section 80 of the Transport Operations Road Use Management Act provides that if a police officer even suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a person was within the last preceding 2 hours driving or in charge of or attempting to put in motion a vessel being used or apparently about to be used in navigation; they (the police) may require a person to supply a specimen of breath. So you are cruising up the coast your vessel is anchored in Airlie Beach, you are ashore at the sailing club and you are going to stay ashore and sleep at a friend's house, and you are having a big night, according to the current Qld Transport interpretation you are still covered by the legislation.

To take this to the extreme, your vessel is anchored in the Brisbane River, and you are sitting on a plane 30,000 feet in the sky, best not to have a drink, cause you are still in charge according to the Transport definition, but I am sure no court would agree with them in these extreme circumstances. It is the non extreme circumstances that worry me, anchored safely and on the beach at Horseshoe bay having a drink. The MSQ interpretation is that you are quite clearly in charge.

And again; please do not interpret this discussion to mean that in any way shape or form I condone the unsafe operation of vessels. I don't. I spent the better part of my working life in law enforcement and have arrested more than my share of drink drivers, I have investigated more than my share of fatal traffic accidents and delivered more than my share of death messages.

I simply hate badly written and interpreted laws that cast too wide a net.

I hate laws that seek to control behaviour that is demonstrably not causing risk.

Finally, I again indicate that I am not a lawyer; get your own advice and stay sober on the water. But if you are one drink over and at anchor and get done, I strongly urge you to seek quality criminal law advice.



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Death at Sea

By Capt'm Oddworm, SY *Mariposa*

I spotted the raft a long way off, erratically blinking like a tiny orange beacon, winking from the crests then disappearing altogether as it slid into the troughs. At first I mistook it for another poly-ball line marker adrift in the stream but even at this distance I could see it wasn't round, so I alerted the Captain.

"Bail off the port bow, Tom!" I called, using the popular misnomer.

He eased off the throttle and squinted across the seas. His eyes were not sharp.

"Just another ball," he muttered, pushing the throttle forward.

"Look again, Skip. The bastard's way too big; I think it's a raft."

"Raft?"

"Yah, ya know; Life Raft?"

We were hauling back our fishing gear, thirty miles of heavy monofilament main-line rigged with hundreds of baited hooks, white Styrofoam bullet floats, great orange poly-balls, and two dozen "high flyer" radar reflectors. We rolled in the trough as Tom held our vessel on a plodding course parallel to the run of the main line. He worked from a mid-ships steering station, exposed to the weather like the rest of the crew. The big, hydraulic spool hummed as it took up the slack line; leader snaps jumped from the sea trailing silvery rivulets; waves slammed our beam ends bursting into spray and foam. We all watched the bright orange form dancing on the waves and continued to fetch our gear.

Tom grabbed a flying snap, released it and handed it off to Eric who ran it back to the leader spool. At every glance the distant object grew larger until it became clear to every one's eye. I was right: There was an inflatable life-raft ridding the swells upwind and only slightly off our track. We could intercept it without parting our main. Tom made the necessary corrections. We came abreast of the raft. Eric snagged its pointed tent-like awning with the long gaff and hauled it close along the port bulwarks.

This was the moment of truth. Were we to become heroes, rescuing some poor castaway from a gruesome fate, or were we too late?

Tom's hail went unanswered, so I bent double over the rail and lifted the tent flap with the short gaff. A foul halitosis engulfed me as the sea action made the soft bottomed raft exhale. Inside, was a soggy chaos awash in a sick orange glow. Was there a body tangled in the mess? I couldn't tell. Another call: Still no answer. I knew I'd have to climb down into that stinking pool. After all, I always fancied myself the hero.

To my great relief, I discovered the raft was void of both human life and human remains. I stirred around in the muck a few moments hoping to find some indication of the raft's origin or of its previous occupants but found nothing. Back on deck, we spun the thing around on it's axis a few times expecting to find the ship's name or some kind of I.D. number but again came up blank. There was nothing left to do now so we cut it adrift. Tom tried to call the Coast Guard with a Lat-Lon but failed to raise them on the H. F. radio. We went back to work.

We didn't talk much that day, avoiding the banal chatter and customary antics of our age and trade. The catch was good but there could be no elation. A contemplative melancholy hung over our ship; a silence punctuated by occasional speculation.

"Maybe the poor bastard went nuts and tried to swim for it." Yeah, maybe. "Maybe he got pulled in by a fish or tossed out in a big sea or something." Yeah, or something.

Curiously, we always said He; never they and certainly not She. No way! Equally strange, we never considered the possibility that our castaway was picked-up by a small vessel, like a sailing yacht, and the raft was simply discarded. So we were glum.

But the emotions of young men run fast. The following morning we were back on our game, joking and grab-assing around as usual. After all, "We" were all born lucky.

Death at sea is a truly grim proposition, and not one that many of us care to contemplate. I have only glimpsed the reaper from afar, when a mate would wander up quay and ask "Did ya hear 'bout Joey", or Pete, or whatever the latest poor bloke's name was.



Oddworm on watch

Or even more ominously, a blow would pass and we'd hear that the "Terry Ann" or "Miss June" had not returned or even checked in on the H.F. net. Of course, a late or silent vessel did not necessarily indicate a disaster; but all too often that frightful harbinger proved portentous. I have followed the sea for three decades now, both commercial fishing and sailing, and have known more than a few young men who have simply gone missing - no May-Day, no flotsam, no nothing just gone.

And I can't help but wonder how many stout hearted lads did not go down with the ship. How many struggled on in life boats and rafts, fighting the lonely fight in vain. How many ships missed the tiny red spark of a hand-flair; how many sailing yachts slid silently by in the blackness. How many castaways have I left in my wake?

This has become one of my standard contemplations when I am tempted to catch a little shut-eye on Dog watch. Over the years, I have become determined to find and recover those lost souls drifting across the infinite blue dessert. So far, I have not succeeded.

The basic dilemma is this: Life never plays out its dramas as I have written them in my head. Events always unfold in some surprising way that catch me off guard and require quick thinking which, unfortunately, is not my strong suit. This is especially true when I am tired. And so, having admitted all this, the following yarn may prove more curious than shocking.

continued next page..

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We were sliding along nicely on a rollicking blue sea with the barometer on the rise, fluffy cumulus lambs scudding overhead, and crests blowing off in dazzling white. This time, I had managed to time our down-hill run across the South Indian Ocean in perfect sync with the weather. A fresh port-quarter breeze drove my cutter, *Mariposa*, along at a comfortable clip, with her boom swung way out and prevented to starboard and her big genoa poled out to port. Running wing-n-wing is always fun in the open sea where there is scant need of swift manoeuvres, but I was not rising to the thrill. We had been racing along for well over a week now and, having only my wife for crew, I was tired; really exhausted, I should say.

On watch once again, I had assumed my typically vigilant pose, sprawled out on the starboard-side cockpit bench. Yeah, I know it sounds slack but you'd have to see my layout to appreciate the advantages of the situation. From my reclined position I can, of course, clearly view the little black Windex arrow atop my mast; but with a slight glance aft I can also monitor my Hydrovane self steering device. I have an unobstructed 310 degree view of the horizon and, with little effort, I can read the large block numbers on my GPS computer. In fact, my set-up is only a trifling 50 visual degrees short of perfect. And so, to keep a proper watch I am occasionally forced to stand and trudge across the two meter void to the port side bench and gaze at the usually empty horizon. Making such a fuss over keeping watch may sound silly as you read this, but when suffering extreme sleep deprivation it is no laughing matter.

I lie on my bench watching the sky, listening to the eternal crash and hiss of following seas, wondering what horrors loom in that 50 degree pie-wedge of ocean, until stark paranoia sends me crawling to port. I stand. I look. Nothing; alas. I scan a quick 360 and slip back to my soggy bench.

But on this particular bright and bracing morning that hidden wedge of sea was not empty. When I made my mundane survey I did a quick double take. There was a yacht bearing up on *Mariposa's* port bow, close reaching along an intercepting track. What were the odds? Until then, I had never even seen another yacht in mid ocean. I held my course.

The vessel was still a safe distance off so I tried hailing her via radio to no avail. Now I was getting angry. It's bad enough getting run-down and terrorized by ships but this was ridiculous. I tried giving her the customary five short "danger/doubt" blasts with my God-deafening air horn but got no rise. I decided to stand on my rights.

Our paths converged until the mystery vessel drew close enough for me to observe her general condition; a condition I immediately labelled Derelict. She was a good deal larger than *Mariposa* and had once been painted

white; but now her hull was grey and streaked, and coated with brown ocean slime. Goose barnacles hung in great mossy patches from her bottom; long green tresses trailed from her boot-stripe. Her reefed main showed a gash of daylight where it had split from mast to leech. Shredded ends of sacrificial cloth flapped like banners from her jib. Birds lined her deck rail and perched atop her "dog house". Not even in my fishing years had I seen so many birds on a moving boat. A chilling apprehension settled in my stomach; something was very wrong here. And now we were way too close.

At first it appeared that *Mariposa* would pass just ahead of the intercepting vessel but now I wasn't sure; it looked all wrong. We were going to collide. I cursed myself for being such a stubborn Jack Ass. I - always so proud of my seamanship, always so critical of the imprudent fools who clog our waterways - was about to loose my boat, not to mention my life and that of my poor trusting wife. Seamanship is Not about Rights; it is about doing the right thing. There was no turning away without risk of backing my jib and stalling, so I flicked the ignition switch and punched the big rubber start button on the pedestal. The engine coughed and roared and I pushed the throttle ahead hard. The ghost ship hove close too and slid across my wake.

Backing off on the throttle I spun around to shake my fist and hurl debasements at the offending craft but my tirade was stymied by an electrifying sight. There, dangling overboard from his safety harness was a man; or what had once been a man, for now it was clearly a corpse. At once, my brain rebuffed my eyes, trying to rationalize the scene. It must be laundry, or a sail bag, or some poorly stored junk, or.... Bollix!

I grabbed my binoculars and focussed on a dirty yellow rain jacket with limp arms and rolling head still shrouded in a hood. His tattered yellow rain pants had turned black at the thighs, the lower legs flapped empty. And then he was beyond my view. I could read no name on the guano stained transom. The swaying paddle of an Aries wind-vane waved good-by as the phantom sailed off smartly.

With a shudder of relief, I killed the engine and slunk back to my bench only to spring up again for another survey off port. Nothing; of course.

Again I focussed my binoculars on the fleeting vessel but could discern nothing more at this distance. I felt as if I should do something but, for the life of me, couldn't imagine what; so I just sat there. After a while, I went below and made an entry in my log.

"Ghost Ship: 1245hr more or less." Then, as an afterthought, I added the now inaccurate Lat./Lon. Nothing else came to mind so I again went back to my bench.

I considered trying to intercept the errant ship but rejected that idea in short order. She had already become a dirty little speck off my starboard quarter. By the time I de-tensioned my rig and came about in chase, she would be long gone. Besides, what would I do if I could catch her; leap aboard? Not in these seas. The idea was patently absurd. So what was left? I considered reporting my find to some authority that seemed reasonable but I wasn't sure. I felt conflicted and suspected that issues of morality lay at the heart of my quandary.

There seemed something hauntingly poetic about the fate of that unknown sailor; and something poignant in that I should become aware of it through such an incredibly dubious coincidence. Here he was sailing the eternal seas, having found his destiny without reaching his destination while I focussed on reaching my destination without glimpsing my destiny. Or perhaps, our meeting was that glimpse. I pondered the prospect, trying to envision my fate.

With my spirit joyfully riding the Wheel of Life, my floating tomb would dance across the waters feeding sea birds and startling drowsy sailors. The more I considered the idea, the more appealing it became. And after a while I was glad for my inaction, glad that I had not alerted the bureaucratic desecrators, pleased that I had preserved the dignity of my brother's grave; thankful that he would have time to feed his birds.

I stood at the helm feeling self-righteous and dizzy. My head spun, my heart raced, the saloon clock chimed eight bells. It was time to wake my wife.

Dropping below, I gently shook her awake and, omitting our "close encounter", gave my two minute shift report. I slid into the still warm berth and, listening to the water gurgling along the hull, slipped into oblivion.



Oddworm at work



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Master and commander

By Jan Forsyth, *SY Sea Wanderer*

OBEYING ORDERS

I'm up to my neck baking bread, flour up to my elbows kneading away when the rather loud and intrusive command pierces my reverie.

It's urgent and I must drop everything to assist up on deck.

I shake off what flour I can, rinse my hands, pick the goo out of my fingernails, wipe off the excess water and fly up the companionway and onto the deck.

There he is shaving a lump of wood down the stern on the fish cleaning board.

"Could you hold this for a minute please?"

Of course I oblige regardless of my bubbling yeast, disintegrating by the minute and the oven that will probably be ready to bake pottery by the time I return to insert the bread.

Another time I have the urge to clean out the food lockers. Everything must come out from the dark cavern that hides our stores. Some I fear that are long forgotten and disintegrating. There may well be life evolving in the old rice and flour containers, I think to myself as I dig deep. I cover the floor and bench tops in all sorts of interesting containers from the locker, ready for investigation. Then right in the middle of my work my Commander pokes his head down the companion way to inform me he has invited people over for a coffee and am I ready to put the kettle on?

I often wonder why my work is never quite as important as the 'Commanders'. Even if I am preparing a meal, which is pretty high on the Commander scale, I still must leave all and run to do his bidding. Why does he need me so much when he is doing his stuff I wonder? And if I called him to assist me while he was involved would he drop everything?

I posed this mystery to him one day and his calm and logical response was: "I work to keep us afloat." What can be said about that

CHALLENGING A COMMAND

Who would dare?

But does he really need me or am I just a panic button? For instance early the other morning when we were "up anchoring" I had to run to the anchor locker to lay out the chain. No complaints here as we did have a large amount of chain out. Down the companionway I rush, through to the forward cabin, up on the V bunk to access the anchor locker, unclipped the door and obeyed the command. However, when I received the command to go back to the helm, as most of the chain was up, I bolted the locker, jumped down from the high V bunk, washed the salt and mud off my hands from the chain, climbed the companion way and was about to grab the wheel when the command came to go back down and pull on the chain as it had stuck.

This meant I had to carry out the process in reverse, but as I hadn't yet had my obligatory cuppa I was in no mood for fruitless commands. So I just said "NO!"

Dead silence. Then I heard a curse and a tap on the anchor winch foot switch - problem solved. Without my help.

Then there was the time when he enquired; "Can you check the prop?"

He can't go in the water as he has scratched a midgie bite which has become infected, and understandably the salt water would extend the life of the infection.

I look down at the water, a sea of turgid mud, swirling around the large bay; some say crocs inhabit these waters. He's got to be kidding, I say to myself.

No he's not; he really wants me to get into the water, dive down and scrape any growth off the prop.

"No, let's wait shall we? The next anchorage will have cleaner water where I'll be able to see what I'm doing."

I find with my commander's commands, if I present a logical argument to convince him to counteract his demands he sometimes concedes.

IDENTIFYING LOCATIONS

"Where did you put my " whatever it is he is looking for and has forgotten where he put it.

Once again the crew must drop everything to search. Inference and innuendo boil in the air that I have hidden the said object just to annoy him.

We have to walk through his movements for the past twenty four hours, until he remembers that he took his pen up to the cockpit, away from its home at the side of the computer for reasons only he knows and I don't.

I hate this particular pen; it is black, cheap and has a nasty habit of migrating. One particular day when I went to grab it to fill in the log book it had gone, so I found one of my pens that sit in a pen holder on the saloon table and proceeded to insert the day's doings.

Half an hour later I hear a murderous yell, I rush down to him where he is sitting at the navigation table gazing in disbelief; log book open at the day's page, his face the colour of puce. I have used a blue pen, and all his previous entries are black.

WORK SPACE

How I hate our maintenance days. There are many tools and instruments that grind and hum on our boat, and they all live under seats. Seats that have been lovingly covered in sheets and sprinkled with colourful scatter cushions all working together to provide a tasteful and harmonious décor. However, when access to the lockers behind and under the seats is required the whole scene is moved into chaos.

Cushions are flung, sheets are shed and seats upended, tool boxes dribble their contents in careless disarray and the entire saloon, galley and nav area look as though we have come through a typhoon.

Every surface has the potential as a work area. Galley bench tops, cockpit table, fish cleaning board but the best one of all is the bed. Now I love my bed which is a queen size bunk on which I like to tuck colourful sheets and a soft light bed spread.

When I see this precious space, lovingly decorated used as a stinking work bench it is just all too much. I rant and rave, threaten the worse possible promises and sulk for an hour.

I cannot slam a door, as we don't have any, I can't pop out in the car and roar off, or even cry on a girlfriend's shoulder, I just have to fume alone in silence. There is just nowhere to run when the bloody commander commands his work space.

REVEILLE

Up at some ungodly hour to get underway. He is a morning person, unfortunately the crew is *not*, and never the twain should meet. At least until the first strong, invigorating cup of muddy coffee is consumed.

He has no understanding of the marvellous benefits of that first cup, but he has so much energy and very early in the morning, energy that runs on water; God help the crew if he *did* like coffee.

The orders come fast and loud and land on fallow ground. I am very happy to obey but not being fully able to compute at 0600 hrs some of his orders fail to reach their mark. Then the "Martyr" is let loose. Oh God save me from Martyrs!

"Don't you worry I can get us underway, you go back to bed." As if! Hurt and hurried he begins to perform all the tasks of up anchoring.

I respond at first by obeying his command and returning to bed. However, I am made of sterner stuff, and anticipating the day ahead if I failed my master's commands I head for the anchor locker to lay out the chain.

He tells me later that he could have managed without my help.

"I know you can manage, but isn't it much easier when I am there to assist?"

CONCLUSION

The commander has taught me a great deal of seamanship during our somewhat tempestuous years on the sea. I still can't master the bowline, especially on entering a marina where you need a looped rope in a hurry, but I can navigate, prepare a meal in a storm, fill the water tanks, and crash the dinghy.

Life with all the commands is not easy but all being said, I do hold my commander in high esteem (he may read this) obeying most of his orders from morning to night with grace and as much dignity as can be mustered in adverse situations. There is of course that very rare occasion when I choose to rebel, but "hey" where can you find the perfect crew?



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up the creek and pay less!



MULTIHULL FRIENDLY!

VULGA OLGA



"Miss Christine" looked in perfect condition (photo left)... until the next day when she was pounded into a thousand bits. Photo above is Libby Edge of Edges Echo Barge Services cleaning up "Miss Christine".

Photos & story by Bob Fenney, SY Elcho

Ex Tropical Cyclone Olga as we all know, dumped some much needed rain throughout the interior of Queensland and NSW.

The farmers and graziers rejoiced as their dust bowl properties once again sprouted the green shoots of rural life. The outback was reborn yet again.

Yachties on the other hand, once again, drew the short straw. At beautiful Airlie Beach, those who knew the bay becomes deadly in a serious northerly with its bow breaking swell, moved their boats either to Abel Point marina, or sought shelter at Shute Harbour.

A few who had faith in their moorings, took their chances.

The normally crowded bay looked remarkably empty from the balcony of the Whitsunday Sailing Club, with possibly only a dozen or two yachts to be seen.

The weather forecast predicted strong northerlies, heaps of rain, and an uncomfortable stay for those who chose to stay on-board.

The weather was nowhere near as bad as February, two years ago, when around 50 vessels were either sunk or badly damaged, but it was bad enough!

Several boats became victims of the lea shore and ended on the beach at Airlie and Cannonvale. The well known local Yacht *Rumrunner 11* broke her mooring but was thankfully salvaged the following day, being craned onto a low loader and taken away for repairs.

The beautiful 34' bay cruiser *Miss Christine* wasn't so lucky. When I first saw her, she looked still in perfect condition, although, high and dry. She still had her Nav' lights on. Alas, a few hours later, she was in a thousand bits, and next morning, among the carnage in the sand and surf was what had been her proud painted motor, prop shaft, and propeller. The owners clearly devastated as they tried to salvage personal possessions. They had been in the Whitsunday's for only a week, having journeyed from Bundaberg.

The northerlies will go, and Airlie will return to its normal hive of boats and activity.

Until next time.



"Rumrunner 11" broke her mooring, but was able to be craned away the next day.





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DARWIN BEACH

Darwin to Ambon Yacht Race & Rally 2010

It's time to start planning your next adventure

Expressions of interest for the historic Darwin to Ambon Yacht Race/Rally are now open, with the event scheduled to start on July 24, 2010.

The fleet will leave from Darwin Harbour, travelling 600 nautical miles to the race finish in Ambon Harbour, at the village of Amahusu in the Spice Islands.

Participants then have the option to tailor their own holiday by continuing to sail through the Indonesian region and beyond.

Possible destinations include the picturesque Banda Islands, Komodo and its dragons, the coloured lakes and savannah-type country of the Flores group. Activities include plenty of hiking, sailing, diving, snorkelling, sightseeing and importantly, meeting the wonderful, smiling people of Indonesia.

Watch the website for further details on post-race destinations.

The Darwin to Ambon Race is the only international yacht race organised and run from Australia.

Started in 1976, it ran until 1998 before a break of several years. The race recommenced in 2007 at the request of the Indonesian Government and has been run three times since then by the Dinah Beach Cruising Yacht Association.

Yachts in the first two divisions will be treated as the premier contenders in the fleet and prizes will be awarded accordingly.

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- Multihull Racing
- Monohull Racing

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a non-handicapped 'Rally' division



Spoils of the Sea

Story & photo by Stuart Buchanan, SY *Pluto*

Devoted beachcombers who were around prior to the 1990s would no doubt agree that one of the greatest finds was a Japanese glass float. These fascinating glass balls, usually about 300mm in diameter and covered in hand-plaited tarred rope mesh, came in a dozen shades of green, blue and amber.

They were used by Japanese tuna fishermen to support their long-lines, which were many kilometres long. Every now and then a float would break away from the line and begin its journey over thousands of miles of ocean at the whim of wind and current, collecting barnacles and other marine life until it was eventually cast ashore.

I was envious of people who had glass floats hanging from the beams of their patios and verandahs, flaunting their prizes as if proclaiming to the world their affinity with the sea.

I found my first glass float in 1966 on North Stradbroke Island. I was standing on Point Lookout headland scanning the main beach with binoculars when I sighted a black spot on the water's edge about 4 kilometres away. It had to be a glass float! But alas, there was a fisherman walking along the beach, halfway between me and the black spot. I took off like a rocket, down the headland and along the beach; it was the only time in my life I've ever run 4 kilometres nonstop. The fisherman got the shock of his life as I panted past him to claim my prize. It was a glass float, and to this day it takes pride of place in our home.

In the early 1970s my wife Shirley and I flew by light plane to Orchid Beach on the ocean side of Fraser Island. We planned to walk 40 kilometres along the beach to Sandy Cape lighthouse. Two weeks earlier a cyclone had washed away thousands of tonnes of sand from the frontal dunes, leaving a 4 metre sheer drop to the beach and exposing rocks that prevented vehicle access.

Twenty kilometres from our destination we came to a wash-in where the cyclonic seas had deposited a mountain of flotsam. We couldn't believe our eyes; within one small area there were twelve glass floats. It was as exciting as winning Gold Lotto. But our joy was short-lived; how the hell could we carry twelve glass floats for the next 20 kilometres?

With two floats in each hand, I set off along the beach. Each float weighed about 5 kilograms and together with my 20 kilogram backpack and the energy-draining summer sun, after a few kilometres, I had to abandon two of them. Shirley had selected the best of the twelve and, despite the weight of her backpack, clung to her prize like a limpet for the rest of the trip.

And then, a short while later, we came across the ultimate beachcombing find – a Japanese lightbuoy. This elaborate piece of equipment was framed out of brass tubing and stood 1.5 metres high. At its base was a watertight cylindrical bowl containing a 6 volt battery that powered a light encased in a glass prism fitted to the very top of the frame. A photoelectric cell activated the light during the hours of darkness. In the centre of the frame, roped between its two curved arms was a large glass float. This type of buoy was used by the Japanese tuna fishermen to locate the end of their line at night. It was an extremely rare find.

As it weighed nearly 20 kilograms, I had to abandon my two glass floats and struggle on with this awkward, smelly, barnacle-encrusted monstrosity. But after 4 kilometres I knew I couldn't carry it the remaining distance. In disgust, I dropped the buoy on the beach and walked on empty-handed.

Next day when we reached the manned lighthouse at Sandy Cape, we told the Head Lightkeeper Harry Tate about our finds. Harry told us he was an avid collector of glass floats.

"Gee," he said, "it's a pity the cyclone has exposed the rocks on the beach. We could have driven down in the Land Rover and got the lot."

"Well," I replied, "you can't drive to the area where we found the floats from the Orchid Beach end, but from this end there's only one set of rocks that I think we could negotiate at low tide."

"It's low tide now!" Harry exclaimed, as he leapt from his chair and headed for the Land Rover.

Two hours later we were back at the lightstation with all the floats, including the lightbuoy. Shirley kept her float and I kept the lightbuoy, while we insisted that Harry took the remaining eleven floats.

The only other lightbuoy I found was while sailing in the 1980 Brisbane to Gladstone Yacht Race in the 11 metre sloop *Aeolus*. We were abeam of Fraser Island when one of the crew sighted a lightbuoy in the water. We went about, sailed back a few hundred metres and picked it up. Ray the skipper, who had been having a nap below, heard the commotion and came on deck. On discovering we were sailing south instead of north, he went off his head; but when we got it aboard, even he had to admit it was a beauty. I can't imagine the skipper of *Wild Oats* being so forgiving.

During the 1970s Shirley and I walked hundreds of kilometres along isolated beaches and around islands searching for these enticing glass baubles. We swam across creeks, prowled through sandfly-ridden mangrove swamps and descended almost sheer cliffs just in the hope of finding another glass float.

And there were other ways of getting them. One day, while we were living on Booby Island in Torres Strait, the pearling lugger *Ruby Charlotte* anchored in the lee of the island. Attached to the lugger's rigging were dozens of plastic floats; amongst them was one glass float. I went out in the dinghy and offered the skipper three polystyrene floats in exchange for the glass one. He readily accepted.

One evening in the early 1980s while I was at a Brisbane wharf, I noticed a Japanese tuna fishing boat tied up nearby. On her deck were hundreds of glass floats. I spoke to one of the crew, but he couldn't understand English. Not to be beaten, I drew a sketch of a float on a piece of paper and offered him \$10. He laughed, went on board and returned with four floats, refusing to take any money.

By the mid 1980s glass floats were quickly being replaced by plastic floats. While living on Pine Islet as lightkeepers in 1981, we experienced a bout of unusually fine weather. There wasn't a breath of breeze, only a long, low ocean swell. Another lightkeeper and I took our 4 metre dinghies over to the high, almost sheer cliffs on the southern side of South Percy Island. With only a few small pebbly beaches, most of the shoreline consisted of piles of large boulders making it impossible to land. We anchored about 100 metres out from the cliffs and swam ashore with a long length of rope. We found dozens of floats, which we tied into a raft and floated them back to the dinghies. We must have swum ashore at a dozen different places. By the end of the day we had over eighty floats – only a few were glass.

The last glass float we found was in 1984 on Rodds Peninsula north of Pancake Creek. But you know, glass



floats ain't glass floats. There are roller floats, cylindrical floats, herring net floats, floats with spindles, double ball floats; blue, green, amber, lavender and pink floats. Every glass float was hand blown and sealed with a glass plug, sometimes stamped with the Japanese manufacturers' symbol and sometimes with a serrated edge.

A book *Beachcombing for Japanese Glass Floats* was published in America in the 1970s and describes everything you ever wanted to know about glass floats. It sets out their varying sizes and the rarity percentage of finds.

Not everyone is fanatical about finding glass floats. I met a professional fisherman in Gladstone who said if he came across a glass float while walking along the beach, he'd kick it out of his way.

There are many yachties, most of whom are now in their sixties or seventies, who spent weeks scouring our beautiful coastline and islands searching for and finding these fascinating baubles. I know yachties who would never part with their collection at any price, even though glass floats have now become quite valuable.

I don't really know why glass floats are so fascinating. We've got them hanging from beams in our house, on the verandah and around the garden. They collect dust, spiders' webs and bird poo. But there's just something about them.

When I throw off this mortal coil, what's going to happen to them? They'll probably be sold off for a pittance at some auction along with our other pathetic possessions. Perhaps I'll stipulate in my will that when my ashes are chucked into the sea, the glass floats can be thrown in after me to once again wash ashore on a beach to be rediscovered by modern-day yachties. And if you don't find them fascinating, too bad, just kick them out of the way.

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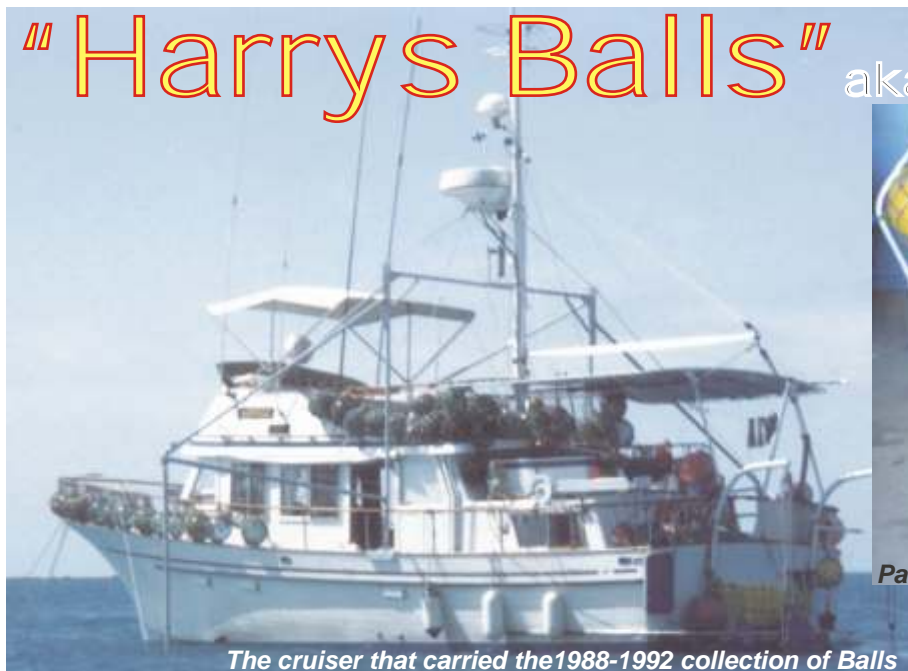
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"Harrys Balls" aka Glass Fishing Floats



The cruiser that carried the 1988-1992 collection of Balls



Part of the 1992 collection

Story & photos by Harry Smith,
MY *Melaleuca*

I was one of the yachties who walked hundreds of miles to chase these prized baubles. Oh to be that fit again.

I don't have that many left now, maybe thirty samples of the different sizes and colours from small 75mm up to 400mm, but mainly the standard 300mm size, and including some smaller ones branded England, Germany, Czech and Poland. With another cruising couple, my late wife and I beachcombed every beach and mangrove swamp from Cooktown to Cape York and down into the Gulf over a period of four years between 1988 and 1992. Our joint collection amounted to some four hundred and fifty glass floats of various colours and sizes.

Mind you, that was less than the six hundred found by a couple who lived in Cooktown and cruised the Cape in a small landing barge, able to get into remote areas. The late "Hugo the Hermit" who lived in a shack in the Olive River also found many on local beaches, as did another couple on a Catamaran "Skybird" now based in Cairns. And I am sure, from photographs I have seen, many yachts came south absolutely loaded with floats in the years pre-1988, about when we started our voyages up the Cape. By then, most of the ones littering beaches had been taken, and our task searching the mangroves was a little more difficult. Albeit rarely, by prodding grassy banks behind beaches, we sometimes found a few floats stockpiled where past collectors had hidden them, unable to carry them out. We did - so "finders keepers". And although we regarded them highly, the publican at Thursday Island told me in 1990 how they used the floats on local beaches for .303 rifle target practice!

My own interest in floats started in 1978 when we were sailing south off Prudoe Island in a Swanson 32 yacht, the first of many trips to the Whitsundays. Curious about a seabird sitting on something shiny, we went over to investigate, and it was a lovely olive-coloured glass float with a pristine net. Bad luck birdie. In ensuing years we located a few in out of the

way beaches in the Whitsundays, including a lovely rare Olive Oil Bottle Blue colour at Haslewood Island. In the mid eighties, cruising in a 36ft Ho Hsing motorboat, I used to collect plastic floats from all the beaches up near Island Head creek, plus those in the rocky bays on South Percy that had arrived since Stuart cleaned them out in 1981. I took them back to Mooloolaba where they would fetch petty cash as anchor retrieval floats. One year we found a nice glass float in the rocks on Townsend Island just as a RAAF helicopter arrived and ordered us out of the Navy gunnery range. We left, motoring back to Island Head, with the float.

Later, 1988, then living at Airlie Beach, we linked up with another couple in a 39ft timber cruiser and set off north, beachcombing five or six months each winter. Depending on the seas being calm enough to get ashore, often using beach-landing techniques and long anchor lines on a pulley system to be able to get back out through waves, we searched coastal beaches, rivers, creeks and swamps. In the northern Gulf the beaches there were mostly littered with small blue plastic floats from Indonesia.

When we could, we also walked or waded through most mangrove swamps to get to where all the flotsam and jetsam had been washed back to, often up to two miles in from the beach. The floats were a very heavy load to carry back, as Stewart testifies, especially if they had no nets to grasp. We carried them in large string bags. A particularly heavy one was half filled with crystallised salt water, still there today. It must have been dragged down very deep and pressure forced water in, but there is no visible crack.

Other junk was mostly plastics, bottles (some collectable), light globes, timber and thongs, but at the back where the bush and hills started, there were usually a few floats that had been washed through the swamps by cyclones. Some were tethered by their lines.

On remote beaches we found dive tanks, wet suits, the odd dinghy and motor, shells, and even worn out blow up rubber dolls.

Risky, probably stupid in hindsight, we mainly searched alone, meeting up at rendezvous points miles along the beach in time to get back to the boats lest we be stranded by low tides. And most of the sandy beaches had fringing reefs to negotiate. The odd crocodile and wild pig sometimes caused us problems. I carried a Russian pistol, a "spoils of war" from Vietnam, but never had to use it, and later gave it to the War Memorial. Most crocs seemed happy to go the other way if disturbed sunning themselves but there was a 6m monster in the shallows at Ninian Bay that shadowed us along the beach. But I recall looking into bushes at the back of a beach and upsetting two big "Captain Cookers" with a litter who objected to my intrusion, and having to run down and take refuge in the ocean until they left.

That was better than a Bowen-based yachtsman who spent all night up a tree on the track across from Margaret Bay to Indian Bay. We did not have portable radios or GPS in those days, and even now I often wake up during the night and reflect that if I had been bitten by a snake way back in the mangroves I would still be there, as my friends would have had little chance of finding me. But as luck had it, we all survived.

In 1992 there was no usual monsoonal wet season and with the mangroves being mostly dry, we were able to get into previously unsearched areas. I recall the area opposite Night Island revealed some 80 floats in two weeks, and similar in the mangroves south of Indian Bay. As I had limited stowage below, I strung up our floats on handrails.

I recall Japanese Pearl Farm employees in the Escape River were intrigued by the floats and returned the next day with a couple more they had found on the local Turtle Beach, donating them to our collection. There were other treasures, such as one day we came across about sixty Nautilus shells just floating in on the tide at Indian Bay. Then there were wooden canoes of various sizes which had floated down from PNG. I brought a small one back on the bridgedeck.

We often anchored in bays used by trawlers and thus had ample supplies of prawns, painted crabs and bugs. We once provided

antibiotics to a fisherman with a dental problem, and thereafter whenever we met up we always received a bucket of prawns and bugs. With few Green Areas then, we were able to catch fish almost anywhere and I recall diesel was about 35cents a litre from the supply barges. A 9kg gas bottle refill, taken back and returned from Cairns on the barge's next trip, was just \$12 including transport.

Looking back, I have very fond thoughts of friendships and adventures in the 1988 to 1992 beachcombing

years. We met up with many wonderful people on yachts and fishing trawlers. And although we must have found every other colour we never found one of the red floats used by the "Emperor's Fleet". When weather-bound in the Olive and Escape Rivers, we used to plot the possible wind and tidal flow routes any floats might have taken once inside the rivers, then go search the lee-shore mangroves, usually with success. My friend found another bottle blue float tied to a plastic float in a mud-bank some miles up the Olive River. The only other bottle blue float we saw was hanging on the veranda of the local postman, Ross Pope, at Portland Road.

I am sure that if one had the time and the weather, there are still many glass floats to be uncovered in mangroves and sandbanks up the Coast, especially when the sands are disturbed by cyclones, if one could compete with increasing 4WDs and helicopters. I have since found the odd one on the long beaches in Port Clinton and north of Freshwater and Pearl Bay, and I am told one was floating up the harbour at Gladstone just a few years ago. I think the author of the Collecting Floats book indicated that of the 14 million made in Japan between 1945 and 1968 there were about 3 million still floating around and around the oceans of the Pacific, occasionally being blown out of their current streams and finding their way ashore.

I have never been able to ascertain how the smaller European-made floats came to be in the Pacific. We also found Light Floats, one with a bamboo frame, others with brass frames, and another type with a long cylindrical body full of torch batteries, and a more-modern stainless steel homing beacon containing an HF radio transmitter.

I can relate to Stuart's beachcombing experiences and apart from a few dust-collectors in the house, we too have floats hanging in our patio, also collecting cobwebs and bird poo. But they are still very prized possessions. As he says, there is something fascinating about them, and they recall the wonderful and adventurous times spent in searching for them.

There is a story attached to every one of what my friends call "Harry's balls".

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Australia Day at Tin Can Bay Yacht Club



Above: "Boulers" dodging the stingray holes on the "green".
Left: Wot Yots close finish in the match racing final.

providing ten paddlers. Everyone expected the "professionals" from the Dragon Boat Club to give the other "comers" a paddling lesson, but the "Jolly Sailors" from the TCB Sailing Club team put down an impressive time that couldn't be bettered and came away from the event with the first place points.

Running concurrently was the Kayak Chaos Relay. This involved two teams of three paddling kayaks to a buoy and back, then tagging the Chief Steward before the next paddler was allowed to set off. The competition was fierce, and while some paddlers' skills were ... umm *ordinary*. Their waiting team-mates were happily employing almost every dirty trick in the book - water pistols, crash tackling, restraining the opposition kayakers as they tried to paddle away - in an effort to gain ascendancy over the opposition during the change-overs.

Interference was definitely the name of the game! Some paddlers got so enthusiastic about tagging the Chief Steward that Gayle ended up getting a stingray's eye view of the beach! For the record, TCB Sailing Club again scooped up the points after a close final against the TCB Yacht Club team.

In comparison, the atmosphere at the Beach Boules was so serious one could have been forgiven for thinking that super yachts were up for grabs! There was much comment about the condition of the "green", with some "boulers" expressing the opinion that the "green" was "unplayable", but Assistant Chief Steward Bob insisted that the stingray holes could actually be used to advantage! After some close tussles in the heats, the final was contested by Sailability and the Dragons, with Sailability finally grabbing the points.

Cheating was rife in the Wot Yots Match Racing, with TCB Yacht Club stacking their team with a couple of "ring-ins" fresh from the Flying Fifteen Nationals. While the Dragons and Sailability both managed to round up a couple of rebel sailors, the heats were "no contests" which saw the Dragons and Sailability eliminated, leaving the way clear for TCB Yacht Club and TCB Sailing Club to engage in a ding-dong struggle for supremacy that saw the yacht club's "ring-ins", *Nicky* and *Laurie*, take the win from the sailing club's *Grimmo* and *Russell* by the narrowest of margins.

continued next page...

Story & photos by Julie Hartwig

The Tin Can Bay (TCB) Yacht Clubs second annual Australia Day Interclub Challenge was held on Tuesday 26 January. Following on from last year's successful event, the members of Cooloola Dragon Boat Club (CDBC) put their hands up to organise this year's event.

The day dawned fine, clear and hot and kicked off with bacon & egg muffins with fruit salad and coffee for breakfast; hot, steamy work for the "camp" cooks, standing over the barbeque plates! Australia Day's most avid spectator, "The Girl" was seated on her stool on the deck, and while she fell over a few times (the wind, not too many chardy's) she was finally ready for the action to start.

Before the fun & games got underway, Sailability held a special ceremony to name their new safety boat the *Bobbie L* after Bob

Lambert, a generous client who donated funds towards the purchase of the boat.

CDBC president Andrea Casey welcomed everyone to the day's activities and after "Chief Steward" Gayle Barnett outlined the day's program and explained that there were no rules, cheating and bribery were encouraged, skulduggery was permitted, so long as it didn't get violent; and interfering with the opposition was a "given" the "games" began.

The Challenge consisted of five events for which each club was requested to field a team: The Dragon Boat Drags (a time trial in the dragon boat), Kayak Chaos (a kayak relay), Beach Boules, Wot Yots (match racing in the Sailability Access 303s) and the Thong Thing (thong throwing).

The Dragon Boat Drags was the first event. CDBC supplied two strokes and a sweep for each team, with each club

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Aussie day at TCBYC continues...



Kayak Skulduggery
Running interference on the opposition paddlers was the name of the game.

In the Thong Thing, a challenging set of rules saw TCB Yacht Club prove that their talents were not limited to pulling strings on the water when they threw their way to a close fought win over the Dragons. At the conclusion of hostilities, the scoreboard saw TCB Yacht Club and TCB Sailing Club tied for the lead on 14 points, with Sailability and the Dragons tying for the Wooden Spoon on 11 points.

By this stage of the day there were many parched throats and hungry bodies. The Dragons laid on a fantastic salad bar to accompany the BYO meat. After lunch, it was time to break the deadlock at the top of the scoreboard. Chief Steward Gayle announced that the winner would be decided by a "Sudden Death" trivia question and that the yacht club (aka Dougie's Dream Team) and the sailing club would each have to nominate a person to have a crack at the question.

Larry and Commodore Doug stepped up to the plate, but Doug, employing ruthless "skul-Doug-gery" to the very end, insisted that he was representing the sailing club because if he got the question wrong (which he thought highly likely) the yacht

club would win! With so much at stake, Chief Steward Gayle thought this was pushing the "rules" a bit too far and nominated Commodore Doug for the yacht club. That settled, the question was put in rhyming slang, what is meant by having a bo-peep? Larry said it meant "having a look", which left the yachties howling with glee, provided their fearless leader could come up with the right answer. In spite of claiming that he wouldn't know the answer, Dougie said it meant "having a sleep" and on such moments is history made. The yachties claimed the final point to wrap up the provisional win.

However, all was not over. To ratify the points scored, each team had to perform the National Anthem. Dougie's Dream Team were first up and after an entree blown by Len on his conch shell, the yachties launched into a stirring rendition of Advance Australia Fair with words by Pam. Not to be outdone, the Dragons lined up, and with Denis blowing "boom chukkas" into the microphone, Gayle rapped out the anthem accompanied by "oi, oi, oi's" from the assembled Dragons at appropriate moments. Sailability (with the help of a few "ring-ins") restored decorum

to proceedings by performing a traditional rendition of the anthem, but it was a "no contest" for the best rendition, with the prize going to the Dragons.

So, with the point scores ratified, the score board confirmed TCBYC (Dougie's Dream Team) as the winners of the Olive Dish Trophy for the second year in a row with 15 points, with the TCBSC (Jolly Sailors) taking out second place with 14 points. Sailability and the Dragons remained tied for the Wooden Spoon with 11 points apiece.

Chief Steward Gayle presented Commodore Doug with the prestigious Olive Dish Trophy who promised that the Australia Day Challenge could only get bigger and better. Roll on 2011 when Sailability has accepted the challenge of organising the event.

As is usual for Australia Day, showing the flag by wearing the red, white and blue or the "green and gold" was mandatory. Aussie "rigs" on display was many and varied from the sublime to the ridiculous.

It fell to Sailability, who donated the prizes, to pick the best dressed bodies.



The Olive Dish Trophy



Best Dressed Bloke Michael Happy

Barry announced that Tracey Magyar had snagged the best dressed "chick" (green & gold sombrero and t-shirt, Aussie flag boxers and Aussie tattoos plastered all over arms and face), while the Dragons' Michael Happy was undoubtedly the best dressed bloke. The judges couldn't go past a two foot high royal blue velvet stove-pipe hat with the Aussie flag emblazoned across the front, an Aussie flag t-shirt, boardies and that indispensable piece of Aussie footwear, rubber thongs!

So ended another memorable Australia Day. Special thanks and much appreciation must go to the amazing Dragons for organising the day and overcoming the many challenges thrown up by both the magnitude of the event and the competitors' endeavours to gain the upper hand! Thanks to Sailability for the use of their 303s for the Wot Yots Match Racing and to all who contributed to make the day great.

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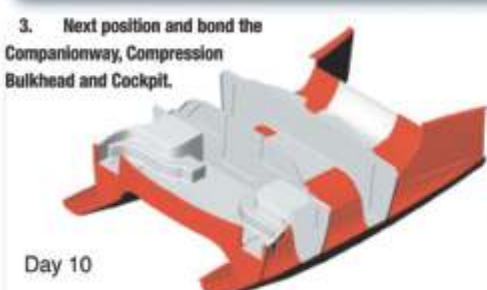
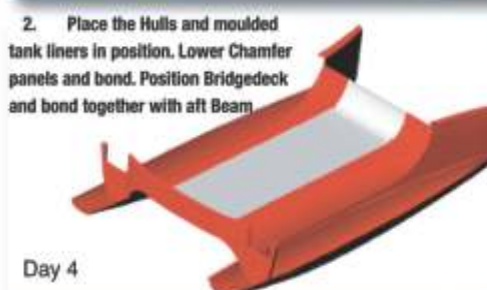
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Cruising For Communities 2010

By Guy Chester, SY Sanctuary
Photos courtesy of Guy Chester,
Louisiades Rally & EcoSustainAbility

Papua New Guinea's Louisiades Archipelago is one of the closest international cruising grounds from Australia. Its only 520 miles from Cairns and prevailing south easterly tradewinds make the passage from the Queensland coast a relatively straight forward sail over and an easy trip back. A steady flow of intrepid Australian cruising yachties have made the voyage over the last thirty years, with numbers peaking a few years ago and now rebuilding with the introduction of the Louisiades Rally in recent years.

Here follows an outline of how independent cruising yachts and more recently Louisiades Rally yachts have helped the local community as part of their visit.

Self Sufficient Community?

Few yachties can arrive in the Louisiades without realising how relatively impoverished the community is.

The local folk sail the "sailaus" (traditional sailing canoe known as a Lakatoi elsewhere in PNG) made from mostly local materials, fishing line lashing, assorted bits of rope and blue polytarp the only modern materials used. Some outboard powered fibreglass long boats are used, but unlike much of the rest of the Pacific, most of the local transport is by sail...out of necessity, the local economy just doesn't support outboard fuel for every trip!



Guy Chesters Yacht, Sanctuary

The villages are mostly traditional palm thatched huts with some timber framed and galvanised iron roofs. There are elementary schools at most islands and some middle schools. Attending high school involves leaving the islands and only a few have this opportunity. Whilst a village may work together to send a local kid off to high school, they are often lost to the community, the education allowing them employment on PNG's mainland.

The closure of the mine five years ago has seen a depressed economy on the main island, Misima. Although some skilled workers have been able to secure jobs in other PNG mines, the only cash input to many villages is the catching of beche-de-mer (sea cucumber) which are collected annually by a local trading boat for export to China. In 2009 and 2010 the fishery has been closed by the government for conservation purposes, leaving many villages unable to pay for the basics such as school fees.

The kids look healthy, but one only has to ask local villagers to realise there is high infant mortality and rates of death in childbirth which would be unacceptable in Australia... "Old" folk are often only in their sixties; there are few really elderly folk and life expectancy would appear low. There are some village aid posts, the Catholic run clinic at Nimowa Island and government "Hospital" (run by a nurse with no doctor!). At Misima, even basic health services are rudimentary.

The islands' communities are by no means dysfunctional; they have a thriving social life, elect their local level government and get on with family and community life as best they can. They just don't have much... Most yachties see this, and whether they planned to or not, try to give something back to the community during their visit.

Trading

As soon as a yacht arrives in an anchorage there are canoes which paddle out to say hello and to trade. One of the great things about the Louisiades, for the Australian cruising yachtie is that English (rather than Pidgin) is the main language (other than the local language Misima / Paneati or Sudest). So communication is easy.

Trading for fruit, vegetables, seafood (lobster, fish etc.) and handicrafts does raise some important goods for the community. Clothes, fishing gear, rope, tools, sewing gear, basic kitchen items, basic food stuffs are all highly valued for trading. As a general rule, easily procured items such as fruit and seafood



Fiona Barron has a visit with the locals

are readily traded. For handicrafts, that have taken days to make, cash (Kina) is generally sought.

Requests

Begging, just doesn't happen in the Louisiades, although, once folk get to know a yacht, their "needs" are often explicitly listed, from a vague request ("do you have any spare rice/oilment/glue?"), a written wish list of items asked for if the yacht returns next year, to something to bring back from the trade store at Misima.

Many yachts try to respond, and indeed in 2009 Rally yachts acted as freighters for 2008 yachts not returning, but sending stuff back up (including medical and school supplies, two large deep cycle batteries, a generator and power tools and copper nails for building sailing canoes).

SY Vision Market Day

Marlene Everett and Mike Derridge on Vision have a unique way of community contribution. In Australia, they collect many yacht loads of donations, mainly clothes. Then in more remote, less visited destinations of the Louisiades (such as Rossell Island or the north coast of Misima Island), they run a "market", with the community buying the goods at a small fraction of the normal local cost. All the proceeds go to the local community, to the school, or in 2009 at Gulewa village to the local womens shelter. The community gets an input of cheap goods needed for day to day living and pride in themselves raising money for their own community venture! The Vision folk also make sure that those families with a desperate need and no cash end up with what they need!

continued next page...

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SY *Veloce* Focus

Greg and Sylvia with *Veloce* cruised the Louisiades many times in the nineties and naughties. They took up a huge supply of used spectacles, and held a cockpit "eye clinic" with an eye chart at each anchorage. When we visited in 2007 many locals asked us where *Veloce* was. They are friends and we reported they are back in Cairns, but we have some glasses Greg and Sylvia sent up with us. Hence *Sanctuary* became an eye clinic at too few villages (we only had a limited stock of glasses).

Sewing Mechanic

A couple on a catamaran we met in 2008, I am afraid I have forgotten their names, provide a great service. Most clothes are hand made and each Island will have at least one hand operated sewing machine. This couple, brought sewing machine bits and some expertise to bear on many machines getting them back into service! In such a remote place, where the capacity to repair or replace the old machine just didn't exist this was a fantastic community service (which I believe still happens).

Cruise-Aiders

The cruisers Eric and Cathy Gray on *Erica* along with Christian Selaries and Gina de Vere on *Caesura* were the catalyst for the creation of a group called the Cruise-aiders. Their story is well set out on their website:

www.cruise-aiders.com

In 2008, they took boat-building gear to Gigila Island and helped the local folk create a sailing boat from two (once outboard powered) fibreglass banana boats. The *Tol-yot* took months of volunteer labour but created many lifelong friendships and sense of community spirit.

In 2009, Eric asked me to take up some supplies, power tools and a small genset to run them. We promised to go to Gigila to deliver them. Imagine our surprise

when the very well sailed *Tol-yot* sailed up to us at Blue Lagoon, captained by the local Councillor. Taking larger groups than can be carried on a sailau (the traditional sailing canoe) and with no fuel cost required, the boat is now a valued community resource.

Its important to help the locals maintain such assets and in 2010 either the Cruise-aiders or Louisiades Rally folk will provide polytarp, sail needles and all the bits for the locals to make *Tol-yot* a new set of sails.

We understand the Cruise-aiders have gone on to support one young villager to attend high school, then teachers college and are planning the building of a new school house for Gigila!

Nimowa Water Ambulance

Kevin Dunn and his wife Francis cruised the Louisiades in the 1990's. Kevin adopted the Nimowa mission and worked with father Tony Young on a variety of potential projects, seeking aid from Aus-aid and designing new facilities for the

mission. Now back on land, Kevin saw an opportunity when the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club's Race Committee launch was grounded off Terrigal during a regatta.

Kevin arranged with the insurer to purchase the written off boat and refitted it as a water-ambulance for Nimowa Clinic. Kevin brought in donations and volunteers to undertake major hull repairs, refurbishing one motor and re-engineering the boat from twin screw to single. He has created a highly valued resource. Kevin received support to ship the Ambulance to Alotau on the PNG mainland, then he delivered it the 150 miles out to Nimowa.

Although it had only been there for four months when we visited in 2009, the Ambulance was already an essential community asset, being used for emergency medical evacuations, for routine preventive health clinics and being chartered by the catholic mission to the government for other community projects.

The Louisiades Rally folk raised over 6000 Kina for the Mission Clinic and Sister Sarah advised much of this would go

towards the fuel costs for the Ambulance.

Folk at Pittwater's RPAYC cruising division are proposing to assist Kevin provide ongoing support for the Ambulance and again the 2010 Louisiades Rally will raise money for operating expenses.

SY

Lady Bubbly Water

Chris Mitchell sails his yacht *Lady Bubbly* to the Louisiades regularly. Chris is a laid back, practical guy. He isn't effusive, and doesn't sit in an anchorage trading all day but always

manages to have a couple of canoes tied up behind and is working on or discussing some community problem with local folk.

He takes up a few bags of plumbing fittings and some fibreglass. In 2007, he repaired the water tank at Wanim. In 2008, he "had a look" at the one at Little Panasia, re-commissioning the village's water supply. Without it, the village faced a ten mile sail to windward to another island to get water!

Swap Library

Rob and Pamela made their mark on the 2008 Rally folk and the local community.

Their Lightwave cat, *5:00 Somewhere* became the *5:00 Ferry to Gulewa*, allowing local ladies who had attended the Showcase Misima Festival to avoid a two day walk home, they enjoyed their sail around the Misima coast to their northern village.

Like anyone who visits Kamataal Island, they became firm friends with Jimmy and his family. Jimmy has built a "Yacht Club" (a great hut for a BBQ or a chat) and is so welcoming to his beautiful lagoon and island its always hard to leave. Pam and Rob collected books and asked us to take them to Jimmy in 2009. Many heavy boxes were transported up by a Rally yacht and we delivered them to Jimmy to create the only swap library at a yacht club for 500 miles!

continued next page...



The cruise-aiders SY *Tol-yot*



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Rotary

Rotary runs the ROMAC (Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children). This has been used to provide vital medical aid for young folk would otherwise languish untreated.

In 2008, Joyce Raymond was living in her village, Bwata when her grass skirt went up in flames and she received burns to forty percent of her body. We saw her at Nimowa Clinic during the 2008 Louisiades Rally. Sister Sara was doing her best, but Joyce desperately needed major care! Through the efforts of cruising yachties on *Desert Wind* and Brad Benbow and the Rathbournes on *True North*. Rotary's ROMAC program was engaged.

At a huge expense met personally by the Rathbournes, Joyce was flown to Melbourne via Air Ambulance and has received life saving treatment.

This hasn't happened on its own, it has taken dedicated yachties who have seen the problem first hand and then pushed through the PNG and Rotary Systems to make the treatment happen.

In 2009, Louisiades Ralliers, John and Catherine Lawler (*Ada*) saw two kids at Panapompom who need help. Jonathon Amos has a tongue that is swollen, marked with lesions, distended and permanently protrudes from his mouth. Gregory Jack has a facial deformity whereby his eyes protrude extensively from the orbital sockets and he has had this problem with his eyes since birth (he is now 6). He can see objects but he is unable to close his eyes, even when he sleeps!

John and Catherine are working with the Rotary ROMAC program and medical contacts in Port Moresby to get medical help for these brave kids. Jonathon's

condition is probably drug treatable, whereas Gregory needs major surgery over a long period.

Handy Folk

Bruce from *Dancer* got a ride on the Nimowa Ambulance and within minutes was helping the skipper program the plotter and then spent a day fixing some wiring issues. In 2009, thanks to Oscar from *Zen* for two large deep cycle batteries and the "Ute" *Utopia* for the freight, we were able to refurbish Nimowa Clinics solar system to provide lighting in the clinic and with the genset only run for a few hours a day (if at all), establish an inverter for overnight use of the asthma ventilator. One crew (*Aqueus*) had an automatic steriliser at Nimowa Clinic apart and fixed in a few hours. it had not been used for years!

Yachties are often handy and there are always things to be fixed which are beyond the skills or tools of the village. In 2009 we re-commissioned two outboards by fixing villagers' propellers, damaged from reef encounters.

Louisades Yacht Rally

In 2007 when visiting the area to plan for the first Louisiades Rally in 2008, we looked at how best to contribute to the local community. To start with, we planned to make sure we paid well for everything.

Aware of corruption issues we decided it best to pay the local (elected) Councillors for community events (for them to distribute the funds). Lets just say that in most places this works but in 2009 we "fine tuned" the arrangement to ensure the right folk receive all the money we pay for events!

We also worked out a set of trading guidelines, which we promote for Rally folk

to avoid unintentionally ripping off the community.

We always intended to have some benefits beyond paying our way. We encourage each yacht to gather donated goods for schools and medical supplies etc. In 2008 this was over a tonne of gear which went to a number of the local schools and the Nimowa Clinic. The Clinic provides an essential medical service to the eastern Louisiades including the large community on Sudest Island that see very few yachties, hence our support of the clinic reaches folk who otherwise would receive no benefit from the yachties.

In 2008 we raised over 5000 Kina via donations, an auction, bribes of the organiser and even the odd fine imposed by the organiser, which was given to Panapompom and Nimowa clinics.

In 2009 we raised over \$5000 AUD, which paid for a blood pressure monitor, asthma ventilator, other medical supplies and made a 6000 Kina donation to the clinic (most likely to be used for the running costs of the Nimowa Ambulance described above). In addition to cash support from the yachties in 2009, we invited key "VIP" business folk who are also sailors to our Cairns farewell... whilst they got a canapé and a few free drinks, they were cajoled into supporting our cruising benevolence and from their generosity we raised another \$1500 which went to the community!

Between the donated goods and cash, what is paid for Rally events and Rally yachts purchases over, \$25,000 AUD has gone into the Louisiades community in both 2008 and 2009. In the words of Messie Toima, Headmaster of Nimowa School: **"Please relay our sincere thanks to your cruising yacht colleagues and other Australians who have made this donation possible. Your kind hearts and unselfish effort are vividly seen..."**

Cultural Renewal

One aspect of yachties visiting is cultural renewal. It encourages the kids to take interest in the dances. The young men and women to create keen dance and singing troupes. The traditional dress of grass skirts, face painting, shell necklaces, arm bands etc. are necessary for such events and the skills to make them are kept up.

Many islands put on an event for any visiting yachts on Independence Day (early September) and the Louisiades Rally has created events at a number of Islands where the locals provide "singsings". The local member of parliament has for the last two years sponsored the Showcase Misima

Festival, a huge weekend of dancing, singing and other cultural activities.

The local sailau's are still very much a part of community life, these sailing canoes are the local transport between islands and for fishing and beche-de-mer expeditions. The Louisiades Rally has created an annual regatta, and whilst there sailaus are not in any danger of dying out, the regatta reinforces the locals pride in these vessels.

Conclusion

No matter how poor one thinks one is, how you have scraped and begged to get away on your cruise, you are still infinitely better off than the local folk. Even a modest contribution means so much to the communities.

Almost all yachties who visit any of our near Pacific Island neighbours try to provide some form of community assistance. Just thoughtful, practical trade goods are a start.

Applying on-board expertise and resources and taking goods to donate for major community benefit programs is becoming increasingly part of the cruisers contribution to the local communities.

For the Louisiades Rally we promote a "Rally Attitude": "To have fun and leave the places and people in a better state than when we arrived." From the many examples above it's obvious that the vast majority of independent and Rally cruisers to the wonderful Louisiades adopt this attitude!

Louisades Rally 2010

Cruise spectacular islands, meet wonderful people and support their community.

In 2009, the locals gave their fantastic welcome to the Rally. The hospital visit gave an insight to the community's hardships and playing soccer against ten years olds the joy of a good laugh. The weather held with only a few brisk days and occasional rain, moderate winds and sunny skies were common. Whilst the fleet all gathered for each of the Rally events, between times, the yachts spread out to nearby islands, formed friendships, traded, fished, swam, visited schools, helped sick kids and enjoyed the amazing islands and their inhabitants.

The 2009 rally was enjoyed by all; in the words of the crew from *Tribal*: **"It's been a life changing experience."**

Leaving Cairns on 11 September, plans are well underway for the 2010 Rally. Events will include the Panasia BBQ, skull cave visit, Panapompom Sailau (traditional sailing canoe) Regatta, Bagaman Muster, Blue Lagoon Beach Party, Showcase Misima Festival, a remote river trip, handicraft workshop, sports day, Nimowa hospital visit and lots more! The Rally organisation includes briefings, a Manual, customs and quarantine arrangements, weather and navigation advice.

Further information:

www.louisadesrally.com

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Ruby Chester enjoying a gathering.



The local ladies in the canoe race.

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THE LOUISIADES

a journey from the past- just getting there...

Story & photos (excluding photo right)
Dianne Challis,
Boat Builder Extraordinaire

2001 was the maiden voyage for 'Even Bet', the 39ft Gary Lidgard catamaran that my ex husband and I had toiled over for two and a half years. After her launch in May that year we motored down to Brisbane to have the rigging done. The so called sea trial had begun with that trip down to Brisby and the sail back up the coast of Queensland. We were extremely happy with the performance of the boat, a bit of a surprise seeing that we had built her ourselves and had no idea how a catamaran would perform. It was while sailing north that we decided to bite the bullet and charge off overseas using the Louisiades as a practice run. The Louisiades is a coral archipelago south east of New Guinea and easily accessible from the Queensland coast. If that trip went okay then the future would have us leaving Oz behind in our wake and head towards Indonesia and up through to Malaysia and Thailand then further to who knows where. So the fun and challenges had begun.

Before *Even Bet* had been launched we organised the Australian Ships' Registration which was a once only fee of \$799 and I have noticed that this charge has not changed in eight years. It's about time something hasn't gone up especially when it is a government department. Of course this was a cost over and above the state rego. fee. All seems a bit silly to me but there you go; with the

individual state's greed, what hope does a poor little yachty have in this big country of ours?

To enter Papua New Guinea it was and still is mandatory to have a visa just like anywhere else in the world. The visa was easily obtained through the New Guinea consulate office in Brisbane.

For other states the phone numbers and addresses are under Consulates in the white pages of the telephone directory. If you are lucky and there are no hiccups it takes only two days to officiate if you are organising the paperwork personally.

If you are applying for the visa through registered mail you would need to allow for the postage time. Back in June 2001 the fee was \$133 for the skipper and the vessel then an additional \$13 per crew member. Now looking at the website:

www.pngcanberra.org/visa/visitor.htm

under the heading of 'ENTRY PERMIT TYPES AND CLASSES'. Yacht persons costs are Skipper (you can fight over that one) \$90-00, - Crew \$35-00.

Now if you were just an ordinary Joe Blow on an organised tour or on your own itinerary the visa cost is \$35-00. But if you class yourself as a bit of a journalist PNG will hit you for \$220. Don't they like journalists or something?

Panacia Island village

Guy Chester photo

Getting back to the application of a visa....A Yacht person needs to have proof of ownership of vessel or captain's papers, Ship's log for details of crewmember's and the Customs' Clearance form must be completed. The visa is valid for single entry of 60 days from the date of arrival. Once all the paperwork is done with the PNG consulate, it is off to our very own Australian Customs.

We had travelled north to Townsville in Queensland where we based ourselves in Breakwater Marina and readied ourselves for our first overseas cruise. We stood leaning against the counter in the Customs' House located on the corner of Fredrick St. and The Strand opposite the marina. Gob smacked, we waited patiently as one form after another was passed over to us to be filled out in detail. In those days, way back then, it all seems so long ago now, we received a 'CLAIM FOR DRAWBACK' form.

Now remember this was eight years ago and I don't know if the paperwork is still the same these days. This form allowed us to claim a rebate on the diesel fuel. Back then it was a reduction of 38 cents per litre.

continued next page...



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Louisiades - getting there continued...



SY Even Bet in Townsville, ready to go...

Another little sweetener of the day was promotional material such as postcards, notepads, and biros, rubber straps for sunglasses, International Flag Code Card and pamphlets. These wee gifts were to entice the sailors into reporting any possible strange activities that might be sighted while sailing the wild blue wet stuff and along our coastline. It didn't matter to them how insignificant it might seem to you but it could be important to the men and women in khaki. So if they desired this sort of help back then and to receive said help they were nice and approachable to boaties of all sorts...so what has happened in eight years? Are the gifts (bribes) still available when you are clearing out of the country now? That I have not found out about as yet but will endeavour to do so just to satisfy my own curiosity.

When we received our visa for New Guinea another piece of paper was also required to be filled out in triplicate. This we had to get photocopies of as it was faded and we were supplied only one form. We were to hand this to customs and quarantine when we cleared in at Bwagaia Harbour on Misima Island.

At that time in 2001 there was no departure tax charged if all persons on board the vessel were marked down as crew not passengers. Also required was the yellow 'Q' flag and a PNG flag which was easily purchased from chandleries, flag makers or alternatively hand paint one for ourselves. We were lazy and just bought one of each.

We were able to purchase Duty-free items as per normal travellers leaving the country. In Townsville at the time there were no Duty-free shops as such but we could purchase staples such as beer, spirits, tobacco and cigarettes (if you're a smoker) at duty free prices through Legend-Nautilus. Groceries, such as tinned butter etc was purchased through this company as well. All items that were free of duty were invoiced and a copy of that paperwork was forwarded on to the Customs' office for confirmation. Our goodies were delivered free of charge to our catamaran the day before departure.

The charts we pondered over were AUS 381, 382 and 568. Because we were leaving via Townsville the AUS charts 827 and 828 were needed for travelling through the Barrier Reef via Palm or Magnetic Passage.

There were many mud maps floating around that previous yachts had shared and I assume that there are still many out there now. One way to get some of these is to use the internet. We did a search at the time under the heading of Louisiades and came up with cruising notes dating back to 1999 by David Barrett from the yacht *Wild Swan*. It was full of useful information and several maps to get us on our way. Though after searching the web recently I was unable to find this info again but knowing yachties someone out there would have copies of his experiences.

Another way to travel safely is through an organised rally. Have a look at: www.louisiadesrally.com
Email: LouisiadesRally@EcoSustainAbility.com
This is a site that has information on a rally that leaves Cairns in September and is organised by Yorkeys Knob Boating Club and EcoSustainAbility. It is also sponsored by the Papua New Guinea Tourist Promotion Authority. Through such rallies all visas are organised and relevant information supplied can make life so much easier.

The majority of yachts that we met who were also travelling to the Louisiades were planning to leave from Townsville but were returning via Cairns. The reason for this was the approximate distance from Townsville was 600 nautical miles at a course of around 37 degrees. A far better angle would be to leave Australia from further down south but that means that you would be at sea longer.

Leaving from Cairns is another popular departing port but the angle is not as good because of the strong westerly set that can be encountered near the archipelago. Returning to Australia via Cairns is a shorter trip. The journey is about 480 nautical miles. Personally we chose to clear back in at Thursday Island which was a 700 nautical mile westerly journey.

continued next page...



exploring the rocks at Panasia Island



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The best time to set sail for the archipelago is anywhere between May and October. June to July seemed to be the most popular as during this time there's usually more constant south-easterly winds of 15-25 knots. These winds blow steadily throughout the Louisiades creating ideal cruising grounds. As the month of September arrives, the wind tends to die down and as from October there maybe no wind at all. We left in August and found that we motor-sailed more often then sailed but we also received winds of up to 40 knots...a little hair raising to say the least. The 'cat' handled it very well.

All vessels that are serious in travelling overseas need to be self-sufficient. Make sure you take ample water or have ways to either catch it or make it. Water is available on Misima Island at Cape Ebola, which is an anchorage on the western end of the island. Water is also available from rainwater tanks attached to the market place roof in Bwagaioa Harbour where you clear in. We found that on some of the islands the locals went out of their way to give water to the sailors but unfortunately they were sharing a very rare commodity.

The archipelago suffers from drought just as we do here and the water catchment areas are very small dams built in a small rock crevice at the foot of a hill. The amount of water that some of these dams hold would not sustain a village easily. So please give a thought to these gentle, generous people and their fight for survival.

Medical facilities in the Louisiades are very, very limited. It is advisable to have your doctor draft up a medical kit suitable for the tropics. Antibiotics and creams for possible tropical ulcers, malaria tablets, (malaria is a very large concern to locals and visitors in the Louisiades) pills and potions for other general ailments, bandaids, bandages, splints and anything else that may ease what ails you (Rum for medicinal purposes only of course). I love my Hydrogen Peroxide; it's just about good for everything external.

There is a small but reasonably equipped hospital with a resident dentist in Bwagaioa.

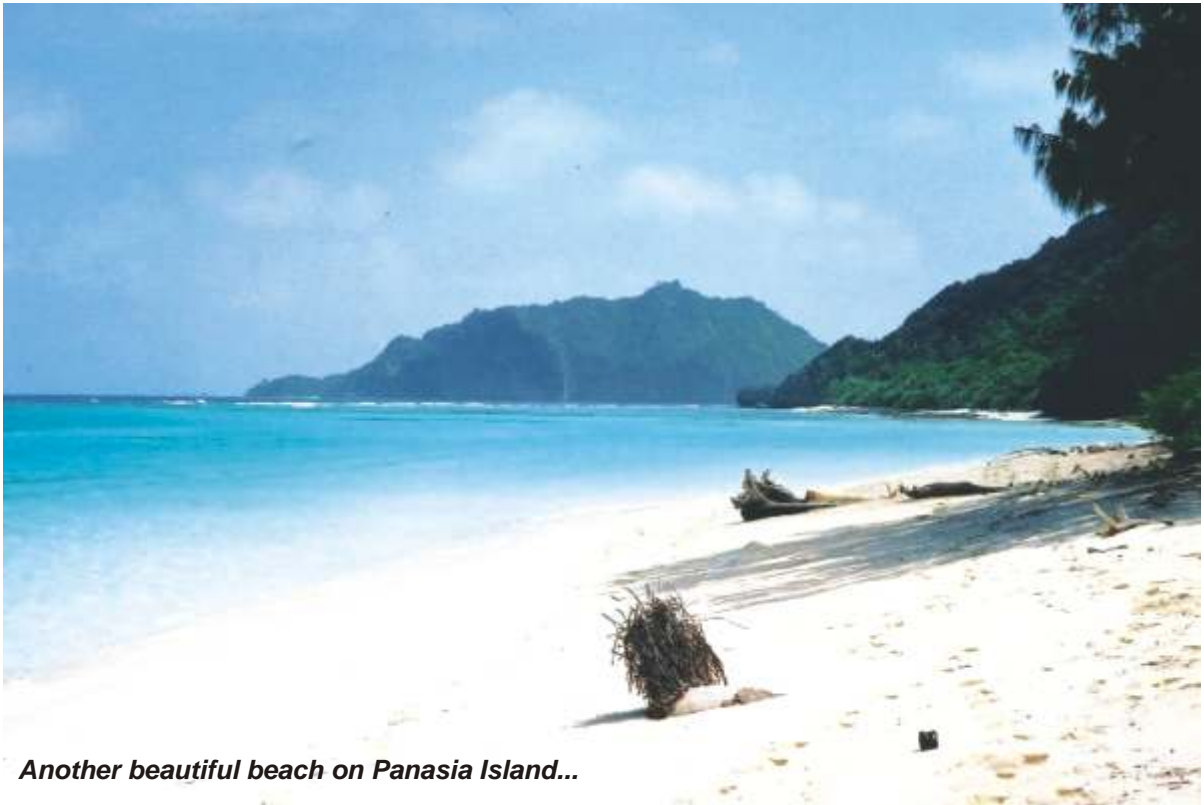
At the far south-eastern end of the chain on Nimoa Island there is a medical centre cum hospital. This is run by Nuns from the Catholic Mission and there is an equivalent to a paramedic which is as close to a doctor as you will get in Nimoa. We visited this hospital and there were many children there suffering from Malaria....very sad.

Now that we were organised it was time to hit the waterways.

We left Townsville and anchored the first night in Horseshoe Bay at Magnetic Island. From there we sailed across to North East Bay on Great Palm Island and here we spent the night counting down the minutes to the journey which would lead us to a beautiful part of this world. After a high of 1024 hpa had crossed the coastline we left our anchorage and scooted through Palm Passage with a breeze of 20-25 knots. The seas through the reef were around a metre high and the sky was clear. We had ideal conditions for the so called shake down cruise of *Even Bet*.

Two hundred miles off the coast conditions changed. The sky darkened with threatening clouds and the three metre beam seas became confused. Our trip across was a combination of a breeze from nine knots up to 40 knots. We actually had to slow the boat down from 11 knots to eight to give us a more comfortable ride and as night encroached on us we double reefed the mainsail for safety.

This we decided to leave in and with a partially reefed heady the catamaran seemed to skim through the conditions unfazed.



Another beautiful beach on Panasia Island...

The trip took us 77 hours giving us an average of about 7.8 knots. Not too bad considering we were used to sailing a 20 ton steel mono that averaged 4-5 knots. We were anchored by 1300 hours spending our first sleeping hours in an anchorage off Kukubila Island in the Duchateau group of islands.

These three uninhabited islands were typical of a tropical scene with golden beaches and swaying palm trees, absolutely breath taking; real post card stuff.

After a fantastic non interrupted sleep we weighed anchor and sailed to Panasia Island no more than two hours away. Here after negotiating the entrance through the reef we anchored in 10 metres of clear water with a sand bottom and a few coral bommies. It was a safe secure anchorage with a view out to many islands awaiting exploration.

Panasia's anchorage was well protected with high cliffs and hills forming an arc. On the ocean side was a pristine white beach which was awash with a turquoise sea. The sun shone brilliantly reflecting prisms of golden light off the rippling wavelets. We truly thought we had found heaven. This was the beginning. We felt privileged to be able to experience such peace, tranquillity and wonderment and to be sharing the experience with other boaties.

It may sound wishy washy to some but when you get the opportunity to get away from the hustle and bustle of what is expected of us and experience the way life should truly be the calm just seems to wash over you. It's hard to explain until you experience it. We were now ready to see, explore and experience all the other anchorages that lay in wait for us.

Our plan was to island hop to Misima Island where we were to clear in. We had our smiles, an open heart and an open mind at the ready, we were prepared to go out and meet the locals.



Dianne. Diane and her husband John are building a catamaran (see TCP #38), with plans to get "out there" next year. Stay tuned for more of Dianne's story of her Louisiades adventure from the past...



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Slip sliding away...

aka, 'The Boob Factor'

That's right, I thought groggily, it's full moon ebbing half tide. They must also have opened the barrage upstream. It was raining heavily to boot. Damn, what a day to have to navigate my way ashore. Donning a raincoat I dragged the dingy, by now half full of rainwater, alongside.

Double damn, I have to bail before going anywhere. That was my last conscious thought as I stepped amidsthips into our very tender, tender. The bow headed downstream at around 6 knots. Not to worry; I had done this many times before so I hauled the bow toward the current and watched in my sleepy haze as all the water in the dingy sloshed toward the direction of the current. Too late to let go the rail, the floodwaters were rushing to fill the rest of the dingy. Before my befuddled brain could register I was going about this all the wrong way, I was tossed into the filthy water.

Now I WAS awake. How the hell was I going to get back on board? I don't possess the novelty of a boarding ladder. Normally I pull the dingy alongside, grab the toe rail with one hand, the dingy with the other and hoist myself up onto either. After several tries I realized it wasn't going to happen with a dingy full of water and the water funnelling between the gap at the volume of a storm drain. My legs could do nothing but stream out behind me like burly for the crocs.

Patience, as if to a cretin, Stef said, 'Hang on! I'll bail the dingy.' He, of course didn't try to hold the boat alongside, while I grimly hung to the toe rail my lower body horizontal and my arms being wrenched out of their sockets.

'Now pull yourself in over the transom.' He instructed. Easy for you to say, I thought.

If you sailors out there wish to try this manoeuvre from a well endowed woman's perspective, strap your balls enlarged to the size of a couple of rock melons on your chest after having half your arm muscles removed and see how easy this is to achieve.

'I'll drag you up', Stef announced from amidsthips as he grasped my wrists and wrenched my clinging hands free.

Now sailors, image how you would feel as your rock melon sized balls are being keelhauled up the transom.. Not a very comfortable idea, is it?

'Just row ashore.' I told him after I managed to convince him at last not to proceed with his insensitive insistence he could land me like a flopping fish into the dingy. As USO's (unidentified submerged objects) hit or brushed my legs it was all I could manage not to scream like an over-revved outboard.

With many curious, amused eyes watching our progress, it will take me a few years or until my next stupid blunder to lose the nickname, 'Outboard Rudder'.

By knock off time the waters and weed seemed to have eased, the tide had turned. It seemed too risky after my morning escapade to mount the outboard onto the transom. Our slide on inflatables were 80 kilometers away. We were able to row back by following the bank well past the boat and steering toward it with the down-flow.

By 2 am I woke to the wind shrieking and *Shomi* healing on his side. The awnings were still up and without warning the wind was blowing 100 kilometres an hour (clocked by the weather bureau for landlubbers). Boats were heading in all directions. I dragged myself on deck in an even groggier state than the morning before and suddenly my survival instinct kicked in. There was no way to remove the wildly flogging things safely. So we sailed and heeled to the gusts of the wind like a demented bird caught in a rabbit trap.

Just before first light there came a bashing on the hull that had us up and out in a flash. 'Take a look!' It was Dave from whom we rented a mooring, pointing to the chaos that was now our normally sheltered and peaceful haven. Islands of weed were caught on most of the mooring lines, boats dragging their moorings at only a slightly less rate of knots than the frantic current. It was time to leave. Adding fuel to a low tank at this late stage had Dave shaking his head in frustration and disbelief.

Fired up and with an extra line to his tinny we manoeuvred toward the bank avoiding the large amounts of debris tearing at us and dropped anchor. Stef took off with Dave to rescue 12 other boats with some pretty dramatic encounters as yacht, motorboats and houseboats played dodgems. I was left to take a line to tie to a sturdy tree and drop a stern anchor.

For all of you boat owners here comes the fix. Stay or leave for work. This was my third day on a new job and although they knew I stayed on a boat they had NO idea what that entailed especially in flood times. Weighing up the risks I knew the tide would be turning in an hour or so and that I could come and check on it at lunch. Stef and Dave were still at large. Also as more and more boats came to

join me near the bank there would be other eyes watching carefully and they had my mobile number.

That evening after work found me sliding down the muddy bank into the rubbish tip (that was now floating on the dubious sludge at waters edge), to grab the line thrown for the third time miles too short and tangled in the mangroves. I briefly pondered the contrast of sitting in an air-conditioned office in neat, clean clothing doing nothing harder than tapping keys on a computer, driving clients to appointments and attending meetings, with spreads of delicious food provided - and knew in that precise moment as I was being yelled at to 'Catch the *\$# rope this time and stop your winging, woman', that I should be certified.

If that had been the end of it I may have laughed it off with all the other crazy things we do for our boats. Truckloads of weed and logs were expected to come down on Saturday. I stayed on duty as Stef went home to attend our sadly neglected animals.

So far it had been an uneventful weekend except for a large log whose branch had caught the anchor chain. The sun was out and all of us waiting it out were slowly stewing in our awningless boats.

Suddenly Dave dashed by in a hurry to attend to a boat and called out, 'The side window of your car had been smashed. I haven't called the cops yet.' Normally it is locked up in the safety of the Fitzroy Motorboat Club compound, but for ease of rowing along the bank I parked it where other boaties had parked their cars, at the public jetty. Now not only did I have a smashed window but my money, phone, cards, identity and personal items had been stolen. To add insult to injury I had to drive home without a window in the rainy weather to find our unsealed road washed out. I edged the tiny buzz-box into the rain forested curb, covered the space where my driver's window had once been with my raincoat and trudged for ages up our mountain, while contemplating another week, at least, of rising waters and possibly worse problems to come.

It's the third week of February and it is again pelting down in the Fitzroy area. As yet the waters have not reached us. All the yachts are still tied to trees and ready for more floodwaters. I've been in Brisbane for the week and have not heard there are any problems with the boat. As they say, "No news is good news." Still we are all gearing up in case the rain doesn't ease up. Stay tuned.



Vicki, on a better day...

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Chk Chk Boom!

By Stuart Buchanan, SY *Pluto*

Have you ever had the overwhelming desire to blast a jet ski out of the water? I have. Especially the ones that have that spout of water squirting vertically in the air, as if giving the finger to everyone they pass.

I've always found them odious and an annoying intrusion into the usual peacefulness found in most anchorages. My real hate of jet skis began when I was anchored in my ketch *Pluto* at Whitehaven Beach in the Whitsundays. As the day progressed, more and more tourist boats arrived, often with two jet skis on board. They'd immediately be lowered into the water so the tourists could each take turns at zipping around trying to get as close as possible to other anchored vessels without actually hitting them.

Then they were introduced to Great Keppel Island, where groups of tourists, astride these screaming abominations, circumnavigated the island a few times every day.

While *Pluto* was anchored in Pancake Creek I was invited over to the catamaran *Katzenjammer*. Her skipper John was showing me around the deck of his recently launched professionally built aluminium vessel. He was complaining that the frames of the boat had been placed too far apart, because as you walked around the deck, all you could hear was pop, pop, pop, as the deck popped down with the weight of your foot and then popped up again when you lifted your foot.

John was an actor from Sydney. He was big, rotund, with a short beard and had a deep, booming, theatrical voice. As we were talking, above the sound of the 20 knot south-easterly, we heard a cacophony of what sounded like a thousand screaming banshees. Then we saw little black blobs going like bats out of hell coming straight at us. The blobs turned out to be about twenty-five jet skis. They screeched past, missing the anchored boats by only a couple of metres, and then headed up the creek doing spins and turns as they went.

John shook his fist in the air and shouted a string of obscenities as he ran across the deck to the wheel-house pop-pop, pop-pop, pop-pop, pop-pop. He grabbed the microphone of his VHF radio and called Round Hill

Volunteer Marine Rescue, expressing his disgust at what was happening in Pancake Creek. John was told that the jet skis were on a charity run along the coast. One of the organisers of the charity run was in VMR's radio room. He apologised for the behaviour of the jet ski riders and assured John it wouldn't happen again.

On returning to *Pluto*, I went up to the bow to see if there was a suitable place to mount a whaling harpoon-gun, and fantasised about what damage I could do to a jet ski with that. I then considered an AK47 assault rifle, but I didn't think you could buy one of those over the counter at an army disposal store. So, I decided to settle for a ging and a bag of marbles, which I bought in Bundaberg.

It was enjoyable getting my aim in, firing at objects that I pretended were jet skis. It was with great anticipation that I continued my sail south, hoping for a jet ski to come within striking distance. But day by day my hopes were slowly dashed; the few jet skis I did see were too far out of range.

Later on I spent a week or so sailing from Scarborough down the inside to Southport. The 15 to 20 knot north-easterly breeze provided wonderful sailing conditions. I hadn't thought of jet skis once on the trip until I reached The Broadwater. Yep, there they were, screaming along, between and around the vessels anchored on the western side of South Stradbroke Island, blatantly disregarding the 6 knot speed limit when within 60 metres of anchored vessels.

I felt the hackles rise on the back of my neck. I clipped the autopilot onto the tiller, went below and dug out my ging and bag of marbles from the locker. I was at the ready. But the bastards didn't come near me.

A few days later I left the Southport Yacht Club to head home. I was less than a mile from the Seaway when, above the noise of *Pluto's* motor, I heard something that sounded like a giant swarm of bees. I turned round to see about twenty jet skis bearing down on me. Damn! My ging and bag of marbles were back in the locker. I couldn't leave the tiller to go below, because there were too many other vessels around me. One by one, in a churned up sea of white water, the armada screamed past. The riders probably wondered why this old bloke with the purple face and foaming at the mouth was jumping up and down in the cockpit.



The inconsideration shown by jet ski riders towards other people on the water is unbelievable. From now on I'll be storing my ging and bag of marbles in the cockpit locker.

Just recently I saw a program on television showing a new type of ski board. It has a hydrofoil that allows the rider to do amazing acrobatics as they're towed along slightly slower than the speed of sound. And that's not all; the tow boat has special speakers installed in the cockpit so the ski rider can listen to rock music while somersaulting and spinning through the air. Gee, that would make great target practice a bit like clay pigeon shooting really. I haven't yet carved a notch on the handle of my ging, but I live in hope.

Read more by Stuart Buchanan!

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Bare Bones is Back!

The TCP boat building project resumes!
In spite of weird stuff...

by Bob Norson

I know people that go their whole lives in some kind of protective bubble, but building a boat seems to be a shit magnate. People in the family get ill or die, injuries can occur and lately floods are all the fashion. As far as health goes, I knew going in I had to be careful. In the last several years I've been diagnosed with everything except writing talent but all the things I considered as risks did not occur, but the surprises sucked. And that's the point. Lesson learnt is... it is not possible to anticipate all the things that can go wrong when you take on a project like this, for example:

Shoulder injury: I didn't see this one coming. Damaged tendons are a bastard to heal. The shoulder is a continuing problem that is being managed by adaptation of equipment and technique but that cost 5 months outright and continues to slow things. A caution to builders, this wasn't a sudden injury but rather a few days of extreme overwork. The actual injury wasn't realised until days later.

The worlds worst neighbours. No, not(nessecarily) the house next door, though that could happen too. We purposely bought a home on a large block to prevent the neighbour complaint factor but we got caught up in local politics and the vested interests of aviation. Lesson learnt? If where you live, an airport is being considered for construction or expansion, fight it with your life or sell up fast before the value drops. If our experience means anything, they will say anything to convince you aviation will do the right thing and stick to the proper flight paths but once in place they will ignore every "promise" made. For more on this see www.stop-noise.org

So, that is what set the project back but now we live in a different place, and it's time to move on. For those of you that would like to see the earlier stages, the TCP web site has logs and photo galleries.

Where we re-started: The first hull was a mess due to material defects and incomplete information. Repairs to prevent water ingress into the balsa core were complicated, time consuming and costly. The second hull was much better due to luck and the acquisition of information on outgassing. [Kay now calls the first hull, "Bob's hull" and the second hull, her hull.] These issues have all been reported in previous editions and are on the website but a brief description of the outgassing problem is at right. Lessons learnt? I wished I had stuck to my plan of using foam sandwich. There is a mountain of independent information on using the material. It is usually less expensive and doesn't require epoxy with it's cost and toxicity.



Hulls ready to flip and join.. at last

Boat Cote resin: I did have concerns that I might be more susceptible to epoxy reaction which has been the case but I have managed that. In a way, this has been good in that some builders that don't expect trouble get themselves really toxic before they realise what they've done. I have switched to *Boat Cote* epoxy resin which claims to be less toxic than what I used before. It's even more expensive but if it saves health, worth every penny. It works well in most regards but for bogging it has a tendency to sag. I addressed this by using some cab-o-sil filler along with the Q-cell in the mix which helps but makes for harder sanding. Boat Craft Pacific (makers of Boat Cote) has it's own bogging mix that is claimed to work better but I haven't had a chance to try it yet but will soon.

The weather this summer has been miserable. For the year and a half that the project was on hold we watched cool dry days go by. My lovely drought! Now that I can work, it's monsoon city. That and the necessity of working at night to insure every coating was a sealing coat, made for some interesting schedules and extra work.

I admit that I lavished the hulls with attention in the repair and finish stage. Once bitten, twice shy. But the extra work will pay dividends later (hopefully) as much fairing work has been incorporated that may save time later and in increased confidence in the integrity of the water proof sealing of the balsa.

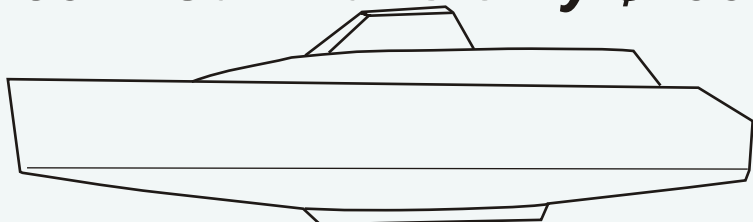
next page....

What is "outgassing"?

Shown is a duflex panel with a thin layer of fresh bogg

"Outgassing" occurs when a porous substance like balsa is rising in temperature. The atmospheric gasses are then expanding and will force their way through a non-solid covering like the fresh bogg above. Everyone of those little volcano like pits is a direct path to the balsa. Water ingress would be assured and destructive unless sealed. An effective seal can only be accomplished when the panels are "ingassing". That is, when the panels are cooling (evening) and the gasses in the balsa are contracting, thus drawing the resin in. This was a surprise as the panels come with a heavy fibreglass-epoxy skin and were assumed to be a sealed surface. Would have been fun to have known.

30 ft Cat Plans only \$150



If you have skills in plywood and FGRP, you can build this boat for about \$25K in less than 1000 hours. See the TCP web site and look for the link to the "\$21K Cat" for a construction overview and link to the "buy Now" page.

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The Procedure that works: This reflects my experience with the Duflex. To the extent possible this is what I did or would have done if I could. First step, cover the panel surfaces with resin at night or anytime the panels are cooling. The “longer” the thermometer the better. A squeegee works best to fill the pours. Then once that goes tacky, the first layer of bogg mixed thick. When that goes tacky then another thinner coat of bogg to smooth and fill the thicker layer. Let set overnight and sand the next day when it's gone off. That should get you most of the way there but I still wouldn't bet my life on it. So, another layer of resin over the lot, again working at night to be sure, let go tacky. After that comes another layer of resin saturated with **copper powder**. [I elected to use this for abrasion resistance rather than long term anti-foul. I have had reports of this mix preventing hull damage from grounding. I have found that some especially savvy sailors use this mix to prevent abrasion damage to key areas on deck as well.] After the copper coat goes good and tacky, a coat of epoxy primer (that's Watty! Epiname! PR 250, formally called EP universal)), and later we'll coat that with Watty! DTM 900 for a tough sealing coat and then a chlorinated rubber tie coat and anti-foul. I did do a test to insure compatibility of the primer and resin.

Cool Tip! When rolling resin on in hot weather, I used modest batches (350 to 450 grams) and kept most of it in a milk container that I left floating in a bucket with a few inches of water in the bottom. This dissipated the exothermic heat of the reaction and extended the pot life dramatically.

Dry Tip! To keep water out of my air tools and paint sprayer, I bought a 30 metre air hose to connect the compressor with the tank. I threw the excess hose into a dam next to the tent and the water keeps the line cool and prevents most of the condensation from reaching the tank or my tools and paint sprayer. Thanks to an Airlie Beach reader for that tip.

The Tools: In issue # 39 I showed some tools I modified and fabricated for the job. Having had a chance to really test them, I report success! The split tool is wonderful for sanding bogg in an even, fast and controllable fashion. Finish work will be it's forte. Using 80 grit on it leaves a 120 grit surface, don't ask me how, it just does. The air sander that in it's original form spit oil all over the job really benefited by greasing key parts instead of using more oil. Not one drop of contamination after many hours of hard work. Replacing the original

‘shoe’ with a big slab of plywood made it much more effective. A fantastic tool! But the ugly truth is, nothing beats a torture board. So for the gimp here, I made a board that doesn't require both shoulders. My one armed torture board uses my right elbow to press against the work while my right hand guides and puts pressure forward. No fun, but good result.

The Waterline: All the you beaut ways to get this are a pain in the arse if you are working on dirt. Stuff it! I spent hours trying to get a hull level athwartships and fore and aft and gave up. I had five points from the hull forms that indicated the waterline. I transferred those measurements to the hulls then upon advise (thanks Craig) added about 100mm to account for design optimism and splash action that leaves a dirty bit just above the water. I then took a string line, fastened it level with the fore and aft marks and gently moved it (didn't take much) to line up with the other marks for a good fair line. See photo at lower right.

Pardon my French! I had some help for a week or two early on and it was useful to get me back in the groove. One helper was Luc from France. He was keen so turned him loose with a trowel. We have been going through some wet periods and when the rain stopped, an extraordinary insect breeding cycle came on. Boat Cote claims their resin has an insect repellent built in but working at night under lights... it was infuriating! Nothing would stop their Kamikaze attacks on the white bogg. Swearing is kind of universal. If not pronunciation, then tone certainly runs consistent through the language barrier. The poor lad was trying really hard to do a pro job and the bugs made a mess of every try. Oh well... now incased in resin forever, is a (large) sample of Queensland wildlife.

As I write this I'm chaffing at the bit. Kay needs a few days of my time for help on the paper but I can't wait to get back at it. My shoulder feels better most days (some not) and in spite of the continuing bad weather, I'll sand until I drop... JKOS... just keep on sanding (thanks for that one Beel!).

After last year I didn't know if my health would ever come back but the gut I had developed is already going away and my body is gaining strength. The most important thing though, is that I've got the dream back and I'm really enjoying it. I've got a boat to build and after all the bullshit we've been through so far, I doubt anything can stop me.



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HOW ~~NOT~~ TO BUY A BOAT

With tongue planted firmly in cheek, Petrea advises on how to make a vendor crazy!

By Petrea Heathwood, SY *Talisman*

The ins and outs of inspection

- Keep an open mind. Don't decide in advance what type of boat you want. Look at as wide a range as you can find.
- Read everything you can about your target design so you will know more than the owner.
- By doing this homework you eliminate the need for a detailed inspection. Just have a quick look through to allow time for a long and wide ranging discussion about the merits of the design and your own boating experiences.
- Never allow the owner to presume superior knowledge of the boat. You've done your homework and have every right to air your wisdom.
- If you're a family type take the kids along.
- If you're the thorough type always delve into every small space before considering the big picture of layout, condition, suitability for your purpose and so on. The contents of the owner's bunk-side locker can reveal a lot.

- Read the instruction manuals for all the ship's equipment thoroughly to determine whether you have the mental capacity to operate the gear installed. The owner will admire your devotion and won't begrudge the extra time this takes.
- Assume everything aboard is included in the sale, regardless of whether it's listed in the inventory. Some owners are not the sharpest tack in the pack, and just forget to list stuff.
- Be sure to restrict your search to boats well out of your price range. It's common knowledge we're in a buyers' market and most owners are desperate to accept whatever you can offer.
- Consider offering a trade. The seller of a sizable cruising yacht could well desire a small trailer sailer, a block of land in Woodenbong or a 1974 Toyota pig hunting vehicle complete with dog crate and cab mounted spotties.
- Most owners live close to their boat and have lots of spare time. They can usually show the boat at short notice, preferably during the week. If they work, they'll relish the excuse to take some time off to pop down to the boat.

- Keep your timetable flexible. Appointment times are a guide only. You mustn't appear overly keen by turning up right on time. On the other hand an early arrival might deprive the owner of an opportunity to hide all the defects. Turning up a few hours early also provides plenty of time to talk boats afterwards.
- Cheap airfares and pensioner discounts mean travelling to inspect a distant boat need not be an expensive exercise. Owners are only too happy to drive across town to collect prospects from the airport or bus terminal, and return you there afterwards.
- Most boats on the market are unoccupied and the owner will be delighted to let you bed down on board for the night so you can get a good feel for the vessel.
- If you change your mind about looking at any boat, don't notify the owner until the last minute. You may decide to have a stickybeak anyway if you've nothing better to do.
- Lastly, if you're not interested in buying, don't let on. Owners get a warm fuzzy feeling just knowing someone has shown an interest in their pride and joy.

The financial side

- Postpone discussing your nautical aspirations with the resources controller until the deal is done. It could cramp your style to know in advance what you will be allowed to spend.
- If you already own a boat, hold on to it until you've found a replacement. You don't want to risk being boatless in case the money is appropriated elsewhere.
- You need the money from this boat to buy the next one? No worries, you can sell it whenever you need to.
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GOOD NEWS FROM TCP'S ADVERTISERS

Is Moreton Bay the Undiscovered Country?

The History, The Islands and now more berths at
Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club Marina



Tangalooma Resort on Moreton Island:
Perfect spot for hand feeding bottlenose dolphins.



Moreton Island is 95%
National Park, popular
for whale watching, four
wheel driving and fishing.

Tourism Queensland photos

By Michelle McKenna,
Representing "The Club"

Queensland abounds with natural beauty, much of it undiscovered, even by those who live locally. Boaties who have long been visiting Moreton Bay call it "the undiscovered country", packed with secret bays, secluded islands beaches and history.

The scope of the unique playground that exists only 25 miles from the CBD of Brisbane, capital of QLD, is outstanding. The Bay features national parks, world heritage buildings, tourist resorts, excellent anchorages; prime fishing...the list goes on. If you are a boatie and travel the Australian coast you'll love exploring Moreton Bay and its hidden treasures.

Island Hopping

Moreton Bay is one of those beautiful areas unique to Australia where one minute you can be handfeeding dolphins, the next having a crack at sand tobogganing or camping under the stars. The Bay has some great diving and the second and third largest sand islands in the world; Moreton and North Stradbroke Islands, offering beaches, incredible marine life and freshwater lakes.

Flinders Reef is Brisbane's only true coral reef and is a fully protected marine sanctuary with wobbegongs, turtles, stingrays and lots of reef fish. Cape Moreton is a rocky headland at the north eastern tip of Moreton Island providing some of the best fishing spots on the island. Blue Lagoon Campground, located on the eastern side of the island, offers beach style camping for those who like to sleep ashore. Those keen on marine life should pencil in a visit to Tangalooma Marine Education and Conservation Centre which is dedicated to dolphins, whales, dugongs and marine wildlife.

North Stradbroke (or Straddie to the locals) is known for some of the most spectacular scenery found anywhere in Australia. Three little townships on the island provide a relaxed village atmosphere with a variety of cafés and restaurants to sample during your visit. Cylinder Beach is a picturesque cove between Cylinder and Home Beach Headlands. Point Lookout is situated on the

most Northerly side of North Stradbroke Island and is a favourite with locals for socialising. If you fancy hopping out of the water for some exercise the North Gorge Headland walk provides fresh air and astounding views.

If you prefer somewhere more secluded or need a sheltered location, try the five small islands - Coochiemudlo, Macleay, Lamb, Karragarra and Russell - at the southern end of the Bay. These offer a quiet haven to enjoy safe swimming, boating and water sports and great fishing with an abundance of species.

Moreton Bay History

St Helena Island is located in Moreton Bay only 6km southeast of the Brisbane River mouth and about 8km northeast of Manly. Brisbane's best kept secret for history buffs, it functioned as a high-security colonial prison, home to Queensland's most hardened prisoners from 1867 to 1932. Queensland's bushrangers, murderers and thieves all worked together to build this unique prison system using locally quarried beachrockstone joined together with cement made from the Island's lime kiln.

The overcrowding in Brisbane's gaols resulted in the conversion of the buildings, originally intended for a quarantine station, into accommodation for prisoners. Prison labour was used for all activities on the island, from the construction of buildings and roadways to growing, processing and cooking of food. The life of the island rotated around the supervision of prisoners - patrols, barred windows and legirons. The Museum displays fascinating artefacts and information from these times.

Guided tours of the ruins give an insight to the penal and social aspects of the mid 1800's to early 1900's. All visitors in the restricted zone must be with a guide at all times. The ruins are very fragile and sometimes present safety hazards. There is a fee for guided tours in the restricted zone.

Manly Boat Harbour Your Stepping Off Point

The building of Manly Boat Harbour, the largest small-craft harbour in Queensland, began in 1958 and

progressed into large site housing several clubhouses. Manly Boat Harbour is the best stepping off point from which to discover Moreton Bay and its islands.

One of the very cruising yacht friendly clubs located here is Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club. The Club is currently undergoing a major expansion which has so far included the addition of 135 new berths to MBTBC Marina which cater for mono and multi. Further expansion will offer increased amenities, under cover car parking and larger deck area in the Clubhouse.

For many years this Club was recognised as the cruising yachties' haven during the summer months. In recent years due to demand the marina had been unable to accept new tenants however with the completion of the new marina this has all changed.

As MBTBC Marina Supervisor Christine says: "We're very excited about the new berths as it has been very frustrating for people who had supported us for a number of years previously to be unable to berth with us during peak cruising season. I'm very happy to be able to tell them we now have space for cruising yachties to enjoy our facilities and proximity to town once more."

The Club's prime location adjacent to Manly town centre is one of the main reasons the expansion has been necessary. As Club Treasurer John Cardillo says: "As a popular Club we have a responsibility to both members and visitors to ensure we provide the best facilities possible. Our Club is committed to providing top class service, amenities and a great experience for many years to come".



Julian Star photo

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Kay's note: We had these fans in our ketch, White Bird and will definitely have them in our new boat! Pictures show fan in action in the galley. They look nice too!

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"the U.S. sailing magazine for the rest of us!"*



Sundowners *here's my story...*

Crocs? What Crocs?!



Julius having a swim somewhere up north...

By Julius Sanders, MY Nova Kerria

I, your Far Northern Correspondent, do sincerely apologise for not contributing recently but I have had zero boating contact in the past 12 months, so I have no news. Well, close to zero. I do not count occasionally sleeping on a boat that has not been out of the marina for 2 years.

The only other bit was a ride in a 12 ft tinny on the Liverpool River (12S, 134E12 for the technically minded/locationally challenged).

I brought this tinny (tender to Nova Kerria) over to Maningrida on the barge

but I do not own a boat trailer. So I enlisted a couple of the locals to help manhandle it on and off a box trailer. Never again. Nearly did my back in.

We went out in great hopes of catching a feed. I did not realise that these two individuals had near zero boating experience, even though they were born and raised on this stretch of river. They know more about catching a fish than I ever will but they do it from the rocks, or the bank, or the mangroves.

Family groups own traditional areas of land and one does not go fishing and hunting anywhere without permission of the owners.

These guys' country is a short, shallow creek about 3 miles from the landing. I was driving, following their directions. Most of the directions consisted of "go faster" and "over there".

Now, I never go anywhere on the water without consulting cMap first and this consultation indicated mud flats of enormous scope in the direction they were guiding me.

Mirror flat water, hull on the plane, outboard singing a happy song, wind in the hair, afternoon sunshine right behind me. All perfect. I could see the creek entrance about a mile off. A memory of cMap surfaces, a niggling question to my guides.

"Do we have enough water here?"

"Yeah, no worries" was the reply and "See them birds? That's where were going"

Yeah, I've been looking at them birds for some time. They are wading birds, millions of them around the wetlands. Nothing unusual. My problem is that they are doing something that I am not happy with. Too far away for any detail but the motion is unmistakable. These wading birds are wading! Knee up, beak thrust forward, knee down. Yep! Wading! So... depth of water there is about 7 inches. Having 7 inches may be desirable in some situations. A tinny at 20 knots and closing on 7 inches of water is definitely not one of them.

A gentle turn to port, Away from the creek. A glance at the wake. A wake which is no longer hidden by the sun's reflection. Mud! Terrifying!! Mud! Worse than I thought. Mud churned up by the

prop means less than a metre of water. More like half metre by the look of things.

Stay on the plane or we may sink into the mud. Not good!

So, why is this a huge problem? I will not be the first to get hung up on a mudbank and I certainly will not be the last. Mid tide and falling, so only a six hour wait and we float again. The problem can be summed up in a simple four letter word. No, not that one!

This one. Croc! I mentioned "12 foot tinny"? A small croc in these parts is 12 foot long. Get stuck close to sunset, half a mile from shore, for six hours, on a mudbank, in a 12 foot tinny and.... Well, I'll leave it to your imagination. My imagination has me looking for valium and a change of underwear.

Back to the sweaty hand gently holding the throttle, heading for the very slightly deeper water that has to be where the creek empties into the bay. A touch of the hull on mud and I throttle back immediately.

As the sun sinks slowly in the west, we sink quickly into the mud. Not much, thank heavens. The prop and a few inches of keel is all.

We lift the prop into shallow water mode and redistribute the weight. Still not enough water to float free so we can row, but sticking the oars in the mud and poling for ten minutes has us floating again.

An uneventful ride back to the barge landing and so ends my only outing (so far) on the waters of North Central Arnhem Land.

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11m / 36ft	MULTI	\$47.00	\$1,034.00	\$2,999.00	\$5,249.00
12m / 39.4ft	MONO	\$43.00	\$946.00	\$2,744.00	\$4,802.00
12m / 39.4ft	MULTI	\$54.00	\$1,188.00	\$3,446.00	\$6,031.00
13m / 42.6ft	MULTI	\$56.00	\$1,232.00	\$3,573.00	\$6,253.00
13.5m / 44.3ft	MONO	\$47.00	\$1,034.00	\$2,999.00	\$5,249.00
13.5m / 44.3ft	MULTI	\$59.00	\$1,298.00	\$3,765.00	\$6,589.00
14.5m / 47.5ft	MULTI	\$62.00	\$1,364.00	\$3,956.00	\$6,923.00
15m / 49.2ft	MONO	\$49.00	\$1,078.00	\$3,127.00	\$5,473.00
15m / 49.2ft	MULTI	\$65.00	\$1,430.00	\$4,147.00	\$7,258.00
16m / 52.5ft	MONO	\$65.00	\$1,430.00	\$4,147.00	\$7,258.00
16m / 52.5ft	MULTI	\$86.00	\$1,892.00	\$5,487.00	\$9,603.00
17m / 55.8ft	MONO	\$72.00	\$1,584.00	\$4,594.00	\$8,040.00
17m / 57.4ft	MULTI	\$90.00	\$1,980.00	\$5,742.00	\$10,049.00
17.5m / 57.4ft	MULTI	\$92.00	\$2,024.00	\$5,870.00	\$10,273.00
18m / 59.1ft	MONO	\$74.00	\$1,628.00	\$4,722.00	\$8,264.00
20m / 65.6ft	MONO	\$86.00	\$1,892.00	\$5,487.00	\$9,603.00
21m / 68.9ft	MONO	\$91.00	\$2,002.00	\$5,806.00	\$10,161.00
22m / 72.2ft	MONO	\$99.00	\$2,178.00	\$6,317.00	\$11,055.00
22m / 72.2ft	MULTI	\$129.00	\$2,838.00	\$8,231.00	\$14,405.00
23m / 75.4ft	MONO	\$104.00	\$2,288.00	\$6,636.00	\$11,613.00
24m / 78.7ft	MONO	\$125.00	\$2,750.00	\$7,975.00	\$13,957.00
25m / 81.9ft	MONO	\$130.00	\$2,860.00	\$8,294.00	\$14,515.00
25m / 81.9ft	MULTI	\$168.00	\$3,696.00	\$10,719.00	\$18,759.00
26m / 85.3ft	MONO	\$136.00	\$2,992.00	\$8,677.00	\$15,185.00
27m / 88.5ft	MONO	\$140.00	\$3,080.00	\$8,932.00	\$15,631.00
28m / 91.8ft	MONO	\$146.00	\$3,212.00	\$9,315.00	\$16,302.00
29m / 95.1ft	MONO	\$149.00	\$3,278.00	\$9,507.00	\$16,638.00
30m / 98.4ft	MONO	\$158.00	\$3,476.00	\$10,081.00	\$17,642.00
31m / 101.7ft	MONO	\$162.00	\$3,564.00	\$10,336.00	\$18,088.00
32m / 105ft	MONO	\$166.00	\$3,652.00	\$10,591.00	\$18,535.00
33m / 108.3ft	MONO	\$173.00	\$3,806.00	\$11,038.00	\$19,317.00
34m / 108.3ft	MONO	\$177.00	\$3,894.00	\$11,293.00	\$19,763.00
35m / 114.7ft	MONO	\$183.00	\$4,026.00	\$11,676.00	\$20,433.00

Terms and Conditions

- Mega berths - over 35m - \$10 per metre per day + 3 phase power
- Berth rentals to be paid in advance
- No refunds
- Access key - \$40 deposit / key
- All rental rates include GST
- Air conditioners - \$20 / week
- Concessional GST may apply for long term accommodation
- 3- phase power - additional charge
- No pets permitted on Marina
- Sorry no Amex or Diners cards accepted
- Liveaboard \$40 / week - on agreement with management

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			0-45FT	46FT - 65FT	66FT +
LIFT OUT & RETURN	2 slings	Per Foot	\$8.00	\$10.50	\$12.00
4 SLING LIFT		Per Foot	\$9.50	\$10.50	\$12.00
SURVEY / INSPECTION LIFT		Per Foot	\$7.50	\$8.50	\$10.00
TRANSPORT LIFT		Per Foot	\$7.50	\$7.50	\$8.00
IN YARD LIFT		Per Foot	\$5.00	\$5.50	\$6.00
WATERBLAST CLEAN		\$65 PER HOUR			
WATERBLAST DIRTY		\$120 PER HOUR (THIS INCLUDES CLEAN UP FEE)			
HARDSTAND RATES MONO & MULTI		Per Foot/Day	\$1.50		
SHED HIRE - MONO & MULTI			0-45FT	46FT - 65FT	66FT +
PAINT SHED		PER DAY	\$250.00 *	\$300.00 *	\$350.00 *
MAINTENANCE SHED		PER DAY	\$250.00 *	\$300.00 *	\$350.00 *
BLAST BAY		Per Foot/Day	\$4.00 *	* Outgoings are Electricity, Water & Compressors	
FORKLIFT HIRE	30 mins or part thereof = \$70.00. Per Hour = \$120.00				
DORY HIRE FOR TOWING PER TOW	\$250.00	Under 15 knts of wind only			
LABOUR	Per Hour	\$60.00			
CLEAN UP FEE	Per Hour	\$80.00			
MAST STORAGE	Per Day	\$40.00			
AFTER HOURS LABOUR WEEKEND & PH	Per Hour per person (min 2 hours) = \$90.00				
3 MT BIN HIRE	Per Empty = \$100.00 (Clean up fee will be charged if work areas are left in an untidy condition.)				

Terms and Conditions

Environmental Levy for vessels = \$35.00. Tradesman Access Cards \$100 deposit. Vessels are lifted & stored at owners risk.
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"This is who we are"



Bob Fenney photo

Airlie Beach mates of Dan Kane join to celebrate Dans life

A Yachtie's reflection on days gone by

Carmen Walker, SY Dreamweaver

After sailing the Boat *Dreamweaver*, a 9.03m Catamaran, from Cairns to Airlie Beach with my son and another crewmember, my life, as I knew it has changed. 5 months have rolled by since Colin, my brave sailor passed away from pancreatic cancer. My focus, over these past months has revolved around becoming a competent sailor.

I am most fortunate. I have willing friends who are interested in my welfare and that of *Dreamweaver*. I am also involved in racing sailing boats on a Wednesday afternoon and I try and take *The Weaver* out most weekends. These have been fun times and I have enjoyed numerous social events with my friends.

About a month ago I made my first solo in *Dreamweaver* from an Abel Point mooring to Shute Harbour. The Whitsundays is a fabulous place to be in, but during the cyclone season if one is not prepared to move ones boat from Airlie Beach during a severe northerly, be prepared to lose it. This year was to be no different, except I now had to be prepared to do this on my own. I have many wonderful people here who I have the privilege to call on should I ever need a hand.

The "Yachtie Community" was recently rocked by a tragedy.

We lost another one of our own. Dan (a "yachtie" mate) had a seizure on the pontoon at the Whitsunday Sailing Club on Australia Day 2010.

I was lucky to become reacquainted with Dan on my return to Airlie Beach. Colin and I used to be anchored close to Dan at the Whitsunday Sailing Club prior to us leaving for Cairns in November 2008. Dan was a permanent fixture in Airlie Beach. His home was his boat *Yin Yang*. Dan had suffered a stroke many years prior. He walked with a limp and had one arm permanently in a sling.

I remember waking one morning and Dan yelling out, "My tender's got a way from me during the night." Before Colin and I could render assistance, Dan quick as a flash had the anchor up on his boat and was off to chase his lost tender. 10 -15 minutes later Dan was back on anchor in his boat, with lost tender in tow.

I will remember Dan for his quiet confidence, his bright smile and his love of music, which he used to torture Colin and I with, each time he made his way back to his boat after a glass or two of red at the sailing club. Colin and Dan would often compete with each other over who had the loudest and worst/best music.

Dan could handle his boat better than some of us who had two good arms. He should be an inspiration to us all.

DANIEL PETER KANE

26th August 1970 - 26th January 2010

A memorial service was held at the sailing club rock wall on Friday 5th Feb 2010. His funeral was held in Sydney; 500 people attended.



Bob Fenney photo

Why Do Foreign Vessels Still Come to Australia?

Maybe because word gets around about experiences like this...



The Time Honoured salvage reward, and 12 year old!

Chatting with a neighbour a while back, he said, "have a look at what I found in the mangroves". We walked around back of his place to find a large inflatable in very good nick. Peter Lamond, had contacted the local Coast Guard and sure enough, a report was traced back and the owners found. Peter was to meet the yacht at Gary's anchorage to deliver it back to the boat (our little inlet is not a deep water port) and would I like to come along? Wouldn't miss it for the world. So early morning finds us making the shortish trip across the straits in Peter's big tinny.

It was a feel good moment. A good turn done for worthy and appreciative crew.

A few words from the crew of UK boat, SY Do It:

"The return of our dinghy by Peter, which was lost in a squall, was yet another example of the friendliness and hospitality we have experienced during our short time in Australia. From not being charged for some welding, to being invited to stay on a private dock in Mooloolabah for no charge."

We thoroughly enjoyed reading The Coastal Passage, it is in the best traditions of the free magazines, such as 'All At Sea' (UK) and 'Caribbean Compass' with entertaining articles and a robust and vigorous letters page - particularly on the Aussie regulations and arrival costs issues. Topics which resonated with us - not only quarantine fees but also the cost of visas."

Angus & Ruth Ross-Thomson, SY Do It

Further notes: Peter and Leslie are local to Boonooroo and are developing property in the area. It's nice to know the kind of people behind a business.

Angus and Ruth have a lovely website on their cruise: www.doitcruise.info

Bob Norson



That's Angus, Ruth and good neighbour Peter



"This is who we are"

A MESSAGE FROM GARY

The last week of November, 2009, my dreams were completely scuttled.

A visit to the Doctor about chest pain resulted in a chest x-ray. Heart & lungs no problem, but he noted increased density in lower vertebrae.

"Any clinical evidence of prostate cancer?", the report asked.

"But Doc! I haven't had any symptoms!" No pissing problems such as urgency, weak stream, getting up frequently at night, as the TV ad warns.

The next week, after a P.S.A. (Prostate Specific Antigen) blood test, bone scan, C.T. scan, and transrectal ultrasound with multiple needle biopsy (I still shudder after that one), I was seen by the urologist.

PSA level 500, Gleason score 9 out of 10, wide spread metastases (secondary cancers which have spread from the prostate) in multiple vertebrae from base of skull to the sacrum, also in ribs, pelvis and shoulder.

My dreams of completing my beautiful yacht, of Pacific Island cruising, of slowly doing a world circumnavigation were flushed down the head as I heard the urologist suggest I get my affairs in order and have my will made out.

WHY AM I WRITING THIS LETTER?

I want to make all you blokes out there 50 and over aware that just because you don't have any obvious symptoms of prostate trouble, don't put off having a simple PSA blood test. Have it tomorrow. An elevated PSA level (above 3.5) could mean other things, not just prostate cancer.

Ninety percent of blokes with prostate cancer that hasn't spread, with some treatment, will live for many years and die of other causes.

I just turned 59, so it's not just an old bloke's disease. If you are 50 and over, just go and have that bloody PSA test! To wives, girlfriends, and partners, please get on their backs and make them bloody-well take the test! I guess I wish I had, a few years ago.

**Gary Thompson,
SY Killara**



Gary is still smiling

by Bob Norson

So how would you feel? What would YOU do? Gary put a for sale sign up on his part finished boat. Defeated? Not yet. The community at the Maryborough Slipway rallied round. First it was Robbie from *Mi Casa* talking to Al about helping Gary get his boat in the water; Doc from "Doc's Marine" got in on it and said, "we need a working Bee". And things started happening. Time is precious.

So now Steve may be able to help with electrical, Don said he can help with fitout, Al sanded everything that wouldn't run and hide and yours truly helped with a little welding.

Graham, who runs the slipway has contributed his time and supplies as well. Local welder "KB" has put in many hours installing SS trim, and bow sprit and repair and alterations to the rig. In spite of the difficult weather, much progress has been made but it isn't in the water yet.

Gary has a mission, he wants to tell everyone he meets that men over 50 should get the test. But he has to get the boat in the water first so he can get moving.

Can you help with the message? Can you help with the boat? Contact TCP. We'll pass the word, or just wander down to the slipway. There are good folk there and work to be done.



KB hard at it

The Mooloolaba Yacht Club recently held a Pink October day to raise funds for women's breast cancer research and care. And what a great day it was. With 17 yachts taking part and the boats and crew looking resplendent in pink, people in the surrounding areas surely would have had to question the sanity of those involved.

The MYC tied the event in with it's annual ladies race day with Jenny Fitzgibbons the victor on *Dacore*. Jenny is competing in the single handed Trans Tasman race in April 2010. In the picture is Selena Hart presenting Jodi Durkin from Cancer Council Queensland with a cheque for proceeds of the day, \$1408.

The MYC holds 2 events each year for charities the other being 'Give me 5 for kids'.

Well done Mooloolaba Yacht Club!

Rob Stevenson

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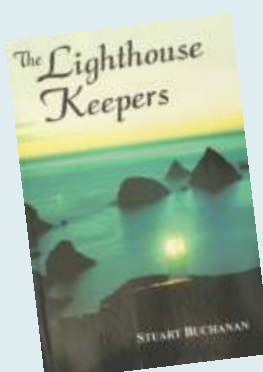
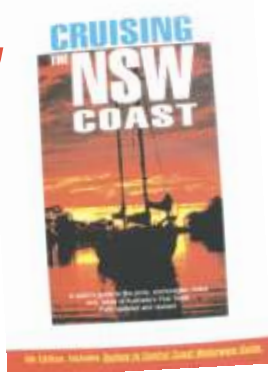


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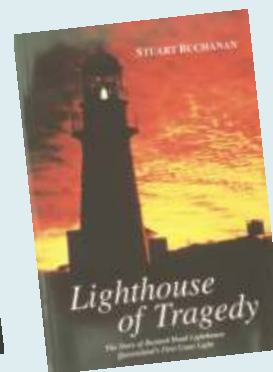
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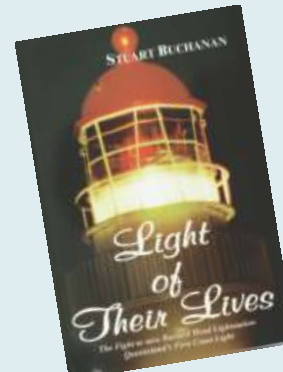
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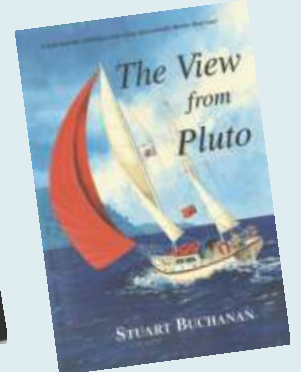
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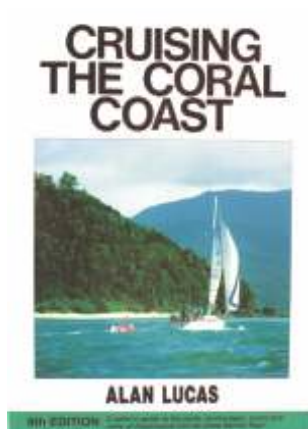
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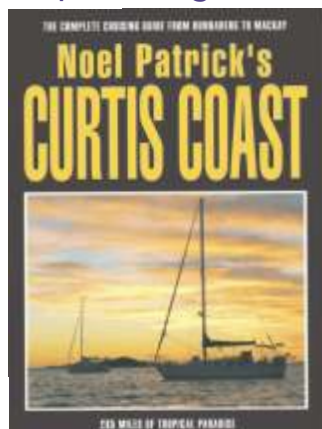
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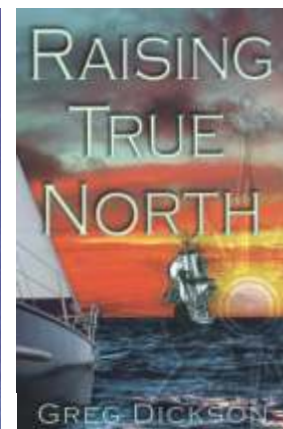
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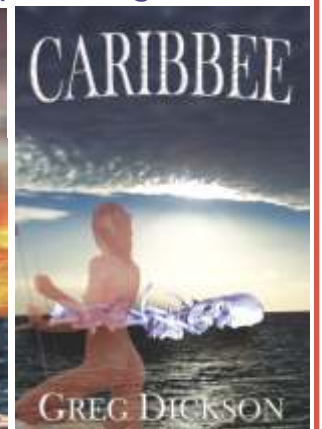
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