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46th Edition  
Jan - Feb 2011

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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.

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# Peter Berck of St Bees Island



Words and photo by Steve Kenyon

The Queensland coast recently lost one of it's great characters when the legendary Peter Berck of St. Bees Island crossed over to that big island in the sky - where, hopefully, there is plenty of golf, fishing, beer, and good friends. For during his unique tenure on St. Bees, Pete made countless friends via his warm open hospitality, his unstinting and knowledgeable assistance to Mariners over the radio, plus some very real inspiration.

For Pete's life is one of great inspiration. Of the triumph of human determination and humour over extreme adversity.

In March 1970 Pete, (then a 16yo High School athlete living in Michigan USA), helped two buddies carry an aluminium flag pole across a golf course at night. Holding it erect they ran into a 40,000 volt high tension line. One lad was killed; one lost part of his leg; while Pete lost both his legs just below the knee. In that instant he lost ever so much more from a promising life, and was in intensive care for 100 days.

Undaunted he started forward again - travelled to Australia - enrolled in Mackay State High School in 1971 - and by 1979 was excelling academically in his 3rd year of Law School. However the pain in the stumps of his legs became too severe, so he opted to return and live on what was now his parents Island, St. Bees near Mackay.

As fate would have it John Flook was here too, with common traumatic denominators, (together they had 3 arms and 1 leg) and the two became firm friends. They did all the 1001 jobs required to live in a remote place, *"they worked hard, built and extended, laid water pipes, electrical circuits and power lines, cemented pathways and storm drains .. nothing defied their industry and ingenuity"*. They had fun too; they played golf on the beach and Pete caught a record Grouper weighing 245kg.

But time, as is it's want, moved on. Pete stayed. Good mates such as Bert Salisbury and John Baillie took him on visits to town or Brampton (a good yarn there), but mostly he stayed, and apart from doing his own chores, provided an extremely reliable radio service for passing Mariners. Pete didn't mind a cold beer, yet no matter what time of day or night a call came through, there was a clear concise voice answering. The voice of a Law School student, tinged with extensive local knowledge, keen intelligence, and lively humour....

... And that sense of humour never left. Even at the end when his body failed and a medivac chopper was called in. Pete declined assistance, dressed himself, and in one final heroic effort crawled out unaided to the waiting stretcher. He must have known this was his last day on his beloved Island, yet he emerged smiling and wearing a tshirt inscribed *"get down on your knees and fight like a man!"* His wonderful spirit still unbroken.

I'm sure all the old legends will have stood to salute Pete when he came home, and so should we.

Vale,  
The one and only Peter Berck



## The Coastal Passage

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# Reflections

By Alan Lucas, SY Soleares

## LEGAL TERRORISM

Recently, Patricia and I had a most illuminating chat with a bloke sitting alone in a coffee lounge wearing a Customs 'T' shirt. Emboldened by his off-duty casualness we said hello and asked if we could pop a few questions. To our surprise, he was more than willing to talk about a career he had recently terminated after twenty-seven years. He was a skipper of one of the new vessels and loved his work; but not the way things were going in his department.

He said, in earlier days there were many more successful prosecutions against drug runners than now because Customs has moved towards Naval-style operations with far too much time wasted on surveillance instead of pursuing solid leads. He didn't talk about private boats specifically, but obviously included them in his disagreement with unnecessary violations of citizen rights.

Which brings us to the rudeness cruising sailors occasionally endure from officers who act badly because they are allowed to and not necessarily because it is in their nature: In 2001, we were resting under Bathurst Head, Princess Charlotte Bay, when a large Customs RIB ranged alongside. On realising that they had already approached us further south, they were about to leave when I recognised one of the officers from years before so we invited them all aboard for coffee when we reached the Flinders Islands (where their mother ship was anchored). The following day, anchored in Stokes bay, Stanley Island, the RIB came alongside, the crew tumbled aboard and we all had a jolly good chinwag mostly about boats, weather and mutual friends. They were, in every respect, a very nice bunch of blokes.

Some years later, Heyward Coleman, of the American yacht *Skimmer*, sent me his book 'The Next Port', a very readable story of his world circumnavigation. He mentioned meeting us in Stokes Bay and how, from ashore walking the beach, he and his wife Charlotte wondered why an 8-man RIB was alongside our boat. After returning to *Skimmer*, the same RIB went alongside her and, to quote

Heyward's book, "its uniformed chief made a point of *not* asking permission as he boarded our craft".

This underlines my point: the nicest of people will ignore normal courtesies if that is the fundamental culture of their calling. That 'uniformed chief' showed no such discourtesies when socialising on *Soleares*, but apparently changed his persona a few minutes later for a stranger a stranger whose book adds yet another black mark against Australia. And despite history clearly showing us how lack of mutual respect leads to tyranny, we ignore it while pretending to be a democracy. We need to learn from other countries whose customs officers are far more diplomatic: even to those suspected of involvement in a major offshore drug pick-up, as we once were.

Arriving in Bougainville direct from the Louisiade Archipelago in the late 1970s, Kieta Customs were uncharacteristically tough (but still diplomatic) in going through our boat with a fine toothcomb, after which they hung around for ages obviously convinced that we must have been hiding something, somewhere. They found nothing, of course, but I pondered over their behaviour compared to previous visits when they had been delightfully laid back and friendly.

It turned out that drugs had been dropped onto Portlock Reef, in the Solomon Sea, by a Taiwanese fishing boat for collection by a southbound Australian yacht. Unbeknown to them, Customs had been tipped off and sent an Orion sky-spy to trace their progress down the Coral Sea until, on entering Australian waters, they pounced and caught them red-handed. The owner of the yacht declared that he had been coerced by his back packing crew and had no choice in the matter. The crew painted the picture in reverse, accusing the owner of being the mastermind, but they nevertheless all ended up doing five years in jail.

As for our 'involvement', we just happened to be sailing north past Portlock Reef within a few days of the incident.



The possibility of an Australian yacht picking up mysterious objects from an offshore drop is a legitimate reason to suspect us, but not to presume our guilt before it happens by storming aboard without basic courtesies. In my decades of cruising I have only once been approached about meeting a ship offshore and that was by a young off-duty customs officer who broached the subject over a cup of tea aboard my yacht of the 1960s. He may have been testing me, but that was not my impression.

Since then, there have been cases of offshore drug exchanges involving yachts, but of those I know something about, all were so blindingly obvious in their behaviour and special equipment carried that you wouldn't need to waste time boarding innocent vessels to identify them (one had a large jet-ski on the foredeck not your standard equipment on a cruising boat). And once when a wanted yacht came into port, I tipped off the local authorities, and guess what? No one turned up.

Nevertheless, Australian Customs has a good record of blocking the drug trade, but its reputation for rudeness and zero tolerance towards innocent yachties goes a long way back. Look at the way they treated Bill Nance in the mid 1960s.

Twenty-five year-old Bill was the second solo sailor in the smallest boat to circumnavigate the world by way of the Three Capes in his engineless 7.7-metre yacht, *Cardinal Virtue*. He preceded Englishmen Francis Chichester and Alec Rose, both of whom received knighthoods for their effort: Nance's reward, after he limped into Fremantle under jury rig with a fallen mast, was to have his boat impounded by Australian Customs until he could pay a \$1600 fine! That's around \$20,000 in today's language. Furthermore, after the Royal

Freshwater Bay Yacht Club came to his financial aid Customs demanded that he leave Australia within six months.

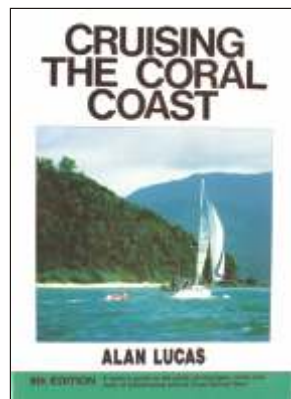
Let me emphasise that Bill Nance was an Australian by birth and innocent of any crime. An overseas group recognised his remarkable achievement by awarding him the Joshua Slocum International Award for Sailing Achievements. Thanks to our Customs culture, Australians awarded him with a crushing fine and a limited permit to stay in his own country.

Back in the 1970s, there was a wonderful reaction from a very outspoken onlooker when an English gaffer entered Cairns and, ignorant of our tough entry rules, rounded up and placed his engineless vessel alongside the shipping wharf with commendable precision. As he started putting lines ashore, a customs officer came running over shouting, "Get off this wharf. Go out and anchor and wait until we board you". At which the onlooker leant over and said to the shocked visitor, "Welcome to Australia mate. Don't worry, we're not all rude bastards like him".

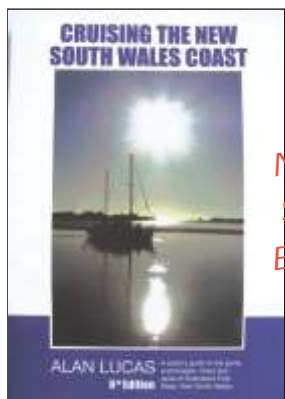
Bill Nance's experience and hundreds of similarly insensitive incidents have driven a wedge between the boating public and a vital government service that apparently accepts and perhaps encourages - rudeness in its ranks. It is unnecessarily tough on us and it unfairly rubs off on the many decent Customs officers who live with it every day. It also destroys our reputation as a world cruising destination.

Worst of all, it is a form of legal terrorism that destroys any desire to co-operate in reporting suspicious incidents. I certainly won't bother again after being rudely fobbed off on the few incidents I have reported over the years.

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# Customs: untangling the web

By Robert Norson

It's difficult to gain more than a superficial understanding of the "Customs Culture" unless you are unlucky, then you may acquire a good deal of information too late. The other, safer way, is to be in publishing, the repository of the horror stories of others. And part of the game is having a sensitive bullshit-o-meter.

Any entity with a public voice will be inundated with commercial or bureaucratic interests that wish to have control of that voice to suit their own ends. You can get rich that way. In much of Australian media, that IS the way.

Australians are inundated with subtle or overt messages that offer rationalisation for Custom's acts against yachties or anyone, such as TV shows purporting to be reality and "millions of dollars" expended on internet interference and censoring. TCP has been a victim of that. In short, there is an amazing amount of effort put into image control directed at the public. And then there are the genuine reports of positive experiences by most entering yachts, (thankfully, See the letters section of the electronic version of this edition). If one judges by the majority of information, one could conclude that all is well if you are willing to ignore the substantial minority of

yachts that suffer genuine abuse. TCP can not ignore those. And why are some victimised over others? Bad luck in some cases, and partly I think, but increasingly it may be anyone who dares to resist them. As quoted in last edition of TCP:

*"The evils of Tyranny are rarely seen but by him who resists it."  
By John Jay, Castillion Days II 1872*

How far is Customs willing to stretch the law and where do YOU draw the line? When they ask you a few questions about your voyage they haven't the right to ask? When your boat gets unnecessarily trashed in a search? Or when you get thrown in Jail on bogus charges that could have you there for years because of incompetence or retribution? Couldn't happen? We hope not but that the matter can be questioned at all should concern.

This article is a sample collection of reports, commentary and experiences over the years that may give a reader an inkling into what may be behind that smiling face...

## Sailor Jailed by Customs for Smuggling..... Pantene Shampoo?

### The Report:

Neil Parry is a professional skipper and yachtsman with many border crossings behind him. He has sailed his yacht, *Burong Bahri* since 1981 with numerous voyages and re-entries to Australia with no problems with Customs until 2010. When he arrived on a flight into Darwin from Singapore last June 4th and a customs inspector demanded the pass word for his lap top; he refused.

After that things got very hostile according to Neil. His bottles of shampoo and hair conditioner were taken away and customs "tested" them and reported finding they had 1.6 kg of MDMA or "Ecstasy" in them according to an ABC report of June 11.

Whilst he was imprisoned, his boat was searched where it was berthed. Although Neil claims to have provided a contact that would open the boat for them to inspect, they

broke into his vessel by smashing it open, tossed it, then leaving it open when they left. Neil claims also that some of his acquaintances had their homes searched as a result of the charges against him.

He remained in jail until the 7th when he was able to arrange bail and then summoned back to court the 9th to have his case dismissed. TCP understands that the contents of the two bottles was examined by the AFP and found to contain.... Pantene Shampoo and conditioner.

Neil as quoted in the ABC report; "Anyone can be locked up at anytime without having done anything and it's not right,"

The ABC also reported that "The Australian Federal Police and Customs have not responded to the ABC's request for an interview."

Mr Parry wants an explanation and apology.

### What does it all mean?

It is very important to refer back to the original conflict, that is the refusal to divulge the computer password. If that had been an offence one would imagine charges would have been laid regarding that but they were not.

How reliable is Custom's "testing"? The bottles contained two separate substances, Shampoo and Conditioner yet Customs's claimed to have found MDMA in both. Two mistakes back to back?

Computer security has been an ongoing issue in TCP for years. The more you know about computers and the web, the more importance it assumes. In Neil's case, divulging his password would have allowed a random search; a "fishing expedition" through his personal finances, relationships and more. But the biggest risk could be in what he didn't know was there at all or what could be surreptitiously installed by anyone who has the password.

People that aren't careful or expert with their computer (MSWindows especially) could for example, have large files of shocking and illegal images on their hard drives that they have never

seen and may have no idea where they would have come from.

This is a serious matter. The possibility of this being a simple error stresses belief but if it is, it indicates an agency of such incompetence that it may not be trustworthy as a law enforcement body.

Neil is calling for a full public enquiry into Australian Customs and a review of the laws they work under. This would be welcomed by TCP and would go a long way to restoring confidence and trust in the agency.

In a separate incident earlier last year, Neil Claims he was pressured during a customs interrogation when entering with his yacht, to sign on to a document that stated Piracy was rife in Indonesian waters. He refused as that was contrary to his 30 years of experience and he questioned the attempt at "rumour mongering". He says the most dangerous people he has come across in all his travels are Australian Customs.

TCP will keep readers advised as this story progresses.

## TCP'S FIRST ENCOUNTER

About 6 years ago whilst in a far northern port, Kay and I were invited into town for a Thai meal by friends of ours. Upon meeting at the restaurant, we were introduced around and amongst the several cruising couples there was a single or at least unaccompanied bloke introduced as a Customs officer. He seemed out of place but trying hard to fit in. "Odd" but gave it little thought or importance. The Coastal Passage was in its virginal state at the time and Customs had not yet begun stinging the fleet with issues like the 96 hour rule.

A few days later Kay and I were invited to Custom's offices at the harbour by the officer we had met at Thai for reasons that weren't entirely clear except the officer was keen to impart some information and develop a relationship with us-the paper. Nothing wrong with that and the invitation was taken up.

Upon arrival I noticed the high security presence at the entrance. Heavy door, glass I suspected of impact resistance and obvious video surveillance. A bit over the top but it was government after all... I should explain at this point that I am familiar with surveillance monitoring and alarm equipment. I spent many years in the gem and jewellery business. As a matter of self preservation and to protect our customers, I became qualified to install and update our own devises and systems, in as inconspicuous a manner as possible.

Our contact met us by the door and had some mumbled excuse as to delay him but would we mind waiting in a room and he would join us shortly? So we found ourselves in a large clubby looking room full of tables with magazines scattered about and lit by windows lining two of the walls with a view to the car park.

Kay and I exchanged small talk, commenting on the homely-ness of the room and then the penny dropped. The inconspicuous but inexplicable bits of darkened glass and mirrors and other devise placement opportunities were well positioned for coverage.

As I scanned the room I realised the place was likely under surreptitious surveillance. Kay got the message quickly and I growled "we are getting out of here". As we approached the door to the room our visibly red faced officer met us with another mumbled excuse, he had an unexpected duty etc. I think my icy reply was that "I understand perfectly".

It appeared we had been manoeuvred into an area of high surveillance to spy on us. We were understandably upset. Who would do such a thing

and why was this installation so equipped? Highly visible surveillance at the entrance, juxtaposed by a homey club house appearing environment that would lead one to assume it was less "official".

Our observations suggest that anywhere within a Customs-Immigration facility should be regarded as under surveillance. Our experience in this case and reports from others indicate a culture of tricky-ness. A speculative example? Put a person that is targeted into a situation of obvious surveillance, eg recorder on table, then remove that, leave them alone and see what they say to each other in their belief of privacy.

It could be reasonable speculation that the motive behind our experience was to ascertain our usefulness as informants or propagators of Customs messages.

TCP is aware of occasions where customs agents or associates, (eg ex agents) have made efforts to ingratiate themselves into a group of yachties for purposes that could appear to be related to data gathering and message dissemination. For example, TCP was contacted by a reader of an internet forum quoting a Bundaberg source that said the Manzari's, the US couple prosecuted by Customs ([www.thecoastalpassage.com/manzaris.html](http://www.thecoastalpassage.com/manzaris.html)) were anchored for days in the river before contacting Customs. This disparaging falsehood is a likely example. If you are fronted by an agent that appears to be on a personal level, it may be genuine or because you have been determined to be useful. And do be sceptical about any 'inside information'.

*more reports, next page...*

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## FIRST COMPLAINT

The American vessel *Toujours*, was moored at Bundaberg Port Marina when they were boarded unannounced according to the crew. This violation of their privacy at home prompted a letter to TCP. The letter was printed in TCP # 15 (2005).

After that edition, we were informed that word of mouth was being spread around the marina that the circumstances of the boarding were not as represented by the skipper of *Toujours*. This was the first instance of a malicious, anti-cruiser rumour mill we were to encounter. As a result, TCP sent a request to Customs for their version of the facts to settle the matter; also TCP sent a request to *Toujours* for verification of their version (physical evidence, photos of location etc). Customs responded with a letter detailing general policy that supported the version of the agent but *without* specifics to the case in particular. *Toujours* responded immediately with photos and other requested information that showed the rumours to be false. TCP contacted Customs to again ask them for the facts of the matter and were refused.

It is the policy of fairness (see letters page) at TCP that "Anyone disputing a matter of fact in any part of TCP is **invited** to respond as long as the discussion remains one of fact and the responding writer must also be ready to provide support for their assertions or additional information if requested."

Although the information provided by the *Toujours* crew was the more convincing, allowing a non-factual response in debate seemed useless. TCP let the matter stand with the original letter. The rumours then began that TCP won't publish letters from Customs in defence!

## "Dangerous Customs" article and web page

TCP had recently published an account written by Chris Ayres of his encounter with Customs whilst cruising the north coast of Queensland. He and his partner Rhonda had been interrupted at their meal below decks, whilst at a remote anchorage, by faces peering into their ports. This violation of privacy brought Chris right up to confront a big unidentified RIB loaded full of blue suited but personally unidentified personnel. As it became apparent they were Customs, it also became apparent they had picked the wrong boat because Chris is one of the lawyers that helped draft the responsibilities toward the public that they were in the act of violating.

[www.thecoastalpassage.com/dangerous.html](http://www.thecoastalpassage.com/dangerous.html)

After print publication the article was posted to the web site. Whilst preparing a subsequent article dealing with Customs, I got in the sloppy habit of using Google to get to the Customs web site instead of direct. I noted that several articles from TCP were on the first page of Google search for "Australian Customs", and Chris's article titled on the web as "Australian Customs acting like Secret Police" was the most popular. And then one day they were gone, all of them. A search back as far as page 50 revealed no articles of any kind from The Coastal Passage! On "Live Search" and "Yahoo!" and other search engines those TCP pages remained for quite a while but in time the loss of the Google search referrals made their numbers wane and they receded back to pages 3 or 4.

It appeared that Customs had gotten Google to manipulate search results to save them embarrassment. I contacted Google to verify but they would not respond. It wasn't until a few months ago that it was confirmed by a statement in Parliament from an opposition member that "Government departments had spent millions on Google".

The conclusion is that Commonwealth government and Customs probably in particular, believes it is acceptable to censor media to manage their image by paying money to Google.

## "I Always do Everything Right so I Don't Worry!"

For one, doing "everything right" isn't as easy as it sounds depending on the scrutiny applied. And for two it may mean nothing anyway. Dave Morrow of the vessel *Friction* is a case in point. Just to be on the safe side, he joined the Port to Port Rally entering Bundaberg Port. When David and Sonia arrived they were singled out prior to tying up. They were asked to leave the boat during customs inspection, an unusual and legally questionable request, but which they did without argument and returned to the boat in ruin. The boat had been savaged with personal property and equipment damaged or destroyed. They were one of two boats (the other in Brisbane) reported to have been subjected to this kind of search and neither revealed contraband.

David complained about this to every authority he could contact but he had been gone from Australia for many years on his leisurely circumnavigation and he expressed some shock at the changes. In apparent retribution for his complaints, David and Sonia were the subject of a letter writing campaign and rumour mill. One of the letters received by TCP was so obviously fictitious and untrue, so easy to debunk, that TCP considered publishing it to illustrate the false nature of the attacks but it's defamatory nature precluded it.

David reported that the cruisers he talked to at the marina were all very supportive.

A new level of coverage reported on this event as channel 7 TV news ran the story which resulted in Customs responding that the agent responsible would pay for damages to personal items and equipment repair whilst not admitting wrong doing.



If you have been reading the last two issues of TCP this issue will be somewhat familiar but to refresh; in TCP # 44 we had a report from the vessel *Bifrost* concerning their attempt to sail their Australian boat in Australian waters, undisturbed by interrogation by Coast Watch, Customs, etc...

In preparation for a voyage north, the *Bifrost* crew, novelist Greg Dickson and his family confirmed through Customs in Canberra that they were NOT required to respond to customs regarding their personal details, plans etc. However, on the way they were threatened and in one case, appear to have been put in a state of arrest that may even have been a case of illegal imprisonment.

In a very interesting case of twisted logic, Customs on the one hand, admits they do not have the power to demand the information but on the other hand claims they have the power to board to obtain it by force if they like anyway.

After examining the Act it was the opinion of this (non-expert) writer that Customs did NOT have that power. The legislation Customs claims grants them that power is not specific in the case and research into Parliament's records indicates it was certainly NOT the intent of the legislation. This was confirmed by expert information in the form of a report in The Sun Herald, quoting Attorney Mr. Terry O'Gorman of the Queensland council for Civil Liberties. He said, "**My view after reading the Act is that Customs do not have the power to board Australian yachts in Australian waters without the owners express permission.**"

This leaves Customs in a bit of a pickle. If they attempt to handle this as it appears they did with the 96 hour rule, it is not likely to work. Acquiring precedents from easy targets may not work because the easy targets will likely just acquiesce and give them what they want. The stropky ones, the ones that will refuse on principle may fight and without a string of precedents in hand, Customs could lose in court. This may very well be why *Bifrost* escaped without harm in spite of the threats.

Customs could try to find a target that at one hand, refuses to cooperate *and* they feel will fold their hand in a crunch, and/or, shop for a court that can be relied upon. Dangerous stuff.

It is this writer's speculation that: Customs can not afford to take this to court unless they trip over a very unusual circumstance. They will continue their bravado and threats and may even make legally doubtful forced boardings. They are aware that the burden of proof is on the accuser, not the accused. There are at least three people in their big RIB and likely two of you on your boat.

This is a good time to inform yachts that according to the Act, Customs agents DO NOT have the power to forbid recording of their activities unless they are at an installation for clearance and Customs erects a sign that specifies that recordings are not permitted.

But more likely they will be even more careful to devise strategies that trick yachties into reactions that *may* be interpreted as "permission", like accepting a painter from their RIB or some other innocent appearing act. This may possibly be countered by simply stating that any boarding of your vessel is without your approval or consent and ask for the senior officer's name of the party wishing to board. In absence of any recording devise be certain to record in your log the response as soon as you have an opportunity.

## The "96 Hour Rule"

As in the case of the powers to board domestic vessels that Customs claims, it appears that applying the 96 hour rule to yachts may not have been the intent of legislation. If the power was invested to Customs by legislation in a clear manner the actions of the agency make less sense but if the agency had little confidence in the power, here is a way to seize the power outside the letter of the law.

**Firstly, exploit the element of surprise.** Soon after the first round of prosecutions, TCP asked customs why they hadn't published this radical new rule and the response was that it had been "widely published". When questioned further TCP found that their definition of "widely published" meant a notice in an obscure sub page of the customs website that related to commercial shipping. And in fact there was nothing on the actual document that referred to anything other than commercial shipping and if a yacht had by some accident found the document, reading it would probably not have given any clue at all that it applied to a private yacht. A copy of that document is on a much easier to find page here; [www.thecoastalpassage.com/customsnotice.html](http://www.thecoastalpassage.com/customsnotice.html)

The customs website had other information concerning yachts entering but that information was contradictory and incomplete, but mostly it was an issue of where and how yachts had traditionally sourced entry information. Few boats at the time had internet capability, especially at sea, and no country had ever sprung such a surprise. It was TCP coverage of the first victims combined with the coconut telegraph that alerted the world cruising community to the rule.

**Secondly, screen your victim.** The vessel *Sohcatoa* from the US was towed into Trinity inlet with mechanical problems. In interview it was established they were short on time and long on cash. "So after having all of our cupboards emptied and the dog run through all of our stuff, we had to explain that YES we could afford the boat and NO I don't have any business card to PROVE that I used to work at this obviously fictitious company "Cypress MicroSystems". The inquiries concerning finance were unusual under the circumstances. But it gave customs what they may have been looking for, an easy court precedent. (See [www.thecoastalpassage.com/brutalcustoms.html](http://www.thecoastalpassage.com/brutalcustoms.html) for these stories) The second victims were as carefully selected. A retired Dutch couple with limited English and exhausted from a difficult

voyage that contacted Customs as soon as they were within radio range and received instructions to enter without being warned of their non-compliance when they were in a situation at the time, where they could have stood off. Both of these cases were rushed. Charged, convicted, fined and done within a couple days of entry. In reports of more recent convictions, the prosecutor inexorably presents the list of court precedents as "advise" to the victims to show why they should not fight the case but plead guilty and pay the fine.

As judges generally resist contradicting another judge, every conviction adds weight to a "rule" that may have questionable basis in law.

Three recent cases may illustrate this point very well. Two vessels cruising in company from Noumea arrived at Bundaberg Port. They had made a mistake in their emailed notice, sending it to the wrong Commonwealth office. They were threatened with prosecution but did two things that probably prevented it.

They refused the so-called "interview" that officers will infer is an opportunity to deflect prosecution by "explaining" the situation (these interviews are used only to enhance the case against a yacht; they will never be used to your benefit. This is a TCP observation and in this case was the legal advice the targets got from their attorney) and they did not indicate they would cop it sweet. One of the group in particular, had a record of standing up in court and customs would have had access to that record.

That skipper reported that the reason they arrived at Bundy Port was a friend told them how nice and friendly the customs crew were there.

The other two vessels arrived independent of each other at Brisbane. They both had circumstances that mitigated their situation to an equal or better degree than the Noumea boats but they arrived tired and innocent, did the interview and both indicated they would cop it to get it over with.

Two more convictions... and another Kiwi boat that won't return and an Australian couple that had never had so much as a traffic ticket before that were so disgusted they sold the boat and gave up their dream of cruising.

# Bundaberg Floods



Story and photos by Bob Norson, Jan 4, 2011

Up the Burnett River to Bundaberg lies a Coastal Cruising icon and an international destination. Ask a US boat that has circumnavigated and they will know Bundaberg-Rum-Mid Town Marina. Coastal Cruisers would allow more time in Bundy because trades and equipment are all there and reasonably priced. Step off the river side marina and you are in the town. Fresh seafood and chandlery by the office, and the slipway across the river with hard stand storage and full workshop and slip facilities. In short, everything a boat and crew need, right there.

This year may have been busier than most as (ironically) more boats were coming south to escape the predicted high cyclone season in the tropics. But no one could have predicted the floods that have devastated Bundaberg and have just now cut off Rockhampton.

At Mid Town Marina, one of the two newer buildings has been carried away, disappeared, the other wrecked. That was the chandlery and seafood store. The old office and chandlery still stands with the laundry and toilets on top but both floors were flooded. With the water dropping rapidly, the remnants of the marina are emerging but half of it is gone and there will be a lot of repair before that is useable, but the work has begun.

Everywhere it is brown, depressing.

I talked to Lorraine at the Slipways and they are also beginning the job but for right now it appears assessment of the damage is enough to keep a crew busy. Their facilities appear mostly intact but they don't have power until the electricity company can inspect the service. They have a big Tri on the slip but can't bring it out till then. While some of their property has been reported washed ashore downstream there is no accounting of all the boats that were in storage yet. Hopefully the missing ones may be found in the mangroves downstream, scratched but seaworthy.

Between the mooring field, marina and hardstand, there may be boats that are never accounted for and it is heartbreaking. Over the years we have come to know so many of them. One of the steelies left high on a bank is *Bralkeza*, launched after a refit and re-naming at Edges Boat Yard in Airlie Beach while we were there in 04. It was a family boat, kids crawling around everywhere on her. Another piled up in a scrum is *Buffeteer*, an Alden Malabar schooner built traditionally and beautifully by a professional photographer on the Gold Coast. Gerry Noon just woke up one day and decided he would build a boat, didn't even know how to sail. She looks only lightly damaged but the little cat under her is destroyed. *Pennant*, an early Crowther Spindrift built by the Salisburys of balsa core, the first in Australia perhaps, looks OK and tied up to what's left of Mid Town. There is a story behind every one.

Lorraine of the slipways lives in a solid brick home just behind and above the yard. The water got within inches of them there. She reported the "noise was terrible." The damage at the water front suggested that it wasn't just high, it must have been a ferocious current. Trees are bent over, light poles snapped and earth scoured back to bedrock in places and some of the muck deposited in new shoals. The sea off the Bundy Coast will be brown for some time. The ecological balance of Hervey Bay must have been changed by this event.

TCP extends whatever help we can provide to individual boat owners affected by this flood and the water front business's of Bundaberg.

TCP would like to make the point that 'lightning can strike anywhere' but Bundy is overall a safe place and should not be avoided due to this one off event.

**See page 10 for letters on flooding and look for more words and photos posted to the online edition.**



# Sailing Cat 2Abrest Survives the flood Due to heroic help

TCP note; this just in, received 0600 Friday. We drive this morning to Bundaberg to pick up the printed paper, if the roads are clear. The radar image current for the hour, at right, says we should be ok. It rained last night with high winds from late afternoon until about 2300. Double Island Point, near us, recorded wind gust to 37 kts for that period.

Though the flood waters have receded, there is concern that the catchment could again be targeted and the river could rise again. Doubtful to the level reached a few days ago but enough to interfere with repair and clean up.

## Story and photos by Geoff and Maz White on the sailing cat 2Abrest

In the early hours of Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> December 2010 my husband Geoff and I, along with many other boats evacuated from Midtown Marina in Bundaberg, were on our catamaran 2Abrest and anchored and tied to a mangrove tree below the Bundaberg Town Reach in a calmer section of the flooded Burnett River. We had been told to expect a flood peak of 4.5 metres and by the time we were notified that it was going to be closer to 8 metres there was nowhere anyone could go.

Our main concern was loose and unattended boats that were breaking free from the moorings or floating out of the nearby slipway, marine infrastructure, sunken vessels, islands of weed and riverbank and other debris like trees and logs.

Just after midnight of the 30<sup>th</sup> December a large tree came tumbling down underwater and grabbed our anchor and chain. This tree took the anchor and chain completely under our hulls to surface occasionally behind our boat. There was no way we could free the tree and knew it was only time before the rope attached to the Mangrove tree parted or the tree uprooted. At 1am this is just what happened as the Mangrove Tree uprooted. We were then swept backwards into the raging torrent and Geoff was able to cut the Mangrove Tree free but we still had the large tree tumbling beneath our hulls. Although we had both engines on, the tree was influencing the rudders and propellers and we had no manoeuvrability. We were going backwards at a very fast pace. I put out a securitay over Channel 16 on the VHF warning other boats downstream as we did not want to put them in any more danger. Geoff threw out a Danforth anchor which, although it streamed out from the bow, would not set. We continued downstream to the creek that runs behind Paddy's Island side swiping one boat on the way but, luckily, missing many more. We tried to influence the boat to go into the mangroves but we were not successful as the mangroves just broke away.

As we swept past a group of boats anchored at Paddy's Island Ian and another person, Barry, jumped into Ian's small dinghy with only a 5hp outboard and they rode the swift current with us. Barry came on board and Ian stayed in his dinghy pushing us from side to side to avoid hitting other boats. At around this time the Danforth anchor snagged something and, as it was attached to the anchor winch/windlass, it pulled the anchor winch and its base out of the boat. By this time we had covered approx 3 nm backwards. The Danforth anchor and rode was lost at this point. Another anchor was passed up from the dinghy (you could tell these guys were prepared) and it was thrown over and was immediately swept back underwater into the tree. We desperately tried to winch the tree on our main anchor and also on the extra anchor (plough). During this winching operation, which was unsuccessful, we broke the mast winch that we were using to haul the second anchor. It was then decided to try to untangle the second anchor and Ian motored away with the rode that we had released from the mast winch and it seemed that this anchor fell away and was lost. We then decided, as we could not control the boat, to cut the main anchor away with bolt cutters to free us from the tree. Immediately on doing this we had some control of the boat. A Bruce anchor was deployed on very light line which was all we had left and, thankfully, it brought us to a halt.

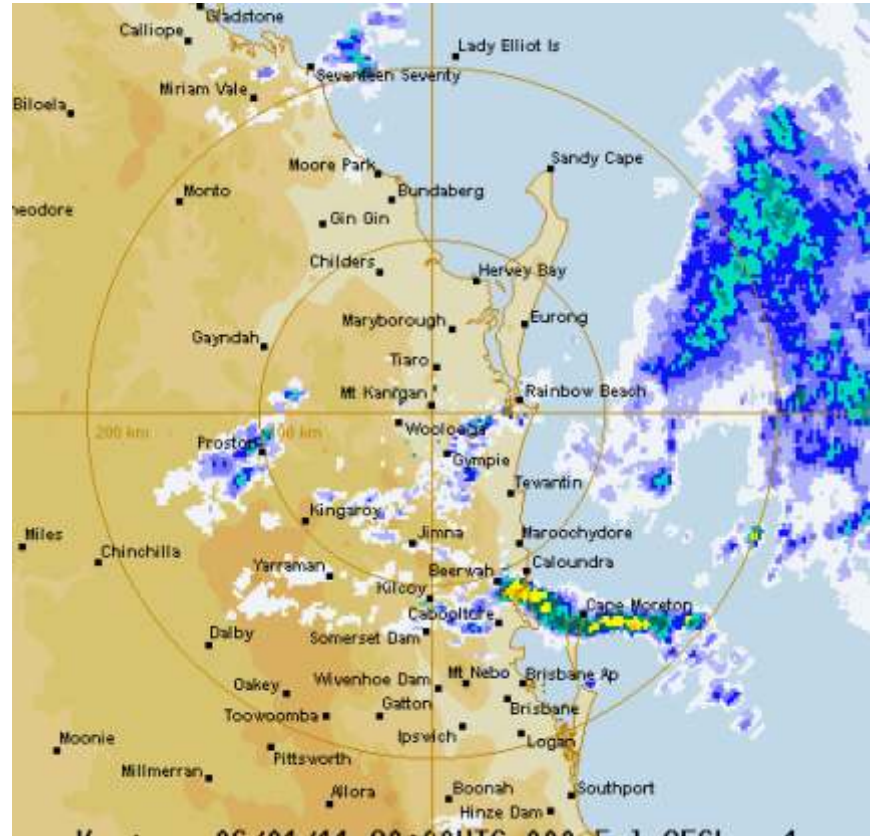
By this time we had travelled approx 4.5 nm backwards in treacherous currents and these guys stopped us going through the dangerous Ferry Crossing narrow area by approx 40 seconds. We have been told no uncontrolled boat had made it through without serious damage. We were then evacuated to another boat as our boat was still in a precarious position in the river. Ian and Barry then left us in the capable hands of other cruisers. We found out the next day that Barry had to be dropped off at the bank .5 nm away from us as the dinghy could not push against the current with two people. Ian then proceeded back to his boat, found another cruiser with a more powerful motor, and went back to retrieve Barry. The whole return trip took them more than two hours.

These two people risked life and limb to save us and I cannot thank them enough.

Ian had already spent every daylight hour since the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December going out with another person, John, and boarding unattended boats that had broken their moorings or floated out from the slipway up stream to get their anchors down to stop then rushing down river and imperilling other lives and boats.

If we are ever in this situation again, what would we do differently? Well ... We would cut away the anchor that was attached to the under water object that was controlling the boat straight away and not wait.

Geoff and Maz White on the sailing cat 2Abrest





# Bundaberg Floods



# Bundaberg Floods



# Bundaberg on the 7th January

The Coastal Passage is printed in Bundaberg by APN presses. Many of you reading this will have never seen a printed paper but they do exist, about 10,000 of them. We were lucky and found a hole in the weather to drive the one ton van to pick them up. While there we had another look around and took some more photos.

Mid Town marina is working hard to get back in business with many of the residents of the marina pitching in, volunteering to help. That says something doesn't it? A group were working in a building up by the main road to house the goods saved from the flooded buildings below.

At Burnett heads by the mouth of the river, more photos of boats that went through the worst of it a few days ago. They look OK until you look closer, and then the damage becomes apparent. One boat was being towed by a tinny alongside, it's engine must be inoperable, looked lovely then a closer look reveals the topsides have been chewed up by mangroves or other boats or??

Talked to a skipper we knew, he reported that exhaustion took its toll on them as the helm had to be attended every minute for days on end. He admitted he made some mistakes but they got through it in better shape than most due to their diligence. They lost most of their ground tackle, that was very common. He was helping Ray Foley and crew to clean up Mid Town Marina.

A thing we worried about was boats that had been tied up for a while having fouled props and losing valuable performance to navigate the flood waters but not to worry about that anyway, the inundation of fresh water had killed the barnacles and other salt water creatures.

Mid Town Marina Chandlery to be...





# The Mary River Flood



A newer marina has disappeared altogether.

I drove into the boat yard to also find it better than what I had heard.. so far...

About 400mm of water in the yard. Not good but enough to cause havoc with the fleet of boats under repair or unfinished build. Ian Campbell's polycore boat, "Lyra" was there on the highest ground, must have been a recent arrival to have the keels moved. (See [www.buildacat.com](http://www.buildacat.com) for more on that)

The store was out of most everything, I got eggs (last cartons), some fruit and a huge watermelon and drove back.

It has rained all night and looks like it will rain most of the day. Our house is high set so safe but the tent where the boat is, is flooded and a lot of materials damaged. It will take a month to dry out and restart work if it stops raining now... but it won't. We are caught in the lower quadrant of a stationary low being fed by a high down south.





# LETTERS

**Due to late breaking news, one page of letters was bumped in the print edition. See the web edition**

## THOSE COCONUTS

Dear Bob,

The argument to remove coconut palms, from the islands, (TCP # 45, Alan Lucas article) appears to be an argument, not about what is to be decided, but rather **who** shall decide. Are coconuts weeds? Absolutely, if you are the one defining the word. Wikipedia defines weed as:

A **weed** in a general sense is a plant that is considered **by the user of the term** to be a nuisance, and normally applied to unwanted plants in human-made settings such as gardens, lawns or agricultural areas, but also in parks, woods and other natural areas. More specifically, the term is often used to describe native or nonnative plants that grow and reproduce aggressively.<sup>[1]</sup> Generally, a weed is a plant in an undesired place.

The parks department is making the perfect political argument and has an unassailable if illogical position.

To my knowledge, coconuts, soaked in seawater for any length of time, do not germinate, making it unlikely that the coconuts floated ashore and grew. Rather, they were planted by man, over millennia. Inland coconuts can propagate and spread unaided. Not so, across miles of ocean, even with the help of hurricanes. Think of all the thousands of isolated atolls around the world, where ancient travelers have planted coconuts. It is a wonderful achievement.

Do they propose to cut down **all** the offshore and waters edge coconuts? Can the case be made that they are applying the rule capriciously, hence illegally?

We have a similar situation here in California. Every five or ten years, the U.S. Corps of Engineers, determines that the trees growing on the banks and levees of the Sacramento River constitute a nuisance and hazard, because when they topple, the roots tear out bits of the bank. So the engineers tear out the trees. Five or ten years later the engineers discover that the banks are eroding, absent

the tree roots and set about re-planting. Why do we still keep expecting government to make sense?

Bureaucracies will come and go but the trees and coconuts will prevail.

Sigmund Baardsen, SY Mary T

## BOOK NEWS

Bob and Kay,

In issue #45, I noted your mention of Greg Dickson's new book, Caribbee. That made me think of the excellent book Jule Miller wrote a couple of years ago about the area. Jule and his wife lived on the Island of Nevis, near St. Kitts, for many years and is a sailor's sailor, so the sailing parts and the geography in the book ring very true. Jule's book, *A Voyage Toward Vengeance*, is a real thriller. We warn that it's strictly for adults only . . . and they'd better be strong of spirit, while they're at it. Reading this book can keep you awake at night. That said, it's so powerful the editors at Good Old Boat chose to offer *A Voyage Toward Vengeance* as one of the dozen audiobooks we have produced and offer for sale on our special audio books website at:

<http://www.AudioSeaStories.com>.

It's unabridged and runs 10.6 hours. Whether you read the paper version of the book or let us read it to you, it's one heck of a trip, I assure you.

Karen Larson,  
Founding Editor,  
Good Old Boat Magazine

## MORE ON MOOLOOLABA'S ANCHORING RULES

Dear Bob and Kay,

Every port should have some free anchoring available, though some thought obviously needs to be put in by the yacht folk, and the authorities, as to an amicable compromise on the length of stay and possible pollution

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

issues created by that stay.

Thinking this through further, could the waterways be made safer and cleaner by the addition of approved moorings? (no more dragged anchors or mysterious damage to your pride and joy).

Vessels wishing to anchor out could use the moorings for a limited period (at a small cost), would call in at the waterways office at a specific pontoon allotted for the purpose, then proceed to the mooring allotted for the allowable period. There would be a small toilet block and possibly a coin laundry adjacent to the moorings, with a small pontoon (secure) for dinghies from the yachts to use via a key or tag supplied at the check in time.

Personally, the more yachts we can encourage to be in Mooloolaba, the better. These fine people are after all, growing in numbers and need places to stay, are entitled to a choice of the service levels they desire.

Lawrie's Boat Services work very very hard to ensure clients leave our yard happy, and I take it personally when Mooloolaba is written off because of the actions of a small minority .

Keiran Jackson Shipyard Manager,  
Lawrie's Boat Services

Hi Kerian,

Thanks for your letter. *I think your suggestion for a reasonably priced mooring field for itinerant cruisers is excellent. I also agree that the more boats that enter your lovely harbour, the better. It's a great rest, relaxation, repair and provisioning port. And it would be very good for high quality service providers like you.*

*I think a ruthless enforcement of a time limit on anchoring will breed problems and anger. A warning for first offence on the part of enforcement, education instead of a fine, would probably do everyone a favour and remove any excuse for non-compliance. And forcing anyone to move despite conditions ... hmmm... I like your mooring field idea!!*

Cheers,  
Bob

## TOWNSVILLE BRIDGE BLUES

Bob,

I have just rented a pile mooring in the Ross River from the Townsville Port Authority, I asked about all the work being carried out in the river and was informed that a bridge would be constructed over the river by 2012 and that any boats with a height greater than 6 metres would not be able to use the river after about late November 2011.

The current pile moorings and the anchorage up from the moorings will become useless to any yachts which don't have a droppable mast, there has been no provision for the mooring or anchoring of the vessels which now use the Ross River.

So here we go again; the State government loves boaties, I mean registration fees went up 140% 2 years ago to provide infrastructure for boaties in Queensland but of course this does not happen.

I personally had to come into the Breakwater Marina for repairs to my windlass and had to pay \$370.00 for a week in the marina.

Bob I don't know if there is anything that can be done about pressuring **the government to provide a place of mooring for us boaties** who don't have an endless money supply.

I can only see things getting worse for all boaties as the government ignores our needs. I would appreciate your comments.

Regards,  
Rob, MSV Nightmoves

Hi Rob,

*Yes, I am aware of the problem in Townsville. I know of at least one case where a person has moved house because they were no longer going to have a place to moor their boat that was affordable for them. The cost of KEEPING a boat is increasing at an unsustainable rate for many. Watch for more big name yacht builders to go soon. It's industry organisations and publishers that can pressure the gubment. Watch closely who does... and doesn't and lend your support accordingly.*

Cheers  
Bob

Letters continued next page....

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# more **LETTERS** CUSTOMS - THE GOOD, BAD AND THE IN BETWEEN

Hello,

My name is John Pasternak. My wife and I entered your beautiful country last week from New Caledonia at Coff's Harbour in NSW. I have been reading your website for the past year. I know that you have written a lot about visiting yachts treatment upon entering Australia and I thought my experience you might enjoy hearing about. I should tell you that we are a 37' non luxury sailboat, that I have a USCG Captain's license and deliver sailboats around the world for others.

My wife and I are on our own circumnavigation with our own boat in between working. We left the U. S. in 2002 from Port Townsend just North of Seattle. We have been bouncing around islands in the South Pacific since 2006. Basically this background is to let you know that we have a fair bit of experience entering different countries.

This year for instance I was in Italy and the islands of Croatia for 2 ½ months. We had some trepidation about entering Australia based on what we have read on your site and other places. There have been some real horror stories out there. I have noticed more in the last 3 seasons or so, the number of fellow yachts that choose to bypass Australia and go the Philippines or Marshall Islands. Most said it was due to the negative publicity.

Hardly a scientific poll but just my experience. So we made sure to get all our advance notice work done and kept verification of this. We also cleared off anything we thought might be taken upon entry and hauled the boat and re-painted the bottom in Fiji.

I would have to say that our entry into Australia was the easiest and most reasonable one I have ever had. One man took care of all the formalities on our boat. We didn't have to go to several offices on land or try to find them. He came almost right at 0830 when we were told to expect him. The forms were reasonable in length and for what information they asked. He did take some food products that we had on board but not too much. What one country takes and another doesn't never makes sense to me anyway.

After he left I had to go to his office to collect one more form which he had all ready for me. I will say that at a little more than \$300 for his 30 to 45 minute clearance this was the most expensive country we have ever entered. I left this experience feeling very well towards the officer who couldn't have been nicer, and Australia in general. I will certainly share my experiences with others I know who are headed here. I just thought you might like to hear from someone who had a good experience with your officials.

**Thank you, Sincerely,  
Captain John Pasternak, SY OZ  
Laying Coff's Harbour, NSW Australia**

**Hi John,**

*It's a Queensland thing John. In past editions I*

*have advised boats to enter at Coffs Harbours specifically and if Queensland can't be avoided due to conditions, Mackay is good, possibly Townsville and Cairns has reformed itself pretty well after a rough start several years ago. Brisbane and Bundaberg Port are very still dangerous. And they ALL smile now, but not all of them mean it! Near miss at Bundy Port 2 months ago for two boats. Brisbane has prosecuted two boats in last several months for minor problems, 75 instead of 96 hour notice for example.*

*The \$300 was probably quarantine fees, lucky you didn't come in on a weekend and/or have a wooden boat. then could go to \$800 and more.*

*Coffs is lovely in spite of the recent weather but everywhere has been getting less than perfect conditions lately. The marina is good from our experience and nice to step off right into town.*

*You are 60 miles south of the Clarence River. Very nice. Good marina at Yamba and Iluka has one of my favourite pubs. Fairly mild bar entrance most of the time. Welcome to Oz mate!*

**Cheers,  
Bob**

**Hello,**

We have been really lucky with customs nothing but good to say however AQIS is another story with the termite thing we just brought our yacht in from California all timber and are looking at approx \$1500 for sniffer dogs. Its all about revenue gathering. Thanks for letting me vent, contact your local politician

**Patrick Bradley, SV Screamin Eagle**

**Hi Patrick**

*We do question the necessity of this new obstacle as yachts are an unlikely vector for the spread of termites as far as we can tell. Not impossible but unusual. Termites need access daily to fresh water. A leaking water tank or a hollow mast that traps rain water could house a colony but if it dries out they would die. When time allows we will try to pursue this but that's too late for you.*

*Most Australian agree with you and are waiting for an alternative to the class of politicians we have endured too long to straighten up the agencies.*

**Cheers  
Bob**

**Dear Sir or Madam:**

Over years, since sailing in Australian waters, I have read unfavourable articles about the Australian Customs Service in your magazine. Recently in issue # 45 'A change of tack is needed'.

My experience, first as a crew and during the last 3 years as owner of my own vessel, has always been positive when leaving Australia and when coming back.

AU Customs and Quarantine have been friendly, polite, courteous, efficient and thorough. O.K. I always e-mail my arrival with all required details, 4 or 5 days before arriving back in Australia. This may of course pose a problem

if you do not have sail mail aboard or other means of communicating in writing. Officials have always arrived promptly and waiting time to clear in and out has been minimal. Coming back to Australia, I make all food aboard available for inspection, declare alcohol and tobacco ( if any ) and also show items, such as carvings to the officials. To avoid an immediate haul-out, I usually arrive with a clean hull. I neither carry fire arms nor illegal drugs aboard and I do not smuggle. Do I sound holier than thou? I hope not, just sensible, following the law and staying out of trouble.

Bashing of government officials is universal. However, it appears to be a particular past time in Australia. I love being and sailing in Australia.

**Klaus Schmidt,  
Canadian catamaran Zero Gravity**

**Hi Klaus**

*"Do I sound holier than thou?" " You said it, I didn't but.. but I agree. Klaus, you have been lucky and your luck could change in a heart beat. Doing everything right is no guarantee. It's good to hear your positive experiences, we welcome them and TCP may take some credit for them but you do not have the right to invalidate the negative experiences that the victims have had. You don't know the country as well as you think. Aussies are laid back and non-confrontational by nature. Not into bashing anything unless provoked a lot! In any case, if your luck changes, TCP will stand behind you. Whether you deserve it or not because the principal is more important than either of us.*

**Cheers  
Bob**

**Dear TCP,**

Here is an email I sent to the Guvmint people. If you can get enough boaties to send similar emails, maybe, just maybe, it will sink through some thick skulls in the vast regions of Can'tberra and maybe, just maybe, we will see some commonsense decisions made.

**Tony**

**Tony's letter:  
Border Protection Idea - cheap**

I have an idea for you to consider:

We have thousands of kilometres of coastline, and it is being patrolled by Customs, Police, fisheries, Navy, MSQ, Environment dept, etc. Clearly they are not keeping up with the risk, and it is costing a small fortune to equip, staff and fuel the fleet.

There are HUNDREDS of Australians out there in yachts, all cruising, all quiet, and observing everything that is happening. There is a 1300 hotline number you can call if you see anything - but very few yachts have phones (duh!). They DO nearly all have HF radios.

Wouldn't it be really CHEAP to man a HF radio at the Qld LUT site, and have a constant human listening watch on the emergency channel? That way, boats approaching

Australia could contact Customs 96 hours out, as they are required to, AND if anything suspicious is seen, ANYBODY could contact the Government IMMEDIATELY, on HF, and let them know what is happening.

Think about that - IMMEDIATE COMMUNICATIONS with the majority of vessels out there, and all for the cost of a rotating shift on the radio. The site and radios already exist - but nobody is listening to them. All you need is a rotating shift.

This has to cost a whole lot LESS than you are spending on aircraft, boats, fuel, training, travel, equipment etc. AND it will increase your surveillance fleet from just the existing government resources, to the ENTIRE civilian yachting population.

**Anthony Little, Gold Coast**

**Hi Anthony,**

*The (unconfirmed) info. I have is that customs does indeed monitor HF... but will not respond. I have a couple of accounts related by sailors of conversations they have had on HF that customs personnel had later commented on, thus suggesting this.*

*The problem I see is that money has been thrown at the agency that is spent in a very casual and ill-considered way by self important bureaucrats who see value in big "things" (ships, aircraft etc.) and many staff (ill-trained and unsupervised except for loyalty to the agency and it's bureaucracy) and lots of numbers to quote for the minister. 10,000 contacts per month, surveillance of 1000 "vessels of interest". Inferring suspects of crime when in fact family cruisers....*

*But "Can'tberra" (thanks, I like that) works like that. Because the money is being spent it is proof that the gubment is doing the job and the 'bodycount' delivered by the agency proves it is working and good value for money...*

*And since we haven't been attacked by terrorists, the fairy dust they are selling is to be credited. But I do agree we have to keep trying...*

**Cheers, Bob**

*for more letters see page 10..*

## Welcome New Cruisers!

**Hi everyone,**

I've just recently been exposed to this outlet and I am so stoked about the content especially Kerry's contribution in the last edition.

I am about to undertake a journey from Townsville to the Gold Coast in the New Year on my 46' Roberts(motorised). I am especially impressed about Kerry's outlook on minimising one's possessions but more-so according to her outlook, which was in the most recent edition, it really takes the pressure off the 'real workers' (as in the Captains). That is sure to create some feedback.

Please don't hold me to this as I will be requiring all the help I can need over the next couple of months

Thank you for a great magazine and I'm sure we will be accessing your site daily on our way south. As this will be our first long-haul trip could I please request that all trippers be on the look-out for *Tanna-tu*.

**Kindest regards,  
Gary Emmerson,  
MY Tanna-tu**

**Greetings Gary,**

*Keep Australia on your right. Be very mindful of the tides, especially between Bowling Green and Yeppoon.*

*Remember the water is flowing into and out of the Broad Sound so you will have an idea of direction of tide relative to your position. Learn to milk those tides for fuel and comfort. Remember that the wind in opposition to those tides can create surprisingly steep seas. If you have to buck the tide, look for shallower waters. Tides usually run hardest in the deep part of the channels.*

*Keep your VHF on and learn to use it properly. The community is usually mindful of it's own; help is there if you need it but good planning and attention to your craft and conditions would likely mean you won't need the help. Also, you will be transiting during peak cyclone season*

*and weather reports are broadcast on VHF. Always have your bolt holes planned in advance.*

*Use paper charts!!!!!!!!!!!!!! plotters are handy but... use paper charts. Plot your position regularly, especially around the Whitsunday's until past the Percy's as the tides rip around the islands and can set you off course with surprising speed and direction.*

*Make sure you have spare fuel filters and know how to change them out and bleed the lines before you need to. If it fails it will be in a seaway with rough conditions, no time to learn there.*

*And you will have all the Cruising Guide's (or at least Alan Lucas's CCC) won't you?*

**You'll be right mate,  
Bob**

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12 metre MONO	39ft x 14ft	\$40.00	\$200.00	\$630.00	\$3580.00
12 metre MULTI	39ft x 22ft	\$55.00	\$280.00	\$840.00	\$4820.00
13.5 metre MONO	44ft x 15ft	\$45.00	\$230.00	\$680.00	\$3900.00
13.5 metre MULTI	44ft x 23ft	\$60.00	\$310.00	\$890.00	\$5080.00
15 metre MONO	49ft x 15ft	\$50.00	\$250.00	\$740.00	\$4220.00
15 metre MULTI	49ft x 25ft	\$65.00	\$330.00	\$990.00	\$5670.00
16 metre MULTI	52ft x 26ft	\$70.00	\$350.00	\$1060.00	\$6040.00
17 metre MONO	56ft x 16.5ft	\$55.00	\$280.00	\$840.00	\$4820.00
17 metre MULTI	56ft x 27ft	\$75.00	\$360.00	\$1090.00	\$6240.00
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**Geoff White of SC2Abreast**  
**inspects the end of someone's**  
**dream at Pancake Creek.**

Hi TCP,

Another boat comes to grief at Pancake Creek.

I wonder when the people a MSQ or whoever, will use SOME of our cruising boat registration taxes to improve the navigation markers at Pancake Creek!

Jim Purcell, the chief controller at VMR Gladstone, has for eons tried to get the markers lit. Why won't the authorities listen to his advice which is always spot on.

How come they can always find money to build another boat ramp or a fish cleaning station somewhere! ... shouldn't safety come first?!

**Geoff & Maz White, Aboard the sailing catamaran 2ABREAST, Based at Midtown Marina, Bundaberg**

**Bob's note:** We were very concerned for Geoff and Maz considering their location during the flood. We called and they are OK but shaken. Geoff reports that they were washed down the river and attempts to anchor were foiled by masses of debris and passing vessels. They were apparently saved by the heroism of a party in a small craft that delivered ground tackle to them in the middle of the night to replace their gear that had been cut to free them from larger flotsam. They lost their windlass, ripped from the boat, and 5 sets of tackle. They report one person boarding drifting unattended yachts from his tinny to set out ground tackle. Very brave under the circumstances

**A LETTER FROM LORRAINE -**  
**BUNDABERG SLIPWAYS**  
**on the flood situation at the slipway**

January 5, 011

Bob,

Thank you for your visit the other day. We appreciate your concern and that you want the boating fraternity to be aware.

Bundaberg Slipways, situated in the town reach of the Burnett River, Bundaberg, has sustained major damage due to 8 metres of flood waters sweeping a torrential wake through the premises.

We had boats on hardstand in storage, in our workshed and in our worksite area, and although we made preparations tying them down securely (as is our practice), the force of the water swept some of boats out of the yard, along with heavy equipment and countless other items.

We kept all boat owners informed of the situation, as soon as the waters started to rise, and remained in contact either by phone or email throughout the dreadful time. Some boats have remained in the yard, some safely, some in precarious positions.

As soon as we were safely able to get on the river in our workboat, we were able to identify, along with MSQ and other boating fraternity, where the boats were and keep owners informed. We have been working with owners through the retrieval and insurance processes, and will continue to do so.

The flood waters have dropped, and we have begun the mammoth clean up on site. We are working towards getting our yard and equipment back into place and operational, and will have all the electrical gear checked so that we can have the power restored and re-open for business.

While we don't have a time frame, at this stage, we will keep you informed.

**Russell & Lorraine**  
**Bundaberg Slipways**  
**2A Agnes Street,**  
**North Bundaberg**  
**Ph: (07) 41510029**

**KAYS TYPE-O'S**

G'day TCP,

I always enjoy reading your mag. The last issue gave me lots of hard to spell holiday ideas like Tasmaina and Kimberly!

**Cheers,**  
**Dave**  
**Canberra, ACT**

**Hi David,**  
 Yep, two on the front cover!!!! No excuse really. I just get brain damaged the last week of editing when every page (including page 1) gets reshuffled. Good thing I work cheap, the boss wont fire me because of my awful/dickslexick spellink problums. Lemme no how your holidayze goe!

**Kay**

**EYE SPLICE TIP**

Hi,

I found it a lot easier to use tweezers to pull the centre braid out rather than the small fid and much neater. I really appreciate the online content as I could not find anyone on the sunshine coast to splice the double braid until a person suggested your site on the net.

**Thank you,**  
**Gordon MacPherson, Gympie Qld**  
**Hi Gordon,**

See page 24 for more on eye splice tips...the web pages have been a fertile ground for creativity in technique, thanks for adding to it!

**Bob**

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# A Close Call

By Stuart Buchanan, SY Pluto

Of the hundreds of yachties who sail past Bustard Head lighthouse each year, I imagine few would give much thought to Rodds Peninsula on the northern side of Pancake Creek. My wife Shirley and I were fortunate to discover this coastal paradise in the 1970s while living at Bustard Head as lighthouse keepers.

Many times we walked along its 15 kilometres of pristine ocean beach without seeing another footprint in the sand. We explored the patches of shadowy rainforest, the freshwater lagoons, the narrow rocky creeks, the eerie tapestry palm forest and climbed Table Hill, the peninsula's highest point, to marvel at the panoramic view from its summit.

At Richards Point, on the northernmost tip of the peninsula, we discovered three shacks, which we always found unoccupied.

And then one day we met a woman on the beach, who was as surprised to see us as we were to see her. She told us her name was Gloria Corley, the sister-in-law of Arty Loeskow who held the lease of the peninsula. Gloria went on to say that she spent a few months each year living alone in one of the shacks at Richards Point. When not at the peninsula, which Gloria referred to as 'the coast', she lived at "Taunton" cattle property with her sister Jean and husband Arty.

Over the years as we met Gloria on subsequent occasions, we discovered that Arty was a multi-millionaire who owned a number of large cattle stations. Although he ran a few hundred head of cattle on Rodds Peninsula, it was mainly used as a holiday home, where he and his mates would occasionally spend a week or so fishing, crabbing and telling yarns while they consumed the contents of numerous flagons of Bundaberg Rum.

Isolated from the mainland by a manmade causeway and a locked gate, the 5,000 hectare peninsula was accessed by an atrociously rough track, which became almost impassable after a heavy dew. It was only the privileged few who Arty invited to 'the coast'.

When we first met Arty, he looked more like a derelict than a wealthy man. He was barefoot and wearing an old flannel shirt with more holes in it than a Swiss cheese. His long, baggy trousers were held around his waist by a wide leather belt, positioned about 150 millimetres below the top of his trousers. His face was deeply tanned, heavily lined and had a five day growth of stubble. He wore a battered and sweat-stained felt hat, which displayed two bullet holes. Arty told us that while he and a few mates were out kangaroo shooting in his Land Cruiser utility, one of the blokes in the back accidentally discharged his rifle. The bullet smashed through the cab window, through Arty's hat and out through the roof. Arty received only a slight graze to his head.

When Arty heard we were leaving the lighthouse service, he invited us to stay on Rodds Peninsula anytime we liked. We accepted his offer, and for the next ten years we spent a fortnight there each year. On our first visit it was arranged that we'd call in to "Taunton" to pick up the key to the peninsula's causeway. We arrived at Arty's just on dusk to be greeted by Arty and seven barking, growling dogs. I was hesitant about getting out of our Land Cruiser campervan, but Arty assured us:

"Don't worry about the dogs, they won't bite you."

Relieved, Shirley and I stepped out of the vehicle, as Arty added:

"Just watch out for that brown one."

In the semi-darkness, they all looked brown.

"The homestead burnt down last week," Arty said.

"We're living in the shed at the moment until the new place is built. Come in and have some tea."

We gingerly made our way through the milling mass of brown dogs and entered a steel shed with a concrete floor. About 7 metres long and 5 metres wide, along one wall were three camp beds. Around the other walls were whitegoods, all brand new and sparkling white. There was a large refrigerator, a couple of huge chest freezers, a stove, a dishwasher, a washing machine and a microwave. In the centre of the shed was a large table surrounded by chairs. Two other blokes were in the building.

"This is my grandson Brett," Arty said, indicating one of them who was in his early twenties, tall and heavily built. "And this is Peter, the station-hand. Jean and Gloria are in Bundaberg at the moment."

Brett cooked 'tea' while Arty sat at the table and spoke to us. It was mid winter and freezing inside the steel shed.

"Have you fed the dogs yet, Brett?" Arty asked.

"No, Grandad."

"Well, give 'em that leg."

Brett walked over to the freezer and opened the lid. I was expecting him to bring out a bone with a bit of meat on it and pop it in the microwave; instead, he brought out a beast's whole leg, complete with the hide and hoof. He opened the shed door and tossed the leg out into the darkness. All we could hear for the next half hour from outside was snarling and snuffling.

As soon as 'tea' was finished, Arty stood up, put on an old khaki greatcoat over his clothes and went to bed "See you in the morning," Arty said.

Next morning when Arty handed us the key to the peninsula, he said:

"It's a pretty rough track out to 'the coast', but you shouldn't get lost. Just remember to turn right at the old stockyards."

It was a rough track, with many side tracks that had been formed over the years to bypass areas that flooded when it rained. Somehow we managed to reach 'the coast', but didn't sight the old stockyards. We spent a fantastic fortnight on the peninsula, walking, fishing and crabbing.

During our next visit to 'the coast', we again didn't see the old stockyards. I mentioned this to Arty.

"Oh, you won't see them," Arty replied. "They were pulled down years ago. All that's left is a tree."

On some visits we found Gloria staying in her shack at Richards Point. She always invited us in for an evening meal, cooked on the old wood stove in the kitchen. As the gas lamp hissed and the waves crashed against the beach, Gloria told us that years earlier she had worked as a barmaid at the Treasury Hotel in Brisbane. The hotel was patronised by detectives who worked at the nearby Criminal Investigation Branch. Gloria knew the detectives well and seemed to have a morbid fascination for gory murders. After spending an evening in the gloomy atmosphere of the shack, listening to Gloria describe decapitations, amputations and other bodily mutilations all in great detail, it was unnerving to crawl into our campervan and try to settle down to sleep, half expecting an axe to crash through the side of the van at any time. But we had no need to worry, Gloria just liked relating those incidents, not re-enacting them.

Gloria and Jean were a little hard of hearing, as a result of going fishing with Arty in a creek at "Taunton". Arty didn't use a rod and reel for fishing, just a stick of gelnignite. He climbed a tree, spotted a school of mullet and threw the gelnignite towards it. Gloria and Jean were standing in the shade under the same tree. Unfortunately,

the gelnignite hit a branch, dropped beside the two women and exploded.

One day we received a letter from Jean telling us that Gloria had died. Gloria had been out at 'the coast' by herself for a couple of months, when Arty arrived with some stores for her. There was no sign of Gloria, but Arty noticed that although the table was set and some food prepared ready for cooking, the wood stove was cold. Arty searched for Gloria until dark and then returned to "Taunton" where he phoned some mates who drove down to the coast with Arty the following day. They found Gloria's body washed up on the beach. It appeared she had had a heart attack while going for her afternoon walk.

A few years later, Arty phoned us with the news that Jean had died. Like Arty, his lifelong mates most of them cane-cockies or cow-cockies, were in their late seventies. Each year when we drove to "Taunton" to pick up the key, Arty would tell us of another mate's death.

Arty's visits to 'the coast' were becoming less frequent. And then in 1989 we read in *The Courier-Mail* that a Japanese consortium was planning a multi-million dollar resort for Rodds Peninsula. There was going to be a jet air strip, golf course, lagoon and hundreds of condominiums.

I phoned Arty who told me the Japanese consortium was going to buy the lease, but only on the condition that Arty could get the peninsula transferred from a grazing lease to a tourist facility.

Shirley and I were bitterly disappointed to know that this almost pristine piece of coastline was going to be developed in such a way. We didn't think that Arty would have any trouble with the State government in regard to changing the lease. At that time the 'anything goes' Bjelke-Petersen government was in power, well known for giving favours to entrepreneurs in exchange for cash-filled brown paper bags.

But in an amazing turn around, the State government knocked the proposal on the head. The peninsula was earmarked for a national park. Arty's lease, which was due to expire in 2007, was revoked, with Arty receiving \$350,000 compensation for loss of grazing. The irony was, that when Arty first purchased the lease of Rodds Peninsula in the late 1960s, he could have converted the lease to freehold at very little cost.

Rodds Peninsula was gazetted as a national park in 1991. The dams on the peninsula were filled in and the three shacks at Richards Point removed.

Rodds Peninsula is now classified as a walk in and boat in park only. No vehicles or dogs are permitted.

So, next time you're anchored in Pancake Creek, sitting in the cockpit enjoying a sundowner, imagine the ear-splitting sound of a jet plane low overhead as it comes in to land on the peninsula. And if you decide to go for a walk along this wonderful untouched beach, think how fortunate you are not to be tripping over sunbaking Japanese tourists or dodging jet skis, quad bikes, wind trikes and all the other essential resort toys.

It was very, very close.

Read more by Stuart Buchanan!

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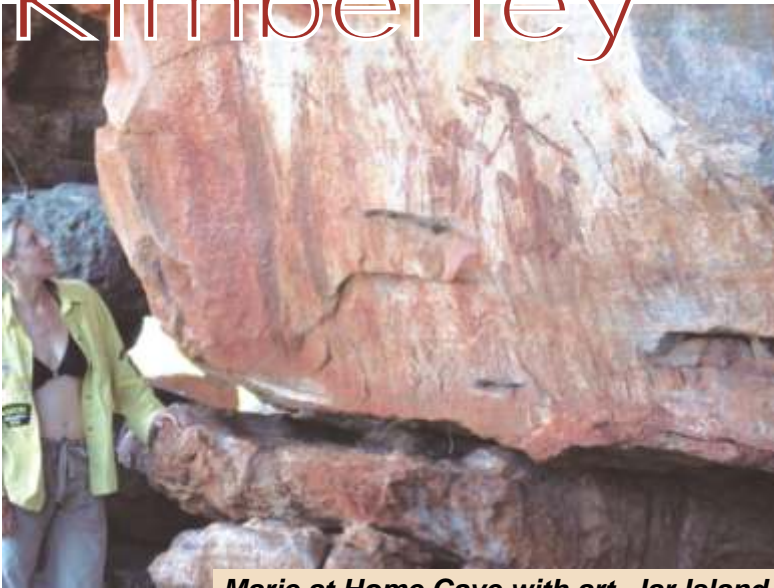
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The rope ladder

# Little Voices in the Kimberley



Marie at Home Cave with art, Jar Island

country and escarpment. We'd heard from other boaties of art sites in this area. The options seemed infinite until, right in front of us a huge midden (ancient cooking and eating site) became visible. We climbed ashore and were stunned by the extent of the midden. It covered perhaps five acres and was more than six metres deep where a washout cut a deep bank away. Ancient charcoal pieces from cooking fires laced the trillions of discarded cooked shells at all depths exposed. Rocks offering good vantage points to view the nearby lagoon had polished discs where each pair of buttocks regularly sat - and not alone, always a few together. One could stand humbled on that midden and survey the rock and Spinifex surrounds. The moisture sucking sun beating down on vibrant emptiness now but

Story & photos by Peter Giller, SV *Tryphena*

**A tattered rope ladder hung clear of the rock face. It was attached to a substantial but weather worn rope of indeterminate heritage by a ball of knots that gave a yachtie cause for concern. We had dinghied up a tributary of the King George River and reached the escarpment. "Would I trust my life to this?" I pondered as I stole a sideways glance at our daughter, Marie.**

Marie is a bright, athletic, professional woman who started to "out jog" me when she turned eleven. She'd taken seven weeks off work to join us for the first part of our Kimberley cruise. *Tryphena* had only been anchored in the King George River gorge for twenty four hours when we slipped on sandals and went looking for a "bit of a walk". Now the vertical rock face with waterfall tumbling into a mangrove lined amphitheatre didn't seem like what I had in mind earlier. The whole thing had looked OK as we approached it from the dinghy - but now, standing on the little rock ledge, dinghy tethered next to us and a two and a half metre croc watching us lazily, we experienced an obvious hesitation. Like us, I reckon the croc was estimating our chances of a successful climb. The rope ladder hung like an invitation, a shortcut in a Snakes and Ladders game. A short cut to a cool dip in the stream above and a dip also into twenty thousand years of aboriginal history with a visit to creek-side caves, art sites and living spaces of the first Australians.

Looking respectfully at old cave and art sites was, for me, a highlight of our time in the Kimberley. They were often difficult to find, even when we had good clues as

to where to look. Our early attempts at Jar Island, Vansittart Bay, were illuminating. Marie and I landed the dinghy on a glorious little beach on the south side of Jar Island. A ragged Osprey nest sat sentinel on the eastern rock outcrop. A radiant sun pierced the crystal water sending shards of light off shallow sands below. The only sounds, a muffled suck, thud and blow as tidal surge forced pulses of water in and out of horizontal rock platforms and cavities. Squinting against the glare we surveyed the wall of ancient, eroded rock escarpment rising two hundred metres in front and above us. Caves of all shapes and sizes could easily be seen - but which one holds the art gallery for which Jar Island is well known? Thinking like a white man raised with the real estate maxim "location, location, location" I started climbing looking for a room with a view. Unconvinced, Marie worked along the mangrove lined lagoon surely the supermarket of the times. Sweaty, dehydrated and scuffed I eventually climbed onto the barren wind-swept rock plateau. I'd surveyed twenty different caves on the way up without finding evidence of earlier habitation. From way below, "I've found it, just a stroll from the lagoon" Marie called over the breeze.

Climbing the King George tributary waterfall was not going to be a stroll though. That much was clear. We looked at the eight metre ladder section hanging free and considered it "doable". After that we'd have to hand over hand it and free climb some sections with the help of the old rope. "There are ledges to rest on", I whispered. A little voice in my head said "you can do this". I trust this little voice but how did it all stack up with Marie? Would I be Dad on this rock face or a climbing companion? There are implications in this. I glanced at her.

"Let's do it" she ventured. We were quickly up the ladder, topping stage one but when hanging free on the old rope at overhangs, I started to go to jelly. About five metres from the top we rested on a ledge unable to see a way up further. I cut an apple into quarters and we sat chatting, our legs dangling, the croc watching, the water fall to our right side splashing its way down. With apple eaten I still hadn't accommodated to the exposure. A fall was certain death. My little voice was telling me, "no more" and I was listening. "What do you think?" I asked Marie. She'd had enough if I had, she said. That was consensus in my books and we scampered back down in no time. Adrenaline laced sweat dripped from every pore. We climbed back into the dinghy and our croc dipped below the surface.

On another day, in the south eastern corner of Swift Bay, we nudged the dinghy along the shore line surveying the cave

I could hear the squeals of children playing in the shallows and smell the smoke of many cooking fires snaking up through the bleached air. Perhaps I could hear the drone of a didge echoing down the gully. How many generations lived and loved here? There had been a significant community here, that was for sure, but it all went quiet less than one hundred years ago! Carbon dating of wasp nests built over ancient art work puts habitation here at going back more than 17,000 years.

**This monument of shell, charcoal, domestic remains and magnificent rock art work makes a mockery of white man's delusion of "terra nullius". There was a civilization here, not just a few nomads drifting about. There was a culture and there were families, and as with the big bang, the echoes are out there for those who are listening.**



Shannon standing at Swift Bay midden

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# Darwin

## on a shoestring

Story & photos by Leonie Bremer-Kamp, SY Bifrost

**It amazes me how many yachties skip from marina to marina between their forays into the great unknown. Is it because yachties are a lot better 'keeled' than they used to be, or, is it because harbor congestion and redevelopment has made the good anchorages harder to find?**

They don't call it the 'off' season for no reason. Especially when there's maintenance to be done on the boat and work to be found in order to pay for it. Ideally, an off season anchorage should be close to town, shopping, amenities and marine stores.

Often the anchoring space near such places has been filled with moorings upon which sit an infernal collection of boats that go nowhere, or, there's been a marina built to civilize the foreshore and rake the money in with coffee shops, restaurants, boutiques and the like.

It's not such an issue when you're cruising, but come time to re-wrap your sarong and put your best thong forward (say to look for work) in the wet season, a yachtie HAS to find a good spot.

Bifrost is in Darwin at the moment and while Fannie Bay is a great anchorage in the dry season, it becomes untenable in the wet as the swells roll in from the northwest.

So, where to go? We had heard Sadgroves Creek was chock-a-block (when has it never been so?) and a cursory glance confirmed this. So, feeling bold we checked out the marinas.

The cheapest was \$375 per week!!! Ouch, this includes livaboard fees for two adults and two children plus a levy for running an air conditioner! *To have the pleasure of parting with all this good cruising kitty first you have to be insured or you're not allowed near the place! (which we're not)*

So we needed to take a better look.

There is still good anchorage in Frances Bay, between the entrance to Sadgroves Creek and Darwin Harbour. Within convenient dinghy range there is a floating dock on Stokes Hill Wharf. Yes, the sign says that boats are not to be left unattended, but tying your dinghy up at one end, in consideration of the charter boats that sometimes tie alongside seems to attract no ill will, either from the harbor master or the charter boat owners. It has a fresh water tap which is best used at high tide. That way you avoid having to lift water drums off the ground to get a fill.

The walk into town from here takes about 10 minutes. We go past an enclosed saltwater lagoon in parkland (free for swimming) and beside a crazy wave pool (fee for swimming). Nearby there are showers and toilets that are very well maintained and are open till 6.00pm. Outdoor movies are regularly screened (free) in this

area. Take an elevator ride up to the CBD level and walk straight up into the heart of Darwin. On the way you pass the library and just past that is the bus interchange. Buses leave here for all over Darwin. A great system, a \$2 ticket allows you to travel anywhere on any bus for 3 hours. If you hold a concession card it's only 50 cents.

Just beyond the bus interchange is Smith St Mall. Great if you want to indulge in some retail therapy or, a 'traffic free' walk through to the supermarkets.

If you've got to do some serious stocking up Woolworths and Coles are within a block of each other. During the dry season there are a variety of markets where you can get fresh local produce and be treated to some good live music. The Art Gallery and Museum are handy and there are numerous smaller galleries and craft shops

Laundry can be done at three places. Dinah Beach Yacht club is a short dinghy ride upstream. To use their facilities you have to become a member. Family membership costs less than half a week on a marina. They have laundry, showers, bar, restaurant hardstand and slipway. Upstream, another 100 metres is a public boatramp that is a short walk from the public laundry near Tipperary Waters Marina. Alternatively, you can hop on a Cullen Bay bus (no. 14) that drops you at Cullen Bay Marina almost at the laundromat door. If you pull your finger out and don't chat too long to Rosie you can catch the next bus back into town. All pretty convenient.

Darwin itself is filled with trees. They are huge and make for a beautiful city, not only great for birdwatchers but adding luxurious shade.

The anchorage in Frances Bay, though industrial, is very interesting. At first glance it might look a little 'out there'. Perhaps that's because it is, but we prefer the open space and breeze to the mugginess of Sadgroves Creek and its windless marinas. It can get a bit choppy but the muddy bottom is excellent holding and in the strongest winds we've had here (around 40kts) we haven't had any trouble. Being a reasonable distance from the mangroves the mozzies aren't too bad. The sandflies don't even bother to make the trip.

Should the cyclone season live up to its name and the weather get nasty, there are plenty of creeks and cyclone holes in the nearby mangrove.

As for bities of a reptilian nature... crocodiles are 'managed' here in Darwin and the surrounding waters. Just this year 252 crocs were relocated. We haven't seen one since we've been in town and if we do presumably we call the croc-hotline and some gnarly character will show up and trap the beast.

There's about six cruising boats in this area along with a couple of barges, pontoons and some bigger ships, some of which take the bottom at low tide.



Leonie, with her sons Ben (standing) and Jesse, enjoying the amazing views of the Kimberley Gorge

We've got the usual off season maintenance to do which entails a lot of banging and noise. No doubt all this racket would make us fairly unpopular with the fat cats (no pun intended) at the marina but out here, everything's sweet.

One thing to take into consideration before committing to a wet season in Darwin is... can you take the HEAT? We run a generator at night so that our latest mod-con, the air conditioner, can take the 'edge' off. Together these items equated to about two weeks of marina rent.

Also, a week *not* spent at a marina translates into a car hire for 4 days to visit either the Litchfield or Kakadu National Parks.

There's great cruising nearby. The Kimberlies are just a couple of days away and Timor is just as close! So Darwin really is worth considering for an early start to these destinations.

**If you've found this helpful, tell us about any other good off season anchorages in your area.**



Leonie, Jesse, Greg and Ben at Litchfield National Park

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# The Cats and Crocs of "Catamaran Bay"

The Bay at low tide

Story & photos by Robert Rowan and Tess, SY Nightmoves,

**Where to start?** Probably with an apology to monohull owners who's boats can't stand upright when the water disappears. This bay at Bigge Island is capable of holding 3 boats; more than that and it could get squeezey.

**Bigge Island is located off the headlands between York and Montage Sound. It is the largest in the group of islands that comprise the Bonaparte Archipelago along the Kimberley Coast.**

We were lucky in that we had the place to ourselves for a week before we headed out to explore more of the Kimberley's. When we first arrived we sounded out the entry which has a rock bar that can frighten the hell out of you as it rises rapidly from 10 metres to 4 metres in a boat length.

We were 1 hour after high tide neaps. The range of the tide was 4 metres, so the rock bar would be dry at low tide. When we passed over the bar we had 3 metres over a white sandy bottom which shallowed to 2 metres in the centre of the "Unofficially" named, "Catamaran Bay".

The entry to the bay is 40 metres across and once inside it opens up to 120 metres wide by 200 metres long. At the southern end of the bay mangroves grow along a small tidal creek for some 100 metres or so.

We dropped anchor in the middle of the bay and the water clarity was fantastic. As the tide dropped and the water depth was 1.5 metres, we scanned the bay for any nasty beasties that would like to dine on us and could not find any.

Time for a swim. I jumped in to the cool clear water with my trusty Swamp Dog Spear in hand just in case a "biter" was hiding in the sand. (crocs are swamp dogs). Tess took a lot of convincing to get in and finally when the water was half a metre deep she joined me.

We had a great swim before the tide receded and we were high and dry. After a cup of tea we decided to explore our haven. With camera in hand we wandered around the bay and enjoyed the tranquillity of the place. That evening the tide rose and fell without so much of a ripple disturbing our sleep under the stars on the front deck.

The following morning after the tide had dropped I wanted to explore the mangroves. Tess was steadfast she wasn't going anywhere near the mangroves. I set off on my own with the Swamp Dog Spear and wandered into the mangroves. I was looking for signs of crocs when I stopped next to a mangrove tree. Bugger me, I was

standing a metre away from a 3 metre croc which was staring at me but not making a move.

I was a bit shocked to find myself so close to this croc, so without too much panic I simply walked backwards from where I came. Of course I kept a good eye on the croc just in case it was hungry. When I got back to the boat I asked Tess to give me the camera so I could video this croc in the wild. Tess refused my pleas to join me in a close encounter with this croc.

Back to the mangroves I went camera ready to get some good footage. I tested my luck by going as close as I was when I first sighted this beast. Again, the croc did not move, so I gathered some sticks and tossed them at the croc but no way was it going to move. It was quite surreal being so close to a predator that can kill you with a swipe of its tail, then the closing of its powerful jaws around your torso crushing ribs and internal organs.

Most common sense people would stay well away but I somehow thought this croc was not going to have a go at me. Tess finally decided that she would venture over to see this croc. To her horror she saw me sitting on the ground in front of the croc 5 metres from the biting end. After a few expletives from Tess which seemed unkind, I moved back to a safer distance as these days I'm not as mobile as I used to be.

We left the croc and explored a bit further inland then decided it was time for a nice cuppa and a snack. Later in the evening when the tide started to rise we could still see our new found friend laying in about the same position. As the tide reached our friend and became deep enough to swim in, it was on the move. We kept an eye on this croc as it headed towards us on the boat.

As night fell the croc must have fallen in love with the boat. It decided to rest its jaws on the duck board; or maybe it was waiting for me to come in for a swim with it. Either way no way were we moving anywhere below our deck. As the night progressed this croc swam around the boat checking us out; it was weird to say the least.

In the end I came to the conclusion that this croc was gay, very gay. The reason I came to that conclusion was that when it plonked its jaw back on the duck board again I could swear there were tears in its eyes. It seemed to be pleading for a cuddle as it stared into the flashlight.

**Trust us to find a gay croc! Crikey, what a good pub story this will make: "Robbie and Tess find gay croc in Catamaran Bay". Gay or not, crocs are dangerous animals and to have to be respected in their environment. The experience of meeting up with this croc will stay with me forever.**



Looking back to the entrance



Tide is out



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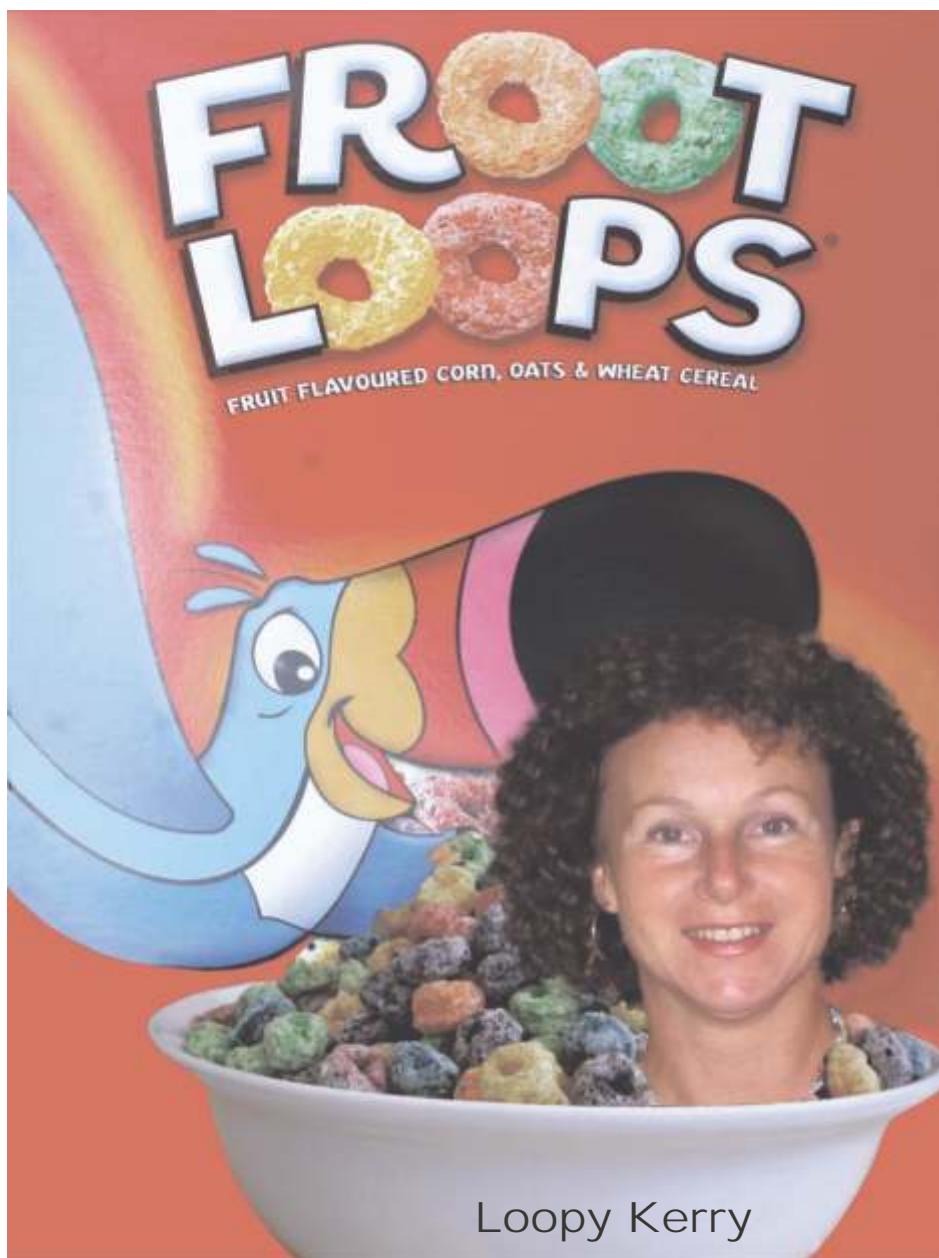
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Loopy Kerry

# FRUIT LOOP CITY!

Kerry Alexander of SC Aussie Oi sends a warning: Land life may damage your health - Returning to land after time at sea demands caution.

*me. Where are they off to in such a hurry I wonder?*

Had we made the wrong decision to drop anchor for a while? We stopped cruising for 2 reasons: **A:** The cruising kitty dried up and **B:** We thought the kids should be in mainstream schools for their high school years. A sensible decision? Perhaps not.

We are now several months down the track and I don't feel like being sensible. I, too, am now an aggravated driver:

*'Tired from my day's work, I sit at the traffic lights with my foot on the accelerator. I want to burn off the guy in the flash car next to me and pick up my son from martial arts a couple of minutes early, so I then have time to get to the post office before he goes to touch football. Then there's dinner and domestics to do before I get up and start again. I'm on an express train and it's in top gear.'*

A calm anchorage seems a long way off. Our family has now moved into a big lump of house. Jim and I both have jobs. We are the proud owners of a brand new mortgage. We have cars to run around in and a washing machine and a fridge and... after 4 years without one, a disgusting big TV, because that is how they are these days, BIG. I'm not very impressed with it I can tell you.

Our children have all the electronics and are glued to them as often as they're allowed. We find we have to "unplug" the kids to have a conversation. We are learning a new language too. If we like something we have to call it 'sick' or 'sweet' or 'mad'; if we are surprised we say OMG and if it's funny we LOL. If something is slightly unusual it is now called 'random'. It's now cool to walk around with eyes down and thumbs ticking.

Don't think about looking people in the eye and saying a cheery hello, that's way random. I am told my pink crocs no longer cut it. My clothes are an embarrassment too. It would appear that the crotches of young men's trousers have descended so low they only have to bend slightly to show the crack of their arse and they are constantly in peril of tripping over

themselves. The more of your knickers you can show, the better. Hair is another issue, you are supposed to have hair that's dead straight and looks like the dog has chewed the ends of it. Am I out of touch or what?

I thought we were doing so well fitting in; ironing our clothes, putting out our wheelie bins out on a Friday, mowing our lawns and clipping our edges. Running around as if we are in some kind of race.

OMG I'm starting to feel a bit random.

I think of our lovely boat, Aussie Oi, now reluctantly for sale and sitting in the marina with a load of expensive fishing boats for company. I have an overwhelming desire to be heaps mad and do something sick.

Do you think if I snuck down to the marina tonight, hopped on board and untied our lines anyone would miss me?? Trouble is, I can't get off the damned train.



Kerry on Aussie Oi

*'Fresh from an ocean passage from the Louisiades, Papua New Guinea, I pace up and down the shiny walkways of Smithfield Shopping Centre in Cairns. We need food and I'm in trouble. I have been cruising for some time in faraway places. I haven't used an ATM for months and ....I can't remember my damned pin number. I can't plug in to society without it.*

*8167! Yes, that sounds right, no, that's the Mhz for the 'Sheila Net' on the radio. I try 8173, convinced my brain has kicked in, but no, I'm rejected again. I have just keyed in the Mhz for 'Rag of the Air' in the Pacific. Oh poo, what to do? I am used to trading for fruit and vegetables, but somehow I don't think the smart lady coming out of 'Woolies' is going to want to trade my old t shirt for some of her nice tomatoes.*

*I find I can't think straight. All around me are lights and shiny things and signs demanding my attention. I wrestle with the crowds, tacking my shopping trolley into the wind of puffed up humans, filling*

*their faces with chips and doughnuts. As I gybe up the aisles in Coles, I realise that less than 20% of this market sells plain meat, fruit and vegetables. Over 80% of it is made up of shelves and shelves of bright boxes of products with questionable nutritional value.*

*The whole thing appears as a giant machine devised to manipulate us into spending our dollars on things we don't need. 'Dollar Dazzlers' the signs say. Well, I'm certainly dazzled.*

*We manage to resist the kid's requests for gooey pink chemicals that you can squeeze out of a plastic tube whilst pretending you are eating a wholesome dairy product and escape to our borrowed car. We cast off and attempt to glide out of the car park but our radar picks up hazards on all sides. Finally we find a gap in the teaming school of vehicles and head out onto the open highway. It's pretty scary to be at the wheel again I can tell you. I am happily cruising along at about 10 knots and all these aggravated drivers are overtaking*

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# The 2010 Rolex Sydney

# Hobart Yacht Race

By Bob Norson, and contribution from the Rolex Sydney Hobart Media Team

The 2010 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race got off to a glorious if controversial, 1:00 PM start. With the super maxi's charging through Sydney Harbour, the waters immediately surrounding the fleet were off limits to all but participants and media vessels. One of the media motorboats, in an apparent attempt to get a great background shot for an SBS commentator, placed his vessel in front of the hard charging Grant Wharington's, *Wild Thing*. The video that resulted showed more than intended as the bow sprit of *Wild Thing* took a sweep through the deck gear of the media boat, causing the commentator to make a hasty retreat.

Prior to that distraction, the weather report was the big news. Race entrants were told they could expect the first of the southerly busters around 6.00-7.00pm around Wollongong on the NSW south coast with a strong wind warning attached. "I don't know if it will be a true southerly, it may be a sou-westerly, but the fleet (87 yachts) can expect 20-30 knots. Monday winds will surge up the NSW coast and by 5.00pm there will be a strong southerly for up to 12 hours," Michael Logan of BOM warned.

*Wild Thing* made a very good start and edged out *Investec Loyal* at the harbour mark but went looking for the wind in the wrong place after that. Mark Richards skippered *Wild Oats XI* made it first to the sea mark and then it was his to lose.

By 5.30 PM the light nor-east was replaced by the first of the southerlies and will the leader be successful in the punch to windward? Former overall winner Ed Psaltis (AFR Midnight Rambler) and Ingvald agree that the crews that do best will be the crews that are most disciplined during those testing first 300 miles.

"It's about maintaining the watch system rigidly so that those below don't get interrupted when they are resting," agrees Psaltis, skipper of his modified Farr 40. "You need to keep the food up, give them coffee when we can, plenty of water. It is also really

important to keep the boat dry down below, so that when the crew come down off watch they can get into some dry clothes and warm up. The cold is very exhausting. Don't push it when you don't have to. You can break the boat in one second but it is the last two hundred miles that matter."

Oddly enough, the boats that win may be those that choose to slow down at the right time.

Monday arvo the storm takes its toll with five retirements in less than an hour as the fleet battles 40 to 50 knot head winds off the New South Wales south coast. Rolex photographer Carlo Borlenghi flew over the fleet at lunchtime and reported seeing yachts with triple-reefed mains, some with storm headsails or racing bare-headed (no sails). He said that in a decade of covering the race he'd never seen seas like those that day.

Broken arms, broken masts and general carnage see a fleet limping into Eden that day. *YuuZoo*, *Southern Excellence*, *Wot Eva*, *Dodo*, *Shamrock*, *Swish*, *Brindabella*, *Exile*, *Nemesis*, *Pirelli Celestial*, *Salona*, and *Bacardi*. But Mark Richards and *Wild Oats XI* charge on in the lead with *Investec Loyal* and *Wild Thing* in closest pursuit.

*YuuZoo* had the hardest luck story with two people OB followed by a hull breach from a failed log. Then an electric pump failed, then the other one...a bucket brigade followed.

It was a survival contest but conditions were easing.

Not everyone was pleased that the breeze had softened. Unlike the supermaxis, Matt Allen's Volvo 70 *Ichi*

*Ban* was built for round the world racing. She relished the big southerly and sailed a great race.

But while the weather waned, a bureaucratic storm was brewing. *Wild Oats XI* and *Ran* hadn't checked in via HF radio before entering Bass Strait and Tim Cox, chairman of the race committee lodged protests against them as a result. This was a safety measure put in place after the notorious 98 race.

But that was not going to stop Richo. Bob Oatley's champion 100-foot supermaxi *Wild Oats XI* reasserted its claim as one of Australia's greatest ocean racing yachts by being first across the Rolex Sydney Hobart finish line...again.

After storming to the finish at 15-19 knots of boat speed over the final miles, *Wild Oats XI* reached the finish line off Hobart's Battery Point at 8:37pm, Tuesday 28 December.

*Wild Oats XI* was named the provisional line honours winner pending the decision of the International Jury over the protest by the Race Committee regarding their HF radio which concluded next day that *Wild Oats XI* and *Ran* had fulfilled their responsibilities. *Wild Oats* had stopped racing for 20 minutes in the vicinity of Gabo Island until they got their radio functioning.

Both boats were cleared to go from that point but both used phones for transmission after that as their HF became unreliable.

*Wild Oats XI*, finished 30 miles ahead *Investec Loyal*, with *Ichi Ban* a further 51 miles behind in third place.

*Wild Oats XI*'s elapsed time was 2 days 7 hours 37 minutes 20 seconds with an average speed of a tad over 11 knots.

Richards has long resented suggestions that *Wild Oats XI* was just a fair wind flyer but proved that with wise management she would sail rough waters. "Winners are grinders," declared Richards as he stepped ashore holding up the fingers of one hand. "Check it out. That's why you have five fingers: for five Sydney Hobarts."

**TCP note: There were so many outstanding pictures so we have added more pages to the online edition. See [www.thecoastalpassage.com](http://www.thecoastalpassage.com) to download - FREE!**

for more on S.R.H.Y.R. see page 19...



SECRET MENS BUSINESS  
Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race  
Handicap Winner  
Photo: Rolex - Daniel Forster



Photos top left: **WILD OATS XI** - Bob Oatley Photo By: Rolex - Daniel Forster

Above: Mark Richards, skipper of **WILD OATS XI**, celebrates crossing the finish line first in the 2010 Rolex Sydney Hobart Photo by Rolex-Carlo Borlenghi

Below: Peter Millard and John Honan's 98ft **LAHANA** forging her way through Bass Strait Photo by Rolex-Carlo Borlenghi



**WILD THING**  
and the media boat



Storms to the left, storms to the right  
and you're the  
only boat  
around!

**WILD THING** -  
Grant Wharington  
Photo: Rolex - Carlo Borlenghi



Waves in the sky - this what crews were looking down the barrel of during the evening. Photo: ROLEX - Carlo Borlenghi



**Investec LOYAL**  
in Bass Strait  
Photo: ROLEX-Carlo Borlenghi

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Photo: ROLEX Daniel Forster

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**Aurora crew farewelled by family and friends on Boxing Day.**  
Photo: ROLEX-Daniel Forster

# Aurora

a notable Sydney Hobart yacht  
It's not about luck,  
it's about preparation

By Jim Gale, Rolex Sydney Hobart Media Team

"We very rarely have any breakages, everybody is always well," Mary says proudly. The race and getting everything in order gives a focus to the whole year. We start planning for the race, thinking about crew, in January. The second half of the year it is pretty full on."

"It does make it easier, though, when we are both involved," says Jim. "There is so much to do, so much paperwork. It must be very hard for a guy on his own to get it all done."

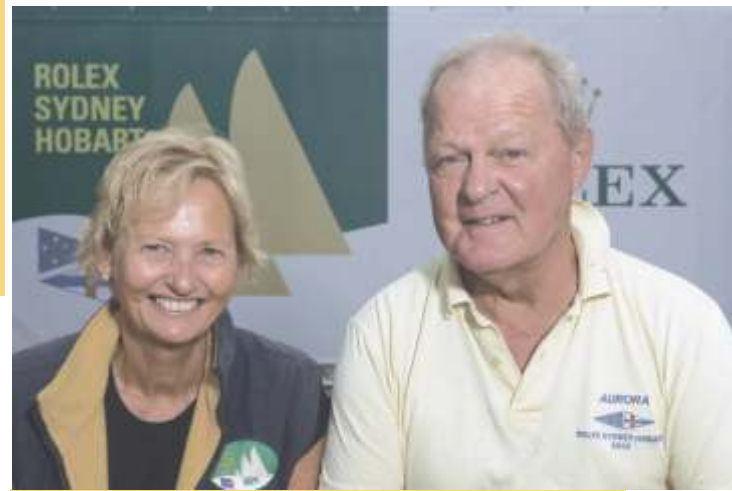
The Holleys aren't into cruising at all, they tried a circumnavigation of Tasmania once but "never cruise a racing boat," Jim says, "it is even more uncomfortable than racing a racing boat."

"It is not so much the competition that attracts us to the Rolex Sydney Hobart each year," Jim observes wryly, "with our rating we can't really compete. It's the voyage down there. You either like the sea or you don't." "And the satisfaction of getting down there," Mary adds. "When you finish in Hobart after all that effort, it is very satisfying."

Mary is Aurora's navigator and tactician, Jim is the skipper. He says Mary is also the person the crew will go to if there are any problems, though Mary insists that Jim "is very calm. When there is strife he is very calming on the crew."

This year the Holleys have taken on a new crew member fresh out of school. At 18, Tasmanian James Hall just qualifies under the Rolex Sydney Hobart minimum age rule. The couple has known him since he was six, when they escaped Hobart for a few days to Dover and some cottages that James' parents managed.

"He has always dreamed of doing the race" Jim says. "He has already flown up from Hobart five times to train



**Jim and Mary Holley, who have sailed the last 13 Rolex Sydney Hobarts together in their yacht Aurora.**  
Photo: ROLEX-Carlo Borlenghi

with the crew. When he wakes up every morning his first thoughts aren't about Christmas, they are about the Rolex Sydney Hobart."

Mary concedes that when she first met Jim she had very little sailing experience.

"Mostly social bits and pieces," is how she puts it. Then she started joining her husband for delivery trips back to their Newcastle home after he had finished offshore races and she got the bug. Mary is one of many women making their mark on ocean racing. She says she can't understand why women are letting men have most of the fun.

"Wives who leave their husbands to muck around on their boats alone don't know what they're missing out on," she declares. "It's so much fun. Challenging, but just so much fun."

**TCP NOTE: Aurora arrived in Hobart at 1:58pm on December 31st. Congratulations!**



Photo: ROLEX-Carlo Borlenghi

For detailed news and information on the yachts, crews and amazing photos see:  
[www.cyca.com.au](http://www.cyca.com.au)  
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[www.thecoastalpassage.com/hobart10.html](http://www.thecoastalpassage.com/hobart10.html)  
and on the TCP #46 online edition

It might be unlucky for some, but husband and wife team Jim and Mary Holley didn't believe there was anything ominous about setting sail for race number 13 on Boxing Day last Sunday.

The New South Wales couple is competing in the Rolex Sydney Hobart aboard their Newcastle based modified Farr 40 Aurora for the 13th consecutive year. The fact the 40 footer has competed in every race since 1998, and incredibly has never failed to finish, is believed to be a race milestone.

For Mary as much as Jim the tough race this year has been just what they wanted. The challenge of one of the toughest ocean races in the world has become an addiction. Jim has 22 Hobarts to his name, Mary has 13, all but one of those completed with her husband at the helm.

"Completion is everything," says Jim. "We are absolutely meticulous in our preparation. I take the mast out every year. People say it is unnecessary but it pays off in Bass Strait, lying in your bunk not worrying that the rig is about to fall down."

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Malapacao, Philippines  
photo by Nat Uhing

# Monsoon Dervish

Being a true account of the mischief and conflagrations caused by fine voyages of the junk "K ehaar" to the islands of Madagascar, Zanzibar, Ceylon and impenetrable Japan as well as Terra Australis and the Eastern Archipelago, set down to the greater glory of gods at the turn of millennium by the captain of said ship, notorious **Kris Larsen**

Back when I was a kid there was a musical and cultural revolution going on. It was psychedelic, "underground", records passed from hand to hand with rare and amateurish covers and only played late at night on some of the more adventurous radio stations, outlawed in polite society. The names were new; Big Brother and the Holding Company with Janis Joplin, Grateful Dead, The Doors. The Velvet Underground even incorporated it into their name and their "hit", which was NEVER played on top 40 was "Heroin". A song about the rush of the high. I was mesmerised by the honesty and sheer audacity of it all.

Kris's book is something like that. Too honest for polite society. The sense of underground has to have appeal to you or it won't work but if it does...there are few that would satisfy like this. So all you pirates out there, here is a taste of the accounts of the travels of the ship and crew of *Kehaar*. The books are hand crafted and will never see the best seller lists... well... never say never. I hope you enjoy these excerpts as much as I enjoyed the book. All the typo's and grammatical errors are genuine, I tried not to add my own!

by Bob Norson

## The Boat;

I usually tell people I built my boat. This is not exactly true. About 20% of the work has been done a by a chap on the west coast of Tasmania. He bought a set of plans from John Pugh, stole a lot of plate steel from the gold mine he was working at and started building. He bent the 1/8" plates into the shape of the hull and tacked them together. That's as far as he got. His dream was to finish his boat and go cruising. His Missus wouldn't have it. So he had that heap of rusting steel in his yard for a while, then sold it to his mate on the north coast. I heard it was something about paying his debts in kind or similar story. The new owner was a nuts and bolts man close to retiring age. He did no work on the boat, only dreamed of cruising. His missus wouldn't have it either. He had it siting in his machinery yard for a while, then put it on the market. Nobody wanted the thing. It was only a few rusting plates tacked together.

I was driving past it for a year before I seriously considered buying it. I was going to finish it and go cruising. Naturally, my missus wouldn't have it. So I got myself a divorce and bought the hull.

## Rig and such

The only mode of propulsion was to be provided by sail. No engine. I am not a purist. A purist is someone to poor to buy an engine. With me it is not a question of costs. I feel that smelly noisy infernal combustion engines belong into barges and trucks, not into sailing boats. From my personal experience I know that the only time you really need them, they won't start, anyway. People sailed all over the place without them. They still do, millions of fishermen and traders in poor areas of the world. No engine means no noise, no stink, no grease, plenty of room aft, no through-hull fitting to leak, saved weight of motor, gearbox, shaft, tanks, fuel, oil, spare parts.

Instead you get a true independence in decisions. So what happens when the wind died and you are drifting with the tides? Another bloke starts his engine. I start cursing. You learn to sail your boat, keep her bottom clean. You learn to catch every puff of a breeze, use the wind shifts to your advantage. You learn not to make reckless decisions, not to sail into traps hoping your cast iron genoa will save you if you get caught.

There is no ideal rig; otherwise everybody would be using it. I wanted to do fast comfortable single-handed passages. Frenchmen have shown us that you can single-hand anything, and fast. They'd single-hand the "Cutty Sark", if she weren't too slow for them.

I like more comfort, and the simplest, cheapest rig.

Junk is fast downhill. We once sailed 1000 miles in 7 days and 2 hours. For a 33' steel cruiser I do not ask more.

## Mainland Australia

I was watching the mountains in silent wonder, a childhood dream coming true. We had crossed our first ocean, without using a compass, GPS or even an electric torch, 41 days of tranquil solitude, undisturbed by idle chatter on a two-way radio. A simple profound experience that justified itself. Precisely the way I want it. Every generation of boat bums grows up with their own heroes. I grew up on tales of Chichester, Knox-Johnson, Tabarly and above all Moitessier and Lewis. Those guys expanded the field of small boat navigation to the regions undreamed of until then. After their exploits there was virtually nothing left that has not been done.

The following generation concentrated on speed, a bunch of young French dragons who were using the latest technology,

sailing improbably fast multihulls, slicing days off the fastest times, always pushing for more speed. 80 days around the world. Fine. What next?

There comes time when our heroes disappear at sea, lose their boats or die of old age. One morning you wake up and looking over a quiet anchorage you realise it's up to us to carry on. We are the generation who is DOING IT. Right now.

I believe it's time to put a bit of magic back into sailing, for sailing is not about hardware. It is about interaction between a man and the sea. More gadgets you put between yourself and the ocean, colder and more diluted your experience becomes. And there is nothing in this world but firsthand raw experience. Reality, if there is such a thing, is experience at first hand, and on the quality of that experience depends what you get out of life.

## Zanzibar

Zanzibar is an island 60 miles long. The main town, also called Zanzibar, has about 100 000 people. What makes it so attractive is hard to define. It is not one particular thing that arrests you. Many small details combine to creep up on you. Zanzibar has always been the distribution centre for East Africa, trading hub, dealers' place. The Stone Town is well preserved. Many buildings were restored or are being restored. Famous carved doors, old and new, convoluted narrow lanes struggling to accommodate modern traffic, bazaars, spice shops, coffee-vendors, dhow sailors, tourists. Everywhere distant and recent past is mingling with the present, jumble of most diverse influences. I can't think of a more depressing combination than Islam and Communism together, a drab unimaginative negation of life. Yet African zest survived it, absorbed it and sprang back. A number of whites fell under the spell of Africa and stayed, but ask them why and they can't put their finger on it.

How can you explain that intelligent and capable people are barely scratching living in countries where they are not welcome, where they lack basic comforts and securities, where general poverty and illness reflects in their own conditions? There is no way to explain it in a rational way without experiencing it yourself.

You wake up one morning on the anchorage in Zanzibar at dawn, hearing drums over the waters. Ngoma. Africans returning from fishing the reef, beating their drums and chanting. And you know - this is it, the life itself, before communism, before Islam, before Aristotelian logic, a primal chant of humans alive. And you want to be a part of it, this "to hell with tomorrow" attitude making our philistine prudence appear sterile and lifeless. Watching them joyfully crowding into already overfilled taxi, loudly arguing the price of a single mango or shovelling greedily rice gruel from a cracked plate into their mouth, you know that nothing is alien to them. They live now, in total abandon, poor, dirty, futureless, free of neurosis and agonising indecisiveness. Imperceptibly you are drawn into it, however out of place you may feel at the start. If you are not tough and cynical enough, you can quite easily lose your fragile identity, without gaining another one. In such a place having your own boat outweighs any inconveniences it may bring. Wherever you are, you have a refuge to go to. Not just any hotel or some other impersonal shelter. You carry your own home with you. After a day's bustle you return into the sanctuary of your own hearth, your own home. It makes it easier to preserve your identity in powerful or overwhelming circumstances. I found this nowhere more important than in Africa. There are few things more pathetic than a white man who lost his tribe.

continued next page....

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## Madagascar

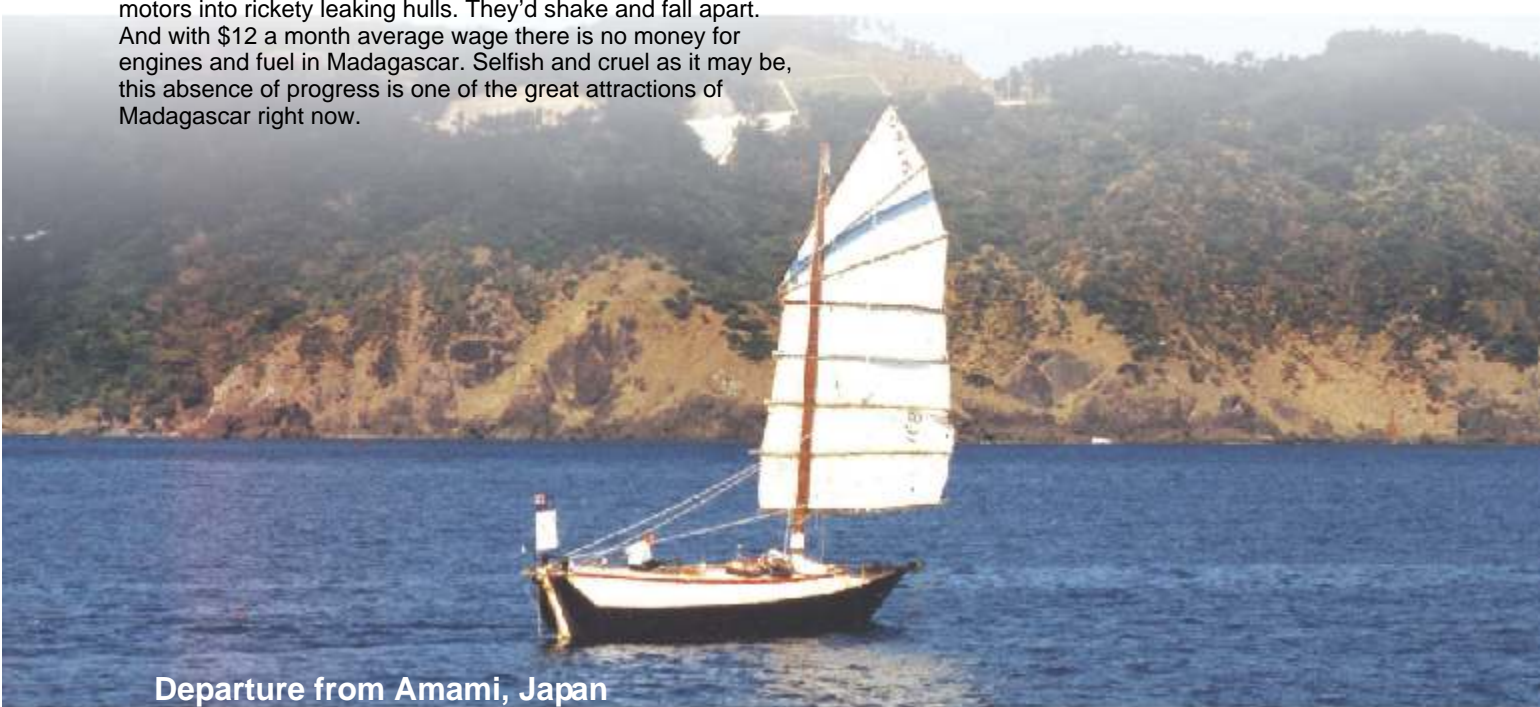
Waking up on a passage one morning I found "Kehaar" racing an 80' three masted sambu under a full sail, a half a mile from us. I sat there in my hatch, spellbound. I felt I had finally arrived; I went through time backwards where I had always wanted to be. I missed the time of square-riggers and down-easters and often, when travelling, I felt I was born too late. All I had left was chasing romantic images of the past. Travelling two decades ago in Asia I got close several times but never the less late I was. Questionable progress and tourist development managed to alter the places. And not only Bali, Goa, Phuket. In Eastern Indonesia I got very close, sailing on huge two-masted "pinisis" of Buggis people from Surabaya and Macassar to the Islands of spice and New Guinea. Yet even then, I felt there was not much time left for them. Indonesia, lying in the equatorial doldrums, is famous for its calms and everyone was talking about engines. I was right. In the eighties they indeed converted to unreliable truck engines, cutting down their masts. I was late again. Now, here, in Madagascar, watching fascinated how the sailing master of a 120-ton butre tried to get the best out of the morning breeze, I felt that was IT. For once I was not late. It's hard to describe the excitement of the moment. These guys were direct blood descendants of Arab traders from Oman, blokes who were sailing in the same way since King Solomon's days, ignorant, raw, brave and wise, the last fleet of working sailing ships anywhere. And nobody is talking about installing motors into rickety leaking hulls. They'd shake and fall apart. And with \$12 a month average wage there is no money for engines and fuel in Madagascar. Selfish and cruel as it may be, this absence of progress is one of the great attractions of Madagascar right now.

## Japan and Dirty Weather

After 45 000 miles in "Kehaar" dirty weather worth talking about will fill a short chapter, no more. The most memorable gale occurred in winter on the west coast of Japan. The monsoonal high of 1035 mb over Central Asia, two combined depressions of 990 mb over eastern Japan, "Kehaar" caught in a surge between them. Two days of sustained winds of 50 knots, gusting to God knows what. Rain, sleet, freezing cold, busy shipping, visibility nil. What made it memorable were not the conditions of the sea, but the proximity of land on the lee side. In a hard blow I usually reef right down, ease the sheets and wait inside the cabin till it passes over. I could not do it this time; we were too close to land, being driven closer by wind and swell. Caught on a lee shore of Kyushu we had to carry much more than a minimum of canvas. Madagascar cotton had rotted away and panel after panel of our sail blew away as I was pushing the girl through the swell, clawing our way to windward close-hauled. We gained a lot of ground and after weathering the bottom of Kyushu we run to the nearest down wind port, in Amami-o-shima. We sneaked into the harbour unassisted, ribbons of canvas streaming from the bare spars, 70% of the sail missing. It made a great photo - Flying Dutchman has landed. The following two weeks I spent in a park adjoining the Nagahama fishing harbour, stitching up a new sail from old Dacron I picked up from the garbage in Fukuoka Marinas.



"Flying Dutchman"



Departure from Amami, Japan

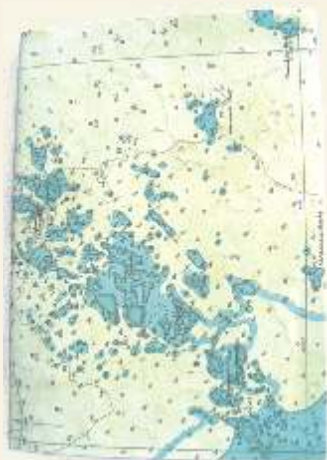
Photos by Yonemitsu Motomi

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My name is Kris Larsen and I've been living on a boat for the past 17 years. A 32 foot steel John Pugh modified to carry unstayed junk rig that I designed in Tasmania. At first I went trading with it to East Africa and Madagascar, then cruising and working the Far East, Japan, Korea, Russia, then 5 years in the Philippines, all up 45 000 miles without an engine, electrics, electronics, GPS and such. I wrote a book about it, "Monsoon Dervish", and published it myself.

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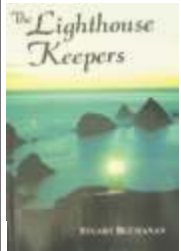


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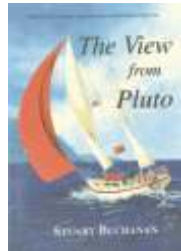
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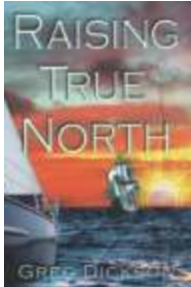
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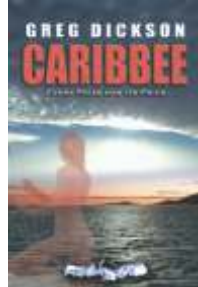
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# THE ENCOUNTER

Story & photo Jan Forsyth,  
SY Sea Wanderer

I know it will seem strange to many readers that I am about to relate an encounter with elephants in a cruising magazine. However, we were cruising Borneo in our 45 ft yacht, so it does relate indirectly. The event could be motivating for those contemplating a trip to South East Asia in the future. It may in fact stimulate some of my coast hugging friends to take the break and stretch out of their comfort zone and cruise some of the wonders of the world.

There we were in the middle of a massive river system somewhere in the heart of Borneo. It was early evening just after we dropped anchor in the swirling chocolate water that is the Kinabatangan River, where thick jungle patterns the muddy banks and where the spectacular wild life attracts visitors from all over the world.

My skipper was ready for his sundowner after a long day on the river, where most of steering had to be done by hand due to the many great logs and other debris heading down river in a frantic rush for the ocean. I convinced him drinks could wait, as here we were in this amazing place where there was much to see and a slight chance we could spot a pygmy elephant or two.

Into the water went the dinghy, a difficult manoeuvre as the current was deadly, but we boarded aft in the lee of the transom and set off. It is this time of day when the jungle comes alive. Exotic bird calls, chattering monkeys and many sounds that remained mysterious and unidentifiable fill the air.

We pass a little creek inlet that meanders into thick jungle, we turn and motor up quietly. The Skipper turns the

motor off, unties the oars and rows, in order to hear the jungle more easily. I look up when I hear a rustling, high in the canopy and I see a community of monkeys scampering about, some sit staring down at us while they chomp on leaves and jungle fruit.

From further in we hear a noise as the Skipper rows quietly and cautiously into the stream with oars almost touching the sides of the muddy banks. The jungle is closing in and becoming darker as the day dies. We see a culvert up ahead, it must be an outlet for the palm oil plantation further in I think to myself.

Then there is a snapping of branches and swishing of undergrowth and out of the depths of the jungle we see several grey forms take shape. Elephants! There are four of them; three adults and a baby carefully making their way across the culvert and into the jungle on the other side. I am spellbound; we are so close, my hands shake as I line the camera up and focus in on them.

Then we hear a crashing all around and wild trumpeting, more elephants are about to cross the bridge when suddenly the four that had already crossed turn and veer back. Over the culvert they charge their way towards what appeared to be a war of the wilds. The jungle comes alive with the sound of deafening trumpeting and charging moving closer and closer. We are terrified; feeling that any moment a stampede would involve us sitting in petrified vulnerability in the little tin dinghy. Why did the four elephants return? Did they sense us; are we the cause of all the uproar? Are they gathering their forces to attack us?

While I am shaking in the little dinghy the noise slowly abates and we wonder what will go down next. Then the elephants return to the culvert, quiet now, it seems they had released their anger and resolved whatever it was distressed



them. They line up and cross in an orderly fashion once more one by one.

When the original group have crossed there are more, and more, until the last count amounts to 25. Another baby, younger this time moves across with its guardians, and then another group crosses the culvert, it is obvious that one is a bull and is chasing a female as we see his huge sex dangling almost to the ground.

A great bull arrives, swinging his trunk as he crosses, but suddenly he stops and turns toward us as he picks up our smell. I cringe, will he attack? I try to snap off pictures but my hands are shaking so much I fear my pictures will be nothing but blur.

Much to our intense relief the bull moves on, then another group crosses until a really small baby and its entourage arrive. The "aunty" elephant taking the lead senses us, turns, waves her trunk in our direction and proceeds to amble along the bank above us. This aggressive investigation is just too much for our shot nerves and we move back very slowly away from the threat, dipping the oars so as not to make a noise, until we feel we are out of range of any aggression. Aunty

follows us for a time, waving her trunk and looking fierce, but eventually returns to her charge when she perceives we are no longer a threat.

The large herd moves off, at peace now, to concentrate on feeding, we are at peace too or at least the shaking has stopped. We return to the yacht, silent in our own thoughts, reliving the spectacle we have just been a part of, how fortunate to be in that particular spot at that time.

I haven't heard of an encounter of this nature before and according to our cruising friends who have also visited the river, none have ever seen so many elephants at the one time. In the past, small numbers of the Asian or pygmy elephant have been spotted on the odd occasion by tour guides and their party. Small herds of about 4 to 8 in number, usually sighted fossicking for grass at a distance on the river bank, but it is a hit and miss encounter.

**We felt so privileged to have stumbled upon the large rambunctious herd and to be in that place at that time was truly one of the wonders of cruising.**

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# TCP's ADVERTISER'S NEWS

## Lawries Boat Services, Mooloolaba

much more than what you see from the street (or the water)

By Keiran Jackson, Lawries Shipyard Manager

Lawrie's Boat Services was started by Keith Lawrie in the early 80's. He had a small factory (shed) onsite producing floating marina sections and used these to make the first floating marina in Australia, Kawana Marina (formerly Lawries Marina ) which he also owned.

The yard started lifting boats with an old crane which had a limit of 12 tons. All boats at that time were set up on the compacted dirt in close proximity because the crane couldn't walk and lift at the same time.

After a while the market improved and the yard became more and more popular so finger piers were put in and the first Crib Point Engineering Straddle Carrier was commissioned. Additional to this, cradles and a prop system were designed to enable the yard to grow and service the clientele to the level it enjoys today.

Lawrie's Boat Services now has a 44 tonne full hydraulic Straddle Carrier, with a "Unio" extendable crane mounted on the cross beam to step/remove masts and also for lifting motors in and out of vessels. This extends the capabilities of an already versatile machine.

There is also a 4 sling set up available for the heavier / fragile vessels.

I joined the business in 2002 under the tutelage of the then yard manager, Charlie Miller. Charlie Retired four years later and the management position was offered to me.

Lawrie's Boat Services was given a refurbishment in 2005. Bitumen was laid over the entire yard, a computerised drainage system was installed with settling tanks and pump system making Lawrie's state of the art in environmental protection. Each vessel is placed into a cradle in its own bay surrounded by shade cloth. This enables sanding and painting to be done without disturbing the neighbouring boats. However we do insist that vacuum extraction is used on all sanding and prep work and a careful watch is kept to ensure painting is conducted in a safe drift free manner. The yard also has an Abrasive Blast Bay, Wet/Dry for removing excess antifoul build up.

Those unsightly Osmosis Blisters can be hull stripped here as well and the hull refinished in Epoxy to prevent a recurrence.

Lawrie's Boat Services also has two covered sheds which are in constant use (no weather to worry about ) also providing shade and cooler conditions for the workers. There is also a wet workdock area available for jobs that can't be done in a marina. This workdock is used at our discretion with no exterior sanding, painting, or grinding allowed. It is mainly for interior work with no risk of pollution in the water.

The yard has two boat builders, stainless steel fabricators, rigger, mechanics, electronics expert and upholstery / boat cover manufacturers, painters. Good old fashioned service by the professional staff onsite should make Lawries Boat Services the place to come for work on your floating pride and joy. Check us out at: [www.lawriesboatservices.com.au](http://www.lawriesboatservices.com.au)

Mooloolaba is a great port and a variety of specialist marine based businesses at your finger tips. It is conveniently located near shopping centres, banks, post offices, hotels, marinas, restaurants, coffee shops, surf clubs, and all types of accommodation choices. Many amenities are just a short stroll away whilst others are accessed by a reliable public transportation network.

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**Kay's note:** I had a chance to visit Lawries (took these and many more pictures). I was very impressed with the operation, and I don't usually get impressed with boatyards, though Bob loves to wander around them. This boatyard was first class. They even had a ladies restroom with showers!



Tom Martin (left) Lawries Boat Services Manager, and Keiran Jackson, Lawries Shipyard Manager



Rick, the lift operator with Kerian



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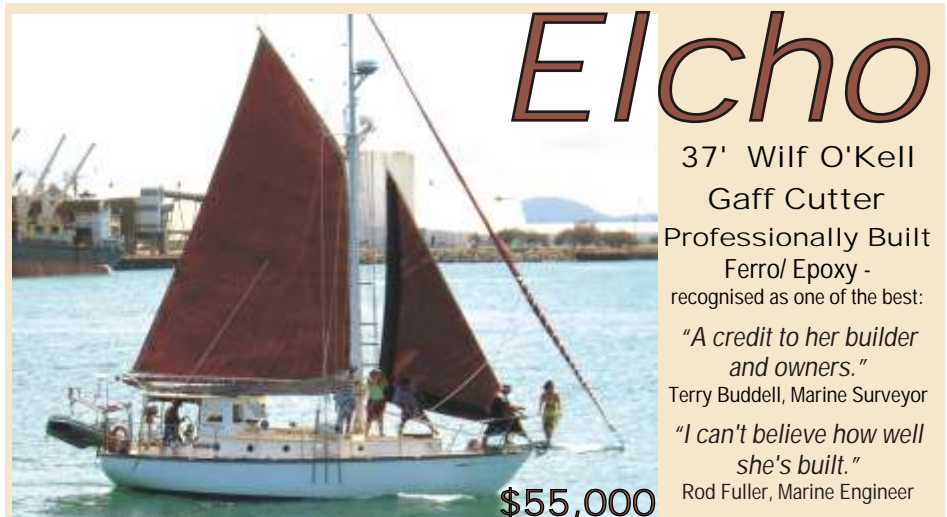


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# THE EYE SPLICE RE-VISITED...

## The Ken Fox Splice is worth sharing!

*I've always asked that if someone out there thought they had a better way to go to please share.*

*Ken Fox from Canada has come up with one that is very worthwhile. Have a look at this and see what you think.*

*Cheers, Bob*

### A few words from Ken:

As for the eye splice, keep in mind that sailing has been around for a long time and there is very little new on the subject. The idea of cutting off the core rather than the cover and threading it under the cover for a bit is one I cribbed from making an end for end splice years ago. The brummel splice which you used is in one of the rope manufacturers instructions for some other application. I tried it with good results on a different type of rope (polypropylene) which consisted of a knitted tube and no core. Only trouble with it is that after a few years it becomes extremely unpleasant to handle so I gave it up. The real advance is to pull these various things together in a new application which is what you did.

Just as an example, some years ago I was looking over the pharaoh's boat from about 3000-3500 years bc in Egypt which was found stored in an underground room beside one of the great pyramids. I expect that any modern sailor would quickly learn to run it and that a sailor from that time would quickly catch on to running our boats. Even a coil of rope in a display case was standard 3 strand twisted.

Ken Fox

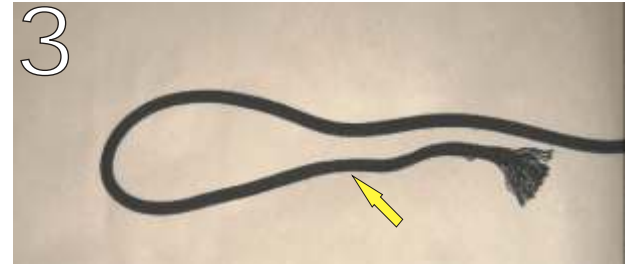


Slide the cover back to expose about 1 foot (300mm) of core.



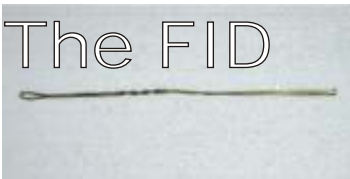
Cut off about 8" of core and taper about 3" of the end of the core. This allows the core to be put inside the cover so it is easier to pull into the throat of the eye.

*Bob's note: Do this by trimming away some threads at varying stages as is shown in the Norson Double Splice.*



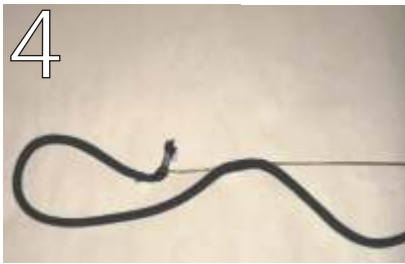
Now slide the cover back up over the end of the core so that the tapered end of the core is fully inside the cover. Lay out the eye as shown here and note where the throat of the eye falls on the standing part of the rope.

The end of the core is about where the yellow arrow indicates. It will pull up into the cover in step 5.

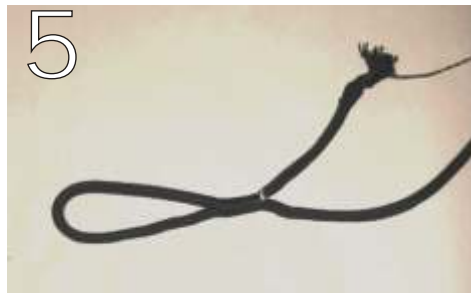


You will need a special fid for the next step so make it up by bending a piece of coat hanger size iron wire double as in this picture.

*Bob's note: Iron coat hangers are getting hard to find in Australia but are about 2mm wire.*



Insert the end of the fid under the cover about 3" up from throat position noted in step 3 and out of the cover at the throat. Thread the end of the cover through the eye of the fid and if necessary squeeze it down with pliers so it gets a good grip on the cover as shown.



Now pull the fid and end of the cover through the cover and out as shown here.



Right where the cover comes out bend the rope sharply and extract the core making a loop of it as shown below. This will take some digging but it can be done without too much difficulty. The end result is shown in this photo.

*Bob's note: If you need further explanation on this procedure, have a look at the [Norson Splice](http://www.thecoastalpassage.com/eye_splice.html) page: [www.thecoastalpassage.com/eye\\_splice.html](http://www.thecoastalpassage.com/eye_splice.html) This step is important and a part that I think makes an improvement of the technique.*



Now remove about half the strands in the loose end of the cover starting right where it exits the standing part of the cover (As in the Norson Double Splice) and weave the cover end in and out of the core. (As in the Original Norson splice)



Massage the cover down over the core so that the core is drawn up into the cover. This photo shows the almost finished result. The knot of white is the almost finished core and this will require quite a bit of force to pull in but less than the original Norson splice.



The finished eye splice.

*Bob's Note: Ken has taken parts of my splices and recombined them and added an important step all his own. All of us owe a debt of gratitude to Ken for his work and inventiveness.*

*Well done mate!!*

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# The Launching of *Te Arawa*

October, 1975

Jim Geddes, SC *Te Arawa*

A lot of folk have asked me why I took such a risk, well the short answer is that in 1965 I and my brother in law Steve Leys (the builder) had done it before, except that the boat in question was only a 15ft. 6" Yachting World Catamaran which easily sailed out through the surf and surfed back in again...

Well, we figured that an even bigger boat would be a breeze and besides there was no other way out as the boat was built in my poor Mum's backyard just behind the sand dune. Anyway, we could pick the weather and tide. There was just the small matter of moving it to the water as the two of us could not lift it like the YW cat!

Burying an anchor in the sand and winching was discussed over a couple of beers but discarded as being too much like work and would take too long. After another couple of beers we had a brilliant idea, a bulldozer and it just so happened that we knew two brothers in the earth moving business. They agreed to take on the job and even thought it might be fun, sadists. As you do, we had a few beers with the brothers discussing rollers or not and as the bottom of the hulls were about 12mm solid glass we decided no rollers as the jellcoat would need a sanding anyway.

And so it was done, except that *Te Arawa* decided she was in a hurry and started to slide down the sand dune almost decapitating the bulldozer driver with the fore beam, he settled down after a stiff drink and even took his dozer right into the surf then came around and lifted the stern in order to fit the rudders.

A friend had brought his Bertram powerboat around from Pittwater to give us a tow of the beach when there was enough water to float except we hadn't figured on the surf washing in and out and 45ft. of boat. Never mind, we had an elaborate hand signal system, (arms raised GO, arms crossed STOP) but we had used nylon line and it took a long while to take up. Then it stretched and stretched leaving the sterns high and dry.

This is where the spectators came in handy; lift, lift ya bastards, and LIFT they did. It's amazing what 20 or so blokes can lift if suitably lubricated. The next wave *Te Arawa* was off at about 14knots as the nylon line took up from full stretch and in what seemed like seconds we were clear of the break and out to sea. Steve and I both vomited.



*Te Arawa ready to slide...*



*Go! Go! Go! Spectator power!*



*Just missed that sandbank!*



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Locks Deguello, Te Arawa, and Gipsy Rover*



*Many years later; no regrets*



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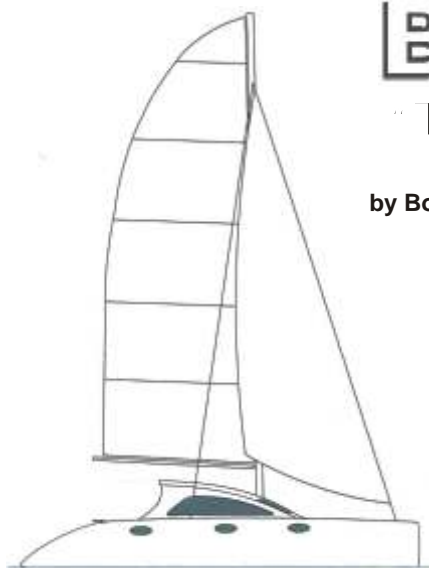
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# Bare Bones project update

"They" say this weather is going to last till March?!

by Bob Norson



"BareBones Island"

## Our flooding has been annoying but...

we know a lot of people are more than inconvenienced by these rains and our heart goes out to those that have suffered real losses.

It isn't that there hasn't been workable weather but it has been fleeting and risky.. do I go? Do I mix that batch of resin? It's 70% humidity now, what will it be an hour from now when this stuff is trying to go off? So there has been a lot of little inside small jobs. and the occasional big ones. The shears have been finalised, the net rigging in place, the mast deck done and rudder cassettes are in the works. Not much considering the span of time.

It has been rewarding to grind the sides and cabin bulkhead to final shape which couldn't be done until the mast deck was in. I was very pleased with the accuracy of the lines. After grinding off the excess left after the original lamination, I laid an alloy square tube across the span with a spirit level and found less than a 5 mm error. If it was 50 out no one would likely notice. I'm figuring about 100 mm camber in the top. That should stiffen the structure and shed water well. Also, I think we have a strategy for the lamination and installation of the cabin top. That is a job I hoped would be done now but with conditions... no way. I want the board cases installed before we button up the top. Another job delayed due to the wet.

The forward lockers are done but I might change out the hatches that I made for

them from ply and the cutout panels because I found deals on entry hatches picked up from one of the bankrupt motorboat operation on the gold coast. Always AFTER the fact...

For the centre locker which is the chain locker and mounting for our windlass, I put in an 18mm piece of laminated ply under the 20mm laminated foam and then installed a length of 1000 gram unidirectional tape to anchor the assembly to the main bulkhead. I think it would take over ten tons force to break it. Our anchor should hold!

The mast step is similarly over-built. It has about a 60mm thick ply base that brings it even with the deck level and I intend to place a piece of hardwood over that of about 18mm, laminated in of course. Unless we spear a 747 with our stick, we should be OK.

To shape the shear I just tied a magic marker to a stick to set a line 40mm back from the edge, top and bottom, and manually ground the lot off with a 7" sander. And speaking of that... professional quality abrasives are not available at the local Bunnings or whatever.. All Abrasives in Maroochydore at 07 5443 9211 have the good stuff. After the sander, it was the bad old torture board to true it up. Also I laid in a scrim coat of bogg under the edge to help even out the tape and keep it stuck to the work.

I found I had to be very careful on those loonnggg tapes with the outside curve. I

came up with a couple voids under the edge. Most of them I found whilst rolling it in but a couple got past me. A small cut the next morning when it was still green allowed me to inject a few drops of resin into the voids and then clamps and braces to force it down and you can't spot them. After considering the possibilities, I think the way I was handling the tape may have been the culprit. I do prefer pre-wetting but it may have it's downside.

Dianne and John Challis gave me the tip on the abrasives supplier. Their "Easy" cat is going but they got it worse from the recent storms than we did!! They may need to wait for a new road to launch!

Malcolm Salisbury of the Crowther Catana *Coconut Airlines* continues to be a very helpful source of information with more decades of multihull building than he probably wants to admit and David Drew of the Oram 44 *Starfire* is parked out front right now with lots of experience to share. Jim Geddes down south has worked out a thing or two since he launched his Crowther 47, *Te Awara* in 75. Boonooroo Bill is around the corner and he has years into it and a skilled bargain hunter, many thanks! And Phil Whitely and partner are under way nearby with a Schionning Wilderness that I'm sure will come very good. And Rick on Simpson cat *Giddyup Go*, is a welding pro! We have benefited by all of these friends and hope it flowed both ways at times.

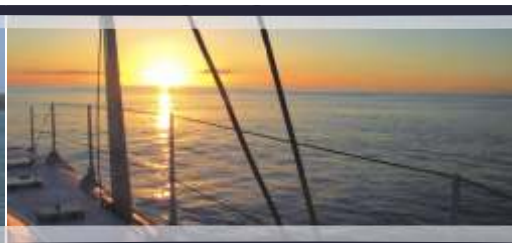
A happy boat building year to all.



**Photo's..** at left, the table prepped for taping the shear. Bote-Cote resin continues to be my reliable choice, especially for big jobs with it's generous open time. That's 13 metres of 750 gram tri ax flaked out ready to work. Lower right; working in the tape that was prepped on the table. Middle right; Tape and peel ply organised for the inside of the mast deck. top right; As she stands now.

## New Website! [www.buildacat.com](http://www.buildacat.com)

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# Greg Dickson's Pelican visit

By Kay Norson, (with a little help from the Dickson's)

In the last edition of TCP (#45, pg 11, This picture made me curious. So I asked Greg what was with the "pet" pelican. Here was his reply:

*"If you believe in reincarnation then 'the pelican' is an amazing story. He flew on board en route to the Galapagos Islands. We shook 'hands', then he came and sat behind me, reading the pilot book over my shoulder. Later onto my lap, moving so that I could turn the bloody pages for him. Then he went and sat behind the wheel as if he were steering for another hour or so. Wouldn't take food and eventually left as mysteriously as he arrived."*



## Greg's pelican story led me to respond to Greg with a bird story of mine:

I am amazed at the antics and clever minds of birds. A strong wind blew nests down a week or so ago.

### Here's a few pictures:

Note the fibreglass the Magpie found to weave into it - must have been watching Bob and figured, well if he is using that stuff to make his nest... We put it on the deck and he got back to recovering his damaged nest bits to make a new one! Engineering, building, then restoring! All in a Magpies tiny brain!



A few days later I received this clever photo from Leonie, Greg's best mate with these words of wisdom:

### Just a tribute to ingenuity & evolution:



Is it a catamaran nest or a double yolker? Those birds have been watching Bob to Closely!

# A Passage Poem

## EASING OFF

Life's like a windward boat hard pressed  
That's under pressure now  
So you ease that sheet and lay a point  
And fall off to leeward bow

That grind is gone, her helm asoft  
Her rudder close a lee  
The spray now trickles by your feet  
Allowing you to see

To push a moment in a day  
Instead to bend that reef  
And silence all the wind affray  
The challenging of grief

And grieve you will  
If you don't crack away  
Just that point, or maybe two  
Running kind with just enough  
And very less to do

Life's sometimes over canvassed  
And hard with little soft  
So don't look too long upon your feet  
But look to what's aloft

Enjoy the ride as you run  
Not away from, but toward  
Another day, another friend  
All bring your just reward.

Lance T, SY Galadriel  
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# Let's Share Cruising Tips

TCP looks into ways to stay clean, fresh, happy, content and even a bit indulgent while not using up all the water! **By Kay Norson**

## SOAP



A Platypus Dreams gift box of soap

Wouldn't it be nice to have one type of soap you can wash your body, hair, hands, dishes, boat, dog, cat, kids, etc.? I haven't found any all purpose soap, but I believe I have come close and am learning the benefits of natural soaps.

My friend sent me a bar of soap she found "divine" (thanks Gail!). Gail knew of my problems with rashes and as Gail is a firm believer in natural - chemical free products for your body, inside and out, I listen to her advice. The soap is called **Goats Milk Royale** and the makers of this soap is a Australian company called **Platypus Dreams (PD)**:  
[www.platypusdreams.com.au](http://www.platypusdreams.com.au)

After using the bar Gail sent, I noticed a change in my skin and rashes and "bumps" were gone! I now use very little lotions on my skin with these soaps (another benefit) and I just feel cleaner! The soaps are apx. 150grams and cost around \$8.50 (discounts for quantities). I believe I am saving money as I no longer need other special ointments and lotions to keep the rashes away!

I was real keen to get more. I have been happy with every type of soap from **PD**. I feel they are a special treat like a piece of good quality chocolate! Bob is very pleased with the **Herb Garden Natural Shampoo Bar Soap** as am I. I rubbed a bit of the **Four Thieves** soap on my mop to clean the floor and it worked great! I would hand wash clothes on the boat with this soap as well.

I have sent these soaps to friends and family and have asked for their opinion. The words "squeaky clean" and "amazing" have been used to describe them as well as "they smell so nice". Judy, formally of SC **Two Easy** told us even though she uses liquid soap, that these soaps don't leave a "cling wrap" feel to your skin.

Spend the money - try them. If not **PD**, find other natural soaps. You are rubbing lots of chemicals into your skin every day with cheap soap. **You are worth it**. Those grubby chores on the boat are washed away even if you are using a little bowl in your galley to get yourself clean!

Men, you will smell great! Stinking up the boat with body odour is a real turnoff! And remember those 100% cotton clothes! Polyester blends are notorious ly smelly.

## SPRAY BOTTLES WILL SAVE YOU WATER AND FRESHEN YOU UP!

Ada and Charlie of SY **Geronimo** mentioned that they have spray bottles scattered around the boat (by sinks, on dinghy, etc.) and find the water savings are considerable. Add a bit of eucalyptus oil, lavender oil, etc. Spray on your face, hands and body for a quick wash. You can also put them in your fridge for a cool spray!

## TOWELS & BEDDING:

Speaking of cleaning yourself, why always use a big towel to dry yourself off on a boat? In hot humid climates they can get stinky in one day! A tip given to me from Jane on SY **Escondido** is to have plenty of large hand towels to dry yourself. They are so quick to dry and really all you need.

I heard there is a type of rubber strip thingy that you can "wipe" yourself dry. Anyone out there know how this works?

Don't be shy about using paper towels. Keep some nice ones for wiping your hands and face - use an astringent or just a bit of isopropyl alcohol on them. Those hand wipes/baby wipes are great!

Hilare of SC **Starfire** found a great way to clean the mud out of her toe nails. Get a cotton bud, dip it in hydrogen peroxide, and rub around the nails. It really works!

For those of you that believe this paper stuff is bad for the environment, then use them two or 3 times or cut them in half, but I feel it is important to feel clean and refreshed on the boat.

**Crew feeling like they have to suffer to be on a boat won't be crew very long and head back to land where it is "easier"! Captn's, if you are reading this, be careful when you begin limiting crew of simple luxuries - you will be boating ALONE!**

We all love getting into bed with clean sheets, but on a boat when it is hard to wash them because of weather, or just feeling lazy about it ("I'll just wait for that marina stop and find a laundromat"), here's a few ideas:

"Air" them out if you can even if you just hang them up inside somewhere. Spray a little lavender oil (or ?) mixed with water on them, then hang. Maybe a light dusting of body powder in between sheets? Make sure you have extra pillow cases. A clean, fresh pillow case is nice to lay your head on! 100% cotton is the way to go. Avoid polyester (even blends) on boats! Be careful of "heavy" or bright coloured sheets & towels, as they can take long to dry and bleed colours into other laundry, especially if you are using laundromats. Light colours are best. Use colour elsewhere like seat covers, cushions, etc.

## KEEPING DIRT OUT:

If you want the boat to keep clean inside you really need to be "strict" about *all who enter*, to rinse their grubby feet when entering *your* boat! I was getting angry about all the dirt in the boat - I then realised I too was contributing!

"Kitty litter" plastic containers are a good size for the "foot wash" placed next to the entry way of the main saloon. Bath mats are good to lay next to it and dry quick.

Sometimes is nice to just soak & scrub your feet in a foot wash (with some nice soap of course!).

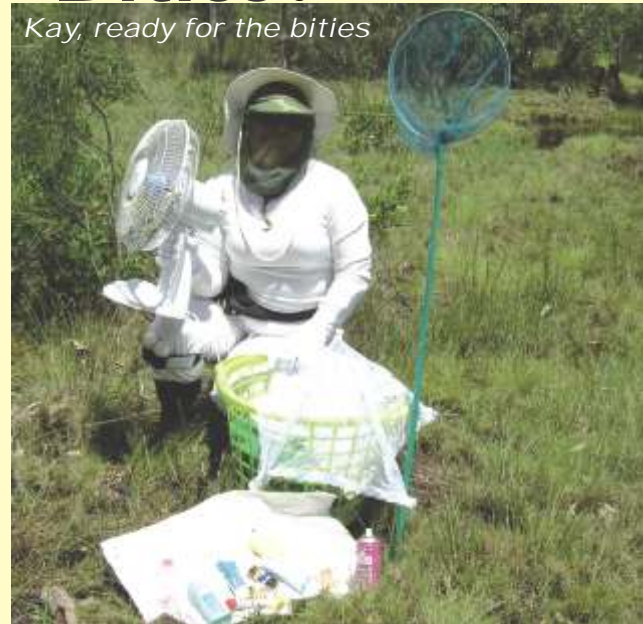
Anchors are always a challenge. Just a bit of mud will dry then a wind will blow it all over (what's that grey dust all over everything?) We try to remove the mud before it gets up on the bow. If that's impossible (no time), rinse it when you can.

Simple rituals upon entering can make a huge difference and no grubby / sandy sheets to sleep in!

**These are just a few tips - what's yours? There must be many more to share!**

## Bities gear and Vitamin B1

Kay, ready for the bities



In the last TCP there was many tips on keeping those bities from ruining your day. I took the advise and collected all the "tools" together: soap (to wash the bitie "poo" off before it itches) baby oil, deodorant (to rub on the bite), aloe vera, stingoes, tea tree oil, citronella oil, Rid, Bushman's, Detol, fan, mossier coils, netting to keep them away from your food, a full face net, hat net (dunno what for but it looks impressive), white clothes, white gloves, rubber boots, carry bag, washcloth, a snake bite kit (for the BIG BITIES), a carry bag and last but not least, a basket to drag all the gear with me...

Whew! That was a lot of work and not too practical. Very hot and not a good fashion statement!

I then started taking one 100ml of Vitamin B1 tablets a day. Its been two months and right now the bities are at their worst! I feel the bites, as PJ mentioned, but haven't reacted with the big welts yet. Some say you need to take several a day, but I hear that it can be bad for you to take too much of this vitamin, so I will just take one and see how it goes. I hope it helps as it would take me an hour to round up all the bitie tools!

## A few no cook" meals and snacks from Susan Bett, author of the "Great Ideas Galley Guide"

### LIQUID BREAKFAST

*A great idea for a fast, uncooked brekkie.*

Beat and blend to a smooth consistency 1/2 banana, 1/2 cup water, 1 tbsp wheatgerm or bran, 1 tsp honey, 1 cup milk and 1 raw egg. If you have any fruit that has lost it's crunch, throw that in too.

### SALMON PATE

Combine 1 can salmon (250gm), 1tbsp lemon or lime juice, 1/4 cup cream cheese, 2 tbsp melted butter, 1 tbsp capers, 3 tbsp sour cream and a generous dash of Tabasco Sauce. Mix until smooth, add some black pepper and serve chilled.

### CUCUMBER & YOGHURT SOUP

*A delightful cool lunch on a hot and humid day.*

Combine 2 cups plain yoghurt, 2 cloves crushed garlic, 1 tbsp lemon or lime juice, 1 tbsp olive oil and 1 large peeled and finely grated cucumber. Add salt to taste and freshly ground black pepper and serve very cold.

### SARDINE SAVOURY

Quick and healthy snack meal to serve on wheat biscuits. Drain oil from a can of sardines. Remove tails and mash in a bowl with 1 tsp curry powder, 1 tsp lemon juice and 1 tbsp chutney.

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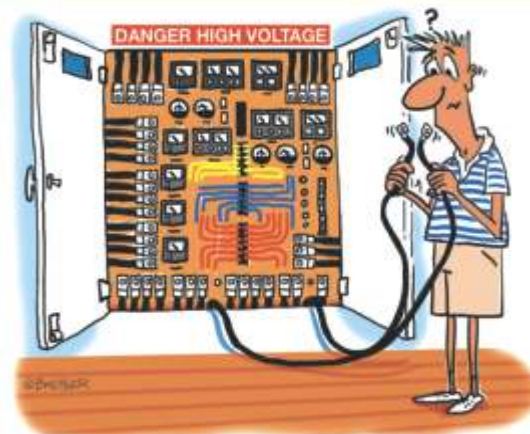
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Skipper happy after finding oysters

By Jan Forsyth, SY Sea Wanderer

**We've all seen those oyster encrusted rocks from time to time as we've cruised around coast and islands. For me it's very ordinary to anchor in these areas as the beach is usually mud and the rocks slippery.**

The communities of oysters are at their most prolific on greasy rocks that sit in midgie infested mud or on inaccessible headlands. Whatever the oyster seascape, to my skipper its heaven. When the low tide betrays the oyster's habitat smack bang in all the mud and rock, the dinghy is launched and the Skipper is off.

He moves in a frenzy, tap, tap, tapping away at the tightly closed shells to reveal the huge mollusc inside, he then scoops out the contents with care and delight into a container. It is difficult to stop him once he has begun his gathering frenzy, but eventually when oysters dribble out of the top of the container enough for a meal, I urge him to cease.

I have more interest in the beauty of the backdrop of sweet smelling bush tall timbered and green, than what lies on the rocks below. Overhanging eucalypts sway in the warm breeze as though fanning the bright green under growth that clings to the steep gorges, where over the years rushing water has paved a path to the sea. The long gone secrets of the dream time protected forever amidst the mystery of impenetrable forest.

On the beach below tiny star fish bury themselves in the mud in an effort to escape our clumsy feet as we squelch towards the rocks and millions of insects swarm around us then hover hoping for a feed of our fresh blood. After ten minutes, time enough for my thongs to have flicked oily mud all over my legs and bottom, dehydration has set in and the midges have left their mark, I've had enough.

Now an Aussie like me loves her oysters if not raw, covered in bacon and sprinkled with Worcestershire Sauce then shoved under the grill for 10 minutes or grilled in a rich creamy sauce. But the Skipper, being the good Kiwi that he is, will fritter everything that moves. Hence any oyster that makes its way on board is immediately thrown into a bowl of batter and browned in the frying pan.

What a waste I think, a waste not to feel the mucus like glob slip down the throat. Instead one has to chew something that's mixed with flour and occasionally has a bit of shell still attached which, when crunched feels like a filling has fallen out. But the skipper thinks his production is pure gourmet.

As the oyster became more significant to our cruising life I furthered my research and found that in spring the oyster is at its most attractive and ready for spawning, scientists say that this is the time the oyster has its

# THE OYSTER



greatest aphrodisiac quality. It has been linked with love and sex over the centuries and I wondered if this was fact or fantastic fiction? Casanova is said to have consumed 50 of the little molluscs each morning for his breakfast. However there is little documented evidence that it was the breakfast that made him mad for the ladies. It may have been that Casanova didn't have toast or cereal in his larder, so had to resort to what was available, and that just happened to be oysters.

The psychological impact of believing that oysters can improve sexual prowess can sometimes give temporary desire or improved performance. It has been said that the mind is the greatest aphrodisiac of them all, but that is another story.

As we moved further and around the coast we found the oyster patches were fewer and further between. The Skipper devastated at the state of the coast, had not sighted any suitably rocky seascapes for some time. Not for the lack of trying, every shore line was searched keenly by this mad oyster eater. Then one hazy afternoon just as he had about given up; a distant headland loomed, where it slowly became apparent that there could be potential in the shape and form of the rocks.

Anchoring in the shallow bay, there they were; shells glistening in the glow of the warm sun. Never mind mud and midges, not to mention croc, Skipper driven by the chance of a fritter dinner talked his totally unenthusiastic crew into an enthusiastic oyster harvest.

Armed with jar and chisel, I slurped and skidded over to rocks that were home to enormous oysters, but as soon as I cracked the first shell, slithering its contents into my jar I saw my legs and arms were inundated with little black dots.

This place was home to millions of starving midges which called for an abrupt halt to my oyster gathering. Yelling at the Skipper to hurry up, I picked my way cautiously back across the sea of slime to the beach, all the time wondering when a croc would come slithering out with me in mind for dinner.

The skipper oblivious to his crew, croc and insect, tapped away until satisfied he had enough for his famous fritter, then headed back with spring in step to join me in the dinghy and race back to the boat to prepare his meal. How something so small could excite so much is beyond my comprehension. But I will let you decide for yourself and sneak his secret recipe, hoping he doesn't discover I've let the cat out of the bag. Or would that be oyster out of the shell?

## Skipper's Famous Kiwi Oyster Fritters

**Wash** the oysters thoroughly to avoid crunchy bits. **Then mix** - Enough batter (eggs, flour, salt and pepper) to bind the oysters, add finely chopped bacon and onion if available.

**Fry** until the fritter takes on the appearance of a steaming cow pat, then eat immediately but only after a dash of Worcestershire and/ or chilli Sauce.

### Alternative dishes include:

- Fresh with a squeeze of lemon
- Steamed with garlic and onion
- Hidden in an omelette
- Baked in the shell
- Barbecued, smoked or pickled
- Stuffed in a steak or pie.

**A tip:** The flesh is delicate and requires little heat, stop cooking immediately when the edges begin to curl.



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# What do you do all day?

An excerpt from the blog/log of Karen and Jerry, founding editors of the Magazine, *Good Old Boat*, of their three month cruise around Lake Superior, North America last summer.

handful of projects that he had meant to get to before we left the dock. Those kept him busy while I stayed at the helm and kept a lookout.

When we're at anchor, we go kayaking, or hiking, or both. We appreciate the serenity, if we're alone, and the local action, if there are other boats in the anchorage. We paddle around crowded anchorages with sample copies of *Good Old Boat*. We meet a lot of people that way and everyone has an interesting story, if you take the time to listen. We also read together when at anchor. And we're always working on a project or two.

Even if it's a brand-new boat, there will be cleaning and maintenance chores. On our boat, a good old boat, there are cleaning and maintenance jobs in addition to upgrades and Jerry's many "inventions and improvements." He's always experimenting.

And finally, we go to a marina from time to time (maybe every three to five days) in order to buy fresh groceries, do the laundry, pump out the holding tank, fill the fuel tank, dump the trash, get water, and so on. A trip to town also gives me a chance to connect by cell phone or email or both. The marinas are very social places and we enjoy visiting with other boaters and the local folks in town. We

can take walks and paddle our kayak too when "in town," but we generally get our jobs done and head back out to an anchorage.

Non-sailors also wonder whether we sail overnight. We've done that many times. This lake is big enough to sail for several days of non-stop sailing if you want to get from one end to the other in a hurry. But I don't expect to make many overnight passages on this cruise; we have the time to make short hops and drop into many anchorages we've had to pass by in the past. We're looking forward to doing exactly that.

This is the summer cruise in which, as never before, we'll take time to stop and appreciate the beauty that surrounds us. Already today, our first day out, we've seen a loon and heard his call and we were thrilled by the otherworldly chorus of calls by a couple of sandhill cranes.

What I should tell the non-sailors who ask what we do all day is that we're busily engaged in the business of running our boat and appreciating the glorious world in which it floats.

**For more great stories and pictures of "Karen & Jerry's Great Grand Adventure" see:**  
[http://www.goodoldboat.com/blogs/gob\\_blog.php](http://www.goodoldboat.com/blogs/gob_blog.php)

**The woman (me) in this photo looks very cold. And that shot was taken in June as we started our trip. That lake NEVER warms up. Oh, and I'm wearing a life jacket UNDER my jacket so I may appear to be rather "powerful" or full-chested or barrel-chested or something!**

By Karen Larson, SY *Mystic*

As we prepared to leave on our three-month cruise, several non-sailors asked us what we do all day on the boat. How does one explain to the non-sailor that it's not like spending three months at a lake cabin or even like spending a day soaking up the sun on a powerboat? On our first day out, we spent from mid-morning, when we left our home marina, until we anchored for a late dinner either sailing or motorsailing.

Time when we're underway are spent navigating, keeping watch, making sail changes, and tweaking the lines to get the most out of the sail combination of

the moment (it's never exactly right for more than 15 minutes before we're considering alternatives as the wind increases or decreases). We're always appreciating the changing scenery. No matter how often we've passed that way before, it's never the same twice.

The weather, the time of day, and even the time of the year vary. Sometimes when aboard, we're plenty busy just sailing the boat because the weather is challenging or there are lots of ships about. But in light breezes, such as those we had today, I read to Jerry while he keeps watch or one or the other of us gets busy doing little projects on the boat. Today, in particular, Jerry had a

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# Sail home to the Grocery Store

By Vicky J, SY Shomi

Having spent my childhood in farming areas and tasting food directly from the tree or plant it is impossible to satisfy my taste buds with anything less. Home grown and straight from the tree, plant or chicken. No chemicals, preservatives or additives, no long term travel or dehydrating air conditioning. I want my veggies, nuts and fruit to be alive when I eat or store them.

I am at home on the ocean but I want a taste of home in the stores we carry for journeys, not to mention growing things is one of my consuming interests. The saving, health benefits, convenience and freshness can't be overlooked. We look at it as an investment for a future that may include food supply problems.

So at the moment I am up to my ankles in shit (literally) and in breaks reading The Coastal Passage with wistful memories of sailing adventures gone by feet cleaned by the sand and sea. It's spring, the planting is on. The orchard is almost complete and sown in between while the trees are still young with rows of vines, corn and beans.

## FOR CRUISING DRYING MAKES SENSE

All tomatoes, beans, onions, popcorn, legumes, mangoes, strawberries, bananas, pineapples, herbs and leafy greens are suitable for drying. Solar drying does not destroy vitamins and caramelizes the natural sugars increasing the flavour.

### To make a solar dryer

A piece of scrap tin painted black with a window screen elevated over with a piece of timber either side with a slot cut half way up. Place glass or Perspex over this and tilted at least 25 degrees at one of the open ends. This makes a successful solar dryer. Hatches on boats could be rigged to have a soft fold away version from a car windscreen shield and fine mesh in between.

We freeze fruit and veges from our solar generated power and find the lemon's and limes can be juiced into ice trays frozen and the cubes put into a ziplock bags to be used in convenient measured amounts or popped into drinks like an ice-cube. Passionfruit can also be processed in the same way.

### Sundowner tomatoes

Soak dried tomatoes in hot water for 30 seconds, (Keep water for cooking later) add salt cracked pepper and herbs. Cover with olive oil and serve with crackers and cheese. Small chunks of feta can be added to the jar of tomato mix.

### Greek salted lemons

Little lemons pricked all over and placed in a heavily saline mixture of salt and water and cooked in the jar with a vacuum lock lid (use old pasta sauce bottles or the like, that will pull down the middle of the lid when cooled. The lids have a ring of grey or white rubber around the inter rim). Cook for 20 minutes in rolling boiling water and cool in the saucepan with the lid still on. **Lemon butter and jams** work the same way but are of course cooked first then bottled, cooked and cooled.

**Wine making** is not so hard but the amount of sugar used not only in wine but chutneys jams and pickles is staggering so I keep these to special occasion treats.

### Making your own fancy vinegar is easy.

Tie fruit in a muslin bag or old clean scrap of sheeting let drip into a screen covered container for a couple of weeks. Bottle the liquid and discard the fruit. Use as a



Kirsten and Bob on SY White Bird

base for marinates for those big catches on the lure or on a salad. Jackfruit and mango are my favourites but most fruits suit this treatment.

### Fish Jerky

Marinate your fish in a mixture of soy, ground pepper (or chili) and a dash of lemon or lime juice for 2 hours. Straight salt will work also. Pat dry. Dry in the solar dryer or on a fishing line tied to the stays without the pieces touching each other. Cover at night or bring inside. It takes 2 or 3 days in hot dry weather depending on the thickness of the strips of fish used. Beef works in the same way. A fan forced oven on low for 3 or 4 hours works a lot faster.

### Smoked fish

This does not preserve the fish but gives a very pleasant change and is excellent served cold with sundowners crackers and pickled baby chokos or bread and butter cucumber. Home made of course. Line a wok with alfoil. Sprinkle with a tablespoon each of brown sugar and green tea. On a rack over this, place marinated or slightly salted plain pieces of fish. Put on the lid and cook on low for 15 or 20 minutes. Throw away the foil afterwards and the wok should be clean at the end.

### Antipasto

This is easy to make and keeps for ages in the cupboard. Refrigerate after opening. Slice and lightly salt eggplant, onion, garlic, capsicum and mushrooms, cook slowly in a sprinkle of olive oil in a frying pan add pepper and any herbs you wish. Pack into a jar with olives when cool and cover with olive oil and the lid of course.

### Fruit Ambrosia

To a few pieces of your sun dried fruit add quality white wine in an attractive jar and steep for 4 months. Drink and use fruit or make a rich yummy sauce by blending.

### Fruit Brandy

Follow the steps as for the ambrosia but use brandy or vodka instead.

### Instant meals

make an easy end to a hard days sail. Made ahead of time and stored for times you don't feel like preparing food.

### Fish chowder

Add ½ cup of powdered milk, pepper, dried onions, peas, carrots, corn and a teaspoon of dried mustard, parsley and corn flour to 2 cups of fish jerky. Cook for 20 minutes in 2 cups water. Serve with toast or crackers.

### Moroccan Cous cous

Add a cup of mixed dried onion, capsicum, beans, corn, peas and sultanas to a cup and a ½ of cous cous with salt and garam masala. Keep in a ziplock bag.

To serve add equal quantities of dry mix to hot water. Stand for 3 minutes fork in a tablespoon of butter or ghee, cover and stand for a further 3 minutes. Add dried cashews if you have them.

### Thai Red Lentil curry

Add a cup of dried pumpkin, ½ cup onion, 1TbIs garlic, to a cup of red lentils with salt and pepper, ginger, chilli, lemon grass, coriander and lime rind to taste. Add a cup of dried coconut milk and store in container or bag. Cook with 3 cups of water for 20 minutes. If you have trouble finding dried coconut milk in the supermarket add a can after cooking pumpkin and lentils. Serve with rice or long life naan bread (available in supermarkets).

### Minestrone

Add a cup of dried tomatoes and capsicum, ½ cup dried onion and garlic, ½ cup pasta shells to a cup of dried legume soup mix or brown lentils salt pepper and mixed herbs. Pressure cook with 3 cups of water for 15 minutes or simmer on the stove top until legumes are soft. To cut down cooking time this can be soaked in warm water for the days sail and cooked in the evening.

### Sweet Jasmine coconut rice

Add a large cup of Jasmine rice to ½ cup each of coconut, sugar, dried fruit, macadamias or almonds and dried milk powder. Cook for 20 minutes with 2 cups of water or until rice is soft.

These are just a few of my ideas for stocking the boat ready for a sail. Stacks of fresh fruit, veggies, coconuts, a few dozen eggs from our feathered friends and a sack of macadamia nuts cooked for 20 minutes in a moderate oven to make them crunchy and easy to crack and we are ready to head out into the sunset. It's time for Mango Wine and any of the goodies from above.

## Passage People, boatyard style

SY Barbie?



While I was wandering around Lawrie's Boat Services Boatyard, I came upon **Robert and Wendy**. They were scrubbing away their Christmas present to be ready for a great time cruising and partying around the Mooloolaba canals. I asked them the name and though not quite sure, they claimed it would be something like, "**Barbie the Barbie Boat**". Here's hoping you and your friends and family had a great time on the Barbie Boat!

Kay



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12m mono 40ft	\$35	\$180.00	\$ 660.00	\$1820.00
14m mono 47ft	\$41	\$217.00	\$ 813.00	\$2148.00
15m mono 50ft	\$47	\$253.00	\$ 966.00	\$2477.00
16m mono 53ft	\$49	\$270.00	\$1030.00	\$2640.00
17m mono 55ft	\$51	\$287.00	\$1095.00	\$2803.00
10m multi 33ft	\$39	\$210.00	\$ 800.00	\$2200.00
12m multi 40ft	\$48	\$260.00	\$ 990.00	\$2500.00
14m multi 47ft	\$56	\$302.00	\$ 1045.00	\$2850.00
15m multi 50ft	\$60	\$324.00	\$ 1230.00	\$3100.00
16m multi 53ft	\$64	\$345.00	\$ 1350.00	\$3400.00
17m multi 57ft	\$68	\$367.00	\$ 1450.00	\$3700.00
18m multi 60ft	\$72	\$390.00	\$ 1550.00	\$4000.00

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Jessica Watsons  
Ellas Pink Lady Home Marina



Latitude 26.41'S . Longitude 153.07'E  
VHF channel 16 or 73  
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