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E-TCP
#59



**Kirsten and *Scrappy*,
after the storm**

photo by Kay Norson



**Jason and *Spirit*,
living the dream**

photo by Murray J. Kelman

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The Attack on The Coastal Passage, Bob Norson and his family

This is no joke - This is the story of how a chemical that is deadly to a rare few is being used to try to silence this paper and Bob Norson

"Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities, truth is not." Mark Twain

The attempt to murder an *IDEA*

By Bob Norson

This is commentary and a report of an ongoing crime that I still find incredible myself. I have been the victim of chemical warfare. My family is now suffering from the stress of this ordeal and now possibly the chemicals themselves. Deliberate, premeditated poisoning of a type that can be directed at an individual as explained next page (Chemical Sensitivity). I had already suffered grievous physical harm and the attacks were only getting worse to the point I had to leave the country. I can't singly be important enough to justify the campaign of harassment that has been waged against me. Must have been something I said, or maybe allowed others to say by way of the paper.

This is written personally because it is a family story. We are real people and this is happening to us right now. I begin with my last day in Australia.

My daughter and I were having a beer in the afternoon, five o'clock it was. We were discussing work to be done on the boat while at Scarborough Marina and just general stuff like you do at that time of day with a beer in hand with company you enjoy. And I do enjoy Kirsten's company; she sure went through the brat teen and full on anarchist stages but some life experiences, including a stint in Iraq courtesy of the US Army has seen her come to be more interesting. Disabled now, as a price of the learning experience, she has nonetheless been a help to me managing the boat as Kay has had to tend to the difficulties of producing the paper and moving house single handed except for the help of a few close friends. It wasn't meant to be this way but back to five o'clock at the marina.

I sensed it coming, the quick pressure ache in the head, like an air pressure change that you can't adjust to only much more painful, like a vice squeezing. Very distressing as I knew what to expect or so I thought. I knew I had a security problem in an easterly. A large vessel on that side of *Scrappy* blocked the view, hid a perpetrator in a small boat in the channel or from the jetty of another marina. I had been dogged with these attacks for months, often the chemical being dispensed in an vapour of some sort upwind to drift back to me. I used cameras to discourage as best I could. Total all-round or longer distance security was never possible. Every shift of breeze brought temporary relief or new threats.

This attack/chemical was different. When I thought the worst had come, it was only just beginning. Buttoning up the boat and sweating inside the suffocating cabin wasn't going to work this time, too late and too much. I was already too far gone to think clearly, to reason what to do to mitigate damage. All I could do was sit there and disintegrate.

Sometimes as I first begin to sense it, I realise the doors of my mind are all gently closing, leaving me colourless, empty, incapable of any complex thought or action, depressed, in despair. This one was different, it blasted my head, it kept coming harder and harder. It literally knocked the legs out from under me. It was some time before I could stand on wobbly legs. I was devastated and stupefied. This one wasn't harassment, this was a killer. Kirsten saw what was happening. She has a mild (so far) sensitivity herself.

Besides chronic exposure to a powerful chemical insecticide developing a dangerous chemical sensitivity in me, genetics apparently play a part in this. But how much of a part? Could the extraordinary sensitivity I have to this chemical occur entirely naturally? I have reason to wonder.

Kirsten took over. I needed help. A taxi was called, a quick bag packed and I was off to the airport to catch the first foreign owned aircraft to anywhere acceptable.

Follows upper right, Kirsten's story regarding that day...

Here are my observations of what happened to my Dad on January 22nd, 2013 aboard *SC Scrappy* sitting in Scarborough Marina.

It's not that I haven't seen my Father ill from these poisons, because I have, along with experiencing my own reactions to an over abundance of these chemicals when with my Dad, but this is not the space for that, this is just about that one day that I almost lost my Dad.

As my Mother and I have watched my Dad go through extraordinary lengths to avoid the poison, and not succeeding, we became more and more worried for his life and actively encouraged him to leave the area; the country, just go somewhere, anywhere where he could get healthy again!

Dad persisted with staying here and staying with *Scrappy*, to show that no matter how much he suffered, that he would not be silenced. As a person I find that very admirable, as his daughter I wanted to kidnap him and throw him on a plane. So while I would push for him to leave, I would also help in any way possible while he stayed. So when I found my Dad looking on-line at plane tickets I could've danced a jig. It didn't mean he was going yet, but he was thinking about it, I saw that as a positive step.

After getting an idea of costs and flight itinerary, but without yet setting a date to leave, I asked what I could do to help complete *Scrappy* while he was away. Thinking he would be gone a week or two he gave me some jobs that I was capable of doing, and some tasks utilizing my electrical experience. All in all, not a bad day.

Later at beer o'clock we were sitting in the salon enjoying the first few sips of the ice cold Tooheys in our hands, enjoying the view and discussing what we could do the next day, since Dad's departure date was still TBA.

That's when it hit! Dad put his beer down and told me it was starting. I knew what that meant. As I've stated, I've seen my Dad suffer from these attacks, but I had never seen him so devastated and it scared me.

I told him to leave, NOW. Just go to the airport and take the first flight to any where he felt safe going. I told my Dad to do something and he followed my instruction. It was like I was the parent in this situation. We went over the really important stuff to take, i.e. passport, cash, etc. As he sat there counting out money, he was

going through a stack of \$50's and very slowly counted one....two...etc. to ten and then he said, 'ok that's a thousand.' I stopped him and said no Dad those are \$50's, not \$100's. His speech was so slow. I've been through surgeries and the best way I can describe what he acted like was like when someone just comes to from being under anaesthetic. Groggy, slow, confused.

As much as I hated it, I talked to him like I would a child, slowly using small words and gesturing to help make myself understood. Together we put together his wallet, adding important travel info. and taking out unnecessary items (to make things extremely simple once he got to the airport) again something I never thought my Dad would need help with. I went to packing him a simple carry on, it had already been decided that he would get clothes once he arrived at where ever he was going. I packed a computer case with his laptop and bare essentials, toothbrush, reading glasses and Kay's and my cell numbers.

I put an outfit together that would be comfortable to fly in, showed him what I had packed for him, and went through a checklist; 'where is your passport', he would pull it out, 'ok where is your cash', he pointed, I was double checking that he had everything he would need and at the same time trying to make him remember where he put those important things to make it easier for him once at the airport, because he was not capable of even simple thought processes.

Then it came time to go up to the parking lot and wait for the cab. I didn't know what to say, or if I could say anything. I had a real good poker face going. We saw the cab coming and I hugged my Dad and told him I loved him. He got in the cab and the last thing I said to my Father was "I'll look after *Scrappy*". He had cash on him and looked like he was very sick or drugged, an easy target for any petty thief, or worse. Normally my Dad can defend himself, but in the state he was in he couldn't have fought off a gang of kittens.

Due to circumstances it wasn't until a couple days later I got a call from Mum saying she had gotten a call from Dad; it wasn't until then that I knew my Dad was safe, or at least alive.

I can't describe the shock and sadness my Mother and I have been going through since this all started and it is ongoing. Just remembering that day brings me to tears.

Kirsten

What is Chemical Sensitivity?

This illness is new enough to not be described by the same title consistently. Multiple Chemical Sensitivity or MCS is one but references to Chronic Fatigue or other vaguely understood illnesses may be of the same general type. Toxicant-Induced Loss of Tolerance, is the designation from a report by Claudia Miller and available at:

<http://tih.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/15/3-4/284>

The illness is fairly consistent in it's symptoms but may vary in the chemical that causes the collapse of tolerance and attack of the immune system. According to the report cited above and many others, It begins with susceptibility. Bad luck in the gene pool.

A susceptible person exposed to chronic low level or even a unique exposure of a higher level of a toxicant may develop sensitivity. The sensitivity then triggers symptoms upon subsequent exposure to even

minuscule doses of the chemical.

But wait, it gets worse. It appears that once the damage is established in the brain by the prime toxicant, other toxicants may use the established pathways. The patient now has multiple sensitivity.

The problem people have at this stage is that the symptoms don't have a cause as far as some doctors are concerned because they are masked by the indirect nature of the illness and because if they did pursue the toxicant investigation, testing done only shows, "safe" levels of toxicants and therein lies the problem.

What is "safe"? In Australia the government agency that regulates such things is the Australian Pesticide Veterinary Medicine Authority (APVMA). Test animals are exposed and a body mass to chemical ratio is established to determine a "safe" exposure. Developed sensitivity is not considered

even though research indicates sensitised persons can react to a chemical by a factor(s) greater than "normal". The toxin attacks functions in the brain that are similar in insects and humans, it's the mass that varies and humans greater cognitive abilities can not be addressed at all in test animals. **The list of chemicals once pronounced "safe" but now banned after discovering some substantial harm is getting longer every year.** My understanding is that the chemical supplier furnishes or funds the testing.

So a person with sensitivity and unscrupulous enemies can be attacked in a crowded room and even with illegal concentration of the chemical, few, if any of the other people in the room will feel anything other than a light head ache perhaps and wondering why the stricken looking person stumbled out of the room.

Comments on Kirsten's report

I didn't read Kirsten's report at left, until working on this page for Kay. Needless to say it overwhelmed and both Kirsten's account and my own have had to be edited a lot, so much emotion.. Being under constant duress it's easy to overlook or at least underestimate the affect a circumstance like this can have on those close to you.

My recollections of the day were limited to what I wrote, but upon reading Kirsten's account I do recall more now. Much of my memory is 'missing'. I only have a vague sense of something not right until I pick up a thread of one memory that leads to another or someone close to me tells me what happened and then my memory comes back and I can recall.

I feel it's important to note that this chemical poisoning does not make me delusional like Alzheimer's or something like that. It doesn't distort thought, it seems to weaken the link to it, 'too hard', a profound mental lethargy. I've talked to another sufferer of this syndrome who reports similar. For example, we had done the same thing, we both had to write down symptoms of our illness prior to seeing a doctor because we both felt we wouldn't be able to remember them on demand.

Kirsten has been involved in TCP battles for free speech for some time. When my pages disappeared suddenly off the first page of Google's search results for "Australian Customs" in Australia,(2007) I rang Kirsten, stationed in Germany at that time, to see what position they had there. She reported that they were still the top of the search result so someone had paid to alter or censor that search result in Australia. I later learned from a statement made in parliament that the government had been "spending millions on Google".

The Slippery Slope. Once that threshold is crossed, when a government agency uses it's might to suppress free speech in a way that the public would generally find wrong but gets away with it... **What is next?** As it is now the safety, the physical safety of anyone who dares criticise government or one of it's favoured industries like mining, aviation or large developers, etc, could be dependent on the moral compass of those in political or bureaucratic power.

This is not meant to be a warning to others to shut up because of the danger, the opposite. If ever there was a time Australians needed to be vocal, it seems to be now.

My report continues at right...

Bob's Report and Comments Continue

I feel I can begin to tell the world what is happening to me. This is not entirely bad luck or being in the wrong place at the wrong time with a special weakness. The attacks have been planned and managed. The goal is to discredit me, thus the paper, and to blame it on the boat building resins using my own mistaken account early on when I assumed that myself, not considering the possible presence of a chemical insecticide from outside our property.

The arrogance is such that one of the players confronted me to gloat and brag. He spelled out the strategy. At another location on the boat, a different player liked to give me a wave as he came back from the upwind locations that he had just dosed and I was just beginning to suffer from. Willful provocation, a set up. The idea is to provoke me into a violent act that would put me on a back foot with any witness. Invisible poison versus a visible physical act. So I must be patient, not take the bait. But in the meantime, doing everything I can to avoid more of the toxin. The multiple exposures may have done permanent physical damage, I don't know yet. I'm recovering some of the lost balance and muscle control (terrifying, I lost control of the movement of my hands). Realistically I can't expect 100%, but I intend to survive.

If you are confronted with someone very strident in putting forth the, 'Norson has lost his mind from the epoxy fumes' thing, in spite of this very personal revelation, you might ask why? And I would ask, who?? What special knowledge could they possibly consider more convincing than the horses mouth and why have any position at all, **what barrow is being pushed?**

This can be addressed by the fact that I voiced suspicion about symptoms I was having in Bowen that I suspected were related to chemical use by nearby agriculture well before working on the boat. I was then diagnosed with Lupus and the symptoms at the time justified that conclusion but when we moved away from Bowen to Hervey Bay those symptoms slowly receded, making that diagnoses doubtful, adding weight to my suspicion.

We had to give up the home in Hervey Bay due to a change in aircraft management at the local airport. Our country home turned into a playground for low flying pilots. We fought, we lost, gave up our efforts and moved on but even

after years gone by, it seems we still get harassed by some of the aviation mob as evidenced by the unwanted emails from various aviation operations that we get "subscribed" to and other less tangible but more concerning attention. Psychopathic behaviour?

The attacks have varied in response to my efforts at security. Some people have wondered why the cameras and video system in the final days before launch of the boat, or the lights at night outside the tent where the boat was. It kept the chemicals from being applied inside the tent and nearer to it. But security is far easier to get around than it is to put in place perfectly and it was a constant distraction when I was already keeping a near impossible workload with the boat and paper.

I hope some dear friends better understand now why I have been out of touch and unresponsive much of the time. And not just me. Besides carrying much more responsibility with the paper, before launch Kay was looking after me as best she could. Meals, clothes and the rest while I left the place every afternoon to find a safe refuge.

I foolishly thought that after the launch the attacks would cease. But as it turned out, on the boat I couldn't hide, I was a sitting duck, especially before I had a chance to install windows. Some small sound at night from forward, the sudden pain and then the blast of a runabout racing away, laughter. Sneaking in the dark throwing poison. The towards weapon of choice.

With windows mounted and security cameras on board, that kind of attack stopped. The methods used lately have been to apply the toxin to the nearest shoreline upwind from where the boat is moored and if the boat is under way, to try to get a boat, generally a small high powered runabout, in front of my path to lay a coating of the chemical in the water. The chemical floats without trace like an oil leaves. The boat's hulls pick up the floating liquid and is then contaminated for a period of time depending on how much seas I am motoring into-hours or weeks. Vigorous scrubbing down of the boat can remove much of the toxin and I have done that quite a few times. If the more common toxin, (there may now be more than one variety) is applied directly on the boat it is clear-ish until exposed to light for some time, a day or longer, then it turns to a dark brownish, spilled

coffee-ish stain. I believe the method used on the near fatal attack was a vapour or gas. I don't know exactly how it is created but there have been several occasions where I have been attacked with it in a way that suggests an aerosol of some kind. But never as strong as the one described in the beginning of this article.

Well, maybe one other time. I was working on the nets out in the yard away from the tent with Peter Kerr a few days before launch when I got hit very hard. It disabled me for a time but I recovered and managed to continue after a fashion. Fortunately, I wore a 3M mask whenever I was near the property. That probably made the difference.

An observation from Peter Kerr: *"Bob seemed very distressed at the time and had to sit down before he fell over. Lasted 1/2 hour or more and slowly got better as I was leaving."*

Quite simply what I'm revealing is that my life is in danger. These attacks, if continued, would destroy who I am by attacking my mind and body.

To be secure from poisonous attack, I've had to live in relative isolation. This slows recovery as well as another cause of personal pain. I need my family, my friends and my soul-mate now more than ever for support. The ones who know me and can help me find my way back.

The next paper marks a decade of our service to the community. Ten years of standing up for an idea. Ten years of celebrating the wonderful community we are a part of and demonstrating the importance of not accepting wrong when we see it. We could use some help now..

Other sets of eyes are welcome. Experts in chemistry would be very helpful. What skills or information is out there that could assist in our safety and production of the paper? Suggestions from the community are welcome.

And do be prepared for attacks against us in web forums or other media for exposing this. The web and letters to editors sections are littered with operatives from Australian government and industry, often appearing under multiple names to push an idea. There is even a name for this in the IT business, "astroturfing". An artificial attempt to appear as a grass roots movement.

continued next page ...

continued from page 5

Friends have told me that I shouldn't tell this story because it is vulnerable to all that and may not be believed . Maybe not by some but I am at the point where I have nothing to lose.

From TCP # 57: *Australian Security Intelligence Service (ASIO) asking for powers to tap phones and monitor internet of citizens and to commit crimes without being charged...*

It happens all the time when governments begin to fear their own citizens or when powerful interests begin to control governments.

It happened in Australia before, at least once. In 1978 3 people were killed and another 11 injured when a bomb went off outside the Sydney Hilton Hotel. From the Wikipedia report of the incident: "*Barry Hall QC, counsel for Griffiths, argued that ASIO may well have planted the bomb in order to justify their existence.*" "*In 1991 and 1995 the NSW Parliament unanimously called for a joint State-Federal inquiry into the bombing to examine whether there had been an official conspiracy. However, the Federal government vetoed any inquiry, and none has been held.*"

A picture is painted of a government agency in league with professional criminals to pin a crime they committed on unsympathetic but unrelated persons that eventually failed and victims were pardoned. but the government has been successful in preventing investigation that might reveal the facts.

Our government seems to have the position that persons lives are less important than the governments continued power to retain secrecy. I dispute that priority.

This was the hardest piece I have ever written and the most important. A month ago it would have been impossible due to the daily exposures of toxin. It is only because I have been able to "clean up" a bit that I have been able to do this, hopefully well enough.

WHO & WHY?

I have important leads to some individuals and a group involved.

From Wikipedia: "*Psychopathy is a personality disorder that has been variously characterized by shallow emotions, coldheartedness, egocentricity, superficial charm, manipulateness, irresponsibility, impulsivity, criminality, antisocial behaviour, a lack of remorse, and a parasitic lifestyle.*"

TCP has taken strong positions against those in industry and government when the facts justified it. There have been times when the transgressions have been so over the top, mocking the groups involved was irresistible, and considering the above quotes, perhaps dangerous.

I speculate that fate handed those involved a hand so tempting they couldn't resist. All they needed was a handful of desperate bludgers (*parasitic lifestyle*) that stood to benefit from the discretionary approach to benefits, entitlements, approvals and permissions. Feed them technical information, medical records perhaps, surveillance, a touch of 'hands on' here and there and stand back ready to deny any involvement or that a crime had been committed at all.

Why does this continue? Because we haven't stopped publishing?

That is not going to happen. Besides the issue of self respect, I'm not going to hand over my best defensive weapon on the vague notion of a quid pro quo and knowing the nature of the groups involved, it wouldn't stop them anyway. Even if this is not believed now, once it is out there it is out there for good. Always hanging over the heads of those involved no matter what happens to me.

FINAL NOTE: There could be updates on this report on the TCP website.
Bob



LETTERS

Hi Bob and Kay,

Just a quick note to thank you for your article on rust. Your comments on steel boat design are right on.

About 5 years ago we purchased a well constructed (really) polish boat here in Thailand. Our surveyor was fairly good and didn't over rate the boat and he only missed a few items. The main misses were related to your comments on how essential it is on a steel boat to have ready access to the bilge. We had an added on SS holding tank and, worse a fibreglass box in the anchor locker and a couple of covers over what I would describe as the sumps of our fore and aft bilges. Nothing like your project but worrisome enough. The sumps BTW were filled with salt water despite having been "sealed" over.

I have a question. I wonder how the longevity of POR15 and your paint system is working out. We are trying a few experiments with needle scaling and paint. One is to try the American Rustoleum brand for one part spot treatment. The other is Jotomastic 87 Aluminum (epoxy) with Polyurethane top coat which we have repainted the bilges with. I may lug along a Canadian brand of rust paint called Tremclad that I have used for years but not in a marine application.

Again I find your comments about preparation spot on. There is no such thing as corrosion free steel or iron - the second it is exposed to air it oxidizes but one has to get down to a tight oxide and that means needle scaling or sandblasting but there is another factor I recently learned about. I refer to most of these things as theories since as an engineer and student of science but experience in the real world I've become much less certain about, well everything.

In any event we had some blisters along our inside toe rail repaired about 2 years ago. There are a few more mild blisters forming on the hull above the waterline that our painter showed me these are developing under an apparently sealed 10 year old paint job.

I got curious about these re-occurring blisters so I contacted Jotun. Jotun indicated these are likely caused by salt contamination. After watching our

painters working on a few of the topside hull blisters I quickly moved salt contamination to the leading hypothesis. .

Anyway my work exposed me to some of the idiosyncrasies of polymers like paint. They are quite permeable to water molecules, to add to your "paint right over rust" debunking you can add barrier coats - they just can't be water impermeable if they are polymers . If there is a tiny grain of salt embedded in the paint then ultimately water will form around it by osmosis. Moral of the story is soap and fresh water are your friends. In our case our painters were grinding straight through a light salt crust on the paint to the steel blister then applying primer. I called a halt and requested a soap and water scrub and rinse!

TBD if this solves our problems. These experiments take a couple of years.

Ian Jefferson, Mooncharka

Hi Ian,

(*Ian attached a document from Jotun that was interesting support for their salt contamination theory. I would add to that. As far as a current report on our paint work, that boat is long sold.*)

I did use Por15 with success especially for smaller jobs. For our big job in the bilges, we used Altex pre-prime 167. It's big virtue was in it's low viscosity and it is pure epoxy solids, the least permeable paint I know of. The idea was to deny any contaminant of oxygen atmosphere by encapsulating the rough surface or stray debris, like a salt crystal. Por15 is also a low viscosity paint but not as 'wet' as the Altex. It does dry extremely hard though. Jotomastic was one of the paints we used in the bilge but never directly over weathered steel. I have some concern for the future of that work on your boat. Always read the technical data sheet. I believe they specify a fresh blasted surface if painted on steel.

On your toe rail recurrence, my first guess would be insufficient prep on the first go but in any case, a steel boat is an ongoing maintenance project no matter what. Perfection is impossible.

It is always rewarding to know readers get value from the knowledge sharing on the TCP website.

**Cheers,
Bob**

A response from TCP on letters about Airlie Beach boats "on the rocks"

On the one hand TCP represents a forum to discuss but on the other hand, TCP is not to be an instrument of unnecessary conflict within the community. There has been some conflict over the loss of boats and how various individuals acted in the aftermath.

So this is to acknowledge and address the issues as best I can without involving the individuals. So heap your abuse on me, I'm getting used to it.

First off there was a charge that at least two boats were ordered off a marina section (that was under construction) that had sought shelter after the storm but in still harsh conditions. The claim was that one vessel had lost it's ground tackle and the other was towed in with an injured skipper. Lack of time precluded verifying these claims for accuracy so they are dealt with here in the theoretical.

IF those charges are true then TCP condemns those actions full stop. If there are arguments of proper seamanship to be made then make them later but in no circumstance is it justified to further endanger a craft and crew.

There are charges that in spite of repeated hammerings by storms over the last two years and sufficient warning from weather forecasts, local yachties have not learned the lesson to properly protect their boats and themselves, instead having an attitude of entitlement, others to assist them. It's

worth noting now that though the storm in Airlie Beach was very harsh, it wasn't historically monumental such as the Bundaberg flood.

The numbers speak for themselves. It would be unfair to paint every boat damaged or lost on bad seamanship. There are many stories but there are too many loses.

Why Airlie Beach? Are Airlie Beach sailors less competent or seaworthy than sailors from other places? Probably not, so lets look at environmental factors that may affect mindset. What makes Airlie Beach different than other places?

Geography. While Airlie Beach is a good anchorage in southerly or light northerlies, a boat has to navigate some distance to find better shelter. Nara Inlet for example. There are better shelters but Nara is known and rather direct. I suspect also the fear of isolation. The nearness of anchoring off Airlie Beach to the 'safety' of town versus an island anchorage.

Adversarial relationship with the cruising fleet and the local marina. The reputation is one of high cost and unfriendliness. For years the staff of the marina was famous for hostility. Mention "The Witches" still and a lot of coastal cruisers will instantly assume the connection to Airlie Beach.

continued on letters page 9...

Contributors

Susan Bett, MY *Sallywag*
 Stuart Buchanan, SY *Pluto*
 Bob Fenney, SY *Elcho*
 Kirsten Flam, SC *Scrappy*
 Jason Gard, ST *Spirit*
 Peter Holm, SY *Marriah*
 John Jordan
 Alan Lucas, SY *Soleares*
 Allan McCarragher, SY *Zenataos*
 Phil Watson, SC *Aquavista*

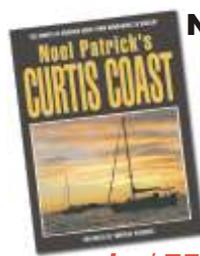


and even more in the E-TCP
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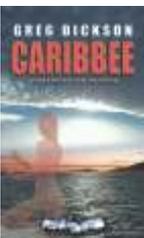
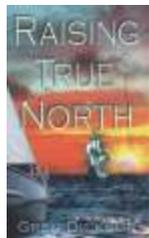
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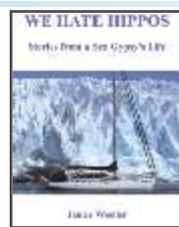


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CYCLONE OSWALD - EX CYCLONE OSWALD - HISTORICAL WEATHER EVENT - Whatever you want to call it, was (and still is) the 2013 east coast Australia disaster

The last two years were awful when the cyclone/storm seasons wrecked boats with winds and floods. This year, between January 17th and January 30th words like "horrid", "shattered", "unbelievable" have been used to describe a storm like no other. There was no shortage of pictures, stories and letters sent to TCP in 2010, 11 & 12, this year was the same. Many we have spoken to have expressed sadness and helplessness. I believe the victims would be heartbroken to see their damaged (or sunk) boat on the cover of TCP! So they won't be there. Just pictures of Kirsten and Jason, two very special boaties.

I went online to begin a "timeline" of this event and found that the best reporting was on Wikipedia. I began to write in my words but realised it would take so many pages to cover each place that was effected along with all the facts, so I will instead just give you the link:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_Eastern_Australia_floods

I was rivetted to the news online and on TV for days, wondering, hoping it would end, but every day for over 2 weeks came the stories and photos. Bob Fenney and Alan McCarragher wrote of the disaster in Airlie Beach before Oswald headed south. Many now know what happened in Bundaberg and surrounding areas. We know of several that lost their boat and their homes flooded. They are now trying to come to grips and move on, as we all do. We were lucky with *Scrappy*, as Bob put her/him safe at Scarborough Marina a few days before all hell broke loose. See inside for daughter Kirsten's story of her stay on *Scrappy* during the storm.

A few months ago we contemplated bringing *Scrappy* to Maryborough Slipway, but decided to stay closer to where rigging/sails/deck fittings are getting done. The slipway suffered the force of the raging Mary River and many boats were tossed off their trailers landing on their sides and some on top of other boats. Terry, who was just able to drag his boat out of the shed where he is building it, told me the sound of the raging river was frightening. He left for his life was at risk.

I stopped in February 9th and had a chat with Terry and Belinda. Belinda of *Tradewind* was responsible for keeping Bob Burgess's *B52* from a horrible fate with a last minute decision to add a rope to a huge gum tree and *B52*. In doing this *B52* rose up to the top of the shed (see picture) it was in front of then back down onto the trailer in the exact place, "like a duck" as Terry said. One happy ending.

So there will be happy stories but mostly tears for all who have suffered and are still suffering. It's a good time to lend a helping hand to those who need it and an open ear to hear their stories. A time of reflection, learning, putting one foot in front of the other, just carry on, waiting for the days to heal and get a bit better.

Kay

PS: It is now the first days of March. The roads are closed around me and the rivers are flooding towns. That's why this paper is a bit late.

MESSY PEOPLE

In TCP 58 Bob & I wrote openly and honestly about our situation with Bob's chemical illness (see previous pages) and the hardships of the launching of *Scrappy*. We have received several letters of congratulations and also of concern for us and we thank all of you. Some told us we were very brave to tell this story, as it wasn't a happy one. Messy.

Many just cannot comprehend the difficult lifestyle we have been in. No big launching party for us. Just the struggle of getting *Scrappy* ready for launch date, controlled by tides, boat movers schedule and the looming possibility of getting flooded in again. After *Scrappy's* launching there were worries mixed with illness and injuries combined with bits of happiness of *Scrappy's* success.

The phrase "messy people" came to mind during this time. I was frustrated when asked the question, "How are you doing?" You are supposed to reply by saying you're are happy, healthy and successful - with a smile. Nobody really wants to hear how tired, sick, depressed, even scared you are. Too messy. So you take a deep breath, hold back the tears and just reply with something like, "Just fine, how are you?" Then when asked to lunch or a dinner party you tell them you are just "too busy"... Next there is usually an uncomfortable silence to deal with. Messy. Better to just stay a bit of a recluse and get on with the endless tasks to do every day and hope that soon our lives will enable us to be how we used to be. Not so messy.

Kay



LETTERS

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PRINCESSES

Hi TCP,

Going through my TCP58 reading the article on Princesses aboard.....Vicki and I were returning from Middle Percy in Sept this year, and on the way south we overheard a vessel talking to VMR somewhere, requesting tide times for the 1770 bar.

Our ears perked up. The 1770 bar can be a bit ruthless, but as it was a SE breeze, should have been OK, if crossed at the right time. We were wondering "why doesn't this chap just check his tide tables?" which is exactly what the VMR person suggested they do.

They said they wanted "local" information, as their 40-odd foot French Mono (you know the breed starts with 'B') drew 2.2 meters, and they wanted to be sure to cross at the right time. Our eyebrows went up! 2.2 meters? Over 1770 bar! And once inside, where do you put it?

So we listened to the VMR person explaining the tide times and over-run, etc.

A few hours later, the same Princess is back on the radio, asking where he should park his yacht? VMR replied to the effect they could not advise where to put it, and that "checking your chart might help". Brilliant why hadn't I thought of that!

An hour later, and our Princess is telling VMR that he can't seem to find enough depth, and is heading back out to sea, and how long should it take him to get to Bundaberg?

So here we have a 'presumably' wealthy chap, in a largish boat, who can't calculate tide times, can't read a chart, can't do speed/time/dist calcs! If that isn't "Princess" material.....

Tony, SC Sunbird

PESTICIDE POISIONING

Hi Bob,

Just a brief note from one of your long term keen readers to say Happy New Years to both you and Kay and thank you again for the E-TCP's that you send!! Always a pillar of saneness in this increasingly (deliberately) confused world!

Also, **CONGRATULATIONS** for *Scrappy's* launching! WOOHOO!!! It must be so satisfying and a relief and rewarding!?! Yes of course I understand that there is still much to do, but that's ok!

I read with what I call a wide reaching sadness mixed with deep seated anger of your illness.

I say this because it is sad news to hear this has/is happening to you, and anger because I am convinced (with an abundance of evidence from across the world now) that the deliberate, well understood and denied poisoning to us all, both indirectly and directly, by big businesses power/powerful egocentric financial interests together with their consenting, compliant and impotent government and political allies really are poisoning us all along with almost the entire environment.

I could be wrong but anecdotally, (I am a Medic) with just one observational parameter, over the past several years I have noticed what seems to be an increasing number of people both young and older (but more particularly the younger) to experience fine peripheral tremors, that is tremors to their hands in the absence of other obvious medical problems. And of course there is an exponential increase of people experiencing a range of other signs and symptoms under the broad titles of "allergies" and "sensitivities" and "unknown causes" !!!

God, if only the worldwide media could break the trance of insatiable, egocentric money making at all costs that they are in, they could literally turn this worlds future and direction around 180 degrees.

I really hope that you find ways to improve your own environment which will no doubt improve your health.

On a boat far from any industry or it's effects environmentally where you could eat food grown naturally free from Industries synthetic adulteration, *AS IT SHOULD FREAKIN' BE*, would likely be a good start. Good thing you now have one of those nifty transporters!

Kind Regards,
Bruce,
SY Mistress of Freedom

Hi Bob and Kay,

Congratulations on the boat pre-launch. Sorry to hear about your problems with pesticides. I am sure you will be inundated with letters about this sinister subject. May I add my voice to the throngs.

I grew up with chemicals. My father worked as a 'Cane pest and disease control manager' in the 60ies. His work ute in which we would often be

given a lift to school, was always liberally laced with white powder. Dieldrum, 2.4.D and 245T all used as defoliants in Vietnam and in the trials being run with CSIRO here in Australia. Photos of him and my uncle standing with tall markers for the crop dusting trials on defoliating the sugarcane still exist to this day. His clothes all came home and were washed with ours.

In later years I worked in picking fruit and vegetables and have had to run out of a row to make room for the sprayer. We lived at Apple Tree Creek where all the spray drift from the surrounding farms ended up in our rain water tanks. We had no town water supply.

Looking back I can see a pattern emerging. The more chemicals I had in my system the more of a mess I became. In my head there was a feeling of silent static. My mood swings were not gentle. My life unravelled. I ended up in a Psych hospital unable to stop crying. Sure I had issue but it does not help ones state of mind to be coping with severe chemical poisoning as well as facing a grisly childhood. I used to see bugs in the tomatoes with their legs spasming, in death throws and think, 'Gee one dose and he's gone. How many doses have I had in my time.'

Even when I moved onto the boat in the Burnett River I always became sick when I returned to the boat.

All the sprays from farming in the area drains into the waterways. At the time large numbers of fish were dying of some mysterious ailment. Measures were introduced to reduce the deaths. It was only after I moved *Shomi* to the town of 1770 or Round Hill Head (on the chart) did I collapse for a time to see myself slowly recover from the effects of long term poisoning.

I now live in rainforest without another house to see. Occasionally we get out on the water and right away from the land where the salt air heals.

I have also been introduced to detoxing with raw food. I've taken to living on freshly squeezed veggie and fruit juices, sprouted almonds and sunflower seeds to make a milk instead of cows milk which is loaded with chemicals with the feed they grow.

So, a big smoothie at breaky with soaked almonds and sunflower seeds, banana, mango or strawberries, farm egg and honey. And the big one. Green smoothies. Organic apple juice a banana and bag of spinach or similar greens. Blend and drink. Green tea is another powerful antioxidant.

Refrain from sugar, processed food, dairy, alcohol and red meat for a while. It gives your liver a rest. Have seafood, nuts/seeds, legumes and all the fresh food you can get your hands on, especially without spray.

I wish you luck on your quest to address the issues of all these chemicals that end up from mining, farming, etc. to reef with us and the flora and fauna in between.

Vicki J,
SY Devils 3

REMOVING STICKY STUFF

To TCP,

'Fellow Travellers' may benefit from a discovery or maybe it's already common knowledge. I'm currently re-fitting our Simpson cat and along the way have made some startling, and some quite mind boggling aspects of vessel construction.

One involves the removal of the 'sticky' invariably left behind when removing or endeavouring to remove various tapes and silastic style products from window frames etc. Carburettor cleaner! A simple spray and wipe and most of its gone. Sometimes a second application, but invariably one application will suffice. A word of caution - do not use it near polycarbonate sheet, 'Lexan' etc. and do not use in confined spaces. Other than that, a great time saver. Another benefit is with the continuing demise of carburetted vehicles, it can usually be found in the discount bin at your local auto parts shop.

Cheers,
Doug McPhan, SC Knee Deep

Hi Doug,

On the carb cleaner thing. yeah good idea. I hadn't thought of that application but a good note to file in the brain somewhere, bound to be needed some time. I used carb cleaner on my bare hulls in early construction. The inline sander I was using used to get the occasional drop of oil on the work and it had to be cleaned off perfectly. Carb cleaner did it. I later converted the internal lube on the sander to grease which ended the problem but it did illustrate how effective and various it's uses can be.

Cheers,
Bob

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LETTERS

VMR TO THE RESCUE

After reading SC *Hybreasails* article by Anne Wilson in TPC 58, "VMR To the Rescue Why it pays to log on", I would like to contribute my experiences regarding this valuable organisation.

Back in 2007 when I was a live a board yachtie on a 9-metre catamaran, *Dream Weaver* I paid an annual fee believing it to be a small price to pay for piece of mind should we ever need to be towed back to shore or worse still "rescued".

As a solo sailor (after the death of my husband in 2009), I became very interested and involved in operations in and around the islands with VMR Whitsundays. Mostly (but not always) the incidents occurred in the very dead of night and in the most appalling conditions (lighting and thunder associated with very heavy rain and moderate to high seas). Irrikanji stings, a propeller facial accident, man overboard, electrical, battery problems or running out of fuel were to name just a few. I gained first hand experience of how important VMR operations were to the growing maritime population of the Whitsundays in QLD.

After moving to Sydney and selling my vessel in 2011, I again renewed my relationship with VMR. Membership in NSW is free but to become involved as a crew member on a rescue vessel or in the radio room requires one to have a boat licence, first aid certificate, radio licence, and elements of ship board safety (every five years).

VMR is a RTO (registered training organisation) and the commitment to ensure their members provide the very best professional service is paramount to the operations of their service. After 4 months of intense training I finally make a team. Coupled with my already boat license and first aid certificate, I also gained a radio licence and renew Elements of Shipboard Safety.

Once again I am gaining first hand experience on the important role VMR plays in the community. I am on a night shift 7pm-2.30pm on the 31/12/2012 at South head tower NSW (Port Jackson) overlooking Sydney Harbour and the heads. There are approx 10 marine vessels from various units patrolling all areas in and around the Sydney Harbour Bridge waiting for the midnight fireworks. The night is slow to begin with. VMR Sydney at Terry Hills fields all the calls coming in from other vessels asking for assistance with a small number of parties (drunk) who are causing a disturbance on their vessels in the water. Every one is there for the same reason. It is one of the best seats in the house to watch the fireworks in which to bring in the New Year.

A minute to one after midnight the scene reminds me of fire flies flying on the water as I watch starboard lights of hundreds of vessels leaving the area, heading back to their respective mooring, marinas etc. It is an awesome sight but the phones start to

go ballistic as the radio room becomes swamped with distress calls from many vessels unable to leave due to battery, electrical and other problems. The water police are called to help out when the VMR vessels are tied up. Rescues continue during the night and into the late morning.

With regard to Peter Kerr's *MV Makin Tracks* letter in TPC 58 "New VHF Qualifications for recreational Boaters", I believe these reviews are absolutely necessary. I also witnessed first hand VHF Channel 16 being used for incessant chatter: "This is Bob, This is Bob (obviously very drunk) Happy New Year etc", who continued to use the distress channel after repeatedly being asked to keep the channel clear for distress calls. A little bit of education goes a long way and if new and existing boaties become familiar with "radio etiquette" then it makes the job for VMR bases easier.

Over the New Year break I was fortunate to experience some R and R on a friends vessel (9 metre Catamaran, *Athena*) in the beautiful waters of Pittwater in NSW. While heading towards Cottage Point we were requested to stop by the water police for a routine safety inspection. Because I was the person behind the wheel I was routinely breathalysed and had my radio and boat licence inspected. The owner was also requested to show evidence of a current registration licence and 2 life jackets. It's was obvious it was a New Year blitz on all vessels in the area because as soon as we were given the all clear they bolt over to the next vessel they see heading their way.

I believe in time we can expect to see more of these routine procedures on the water and I for one embrace the idea. Remember your five P's (Prior Planning Prevents P...ss Poor Performance).

**Happy boating everybody,
Carmen Walker**

DEAD FISH IN THE FITZROY RIVER

Hi Bob and Kay,

As the flood waters dropped we tweaked our lines laid out beforehand and as soon as she touched bottom (9pm) we propped up the outriggers with timber and clamps. All that remained was ankle deep mud, and dead fish everywhere. It looked as if every fish in the river came ashore trying to breath that afternoon. They were going belly up then but it seems none survived. An old gent of 70 lived his whole life in Rocky and has seem many floods but never once the dead fish. We fear it is the mines upstream have poisoned the water here.

Heaven help us all. Where do we go to get away from the toxic waste of industry?

**Regards,
Vicki J**

Hi Vicki,

I noted with disgust the last flood that then premier, Anna Bligh gave the mines "permission" (like they needed it) to discharge their toxic waste into rivers during floods. I've voiced concern about Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) for years as an environmental time bomb (see the TCP web site) and have been disappointed that so-called greens haven't lifted a finger in protest.

Bob

NEW VHF QUALIFICATIONS FOR RECREATIONAL BOATERS???

Dear Bob, Kay and TCP readers,

I read with astonishment the letter written by Peter Kerr, *MV Makin Tracks* (TCP #58 Jan-Feb 2013) re 'New VHF Qualifications for Recreational Boaters'. I have used VHF and UHF radios all my working life without being the holder of any recognised certification, might I add quite lawfully, so prior to commencing a water based lifestyle I and no doubt hundreds of other boaties grasped with enthusiasm the opportunity to complete the Marine Radio Operator's Certificate of Proficiency (MROCP) at a substantial financial cost in 2009.

Considering the subject in hand, the proficient use of VHF radio (which isn't rocket science by the way), I found this course quite informative and at times excessive on required knowledge. A course that certainly gave the participants a more than competent level of knowledge required to operate marine radios.

Now Peter tells us that the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is to instigate a re-qualification by current holders of MROCP. Great news, another Government department wasting taxpayers money on unnecessary duplication of current license holders for what possible good?

It's no wonder that this country is becoming a bureaucratic nightmare for all who live here and a treasure chest for government coffers when goal posts are shifted for no logical reason.

In closing I would like to ask one question and make one statement: Firstly, just how much has changed with regard to radio use in the past four years and lastly, that this is just another blatant money grab by a Government Authority to supplement their operating costs.

**Regards,
Sam Franke, SV Drummer**

AIRLIE BEACH "ON THE ROCKS" CONTINUES from page 7

As far as cost? Several years ago a boat that had sailed from North America had confided that the most expensive marina they had visited was Abel Point. Lately the marina operation has made berths available on a short term basis for boats seeking shelter but TCP still gets letters complaining of an officious and unfriendly attitude. Fair or not the reputation persists and appears to form a reciprocal hostility from cruisers and a justification for "getting away with what you can, they deserve it". A vicious circle. The result is a marina with berths empty and boats left on vulnerable moorings. It seems the marketing strategy does not include the live aboard fleet and that is the heart of the issue.

Mackay Marina was made famous a few years ago by throwing open a part of the marina under construction when conditions outside were rough and regular berths were in short supply. NO CHARGE! This generosity from the management (Peter Hansen) garnered a mountain of good will.

I will also note that Abel Point Marina was in liquidation and Mackay Marina is not. Time will tell if the new owner adopts a marketing strategy that includes the cruising community.

And one more thing. Port Binnli, the developers of Mackay Marina, proposed a marina in an area of Shute Harbour well suited to that development (far from virgin shoreline) and was willing to give up the property that may have been sensitive environmentally. That being on the inland side of the road. This was a valuable concession. This proposal aroused such a backlash from the local greens that the delay and deteriorating world economic situation caused the project to be put on the back burner. Shortly after, the Muddy Bay development proceeded with a massive destruction of mangroves and habitat without a word of protest that I am aware of. That project, owned by the same company as Abel Point marina appears to be tailored to charter and high cost residential units.

Could it be that the cruising community is an undervalued market? Could it be that the cruising community hasn't shown the support it should for the businesses that do respect them as a market?

There is plenty of blame to go around. What is needed now is conciliation. Not everyone can afford the local marinas and not everyone was practising best seamanship. What is done is done. It's time to learn from the experience. Boating should belong to everyone.

Bob



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Reflections

Beached

By Alan Lucas, SY Soleares

One of my boat deliveries of the 1980s was interesting more for its failure than its success. I was delivering a large motorised barge to a maintenance facility straight into the teeth of a North Queensland trade wind. My presence was only required for my coastal ticket, the permanent skipper having only a harbour ticket. He knew more about barging than I would ever know, but that's how it works in the commercial maritime world and I wasn't complaining. However, I was very glad to have the permanent skipper and his crew aboard when things went pear-shaped just hours after leaving port.

Making a mere three knots into a twenty-five knot sou'easter, it was with some alarm to have the steering suddenly fail after which the barge immediately turned around and went lickety-split for the nearest beach, her speed tripling with the wind astern. And even going hard astern with both engines merely slowed her down by a couple of knots. With a surf-beach looming to leeward the situation didn't look too rosy.

The true skipper - not me - went aft to find the fault, which he instinctively knew was loss of hydraulic oil. I stayed in the wheelhouse desperately trying to turn her around with the engines, but such was her extreme windage that she flatly refused to respond. I called for an anchor to be dropped only to find she didn't have one and by the time the skipper had replaced the blown oil pressure line with a garden hose we were just outside the first line of breakers. But the garden hose held and with just minutes to spare we regained steerageway and brought her into the wind assisted by a great screaming of engines.

Back in port, the skipper was relatively unconcerned about the incident because he knew that a shallow draft, flat-bottomed barge will typically run through a breaking surf to hit the beach beyond the waves' damaging scend. There it sits quite comfortably with a minimum of thumping. Not discussed was the fact that, regardless of hull shape, any vessel stranded on a beach is quickly surrounded by a build-up of sand that makes salvage almost impossible.

The following looks at a few beachings along South Queensland's coast all of which proved impossible to salvage.

Five years after the northern district of the Colony of New South Wales became the State of Queensland, the 414-ton wooden barque *Panama*, owned by a New York syndicate of merchants, struck the northeast corner of Fraser Island on 18 March 1864. All persons except an unfortunate youth landed safely on the beach with one of the boats setting out to seek help. Meanwhile, hostile Aborigines approached the remaining crew members on the beach, a complication that encouraged them to take off in the second boat. They eventually met up with the first boat and all reached safety - possibly in Maryborough.

Long before Brisbane's South Coast became known as the Gold Coast, the 950-ton iron barque *Scottish Prince* missed stays and ran aground on the Southport Bar in four metres of water, 3 February 1887. Built in Aberdeen, Scotland nine years earlier, she broke up over the next week scattering sewing machines, corn flour, beer, rum and whisky along the beach. Rediscovering her remains in 1954, a group of divers, including well-known Ben Cropp, found hundreds more empty and full bottles plus her moneybox in which was found a mass of soggy notes but no coins.

A few years later, yet another barque, the wooden *Gerd Heyes* of 850 tons, went ashore on Moreton Island's east coast on 16 July 1889 while sailing for Samoa to load copra for Europe. Built in 1811, she was an old ship owned by A. Schiff of Elsflath, Germany, all members of her crew reached the beach safely but were not found for several days. Eventually an officer of the South Passage Telegraph Station found them whilst searching for a break in the telegraph line.

In 1894 a well remembered beaching happened to another steel barque, the 1651-ton *Cambus Wallace*, when she stranded on South Stradbroke Island near today's Jumpin Pin Bar, 3 September 1894. Built in Glasgow for owner R. Russell & Company just a few months before, she was on her maiden voyage when she grounded, after which the captain was found culpable and lost his license for two years while the second mate lost his for six months. All but six of the crew survived.

The iron steamship *Dickey* was destined to become a Caloundra landmark for many decades and a classic case of an unsalvageable beaching after she left Rockhampton on 1 February 1893 bound for



Illustrated from a press release of the time, *Cherry Venture* proved impossible to salvage despite being in good order after beaching south of Double Island Point.

Brisbane. Built in 1883 and owned by J. Brydon & W. Jones, she ran into a severe gale just north of Moreton Bay and couldn't weather the reef off Caloundra Head. To avoid disaster, Captain John Summers Beattie acted quickly and drove her onto the beach and by so doing he managed to save all aboard. Unfortunately, the very weather that put her there rapidly built up a sandbar around her bilges that trapped her on the beach forever.

S. S. *Dickey* was a well-known coastal steamer of 144 net tons, 30-metres long with a beam of six metres and a draft of five metres. On her last trip she was in ballast with water and sand.

The steel steamer *Marloo* of 2628 tons, built in Newcastle, England, 1891 and owned by Adelaide Steamship Company, struck a submerged object off Sandy Cape, Fraser Island, on the morning of 27 September 1914. The skipper beached her three miles north of Waddy Point where her 38 passengers and luggage were boated out to S.S. *Tasman* standing by offshore and taken to Pinkenba, Brisbane. Most of her cargo was salvaged and her brass was dynamited off her hull.

South of Double Island Point, about 40 miles north of Mooloolaba, the forty year-old 402-ton Norwegian-built steamer *Natone* was intentionally driven ashore on 24 January 1959. In high wind and sea after her seams started, she leaked so badly that there was no option but to beach her. The crew of eighteen, many of them Papuans, surfed ashore on hatch covers and other wreckage. *Natone* had an interesting life, the

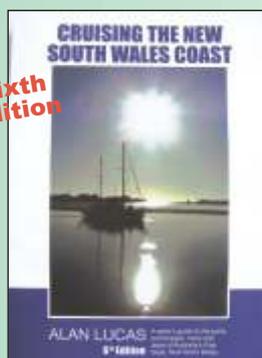
Australian Government buying her in 1939 for work in the Antarctic and renaming her *Wyatt Earp* before transferring her to the Royal Australian Navy where she was again renamed *Wongala*. She left the navy in 1947 and was purchased by the Anglo Shipping Company and named *Natone*.

The best-known wreck on Queensland's south coast - from the recreational sailor's point of view - is the *Cherry Venture*, her rusty skeleton still visible from a couple of miles offshore and often surrounded by 4-wheel drives, south of Double Island Point. A steel steamship of 1609 tons, she was built in 1945 and owned by the Singaporean company, Sea Tankers Shipping Co: At the time she was named *Timur Venture*.

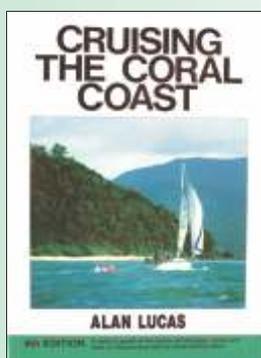
Later renamed *Cherry Venture* she was blown ashore during an unseasonable cyclone in July 1973, the salvage rights being bought by Peter Vagellas, then owner of South Molle Island Resort. In 1974 he made a valiant effort to refloat her, including dredging a basin in which she floated but the speed with which nature closed the dredged channel connecting the basin with the sea defied their best efforts.

Cherry Venture was a classic example of a vessel stranding on a sandy beach in the wildest of weather and surviving virtually unscathed. Sadly, she also proved the impossibility of successful salvage on a weather shore. Had we not turned that barge around back in the 1980s, I have no doubt she would still be there, her rusty skeleton mute testimony to the rapidity with which sand will entrap a ship forever.

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TCP's Forum

DIGITAL SELECTIVE CALLING

It's over ten years since the Digital Selective Calling (DSC) system was made compulsory for commercial vessels. In that period:

1. Techniques for effectively using the DSC feature in modern HF//SSB radios have been refined, corrected and radio operation/ programming has been upgraded/corrected. All this development work has been done through the compulsory use of DSC with commercial vessels. Yacht owners can now tap into an effective working system.
2. GMDSS compelled big ships to install INMARSAT equipment and that led to an immediate drop in their HF/SSB traffic; especially the telephone interconnect traffic that provided the money to operate many Coast Stations around the world. In our area, all of Australia's Coast Stations closed, and Singapore Radio also closed.
3. But that development also meant a massive drop in high power ship transmissions hogging the HF/SSB marine radio spectrum. HF/SSB radio frequencies became available for the little - low-powered - people to use again.
4. Advances in digital technology over HF/SSB created the opportunity for yachts and other small-craft to have email on board, including access to far more sophisticated and accurate forms of weather information - eg GRIB weather charts and SPOT forecasts. The combination of

the Pactor Controller and SailMail stepped in to take the place of broadcast forecasts, weather fax and other services lost to small-craft when many Coast Stations and related services closed. The Pactor Controller and not-for-profit SailMail Association - in combination with development of internet services - created far more communication options and services accessible on-board for a low-cost, than were available before GMDSS freed up the HF/SSB air-waves for the little people to use.

5. Because the DSC system has achieved wide - compulsory - adoption by commercial vessels, the DSC based marine Distress network is now very substantial. And most MRCCs advise they only maintain a watch for DSC calls; no longer voice calls. Yacht owners can tap into this established network easily - and still have all the low-cost advantages of the Pactor/SailMail combination - just by fitting DSC equipped HF/SSB radios.

6. Many yacht owners were ready to give up on HF/SSB because - without DSC - it no longer gave access to MRCCs in many places. And because commercial vessels shifted to monitoring only for DSC calls 24/7 - not voice Distress calls - it was no longer possible to make a MAYDAY or PAN-PAN call and get a response from a fishing trawler or big ship. But all these previous advantages of HF/SSB are still available - plus a lot of new benefits/services/advantages - by fitting a HF/SSB radio with DSC. And it works a lot more

reliably for Distress functions, because other vessel crews no longer turn down the volume of their HF/SSB radios - which they were supposed to be monitoring for voice distress calls - because the radio speaker is already muted and the radio does the work of monitoring for Distress (DSC) calls; not the crew.

7. The latest YA Special Regulations - "for racing and recommended for cruising" - now make DSC equipped HF/SSB radios compulsory for new/replacement radios from 1st July 2013.

At the suggestion of the Perth to Bali race/rally organisers, I have now added links to the documents on my website, so you might also like to save the link below:

www.bruneibay.net/bbradio/bbrmarinecomms.htm

I'm certain if people understand more about the benefits available from modern marine HF/SSB radios with DSC, and fit them, and maintaining a 24/7 DSC watch, they and other yachts will reap the rewards. Particularly in terms of safety, getting advise and maintaining regular email comms.

Allan Riches
radio@bruneibay.net

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TCP's Forum

Bob Norson's ideas of how the election might go. A cynical look at what might actually happen.

Abbott against Gillard with an outside chance of Rudd. In any case, nothing substantial changes, SSDD, status quo. 2 to 1 for.

OR

Gillard quits and leaves politics. Rudd would savage her supporters. He carries a grudge well. Pressure would be on her to stay so... 5 to 1 against

OR

Turnbull against any of the above. Turnbull wins big and Australia gets a referendum of an acceptable model of a republic. 10 to 3 against

My view is that Canberra has been run for the last several years by a coalition of self interested politicians across party lines and industry heavies. That is, both sides selling voters out. The resource boom has been better for some than others. Voters becoming more aware and angry.

The best test of a theory or at least an easy one, is to make odds/predictions based on your theory and see how it pans out. These are mine.

A Sydney Morning Herald story included a web poll of favoured leaders. The results as of Thursday, Feb 15th: Gillard 9%, Abbott 19% Rudd 23%, Turnbull 38% and None 11% out of some 14,000 votes. Now I think the dislike for ole Julia is firm and lasting. She could walk on water tomorrow and Abbott would still beat her on a popular vote. Even "none" would beat her. And

Abbott is perceived by a large number of Australian voters as a dangerous nutter. "The Mad Monk." Labor couldn't go negative enough on him to convince voters he is worse than they already believe.

And Rudd's act has been busted. Behind the pie face the public has seen a very dark side. A sympathy vote for getting backstabbed by Jullia? The poll probably reflects that already and odds are it would diminish at an actual election. Australian elections are not a popular vote, not yet, but my sense of it is that both parties are now about equally despised and a truly popular leader could have more to do with result than support for local members.

Do the Greens matter? No. They squandered their possible big protest vote this election by making a bad deal with Labor and by turning their backs on issues they should have been hard onto, mere lip service on coal seam gas, Gladstone Harbour and the Reef, etc. whilst their leader is crying in Parliament about the fate of the boat people that upon closer look many voters do not have much sympathy for. They may add a seat or two but will continue to be irrelevant.

Independents? The ones that cozied up to the unpopular Labor government may take a hit depending on the competition in their districts and have given independents across the board, less credibility by their example. However, if Turnbull doesn't get Liberal leadership, reputable independent candidates could have a strongish showing.

In the SMH article that included the poll, Turnbull was quoted as saying

Labor was to replace Gillard with Rudd, which Rudd denied. Mal knew what he was doing when he said that. Labor is in a tough spot. Labor could ask Rudd but would he touch it unless... unless he knew for sure the Libs wouldn't up the ante by switching to Turnbull or there was some fool proof weapon against Mal? The fix would have to be in. He wasn't ousted by losing an election, I think an important distinction to him. Otherwise he would let Gillard take the drubbing against Mal. So it will come back to the Libs; if Rudd did accept the nod and the polls swung against them, would they accept a candidate from their party with different views and ambitions from the Abbott clique to win or... would they prefer to remain second fiddle to preserve the system? And then there is Tony's reputation as a mean piece of work and a very dirty fighter. John Howard's hatchet man. Would Abbott leave leadership voluntarily 'for the good of the party'? Odds are against; he would have to be ousted. Dangerous business.

Both sides have a dirty look to them. A clean skin could make them all look bad, Raising voters expectations would make him unpopular across both parties and their industrial supporters.

If I were Malcolm, I would avoid dark places and not leave a drink unattended at the pub... if ya know what I mean.

TCP NOTE: This piece was written and finalised before the Western Australia election returns

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Australia Day, Airlie Beach, 2013



Bob Fenney photo

By Allan McCarragher, SC *Zenataos*

A few days before the 26th and ex cyclone Oswald, now a monsoonal low, slid down the East Coast of Queensland. We stood in front of the Whitsunday Sailing Club (WSC) computer and stared at the wind map. A disparate bunch of liveboards being faced with a worst case scenario for Airlie Beach; strong N.E winds anywhere from 30 to 60 knots. Favourite hidey holes were discussed but in reality each of us was about to face moments of terror, despair and loss. I took *Zenataos* around behind the new marina and put her well up on the mud bank and spent some time reinforcing my bridles onto my anchor chain, putting in anti chafe on the fairleads and leading lines back to my main sheet winches to spread the shock loads over the entire boat.

The cricket game was in full swing; no not Oz versus Sri Lanka, this was an important match. Kids playing with kids, tip and run on the lawn of the W.S.C. I'm not sure that some of these kids had even seen a cricket bat before let alone swung one in anger but everyone got a go, girls equal with boys, black kids equal with white kids and coffee coloured kids, everyone patient with the littlies. Dad's sometimes lending a hand, no arguments, no out first ball, me as umpire trying to be even handed, my head full of cotton wool from lack of sleep and the carnage that I had witnessed on my boat trip round to the club.

It was just coming on dark, *Zen* was on the mudbank, the wind rattling the rigging, but not shrieking so not too bad. More ominous was the roar of the oncoming waves across the mudflats as, aided by the incoming tide they sought to reach out to *Zen* and tear at her. Closer in to the boat ramp were a few other boats that although wind affected were protected from the wave action. I regretted not moving in there when I had the chance but the die was cast. Astern of me was Paul aboard his Hitchhiker 40 and Kevin on his RL24 mono. Earlier in the day one of my bridles had carried away and I took a risk and dived over the side with a spare bridle which after several dunkings and an uncomfortable amount of time spent underwater, I secured to the anchor chain with a rolling hitch. I sat on deck for two hours in the pouring rain in my stinger suit, oblivious to the cold and watched as we reared up and snatched against the straining bridles.

The encroaching waves finally hit *Zen* and we endured 6 hours of hell till *Zen* again found the ground and I was able to assess the damage.

As I rounded the point near the new beach I saw the first boat on the hard; a trawler yacht, and nearby a small mono. Tucked into the corner was the remains of someone's boat; nothing bigger than table size smashed plywood and a family waist deep in the water dragging the pieces up the beach. I walked along Airlie Beach, another mono high and dry but seemingly unscathed. I made

my way toward the creek and there was met with the heartbreaking sight of several boats smashed beyond repair or submerged. One belonged to a good friend Andrew Bird of *Naiad*. I was there when Andrew bought the boat 4 years ago in the Brisbane River. Some say that he paid too much for her, and had she stayed on a mooring or in a marina that would be the case but Andrew learnt, and sailed and learnt some more and got more value from his boat in 4 years than many will in their boats lifetime. This was his first long trip and he held the distinction of having visited all of the 74 Island of the Whitsunday's in 14 days. Now *Naiad* lay on her side, full of water, seemingly intact but so sad. Just nearby lay the remains of Graham and Leonie's Catamaran *Hogs Breath Cafe*. Graham had been involved with the rescue of several boats but lost his own.

Night two, both *Zen* and I are battered and bruised. During the day a one inch cast aluminium cleat had broken and the Zytel fairlead exploded under the strain. I had put extra anti chafing material around my bridles and as darkness fell and the tide filled in, I clenched my sphincter and prepared for another belting.

Later on I looked aft and Paul's Cat was on the move toward the mangroves, by now populated with several yachts and motor boats which had dragged past us in the night. I looked again some minutes later and the boat was gone. I feared the worst and came out on deck and spied Paul well down near the mangroves but apparently under power. What followed was an epic struggle against the might of the wind and waves as first he turned his boat into the wind and then proceeded to make way towards the new Marina. I rode every small gain and agonised over every setback but Paul was resolute and he managed to get her into the Marina and relative safety. Not bad for an old guy and his faithful dog. An inspection of my lines showed massive chafe over the broken cleat and an hour later all of my starboard lines carried away and *Zen* slewed around and tore away my anchor chain pipe. One of the port bridles gave way and I was held by a spectra line and lines attached to the anchor chain back at the winch. Just then I felt *Zen* hit the bottom and realised that soon she would be aground and perhaps I would survive. I set the alarm for 3 am, low tide, and tried to sleep.

In the Tennis and Cricket commentators were using terms like fighting for their lives or for survival, elsewhere in Australia fire crews and homeowners battled valiantly, yachties struggled to save their boats, on the other side of the world people were dodging bombs and maniacs with guns. It's all relative I suppose. The adults were singing the

National Anthem, we kids were still playing cricket and yet more boat owners were cleaning up what was left of their boats. New Australians were being sworn in with a hope that they put aside the enemies of their ridiculous 600 year old feuds or religious or cultural differences and truly grasp the chance of a new life that they were being given. As Australians we really don't give a rats backside about that stuff. Apart from the paid for comment maggots most Australians just want to get on, most Australians are generous people and willing to accept anyone who is willing to give it a go.

I woke seconds before the alarm went off at 3am. *Zen* was eerily still and although the wind was still blowing some sanity had returned. I scooted over the side onto an almost dry sand and mudbank and with my caplight on and armed with a knife, hammer and screwdriver began to disentangle and cut away the severed bridles. Lurking somewhere in the back of my mind was the thought that the resident croc may well be out and about as well and I really wasn't in the mood to repair *Zen* and have to kill and dress out a croc for new boots. After an intense hour of work I replaced all the bridles with new ones and then went on deck and replaced the fairlead and double all the anti chafe. As the tide came back in it was a bit of an anticlimax, the wind having gone more to the west, I was getting some shelter from the Marina and although rocky was a far cry from the previous pounding.

I watched the family grab pieces of ply and timber from the surf and carry them up the beach. One older gent, perhaps the owner, stopped for a moment with something in his hand. He stared away into the distance, the rest of the family respectfully quiet and preoccupied. Was it a trophy of that one race they won when the "old girl" picked up her skirts and flew, or a favourite handhold where he braced himself and listened to his family laugh and cry and fight and delight in being on the water. I don't know what it was, I know it was a memory. Not for the first time a tear slid down my cheeks. Yes we Australians cry, from our sports stars to our Prime Ministers, our fireman and S.E.S. Crews, our fathers and mothers. Unashamed tears because we love Australia, we love our life, it can be harsh but someone is always worse off and we will bounce back.

I am an ignorant sod at times, terrible with names, never remember dates so when I was asked how I had fared in the storm I took a few seconds to put the face to a situation. The young Mum who was enquiring and her husband and two kids had been on their way out to their boat one windy day. I observed that they were having problems so towed them back to my boat where I took a look at their outboard. Unable to fix it I took them back to shore. She never failed after that time to address me by name and enquire after my health. I told her that myself and *Zen* had gotten through unscathed.

Belatedly I inquired as to the fate of their boat. "It's on the rockwall, split open and lost", she said. I was stunned. No "poor me, Oh woe", just a sincere inquiry as to my well being and the safety of my boat, like so many people who have contacted me. To all these people, thank you. And yes, I shed another tear.



Bob Fenney photo



The cyclone that wasn't

Story and Photo's by Bob Fenney, SY Elcho

Ex Cyclone Oswald wasn't expected to cause the people of Airlie Beach any major problems! Ex Oswald dumped large quantities of rain on North Queensland, inland, and on the coast. Well, it is the "wet season" it's that time of the year eh?

Thursday 24th January saw cyclonic conditions without a Cyclone hit from Cairns to Mackay, and perhaps further south. A friend in Cairns told me, "it felt just like Cyclone Larry."

I went to the Whitsunday Sailing Club that afternoon, I was concerned for a mate's boat as the wind and rain had been howling all day. Had he not moved his yacht into the marina, I was going to offer to help him do so...he had. Just as well, as the conditions were so bad, only a madman would attempt to take a tender out there.

There were a few worried faces looking out from the now closed doors of the balcony, usually famous for its wondrous view, now overlooking raging, brown surf, with breaking waves of what seemed like at least 2-3 metres.

A few yachts had already dragged their moorings and were headed for disaster; to be

pummelled against the rock wall...there was nothing anyone could do to stop the carnage that was about to happen before our eyes.

Already two boats had crashed onto the beach at the new "Port of Airlie". At that moment, another three were headed our way.

Around the corner, at Cannonvale, the scene would be the same, with a well known luxury home cruiser luckily finding it's way onto the beach, just clear of rocks and mangroves...she was able to be craned off the following morning with only minimal damage. Many others were not so fortunate.

A 34' steel fishing boat, wedged herself on rocks, inches from the scenic board-walk that connects Cannonvale and Abel Point.

A fly-bridge cruiser, holed, inundated with water, and stuck in the mangroves, large and small Yachts being smashed to pieces by the raging surf..

I returned to the Sailing Club, only to witness a friend's lovely 34' sloop about 15 metres from the rocks, and coming closer by the second...alas, she hit. The sight and sounds were horrific; this lovely yacht being picked up and flung against the rocks as if she were a

feather. She didn't last long. In a very short time there was nothing to see, I guess low tide will reveal the carnage.

Next day, the owners, my friends were devastated. They had recently returned from a ten-week trip on her, and had been full of stories, smiles, and compliments of their much-loved yacht.

It seems, once a Cyclone is no-longer a Cyclone, interest wanes, weather warnings are not as comprehensive. If this type of weather is expected, skippers can take precautions, be proactive in looking after their boat. But when it hits as it did on the 24th of January, there's buggger-all you can do.

It's been said by some, that boats should be kept in Marina's at all times when not in use. Perhaps if Marina fees were reasonable in Airlie Beach, the majority could afford to do so.

Meridien Marina in Airlie fell into the hands of receivers...as you drive over the hill coming into Airlie, and look down on the Marina, you see empty berths galore...no wonder? They have priced themselves out of business. Both, the business...AND the boating community are suffering because of their over-pricing.

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20	116003	347 x 202	401 x 256		3.5	\$238.20
22	116015	518	572		7.3	\$559.85
30	116004	457 x 327	511 x 381		5.6	\$234.90
40	116005	421 x 421	475 x 475	42.5	6.2	\$373.45
44	116006	442 x 442	496 x 496	42.5	6.7	240.95
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A few photos of the "Ex" Cyclone" Oswald storm

TCP received many more photos of the boats during this "weather event" , but as many photos show individual boats and their destruction, we thought t it better not to show. Below are a few photos of boats that did better than many.



Airlie Beach - the sand before the rocks made a soft landing for some
Photos above © Bob Fenney



Scarborough Marina rough seas in the marina - Trawlers come in as all did up and down the east coast
Photos above © Kirsten Flam

Maryborough slipway- suns out and time to clean it all up



Photos left & right
©Malcolm Salisbury



The Tarp helped...
photo © Drew Sayer



The arrow marks
how high the water
came up to





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Scrappy's (and my) first storm on the water



Galley windows normally untouched by rain or sea water, now drenched



The trees in the background show the power of the storm

Story & photos by Kirsten Flam, SC Scrappy

There are thousands of people and a lot of boats that have been effected by ex-cyclone Oswald all along the Queensland and New South Wales coast. My story I'm sure is not the most captivating, or distressing and is not full of tragedy. However it is my story and the only one I can tell.

I'm not a sailor, or even really a boat person. However, when Dad asked me if I was up to helping him on the boat (I'm still recovering from my last knee surgery), I said sure, I'll do what I can, when I can and otherwise try and stay out of the way. Staying out of the way I have come to find, can be the most helpful thing one can do when ignorant of surroundings, e.g. not being a sailor. I drove down and met up with my Dad and *Scrappy* on the Sunshine Coast. There I mainly ran errands, cooked etc. little things that made his life easier and things I could do in my condition. It came time to leave and head further south so we took off on the 21st of Jan and cruised (can't say we sailed, not yet) down to Moreton Bay, lucked out and got a cat berth at Scarborough Marina. Dad needed to leave town for a while and asked if I would be okay looking after *Scrappy* by myself, and again I said sure. I thought to myself, we're sitting at a berth, I have no rigging or sails to look after, what could possibly go wrong! I know better than to even think that kind of thing, but I did and therefore maybe responsible for the storm itself.

We had been looking at the weather everyday since thinking of leaving the Sunshine Coast and we had seen the strong wind pattern that suggested a cyclone. At first the Bureau of Meteorology predicted it would come around Cape York and hit somewhere near the Whitsunday's. Then they predicted it would hit land and peter-out in the Gulf of Carpentaria. As we all know, when a cyclone makes landfall it decreases in size and intensity, right? HA! The moral of the story is

we had NO idea that we would get the weather we had. My Dad would never have purposely left me in that kind of situation and wouldn't have left his boat with someone as inexperienced as I am. However as we all know, life rarely works out the way you want, or plan on, or.... So that's how it came to be that I was looking after *Scrappy* when ex-cyclone Oswald ripped through Brisbane.

The first day on the boat by myself, happened to be my birthday and the first day of less than pleasant weather. Not too bad, but definitely wet and that's how it went for the next few days. I kept up on the news so I knew the weather was going to get worse, although I figured that there wouldn't be the flooding and damage that Cairns and Townsville saw. The storm would dissipate by the time it got here, surely.

Days later and I started to worry about the way the boat was tied up. We had spring lines and ties on the starboard side but just ties on the port and the transom on the starboard side was hitting the berth. I thought that could beat a dent in the boat with the wind kicking up like it was, so in the wind and rain I went out to have a look at the ropes to see how I could tie it up so it wouldn't do that. It was so windy I was worried about undoing one line, in case the wind would take the boat from me and I would be unable to get it back. So I would pull on the port lines to pull the boat further that way and away from where it was hitting. I would pull on a line and the boat would move towards me, but then the wind would grab it and rip it from me. Shit, what am I going to do? I need more muscle in this wind, and I didn't have it. That's when one of my neighbours stuck his head out and asked if I was alright. Actually no, I need to tie the boat up so it won't hit, but I can't fight the wind. He put on his wet weather coat and grabbed another neighbour and they both came over and helped me tie her down so she wouldn't smack against anything in

the wind. Thank you guys! With *Scrappy* ready for a real storm I felt much better about what may be coming our way.

Suddenly it was the day before Australia Day and the storm hadn't dissipated! Bundy was flooded and there had been tornadoes in the Wide Bay! What! Tornadoes? I thought I left those things back in the States. What were they doing here? Even though *Scrappy* had been tied up for a storm I was still worried about her. Not because I had doubts about the boat itself; but remember my perspective, except for a few visits I have been out of the country for ten years. I had seen where my Dad started on this vessel and knew how much time both my parents had put into and sacrificed for this boat. The last thing I said to my Dad before he left was, I'll look after *Scrappy*. It was imperative to me that NOTHING happened to *Scrappy* under my care, or at least anything that could've been prevented.

Australia Day: A holiday that really does mean a lot to me. People might think that strange knowing that I was born in the US and hold dual citizenship, but it is. I remember my 1st Australia Day. I remember a family friend gaining her Australian citizenship at a big ceremony in Brisbane on Australia Day 1995. It's a special day for me, and this year was no different. I was invited to an Australia Day party, but had to decline. I wasn't going to leave the boat come "Hell or High Water" (as the saying goes) and just being home on this day was the best way I could think to celebrate this holiday. I had counted far too many that past while I was overseas.

Back to the storm. Watching the news - Brisbane had cancelled some Australia Day celebrations due to the storm and certain areas around the city were preparing for flooding. There was even a tornado warning for the area. I battened down the hatches, as it were. The dinghy tied to the Targa bar, resting on a

wooden frame on the duckboard was already full. I'm thinking I should put a bung in that, and have since. I dumped the water out of it, put everything that could possibly be picked up by the wind inside and tied down anything else that couldn't come inside. I understand that kind of storm system and how it can pick something up from one spot and throw it through someone's window over there. I wasn't going to have something from this boat end up going through someone else's boat! So I was storm prepped! Right?

The night went by without any major concern yet, in Brisbane we hadn't experienced the worst Oswald had to offer. The peak of the storm was hitting Hervey Bay that day, where my home is. Mum was looking after my place, which I was very grateful for. She had lifted all my most precious things off the floor in case it did flood, though we got off pretty good there. Hervey Bay was cut off from everywhere else, but it didn't flood, at least not where my home is.

I had been talking to Mum and we knew that the worst of the storm would hit Brissy on Sunday, and she told me that I may have to evacuate if it got that bad. A horrific thought in my situation, but still had to be prepared for that and did have a "bug out bag" packed. That statement from my Mum hit home, telling me I may have to abandon what is my parent's home, quite sobering really. That along with the thought of tornadoes I wondered, what would it take to pull the 'roof' off? Where would be the safest place to be in a catamaran in a tornado? Not the same as being on land at very least. I am very glad I still don't know what it takes to pull the roof off.

As Sunday was quickly turning into Sunday night I was on the boat with the door closed up keeping myself busy, when I felt someone step on board. What?!?!? Who just walked onto my boat!!

continued next page...



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Head Sails! Even when you have felt you have done all you can to secure the headsail, check again. You may not be able to get back to your boat to check during a storm event. With a little luck on your side maybe you won't have to come back to your boat and find your headsail ripped. I feel bad for everyone that was unfortunate (through whatever circumstances) enough to have this happen to them.

I pulled out the door, just ready to rip into whomever was in the cockpit. It was someone in a rain coat and there was someone else in a raincoat on the wharf. The man on the wharf saw me (the guy on board had his back to me and couldn't hear me) and explained that they were from the marina, and they were doubling up the lines. Then I thought, Oh I've done something wrong, I didn't do the lines properly, so I came out to see where I had bugged up. But no, the lines were fine, they were just going around and doubling up all the lines, and didn't realize I was there with the door up. No worries! I had no problem with them; actually I was impressed to see how they were taking care of the boats in their marina. Again thank-you guys!

Sunday night, the night ex-cyclone Oswald hit Brisbane. It started getting rough Sunday afternoon and by the time the sun went down the storm was almost at full force; and I was on high alert. Then I heard this loud crashing sound. I didn't feel anything hit the boat, but it sounded like something had been chucked against her. I scrambled out of my bunk to see what had happened. There was nothing around the boat so I started looking around. There was a boat on the finger across from me and down a bit and the head sail had been pulled out from the wind and was blowing around. By this time I also saw torches and people all over the problem and from what I saw later they saved that boat's head sail; good job!

As I watched what was going on I thought to myself, what would I do? I don't know sails. I wouldn't know

what to do. Maybe I should just be glad that didn't happen near me. Maybe I should stop thinking like that, because you know what happened next, right? I was lying in my bunk, keeping an eye on the weather reports, warnings, had the VHF on etc. and actually went to sleep for a while. Then that loud crashing sound again, but this time much closer. I scrambled out of the bunk, again, and saw that a boat just a few down from me, had its head sail unravelled and the wind had gotten it. I stood at the door thinking shit! What do I do? Then I saw a man from another boat run over to the vessel in trouble, with no light, then I knew what I could do. I grabbed the spotlight - torch and quickly joined the other man helping. I didn't know how to help the boat, but I could help the person helping by shedding some light, so I did. As we were trying to get the head sail reefed in another person came to help. We didn't succeed in the end as the wind still got a hold of the sail later in the night and it will have to be replaced. But I found out what I would do in that situation and learned enough to be able to help in the future.

I returned to *Scrappy* even more relieved that I had no rigging or sails to be responsible for and crawled back into my bunk for some more sleep, if it would come. By this time I had come to the conclusion that I had absolutely nothing to worry about as far as damage to the boat. *Scrappy* is a very structurally sound vessel, but then I would expect nothing less from my Dad. The rest of the night was rather uneventful; no more crashing sounds, no tornadoes, just a lot of wind and

rain. Then dawn came with some sun shining through the dark clouds, and a calm that can only come after a major storm has passed. I grabbed my camera and went to assess the damage, or lack thereof. Destruction makes for great photos, but I didn't want to see someone's boat smashed against the rocks or thrown from a hard stand and luckily I didn't see any of that. The worst the storm managed in my little section of the world were torn head sails, and there were a few of those.

Again I'll say I'm not a sailor and wouldn't know how to get sails ready for a storm, but if there is one thing I've learned from my recent experience is KEEP TENSION ON YOUR HEAD SAIL!. I can only guess at the cost, a few thousand minimum probably depending on the size. I paid very close attention walking through the marina at how the boats that still had head sails had then tied up. You can wrap the rope around them, you can tie the ropes off to the railing or something else, but however you do it the core of the sail has to be tight. Otherwise a strong persistent wind will tug at any layer that is even a little loose. It will tug and tug until it gets a good grip and then riiiiiiiiip, as illustrated by the pictures. A note about my observations; I am quite aware that you can do everything right and still have the worse happen. I am not saying (and am not qualified to say) that every boat that ended up with a torn head sail did something wrong, I'm just pointing out that the head sails seem to be particularly vulnerable.

As for me, the storm was definitely an experience, but it takes more than a cyclone (sorry, 'ex-cyclone') to scare me away. If anything I've come away with a greater confidence in the vessel and myself. On an after note; people are funny how they deal with an impending serious situation and how they may describe it to their loved ones. While the storm was on its way and when it hit, all I told my Dad was that yeah it was wet and windy, but still keeping myself busy, doing some varnishing here and wiring there. I, of course didn't want my Dad to worry. What's the point of having someone you trust look after something that means so much to you, if they make you worry the whole time your away. However the first time I e-mailed Dad after the storm I started with, "Yeah it got pretty wet, and by wet I mean Ex-Cyclone My Arse!" The danger had passed and so it was now okay for me to go more in depth with the circumstances. I thought he should be proud of the very well made catamaran he had built, I sure am!



Kirsten, expert storm keeper

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GOOD NEWS FROM A TCP ADVERTISER

Landmark agreement between the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club to boost Queensland marine industry

A landmark agreement between the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club is being heralded as a huge boost to the Queensland marine industry.

On Tuesday 21st January a revised Heads of Agreement was signed and the large increases that were imposed on the Club by Port of Brisbane Corporation were reversed. The Club received an additional 10 years on its head lease (extended until 2044) along with a substantial reduction on sea bed lease rates.

The reduction in lease rates along with increased lease term will benefit all stakeholders and gives hope to the wider marine industry which has been hard-hit by the global financial crisis.

Driving this on behalf of the State Government have been Neil Symes, Member for Lytton and Mark Robinson, Member for Cleveland. Mark says the majority of praise for the deal struck should go to Neil who has been set on providing jobs for the community and enhancing the marine industry as well as helping the Club.

Neil said: "It has been an honour to work with MBTBC and this is a win for both the long-established Club and the wider community. We've been battling to get this approved since the election and I'm looking forward to continuing this strong relationship moving forward."

For too long jobs in the marine industry have been exported out of Australia for a variety of reasons, labour cost, GFC and the high Australian dollar to name a few. We only to have to look at our new boat industry as an example (with the exception of Riviera and Maritimo).

Approximately 80% of the population lives within 100 miles of the water and we have some of the best waterways in the world. As a result of this a boat of any size is part of the 'Australian Way'. Being able to moor a boat in a marina and the club environment attached to the marina is huge part of the social fabric and great for kids. It keeps them off the streets and gives them an interest.

But probably the most important benefit is employment; boats by nature have a huge built in "Planned Obsolescence" factor and are

designed to last for many years. However they must be maintained. This generates work for shipwrights, mechanics, labourers, painters, upholsters, crane drivers plus all the associated workers at the marinas and clubs and the construction of new marinas. The marine industry employs people in hands on way and provides jobs which cannot be exported."

Over the last six years the Club has been through a dramatic change in both size and direction. The advent of the new marina was part of an overall strategy to place MBTBC in a secure financial position for the long term and maintain its identity as an affordable family Club.

MBTBC Commodore Frank Ugolini said:

"For some time now we have been involved in discussions with the new LNP Government and negotiations with TMR, with a view to revising our lease rates to reflect our status as a not-for-profit-organisation."

The local Members have recognised the importance of the marine industry and the LNP are to be congratulated. The Club's original contract was negotiated with the Port of Brisbane Corporation prior to the GFC and



Sunset at Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club Marina



photo left to right: Neil Symes, MP for Lytton, Frank Ugolini, Commodore of MBTBC, Mark Robinson, MP for Cleveland

berths at the Club have continued to sell despite the downturn. The Department of Transport and Main Roads took over the management of Manly Harbour and MBTBC Inc seized the opportunity to get back to being viewed as a Club rather than a fully commercial enterprise.

In addition the Club will assume day to day running of the adjacent Government marina in conjunction with the MBTBC Marina office. It may seem strange that a "Trailer Boat Club" is now an operator of one of the largest marinas in Queensland but to consider a name change would be unacceptable in light of the efforts of all who have gone before us.

Finally, we reiterate that we are a family Club for all, not a select few and will be doing out utmost to reflect our desire that membership fees and the marine lifestyle at Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club remain affordable."

For more information please contact MBTBC sales representative Peter Hansen on:

0418 765 963 or email:
marinasales@mbtbc.com.

By Michelle McKenna, for MBTBC



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A Memorable first Darwin to Ambon Race/Rally

By John Jordan

My old man was a big sailor, yachtsman. I say was, he's still with us, now in his 80's but gave the yacht away at about 65. The yearly grind of antifouling etc. and the Friday night ring around for crew got to him such that it wasn't that much fun anymore. Can't say I blame him. Now 60 myself and pretty much fed up with decks where there is always something to trip over, time to find a boat where you turn the key to go anywhere. With such parent it was inevitable that I should take to sailing and in truth so I did. Apart from a couple of years in Katherine NT, I have always been close to the sea and yachts. Neither of us have ever won anything other than a couple of round the buoys races, but we've had a boatload of fun, lost count of the miles and met some astounding people and some real characters. I expect this is a familiar story.

About 24 years ago, during what we call a rellie run, a Christmas Darwin to Sydney family visit, the old man says "What's this Darwin to Ambon Race?" Bugged if I know, was the reply, "but I'll find out and get back." Well I duly found out and as I'd recently got hold of a 30ft ferro, he announces that we're doing that year's race in 1989. So with the obligatory motley crew, me & him, a kiwi bloke with a small chain of florist shops, a Darwin copper and the alleged world something or other champion we set sail in July for the fabled Spice Islands.

We had all the latest safety gear; a borrowed 6 man life raft of dubious age. The old man navigated, as one girl put it a few years later, Capt. Cook style. He got into an argument in a bar (he does that) regarding navigational prowess. His opponents knockout blow was that he had to be right as he had GPS! "Wassat?" was the puzzled reply. The old man was good though, right when he said Ambon Island would appear, so it did. The only remaining problem - was the harbour right or left? Toss the coin, left. We got it right and sailed up the harbour in glorious splendour, one of the few times in the ensuing years I arrived in daylight. Ambon Harbour is however no problem to enter and these days is without the big fish traps that used to dot the water as the younger people abandon fishing for easier livings.

The copper and the old man had what they called a 'deck bottle'. They had purchased a case of whiskey for the race and once they'd opened a bottle it wasn't allowed to leave the deck. The copper used to fall asleep

in the cockpit. When it was his turn on the tiller, someone just kicked him and yelled 'hey your drive'. He used to shake his head, look around, get set on the helm and steer a perfect course for his shift. I've always preferred nocturnal workers as crew, they don't die in the arse in the evening.

A day before we arrived in Ambon the policeman asked, "How much longer do you think?" "Why, you in a hurry?", I replied. Turned out he'd left his wife and arranged to meet his girlfriend in Ambon after the race.

I forget how many boats were in the race that year, probably 80 or so, and we joined them at anchor off Amahusu village. I'm not sure why so many yachts have anchoring problems now, what with modern anchor design etc, but I suspect 20 years ago there was more attention paid to teaching seamanship stuff in sailing clubs. Now we all live in marinas and people are going straight into bigger boats and missing some basic training.

Well, I thought I had travelled a bit, particularly in Asia and at that stage had been married to a Chinese lady for over 10 years, but what a fabulous place! Quintessential Asia; noisy, chaotic and the aromas! I was in yachtie paradise; cheap beer, entertainment, and nobody gave a toss about what you wore or what you did. It was like going back to the 1800's. Sadly this has changed over the years but Eastern Indonesia remains mostly underdeveloped - see it while you can. The historical aspect came to me in subsequent years, and absolutely fascinating it is too. One Island, Run, was actually exchanged for Manhattan in the 1600s! However,

that year was all about taking as much in as possible, and the odd Bintang or two.

I missed the presentation that year, I think there was one bar too many on the previous nights agenda, and that was a real shame as the presentation ceremony and dinner is something special, lots of speeches, true, but a real gala event. The Ambonese and the Maluku Government really do their best to put on a show for the yachts.

We were a bit pressed for time that year, which I swore would never happen again; this was just too good. In the end we were a bit late getting back anyway and I lost my job; well, was offered an unacceptable demotion. Hell, what the heck, I'll trade a job for this sort of experience, still would, you're a long time dead. I guess this was a life changing event for me, and when Mr. Keating came along a few years later and announced we were going to have the recession we had to have, I just said to myself, you have your recession mate, I'm going sailing. Thus a whole lot of cab driving and boat deliveries replaced standing on construction sites looking like an engineer. With two young kids you've got to do something to keep the wolf from the door, and buy new anchor chain.

We had fun getting back to Darwin that year, real old fashioned sailing. Just the three of us, me the old man and the florist, no grib files, no autopilot and a 12hp Yanmar; like were going to motor anywhere other than a flat calm. We only had 90ltrs of fuel, about 3 days worth. Popular wisdom held, and still does, that you head to Banda and make some

easting and then you can drop south and you should end up in Darwin. Might have helped if we had a chart; oh yeah we had the ocean chart, just not the land we were heading for. Anyway, someone had given us a position which wasn't far off the chart, and the florist had bought a postcard with a picture of the Banda's on it. Took 3 days to get to Banda, about 130miles, not bad. Hey first we got the crap kicked out of us, then the old man refused to navigate any more and took to his bunk, then we lost the DR as we tacked so many times, then we couldn't get a sight, so god knows where we were. Then the wind dropped out and we gently drifted backwards. I know it was backwards, quite apart from the sun being on the nose in the morning, I knew because it always is.

Well, the wind picked up as it always does, we reached Banda and found a dozen or so other returning yachts, got handed a cold Bintang, which was gratefully received as we had no refrigeration. The old man reckoned sailors drank rum at sea.

Banda! I wouldn't know where to start describing this paradise, so I won't, you can do your own research. A good place to start is with 'Nathaniels Nutmeg' by Giles Milton. A history of the place showing the interaction with Europeans. You want diving? This is the spot. In subsequent years I had great difficulty dragging myself away. The skipper of a yacht after an extended stay, left. He returned a few hours later. "What's up, too rough outside?" His reply was no, he'd found \$50 and was staying 3 more days.

To cut the proverbial long story, a couple more squalls during one of which the florist lost his glasses and spent two hours steering back to Ambon, two more islands and some great sailing and we were back. Customs were much more relaxed in those days, almost human; just had to wait for a while at the quarantine buoy for their boat to come out, no marinas then.

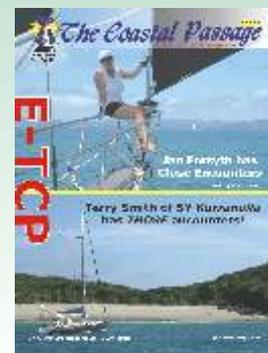
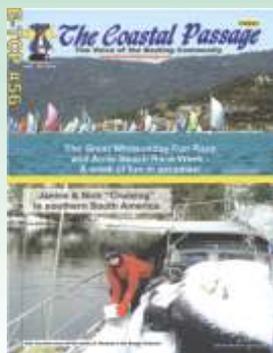
Well that was my first trip to Ambon, Capitol of the Spice Islands been 20 times since then, many times with the Darwin to Ambon race and sometimes just for the hell of it. There are many stories but unfortunately most are unprintable. This year 2013, Sail Maluku and the Darwin to Ambon race both offer an easy entry into Indonesia and a great chance to see The Spice Islands of Maluku before they're "developed". See you there.

www.sailmalukuarchipelago.com
www.darwinambonrace.com.au

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News from the Whitsundays

Eco Barge Clean Seas encourages our community to clean together



Eco Barge Clean Seas is inviting the whole community to get involved in Operation Clean Seas, a month-long clean-up in April to reduce the impact of marine debris to our iconic marine life and aquatic environment.

Eco Barge Clean Seas is launching Operation Clean Seas, an exciting new program supported by Caring for our Country, which aims to be the largest clean-up activity in Airlie Beach to date. For the whole month of April, Eco Barge would like to encourage everyone out on the water to take a few minutes out of their fishing or boating activities to remove marine debris from island and mainland locations across the Whitsunday BY Region.

The focus of Operation Clean Seas is to have 'Our Community Cleaning Together', with the goal to remove large quantities of marine debris from the Whitsunday Region. We are currently dealing with the accumulation of marine debris from the trade winds dumping (primarily) plastic rubbish on the south-east facing beaches in the Whitsundays for the last 30-40 years. The main focus of Eco Barge at the moment is this accumulation, but once that is removed we will be able to move to a monitoring phase where we will be focused only on the new debris that arrives in the region."

To assist the community in getting involved Eco Barge will provide free

Clean Seas Kits that will include safety information and clean up equipment. These kits will be available to collect from the following supporting outlets during March and April:

- BCF Whitsunday
- Shell Cannonvale
- Airlie Bait and Tackle
- Whitsunday Fishing World
- Abel Point Marina
- Nth & Sth Admin offices
- Marlin Marine Jubilee Pocket
- Proserpine Bait & Tackle
- Conway Beach Caravan Park
- Dingo Beach Hotel
- Hydeaway Bay Caravan Park
- Bowen Outdoors & Disposals



Once you return from your day on the water there will be specially marked bins provided by JR Richards at the boat ramps where you can deposit your bags of marine debris. Eco Barge will then collect the bags and weigh them to tally how much marine debris is removed during Operation Clean Seas. These bags will then be displayed along Shute Harbour Road in Jubilee Pocket so the community can see the pile grow!!

All volunteers will go into the draw to win amazing prize of 2 nights' accommodation at the Reef View Hotel at Hamilton Island and ferry transfers thanks to Cruise Whitsundays.

We are excited to see how much marine debris our local community will collect through Operation Clean Seas. Together we really can make a difference to help protect our local marine life and reduce the amount of marine debris on our coast and islands.

To allow community members without a boat to also get involved, Eco Barge will be running 10 debris removal trips throughout April. To find out more or register to volunteer please go to their website

**www.ecobargecleanseas.org.au
or phone (07) 4946 5198.**

Libby Edge, Eco Barge Clean Seas



Big dreams for Airlie Beach Race Week



New Tack Directors Mark Turnbull OAM and Jav Greaves, New Tack Administration Manager Bianca Garo and Whitsunday Sailing Club Public Relations Officer Heidi Walton and Commodore Rob Davis have joined forces to expand Airlie Beach Race Week this year.

Airlie Beach Race Week now has an Olympic gold medalist onside to bring the highly-popular sailing event to a greater scale this year.

This week, the Whitsunday Sailing Club met with New Tack Consulting directors Jav Greaves and Olympic gold medalist Mark Turnbull, who have come on board to develop and expand race week and its onshore activities.

Having been involved in the Volvo Ocean Race, ISAF Sailing World Cup Sail Melbourne, the TP52 Southern Cross Cup and the largest regatta in Australia, the Festival of Sails (Geelong Race Week), the team has over 20

years' experience of marine events between them with Mark having also received a Medal of Order of Australia for his services to sailing.

Whitsunday Sailing Club Commodore Rob Davis said the event has grown to the extent that it requires the expertise of New Tack Consulting.

"It's great to have people of the calibre of Jav and Mark and their team involved with our regatta," Mr Davis said. "We believe they can contribute by way of their expertise to grow and improve the event this year and years to come," he said.

Mr Davis said New Tack Consulting jumped on the opportunity to work behind the scenes of Airlie Beach Race Week. "The invitation to venture into Queensland was eagerly received," he said.

Meanwhile, Mark said New Tack is very excited to be working with the Whitsunday Sailing Club on an event that is already seen by the sailing community as a regatta known for being fun and affordable for the competitors. "We are also looking forward to working closely with local and state government, as well as local businesses, to help to showcase all that this beautiful part of Queensland offers to visiting competitors and families, as they enjoy a unique regatta experience and holiday in the Whitsundays," Mark said.

Airlie Beach Race Week will commence during the second week of August.

Heidi Walton, WSC Public Relations Officer

**For more
Whitsunday Sailing Club news and events see:
www.whitsundaysailingclub.com.au**



**WHITSUNDAY
SAILING CLUB**

The 33rd Bay to Bay 2013



Photos © Julie Geldard, www.vidpicpro.com

The **Bay to Bay Yacht Race** is on again, on the 2nd and 3rd of May. Despite it no longer being a public holiday, such is the popularity of this event, that organizers confidently locked it in, knowing the popularity of the event, and the idyllic weather conditions around that time of the year.

Hervey Bay Sailing Club with their major sponsor Hervey Bay Boat Club, will be running the 33rd "Bay To Bay" trailerable yacht race.

This premier event amongst yachties along the East Coast, runs from Tin Can Bay to Hervey Bay, through some of the most picturesque waterways inside the World Heritage listed Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Strait. It has been popular for the last 32 years for all the right reasons. It is very professionally run, by people who have been involved since its inception, including Officer of the Day, Mr. Colin Verrall.

The **Bay to Bay** offers a race which caters sailors from the most competitive in their sports boats, to those who just want an enjoyable sail with the family in one of the most popular holiday spots along the Queensland Coast, especially for people who love sailing.

Many stay long after the event is run, taking advantage of the protected waterways, crystal clear waters, excellent fishing and beautiful white beaches which disappear into infinity.

There have been entries from Darwin, Perth, and Melbourne in past years, and even competitors last year, crossed "The Ditch" from New Zealand. With boat numbers averaging around 180, 2013 is sure not to disappoint.

As the race is often sailed in South East winds, it is quite common to see a kaleidoscope of spinnakers disappearing to the

horizon, as they make their way up to the peaceful anchorage of "Garry's", on the Saturday night, when one can raft up with people they may not have seen for a year, but it seems like yesterday. Such is the camaraderie of yachties, and such is the mateship of those who keep returning year after year for the **Bay to Bay**.

Don't let the opportunity pass by, to experience one of the great "MUST DO'S" of the sailing world, so check the website today, for the Notice of Race and all the important details, on:

www.herveybaysailingclub.org.au

**Julian Leighton,
Hervey Bay Sailing Club
Bay to Bay Committee**

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Not just cruising

By Stuart Buchanan, SY *Pluto*

Talk about a change of scenery. I had just spent six weeks in an environment of sea and beaches while cruising from Brisbane to Gladstone in my ketch *Pluto*. Within twenty-four hours of arriving at the Gladstone Marina, I was 200 kilometres inland, cooking in a camp oven and sleeping in a one man tent perched on an isolated mountain range.

A couple of months earlier, a geologist mate of mine, Dave, had offered me four weeks' employment as a field hand working for the Department of Mines and Energy as part of an extensive geological survey of Queensland. The job entailed living in the bush from Monday to Friday collecting rock samples, while the weekend was spent at the base camp maintaining the vehicles and replenishing our food supply. The field hand's job was to act as the geologist's driver, cook, and backpack carrier of rock samples.

I thought it would be an interesting break during my trip up the coast, so I accepted Dave's offer. It was arranged that three men would meet me at the marina early that first morning. They weren't hard to recognise. Dressed in khaki shirts, long khaki trousers, heavy-duty work boots and wearing battered Akubras, they stood out like sore thumbs from the T-shirt and shorts yachtie brigade. The men introduced themselves. Geoff and Paul were geologists. Jack was a field hand who looked to be in his early sixties; he was nearly 2 metres tall and built like a Mallee bull. At the time, I was in my late fifties, and wondered why Dave employed field hands almost ready for retirement, rather than strong, young studs. Not too many sixty year olds were as fit as Jack. But as Dave later explained:

"Married blokes in their twenties and thirties don't like being away from home; and if they're not married they've usually got women problems. Lots of blokes in their forties and early fifties are going through divorces. But blokes in their late fifties and early sixties have got over all that crap, are reliable and keep their minds on the job."

We walked over to two, four wheel drive Toyota Hi Lux utilities standing in the carpark.

"This is our vehicle here," Geoff said to me. "You'll be my field hand this week. Tomorrow we'll be on our own, but tonight, Paul and Jack will be joining us."

The canopied utility was well set up with a twelve volt fridge, a 'tuckerbox' filled with food and basic cooking equipment, puncture repair kit and tools. We drove inland, stopping every so often to look at rock cuttings along the way. Late in the afternoon we drove for kilometres along a power easement and set up camp on top of a mountain range.

I noticed that Paul pitched his tent well away from everyone else.

"Paul seems to like his privacy," I said to Geoff.

"Not really. We insist he camps that far away, because he snores like a horse."

It's good that Paul's here, though," Geoff continued. "Before Jack cooks dinner, Paul usually

cooks his speciality - corn fritters."

I was keen to pick up any hints on campfire cooking, so I watched Paul prepare his speciality. He emptied a few tins of creamed corn into a billy and added flour. He poured a whole bottle of cooking oil into a hot frying pan and shortly afterwards added dollops of the corn mixture. Within a minute, almost all the oil had been absorbed by the fritters.

"These fritters are very healthy for you," Paul said.

"They are?" I queried.

"Yes, they're fat reducing."

"Fat reducing?" I again queried.

"Oh, yes," Paul said, staring into the frying pan, "See the way they reduce the fat."

Jack's main meal of a healthy looking stew perhaps helped keep our cholesterol levels in check.

Next day, Geoff and I took off by ourselves. Although the Department of Mines and Energy had the legal right to enter properties without notice, out of courtesy the property owners were notified in writing months before the visit. When we entered anyone's property, the routine was to first visit the homestead and introduce ourselves. The geologist would show the farmer a map of the area and ask him about accessible tracks around the property.

"Can we get out to this area?" Geoff asked the owner of the first property we visited.

The old farmer studied the map thoughtfully for a while.

"There's a rough track that runs along this boundary," he said, pointing with a gnarled finger, "but I haven't been along it for a few years. It could be a bit rough and washed out by now."

Rough and washed out! Twenty kilometres from the homestead and two punctures later we realised that to continue further we'd need a D9 bulldozer. Some of the slopes we negotiated defied gravity and at some of the steeper ones, Geoff did little to boost my confidence by getting out of the vehicle and walking and sliding down the slope while I drove solo.

"I think it's been quite a few years since the old farmer drove along here," Geoff commented.

"Yeah," I replied, "just a few weeks after Burke and Wills went through."

Next day, just after lunch, Geoff told me to pull up. Far in the distance was a mountain range.

"Mmm," he said, looking through the binoculars, "that range looks interesting. It's a pity we can't drive there."

It didn't look interesting to me. To access it meant walking through shoulder high grass to infinity and then climbing an almost sheer cliff face before returning with a backpack filled with 30 kilograms of goolies.

"Yes, I think we'll go and have a look at it," Geoff said.

We went. A similar type of lifestyle continued for the next few days.

On Friday, I dropped Geoff off with another group of geologists, while I rendezvoused with Jack and



helped load 5 tonnes of bagged rocks onto a trailer, drove to Rockhampton and offloaded them at the railway station for their journey to Brisbane. We then headed for our base camp which, Dave had told me, was an old farm house on a few thousand hectares 20 kilometres outside the one-horse town of Dululu, west of Rockhampton. On the way, Jack suggested we call into the Dululu Hotel for a quick beer. The two-storeyed hotel required major renovations. The wooden floor was so uneven, one leg of the billiard table was propped up on a house brick. Four old local yokels were drinking at the bar.

The walls of the bar were adorned with the usual country hotel paraphernalia - branding irons, bridles, dog carriers and old photographs. One item I hadn't seen before was something like a simplified version of a French horn. It was built of copper, had a mouthpiece, and a curved pipe with a flared end.

"What's that horn thing on the wall?" I asked the publican.

"It's a fox calling horn - used for calling foxes. Do you want to try it?"

"Yeah, OK."

I put the end to my mouth and blew. Nothing happened.

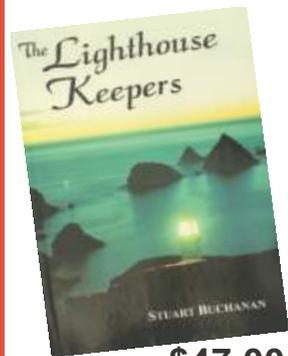
"No, no, no," the publican said. "You've got to put your fingers over those three holes in front of the mouthpiece and blow hard."

I did as instructed. One kilogram of white flour exploded from the flared end of the pipe and covered my face, head and shoulders. The publican, the four local yokels and Jack doubled up with laughter.

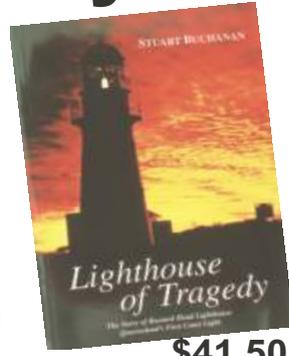
Back at the base camp, after a hot shower and a sumptuous evening meal prepared by a jolly farmer's wife from a neighbouring property, eight geologists and eight field hands returned to the Dululu Hotel for a night of revelry. It was easy to tell when we had drunk too much, because we could walk in a straight line over the uneven floor to the toilets. Rather than risk the wrath of the law by driving back to the base camp, we slept in our swags on the verandah floor of the hotel.

And so the routine continued for the next three weeks. By the end of that time, I could turn out a reasonable roast meal in a camp oven. Walking to infinity and climbing mountains carrying a backpack of rocks became, not a pleasure, but easier. I could remove a tyre from a wheel in no time at all. I had learnt a little bit about the geological formation of Queensland. I had also learnt that I'd rather live in a yacht surrounded by ocean than live in a tent surrounded by bush. But most importantly I had learnt never to blow into a fox calling horn in a country pub.

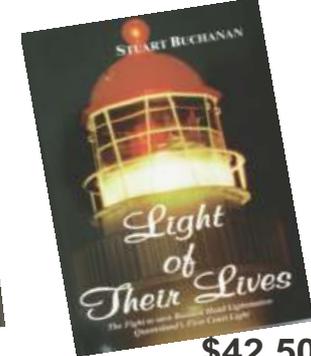
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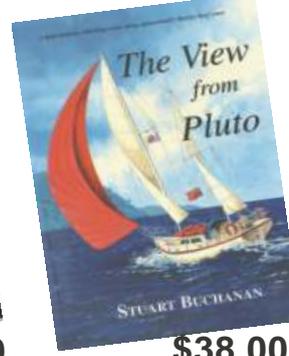
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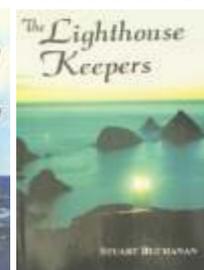
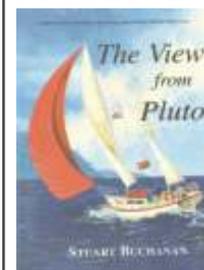


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Our favourite anchorage

Hill Inlet, Whitsunday Island

Story & photos by Phil Watson SC *Aquavista*

Well here we sit in Yellow Patch at the northern end of Curtis Island, a safe and pretty anchorage. We arrived here a bit past noon on the last of the flood tide and now it is almost time for sundowners.

As we look around to Hummocky Island and the mainland to the North West, the vista just gets better as you pan around until you reach the anchorage's name sake, the big yellow patch of sand. A 20+mtr. tapering cliff of yellow sand baked golden in the early summer sun. Not a foot print to be seen . . . sounds like a challenge to me.

The wine and cheese have just been delivered to the cockpit by my beautiful wife and we sit and discuss the mongrel sail we had from Great Keppel Island and all the tacking into the 15 knot South East wind, but we soon forget that and our thoughts turn to the walks, crabbing, fishing and socialising in the days to come that this magical anchorage has to offer.

Not long after the conversation turns to what are our favourite anchorages we have visited over the last five years of cruising the coast from Yamba to Lizard Island. There are so many that spring to mind and as I am certain you all know, they change from visit to visit, dependant on the weather, tides, currents, insect population and a myriad of other things that can influence a stay, but we both agree it is the people we meet that mostly influence our recollection of a particular anchorage. So if we can take that away from the equation and look at what an anchorage itself has to offer, we narrow the field down and eventually come to a consensus as to which anchorage we think is the best !!!

So we declare our favourite anchorage to be Hill Inlet. Pat seems to think the creek at the northern end of Zoe Bay on Hinchinbrook may just pip Hill Inlet on a good day.

We didn't discover Hill Inlet until some good friends, Brett and Deb showed us the way in about three

years ago. I wouldn't say I was reluctant but I certainly was concerned as I had previously seen the inlet from the lookout at Tongue Bay and from there it looked like one big sand patch with a thin covering of almost clear aqua blue water. So we gingerly followed their catamaran slowly through the winding path to a deep anchoring hole. Very picturesque but not somewhere I would have thought navigable. Once in and anchored, a whole new world opens up that is mostly dependant on tide.

Hill Inlet is on the Eastern side of Whitsunday Island in the Cumberland group East of Shute Harbour. If leaving from Airlie Beach, proceed out past Pioneer Rocks then North of North Molle Island and then out through Hook Passage then turn to starboard and once past Tongue Bay the broad expanse of Hill Inlet is clearly visible.

If you haven't been in there before, I suggest you anchor in Tongue Bay then take the walk to the lookouts and check out where the deep water is.

The view from the lookout will confirm that this is a shallow-draft anchorage only and at close to high water neeps the least water we have had while transiting in or out is 1.5 metres and this is staying in the deepest water visibly available. For the deep keelers it will mean a tender ride from your anchorage outside at Tongue Bay, just outside the entrance or Whitehaven to visit these beautiful environs.

I am lucky enough to have the entry coordinates on my chart plotter but I still don't take them as accurate as proven on this year's GPS snail trail as the channel near the entrance must have moved at least 50 metres to the South.

Once in, the deep water is relatively easy to pick given there is clean water and plenty of sunshine. I would certainly recommend coming in on a rising tide. There isn't usually any or much swell to worry about but the shifting sand bars need a bit of respect or an unwanted and oft times embarrassing grounding could occur, but not too much of a problem if you are coming in on a rising tide.

Some people like to anchor behind the Casuarina covered sand mass at the Northern end of Whitehaven but it is difficult to find a hole deep enough to float without blocking the channel, especially on Spring tides. For those of you who don't mind drying out it is a great place to stay. I prefer to float where possible as this is easier on *Aquavista's* spade rudders, so we usually go up a bit further and find a deep hole and anchor there. The only problem with proceeding further up the inlet is that the look out person has to be even more vigilant and instead of just looking for the deepest water and avoiding sand bars. Tree branches and logs are also now on the agenda. This year's second entry proved a treacherous one for us as the water was not as clear as it normally is which was a bit nerve wracking as we knew the approximate positions of the logs but could not see them. So we stuck to the chart plotter's snail trail of our entry eight weeks before and luckily no mishaps.

Once abeam of a prominent rock about 2.5 nautical miles (or 1.3

nautical miles as the crow flies) from the inlet there is a deep hole capable of taking two vessels, then a sand bar and another deep hole to taking another two.

We have had three catamarans in the hole adjacent to the big rock, but we all put out stern anchors to avoid unnecessary bumps in the night. Should there be other vessels at anchor please adhere to normal anchoring etiquette (especially if in close proximity to *Aquavista*). It is a snug anchorage and it is nice to be able to talk to your neighbours once you have finished anchoring rather than having them glaring at you with disapproval.

There are numerous deep holes further up the inlet should the afore mentioned holes be occupied but a shoal draft vessel is necessary should you wish to navigate much further up. To get to the deep holes near the rock you still require a shoal draft vessel and at high tide neaps the least water we have encountered was 1.5 metres. This however is only a guide as depths do change with shifting sand.

So now you are securely anchored and start to relax and probably the first thing you will hopefully notice is the distinct lack of other vessels. Strange; here you are in the middle of the Whitsunday's, the charter boat capital of Australia and no charter boats! That's right, the charter companies do not allow their boats in the inlet. The whole inlet is zoned yellow for Conservation Park and additionally falls in the public appreciation area. It is rated "protected setting five" which means limited commercial activities. All of Whitsunday Island is a National Park with it's associated rules. (See GBRMP authority Zone Map MPZ10.) So, no one trying to drop their anchor in your cockpit, no noisy parties and no bumps in the night because the *#@%! in the charter boat only put out five metres of chain in three metres of water and 20 knots of wind! We have been lucky both times this year and had the deep hole anchorage to ourselves although there have been a number of boats near the entrance.

We find Hill Inlet the perfect place to sit out a South East blow and if this is the reason we have come in, then we usually put out a stern anchor to hold *Aquavista* nose into the prevailing wind and keep the cockpit dry if it should rain. The reason for the stern anchor is that the tidal flow can sometimes be quite strong and we like our comfort. Without a stern anchor *Aquavista* tends to skate with the wind and when there is a lull, the tide gets us and we turn stern to wind. So for peace of mind a stern anchor is the go in anything over 20 knots. The wind can be 30 knots or more outside and we are very comfortable in Hill Inlet, although the wind tends to twist round through the inlet and some gusts are quite strong but certainly a lot less than outside.

continued next page...

Photos from upper right: View north from top of the Hill, *Aquavista* at anchor in Hill Inlet, and Phil with Hill Inlet Muddies



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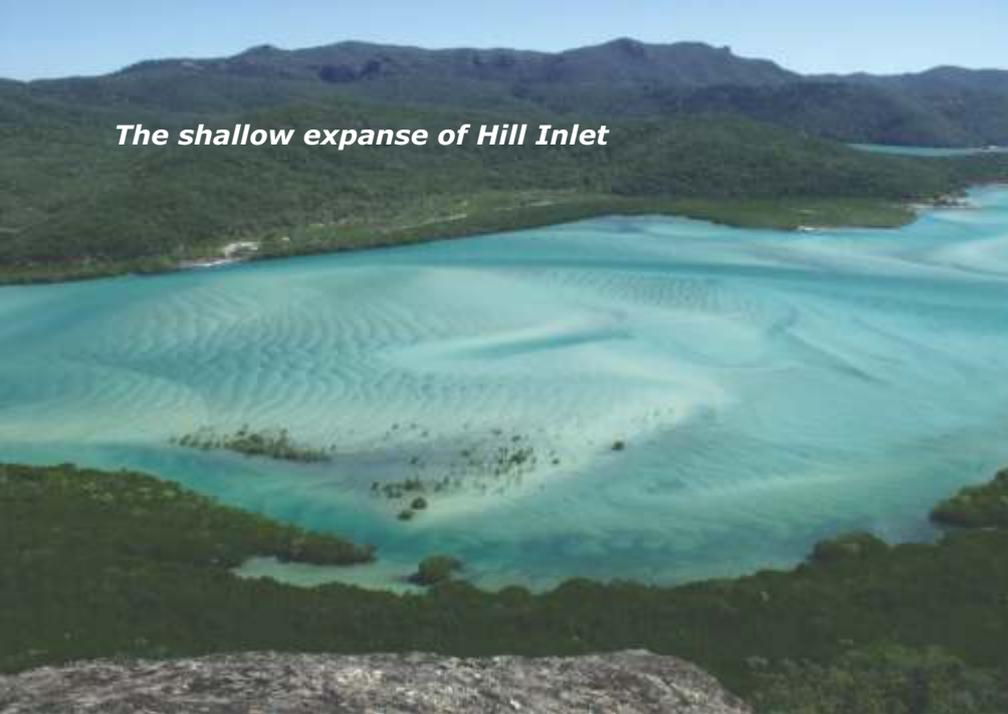
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Intermission...



Photo ©Bob Norson

The shallow expanse of Hill Inlet



Hill Inlet continues...

Where we usually anchor, we don't get phone or internet reception but for some reason this year we were able to pick up a few television stations. However if you need to communicate with the outside world apart from HF or VHF radio, I have been told that some phone reception is available near the mouth of the inlet. If you want to make the most of getting phone and internet reception, you can do what we have done in the past - pack a few snacks and something to drink in your backpack then put in your fully charged phone and lap top and make your way to the top of the hill that I think Hill Inlet may be named after.

To get to the start of the track, tender to the Northern end of the

sand spit inside the entrance to Hill Inlet. Then follow the sand round a small "V" shaped inlet then look for tracks and eventually you should locate the start of the track up the hill. I must admit it is hard to find, but once on the upward track, keep a lookout for stone cairns myself and others have put in place to mark the track. While on the way keep a sharp lookout for the elusive wallabies that also inhabit the area. About half way up there is a natural lookout from a large rocky outcrop that gives great views to the east of Whitehaven Beach, Haslewood, Esk, Border Islands and around to Hook Island. Continuing on, the track is of medium grades but I do recommend suitable foot wear for loose and sometimes sharp stones etc. Once at the top, you should

have ample phone and internet coverage for that all important seven day forecast and not have to put up with the sometimes entertaining but mostly annoying "skeds" on channel 81 VHF. If you are anything like us though, the last thing you are concerned about is the phone and internet as the view from the top is spectacular and rivals the view from Whitsunday Peak. There is an almost 360° view with about a 30° loss due to trees to the East South East but if it is a good day you can see from Deloraine Island to the North East right round to Shaw Island to the South and the imposing lofty height of Pentecost Island. So don't forget your camera to capture this fantastic vista.

Hill Inlet is one of those places that can be 'full on' or very 'lay back' and the days slip by all too fast in either mode. I have been known to sit in the cockpit for hours on end with or without the binoculars and a fishing rod in hand (as I don't want to appear to be doing nothing while the first mate cooks, cleans etc etc etc) just looking at the vegetation on the shore lines, hill sides, cliff faces or the abundant fish life and the many species of birds that inhabit the area. I have counted in excess of 40 species of birds, but the most entertaining are the military like pied oyster catchers whose strutting remind me of army parade antics. The pelicans are also good value as they dive their heads and bellowed beaks in unison on an unsuspecting school of fish.

The vegetation ranges from mangrove, dry forest through to rain forest with ferns, orchids and mosses on the faces of the craggy cliffs. Birds

of all descriptions flit in and out of the dappled afternoon light. Just the right accompaniment to a chilled glass of wine and cheese platter for sundowners in this truly tropical paradise - until an ever increasing metallic whirring sound breaks the spell and you turn to see the line peeling off the spool of your fishing rod at an alarming rate.

There goes the relaxed atmosphere!!! You take the rod firmly in hand and deftly tighten the drag and the fight is on. After eight or ten minutes you have established it is not a ray or a shark as you have seen a flash of silver. Now the doubt sets in and you kick yourself for not bringing in the fishing rods earlier. Having had a shower 15 minutes earlier, the last thing you wish to deal with is the cleaning of a large fish at this hour of the day but then another 10 metres of hard won line is peeled off and the battle continues. Apparently catch and release is quite acceptable after 5:30pm even for the most hardened hunter-gatherer.

We have caught numerous species of fish but the most common are whiting, bream, barred grunter, travelly of several species including golden, and estuary cod. Barra and mangrove jack are also purported to be present but these species of fish avoid my endeavours like the plague. At certain times of the year mud crabs are in reasonable supply and I have even been lucky enough to catch them in a scoop net off the sandy or muddy shoreline at low tide but we find using crab pots the most efficient method.

continued next page...



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There are a myriad of little creeks and off shoots in which to put crab pots and so far we have found fish frames, especially mackerel, the best bait. While you are getting about in the tender, keep an eye out for oysters as there are a few in the inlet, so as the hunter-gatherer comes to the fore it is not too hard to put together a lovely seafood basket for the evening meal most nights.

The majority of the time we have spent here the water is very clean even 2.5 nautical miles from the entrance so running your tender onto a sand bar or rocks shouldn't be an issue but, as always, drive with caution and at a speed that suits the conditions. The bottom is mostly sand and mud, but the further up the more mud. There are also a few rocky patches, mostly along the shoreline. If you look further up from the waterline and see rock instead of mangrove, you can be almost certain these rocks will continue on down into the water, so give these areas a reasonable berth. A good way to judge the fish population when the water is crystal clean is to motor in the tender at speed. Our little 8 horse power gets us up on the plane quite well. When travelling at this speed take note of the number and types of fish darting away from the tender in the shallow water, this will give an indication of fish numbers and what species to target.

Should you be in need of some exercise you could choose to visit the revamped lookout that is accessed via a board walk on the

Eastern side of the Tongue Bay headland. The numerous back packers and the well trodden path will lead you straight to the start of the walk. From this lookout you will get a fantastic view of the layout of Hill Inlet and it offers a great photo opportunity. If a beach walk is more to your liking then the vivid white sands of Whitehaven Beach may be more suited. It is about three nautical miles from the mouth of Hill Inlet to the Southern end of Whitehaven Beach where there are now walks up to a lookout or you could continue further round to Chance Bay. After these walks you may wish to cool down with a swim and the crystal clear waters at the entrance are certainly very inviting but exercise some caution as the tidal currents can be quite strong.

Speaking of cautions keep in mind that you are in the tropics and stingers are active in the summer months and although I have never seen or heard of crocodiles populating this inlet, it is and certainly looks like crocodile territory. The closest sightings I have heard of are in Cannonvale near the VMR and Double Bay just north of Airlie Beach so that isn't too far away for it not to be a possibility.

Sharks also populate these waters and I have seen a 3.3+ metre shark cruising around in less than 1.5 metres of water and we think it was a black whaler which is a species purported to include humans in its opportunistic diet. Another critter to keep an eye out for is the stone fish. I have been given a first hand account by a good mate who enjoyed a helicopter ride for medical attention that these ugly little blighters do



Aquavista at anchor in Hill Inlet

populate these waters, so take the necessary precautions by wearing appropriate foot wear to avoid them and the associated medicac helicopter rides.

I guess that for some, the biggest thing to worry about in the inlet is insects. To us, they have never presented a major problem as we usually only go into Hill Inlet to sit out a blow and with winds in excess of 15 knots they tend not to be noticed. We do however close all screens at evening and put out a precautionary mozzie coil or two when needed. When out and about we usually don a protective coating of insect repellent (especially in the late afternoon) just in case.

To our way of thinking Hill Inlet ticks almost all the boxes for a tropical get away with plenty of privacy and we thoroughly recommend a visit if you have the opportunity.



Phil with another trevally

See next page for more of Phil's beautiful pictures of this area.

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Additional photos from Phil Watson's story,
Our favourite anchorage
Hill Inlet, Whitsunday Island

photos ©Phil Watson



Whitehaven beach from the first lookout on the Hill



Border Island from top of the Hill



Some of the vegetation at Hill Inlet



Hill Inlet native hibiscus

Weathered rock formation near mouth of Hill Inlet



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"It was our time!"

Marriah's 2012 Gladstone Experience
"Oldies can still make their mark"

By Peter Holm, SY Marriah

Most coverage of major ocean races either in print or TV tends to focus on the biggest, fastest and most expensive yachts, breaking records while breaking banks.

They are certainly impressive in size, cost and performance. However they make up a very small proportion of any fleet and while they catch the media's attention the winner of many of these events comes from the "rest of the fleet".

It takes many of these more modest vessels to make up the fleet and like the Melbourne Cup it is a handicap event.

Occasionally the most unlikely vessel pops up with a great performance and steals some of the limelight giving a boost to the ambitions and confidence of the "others" in the race.

The July-August 2009 edition of the Coastal Passage reported the experience of one such yacht. In that year Marriah had a "nice sail" and even collected some minor silverware.

In 2012 however she showed that even the most cruisy of cruisers can make their mark in such events.

See the following pages where Peter Holm the skipper of Marriah tells his story.

With the 2013 race coming up soon the owners and crews of many yachts might consider the possibilities.

The 65th Brisbane to Gladstone begins on March 29th at 1100 hours off Redcliffe Point.

For more information see website:
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photo by Julie Geldard, www.vidpicpro.com



Peter with a new friend



Peter (third from left) with crew

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"It was our time!"

By Peter Holm, SY Marriah

The sight of a bow-tied steward (aka Graeme Smith) serving drinks to the pink shirted crew as Marriah passed QCYC on her way out to the start on Good Friday raised some curious looks, but the wellbeing of crew is very important, so I'm told.

Preparation for Easter had not involved much racing. We had focussed instead on half day practice sessions to get the maximum crew experience at sets, gybes and tacks. The crew included the usual suspects, Terry Kearney up for race 20, Kris Holm to make her dozen, our steward Graeme with over 30 and "yours truly" the skipper on trip 42. Phil Spry-Bailey signed up again as navigator. Jack Morrison, Renee Kearney and Scott Holm were lining up for their second and they along with newcomer Gary Head, had been working to come to grips with an unfamiliar vessel.

We were cautiously pleased with the forecast. Contrary to popular opinion, Marriah, large and heavy at 25 tons, prefers to race in medium conditions around 15+ knots not much stronger. We need enough puff to get us close to hull speed and not so much as to allow the "skiffs to plane". The fear with the forecast was the threat of light winds Saturday.

At 11 am on a magic day on the Bay, the colourful fleet got away from a very long line



allowing most boats to "do their own thing". We started conservatively towards the western end hoping for some angle to the first mark. The fleet spread out as crews tried to maintain boat speed in a light southerly, then followed the inevitable "coming together" at the rounding mark off Redcliffe. The breeze at this stage was too light for us and we dropped back more than we liked.

On rounding and setting off for M8, we found the wind angle, which had frustrated us to the first mark, allowed us to fetch M8 on one board, a feat we had not been able to achieve for the last five years. With the breeze freshening a little we started to reel in boats who had got away from us. As officially the second slowest vessel in the fleet, according to our handicap, we were satisfied to have at least some boats behind us. We had a good tussle with Wistari, Saltash, Tybo and Sassy on this leg. We weren't able to get clear of Sassy but joined her for the short leg to M9.

The ebb tide surging past M8 was now a major help but it was also across the course. The breeze decided to die off at this stage causing some concern as the tide threatened to take us the wrong side of the mark. Such a result would have been a disaster. The crew went into that well known "hold the collective breath" as we checked and double checked if we were making on the mark. The effort worked and with a sigh of relief we rounded and up went the big blue kite for the second time.

The run down the Main, Spitfire and North West Channels in barely ten knots of breeze was a continuation of the challenge to maintain boat speed while not straying too far from the rhumb line. Our spinnaker gybe practice was paying off. At NW4 we had to drop the kite for the lead out to the fairway. Sassy at this stage had got ahead again but in the freshening breeze we were making ground.

We rounded the NW fairway with Sassy alongside barely 10 metres to starboard. A flurry of spinnaker sets followed as darkness fell. Our fear that sun down would herald a drop in the wind proved baseless and in a comfortable 15 knots or so we were able to pull away from Sassy and do well against the collection of Division 3 yachts surrounding us.

It was a magic night. With the full moon due on Saturday, this was going to be a race where we had full moonlight ALL night. The sea was slight, the sky clear and the decks were dry. Boats around us were slipping back little by little and all that made the prawn and avocado cocktails served around eight thirty taste even better.

While for the most part we had our preferred wind strength, at no time was the angle to our liking. Tacking downwind in heavy cruising yachts is a challenge, and we **were** heavy. The last things loaded included 424 litres of fuel and 1000 litres of water. We don't ask the crew to cut the handles off their tooth brushes. The loading however is not as reckless as it sounds. The tanks are very low in the hull and she actually needs the weight to push her down to her proper lines. But getting back to downwind tacking. A challenge? Yes! In a ketch? More so!

The run from NW fairway to Waddy Point is a straight line leg of over 110 miles. Theories abound on where the southerly set is best avoided and where it is most damaging. Our plan was to stay on the line if we could maintain reasonable boat speed while doing so. Checking on the "snail trail" still visible on the chart plotter shows that we were able to do so with minimum divergence while trimming and careful helming maintained reasonable speed. We did have a scare in the hours before midnight when the breeze dropped off and we slowed to as little as four knots. Fortunately the lull didn't last long and the pressure returned.

The first sked, an hour after midnight, gave us a good picture of our position in the fleet. While the rocket ships out in front were doing their usual thing, the bulk of the fleet hadn't got away that much. Phil had his own "progress programme" in his computer and while he had yet to trust its performance it did show that overall we were doing well. We had been fairly treated by the handicapper, we DID have our preferred weather and the boat was in good sailing condition. We had no excuses. We were in with a chance of doing reasonably well. However there were still 200 miles to go and it is a yacht race.

continued next page...

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Daylight replaced moonlight around 5.30am and saw us some twenty miles south of Indian Head. Some yachts had gone in close to Fraser Island but most seemed to be holding to the rhumb line. The work in the cockpit was more of the same. Constant trimming, concentration from the man at the wheel. Terry, Phil and myself shared the "driving", changing regularly. While the sea conditions were just a cruiser's dream, the need to get that last half knot of boat speed meant typical light air concentration.

We chose at Waddy Point not to gybe and to stay on starboard but this caused us to drift further out from the Cape than we wished. We held on to the tack until we gybed just outside Sandy Cape Shoal and then closed in on the Spit. Lady Katherine, Extended and Bad Habits kept in closer to the beach and were able to take some out of us as we tackled stronger set outside the shoal.

At Sandy Cape Shoal we performed the first of two solemn ceremonies compulsory on Holm Family vessels during each Gladstone Race. All hands on deck. Everyone with a freshly poured rum. Some quiet thoughts and a toast to the late Doug Kemp, Life Member and veteran of the first 43 Gladstone races and whose ashes were carried to "The Shoal" on Laurabada in the 1992 race.

Our run on port had us closing on the shallows of the spit but just able to clear the end. Our course was south of the Spit Buoy and this southerly drift was accentuated by a very strong flood tide. We put in our last gybe on the spit about two miles short of the buoy. At this time we crossed the heavy overfalls at the end of the Spit which is always an interesting experience for first timers. Our duel with Sassy had continued all day with her dusky blue kite constantly dogging our view astern.

The flood tide was ripping past the buoy at close to four knots as we passed the buoy just before darkness fell. Once again the direct course to the waypoint at Lady Elliot Island was impossibly slow. Starboard tack best speed was 15 to 20 degrees above course but with compensation from the flood tide. Port tack was closer to the mark but with the error added to by the tide. We had the usual debate with ourselves, the VMG readout and gut feeling. Logic favoured starboard, we wimped out and went for port.

The breeze stayed fresh and we made good time toward Lady Elliot Island. With a cross track error

approaching three miles to the south we gybed about 7miles short of the island. The flood tide now counteracted our drift to the North.

Approaching the island at close to high tide, Phil and I had a brief discussion concerning the proximity of one of our waypoints to the coral. It was agreed to give this "daylight/low tide" waypoint some additional clearance while older hands on board swapped yarns of visions of Apollo and the Thisby "parked" high and dry in earlier years.

Clearing the island (and all the coral) around 10pm we gybed (again) and set sail for Bustard Head or more specifically S2 the first navigation mark of Gladstone Harbour. The challenge of holding the direct course while maintaining boat speed continued **once again**.

Since the brief desertion of the wind around midnight on Friday we had enjoyed almost perfect wind strength for Marriah. Sitting on 7's to high 8's and even low 9's at times we were maintaining a good average. What we didn't know at that stage was that the leading boats had fallen into a hole approaching the coast. That lull had not and ultimately did not affect the back third of the fleet. It was Division 3's turn to shine.

By midnight, the light on Lady Musgrave Island was loud and clear to starboard. All hands were called up and rums poured all round. (even the beer drinkers). Eyes were directed towards the light and thoughts directed towards the memories of Ivan Holm Snr whose ashes were laid in the lagoon by family members 15 years before. The crew toasted the man who sailed the first 47 races, designed and built a boat which sailed 50 consecutive races but more importantly was a mentor and example to many, and whose life and achievements continue to inspire others to this day.

About an hour later birds began circling the boat in the moonlight. As if to confirm the veracity of a yarn being related by Phil concerning a bird landing on a "round the world" clipper yacht, one of the birds decided to land. Not satisfied just to land on the boat, this sooty tern landed and perched on my head as I stood at the wheel.

Neither loud conversation nor flash photography was enough to trouble the bird which remained firmly on my cap for over twenty minutes. It wasn't even disturbed when Phil relieved me at the wheel and I sat down on the port side of the cockpit. Even when I took my cap off to look at the bird it seemed very content. It only departed when I tried to put the cap, with bird still attached, on Phil's head.

We took it as an omen to be visited by our "spirit bird". We already had been granted favourable conditions and things were going well, **the planets were aligned!!**

Initially on the sixty plus mile leg from Lady Elliot Island to S2 the best course for boat speed was taking us to the South of the direct line. However, over the last twenty miles the breeze swung south

and we were as shy as the big blue kite was comfortable. Just before daylight we were closing on "Bad Habits" who gave up on her kite. We persevered but were forced to sail through the ships parking lot. Less than a mile and a half from S2 we finally dropped "big blue" the first time since we set it at Caloundra.

Moderate conditions and conservative times then rewarded the tail enders yet again. The advantage of an elapsed time around 41 to 45 hours is that you score a flood tide up the harbour. Boy! What a tide!

After a short beat to S12 and a reach on the Boyne Leads to S16 "Big Blue" was hoisted again for the final run up the harbour. With a surging tide boiling around each beacon as we passed we spared a thought for those who suffered the opposite. Not much sympathy though.

Crossing the line at 8.39.34 we realised we had done reasonably well in Div 3 but didn't dare to hope that we had really scored the big one.

We had been granted almost perfect weather for the vessel. The front runners had run into a lull which had not affected us. We had a visit from the "Spirit Bird". The gybing practice had paid off. The marina office allocated our usual convenient berth and then, as a final sign that it was our time, the commemorative plaque give to us along with the welcome beer was "PINK" **The planets were indeed aligned.**

To say we were embarrassed to be receiving all of the trophies we received IS A LIE! We were stoked!

Footnote:

Marriah is a Roper 57 launched in 1982 into a day sailor and ocean going charter fleet operating out of Sydney. Originally rigged as a schooner she was converted by her present ketch rig by owners Kris and Peter Holm who rescued her after a long period of neglect in Sydney. They plan to continue her recovery to her former level of comfort and performance. **Marriah's** experience in this race shows that, media coverage notwithstanding, the event is not just for the "out and out" racers. It is hoped that more of the cruiser type yachts take heart from her experience and swell the numbers in coming years. This year is the 65th running of the event and it is hoped to attract 65 entrants to mark this milestone.

With the 2013 race coming up soon the owners and crews of many yachts might consider the possibilities.

The 65th Brisbane to Gladstone begins on March 29th at 1100 hours off Redcliffe Point.

For more information see website: www.brisbanetogladstone.com.au

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The Louisiades Yacht Rally - come along in 2013!



By Guy Chester SY Sanctuary

The Louisiades Yacht rally is being held in 2013.

There is strong ongoing interest from the local community to host the Rally and there remains strong support from the Provincial Government and the Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority.

Running the Rally is a lot of hard work, but the smiles on the Louisiades locals faces when we arrive at each of their villages, the welcome and the gratitude for the community aid we offer makes it all worthwhile.

The Louisiades Archipelago is 520 nautical miles north-east of Cairns and 100 nautical miles east of "mainland" Papua New Guinea. They paradise found, 100 beautiful islands with a friendly people living a very simple life who welcome cruising yachts.

The Louisiades comprise sand cays, lagoon reefs, limestone outcrops (up lifted coral reefs) and continental islands with many safe anchorages. With abundant coral reefs there is snorkelling, diving and fishing galore. The local people are exceptionally welcoming to yachts and will paddle out to welcome yachts and, of course, trade.

The Louisiades Yacht Rally has become a major annual event for the community of the Louisiades Islands in far eastern Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. The Rally is a cruise in company across the Coral Sea and then four weeks throughout the spectacular Louisiades, with a mix of events and time for independent exploration of the islands and their friendly communities.

After safety and navigation briefings, the Rally leaves from Cairns bringing Australian and international cruising yachts to the islands for a month or so. The Rally Yachts arrive at the uninhabited Duchateau Islands and are often welcomed by local fishermen in their Sailau's (traditional sailing canoes).

A few days of rest after the passage and

sundowner barbeques then onto the spectacular Panasia Island and its narrow reef entrance and sheltered lagoon. Panasia has a

spectacular limestone cave and the nearby little Panasia a skull cave which the yachties visit. The Yachts then move onto Nivani Island for the Panapompom Cane regatta, this involves the traditional sailaus in some serious racing, then the yachties get to sail on the sailaus...then next day it's the locals turn as all the yachts load up with newfound friends for a fun race.

The boats have a week or so of independent exploration, some going to the famous Kamataal "yacht club" before meeting back up for the Bagaman muster, a great singsing day and handicraft market. A beach party at Blue Lagoon and then a traditional lifestyle/cultural day at Pananumarra Island before the yachts move on to the only town, Bwagoia on Misima Island. Formalities are completed and the Misima Showcase Festival is held in the yachties honour! Another week of independent exploration and the sailors meet back up at Nimowa Mission where school and clinic visits, a remote river trip and sports afternoon are planned. The rally concludes with a final party at Wanim Island.

What makes the Louisiades and the Rally so special are the local people. They put on a huge welcome for Rally yachts and there are many activities and opportunities during the Rally which are truly unique. The local folk have little and whilst happy, live in comparative poverty.

The Rally aims to contribute to the community by paying for events and activities and also has a community benefit program. To date the Rally has provided tens of thousands of dollars to support a marine Ambulance, clinics at Nimowa and Paneati, provided water tanks for villages and taken up tons of school and medical supplies and clothes.

The Rally was first established in 2007 by Guy Chester of EcoSustainAbility, with the sponsorship

and support of the Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority.

All Welcome

The Rally invites monos, multis, power and sail.

No-one is "hullist" or "engineist"...well not too much! A wide range of vessels have joined the rally to date. Many monohull yachts from new fibreglass production boats (such as Jenaeaus, Bavaria's, Benateau's and Hunters) to older steel and ferro yachts. Many sailing catamarans have participated with Crowther, Catanas, Perry, Lightwave, Schionning and Leopard among the models. Motor yachts have also participated, with an 18 metre Riviera and 20 meter Crelock having been on four Rallies.

The Rally provides support for those with little offshore experience, and also has proven popular with those with great offshore experience.

Come Along in 2013

The 2013 rally was enjoyed by all, in the words of the crew from 2009 Rally yacht, Tribal: "Its been a life changing experience." The 2013 Rally leaves Cairns (Yorkeys Knob Boating Club) in mid September. Early bird entries close 1 May!

More Info

The Rally is sponsored by Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority, supported by Yorkeys Knob Boating Club and organised by EcoSustainAbility.

Further information from Guy Chester:

www.louisiades.com

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Living my dream Part 2

Jason Gard of *Spirit* shares his story of his voyage from Raiatea to Australia



Jason Gard photo



Jason Gard photo

I recently received an email from Peter Clutterbuck, the owner of Spirit from 1994 to 2001, and he presented me with these race statistics on Spirit during that time. Peter also directed me to where I could obtain videos of some of the highlights of these amazing races. 'I so love my little Spirit.'

Track record:

some of the recent first place wins 2001 Spirit of England has won more British offshore races recently than any known boat (2001) Spirit of England is the fastest known offshore sailing boat of its size worldwide (2001)

Racing detailed results:

First place RORC Cowes - St Malo 1999 and race record

First place in Class, Round Britain & Ireland 1998: beat all boats in Class 1, 2 & 3, leg record, line honours on 4 legs

First place RORC Cowes - Ouishtreham 1998

First place RORC 1997 season Multihulls

First place corrected RORC Fastnet 1997 Multihulls under 50ft, and record

First place elapsed & corrected & line honours RORC Morgan Cup 1997

First place elapsed & line honours RORC Cowes - Alderney 1997

First place (tied-elapsed and corrected) RORC Cowes - St Quay 1997

First place Gelert Three Peaks Race 1996 plus record number of awards

First place Isle of Jura Scottish Peaks Race 1996

First multihull RORC Cowes-St Malo 1996

First place (elapsed & corrected) Falmouth-Azores Race 1995, broke/holds record

First place (elapsed) Nab Tower Race 1994

First place in class (elapsed) Nab Tower Race 1995

First place and broke record Doublehanded Round the Island Race 1994

TAHITI

One of my aims was to return to Spirit for the Tahiti Pearl Regatta, better known locally as the TPR in May 2012. So after the delivery of the 200ft Super Yacht *Ethereal* from the Galapagos to Tahiti, it was a quick flight up to the boat, which was still on the hard at the CNI shipyard in Raiatea.

Spirit was in fine condition and I decided not to antifoul the boat as I dive on her weekly and scrub the bottom. After a week of work everything was sorted and it was off doing some sail trials and getting a crew up to speed on the boat.

The weather for the regatta looked awesome light winds from the northeast to southeast and perfect blue skies. Early in the season is definitely the best time to cruise this area. You get the lighter airs as the trades haven't settled in yet and it's a much nicer way to see the islands. Later on you get the stronger trades from 20-30kts and they can hang in there for 7-10 days!

Race 1 -

Practice race in-between Raiatea and Tahaa in the lagoon about 7nm long

The first race started with very little wind. It slowly built and by the end we had a nice 10kts of breeze and the boat was powered up nicely. Spirit sprinted away from everyone in the light airs and took the first race easily beating every boat across the line by more than 20 mins. It was a great start to the regatta but showed us that we had no real competition, which was a bit of a shame.

Race 2 -

Race from Raiatea to Bora Bora 25nm

We had a late start but by the first mark we were in front and with the light airs and our big WMD's as we call them we were off. We have named our light air reachers WMD's as they truly were that in this regatta. As soon as they were up, our apparent just came around and increased and we were off in our own breeze scooting along. It was an awesome run out of the lagoon and across to Bora Bora in the light airs. We were doing more than the wind speed and Spirit loved the flat conditions and long sprint across to Bora Bora where we finished more than an hour in front of the next boat and up to three hours in front of some of the monos!

Race 3 -

Race from Bora Bora to Raiatea 20nm

This race had some nice breeze at the start with the wind coming down the valley in Bora Bora onto the start. We had another late start but weren't

too worried about it. We thought it better to be late and keep away from everyone else especially while doing 10-15kts along the start area. Spirit rounded the top mark in front and took off running deep as we could to the lagoon exit and along the reef where we then headed out and across to the reef entrance in Tahaa. This race was crazy as we even beat the committee boat to the finish line and had to radio in when we thought we had crossed the finish line. Lots of fun in the higher breeze of around 15kts. Again we took the win for first across the line, which really meant we just got more drinking time in at the end of the days racing!

Race 4 -

Race around Tahaa within the lagoon 20nm

Another awesome day with clear skies and 15-20kts of breeze. We did two races this day and short windward and leeward course followed by the around Tahaa race. We won both easily and took to the anchorage where we had nice cold beers and a swim.

Spirit took the trophy for the "Temps Real" which means for the fastest boat around the course in real time. And got three nights in the Le Meridien resort in Bora Bora. Plus trophy, not bad for a fun filled four days doing what you love!

I have sailed some pretty cool places and done some of the big name regattas but this left them all for dead. The parties each night, the organisation and scenery is second to none. If you are in the area or looking for a regatta to do in a beautiful spot this has to be on your list.

My friend John Barber had flown in to do the Regatta with me and with 3 weeks remaining we decided to sail over and visit the wonderful Tuamotos, meet the locals and experience their customs and food. What wonderful hospitality we received, especially from Valentine and Gaston in Toau, who have a small home and jetty which they share with visitors plus welcome cruisers to their home for meals for a small fee.

continued next page...

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Winning Crew, Musket Cove Regatta



Musket Cove Regatta Pat Wilkie photo

Raiatea to Fiji/Tonga

The weather report for the next day was for 25-30kts but quickly dropping off to 15-20kts from the SE. As the wind was from the stern it meant a quick few days were in order for the start of the trip. *Spirit* loves the heavier airs from astern and she handles big seas well so we decided to head out first thing the following morning. The wind was going to lighten up a few days out so we thought it best to make some miles while we could.

The first few days were awesome 240nm to 260nm days and we were flying across the charts. It would only be a few more days and we'd be in Fiji! It wasn't to be though and about three days out the wind really started to drop off and head East. We had made some Northerly ground with the strong winds from the SE over the first few days so we then had the wind astern when it swung east, which really affects the boats speed. After a consultation with our weather guru the iPad and my father it was decided to head South to the Vavau group of Northern Tonga.

This lessened the distance and put the wind just

after of the beam. We had made about 700nm and this new destination gave us about 600nm to go. Over the next four days we managed to average about 150nm a day, which is very slow for us. Given the super light winds though it was pretty good going. It's times like this that I really love having a boat that sails well in light airs. *Spirit* is still able to average good mileage even though we had well under 10kts of wind and even less most of the time. Being able to do wind speed in light airs is a godsend.

The sail into the Island, Neiafu in Tonga was incredible. We had about 10kts all the way into Neiafu and with the full moon it made for one of the best night sails I've ever had, tacking up in between the small islets and reefs. Super flat smooth water a light breeze and bright sky and surrounds lit up by the moon! Incredible. A moment we'll never forget.

The Tongan people are very happy to offer advice and help where they can. We had a great time in Tonga over the following weeks and after a few days in port we decided to head out around the Islands and do some exploring.

We met up with our friends on the yacht *Evangelina* to check out the local Islands. Each day we would spear fish and then at night we'd raft up and cook up a feast of local fish and veggies. Tonga is an extremely cheap place to live and cruise and catching your own food each day makes it even cheaper. The seafood here was abundant and after sailing around the Islands we were so glad we had the opportunity to pop in here and do some exploring.

I found that there's not a lot of talk about Tonga within the sailing community. Some people go there but you don't read much about it and there aren't many good guides on the area, which is probably a good thing. But I would head back in a heart beat. The people, the Islands and scenery made it one of my favourite places so far.

We had been in Tonga for over two weeks and it was time to depart. There was a nice forecast for the following few days with light airs and from the ESE. Another nine yachts departed on the day we left so it was a full flotilla that headed up to Savu Savu in Fiji from Tonga.

continued next page...

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Musket Cove, Fiji



Fiji

From Tonga to Fiji was bliss. There was a few days where the wind was a little light but most of the way we were able to sail along at about 8kts. Most of the other yachts we departed Tonga with had to motor most of the way with the winds being too light for them.

We made it into Savu Savu in just over two days and with a freshening breeze from the SE the last few hours were fast. It was really nice being able to sail along the Lau Group of Islands to the East of Fiji during the day and we managed to tack right up the coast of some those islands and along the reefs making for some awesome scenery.

As we'd never been to Savu Savu or Fiji for that matter we had no idea of what to expect. It turned out to be a super protected anchorage in Savu Savu and the matter of clearing-in with customs and immigration turned out to be painless. Although there is a lot of paper work to be done if you are organised and just happen to arrive the prior night you'll find that first thing the next morning they are onboard and within an hour you should be all done as we were. It was great!

We had a few days looking around Savu Savu got the boat cleaned up and did some provisioning. We also caught up with all the yachts that arrived in the following days and had some nice cheap meals at the local restaurants. It's a very cheap place Fiji, but the northern Island is even cheaper than the southern Islands where most of the tourism is located and the prices are higher.

With Savu Savu being on the east coast we found it rained quite a bit. It's also the exposed and windy side of the Island so getting in and out can be fun as you can experience a lot of wind against tide in the local coastal areas. When we came in it was at around 2000 and we found that none of the lights worked. We used the radar and iPad and found the electronic charts we used to be very reliable and correct, which is something other yachts had complained about.

There's a lot of talk about the reefs and how hard sailing can be in the area. We found it to be no worse than anywhere else we'd been that has fringing reefs and shallow waters. After waiting a few days for the wind to drop we headed out to an Island on the top of Viti Levu called Nananuira where the kiteboarding is known to excel as the wind gets squeezed between the two Islands.

With the help of google earth we found a great looking route through the reefs with a much more direct path to Nananuira. It cut about 20nm off the normal path yachts use and meant we could do it in good conditions in about 6 hours instead of the 2 days that most do it in. We left early in the morning and headed straight out. With a nice fresh 15kts of breeze we took off, sitting comfortably on double figures. With the sun high we glided through the reef area and were happy to find nothing in our path that wasn't charted.

After a great sail to Nananuira we stopped off for four days of relaxing and kiting. It was well worth the stop as the area and Islands around offer great protection and some beautiful beaches and walks. With our good friends on the big 55ft Outremmer *Kappa* we enjoyed some nice walks ashore and enjoyed a few meals at the local restaurants.

It was time to depart Nananuira and as *Kappa* was heading South to Port Denarau we decided to leave together. We had an awesome breeze from the SE and with a full rig up, we took off. I imagined it dropping off as we got around the Island and into the lee. I wasn't correct with my forecast. And we found that the wind really bends around the Island and for the whole 60nm trip down we flew with good pressure all the way. We were able to sail until we were about 5nm from Denarau and again we had the sun high and found the electronic charts we had to be incredibly reliable even when we passed close to the reef edges.

From Denarau we went out to Musket Cove where we hung out for the next three months. I was able to find some charter work on a 90ft motor yacht. After this it was up to the Yasawas with a couple of friends for two weeks.

Musket Cove was great they really make the cruising yachts feel very welcome. Sophie at the yacht club is incredibly welcoming and helps with anything she can. The scenery around Musket Cove is to die for and it's easy to see how people keep coming back to this place for more each year. My parents popped out to Musket Cove for the regatta in September and had a ball while there, especially with *Spirit* taking Line honours in both races in the very light airs taking 20 minutes of the Regatta Race record. This was done with the extra ton of weight *Spirit* carries in cruising gear!

After the charter on the motor yacht I was asked to deliver her down to New Zealand. While away, I put *Spirit* into the marina in Musket Cove. It's really well protected and with some friends on boats nearby to keep an eye on her she was fine.

The four months we spent around Fiji was not nearly enough. It's such a huge chain of Islands and as they stretch over 200nm from the NE to SW it would be a couple of good years before you could say you'd seen Fiji. I hope to be lucky enough to get back there sometime soon.

Fiji to Australia

After doing another six weeks work in New Zealand from November to the middle of December, it was time to get back to *Spirit*. I had left her on a mooring at Port Denarau where I had a local Fijian guy looking after her and cleaning her bottom every week. There's nothing worse than trying to get 6 weeks of growth off the bottom!

Even though we were leaving our sail to Australia late from Fiji, we had a good plan of attack and a lot of places where we could pop into should the weather decide we needed to do that. We planned to sail to the South of New Caledonia and from there to Brisbane direct. If we had a good forecast from New Caledonia to Australia we would continue on, not stopping at New Caledonia. And again if the winds were strong from the SE we would head to a more northern port of Australia and if they were light or from the northeast we would head to a port further south. We tried to be as flexible as possible as this was cyclone season; this way we could work to the weather we were given.

After clearing with Customs and Immigration in Lutoka we sailed off through the passage bound for Australia. I had onboard two very good friends Murray Kelman and Robert Luxford. Both very experience sailors with heaps of ocean miles. I thought if there was one journey where things could go wrong it would be this one so it felt good having the extra help with us.

As it was so late in the season a cyclone had started to develop to the northeast of us over the Solomon Islands called Evan. It was due to arrive on the Saturday and I had Murray flying in on the Tuesday before. That left us Wednesday to clear out and get going giving us three days advance, which is around 800nm if we had to push things. The only worry is that it left us very little room for anything to go wrong. If we hit a submerged object or broke something we could be sitting there with nowhere to hide while the cyclone was bearing down on us.

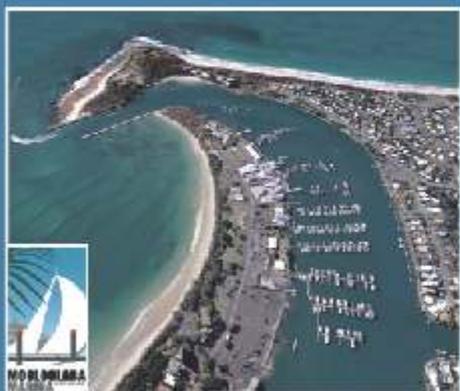
It played on my mind, as I know this is when things do go wrong. But what do you do? Do you wait it out in Fiji? Do you go for it and hope things will be ok? After weighing up all our options I felt it safer to get out of there. The forecast was for it to track well south after Fiji and to head to New Zealand. I had watched the forecast and it didn't change much for the week prior and the track was similar each day giving me confidence in the accuracy of the forecast. We had to cover just over 600nm to New Caledonia and I know *Spirit* can do this distance easily getting us there before the cyclone had even hit Fiji.

Should the Cyclone change track and head west we decided we would put into New Caledonia, wait it out and then head onto Australia. If when we got to the bottom of New Caledonia and it had not changed it's track we would go on.

Our forecast for the first day was a fresh southeast breeze about 20-25kts that was going to swing further to the north over the following days as we got closer to New Caledonia and the cyclone approached Fiji. From New Caledonia it was going to go light and to swing back to the southeast where it would remain for the trip across the Coral Sea to Brisbane. This suited us fine as long as it stayed like this.

continued next page...

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you felt as though you could touch them. We made good time for the first two days doing over 200nm a day in the light airs.

About halfway across the Coral Sea we found a very light patch of air and the direction changed to east giving us a deeper and slower angle. So for two more days we pushed on with the light airs and made only 140-160nm a day not bad really but slow going for us compared to our normal progress.

It was blissful sailing, so the slower pace didn't bother us and we enjoyed the fact we didn't have waves coming over the bow.

We were dry and able to enjoy our night watches with stars abound and the glistening sea gliding beneath us.

On the 7th day out of Fiji we spotted the northern tip of Moreton Island. It was about midday when we first saw land and the closer we got to it the more the wind swung north and increased. It was the perfect end to an amazing crossing from Fiji. The wind steadied to about 15kts from the north and we took off into the east channel into Brisbane. We had a beautiful clear day and the boat sat on 12-16kts as we entered Moreton Bay.

We rounded east knoll and the wind died right out. Up ahead we could see the wind on the water and a large storm cloud approaching. There was talk of reefing but we couldn't help but feel excited to be sailing into our own waters so Spirit was left with a full rig up. The wind then slowly increased but had swung to the southeast and off took Spirit up the Brisbane river channel and into Brisbane doing constant 15-17kts all the way up the channel. We sailed right up to the River Gate Marina where we had organized to meet Customs and Immigration at 1700hrs.

Once along side we were met at the dock by the relevant authorities and cleared in quickly. They allowed us to stay at the dock overnight and were all very welcoming. I have had many reports during the trip about entering in Brisbane and Bundaberg and which is best. I have to say that our experience in Brisbane was really wonderful. The guys were all incredibly helpful and it was all done with great efficiency. I wouldn't hesitate in

recommending Brisbane as a port of entry.

Spirit was promptly cleaned out and put onto a mooring on the Brisbane River where she now sits patiently waiting my return. I flew to Airlie Beach to have Christmas with my parents before flying back to New Zealand for another two-month contract on MY Aquarius with whom I'd worked for in Fiji. So far Spirit has had to weather the floods on her own in the river, and she's been doing fine.

I'd really like to say a big thank you to everyone that has made my dream of sailing Spirit halfway around the world a reality. It has been an incredible two and a half year journey. We have met some beautiful people and had some amazing experiences. Thanks to you all! I'll be sure to write more about our travels up the east coast of Australia and beyond into Asia where we plan to race and cruise during 2014.

If you have a dream of living on the sea and sailing all I can say is, what are you waiting for?

TCP NOTE:

See next page for more photos. To read more "Spirit Stories" see:

<https://www.facebook.com/trimaranspirit>

We blasted out of Fiji with the wind staying strong until we were about 120nm to the East of New Caledonia. It took us two days to cover the first 510nm. From here we had to pass through a trough that was stationary before we'd find light airs from the southeast. The forecast ended up being incredibly correct with us passing through the trough during the early evening with lightening all around like I have never seen before. It was incredible to see the sea and sky light up like fireworks all around us for hours! It cleared early the following morning where we found a full day of no wind while we motored past the bottom of New Caledonia. We passed so close we could see Iles de Pins and the southerly swell breaking on the reefs edge.

Just before sunset the wind increased from the south to about 8-10kts. With the flat calm sea and light airs Spirit sprinted off doing wind speed. It's a surreal feeling when the sea is flat calm and there is just a breath of wind on your cheek and the boats doing 8-12kts! I liken it to being on a magic carpet as when you go and sit out on the windward float it's really like your floating above the ocean gliding above the sea at such speed with very little wind and effort..... It's pure bliss and these are the moments I truly savour and love.

We carried on like this for the next two days. With dead flat seas a little ground swell of a meter or so with a very long period that we just slowly rose up and over and a sea void of any wind waves. The skies were totally clear each night with not a cloud to be seen and the stars were so bright



Jason



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Additional photos from Jason Gard's story "Living my dream"

Pearl Regatta Tahiti



photos right & above courtesy of
tor johnson
www.tjhawaii.com



Spirit took the trophy (above) for the "Temps Real" which means for the fastest boat around the course in real time. And got three nights in the Le Meridien resort in Bora Bora. Plus trophy, not bad for a fun filled four days doing what you love!

photos ©Jason Gard



Spirit parked beside SY *Ethereal Tahiti*

**Additional photos from Jason Gard's story
"Living my dream"**

photos ©Jason Gard



"The forecast ended up being incredibly correct withus passing through the trough during the early evening with lightening all around like I have never seen before."



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SC Scrappy what works so far...



By Bob Norson, SC Scrappy

It's not like the boat is finished but what is on board has been hard used so the report of the items listed below should have some preliminary value.

A lot of things were done on the run with crossed fingers so the results are particularly pleasing. The only thing that really failed was the first attempt at so-called cavitation plate for the outboards but more on that later.

Starting at the bows:

ANCHOR:

I had a big sand anchor from way back - OK, for a spare in case I lost my #1, but not something I would use everyday. My first choice if I could have any was a Manson Supreme but the layout I wanted on the catwalk precluded the curved bar over the top. I had used a CQR for years and was well over the thing. It was way to fussy on where and when it would stick. It was strong when it did but I didn't want to have to hunt around to make it happy.

Steve Halter mentioned he really liked his Delta. It would fit, BIAS had it ready to ship, Delta was it. It is a champ - Whew! It hooks in immediately and well. I've used it on a wide variety of bottoms and it has never hesitated in digging in. The highest wind encountered so far was probably only 30 kts. but my feeling is it will take a lot more than that before it would fail. We are using a 35 lb model for a boat of around 4 tons but a lot of windage.

CHAIN:

Australian made and that is final. It is amazing how easily that isn't understood when ordering. "I want Australian made chain, the

good stuff!" The reply, "Yup, the good stuff, no problem." Chain arrives, "so just to make sure, what Australian brand is this?" "You didn't say Australian." GRRRR "Where is it from?" "China of course, no one buys Australian chain, it costs too much."

Try again elsewhere. Chain is PWB, ordered from Mid Town Chandlery in Bundaberg. Yeah, I paid more. I used 8mm or 5/16. That size of good quality chain should be plenty for the weight and windage of our boat and save a good deal of weight forward. If I was going to use the Chinese stuff I would have gone to 3/8 or 10mm chain. It would have cost near what my higher quality 8mm did and weighed more.

I want what I want. Put anything you like on YOUR boat. And just a word here in general on Chinese stuff. You could not avoid Chinese goods if you wanted to but there are some things they don't do as well. If you want best quality steel, Australia is a very good source. If you want steel that is pretty good and real cheap, China is where you go. I have duplicate tools.

Chinese for the boat where corrosion will kill them before wear and tear will and Snap On for finer work (I used to race & tune Motorbikes), but nearly all the clothes I buy seem to be Chinese. Horses for courses.

WINDLASS:

A quick census around most any marina gives the popularity nod to Muir but there are a lot of Maxwell's and other good brands. I

wanted a horizontal model for flexibility in use. That drum opposite the gypsy is often used to propel a body up the rig, dinghy's aboard and a lot of other things, you name it. I also liked the fact it is designed for manual operation in case the electric part fails, battery dies, whatever. Hope never to use it but I just like it. This is an item I would not consider buying by price point. Decide what is best for YOUR boat and get it; that is that, no compromise. Nothing more dangerous and inconvenient than a failed windlass.

The best test of the anchor occurred when the windlass did fail. Not it's fault, imperfect installation. I did two things wrong. First, I mounted the chain stripper a little bit to far forward. The position of that part is critical. Second, I didn't have time to de-core the deck under it when mounting. One of those last minute deals before launch. The result was the chain jammed and the very powerful motor pushed the chain into the stripper and crushed the lot through the cored section of the

deck. I had to unmount the whole windlass to lift it off the jammed mess. No way in the world was it coming out otherwise. This in a strong wind with the boat whipping around like an ill mannered terrier on a long leash. It had taken in just enough cable to bring in the bridle before it stuck. The anchor did not budge through the abuse on short scope, almost wish it had because... yes, it gouged up the bows in the process. Nothing fatal but some touch up to do around the water line. The stripper is chrome plated bronze and it will have to be replaced sometime, it's a bit funky now. The deck has now been de-cored and is solid epoxy for 20mm before the 20 mm of ply and laminate below.

The only gripe I have with Muir is I think the mounting hardware could be larger on the stripper. Small matter. I drilled out the holes and installed the next size larger bolts. I got windlass from BIAS Boating, best price.

continued next page...



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SOLAR This is one of those things you don't get till the last minute. Jim Gard sent us info. on the new flexible panels he is importing from the US just as I was wondering how I was going to mount those hard panels that had been gathering dust under the house for yonks.

I was concerned about the minor flex in the canopy if someone stood on it. If I mounted the panels there, hard to the canopy, they may snap and if I mounted them further forward they would be in the way of managing the main sail. Also more likely to be in shade. Years ago I faced a similar problem with our old ketch. The flexible panels available then were very expensive and low output. The new panels are about the same cost but put out FOUR TIMES THE POWER! And about the same size.

I've measured the output at 6 + short circuit amps each panel. So just those two mounted on the canopy exceed the total we used to have that powered the whole boat

including a main electric and spare electric fridge and that was before LED lighting.

With the two hard panels I've mounted on the davits and Targa bar, we should have enough to power us even with running computers in the office that is built in to the boat as well. We also have a spare soft panel to stow until needed and room on the davits for one more hard panel. The hard panels are not obsolete. They are the perfect on the davits. But the sun doesn't shine everyday.... wind power is in the future as well.

Mounting? Soft panels took 3M tape on one and polyurethane glue on the other, just to experiment. That's it. Hard panels mounted conventionally. As long as you aren't wearing spike heels, you should be able to walk on the soft panels, cross dressers take note.

Regulators? I really like a lot of information from my regulator. Most newer ones do a reasonable job and are cheaper than before but I like to monitor input, load and battery

voltage at all times. NQ SOLAR and THE ENERGY HUB are the place for that as well as panels. They have a German made regulator that can handle the high output and all the information I wanted, This regulator will be on *Scrappy* soon.

AUTO PILOT: Southern Seas Marine has a JEFA system I want but having a look at it before launch I couldn't work out how to mount it. It just wasn't going to fit in the compartment with the tiller bar. The tiller steering arrangement on *Scrappy* is meant to be temporary. I wanted the tiller as a backup system but for convenience in the long run, a wheel steering system is 'in the box'. BUT... I was hand steering all day and overnight to make some passages and a pilot of any kind was sounding like a hot idea.

Simrad got the nod. A couple hours disfiguring my port tiller and gunnel, another 1/2 hour running wire from my port side outboard start battery and it was off and running. It must not draw much power as the outboard doesn't have much output from the alternator and once on cruise mode I only use one motor at a time so it ran for hours off the cheap little battery and when starting the motor it didn't hesitate at all.

And if your are wondering about how strong it is in rough seas, I have purposely run *Scrappy* in nasty stuff, 30 knots, big seas. The little thing never let me down so I'm happy with it for now but one more test awaits. It hasn't been tried since the big storm and it was exposed to that weather.

We'll see if the claims of being waterproof even immersed are true. Hope so. I would like to keep it for a

backup regardless.

JEFA - I was talking to Bob Burgess about the pilot and he had the solution at his fingertips. "You just run a push pull cable from the ram and mount it somewhere nice and dry where ever ya like. Everybody knows that!" ER... well, now I know. It's guys like that that make me feel so dumb sometimes.

Of course there is a lot more to go. I'll be reporting on everything in time, warts and all.

And once again **Lawries Boat Services** was my destination for serious work. The crew are first rate and the accessibility of everything is hard to beat. *Scrappy* recommended!



This installation is very agricultural! It had to be done with materials on the boat and in a hurry. I will fix it up later. Arrow marks the .. Pilot has been checked and is functioning fine after being drenched with rain for days. Next will be the test when in use for several days.

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The egg - essential protein for life at sea

By Susan Bett, SY Scallywag and Author of *The Great Ideas Galley Guide*

What came first the chicken or the egg?!

Eggs from many different feathered species have been eaten by mankind for thousands of years. The humble chook was probably domesticated for its eggs from jungle fowl - native to tropical and subtropical SE Asia and India before 7500 BC.

Chickens are widely kept throughout the world - mass production is a global industry and the demand for chook meat is growing. In 2009, an estimated 62 million metric tons of eggs were produced worldwide from a total laying flock of around 6.4 billion hens.

With the European Union's ban on battery farming, methods of mass production in Australia are currently being investigated.

Some useless information about mother hens:

They turn over their eggs 50 times a day to prevent the yolk from sticking to the sides of the shell.

This is good news for us it means that those little beauties slide straight off the shell into the frypan! From about 19 weeks old, an average hen will lay about 300 eggs a year. As she gets older, her eggs get larger.

White shelled eggs are produced by white

feathered chooks and brown shelled eggs are produced by chooks with red feathers. There is however, no difference in taste or nutritional value.

Chicken eggs supply all the essential amino acids (complete protein) as well as several vitamins and minerals to include Vitamins A, B2, B6, B12, E, choline, iron, calcium, phosphorus and potassium.

The diet of the laying hen can greatly affect the nutritional quality of the eggs. Free range chooks which forage for their own food tend to produce eggs with higher nutritional quality and have less cholesterol and fats. They also have more Omega 3 than standard factory eggs.

There is an ongoing debate over whether eggs present a health risk. The average Aussie eats about 3 eggs a week, not that much really. Since the 60's doctors have linked high cholesterol with clogged arteries and our number one killer, heart disease, so avoiding eggs seems like the way to go.

But the humble chook egg is not to blame. Many tests have been carried out and much research has proved that even a high egg diet does not alter cholesterol levels.

Saturated fat is responsible for increasing the bad cholesterol level in our bloodstream. The typical Aussie diet is high in saturated fat, found in food we love to eat; cakes, full cream dairy products, fatty meats and processed junk food. Doctors now believe that eating eggs can actually lower cholesterol given that they have such a low fat content. All good news for egg lovers.



For us boaties, eggs are great value. They last for ages - up to 10 weeks unrefrigerated by coating them in Vaseline or immersing them for 10 seconds in boiling water, then removing them (a metal utensil in the water will prevent them cracking). Both these methods provide a seal over the porous shell and prevent air entering. Storing your eggs in their cartons in the fridge will keep them fresh for up to 3 months. For long term cruising, turn them in the carton every couple of days to prevent the yolk from settling. Pickling in vinegar in an airtight jar with black peppercorns and a bay leaf also works. If you are worried about the freshness of your egg, dissolve 60gm of salt in 2 cups of water. If the egg sinks, it is fresh, if it tips on one side it is still edible but if it floats, chuck it overboard.

A few easy recipes from Sue Bett

THE PERFECT BOILED EGG

Seems simple enough, but getting that perfect runny yolk every time can be a challenge for some.

Basic rule not a second over or under 5 minutes, timing is everything...

One way of telling if an egg is raw or hard cooked spin it. If it spins easily it is hard cooked, but if it wobbles and comes to a stop, it is raw.

MICROWAVED SCRAMBLED EGGS

For 2 people: Whisk 4 eggs, add a dash of milk, 1 tbsp grated cheese (optional), salt, pepper and a little butter. Microwave for 40 seconds. Stir and let stand for 20 seconds.

PERFECT POACHED EGGS EVERY TIME

If you don't have an egg poacher, a handy trick is to place some cling wrap over a small ramekin, crack your egg into it, gather all sides of the cling wrap and twist, then lower into a pan of boiling water. This ensures that your poached egg holds a perfect shape.

SCOTCH EGGS

4 large eggs
2tbsp flour seasoned with salt & pepper
225gm skinless sausage or good quality sausage meat
Dash Worcestershire Sauce
5 chives and 1tbsp parsley, finely chopped
1 extra egg, finely beaten
Bread crumbs
Vegetable oil for frying

Boil the eggs for exactly 7 minutes. Remove from the pan and plunge immediately in cold water. Once cool, peel the eggs and roll them in the flour. Place the sausage meat, Worcester Sauce, chives and parsley in a bowl and season with salt and pepper. Mix thoroughly then divide into 4 equal portions. Work the meat mixture around each eggs evenly as possible, making sure there are no cracks.

Place in the fridge for 15 minutes. Roll each cooled egg in the flour, followed by the beaten egg, then the bread crumbs. Press lightly to ensure full coverage. Place the eggs in the heated oil, turning frequently for 4-5minutes or until golden brown all over. Drain on kitchen paper and serve or eat cold for a tasty lunch.

CURRIED EGGS

Hard boil 4 eggs, peel and slice when cool. Cut in half. Fry 1 chopped onion in oil with 1tbsp curry powder and stir in 2 tbsp flour. Add sufficient water or chicken stock to a thick sauce consistency. Stir gently and pour over the eggs. Can be eaten hot or cold.

See next page more of Susan Bett's recipes.

Buy Susan's book! Well worth the \$25!

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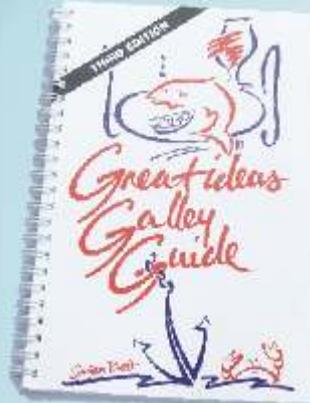
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Great ideas Galley Guide

by Susan Bett



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A few more egg recipes from Susan Bett



if you love poached eggs, a gourmet way of serving them is:

EGGS BENEDICT

2 English muffins, cut in half
2 eggs
*Hollandaise Sauce
2 rashers bacon
20mls white vinegar
Salt & freshly ground black pepper

Add the vinegar to a small pot of water and bring to the boil.
Turn down heat to simmer.
Crack the eggs into a small bowl and add them slowly, one by one, to the water. The motion of the swirling water should allow the egg to wrap around itself.
Fry the bacon and toast the muffins.
The eggs should be ready after 4-5 minutes for soft poached or longer if you prefer them harder. Remove them from the pot with a slotted spoon and drain on a kitchen cloth.
Place the bacon on the muffins and arrange the eggs on top.
Spoon a heap of Hollandaise Sauce onto each egg and voila!
A yummy breakfast!

A healthier option is to make **EGGS FLORENTINE**, which is the same recipe and method of cooking, but substitute the bacon for 100gms of baby spinach.

HOLLANDAISE SAUCE

3 egg yolks at room temperature
2tbsp water
175gm unsalted butter, cut into small cubes - also at room temp.
2tbsp fresh lemon juice
Salt & freshly ground black pepper

Place a heat-proof bowl over a medium saucepan, quarter filled with water. The bowl should fit snugly in the pan without touching the water (lift the bowl to check and remove some water if it does). Remove the bowl, cover the pan and bring the water to the boil. Uncover and reduce to very low **barely simmering** hardly any movement of water is critical. (If it is too hot, the egg yolks will cook and the sauce will curdle).

Place the egg yolks in the 2tbsp of water in the heat-proof bowl and place over the saucepan.
Whisk constantly for 3 minutes or until thick and pale and doubled in volume. Add the butter, a cube at a time, whisking all the while. (about 10 mins) Remove the bowl from the pan and place on a heat-proof surface. It should have the consistency of thickened cream. Whisk in the lemon juice and season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

A tricky recipe but well worth the effort. And equally good with either asparagus or smoked salmon.

DEVILLED OR STUFFED EGGS

Hard boil a dozen eggs and peel when cool. Slice each egg in half, lengthwise. Remove the yolks and place in a small bowl. Mash up the yolks with 2 tsp Dijon mustard, 1/3 cup Mayonnaise, 1 tbsp onion or shallot and 1/2 tsp Tabasco and add some salt and pepper. Spoon the mixture into the egg white halves and sprinkle with a little Paprika.

EASY POTATO BAKE

Pre heat oven to 180 degrees. In a bowl, beat 2 eggs together and add 1/4 cup cream, 1 cup milk, 1 cup grated mature cheddar cheese, salt and pepper, 2 cloves crushed garlic and 2 tsp hot English mustard. Layer 4 sliced potatoes and 1 large onion (sliced in rings) in an oven proof baking dish. Pour the cheese and egg mixture over the spuds and bake for about 45 minutes or until top is golden and potatoes are cooked through.

IMPOSSIBLE PIE

Pre heat oven to 180 degrees. In a large bowl mix together 3 eggs, 1/2 cup flour, 1/2 cup milk, 1 tbsp melted butter, 1/2 cup grated cheese, 1 grated onion, 3 slices chopped bacon or ham, 1 can corn kernels and 2 cups of mixed vegetables, chopped. Mix together well and place in a baking dish. Cover with a further 1/2 cup grated cheese and bake for about 30 minutes. The final result turns lovely brown and resembles a quiche.

SECOND CHANCE FISH CAKES

Add 500gm leftover or cooked white fish to 300gm cooked and mashed potatoes.
In a bowl mix together 4 tbsp grated onion, 3 tbsps chopped parsley, 1 tsp salt, 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper, a generous pinch of nutmeg and 2 beaten eggs. Shape fish mixture into patties, coat evenly in bread crumbs and fry in hot oil. Drain on paper towel and serve with lemon juice, mayonnaise or tomato sauce.

QUICK BANANA LOAF

Pre heat oven to 180 degrees. Place 1 1/2 cups sifted Self Raising flour, 1/2 cup sugar, 3 mashed ripe bananas, 3 beaten eggs and 1/2 cup milk in a large bowl. Beat vigorously until smooth for about 5 minutes. Grease a loaf tin with the melted butter and pour the mixture into it. Bake for 30 minutes and allow to cool before turning out.

Mmmm I love desserts - the perfect ending to any meal on land or at sea .

CRÈME CARAMEL

Serves 6
6 eggs
1 1/4 cups caster sugar
300ml thickened cream
1 1/2 cups milk
1tsp Vanilla Extract

Pre heat oven to 170 degrees.
Combine 3/4 cup sugar and 1 cup cold water in a saucepan over low heat. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes or until sugar dissolves. Bring to the boil and boil for a further 5 to 7 minutes or until golden. Remove from heat and set aside to allow bubbles to subside. Pour sugar mixture into 6 one cup capacity oven proof dishes and put aside to set.
Combine cream, milk and vanilla in a saucepan over medium heat and cook, stirring constantly for about 7 minutes, or until small bubbles form at the edge of the pan. Remove from heat.
Whisk eggs and remaining sugar in a bowl until pale and creamy. Gradually add cream mixture, whisking all the while. Strain into a jug and divide between the 6 dishes. *Place these in a large baking pan and pour boiling water into the baking pan until halfway up the sides of the 6 small dishes. Bake for 30 minutes or until set and remove from the oven, setting aside to cool. Refrigerate overnight then run a thin knife around the edge of each dish. Turn out onto large side plates and serve with light cream.

* A folded tea towel placed in the baking dish before adding the small dishes and boiling water will prevent over cooking.

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

3 eggs, separated
200gms dark Belgium chocolate, roughly chopped
30gm unsalted butter
300ml thickened cream, whipped

Melt chocolate and butter in a large heatproof bowl over a large saucepan of simmering water. Don't allow the water to touch the base of the bowl. Remove from heat, stir in egg yolks and allow to cool.
Vigorously beat the egg whites in a small bowl with a whisk or electric mixer (if you have electricity) until soft peaks form.
Fold the cream into the chocolate mixture then slowly add the egg whites. Pour the mixture into small glasses or bowls and refrigerate for at least 3 hours.
Grate chocolate over each helping and serve with double cream or fresh berry compote.

COOKING CHOCOLATE: Make your own for baking by mixing 4tbsp cocoa & 1 tsp butter (makes 300g).

CREAM: To make your own, beat 1tbsp butter & 4tbsp sugar vigorously. Add 6tbsp milk very slowly, beating until smooth.

Do you know what **2 ingredients** you can add to above recipe to make sour cream? The 1st to email with answer wins a *Great Ideas Galley Guide!*
kay@thecoastalpassage.com



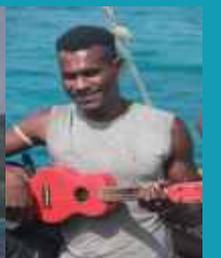
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