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The Coastal Passage

The *Voice* of the Boating Community

37th Edition
July - Aug 2009

Marriah reflects on The Brisbane to Gladstone Race, 2009



Photo by Mike Kenyon www.kenyonsportsphotos.com.au

What's your story? It can't be about you without you!

www.thecoastalpassage.com

Reflections by Alan Lucas

COCKROACHES!

As we all know, cockroaches are often unwanted guests aboard a cruising yacht, with most sailors able to spin at least one horror yarn about these orthopterous insects. Predictably, the same sailors have guaranteed methods of preventing cocky invasion, all of which fail dismally when the ultimate test comes: this being the night an army of occupation moves in and overwhelms your vessel in a matter of hours. Like the time in 1978 when we laid our recently built, cockroach-free schooner alongside the old Maryborough Public Wharf (the site of today's Mary River Marina) to celebrate her launching.

Later that night, after farewelling guests and returning to anchor, Patricia went into the galley to get a drink of water in the poor light of a quarter moon. In a sleepy stupor, she couldn't understand why the galley's light-coloured bench surface had turned brown. Touching the bench, she recoiled in horror as a thick carpet of cockroaches scattered in all directions. After a brief period of stunned disbelief, she brushed off those climbing her arm and urgently called for backup.

I have seen infestation of this magnitude on pearling luggers and other vessels involved in seafood, but never on a squeaky-clean, near new yacht whose owners fully understood the meaning of hygiene. Frankly, I was bereft of ideas as to how thousands of cockies could be eliminated without putting the crew ashore and bombing her. We settled for sticky mats and insecticide sprayed into every locker, shelf, bookcase, wardrobe, and even bilge and engine room. We then spent the night standing watch over our infant son lest he became the target of food-seeking vermin (as we will see, cockroaches will nibble humans under extreme conditions).

Rare though it is on a clean, well cared-for vessel, roach invasion of the above magnitude can nevertheless happen and there is plenty of historic evidence proving that it is far

from new. Look at the well-documented case of the survey ship HMS *Bramble* back in the 1840s: she became so badly infested that her skipper, Lieut. Charles Yule of the Royal Navy, decided to *sink* her in Port Essington.

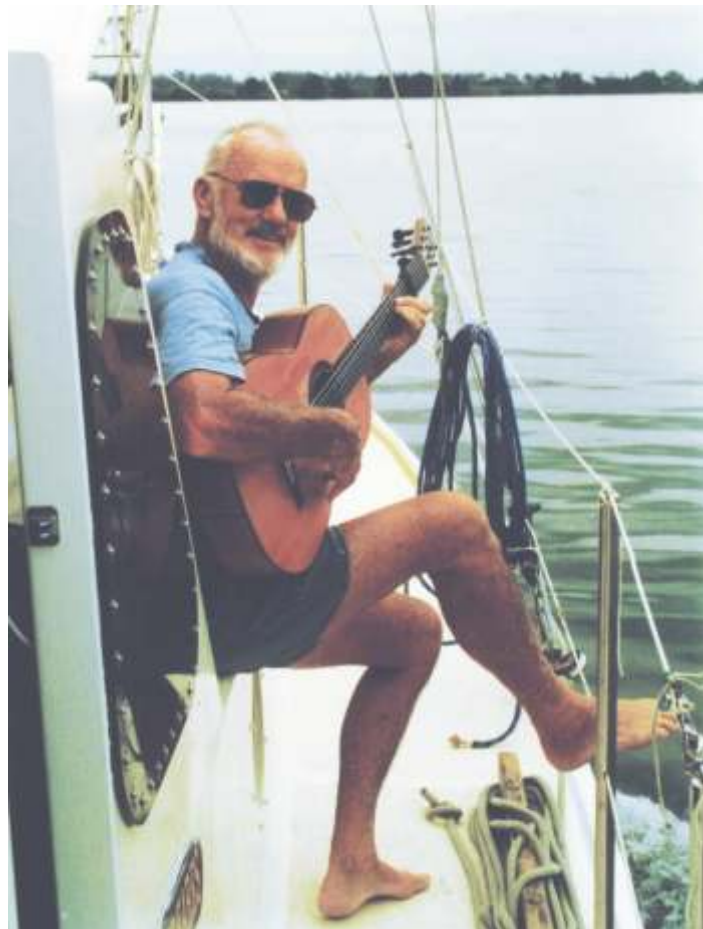
Port Essington, and its main settlement Victoria, was a short-lived attempt during the 1840s to establish a working port in the (now) Northern Territory. It lasted only a little over a decade, but in that time it gave welcome succour to many a ship, including HMS *Bramble* when she returned from a victualling exercise in Indonesia. She was loaded with nearly one hundred wild pigs, yams and other foodstuffs, and despite being smoked out and cleaned, cockroaches, quickly took control, becoming so bold as to nibble away at the extremities of the crew's bodies while they slept. Drastic measures were needed.

Lieut. Yule ordered everything moveable aboard to be taken ashore along with crew and officers who were obliged to camp in makeshift quarters behind the beach for the duration. The ship was then run aground at low tide, shores were placed under her bilges and a scuttle (large hole) was cut into her bottom to flood her to the waterline then freely admit the rising tide. At high water, only her masts and rigging were exposed by which time they had become a writhing mass of cockies desperately seeking higher ground. The crew happily vented their anger in what became a challenge to dispatch millions of cockroaches.

Bramble's cockroach numbers were estimated in gallons, 500 being the official figure for those floating ashore, with that many again drifting out to sea. In today's terms, that's around 4000 litres of vermin from one 165-ton vessel! The mind boggles, but only if you have never seen a real invasion. Patricia's and my experience in Maryborough leaves us in no doubt about the estimates. Happily though, modern chemicals eliminate the need to smoke and sink our vessel whilst poor old *Bramble* was obliged to repeat the process just a few months later when she arrived in Sydney Harbour, so quickly did the vermin return. And even after the second sinking, she became infested again soon after.

Most of us squirm at the thought of living with cockroaches, yet Mike Bailes, an intrepid cruising sailor of the 1970s, was quite comfortable with them. Despite a high intellect and a background in the Royal Navy, Mike had reduced cruising to its basics of minimum boat, minimum maintenance and an unbelievable anti-cockroach agenda. He lived and cruised internationally in a tiny, traditional Folkboat named *Jellicle*, which, he freely admitted was rotting in at him from both ends. A sentimentalist, his main boom was a polished mangrove pole given to him by a friend in Spain twenty years before and nothing would move him towards getting a 'proper' one.

But the most remarkable thing about Mike was his philosophical acceptance of 'his' cockroaches. Supping with him in his cramped heads-down-knees-up cabin took a little courage because the place was well endowed with cockies and when one of them came too close he calmly crushed it then chucked it into a corner.



The author aboard *Soleares*

His theory was that if they eat their dead they wouldn't be hungry enough to attack his stores whilst controlling their population into the bargain.

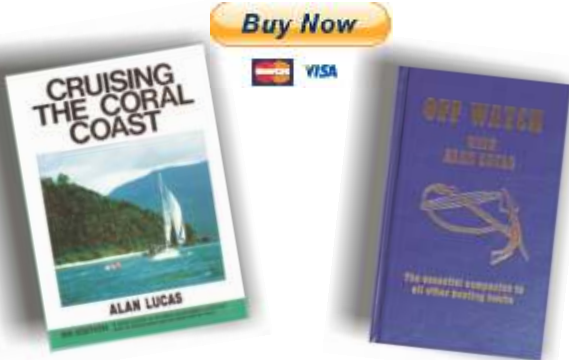
As for the claim that some crewmembers had their extremities nibbled, I can also confirm this: not from personal experience but from a 1960s Cape York fisherman whose boat was a veritable pigsty. A lovely bloke, his attitude towards hygiene suggested he had never heard of it. His boat swarmed with cockies, so much so that the quicks around his fingernails were eaten away by, he frankly admitted, 'Cockroaches nibbling at me while I'm sleeping'.

If the idea of being eaten by cockies doesn't revolt you, try digesting this quote from the journal of *Bramble's* storeman, John Sweatman: "As the *Bramble's* cockroaches washed ashore in Port Essington, the natives gathered them up in handfuls to eat them!"

Cockroaches are a rich source of protein, I believe, and the idea of making them palatable for human consumption has been tossed around by food scientists for years: meanwhile I'm more than happy to stall the day with good hygiene and, if that ever fails again, with whatever chemicals it takes. When it's all said and done, cockroach armies are like human armies: if they can't feed their troops, they won't occupy a clean vessel.

Well that's the beautiful theory anyway.

Oh, and by the way. Since becoming the basis of a marina, café and chandlery, Maryborough's old public wharf has never experienced a cocky invasion of such magnitude since that terrible night in 1978. To the contrary, I haven't heard one complaint about boat infestation from anyone who has berthed there since. Maybe we unwittingly blocked a rare migratory path of cockroaches rather than attracted an army of locals.



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More COCKROACHES!

After receiving Alan Lucas's story on Cockraches we decided to reprint Stewart Mears's story and Bob Buick's letter from early TCP's. There is much to learn about theses creepy critters! What's your story?

Lily & Stewart



By Stuart Mears, SY, "Veleva"

Working at maintaining a functioning relationship, I read somewhere once, is a fast track to spiritual growth. If this is true, then working at (read 'surviving') a relationship aboard a small cruising boat, must be a superhighway to Buddahood. Sure it is that the thin veneer of civilized normality, is apt to be stripped bare by the incidence of panic at sea. And ..ahem...who hasn't had one or two of those? But for Lily and I, sharing life aboard our 10m wooden yacht, the teeth grinding tests of relationship solidarity, seem to arise within the safe confines of the marina.

For example, a couple of months ago, I noticed, a cockroach on the boat. Aha I thought idly, Mephistopheles on six legs, harbinger of doom, are we about to be visited by the seven plagues of Egypt? It was as it turned out, a prescient thought. For not long after the one or two roaches had become a small tribe, and thereafter the laws of geometric progression kick in. Meanwhile, Lily and I are immobilized within one of our circular conversations. This one goes something like this...
(Me) My... there's another cockroach Whack!!...pretty soon they'll be carrying us away!
(Lily) God I can't live like this!
(Me...) I can't stand cockroaches; you can't stand cockroaches...we have to bomb the boat! (Lily) Can't bomb the boat...toxic residues. Can't handle sprays...same reason ...
(Me) Suggest then, we both start getting on friendly terms with roaches. Pretty soon you and me...why, we'll be asking permission to come aboard.
(Lily...) God I can't live like this! In the back of my mind I can hear my mother saying: "only dirty people have cockroaches!"

As usual where there is a clash of World views, logic decides nothing. Resolution comes not by persuasion on my part (what an absurd ideal!) but by 'other' means. One fine morning Lily is busy preparing her daily cocktail of Himalayan goji juice, iron supplements for the blood, B12 for the stress of living with me (double dose!) ... etc etc...and right before her eyes....two brazen roaches making out! Whack!! Down comes the bottle of Goji juice. "Bleeding Jesus... missed!", she said. Did the Earth move? I enquire helpfully. Lily, teetering on the brink of emotional meltdown, quietly slips over the edge. Aaaaaaaah!!!!

When calm prevailed, we had, praise be to Allah the merciful, achieved consensus on the matter of bombing. Of course one must pay the price for having the arrogance to be right. Ergo Saturday is devoted to removing everything (EVERYTHING!!) from the boat ...down the finger arms, the trolly heavy as buggery... up the ramp (a heart stopper at low tide). Sensing imminent cardiac arrest, I enquire"Obviously my education is lacking here...Lily darling, I wonder if you could furnish me with the scientific basis for why the electric steam iron which we never use...has to be removed from the boat, not just onto the deck mind you, but half a mile away & up the ramp to the car-park...along with all the rest of the stuff?." I remain as a matter of fact, still waiting for the answer. Like I say logic counts for nothing in relationships.

But back at the battle front; one bomb we figure, is probably sufficient, given the cubic air volume of our boat. The hell it is ...let's give it three cans! Twice!!

So with the boat now empty and sitting a couple of inches up on the usual water line, I open the empty cupboards, pull up the floorboards, remove emergency ground tackle from the bilge, empty a big aerosol can of surface spray in all of the hiding places and

finally set up the bombs in position. Turning off the battery switch means that having set off the bombs in the best locations, one has to back out of the boat in the dark, taking care not to slip into the open bilge. (roaches we figure are active at night). Of course in the process of exiting the boat, I manage to lose my footing, stagger backwards, gasping a lungful of roach poison. The raging headache and minor brain damage, I tell myself, are a small price to pay for the pleasure of nuking the bastards.

Next morning we remove the towels blocking all ventilation into our floating roach tomb ...and then we do it again. "If anything is alive after this", I said, foot in mouth as usual. "I'll slash my wrists!"

Funny about that; two days later, Lily and I are sitting down to dinner, happy in the knowledge that our environs are rendered roach free, and what should we see but horror of horrors....a healthy roach promenading on a cupboard; then another and then a mother roach about to give birth! Lily and I quietly slip over the edge, into emotional meltdown.... Aaaaaaaah!!!!

When we had both calmed down, the momentary urge to slash the wrists having passed, we resolved to do it all again. In fact we had to do it, several times. I lost count. We eventually did manage to eradicate our roaches, but it required a far greater effort than either of us ever anticipated.

Our fundamental mistake was to prevaricate. When the first roach shows, we should have acted immediately. Roach fecundity is one mechanism whereby the species has endured from the Pleistocene. Secondly, I made a stupid mistake in hosing out the boat, before we re-packed all of our gear. In doing so, I managed to wash away residual toxins and make the boat livable once again for the surviving roach population, which quickly recovered.

Thirdly and having regard to products, there appears to be no magic bullet; or if there is we didn't find it. None of the product claims made by manufacturers of cockroach insecticide, matched our experience or even remotely lived up to their claims of efficacy and we tried quite a few. All of the products we tried were relatively ineffectual and baits were completely useless. We saw roaches promenading on surfaces we had recently drenched with surface spray with little evident effect. Bombs work to some extent but by no means are they a final solution. Possibly our boat simply has too many opportunities for roaches to hide. Roaches might also be adapting to deal with the current generation of insecticides, which is a scary thought.

Thirdly, while scrupulous cleanliness is obviously necessary, it is no guarantee against infestation. Roaches will eat just about anything, including cellulous and glue on book bindings. A bad boy though I might be, my mother was wrong.

A COCKROACH CURE

Hi Bob,

I'm not sure how to handle a suggestion, so I'll leave that to you. On Page 8 of #9 2006, there is an article by Lily and Stewart, describing their cockroach problem. We had similar experiences in the Caribbean and Pacific, up and down the Queensland Coast, around the Coral Sea circuit and across the Indian Ocean to the Med. Some years ago, until we discovered little packets of poison bait for "La Cucuracha" in Larnaca, Cyprus. They worked like magic, but we could not find them after finally returning to Australia.

The listed ingredients are simply Boracic (Boric) Acid and Glycerine. Both can easily be bought from a chemist - a life-time supply for about \$5. You mix a small quantity (less than a teaspoon of Boracic Acid is plenty) to a stiff paste with a few drops of glycerine. Little bits are then worked into niches and corners where the little beasties lurk (they don't eat much). They like the sweetness of glycerine, but the Boracic Acid is not at all good for their health, although it's a good, but old-fashioned antiseptic for humans. The cockies seem to take some home for the kids, too, because one dose keeps us free of the critters for many months. When the plague returns (via eggs from the supermarket, bottle-shop etc.), you simply mix a little more and spend 2-3minutes reapplying it. Voila! Cheap and effective!

Cheers,
Bob Buick,
"Bonaventure", (Southport).

Greetings Bob B.,

Isn't that the way..... a 100 megaton nuclear device couldn't do it but mum's home remedy will kick their rotten little arses...I'll definitely pass on your recipe or should it be regarded as a trade secret or... should we bottle it and disguise the ingredients by calling it something more complex and make a fortune! AAAHHHH, the possibilities!!

Cheers, Bob

Hi Bob,

Thanks for your response. Yes, we've had no more than an occasional cookie for almost 10 years now - despite being careless with egg-infested beer cartons etc. Obviously, they don't push it in the supermarkets, as a life-time supply for a few bucks wouldn't make a lot of profit! I don't care whether you print extracts from my e-mail verbatim, simply post it as a tip from the editor, or whatever. It just works and people should know. By the way, little corner deposits in the shelves and lockers around the galley haven't killed any of our human family yet.

Cheers,
Bob Buick

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

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

Places in Red are new locations

.....NORTHERN TERRITORY.....

*D A R W I N

Dinah Beach Yacht Club

Darwin Sailing Club

G O V E

Yacht Club

..... QUEENSLAND.....

*P O R T D O U G L A S

Port Douglas Yacht Club

Port Douglas Combined Club

*Y O R K E Y S K N O B

Yorkeys Knob Boating Club

+C A I R N S

Blue Water Marina

Cairns Yacht Club

Cairns Marlin Marina Office

Cairns Cruising Yacht Squadron

The Coffee Bean Estate

*C A R D W E L L

Hinchinbrook Marina

*M A G N E T I C I S L A N D

Iga, Horseshoe Bay Supermarket,

TSN, Maroon'd and "TraxsAshore"

*T O W N S V I L L E

Motor Boat & Yacht club

Bre ak wa te r M a r i n a o f f i c e

Breakwater Chandlery Café

BIAS Boating Warehouse

*A Y R

Burdekin Browser Book Shop

*B O W E N

North Qld. Cruising Yacht Club

Harbour Office

Summargarden Cinema (Q.B.)

*A I R L I E B E A C H and surrounds

Whitsunday Sailing Club

Abel Point Marina Office

Whitsunday Ocean Services

Marlin Marina

Shute Harbour Chandlery & Slipway

Quadrant Marine

*S E A F O R T H

Seaforth Boating Club

*M A C K A Y

Mackay Marina

Fishabout Marine Technologies

Mackay's Boat Yard

*P E R C Y I S L A N D

Aframe

*R O S S L Y N B A Y

Capricornia Cruising Yacht Club

Keppel Bay Marina

*R O C K H A M P T O N

Fitzroy Motor Boat Club

*G L A D S T O N E

Gladstone Marina Office

Gladstone Yacht Club

*1770 AND BUSTARD HEADS

1770 LARC tours

*B U N D A B E R G

Midtown Marina

*B U R R U M H E A D S

Burrum Traders

*H E R V E Y B A Y / U R A N G A N / B U R R U M H D

Great Sandy Straits Marina Office

Fishermans Wharf Marina

The Boat Club Marina

Burrum Traders

*M A R Y B O R O U G H

Boaties Warehouse

Muddy Waters Café

Mary River Chandlery

*T I N C A N B A Y

Tin Can Bay Yacht Club

Tin Can Bay Marina

Tin Can Bay Boat Sales

M O O L O O L A B A

Kawana Waters Marina

Mooloolaba Marina Office

Whitworth's (Minyama)

*N O O S A

Noosa Yacht & Rowing Club

*R E D C L I F F E P E N I N S U L A

Redland City Marina

Moreton Bay Marine Supplies

*S C A R B O R O U G H

Scarborough Marina

Moreton Bay Boat Club

*N E W P O R T

Australiawide Brokerage

*S A N D G A T E

Queensland Cruising Yacht Club

*B R I S B A N E

Whitworths (Woolloongabba)

Whitworths (Breakfast Creek)

Boat Books

Glascraft Marine Supplies,

(Rivergate Marina)

*M A N L Y

Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club

East Coast Marina

Royal QLD Yacht Squadron

Wynnum Manly YC, Marina Office

*R A B Y B A Y

Raby Bay Marina

*C O O M E R A / H O P E I S L A N D

Outback Marine

Gold Coast City Marina Office

Marina Foods and Takeaway

Hope Island Resort Marina

*S O U T H P O R T

Southport Yacht Club, Marina Office

Whitworth's (Warehouse Rd.)

... N E W S O U T H W A L E S.....

*Y A M B A

Yamba Marina

*C O F F S H A R B O U R

Coffs Harbour Marina

Harbourside Chandlery

*P O R T S T E P H E N S

Lemon Tree Passage Marina

*C E N T R A L C O A S T

Gosford Sailing Club

*N E W C A S T L E

Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club

*S Y D N E Y & S U R R O U N D S

Boat Books

Middle Harbour Yacht Club

Cruising Yacht Club Australia,

Rus h c u t t e r s B a y

Royal Motor Yacht Club Broken Bay

....C A N B E R R A.....

Canberra Yacht Club

....V I C T O R I A.....

Royal Yacht Club (Williamstown)

Royal Geelong Yacht Club

Sandringham Yacht Club

Royal Brighton Yacht Club

Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron

Hastings Yacht Club

.....S O U T H A U S T R A L I A.....

(Nor thh a v e n)

Cruising Yacht Club of S.A.

Royal S.A. Yacht Squadron

.....W E S T E R N A U S T R A L I A.....

TCP'S Distributors, Moreton Bay Marine Supplies



Mary & Andy pictured above of Moreton Bay Marine Supplies are located at Clontarf, on the Redcliffe Peninsula, Queensland. Here's a quote from Mary:

"We are as the name implies marine suppliers and chandlers who started our business from scratch 3 years ago and are now very proud to say we have a growing and a very good business despite the bad summer before last and the economic tough times.

Apart from new chandlery for power and sail we also have a second hand section in our business which is very sought after and used a lot by cruising folks."

TCP has a new skipper!

No kidding. I have been wearing too many hats lately. We became the victim of an environmental disaster and I have been the point man for a community association to correct a truly despicable situation involving Fraser Coast council and the local aviation community. A horribly graphic example of how bad things can get with no responsible press to stand up for the community (we didn't have a TCP). We've made progress for the community and expect more improvements shortly but it has taken a lot of work and time. There are some big changes going on at casa de Norson as a result and one of them is I will be going full time on the boat building project to make up for time lost. *continued next page....*

This is your new skipper! That's my Kay at the re-launching of our old ketch, years ago. She was admonished by her Gold Coast friends of all the dangers and inconveniences of going to sea. So... she is outfitted with flotation, EPIRB, 'holding tank', the balaclava for total sun protection and for the sharks, the crow bar in her right hand. I can report that no shark yet has shown the courage to attack.



G-day TCP Readers!

Yes, as you can see from the photo, I am ready to volunteer this position of TCP's skipper. Bob told me he could get our boat finished faster so I am willing to take on this job. I have been known to be "the volunteer" behind the scenes, so I do have a bit of experience for the job.

You can help by sending in your stories, Passage People photos, letters, forum issues, and especially those technical articles. We have been waiting for boaties views on how to keep the drinks cold without running down the batteries! Remember: ***"It can't be about you without you!"***

I do miss being "out there" and hope to see Y'all when we get "... .." done, or at least floating!

Kay (kay@thecoastalpassage.com)



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Kay Norson: Senior Volunteer, temporary editor, all the rest & expert postie

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

The Coastal Passage

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Lets Just Do it!



Pick up the Rubbish I mean... It started with a letter from Keith of *Speranza*:

The picture attached was taken at the south anchorage at Thomas Island. The pile of rubbish has been collected from the beach by visiting yachties and left in a neat pile. It contains junk that has been washed up in SE winds. It is not refuse left by visiting cruisers.

Two years ago, I phoned Parks and Wildlife to let them know that it was there to be collected. I was thanked profusely for my civil awareness. They had a boat going down that way in the next day or so and would collect it then.

And then this letter from Ada and Charlie of *Geronimo* (see Passage People this edition):

"First to 'rubbish pickup' by Keith Owen. Enclosed photo we took in Sept. 2004 from same beach on the southern side of Thomas Is. It seems as if some rubbish was removed since, and more flotsam / jetsam & general STUFF got washed on the Island.

We found it to be a general problem with most other southern anchorages we visited, that year and since, and almost all of it is foreign packaging. I would like to suggest that if the sailing / yachting / fishing community will make an effort to pick up some of this rubbish; i.e.. one rubbish bag per vessel, when encountering those remote beaches; than, taking it with them to a suitable dump or rubbish bin, we'll have a much better chance of reducing this environmental / pollution / visual problem.

I believe that will be far more effective than the expectation that some suitable government department, council, Fisheries or Parks will do it for us. If we don't like it, we should do something about it, it's hard to imagine that someone else will."

So...TCP and the following Marinas Are Going to *Just Do It!*

TCP will supply *FREE* to the boating community, heavy duty bags that may be picked up at the following marinas which will also accept the full bags for disposal.

**Mackay Marina
Abel Point Marina
Bowen Boat Harbour**

**Additional approved bag disposal Marinas:
Keppel Bay Marina
Breakwater Marina**

**All these marinas jumped at the chance to help!
Just thought you should know that.**

Here is how it will work: If you are making your way to the Northumberland Isles, The Cumberlandands and Whitsundays, and you think conditions will allow anchorage to access the south facing beaches or wherever there is an accumulation of flotsam, please pick up a bag from one of the listed marinas. As Mackay is most centrally located, you will automaticaly receive a bag when you check in.

Then please stop in at one of the Marinas or Bowen Boat Harbour to dispose. We understand that the best intentions are sometimes defeated by adverse and unexpected conditions so if it doesn't work that is OK. In that case, use the bag to **leave a clean wake** in whatever way you can. TCP does not advise to pick up broken glass unless you are able to protect your hands and the bag from cuts. Dry plastic is the main culprit. Ugly to see and dangerous for the marine environment.

TCP has been talking with "Parks" on this but bureaucracies move slowly and the season is upon us now. We hope in future that Parks may make available, drop off points in the Whitsunday's that are serviced by the regular maintenance crews as well.

NEWS!

Summit Down Under Sets the Standard

From the National Marine Safety Committee

Chairman of the ISO Committee on Small Craft Nik Parker confirmed to delegates at the Summit Down Under on the Gold Coast that the International Council of Marine Industry Associations is sponsoring a program to develop globally recognised technical standards for boats.

"They are undertaking a program of standards harmonization encompassing ISO (Europe) and ABYC (USA) standards," he explained.

"We are currently working with ABYC on harmonising standards relating to fuel systems and ventilation, capacity and plates, principal data, and LPG systems."

Organised by the National Marine Safety Committee, and coinciding with the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show, the event, held on Friday 22 May was attended by more than 60 delegates from marine agencies and industry.

NMSC CEO Margie O'Tarpey emphasised that the Committee has always valued its collaboration with the private sector with the shared aim that 'boating should be a pastime that everybody can enjoy safely'.

"We recognise the challenges currently faced by the Australian recreational boat industry in these difficult financial times and that has been a key factor in planning this seminar.

"It is important to target safety initiatives in such a way that they achieve the desired goals in a flexible manner without unduly affecting the viability of the sector or putting jobs at risk."

Issues such as safer boats or better rescue services, consumer attitudes to boating safety, standards for recreational boats, a national boat operator's license and doing business in the current financial climate were just some topics "on the table" during the Summit.

According to key note speaker Peter Chennell, the UK's Royal National Lifeboat Institution's Safety Manager, your brain is your most important piece of safety equipment.

"Unlike Australia, the UK does not have any form of recreational boat registration or licensing of boaters, nor is the carriage of safety equipment mandatory.

"It's about attitude, we need to find out how we get people to change their behaviour and use their safety equipment."

To this end, the RNLI, the charity that provides the Lifeboat and Lifeguard service around the shores of the UK and Ireland, is commissioning research into the psychology of behavioural change.

From an Australian perspective, Margie O'Tarpey confirmed that the NMSC has implemented a variety of measures to improve boating safety, such as developing a national incident database and research initiatives, education campaigns, the Australian Builders Plate for recreational boats and technical standards. www.nmsc.gov.au.

Close Call for Increased Regulation

June 10th 09

By Bob Norson

The Queensland Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry, represented by Bob Hockey and Tim Williamson, hosted a seminar at the Hervey Bay Boat Club. Various parties from the local Marine Industry were in attendance. Peter Kerr From Lizard Yachts in Tin Can Bay alerted TCP to the meeting.

Bob Hockey, spoke of the current financial squeeze and how the boating industry should be prepared for the turnaround.

Speakers for companies dealing in "nanotechnology" and efficiency consultants explained how industry may improve profits and range.

Bob Lowe of MSQ spoke and made a point of how the new builders plate requirements applied to "the whole boat" or every part, which drew comment from Two boat builders that corrected Mr. Lowe as they claimed the MSQ web site made clear the protocol applied only to a formula of horse power and flotation. Mr Lowe then apologised and accepted the correction.

Mr. Lowe then announced that the proposed requirement for a "seaworthy inspection" for vessels being sold was cancelled due to budget concerns. This met with mixed reaction in that some do consider such regulation a benefit for boat buyers though concern of over-regulation was voiced.

A new easier visa system for super yacht crew was announced. The Queensland government has a strategy and department in place to attract this, hopefully, big spending sector of the marine trade.

Editorial continued from page 4

In spite of all that, I have kept TCP on the boil to protect and fight for the rights of cruising boaties.

Customs Much Improved!! TCP has achieved an amazing turnaround in the actions of Australian Customs and AQIS (quarantine). Reports are coming in from numerous ports and craft that the attitude of officials has done a 180. Besides the fact entering boats now know what to expect, officialdom is generally accommodating and friendly. Bundaberg Port is still a concern due to a history of complaints from yachts and the debacle with the vessel *Friction* reported in TCP #34 & 35 but we hope that the local business community and Port to Port Rally organizers will lobby strenuously for a more professional approach from that team. TCP has proved that sucking up to the gov isn't what makes positive change!

But Queensland still has a problem. As Customs winds down it's aggressive enforcement, MSQ hasbeen crankingit up. Some foreignboats are avoiding Australia due to this newer menace and a lot of Australian Boats are fleeing. Relentless revenue raising by water cops, impossible legislation and ignorance of it's own rules have left the state a laughing stock. Ports in Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines are filling up with ex-pat craft who's owners fly home when they feel the need and leaving their boats OS. That is taking millions out of an industry that doesn't need another handicap right now.

And it doesn't have to be that way. As a motorcyclist, I received mail from Queensland Transport recently outlining some new legislation and safety information. The new rules are utterly sensible and the safety information was accurate and useful without the bullying and punishment ethic of MSQ though MSQ is part of the same department. It's time the public demand that MSQ be shaken up if not disbanded altogether.

So that's it for me for a while, except for a contribution now and then.

TCP will continue to be the voice of boaties everywhere but I simply will not be able to devote the immense time and energy it takes to properly cover the issues that remain. The article in last edition by Andrew Crawford covering Customs was terrific. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Andrew for it. But do you realise that article was months in the making? It's still your rag. **And part your responsibility** so we hope to hear from those that are willing to stick their neck out and do the hard yards. Sometimes even a one sentence letter can make a solid point.

And Remember..... Support TCP Advertisers and tell them who sent you! They are the best of the best... See you out there as soon as..... Bob



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

The early days of SY *Empress*



Gusting 25 kts 'Empress' single reefed, hefted on the helm, ready on the main and a bone in her teeth.

Hello Bob,

A friend in Tasmania has sent us the letters page from TCP #35 with the sad news of the loss of *'Empress'* (OBE) in the Feb '08 gales at Airlie. So many *'Empress'* letters (Ahoy Jim Hayes), I hope you can handle one more.

She was a going concern when we purchased her from the Schultz family in Bowen, 1979. Reduced rig, Rugby motor, long cockpit, tongue'n'groove interior with a large ice box where the centerboard trunk and table used to be. Built 1926, kauri on spotted gum by Norm Wright Snr. for the wide waters of Moreton Bay.

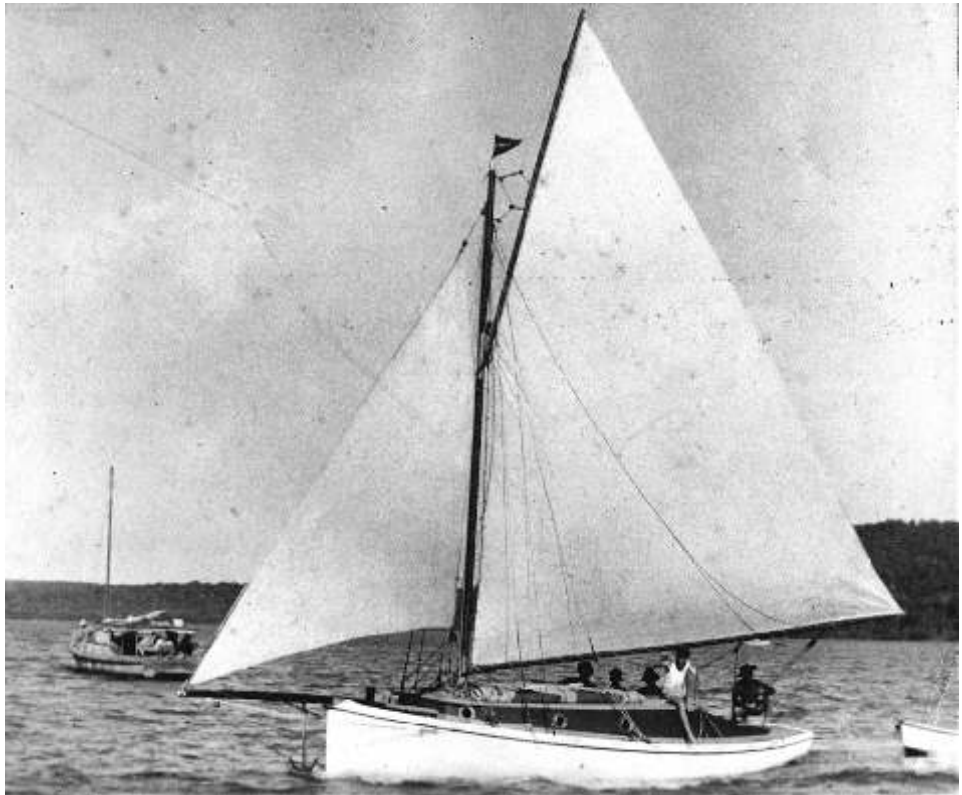
She was home for us while working on her in Bowen 'duckpond', laminating new timbers between all the fractured ones aft of the cabin both sides and fitting two thwartship beams supporting a bridge deck over the engine. This stiffened the old hull but compromised her best Queenslander feature; i.e. the long, deep cockpit leading forward into the cabin, enhanced by an extra wide hatch and awning over the boom. We replaced the Rugby with a Sabb 10h.p. diesel and set out for the Whitsundays, Christmas 1980.

In Shute Harbour we built the doghouse allowing us enclosed head room over the galley and chart table while sailing. New rig and sails were fitted in '82 at Hawke's slipway, Abel Point. *'Empress'* carried Viv and I as far as Southport that summer but excessive leeway when sailing to weather suggested that we return to Airlie to fit a long fin keel. At Graham Hawkes, we replaced her docking strip and built the fin keel of 8"x 4" blue gum shaped, stacked, copper bolted and faired. Now drawing about 4' 6" we gave her a deeper rudder and longer tiller. With the steel docking shoe she carried no ballast, hull shape kept her stable, though the bullets of Funnel Bay once laid her lee coamings awash. So south again in '83-'84, to sail into Broken Bay one busy summer Sunday. We missed out on the Louisades Jim, where'd you hear that one?

A few years ashore in Sydney with *'Empress'* on a Snails Bay mooring and weekend sailing had us heading north again in autumn '89. By now we'd acquired a bushy block on the far south coast north of Bermagui, a good port we thought for the boat but with mortgage rates at the time also heading north we chose to let our sailing home go at Airlie in Jan' 1991 to the engineer of Proserpine Council.

Now days we're high'n'dry, in a home made house on a clay shale ridge amid spotted gums deep rooted, not sawn, bent and fastened. Our latest *Empress* attends the local high school.

Regards,
Ian, Viv and Tilley Wood.



Taking it easy on Moreton Bay, 'Empress' 1943. Photo from Greg Cavell.

Bob,

Two quick points for your epoxy rash, actually three:

1) Barrier cream with gloves over it can cause a rash worse than the epoxy rash for some. I got such a rash and my doctor knew right away and seemed to wonder that everyone else didn't also know this potential problem. I guess it may show up in the medical community. So by all means use the barrier cream on your arms, but I would not use it again under gloves.

2) Best thing for the wrists and arms are the tyvek sleeves. They are also ridiculously durable. I have been using the same pair for years. This is just a url I got from the web, don't know this particular product.

<http://taurussupplies.co.uk/tradepriceworkwear/TyvekClothing.htm>

http://www.coleparmer.ca/Catalog/large_image.asp?sku=3368320&img=3368320.jpg

The ones I have aren't this baggy at all. I imagine one could make a pair with a sewing machine. Mine came with elastics, but they broke a long time ago, and doesn't seem to affect them much.

3) This Gougeon soap recipe is absolutely wonderful. Very gentle and effective, and while it goes through colour changes it will last years. Might go rancid in high heat, hasn't been a problem for me.

6 oz Joy, Dawn, etc dish soap (36%);
4 ounces veggie oil, corn, peanut, canola (21%);
5 ounces shortening, lard, Crisco (30%);
1 ounce corn meal (5%).
Mix in blender with up to 5% water to achieve correct consistency.

This isn't a waterless cleaner. They use it in the Gougeon shop with a bucket of water, since they don't have a sink. All crew members use the same rinse water, but the cleaning effect is better than with the waterless cleaners.
These are volumetric ounces.

Thomas

Thanks for that info Thomas,

I will include the tips when I catch up with the boat building and log. Will be using other materials for further work and hoping epoxy will be less of it but nonetheless.. Very good info, thanks for passing it on...

**Cheers,
Bob**

Avast There!

I have followed some of the articles relating to a spanish galleon wreck on Straddy. When I joined the Point Lookout SLSC in 1967, one of the first local stories related to me was about a spanish galleon that had beed wrecked down the Main Beach..real name now not used....Blue Lake Beach, and that after the passage of time, had now been engulfed by the sand dunes.

This local story is enriched by the fact that a traditional family at Amity Point is named Gonzales, and they have artefacts of Spanish origin, in their posession handed down through the generations.

There is a author in the Redland Bay area,(think he may reside on Coochiemudlo Is.) who has published a book on this subject and has located the site.

Apparently all he needs now is some sophisticated scanning equipment to pinpoint the remains.

Should someone know him or the book, a call to TCP would surely help.

**Cheers and Beers,
Mike Flanigan**

Hi Bob,

A couple of years ago I bought an **Eco2 water maker**. It was delivered promptly with plenty of help to install. Last year when in Vanuatu it sprang a small leak. I contacted the importer, peter@blueseasmachines.com who amazingly had a mate in Vila who was very familiar with the machines. Doug from *"Cartref"* had a look, identified, and advised Peter of the problem. A replacement part arrived in 10 days from the factory in the Caribbean at about the same time as Peter who was sailing his yacht *"Mindana"* up from New Caledonia! How's that for snappy service? A refreshing change from some companies service these days. And how about modern communications? Bloody marvellous!

By the way this simple water maker is the third I've had on various boats. One, an engine driven unit, delivered 60 lph the eco2 is 12v driven and delivers 55lph. It draws a lot of power but if run in conjunction with the engine it's not an imposition on the batteries. Not being cursed with sophisticated electronics it is a ripper. These comments, by the way, are entirely unsolicited.

**Lawrie Gubb,
Tropicalia Cavalier 37Airlie Beach**

Dear Bob,

I was interested to read Graham Shields letter of the #26 issue. I always wondered what happened to Len, there was very little in print.

I was a boat builder in Papua New Guinea in the 60 /70s and built two of Lens ferro designs for a Papuan fishing co op on Yule island in the Papua gulf. Prior to construction Len and I must have visited every ferro boat being built in the Sydney area, and in those years there were quite a few, including an ocean race, the name eludes me now though, I have snaps of Len and us on Yule Island inspecting construction, I will try and dig them out.

**Kind regard to you and your paper,
Ian Sutton,**

TCP WEBSITE FOUND

Brit living in Canada reading an Ausi boaty maggy !!! (down load version) is that global or what? (and of course living on a boat). Found your site through **Good old Boat** mag'n. "I'm in". This sort of reading should be on the Mandatory Equipment list for boats and very stiff penalties if not found on board. So its back to your site to sign on for a hard copy. Good Work old chap keep it up.

2SS Roy

More LETTERS SY *Hinemoa* History?



MSQ GONE TROPPO?

Hi Bob

Barb & I are good so is the boat, but the M.S.Q. has gone troppo. Both the Arlie Beach & the Mackay office, say on their mooring application forms, that you will be fined if found on a mooring without a anchor light on. Info. in the tide book only mention on anchor.

There are 50 odd vessels on moorings in Shute Harbour, some 20 would be bare boats with no lights on at night. It has always been that if you are on a mooring you do not need a light.

I rang the Water Police at Airlie Beach & they say we don't have to have a light on a registered mooring. So as usual it's all S.N.A.F.U. until they decide to send in the storm troopers.

Regards,
Allen

Hi Allen,

My understanding has always been that a known mooring field does not require a light. A boat on mooring suggests the vessel is not manned so how the hell can you?

Thanks for the heads up...any chance on getting a copy of the app? Airlie Beach falls under the jurisdiction of MacKay as I recall.

Cheers,
Bob

TCP NOTE:

Following is excerpt from MSQ website. Not easy to find, but if you go to MSQ website / search / bouy moorings/bouy mooring application. Download PDF application, then go to page 4, then to #6:

6. Only the buoy mooring authority holder's nominated ship is permitted to be moored on the restricted mooring. The vessel on the mooring must be Queensland registered, unless it is exempt from registration, and the buoy mooring authority holder must ensure that the vessel complies with the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 2004*.

Buoy mooring authority holders are reminded that under the *International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea*, all moored vessels are required to exhibit an all-round white light whilst secured to the buoy mooring. Penalties apply for non-compliance.

This subject seems to need some input / opinions. Please feel free TCP readers to send us your views on this issue!

Dear Bob,

Come on "boat owners" its time to say enough is enough! I have just received my boat registration account from the Queensland government. In 2008 I paid \$166.55. The 2009 account is \$393.85 an increase of just over 135%. How can this be justified?

Its bad enough as a self funded retiree watching your invested funds going down the gurgler without the government also mauling us at this rate. It really is time boat owners and boating organizations such as fishing clubs, yacht clubs, ski clubs etc stood up to be counted.

What is needed is for many thousand of boat owners to simply refuse to pay such a massive increase. She's not right mate!

Yours faithfully,

R.G. McCulloch

MORE BAD NEWS FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Dear Sir,

The Abbot Point State Development Area, just north of Bowen on the Great Barrier Reef and at the top of the Whitsunday's in Queensland, is now touted to be the port for the export of 1.4 billion tonnes of coal by Waratah Coal project. It will be developed by the Metallurgical Corporation of China with Clive Palmer backing and is to be named 'China First'.

The Bowen region is also poised to become an "industrial powerhouse and a second Gladstone" by the Queensland Government. They have gifted \$300million to the Communist Party of China owned corporation Chalco (Aluminium Corporation of China) to build what will be one of the worlds' largest alumina refineries/smelter. On the 20th anniversary of the horrific Tiannamen Square massacre we need to remember those many brave young people who were murdered by the most oppressive and ruthless regime on earth - the Communist Party of China. They died because they had the courage to protest peacefully for their rights to democratic freedom.

We are now embracing the same Chinese political bureaucracy onto our shores under the hollow mantra of "economic development to provide jobs for our children". Some may be fooled but many know that 'China First' will definitely mean Australians Last!!

Thankyou,
Maria Macdonald
President of the Residents Action Association, Bowen, QLD.



Dear Bob,

I am the owner of *Hinemoa* a 36 foot Kauri Sloop. For the last 15 years I have tried unsuccessfully to find her builder or designer. I believe that she underwent a major refit in Queensland sometime in the Seventies and was later sold to Mr. Peter Bateno of Paynesville Victoria.

The earliest owner I have found was the Late L.V..Reilly who raced her in Sydney during the late fifties. Mr Reilly later commissioned Ron Swanson to build *Du-Ma-Lee* which he competed in the 1962 Sydney To Hobart along with Horrie Godden and *Du-Ma-Lee's* sister ship *Kaleena*

The oral history that came with the boat was that she was designed by the late Burt Woollacott a much respected New Zealand boat builder and designer. But after extensive research in New Zealand and discussions with the Woollacott Association in Auckland there appears to no trace of her being built or being designed by Burt.

After a recent complete rebuild *Hinemoa* sailed to Hobart for the 2007 Wooden Boat Festival and is now moored at Sandringham Yacht club in Melbourne Aust.

Thanking you in anticipation,
Colin Grazules, SY *Hinemoa*,
colingraz@hotmail.com

TAXPAYER'S MONEY WELL SPENT???



Greetings Bob,

I took the photo of the new police patrol boat in Rosslyn Bay. The vessel has been recently commissioned at a reported cost of \$3.3million. This issue raises three questions immediately.

First with every tier of govt. bemoaning tight budgets how can this sum and the future costs be justified? Secondly, what is the perceived threat that the introduction of this vessel is intended to meet? Rapid deployment of SWAT teams to Keppel island?? Is Fiji surreptitiously inching closer? What function can be envisaged for a vessel of this size that is not already being addressed by SES, Coast Guard, Coastwatch, Customs, Quarantine Service, Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, or for crying out loud....The Royal Australian Navy? Thirdly what further level of surveillance and intervention is going to be implemented to justify the vessel's existence? Dare I mention the term Police State?

All the best,
Daz

Bulletin Board

The Coastal Passage

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A New Service of The Coastal Passage Web Site!

Just like the Bulletin Board at the Marina. A non-commercial service for boat owners and crew. Here is a sample of what you may find:

WANTED: Comfortable liveaboard boat (power or sail) for UK couple/yacht owners in UK to live on between November 09 – March 2010. 10 metres plus, just to liveaboard in Brunswick Heads boatharbour, Northern NSW.

FOR SALE: Manson 45lb Plow, Used Less Than One Season. The Label Hasn't Worn Off Yet! \$190.00

CHARTS TO TRADE:

I would like SWAP charts with other yachties. I will make up a sheet of what's available but mostly Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Pacific Ocean and Japan. I have more bits and pieces from around the world. All BA or Australian charts.

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TCP's Forum Customs Is Much Improved!

**The Man Behind the Screen:
Clearing Customs in "Oz"**

By **Ellen Massey, SY Heretic**

The whole way across the Pacific, people warned us about clearing Australian customs. Everyone seemed to have some third or fourth hand horror story of having all their food confiscated, or having to haul out to prove they didn't have giant mussels and trails of slimy seaweed clinging to the keel. And as always, the more beer the storyteller consumed, the more outrageous and terrible the ordeal became. At the Opua Cruising Club in New Zealand authorities on the subject often spoke their piece. The summer was drawing to a close, and cruisers were contemplating routes back up to the Pacific Islands or simply straight across the Tasman, but eventually, following the trade winds, many would end up in Australia either way. Hence, "If you thought Kiwi Customs was strict, just wait 'till you hit Oz." And then the tales would begin. "Sydney's absolute worst. You see, they train the new ones there and are so thorough you wouldn't believe." "Oh, no, no. I got a friend cleared in at Brisbane, told me that was the worst. Kept thinking he had firearms. Wouldn't believe him that all he had was a flare gun." And so on.

Nor did we escape these tales when we arrived in Fiji. At the Savusavu Yacht Club, with the beer flowing, it began again. "Well, you see, friends of ours cleared in at Darwin, going the other way, you know, up to Japan. They'd lost their invoice for the antifoul job they'd done. Had to haul before they could have a shower. And then more Quarantine people came and did a whole search of the boat. They took away any cans not from Australia. And honey. Make sure you finish all your honey before you get to port. We just took out spoons and ate it right out of the jar last time we were there."

While we took most of this with the proverbial grain of salt, we were nonetheless careful to have everything in order. We made sure to have a multiple entry visa good for 12 months upon each entry (the Sub Class 676); we e-mailed ahead and got a reply, this way giving several days more than the required 96 hours notice, put our antifouling invoice in a Ziploc bag, and bought only enough provisions to last the 1200 miles from Santo, Vanuatu to Cairns. We arrived in Cairns around midday under gorgeous blue August skies, and after radioing Customs, we were directed to a berth in one of the posh marinas. As we rounded the breakwater and looked around at the other boats with their satellite domes and gleaming chrome vents, we hoped aloud it could be done with quickly since we had no intention of paying for a night in the place. We had spent our passage eating up the cans and dried goods we had left, since we saw no sense in buying lots of food in Santo just to have it confiscated. Sometimes this had made for interesting flavor combinations, but we were happy that all we had left for customs to take were a few cans, some lentils, and some powdered milk which we had shunned in favor of tastier long life milk. We had even eaten all the honey.

Once in the marina slip, the surprises started. First, only two Quarantine officials walked down the pier towards us, instead of the hordes we had been told to expect. They carried no video cameras. An affable man slipped off his shoes before coming aboard, and sitting down in the cockpit to ask us some questions and fill out some forms. We handed over our antifoul invoice which he looked at and then he scribbled something on his clipboard. So that was all for that. No hauling, no fines. When we told him we'd gotten a reply to our advance notice and would he like to see it? he responded, "Oh no, it's all in the computer," and then came the next question, "Do you intend to take up residency in Australia?" "No." "Well, why not?"

The other official was a young blonde woman who was already below looking in our lockers and sifting through our stores, trailing a big yellow plastic bag behind her into which she threw all our powdered milk (thank God) and our few remaining lentils. She held it open for me as I tossed in the rind from the Vanuatu grapefruit I had been eating. She did not touch any of our cans, and was confused when I asked her whether she was going to. "Why, they're sealed!" she replied, and went on to ask if we had any wood or seashells aboard. I pulled out a few shells I had picked up in Fiji, and she placed them carefully back in the drawer. She turned over various wooden objects, inspecting them, before she reached a little carved figure a Chilean friend of ours had given us. She pulled him up from his place in the bookshelf, and as she did, his carved phallus popped over the edge of the shelf. She gave a puzzled look, and our Quarantine inspection was complete.

Please note: None of this is to say that cruisers intending to sail abroad should regard Quarantine, Customs, and Immigration lightly. They are important for keeping countries and their environments safe. My point is only that if you understand the laws of the country, and have your paperwork in order, clearing Customs in most First World countries is not a horror story.

I understand that some yachts have indeed had problems with Australian Immigration, Customs, and Quarantine; I am simply happy to report that our experience here has been of professional yet helpful and accommodating officials. We did not find any difficulties with obtaining an Australian visa: after a close reading of the Immigration website, it became clear which visa to apply for, and since we do not intend to stay in Australia longer than a year, the regular Sub Class 676 Tourist Visa worked well for us. This visa allows multiple entries for a period of two years after the date of issue, and permits a stay of 12 months following each entry. We were lucky to have good Internet and fax facilities available at the time we applied. Australia's 96 hour advance notice rule posed no problems for us, since we were able to e-mail ahead from Santo, and we received our reply immediately. We were also aware of Australia's concern over marine pests, and were thus careful to preserve our records regarding antifouling.

Furthermore, this article is merely a reflection of our own experience, and may have little bearing on the experiences of other yachts, foreign or domestic.

Dear Bob,

Australian Customs & Immigration officers were great. After 3 years of sailing amongst Pacific countries these officials conducted their duties with total respect for us and our yacht. Our exhausting ocean passage ending with their warm welcome and helpful local advise making us feel good to be back in Australia.

Warwick & Amanda Spratt, SV Wiikirri

Greetings Warwick & Amanda,

Congratulations!

You are the beneficiary of much hard work on the

Hi Bob,

I was interested to note on arrival at Mascot Airport recently ...
A. We were confronted with many signs indicating that photography was strictly not allowed.
B. As we queued after collecting our bags, I noticed two large placards stating that Channel Seven were currently filming a program within the Customs' Hall!

If Customs allows a TV program to be filmed within Customs Hall, what is their objection to a search being filmed or photographed on a yacht?
Surely it would safeguard Customs from any accusation of 'rough' or an inappropriate search, while providing proof and assurance to the yachtmaster concerned that the search was carried out correctly?

On the '96 hour advance notice rule', I'll bet airlines do not, indeed can't meet this rule. While Customs may receive an advanced passenger manifest 96 hours in advance, they could only get a final passenger manifest after the flight had closed and was about to depart. This would normally be well under 24 hours with an average of around 300 odd passengers these days. So why the huge difference and disparity for yachts with an average of 3 to 5 persons on board?

Finally, how can a small pleasure yacht at sea meet their requirement when Australian Customs do not have HF radios on which they can be contacted? It has long been standard equipment for every Harbor Master, Marine Police station, offshore yacht, commercial vessels, VMR station etc as it is the 'normal' mode of communications for offshore work around the world. VHF being the standard for inshore comms. If Customs used HF instead of insisting of either a phone call, fax or written advice (difficult in the middle of the Tasman Sea), the 'problem' would not exist. I believe the 'problem' is of their own making.

It's about time that Customs started using HF for offshore work and stop just 'monitoring' the frequencies. All that is needed is for their personnel to be properly trained and licensed, just like the rest of us.

**Peter Carton
Ketch Absconder**

Greetings from Bear,

Just wanted to let you know we escaped from Queensland with no lasting scars. The big issue up here is the quarantine problem with goods entering mainland Australia from islands in the Torres Strait. Yachts heading north to Darwin are bypassing Thursday Island because of it. While in Cairns, the local Quarantine office broadcast messages concerning this issue over the VHF, and when we responded asking for detail, someone from the Quarantine office offered to meet with us and go over the rules. Nice gesture. They do seem to be trying to make the system work for Yachts, but it is a difficult issue. We certainly couldn't fault them for getting their message out.

Also, we got a visit from a Customs boat while in Cairns. Three smiling faces and a good experience for us. They asked if we had a cruising permit and how long it was good for- when I started to go get it they said they didn't need to see it and that was it. They left after giving me some advice on how to catch barramundi- "get a big hook, big line, some bait, and throw it in the water- that's Australian advice, mate". I still smile when I think of that interaction.

The fly-overs from Coastal Watch are a little much, but they do their jobs professionally and courteously. I got so I missed the daily contact when we arrived in Gove.

**Thanks to a lot of hard work and the sacrifice of victims but
the laws are still there and more to be done.**

part of TCP and more importantly, the victims of former abuse that had the spine to stand up. Only a couple ports in Queensland still present a problem. What port did you enter?

Again, welcome home!

Cheers, Bob

Howdy Bob,

Port of entry: Cairns Yes we thought this may have been the case so we felt a little encouragement might be enough incentive to keep the momentum heading in the right direction.

Warwick & Amanda

Hi Peter,

Perfectly reasonable observations. I wonder if the filming you saw was a news item or for that propaganda vehicle "border security" that I've seen advertised as a TV series? In either case it does appear to be motivated by fear of not being able to control message. Besides forbidding independent recording there are other ways that customs has used to control image in a way that appears to me to be very corporate/adversarial but hardly a function of a government 'service' as I view it. For example, I believe customs works with google (read pays google money) to enhance it's web presence and knocking 'undesirable' competition back on searches. At least when I asked, Google wouldn't deny it.

As the example you site, it doesn't seem to be a law enforcement tool but PR exercise.

Customs stopped responding to HF about the time of the 96 hour rule. Reports do indicate they continue to monitor.

I agree that customs should take advantage of every reasonable resource to assist boats to comply with what is after all, the most severe entry protocol in the world, except for China. What company we keep!?

**Cheers
Bob**

Bob,

Yes, it was the 'Border Security' TV series. I was told when we were in Townsville, about three years ago, that Customs did monitor HF. At that stage I was actively involved in running the 'Sheila Net' and an American cruiser told me he had either seen or heard it (I can't remember which) when visiting their office. I can only surmise that Customs does not want to go to the expense of ...
a. Training all their officers.

b. Paying for their operator's license and

c. Obtaining a 'Base Station' license. Who knows?

Keep up the good work ... we need it!

Peter

15 metre + Foreign Boat sails past QLD insurance scheme but Customs “really” nice!

So my only conclusion is that you beat these guys up so badly that they are being really really nice to "yachties" now. Good on ya, mate.

We are working our way to Broome and then Cocos Keeling. We seem to be the only boat in the area that is not doing the Indonesia rally.

**Keep smiling,
Chuck and Dianne
Bear, USA**

Thanks mate and yes...

Your experiences are being closely watched and now that you are safely out of Queensland.... we can tell the 15 metre + American boats that have been monitoring your dash for freedom that you made it out unmolested.

I think it's possible that the state does not want the troubles visited upon them that Customs got for being so recalcitrant... but doesn't want to lose face by backing down either. The burden placed on a foreign vessel to obtain this special kind of insurance just to sail through Queensland is unwarranted and perhaps unenforceable.

If we don't hear from you again in the land of oz, have a great voyage and thanks for your help whilst here. You've left better than a clean wake.

**Cheers,
Bob**



Page 9 The Coastal Passage #37 2009

A Favourite Hangout - Refuge Bay, Scawfell Island



The author, Karen and Craig view Refuge Bay, and the view at the "halfway vista"

**Story & Photos by Jan Forsyth,
SY Sea Wanderer**

Through a curtain of mist that shrouds the coast around Mackay, we sail out from a soft grey world. Mist swirls around the boat but it is short lived once the shelter of the mainland is left behind. The turbulence hits and with the headsail and mizzen set we surge ahead. Scawfell Island, our destination is a remote shadow on the horizon.

Green water rolls over the bow. It is rough and getting rougher, but, the thrill of being at sea again outweighs any discomfort. The protected cockpit keeps us safe from the turmoil outside, 25-knot winds are raging off the starboard beam, and we feel the boat heave on the swell

as we surf along at a great pace. I feel free and exhilarated to be on the sea again away from the noise and flurry that is life on land. Although we always look forward to a stretch in a good marina, we are always pleased to leave when the time comes. The boat is well balanced and the trusty TMQ autopilot, nicknamed FRED, (Flipping Ripper Electronic Device) handles the uncomfortable conditions with ease.

Refuge Bay on the north side of Scawfell Island is our destination, a 28-mile trip and we are both pleased to be able to sail rather than have to use the motor.

Nothing appeals to the senses more than the whoosh of the wind in the sails as it pushes the yacht along rather than having to listen to a motor that hammers away

below dulling all power of thought.

Unlike me, the boat is in her element sliding gracefully across the troubled sea. While I'm tucked up in the cockpit trying to keep my breakfast down, and fighting the nausea that comes after too long a time in a marina and a few too many sundowners the night before. I am grateful that we are not setting out on a long ocean cruise, as I am not physically ready. It will take a number of days at sea for the body to adjust from the stability of the marina to a world of constant movement.

We arrive at the anchorage after nearly four hours of hard sailing. The bay, deep blue and peaceful, is protected from the south easterlies that reign in April. As I drop the mizzen I look up at the high granite rocks and thick foliage that clings in colourful abandon around the edges of this imposing bay. I wonder if the rock face would be accessible as the view from the top would be supreme, but the thought of scaling up is not in the least appealing to me.

The anchor is carefully set after a number of unsuccessful attempts, which take about 20 minutes, driving me mad with impatience at the wheel, but with a conscientious skipper who likes to make sure the anchor is properly set so the boat won't drag, I have to contain my frustration and follow orders. He is immune to my crankiness anyway, taking no notice of any suggestion that he is "taking far too long" and "why do we have to go round the bay again?"

We are out of the constant wind but not the roaring bullets that shoot down the rocky gullies. Some gusts must be up to 50 knots but we settle in comfortably and the skipper is content that we are safely anchored.

Time to relax and take in the scene, the thrashing and crashing from the trip over has taken its toll so we rest for a couple of hours in the cockpit. I look up at the landscape with its huge granite boulders clinging precariously to the cliff and marvel at the beauty of this imposing island. We watch from the cockpit as friends drop anchor close by and when we get together a little later a plan is formed to climb to the top of the granite cliffs. I am silent with dread at the thought of clambering up to the top, but to decline would be a cop out, so I reluctantly agree.

The trusty 3-metre tinny takes us ashore after our rest, the wheels are lowered to pull it high up on the white sandy beach, out of range from the incoming tide. I take a deep breath as I look up at the granite face we are about to climb, mumble something about wishing I'd stayed on board, and begin. No easy feat, I find that I'm sadly out of shape as I heave myself up trying to locate crumbling footholds with straining leg muscles and shaking feet.

The others race up way ahead of me, but I am happy to be left behind as no one can see my slipping and sliding as I try to grasp the unforgiving granite. Sweat rolls from my forehead into my eyes, a branch snaps as I grab hold and I slip back down. By now the others are up on the top. I have to rest a moment after making a tremendous effort to reach the half way mark. Pressing my body against the warm rock, I try to scale higher, in some places reaching above my head for a hand grip, and then slipping back down to the ledge that I'd just left. It takes all my perseverance and concentration to make the top.

continued next page...

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Sea Wanderer approaching Refuge Bay

But wow! The view is worth every scratch and aching muscle when I finally haul myself over the last ledge and sit on top of the world to take in the vista below. I forget for a while that I have to get back down as I gaze out over the bay at the stunning scene and the yachts resting at anchor way down below on an azure quilt. It is a relieved feeling of accomplishment to be there looking down from where we have come but this feeling is short lived as if I thought the climb up the cliff was difficult, the scramble down via a dry creek bed to the beach was deadly.

We moved off for the downward journey after I had collected my breath and steadied my racing pulse. The creek bed, embellished with small boulders and what I imagined would be waterfalls when it rained tried its best to kill me. Slipping and sliding down over rubble and rock, I had to grab hold of overhanging branches to save me from falling. With my feet pressed against the rock face, trying desperately to

maintain a grip, while in some places I just had to sit down and slid on my bottom to the next ledge, thankful there was no gushing water.

Scratched and exhausted I finally arrived back on the beach, where the others were already recuperating. Plunging into the cool water I soon recovered and felt a tremendous feeling of accomplishment and was damn glad I still had life and limb.

The next day dawned, presenting a repeat of the day before's weather; 0645 and we are ready to dive for dinner. Our friends pick us up in their inflatable and we're off for a hair-raising ride hanging on for grim death as we zoom over the wind-swept bay and around the point looking for a good dive spot. I found it great to be back in the water after five long months ashore, and although my wounds of the day before protested at another new activity, it was only a matter of minutes before I felt completely at ease and ready

to explore the underwater world of the island.

Visibility was marginal and there were very few spearable fish about but I didn't care I was in my element chasing fish and feeling weightless. My skipper, an experienced diver, armed with spear gun, stalks the reef and rocks in order to find our dinner. I move off on my own to explore rather than hunt. I hover over a rocky community of industrious fish, pecking away at the rock that feeds and protects them, while others dart in and out chasing intruders that dare to invade their territory, while still others stop at a fish cleaning station to allow a cleaner fish to remove their parasites.

I am not in the least bit interested in spearing fish, I'd much rather observe their antics while imposing in their territory. However, once they are on the plate or BBQ, I don't complain as long as I don't have to kill them. Meanwhile the skipper manages to bring in the first good size coral trout, his sheer determination makes him a success in the water and we soon have enough fish for both boats.

After lunch, the wind drops so we clamber into the tinny to explore the island from the water. Around to the windward side where giant boulders graduate to small stones covering the beach, it is still far to rough to linger, but I can see that without the choppy conditions it would be another attractive anchorage.

Motoring back, the engine slows and we find it is overheating; we have to stop. The wind is increasing and I begin to worry that we will have trouble rowing back to the boat. However, the trusty skipper puts on his mechanics hat, tinkers a little, swears a little more and we are mobile, I put the oars to bed thankfully and we are under power again.

Our friends Craig and Karen roar over in their dinghy soon after we return, they report breathlessly that turtle hatchlings

are racing down the beach; do we want to watch? We jump into their dinghy and hang on for dear life as Craig only knows one speed flat out! We skim over the top of the waves into shore and there they are - tiny turtles scampering over the sand and down the beach to the water. I wonder in amazement how they know their way to the sea from way back over the dunes. When they hit the water, they swim like hell to who knows where; dozens of them reach the water without mishap, as we are standing guard protecting them from the hungry birds that soar with agitated frustration above us.

Gently I grab a couple of babies for photographs and inspect their perfection then softly place them on the sand to continue their rapid pursuit to their new and treacherous home. Craig spots a dark shape hovering out in the water; waiting for dinner I presume, however it is too murky to distinguish the fate of the babies, we can't protect them in that element; the sea only allows the strongest to survive.

After three days in this captivating anchorage where there was much to discover and explore, we up anchor and set our course for the next adventure. For us sea gypsies it is time to face the gales and squalls once again on route to Brampton Island. We say a sad farewell to our friends who must return to their life on land in Mackay. Who knows when we will meet again?



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13.5 metre MONO	\$45.00	\$220.00	\$665.00	\$3790.00
13.5 metre MULTI	\$60.00	\$290.00	\$865.00	\$4930.00
15 metre MONO	\$50.00	\$240.00	\$720.00	\$4100.00
15 metre MULTI	\$65.00	\$320.00	\$965.00	\$5500.00
16 metre MULTI	\$70.00	\$345.00	\$1030.00	\$5870.00
17 metre MONO	\$55.00	\$270.00	\$820.00	\$4680.00
17 metre MULTI	\$70.00	\$355.00	\$1065.00	\$6080.00
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By Derek Ellard, Scruffie Marine

No matter how well the sailor plans his voyages, no matter how many lists are written, no matter how many items are ticked, there is always the looming, malevolent spectre of Murphy his black book of Law clutched to his chest. He hovers, ever waiting for the unexpected opportunity, ever ready to put the boot in. Some fifty years ago the callous bastard struck me hard below the belt one freezing January day in the UK. At Burnham on Cranch, on the East Coast, a yachting race was held every New Year's Day. It was called, aptly enough, "The Burnham Icicle." A race pretty much open to all comers. It was a "tradition" of certifiable stupidity, joyfully embraced by scores of brainwashed amateurs, one step away from these madmen who break the ice on Christmas Day in order to go swimming.

As a young lad of thirteen or fourteen and an eager cadet crew, I was proud of my agility and sheet handling prowess. The promise of light airs meant we of slight stature were in demand and there was a chance to crew a competitive boat with a good skipper. Summer and autumn racing seasons completed tick. Wet weather gear, woolies and life jacket, tick. Non-slip deck shoes, tick. Ready to win, tick.

So we launched the gleaming 14-footer from the Royal Corinthian's ramp without touching the water or the ice floes near the shore. My skipper for the day was a fiercely competitive Scotsman who didn't mince words but did threaten to mince anyone who dared to manhandle his beautiful new boat. We were both confident but only I was cold bloody cold the east wind probed every crevice and every orifice. Rob Roy shrugged it off - "Cold? Nae but a bracing breath o' breeze."

The five-minute gun saw us avoiding the pointy bits of the Dragons coming back upriver and then we were off! A good start starboard tack, seventh or eighth maybe.

Tales from Beyond the Script

To slip, perchance to scream - "The curious case of the missing testicles"

The boat heeling a touch to leeward, her jib nicely set, "a touch off". Cautious and cat-like we tacked with every shift and crept up on the leaders fifth, fourth, third a podium! There would be celebratory bagpipes and loud whisky for sure. Then the fickle breeze faltered, sighed and finally couldn't be bothered. The pathetic rays of sunlight gave up and went to Spain for the rest of the afternoon. The river mist multiplied, rose up in wraiths and quickly became a fog of freezing misery. The skipper fell silent, all but inaudible Gaelic oaths issuing from beneath tobacco stained teeth. Suddenly a nudge rapidly followed by a sinister scouring from aft a moored cruiser had crept up on us from behind and gently but thoroughly scratched our beautifully varnished gunwale with a rusty, once galvanized, bobstay. I looked back aghast as the captain furiously fended off the offending vessel. Well the new words I learnt that day were the sort that when uttered before our parents as in "What does **** mean Mum?" drew the response, "Don't ever let me hear you say that again!"

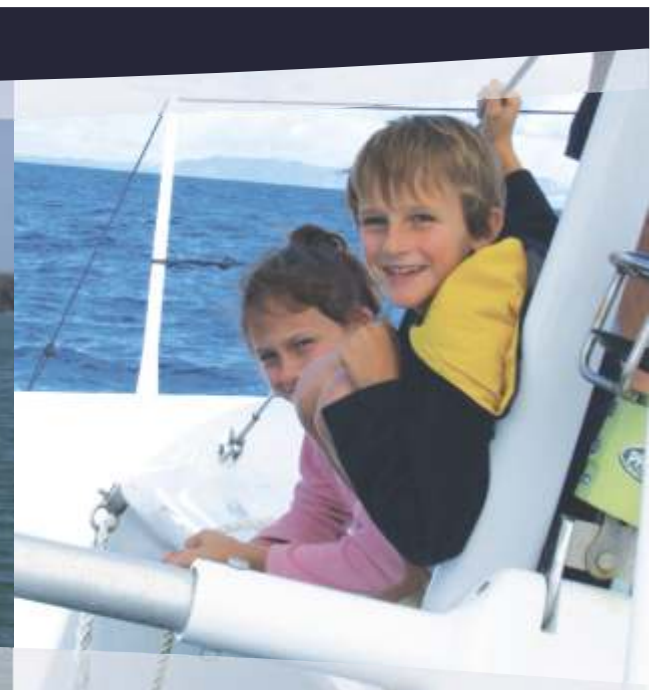
We drifted on sullenly for a while then the spell was broken with the immortal words "Fook this for a game 'o chinks I'm awa' in." So we paddled her back to the ramp, my teenage podium fantasies gone forever but at least I was warmer from the exertion. The ramp, normally acceptable, was now woefully inadequate as scores of shivering sailors came to the same conclusion this was a mug's game and the hot toddies in the hot bar were waiting. We fended off as best we could but few racing dinghies carried fenders, while many carried a reserve of "funny" words. It was nearly dark and below zero before it was our turn. "Hop out and get us a trolley, laddie!" Out I hopped but the ramp was steep and treacherous, I slipped, I fell, I dragged the side down and scraped her beautifully varnished mahogany bottom on the icy concrete. The skipper, hot smoke hissing from his nostrils, fried my ears with a blast of encouragement but to no avail. I got up, I slipped again, betrayed by the nonslip shoes, this time bum first into the iced water. The shock was truly profound, I may have screamed but the breath was forcibly ejected from my newly numbed body. Somebody laughed and said something like, "Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey." It didn't help.

Older, wiser men hauled the 14 back to the pen, leaving me to trudge up to the changing rooms alone, forgotten in the promise of the welcoming arms of the club bar. I rummaged in the scrum for my kit bag, enduring the elbows and taunts of my fellow cadets; "Who's the only one to fall in then?" I peeled off my sodden gear and "Oh my god, some of my parts are missing!" They had beaten a hasty retreat and slunk away into hiding! Would they ever return? Would I ever get to do "it?" Johnny French already had, apparently. Was it true about the brass monkeys? I whimpered as I towelled and changed into the consoling dry trousers.

The bar upstairs was a solid steaming mass of sodden sailors, but it was blessedly warm and even at the entrance I was sent reeling by a thick smoky stew of alcohol fumes and hot air. My father was in there somewhere. One of my mother's friends came up - "You look upset Derek, are you alright luv?" What could I say? "It's OK Mrs. W, they're back!" Perhaps not. I never sailed out of Burnham again.



Derek at the Maritime Museum, Sydney



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Let's Share Cruising Tips

Provisioning for cruising or
Olde Spanish Proverb:
"The belly rules the mind"

ATTENTION PRESSURE COOKER OWNERS:

Here is a tip you probably didn't know about. What to do with the fish that you can't eat fast enough before it goes off in your fridge, or if you don't have a fridge...

First, let's talk about how fish is tinned professionally. The fish is put into, and sealed in the can raw. The tins are then put in an autoclave where the high temperature kills the bacteria and cooks the fish.

Your pressure cooker is an autoclave! Here's how to do it:

Get a clean glass jar of any kind with a lid seal in good condition.

Clean your fish and put into the jar with a spoon ful of oil and maybe a dash of salt. Screw on the lid to barely snug.

Put in your pressure cooker, with a little water in the bottom, and steam away for about 40 minutes. While in the cooker, the heat kills the bacteria and cooks the fish. The expanding gasses escape the barely snug lid while cooking.

When the jar is cooled, and removed from the cooker, the difference in pressure and temperature causes the lid to vacuum seal. You should notice that the lid top is depressed like from the grocers shelf.

The fish should keep for months without refrigeration.

We have another report from a cruising boat that used this method to preserve goat meat in the Marquesas.

Use common sense! If the lid doesn't snap when opened, throw it out! **Check your results and practice!** If you don't do it properly, dangerous food poisoning could result.

This tip came from **Claudia** on **SY Ganesh** who has used it countless times with success. **Bon Appetite!**



Claudia

Veggie bags



Hi PJ,

I thought you might be interested in my potato and onion bags for your section on food and how to store it.. As well as keeping potatoes and onions I also keep sweet potatoes in mine and they might be good for other root vegetables as well. While clean sweet pots keep ok the refinery pots must be of the unwashed variety. I purchased my bags from a catalogue called "Innovations" but I think they would be pretty easy to make if you have a sewing machine. Essentially they are just drawstring bags (like the ones kids used to carry library books in) but with a zipper in the lower half of one of the sides. The bags are made from a canvasback material and lines with a black fabric. Anyway, I hope this little item is of use to you and I'll keep my eyes open for any other ideas along the way.

All the best and sail safe,

Lin Nemeth of the sailing catamaran 'Rose-A-Lee'



PJ

More tips on washing clothes - at sea

Hi PJ,

Fresh water is at a premium when at sea....so wash clothes with ammonia not soap.....do not rinse clothes, just hang up to dry....clothes are clean, sanitized, and the ammonia evaporates.....only the amount of fresh water to wash was used.

Susan Meckley,
Skipper W7KFI-mm AFA9SM USSV DHARMA

If you don't change direction you will arrive exactly where you're headed!!

A mould preventer & remover?

5 drops of clove oil, 2 drops liquid detergent, ½ litre water
Has anyone out there tried this? Let us know what you think of this "recipe".

What's yourcruising tip?

You can contact me at: pj@thecoastalpassage.com

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here's my story mate...

By Graeme Johnson

When I was 5 years old, my family fled Singapore for Melbourne on 2 successive boats, the "Empress of Japan" and the "Ceramic", via Sri Lanka and Winklesprute Sth Africa. I'm told both were sunk on the return journey.

A couple of decades later I worked on large ships like the *PJ Adams* as a fitter in Whyalla. There followed several years after, an 18 month sojourn on Percy Island. Then straight to rosebud farm in Kuranda where some young Americans were constructing a 60 ft. concrete boat in the early 70's. I just can't seem to get away from boats, not that I want to.

The increasingly serious accidents there and my shortage of funds encouraged me to leave for employment. The gear change lever of a motorbike in someones calf muscle, an active chainsaw bouncing off chicken wire into another's shoulder were part of it. Death by drowning at the boulders followed after I left.

Destination Townsville. After owning the boat *Southern Maid* for 6 or 7 years, Andrew Martin of Percy Island sold the vessel to Sid Ramsey, a car dealer from Townsville. From memory the sum that was mentioned was in the vicinity of \$21,000 but am unsure of its validity. However, I am sure of the amount of rust that was in the boat. This was about 1973 when I

The Final days of the "Southern Maid"

met Sid after quitting Percy Is. 2 or 3 years before. I was heading for the nickel site office and went to the wrong end of town where destiny would guide me to meet Sid again. He convinced me to work on the extensive repairs and also provided accommodation at his home. A nice arrangement and we got on really well.

I cut the old forward deck off and found the remains of at least one other deck below, probably 2. Then new cross members and deckplate were added followed by teak which someone else attended to. The aft cockpit was a surprise. I was underneath it in the cramped space chipping away at the hull when suddenly I could see the wharf thru the holes. Fortunately above the waterline, just. And the angle iron longitudinales were positioned with both legs welded to the hull which gave an impossible to paint environment for ferrous oxide to flourish. Not a bright idea. It was rumoured to have been built in Tasmania about 1948, but more thought should have gone into its construction. The worst of it was cut out and replaced together with new sections of plate. And painted.

What condition the keel was in remained a total mystery and ignored with good faith and a crossing of the fingers. Many months had passed and Sid was eager to put to sea. He wanted to head for the Solomon's but due to prevailing winds opted for New Guinea and Rabaul. His friend John came along together with myself and an advertised for 4th male member from Cairns. We stopped at Cooktown where another yachtie told us of the Woodlark Islands and advised us to take some rags and stick tobacco for the locals.

Next morning we headed out real early in a roughly northeast direction. The plan was to

get thru a channel in the reef but make enough mileage to get past another large reef farther out to sea before nightfall. Names escape me. This we managed with Sid learning to navigate on the way, as I learnt later. As we neared the waters of New Guinea the clarity of the waters was truly amazing; you could easily see the chain links down to 8 metres. We landed somewhere and spent the evening.

Woodlark Islands were approached not long after that, a huge fantastic circle of island and reef. A canoe came out to meet us and we handed out various clean engine rags and stick tobacco. Also gifts of the surplus fish we had caught. After prolonged enticing we photographed a shy teenage girl on the bowsprit. In the evening we went ashore and saw the king. Not really the king but you'd have thought he was royalty the way he stood by the firelight on the beach in his full length purple dress rag smoking a giant cigarette rolled with newspaper. He had it all. Next day another lad arrived in his canoe and tried to barter his \$2 note for my classical guitar. He might have been in the cabin for 20 minutes or less but time enough for his canoe to come loose and drift swiftly away with the tide never to be seen again. And his boat would have been very hard to come by. Weeks later I sent him a guitar care of the mission but have no idea if he ever received it. We're talking 1974. We traded for a few carvings and left for Rabaul to the east, surfing down a following sea, trailing lines and catching more mackerel and others.

Finally we entered Rabaul Harbour, trying to make radio contact with customs but only being heard by Lae. And there was the volcano, barely smoking. I was disappointed there was no action, being ignorant of the vast damage it could cause. Customs came out and that was quite smooth.

Sunsets were incredible, the best in my life. We went ashore, hired a car and got really told off by the locals for going up a one way street, the wrong way of course. I had similar experiences in the Philippines and was hard put to find any signs to guide me. It may have

been local knowledge or painted in miniature. Red paw paws, my favourite food after tim Tams, were abundant and quite cheap. Sid was staying longer and I decided to return to Oz by plane. I got a job somewhere and Sid returned a month later by air and said, "come on, we're going to Hong Kong." Amazingly, I'd had enough adventure to last me a few more months so I declined. Before beginning this trip a ladyfriend had expressed misgivings about my safety and I cheekily replied "if there's any problem, I'll get off!" Had 6 months passed I would have jumped at it. His friend John also declined as his wife Margaret was pregnant. Sid advertised and took 2 crew from Townsville and one from Rabaul Yacht Club. They flew to the yacht in Rabaul and shortly after left for Hong Kong. Sid's wife and 4 children would await him in Hong Kong. The halfway mark was Yap Island and it was there Sid sent a card or gram to John saying they were leaving for the last leg of their journey.

They never arrived. His wife waited increasingly anxious. The two most likely hypotheses were cyclones or pirates. If it was pirates Sid would have fired first and not bothered with questions. Sids wife furnished me with his fountain pen set. Women put more credence in psychometry than men. I placed it in the hands of a gifted man I'd known for years from a radio station. He had a proven track record. He felt the pens for a while and sifted thru the various theory's as to the boats disappearance, then felt himself onboard the boat caught up in tremendous seas. He said there were no sails up but a pocket handkerchief.

3 men on board, not 4 and no one on deck. They had had to decide whether to turn back or keep going as the weather worsened and once committed could not change their mind. From the mountainous seas a giant wave crashed down on the 'Maid' and it was gone forever. Not a single sign remained. Such was his description and possible but unprovable. Some may be amused at this, others will muse, ---maybe? To each his own. I'm glad I got off in time.

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Map 105, pg 150 Beacon to Beacon
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Reflections on The Brisbane to Gladstone Race 2009



Mike Kenyon photo www.kenyonsportsphotos.com.au

By Peter Holm, SY *Marriah*

The last week leading up to Easter was not supposed to be the traditional mad panic but it was! After our sailing preparation managed to be frustrated by lack of wind and absent crew, and the work on the boat proved to be ambitious within the time available. Thank God for Jim Kemp and his input. Even with that, Thursday morning saw a boat that looked part way through a major reconstruction rather than 24hrs before a major race.

Thursday evening's mad rush at least gave the boat the appearance of being ready. Last minute frustration like the new instruments refusing to work added to the stress. The lists were completed more by re-arranging priorities rather than proper completion.

Friday morning however we gave the appearance of being "ship shape and Bristol fashion". At least we looked good in the new "All Black Supporters" team colours.

Friends and family gathered on the "lawns" of the "Upper Cabbage Tree Creek Yacht Club" to farewell and wish us well. The forecast given with much confidence at the briefing on the Wednesday evening was backed up by the SeaBreeze website so we seemed set for a quick but not too demanding ride.

Our allocated PHRF handicap was comforting. Officially the slowest yacht in the race trailing the fleet would be acceptable not embarrassing.

Keeping out of tight manoeuvring games is always our aim at the start but giving everyone at least a minute and a half start is not. However we were not alone.

The reach to Garnett Rock saw us pacing *Pagan*, *Wistari* and the like even in the lighter than expected winds. Much of the fleet held higher than the mark and with the slow run down to make the mark at the end of the leg about two thirds of the fleet staged a restart at Redcliffe.

The slow beat across the bay to M8 is always our Achilles heel and this year was no exception. We did keep company though with *Pagan* and *Sassy* which

would not have pleased them too much.

The light conditions prevailed all the way down the North West Channel. Considering the conditions we were not disgraced and cleared the North West Fairway with several including *Pagan* astern.

Surprisingly the wind was more east than predicted and we set sail with working gear and NO spinnaker on the rhumb line for Double Island Point.

With occasional squalls and varying wind strengths these conditions prevailed almost all the way to Sandy Cape.

During the evening late Friday bright lights passed us several miles to seaward. Our guess was that *South Passage* with weather almost designed for her was stretching out and taking full advantage of her schooner rig and considerable waterline length and so it proved to be. The angle suited us as well as *Pagan* and *Dreamagic* fell further behind and *Sassy*, *Wistari* and several others could not get away from us.

However the quicks at the front certainly did. The radio sked on Saturday informed us that *Black Jack* had already finished and we still had the best part of one hundred and fifty miles to go. This race has become one of two vastly different divisions. In spite of all this we still held out hope to beat her on handicap.

Apart from the short run down the North West Channel the first useful spinnaker work didn't occur until Sandy Cape Shoal.

After toasting Doug Kemp at his "resting place" off Sandy Cape Shoal, reflecting on his 45 consecutive "Gladstones" and, personally for me, remembering his contribution to my sailing education, we got the kite up and paced *Sassy* around the edge of Breaksea Spit, easing away little by little until we reached the Breaksea Spit Light Buoy a little before dark Saturday. It had been a good run up the coast rather an armchair ride. Conditions on deck were dry and extremely mild. The only water to find its way on deck were two small waves scooped up on the bow. They also found the fo'rard hatch wanting. One drowned Ron while a later one cooled Terry down. "They did choose the big bunk fo'rard".

Entrants in the 2009 Brisbane to Gladstone yacht Race included only three yachts registered with the host club the Queensland Cruising Yacht Club. *Pagan*, *Sassy* and *Marriah*. While thrown together through necessity to form a team representing QCYC, the three yachts and their crews enjoyed a friendly rivalry highlighting the keen competition among the yachts even at the slower end of the fleet. These friendly rivalries arise in many sections of this race and are a hallmark of Queensland's "Friendly" Race. Peter Holm, skipper of "*Marriah*", provides us with an insight to the race within a race.



Peter Holm, (far left) with crew

The leg from the Spit Buoy to Lady Elliott Island presented the usual dilemma. Tide direction, wind angle, tack port? starboard? Run square? Or sail the angle? It was "navigators and tacticians work for their money" time. VMG calculations by the minute.

On reaching the Spit Light the port tack was obviously way out so the choice was "starboard wide with a gybe down the track" or "run deep". We chose to run deep. In hindsight it may have proved the slower option. In any event the combination of running deep and the flood tide provided us with an almost direct course to the waypoints north of Lady Elliott. We certainly didn't waste any distance over the twenty odd mile leg.

Two yachts had progressively moved to the north of our track. We assumed one to be *Sassy*. Another yacht had taken a more southerly track but we lost sight of her after dark. With a hundred miles to go it was good to have company and the thought that *Pagan* was still well astern was pleasing to say the least.

A squall heralded "gybe time" just after we cleared Lady Elliott. We decided on a spinnaker drop and delay the decision on sail sets after the gybe. The squall and some crew fatigue put some pressure on the spinnaker drop and gybe so it was not our best effort. However it was accomplished without mishap or major damage to crew though the cockpit crew gained a new respect for the power of the mainsheet.

The choice of the number 2 spinnaker initially for the run to Bustard Head was made due to continuing unpredictable squalls. Even squared up and running deep our course had us heading well south of our waypoint clear of "Outer Rocks".

At this time we were pacing two yachts off to starboard. One was showing exceptionally bright lights which we assumed (mistakenly as it turned out) to be *Sassy*. What we didn't know at the time was that *Sassy* and *Wistari* had opted for a wider course to the south risking distance for better boat speed.

continued next page...

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Reflections continues...

Abeam Lady Musgrave Island (his resting place) we toasted my dad Ivan "The Skipper". We remembered his contribution to QCYC, the Race and, to those who had known him, the influence he had on our lives, an influence which continues in its effect even though he has been gone now for almost twelve years.

This was my fortieth race over fifty two years. He had managed 47 over as many years, forty three of them as owner/skipper of "*Laurabada*" a vessel he designed and built himself. The feat was not interrupted by the vessel suffering broken masts on two separate occasions nor the massive explosion which almost destroyed the boat and came close to killing him. It does put what we regard as the pressure of preparing for the race in some perspective.

About halfway from "Waypoint Ivan" to Bustard Head we put in a gybe to hold closer to the rhumb line and guard against any major wind shift as we closed on the coast. Gybing back after a short run we found ourselves holding a direct line for S2, the first mark of Gladstone Harbour.

The lights to starboard continued to intrigue us. They were extremely bright for masthead or stern lights on a yacht. We still held hope they were Sassy.

As we approached S2 the usual convergence of yachts, at least at our end of the fleet, began. The mysterious yacht with the bright lights converged with us in the last few hours of darkness. Even though closer they were between us and the anchored bulk carriers and with the background of bright anchor lights we still couldn't identify her.

Daylight and S2 arrived at almost the same time. We dropped the spinnaker a conservative distance from the mark and prepared for what could be a windward beat from S2 to the first turn in the harbour at S12.

Our starboard hand friend proved to be *Charlie's Dream* who beat us to the mark by about a quarter mile. We rounded and set off in pursuit.

The leg from S2 to S12 proved to be a tight reach and with an increase in wind strength *Marriah* came alive as we charged up the channel.

Some of the most competitive sailing/racing can be seen each year from S2 to the finish. The competition between last and second last over the last seven miles can be fierce. 2009 was no exception.

After three hundred miles we had seven or eight yachts between S16 and the finish. We were disappointed to find that Sassy and *Wistari* had got past coming across "the paddock" but while they were ahead they were still in the

harbour yet to finish. We had them well covered on handicap and *Pagan* had yet to reach S2.

After initially closing the gap on *Charlie's Dream* up the first leg things remained steady from S12 to S16. On the last straight run we began to close with our big spinnaker. We must have had them worried because their spinnaker went up several sizes.

The slide up the harbour from there was uneventful apart from a short detour to avoid a small ship, the *Asphalt Carrier*, departing the harbour and needing to use the channel we were in. No we didn't catch *Charlie's Dream*.

The SES didn't disappoint and announced our arrival with a shotgun blast at 7.38 am and 40 seconds. We were 45th over the line out of 48 starters but another six yachts were less than an hour ahead of us.

The mayor's representative, courtesy of VMR, came along side to welcome us to Gladstone, handed over the skite plaque and the beer. The marina allocated us to A18 and before long we were "parked" - for me the 40th time.

We had sailed the boat to Gladstone. We had enjoyed two splendid evening sails in unusually mild even balmy conditions. We had kept the boat moving and sailed a reasonably efficient course. In hindsight we had not "raced" the boat as I believe Sassy and *Wistari* had over the last eighty miles motivated by the fact we were in front of them.

The presentation was held in the air conditioned (thankfully) comfort of the Gladstone Entertainment Centre Sunday afternoon. We surprised ourselves with our collection of "loot". We were always confident that we had beaten local opposition in *Pagan* and Sassy on handicap but we had not monitored the rest of the forty odd entrants. Our race effort earned us a third in our division and ninth overall out of 36. We scored third in the veteran class (veteran boats not skippers) against largely the same yachts. In spite of being way too optimistic with our predicted eight knot average in the middle section of the race we retained enough points to snare third place in the Cruising Division.

The real surprise was our "Runner Up" in the

Federation Cup team's event. Our good showing contributed to Sassy, *Pagan* and ourselves putting a QCYC team on the podium.

With "loot" in hand we adjourned to the Port Curtis Sailing Club/Gladstone Yacht Club to display our trophies in the middle of the table as we celebrated and entertained a succession of well wishers and visitors to our table. Each new visitor brought a new series of tall tales to tell which grew taller in line with the blood alcohol level.

Progressively during the evening declarations of "I'm never doing this again!!" slowly changed to "Next time we do this we should"



Peter Holm receiving the "third in division" trophy

"Marriah" is a Roper 57 Designed and built by Roper Yachts Sydney and launched in 1982. Originally rigged as a schooner she came to the 2009 race as a ketch. At time of printing she was cruising the Whitsunday's and planning to return to her home in Cabbage Tree Creek in August.

"Sassy" skippered by QCYC Commodore Phil Lazzarini is a 11.12m Kan Walker sloop launched in 1979 and "Pagan" skippered by Peter Kerr one of the original Tasman Seabirds sailed her first race in 1962.

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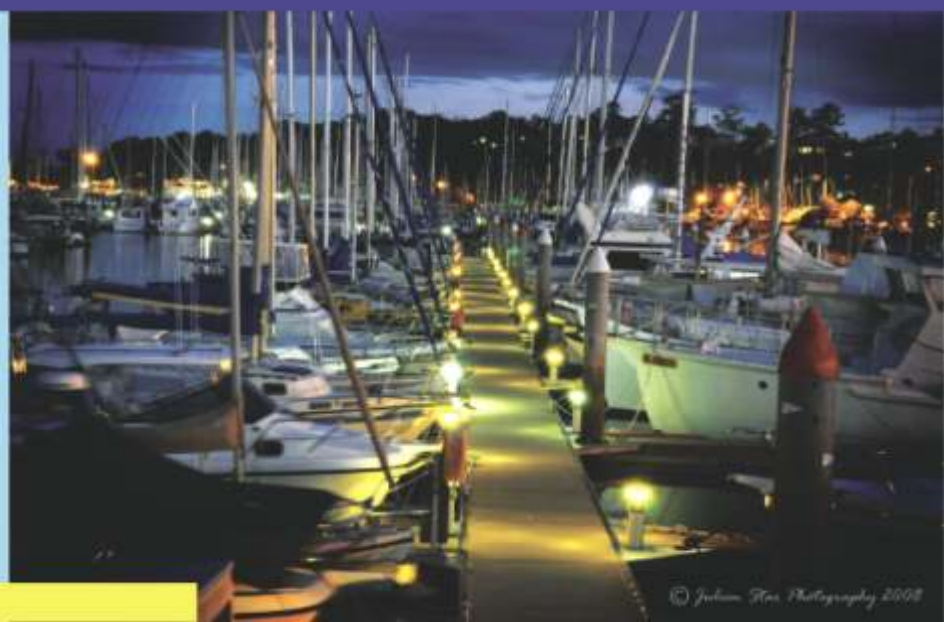
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Sailing around the world?

Wendy ponders the adventure...



Wendy

Story & photos by
Wendy, SY *Absolutely Knot*

A marina Friday night barby can be a wonderful, social, information and story swapping night, mixed with a few beers and the inevitable snugglers. It can also lead the unwary astray, possibly in more ways than one, but I digress. My Skipper and I were nicely settled in on our deck chairs, enjoying a particular Friday 'do' at the Bluewater Marina in Cairns, when the inevitable happened; someone came up with a story about someone they knew who had sailed around the world. The romance and sheer possibilities of a journey like that took my breath away. I thought to myself, self I thought, if these people can do it, so can I!! After all, I had at least sailed all the way up from Brisbane to Cairns, tackling squalls, high winds, night navigation, lost anchors and curious dolphins, among other things. Besides, our boat is bigger than theirs, which must count for something, right?

Let me mention right now that I am usually the first to stick my hand up for an adventure before thinking it out you know, the 'open mouth before brain goes into gear' type. It has gotten me into a fair bit of trouble over the years but has also led me to some incredible experiences. Consequently, I tend to live a lot of my life sitting on a pendulum, swinging between 'OMG what the hell do I think I'm doing?' and 'Yeehaw, bring it on!'

The next morning I casually asked if my Skipper had caught the most interesting conversation of last night, referring of

course to the 'sail around the world' stories. Upon an affirmative response, I excitedly outlined my (sketchy) plans for sailing around the world. The Skip merely raised his eyebrows and asked when I wanted to leave. How about next week? The rest of the day was spent explaining to me in great detail why it really wouldn't work leaving that soon money (lack thereof), visas, passports, boat preparation, etc, etc. As you can imagine, I was feeling seriously deflated; a great adventure knocked on the head by the very person I thought would have jumped at it. Said person then mentioned, even more casually than I had, that if I was so keen on sailing out of Oz, perhaps I could consider joining the rally leaving Darwin for Indonesia. Yes, yes and yes!! So began 18 months of planning, spending, more planning, more spending and then even more spending. So much for leaving next week! It wasn't until much, much later that I realized the Skip had been angling to join the Sail Indonesia rally all along....

I seesawed between wild enthusiasm and absolute terror at what we were contemplating doing. Questions bounced around my brain, leaving me anxious and sleepless. Will we have enough water/petrol/ diesel/food/toilet paper? What happens if something gives up the ghost,

like my bread maker or lady shave? What if the steering wheel falls off? What if, what if, what if.....

Someone asked what our trip plan was and after receiving a blank look from me explained that a trip plan is an itinerary of anchorages, stopovers and places to visit with a loose time frame thrown in. I confess to saying that my trip plan consisted of getting to Lowe Isles and that I would review it after that. One step at a time is my motto.

Finally, after an incredible sendoff thrown for us by Rick the marina manager and by then a personal friend, his partner Joanie and seventy of our friends and fellow boaties, we choofed out of our pen for the last time and turned left....er, to port. I will own up to shedding a few tears upon leaving; Bluewater had been our home for nearly two years and we were leaving behind many wonderful memories and even more wonderful friends.

albeit a windy one, and no problems had done a lot towards lulling me into a false sense of security.

A few anchorages, enough fresh fish to see us through, several anticipatory crocodiles and many sail adjustments later, we were suddenly through the Albany Passage and at the very top of Australia, right on sunset, madly taking photos and congratulating each other for having achieved such a milestone.

As happens when you are anticipating a nice, secure, comfortable anchorage after a big day, the weather conspired with the sand banks at Cape York and chased us away. My Skipper decided the safest thing to do was sail on to Seisa. All my long forgotten anxiety surfaced in triplicate as I watched, horrified, the plotter and messy radar showing islands, reefs, markers and other unidentified blobs in wild profusion. The Skip sent me down to the galley several times to make strong coffee to help keep him focused, but when he suggested I have a go at cleaning the head at close to midnight, I began to suspect he may have been keeping me away from the nav station.

Never had I been so happy to drop the pick, safe and sound in Red Island Bay, far away from the island, any other boats (the bay was empty) on good holding mud and sand. The next few days were spent in shopping therapy and carting water by jerry to ensure a good supply of long, hot, therapeutic showers. All very, very necessary as we were facing **the crossing**.

Continued next page...

I see-sawed between wild enthusiasm and absolute terror at what we were contemplating doing. Questions bounced around my brain, leaving me anxious and sleepless. Will we have enough water/petrol/diesel/food/toilet paper?

Within eight days we were safely anchored at Lizard Island, bread maker, lady shave and steering wheel mercifully intact, and enough water thanks to the previous week's rain, to have full tanks. A lot of my anxiety had eased. A trouble free week,



Eddie at "The Top"

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An interesting sunset shot reflecting on A.K.'s windows



Yahoo Wahoo!

The Skip checked and rechecked the weather, both at Seisa and at Gove and finally decided that the time would be right on Monday. After a nice rest and the aforementioned therapy, I was feeling reasonably resigned to whatever may happen on this, for me particularly, huge trip across the Gulf of Carpentaria.

As we pulled away from Seisa, I checked our emails one last time. There in the inbox was one from friends who had crossed the Gulf the week before. They had sailed in 30 knots with 3 metre seas yikes! Oh well, we were committed and while I have every faith in my Skip, I was still a bit nervous about what could be.

The first three hours we motored to help the sails, as the wind maintained a steady 5-10 knots. A huge old sea turtle trundled past, complete with barnacles and weed growing on his shell, breathing "hhhhiiiiiii" as he popped his head up to check his bearings. The long rolling swells were like nothing I'd ever encountered before, being used to the short chops one gets inside the reef on the East coast. My tummy rebelled at this unusual motion, and while I wasn't actually sick, the nausea kept me from eating much for the day. Just after lunch the motors were started again as the wind had once again died down.

I was on watch while my Skipper had a kip, and had been congratulating myself on what a good job I was doing, when I noticed that the fishing line being trolled out the back had very little left on the reel. How unusual, I thought to myself. Perhaps we've caught a bit of weed and it's dragged the line out bit by bit. I grabbed the reel and started to wind it in. Bloody big bit of weed; it wasn't giving up too easily. After puffing and panting for a short while I eventually gave in and knocked the motors back to idle to give myself a bit more of a sporting chance. This of course brought the Skip up to see what was what. He looked at the tip of the rod and noted a slight quiver. A fish you idiot, not weed. Hah, the Skipper's fault - there was two kilometres of line out he had forgotten to put the ratchet on. We finally landed a 12kg Wahoo, and I'm not sure who was more exhausted; us from reeling in all that line or the fish from being towed at 6 knots for goodness knows how long. The nausea forgotten, we ate (some

of) him lightly floured, cooked in butter, finger food extra ordinaire.

Coast Watch flew over just before dark and logged us onto their system. Friendly and professional, it felt good that someone knew where we were. No land in sight in any direction, not even on the radar.

The miles were steadily eaten up as we continued on under sail alone, making use of the 15-20s that had appeared. At one stage our boat reached 10 plus knots surfing on top of a particularly large swell (that's fast for us). It got noisy with the seas breaking on top of the swells, banging under the boat and slapping the inside of the hull as the beam on seas rolled into and under us. I tried to sleep from about 10pm, but each time I nodded off, another big bang jerked me awake. I gave up at 2 in the morning. The Skip hit the sack and I saw the morning in. There was no moon, but a brilliant starry sky, the kind you only ever get away from the pollution of city lights. I spotted a bright light on the horizon behind us and straightaway checked the radar for a boat-nothing. After 15 minutes I decided that it was a bit too high to be a mast light which must mean it is, I know, the morning star! It was a friend on that lonely watch so when I looked one time and it had disappeared; oh no! I straightaway checked to ensure we were still going in the right direction all was as it should be. Silly woman, a big black cloud was the culprit, hiding my friend for a few minutes. As the sky began to lighten my Skip emerged, I made coffee and we sat together and watched the sun rise. One of those magical moments.....

That day brought visitors. A large booby tried to land on the boat but was put off by one of the jibs that occasionally flapped along the edge. He tried and tried, circling the boat, looking, looking, looking, but eventually gave up and coasted away, presumably towards an easier landing. In 200' of water, in the middle of, well, the Gulf, a striped 6 foot long sea snake swam past alongside the boat. Minutes later my Skipper spotted a large sailfish, surfing the swells, right on the surface. It followed us for ages, close enough to allow a good look but unfortunately not a clear photo. A pod of dolphins spotted us before we

saw them and elected not to come in too close, but later that day when the wind had died down a young couple came and played around the boat.

My Skipper had the spinnaker up by the afternoon, along with the main and one of the foresails; an interesting configuration that seemed to work. I love our kite being up, it is big and colourful and besides increasing our sailing speed, it provides a goodly amount of shade when the sun is in the right place of course.

At around 4pm Coast Watch called to request confirmation of our position, noted we were on their radar and wished us a pleasant nights sailing. By evening the wind had picked up a bit and we were averaging around 5 knots. We spent an uneventful night, particularly as I slept a bit better, probably more to do with exhaustion than with less noise. My Skipper got a decent sleep and that, combined with endless star gazing and coffee drinking, ensured a smooth transition to the second morning in the Gulf. By pre-dawn the wind had died and the motors were started. The Skip thought we might make Gove before nightfall but it wasn't to be. The wind died completely and the tide turned, running against us, slowing us down.

My old enemy 'Anxiety' surfaced again as we turned into the harbour with its accompanying lights everywhere, most lit, some not and of course the blaze that is the refinery, making everything else appear even blacker. A quick phone call to the yacht club ascertained where they were and we headed in that direction, bearing in mind the advice to "anchor at the back & you'll avoid the wrecks". Suddenly, looming up the side of the boat, was a grey shadow! Another boat, and without a light on. A quick find, plug in and switch on of our spotlight revealed we were sailing into an anchorage full of boats, none with lights. Add to that numerous floats, markers and buoys and we hastily reversed, turned around on the spot as only cats can and headed back out. To all those people in that anchorage, I apologize for shining my 1000,000 watt spottie into your windows at night; hope it didn't startle you too much. And yes, the Skip did suggest it wasn't a good idea as a sweep at waterline would do the trick.

We anchored well behind every boat my trusty spotlight could pick out and the blissful silence when the motors were turned off at last pounded in my ears. **We'd made it.**



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Having a Whale of a Time

By Stuart Buchanan, SY *Pluto*

Well, it's that time of the year again when the humpback whales are making their annual pilgrimage along the Queensland coast. According to the experts, the humpbacks are breeding like rabbits, with their population doubling every seven years.

That's good news for the whale watching boat operators and for the thousands of tourists swept along in the current fad of oohing and aahing at these giants of the deep. But it's not particularly good news for the thousands of people like me who enjoy going down to the seas in small boats. You see, over the past few years while I've been making *my* annual pilgrimage along the Queensland coast in my ketch *Pluto*, I've seen humpback whale numbers increase to the extent that I consider they are becoming a real threat to smallcraft safety.

Pluto weighs 5 tonnes, a mature humpback comes in at about 48 tonnes. It doesn't need Einstein to calculate that should those two objects collide, *Pluto* and I would come off second best. I'd hardly have time to grab a lifejacket and a bottle of rum before my trusty old boat sank beneath me.



I was fascinated the first time I saw a female humpback and her calf frolicking only 50 metres away from the yacht. Great stuff. But each year more and more whales started popping up around me, to the extent that I'd alter course rather than risk the chance of a collision by going anywhere near them.

One year when I was 30 miles off the central Queensland coast, sailing in a blustery 25 to 30 knot south-westerly from the Percy Islands to Digby Island, something towards the horizon caught my eye. It was a whale, leaping clear of the water about a mile away on my starboard side. Until then I had never seen a whale breach, and even from that distance it was an awesome sight. With more than a passing interest I tried to keep the monster in sight. A few minutes later I saw a blow; the whale was closer than before, but well behind me. I relaxed somewhat, assuming it was travelling in the opposite direction.

Digby Island lay 9 miles ahead. Even with a tiny headsail and two reefs in the main, *Pluto* plunged along at 8 knots on a port reach, the starboard gunwale constantly submerged. While anticipating the comfort of soon being anchored behind the island, I got the shock of my life when a whale suddenly surfaced about 20 metres away to starboard, barrelling along on a 90° collision course with the yacht. I instinctively pushed the tiller over, turning the vessel straight into the wind. The headsail backed, the yacht stopped dead in its track as large waves pounded the deck. I hadn't felt a collision, and the whale had disappeared, but I was extremely shaken by such a close encounter. Being single-handed, it took about ten minutes of hard wrestling with flogging sails to get back on course.

I had no idea if it was the same whale I had seen breach earlier, but the vision of its shiny, black body erupting from the boiling ocean was etched into my memory forever. I began thinking of books I had read about boats that had been damaged and sunk by whales.

Twenty minutes later, I almost levitated out of the cockpit when a whale surfaced and lunged so close to the yacht that I didn't even have time to turn the tiller. The giant disappeared somewhere beneath the centre of the boat. Again I didn't know whether or not it was the same whale, but this time it had been close enough for me to see scars and barnacles on its body.

I was at my wits' end. What was this bloody thing trying to do? I hadn't a clue. But if it wasn't for the 30 knot wind, I'm sure my hair would have been standing on end. I stood in the cockpit, hanging onto the rigging with one hand and holding the tiller in a vice-like grip with the other, my heart pounding, poised for another confrontation with Moby Dick. I was as taut as a coiled spring. If someone had said boo to me I would have jumped out of my skin. Thankfully I reached Digby Island without further incident.

Safely at anchor, and after a few quick rums to settle my jangled nerves, I shakily opened a book about whales that I had put aside to read at a later date. It stated that during the mating period male humpbacks show aggression towards each other by lunging, fluke slapping and breaching. Other reasons for breaching were thought to be the whale ridding itself of whale lice or (believe it or not) "inspecting the environment".

That got me thinking. Had Moby Dick lunged at *Pluto* thinking my little yacht was a competing male, or was he just preparing himself for a good look around? In the noisy, rough conditions such as we had been in, do whales have the intelligence to know what's happening on top of the water some distance away? If whales are so smart, why do they beach themselves or become entangled in shark nets?

Which got me thinking further. There are bright people and dumb people, right? You know, the dumb people are the ones who drive out of side streets onto main roads without looking. So there's every chance there are bright whales and dumb whales too. So imagine this dumb whale is swimming along and decides to have a look around, and at the same time get rid of some whale lice that have been irritating him for a while. Out comes Moby, and there, dead ahead and below him is my little yacht. Surprise! Surprise! Well, that's about it, isn't it? A quick burial at sea and Bob's your Aunt.

As whale numbers increase, will they become as much of a pest as salt-water crocodiles are in the north? I mean, anyone who goes for a swim in a coastal creek north of Gladstone is one sandwich short of a picnic. It's all very well to protect crocodiles, but

how many attacks at popular tourist resorts would it take before the public demand that decision be reversed? It was recently reported that some crocodiles in Torres Strait were lining up at the Thursday Island State School for their little lunch. How many more fatal attacks by dingoes on Fraser Island will it take before Roger the ranger permanently relocates them to the big kennel in the sky? It took only one fatal shark attack in Western Australia to start a hunt in an attempt to shoot a protected white pointer.

Will whale watching develop into an adventure sport? Will it become too dangerous to go down to the seas in small boats? But suggest the idea of bringing back whaling and there's every chance you'll be condemned by a public who have been brainwashed into believing that whales are sacrosanct. Sure, whale calves are beautiful mammals; so are poddy-calves, lambs and joey kangaroos, but most of us can hardly wait for *them* to grow up so they can be dinged on the head and chucked onto a barbecue.

Unlike the Japanese, who don't seem to mind the odd whaleburger or two, I'm not advocating the return of whaling; after all it's me who's trespassing on their territory. I'm just saying that as more and more of us go down to the seas in small boats and fewer and fewer of us return, our loved ones might demand something be done.

In the meantime it looks as though we boaties will just have to take our chances and keep the lifejackets and rum bottles handy to the tiller.

Kay's note: The photo above was taken on White Bird early morning heading north between Airlie beach & Bowen. A favourite "whale route". After I took this picture the whale got closer to the boat and turned his head up to have a look...I was in such awe I didn't take a picture, but I will never forget its eyes and barnacles...a magic moment!

Read more by Stuart Buchanan!

See the selection of famous books by Stuart at the new "SHIPS STORE" at the web site of The Coastal

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The Quest for the Alice Springs Yacht Club



By Julius Sanders, MY Nova Keria

Met an interesting guy the other day. He was, beer in hand, propping up the wall in the Oasis hotel's Sports Bar in Alice Springs. He tried to tell me that there was a world famous yacht club here in Alice Springs. Yeah, sure. Pull the other one, it's got bells on.

Here I am in Alice Springs. Not a drop of water outside of a tap.... The Todd, bone dry again. The McDonell's ranges shimmering in the desert sun. The town that is, of any other town in Australia, furthest geographically from a navigable stretch of water. Yet this was the home of the Alice Springs Yacht Club.

This is serious. There WAS an Alice Springs Yacht Club. I say was, as their past home, The Oasis Hotel, hasn't even heard of them. Well, at least the two young things behind the bar hadn't heard of them. They actually thought I was pulling some kind of a prank. You know the LOOK!! Old fart trying it on with young girls. Or maybe you don't know. Anyway, after convincing them that I was serious I caught the eye of a local veteran drinker.

I walked over and I did not have to say a word. The history of the club came forth. And what a history it was. Four Sydney to Hobarts including one win. Racing in

Britain at Cowes and on and on. This bloke has GOT to be pulling my leg! But no, he was fairdinkum.

So I went hunting for more info. Baza, Newton, Jene and Mic were another mob of Alice locals that I approached. The responses to the question, "Where is the Alice Springs Yacht Club?" were split 50/50.

B^*Sh%T, W@%K*R and Pi\$off were the more vocal responses while the quiet thoughtful ones started reminiscing. "Weren't they the crazies that were training in the Todd" and "Yeah, one of the guys was an Ambo but has moved to another town" and "Doesn't the other guy own a pub in Barrow Creek?"

So further research was needed. No more beer fogged conversations. Solid hard evidence was required. A hard hitting expose on the Alice Springs Yacht Club! With PRESS card stuck in hat band and BIG camera with BIG flash in hand, I set off on a journalistic quest. Sleuthing as I went. And I did what any modern day sleuth does to get to the truth. I googled it! Bingo, the first hit was all I needed.

This excerpt from the **ALICE SPRINGS NEWS, February 3, 1999** shows that they were once a force to be reckoned with in the yachting world.

"From the bows of the Sports Bar at the Oasis, the Alice



The OASIS at Alice Springs, & Baza, Newton, Jene and Mic at the Oasis Sports Bar.

Springs Yacht Club under Commodore Paul Herrick, plot and plan their future. In 1998 they steered the Spirit of Alice from Sydney to Hobart in the quest of back to back Class honours. 1999 however will present the "salties" with their ultimate challenge. They plan to participate at the Cowes Regatta in Britain, probably the most revered event in world yachting. Following the Mariner's Dinner late last year a squad has been named and are in training. Fund raising is at fever pitch, with encouraging results as already the Ayers Rock Corporation have been lured as major sponsors. Formative planning has been entrusted to Jeff Rose, an international yachtsman now residing in town. What a sight it would be to see the Territorian spinnaker in full bloom coming through the mist at Cowes!"

Past glories indeed. What great memories those blokes would have. From the middle of Australia to Bass Strait and Tassie. The Alice Springs Yacht Club wins class honours in Sydney to Hobart! Congratulations on a world class effort.

So there you have it. Boating stories abound. You can find them in the driest places.

Cheers from your "Far Northern Correspondent"

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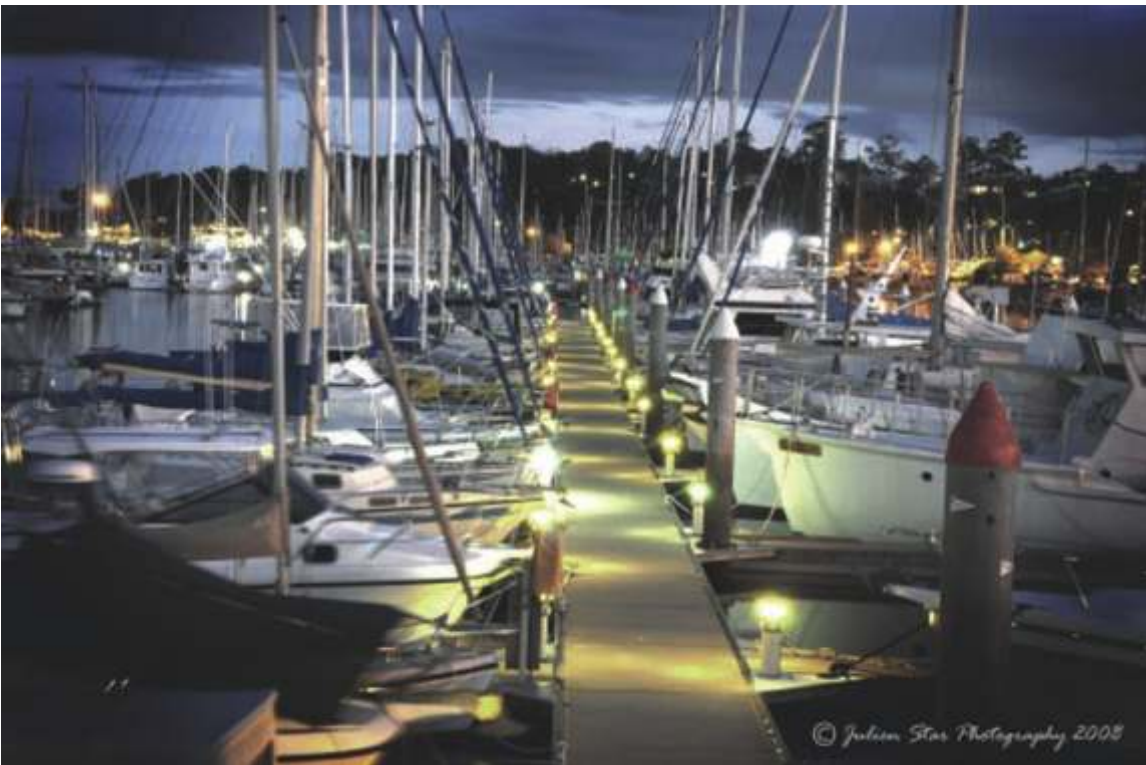
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This August **Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club** is offering you the chance to win a berth worth \$132,000, a Suzuki car, a CruiseCraft boat and heaps of cash and other prizes.

All this is in honour of the inaugural Moreton Bay Classic fishing tournament which will be held from Friday August 7, to Wednesday August 12. Anyone can enter the Classic which is the first of its type to be held in Brisbane.

The Classic offers three main forms of fishing: Offshore, Inshore and Foreshore. It has been designed for all family members with fishing only part of the occasion. Other events include entertainment; prize draws; special events and activities; product and information displays; presentations and expert information on matters including marine practices and safety, management of environmental resources and bio-mass; demonstrations, games and dining experiences. Subject to final agreement it is hoped the prize pool will be worth more than \$200,000.

As part of the Classic the Club is also selling raffle tickets which are available to buy now and selling fast due to the amazing prizes on offer.

1st PRIZE: 12m marina berth valued at \$132,000 *plus* the first 12 months operating levy valued at \$2,000 *plus* the first 12 months full membership at the Club valued at \$515.

Total 1st Prize Value is \$134,515!

2nd PRIZE: \$5,000 MBTBC Voucher

3rd PRIZE: \$2,500 MBTBC Voucher

4th PRIZE: \$1,000 MBTBC Voucher

As Commodore John Cardillo says: *"The raffle is aimed to give everyone a chance to be the owner of one of our brand new berths. We're only selling 5,000 tickets so there is a very good chance for people to win compared to something like the RSL raffles where over a million tickets are sold."*

Tickets are \$50 each and are available to buy now at the Club. Entries close on August 12th or until sold out, the prize draw will be held on presentation night, 12th August.

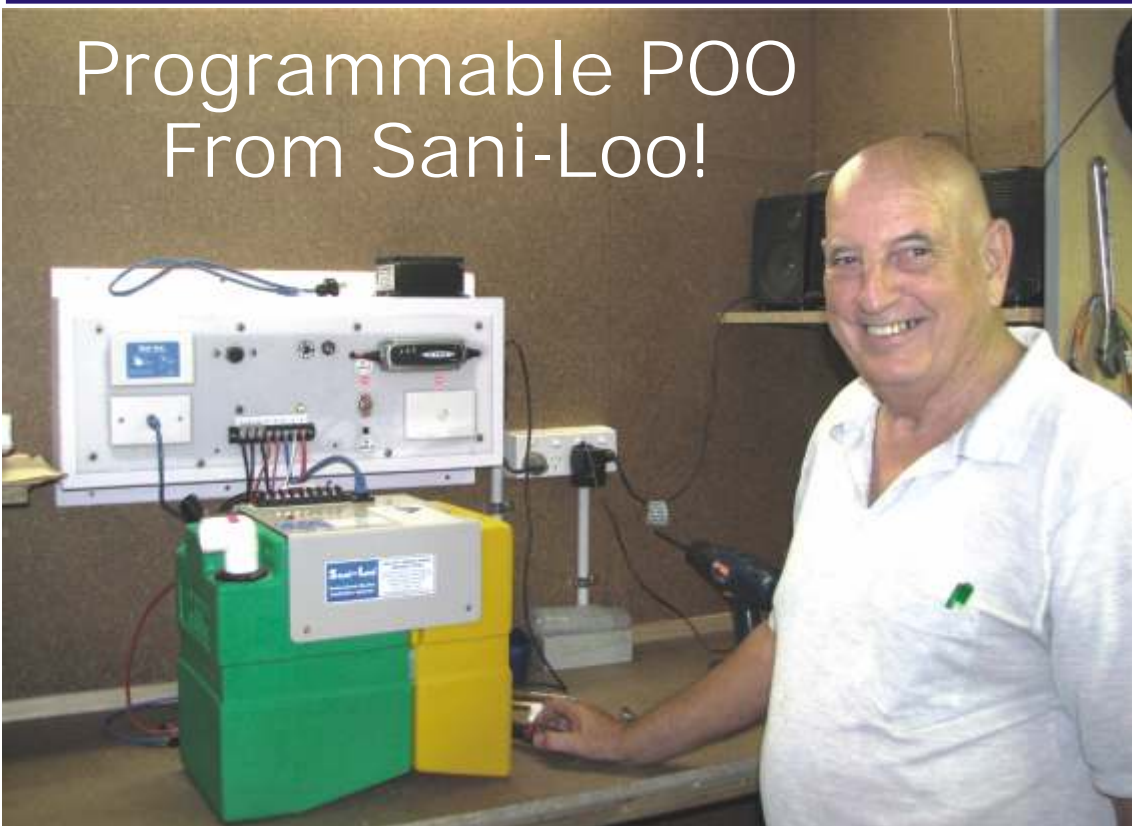
The berth on offer is part of the new Marina. MBTBC Marina has built 135 state of the art new berths which are now completed and MBTBC is giving a \$500 book of raffle tickets to anyone who buys a new berth before August (subject to availability). The berths are also available to rent through MBTBC Marina.

To find out more about the Classic and the raffle call (07) 3396 8161 or email office@mbtbc.com.

To rent a berth call MBTBC Marina on (07) 3893 0810.

To discuss berth sales call Peter Hansen on 1300 889 509 or email marinasales@mbtbc.com.

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Loo Control?!?

By Bob Norson

No, Seriously!!! This isn't easy to do with a straight face, so many possibilities for low humour but the truth is, a sewerage treatment system on your boat can be a very inconvenient or even dangerous piece of gear if it isn't done properly. On a recent visit to Gradon Engineering at Maryborough, Graham was working with the apparatus on the wall and one of his famous treatment systems. I asked about it and was informed that the devise is used to program the unit to tailor it to the rest of the boats systems. How long to flush, what quantity of flush etc... So you see, it is the science of poo control! Graham is probably the leading expert in marine sewerage in Australia. Besides the **"Sani-Loo"** product, the science involved in safe and inoffensive installation of a system in your boat should not be trusted to just any shithead. Ooohs... I mean amateur sewerage installer... Inappropriate gear and installation can turn your best intention into a toxic result. **Call the Pro in Pool! 0414 942 811**

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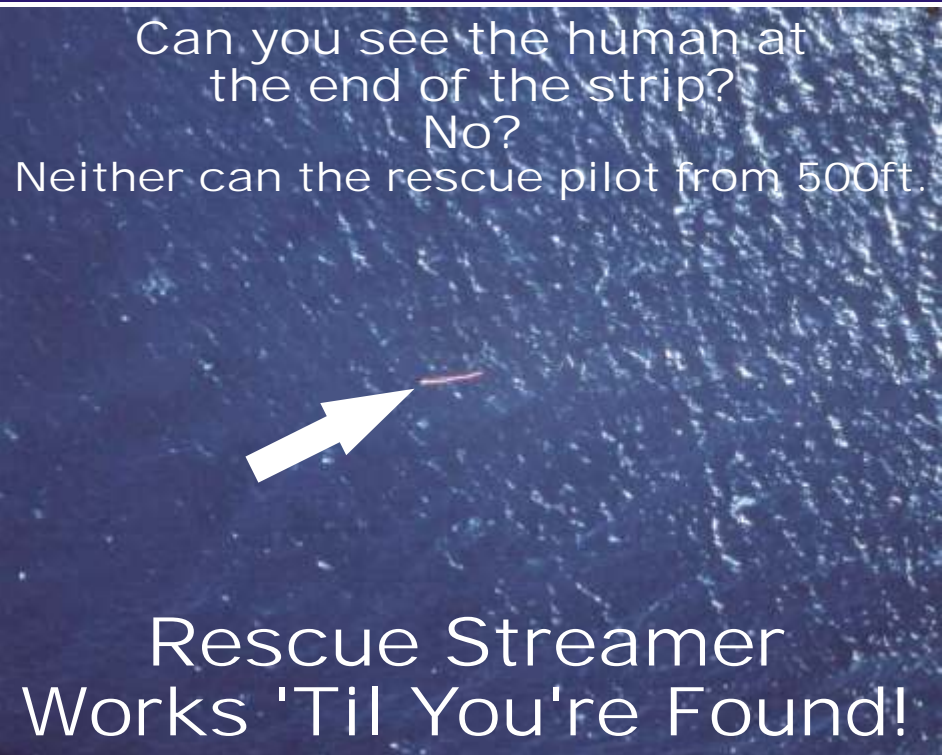
The range featured in the free catalogue is extensive and inside the catalogue you will find a range of products that will seal almost any surface to help the restorer. If you are restoring a car or boat then this catalogue is a must.

CEO, Rob Harrington-Johnson is passionate about fighting rust and helping get the best out of his products. Just a phone call away, he is available to answer your questions and point you to one of their 70 dealers Australia wide. When in doubt phone and ask.

To get your hands on the free Restorers catalogue PPC on **1800 643 229** and they will mail it out directly.

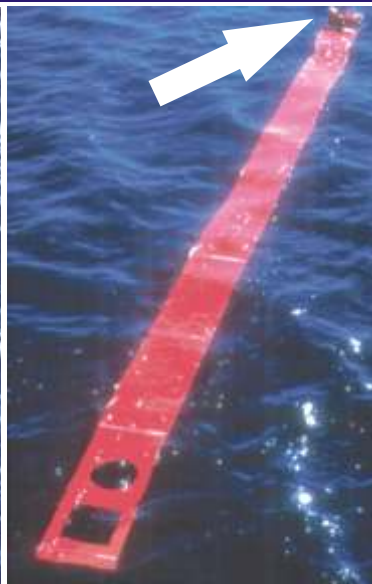
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by Bob "SMS" Norson

I Splice! or

This article was published in TCP #18, early 2006. Afterwards, it was posted on the TCP website and there have been over 50,000 visits and counting! Because of the popularity of the article and the questions I received via email from sailors all over the world, I was able to fine tune and add detail where needed to make even clearer.

The emailed comments from the site have been very positive from those that have actually tried it. The indirect lesson here is that a sailor should never assume they can't do a particular thing. Work it out and give it a go. You aren't as dumb as some special interests would like you to believe.

And why have I spent so much time and effort on this?

Dear Bob Norson,
Been a cruising man for over 50yrs. Now 82, have just made my first braided splice with your simple to follow photos and explanations. In the past I always done an ugly sewing job; what a time to learn a new skill.!!!
Still cruising. Thanks a lot, Albert

That's good enough for me. And does the splice really work? Is it strong? See page 26 for the *Mythbuster* approach to solving the question.

The Original NORSON SPLICE. Designed by the author to be the simplest to learn and strong.

Eye splicing double braid is one of those mysteries of the sea that clog up the schedules of riggers and cost sailors money and time to get done. So... Several years ago I determined that I just wasn't going to waste days of time in running gear around so I sat down in my cockpit and worked it out. I am a real visual type so I have arranged this to suit myself.



1. Before proceeding, get hold of the core and pull it out the end of the cover for about 2 to 3 inches. (50 to 75mm) Wrap some PVC tape tightly around the joint and cut. This leaves you some extra cover material that will make life easier when doing the last step. Also note the knot, this one is a little too close to the work but I wanted to get it in the photo. Recommend about 5 feet (1.5 metre) from the end.



2. Set up where your 'eye' is going to be and how much core is to be woven inside.



3. Use a small fid to poke through the cover. The idea is to part the fabric gently and get the tool under and behind the core until...



4. You can get behind the core enough to pull the core out the side of the cover. Be careful not to get a strand of the cover by mistake when extracting the core.



5. This is about what it should look like.



6. Now that you have the core pulled out, cut off the cover end.



7. This tool allows you to do the best way of securing the cover shown below. It is the "STITCH IT AWL" made in the Whitsunday's and highly recommended. Note that this photo does not portray a part of the splicing method, it's just to show the device and it's size.



8. What I have done here is to sew right through the cover and core with the heavy thread that comes with the Stitch It Awl, working my way all around. This keeps the cover in position whilst being buried and may help keep it there if the line is flogged. Think Chinese finger puzzle. Once the stuff is buried, the more tension applied, the stronger it gets. Once sewn, cover it all with tape as in photo number 9 so it goes smoothly through the core later. If you don't sew through the rope but tape only, it should still be OK if you get it buried deep enough but I like having the insurance.



9. Secure the cover with a snug piece of tape to the core and also do the end of the core, be tidy and taper the end if you can. I used common PVC tape. My tool in this photo is indicating where the joint is going.



10. At the joint selected, get behind the core again.



11. Pull a length of core out of the length of the rope. It comes out easily. Note the 'fat' look of the cover on the long part of the rope as compared to the loop. Keep the loop snug. Don't pull core from the loop.



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Eye Splice! Revisited...

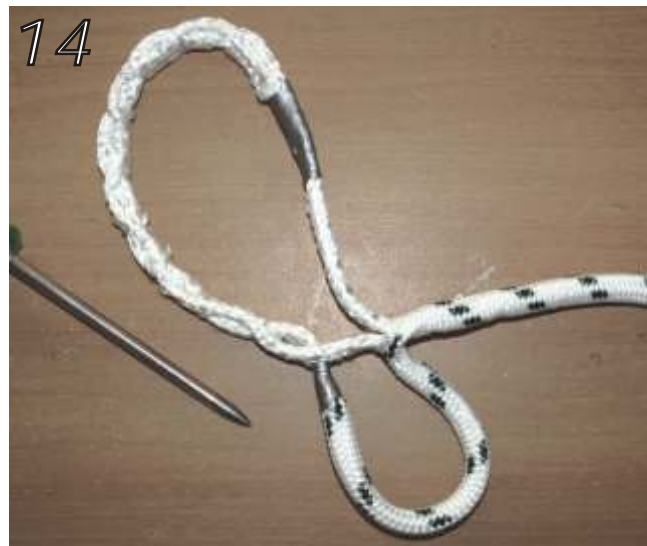
Or.. Technical advise for other SMS.. (simple minded sailors!)



12. Using your fid to part the fabric in the core, then pull the tail piece through as shown.



13. Repeat the process of weaving back and forth through the core all the way to the end of the tail.



14. Pull the tail taunt within the main core and remove the tape on the tail and put a fresh piece over the end and creating a smooth join with the main core.



15. Make the other end fast to something sturdy and start to pull the cover toward you.. Milking.



16. And it starts sucking the whole lot back inside the cover.



17. The last bit is where it gets hardest.



18. Fighting for the last bit. Getting the core to dive deep into the joint. If it gets too hard... cheat! See next pic.



19. This last step was always bitchy. The core can bunch up right at the end and rather than fight it, a little screw driver can be used to poke under the cover in the loop and pry it up using the bunched up core as a fulcrum. Do this gently, all around and then milk again.



20. Then check the fit and do a little more with the tool if required but if it is a little lumpy and still resisting you...



21. A hammer (gently) on a concrete floor does a great job of getting rid of the lumps and high spots. It compacts the core. Then one last milk...



22. Very satisfying! Give the loop a hard strain (the harder the better!) to test and set. Now go have a beer.. you earned it!

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MYTHBUSTING THE NORSON SPLICE

The mission was to put a Norson Splice on one end of a line and a Norson Double (another invention, see the web site). on the other end to test which would fail first or whether the line would go before either of them. The first attempt immediately below, failed to break anything. It took acquiring an accomplice of destruction to helm the van to make it finally work...



The one ton van has the parking brake on and large bricks behind every tyre and shoved hard in place. The CRV is backed off and then floored but.... I couldn't get it to break even after several attempts. The shock felt inside the Honda was extreme but all it did was jerk the van into the air and over the bricks! I was going to need help...



John Cadwallader, well known multihull sailor, happened to stop in for a visit with partner Fran and when offered the opportunity to participate in an act of destruction, fell right into the mission.. This time a few hundred pounds of weight was added to the van and we would have a driver in both vehicles. Still it took a couple tries and there was some concern about the safety of the equipment but hell, this is science!



Having more power and traction, the Honda pulled the van back. Eventually we were able to break the line.

SO.... Where Did it Break??????????????



It broke on the rope! And the Norson Splice? The simplest, fastest, easiest splice that anyone can learn? No damage of any kind. Still as supple and tidy as before and in use as a tie down for my tinny today.

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The above is a famous quote from...well...many experienced boaties. They are the ones that truly understand that Murphy will always be lurking around, then when you least expect it the gear will break! So, the smart ones out there will always have cruising guides and paper charts. A real comfort *and* they make interesting reading! These 3 guidebooks are a "must" for cruising the Queensland coast. **Buy now from TCP's Ship Store. All Prices Include Shipping Anywhere in Australia.**

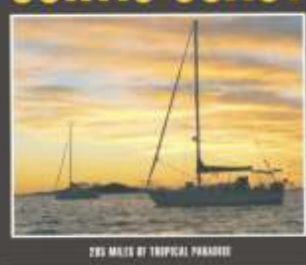
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BareBones continues...



by Bob Norson

For those that have read my editorial this issue, you will understand why BareBones has been delayed as I became a full time researcher and activist to save the environment around Hervey Bay from the aircraft hoons that have been given the place. Another delay has been weather. If I had been able to take the time, conditions have been bad so opportunities have been few.

With Kay taking over the bulk of the work on the paper, I have been able to squeeze in some work between periods of 100% humidity. The epoxy has a maximum tolerance of 75%.

As we are moving house, I hadn't wanted to join the hulls. Moving is hard enough without that additional complication. But I did want to repair the bogg in the first hull that was riddled with holes caused by the unexpected outgassing of the Duflex panels. See TCP # 34 or the web site.

The lesson learnt in all that was that those panels shouldn't have resin applied to the surface unless the temperature of the panels is falling, thus sucking resin through the porous factory coating of fibre glass due to the contraction of gasses in the core and

atmospheric pressure. The 'longer' the thermometer the better. The ideal would be to heat the shed along with the hottest part of the day, then throw the doors open and turn off the heater just when the ambient starts to fall and mix your bogg and go. That way the bogg goes on dense and fills the pours in the skin you may otherwise think is already sealed... but isn't.



In the repair of the bogg I learnt another lesson about epoxy... (learning a lot of lessons!) never trust materials if you haven't used them... recently. To explain, to insure the best sealing possible after grinding off the bad old stuff, I mixed a batch of resin to apply with a roller to seal the entire surface, then applied bogg over the areas that had been ground off, wet on wet. Unexpectedly, the temperature that night set record low temps. The next morning the bogg was firm-ish but the painted on layer was still gel. I attributed the difference in hardness to the exothermic heat (warmth generated by the reaction of the materials) that would have been developed by the bogg layer due to it's thickness and the fact the painted on layer had less thickness to generate it. So I wiped down the bogg to remove the 'amine blush' and since the other layer was still 'wet' I thought I would take advantage of the opportunity to put another layer of resin over it all.

Troubles... it wasn't going off! What happened? In spite of the day time temperatures the first layer remained gel and was not effectively 'tying' the substrate to the subsequent layer. A day or two to set in these conditions seemed plausible but after several days it was becoming obvious it was more than that. I did a test with the resin used. Mixed one pot with the hardener ("medium") I had used on the first roll on layer (I had used a different resin/hardener on the bogg), then another with a different bottle of hardener, then another using the hardener for the other type of resin (in case I mixed them up). The latter two were hard by that evening but not the first pot, it was still loose gel. Two days later the first pot was better but still rubbery. Mystery solved, bad hardener. Putting my test panel in the sun for a couple days really helped harden the rubbery stuff so... I knocked up a frame for the hull and Kay and I rolled it out the shed, through the big tent, and out into the yard to get what winter sun we could through the forest that is the yard. It's going slow but progressing and that is where we are for now.

If it doesn't set to satisfaction then I get out the heat gun and go to work, scaping off every inch of the hull and washing it down with acetone. Sure glad Kay is running the paper... I need the time!

Again, lesson learnt? If in doubt, test. If not in doubt, you should be, test anyway. The hardener was 17 months old, kept covered in the original container and had been properly stored indoors. I can't wait to get to the vinylester part of the project!

I am looking at plywood for bulkheads, having picked up some good tips by looking at a few other boats and talking with Leon of the \$21K cat (see page 29). Still undecided about decks but possibly for them and other parts, the Polycore panels that Ian is using (next page) seem interesting.

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Ian's Little Project continues...

by Bob Norson

Update on the boat building project reported in TCP #36. Ian Campbell's custom designed motor/sailor catamaran using polypropylene, "Polycore" panels. First a correction in the last article, I incorrectly identified timber that was used in the fitout as Kauri when in fact it was Kiri.

Work is going along at the Maryborough Slipway despite what has been atrocious weather this year. If you are a rice farmer you would be loving it but for boat building this continually wet weather sucks! Using vinylester resins that set quicker than epoxy is probably helping. Ian's goal of completion in 9 months is still seemingly attainable.

Just a few pictures tell the story of the progress to date.

Though the Polycore material is relatively inexpensive, delivery delays are a concern. We'll keep you posted. And Ian admits that the jury is out until the boat is tested in the water but with Ian's engineering background and what can be seen so far in the build, it looks OK. Walking about the bridgedeck and cockpit reveal a pretty solid feel underfoot.

Not like concrete but similar to that of a good household timber floor. The hulls are well supported with bulkheads close together and furniture incorporated into the structure. Ian doesn't incorporate much for accommodation in the hulls. He prefers to keep the bridgedeck for living space and the hulls for storage of stuff you don't need often.

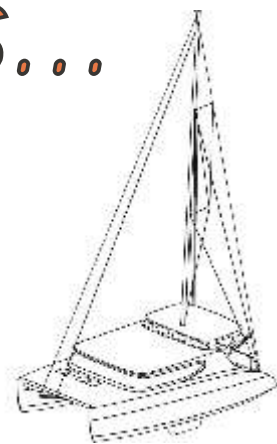
Vega I, Ian's previous boat, was laid out similarly.



This is a great test for this material.

Last note: Bob August of Polycore gave a ring and we talked about Ian's project, the pain of building with epoxy and other stuff. He states that the delivery delays for Polycore are getting worked out which as mentioned above was a concern. TCP would like to see this material succeed. Anything that adds to the variety available to builders has to be a good thing and especially if it can save a few bob. The increases in the costs of resins and foams etc... make saving money on materials more than a hobby. That coupled with a hard market and reduced values of finished product (lets be honest... boats are selling for less when they are selling at all) has created some hardship in the trade.

At left is a cutaway piece of the Polycore panel. At right the sweet lines of the boat are taking shape as the helpers glass a full length panel.



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Think it can't be done? A sweet little coastal cruiser in the water and on the cheap. The builder claims about 900 hours and he has done enough of them to know. His first one was in the seventies. The ply is covered in glass and vinylester outside and inside is done in Watty! epoxy and varnish. Just have a look at the photos and see what you think. There are no plans... Leon just draws em for himself. But don't take my word for it... read Leon's notes below.



Pretty self explanatory but the four main panels are simply sheets of ply with the stringers and bulkhead positions glued and fixed in position (liquid nails and nail gun) then rot proofed and flipped over and glassed and finished on the floor.

The main bulkheads are then fixed to one panel, stood up and the other panel is fixed to them. Pull the bow together and then the stern to the transom. Square up diagonally the main bulkheads and brace. Fit chine stringers and measure and fit remaining bulkheads (cut two at once of everything so both hulls are the same). Fit and cut bottom panel (two again). Now make and fit keels (you could fit daggerboards if you prefer but I believe the long flat surface of the chine gives lateral resistance) as it is easier without the chine panel. Now fit and cut chine panels (four this time). Glass and finish then flip. Fit pre-made crossbeams and do internal fit-out then do cabin/decks/hatches etc.

Cockpit/saloon is all done on the floor and jacked and bolted in place and then saloon cabin is made and fitted. Sounds simple? Well it really is compared to strong-backs then stringers fitted over frames etc. This boat was designed around the rig that I had bought from a wrecked boat for \$800 and was more an experiment than anything to prove to a couple of people that I probably am WACKED but not afraid to back my self.

I have to admit that the Waller concept had a lot of influence on the actual design but it was drawn up on the back of a beer carton after a few stubbies (still got it somewhere). I think I have proven (at least to myself) that you don't have to spend your life savings and spend years to get out there and do it. No she is not an ocean crosser, though I have seen worse do it, but as a coastal cruiser she is quick, easy to handle, comfortable and I have come to really like the little bugger! (I think it could be love!). Now having said that, it's hard to say that's it as there is always that next design eating away at what is left of the brain.

Boatbuilders never retire, they just sort of slowwwwwwww down.

Leon, SY True Blue



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Favourite Hangouts

From The Coastal Passage #3
June, 2003

By Bob Norson

Haycock Island lies in the Hinchinbrook passage sorta half way through. The island is a large rounded lump of brush covered rock, lying to the east side of the main channel. To the west, across the channel, are miles of mangroves and meandering small channels. To the east of Haycock, across the smaller channel that forms the anchorage is Hinchinbrook island itself. Though it rises majestically in the distance, the island shore by Haycock is more mangroves with a small channel by the anchorage that runs for a couple miles into the "jungle." Against the lower background Haycock rises abruptly to a striking presence.

I knew we would have to spend a few days here in our yacht *White Bird*. We were on our way to Cairns with no schedule to keep so now was the chance. We pulled in and set the pick that morning.

The day before we had stopped in at Lucinda. There is a bloke there that makes lures. Figuring that the secret to catching fish is to get a lure made by a notable local, I walked into "town" and parted company with some \$\$\$\$ at the "factory" in the shed out back. I was assured there were no better lures on earth.

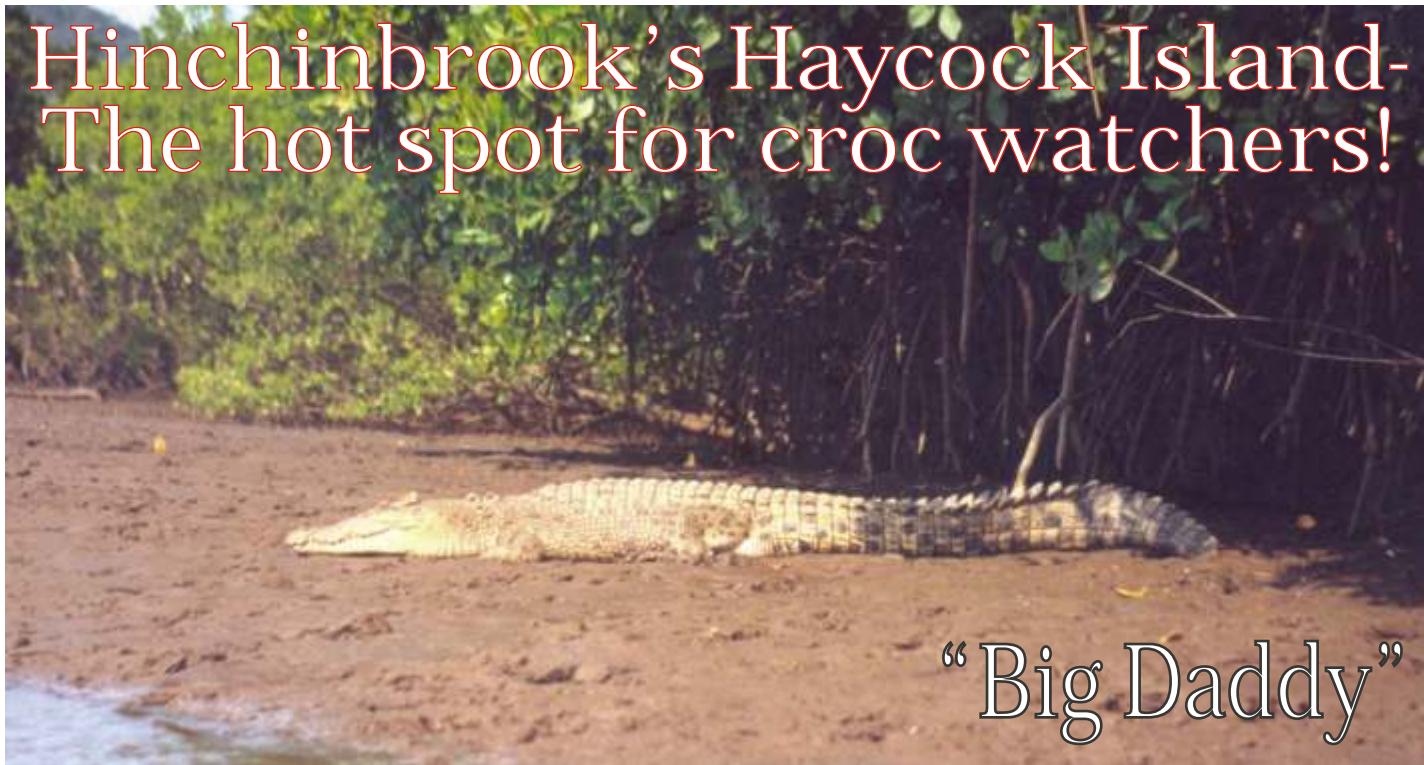
So today I was gonna try the lure. As pretty as the place is, after a half a day of staring at the scenery you need action. Kay and I readied the dingy for a major expedition. We had fuel, food water, safety gear, large can of Aeroguard for Kay, and most of all, our super sonic barra killing lures.

With only a couple inches of freeboard left on the dingy, we motored across the channel for the mangroves on the inland side. As we were nearing the opposite shore, I saw what appeared to be a large log laying on the low tide exposed muddy bank. Curious, I motored closer until the log turned into a croc! I had never been able to get close to a big croc before and my camera didn't have a zoom lens so we crept closer. When I sensed the croc was at the limit of its patience.....

I snapped my pictures (one which is above) and respectfully edged back out.

After that little distraction we began serious fishing, working the edges of the channel with our super sonic lures. Nothing! I had heard what a fish paradise this was and I had bought my ticket and expected my ride, but no takers.

Hinchinbrook's Haycock Island- The hot spot for croc watchers!



"Big Daddy"

Bob Norson photo. Picture taken with a 50mm lens, from an 8 ft dinghy!

After several hours baking in the sun and just one more cast, just one more cast..... we were both ready to admit defeat. As we rounded the bend that brought Haycock Island and the anchorage into sight, we could see where the croc was and it had company. It seems our friend had attracted the attention of several other crews from the anchorage. They were gathered in their dingy's in a neat symmetrical pattern, just off the bank now grown smaller by the rising tide. I thought that a picture of all the dingy's taking pictures of the croc would be good fun, so I pinned the throttle on our mighty 2hp Honda. In spite of our "furious" pace, it wasn't to be.

The group was nearly as close as we had gotten, and the croc's patience was thin, and bolted directly at his appreciative audience. As one, dingy's exploded in three directions. It looked like they were puppets on strings that had been jerked backward. The utter panic of it all, at our safe distance, was hysterical. We both laughed to tears.

We followed them back towards the boats and caught up to them. They were rafted up and re-living the adventure. (see below)

Everyone was grinning, especially the youngsters. Another one of those memorable things that just happen on boats.

Oh yeah, the fishing..... When we got back to *White Bird*, Kay decided for rest, but I had to have one more cast, one more cast.

I worked over the banks of the islands using every lure I had. The sun was sinking but I had to make one more cast. The sand flies were out, but I had to make one more cast. Sand flies annoy me but I had never had a serious problem with them, besides, I had to make one more cast....

I came back with no fish but with little bumps over 90% of my body. That night I suffered like I had never before. I even begged for the remedies Kay had stashed as she has had a problem with sandies. I think I had hallucinations from the things before the night was over. The next morning I looked awful. Even worse than normal.

Will we go back?? Oh yeah, but instead of stopping in Lucinda for a lure, I will stop there for fish and chips and more bug spray!

The Croc Watchers of Hinchinbrook



Kay Norson photo

The crews of (left to right) Regina, Chappie, & Earrame gather up comparing notes after the Croc sighting...

Notes from **CHAPPIE**
By Lynelle Parker, SV "*Chappie*"
(currently cruising Europe or ???)

The two boys in the dingy were from South Australia, and had never seen a croc in the wild. The "Chappies" had promised to show them a "BIG CROC", and having opened our big "north and south" (mouth), had to come up with the goods.

So we spent the entire afternoon on a sortie up and down the estuaries looking for "THE BIG DADDY OF ALL CROCS". We eventually went back to the place we had seen the first small croc, and bingo, there was Daddy (TCP note: see picture above; that's Big Daddy), sunning himself on the bank-we had come up with the goods.

A couple of days before we had been sailing just behind them up the coast, and we called them on the VHF to come back to us, as we had just spotted a huge pod of whales, and they had never seen whales up close and personal. They came back and spent about ½ hour watching the whales frolic. Of course by now we were becoming quite famous, what with all the wildlife to display. We also showed them a good swarm of "sandflies", but they didn't thank us much for that.

Between the crocs and the sandflies, the boys wanted to know if everything in Queensland has a "bite" to it!

I got a picture of the big croc on the shore, just before it took to the water and we all TOOK OFF!!!!

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"Old Scar Face" aka "Big Muncher"

By Norm Walker, SY *Peggy-Anne*

Oh yes! Far North Queensland. We've been tied up for the last two and a half months, involved in the important task of becoming grandparents. So with the babies born and thriving, it's time to provision *Peggy-Anne* and start heading to the top.

We had a great stay at the Bluewater Marina whilst in Cairns, everyone was very friendly and the place was well managed. Marinas are a bit like crab pots, their easy to get into and bloody hard to get out of, but it's time for the newly proclaimed "Boat-Ma" and "Boat-Pa" to get a few more miles under the hulls. The provisioning is done and the weather even obliges with a picture perfect day for us to rediscover our sea-legs. After four and a half hours we are anchored at Low Isles with ten other boats. It certainly is a lot busier cruising during this time of the year. We island hopped to Cairns during the cyclone season and anchorages were a lot less crowded.

After a pleasant evening at Low Isles rediscovering the meaning of true contentment, we pushed on to Snapper Island to catch up with Dawns brother, who was acting as a guide for a brief stop in the Daintree River. As we headed to the river entrance I noticed that the starboard side engine was a bit sluggish and not revving out

properly. Once safely in the river and anchored near the ferry crossing, the cause of the problem was narrowed down to the possibility of a damaged propeller as all other probabilities had been explored and rejected. We did do a little bottom kissing on entering another marina a lot further south. Diving on the prop was not thought to be a great idea in the Daintree especially as the main activity here involves ferrying tourists up and down the river in varying types of craft to look at crocodiles, with names like "Old Scar Face" and "Big Muncher"

We had seen a sand bank exposing at low tide close by, that showed potential as a beaching site which would allow (if all went well) the props to hang off the edge for inspection or removal. So early next morning the beaching manoeuvre was carried out. As there wasn't as much depth as had been anticipated, *Peggy-Anne* was not driven onto the sand quite far enough and as she settled, the sterns sank lower than we would have liked. Oh well! let's wait for low tide and see how much access we have. With the tide at the bottom we decide that it is feasible to remove the offending screw, although to do the job I will have to lie in the water under the boat.

Now I have never been a thrill seeker, have never felt the urge to jump out of an aeroplane, bungee jump or hang-



That's Norm down there...

glide, but the job needed doing. So this is what is meant by calculated risk!!!! With tools in hand and Dawn doing donuts in the dinghy behind the boat and beating the water with a paddle to scare the toothy critters away, I moved into the knee deep water at the stern of *Peggy-Anne* and then gingerly laid flat out to do the work.

When you're in this sort of a situation it is always useful to try and turn off the mind and concentrate on the job at hand. That process is not helped when a punt full of backpackers, gets the guide to get in closer so they can get good photos of the blood and guts for YouTube. After half an hour wrestling with pliers, spanner and a puller, the prop has "come to mama". I didn't know until this experience that you could actually have sweaty palms while underwater.

Anyhow, where back on board with a glass of rum in a shaky hand. Have rung the family to let em know, to take the boat off the market. Tomorrow it's off to the prop doctor in Cairns. I just hope he finds something wrong. After today it will nearly be a pleasure to spend some money to get it fixed.

Just as I was slipping into a relaxed state after my adrenalin fueled day it occurred to me. "Shit! Someone's gonna have to put the dammed thing back on"!!!!!!



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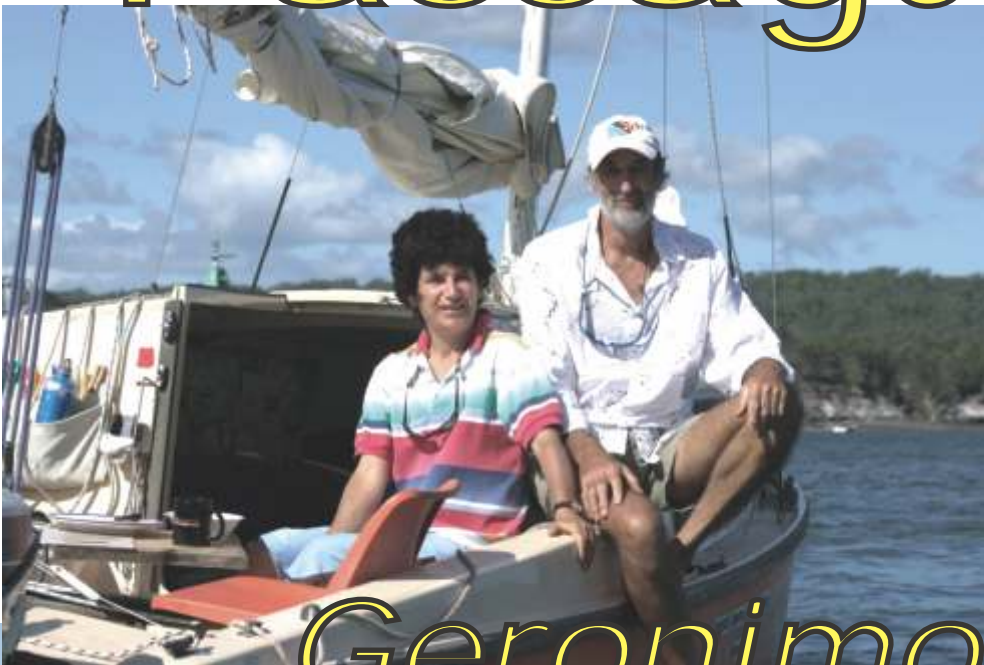
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Passage People



Geronimo



Ada & Charlie of Geronimo have been contributors in TCP's letter section with topics like rubbish on the Islands and vitamin C, so it was a special treat to meet them in person while in the Great Sandy Straits during the Bay to Bay race last May in *The Tinny*. We were just getting ready to bolt back to the boat ramp as the wind was picking up and it was going to be a rough ride back... So, just a few pics and a hi was all time allowed.

Their home port is Lake Cootharaba which is part of the Noosa River system. To get the most of their cruising time (between working) they tow *Geronimo* to destinations like the Whitsundays, Kepples, Sandy Straits, etc., sailing a few hundred k's on a long break, and when time is short sail on Lake Cootharaba and the upper Noosa River

See you again *Geronimo*!



The Tinny



Yes, that is us (Kay & Bob) in our trusty tinny. When we really need to "get out there" this is our escape boat for now. We always have some TCP's and a camera, looking for Passage People or just a chance to visit! Thanks *Geronimo* for the pic; the dorky looking subjects aren't your fault!



Seaya

Natasha & Matthew Harper of SY Kalida are seen here distributing the latest issue of TCP in Cairns Marlin Marina to **Kieron & Linda O'Connell of SY Seaya**.

Seaya is a 1971 Cheoy Lee Offshore 31 Ketch. Kieron & Linda sold their trailer sailer, an RL24 and bought Seaya in Gladstone in 2006 from Jules Darras, an American who had sailed the boat across the Pacific from California. Kieron says the boat is a very graceful old lady and anybody who has owned a H28 can imagine the same but with an extra three feet added on its length. She is a typical Cheoy Lee, fibreglass hull with lots of teak trimmings. Kieron says like most boat owners, "he wishes it was bigger when it is in the water and smaller when it is out". Kieron is one of the few sailors that hail from Broken Hill, (not known for its sailing community), whilst Linda (who gets seasick watching Popeye cartoons) is from Kuching on the island of Borneo. They are in Cairns to recharge the bank account and then plan to go cruising again. Where to, they don't know, it depends on the wind.

Photo by Allison Harper, text by the Seaya crew, and a special **thank you** to Natasha & Matthew for understanding the spirit of TCP and delivering the papers to their marina neighbours!



Jubilant Spirit

George of **Jubilant Spirit** was a regular around Bowen for quite a while and we met on many occasions at the sailing club or the dinghy wharf. We were on a 'tinny tour' of the creeks and bays around Tin Can Bay when we came upon George replacing port lights with the tape and glue method (nice work George) out at anchor. It was good to catch up and just goes to show.. it's a small coast for boaties, hang around long enough and all your mates turn up eventually and since George has been at it over 16 years.. well no surprise!



Photo above is the "Southern" contingents of the D2D. Photo from Caroline Wilkins, SY Spike

The Dent to Dunk Rally makes more history!

Along with the fact that this was the 100th anniversary of the Rally, the visit of the 40 boats at Palm Island was a first! Here is a quote from Chet the *Cheetah*, Member of the Rally Mascot Club:

"For the first time the rally was invited to make a stop at **Palm Island**. It is an easy 25nm downwind sail from Horseshoe Bay with good holding in Challenger Bay. Anchoring was an easy drop of the hook. This was the first time in history of Palm that 40 plus boats were anchored in the bay--all flying Dent to Dunk & courtesy Aboriginal flags. The mayor and his assistant met with Frank and Steve to welcome all to the island and accepted a \$500 check from Abel Point Yacht Club for the kids Marine Education Fund. This was a truly memorable stop for us all & plans are taking place for a bigger event next year."

How's that for Historical?! See TCP 35 for the "Palm Island Welcomes' Sailors" story.

There was also a historical mounting on a rock, but that's another story...