Reflections
by Alan Lucas

The case of the disappearing galleon

Forgotten by most modern Gold Coasters is the once persistent rumour of a Spanish galleon lying at their doorstep. It was reputed to be in the North Stradbroke swamp, not far from Jumpin Pin Bar. The subject grabbed my attention in 1965 whilst employed to look-proof a galleon launch at Southport. Her elderly owner had spent his entire life in the area, sailing a variety of boats around the Broadwater and Moreton Bay, farming and bushwalking the islands and gathering historical oddities along the way. His oldest story told of an ancient ‘Spanish’ galleon in the swamp at the southern end of North Stradbroke Island.

Years ago, he said, walking along the edge of the swamp between the island’s coastal dunes and its high country, he sighted a mast stump and ornate taffrail standing proud from the reeds, just beyond dry land. He knew of a large schooner that had been lost 60 years earlier, but correctly reasoned that it couldn’t possibly have gravitated so far inland. It had to be a vessel driven ashore centuries ago when the island’s coastline was a mile further west (this is fair logic considering that the ruins of Rome’s ancient port city of Ostia now lie two miles inland).

So intrigued was he that in the late 1930s he organised an expedition to attempt a partial salvage: Unhappily, World War Two intervened and decimated the group, but he returned alone in 1946 and found no sign of the wreck despite other persons claiming to have sighted the taffrail around the same period.

With my yacht anchored stern up to a lovely protected beach (long since replaced with a concrete wall) in the Southport Yacht Basin I spent a few months odd jobbing in the area, one of which was the delivery of a 60-foot ketch from Gladstone to the Gold Coast where my employment continued as her temporary caretaker along with the owner’s other boat, a diesel-powered Bar Tender. I hesitated that I use the latter whenever I felt like it a welcome gesture to a person developing mild galleon fever.

A friend and I steamed the Bar Tender north into Swan Bay (the southern end of the swamp and long since a closed fish habitat) where hopes were soon crushed at first by mangroves then a swamp too shallow for navigation at high tide and too soft for walking at low tide. We considered entering Canapa Passage then walking across the island via its many sand mining roads, but recognised the futility of such an attempt without proper equipment and supplies. We shelved our galleon ambitions and gave up.

In my ship’s library was a 1907 book by Portuguese linguist George Collingridge claiming that Australia’s east coast had been partially charted two and a half centuries before James Cook’s visit. He suggested that in 1531 Portuguese navigator Cristovao de Mendonca, with a fleet of three caravels, was ordered to head east from Portugal’s Spice Islands to defend her monopoly against possible Spanish attack spearheaded by Ferdinand Magellan, then thought to be in the Pacific after rounding Cape Horn.

The case of the Geelong Keys revolves around the 1847 discovery of a set of European keys in a lime pit at Limeburners Point, Corio Bay, Victoria. Their discovery was witnessed by no lesser person than Charles Joseph La Trobe, Superintendent of the Port Phillip District and soon to be Governor of Victoria after Separation from New South Wales. The depth at which the keys were found geologically suggested that they must have been lost long before the British discovered Corio Bay in 1802.

It is vaguely possible, I suppose, that the keys were lost by a Dutch sailor who had somehow walked across the Nullarbor to arriving shipwrecked on the west coast during the 17th century, but the theory of it being dropped by a Portuguese officer of Mendonca’s flotilla is more probable.

The relics of a stone building in isolated Bight was created in south coast New South Wales, has encouraged speculation that the Portuguese spent some time there, perhaps careening their ships, but the same argument is used by Gavin Menzies as proof of Chinese visitation in his highly contentious book 1421.1 Running my untrained eyes over these ruins, I suspect writers who cling to such theories are clutching at straws, but the amazing mystery of the Mahogany Ship takes a lot of explaining.

The Mahogany Ship ranks as one of Australia’s greatest unsolved mysteries, involving, as it does, a well-documented wreck on a Victorian beach between Warrnambool and Port Fairy. A scene painted by teacher Thomas Clark, circa 1860, features ship’s timbers projecting vertical from the dunes that were claimed to be of European mahogany, a fact that diminished later claims that it might have been an American whaler.

The wreck was first discovered in 1836 by shipwrecked seafarers Gibbs and Wilson while walking along the beach to Port Fairy. Their discovery set off speculation that stairs to this day about it being a pre-colonial Portuguese ship, possibly one of Mendonca’s flotilla that unwittingly discovered Australia’s east and south coasts while searching for Magellan.

The Mahogany Ship has inspired archaeological digs right up to modern times, but it seems to have disappeared forever. However, rumours of ‘Spanish galleon’ wrecks along the Queensland coast abounded until recent times, most such rumours remaining speculative with no supportive evidence. But if the conviction of that elderly fellow back in 1965 means anything, then his ‘Spanish’ galleon may well have been Portuguese, perhaps one of Mendonca’s ships that crashed onto a North Stradbroke beach from which extrication proved impossible.

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This is a tribute to our mate, Geoff Henry, OAM, who passed away on New Year’s Day. Geoff was, of course, the persona of VMR East Mackay.

We started our cruising lives in 2000. We hesitantly, and with some trepidation picked our way up the Old coast for the first time. We first docked on with VMR East Mackay when we anchored at Curlew Island one evening. It was blowing bags and so, as was our practice at the time, we did an overnight anchor watch. At 4:30am there was a call for VMR East Mackay. Not a Mayday or a Pan Pan just VMR on channel 80.

Geoff quickly responded to a stall boat that had gone up on the brinks at Digby Island. He authoritatively took control of the situation, calmed everything down, started contacting a whole raft of people including the rest of the people on the stranded craft, as well as effecting the rescue crew. Rescue Cat 4 was soon on its way and Geoff at base kept the whole exercise on the rails until the drill was pulled free at dawn. He, rather wearily, took the first clock-on call just before 6am.

We quickly realised that if Speranza was ever in strife, the best possible outcome would be to have Geoff in our corner. When we next logged on with East Mackay we received his signature “Good to hear your voice again”. It was for us, at the time, like being accepted into a very special family.

We spent a lot of that season around the southern Whitsundays and Mackay and spoke frequently to Geoff over the radio. It is true to say that he instilled a great deal of confidence in our sailing/cruising ability - so much so that 8 years later (and 9 coming up) we are still at it!

The next time we in Mackay dropped round to meet him in his digs at the RSL Village. This was the first of many visits. We would arrive about 4pm and have sundowners at 5 before calling a cab around 6pm. During this time, Geoff shared many of his experiences. His story, so interesting and varied we are sure his background could have been the subject of a successful long-running TV series.

He was a great raconteur and spoke openly about his war service (very distinguished, we gathered listening between the lines), Keswick Island (building the airstrip), managing a vessel in the South Island of New Zealand, the son of a grocer and a housewife. On 17 04 41 he joined the 2nd NZ Expeditionary Force and was fighting with the 8th Army at Tobruk to Benghazi and El Alamain. These were horrendous vicious battles, and he went onto the Italian campaign rising to the rank of Field Colonel with 2500 men under his command. He got blown up in the River Po and finished the war at Trieste.

He then became part of the British Commonwealth Reclamation Force and was shipped to Nagasaki and Hiroshima a few weeks after the atomic blasts, before being finally demobilised back in Lyttleton, New Zealand.

Geoff was born in the 1920’s in the rural town of Temuka in the South Island of New Zealand. He attended local schools and finally engineering college at Christchurch where he graduated as a civil engineer with a thesis in hydraulics and joined the firm of J.B.MacEwan specialising in hydraulics’ allowing him to reduce the size and cost of irrigation motors to the clefts field. He bought a motor yard and finally sold it, and then retired, again, buying the first red 4WD Toyota Station Sedan in town, and travelling around Australia for 18 months. During this he was enrolled in “School of the Air” and they travelled which was his first connection with the radio. On his return he joined the partnership on Keswick Island where he converted the only 10’ by 10’ tin shed into a three bedroom home where “School of the Air” was continued. Aconiett spent 2 weeks technically absorbing the information and then spent 2 years filling in all the holes with rocks by hand and finally grassing the strip. Overall, he spent 8 years on Keswick, becoming part of the Mackay VMR.

He then came over to Mackay in 1973, following his son, and decided to move from management as software and gave up the radio game and a houseboat. He then became a bridge builder for G. W. Pearson and Sons working on all the bridges between Oamaru and Kaitaia.

Eventually his father left the sea, we were sent to Australia and now Mackay. With time on my hands I figured that maybe I could give my time to help Geoff. VMR Mackay would bring forth answers and if Geoff was at home I’d soon hear him answering the vessel concerned with his soft and dulcet tones.

One particular shift he heard me repeat Weekton Island back to a sailor, I was quite carefully to Wigton Island then he added his beautiful laugh, being distracted to hear the line. Next quick to compliment yet did not suffer fools gladly, sticking firmly to his guns when one approaches an area to hear from you again.

One morning I was caught up in a traffic jam after some World Cup over night, football perhaps, either way I was not going to be in the radio room for an 0803 open all stations. Sailors were calling in to try to connect up. With no one to assist me I thought of something to the effect that what was the point of logging on when no one was there to answer.

Geoff leapt on the radio and pointed out fairly strongly that we were all reminding me that absolutely everyone listening would have heard everything I said. In that brief moment I’d totally forgotten just how many people are listening to 21 and 80, including Customs and AGIS, as I was concentrating purely on Namche. That fact was borne out by about eight calls later when someone anonymously simply said “VMR Mackay, have you got your bloody teeth back in yet”. Another phone call a couple of days later that someone had a partner in the radio station who had been wearing a fist poised to punch Geoff and was still laughing.

Another time a friendly lady on Namche called up as they were passing through the Whitsundays. With her delightful American accent and laugh I was slightly bewildered as to the spelling of the vessel. With pride in a well kept log, she sounded as though she was saying Namche. With a startling clarity my brain was in two and I was momentarily at war with the vessel concerned. Her response was clear... “Namche, you have a safe trip etc” then whispered to her “I’ll just put my teeth back in” to which she laughed. I laughed, said our farewells and that was the end of the matter.

Not only was Geoff on the phone within seconds offering that everything was all right, by the time I’d told him the story of what really happened from my point of view then he was laughing uncontrollably, something he was known for. Later he would say “Namche, you have a safe trip.”

One particular occasion I have vividly remembered was on the radio during one of the busy times. We had our day, or week, or year, with acts of random kindness. Geoff keeps it going, Geoff. We need you. The whole world needs more like you to show us how to conduct ourselves in these troubled times. Standby, but don’t sign off yet.

Leigh Campbell, SY Harley Street
TCP is looking for new high volume locations in WA, Tasmania and New Zealand. Do you know a hot spot?

As always, TCP very much appreciates your letters and other contributions that provide the rich forum of ideas that sustains the paper. For information on requirements and awards, see the TCP web site, contributions page.

“What has been going on at TCP HQ?”

By Bob Norson

TCP now using 100% recycled paper!

TCP is a boating paper that has always been about the environment and its impact on those who live on the water. Our latest edition is no exception, as we explore the ongoing battle between the town of Maryborough, Queensland, and the nearby airport. The town is fighting to save its homes and businesses from the noise and pollution caused by the airport, but it seems like the government is siding with the airport.

The Maryborough airport is home to a flight school, and the town is concerned about the noise and pollution it causes. They have tried to negotiate with the airport, but so far, they have not been successful. The town has appealed to the government, but it seems like they are not interested in their concerns.

The town of Maryborough is not alone in its fight against the airport. Other towns and cities across Australia are also concerned about the impact of airports on their communities. In recent years, there have been a number of cases where airports have been built or expanded without proper community consultation.

The problem is that airports are often built in areas that are not suitable for them. For example, airports are often built in areas that are close to homes and businesses, or in areas that have a lot of wildlife. This causes a lot of problems for the people who live in these areas.

The Maryborough airport is a perfect example of this. The airport is located in a residential area, and it is causing a lot of noise and pollution for the people who live nearby. The town of Maryborough is not the only one that is concerned about this. Other towns and cities across Australia are also concerned about the impact of airports on their communities.

The government needs to do more to ensure that airports are built in areas that are suitable for them. They need to consult with the people who live in these areas, and they need to make sure that the airports are not causing a lot of problems for them.

The Maryborough airport is just one example of the problems that airports can cause. It is a clear indication of the need for the government to do more to ensure that airports are built in areas that are suitable for them. The government needs to consult with the people who live in these areas, and they need to make sure that the airports are not causing a lot of problems for them.

The Coastal Passage

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Hi Bob,

I was recently reading your magazine on-line and had the privilege of reading a number of articles by Bob Hayman. I find his witty anecdotes as well as informative script most enjoyable. I was particularly interested in his article about increased boat fees. It is a real pity that so many of these fees are going to be used to fund extravagances which we do not need. What we all need to do is seriously lobby our local government councils as to excessive Rate After an emergency landing to anchor. ramps. I think many of us, restricted to injuring many passengers, and as a U.S. citizen, I was still handled in the Customs officers in both of these countries.

Greetings Helmsmen

Greetings Alan

Hi Harry

TASSEI WINS FOR BOATIES!

It is great to see that at least all over the world, the Defence Forces opened up some of the anchorages for us to break up the journey from the Kepplers to the Percy's. The last couple of years we had to sail from the Keppel's straight through to Gladstone, I visited the local Customs office (2nd September ‘08) where a very friendly officer served me at the counter. She candidly admitted that she had not heard of any changes at Manly, but would hope for the best. To this end, she disappeared into the back room where I heard her chatting to fellow officers, none of whom could confirm any of the rumours one way or the other. So she phoned Brisbane then reappeared at the counter to assure me that Customs was still handled in Manly.

This did not match the rumour that some of the offshore islands of Puget Sound in the Brisbane River, so I phoned Rivergate and guess what? The rumour was true, and the clearance facility had been relocated to Rivergate since July. Yet, custom's website still placed it at Manly and the officer in Gladstone had obviously been misled by the wrong information by her own organisation.

Greetings Helmsman was still handled in Customs etc.!

Thanks for the great job and all the handy warnings - cheers, Bob Hayman

Bundine recently, I thought you might magazine it's pretty good reading. The none of that helps the yachtsman and upgraded ... like a little grist for the mill. articles by Bob Hayman were are not very noticeable where I have been sailing lately. So angry I am that I get to check the website and discover if my vessel (regardless of its engine size/power) is just .50 mtr. less I can reduce my rego. 5000mg or 5g is about a teaspoonful. I ask as a serious seeker of knowledge, not as a pedant.

Hello Bob

Just read Allan’s snake bite story and found it fascinating. I have had a few close encounters of the snake kind myself. I never knew that large doses of vitamin C could neutralise the toxin. And herein lies the question. Is the injected variety different or just faster acting as it is directly in the bloodstream. Would ingesting a number of these products produce similar results?

Would Allan know or know someone that could provide expert comment?

Cheers,
Julius, MV Nova Kerla

OLD BOATING FEES GONE MAD

Dear Bob,

Congratulations on a top issue of TCP, with some really great photographs. I am aware of the cry of the trailer-boat fraternity that seeks more and improved bob ramps and parking areas, but they have absolutely nothing to do with the displacement yacht and cruiser community. It should be a user-pays system, and we will keep them going if we pay for speedo bridge facilities. What we need is facilities which provide for keel boats as well as public jetties and landings where we can go alongside for water and load provisions, rather than have to pay for such as a $65 a night for Keppel Beach, as one example. I recognise many folk lug water and supplies out in a tender, and we have done that, but I regret that some of us are no longer able to do that. One of my friends said let's all stop paying the fees. Fine, but that throws in another problem where an insurance company might find a way out of paying up for damage, if not legally registered. And of course, we would be open to fines, more than the cost of the fee. It is a win no situation.

What we all need to do is seriously lobby our local MPs to do something about it, like here in Hervey Bay the Boat Club land leases from the same DOT have gone from $180,000 to $500,000 a bit more than the CPI. We really have to curtail Captain Bligh’s need to impose more than CPI rises to fund extravagations which we do not need.

It is for our boating people to take the action to the Government.

Harry Smith, SY Cavarlo

Hi Harry

Take a look at page 8 and 9 this issue. You aren't the only one unhappy with MSQ.

Cheers
Bob Hayman

Avast there Bob,

Feeling certain that you will follow up on the dreadful treatment metered out by some of the Anchorage Managers to an incoming yachtsman in Bundine recently, I thought you might like a little grist for the mill.

During my website updating of Queensland during 2008, I failed to check the latest status of the Manly Harbour Customs dock. So, while moored near Rivergate, I phoned the Customs office and was told that they could not help me. To this end, I submitted a complaint to the ABC, 8 October 2008. I never knew that large doses of vitamin C could neutralise the toxin. And herein lies the question. Is the injected variety different or just faster acting as it is directly in the bloodstream. Would ingesting a number of these products produce similar results?

This raises a very serious question: If Australian Customs officers in both Gladstone and Brisbane are ignorant of their own whereabouts, how are overseas visitors expected to out guess them? Apparently ignorance of the law is a one-way street.

While and I have a head of steam, did you hear the news on the ABC, 8th October 2008? I was included interviews with a few of the passengers aboard an incoming international Qantas plane that suddenly dived 5000 feet on its leg to Darwin, injuring some of the passengers seriously or even killing some. It is such a sad situation that needs flying doctor service. After an emergency landing at Exmouth, an English passenger said quote: Customs treated people horribly, locked all doors, insisting on passports for everyone. I wonder why Vitamin C helps and guess what? The rumour was still handled in Customs etc.!
The two pictures attached were taken only 100 meters apart at the south anchorage at next day or so and would collect it then.

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

Two years ago, I phoned Parks and Wildlife to let them know that it was there to be collected. It contains junk that has been washed up in SE winds. It is not refuse left pile!

(see TCP 16) and confirm the rubbish is substantially foreign in origin and maybe the same boats and other tourist traffic tend to be ignored. TCP has inspected and reported on this

As soon as we bought the vessel we tried to insure it for third party insurance, so as to be able to go into marinas and on the slip etc. We rang the insurance brokerage we have been dealing with for the past 25 years and were surprised to be refused. We needed an out of water survey, as she is over 20 years old. So we arranged a local surveyor to do the job for about $450 and on the slip for 2 hours for another $450. The surveyor arrived and informed us that he could not go on board, as we had no insurance, he finally relented when we told him that the previous owners still had her insured. So one should be careful, as it was nearly a Catch 22 situation. He then walked around the boat a few times poking his screwdriver wherever he thought it was rotten and in fact found a spot near the stem post. Needless to say he gave us a bad report so no insurance and a wasted $900.

We are now in Shute Harbour with an almost trouble free run from Gladstone; we took on water for the first time the day before the timber took up in the bow section.

P.S. The insurance was of no help at Abel Point Marina; they only accept full Comprehensive insurance.

Bob’s note: The Southwoods also sent a pic of the finished repair and when done you couldn’t pick it.

GOOD OLD BOATS BE BUGGERED!!!

Progress on restoring the old “Abrolhos Pearl” is progressing well, with the usual smelly greasy bilges, cracked ribs, a leak in the stem post area and a rusty steel frame in the hollow heel which looks really bad as it had grown large rust flakes. Of course we knew what we were in for as all old boats have many scars, scratches and sores, owing to ignorant owners and sheer neglect as well as age. We recon as god did not build it we can fix it, so long as the dollars do not run out.

As soon as we bought the vessel we tried to insure it for third party insurance, so as to be able to go into marinas and on the slip etc. We rang the insurance brokerage we have been dealing with for the past 25 years and were surprised to be refused. We needed an out of water survey, as she is over 20 years old. So we arranged a local surveyor to do the job for about $450 and on the slip for 2 hours for another $450. The surveyor arrived and informed us that he could not go on board, as we had no insurance, he finally relented when we told him that the previous owners still had her insured. So one should be careful, as it was nearly a Catch 22 situation. He then walked around the boat a few times poking his screwdriver wherever he thought it was rotten and in fact found a spot near the stem post. Needless to say he gave us a bad report so no insurance and a wasted $900.

I was depressed and in need of a carton of nerve tonic, when the S.V. Ariel arrived in the berth next to us. On board were skipper Jeanette and mate Todd, sailing south to the Gold Coast. I was ear-bashing Todd about my insurance woes when he suggested we ring his broker in Darwin who had insured his 30-year-old Tahiti Ketch that he had sailed from America sight unseen). Barbara rang the broker in Darwin and with a 5-year-old survey & a credit card, the next day we were insured. By the time you read this we will have slipped and fixed the problem by a very experienced, fast and reasonable priced shipwright Frank Bremer of Artisan Shipwright Services, for any repairs in fibreglass or timber, he is the man!!

We are now in Shute Harbour with an almost trouble free run from Gladstone; we took on some water for the first day until the timber took up in the bow section.

P.S. The insurance was of no help at Abel Point Marina; they only accept full Comprehensive insurance.

Allen and Barbara Southwood of Abrolhos Pearl

Rubbish pickup for tourists only?

The two pictures attached were taken only 100 meters apart at the south anchorage at Thomas Island. The pile of rubbish has been collected from the beach by visiting yachts and left in a neat pile. It contains junk that has been washed up in SE winds. It is not refuse left in a pile!

Keith Owen, SY Speranza

TCP note: Have noticed that flootsam collected on any island not regularly visited by charter boats and other tourist traffic tend to be ignored. TCP has inspected and reported on this (see TCP 16) and confirm the rubbish is substantially foreign in origin and maybe the same pile!
Hi Bob,

We are seeking information on the Australian naval architect, Len Hedges.

One outcome of his designs, the “Dorrigo” schooner Santana an Australian registered vessel with the home port of Darwin. She was built in Melbourne in 1982 by Miele Yachts. We would be delighted to hear from other owners of Len Hedges designed yachts particularly the Dorrigo and any information on the man and his designs would be greatly appreciated.

We’d also like to hear from former owners and crew of Santana and find out more of her history.

Regards,

Tim & Julia Knight, SY Santana

TCP note:

When Allan called in reference to the inquiry at left, the conversation got around to general goings on aboard boat “Valian” my "favourite yacht". Somewhere in the conversation I mentioned something about how he must take some dramatic and interesting calls in those wild waters. And Allan began telling me of the one below. Not the hair raising rescue in 60 knots I imagine but something more powerful, more human, more relevant. I begged Allan to write this down and hoped he could write it as well as he talked the story through. I needn’t have worried.

Hi Bob,

When you asked me to put in writing what I told you about an event which took place on radio, I thought “this will be easy”. My comment to you was “this is one of the reasons that we operate a Radio Station namely American River Radio Rescue VMR523”.

I began to think about the events that have taken place over the years that are much more sensational than what we talked about but this one sticks in my mind more than any other because of its human nature and it has done more to cement my resolve to operate this radio station 24 hrs a day where possible than any other.

To begin I must start at the end. Almost every person has been terrified at sea at some time, some more than others and some to the point of freezing up. A number of our local professional fishermen down here on Kangaroo Island in South Australia have told me of similar experiences and fears. They have also talked of having conversations with “Dolphins” as a way of facing loneliness. I too have found myself hallucinating at sea when sailing single handed and I have been well introduced to fear.

So onward we go to the event that made me think.

A few years ago I was sound asleep and off goes the radio (VHF CH8), the call, “is any one there” he may have said on air. I got up and replied this is American River radio VHR 523.

It was winter, very cold and blowing about 35 to 40 Knots where I was on KI, I don’t know what it was blowing where this guy was as he was about 40 mile SSE of us and as I recall (I think) in 6 to 8 metre seas and being blown about by the head winds. Not good place to be.

I was aware of the other that he wanted to talk and I started to get just a bit agro at getting called out on the radio 3000 in a freezing cold radio area in the shed, just dressed in a dressing gown, by some idiot who “just wanted talk”, but as courtesy is the order of the day, we talked and talked.

At the beginning I could not work out why he wanted to talk and talk (I am not bad at talking either), there must be another reason. We talked of where he had come from and going to, about his boat (34 Ft sloop) and his experience in single handed sailing, my pet subject and of course his family and background, etc.

I was privileged to spend this time with this person and I felt very humbled for the experience. I learned a lot about myself especially not to prejudice when you listen to radio because what you hear may not be what is being really said. I think was the only thing that I could tell him was pleased with himself and that his confidence was back on line.

We talked for a while longer about boats and things including his freeze up. He could not understand why it took place, never happened before but exhaustion could have been a big factor. All of this took about an hour to an hour and half. Sign off and back to bed with my teeth chattering with my vital parts rattling along in perfect harmony with my teeth.

This guy was heading West, I never heard from him again and he probably does not know who he spoke to, if he remembers it at all. I will remember his name but the boat name will always be with me.

After about a half hour I was still no wiser as to what the call was about and was beginning to think “this guys a clown”, but there was something in his voice that made me stay on air.

When we got to talking seriously about the conditions and what he was experiencing, the reason for his having come out. One must realize the wind was howling and I could hear the boat crashing in the seas over all. He even confided me that he was terrified and had frozen up in fear. This is not so unusual except that this guy had done one hell of a lot of sailing, most of it single handed. This had never happened to him before and he said that he had been in worse conditions, why did he freeze? God only knows, he didn’t.

What had got him to this point was that he had to go forward for some reason (to take a sail off the boat I think) and he could not leave the cabin to go and do it. We were petrified. We talked about getting the sail off, the process of doing it, how safe he was when hooked on and alone, when he could see the reef in the mizzen when going to windward with the centre board raised. I think was the only schooner at the Squadron. I have sailed her on a number of occasions and she sailed beautifully. She is really a stand alone design.

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So. I duly contacted Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) to find out about new registration requirements!!! What a cock up this proved to be.

When I went to fill out the registration form, I nearly fell over backwards to find that for my vessel, the annual registration fees recently went up by 120% (ie more than doubled). some deal has been done or the insurance company has put one over the MSQ staff. (for my 16 m boat, WA = $261, Queensland = $488.30) (Incidentally, as the NT, registration is not required at all)

However, the real problems are much worse.

Because my vessel is over 15 m length, I am compelled to provide two extra very specific insurance covers. These fees are way out of kilter with other companies and it also seems that there may be an issue of principle. MSQ seem to have deliberately conspired against you, the boat owner, but It is also my contention that legislation such as this can be provided. considered? (ie a fairer, cheaper and more comprehensive cover for a particular vessel $10 000 000 to be “quiet absurd” for a 16 m yacht. This same company will provide ferro cement comprehensive cover with it seems to me that the there is a major flaw in the MSQ’s argument.)

I am prepared to make this a public issue, as one of the few boat owners that have been affected. (It is very difficult to accept that this legislation has been considered or constructed carefully as my own case clearly demonstrates. The compulsion to take out comprehensive insurance when writing up their insurance requirements but it seems pretty clear that some deal has been done or the insurance companies put one over the MSQ staff. It also seems that there may be an issue of principle. MSQ seem to have deliberately conspired against you, the boat owner, but It is also my contention that legislation such as this can be provided. considered? (ie a fairer, cheaper and more comprehensive cover for a particular vessel $10 000 000 to be “quiet absurd” for a 16 m yacht. This same company will provide ferro cement comprehensive cover with...)

Continued next page...
Continued from previous page

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Your organization may be interested enough to ask questions of your local member or the minister responsible.

The Hon John Mickel MP Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations.

Email: iter@ministerial.qld.gov.au

(Don’t expect a speedy response)

Did you notice how simply they just more than doubled the registration fees?

This is what happens when the boating organizations do nothing.

However, I would really appreciate it if your organization could address the 6 questions I posed earlier.

Please feel free to answer any of the 6 issues. You could just add comments under each of the issues and return the email. However, any comments, in any form would help.

I will do you the courtesy of conveying any outcome of my efforts if your organization can respond to this email.

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I have circulated this email to some groups/organizations in Queensland. You may suggest others. The list is at right.

Thank you for your time. Oh for the days when boating was a simple pleasure. But yachtsmen (both power and sail) have no such effective voice. Probably because (besides being fragmented), there are fewer of us and many of our needs and regulations are based on state government dealings rather than local council ones. Our associations and clubs have agendas that do not touch on such issues regularly. Some cruising sailors have no club affiliations at all.

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Just one more LETTER...
The Coastal Passage #34  2009

I am pleased to hear of every successful entry and act of compassion by any government official but it is genuine or a posture? What would have been the result of all this if TCP hadn’t taken on the issue and informed the South Pacific fleet of the prosecutions of foreign vessels entering Australia? Over time, every expose that TCP has made of inexcusable action by Customs has had a quality of one approach: “strict liability” rules to save face and restore some credibility until the rules are hardly recognisable from the first prosecutions. (The letter below illustrates that until the agency is willing to engage in a frank and honest way with the public TCP will keep a weather eye on them for you. So, return the smile...but don’t turn your back and watch what you say.

regards, Isaac

Isaac

The Message

Report by Bob Norson October 29

This report seemed strange. There are a raft of reasons why police agencies do not usually require a person to leave the location of a search but the common one is the obvious risk of tainting the results by the opportunity to plant evidence, not to mention the risk of a theft accusation. Probably a one off.

Then a phone call a couple hours later reporting a very similar kind of incident. At first it was thought it was the same one, same boat. But it wasn’t. Some of the description of the search was similar but the latest one was located in Bundaberg and the caller, Chris Ernar, a rally volunteer recommended contacting the vessel Friction for more information on what appeared to be an extraordinarily destructive search by Bundaberg Customs.

So I drove to Bundaberg to investigate.

It is important to note that the great majority of vessels that entered with the Port to Port rally and otherwise lately, reported customs to be quite thorough and generally courteous and had requested the marina to direct the vessel. Friction to more information on what appeared to be an extraordinarily destructive search by Bundaberg Customs.

I thought you might like to know about this.

regards, Isaac

The Incident

Gday Bob,

I read with interest in the letters regarding Australian Customs in the last issue. My wife and I have recently moved back to Australia after buying our new home a Leopard 42 catamaran, we purchased it in the Caribbean and sailed it from Martinique to Bundaberg for clearing in and paying our tax.

During our voyage that lasted eighteen months, we entered a lot of countries and had to deal with Customs, Quarantine and Immigration and they are all different in the way one has to do things. Some countries are quite easy and some are not so easy.

However, I found one thing in our dealings with the authorities, different yachties have different experiences.

When we arrived at Wreck Bay in St Cisopolis, Galapagos Islands, we radioed and asked permission from the Port Captain to enter port, we were allowed to enter and anchor in a certain place which we did. The guide books indicate that the authorities will be on board before the anchor hits the bottom, this was not the case. Guide books are good but out of date with some information due to the time between the research and the book going to print.

We radioed the Port Captain and asked about clearing in, we were told to report to his office at 1000 hours the next morning, and we asked if we were confined to the boat? The answer was no, we could go ashore.

In the harbour was a maxi yacht that we had met in the Panama so I dropped the dinghy and went across to talk to the skipper, Nick, he told me that the authorities were savage, they had charged him more than they should, they had carried out a full inspection of his yacht and confiscated some food stuffs and now they wanted him to fumigate the vessel at his own expense.

Armed with this information I cleared in the next morning expecting the worse. We arrived at the office at 1000 hours and he asked what we wanted and I said we belong to the catamaran that came in and are here to clear in, I also apologised that I only spoke English, Nick said fine and called for another Naval Officer that spoke perfect English, we did not have the same experiences as the maxi yacht our clearing in was uneventful, the only small discussion we had was regarding the length of time we could stay. We did not get inspected nor have anything taken and the charges was calculated on what the guide book stated.

I think the difference was attitude, although Nick was a nice bloke he does have a little attitude that could upset people at times. We found this everywhere we went, many yachties treat the people as though they are stupid, most we dealt with were poor but more street wise than most.

On our voyage we heard terrible things about the Australian authorities and we met sailors that were going to bypass Australia because of it. May I say that when we cleared in at Bundaberg the authorities were very pleasant and very helpful, they helped us import the catamaran they sat with us explained everything, they gave us time to settle in before going through the process, then they helped us with the paper work. It was a lot more pleasant than dealing with the Gendarmes in Raiatea even though I was as polite as I could be.

I think sailors judge the Australian Authorities on the experiences in other countries and yes our inspections are more thorough and so they should be, I know of three yachts that had dry wood termite oversights that totally wrecked the yacht one even de-masted through this.

In regard to the 96 hours notice, I think you will find it is a minimum of 96 hours notice, we gave notification in New Caledonia with the ETA of arrival, you can download the form to fax to the internet, Australian Customs has a great internet site with all the required information. We arrived the before our ETA and Customs had no problems with that because we had given the notice. They are aware that it is an ETA, (estimated time of arrival). We kept in contact with Customs and informed them of our ETA change.

Other Pacific countries are following suit with notification times, Tonga is now 24 hours notice, Fiji is 48 hours notice and there is a form that you can get off the net to send.

The Australian Authorities are no different to any other business they have good and they may have few not so good staff like everyone else, we only experienced the good. They have a job to do, it appears to be tradition that Australians knock authorities and we appear to be getting worse by doing so, we are frightening our potential visitors away.

Kind regards,

TCP did want to give the writer a chance to clarify and the TCP mail and the response with comment is next page.
Greetings J,

I did have a couple questions if you don’t mind.

As far as the general thrust of the letter, that is, the matter of attitude affecting outcome, that is the case with the majority lately.

As far as the general thrust of the letter, that is the case with the majority lately.

I get regular emails from people that have met that have not reached our shores yet asking me questions about that they have heard. To answer some of their questions I have contacted Customs and AQIS direct for the answers and emailed them to the respective friends.

Have a happy festive season. I hope this helps.

J

Hi Bob,

My comments related to experiences I have witnessed in the different countries that we cleared in and out from, the attitude of some check points is that they feel that they are above the people of authority that they are dealing with. In many cases I saw other boats penalised for their attitude to authorities, where we were politely treated with respect and only answered questions that were asked of us and were treated very well in all the countries we visited. The only places that we had food stuffs confiscated was Port Vila and naturally Australia, other vessels had things confiscated and had to pay fees of disposal. The only difference was the attitude towards authority.

comment and response, Bob Norson

First point: those aren’t “rumours across the Pacific”, those are facts. Australian Customs has used in past and continues to use extraordinary laws and enforcement tactics that are at odds with world norms and the interests of cruising sailors. TCP coverage of those hostile interventions has resulted in the more relaxed enforcement that is now usually the case. TCP has always and continues to invite correction on any mistaken fact stated in coverage of Customs. So far, no takers. All we get but would have readers make a negative inference about them based on innuendo. And what if we did? Is our border security to be based on facts or so unimportant we can afford to squander the resources on an officer’s personal dislikes ?? Besides decency, efficiency demands that laws are applied evenly and fairly.

Bob Norson

Also worth noting that though J asserts cruisers attitude is the problem he offers not one fact to support that. Even the example sited in the original letter does not state for fact that the cruiser “Nick” was treated rough because of his attitude, J merely states his belief that it was. To advise cruisers concerning a situation that could be dangerous for them to satisfy a personal belief could be disastrous.

Second point: notice that J ignored the second question in my comment by Bob Norson

To advise cruisers concerning a situation that could be dangerous for them to satisfy a personal belief could be disastrous. Second point: notice that J ignored the second question in my mail entirely. Mind firmly closed. This may be what allows J to criticise “rumours” and the harm they cause whilst at the same time make his point with.. rumours.. . Perhaps the author is just passing off business people that may believe it is in their interest to deny or redirect blame for heavy handed officiam. That may be wrong though as the most recent case shows because it does not deter future instances of abuse and it will be reported when it happens. If the business community got stuck into Bundaberg Customs as well, maybe they would revise their enforcement style for everyone’s benefit. After all, it isn’t the victims or TCP that causes international cruisers to avoid Australia. Customs has the monopoly on that business. TCP just reports the facts.

J

There are business people that may believe it is in their interest to deny or redirect blame for heavy handed officiation. That may be wrong though as the most recent case shows because it does not deter future instances of abuse and it will be reported when it happens. If the business community got stuck into Bundaberg Customs as well, maybe they would revise their enforcement style for everyone’s benefit. After all, it isn’t the victims or TCP that causes international cruisers to avoid Australia. Customs has the monopoly on that business. TCP just reports the facts.

J

What’s with Bundaberg Customs?

Bundaberg Customs has been at the forefront of conflict with entering cruisers. No other port of entry has had such a record. The very first complaint of Customs made to TCP was from Bundaberg (TCP # 15, The SV Toujours conflict). The Manzari case was in Bundaberg (TCP # 24). The controversy over “ship in transit” duties was in Bundaberg (TCP # 30) and now Friction. Cruisers should know this so they can make their own decision.

J

Can they Take Your Camera Away?

by Bob Norson

On December 19, Nick Holmes a Court, owner of web based media companies was on a street in Kings Cross where he lives when he saw Police performing what appeared to be a search on someone. He started recording video with his Blackberry which caught the attention of the police and they came to him demanding his Blackberry and saying they could arrest him under the terrorism act as recording the police was forbidden under the act.

The incident received immediate attention on the web as upon returning home Mr. Holmes a Court sent a message out on the blogsite Twitter. He claims he did not volunteer the device and stated “I do not consent to a search of my phone” but they insisted saying, “give me your phone, give me your phone”.

According to his account the police pulled the phone out of his hand and when he protested he was told to “shut up”. He was forced to stand by while the female cop looked through his email, text messages, photos and contacts. When they found the video they deleted it from the phone.

NSW Civil Liberties Council president, Cameron Murphy was quoted in a Courier Mail article on the story as saying there had been a similar event “where a student was arrested and pressured to delete footage of a brawl involving police”. According to him police could seize footage only if it was needed as part of an investigation.

From the article, “There has been a steady increase in police powers to stop people, search them and move them along,” Mr Murphy said. “This is very dangerous and it's the sort of thing that over time will lead to a police state.”

Queensland Council for Civil Liberties agrees. According to the president, Michael Cope, police do not have the authority to confiscate equipment or stop people from taking pictures of them performing their duties and questioned why the police would feel they need to.

Australian Customs Service claims they have the right to stop people recording their work and this begs the question of their authority. It does seem to be common for government agencies to exceed their authority and some individual officers may use intimidation to succeed where the laws don’t provide. Since few people know what their rights are, this often succeeds. TCP will pursue this matter along with the forced removal of owners from their own boat whilst being searched.
Off we go with one in tow

Once we are set up, it's all aboard each quarter of (Pete's boat) to a bridle attached to bitts on head off again. Past the coal terminal, care of "ya boat to 1770 and then Dawn can take first half hour, but there's no time to finish buying the supplies!!!!!! for Gladstone. This part of the plan trying to escape from here and have just Mustang, across the bar and headed up a tow from the "trailer eye" on the marina and into the river, where we set Cokes). We move both of our boats out of Narrows.

Sunday sees us making final preparations to the boat; we'll do some shopping on Thursday and depart early Friday morning.

While pushing the trolley around IGA the phone rings, it's an old friend who used to live in Bundy and has relocated to Rockhampton. He's been having a look at the weather forecast and thinks that the weekend would be a great time for me to help him deliver his 28ft Mustang "Sashay" to its new home at Rosslyn Bay Marina. I know I did offer to help him out, but we're trying to escape from here and have just finished buying the supplies!!!!!!

After a bit of thought, the plan is hatched. Get yourself down here mate and we'll tow ya boat to 1770 and then Dawn can take care of "Peggy-Anne" while you and I complete the delivery to Rocky, before bringing me back by car the next day.

Pete arranges that night and it's great to catch up with old mates when you haven't seen them for a while. Over a few Bundy and Cokes we plan the next day. high octane. We have made really good time and will have to cool our heels for a while to gain enough water, to make the crossing through The Narrows.

The next morning we arise early (despite heals for a while to gain enough water, and we're going to get a chance to finally leave the Bundaberg/Hervey Bay area. My last day of work is on a Tuesday, so Wednesday sees us making final preparations to the boat; we'll do some shopping on Thursday and depart early Friday morning.

The overall plan is set and we plot a course for the Town of 1770. The forecast is good and the weather looks kind, but once the sun is a little higher in the sky a nasty little Sou' Wester kicks in and makes us reshape our course to gain a lee from the coast. Once in close to the beach the trip becomes a lot more pleasant and we relax in chairs on the foredeck and take in the sights not usually seen from further out to sea. We lose about a knot, on our normal cruising speed (7 knots) and arrive at 1770 just before sunset. We drop the tow before heading into the anchorage and raft the Mustang up once "Peggy-Anne" is securely anchored. Another night of planning over Bundy and Cokes.

Breakfast as the sun comes up, throwing some fantastic hues over this pretty spot. By 06:30 were aboard the Mustang, across the bar and headed for Gladstone. This part of the plan will be a lot quicker than the first, as we are now travelling at 18 knots. We have Bustard Head abreast within the first half hour, but there's no time to enjoy the pleasures of Pancake Creek. We're on a mission!!!!!!! The little Chev. Engine runs sweet at 18 knots and the weather gods have been kind again, by 10:00hrs, we have tied to the fuel dock in the Gladstone Marina where we take on about 400ltres of high octane. We have made really good time and will have to cool our heels for a while to gain enough water, to make the crossing through The Narrows.

After a long lunch it's about time to head off again. Past the coal terminal, Graham Creek and eventually The Cattle Crossing. The tide is still running in and we have just enough depth to get through and have to push a bit of water as we make our way to Sea Hill. Once out of The Narrows the tide is more favourable and we make good time running in between the islands leading up to Rosslyn Bay. After receiving berthing allocation from Keppel Sands Marina, we have "Sashay" tied up in her new home by 16:30, after which we have the celebratory Bundy and Cokes.

Pete delivers me back to "Peggy-Anne" the next morning and my commitment has been admirably fulfilled. We spend another week at 1770, checking out the sites, before heading further north.

Another week in Pancake, a few days along our magnificent coastline. Breakfast as the sun comes up, throwing some fantastic hues over this pretty spot. By 06:30 were aboard the Mustang, across the bar and headed for Gladstone. This part of the plan will be a lot quicker than the first, as we are now travelling at 18 knots. We have Bustard Head abreast within the first half hour, but there's no time to enjoy the pleasures of Pancake Creek. We're on a mission!!!!!!! The little Chev. Engine runs sweet at 18 knots and the weather gods have been kind again, by 10:00hrs, we have tied to the fuel dock in the Gladstone Marina where we take on about 400ltres of high octane. We have made really good time and will have to cool our heels for a while to gain enough water, to make the crossing through The Narrows.

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Thornton's Creek, Colosseum and The Boyne. Two days at Gladstone for a shop and off to explore Graham Creek and then Pacific Creek. Once out of The Narrows, we decide to head to Yellow Patch for a couple of days. This turns into a week, in this great spot. We climb the dunes, catch a feed, walk the beach to Cape Capricorn and climb to the light station, whilst enjoying calm nights at anchor with lots of new found friends.

It took us a month to savour the places we rushed past, when delivering "Sashay". Boy it's great having the time to explore and enjoy some of the great destinations along our magnificent coastline.
It’s been ten years since the horror of Bob Steel collected the Rolex watch and the 98 Sydney Hobart and this year’s Tattersails Trophy for his second overall Hobart race could not have been more different than that tragedy.

Sydney was sparkling before the world’s cameras and Wild Oats XI put on a world class show as she broke away from the fleet after a perfect two wave start. Skandia had a busier time of it having more tucks to make the heads. Outside there were the usual tense moments as the thoroughbreds threaded their way through the scum of gin palaces and even Hobie cats. Especially with her lead out, WO XI was expected to run away and hide from the fleet but to the surprise of most, Skandia took the lead back in the 25 knot NE breeze.

There was some bad luck/good luck that night as Sandringham Yacht Club entry Georgia hit something hard off Point Perpendicular. The hull was holed at the rudder stock and she was sinking. A mayday was issued and two vessels responded, Ragtime and Telcoinabox Merit. Merit steamed back to find Georgia with her nav lights barely above the water. The good luck for Georgia was that Merit had 7 professional skippers from the Whitsunday charter fleet and they were sharp on their sea survival skills. The rescue of the stricken crew was executed perfectly and according to reports, Georgia sank within ten minutes of rescue. A close call.

Meanwhile the frustrated WO XI just couldn’t catch Skandia and then more bad luck, she hit a shark! The creature got wedged onto the rudder and the crew finally had to back the boat off it. This consumed precious time but the good luck was... apparently the keel had been fouled with something picked up off Sydney. Mark Richards, the skipper, claimed the boat was sailing like a dog but when they freed the shark and whatever else... she took off for line honours without looking back. Richards did compliment Skandia skipper Grant Warrington for sailing a brilliant race and there was some good natured ribbing at the wharf.

The bad luck was that WO XI didn’t break the record time but the good luck was the shark gave them their coveted line four honours in a row!
By Alexandra Connolly

I have spent about half of each of the past eight years in Queensland’s Tin Can Bay, a beautiful little coastal village on a triangular peninsula jutting into the waters of the Great Sandy Strait, protected by Fraser Island to the north east and Inskip Peninsula to the east. These waters are a yachting paradise, and Tin Can Bay is a magnet for such passing small vessels and their masters.

My time in Tin Can includes a twice daily survey of the Yacht Club area to note the arrival of new yachts and to meet the new “yachties” who invariably turn up nightly for a look around, meals, showers, and to enjoy the life and company (if they can find any) for the duration of their stay before continuing on their solitary way. I use the adjective “solitary” because most are. Those that aren’t sadly constitute a minority, the odd couple, retired and still together after a lifetime of child-rearing and working.

So, what type of being is the average, solo yachtsman (rarely a woman) who glides in, maybe stays a while depending on the weather and the attractions, then glides out of yachting communities?

The solo yachtsman is by definition partnerless, although he occasionally may have a wife who has refused to accompany him on his trip. He’s also retired (therefore almost always post 50) and is now managing to follow his dream of freedom and finding new places. His dream invariably includes finding, along the way, a partner to sail with him. The ideal partner will be hopefully youngish, a fit and attractive female, at one with nature, indeed free and willing to sail. The expectation of subliminal and unconscious. It implies that before we get to “with him” it is time to examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie? Before we get to “with him” it is time to examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie? Before we get to “with him” it is time to examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie? Before we get to “with him” it is time to examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie? Before we get to “with him” it is time to examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie? Before we get to “with him” it is time to examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie? Before we get to “with him” it is time to examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie? Before we get to “with him” it is time to examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie? Before we get to “with him” it is time to examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie? Before we get to “with him” it is time to examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie?

The “at one with nature” criterion is more know because I used to be one of them. But alas, a dream she is, and unless he and when nature has its way with dyed “leave behind your hard won lifestyle and has truly exceptional attractions, a dream hair, grey roots (and growing fast) are say hello to hard graft with added I ... paradise and Tin Can Bay is a “with him”. First let’s examine “free”. Free distant mangrove and the odd yellow strip magnet for such passing small vessels and After many conversations with many of means no new grandchildren to adore, no of beach. And above all, she will put her their masters. these yachties, I begin to realise that I pets, no husband, no regular bills to be very life into the hands of her adventurous have stumbled upon a sub-culture of single paid, no mortgage, no debts to pay off, no new companion who knows he is an My ... “solitary” because most are. Now are we, or is our yachtie, hoping to over all these obstacles, our yachtie has Those that aren’t sadly constitute a minority, Let’s start with youngish. Yachties are, in stumble upon a needle in a haystack? found this rare species of woman and has the odd couple, retired and still together in general, not young. As explained above managed to convince her that she should ... post 50. of yachting communities? raised children, cooked and cleaned and He will have to present himself as able, such a finding is one of the lures, along with the woman will continue to look as she did examine, from her point of view, life aboard cruising the blue with a yachtie? In addition she is expected to cope without mod cons, with feeling dirty (shower not too wonderful) sticky hair full of salt and cannot get her roots done, sheets not crisp and clean….

Let’s just round all this up to Observations on Solitary Yachtsmen

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And just who is the yachtie that captured Alexandra’s heart? TCP knows but we aren’t saying
The secrets to going sailing and sex appeal

Or.. every babe is a sucker for a boaty

By Captain B. S. Nautical

WHERE TO START:

(1) Get a sailboat. This is the easy part. Go to the harbour and look for boats, find the biggest, cheapest one and buy it! MOST IMPORTANT! Get a boat with a motor! Everyone who ‘sails’ knows that is the most important part of the boat.

(2) Essential accessories: the boat must have a ‘fridge’ or at least an ‘esky.’ Cold drinks are no mere luxury but a required part of your ‘navigation system.’ (It’ll explain later) You may also need ‘provisions.’ This is not too tricky. You may just go through the market and pick up tins that strike your fancy. My favourite are the ‘red’ ones. If colour coded provisioning isn’t to your standard then you should get...

A ‘FIRST MATE’: The value of this accessory is a matter of some contention amongst us sailors but the virtue of having someone on the boat to order around should not be undervalued. (gimme a beer, what’s for lunch? etc) In my opinion First Mates are indispensable and easily found. Any sailing club will have several young and attractive candidates waiting for just such a stud-ly example of manhood and seamanship as yourself. Go to the bar and practise all the nautical terms you know (be sure to wear wind is ‘going to.’ If the first mate seems to have trouble answering nautical terms in addition to the salutes. I admit there are still some even I don’t know but they mostly seem to refer to the weather.) The by the time you are done with your first beer you should be out where the wind is so you can begin to ‘sail.’ First stand by the mast and put your finger in the air to test the wind direction. Find out which is the side of the stick the wind is coming from and going to. Next find the rope that fastens to the top of the sail. When done with that open another beer and yell for the ‘first mate’ to come up from the food place and haul up the sail while you ‘steer.’ Be sure to tell the ‘first mate’ to stand on the side of the ‘stick’ where the wind is ‘going to.’ If the first mate seems to have trouble hauling up the sail the rope you can then criticise the first mate for her lack of ‘seamanship’ and thus establish your own position as skipper. Be sure to retrieve the ‘first mate’ from the water, where you will find her after the sail fills and knocks her off the ‘deck.’ This might be a good time to reassess which side of the ‘stick’ you instruct the ‘first mate’ to stand on when pulling up the sail.

ANCHORING: Since by now you are aware of the proper technique for performance sailing (about 2000 revs on the motor) you will have arrived at the ‘anchorage’ just in time for beer #3. To find the best spot in the ‘anchorage’ look for the other boats. Find the two closest together and go between them. Be sure to raise your beer in salute and announce that you have no insurance to bring out the best in your new neighbours. While this seems to have a dramatic effect on new, shiny plastic boats, especially catamarans, you will find large steel boats react very little. Often raising their own beer in salute while saying, ‘your funeral.’ Your first mates facial colour should now be restored and thus she should be ready to assist ‘setting’ the anchor. After showing your ‘first mate’ how to ‘drop’ the anchor but before telling her how to ‘secure’ the thing, order her to ‘hold tight’ while you ‘set’ the anchor. A few moments at full throttle in reverse should do. After retrieving your ‘first mate’ from the water again, there are several things to remember. One, the location of the ‘first aid kit’ as the ‘bow roller’ and ‘pulpit’ are a tight fit for a first mate when clinging to a chain. Two, this is a good time to clear the boat of any potentially lethal objects, knives, guns, broken bottles etc. Three, hide all life jackets as after the first day sailing is when first mates are most prone to ‘jump ship.’ Because of your first mate’s lack of ‘seamanship,’ you now have a lot of chain out and you are very close to one of your neighbours, usually the shiniest one. Even though you have ‘stowed’ the ‘pfd’s’ and the mate has had enough swimming for the day, if you are close enough for her to step aboard another boat she may consider a drooling pirate rapist preferable to your company and flee.

No problem, simply bring in most of the chain. If your ‘depth sounder’ says 10 metres then 11 metres of chain is probably drifted near or are already ‘alongside’ another boat. (See above: other accessories) Remember to keep the open beer in the right hand whilst all this is going on, as a dumb smile and a raised beer can/stubby is the universally accepted explanation for all errors in ‘navigation.’ By now you have probably made your way out of the marina with lots of help from friendly neighbours raising their hands in a salute or something like that. If you have really impressed, you may be honoured by being shouted at with shouted nautical terms in addition to the salutes. I admit there are still some even I don’t know but they mostly seem to refer to a rectal reference, eg; are this or that.

About the Author

By retiring as a financial planner (just ahead of the investigation) the good captain has gone to sea but now has a fashion centre for the distribution of custom made leather vests, treasure chests and child safe plastic cutlass’s for that oh so sexy look...
I am fortunate enough to be in possession of a piece of Queensland history, a vessel that is registered with the Australian National Maritime Museum and the Australian Register of Historic Vessels.

The Waiben is a Norman Wright Built Pilot Vessel launched in Cairns in 1949 for the purpose of servicing the Torres Straits.

Its first job after WWII was to replace the navigational beacons that had been removed at the time, so the enemy could not find their way in to the Torres Straits. Being a vessel in a remote part of Queensland the “Waiben” was the local school ferry, the police launch, medical ship, customs and immigration vessel as well as its real job, a Pilot Vessel. It was up in TI for approximately 25 years, before being transferred to Hay Point, as the pilot vessel for the new coal loading facility near Mackay. It was only a short stint there, before it was up for repair at Goldstones slipway in the Pioneer River. The vessel was declared uneconomical to repair and the shipwright was ordered to burn it.

The shipwright seeing an iconic part of Queensland maritime history being reduced to ashes, offered the Government officials $50.00 for the boat, they scoffed and returned the order to burn it. Ray Goldston, the shipwright stated that the vessel was declared unserviceable and if he was to burn it on his land that they would receive an invoice for $500 to remove the remaining debris. Ray got his Waiben for $100.00.

The Waiben laid on its side in the mud for a year or two until Ray had the time and money to resurrect his project. Eleven years in the making and some $300,000, the vessel was restored to its former glory.

The Waiben was put to work fairly quickly and become the flagship of the P&O owned Brampton Island as a charter vessel, offering sunset champagne cruises, dive and fishing charters up until 2005 when the contract was not renewed. The vessel was put on the market and quickly snatched up by Ed and Michelle Barker of Brisbane.

The boat was cruised down from Mackay and now calls the Moreton Bay Boat Club at Scarborough home.

The vessel has had extensive work on her, being rewired, new electronics, blasted back to bare timber, seams re-packed and new epoxy topcoats... New refrigeration, DC board, onshore power and new instrumentation and new structural fridge freezer installed. The make over cost me about the same as the purchase price of the vessel.

I plan to cruise the vessel back up to Thursday Island (TI) in October 2009 to celebrate the “Waiben” 60th birthday. I recently flew to Horne Island and ferried to TI to pick up some history on the old girl, the response was fantastic, the party will be on when we tie up next to the new Waiben next year.

Ed Barker, MY Waiben
INTRODUCING THE MCY 46

The MCY 46 is designed for extended cruising and passage making without sacrificing performance, creature comfort or structural integrity. Some of the features of the yacht include:
- Fuel and water capacity for extended cruising
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Sail the worlds oceans, set a course for that favorite destination, make that dream come true.

Basic Structural Stage available from
$165,000

CRUISER DESIGNED, SAILOR MADE
The Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club is building a new state of the art marina of 135 berths due for completion in April/May of this year. Less than half of the allocated marina berths are offered for sale; however there is a wide range of monohull, multihull and large marina berths available ranging in size from 12m to 24m at competitive rates.

This is the last opportunity for the Club to expand marina berth numbers in the Manly Boat Harbour. The club is building a new marina of 135 berths for total of 350 berths in total. The Club actively promotes and fosters a healthy family culture and has plenty of special interest groups including Social Cruising Group, Sailing Group, In-Shore Fishing Group, Deep Sea Fishing Group and Dive Group. The Club also has one of the finest views of navigable waters, making the location for a permanent berth as the off season convenience.

Properties analyst group Colliers International has been watching rising prices of marina berths and believes that marina berths are a solid investment for the future. Colliers Brisbane research analyst Alison Timchur said: "It's the age-old principle of supply and demand, the demand for berths is up and there aren't enough available. "Boat ownership in Queensland is growing faster than the population and there are at least 2000 people in the southeast waiting lists for marina berths. It takes time to build more marinas so we would suggest the prices may continue to be pushed up by the lack of supply for some time to come."

Hope Island Resort Marina Manager Marc Hall said the pressure on the limited number of marina berths available for purchase and annual rental on the Gold Coast was increasing monthly as more people opt for a boating lifestyle. "In West Australia, parts of Victoria and on Sydney Harbour people are paying unbelievable prices for marina berths and that is going to occur here," he said. "The number of people into boats in southeast Queensland has just exploded."

Manly Harbour definitely has all the boxes ticked for a perfect boating destination and is widely considered the hub of boating in southeast Queensland with the best access to Moreton Bay. Marina facilities include: monitored security access, travel lift, hard stands, diesel and unleaded fuelling station, boat servicing, car parking, shower and restroom amenities. A five minute walk from the marina to Manly Village you will find a Post Office, coffee shops, restaurants, hotel, supermarket, bus and train station.

Coastal cruisers love the location for a permanent berth as the off season security of being out of the major cyclone belt combined with the best of the city at the doorstep, make the off season a thing to look forward to rather than something to be endured! Yearly maintenance, social networking and retail therapy at hand.

And for boaties that cruise local waters, it couldn't be better. A few minutes from the house, toss lines and you are on your way. A sailing vessel has a lovely destination in almost any wind direction through deep navigable waters, making the most of your precious weekend time. The islands of Moreton Bay or the glitz of the Gold Coast Broadwater are easily accessible.

Taking into consideration the large number of multihulls on the water the Club is building marina berths specifically designed for multihulls with finger lengths same as boat lengths and fairway widths exceeding Australian Standards.

Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club facilities include alfresco dining and gaming. The Club actively promotes and fosters a healthy family culture and has plenty of special interest groups including Social Cruising Group, Sailing Group, In-Shore Fishing Group, Deep Sea Fishing Group and Dive Group.

The Club also has one of the finest views of Moreton Bay in Manly!

To find out more about Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club visit www.mbtbc.com. To discuss berth sales call Peter Hansen on 1300 889 509 or email marinasales@mbtbc.com.
Beautiful blue skies.
Still water below.
Vessel under your toes.

Rare opportunity to buy new marina berths at
Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club Marina from $132,000

- 135 new state of the art berths are being built, less than half available for sale
- Wide range of berths still available to buy 12-24m mono and multi
- Best access to Moreton Bay - hub of boating in Southeast Queensland
- Marina includes hardstand, travel lift, fuel, boat servicing, car parking and amenities
- Short walk to cafes, restaurants, shops, supermarket and post office

On completion, the expanded marina will accommodate 350 vessels.

Whether it’s a work berth or a secure place to moor your boat, this is your last opportunity to acquire a competitively priced, lifetime appreciating marina berth within the Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club at Manly Harbour.

To discuss your specific needs call Peter Hansen on 1300 889 509 or email marinasales@mbtbc.com

www.mbtbcmarinasales.com
We’re building a marina for boaties not sardines.
What do Nigel Calder, Jimmy Cornell, and Beth Leonard have in common? They're all members of Seven Rally this year. We'd read an article by a previous cruiser who said that sailing seemed a long way away, literally, to plan and travel to 114 countries and always look forward to reading it each month," say Liza and Andy Copeland, Bagheera.

Cruisers around the world gather, they organize get-togethers, seminars, roundtable discussions, hand-on demos and they share experiences and enjoy each other's company. "The camaraderie of SSCA is making it a bit easier to travel to a new port," says Lin and Larry Pardey, Sunflower. "Now in the nearly 20 years that I've been a member of SSCA years before she set sail in order to learn what life on the high seas was all about." Lin and Larry Pardey, Sunflower. "For many years before she set sail in order to learn what life on the high seas was all about."

SSCA members join as Associates, which allows them to fly the SSCA burgee flying blue burgee. Members can apply to become Commodores after fulfilling certain requirements: they must be members for at least one year, be fulltime cruisers, have met the cruising distance requirement, and be sponsored by two Commodores. Commodores fly the red swallowtail burgee. By flying our burgees we can find other members throughout the world, enjoy their friendship and company. But we can also see who's in the anchorage before we get there! We can find members we've lost touch with or who can give us insight into what we can expect when we arrive at our destination by using the online Member Locator Map.

The Commodores Bulletin is available online at www.scca.org so that members who have never been published before can contribute to the website's help us keep track of our friends even better.

Cruisers Ty and Suzanne Giesemann, Liberty, believe that "There's no greater feeling than sailing into an unknown port. You can't buy varnish! Where do you buy diesel or get your propane tanks filled? My dog needs shots; is there a vet around?"

SSCA bulletins are now online at www.scca.org so that members who have never been published before can contribute to the website's help us keep track of our friends even better.

Members are encouraged to hold regional Gams as well. Longtime cruiser Kathy Parsons, Hale Kai has been a member of SSCA for decades. She first joined SSCA years before she set sail in order to learn what cruising was all about. "Now in the nearly 20 years that I've been out cruising, SSCA is my community of cruising friends. I enjoy attending the Gams and we fly our burgee as we cruise."

One of the newest ways that SSCA is sharing camaraderie is through SSCA's new online interactive Port Guides. These volunteers coordinate local social events for members. We would like to actively engage even more of our members to build camaraderie worldwide and would love to find some willing volunteers from Down Under. Start-up kits are available to give you lots of hints to help you launch a new local group and SSCA Home Base will provide administrative support. Send an email to Jeff at metromanager@ssca.org for more information.
SSCA is a caring, supportive family of kindred spirits, ready to assist fellow cruisers when needed. We are individuals who share a unique way of life and celebrate international fellowship and goodwill. We aspire to the fulltime cruising lifestyle. We are independent and responsible people who pride ourselves on our self-reliance and conduct ourselves with integrity. We treat all people and our environment respectfully. We are ambassadors of a cruising fraternity and want to ensure that those following in our wake will be warmly welcomed.

It's this now famous "SSCA Clean Wake" policy, which has helped raise the reputation of today's sea-gypsies around the world, ensuring that the welcome mat will be out for all cruisers who following in the wake of a fellow SSCA member.

Beth Leonard and Evans Starzinger, Hawk, are true ambassadors of the SSCA Clean Wake policy. They add, "SSCA provided us with invaluable information and an instant support network when we were new to cruising and most in need of both - and SSCA allows us to do the same for others who are following in our wake."

For as long as mankind has memory, man has been enchanted by the sea. The need to know what lies beyond the next wave and over the far horizon is pervasive. Ask any group about their fantasies and someone will tell you of a vision of tropical blue skies, balmy breezes, ever-gentle waves and sailing to exotic ports. Those who are living the dream, as well as those who are planning for the day that they can release the ties to the workaday world and sail off to seek paradise, and those who only dream of such adventure, all join together in an organization called the Seven Seas Cruising Association.

Become an SSCA member and participate in the fellowship of worldwide cruisers. You'll be rewarded with lasting friendships of like-minded, caring people who are there for one another when help is needed; who are eager to share their experiences and knowledge with you.

For more information, go to www.ssca.org and take our Virtual Tour.

Bob's note; It is my opinion that Australian sailors have much to gain by association with this respected international organisation. Besides the obvious social delights, Aussie's in particular could use an organisation that really is representative of who we are and what we do. Kay and I are members.
Saving Steel...

Lesson number one,
The skipper is responsible from day one

Over the years I have been asked or been involved in discussions regarding the purchase of steel boats. Often the subject turns to surveyors and some people suggest that buyers rely entirely on the surveyors report. This runs shivers down my spine. I did that once...

“This vessel was professionally designed and built and has been well maintained to a very high standard. Hull and superstructure are in very good condition and has been kept up to protect all areas. All windows have storm (sic) boards. No defects were noted with hull or superstructure.”

Owning an old steel boat has taught me many things but paramount is the realisation that a good skipper is absolutely self sufficient, and that begins on the day of purchase. Never ever delegate YOUR responsibility to a person whose abilities or interests are unknown. When it comes to buying a boat it is ‘Buyer beware’! A good surveyor can be very helpful but do learn enough yourself to know the difference between a good boat and a bad boat.

How to judge a steel boat? Very briefly, look around as you board. Is deck gear bolted through the decks? Or on raised flanges? Leaks on decks ruin steel. Is there timber fastened to the steel? Oh oh., look carefully around the edges of the timber for signs of fresh paint to hide the rust scale. Go below and look immediately for the lowest point in the bilges. Not accessible? Steel? Oh oh.. look carefully around the edges of the timber for signs of fresh paint to hide the rust scale. How to judge a steel boat? Very briefly, look around as you board. Is deck gear bolted through the decks? Or on raised flanges? Leaks on decks ruin steel. Is there timber fastened to the steel? Oh oh., look carefully around the edges of the timber for signs of fresh paint to hide the rust scale. Go below and look immediately for the lowest point in the bilges. Not accessible? Steel? Oh oh.. look carefully around the edges of the timber for signs of fresh paint to hide the rust scale.

Still smiling...

There is a satisfaction to seeing progress.
The cockpit was as bad as the aft deck. With so much to replace it was an opportunity to redesign it as well.

The quick scaling we did on the slip was good enough to identify spots for the replacement of steel but when it was time later to do paint... Every last bit of rust scale must be removed which is trickier then it may sound as the stuff will disfigure itself as steel and appear in surprising places. As abrasive blasting wasn't possible, a carefully applied paint system was the next step. Beginning with two or more layers of Altex pre-prime 167 (POR 15) I began... I'm not happy with the result of that paint system is astounding to me but that was the case: "experts" advising a coat of primer and the foam only... and don't forget the wonderful teak deck! As soon as the decks were in place and the boat floated, we both turned to the inner plating. Months of the rattle gun and scrapers. But a warning I gave to KK, "don't use the rattle gun below the waterline till we are on the slip!" Good precaution. Though I knew we had some work below to replace previous poor quality work, the repair of the rust was, as usual, underestimated.

When we did scale the lower bilges we punched eight holes in her. The boat had been floating on paint. The quick scaling we did on the slip was good enough to identify spots for the replacement of steel but when it was time later to do paint... Every last bit of rust scale must be removed which is trickier then it may sound as the stuff will disfigure itself as steel and appear in surprising places. As abrasive blasting wasn't possible, a carefully applied paint system was the next step. Beginning with two or more layers of Altex pre-prime 167 (POR 15) I began... I'm not happy with the result of that paint system is astounding to me but that was the case: "experts" advising a coat of primer and the foam only... and don't forget the wonderful teak deck! As soon as the decks were in place and the boat floated, we both turned to the inner plating. Months of the rattle gun and scrapers. But a warning I gave to KK, "don't use the rattle gun below the waterline till we are on the slip!" Good precaution. Though I knew we had some work below to replace previous poor quality work, the repair of the rust was, as usual, underestimated.

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A few things worth noting...

When we did the fitout I refused to do it the way the pros had done the boat. I thought that if we did insulate it would be with panels of foam or even just layers of old carpet as the chippy at the Tweed advised, but sailing in North Queensland, it was never an issue. The boat was painted white so heat wasn’t a problem and well ventilated so we had little of the condensation that experts warned we would. But insulation could have been done anytime because I made the fitout so that everything came apart with a screw driver and 7/16ths wrench. I believe strongly that no steel boat should be built in a way that denies access to the steel for inspection and service.

On MIG welders; the first machine I bought was good only in that it was such a challenge to use, that when I got a good machine it seemed easy! The overhead welding required for the patches in the bilges was going to be more challenge than I needed however. I got a high quality machine with greater capacity and it had such powerful grunt that I literally danced while welding the plates overhead just to show off. Anything to put on a show for the troops… And in case you think I’m careless, not one leak ever showed on the welding I did and it was impossible to tell my repairs from the original professional welds.

How to select a good MIG welder? Pick the thing up. If it nearly breaks your back to lift it, that’s the one you want. Aluminium coils are light weight and cheap but they heat fast and do not tolerate heat well. This means the character of the arc is inconsistent and the machine shuts down frequently when the internal temperature sensor tells it to. The better machines use copper wound coils that do not heat as easily and can tolerate more heat. The arc remains consistent and they have a much greater “duty cycle”.

Steel is a bloody mess to work with. You owe your neighbours all the effort to insure you don’t damage their boats. Metal spray is very destructive. Only some one ignorant or a real arsehole works steel near other craft.

And don’t be tempted to put off a small job after wrapping up the big project. Even a little ten minute project will spread metal spray over a surprising area requiring an all day clean-up effort. That’s if you want your boat looking good. If you don’t care what your boat looks like, clean up is pretty easy. But on a steel boat, if it looks good it may be good. If it doesn’t, it is in decay.

There is an old saying about Granny’s 100 year old axe. It may have had 2 new heads and 10 new handles but it is Granny’s 100 year old axe. A good steel boat is like any other in that it will last forever with proper maintenance. But what is proper maintenance? We got the boat caught up after many years of indifference and as important, changed much of the deck gear to suit the realities of steel boat use. No holes drilled through the deck! Flanges welded on to mount things like mainsail track, stanchions and cleats. When we sold her she was in the best condition she had been in for decades but there will always be work to do on a steel boat.....

Saving Steel, continues......
Patching Steel on a curved or irregular surface...

If you are going to take the time to do it… do it right!

There are two kinds of patch, over-lay and inlaid. The overlay patch is just cutting up a piece of steel that is at least as large as the repair area needed and smacking it on over the top and welding all around. Cheap and nasty.

If done properly, an inlaid patch can not be discerned from the surrounding original work and if under water will not slow your boat because of an uneven surface. It will also be as strong as the original work because it will be fully welded, that is, inside and out.

This is a description of how WE did it.

First cut out the rotten steel. Be sure to use a respirator and ear and eye protection!!! Besides the flying bits of steel, the fumes from the burning paints and other nasties will bite you. Ask me how I know….

Try to leave fairly straight edges and insure the steel is clean and wholesome all the way around to make a good weld. Transfer the dimension to your new steel by tracing with a piece of cardboard or bracing ply or just measure it up, whatever works for you. It doesn’t have to be perfect. The bottom edge needs to be close enough so that it will rest in place to start but much of the rest can be adjusted as you go with an angle grinder. Remember, this is built joining so a gap of at least 2mm to 1/8 inch is perfect. You can get away with up to ¼ inch depending on the thickness of plate you are using. The range of hull plating used is usually from 1/8 to ¼ inch or 3 to 6 mm. Ours was 3/16 or about 4.6mm.

Because I bought a second, better welder before the bilge work, I had the convenience of leaving my weaker machine in the boat so I didn’t have to lug around the other machine. Outside I started the welding by installing the “dogs”. These are small plates temporarily welded in place to support and position the new steel. As you can see in Step 1, the dogs at the bottom are just rectangular pieces while the ones above are “L” shaped. Working inside at the bottom, the bottom dogs should keep the steel in line, or a little pressure against the new steel with one hand while you tack with the other should do. Use your touch and eye to judge the alignment. Get it right. Make the tacks inside as shown on Step 1. If you place your weld on just one side of the dogs they easily knock loose later with a hammer.

Next I would yell to Kay who would be outside with a hammer, to drive the wedges in the “L” shaped dogs to force the steel into a slight curve. As soon as the surfaces aligned about 6 inches up the plate from the last tack, I would have her stop and install another set of tacks and repeat that until I tacked right under the “L” shaped dogs. Then I would go outside to smack off the “L” shape dogs and weld them higher up and start again. Inside again and with the plate tacked all around and satisfied the edges met well, I would cut back the tacks to reduce bead height and prepare for welding all around. With my small MIG running on moderate power, I could weld a pretty long line before stopping to let the metal cool to prevent distortion.

With that done I would go outside and take an angle grinder with a cutting blade and use it to “groove” out the line all around the patch. I do this to get a more uniform width and depth of channel. Then fire up the good machine. For overhead welding you need a different arc than what you would use on a horizontal surface. Many will advise to reduce your current and slow the work right down but the machine I got was so grunty and I was so sharp from having to work with a rubbish machine before, that I just wound up the wire feed speed and ripped! I use good magnification and my jeweller’s background was helpful. If you get it right the weld looks flat and dense, no bubbles, pits or globs hanging off. The bead width should be consistent. It should be pretty!

To prevent distortion you have to work in sections. The length of weld can vary depending on the current used and nature and thickness of steel. I was going about a foot (bold) and then doing a line on the opposite side of the patch. To make a smooth start on the next section, I would cut back the end of the previous line with the edge of the cutting blade to form a small groove then start the next weld with about an inch overlap.

Kay and I did over 40 square feet of curved bilge that way and no one could ever tell we had done it at all once it was painted. And in spite of it all being done on the rush on a slipway that the local fishermen would get nervous about seeing the “L” shape dogs. I would fabricate the fence in sections and then have Kay hold in place whilst I “eyeballed” from shore. The result was quite good. Below…cruising in the Whitsundays. From rusted steel to red gum, no matter what you want to paint, QUALITY PRODUCTS AT THE LOWEST PRICES! CALL ME!

Our price on Wattyl Anti-foul and POR 15 products is so low you have to ring to get a quote…

You’ll like it!!
The scene is Sawmill Beach at Cid Harbour, Whitsunday Island. The timing is between strong wind warnings (most of us are endeavouring to get south sometime). The occasion is Jane’s (SY, Escondido) “Big O” Birthday. We were lucky enough to get six hours without any rain.

Twenty something dinghies had converged on the beach and disgorged some seasoned party goers. For a few people this would be the first of hopefully many more such beach events. For those of us more seasoned travellers it’s just an excuse for another big get together ashore.

It doesn’t take a lot for Arnold and Frank to dinghy around the anchorage and invite everybody to a BYO everything party.

Several of our partygoers put on some entertainment including a “Marilyn Munroe Happy Birthday Mr. President” rendition by Tina from Aurelia and lots of jokes from the men of the group. Frank (Escondido) sang the Charlie Mops song “The man who invented beer” along with some more of his great songs and guitar playing.

It turned out to be Cath’s birthday (Cool Change) as well, which meant more celebrating. Donna (Kidnapper) “says” she made a chocolate mud cake Birthday cake. It looked like something out of Michael’s Patisserie but there isn’t one in Cid Harbour so I guess she really did make it. Quite a work of art.

Frank and his electric drill made short work of some green coconuts, which along with a bottle of rum, lime juice and a couple of straws became very popular. After they were emptied they became the Sawmill Beach version of Petonque. Everything on a boat must have two uses.

We parties until dark then rescued the dinghies from varying positions up the beach with the falling tide and all headed for home.

Saturday was a fairly quiet day around the bay except for the charter boats who were all squeezing as many anchorages as possible into their short holiday.

Then followed a “Recovery Party” two days later which was held at the other side of the beach, with Frank acting as our Caribbean dinghy boy. Bill (First Light) didn’t join us because he was having too much fun swimming around his boat with a turtle. Steve (Aurelia) caught a stone fish nearby and brought it in a bucket to show us (adult show and tell).

The forecast is starting to improve so hopefully this means we will have the next get together at a new location.
or.. some days you bite the dog
and some days the dog bites you..

OR... The continuing saga of Bob’s boat building saga

Just before publishing last edition I ran into an outgassing/pitting problem that I wasn’t certain of the source. Where did it come from? For the benefit of those that aren’t familiar with the terms, when a porous material is warming, the gasses inside of it will expand and if you are covering with resin, the resulting escaping gasses will bubble up through your work leaving surface pits. If the gas is coming from the core, the pitting will apparently leave a path from the surface to the core. If the core is cooling, then the opposite occurs and the resin will actually be ‘pushed’ into a surface cavity. From TCP # 33, I have to settle the question of whether it’s the core or laminate that is the source of the gas. Before I proceed with the first hull I will conduct an experiment to find out conclusively where the gas came from and how to approach the problem from there. I’ll post it to the web site building log after publication.

I did do an experiment that answered the question to my satisfaction and the answer is; it’s the core. My lot of Duflex panels have a skin that is not sealed at all. The web site has a more complete log on this. Boat builders who wish to know more detail should have a look there.

Here is what I did; I cut off the skin on one side of a scrap piece of panel (pic 1), leaving as much balsa as possible. After installing a gasket to be used with a vacuum chamber later, I immersed the panel in a few mm of water with red food colouring (pic 2). The idea was to let the exposed core soak up some water and then apply vacuum to see if the moisture would draw through the skin. The vacuum has hardly necessary in that the water started “wicking” through the skin in minutes. When vacuum was applied the water rushed through the skin (pic 5). I took another scrap and coated it with a layer of resin (pic 3), and put it through the same treatment. The result was a vast improvement.

The conclusion? My lot of 13mm Duflex panels have a resin impoverished 800 gram fibreglass skin that is probably structurally sound but is not water proof. The pitting I had so much trouble with was the result of outgassing from the core and these pits likely provide a ingress route for water through the fairing and skin that could see the core-saturated. It was my judgement that a couple of hopeful coats of resin over the top of the bogg was not sufficient for me to have confidence in the integrity of the hulls. If the sealing agent is on the surface of the hulls then any scratch or scrape in the surface could be dangerous.

To repair the problem I cut back the bogg under the waterline on the first hull and will apply a layer of resin AT NIGHT when the panels are cooling. Then while that coat is firming I will reapply the bogg. If my experience with the second hull is an example, I should see no pitting in the surface of the fairing bogg having done it at night and I will have a sealing surface entombed underneath and protected from mechanical abrasion. The parts of the first hull in pic # 5 that haven’t been cut back are either above the waterline or where there has been glass tape applied over a joint, which will not leak gas. I will also coat the surface with resin when done fairing.

I believe that boats built of Duflex, provided the panels are similar to mine, that have not taken precautions could possibly be subject to ingress of water to the core. Of special concern may be interior surfaces that get wet as they may not have any sealing surface applied.

This is another set back that in my opinion, did not need to happen. If the panel skins had been fully wetted with at the factory I don’t believe this would have been an issue at all. The next best thing for a builder may be to coat all panels with resin upon receiving a kit and prior to any assembly. And do it at night! The project has had to be delayed due to another matter that I may have mentioned in editorial but it will resume when conditions allow.
TCP note: This started out as a Passage People from our friend Julius Sanders but it got carried entirely away with this interesting sailor. As it should...

By Julius Sanders, MY Nova Keria

I would like to introduce Chu-sa (Commander) Seki Hideshige or Hide (pronounced hid-eh) to his friends. Hide san is retired from the Japanese Navy where he was an air-frame engineer. On retirement he bought his boat from a friend and decided to do a solo round the world trip. Hide and I met in Darwin in November where I spent a few days as his chauffer.

His boat is named Polaire (Polaris or Pole Star). Polaire is a Perry designed cutter rigged. A most impressive feature is the two leather recliner armchairs in the saloon. We very quickly made use of these, kicking back with a cold XXXX or two. His experiences in Queensland have made a lasting impression. His beer of choice is now XXXX. The condensation off the cans were leaving water rings on his teak dinette. Strange that with all the technological marvels on these visiting boats, such a simple and effective aid to comfortable cruising, the venerable stubby holder, is generally missing. We soon rectified that and the beers stayed colder and his furniture stayed unmarked. With arm chairs and coldies, the stage was appropriately set and Hide recounted his travels so far.

He left Tokyo, his home port and chose a great circle route for Canada. This took him up towards the Aleutian Islands. He went almost as far as 50N. Here he encountered fog, fishing boats and fishing floats. Despite these hazards he persevered until bad weather broke his hydraulic jib furler. He then made for the South east. Being caught in a blow with a jib that will not go up or down is not something that you would wish on your worst enemy.

Hide tells me that he had a full jib going for over a week until he got down to 38N looking for calm weather. Here, he could climb up the mast and repair the furler. 1000 miles from the nearest land, sailing solo and he climbs to the top of the mast. You may think that sailing a thousand miles off your course is a bit extreme. Not so. Those of us that have had a similar experience know that the job HAS to be done. And know also that it is terrifying. Wobbling around on the top of your mast where a mistake could see you drop 50ft to the deck or the water and no one around to pick up the pieces. Hide remarks here that apart from the small fishing travelers near the Aleutians he saw only six large vessels on the whole trip across the top to Canada. I asked about his solo watch keeping regime on board. He started off by catnapping during the day so that he could be more alert at night. Later he went back to the normal day work/night-sleep cycle. His radar receiver alarm is enough to wake him in plenty of time to keep clear of traffic.

After 33 days on this zig-zag course he arrived in Victoria, Canada without other mishaps. Hide then sailed down the US west coast to Mexico where he set of on the South Pacific leg of his trip. This leg took in Marquesas, Tahiti, Fiji and New Caledonia. The stuff dreams are made of.

In Australia, Hide’s port of entry was Brisbane where there was only sweetness and light with Customs and Immigration. (Bob, as an aside would you say that 90% of the heavy handed type problems in Customs are being caused by 10% of the staff?) Hide says that the officials he met with were, without exception, cheerful, friendly and courteous. The icing on the cake was his catching up with the folks from the boat Yawara, who he met in Malolo Lailai, an island about 10 miles west of Nandi, Fiji.

Hide then sailed to Bundaberg where he picked up his friends for a week’s cruising in the Whitsundays. After this was a trip outside the reef to Cairns and then outside the reef again to Thursday Island (TI). He said that it was easier on him to take the open waters of the Coral Sea than try do day hops inside the reef. He nearly came to grief anchoring at TI with the well known poor holding and strong currents forcing him to spend hours dropping and retrieving the anchor. Here, gentle reader, I must apologise. Hide gave me places and times at TI. I know he did. But the sheet of paper, like my memory of this part of the tale, is missing. I plead an excess of Hide’s generosity with the Fourex. Also, somewhere in this is a hydraulic hose vibrating loose, a hydraulic boom vang empty of hydraulic fluid, a sudden wind gust and involuntary gybe from the end result of a boom vang needing repair.

This is, sort of, where I come in to the picture. Hide asked me for directions to a chandlery and a repair shop for his boom vang. I offered my services with a car and local knowledge. I made the offer remembering the many foreign ports where local people had done the same for me.

continued next page...

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The “Spectacular” one. You turn left, off at the Window on
tripod with 90% of the tripod below water. Or the whole
pensioner card in the mail last month. I was impressed The “Cyclone Tracks” chart was out about
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Australian club for a meal or two. You can’t get much back with information on availability and price. This is in
I later returned the favour by taking Hide to a traditional “We do not stock them” was the reply and they never called
had the same idea about open speed limits. his Garmin chart plotter. They were not available in Darwin
came across two less than pleasant surprises.

As the car was in a place that I was not comfortable with it being parked overnight, Hide staggered of in one
direction towards his dinghy while I staggered off in another, towards a cup of coffee and a rich chocolate
mud cake to help soak up the alcohol. (I know, I know! Nothing soaks up alcohol except time but it was a great:
excuse for the mud cake) Believe it or not, there are NO alcohol restrictions on a person in charge of a (private as opposed to commercial) vessel in the NT. You can be legless and there is no law to stop you being in charge of a vessel. There has been some discussion about this in the local halls of power. It was decided to leave this as is to preserve the traditional Top End lifestyle. Wish they had the same idea about open speed limits.

I later returned the favour by taking Hide to a traditional Australian club for a meal or two. You can’t get much more traditional than the Buff Club in Stuart Park. I couldn’t tempt him with kangaroo, crocodile or buffalo but he reckons that an Aussie meat pie is good tucker. We also did the tourist bit with a trip to Litchfield National Park and The Spectacular Jumping Crocodile Cruise at Adelaide River. At Litchfield we sampled the swimming at a couple of the waterfalls. Here I demonstrated my immaturity by climbing up the rock face next to the fall and jumping in to the plunge pool below. I have done this once each visit, with the first being in 1976. I see no reason to change tradition just because I got my pensioner card in the mail last month. I was impressed with Hide’s digital camera. It is an Olympus µ37.

Smaller than a cigarette packet and waterproof to 2 mtrs. He took it swimming with him and snapped some great pics while in the pool. Really weird to see a camera on a tripod with 90% of the tripod below water. Or the whole rig, tripod and camera, below water trying to take pictures of the fish.

At Adelaide River, by far the best of the croc cruises is the “Spectacular” one. You turn left, off at the Window on
the Wetlands Bird observatory and follow the dirt road for about a kilometre. Here we met the operator of the venue, Peter “Salty” Saltmarsh. (In the territory nearly everyone has a nickname ending in Y. Shorty, Salty, Whitey, Happy, Hippy, Holtey and Happy, just to name a few.) Salty introduced Hide to several large, well fed pythons. Hide got up close and personal with Olive, a two metre olive python. After the photo op we went for the cruise. The skipper was extremely knowledgeable about the local fauna, pointing out Arctic Terns and Whistling Kites amongst others. The Kites followed us, grabbing tidbits thrown up to them, on the wing. We saw about a dozen crocs, with several doing the “jumping” for chunks of buffalo dangled at them. My favourite was “Michael Jackson”. It ignored the chunks of buffalo in favour of attacking the outboards. Scary to think of what this Smirn monster would do to anyone silly enough to get close to him, in even a large tinny. They call it Michael Jackson because it has a white face and they can’t figure out if it is male or female.

We put about 400 km on the odometer that day. Like many other visitors that I have chauffeured around Australia, Hide was amazed at the space, distances between venues and the very few people in-between.

Well, my few words for a Passage People piece have turned into this massive missive. But Wait! There's more!

In my ferrying around Hide to prepare for his departure, I came across two less than pleasant surprises. First. He was ready to spend well over a thousand dollars on Indonesian, Indian Ocean and African data cartridges for his Garmin chart plotter. They were not available in Darwin and calls to Garmin Australia were met with indifference. “We do not stock them” was the reply and they never called back with information on availability and price. This is in stark contrast to cMap. I can ask Scott at SeaFleet Marine in Stuart Park for any cMap product and he will load it onto a data card while I wait. It is a shame that such a good GPS is let down by poor service.

Second. A longer story. He bought a couple of cruising guides and the single most important item in it for the next leg of his trip was so wrong as to be dangerous. The “Cyclone Tracks” chart was out about 600 miles. And it begs the question, how reliable is the technical information in these cruising guides? I have written a separate item to TCP regarding this.

I had to leave Darwin a few days before Hide and did not see him depart. I wish him safe passage wherever the winds take him.
The crew of the good ship Quoll have had another busy few months exploring our new surroundings. We arrived in Borneo late in June taking anchor in the Santabong River near Kuching in Sarawak. It is a picturesque anchorage with Mt. Santabong overlooking the river (see photo). We got energetic one day and climbed the Mt. The climb itself on a well marked trail was fun. Following the ridge, we scrambled up over giant granite boulders making our way over 800m to the top with endless views of the river and across Kuching. As usual, Mum was tail end Charlie holding back the team with Tim doing a balancing act keeping a leash on the boys and keeping an eye on me behind him. It took us only 3 hours to climb but 6 hours returning. We extended our walk to a waterfall which was fun. Problems arose when we lost the trail going home and then had a hot, exhausting 4 km walk along the road back to the boat. 9 hrs was a bit more than we had budgeted for in our energy allowance!

Kuching is a modern city with a large suburban corridor, not unlike Perth, but more crowded with identical houses crammed into housing estates without trees. Most of the shops and restaurants are Chinese owned. The Chinese form about 1/3 of the population of Sarawak. Travelling around the state, we've decided a Chinese town is a good town. Everything is available or can be organised for you. The quality of the food at the markets is delightful and we're always in search of the 'Rumah Babi' where you can buy superb pork and only around $4 kg for a fillet. Because it's a Muslim country, pork, if available, is always in a separate room. In one town we had to seek out a van on a back street to make our purchase. Almost feels like you're dealing in illegal goods. The highlight of our time here was to go to a longhouse-up the Rajang river, past Sarakei to Bintangor, turn left into the Talui river and stop at the first set of longhouses on your Stbd side. Here we joined two other yachts and celebrated the end of Gawai, their 'thanksgiving' cum Christmas type festival. Here we shared a few meals and enjoyed longhouse life for a week. Each afternoon the children would come and do some English/Maths homework and then run wild with our two, swimming and jumping off the boat. Catamarans make wonderful water playgrounds in tidal waters. You jump off the bow, float/whizz under the bridgedeck in the 1-2knot tide, climb up the ladder run up the bow and jump off again. The locals weren't concerned about crocs so we weren't either, safety in numbers I guess.

At the Gawai festival we were introduced to Tuak/Arak the rice wine. Tim broke out in a severe rash soon after. I wonder if there was any correlation between the two? We also discovered on the night of the festival, Tim has a natural flair for traditional Iban dancing. I felt like the 'belle of the ball' when invited to wear the traditional silver dance trimmings. Unfortunately I couldn't wear the heavy hair piece/crown of silver. I had about 6 ladies dressing me, but try as they might, the headpiece was too heavy for my lovely fine locks. I've never been made such a fuss of!

The dancing took place around the Tree, a pot planted in the middle of the longhouse veranda floor. It contained food and drink much like you would decorate a Christmas tree. At the end of the evening guests (male) were invited to harvest the 'fruit' of the tree with the traditional sword. A very special privilege to share this night with them. Like all good parties, the more wine consumed the better/more lively, the music and dancing. I did notice that despite large quantities of alcohol consumed by some, there was a complete lack of agro all evening.
Sailing up a river in these parts of the world is risky business. Logs get swept downstream off river banks and threaten. Jumping into the dinghy with the speed of light we raced to...

Since we were at the longhouse, we have flown home for 4 weeks, returned to Borneo, sailed up the coast to a regatta. It started offshore in Labuan and finished in Miri, on the border of Sarawak/Brunei. Geoff Connor, an RPYC friend who sailed pelicans with Tim as a kid, joined us. I'm sure it was his expertise that enabled us to come second. There were 4 cats in our division, 3 of us worked best) over several hours to accomplish this feat. We've now turned the corner at the tip of Borneo and anchored off the sleepy country town of Kudat. This coast is lined with white, sandy beaches but no resorts. One wonders how long it can stay this way?

On the road again, we catch up with interesting.

Trish dressed to impress. Dancing, social centre for farangs. Joined in a Hash party, nearly all the girls were English teachers at the local schools. HMMM, nice. We'd like to do this more, but time is slipping by and the miles of photos taken are mounting up. Another highlight was a few days at Mantanini Island, NE of Kota Kinabalu. The name sounds very non-Malay. The people were more Filipino than Malay, so we're told. They live a very subsistence lifestyle, still pillaging the barren reef in order to get their daily food. Extensive reefs surrounded the island and being a cat we were able to anchor in the narrow/shallow lagoon inside the reef.

The island with its extensive coconut plantations reminded us of the Pacific.

We're now turned the corner at the tip of Borneo and anchored off the sleepy country town of Kudat. This coast is lined with white, sandy beaches but no resorts. One wonders how long it can stay this way? Sandakan, is our next port of call to see the Orangutans and visit the war memorials. A few island paradise stopovers are planned en route.

This tree has its roots caught under the rudder. Tim's trying to chop it free. David lends a hand.
They Did It!

By Gina de Vere
For Yachts 'Erica' and 'Caesura'

The crews of yachts 'Erica', Cathy and Eric Gray, and 'Caesura', Gina de Vere and Christian Selaries, are pleased to say the boat building project in the Louisiades over August and September, has been a tremendous success. 'Tolo Yof' (meaning, 'Yachtie follower, those who trade with yachties') she came to be known, was a sign of too many evenings spent with Rick and Alex who stayed so near the school when mysteriously the entire time working with us. Not long after, 'Insatiable' arrived the boat shelter was still in to the lifelines, the many drums of resin firmly on the deck and arranged the paint cans on the floor of the cabin making them. 'Erica' had similar problems finding space for the Gigila islands and opened many doors to the 24 sheets of plywood requiring family photos were much in demand out of 'zoom!'

Many times over the past year we wondered if our project would in fact ever take place, then something positive would happen and we would be excited all over again. We had to raise funds and gain resources for schools and from us! We were appalling the only song clothing. We knew all the words to Waltzing Matilda a sign of too many evenings spent with Rick and Alex who stayed so near the school when mysteriously the entire time working with us. Not long after, 'Insatiable' arrived the boat shelter was still in to the lifelines, the many drums of resin firmly on the deck and arranged the paint cans on the floor of the cabin making them. 'Erica' had similar problems finding space for the Gigila islands and opened many doors to the 24 sheets of plywood requiring family photos were much in demand out of 'zoom!'

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Eric proved to be an excellent boat builder and taught the team well. Christian helped oversee activities and was responsible for the Optimist style lanteen schooner rigging. Bruce of “Swaggie” was doing his thing with his chainsaw and overseeing the building of a wharf.

When the boat was turned over to work on the interior, the islanders had to learn a new set of skills, working on the ply cabins, drop keel housing and the rudder. We squeaked to a finish on launch day. What a joyful day! The two lifebuoys were formally handed over.

Ceremonies of speechmaking and goodwill of the people of Gigila Island. The shrieks of joy were deafening as she hit the water! Then a shared meal, traditional dances, songs and lastly fireworks on the beach. A great end to a great day. Never before in these remote islands had there been such a big project undertaken co-operatively between dimdimis and islanders. Farewells were highly emotional, with many hugs and tears and best wishes for the future.

Without the help of many other yachties, especially the crews of ‘Roxanne 1’, ‘Insatiable’, ‘Swaggie’ and ‘Lady Bubbly’, we could not have finished her on time. In fact the boat was launched with the paint still soft. If any yachties are visiting Valesha village on Gigila Island, please take cans of blue and white enamel paint. Also any fibreglass and resins. We left behind all the tools and materials we could but if the islanders are going to use their new fibreglassing skills, more materials will be very welcome.

Of course, we cannot control what happens to Tolo Yot in the future. We can only hope that the islanders of Gigila maintain her well. Recently they took her into the main harbour of Bauagapia where she was the centre of attention. There is much ‘mana’ attached to her ownership and we hope this pride will guarantee good maintenance. The villagers of Valesha now have fibreglassing skills, but like any newly acquired skills, they need practice. If any yachties are keen to assist them repair and maintain fibreglass boats and water tanks, we know this assistance will be invaluable to them.

A new school is one of the Councillor’s aims for the island. To this end two projects are about to start; a trade store and a pig farming venture, where profits will assist the fund to build a proper school. This seed funding has come via a Trust I have created, called the Yachties Louisiade Education Trust aimed at improving the educational prospects for young people. This is in conjunction with a dimdim couple, Keith and Lynnette Parascos at the bakery in Misima, the largest island in the Louisiade chain. Already we have sent one 23 year old to Teachers Training College in Lae, and assisted with fees for two high schoolers. We are hoping that yachties who cruise in the Louisiades either on their own or with the rally, will donate funds to the Trust to put something back into the islands as they leave. Or they may wish to give a helping hand with the pig farming, trade store and wharf projects. Co-ordination for projects can be done via www.cruise-aiders.com.

From Eric Gray’s initial vision last year up until today, is an interesting story with many ups and downs. The project was made possible not only through our determined efforts but also because of the generosity of many New Zealand and Australian companies, organizations, friends and family. A huge thank you goes to all who have helped this project become a success. We are also very grateful to the genuine friendship, hard work and the goodwill of the people of Gigila Island. They join with us in our thanks to all our cruise-aider supporters.

We hope that other yachties will check on the maintenance of Tolo Yot as they cruise the Louisiades, and take her for a sail. If yachties have other projects to co-ordinate, please contact me via my website, www.cruise-aiders.com. It is for your use. Updated information on the building of Tolo Yot and the newly formed Yachties Louisiades Education Trust will be on this site early 2009. Email info@cruise-aiders.com.

TOCP is proud to have had a small part in helping to publicise this endeavour and congratulates the people that gave their time and money to help the islanders acquire the means to help themselves: Talk is cheap but these people made it happen. Every cruiser has a right to be proud of this fleet! Besides the good done, the example made that great projects can be achieved… maybe will inspire another… maybe you?  

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  $109,850
It was 9 years around for Dave on his Adams 12, and he didn’t come home alone. He met Sonia in her native Columbia. Sonia loves children and comes from a very traditional family. Dave told us how when he first met she asked if he might talk to her for a while and he was surprised when he had to wait for the matriarch of the family to size him up first! Apparently he was judged OK and now Sonia calls Australia home.

Scott(8) and Curtis(8) was not in keeping with the name, we all had a FANTASTIC time!!! We had mostly great weather, certainly plenty of Whales, Dolphins, Turtles and excellent snorkelling, as well as the old ‘not so planned’ occurrences. Probably the only disappointing thing was how few other families with young children we came across. This trip brought us all more together as a family and whilst not in formal schooling, the experiences the older boys gained during this journey could not be taught in any classroom situation.

We were also very encouraged at how kindly others without young children welcomed us despite not fitting the “Cruising Couple” mold. I hope you can use this and some photos to encourage some more families to “seize the opportunity” and that when we head out again in 18 months there are more young “playmates” out there!!

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