



The Coastal Passage

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49th Edition
July - August 2011

The Voice of the Boating Community

FREE!

The New America's Cup



Emirates Team New Zealand's AC 45

Photo by Chris Cameron

SPECIAL EDITION

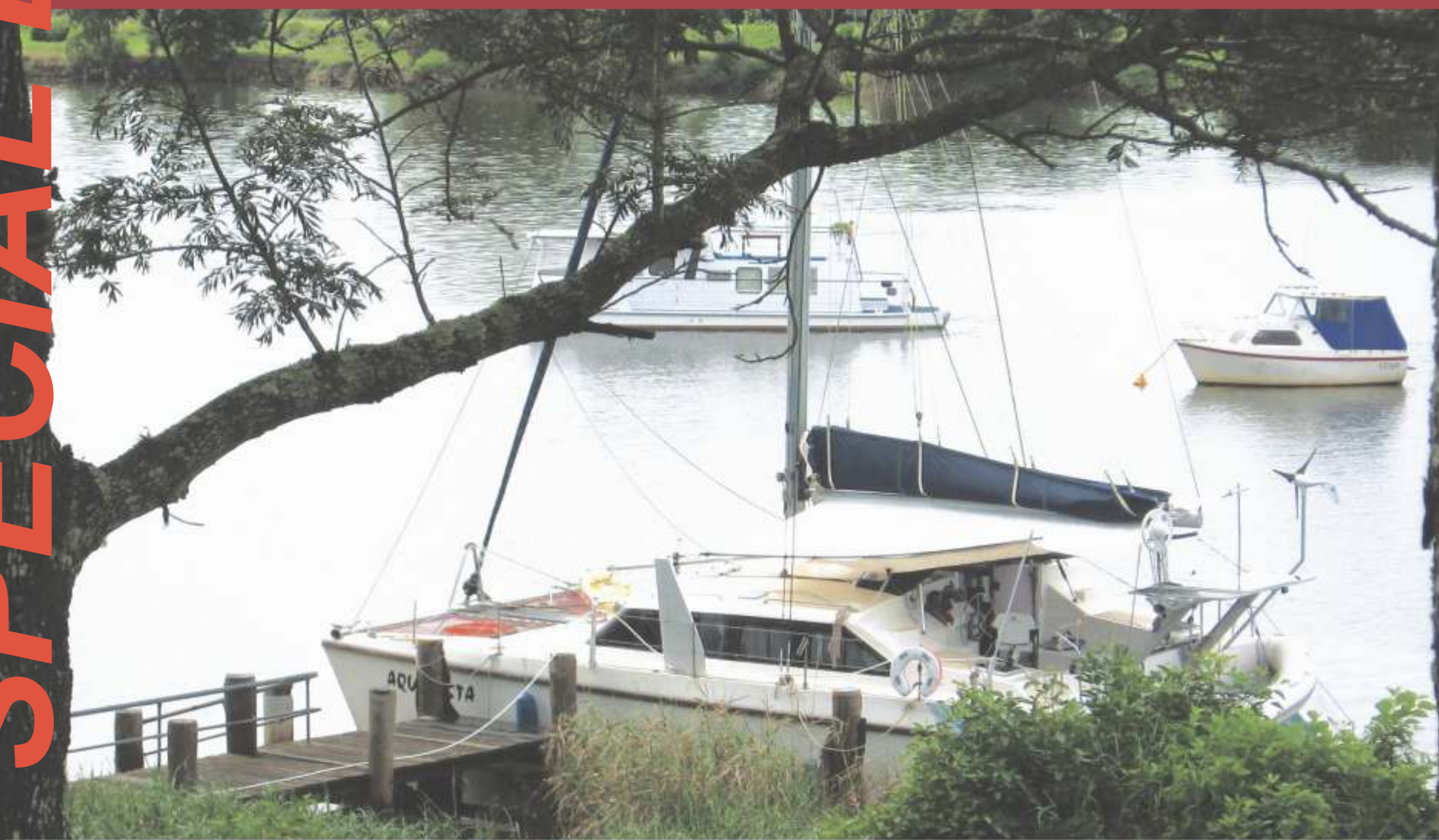


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Reflections

By Alan Lucas, SY Soleares

Quarantine Quandaries

Last December a southbound foreign yacht's hydraulic steering gear failed, locking her rudder hard over and inspiring the skipper to call for help. The local Marine Rescue Group responded with admirable efficiency and towed her into port where, despite her having cleared all Australian entry formalities weeks before, her problems really started.

Waiting in port for her were police and quarantine officers, the first insisting that she be brought alongside a jetty to be questioned about the 'marine incident', the second demanding that she go to a swing mooring because she had a parrot on board. This bureaucratic mini tug-of-war was all about our law that states no imported animal may go ashore unless directly to a quarantine depot in the company of a quarantine officer. The animal may, however, remain aboard for the duration of a cruising permit as long as the vessel NEVER goes alongside any land structure. Furthermore, the animal in question must be available for inspection at any time anywhere by quarantine officers who will impose a suffocatingly high fine if it is missing.

The parrot in question had lived aboard in a cage for fifteen years and was very much part of the family, having a vocabulary that tempted one to believe it understood every word you said. Certainly he had the intelligence to tell his owners 'it's raining' should he get wet whilst hanging in the cockpit for his daily dose of fresh air.

Not that intelligence excuses a parrot from our strict quarantine laws, but for heavens sake, we are talking about a caged bird that has been self-quarantined aboard a cruising yacht for fifteen years: isn't that enough time to offer it some level of special

dispensation? Apparently not because the law against going alongside is steadfast and, furthermore, his owners are obliged to collect and bag all his waste then pay \$90 dollars every time a quarantine officer rolls up to take it away.

The incident brings to mind the trouble Brigadier Miles Smeeton, his wife Beryl and daughter Clio of the ketch *Tzu Hang* had in Sydney back in 1957. They had their pet Portuguese Terrier, *Poopa*, aboard but found our quarantine laws so unforgiving they decided to ship him back to England. For this to happen *Poopa* was legally obliged to be taken to a veterinarian for a Certificate of Passage - but guess what? quarantine officials refused to allow the dog ashore to be certificated!

I wish I knew the outcome of this farce, but if *Poopa* was aboard for *Tzu Hang's* crossing to Cape Horn, he may well have been lost during their famous pitch-poling incident. The yacht's mast carried away and had to be repaired and jury rigged to reach the port of Coronel in Chile, a famous epic of the sea that won the Smeetons and their crewmember, John Guzzwell, the Royal Cruising Club's Seamanship medal.

Despite knowing the unforgiving nature of our own quarantine laws, Patricia and I adopted a cat in New Guinea in the late 1970s. What we didn't reckon on was the degree of uninvited visitations our pet would attract once back in home-waters.

Clearing into Cairns at the outer anchorage, the quarantine officer warned of the heavy fines if we lost the cat and that we could never go alongside a berth of any description for as long as we were in Australian waters. Because we have always



Alan

preferred anchorages to berths, we were not in the least inconvenienced by this restriction and were happy to comply (although keeping our fuel and water topped up by Jerry Can had little appeal). What we didn't foresee, however, was the fervent distrust embedded in our quarantine culture because twice in the *first week* we rowed home to find officers aboard our yacht to check on the cat. They were polite enough, but had no sense of trespass or contrition over their intrusion.

Horried that we had lost all rights to privacy for as long as we remained in home waters, on quarantine's third visit that week we surrendered the cat for destruction and swore never to make the same mistake again.

A few years later we took our next cat (an Ozzie one this time) world cruising and it was interesting that he did not attract any attention whatsoever from any authorities anywhere else in the world. It made me wonder if Australia had gone too far in its isolationist policy because most countries visited had vibrant agricultural economies despite the presence of some pretty nasty diseases. Is it possible we have sanitised ourselves to the point of zero immunity against future plagues?

It has to be agreed that sensible rules against the importation of exotic diseases are necessary, but difficult to fully respect when we recall how past governments infected us in other ways. Look at their record: from the First Fleet onwards all types of feral animals have been legally imported by our glorious protectors, including pigs, sheep, goats, rabbits, foxes you name it. And there have been grand

government-sponsored disasters such as beetles to control sugar then cane toads to control the beetles and now the only weapons we have against cane toads are well-aimed motor vehicles on country roads (you can no longer practise your golf swings on them because it attracts enormous fines).

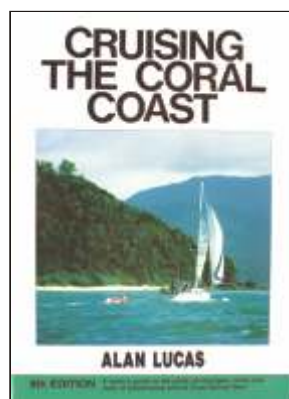
Furthermore as Australia drags itself deeper into the brave new world of a global economy, caution continues to erode as today's governments constantly threaten our rural industries with imported fruit, vegetables, meat and seafood from countries whose hygiene standards are way below par. The United Nations Lima Agreement of many decades ago aimed at Australia importing around thirty per cent of its needs as a gesture to struggling countries. Now days we are importing well over seventy per cent of our needs as other countries kick all the goals on our so-called level playing field.

It certainly makes quarantine's determination to prevent one little caged parrot from bringing us all down with an exotic disease farcically disproportional.

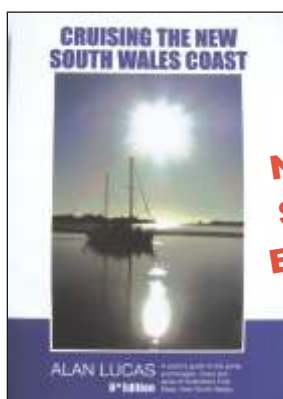
And by the way, the owners of that little parrot donated \$1000 to the rescue organization for the tow into port and the police won the tug-of-war with quarantine by getting them alongside a 'public structure' for questioning: As far as I know no one in that coastal town has been stricken with the plague.

TCP NOTE: See Page 22 for more on AQUIS, importing boats, duty, etc...

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Contributors

Susan Bett, MY *Scallywag*
Benito Bracco, a sailor
Stuart Buchanan, SY *Pluto*
Ian Campbell, SY *Lyra*
Dianne Challis, building a *Snell Easy*
David Drew, SC *Starfire*
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Allen Southwood, SY *Peggotty*
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What's your story?

It can't be about you without you!



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

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The Coastal Passage

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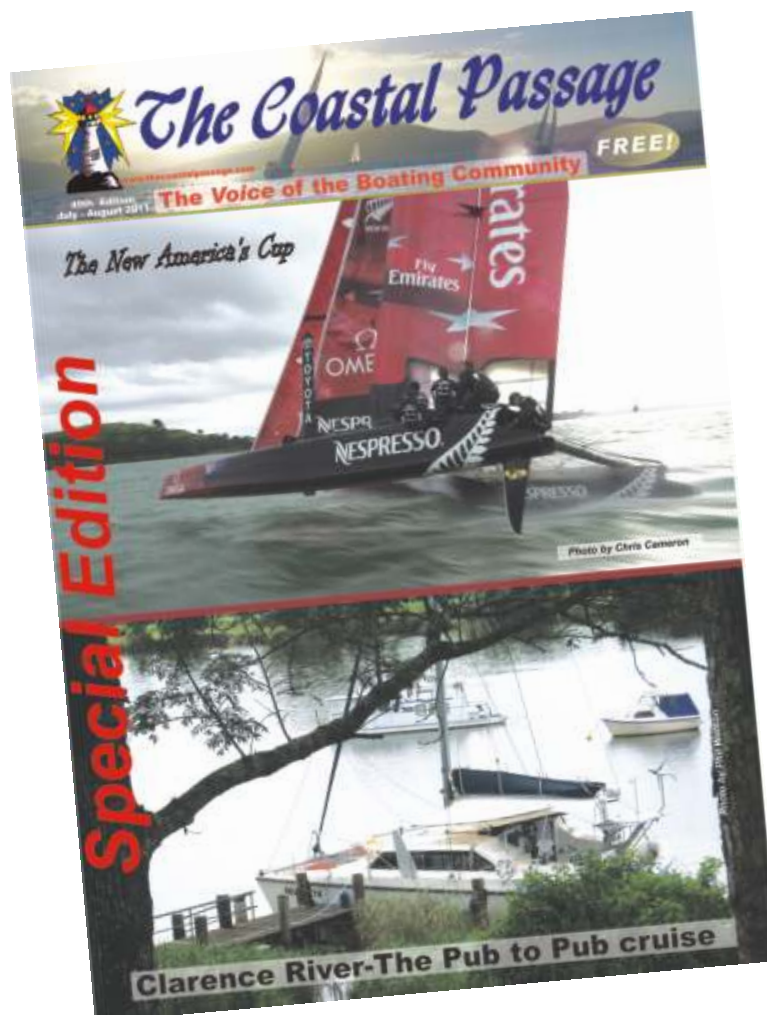


50th Edition! Who would have thunk it!? We are going to have to do something special but what will it be? We have some ideas but we aren't even sure yet. What do you think? Do you have an idea that would confound, confuse, amuse or piss off the right people? Let us know because it is and always has been, YOUR RAG!

The (OTHER) Coastal Passage

Have you tried it yet? It's just as free as the printed paper but more to love. Additional features like details on the construction of the America's Cup cats, more letters, more photos and it's available anywhere you have web access.

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The Coastal Passage

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Marina madness and knowing knots



Kota Kinabalu Marina



"That knot"

Story & pics by Jan Forsyth,
SY Sea Wanderer

Oh how I hate coming into marinas. There I am running from fore to aft doing my best to obey the Skipper's commands.

"Tie the fenders on the starboard side."

Then the radio crackles, and we are advised it will be a port side tie up.

"Untie the fenders and take them over to the port side."

"Throw the fenders over."

"Use a clove hitch!"

"Secure the spring lines."

"Check the stern line."

He who must never be questioned assists when he can, but it is on his head if the boat crashes into the dock, I understand this, but all the same I get so cross with him and so anxious to do the right thing.

Then there is the bowline, a knot I have practiced until my fingers are skinned, until I thought I knew how to tie it in my sleep. But when the time comes to apply this knowledge, when we are charging into a marina there is no way I can accomplish a firm loop in the end of

the line with which to throw over a cleat on the dock. For a start the line is so thick and so nylon my finger prints are destroyed in my frantic efforts for a loop.

That blasted knot that turns a creative right brained woman into knots of her own, a shaking stupid mess when ordered to perform under stress.

I remember my initial experience with the king of knots, it was when I was on my first boat on a passage from Fiji to Bay of Islands in New Zealand. The Dutch skipper must have been a descendant of Black Beard, as he was the meanest of the mean. He had two lovely Sea Princesses on board; myself and a Brazilian gal; both of us raw but willing crew and always keenly interested in learning on board skills. Skills like not putting boiling mugs of coffee down on unsecured places and jumping to his every command.

When we arrived at the quarantine wharf in Opuia, we were ordered off the boat by Black Beard to secure the bow line and yes to tie a bowline. The knot we had practised at almost every waking moment.

The night was black and turbulent and the wind howled around us; do you think either of us could tie that knot? Not a

chance. Fingers shaking with cold and trepidation would not, could not perform the task.

The skipper had murder in his eye which made matters worse as we tied granny after granny knot in nervous anxiety.

"You can stay there until you get it right." He screamed at us.

"Oh shit, I thought, we could be here all night."

Thankfully Black Beard finally relented and jumped down onto the finger and tied the loop himself, mumbling all the while about just why he had to be stuck with such incompetent crew.

Marinas are marvellous places, especially after a long ocean passage; the promise of long hot showers and a good motionless night's sleep, secure in the knowledge that the anchor will not drag and rascals will not board in the early hours is very attractive.

Although not all marinas are secure as any cruiser who has tied up in Penang at the Tanjong City Marina in Malaysia will concur. The marina is stuck right next the ferry terminal and not only does the wash from the ferries cause mayhem and havoc with the structure of the marina, but the boats yank desperately at the lines as the wash moves in, sometimes ripping out cleats and snapping lines. A number of boats have even had their masts catch in a neighbours rigging if the rocking is not done in unison.

But the king of marinas must surely be Kota Kinabalu's Sutera Harbour in North Borneo, where the surrounding luxury of restaurants, four swimming pools, bowling alley, gym, spa and sauna bewitches the most hardened cruiser. Yachts that have planned to tied up there for two or three days have been known to remain tied up for years.

The very worst marina though is one where there is no one to take your lines. In the absence of a smiling face willing to assist with the lines, the task of securing falls on the crew. This can mean total collapse of the first mate who, after landing on the firm finger of the marina

finds herself totally out of sorts and completely discombobulated after living sometime on a moving deck.

However, if there are smiling faces ready to catch a line, First Mate then has to have the strength to actually throw the line. I have lost count just how many times my lines have fallen short and splashed into the water. Skipper tells me I am doing it all wrong, that I should have half the rope coiled and the other half ready to throw.

I remember watching, with not a little bit of envy at one of my sea sisters moving into a marina, standing tall on deck, groomed and confident, with half the line in a coil over her shoulder while the other half was coiled ready to throw. But when I tried for this look the rope just slipped off my shoulder and I was left with a mess of rope at my feet ready to cause bodily harm.

These days I take a much more realistic view of marinas, when we arrive at a marina I switch to coma mode, performing my tasks in a robotic fashion, oblivious to the eruptions at the helm and my knot performance.

I still rely heavily on a smiling face and fortunately there have been many in this neck of the woods, both cruising friends and marina staff; and yes I can perform the bowline under stress and sometimes, just sometimes it will reach the smiling face waiting on the dock.



"My foot in it"



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The New America's Cup



This may be a surprisingly relevant format in international yacht racing. At most any Australian port, OK, ANY port anywhere, there are a few 'round the buoys' racers that aren't that far off these hot rods. Not spot on, but close enough to relate.

WILL IT BE EXCITING ENOUGH FOR YA?



AC photos by Gilles Martin-Raget



Q: How do you know when you've gone too far?



A: When things start getting vertical! 'Throw traveller! Throw sheets! Throw everything and hang on!!'



Sheets thrown, starting to pivot away from the wind... maybe....



This is no way to win a race..

On the international level this is a sea change. We've gone from the traditional 12 metre rules monohull to monolithic multi's. The former were high performance versions of boats built to be impossible to fail to those craft "to big to fail".. like a bank or something. Who would want to be at the helm of a multimillion \$\$, 100 foot plus trimaran that could kill crew if it went ass over tea kettle? Not me thanks... The monos could get knocked down but in the process they loose power as the rig dips. They have even been virtually broken in half (San Diego) but as long as the race isn't an Ocean Race in tragic weather there is little overall risk.

But now, The 34th America's Cup (AC) will run a class of boats in the challenger series that will go their fastest right up until they are, well, see the photos above! Brinkmanship may win races. How close to "the edge" are you willing to go. This is like Motorcycle GP with players going for it all on every turn and to lose is total. You can't win if you don't finish. But, water is softer than bitumen. And whilst we are on the subject of bitumen, how many of you know that a Gold Coast lad, Casey Stoner is tearing up the premier class of motorcycle racing as we speak? And Mark Webber from Queanbeyan formula one. Both of our world beaters had to move to the UK to get a ride. Now, why wasn't there a credible Australian entry in the America's Cup? Lack of local talent? Doubt it. Oh well.. Go KIWIS!

Cats aren't entirely new to the AC. Back in 87 a Kiwi caught Dennis Conner and the San Diego Yacht Club out for not tending to their paper work and put in a challenge that was rebuffed from the club, but not the judge. The court gave the nod to Michael Fay and his huge 90 footer that looked like an oversized skiff which was quite a break from the 12 metre boats that had been the rule since the fifties. Caught out with little time and no boat to suit the Venue as prescribed by the challenger, Conner's team did some fine print magic themselves and in months

had Gino Morrelli and a team of multi wizards design and build two cats of 60 feet, one with a soft rig and one with a wing mast lifted off a beach cat that Dave Hubbard and Duncan MacLane drew and not too different from that being run on the AC45's now. They got Aviation legend Burt Rutan to help and manage construction of the hard sail. The final rig was about 100 feet. They ran the wing cat and cleaned the floor with Fay. No contest except in court again, and again.. but in the end it went to Conner and the SDYC.

The series: 2011 One Design AC45's: Cascais Portugal, August. Plymouth England, September. San Diego California USA, November-ish.

The challengers: China Team, China. Aleph - Equipe De France, France. Energy Team, France. Venezia Challenge, Italy. Emirates Team New Zealand, New Zealand (YEH!). Team Korea, Korea. Artemis Racing, Sweden. Oracle Racing, USA. and Green Comm Racing, Spain.

In 2012 the racing will be on team built AC 72's and that will be the boat raced in the final in San Francisco California in 2013.

San Francisco should be a magnificent venue for the big race if a little on the cool side for us tropical sailors but what a spectacle for local media. There have been some tests run lately and that is where the alarming photos above were taken a couple of weeks before print of this edition. (June 12)

TCP will keep readers updated on occasion but do encourage being glued to a wide screen TV somewhere when it comes to the big day. The electronic nature of the course set up and shipboard monitors promises to make the event rivetting.

See the electronic edition for more on the construction of these speed machines.

B. Norson

Would the boats below be competitive with the AC45's? Absolutely not but you can see the roots of the thoroughbreds in these still fast boats. All of them were photographed in local events at Airlie Beach. From Top, Rum Raider, Flat Chat and SpudGun.



Bob Fenney Photo



PJ Halter photo



Bob Norson photo



Test sail in Auckland Harbour last May. The boats are Kiwi built.

The New America's Cup



The Making of the Boat

photos by Ivor Wilkens

The AC45 is the little sister with attitude to the AC72. Both classes are fundamental parts of the transformation of the America's Cup.

A one-design wingsail catamaran of 45 feet, the AC45 has been created to fulfill three roles:

- > Fast-track teams for the 34th America's Cup to a common level of catamaran sailing and wingsail technology at the outset of their campaigns.
- > Provide a class of boat for the 2011 season of the new America's Cup World Series.
- > Provide a class of boat for the Youth America's Cup commencing in 2012.

The first catamaran was launched in December in Auckland, New Zealand. Sea trials were immediately afterwards with representatives from potential challengers to the 34th America's Cup invited to participate. The America's Cup is now starting from a completely clean sheet of paper.

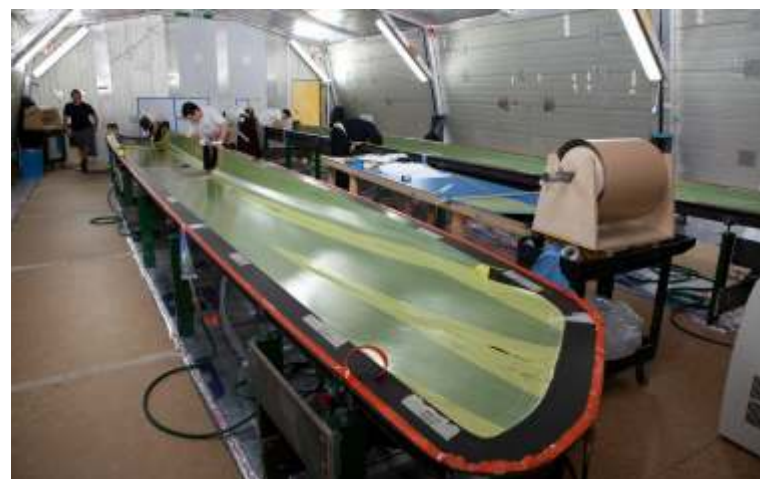
The rights to the design and administration of the build, sales, service and competition are vested in America's Cup Race Management (ACRM), the independent race management authority for the 34th America's Cup. "The change to catamarans will see competitors racing round the track at 20 to 40 knots. It is going to be very fast and exciting. The event needed big changes and now it is happening," added Ian Murray, America's Cup Regatta Director.

DESIGN

The AC45 was designed and engineered by BMW ORACLE Racing on behalf of the America's Cup community. Manolo Ruiz de Elvira led the hull design development, Scott Ferguson the wingsail development, and Dirk Kramers the structures team. Mark Turner and Tim Symth of Core Builders, Warkworth, created production tooling for the hull platform and wingsail, and will produce the initial batch of boats in collaboration with other New Zealand marine industry specialists including Cookson Boats and Hall Spars NZL. Steering and daggerboard assemblies have been sub-contracted to C-Tech Carbon Technology and Craig Stirling Composites Engineering.



above; Laminating the moulds- below right, polishing a wing mould and left, preparing vacuum bagging the moulds



Hull # 1! layup at left and below right the first one laminated and at bottom left lifting number one out of the mould.





The Making of the Boat

The AC45 is a versatile, one-design class with controlled costs and ease-of-maintenance a priority. The hulls and cross-beams are designed for simple and fast assembly to accommodate the active racing schedule.

The one-design wingsail consists of two elements. It is a scaled down concept of the 223-foot tall wing that powered BMW ORACLE Racing's trimaran USA to victory in the 33rd America's Cup Match. The wing will have simple, manual control systems. There will be two headsail options, a gennaker and jib, but no Code 0 headsail.

"The AC45 is small enough that it doesn't need hydraulics. The loads drop quickly when you get down to a boat of this size," said Ian Burns, design team coordinator for BMW ORACLE Racing. "There aren't even grinder pedestals. The winches will be powered by top-handle grinding."

Keeping with the simplification theme, the AC45 will have straight daggerboards. No articulation beyond raising and lowering is permitted. Crews are likely to number five at an average weight of 85 kilograms (approximately 187 pounds) to fit the AC45's future role in the Youth America's Cup.

CONSTRUCTION

Cookson Boats and other key suppliers have been engaged to work with Core Builders to ensure swift production of the first batch of boats at a rate of two a month. Another designated boatbuilder in the USA or Europe is envisaged. Boats will be delivered in sequence of ordering.

After use next year in the ACWS, the AC45 will be used for the Youth America's Cup, a series to be run in 2012 in conjunction with the ACWS.



The "wing"



Rudder moulds





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Editorial by Bob Norson



**Getting older and grumpier, or:
How have we come to the state we are in?**

I started writing about particular misdeeds of government that affected boaties specifically but it wasn't working. I realised trying to explain how it was wrong was like trying to explain a house by describing a floor tile. It all sounds like non-sense without the foundation but I think bloody few have that understanding. Our government is so screwed up talking detail is almost useless. But turning 60 is liberating. I've run out of patience and just don't give a shit. You can regard this as a bitter tirade or a wake up call, like I say, don't give a shit.. but if you are happy with the way things are going in the country, particularly Queensland, *you* are the freak or, "on the team". And if you don't like it and want to look around for who to blame... it's too easy, check your mirror because you (collectively) have been far too lazy and apathetic. If you are angry enough to do a little homework then there is some hard reading below, if not then line up-shut up- and do what you are told and LIKE IT!

The REAL axis of evil. To understand you have to start at the beginning. The worst part of all this is it's the second time around for me. I grew up in the US in the time of Nixon, when the methods of control and corruption were younger, but no meaner. Nixon got his start in California after WWII. He managed to vilify well regarded congressman Jerry Voorhis by painting him as a communist to get into congress. The charge was untrue but Voorhis did expose big oil's attempts to seize public lands rich in oil. Nixon kept up the commie baiting, the "them" and "us" technique, to a point the Republican Party anointed him vice president, much to president Eisenhower's disgust. Nixon aligned himself with elements in media that supported big business.. ruthlessly.. and built an unholy alliance with America's most popular evangelical preacher, Billy Graham, who was supported by media mogul, William Randolph Hearst, who ordered all his editors to "puff Graham". He managed to slither through the fallout in the fifties when the other commie baiters and hate mongers were disgraced and dodged corruption charges with a TV appearance that has gone down in history. Look up "the checkers speech". He then blew a run at governor of California because he couldn't control the state's media. Look up "you won't have Nixon to kick around anymore". He later enlisted

the aid of some American PR agencies and they repackaged the old crook for a run at the presidency in 68 on a promise to end the Vietnam war quickly. That is where I came in. I was quietly spending my last night of freedom before the US Army got me the next day, listening to the radio when the music was interrupted to announce the assassination of Bobby Kennedy who up to that moment was the shoe-in that would deny Nixon his victory again. It was personal. I literally had my life bet on Nixon not getting in. I knew that lying bastard would escalate the war further and use the draft to clear off the participants of the protests (whilst sparing the Cheney's and the Bush's ect). Two things that happened in the seventies as a result of those events; the American Republican party polished a media manipulation and public relations machine benefiting the banks, oil companies, anybody or anything really rich, and most of the dozen mates I had in high school were wiped out by the war. Nixon and his minders perfected the old techniques of going negative and the palatable lie but virtually invented the technique now called "driving the media".

You don't see the connection to modern history yet? How it relates to us now?

OK, lets go forward in time a bit... Let's drop some names you may recognise: Dick Cheney: US vice president a few years ago. Started work with Nixon, then Ford, Reagan, Bush I and Bush II. Amongst a shopping list of dirty business, he refused to support the release of Nelson Mandela and sanctions against South Africa to end apartheid, also a Vietnam draft dodger. Donald Rumsfeld: Quit congress to join the Nixon white house and has been in play ever since. As secretary of defence under Bush II, think Guantanamo Bay (GITMO), waterboarding and Abu Ghraib prison. Nixon was recorded as saying about him, "He's a ruthless little bastard. You can be sure of that." He would know. I could go on but just one more instructive example, Roger Ailes: This is the man largely credited with getting Nixon elected in 68. He was the media expert that managed to make Nixon palatable to voters after Bobby Kennedy's murder; no easy task. This was the subject of the famous book, "*The Selling of the President*". After Nixon he worked with Reagan and Bush I, which used some of the most racist and ugly political attacks seen in my lifetime. He also was adviser for

Readers please note: the following was written in late June just before the astounding news from the UK concerning the Murdoch media corruption with ties to the highest offices of government and the police. This editorial was not included in the print edition due to shortage of space and concerns it may have appeared to be "too hard of a read" for many more conservative readers. A decision I now regret.

Bob Norson

Bush II. He has recently been charged with instructing a witness to lie to US federal investigators to protect a Republican candidate. His current job? He is president of Fox News Channel and chairman of the network group at \$23 million a year. His boss is Rupert Murdoch of News Corporation..... While that is sinking in, I remind readers that may have heard some of the wild ravings from US shock jocks like Rush Limbaugh, that he is Ailes' boy. The radical right like Palin and other nutters are the darlings of his network who also receive support from the bank accounts of the Kock brothers (Big Oil) to finance the Tea Party groups and climate change deniers.

So.... You may imagine how disappointed I was to hear that the American Republican party consultants were advising John Howard in the 96 election that ousted Keating. It was several years later that I heard this quote from Keating, from recollection, "John Howard has managed a massive realignment of Australia's moral compass". Paul gave Honest John too much credit. Just like Bush II and especially Reagan, he is just a (willing) tool of those with the cash to buy the levers. But our problem is our political system has been far easier to corrupt. It was under Beasley that I began to look at the political parties as doing nothing more than having the occasional public tussle to see who gets the head of the trough and who gets leftovers.

If you think you are clever enough to absorb the crap from our crop of media (including and in one case, especially boating media) and still have a clue on reality, you are probably mistaken. Every day you read a paper or magazine, listen to radio or TV, you are absorbing content credited to those media but actually created by commercial interests or our government, which lately is pretty much the same thing. Some media is bent, some is just lazy and government funded media lost it's aura of independence long ago as far as I'm concerned. It finally slipped out in parliament last year that government agencies are spending "millions" on Google to manipulate searches. We have strong evidence that TCP has been a victim of that corruption.

continued next page...

Editorial Continues...



So there you go... Many of you were not around for much of the history that affects us today but to save the place for your children, do your homework, check every fact I've referred to above, before Conroy "filters" the sources. Learn the history to connect the dots but do understand, Australian politics does not operate in an international vacuum. The resource

boom may be the worst thing that ever happened to Australia. We may have gotten too valuable to the wrong people. The people that have destroyed every country they have found resource rich and politically corruptible. Watch question time and tell me we aren't a banana republic.

In Queensland our government is basic soviet area authoritarian. The boating industry is being run like an old soviet collective, headed by a pick from the party who knows nothing of the industry but is "on the team" or "reliable". Regulatory departments are used like a club against any industry member that gets out of line and those that toe the line don't have to be competitive because of the wonder of government "grants" or the hamstringing of competition. I believe that is a key reason international marine trade is leaning more and more to countries like New Zealand (see America's Cup article). Especially in Queensland business's are reverting back to the old way, if you are not competing, go to your mates in Brisbane and have them rig the game.

And if in government you are confronted with media you can't "do business with", find a competitor of that media that you can "do business with" and fund them. It's all legal because they wrote the laws.

What to do? One; Look at media you patronise and advertisers you respond to and ask yourself, do these people actively support my rights and freedoms? **Do they disguise advertising as editorial?** Then stop supporting their activities!! Two; There will eventually have to be an election but if you vote for any of the major parties nothing will change. If you have the time, and a tough hide, run for office yourself because I think in the year to come, any clean skin can win. One bit of advise though, I wouldn't attempt a run in a district that has a postal ballot. Take this from someone who was a scrutineer at one of those. In Queensland it's not who wins the votes sometimes, but how they are counted!

From TCP # 16, 2005 editorial:

How do you feel?: *A little cruise among the islands and chatting at the anchorages reveals an anxiety among cruising folk. Maybe it's the boardings or watching the TV news but for whatever reason I didn't have to prompt people to talk about the subject. There is a sense that the country is going the wrong way in a hurry, that the better days have gone. There is a strong sense of cynicism about the leadership.*

Advertising/Propaganda?: *("Back in the USSR.. You don't know how lucky you are..") As I was having a look at a weekend paper, noting the profound lack of coverage on the new Industrial relations bill, I choked on the four page government piece of blatant propaganda and decided to add up the dollars spent on this one weekend paper. After checking on the web site of the paper in question (Ed note: the paper was Murdoch owned "The Australian") to get ad rates, I added up the cost to us tax payers of government ads in just the first two sections. Here is the result as near as I can determine without being able to peruse an actual contract if there is one. Commonwealth = \$387,689! The various states and territories = \$60,014! Like I said, that is just two sections out of many in one edition! One paper! The Commonwealth may pay up to half of the entire advertising income of many Australian papers. So how come in New Zealand our new laws are front page news (according to their web sites) and in this paper... a couple columns buried in the back. I'm sure that swag of cash doesn't affect editorial content... does it? By the way.. want to know how much in government advertising TCP has had so far? That's easy to add up... \$000.00 Principals can be expensive things.*

One final update: I know people that have worked for the Murdoch press and think very highly of them. It would be totally wrong to think everyone who has worked for the organisation is corrupted but I would suggest that Murdoch is a micro-manager and anyone in a position of power in the organisation, editor for example, is simply not credible to deny receiving direction from the power that be. I have also been in contact with former Murdoch people acting as "media adviser" for Queensland labor politicians and my experience makes the claims coming from non-Murdock press in the UK very believable.

American Republican party; of course there are decent people in the US that support the party's stated agendas. I just wish they would take a closer look at the activities of the leadership, who is really funding them (banks, big oil) and not accept an ends justifies the means strategy for the party.

News... and views



The Murdoch Media Corruption Meltdown

"what did he know... and when?"

"And at the moment no one's got any evidence to say it was in more than one newspaper. Rebekah Brooks (current CEO of "News International" and former editor of "News of the World") is critical to this. If there is evidence she knew what was going on and that she didn't encourage a proper investigation, then he (Rupert Murdoch) would be directly affected because they worked so closely together and he's next up the line to her." (The Guardian)

After revelations that Murdoch's media reporters and private detectives hired by them or the paper "News of the World" itself, were hacking the phone accounts of crime victims and dead veterans and their families, the English public has expressed revulsion and anger of a kind dangerous to even Rupert Murdoch.

Investigations after revelations by the UK paper, "The Guardian" are pointing to a web of corruption including six figure payoffs to police and tampering with evidence in a murder investigation. Police are also under the gun of public opinion in that there lack of interest in the case is suspect. A former Home Secretary commented; "Were they being evasive, were they being dishonest, were they being lethargic? I think it's one of those three."

Both sides of UK politics are expressing opinion in The Guardian; "The Conservative, Zac Goldsmith, accused News of "systemic abuse of almost unprecedented power ... Rupert Murdoch is clearly a very, very talented businessman. He's possibly even a genius. But his organisation has grown too powerful and has abused that power. It has systematically corrupted the police and in my view has gelded this parliament, to our shame." Tom Watson, a former Labour minister, accused News of entering the "criminal underworld" by "paying people to interfere with police officers and doing so on behalf of known criminals". He said James Murdoch had "personally, without board approval, authorised money to be paid by his company to silence people who had been hacked and to cover up criminal behaviour within his organisation". He called for the younger Murdoch to be suspended while the police investigated "an attempt to pervert the course of justice".

Murdoch control over Australian media is generally believed to be greater than in the UK.

As the UK's prime minister is strongly connected to the Murdock empire the government is in serious trouble and denials will be difficult to sell.

more news in following pages....



News...

and views

Why didn't they know?

or did they..but aren't "expected" to care?

Yachts cruising inshore waters that have experienced repeated "Coast Watch" overflights and surveillance ask how it is possible for asylum seeker boats to evade detection?

The Howard government spent 1.8 Billion (reported) to develop a radar system that was supposed to cover the entire north coast of Australia that would help "in the detection and prevention of illegal entry smuggling and unlicensed fishing". (then) Defence minister Robert Hill said that Australia's northern coastline would be "under constant wide-area surveillance for sea and air approaches" using the over-the-horizon high-frequency radar network.

Federal governments since have promised that the network would detect people smuggling and illegal fishing boats but according to Fairfax Media, *"AUSTRALIA'S defence radar system has not detected any of the more than 200 asylum seeker boats that have landed on our shores in the past two years, raising serious questions about border security."*

The Sun-Herald can reveal that the \$1.8 billion Jindalee Operational Radar Network (JORN) has not picked up any of the boats that have carried thousands of people to Christmas Island and Ashmore Reef.

Customs and Border Protection revealed under Freedom of Information that the system had not detected a single boat in the week or month before or after a vessel carrying 97 asylum seekers from Indonesia vanished in November."

When the department was asked about how that can be they responded they were only "expected" to look for boats the size of an "Armidale class patrol boat". The Navy ship Armidale is 56 metres long and has a displacement of 270 tonnes".

Former Australian diplomat Tony Kevin, who investigated the SIEV X tragedy in 2001 in which 353 asylum seekers drowned on their way to Christmas Island, said the apparent change in radar policy was leaving a gaping hole in Australia's defence

"Who else has been able to slip through unseen in small boats: drug smugglers and terrorists?" he said. "And you have to ask why was \$1.8 billion spent on a system that seems so inappropriate for Australia's border protection needs."

The head of Border Protection Command, Rear-Admiral Tim Barrett, recently told an inquest into the deaths of those aboard a boat that crashed into the cliffs off Christmas Island last December, that JORN was not working that day. Rear-Admiral Barrett told the inquest he did not know whether JORN was operational on a day-to-day basis.

Sydney Morning Herald reports that Mr. Robert (opposition spokesman for defence science) said on Friday it was "inconceivable" Rear-Admiral Barrett would not know whether the country's most important radar surveillance system was in operation.

So it appears if a person is interested in smuggling anything into Australia the easy approach is via our remote northern coast and to avoid the populated east coast where "irregular entries" would surely be spotted by domestic craft or Coast Watch aircraft. Also it would be important to limit the size of the smuggling craft to less than 270 tons so it may be "expected" not to be observed or reported in any case.

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/border-fiasco-as-boats-go-undetected-20110702-1gwaz.html>

You are NOT presumed innocent in Australia. But there may be hope...

In 2008, Victorian solicitor Vera Momcilovic was convicted of drug trafficking after police found 400 grams of methylamphetamine and cash in her apartment.

She claimed it belonged to her boyfriend and that she knew nothing about it. Her boyfriend confessed and pleaded guilty to the charges, but under Victorian law Momcilovic had to prove that drugs found on her premises did not belong to her.

Momcilovic's lawyers asked the High Court to quash her conviction under the Charter of Human Rights, saying any future laws that remove the presumption of innocence should be declared invalid. If her conviction is overturned, experts say thousands of current cases and former convictions could be in jeopardy.

The case has national implications.

The Federal Government and other states and territories are backing Victoria's defence of the presumption of guilt.

The court has reserved its decision.

Australia's erosion of the presumption of innocence, regarded by most other modern democracies as a basic human right has been progressing for some time and is heavily connected to the most objectionable issues facing boaties from law enforcement agencies such as forced boardings and searches.

In many of Australia's laws you are "deemed" guilty of an offence as determined by a set of pre-described circumstances but not necessarily with intent or knowledge.

SV Pacific Vision on the Bricks

According to an ABC report of July 3rd a couple were rescued from their yacht after it went aground on Llewellyn Reef off Glastone. An EPIRB signal was received and an RACQ helicopter was dispatched and found the crew of the vessel that had sailed from San Diego in a life raft a mile away from their boat.

Apparently a torn sail the night before caused the crew to lose control of the vessel near the reef and a strong tide drove the vessel onto the reef where the vessel began taking on water.

The couple were flown to Rockhampton for medical examination but were reported OK.

Man Overboard Catch of the day

Fisherman must have been surprised to find a West Australian sailor on a sand bank last June 30th. Reports say he was tired and cold but OK after falling off an anchored catamaran in Rodds Bay off Turkey Beach.

Police and VMR were looking for him after a woman on the boat raised the alarm but it was the fishos that made the rescue.

VCG up the creek

The Sunshine Coast Daily has reported that Noosa man, Larry Kershaw won a boat raffle but Volunteer Coast Guard, that conducted the raffle had to immediately withdraw the prize due to irregularities in the drawing. Seems not all the ticket buyers were in the draw. Larry wasn't happy and thinks he should have the boat. Coast Guard says, no comment.



LETTERS

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

MORE ON "SPY IN THE SKY"

Hello TCP,

Regarding the "Spy in the Sky with a Box Brownie" article in the 48th edition:

Just a short note on our experience. We were sailing off the bottom end of Orpheus Island on Friday 26th October 2007, sailing our newly acquired 28ft Mangrove Jack back to Cairns from Tin Can Bay. We were making for anchorage in Little Pioneer Bay for the night. We were covering ch81 for traffic when the Customs plane flew directly overhead. I looked at my wife Ali and asked if she would change to ch16 as we had just been overflown by customs. She did that and within a minute we had the call from the plane.

The usual conversation took place. Even though this was our first contact ever with Customs the conversation with Ali was polite and to the point they asked our destination, last night stop; as I said the usual stuff.

I had gone back to my then day job at the airport. I asked a customs official I was friendly with that if Customs had called me then they would have a very high resolution photo of *Magic 2*. The official told me all I needed to do was to contact Customs, give them the sailing date the name of the vessel and other details and we could buy a copy of the high resolution photo. Woohoo, we thought. How often can we get a quality photo of both of us on *Magic 2* under full sail (that trip was famous, or infamous for Northerlies all the way from Tin Can Bay).

So I duly contacted Customs by email requesting the photo of our 'magic' moment, only to be told that a photo of our vessel was taken but due to NATIONAL SECURITY issues, it was not possible to release the photo. Cost was never mentioned although I was advised that a fee of about \$45 would normally apply.

I now have to look over my shoulder whenever I'm out wondering what danger to the nation I could be creating. Anyway, the Customs lady on vhf 16 was very pleasant and our first experience was positive and just like Keith I don't have a problem with them - yet?

Our sailing passage is just about to begin in October when we take off to parts known and unknown so that experience could change.

Phil and Ali Gibson,
Magic 2

MORE ON SILENT DEFENDERS

Hello,

I am French and presently in Cairns en route for Darwin. I am sorry but, even though I am neither a regular reader of your publication nor well aware of the MSQ obligations, capacities and efficiency, I have been a bit shocked by the article "The silent defenders" published on page 7 of the 48th edition. At least, the experience I have had with MSQ is very different and much more positive. I have tried resuming it here below.

I left my sailing boat (a 46-foot Bénéteau) in late November 2010 at Midtown Marina in Bundaberg on the Burnett River on fore and aft moorings just in front of the marina office. My boat is equipped with an autonomous Inmarsat beacon so that I was able to check, via the Internet and from France where I was for a couple of months, its position sent twice a day. I used to do this in the morning after having opened my mailbox, just noticing the upstream/downstream few-meter displacement due to the tide (which interested me anyway since I am a scientific researcher in physical oceanography still in activity) and not aware of the actual flood conditions. On the 22-23 of December, the level was just 2-3 m above normal so that nothing was mentioned in the titles of either the Internet or the TV journals, in France at least.

On December 23 in the morning (French time), I had an e-mail from Robert P. Lowe of MSQ Bundaberg informing me that my boat drifted away from its initial location and that it was entangled, with two other boats, over a fourth sunken one a bit downstream. I was able to check with my beacon that it was just about half a mile from the marina and that it started drifting 12-24 h ago. Bob then kindly answered the several e-mails I sent him and provided me with information about the situation as well as with a photo of the boats (that I could eventually provide you with) he took from the riverside. I did not get any answer to the e-mails I sent and the phone calls I made to Midtown Marina and immediately took the decision to fly back to Bundaberg. I have been lucky to a) have my boat being one of the firsts to drag, b) be able flying as soon as December 24 in the evening, c) arrive in Bundaberg, despite flight delays and changes, on the 27th in the morning, d) be transported on my boat by the marina's director in the afternoon even if the level was already at +3.5 m, e) etc.! Then, it has been another story, with a maximum of +8m and all boats swept away downstream, but I saved my own boat which only has had very minor damages.

Bob then explained me that our three boats have been the first to drag and that he asked himself the marina on the 23 in

the morning (Australian time) what were the e-mail addresses of the owners. Indeed, the marina's staff was very busy with their own office and equipment and, having no more electrical connections, were "unable" to inform the owners directly. I personally think that they should at least have informed by e-mail the owners as soon as the level has started increasing markedly, furthermore the forecasts were not good (and proved to be accurate!); as I told them, cyber cafes are numerous close to the marina and writing a unique e-mail with some tens of addresses would have been a very simple and efficient action. Whatever, I must also say that they have been very kind and helped me as much as possible on the 27th. The "funny" thing is that, when they reimbursed me for the time I paid for and did not spend in their marina, I discovered that they noticed by themselves that my boat "left the marina on December 22"!

In any case, the Bob's decision to ask our e-mail addresses to the marina and inform us as soon as possible allowed the three of us to save our boats. Thanks again Bob, you allowed my wife and myself to continue enjoying our round-the-world trip, I will never forget.

With my kind regards,
Claude Millot, S/V "Ailes et Iles"

TCP contacted Midtown Marina for the response below:

Just a few notes to mention. Claude is wrong in relation to the date of 22nd. We decided that even though we did not have to refund any moorings as it is a policy of our Marina and many others that no refunds are given. Due to the exceptional circumstances as a goodwill gesture, we set a cut off date of the 22nd even though many boats were still here days later. Claude expressed that he would take goods in lieu, but requested the refund and would purchase goods at different times, getting a quote from us. He then went with our prices to the Chandlery store at the Port and asked for a discount off our prices, we did all the work locating the items and details he required and he didn't give us the opportunity to price match.

I cannot express my disappointment with his comments; we asked that people took goods in lieu of a cash refund to help us out as money was and is still very short. Instead of closing Ray is doing the right thing by staff, suppliers and guests by battling through.

In regard to the internet cafe, we were busy trying to save stock, boats etc. No phones were working or internet, I was continually using my mobile to arrange emergency services for power cut off as the water was rising and had to be monitored, later reconnecting to new premises, sand bags etc., Also it was used to ring customers to advise them to get back here if they were in Australia and was running hot with the marina phone numbers being diverted to my mobile. The last thing we had time for was to meander up to an internet café to send emails. Everyone had a job to do together with many volunteers. Paperwork was bundled up to preserve from the rising water and computers shut down and moved to dry land. The position of MSQ was to monitor the vessels in the river which they did well and

liaised with us to ensure everyone was informed. All hands were on deck. We went without having Xmas to try and save boats and stock. Many owners wouldn't leave to the last and we had to assist the ones that were leaving, taking owners to their boats, risking our lives to evacuate and moving boats as long as we could into areas with less run in the river. If Claude is as experienced as he says why was he not looking at the BOM site or even kept himself abreast of the weather forecast as this was predicted prior to the 22nd.

Once again thank you, we have had many customers who have thanked us, especially Ray who worked till he dropped and all the staff here who worked more than 20 days straight without a break to ensure that we saved as much as we could. Working at times at 2 in the morning till dark when it was unsafe to do any more without complaint, being continually wet all day with water up to our necks. I can say it is not pleasant and very cold, but hopefully worth it as with time and a lot of hard work we will survive.

Kind Regards,
Jan Douglas
General Manager,
Midtown Marinas Pty Ltd

Hi Claude,

TCP would further comment that according to your letter you may have been in violation of the law if you didn't file an "incident report" with MSQ concerning the pile up of boats your's was involved in. As reported in TCP # 47 some boaties that risked their lives saving the boats of others because no one else would, were incensed when they did obey the law and provided the reports and got the following as part of the reply:

"I would like to draw your attention that all professional mariners moored in the Burnett River moved their vessels to safe moorings prior to the flood event. Your action in not moving your vessel at an earlier time clearly placed yourself, other persons and infrastructure in grave danger. Maritime Safety Queensland strongly encourages all vessel owners to take timely action in removing their vessel from danger in times of flood and severe weather. Whilst we appreciate that some people reside a long distance from their vessels and may not be able to take immediate and timely action to move or better secure their vessel, especially at this time of year, other arrangements should be made to ensure vessel owners have made arrangements with persons who would be able to take immediate action on the vessel owners behalf."

The great irony of this is that of all the recipients of this letter, should you have obeyed the law and gotten yours, you would have been the only one that we know of, it would have been applicable to! The other recipients were liveaboards who did move their vessels immediately but that got hit by un-maned vessels like yours or the professional's vessels so esteemed by MSQ.

However, it is good that your boat was saved and pleased to hear that MSQ staff were helpful in that.

Cheers,
Bob

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LETTERS

TCP READER ASKS ABOUT FORUMS

Dear TCP,

A short note asking you if there is a possibility TCP can incorporate or facilitate an Online Readers' Forum where clever and thrifty boaties like me can ask short & sweet silly questions (and get smart answers) seeking advice regarding anything boating or cruising related, whether it be of technical nature, DIY repair advice, or best anchor spot at Musgrave.

I know you have technical stories in TCP, and boat building updates which are excellent quality and appreciated but my appetite is ferocious and often my specific topic issue (eg. Correct oil for my Yanmar 3GMD gearbox) may not be appropriate for your general readers viewing pages. As you are aware, there are several American web forums in existence but they usually offer advice and product info not applicable or relevant to Australia.

For your consideration,
Kind regards,
Fred Phillips, SV Aquilla
Port Bundaberg

Hi Fred,

This is a subject that has had some consideration.

To bring you up to speed, at one time, years ago, I used to participate on a couple of forums with good result. That is, I found it rewarding, educational and provided good publicity for TCP. In exchange I provided a good assortment of threads that drew well for the forum I was on.

But the nature of the crowd changed. There were always a few negative people around but it came to be a toxic environment. Didn't have a specific name for them then but now commonly known as , "internet trolls" or even "cyber bullies". The anonymity of the environment is too tempting for the cowardly and or those with undisclosed commercial interests. They'll say things on the web they would never say to anyone's face. A real Jekyll and Hyde story.

So, there is the dark side. However, I always believed a well moderated forum could be as beneficial as you describe and more. A site you would let your kids participate in. To that end I secured suitable domain names for a TCP forum. I also investigated the availability of the web program and found the costs acceptable.

There is only one commodity that is prohibitively expensive so far...time. To keep the peace on such a public place would require daily attention and I just couldn't do it. No one person should. It would take a team of volunteers but TCP could provide the facility.

I propose we put this out for general discussion in the paper and see what people think about it. A forum that is a "troll free zone".

ANY VOLUNTEERS?

Cheers,
Bob

Anchor Lights Please

Dear Bob and Kay,

Just anchored in Pancake Creek - and in lovely weather. Spoke to Keith on "Speranza" this morning, and several other old friends by radio.

Bob, you might recall I reported problems with LED anchor light globes causing interference to HF radio. I sold the yacht 18 months ago. On this cruiser's anchor light I changed the normal incandescent globe to LED, thinking the problem of the resistor noise in new type globes to drop voltage to 3v for LED's had been solved. A great light from what is supposed to be 8 -32volt globe with circles of Leds.

On arrival here yesterday I had good repeater VF coverage on Channels 80, 81 and 82. At sunset I turned the masthead anchor light on and later tried to make a call on Ch 82, with no contact to any repeater. After checking various connections and finding no faults, I had a (rare) thought and turned the light off, and back came the radio reception. A friend tells me he gets interference on his TV from an LED light.

I think it is worth a mention in TCP of these problems with LED lights. Others may have similar experiences. My first globe came from "Ledshop" in Cairns in 2009 and they admitted they needed to shield the resistor or rectifier in the base of the globes.

Mind you, from what I have seen so far this year, about a third of yachts don't even show an anchor light, let alone a masthead anchor light which is required for all round visibility. In the Burnett River I overheard passing trawlers commenting on "b....yachties without masthead anchor lights". As with dogs on National Park beaches, like this morning at Pancake Creek, it does little for the image of cruising boats.

Best wishes, and keep up the good work in TCP,
Harry Smith, MV Melaleuca

TCP proposed to buy a strip of led lights to test the interference but Harry responded:

It seems to be only the anchor light LED. I also discover it blots out ABC Local Radio 100.10FM and others, and also send the gas detector led light into fits of flashing. I am going back to a normal globe.

In Gladstone, I came out of Pancake Creek (upper) before dawn and three of five yachts anchored off the resupply beach had NO lights. Unbelievable in an anchorage where trawlers etc often come in at night. It is no wonder the QT patrol people and other authorities have a poor respect for us grotty yachties.

Lovely weather for motorboats.
Best wishes,
Harry

Thanks Harry,

I wonder why just the anchor light...? Reader response would be appreciated here.

I agree with your comments on the boats in outer Pancake.. a perfectly bad place not to have an anchor light. I have always felt that a skipper shouldn't depend on others anchor lights if they have to navigate in a dark anchorage, faults occur, globes blow or an otherwise conscientious boatie forgets that one night but... when you see a steady percentage that aren't lit up that is plain negligence and blatant disregard for the safety of others. No fair you guys out there that don't install and use your anchor light. Don't make it harder for others.

Bob

Tenders and the law...again

Kay & Bob,

I was out in my tender (13' RIB, 4 x buoyancy pockets with a 18hp motor) fishing yesterday 300metres from my "Primary Boat" at Burning Point, Shaw Island, when I was approached by a MSQ RIB.

They first asked to inspect my catch which was not hard as I had nothing, then I was asked where my life jacket/s were. I advised the boat was a tender as appropriately marked.

I was advised that because my tender had more than a 4hp motor (although exempt from registration when operated within 2nm of the Primary Boat) it is deemed registrable and safety equipment is required. ie lifejackets, flares, light and EPIRP if operating outside of partially smooth waters regardless of the distance from the Primary Boat.

He advised that a small tender with a motor up to 4hp or no motor, does not require any safety equipment, if operated within 2 nm of the Primary Boat. How stupid is this. Which tender would you rather be in if a big wake came at you. Not to mention the ability to go against a strong rip.

I must say the MSQ couple were pleasant and not offensive, but would

Hi Dave,

As Peter Kerr pointed out in TCP # 47, The state publications are miss applied much of the time and advice I have received over the phone on occasions from MSQ has been wrong as well. As you state your tender was equipped with greater than 3KW of motor then your tender is "required to be registered" regardless of distance from your vessel and Div 6 of TOMSA applies.

From DIV 6; This division applies to a tender, if the tender is required to be registered.

(3) Despite subsection (1)(b) [TCP note; general PFD requirement], a tender operating beyond partially smooth waters is not required to be equipped with a PFD type 1 or 2 for each person on board if

- (a) the tender is operated within a radius of 500m from it's primary ship; and
- (b) there is a statement in the approved form for the tender that the tender has positive flotation.

From DIV 5; Other safety equipment for recreational ships

27 Application of div 5

- (1) This division applies to the following ships
 - (a) a ship registered under this regulation as a recreational ship;
 - (b) a ship that is registrable under this regulation as a recreational ship but is not registered;
 - (c) a recreational ship mentioned in any of paragraphs (a) to (l) of section 60(2), other than paragraphs (f) and (i).

Here are paragraphs (f) and (i) from sec 60 lifted out of context;

- (f) a recreational ship that
 - (i) is not powered; or
 - (ii) is powered by an engine of less than 3kW;
- (i) a tender to a registered recreational ship if the tender is operated only within a radius of 2n miles from the recreational ship

So they could have had you on the registration issue I think but as you state you were within 500 metres of your vessel on the tender, even outside of "partially smooth waters" it appears that PFD was not required as far as I can read it. The law further states requirements for other safety gear in your registrable tender however.

TCP wishes every yachty to become familiar with the actual law because according to numerous accounts received here, the enforcers aren't and though I try harder, I am not a legal expert and can only provide information and encouragement to the skipper to pursue the facts. See the TCP web site "issues" page for links to the legislation.

We do know of at least one tourist killed and his partner injured in a jet ski accident on their holiday on the Gold coast. The tourist had no license or training however was legally operating th craft. It can be argued that if tourists were regulated to the same degree as us locals, the industry would suffer but lives would be saved. Time is short for a tourist from the UK or other place, and they tend to go full on rather than take time to learn.

Cheers,
Bob

not listen to my argument / belief that safety equipment was not required, they then gave me a handbook / guide and said it was all detailed in there. IT is:

Page 27. "Tenders do not require registration if operated within 2 nm of the primary boat. Tenders that are not registrable, are not required to carry safety equipment other than a light for signalling."

Page 27 then goes on to give a table headed "Safety equipment for tenders that are required to be registered" which details the safety equipment required.

Page 28 adds a little more clarity to my view.

I was advised providing I went back to the boat immediately and got a life jacket I would not be given a ticket. Which I did.

I think it is just another incorrectly enforced law which is becoming common in the United Soviet States of Australia.

However if You or I hire a bareboat, we can get paralytic drunk every lunch and evening, race around other anchored boat and no life jackets or boat license required. Because to do so would be bad for tourism and the economy.

Can anyone offer some clarity on this issue?

Dave, MV Merdeka

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LETTERS

TCP on E-readers? TCP,

Would it be possible to put up an e-book copy/file of your magazine, that can be read from most electronic readers? ie. E-paper readers /tablets and most computers running windors/linux and while I don't know about apple, I would be surprised if they didn't work on that system also.

I've tried to convert your pdf files using ebook Calibre (a free program for deb linux operating systems and most windows op systems), while I can convert your files using this program its a pain to read as the file width and length means on my e-reader (Kobo) every line needs scrolling across and down.

There is little on the web in the way of e books that I can find about sailing, but a reader like I have can hold thousands of articles / books and PDF files and with the addition of a SD card, so many more. I think sailer's would still want to read at sea and e-book files are a lot lighter than mags and paper books.

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Regards,
Max Bazzica

Greetings Max,

Even a publication printed on little A4 size paper isn't crash hot on E-readers and we really like the big page format of the printed TCP, BIG colour photos and all. But as we make our PDF's off the print files, that is what makes it so busy to peruse on your reader. To reconfigure the paper for a reader size screen would be a major undertaking BUT... the popularity of our electronic edition is getting hard to ignore. Especially as roughly a third of our readers are North American where the popularity of electronic readers is ahead of Australia, for now.

So yes, we have been considering such a move in spite of it meaning we have to work harder and learn new stuff... I thought I was doing good to learn how to send email a few years ago and since then I've learned publishing production, photo manipulation, web production and some new swear words... thought I already knew them all!

An informal survey of the fleet with interest in such a move is invited... please readers.. let us know.. should we.. gulp.. do it?

See page 31 for more on e readers.
Cheers,
Bob

Insurer shows heart, bends the rules and comes to the table.

Hi Bob,

I had intended to contribute a sad story. Thank the Universe it is not sad any more.

For the past seven years us ferro owners travelling up and down the coast have had to prevaricate about having an comprehensive insurance policy if we wanted to go into most marinas - even if it was only for an hour or so.

As you know *Curwings* was on (or about January 10) a four times clobbered victim of other less secured vessels (and marinas) on the Mighty Muddy Mary River. My first intimation of this was while in transit in Singapore waiting for my Brisbane flight and absently (at first) staring at more Qld floods on CNN.

Then the camera pans down and (Oh, Shit) is that the Mary to whence I had slogged 400 miles from Mackay through heavy seas before Christmas so that my boat was 'safely' anchored while I went to South Africa for a cousin's wedding???

I immediately rang my mate-and occasional crew- who could view my boat from his kitchen window. "Your boat's cool mate, was on there yesterday after the worst hit. Your Super Sarca is holding well, though there's a lot of big stuff coming down the river and she's running around 20knots. Something seems to have trashed your bimini but she's holding well. I'm taking off with mine but the missus will keep an eye on her and keep me posted."

All very reassuring, even more so because

some two years ago I had seen an ad in TCP for 'ferro' insurance and was now comprehensively insured. All good, as I am a 'live-a-board' and everything that I own and that ties me to the earth in on *Curwings*.

Next morning I lob in Brissie, collect my car from Rivergate Marina and, with partner Karyn, think in three hours we will be back at the boat, after a short detour to pick up a Kiwi friend who came through Customs with us and had two boats and a (now) floating shed in the Maryborough cane fields near the slipway.

Double shit. The road is cut both sides of Gympie and the trains have just been cancelled. I rang Tony, patiently waiting at the airport, and he organised tickets for us to fly over the floods to Hervey Bay. We lob in H.B. around 15.30 and Leslie (Barry's missus) valiantly works her way through the Susan River back flood to pick us up. Other friends of Barry's drive up his front lawn to take Tony across the river (bridge is under) and me down to *Curwings* who/which is now 7 miles down the river at Devil's Elbow.

While we were on the plane something/s had come down and clobbered her again, stripped off my snubbers, the rest of my 80M of chain and keeper had been dragged through the winch and poor *Curwings* had rotated from bank to bank till Julio and Dan (two unsung hero's of the floods) had seen and captured her spinning round the corner

at Devil's Elbow where 9 odd Maryborough stalwarts had already anchored.

Now back on my boat and taking stock I find enough timber on deck to have a Barbie and the engine she no go. Barry had tried to start her, but was unaware that she had been holed on the waterline and the bilges had filled to a level over the bottom of the starter motor. So that was stuffed. The Pullpit had been trashed from both sides and jammed against the furler, Bimini ripped off, radar trashed etc. I notify my insurance agent and get notification that part of the policy is keeping my boat afloat and free from harm. Slipping fees etc. will be sorted out as my claim is processed. I hang in the river for a week while Graeme at Maryborough slipway gets the mud out of his motors and agrees to take me up as a matter of priority (I was the first keel boat slipped) In the meantime, photos, faxes and emails are exchanged between me and Spain working on my claim.

In my claim I had been quite clear that I had been off the boat before Xmas and had it physically checked every 24 hours and left it in plain view of my Mate's kitchen window. That was not good enough. My claim was disallowed and my slipping and basic repair costs were up to me. Derick of DG Marine, my Aussie Agent, kept at the crease well after the time that I was fully reconciled to the claim being disallowed and investigating if I could get a loan from the pension office.

Continued below the following....

From Derick of DG Marine:

Here is the most recent communication received from Edward William Marine Services which requires no comment.

Let me say that our role as an agent is to arrange cover on behalf of the boat owner and offer the best level of service we can and, we hope offer expertise based on our forty odd years in Marine Insurance. We do not determine liability, we do not decline claims, we do not sign the cheque or determine the level of premium all that is done by Edward William as underwriting agents for Northernreef Insurance. What we are about to say is our opinion and not that of either Edward William or Northernreef.

- The application for insurance is the basis of the contract between the Insured and the Insurer.*
- A number of questions are asked in the application the answers to which influence the level of premium and, in the event of a claim are used to determine liability. e.g. have you had any claims before? If, when investigating a new claim it turns out the question was answered incorrectly Insurers are entitled to decline the new claim.*
- The application under discussion asks the question "House boat - Y/N" We don't have a copy of the application but understand the answer was Y which means this is a live a board risk.*

Derick kept hammering the points that I hadn't left the boat on a lee shore, had taken it out of cyclone prone areas, had it visually checked every day and physically checked ever 48 hours. He also hammered the point that the Water Police had ordered everyone off their boats when the effects of the flood were apparent. The river got up to 24 knots during the peak.

Last week I got an email from the company's Spanish agent saying, "*Despite their (Ins. Company) repudiation of the claim I have explained the situation again and*

pointed out the serious effect this flooding had on the area as a whole. I have finally got insurers to agree to an 'ex gratia' settlement on a without prejudice basis and without admission that there is any liability on behalf of insurers of AU\$7750.00 net. Whilst this may not be as much as you had hoped for both Derik and myself have worked hard on your behalf to get this offer and under the circumstances I cannot see us getting any more. If you decide to accept this please sign and return the attached declaration and we will get the funds sent to you."

Yes, of course I signed.

- Under the exclusion section the policy contains a cls which reads " 12.11 Any incident that may give rise to a claim whilst the assured vessel is left anchored in open mooring or off beach or off shore without shelter, and without presence on board of a person who can take care of navigation, unless underwriters have been informed and such provision is given on the policy schedule."*
- This restrictive Cls can be amended to allow the boat to be left unattended for specified periods of up to weeks or months at a time PROVIDED PRIOR NOTICE IS GIVEN AND AGREEMENT OBTAINED.*
- At the time of the damage the policy had been amended to allow an 8 hour period for the vessel to be left unattended.*
- Acting as a prudent owner would John arranged for a minder during his two month absence from the boat but did not arrange an extension to the 8 hour limitation.*
- Therefore, at the time of damage the policy conditions had been breached allowing underwriters to avoid liability.*

John, we will continue working on your behalf and now await the spreadsheet we discussed this morning which should contain details of the item being claimed for, the damage sustained to the item and the estimate to repair/replace it.

Is this a fair result? I think it is more than fair in the circumstances. Before writing this I asked Malcolm (in Spain) if one needed full approval in writing if one was going to leave the boat for more than 8 hours. This is his reply: "Normally Advisement is sufficient but wherever possible it is best to have the authorisation."

Good sailing,
John Irving,
SY Curwings

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Cyclone Yasi and Hinchinbrook- Fate or Coincidence

I have spent the past two decades living in Port Douglas. During that time I have spent various times up a creek tied to the mangroves for the night as the harbour has been evacuated due to an impending cyclone. Port is blessed with an exceptional cyclone bolt hole. Prior to cyclone Yasi my girlfriend and I had planned to travel in my yacht down to south east Queensland to spend summer for a change. We were delayed and got away late as can happen. We arrived at Port Hinchinbrook on a low but rising tide to refuel. However with a draft of 1.8m we did not have sufficient depth of water to reach the fuel dock. We decided to take a berth for the night and fill up on the high tide the following day. If for different circumstances we would have refuelled and continued on our merry way.

History will now tell that we ended up in Port Hinchinbrook for cyclone Yasi. As the cyclone approached the coast there was much discussion between boat owners and with the marina management and indeed for many with their insurance companies. It was a very stressful time as boat owners struggled with how best to deal with such a massive storm system that was bearing down on the coast. We all know that hindsight is a wonderful thing and I must say that I don't believe that anyone has the right to preach to others on what was the correct or incorrect course of action to deal with this storm using hindsight. The boat owners who wrestled with what was the best course of action prior to the storm played their cards as best they could with the knowledge they had. I don't believe that anyone had seen a system this large prior to the event on the Queensland coast and it was virtually impossible to know how it would pan out. I think it is worth noting that the predicted surge for this cyclone was to be between 5 to 7 metres and for this reason the residents of Cardwell and Port Hinchinbrook were asked to self evacuate. Premiere Anna Bligh was herself broadcasting on television that the authorities predicted a 7 metre surge associated with the storm. I do not believe that any mangrove system would be a safe haven in a surge this size in a category 5 cyclone. Indeed it's worth pondering the mess that may have occurred if all boats had moved up into the mangroves and the predictions had actually occurred. Salvage in this remote area would be incredibly difficult and the pristine environment may well have been jeopardised.

Personally as the skipper of my vessel, I decided that we would be safest off the yacht and that as my responsibility to my crew this was the only course of action. I thank Peter from Inspirations Resort for putting us up in what proved to be a very sturdy building. When morning broke I, like everyone was stunned by the destruction but happy to be alive. Even though I knew that the area would be a real mess after the storm we had experienced that night, it is still hard to believe when it sits right in front of you in stone cold daylight. Yes my yacht did sustain damage and has since been repaired. I would like to thank Club Marine for the way they dealt with the repairs. Due to the situation my boat was trucked to Lawries in Mooloolaba. I would like to thank Lawries management, Adam Ashby Boat Builders, Greg Gilliam marine and Aquatec fabrications for their great workmanship and professional service.

I realise that I have been luckier than many and for this I am grateful. We met some great people in the Hinchinbrook area prior to and after Yasi. Many I am sure are still struggling to come to terms with the damage it inflicted and I hope that they can get their lives back to normal as soon as possible. As an end note it is worth mentioning the medium sized yacht that still floated happily tied to a private pontoon which appeared to have significantly taller piles than all the others at the entrance to the harbour the morning after the storm.

Campbell Corbett
SV Jimmie Blacksmith

Response...

Campbell;

Your statement; " I don't believe that anyone had seen a system this large prior to the event (Yasi) on the Queensland coast .." indicates a very short term memory. Just a few years ago the other cat 5 storm, Larry, that ripped Innisfail and Mourilyan to bits and wreaked significant destruction all the way to the Atherton Tablelands, was covered extensively and especially by *The Coastal Passage*. The idea that Yasi was "larger" or "stronger" or other superlatives would have to be supported by something more than mere assertion. To say that Yasi posed dangers unique even in recent history just is not so. Probably Queensland's most destructive cyclone, in human terms was Mahina in 1899. A truly vicious storm that wiped out the large pearling fleet anchored around Princess Charlotte Bay, leaving just enough survivors to tell the story.

"Hindsight"?

If you are responding to questions in previous editions of TCP regarding why so many vessels stayed in Port Hinchinbrook Marina with Cyclone Yasi eminent, saying it was an unfair judgment in "hindsight", I am astounded. To say that strategies for such storms was not discussed prior to such a storm is another surprise. You must be in the habit of reading less informative marine publications because these issues have been regularly reported by *The Coastal Passage* in minute detail! Besides reports from vessels that successfully survived the direct hit of *Larry*, we covered reports of those that didn't. I personally visited Innisfail and Mourilyan as soon as the first traffic was allowed on the road (4WD only) and duly reported my findings.

As recently as last year in TCP #40, we featured an article **"Dodging Cyclones.. If you can and what to do if you can't"** where I wrote, among other things how we sussed out a spot in the mangroves as a preference to our berth in Mackay Marina, in spite of it's fine sky high piles and rock wall.

The one reliable fact gleaned from all that was, mangroves make the best shelter, you were within Cooe of some of the best storm protection on the coast and didn't make use of it. That was your decision and your reasons for your decision are your own. However the extent of the damage in Cardwell revealed a trend that deserved to be questioned as a whole and the questions were not a matter of hindsight but derived from careful examination of the facts and publicised personal experiences.

You apparently relied on insurance. I wouldn't advise making that a habit in future. We have just received a letter from a boat returning to the Whitsundays and they report their insurer will no longer provide coverage for their boat on a registered mooring at Airlie Beach or Shute Harbour. Wonder why? In TCP #42 we reported on cyclone Ului which followed coverage of a northerly storm. Both events cleaned off those moorings and resulted in huge losses as did Yasi at Cardwell. We wonder how the insurance companies will respond to Yasi? They must somehow because those kinds of losses are unsustainable. They are not charities. Will they further restrict where they will cover for major storms? Will they cease coverage for storms altogether or finally, will they raise rates so high that insurance becomes prohibitive to even more boats than it is now?

But Campbell, we have more important things in common than we have grounds for disagreement on a particular issue. We both love sailing. I am very pleased you didn't give it away after the cyclone and though I'm surprised the insurer was game to transport your boat all the way to Mooloolaba for repairs, it is good news because she couldn't have been placed in better hands.

And finally, I will include the article mentioned above from TCP# 40 in the following pages. Perhaps we should publish the article every year .

cheers

Bob

Dodging Cyclones... if you can, but what to do when you can't

These boats survived up the creek

Post Larry, Creek off of the Johnstone River, B. Norson photo

By Bob Norson

Cyclone strategy is a very personal thing. This article may be helpful to sailors doing their first season in the north and parts of it may add to the information experienced yachtys already have.

Living up north on a boat has it's virtues and risks. The virtues are apparent but the cyclone risk is easily put in the too hard basket... she'll be right mate!

At times you have to look at the possibility of running south (to attempt) to get out of the cyclone belt OR... figure out how to mitigate the risk OR... over-insure.

We chose #2, mitigate the risk. When we lived in the cyclone zone our boat was kept at Bowen Harbour and Mackay Marina. There just wasn't much for alternative around Bowen but the harbour is good natural protection. In Mackay Marina, the marina itself is top notch and behind a rock wall. No marina or harbour can be called cyclone proof until it takes a direct hit from a cat 5 storm and survives relatively unscathed. So no matter where you are a plan "B" is a good thing... unless you relish the idea of being the crash test dummy.

The good thing about cyclones is (and there aren't many good things) they tend to move slow enough that modern forecasters can give you time to act **IF YOU HAVE A PLAN**. But sometimes you aren't handy to the bolt hole you have sussed out or maybe you are a foreign boat in Queensland waters.

Local holes! We found that it can be rough competing for the nearest and easiest. My favourite place will be the one just past the obvious and is usually surrounded by mangroves.

Port Newry anchorage is a few hours sail north of Mackay. A good anchorage but not a storm hole. However, there are a few creeks behind it, one of them is well known; that is Victor Creek. At crunch time Victor would be chockers so we had a look around at the others. Cluny is the next one. With our tender loaded with esky and handheld sounder (we were the first on the block to get one of those little beauties!) we had a look. Our old steely had a 6.5 ft draft and there was no way we could just steam into the creek but we did find enough water to get in on a tide. We found the best water in a line between the creek entrance and the passage between Rabbit and Inner Newry. With the shelter provided by Rabbit and Newry islands, working a tidal entrance in this case was doable at the time we investigated.

Inside the creek we found better water for quite a distance in. We had our hole! This has been our deep dark secret for quite a while but in talking to a of couple old timers, can't claim it as our invention. We'll call it our re-discovery. I was told that the old Fairmiles (see below for details) that serviced the island resorts 40 years ago used Cluny Creek for storm shelter.

For boats caught out between the Whitsunday's and Mackay, that creek's location could be a useful card to have up your sleeve. When cruising the coast in cyclone season that is always on my mind.. what hole am I closest to? What if the VHF lights up with warnings right now?

The rivers at and immediately south of Cookie are well known. The Endeavour, Packer Creek, and Trinity Inlet are all relatively easy to enter and have a reasonable amount of room.

The one further south and slightly less known is Mourilyan Harbour. With it's deep entry and immediate shelter it would be my pick for the coast between Cairns and Hinchinbrook. The open area near the sugar wharf is poor shelter in a cyclone as Larry amply demonstrated. The boats that had the best chance to survive in that part of the harbour were on the piles and some removed their stern line to allow the boat to swing to face the wind and reduce windage as a result. Most of the boats anchored in the open harbour were found in the mangroves later...

The Moresby River which creates the harbour, is good shelter if you get deep enough into it. Petrea Heathwoods report in TCP # 19 was evidence of that. That is where her and Dennis kept their two boats during Cyclone Larry. Petrea reported that other than stuff being tossed around inside, no serious damage.

The Johnstone River into Innisfail has it's good shelter but the bar is unstable enough that I wouldn't want to chance it with a blow on it's way. But if you are there already, the town reach was beat up pretty bad during Larry. Some boats wound up in backyards of homes, some were washed downstream by flood and some were OK. I found some boats sheltering in a Creek off the river (Ninds Creek I believe? See photo top of page). They did just fine though the trees above them were stripped bare of leaves and even bark!

continued next page...

Mourilyan Harbour post cyclone Larry



Petrea Heathwood photo

What Is A "Fairmile"?

Designed by Fairmile Marine in the UK for service in WWII.

They were designed for prefabricated assembly.

Various boatyards were contracted for components. Between 1940 and 1945 over 1000 of them were constructed worldwide.

Fairmiles wore many hats. Some were configured as submarine chasers, ambulance launches, motor launches, torpedo boats, etc. They were about 110 to 115 feet long with a beam of about 18 feet. Depending on equipment and use, they had speed of 20 to 30 knots. After the war many found use in the commercial and tourism markets. Several operated around the Whitsunday's and other areas around Australia. Also Canada, the USA and South Africa. There are fine examples still afloat.





Johnstone River in Innisfail, post Larry

B. Norson photo

Hinchinbrook Island, Missionary Bay? I would prefer the numerous shelter opportunities of the channel. Best around.

Townsville has a lot of local craft to shelter and I wouldn't want to fight it out with the fleet. Ross River would be my hope if cornered. Otherwise run for...

Bowen: probably the best protection around. The greatest danger there would be from other boats that haven't done the right thing in the confines of the piles but Mike Smith, the harbourmaster and staff go beyond the call of duty to prepare the place in case of a storm.

Airlie Beach has Abel Point Marina. Rock wall facing north. Easy to get in but would vacate the boat! The bad northerly storm of February 07 didn't overwhelm the rock wall but the moored and anchored boats were savaged.

The Whitsunday anchorages: Nara, Macona and Gulnare inlets, among others, could be shelter. The holding is excellent and there is a lot of room but bullets can come screaming over the hills.. If you aren't carrying real storm ground tackle you wouldn't want to risk it. The good part is, easy entry. Except for Gulnare, any vessel, any tide works, and if it is already blowing that could be very important. If

you aren't familiar with the place, leave plenty of room for the fringing reefs as well other vessels. That aside, get up as far as you can.

Mackay: The Marina is rock wall protected and in bad storms water blasts over it on a high tide but so far so good. If I knew something really bad was coming I would try to get lifted out if there were time. The boat yard is designed to be very tough. The cradles are massive and the concrete slabs have steel rungs to lash boats down in case of a blow. It is designed for cyclones. I don't like the Pioneer River in town. Where there is water it is exposed. Where it isn't exposed up the mangroves there is little water. It would take local knowledge and quick response to find a good spot I think.

Middle Percy Island: The Boat Harbour or Lagoon or whatever you want to call the inlet from West Bay could be a saviour if no better shelter can be found. Tidal entry and some deep water inside but not much.

Claremont Creek: Noel Patrick, in his guide "Curtis Coast" gives this creek high marks for shelter but in a developed sea the entry may be hard to work.

Port Clinton and Island Head Creek: IH Creek, especially, has a shallow entrance but if you can get through that, you are OK.

If you let it wait until it's already blowing, you may practice those surfing skills on your way in.

The Narrows! Great shelter and what I consider the bottom of the danger area of cyclones. But then I have always been an optimist. The Fitzroy River and creeks at the north end will be less crowded than the south which may fill with Gladstone locals. Beware of flood hazards in larger rivers like the Fitzroy as they could be more damaging than the winds and the surge created by cyclones may raise the water level of any shelter.

So, if cruising the cyclone coast in season, develop your strategy and be aware of the nearest, best place as you cruise. Refer to the excellent guides available, Alan Lucas's *Cruising the Coral Coast* or Noel Patrick's *Curtis Coast* for example.

That sums up my personal cyclone awareness list and the alternatives I have considered and filed away. This in no way intends to be exhaustive and the subject is subjective.

The point is to always be considering where the nearest bolt hole is as you cruise the coast and keep that radio on. It's a better strategy than a rabbits foot for good luck or blind faith. :

CHECK LIST FOR CYCLONE SEASON

For harbours, marinas and moorings: If you know a blow is coming OR if you are leaving the vessel over a period when a storm could come and you wouldn't have time to return to sort it out. Leave nothing on deck...no outboards, buckets or life slings.. nothing.

Strip sails off or at least wrap a lot of rope around the sail covers and tie securely to the boom or furler. Make them snug! This will reduce windage and prevent the wind from gabbing a corner and ripping the stuff to shreds. Furling headsails have a reputation for unraveling. Roll it in tight and let the sheets wrap around the sail several turns. Secure the furling line very well or even padlock the drum.

Secure booms with preventers or lash to boom galleys or hard canopy tops.

Secure all halyards, topping lifts and sheets. In a blow they may have more windage than you imagine and if they get loose, can be destructive.

Strip all biminis, canopies, window covers, anything canvas.

Check your solar panels. If they are adjustable you may want to lash them hard in position or even remove them if that's feasible. Also any wind generator.

If you have storm boards - use them.

Check your bilge pumps.

Double or triple your lines. At a mooring or piles I like heavy chain at the bow taking primary load through a snubber, then a heavy rope with some slack in it and wrapped in an effective abrasion resistant cushion. Don't forget to lash down your chain and warps to your bow roller (and stern if on the piles). When things get wild you don't want the gear to jump out of position and against surfaces that will be damaged or that will saw through your tackle. In a marina, doubled or tripled lines.

Do you trust your cleats? If in any doubt run your lines past or through them to something tougher. Your sheet winches or anchor windlass or...? As was reported in TCP # 27 the vessel *Triad* was lost in cyclone Larry when the bollard was ripped out of the bow. The mooring held though.

Secure your dinghy. Lash to deck if you can do so without increasing your windage too much or just sink it next to your boat. If left on davits, leave titled on the stern so it won't fill with rain water. If in a marina lash to the jetty.

Every boat and situation is different but the ideas above are ones I have used as a precaution at one time or another.

The best reference around is one you have (or should have!) at you nav station. Alan Lucas's "Cruising the Coral Coast" has excellent information beginning on page 16 of the 8th edition.



Cardwell, post Larry

B. Norson photo



A Grumpy Old Yachtie

days out of Brisbane, just on dusk, when we were 8 miles east of Tacking Point on the New South Wales coast, we were pounded by 50 knot winds and monstrous seas. *Aeolus* was knocked on her side by a giant of a wave that snapped one of her shrouds. I was convinced we were minutes from death.

"We'll drop all sail, go about and head for Coffs Harbour!" Ray screamed above the noise of the wind. "It's about 80 miles back up the coast!"

It's not what I would have done if I had been skipper. The chart showed that north of Tacking Point there was a long sandy beach. I would have sailed *Aeolus* straight onto the beach, dived into the surf and swum ashore, then hotfooted it up to the nearest pub for a quick beer and ten rum chasers before catching the first bus back to Brisbane, never to go within sight of the sea again. But I didn't. And, surprisingly, we reached Coffs Harbour without dying.

The cruiser and *Pluto* passed starboard to starboard, and as we did, the skipper of the cruiser stared at me with a stupid look and twirled one forefinger around the side of his head.

Ah, well I thought, they do own stinkies. I'm sure cruising yachties are more seamanlike.

On my first single-handed cruise north from Brisbane, I followed the advice of a veteran sailing friend to arrive at the Wide Bay Bar at first light on the second half of the flood tide; his reason being that the seas would be running in the right direction, they would be less confused, and the sun would be behind me, making it easier to see the directional light at Hook Point on Fraser Island. He also gave me other worthwhile hints such as never leave Mooloolaba if the swell is predicted over 2 metres, and when approaching the Bar drop the mainsail and run under jib alone, start the motor, close all hatches, wear a lifejacket and safety harness. It was all good advice.

But as I rounded Double Island Point and headed for the Bar, I found that the whole of the mainland and Fraser Island were hidden by a thick bank of fog. As I didn't have GPS, I headed in by dead reckoning towards the directional light. With the autopilot connected, I knelt on the bowsprit with the binoculars glued to my eyes. I was on the verge of panic, when I saw the welcoming flash of the white light.

My next concern was picking up the leads on Inskip Point for the dogleg into the main channel, but luck was with me, the fog thinned and I was soon anchored safely in Pelican Bay.

Four other yachts weren't so lucky that morning. They headed too far north of the Bar and became caught in the breakers. They all survived, but one was thrown on her side and took a lot of the Pacific Ocean through her open companionway hatch. The four yachts all had GPS. Two of them anchored in Pelican Bay and that night neither displayed a riding light. So much for cruising yachties being more seamanlike.

continued next page...

By Stuart Buchanan, SY *Pluto*

Yes, I admit it, I'm a grumpy old man. Anyone over fifty who has read Stuart Prebble's book *Grumpy Old Men The Secret Diary*, and doesn't agree one hundred percent with the things that piss him off in today's world, is either dead from the neck up or has been living under a rock in the Simpson Desert for the last fifty years. However, one subject that Stuart didn't broach upon in his book was annoyances that occur on the water and I've come across plenty of those during my few cruising years.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not a pedantic old seadog born with saltwater in my veins; I didn't pop out of my mother's womb practising tying a bowline on my umbilical cord. I'm just a bloke who had a dream of some day sailing his own yacht along Queensland's Barrier Reef Coast.

But how does a landlubber with such a dream learn to sail? I was lucky, or perhaps unlucky, to know Ray Canniffe, who owned the 11 metre steel sloop *Aeolus*. Ray invited me to sail to Sydney to compete in the 1980 Sydney to Mooloolaba Yacht Race. Two

Over the next few years, under Ray's guidance, I learnt how to sail a yacht under all conditions and discovered that in extreme weather a well found yacht will usually out survive its crew. I studied coastal navigation and read dozens of boating books.

Eventually, I bought the 9 metre ketch *Pluto* and practised sailing single-handed on Moreton Bay before heading north. It wasn't long before the annoyances began. It was a dead calm day. I was motoring along at 5 knots, when a 15 metre cruiser doing at least 15 knots approached from my starboard side. Rather than go behind me, the cruiser went in front of me, missing *Pluto* by only a few metres. The wave from its wake was reminiscent of my experience with Ray off Tacking Point. The two blokes on the flybridge of the cruiser didn't even glance at me. Next day, while heading along a narrow channel to the Broadwater, I saw a half cabin cruiser coming towards me head on. I turned *Pluto's* bow sharply to starboard, indicating we would pass port to port as the regulations demand, but the cruiser turned its bow to port. I turned more to starboard. The cruiser turned more to port. I gave up and turned back on course.

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Grumpy Old Yachtie continues...

As I made my way along the coast, I found it extremely rare to find an anchorage where all yachts displayed riding lights at night. Some yachts displayed those stupid bloody solar garden lights you can buy from Bunnings for \$4, and which run out of power at four o'clock in the morning. Struth! These people have yachts worth \$300,000 and over and they buy a \$4 light. I came into an anchorage one night to see three or four riding lights; from their distinctively dull glow, I recognised them as Bunnings specials. But I discovered that the lights didn't indicate three or four vessels. It was a catamaran with a garden light on the extremity of each hull.

Cruising in open water is usually harassment free, it's at anchor where all the action happens. You've just dropped the pick perhaps 200 metres away from the only other yacht and settled back with a rum when another yacht arrives and anchors between the two already there. Then another yacht arrives and anchors between them. And so it goes on. Before long you could hold a conversation with a dozen people and not raise your voice. At the turn of the tide, you're up and down into the cockpit a dozen times to see if any vessel is going to swing into you. And then, if it blows up, it never fails for at least one or two boats to drag anchor. And while at anchor, there's always someone who'll come screaming along in a tinny and, thinking they're doing the right thing, drop off the plane as they near you, creating a bigger bow wave than if they had kept on planing.

One afternoon, I anchored off the mainland just north of the Whitsunday Islands. There was 6 miles of protected beaches and I was the only yacht there. Later in the day I saw a yacht about 2 miles away heading directly for me. 500 metres away and it was still heading directly for me. I thought perhaps it might be someone I knew, but it wasn't. He dropped anchor and hung back until we were side

by side, 20 metres apart. Then he sat in the cockpit shouting into his mobile phone as he called everyone he knew in the world to tell them what a wonderful time he was having. I up-anchored and moved a mile up the coast.

Port and starboard lateral marks are pretty simple things to follow. In Round Hill Creek, leading into Town of 1770 there are a number of them. One yacht made it in there safely, but on the way out went aground by going on the wrong side of a starboard mark. The local VMR boat towed the yacht back into the channel. Five minutes later she went aground again on the wrong side of the same starboard mark.

"Why do you keep going on the wrong side of the mark?" the VMR boat skipper asked the yachtie.

"I'm not," the yachtie replied, "I'm keeping the green to starboard."

"Mate," the skipper replied, "that's only when you're *entering* a harbour. It's the reverse when you're leaving."

Pancake Creek on the north-west of Bustard Head is always good for some entertainment. At one stage last year during the cruising season, up to three yachts a day were running aground by not following the well-marked channel up to the Middle Bank anchorage. Some of those skippers, never having been in Pancake Creek before, entered the creek at night on an ebbing tide not the wisest move.

One yachtie sailing north, approached Bustard Head at night. Somehow he managed to safely negotiate the rocks off the headland, but then turned to port, intending to enter Pancake Creek. Instead, he went aground on Aircraft Beach, one mile before Clews Point and the creek's entrance. I wonder what he thought the flashing light on Clews Point was all about?

Another 13 metre Sydney yacht ran aground in Pancake Creek while trying to enter at night. At the husband and wife crew's request, they were taken into Gladstone by the VMR boat. At midday the following day, the yacht floated free,

dragged anchor and was washed ashore onto rocks by a strong north-westerly, seriously damaging the fibreglass hull. If the couple had stayed with their yacht, she would have been saved. That same day, under instructions from the insurers Club Marine, the salvage vessel *Booby* motored down from Gladstone, temporary repairs were effected and the yacht towed into Gladstone. It's unnecessary incidents like that, that bump up our insurance premiums each year.

I love charts. I like plotting my course by the dead reckoning method, and writing informative notes on the charts for future use. GPS is good too, as a check. But I've found more and more yachties relying solely on GPS. Basic navigation appears to have gone out the window. I wouldn't be surprised if some of those yachties think that taking a running fix, means injecting yourself with heroin while jogging.

While I was restoring Bustard Head lightstation over the past couple of years, many yachties walked up from Pancake Creek. A fair number of them asked about the lighthouse:

"Is the light still operational," they'd say.

"Don't you have a chart on board?" I'd reply.

"Yes."

"Where are you anchored?" I'd continue.

"Right up the creek, past the leads."

"How long have you been there?"

"Four days."

"Well, while you've been having a piss over the taffrail at one o'clock in the morning, you didn't happen to notice a particularly bright light on the headland flashing twice every ten seconds?"

"You know," one yachtie said, "I did see a light one night, but I thought it was someone in the bush with a torch."

And there are the yachties who have been cruising for years and still call a chart a map, the head the toilet, sheets ropes and going below downstairs.

I tell ya, no wonder I'm a grumpy old yachtie. You could almost write a book about it, couldn't you?

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Aquavista cruises into Iluka harbour



Corrugated iron boat regatta at Iluka

Words and photos by Phil Watson, SC Aquavista

Last years cruising season was cut short for us as I had an appointment with my urologist for another prostate biopsy in September. This will be the third one and I was not looking forward to it. So to give myself a reward for undergoing it, my wife, Pat and myself were to proceed south after the effects of the biopsy wore off (usually about one week) to visit the Clarence River which good friends who know us well, said we would enjoy.

Unfortunately the biopsy was to show a couple of tumours (I always thought I was too slow to catch anything) and the thought of cancer was spine chilling to both myself and my wife but the reality was that I had it, and it was in its early stages and if captured in the prostate chances were that I could be rid of it completely. So all you guys over 45, get that PSA blood test done !!!! We opted for the most expensive treatment on the premise that you get what you pay for. Remember that cheap tradesman you got to do work on your boat!! I know I can recall at least two instances when I should have said it sounds too good to be true.

So with a fantastic surgeon on hand and lots of family and boating friends for support, I had it "whipped out" as my urologist put it. It all happened too quickly for my liking. I didn't have time to become accustomed to the idea and the after effects of a "radical prostatectomy" weighed heavily on my mind. I was fortunate to have chosen a surgeon (after seeing/interviewing two others) who had done in excess of 1,300 similar operations and put me in touch with their doctors who deal with the aftermath of the operation. The two main side effects are incontinence and sexual dysfunction. So with a super strong set of pelvic floor muscles (after all the exercise) and a pocket full of Viagra, I had no problems in either case, but I was told I was one of the lucky ones.

It has now been five months since we first went to see the urologist for the biopsy and we had done all the Christmas things with family and friends so the time had come for the "reward".

On 28th January 2011, we caught a bus to Kippa-Ring then walked in 32 degree heat and 90% humidity (we got off one stop too early and had a half hour walk) to where Aquavista was at a private pontoon.

Once back aboard Aquavista we quickly did our routine checks and all being well it was only an hour before we had cast off and motored out of the canals. Once out in Deception Bay we radioed into the local VMR for a radio check etc then raised sails and set our course to Tangalooma. The wind was 15-20 knots from the south east, almost on the nose so we got a bit of practice at tacking. At one stage I worked out we had done 8.4 nautical miles in a straight line from Newport Waterways but with all our tacking we had done 21.6 nautical miles.

It was great to be back on the water and we hardly noticed the notorious Moreton Bay wind chop. We managed to reach maximum speed of 9.2 knots and the choppy waves managed to give Aquavista that familiar salt encrusted look.

As you are no doubt aware Brisbane had only recently had incredible floods and the VMR's were issuing regular securaties with regard to debris in the water. We were constantly checking for that almost submerged pallet, pontoon, log, boat or whatever, but other than discoloured water we thankfully saw nothing. On the other hand we did have concerns with the weather. Cyclone Anthony had reformed and although it was 600 nautical miles east of Townsville, we will be keeping an eye on its movements, but more pressing in nature is the strong wind warning for 29th January 2011. A great welcome back to the water!!

As the days drifted past we slowly made our way south. A good direction to be going with cyclone Yasi also looming up north. As you all know Yasi did some incredible damage. In particular, you have to feel for those who were berthed at Port Hinchinbrook but even more so for those who lost far more than can be replaced with monetary aid. Who would have believed it possible for Julia Creek to experience a category 1 cyclone!

As we are little better than novice sailors we waited for ideal conditions to head south from the Gold Coast because occasionally little pictures spring to mind. The ones insurance companies use to promote their services. Boats at a 60 degree incline, surrounded by white water and a rock wall on either side.

As luck would have it a window of opportunity soon became evident and with a few quick calculations we decided to exit the Southport Seaway at 1:00am to do a single "hop" to Yamba and this would get us there on an almost full tide at about 3:00pm.

As it turned out all our fears dissipated once out of the Seaway, so with bleary eyes, we sat back and enjoyed the trip. Daylight was upon us once we were abeam of Cabarita and we stayed well off shore so the coast was, from our vantage point, a bit mundane, but the sailing was good and the logging system with the New South Wales Marine Rescue was brilliant. The predicted north west wind for the Point Danger area turned out to be a light and fluky south west breeze and by mid morning turned to a building north east breeze.

So at 3:30pm Saturday afternoon we came in between the sea walls of Yamba to the south and Iluka to the north without any problems and anchored in a very protected harbour at Iluka to the south of the trawler berths. Then after a shower we settled down to sundowners and congratulated ourselves on another successful trip and took in the sight of Iluka from the cockpit.

Our first day in the Clarence River started with a sleep in, then a tender ride round the harbour and then a walk into the main street. The pub on the harbour foreshore looks interesting and will no doubt warrant a visit soon. The heat was oppressive and by 4.00pm (daylight saving time) we were back under Aquavista's shade sails and planning the following day. These plans were short lived because the next morning brought a welcome relief to the heat by way of solid rain which was good for our water tanks and washed off all the salt, but meant a day of inside jobs, cleaning and reading.

continued next page...



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The public pontoon at Maclean

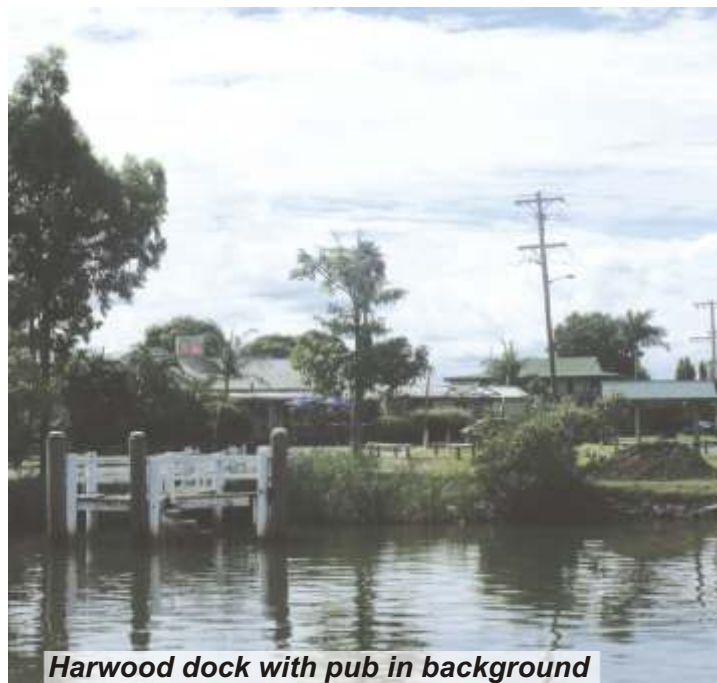


The Harwood opening bridge

We then decided to give Yamba a more thorough investigation on our exit of the Clarence and sailed upstream to the Harwood Bridge. We had phoned 24 hours in advance to arrange the opening and got there hours ahead of time, dropped the anchor and waited. At the appointed time we saw two men in high vis shirts walk out to the centre and climb to the control room then a red light appeared. We were excited about the passage through the raised bridge and were busily taking photos and video of all the activity and acutely aware they were closing off Australia's number one highway for us. It was only after another vessel had gone through that I realised we were a bit further away than we should have been. So with motors at full throttle, were charging toward the gap in the bridge when the once green light turned red again while we still had another couple of cable to go (10 cables = 1 nautical mile). With motors now in neutral and stupid looks on our faces we were wondering if we would have another 24 hour wait. However the blokes in the control room hadn't gone so another apologetic phone call saw the bridge opened again for us and with tail between our legs we raced through. We then sailed the next couple of miles to Maclean and anchored opposite the public pontoon.

Maclean is the "Scottish Town" and the town abounds with all things Scottish. We had no need to bring our bikes ashore as everything was within walking distance. There is a public pontoon with power and water but at present limited to vessels less than five metres till they replace the rotted middle timber pylon. We were happy to anchor in three metres off the opposite bank and tender ashore to where four hotels, an RSL, a bowls club, small supermarket, butchers, bakers, Laundromat etc. were all with a very easy walk. We found everyone very friendly and helpful, especially the guy in the Scottish shop come tourist information centre, who was a wealth of local and historical knowledge. We only stayed four days at Maclean and the first day was just too hot to do anything except try to locate the coolest spot on the boat and take tepid showers then sit in the humid north east wind. The following day cooled slightly so we walked to a well equipped little chandlery then back to the Clarence Hotel for a good pub lunch. The next day we checked out the shopping precinct of town and then had a great lunch at the RSL, \$6.50 for a rump steak, chips and salad! We also had a meal at the local Chinese restaurant but it wasn't as good as the other venues.

continued next page...



Harwood dock with pub in background



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Public pontoon at south Grafton



Grafton anchorage



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Grafton's Prince street public pontoon with Crown hotel behind



Ulmara public dock

Time had come to move on so we motored into a stiff south east wind with the incoming tide. We took our time and enjoyed the view from the river keeping a sharp lookout for the many river trawlers. About one nautical mile down stream from the small town of Lawrence, there are two obstacles. Firstly overhead 11,000 volt power lines, thankfully 28.5 metres above MHWS, but Pat and I still hold hands going under them, then within a couple of hundred metres, is a cable ferry to contend with and then some shallows close to Lawrence. We motored past Lawrence slowly and I made a mental note to pay the tavern a visit on our return trip.

The scenery is great along here and we continued on our way till we got to Brushgrove where we dropped anchor for lunch. We were told there is a good old pub there but marked this for our return trip also as there was no visible public set down point on this side but perhaps on the by-water of South Arm we could make it ashore.

After lunch we up anchored and motored slowly upstream till we got to the quaint little town of Ulmarra, but not before we crossed another cable ferry close to town. We anchored opposite the town in about three metres and very good holding and an easy tender ride to either the pylon wharf or the small jetty adjacent to the boat ramp. We both loved Ulmarra with its very friendly people, antique/collectable shops well maintained park and old fashioned hotel that served a great meal !! However the exploration of the town was done in half a day so it was only a short stay then off the following day on the flood tide.

Once again it was essential to motor so we did it slowly to take in the great scenery but all too soon we were at Elizabeth Island and the one obstacle we had been dreading was all too evident with the looming high voltage towers just round the bend. The guy at NSW Maritime had told us that 19.8 metres MHWS meant that 19.8 metres was the highest mast that should attempt going under the power lines and they had taken sag and arcing distance into account.

Never the less we were taking chances with our 18.4 metre height, we hugged the starboard bank and held hands very tightly this time as these were the lowest overhead power lines we had been under and upon looking back I am certain we would NOT have gone under in the middle where the lowest sag point is!!

About another two nautical miles saw us anchored in about four metres of water past the moored boats and

within 200 metres of the dual carriage bridge. The bridge carries cars on the top and trains underneath and although we were close, the traffic noise was minimal, probably because it is so far above us. The trains however are very noisy but thankfully quite infrequent.

Access to shore is easy with a large pontoon structure for South Grafton and various places for Grafton proper. We found the best was a public pontoon at the end of Prince Street adjacent to the Crown Hotel. The Girl Guide park jetty is closer for those without an outboard and water is available there at the shore end of the jetty. There are also other jetties and beaches further down stream but it is a bit of a hike from them back into town.

Grafton CBD isn't too big and most of it can be seen in a full day of walking. There is also a large shopping centre with all the usual retail outlets. For the more methodical there is a plethora of information available from Clarence River tourist information based at South Grafton on what to see and do in Grafton and the surrounding areas. We opted for a hit and miss method and although we may miss some things, it is very enjoyable to discover a scenic treasure by accident. Grafton is similar to any older mid-sized regional country town but its claim to fame are the many streets lined with huge camphor laurel, fig and of course jacaranda trees. The latter giving rise to the famed Jacaranda Festival in October each year when they are in full bloom and the streets are a mass of purple from canopy to tarmac and although we were there in February/March there was still the odd bloom to give an inkling of how vibrant a full bloom would look.

We found Grafton a pleasant place and could have quite easily stayed longer than the one week we were there. However in this time we accomplished all our sight seeing goals. We chose to use our bikes at South Grafton as we needed the exercise and went for a ride out of town then came back to explore the town CBD etc and a mandatory ride over the bridge and back again. At Grafton proper we had no trouble finding provisions with a large shopping centre within easy walking distance and water available at the Girl Guides park jetty. As usual, we tried to sample the many pub's and club's lunch offerings and found the Australian Hotel at South Grafton and the Clock Tower Hotel in Grafton the best value meals with the Crown Hotel the best views from the dining area where we had the excellent company of the crew from *Kinta* for lunch who were on a road trip south.

Continued next page...

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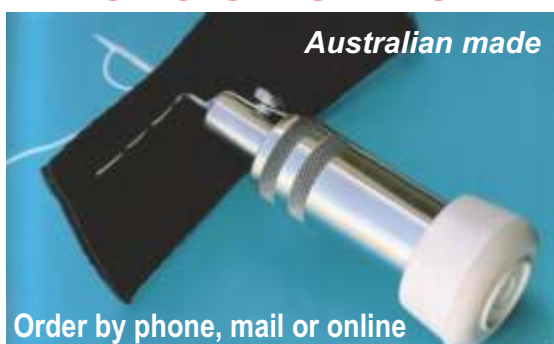
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Girl guides park public jetty at Grafton



Pat on the Yamba to Angourie cycle path with Brett & Deb Swann off "Swanning Around" catching up.

All too soon it was time to head back down river and with a lot more confidence we tackled the two sets of overhead power lines and the two cross river vehicular ferries.

We had an overnight stop at Ulmarra then on to Maclean where we spent another couple of days, then booked the Harwood Bridge opening for 3:00pm which allowed us to anchor off Harwood and explore for a couple of hours and to our delight discovered the Harwood Hotel restaurant which served delicious and very filling \$10.00 lunch specials in a very friendly atmosphere.

Once back in Iluka Harbour, we were joined by the crew from *Swanning Around* for an exploration of Yamba and Angourie on the push bikes. Yamba is a vibrant coastal town that is tourist orientated offering a full range of water sports and has a good marina with all facilities and a well equipped chandlery.



Yamba Shores Tavern (note visitors pontoon)



Public pontoon with Seggers Reef Hotel in background at Iluka

A **must** while there is to sample the locally wild harvested prawns. The school prawns are among the sweetest we have ever tasted and washed down with a good ale in the presence of good company and great views, life doesn't get much better.

We were now starting to notice the balmy evenings and knew that before too long autumn temperatures would be upon us and being cold blooded, a slow northward relocation was called for.

So having sampled the delights of the mighty Clarence River, we headed back to the hectic pace of Southport, but we would never pass up the chance of future visits to the Clarence.

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Gulf of Carpentaria Passages

Boaties are heading east to west now to make the crossing to Darwin and beyond. Reports from the fleet have been good as the weather has settled up there.

The west to east crossing later in the year will be interesting to see if boats will decide whether to stay in Darwin for the cyclone season or make the trek back to Australia's east coast.

Few will be without Alan Lucas's *Cruising the Coral Coast*. Alan has much valued information on cruising the Cape York Peninsula, so if you are planning a trip in this area, don't leave port without it! Below are a few notes from Alan.

Map & notes courtesy of Alan Lucas from his book, *Cruising the Coral Coast*

More than half of this gulf's 1000 miles of coastline belongs to Queensland. The remainder belongs to the Northern Territory and, in particular, that part of the territory known as Arnhem Land.

Because there is no coral in the gulf, it is not part of the Coral Coast, nor does it rate as a very satisfying cruising ground. Anchorages are poor to non-existent, although in the right weather the entire west coast of the Cape York Peninsula becomes an "anchorage".

The gulf has tantalised people with its possibilities for many decades and has always been a magnet to fishermen and crocodile hunters.

Weather

The gulf is a breeding area for cyclones during the wet season, December through March. The northwest winds of that period especially late January through February commonly extend further south than the same wind on the Coral Coast.

During the winter, the south-east trade wind persists similar in principle to the Coral Coast, but the differences created by the land mass of the Cape York Peninsula to windward. In essence, a strong trade wind will lose a little of its dominance and strength, especially in the northern half of the gulf, whilst the moderate trade wind commonly wraps into an easterly or even north-easterly.

Because the Cape York Peninsula is to windward during these conditions, sailing under its lee is one of life's great experiences. Hundreds of miles can be covered at a good rate in swell-free seas. Once the coast is left well astern, however, seas rapidly build up and a gulf crossing can be similar in every respect to the Coral Coast regarding wave shape and form.

When the weather is calm to light on the Coral Coast during winter, the Gulf of Carpentaria can create its own weather patterns, the worst being a south-west gale. It is thus possible to have that dream sail turn into a nightmare of discomfort.

Anchorage

When the wind is off the Cape York Peninsula, its beach-fronted coast can be closed on and used as a perfect lee for anchoring anywhere along its length. In some places underwater reefs of bauxite rock are encountered, but generally the bottom is good holding mud which shoals nicely towards the beach.

Some rivers have adequate depths within for all-tide anchoring, but are barred and demand a low tide survey by dinghy. Exceptions are the Embley River, into which a deep channel is maintained for ships loading at Weipa and, to a lesser degree, the Norman River, which is used regularly by large trawlers.

The island groups, *Wellesley*, *Sir Edward Pellew* and *Groote Eylandt* are Aboriginal Land which cannot be visited without permission. Their anchorages can be disappointing depending on prevailing winds at the time.

Tides

Queensland's Official Tide Tables include most of the gulf; prediction areas being Weipa, Mornington Island, Wellesley Islands and Karumba. Tidal sequence is normal in the north whilst only two tides per day are common towards the head of the gulf.



A FEW INTERESTING NOTES ON THE GULF

Starting 4 November, 1802 Matthew Flinders aboard *Investigator* spent four months surveying the Gulf of Carpentaria. During this period, continuous diarrhoea swept through the crew; six Asian vessels from Macassar fishing for beche-de-mer were encountered; an unfortunate skirmish with Aborigines resulting in one Aborigine man dying, and bush flies and mosquitoes were their constant companions.

Flinders charts of the Gulf would be used for the next 150 years.

DISTANCES BEYOND THE TORRES STRAIT

The following distances west from the Torres Strait are from *Booby Island*:

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Gove --- 334
Darwin --- 717
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Crossing the Gulf of Carpentaria - Gove to Queensland

Dianne Challis recalls her experience aboard *Natura*

November 5: the weather faxes finally showed the conditions and forecasts to be what we were all waiting for. The ideal conditions for crossing the Gulf of Carpentaria were for northwest winds or any wind with a westerly aspect for that matter. We had been blessed with such winds. Wombat II and Dreamtime III were preparing to leave before lunchtime. We quickly rushed into town with Bob and Rene from Toroa to do a final raid on the shops and to check the post office for any mail...

Around one o'clock that very afternoon we had made our departure. We were all hyped up for the 72 hour journey that lay ahead of us. The other two yachts already had about a two hour head start on us but nevertheless the waiting game had finished.

The winds died down and the sea calmed enough for me to make up sandwiches as we were going out through the channel. I organised a bed in the 'V' berth where we would be grabbing our three hourly sleeps and placed a change of clothing at the ready. We were trying to hold a bearing of around 070 degrees while we could in case the wind changed and came from the wrong direction. It had remained adequately calm to the extent that I was able to cook a meal of steak, eggs and vegetables; just what Bernie loves.

Everything was running very smoothly as we motor-sailed towards the coast of Queensland, 340 nautical miles away from Gove.

Time slipped by and before I knew it the clock showed ten o'clock, the night was as black as tar except for the intermittent flecks of stars peering down at us. We picked up a large target on the radar and noticed it was moving at quite a speed and on a collision course with Toroa.

Bernie radioed Toroa. "Bob, I've got a large target on the radar and it's heading straight for you."

Bob confirmed that he had seen some navigation lights off his starboard side on the horizon. He didn't know exactly what they belonged to and he was surprised how quickly they were coming towards him.

He then attempted to communicate with the vessel. We were four miles behind Toroa listening to Bob's urgent efforts to make contact. Our electronic gear was a Godsend; the radar was our eyes so we could see all that was going on ahead of us. Toroa finally received acknowledgement from the vessel. Unfortunately it appeared as though the person on watch had limited



SY Natura

English and didn't seem to understand that he was on a collision course and that there were three yachts in his vicinity.

The large tanker changed course but it still seemed to be heading straight for Toroa. No amount of radio contact after the initial one could get any more response from the ship. Bob made the decision to make a distinct change of direction to starboard.

Meanwhile we could see another blip ahead of Bob but we weren't too sure who, or what it was. We watched Toroa flashing their spotlight up at the bridge of the huge tanker as their small yacht moved closely along its massive steel hull.

We also had our spotlight beam aimed towards the ship hoping that they may respond to the strange lights coming out of the inky darkness of their surrounds.

We called and re-called both the large ship and an unknown yacht using the universal distress channels. But neither of them would respond to any of our radio calls and we found it very frustrating and nerve-racking.

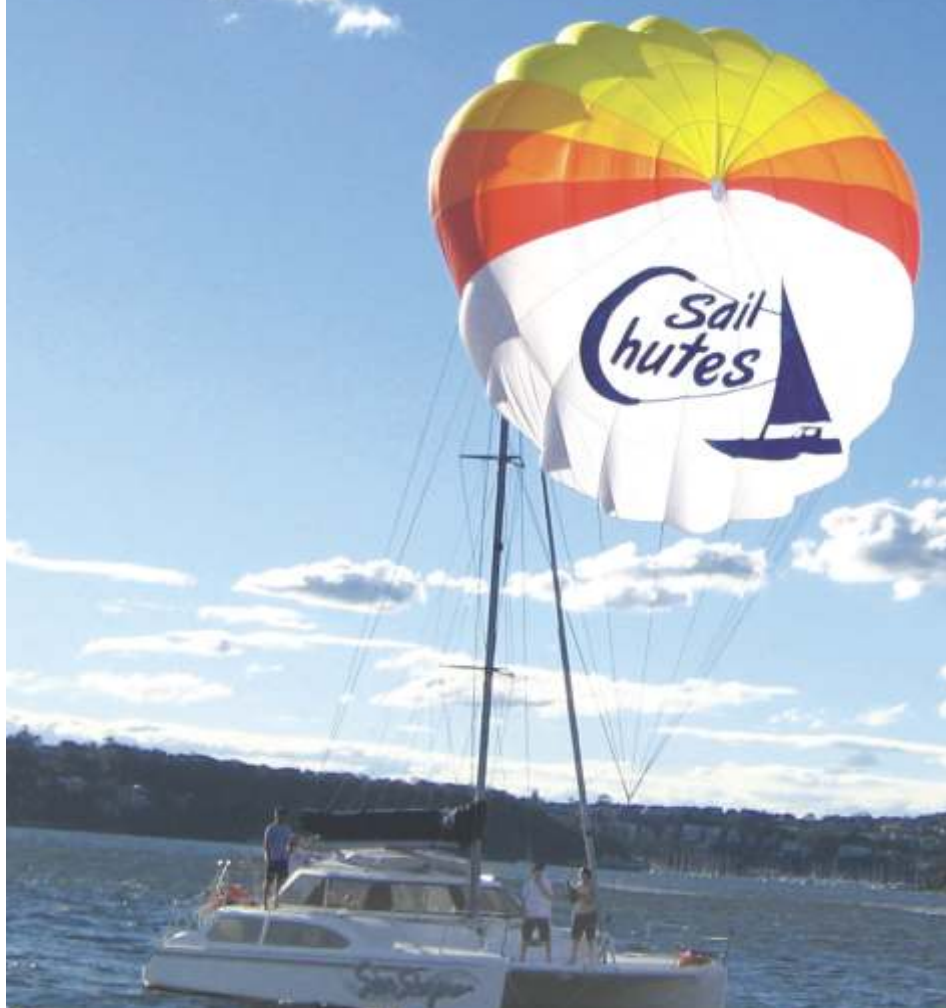
Then, we noticed the ship had come to a halt, no mean feat for such a monstrous craft. On the radar screen we saw both the ship's target and the unidentified yacht's blip melt together. Our first thought was that a collision had taken place, as we couldn't see any lights in the distance with our limited night vision.

But soon the large vessel picked up momentum again and continued on its way. We began to look for other movement on the radar. After an intense moment we sighted a small green blip. Now we had Toroa and the unknown yacht on our screen. The target of the ship was almost out of range.

Continued next page...

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Crossing the Gulf, West to East

Those tense moments in the dark tested our internal strength for what seemed such a long time. My biggest fear was all that we could do would be to search for survivors in the dark; something that we were very grateful did not eventuate. Our concern for the other vessels seemed heightened when we realised we were so limited to what we could do to help them physically. It was that invisible bond that I tend to refer to often. It really does exist. It was very hard not to worry about our sailing companions whether we knew them or not but as we heard nothing more we had to assume all were OK.

After our futile attempts to contact the large ship, we decided to notify Darwin Radio and put in a report on the ship's failure to respond and continued on our journey.

November 6: our second day out and the trip has been very slow. The light winds offered very little assistance in helping the engine push us through the sea. We knew we were fighting a current as the motor was working overtime. Our marinised tractor motor overheated and we quickly shut her down allowing Bernie to search for the problem. I took over the steering from Chip our faithful auto pilot and while I attempted to keep some form of wind in the sails Bernie checked the salt water intake and found that clear. There was a good flow of water into the motor so that wasn't the problem either. He then checked the radiator and found it was down on fluid and there was a kink in the rubber seal on the radiator cap. The radiator was then topped up and away we went again. The engine ran cool for about ten hours until it over heated again...

Our second night out was very quiet and gradually we trailed behind the rest of our small fleet. The other three boats were spread out, the closest one was *Toroa*, 24 nautical miles ahead of us. We were being slowed down by the oncoming waves that caused us to slam, as usual. We patiently plodded along enjoying the sight of two large dolphins playing in our bow wave. We heard that *Wombat II* had engine troubles and coincidentally it was in relationship to the water intake of their motor. They spent two hours drifting and bobbing around in the Gulf trying to solve the problem, managing to do make shift repairs with what they had at hand.

The night seemed so long. We

didn't cover much ground and our sleep was almost non existent. The daylight hours didn't bring much joy either. We were aiming for our waypoint at Crab Island and just as we thought we were beginning to make headway Bob radioed us.

"Just letting you know that the seas are quite rough now and the winds are up to 20 knots," he said.

To get to our waypoint we needed to bash our way into the wind and waves. If we were to veer south it would cost us time and miles and to head due north would put us into the current that flowed strongly around the tip of Cape York and into the Gulf. We decided to reef down and plod on the way we were. We were grateful for the reef in the mainsail as it gave us a better sail against the waves.

As the evening approached, the seas and wind died down to a zephyr, giving us an ocean as smooth as satin sheets. We took advantage of this by increasing the engine revs and putting a full set of sails up. We were now making way in the right direction. At midnight Bob radioed again warning us of the strong easterlies and steep seas he was experiencing. He was still more than 20 nautical miles ahead of us.

We reefed the sails once more in preparation and around four o'clock in the morning we had started to head into the turbulence. The seas increased from one metre to two metres closely set together, causing *Natura* to climb up one wave and slam into the next as she came down. This sent water spewing over the bow in great torrents. The slamming caused great shudders to go through the hull and rigging. We felt every vibration as the yacht struggled her way through the ever growing sea-state but we weren't perturbed by the ride at all. We had accepted it all as part of the struggle between a man-made object and Mother Nature. We knew that nature would always win; it'd been around a hell of a lot longer than we had.

November 8, midday: it has been 71 hours since we left Gove and the seas are slowly subsiding. We could now gradually edge our way back up and onto our course. We were heading for an anchorage known as Crystal Creek on the Queensland coast. This was a small stretch of coast that was below the tip of Cape York and south of Bamaga. At first glance we could see we were

losing speed over the ground. Our GPS was indicating that we would arrive at our destination approximately eleven o'clock that night. We were tired but happy at our endeavours and we had learned to be patient, knowing that we would get to our destination sooner or later. So we settled down making the most of the seclusion, the peace and the quiet...

Big Bertha, our fishing rod extraordinaire, was baited and sitting in its position in the rod holder on the pushpit rail and the line trailed a few boat lengths behind in our wake. Our relaxed composure was rewarded with what we first thought was a black shark. As Bernie reeled in the catch we realised it was a Cobia or what some call a Black King Fish. Anglers were often deceived by its shark-like dorsal fin that pierced the water when hunting for its food.

Nature was finally on our side as the wind came from the west and began to give us a delightful push along at seven knots. This was far better than crawling over the ocean at three and four knots as we had been. As we neared land the seas became smoother, giving us a comfortable ride.

The end of our journey was near. We were exuberant over this fact until four miles out of the anchorage the tacho decided not to work. *Bugger*, I thought, as I relieved Chip of his steering duties. The engine was switched off and Bernie checked the alternator and fan belts thinking that one may have broken. Fortunately for us, it turned out to be a broken connection to the tacho itself. The offending wire was quickly repaired and saw us on our way.

Eighty hours after we had left Gove we sailed into the anchorage on the Queensland coast. As we came in to drop our anchor sirens and horns were blasting, yelling and clapping, cheers ceremoniously greeting us from all the other boats. It was now 10:00 pm and our friends were still up partying and celebrating their conquest over the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Bernie and I could only muster enough energy to sit in our doghouse with lights out and drinks in our hands, vegetating, before we went to bed for a well deserved sleep. We'd actually arrived at the stage of being so used to being out there on the sea for that length of time that we felt we could have just kept going. The prospects of an

ocean crossing no longer daunted us.

What a wonderful deep sleep I had, until the water alarm in our bilge went off. The stern gland was continuously leaking drip by drip, slowly filling up the bilge to overflow point. Once the water reached the sensors the screeching of the alarm bounced off every steel panel in the yacht. There was nothing worse than to be woken from a deep, deep sleep to a noise that was so ear piercing.

I'm so glad no one could see me; I must have been a real sight. I was so disorientated that I was running around naked in circles through the saloon yelling, "Where is it? Where is it?" not being able to comprehend what the buzzer noise was at the time.

I virtually slept with one ear open after my first rude awakening. Three times I had to get up, empty the bilge and reset the alarm. Bernie, as usual, slept through everything. The first he knew of my night's gallivanting around was over coffee just on daybreak. After he finished laughing at my tale we both sat back and basked in the early morning's light staring at the golden beach. Queensland now lay in front of us.

"We've made it. We have really made it," I said, as I sat, coming to grips with what we had just accomplished.



Dianne has been a regular contributor to TCP. She has written a book, "*A First Time For Everything*", a memoir of Dianne's 18 month journey on *Natura*.

Presently Dianne, with her husband John are charging ahead since the rains have eased, building a Peter Snell Catamaran near Bundaberg.

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Crossing the Gulf of Carpentaria - Siesa, Queensland to Gove, June 2011

A rough ride, but SC Starfire and crew succeed

By David Drew, SC Starfire

With my crew of Hilarie and Gary, we left Seisia after spending a pleasant day there inspecting the small shopping centre, caravan park for clothes washing and coming out of a state of shock of the price for a litre of petrol at \$2.36! Luckily, we didn't need any.

Our advice had been to sail down to Weipa, turn right for Wirawawai Point on the Arnhem Peninsula before rounding for Gove to get a better angle of wave pattern for the crossing, as otherwise waves and swell would attack us side on and make for a bouncy crossing.

Things started off good with an early morning exit from Seisia for Crab Island. On reaching Crab Island and its occasional mud banks, the wind became a strong S.E., which now meant we had 100n miles or so to go with wind on the nose and no chance of letting up.

It didn't take long to change our minds and turn right and head for Wirawawai Point, 320n miles away.

In the lee of the land the seas were quite small and we had a nice breeze on the port quarter. We were soon doing speeds of 9/11 knots. Ha!Ha! Only 32 hours to go, great.

About 20 miles out, things started to change. We now had a nasty swell coming in from the south-west corner of the Gulf, with S.E. waves on top as well as a swell coming off Cape York from the north-east.

This pattern of waves had us taking a lot of slamming under the wing-decks, particularly the outboard pods were taking quite a hiding with the result that we had to slow down or suffer consequences of stupidity.

With 800mm of bridgedeck and 180mm of engine pod clearance it was soon found that no matter how much we had there was no way else of avoiding it when two opposing waves met and viciously went skyward.

Slowing down was the only thing to do as a change of course would not have helped and after all, *Starfire* is my home and has to be looked after as such. Also a leak had developed from the starboard hull escape hatch. It was time for a reef down.

Two reefs were put in the main with the working jib still carried and we were down to 6/7 knots. Ha!Ha! 60 hours to go! Quite a change, but a lot quieter.

At this stage, Hilarie was not happy at all and it wasn't long before she retired to the bunk with a bucket (Hilarie is not

usually one who succumbs to seasickness, but this crossing was a challenge), mumbling some foul things about the Skipper and Co.

Meanwhile, *Starfire*, my 13mtr. Bob Oram Catamaran was quite happy with the situation of "slow down" and was very comfortable considering the conditions.

With my other crew (Gary, who joined us at Cooktown), we set up 3 hour watches during the night with Hilarie on call if needed which turned out a good arrangement.

Gary and I raced in opposition with the Trimaran Yacht Club of Victoria way back in the seventies after I built my first Trimaran *Wildcry*. After a few Bass Strait crossings and numerous races around Westernport and Port Phillip Bays, we took off cruising in the late eighties and I have virtually been afloat since then, with travel up and down the east coast of Australia. My preference is to leave early in the morning and arrive in the afternoon, anchor and have a pleasant night.

Back to the crossing. Things went well for the first night with *Starfire* making good headway towards our destination under autopilot. At about 0100 hours I heard this fluttering sound up forward and on taking a further look found it was a Booby bird trying desperately to land on the port bow. It kept hitting the cable ties that I had put on the pulpit to keep the Cormorants off my boat in Pittwater. I quickly went up and turned them down. His next try had him landing on the bow. He somehow stayed perched there until dawn. What a rough trip it must have had bouncing down with the occasional spray over him. He must have been desperate indeed.

When I was next on duty about 0600 hours, the breeze dropped to a zephyr, so I dropped the working jib and set the light weight genoa with 2 reefs in the main. Our speed was soon up to 5/6 knots but still with the pounding. The seas had not abated very much at all unfortunately.

About 0900 hours we set the full main and away we went again. The Autohelm 2000 kept a very good course right throughout. Around mid morning we caught a lovely Bluefin Tuna followed by a Hairtail which I threw back as they are rather bony and tasteless. The Tuna made a lovely meal later when we reached Gove and Hilarie made a recovery.

The S.W. swell persisted which made the trip unpleasant until we reached Wirawawai Point.

The second night the wind came up again so it was back to 2 reefs and working jib, followed later by a storm jib and no main; still doing 6/7 knots and pretty comfortable.

The next morning the Booby Bird was back perched on the end of the boom. After Gary and I had breakfast (still no sign of Hilarie), the Booby flew off to get his own and I wondered who he would get his next lift from. We did not see another boat the whole way across, only our two visits from Customs enquiring about our next port of call, our last port then wishing us the best for the continuation of our journey.

Again, reefs were undone and full main set, storm jib off, and working jib set, followed later by the light genoa as the wind petered out again.

When we rounded Wirawawai Point the seas abated, though we still had the N.E. swell with light S.E. winds, which made it very pleasant sailing on to Gove where it was almost calm and we were down to 3/4 knots boat speed right up to the anchorage outside the Gove Yacht Club. We made it.

David's notes on the crossing:

We used the two Yamaha 9.9HP outboards only to leave Siesa and then

to set the anchor at Gove. The Honda generator was run for 6 hours to charge the batteries. Headsails were changed between the storm jib, working jib and light genoa (which is very helpful in anything from slightly ahead to reaching and running up to 8 knots of speed, it is a very old sail) several times. The main was up and down and had between 1,2 and at one stage the 3rd reef in, though not for long. The working jib is hopeless behind the main as it is too heavy and just collapses all the frustrating time.

We kept *Starfire* down between 5 to 10 knots but pounding dictated reefing to slow down and make it as comfortable as possible. It was almost impossible to sleep in the starboard hull as it was far too noisy.

The Autohelm 2000 went non-stop for the whole trip and was a great help. We sailed 358n miles at an average speed of 5.86 knots for a 61 hour crossing. Some of this was well below average at the Gove end.

This is the first time I have been so far offshore with *Starfire* and at no time was it worrying, just noisy.

TCP NOTE: David and Hilarie left Sydney July 2010 and headed north, spending time in the Great Sandy Strait during the cyclone and rainy season. David and Hilarie are now at Darwin where they are one of the apx. 110 boats entered in the Sail Indonesia Rally which will begin on or about July 23.



Hilarie and David



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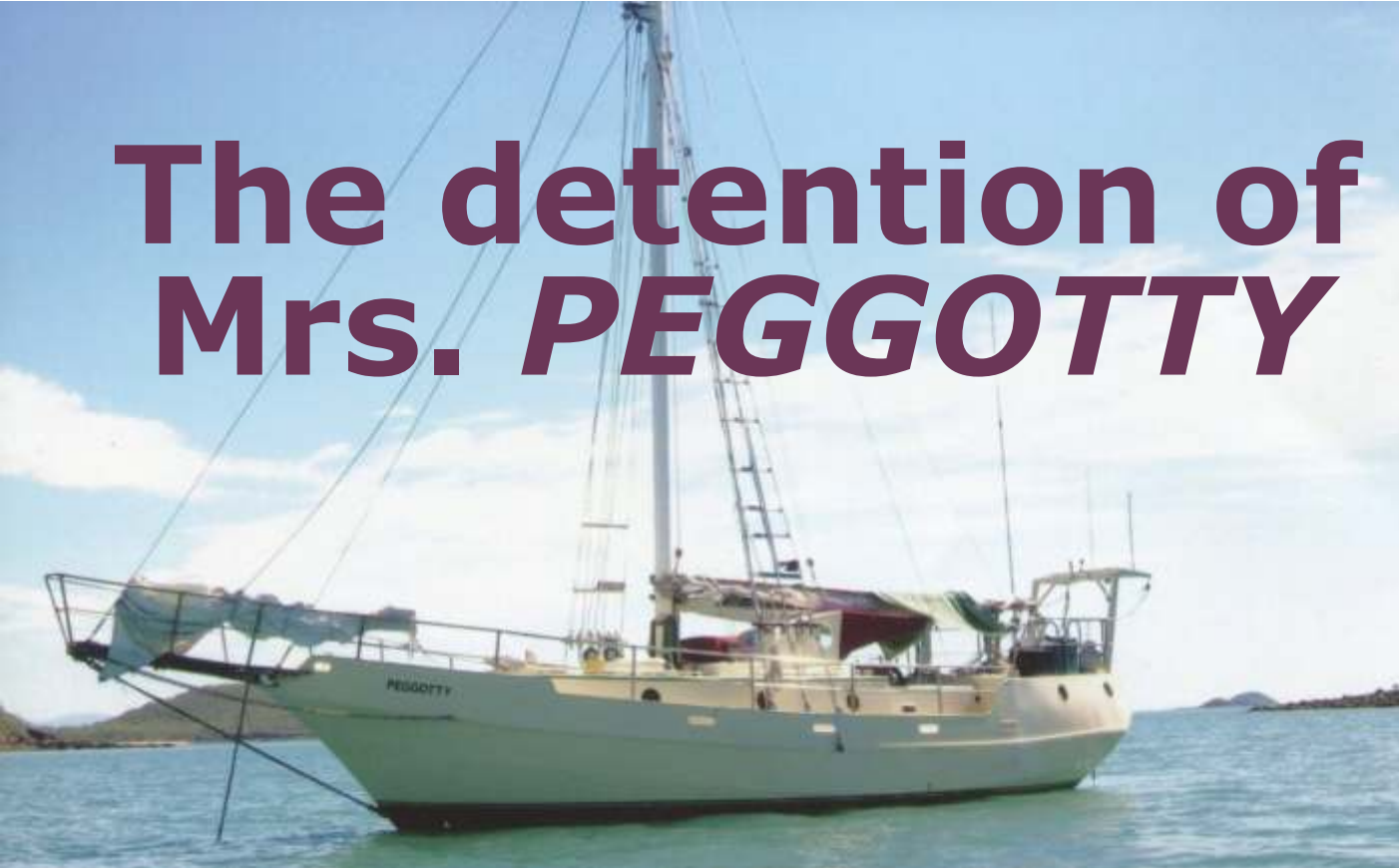
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The detention of Mrs. PEGGOTTY



By Allen Southwood, SY Peggotty

Mrs. Peggotty as the more well read readers would know featured in Charles Dickens novel David Copperfield as his kindly nanny housekeeper person. Peggotty is also the name of Barbara & my new 4th hand vessel. A 12.51mts. steel Roberts Spray, built in N.Z. at Tauranga in 1986 by Alan Sandall (if anyone knows him or where he is please let us know). Alan & his wife cruised extensively around the world including Antarctica and it has proven to be an able sea boat in the roughest of seas, not that we want to do that as it is 50 years to late. These days we like a comfortable life around the Whitsunday's and reefs.

The last owner, I'll call him 'Joe', an Australian, bought Peggotty in Malaysia from an Australian couple and she was on Australian Ship Registry and still is. "Joe" sailed around S.E. Asia for 12 months & after clearing Customs in Bali sailed into Thursday Island with no notice and knocked on Customs door & they said, "Where did you come from?" They then processed him, gave him clearance to enter Australia and AQIS did a Pratique inspection and provided a bill for \$300 that he paid. He was told to contact AQIS Cairns when he arrived. "Joe" then sailed down the coast to Cairns where he experienced gearbox trouble. His story is that he went to the AQIS office in Cairns as instructed; it was raining and he was told to dispose of any perishable food purchased in Thursday Island in bins provided, this he did. Some 2 weeks later with repaired gearbox he headed south bound for Southport, his home port, but he ended up being towed into Mackay harbour by the local VMR boys with his gearbox totally ruined and supposedly financially bust, as he told them he had had enough and would sell her cheap.

My brother rang me from Mackay to see if I was interested in a cheap steel spray. We decide to drive from Airlie Beach the next day and have a look. The weather was pouring with rain & blowing 30knots at Mackay Marina & Peggotty was moored at the furthest berth in the marina. We went aboard, met Joe and checked out the bilges etc. All looked O.K. except for the busted gearbox. What impressed us most was the amount of room including a Queen size double cabin aft, full walk around bed, including a wardrobes, a veritable palace to live aboard. Stainless steel galley, built in fridge & freezer & comfortable lounge, good rigging, sails only fair. We looked at Joe's documents and it seemed all in order to us so we shook hands and said deal and we would pay tomorrow. At this point we should have checked with the customs office at the marina.

On Monday Barb drove into Mackay with Joe and organised the payment, whereupon Joe booked a flight to the Gold Coast that afternoon. He departed the scene taking only his personal gear and apologising for leaving us a mess. I thought he meant all the stores, tools and enough gear to set off around the world again.

Tuesday, pouring with rain again, we were below decks eagerly opening all the storage lockers sorting and thought it

all good fun, when there was a knock on the hull and we were surprised to see two lady customs officers wanting to talk to us. Customs informed us there was G.S.T. to be paid on the vessel by someone and they needed an independent valuation so they could calculate the G.S.T. Also we had to sign a document confining us to port. This did not concern us as we needed time to replace the gearbox as the old one was beyond repairs.

We were told that even though Peggotty was on the Australian Ship Registry, the person who left Australia 5 years ago did not bring her back (Joe bought the boat in Kupang 12months ago), so she was subject to the G.S.T.

As Joe was the importer he was responsible to pay the G.S.T. 11% of the valuation roughly 30% of our purchase price. Joe was contacted and presented with the bill but he told Customs to contact us, and promptly departed back to Malaysia. Customs let us live on board so we could start cleaning etc., but advised us not to spend money or fit the gearbox as they were not sure how this would end up as they did not feel that we should pay. We also were informed that AQIS needed to do a further inspection as the boat came from a high risk area, but they could not do that until customs gave them a clearance which they would not do until the G.S.T. was paid. So talk about a rock and hard place.

We did the sums on an extended stay in detention at Mackay Marina and decided to offer to pay the G.S.T. This was accepted and suggested we sue Joe? We started work on the gearbox and a week later received a clearance from customs. We then had to clear AQIS who did a very through inspection with one officer and a pest control contractor for a further \$350. No infestations were found. A week later we received a release form so we were clear to leave. Once we paid the GST we started to work on the gearbox so by the time all the paperwork was finished, we were ready to depart, but of course the usual 25/30 knots was blowing.

We departed 2months after we started this project aboard Mrs. Peggotty a lot wiser but still with a relative bargain. Our thanks go to Rebecca at customs Mackay who did a good job in unusual circumstances. Also Elma at AQIS for his knowledge of bugs.

I think that the lessons learned by myself despite having read all the horrendous accounts of other yachties with Govement Dept's. is: We should inquire about the regulations pertaining to our problem and where possible get it in writing before risking our hard earned dollars. Then of course nobody will do anything in this paradise of the long weekend.

In the meantime our "Good old boat" Abrolhos Pearl was left to herself on the mooring at Airlie Beach so here we are with two boats nearly as bad as having two women. Then a stroke of luck; my mate at Airlie Beach decided he loved the old girl and bought her as soon as could, she must be a lucky boat because I know he will keep her maintained.

"Importing" an Aussie Boat? And paying GST? What!?

After reading the Southwood's account TCP was surprised at the fact an Aussie registered boat, bought in Oz could possibly have the burden of tax.. so we contacted the experts. First the Customs Broker...

mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

You have to show documented proof that said boat was manufactured or was owned in Australia that can be easily proved if you can produce the Australian customs export entry at its final or the sailing masters nominated port in Australia before it left Australian waters tough call I would suggest for the new owner

It's a bit like a vehicle that goes from Australia to NZ and after 10 years or so the fella has sold vehicle in NZ and the new owner comes to Australia if he doesn't have the evidence he/she has gone and goes through the same ritual as your boating fella.

The other option is you take out an ATA carnet before you leave Australian waters that will allow you go from country to country without having to pay DUTY and GST/VAT the carnet requires a bond and is valid for 12 months but you can get it extended ... if you end up staying overseas then you sacrifice the bond back here in Australia and Australian Customs will send the monies to the Customs Department of the overseas country where you have set up home

Your other issue is overseas yachties can come into Australia and obtain a transiting visa however it's only valid to the expiry date of the crew member with the less amount of time remaining on either a) time left on personal passport or b) Australian visa conditions and herein lies the issue ... the visitor sells the boat whilst in Australia so the Australian purchaser is left with the burden of Australian Customs and Quarantine Clearance (AQIS is a big issue which I hear say you have covered in previous stories) and Duty (except NZ/USA) and GST.

You have to remember you have a product that is a commercial product that can be sold and will gain substantially more money that the average car boot sale

I would check to see if the seller was the bona fida owner... the question I would suggest is the buyer probably took the position of "uberrimae fidei" or utmost good faith, thought he was getting a red line special at KMart when I would suggest it was a case of "Caveat emptor" or Buyer Beware.

Bottom line ... if you don't have the empirical proof as stated above ... you're gooooooone

as the boys on the Thursday Nights Rugby League Footy Show would say.

Cheers,

Jeff Shaw,,,Managing Director

TCP Note:

See Jeff's website www.australiatrade.com.au for any customs brokerage needs or for general entertainment! Especially his comments on AQIS and importing a boat from the US. Great stuff.

Thanks Jeff!

TCP asked legal expert Chris Ayres and he confirms:

Registration and ownership are different. If the boat was sold in Asia, even though it was Australian registered, it would have to be re-imported. The law looks at where the boat was made, where it was sold, and WHEN. With GST the ball game changed. Import duties were done away with depending on where and when the boat was built.

The valuation price can be challenged. I understand any yacht broker can give a valuation and challenge the Customs valuation. Your correspondent would know how Customs arrived at the valuation if it was done by the Commonwealth Valuer General's office - they would have charged him a stack for a VGO valuation.

Thanks Chris!



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annoying boom slatting to and fro - that drives me mad in a seaway, and here we have our own boom-less equivalent. It's not dangerous or noisy, just annoying.

The cure is to rake the mast much further aft to open up the rigging angles at the masthead, and to build a stiffer glass beam athwartships under the mast compression post. From the point of view of performance I don't think this rig can be beaten for a cruising cat. The contention that the rig won't go to windward is codswallop. We travel at a hull speed equal to the true wind speed at 30 degrees apparent under auto pilot and down to 28 degrees hand steering, and the rig still pulls well down to 23 degrees when motor sailing.

Sailing against a Seawind in the Brisbane to Gladstone race we were pretty much neck and neck he was faster in light wind; we went better when the wind got up. We saw 18 knots a time or two, 12 a lot of the time though I must say we do a lot of travelling stooging along at 7 knots. We have done quite a lot of sailing in winds of 35 knots, gusting to 40 knots with seas to 4 meters and found the boat as rigged handles well with a few turns in the furler and no tendency to slide off a wave. No panic, no heart stopping moments. We only had a bit of water in the back of the cockpit twice from big breaking waves. In light winds the big outer staysail sits well and is always well balanced

The true benefits are ease of sailing. Up wind in a narrow channel you just steer from side to side and let the self tacker do its thing while the other boats go by under motor, and downwind with the wind dead aft accidental jibes are a ho hum event, the sail just goes to the other side. Whatever the angle of sailing if the wind gets too hard you just pull the furling line in on the electric winch and if the wind is light and variable it is no big deal to pull the other string and get a furled sail out. The result of all this is we sail a lot more than we did on any other boat I have owned.

The effect on the fuel bill is louverley. We spent a month travelling from Gladstone to Cairns and used 160 litres of diesel. We motored through the narrows and around the Hinchinbrook creeks to Ramsey Beach landing and through the channel in a dead calm. We used the engines to anchor and to manoeuvre into the marinas in Townsville and Cairns and we charged the batteries every two or three days. I don't think we could have done that journey over that length of time with a conventional rig and used so little fuel. We just would not have sailed that much.

So for the next boat definitely use the same rig, no contest. Rake the mast further aft and plan to move the shroud chain plates further aft. Spend some of the money saved in not having batten cars, boom, lazy jacks, sail covers, vang, topping lifts, main halliards, main sheets, battens, reefing winches etc. etc. on light weight headsails. Fatten the hull sections forward. Rake the bow a lot. Lift the run aft a couple of inches at station number 9. Design for a little more displacement...stiffen the main beam.....build the bottom step at the transom higher.....think more about polycor's low shear strength.....

TCP NOTE: See the electronic edition for more on the maiden voyage of this impressive sailer.



By Ian Campbell, SC Lyra

I see quite a few cats using the "staysail sloop" rig now and in a recent Multihull Magazine there were two new designs using a mainsail-less rig. Lyra has been in the water for a year and a half now and has 7000 miles under her keel including a Coral Sea crossing so we have had quite a lot of experience travelling without a mainsail and I think it may be time to give an honest evaluation of it.

The rig is not perfect; if it was every boat would have one. It does have a flaw that is inherent in the concept and it comes about this way. In order to get good balance the mast has to be stepped right aft and to have a rake aft. In order to get a similar sail area as a conventional rig the mast has to be higher. And the big staysails have to be made from heavier cloth. We wind up with a tall mast stepped far aft with two long foresails and with a short rigging base aft it is the very devil to get enough tension into the cap shrouds to stop luff sag. You wind on shroud tension until the hull starts to flex and still there is more sag than you would like.

Those two heavy sails on the sagging foresails flog from side to side in a big seaway so much that the masthead can sometimes flex forward as much as 5 inches. One reason for doing away with the mainsail was to get away from the



Ian



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The Launch and Wet Test of Lyra...

Words & photos by Bob Norson



The last job before launch....



The boat was transferred from the shed next door on a trailer pulled by various combinations of trucks, 4X4's and Ian's old Mercedes. On the ramp the trailer was attached to the slipway's winch via a turning block. Craig from *Two Up* is lending a hand.



Getting the boat to this point on the trailer was worth a story by itself as the modest clearance and uneven terrain made for some desperate, and effective engineering solutions!



Finally she touches water for the first time. The Gori folding prop is visible at left.



All it takes is the courage of ones convictions, a pile of money and a lot of help. She is wet and the motors got her this far... will it all work, out there....?

"Forecast for Hervey Bay waters, winds 15 to 20 knots with squalls to 30 knots..."

Not exactly perfect conditions for sailing an untested boat. And when I say untested I mean nearly every aspect of it.

The design is unique, drawn by an individual who is not a professional marine architect but with a solid footing in general engineering.

Untested materials: Polycore panels have been making headway as an accepted construction material to a point.... I know of several boats incorporating these polypropylene honeycomb panels in their construction but this is the first substantial boat I know of that is entirely of the material.

The rig is unusual. John Hitch incorporated something similar on his magnificent cat *X-it* but he ran three furlers, centre, port and starboard bows, but John's is a sailer with outboard motor auxiliary. Ian's is motor boat with sail auxiliary... or so it seemed.

Anyway, by 0745 we were off from Maryborough. The 30hp motors were pushing us along at about 8 to 8.5 knots SOG at 3000 rpm out of 3600 available. As far as we could tell and with what we were to see later in the day, this was probably about honest speed through the water.

Navigating the Mary River gave opportunity to test the electronics and the accuracy of the plotter charts. With the radar overlaid on the plotter screen it became apparent that the river wasn't exactly where the plotter showed it however the beacons appeared to accurately placed.

Once past the heads the inner sail was unfurled into a diminishing breeze (so where is this 20 or even 30 knots I heard about?). Our destination was the anchorage off Kingfisher resort, dead into the ENE wind, so I expected this to be a good test of the motors!

The sail we rolled out was a self tacking thing about 53sq metres. On conventional rigs I have rarely seen a self tacking heady do much more than assist the main somewhat but not something very useful on it's own. Nothing you could actually sail with in anything less than a gale. So I didn't expect the motors to get turned off but could feel them reduced to idle speed. Ian took her off the rumb line (and the wind) by about 35 degrees and we were going nicely in the mid to low 5's. Not bad for the sail and motors idling I thought. The wind was about 9 knots true so motors at low r's and the sail made sense but then I looked at the controls. We had not been motoring, they were in neutral! Ian shut the motors down and we continued at that pace and better. Sometimes up to 7+ knots in wind not strong enough to lift a cup full of foam off the chop. Not a horses head in site and making 5 to 7+ knots, 35 to 45 degrees off the wind (38 best point of sail) on a self tacking heady, er staysail... wow!

I took to the bow to have a look up the stay the sail was on and it was loose as a goose (whatever that means). The sail shape was compromised by the bow in the stay and still... we were going very well. The lower tell tails were right on whilst the uppers sets were flogging on the windward side. When asked Ian said we was a little concerned with the amount of tension on the backstays. I pointed out that the outer (masthead) forestay was tighter so winding up the inner wouldn't increase the tension on the backstays anyway. Then the truth came out... since the turnbuckle is buried inside the furler, which would have to be disassembled to get at it, it is a nuisance to adjust and Ian just couldn't be bothered yet! I wonder how much improvement it would make. I bet it would be well worth the effort and I know Ian will eventually... but when it goes this good sloppy, it can take the urgency right out of hard work.

Going to windward means tacking... and I've been on multi's that were very unforgiving on a tack and with this rig especially, I expected drama. Silly me. The boat tacked like a 16 ton steely with a full keel. In other words, like a freight train. Calm, steady and relentless. The helm went over, the sail ran along it's canopy mounted track and we accelerated and were gone. Ho hum...wow!

Just on 1200 and we are anchoring off Kingfisher. A Dugong greets us as we settle in for a lunch, just before the jet ski thing blasts by us less than a boat length away.

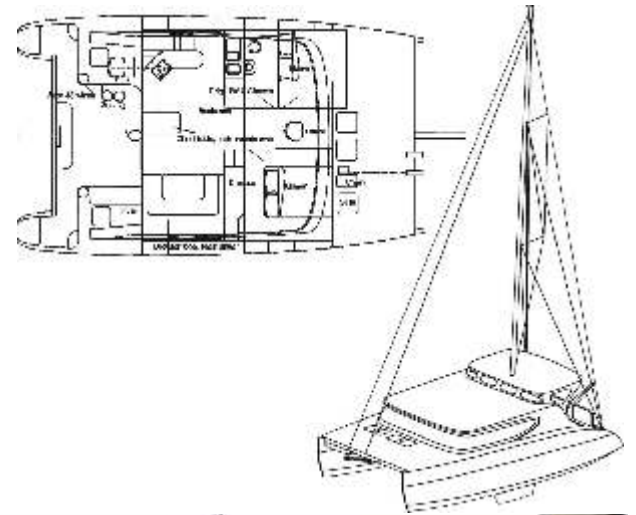
A few relevant facts on Lyra:

She is powered by twin Yanmars, 30 hp each.

The folding props impressed everyone from minute one.... literally. Launch day saw the need for heavy reverse right off the trailer as one keel dug into mud while the current was pushing and twisting the boat around toward some piles. Reverse response was powerful and immediate... whew!! They are Gori's, which Ian considered pretty dear except when compared to the crop of feathering styles available.

Ian sent off inquiries to a slew of sail lofts and received no quick responses except from Gary Saxby out of Brisbane. Perhaps the others didn't regard Ian as serious...?? Whatever, the Saxby quote was delivered quickly and even when the others did get around to a reply Saxby's quote was good so they got the deal. The inner sail is 53 metres and the outer, mainly intended as a reaching sail, is a little over 70 metres.

The stick is 16 ½ metres done up by S&H Spares in Labrador, Gold Coast.



Eddy at right, who helped build the boat, handles the furling line whilst Ian works the sheet winch. This is the first time a sail is used, and it seems to be working!



This shot taken at about 6-7 knots sailing doesn't indicate any tendency to drive in. It would have been good to get enough wind to take her into double digits to verify but it looks like she may run quite level or just slightly high in the bow. The tube under the bridge deck routes halyards from the mast back to the powered winch by the davits used for the dinghy as well.



Might not hurt to tighten up that inner forestay. And yes, she was missing the port sheet on the outer sail. We installed one later.

continued next page...



Ian reckons the hulls in a cat are for floating on, engine rooms and storage. Even without the hulls, the accommodation is large by any standard and huge for a 40 footer. The price you pay is windage but if the boat suffers for performance it doesn't show much. She is a two bedroom unit with full kitchen. The bedrooms are well ventilated from forward facing hatches and curtains provide privacy if desired. The bed frames are structural as is everything. The nav station is next to the door for handy access.

As the mast is supported by the cockpit bulkhead there isn't unlimited space available for entry or windows but the layout is clever enough not to make it seem claustrophobic. Head room is almost excessive. All up the configuration is suggestive of those floating apartments the charter business loves and cruising sailors ridicule for their lack of seaworthiness and performance. A word of advise though, If you challenge this boat to a little impromptu regatta... you might want to have your excuse prepared ahead of time...



The ground tackle is on 8mm short link chain with a Farca anchor and a little Maxwell HRC windlass. Ian likes the Sarca and anchoring in the Mary River, known for poor to indifferent holding, is a test of how well the anchor works. Ian says the river bottom is loose rubble so the anchor has to get set right in deep to find anything to hang onto. The windlass seemed powerful enough and had reasonable speed.

There is a small powered winch located port side deck aft for the furler lines and another for the dinghy lines and halyards centred between the davits. The sheet winches are non-powered self tailers located either side in the cockpit. The single sheet for the inner sail runs from the car to a block at the clew then back to the car and then to the port side sheet winch. The car and track are controlled by clutches on the canopy top accessed by a hatch above the helm. The main sheet winches are #40 Arco's. Electronics? Every bloody thing.... I heard it took two weeks to run the wires...

And the composite material? There was no way of telling the difference between Polycore and any other material from performance. The "feel" of the boat is solid. The design has created a slow easy motion without the quick, jerking I have experienced on some cats. Keeping in mind the boat was not subject to rough seas while I was aboard but my impression suggests it would handle rougher conditions particularly well. The motors cast minimal vibration through the decks and noise was low. The insulating nature of the material was evident when you opened an engine room door. Years gone by are the final test but nothing I can see so far indicates any particular shortcoming. I expect to see more of Polycore in future projects, especially when you consider cost... and who isn't lately?

Ian reckons 6 ton displacement. Not bad for a 40 footer built for comfort.

continued below left

Lyra concludes...



The engines rooms have a luxury of space to work in. As Ian doesn't try to make living space in the hulls there is no pressure on the room. The 30 HP Yanmars performed well and have a reputation for good value and long service.

Lunch done and away we go.... Now the wind is dead astern and we prepare the bigger sail on the outer stay.

It is important to mention (again) that Ian designed a motor boat with sails as an auxiliary. Ian does not do 4 knots so with the wind up our bum I was thinking we might be motoring most of the way back to the river.

We raised the anchor and once clear of other craft, rolled out the sail and shut down the motors. The wind picked up a little on the way back, to a screaming 10 kts

true, gusting to 14 (confirmed later with BOM site for Hervey Bay) *Lyra* took off. Best speed was 8.5 knots in seas I would consider boring in a ten foot tinny.... Wow!

But wait it gets better! When well past the heads Ian wanted to roll up the sail to avoid the blanks spots and windshifts and to keep a steady pace. With the sail rolled up and motors running but not in gear, we were still making 5 knots! We sailed like that for about ten minutes just to make sure it wasn't momentum or all tide but it wasn't! The tide surely was contributing but the water boiling off the stern indicated we were under power and the only source would have been from the windage of the canopy top!! No joke... now that's what I call an easily driven boat... wow!

Ian is keen for some 30 knot stuff, I'll be hoping he needs crew.

Calling this boat a "motorsailer" seems incorrect. We need a new term.



The photo above is of a space forward and centre. The desk has very good visibility forward, good ventilation and ultimate shelter. With the pilot engaged and plenty of sea room, this is a brilliant place to take your watch. Comfortable in any condition yet still keeping an eye out for those container ships, floating debris or pieces of real estate the plotter didn't plot...



I thought it better to show rather than describe the conditions that prevailed when the boat was doing the speed indicated on the plotter screen and enlarged in the separate box. This was about 15 degrees off a dead run. The photos were taken less than a minute apart. If tide contributed to this speed I doubt it was substantial as we were off in the shallows and the beacon we passed shortly after showed no sign of tide passing it.

Nits and Picks.... The sheets for the outer sail are going to be tricky to work out. The windows are mounted with tape and glue on the inside of the cabin sole and I would rather have the structure behind them in case of a solid blow. Being a man of science, Ian was already questioning some parts of the design as we were sailing. Are the keels in the best spot? And are the rudders of optimum size? He was concerned about the rudder angle being 7 or 8 degrees off the course sometimes but time spent in fine tuning the rig may dispel those concerns. As it turned out I think the boat would have been ready for a 30+ sea in spite of a few gremlins. Hey, it's a new boat! **And why have I devoted this much editorial to this boat?** It is pretty rare to have an individual take this much of a calculated risk in a project of this magnitude. Conservative convention had nothing to do with this project. It's all or nothing and I respect that.

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Bare Bones

And boat building stuff...

Fillers: Strange Brew!

Some of the things I've learned about the common fillers that I wished I had known earlier

By Bob Norson

"Q-cell" filler is composed of hollow glass spheres, or microspheres. White in colour and looks liquid when jiggled around in a container. It vastly increases the bulk of any normal boat building resin and is commonly used for fairing.

Advantages: Relatively cheap and easy to sand. It Trowels on smooth and wets to the surface well. I also like the semi transparent nature of the mix as it allows some judgement of coating thickness.

Disadvantages: It imparts little or no strength to the mix. It is slow to wet when mixing, using up open time of the resin. I find a steady "folding" action better than vigorous stirring of the mix as it is faster to wet and introduces less air bubbles. I know a builder that keeps plastic containers with lids and mixes the filler by simply inverting the container once or twice to achieve wetting.

The mix is reputed to be somewhat permeable to water. This was quite a matter of discussion early on in the project. I had heard the charge and received advice that any Q'cell filler on a boat should be coated heavily in pure resin to "protect" it or shouldn't be used at all under water but had no solid explanation to base it on and in fact talked to boat builders that had used it under water and were disparaging of the charge. What I did sort out over time is that those builders were working in laminates that were well sealed to begin with and/or a PVC foam core less susceptible to damage from moisture so a degree of permeability in the fairing compound was less relevant to them. However, I think working with balsa core with a questionable laminate could be a problem for this filler and should be avoided, especially under water.

"Cab-O-Sil" (picture # 5) is a brand name for fumed silica. This substance can be made from running quartz sand through a super hot electric arc that produces a fine, complex three dimensional shape with a high surface area and very

little bulk. This is interesting material. I doubt the above description would be very appetising but the fact is you have eaten a lot of fumed silica! HUH? Yup... it is commonly used as a "thickener" in food processing. Ever wonder how MacDonald's can make their shakes so thick when they weight so little? Perhaps fumed silica. The stuff is even Kosher! No kidding, I've got a copy of a letter from the good Rabi M. Seckbach granting the status to Cab-O-Sil after inspection of their German factory... yummm!

Advantages: It sets strong and hard. Because of it's high surface area and complexity it imparts good strength to the mix. In fact it is very good glue mix. Pure fumed silica wets easier than Q-Cells and can be mixed to various consistencies for gluing and joining. It mixes well with Q-Cells or other fillers to add strength to the particular mix. I use about half and half when filleting in preparation for taping joints. It's not terribly expensive.

Disadvantages: It sets strong and hard. It's ease of sanding and shaping is on a par with concrete. It is a strength to workability trade off when mixing with Q-Cells or microballoons so the particular application will dictate the ratio of mix.

Microballoons or Phenolic Microballoons: (picture # 1) Derived from the earliest commercial application of plastics, phenolic resins were invented as a substitute for ivory in the manufacture of pool table balls. Doesn't look like the other common powders at all. Instead of puffy dry looking white powder, microballoons are a chocolate reddish brown and come out of the bag looking like they are wet and sticky!

Advantages: Smooth texture to apply and good sandability. I have found it especially easy to use when applying wet on wet over recent laminations. Believed to be less permeable to water than Q-Cells, it makes a safer choice when fairing underwater or other areas of the boat that might be at risk from moisture.

Disadvantages: Bloody expensive! But far less expense than replacing

water soaked sections of non-waterproof balsa panels for example. When mixed stiff or comparable to stiffness of a normal Q-Cell mix, I find it high effort to apply. It really takes some grunt to work. Also, it doesn't wet into a dry surface well and wants to "peel back" (picture # 3) from the trowel requiring a lot of movement and reworking to get a good surface, but once you finally have it, it's good. A thinner mix (picture # 2) goes on with less effort and doesn't peel back off the trowel as much but if you don't have it smack on it can sag on a vertical surface. If you are vigilant, you will spot the sag when the resin is just firming a little and it will work back in beautifully and stay there, having wetted the surface from the original application. I haven't tried pre-wetting a working surface with pure resin yet to see if that helps but it might work.

Overall, I find it's a thin line between perfection and useless and I seem to spend more time on fine tuning the mix with microballoons than other fillers. One more minor annoyance is that it is more opaque than Q-Cells. It's harder to judge the thickness of what you are applying or when sanding. But in spite of all that I feel the end result is superior so for areas where it counts, it's what I'm using.

Mix's and "blends" and brand names: A product labelled "Microballoon filler" may actually be a filler with microballoons as one of several ingredients. Or "filler # 123" with ingredients that are unspecified. In any case I prefer the pure fillers and to mix myself. I know what I'm getting and can tailor to the job.

Tip for using powered fillers: Q-Cell and Cab-o-sil can both get lumpy with storage. If you try to use them that way you may get poor mix and failure of the compound due to absorption of moisture through the clumps that didn't wet with resin sufficiently. I use small garbage bins to store the fillers for eminent use and top up from larger containers as I use them up. Every time I top up I pour them through a piece of fly screen, rubbing to break up the clumps and shaking the dust through. (picture # 4) Makes all the difference. (picture # 5)



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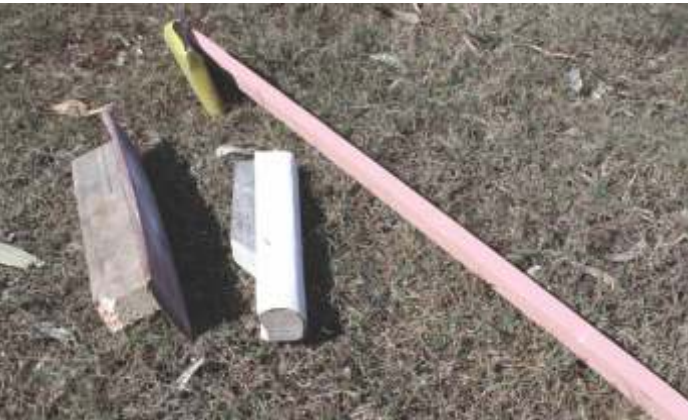
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Bare Bones

And boat building stuff...

Tools, Tools, Tools...

By Bob Norson



There must be as many approaches to the right tools as there are boat builders. One persons favourite is another's waste of time but everyone is bound to learn something if you listen to another builder. Marcus McGregor, confessed tool junkie, is building the Schionning at left and he has one that I had to try.

FROM MARCUS: Re: Fein Multimaster: I just couldn't do without it - an exceptional high quality tool, German made not Chinese shit! Mine is now 4 years old and came as a kit with all the various attachments. The bizarre thing is that the Profile Sanding Kit was an extra bonus if you purchase the tool, and yet it gets about 99.9% of the use. It is extremely robust and durable, and will probably outlast the tool itself. The kit has about 6 various rubber profile dies, and you will only ever end up using 2 of these - the round ones. Also with the kit is a delta sander - this will get more use as I get into the final fairing - and various cutters etc which I haven't explored (but am sure are very useful!). People can be very finicky with their favourite tools, so I am generally reluctant to recommend this tool or that, but having recommended this gadget to others, I can only say I would be most surprised if you were disappointed. After the random orbital sander, it is my second most used tool. Mine cost \$600.00 4 years ago....you can find them now on Ebay Australia (NOT USA- 110VAC!!) for \$520.00. If you don't buy the kit with the profile sander set, then this extra will cost you \$80.00. So, of course if you buy the tool, make sure the profile sander is included in all the goodies.

I too lay wet tapes onto wet coving material, and then put wet bog (usually Q-cel) on while all is still green. Profile sander is great for sanding the hardened bog coves... I can imagine the only alternative is sanding by hand...bugger that.

Marcus

I admit to owning some cheap shit tools but also some really good gear like a *Rupes* orbital sander which is real tool porno. The big mistake I commonly make is waiting too long before giving up and getting the good one when it really is called for. You know.. when the job is already half done. So, right on schedule, I ordered the *Fein Multimaster* today from "Sydney Tools". I ordered just the bare package of the main tool and a couple of cutting bits for \$299 and the profile kit for an additional \$68 plus \$20 shipping. At least I got some benefit from the big Aussie \$, a little win. I don't have all the gizmos Marcus has, so surely I will get them later when I've already suffered sufficiently.

What sold me? Well, pictured at left is my current "profile sanding kit". Not that they didn't do the job but hard work. The sander on a stick was 'created' to prepare the surface inside the motor pods for paint. Four foot handle and floating head, wonder if I can patent that?

But a bargain tool I have got away with is the split sander gadget that has gone from crude to even simpler due to an accident and I like it better for it.

As those that read the full Barebones article in the last electronic edition know, I had to entirely strip our starboard hull, right down to panel due to faulty materials used in earlier steps. My teeth still grind at the thought.

Anyway.. working on an upright hull is way harder than an inverted one so all the worse, especially as pictured below far left sanding on the chamfer panel. But the tool made fast work of it. I made one earlier of two parts joined with rubber feet and as I had a spare piece of metal, made the simpler one shown at lower left. I buggered up the flash one trying to mount it on a new air-tool so brought out the simpler one. Brilliant. All it is, is a flat piece of 3mm high tensile aluminium with a sander disc mounting flange screwed into one side and velcro hooks on the other for sandpaper with a fuzzy side. The metal has enough flex to take a slight concave surface. I knocked off the obvious high spots with the big *Rupes* orbital and then this tool and that's it and she came fair enough for me! I used very ordinary 80 grit paper which cuts far faster in this configuration than normal, (careful!) and used low speed with a light touch on the sander and kept it moving in longish sweeps. As big a sweep as I could control being very careful to start and stop the machine whilst the tool is flat on the surface. Investment? About \$10 and ten minutes... love it! Sometimes cheap is good!



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Bare Bones

Dagger boards, Duck boards, Motor pods....and other mysteries of the sea

B Norson

I thought there were some immutable laws in the universe and that constant was reassuring but fitting my outboards has given me a complex!

My dagger boards are my own design and I had to re-do some work as I was a bit impatient and just didn't take enough care in shaping. I'll save that project for another edition as the boards deserve a feature of their own but I was able to diagnose the ills, make my calculations for adjustment and proceed and got it. But these bloody pods... wow.

The motors: Honda 20hp with power tilt. These are the extra long leg; longest I could find and at 54kg (claimed weight) lighter than the competition by about 40kg! As they are 4 stroke I'm hoping for them to be grunty and economical on fuel. And BTW.. I got them at Runaway Bay Marine in Queensland for a solid \$1400 less for the pair than any of my local dealers.

I took a motor over to a builder working on a similar boat to help them check their work and allow me the benefit of their experience. Their pods were already installed. I preferred a different placement so made some significant changes to their dimensions as they did after the fitting.. So I cut up some perfectly good laminate and re-jiggered what I had started. But after I got done reworking the pods I got this nagging feeling I had perhaps adjusted the transoms too close to the bulkheads. The motors are very clumsy to handle so I hadn't checked the old fashioned way after the re-jigger.

To check what I had done I then set the motor on it's side with jigs, compass's and tape measure and made a real science of it. My conclusion was that I went too far somehow and might have got the motor too close to the bulkhead to allow it to tilt and too high for the lower unit to clear the deck. Oh oh..

Nothing to do now but get that motor in there and see for sure. So a come-along to the tent frame, various tie downs and neighbour Malcolm shows up (foolishly) on cue.

Result? 3 inches back from my intended placement, 5 inches back from my feared placement and plenty of room under the deck. I'll take it! Confused but satisfied. If adjustment is needed after sea trials I have some wiggle room.

Aside from the placement of the transom the project is pretty straight forward. Get a 4mm piece of marine ply, cut it diagonally across to make two triangles, torture the hell out of them to make a funnel shape, glass it in and let set for a few days to harden. Then position the transom in place with clamps and screws, do a little voodoo dance to align (that and a timber clamped right across both transoms), and fit the curved, laminated ply to the boat... easy..(snicker snicker). Then remove the transom and tape (glass

lamine) the inside of the cowl to the boat. Easy if you are a mutant with 6 foot arms.

The way us mortals did it was by applying the filleting bog on the ply edge, then lifting into position, bracing up with a wobbly looking assortment of sticks and bits, use a properly shaped stick about 4 foot long to shape the bog, wipe the stick and use same to hold the wetted tape up and somehow get a long handled roller up there to roll the tape in so it sticks enough to get the steel roller in there that is fastened to another stick with duct tape.. and the crazy thing is it worked! Everything was laying flat the next day and no air under the glass that we could see, so installed a paint system inside the pods and then taped in the transoms. I used conventional glass around the perimeter but for attaching to the decks I used some carbon fibre unidirectional. That is where the main load will be and the carbon is strong and thin, easy to fair.

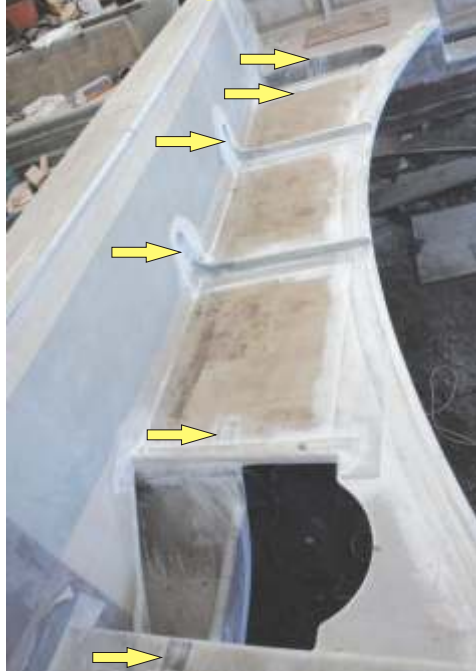
I like carbon fibre and once I described it's virtues, Kay is ALL for it! It's expensive but now that I know more about it I would recommend a builder get a supply of some say, 300 gr uni to have around. A few hundred dollars worth isn't anything in boat building and I have used small bits of it in several places where I wanted that extra stiffness.

Speaking of stiffness (alright, fess up, how many of your minds went straight to the gutter?), I was having a hell of a time getting my duckboard er.. solid. The edge I put on was laid up with three layers of 750 gr glass. That should have been *pretty* solid. Yeah right, solid as a diving board. I wanted some sort of brackets in place anyway, to nest the dinghy on so why not make it serve a dual purpose. So I used some scrap foam with heavy laminate and a decorated and filled edge. Taped in place with multiple layers of glass and at the back side some of the carbon fibre. I know that it takes time for the resin to really cure and set hard but generally by the next afternoon, it's about 60-70% there at least but even two days later I couldn't tell the difference and after the motor pod fiasco I didn't need another challenge to my understanding of physics!

But magically, a week or so later it transformed itself and that's an important thing I've learned about boats and the sea. You try to think about and understand it the best you can but sometimes you just have to recognise it's bigger than you and you just have to flow with it.



Yellow arrows point to carbon fibre



One side laminated and bogged, wet on wet



Panel jiggered in place with filleting already applied. Transom has been placed to check fit before taping in. **All very scientific!**



Outside work MUCH easier than inside stuff!



Every effort has been made to persuade the water to deflect rather than pound against this pod. Only time will tell.

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SUNDOWNERS *here's my story, mate...*

Benito's Dolphin Stories

By Benito Bracco, a Sailor

The first time I heard a Dolphin story was when I was about six or seven, where I lived in the Island village of Nerezine, Croatia. There was a fellow sailing a caic which capsized. A dolphin appeared from nowhere and by nudging him on his chest, pushed him onto some rocks. This saved him. He was an eighty year old local man, who looked as though he had never had a shave or haircut in his life.

Next is a bit different story. My Uncle was a professional fisherman, and in summer, shoals of sardines would come to our Island. The fishermen would go out to catch sardines with their big nets. Of course, dolphins like sardines too. The dolphin would make a small hole in the sack of the net and suck the sardines out of the sack. My Uncle would carry a 303 rifle, thinking to shoot the dolphins, but when he had the rifle, the dolphins would stay away. He would just show it to them and they would disappear. My Uncle did not like to carry a rifle so he would leave it at home and the dolphins would be back. As far as I knew, he never shot a dolphin.

In 1982 I bought a 16' Corsair, three person dinghy, but soon I had to sail single-handed in Moreton Bay. I would race it on weekends and single handed cruised during the week. Every Tuesday I would go to Moreton Island. It was my day off. *Hiking out on a gunnel.*

Soon the dolphins would notice and come out to check this insane person, sailing at a breakneck speed. The dolphins liked what they saw. They came over and I could almost touch them. I have four eyes and they have two round eyes, some are pigmy brown and some are blue. The blue eyed ones liked me better. They would come so close to me in the Corsair. They came in twos, then fours, then sixes. Then all at once, just to be with me, from the M* to the Pearl Channel Buoy.

After eight years I got fed up with "gunnel bum" and I started to look for a trailer sailer. Everything I looked at was too expensive and I just kept on dreaming. Then one Friday afternoon I had to do a delivery next to Scarborough Marina, Brisbane. As I drove in there was this gorgeous looking trailer sailer looking at me. It was love at first sight. I looked at the photo in the window and I thought, "I could afford that." I got the key from Peter, and my "hound instinct" took over (Bracco is a breed of dogs).

Potentially, the trailer sailer was not very well looked after. The smell of prawns and cockroaches was overwhelming. She had a lovely round bottom. A lovely

behind transom. The bow was looking at me as if in a prayer; "take me away and love me." Her name was *Jezebel*.

And love I did, for almost twenty years. I still remember asking at the office, "Why so cheap?" The owner had a business problem and wanted a quick sale. I took her home and I soon discovered she needed more than love. She needed work and money.

With my children we sailed every weekend to Tangalooma or some other place, swimming, fishing, etc. One day we were sailing to Moreton Island. My daughter, Michelle was on the bow and said, "Dad, there is a big dolphin looking at me!" I got up and looked. He saw me and peeled off the bow and came over to the quarter stern, looking at me. I waved my hand and he gave me a big grin then peeled off. Then he came back again and gave me another look and grin, then away he went. I was in Heaven. I waved to him and he disappeared. It was the big blue eyed dolphin that along with his friends used to come over to the Corsair.

The next winter, I told my Nephew I was going to Fraser Island. He said, "Don't go yet, wait for me. I am coming." The next week we were off to Mooloolaba, then onward to Double Island Point and the Wide Bay Bar entrance. The surf was working big rollers. I heard talking about where the trawlers cross; on the port side along the beach. Before we knew it, we were inside and heading up to Tin Can Bay.

We ate a lot of fish breakfast, lunch and dinner and drank a lot of vino. Two days later we went to Garys Anchorage and onward to Watumba Creek. After two days we tried to sail to Lady Elliot Island, but there was no wind. At dusk we go to Breaksea Spit with very big breakers. There was little wind and the tide was taking us back to Sandy Cape and the shallows. We put the motor on and motored back towards Sandy Cape Lighthouse and then to Breaksea Spit. The sea was calm. No breakers. I turned to the east, and all of the sudden the port and starboard surf broke up. There were two waves on the port side, one on the starboard side and blue in the middle. Three big waves hit us like mountains. We made it to the eastern side of Breaksea Spit and it was flat calm. Instead of going to Lady Elliot Island, we decided to go back to Mooloolaba and home.

The light northerly wind came up in the morning. We poled out the genoa, pressed the pilot on and were sailing four knots. In the morning a dolphin came up and checked the boat. Every hour it came up to say hello. He was

with us all day. He would swim up on the bow, then to the afterquarter, then just disappear. He was with us until we reached Double Island Point. Oh, I forgot to mention. We saw seven whales.

At dusk we were at Double Island Point; the dolphin gone, the wind howling from behind.

While surfing down the face of big waves the automatic pilot started to fatigue. I took the pole down and *Jezebel* did a big round up. Then I realized how much wind there was. In half an hour the wind died and went to the west. The sea also calmed down and before I knew it I was past Noosa and towards Mooloolaba. My Nephew slept all night. Early morning I could see the television antennas of Coolum, then Old Woman Island and finally Mooloolaba. And no more dolphins.

One Sunday I went to Moreton Island next to Akinson Artificial Reef, and as usual I dropped the anchor into 2 to 3 metres of water. We all went swimming and played on the beach. We came back on board and Rebecca started to make chicken sandwiches. I sat on the push-pit and sucked on chicken bones. Then all of the sudden there were two dolphins under the boat. I tried to have a look, but I could not see anything until the two dolphins started to swim around *Jezebel*. I called the crew (my family) and I noticed that one of the dolphins had placenta streaming behind her. Two little dolphins appeared, chasing their mother. Then the blue eyed dolphin appeared, circling *Jezebel*, making summersaults in the air and staying around the boat. We were just amazed looking at the dolphins somersaulting in



Kerry Alexander photo

the air. On the beach there were fifteen four wheel drives all watching the dolphins. It was quite a spectacle. After a while the dolphins moved about 150 metres to a fresh water creek and then out, still somersaulting in the air to the delight of us spectators.

My conclusion: The dolphins knew *Jezebel* and myself and knew they would be safe to give birth under *Jezebel*. I was so happy and a little bit stunned to see what happened under my boat. We still reminisce with delight about this. I have told this story many times.

Other experiences:

I was fishing in Tangalooma for Butter Brim and a pod of dolphins went by. I picked up a Butter Brim and threw it to one of the dolphins. He put it in his beak and swam around showing it to the other dolphins. Often we see them in Deception Bay chasing fish; usually mother with babies. A few times I have seen them in the Marina chasing fish, probably Brim, between the boats.

Another time I decided to sail to Tin Can Bay for the Bay to Bay race. Out of Double Island Point, two purple dolphins appeared on the bow. I laid down on the bow to touch the dolphins and soon enough, I touched the back of one of the dolphins and he shivered and came back for another touch.

Benito Bracco. Benito also wrote the TCP #39 story of "The Ketch Hawk - a sailors story". Benito was crew on this famous sailing ketch trading ship in the late 1950's.



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Let's Share Cruising Tips

Tuna in a can - don't leave shore without it



This photo above was taken at an IGA grocery store June, 2011. There are many of choices for canned tuna and also vacuum sealed pouches available.

Canned Tuna

About 2 years ago a USA appeals court upheld a ruling that canned tuna does not need warning labels as the methylmercury is naturally occurring.

Canned tuna was first produced in 1903, quickly increasing in popularity. Today it is canned in oil, spring water or brine, all of which have excellent health benefits, sometimes containing over 300 milligrams of omega-3 per serving. Many weight trainers and people wanting to lose weight favour canned tuna as being an oily fish, it is high in protein and Vitamin D and is easily prepared.

Australian standards once required cans of tuna to contain at least 51% tuna but these regulations were dropped in 2003. In 2008 some tuna cans changed from 170gms to 140gms due to "higher tuna processing costs."

Sadly most canned tuna seems to originate from Thailand. One of the best quality cans I have found is the Sirena brand in the yellow tin. Tends to be a bit more expensive than other brands but always reliable and full of flavor.

As cruising folk we should never leave shore without as many cans of tuna we can carry. Not all of us can catch our tuna fresh and the canned variety is the most versatile standby for creating a quick, healthy and satisfying meal onboard.

A great tuna pate good on sandwiches as well as making a tasty dip for happy hour is made by mashing together 1 can tuna, drained, 2 tablespoons mayonnaise, 75g melted butter, a generous pinch of ground black pepper and a little salt.

Here are a few of my favourite tuna recipes. The Skipper of our boat absolutely loves the Tuna Pasta Italiano from *The Great Ideas Galley Guide*. The addition of capers and garlic gives this dish a distinct Mediterranean flavour and it's quick and easy to prepare; 2 cans, 1 saucepan and you have a tasty meal.

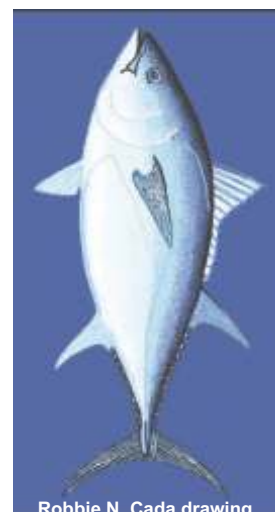
By Susan, Bett, MV *Scallywag* and author of *Great Ideas Galley Guide*

The tuna is one of the fastest salt water fish believe it or not - some species are capable of speeds of 70km/h. Most fish have white flesh but the muscle tissue of tuna ranges from pink to dark red.

Some larger tuna species display warm-blooded adaptations and can raise their body temperatures above the water temperature by means of muscular activity. This clever trick enables them to survive in cooler waters and to inhabit a wider range of ocean environments than other types of purely cold blooded fish.

Dolphins and yellowfin tuna swim happily together. Tuna schools are believed to associate themselves with dolphins for protection against sharks which are major tuna predators.

There are nearly 50 different species of tuna in our oceans around the world. It is one of the most important commercial fish and due to their high position in the food chain and the subsequent accumulation of heavy metals from their diet, mercury levels can be high in the larger species such as bluefin and albacore.



Robbie N. Cada drawing

TUNA PASTA ITALIANO

425g can Tuna in oil
425g can tomatoes with juice
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 onion, chopped
2 tbsp capers (optional)
350g spaghetti, fettuccine or linguine, cooked
Shredded cheddar or parmesan cheese to serve

Reserve and heat 2 tbsp of oil from canned tuna in a pan. Add onions and garlic and fry until soft. Add tomatoes and capers. Bring to the boil and simmer gently for a couple of minutes. Add tuna, heat through and serve over hot pasta. Top with cheese, as much as you like.

TUNA AND CASHEW PILAFF

425g can Tuna, drained
1 medium onion, chopped
3 tbsp butter
1 and a half cups rice
Half a cup sultanas
1 cup peas, cooked
Half a cup unsalted cashew nuts
2 chicken stock cubes dissolved in 560ml water

Melt butter in a saucepan with a lid. Add onion and sauté for 2 minutes. Stir in rice, stock and sultanas and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to very low cover and cook for 20 minutes or until all liquid is absorbed and rice is tender. Add peas, cashews and tuna, stirring gently.

TUNA PATTIES

Makes 8
4 potatoes, peeled
425g can tuna in brine
1 egg
1 grated carrot
1 stick celery, finely chopped
Olive oil for frying
Plain flour to coat

Cook and mash potatoes. Combine all other ingredients and add to mashed potato. Divide into 8 patties, lightly coat both sides with flour and fry in hot oil for 3 minutes each side or until golden. Drain on paper towel and enjoy with mayonnaise or lemon juice.

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P.J. Halter, Admiral, *Cheetah*

What do you think? Send your input to PJ:
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Passage People - a launching *Seadragon*²,

Fran and Gary begin their adventure



Photos: the after launching party, Seadragon 2 and Fran and Gary celebrate - Hip Hip Hooray!



Here are a few notes from Fran & Gary:

"The People":

Fran and Gary - Gary has spent 6 1/2 years working fulltime building the boat and pretty much everything on it. Fran has worked to support the project.

"The Dream":

We lived aboard a small monohull - *Tulku* - for 7 years and loved it. Saw all the catamarans with great living space and great air flow and decided that's what we'd like for the future.

"The Boat": *Seadragon 2*:

After much research we decided on a 12.2metre Simpson woodwind catamaran. A bridge-deck cabin and big bimini were added for lifestyle and comfort.

"The Rig": The rig is a bi-plane junk rig designed by Gary. There is one freestanding, hollow timber mast in each hull; the sails were made by Lee Sails - Hong Kong. We replaced *Tulku's* sloop rig with a junk rig designed by Gary and absolutely loved it so we decided to go junk again for this boat. A bit unusual but we like it.

"Launch day": 28 May, 2011 was the beginning of our dream coming true and we would like to thank everyone who has helped along the way.

We look forward to catching up with all our old cruising friends and meeting lots of new ones out there.

Fran & Gary,
SC *Seadragon 2*

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