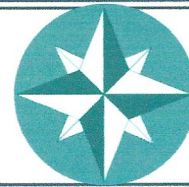




CRUISING NEWS



FEBRUARY 2013

CRUISING HARDSTAND CHRISTMAS PARTY

BY BRENTON SMITH



For two successive years inclement weather has forced the cruisers ashore for the Cruising Hardstand Christmas Party, but cruisers being adaptable people, did not allow this to dampen their ardour for barbequing, carolling, chatting and having a thoroughly enjoyable evening celebrating Christmas festivities.

Chairman Rod sniffed the breeze, saw the forecast for a cold front at 1800, was mindful of just how much fun the cruising group had on the downstairs verandah last year, and made an executive decision to gather the group at the same place. It is a little cramped when you have 60+ people and their chairs, tables etc, but there is certainly no lack of conviviality.



Mirrattuckwongs

Kathy and Alan (Allegresse) brought along the perfect icebreaker with a cryptic Christmas carol quiz for which we divided up into teams. Typical clue: Testimony of witness to maternal parent's infidelity with Kris Kringle. If you want the answer then keep reading!! Winning groups were the Mirrattuckwongs (Mirrabooka, Nantucket & Currawong), the Andalucians and Jo's Team.

Barby bonding, eating and by now almost everyone's second bottle of wine resulted in well lubricated throats ready for some rousing Christmas carolling led by our resident choir mistress, the indefatigable Kathy (yep, same one as before).



Dori on drums with carol leaders

It is clearly evident that although some (most) of us have fallen by the wayside, most of us had enough exposure to Sunday School to learn our carols, and the carols were sung with gusto and to my untutored ear were even quite melodious – mostly.

In addition to Christmas, we also celebrated the conclusion of another successful year in Cruising Group.

HERE'S TO A SUCCESSFUL 2013!!

ANSWER: I SAW MUMMY KISSING SANTA

CRUISING GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson	Rod Watson 0409 507 480	Will Merritt..... 9598 8626
		Pam Merritt..... 9598 8626
Secretary	Jenny Collins..... 9585 1154	David Pollard 9596 5633
		Richard Johnson 0419 361 285
Editor	Robina Smith..... 9503 0409	Sandy Watson..... 0418 906 417

22ND BIRTHDAY CRUISE TO ROYALS

BY ROBINA SMITH



Once again the Cruising Group was blessed with perfect weather for the 22nd birthday celebrations at Royals. A light SE breeze made it worth putting a sail up and the race was on for a berth at Royals. Rod had called ahead and organised allocation of some empty pens while others rafted up to the walkway and the outer end of the marina.

Kirra Kirra had an early arrival at Royals to

ensure they could tie up to the walkway to enable John's 90+ mother, Alice, to alight from the boat. Getting back on at the end of the afternoon was trickier as it was low tide but with some thought and agility it was accomplished with aplomb.

Royal's made us welcome as usual and tables on the veranda and grassed area were soon covered in an assorted array of food which was shared among the groups of cruisers.

The BBQ was popular although the scrum fight over space in previous years meant some brought food that didn't need cooking. David Asprey and Grant Collins were vying for the prize of best pie – both were delicious! Marion French and Miriam Cherry decided to dine in style in the restaurant. After welcoming speeches the candles were blown out and the cake cut into the 60 or so pieces for everyone to share.

When it was time to head off there was a brisk sea breeze to blow us home after another enjoyable day meeting up with cruising friends and celebrating our birthday.

Boats attending were - Allegresse, Andaluca, Catwalk, Charliebird, Currawong, Emma Kate, Enya, Kirra Kirra, Polly Jane, Stardust, Sun Kiss and Y Knot. Apologies to anyone left out.



PORT ALBERT MARITIME MUSEUM

BY PAM MERRITT

On a recent holiday in Gippsland we discovered the Port Albert Maritime Museum, and it's a real little gem. The museum reflects the rich maritime history of the port, the oldest in Victoria (1841). Housed in the former Bank of Victoria, built in 1861 to receive gold from the Gippsland gold fields, it is a wealth of information about the development of the area. The museum houses plenty of interesting nautical objects and memorabilia –

The first Citadel Island (Glennie Group) lighthouse, placed on the island in 1913, dismantled in 1992, restored and moved to the museum in 2004.

A circa 1900 Fairway Buoy from South Channel, Port Phillip. The buoy was later relocated to Port Welshpool.

The former Cliffy Island (near Wilson's Prom) workboat, which was a link between the lighthouse crew and the supply boat carrying stores to the mainland.

Nautical artefacts, including historic navigation equipment and boat building tools.

The history of the 'Clonmel', the oldest located paddle steamer wreck found in Australia. The 'Clonmel', a luxury paddle steamer built for intercolonial passenger trade between Sydney, Melbourne and Launceston in the early 1840's, struck a sandbar near the entrance to Port Albert on its way from Sydney to Melbourne in 1841, luckily with no loss of life. The following day 5 crew members, under the guidance of an experienced seaman, heroically set off in one of Clonmel's whaleboats, battling wind and waves and arriving exhausted in Williamstown 60 hours later. The remaining 75 survivors, camped on a nearby island (now called Clonmel Island) and were rescued by two boats dispatched from Port Phillip nine days later. Many interesting artefacts and photos from the Clonmel are on display.

IF YOU'RE EVER DOWN THAT WAY PORT ALBERT MARITIME MUSEUM IS WELL WORTH A VISIT.

OUR TWELVE BEST DECISIONS

MICHAEL WHITE AND CHRISTINE EDWARDS, *NEW HORIZONS*

The rumours reported in the last newsletter were correct. Michael White and Christine Edwards (*New Horizons*) have returned to Australia after 6 months cruising in the Pacific.

We sailed through Sydney Heads at 2200 on 19 December 2012 after 4500 miles of coastal and ocean sailing since we left Melbourne. It was a wonderful trip, which saw us sailing from Melbourne to Sydney in November 2011, visiting the beautiful little fishing ports of the East coast along the way – Refuge Cove to Eden - to Bermagui - to Jervis Bay - to Ulladulla - to Port Hacking - and finally to Sydney Harbour. We stopped in Sydney for 6 months because the first and most beautiful grandchild in the universe (what else?) was born in March 2012 and so we didn't turn our attention to the next leg of our adventure until June. We had intended to sail from Sydney via Lord Howe Island to New Caledonia but the lows of the Tasman Sea kept defeating us. Finally, we sailed 250 miles north to Coffs Harbour and so entered the Coral Sea in June and arrived in Noumea 8 days later.

After enjoying the delights of French colonialism - the wine, cheese and ambience, including the Bastille Day Parade which was fabulous - we headed east to Vanuatu. This

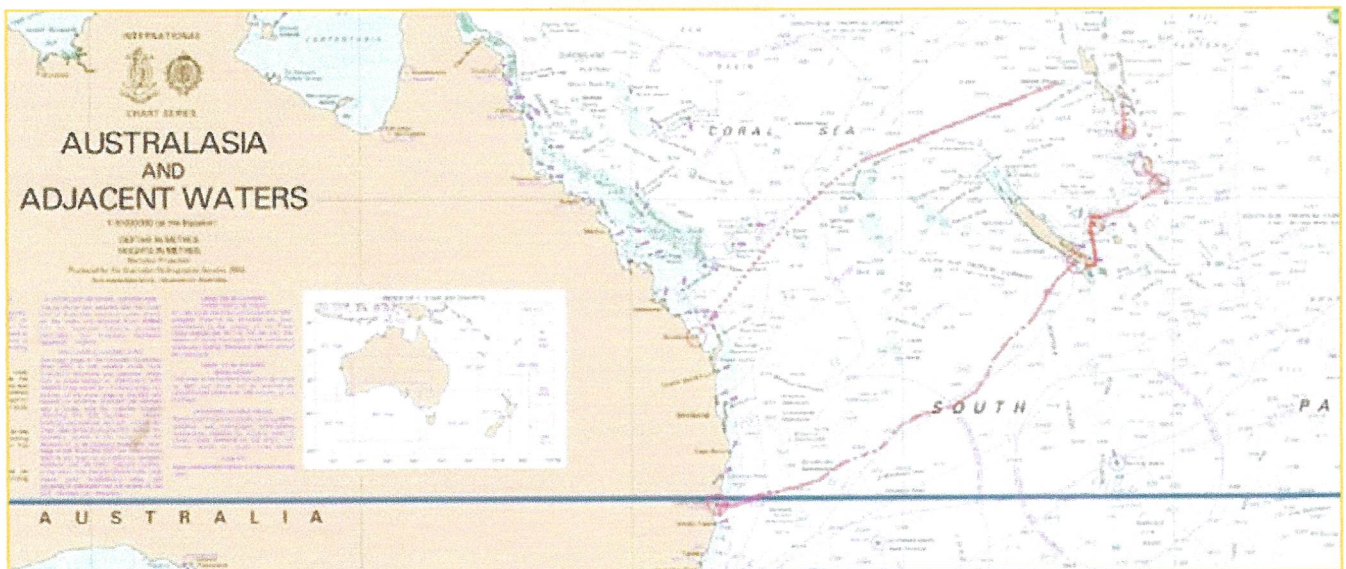


was the highlight of the trip without doubt! The volcano and culture of Tanna, the turtles and dugongs of Lamien Bay, the beauty of the Maskelyne Islands, the diving and World War 11 relics on Santo were only surpassed by the welcome of the wonderful Vanuatu people. We were reluctant to turn *New Horizons* towards Bundaberg in late October but were pleased to be home with family and children for Christmas.

We could spend a long time doing a chronology of the amazing places we have visited. However we thought it might be more useful to share with our fellow cruisers a few perspectives on what we, as apprentices to the cruising game learnt in the last 2 years as we prepared our boat for the adventure of our lives.

We learned a great deal. Despite all our extensive preparations we left Brighton as novices and every day we

learned something new. These are not earth-shattering ideas, just thoughts of the 2 of us after we headed off to pursue a sailing dream. As we prepared *New Horizons* we were constantly faced with choices as to what was important to get right before the big adventure - what was it we must do to ensure that the boat was as best it could be, and that we knew what we need to know. Sailing is always about making choices, making the right decision, making compromises to get it right. These are our thoughts on getting it right.



THERE ARE 3 SETS OF THINGS WE THOUGHT WE MIGHT SHARE:

BEFORE YOU LEAVE • EQUIPMENT CHOICES • HOW YOU TRAVEL



BEFORE YOU LEAVE

1. The most important thing we found was to choose a date and stick to it! It's so hard when you have full working lives and families and 1000 reasons to stay to finally cast off lines and head off into the ocean. Without a date it won't happen. We chose, whimsically, the 11th of the 11th 2011.

2. Live on your boat before you go. We moved on to New Horizons in March 2011, 8 months before we left. So we had many months to figure out how to pack, where to put things, and where to find things when you really need them. It's amazing how quickly you change your priorities and discover the art of packing by frequency of use rather than by category. By definition no matter what size boat you have it will be full before you leave. All you need is to be able to get things quickly or you will, just as quickly, go stark raving nuts! Of course there are challenges living on your boat, not the least of which is wandering down the 800 m of the Brighton Pier sometime around midnight in your finery after a work function, returning the bemused stares of the fishermen with a cheery, "Hello, how is the fishing - the wife - the kids - the weather?" We got to know them all quite well!

3. Buy a boat that you can trust. As many of you know we were "fleet owners" for a while as we cast about looking for a boat we wanted to take with us - or more accurately, the boat that we wanted to take us with it! We wanted to know that if things ever got rough we would have absolute confidence in the boat. In the end we figured that if Kay Cottee was happy to circumnavigate by herself through the Roaring Forties, and indeed the 50s, in a Cavalier 37 then that would do us for the Pacific. We were happy with our choice, because things do, and did, get rough occasionally.

EQUIPMENT CHOICES

4. Get the right sail plan. We put all new sails on New Horizons before we left, but perhaps the most important decision was to add a cutter rig - the staysail on a furler was the best decision we made. We used it regularly and it had a marvellous effect on the boat, bringing the centre of effort back towards the mast and reducing the power in the rig and taking the load off the autohelm.

It was great to have a new Genoa and Main, and the recut spinnaker on a furler was a wonderful sight flying in front of us, but if we were to say we have learnt one thing as novice cruisers it would be that you don't overpower your boat and you don't go to sea without a staysail.

We would also have to say that we set up the 3 reefs in the main so that we could do everything, including pulling down the main completely, from the cockpit. It was great to be able to avoid the journey along the pitching deck when reefing or removing the main was called for.

5. There is nothing that beats the security of knowing that your anchor is not going to drag. We put a Sarca on 60m of chain as our primary anchor and it never dragged - not once. We also had a backup CQR on 60m of chain. In addition we had a stern anchor, a Bruce on 10m of the chain and 45m rode. We did use the stern anchor several times and we spent one 24-hour period hanging off the stern anchor when the wind changed and came around behind us at 27kts. Don't risk it. Carry plenty of anchors and know how to deploy them.

6. Communication. The never-ending discussion that seemed to be around as we prepared New Horizons was whether to use a sat phone for e-mail or to get a modem for the HF radio. In the end we decided that since we already had the HF radio we may as well spend the \$1500 on a 2nd form of communication, that is the sat phone, rather than simply enhancing the one that we had. This was one of those decisions that was really good and at the same time, really really bad!

We were happy with the decision to get a sat phone, but really unhappy with the decisions we made about getting a provider. Our first monthly bill was over \$1000. In short a complete disaster! In the end we swapped providers and resolved the problem. We now have an Iridium 9575 sat phone, connected through a US company called OCENS and the e-mail provider is uuplus. We have found uuplus in particular to be wonderfully helpful. After spending far too much money on a completely lousy service we now rely on our satphone to get weather updates from Buoyweather twice a day. These e-mail exchanges used to cost us about \$10 each time - they now cost us \$0.45. The difference is real! Buyer beware!

7. Generating power Of course we spent a long time tossing up whether we needed a generator or not. The positives of course relate to the availability of power. The negatives are about space, inconvenience, noise, and carrying around more flammable fuel. In the end we added 2 wonderful pieces of equipment and have been very happy with our choices. We had two 60W solar panels and we added 2 more 80W solar panels. The new ones are the flexible 1.5mm panels which have been zipped onto our Bimini. These are just great! We were reluctant to redesign our stern arch and add yet another 17 kg of solar panels. Instead by paying slightly more for the panels we have added virtually no weight to the boat and have maintained its current structural arrangements. With 280W solar we find that it is very, very rare that we need to start the engine to generate power.

The other wonderful piece of equipment that we brought is a tow/wind generator. The downside of relying on solar power is that there isn't a lot of it around in the middle of the night - just when you need it. At night you are running the chart plotters, the AIS, the radar, the computer, the wind instruments, the navigation lights, the auto helm, the fridge, water pumps - all with no power input. To solve this problem we bought a wonderful Aquair 100 wind and tow generator. When you fling this marvelous thing out the back of the boat it produces a good stream of power. The claim is something like 1 amp per every knot of speed over 3 kn. So as we cruised through the night on 5 to 6 kn we would be putting that number of amps back into the batteries. At anchor, you simply remove the tow line and its propeller and replace it with the wind vane and windmill blades and hoist the thing into the rigging. We haven't installed a dedicated ammeter for this yet but the difference is clearly observable and I have to say it works a treat!



8. Don't get Run Down - AIS I'm not even going to comment on the need for a chartplotter and a good GPS. This is just basic equipment these days. As a matter of fact by the time you count the iPhones, iPads, inbuilt chart plotters, the computer and a handheld battery-operated GPS for emergencies we had 8 separate devices to give us our location. What you really do need though is a good AIS transponder - something that will not only tell you where other ships are but will let them know you're coming. We had a number of conversations with 900 foot ships which could have come within half a mile of us and as we passed Newcastle the AIS informed us of 26 ships at anchor and another 28 that were manoeuvring nearby. Do not try to go up the east coast of Australia without one.

HOW YOU TRAVEL

9. Take your time. We had intended sailing from Melbourne to Sydney and New Caledonia, through Vanuatu to the Solomons and the Louisiades and back to Cairns. We quickly abandoned this idea: you simply do not get to know the people and places by ticking them off on the log. Take your time so that you can meet the people, come to understand the places and cultures, and spend time with your fellow cruisers who will enrich you as they enriched us.

10. They say in the real estate business that there are 3 important things - location, location, location. We learnt that sailing is about the weather, the weather, the weather. If you have a crew joining you they must understand you might make a decision not to leave an anchorage for a fortnight while you wait for the weather. We sat in Luganville in Vanuatu, watching various storms travel through the Tasman Sea and pushing 4 metre swells and 25kt plus winds all the way to New Caledonia. While we waited a fortnight another noted sailor who was the subject of an article in The Weekend Australian magazine called on emergency services to rescue him. This was a storm that was accurately predicted and unless you want to make yourself a name in the newspapers, stay put.

We made use of 2 different weather routing services - Commanders Weather in the United States and Bob McDavitt in New Zealand. We relied on Buoyweather for daily updates but found both Commanders and Bob McDavitt provided really useful passage forecasting.

11. Trust each other. Most of us seem to travel as a couple which means that essentially we are each solo sailors - we all need our sleep so while one is sleeping the other is on watch and managing the boat. Particularly if you are the skipper you need to be able to let go and rest when you need to, while your partner takes full command and makes the decisions. This respect for each other translates into all sorts of obvious behaviours. Unlike a racing crew, a good cruising couple never shouts and never blames. We watched many cruising couples as they wordlessly brought the boat into foreign marinas, anchored, changed sails and managed the boat in difficult conditions, able to smile and have a hug at the end of it.

12. And just to round it all off you know you've gone cruising when you're having fun. If you're not having fun, change something because you're not doing it right. The purpose of all this is to have a good time, day after day after day. And when you get back it's quite a shock to find everyone telling you that you have never looked better - we must have looked pretty ghastly when we left!

Go cruising! Have fun! Be bold! And, as Christine says, 'Dwell in Possibility'

So what now for the crew of New Horizons? Well, our shakedown cruise to the Pacific has convinced us that we need to keep going. We have decided that we would like to cruise the Mediterranean and then sail across the Atlantic, down the East Coast of the US through the Panama Canal and back across the Pacific to Australia. Sadly this means we need to sell New Horizons so that we can purchase a boat in Europe. An expensive decision but then that goes with boats doesn't it?! Perhaps that's the last thing we learned that we should pass on. As you prepare your boat you are investing in your life. You won't get your money back but the really good thing is you won't care.

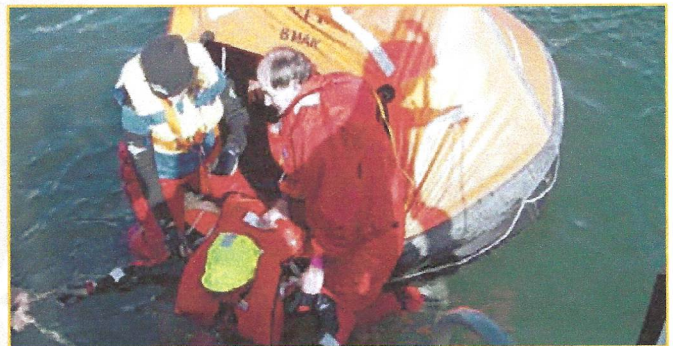
Photography by Paul White.



Sun Kiss underway in the Boxing Day Dash

SEA SAFETY AND SURVIVAL

BY ROBINA SMITH



What was I thinking when I booked Gordo's RYA Sea Safety and Survival course two days after arriving back from six weeks holiday!! However it was a good way to clear the jet lag and get back into cruising mode.

Safety is always our highest priority when we cruise for both the boat and those sailing her. We have all heard some horror stories and hope that firstly we don't ever get into those situations and secondly that we will know what to do if one occurs.

Having completed the course I feel that I am better equipped, but having gained some knowledge it also shows how much more there is to learn. Some more Man Overboard drills are on the agenda when next out on the bay!

What did I learn? Firstly, that I really don't ever want to have to get into a liferaft. I was surprised at how much water there was on the floor of the

liferaft after six people climbed in with full wet weather gear on. It would take a lot of bailing to get rid of the water before even contemplating drying yourself out and that assumes that little has come in from breaking waves. And as for righting a liferaft, hopefully at that point the adrenalin will have kicked in and superhuman efforts will be found. It was also easy to drift away without realising – and that was on a calm day in the Etchell pond!

I was surprised at how much buoyancy there was in the wet weather gear. There was no urgency to inflate the lifejacket as I was floating with the air trapped in the clothing. I had thought this gear would drag me down!

Having done the course it has prompted me to go through the safety equipment on the boat to ensure that it is all in date, up to standard and readily accessible for use. A bit of reorganisation and purchase of grab bag essentials

has been done ready for the Bass Strait Cruise in Company.

While we were in the water Kim Luck set up a Hypo Hoist as a way to retrieve a man overboard. Brenton and I have made various plans as to how to get a MOB back on the boat, especially how I could get 100+ sodden kilos back on board, and Hypo Hoist is one to consider. As the MOB I found it really easy to float into the sling – I only needed the use of one arm to pull myself into the correct position. I believe that a boat hook could be used to position the MOB if they can't do it themselves. The person is then winched on board by being rolled up the side of the boat and under the lower lifeline. I was able to winch two hefty guys on board easily!

I am looking forward to a great summer of cruising and feel more prepared for all eventualities.

BASS STRAIT HERE WE COME!

MEMBER NEWS



Many cruisers have been out and about over the **New Year** period. A good crowd congregated on the RBYC attenuator to watch the New Year's Eve fireworks in Melbourne. Some cruisers attended

the New Year's Day seafood feast at QCYC including Allegresse and Aquarius who had taken up residence along with others who drove down for the day.

Other boats that spent time in Queenscliff over the New Year period were **Sophistique, Tales, Chakana, Sun Kiss, Andalucia and Emma Kate**. **Sun Kiss** reverted to cruising mode after completing the Boxing Day Dash. They had some night time adventures in Blairgowrie when rafted up with a big contingent of boats and the wind changed direction.

Sun Kiss and Thunder enjoyed the hospitality at RGYC in early January.



Will's son Wayne has just completed quite an adventure. He bought a second hand Catalina 38 in the US and sailed it home single handed stopping once in Honolulu. He landed in Bundaberg in early January

after an arduous last week of sailing. He sailed 6400 nautical miles and managed an overall average of almost 100 NM per day. His final words of advice are; 'Always carry more hats, sunglasses, reading glasses and can openers than you first think you will need. 'nuff said?'

Not sure Bundaberg was the safest haven in the recent floods. Amazing pictures on Facebook What happened to my boat with Wayne's boat among them!

The boat yard has also been busy with **Alison and Tom** giving some attention to the underside of **Tales** (Alison is starting a new trend in blue makeup) and **Chakana** having her bottom cleaned ready for the Bass Strait cruise. **Sandy and Rod, Emma Kate** are busy installing solar panels ready for cruising.

RBYC has seen 2 boats head off for the **'Big Adventure'** this year and 1 boat is returning.



Sue and Bryan Drummond, Gypsea Rover cast off their mooring lines on Boxing Day to take advantage of a good weather window for their shakedown cruise to Tasmania. David James, Bronwyne and James Ide were the crew for this first leg. Bryan and Sue are

currently preparing for the trans Tasman leg of their trip and we look forward to following their progress on their blogspot gypsearover.info Articles from the crews joining them would also be welcome by the editor!

Jo and John Walker, Kirra

Kirra sailed from RBYC on Monday 4th February to explore the east coast of Australia. They have left their normal 4 legged crew, Tasha, home in the care of family and have replaced her with Steve Rickson



who will probably be better at standing watches in the Bass Strait. We wish them smooth seas and fair winds (although a catamaran doesn't need the smooth seas as much to keep the wine in the glass!)

Karen and Andrew Parker are meandering their way down the east coast of Australia on **Highland Fling**. They managed to secure an anchorage under Bradleys Head (where it was wall to wall yachts) to have a spectacular view of the New Years Eve fireworks around Sydney Harbour.

From the Editor: There has been a lot of good feedback from readers who enjoy our How I Started Sailing articles. However it is missing this month as I have not had any contributions recently. This is your chance to see your name in print and write up your story. Approx 600 words with possibly a picture dug up from the archives would be great. Thanks for keeping your cruising stories rolling in.

Please email robina_smith@hotmail.com



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY 15TH FEBRUARY

FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speakers: Kerry and Linda McGorlick
Happy Hour by 1700hrs (Sojourn around Australia)

Kerry and Linda circumnavigated Australia on their yacht 'Sojourn' and will entertain us with the 'why's' and 'how's' of their voyage. They will also recount some of their adventures including Cyclone Yasi, navigation in unchartered waters, stories of the people they met along the way and the emotional homecoming in Perth and Melbourne. With their motto of "ladies and gentlemen don't sail to weather", this is sure to be a very entertaining evening!

As usual, gather at the Club about 6.30pm, meal at 7pm, followed by the talk at about 8pm. Please book with the office (95923092) no later than Wednesday February 13th.

23RD FEBRUARY– 10TH / 11TH MARCH ANNUAL BASS STRAIT CRUISE IN COMPANY 2013

Gathering at QCYC on Saturday 23rd February with destination to be decided according to the weather. There has been plenty of interest with 9 boats currently signed up for this cruise. Now all we need is that all important weather window!

FRIDAY 15TH MARCH ANTARCTIC CRUISE

Guest Speakers: Carolyn and Don Warner

Carolyn and Don have just returned from a 20 night Antarctic cruise from Ushuaia to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, Elephant Island, other sub-Antarctic islands and the Antarctic Peninsula. They had a most splendid trip and are very enthused about Antarctica, the incredible wildlife they saw, the remote locations they visited and "re-trekking" part of Sir Ernest Shackleton's crossing of South Georgia between Fortuna Bay and Stromness. They even saw 2 yachts during their visit to the Antarctic Peninsula which had successfully negotiated the Drake Passage.

This promises to be a most interesting talk so mark in your diary now.

FRIDAY 19TH APRIL ANNUAL BOAT PROGRESSIVE DINNER

Always popular- please keep this date free.

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

Starting now you will only receive the colour version of the newsletter by email unless you have notified the RBYC office that you still want the black and white print version. Please let us know if you have had any problems with the delivery of your newsletter. We are endeavouring to get it right but as with all changeovers there is always the possibility something will go awry.

As one prepares to head off into the 'wilds' of Bass Strait (after hopefully a short stay at Queenscliff), one is reminded of the costs of cruising a yacht.



Do I need a wind generator, solar panels, water maker, a tender of what size, davits to hold it, have I enough batteries, enough fridge space, do I need a barge for the wine ??? All this comes at a cost of many 'boat units' (usually \$1000 per unit), before one even considers safety issues.

Many prudent cruisers choose to adopt Yachting Australia's Cat 2 regulations for racing boats and recommendations for cruising boats, for coastal cruising. 'Boat units' will again be contributed for safety items, which is of course a good investment. Items to be considered include life raft, HF Radio, radar, AIS, hand-held VHF radio, storm sails, sea anchors, spare anchor and chain, first aid kit and the list goes on... Yes, my excitement at the thought of going cruising is often dampened by all the stuff one needs, but is always re-kindled by the great time to be had!

Aren't we getting clever at picking the weather - a bold statement I know, as demonstrated by the very successful Birthday Cruise to Royals on the 20th January. What a friendly and sweet (delicious cake) welcome and warm hospitality we received, as always.

Captain Coxswain's Corner

'CUTTING HIS PAINTER'

'Cutting the painter' was originally used to describe the process of making a silent, clandestine departure from a berth to avoid customs or debt collectors etc. Cutting lines and drifting away was presumably quiet compared to the usual hubbub of a legal departure.

Apparently old salts adapted this by changing 'the' to 'his' to describe the departure of a shipmate from this life.