



CRUISING NEWS



OCTOBER 2013

BRENTON AND ROBINA'S HORNPIPE PATAGONIAN SEA ODYSSEY

BY GRANT COLLINS

Will thanking Brenton .



Robina & Brenton; Cape Horn in the background.



At the September Cruising Dinner Brenton Smith entertained us greatly, recounting their voyage in the deep southern latitudes around Beagle Passage near Cape Horn.

I was quietly envious when they described the type of vessel they did the trip in. They had no desire to see that area via a large cruise liner but opted for a much smaller 136 passenger capacity ship (which only had 80 passengers for this particular voyage). I would love to do something similar in that region on such a vessel. The 'Via Australis' drew only 3.3 metres which was ideal for the many narrow, shallow waterways in the area.

The area was first opened up to Europeans when Magellan passed through the strait that now bears his name, in 1520. All subsequent sailors used this strait until the Dutch rounded the Horn in 1616. The HMS Beagle was commissioned by the British Admiralty to chart the islands and area around Cape Horn. The Admiralty also permitted the naturalist Charles Darwin to sail with Captain Robert Fitzroy for this voyage. Fitzroy, a deeply religious creationist must have

had some interesting conversations with the man whose later theories would change the way we perceive the world and even God. The Beagle rounded Cape Horn and chartered a long straight channel that would bear the ship's name. The scenery was spectacular with rugged mountain ranges. Brenton and Robina's great photos certainly confirmed this fact.

The voyage on 'Via Australis' from Punta Arenas to Ushuaia lasted 5 days exploring such areas as Beagle Passage, Glacier Alley and the Tucker Isles Penguin Sanctuary. Birds such as Magellanic Penguins, Skuas and Cormorants were in abundance. Although they didn't see any fish there must have been a lot of fish to support such numbers of fish eating sea birds.

There were numerous shore expeditions in RIBS to many attractions including quite a few stunning glaciers. Many of these are now in retreat due to our changing climate. A dose of warming Scotch would often round off such expeditions. With an average temperature of 5.2 degrees Celsius, I

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would have thought the scotch was well needed. Like many places in the world introduced species are proving a real menace. In this case it is beavers that have wrought havoc in some of the regional forests.

Navigating such enclosed waters meant an auto pilot wasn't used on 'Via Australis', rather the navigator would plot the position every 10 minutes using a radar fix and call the course for the helmsman to steer.

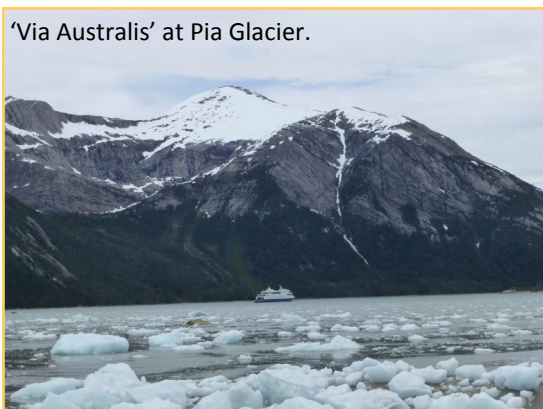
The trip ended at Ushuaia where they discovered the Ushuaia Yacht Club. OK it's cold but in sheltered waters and with an average wind speed of 15 knots things may

not seem too bad after all, but the prevailing winds happen to be the furious fifties – so fifty plus knots or nothing would make for interesting sailing. Many thanks to Brenton for a fascinating evening.

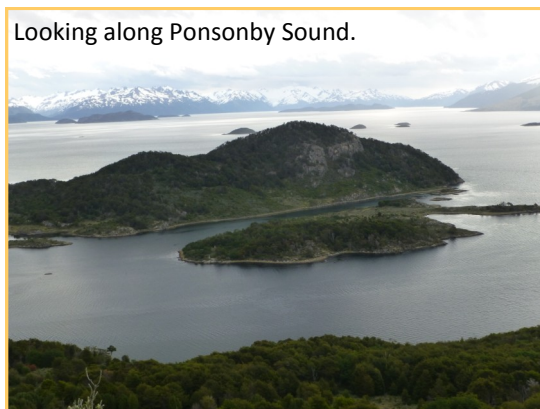
Beagle Footnote: The HMS Beagle made another voyage to Australia under Commander J.L. Stokes in 1839-43. I used the chart which the Beagle surveyed of Western Bass Strait on my first cruise with RBYC in 2002. A testament to the accuracy of that chart, to still be in use until very recently.

Grant Collins

'Via Australis' at Pia Glacier.



Looking along Ponsonby Sound.



JOSH DEACON - RBYC MARINA AND OPERATIONS MANAGER

BY BRENTON SMITH

Josh Deacon being thanked by Will.



Hopefully one of the enduring legacies of Past Commodore Paul Woodman and his committee will be the appointment of Josh Deacon as the Marina and Operations Manager at RBYC. Josh

accepted the invitation to join the monthly dinner of the Cruising Group whose members obviously have a significant interest in the management of the RBYC marina.

Josh brings considerable practical as well as administrative expertise from his previous appointments having worked as a shipwright on wooden and fibreglass boats in Warrnambool and Geelong, and more recently as Dock Master with d'Albora Marinas at Pier 35 and Victoria Harbour where he spent six years. When the opportunity to join RBYC came up he 'jumped at it'.

At RBYC his responsibilities include the marina, hardstand and boat repair yard. Our marina is now 10 years old and so is moving into the phase where sustaining maintenance

is important, and having a person responsible for overseeing the inspection and maintenance works will provide peace of mind.

Decreasing the vacancy rate in both the marina pens (currently 22 of which 16 are 10m pens) and hardstand (11) came across as a strong focus for Josh and will no doubt be a focus for the new committee as well.

Josh brings with him a strong focus on health and safety in the operations of the marina, hardstand and boat repair yard. For us it will mean participating in an induction before doing work on our boats in the yard. For those of us who use the cranes at the hardstand there will be a crane induction. I know that we have been using them for years, but as a person who moves around heavy industry continually, the statistics for crane and hoist mishaps are discomfoting to say the least. A refresher of the safety aspects will do us no harm and probably be good for us.

In the recent inclement weather (68kt gust at the Fawkner) Josh had a busy day at the marina working around the boats and advising problems to owners – a service that we appreciate.

Casual visitors are being encouraged and so we may see more them over the summer months.

Wow! Here we are a major stakeholder in RBYC (i.e. Keel boat owners, the majority of whom are cruisers, contribute most to Club funds) with our Chairman not elected to General Committee (GC). As regular readers are aware, I've often extolled the virtues of democratic processes in any organization. An underlying assumption of this philosophy is that those involved will inform themselves of issues of concern to the organization and vote accordingly. I had assumed that our Chairman, if he so desired, would always easily have the support necessary to be on our GC. Of course you did vote for our Rod, didn't you?

Fortunately our Cruising Group Charter allows us to select our own Chairperson who is not neces-

sarily required to be on GC. Rod is therefore able to continue in this role for as long as his huge (as distinct from tiny) heart desires. I am assuming that GC is not about to revoke our Charter.

Hopefully our Group will continue to function as a happy, friendly element within RBYC so that we can continue to enjoy following our chosen sailing interests. Remember we still have ways to make you enjoy yourselves. (Wicked chuckle offstage.)

William Merritt Esquire.

**Will's
Wise Words**

2013 Island Cruising Association (ICA) Rally: Cruising on *Gypsea Rover*

by Angie Wharton

Muscat Cove, Fiji to Pt Vila, Vanuatu – August 2013

Sailing in the wake of Captain Cook's amazing journeys would surely fire most people's imagination. It certainly did for me! But unlike Cook, we had state-of-the-art technology – instead of only compass, lead line, clock and sextant, our tools included the Rocket and Tusker Guides to Vanuatu, radar, autopilot, satellite – plus all the creature comforts.

Gypsea Rover is a Hylas 54, cutter-rigged sloop with a reinforced solid fibreglass hull. She has a 4.8m beam, 2.1m draft and a displacement of 22 tons. With water, wind, solar and diesel generators, we had power for all life's luxuries, including a desalinator which meant that we had constant fresh water and hot showers. Life doesn't get any better than this at sea. To cap it off, I revelled in the delightful company of the owners, Bryan and Sue Drummond, plus David Webb and Susan Tuma.

Triathletes: David, Susan, Sue, Bryan & Angie.



The crew joined the boat at the Fijian Muscat Cove Island Resort, where Sue welcomed us with leis of hibiscus flowers. We needed the right weather to sail to Vanuatu, so while wait-

ing, a triathlon (running/swimming/ kayaking) was organised for all the rally crews. Our crew had special skills. David, our runner, had to run with a sarong tied between his legs. Sue and Susan shared the swim section, while Bryan and I paddled furiously, chanting "gin rummy" over and over. Other activities included a catamaran challenge, coral reef snorkelling and exploring the rock pools around the island -- wonderful colours of corals, nudibranchs and starfish, and even a stingray.

At last, a favourable wind from the SSE at 12-20 knots. Having cleared customs, the fleet of 22 yachts set sail in a Passage Race to Anatom. It was truly a majestic sight. Sue was perched on the pulpit on reef watch. After 30 hours, averaging about 7.6 knots, we arrived at Anatom, Vanuatu, anchoring in a turquoise bay between Mystery Island and the mainland.

Bryan set the Rover Rider which reduces motoring at anchor. The custom officers were on the job at 0800. We then motored ashore in the tender and, as it was Assumption Day, the head teacher, Webster, was free to show us his school and receive our gifts. As a fun gift from Australia, Susan had linked



Reef watch.

colourful textas to form a 2-metre rainbow serpent for the children.

Webster led us through the village of grass huts where we saw timber curing in a 10m dugout canoe.

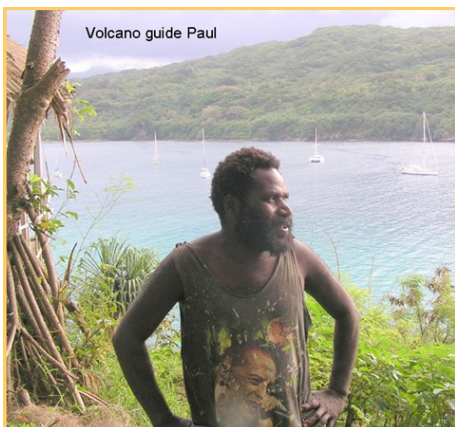
That evening, the traditional sundowners were enjoyed on Mystery Island, used by cruise ships to give the passengers the tropical island experience. The island is surrounded by a tropical reef, has an airstrip and shelters for selling the villagers' artefacts. Next morning, we left the magical island of Anatom to sail to the next island north, Tanna. As we approached the island with its active volcano gently puffing black, then white smoke, it seemed so very appropriate that Sue read to us from Captain Cook's diary.



A local fisherman in his dugout canoe welcomed us to Resolution Bay on the east coast. After dropping the anchor in 2m of clear water next to yachts *Alibi* and *True Blue*,

we went ashore to the quaint Port Resolution Yacht Club, decorated with flags from yacht clubs around the world.

At dusk, we travelled by a 4-wheel drive ute up to the volcano. (Cook wasn't so lucky as he was forbidden to climb the volcano by the unfriendly village folk.) A bumpy dirt road led us past huge banyan trees and lush vegetation. Pigs, people and dogs from small villages scattered everywhere in the wake of our vehicle. It was dark by the time we arrived at Mt Yasur. I clung onto Paul, our guide, my teeth chattering like castanets as we climbed up to the rim. Every minute there would be a loud rumble and then a blasting sound, as molten rock shot towards the heavens. Sparks flew everywhere and liquid magna would change shape in

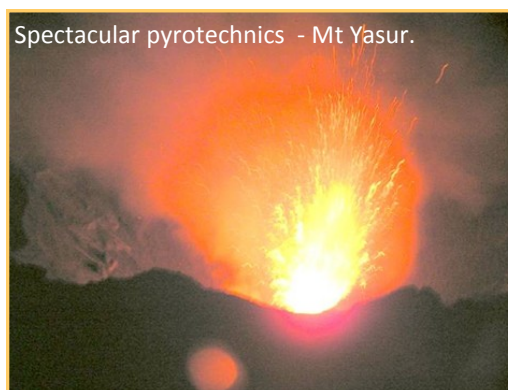


Volcano guide Paul

the air before falling back into the cone. Fortunately, none fell on us. (This volcano was rated at Level 2. Levels 3 and 4 are too dangerous for people to be near the rim.)

The next morning, after protein pancakes with pineapple and yoghurt cooked by David and Susan, we went ashore in the dinghy, dodging coral bommies in the shallow water. We roamed around the village, meeting the locals and photographing their huts. Each family had three huts –

one for sleeping, one for cooking and one for socialising. They were so proud of their water pump, provided by some Aus-sies. I took a photo of Miriam and her two girls, wearing grass skirts. These were worn for the John Frum Cargo Cult dancing on Friday nights.



The local community benefited big time as we bought up local artefacts at the community shed. Sue bought bows and arrows for repelling pirates! After drinking Tanna coffee at Sarah's restaurant and visiting the local school and church, we returned to *Gypsea Rover* for sundowners. The local children fished from dugout canoes nearby, their anchors rocks, encased by vines.

The next morning we went ashore to leave our marks in the Visitors' Book as well as donating a RBYC burgee at the yacht club. Time to leave Tanna. The volcano was puffing gently with cumulous clouds hovering around the rim, the hills were green and the sea was smooth. We were sad to leave this beautiful island and its welcoming population.



We sailed overnight to Port Vila and on my midnight watch, I was entranced by the almost full moon dancing on the waves of the ink black sea. On our arrival at 0800, the morning sun highlighted the bures opposite the picturesque marina, and coconut palms lined the shore. After being signed off as crew, we all scattered in different directions – several of us to the market to buy gifts. The highlight of my afternoon was spending three hours in the local museum. Here I could indulge my interest in the culture of the Melanesian people of Vanuatu.

Having seen carved Tam Tams from Ambryn, burial effigies made of mud and painted in orange, black and white, bamboo xylophones and ancient ceramics, I returned to *Gypsea Rover* to pick up my gear – where Bryan and Sue were welcoming the new crew, Will and Pamela Merritt. My fascinating voyage was at an end – an unforgettable experience to reflect on all my life.

PUSHING BRYAN'S BUTTONS (while cruising Vanuatu!)

BY PAM MERRITT



Bryan's new red ensign

In August we had the privilege of becoming part of *Gypsea Rover's* South Pacific Rally crew. By the time Bryan and Sue return to Australia in November they will have had 21 RBYC members on board for part of the journey, as well as

quite a few 'non-yachtie' friends.

We joined *Gypsea Rover* in Port Vila, Vanuatu with the plan to cruise north to the diving mecca of Espiritu Santo, visiting isolated islands along the way over about 12 days. We were joined by Jenny and Ed Hassett, friends of Bryan and Sue, who quickly confessed to a lack of sailing experience. What they lacked in experience they made up for in enthusiasm, good humour, galley skills and fishing expertise. On arrival we were dispatched, with large bags and shopping list, to the foreshore fruit and vegie market to stock up for the next couple of weeks. What an experience – amazing displays of a huge variety of local produce, but best to have the correct money as change was not freely forthcoming.

Our first sail was a mere hour away to Mele Bay on Efate Island – a very gentle introduction to *Gypsea* cruising, with excellent snorkelling just off nearby Hideaway Island. Then disaster struck! Our fearless captain, Sue, developed a tooth problem which appeared to require specialist treatment not readily available in Port Vila. A quick trip back to Melbourne was organised. So there we were, 5 of us, all at sea on a ship without a captain! First Mate Bryan quickly stepped into the breach and took control. He looked after us 'Admirably' - and we tried to look after him. Sue gave Jenny and I a brief galley tour before she left, but our saviour turned out to be the 'Gypsea Rover Food Map' which helped navigate us to any supplies we required. (Luckily Sue's tooth problem turned out to be no more than referred pain from a serious sinus infection).

As we sailed north towards Santo we anchored at Havannah Harbour, Port Revolieu (Epi Island), Port Sandwich and Port Stanley (Malekula Island) and on to Palekula Bay, near Luganville, Santo – altogether about 300 nautical miles. The prevailing south easterly was behind us all the way, with some excellent sailing. Our longest passage of 60nm from Havannah

Harbour to Epi Island was an exhilarating sail, averaging 7.8 knots with full main and genoa. Now 'sailing' *Gypsea Rover* is not too strenuous - main in or out, headie furled or unfurled, eased or tightened – all at the press of a



Port Sandwich

button. Must say our fingers did get a little sore from so much button pressing! Even the dinghy is raised and lowered on davits by pressing buttons! Then there was the Soda Stream machine with fresh bottles of 'mixers' at the press of a button, and the coffee machine – a couple more buttons to press there. Even more buttons to press on the washing machine! We all liked Pushing Bryan's Buttons! Certainly takes cruising to a new level for us Andalucians.

There were many great experiences along the way. At Havannah Harbour we anchored near a very impressive looking 55 metre yacht '*Blue Gold*'. That evening the request by a couple of locals in a dinghy for some petrol, which Bryan gave them, was rewarded with a bag of fresh tomatoes and an invitation to visit '*Blue Gold*' next morning. What an amazing yacht, with an equally amazing history. Sadly, it's now looking a bit tired and it'd be easy to spend a spare million or two bringing it up to scratch.



Bryan, Ed, Will on *Blue Gold*



Blue Gold

Onshore local villagers were friendly and welcoming with big happy smiles. Village life is basic, with generally no power, running water or other modern amenities. Cows, chooks and pigs roam freely, coconuts and bananas grow abundantly. Transport



Local family, Port Revolieu.

is by open truck or walking along the dusty roads. Everywhere there is smoke rising from the hillsides from cooking fires. The scenery is truly beautiful, mountainous with lush tropical vegetation and mangrove lined secluded bays and beaches. The water is warm, crystal clear and perfect for swimming, except at Port Sandwich where we were warned about the legendary resident shark!! Onshore here, at the Rainbow Store 'shop' (which curiously didn't seem to sell anything), we met local identity Rock, who was a mine of information (pardon the pun) on local history and politics. We also met Charlie, the local school principal, and gave



Locals - Port Sandwich



Ed's Spanish mackerel

him a bag of school books, pencils, textas etc for which he was grateful. School supplies on these islands are hard to get.

Ed's initial fishing efforts resulted in a broken rod and lost lure while sailing

at 8.5 knots towards Epi Island. Then great excitement a couple of days later when he caught a 9kg Spanish mackerel as we entered Port Sandwich. "Looks a bit too big for us to deal with," said Captain Bryan (and it was), so we took it ashore and gave it to Jimmy and Moses who were delighted, and it probably fed the whole village that night.



Those bananas.

When we returned from our walk Moses was waiting for us on the beach with a huge sack of green bananas, still green when we left the boat a few days later. We gave bananas away to other boats anchored nearby, including a Japanese solo sailor, Nishi, in his Jeanneau called 'Next'.

Ed's next haul was a 5kg blue fin tuna which we kept, cooked and enjoyed.

At Santo we anchored near Luganville in beautiful Palekula Bay. John, the Rally Coordinator, came out in his dinghy to

guide us through the very tricky entry amongst coral reefs and bommies. There were several yachts already there including other rally boats, and our Japanese friend in 'Next'. Soon after we arrived he dinghied over and gave us a large chunk of the Spanish mackerel he'd just caught in return for the bananas we'd given him – (hang on, we were given those bananas for our Spanish Mackerel, what goes around.....etc etc)

We left *Gypsea Rover* in Santo and flew back to Port Vila for a few more days of sun and relaxation.

Bryan and Sue are amazingly generous with their beautiful boat, giving so many the opportunity to experience some overseas cruising on magnificent South Pacific islands, not to mention the chance to escape Melbourne's wintry weather for a couple of weeks. We'll hopefully look forward to a Cruising Group talk early next year!



Port Sandwich



Jenny aboard *Gypsea*.



Sundowners!

POSTCARD FROM ISABELLA

A quick update from Michael White and Christine Edwards, *New Horizons* as they have disappeared over the horizon....

'After 5000 miles through the Pacific in 2012 we returned to Australian shores last December as part of the Port to Port rally from Vanuatu to Bundaberg. Then we sailed to Sydney to spend Christmas with family and friends. The bug to sail and travel was still with us and so we made plans for our next adventure. We were booked for the Darwin to Indonesia rally but changed our minds and decided on.....the Mediterranean! We parked the beautiful *New Horizons* in Sydney and headed for Spain where we bought *Isabella* - a Contest 43. So far we have stayed in the south of Spain and expect to finish in

Sardina before heading back to Australia in November. Hopefully we can catch up with friends over a drink at a Cruising Group dinner over the summer months.'



Isabella

TALL SHIPS ON THE BAY



On 14th September the Tall Ships that had been in Melbourne for the Tall Ship Festival at Williamstown sailed down the bay. Even though they were heading into the wind, they hoisted all sail to create a fabulous spectacle.

On 14th September the Tall Ships that had been in Melbourne for the Tall Ship Festival at Williamstown sailed down the bay. Even though they were heading into the wind, they hoisted all sail to create a fabulous spectacle.



Many boats from the northern end of the bay joined the procession with *Chakana* snapping *Andalucia* motoring in for a closer look.

WANTED: NEW EDITOR

Due to the current editor planning on sailing out of the heads next February and turning left without a backward glance (after joining the Cruising Group for the Annual Bass Strait Cruise) this newsletter is in need of a new editor and a layout person.

Skills needed: An ability to twist peoples arms for contributions and make sure there is enough content for the layout person! Actually, the articles usually roll in as the cruising group must like seeing their names in print!

Layout person: I have been using Publisher and can provide templates and training. I started with a rudimentary knowledge of how to use Publisher having done a few worksheets for school and taught (they taught me!) a few computer lessons with upper primary age children. My own children have been an invaluable resource.

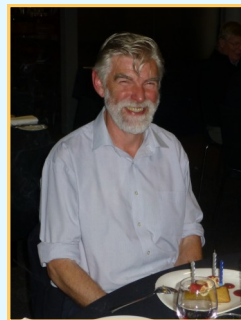
If you have an interest in either or both positions please see a member of the Cruising Committee or Robina Smith, the current editor.

MEMBER NEWS

Cruising Committee welcomes **Kathy De Garis** as our liaison person on General Committee.

.....
Stuart and Magdalena Hall, **Smiley**, a 37' sailing catamaran joined us for the last cruising dinner. They have sailed from Perth to Melbourne via 'The Top' and we hope they continue to attend cruising group gatherings to share their experiences.

.....
Jo and John Walker, Kirra Kirra, are currently enjoying the warmth and fishing amongst the Whitsundays. Snorkelling the coral reefs and meeting up with sailing and cruising friends have been highlights.



.....
Tom Hinton celebrated his 60th birthday at the September Cruising Forum.

He and Alison have spent a couple of weeks on their new boat currently moored at Mooloolaba.

Ideas for a Cruising Project.

.....
The Cruising Group is in need of some ideas for their next Cruising Project. Previous projects have included the fire-place in the Members Bar, purchase of a Sabot and contributing to the fitting out of the First Aid hut.

If you have an idea let Rod or one of the committee know.

.....
For Sale. 27kg genuine Delta anchor. \$275ono. Contact Brenton Smith, **Chakana**, 0417 773 687.

.....
Please keep your cruising stories and 'How I Started Sailing' contributions rolling in. This newsletter relies on a flow of member contributions.

NOTICEBOARD

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY 18th OCTOBER FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speakers: Lou and Marnie Irving
Circumnavigation of Tasmania

In February 2013 Lou and Marnie Irving in *Cavarlo*, a Cavalier 395, joined a fleet of 37 cruising yachts and motor cruisers for the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania's Van Diemens Land Circumnavigation Cruise.

As usual, gather at the Club about 6.30pm, member draw in Members Bar at 7pm, meal at 7.15pm, followed by the talk at about 8.15pm.

Please book with the office (95923092) no later than Wednesday October 16th.

SATURDAY 26th OCTOBER INGENUE RACE FOR CRUISERS

This is the first in a series of three long races to encourage non-racing boats to have a go at racing.

The format will be a morning centre course start, passage race with a tower finish. Use the RBYC online entry system.

We encourage cruisers to participate. As there is a Club Marine on the same day the real racers won't be competing with us for space on the start line.

MELBOURNE CUP WEEKEND 2nd - 5th NOVEMBER END OF MONTH ON WATER ACTIVITY

The plan is to sail to Queenscliff Yacht Club on Saturday 2nd November. On Sunday we will sail around the Bellarine Peninsula to Geelong and see what happens from there. Of course, being cruisers this is all weather dependant!

Contact Robina Smith (robina_smith@hotmail.com) to register your interest and we can then update you with more details.

SATURDAY 9th/30th NOVEMBER INGENUE RACES FOR CRUISERS

FRIDAY 15th NOVEMBER FORUM DINNER MEETING

Bloopers/Shipwreck night.

Dress as you were when the ship went down. Prizes for costumes. A fun night!

SATURDAY 16th NOVEMBER HMAS GOORANGAI TROPHY RACE from RBYC to Queenscliff YC with QCYC Opening Day on 17th Nov

CRUISING ALONG

Chair Chat

The club elections have resulted in me, cruising chair, not being elected to General Committee. Whilst disappointing that cruising will not be directly represented on General Committee, the cruising group will continue cruising along. Cruising subcommittee will have a general committee member, Kathy De Garis, to liaise with General Committee, which should deal with all matters.

I like a few other cruisers have spent some time with *Gypsea Rover*. We spent some time in Vanuatu and did a bumpy crossing to Lifou in New Caledonia. A beautiful part of the world with great lagoons, culture, scenery and its always fun and entertaining with Bryan and Sue.



Captain Coxswain's Corner

'GLASS'

Here, me hearty's, ye'll no be bein' daft will yer? O'im never speak'n 'bout stuff in winders of lubbers. Oi be talk'n 'bout sail'n ships in olden days. Bit confus'n back then. Officers said things like;

"fetch m' 'glass' so oi cn see 'is colours."
mean'n telescope.

"Looks bad. T' 'glass' be fall'n " mean'n barometer.

"We be wait'n four turns of 'glass' f tide"
mean'n hour glass.

Now, oi ask yer, 'ows a simple sailor frum lower deck supposed t' follow orders when they're so con fus'n.