ROYAL BRIGHTON YACHT CLUB CRUISING GROUP



CRUISING NEWS



NOVEMBER 2013

ROUND THE APPLE ISLE

WITH LOU AND MARNIE IRVING

BY BRENTON SMITH





Lou and Marnie Irving sail *Cavarlo*, a Cavalier 395, which has a proven record as a fine sea boat with a previous version having taken Kay Cottee around the world in her non-stop circumnavigation via the southern capes. Not doing anything by halves Lou and Marnie decided to do some training for a cruising lifestyle by racing in the Melbourne to Hobart, firstly on the Eastcoaster in 2011 and then the Westcoaster in 2012. Recruiting some experienced sailors such as David Bingham, Rosie Colahan and Sally Williams as mentors provided a steep learning curve for them.

Following the 2012 west coaster, Lou and Marnie changed *Cavarlo* from a racing boat to a cruiser; which included much more fuel and 50m of anchor chain. They joined the biennial round Tasmania cruise that is organised by Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania (RYCT). Part of participating in the cruise is set-

ting the boat to meet Cat II safety requirements plus a few extras such as HF radio and there must be at least two experienced ocean sailors on board. Lou and Marnie recruited Peter and Susie Strain, Will and Margie Twycross and Steve Rodgers-Wilson for various parts of the 5 week long cruise.

All up there were around 40 boats, although not all did the full circumnavigation, many of them two-up cruising couples. The latter group tended to have large, heavy, powerful boats that while not being able to point to windward quite as well, could still make good progress and keep up with the 'faster' boats.

The RYCT circumnavigation cruise is always in February-March because this is when the weather is normally at its mildest, and this proved to be the case in 2013, when it was milder than normal. Better to be lucky than rich when it

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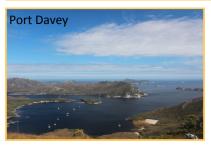
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comes to sailing around Tasmania!

The circumnavigation is done anticlockwise, starting from Sandy Bay and proceeding around Tassie via the Hole in

the Wall, Pt Arthur, Maria Island, Wineglass Bay, Beauty Point, Stanley, Hunter Group, and then through the Hell's Gates into Macquarie Harbour on the west coast.

Lou, Marnie and crew proved to be excellent photographers with some stunning photos to tempt us to consider cruising south, particularly on the wild west coast. We have all heard stories about the legendary beauty in Macquarie Harbour and Pt Davey, but to see it captured by fellow cruisers makes it that much more special. These are both several times larger than Sydney Harbour, totally unspoilt and shared with practically no-one else. While in Pt Davey the wind gusts reached 50 knots and Lou's response is that next time there will be 100m of anchor chain in the locker, not 50m!



After a very lumpy exit from Pt Davey, it was a short cruise around South West Cape to the D'Entrecasteaux to Hobart.

Weather is obviously the biggest factor

when making decisions about sailing or not as they moved around the coast. In addition to the regular forecasts the RYCT cruise benefits greatly by the local



interpretation of the information based on formidable amounts of experience in Tasmanian waters. The cruise leaders would not provide advice, it is up to each skipper to make their own decisions, but they did share freely their day-to-day plans from which Lou and Marnie could draw their own conclusions.

As many cruisers would know, and particularly in this day of reliable diesel engines, cruising is often a lot of motor sailing. Next time there will be more fuel on board.

Tasmania is remote, particularly the west coast, and Lou, Marnie and crew found themselves out of contact with the rest of the world for days at a time. The discussions into the evening, and walks amongst some of the most remote natural beauty in the world, led to re-affirmation of long-

standing friendships and relationships – all good portents for their next cruise as part of the 2015 RYCT circumnavigation cruise. *Cavarlo* is moored at Kettering, waiting patiently.



Here we are dear cruising companions, just back from a short nine day cruise. We covered approximately 800nm in eight days. We enjoyed four stopovers at scenic sites with water views, drinks at sundown, pleasant company and much frivolity. No, no, not on the boat. We've been off in our 'A' van again. We travelled a stretch of the Murray River with the 'A' van Club. Members with more time to fill were actually following the River from source to sea.

I realize that all our readers are very young at heart and will never retire from blue water cruising. In fact we can take a salutary warning from an incident whereby one of our Cruisers very recently had a visit at sea from a helicopter to transport a seriously ill crew member back to shore for treatment. This incident set me to thinking about planning for retirement from 'offshore' cruising. I guess we've all encountered people who have retired from one or other of life's activities without a PLAN! These hapless individuals often appear to be rudderless. (As yachties you will doubtless appreciate this analogy.)

It seems to me that a cruising yachtic could do worse than taking up vanning, which is akin to yacht cruising without some of the problems.



Why, you might even find a use for some of your sailing skills. Setting up or lowering an annex from the peak of a standard 'A' van is not very convenient. Yours truly realized that adding a simple halyard would greatly simplify the procedure. Our fellow travelers were so impressed. I thought it best not to detract from my moment of glory by revealing that yachties use halyards to raise sails all the time.

I also use a 'Handy Billy' (see Captain Cox) to single handedly move the van around in our front yard. Perhaps on the next trip I could rig the van with mast and sails.

Will Merritt

HOW I STARTED SAILING

BY DAVID BINGHAM



When I was just a little boy my father (henceforth referred to as the Old Man) came to me and said, "You would make a fine bilge boy and general rouseabout on the yacht I am sailing on," (he could have added "and that will relieve your mother and allow me to go sailing.") and so, starting at the very bottom of the heap, I became a sailor.

Oimara is a 42 foot timber ketch that took part in various Bass Strait races and the first trans-Tasman race in 1931 with its then owner Frank 'Doc' Bennell. *Oimara* is on the register of historic vessels having been built in Tasmania in 1903.

When I joined her she was owned by 'Doc's' son 'Bushy' and although beyond ocean racing, she was still being actively sailed out of what was then the Royal St. Kilda Yacht Club with a crew of characters. As general dogsbody I helped with whatever job didn't need strength but my primary job was to retire to the engine room and sit beside the diesel and pump the bilge when we returned to the mooring and gently rolled in the swell. There wasn't a lot of room!



Having thus proved myself I joined the Cadets and, after serving a short time as 'volunteer' in the tower, joined the crew of *EB* as for'd hand. As we lived in East Brighton getting to St. Kilda initially meant being driven by the Old Man but by 14 I was allowed to ride my bike (in those days one of the summer sports available Wednesday afternoons to Brighton Tech. students was ice skating at the Saint Moritz on the Upper Esplanade as long as you were prepared to ride your bike so riding to St. Kilda became second nature). Riding home after a Saturday afternoon race could end up being pretty late. By not making too many stuff-ups I was eventually appointed a skipper; king at last! Came 1955 and I was

given the opportunity to sail in the Stonehaven Cup that was held in Perth as the RStKYC representative. I was for'd hand on the RBYC dinghy *Nocroo* with Norm Baker (RBYC member). Learned quite a bit and had a good time, particularly as you could get your driving licence at the age of 17 over there so some of the boys (no girls) were mobile.

Soon after this there was a significant change in my sailing life as the Old Man had a row with the powers that be at St. Kilda and he left, taking me with him to RBYC with the bribe of buying a new dinghy so along came *Shmohawk* from the loving hands of Jack Gutierrez with a new set of cotton sails from Bob Keeley (80+ and still going). Won the V3 spot in the Stonehaven selection series in 1957 but had the chance to go over to South Africa to work for three months so chose that option. Sailed over in the QSMV Dominion Monarch with my Uncle Tom. Not a bad trip but the poor old girl's engines had been worn out working as a troopship in the war.

On my return being now too old for Cadets I stuffed around for a while and then the Old Man bought *Vega* from Ken Lacey. *Vega* was a Star class yacht that hadn't been sailed for some time but was in good nick so my old friend Doug Scotcher and I started racing her as the Stars were undergoing something of a revival on Port Phillip at that time. As it happened *Vega* was the only one of the fleet with a valid measurement certificate. Interesting boats to sail in a typical Saturday afternoon sou'wester but good practice sailing through the moorings and shooting up to ours. (While I was away brother Laurence sailed *Vega* until he managed to lose the mast, a tall spindly wooden model with 2mm solid wire rigging and the need to work the runners carefully. She was given to a friend to sail on Lake Hume.)

In between came the 1960 Olympic Games and I sailed as main hand with Jock Sturrock and Ernie Wagstaff in the 5.5 metre yacht *Buraddoo* with which Jock had won the bronze

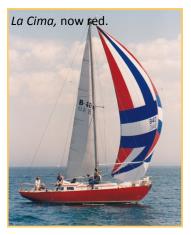
medal in Melbourne. We won the Australian championships in Sydney and then the Olympic trials held on Port Phillip before heading over to Naples where the sailing was held. Managed a tenth out of nineteen in the very light conditions on the Bay of Naples. A third in the only race with a decent breeze was our best result.

Then along came *La Cima*, the Old Man's 33ft Alden designed 'Puffin' class



cruising yacht built by Jack Gutierrez, and launched just before I went over to Los Angeles to study electronic engineering. This put an end to sailing for a while.

Off to USA in 1963 then back via England and Germany to start sailing again in 1965. (Met Lyn in London on my way back home). Unfortunately this meant I couldn't meet Lyn on her return from U.K. as I had to install an HF radio in La Cima before we, the Old Man, Bushy Bennell, myself and another, went on my first cruise in Bass Strait.



Unstructured cruising around Bass Strait and the bay followed for a while before I started racing her (in the mid 1980's) Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. (Yes we had winter Sunday morning racing for a while; just the thing to clear the head after Saturday night). Due to mobility problems the Old see them arrive. Man had to give up sail-

ing but over the next few years I cruised almost every nook and cranny between Macquarie Harbour to Portland in the west to Wilson's Prom. to Vansittart Island and the north coast of Tasmania; always with a crew of three friends with plenty of adventures.

As 1990 was a good year for my company I decided to up size the transport and bought *Amaya*, a lovely burgundy Farr 11.6 located at the CYCA in Sydney. A friend Philip Costello managed to arrange a Wills Shipping head office car to come to Melbourne so with this, and a one way trailer hire, five of us set off to Sydney one Friday night after work to return it and collect the yacht. Arriving very early Saturday morning we found the broker's dinghy OK but not the promised oars! Hand paddled out and brought Amaya alongside, convinced security we were honest citizens and loading the yacht, not our trailer. Slept on board and spent the remainder of Saturday preparing to start the journey south on Sunday. The trip went well until, after leaving Eden in light winds an un-forecast stiff south-Westerly blew up and we tore the main when bungling the reefing process. Not to worry! Reaching Hogan Is. we stopped to rest for a day while Hogan Island Sailmakers repaired the sail.

(These blokes also did a great job in repairing the main after we speared it with the spinnaker pole during a night time exercise in the '99 Sydney-Hobart). Approaching the Prom with night coming on and the promise of the wind building again I went forward to check that all was clear to reef should that become necessary. Unfortunately as I leaned down to unclip myself for the return a large wave caught me and bashed my head into the side of the mast. I went down for the count! Of course the on watch in the cockpit lost sight of me and one hurried forward and found me lying on the deck. I came to with a concerned John Harrap trying to

determine whether I was dead or not, worried about performing a burial at sea as per our Ship's Captains Medical Guide. I was OK but my ankle was broken so I was sent below to do nothing more useful than offer sage advice for the rest of the trip. It was decided to unload me at Flinders where we couldn't raise Lyn but the wife of one of the crew,

Alma Barron, volunteered to come and drive me to Monash Hospital. The boys then decided to take Amaya to Hastings and go home from there. One Saturday a week or two later they went back and brought her into Brighton. Lyn wheeled me out to the marina in a wheel barrow to (An interesting



point to that voyage was that Bill C. decided when rigging up to leave that there would be no need to have a weather jib sheet so they didn't and sailed all the way to Brighton on starboard tack).

Of course we started round the sticks racing and continued cruising but the ocean racing bug caught and in December 1991 we completed the Devonport race. Although we had plenty of Bass Strait experience on board only one crewman had actually done an ocean race and Sea Safety Survival Certificates weren't heard of. Would they let us start today? In 1993 I was embarrassed into buying a GPS when the ocean racing fleet began to report their positions giving lat. & long. and we continued with "approximately 20 nm SSE of the Prom".

Amaya's speed allowed cruising further afield and the longer Melbourne-Hobart, Sydney-Hobart (1999 and 2000) and Adelaide-Port Lincoln races and a cruise to New Zealand in 2000 to watch the America's Cup racing. After 16 years of getting our money's worth from Amaya Lyn and I decided that old age required something that could have the same sort of use but heavier for stability and with some extra comfort and so we bought Mirrabooka, a Jeaneau Sunfast

42, in 2005. Amaya was sold to Townsville where the owner has recently put her on the market again.

Over the past eight years Mirrabooka has raced extensively, both ocean and bay racing and the Vanuatu race in 2010 and has participated in most of the Bass Strait cruises.



VANUATU ADVENTURE ON CHIMERE

BY SALLY SPENCER

This is the tale of a first timer on a long passage so for all you seasoned ocean sailors please excuse me if my observations are 'run of the mill'.

VANUATU TORBA Torres Islands Vanua Lava Island BANKS
ISLANDS SANMA Gaua Island PROVINCE Espiritu Santo Island Island Maewo Island Luganville o Pentecost Island Ambrym Island Island Epi Island MALAMPA PROVINCE SHEPHERD ISLANDS Efate Island SHEFA PROVINCE Port Vila Erromango Island Tanna 150 km Aneityum Island

With Vanuatu consisting of 83 islands spread out over approx 850 km, those who visit by boat are likely to have very different experiences.

Ours was on the yacht *Chimere* which is a 53 ft round bilge steel cutter on loan to Medical Sailing Ministries used for transport of medical aid to remote villages in Vanuatu. This year *Chimere* was used in 3 missions to villages of the Shepherd, Banks and Torres groups of islands. For each mission on board was a doctor, dentist, optician, 2 Nivan nurses and 2 Nivan dental workers and 4-5 crew. We had heard of the mission from a doctor friend and our role began at the end of the third mission on 16th September.

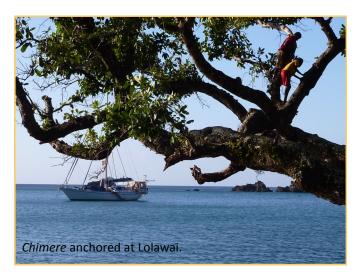
After 4 flights from Melbourne to Loh in the northernmost group of the Torres Islands, we literally stepped off the 10 seater plane picked up our bags, greeted the 6 who were flying out and walked 200 meters to the beach where we climbed into a dinghy to board Chimere in a bouncy sea to begin the task of helping bring the yacht back to Port Vila. Since the south easterlies were still strong and Port Vila was to the south east we headed south and next morning saw the north western tip of Espiruto Santo and proceeded down the west coast. In the afternoon the sea yielded its treasure in the form of a large Wahoo or Mahi Mahi which gave us a tasty dinner that night and some for the fridge. At 3.00 am next morning, as we were heading along the southern coast of Santo and it was time for our watch, David and I saw a light flashing through the overhead hatch of our cabin and thought that it was the previous watch shining a torch to wake us. However, when we came on deck, we found out that we

were in the midst of a thunderstorm. Horizontal rain and squalls made lowering the mainsail to enter the Segond Channel to Luganville a real challenge.

After recuperating and restocking in Luganville, we headed ENE along the coast of Ambae (said to have inspired James A Michener who lived in Luganville, as the misty Bali Hai in his book, Tales of the South Pacific). We anchored by the picturesque village of Lolowai once we had negotiated the coral across the entrance to the bay. One of our most memorable village experiences was at pretty Asanvari at the bottom end of Maewo Island. The day happened to be the 100th after Chief Nelson's death and as we paid our respects we were made very welcome and the men folk were invited into the Nakamal (meeting house) where a pig was being roasted in a pit in the middle and kava was being prepared and consumed around the outside. David partook but did not go back for a second one! In the afternoon we had a swim at the base of a waterfall in an area where an entrepreneurial Nivan had set up a bar and patio and had even provided a place for yachts to moor dinghies.

Proceeding south we sailed along the western coast of Pente-cost Island as close to the land as possible and anchored at Nopul on the north western tip of Ambryn Island. Although it was a grey showery day, it was interesting to see the villages and the coconut palms in rows of plantations against a background of crisscrossing razor backed ridges and mountains. The exposed waters between the islands provided some more challenging sailing.

We would have liked to have gone ashore there next day as Skipper Rob had a contact there but with a strong northwest-erly change predicted we headed south. That change lasted only a few minutes before a violent SW squall hit. David and I had gone off watch and were down below and being in the middle of Chimere's 30 tons we only experienced some listing



and not the difficulties of the others in trying to reef the main and furl the headsail. Finding a lunchtime anchorage enabled us to provide our cold and wet companions some hot soup and baked beans on toast, (not quite the tropical paradise in the brochure!) However the seas settled down and we decided that with a southerly wind blowing, Port Sandwich on the SE corner of Malekula Island would be a suitable anchorage we could reach in the direction of Port Vila before dark. Although the sea was confused it again yielded its treasure in the form of a medium size tuna (enough for 5 lovely fish steaks that night) and then a short time later a large Mahi Mahi (for the freezer). Anchoring is recommended in the daylight which was rapidly fading for us but fortunately Matt standing partway up the mast spotted a large lump of coral shouted FULL REVERSE and Cathy on the helm quickly complied.

It took us a full day of sailing and motor sailing to reach Port Vila along the south western coast of Epi Island and going to the east of Emae Island. What amazed us were the pinnacles of rock on the horizon (like the Glasshouse Mountains of Southern Queensland without the land). The sun was rising when we followed the Pacific Jewel into the harbor and moored at Waterfront Marina where we spent 2 weeks during which we helped out with a 'Supporters Tour' and explored some of the sights of Efate Island.

Tuesday 8th October was departure day for the journey back to Australia. Food supplies were topped up, 1300 litres of diesel were taken on board and the second gas bottle refilled. The decision was made to go around the northern end of New Caledonia because of a better wind angle for sailing. However I suspect that the southern route would have been more scenic, We went through 'The Grand Passage' at night which was only notable for what we did not see i.e. coral reefs on either side. We saw nothing for 5 days (but were entertained by tales from one of our crew who worked for AMSA and our skipper with his experiences of being race officer at CYC). Then nearing our halfway point we saw 2 birds, the *Pacific Dawn* heading towards Noumea and the yacht *Solstice* heading towards Brisbane - we were not alone!

From then on there was more action. The automatic helm stopped working. Our resourceful skipper climbed under the cockpit removed it and took it apart. He removed some gunk so that the arm was freely moving and put it together again but no luck. He also felt that the presence of stormy petrels was not a good sign weather-wise. First a NW wind which *Chemire* loved kicked in and gave us good speed until we hit a series of squalls from the SW. The sea state became

nasty and through a long night, slow progress was made. Then in the calmer weather next day (15th) skipper Bob became a 'Legend of the Coral Sea' because when for the second time he crawled under the cockpit he found that fixing a loose connection brought life again to the autohelm.

We had decided to go into Coffs Harbour rather than arrive in Sydney on a weekend. At 3.00 am on the morning of the 16th I noted in my diary that there was no wind but through the afternoon it built and during the night Chimere was doing record speeds but bouncing around when we hit a wave side on. Life became more comfortable when the sails were taken down and the engine revved up. This was the wind that did so much damage by fanning bush fires in the Blue Mountains. It was good to reach the peaceful waters Coffs Harbour where we were greeted by the customs officers who looked us over, took our fresh food and stamped our passports. After 48 hours waiting for a southerly to abate we set sail for Sydney. We certainly had to keep a look out for ships with the AIS alarm working hard around Newcastle. A treat was to see some dolphins and then some whales leaping out of the water. The sun was rising as we came through the Heads making the coastal suburbs and the cliffs glow. Chimere had some hours of rest at CYC moored next to Brindabella. We flew to Melbourne and Chimere, with a new crew, arrived home to Hastings a week later.



Information about Medical Sailing Ministries and Chimere can be found at msm.org.au. For the combined missions 15 islands were visited, 33 clinics conducted, 1552 patients seen comprising 1246 medical screenings, 805 eye screenings and 552 pairs of glasses dispensed, 727 dental screenings with about 400 extractions. 11 dental and health educational presentations were given to approx 350 people and there were13 demonstrations of mud brick low smoke stoves.

Cruising Newsletter Editor - Are you the one?!

We are still looking for an editor for this newsletter from early next year. If you think you could offer your services please talk to Robina Smith, the current editor or one of the Cruising Group committee members.

The editor organises people to write articles, take photos and write up events (or organises others to write them up) and sends these to the layout person. My inbox always seems to fill when I need it to and quite often I have to hold copy over for a future edition.

OPENING DAY 2013-2014 SEASON

With a Gale Warning in place the Opening Day festivities centred on the marina with boats putting on their finery for the day as their crews gave three cheers for Commodore Alan Woodward who surveyed the fleet from a RIB.









MEMBER NEWS

Ted and Maree Masur, Y Knot, spent some time cruising the Italian coast recently on a cruise ship where they had a fabulous time.

They then flew to Noumea, New Caledonia, where after some sightseeing, Ted joined the *Gypsea Rover* crew to sail back to Australia. After setting off the first time one of the crew, not Ted, became very, very sick. This meant a dramatic helicopter rescue of the crewman back to Noumea and *Gypsea Rover* returning to port.

On their second attempt, fair skies and wind of variable strengths necessitating some motoring made for a fairly uneventful and speedy trip home.

Ted is now planning his next trip to bring his new boat home!

A very big welcome back to Australia to Sue and Bryan Drummond, Gypsea Rover. We have been enthralled by their adventures throughout the year on their blog site and as narrated by various crew who have joined them. We look forward to hearing more about their adventures.

Jo and John Walker, *Kirra Kirra*, have been enjoying sailing around the Whitsundays in warm sunny weather. They have decided that is as far north up the Queensland coast they will venture this year.

Once again our Cruising Group Forum Dinner produced a winner in the member draw held at the club on Friday nights when Robina Smith, Chakana, won the jackpot of \$1000. Thanks to the sponsors Patricia Laverty of New Habits Corporate Coaching and Karen Sullivan from Savvy Mortgage Solutions.

Edwina aka **Aquacadabara** has been filming out in the bay. Reports are that there was more than pretend seasickness on board when some shooting took place in choppy seas.

Next edition! Melbourne Cup weekend trundle around the bay report.

NOTICEBOARD

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY 15th NOVEMBER

FORUM DINNER MEETING

Bloopers/Shipwreck night.

Dress as you were when the ship went down. Prizes for costumes.

A fun night with games, trivia and onscreen action of yachting bloopers around the world. Come along with any disaster stories or salient lessons you have learned.

As usual, gather at the club about 6.30pm, member draw in Member Bar at 7pm, followed by the meal and fun.

Please book with the office (9592 3092) no later than Wednesday 13th November.

SUNDAY 17th NOVEMBER

DISCOVER SAILING DAY

10am-5pm. A wonderful opportunity for friends and family to discover sailing.

SATURDAY 30th NOVEMBER END OF MONTH ON WATER ACTIVITY

A cruise in company to Melbourne City Marina (ex Waterfront City). Meal out at a local restaurant.

Register your interest with Pam Merritt

willm@hotkey.net.au Book your own berth at the marina.

SATURDAY 14th DECEMBER

ANNUAL HARDSTAND CHRISTMAS PARTY

Don't miss out on this popular club event - mark this date in your diary now.

From about 6pm on, out on the hardstand and start beseeching the weather gods now for suitable weather.

Load up the barrow for a BYO everything bbq, folding tables and chairs, and don't forget to start tuning your carol singing voices.

Surely it won't be 3 years in a row on the verandah!

SUNDAY 19th JANUARY

23rd BIRTHDAY CRUISE TO ROYALS

Another date to mark in your diary now.

ANNUAL BASS STRAIT CRUISE IN COMPANY 2014

For 2 weeks from Saturday 22nd February. Expressions of interest to join this cruise to Chairman Rod at rodsandy@bigpond.net.au

Come to the cruise meeting on Dec 5th at 6.30pm for more information.

BAY CRUISING

Chair Chat

Whilst others were gnashing their teeth over their Melbourne Cup losses or racing around the bay or Bass Strait, 9 boats from Cruising Group headed to Queenscliff. A great time was had by all at Queenscliff despite a few wet crossings to the mainland on a very windy Sunday. The facilities at QCYC were a little less than usual due to renovations which will improve the facilities in the kitchen and the upstairs bar. It was great to see a good turn up for the end of month cruise and even better to have good weather on the sail down and back. The bay was at its best with many wildlife sightings and sunshine. A few of us returned via Sorrento where we took advantage of the public moorings for the night before cruising along the picturesque eastern coast of the bay.

The weekend reminded me what a great destina-

tion the south end of the bay can be with the right weather and company. We should try and get there more often.





Captain Coxswain's Corner

'HANDY BILLY'

Surprising how many blank looks I get when I mention this device. A 'handy billy' is simply a smallish block and tackle used on sailing ships in days of yore to move small loads. This very useful device is sometimes used on small boats to this day. It typically consisted of one single and one double sheaved block rove to advantage to give a mechanical advantage of four to one. If anyone needs further explanation I would be happy to offer same over a large glass of rum and cola in the members bar. (Your shout.)