



CRUISING NEWS



MARCH 2014

2014 BASS STRAIT CRUISE IN COMPANY

Some points to jog memories – Sally Spencer

C **Company** (*Andalucia, Andante, Chakana, Emma Kate, Its A Privilege, Lara, Mirrabooka, Sun Kiss*)
Crew 27

R **Route** - depart Heads to Grassy (24th Feb)
Grassy to Three hummock Island (27th Feb) 7 boats
Three Hummock Island to Stanley (2nd March) 6 boats
Depart Stanley 5th & 6th March 4 boats to Heads, 2 boats to Tamar

U **Unexpected** - “no food restaurant” at Currie, a delightful setting.
Reminder to wear PFD’s even on an almost uninhabited island.
Ladder climbing at Stanley.
Boisterous chop in Stanley Harbour.

I **Islander hospitality** - King Island Boat Club
John and Bev at Three Hummock
Intense competition at Petanque and Klop.
Interesting exploration of King Is & NW Tasmania (The Nut, Highfield, Arthur River).

S **Sailing** approximately 400 nautical miles sometimes
assisted by the engine.
Starry wonders at sea at night.

E **Encouragement** Keeping in touch by radio.
Experience We have now crossed Bass Strait.
Enjoyment A great 2 weeks - Thank you all!



At Grassy, King Island.

CRUISING GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson	Rod Watson.....0409 507 480 Home.....9842 0969
Secretary	Jenny Collins.....9585 1154
Editor	Robina Smith.....0403 791 347 Email.....robina_smith@hotmail.com
Co-editor	Barbara Burns Email.....barbaraburnstwiss@bigpond.com

Will Merritt.....9598 8626
Pam Merritt.....9598 8626
David Pollard.....9596 5633
Richard Johnson.....0419 361 285
Sandy Watson.....0418 906 417
Roger Walker.....0407 844 992

FORUM DINNER—OUTBOARDS



Rod thanking Robert Ireland.

As unlikely as it may seem, we enjoyed an entertaining presentation at the February Cruising Group dinner about outboard engines from Robert Ireland. Robert is from the Haynes Group which

amongst other things is the Australian distributor for Suzuki outboards.

Suzuki is the No 1 seller four-stroke in global sales and second to Mercury for outboard engine sales. All engines are developed and made in a single factory in Japan.

Suzuki also markets itself as having the best outboard in the world at each level of size and judges its outboards on four criteria – which also seem to be the most useful for a boat owner:

Lightest	Most fuel efficient
Most compact	Easiest to operate

All outboards now have fuel injection, pointless ignition and lean burn – Suzuki just aims to do these better than the others. Similarly with corrosion of the aluminium – which is most of the engine. All manufacturers have developed means of coating the aluminium surfaces to provide a long life.

If your outboard gets dunked – and this happened to me at New Caledonia – then wash it immediately and preferably get it to a dealer to be repaired ASAP. They will recover if

treated promptly!!

Most of the presentation was about large outboards which most of us yachties have probably noticed seem to be larger every year on smaller and smaller boats! Apart from recreational boaters, their market is government (police, rescue etc) and commercial such as the salmon farms in Tasmania where one customer uses \$1.6million in fuel each year in their outboards.

In the large outboards there is an on-board computer, just like your car, and this records an amazing amount of data that is then downloaded at the workshop. It is very hard to successfully blame their product if you have been abusing your outboard! Thankfully this does not extend to our size of motors.

One item of advice for all outboard users, including yachties on their tenders, is to flush the motor with freshwater if you can. Some of us have good intentions, but....

The other advice was to have your motor serviced every year. Probably good advice and the recent article in Cruising Helmsman gave some very good tips on how to do this if you do not want the cost and inconvenience of taking your outboard across town.

PS - RBYC has entered into a contract with Leisure Sports Marine to provide Suzuki engines on its RIBs that are provided and serviced at a fixed annual cost.

BRENTON SMITH



At time of writing I am shaking in my boots. Of course I am wearing other apparel but this slightly odd colloquialism fails to include that fact. If you think about it that may be the reason one would be quaking (AKA 'shivering'). In my case the lack of other apparel is not the cause of the shaking. My concern is; what other embarrassing material may be included in the journal for which this erudite contribution is destined.

Allow me to elucidate. As many of you are aware Andalucia is only recently returned from an overseas trip. Okay, if you're going to be picky it was only to Tasmania, but it felt like OS. In the course of these travels we had occasion to stop at Grassy on King Island. The local boat club hospitably opened their doors so that we might enjoy the odd alcoholic beverage

Those of you who have yet to visit Grassy may not be aware that berthing provided in this harbour is by way of swing moorings or anchoring, so the use of the ship's tender is the normal means of transporting oneself and crew to shore, and this we did. For some reason we were last to arrive and followed the example of others in carrying our tender

up the launch ramp, well above (I thought) the high tide line. You will appreciate that being last did mean that the dinghy was a trifle closer to the tide line than the others. Well satisfied with our efforts we repaired to the bar and sampled some of the local brew. I was just mellowing nicely when some joker posed the question; 'Will, is your tender red?' Of course she knew darn well that it is red and that it was untended and adrift.

Now, do you understand my concern? The problem with fame is that the paparazzi follow you everywhere and they were certainly there on this occasion. I'd suspect that our editor would be only too happy to pay large sums for the most embarrassing of these shots in order to bring down another tall poppy.

Will Merritt

Will's Wise Words

HOW I STARTED SAILING

BY TOM HINTON



Tom and Alison sailing *Tales* in Bass Strait.

Sailing with Will and Pam Merritt in the RBYC Mid-week Mud-lders and Twilight races was what sealed my fate and re-

moved me from almost all other aspects of normal life. However, the seed was sown 40 years ago, Easter 1973, when I was on holiday in Sydney.

One of my workmates, Mark Oliver, and I were both recovering from injuries sustained while riding motor cycles so instead of riding, we drove my old Holden to Bathurst races. We continued on to Sydney to visit friends living in a share house and while we were staying there someone suggested hiring a yacht to sail on the Harbour for the day.

The next morning a 25' fibreglass keelboat was tied up to the pier waiting for us. I was surprised to be told that it had no motor. Of the 5 motorcyclists and one young boy only 2 had sailing experience, but after we shoved off in no wind conditions we all took turns at trying to steer her out of the sheltered bay.

After drifting slowly for an hour we rounded a point and the sails began to draw. With great delight (and amazement for we non-sailing types) we set off into Sydney Harbour, the bows cutting the sparkling water without a sound. The light breeze built, the boat heeled and we set off down the Harbour. It was utterly thrilling to be in motion on the rippling water going who knew where in the cool morning air. It was all so new and wonderful to me, the view of the shore and hills from the water, motion without the need of a motor and the feel of the light breeze upon my skin. We made our way down the Harbour. The Bridge came into view and what a great experience to sail beneath that huge and overwhelming construction.

The boy and his father had to leave us at the wharf near the Opera House. We came in under sail and the father leaped onto the structure, quickly climbing to the top. We sailed around and back to the wharf but could not stop. The boy was held out over the water for his father to take but the gap was too wide and changing all the time as we sailed (and he trotted) along the length of the wharf. As we neared the

end of the wharf his father yelled, "Just throw him"! The boy was flung across the void and caught by his father just as a ferry blasted its horn and appeared directly in front of us. The pilot's face was angry and he was shaking his fist.

The ferry was huge and as we all looked up in fear, Mark, who was at the helm yelled, "Steam gives way to sail" only to be corrected by the other (local) sailor on board. The water around the ferry was churning violently as the screws were reversed. Slowly our bows came around and we tacked out of the way. We all felt that we had been very lucky indeed not to have been crushed and drowned. Obviously there was more to this sailing game.

We quickly forgot our fear as we tacked up under the Bridge but were reminded of our responsibilities twice more as we crossed paths with, unbelievably, the same ferry and had to change course each time.

Later in the afternoon and feeling elated that we were getting the hang of this sailing game, we encountered a woman and her teenage daughter in a smaller sailing craft. Confident that four fit young male motorcyclists could easily account for these two females, we endeavoured to race them into the wind. After a few tacks and an embarrassingly short space of time they left us far behind, contemplating not only sailing but life generally.

However we were resilient and now hungry so when Mark told us of a cafe on the far side of the Harbour where one could procure prawn and salad rolls we made all haste and steered for the landing place he indicated. The only line to attach to the pier was one of the sheet ropes and I stayed aboard to fend off while the others climbed the steep path to get the food. I was nervous about being responsible for the safety of this lovely white vessel which had given us so much already that day, so I was doubly glad to see my shipmates return with the food. It was certainly the best prawn and salad roll I had ever eaten.

The pressure was off now as we sailed back across the Harbour and I felt very weary. A welcome surprise was a bunk in the cabin so I had a bit of a sleep while the others took us home.

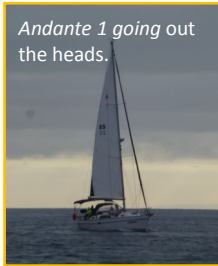
It was an experience I never forgot and I made up my mind that if ever I gave up motor cycling, sailing would be my life.



Tom on Boomaroo III.

OUR FIRST CRUISE!

BY BARBARA BURNS



Andante 1 going out the heads.

Geoff and I bought our Catalina 385, *Andante 1*, just over a year ago and we have been on a very exciting and sometimes overwhelming learning curve. Throughout the year we have met and made some wonderful new friends and certainly learnt elements of our relationships which we hadn't explored before!

Half way through the year we decided that we would like to do the two week Bass Strait Cruise in Company and extend it for a few more weeks to slowly work our way back.

Geoff had kayaked Bass Strait in a previous life and had fallen in love with the rugged Islands, so he was very excited to have the chance to view it from a different perspective. It is amazing when you start to plan an adventure, how much preparation is needed. Equipping the boat with all the 'what ifs' is quite an exercise in patience.

We also invited our very good friend from England who has an enormous experience in all aspects of cruising. This we thought was essential.

Finally the weekend arrived, and we all met at the Queenscliff Yacht Club. There were seven boats in all making up a very experienced bunch of people. We gathered around the bar in the evening to discuss the **WEATHER**. Many iPads were produced and there was much raising and lowering of eyebrows until finally a decision was reached that we would sail directly to King Island.

I must admit that I was a little anxious about this as I had hoped that we would make our way to Refuge Cove and then island hop down to Tasmania. However it was not to be and off we went, twenty hours directly to Grassy on King Island.

We commenced in perfect conditions out of the heads (very reassuring) and sailed all day and all night (well motor sailed) as there was little wind and we were going straight into it. Another discovery about cruising is that ideal sea conditions also often means not much wind.

As the evening approached the comforting presence of all the other yachts spread out over the sea, but always in sight, was wonderful, but especially good was the radio schedules every two hours where we all radioed in, keeping a light banter going throughout the night.

We all arrived in Grassy safely, quite close, one behind the other. Everyone found a mooring reminding me of a flock of birds settling in a tree for the night, without the loud squawking of course.

We stayed in Grassy for three days waiting for the next weather opportunity, and enjoyed ourselves immensely exploring the island. We did this by hiring 6 cars, and each car

filling up with people, from different boats so that everyone met each other.

King Island dairy was thoroughly explored, all of us tasting all the cheeses that they had out and most of us buying quite a bit.

An article by Lyn Bingham on Cape Wickham, the lighthouse and shipwrecks, is included in this newsletter. All very tragic. There doesn't seem to be any headlands and capes where some tragedy has not unfolded at some time!

Finally after three days, when the island had been thoroughly explored, the weather became benevolent again and we all scooted out early in the morning. I was particularly impressed when David Bingham, who was just ahead of us, raised his sails and sailed out of the harbour, manoeuvring around the rocks with great ease and was on his way and out of sight.

Our next stop was Three Hummock Island where we anchored in a cute little bay (Spiers Nook). Geoff practised his fishing skills as did Rob off Lara and they both caught some very nice flathead and gummy shark.

The following day we all loaded into our dinghies and motored to shore to explore the island. There is a homestead on the island where you can stay for a few days and experience absolute serenity and wilderness. Several of the cruisers bought tee shirts with Three Hummocks emblazoned on them, which look terrific.

The next evening the wind became stronger and we spent an interesting night bouncing on the end of our anchor. Roger reassured me that when the boat jerks strongly on the end of the anchor it means that the anchor is holding. Good to know when the rocks are not far away.

In the morning it looked fine and off we all went, us last but we soon made up lost time with a brisk SW 20k wind pushing us along at 7k. After about 4 hours the wind slowly disappeared until a gentle zephyr of 4 K forced us to put the iron sail back on to arrive at a reasonable time at Stanley.

We arrived at Stanley on a beautifully still afternoon. (I am sure it is like that at Stanley only twice a year!) We enjoyed one day of calm and then it blew for four days. Fortunately Stanley is very pretty so we were able to spend lots of time exploring again, even going for a cruise down the Arthur River which was very confronting as it was painfully obvious to see that the Tarkine is being destroyed with logging.

We are now in the Tamar and the journey continues.



Pam, Will, Barbara, Geoff, Therese and Roger at Cape Wickham.

CAPE WICKHAM LIGHTHOUSE

Latitude 39deg.35.4'S Longitude 143deg.56.5'E

BY LYN BINGHAM



Cape Wickham lighthouse.

This year's Bass Strait cruise included a visit to Grassy on King Island, Three Hummock Island, and Stanley. In common with the others, the crew of Mirrabooka made use of a hire car to travel the island from south to north. This was my second visit to the impressive Cape Wickham Lighthouse which stands majestically on the north west tip of King Island, it's light visi-

ble for 24 nautical miles.

When you note the location of King Island it is easy to see why it has been called The Graveyard of Bass Strait. Lying at the western end of Bass Strait the island forms an impenetrable barrier to ships that sail too far south on entering the Strait bound for Port Phillip or Sydney.

The lighthouse is 48 metres tall which makes it the tallest lighthouse in Australia and the Southern Hemisphere, and it is as white as snow! It is listed on the Australian Heritage List.

The lighthouse was established in 1861 (when the island was still referred to as King's Island) in response to the sinking of the barque *Cataraqui* sixteen years earlier, a disaster which resulted in the loss of 400 lives.

During construction there was concern that the lighthouse would cause more shipwrecks than it prevented, as lighthouses usually show the way to safety, rather than warning of danger as the Cape Wickham lighthouse was designed to do.

The lighthouse was eventually completed although shipwrecks continued to frequently occur until the Currie Lighthouse was completed in 1879.

Built from locally quarried stone with walls 3.4 metres thick at the base, it has eleven flights of stairs each with twenty steps. The light was automated in 1918, replacing the original single wick oil burner with an acetylene flasher. This changed the character of the light from being "fixed" to group flashing, showing two flashes in quick succession every ten seconds, and increased the candle power from 7,500 to 13,000 candles.

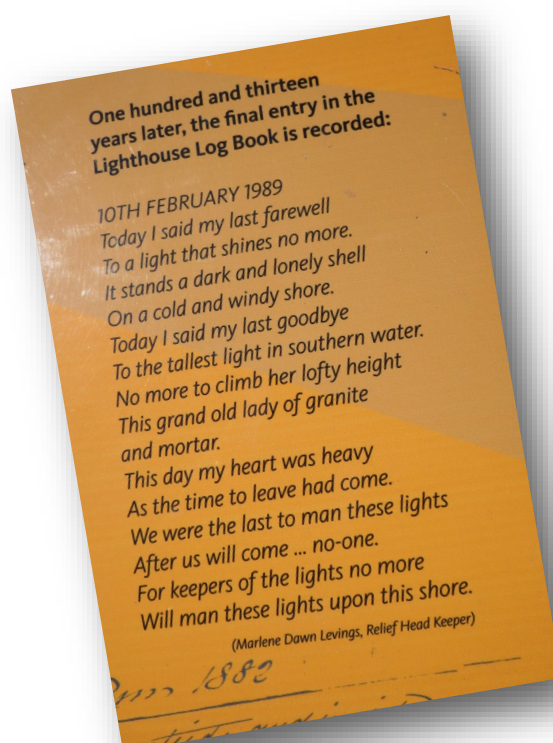
The area surrounding King Island has claimed over one hundred vessels large and small and 800 lives since European

settlement, the majority of the lives being lost in the wrecks of the *Neva* in 1835 and the *Cataraqui*; in 1845, with around 470 emigrants and 40 crew. The *Neva* was a convict transport barque with 150 women convicts, nine voluntary emigrants and 45 children and officers and crew. It appears around 218 people lost their lives.

The Cape Wickham lighthouse was initially maintained by a superintendent and three assistants. At the time of its establishment it was an isolated outpost on an otherwise undeveloped island. The settlement included stone cottages, vegetable gardens, stock enclosures (for sheep, cattle, goats and horses), a small timber church, graveyard, signal house, boat shed and jetty. The remainder of the island's population were largely itinerant sealers, fishermen, prospectors and hunters.

As far as can be determined the Wickham referred to would have been Captain John Clements Wickham born 1798 in Leith, Scotland. In 1812 he joined the Royal Navy and after various postings Wickham was promoted from Lieutenant to Captain and given command of HMS *Beagle* from 1837 to 1841 charting the coasts of north western Australia and Arnhem Land. He surveyed King Island in 1838.

The following is a moving testament – the final entry in the lighthouse log book in 1989 by Marlene Dawn Levings, relief Head Keeper.



One hundred and thirteen years later, the final entry in the Lighthouse Log Book is recorded:

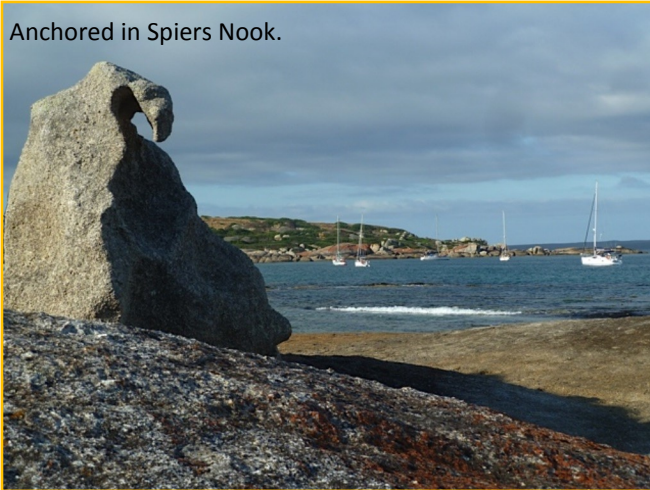
10TH FEBRUARY 1989
Today I said my last farewell
To a light that shines no more.
It stands a dark and lonely shell
On a cold and windy shore.
Today I said my last goodbye
To the tallest light in southern water.
No more to climb her lofty height
This grand old lady of granite
and mortar.
This day my heart was heavy
As the time to leave had come.
We were the last to man these lights
After us will come ... no-one.
For keepers of the lights no more
Will man these lights upon this shore.

(Marlene Dawn Levings, Relief Head Keeper)

THREE HUMMOCK ISLAND

BY PAM MERRITT (VICE COMMODORE)

Anchored in Spiers Nook.



I was so taken with Three Hummock Island on our first visit there three years ago that when we joined the Qld based Shag Islet Cruising Yacht Club later that year, where every member's a Vice Commodore of a different island (or bay), I chose to be Three Hummock's Vice Commodore.

Three Hummock Island is part of the Hunter Group and is roughly between Grassy Harbour on King Island and Stanley on Tassie's NW tip. Not really remote, but far enough away from civilisation to have that 'getting away from it all' feel. It is named after its' three most prominent hills, North, Middle and South, with the South being the highest at 237 metres above sea level.

There is one house on the island, where Managers John and Beverley O'Brien have lived for 5 years. As well, the recently

The Homestead.



renovated Victorian Homestead provides visitor accommodation for up to 14 guests, and a separate cottage sleeps 4. Self catering can be provided, or visitors can bring their own provisions. John and Beverley have no plans to leave in the near future – and why would they? They have a lifestyle many would envy – pristine beaches, granite coastlines, sweeping views, plenty of wildlife, chooks and a vegie garden. There are over 90 species of birds on the island, Cape Barren Geese roam freely and kangaroos abound. John and Beverley manage a trip to Smithton on mainland Tassie every two months and a couple of holidays a year. When we were there they had 37 visitors in one day – 25 RBYC cruisers, 10 from Smithton in

speed boats and 2 in a helicopter.

We anchored for two days at Spiers Nook on the western side of the island, a great anchorage in the SE breezes but a little roly due to some residual SW swell. From there it was a short walk to the Homestead and Chimney Corner, where we'd anchored on our last visit. John and Beverley were once again very friendly and welcoming and happy to share their own version of paradise.

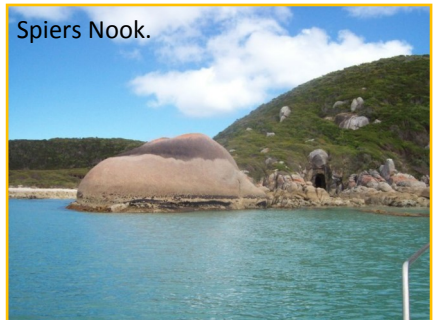
Our group spent a day exploring various walking tracks, strolling along beaches and being shown around the accom-

modation by our hosts before gathering at Five Sisters Beach at 3pm for a game of Klop, followed by sun-downers. John and Beverley joined us for drinks, together with friends of theirs who had just helicoptered in from Stanley.

Waves were rolling in by the time we were heading back to boats and clearing the breakers in the dinghy resulted in some very wet bottoms. Our crew decided that swimming was the better option and nearly beat us back to the boat.

Interestingly, John and Beverley did say that only a few yachts call in, particularly groups such as our own Cruising Group, whose two visits were the only they'd remembered by a group since they'd been there. That's a pity because the scenery would rival any in the Whitsundays, the welcome's warmer, and the weather was brilliant when we were there!

Spiers Nook.



Sundowners and a game of Klop.



THE RUNAWAY DINGHY



At Grassy Harbour.

“Will, is your tender red?”



Peter Strain helps in the rescue.



But the little red tender continues to float her way home to the mother ship.



Not my best angle.



Tender finally under control.

No money changed hands to procure these photos!

Please keep your cruising stories and ‘How I Started Sailing’ contributions rolling in. This newsletter relies on a flow of member contributions. More on Bass Strait Cruise in next edition including ‘Under the Nut’ about Stanley King Island Boat Club and many more photos.

MEMBER NEWS

It was great to see new people attending our Forum dinners. Last month we had new members Rod & Sue Slater (profile last month), Anthony Baird who sails a X-Yacht in regions such as Ireland and Denmark 4 months a year and Roger Lloyd from UK who crewed on Bass Strait cruise.

.....
 Chairman Rod and Sandy, *Emma Kate*, are currently cruising the Tamar. After seeing Bass Strait crew Kathy De Garis and Allan Richardson, *Allegresse*, off to Melbourne they have dined with Rob & Nona Hurrell, *Aquacadabra* while waiting for new crew Richard and Marion Johnson, *Sophistique*. Latest, sailing to Flinders I

.....
 Barbara Burns and Geoff Brewster, *Andante 1*, with crew Roger Lloyd are also extending their Bass Strait cruise by heading to the Tamar and further east along the Tasmanian coast.

.....
 Barbara Burns, *Andante 1*, is going to take over as co-editor of this newsletter and will be keeping members on their toes to write contributions and reports of Cruising events while Robina Smith is away cruising. Please send contributions to Bar-



bara so that she can check we have enough for each edition. Contact details on page 1.

.....
 Most of the Bass Strait fleet has returned to the bay with some boats needing some attention.

Andalucia, autohelm stopped working after falling off a monster wave outside Stanley. Now fixed after some fiddling. *Chakana*, fridge stopped working before exiting the heads and engine problems when entering heads—both problems identified and in hand. That is what a shake-down cruise is for!

Mirrabooka, steering cable failed exiting Stanley. Used emergency tiller and autohelm for the rest of the trip. A timely reminder to be sure our emergency steering is in order!

NOTICEBOARD

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY 21st MARCH FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speaker: Bryan Drummond
Adventures of *Gypsea Rover*

In 2013 *Gypsea Rover* cruised the South Pacific with the Island Cruising Association in their Pacific Circuit Rally. We have been kept enthralled reading the cruising stories of various crew throughout the year but this is our chance to hear it from the Skipper/Ship's Engineer himself. Unfortunately Sue will be away—so no quibbles about deciding who really is the Skipper on the night.

As usual, gather at the Club about 6.30pm, members draw at 7pm, followed by the meal, with the talk at about 8.30pm.

An interesting evening is in store, with, no doubt, plenty of stories to tell about Pacific adventures.

Please book with the office (95923092) no later than Wednesday March 19th.

SUNDAY 30th MARCH END OF MONTH ON WATER ACTIVITY SABOT CRUISE TO ROYALS

Cruise to Royals as a combined activity with Sabot sailors and parents. The idea is to give the Sabot kids and their parents a 'Big Boat' experience. BYO everything for a BBQ lunch on the lawn. Buy drinks from the Bar.

This was a fabulous day last year with many enthusiastic Sabot sailors and their parents. Please email Rod to volunteer your boat. rodsandy@bigpond.net.au

FRIDAY 11th APRIL ANNUAL BOAT PROGRESSIVE DINNER

****Please note that this has been brought forward a week due to Easter****

Gather at the Members Bar for predinner drinks and nibbles at about 6.30pm where the evening's program will be distributed.

At 7.15pm we head out to the marina to arrive at allocated Main Course boats by 7.30pm. A reminder to please BYO wine to boats.

8.45pm to 8.55pm is 'change over' time, where we all tear around the marina looking for our allocated Desert boats.

At about 10pm we gather back to compare notes over port and chocolates..... Venue to be announced later.

The evening is only possible because of the generosity of boat owners who provide main course or dessert for 6-8 people (all costs reimbursed).

Sandy Watson would love to hear from all boats who are able to host a course. rodsandy@bigpond.net.au Bookings are also being taken for others who would like to attend. Cost is \$20 per person.

SUNDAY 3rd MAY CEREBUS CRUISE/RACE TO ROYALS

CRUISING STEW

Chair Chat

Whilst crossing Bass Strait on our way to King Island I was carrying out the 8:15pm radio schedule. I endeavoured to keep the troops amused during this long passage by asking what they had dined on for the evening meal. I had not realised that we had so many SNAY's (sensitive new age yachties), who had dined on Chicken Provencale accompanied by French Pasta, Beef Baloney accompanied by Whipped Mini Vegetables and other various flowerily described dishes.

We on Emma-Kate had a delightful Lamb Stew and it seemed to upset the SNAY's when I pointed out that they had all eaten plain old stew as well. I must clarify that Lara did not have stew, Sarah and Rob dined on tinned soup and baked beans, heated of course, followed by cherry pie. Wouldn't we all have loved some cherry pie followed by plain speaking and no b.....(I can't think of words that won't be censored by the SNAY's)?



Captain Coxswain's Corner

'PUT THROUGH THE HOOP'

When sailing ships engaged in battle it was required that every man's hammock be brought up on deck and tied to the netting along the ship's rails, where they could afford protection against musket fire and splinters and also be used as life preservers.

To perform both functions properly it was necessary that they be tightly rolled, and it became the drill every morning for bosun's mates to check the tightness of each man's hammock by seeing if it would pass through a regulation-sized hoop. There was trouble for a man whose hammock did not pass 'through the hoop', and the expression suggests trouble to this day.