



# CRUISING NEWS



JUNE 2014

## MARINE BIOLOGY 101 AT RBYC CRUISING GROUP'S MAY FORUM DINNER

BY SANDY WATSON



Rod Watson thanking Professor Dustin Marshall

Approximately fifty Cruising Group members were treated to a very informative and entertaining evening on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, thanks to Professor Dustin Marshall, from the School of Biological Sciences at Monash University. He gave us an insight into the work being done by his Department and students at the RBYC marina.

The main purpose of the research is to carry out experiments for a variety of reasons generally related to medical and other biological research. The rapid growth rate of the marine organisms allows them to be used to carry out a wide range of experiments that can often be extrapolated to medical research. Dustin likened what he does at the marina to what others do with rats and other animals. The research is carried out with the use of artificial sediment plates placed under the water in the marina. After one to

three months they develop a miniature ecosystem like a rainforest. Dustin pointed out that much of the sea life around marinas in Port Phillip Bay originated from the hulls of visiting wooden sailing ships many years ago.

We learnt many fascinating things about sea creatures. The Sparks Road blue ringed octopus, which is present in the marina, causes paralysis in skeletal muscle and an inability in its victim to breathe in, while its toxin is active. Octopii are very intelligent and sensitive creatures. The sea spider takes on the colour of whatever creature it last ate. Vivid photos of the many sea creatures inhabiting this environment added to the interesting talk. The Siphopteron sp. 1 is an hermaphroditic sea slug. We saw a video of its mating ritual, in which two 'males' joust, each hoping to remain male after the contest. The one which is successful in inserting its stylet and prostate hormone into the head of the other remains a male, while the other becomes a female,



Blue ringed octopus.

### 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

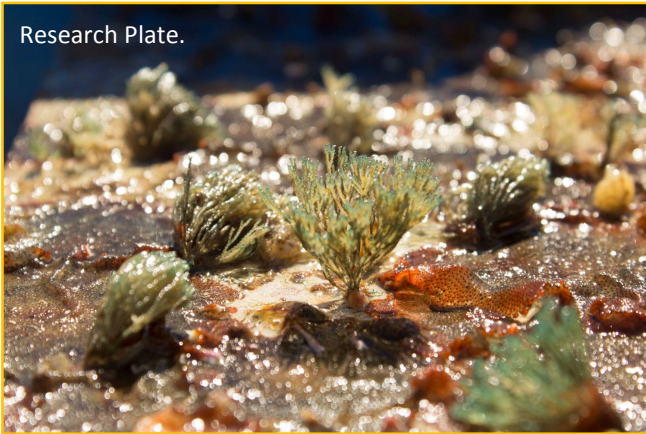
Richard Johnson.....0419 361 285

Sandy Watson.....0418 906 417

Roger Walker.....0407 844 992

Kathy De Garis.....0417 392 811

Research Plate.



with all the associated hard work of reproducing the species!

Dustin provided 'food' for thought about what is happening to the world's fish supply:

- We're catching much more fish- the catch has increased four-fold since 1950
- We are down to the last 10% of fish in all our major fishing areas
- One in five people on earth get most of their protein from the sea; the amount per person is now declining
- We are needing to move further south on the planet and deeper in the ocean to catch fish

Cruisers enjoying the meal and presentation.



Old, fat fish produce many more offspring than younger, smaller fish, but fish size is decreasing  
Over-fishing has a huge global cost, estimated at €103 billion in lost production.

Dustin and his team of scientists are only too happy to answer any questions Club members may have about life under water at the marina. There is someone from Monash at RBYC most days working on experiments around the marina.

Coincidentally, Dustin is a nephew of regular *Enya* crew, David and Kathleen Drennan, who brought the Professor's parents along - a surprise to him, to hear his talk!

Listen here you lot, this practice whereby C.G. members are taking off for warmer northern climes in winter has to stop. I mean to say; what must our racing colleagues think? I'll tell you what they think. They think that we are either soft or old. Even worse, they may regard us as being soft and old. Mind you the average age of the cruising fraternity might be a tad higher than the national average but that's only to be expected. After all it takes time to develop the maturity necessary to realize that sailing to windward in a strong gale in mid-winter may be character building, but does tend to be a trifle uncomfortable.

Our friend, Sir Francis Beaufort said it all very succinctly as being the condition prevailing with the wind at 41 to 47 knots and 23 foot waves with toppling crests and dense streaks of foam. The expression 'bloody awful' springs to mind but may have been unacceptable to the Lords of the Admiralty.

I realize that your suspicious little minds

are wondering as to where this diatribe is leading. I'm sure that none of you would think that I'm just envious of the bludgers who have left us here in Melbourne holding the proverbial can. Why would I want to be in the tropics on a yacht skimming along in crystal clear water with a moderate breeze, a clear blue sky and bright warm sunshine? But, wait there's more. Her indoors and my good self are planning to do all of that in the next few weeks and I would be much happier if I thought that my special, wonderful cruising friends were here in Melbourne supporting activities like the frost-bite BBQ.

Just think how much you will enjoy yourselves waiting for a personal post card from yours truly.

Will Merritt

**Will's  
Wisdom**



# PITTWATER - A REVELATION REVEALED

BY BRENTON SMITH



America Bay with an abundance of club moorings and some courtesy moorings.

Our prior perceptions of Pittwater were vague – but we did know it was going to be good.

Pittwater was indeed a marvelous revelation

as we cruised among her waters for ten days in early May and I can understand those that have never sailed anywhere else; anywhere else will find it very difficult to compete.

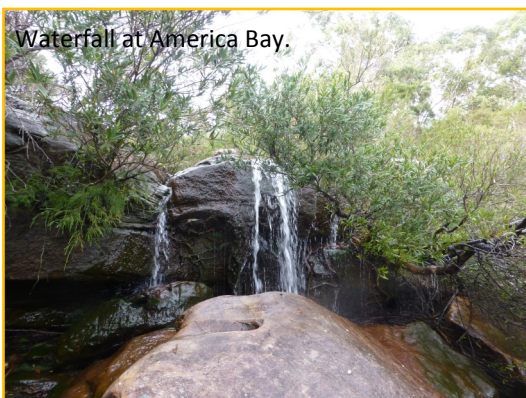
What makes it so good? Well where do I start? Maybe it is with its geomorphological heritage, a combination of ancient sandstones, valleys carved by torrents, all submerged as the land sank, and the seas rose as the last ice age ended. Result: a rugged landscape that is a boat length from you almost anywhere along its myriad waterways. Put the binoculars back in their case!

The myriad waterways include Pittwater itself, Cowan Creek and its tributaries, the Hawkesbury River and the open waters of Broken Bay, all different, all stunningly beautiful, and all fitting in an area not much larger than Pt Phillip Bay.

Maybe it is the dense forests of eucalypts and banksias that thrive in the thin barren 'soils' and make walking anywhere except on a prepared track incredibly slow going.

Or is it absolute stillness, which is punctuated with incessant calls from a prolific collection of native birds, and the occasional splash on the water as predator fish chase their prey?

Or the brilliance of the stars in the black sky – providing enough light to see the outlines of the land in the moonless nights.



Waterfall at America Bay.

Or is it the ease of cruising these waters where the weather is a less significant factor and there are moorings

in many of the bays—easy on the for'ard deckie.

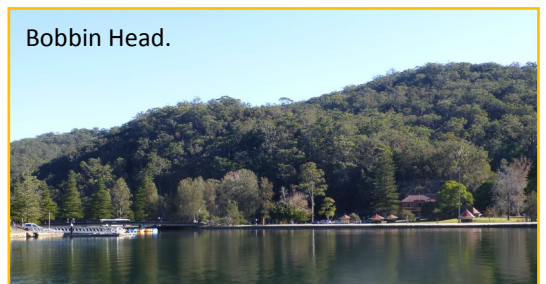
Our adventures in Pittwater commenced as we glided effortlessly under sail through Broken Bay and into Cowan Creek which pierces the heart of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, which in itself is a revelation of farsightedness when it was declared a national park 120 years ago. It was obviously an era before large scale production of cut flowers, because the quoted reason for the creation of the national park was to outlaw the harvesting of native flowers.

On the southernmost end of Cowan Creek is Bobbin Head, the home of the historic

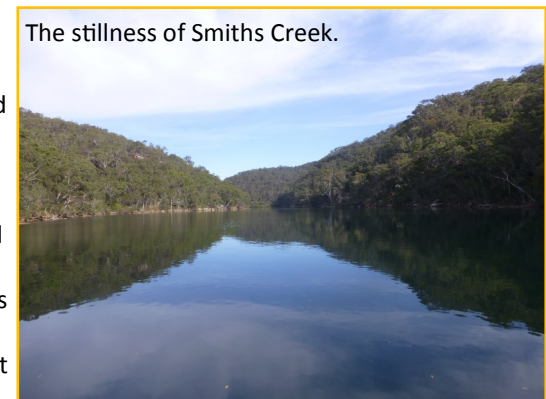
Halvorsen motor cruisers, fleets of which once graced Pittwater several decades ago, but now almost a collector's item. We saw one that had been restored to her former glory, quaintly gliding along in her stately manner. Bobbin Head is also the closest part of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park to much of Sydney and it was the place to be on a Sunday afternoon in your family's Model T. About ten small rotundas slowly fading in the large grassed open space at the water's edge remind us of a park that would have been teaming with men in suits, women in bonnets and fashionable skirts laden with baskets; silent witnesses to the conversations of courting couples.

Bobbin Head is now another floating marina, but still with shipwrights, slips and marine engineers. It also had an energetic Russian backpacker barista, very nice too – that's the coffee of course!

We like to go ashore each day to walk, but this was a challenge at times, because it is almost impossible to walk through the trees, undergrowth, boulders and fallen logs if there is no track. The beaches tend to be measured in me-



Bobbin Head.



The stillness of Smiths Creek.

tres rather than kilometres, and mostly disappear at high tide. Most of the tributaries have a small muddy end where, after rain, the freshwater meets the sea and the silt is deposited. These are homes to groves of mangroves that have a path where the freshwater flows fastest, and through which to take the dinghy. Rowing noiselessly, we watched herons feeding as the tide receded, but being careful to not be stranded on the mud ourselves. At one of these we disturbed a very large stingray when the oar hit the bottom – not a place for wading! Robina made it very plain that if we stranded, then it wasn't her that would be reducing the draft of the dinghy.

The highlight was the clear, black starry night at the end of Smiths Creek where the stars were mirrored perfectly in the black still waters, leaving us suspended in a 3D cosmos.

As always with cruising it becomes time to move on, and we motored around to Pittwater itself, the homes of thousands

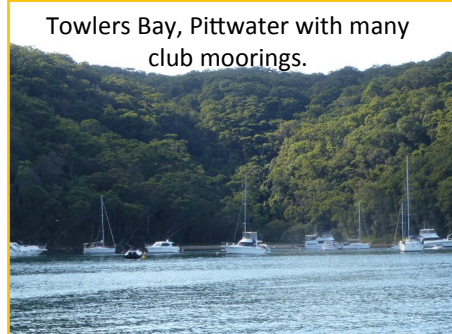


Pittwater and Scotland Island

of boats of every size and description – and where the waiting list for a swing mooring is now 27 years. Here, you don't put your kids' names down at birth for membership to the SCG! One side is

still the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, while the other is the peninsula out to Barrenjoey Head where the rich and famous like to congregate on weekends. In the middle is Scotland Island, traditionally the home of those that can't quite fit into society, and still reputedly so today, although it is changing in response to the steeply climbing land prices. Having to take a boat every single time you want to leave the island probably hinders many of the wealthy.

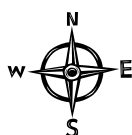
Pittwater entranced us with its beauty, the sailing, and the ease of cruising amongst its delights. But first some caveats – we cruised on weekdays amongst the glorious sunny days of early May after a rainy March – the national park was in mint condition.



Towlers Bay, Pittwater with many club moorings.



Tied up at Royal Motor Yacht Club for supplies.



## STARS AND COMPASS TROPHY INTRODUCTORY FORUM

BY SANDY WATSON



On Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, prior to the monthly Cruising Dinner, an information session was held for those intending to attempt the Stars and Compass Trophy competition this year.

Kathy De Garis introduced David James, who presented a brief history of the Stars and Compass Trophy, which was initiated and is sponsored by Richard Hawkins, author of several Victorian cruising guides. The intent of the award is to promote the use and development of traditional navigation skills. The trophy itself is a magnificent aqua-coloured glass goblet. It was made by Leisa Wharington and sits atop a celery-top pine base made by Stuart Calder with engraved plaques displaying the names of previous winners around it. There is a 'take-home' trophy for the winner as well.

Kathy De Garis and Dori Parkin, previous winners of the trophy, then presented information on resources available to help in completing the papers, in the form of navigation texts, equipment, charts, tide tables and of course, the internet.

There is a new novice navigators' Award in 2014, which will be awarded for the best performance in Section A of the

paper, by a person who has not entered the competition before. It can be completed on its own or in conjunction with some or all of Section B.

**Test papers are available on the RBYC website and at the office. The Stars and Compass Trophy will be awarded to whoever gets the best combined result for sections A and B.**

**Entries are to be submitted to the RBYC Office and close at 5pm on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June at the latest. Winners will be announced at the RBYC Presentation Night on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July.**

Many thanks to David, Kathy and Dori for presenting the well-attended information session.





# HOW I STARTED SAILING

BY ALLAN J HADDOW



It was early 60's in the small sea-side town of Russell in Bay of Islands in NZ that my father was a sea scout master. My grandfather

owned Tapeka Point and had a house where the current Eagles Nest is – a wonderful view of all boats could be seen moving in and out of the Bay of Islands.

I was too young to be a sea scout but remember wanting to go out, so in 1965



Haupapa

when I was 13 years old my father bought my first yacht called *Haupapa*, a 11' plywood yacht – don't know the model. I don't even know the cost. Apparently I took to yachting very quick-

ly. It was kept at a local boat builder's yard on a beach trolley. Occasionally one of my sisters would come out with me but mostly I was by myself.

For our high school years we moved close to Opuia and I would cycle about 5km down a dirt road to go sailing most weekends in the summer. I would sail from Opuia to Russell and remember sailing up to the stern of the Queen Mary and other cruise ships, anchored off Russell for the day. I remember being sprayed with water (turned to fine mist at sea level) when I was too close.



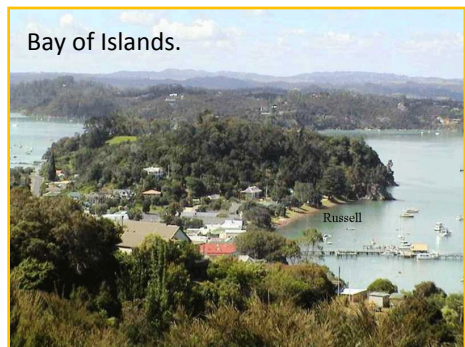
Haupapa

I could even tie the tiller and set the 'pocket size' red spinnaker by myself. That was before the days of modern autopilots. I never sailed beyond Tapeka Point (for those

who know the Bay of Islands– don't know why – perhaps the wonderful islands (144 of them) seemed too far away at that young age. The yacht was sold in late 1969 prior to me moving to Auckland to start work.

1970 saw me leave the home farm & take up an apprenticeship in Auckland.

After a couple of years and the purchase of a car, I bought a 12' Cherub called *Ace High* and sailed a few times on the Auckland Harbour before selling it, getting married and moving to Melbourne in 1976. I never got around to purchasing a yacht until I became 'rich' when my 2 girls finished private school, when I bought a plywood 12' Cherub 30yrs old. It had a varnished hull and was very hard to keep un-scratched. It was mostly launched from Black Rock using the beach trolley sliding off a purpose built road trailer. It was hard work putting up the mast each visit & dismantling it. I had to be at the ramp about 8.00am to get a parking spot and was mostly by myself. I could not sail past Brighton to be back at Black Rock before the stronger sea breeze came in 2 to 3pm. I even split the hull during a 15 knot southerly slamming into the short chop.



Bay of Islands.

After 3 years I saved enough money to purchase a Compass 29' yacht, *Ophelia*, in January 2011 and then spent another \$10k servicing the engine & anti-fouling. It was all worth it and I enjoy sailing on Port Philip. Managing the yacht sailing single handed is no trouble although knowing what the yacht can take is a learning process. I have sailed to Geelong, Portarlington, Queenscliff and Sorrento by myself in winds to 30 knots.

I have a dream – to live and work on board as I don't require an office just AC power and the internet – I am happy at this stage to work on board in the marina while setting up *Ophelia* for extended cruising in 2015.



Ophelia



## Cruising Food with Karen Parker

### Hot-Smoked Food

Home smoking or provisioning for a cruise with store bought smoked food increases the shelf life of the food and provides another element of texture and flavour to meals. There are plenty of smoked products readily available at supermarkets which can be kept as a "later in the cruise" meal. These can be a bit of a lifesaver should the weather conditions prevent making passage to re-stock. They also have the advantage of being pre-cooked, so if the going gets rough, the stove need not be lit.

Smoking food on-board is relatively simple to do if you have a hooded BBQ on the stern. It's handy if you have caught a glut of fish (something that NEVER happens to us) or have too much chicken that all needs to be used before its expiry date.

Fish that is high in natural oils lends itself best to smoking. Salmon, Australian Salmon and Mackerel are all good options.

Smoking can be achieved by using a combination of tea, brown sugar and rice, or soaked wood chips. For a small BBQ use finely cut chips.

To smoke on the BBQ you will need a solid based metal baking dish which fits inside your BBQ. You will also need a metal rack (a small cake rack is good) to fit in the dish and some tinfoil. You can put a loose tent of tinfoil over the smoking dish before you close the hood if you wish to keep your bbq shiny clean.

If using the tea smoking method line the dish with a double layer of tinfoil then layer the rice, brown sugar and loose tea leaves in that order. The rice is the heat conductor the sugar the heat concentrator and the tea the flavour. Jasmine rice and green tea make a great combination if you favour Asian food. Place the rack on top and close the BBQ hood. Leave until it starts to smoke. Place your fish fillets or chicken breasts on the rack with the skin side facing up. Close the hood and cook. A 700 g fillet of salmon takes around 17 minutes. Aim for medium to well-done fish.

Chicken breasts should be of even thickness and generally shouldn't cook for longer than 20 minutes as they can become acrid with too much smoke.

If using woodchips, soak a handful in water for an hour prior to starting the BBQ.

#### Smoked Chicken and Avocado Salad

2 chicken breasts  
2 handfuls of rocket or baby spinach leaves  
1 avocado  
1/2 a red onion, finely sliced  
1 lime  
1/2 cup of mayo  
A splash (to taste) of hot chili sauce, Sriracha rather than sweet chilli sauce

#### Method

Smoke the chicken breasts for twenty minutes and slice  
Mix the lime juice, mayo and sriracha sauce together to taste  
Combine the salad ingredients in a bowl and toss through with the mayo.

#### Hot Smoked Salmon Pate

500g salmon  
Tea smoking mix as above  
225g extra light cream cheese\*  
Zest and juice of one medium lemon  
2 dessert spoons of natural yogurt  
1 teaspoon horseradish cream or ground white pepper to taste  
A dash of Tabasco sauce

\*The cream cheese is a healthy option, but if you don't have it on-board, try yoghurt, sour cream or crème fraîche. You will need to use less as these are all more liquid than the cream cheese.

#### Method

Smoke the fish cool and flake the flesh  
Mix the lemon zest, cream cheese and horseradish or white pepper in a bowl  
Loosen the mix with the juice and yoghurt  
Stir through the flaked salmon  
Test for taste and adjust with tabasco to your liking  
Serve with oven toasted left over flatbreads

There are endless ways to vary this recipe. Fresh herbs, capers, lemon pepper, and chili... explore and have fun.... There are also endless other things to smoke: oysters, mussels, eel.. and plenty of ways to use them up. Smoked oysters and mussels for sundowners, smoked salmon pasta or omelette. Enjoy the adventure!

Please remember to send your best cruising recipes to [sailfling@gmail.com](mailto:sailfling@gmail.com) so that they can become a part of the RBYC Cruising food column!

Those on the Cruise in Company had some great ideas for preprepared cruise food for overnighters (boat stew as Chairman Rod calls it!) or quickly prepared after a long days sail. Plus cakes that keep for two weeks and keep a crew or gathering for coffee happy! Not to mention the sausage rolls that have become legend on Chakana after one of our great cooks shared her recipe.



## CRUISING'S MAY END-OF-MONTH ON WATER ACTIVITY

BY PAM MERRITT

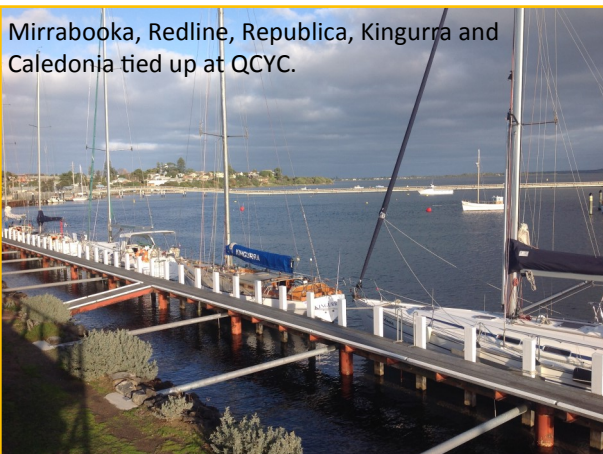
The annual Alan Robinson Trophy race to Queenscliff on the Queen's Birthday Weekend was the designated end-of-month 'on water' activity for cruisers.

13 boats competed, with 4 of those taking part (*Amelia*, *Andalucia*, *Aquarius* and *Mirrabooka*) being active members of our Cruising Group. We got up early, braved the cold and prepared for the forecast 15 knot westerlies, followed by a 20-25 knot SW change about midday. Luckily the strong winds didn't eventuate and we had a dream run on one tack to the finish line at West Channel Pile, with the faster boats completing the race in under 3 hours.

Having finished the race most boats continued on to Queenscliff and the delights of QCYC. We had a bit of excitement along the way when we heard Murray and Sally Hine (*Amelia*) call QCYC for assistance as they were experiencing motor problems and were drifting towards a sand bank halfway along West Channel. Conditions were reasonable so we towed them in to the club where Tarni's crew ensured a safe tie up.

The welcoming fire and friendly ambience of QCYC completed a good day out on the water. A steady 15 knot SW the following day made for a fast and exhilarating sail back to RBYC.

Mirrabooka, Redline, Republica, Kingurra and Caledonia tied up at QCYC.



David and Ray on kitchen duties.

## MEMBER NEWS

The Cruising Group welcomes new members **Sally Williams**, *Odysseus* and **Howard Meltzer**, *Looking Good*.

.....  
**Richard & Marian Johnston**, *Sophistique*, used their raffle prize from last years Classical Music Night and spent the week in Docklands.

.....  
**Bryan and Sue Drummond**, *Gypsea Rover*, are on their way to Airlie Beach but Pandemonium has hit - Panda their genset has broken down so an urgent repair or replacement is needed.

.....  
**Foxy Lady's Rod and Sue Slater** have just returned from Europe to be greeted by a new granddaughter.

.....  
**Sally & David Spencer**, *Sun Kiss*, are visiting family in Washington DC.

.....  
**Will and Pam Merritt**, *Andalucia*, head to Townsville on June 19<sup>th</sup> to join *Gypsea Rover* for the sail to Cairns, then on July 6<sup>th</sup> fly Cairns to Hamilton Is. to join *Kirra Kirra* and sail back up to Townsville, home July 15th. They are looking forward to both trips and the chance to escape a bit of Melbourne winter.

.....  
**Grant and Jenny Collins** have just sold *Currawong*. She will stay in their pen for a few months so we encourage the new owners **Nick and David Mileskin** to come along to cruising group where *Currawong* has been a regular for many years.

.....  
**Tom Hinton and Alison Roberts-Wray** have sold their unit close to RBYC and heading further afield to Ocean Grove.

.....  
**Robina and Brenton Smith**, *Chakana*, are anchored in 'Bums Bay' at the Gold coast Seaway along with many other yachts waiting for an abatement of the strong south-easterly winds before heading further north. Have met up with **Champagne Charlie** whose cruise commenced from Whyalla, Brenton's former stamping ground. **Shayne and Lisa** have helped another couple with the refit of the steel yacht, *Energy*, Brenton built 36 years ago and sold as a hull, deck and coachhouse ready for fitting out. It's a small world!

.....  
**Jo and John Walker**, *Kirra Kirra*, are in Mackay Marina sitting out 30-35kt winds.

# NOTICEBOARD

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### FRIDAY 20th JUNE ANNUAL CLASSICAL MUSIC EVENING

#### 'BAGATELLES, FANTASIES AND RE-IMAGININGS'

Featuring world-renowned pianist Stefan Cassonenos who will play a large variety of his repertoire to entertain us. Stefan is a recipient of the 2012 Young Achiever of the Year Award and is internationally acclaimed.

Stefan will perform many familiar and enchanting pieces including Beethoven's Fur Elise and Moonlight Sonata on our newly refurbished and finely tuned grand piano.

Enjoy an evening of fine dining, dining and entertainment -all for just \$100 a head. Time: 7pm.

Pre-dinner sherris, delicious three course dinner and some wine included. Menu includes a seafood platter at each table for Entrée followed by duck or fillet mignon for main course. Doesn't this sound scrumptious!

Of course by now you have booked, but just in case you haven't please book through the RBYC Office as soon as you can get to the phone. Individual tickets or tables of 10.

Hurry to secure your booking for an elegant evening of fine entertainment.

### SUNDAY 6th JULY ANNUAL YARRA RIVER FROSTBITE CRUISE

It's that time of year already and with the winter rainy season upon us we need a good social occasion to entice us onto the water. Our cruisers are a hardy bunch and a bit of wind, possible rain and low temperatures are not enough to stop us from having a great time.

So on Sunday 6th July we will all sail up the Yarra for our Annual Frostbite Cruise BYO everything BBQ lunch.

Break out your best and warmest winter outfits. This is your chance to vie for the 'Best Silly Hat' prize.

Depart the marina about 10am for a midday arrival or you may prefer to stay a night at Melbourne City Marina.

Venue the same as last year at a pontoon on the south side of Victoria Harbour.

Call or email Roger Walker (rgwalker309@gmail.com or 0407844992) about a week before to register your interest or find out more information. Book own berth if staying overnight.

Of course cruisers are always adaptable and those registered will be contacted if any changes are forced by the weather.

### FRIDAY 11th JULY RBYC PRESENTATION NIGHT

Come along and support our Cruising Award Winners. Cruising Yachtsman of the Year, Most improved Cruiser and Stars and Compass Trophy. Details club website.

### FRIDAY 18th JULY FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speaker: Chairman Rod Watson  
Borneo Cruise

### DESTINATION DOCKLANDS

## Chair Chat

Once again I am reminded why so many of us go north during the Melbourne Winter. May was apparently one of the warmest on record, but it seemed pretty cold to me, maybe it's my ageing bones.

Sandy and I did brave the May chill and have a few days at Waterfront City Marina in Docklands. It is very peaceful at this time of year and is a great base to take in some of Melbourne's highlights. We went to the footy at the MCG and took in some culture with a visit to the Italian Masters at the NGV. Of course we did the usual shopping, eating and drinking.

There are regular Friday Night Fireworks at Docklands from the 4<sup>th</sup> July to the 29<sup>th</sup> August which is a great start to a weekend at Docklands, join an end of month cruise or just get some friends together.

Welcome to **Vanessa Twigg** who is now the G.C. liaison, Vanessa is a very experienced sailor who will do a great job for Cruising and the Club.



### Captain Coxswain's Corner

#### 'LOOPHOLE'

So you've found a loophole in the Club rules which is letting you get away with all sorts of mischief. But, do you know the origin of the term? In the days when sailing ships engaged in trading activities were often being boarded by privateers it was common to have a barrier of strong timber on the deck to form an enclosure of close quarters. These barriers were provided with loopholes so that the defenders could use muskets to fire at the boarding parties. The loopholes provided a way around the perceived problem.