



CRUISING NEWS



AUGUST 2014

CRUISING AWARDS 2014 CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS

PHOTOS: NICK McGUIGAN



Rod Watson accepting the Cruising Yachtsman of The Year from Roger Bennett, Commodore of QCYC on behalf of Sue and Bryan Drummond.

CRUISING YACHTSMAN OF THE YEAR: SUE & BRYAN DRUMMOND

In 2012 Sue and Bryan Drummond sailed *Gypsea Rover*, a Hylas 56, from RBYC to Hobart, then across to Nelson, NZ before joining the ICA Pacific Rally sailing from Opua, NZ and arriving back in Bundaberg via Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. During this time they had many crew from Melbourne join them and share the experience.

Their informative blog site kept us entertained and Bryan gave a presentation to the Cruising Group at the March Forum Dinner.

Rod Watson accepted the award on their behalf as they are currently cruising to Indonesia.

MOST IMPROVED CRUISERS

BARBARA BURNS & GEOFF BREWSTER



Barbara Burns and Geoff Brewster sailing *Andante 1*, a Catalina 385, participated in the Cruising Group's Bass Strait Cruise for the first time in 2014.

They made their first Bass St crossing and continued on to the Tamar and Flinders Island.

STARS AND COMPASS NAVIGATION TROPHY

ANDREW ROBERTS

Rod Watson presented Andrew Roberts the Stars and Compass Trophy. Andrew is a member at Sandringham but sails on *Tilting at Windmills*.



The novice Stars and Compass Trophy, donated by Kathy De Garis, was won by CH Reynolds of Hobson's Bay Yacht Club, who was not in attendance.

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ROD AND SANDY GO APE ON A CRUISE!

BY GRANT COLLINS



Jenny Collins thanking Rod for his presentation.

“You are Hiiideous Oorangutan,” so said the hapless Manuel to a Burly Irish construction worker in an episode of ‘Faulty Towers’. Sadly, the only thing hideous about the Orangutans described at Friday

(No relation to Sybil Fawly) and many beautiful butterflies.

The snorkelling was great, but due to over-fishing there are no large fish on the reefs. This is problematic throughout the region that they travelled in.

The “Stars” of the tour were the Orangutans at Camp Leakey. They also met Dr Birute Galdikas who has been working there for 40

years trying to minimize the impacts of the loss of their habitat. These magnificent apes now rely on feeding stations as there is not enough forest left to sustain them. They are very strong and have an arm span of up to 8 feet. They are very graceful and athletic climbers.

The 40 people who attended the dinner were entertained and informed by Rod’s presentation and he is a gifted photographer, judging by what we saw that night.



Night’s Cruising Dinner is their declining numbers brought about by the rapacious destruction of their habitat due to the deforestation caused partly by the palm oil industry while corrupt government officials turn a blind eye.

Rod and Sandy Watson partook of a 10 day cruise from Singapore to Bali on the Orion II which featured the Camp Leakey Orangutan Refuge as part of the trip.

The Orion II is small by cruise ship standards, with a capacity of 102 passengers plus 80 crew. On this particular voyage there were 82 passengers on board. Unfortunately the price of the cruise is inversely proportional to the size of the ship. Even at the 2 for 1 deal that Rod and Sandy got it would still be significantly more than similar time on board a 2000-3000 passenger super liner.

The ship usually sailed overnight to allow day stopovers at points of interest along the way such as the village of ‘Kuching’ (which translates to “cat” in English). Here they were treated to such things as local dancing, music and other aspects of village culture. The company that runs the Orion II cruise ships supports community projects, one of which was to send a young boy for major face surgery in Australia or Singapore that could not be treated locally.

Much of the cruise centred around the wildlife of the area and Rod produced some brilliant photos of exotic creatures, such as the Borneo Bearded Pig (no relation to the writer despite the opinions of his wife!!), the Proboscis Monkey, Macaque Monkeys, the Silverleaf Monkey and an Asian Pit Viper



CRUISE TO VICTORIA HARBOUR

BY PAUL AND ANGELA WOODMAN

~ *Summer Wind* ~ B 237



On Friday afternoon the 25th July the Cruising Group, led by Will and Pam Merritt, arranged to spend the evening at Victoria Harbour. Attendee vessels included, *Andalu-*

We welcomed Keith and Sue Woodruff, the proud new owners of *Andante* previously owned by Barbara Burns and Geoff Brewster. Keith and Sue have sailed in the UK and son Jonathan sailed in the RBYC Cadets with Adam Woodman and won the 2001



Past chairman Will directing the cruisers about dinner arrangements..

cia, Foxy Lady, Highland Fling, Allegresse, Sun Kiss and Summer Wind.

As reconstruction work was occurring at Waterfront City Marina, our group was berthed at Water Plaza on the southern side of Victoria Harbour. Many cruising members enjoyed exploring this Docklands area bordering the extensions to Bourke and Collins Streets. A different atmosphere was evident with city workers gathering at waterfront venues for Friday night drinks.

A total of 22 cruisers including Will and Pam, Rod and Sue Slater, Richard and Marian Johnson, Andrew and Karen Parker, Peter and Karen Dove, Ron Brown and Elizabeth Scicula, Keith and Sue Woodruff, Annie Belfrage, Ross Wareing, Kathy DeGaris, Alan Richardson, David and Sally Spencer, and Paul and Angela Woodman gathered to enjoy the evening's entertainment and good company.

The evening commenced with sundowner drinks on the marina walkway at 6.30pm closely followed by the fireworks at 7.00pm.



Stonehaven Cup in Largs Bay. Keith and Sue plan to join in Cruising Group activities and to occasionally race *Andante*. We wish them both well with their new acquisition.

We dined at the nearby Watermark Restaurant overlooking the marina, the group taking up two tables. We all ate well; the food was good and modestly priced. The night was lively with lots of laughter.

A part of the evening's discussion centred on other possible destination harbours for cruisers to visit during the year. These ideas included Martha Cove, the newly formed Wyndham Harbour Marina and Portarlington. Another interesting option is anchoring in Beaumaris Bay to seaward of the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron.

Many of the group returned to *Summer Wind* around 10.00pm for after-dinner drinks, coffee and sweets. A fabulous time was had by all, the evening closed around midnight.

Most of the yachts returned to RBYC by midday Saturday.



Ross Wareing, Richard Johnson, Alan Richardson and Marion Johnson



Rod Slater, Paul Woodman and Sue Slater



Cruising Food with Karen Parker Cooking Under Pressure!

Robina:

I decided I needed to learn how to use a pressure cooker when we started floating the idea of long term cruising. It means I can make a tasty casserole on board using the least possible gas of which there is a finite supply, using the cheap cuts of meat and have enough to put some meals in the freezer ready for overnights or long sailing days.

We chose a Tefal Clipso Pressure cooker as the handles fold down for easy storage (an attribute that Karen Parker spoke about in her presentation to the Cruising Group with the Tefal saucepans that stacked within each other) and it was highly recommended by Choice. It has two pressure settings.

The following recipe has evolved from a family favourite and adapted to the pressure cooker. I usually make it when at anchor early in a sailing leg ready to freeze the leftovers and while the vegetables are still fresh.

Chakana Beef Casserole

- 2 tbsps oil
- 2 leeks or onions
- 4-6 small/medium mushrooms
- 1kg gravy beef cut into 2cm cubes
- 1 tbsps plain flour
- 1 cup red wine
- 2 tspns garlic paste
- 1 tsp mixed herbs
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tbsps cranberry sauce
- Salt/pepper
- 4 potatoes cut into 3 cm pieces
- 1 small sweet potato cut into 2-3 cm pieces
- 2 carrots



1. Heat half the oil in the pressure cooker over medium heat and cook leeks and mushrooms until soft, then remove and set aside.
2. Add rest of the oil and brown beef cubes in batches over med/high heat. Return all beef to the pan and add flour. Cook, stirring, for about 3 mins.
3. Add wine, garlic, herbs, cranberry sauce, onions and mushrooms. Season to taste.
4. Close the pressure cooker lid and lock it, then bring cooker to low pressure over high heat. Once low pressure has been reached, reduce heat to stabilize pressure and cook 20 mins.
5. Remove cooker from heat and release pressure by quick release method.
6. Uncover and add potatoes, sweet potatoes and carrots. Quickly replace the lid, bringing back to low pressure over high heat. Once low pressure has been reached, reduce heat to stabilize pressure and cook another 10mins.
7. Release the pressure using natural release method, remove lid and check everything is cooked and tender. Add surprise/canned peas or beans and reheat.
8. Enjoy and freeze.

Quick Release - Turn the pressure settings dial to the steam escap-

ing symbol and it releases the pressure quickly to be able to open the lid.

Natural Release - Turn off the heat and let the pressure cooker lose pressure slowly. Apparently this stops potatoes from exploding!

Karen:

We have a Fissler Vitavit which I bought for cruising the Whitsundays on our first Highland Fling 16 years ago. Our little Roberts 26 had no oven, just a two burner metho stove and at the time our children expected bread with every meal! I used mine to bake bread by removing the pressure valve and lightly packing the space with tinfoil. The bread was placed on an oiled trivet in the pressure cooker, then the lid put on. Once heated the cooker became a stovetop oven and small cobs of bread could be cooked.

Pressure cookers have many virtues. They have a locking lid, which means that transferring food ashore by dinghy is failsafe. It also means you can safely heat pre-packaged cryovac* meals at sea without running the risk of splashing crew with boiling water. Precook your meal, cryovac it into individual pouches and freeze. (Pre freezing also helps to bring the fridge down to working temperature before a long cruise.) To reheat your meal in it's bag, bring water to the boil, drop in the bags turn the heat off and leave until warmed through, putting the lid on for safety. You do not need to generate pressure for this form of cooking. It's useful if you don't have a microwave on board, or if you are reheating something with a strong odour... eg curry.

Highland Fling's Portuguese Chicken

- 1 soft chorizo, sliced thickly, each slice cut into quarters
- 2 rashers of smoked bacon or speck cut into small strips
- 1 large brown onion, diced roughly
- 6 chicken thighs diced into 3cm cubes
- 500 ml Tomato passata
- 1 teaspoon Smoked Paprika (+/_) to taste
- Dried chili flakes to taste
- Pepper to season : Do not add salt as there is plenty in the chorizo, bacon and olives
- Pitted black olives
- Freshly chopped flat leaf parsley
- Sour cream to garnish

Heat the pot and gently fry off the chorizo and bacon
Add the onions and sweat on a medium heat until the onions are soft but not too coloured
Remove from pan and brown the chicken pieces in batches
Return all to the pan, add passata , paprika and chili to taste
Bring liquid to boil then cover and lock lid
Cook for 12-15 min until tender
Release pressure by the rapid method
Add sliced black olives and check seasoning
Serve topped with a dollop of sour cream (or natural yoghurt), garnished with fresh parsley and a green salad and crusty bread.

*Sunbeam make a reasonably priced cryovac machine with bags readily available on the Aus East Coast.

MONO OR MULTI (ARE TWO HULLS BETTER THAN ONE?)

BY PAM MERRITT



Sue, Bryan and Will at Orpheus Island.

The June '14 edition of Cruising Helmsman has a comprehensive article titled: **'Multihull Madness: Mono versus Multi – You Decide'**.

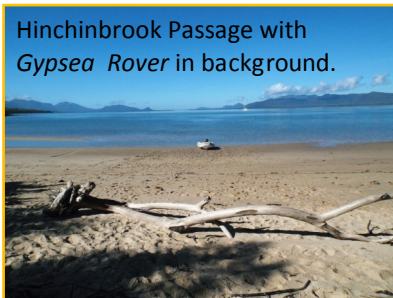
The article gives an unbiased view detailing the advantages and disadvantages of both

for cruising. The conclusion was that there's no conclusion - mono or multi, swings and roundabouts, with points for and against both.

From mid June to mid July we were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to cruise on two beautiful RBYC boats, one a mono one a multi, and the best thing was – they were both in Far North Queensland.

MAGNIFICENT MONO

First up, *Gypsea Rover*, where we joined Bryan and Sue at Horseshoe Bay on Magnetic Island. We sailed to Cairns with fantastic anchorages along the way. Our first anchorage was Orpheus Island where there is a resort, good snorkelling and a Marine Research Centre. A challenging walk through waist high grass and rocky terrain up to the ridge at the northern end of the island rewarded us with fantastic views over both sides of the island.



Hinchinbrook Passage with *Gypsea Rover* in background.

We continued on to, for us, the much anticipated Hinchinbrook Passage, and it didn't disappoint. Early morning motoring on glassy seas surrounded by rugged wooded mountains was a highlight of the trip. We anchored

at Scraggy Point, the sunset was spectacular and the walk onshore next morning following a crystal clear creek a delight, especially when Will's hiking stick snapped in half during a creek crossing and he slipped in!

While in the area we dinghied in to Port Hinchinbrook Marina which, like much of this area, suffered massive damage from Cyclone Yasi in 2012. All that remains of the marina are broken piles without pontoons and walkways. The area is so silted up that we



Hinchinbrook Marina

even ran aground in the dinghy. It's doubtful whether the marina will ever be rebuilt and very sad to see as the marina area is surrounded by luxury homes with private pontoons.

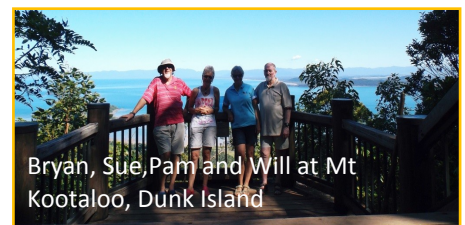
On to Dunk Island where the once popular resort remains closed and still bears the scars of severe damage from Cyclone Yasi. Rebuilding is slowly happening and the island is now open to day trippers and campers. Another walk, this time along a well graded and maintained path to the 271 metre peak of Mt Kootaloo - with more fantastic views. Our only mainland port of call was Mourilyan Harbour, a sugar port which has an easy deep entrance and would provide excellent protection from strong winds. High Island, part of the Frankland Group, was our next anchorage and we took advantage of the one and only mooring buoy there. This scenic spot had a camping ground ashore well hidden from passers-by!

Our final anchorage before Cairns was the bustling Fitzroy Island, bustling at least on sunny weekends when hoards of day trippers from Cairns arrive at the resort. Here there is a Turtle Hospital where turtles come to recover from a disease called 'floating syndrome', where gas builds up in their bodies and prevents them from diving below the surface. And for us yet another mountain to climb, with a steep walk to the lighthouse for more spectacular views. Good snorkelling and swimming here with the water becoming noticeably warmer as we headed north.

We then scuttled in to Cairns' Marlin Marina a day earlier than planned with some stronger winds forecast for the next few days – and of course there were 'boat jobs' to do in preparation for *Gypsea Rover's* Indonesian Rally, and Will's birthday to celebrate.

We spent 16 days on *Gypsea Rover* and it was a pleasure to once again be part of Bryan and Sue's cruising adventures, especially to have the opportunity to sail along part of the Australian coast we hadn't cruised before. Apart from the cruising there were the night time games of Rummicub and 'Bryan's Video Nights' where we watched the full Shackleton Antarctic saga. *Gypsea Rover's* a magnificent cruising yacht and we are so pleased that Panda the Generator's alternator is now fully repaired so that the washing machine, air conditioner and water maker will all be fully functioning in Indonesia.

Happy cruising
Bryan and Sue!!



Bryan, Sue, Pam and Will at Mt Kootaloo, Dunk Island

MERRITT'S AND WALKER'S CRUISING ABOARD KIRRA KIRRA

BY JO WALKER

Will, Pam, Jo and John at Hamilton Island Yacht Club.



(or Will and John either!). Woodwark Bay was the first stop after enjoying Hammo's great facilities, a lovely anchorage with some fishermen cooking their catch on an open fire. On their advice John and Will went off in the dinghy fishing. We believe they were given the wrong information by the fishermen, obviously wanting to keep the fish to themselves, as none were caught.



Woodwark Bay

sort. The Merritt's having been there for a Shaggers gathering were able to offer advice as to where to anchor. We stayed for 2 nights as the weather was beautiful and it's definitely a must-see, for its beauty, peacefulness and facilities. Pam and Jo ventured into the pool one afternoon, water was pretty cold, but the thought of a lovely hot shower ashore made it worth it. John and Will decided a beer was as cold as they wanted to be.

We all enjoyed a great sail to Cape Upstart, flying along reaching up to 13kts. We spotted a whale not far from *Kirra Kirra*, she appeared to have her calf near and they swam around the boat, checking us out. Again another lovely anchorage just around the point where there is a small hamlet of houses along the



From Monty's—Shag Islet in background.

Arrival at Hamilton Island commenced 8 days of cruising aboard *Kirra Kirra* for the Merritt's. The weather was warm, swimming at the pool was a must, the bikinis were out although not on Pam and Jo (or Will and John either!). Woodwark Bay was the first stop after enjoying Hammo's great facilities, a lovely anchorage with some fishermen cooking their catch on an open fire. On their advice John and Will went off in the dinghy fishing. We believe they were given the wrong information by the fishermen, obviously wanting to keep the fish to themselves, as none were caught. This seems to be a common theme with fishermen, telling you the best places to fish, NOT!!

From Woodwark we motored to Gloucester Passage, near Montes Re-

sort. The Merritt's having been there for a Shaggers gathering were able to offer advice as to where to anchor. We stayed for 2 nights as the weather was beautiful and it's definitely a must-see, for its beauty, peacefulness and facilities. Pam and Jo ventured into the pool one afternoon, water was pretty cold, but the thought of a lovely hot shower ashore made it worth it. John and Will decided a beer was as cold as they wanted to be. We all enjoyed a great sail to Cape Upstart, flying along reaching up to 13kts. We spotted a whale not far from *Kirra Kirra*, she appeared to have her calf near and they swam around the boat, checking us out. Again another lovely anchorage just around the point where there is a small hamlet of houses along the

shore with their fishing boats, so a road must have been somewhere nearby. The headland is about 400m high with Station Hill behind at 700m, towering over the hamlet, mainly covered with hooped pines and very rocky. We walked along the beach to look at the wonderfully shaped rock formations.

Cape Bowling Green, our next stop, a name evocative of a large, flat, green grassy area. Not so! It revealed

itself to be a very long sand spit rising only a couple of metres above the water, protecting quite shallow water inside. Not really the place for a comfortable anchorage except in very calm weather. Luckily as we are in a catamaran, we enjoyed a fairly smooth evening, rocking a little during tide change. The pelicans and their numerous chicks were out in force ashore preening and chirping. Fishing off the back of *Kirra Kirra*, we only caught some small sharks which we released so they could grow into BIG sharks.

The games of 500 were hotly contested, boys against girls. Round 1 girls romped it in, the following night, we conceded Round 2 to the boys. I wasn't quite sure whether there were some sly hand movements or scratching of chins which may have facilitated victory for the men, but I'll give them the benefit of trust that it was fair and square.

Rounding Cape Cleveland we sailed into Townsville Breakwater Marina, having to pick our entry time as the channel is not dredged and depth is 0.8m to 1.00m at LWS. A bit of a surprise to us as it was not mentioned when we booked our berth. Townsville's museums and the Strand by the water kept us busy for a day or two.

The weather being very nice, warm and sunny with a cool breeze, we enjoyed our last day with the Merritt's, celebrating another successful sailing leg with the odd bottle of our favourite tippie. Although *Kirra Kirra* is a comfortable vessel to sail with only 2 up, having good friends aboard adds to the allure of coastal sailing. We had a fun time with Pam and Will aboard and whilst we were visiting areas we hadn't ventured to before we don't think they minded seeing them again.



Cape Bowling Green.



Townsville - Magnet Island in background.

ARMCHAIR TRAVEL

BY PAM MERRITT

It was certainly 5 star cruising on board *Kirra Kirra* when we sailed from Hamilton Island to Townsville with John and Jo Walker. We had little idea of what to expect with catamaran cruising and were suitably impressed. How could you not be when cruising north in a 20+ knot south easterly with boat speed about 8–9 knots and nothing spills, wobbles or falls over. How amazing to be able to sit in comfort in a lounge-room type setting while sailing at good speed, enjoying the coastal scenery and a morning coffee.

It's not sailing as we know it (ie stowing carefully before departure, heeling, sometimes cold and wet), but we'd have to admit that for East Coast cruising a catamaran makes a lot of sense with plenty of space for living aboard and many home comforts. Maybe there's more to it than we realise, but John and Jo make sailing *Kirra Kirra* look effortless.

We had eight wonderful days. From Hamilton Island we sailed to Woodwark Bay, then on through the beautiful Gloucester Passage to anchor at Monty's Resort where we had a relaxing two day stop in idyllic conditions. From Monty's it was a quick look at Bowen and overnight anchorages at Edgumbe Bay, the rugged Cape Upstart and then Cape Bowling Green, which is basically a long sandspit providing good shelter in light conditions. Could be interesting in a blow! Then on to Townsville's Breakwater Marina, a huge marina quite close to town, with a couple of days to explore Townsville before we headed home.

John and Jo were great hosts. We had some great sailing, ate and drank well, enjoyed the evening games of 500 and we were delighted to have had the opportunity to experience catamaran cruising in such a fabulous area - with the added bonus of sunny 27° days and water warm enough to swim in.



Hijinks at Cape Bowling Green.

Will is wondering whether wandering away while wintry winds whistle over Melbourne will allow time for witty writing for his Cruising friends. Weep not, wistful wage-slaves, for he will return with wise words when warmer weather comes.

Will Merritt

**Will's
Wise Words**

MEMBER NEWS

EDEN GETS THE GO AHEAD FOR A NEW MARINA AT SNUG COVE

Ross Wareing has had his ear to the ground and passed on this news received from his friend at Two Fold Bay Yacht Club who is also a member of POEM, Port Of Eden Marina Inc. the lobbying arm for the project.

'3 weeks ago they received the funding for the Eden Snug Cove wave Attenuator, floating walkway, on shore hard stand, and shoreline revetments work from the NSW Govt. -- \$10 mill. The floating marina can now be built in behind by private investment. The aim is to have the 1st stage of 100 berths completed within about three years from now.'

Barbara Burns and Geoff Brewster have recently sold *Andante 1*. We thank Barbara for her contribution to the Cruising Group and helping Robina as Assistant Editor.

Keith and Sue Woodruff are the proud new owners of *Andante 1!* They are keeping her at RBYC and have already participated in the End of Month Cruise. We hope to see more of them.

Robina and Brenton Smith, Chakana, recently spent an evening with **Tom Hinton and Alison Roberts Wray, Boomeroo**, in Mooloolaba where she is currently berthed. Tom and Alison previously owned *Tales*.



Alison and Tom on Boomeroo.

Sue and Bryan Drummond, Gypsea Rover, have checked out of Australia at Thursday Island and are sailing to Indonesia with RBYC crew of Paul Wise, Helen Scott and Mel Chambers.

Will and Pam Merritt, Andalucia, plan to set off on the Great Nullarbor Caravan Adventure about mid August.

Robina and Brenton Smith, Chakana have reached the tropics and are currently anchored in the lee of Great Keppel Island from where, with the marvels of modern internet technology, this newsletter is being produced.

Please keep your cruising stories, 'My Favourite Anchorage' and 'How I Started Sailing' contributions rolling in. My inbox has been rather empty lately. This newsletter relies on a flow of member contributions.

NOTICEBOARD

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY 15TH AUGUST FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speaker: Peter Johns
Nautical Antiquities and Canal Cruising in Netherlands.

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

Booking with the office is essential to have accurate numbers for the catering.

Please book with the office (95923092) no later than Wednesday July 13th.

FRIDAY 29th AUGUST POSSIBLE END OF MONTH CRUISE

A cruise in company on Friday August 29th to Melbourne City Marina to see the Fireworks. This is dependant upon Melbourne City Marina being available, or once again going to Victoria Harbour as per last month.

If you missed last month this would be another chance to see this fabulous display and meet up with other cruisers.

Plan would be to arrive by 6 pm, with a meal at a local restaurant following the fireworks.

Watch emails as to whether this cruise will go ahead and details.

Book your own berth at the marina.

FRIDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speaker: Kathy De Garis
Preparations for Cruising Medical Emergencies.

Attendance is a must for all those who want some handy tips to prepare for medical emergencies while cruising and what to stock in your first aid kit.

SATURDAY 4th OCTOBER OPENING DAY

Traditionally this day marks the beginning of the sailing season in a fun and colourful way.

Refer to the club website for details and times.

SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS

Chair Chat

Hi Cruisers,

We are still in sunny Queensland doing the Nana and Papa thing. We visited Manly which is apparently the largest marina in the Southern Hemisphere. It has great facilities to complement the wonderful weather and plenty of anchorages around Moreton Bay. This seems all very tempting when contemplating Melbourne's winter weather.

On another note, whilst we generally manage to get speakers for the monthly dinners, we are always in need of ideas and suggestions. People's experiences and photos of same are always popular, so please don't be shy about offering to speak yourself or about nominating someone else! Even an idea that the Committee could follow up on would be appreciated; just speak to a Committee member.



Captain Coxswain's Corner

'PETTY OFFICER'

A 'Petty Officer' is a naval rank equivalent to an army sergeant. 'Petty' is derived from the French word 'petit', so literally interpreted the rank is a small (or less than an) officer.