



CRUISING NEWS



NOVEMBER 2014

WONDERFUL ADVENTURES IN THE CARIBBEAN

BY KATHY DE GARIS



Rod Watson thanking Peter Strain.

Cruising Group Forum dinner on 17th May presented by Peter Strain.

Peter and Susie Strain had a fabulous 2 weeks cruising in the Caribbean late February to March this year. They joined 2 other couples and hired a very comfortable 43 foot Catamaran from Dream Charters and altogether travelled 300 nautical miles between 7 different islands and thus 7 different countries!

The sailing conditions were perfect with very steady and predictable easterly trade winds that enabled them to beam or broad reach to most destinations in comfortable day trips. The water was clear and beautiful for both swimming and fishing. The boat had a very shallow draft with dagger board keels so they could get in very close to the beaches and found that their anchorages were just gorgeous! Happily there were no nasties in the water or in the

air to annoy them.

The area has a fascinating history with most of its population now consisting of the descendants of the African slaves brought in by the French, Dutch or Spanish colonists of the various islands. As the islands are mostly volcanic the very fertile soil supported profitable agricultural industries in the past. Nowadays tourism is the mainstay economically and some of the islands are very poor whereas others such as the French Gustavia is a very sophisticated area with amazing super yachts and motor launches and very expensive French boutiques and restaurants everywhere.

Some of the areas such as St Kitts and St John attracted the massive cruise ships and the port areas were bustling with tourists and shops with Reggae music coming out of every bar and restaurant. Antigua, the home of the West Indian cricket scene, had some wonderful cricket history on view.

At Iles des Saints they caught a massive tuna and were lucky enough to have the local French chef prepare it into a massive banquet that fed most of the lucky diners



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That tuna!



Island visiting.

that evening at the restaurant; a wonderful night of fun that will stay in the memory for ever.

At each island they had to log in and out to the Customs officials at the beginning and end of every visit and as they were only on the islands for a day or two this involved a lot of paper work and hanging around but luckily for Peter and Suzie,

Dr Simon Bell took on this onerous task.

In summary they had a very relaxed time with wonderful carefree sailing, gorgeous food and weather, no dramas and the only problem was that it was over all too quickly. It takes a long time to get there from Australia but it was wonderful.

From time to time we complain about the lack of cruising destinations on Port Phillip. I know I'm being pedantic, but Lt John Murray discovered our bay in 1802 and strangely named it as a port. Now it seems to me that our bay is a little large to be considered a port, but there you go.

Of course maritime tradition has it that names given by European discoverers are to be respected. In fact the name given by little Johnny Murray was Port King, but Governor King declined the compliment and insisted that the bay should be named after his predecessor Governor Phillip, so it became Port Phillip.

Now where was I? Oh yes, I was considering complaints about lack of places to go in the bay. I'm guessing that such complaints are referring to lack of secure destinations with all-weather berths, power, water and fine ale houses. However, for the more adventurous, there are some fine spots which offer a good night's sleep when the wind is a settled offshore breeze.

For instance, if the forecast is for a northerly to blow for a couple of days, then Sandridge beach (just north of Station Pier) or Beaumaris Bay make excellent venues for

eating and sleeping (Lady Pamela says that if I keep mentioning 'drinking' you will all assume that I'm in the grip of the grog, so 'mum's the word').

Southerlies offer areas from Frankston to Sorrento, easterlies open up possibilities for anchoring off beaches from Port Melbourne to Black Rock and so on.

If you do have experience with anchoring in the odd lesser known spots perhaps you could drop Madam Editor a line extolling the virtues of same. I know she would appreciate your efforts and would doubtless offer some sort of monetary reward. You might even get as much as I do.

Furthermore, if you do share your info about your peaceful hideaway you could be joined by a crowd of noisy cruisers wanting to enjoy the serenity with you. Wouldn't that be good?

William Teetotaller

**Will's
Wise Words**

CRUISING THE ENGLISH CHANNEL WITH ROGER LLOYD



This UK summer I had a great time sailing around the Channel Islands and Northern France. The weather was, in the main, brilliant. My Westerly Konsort 29' *Katy Dee* departed from Barry on the Welsh side of the Bristol Channel with crew to Salcombe, for a brief stop on the visitor's pontoon to change crew. We set off towards Cherbourg, but diverted to Dartmouth to avoid motor-sailing into a force 5 headwind for hours on end. The next day, despite the same forecast (E or NE 4/5) we set off again, but now into only F4. Arrived Cherbourg after much motor-sailing. Crew returned on ferry. Set off solo immediately for best timing around the Barfleur overfalls to Ouistreham, one of the few harbours in the area having an all-tide and almost all-weather entry, and then the next day entered the canal towards Caen. I caught up with the Westerly Owners' Association fleet in the canal. Of 25 yachts only one yacht was smaller than mine. After leaving Caen, where we were given a fabulous welcome and dinner, we retraced our steps, stopping to visit the Pegasus Bridge Museum / Memorial (of "A-Bridge-Too-Far" fame) before spending the night at Ouistreham. We day-sailed slowly east, entering various French ports, finishing at Fécamp, where the rally ended. At one point the fleet was accused of bringing the town traffic to a halt by taking too long to go through the lifting bridge into the town marina!



Sailed (very quickly on broad reach in F5+) using a favourable spring tide to St

Vaast, which is a quaint old town with a gated harbour. Then onto Barfleur, where *Katy Dee* dried out at low water against the harbour wall in one of two visitors' berths. Then Cherbourg. Since solo, very pleased to meet a German yachtsman (from Panama) on his boat (which he winters in Germany). He had arrived early because of the strong easterly winds and was waiting for his wife to arrive at Cherbourg by train. We were both anchored outside the marina (to save money) but inside Cherbourg's very large inner harbour. My yacht *Katy Dee* was just outside the charted military area, but we were soon joined by French yachts who were definitely inside the military port area! We sailed in company to Alderney, where a long-standing friend of mine lives. I have folding bikes aboard which I made good use of, especially in Alderney, with my German friend and his wife, who was a keen skinny-dipper - but only in private.

Then solo to St Peter Port. Needed to replace the stern tube seal. A little agro here with somebody trying to charge me a silly price for using the marine railway.

Then various Channel Island anchorages. On one occasion, I had difficulty getting back to the boat with my bicycle. In the Channel Islands



a calm beach at low water can become impossible to land on (or especially to launch from) near high water. It is an area of strong tidal streams, and the strongest tidal streams are at low and high water! Somebody suggested that the sea state near high water that occurs in a number of anchorages which are well sheltered from the wind, was at least in part caused by the tidal streams, as well as the extra depth of water. An hour or so before high water I was faced with big waves breaking on the fast-reducing beach. I escaped disaster by a "cunning plan" and good luck! (Full story available by personal request upon my imminent return to Australia). Herm is beautiful island, but full of tourists.

Every year I seem to be in competition over water resources with fishermen. This year was no exception. Whilst I was in the loo *Katy Dee*, sailing with wind and tidal stream abaft the beam, caught the

floating line of a lobster-pot marker on her transom-hung rudder. I knew that there was a problem on deck. I had to lower all sails to reduce the strain on the rope and then lift it and cut it. Fortunately there was no damage to my yacht.

I am getting neurotic about two things. Lobster pot markers and the clearance given at night to yachts by large vessels outside designated routes and therefore supposedly able to comply with the appropriate rule of the road. (The previous summer I was nearly run down by a large vessel approaching from astern in good visibility by day in a force 6 when the sea was sufficiently rough that my electronic tiller pilot could not cope and I had to hand steer. This prevented me from calling the ship on my VHF radio linked to my AIS receiver. When I was able to call him using DSC (twice), he did not reply! Anyhow, that is another story). The waters around the UK are of course much more congested than those around Australia.

Then Les Ecrehou, which is an English group of rocks, and rather fun. There is limited space to anchor but a lady rowed out to me and offered me their good mooring, which was very comforting. The anchorage is exposed and definitely not the place to be in bad weather (even in summer) for visitor or local. The houses are built on the top of rocks. In the bad winter storms, as of recently, the houses are attacked by the waves. Nature always wins. However the owners are usually very rich, having their main residence in Jersey or Guernsey. The houses, very prized as holiday accommodation, are impossible to purchase.

Then Îles Chausey, a group of French islands and rocks. I arrived at neap tides. As the tides became more springy the free moorings (laid by Granville Yacht Club on the French mainland) became "elastic" near high water, in a way that I do not understand. This caused a few problems, mainly for other boats. There was much exploring to be done here both ashore by bike and in the dinghy during the lower half of the tide, but being very careful of the strong tidal streams. The islands are very popular with French yachts, and French tourists ashore. I wish my French was better. They have a maritime history at least as strong as the British,

but we did beat Napoleon, otherwise I would be speaking French a lot better.

Then St Malo, where my wife came out on the ferry. We went inland up the river Rance for 5 days, motoring all the way! But it was good fun. Initially the river behind the lock of the Barrage is tidal. The electricity company computes the tidal heights and streams a week in advance, depending on the rainfall and the expected demand for electricity. At the head of this delightful river is the town of Dinan (not Dinard). It is incredibly beautiful and much loved by English tourists. Returned to St Malo for my crew's return to Portsmouth by ferry. Small hassle here with the marina, who refused to believe that we had paid for two nights even when I was fortunately able to produce two separate receipts. St Malo is a wonderful old town with much history and many fortification, built mainly to defend against the dastardly English, who centuries later are now welcomed.



Then I sailed slowly westward along the north coast of France and Brittany. I was particularly intrigued by île de

Bréhat and its many off-lying rocks and islands which I could explore by dinghy. I was able to use many of the good anchorages despite the many yachts because I only draw one metre and, although I pre-

ferred not to dry out, I can if necessary on my twin keels. After a week there I sailed slowly westward again, finishing up at Perros Guirec, which is a marina with a very narrow entrance over a sill and located at the head of a big sandy bay. After a few days there I set off to cross the English Channel expecting a maximum wind of SE5. I later received a SE7 gusting 8. After one big wave my tiller-pilot packed up. Fortunately I carry a spare, which I regard as essential for single-handers. Luckily I approached the Scillies in daylight with the tide also with me, otherwise things might have been a little different! At one point I was at hull speed with no mainsail and only one third of my genoa set. The Isles of Scilly are infested with lobster pots, which on a number of occasions caused some alarm, but thankfully nothing more serious - this time.

I had a very good time in the Isles of Scilly. It is a group of low-lying islands, of which six are inhabited. Life there is controlled by the sea. In the sum-

mer months the islands are very popular with tourists and yachtsmen, including the French, who love the Scillies. The tourists arrive and depart using the daily visits of the *MV Scillonian*. After a week I had the company of a crew on *Katy Dee* and we were joined by a friend of mine and his wife on their steel bilge-keeled yacht, *Peggy*. We explored mainly ashore, not sailing, for a further week. I have been to the beautiful Scillies many times before, but never so long as this time. NOW both *Peggy* and *Katy Dee* were trying to return to Barry. The wind was persistently E/NE force 4/5 or more for a further two weeks. We were locked in paradise! We used the time to go on guided walks of the islands, looking at wildlife and archeology (which abounds). Did you know that the Scillies are currently sinking? The islands have reduced in size since Roman times and even since the Middle-Ages.

The easterly wind was bringing some fog. One day *Peggy* set off into the mist and against an easterly wind because her crew was keen to get to the mainland. The following day the fog had gone



and the wind was a light easterly, allowed me to motor-sail to St Ives. The days

were shorter now and I did not wish to leave the Scillies nor approach Padstow in the dark because of lobster pots, but I needed to make good use of the flood tide to arrive at Padstow before high water. I anchored off St Ives, and the next day sailed to Padstow, another gated harbour, where *Katy Dee* was reunited with *Peggy*. The following day we set off in company for the drying harbour of Ilfracombe, and the day after that had a beautiful sail back to Barry.

At Barry, I was keen to get *Katy Dee* ashore as soon as possible, but the hoist was in need of repair, which took a further three weeks. There was also a new water main to install, which needed digging and time for the concrete to set before the hoist could drive over it. While I was on a borrowed mooring at Barry there was a SE'ly gale. Barry harbour is open to winds from this direction, but gales from this direction are rare. A number of boats were damaged. Perhaps foolishly I abandoned the boat that night after fendering her well, roping her loosely to neighbouring yachts, and

lowering the spray hood. I slept in the Yacht Club. However, I am pleased to say that *Katy Dee* survived without damage.



I had to return to my house in Kent to get to London for an editorial meeting of the Cruising Association's Almanac Group, to which I contribute as a regional editor. I am about to return to Barry (a 5-hour drive) to winterise my boat against frost and damp. Luckily my good friend keeps an eye on the yacht ashore while I am in Australia. He also switches on my desiccant dehumidifier once a week for me. This desiccant version works well at low temperatures when the more common compressor dehumidifiers struggle.

The Cruising Association has excellent lectures and all-day seminars over the winter period. It has an excellent website with cruising information and forums. There is also a system where members can report on the latest situation at any harbour for the benefit of other members. We call these Cruising Reports and they can be made on a computer or iPad or Android tablet using an app called Captain's Mate. Many CA members have valuable expertise and give freely of their time to assist fellow members. There are Honorary Local Representatives who assist members in various ports. There is also a Blue Water Section with international members.

I am about to return to Melbourne (by air!) and am looking to go sailing or racing from mid December to early April, either around the cans, or preferably on longer trips. If you would like to have me aboard, please contact roger@RNL.org.uk.

Roger joined our Bass Strait Cruise in Company earlier this year crewing on *Andante 1*.

He has a UK DTI Ocean Yachtmaster ticket and a RYA Yachtmaster ticket plus various other yachting qualifications.



Cruising Food Mussels

Delicious, healthy, quick and versatile! Mussels make a great cruising meal and offer endless variations on flavour. They can be steamed, boiled, smoked, grilled, baked and even fried in fritter batter. Most of the ingredients to accompany them in the following two recipes are simple store cupboard items, with only a few fresh herbs required.

Fresh mussels bought straight from the source will keep well if suspended from the side of the boat in a mesh bag. Because they are intertidal they can be hauled up and placed in a bucket whilst on passage, as long as you can provide a cool spot.

THAI MUSSELS

INGREDIENTS

- 1kg mussels, washed and debearded
- Groundnut oil
- 4 spring onions, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- Small bunch of coriander, stalks finely chopped, leaves picked
- 1 lemongrass stick, cut into 4
- 1 red chilli, finely sliced
- 400ml coconut milk
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 lime

main courses | serves 2

Discard any mussels that aren't tightly closed, or won't close when they are rapped on the side of the sink.

In a saucepan, heat a little groundnut oil and soften the spring onions, garlic, coriander stalks, lemongrass and most of the chilli for around 5 minutes.

Add the coconut milk and fish sauce and bring to the boil.

Add mussels and cover pan. Steam for 5 minutes, till the mussels are open and cooked. Discard any unopened mussels.

Finish with a squeeze of lime, and sprinkle with coriander leaves and remaining chilli.

CHILLI TOMATO MUSSELS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 brown onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 small red chillies, deseeded, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 kg tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 lemon, rind finely grated, juiced
- 2 teaspoons caster sugar
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1.5kg mussels, beards removed (see note)
- ½ cup flat leaf parsley leaves, roughly chopped
- Crusty bread, to serve

Step 1 Heat oil in a large, deep saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, garlic and chilli. Cook, stirring, for 3 minutes or until onion is soft. Add tomato paste and cook for 1 minute.

Step 2 Add tomato, lemon rind, lemon juice, sugar and wine to pan. Stir until well combined. Increase heat to high. Bring sauce to the boil. Reduce heat to medium. Simmer, uncovered, for 8 to 10 minutes or until thick. Season with salt and pepper.

Step 3 Add mussels to sauce. Cover and cook, shaking pan occasionally, for 3 to 5 minutes or until mussel shells open. Discard unopened shells. Ladle sauce and mussels into bowls. Sprinkle with parsley. Serve with bread.

OCTOBER END OF MONTH CRUISE ON MELBOURNE CUP WEEKEND

BY SANDY WATSON

Despite the best laid plans, a departure for the southern end of the Bay on Saturday, 1st November was not to be. *Sun Kiss*, however, had beaten the weather and set sail for Martha Cove on Saturday.

After much contemplation, it was finally decided to depart Brighton for Wyndham Harbour late in the afternoon on Sunday. A sail at 40 degrees to the wind followed and *Emma Kate* and *Sophisticate* anchored at a calm Wyndham Harbour around 7pm, joining another boat *Solero*, from Sandringham. *Andalucia* had started the trip to Wyndham Harbour but were not going to be able to round Point Cook without tacking, so decided to abandon plans and return to RBYC.

Marion had driven down from Werribee and was collected in the dinghy by Richard. It was a very long, wet dinghy ride after some time spent by Marian waiting in the carpark, because *Sophisticate's* dinghy outboard was not cooperating! This was only the first of several minor mishaps for the weekend. The second was when two anchor chains became entangled when the boats were rafted together and blew around each other. This was an outcome predicted by the first mate! The untying required untying of anchor rode to feed one under the other. This was after much gyrating of boats and dinghy to try to untangle the mess. All in a weekend's entertainment!

With much lighter conditions on Monday, the fleet of three motored to Half Moon Bay and joined another Sandringham boat. After a pleasant lunch together, all crew felt the need for an afternoon nap before gathering again for dinner aboard one yacht.

After a peaceful night at anchor the two Brighton boats returned to RBYC on Tuesday before the northerly wound itself up too much.

A shortened, but very enjoyable weekend was had by all.

MEMBER NEWS

Gypsea Rover has continued onwards through Indonesia. They have had a few crew changes and we are hoping to have some insights into the cruise in future newsletters.

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Jo and John Walker, *Kirra Kirra* have started their journey southwards after spending several weeks at their most northerly destination of Lizard Island. They spent some time waiting for a good weather window of less wind or a northerly. While at Lizard there was a bit of a get together when they met other RBYC members.

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Kirra Kirra made good time travelling south and were able to catch up with ***Chakana*** in Macona Inlet, Whitsunday Islands, for a night before *Chakana* started heading south. A great night swapping cruising stories.



Brenton, Robina,
John and Jo.

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Richard and Marion Johnson, *Sophisticate*, are joining ***Kirra Kirra*** in Mackay for part of their southwards journey.

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Robina and Brenton Smith, *Chakana*, have started their journey southwards to leave the boat in Brisbane over the summer period. **Tony Garvey, *Thunder***, has joined the crew and although it would be nice to have the wind north of east they are making good progress.

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Will and Pam Merritt, *Andalucia*, have gone A-van cruising to Echuca.

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Diary Date: January 18th, 2015.
Birthday Cruise to Royals at Williamstown for BBQ lunch.

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Please keep your cruising stories and 'How I Started Sailing' contributions rolling in. Also, we would love to hear about your favourite or not well known anchorages in the Bay and beyond. This newsletter relies on a flow of member contributions.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY 21st NOVEMBER FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speakers: Michael White and Christine Edwards
Dreams, Dilemmas and Decisions

Michael and Christine have spent four years sailing in the Pacific and the Mediterranean. Their journey started ten years ago when they decided that they wanted to live near the water but couldn't find an affordable house. Buying a boat was the obvious way to realise their love of the water, and to indulge their other desire to travel without time barriers.

Ten years on, they've trained and read and practised, pestered people for information, given up their fulltime jobs, sold their house, moved their children into independent living, bought and done up four boats, and have lived full time on their boat for the last four years. Their sailing has taken them to New Caledonia and Vanuatu, Spain, Sardinia, Corsica, Italy, Sicily, Croatia and Montenegro.

They will be talking about how their dream took shape, the choices that had to be made along the way, how they made them, and how they faced dilemmas that inevitably come to people who decide to leave the predictability of their known comforts and security.

Titled "Dreams, Dilemmas and Decisions", Michael and Christine will talk about what this has meant for them, and how their lives have changed.

Yoti will be sponsoring this dinner with some wine supplied and will give a short presentation over dinner.

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

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

Please book with Mandy in the office (95923092) no later than Wednesday September 15th.

FRIDAY 5th DECEMBER

Meeting for Annual Cruise in Company

For all those interested in cruising Feb/Mar 2015 there will be a meeting held at the Yacht Club on Friday night 5th December at 6.30pm.

Expressions of interest to join this cruise to

SATURDAY 13th DECEMBER

ANNUAL HARDSTAND CHRISTMAS PARTY

Don't miss this popular club event- mark this on your diary now!

From about 6pm on, out on the hardstand and hope for some good weather.

Load up the barrow for a BYO everything bbq including folding tables and chairs and don't forget to start tuning those carol singing voices! We managed good weather last year but the alternative is always the verandah.

CHANGES AT THE HELM

Chair Chat

After a couple of years at the helm of Cruising Group it is time for a change in the Chair. I don't have the stamina of Past Chairman Will to maintain the pace for six years, so I am retiring from the Chairman's role.

We are planning an overseas trip early next year followed by some cruising along the east coast in *Emma-Kate*. These and the usual grandchildren visits will see us away from Melbourne for lengthy periods of time. Chair of Cruising is a pleasant and rewarding task but does require some reasonable level of attendance at functions and meetings, which my plans would not permit.

Roger Walker has accepted the role of Cruising Chair and I am sure he will do a great job. Roger will take over the Chair at the Hardstand Christmas Party and I am sure he will get the usual help and support from the committee and other cruising members, as I always have.

I will stay on Cruising Committee at this stage as long as my travels leave enough time to contribute and I am needed. Thanks to all who have supported me as Chairman Rod.



Captain Coxswain's Corner

'TARPAULIN MUSTER'

Now here's a term I've discovered, which is not in common use today, but one which will doubtless strike a chord in the heart of our seagoing readers. In passing it on I am risking the ire of 'er indoors. (See Wise Words herewith.)

A 'tarpaulin muster' referred to the pooling of funds by a group of sailors wanting a run ashore. I shall leave it to your fevered imagination to imagine what sailors did when ashore but do not tell 'er indoors.