



CRUISING NEWS



DECEMBER 2015

NOVEMBER FORUM DINNER: ALEX PARRY MBE

CAPE OTWAY LIGHTSTATION - BEACON OF HOPE

WRITTEN BY VANNESSA TWIG



Alex Parry and Roger Walker

For people migrating to Australia by ship in times gone by, the first man-made light they would see on the coast of Australia was that of the Cape Otway Lightstation. Then they knew that Melbourne was not too many days away. However, before the lightstation was constructed, arriving in Melbourne was a lot more treacherous: *The entire nation of Australia was left reeling after more than*

born wife Kim, to a totally different job, but one that has taken him back to his academic qualifications – a Bachelor of Arts (Honours), when he majored in British Imperial History. With a power point presentation of slides about the building and history of the Cape Otway Lightstation, he kept an interested audience well and truly involved in the tale of the lightstation.

What impressed me most was the dedication and effort to build a lightstation in a location where all materials had to be brought by sea to a point about six miles away by bush and then carted there. All the stone to build the lightstation was quarried from local stone, but it wasn't that local.

350 lives were lost when the Catacaui founded on reef off King Island in September 1845. In the face of public outcry, newspaper editorial comments, and widespread condemnation, the New South Wales Government was forced to commission a string of lighthouses in Bass Strait. Cape Otway soon became a favoured site, but decades of logistical challenges lay ahead for the builders, lightkeepers, assistants and their families – not to mention the scores of people who were shipwrecked after the light was operational.

After two failed attempts to penetrate the forests, rivers and gullies of the Otways, Port Phillip District Superintendent La Trobe, with the help of Henry Allan, Native Police, and a local Aboriginal man Tom-

On 20 November, the Cruising Group was entertained by a presentation by Alex Parry MBE, Guide Coordinator at the Cape Otway Lightstation, himself a relatively recent arrival to Australia, but I'm sure he didn't come by ship. He is originally from Wales, and had a long and challenging career as a police officer in UK police services and related government agencies specialising in organised crime and counter-terrorism. He received his MBE in 2011 in recognition of his services to law enforcement. He came out to Australia with his Geelong-



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my, reached Cape Otway and marked the proposed lighthouse site. It had taken La Trobe a whole year.

The challenge was then to find a suitable way to transport men and construction materials to the Cape. After several failed attempts to find a route, William Roadknight was able to map a road in the winter of 1846. George Smythe was appointed by La Trobe to survey Cape Otway from the sea and determined a landing place at the mouth of the nearby Parker River for stores and materials.²

Then there was the dedication of those who manned the light – particularly from 1854 to 1891, before the more modern Fresnel lens was installed:

Manufactured in London, the lantern was brought ashore through crashing surf in small boats. The light mechanism consisted of 21 polished reflectors and lamps mounted on a frame.

“The flash was of three seconds duration with fifty seconds of darkness. The lantern had three faces, the entire revolving every two minutes and thirty nine seconds. On each was mounted seven Argand Lamps which burned special sperm oil.”

“The early instruction books are filled with accounts of how the oil had to be kept up to the wicks, the wicks trimmed and monitored during the night and the individual parabolic reflectors located behind each light, kept as clean and reflective as the best French chamois would allow.” (Source: Beacons of Hope)

We learned about the telegraph station and the rivalry

between the lighthouse keeper and his telegraph station counterpart, as well as the important role played by the radar station during World War II.



However, for me, the most interesting part was the information about the light – now replaced by a small solar light beacon in 1994. We were all particularly intrigued to learn that the light-flash sequence has now been changed. An enjoyable talk and engaging speaker, who certainly impressed me with his ability to answer the challenging questions of David Pollard.

Thanks must go as well to Pam Merritt, who decorated her table with a variety of model lighthouses, and also to John and Alex from Boatbooks who provided a display of books about lighthouses. They have a range of beautiful and informative books on the topic.



¹ Cape Otway Lightstation website, history

² ibid

Pam Merritt's collection of Lighthouses.

Now, listen up all you good and even not so good Cruisers. Your committee is becoming concerned about declining numbers at our monthly dinners. Of course you do have a doctor's certificate or, at least, a note from your mother explaining your recent absences. Just hand them in to Secretary Jenny when next you visit the Club. I do realise that you may think a retired dungeon master doesn't have a heart, but you are seriously in error to think that. This ex-dungeon master was reduced to tears (OK. Would you believe 'nearly?') at the sight of mature aged (The adjective 'mature' might be an exaggeration.) committee members wailing and gnashing their teeth and rending their garments. They just could not think of any improvement to the Cruising program which would ensure that all future events would 'sell out'.

I suggested that building a colosseum in the yard and feeding recalcitrant members to the lions would create some interest but this suggestion sent the wailing up to crescendo level. I don't

know, some people are unable to recognise a marketing opportunity when it is in front of them.

**Will's
Wicked Wisecracks**

So, next time you encounter a committee member cowering in the balcony corner covered with sack cloth and ashes, give him / her a hug and reassure him / her (Us 'snags' have to be politically correct.) that you will mend your ways and will attend all future cruising events which do not conflict with your own funeral.

Will Merritt



Don't forget to book for the 25th Birthday Dinner Dance by Wednesday 13th January. Includes launch of RBYC Cruising Group History Book compiled by Pam Merritt available for \$5 on the night. Book your group for tables up to ten or make your booking and we will assign your table. Bookings essential. Mandy in the RBYC office is waiting for your call!

POSTCARD FROM GYPSEA ROVER: PHUKET

BY ALAN RICHARDSON

We made it to Phuket on Gypsea Rover, settling in at Royal Phuket Marina today.

Our route from Langkawi consisted of island hopping and overnight anchorages in the lee of islands away from the North-East monsoon winds. Our route took us via Ko Lipe, Ko Rok Nok, Ko Muk, Ko Ngai, Ko Lanta, Ko Phi Phi to Phuket. There was good sailing but as usual lots of motoring. Weather was good, but very hot and humid with afternoon squalls and rain showers.

The aircon has had a workout. Food and drink have been cheap and tasty. Swims have been plentiful. Some quality snorkelling spots were visited. Each night has brought great drama watching lightning followed by another 3 episodes of the miniseries 'A Place to Call Home', or 'Downton Abbey' Australian-style. Box sets of DVDs have been useful, keeping the electrical engineer in work.

Bryan and Alan have completed numerous repairs of pumps, switches and gadgets, while Sue has completed grandmoth-

er knitting projects. Kathy has supplied the best doses of fruit salad ever. Crew meetings have solved all the world's problems and even some of the boat's issues.

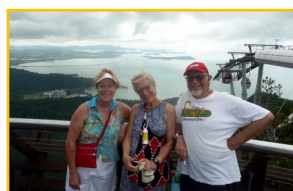
There will be more repairs done in Phuket. We are working out the relationship between the number of months a boat is left in the tropics to the number of days required to restore the boat to good health! Not easy, even for a great boat like Gypsea!

We have sampled the great range of Thai facilities from beachside bars to 5-star resorts. Thailand is steadily developing and the number of tourists and 5X250 horsepower tourist boats are awesome. Fortunately there are still plentiful quiet and beautiful spots to visit away from the madding crowd.

We will look around Phuket for a few more days, maybe cuddle a tiger, then Kathy and I will return to a cool Melbourne in early December.



Gypsea Rover completed antifoul and repairs on hard stand at Rebak Island Marina off Langkawi.



Kathy, Sue and Bryan at viewpoint at top of cable car ride on Langkawi Island, Malaysia.



Captain Sue on the lookout off Phuket Island.



Sue getting excited at Ko Phi Phi Le, the location of the movie 'The Beach'.



We used a pilot to navigate the shallow sandy channel to Royal Phuket Marina.



Kathy making sure we eat lots of fresh veges and fruit.



Gypsea Rover being used as the backdrop for a wedding at the marina in Phuket.



USE A SPRONG AT QUEENSCLIFF CYC!



Many of us have had a stiff westerly pinning us against the wharf at Queenscliff CYC, and if it is one of the busy times then just to add a little more challenge to getting off we are hemmed in fore and aft by other boats often rafted two or three deep. The challenge is to spring off sufficiently without damaging the pulpit or the gear that we tend to have on our sterns, you know the usual stuff of cruisers such as davits, dinghy, barbeque, wind generator etc. From mid-tide downwards those wharf poles present solid opportunities to damage anything above handrail level.

Well, with help from this little gem from Yachting Monthly (Aug 2015) recently, using a sprong may be your answer, particularly if you are short-handed or lacking in on-deck grunt, i.e. most of us.

Not only is it effective, it is simple to execute, which should make the crew happy because the skipper has much less opportunity to become confused, stuff it up and resort to shouting expletives to all and sundry – not that this is a common scenario when using the usual techniques of springing off.

The ten steps below looks daunting but it is simplicity itself:

1. Leave barge board in place
2. Put a large fender at the stern – this is precautionary only
3. Run a slip line from your outboard stern cleat (starboard side at QCYC) to a pile as far aft as possible, but no more than a boat length. This is your

sprong.

4. All aboard and slip all other lines – letting the wind hold you onto the wharf.
5. Engage forward gear gently and take the weight against the sprong.
6. Helm hard over to port at Queenscliff CYC – yes that's right – port
7. Increase revs and watch the stern come out gently, and the bow out even faster as the tension on the sprong increases.
8. When you have clear space up forward, power off, helm to centre and request the crew to
9. 'Slip the sprong please'.
10. Take off like a professional.

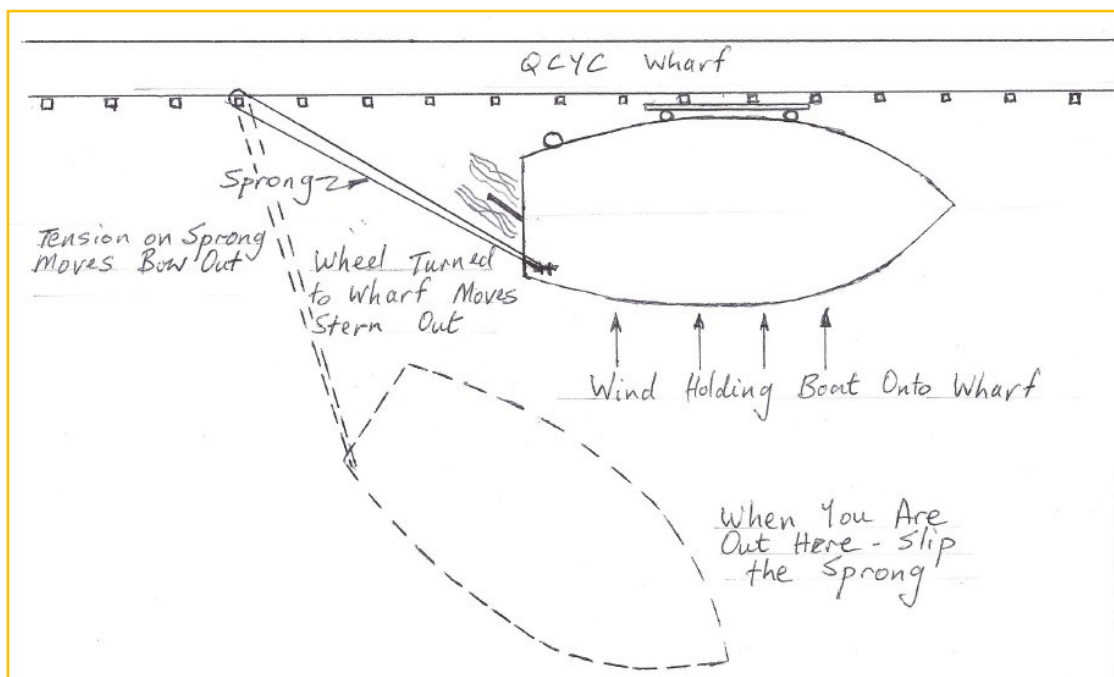
In a nutshell:

Set up sprong on outside stern cleat, other lines off, take up the slack on the sprong
Turn wheel into the wharf, moderate power forward
Maintain power on while boat moves out; bow more than the stern
Power off, helm to centre, release sprong and ...

Voilà you're off!!

For those that like a picture to explain it see below.

Final tip: try it before you need it and when there is no audience!!



This 'Skippers Tip' contributed by Brenton Smith.

Editors Note: We tried this out successfully in a westerly blow.

The Editor would just love some rings on the wharf uprights at QCYC to be sure that the line will slip when called for.

Please share your 'Skippers Tips' by emailing robina_smith@hotmail.com

END OF MONTH CRUISE CRUISERS FIND A GEM AT FERGUSON PIER

BY ROBINA SMITH



Rafted up.

the boat - better... with minimum 1.5m in the middle and 3m at the end.

And so six boats, fourteen people, two dogs (*Lena*) and the ship's cat (*Haida Gwaii*) headed off on the morning of Sunday 29th November for the End of Month Cruise hoping that it was not going to be the run aground cruise. With a gentle southerly enabling sails to be hoisted *Chakana* led the group, ambling along at 3kt, thankful that for once we didn't have a time limit for arrival. This was the slowest she has travelled for quite a while as with high tides, weather windows and sunsets to make while we were cruising north we usually put the engine on if under 5kt.

Haida Gwaii and *SunKiss* headed out into the bay for some sailing, *Lena* was hot on *Chakana's* stern and *Andalucia & Cat Walk*, who left a little later, brought up the rear.

It seems some planned not to arrive first. They wanted others to check the depth and help them with their lines. There were no cleats or bollards on the pier necessitating an expert manoeuvre up to a ladder to enable someone to get off with a line and tie it around the raised border of the pier.

We arrived at low water of 0.4m and the water depth was never less than 3.2m at our position midway along the pier.

With three boats along the pier and the others rafted up to them we went in search of some picnic facilities on the grass at the end of the pier. Maurice found the picnic table hidden behind the cannon and we settled in for a pleasant lunch. With Ferguson St at the end of the pier, some bought fish

Ferguson Pier? Where is that? Somewhere near Williamstown and Royals was the answer. Check Navionics on the Ipad at home - doesn't look promising at 0.5m depth! Check the paper charts and C-MAP charts on the chartplotter when at

and chips which I am told were excellent.

During lunch a gentle sea breeze set in providing sufficient wind for a pleasant beat home in 15 knots. This was no hardship as we could make Brighton in a single leg.

Leaving the pier was easy too with the sea breeze blowing us off. Leaving the bow line on and casting the stern line off *Chakana* headed around herself making it easy to point the bow towards the channel.

A very enjoyable day discovering a destination to which we intend to return and explore further.



Picnic table found behind cannon.



Great company!

For Sale: Swift 2.7m hypalon inflatable dinghy with aluminium floor and Yamaha 615k 3hp 2 stroke outboard. If interested call **Barbara Burns, *Haida Gwaii*, 0417035404**



For Sale: Peter Roney has an as new Zodiac 210 Blow-up tender with padded seat cover and fold down wheels. The craft will carry 3 persons.

If interested phone Mobile: [0400525254](tel:0400525254)



I arrived at Airlie Beach on 08-09-2015 – 11 weeks ago. In that time I have circumnavigated the Whitsundays 3 times from Whitehaven to Blue Pearl Bay, travelled to Bait Reef twice, Hook Reef once, Shaw Is., Lindeman Is., Deloraine Is., Driftwood Bay (south end of Hamilton Is.), Happy Bay on Long Is. & Double Bay north of Arlie & walked up Whitsunday Peak in the rain with Scott Cumming. It has been a fantastic time but has been hot working in the cabin. Some days I have had to put up the sun shade cover, especially in Abell Pt. Marina. While the 20 knot SE winds were blowing the cabin was cool enough with front hatch open.

Fishing, well not too successful, catching one bonito, one spotted mackerel, two school mackerel, one big eye tuna, two small black tipped reef shark, three or four parrot fish, two grassy emperor & one yellowfin tuna when Scott came for a visit. I even lost 100m of line & a lure to something unseen but rather large. Only one mud crab with huge claws.

My goal when I arrived was to catch a spanish mackerel & coral trout. Time has run out this year.

About 3 years ago Cumberland Yacht Charters had a web site boasting about 250 or so sunny days a year. What they did not mention is that perhaps 85% of those days SE trade winds are blowing 20 knots, with gusts much more. The bullets from the higher hills coming down the valleys are horrendous. I stayed on the mooring for the first month (\$50/week) because it was too windy anywhere else. Beside there was good internet & cell phone reception in front of the Whitsunday Sailing Club. On weekends I did brave the 20+ knot winds & crossed to Whitsunday Is. to Cid Harbour & Hook Island's Nara & Macona Inlet. While tide with wind wasn't so bad it was the wind against tide that was uncomfortable, but still better than sailing the east coast of NSW below Sydney. One soon gets the idea of sailing with the better wind/tide conditions. I admire the charter boat hirer's who just have to move no matter the wind strength otherwise they would just sit in the marina. It seems there are more places to hide from the SE than northerlies.

I did stay on the mooring at Airlie one night with 10 to 15 knot northerlies & it was so uncomfortable. I soon realised why all cruiser's move across to Nara.

So on 02-12-2015 I moved into Mackay Marina for a 17 week special - \$18/day. Hopefully there won't be any cyclones.

I am now planning my trip around Australia next year perhaps in company with another solo Compass 29, currently in Yorkies Nob.



Nara Inlet.

MEMBER NEWS

Cruising Group welcomes new members **Dan Elisha** who has bought *Unami* but I believe is renaming her, **Simon Hirsch** with *Nari* and **Katja Rembrandt** who is a crew member and maybe looking for some crewing opportunities.

.....
Chakana has now returned to RBYC after 20 months away cruising up the east coast and sailing across the Coral Sea to New Caledonia. **Robina and Brenton Smith** dodged the southerlies and made use of the northerlies to get to Eden with crew **Tony Garvey**. They then waited for weather windows in Eden and Refuge Cove to complete the 3 week trip two handed.

.....
It's a Privilege set sail from Lakes Entrance on Tuesday 26th November in company with another Catana catamaran **Angels Wings** crewed by a Perth couple who had sailed it out from France over the last 3 years. **Peter Strain** spent a few days fishing in Refuge Cove with friends with outstanding success on the squid. Saturday they sailed to Flinders for a night at the pub and through the heads on Sunday at midday showing our fellow Perth cruisers how peaceful it can be at slack tide. With a current assisted spinnaker run up the bay the **Privilege** is now back home after six months cruising the East Coast.

.....
Ian and Sue Cummin, That's Amore, our only active power boat members are spending some time in Melbourne over Christmas before returning to their current home in Singapore.

.....
Paul Jenkins sailed **Kathleen B** with partner **Jane** to Queenscliff for the Queenscliff Music Festival. Sounds like it was a great weekend but ordinary sail home.

.....
Rod and Sandy Watson, Emma Kate, also took advantage of the 3 day weather window to spend some time on a mooring off Sorrento. They left early Monday to beat the strong winds home.

.....
John Tadich, Enya has taken over as chief cook, bottle washer and driver as **Heather** recovers from a broken right arm. We wish Heather a speedy recovery so she can come on the Bass St Cruise next year but not too speedy as to have to cook and wash up at Christmas time.

.....
The RBYC marina is a brilliant place to watch the fireworks on New Years Eve. Some cruisers socialise over nibbles/meal earlier in the evening, setting up tables and chairs on marina arms near or on their boats. Join us on the attenuator near mid-night to watch the fireworks.

.....
Your New Years Resolution - to write something for the newsletter! Get your name in print! There are lots of ways to contribute: 'How I Started Sailing', Best/Worst anchorage, cruising stories, Skippers Tips, the story behind your boat name. This newsletter relies on a flow of member contributions.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY 12th DECEMBER HARDSTAND CHRISTMAS PARTY

This Weekend!

Where has the year gone?

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.

Don't forget to start tuning those carol singing voices and dig out your Christmas hat!

Come for a fantastic evening of socialising and carol singing.

We managed good weather last year but the alternative is always the verandah.



FRIDAY 15th JANUARY 2016 CRUISING GROUP 25TH BIRTHDAY DINNER DANCE

With Harris Tweed Band

Come and celebrate the 25th Birthday of Cruising Group. See advertisement on page 3.

Includes the launching of Cruising History book.

Book with Mandy in the office. Rustle up your friends and cruising colleagues to book a table of 10 or book and we will assign a table..

SUNDAY 17th JANUARY 2016 25th ANNUAL BIRTHDAY CRUISE TO ROYALS

An annual favourite and always well supported so mark the date in your diary for the New Year. Departing RBYC at about 10am, we sail to Royals for a BYO everything BBQ lunch, bring a picnic or order a meal at Royals.

Drinks to be purchased at the bar.

Please advise Jenny Collins, jacngrant@gmail.com the week before if you are planning to attend so we have some idea of berthing requirements. In the event of bad weather we will cruise over the Westgate Bridge by car.

FRIDAY 19th FEBRUARY KEN KING CENTRE, SANDRINGHAM

Cruise down to Sandringham by boat or by car. BYO meal. More details to follow via active cruisers email list.

If you have not registered your email on our active cruisers list please email our Secretary Jenny Collins to be added. jacngrant@gmail.com

FRIDAY 18th MARCH ANNUAL BOAT PROGRESSIVE DINNER

Armchair Chat

This past year has been one of significant changes at R.B.Y.C. Sadly members are divided over some of the decisions which will change the Club forever. Some members have already left the club and moved to other clubs around the bay, others are still contemplating their future home. I do not envy the members of General Committee who are charged with the task of bringing the club back to the great club that we have all enjoyed for many years.

I wish every member a happy festive season and good sailing in 2016.

Roger Walker

Editors Note: We wish Roger a speedy and successful recovery from his recent eye surgery.



Captain Coxswain's Corner

'DOING A TRICK'

I anticipate that some of my cruising cronies will now be reading this passage with a less than wholesome interest because they will associate a 'trick' with the Hollywood version of the expression 'turning a trick' with application to the activities of certain 'ladies of the night'. Sorry to disappoint those cronies but the term in fact was previously used on sailing ships to refer to taking a spell on the helm. There may have been a connotation that keeping a sailing ship on course at that time was a bit of a magic trick.