



CRUISING NEWS



NOVEMBER 2016

OCTOBER FORUM DINNER: JUSTIN AND DEBBIE PAGE JUST REWARDS FOR *MISS BEHAVING*

WRITTEN BY BRENTON SMITH WITH ADDITIONS BY PAM MERRITT



Debbie and Justin Page

At our last cruising meeting we were both entertained and informed by Justin and Debbie Page, recent circumnavigators from Sandringham. Justin had salt water in his veins coming from a family of

sailors that included taking him cruising in the Pacific for a year when he was a youngster. His father kept the family yacht in good order and it was a cruise with no dramas.

Debbie met Justin when they were both backpacking in the Caribbean, and as only young people can, they bought a 36' yacht and sailed her back to Australia. The trip was made a little more adventurous because this boat was not maintained to quite the same order as his Dad's. Debbie is obviously a quick learner, and Justin a smart skipper, because a 12 year plan was hatched with one aim – to sail around the world, and take their family, which was still in the planning stage!

After placing an order for a new Buizen 48, they bought a second hand Discovery 55, *Miss Behaving* – go to the website to see just how suited to blue water cruising these boats are – spent a year doing it up – even though it was bought ready to sail away, and then really did sail away.

Their journey started in 2012, and with children Hayley (then 9) and Riley (then 6) they left Melbourne, returning four years later. They headed up the east coast of Australia, through

Indonesia and onto Malaysia and Thailand. This was in the thick of the Red Sea pirate action, and with a choice of sailing around South Africa or shipping *Miss Behaving* to Turkey, it was the transport option that appeared to be the most sensible – and I agree – this was a pleasure trip after all and the Cape of Good Hope was not called the Cape of Storms by someone with a strong sense of irony.

The Med introduced them to the joys of the Med moor; great for packing a large number of boats into a small space, but also great for providing entertainment for those already moored. Hint: arrive early. It also presented some challenges as a family for friendships because everyone, or at least the vast majority, were not long-term 'live aboard' cruisers. Also their contemporaries from Australia had young families, and it was just not the time to take off a couple of weeks or longer in the Greek Islands.

Crossing the Atlantic was the first major passage for them, and to assist they took a friend as crew. This was a big help, but when the next major passage arose from Panama to the Galapagos they felt comfortable doing this on their own.

Some fairly rigid demarcations of boat jobs meant that the work was done efficiently and effectively. Debbie was in charge of provisioning, and it was no mean feat provisioning for four,



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Snorkelling



two of whom were approaching the 'bottomless pit' stage of personal development. She also organised schooling, health care and the endless stowage lists, as well as proving to be good at swimming after dinghies! Justin was in charge of route planning and weather data gathering / forecasting. The aim was comfort and this was mostly achieved, and helped by having a boat with a very sea kindly motion. He also took responsibility for managing the paperwork ashore in the 38 different countries. Weather routing was done using Weather 4D – look it up, it could save you a lot of money – and angst.

They did not participate in rallies, but were active participants of the cruiser nets. Justin found these to be excellent sources of information about the various entrance formalities – and informalities.

After crossing the Atlantic and cruising down through the Caribbean to the NE coast of South America, they were ready for the transit through the Panama Canal and crossing the Pacific. Easy if you say it quickly, but it does involve 3,000 miles of sailing non-stop, and then some of the trickiest navigation in the world – coral reefs tend to be unforgiving and there are a lot of them. As some in our midst can attest, and Justin and Debbie confirmed, the Pacific also has some of the most spectacular anchorages. Theirs included the Marquesas, Tuomultos, Tahiti, Bora Bora, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia before making the final dash across the Tasman to Australia.

Tips from Justin and Debbie:

Make a plan, or it may never happen. Theirs included finance, life goals and also the sailing bit.

The six-six option keeps you in the green grass

Fabulous anchorages.



Sunsets



(explanation at the end!)

You need a dinghy that is fast, safe, light and robust – now there is a challenge! A Swift aluminium 3.4m RIB with a 15hp 2-stroke was their final choice. The dinghy went around the world on davits – but they are very robust.

Lift the dinghy every night!!

Twin poled out headsails worked a treat for the trade winds and having them on roller furlers makes shortening sail simple and quick.

They are keen fishermen and had regular serves of ocean fresh sashimi, packing and freezing any leftovers for future needs.

Phenergan is their seasickness drug of choice – but get the dosage right. Seasickness was a major and ongoing problem which they all suffered from.

How to prevent an anchor dragging – make sure it is set in tight. How do you know? Go hard astern until there are whirlpools at the bow and the boat is not moving. Anything less then be prepared to go chasing your boat.

The technical backup from Discovery (based in Southampton, UK) is outstanding.

Highlight: Meeting and socialising with other cruisers

Six-Six: six months cruising and six months off the boat. Best of both worlds and the sailing / route planning / provisioning / maintenance does not become an endless job, but rather something to be looked forward to.

If you're interested in undertaking a similar trip *Miss Behaviour* is currently for sale – check it out on boatpoint.com.au

Berthing in Bonifacio.



A TRIP TO NOWHERE

BY JO WALKER WITH INTRODUCTION BY PAM MERRITT

We've long bemoaned the lack of good all-weather destinations in Port Phillip Bay so the fairly new Wyndham Harbour at Werribee South is a welcome addition. At 13.4 nm it's a great distance from our club - just a couple of hours sailing and you're there, especially in the prevailing south westerlies.

But Werribee as a holiday destination?? Hmm..... It somehow lacks the history of Queenscliff, the restaurants of Docklands, the charm of Portarlington and the facilities of Geelong. So with a bit of spare time on the Melbourne Cup weekend cruise where can we go?

We've decided to catch the bus from Wyndham Harbour to see the Werribee mansion gardens, Pam, Will, John and myself. The day is unpleasantly windy and warm, but the bus arrives on time. We travel through market gardens, empty paddocks and half built streetscapes. Arriving at the entrance, we are met with event personnel, all Werribee mansion gardens are closed for a music concert. Nothing was mentioned on their website, so we are surprised. Luckily, the once-an-hour bus has not returned by the gate after dropping people at the Werribee Zoo, so we boarded, bound for Werribee.

Werribee is a suburb in transition, many older houses are mixed amongst the new. The shopping centre has the air of

change too, brand new Woolies alongside old fashioned shops and the train line bisects the shopping centre. On Sunday afternoon of Melbourne Cup weekend, the streets are fairly empty. What to do? Ice cream is the unanimous decision.

Picture this, 4 adults squashed on to a single park bench eating ice cream, sitting in a wind-blown, rough and ready piece of a parkland, filling in time till the next bus is due.

Ahh, a trip to nowhere.

Cruisers on the Melbourne Cup weekend were treated to a magnificent Wyndham Harbour goodies bag.



Editors Note: For a comprehensive report on the cruise to Wyndham Harbour see page 6.

The last word from Pam. Q: When is a boat a dog? A: When it's a 'bark'. (see page 1 of October newsletter!)

If all else fails when one is experiencing difficulties in maintaining the small talk required to fill a deafening void of silence, one can always turn to that old standby 'the weather'. You might think that this topic has been trivialised to the point of annihilation. Fortunately, humankind appears to be bent on a course of action which will ultimately and inevitably destroy planet earth under a blanket of gaseous pollution. At least, this is the opinion of a whole raft of top scientists. Now don't you go on getting worried. Many of our politicians, with minds unburdened by years of scientific training, assure us that they will save us all. What can possibly go wrong?

Well Ok, just suppose that the scientists are right. What can be 'fortunate' about global warming you ask. The silver lining is that the weather will change and our small talk backstop will have a whole new lease of life. For instance, when I sit before my keyboard with a totally blank mind (There is absolutely no truth in the rumour that it usually is blank.) and a newsletter deadline to meet, I can become a little bit tense. You know how it is, the dreaded thought of facing our terrifying editor snarling at my

idle typing finger and threatening to cancel my Xmas bonus. These days I can easily peck at the keyboard to produce a few pithy paragraphs about the effect of global warming on our sailing pursuits.

I'm confident that you will find it endlessly fascinating to learn that today was warmer than yesterday and that tomorrow will be even warmer. Perhaps you will even be surprised to learn that this month has been very windy and that the sun is setting later each day. There can be absolutely no doubt that you will be on the edge of excitement waiting for further details from this ongoing stream of my learned opinions about the weather. However, I do hope you can be patient because I am happy to say that I have reached my quota of words for this month and am now off to negotiate to have my Xmas bonus doubled.

Will Merritt

**Will's
Weather
Words**

WELL, THAT WENT ACCORDING TO PLAN, DIDN'T IT?

BY STEVE HARNETT AND JUDE HARRIS
RBYC 2016 Most Improved Cruisers

*Steve and Jude, sailing **Beaujolais 1**, set out from RBYC in May for their 6 month cruise up the east coast of Australia. During this time they have kept us informed of their adventures via their blog; beaujolaisi.wordpress.com This is their last posting on the completion of their 6 months.*



When we set out on this journey we thought, foolishly it turned out, that it would be possible to enjoyably sail at least as far north

as the Whitsundays and back to Melbourne within the six month timeframe we had. Ha! How deluded was that!?

As the days and weeks flashed past at about the same rate of knots as the wind and rain we were sheltering from it became apparent that this was not going to work. After some grim weather and unpleasant passages we arrived at Pittwater and thought, well, our return south need extend only this far; we could leave the boat here rather than retracing our steps all the way to Melbourne. This revised plan had a couple of things going for it: maximizing the time we could spend in places which were not freezing cold with howling gales and minimizing the time we had to spend in places which were freezing cold with howling gales. Then we got to Newcastle and again thought, hey, we could leave the boat here, that would be better still. Likewise when we got to Brisbane, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Mackay and, finally, Airlie Beach. At each place turning around and sailing south became less attractive. Once we were in the Whitsundays, staying there as long as possible, with the warm sun, gentle breezes, calm seas and interesting islands to visit, became The Objective.

Another element of the original plan was that we would be able to supplement our victuals with fish caught along the way. If the first element of the plan was delusional this was simply crazy. That home caught fish may not form a substantial part of our diet became obvious pretty early on, when more bait by weight was being contributed to the marine ecosystem than fish being landed. Not to mention that the fish landed were too small to eat, barely bigger than bait themselves.

After all our revised planning we find ourselves back in the marina at Mackay, preparing the boat for an extended stay.

Since arriving here the first time just over a month ago we have been fulfilling The Objective. We've visited many islands, inlets and bays, some a number of times, snorkelled over coral reefs and enjoyed some great meals along the way. Few have featured fish caught by ourselves, actually only one. We have continued to contribute large quantities of bait to the marine ecosystem. With Mackay being just a couple of days south of the more popular of the Whitsunday islands but marina fees being quite a bit lower we decided we would turn around and head south, albeit not far south.

The furthest north we went was Gloucester Passage where we spent an enjoyable couple of days on one of the "Eco Resort's" moorings. The deal whereby the mooring fees are taken off the costs of meals and alcohol bought at the resort and the high quality of the meals made this visit very pleasant indeed. It was with some reluctance that we turned around and headed south, although this did mean catching up with *Time Flies* one last time in Macona Inlet after several weeks of missing them as we headed north as quickly as the weather would allow and they took a more leisurely approach. On the way south we visited Lindeman Island and St Bees before our final short passage to Mackay.

I've only tried trolling (dragging a line with a lure over the back of the boat while underway) a couple of times but thought it was worth one last try; at least there is no stinky bait to deal with. It was a beautiful sunny day with a light SE so we were motor sailing the 15nm from St Bees, where we'd endured 20kt bullets threatening to dislodge the anchor overnight, until torrential rain and an electrical storm took the place of the wind. The line with lure firmly attached was dragging behind and I was sitting on the back deck in the sun. But, what is that!? It looks like a big fish on the end. Stop the boat!

After a bit of a fight I got the fish aboard. This was it. This was a fish that could provide meals. Jude quickly took a photo and I wrapped it up in an old t-shirt, which seemed to reduce its frantic flapping, to give myself time to get something from the tool bag to subdue it more permanently, when it started flapping again. The T-shirt came off and before I could grab it, the hook had come out of its mouth and it was flapping towards the side of the boat. Flap Flap Flap Splash.

Some times it pays to have a plan.



BILGE PUMPS



I was brought up on an all steel yacht, and by that I mean the hull, keel, decks, cabin and cockpit were a fully welded construction, and combined with a deck stepped mast, meant that *Coorari* was a dry boat. We literally cleaned the bilge with a vacuum cleaner. This was assisted by the engine bay having its own deep drip tray to collect the inevitable drips of diesel and oil.

Modern fibreglass boats are similarly dry, although as they age there are the inevitable leaks at the deck-hull joins and around hatches and windows, particularly if you are pounding away in a good(?) Bass Strait slop and the occasional greenie is popping over the bow. The use of keel stepped masts and internal halyards also sees some rainwater accumulate below. None of these are an existential threat to you or your boat through some water accumulating in your bilge; although after the labels have fallen off while stored in the bilge, it may make it difficult to know whether you are drinking some red rotgut that a sundowner guest unloaded onto you, or you are drinking a finest Yarra Valley pinot noir.

However, if one of those all too numerous through-hull fittings fails then the water will flow in at a prodigious rate, and if your bilge pumps are not working then you will have floating floorboards and be sending out a mayday call within minutes – and the second of these only while your battery terminals are above the rapidly rising water level. This trend is not helped by most boats now being effectively flat bottomed with shallow bilges. *Chakana* is no exception because although she has traditional lines the extra internal volume down low is taken up with her large tanks.



As part of the new season preparation a thorough check of the bilge pumps is advisable. This means intentionally trying to sink your boat and checking the operation of the pumps and their controllers. For me, it is easy, I just pull out the log/depth transducer and I have a 35mm diameter hole about

40cm below the waterline. The result is a mini geyser that requires a bucket to be held over it to divert the flow downwards if I am not to immediately earn the wrath of the first mate. Another option is to use one of the fire hoses on the walkway, but the marina manager may have another opinion about this option.

If you contemplate leaving the bay then there should be a minimum of two bilge pumps, one electric that starts automatically, and the other manual. If you are a YA Cat 2 boat, or participating in the VDLC rally then there must be a manual bilge pump operated from inside with all hatches closed. Even though we were neither, we installed the internal manual bilge pump because it made much common sense to us. Bilge pumps are mostly used in extreme events, and being in an exposed cockpit while pumping presents additional unnecessary hazards.

Two essentials are required from you and your pumps. Firstly, do you and your crew know where the manual bilge pump is – and equally as important – where the handle is located. Secondly, will all pumps operate as intended? Will the electric pump operate automatically? Do you have an alarm so that when the bilge pump operates you are informed in no uncertain manner? Finally, have you tested them as part of your preparation for the cruising season?



This 'Skippers Tip' contributed by Brenton Smith who has been doing the safety checks on *Chakana* ready for the Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation Cruise next year.



FATHER AND SON - TWO OF THOSE STEEL BOATS

While in Whyalla visiting family in August Brenton and Robina went for a walk down to the Whyalla Yacht Club.

There was the boat Brenton built 40 years ago (well he sold it as a hull and cabin top/deck ready to be welded together by the new owner) sitting in the sunshine (foreground) with one of the boats his father built behind it. All steel!

Sadly, the boat has seen better days and is now a haven for the local birdlife!

RBYC - CRUISING GROUP MELBOURNE CUP WEEKEND CRUISE

BY ROD SLATER

**“From this day to the ending of the world
We few, we happy few, we band of sailors,
Shall be brothers
And gentlemen (and ladies) in the Clubhouse
Shall think themselves the poorer
That they were not there on Cup weekend”
(with apologies to Shakespeare)**

Wyndham Harbour - before the cold front arrived!



It would be a great mistake to set out on an RBYC cruise in Melbourne expecting two consecutive days of good weather much more less three, and to this point, Cup Weekend did not disappoint. Several yachts set off mid-morning on Saturday (29th October) and headed West for Wyndham Harbour our destination for the weekend. Some of the yachts had been to Wyndham previously, but for most it was a new experience. An adventure to be enjoyed.

Winds were light, and the weather warm, so in true RBYC Cruising Group fashion, engines were fired up and ‘iron spinners’ engaged. I did not make the trip across due to a shoulder injury, instead choosing to drive around the Bay, but I am told by those who did sail or motor across, that it was a very pleasant experience.

Wyndham Harbour is of course a very new facility, and development is continuing there, but it offers berths (pens of various sizes, all with power and water) for visiting yachts, and small but comfortable marina facilities....combined toilets/showers and a modest lounge area with a small kitchenette. There is a very nice cafe in the complex, and a regular bus service to Werribee which will drop you off at the Werribee Zoo or Mansion if you would like to explore a little further afield.

Having arrived and had lunch on-board, our band of intrepid sailors set off to walk around to the Werribee River and boat ramp, a distance of approximately 2.5kms. It was windy but warm. Having walked back to the marina, crews prepared themselves for pre-dinner drinks and the inaugural Wyndham ‘Smite’ (Klop??) championships organised and very ably managed by Pam and Robina on the lawns in front of the marina office. The first round was won very clearly and relatively quickly by Robina. There have been no protests (as yet). Round two was conducted on Sunday, and it was a much rowdier affair, with some serious sledging, but David Spencer rose above it all to take out a convincing win. No doubt the deciding match will be played on some future cruise.

On Sunday evening, after dinner on board various yachts, the ‘lady’ sailors challenged the men to a Trivial Pursuit contest, which they won after a very closely contested battle. It did seem wrong though that their questions came from the children’s box while the men had to deal with the far more difficult adult questions. And still only a point in it. Next time.....

On Sunday, many of the crews set off to visit the Werribee Zoo and Mansion. The Mansion was closed for a music festival, but the Zoo was open, and proved to be a very pleasant



Large grassed area great for games like Klop!

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surprise for those who chose to explore its grounds and animals. A great facility, with large spacious enclosures and a wide range of interesting animals.

And all the while, the wind blew, and blew, and blew, with gusts in the 40knot + range. Better off in Wyndham Harbour than on the Bay.

Relaxing on-board was followed by drinks very kindly hosted by John & Jo Walker on *Kirra Kirra* where a very pleasant session was had by all, the wine flowed freely, and the conversation was lively, just as you might expect at a Cruising Group get together. And for those with the strength, (or room), dinner back on board after drinks.

In keeping with the Melbourne weather of 2016, the trip



Morning coffee at the café to finalise plans for the day.

home on Monday was far less pleasant than that experienced on the Saturday voyage over to Wyndham, with one gust after another reminding the returning crews just what sailing was all about. *Foxy Lady* even experienced hail as she hove to off the RBYC marina waiting for a gust to pass before entering the harbour. Needless to say, all the yachts returned safe and sound, and in plenty of time to prepare for the Cup Day festivities, whatever they were.

Thanks to Pam Merritt for being an excellent Cruise Co-ordinator, a job well done.

The participants: *Andalucia, Chakana, Foxy Lady, Haida Gwaii, Kirra Kirra, Summer Wind* and *Sun Kiss*



Sundowners on Kirra Kirra.

MEMBER NEWS

Cruising Group gives a warm welcome to new member **Steve Etches, *Strathtay***.

Weddings continue to be in the air with the advent of spring. **Peter and Susie Strain, *It's a Privilege***, have ben in Byron Bay for their second wedding of the year.

Bryan and Sue Drummond, *Birubi*, have recently visited Mooloolaba, where they stayed chez **Parker**, with ***Highland Fling*** on their very own pontoon. **Sue and Martin Stevenson** came to visit. They have just sold ***Mandolin Wind*** and are focussing on growing avocados in the foothills of Mount Tamborine. They gave Sue and Bryan some good tips on multihull sailing.

Rod Watson, *Emma Kate*, is recovering from his back operation. Seems the pain has now gone and now just has to get the wound under control.

Aquacadabra is heading to Tasmania on Tuesday 22nd Nov with crew of **Rob Hurrell, Ross Fisher and Richard Kasper**, hoping to go direct to Beauty Point and then meander down East coast when cruising weather windows allow. Fair winds!

Barbara Burns and Geoff Brewster, *Haida Gwaii* have splashed some BOAT units on a new headsail. Seems they are leaving the field behind now after their twilight race win.

Our currently cruising list is diminishing. **Allan Haddow, *Ophelia***, has reached Darwin and packed up the boat ready for the cyclone season. Sure

we will see him around the club for a few months until he returns to continue the adventure. An article will be in the next newsletter of his final weeks in 2016. **Jude Harris and Steve Harnett** have left ***Beaujolais*** in Mackay and have returned to Melbourne. They are back at work and crewing on 'Other Peoples' boats until they can return to continue cruising.

Meanwhile, **Fiona and Dean Cook, *Time Flies***, are continuing to 'live the dream' exploring the Whitsundays and successfully supplementing their diet with fish they have caught.



Some cruising people are really keen to attend our monthly meetings they turn up a week early!!

Thanks to David Bingham for passing on this inside info!

Sally Spencer, *Sun Kiss*, has volunteered to collate the April edition of the newsletter in 2017 to allow Robina to 'go sailing'. I promise there was no arm twisting and am sure you will all supply plenty of articles, especially those participating in the Bass Strait Cruise. There will be no March edition, just your friendly email reminder about future events.

Please keep your cruising stories and contributions to 'Skippers Tips' rolling in. This newsletter relies on a flow of member contributions.

NOTICEBOARD

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY 18th NOVEMBER

FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speakers: Vanessa Twigg and James Heywood
Mediterranean Mariner Boating Holiday

Earlier this year Vanessa (our liaison representative for Cruising Group on General Committee) and James (Club Captain) participated in a Mariner Boating holiday, sailing the waters of Croatia with other RBYC members.

Come and hear about their sailing in these beautiful waters and enjoy the conviviality of dinner with other cruising group members

As usual, gather at the Club about 6.30pm (after the Bass Strait Cruise meeting), members draw at 7pm, followed by the meal and with the talk after the meal.

Please book with the office (95923092) no later than Wednesday February 18th. Bookings essential.

FRIDAY 18th NOVEMBER

6pm: Meeting for Annual Bass Strait Cruise in Company 2017

For all those interested in cruising for two weeks around the long weekend in March 2017 there will be a meeting at the Yacht Club on Friday 18th November at 6pm.

Dates will be decided and information gathered as to where boats would like to cruise depending on the weather. If you are unable to attend the meeting but want to register interest please contact Will Merritt.
willm@hotkey.net.au

SATURDAY 26th NOVEMBER

END OF MONTH ON WATER ACTIVITY

A cruise in company with a bay destination as determined by the weather. Possible destinations are Portarlington and Wyndham Harbour, Werribee. Portarlington was unsuitable over the cup weekend so we will see if there is a weather window for this weekend.

Cruise coordinator is Robina Smith.

robina_smith@hotmail.com Please contact her with your expression of interest in joining the cruise. Further information and updates can then be forwarded to you as the destination is decided by the forecast.

SATURDAY 10th DECEMBER

HARDSTAND CHRISTMAS PARTY

Don't miss this popular Cruising Group event! 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 can always be an alternate site away from the weather at the club..

SUNDAY 15th JANUARY

26TH ANNUAL BIRTHDAY CRUISE TO ROYALS

Armchair Chat

Beautiful one day, very windy the next. This appears to be the norm of late so it does make the decision to travel across the Great Dividing Range to go sailing somewhat of an adventure.

Once we are on the road questions such as 'have we got everything we need?' are usually part of the conversation. It's always helpful if this is resolved before we pass the small supermarket at Beacon Cove. It is amazing what you think might be needed, but if the sun is shining and the wind is kind all is well in the world and it doesn't matter too much if you have forgotten the milk.

Roger Walker

QCYC OPENING DAY 13TH NOVEMBER

A reminder that QCYC's 54th Opening Day Ceremony will be held at 13:15 on Sunday, 13th November.

The ceremony will be performed by Captain Stephen Bowater, Commanding Officer, HMAS Cerberus. Reverend Peter Martin, St James' Church, Point Lonsdale and St George's Church, Queenscliff will conduct the traditional Blessing of the Fleet.

Following the service, members and guests are invited to light snacks and refreshments in the main lounge. The bar will be open from 12:30 so please come early and mingle with other members and guests.



Captain Coxswain's Corner

'DRESSING DOWN'

Thin and worn sails that were no longer wind-proof were often taken down and re-dressed with oil or wax to renew their effectiveness. This was called 'dressing down'.

An officer or sailor who was reprimanded or scolded received a 'dressing down'. Presumably the aim of this was also to dramatically improve their effectiveness!