



CRUISING NEWS



FEBRUARY 2017

NEW YEARS EVE

HOBART FIREWORKS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

BY ROB HURRELL



Aquacadabra sailed down to Tasmania in early December for some cruising around the beautiful D'Entrecasteaux Channel with various family members and friends.

Like most capital cities around the world, fireworks on New Year's Eve is locked in for life. This time we saw a magnificent show in Hobart on New Year's Eve. Unlike the crowds of boats on Sydney Harbour, there were plenty of vantage points on the water. We chose a spot near Princes Wharf 1 south of Sullivan's cove as the winds, although light, were heading in a NW direction, thus ensuring any smoke travelled away from us. With fairly deep water immediately off the shore – 18 metres, we had to use most of our 100 metres of chain to anchor.

Well just what goes into putting on a fireworks display of this size? We had some inside knowledge from one of our guests – Mark, who has been letting off bangers for most of his adult life, as a paid hobby.

REMINDER: **NO** MARCH NEWSLETTER

Due to the Editor **Robina Smith, *Chakana***, joining the RYCT Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation Rally with lots of social events and limited internet on the west coast of Tasmania there will be no March edition of the newsletter.

Instead you have a bumper edition this month and will receive an upcoming events email during March to inform you of forthcoming events.

Sally Spencer, *Sun Kiss*, has kindly undertaken to edit the April Newsletter with **Trish Jefferies of Kaleidoscope Design** doing the layout. Please send contributions to Sally during March. I am sure there will be plenty of articles from the Bass Strait Cruisers and those participating in the Tasmanian Circumnavigation Rally.

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His job started about 2 weeks earlier when he accompanied a van, carrying almost 1 tonne of fireworks & equipment, on the Toll cargo vessel 'Victorian Reliance' from Melbourne to Burnie – see pic. I

wondered why they kept that little van such a long way from the other trucks on the ship! With his special licence he is then permitted to drive this Dangerous Goods vehicle from Burnie to Hobart, where it is stored in an explosives magazine compound until 29th December before the hardest-work-phase of the firework preparation begins.

Mark and 5 other guys fly from Melbourne to Hobart on 29th December and take 3 full days preparing the fireworks barge for the twin shows on New Years' Eve. There is a children's show at 9:30pm, followed by the slightly bigger and longer midnight show.

I'll let him now give you some background and more technical details.....

I have been working for ShowFX Pty Ltd, based in Tullamarine, for about the past 15 years and prior to that for Syd Howard Fireworks, based in Sydney. My role is one of setting up, firing and packing up small, medium and large outdoor fireworks shows and occasionally indoor / special effects displays.

ShowFX has had the contract for Hobart's NYE show for the past 7 years. It is among the larger shows for ShowFX, but



compared to the usual Sydney, or Melbourne NYE displays, it is modest. However, we feel it is a much better show than Melbourne's, because that city is constrained by the narrow Yarra River, without an open harbour with good viewing points. Although Melbourne has the Yarra and numerous tall rooftops for launch



sites, the largest fireworks shell that can be used is 2.5 inches (about 65mm) diameter. This year our Hobart NYE display included 4", 5", 6", 8" 10" and 12" shells (100mm up to 300mm diameter). See Pics of the 300mm shells and about 40% of the loaded barge.

With the wide Derwent River, and the lovely wide harbour, one can easily get a great vantage point for the NYE fireworks on water or land. Using 12" shells there is a safety exclusion zone of 300 metres from the barge to any vessels on the water, and structures on the shoreline. The best views can be had between 500 and 1500+ metres from the barge, remembering always to be up-wind if feasible. Delivering fireworks displays of this type and size takes an incredible amount of planning, logistics and regulatory approvals, which all starts several months before the show date. Once the customer's requirements and budget have been established the detailed planning starts. The budget largely sets the duration and scale of the display and the client can request it to be synchronised to music (which applies to Hobart NYE), or contain emphasis on particular colours, or types of effects. The



show designer will use this information to select from hundreds of different effects and develop a show "cue sheet", with split-second timing to initiate each effect. This cue sheet takes into account the time delay (different for each size & type of effect) between the "firing time" and the time the effect appears in the sky.

Obviously the show has to draw from fireworks products that are in stock at the time. These are stored in a licenced explosives magazine facility at a rural location. The vast majority of fireworks are imported from overseas – mainly China. The logistics of ordering, shipping, customs clearance, and land transport to the magazine is complex and has to be planned also months ahead of the show date.

At the storage magazine, staff use the show "cue sheet" to pick each product from stock and (a) fit an electric igniter to the shell or other effect, (b) label the item with a unique ID and (c) safely package all items to be launched from that area on the barge into a suitable cardboard box. Once all items have been packed, they remain at the magazine until the date for loading the van and delivering it to the cargo ship at Webb Dock arrives. Hobart's NYE shows typically needs 50 - 60 boxes each having from 2 to about 70 separate effects.

The only items to be transported between Melbourne and Hobart each year are (a) the fireworks, (b) electronic firing

gear and (c) personnel. A 20-foot shipping container, jam packed with an estimated 4 – 5 tonnes of mortars and other durable gear, stays in Tasmania between shows.

We use one barge, containing the effects for both the 9:30pm and midnight shows. The earlier show runs for about 10 minutes (with about 450 cues) and the midnight show runs slightly over 10 minutes (with about 600 cues). A proprietary firing system (supplied from USA) is used to fire the shows. It includes self-diagnostics for correct communications and firing power to the firing modules, and also verifies the continuity of every electric igniter circuit. It uses coded signals delivered wirelessly from shore to barge, with no-one remaining on the barge during the displays. The pyrotechnicians return to the barge after the first show to change over certain firing equipment for the later show and complete final testing.

After the midnight show, the barge is towed back to the loading wharf and the pack-up commences. This takes the crew almost till dawn on New Year's Day and the weary team grabs a couple of hours sleep before finally packing everything away and flying back to Melbourne in the early afternoon. However, one of the crew has to drive the fireworks van back to Burnie for the first available sailing of the cargo ship back to Melbourne.



PORTARLINGTON SAFE HARBOUR

BY PAM MERRITT

Portarlington on the Bellarine Peninsula has always been a great bay cruising destination. Home to the Port Phillip mussel farming industry, a popular holiday destination - and only 20 nautical miles from Brighton. Throw in some good coffee shops, nearby supermarket and scenic walks along the coast for good measure.

However the anchorage to the west of the pier was an unprotected and untenable anchorage in all but southerly winds, making Geelong and Queenscliff more desirable 'all weather' destinations on the west side of the bay.

In recent years the State Government Bays and Marina Initiative has identified a network of maritime precincts around Port Phillip and Westernport where safe harbours are proposed. The concept of more 'safe harbours' around the bay is a very welcome one - and long overdue.

The Portarlington Safe Harbour project is well underway with the completion of a new pier, rock walls extending the existing breakwater already in place and a new arm at right angles to the pier almost completed. A



marina within the harbour is also planned.

In early January we visited the Harbour for a few nights and received permission to anchor in the new harbour area. With an easterly forecast overnight it was comforting to know we had all weather protection. Not surprisingly, by the following evening there were about eight boats anchored in the harbour. An added bonus - no jet skis whizzing round terrifying anchored boats! Now that work on the harbour has resumed after the Christmas break anchoring is probably limited to weekends while it continues.

Also berthing in the new harbour, the new Portarlington to Docklands ferry service is now permanent following a trial run late last year. There are about three return trips daily catering for both commuters and tourists and the 90 minute service is guaranteed to continue for at least 3 years.

While we'll never compete with the abundant bays and anchorages of Sydney Harbour, Pittwater or Tassie's D'Entrecasteaux Channel, our bay is finally, thankfully, gaining more all weather cruising destinations for those times when the cruising bug hits.



2016 HARDSTAND CHRISTMAS PARTY

BY ROBINA SMITH



With a mild evening forecast and most importantly no rain, the cruisers trundled out to the hardstand for the Annual Hardstand Christmas Party with their barrows filled with goodies to celebrate another successful year of cruising.

The evening cooled off rapidly which sent cruisers scurrying back to boats to retrieve warmer wet weather jackets to maintain the convivial atmosphere.

The 2017 Bass Strait Cruisers made an early start with a meeting beforehand to discuss aspects of the cruise. Others soon joined them with nibbles shared around while catching up with cruising friends.

The BBQ was fired up, salads brought out and when everyone had eaten their fill, the group settled back for the entertainment of the evening....the carol singing.

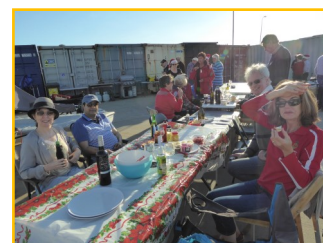
Kathy De Garis led us enthusiastically into the carol singing helping us to all start in the same key. After a shaky start the group warmed up to singing with gusto. Our Chairman, Roger Walker, showed Kathy our new skill learnt last year of singing the Twelve Days of Christmas with groups taking different lines and also adding a new twist. Think one table ended up much louder than the other but maybe not more melodic!

As per tradition, the Lions Christmas cake was shared around before cruisers packed up their barrows and headed home....or to their boats.... after wishing everyone a Happy Christmas!



Some even managed to sample the product of the coffee machine manned by Peter Strain on *It's a Privilege*.

Thanks again to the committee members who helped to set up and clear the hardstand. Also thanks to the RBYC staff who always support us with delivery of the BBQ's, tables and chairs to the hardstand.



ROGER LLOYD'S CRUISE OF 2016 IN HIS WESTERLY KONSORT 29'

BY ROGER LLOYD

Roger, who sails *Katy Dee* in the UK, has been a regular crew member on RBYC Bass Strait Cruises on various boats while he spends summer in Australia. This is an article about his exploits over the UK summer season.



The weather in the UK before departure was brilliant for once. My hoist-driving friend at Barry yacht club (near Cardiff in [Old] South Wales) and I took down the mast of *Katy Dee* in order to replace all the standing rigging. After that and many other refit jobs, I sailed in *Katy Dee* with two crew from Barry down the Bristol Channel, with its large tidal range, and across the English Channel to Camaret in Brittany, France.



Beautiful Camaret

Because the weather was sunny and the wind was light we did a lot of motoring; and because *Katy Dee* was well crewed for once we just kept on going, past Padstow, and without waiting at Newlyn. Then through the Chenal du Four and the Raz de Sein, (both horrific under the wrong conditions) and along the French Atlantic coast, via Sainte Evette, Îles des Glenan to an anchorage called Port Goulphar on Belle Île, then to Port Joinville on Île de Yeu and to St-Denis d'Oleron.



A shower when crossing Biscay flattens the wind waves.

Here we waited two days for suitable weather before crossing the Bay of Biscay. We sailed at 5 knots (a great speed for a 29' yacht) on a

fine reach over two days to Ribadesella, a surfing centre lying in the middle of the north coast of Spain. Many of the harbours along the North coast of Spain have strong, tall sea walls to counter the huge swells that can occur, hopefully out of season. Most of the rivers have sand bars, impassible below half tide or with swell. My boat insurance was 50% extra for sailing across Biscay, i.e. south of Île d'Oleron. We crossed Ribadesella's bar in the dark just after low water - because *Katy Dee* draws only 1 metre, the wind had dropped as we approached the coast, and the sea was flat calm. In fact we were lucky that we experienced no significant swell at all during the summer.



Sea walls for enormous swells in the winter.

At Ribadesella we joined a seven-day rally of the Cruising Association, of which I am a member. We explored the Picos mountains, and the prehistoric cave paintings. We visited the local cidra making (and sampled the produce). We savoured the local culinary delights (e.g. lamb reared in the mountains on acorns), canoed down the River Sella, and much more. Then we cruised in company to Gijon (pronounced "He-Hon") [just to the east of Avillés], where both my crew departed by air back to the UK. I sailed solo to Avillés to await the return of one crew member, who incidentally purchased a house while he was in the UK (as one does in the middle of a holiday). We then sailed as far west as Ribadeo with its delightful estuary. Ribadeo marina is very expensive, but we anchored in the estuary and were then made very welcome, very cheaply, at Figuras on the opposite side of the river.



Ribadesella entrance, marina & town.

I had been keeping an eye on the winds off "Windy Corner" (the NW corner of Spain). These had been persistently NE and strong, so I was reluctant to sail further west to A Coruña, as I would have liked, for fear of not being able to return easily.

Also, I would have liked to have sailed back NE across the Bay of Biscay to Île d'Oleron, but the winds had been persistently adverse; something to do with the Azores High and the heat Low over Spain. So, I was resigned to mainly motoring in small hops, East along the North coast of Spain and then

La Vieille & La Plate
Raz du Sein



North along the West coast of France, grateful for diesel being cheaper than in the UK. We spent time at Santander and Bilbao, both of which had much of interest

ashore. At Bilbao we had the choice of expensive marinas or a beautiful, convenient and free anchorage with a good metro to the museums, culture and restaurants of the city.

It is 60 miles between Cap Breton and Arcachon on the West coast of France, with no harbours or anchorages intervening. The Capitainerie at Cap Breton advised us, "It is easy. Go out of here at high water and into Arcachon at high water, 12 hours later". To achieve this we would need 5 knots, but we would be very lucky to make even 3 knots VMG against the northerly headwinds. So we allowed ourselves 18 hours by departing at nearly low water in the dark. We could only do this because at that time the sea was calm and there was no "houle" (swell) which limits almost all harbours in this part of the world. We arrived at Arcachon at exactly high water, but unfortunately just after dark - and the buoys are not lit. (The radar station there was unable to offer us any assistance - except advice against entering.) Against the strengthening ebb stream, we luckily just avoided hitting not one but two buoys. Perhaps radar is the next toy. (But I am told the buoys have no radar reflectors. It is France!) *Katy Dee* has two folding Brompton cycles aboard. We explored Arcachon and visited the tallest sand dune in Europe.

The next leg was also a long one, but luckily the sea was calm as we entered the River Gironde at day break. Here my crew departed at Port Medoc (because his flat-renting was about to expire). I motor-sailed out of the River Gironde, taking a short cut through the bar, which was definitely a very worrying mistake. Then through the Arzal dam to the River Vilaine, searching for a winter berth ashore at a reasonable price. Eventually I settled on a boatyard near the beautiful medieval city of Vannes in the Golfe du Morbihan with its many islands and fast tidal streams. The area is famous for its pre-historic standing stones and tumuli. *Katy Dee* is now wintering ashore there and I avoided the trauma of sailing solo back across the English Channel, which I had to do the previous year.

The French are even more keen on boating (and fishing) than the British. The Atlantic coast of France is a beautiful area and I have never seen so many yachts, but the marinas are crowded and unfortunately coming alongside is not in the French yachting syllabus. All the summer the weather was fantastic where I was, which made for a nice change from the UK. I had over three months wonderful sailing.

If anybody wishes to join me next June please contact roger@RNL.org.uk

The lock at Arzal, River Vilaine



Guess where this photo was taken!

RBYC



Royal Bombay Yacht Club that is!

Photo contributed by Ian Cummin, *That's Amore*, and taken during his travels in the past couple of years while living in Singapore.

Ever wondered what to do with your old outboard motor.



Turn it in to a letter box of course. Seen by Pam and Will Merritt, *Andalucia*, on their travels.

THE BUNTLINE HITCH - A GREAT SIMPLE LITTLE KNOT.



Knots are fascinating, made all the more beguiling because they each were developed for specific applications and tasks, many even before the early days of sailing.

Did you know the Mayan's used knots as a base system for their mathematics and language! Many cruising sailors seem to make do with 1 or 2 basic knots – the ubiquitous bowline and the clove hitch. But there are so many other knots that are ideal for different applications.

Now the buntline hitch was definitely developed as a sailing knot.

It has been used on square rigged ships for centuries to tie several buntlines to rings along the foot of each sail. The buntlines were used to haul the sails up to the wooden yard, and so reef and shorten sail. So the buntline hitch had to be totally secure and never be shaken loose or slip with the repeated flogging of sails.

In modern usage it is a simply tied neat knot with little bulk, for securing ropes and lines to any object, especially rings, railings, shackles or even a post, and is an excellent knot to use with modern slippery synthetic ropes and cordage. I was converted to it after almost losing a new crab pot over the side because a bowline knot tied with a nylon 3 strand rope had come undone.

Now a buntline hitch would never do that – it doesn't come undone or slip!

How to tie it.

One needs to understand a little knot jargon here. The bitter end is the end of the rope you are working and tying the knot with. The standing rope or standing part is the main run of rope you are not working with.

Refer to the diagram – a picture is worth a thousand words when tying knots.

The buntline hitch is essentially a clove hitch, tied with the bitter end around the standing part, but most importantly tied with the bitter end working inwards of the knot towards the object. Pass the bitter end around the object you wish to tie to and pass it over the standing part moving part away from the object. Further turns of the clove hitch must then progress inwards, ie towards the object you are tying to. This traps the bitter end inside the knot. Once loosely tied, the knot can be slid along the standing part and snugged up against the object and pulled tight.

It can be difficult to undo after being under load – just undo using a marlin spike. But then again, you use a buntline hitch when you don't want the line to come undone!

As with most knots, there are variations. Eg., when tying dyneema string and cord, almost all knots slip under high loads. There is the EStar Hitch, which is a variation of the buntline hitch, but with the bitter end passed again back through the knot.

If interested in the EStar hitch, go to <http://bethandevans.com/load.htm>

TYING A BUNTLINE HITCH



This 'Skippers Tip' contributed by **John Walker**, *Kirra Kirra*. It is great to have Skippers sharing their knowledge of boats and sailing.

26TH BIRTHDAY CRUISE TO ROYALS

BY ROBINA SMITH



A forecast of a light S/SW breeze augured well for the 26th Annual Birthday Cruise to Royals always held on the third Sunday of January.

The morning of 15th January started off chilly and overcast (normal Melbourne!) and we wondered where the fine, sunny weather was but by the time we were tying up at Royals it had turned into a beautiful day.



A fleet of 7 boats participated: **Andalucia, Catwalk, It's a Privilege, Kathleen B, Lena, Mynooka and Summer Wind** with the crews of **Beaujolais** (in Mackay), **Chakana** (in Hobart), **Charliebird, Jotudom, Mirrabooka, Reliance, Selkie and Sun Kiss** opting to hitch a ride or drive across. Thanks also to Peter and Susie Strain who invited any boatless people to sail up on *It's a Privilege* which was appreciated by a few.



The 46 members and friends enjoyed catching up on the news and cruising plans of their fellow members while making good use of the BBQ that is always available to fellow yachties.

Chairman Roger Walker along with RYCV Vice Commodore John Duffin welcomed us to Royals followed by a toast led by Will Merritt to recently departed member, Jim Yarra. The birthday cake was cut by Miriam Cherry one of the original Cruising Group members from 26 years ago.



A gentle breeze enabled a sail home, with a couple of tacks to keep the crew occupied. Another wonderful day!



TIDAL DIAMONDS - THE EASY WAY



Meeting an unexpected tidal stream can put a real dampener on the day, both literally and figuratively. Figuratively when you are galloping through the water with the log reading 7.5kts and the instrument that never tells lies, the GPS is giving a SOG of 5.5kts. That beer is going to sit on the bar for much longer than anticipated. Literally, when you have tide versus waves creating those brick walls that send your bow plunging along with any semblance of comfortable sailing.

Buried in a corner of many charts there are tables that refer to tidal diamonds and even harder to find amongst the depth contours, there are tidal diamonds which, combined with the tables, present a great amount of useful information on tide direction and flow rates, but they are tedious to use particularly if you are not feeling the best. They also often have the times referred to a port that you do not have the tide times for; the most extreme that I have found is the tidal diamonds on the New Caledonia charts from the UK Hydrographic Office that refer to a port in China for the tide times.

Well, the days of tedium are over if you have Navionics on your iPad – this is a great app and a bargain at only \$80.

Zoom in until the distance scale in the bottom right hand corner of the screen shows 3nm or less and up pops the tide height indicators. Move around the area you want to sail and if there are tide diamonds in these areas you will see the tidal arrows. To check it out – try Western Port Bay or Banks Strait between Flinders Island and NE Tasmania.

Click on the tidal arrow and then the '?' symbol and voila – all the tidal information is revealed on the bottom of your screen for the next three days. This provides stream strength and direction, and accounts for whether you have spring or neap tides; or somewhere in between – no more interpolation on those tidal tables on your chart. How easy is that??

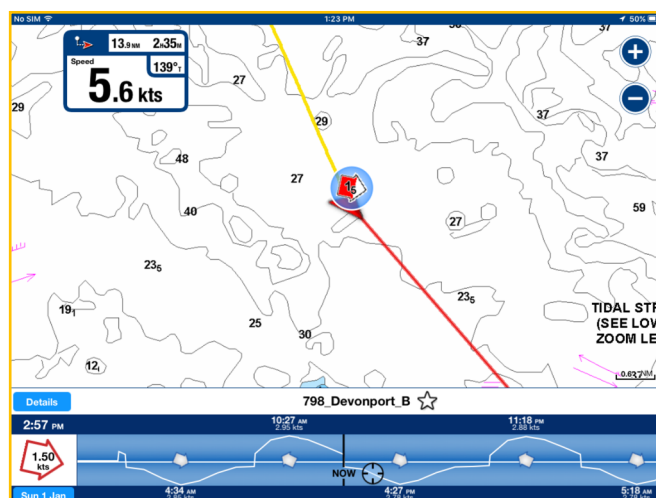
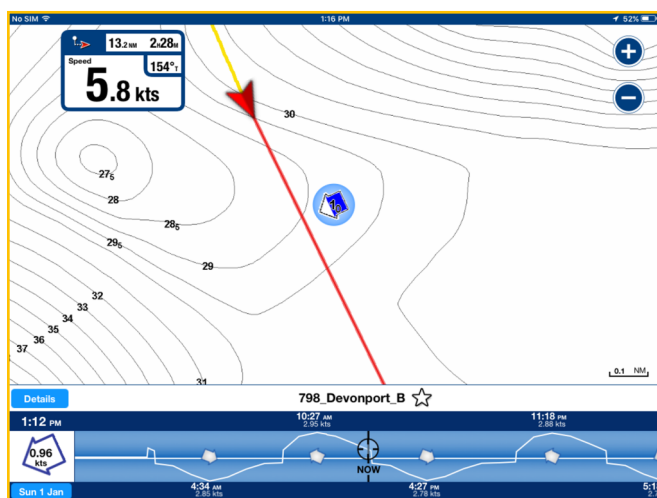
Planning further ahead than three days? Then go to date bar on the bottom left of the screen and dial in the date and that tidal stream data is all there.

There are limitations of course – the tidal stream information on the Rip at Pt Lonsdale is not indicated until you zoom into a 373ft scale (absurdly small) and then it provides a single piece of information of 6kts. Keep buying the Vic Tide Tables if you want a long range tide stream prediction for the Rip.

Also around the Hunter Group on the NW of Tasmania the best source of tidal steam information that I have found is the *Australian Pilot Vol 2*.

Sorry Skip, there are no excuses now for that 'unexpected' tidal stream that sees the barman calling last drinks as the crew staggers dripping wet into the 'Bar du Port' after wrestling sails on that plunging foredeck.

The following snap shots from the iPad show Chakana (red arrow) crossing Banks Strait from Prime Seal Island. The first shows a blue arrow with 1Knot of tide against us and the second shows the moment the tide changed. It took 40 mins for us to feel the effect of the change.



This 'Skippers Tip' contributed by **Brenton and Robina Smith**, *Chakana*. We discovered this feature on our recent cruise to Hobart. Please send your 'Skippers Tips' to the editor, we are surely not the only ones to discover new things that are possibly useful to other Skippers.

CHAKANA GOES TO HOBART

BY BRENTON SMITH



Sunrise as we exited the heads.

This was the first step of three months of cruising around our southern neighbour in preparation for the upcoming Van Diemen's Land (VDL) rally and as always when cruising in new areas

there were some new things to learn.

The process all started well before Christmas as we made preparations on *Chakana* for a long spell away from her home port. These included replacing the PSS and cutlass bearing on the propeller shaft, a new 12V outlet in the cockpit and the installation of a bilge alarm. While I was away on my final work trip of the year in December, Robina provisioned *Chakana* with the long-life victuals and made a succession of casseroles ready for the freezer. This meant that apart from buying and storing the fresh food we were ready to go at the first available weather window after Christmas.

For the VDL rally there were two important preparatory steps. The first was testing the HF radio, not only the machine, but also ourselves so that we could participate in the VDL rally. The RYCT nominates its recommended safety equipment and crew experience but does not formally check these. It does however insist that you make a test call on your HF radio over a distance greater than 500 miles. Robina passed the test with flying colours. The second was the purchase of an aluminium RIB with a 9.5hp outboard so that we can zip up the rivers on the west coast of Tasmania. We want to maximise the experiences in this wilderness area.

The weather system that promised a good Bass Strait crossing continued to be postponed in the week after Christmas and it became clear that Thursday was the day to head south to Queenscliff with light northerlies promised. These occurred along with a heavy downpour of warmish rain near the West Channel Pile that encouraged Robina to go out and wash all the clears around the cockpit while I kept watch in visibility that was reduced to a boat length or two ahead.

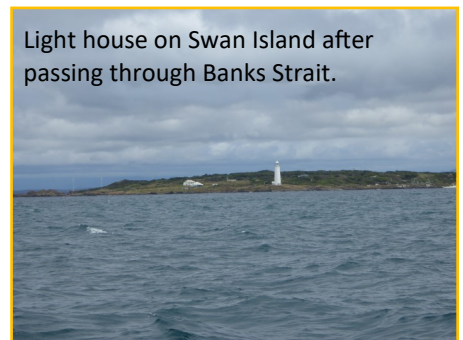
Slack water at 5.30am Friday meant an early start and we motored through the Rip with two other yachts that were heading to Refuge Cove for several days. It was flat calm and so the motor was on for several hours before the promised westerlies arrived. We motor sailed to keep the speed up over 5kts and eventually we had sufficient wind to enable sailing only. This continued with a combination of full whites, furlled whites and even the spinnaker for a brief period. We started watches of about 3 hours after lunch, but as always on the first night out, not much sleep was had by either of us.

The destination was Prime Seal Island just to the west of Flinders Island and we had the anchor down in the bay just to the north of Koh-I-Noor rock at 1pm New Year's Eve, 32 hours after leaving Queenscliff. It took three attempts to get the anchor to hold in the weedy bottom, and we learnt our first lesson of cruising in Tasmania. This was: let the anchor wriggle its way into the sand under the weed. Normally we give the Rocna anchor a good tug with the engine in reverse to ensure that it is buried, and then we can forget it. With the weedy bottom this is not successful; the anchor just becomes an effective seaweed harvesting device. Letting it wriggle down through the weed under the action of the wind on the boat before giving a tug in reverse proved to be successful here, and also further down the coast.

Next day's forecast promised light winds that would freshen in the afternoon, and the tide stream predictions said to cross Banks Strait at about 1pm. This we duly did, and Banks Strait was very tame indeed. Mainland Tasmania came quickly into view as we motored / motor-sailed / sailed south in the summer wind pattern that we were quick to pick up on, and later confirmed with chats with the local sailors.

We anchored in almost gin clear water in Binalong Bay in NE Tasmania. This is an enchanting place that is a popular summer holiday destination for the locals, and justifiably so, with a large tidal estuary behind the beach that provides hours of fun for the kids as the tidal streams flow across the beach.

Binalong Bay was home for two days while some southerly winds passed through, and then it was a long day before tucking in behind the Freycinet Peninsula to have protection from the easterlies and also the easterly swell. We wanted to anchor in Wineglass Bay, but the easterly swell made it uninviting. We anchored in Bryan's Beach and after a morning walk on a white pristine beach we moved a few miles across to Crocketts Bay on Schouten Island and spent the day there watching the local Hobartians on their summer holidays using a wide variety of boats to



Light house on Swan Island after passing through Banks Strait.



Bryan's Beach, Freycinet Peninsula.



Denison Canal

bring them here.

The next leg was heading south, by now we were in the 'roaring forties' being just south of 40°S but the wind was anything but as we motored down behind Maria Island towards the Denison Canal.

The wind finally came in as we headed south towards Blackmans Bay which has a narrow and sometimes shallow channel to navigate through. Fortunately the sun was out and high in the sky and so it was easy to see the deeper parts, or more importantly, the shallow parts. This took us south to the Denison Canal which we passed through pushing about 1kt of tide against us. The bridge that provides access to the Tasman Peninsula has to be opened for you to pass through and the bridge keeper was very helpful with advice prior to passing through the canal.

We had been focused on the pilotage to pass through Blackmans Bay and the canal and now that we were through we had to find somewhere to anchor, and preferably in time for sundowners at 5pm. The wind by this time was whistling in from the SE and the options came down to Eaglehawk Bay (still a long haul from Hobart), the top end of North Bruny

Island (sundowners would have been very late) or White Beach near Nubeena, which met all criteria – i.e. no close hauled sailing in the stiff breeze and sundowners at a respectable hour. This proved to be an ideal choice with Wedge Island providing protection against the SE swell that I suspect perpetually rolls into Storm Bay, the entrance to Hobart.

Next day it was only a short hop of about 10 miles to the Iron Pot at the entrance to the Derwent River, and hence we had a slow start to the day, allowing the SE breeze to awaken from its slumbers so that we could have a pleasant sail across Storm Bay. The summer wind pattern in Tasmania is ideal for cruising, even if not for making miles. The mornings are flat with only faint whispers of wind that may start to increase to a few knots by 11am. It gradually builds in intensity until by 4pm it is piping in excess of 20kts before starting to decrease at 5pm. By six it is pleasant in the cockpit and by seven it is back to zephyrs where it remains until after 11am the next day. Idyllic when you are pottering between anchorages. The exception is at the start and finish of the high pressure cells coming across the bight when there may be a day or two of pronounced and continuous southerlies and northerlies. If you are not heading north or south respectively, then these are days to find one of the numerous good anchorages here and read a good book.

After wrestling with the fickle breezes on the Derwent we were tied up in the RYCT marina at 4pm ready for the cruising in Tasmania to commence.

MEMBER NEWS

Cruising Group extends a warm welcome to our new members. **Catherine Dawson** has just joined RBYC as a Crew Member .



have now upgraded to extend their sailing opportunities.

Stephen and Kathy Clarke joined in 2016 and are already planning on joining the Bass St Cruise this year in *Mynooka*, their Jeanneau 389. They have sailed in NSW and Qld, chartered a bit, sailed Cousta boats and



Land Circumnavigation Rally.

Several boats are taking advantage of the traditionally more settled weather at the beginning of the year to head off cruising south. **Rob Hurrell, Aquacadabra**, has enjoyed some cruising around the D'Entrecasteaux Channel from Hobart with family and friends before joining RYCT Van Diemens's

Robina & Brenton Smith, Chakana, sailed to Hobart after Christmas and are enjoying some cruising before joining the VDL Rally.

Sue & Bryan Drummond, Birubi, have explored the Tamar before heading to Hobart for the Wooden Boat

Festival.

Sue and Rod Slater, Foxy Lady, have headed to the Tamar and southern end of Flinders Island before joining the Bass Strait Cruise.

Peter and Susie Strain, It's a Privilege is sailing with the Victorian fleet to join VDL at the Hunter Group.

Some members socialised in the marina on New Years Eve before watching the fireworks from the attenuator, staying overnight on their boats and meeting for breakfast at the club.



The 2017 Bass Strait Cruise in Company has 11 boats signed up and is being ably coordinated by **Craig Walton, Yknot**.

Pam and Will Merritt spent a week cleaning and antifouling *Andalucia* during January. She had a smooth lift on the travellift at Sandringham.

With lots of boats out cruising please keep your cruising stories rolling in during the next month to **Sally Spencer** April Editor. sallyspencer@ozemail.com.au

VALE JIM YARRA

BY WILL MERRITT



I know that I usually write a contribution with a touch of levity so I trust you'll all understand if I get a little serious on this occasion. I wish to contribute a few words in memory of Jim Yarra. Those of us who knew Jim understood that he was always happy when engaged in the pursuit of messing about in boats. We know that this is an activity which offers many varied experiences ranging from tranquil to terrifying.

Almost 50 years ago Jim was taken with a serious case of the sailing bug, which can be an almost incurable obsession. His initial interest centred on sailing dinghies on Albert Park Lake and more adventurously at Balnarring. He went on to crew on ocean racing yachts including two Sydney / Hobart races and several Melbourne to Devonport races. In recent years Jim allowed common

sense to prevail and restricted his racing to regularly crewing in local club races on Wednesdays aboard *Andalucia*. Jim's contributions will be sorely missed.

Jim also extended his sailing interests by delivering yachts along the Australian east coast for owners lacking time or experience – or having too much money! He probably enjoyed the opportunity to extend his experience as a skipper. There were certainly tales to tell, particularly when inexperienced owners were on board. These trips naturally involved a wide range of boat types and destinations to add to Jim's already formidable range of boating experience.

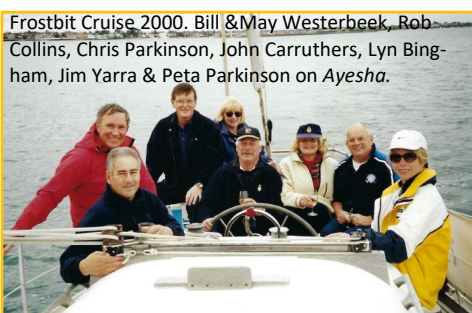
A logical progression for Jim was to move on to cruising yachts. He participated regularly as a crew member aboard many yachts. The Cruising Group annual cruise over many years has visited South Australia, Tasmania, many Bass Strait islands and coastal ports and anchorages. Jim was usually involved. However, I'm guessing that, for Jim, the longest and most memorable trips would have been extended passages such as those he did returning from Osaka, Japan and going to New Zealand.

Jim also had some commercial experience. In about 2000 he obtained his Master 5 qualification and for a time operated some Yarra River ferries. 'Yarra on the Yarra' does seem to be appropriate, although Jim did assure me that the names are in no way connected.

Now yachting isn't only about sailing. Having completed a race or passage we sailors like to find a safe anchorage or berth and gather around for the odd glass of whatever is good for you. If there is a previous life Jim must have sailed before the mast of square riggers when a daily tot of rum was standard fare. His only concession to modern times was to dilute the rum with coke. Probably a wise decision since he faced a long drive home.

Yachties do like to yarn over a glass or six and the yarns get taller as the spirit flows. Jim often had tales to tell, though modesty forbids me from passing on the more colourful versions.

It is sad to know that Jim's gone but, hopefully, he'll live on in our memories.



Frostbit Cruise 2000. Bill & May Westerbeek, Rob Collins, Chris Parkinson, John Carruthers, Lyn Bingham, Jim Yarra & Peta Parkinson on *Aysha*.



Music Night 2000. Bill Westerbeek, Frank Smith, Jim Yarra, Ben Sheppard, David James, John Carruthers & David Bingham.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY 17TH FEBRUARY FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speaker: Grant Collins

Sailing on *Tenacious* from Melbourne to Adelaide

Grant will be telling us about life aboard a three masted sailing ship. He spent 6 days sailing aboard *Tenacious* from Melbourne to Adelaide.

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

Please book with the office (9592 3092) no later than Wednesday February 15th. Bookings essential.

4th MARCH TO 19th MARCH ANNUAL BASS ST CRUISE IN COMPANY

Boats will gather at QCYC on Saturday 4th March and start planning their destination according to the latest weather. Whether to go east, west or south and on which day will be decided after much examination of various weather forecasts and wind predictor programs. **Craig Walton**, *Yknot* is coordinator and 11 boats have registered their interest.

FRIDAY 17th MARCH FORUM DINNER MEETING

BBQ at the Ken King Centre, Sandringham YC

Sail down and test your night navigation skills on the way back or drive down and meet us there.

6.30pm arrival at Sandringham YC.

This will be a BYO food and drinks with BBQ's and tables provided at the Ken King Centre on the water's edge of the marina.

Please let Jenny Collins know if your boat is going by Wednesday March 15th so she knows the numbers for possible allocation of some pens.

jacngrant@gmail.com

FRIDAY 21st APRIL ANNUAL BOAT PROGRESSIVE DINNER

Gather at the club for pre-dinner drinks and nibbles, main course on first allocated boat, dessert and coffee on second allocated boat then gather back for port and chocolates. Cost is \$25 per person. Sounds confusing but it works!

This evening is only possible because of the generosity of boat owners who provide main course or dessert on their boats for 6-8 people with costs reimbursed up to \$10/person for main course and \$6/person for dessert. **Peter Strain** would love to hear from all boats that are willing to host a course.

peter_strain@bigpond.com

Non-boat owners or currently boatless are always warmly welcomed and need to book through Peter. Numbers are limited to what can be accommodated on the volunteered boats.

FRIDAY 19TH MAY FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speakers: Steve Harnett and Jude Harris

Sailing Beaujolais up the East Coast.

Armchair Chat

If I put on my other hat, that of volunteer fire-fighter, I think about those of us who have gas stoves on board our boats along with LPG cylinders. This raises some questions: when did I last change the cylinder? and when did I last check the cylinder service date? I must confess that I cannot remember.

I have now checked another cylinder that was given to me a while back; it looks fine but the last date of service is shown as 2004. I am a bit embarrassed to work out that it's thirteen years past the designated date! I am not sure that my insurance company would like that cylinder on my boat.

The lesson is, please check the gas supply on your boat and if it needs to be serviced, please attend to the matter as soon as possible, then you and I will both sleep well.

Roger Walker



Captain Coxswain's Corner

'SLUSH FUND'

A slushy slurry of fat was obtained by boiling or scraping the empty salted meat storage barrels.

This stuff called 'slush' was often sold ashore by the ship's cook for the benefit of himself or the crew.

The money so derived became known as a 'slush fund'.