



CRUISING NEWS



NOVEMBER 2017

MAY FORUM DINNER: PETER WELLBY

NUMERICAL WEATHER PREDICTION - NWP

WRITTEN BY BRENTON SMITH



Peter Wellby of Offshore Weather Services is a professional meteorologist and gave the Cruising Group an insight into a matter that is almost all consuming when

cruisers are out doing what they love – i.e. cruising!

We really are spoilt nowadays with internet access almost everywhere, even on the high seas, and an abundance of professional meteorologists ashore with ever more powerful computers that can crunch data from around the globe, and push their mathematical models to their limits. In the old days, going cruising was a case of cutting out two days of weather charts from the morning paper, watching the barometer and the sky, and then trying to interpret the weather forecast on AM radio, which presented a forecast for an area half the size of the entire state. I am sure there are not too many of us who lament the passing of those days.

For the engineers amongst us, it was interesting to see how the good old thermodynamic equations, which we could never solve, applied to the atmosphere, continue to be the basis for the various NWP models that provide the seven day forecasts on which we place ever increasing levels of reliance – and we are seldom disappointed. This period has grown from the 48 hour forecasts that we all grew up with, and the obvious question is when will the period for reliable weather forecasts extend out to 10 or even 14 days. Well,

the answer is – don't invest your super in backing someone promising this Holy Grail because Huey still has a few con-
nections that we do not have, and has some nasty surprises for naïve players.

We are all familiar with Meteye and the BOM 7-day models, which, speaking from our experiences up and down the east coast, are pretty darn good. Those of us who subscribe to Predict Wind will know that they present predictions from four global NWPs, including the European model, which according to Peter is regarded as the current world leader. To these we can add the output of the BOM modelling developed from their detailed insight to Australian weather and their own supercomputer. Companies like Peter's have their own NWP models, aimed at particular parts of the world that suit their clientele. However, they are all developed from the same set of thermodynamic equations, and similar starting conditions – and that is where the conundrum commences, it is hidden in that word 'similar'.

The starting conditions, or what mathematicians call the *initial boundary conditions*, determine the end result of the NWP model, i.e. the weather forecast. However, for weather modelling these inputs are widely and irregularly dispersed weather readings. And we are not only talking



CRUISING GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson Roger Walker.....0407 844 992

Secretary Jenny Collins.....9585 1154

Editor Robina Smith.....0403 791 347
Email.....robina_smith@hotmail.com

Rob Hurrell..... 0409 781 477

Paul Jenkins0400 946 658

Will Merritt..... 9598 8626

Pam Merritt..... 9598 8626

David Pollard..... 9592 6554

Peter Strain..... 0418 530 385

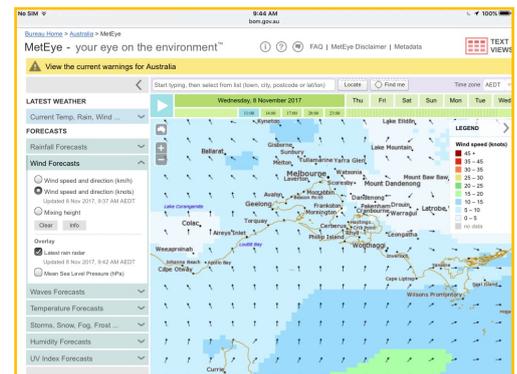
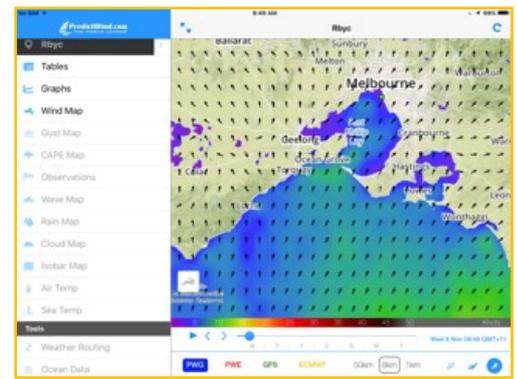
about surface readings, of which we have a reasonably good distribution of readings, on land at least, but 3-D readings for the atmosphere which are done daily and at very widely dispersed locations. The readings are also taken at various times, and hence those all-important initial boundary conditions are compromised before the evermore powerful super-computers start their ultra-high speed number crunching of those thermodynamic equations. Satellites provide increasing amounts of surface data such as ocean surface temperatures, cloud cover, even wave height, but those actual conditions (winds, temperatures, humidity etc) in that gap between the surface and 40,000+ft is proving to be astonishingly hard to measure at useful frequencies and geographical distributions.

Computing power has been a wonderful advance; we only have to see the small cell-size of the Meteye output to appreciate this, and we, as cruising sailors, have access to the results from these vast amounts of computational power at little or no cost. When we were cruising the east coast and across to New Caledonia we hooked into the BOM models and to a lesser extent Predict Wind for which we paid an annual subscription of around \$100. Although we were not professional meteorologists we took a similar approach to that used at Offshore Weather Services, which is to look at a 'Multi-Model Ensemble' – although I suggest that you do not use that bit of jargon at your next beachside meeting of skip-pers. If they thought you were a bit of a plonker before the meeting, they would be under no illusions henceforth.

This is essentially to look at the output of all the models, and if they are all singing the same tune then there is a high probability that the weather in 5-6 days will actually resemble what is in the NWP's. As the divergence between them

increases then the unreliability increases, or as the meteorologists say, the Skill of the models declines. This all sounds a bit touchy-feely and guess work but unless you are prepared to pay the big bucks for a professional meteorological outfit like Offshore Weather Services whose market is ship owners and oil companies, then this is what you have!

However, this lack of reliability does not stop Robina and I from looking at the Windyty models for 14 days ahead to gain a hint of what may be in store. It has helped us dodge some nasty weather – and, after all, that is the aim of the game even for the professional seafarers.



Weather models for Wednesday 8th November.
Top: Predict Wind with four weather models available.
Bottom: Meteye.

Here it is, the end of a four-day cup weekend. We are back from a Cruising Group sail to Wyndham Harbour. We were back in time to watch the Cup on telly in the Members' bar. Of course, one had to have a little flutter and, believe it or not, I managed to more than double my stake. This was so exciting that I am considering taking up a career as a professional gambler. I mean to say that that option has to be a step up from freelancing as columnist of this wonderful newsletter. The workload is horrendous with a complete column expected every month. Even then, the earnings are nothing to write home about and are unlikely to improve. In fact, the editor / production manager demonstrates little intention of improving the remuneration package for her staff. Instead all of her time is directed to improving her own retirement plan which will soon be implemented.

There you have it. Do I continue on this dead-end path or should I switch to the glamour and rewards of the lifestyle of a professional gambler? She, who must be obeyed, may not be pleased to find that I have used the house as

collateral to raise the necessary 'start-up' funds for this venture. Now think about this, a man who can convert \$4 to \$9 in the time it takes to run a horse race will have no trouble in making a large fortune by applying this money-making skill every ten minutes of every working day for two years. She will be all smiles when I shower her with gifts such as expensive perfume, a new high-performance sports car, and heaps of jewellery.

Readers should not be alarmed at the prospect of losing access to these beautifully crafted words of wisdom while I am busy making a fortune. I will employ a Doctor of Philosophy to be my ghost writer.

Will Merritt

**Wondering
While
Wandering**

HARBOUR BOUND AT WYNDHAM HARBOUR

BY BRENTON SMITH



At Wyndham Harbour - Apologies to SunKiss who somehow missed the photo!



The Mansion group.



Pixies in the rose garden.

The eight boats that braved the blustery cup weekend were *Andalucia*, *Chakana*, *Foxy Lady*, *Haidii Gwai*, *Kathleen B*, *Mirrabooka*, *Reliance* and *Sun Kiss*. Terry had a couple of mates on *Reliance*, and Paul and Jane welcomed Steve and Jude (*ex-Beaujoulais*) on *Kathleen B*. In all 19 RBYC cruisers were afloat.

Wyndham Harbour has some attractions for sailors, an easy to enter marina located just 15nm from Brighton marina, and a marina team focused on customer service. Those who turned off the diesels were treated to some windward sailing with the wind coming directly from Wyndham, which was a rewarding bit of practice for those that persisted. Eventually Huey put enough south into the breeze for the rhumb line to Wyndham to coincide with the close hauled layline on port tack. "Ah, that's better" was the sigh from the crews, beating in 15kts is ok, but as long it is in the desired direction.

Pam Merritt was the coordinator for the weekend and the troops were mustered for 5pm sundowners, including Vice Commodore



Paul and Jenny Pascoe who popped in to check that the RBYC reputation was still intact, followed by a barbeque.

The marina office is not large, but some imaginative arrangement of the tables and chairs had us all seated for a range of barbequed offerings from the various chefs. David Spencer (*Sun Kiss*) surprised us all with two T-bone steaks that must have come from a very large cowasaurus. Dinner over, and sufficient libations by all, and it was into the trivia quiz at which the team 'Mirana Lady' (David-Mirrabooka, Sue-Foxy Lady, Brenton and Robina-Chakana) had the best all round expertise.



Sunday started off with a cooked

breakfast of bacon and eggs on the barbeque, courtesy of the marina staff, before we took the scenic tour of Werribee by bus to go to Werribee Mansion. (Hint for future cruisers reading the timetable - the letter H beside the time means the bus is doing the loop into the mansion and zoo, otherwise it goes straight to Werribee requiring a wait for another bus back!) Half the group specialised in the gardens and Uber, and the other half in the mansion.



Siestas completed, the pace quickened

for a game of Klop, where the pins scatter rapidly between turns when there are about 16 players in action. The skill levels need to ramp up quickly, and obviously for most of us they do not increase quickly enough, with only Sue (*Foxy Lady*) and Robina (*Chakana*) still standing for the final shootout, which Sue clinched with a commanding knockout blow of the No 8 pin. Sundowners in the marina lounge followed which morphed into dinner, where some creative one-pot dinners were served. The Mirana Lady group continued to display their breadth of combined knowledge with another winning performance.



Waiting for the bus.



Sue's winning Klop action.



Jude



Sue and Pam

With the original forecast, Met-eye had us sailing to Portarlington on Monday for a change from the cushy life of living in a marina, but Huey clearly had other plans presenting us with a solid 20-25kts S, both forecast and actual. A lay day was called and a walk along the Werribee River was underway by 10:30am. This concluded with coffee back in the Marina Lounge (it really was a popular spot - warm and no wind) at about 1:30pm and then back to the boats for some jobs, siestas and reading. Muster time was four-ish for Klop where Jude (*Kathleen B*) and Sally (*Sun Kiss*) were in the final shootout, and Jude the winner.

The forecast for the return leg on Tuesday was 20-25 SW moderating to 15-20 at about 11am prompting a relaxed start to the day. Bacon and eggs rolls courtesy of the marina staff assisted to settle some of the queasy abdomens before going to sea. At 11am the exodus commenced as one by one we reversed into the stiff SW breeze to exit the marina. Headsails were unrolled and we all had a very comfortable ride home in time to watch the cup at RBYC.





AVOIDING CATTLE WHILST SAILING

BY STEVE HARNETT *BEAUJOLAIS*

Leaving Rosslyn Bay heading south, I had a couple options. Either sail around Curtis Island and then zig zag through the North Channel between Curtis Island and Facing Island to Gladstone, or sail there via "The Narrows". On our way north last year, Jude and I took the first option. This year, heading south, it wasn't quite as attractive. It involved leaving Rosslyn Bay in time to get to the North Channel before dark and coinciding with a rising tide. It is about a nine-hour sail from Rosslyn Bay to the entrance of the North Channel, then a couple more hours to get to the marina. A quick review of the tide tables suggested that this combination wasn't going to work well. That left "The Narrows". Heading north, we considered this option, briefly, before ruling it out as being unnecessarily risky.

Between Curtis Island and the mainland is a narrow channel. Calling Curtis Island an island is misleading, some of the time. At low tide it isn't an island and at high tide it is. The channel, "The Narrows", is a muddy stream between clumps of mangroves which only exists at high tide. At lowest astronomical tide, there are sections as high as two metres above the water. Stockmen lead their cattle between Curtis Island and the mainland at that section, called Ramsay Crossing. How does one sail a boat with a 2m draft over an area that cattle are herded over? Very carefully.

One of the enjoyable aspects of sailing is meeting others involved in the same activity. It is generally not long between arriving at a marina and striking up a conversation with another cruiser. This was the case at Rosslyn Bay. The owner of a neighbouring boat caught a line for me as I was maneuvering into the berth. Once tying up the boat was completed and introduction made, conversation heading towards cruising intentions – heading north or south? He opined that with a 2m draft The Narrows were navigable, but that I'd need to do it in the next couple of days, otherwise the tides wouldn't be high enough. After catching up with sleep and recovering equanimity, after the night sail

from Middle Percy Island, which took a couple of days, I'd lost that opportunity.

For tide calculations, there is a secondary "port" at the shallow part of the narrows. In order to work out the height and timing of the tides there, it is necessary to refer to the information at the back of the Queensland tide tables and apply the adjustments noted to the heights and times of its respective standard port. Being an accountant I, of course, made a spreadsheet to do this. Local knowledge bypasses all that, the local rule being that you need height of tide at Gladstone greater than your draft plus 1.2m and that high tide is about half an hour later than at Gladstone. It confirmed that indeed I had missed the opportunity, especially if I wanted the following high tide to be higher than the one I used, so that if I ran aground, I'd float off on the next high tide. Not sure how that would work, with the boat on its side 2m above the water, but it sounded more attractive than the tides getting progressively lower until the next spring tides.



Paul and Karen, with whom Steve spent several pleasant hours, leaving Rosslyn Bay in their CT 41.

In any case, I'd missed the window of opportunity and therefore needed to consider other options such as sailing directly to Rodds "Harbour", or Pancake Creek beyond Gladstone. I spent a few days thinking about this, checking the tides and weather forecasts, but also exploring Rosslyn Bay and Yeppoon. I also enjoyed the company of a few other boaties, ate at the marina restaurant (highly recommended) and at the Capricorn Cruising Yacht Clubs Friday night pot luck dinners. I guess I wasn't very conscientious in my planning. But it was an enjoyable few days.

By the time I'd exhausted the excuses not to leave, I found reapplying the spreadsheet that neap tides were just about passed and springs on the way. This meant that "The Narrows" was once again viable.

I left Rosslyn Bay with a light south easterly; not enough east to sail much, so I mostly motored down to Pacific Creek, at the entrance to The Narrows. As I got close, the outgoing tidal stream increased and my speed decreased. The water turned a "flat white" brown. I anchored in about 6m, needing to take into account the 3m of tide I had, and put out 50m of chain. Why so much? Experience has shown that when the tide changes and takes the boat over the anchor it may gather enough momentum to dislodge the anchor and then, if travelling fast enough, prevent it resetting. With a heap of chain out that momentum is reduced. I knew that I had about 3 knots of tidal stream which would reverse during the night.

The alarm was set for 05.30. This would give me time to sail for 2 hours to the shallowest section before high tide, allowing a further hour so that if I ran aground I had opportunity to recover as the water level increased. The alarm wasn't necessary. I woke at about 05.00 and after a bowl of cereal and cup of tea lifted the anchor. The extra chain probably wasn't necessary either. The mud was so sticky that the windless couldn't lift the anchor. I needed to drive the boat over it to dislodge the anchor and allow the windless to lift it, together with a great clump of black sticky mud.

The next three hours were spent with eyes alternating between being glued to the plotter, showing where the boat was relative to the course I'd set, and looking out to dodge clumps of mangroves and lateral marks. At the lowest point the depth read 2.1m. With my 2.0m draft I was getting a little concerned, but pressed on, hoping that all the calculations were correct. Without touching the bottom, I emerged at the other end.

The Port of Gladstone is a big industrial port, with large ships moving in and out, so I checked in with the port traffic control on the VHF to make sure there wasn't anything going on that would be problematic and made my way past the berthed ships and wharves to the marina, tucked away in Auckland Creek, off the main channel.

Wherever I go next it will not involve dodging mangroves and cattle.



The Narrows – the blue bits are always underwater, the green bits are above the water at low tide, the yellow bits are nothing to do with marine navigation.

IS THIS THE NEXT STOCKING FILLER FROM SANTA?



The old saw, 'you have not been cruising if you have not run aground' is painfully true, and I know enough racing folk that have hit the bricks to know that it is not only cruisers that push the depth contours.

It pains me to say it, but the actual connections of Chakana's keel with the seabed, and the close shaves, have been due more to complacency rather than a consequence of being adventurous. Whatever the reason, it is never a good feeling when the boat glides to a halt (if you are lucky) or you are slumped over the wheel because the stop has been rather sudden. The first dents your pride; the second may need a big boat unit or two to repair the damage.

Well those days may be numbered – or worse, there will be even fewer excuses for hitting the bricks. Garmin and B&G have released forward looking sonars that independent testing has validated as being as useful as a depth sounder – and all of us are very reluctant to go in unfamiliar waters without one of these. Unfortunately, they are a tad more expensive, and they only work with their own networks including the display screens.

The verdict in Yachting Monthly, May 2017 is shown for the Garmin sonar device. Robina and I had a good look at the Garmin and B&G sonars at the Sydney Boat Show this year, and in particular how the information is displayed on the chart plotter. Garmin's display appears to be aimed at the keen fisher folk, whereas the B&G display is aimed more at providing clear pilotage information as shown on the two plots on the right from Practical Boat Owner.

Santa – you know that I have been very good this year.....

P.S. – Chakana has a B&G network.

This 'Skippers Tip' was written by Brenton Smith Chakana who can dream all he likes about what could be in his Christmas Stocking!

OUR VERDICT

To say 'stunning' isn't overdoing it. I think forward-looking sonar is the best invention since roller reefing. The ability to see ahead with confidence, having calibrated the offsets before we began, is nothing short of life-changing for pilotage in unknown, or untrusted waters.

RATING

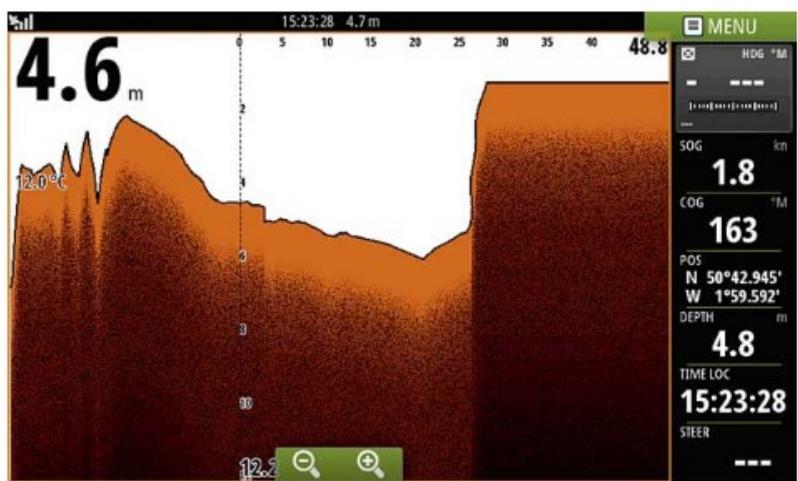
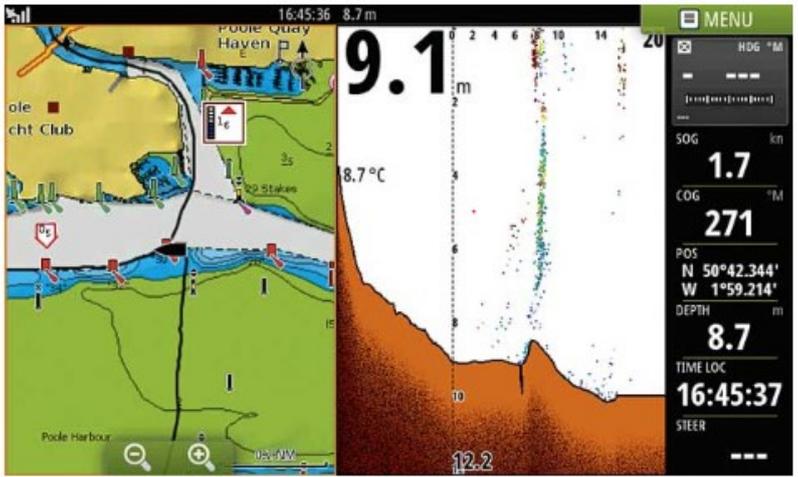
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PROS

- See underwater ahead of the boat
- Usable at speeds of up to 8 knots

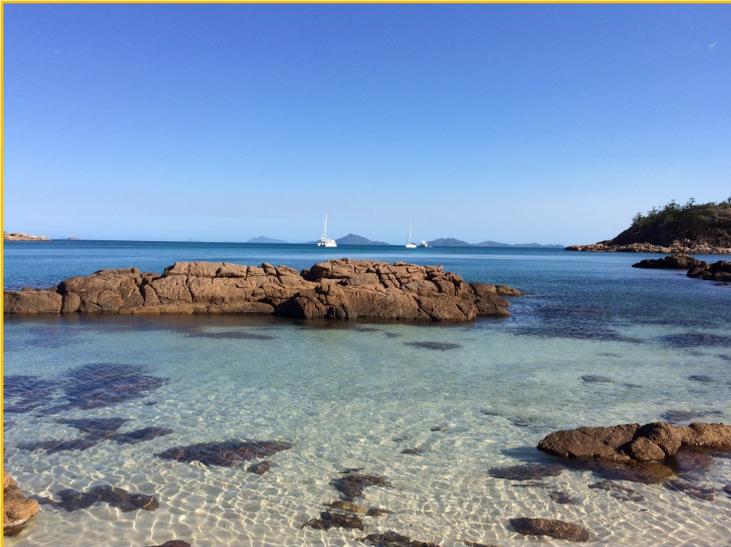
CONS

- Very expensive
- Only works with a Garmin network



POSTCARD FROM *EMMA KATE*

BY ROD WATSON



Sea Eagle Beach on Thomas Island.

Today we had a mid-morning arrival at a delightful anchorage on the south west corner of Goldsmith Island, Stingray Bay. We have spent the last four days at Sea Eagle Beach on Thomas Island, which was an even more delightful anchorage. These are all so-called northern anchorages that provide protection from northerlies, rather than the standard Whitsunday south easterlies. We have had almost no South Easterlies in the last four weeks. These anchorages are not visited too often so it's some what of a treat, sandy beaches and lots of sealife.

The weather for the last week or so has been perfect. I say HAS because as I write this we are surrounded by thunderstorms. Bullets of 25 knots plus have lashed us from every direction, it's bucketed rain and surrounded us with lightning and of course thunder. That was the first band of storms and off to the south west a second band is approaching with darkness.

The forecast is for more storms over the next two days, maybe we will head for Mackay, but let's see what tomorrow morning brings.

MEMBER NEWS

Ern Green who sails *Salty Dog*, a Beneteau 36.7, attended his first Cruising Group Dinner last month. He has spent time chartering in the Gippsland Lakes and is looking to cruise.

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Last month it was Grandchildren and this month it is weddings.
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We wish Jane Cooper and Paul Jenkins, *Kathleen B* a wonderful wedding day and many years of fair sailing.

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Lyn and David Bingham, *Mirrabooka*, are attending their daughters wedding in a hot air balloon! Think that is more weather dependent than sailing!
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Rob Hurrell, *Aquacadabra*, has been continuing his wanderings through Portugal and Spain but is due to return home soon. This photo is looking over the yacht club in Lisbon with a local Portuguese Gin.



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Roger Lloyd, who usually visits us from the UK and has crewed on some of our Bass Strait Cruises had a good northern hemisphere summer in lovely Southern

Brittany. His boat is wintering ashore near Vannes, as per last year. Saves crossing English and Bristol Channels.

He is looking forward to cruising around the South Island NZ during our summer on *Bomoh*, the boat from Port Albert that he circumnavigated Tasmania in this year.

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On 3rd February 2018, RBYC Cruising Group is hoping to organise a Combined Bay Cruise and BBQ with all the Cruising Groups in the Bay. Details still to be finalised but maybe a Rendezvous at Fawkner Beacon and sail into RBYC for a BBQ.
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Raymarine C 80 chart plotter. 10 years old. Comes with CF chip loaded with Navionics Gold charts. Plotter free to good home. E-charts by negotiation.
Raymarine Class B AIS unit. Model AIS650. 10 years old. May have circuit damage – needs checking. Free to good home.
Contact John Walker Mobile: 0408 992 630

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Please keep your cruising stories and other contributions rolling in. This newsletter relies on a flow of member contributions.

NOTICEBOARD

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

***** **CHANGED FORMAT** *****

FRIDAY 17th NOVEMBER FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speaker: Lisa Blair

Sailing her yacht *Climate Action Now* Lisa became the first woman in history to sail solo around Antarctica with one stop.

Lisa is an entertaining and inspirational speaker who overcame extreme conditions and a dismasting to fulfil her goal.

She will be speaking in the Bayview Room at 8pm.

As Lisa is a paid speaker, and we have combined with WGIS, this presentation needs to be booked and paid for (\$20 per person) through the link found in the email with this newsletter.

Our buffet dinner will be held in the Members Bar with tables reserved for those who book and service starting straight after the key draw at 7pm. There will only be main course and a reduced price of \$25. Buy your buffet meal tickets at the bar.

As usual, gather at the Club about 6.30pm, members draw at 7pm immediately followed by the buffet meal and with the talk at 8.00pm.

Please book for the buffet meal with the office (95923092) no later than **12noon Wednesday 15th November**. Bookings essential.

NO ORGANISED END OF MONTH ON WATER ACTIVITY FOR NOVEMBER

Don't let that stop you from going cruising though!

FRIDAY 8th DECEMBER

6pm: Meeting for Annual Bass Strait Cruise in Company 2018

For those interested in cruising in company for two weeks between Saturday 24th February and Labour Day weekend Monday 12th March to a Bass Strait destination as dictated by the weather.

The meeting at RBYC on 8th December at 6pm will register boats interested in joining the cruise.

Information will be given as to how the cruise is organised and any requirements for the cruise.

If you are unable to attend the meeting but want to register interest please contact Cruise Coordinator Craig Walton Y Knot cragus13@gmail.com

SATURDAY 16th DECEMBER HARDSTAND CHRISTMAS PARTY

Don't miss this popular Cruising Group event! From about 6pm on the Hardstand although there is a wet weather plan.

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.

SUNDAY 21st JANUARY

27th ANNUAL BIRTHDAY CRUISE TO ROYALS

Position Vacant!

Newsletter
Editor

**from the
Editors
Chair**

Due to some extended holidays next year, Robina would like to pass the Newsletter on to a new editor. After 5 years it is time for a break.

The newsletter has been a Cruising Group institution since Cruising Group started more than 25 years ago.

It is a valuable historical record and means of communication amongst our members.

Please give some thought to volunteering for this valuable role. See Robina to discuss it further!

News of two important dates at QCYC.

Our **55th Opening Day** is fast approaching (Sunday 12th November) with Guest of Honour Lieutenant Commander Tristan Heritier, HMAS Cerberus, performing the Opening Ceremony and Reverend Peter Martin conducting the Blessing of the Fleet. The ceremony will commence at 1:15pm and the bar will be open from 12md. Following the ceremony a buffet lunch will be served in the clubhouse by Noelene Walton (formerly of *Cafe Amore*, Point Lonsdale). To add to the afternoon's atmosphere *Steve Murphy's Jazz Band* will perform from 2pm.

Planning for the **2018 New Year's Day Seafood Luncheon** is well underway, with Club Person of the Year Judy Hodgkins at the helm for the third consecutive year and Hugo Armstrong amassing an impressive range of raffle prizes in aid of Cottage by the Sea. Further details of the day will follow, with bookings commencing via TryBooking from early December.



Captain Coxswain's Corner

'LOOSE CANNON'

Everyone has known a few people who are loose cannons - unpredictable and dangerous on some level.

Not surprisingly the term comes from when a ship's cannon would come loose from it's lashing. The big dangerous thing would be sliding all over the place making for some uncomfortable time on deck trying to get that bad boy back in it's spot.