



CRUISING NEWS



FEBRUARY 2019

ESPERENCE TO ESPERENCE

By
Allan Haddow

After 4 days on anchor I decided to go into the Esperance Bay YC pile mooring marina prior to some wild weather arriving. After 10 days in Esperance & looking at Meteye I decided I could leave on 08-11 for the 600nm crossing to Ceduna. It appeared there would be SW for 2 days, followed by 1 day of light easterlies & then northerly breezes for 2 days. From Esperance to Daw Is., western edge of the Bight, is 125nm - 27hr. Across the Bight to Ceduna is 400nm – 4 days. I had been informed not to travel from Esperance to Daw Is. in the dark due to many unsurveyed areas. There are over 140 islands in this area called Recherche’ Archipelago with many having sloping faces at water level & waves crashing into crevasses. On the night of Feb. 14, 1991 a 174m long Japanese bulk carrier (with 30,000t fertilizer & 700t oil) Sanko Harvest struck a reef 12nm from Esperance, broke up and sank spilling thousands of litres of oil into the sea. A black area can be seen on the rocks today, presumSo leaving at 0300hr meant I could travel most of the way to Middle Is. in daylight – the sun rises at 0345hr. Perfect SW weather was encountered for the 76nm, 17hr to Middle Is. arriving at 2015hr in pitch black darkness anchoring in 8m using a plotted GPS position from the Freemantle SC cruising guide book, where I could get enough internet to see the weather was still OK. After 2hrs I left for the 50nm, 10hr journey to Daw Is. & kept going heading towards



Ceduna. There was no wind for the first 15hr & then a 20-25kn easterly arrived so for 10hr I battled them trying to tack along my rhumb line. I had no idea if two highs had combined or just how long the easterlies would last so decided to turn back – ½ way between Esperance & Ceduna and 100nm into the Bight. I tried to tack north and south but kept stopping and losing steerage due to waves coming in from different directions. I kept watching the barometer to see if it was dropping – signalling a weather change, but never happened. I noticed a weird wave pattern that I had never seen before

By the time I got back to 50nm from Daw Is., at day break, the wind dropped & a sea mist came in. Also coming from the north were something like 4m high rollers 150m apart. I found out later there was a tremendous storm top of the Bight. By now the barometer was dropping & I was wondering what was happening. If N, W or S fronts arrived, I was too far from shelter. After a few hours the rollers dissipated, and about 1500hr, the westerly change arrived so decided to head towards Port Lincoln – five days away. At least I would be traveling with the wind.

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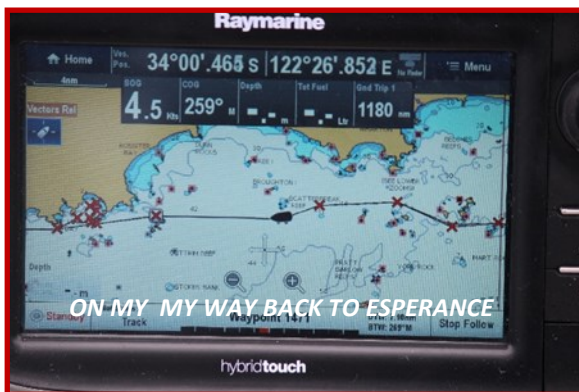


JUST ANOTHER CRASHING WAVE



INVISIBLE REEF

I had to hand steer through the night with just a small gib unfurled as the sea conditions were creating too much force on the rudder for the wheel autopilot. The wind whistled through the rigging up to 25kn, but roared at 30kn. I had three intervals of 20 minutes at 30kn. While the waves did make more noise, it was dark, I thought the conditions weren't so bad. At sun rise, 0345hr, the front had passed so I used the autopilot & soon after, the belt broke. I had one spare so fixed that easily, but in the process the electrical wires at the autopilot motor came away from a crimped part. I thought I had no way of fixing that The motor overheated and while rocking around, I fixed the motor & with no spare belt decided to head back 200nm to Esperance into the 15kn westerly, from 76nm into the Bight. About an hour later I realised I could run a new wire from the computer to the autopilot motor & try to water proof the connection. Two days later I arrived at Esperance and have left Ophelia in the yacht club moorings til late Jan. 2019 for the next attempt. Along the way, during day light, I came across a small rock & reef not shown on Navionics.



ON MY MY WAY BACK TO ESPERANCE



AUTOPILOT REPAIR

Lessons learnt –

1. Don't go into a remote area with no HF or satellite phone – if I had one of these, I could have called Scott, who would have stated to sit tight for 8hr for the easterlies to stop, then sail to Ceduna under westerlies.
2. Have at least two spare autopilot belts.
3. Look at other wind apps. Meteye is only up to 10nm off shore. I was 100nm.
4. Look at installing a self-steering system

As for the Bight water, I believe with the shape of the Bight being a large 'U' shape & predominate SW weather the water is rotating. Mix that with daily wind changes anticlockwise the whole water mass is like a washing machine. In other areas like Bass Strait, the water can pass through albeit with other currents involved. I had numerous waves combining into one larger wave nearby & moving at a rate of knots under Ophelia. I expected to lean as it passed under, but Ophelia stayed upright. It appears the whole mass of water was moving. Ophelia did roll from side to side with violent motion and up & down as the SW swell moved along. One could not stand up without hanging on with both hands, so most of the time I was lying down in a fetal position on the lee side. When there was no wind the sea was flat with a slight SW swell. We could not sail any faster than 3kn with 25kn tail winds as I believe the revolving water was causing friction on the full length keel. We could travel at 5-6kn motor/sailing, which probably broke the friction. There is no literature on the Bight conditions.

The Christmas Hardstand Party By Barbara Burns

The December Hardstand Party was a great success. There were 34 people who came and enjoyed the beautiful evening, as it was very balmy and with little wind.

The lead up to the evening was a little doubtful however, as the weather forecast promised heavy thunderstorms with rain and wind. To complicate matters the club was also running Sailing Australia, which meant that there was no parking in the Club Car Park, and the rules for the evening are that you bring chairs, tables and your own food, BBQ provided. This is difficult when there are no wheelbarrows and nowhere to park your car. Most people were not put off by this slight inconvenience and optimistically thought that they would manage somehow.

Peter Strain and Adrian Finglas (Club Coach) came to the rescue by providing all the chairs and lots of tables, as well as a Marque left over from the days activities, so when a few spots of rain did appear we were able to scuttle under the cover. Peter Strain provided the carols on his sound system, which was interspersed by the groups joining in with some very interesting voices.

Our Commodore popped in for a brief chat which was lovely, as it really shows that the club is becoming very inclusive and all members are being catered for.

It was also great to see Angela and Paul Woodman back from their amazing travels up the coast to Lizard Island. (We will hear more about them later in the April forum talk)

Two new member Susan and Stephen Etches (Favourite Child) also turned up and it was great to have them participating in the evening festivities and our interesting Christmas Carols.

The silly hats were in full evidence, and it was very hard to choose which hat was the silliest.



To New Zealand

By

Roger LLOYD

In January, along with other crew members, I joined my friend, Ralph, in his S&S 51' cutter at Port Albert, in Victoria, Australia. After provisioning, we set off across the ever-changing bar at Port Albert to Refuge Cove for a night. We walked to Sealers Beach, and then, starting early next morning, we sailed over-night to Lakes Entrance. I was delighted to enter with a confident and experienced skipper. After only one night in this lovely part of the world and meeting my friends, recently settled here from Melbourne, we were on our way again in the early morning. Before passing Gabo Island we entertained at night by a huge *son et lumière*. There was thunder and lightening to the left and to the right of us, but we escaped through the middle without too much of a problem. After 26 hours sailing we arrived on Tuesday 9 January alongside the Snug Cove pier at Eden, in New South Wales. However, there was a deep low pressure system on our intended track across the Tasman Sea. We enjoyed the Killer Whale Museum and some great evening meals at the Fishermans' Club. We also anchored in East Boyd Bay and explored Ben Boyd's Tower.

On 17 January, after waiting a week at Eden, we set off across the over 1100 nautical miles of Tasman Sea towards Nelson, a port of entry in the north of South Island, New Zealand. At first we were sailing about 50° off a Beaufort force 6. We were well reefed. Because the dying low was moving slightly north (not to the south as we had expected and preferred) we anticipated further head winds, but less strong. A few of us were briefly sick, but one crew member, a doctor, was almost incapacitated for some days. The wind was gradually reducing until, after a day or so, we were left with very light winds or none at all. We did a lot of motoring now. Except for my solo re-occurring 0000-0300 watch, every duty on board was voluntary. It is an interesting management method, and it worked, but it is very different from the more structured approach of the sail training vessels that I had been used to. I read most of the books in the ship's library and specialised in cooking porridge to give everybody (including myself) a good breakfast. After a week sailing and motoring east, I began to doubt if there was any land ahead. I was delighted to learn from the Skipper the intricacies of the SSB MF/HF radio and how to use Saildocs for GRIB weather forecasts and (limited) emails. (The reducing cost and increasing ability of Sat Phones has made them more preferable elsewhere than Australasia.) At last, in the early hours of 25 January, we were approaching land, but we had winds building to a gale from the SW, gusting to 39 knots. Before we turned south around the very long Farewell Spit, we saw on radar a yacht motoring against the gale, heading towards us. We had no main and almost no jib (actually a yankee), but the Hydrovane could not cope and I was forced to hand steer. The next watch had difficulty starting the engine, due to low battery voltage. As the wind reduced so also

did the visibility, now to 200m. As the other yacht closed us we could see that she was a 40' cutter called *Sahula*, whom we were to meet on a few occasions later in the cruise. She had been motoring west from North Island and had received a bashing from the westerly gale. The Cook strait is the only west-east gap in the 700 nautical mile north-south mountain ranges of the North and South Islands of New Zealand, and through which the prevailing westerly winds are funnelled, increasing them in strength and gustiness. Soon after this encounter, the mist cleared, but we had generator cooling-water problems. We arrived at Nelson's quarantine berth at 1500 on 25 January, having taken 9 days to cross "The Ditch". We had to dispose of half the remaining foodstuffs, especially fruit and honey, to avoid importing diseases into NZ. The yacht had two heads. At Nelson we discarded the electric toilet for a second manual one.

After resting, re-watering, refuelling and re-victualling, we set off on 28 January, back around Farewell Spit and south towards Milford Sound, a trip of over 400 nautical miles. We were not tempted to break the journey at Westport or Greymouth, because these harbours with their shallow approaches are dangerous in the prevailing strong westerly winds, exactly in the conditions when you would like a harbour of refuge. While still a few miles north of Milford Sound, the wind was NE 25 knots and NW 35kts was forecast, but for Milford there was initially a southerly 30 knots forecast, but the winds further south of Milford were forecast to be 50 knots. Add the usual caveat of possibly 40% stronger in the gusts, and it might be gusting 70 knots on the nose! We did not wish to be out in a blow, but also did not wish to arrive at the Sound while it was still dark. The main-sail was down and on my 000-0300 watch I had reefed the jib until finally nothing, in an effort to delay our time of arrival, but we were still making a ground speed of 4 kts under bare poles.

When I came off watch I estimated we needed no more than 3.5 knots to arrive at Milford Sound as the sun rose.



To New Zealand

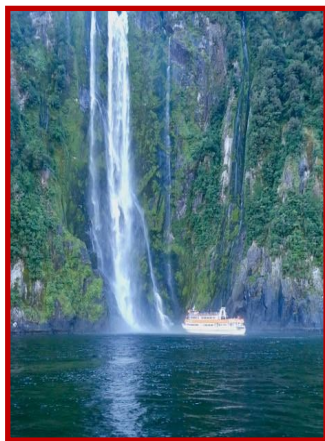
By
Roger LLOYD

A few hours later, before the dawn, I was up checking the GPS navigation on my iPad as, under power, we entered Milford Sound with its depths from 100 to 300 metres and its steep sides, over 1000 metres high, which might shield or upset the GPS signal. Finally at 0730 on 31 January we picked up a good mooring, courtesy of the locals, in Deepwater Basin, which has a central depth of 50 metres. The mooring in 21 metres depth was right under the high precipitous, even overhanging in places, cliff of Mount Sheerdown. At midday it was 17°C. We were now further south than the southern-most part of Tasmania. There was evidence of relatively recent rock falls in Milford Sound, and even though I thought that there had been no rain for the few days previously, there were many dramatic waterfalls. I was hoping that there would be no rock fall from Mount Sheerdown in the next few days !

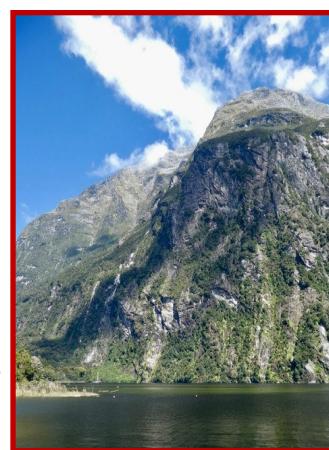
We expected the worst of the wind and rain when the change (the cold front) was forecast to pass us in the night with the wind changing from NW to SW/S outside, but in the Sound the wind blows in all directions, even 180° opposite that of the clouds above. The overnight rain gave extra impetus to both the minor and the majestic waterfalls. The scenery is magnificent here. It is difficult to comprehend the scale. I was amazed to see breaking waves, coming from a vertical cliff less than 70 metres away. The waves were generated by the wind alone, without any tidal-stream effect. One giant gust (we estimated at 50 knots) raised white spume and heeled the yacht to 20°. I was on deck and had to hang on tightly. If I was to fall overboard while we were at anchor here, I guess it might be a while before I would be recovered, if at all, and I do not like cold water, despite coming from a country surrounded by cold water. After the wind had reduced a little, the young lady who joined ship at Nelson went swimming ! She returned just as a gust hit and swung the stern around. We heard the forecast of 50 knots offshore for today and tomorrow. We are very pleased to be here.

On Thursday 1 February we were still at Deepwater Basin. At 1130 the barometer was 983mb. On the radio we heard reports of the effects the strong winds and heavy rain had over both North and South Island. There had been wave damage and sea inundation at Greymouth, and the electrical power was out at Nelson. It was all due to ex-cyclone Fahey. In Fiordland 7 metres of rain falls here every year. It rains 200 days in 365. After the very heavy rain the previous night the waterfalls had been re-energised. Because of all the rain that falls, the fiords are more fresh than salt water, particularly in the higher levels. The skipper has an ingenious method of re-filling the fresh water tanks by using a dam to collect rain water from the decks.

If you thought that Man is a top predator, you are wrong. The sandflies here thrive on the visiting tourists, mainly foreign, some of which arrive on the many cruise ships berthing at the newly-constructed harbour in this otherwise wilderness.



This is the only place in Fiordland where they can disgorge their cargo. There is also an enormous coach and car park at the Visitor's Centre to receive the tourists coming by land. Sandflies are everywhere here, and are immune to any chemical discouragement. Unfortunately the skipper seemed to be allergic to them and reacted with big red swollen blotches. Apart from tourism, the main industry here is fishing, although the waters of Fiordland itself are well regulated. As amateurs the number of crayfish that we are allowed to catch and keep is very generous, I think. Because of the unusual conditions the local fauna and flora is very different from that normally found elsewhere. There are many endemic species, and many protection regulations enforced by DOC, the Department of Conservation.



The motor had been difficult to start three times now because of low batteries, and the generator was also having cooling water problems. The skipper was brilliant, very weather-wise, and had a lovely manner with his crew. He is also a brilliant engineer, without whose skill we would not have been able to continue. Friday 2 February was beautifully sunny. Unfortunately the four domestic batteries need replacing. The skipper thought that was the reason that the engine batteries were getting drained was because of a malfunction of the supposedly-smart connection device between domestic and engine batteries. Here the cost of a new battery is four times what it would be in Australia, I suppose due transport problems and scarcity. The skipper cleverly hitched a convenient ride on the minibus of a nearby kayak-hiring company to take him to Te Anau, the nearest town 110 km away, and back again with two batteries. It was very generous of them. **To be continued.**

CRUISING NEWS FEBRUARY 2019

28th Annual Birthday Cruise to RYCV 20th January

By

Barbara Burns

On the 20th of January The Cruising Group headed over to RYCV for our annual Birthday Cruise. The weather was very conducive for a sail going over and coming back. (I do go one about the weather however it matters). We usually leave about 10am arrive about 12pm and leave to go home about 2.30pm.

There were 11 boats participating in the cruise which is fabulous as there were some new people enjoying the relaxed atmosphere, and it is always rewarding to get a chance to use your boat in company.

The 11 boats were: It's A Privilege,, Saffron,, Kathleen B,, Favourite Child,, Sun Kiss,, Best Friends,, Nimrod II,, Handful of Wind,, Andalucia,, Cat Walk,, and Christophidos. Rod and Sandy Watson came by car, and brought the Birthday Cake!

The sail over was very gentle with 10 knots southerly, however the wind did come up as predicted at 2pm to 20knot SW. We had a great sail back especially as we had a very experienced crew.

We have worked out finally after a few years of bumping off the front pier (River side), that there is a better area to the side in the pond near the slipway, on the Northern side of the walkway, where we either rafted up or tied to the pier. Great chance for everyone to show off their docking skills.

Most people brought their own barbeque lunch , as there are very good barbeque facilities, which we enjoyed on the verandah. however the lunches bought from the bar are also quite delicious.

This event is an excellent chance to catch up with people who you might not see very much during the year, establishing new friendships which is what the Cruising Group is all about.

After lunch Peter Strain (Vice Commodore) gave a very good speech, accompanied by Miram Cherry who is a founding member ,and handed out the Cruising Group Flags (made By Robina) – a very special t effort and I am sure will be flown on the Bass Strait Cruise.

Then the Birthday Cake was cut and everyone enjoyed a slice of Mud Cake.



MEMBER NEWS

The New Year has arrived with many cruisers appreciating the siting of the marina attenuator for a great view of the Melbourne skyline that was lit up with a magnificent display of fireworks to usher in the new year.



Chakana and Andalucia enjoying some time out at Port Arlington



Jenny and Grand Collins enjoying a cruise in Noumea



*28th Annual Birthday Cruise to RYCV on
20 January*

*By
Barbara Burns*

Miriam Cherry one of the founding members of the Cruising Group helping Peter Strain cut the Birthday cake.



NOTICEBOARD

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY 15th February FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speaker: Peter and Karen Johns

“Let’s build a boat, and save money on hotels !”

The story of how a RBYC yachtsman of 60 years with two yachts thought it might be a good idea to build a 30 ton barge to cruise the inland and coastal waters of Europe for six months each year. Or how to avoid the Melbourne winter and save a fortune on hotel bills !

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 at the office (95923092) with Mandy no later than Wednesday February 13th. Bookings essential.



FRIDAY 8th FEBRUARY

6.30pm at the bar

Pre Bass Strait Cruise Dinner

Still open to any late comers who would like to join the Cruise, come and have an enjoyable evening

Getting to know fellow cruisers.

MARCH 15TH

Progressive dinner .

APRIL 19th

FORUM DINNER MEETING

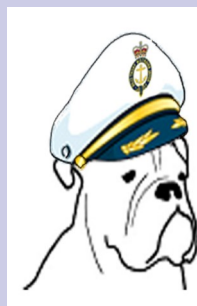
Guest Speakers: Paul and Angela Woodman “Sailing the East Coast”

General overview of their trip, with a focus on cruising the Clarence River, and cruising from Cairns to Lizard Island

MAY 17th

FORUM DINNER MEETING

Guest Speaker: Grant Dunoon—Melbourne to Osaka



Captain Bully's Blog

Really great to see some new faces attending our annual Birthday Cruise to Royals. “Best Friends” - Manny and Larissa Christophidos and “Handful of Wind” - Lech and Ewa Banasik, hope they enjoyed the camaraderie and welcoming of our host and sister Club across the Bay in Williamstown. I think there were about 8 or 9 boats and over 40 Cruisers, it was great weather and a vigorous return sail with the winds on the beam hitting 20 knots or so. (I am sure our editor will give much more accurate detail) Also a special thanks to Robina for creating the Cruising Flags, which we certainly will be flying out into Bass Strait. On that note any late starters who can find the time and want to join us on the Bass Strait Cruise, still plenty of time and all would be very welcome.

Just returned from the Festival of Sails down at Geelong and it is a fantastic regatta. Weather was almost perfect with good winds and what makes it so great is that the water is always flat ,so really good sailing conditions. “It’s a Privilege” is indisputably a cruising boat, built for comfort not speed, but having said that she sails very nicely and so we do have a go in these sort of regattas for the fun and the experience. Certainly my first mate, she who must be obeyed, is always very scarce and only joins us after races for sundowners. The rule on our boat whether cruising or racing, which is now rare, every command must be paraphrased with “darling” at the start of the command and “darling” at the end, when she who must be obeyed is on board. This seems to work quite well. Should any of you cruisers want to consider a regatta Geelong is great, even to go down and enjoy the celebrations and watch the action?

“It’s a Privilege” in action.

