



Sail training in the Pacific
by
Ronda Walker



Stuart Walker, crew member on the family yacht *Catwalk*, and his partner Beth have been thinking about off-shore cruising. They have both completed courses with Gordon Syme and decided that it was time for further preparation.

The sail training offered by Mahina Expeditions seemed a good place to start. Stuart was one of 6 crew, who joined owners Amanda Swan Neal and John Neal, in Apia, Samoa on 2nd August for a 16 day voyage to Fiji. Their yacht, *Mahina Tiare III*, is a Hallberg-Rassy 46.

John holds a USCG 100 ton Master's and Private Pilot's licenses, has sailed extensively and conducted sail-training expeditions since 1990. Co-skipper Amanda has a NZ commercial Launchmaster's license and NZ Ocean Yachtmaster. She has worked as a sailmaker and rigger and was rigger on *Maiden* in 1990, the first all-woman crew to complete the Whitbread Around the World Race. Between them they have completed over 600,000 miles of ocean sailing.

From May to November 2019 they offered places in eight legs of their cruise from Auckland to Brisbane, around the Pacific.

This was not a pleasure cruise. A reasonable level of sailing experience was expected and pre-voyage preparation included two weeks de-tox: no tea, coffee or alcohol, and none were available on board. The rationale was that hydration is a priority and these are all dehydrating. A check list tracked the daily water consumption of each crew member

Once underway, everyone was expected to take their turn to complete the daily tasks required to manage the yacht: navigation, helming, cleaning the interior and exterior and radio skeds; sea sickness was no let out. Cooking was not on the

task chart and Amanda provided excellent meals.

Morning and afternoon classes each day covered topics like coastal piloting, navigation, celestial navigation, communication options, marine weather, storm tactics, reefing and sail repair. In some areas, available charts were unreliable and careful watch was essential.

A practical exercise in off-shore medicine eventuated when Amanda landed a large fish. It protested with a sudden leap and the double hook lure caused a deep gash to her leg – proving that even the most experienced and careful sailors can suffer serious injury. Stuart's CFA first aid training was helpful.

The voyage included visits to several nations, providing practical experience of port etiquette, customs and immigration protocols in different places. Some nations were very strict, others quite relaxed, but evidently this can vary from day to day.

The destination for this leg of the voyage was Vuda Marina in Fiji and a Graduation dinner ashore celebrated the end of a marvellous experience.

The cost was significant, AU\$8,800 plus air fares, but Stuart explained that this could save a great deal more if the experience demonstrated that off shore cruising is not for you – before you buy a suitable boat.


Stuart had a marvellous time, learnt a great deal and feels far more confident that extended off-shore cruising is a possibility. The plan is that Beth will sign on for a future voyage on *Mahina Tiare III* and when the time is right they will buy that boat.



Sail training in the Pacific by Ronda Walker

Mahina Expeditions

- John Neal
 - 377,000 offshore miles
 - USCG 300-ton master
 - FAA private pilot licenses.
- Amanda Swan-Neal
 - 335,000 Offshore miles
 - NZ's first women apprentice sailmaker
 - Sailed as rigger aboard Maiden in the 1990 Whitbread Around the World Race (now The Volvo Race)



Apia, Samoa; Wallis; Lautoka, Fiji

- Exhilarating sailing, gorgeous tropical islands and four distinctly different cultures make this expedition an excellent overview of South Pacific cruising.
- Poorly charted waters,
- Strong currents,
- Numerous reefs and
- Occasionally strong, squally weather in the SPZ provide maximum learning potential.
- Total distance: 1,100 miles.
- Cost A\$8,800



The crew


Navigator

- Coastal
 - Prepare charts and plotting the night before
 - Enter into computer and GPS
 - Study cruising guides and tides
- Offshore
 - Plot 1200 position and calculate 24-hour noon run

Dehydration

I understand that dehydration is the most common potentially serious health issue aboard. If I do not drink 2-3 litres per day, I expect to experience some of the following: Queasiness, seasickness, listlessness, constipation, or diarrhea, depression, anxiety, and confusion.

I understand that if I remain dehydrated for several days, I may go into shock requiring hospitalisation or fluids or enemas,

Signed expedition members 

Health and Safety Officer, Head Master

- Clean head
- Empty head rubbish
- Ensure crew are in good health

Captain of the day – Keeper of the deck

- Oversee daily running of the vessel
- Wipe down cockpit and cushions with freshwater
- Clean windshield
- Tidy Deck
- Check rigging

Bosun – Officer in charge of vessel equipment

Checklists

“under conditions of complexity, not only are checklists a help, they are required for success.”
— Atul Gawande, [The Checklist Manifesto](http://www.thechecklistmanifesto.com), p. 100 (2007) www.thechecklistmanifesto.com

Checklists cont.

- Sail reduction guides
- Standing orders (Wake John and Amanda if...)
- Watch orders
- MOB
- Fire
- Flooding
- Abandon ship



Meke

Navigation

Other services offered by Mahina

- For \$750 your unlimited email consultation includes:
 - An analysis of the boats you are currently considering: discussing design, construction quality, seaworthiness, safety, speed and comfort.
 - Advice and referrals regarding documentation/registration, offshore flagging and tax implications
 - Recommendations and referrals for offshore insurance including crew of two
 - Assistance selling your boat years later, potentially in a higher market than where you are considering purchasing

Cruising from Montenegro to Athens by David and Sally Spencer



John and Sandra McPherson who had crewed with us for over 2 years and had done a Bass Strait cruise with us to Wilson's promontory returned to their recently purchased boat in Barcelona in March this year and said, "You must come and cruise with us". After considering the hardships we might face cruising on a new Laguna 42, Sabella, with double bed, en suite, microwave, water maker and coffee machine ... we accepted their invitation and booked our flights.

We arranged to meet in Tivat a coastal town in northern Montenegro on the Bay of Kotor and booked accommodation for two nights to give some flexibility as they were coming from Croatia. They were there to meet us and after looking around Tivat and noting the lineup of very large motor yachts, we put our luggage in their dinghy for a 10 min trip out to where Sabella was anchored. From Tivat which is backed by high mountains, we motored across Kotor Bay to a stunningly mountainous part of the bay that has been described as "Europe's most southern fjord. The beautiful old town of Kotor with its walls and fortress is at the eastern end. Early next morning John and Sandra climbed to the top of St John's fort which overlooks this spectacular waterway. Sally and I only managed halfway but the view was well worth it. On our second day we took a local boat trip to the small picturesque island of our Lady of the Rocks

situated at the opposite end of this part of Kotor bay.

Fuel is much cheaper in Montenegro but is conditional on the vessel exiting the country straight away. So, after refueling back in Tivat and checking out with the port authority we set off for the 200 NM overnight motor sail to Greece anchoring at the northern most island of Erikousa at midnight. Next day with John and Sandra fulfilling the 90-day requirement to be out Schengen Europe we formally entered Greece via Corfu. Corfu is the first main island of the Ionian group of islands off the western coast of Greece. The landscape is pretty, green, mountainous, pencil pines, blue water, and the Albanian mountains in the distance to the east. Corfu Town has a varied mixture of architecture that reflects its past occupation by many invaders. We anchored to the south of the large fort and were glad we could moor the dinghy at the local yacht club.



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Cruising from Montenegro to Athens by David and Sally Spencer

From Corfu we continued south visiting four more scenic islands but often seeing a scattering of islands with different shapes, some flat but mostly mountainous as we made our passage. Most of the time we anchored in beautiful bays sometimes having lines from the stern to the shore. With a 20-horsepower outboard on the dinghy it was well able to transport us to and from the shore for excursions, coffees and meals often with a Greek salad with delicious tomatoes. Swimming a couple of times a day in the warm waters of the Mediterranean in the August heat was a way of cooling off (except for one place where large jelly fish came by seemingly attracted by pickings from anchored yachts). One stop on the mainland was Preveza which was in the direction we were travelling. Its Roman history resounds in the name of the nearby marina, Cleopatra Marina, where we met some New Zealanders who were storing their yacht on the hardstand for the winter. Between Lefkada and the mainland at certain times a road bridge is swung aside to allow boats a shorter access to the east coast of the island. From Ithaca, which was the last island of the Ionian group that we visited, we headed east.

After entering the Gulf of Patra, we moored at Messolonghi, flat but historical and friendly. At the other end we sailed under the large suspension bridge (3 pillars to the left and 1 pillar to the right as directed) into the Gulf of Corinth. With strong winds forecast a mooring at the picturesque island of Trizonnia gave us shelter and good contact with other yachts who had good advice for waters ahead. At Corinth we managed to make a quick visit to ancient Corinth. Our passage through the historic Corinthian canal with its height and revealed geological strata to the Saronic Gulf was a highlight.

Within striking distance of Athens for our return flight, our plans had to be changed because of a ferry strike on the day we intended to travel from the island of Aegina. We had a "fare" "well" dinner with John and Sandra on Aegina before they headed east, and we flew back to Melbourne very thankful for such a great 5 ½ weeks with them on Sabella.



HANGING ABOUT SA - PRT 2 –

by Allan Haddow

This past month of May has been very busy work wise & socially. I left Port Pirie on 11-05 & motored about 6hr (24nm) to Fitzgerald Bay for the night. The anchorage is a mixture of weed & sand and is sheltered from NE to South thru' north. There was no wind anyway. Next morning I set off heading to Yatala with rising tide, 8nm north, an anchorage people told me about. It is an open harbour, shallow submerged sand banks all around with a 7m deep entrance channel & 2m deep creek heading towards land. I did enter part way but thought it too exposed to sit & work so kept going to Port Augusta arriving at 1930hr in the dark. The autopilot went haywire part way along & steered Ophelia onto a sand bank at one stage while I was making a coffee. I still have not been able to fix it. The channel is well marked but many port beacons lights had retired. Luckily Navionics was accurate to show those unmarked beacons. Many sailing ships used the river in the 1800 & early 1900's



Augusta Pontoon

t Augusta Pontoon

I spent a very pleasant two weeks tied up to a free floating pontoon in Port Augusta. The yacht club is very active with Friday night drinks & all members were very friendly. There are 5 yachts, 30' to 45' long, who race tacking down the river, against or with the tide, & back again. If no wind it becomes a drifting social race. The current commodore has his 45' yacht out & changing from tiller to two helms. Many fisher people go past the pontoon without any care, creating a wake that rocks the pontoon and rebounds from the wall under the old wharf rocking even more. The concrete pontoon has cracked as a result. The yachts are moored in 7-9m of water. There is a tide variation of 1.5-4m with the southerlies increasing the variation.

I met another couple from Sydney who are caravanning around SA & spent a pleasant 2hr wandering around the botanic gardens. The old wharf is a great structure – there are photos around town showing the old schooners tied up with donkeys carting loads of grain along the railway track. The river is about 400m wide & apparently it has been gunwale to gunwale with all type of vessels tied to each other waiting for the southerly winds to abate.

I returned to Port Pirie after two weeks for three engagements – ABC SA radio interview on my travels and a twenty minute presentation to the Rotary Club & Royal Port Pirie YC. I premiered my video across the GAB to the PPHYC – <https://youtu.be/RPhxuKIpViI>.

I leave Port Pirie on Saturday 08-05 and head to Port Broughton, Wallaroo, Sir Joseph Banks Group, Port Vincent opposite Adelaide & then into North Haven to end this half of 2019 sailing year, before flying back to Melbourne & continuing my holiday in warmer Bali.



Port Augusta YC



The old Port Augusta Wharf

RBYC Cruising Group Hardstand Christmas Party

Barbara Burns

The Cruising Group Annual Hardstand Christmas Party was a great success. It was held two weeks early because the Royal Brighton Yacht Club was hosting various yachting regattas, and the car park would have been inaccessible to members. The weather forecast had been a bit dodgy earlier on, as it was supposed to be cold, with rain and thunderstorms. Fortunately, none of this eventuated, and it turned out to be a beautiful balmy evening, with a gorgeous sunset. It was comforting to know that if the predicted rain and tempest did eventuate, we could always use the Jock Sturrock centre.

We were very fortunate to have David Bingham, Tony Garvey, and John Walker, who came early and helped prepare the area with portable tables and chairs. Our yard man Brenden Fisher arrived to make sure the gas bottles for the barbeque was full. We are lucky to have so many wonderful helpers, which enabled us to have a trouble free evening.

We had an excellent turnout with 49 members, everyone came prepared with chairs, tables, and lots of lovely food and of course what would a party be without alcohol.

There was a goodish sprinkling of silly hats, especially silly were a couple of hats with twitching ears and Christmas carols emanating out of them. Even our Commodore Paul Pascoe joined in the fun, dressing up as Santa Claus!. It took us a few minutes to work who he was, but his voice gave him away.

After we had caught up with everyone, and enjoyed the barbeque, it was time for the Christmas carols.

There was no excuse that you couldn't remember the words because the Christmas carols had all been very neatly printed out in a very handsome folder and handed to everyone.

Kathy de Garis who has a fine voice was able to lead everyone by example. She brought her own amplifier and microphone so you were able to hear her clearly and join in. Rod who also has a fine voice, and can sing in falsetto, was out the front with Catherine Hurley, Peter Strain, Lyn Bingham and Paul Woodward. This all added another dimension to the singing. Robina Smith organised the Lions Club Christmas Cake, which was handed out to everyone, and the consensus was that it was very delicious.

After the Christmas carols, we all packed our chairs and tables and agreed that it was a great evening, and that we would all enjoy doing it again next year.

From the Royal Brighton Cruising Group we hope that everyone has a wonderful Christmas and a fabulous New Year.



MEMBER NEWS

FOR SALE -BALANCE OF PEN LEASE

A past member of Cruising group has recently sold his boat and now has a 12m pen lease with three years to run. This pen lease will be sold at a competitive price and provides an opportunity to lock in a set rate for the balance of the lease term. The pen is number 407. It is a well-protected berth and has fixed fenders all round. Contact John Tadich (0439151501) for further information.

LAND CRUISE

Cruising Group's 3rd annual Land Cruise will be at Euroa Caravan Park on the weekend 3rd - 5th April 2020, although some are planning to head up a day or two earlier. It's a lovely park with good facilities and a great pub nearby. A limited number of powered sites and cabins are being reserved for us until December 14th, when a deposit will need to be paid.

If you'd like to join us for a fun weekend please call Euroa Caravan Park 03 5795 2160 or email bookings@euroacaravanpark.com.au - make sure you mention that you're with the RBYC group for a 'club discount'. If booking could you also please let Pam Merritt 0408 361 208 or Jenny Collins 0409 936 377 know.

The Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation Cruise

As you are well aware, the VDL-C Cruise is gaining a considerable national and international reputation and a place in the 45-boat fleet is sure to fill quickly as this event is now regarded as the major organised cruise in the Southern Hemisphere.

So, if a challenging 800 nautical mile cruise-in-company around the Tasmanian coastline with experienced, friendly people appeals to your sense of adventure, don't delay in registering your interest.

All current documentation for the cruise is available on The Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania website at the following link: <https://www.ryct.org.au/cruising/vdl-circumnavigation/vdlcruises2021/>

WET AND WINDY WYNDHAM

It takes more than bad weather to dampen the spirits of a yachtie - another great weekend in November with good company and plenty of laughs.



Mynooka is on the way from Lake Macquarie to join the Bass Strait Cruise. She is being crewed by Aldi Felix and Steve Dickson. We are looking forward to catching up with Kathy and Steve Clarke

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Geoff Brewster and Barbara Burns are heading North to Brisbane soon, and are planning to bring Saffron back to Melbourne. Geoff is being joined by Roger Lloyd.

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Kathy and Geoff Perks on Foxy Lady are joining the Bass Strait Cruise for the first time.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY JANUARY 19th BIRTHDAY CRUISE

Remember to put this annual event in your diary. A cruise to RYCV at Williamstown for lunch. Boats leaving RBYC at around 10am. BYO everything BBQ lunch, organise a picnic lunch or order off the menu at their bar.

Please advise **Peter Strain** . Peter_strain@bigpond.com the week before if you are planning to attend so we have some idea of berthing requirements.

In the event of bad weather we will cruise over the Westgate Bridge by car

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FRIDAY FEBRUARY 21st FORUM DINNER MEETING

Keith Badger— An Iceberger—Walking from John O’Groats to Lands End.

Keith Badger is a long time Iceberger Club Member who had a life changing experience walking the 2801 km from the top of UK at John O’Groats to Lands End in Cornwall. Former Corporate heavy weight CFO and CEO five exhilarating but gruelling months changed his perspective on life. A journey of life, love and laughter all recorded in his “Joining the Loose Ends.”

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SATURDAY 22nd FEB to MONDAY MARCH 9th 2020

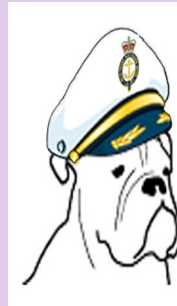
BASS STRAIT CRUISE

There is still time to register your interest in the Bass Strait Cruise. Please contact **Craig Walton** either :
Phone 0425714664. email: cragus13@gmail.com

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FRIDAY MARCH 20TH ANNUAL BOAT PROGRESSIVE DINNER

This annual event is a fabulous way for all the boat owners and non boat owners to get to know each other., and enjoy delicious food.



Captain Bully's Blog

The law of diminishing returns dictates that every year of our lives is only a percentage of the years lived, hence the years flash by at an unfortunately increasingly rapid rate for us who have reached the biblical age. From my perspective the Cruising Group has been an absolute highlight for us in 2019. The Bass Strait Cruise went brilliantly with great weather and great company. The Gilbert and Sullivan challenge provided amusing entertainment and exploration of Apollo Bay and King Island truly enjoyable. So many very successful monthly Forum Dinners where we all enjoyed the adventurous experiences of Grant Dunoon, Stuart Walker, Peter and Karen Johns, Craig Walton and Terry Frankham's VDL-Circumnavigation. Additionally, the educational talks by Dr. Graeme Hubbert, Dr. Martino Malerba and Gerry Byrne and our own Dr. Andrew McCowan. The new format of the George Brookes Swing Band proved an outstanding event and the Birthday Cruise to Royals packed out their Clubhouse with over 70 Cruisers.

The Cruising group Sub-Committee have done an outstanding job of keeping up the most active social hub of our great Club. My thanks to all, secretary Robina, past Chairs Will and Roger, long time hard workers Pam, Jenny and the relatively new blood of Barbara, Paul, Rob and Terry. Much work is now being done to do a little marketing of all that Cruising does, to encourage other Club members to join us in all the social and sailing events that happen. We also thank the Club's terrific staff for all their support. Especially Hannah, Caroline, Pai, Kylie, Harry and Sammy. RBYC is a great Club for the best Cruising Group on Port Phillip Bay.

I would like to wish everyone at RBYC a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous and happy New Year.

