



Albatross

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"Ailsa" – the Bain family on the Derwent Photo: Milton Cunningham

**Newsletter of the
Cruising Yacht Club of Tasmania**



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Last month's picture in this spot was of 'A' the personal yacht of Russian billionaire Andrey Melnichenko. More money than taste, I'd say.

CYCT Calendar

Tue 25th November

Rabbit Island Cruise Briefing

Mariners Cottage at 8.00pm

Wed 26th November

Mid-week cruise

Meet at Kettering (Oyster Cove Chandlery) at 10.00 hrs.

Fri 28th (evening) to Sun 30th November

Cruise to Rabbit Island (Port Esperance)

Including a night passage to Rabbit Island. .

Tue 2nd December

General Meeting – Derwent Sailing Squadron at 8.00pm

Details to follow.

Wed 10th December

Mid-week cruise

Meet at Kettering (Oyster Cove Chandlery) at 10.00 hrs.

Sat 13th December

CYCT Christmas party – Dru Point Reserve

See page XX for details

Wed 31st December – Thu 1st January

New Year Cruise – Quarantine Bay

Sat 24th - Sun 25th January

Nubeena Regatta Cruise

Tue 3rd February

General Meeting – Derwent Sailing Squadron at 8.00pm

Details to follow.

Wed 4th February

Mid-week cruise

Meet at Kettering (Oyster Cove Chandlery) at 10.00 hrs.



Editorial



So another year has just about come to an end. And what a year it has been in so many respects.

Those Club members approaching or past retirement age (your editor included) have no doubt been watching events in the commercial and financial world with some concern as superannuation fund values continue to drop. At least we can console ourselves with the thought that we not only live in one of the best places on earth, but also can escape its cares by simply throwing off mooring lines and heading off to a secluded bay for a spot of fishing or quiet contemplation. In that respect, we are indeed lucky people.

With the cruising season about to start in earnest, most Club members have probably had their boats out of the water recently for the annual ritual. Your editor was no exception, and while it is not our policy to provide free advertising, we are happy to relate good experiences with suppliers. Both this year and last I was extremely impressed by PaintTech, a paint supplier in Derwent Park. Last year I wanted to paint the topsides, but had a problem due to a previous owner using water based paint. PaintTech suggested a paint which would allow me to use an oil based paint after putting their product over the old paint. It is holding up exceptionally well. This year I needed some of their very reasonably priced Jotun brand anti-fouling, but they had run out when I called in. There was a delivery due in that afternoon, however, and the manager offered to drop it in to my home at Kettering on his way home. This sort of service deserves recognition.

This is the last 'Albatross' until February next year. How thoughtful of the Club's Founding Fathers to allow the editor a month off – to go cruising, of course! In this edition you will find the first of what I hope will be a regular series entitled "My Boat" in which Club members tell us about their pride and joy. Lindy Jones tells us about *Awittaka*. Erika Johnson has provided an article about her time at Sandy Cape Lightstation and has also written a tribute to Graeme von Bibra, a previous Commodore of our Club who passed away recently. And to keep you (or your kids) occupied, there is a Giant Christmas Quiz.

So that's it from me until February. I wish you and your families a Happy Christmas, and much good cruising weather in the New Year.

Stay safe!

Chris Palmer
editor@cyct.org.au

Commodore's Comments



No Commodore's comments this month due to Leo enjoying a passage on *Alamak* from Darwin to Langkawi, Malaysia.. At the time of writing, he was about 24 hours away from Singapore, and all going well.

However, he has asked me to pass on his best wishes to all CYCT members and their families for an enjoyable Christmas, and a safe and happy New Year.

Ed.



Vice Commodore's Report



Reflections now has a brand new high-output alternator, three-stage regulator and new AGM batteries and I am looking forward to being able to cruise without needing to run the motor every day just to charge the batteries. This was a great annoyance at Port Davey earlier in the year, when the old batteries were down to less than half capacity (ie about 50 A-hour) and the original alternator would only provide about 10 A of charging current. The new setup has 210 A-h battery capacity and over 50 A of charging current. We should last for three days in summer without running the motor, with a bit of help

from the solar panels.

Boat handling exercise

This event scheduled for Nov 9 was cancelled due to moderate winds being forecast. I will re-schedule it for another day, probably at short notice, and advise members by email. The aim of this day is to undertake simple exercises such as bringing your boat alongside a jetty, wharf or another boat, maneuvering astern and finding out how long it takes to bring your boat to a stop when under way. We have had the offer of a small barge which we will use as a make-believe jetty.

If you are interested and do not have email access, please let me know and I'll let you know by 'phone.

New Years Eve – Quarantine Bay

Our New Year's Eve gathering this year will be in Quarantine Bay, with an evening barbeque and community singing at the old Quarantine Station jetty site. Bring along a chair, your singing voice and any worthless share certificates you may have, to keep the fire going. Something to eat and drink would be good too.

Mid-week cruises

The last mid-week cruise day for the year is Wed December 10th. They will start again in February 09. Meet at Kettering (next to the chandlery at Oyster Cove Marina) at 10 am.

Australian Wooden Boat Festival

The AWBF is on from Fri 6th to Mon 9th February 2009. The Commodore and about eight other members have entered their boats, so make sure you look out for them, in Constitution Dock or Kings Pier Marina.

Members Cruising Plans

Port Davey is on the agenda for several members in 2009. *Irish Mist* is heading around in late February, *The Pirate II* in the first week of March. *Sagres'* crew is heading up the Gordon River in a 4-metre runabout on 4th January, maybe *Asterix* as well. *Reflections* (possibly accompanied by *Two-B*) is aiming for the Furneaux Group in mid-February for 3-4 weeks. We might even do an *Ailsa* and go to Port Davey after that! *Aurielle* is back in New Zealand while her crew returns to Hobart for Christmas. No doubt she'll be heading offshore again in the New Year.

The RYCT bi-annual Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation Cruise departs Hobart on Wed Feb 11th 2009 and returns 5 weeks later (Mar 17th). The fleet is limited to 45 boats and *Endurance* and *Pendulum* are included. This Cruise continues to be a very popular way of seeing our State in company, with 16 boats on the waiting list

If you are planning an extended cruise to these or other destinations and would like to see whether others have similar plans, contact me or send an email query to members@cyct.org.au. This contacts all members who have an email address and is a good way to exchange this type of information.

406 MHz EPIRBs

Don't leave it till the last minute to try and get a new EPIRB. If you intend to go outside sheltered waters, you **must** have a 406 MHz EPIRB on board and have it registered with AMSA before 1 Feb 09. Register your EPIRB at <http://www.beacons.amsa.gov.au>. Please DO NOT put your old 121.5/243 MHz EPIRB in the rubbish or recycling bin. Take it to the collection points: Battery World (164 Campbell St, Hobart or 442 Main Rd, Glenorchy) or to MAST's offices (L1, 17-19 Franklin Wharf, Hobart or Kings Wharf, Invermay).

Skippers' responsibilities

Another reminder to the skippers of boats taking part in events in our cruising calendar. It is your responsibility to ensure that someone is aware of your plans. The responsibility to start and continue in any cruise is yours alone. The CYCT does not 'control' events nor does it accept responsibility for the safe return of any vessel. Make sure that someone ashore (usually family) knows when you expect to return and keep Coast Radio Hobart up to date with your location, destination and crew details. Remember to fly your burgee and look out for other boats flying an Albatross.

Finally, I'd like to wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous 2009.

Andrew Boon

Rear Commodore's Report



Our guest speaker for November, local adventurer Ben Tucker, provided us with an evening that left some of his audience, including myself, open mouthed in awe. His journey to Commonwealth Bay and Dumont D'Urville in his 33'6" sloop, was filmed by a brother who has produced an excellent video. In addition to showing an edited version, answering questions and discussing some of the problems encountered, he also presented a display of some of the gear used on the trip.

Ben was accompanied to the meeting by his Scandinavian friends Rolf and Debra, who he says were his inspiration, they having twice sailed to Antarctica, spent a winter there and also sailed to 82 deg N.

Ben has now settled back in the local community and is offering his services for yacht deliveries, rigging work, and advising on setting up a boat for extended cruising. He can be contacted on 0409 168637.

For December our guest speaker will be Kate Keifer who manages terrestrial ecology at the Antarctic Division. Her main interests are the sub-Antarctic region and her topic will be "Life on a Southern Ocean Island", in particular Macquarie and Heard Islands. At 8 PM Dec 2 Derwent Sailing Squadron.

Don't forget our Christmas get together on Sat Dec 13 at Dru Point Reserve, Margate. See the opposite page for full details.

Regards

Merv Page

CYCT CHRISTMAS GATHERING



Date: Sat 13th December
Time: Midday onwards

Location:
Dru Point Reserve
Margate

**BYO everything except
barbecue equipment.**

**Parents—Bring a small gift
for your child for Santa to
deliver.**

**Dress up in something
Christmassy!**

Speedboat rides!

Vale - Graeme von Bibra CYCT Commodore 1990-1993

By Erika Johnson

Graeme was an unassuming character whose demeanor belied the fact that his lineage could be traced back through the nobility of old Germany and the Imperial Knights of the Holy Roman Empire. He always reckoned that there must have been a black sheep in his family background. By a quirk of fate his ancestor Franz Ludwig von Bibra worked his passage to Van Diemens Land in 1815 with a view to settling in the antipodes. He must have liked what he saw because he, his wife Eliza plus their eight children landed at Hobart Town in 1823 and took up a grant of land on the banks of the Macquarie River. Some his descendants still farm in this area.

Graeme's father, Sir Eric Ernest von Bibra, served in WW1 and later took up land in a settlement scheme at Hagley. He also served as an alderman and Mayor of the Launceston City Council. During WWII the family moved south to Hobart where Sir Eric worked at the military HQ and formed a long association with the RSLA in Tasmania. He was later appointed Tasmania's Agent-General in London. For these services he was knighted in 1953.

Graeme has followed in his father's footsteps, also giving a lifetime of service to the community. I remember him as a dapper gentleman with a beard somewhat reminiscent of Sir Francis Drake. Despite his sometimes gruff manner his eyes would sparkle as he showed you over his workshop or discussed a subject of interest. He, too, had a long association with the RSLA, was a Councillor on the Kingborough Council and a member of the Volunteer Fire Brigade. He was also a life-member of the Channel Historical Society.

He and his wife Margaret joined the Cruising Yacht Club of Tasmania in August 1987 and their yacht *Iolanthe* became a familiar sight on cruises down the Channel. It wasn't long before he became actively involved in Club affairs, serving on the committee and as Commodore for 3 years from 1990-1993.

Graeme took the lead, on behalf of the Club to investigate the closure of the network of OTC coast radio stations. As a result the CYCT, together with other yacht clubs and user groups, the Hobart Marine Board and State Government funded communications and electronics consultant, Andrew Boon (our current Vice Commodore), to conduct a survey of Tasmania's radio requirements. His report verified the committee's worst fears. Vessels in distress in Tasmanian waters had about a 92.2% chance of reaching help through Hobart Radio; this figure fell to only 70.4% should this station be closed.

Graeme and Margaret eventually sold *Iolanthe* and had gradually faded away from the Club scene by 1997.

After a period of illness, Graeme passed away recently and our thoughts are with Graeme's wife, Margaret, and their family.

'My Boat' *Awittaka*

From Lindy Jones

The current motor vessel *Awittaka* was designed and built by the shipbuilding firm of Purdon and Featherstone in Battery Point and completed in 1947. This was their second vessel to bear the New Zealand name of *Awittaka*, interpreted as 'Chief of the Tribe'.



(Photo kindly supplied by Dennis Lees)

About 1910, the shipbuilders created the first *Awittaka* which at the time was believed to be the fastest vessel on the Derwent River. However she was beaten

by *Toga* during a race to Green Island and return and consequently was banished to become the British Government's Solomon Islands tender *Belama* in 1911 and was eventually wrecked in Tanabuli Harbour in 1924. Purdon and Featherstone then launched the *Cartela* in 1912 which had a greater effective waterline length – 'Toga' had met her match! (Ref: *A steamship for Hobart S.S. Reemere 1909: G Broxam, P: 27, 28*).



During the Second World War, Purdon and Featherstone were awarded contracts to build several 80 ft motor launches for patrol and ambulance use and at the time the Huon Pine timbers for building the *Quest* were purchased, additional timber was obtained to build the current *Awittaka*. Interestingly, *Quest* was wrecked on its maiden voyage to Sydney when it ran ashore under full power off Gull Island in 1950 (Ref: *Tasmanian Shipwrecks, Vol 2, 1900-1999: G Broxham, M Nash, P: 182*).

Awittaka was built for Mr. Frederick Clyde Featherstone and was registered as a speed boat as HT40. In 1969 David and his father Douglas Jones were in the market for a vessel and placed a bid of \$9,000 (\$500 under the asking price) to purchase the 52 ft sailing ketch, *Pedra Branca*. Fortunately, the offer was not accepted, and shortly afterwards they secured *Awittaka* from Mr Featherstone for \$9,000 in March 1969. There are enough arguments now over the handling of the *Awittaka*, let alone a much larger vessel which had an enormous drought!!!

Awittaka is 42 ft long with a 10 ft beam, constructed in Huon Pine and King Billy decks and is carvel planked. The vessel is powered by a Volvo Penta 130 hp 4 cylinder turbo diesel engine which cruises comfortably at 9 – 10 knots (7 litres to the hour) with a maximum speed of 12 knots. Some years ago David fitted a hollowed Oregon mast (with a self tacking jib) which has improved the stability of the vessel and in fact she is a very comfortable seaworthy coastal vessel, cruising anywhere between Flinders Island in the north and Port Davey in the south. He experimented and developed stabilisers which are put into effect when necessary, but only at anchor. Further, David had storage lockers fitted on top of the cabin which gives the appearance of a flying bridge but provides the vessel with some height. We were very limited for space for the 9kg gas bottles so Max Muir built a funnel on the roof which now stores the cylinders. The original mast is now fitted as a mizzen mast. The vessel can be returned to its original appearance with minimal fuss. *Awittaka* now has all the modern conveniences and electronics, a recent addition being the auto helm. How we have ever done without that David will never know when he recalls helming for hours over the past 40 years when cruising the coastal waters!!! A recent decision to re-dynel the decks and roof was accomplished 12 months ago by the shipwright John Heron, who actually completed his apprenticeship whilst constructing this vessel nearly 60 years ago!

Awittaka has provided David and me with many happy hours of boating, being a reliable and well cared for vessel which will see our boating days out.



'Reemere' Photo courtesy of Sate Library of Tasmania

In Sandy Straits

Volunteering at Sandy Cape Light, Fraser Island

Erika Johnson

During the 1980s and 1990s, CYCT members Erika and Alan Johnson cruised the Sandy Straits on a number of occasions in their yacht 'Camira of Hobart'. They have spent the last few years living and working on remote off-shore islands around the Tasmanian coast. They worked as volunteers at Sandy Cape on Fraser Island in July/August 2008.



Sandy Cape lightstation

It was raining steadily and ranger, Aubrey Strydom's, enthusiasm knew no bounds. *"It's good weeding weather!"* he decreed. We were soon saturated as he educated us in the art of weeding. We were cold, wet and hungry by the time we eventually clambered back up to the light station for a late lunch.

We had travelled north from Tasmania expecting to find **sunny** Queensland. However, our six weeks on Fraser Island were not all sun and sand. Cold southerlies were *"...blowing straight up from Tasmania"*, as one radio announcer said! *"Cold enough to consider wearing our thermal underwear,"* quipped Alan! The bad weather continued with over 100mm of steady rain and the storms also caused havoc on the eastern beaches which double as the island's main highway. Not much hope of getting a suntan!

At Rainbow Beach we had lowered the tyre pressure on our Toyota Prado 4x4 before boarding the *Manta Ray* barge for the 20 minute crossing to Hook Point. On Fraser Island driving is predominantly on the beach and dictated by the tide as sections of the 420 kilometres of coastline double as a highway. There are other tracks linking settlements in the more popular southern part of the island, but these are also soft sand and all strictly 4-wheel-drive only.

Despite a falling tide we felt like King Canute, dodging the breaking waves as we drove along the ever-broadening strand which is Seventy Five Mile Beach. The beach is also a landing-strip for light aircraft and huge 4-wheel-drive coaches disgorged their complement of eager tourists at points of interest.

Spray flew as we crossed Eli Creek, the largest freshwater creek on east coast of the island. The channel changes from tide to tide as cold crystal-clear water cuts deeply across the sand. The rusting wreck of the *Maheno*, which drifted ashore while under tow to Japan in 1935, is also a prominent landmark and further up the beach we stopped to admire the spectacular coloured sand formations known as The Pinnacles.



The Barracks

A group of the Buchella people had watched the progress of the *Endeavour* as she sailed up the coast on 20 May 1770. Little did they know that their way of life was to about to change forever. Captain James Cook named Sandy Cape “for two very large patches (of sand) which lay upon it”

Matthew Flinders met some of the local tribe of aboriginals when he landed just south of Sandy Cape on 1 August 1799. He explored deep into Hervey Bay as far as Woody Island but the great number of shoals persuaded him to turn back. As a result he mistakenly called the land Great Sandy Peninsula. It became Great Sandy Island when, in 1822, William Edwardson crossed the Wide Bay Bar proving that it was, in fact, an island. Following the wreck of the 500 ton brig *Stirling Castle* in May 1836 Captain James Fraser, his 38 year old wife Eliza and crew spent over a month in an open boat before eventually landing on the island. Their privations on what became known as Fraser’s Island, are legendary.



Eastern Firebreak after the rains

We had now reached the more remote northern part of the island and the driving was more demanding. Clumps



Alan checks a bollard wall

of 'coffee' rocks split the beach at Ngkala and Browns Rocks. Despite the fact that these dark brown rocks are composed of grains of sand, weakly held together with plant matter, they can still pack a punch when hit by an errant 4-wheel-drive!

It was late afternoon by the time we reached Sandy Cape, the northernmost point of Fraser Island. By now it was low tide and we continued along the beach, doubling the point and heading down the western side of the island - to our left the steep dunes of the Flinders Sandblow and to our right the broad expanse of Hervey Bay and the Great Sandy Strait.

The early explorers were not very impressed with what they saw but despite the vagaries of the weather we **were** impressed with this, the largest sand island in the world. The extensive waterways, too, are a magnet for cruising yachts with many using the Great Sandy Strait as a short cut to destinations further north.

The Island had been declared a World Heritage Area in 1992 and is one of the few places which have all four of the selection criteria. Its 165,000 hectares boast exceptional natural beauty, outstanding examples of the major stages of the earth's evolutionary history, significant ongoing ecological and biological processes and significant habitats for the conservation of biodiversity, especially of rare and threatened species. The island is administered by the Parks & Wildlife Service, a division of the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency.

Other people must have been impressed, too, judging by the number of shipwrecks. Over 20 vessels foundered in the area before the authorities built a lighthouse. The light with its distinctive red dome



Sandy Cape beach highway



NgKala Rocks

was built high on the hill 1.2 kilometres from the beach. Today, a sandy track, corduroyed with timber planks, climbs steeply before emerging onto well-kept lawns where a cluster of buildings surround the light tower.

The Sandy Cape Lighthouse first shone its warning 10 second flash on 19 May 1870. However, since 30

June 1997 the light has operated automatically. The original four weatherboard cottages are long gone, replaced in the 1930s by two asbestos-cement houses elevated on concrete piles. Parks ranger, Aub Strydom, lived in one of the cottages during his term as light keeper between 1992 and 1997. The sweetest bush-lemons still grow there! The other keepers' house, now known as *The Barracks*, became our home during our stay.

Apart from the 'voluntary' work which occupied us for about 4 hours each day we were paid to do three daily weather observations for the Bureau of Meteorology. We had done this sort of work before in Tasmania but found the weather systems in Queensland a little different and observing the swell from a distance of eight kilometres somewhat challenging!

In between our scheduled weather observations we continued weeding – but NOT in the rain! We had developed a love-hate relationship with the Asparagus



Sandy Cape beach

fern (*asparagus plumosus*), a native of South Africa much loved by florists for its bright green feathery foliage. It was also obviously a favourite in light keepers'

gardens as thousands of plants were proliferating throughout the bush below the lighthouse. Armed with a shovel, secateurs and a large sack we scoured the steep slopes for tell-tail fronds. We needed thick leather gardening gloves to guard against the thorns of the larger plants which could extend over four metres into the surrounding scrub.



Wreck of the Maheno

Sometimes sporting purple berries, these were always found near the top of the slope. Stumbling down hill we found progressively smaller plants and, at the bottom, a myriad of tiny seedlings just poking their heads out of the sand. Our tally of over 900 plants will give you an idea of the size of the problem!

Apart from weeding the ubiquitous Asparagus fern, the other major job was known as 'bollarding'. This, we discovered, was not mooring posts for boats but Koppers Logs which, set vertically, were an excellent material for building retaining walls on the uphill side of roads and tracks. Despite our protestations, we were kept well supplied with recycled posts and our tally of 134 logs covered over 20 metres. We developed a new complaint – bollarding back!

The routine tasks such as mowing, checking on the Remote Area Power System (RAPS) and two diesel generators seemed easy by comparison!

Erosion was also a problem. Every time we drove



Sandy Cape lightstation graveyard

around the lightstation we had to repair the steep sandy tracks. Bronzewing pigeons fluttered ahead as we shovelled sand to clear each drainage ditch before the next heavy rain.

However, it was not all work and no play. There was plenty of time for walks along the beach or through the bush. We paid our respects to the first light-keeper, John Simpson and his daughter Edith, who are buried in a grave-yard below the light house. Sandy Cape must have been positively bustling during World War II when about 40 men from RAAF Radar Station 25 set up camp below the light station. The ruins of their bunkers and mess kitchen are still visible. Hidden behind low dunes some distance away we found Bool Creek, named by Matthew Flinders for one of his crew. The creek must have changed substantially since the visit of the *Investigator* in 1802 to take on fresh water as these days there is little more than a series of reed-choked ponds.

The Flinders Sandblow was a constant fascination. In the sea of sand we found a series of pools of water which rose and fell according to rainfall. On each visit there were subtle changes with mineral staining producing an artist's palette of lines, shapes and colours. In a moment of stillness, birds twittered as they sipped and splashed amid the reflections. Stunted shrubs, brush-topped reeds and grasses rustled in the slightest breeze. Animal tracks announced the presence of a dingo or a monitor lizard while a golden orb spider lay in wait, suspended in its web.



Radar Station 25

The view from the house was also pause for reflection. From our favourite chair on the front verandah we gazed over the surrounding bush to the sand blow, its highs and lows accentuated with shadows in the late afternoon sun. Beyond lay the Great Sandy Strait and Hervey Bay, its vast expanse bisected by the breakers of Breaksea Spit extending over 40 kilometers into the distance. If we were lucky we saw the tell-tail splash of a whale breaching or sea eagles soaring overhead.

Closer at hand was a daily parade of bird life. Welcome swallows chirped as they darted about, pausing to rest on the clothes line or shelter under the eaves. Two glossy black ravens stalked on the lawn, their beady eyes ever watchful while Leewin honeyeaters splashed in the bird-bath suspended in the tree outside the kitchen window. A lone willy-wagtail strutted its stuff, its tail twitching from side to side and towards evening the green and red rosellas swept past in a cacophony of chatter.

The arrival of the next caretakers heralded the end of our stay. We said farewell to Sandy Cape as they escorted us past the notorious Ngkala Rocks. The Taylor season had started and Seventy Five Mile Beach was crowded. Instead of waves we had to dodge fishermen as they cast their lines into the surf. Turning inland at Eurong we spent our last full day on the island exploring the network of sandy tracks which criss-cross the southern part of the island and taking a walk along Wanggoolba Creek.

The contrast of our return to 'civilisation' could not have been more stark. That evening we lapped up the luxury of the Kingfisher Resort before heading back to the Australian mainland and home.

After the North West Passage

Alex Whitworth

Berrimilla is a 33' Brolga yacht owned by Alex Whitworth. Some of the blog covering his two-handed circumnavigation a couple of years ago was printed in 'Albatross' shortly afterwards. As has been previously reported here, Berrimilla has just completed a passage through the North West Passage from West to East, and is now safely back in the UK. The following are some of Alex's thoughts immediately after safely negotiating the Passage. And there is a local connection – one of the crew – Kimbra Lindus, is Tasmanian.

We should be back on the Arctic Circle going south in about 4 hours - 31 days after crossing it going north in the Bering Sea. At the other end, I did not dare even think about this moment. I can't give you exact distances because of the idiosyncrasies of the GPS but my guess would be about 3400 miles. For me they have been 3400 miles of extraordinary intensity – I wrote in the previous Berri round the world blog that I lived in a plastic tube with its own language, grammar and syntax and that the boat talks to me. That blog became part of a BBC programme. This time, the language has been there – Berri and I have subliminal conversations – but the intensity of the experience has been about symbiosis and heartbeat. Every creak, every wave slap against the hull, every crash of a pole against the forestay, every change in the engine note and my heart has thumped with Berri's. I stand in the

cockpit on watch feeling her as a living thing through my feet and every sense – I can absorb the vibrations in the shaft bearing, the flexing of the mast, the slight change in the feel as the boat goes through a wave, the burr of a shroud harmonic. I think that since we were rolled off Gabo, I have been far more conscious of the



Alex Whitworth and crew - Kimbra Lindus and Corrie McQueen

possibilities and am living a bit more scared.

Then there was the intensity of the experience – the history, Franklin's ghosts, the scenery, the sheer splendour and indifference of ice and the Central Arctic.

And the tension has got to me occasionally. I've been moody and snappy and once, inexcusably, I was far too liberal with the gin and was clearly incapable. I was acutely horrified next morning and decided immediately never again. Consultations since have been juniper flavoured tonic only. I guess I'm no Pope – fallibility is definitely my gig - but I think the trick is to understand it and manage within its limitations. That, after all, is how we got this far.

And we're getting closer to Falmouth – the last sailmail I sent went via the Belgium sailmail station. Yeeehaaa!

With thanks to Alex Whitworth

Christmas At Sea

Robert Louis Stevenson

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;
 The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand;
 The wind was a nor'wester, blowing squally off the sea;
 And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;
 But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.

We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard:
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every 'longshore home;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out;
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer;
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)
This day of our adversity was blessed Christmas morn,
And the house above the coastguard's was the house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves,
Go dancing round the china-plates that stand upon the shelves.

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;
And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessed Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.
"All hands to loose topgallant sails," I heard the captain call.
"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first mate, Jackson, cried.
. . . "It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson," he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood.
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,
We cleared the weary headland, and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old.



Photos from Milton Cunningham



Stephen Newham on
Nyanda



The Kerrisons on *Irish Mist*



John and Noel Brodribb
on *Foxy Lady*

Going About

This section of 'Albatross' is devoted to news items, snippets and short articles relevant to members' interests. All contributions gratefully received. Ed.

Notice to Mariners

Notice No.: M109-08

Valid From: 10/20/2008

Valid Until: 02/28/2009

Notice: Mariners and members of the public are advised that the Southport Jetty will now be closed to all vessels, vehicles and pedestrians from Monday, 27 October 2008 until further notice and not 20 October 2008 as previously advertised.

The closure is to facilitate the construction of a new jetty.

For further information contact Justin Foster at MAST on 6233 8818 or 0418 142 053.

Termination of printed Notices to Mariners

The Australian Hydrographic Service will cease publishing paper copies of the fortnightly Notices to Mariners and will no longer include amendments to Admiralty publications in Australian Notices to Mariners from January 2009. Australian Notices to Mariners from this date will continue to be available free of charge from the AHS website (www.hydro.gov.au) and through the eNotices (email) service. In addition paper copies may be reproduced by chart agents for mariners on a cost recovery basis.

To access Notices to Mariners from the AHS website select 'Notices to Mariners' from the vertical title bar on the home page and follow the links to access pdf versions of Notices to Mariners editions and tracings, blocks and notes, Annual Notices to Mariners and cumulative lists. A link to British Admiralty Notices for Mariners requiring updates to British Admiralty publications such as Admiralty List of Lights and Fog Signals, List of Radio Signals and Sailing Directions can also be found here.

To receive Notices to Mariners via email mariners need to register online via the AHS website (www.hydro.gov.au). Point to 'Notices to Mariners' on the vertical title bar on the AHS home page, select 'eNotices' and follow the link to the registration page. eNotices is a customised service where mariners can choose to receive Notices to Mariners via email for any chart (or all charts) in their specific portfolio and for the following Australian nautical publications: Australian Seafarers Handbook, Australian Annual Notices to Mariners, Australian National Tide Tables.

While the Notices will continue to be published electronically, which will be adequate for most mariners, one unfortunate loss will be the printed "block corrections" which have always been to the same standard of the charts themselves - accurate in colour and dimensions and on quality paper. The block corrections can be downloaded from the web site, but few mariners would have printers connected to their computer that would be able to approach the quality of the print published ones.

Boat Books Sydney has indicated it may decide to publish hard copies of the notices, block corrections, and tracings. Anyone who would be interested in one or more of these printed versions should indicate that interest to Boat Books, 31 Albany Street, Crows Nest, NSW 2065 <shipping@boatbooks-aust.com.au>. Such a service will be on a cost-recovery basis, not for profit. The costs will be affected by the number of customers.

Spotted by Albert Ross

Our worthy Vice Commodore who, when inspecting a pontoon for possible use in the planned boat handling exercise, stepped on to said pontoon only to have it disappear under the jetty it was moored to, taking his feet with it. This left him attached to the jetty by his elbows alone. Swift action by Albert saved the day, and the only real danger to anyone was the possibility of an early demise caused by excessive helpless laughter.

Giant Christmas Quiz

Keep the crew amused on those rare occasions when you might be weatherbound somewhere down the Channel.

1. In what month is Christmas in the northern hemisphere?
 - (A) June
 - (B) March
 - (C) December
 - (D) September
 2. Who sang "White Christmas," in the 1942 film Holiday Inn?
 - (A) Bing Crosby
 - (B) Louis Armstrong
-

- (C) Frank Sinatra
 - (D) Bob Hope
3. In 1974, one Australian city had a miserable Christmas because of a disaster. What was the city and the disaster?
- (A) Darwin, Cyclone Tracy
 - (B) Brisbane, floods
 - (C) Sydney, bushfires
 - (D) Newcastle, earthquake
4. In what period did 25 December become the traditional day to celebrate Christmas?
- (A) 14th century
 - (B) 8th century
 - (C) 4th century
 - (D) 1st century
5. On the eleventh day of Christmas, what did my true love bring to me?
- (A) 11 pipers piping
 - (B) 11 lords a-leaping
 - (C) 11 swans a-swimming
 - (D) 11 drummers drumming
6. This appropriately named national park is in the Indian Ocean, 2600 km northwest of Perth, 360 km south of Jakarta. What is it called?
- (A) Santa Atoll
 - (B) Boxing Day Island
 - (C) Christmas Island
 - (D) Yule Reef
7. Tiny Tim has the last words in a famous Christmas story. What does he say?
- (A) I want some more!
 - (B) God bless Us, Every One!
 - (C) Bah, Humbug!
 - (D) Merry Christmas!
8. What country has St Nicholas as its patron saint?
- (A) The Czech Republic
 - (B) Russia
 - (C) Poland
 - (D) The Netherlands
-

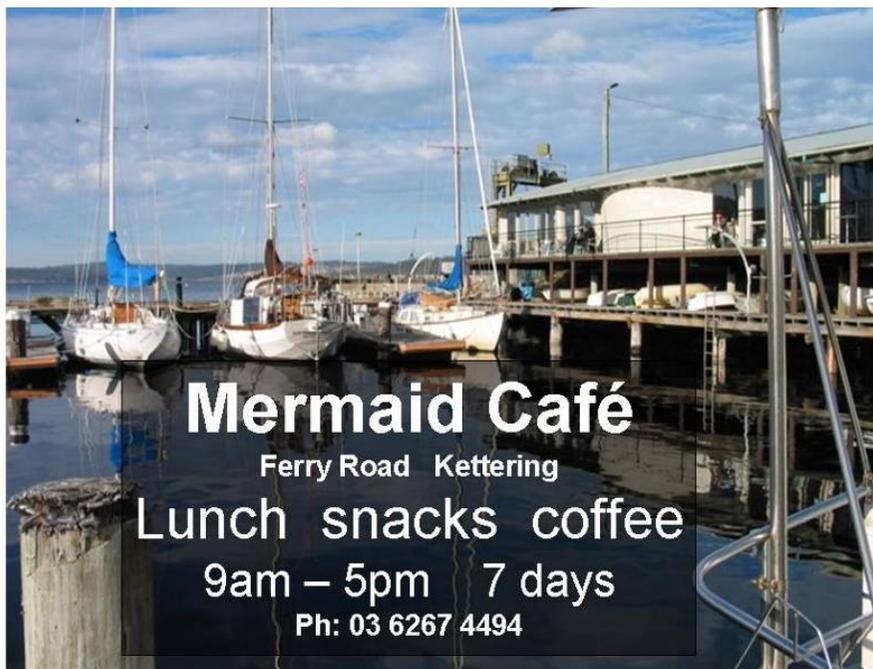
9. What happened on Ross's Farm at Christmas time?
- (A) a fire
 - (B) a flood
 - (C) a hailstorm
 - (D) a plague of locusts
10. When is Advent Sunday?
- (A) The 4th Sunday before Christmas
 - (B) The Sunday before Christmas
 - (C) The 3rd Sunday before Christmas
 - (D) The 2nd Sunday before Christmas
11. Which famous Christmas story begins 'One dollar and eighty-seven cents'?
- (A) A Christmas Carol
 - (B) Christmas Day in the Workhouse
 - (C) A Child's Christmas in Wales
 - (D) The Gift of the Magi
12. Who wrote "Nicholas Nickleby", "Martin Chuzzlewit" and "A Christmas Carol"?
- (A) Charles Dickens
 - (B) Robert Louis Stevenson
 - (C) Aldous Huxley
 - (D) James Joyce
13. Who wrote about Christmas 'One Christmas was so much like another, in those years around the sea-town corner . . .
- (A) Charles Dickens
 - (B) Robert Browning
 - (C) Nathaniel Hawthorne
 - (D) Dylan Thomas
14. What name is more commonly given to the Australian flower, *Blandfordia grandiflora*?
- (A) Christmas bush
 - (B) Christmas bells
 - (C) Christmas lily
 - (D) Christmas tree
15. At the start of 'A Christmas Carol', we are told that somebody is dead. Who is it?
- (A) Marley
 - (B) Bob Cratchit
 - (C) Tiny Tim's sister
 - (D) Scrooge
-

16. In 1897, Francis Pharcellus Church wrote a famous letter, saying that there WAS a Santa Claus. Who was the letter addressed to?
- (A) Virginia
 - (B) Vitruvia
 - (C) Victoria
 - (D) Viola
17. In which year did Cuba reinstate Christmas, to celebrate a visit from the Pope?
- (A) 1987
 - (B) 1977
 - (C) 1967
 - (D) 1997
18. On Christmas Day, 1844, what did Ludwig Leichhardt and his party eat?
- (A) Camel's foot and emu eggs
 - (B) Crocodile eggs and kangaroo
 - (C) Horse meat and fried crow
 - (D) Suet pudding and stewed cockatoos
19. On Christmas Day, 1938, what did Lise Meitner invent?
- (A) Nuclear fission
 - (B) A new type of cosmetic
 - (C) The words of 'Silent Night'
 - (D) A new model of the universe
20. What Robert Louis Stevenson poem starts 'The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand . . . '?
- (A) A Christmas Carol'
 - (B) Ben Duggan
 - (C) Christmas at sea
 - (D) Christmas Day in the Workhouse
21. What were used to make 'a Christmas booklet for the children of their white supplanters', according to K. Langloh Parker?
- (A) Possum skins
 - (B) Paperbark
 - (C) The songs of the Pitjantjatjara
 - (D) The legends of the Noongahburrahs
22. Who is usually given the credit for writing the poem that starts 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house . . .
- (A) Dylan Thomas
 - (B) Charles Dickens
-

- (C) Henry Livingston Junior
(D) Clement Clarke Moore
23. The poet who wrote "Lines for St Valentine's Day" also gets the credit for a Christmas poem. Who was it?
- (A) Hilaire Belloc
(B) Henry Lawson
(C) George Sims
(D) Clement Clarke Moore
24. Who really wrote the poem that starts 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house . . .
- (A) Dylan Thomas
(B) Henry Livingston Junior
(C) Charles Dickens
(D) Clement Clarke Moore
25. Who sang a song 'I'm walking backwards to Christmas'?
- (A) The Monkees
(B) The Rolling Stones
(C) The Goons
(D) The Beatles
26. Who wrote a short carol: 'May all my enemies go to hell, Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel'?
- (A) Ebenezer Scrooge
(B) G. H. Hardy
(C) Hilaire Belloc
(D) Robespierre
27. Who wrote 'Christmas Day in the Workhouse'?
- (A) Charles Dickens
(B) Rudyard Kipling
(C) George Crabbe
(D) George Sims
28. On Christmas Day, 1788, what did Mr. Johnson do?
- (A) collapsed from heat exhaustion
(B) preached a sermon
(C) choked on a fishbone
(D) danced a jig and a hornpipe
-

29. On December 23, 1873, explorers Giles and Gibson ate Christmas pudding and what?
- (A) horse
 - (B) wombat
 - (C) emu
 - (D) rock wallaby
30. Which poet used the first line "It is Christmas Day in the workhouse, and the cold, bare walls are bright"
- (A) Edward Lear
 - (B) Henry Lawson
 - (C) William McGonagall
 - (D) George Sims

Answers – Page 31
With thanks to Peter Macinnis,
petermacinnis@ozemail.com.au



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October General Meeting - Minutes

Minutes of the General Meeting of the Cruising Yacht Club of Tasmania – Tuesday 4th November at Derwent Sailing Squadron, Sandy Bay - 8 pm .

WELCOME:

Vice Commodore, Andrew Boon, opened the meeting and welcomed guests Dot Davie and Rolph and Debra Knight.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

46 members and guests.

Guest Speaker – Ben Tucker

APOLOGIES:

Pam Skromanis, Margaret Jones, Trich & Bill Wright, Quentin & Fiona Tuxon, Leo Foley, David Bevan, Wendy McDougall, Roger & Patricia Locke

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETING OF 7 OCTOBER 2008:

Following no voices to the contrary from members present, Vice Commodore Andrew Boon signed the minutes of previous general meeting as published in November 'Albatross' as a true and correct record of proceedings.

BUSINESS ARISING:

Nil

CORRESPONDENCE:

Inward –

Ebb Tidings
Main Sheet
UniPrint Account

Outward -

Condolence card to Newham family
Cheque for Edmund Hillary Foundation

TREASURER'S REPORT:

No report as Treasurer Caroline Dutton absent from meeting

COMMODORE'S REPORT:

Refer to November 'Albatross', in Commodore Leo Foley's absence from meeting.

VICE-COMMODORE'S REPORT:

VC Andrew Boon advised that *Aurielle* is now at Opuia, New Zealand and *Pendulum* is en route for Coffs Harbour.

Reminded members of boat handling exercise, 'Coming Alongside', to be held on Sunday 9 November at Barnes Bay.

Presented Stephen Newham with the Club's Cruising Plaque following his circumnavigation of Tasmania earlier this year.

REAR COMMODORE'S REPORT:

RC Merv Page reminded members of the Xmas get-together on Saturday 13 December at Dru Point for start time 12:00 noon.

Advised that Speaker in December will be Kate Keipper re Macquarie Island

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Stephen Newham, on behalf of his parents Ken (deceased) and Doris, has donated two trophies back to the Club: 'Cruise of the Year on *Alkira*' and 'Services to Club'.

Announcement that Chris Creese has a few copies of 'Deal Island' Calendar for sale at \$18 each.

Editor Chris Palmer requested that members send in to him new items of interest for future 'Albatross' editions.

VC Andrew Boon to put a note in 'Albatross' re West Coast Race and the appeal for volunteers.

GUEST SPEAKER:

RC Merv Page introduced Ben Tucker, who with his father Jon and brother Matt sailed his yacht 'Sea Petrel' to Antarctica in January 2006. Ben shared some background detail re 3-years of preparation of 'Sea Petrel' and presented his story via a video. It was a very enjoyable account of the journey, with great video coverage.

Meeting closed at 9:45pm

Next General Meeting: Tuesday 2 December at DSS at 8:00pm

Cheryl Price
Relieving Secretary



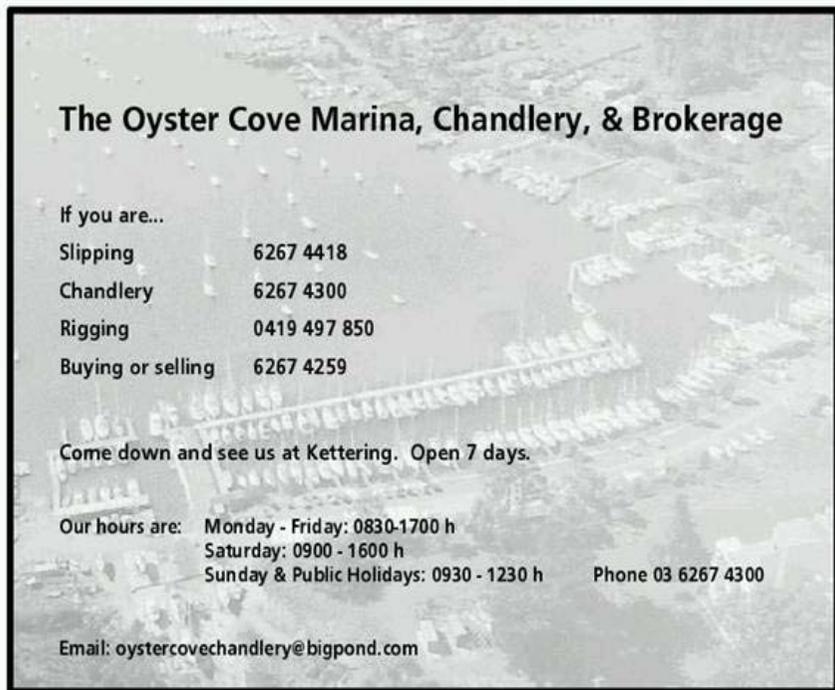
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Answers to the Giant Christmas Quiz

1	C	11	D	21	D
2	A	12	A	22	D
3	A	13	D	23	D
4	C	14	B	24	B
5	A	15	A	25	C
6	C	16	A	26	C
7	B	17	D	27	D
8	B	18	D	28	B
9	A	19	A	29	D
10	A	20	C	30	D



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