

December 2018



SisterShip

women on the water

SUSIE GOODALL

IN HOBART

SMALL
BOATS

Dragon Boats

SheSAILS Regatta

SOUTHERN
GREAT
BARRIER
REEF

BARGE BOATS

Dock parties



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Celebrating real women on the water



LEFT: DEBRA CAULFIELD AND ALISON EADES after a race on Moreton Bay with Newport Cruising Yacht Club. Debra's boat is *Jo-De 7*, a Hanse 575. Debra says "during the race we had about 21 knots breeze, our speed got up to 12 knots. It was a very tight finish with only a boat length between us and the next boat on the finish line - it was Alison's first of hopefully many races with us and this would never have been possible without the wonderful WWSA group." AUSTRALIA.

RIGHT: VIKI MOORE AND VICTORIA MURDOCH crossing New Zealand's notorious Cook Strait aboard Victoria's boat *High Voltage*. Viki and Victoria are training to do the around North Island two-handed race in 2020.



LEFT: CAT STURROCK prepping and applying PropGlide to her stainless prop. AUSTRALIA.

Send your 'Page 3' photos to
editor@sistershipmagazine.com

The bowsprit



Welcome to our December issue of *SisterShip*! As you are reading this, solo sailors Lisa Blair and Susie Goodall are more than halfway through their respective circumnavigations. Tina Richards caught up with Susie during her mandatory Golden Globe Race film drop at Hobart last month and we are thrilled to include a report of their chat. Susie is currently in fourth place battling cold headwinds between New Zealand and South America

At the time of writing Lisa Blair was also battling headwinds, in her case off the Western Australian coast in her attempt to become the first woman to solo circumnavigate this continent. Sadly Lisa is dealing with news from home that her dad is seriously ill in hospital. We are sure all our readers join us in wishing Lisa's dad best wishes for a speedy recovery.

While Susie and Lisa are undertaking adventures at the extreme end of the scale, the recent *SisterShip* navigation course and the SheSAILS NCYC women's regatta on Newcastle Harbour, illustrate how women on the water are pushing themselves out of their comfort zones at all levels.

As a young landlubber, fresh from the lush green islands of Aotearoa, one of your *SisterShip* co-editors was very much out of her comfort zone when she first experienced the somewhat alien environment of a coral reef in 1985. Stretching some 2,300

kilometres, and 19 degrees of latitude, Australia's Great Barrier Reef is formed by a myriad of reefs and cays. There are, as you would expect, distinct regional differences. The Capricorn Bunker group on the southern Great Barrier Reef is a cluster of wooded cays and reefs, many with large lagoons, some of which are navigable. It was this particular group that became that young landlubber's backyard all those years ago, and it is with great pleasure that we feature the Capricorn Bunker group in this issue. With Christmas just around the corner it is fitting that we also showcase one of the reef's tiny treasures - the Christmas tree worm!

As well as a range of sailing vessels, this month we bring you stories of a tug boat, barge boat, dragon boats, and a cruise liner! *SisterShip* loves diversity! This issue also highlights that you don't need all the mod cons on a large boat to be out there on the water or to hold a great dock party.

On that note, the team at *SisterShip* wish all our readers a very happy and safe festive season. Thank you for your support and enthusiasm during our first year at the helm. We look forward to new adventures as *SisterShip* continues the voyage in 2019!

Shelley Wright & Jackie Parry

Message in a bottle

Send your letters to

editor@sistershipmagazine.com

Dear SisterShip team,

All my life I have been around boats. My parents had motorboats and at age 20 I met a boat builder who was building a timber H28. It was a bare cold moulded hull at that point with the temporary frames still in place. We laboured every spare moment for the next four years and in March 1990 we launched our beautiful boat and married later that year in the October. We lived aboard for the next five years, working to save enough money to cruise the Queensland coast to the Whitsundays and beyond a few times. After 25 years our marriage failed and the boat was awarded to him in the settlement. At the time I didn't think I would miss boating, but I soon realised I did.

For the past seven years I have had a Kevin Dick 18' open dinghy to cruise around the bay, taking my dogs most times for a swim at Horseshoe Bay and setting my crab pots somewhere along the way.

A close girlfriend of mine also had a change of circumstance earlier this year which brought about her looking for a new yacht to live aboard as she has done for most of her life. Keen to help, I set about looking online for the "ideal" yacht for her and found many stagnant feelings inside of me were being stirred up about sailing.

I spoke to her about learning to navigate properly and not just by knowing where to go on the bay. She sent me a link to *SisterShip* and WWSA and said, 'You should be part of this.' Jackie and Shell were running their first navigation course in Lake Macquarie the following week. Not knowing exactly where

it was, I checked it out on Google Maps and saw it was only nine odd hours from me. I knew I could do that in a day, so I booked my place on the course and set about finding some accommodation. I found a reasonably priced place called Squid's Ink right on the lake and only 750 m from the yacht club. What was even better was the fact that I could take my two small dogs with me.

On Friday October 26, I loaded my car and the boys and I left Brisbane at 3:30 am. After a few pit/water stops we arrived in Lake Macquarie around 2:30 pm. It was picture perfect; absolutely beautiful. The lake was so much bigger than I could have ever imagined and I was amazed at the number of boats and the size of them. That evening I dined in the Lake Macquarie Yacht Club where the course was being held the next day. I felt this inner peace that I'd not felt for some time. I felt at home and I knew there and then I had done the right thing.

The next morning I arrived half an hour early for the course. I collected my navigation kit/pouch, manuals and chart and met Shell and Jackie. I opened my chart with great enthusiasm to see where we would be "heading" on our nav course journey and you wouldn't believe it, it was the Whitsundays! I cast my eyes over many of the places I'd visited so long before and as I did I heard a women's voice coming up the stairs to the Bridge Deck room saying, 'Wow did you see there is someone here from Brisbane!' They sounded so surprised! As they entered the room, I said that it was me from Brisbane and I really didn't think it was a big deal, in fact I thought there would be

several of us from up that way. After all, what boating women wouldn't want to do a course run by women for women about coastal navigation, I thought?

With 13 of us on board for the course we quickly got started. The information flowed freely and openly ensuring we were all on track at all times. Shell and Jackie would have to be two of the calmest, non-judgemental women I have met. They bring out the best in you. There was no stress, just acceptance of who we were and what knowledge we did or didn't bring with us. There was no such thing as a silly question. We all could relax.

After two days and a lot of miles and knowledge covered, we all received our "Certificate of Achievement" in the *SisterShip* Coastal Navigation Course. Ironically it is dated on the day I was married some 28 years prior. After a group photo and the swapping of many phone numbers, I left the LMYC with a feeling of empowerment that I had

not felt for such a long time.

I left Lake Macquarie at 2:30 am the following morning. It was around the dawn that I realised I had had a taken a micro nap at the wheel having already changed lanes. I woke to see I was heading for the grassed medium strip. I yanked the wheel back on course and with a huge fright I realised that my (and my boys) lives could have changed so much in that split second. I figure life is short and although some things may seem out of reach nothing is impossible. It has made me even keener to fulfil my dreams of sailing once again. I feel so much safer on the water as opposed to the road. I hope to attend the WWSA Gathering at Port Stephens next April, and who knows I may prefer to journey by boat...

Thank you Jackie and Shell. You are remarkable women doing remarkable things.

Karen H.



HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD WITH SUSIE GOODALL

Tina Richards

The fierce Indian Ocean.

After 122 days at sea and not sighting another human being or land since the Canary Islands ‘film drop’ three and a half months ago, Susie Goodall, the youngest and only female entrant in the Golden Globe Race 2018, happily arrived at the Boatshed Drop Point in Hobart, Tasmania, on October 30th.

Finally, Susie could say goodbye to the Indian Ocean after a gruelling couple of months where she found the weather challenging with the inconsistency of either calms or gales and icy cold temperatures. Just a couple of weeks before arriving in Hobart she faced her strongest storm so far with winds of 50 knots plus and swell above 10 meters. Trying to escape the worst of this storm, Susie had to reluctantly backtrack and sail west and then east again, which meant she passed Cape Leeuwin three times! Unfortunately, in the midst of the storm her wind-vane broke, requiring her to hand steer for 10 hours whilst not being able to eat for 24 hours!

Working with the GGR team I caught up with Susie at the Boatshed Drop Point and asked her a few questions about her voyage so far.



Susie at the Hobart
‘film drop’.

What are you missing the most?

Family and friends, fresh food, and a walk.

What has been the most enjoyable moment so far?

There's been a lot of good parts. Finally rounding Cape of Good Hope was a very good moment!

Are there certain moments when the loneliness is greater? And what do you do to cope with the feeling?

I think the loneliest I felt was the day after the storm, that was probably the worst day. There was just no getting out of this hole that I was in. The conditions were horrible and it was just no fun at all. Generally, the temptation when you feel low is to climb into

your bunk and do nothing. But when I feel low, I play some music and get up on deck and in the fresh air. Sometimes I pick up a new book but playing music for me is the best.

Do you find yourself talking to the weather or the heavens above?

(Laughs) I do tell the weather off sometimes. Why are you not blowing! Or why are you blowing too much!

If you could have one additional piece of equipment from here on – what would it be?

I'd take another A-symmetric kite, a bigger one.

Is there a particular feature of your boat that you really appreciate?

The bimini, I love it! I love sitting there, I can reach the steering lines and adjust things, I can reach the main sheet and I can do most things from just being under it.

How are you finding the completely watertight companion way hatch?

That is the best thing that I did in the refit. It

is superb, absolutely brilliant! Water can't get in.

And is there anything you would change such as water proofing the switch board or radio?

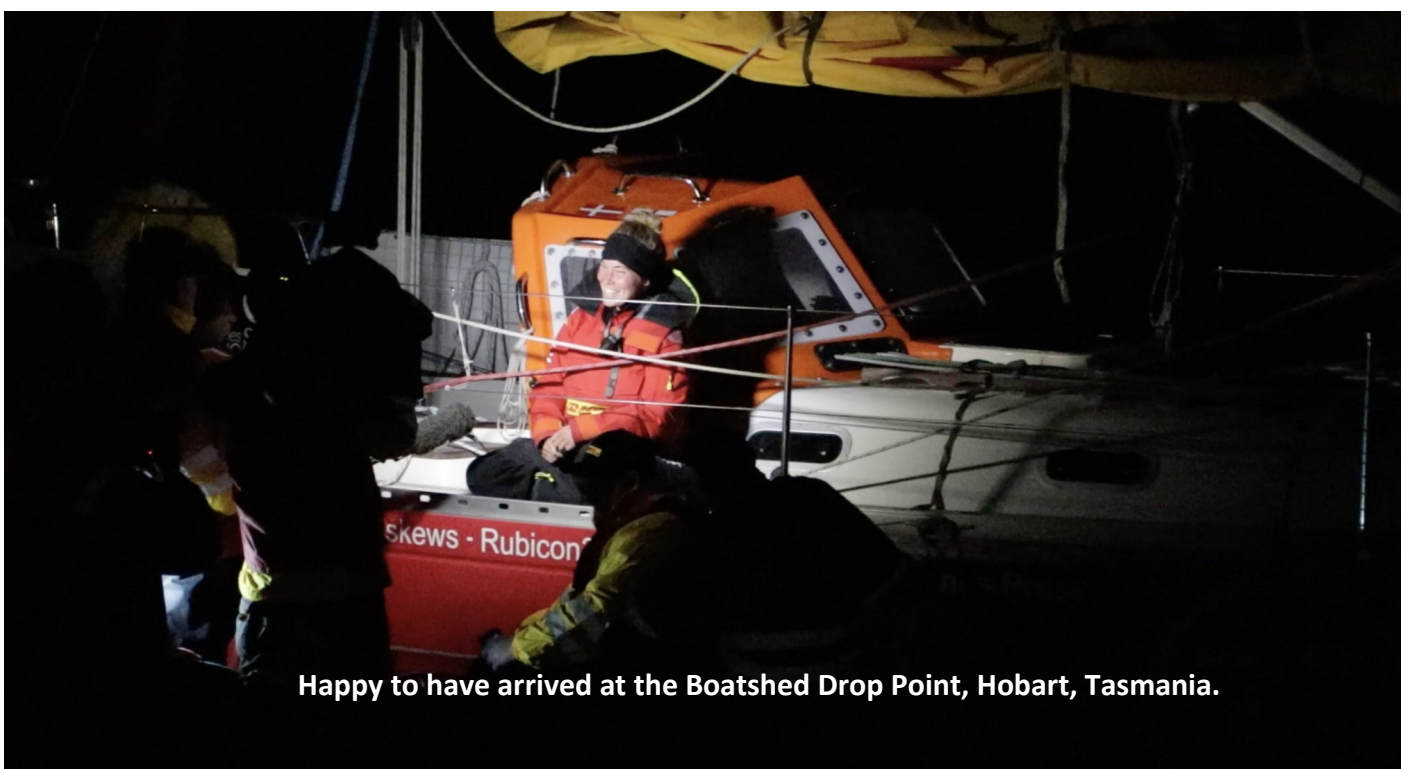
Not at this moment. Although when I go down and I'm soaking wet in foulies, I tend to make everything a little wet and damp. So, I could add some type of curtain to stop this. But it's not too bad, having that hatch means it's been pretty dry down there.

Before you left Les Sab* you said that when you wanted to grow up you wanted to sail around the world. How is the job so far and is this how you thought it would be?

Yeah, it's alright! (laughs). I don't really know what I expected. I knew I was going sailing but to know what I was going to get along the route is quite hard. I didn't think I would struggle as much in the calms. If it's calm weather, then it's not a happy boat (laughs again).

Would you recommend it?

For sure! If someone wants to do it,



Happy to have arrived at the Boatshed Drop Point, Hobart, Tasmania.

absolutely but just don't underestimate those calms, that's all I can say (laughs).

What advice would you give other women contemplating a solo voyage, short or long?

I think it's one of those things, you just have to go for it. It's so easy to think about but it's not an easy thing to get to the start line or the finish line. However, I think if someone wants to do it bad enough then they can do it, so go for it!

Why do you think there aren't more women in the race?

I don't know, it's a good question. I thought about it quite a bit and I really don't know because it's accessible and these boats are so simple. Why there aren't, I genuinely don't know.

Do you think or feel it's safer to participate in an event like the Golden Globe Race, knowing that race organisers are watching over you?

Definitely. I mean it's something I've always wanted to do and I've always thought about just getting a boat and setting off but then

you're just on your own. There's no back up, there's no help, really all you have is an EPIRP. So, having the race there and being part of the race family, you do feel a lot safer. I talk to Mark Slats and Uku Randmaa (other entrants) several times a day and we are always looking out for each other and sharing ideas, like what works in heavy weather, sail settings, especially because the three of us have the same boat. Just having that there is really important, I think.

Sailing into the recent storm, were the events that took place with the other entrants Abhilash Tomy and Gregor McGuckin on your mind?


Oh big time! I had discussed with Mark Slats a lot about his storm, we were always talking about it, so my plan was then if I ever got a storm like that, I would just sail through it. I



All suited up from the very cold water whilst inspecting the hull.

Susie anchored at Kingston Beach, Boatshed Drop Point, Hobart, Tasmania.





Susie's hands have become extremely soft and fragile due to the harsh conditions.

'hove-to, rolled, dismasted' kept playing over like a broken record in my mind. It was something telling me not to hove-to so I just sat there and helmed. It wasn't fun.


How do you feel about entering the second half of the race? Do you think it will be easier?

I hope so. I'm looking forward to getting past New Zealand away from land again. It would be nice if the Pacific was blue skies and sunshine and 20 knots from the north-west but I don't think it will be. I'm hoping that the Indian Ocean is as hard as it's going to get but then there is still Cape Horn and the variables in the Atlantic so I'm sure there is still some tough times ahead to be honest. But I'm ready and the boat's ready.

Have you been thinking about what you would like to achieve next?

I've been thinking about it a lot and my minds still pretty blank to be honest (laughs). I keep thinking, oh maybe I'll do it faster next time but then I have a calm and I think never again. Then I'll have a good day sailing and I think, oh I could do this again. I think there are a lot of options although at the

was doing okay but then before the height of it the wind-vane broke and so I had to steer. That was never my plan. I don't know why I hadn't set my drogues up beforehand. I didn't want to leave the helm because during Gregor's and Abhilash's storm, Gregor came on the radio and I remember him saying he couldn't keep the boat down wave; the boat just kept on sitting beam on. And that's what I was afraid of, which is worse out on the helm, but it was either be on the helm or hove-to. But whenever I thought about hoving-to I remembered Are Wiig's dismasting. Just after he was dismasted we got a text from Don McIntyre saying 'Are, hove-to, rolled, dismasted', and the words



Tackling anything that comes her way, Susie fixing her wind-vane.

moment I don't really know. I think when I get back, it will be decision time.

And finally, when do you hope to arrive back in France?

It would be nice to arrive in February, that would be pretty cool. I think it will take me four to five months to get home, maybe closer to five, although now that the bottom's clean I might be a little faster. I'm aiming for February but if it's March I'll be okay about it.



Fortunately, Susie was able to fix her wind-vane, unassisted. And after climbing the mast to complete a rig check, then diving below into the very cool water to inspect the hull she was cheerfully on her way again. However, due to another nasty storm she made the tough decision to take refuge in Safety Bay, Tasmania until it passed. At the time of writing this article she is currently in fourth position, chasing down Uku Randmaa for third. Go Susie!

*Les Sables-d'Olonne

For more updates on Susie Goodall's progress and the rest of the fleet in the Golden Globe Race 2018 you can subscribe to the mailing list at:

<https://goldengloberace.com/>

Or follow the GGR Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/goldengloberace/>

CURRENT PLACINGS:

Jean- Luc VDH (FRA) Rustler 36 *Matmut*

Mark Slats (NED) Rustler 36 *Ohpen Maverick*

Uku Randmaa (EST) Rustler 36 *One and All*

Susie Goodall (GBR) Rustler 36 *DHL Starlight*

Istvan Kopar (USA) Tradewind 35 *Puffin*

Tapio Lehtinen (FIN) Gaia 36 *Asteria*

Mark Sinclair (AUS) Lello 34 *Coconut*

Igor Zaretskiy (RUS) Endurance 35 *Esmeralda*

Heading off for the second half of the race in her Rustler 36 DHL Starlight.



In 2017 TINA RICHARDS hung up her teaching and everyday land boots to start a new life living aboard a 49ft sailboat with her partner. Having never sailed before, but was all for the adventure, TINA has had to face many fears and overcome new challenges as she adapted to life on the water. Now with 3,000 nm under her belt, TINA is hooked on sailing and all things water!

Fitzroy Reef: Jewel of Queensland's Southern Reef

Anna Ash

MV Babieca.

'Have we died and gone to heaven?' wondered our crew, on the first morning after a blissful night's sleep in this calm anchorage out at sea. We looked out to the horizon where the deep blue sky met the clear turquoise water and it was like we're suspended in a beautiful aquamarine bubble. For five days we floated in this unbelievably peaceful anchorage, swimming and snorkelling by day, and sleeping soundly at night. Fitzroy Reef - don't bypass this turquoise and azure gem of the Southern Great Barrier Reef.

Previously, on our ketch *Zefr*, we had stopped at Lady Musgrave Island 24 nm to the south, and sailed past Fitzroy Reef en route to Great Keppel Island. This time was different, we have crossed to the dark side and are now on a passage-making trawler style motor boat, *Babieca*, a Seahorse 52. She's an ice breaker with an ice maker, business-like on the outside, but concealing within a comfortable world of full pilot house, walk around beds, upright fridge/freezer, and full stove as well as three air conditioners (rarely used!). Did I mention the ice maker? It's worth repeating, after eight years of being a professional ice bludger, I now enjoy it rather a lot. Definitely

not a speed boat, but designed for going the distance, she has twin 150 HP John Deere engines and will cruise at 8 knots, sipping only 10 litres of fuel/hour. Truth be told, she's not ACTUALLY an ice breaker, she's a Blainey Steele designed fibreglass hull made in China, hull number 19 of around 40 that have been made. We bought her in April this year in a neglected state, caught up on maintenance, and installed solar panels and a dinghy crane. Next is a water maker and she'll be ship shape and ready for long distance passage making. On the ketch, we used to wait for wind to cover distances, but now we look for calm weather and smooth seas which makes for a comfortable passage.

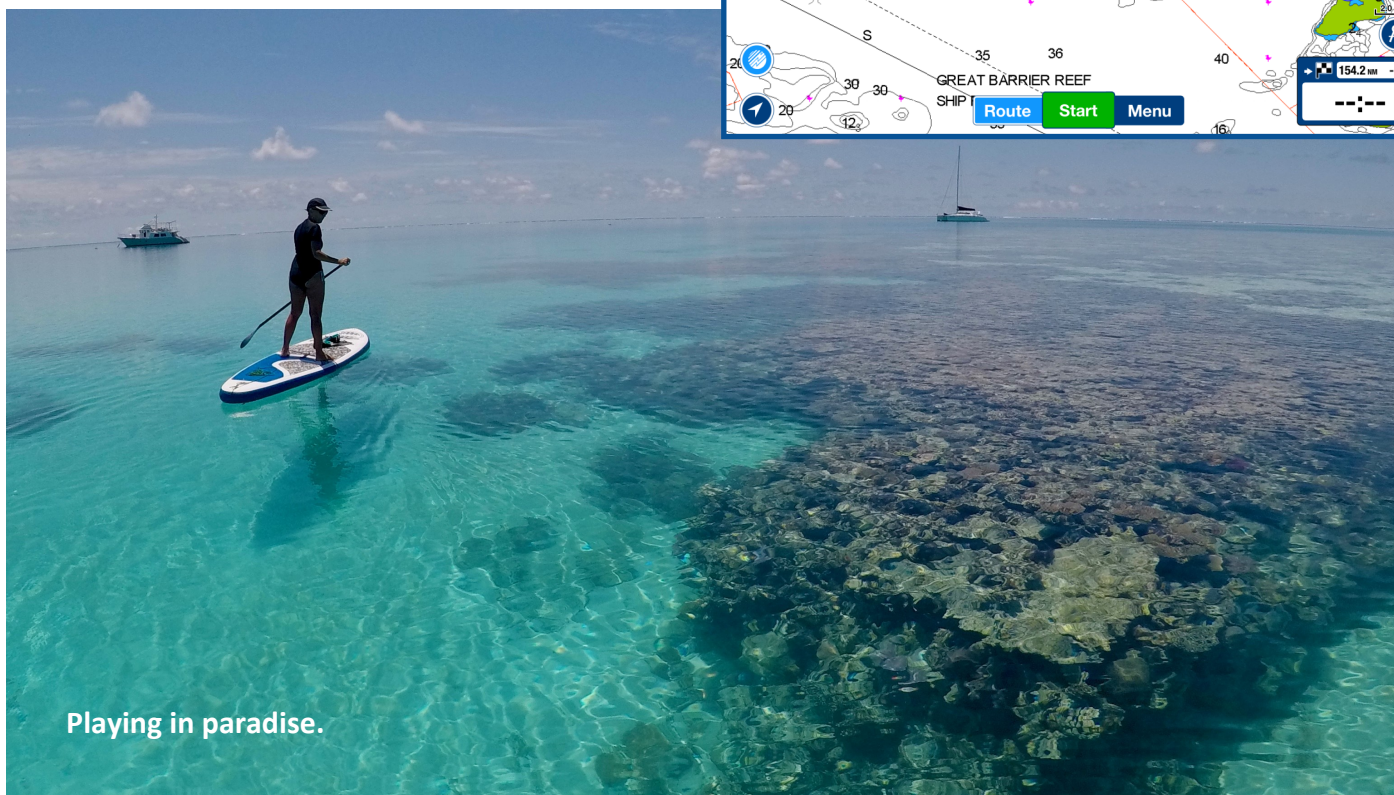
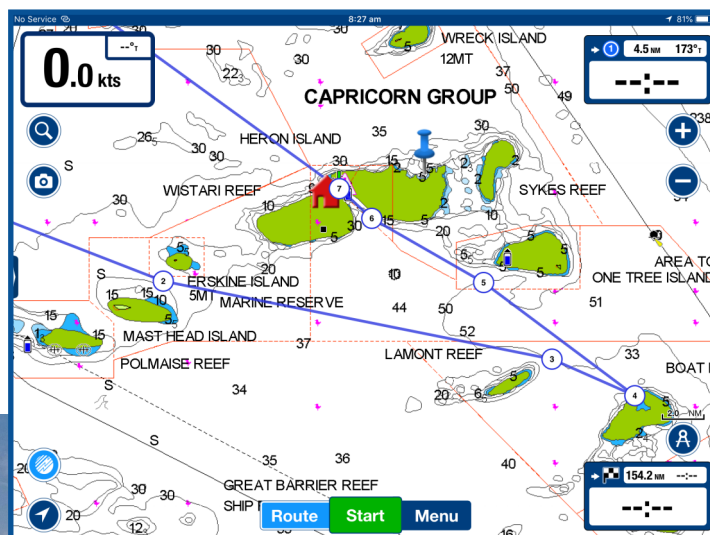
Fitzroy Reef is 45 nm north east of Gladstone on Queensland's Capricorn coast. The closest coastal anchorage is Pancake Creek just over 30 nm away, and many boats wait here for calm weather to head out to the Capricorn or Bunker Group of reefs and islands. We steamed 72 nm to Fitzroy from Great Keppel Island, planning to get there fast and then take it slow.

We picked up my brother Mick and his wife

Deb from Keppel Bay marina. Over the next few days we had light winds from almost all points of the compass, so we could show our crew a variety of lovely Great Keppel Island anchorages: Long, Resort (Fishermans), and Monkey Beaches as well as Humpy Island, where we went for some fishing. It's said that the Keppel Islands have the best walks of all the Queensland Islands and I'm inclined to agree, certainly my calves testify to the height of their peaks. The walk from Svendsen's Beach via Leeke's homestead, still with some of its furnishings like a Singer sewing machine and fridge, and on to the resort area was a good warm up. The next day we followed it up with the 12 km round trip to the lighthouse which gave us spectacular views of the anchorage from Sailor's Lookout and then a long hot climb up and along the ridge to look down on Wreck Bay (not a recommended anchorage) and then to the other end of the island to see the lighthouse and views south to Humpy Island. The Svendsens are unofficial caretakers of this part of the island and have provided seats at strategic places along the tracks, with inspirational quotes etched on to smooth rocks inviting you to take time out to just be.

Arriving back at the beach we plunged in to the clear waters and soaked our aching feet, then spent some time with the cruisers who regularly come in to the beach camp for coffee and a yarn. I met Shirley who willingly shows me how to weave a lightning bolt with palm leaves, she was wearing a palm frond hat that she wove over a year ago. We met several sailing cruisers at the regular sundowners on Svendsen's Beach, the only 'bar' we go to these days, and found that they still talked to us, even when they learnt we are on a 'stink' boat.

We were watching the weather and it looked good for a trip to the reef with less than 15 knots or variable winds for the next week. We left Monkey Beach at 04.00 for a ten-hour steam covering the 72 nm to Fitzroy Reef, passing One Tree Island and several reefs,



Playing in paradise.



Glassed out.

and seeing many large turtles. It was with some trepidation that we approached the channel through the reef into Fitzroy for the first time, but while narrow, it's well marked with port and starboard buoys on the outside and a couple of posts showing the way in. We could clearly see the reef on either side and were in painlessly. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority have installed three mooring buoys rated for 25 metre boats to 34 knots of wind, and we were happy to pick one up.

We kept shaking our heads at each other, gob-smacked. How could it be so blue? So blue-on-blue? We needed some new terms to describe the colours of this serene, ultramarine lagoon-at-sea. In the early morning there was glass-out, and the water's surface reflected a scattering of clouds and boats. Then with a gentle breeze it darkened to teal shading up to turquoise near the reefs. At low tide the surrounding reef was exposed, a gold setting for this opalescent gem, with frothy white waves crashing on the outside.

We had been carefully checking the Marine Park Zoning Maps as we trolled a line whenever we were underway and didn't want to fall foul of the law. Fitzroy Reef is entirely in a blue zone, a habitat protected area which means you can line or spear fish. We grabbed snorkels and skipper Gary dug out his spear gun. While a couple of us floated around enjoying the coral and fish life of the reefs, Gary was in hunting mode, diving down to

look under coral ledges for an elusive painted crayfish. He pointed out a three-metre grey nurse shark dozing in a cave. At that point Deb propelled herself into the tender with unprecedented speed! The water clarity was gin-like, and turtles, rays, and small black tip reef sharks cruised past us. Gary shot to the surface with a cray over his head, and then ten minutes later, a coral trout. That was dinner for four taken care of and we headed back to the boat for a siesta.

Crew from the other two yachts on moorings came over for sundowners on the top deck and we watched as over 30 little trailer boats came into the lagoon and anchored for the night. Fitzroy's proximity to Gladstone means that weekends can be busy with fisher folk, but as we found, during the week there was only the occasional yacht or motor boat stopping for a night.

The weather was perfect for five days and we slipped into an easy routine of swimming, snorkelling, SUP boarding, and snoozing. Mick, Deb and I SUP-snorkelled around the drop-offs and over several large reefs that exist within the lagoon. It's great as you can paddle from the mother ship out to the reef, then don mask and snorkel and drape yourself across the SUP board and drift with the current over the reef. Just a tad relaxing! We found that the reef had suffered a significant bleaching event with a lot of the staghorn corals white or fluorescing at their tips, but the fish life still seemed healthy and there were little patches of healthy corals coming back. We supplemented our food stores with freshly caught crayfish and coral trout, leaving the parrot fish as they play a valuable role, eating the weed that grows on dead coral reef. Books were read, many games of Rummy contested, and a state of supreme relaxation was achieved. There was no mobile reception. What initially seemed like an annoyance was a blessing, the four of us were just 'there', no virtual reality for five days was a welcome change.

After five days we reluctantly dropped the mooring line and headed north, thinking we would explore Heron and North West Islands. We picked up a mooring at Heron Island and dinghied in through the channel to the boat harbour. Again, the water was so clear that we spotted all manner of marine life in this short distance. I spoke with a staff member who apologised but said yachties weren't welcome. In contrast a friend had gone ashore at the beach on high tide, walked around the island and past the resort, perhaps that's the better approach! We snorkelled along the drop off, there was a lot of life in the water, reef sharks, turtles, and pelagics. We heard that manta rays are prolific but didn't spot any this time. The mooring is well positioned, and we had a very comfortable night there.

The following day, due to time constraints, we bypassed Wistari Reef and motored to North West Island. There's a mooring on the northern side, just outside a dinghy channel into the reef, which would be great in SE winds. There were many campers ashore who come out on a barge from Gladstone with tinnies, kayaks, solar panels etc. It was a turtle cannery for many years, but now is a major turtle nesting site, and today the beaches are crisscrossed with dozens of turtle tracks. It's also a haven for many sea birds with a massive colony of black noddies, as well as terns, oyster catchers, little brown sandpipers, and ospreys. The bird life seemed to be thriving amongst the many visiting campers. As we walked around the island, we were regularly wowed by the prolific sea life: turtles, rays, shovel nose sharks, and then an ominous dark shape that campers said was a tiger shark that they were monitoring, as there were several oblivious swimmers further down the beach. In northerly winds we had a fairly rolly night on the mooring, so the next day steamed back to the shelter of the Keppel Islands.

Last year we had sailed *Zefr* through

Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, and hadn't found such a beautiful, unpolluted reef anchorage. To be fair, we hadn't been to Raja Ampat, by all accounts Indonesia's last unspoilt reef wilderness. We certainly have a new-found appreciation for the beauty and pristine quality of many parts of coastal Australia. The Great Barrier Reef is truly one of the seven natural wonders of the world and, under threat from coral bleaching, run off and crown of thorns star fish, needs all the protection it can get.

Deb and Mick described our sojourn at Fitzroy as a once in a lifetime opportunity, and they may well be right, because it's not often that an ideal location coincides with ideal weather. I wholeheartedly recommend a trip to the reefs and islands of the Southern Barrier Reef. It's definitely worth waiting for the weather to calm down so you can head out to Fitzroy Reef and relax.



ANNA ASH is having a break from working with Aboriginal communities on revitalising their languages. She and skipper Gary Lindfield lived on their ketch *Zefr* for eight years, and had the trip of a lifetime sailing through Indonesia and Malaysia to Thailand in 2017

Their YouTube channel can be found at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnu6eh8vGanaPi3zQGPrhLw>

They are now enjoying cruising the Australian East Coast and getting to know their *MV Babieca*.



Six Critical Skills Women Bring to a Sailing Team

Deb Dalziel

Racing *Shibumi* at the 2018 Manly YC Women's Challenge.

If you look around your local yacht club on any race day, you'll likely see a mix of men and women, from young to old, preparing to set sail. Sailing is one of the few sports where men and women can, and do, regularly join together to compete in mixed teams at every level of the sport.

Although there has been a distinct lack of women in the top positions, this is changing with initiatives such as the latest Volvo Ocean Race that incentivised teams that included women by allowing them a larger overall crew. Even at the club level there is still room for change – according to Australia Sailing statistics, in 2017 just under 30% of regular participants were women.

I generally sail in mixed teams and love it. A variety of people onboard brings a range of skills, physical abilities, and perspectives. Just like diversity in the workplace, this can be very advantageous.

I have also competed as part of all-female teams. In these boats you can notice some

subtle, but not insignificant, differences to how things are done and communicated versus a more male-dominated environment.

Before starting to write this article I reached out to women sailors in Sydney to get their thoughts on the skills, experience, and attitude that women bring to a sailing team. Here are our combined thoughts:

Communication

Effective communication is important in all types of racing and sailing. Good communication ensures correct manoeuvres and that people are kept safe.

Women are excellent communicators and are generally keen to take a little more time to ensure things are fully explained and understood.

If you have new crew onboard or someone who's a little unsure of their role, this can make a huge difference to their confidence and help prevent mistakes due to

misunderstanding.

Positive communication before and after a race also helps set people up with the right mindset for a great day on the water, and keeps crew motivated for the next race.

Problem solving

Women are great problem solvers – we can look at a situation to come up with a different way of doing something that may be more effective, or use this skill to fix an issue.

Without the same level of physical strength as some of the guys, women often need to work out different ways or techniques to get a job done. This ability to solve problems and adapt to the situation is a great skill onboard any sailing vessel.

Karen Ewels has sailed extensively around Sydney harbour and offshore. She points out that, 'Women often work smarter as a team to use our physical strength to our best advantage. We can't always rely on brute strength to fix a matter so helping each other and working out ways to do a physical task in collaboration important.'

Pragmatism

Women are great at just getting into a task to get the job done.

If something has gone wrong, the most important thing is to get it fixed and move on with the race. With a pragmatic and positive problem-solving approach, women are great at making that happen.

Simone Hill has sailed extensively in all-female crews including the Sydney - Hobart race and also competes regularly in mixed crews. She highlighted women's ability to forward-plan and be adaptable as great assets to any sailing team.

'Women can handle a situation change at

Australian Women's Keelboat Regatta.



short notice and make fast decisions. We're also adept at forward planning which helps to complete tasks in the time required using the resources at hand.'

Caring

Women have a knack for making sure their fellow crew members are healthy and happy.

Whether this means helping someone if they get injured, ensuring people feel welcome to the team, or keeping everyone adequately fed and watered, a little care can all go a long way in keeping the team functioning well.

Sarah Lawton is a regular sailor on Sydney harbour and beyond. She explains a recent example where she was one of only a few women to sail in the 2018 Sydney to Noumea Yacht Race - a 1,100 nm race that took five and a half days of hard racing in big seas and strong winds.

'We were a team of six men and one woman (me). Everyone could do everyone's role without a spoken word, from the front of the boat to the back. I would find myself on the bow on one shift and helming the following night. On review at the end of the race, the guys commented that having a woman changed the typical male dynamics. Everyone



Australian Women's Keelboat Regatta.

became a little more aware of how people were feeling, what they had eaten (or not) or if fatigue was setting in. It wasn't that I played Mum, but I did ask the caring questions that boys often forget to do, which can clearly have a knock-on effect with overall life preservation on those long races.'

Supportive

As well as caring for their fellow crew-members health and well-being, women are often great at taking a new crewmember under their wing to help explain things.

Stemming from our nurturing side, it's in many women's nature to want to help people succeed and understand when someone might need some extra assistance. This supportive nature (as well as communication skills) makes women great in coaching and training roles.

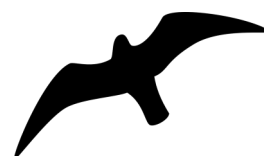
Multi-tasking

Multi-tasking is a skill often attributed to women, and there's likely a lot of truth to that. In roles such as pit, where messages are thrown at you from all directions, women are able to triage the incoming requirements and get things done.

Conclusion

Women bring a variety of invaluable skills and attributes to any sailing team. As Simone put it, 'sailing reflects the real world – where men and women compete and celebrate together.'

And I, for one, think that's absolutely fantastic.



DEBORAH DALZIEL is the founder of [MySail](http://mysail.team/) and an avid sailor. Starting as a very young girl on her family's boat, her sailing experience encompasses everything from dinghy racing to ocean crossings, including the iconic Sydney to Hobart yacht race. Deborah is passionate about advancing sailing and helping new sailors make their start in the sport.

<http://mysail.team/>

Deb at the end of the 2016 Sydney to Southport on *Khaleesi*.



Kristen Anderson



NCYC, hiking hard in stiff breeze.

Women's Regatta Racing: the *SheSAILS@NCYC* 2018 Women's Open Regatta draws accolades for delivering competition and hospitality in equal measure

The *SheSAILS@NCYC* Open Regatta, hosted by Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club (NCYC), drew six entries from NSW and Queensland. Competing on NCYC's fleet of Force 24s, 27 women aged from 15 to 65 contested six windward leeward races on Newcastle's wonderful working harbour. Following the success of 2017's inaugural regatta, this year's 10th November event attracted crews from as far afield as Mooloolaba, earning its place on what participants are now calling an "Australian East Coast women's racing circuit". This puts NCYC in great company with Melbourne's RMYS, who host the annual Australian Women's Keelboat Regatta, which is about to



enter its 27th year; Townsville's TYC, who hosted their second GALs regatta this year; and Mooloolaba's MYC, who plan to host their inaugural women's regatta in 2019 on their fleet of Elliott 6's. As competitor Peta Norris, skipper from the "Ladies of the Lake" team, representing Royal Motor Yacht Squadron (RMYS) Toronto enthused, 'Regattas like this are really empowering for women... because you have to organise your crew and skipper yourselves – you have to step up to the plate.' And as the event highlighted, there is little doubt that the skills are available. Race Officer Robyn Tames, officiating for the second year, was impressed with the level of sailing talent on display. Danielle Kennedy,

skipper of the winning MYC team, represented Canada in the 2012 Olympics (Laser Radial Class) and really set the bar for the fleet, but the mark roundings were tight and all crews sailed hard in conditions described by Robyn as ‘a little tricky and somewhat challenging for an intermediate women’s regatta’. Obvious skills aside, Robyn proclaimed that it was the spirit in which the regatta was contested that blew her away. With Helly Hansen on board as the major event sponsor, there were some fantastic prizes on offer, but the *ultimate* prize of the day was the celebration of women’s sailing – intense, competitive, professionally run, and FUN. Here’s a wrap-up, and I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed creating it!

The breeze on the day was better than forecast and came in beautifully to allow the race committee to set a good square course with a top mark conveniently laid in front of the pub. The tight racing in a shifty S-SW wind made for some great spectacles along the harbour foreshore as crews touselled for buoy room and prepared to hoist spinnakers. MYC’s Danielle Kennedy and crew, aboard Boat 4, showed immediate class. Danielle was impressed with the race track which, she said, offered, ‘Lots of opportunity for good tactics.’ These world-class tactics saw Danielle and her slick crew hit the leader board early as they worked the conditions. Hot on their stern, and crossing continually around the course, were Boats 1, 2 and 6; Tanya Kelly and crew from MYC, and 2 crews from NCYC skippered by Janease Graham and Meika Wright respectively. Not far from the frontrunners, NCYC’s Sailing Academy contingent of recent graduates (and one beginner!), skippered by instructor



Kites up and a great
spectacle on Newcastle
harbour.

INSET: MYC’s Delanie
Morrison.

Sarah Petherbridge on Boat 5, opted to keep their kite in the bag and sailed smart, within their skills range. With them all the way, the crew of Boat 3, helmed by first-time skipper Peta Norris, worked well together and, as crew member Kathy See-Kee proudly exclaimed, 'We learned to trim a kite!'

As the day progressed and the breeze built, conditions grew testier and crews hiked hard in the strong bullets. Race Officer Robyn Tames recorded the gust of the day at 26 knots, making for some interesting downwind legs! While Boat 4 well and truly stamped their name on first place, with an impressive 1-1-2 scorecard after the first three races, placings were up for grabs. At the completion of Race 4, with a drop coming into play*, Boats 1, 2 and 6 were tied on equal 2nd place at 8 points apiece. After a fabulous sail in Race 5 that gave Boat 5 a well-deserved 2nd place, gold remained a certainty for Boat 4 on 4 points, but silver and bronze were still anyone's as the crews lined up for the sixth and final race of the regatta with Boat 2 on 11 points, Boat 1 on 12, Boat 6 on 13 and Boat 5 on 14. Danielle and crew on Boat 4 finished as strongly as they began, nailing it again to close the regatta with an enviable 1-1-[2]-1-1-1 record. Tanya and her MYC crew fought hard and finished a close second behind their MYC sisters to secure an overall second placing with a consistent 2-3-[4]-3-4-2. Meika Wright and crew on Boat 6 crossed the line in 3rd place but at 4-2-[6]-2-5-3, this was not enough to keep Janease and her team on Boat 2 from

securing overall 3rd place with a hard-fought 3-4-1-[5]-3-4. And well done for being the only boat on the day to pip Boat 4!

What sensational racing! Of course, all crews had their issues and, as with every regatta anywhere in the world, the yarns and what-ifs, the near-misses and 'issues' were all discussed in detail over the bubbles and nibbles at the excellent after-race gathering. Laughter and interjections filled the trophy room at Newcastle Cruising Club as the tales emerged. Intense, but still humble, Danielle described how, pre-race, Boat 4 had managed to run over the bow line of the start boat, dragging it over the start line. They also managed to drag the pin and hit the wharf before having to be towed off by the mark boat! As their results made clear, they obviously got a handle on things, but as the crew exclaimed, 'We like to keep it exciting!' Tanya, on Boat 1, had a near mutiny on her hands as the breeze built and fatigue set in. On being urged to 'Keep hiking' and 'Get that headsail on!', the crew had demanded to know 'What was fun about this?' Undeterred, Tanya was quick to respond that the fun is in the winning! She also gave us a great laugh as she told us about the MYC blokes coming to terms with the growth of women's sailing at their club. Suspicious at first, they became downright pissed off as the girls began to beat them. 'The last of the die-hards', she said, 'stay in the clubhouse on Friday nights to avoid that inevitable flogging by Danielle!'

Meanwhile, Peta and her RMYC

Toronto crew were just glad to be having a go, and 'learned heaps!'. As lake sailors they found the harbour conditions, with their bullets and shadows, challenging by comparison, but all agreed that they honed their skills. They experienced great support from their home club and painted a hilarious picture of their Vice-Commodore who, unable to give up his coaching mantle while the girls were on the race track, waved his arms frantically and gesticulated wildly whilst offering inaudible instruction and encouragement from the shore – good on you Mel!

The regatta's youngest competitor, Jessica Campbell from Port Stephens, racing with NCYC on Boat 6, had an absolute blast and, unfazed by the blustery conditions, said the best part of the racing was the spinnaker work. When asked what she learned from the day, it was not surprising that she

immediately quipped, 'Not to wrap the spinnaker around the forestay!' Well yes, after some training on a very blowy Friday night to hone this kite work, Boat 6 was flying it well until... until we really weren't! It wrapped itself wildly and firmly as we crossed the finish line on Race 6, leaving us unable to drop the kite, unable to hoist the jib and, with the finish line at the very end of the basin, heading for the rocks! Mooloolaba may have provided the pre-



2nd place getters MYC crew:
Kerri Smith, Tanya Kelly,
Karen Young, Gayle Hoole.

INSET: NCYC Sailing
Academy Instructor Sarah
Petherbridge.



race excitement but I think NCYC grabbed that gauntlet and provided the end of day spectacle. Many thanks to Neal and Maureen on the mark boat for coming to our aid, and I guess we can be thankful it wasn't out the front of the pub! We reserved the crowd entertainment for a top mark moment in Race 3 that took us from hero to zero as we completed our penalty turn. Ahhhh, there they go – the “what-ifs!”

There were smiles all round aboard NCYC's Sailing Academy crew on Boat 5, who were thrilled with their 5th place. They laughed and danced their way through the day and, in their vibrant pink Hawaiian getup, created quite a picture. As Race Officer Robyn claimed, it was great to see a brand-new sailor in the fleet who just went out and had a go – well done Nicole Marshman. Awesome work! Well done also Skipper and Academy Instructor Sarah. The learning throughout the day for academy graduates Paulette, Caroline, and Dale, was evident in both the results and the broad grins back at the clubhouse. Caroline couldn't reply fast enough when asked if she would be back, 'YES, YES, YES!'

But it was perhaps Boat 2 that provided the most yarns. Janease and team overcame injury to two team members to keep sailing and take out third place. Oonagh had an altercation with the boom that saw her step off the boat for 2 races, to be ably replaced by Maureen Rae, doing double duty on the mark boat. Many thanks Maureen, and well



done Oonagh for getting back out there! Skipper Janease battled on after injuring her knee, describing, with champagne in hand by this stage, how three bandages, sail tape and duct tape, got her through! The management of these injuries typified the spirit that Robyn hails as one of the great successes of the regatta. Race Management volunteers stepping in and other competitors assisting with first aid are only some of the many highlights of the camaraderie with which the day was both run and contested. Injury aside, Janease was quick to praise her fellow competitors for the high standard of racing out on the track. As a regular local laser racer on the harbour, Janease said 'Harbour conditions, as always, delivered chaos at the top mark and threw in a 'chook raffle' element.' She was, however, thankful for the local knowledge gained in the recent laser Winter Series that enabled her to take advantage of the shifty conditions.

As for the race committee and the large team of volunteers, they could not have been happier. Huey sent a great breeze and as Robyn stated, 'The six x 2-lap races were just perfect – well managed by the crews, sailed in the spirit of the

regatta and a showcase for some very talented women's sailing.' All sailors were appreciative of the effort the two crews, from Mooloolaba, put in to travel south for the event, and a warm invitation was extended to join us again next year. This was immediately accepted, with the MYC teams expressing their thanks for Newcastle's generous hospitality, both on and off the water. NCYC have, they claimed, set the standard for how to host a regatta! Throughout the event, not only did the crews expand their skills, but race official Robyn gladly shared her race management experience and knowledge. Robyn is a passionate advocate for female racing officials, and she had some willing ears in Sam, Sharon and Maureen – many thanks Robyn.

The atmosphere at the close of this fabulous day was one of elated exhaustion. The applause was loud and heartfelt as the victorious crews took the podium to receive their Helly Hansen prize packs. And louder still as NCYC Commodore Steve Rae proudly announced that the club's recently purchased fleet of 8 x Olympic Class Elliott 6s will be on the water shortly, promising higher performance racing at next year's regatta. Be sure to get in early to secure a boat, however, as every single sailor declared vehemently, 'I'll be back!'

So how *do* you get involved in women's racing? Well, I can't put it better than Peta Norris. When asked how she got to a level where she felt comfortable to take on this first skippering role her

answer was simple and passionate, 'Sail on lots of boats – big, small, onshore, offshore, and LEARN. Get involved, ask questions, go to courses, and *do women's regattas!*' The rewards of racing are many and varied, and we encourage you to get out there and get amongst it. New faces are always welcomed and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible out there somewhere on the water.

Who sails? SheSAILS! You bet she does!

*Teams can delete one of their placings

** Start marker

Photos courtesy Simon Macks.



KRIS has been sailing for around 10 years and

enjoys both racing and cruising. She has raced with *SheSAILS@NCYC* all-female crews for several years and is a passionate advocate for women's sailing. After a knock-down en route from Antarctica in 2016 she traded the corporate world for the life of an Ocean Gypsy and has since cruised through Patagonia, crossed the South Pacific from Chile to Australia, set sail for Lord Howe for a barbeque and joined the cruising nomads on the Australian East Coast. She has written several short stories about her adventures, which can be found online under "Kris Anderson Ocean Gypsy", and is available for corporate speaking, where her 'Just Say Yes' philosophy and zest for life offers an inspirational message.

Contact: kristenanderson@bigpond.com



Flat bottomed girl

Views from the canal

VALERIE POORE takes the helm of our regular barge boat column.

Do-it-yourself slipway

One of the major upsides of living on a barge in Rotterdam's Oude Haven is that it's a two-minute saunter from our very own slipway. From the spot where I'm usually moored, it's a mere hundred and fifty metres; it could even be less, depending on how the barges have shifted. Neighbours tend to come and go, but wherever I am it takes me just a couple of minutes to walk up to the yard.

Anyway, the benefits of being so close to our own lift-out yard rarely need explaining; for any boat owner, they're mostly obvious, but it's worth mentioning those that aren't: we can, for instance, do everything ourselves (okay, so some might not see that as a plus, I'll agree), we can hire our own labour (if we can find it), and we can use our own equipment (actually, we have to as it's not provided). It's a real do-it-yourself yard, which helps to manage the costs. I won't say it's cheap, though, because owning a historic barge is the watery version of a money pit –



a bottomless one.

There is a downside, however, and like all bad news it's much more interesting. Our river, the Nieuwe Maas, is tidal and in the harbour we have an average rise and fall of approximately two metres although it can be more. When a hard, easterly wind is blowing, the water is pushed out to sea and our fall can be at least half as much again. And of course, high tide is affected correspondingly. This makes life both more demanding for us and entertaining for others.

Getting off the barge at low water becomes an exercise akin to mountain climbing without the mountain. It's also a lot wobblier. I've often been observed puffing, cursing and hauling myself up to the quay by amused onlookers, who, I might add, lift not one finger to help me. I suppose the show is too absorbing. Will she or won't she make it? Will the gangplank tilt just a bit more and tip her off? The hopeful gleam in their eyes disappears once I clamber over onto the

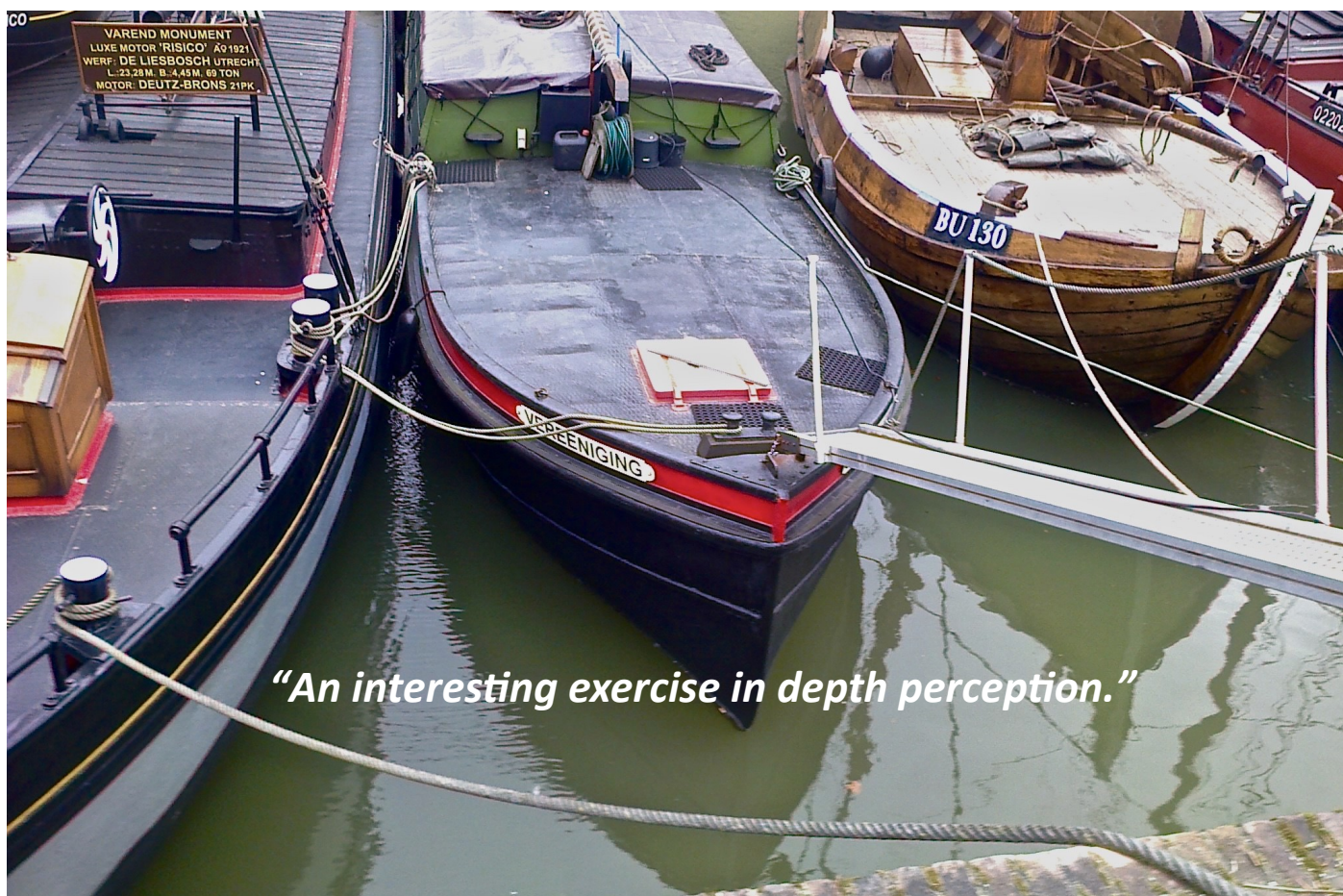
quay. Disappointment, probably.

Likewise, with an extreme high tide, descent to the quay can almost give me vertigo. We get these when we've had heavy rain and storms and the river is swollen with water coming down from Switzerland and Germany. When this deluge meets the incoming tide, it can push the levels up dramatically. On these occasions, the floodgates to the harbour are closed and we sit looking down at the quay until the water has fallen back to normal levels again. I must say I'm not sure which is worse – extreme high or extreme low – as whichever one it is, heights are always involved. And I don't like heights. But I'm digressing (as usual). Getting back to the point, you might be wondering by now what all this has to do with the slipway. Well, quite a lot, actually.

Bookings for a lift out are scheduled for Monday of every week. That's changeover day; a bit like holiday home hire, only it's no holiday, or picnic, or walk in the park even. Here at the *belling*, as the slipway is called in

Dutch, most people reserve blocks of one week, but you can have two or even three if you're lucky and it's available. Then at the end of your booking, you go back into the water on Monday again and the next occupant takes your place. The only variable is what time of day the changeover occurs. And what the weather is like on the day.

The last time I had a week on the slips, we had to start horribly early. It was mid-October, so the mornings were already dark and I had to be ready for the lift out at seven o'clock. This was because high water was at six-thirty. I should mention here that the *belling* is only accessible when the tide is in. The trolleys on which the barges sit roll down into the water on rails. At low tide, there isn't enough depth for them to be submerged, so we have to go up (and down) as close to high tide as possible, especially at east wind times. On this particular occasion, none of the yard personnel were willing to be there as early as six-thirty, so half an hour later it had to be. But that was bad enough because it was also blowing a gale of a very



"An interesting exercise in depth perception."

easterly variety and the water remained stubbornly low.

This meant some preparation was needed. So, there we were the afternoon before, my long suffering partner and I, wrestling to remove the gangplank, which brings me back to the challenging ascent I mentioned earlier. I can say without shame that trying to lift a thirty-kilo six-metre length of unwieldy aluminium onto the quay from a low deck, and at a steep angle, is not easy. I pulled, Koos pushed, and the plank wavered between us like an ungainly drunk. You know the kind: loose limbed, lead weighted and uncooperative. While the afternoon was grey, the air around us was blue; tempers were sorely lost.

‘Come on, Val, PULL! I can’t do this alone!’

‘I AM pulling. Maybe you should put YOUR back into PUSHING a bit more! Nothing’s happening here!’

‘Good grief! If that’s pulling, I’d like to see you in a tug of war. One yank from the other side and it would be over!’

‘There’s no need to be sarky. If that’s how you feel, YOU come up here and do it!’

‘Very funny. And where will you be?’

‘Well since I’m obviously useless, what does that matter?’ I spat.

This was the polite part.

Still, we did it and after climbing across another three barges so I could get back on board again, I collapsed with ill humour and no grace into bed.

The next morning, we were up at six to prepare for our grand journey across the harbour to the *belling*. That sounds a bit silly, doesn’t it? I mean we only had to go two hundred metres. The problem was that it was several months since I’d last moved the boat, and remember those neighbours coming and going? Well, several changes had taken place

in that time and now my ropes were buried, tangled and tied up with several others on the bollards. Some patient extraction was needed without disturbing the neighbouring barges. We also had to unplug the electricity cable, which involved still more amounts of patient unravelling. The shared electricity box is several metres away along the key, plenty enough distance for a cable to become lost in a web of its own weaving.

Then there’s manoeuvring in the harbour too. Sometimes we’re lucky and have a slack tide before it turns, but it doesn’t always happen. One of my neighbours once said, ‘The most difficult manoeuvre you’ll ever have to do is in this harbour,’ and I’m frequently reminded of this wisdom when we reverse my *Vereeniging* out of her box. With currents running every which way and meeting each other in the middle, it’s a fluid confusion of impressive proportions. Add wind to the mix and it can flummox the most experienced bargee. Since I’m more easily flummoxed by these vagaries of wind and water than almost anyone, it’s my good fortune that Koos was born on a commercial barge. He, bless him, has a feeling for the river and its moods like



Koos' old barge where on one occasion, the water got so low, the gangplank didn't even reach his deck.

no other.

My barge has a right turning propeller, meaning that in reverse, the stern wants to go left. We wanted to reverse to the right. The current didn't want us to do anything. Check mate. The wind helped a bit at first by countering the wheel effect, but the gusts were playing their own game of havoc, so Koos did what he always does in such situations: a pirouette. 'I'll let the boat do what it wants,' he shouted to me over the engine noise and the gale. He's good at that – the pirouettes, I mean, not the shouting. Well, that too sometimes, if certain adventures in gangplanks are anything to go by.

Anyway, I'm still trying to be a 21st century Canute; I want to control it all, but Koos knows better. After performing a wide and graceful 360-degree turn in the middle of the harbour, now ably assisted by both wind and current, we finally edged our way towards the slipway. It was seven o'clock and the horizon



Normal low water.



Normal high water.



Six metres of aluminium plank planking.

was glowing pink with early morning light. It was breath-taking. It was also a whole hour from when we'd started. Even so, it would be another half hour before we were high and dry.

As we waited for the previous week's incumbents to slide down the *helling*, I thought of how much was involved in just moving my barge this far. It was a huge amount of trouble for such a small journey, but at least we didn't need to have the bridge opened for us – a further delay suffered by many barges in the neighbouring harbour. They're even closer to the yard than we are, but it takes them twice as long to get there. No kidding.

So yes, we are blessed to have our slipway so close to home, I know we are. We are also blessed that it's non-commercial and DIY. But there are moments, just occasionally, when I feel like taking a long, slow tour right around Rotterdam first – if only to justify the time, trouble, and effort needed to navigate the few metres of this tidal harbour. When all's said and done, though, it's just one part



The *Vereeniging* high and dry.

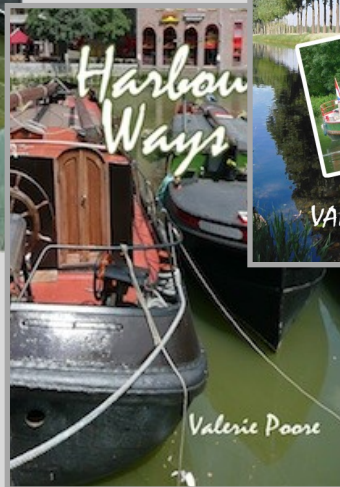
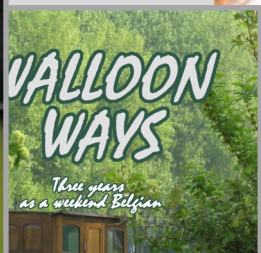
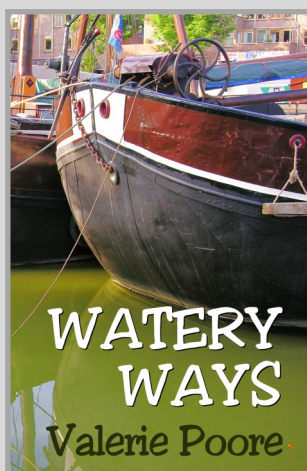
of life's rich tapestry, isn't it? Or perhaps I should rather say it's canal life in a nutshell: usually slow, often unpredictable, but always rewarding.



VALERIE POORE was born in London, England, and grew up in both north London and the west of Dorset. She moved to South Africa in 1981 but returned to Europe in 2001, which is when she began her love affair with the lovely Dutch flat-bottomed barges (hence the page title). She has lived on a barge in Rotterdam's Oude Haven since then, but summers see her and her partner on the Belgian and French canals. Val teaches writing skills at the local uni for a living, but has written several memoirs about her waterways life. Writing is a lifelong love as well as being her work.



Painting the bottom DIY style.



Valerie's books can be found at the following Amazon links:

Harbour Ways: <https://geni.us/CkA1N91>

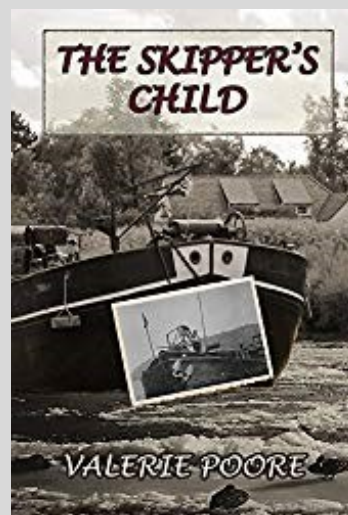
Walloon Ways: <http://geni.us/1CDTu>

Faring to France on a Shoe: <http://geni.us/AOt9kT>

Rotterdam Reflections: <http://geni.us/5pSxcgs>

The Skipper's Child: <http://geni.us/PBwQnP>

Watery Ways: <http://geni.us/lusDZT>



SisterShip Magazine cruises along with an international flavour. Our contributors hail from every corner of the globe. We encourage writers to maintain their voice and therefore their local spelling.

Measurements and navigation aids (IALA A and IALA B)* are different too. As valued readers, we just want to keep you on board with our ethos of a less regimented style, and a more international spirit!

*The International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA, previously known as International Association of Lighthouses) is an Inter Governmental Organisation founded in 1957 to collect and provide nautical expertise and advice.



Bridget Upton

Holly Anne

I started crewing on sailboats eight years ago when I was 55. First on a friend's Pacific Seacraft which was mostly booze cruises to nowhere in particular. It was fun, but I was told that to really learn how to sail you should race. So, I answered a crew needed ad. I went to meet them, and it felt like a job interview. I was proud to announce I had completed ASA 101 through 105. They looked at each other, 'You ever take any of those courses?' They laughed as neither of them had but took me on as crew anyhow. We certainly all learned a lot. After a particularly grueling J fest regatta as foredeck on a J22 on Galveston Bay I started thinking I was getting too old for all of that.

I also became a member of Texas Mariners Cruising Association (TMCA), this is a social boating group that goes on weekend destinations primarily around Galveston Bay. I was crewing on other people's boats and

sometimes staying on them or getting a hotel when that was an option. After selling some rental property I decided it was time to buy my own boat. As all dreamers do I started looking at various boat broker websites. Although she was a little out of my original budget, I had fallen in love with the picture of *Holly Anne* a 1988 26' Nordic Tug. She was located in Sanford Florida on the St. Johns River. Over the phone I became great friends with the broker, Jim Wilke at Luke Brown Yacht sales. We managed to get the survey, sea trial, and haul out in one day. After uncovering some needed repairs, the negotiations began but everyone knew (including me) I was going to buy her. Most of the repairs were taken care of in Sanford.



Meanwhile the broker paid for my extended sticker to keep her in Florida for three months. I hired a marina neighbor Captain Buddy Tasior (in my phone as Buddy Holly Anne) who had been overseeing the boat for the elderly, previous owners, to do or manage the needed repairs. He also agreed to train me how to handle and maintain her. I spent a month on Lake Monroe and St. Johns river learning about and playing on her. Though I had crewed and occasionally rented sailboats, this was my first boat and I was a little nervous to drive her in the sometimes-crowded conditions of Clear Lake/Kemah Texas area. Hiring a captain was in my opinion money well spent. OK, she does have a bow thruster but still...

My broker Jim Wilke helped me get a great transportation deal and she was trailered over to Texas! All the TMCA people were surprised to see I hadn't bought a sailboat but quickly agreed she was a great little boat and she has become the darling of the fleet! Many members in TMCA are helpful in diagnosing, coaching, looking over my shoulder, and on occasion, hands-on work when something isn't quite right. It's great to have the support of other boaters, especially Larry Friemel the current commodore.

I need to get *Holly Anne* resurveyed for insurance purposes as I had air conditioning and heat installed the first winter. Her topside has recently been painted. She has a woodburning stove, but I haven't tried it out yet, maybe this winter. There is always a list



of things to do but she's not just a hobby, she's my pet.

BRIDGET UPTON is a charter member and vice commodore of Gulf Area Yachting Society. She loves boating and boat people (mostly) and is having a great retirement!



Who needs a fridge anyway?

When I tell people we live on a yacht, I'm usually swamped with questions. How big is it, is it a sail or motor, how long have you lived aboard? I can also hear the one unasked question they're usually burning to spit out, but can't because it's rude: Are you loaded?

We are, most empirically, not. In England, where I'm from, *Yacht* is synonymous with *Gin Palace*. So now I've stopped using the word *Yacht* to describe our home, and now say *Boat*. Which confuses people even more, because in Queensland, where we are now, that usually means a little fishing tinny.

Our yacht, sorry, boat, sorry, um, floating home – is a 44 ft LOD (length on deck) steel ketch. So, it's not tiny, but not massive either. Especially given that it is a permanent home for two adults and two primary-school-aged children. It's an older boat too, so not too beamy. And it was designed for long-distance passage-making, so it has whopping great tanks for water and fuel; ergo, less space for storage. When we decided we wanted to sell everything and take the kids and run away to sea, we weren't quite brave enough to actually sell *everything*. So, not the house then – because: destitution. What if running away to sea wasn't actually as much fun as it sounded?

What if we hated it? Or the kids got seasick, or the boat sank? We were firmly committed to our goal, unless the goal meant we had to sell the family home.

So, we scratched around and sold cars and furniture and bits and pieces. We raided savings accounts and piggy banks and felt down the backs of sofas. We managed to come up with \$50,000, which we thought was quite impressive, but sadly not impressive enough to buy a flash boat. But there are a few decent, affordable boats out there if you look hard enough, although there were plenty of people eager to tell us that we were on a fool's errand, and it wasn't possible to buy a vessel for less than \$100,000 unless we were willing to put our lives at risk.

We found a beautiful strong boat for our \$50,000 and have been living aboard for nearly a year. We've put another \$15,000 into her and she's sturdy and sea-kindly and looks after us very well. Unfortunately, we have had to sacrifice a few creature comforts in order to make our lifestyle work. Just a few minor things, like a fridge. And a washing machine. And a shower.

To be fair, we do actually have a fridge. It's

just rather on the small side. Think of a smallish esky, and you get the idea. It's also top loading, so you have to lift a big bulky insulated lid to delve into it. And finally, it's at chest height, in a stoop-way, so yes, you do need to call on your contortionist skills to get the milk out. But other than that, it's a great fridge! We're lucky to even have a fridge, I tell myself and my family, stoutly. Some sailors have no fridge at all! Wouldn't that be frightful? My children eye the titchy high-up unit with the heavy lid that they can't even reach the milk out of, for their breakfast, and nod doubtfully.

The downside to the fridge, apart from actually getting into it, is that it's just a small deep box. So anything you do put in tends to get squashed. I did get creative with small crates, but they're quite hard to lift out with one hand, whilst you're stooped in the stoop-way. And also, it fills up quite quickly. Once you've loaded in some milk, yoghurt, ham, butter, some carrots and lettuce and a couple of the mandatory beers, you're pretty much out of space. Shopping regularly works well. Shopping regularly also works well when you

have access to shops – not so many supermarkets at remote anchorages, unfortunately. But you know what? We manage.

On to laundry, a necessary evil. I have friends who have washing machines on board, and I've also lived on similar-sized boats with washing machines. Yup, they're fab. I do think that you also need a water-maker or access to mains water (i.e. a marina) to really enjoy them. We have a perfectly adequate bucket and a plunger with holes drilled in the suction-cup bit, but it really isn't the same. Interestingly though, when we're not land based, we don't generate nearly as much dirty clothing. I'm not sure if this is because we wear so little when we're not attached to land, or if it's because we just don't care if we get a bit smelly.

We're currently in a marina for a while, and it's marvellous to have access to the laundry. But it does tend to devour our gold coins – it's around \$10 a load to wash and dry – and full laundry bags are quite cumbersome to lug up and down pontoons. I look at it as daily exercise and occasionally wonder what my step-count would be if I wore a pedometer.

The last of the creature comforts that I occasionally mourn is a big hot shower. OK, we live and cruise in Queensland, so it's not cold too often. But, I'm sorry, I don't always want a cold shower. I especially don't want a cold shower IN THE TOILET. With a basin tap that pulls out and has to be held, so you



Our low-tech washing machine.



The fridge in the stoopway #designfail!

direct water with one hand and soap yourself with the other. With miniscule floor-drains that are welded in and inaccessible for cleaning, so you're usually standing in a few centimeters of sudsy water before it slowly soaks away to the grey tank. No, I don't really want that, but that's what I have. The only way to make this slightly more bearable, for some reason, is singing. The more operatically, the better. Something about the expression of the high notes seems to partially ameliorate the suffering.

My husband has got around the whole issue by hoisting a solar bladder shower up the mainmast, and he and our young girls merrily wash away on deck, holding on and swaying if there's a bit of chop around. They happily shower in their swimming togs in a crowded anchorage and take a more *au naturelle* approach in remote locations. This, I cannot do. Don't judge me. I just prefer a little more privacy and stability for my ablutions.

So these are the three things I miss the most now that we live on board a boat. We have recently been renovating an old rental unit, with an eye to selling it and using the capital to cruise a bit longer. In the course of our painting and cleaning, I have been eyeing up the kitchen. There is a big space there, where a big fridge would fit very nicely. Plus there is not just a washing machine, but an entire room devoted to laundry needs. And – cherry on the cake – not one, but two showers. With big drains, fixed heads, and hot water. Ah, the luxury.



Drying off after a deck shower.

It did flash through my mind that instead of selling the unit, we could sell the boat and move ashore for a bit. And have lots of showers, clean clothes, and fresh veggies.

But then I realised what I'd miss. I'd miss the adventures, the voyages into the unknown. Poring over a chart and wondering where to go next. Sunsets. Catching dinner. Watching the kids spend hours, absorbed, on a remote beach with stones and shells and old turtle bones. Sun, rain, wind, stars, tides, salt-spray. The sheer wild beauty of raw, uncompromised nature, on her own terms.

And I realised that singing in the shower was a small price to pay.



ANNABEL STEWART was born in the UK to sailing mad parents, and seemed to spend a lot of her childhood slogging across the English Channel and peering into fog. As an adult she did a variety of jobs, including working as a professional sailor for some years in the Med and Caribbean, before meeting her Australian husband and settling in Queensland. Annabel's first book is due for release in 2018 and she's working on her second. She loves hearing from readers and can be contacted on annabelstewartwrites@gmail.com

The Dragon Ladies

Susannah Gillam



Dragon waiting for the crew.

Dragon boating is a sport that combines paddling with tradition, colour, and the excitement of competition. Loud, energetic, and vibrant, it attracts participants from all ages. Women, however, represent about two thirds of dragon paddlers in Australia. It is low impact, improves core stability, and provides a support network as well as friendships. Women take key roles as athletes, administrators, and race officials.

Dragon boats come in different sizes taking 10, 20, and even 50 paddlers seated in pairs down the length of these narrow vessels. The most common modern boats are about 12 m in length and constructed of fibreglass. The 20 seat boats weigh about 250 kg with buoyancy in the front and rear tanks. A drummer is seated at the front and a sweep steers the boat at the back. Fully loaded these boats can weigh up to two tons so manoeuvring requires good team work and forward planning. With a decorative golden dragon head and tail these boats make an impressive sight at full speed.

Whilst modern international dragon boat racing emerged in the late 1970s, the sport is



Lake Barrington Tasmania.

thought to have originated in Central Southern China over 2,000 years ago. It is steeped in ceremony and tradition with a number of cultural practices still remaining within the sport today. For example, the awakening of the dragon involves a Taoist priest or representative placing a red dot of paint on the eyes of the dragon head awakening it from slumber. This is carried out for all new fibreglass dragon boats prior to launching for the first time.

All-female crews are a common category at competition regattas and one particular group of female competitors comes under the banner of the International Breast Cancer Paddlers' Commission (IBCPC). Members of this group are breast cancer survivors and supporters. The introduction of dragon boating to women recovering from breast cancer originated in Canada in the 90s and the benefits to their health, fitness, and

wellbeing quickly spread across the world. Whilst there are variations in the name given in each country, for example Dragons Abreast in Australia, the ethos is the same: fitness and friendship with a generous splash of pink. Dragons Abreast (DA) teams can easily be identified by their pink uniform, headwear, and great attitude. Whilst DA teams celebrate participation of the sport, regattas also provide an opportunity to promote awareness of breast cancer. During the flower ceremony, flowers are scattered into the water from rafted boats and in this quiet moment participants and spectators have an opportunity to reflect and acknowledge those who have lived or are living with the breast cancer.

The most common form of dragon boat racing is a sprint of about 200 m. Boats line up under the direction of the race starter who moves boats forwards or backwards as required. When the line-up is deemed to be fair, the race starts. Good team work is essential as twenty paddlers strive to work together timing each stroke of the paddle to enter and exit the water as one. Paddling each

stroke in unison can be challenging and in competition each stroke is timed by the beat of drum. The drummer, usually the smallest member of the team, sits at the front of the boat facing the rest of team shouting encouragement over the shouting and drum beat of other competitors. Standing at the back of the boat is the sweep who steers using a long sweep oar and gives directions to the crew. Being accustomed to tiller steering facilitates the transition into sweeping a dragon boat but standing up and balancing on this narrow boat can take some getting

Molly drumming for Geelong Dragon Boat Club.



The Dragons Abreast team Battle of the Barwon in Pink.



Red flag at Mile High Regatta, Falls Creek Victoria.

used to. Races of this length generally last about a minute.

The sport attracts a diverse range of people from youth to retirees, and internationally competitive athletes to social paddlers. Dragon boat clubs can be found throughout Australia on rivers, lakes and the coast, and the sport is growing. Well within the capabilities of an active adult or junior, dragon boating offers exercise, the chance to

be on the water in lovely locations and the camaraderie and support of a team.

SUSANNAH has sailed most of her life and been a dragon boat paddler for 10 years. She actively promotes female participation in these sports and is a qualified Australian Sailing Coach and Instructor. A teacher by profession, Susannah recently started "Sailing Gear for Women and Girls" an online shop which specialises in female water sports clothing.

An advertisement for 'Sailing Gear for Women and Girls'. On the left, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue and black long-sleeved sailing top and black leggings, stands with her arms crossed. To her right is a white rectangular box containing the company logo (a green stylized 'SG' with 'SAILING GEAR FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS' underneath), the text 'Great Range of Yacht, Dinghy, Paddle and Board Clothing', the phrase 'Female Sizes and Styles' in a green script font, and 'Free Shipping in Australia'. At the bottom of the box is the website address 'www.sailinggearforwomenandgirls.com.au' flanked by horizontal lines.



Short story competition for women on the water!

Entries open Dec
1st 2018 and
close Feb 1st
2019.

Prize money!
Free entry!

CHANGING PLACES

Have you struggled emotionally
with leaving your land-based
home to go to sea?

Or perhaps the other way around -
coming back from sea-going
adventures?

We want to hear your stories!

www.sistershipmagazine.com/writing-competition/



Yoga4Yachties



Hi, I'm Leanne Hembrow, John and I run the 'Down Under Rally' but I am also known as Yoga4Yachties. I have been a practicing yogi on board our sailing vessels for 10 years travelling ports of the world and a qualified Yoga Teacher since 2013.

I share my love of Yoga with Down Under Rally Participants and my Sailing Community in various anchorages from Australia to Fiji, check out my website www.yoga4yachties.com to join one of my Yoga Retreats and see my yearly class schedule. Our Catamaran Songlines displays my Yoga4Yachties Logo, please come and say "Hi" if we are anchored nearby, I would love to share a class with you.

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Sheroes!

SEW MAD REGATTA

PATTI STICKLE

We all know what incredible trust, friendships, and bonds are formed with your sailing buddies. We trust our lives to each other, we depend on one another... it's part of the sport. If you are lucky enough to have these friends, well, you are lucky enough.

I am fortunate to be part of a great yacht club that supports active women sailors... and there are a bunch of us! Every year we have one all-ladies regatta named SEW MAD. The name seems a little strange until you learn that the letters are the initials of the two women that started this regatta 28 years ago. The event grows every year. This year we had over 50 women racing at Lake Canyon Yacht Club on Canyon Lake, Texas.

This year's race was dedicated to one of my best friends and sailing buddies, Joy. Joy passed away early this year after a short battle with a leukemia related cancer. For years, our families and friends raced in our annual Leukemia Cup Regatta to raise money to fight this disease. Little did we know this year's Leukemia Cup Regatta would also be in memory of our close and dear friend. We were all numb and couldn't believe we were racing without her. It was during this time we realized how sailing was helping to heal our grief.

For the SEW MAD Regatta Joy's partner had asked me to be on helm of their boat...truly an honor. It was one of those races from hell... everything went wrong, starting (or rather not starting!) with a dead battery. We finally got out to the regatta late, blew out a jib, finished all three races, turned on engine



key... dead battery again. We were a crew of four women with everything thrown at us that could go wrong, but we never gave up. That's what we women do... just keep sailing.

All the boats had lavender and white streamers flying aft... Joy's favorite colors. I know she was looking down on the women in the regatta and smiling. I know she was proud of us on her boat, was smiling, then laughed her ass off!

On a good note... we did win the Floppy Sail Award!*

*The award presented to the team that is in last place for each of the fleets. Their sails must have been 'flopping' during the race.

PHOTO: Patti and crew in SEW MAD Women's Regatta racing with over 50 women sailors!

The beauty of a small boat



Lati, Spain.

Small boats are lovely to look at. They can also be brilliant to sail, but one of the most important considerations is whether they are comfortable to live on. This is especially important if there are two people.

My first experience with offshore sailing was in a 24-foot (7.3m) Primaat, a Van der Stadt plywood yacht, in 1980. I was young, innocent, and knew nothing about sailing. My adventurer husband Bill could barely contain his excitement when he found a boat we could afford berthed in Sydney harbour. I was happy to quit my job in a paint shop in Canberra and quench my yearning for travel. She was the first 'little house' we could own, floating on the water to go wherever we wanted.

With \$1,000 in the bank, our active cattle dog, and the disbelieving faces of my parents, we set out on our adventure. The previous owner left us with charts for Australia and not much else. The dinghy was an inflatable and had to be blown up by mouth. Weather forecasting was a quick look in the newspaper weather map before we left, and the VHF radio gave us occasional weather forecasts. No self-steering, no



Lati, Cephalonia Greece 2013.

sounder, and no toilet. Beds were two bunks and cooking was done on a kero stove. I didn't expect there to be a shower or refrigeration as I knew no better. It was more luxurious than camping.

Alouette was her name and we sailed her from Sydney to Brisbane crossing almost every bar so Jane, our dog, could go to the toilet (and us too), as all we had was a bucket. I suffered with sea-sickness and sometimes couldn't

wait to get off. But there were other times where the sea, sky, and being together made for magnificent days of, 'Wow! We can go anywhere! The wind is free!' *Alouette* sailed well which put the most satisfied and happy face on my captain. There were times where the anchor dragged, we hit a bridge, we ran aground, and things broke but we kept going. Bill is the sailor, he can fix anything and is calm and assuring by nature. I complained about the lack of space and comforts, but this did not stop me becoming pregnant with our first child on this virgin voyage. So, a bigger and more comfortable boat was our plan. This took many years.

Skip forward to 1994, two teenage children later, a mortgage, and full-time jobs. We had just launched our dream yacht, another plywood monohull (designed by Gary Lidgard), some 45 foot (13.7m) long that Bill built with a mate from a bare hull in our back yard. *Valiam* (combination of our kid's names Vashti and Liam – yes, a play on words!) is sleek, fast and comfortable. We eventually circumnavigated the world in her, our life-long dream. You would think that this would be enough of a boat for us and indeed it was for me.

But not so for Bill. Unknown to me he continued perusing eBay advertisements for boats; small boats. One day he sheepishly announced that he had the winning bid for a boat in the US Virgin Islands, in the Caribbean. *What? Was he mad?*

After a few days of tears, I decided to support this crazy whim of his. This boat was a timber yacht built in 1965 and a design he always admired – a 31 foot (9.4 m) North Sea by Kim Holman.

When we arrived and I first laid eyes on her she was in a horrible condition; ransacked, almost stolen by pirates, looking pitiful and disgusting. Luckily, we had friends with a comfortable catamaran to stay on nearby. For three months, after a lot of sweat, money,



and a few tears, this forlorn boat *Lati* emerged like Cinderella from the dusty mosquito ridden boat yard. She was a feral, homeless child that we adopted, and I grew to love her.

Comforts? Back to single bunks in the v-berth and no refrigeration but she did have a toilet. We were too old to get pregnant this time in our 50s! The plan was to sail *Lati* to Europe and the Mediterranean. The locals, who knew us, watching our progress thought we were crazy. People our age don't sail small boats across oceans. Besides she still looked worn, despite the repairs and paint job. The sails were old, and the engine had its issues. It was one of the biggest headaches as it had seized up, but somehow Bill got it going again. *Lati* sailed well taking us safely across the North Atlantic to the Azores after 25 days at sea, our longest ocean passage. Her engine was a pain, but we could rely on her sails.



Valiam, Fiji 2009 (Bronwyn Zemanek).



Lati, Poros Greece 2014 (Elizabeth Tyler).

After a delicious break in the Azores of two weeks we arrived exultant in Portugal after another 13 days at sea. The engine had spat the dummy (broken water pump) so we had to anchor without it, in the busy harbour of Lagos in 25 knot winds. I couldn't believe we had arrived in Europe! It was always my dream to sail the Med and I was disappointed we didn't get there during our circumnavigation on our mother ship *Valiam*. This was Bill's reasoning in buying *Lati*.

For the next three years we enjoyed summers in Europe sailing *Lati* as far as Greece and Turkey. *Lati* was not the big comfortable boat I would have preferred, but she made friends everywhere we went with her pretty blue hull. Whenever the engine broke down, we made more friends. She was easier to manoeuvre into small harbours where many boats were jammed in. A small boat is cheap to berth, even in marinas. We would tie up, step off on to a paved street to enjoy the tavernas a few metres away. Small pretty anchorages with deep clear blue water fringed with pebbly beaches in the Greek islands were the highlight.

Each winter we left her on the hard, which was very cheap for a monohull her size. *Lati's* electrics were simple, so less stress about keeping the essentials charged. I always made sure our satellite phone and iPad were charged as these were our life line. There is something special and beautiful about sailing a small boat that keeps you safe across oceans, even if she doesn't have all the mod cons of large expensive boats. Eventually we sold her but for some reason we missed her terribly.

This is not the end of this small boat story. Recently Bill bought *another* small boat. Did I throw my hands up in exasperation? Yes, and probably more than that. At least this one is in Australia this time. She's a 26-foot Folk Boat named *Bohemian*. I've been on board once and she's lovely, but not comfortable for me. She is much like our first boat



Bohemian, Port Stephens 2018 (Kristi Foster).

Alouette with no headroom, two single bunks, and no toilet. Lucky for me Bill managed to find male crew to sail her up to Iluka from Port Stephens. A boy's adventure trip with me as land crew, following them and giving weather forecasts. I lived the trip with them and felt relieved when they arrived safely. *Bohemian* will be enjoyed on the Clarence River where Bill hopes to take our grandchildren sailing.

When I view *Bohemian* bobbing about on her mooring from the shore, she's such a pretty little thing, reminding me so much of those first exciting adventurous days on *Alouette* nearly 40 years ago.



Linda aboard *Bohemian*.

LINDA FRYLINK ANDERSON:

Linda set sail to circumnavigate the world with Bill aka 'Captain Underpants' aboard a boat built in their backyard. Armed with her satellite phone and laptop, Linda could write her blog anywhere in the world. Enjoying her tales, readers of Linda's blog encouraged her to write a book. Linda published her first memoir 'Sailing in my Sarong, Around the World – a 30-year dream' colourfully illustrated with her original art and photography in 2010. Proudly now in its 6th edition and being enjoyed by thousands around the world.



Linda's second book 'Salvage in my Sarong, The Mediterranean dream in a rescued boat,' tells the remarkable story of how Captain Underpants surprises her (and himself), by winning an online bid for a wreck of a boat in the Caribbean. *Latí* had been abandoned, ransacked, and almost stolen by pirates. Eventually a romantic cruise through the Mediterranean to the Greek islands became a reality.

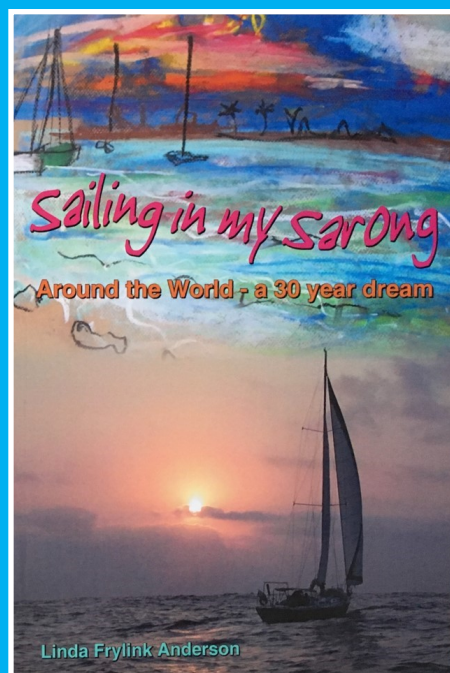
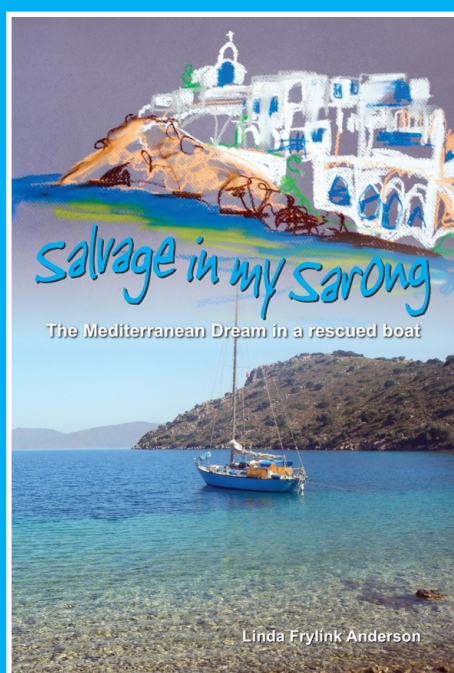
Linda still likes to wear sarongs and loves nothing more than sharing her passion for art and travel, encouraging and motivating others to live their own dreams. These days she escapes the world to her bush studio in northern New South Wales and heads off to sea when she hears the call of the ocean.

www.valiam.com.au (to order books signed by Linda)

Facebook Page: Sailing in my Sarong

Email: valiam1@hotmail.com

www.lindafrylink.wordpress.com (Linda's artwork)



SisterShip's Introduction to Coastal Navigation course



The team at *SisterShip* Magazine are passionate about proper navigation and empowering women. Combine these passions and what do you get? A coastal navigation course for women, taught by women.

Our first all-women navigation course at beautiful Lake Macquarie Yacht Club, in October, was a great success with women from New South Wales and Queensland coming together to learn in a friendly and comfortable environment and a stunning location.

When teaching navigation, the trainer must translate chart work into real-life scenarios. And that's what we do at *SisterShip* Magazine with subjects such as:

“Where on earth are we?” But more importantly, “What does this mean?”

Navigation is an art not a science; determining where we are and what direction and distance we must go.



We must learn where we are and what this means, for example:

- How do I get to where I want to go safely?
- At all times knowing where my safe water is; and
- The big picture for passage planning.

We can't prepare for every eventuality at sea, but the prudent mariner plans as best they can with what's at hand.

The attendees worked through a series of practical exercises over the weekend,

including plotting, bearings, set and drift, and deduced reckoning.

Friendships were formed and confidence on the water increased.

Register your interest with us at editor@sistershipmagazine.com, there will be more navigation courses – PLUS a new course that everyone on the water will love. Coming soon!





Jill Reid's Gold Duke of Edinburgh Expedition aboard the *Golden Vanity*

I completed my Gold Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Expedition over 10 days aboard the *Golden Vanity*, and I'm happy to say that it was an amazing experience! *Golden Vanity* is a small gaff cutter from Brixham, South Devon, but it is the biggest sailing boat that I have been on. This voyage was also my first time sailing on the sea. The journey encouraged me to try things that are usually out of my comfort zone – for example, eating fish we caught from the sea.

I would like to say a huge thank you to the James Myatt Trust for supporting this voyage because it has changed my life, allowing me to see and experience things that I wouldn't have been able to otherwise.

Day One: I met the other six people joining me onboard, and two crew. We all immediately got on, and by the end of the day, it felt like we'd known each other for months. We spent the day in a classroom, learning theory for the RYA Essential Navigation and Seamanship course. We left some of our gear in the classroom as we could only take what we needed for four days. We created a menu for the next four days, before splitting up into two groups.

One group carried the bags to the boat, and the other group bought all the food. We regrouped later at the boat and ate the most delicious meal – carbonara, cooked by one of the crew.

Day Two was a warm and sunny day as we sailed from Brixham to Salcombe. It was a good start the voyage, as the wind wasn't that strong, and we were gently introduced to the sails and ropes, as well as our duties. We stopped in a bay for a short time and went swimming because it was so hot. It was cold in the water, but fun jumping off the boat! We then motored the rest of the way to Salcombe as there wasn't enough wind to sail, but we still practised putting the sails up and down on the journey. We also spotted some dolphins and porpoises, which came over to the boat and swam under us! It was relaxing and enjoyable as everyone was super nice. I even had the chance to steer the boat as we got closer to Salcombe – exciting!

Day Three: we travelled from Salcombe to Plymouth. We sailed most of the way in the stiff wind. It was my day to cook lunch and dinner. We were running behind schedule, so preparation started before we arrived at the

dock – deciding to cook cottage pie may not have been our smartest decision, especially when the boat was constantly tacking, and we were trying to prop the dishes up so the meat was level! Nevertheless, we got through it, and finally placed both pans in the oven without losing too much. In the end, everyone loved it, clamouring for seconds!

Day Four started bright and early at 6 am. Because we got up so early, we decided to start a watch system, and once we were on our way to Dartmouth, we put it in place. I was in the first group that were off-watch, and we just slept up on deck for a few hours. After that, we felt super refreshed and ready to sail. We sailed into Dartmouth in the early afternoon, so we could take another nap when we got there – we were all tired. Unfortunately, I started to feel quite seasick when we went onto land which wasn't nice, but I took some seasickness tablets before going to bed.

On **Day Five** we travelled back to Brixham. Thankfully I was feeling better. We started fishing in Dartmouth while we were still tied up to the buoy, and we managed to catch a couple of fish! However, we also attracted a seal – we named him Sammy, and fed him the fish we'd already caught. He was so cute! We soon set off for Brixham, catching 13 fish on the way which we later made into fish fingers. We also made brownies coated with marshmallows on top. I learnt how to write a logbook entry which was very interesting,

and it came into use when we did our night sail. We arrived to Brixham quickly and spent the rest of the day crabbing before having dinner.

Day Six consisted of more theory for the RYA Essential Navigation and Seamanship course, as well as coming up with a menu for the next four days, and shopping for the ingredients. We had fish and chips for dinner as we saved over £100!

We set off for our Gold DofE expedition in the afternoon of **Day Seven** with the aim of night sailing to Plymouth, and it started off positively. We were working together well as a team and were productive. But soon after we set off, it fell apart because we were sailing with bad cross wind-tide weather. We abandoned the plan of going to Plymouth and instead sailed to Dartmouth. We arrived late in the evening, everyone was tired and eager for bed. We quickly put together a new plan for the next day, before tucking into our bunks.

Day Eight we woke up very early at around 5:45 am. The new plan commenced, to sail to Salcombe. Once we hauled all our sails up, we started the watch system which we designed the night before. The weather was good, and we sailed into Salcombe at around 12 pm. We ate lunch, then rushed over to the showers, desperate for a clean! We had a relaxing evening on the boat, playing games and socialised with each other.



Day Nine was one of the most exciting days of the whole trip because we were going to do our night sail! We set off from Salcombe in the late afternoon after planning the passage thoroughly before anchoring for dinner and a nap. We started heading towards Babbacombe Bay around 9:30 pm, and we quickly implemented watch systems again once we had set off. It was an amazing experience, we saw shooting stars and planets from the boat! It did get a little scary as we got closer to Babbacombe Bay because it was so dark as well as everyone being nervous and tired. We had to prepare the boat for attaching to a buoy in the dark, as well as putting all of the sails down and away in the dark, which we found tricky in the day, let alone pitch black. It all went well, and we were able to safely attach to the buoy and finally go to sleep.

Day Ten was the final day of the expedition, and we motored back to Brixham as there was little wind. Once in Brixham, we had to strip down and clean the entire boat. We



Sammy the seal, Dartmouth.



The crew.

worked as a team and were so productive that we finished it within a few hours. We took part in some rowing lessons in the Brixham Harbour in order to allow us to achieve our RYA Competent Crew certificate. Lastly, we gave our Gold DofE presentation as a team to our Assessor, before finding out that we had passed and received the certificates for RYA Essential Navigation and Seamanship. We all said our goodbyes to each other before travelling home.

Prior to the voyage, I was a bit anxious but also excited. I needn't have been worried. The crew were supportive and helpful. The teams were friendly. I learned so much about boats, the water, the sky, wildlife, sailing, but also about myself. I whole-heartedly recommend this trip. I intend to go out on more sea-voyages, having fun and learning even more about different boats and sailing on the sea. Maybe I will even end up getting more qualifications while doing so.



17 year old JILL REID is based in the UK.

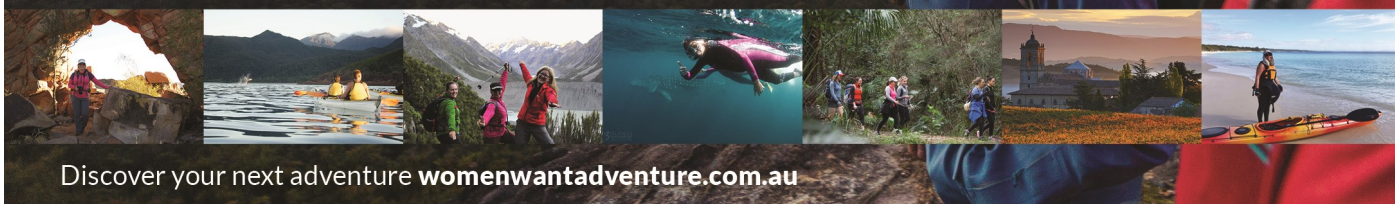


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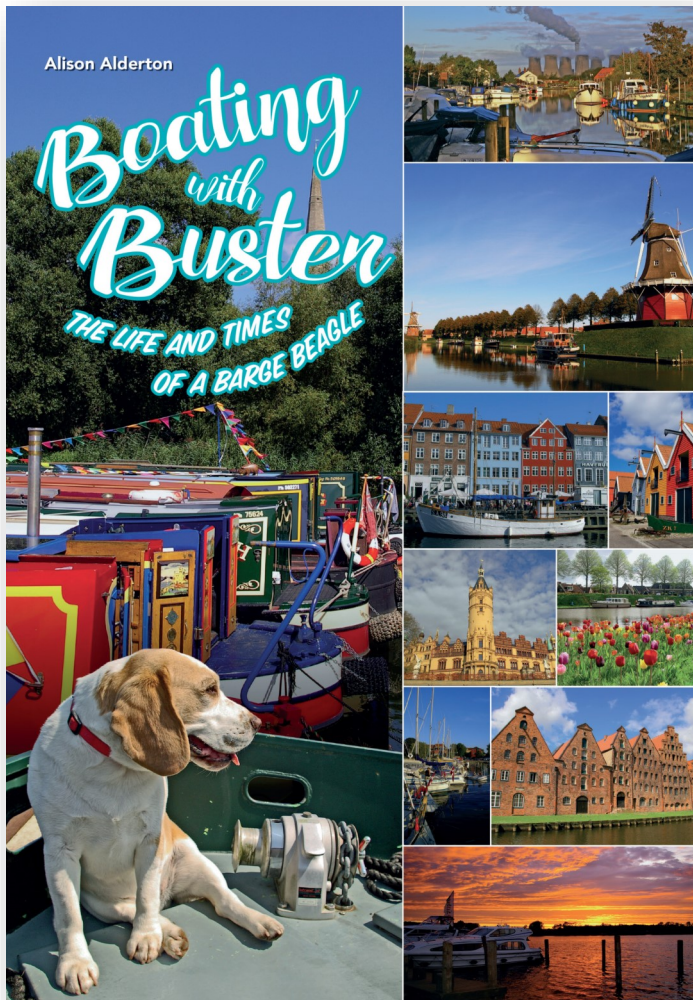
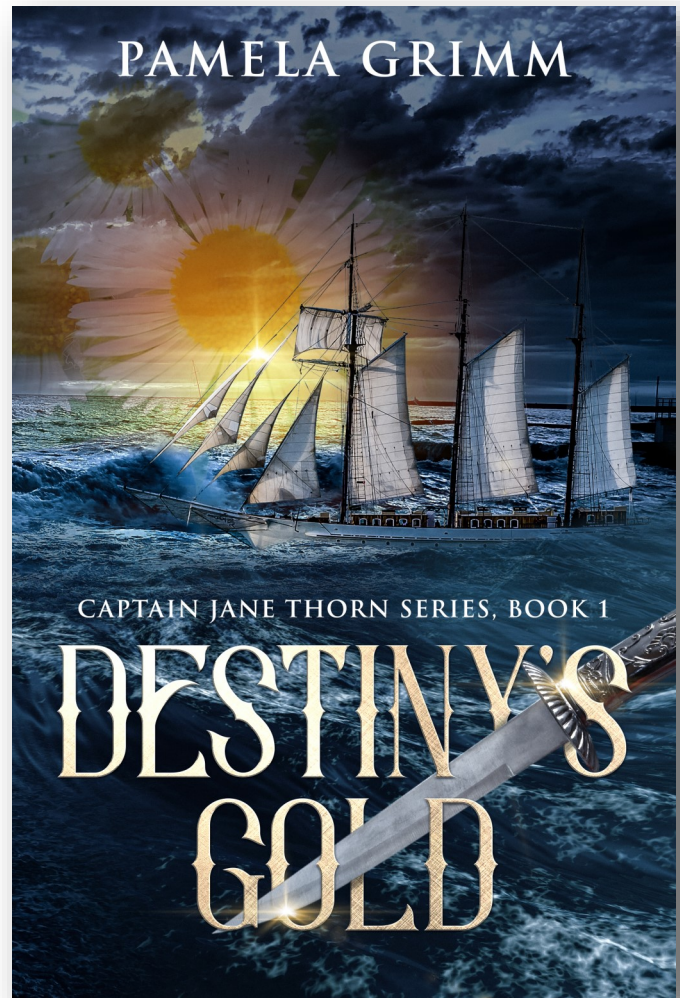
Political intrigue and mystery dog the voyage, and those who underestimate the captain's skill and business acumen do so at their peril.

This is historical, nautical fiction with a fresh new take. *Destiny's Gold* author Pamela Grimm has created an indomitable female character and a storyline that keeps you guessing.

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FEATURED ARTIST: EMILY KALINA

Emily Kalina graduated from Rhode Island School of Design in 2003 with a Degree in Illustration. Emily immediately entered the gallery world in which she exhibited and sold her signature style of layered, textured, and patterned watercolors. As a young watercolor artist Kalina always had an eye for the interplay of color, texture and layering. This skill quickly evolved and expanded. In 2009 as she left the gallery world to pursue the exciting world of print and textile design. Using her watercolors as a basis for her prints, she combines her sharp eye for trends with an innate sense of color and style to produce vibrant designs.

Kalina currently licenses her artwork with The World Art Group, a leading art producer providing original artwork and on demand custom and design printing for large retail and online business as well as the hospitality industry. You can find her work on Amazon, Walmart, Bed Bath and Beyond, Racheal Ray, Wayfair, prints.com, art.com, allposters.com, and icanvas.com, among many others. In addition, she creates commissioned artwork, sells her own line of scarves, products, and prints through her website.

To shop her artwork and products, check out <https://kalina-designs.myshopify.com/>.

See a selection of her full portfolio, visit <http://www.emilykalina.com/>

If you are interested in a commission, please contact Emily.



How to Socialize on a Boat While on a Budget

Heather C. Thomas

Cruisers gather for an informal Happy Hour at Big Major's Spot, Exumas, Bahamas.

When asked to write about budget socializing for *Sistership* Magazine, I thought, *when aren't we entertaining on a budget?* My husband and I spend eight months each year aboard boats, cruising during the late winter and spring on our 40-year-old trawler in the Exumas, Bahamas, and passing the summer and autumn aboard our canal cruiser in France. During our eight years of cruising, I have found many of our fellow long-term cruisers are also on a budget. I've observed that both my fellow Bahamian out-island cruisers and my fellow European canal cruisers follow two basic principles for memorable entertaining on a budget; community involvement and creativity.

Hosting a party can be expensive and involve a lot of work, especially for those of us with small galleys. Cruisers will often participate in potlucks, which spread the effort and the cost of an event. Organization by the host will control the blood-sugar overload that can result in a "meal" of four desserts. When hosting, I will usually assign a course to a guest, e.g., please bring a salad, or please bring an appetizer. I've even been to parties where the host asked me in advance if she

could assign me a specific dish and emailed me the recipe a week in advance. Sharing both the cost and the effort eases the burdens of entertainment.

Community involvement also includes shared resources such as an event space. Over the years, the community of cruisers at Big Major's Spot in the Exumas has constructed picnic tables, chairs, and a buffet table. Informal potlucks happen every week during the season and cruisers gather for happy hour nearly every evening. The incredible natural beauty of the area, the ease of declaring a spontaneous potluck dinner, and the constant flux of boats in and out of the anchorage create a wonderful atmosphere for budget socializing. No decorations or fancy food are required for a great evening.

Creativity transforms an everyday gathering into an exceptional event. You can make an event memorable by throwing an unusually-themed party or by hosting an event with fun decorations. By using a little forethought you can create a special evening with your friends.



Some ideas to get you started.

What about a nautical-attire themed Holiday party? We're boaters after all! Encourage guests to pull out their Bretton stripes or their logoed crew wear, to sport a navy blazer and boat shoes or to don a black skull cap à la Jacques Cousteau. Remember, the goal is not to force your guests to go shopping for yet another fancy outfit but to have them dig in their closets and find a fun outfit. After all, they are also probably on a budget.

An idea for European Barging Budget Entertaining

Everybody must wear something they purchased at a flea market or a street market. Give newcomers to the canals a few weeks warning, but old timers are sure to have items aboard. Many canal ports have public spots for entertaining. Consider decorating the picnic tables with tablecloths, asking folks to contribute battery-powered votives. A simple evening potluck at communal tables can be elevated by the efforts of all the guests.

An idea for Bahamas Cruising Budget Entertaining

Folks generally don't have a lot of extra stuff when cruising the tropical out islands. A creative category like "cruisers' formal" where at least one item of clothing is either a (dry) bathing suit or related to swimming (goggles, rash guard, etc.) will allow everybody to participate. Participants'

creativity will surely produce some memorable outfits.

And finally, creativity can help cut the biggest expense of throwing a party – providing drinks to the guests. Serving inexpensive wine in huge bottles or from a box screams cheap party. But, by mulling the wine, making it into sangria or serving a punch, you can serve something that tastes bigger than it costs. If you serve box wine, save some nice-looking liquor bottles or lemonade bottles (take the labels off) and use them as decanters for the box wines. The following are two drink recipes we serve in the various cruising grounds we frequent.

European Barging Budget Entertaining Recipe

"Vin Basilic"

A French chef taught me to make basil-infused white wine. Served cold, this infusion has a subtle and refreshing flavor that is perfect on a hot summer day.

Ingredients

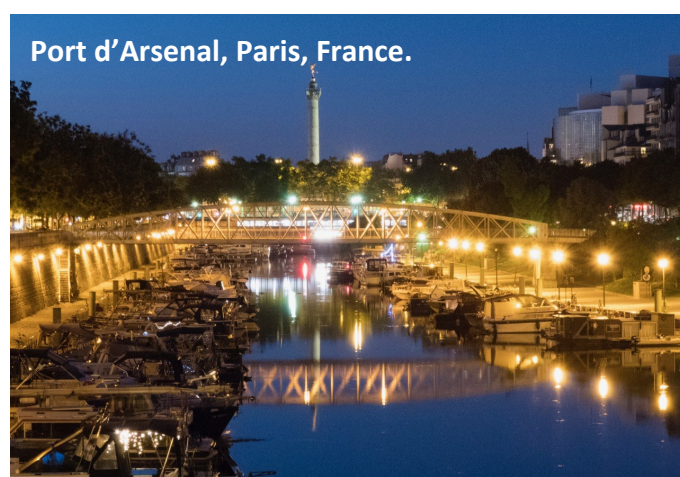
1 bottle of inexpensive white wine

1 large bunch of fresh basil

½ to 1 cup of sugar

Time

Prepare 48 hours in advance



15 minutes of work time

Directions

Wash the basil leaves and remove the stems.

Place the sugar and the white wine in a lidded container, stirring to mix in the sugar (it won't completely dissolve).

Tear the basil leaves and add them to the sugar-wine mixture.

Cover and refrigerate for a minimum of 48 hours. After 24 hours, taste the wine to determine if more sugar is required. The sweeter the wine, the less sugar you will need to add.

After 48 hours, strain out the basil leaves. The wine will be tinted slightly green.

Serve cold from a lovely bottle for a delicious summer aperitif.

Bahamas Cruising Budget Entertaining Recipe

"Miss Calculation"

On our boat, the MY *Miss Adventure*, this is our signature cocktail. By relying on ingredients that are less expensive in the islands (nothing is truly inexpensive in the Bahamas), we can serve guests a fun cocktail without breaking the bank.

Ingredients

1 oz ginger-infused simple syrup (recipe follows)

1 generous squeeze lime juice (bottled lime juice is fine, fresh is best)

Rum

Soda water (we have a tabletop soda maker aboard)

Directions



To make a Miss Calculation, start with 3 oz of rum, 1 oz of ginger-infused simple syrup, and lime juice. Pour these ingredients over ice and top the cocktail with 3-4 oz of soda water. Mix only the syrup and soda water for a refreshing homemade ginger ale.

Ginger-Infused Simple syrup (16 oz)

Time

30 minutes

Ingredients

1 ⅓ cups sugar

1 ⅓ cups water

1 cup of fresh ginger, washed (no need to peel) and cut into chunks.

Directions

Boil the water and sugar until the sugar dissolves, (about 5 minutes). Lower temperature to a simmer.

Meanwhile, shred the ginger in food processor.

Place grated ginger in a cheesecloth bag and simmer it in the sugar water mixture for 5 minutes.

Turn off the heat and allow the ginger to steep for 20 min while the mixture cools.

Squeeze the cheesecloth bag to extract the remaining syrup.

Refrigerate this syrup for up to 2 weeks.

By involving folks and making the event a community effort, you can keep costs down. By encouraging creativity, you will host a gathering that is distinct and memorable. This

You'll never find HEATHER far from water, whether immersed in the sea, swimming in fresh water, or skiing on snow. Like her heroine Julia Child, she is a tall, curious Francophile, with a love of good food. She and her husband own two boats (possibly unwisely) and alternate cruising the canals of France and the Bahamian out islands. You can follow her and her husband's adventures at UnexcusedAbsences.com

Contact heather@cruisingboat.com

+1.540.860.0166 (Google Voice)



Shocked to suddenly find herself in temporary possession of a several ton canal boat in France, the author quickly realized that she should have asked more questions during the charter company's briefing. But until cruising the canals, she didn't know what she didn't know. This is the book that she wished had been available!

This practical guide for European canal boat charterers is written by a French canal boat owner (and former charterer) for the novice to this type of boating vacation. This book prepares the reader to cruise on the canals by highlighting qualities of a good charter company and offering tips for boat handling. The book covers basic waterway etiquette, includes photos of signaling lights and mechanisms, and offers detailed instructions on lock operation as well as insights into European culture. It also highlights the beauty and simplicity of life on the canals and offers advice to travelers seeking a gloriously relaxed way to experience Europe.

A Practical Guide for European Canal Boat Charters



Heather C. Thomas

**Link to Heather's book on
cruising the canals of
Europe.**

<https://amzn.to/2A5fBb0>

Dock parties!

Sue Woods

Who doesn't enjoy a good dock party? It's a great way to get together with fellow yachties, catch up on their news and recent travels, meet new people, discuss local issues and broader situations. It's a wonderful opportunity for the girls to get together to chat, compare experiences and ask for recommendations about all manner of things. Everyone can discuss their current boat problems and often get good advice or offers of assistance. The food is usually interesting, the drinks "bring-your-own" so therefore affordable and the company convivial. The dress code is non-existent and the invitations usually include all on the dock. These occasions reflect the casual but interesting lifestyles of cruising folk.

We have enjoyed some excellent dock parties in years gone by, where up to 25 and 30 folk have crowded together on a jetty to eat, drink, talk and make merry. However, in the last few years these occasions seem to be fewer than in previous years. Why would this be, given the increasing numbers of people now living on board and cruising?

We have found the newer marinas tend to discourage these gatherings by instigating rules about activities and behavior in common areas of their marina. The marinas are designed with streamlined walkways and fingers, and no larger public areas where people can gather. They often prohibit the use of BBQs on the dock and don't allow groups to block the walkways.

Modern marinas are often located within a retail/housing complex, where the marina is



ABOVE: A get-together on the dock at Pangkor, Malaysia.

"showcased" by building the retail outlets, bar/restaurants, apartments and promenade surrounding and overlooking the boats. This provides the residents and visitors with a lovely view over the quaint/charming/interesting boats moored in the marina, but absolutely no privacy to the yachties. Marina management would prefer the people residing on boats to use their many, often expensive, cafes and restaurants to gather. This type of location – somewhat similar to fish in a round bowl – is certainly not conducive to a relaxed, and maybe a little rowdy, dock party.

Our more recent travels have taken us to areas where few other cruising boats roam and this certainly limits the opportunity for a dock party. We instigated one recently in a new marina in Thailand, with just four boats and nine people. The marina management was very supportive and even loaned us a couple of tables, delivered to the dock by marina staff. The party was a great success – everyone mixed well and we met some new people who had interesting stories to tell. A

couple of individual boat problems were discussed and arrangements made for help the next day. We made new friends and have since caught up with them in other destinations. So it seems size doesn't matter.

Do the organisational requirements of a dock party defeat cruisers? I couldn't imagine that anyone who sails regularly or as a lifestyle would be put off by tacking up a notice with a time and date, providing some seating (most folk carry stackable stools, and even an upturned bucket will do) and bringing a plate of finger food to share. Most of the girls I've met enjoy this challenge of offering up some different, appetizing food – many enjoy swapping recipes and trying others' cooking. Most single men will rise to the challenge of providing a share plate. People know to bring their own plates and cutlery. Someone always has a big esky to keep the drinks cold and a nearby boat will usually offer to light up their BBQ if needed. Dock parties can be set up in minutes, and cleaned up with equal speed.

Maybe the demographics of the average cruiser have changed since we set out initially in the early 1980s. At that time, the cruising folk we met were all around 35 to 60 years old, and we were all broke! Social occasions were managed as cheaply as possible. There were very few marinas at that time, and who could afford them anyway? Get-togethers

Below: Sharing a dock party with some local friends at Pangkor, Perak, Malaysia .



ABOVE: A gorgeous sunset background for a dock party.

were parties on a beach or nearby municipal park, or on a few boats rafted together in an anchorage. They were fun times, when everyone had a story and wanted to meet others doing similar things. Cruising folk now seem to be older and better financed. They utilise marinas more often and may be have more refined tastes. They prefer mixing in small groups, at a restaurant or café.

Sailing rallies may have affected the existence of the humble dock party. Regattas and rallies are usually well organised, they include quite a number of participants and the organizers schedule many social occasions. These are great fun and provide a real opportunity to mix with the crew of the other boats. International and overseas rallies give the cruisers a fabulous insight to local culture, food and lifestyle with their organised social events. Although we have only been involved in a couple of short rallies, we felt they were a little too rushed and over-organised. Friends who have participated in longer rallies agreed – they would have enjoyed more downtime, when they could relax and catch up with others in an informal situation. There were no spare evenings, or energy, for dock parties.

We have found international cruising to be a wonderful experience, and to be able to socialise with folk from differing

backgrounds and cultures is a great part of the sailing/cruising lifestyle. Language differences can be challenging but not insurmountable, especially in a fun, social setting close by everyone's "home". Inclusion of everyone on a dock or marina at a social occasion will often help to soften any cliques or enclaves of a particular nationality, especially if the occasion is built around a national holiday of one country. Who could deny the educational benefits of discovering the best way to eat an Aussie pie, discerning the various unusual flavours of Malaysian kampong food or learning how the French prepare and cook their appetizers? Dock parties help to bridge that international gap.

So are we loosing the art of the humble dock party? Let's hope not. "Viva la dock party!"

BELOW: A narrow dock and lots of people partying in Labuan, Malaysia.



ABOVE: A small get-together on the dock at Pangkor, Malaysia .



SUE WOODS and her husband John left Darwin in 2010 aboard their 47ft flybridge motor cruiser *Solita* and have been travelling through Indonesian, Malaysian, Borneo, Thailand and Philippines waters since leaving Australia. They have submitted many cruising notes to the international website www.noonsite.com, Australian cruising magazines and have written two cruising guides—for Malaysian Borneo and the Philippines. They consider South East Asia their home for the present.

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Not just for women, men should read this too. If you want to take your partner sailing these stories are a remarkable insight into the minds of women as they unfold the secrets to help you – help them – love life at sea.

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Kaci Cronkhite's seven year search for *Pax*'s history is an elegant little gem, taking the reader aboard not only for sublime, wind-filled sails but also to eavesdrop the conversations and relationships that are built as she learns more about *Pax*'s past, whilst hugely enjoying her present. The writing is poetic, spare, and full of wisdom.

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<http://geni.us/2Rm6MXW>



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Whether you are westbound on a circumnavigation and considering your options for cyclone season or you are already in Australia and looking to make your first offshore voyage, the Down Under 'Go West' or 'Go East' Rally can assist.

2017 Go East Participants 'Gadji' - New Caledonia
Image Credit: Luke Ludemann - DIY Sailing

GO EAST

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The **Down Under Go East Rally** can help you prepare for the voyage, make the voyage and enjoy the destination.



Sailing, Sydney NSW
Mandatory Credit: Tourism Australia
Photographer: Hugh Stewart

GOWEST

CRUISERS RALLY TO AUSTRALIA

To sail halfway around the world and not visit & spend time cruising in Australia is simply a travesty, yet year after year many international cruising yachts choose to do just that! Why?

In years gone by, Australia earned the reputation of not being 'cruiser friendly' and this came about as a result of a few poor experiences that were caused by a lack of readily available information about what to expect and how to prepare for arriving in the country by yacht.

The **Down Under Rally** has remedied this situation and in the past 3 years more than 100 international yachts have joined the rally and entered Australia without a problem. They have then gone on to tick off many bucket list items, such as sailing under the Sydney Harbour Bridge and being on their own boat and witnessing the spectacle of the world famous Sydney New Years Eve Fireworks.

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Pearls of Wisdom



Maritime teacher Jackie Parry explains how to take a three bearing fix

SisterShip is passionate about safety on the water. In forthcoming issues we'll discuss Passage Plans, Weather, Position Fixing, Chart Work... and much more.

THREE BEARING FIX

This is a great way to double check your position. It is better to use three bearings, although you can use two. (Two bearings will not show an error if one has been made).

Choose distinct objects to ensure that you do not incorrectly identify the landmark.

Lighthouses and towers are excellent objects.

Avoid distant objects as they will amplify any errors.

When taking bearings from edges of land, vertical embankments and steep cliffs are preferable over gently sloping shores. The rise and fall of the tide can change the shape of the coastline.

Do not take a fix from objects that can drift. Buoys should not be used.

Ideally landmarks should be about 60° apart.

Maintain course and speed.

Note the time the bearings are taken.

Bearings should be taken in the following order. (This helps to reduce errors when underway).

First bearing: closest to your stern.

Second bearing: closest to your bow

Third bearing: abeam (090° from your bow).

TIP: Remember to convert all your bearing to True before laying them off on your chart. (Easy and fool-proof ways to convert True to Compass and Compass to True in an upcoming issue).

TIP: You will need to apply Compass error (Variation) to your handheld compass bearings, but no Deviation error (Deviation is only applied if you are using the ship's compass with known Deviation).

Three bearing fix example:

Using chart AUS252, at 1000 hrs we have taken bearings from three conspicuous landmarks (for the sake of the exercise the Compass bearings have been converted to True):

Coppersmith Rock Light: 105°T

Thomas Island Peak (179): 063°T

Mount Arthur on Shaw Island (250): 013°T

Before we work through the process, take a look at the final result (Diagram 1, right).

Where the bearings meet, this is your fix, i.e. your position.

Let's work through the process using a bi-rola chart protractor.

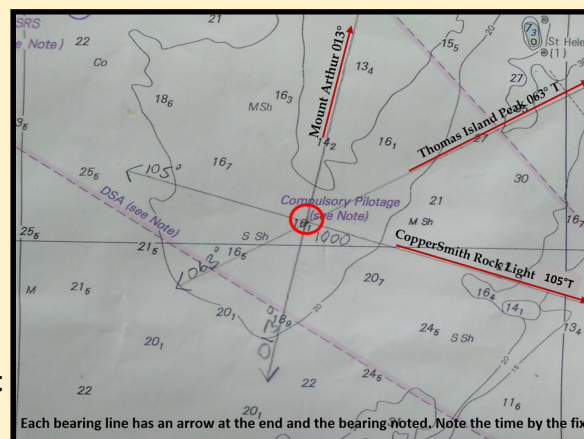
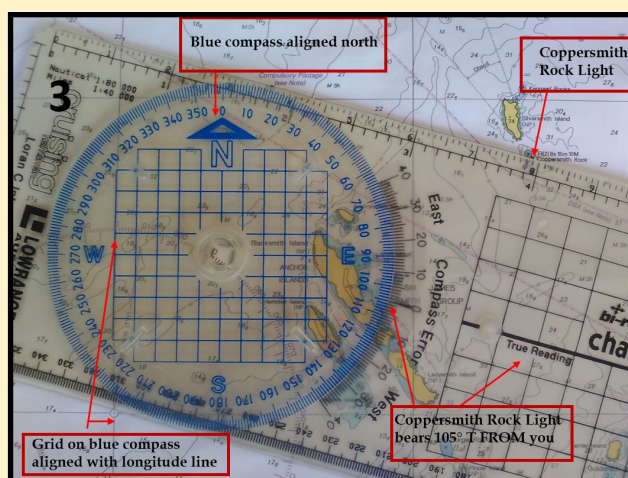


Diagram 2 (below) shows the 2nd bearing Thomas Island Peak

In Diagram 3 the blue compass rose is set to 105° True and aligned with north and the ruler is laying through Coppersmith Rock Light.

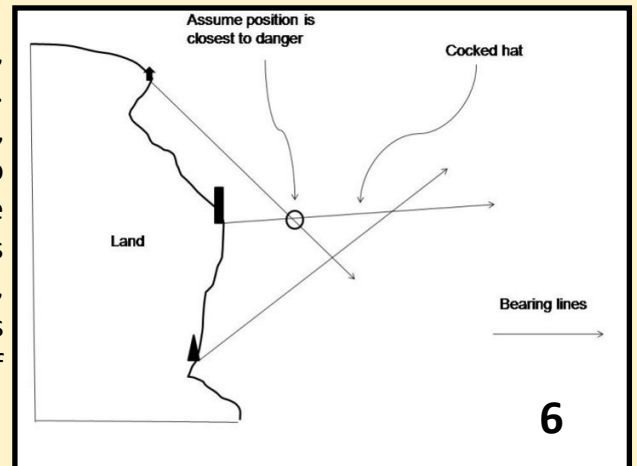
Coppersmith Rock Light bears 105° FROM you, so you will be to the west of the light. Now you can draw your pencil line along the ruler edge.

The same applies to the next bearing, Mount Arthur (Diagram 4). The final result can be seen in Figure 5.



Once you have your position marked, measure the latitude and longitude scale, check it and note that time and position in your log book. In the comments section, explain the fix was obtained via bearings with a handheld compass.

With three bearings, you may end up with a cocked hat, whereby the three bearing lines do not cross at one point. (Usually looks like a witch's hat). If the 'hat' is not too big, mark your position in the cocked hat at the closest point to danger and have another go (in the example opposite the closest point to danger is nearest to land). Cocked hats occur with errors (plotting, wrong identification of object, compass error incorrectly applied, or unknown compass error). This could also occur with the imprecise reading of the compass or an unsteady hand when at sea.



COMPASS TO TRUE

Upcoming issues of *SisterShip* Magazine will include this calculation in more detail. In the meantime, here is a brief example of converting Compass to True.

When converting a hand-bearing compass bearing you only apply the Variation error.

Note: Deviation is only applied to a ship's compass and it commonly changes with each heading. Deviation is usually calculated by a compass adjuster, and a table of deviations is created. (Although, it is possible to do it yourself). In 2018, Variation on chart AUS252 is 8°E (disregard the minutes as you cannot steer by minutes).

More information: <https://learnmarinenavigation.com/2018/01/04/the-compass-true-to-compass-and-compass-to-true/>

Compass to True Conversion Example: The hand-bearing compass reads 097° C, the Variation error is 8°E. The Compass bearing must be converted to True before laying it off on your chart.

Remember: Error East Compass Least, Error West Compass Best

Compass bearing to Coppersmith Rock = 097C°

Variation is East so Compass is least

This means the Compass reading is less than True, so add the 8° to find True.

Coppersmith Rock bears 105° True, and you can lay this bearing off, on your chart.

There are several memory aids for these conversions, we'll go into more detail in upcoming issues.

Remember: On the east coast of Australia, the Variation is East, so you add it on to find True. A west error (in other locations) would be subtracted from the Compass reading to calculate True.

Do you have a 'pearl' to share? We would love to see it! Every tip that is published goes into a draw at the end of the year for a *SisterShip* prize!

A page, a paragraph, or just a few lines - please email your 'pearls' to editor@sistershipmagazine.com to share your wisdom and be in with a chance to win!

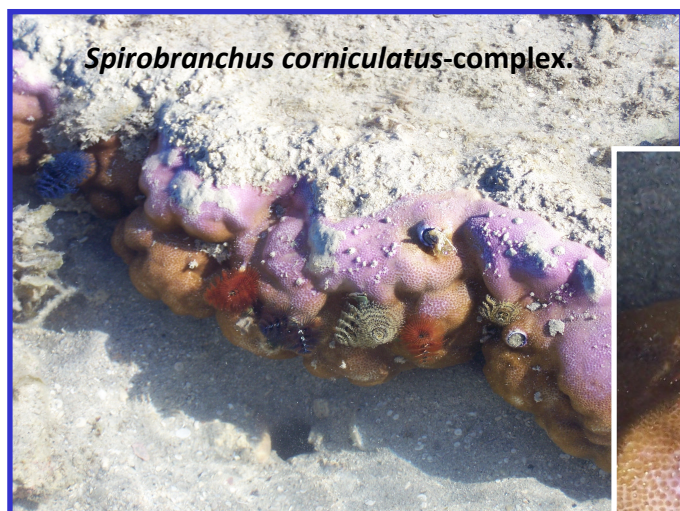
A very reefy Christmas



Coral microatoll.

For further reading see:

Hutchings, Kingsford and Hoegh-Guldberg 2008. *The Great Barrier Reef: Biology, Environment and Management*. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood.



Spirobranchus corniculatus-complex.

Among the many delights to be found in the tropics are the polychaetes *Spirobranchus corniculatus*-complex, or 'Christmas tree worms'.

Important to reef restoration after coral damage, juveniles settle on the coral surface secreting a calcareous tube which the coral then grows around. *Spirobranchus corniculatus*-complex are common on coral microatolls, particularly *Porites* species. Once embedded, they are there for life.

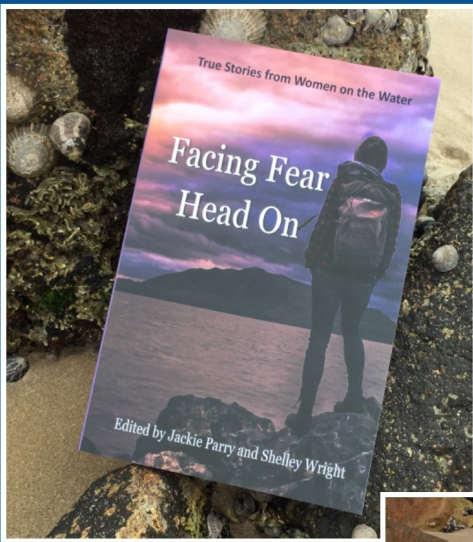
Filter feeders, each worm has two brightly coloured 'trees' which protrude from a tube. When startled the worms quickly retreat to their 'burrow'.

Although present on the reef all year round, these polychaetes would have to be the Christmas tree of choice for all coral reef lovers!

Dr Shelley Wright.



Gift ideas for women on the water, friends, and family!



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Working on the water

Kerry Lillian

I may as well have been born on the water because all I remember from my childhood is sailing in some shape or form. My mother worked in the industry, and my father was something of a legend in the community; needless to say, my brother and I had big shoes to fill. I really did try my hardest when we went to compete and if it was a little breezy I considered going out, but it just never seemed worth the risk, I mean who really knows what lies beneath?

I recall one particular trip to Strangford where the weather took a turn in the wrong direction and there wasn't a breath. The fleet, sitting ever so still on top of the glasslike water of the loch, decided to bail and head slowly back ashore. I had almost reached the safety of the slipway when I saw the others stepping out of their Topper dinghies and walking in. This, to me, seemed like the worst option. I mean, why would you willingly put your feet into the murky waters and pull your boat if you could just... Pray?

I gingerly dipped my bone-dry wetsuit boots into the soup. My stomach started to do somersaults, my heart bounced out of my chest, I could feel the slippery surface of the seaweed, I took a deep breath. *It's just seaweed,*

I said to myself trying to calm down. *Just keep walking, just keep walking,* my head was pointing up towards the heavens so that I couldn't allow my creative little brain to imagine the slithering creatures in the water with me. I tripped. I screamed. I cried.

This wasn't the first incident and it certainly wasn't the last but each time I had a meltdown, my brother took great pride in the pointing and laughing activities.

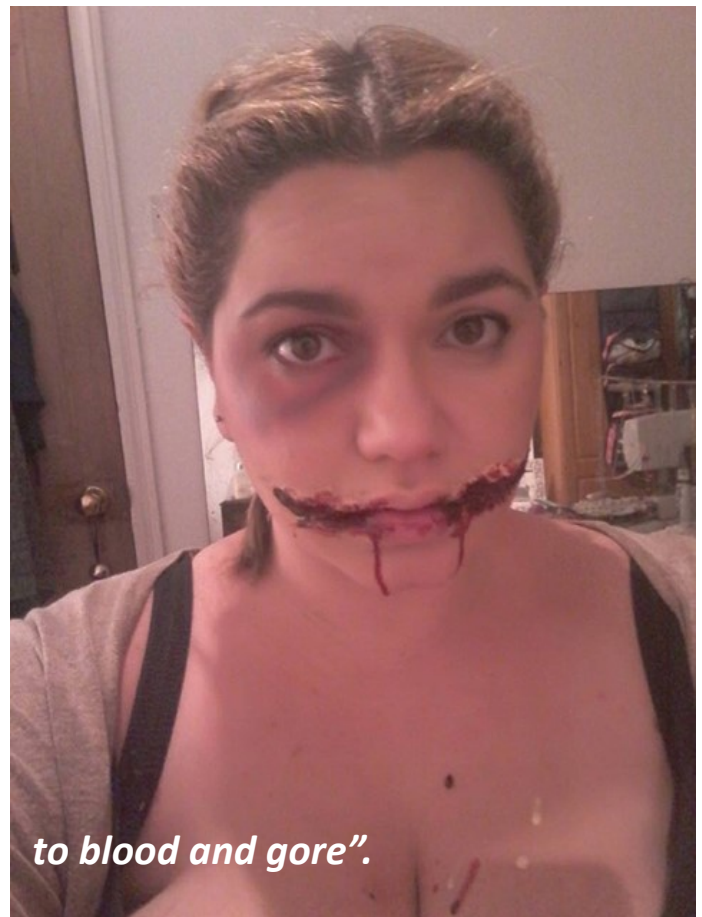
My brother and I were competitive siblings as you can imagine. I enjoyed racing when the



Little 'me' at a sailing event.



“Classic pin-up beauty



to blood and gore”.

weather was right, and he enjoyed racing in all weather. He liked to remind me that I could probably handle the heavier weather as my “frame” was better suited. I continued to compete until I was around 13 and James (my brother) continued all through secondary school and went on to be a coach and is now a Pro.

I, on the other hand, tried to find my way. I studied music; I loved to sing, and choir was a huge part of my life. I was into drama and performing arts and I loved pretty much anything and everything creative.

From a very young age I had a fascination with make-up, like I expect most little girls did. I would go into my mother’s rather limited beauty kit and put on her ruby red lipstick and waltz around the house as if I were the Queen herself.

When we went to the US to visit family, Nana would take great pride in dressing me like a doll. She would put my hair up with pretty satin ribbons tied into bows. I would sit in her enormous marble bathroom surrounded

by mirrors while she got herself ready. I always loved being with her, I felt so special. I watched her as she picked out her perfume from the ornate crystal bottles she kept on a tray in the dresser. Everything had a place in her bathroom; the perfume, the lipsticks, the belts, the accessories, everything. I believe this is where my mind goes when I need inspiration and I’m ever so grateful.

After I left school, at eighteen, I went from job to job never really being able to hold one down. I was restless mostly in the night. It would be three in the morning and my brain would kick into creation overdrive. I would start to think of ways to create a new “look”. It was rather unfortunate that most of these looks were along the theme of gore. I would start painting my face and carving it into a Chelsea smile or maybe a missing eye or even possibly a gunshot to the head. Mother had to endure my excitement at maybe five or six in the morning when I revealed my looks. I tried ever so hard to make “pretty” looks, or more “wearable” looks but that just wasn’t me. On my own face, I could do anything

from classic pin-up beauty to party girl to blood and gore. I wasn't sure where this could take me, but I knew working in shops and furniture stores wasn't going to last forever.

I lost another job, and this was the last straw for my mother, she gave me an ultimatum, I find something to study or I was on my own. I went through the options, travel and tourism, performing arts, beauty, fashion. I thought it over and I kept coming back to beauty. It was always there, as a child, as a young girl and so far into adulthood. It seemed like the clear winner. Mother said. 'Find the best beauty school and that's where you're going.'

This time I had to make it work. I had to put my all into this. I loved make-up, I loved beauty, I thought it would be a breeze, boy was I wrong! Did you know that there are 26 bones in the foot? And more than six hundred muscles in the entire body? I was spellbound. It was the most intricate study I had ever done. Everything I thought I already knew taken to a whole new level. Fancy nails and advanced waxing didn't even scratch the surface.

When it was coming up to our final exams, the principal of the beauty school liked to have a one-on-one with each student to make sure they had all they needed and to answer any questions they might have. When it was my turn I walked into her bright airy office with confidence and sat down on the plush leather chair. She asked me with a twinkle in her eye, 'What is it that you really want to do with your new skills?'

I was a little thrown by this, all the other girls said she just asked if they felt ready and if they needed anything not to hesitate in asking. She seemed to take a liking to me from my very first interview when she asked why I wanted to attend the Bronwyn Conroy School of Beauty and I said, 'I want a skill I can travel with, something that no one can

take away. I love to travel but you need money to do that and I know I can do this wherever I go.'

I think she understood me and I believe at that point I had found my true calling. She had suggested at the entry interview that I should investigate the cruise ships as that would allow me to travel and practice beauty therapy. I already had the job before I had finished my exams in July and was onboard my first luxury cruise liner by October at age 22.

Oh, how hard I had tried to stay away from the water.

"But just like the tide, I'm pulled back to where I came from."

During my four years working on cruise ships I have been a massage therapist, a beauty therapist, an assistant spa manager and even managed to wrestle myself into a spa managers position. During my first contract, I cried on a daily basis wondering if I had made the right choice. Don't get me wrong, I was never really a home-bird, but I had never worked in the spa industry and most definitely never in an environment like this.

The day I stepped onboard my first ship I was mesmerised! I can remember trailing a suitcase and hold-all that I thought was HUGE, through the catacombs of the crew area to reach my new home for the next nine months. I had left home with a single



medium-sized roller soft shell-case and backpack but after spending eight weeks in London, training to work in my first spa onboard a magnificent cruise ship, I managed to accumulate enough belongings to need yet another case, so I went to the local Primark and bought a hold-all. This created quite a challenge when you consider the corridors in the crew area are approximately one metre wide and there are plenty of obstacles to be found along the deck.

I stepped in the door of my first cabin and my eyes widened; not so much because of the lack of space, which I'll get to in a minute, but the walls in this tiny space were completely – and I mean completely – covered in photos, printed motivated quotes, fairy-lights, and all sorts of travel paraphernalia. This both comforted me and panicked me; I am the sort of person to find myself making my spaces cosy and comfortable with photos and such things but also, I had to ask myself, why does she need so much of it? Is it really that bad?

The cabins are cleverly designed for us to be able to hide almost all of our worldly possessions. Spa girls usually arrive with approximately 40 kilos of luggage, most of it skin care, make-up and shoes. I loved decorating my cabin with fairy lights and magnets from the places I had visited. I was close to the staff in the photo department so I'd orchestrate lots of photos taken when we went out for dinner or to see a show. I'd have them printed and I decorated my walls. When I had the privilege of being the spa manager I entered a whole new world of accommodation; I had a DOUBLE BED! I had not one but two portholes to see the world (and ocean) go by when I had a moment, and I had a cabin steward who would make my bed every day and bring my clean linens. He would even leave me lovely towel animals and chocolates and candies on special occasions.

My very first cabin mate was a beautiful soul

from South Africa. She made me feel so at home. Having a cabin mate who you trust and feel comfortable with is extremely important. I have experienced cabin mates who bring their brand spanking new boyfriends back to the cabin after a few too many drinks at the crew bar at 2 am and not being so discrete about it.

To give you an idea of the space we have in our cabins, picture this; a set of bunkbeds at one end. The length of the beds is the width of the cabin; a double wardrobe which hides the pillow end of the bed, and a desk facing the wardrobe. There is a small triangular shaped bathroom where the shower is close enough that you could probably sit on the toilet and wash at the same time (never tried that), and a wash basin small enough to hold a kitten. All that space to house two crew members for nine months.

I was shown around the ship in so many different directions by so many people that I was lost for the first two weeks. This can prove challenging when you're hungry and can't find the crew mess where the crew



gather like wild animals at the watering hole.

When you do finally find your bearings, and become comfortable onboard, you can start to take in all the fun activities for the crew. You can go to the crew bar and play pool, you can go to the crew bar and listen to music, you can go to the crew bar to meet up with friends from other departments on the ship, you can go to the crew bar to find your next ship romance, and all of these activities involve consuming alcohol which makes things particularly difficult when you are told to be sensible because an emergency at sea can happen at any time – day or night – and you are only 22 and just want to have a good time.

I found myself in the crew bar pretty much every night and up for work every morning to start at 7 am. On a seven-day basis, in the spa we worked every day for nine months with one-and-a-half days off (which was usually spread between three days). We needed the crew bar to keep us going.

To give you an idea of the intriguing crew areas that you might not know about when you're cruising as a passenger; on most of the ships I worked on, the crew bar was on one

of the middle decks (7 or 8) and we had to pass through the passenger areas to get there, disappearing through a "Crew Only" door. And yes, we would get fired if we invited you to join us. That little pool on the very forward deck that you sometimes can see but can't figure out how to reach it – it's through the crew area so no, you can't use it! When you are taken down to the tender boats and you enter into a not-so-nicely decorated area with blue or green floors, that's where we live.

Working on a cruise ship in the spa was challenging at most times but I can say now, at the age of just 26, I have seen 54 out of 195 countries in the world.

I have had so many wild nights, many of which I cannot entirely recall and I'm sure that's a good thing. I have experienced so many good-byes from brand new best friends and I've gathered many more lifelong friendships.

As the saying goes; You have big ships and you have small ships but best of all you have Friendships.



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Photo essay by Carolanne Clement

Lady Musgrave Island

Southern Great Barrier Reef



The crystal clear waters of Lady Musgrave lagoon.



After an overnight stay at the Port of Bundaberg Marina, where we had the 'luxury' of using a laundry, refuelling and filling water tanks, we left at dawn and watched the sun rise over the water as we prepared for several hours motor-sailing to reach Lady Musgrave Island, on the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef. Though it's rare to see anything other than our own wake and the odd bird that far out, we always had a watchful eye for any humpback whales. Sure enough we had two close encounters with whales crossing our bow in close proximity. The thrill of seeing them never diminishes, although sometimes they just emerge without any warning which sees us throw the engine into neutral and divert our course to go around them. By early afternoon we spied Lady Musgrave on the horizon and as we neared the channel to the lagoon a humpback performed some fantastic 'look at me' torpedoes and breaches not far behind us. What a welcome!

The lagoon is formed by a reef surrounding a coral cay and provides a calm anchorage in all but extreme weather. The small island itself sits on the rim to the south west and provides opportunity to explore and stretch one's legs. As we put down anchor in the

crystalline water a 'small' 1.5 metre reef shark swam below our hull. As soon as we were settled we donned our dive suits and jumped in for a look.

The island itself is full of pisonia trees forming a dense canopy. Excitable small birds (noddy terns) build sticky nests in them, then often get stuck in the goo, die and become fertiliser for the pisonias to thrive on. Mother Nature can be cruel sometimes!

With strong winds forecast we stayed a few extra days at Lady Musgrave until we could be assured of a safe exit out of the lagoon. Without local knowledge of these waters it can be challenging to avoid the coral bommies dotted around the lagoon in order to negotiate safe passage into the deep water channel to exit. We at last said farewell to beautiful Lady Musgrave, bound for the Keppel Islands. Of course the ten knots of forecast wind never eventuated and after rolling in the uncomfortable slop with the head sail flogging we turned on the 'iron sail' and motored for most of the night. With perfect timing we reached the northern beaches of Great Keppel Island as the sun first emerged on what was to become a glorious day.

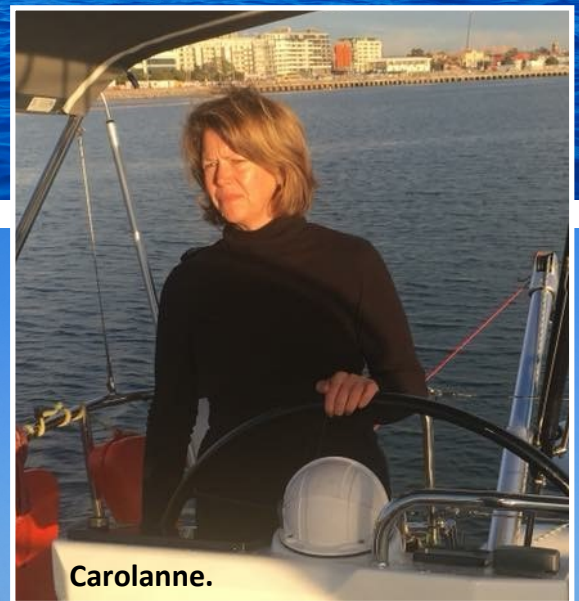


Lady Musgrave Island is a coral cay on the southern Great Barrier Reef.

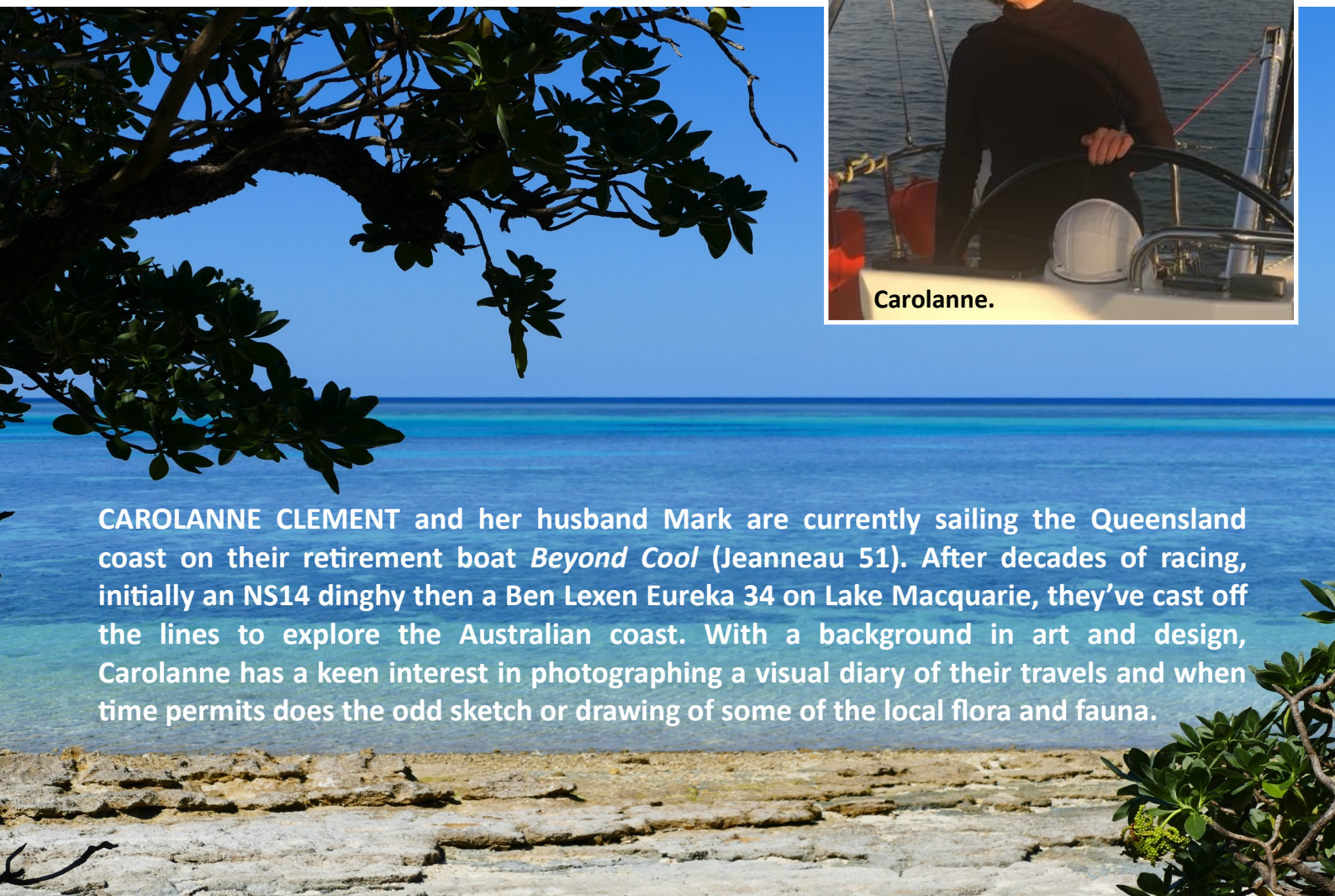




Beyond Cool, Lady Musgrave lagoon.



Carolanne.



CAROLANNE CLEMENT and her husband Mark are currently sailing the Queensland coast on their retirement boat *Beyond Cool* (Jeanneau 51). After decades of racing, initially an NS14 dinghy then a Ben Lexen Eureka 34 on Lake Macquarie, they've cast off the lines to explore the Australian coast. With a background in art and design, Carolanne has a keen interest in photographing a visual diary of their travels and when time permits does the odd sketch or drawing of some of the local flora and fauna.



Watercolours

All photos published go into a draw at the end of the year to win a prize!



LEFT: Fitroy Reef lagoon, southern Great Barrier Reef, Australia.

Taken by ANNA ASH.

RIGHT: Perdika on Aegina in the Saronic, Mediterranean.

Taken by JANE JARRATT.



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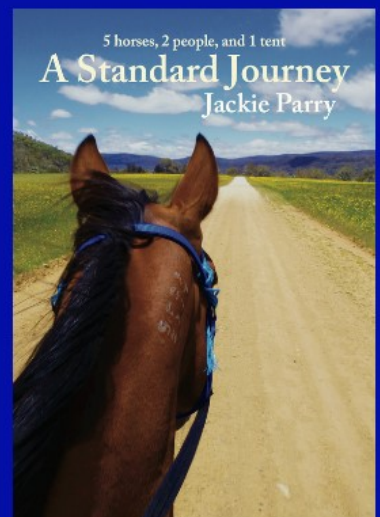
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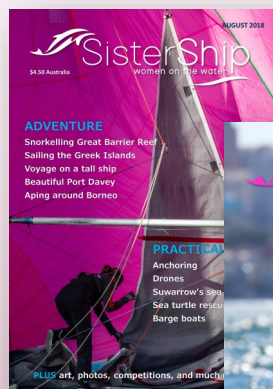
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