

March/April 2020

# SisterShip

women on the water

**HAM RADIO**

**FREE!**

**Beautiful Tasmania!**

**Kirsten Neuschäfer**

**Golden Globe Race 2022 Preparations**

**Sailing the Greek Islands**

**WINTER ON A BARGE BOAT**

**From cruiser to racer: Facing fear**

**Sustainable Sailing**

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# The bowsprit

From the editor



## Knockdowns and lockdowns

Welcome to the March/April issue of *SisterShip Magazine*.

If life was an old nautical chart, I imagine we'd currently be in the region marked 'here there be dragons'. Somewhat less romantically, our location on a modern chart would probably read 'area not surveyed'. Navigating life during the current pandemic certainly seems akin to winding a safe passage through a myriad of razor sharp coral bommies, or perhaps on some days more like drifting with flogging sails through the doldrums.

Most, if not all, of us are now in lockdown of some kind, our boats tugging impatiently at their mooring lines. We know it's for good reason, but I'd be lying if I didn't say the thought of being kept off the water wasn't filling me with sadness.

The current restrictions led me to realise just how often I turn to the beach or ocean in times of sadness or worry. Many of the most significant times of my life have been spent on the water.

I was on the water when I learned of my sister's death last month. In her younger days

Steph worked on dive boats and islands on the Great Barrier Reef. During her short sharp battle with cancer I sent her daily photos of the sea and dolphins. We hoped that the radiation would buy her a little more time, enough to get back out on the waves again even briefly. It wasn't to be. It was to the ocean I turned, unable to attend her funeral, to say an emotional farewell to her in true yachtie fashion, accompanied by Jimmy Buffet (not in person unfortunately)... and dolphins. She would have approved.

Losing Steph has knocked the wind from my sails, and we dedicate this issue to her.

Moving on, under jury rig... the fifth annual Women Who Sail Australia Gathering on the Bay, a highlight on the nautical calendar for many of us, suffered a figurative knockdown earlier this month. For obvious reasons, the event was cancelled. However, the event's major sponsor, Topsail Insurance, generously sponsored this issue of *SisterShip Magazine*, making it free not only to the event's attendees but to everyone!

For those of you whose lives are currently 'hove to' or in 'dry-dock', the *SisterShip* team



hopes to keep you inspired, entertained, and informed as we sit out this storm.

Who in their right mind, about to turn fifty and having never raced in a regatta in their life, would sign up to be half of a double-handed crew in one of the most gruelling ocean races in Australia? Jackie Parry of course! You can read Jackie's brutally honest, and humourous, account on Page 12.

At this stage, South African sailor Kirsten Neuschäfer is the only woman entrant in the 2022 Golden Globe Race. Carolina Deseta chatted to Kirsten about her preparations for the race. No prizes for guessing who *SisterShip* will be cheering on!

Award winning author Helene Young is also pretty handy with a camera and takes the helm of our regular photo essay this month, heading south to spectacular Maria Island, Tasmania.

Sustainable sailing, coping with winter aboard a barge boat in Europe, wildlife encounters during a tropical summer on the Great



**In memory of Steph 1965-2020.**

Barrier Reef, delicious and healthy food from the galley, and women HF radio operators, are just some of the stories our team has for you in this issue. We hope you enjoy.

Stay safe, be kind (to yourselves and each other), and, as always, look for the dolphin...

*Shelley Wright*

***SisterShip* Magazine cruises along with an international flavour.**

**Our contributors hail from all around 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. We 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.**





# Kirsten Neuschäfer

## Preparing for the Golden Globe 2022 Around the World Race

South African sailor, Kirsten Neuschäfer, specialises in high latitude, high adventure sailing. Carolina Deseta talks to her about preparing for the Golden Globe 2022 around the world race.

### How did you get started in sailing?

I started sailing as a child, sailing dinghies: Optimists; Dabchicks; Lasers; and Hobie Cats. All great fun! I was totally hooked and knew then that I wanted to get into ocean sailing at the earliest opportunity I could find.

### What do you currently do for work?

Currently I work for Skip Novak, skippering Expedition Sailboat, the *Pelagic*, a 50-foot steel sloop, custom-built with a lifting keel



and rudder for high-latitude sailing. She is extremely strong with a steel hull for cold terrain and ice, and a strong rig for heavy weather – all features for getting around places like South Georgia, the Antarctic Peninsula, the Falklands, and Patagonia to name but a few. We do expedition-style sailing, taking film crews like National Geographic and the BBC to these amazing far-out places so that they can make wildlife documentaries. We take mountaineers to places like South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula, so they can do ski-touring or can



attempt first ascents on mountains. We also take scientists to these places so they can do research, which is usually on wildlife, and anybody willing to pay the charter fee for this type of high latitude adventure.

Just recently, we moved *Pelagic* to the north to the US and she is currently stationed in Maine, where I'm working on the boat to get her set-up for the season ahead. This summer we will be doing some exploring of the Arctic, namely Greenland and Baffin Island. I'm very much looking forward to exploring this area.

### **What has been the hardest sail you have had so far and why?**

Wow, um, the hardest sail... if I have to be completely honest, I think this South African coast of ours is a fantastic training ground for sailors because it's such a tough coast to sail, especially the stretch between Port Elizabeth and Durban. When you are sailing from Port Elizabeth towards Durban, you need to get westerly winds, which come with its own westerly swell, but there's an east-flowing current, the Agulhas current, which is a wide and incredibly strong current. There's a lot of energy inside that current and when you've got a current with wind and swell against it, the seas get absolutely enormous and treacherous. The only way to do that stretch is to stay very close inshore, because there's a counter current inshore that allows you to be in relatively normal seas. But of course, you also have land which comes with reefs, traffic, fishing vessels, and all sorts of dangers of its own. For example, I have been in a knock-down on the South African coastline, between Port Elizabeth and East London, in 60 knots of wind, bare-pole, trying to avoid the current, but also trying to avoid reefs. In a knock-down, you invariably have damage, water-intake etc., and things also usually happen at night - so too it was in this case. So, you can imagine - a fair bit of adrenaline! I've enjoyed every single moment

I have sailed along this coastline, because I have learnt so much from it!

### **I heard you cycled from Germany to South Africa, that sounds like quite the adventure, do you think this reflects your approach towards the Golden Globe 2022 race?**

Yes, I did! And it certainly was an amazing adventure and I do think it does reflect something within my character towards this race. For example. I did this trip on my own, I was 22 at the time and it was my first real big solo undertaking. I had done a lot of other solo things before that, like hikes, but they were three or four weeks only. This was a big solo commitment and I loved the idea of it. Of course, I saw people, so it wasn't





solitary in that sense, but it was solitary in the sense that I undertook it on my own. What I love about the solo missions is to be completely self-sufficient and to have to be resourceful and find ways to do things with only one pair of hands and to, you know, face that fear of the big unknown and face it alone. I really like that, so as far as that is concerned, I think it does reflect towards the race, because that's exactly what attracts me about this race – it's a solo mission. I don't know if I would be doing it as a crewed mission. The African trip was for me, up to this point, the biggest adventure of my life. I had adventures before, and many since, but that was one of the best and my appetite since then for adventure has still been insatiable. I love the element of adventure – I really love it! And I'm saying about the Golden Globe Race 2022, "Bring it on"! Because I want more adventure!

## What makes you interested in this race over others?

Well, I like the fact that it is a 'retro' race very much, because it wakes up a few dormant sailing skills like celestial navigation, but it goes way beyond celestial navigation. It's the fact that you have to be way more observant of the elements, of every change in weather, things we otherwise don't look at because we are relying on our GPSs to tell us where we are, and we are relying on our weather forecasting system and weather downloads, straight onto our laptops, to tell us what's lying ahead, weather-wise. So it takes you away from looking at screens the whole time, it reminds you of the absolute geniuses that figured all this stuff out, like celestial navigation – and I think it's important to remember and it's important to relearn these skills. At least, it is for me, because it's interesting. I also think this race takes sailing back to its purest essence, because its cutting





out all the high-tech stuff. In a lot of modern races, it's about how much money you can pump into a boat and how specialized the boat can be and how much technology you have on the boat. These boats for the GGR are quite plain, so it's more about the genuine seamanship, and it's about the endurance, and it's about attrition, and about luck. That's what I really like about this race: its historical relevance and knowledge, and application of what has allowed us to be the sailors of today and where this all came from. Truly a great history!

### **How do you feel about being the only woman in the race in amongst a long history of men doing the same race?**

Well, I feel very privileged to be in the race and I'm very glad that I was born in this day and age where these sorts of things are possible for me. I don't know how possible it was back in 1968 for a woman to be in the race, so firstly I feel very privileged.

And it remains to be seen, if I am the only woman in the race. There might very well be other woman entrants by September 2022. if there are, I would absolutely welcome them. I would love some female competitors in this race with me, but if I am the only woman in the race, then I want to race, and will race, as an absolute equal. I feel like an equal now, I'm sure I will feel like an equal while I'm racing and I'm sure I will feel like an equal at the end of the race and that's my big point here: I do not think that there's any difference in men and women when it comes to being at sea. I would like to wave the flag for women and say "Hey! This our thing as much as we would like it be our thing too, we are equals!"

### **What might be your biggest concerns before the race?**

Well, I'm obviously concerned about getting the finances together – that I get adequate funding or sponsorship because I have a lot of prep to do, which is going to take time, it's going to take money. Money is time, so the less money I have, the more time things are going to take and to be honest September 2022, with everything I have to do, it is just around the corner! You can get a better idea of this by checking out my GoFundMe page (see link below). The lists go on and on to get ready for this race. There are many deadlines to meet, the big refit to my boat, qualifying sail, rig replacement, gear, flights, insurance, training and much, much more.





## **What might be your biggest concern during the race?**

Well I think the concern will shift depending on where I am in the race and what obstacles and hardships I'm encountering. Just off the top of my hat, as I think about things now, my biggest concern will probably be to avoid breakage, but then if I'm sitting around the doldrums somewhere, then my biggest concern will probably be that the rest of the fleet is overtaking me and I'm being left behind, if that happened hypothetically. If I get into rough seas, of course my huge concern will be breakage once again, because breakage will slow the boat down – if not stop the boat altogether – and stop the race for me, and also it could be life-threatening depending on where and what the circumstances are, but if I run out of water or run low on water, my biggest concern will shift again towards needing water as I have limited water capacity. So yeah, I think my concerns will shift as things go along.

## **What do your family and friends say about your entry into the race?**

Haha, I know some people to be honest, friends even, a friend in particular who calls me a weirdo for it (but I'm not going to mention names!), but generally my family and friends who know me really well, and even those who don't know me all that well, have been incredibly supportive. Some have asked, "why? Why would you do it?" "It sounds like an arduous experience to say the least, and why would you want to put yourself through it?". But those who know me really well, say "Kirsten! This is your thing!". "This is absolutely your thing". "You need to go for it 100%". "This is your cup of tea!"

It's great having all this support and people encouraging me and affirming my own belief that is something I really want to do and need to do. I definitely describe this as my cup of tea.

## **How can people interested in following your journey be in touch or follow or contribute?**

My fantastic media team has put together a website, they've put me on Facebook, on Instagram, and they are doing all the social media stuff that I ordinarily would never do and possibly can't even do a lot of the time because I will be out of comms. But I'll be in comms with them. They will be in comms with anybody who wants to know where I am and what's going on. People can follow on the site, FB, Instagram and through our email list. Also, while the race is underway, there will be tracking devices on the boats, so people can see where the fleet is moving along and that's something they will be able to see on the official GGR website. People who would like to get in touch, they can get in touch via FB messenger, because my media team will pick those messages up and forward them onto me. Or they can email me, or Instagram message me. If people would like to contribute, it depends on what they would like to contribute, but if they would like to contribute financially, they can either do so by the GoFundMe platform, or we are also setting up a PayPal link that they can donate directly, or they can obtain Bank details and do a direct transfer if they like. Then there are those who contribute with things like skills, labor, donating gear or equipment or anything else to contribute they can get in touch with me and my team. Even if they have ideas or contacts to contribute, I am happy for every contribution and every little bit of support. I'm still looking for the right sponsor for this race too, so any suggestions are welcome.

## **Do you have anything you would like to say to all the women sailors out there who are and will be inspired by you?**

Well, I honestly believe that women are just as good at sea as men are, and I would like to



see more women out there. So, I'm saying: "women sailors, get out there! It's good to have us in the industry". I would like to see a lot more women in the race after the GGR 2022 or even in the GGR 2022. I support any woman joining in, and all women sailing and going after their adventure. It's obvious that historically women weren't afforded such freedoms, but in today's world, which I'm grateful to be in, we are truly open to all these wonderful opportunities. I invite all women to come be equals and be themselves. I would like to wave the flag for women, and I would like to wave the flag for South Africa!



All photos courtesy of Kirsten's media team.

**SisterShip Magazine is proud to support Kirsten and will keep you up to date with her race preparations.**

**For further information and to support Kirsten's GGR2022 campaign go to:**

<https://kirstenggr.com/>

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/kirsten-golden-globe>

<https://goldengloberace.com/ggr-2022/>

## New from SisterShip Press!

How do you part with a lifetime of memories and treasured possessions, leave the comforts of a home, and wave farewell to family and friends to move aboard a small sailboat for a life on the ocean?

It's certainly not a life that suits everyone.

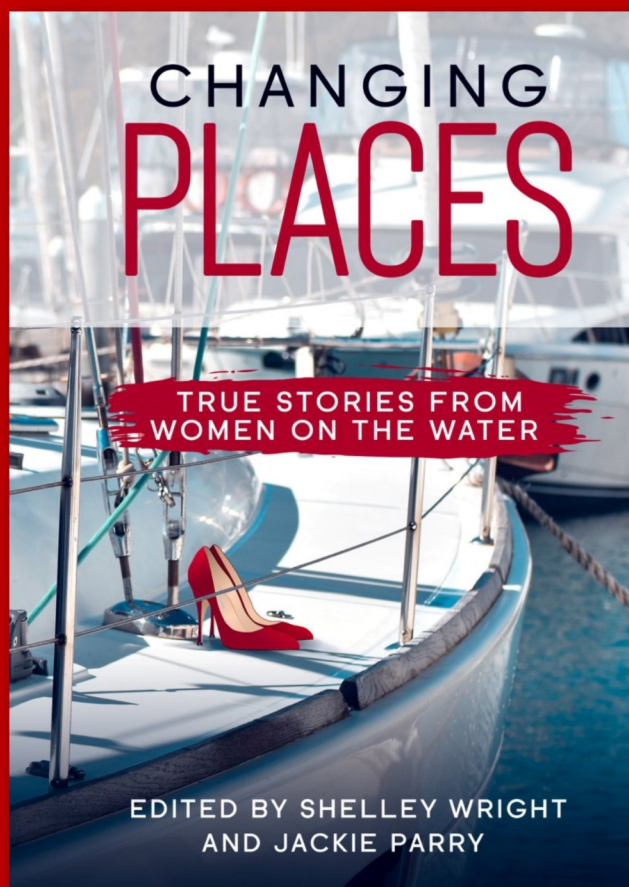
But what if, when the time came, you didn't want to return?

Join us as twenty-four women share their experiences of 'changing places' from land to sea and/or sea to land.

The depth of feeling may surprise you!



[www.sistershippress.com](http://www.sistershippress.com)







# Fear is a Funny Thing: Racing the 'Westcoaster'

Jackie Parry

Recently, in the midst of teeth-grinding fear, I realised it was not the event itself causing my sleepless nights, it was the lead up to it. It was the 'what ifs' that stirred those little fear gremlins into a frenzy.

I know this because during the event, as we surfed down waves at twenty knots in the blackest of black nights, I spread my arms and felt like I was flying. I loved it!

*I'm not scared! I should be scared.*

I pondered that for a moment as the boat whooshed forward.

*Well, you are a maritime trainer with many miles of commercial and recreational boating under your belt, you know you are in safe water, and you are with an incredible skipper and super strong boat, you've rescued many boats in much worse conditions than this as a Rescue Skipper.*

I reflected on that. We do get caught up with in the what ifs, don't we? Well, I know I do. The myriad of thoughts helped me grow in so many different ways.

## The Beginning

To delve into the peaks and troughs of the fears, let me start at the beginning.

'Will you do the Melbourne to Hobart Race with me?'

This question came at a funny time as I was right in the middle of recording a podcast on FEAR.

'I haven't sailed for three years,' I said, 'No! It's longer than that!'

I was chatting with Lisa Blair, world record holder for circumnavigating Antarctica single-handed – which included a dismasting! Lisa Blair, world record holder for circumnavigating Australia single-handed... Lisa Blair is asking me to be her co-skipper!

'You know I have only cruised bare-foot and operated commercial motorboats. I've never raced before!' My voice rose as I visualised the real and imagined horrors of the Southern Ocean.

'It's informal, fun and a small fleet,' Lisa laughed.



With my stomach apparently trying to vault over my lungs I staggered back to the caravan (we're currently building and living in a shitty caravan). I had a stinking cold, my head ached as if stuffed full of cotton wool and everything hurt. *Shit*, I thought, *I can barely walk, how am I going to sail?*

'Am I capable enough?' I asked Noel

'Of course! Tell me about the race.'

I read the first line of the event, 'Arguably the toughest race in Australia.'

The trajectory of Noel's coffee from his mouth was quite something. His body shook with mirth.

'Oh hysterical,' I frowned, 'thank you very much, I think I have my answer.'

Noel managed to pull himself together, wipe the floor, his mouth, and eyes. I noticed his body still shook with a silent giggle.

'Of course you can do this, you are brilliant on a boat, you always do what needs to be done.'

## The Different Forms of Fear

Later, while ignoring my body organs rearranging themselves, I pondered, *so what am I fearful of?*

The weather? Well it can be unpleasant, it can be crappy, it can make you wish you were anywhere else in the world except on a bloody boat. I know this – I can deal with it – I won't like it, but I can deal with it.

Noel and I chatted while I made my decision. And my fear came down to letting people down.

'What if I cock up?'

'You won't.'

How Noel knew this quite so certainly, I am

not sure.

But that was my biggest worry – with not racing before and being out of practice, I was terrified of messing it up and letting Lisa down.

'I don't like being near other boats!'

'There's plenty of room in Bass Strait and the Southern Ocean,' Noel giggled, I am sure he muttered something about few are silly enough venture down the west coast of Tassie.

'I have nothing to wear, no boating stuff at all!'

'I should launch my training videos before then!'

'I need *SisterShip* merchandise – there's not enough time!'

Meanwhile Lisa encouraged me to join her on the delivery from Sydney to Melbourne. It was perfect training time.

'I am not fit enough.'

'I'm 50 next year!'

'I have a cold.'

'And BTW I haven't sailed long distance for OVER SIX YEARS!'

Over the next two days my cold travelled down to my chest and I coughed and whimpered – walking to the bathroom was still an effort.

## Challenge

But the thought of an ocean race with Lisa, creating a record, carrying a message, and facing a challenge was too much – if it scares me and excites me then I must do it!

The fitness campaign began. I wheezed up and down hills wondering who was running a motor; realising the noise was my grating



chest as I gasped for air.

I purchased thermals, gloves, and seasick tablets. I arranged flights, courses, sailing memberships. Had I made the right decision? There was barely time to think about it – except at night.

I flipped from excitement and visions of smooth water, slicing through the waves ahead of all the fleet, enjoying a thoroughbred race boat instead of a heavy displacement ocean cruiser, and teaming up with Lisa for a successful voyage. Then the other part of me realised the battle that lay ahead – we traverse the Southern Ocean, on the WEST side of Tasmania, not the comparatively easy east side. We'll have a lee shore, reefs, notoriously fickle and changeable weather – what the f### was I thinking! I hadn't done a decent sail for over six years and I'm a laidback cruiser! It's nothing like racing. Crossing oceans Noel and I could think about jibing for hours, sometimes days before we did it! That wasn't going to cut it in a race.

'It's going to be a great adventure, you may not enjoy all of it – but an adventure it will be!' Noel said. The next minute though, he'd laugh hysterically, shake his head and mutter, 'the bloody Southern Ocean,' and walk off shaking his head.

*Keep positive Jack.* I berated myself through one night and awoke feeling buoyant and excited. It was time to buck up!

## The Delivery

Suddenly I was in Sydney sitting onboard *Climate Action Now*. Where are the cushions? I wondered. I quickly reminded myself I was here to race not partake in a leisurely cruise.

When underway the boat made complete sense, it's built and set up to race, not lie back enjoying seeing the world at deck level. The more miles behind us, the more I fell in love with the boat and the unfamiliar set up.

Lisa had completed the lioness' share of the work already – beneath two days of sweltering heat and bushfire smoke we finished the preparations.

As we untied the lines and puttered into the most magnificent harbour in the world everything felt right. I felt great.

We hauled sail and headed south. In the cockpit I glared at the forty lines. Set up for single-handing meant that forty critical, loaded lines were in one place. I glared at the array of colour. *How on earth am I going to figure that lot out?*

Forty. Of. Them!

During the cruise down the coast I quickly learned I was not boat-fit. Boat-fit is quite different to being fit. (Although being fit helps). I tripped and caught my feet on everything. I felt old, clumsy, useless. Frustration engulfed me.

That night, on watch, I learned. I studied, traced, pulled, pushed. I memorized, and moved around the boat. I cajoled my body back into the swing of boat life. The following day was better. And the delivery was fun.

We motored into Melbourne, tying up at 2 am. Sitting beneath towering, sleeping apartments, sipping a cool beer our faces glowed with a successful voyage. We had faced forty knot head winds in Bass Strait, but we worked together and enjoyed the experience. I still had much to learn about the boat and racing, but it was starting to feel possible. Those headwinds were perfect training. Those two beers were two of the best I've ever had.

## Race-Ready

The conveyor belt of race-ready took off. I flew home for one night before flying to Sydney for a Sea Survival course. As a maritime teacher, my Sea Survival ticket lasts





**ABOVE: Freeze-dried food.**



**ABOVE RIGHT: Branding - grateful for all sponsors to help make this happen!**



**ABOVE: CAN in Sydney.**



**ABOVE RIGHT: The media responsibilities mean lots of fun photoshoots.**



**Lisa and Jackie onboard during preparations in Sydney.**



a lifetime, but I didn't have the 'racing/sailing' element. Regular training is important, and this Sea Survival course carried an emphasis on sailboats. Terry and his team at Pacific Sailing School were terrific, supporting our quest and delivering fine training.

With First Aid updated as well, I flew back to Melbourne on Christmas Eve where Lisa and I spent Christmas day passage planning and finishing last minute jobs.

### Women Who Sail Australia

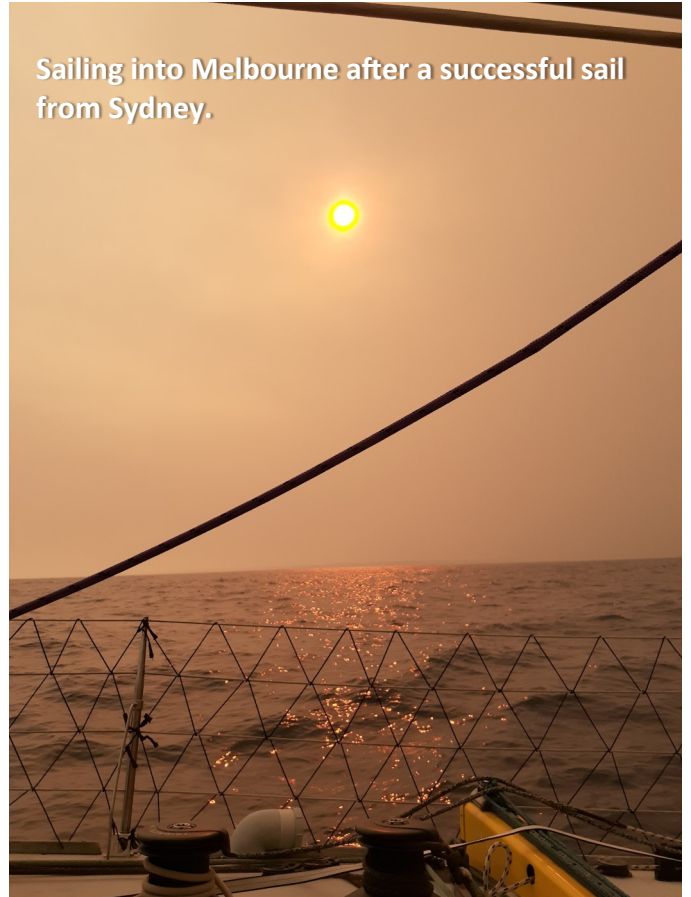
The connections and support from Women Who Sail Australia constantly amaze me. With over four thousand members, it's quite likely several members will be in the same port. The WWSA member in Melbourne was an angel from heaven, in the form of Mary-anne Raven.

We were in Melbourne prior to meeting up with the WWSA team taking up the Cock of the Bay Race on Boxing Day (the day before the Melbourne to Hobart Race). Luckily for Lisa and me, Mary-anne was there too.

"We are across the harbor, come for dinner!"

Christmas had, so far, sat firmly on the sidelines, together with my Boxing Day birthday. After Mary-anne's invite, warm smiles, mouth-watering smells, and welcoming faces greeted us into the Yacht Club lounge. That evening Lisa and I became extended family of Mary-anne and Andrew's

Sailing into Melbourne after a successful sail from Sydney.



Jackie's feet and just some of the 40 lines .





family. Laughter, support, fun, and delicious food (and one beer each and an early night!) was perfect. I love Christmas, togetherness, relaxing, indulging, so I was missing Noel even more at this point (we usually do everything together!) Mary-anne and her family were a wonderful gift and I have a new friendship that's special.

## My First Race!

Boxing Day morning and eight women from Women Who Sail Australia joined us for the Cock of the Bay. What a blast! Ten fantastic women – all with differing experience, all with open minds and hearts – laughter, learning, camaraderie, and more new friends.

The day flew and too soon we were saying







**ABOVE LEFT: Jackie and Lisa at breakfast in Melbourne after sailing down from Sydney ('the best breakie ever!')**



**ABOVE RIGHT: Lisa sent Jackie this flag as a memento: "Dear Jackie, Thanks for joining me in making history as the first double-handed female team in history of the Melbourne-Hobart Yacht Race, Lisa Blair."**

farewell, the crew's faces reflecting a contented exhaustion. Flashes of pity crossed some faces as we hugged goodbye, "We are so tired how on earth can you face another race tomorrow!"

I was wondering that myself.

### **My First Ocean Race!**

The following morning after many media interviews it was time to go. No time for nerves – in fact after a morning of interviews we were both more than ready. 'Let's just get on with it!'

With great skill Lisa manoeuvred her boat as we tacked, watched, waited, and smiled and waved at all the boats vying for the best start. It was a thrill! The sun shone, the breeze was steady – we continued to watch the weather, we'd completed the passage planning, discussed tactics, MOB, communication, sleep, safety.

Suddenly the fleet were flying towards Bass Strait, slicing through the water with white waves flowing by our bows, then we all stopped. Becalmed.

### **Always Learning**

'I don't like it when you watch me.' Lisa

knows her boat intimately, as she should after nine years of racing on her. Adjusting a line is immediate, swift. Whereas I work through forty before I find the right one! I can feel her watch me. She doesn't judge and she didn't give me a hard time (except once, when I yelled back, 'that's the definition of a split second!') – we both laughed!

But I realized I didn't like someone who was more adept on the boat watching me so closely and all the new information was overwhelming.

### **Daunted**

I hadn't felt like this for a long time. Suddenly I had an affinity with middle-aged women, after all I was one! The emotional effects of self-inflicted pressure, learning something new, coping with a female body at a certain age (and all the forgetfulness that brings – what is it with that?!)

As I broached the issue, Lisa was saying how she noticed the same thing. It was a night watch where I tweaked the sails, fiddled, played, got more and then less out of the boat but learned so much. I wasn't watched, I felt no pressure, I began to shine and got on with sailing this amazing machine.

With five days of a mixed bag of everything from hushed becalmed days to a wave-crashing storm, to gusting headwinds on the final stretch up the Derwent River, we made it.

The fishing boat that laid buoys out around us when becalmed was forgotten, (after Lisa explained to the skipper we were in a race and couldn't manoeuvre!), the shattered block in a storm as the bow dipped and crashed, the teamwork, the sleepless nights, the new friendship, the reawakening of my sailing senses. The Record! We'd done it all.

### Setting a New Record

We are the first double-handed all female team to complete the Westcoaster in the forty-seven years of the race's history. The fleet was small, the weather mostly kind, but that didn't lessen the challenge of two women handling a feisty fifty-footer in the stormy Southern Ocean.

### This is Me

Not only did I learn a lot from Lisa, but I learned about me. It took some time to kick start this old brain and body back into sailing mode. As Noel said to Lisa, 'She's like a cold diesel, takes a while to warm up, but when she does she'll go forever!'

When we parted with a big friendship hug – she thanked me and told me how well I had done, and that was enough.

The race and time with Lisa has reawakened the passion for sailing. It's hard with four horses and a home I adore. But when I catch Noel looking at boats for sale, I don't tut quite so loudly!

### JACKIE PARRY

**Commercial Skipper/Professional Mariner, ex-Marine Rescue Skipper, previous TAFE Maritime Teacher and current Instructor of Professional Level Courses privately (Navigation/E-Charts/Passage Planning/Weather/Intro into Boating). Cert 4 Trainer, Recreational Sailor (ocean sailing around the planet, inland waterways, sailboats and motorboats), Author of Practical Maritime Books/Pilot Books/Memoirs/Articles, Speaker at Nautical and Book Events.**

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# Hamming it up at Sea

Lyn Battle



Following on from my story about using HF (High Frequency) radio to chat with operators all around the world on the Ham bands... just how do we become “a Ham”?

There are various ways to achieve our amateur radio or ‘Ham’ licence and regulations vary, depending on the country in which you are currently located.

The best thing to do is check with locals to see if there is an amateur radio club nearby. They often run training courses or can point you in the right direction. If you have access to the internet, you can google local training bodies, but it’s always helpful to have a supportive ‘Elmer’ (qualified Ham mentor) to shepherd you along the way; I know I always like to have a sounding board for those silly questions that we seem to be too embarrassed to ask the experts!

The first question usually is: “What’s the difference between ‘amateur’ and ‘Ham’ radio?”

The answer: same-same! The technical term is ‘Amateur Radio’, because in the early 19th century days of wired telegraphy, only professionals such as shipping and railway telegraphists used the system. The term ‘ham-fisted’ was used to describe someone with poor Morse-key operating skills. When laymen were granted experimental licenses in the early 20th century, they were ‘amateur’ as

**ABOVE: Amateur Radio magazine covers featuring Emma VK2FEMM at JOTA Scouts' Jamboree On The Air (left) and Bron VK3DYF (now \*Silent Key) and young boy in buggy (right).**

opposed to ‘commercial’. In the cliquey ways of the world, the professionals referred to them with the derogatory term: ‘Hams’, which, in turn, has become a badge of honour. We are now proud of our Ham heritage and, dare I say: “As happy as a pig (Ham) in the mud!”

Gone are the days when you had to learn Morse Code to get your licence, whether you ever intended to use that mode of communication or not, and this has resulted in two things:

1. People who struggled with Morse Code are now finding it easier to attain their license; and
2. More people are now taking an interest in



learning Morse Code as it's no longer compulsory. They are enjoying the challenge of learning what is more or less a 'new language' and possibly the only secret code permitted to be used over the airwaves!

Morse Code, or CW as it is known (Continuous Wave as opposed to the type of modulated waves used for spoken word or digital modes), is also a very handy skill to have in the current times of poor solar/HF activity. It's a bit like when you only have 'two bars' of service on your mobile phone – enough to send a text but not enough to make a voice call. It also requires less power than talking and is very popular with those Hams who head off to remote islands on "DXpeditions", as they can carry less bulky equipment.

But we girls enjoy a chat, so back to that license...

The study required to attain a Ham radio license can be broken down into two major parts: theory and regulations.

Theory covers the *what* and *how* of what radio waves are, how they are propagated around the world, how your radio set makes this magic happen, and how to control it. An amateur radio licence is not just a ticket to talk, it qualifies you to build and operate your own radio station, teaches you how to troubleshoot, and repair things like broken wires and poor connections. Oh, the thrill of knowing how to use a multi-meter to



pinpoint a broken conductor on a vertical antenna, peel back the insulation, sandpaper away the salty green bits, solder on a new bit of shiny wire, tape it all up, and Bingo! You're back on the air. No need to pull into port and order an expensive new antenna!

Regulations cover the *when* and *where* of usage of the radio spectrum, which is shared by many users from TV stations to GPS devices and microwave ovens!

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) oversees the system, and national governments regulate technical and operational characteristics of transmissions and issue individual stations licenses with an identifying call sign.

Hams just use a small part of the spectrum, but we have to be careful to not interfere with other users. We also need to adhere to correct on-air procedures. In the same way it is important for yachties to know the difference between making a Pan Pan call or an actual Mayday – Hams also have standard procedures which make it easier for everyone to communicate smoothly. When conditions





are not clear, there is a set of shorthand terms called the 'Q Code', which makes it easy to exchange information efficiently. "What is your QTH?" asks for your location and you respond, "My QTH is... QSL?" If the other operator copied it all clearly, they reply, "QSL". So, each Q code can be both a question and a response. It can make for short snappy exchanges when radio conditions are poor and you need to get the information through clearly and concisely.

When conditions are good, extended conversations can be had; these are referred to as 'Ragchews', and are great sources of information and entertainment on long ocean passages. Remember the various Ham radio 'Nets' mentioned in our previous article (*SisterShip* Jan 2020 issue), such as the ANZA DX Net that Jeanne Socrates checked in to regularly during her solo circumnavigation? Jeanne is now circumnavigating Australia by land, meeting up with some of the Hams who kept her company on air during those long hours at sea.

Sat phones and mobile apps might be useful for critical comms or when in port with free wi-fi, but they'd be far too expensive for chatting at sea. Ham radio opens up the world to you on long passages. Unlike maritime nets that only operate at certain times of the day, there is nearly always a Ham on air somewhere in the world, and 'Maritime Mobile' stations are always popular. You can get up to date information on local weather, traditional customs, and port services. In most countries there is no age limit to earn your license, neither lower nor upper limits – so long as you can demonstrate proficiency. In most cases, there is recognition of prior learning.

There are more male than female operators, but I would not say that it is a heavily male dominated hobby, as most Hams are courteous by nature and female operators are made most welcome on air. Our gregarious nature and naturally higher pitched voices



make us naturals for this hobby. I often chat with a Ham couple in South Africa (retired yachties with a mid-Atlantic sinking in their 'Sail Tales Locker', and publishers of their local coastal sailing almanac). It is amazing the difference when they hand over the mic – Sue's voice cuts through much clearer than Tom's. In fact, male operators chasing that rare DX station will often deliberately pitch their voice a little higher to break through the pileup of stations calling – a technique we jokingly refer to as putting on your 'Tight Undies'! It works!

Being a female Ham comes with all sorts of perks, not least being the old Morse Code shorthand term YL which stands for Young Lady, regardless of our age! Whereas male operators are referred to as OM, or Old Man! Love it!

Callsigns can be fun. A Ham callsign is a very personal thing and identifies you just as much as your personal name. My callsign VK4SWE is easily recognisable on air as Lyn from Sweers Island. The prefix format is fixed, with the first letters signifying which country licensed you, for example EI for Ireland, VK for Australia. The number narrows down your region, VK4 is Queensland (just like the post codes). Some countries allocate random callsigns but others let you choose your suffix from whatever is available. Most Hams seem to select their initials; I chose SWE for

Sweers, and I know some YLs with great callsigns such as MUM, LOL, and FUN!

There are some organisations that offer training assistance for YLs, including our Australian Ladies Amateur Association (ALARA), which offers generous grants to young girls and women keen to attain their licence.

Once you've passed your proficiency tests, got your license and callsign, you can have fun selecting equipment. Not all marine radios come fitted with the Ham frequencies, so make sure when you buy your radio, especially if you purchase overseas or online, that you show your licence and have it 'opened' for the Ham bands. Also, make sure that you select a brand that varnishes their PCB tracks, to protect it from salty air corrosion. Antennas can be incorporated into your backstay or vertical antennas can be used. Digital modes are becoming more popular so you can connect your laptop and experiment with those. Low power handhelds can be taken ashore and used through repeaters when in range. The sky – or should I say 'ionosphere' – is the limit!

Looking forward to hearing some of you on air!

"33" (The international greeting between female Hams),

Lyn VK4SWE

**LYN BATTLE** has lived for over 30 years on Sweers Island, in Australia's Gulf of Carpentaria, where she runs a small fishing lodge with her husband Tex, and they enjoy cruising on their aluminium motor cat *Trim* during holidays. She was born in Ireland, on site at Malin Head Wireless Station, where her father worked as a (professional) radio operator. He never took amateur radio up as a hobby, but he did teach her the phonetic alphabet and how to solder! Lyn studied with the Online Radio and Electronics School, failed the Morse test twice but gained her Advanced Licence in 2004. Many would say she hasn't stopped talking and tapping since!



**ABOVE: Lyn Battle.**

#### MORE INFO LINKS:

ALARA: [www.alara.org.au](http://www.alara.org.au)

Online Radio & Electronics School:  
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\* Silent Key or SK: Passed away.





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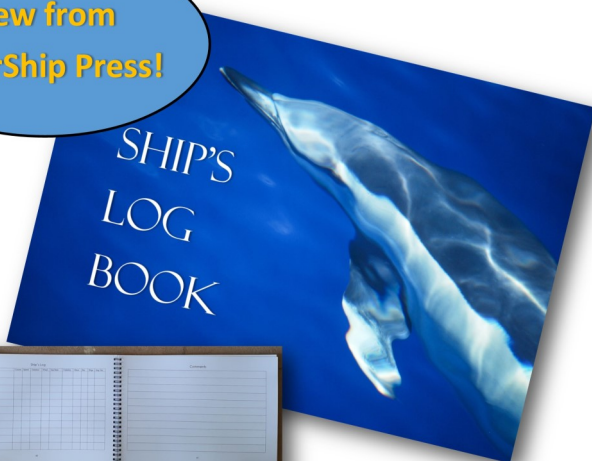
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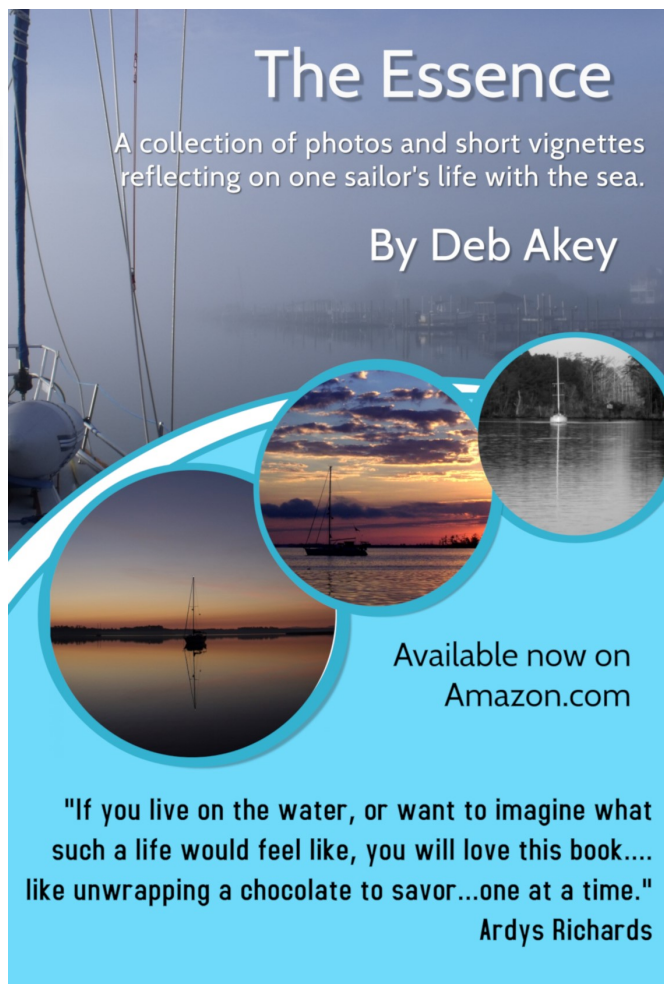
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# NIGHT SHIFT

## Heather Francis

Everything shifts at sea.

I am acutely aware of the strength of the wind, the direction of the waves, the position of the sun, whether the tide is rising or falling, how the clouds move across the sky, where the stars are, and how full the moon is.

I am a part of something.



Since we left Panama and started sailing west, I have had the Southern Cross on our port side and the Big Dipper on the starboard side. I now know the southern sky better than the northern sky I grew up under. It is upside down and beautiful. Venus comes out at dusk instead of dawn, Orion is high in the sky during winter, and the days always seem to have almost the exact same amount of light. For thousands and thousands of miles, where I come from and where I am going to are in balance. And I am perfectly in between.



Standing up above the dodger, I reach for the binoculars and slowly scan all 360 degrees of the dark horizon. I see nothing but a smudge

of grey where the waves and sky meet. No lights. No ships. No one exists in the world but me.

I sit down and take the cover off the dimmed display of the chart plotter hoping that seeing our GPS coordinates and the little boat on the screen will somehow make sense of everything. I notice that the contour line we are passing over reads that there is five thousand meters of water below the keel.

I press the 'zoom out' button five times before even an edge of land comes up on the chart ahead of us. By then our little boat is just a speck. I quickly press the 'zoom in' button five more times so that the tiny boat seems a more sensible size, dominating the sea of white surrounding it.

I find my hand fondling the clip of my safety harness; slowly following the line from my life vest to the jackline, tugging it slightly just to make sure it is secure. I put the cover back on the display and the warm glow of technology is once again swallowed up by the darkness.



I cannot think too long of where we've come



from or concentrate too long on our destination, for time and distance are a pair of tricksters and will make fools of us all. Now is all that matters as the variables are many and situations change in an instant. I lose my sense of place, direction, time, and self as measured against the wind and waves. The dark, deep ocean is at once comforting and humbling. I grapple to unclench my fist and relinquishing control to nature.

The world falls away.

There is a vastness, a forever, that I come to understand.

I slip into the infinite blue landscape. The sky and the sea and I become one.



The storm surrounds us.

Lightning strikes so close we can hear the sizzle of its brilliant fiery edges.

For a few vivid seconds it is more blinding than a hot summer day.

Then we are plunged back into darkness.



The flashes are frequent and disorienting.

Like a strobe light on a dance floor.

Movement cut into still frames.

Thunder booms loudly, crashing into me, vibrating inside my chest.

We are pushed on by the wind, sucked into the storm.

Waves stumble over each other, crash into one another, surging forward.

We are consumed by the tempest.



The days pass in four-hour intervals, time a measurement of hours of slept, hours awake. Day and night, the horizon. There is blue in every direction, the sky, the sea, the wind. Our location is a jumble of numbers, constantly increasing and decreasing. We arrive when we get there, we sail until we stop. Yesterday, tomorrow, today they are all the same.

I see nature at its most beautiful and it's most fierce.

I live by the feel of the wind on my cheek.

It is me and ocean; moving, breathing, living as one. Angry waves, clear skies, tranquil starry nights, menacing clouds, confused seas, dismal mornings, beautiful sunsets. The world falls away.





I am humbled,  
I am strengthened,  
I am defeated,  
I am victorious,  
I am self-assured,  
I am disoriented,  
I am found.



On dark nights, alone in the cockpit I wonder how it would feel to finally give up and drift, with eyes open, down through the blue, as the weight of the water pushes in on me. I wonder what strange creatures live at the bottom of the sea. I wonder how cold and dark it is down there. I wonder how long my body would survive after I am gone. I wonder what my last thoughts would be.



I am waiting for the moon to rise and keep me company. Tonight. it will be just a sliver. A shy smile low on the horizon.  
For fifteen nights I have watched the stars

dance their elegant ballet across the sky as I listened to the melodies of the ocean rushing over the hull, and still there is another thousand miles more to sail before we have the chance to sight land.

There will be days and nights to fill, endless horizons and ever-changing skies to get lost in. But for now, there is a fresh wind pushing us along at a steady pace and the sea aft of beam gives the boat a smooth and constant motion; rise, roll, shift, fall.



Our last night at sea is calm and as the full moon disappears into a beautiful peach sunrise we watch the light creep slowly across the sky revealing the outline of Hiva Oa. Three weeks of staring at waves, clouds and the wind make the island appear large and menacing before us. It heaves steeply out of the ocean, alone and sharp against the horizon, its tallest peaks mired in puffball clouds that seemed snagged on the rock itself.

As we near land I start to discern colours and details and smells. I can pick out the scent of moist earth, of green grass, of leaves and



*Land Ho after 21 days at sea, Hiva Oa, Marquesas 2010.*



decay. I smell the warmth of rocks in the sunshine, the sweet aroma of unknown ripened fruit, the bouquet of flowers in bloom and the muskiness of animals. I am pleased that I can't smell the marks of humans yet, no reeking garbage rotting in the hot sun and no tell-tale stench of sewage.



With the prospect of land on the horizon that familiar feeling of disappointment is starting to creep in around the edges. Disappointed that the journey is over. That this incredible, vast and ever-changing blue existence is about to be interrupted by land-solid, immovable, unforgiving. That this beautiful, simple, raw state of mind will be temporarily lost.

It takes several days out here to become empty enough to feel full, and only a few hours ashore to be full enough that you are empty.

The trouble is never letting go of everything, it is holding on to the nothing that you find out here. Of not cluttering up the beautiful space inside you that only the ocean can help you discover.



**HEATHER FRANCIS** is from Nova Scotia, Canada who has lived and worked on boats throughout the world. Since 2008 she has been living and sailing onboard *Kate*, a Newport 41 sloop, with her Aussie partner, Steve. She is a writer, photographer and cook who tries to live mindfully. Find out more at [www.yachtkate.com](http://www.yachtkate.com)

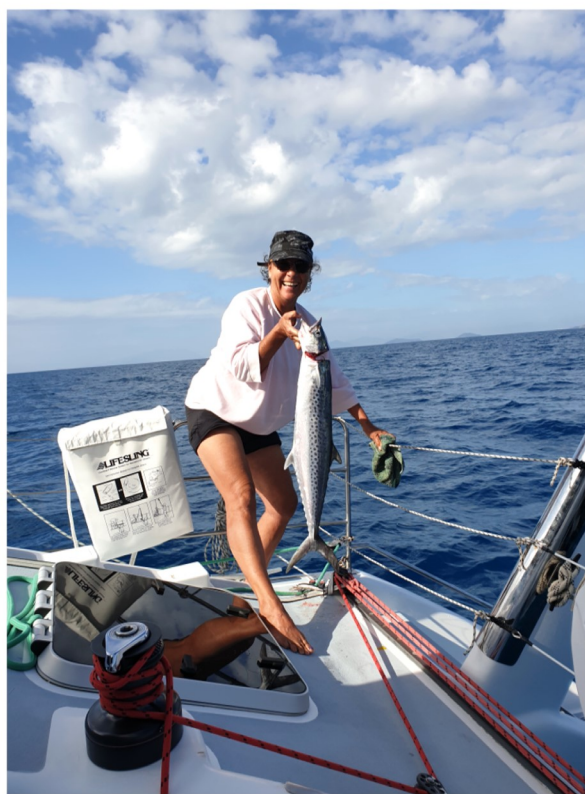


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LEFT: CHERYLLE STONE sent this photo of her crew member DORIS CORCORAN.

"This shot was taken last year en route from Townsville to Cairns. I can't recall exactly where but the delight on Doris' face is wonderful!"

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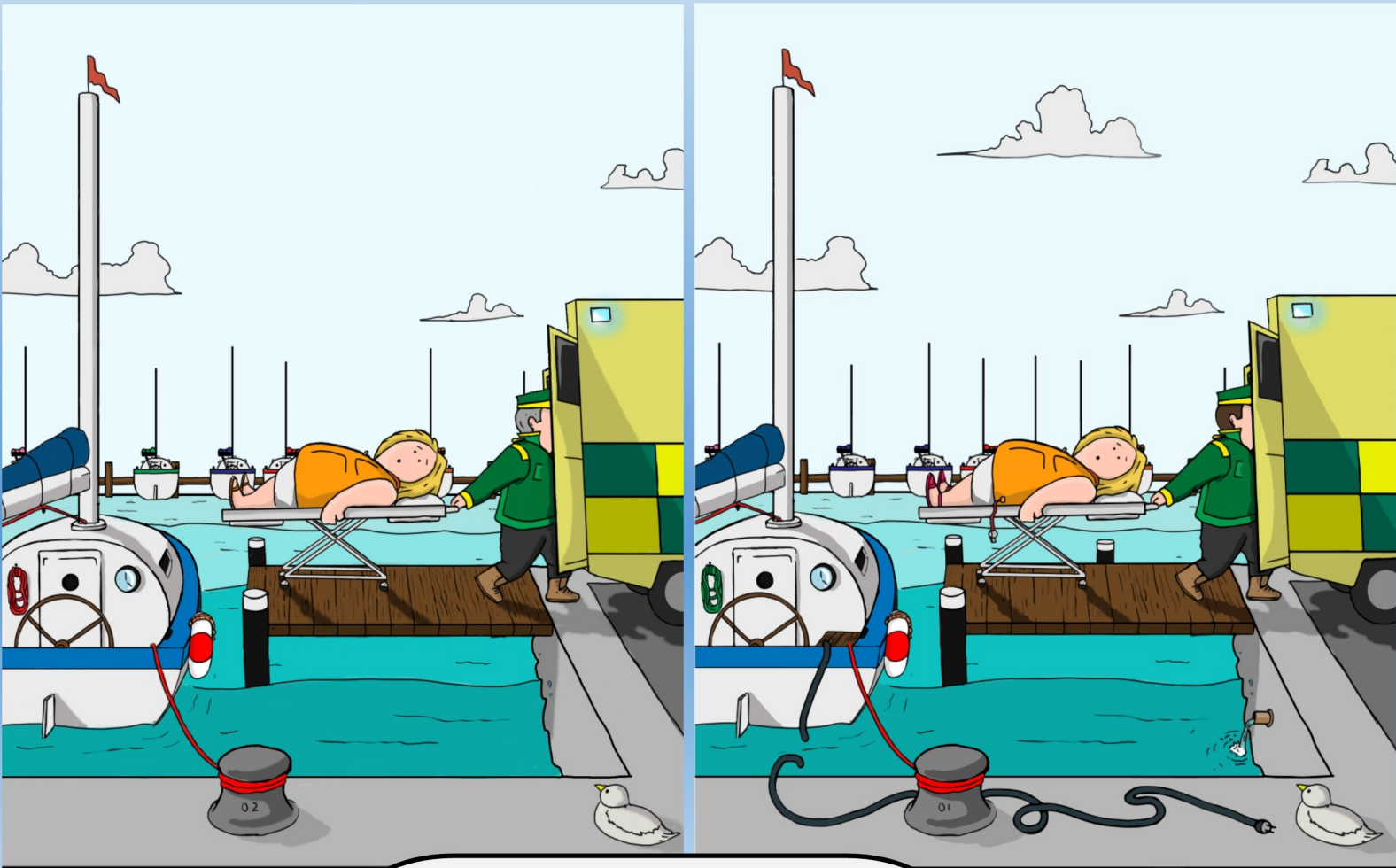
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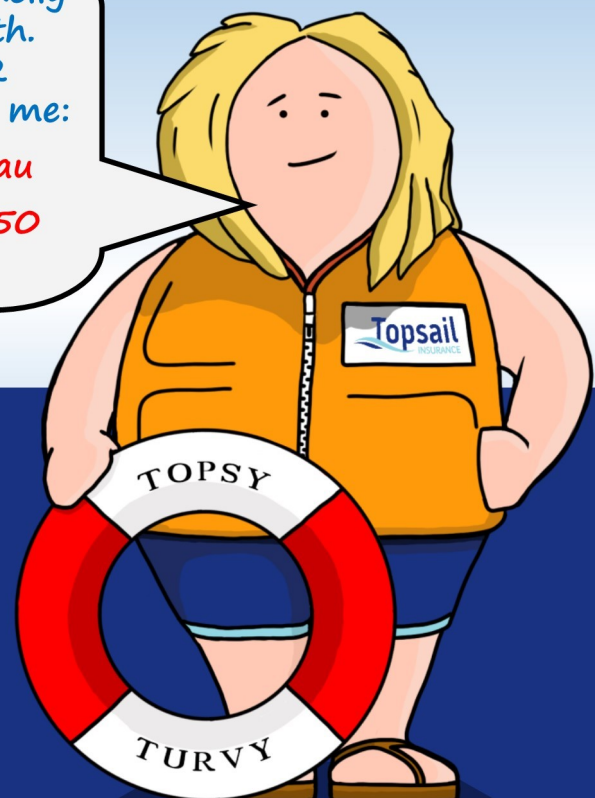
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# Flat bottomed girl

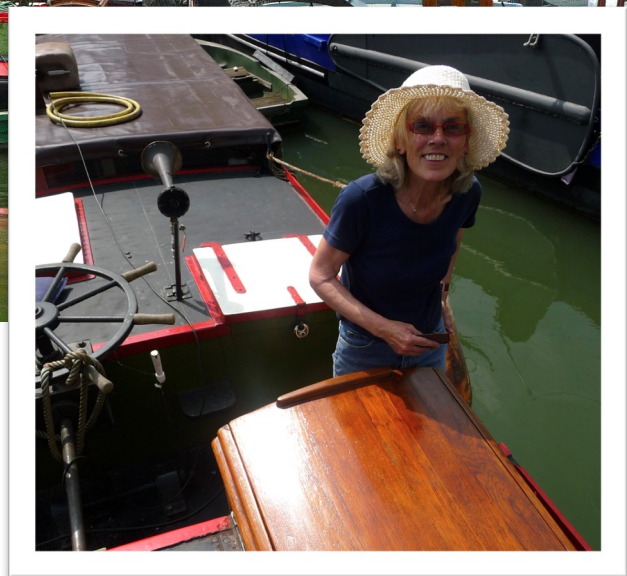
## Views from the canal

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

### WINTER ON A BARGE

It's often strange for me sitting here in the northern hemisphere to read the stories and articles from all the Australian contributors to *SisterShip Magazine*. As I write, they're all dealing with the challenges of summer, and this year what challenges they've had: bushfires, searing temperatures, drought and intensely difficult situations. My thoughts have often been with *SisterShip*'s Jackie Parry who's been on constant alert to save her home from the encroaching fires, although it seems the longed-for rain has now relieved them.

Meanwhile, we in northern Europe have had little to complain about; it's just that for us it's winter and winter in the Netherlands isn't much to get excited about unless you count the occasional wild winds from the west. We've recently had three of these, two of which warranted the names of Ciara and Denis. These unwelcome visitors meant the city had to close the flood gates due to the exceptionally high water caused by the spring tides and heavy rain. Mostly in winter, strong east winds result in extremely low water.



However, here in Rotterdam we rarely have snow. In fact, in the last few years, snow has only graced us with its presence briefly and quite late in the season. Last winter, I think it was the end of February or even March before we had our smattering, but even then it only lasted a few days. Quite disappointing for those desperate to don their skates and travel the canals on foot rather than by boat. Being a maritime climate, of course, we don't expect to have hard winters in the west of the country; in the east it's much colder, but also dryer. So you might think that coping with winter on a barge in Rotterdam isn't too bad. No, it isn't, not if we compare it to Siberia, or even the central USA.

Alright, maybe that's exaggerating the contrasts too much, but we have certain challenges ourselves for all that, added to which I categorically do not *do* cold.

To explain, old Dutch barges are steel, and even older Dutch barges are iron. Mine was built in 1898 and is 122 years old this year; it was constructed from 6 mm iron plates shaped and riveted to curved ribs. The upper part of my barge (I can't call it a

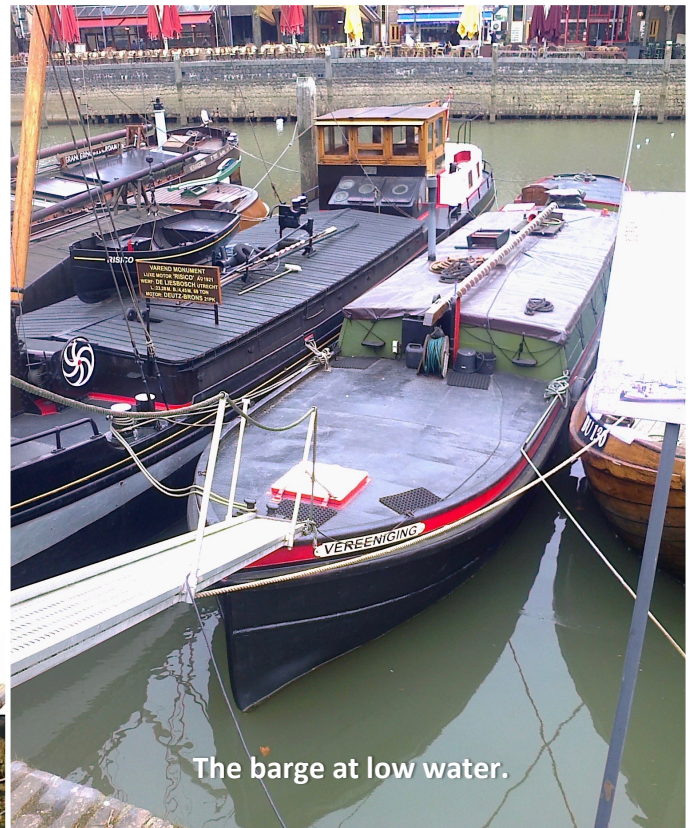


superstructure – that would be far too grand) used to consist of wooden panelling with removable hatches on top for easy loading. I've kept that illusion for the most part by retaining the panels, but behind them, I've had steel sections welded so I now have four layers between me and the enemy (the cold): wood, steel, insulation, and more wood. The hatches are still not completely sealed and can be lifted off, but I have a layer of insulation and a ceiling attached to them, so drafts are minimal. Pretty snug all told, you might think. Even so, despite my best efforts the barge can get pretty frigid in the winter.

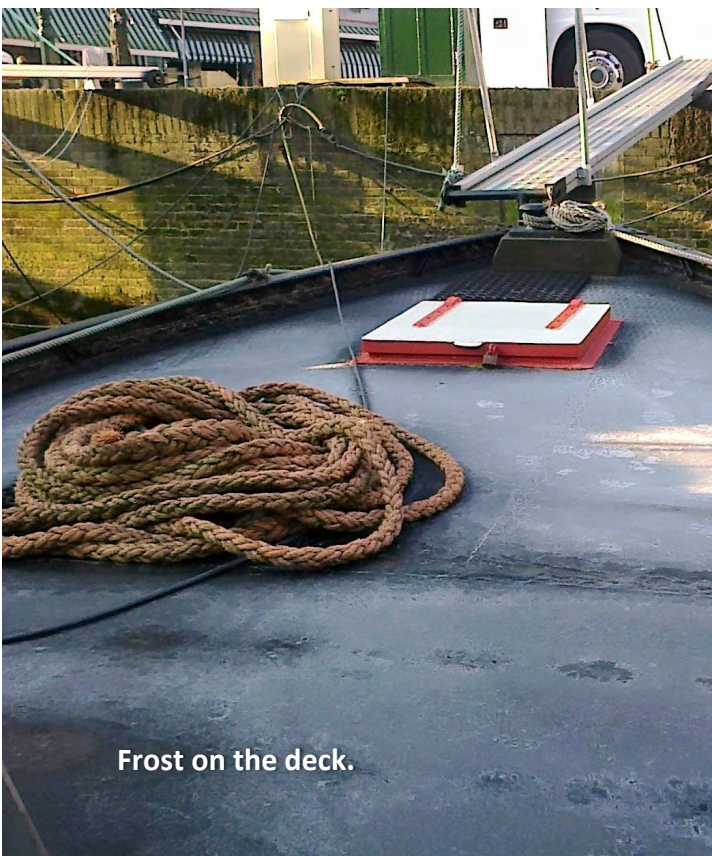
The reason it's difficult to keep warm is that where it's coldest – at the bottom of the hull – there's no insulation at all and there's only a few millimetres of iron between me and the icy waters below. There are those who spray foam into their hulls, or have other types of under floor insulation, but I don't have this for the reason I like to know what's going on under my floorboards.

I've talked about condensation before in an earlier article. It's my number one fear; my nemesis, in fact. It can so easily creep down

the walls and into crevices where nothing is seen and no one lives. In other words, it can quietly do its damage to an old barge without anyone being the wiser. I don't like that idea; I want to be able to lift my floor and inspect the bottom regularly. So during the winter I live with cold that bites viciously into my ankles while my shoulders and face are glowing with warmth from the heat that rises from the stove. Thick bootie-type slippers are therefore essential to prevent frost bite, or at best, chill blains.



The barge at low water.



Frost on the deck.



The worst part of it is when I arrive back on board after a weekend away. Everything, and I mean everything, is cold. From the plates and cups in my cupboards to the sheets and pillows on my bed. Even my tube of toothpaste is like cement and as for my olive oil and dishwashing liquid, both have turned into a glutinous sludge. The whole barge is chilled to its ribs and it takes hours for the warmth to seep into the fabric of the interior and raise the temperature to something approaching normal.

Sitting huddled in my coat with my gloves on and a blanket over my knees is condition normal for the first evening. Eventually, though, the air is warm enough to dispense with a couple of layers, although it takes longer for the furnishings and bedding to absorb it. So I've resorted to that wonderful vehicle of comfort from my childhood: a hot water bottle. Actually, I have two of them, one to cuddle under the blanket on the sofa and another to warm up the end of the bed. I'd forgotten what a boon they are and it took me far too long to think of them as a solution, but oh how glad I am they're still available. There really is nothing that makes me feel better, happier, and more tolerant of the cold than a good old-fashioned hottie.

The other upside of coping with the cold is that I get to cook on my old Dutch oil stove, which always gives me a feeling of frugality



One pot cooking.

and a nicely satisfying smugness. It's also much more efficient than the electric plate I use in the summer since I can stack things up on it quite safely owing to its small security railing. I can not only do all my veggies on it (with boiled eggs included), but also heat up things like vegetable patties and nut roast slices on top of those too – ideal on a cold night when good warming food is what you want.

In the very early days of my liveaboard life, I



My hot water bottle.



My slippers.



struggled with the winters, and to some extent, I still do. I worry about the winds that seem to grow in intensity with every year, a bit like my age; I dread the darker days, which seem to last longer than the glorious long evenings of summer; and I complain about the cold, which is probably less than it was, given climate change, but I still hate it.

All things being equal, though, I manage pretty well despite my seasonal longing for my former home in South Africa. It's either that or give up this life, which I'm definitely not ready to do just yet. But the greatest of all the upsides to winter is that spring, my favourite time of year, is just around the corner. It's the rebirth of everything

wonderful in our world and knowing it's coming is the silver lining to my wintry cloud.



**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.

## 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](http://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.

*Leanne H Hembrow*

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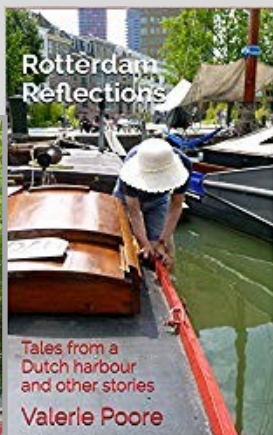
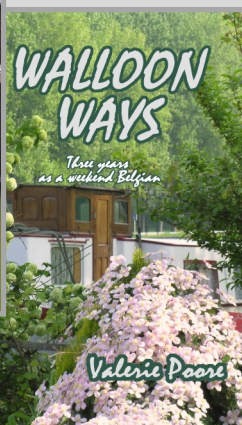
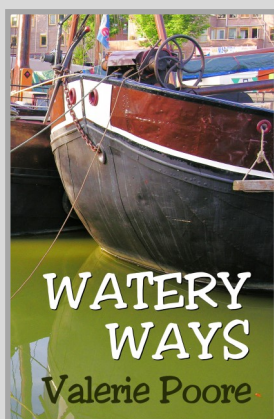
Email: [yoga4yachties@gmail.com](mailto:yoga4yachties@gmail.com)

Website: [www.yoga4yachties.com](http://www.yoga4yachties.com)



Find me on Facebook @yoga4yachties





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

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

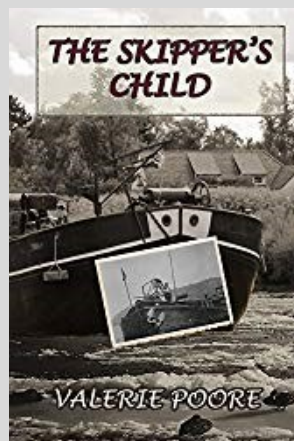
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Faring to France on a Shoe: <http://geni.us/AOt9kT>

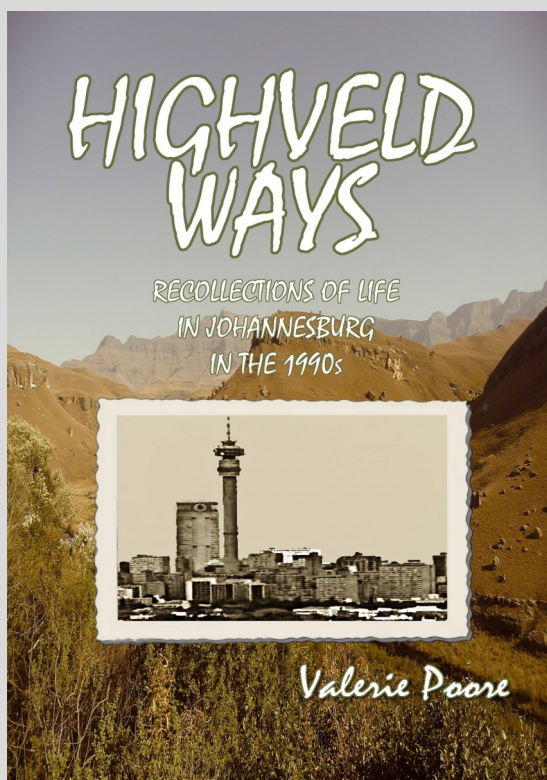
Rotterdam Reflections: <http://geni.us/5pSxcgs>

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

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



**New from Valerie Poore....**



This is the third book about the author's life in South Africa. In Highveld Ways, Valerie and her children join her husband in Johannesburg and begin a decade of life in and around the city. During the years that follow her arrival in 1989, Valerie explores the Highveld area on which Johannesburg is built and learns to love every aspect of South Africa's biggest, baddest city. The family move house five times and each new home brings its own memories and adventures, along with trips to Namibia, Zimbabwe and other parts of South Africa. The backcloth to this memoir is the turbulent political upheaval of the early 90s as well as the emergence of the New South Africa under Nelson Mandela. While no story about South Africa at the time can escape the often violent lead-up to the changes, Valerie's memories are focused on the events, the places and above all, the people who filled her life at the time.





# SUSTAINABLE SAILING

HEATHER FRANCIS

The word *sustainable* is used a lot these days. So much so that sometimes it sounds trivial and trendy. A hashtag rather than a philosophy, a bunch of white noise rather than something to sit up and pay attention to. But the concept, and the conversation, are not new.

What does sustainable really mean? According to the Oxford English Dictionary something is sustainable when it can “be maintained at a certain rate or level”. In an environmental context being sustainable is the capacity for the human civilization to exist, in harmony, with the biosphere without depleting natural resources beyond regeneration. Living in our modern, technological world it is sometimes difficult to find that equilibrium. One that both allows us to enjoy modern conveniences and to live in balance with the natural world.

Now there is an entire market built up around sustainability, making it easier than ever to start making positive changes in your daily routine. That also means that it is easier than ever to get caught in the consumer trap

of “going green” - buying gadgets you don’t need and replacing items already in use for new ones that are more “sustainable”. On the surface the sustainable, or zero waste, industry not only looks good but makes us feel better. Dig deeper and sometimes it feels a bit like caking on makeup; simply hiding the imperfections, not solving the issue.

Making choices that are both ecologically thoughtful and can be maintained for the long run can take some determination. We are currently sailing in the Philippines, and just trying to avoid single use plastic bags when I go to the market can mean repeating my mantra “no plastic, no plastic” four or five times to each vendor.

It also requires us to be aware of the bigger picture, the larger story behind the one we are presented with, however uncomfortable that may be. Switching to a plant-based diet may reduce greenhouse gas emissions and be better for the animals bred to be consumed. But crops grown in a mono-culture, sprayed with toxic chemicals and shipped halfway around the world might measure up to be



just as harmful.

Trying to navigate it all can feel lonely and exhausting and overwhelming. But it doesn't have to.

## MY SUSTAINABLE SAILING JOURNEY

In 2008 when my partner Steve and I bought and moved onto our Newport 41, *Kate*, Facebook was in its infancy, Instagram had not been invented, and mobile phones were definitely not smart. There was no “zero waste lifestyle” guru to give me advice and most people had yet to discover the idea of low impact living. Yet, I was excited to embark on the adventure of living a simpler life, on a modest sailboat, a little closer to nature.

I brought with me deeply ingrained ideas about actively reducing our waste and recycling as much as possible, thanks to growing up in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where there was a municipal recycling and composting program. As someone who has worn hand-me-downs and enjoyed thrifting for as long as I can remember I scoured op shops for items that we needed before ordering something new. And I knew it made both environmental and financial sense to buy in bulk when provisioning. I had a good foundation, but it would be our travels that would spur me on to do more.

Over the past 12 years we have sailed south from California to Panama, across the Pacific as far as New Caledonia and north to the Solomons, Papua New Guinea, Palau, and the Philippines. Throughout our voyage we have been confronted by garbage. In Panama I was hesitant to take our trash ashore to “the dump” as it was nothing more than a mound in the bush, the jungle simply left to swallow our scraps. On the desolate atolls of French Polynesia, we would comb beaches strewn with plastic bottles, the labels all indecipherable Asian characters, flotsam

from afar. In Tonga we walked through a park where instant noodle flavour sachets littered the ground like metallic party confetti. And in the Philippines, we have anchored in harbours where on the change of tide you could almost walk ashore over the floating debris.

Early on we started expanding our capacity to live independently of resources ashore. We installed a wind generator and a year later solar panels, reducing our reliance on both marinas and petrol. Steve built and installed a high capacity watermaker, so we wouldn't have to burden already taxed wells in remote communities. Then we installed foot pumps to cut down on our daily water usage. I eliminated toxic cleaning chemicals and detergents, so our waste water would be as clean as possible. We bought as much equipment as we could second hand; mainsail, spinnaker pole, outboard, charts, pump for the watermaker. We made a conscious effort to drift when the winds died instead of chewing up diesel to appease our impatience.





Still, there was a tinge of guilt when we tossed bottle or a tin overboard on long passages. Or, when I found a bag of flour that had spoiled because I had over provisioned... again. I had long switched to organic, unbleached cotton tampons but each month I hated the amount of “necessary” garbage I still created. I knew there was more I could be doing. More ways to cut down on our waste. More products I could eliminate from our daily lives without notice. More ways I could be frugal with our resources, without being too frugal when it came to our modern comforts.

Of course, there are also all the very boat-specific issues when it comes to sustainability. Although we’ve been living off the grid for more than a decade, that doesn’t necessarily mean we get a gold star. It takes resources to make a solar panel, perhaps more than will be recuperated in the panel’s power production lifespan. We’ve gone through two inflatable dinghies over the past decade (through no fault of our own) and rely on a 2-stroke outboard, albeit one that is less than five years old.

Dacron, Sunbrella, Spectra, polyester. These are all essential materials onboard our boat. They are also all man-made materials, spun in a lab and created with synthetic fibres. We are currently in the process of putting on a new coat of anti-foul and resurfacing the non-skid decks. All of these processes involve harmful chemicals and pollutants.

This year our yacht, *Kate*, will be 47 years old. I am positive she has many good years afloat, but she is fibreglass. Which means she is essentially just a big plastic boat. One that currently cannot be economically or environmentally recycled when her lifetime is up. It’s hard to wave the sustainable flag when so many of the big issues onboard have limited ecologically sound solutions.

Like the story of any epic sailing adventure, the journey to sustainable sailing is a long

haul. One that is fraught with breakages, and jury rigs, and occasionally going in the wrong direction. One full of highs and lows, perfect days and stormy nights. A journey where no matter how skilled and knowledgeable you are, there is always a new challenge or something new to learn.

I am hoping that by opening a conversation here, in each future issue of *SisterShip Magazine*, I’ll learn more about how we can all work to meet the goal of *Sustainable Sailing*. From the galley to the head, the dinghy to the Mothership, DIY projects to the latest tech news, I am excited to be able to share it all with you, the reader. And, I am hopeful that together we can navigate our way to a better future, for ourselves and the planet.

If you have any topics you would like covered or any tips to share, please drop me a line via email at:

[sustainablesailor41@gmail.com](mailto:sustainablesailor41@gmail.com)

And, if you are like me and at times wonder if all those small, hard earned actions are really making a difference just remember the old adage “Individually we are a drop. Together we are the ocean”.



**HEATHER FRANCIS is from Nova Scotia, Canada and has lived and worked on boats throughout the world. Since 2008 she has been living and sailing onboard *Kate*, a Newport 41 sloop, with her Aussie partner, Steve. She is a writer, photographer and cook who tries to live mindfully. Find out more at [www.yachtkate.com](http://www.yachtkate.com)**



# FROM THE GALLEY

BY BURNICE STARKEY

## Spicy Korean Lamb Lettuce Wraps (Serves 6)

### Gather:

800 grams lamb/chicken/pork/kangaroo/fish mince  
2 garlic cloves crushed  
1 knuckle of ginger grated  
2.5 Tbsp. Korean chili (Gochujang)  
2.5 Tbsp. tamari  
2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar (ACV) with mother  
Whole leaves from (Iceberg) lettuce washed and separated  
250 grams daikon (radish) thinly sliced  
3 Lebanese cucumbers cut julienne style  
Kimchi (homemade fermented cabbage)  
Oyster mushrooms sliced  
250 grams bean sprouts blanched and drained

### Dipping sauce:

A little chili paste in equal measures of lemon juice and ACV. Taste and adjust with coconut water.

### Method:

Combine mince with garlic, ginger, Korean chili, tamari and ACV. Mix well.

Heat non-stick pan and dry fry half the mince mixture.

Add a little water if meat sticks. Remove from pan and repeat with second half batch.

Arrange other ingredients on plates or in small bowls as accompaniments to go with the cooked lamb mince.

Make dipping sauce.

The crew can build their own according to preference. To eat, take a lettuce leaf and add a spoonful of mince then a little of everything.

Wrap, dip, and devour!





## BURNICE STARKEY

Adventures are my passion but cooking is a creative outlet for me. Having spent nearly 20 years living abroad, different flavours, styles, and ethnicities have influenced my palette. Mix a few years working in hospitality that honed a skill or three, add five years as a live-aboard sailor with minimalist equipment, and you have a fairly flexible kitchen hand who can tweak a recipe to suit remote markets and conditions.

Bake or dry fry ingredients with good Gut Health as the goal and you have my approach to sustaining weight loss with flavoursome flair. (Yep 35 kg gone!)

If too many sundowners — alcohol, nibbles, and high carb moments — are giving you more than the tummy grumbles, take the plunge and Get Gutsy. Visit my Facebook page and invite friends to buddy-up and join our gut health voyage. It worked for me and many others and it will work for you, too.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/970449153079726>

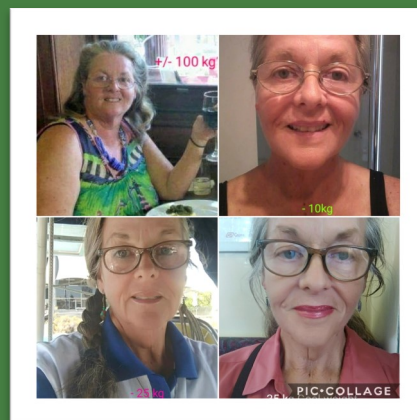
[burnicestarkey@hotmail.com](mailto:burnicestarkey@hotmail.com)

mobile: 0490 955 682

Facebook Gut Health group: Love Your Guts with the Sunny Girls

Link to join :

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1779976948969216/?ref=share>



### Love Your Guts – Easy Recipes for Gut Health LOVE YOUR GUTS AND YOUR GUTS WILL LOVE YOU BACK!

Simple and delicious recipes to improve gut health, lose weight and feel wonderful.

Gut health has a huge impact on our physical, mental and emotional well-being. Eating foods that promote a diverse "microbiome" can have dramatic effects on your health, including your weight. Knowing which foods will feed those good bacteria and keep the bad guys away can be confusing, but it doesn't need to be!



Linda Frylink Anderson amazed us with her tales of adventure and sailing the world in **SAILING IN MY SARONG** and **SALVAGE IN MY SARONG**. The extended holiday, regular sundowners, and indulgence in exotic cuisines around the world had its downside though, and the time came for Linda to make a healthy change. She lost a sensational 30 kilograms (66 pounds) quickly and simply by eating for gut health! Now Linda is showing you how to **LOVE YOUR GUTS** too, with this collection of delicious, simple meals to make loving your guts easy and fun!

Linda Frylink Anderson, Artist, Writer, Teacher, Sailor, Gut Health Mentor

Phone 0402330244 Email: [artistinthebush@gmail.com](mailto:artistinthebush@gmail.com)

Facebook Gut Health group : Love Your Guts with the Sunny Girls

Link to join : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1779976948969216/?ref=share>

Sailing blog : [www.valiam.com.au](http://www.valiam.com.au)



# The Ends of the Earth Challenge



## The concept

In November 2020, the Ocean Sailing Club yacht will leave New Zealand in an attempt to be the first yacht ever to sail to the world's most extreme cities in consecutive mid summers. As far as we are aware, no one has ever done this.

From Ushuaia, the world's most southerly city, Cape Horn, in December 2020 to Hammerfest, 200 miles into the Arctic Circle above Norway, by June 2021. A total of 20,000 miles and divided into nine legs.

A non-profit organisation, the Ocean Sailing Club's ambition is to let as many people as possible share in this unique challenge.

## Research

By following the routes of the great whales as they migrate from Antarctica to the Arctic, the club also offers the yacht as a platform for ocean/climate research, and to call for immediate action on climate change.

As well as the crew positions, there are three scholarship places (one per expedition leg) researchers, film makers, or activists concerned about climate change and our oceans.

## Crewing

The yacht will have six on board for each leg

(skipper, researcher, and four crew). Committed to equal opportunities for men and for women, we are looking for six women and six men, two each for the expedition legs. There are hundreds of books recording men's expeditions into the unknown. But to presume that bravery and daring are specifically male preserves would be wrong. Women are heroes too, and always have been – though too often unsung heroes. In exploration look up Jo Peary, the first white woman to travel into the high Arctic or Marie Herbert who lived with Inuit in the Arctic with her daughter Kari Herbert. In sailing, the examples are innumerable from solo sailors Laura Dekker and Isabelle Autissier to skippers like Tracey Edwards and Nicola Henderson. The list is long and all these women have the qualities we are looking for – tenacity, empathy, bravery, and judgement. We would like to hear from you if you have those qualities

## "Expedition" level legs

- Cape Horn Expedition from New Zealand to Ushuaia (4 weeks).
- The Shackleton Memorial Expedition from Ushuaia to South Georgia and on to Brazil (6 weeks).
- The Norse Saga Expedition, from Dublin to Arctic Hammerfest via the Faroe Islands.



## “Cruise” level legs – (4 weeks each)

- The ‘NZ Dash’ from Sydney to Auckland.
- The ‘Carnival Cruise’ from Salvador (Brazil) to Trinidad.
- The ‘Tick off the Atlantic Cruise’ from Bermuda to Dublin via the Azores.
- And three ‘Sunshine Sailing’ weeks in the Caribbean.

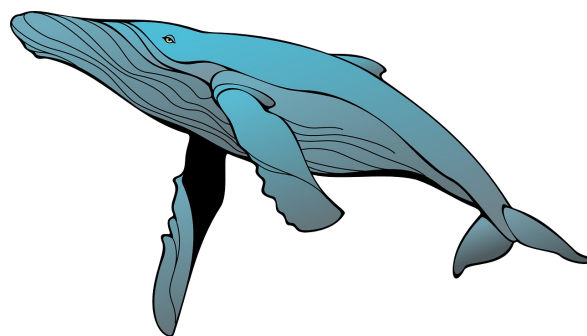
As a non-profit organisation, we are funding this Challenge ourselves. The expected costs are around £75,000 to £100,000. There is a requested contribution from crew of about £72 per day on board, approximately £500 per week. There is also a Challenge joining fee of £350 enabling you to crew on two legs.

We want as many people as possible to take part in the world’s first Ends of the Earth Challenge and share in making history as the first yacht to sail between the world’s most extreme cities between consecutive summer solstices.

More information:

<http://www.theoceansailingclub.org/index.php?page=25>,

Contact Peter Edington +61 405 430 525.  
(Challenge Leader)



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## EziYacht Series – Part 4

# *Faraway* in the Greek Islands

**SONIA ROBINSON**

In this episode of ‘Buying and Selling Boats Made Easy’ you’ll need your passport because we’re sailing the Mediterranean archipelago of Greece. We join Jenny Gordon-Jones of Women Who Sail Australia on board *Faraway II*, her beloved Bavaria 46-foot cruiser. Jenny has successfully cruised the Med for over a decade living an eternal summer.

Jenny has accomplished her dreams and overcome the fear that hinders many from taking the step into the relative unknown.

We’ll look at the ins and outs of boat ownership abroad as Jenny shares more than a decade of experience sailing these waters and outlines just how easy it is to manage your own boat in the Med. We’ll also look at the steps involved in preparing your yacht for ‘wintering’ on the islands and the various tasks that need to be done to ensure your holiday afloat is uninterrupted bliss.

Turn off the TV, pour a drink, and let yourself be swept off to the faraway essence of the Med, and the never ending luminescent blue of the Greek Islands...

Another balmy evening sets in at anchor as the calm waters of a Mediterranean summer’s eve lap against *Faraway’s* hull. In the distance, ashore, glimmering lights flicker from candle-lit tavernas busy with chatty tourists relishing local Greek cuisine as they sip their retsina and order more taramasalata. Deep below her keel, little fish dart this way and that, enjoying their own clear water heaven.

Fresh from a warm cleansing shower, the

captain has dressed for a casual supper ashore. Jenny has been the skipper of her ship for some years now and knows all the best spots to eat out on the islands. As she sips her gin and looks out over the bay, she smiles with quiet satisfaction.

She is in love with this life. This island paradise, once a dream, has become as familiar as her own backyard in Queensland. She’s a sailor, a captain, a voyager, a traveller,



and a seasoned Mediterranean sailor. This is her life now.

But how did she get here? How did she accomplish so much? Jenny admits she would never have made it here if it wasn't for her first experience sailing all those years ago. What seemed like a dream back then had now become her reality.

When I asked Jenny what had made her decide to buy a yacht on the other side of the world, her response was an elated orchestra from a woman in love with this island paradise.

**Jenny:** “The haunting azure blue of the Mediterranean never fails to touch my heart and excite me! It was amazing really, I found myself cruising in Turkey on a Buizen 48! Oh, I couldn't believe the colours, the blueness, the wonderful food and the sailing... I mean the Med – it's just so easy...”

Indeed, listening to Jenny stirred my own precious memories of sailing in Greece as island names and colours came flooding back to me. I too was lured by the clear blue waters, the endless islands to explore,



swimming in the calm dawn waters of a land steeped in archaeological myths and legends. Welcome to the Greek Islands.

Every day dawns with a new destination to discover – always within a few hours sailing – to be met with a secluded bay, or the charm of a small port or fishing village where locals are ready to welcome a yacht upon arrival. The smell of fresh bread in the mornings, the sound of distant church bells on the hillside as goats scatter, the colourful little fishing boats tied up at the jetty full of charm and character while stray cats wander the docks hoping for fisherman's snack. How could one not fall in love? And how could one not dream of sailing here – if only one could...?

Jenny hadn't grown up around boats – she was the daughter of a sheep farmer from New Zealand and spent many years as a landlubber in Queensland before she decided to head off on an unknown crusade. Her friend owned a yacht and asked her to crew. That was the start of a 10-year love affair with the Mediterranean.

**Jenny:** “I loved it so much I stayed for six months!” During that time I started to believe that I could see a life for myself owning a boat in the Med. It all seemed so easy.”

And it was to be... Jenny returned the





following year and it was then that she began to realise that this dream could become her reality. When she returned to Australia she convinced her good friend John to come back with her the following season with the intention of buying a boat and spending the European summer cruising.

**Sonia:** “How did you end up with a Bavaria 46?”

**Jenny:** “Well I’d spent two seasons crewing on a Bavaria 44 and the skipper pushed the boat pretty hard. I saw how well it handled the strong winds of the Med, and how reliable it was. With all the lines controlled from the cockpit, it felt safe. So I decided I wanted a yacht with in-mast furling that would cruise between 7-8 knots comfortably under full main and half heady.”

Jenny explained that the older boats are so well built and not like today’s charter fleets. “The older style Bavarias are so strong and solid and very user friendly”, Jenny adds.

Having spent two seasons now crewing in the Med, Jenny had also come to the realisation

that a 44 or a 46-footer was the perfect size for living aboard – especially if planning to stay over winter in the Med when it can get quite cold.

**Jenny:** “We were so cosy on board over winter because *Faraway II* has a diesel heater – and she can fit up to ten around the saloon table and sleep ten so we could still enjoy having guests on board.”

**Sonia:** “How long did it take to find the right yacht?”

**Jenny:** “We flew out from Australia to look at four yachts in Croatia. We ended up with our first choice. *Faraway II* had belonged to the owner of the charter fleet and she came with a lot of extras for cruising that the other boats didn’t offer - which for us was a huge advantage coming with only our bags from Australia. We met a few other couples on the plane also on their way to Croatia to buy yachts – we all ended up happy and have remained life-long cruising friends ever since.”

**Sonia:** “What makes you return year after



*Faraway II.*



year?”

**Jenny:** “When I first discovered the islands I couldn’t believe how simple life was there; how affordable, with very little bureaucracy, few rules and just a delight to explore. Sailing in Greece is so easy and so affordable that it brings us back year after year. Town quays are very cheap and sometimes free, it’s user-friendly, beautiful, everybody speaks English and the Greeks are so helpful.”

**Sonia:** “What are you fondest memories?”

**Jenny:** “Nothing beats sailing into the Santorini caldera in early morning mist and seeing the white shining cave houses unfold in the dewy hazy sun. It’s that unforgettable royal blue that you see in the popular pot plant holders we use to hold red geraniums and brightly petalled flowers.”

**Sonia:** “How easy is it to get around?”

**Jenny:** “The joy of sailing the Aegean is that each island is within one day sail or less from

the next. In fact when you measure the distance from the most northern Greek island down through the Aegean to Cyprus, it’s the same distance as between Rockhampton and Brisbane (Queensland). It’s a very small area really and makes for wonderful sailing because you’ve always got a bolthole island or bay when those Meltemi winds start to blow.

“Often at times when under motor with no wind, we will stop the boat, throw out a floating safety line and jump overboard for a swim to cool off. You’re totally safe because there are very few big fish in the Mediterranean and definitely no sharks! You can swim without having any cares or concerns. The water is so cool and refreshing and in places incredibly deep but always that fascinating, gorgeous, evocative Mediterranean blue.”

*“Every Greek island has a town*





*quay which we can tie up to for 0-20 Euros per day, yes some are free, and if you are there by three in the afternoon you'll always get a berth. You step off your yacht, walk across the road and into a taverna of your choice."*

"Supermarkets are nearby and every island is surrounded by stunning little bays where you can berth stern-to, close to the shore, with floating lines or safely anchor offshore and swing to the wind."

**Sonia:** "How easy is it for an Australian or a New Zealander to cruise in Europe and what visas are required?"

**Jenny:** "If you have an Australian or New Zealand registered vessel you are required to sail out of European waters every 18 months. If you don't hold a European passport you are required to check out after three months. You just need to sail out for a day and then you can come back again, so we would sail to Albania or Turkey – and they love it when you go for a visit there."

**Sonia:** "How would a first-time Med cruiser plan their season?"

- Know your budget and know what you're looking for (in a boat). Choose your charter fleet well (we had a short list of about four yachts before we arrived.) Note: Boat share yachts are very basic and usually have less equipment on board.
- Use the internet to find a good broker and a good surveyor – there are too many nightmare stories about brokers passing on ex-charter boats in poor working order. If buying from an ex-charter fleet, choose the company wisely.
- Allow two to three weeks at the beginning of the season for anti-fouling and maintenance. Take the boat out for a test run and address anything that needs attention before you head off.
- Maintenance is affordable and every island has a town quay. You don't need to spend a lot of money. Most of the work is done through networking. Ask questions on the net and via the 'Women Who Sail the Med' forum.
- Buy the pilot guides (Rod Heikell). There are hardstands everywhere and



Astypalaia.



they are listed in his book.

- For picking up and dropping off crew, most islands have airports and a good ferry service so chose somewhere that you can tie up stern-to for a couple of days.

**Sonia:** “What advice could you share on preparing to ‘winter’ the boat?”

- At the end of the season, carry out an engine service and change the oil – plan to change it again at the beginning of the season.
- For repairs and maintenance, charter fleets are wonderful for advising who to use/recommend. Also ask the locals and use online forums to seek more advice and recommendations.
- Protect the mainsail if it’s in a furler – otherwise remove all the sails and all the running rigging (apart from the halyards). Cover as much of the boat as possible.
- Hardstands are full of rats – so cats generally are kept to keep the population down!

**Sonia:** “Did you come up against many challenges?”

**Jenny:** “Well, I didn’t own a yacht until I was in my 50s. I was fit, healthy, and willing to learn but not as strong as a man. Of course, you need common sense and desire. In the early days as skipper, I always took a knowledgeable male who had mechanical and electrical experience.

Keep a list and stay on top of it! It’s absolutely vital to keep on top of maintenance each season or you’ll spend all the time in the marina fixing things when you should be out cruising.

When I first visited the Greek Islands I was amazed by how affordable and simple life

was there. That’s changing with the new Etapai cruising tax, which is based on the boat length and the period of time you plan to stay in Greek waters. And Brexit may see new changes for visiting yachts as well.”

**Sonia:** “Which is your favourite island?”

**Jenny:** “I’m often asked which is my favourite island, such a tough question to answer as each one has its own rugged charm and special features. But one of my favourites is Astypalaia, which is shaped like a butterfly and provides safe anchorage from all wind directions. The heart of the island has the remnants of an old castle on a hill and the surrounding village, painted in the inevitable limestone white with blue doors, is picture perfect. You dine with the legs of your wooden table stuck in damp sand by the sea and wait for the cheap but generally good wine to arrive with home-made nibbles from the family kitchen.”

*“With a constant breeze of warm*





*fragrant air the scene is perfectly unforgettable.”*

A final word from Jenny, “Skills come with experience so do as Socrates did and acknowledge that you know nothing!”

For anyone that has a dream and is inspired by Jenny’s’ story of adventure, bold passion and determination, you can make your dream a reality too.

Jenny has spent 12 seasons cruising the Med with friends and her boat partner John. Both have realised that it’s time to pass on their yacht to someone else now.

Having sailed extensively in the Med myself, Greece is definitely my favourite cruising ground. If you have the possibility to live the eternal summer, *Faraway II* is the key to achieving this dream.

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To find out more about the **Bavaria 46 *Faraway II*** and to view her online listing, go to [www.eziyacht.com/yachtsforsale](http://www.eziyacht.com/yachtsforsale) or contact **Sonia Robinson** on **0410 35 77 55**

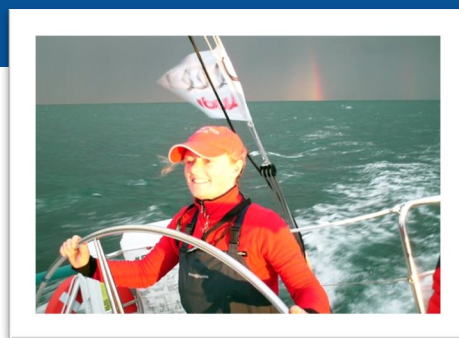
More in the EZIYACHT series ‘Buying and Selling Boats Made Easy’:

Part 1 – Tips on how to sell privately and preparing your yacht for market (*Sistership June 2019*).

Part 2 - Selling your boat the smart way and dealing with prospective buyers (*Sistership Aug 2019*).

Part 3 – ‘The Customer Journey’ Getting it Right when buying a *used* boat without going over budget or stressing out (*Sistership Oct 2019*).

For more information on buying and selling please contact [www.eziyacht.com](http://www.eziyacht.com)



**SONIA ROBINSON** grew up sailing the Irish coastal waters and became comfortable at sea from a young age encouraged by her mother, a passionate sailor. From humble beginnings as a sailing instructor in the Mediterranean, she found her dream job racing classic yachts only to discover a life of adventure which took her across the Atlantic working aboard numerous ocean going yachts. She’s a qualified RYA Offshore Yachtmaster and Australian Sailing Senior Keelboat Instructor and has devoted a large part of her career in the development of sailing with Australian Sailing, RYA, YNZ and Fiji Yachting Association.

Having owned boats throughout her life, Sonia realised through her own experience that a good Broker is a rare find. She decided to set the world straight by turning to yacht broking in 2017. Sonia believes in excellent customer service combined with quality marketing and an honest approach and attitude to selling. Sonia’s goal for EziYacht is to become the number one cruising and classic Yacht Brokerage in Australia.

Sonia is happiest when sharing her passion for boating by helping to make it accessible and safe for everyone and she would love nothing more than to encourage more women to take the step towards boat ownership.

**\*My profession is selling yachts and you can call me at any time for a free consultation on**

**0410 35 77 55 or shoot me an email on [sonia@eziyacht.com](mailto:sonia@eziyacht.com).**



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# Barefoot Boating Blunderment (BBB)



Jane Chevous

**Jane and her husband Ivan try to follow the BBB principles on the sailing boat *Chantey*.**

- 1. Go with open arms;***
- 2. Walk barefoot and tread lightly on this earth;***
- 3. Blundering or random wandering in the flow; and***
- 4. Take only friendship, leave only delight.***

## **#seatoo**

The last three months have been a particularly difficult time to be on the boat, not because of the normal challenges like the weather, or the boat repairs, or the fellow crew. My perspective on these usual sailor's preoccupations has shifted, as four months ago, just before we left the UK, I decided to report (for the second time) a #metoo experience that took place when I was a young adult.

To be honest it's all felt a little surreal. One day I am climbing the mast to install a new fitting; the next I am being interviewed via

Skype by a specialist police officer. Each morning I check my emails to see if my case worker has sent any updates, before scrubbing the bilge or catching the chicken bus to the store. I've had weekly calls with my therapist in the strangest of places, from cuddling my teddy in the corner of our bunk, to sitting on the floor next to the new heads I just installed (as the only place I could get privacy while my hubby did some rewiring).

I am really blessed. I have a warm-hearted therapist, an experienced case worker and a specialist sexual violence advocate. I am part of an abuse-survivor-led organisation and have an amazing group of peers that understand exactly what I am going through and send me messages of encouragement and support. My family and friends in UK know what I am doing and will always be there for me. My husband is kind, safe, and understanding. And yet many times I have felt so alone. My support network and all my female friends are thousands of miles away, and the time difference means I often can't just give one of them a call when I need to hear a friendly voice. Even video calls are no substitute for sharing a coffee and a hug with a best friend, when the pain is hard and you need a shoulder to cry on.



Sometimes I have been as prickly as a cactus and other times have felt lost in a desert. Really only sailing sisters will understand how lonely a bunk can be at times like these. One of my dark nights of the soul I posted a ‘cri de cœur’ on the Women Who Sail Facebook group, and I was humbled and overwhelmed by the response. It was read by 528 people and received 250 comments. I read every single one and they are all warm, supportive, empathic, and have really helped me to take courage and feel less alone. Many women shared in solidarity that they are survivors too.

I have tried to follow our BBB principles, and approach this experience with open arms. I found a quote that inspired me, as I attempt to report abuse as part of restoring the ruptured relationships in our broken world:

“Peace-making doesn’t mean passivity. It is the act of interrupting injustice without mirroring injustice, the act of disarming evil

without destroying the evildoer, the act of finding a third way that is neither fight nor flight but the careful, arduous pursuit of reconciliation and justice.”

The formal reporting process is not very trauma-informed or survivor-centred, but I am doing my best to ensure survivors voices are heard within it, and to steer us towards a restorative justice outcome. Only when we start to heal the shame and mistrust that affects everyone when #metoo happens, can we create a society where it isn’t so horrifically common, and ensure a strong and compassionate response to victims when it does occur. I was abused by two priests. If my abusers admit they did something wrong, I want to meet with them, explain the impact of what they did, and give them the opportunity to repent and be forgiven. If they don’t admit responsibility, I want the bishops to apologise on their behalf, and hold them to account.

**My prickly desert cactus anchorage in Isla San Francisco, Baja California.**





Thinking of BBB #4, 'take only friendship', I was reminded of the women I have met on the way, both sailing sisters and land friends, who have been facing their own #metoo situations. Because I work for a survivor organisation and am quite open about my experience, we have had those kind of conversations quite a lot, including a few times when a sister was in an unsafe situation on her boat, and needed to talk through her options. How important those conversations are, as I'm sure many of you have found.

It made me think about how hard it can be for a sailing sister, if something happens when you are far from home, and perhaps stuck with your abuser on a small boat. Or, as happened to one woman I met, abandoned by your captain in a remote area in a foreign land. Where can you go for help then? So, I have started collecting links to different support agencies around the world (see below), to create a resource for #seatoosituations. I am blogging about my reporting experience, to encourage others to come forward and reflect on what is helpful and unhelpful in agency responses (see [www.barefoot-tales.uk/blog](http://www.barefoot-tales.uk/blog)).

I have made a page on my website for anyone with a #seatoos experience, with information about support, and a safe space to share

experiences and reach out, if you need to. I would really like to hear from other sailing sisters concerned about this issue, if you have ideas about what support is needed, or would like to help to develop this resource.

Finally, all adult (16+) survivors, of all kinds of abuse and any gender, are welcome to join Survivors Voices, for peer support and survivor activism. Allies are welcome too and you can find out more at [www.survivorsvoices.org](http://www.survivorsvoices.org).

### International Support Agencies

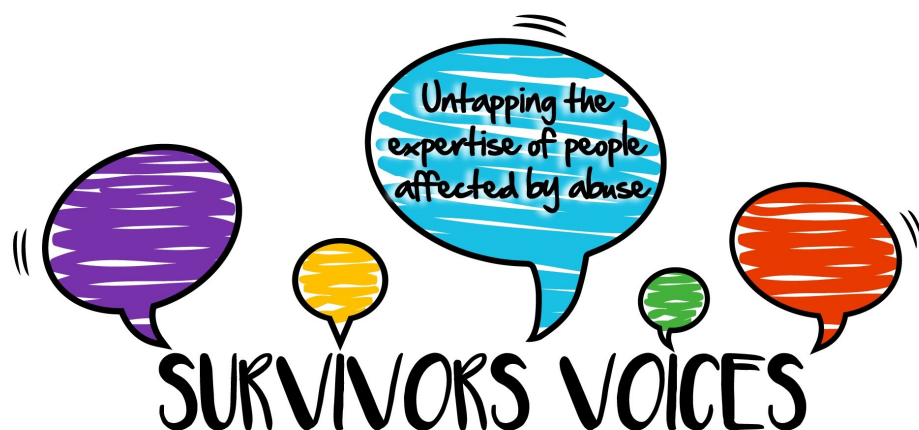
**Pandora's Project:** <https://pandys.org/forums/index.php?/forum/42-public-resources/>

**Rape support links:** <http://www.ibiblio.org/rcip/internl.html>

**Global Women's Organisations list** <http://www.distel.ca/womlist/womlist.html>

**Global Network of Women's Shelters** <https://www.gnws.org/index.php/find-help/find-helplines>

**National Centre on Domestic & Sexual Violence (list of international links)** [http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd\\_linkswominternational.html](http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd_linkswominternational.html)







Jane Chevous

Writer, Educator, Activist

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True Stories from Women on the Water

## Facing Fear Head On

Edited by Jackie Parry and Shelley Wright

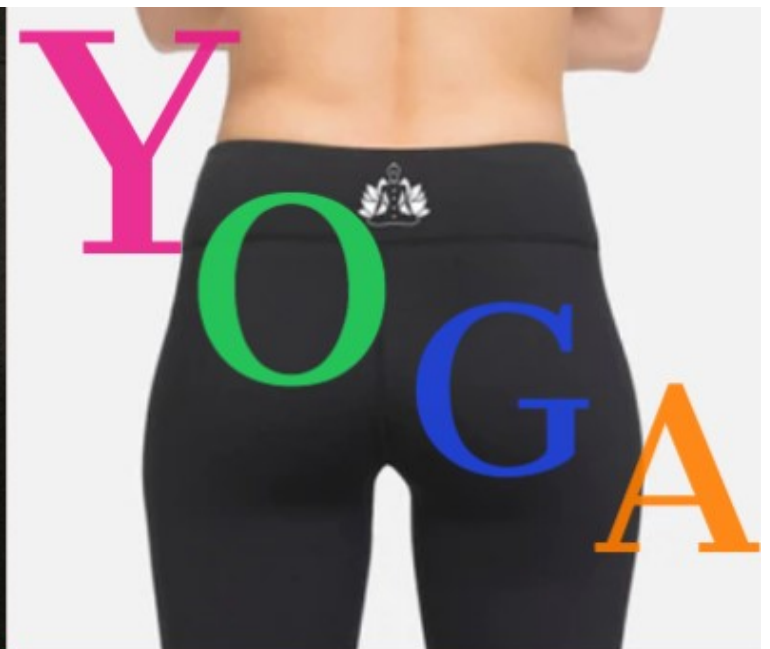
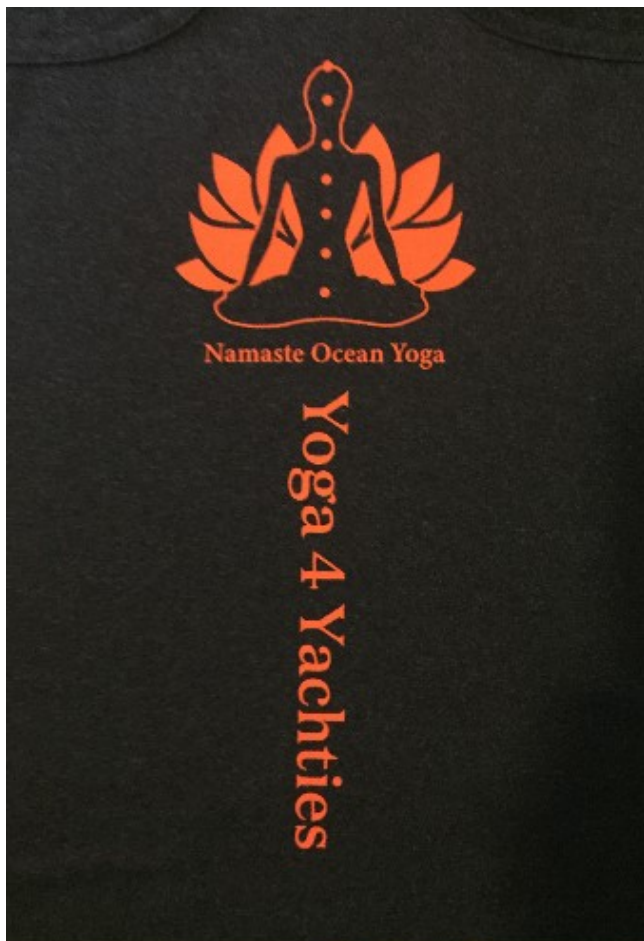
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# Mackay Reef Surprise

Justine Porter

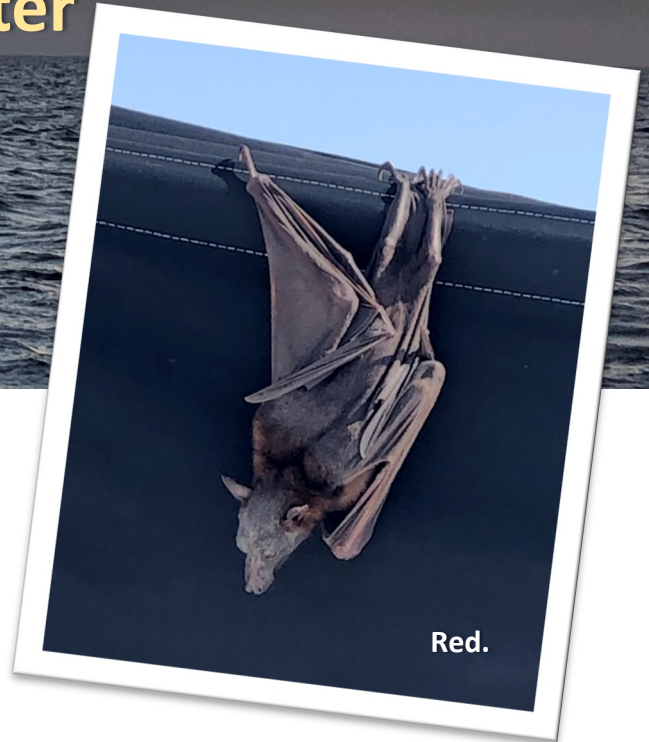
Looking back towards the mainland as Red flew away.

It's cyclone season, however we decided to stay within the cyclone belt in Far North Queensland, Australia, to take advantage of the beautiful warm tropical days between storms.

Not many sailors like to risk being up here, but we have a solid performance blue water catamaran, *Shima*, and a plan for any cyclonic weather. We lived in the territory for 20 years and are well accustomed to cyclones and the dangers, but also know it is a stunning and variable time of year with so much to offer the more adventurous sailors. The public moorings are generally vacant, and you can go out to stunning reefs and often have them to yourselves!

On the downside, sometimes the variability of the winds swinging a full 360 degrees in a 24-hour period can make choosing anchorages challenging, and the lightning belts on ridges are often ferocious and something we fear more than the storms themselves.

We chose to go out to Mackay Reef, a beautiful sand cay north of Port Douglas with stunning coral and plenty of fish to play



with whilst snorkelling, to sit out some stormy weather on the Great Barrier Reef. We like the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMPA) courtesy mooring buoys. They are well serviced, rated for up to 35 knots, and to us are preferable when the winds shift during these storms from the south east to north west.

We enjoyed a day with our great friends on *Sugar Baby*, did some snorkelling in our fashionable 'stinger suits' (as this is also the deadly Irukandji jellyfish season) and then had sundowners on the sand cay. Three years ago, green sea turtles returned and started nesting here again. What a beautiful sight to see several piles of sand with huge tracks leading to their nests!

To our dismay the high tide eroded a nest and we watched several eggs tumble out and



get sucked out to sea. With wines in hand we jumped to attention and gently scooped them up, dug a hole, and buried them again. Will they survive? I don't know. Some say they won't as the eggs need to be up a certain way. Others say they might as they have seen nests that have been destroyed by feral pigs, but the remaining eggs moved and buried, some did survive. My question to a group of fellow sailors as to whether I should just accept they won't survive and scramble them for breakfast saw a lively debate and consensus was to give them the chance! (Note that I was joking and know that they are protected!)

Our friends left for the safety of a yacht club, but we chose to stay at this lovely cay and sit out a storm, forecast to be only 15-20 knots. Storms were expected at night for two days with sunny fair days between. We hoped to see if the other turtle nests would hatch overnight as we have been told they are due having been made 52 days ago. (Still no baby turtle tracks yet, but we wait in hope.)

The wind started swinging from the south to north and we felt the humidity and heat increase, clouds begin to form in bulbous whites and greys, and the horizon start to darken as the swell lifted and small white caps established themselves. Thunder could be heard rumbling in the distance. The weather forecast was still reasonable, and we were prepared. The sun began to set and then the storm really rolled in with force, the swell increased to 2 metres and the wind picks up to 30 knots sustained. *Shima* had three sturdy mooring lines attached at different angles to strong, double plated cleats but she bucked in the swell, the lines stretched and groaned as she rode the waves. The bow dipped the prodger into the water, lifted and sent the stern down for a drink too! Dinner was crackers and cheese as cooking was out of the question. Even a shower took a mean effort to stay upright with *Shima* riding the waves. I felt that gnawing anxiety, did we make the right choice



**Turtle nest on the cay.**

to stay here?

A sleepless night as the mooring lines creaked and groaned, the bow roller developed an annoying squeak as the lines slackened and tightened, why did I not grease that earlier? Too late now, lightning flashed across the ridge on land 11 nautical miles away and stunning spider lightning made the sky glow while the wind howled.

Suddenly, at 5 am, it was all over. The sun peeked its face over the horizon making the sky glow pink and orange, welcoming a hot sunny day with just 3 knots of breeze.

My husband got a fright as he went on deck for his morning coffee and disturbed a bat on the awning. Startled, it swooped at him and flew out to sea. *No, little bat, that's the wrong way, land is the opposite direction, where are you going?*

We have had many birds aboard *Shima* over the years but never a bat, especially this far from land. How strange!



But within an hour the lone and tired bat headed back to *Shima*, landing on the end of our sail bag. He looked exhausted. *Yes little fella, you went the wrong way, it's alright you can rest here!*

The gentle breeze swung *Shima*, and the bat

moved to the other side of the bag to be in the shade, watching us carefully as we kept our distance so as not to frighten him. He needed to rest and looked defeated and exhausted.

We watched him closely and wondered, *will he*



Red.



*survive? The day is very hot, can we help him more?*

I posted some pics on Facebook and asked for advice from some yachtie friends. Within minutes I had bat experts and wildlife carers on the phone helping us out! Some discussed online whether we could cook him with the turtle eggs, apparently bats are a delicacy in PNG, who knew? But this little fella wasn't going to be dinner and those eggs weren't getting scrambled!

We followed the advice to let him rest, put out a bowl of fifty per cent apple juice and water, and gave him a strawberry, one of the last of the last few onboard. Later we offered him a pear.

The bat expert told me they are very smart and quickly figure out we are going to help. She said to look him in the eye (without sunglasses), talk gently, and not get too near until he trusted us. She said they are as smart and quick learning as a dog.

We discovered he was a juvenile little red flying fox, so we named him Red.

We popped a strawberry in the sail bag clip to encourage him to the shady side, put the apple juice on that side too, and let him rest. Sometime later a little red plop fell through the window, a chewed-up piece of strawberry with not a drop of juice left in it. We snuck outside to look. He had relocated to the end of the sail bag, this time he looked at us inquisitively and seemed less afraid. His eyes followed our movements and he looked much happier in the shade with an increasing breeze.

We decided it's time to try the pear. As bats do carry lyssavirus we certainly didn't want to get scratched or bitten, nor did we want to scare him, so we devised a cunning plan.

My hubby attached half a pear on the end of his fishing rod so he could go behind the sail bag and dangle it over the top. I snuck to the front to help direct the dangling pear and of

course to video tape our efforts!

My heart leapt as the pear dangled. Red looked at me, looked at the pear and then his wing stretched out. I held my breath and watched in awe as he grabbed the pear and started munching. Delight swept over me - success, one happy bat, two ecstatic crew!

I snapped some pics and we left him to eat his food in peace.

About an hour later there was a mess of chewed up pear skat on the deck and Red sleeping peacefully in the sail bag. Relieved, we sent the pics and video to the experts and they reassured us that he looked healthy and that the pear was probably enough energy for him to find his way back to the mainland later in the evening, to forage for his favourite food, eucalyptus blossom. I certainly don't have that treat in my boat stores!

The afternoon sun was getting low in the sky, Red had snoozed and was looking alertly at us. We decided to give him the other half the pear, hoping to give him enough energy to be able to make it back to the mainland. This time it swung a little low, but he chewed on the top. I got my hubby to pull it up with the string. Red stared at me and clung on then adjusted. Those big eyes gave me a look that I read as thanks. Red returned to his munching and spitting all over our decks!

We went back inside, peeking out every half an hour, transfixed by this cute and vulnerable creature.

The sun set. We waited and watched with a wine in hand as he continued to snooze. I started to think we might have a new pet, then suddenly he popped his head out, climbed up the mast a bit and just hung there dangling in the breeze. My hubby and I watched, still transfixed. Red looked around, opened his wings, climbed a bit more, and tucked his head in. We face palmed ourselves,



*oh no he's not going to leave.* Behind me my hubby talked in a silly voice pretending to be Red, saying, "Oh but I love those pears, why would I leave them, this bag is cosy". I giggled but willed Red on. The rays of light faded through the low clouds, soon he wouldn't be able to see the land. Then, at last, he looked at us, opened those wings out strong and proud, and launched himself off the boat. As he turned out to sea, we both panicked, *no Red, not that way, land is the other way.* The dark was seeping in as he turned, looped the boat, and headed towards the coast, *phew.* His wings did big long spirited flaps and in a very short time his silhouette disappeared into the horizon.

Goodbye Red, hope you find some sweet eucalyptus blossoms and a proper place to sleep, we enjoyed your company and have a new appreciation of little red flying foxes!

I guess tomorrow we will go to the sand cay and see if there are any baby turtle tracks, what a fabulous place!



Justine and Glen had their dream boat, *Shima*, built in the Philippines and sailed her home in 2014,. They cut their ties to land the following year to sail and explore Australia's least known places chasing history and bush tucker. With a love of sea, but no sailing experience, they are self taught. Now with over to 12,000 nautical miles under their belts they plan to add many more.



Mackay Reef (Photo Veronica Forrest).



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2017 Go East Participants 'Gadji' - New Caledonia

Image Credit: Luke Ludemann - DIY Sailing

# GO EAST

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

# GO WEST

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# Maria Island, Tasmania:

## A photo essay



The peaks of Bishop and Clerk loom over the light on Ile du Nord.

**By Helene Young**



View of Tasmania from beside the old hotel.



Maria Island guards the east coast of Tasmania, breaking up the relentless march of the Tasman Sea. The island is the remnant of an older coastline when Freycinet Peninsula and Tasman Island were connected. For many sailors it provides overnight anchorage on passage to or from Hobart. For me, it provides endless opportunities to explore.

Its history of habitation is long and diverse. Forty thousand years ago it was home and hunting grounds to several tribes of the Paredarmerme (Oyster Bay Aboriginal Nation). Middens are scattered around the island where food sources were abundant. Since then it's been a penal colony twice, and home to sealers and whalers in places like Haunted Bay. The visionary businessman, Diego Bernacchi, set up limestone mining, planted grapes, and opened the island to tourists in the late 1880s at the settlement of Darlington. When the world-wide depression of the 1930s scuttled his dream, the island returned to a slower pace of life with farmers leasing the land to run sheep.

In 1972 it became a National Park and is now a safe haven for introduced species such as Tasmania Devils, free of the facial tumours afflicting their kin on the main island. Its bare-nosed wombats star in many Instagram posts as visitors come to get up close and personal with these marsupial superstars.

The landscape is as diverse as its history and safe anchorage can be found in many bays which give access to bushwalks varying from the easy to strenuous. Next time you're passing, stay a week, follow the changing winds around the island's bays, and explore.



Wombats inspecting the tourist while having a snack.



**Haunted Bay – worth the walk but take a packed lunch!**



**RIGHT: A pied oyster catcher feeding its chick fresh caught worms.**



**The Painted Cliffs with their magnificent sandstone colours.**



**The penal colony looking through the ruins of Diego Bernacchi's cement factory.**



**RIGHT: Pademelons blend into the undergrowth.**



**Abandoned homestead at French's Farm.**



Ancient fossil cliffs on the north of Maria Island.



**RIGHT:** Pacific gulls sitting out the 30 knot southerlies.



Dolphins accompanying us to Maria Island.





# Jeanneau 36.2

## For Sale!

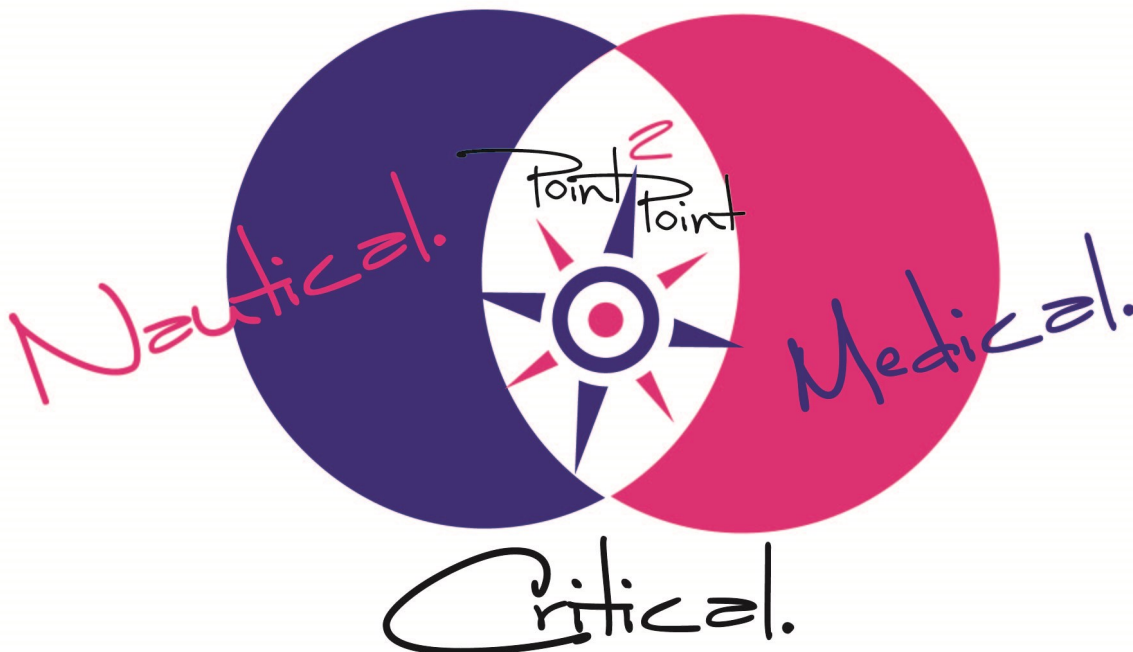
Beautiful yacht. 1999. Well equipped and maintained. Low hours diesel (850hrs). New upholstery throughout. Harbour and foredeck covers. BBQ. RIB with Honda outboard. Single line reefing. Electric head. Water 185 litres. Diesel 160 litres. New Manson 20kg, Bruce spare anchor. Davits and solar panel. Comfortable two cabin layout. Sails really well. 2019 survey available to serious buyer. Sadly for sale solely due to ill health.

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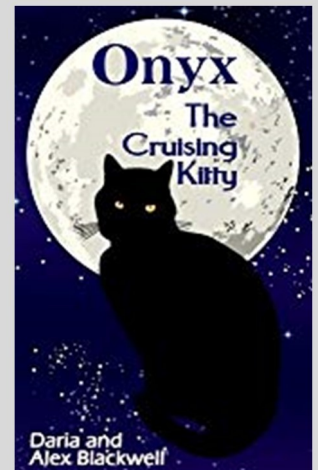
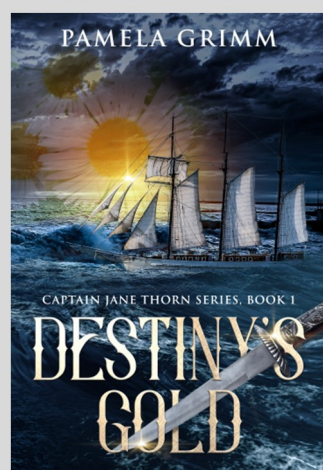
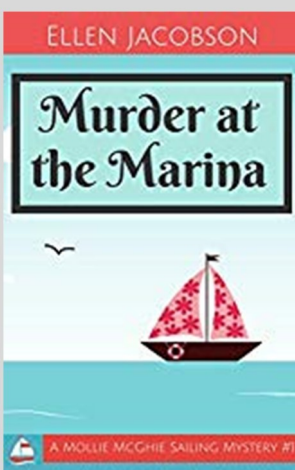
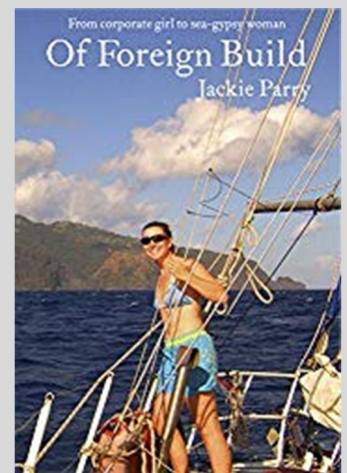
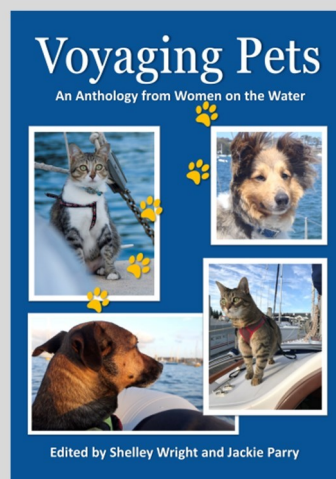
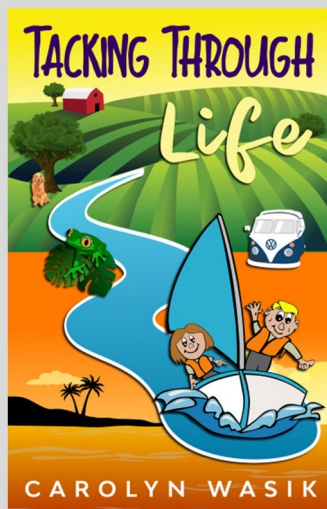
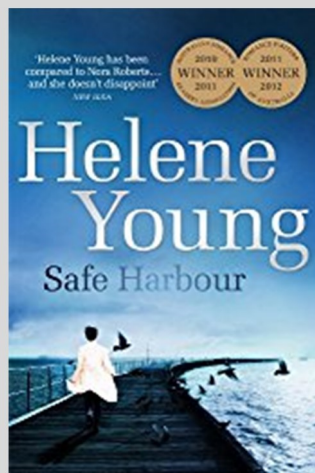
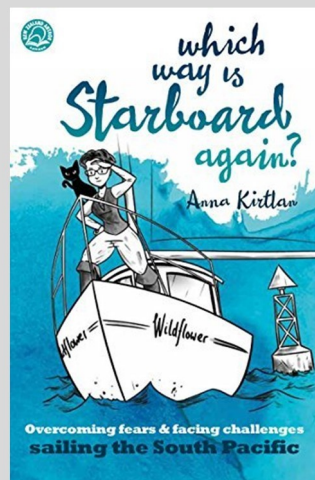
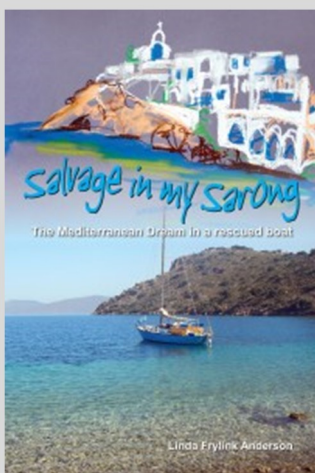
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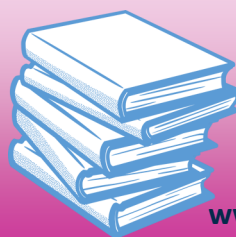
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