

November/December 2020

# SisterShip

women on the water

**FROM  
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CREW TO  
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*Namaste  
Ocean  
Yoga  
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**Sailing  
Pluto**

**Emergency tools**  
**Southern Ocean Sailing**

**DO SHARKS FEAR PURPLE BANDANNAS?**

**PLUS Barge Boats, Sustainable Sailing, and much more!**



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# The bowsprit

From the editor



## The things that matter...

Little did I know when I penned the editorial for the September/October issue of *SisterShip* how close to the mark I was regarding the fragility of the printed word in these times of online resources and pandemics.

Australian readers of *SisterShip* will be familiar with *Cruising Helmsman* magazine. Editor Phil Ross has been a long time supporter of women on the water, and has written for *SisterShip* in the past. It was with great sadness that I learned *Cruising Helmsman* is the latest casualty of 2020, and as of January will no longer be published.

The loss of any quality sailing magazine is a shame, but in the case of *Cruising Helmsman* it is particularly hard to come to terms with. *Cruising Helmsman* has been accumulating on my bookshelf since the 1980s. It was the first sailing magazine we bought before taking up sailing, and the first magazine I wrote for.

Over the years, Phil has been a passionate advocate for sailing. The *SisterShip* team wish him all the best for the future, I'm sure the water will continue to feature largely in whatever comes next!

The loss of *Cruising Helmsman* highlights the things in life that matter.

When living on the water there are a variety of practical and emotional 'things that matter'. These range from emergency tools, essential for safety at sea, to the importance of creating a 'me space' aboard, and taking care of our mental and physical health. This month's contributors have all these covered, and more.

Stay safe and, as always, look for the dolphin!

*Shelley Wright*

***Cruising Helmsman* editor Phil Ross with author Linda Frylink Anderson (left) and Shelley Wright (right) at the inaugural Women Who Sail Australia Gathering on the Bay conference at Port Stephens, 2016.**





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***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.**



# *My Southern Ocean Sailing*

**Nancy Jenks**

The Southern Ocean, the only stretch of water that completely circles the globe, brought tales of monster icebergs towering over huge heaving seas with massive white foaming water, chasing only the brave.

Ok, so maybe I never went that far south, however I did complete a lot of sailing somewhere between 40 and 50 degrees south and at times, yes, I did experience some of its big swells, rough seas, and those furious, dependable westerlies.

The Southern Ocean had long swells; if the wind dropped out and you knew a big low pressure system was coming, the swell was a precursor, the bigger the swell the stronger the coming storm. Then, if near land, you would seek a safe anchorage or not leave your safe harbour. If out there in it, pray that the Gods would be kind.

An old sailors' adage, "Beyond 40 degrees south there is no law. Beyond 50 degrees south there is no God."

My introduction to the Southern Ocean came after being stuck in Fremantle for three weeks, playing that old waiting game, waiting for the 30-40 knot winds and rainy weather to clear and hoping for a good weather window to sail south. Maybe stuck was too strong a word as my stay at the sailing club and visits to Fremantle and Perth turned out to be quite lovely and interesting. Eventually the time came leave and with one quick overnight stop at Bunbury I was once again on another two-night runner, this time around the bottom corner of Cape Leeuwin and on into the Southern Ocean. The winds were on the nose, again and again. Husband John and I motor sailed round Cape Naturalist and on into the first night. With nightfall also came the bitter cold. The sea spray was like ice. Into the freezing cold darkness we plunged. With no heater, the wetness and cold were numbing. I was doing my usual midnight to dawn night watch when *Alana Rose* rounded Cape Leeuwin.



Keeping out wide to avoid the rocky reef islands in the darkness, everything around me was dark. I was very cold and wet from the sea spray. The sails reefed, a fresh breeze blew across from the west and a big rolling three metre swell pushed *Alana Rose* along at nine knots into the Southern Ocean.

It felt good; there was a sense of adventure and a feeling of being an explorer.

Covered from head to toe in four layers of clothing and foul-weather gear with just a slit in the headgear for my eyes to peer out, the bitterly cold made my eyes sting and continually watered, in sympathy with my nose. With the wet and cold came the slippery decks; there was no need for John to remind me about clipping on my harness, it became a part of the costume.

The next day the sea and wind continued to build to near gale, 33 knots, spray flying. *Alana Rose* responded, creaming along at 11 knots in company with the beautiful large watchers of the sea, the mighty albatross. By now we were old friends.

That's not to say that the weather was always bad; in the ship's log I recorded some enjoyable cruising days, usually for a five-day period when the winds were so light we even had to motorsail. On any of the inclement weather periods, on average we spent about two hours per day shifting or reefing sail.

In the Southern Ocean, when gear fails you must repair it yourself. The skills, the tools, and the materials to do running repairs must be on board. I carried an old Sailright sewing machine, a grommet punch and spare cloth, webbing, battens, sheets, shackles, pulleys, replacement hanks plus numerous other items.



**INSET: Sliding down a trough between the big swells.**

**MAIN: Shearwaters.**





There was always the risk of a disastrous wave or storm however, in my opinion, the danger was greatly magnified if the sailor was pushing their boat to the limit.

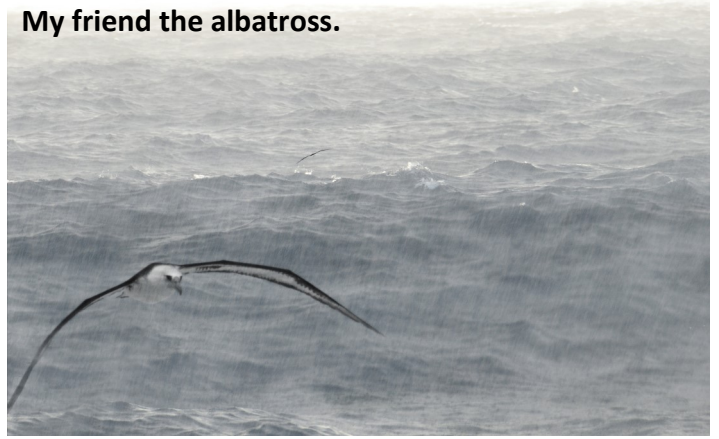
A sense of adventure and the thrill of the ride were thrown my way. Why would I not do this?

The huge swells and nasty seas were all a challenge. I did not expect smooth sailing, I did not expect the winds to be sweet-tempered or the waves to be mellow. I trusted my boat no matter the weather; a confidence deep-seated in my bones, a feeling with her I could achieve anything at all – and so I did. The impossible was only impossible until it was done; under all skies, upon all seas.

This was Southern Ocean sailing.

**BELOW: Sailing below Tasmania, Maatsuyker and Mewstone Islands.**

**My friend the albatross.**



**My name is Nancy Jenks, some people knew me as Nautical Nancy. I lived aboard a sailing catamaran, *Alana Rose*, a 42-foot Leopard built in South Africa and made for ocean sailing. I sailed full time from the South Pacific to the waters around Australia and into the Southern Ocean.**

**Sailing was, and still is, one of my greatest passions, although I can no longer go to sea. Ailments keep me land bound. In saying that, I never let anything get me down. I still carry my passion for photography, writing and the gypsy life.**







# Do Sharks Fear Purple Bandannas?

Liesbet Collaert

“Have fun! I hope you catch some dinner,” I yell at my husband, after giving him a good luck kiss.

“I’ll do my best,” he replies, buzzing off with the others.

Two friends, expert fishermen, picked him up in a dinghy at our sailboat. Once in a while, Mark joins them on their daily fishing journeys into the more fertile waters of the San Blas Islands, Panama. The other guys bring home beautiful snappers or other delectable fish, sized to feed a small army; he returns empty-handed or with a lobster, something that doesn’t move too fast. It’s all good, as long as he has fun. The bounty is usually shared anyway.

Mark’s companions let him borrow a Hawaiian sling, while they handle ‘heavy-duty’ spearguns. How anyone can kill something

moving as rapidly as a fish at eye level is a mystery to me. If you’ve ever snorkeled, taken photos, or tried to touch a moving object underwater, you know what I mean. Distance and speed are deceiving. It’s a warped world down there.

After waving them goodbye, I’m all alone on our 35-foot catamaran *Irie*. *What shall I do today?* I could write an article, read a book, do laundry (thanks to our rain collection last night), or simply remain on deck, taking in my surroundings – palm trees, white beaches, dark patches of coral reef, and the clearest of water carrying our hulls. It never gets old. Just like dolphins frolicking with our bows. Or snorkeling excursions among colorful creatures. Or a lustrous sun kissing the watery horizon, announcing dusk. Or... *Hey, what’s that?* I stare over the side at an odd object gracing the bottom of the anchorage. The



violet haze doesn't appear to move, unless *Irie* swings.

"No, bring us back," I whisper to the wind, as the item disappears out of view. The breeze obliges and soon, I find myself gazing straight down again. *Is that my purple bandanna?* I was wondering what happened to it, unable to locate the piece of fabric recently. *It must have fallen off my head when swimming around the boat.* Because my hair is extremely thin and underrepresented, I always cover my head in the tropics, even in the water. If not, that line of skin separating those locks on top burns to a crisp and I suffer a massive headache.

Without further ado, I reach for my snorkel gear in the anchor locker. *I guess I've figured out what to do.* I descend the back steps of our cat and lower myself into the chilly anchorage via the flipped-down ladder. Underwater camera in hand – you never know what you might encounter – I swim towards my bandanna. I dive down ten feet and snatch it

up. *Success!*

I smile, recalling the objects I retrieved from the sea bottom over the years. From multi-tools to winch handles to towels to a fishing light, to a cooking pot to hold down said light in order to attract fish. The most memorable event happened in Martinique, when my cousin and her husband visited. Eager to help out onboard, she always did the dishes in our saltwater bucket in the cockpit. After she finished, her husband would toss the dirty water overboard. "Are you sure there's nothing in it anymore?" he'd ask. "Yep," she'd answer without fail, and the contents of the bucket took a leap. One time after dinner, this disposal included our silverware. When I scrutinized the bay the following morning, I discovered all the knives and forks sticking upright in the sandy bottom. And, I spotted my cousin bobbing like a duck, facing down, unable to dive as a newbie snorkeler.

Air penetrates my snorkel and I look

***Irie* in the San Blas Islands (Axel Busch).**





downward again, ready to swim back to *Irie*. My grin freezes, as I watch a movie scene develop in slow motion. It could be one of those BBC wildlife documentaries presented by David Attenborough, except the soothing voice is missing and I am a little too involved for comfort. A human-sized nurse shark, discreet whiskers pretending to be sharp teeth, tiny eyes pierced in my direction, approaches at eye level, just underneath the water surface. *Strange!* This species usually rests on the bottom of the ocean, tucked away amidst the duller reefs and blending in. The shark swims towards me. Maybe it wants to defend the colorful cloth. Protect what's been in its territory for days?

*These are benign animals, I tell myself. I know this; I have observed many. And I know how to use Google. Better get my camera ready.* Holding the purple bandanna in one hand, the other fumbles with the camera and turns it on with the push of a finger. The viewfinder portrays

a nurse shark coming closer and closer, until it doesn't fit anymore. *Shit!* I snap a couple of shots of its massive head. *It looks like a catfish. How bizarre.* These are possibly the last photos I'll ever take. My loved ones will peer over them, imagining my last moments alive.

I remember one of our fishing friends elaborating on bull shark encounters. How the bloody fish he speared had to be carried underwater to his dinghy, as fast as possible, since it attracts the least desirable among the shark population: predators smelling an easy catch. How the best way out of this dangerous situation is to offer up his freshly caught dinner. Well, this is no bull shark and I'm not discarding my head covering, or my camera.

This is a shy shark that is coming too close. *Can it sense my thump thumping heartbeat and raised blood pressure?* Ideally, I'd like to fend off a collision. Nurse sharks aren't known to attack humans, but there's always a first.



Approaching nurse shark during bandanna retrieval.



Happy to excel in anything, I don't want to be *that* first. Lacking a better idea, I scream *boo* into my mask and fan the water its direction, almost touching the curved grey nose. Two feet removed from my face, the shark performs a U-turn, and swiftly retreats. My heart throbs in my throat. Adrenaline turns into disappointment before I digest what just happened.

*No*, I think, while snapping a photo of its tail. *Come back!* I don't want my nemesis gone... Only at a social distance, so I can shoot a movie. The nurse shark circles underneath me, hovering the bottom. I consider swimming closer again for more footage. *Should I release my bandanna?* The animal is probably curious, like me. Fear and intimidation take possession of my inner self. The mind wins. Realizing the shark is at least my size and that Mark isn't around to offer assistance if needed, I decide this has been enough excitement for one day.

Anxiety rushes through my body, when I scoot back to the swim ladder of our boat –

eyes on the creature beneath me at all times – and leap out of the water. Every snorkel trip usually ends with a “bath” in our salty surroundings. *It's imperative I stay aware of my downstairs neighbors today... How do I wash up with a mask on?* Impossible. My mask-less shower is a quick one – the fastest in Liesbet history. I'm skittish. Instead of jumping in, I don't lose touch of the ladder and speed-dunk my body and head. I only spend seconds in the ocean to rinse off after lathering up, frantically looking over my shoulders. My heart is still racing 100 knots an hour as I eject myself back onto the bottom step.

Securely on deck, I steady my breathing and wish Mark was here. He would have kept an eye on me, while I remained in my saltwater aquarium. Feeling less vulnerable, I could have rekindled with my new friend. *Shall I jump back in?* The push and pull of danger and safety, adventure and comfort, excitement and cowardness, courage and fear, comes to an end. But the experience instills confidence for multiple close encounters with the black and white-tipped reef sharks of the

**Sailing Irie in the South Pacific.**





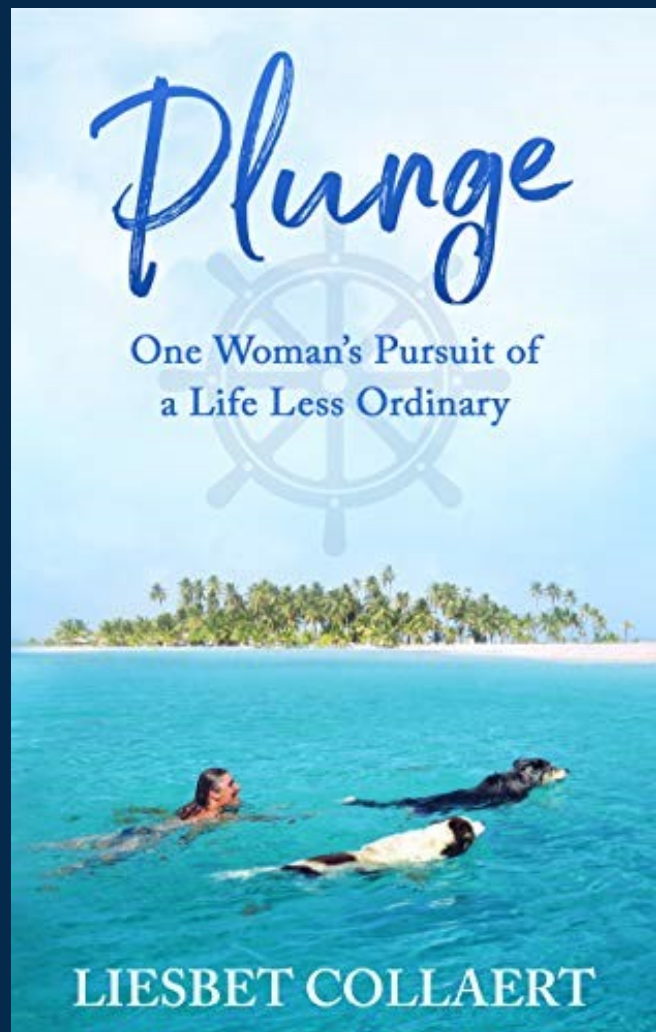
South Pacific. There, swimming with these animals during “that time of the month” is also put to the test. But that’s another story.

Liesbet Collaert is a Belgian-American freelance writer, photographer, and translator who has been a digital nomad since 2003. Her articles have appeared in the major sailing magazines of the world. She and her husband, Mark, sailed in the US, Caribbean, and South Pacific on their 35-foot catamaran *Irie* for eight years (2007- 2015). They currently roam about North America in a 19-foot camper van with their rescue dog Maya. Liesbet blogs about her adventures, frugal lifestyle, and sailing on Roaming About – A Life Less Ordinary ([www.roamingabout.com](http://www.roamingabout.com)). To read more about the couple’s cruising years, check out her sailing blog *It’s Irie* ([www.itsirie.com](http://www.itsirie.com)).



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# SisterShip Watches ...

By Amy Alton

## SAILING PLUTO

I had the pleasure of meeting Nichelle in the heart of Cape Town, South Africa, while I was docked at the V&A Waterfront. Like most cruisers, I was just passing through for the summer, but Nichelle, who's South African, has been playing around the notorious South African coast for years on her sailboat, the 36-foot *Pluto*.

Nichelle is the creator behind *Sailing Pluto*, a sailing channel that shows a mix of the cruising life, from hiking in Knysna to a new engine refit.

**Amy:** Your original plan was to sail east and explore the Indian Ocean. But you had to replace your engine in Knysna and your plans changed to head across the Atlantic. Then COVID-19 hit. You can't catch a break! What are your plans now?

**Nichelle:** Yes, our initial plan was to spend two years sailing 'our islands' ie the African east coast. We travelled the continent on an overland truck 17 years ago and thought it might be fun to sail the coastline too, while

we familiarize ourselves with our boat and abilities. Getting to know our boat happened, but in a different way with smaller hops and shorter distances in our local waters. The biggest setback was our engine replacements last year, but it was also a blessing in disguise. We are embracing the lifestyle at a much slower pace than we initially thought, staying longer in each place, and really getting to know and becoming part of where we are. We are as still set on Brazil as we were before the Pandemic. We will give it another two months to see if it is a viable option for us. If not, we will reconsider our options. In the meantime, there are still places on our own coast that we can explore and our local waters are keeping us entertained for now.



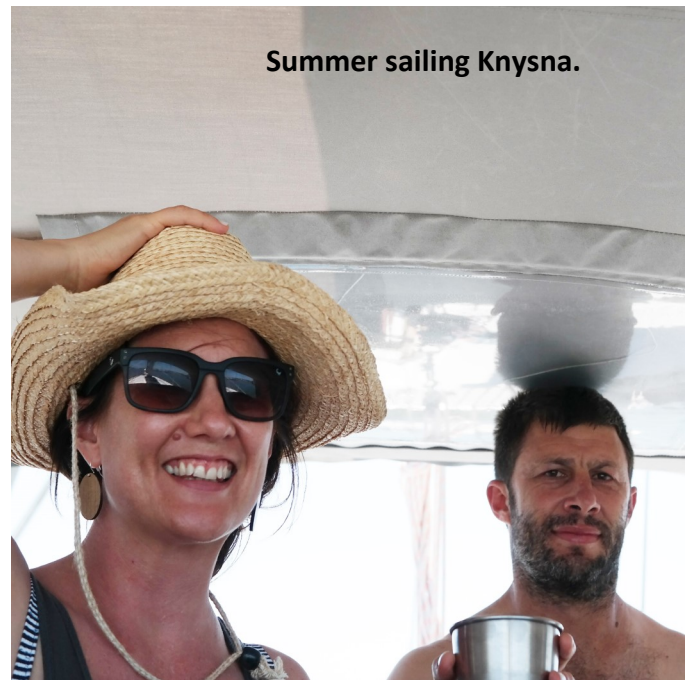


**Amy: How do you divide video production between you and Christo?**

**Nichelle:** I have always been the one documenting our travels in all sorts of mediums. This has not changed since moving onto the boat. I do 98% of the filming and content creation, 100% of editing, production, and our social media channel management. There is sometimes footage from Christo's phone which gets added, but he focuses his attention on sailing and the technical aspects of the boat. He does get a chance to see the final edit and gives feedback before I load a new episode.

**Amy: How has creating videos enhanced your sailing experience?**

**Nichelle:** The ULTIMATE part of publishing our videos publicly is the incredible individuals we have been able to connect with. People are always keen to help and have hearts of gold. We have met so



many amazing people, people who have reached out because they have seen a video and have a question or just want to say hi or offer help. This is a byproduct of our videos as we never set out to reach a specific audience or to monetize our channel, but rather as a way of diary keeping. But the





connection with others is such a privilege to experience. It amazes me every day when we get an email or comment from someone that found some inspiration and connection with us. It is both humbling and a motivation to keep going.

**Amy: What's your biggest struggle with your videos?**

**Nichelle:** Not always picking the camera up. I have often decided not to take the camera with or film something that would have made a very watchable episode (like the time our stovetop espresso exploded in the galley and all over our faces). Finding a balance to keep our videos warm and personal without oversharing is very important to me. The second and bigger struggle is finding time to edit – my work is in a similar industry and my clients always take priority over our videos. Laptop time can become hours and hours on end and scheduling video editing often happens late at night.

After three years, I am fairly happy with the balance I found in the content we share and the schedule I produce it in. We have a new video every second Sunday and post weekly on Facebook. I also share more personal elements of our lives on my own Instagram account (@digital\_niche).

**Amy: South Africa's coast is notorious for rough conditions. You've learned to sail in a part of the world that intimidates many sailors. What words of advice do you have for someone coming to sail along the South African coast?**

**Nichelle:** I always giggle when I realize this. We are so used to crazy wild and strong winds and wild seas. I have no idea how easy it can be in other places in the world, I suppose. My advice would be to not take it lightly, but also do let it intimidate you too much. Use local knowledge (more than one source), plan for the worst, and know where you can tuck in and do it responsibly. Our



coastline might be tough to sail but our country, food, and culture make up for it! Make sure you see and explore it all. Spoil yourself to our world-class wine once you reach Cape Town – you have worked hard to get here.

**Amy: Tell us about lekker. What does it mean to South Africans and what does it mean to you and your sailing life?**

**Nichelle:** *Lekker* can mean so many things – it can mean nice, awesome, tasty, good, or a word of encouragement or endearment. “Our sailing neighbours are *lekker*” (they are nice and you like them), “that guy is NOT *lekker*” (meaning he has a screw loose OR it can also mean he might be upset). For us in our sailing life it can mean any of those at different times, but mostly “Sailing *lekker* with less” means we are content. Life is good.

**Amy: You and Christo both still work from the boat while being liveaboards. How is that working out? What tips do you have for those who need to work while living aboard their boat?**

**Nichelle:** We were under no illusion when we started out, but it can be tough sometimes. I think if at all possible, it would be easier to separate the two; do seasonal sailing vs seasonal work. That way you can enjoy both fully. Having said that, it is becoming even more acceptable and easier after 2020 to work from anywhere, it really is

just a question of WHAT work you do.

For Christo's work we juggle flights and international travel to get to work with weather windows and availability of safe anchorages or marinas with easy access to airports when I am alone on the boat. I juggle internet connectivity and project deadlines. My advice would be to be very realistic with your expectations – sailing as well as work. We also never set out to circumnavigate or do a specific route in a set time, for us it was all about exploring an alternative lifestyle, which we have been able to do, regardless of the miles. Do not sweat what others' opinions are of your sailing schedule. It is doable but will take planning. Find something that works for you, even if it is slow. And be open to change and tweak your plans to make it work better too.

**Amy: What's your favorite modification you have made to Pluto?**

**Nichelle:** The daybed! Living in 36 feet means you have only so much space. The daybed is great for watching movies, underway it is stable when I feel seasick, but best of all, I can also do yoga on it if it is rainy outside! Our sliding fridge/freezer has also been such a great addition, so has our on-demand gas (propane) hot water heater and our cockpit canopy (it added a whole extra living space to the boat).

**Amy: Landlubbers often wonder how sailors can live in a small space with their**



**partner. What tips do you have for maintaining sanity with Christo?**

**Nichelle:** Lockdown sure changed that for a lot of people.

We started dating when we were both tour guides and spent months on a truck, travelling the dusty roads of South and East Africa and camping in canvas tents. I think that set a few ground rules for us. Be clear in what your expectations are from the relationship and the shared dream without getting emotional (an ongoing process that I still need to master). Realize that those expectations can change over time, so check in with each other regularly. Work on each other's strengths. Everyone has their good days and bad, their ups and downs, and their personality weaknesses and strengths. In a confined space that gets highlighted with no place to hide, so best you focus on the good and play on each other's strengths. Specifically, on the space sharing – we have a workaround where I get up before Christo and move around freely as I need to. He only gets up when I am settled and behind the computer.

On land and in the boat, communication is key, but more so having fun together. Find time to set work, maintenance, and other responsibilities aside and go and have fun and laugh together.

**Amy: You do yoga onboard *Pluto* and you and Christo are both active hikers. What**



**advice do you have for someone who wants to stay fit while sailing?**

**Nichelle:** Do what you can with what you have. I miss having easy access to a walk or hike, but we embrace the opportunity when we can. Christo has been saying I should climb the mast more often, now there is a good exercise for you!

**Amy: You were already an artistic person before you started your videos. Tell us about your art.**

**Nichelle:** I have always had a real love for art, especially photography and watercolour. During lockdown, I started doing daily tiny paintings using leftover coffee from the espresso pot. This became quite a thing and a lot of people joined in and used #coffeepaintings. We even had an auction of the art for charity. I opened an online art store and I'm still doing commission coffee paintings every month. It is fun and I love



Coffee painting.

seeing the tiny art travel all around the world and making people happy.

**Amy: What's been your hardest or scariest moment on *Pluto*?**

**Nichelle:** When we first took ownership, we had to move the boat from Houtbay to Simonstown. This meant [sailing the dreaded Cape Point](#) with very little experience and our first sail with her, ever. Talk about jumping in



*Pluto* sailing Knysna Lagoon.





times that community is everything. Sailors might think they will sail off into the sunset, self-sufficient, while getting away from people, but not only do we need each other, it is also the people you meet on your travels that will always stand out and make it into your memories forever. You do not have to be best friends with everyone but keep your heart open and cherish your time with those that cross your path. The sailing community is one of a kind.

the deep end. A few things went wrong that day. The ultimate was when we got close to the actual point. We tried to motor against the wind only to have the engine alarm go off. We killed the engine not sure what to do next. Christo got hold of the engine manual, scanned through, and decided to bypass the alarm and try the engine again. It worked. The engine started and got us safely around the point. We have since sailed Cape Point many times, but our school fees were definitely paid on that first day.

We are still convinced that that false alarm was one of the many signs of an unhappy engine and just one of the many issues that caused total engine failure two years later.

**Amy: What's one quality Christo has that makes him a great sailing partner? What strength do you have that you think makes you a good sailing partner?**

**Nichelle:** He is good at fixing almost anything, he is great with electronics, mechanics, and general fault finding which is a huge must on a boat. We make a good team in stressful situations. We never yell, lose control, or have a total freak out, but both stay calm and solution orientated.

**Amy: Is there anything else you want to share with the readers of *SisterShip* Magazine?**

**Nichelle:** I have been reminded so many

### Links:

[Sailing Pluto Facebook](#)

[Sailing Pluto \(@sailingpluto\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

[Nichelle \(@digital niche\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

[Sailing Pluto YouTube](#)



Amy Alton, in partnership with her husband, shares their journey on their YouTube channel, [Out Chasing Stars](#). You can also enjoy her writing and photography on their blog, [OutChasingStars.com](#).



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# Emergency tools

## Gina de Vere

*Vega* in Thailand.

### Are you keeping your emergency tools in the right place?

On my recent visit to my neighbours on the historic vessel *Vega* I was mightily impressed by the way they keep their emergency and most used tools. On this 128 year old wooden beauty of a boat with a LOA (length over all) of 25 metres, emergency tools must be kept amidships with instant easy access.

The types of emergency tools used on a heavily built timber historic vessel with traditional rigging require additional equipment, spares, and specialised tools, many more than on a light displacement sailboat like our monohull *Stardancer*. However, even though the design, construction, and rigging of these two boats are very different the basic principle regarding access to emergency tools is the same. Emergency tools must be kept in strategic locations for immediate use.

On the *Vega* the location for tools ready for deck and rigging emergencies is based around the top of the central access to the companionway. Hatchets of various sizes are easily grabbed from the wall display to deal with any emergency rope, line, or sheet problems, and the drawers incorporated into the steps contain emergency supplies of shackles and blocks. All conveniently located. Other tools they may possibly need in a hurry are mounted on doors that open on hinges. This is a great space saving idea which can be modified for use on smaller boats.

Because of the *Vega's* many large sails, where rips could be disastrous, Meggi keeps several strong needles handy for repairs. These are kept in the top one of the step drawers. Meggi sews everything from sails and huge awnings to the leather covers for rigging parts, using strong long curved needles such as you would use for a suture. These needles are precious and not readily available, so Meggi keeps them well wrapped up in oiled



cloth and well-sealed in used Berocca canisters.

Our fibreglass light displacement 14 metre monohull *Stardancer*, has a slightly different set of emergency tool requirements. Instead of having a selection of hatchets handy as on the *Vega*, we have a sharp strong knife in a sheath by the top companionway step to cut lines and sheets in an emergency, plus a heavy hammer in the cockpit area. In fact, most of our tools except those for electrical use are kept in our cockpit lockers for easy quick access. Our tools for outboard engine repairs are kept in a waterproof bag in the stern locker close to the dinghy for ease of access. Because our engine is underneath our companionway steps there is no space here to have storage drawers however, we have made one of our four cabins into a 'shed' together with a sail locker up forward and lockers at the stern.

For emergencies involving fire, all boats should display several up to date fire

**BELOW: Cupboard and drawers storage aboard *Vega*.**



**ABOVE: Close up of *Vega's* traditional rigging parts.**

extinguishers placed in strategic locations. In case an emergency requires you to use your flares, life raft, and grab bag, ensure they are in working order, current and conveniently stored. One can prepare for emergencies by laying jack lines, wearing life vests, having knowledge of Man Overboard techniques, learning radio handling techniques and if relevant, having the drogues ready to deploy. Get reliable weather forecasts and prepare for potential adverse sailing conditions. Being well prepared should set your mind at rest.





On *Meridian of Hobart*, one of the *Blue Water Women* sailors featured in my book, Helen Hebblethwaite experienced losing the mast as she sailed west towards the Maldives. She says, 'Most of the rigging was a tangled mess of steel hanging over the side... its weight cumbersome and potentially dangerous.' After a brief thought of salvaging the mast was discussed and discarded, they decided the rigging and mast had to be cut loose for safety's sake. Helen recalls, 'The skipper yelled, quick, get the bolt cutters! And we set to work'. She adds, '...one of the lessons I learnt from this misadventure is you *must* know where tools on your boat are kept so you can find things (like the bolt cutters) in a hurry!'

Grit Chu, another of our *Blue Water Women*, says she learned from experience that it is important to put tools back in their 'home' place. She says, 'Winch handles and window covers have been lost overboard because crew did not secure them correctly.' Every tool should have its own proper place. She

**BELOW: Meggi shows hatchet and spanners location.**



**ABOVE: Drawers built under companionway steps aboard *Vega*.**

adds, 'Putting tools and equipment away promptly is essential. One day a big wave hit our boat which threw the captain into the galley, practically onto the large knife that had been used to make lunch. That was a close one!'

Tools needed for cruising are different for day sailing compared to offshore voyaging where it pays to keep an extensive range of tools, and spare parts. I did a small survey around neighbouring boats in my marina to find out what were the most commonly used and essential tools on board. Remember, you may need both metric and imperial sizes. You can see the suggested list of basics on the following page.

Naturally, you will add to this list to suit the specific needs of your own boat. For example, we keep odd bits of line, rope, cord, wire etc in a bag. Rags also have their own dedicated bag. Remember, not only do you have to have the right tools for the job, but



you have to maintain them; washing the sea water off, keeping them oiled and where relevant, sharp.

When you have revisited and checked your emergency needs, relax, and enjoy your sailing, knowing you are well prepared in the unlikely event of an emergency.

**RIGHT: Sewing needles are kept well-sealed in used Berocca canisters.**

### Commonly used essential tools:

- Axe
- Black cable ties
- Cord
- Cordless drill with drill bits
- Duct tape
- Electrical repair kit
- Fiberglass repair kit
- Hacksaw with good quality blades, no rust
- Hammer
- Hose clamps
- Set of adjustable spanners & wrenches
- Set of Allen keys
- Set of screwdrivers
- Sharp strong knife
- Strong headlamp
- Strong towline
- Types of silicone
- Variety of wrenches and sockets
- Vaseline Jelly
- Vice grip pliers
- Voltmeter, Amp meter, Digital clamps
- WD40 or similar to loosen tight metal joints



**A New Zealander by birth, Gina has been sailing full time on her monohull, a Gib Sea 47.2 with her husband Christian Selaries for the past 15 years. They set sail from NZ in 2005, sailing the South Pacific, Papua New Guinea twice, Australia to Indonesia twice, exploring Borneo, Thailand and Malaysia, and the South China Sea.**

**Sailing was a huge change from the career Gina enjoyed as university lecturer in marketing, innovation, and entrepreneurship, and as CEO of her business consultancy, Masters Consulting. She continues her work as a Life Coach. Her newest adventure is as book author, having previously had articles published in sailing magazines in Germany, USA, Australia, and NZ. Gina's aim in life is to inspire and support women in particular, to make the 'leap' to a more adventurous, fulfilling life.**



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# Topsail

INSURANCE

## RIDDLE MY BOAT PART (1 word)

I am an atmospheric difference married to a bonnie girl  
You can do this on your watch but have  
part of a cutlass to hand in case it gets stuck  
If you span me round and rode me up  
you'll find that I have a big attachment to your boat  
Some might even say what I hold is by fluke.

What part of the boat am I ?

*Congratulations goes to winners  
K.Hayock, S.Mercer, S.McNaughtan,  
K.Smith, and J.Porter for the last  
riddle competition which was the  
"Topping Lift"*

*Here's another one and another  
**\$50 each for 5 correct winners***

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*And .....ladies don't forget to call me for  
a quote !*



Yacht

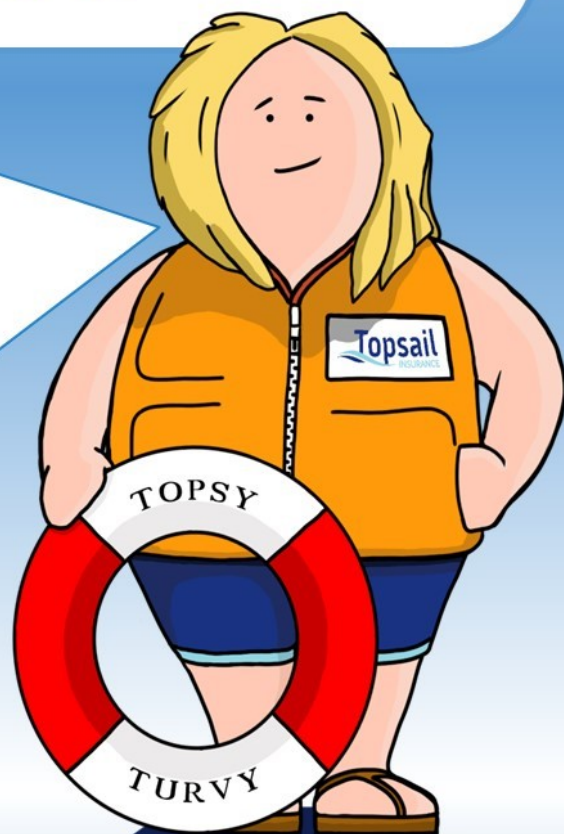


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# Stand Up Paddleboarding



So, you want to try SUP (Stand Up Paddleboarding) – the fastest growing watersport in the world.

In the last issue, you saw how fun and easy it was to have a go when on holiday. But with the COVID-19 pandemic confining many of us to home base, we are less likely to be visiting exotic locations where SUP is offered as part of the experience.

Do you need lessons? This depends. Fellow sea kayaker Beth, from Wales, was already a keen kayak surfer when COVID-19 lockdown confined her to home. Also being a fellow ham radio operator (we fix things!), she realised she could utilise the old silted-up farm pond. She ordered a Naish Alana solid 9.5-foot board, removed the fins, and was able to paddle around the shallow pond to get her balance. Eventually, COVID-19 rules widened the travel bubble and she was able to take it to the beach.

“As I had experience on the sea with sea kayaks, plus also doing a lot with surf

kayaking, I didn’t bother with any lessons, though I did watch plenty of YouTube surfing how to do it videos,” she says. “I would recommend for people to have some coaching on safety if they’re thinking of venturing on the sea for the first time.”

Especially important is understanding how wind affects SUP – an offshore breeze can push you out alarmingly quickly and make it almost impossible to paddle back to shore. Only recently, two Irish girls spent a cold night at sea on their boards – luckily for them they drifted past some lobster pots and tied themselves to them, getting rescued next morning by the fishermen checking their pots.

Initially, Beth says she spent a lot of time falling off, but surprisingly, once she upgraded her paddle, she found that made all the difference.

“I felt that the SUP cheap paddle we had with it wasn’t helping as it was very heavy and not a one-piece, so it had some movement in



# Part 2

## Lyn Battle

it. I upgraded to a carbon one piece and cut it to my preferred length.” (She is not very tall!) “It made a huge difference, definitely a good move.”

Beth has her sea kayak for flat-water adventures, so she mostly uses the SUP for surfing. “I never would have thought in a million years I would love surfing. It’s nearly three years since I scared myself with an 8-inch wave in a surf kayak. I would say in total I’ve done about three weeks’ worth of SUP surfing now and feel pretty happy in three-foot surf. I feel confident surfing to the right. Surfing left is altogether a different thing, but I guess with time that will come.”

In these difficult times, she reckons it is a great way to de-stress.

“I’m sure it’s good for my balance and it’s all consuming mentally which for me is a good thing as I have a very active mind. I find it calming and having a new challenge at 50 years of age is always good. If you’re lucky enough to be able to get on the water we

have so many great things to learn and play with whether it be on flat water, wind or waves – something for everyone. I feel that most water sports are dominated by men but don’t let that put you off, if you’re a female get out there and enhance your life with new adventures. But be mindful if on the sea, Mother Nature isn’t very forgiving so be safe and find people that can help advise you on your journey. One thing I will add to a ‘wannabe’ adventurer is you have to stick at something, usually it takes at least five goes before you actually like something.”

Sharon, from the north of England, also took up SUP during lockdown. Nearly two years ago, like me, she decided to take a break from alcohol with the OYNB group, and in doing so, she discovered a whole world of other activities to take its place.

“Ever since I gave up drinking booze I vowed I would try more things that scared me. Paddle boarding was one of them. I’m an average swimmer but I don’t like deep water.





I'm scared of being on top of things in the water in case I fall off. The recent lockdown has meant our activities have had to change and I wanted to spend more time outdoors and less time around people in enclosed public spaces. Paddle boarding seemed to tick all these boxes so I thought I would give it a go! I'd seen other people doing it – mostly in the sunshine in bikinis in hot European countries and not in full wetsuits in the wind and rain of northern England."

Sharon invested in an inflatable board, choosing a 12-foot Spinera Supventure, the same brand used by her local watersports company, wisely figuring if it could withstand the hire trade, it would be durable enough for all the family to use.

Sharon first tried out the board by herself on Lake Coniston, in Cumbria's lovely Lake

District.

"It was harder than I expected. I was scared and had zero confidence standing up. My knees shook and I was alarmed at how much the wind took a hold and how hard you had to paddle to get anywhere! I spent six miles on my knees the first time. The next day I felt like I'd done 1000 squats. My arms and shoulders ached a little, but my legs and bum cheeks were in pieces! I'd done everything wrong! I've also since found out my board wasn't inflated enough which didn't help the situation at all."

Soon after, she took a three-hour lesson on nearby Lake Windermere.

"I would highly recommend anyone starting out to take a beginners lesson. The instructor was knowledgeable and helpful and gave me confidence to get up on my feet, I could turn without too much trouble and my board was inflated correctly. There was only one hideous moment where I face planted off the front of the board while trying to rock it on my feet! I splashed with all the grace of a hungry walrus but learnt how to get back on the board in deep water without too much trouble."

Sharon chose an inflatable board as it would have been impossible for her to transport a





hard board.

“I inflate it to use – and can easily do this by myself. It takes some effort, maybe around 10 minutes of pumping using a manual pump, but it’s a good workout for the arms! It’s a great fit in the boot of my small car and the whole kit fits inside a carry bag which can be worn like a rucksack. I would inflate by the car then carry down to the water so the rest of the kit doesn’t have to be taken. It’s super easy to pack, unpack, repack and carry! All this is possible as a one-woman job so it’s pretty easy to do. Once inflated it’s as hard as a surfboard – though I didn’t realise just how much air it needed until the instructor told me it wasn’t quite inflated enough. So, it may be best to invest in a manual pump with a pressure gauge. There is a hard fin on the bottom, so care has to be taken not to damage or knock it. It’s removed once the SUP is out of the water.”

Sharon also reckons SUP is a great way to get out on the water and de-stress during COVID.

“Never in a million years did I think I would buy a SUP. The Corona Virus outbreak and changes in the way we live our lives means as a family we want to spend more time outdoors and away from crowds. There’s nothing quite like launching your board onto a surface of glass before the crowds arrive with birds flying past low and mountains as a backdrop. It’s tranquil, it’s a workout, it’s fun, it’s flexible and (after you’ve invested in the

kit) it’s pretty much free. It’s also a great workout for the mind taking in the scenery and seeing things and places you’ll have never spotted before. It’s been a glorious surprise – when the family get involved they’re happy to sit on it and jump off – when I use it on my own it will be for fresh air, exploration and to enjoy some time on my own.”

Women Who Sail Australia member Justine, on board sailing catamaran *Shima*, is also a SUPPER (if that’s even a term!).

Justine was introduced to the sport by friends Di and Cal when they were moored in the Clarence River, on Australia’s east coast. “It looked like fun!” she says, “And it is so much easier on the river, I fall in heaps on the seal!” laughs Justine, adding, “You could definitely pick it up yourself but it’s hugely easier with instructions.”

She praises Cal for his clear guidance and shares his advice that it is easier for beginners to balance on a board that is long and wide. Justine also chose to buy an inflatable board – an 11-foot long Weisshorn.

“It came with a paddle, pump, and pressure gauge. I pump it up each time I use it, though if we’re staying on anchor for a couple of days I might leave it hanging out the back with the kayak, but that’s rare. We never leave anything on the decks whilst sailing - clutter is bad.”

The board weighs less than 10 kilograms and Justine found it very easy to manoeuvre on board *Shima* – she just inflates it on deck, ties a rope to it and throws it overboard.

“It’s great for both exercise and exploration,” she says, recommending it for other WWSA members who are keen to have some fun, adding: “Just don’t let people video you when getting on, it’s far too embarrassing when you do the epic fail!”

Of course, there is no such thing as a ‘fail’ – remember what Jankie from Bali Stand Up



Justine getting the hang of SUP on the Clarence River, Australia.





Darlene and her dog Impi enjoying SUP.

Paddle School said, “SUP is fun and falling off is part of the fun!” (see Part 1, *SisterShip* September issue).

SUP is indeed fun for the whole family – including the family pooch! Justine’s friend Darlene first tried SUP in the Queensland town of 1770, where she was immediately joined by her water-loving dog Impi, a cattle dog/Koolie cross, who has a natural affinity for the water.

“Impi took to the SUP as quickly as I did. He has always been around water and out on our boat. A few years before SUP, we were at the beach with family. Our nieces had their body boards playing in the surf, Impi was fascinated and kept jumping on, and in the end most of the morning was spent with the girls towing him across the surf shallows, it was funny to watch and he seemed to get a real kick out of it. Then when SUP came along he just naturally wanted to join in. In fact, we needed to discourage him, as I was trying to get the hang of it first before I was confident to have him share the board with me.”

Impi is now a regular on the board with Darlene. “SUP is another fun way to interact with our dog. He and I have both fallen off, normally towards the end of our session when a dip in the water or rest is warranted, he just swims back to the shore, waiting for his next turn.”

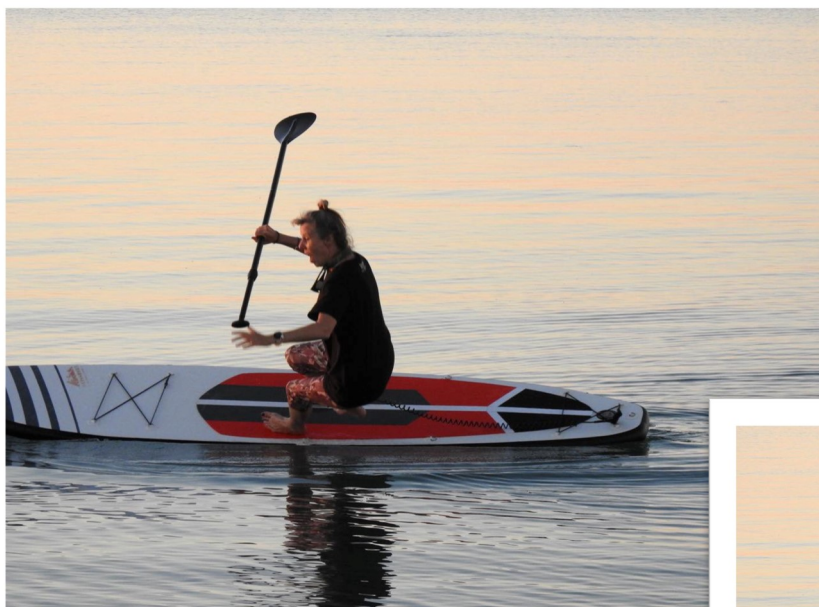
This diversity is probably why SUP is becoming so popular. It suits young and old; it doesn’t require any particular level of fitness; if your balance is dodgy, you can still get along quite well sitting or kneeling on the board. It’s low impact and low maintenance (most inflatable boards come with a little puncture repair kit). It’s one of the easiest and quickest ways to get out on the water, without all the bulk and ‘gear’ of kayaking or many other watersports.

How do I know? Because Justine has just done a big refit on board *Shima*: sanding, painting... and de-cluttering. During the writing of this story, serendipity came to call, and when she mentioned that she was not using her board much anymore and thinking of selling it, I put my hand up right away! Another stroke of luck saw a light aircraft flying direct from her current location to ours, so Justine packed it up in its compact carry-bag and suddenly I became the proud owner of my very own SUP. A modern day *Walbu*, reminiscent of the rafts that the local *Kaiadilt* Aboriginal people used to stand on to paddle between these islands many years ago.



**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. Lyn recently circumnavigated Sweers Island by kayak to raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Queensland. Along with her kayak rolling coach, she hopes to make the Sweers Island Challenge a regular event, with more paddlers taking the opportunity to explore this isolated but beautiful part of Australia’s coastline.






*Lyn falling  
off her board!*







# Barefoot Boating Blunderment

Jane Chevous

## Tangible Presence

Jane tries to follow the BBB principles on the sailing boat *Chantey*, with her husband Ivan. She blogs and shares her writing at [www.barefoot-tales.uk](http://www.barefoot-tales.uk)

### BBB principles:

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

## Open arms of connection

As I write, we are crossing the North Atlantic Ocean, about 750 miles from the Azores. *Chantey* is heading to her permanent home in the UK. We're making the most of this amazing opportunity to be so close to the ocean, embracing the experience with open

arms. We are also longing to be reunited with our family and friends.

One thing COVID-19 has taught us, if we needed the lesson, is the importance of connection. The ocean is a beautiful enigma in this regard. Hundreds of miles offshore, not another ship nor soul in sight, you can feel very alone. Yet here I also feel most extraordinarily connected to every other living element of our universe, to the essence of life and spirit. I understand why sailors called their boats 'she', I feel she comes alive and we sail as partners. Like Moitessier, I can hear the sky and the seas talking with the boat and feel a sense of peace and harmony with all life.

## Connection with space

There is such a contrast between the vast expanse of ocean we are sailing through, and the contained space we are living in. Families in lockdown may have yearned for some solitary space or 'me time' – something regular sailors know all about. Even in the smallest of shared spaces, we have this need



both to ‘nest’ our own little place and to protect some privacy. Perhaps it can become about possession, or defending our castle, but I think it’s like having a shell or a tent, a safe home that is always with us, a base to reach out to others and retreat to.

How to achieve this in a small boat, or other tiny home? I’ve noticed that here on *Chantey*,

we have our own way of creating and using a ‘me’ space. As well as the usual storage in our cabin, in the main salon we each have claimed a passage berth, with a locker alongside, and squirrelled away various belongings. Ivan’s collection is thoroughly practical – a phone charger, woolly jumper for night watch, music player, tools and manuals for current boat



**Atlantic passage.**



projects. He generally only sleeps or rests there and spends most of his time in the cockpit or deck salon.

Whereas I have tried to create my own little burrow, a retreat where I can spend sacred time and be left undisturbed. I have tried to surround myself with tangible reminders of loved ones – my grandfather's writing box, my mother's Welsh wool blanket, family photos, a cushion my son made in school. The shelf holds favourite books, and mementos from our travels – a Salvadorean picture, a Darien carved nut, a Huichol hair-ornament, a mobile fashioned from shells and driftwood collected in Baja California. Resources for my retreat time: musical instruments, my journal, spiritual and poetry books, a bag with the latest craft project, notebook and colourful pens.

It's my restorative space, a place to read, write, rest, create, meditate and pray. To



**ABOVE: Shakespeare.**

**BELOW: Patchwork cushions.**







wonderful therapist who is based in the UK, and I explored some practical thoughts about how to keep connection over distance in my blog about therapy in seclusion which were focussed in ‘mobile’ or ‘distant’ relationships. With lots of time to think during our long Atlantic crossing, I have been wondering about other ways to foster connection.

Researcher Jane Dutton talks about ‘high quality connections’, ones that are life-giving rather than life depleting. She found that one way to build good connections is to use intentional questions in our conversations and interactions, not just small talk. She suggests four types of discussions we can have :

- showing we are genuinely interested in each other *e.g. asking about meaningful things that have happened in our lives recently;*
- finding common ground *e.g. sharing favourite things, or what we’re looking forward to;*
- invoking positivity in each other *e.g. asking about what gives us joy, what are we grateful for;*
- offering help *e.g. asking what do you need right now? How can I help?*

I’ve felt drawn to revive my habit from pre-ICT days of writing letters and postcards, not just relying on social media/emails to communicate. Letter-writing leads us into sharing stories, not just soundbites, which makes those deeper conversations more possible. It can be easier to put down in writing something personal that we’re grateful for, or something we’re really struggling with, than saying it face to face. And cards are a great way to share encouraging positive messages.

I have lots of cards from friends and family with inspiring messages tucked into books and journals around the boat. I love the fact that they provide a tangible reminder of

reflect on the day, recoup, refresh the soul, hold loved ones to mind.

Do you have a nesting space on your boat? What do you keep there that is special to you? What’s the most unusual thing you’ve found room for? I have yet to meet another sailor with the same as mine: the complete works of Shakespeare (pride of place next to Ashley’s Knots).

## Strengthening connection

I think it’s really important to notice how our language affects our meaning. I try not to use the phrase ‘social distancing’ because I don’t want to be socially distant from my family and friends. I prefer the practice of talking about physical distancing and social connectivity. Physical distancing may make connectivity more of a challenge, a theme that frequently emerges in my reflections as a liveaboard voyager. But with some creativity, we can still be the fully sociable creatures that we are born.

For the last year, I have been working with a



people I may not be able to see for a while. Tangible presence is also part of the BBB philosophy of boating. We tried to fit out the boat with pre-loved gifts that have a story and would bring people to mind whenever we used them. We boil our eggs each Sunday in my adopted mum's copper-bottomed saucepan, a reminder of all the family meals we shared. That ditty bag was made by Ivan's mother from scraps she saved when she worked in a garment factory and we use it to take tools up the mast. The playing cards and dominoes are kept in a little wooden box decorated by our grandchildren. The well-loved teddy bear in the corner was made by a late friend for my son when he was born. The recycled Welsh blanket was a present from my natural mother, and I bought her one too. It means so much that although she was never able to hold me as a baby, I can snuggle in the hug of her blanket, knowing she may be wrapped up in mine against the British cold.

We try to find similarly meaningful little things as gifts, not just mass-produced souvenirs. Something with a story from the person who made it or the community it comes from. A mobile made from shells we collected en route, or a bag made from sailcloth scraps. An ongoing project has been to get shore-based friends and those we meet on our travels to decorate a patchwork square with fabric pens, with a picture or message for us. I sew them into cushion covers, throws, curtains etc.

How do you foster deeper connections? What do you keep on your boat that brings that tangible presence of absent loved ones? We'd love to hear about and see your ideas.

**The Long Way, Bernard Moitessier, 1973**

<http://barefoot-tales.uk/2020/04/19/therapy-in-seclusion/>

[http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/janedut/high quality connections/power high quality.pdf](http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/janedut/high%20quality%20connections/power%20high%20quality.pdf)

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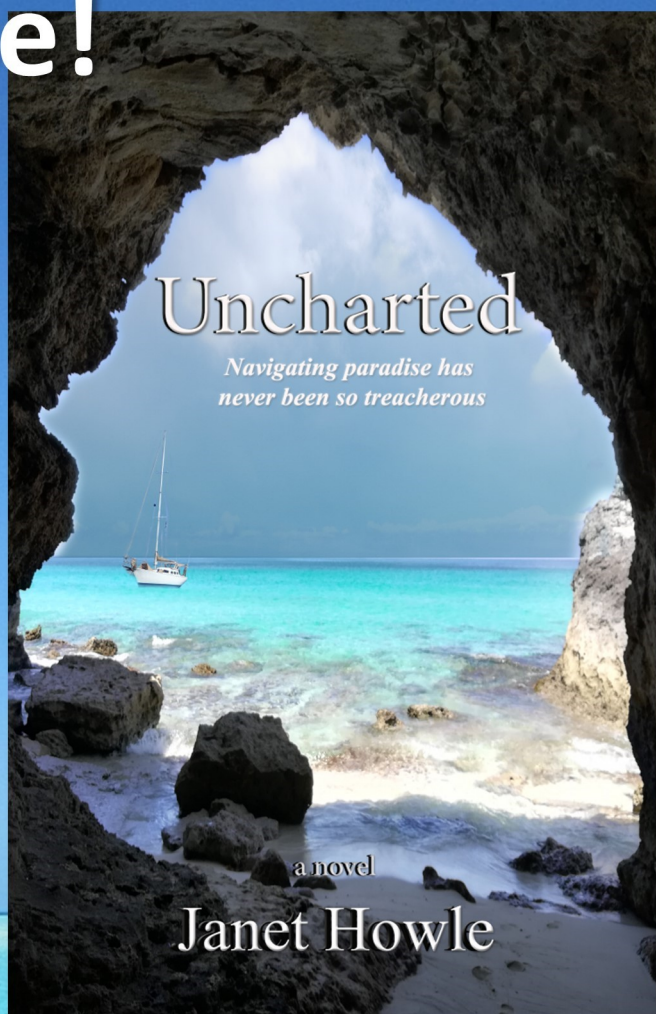




# New Release!

*“Fast paced action set in the exotic Bahamas with memorable characters and intrigue. **Uncharted** is a must read for sailors and lovers of suspense alike”*

*Helene Young, award-winning Australian author*



Carter McDowell is a broken man. Guilt and grief haunt him as he struggles to keep the only thing he has left, his sailboat *Wind Chaser*.

Kat Deano, a feisty investigative reporter, is in the Bahamas to probe the mysterious disappearance of her twin brother.

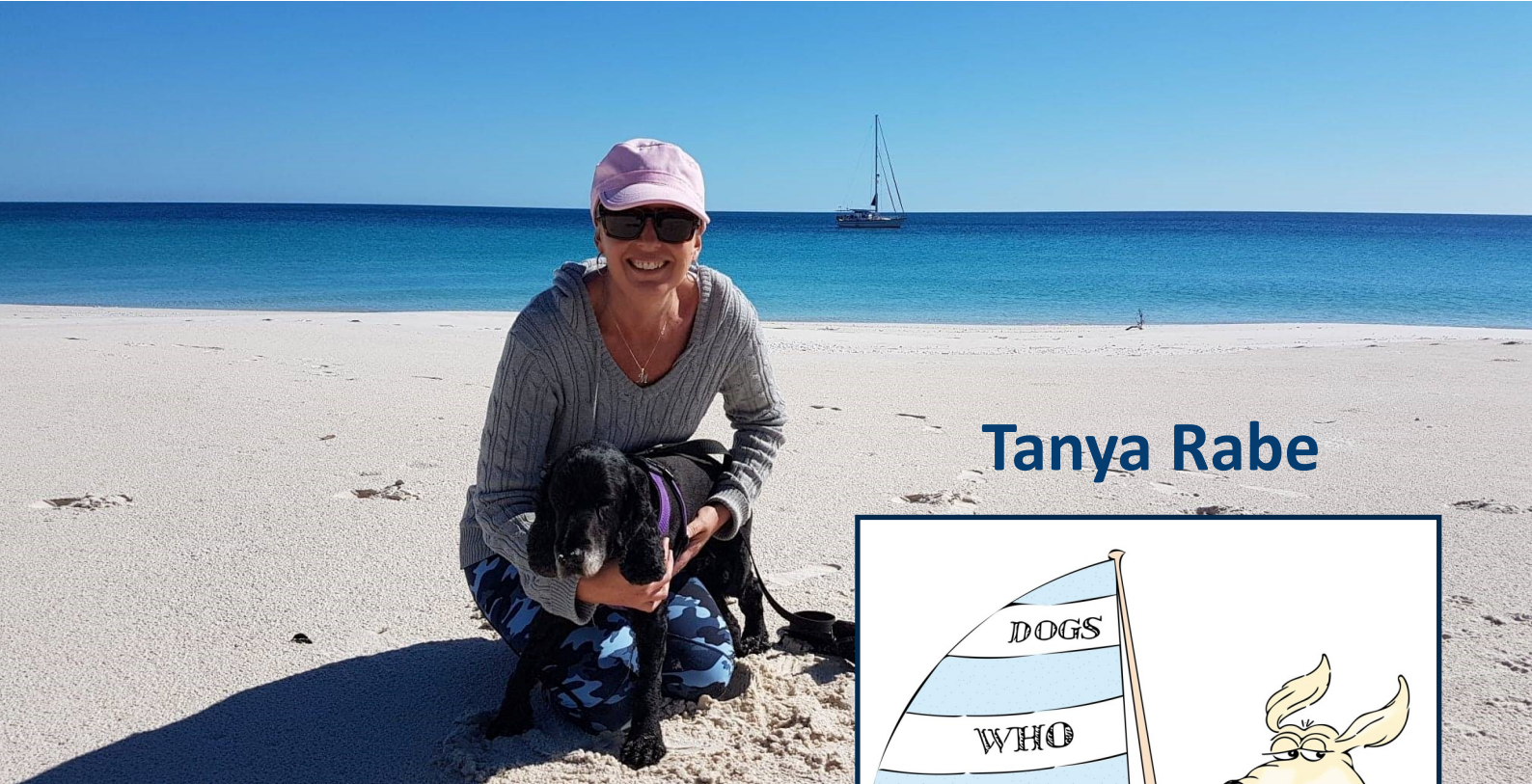
Thrown together when Carter fishes Kat from the sea at night far from land, their lives become increasingly entangled as they face the forces of nature and threats from unexpected sources. Their uncharted voyage propels them from the office of the Bahamian Prime Minister to the remote island of Andros as they stumble onto a horrific plot that threatens both the U.S. and the Bahamas.

*Uncharted* sets a turbulent period in the Bahamas' history as the backdrop for a present-day catastrophe. Drawn on the author's extensive experience cruising this region, this riveting suspense will captivate both seasoned and armchair sailors.

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 SisterShip  
women on the water





**Tanya Rabe**

## INTRODUCING DOGS WHO SAIL TV

*Dogs Who Sail* began with our two Cocker Spaniels, Maxy and Mel, aboard our 34-foot Duncanson.

There were other motivations behind the creation of *Dogs Who Sail*. Aside from saturating family and friends with photos of our dogs onboard, I was eager to meet other sailing dogs, so I created a Facebook group called *Dogs Who Sail*. To my surprise, our community is now 2,200 strong and growing daily.

As a doggy mother it was important to me to know everything there was about having a dog onboard. I wanted to ensure Maxy and Mel were safe and comfortable on our boat at all times. I became a dog with a bone developing my knowledge by reading blogs and books, watching You Tube clips, and speaking with experts.

I was surprised by the number of owners I met through our *Dogs Who Sail* community who were challenged by the same worries and concerns. With dribs and drabs of information scattered throughout the



internet, and some topics not even covered, I decided to capture the stories, advice, trials and tribulations of dogs on boats, bringing it all together in one place on our website [www.dogswhosail.com](http://www.dogswhosail.com).

By connecting with owners of different breeds, different sizes, rookie sailors and old salty sea dogs, we gain a real understanding of the huge variety of dogs who have adapted to sailing life. Initially we began offering Doggy Bios on our website, capturing boating dogs' experiences onboard so owners could learn from not just one owners experience but many.

I recognised that dog owners needed even more support. This is why we are so excited to have launched DOGS WHO SAIL TV.

Now owners can let go of those worries as we air regular interviews with training experts, professionals, government agencies





Dr Sheridan Lathe.

and so much more.

We will be spending time with some of the big names in the doggy world, understanding how their products and services enhance your dog's safety and comfort onboard and promote responsible dog ownership.

We are super excited to be joined by fellow Aussie, Dr Sheridan Lathe from *Vet Tails' Sailing Chuffed*. *SisterShip Magazine* readers will know that Sheddy is an extraordinary woman, providing veterinary care to communities she encounters on her sailing journey. Sheddy knows boats and she knows dogs. She will be joining us regularly to answer your questions in dedicated episodes on DOGS WHO SAIL TV.

I will also be joined by *Dogs Who Sail* members who have been boating with their furry four-legged crew in different parts of the world. These fun and informative stories are from circumnavigators, commercial fishing dogs, weekenders, power boating dogs, super yacht dogs, racing dogs, and of course sailing dogs.

Through our encounters and experiences, we are bringing together helpful information so you and your dog create memories for a lifetime.

Follow the link to our new You Tube channel and don't forget to click SUBSCRIBE so you get all of the latest episodes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtUFPdHz6qQ>

Fair winds and doggy love.  
Tanya Rabe



**TANYA RABE co-founded *Dogs Who Sail* with her two Cocker Spaniels Maxy and Mel. What began as a space to share their own story as liveaboards has now grown into a global community of dogs on boats. Tanya devotes her life to caring for dogs, celebrating their individuality and promoting responsible dog ownership. Ask to join Tanya's closed Facebook group *Dogs Who Sail*.**

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



# Facing Fear Head On 2:

## Short Story competition results

**1st: CHERYLLE STONE: 'From Carefree Crew to Responsible Skipper'**

**2nd: PATSY MITCHELL: 'A lesson Learned in the Gulf of Suez'**

**Highly Commended: Caroline Woodhead 'Saved by a Cruise Ship'**

**Editor's pick: Liesbet Collaert 'Do Sharks Fear Purple Bandannas?'**

### Judges' remarks:

From spiders to bandanas to two-way radios, from large oceans to coastal sails... Judging *SisterShip's* short story competition was a trip down memory lane for this sailor, as I was reminded of how debilitating the fear of the unknown can be and how powerful conquering that fear is. All the entries showed tremendous talent, and a love of sailing is palpable in each story – but in the end, the winner was a clear choice. Congratulations to 'From Carefree Crew to Responsible Skipper', for sharing such an inspirational story about facing everyone's biggest fear – keeping what was a dream for two alive alone. Our story's heroine came back stronger and achieved any skipper's dream whilst empowering those around her. I also commend our runner up, 'A Lesson Learned in the Gulf of Suez', a story of a night to remember for all the wrong reasons, would have any sailor's heart pounding.

Congratulations to our prize winners! It was so difficult to choose that I also want to recognise a highly commended story. In 'Saved by a Cruise Ship!', warmth and compassion shine through in a tale of camaraderie in the ocean sailing community as our narrator faces her fear of crossing the Atlantic.

Mel and Sam Hammond run writing workshops and courses for aspiring scribes through their business, Story Slingers, but are currently on hiatus. You can find out more about what they get up to when they're working here:

<https://story-slingers.teachable.com/courses>



# FROM CAREFREE CREW TO RESPONSIBLE SKIPPER

**Cherylle Stone**



We were cruising in Fiji. He had been feeling unwell for a couple of weeks. We thought he had a urinary tract infection and a course of antibiotics would fix it. Two weeks later and one day into the third course he was no better. Since we were by now on the western side of the country and in civilisation again, he went to a local GP who took a grainy x-ray and recommended we fly home to Australia immediately. We found a safe place to park the boat at Denarau and within a few days were in the urologist's rooms ready to commence a complex round of assessments.

The news was the worst. He was seriously ill and worsening by the day. Being an optimist with a huge appetite for life and the sea and, at the same time, totally ignorant of the awful side effects of chemo, he opted to take the chance that it could prolong his life. He spent a significant part of the remaining three months in pain and confined to a hospital or home bed.

We organised a delivery skipper and crew to bring the boat back to Australia by early November to comply with insurance conditions. The skipper cleared into Brisbane

and then took the boat to Tweed Heads to await further instructions. Geoff died at 1530 on 15 November, 2012.

By late December I felt ready to bring the boat back to its home in Port Stephens. Although I had absorbed a lot and probably done most sailing activities in 40 years of mucking about on vessels small and large, and was passionate about sailing, whether it was cruising or racing, I was definitely carefree crew, not skipper material. I erred on the side of caution and got the professional skipper, with me and one other as crew, to deliver the boat home.

I thought hard about what I would do: put the boat on the market or keep it. If I kept it, how on earth would I be able to transition from crew to skipper? Should I revert to a monohull? Should I buy a smaller boat? If I did, what unknowns would I be buying? How would I do all the blue jobs Geoff had always done? What if I broke the one thing that we both treasured?

I knew if I was to learn to skipper the boat, I had to get out there and do it. It wasn't hard to rope in some patient, knowledgeable,



highly experienced friends who willingly joined me for club racing during the summer. Two wonderful female friends with limited experience hopped on for Wednesday racing and we learned together. Another couple of blokes ended up as permanent crew on Saturdays. As summer ended and my confidence had grown, I decided to head north to Queensland. By then I rationalised that if I stuffed up, Club Marine\* would pay.

I advertised for crew on one of the crew finder web sites and scheduled a succession of willing friends and relatives to join me. It was tense at times coping with my grief, managing the boat, and interacting positively with friends and strangers but sailing safely is an all-consuming activity so it was a welcome temporary diversion from my feelings of utter despair.

That first winter of cruising without my beloved husband of 41 years was achingly lonely but far better than it would have been had I stayed at home. I just could not



envision myself being absorbed by, or enjoying, any other pastime.

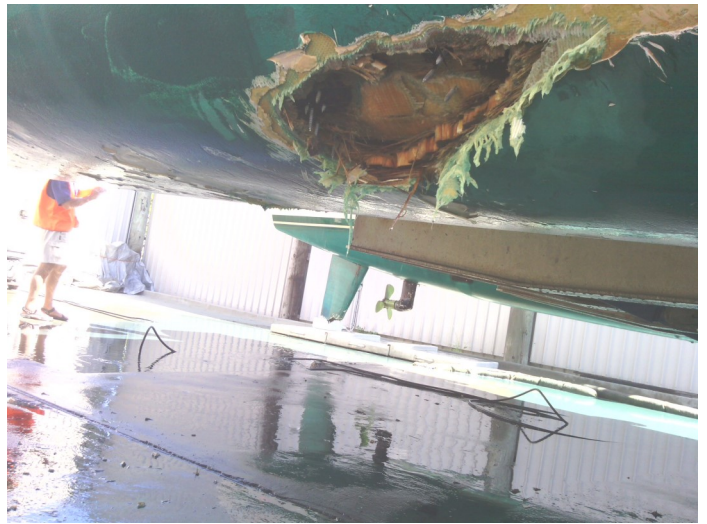
I returned for another summer of racing and learned some more the hard way. During a

**The responsible skipper and his carefree crew.**





severe autumn thunderstorm, the boat and mooring came ashore with one hull scraping and bashing on the rocks, which quickly breached it in half a dozen spots and tore off the rudder and saildrive. Before I even left the house to go to the boat, which I could see was in the wrong place, I called the insurance company who organised for the local boat yard manager to see what he could do. My second and subsequent calls were to those knowledgeable friends. The boat yard manager was there in half an hour and the others in minutes.



**ABOVE: After the grounding in 2014.**

The bilge pumps had kept the water below the sole and the tide was receding so we bailed out the remaining water and Matt used copious quantities of sikka and screws to put plywood patches over the holes while others jammed putty into awkward corners. Within

a couple of hours the boat was ready to move so we kedged off and motored with one engine and one rudder to a Yacht Club mooring for the night. We bailed about 60 litres an hour and were able to motor five miles up the estuary the next morning to be hauled out. It took four months to get the boat back into shape so my northern migration was delayed until August. That year

**BELOW: The crew for a recent race numbered ten. We were last, probably because we were carrying an extra ton of people.**

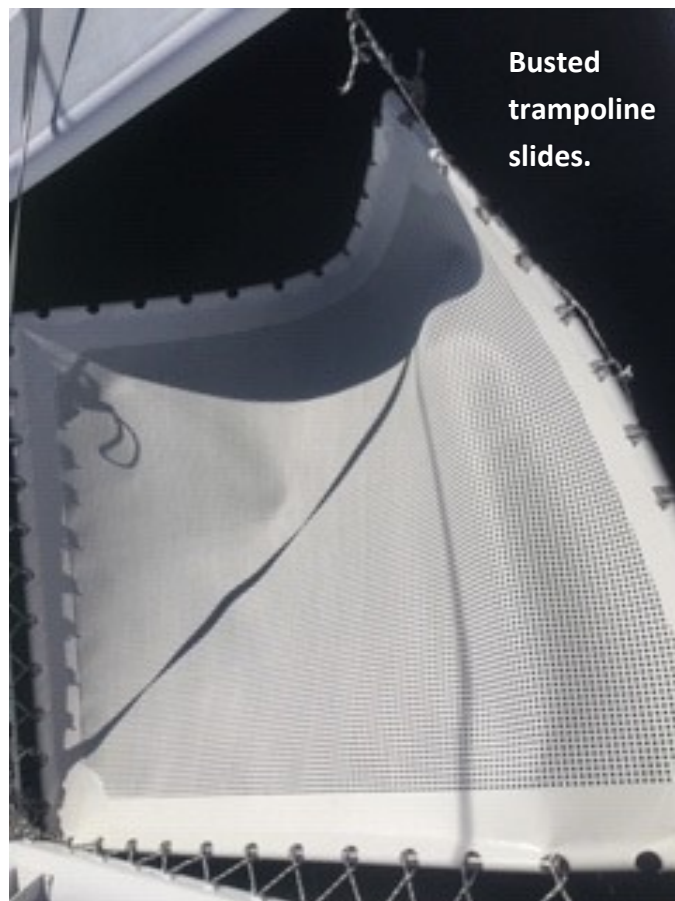




I went solo for the first time, day sailing from Bundaberg to the Whitsundays. It was either that or leave the boat.

In order to address my big deficit of knowledge and skills in the blue jobs department I did a basic diesel engine maintenance course and had a couple of practices at servicing the engines so if an impellor misbehaved, I could deal with it. I have never had an unscheduled impellor change but, having forgotten to switch the fuel supply in a timely manner, I did have to bleed an engine following the instructions in the Volvo owner's manual and another useful mechanical repairs reference. Basic electrical stuff is mostly a mystery to me but I have changed out some incandescent lights for LEDs and dealt successfully with clearing calcified toilet hoses. The basics of three strand eye splicing and whipping halyards and sheets are also on the ticked off list.

I had been up and down the coast several times by 2018, often doing solo passages, and needed a new challenge so I found some



highly skilled and very experienced friends who were willing to head into the blue. We took off with the 2018 Go East Rally and, after turning back 12 hours into the passage

**Subzero Wednesday racing in bushfire smoke haze.**







**ABOVE: Helping at the annual Women Who Sail Australia Gathering on the Bay (conference) at Port Stephens.**



***Subzero on the way to the start of a club race.***



to repair broken trampoline slides that had succumbed to UV damage after only five years, we made it safely to Noumea. A number of friends and a few strangers, who have since become friends, joined me for a season in New Caledonia and Vanuatu.

Seven years on, my transition from carefree crew to responsible skipper is just about complete. On my return in 2018, I was looking for summer racing crew so advertised on Women Who Sail Australia and a local Womens' Facebook Group. I have had so much fun over the summer with many women who are eager to try or continue this sailing lark.

Some have become permanent crew while others have had between one and three days out and called it quits. Two experienced sailors put their hands up for passages north this winter while two of my permanent crew will join me in the Whitsundays and further north.

I am content that I still have my lovely boat, the one object that was integral to my soulmate's and my wellbeing and which has helped me to adapt and find occasional joy in a solitary existence.

\*Insurance company



**Cherylle has been sailing in a variety of craft for two thirds of her life.**

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***Are you ready to go offshore?***

***Do you know what you don't know?***



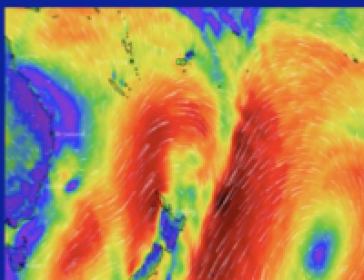
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# *The Student Becomes the Teacher*

*Leanne Hembrow*

My life has not always been easy. Growing up I had adult responsibilities in a child's world, that's not to say I felt unloved or uncared for, I just learnt to grow up faster than most.

My mum suffered from depression, which often became overwhelming or difficult to understand at times. Moods and strange behaviour had to be managed. My siblings and I learnt to be very aware of my mother's personalities, not unlike being a twin. I became quite withdrawn and shy, often being torn from my home and placed in extended family homes until peace and stability was once again restored in ours.

***“In later years I find my voice through yoga.”***

My mum gained much weight, partly from her medication and eating to feel good. This had a huge impact on how I treated what I put in my mouth and at a young age respected my body. Sport was encouraged at school and I really enjoyed the diversity, from athletics to weekend tennis, I liked how I felt being active and eating well. No wonder I

embraced the sailing life easily. I often walked with mum before work and tried to motivate her to lose weight, encouraging her visits to weekly weight watchers.

I have enjoyed mentoring many over the past three years to better health through eating the ‘Gut Healthy Way’ combined with Yoga to commence Yoga, Health and Sail Wellness™.

My mum had a deep faith and often told us growing up she wanted to be a nun, but parental intervention suggested she marry. Sadly, my mum has passed away, but she has left many tools behind for me; self-awareness, checking in with my feelings and thoughts to heal the mind and taking care of my body. She would not know I learnt this from her, as it was through observation of her life, I applied it to mine.

Fast forward years later planning to sail from Australia and travel the world. Yoga became a big part of continuing this journey of mind-body-health, finding myself with time on my hands I stepped into a yoga studio more than 12 years ago.



I have been boating for 32 years and I understand the need to often move swiftly and manage movement from dinghy to vessel, even the simple task of getting back into your dinghy after a swim or walk ashore. I recognised the benefits yoga could bring to sailing life and I incorporated yoga onboard; crossing oceans did not limit my practice only added to the experience.

I was intrigued to go deeper with my self-practice and broaden my yoga knowledge in 2013, completing my 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training. I have since introduced yoga to many in the sailing community and spoken at seminars of the benefits it brings to our lifestyle. I am known as Yoga 4 Yachties™.

I have travelled the world continuing to broaden my knowledge, educating deeper within the philosophy of yoga to enhance my teachings to benefit my practice and students experience on the mat. I have been encouraged and guided to open my own Yoga School and I am happy to share that

Namaste Ocean Yoga School™ is now open.

My dad passed one year into our sailing lifestyle. He was proud he had given up smoking years earlier and saved the cost of a packet of cigarettes each day until he died. My parents were not wealthy people, but they managed to leave a little money to each sibling. I kept my money for a little while, wanting to spend it on something I would cherish and be reminded of them both. I chose to spend the money becoming a Yoga Teacher, so each time I step onto the mat I am reminded of them both and encouraged to share from the heart.

***“Our parents may not always be perfect role models. Good or bad habits or emotional struggles – there are always lessons to be learned.”***

Recently I felt myself falling into a black hole, an experience I had never felt before, driven by a will to adapt, change and grow through COVID-19 2020 nightmare.

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It began as signs of feeling overworked, I was at times scrambled in my head my thoughts and ideas were coming thick and fast. I would make myself try to rest but my mind wouldn't switch off. I kept pushing myself to keep creating, keep offering. I was consciously hearing "REST". I'd acknowledge those thoughts and for small moments I would act on them, but my body and mind were so restless I couldn't relax, I had this subconscious determination and almost maniac pull to complete my goals and ideas... and I would move back to my computer and continue pushing past how I was actually feeling, I almost spiralled myself into a dark lost pit in my mind!

Acknowledging my mother, I started self-assessing and acknowledging the lack of clarity I was experiencing, thinking is this how she felt? Growing up with depression in your life you see the alarm bells. Always wondering 'will I inherit this demon?' is in the

forefront of your mind. Secondly, through my Yoga teachings I managed to reach my mat, check in with myself deeper, I started to relax listening to music, guided meditation, and then yoga. I managed to climb out of that black whole I was falling into through self awareness.

***"You cannot teach what you don't understand."***

I am honoured to be forever learning from life experiences to then guide my students to enhance or begin your practice through 200 hour Yoga Teacher Training and encourage with my co-trainer Susan Richardson, the Life Lessons and Journey into self-discovery through Yoga.

**If you would like to know more about Namaste Ocean Yoga School™ 200 hour teacher training contact Leanne**

**[yoga4yachties@gmail.com](mailto:yoga4yachties@gmail.com) or visit her website [www.namasteoceanyoga.com](http://www.namasteoceanyoga.com)**

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*vikāratas = change*



*"The Student becomes the Teacher"*



*Deepen your practice,  
gain knowledge and skills  
to teach others.*

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*Leanne Hembrow - Lead Teacher*

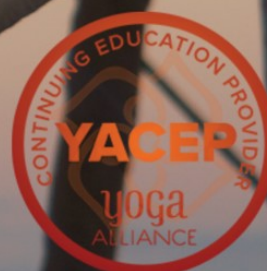
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*Susan (Paschal) Richardson - Co-Trainer*

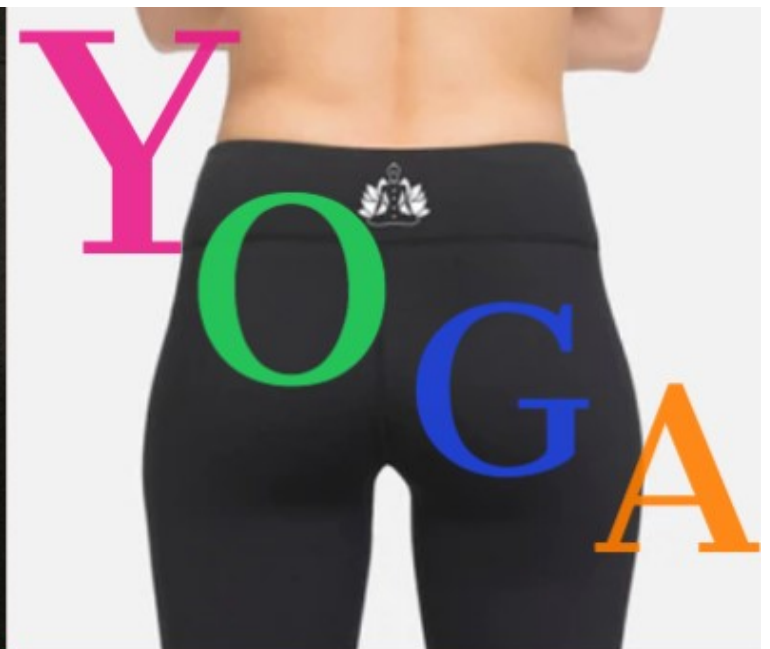
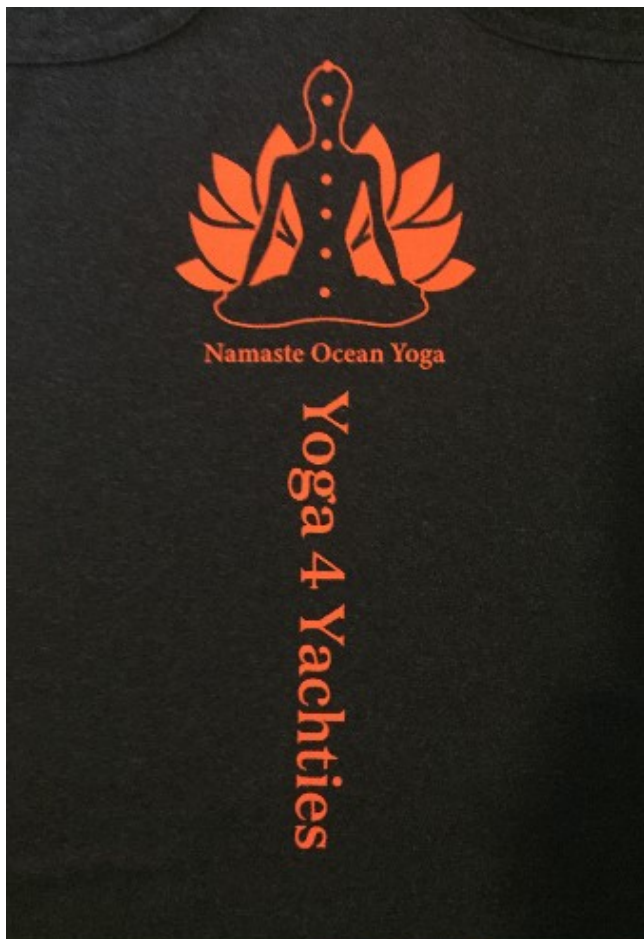
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# Flat bottomed girl

## Views from the canal

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

### New life for our old barge

What do you do when the engine in your boat has a major oil haemorrhage and dies with no hope of revival? Panic? Well, yes; that first. Give up? It's tempting, isn't it? We nearly did so and even worse, we even considered scrapping our beloved barge altogether.

In October, 2018, two whole years ago, we were on our way into Belgium looking forward to a weekend's blissful cruising on a quiet waterway where we knew we could recharge our batteries. It was to be our last mini holiday before the winter set in. What went wrong no longer matters, but the bare fact remains that before we were even half an hour from our home port, the lifeblood of our old Hanomag engine had emptied into the bilges. And we only realised it when the lack of oil pressure warnings alerted us. By that time, it was too late.

At a nearby yard where a passing cruiser kindly towed us, optimism that it could be fixed quickly turned to despair when we heard the price they quoted us. It was way



beyond the value of the entire boat and about five times more than we could afford. So, what to do? It was at that stage we considered disposing of the *Hennie Ha*, albeit very briefly.

Most readers here will be familiar with my liveaboard barge, *Vereeniging*. However, because she's my home and the base from which I work, we rarely travel on her. We have done in the past, but only for day trips and weekends, the truth being it would be something of a kerfuffle to organise everything to make her dual purpose. She's set up to be a shore-powered houseboat; fine for short cruises, but not extended holidays involving several weeks or even months.

So when some years ago we saw the *Hennie Ha* advertised on our local version of eBay, we decided this was going to be our travelling boat. Too small to live on comfortably, she has many other advantages over my *Vereeniging* in terms of cruisability (if there is such a word). Firstly, she has side decks – very important from a safety perspective; *Vereeniging* doesn't, and to go forward to the



bow always means walking over the hatches with no handrail to cling to should one of us fall. Secondly, the *Hennie Ha* is shorter, meaning it's easier to find moorings. And thirdly, she's set up for camping, which is exactly what we do when we're away.

By the time disaster occurred, we'd had three glorious summers travelling into Belgium and France. During those enchanted months, we deepened our attachment to our *Hennie Ha*. She had her own personality with quirks that became fondly familiar to us. So even when she lay mortally wounded with the prospect of horrendous costs ahead, the idea of scrapping her was raised but closed almost as quickly as the thoughts formed. After what she'd given us, it seemed too great a betrayal.

The solution wasn't easy, though. Our emotions soared when a friend recommended a retired diesel mechanic who might be able to repair the old Hanomag engine. We were thrilled when he said he could do it, but then cast into the depths of gloom the day he eventually told us he didn't have the time. We'd waited months without going further in the belief he would begin working on her in March last year, so to be let down after so long was a bitter blow. It took

further weeks of fretting and worrying before we decided the old engine simply had to be replaced. But once the decision was made, things began to move at a pace.

I started scouring the internet and within a few weeks, I found a potential candidate in the form of a second hand marine Peugeot engine that had been rescued from a burnt out cruiser. We went to see it, liked what we saw, and sealed the deal. The next puzzle was how to collect it. But that wasn't the biggest challenge. We then had to figure out how we, a couple not exactly in our first flush of youth, were going to extract the old engine from the *Hennie Ha* and set the new one in its place.

There were times when our brains hurt from trying to unscramble the logistical problems, but with some flashes of inspiration, we finally managed it all. We hired a trailer and bought a handy garage crane for step one: getting the Peugeot home and onto our property. Then Koos uncoupled and disconnected all removable parts from the old motor, whose lifeless remains were lifted out of the engine bay by the crane of a huge commercial tugboat.

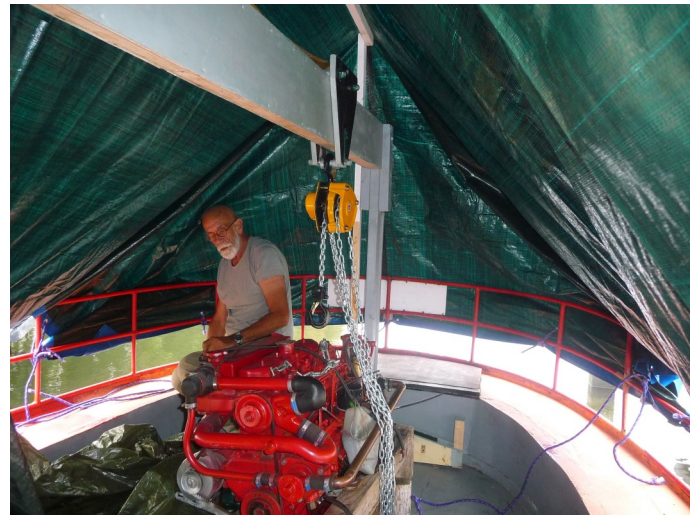


**The *Henni Ha* heading out.**



Being from the commercial skippers' world, Koos had already been in contact with the tugboat's owners for some time. When asked if they could help, they rose to the occasion magnificently, and we watched in awe as they went into action. The same crane was then used to hoist the Peugeot onto our rear deck. It sat there until we'd built a deck crane using a block and tackle that could roll along a horizontal bar. As soon as Koos had welded new mountings into the base to accommodate the difference in engine size, we lifted the Peugeot from the deck and lowered it into place.

It was the end of 2019 and with the winter upon us, it was time to plan the next moves. Koos was convinced we couldn't do all the rest of the work to install the engine completely. The cooling system was different, the exhaust was on the other side of the engine and then what about the electrics? That was a prospect that instantly blew all his



own mental fuses. However, the expression 'needs must when the Devil drives' was never more apt than in this case. There simply wasn't anyone else to help us.

After talking it all through with me first and then with a knowledgeable neighbour, Koos finally agreed to give it a go. Most of what I could contribute was coffee and tools on demand, but I was also useful as a third hand,

**MAIN: Tugboat crane.**

**TOP RIGHT: Deck crane.**





arm or even foot when needed. In fact, I served as an extra tool, waitress, gofer, and morale keeper. Women don't have the reputation for being good multi-taskers for nothing, do they?

Once we got started, it all gradually fell into place. With the COVID-19 summer providing both time and lack of distractions, we slowly worked our way through the 'to do' list and then the great day arrived. It was early September and Koos was just testing his installation of the ignition system when to our astonishment, the engine sprang into life. I was half way up the *Hennie Ha* doing some paint repairs when I heard the unfamiliar rumble.

"Aaaagh," I shouted with a mixture of joy and alarm. "Turn it off! There's no oil or cooling water in it!"

It ran for just seconds, but for us it was a massive breakthrough. It worked. Everything



we'd done was finally bearing fruit. A couple of days later, the Peugeot had its first proper run. With a belly full of oil and well tanked-up with coolant, it started readily – and kept going. There were cheers from all our neighbours, whose goodwill and pleasure for us was evident in their beaming smiles.

"She sounds sweet," one said.

"Very smooth," another commented,



**MAIN: Peugeot before installation.**

**TOP RIGHT: Peugeot connected.**



nodding.

We just smiled, because we knew we had hours of testing to do before we'd feel confident to take her out. But the day eventually came on Sunday, 18th October, 2020. Two years after her heart failure, and following a year's lengthy surgery, we took our little barge for her first tour of the harbour. It was a magical moment and to say we were elated is an understatement.

There is still more to do; there are things to be adjusted, tweaked and refined, but at this stage, the prospects for next summer are promising. I can't wait.

Now there's just the matter of a pandemic to survive.

Keep safe everyone!

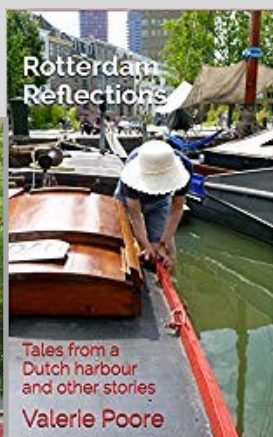
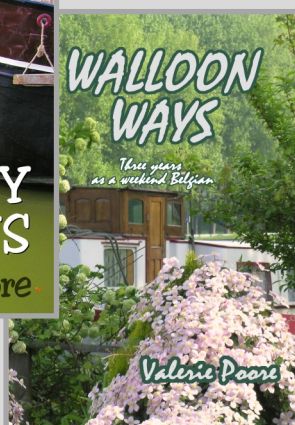
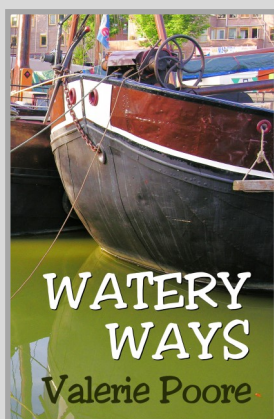


**VALERIE POORE** was born in London, England, and grew up in both north London and the west of Dorset. She moved to South Africa in 1981 but returned to Europe in 2001, which is when she began her love affair with the lovely Dutch flat-bottomed barges (hence the page title). She has lived on a barge 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.



The *Hennie Ha*.





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

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

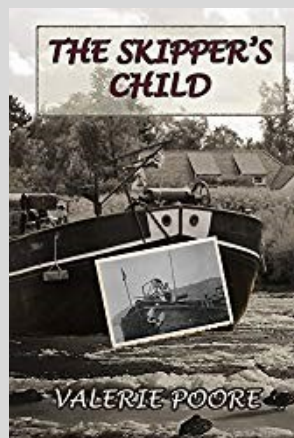
Walloon Ways: <http://geni.us/1CDTu>

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

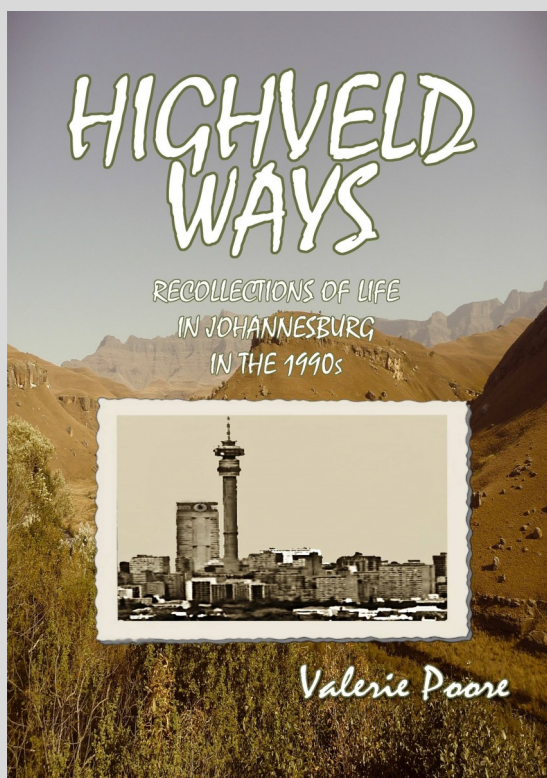
Rotterdam Reflections: <http://geni.us/5pSxcgs>

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

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



**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

## Sustainable Gift Giving

Every year when I turn the page on my calendar to November it makes me pause. There is no denying any longer the year is almost over. The stack of pages is skewed heavily, the final reveal is quickly approaching. And so too, are the holidays.

I love the holiday season. The music, the food, the decorations, the traditions. However, for the past few years onboard *Kate* we approached the holidays a little differently. We've tried to embody what the holidays mean to us rather than how they have been commercialized. As we've been trying to mindfully cut down on how much plastic and packaging we use everyday, we agreed no frivolous gifts. Anything put under our little tree should be something useful, thoughtful and sustainable.

## SHOPPING FOR GIFTS

### MAKE IT

Before you shop think about making a gift. You don't need any special talents to make gifts. If you can bake, sew, knit, garden, whittle, draw, paint, or write, you can make a gift for someone you love.

Around the holiday one of my favourite *MAKE IT* gifts are preserves and baked goods. I get to enjoy time in the galley making my favourite holiday treats, without having to eat ALL the results myself. Bread is another great make it gift from the galley, especially when you take the time to form a fancy loaf. When giving boat-made edibles I also like to include a handwritten copy of my recipe. Then the recipient can enjoy the gift again and again.

I also like to sew and over the years I have made dolls and toys for children, and sewn napkins and placemats out of colourful fabric I have sourced locally. If you are a keen knitter or crocheter a great sustainable



gift is a handmade cotton dishcloth. They are an easy project even for beginners and help cut down on disposal paper products in the galley.

### ***SUPPORT LOCAL MAKERS***

If you're not handy, or don't have the time, then you can support local makers, artisans, and craftspeople. Sometimes local makers can be hard to find but there are usually seasonal craft fairs and sales that bring them together. I try to collect business cards of the makers whose work I like, that way I can contact them and buy again without hassle. And don't overlook community organizations. Last year when we were in Oz I found some amazing red gum cutting boards for a great price at the annual Men's Shed sale.

### ***SHOP PRE-LOVED***

Many people immediately assume gift giving means buying new. Unfortunately, new doesn't always mean sustainable. Nor does it inherently imply quality. I am a long-time second-hand shopper, and these days you can find some real gems.

For instance, instead of just giving someone a box of chocolates or candy why not present them in a vintage bowl? If you have a cook on your list, you can often find great quality cast iron pans at the op shop for a fraction of the new price. Books are another quality item that can easily be sourced second-hand at a bargain. Charity shops are also a good resource for fabrics for crafts or creative upcycling projects.

Online resources like Gumtree and Facebook Market place are great resources when shopping pre-loved. You can find sporting gear like bikes, especially handy if you are shopping for a child who is still growing. And often there are never-been-used big ticket items like electronics for sale.



### ***SHOP SMALL, SHOP LOCAL***

Part of being a sustainable gift giver is also considering where you shop. Supporting local and small businesses is important, particularly this year when so many retailers are struggling because of pandemic restrictions. Supporting a small business means more of the money stays in the community, and that also fosters a sense of community. It is true that box stores are often cheaper, but cheaper doesn't mean better, and it usually doesn't mean sustainable. Your purchasing power counts, so consider how you use it.

### ***WRAPPING***

Gift wrap is one of the most wasteful things about the holidays. After all, it is paper that is designed and marketed to be used once and thrown away. Even if you argue that it can be recycled, it is still a whole lot of resources and energy used unnecessarily. That doesn't mean I don't like and appreciate a prettily wrapped gift. On the contrary. I think gifts that are wrapped in a sustainable way show more



thoughtfulness on the part of the giver.

## **REUSE PAPER**

You can keep holiday wrapping paper and reuse it year to year. Or make your own wrapping paper by reusing magazines pages, old calendars, craft paper envelopes you may have gotten in the mail or other packaging and waste paper you have lying around. I especially like using newspaper for gifts that are sent to friends and family far away- the wrapping tells a story of where the gift comes from.

Making upcycled wrapping paper is a great project for kids, and a fun way to get them involved in holiday preparations. To dress thing up think about collaging or drawing on your custom gift wrapping. Adding a colourful ribbon or flower are great ways to brighten up brown paper or newsprint. A stick of cinnamon or a spring of rosemary are lovely ways to evoke the smells holiday.

## **USE FABRIC**

Using a piece of beautiful fabric to wrap gifts is not a new 'green' trend. Furoshiki is the traditional Japanese art of using fabric to wrap gifts that dates back several centuries. I check Op shops for vintage cloth napkins, tea towels, and handkerchiefs to wrap smaller gifts. A pillowcase, sarong, or t-shirt work for larger items. You can use remnants of fabric as well but the great thing about using a tea

Fabric wrapped gifts.



towel or sarong is that the wrapping can also be incorporated and used as part of the gift.

There is no right way to use fabric wrapping. Pick a pretty piece of fabric big enough to cover your gift. Fold and wrap neatly. Tie a knot or a bow. *Voila!* Tick "wrap gifts" off the 'To Do' list.

## **GREENER GIFT IDEAS**

### **NAME EXCHANGE**

If you have a large group or family consider doing a name exchange. Having one person to give a gift to instead of six might mean you have the time to make something instead of buying it. It also means less – less waste, less stress, less unnecessary 'stuff.'

### **EXPERIENCES, NOT THINGS**

Instead of giving a thing why not gift someone an experience? Offer to teach someone to sail or to help them service their outboard. If you love to cook, you can offer to make a special meal or teach someone how to make your favourite dish. Invest in a gift certificate to a local club or community center that offer courses your giftee is interested in. Museum or theatre tickets are lovely gifts to give and a great way to support the arts.

**BELOW: A hobbyhorse I made for a little girl in Fiji.**





Getting into the holiday spirit on passage to Palau December 2016.



## DONATE

There are so many ways to give without buying a gift. From donating to your local foodbank to supporting a toy drive you can make the holidays better for others in your community. There are also long-term charities like disaster relief funds, animal shelters, local arts funds, national charitable foundations, and international organizations like the Red Cross. And you don't always have to make a monetary donation either. Donating your time can be just as valuable. 2020 has been difficult for everyone, so there is no better year to help out.

It is easy to get carried away by the hype of the holidays. Making thoughtful and sustainable choices when it comes to gifting giving this year isn't difficult, but it does require a little effort. Plan ahead, think outside the box, and get creative with your gifts this holiday season.

To paraphrase Dr. Seuss' Grinch "Maybe the holidays, he thought, don't come from a

store. What if the holidays, perhaps, mean a little bit more."



**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. Follow at [www.yachtkate.com](http://www.yachtkate.com) or [@sustainablesailing41](https://www.instagram.com/sustainablesailing41)**



# Facing Fear: First woman to sail solo around Antarctica releases debut book

In partnership with Australian Geographic, world record-holding sailor and climate activist Lisa Blair released her first book 'Facing Fear' on 1 November, 2020. This must-read book recounts the inspiring and gripping true story of her solo voyage around Antarctica; a tale Lisa almost didn't live to tell. A riveting read for people of all ages who are interested in the triumph of the human spirit, Lisa recounts the highlights of her extraordinary voyage. And along the way, she shows readers that positive thinking and perseverance can make a difference. Seventy-two days into her 183-day journey and 1,000 nautical miles from land, Lisa's mast came crashing down due to rigging failure. She battled in freezing conditions for four hours to save her yacht and her life. The book's title, 'Facing Fear', centres around the lasting effect of trauma from the serious accident and Lisa's brave determination to overcome this in order to complete her trip.

Sir Richard Branson describes the book as, "An incredible story of adventure and endurance that shows what the human spirit can achieve when pushed to its limits."

Lisa explores themes of loneliness, fatigue and hypothermia. She shares everything from the extreme pain endured in freezing temperatures, to the "temper tantrums" that transpired after only allowing herself to sleep for 20 minutes at a time. She emphasises the clear link between her physical experience and her mental health, highlighting the valiance and tenacity required to succeed.

According to Australian sailing icon Kay Cottee AO, "Lisa is a great example of how to achieve your dreams with planning, preparation and dedication."

Lisa recalls mulling over worst case scenarios for three-and-a-half years prior to setting sail in order to mentally prepare herself, motivated by the belief that one should never go on such a voyage expecting to be rescued. However, she admits it is impossible to ever truly prepare for a gruelling expedition like hers. "While I felt I could handle it, I couldn't predict what challenges I was going to face."

The adventurer's insights on and approach to handling isolation and loneliness, albeit under extreme conditions, will be of interest to many Australians facing these issues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reflecting on advice she received from fellow sailing legend, Jessica Watson, Lisa advises people to stop and appreciate the unique journey they are on, remember that the current situation is temporary and try to see the extra down time as an opportunity for self-development. She reminisces about the moments of contentment amidst the chaos. "It was a moment in time that I'll never forget. Amid this unforgiving and raw seascape, here I was, in a tiny yacht, surviving."

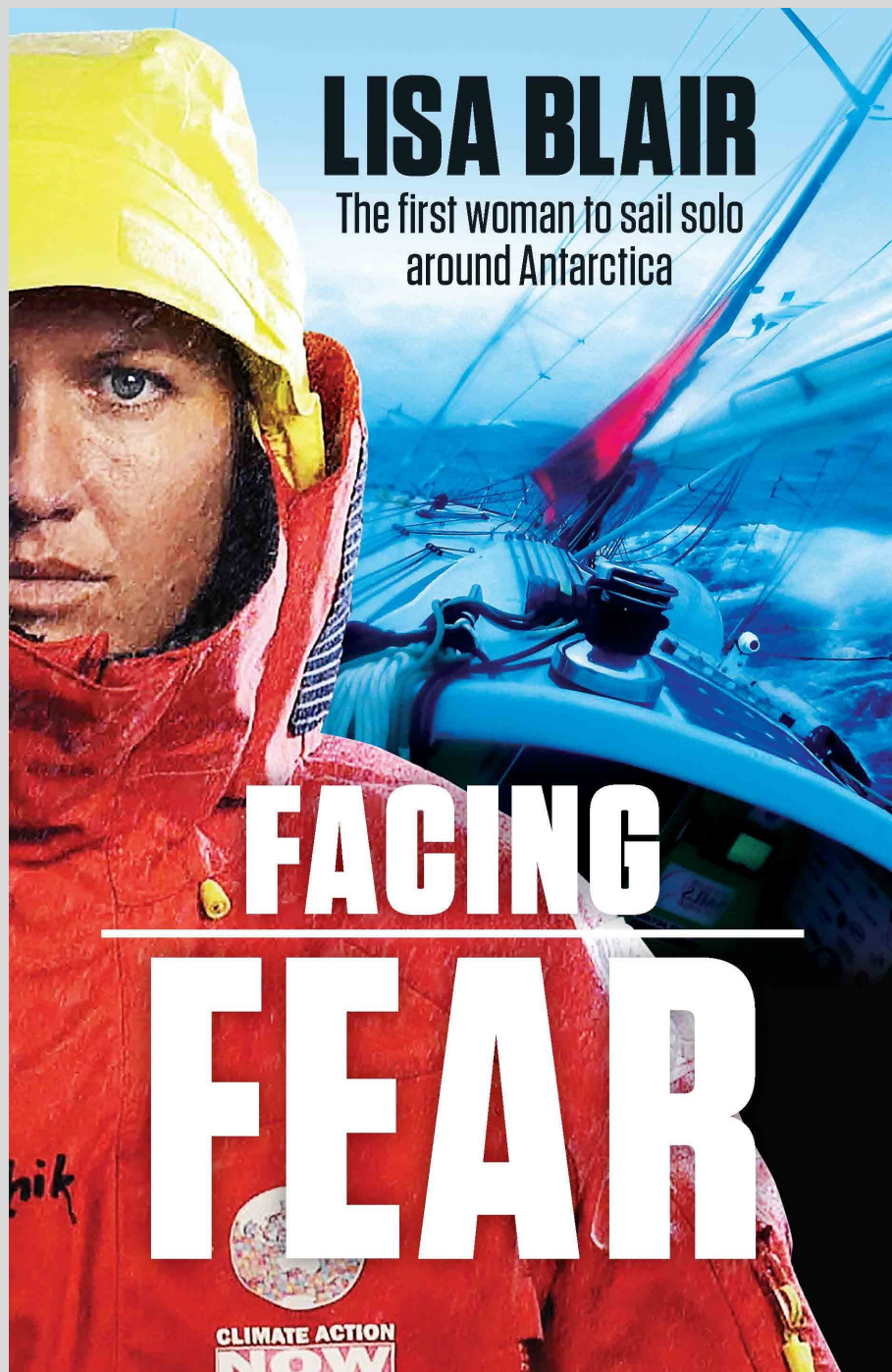
Lisa hopes her book will inspire women to follow their dreams in the way that she was inspired by great female adventurers and trailblazers who came before her. She was motivated by their success as a result of their perseverance and hopes that her commitment and determination shine through to influence others in a similar way.

As denoted by the name of her boat *Climate Action Now*, Lisa is also a passionate environmental activist and wants to educate people on the positive effects of individual action against climate change. Lisa started the Climate Action Now campaign after witnessing the devastating impact of human consumption on oceans and wildlife. She recalls sailing through "soups" of plastic, floating in stretches of ocean thousands of kilometres from land. The hull of Lisa's boat is covered in post-it notes received from members of the public that detail positive actions individuals are taking towards a sustainable future as a result of her campaign. The same post-it note print can be found inside the cover of 'Facing Fear'.

An ideal Christmas gift, 'Facing Fear' is available online at [australiangeographic.com.au](https://australiangeographic.com.au) and in QBD book stores and all good book stores nationally.



Facing Fear is the inspiring true story of Lisa Blair, who on 25 July 2017 became the first woman to sail solo around Antarctica. She very nearly didn't live to tell the tale. Seventy-two days into her circumnavigation, when Lisa was more than 1000 nautical miles from land, the mast of Climate Action Now came crashing down in a ferocious storm. In freezing conditions, Lisa battled massive waves and gale-force winds, fighting through the night to save her life and her boat. Following her ordeal, Lisa relied on her unbreakable spirit to beat the odds and complete her world record. With unwavering focus and determination, she sailed home, completing her journey after 183 days. This is the story of her remarkable voyage.



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





Dr Shelley Wright

## Eastern Osprey (*Pandion cristatus*)

The Eastern Osprey is one of my favourite birds. Found in coastal and wetland areas on every continent except Antarctica, here in Australia they can be seen in tropical and temperate locations along the coast and adjacent waterways.

Also known as a fish hawk, unsurprisingly, they feed on fish, swooping low over the water to snatch them in their strong talons. Ospreys don't swallow their prey whole but fly to a nearby perch to tear it apart. This behaviour doesn't endear them to yacht owners, as sometimes a suitable perch is the top of a mast – resulting in fish bits adorning the deck below!

Ospreys construct nests from sticks, driftwood, seaweed, and even discarded rope, adding to it each year. Nests can be up to two metres across and two metres high. The same pair will reuse the same nest each year,

normally raising two or three chicks which the female incubates while the male hunts and brings food.

The osprey features in the ancestral stories of many first nation people, including Native Americans and Australian Aboriginals. Its scientific name, *Pandion* is derived from Greek mythology.



Juvenile Ospreys.





**ABOVE: Ospreys, Great Keppel Island, southern Great Barrier Reef, Australia.**

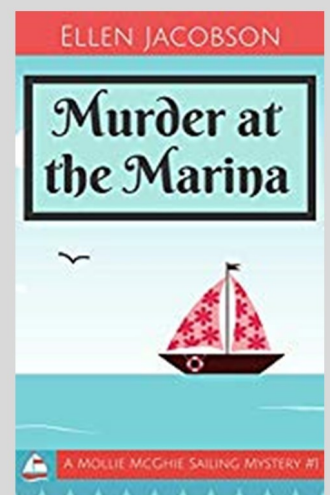
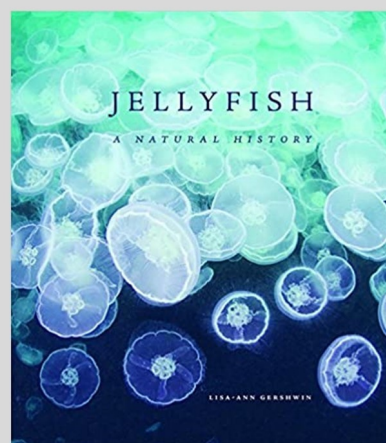
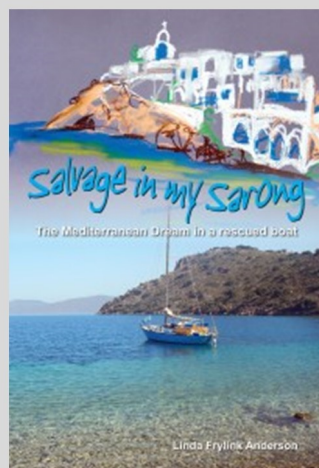
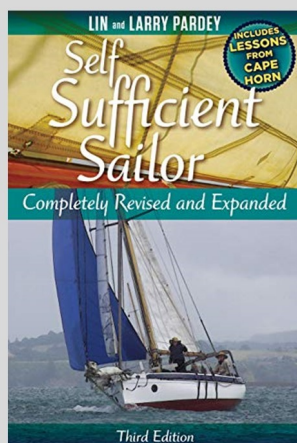
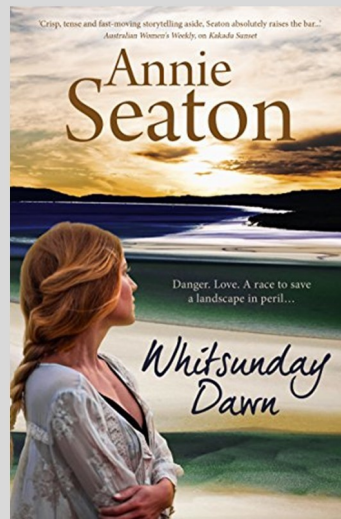
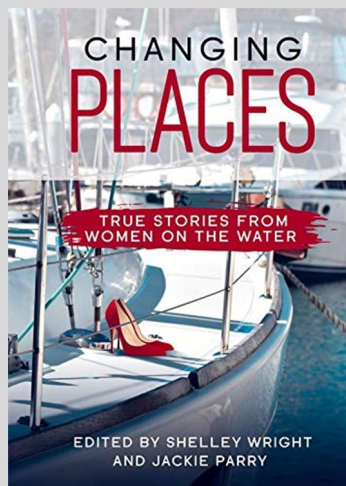
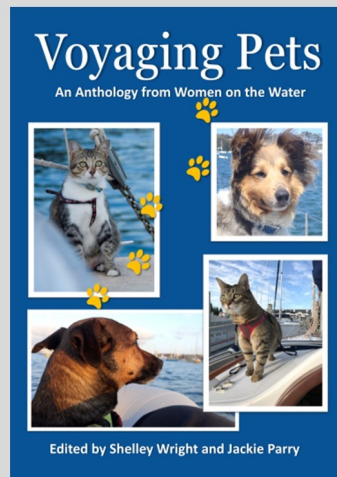
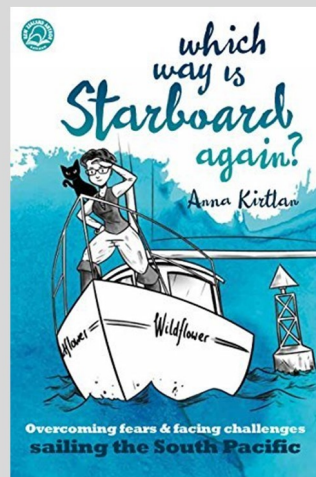
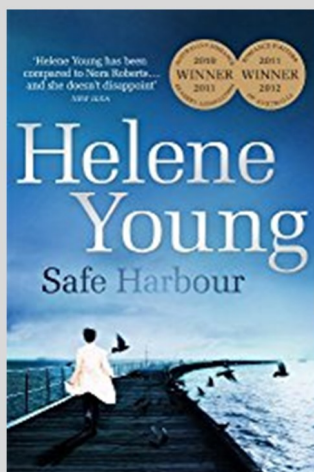


**RIGHT and ABOVE: Osprey nest with juvenile ospreys, Rosslyn Bay Marina, Keppel Bay, Australia.**



# Book club

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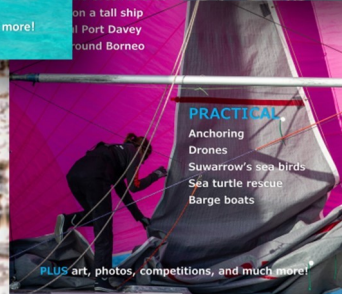
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