

October 2018

# SisterShip

women on the water

## Women's Laser Regatta

### CORK RACE WEEK 2018

Email communications on board

Who knows you're out there?

Tasmania, New Caledonia

BARGEBOATS, TROPICAL FRUIT,

Kayaking Alaska

Dragons and boobies!

# FEAR!

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# Page 3 girls!

Celebrating real women on the water

Send your 'Page 3' photos to  
[editor@sistershipmagazine.com](mailto:editor@sistershipmagazine.com)



LEFT: WENDY JOHNSON,  
generator repairs. Australia.

RIGHT: RAYLENE SYMONS  
up the mast to replace the  
main halyard and  
inspect equipment. Australia.



LEFT: LAURA helming  
*SV Caber* from  
Bundaberg to the  
Whitsunday Islands.  
Australia.

# The bowsprit



In July of this year *SisterShip* announced our first short story writing competition for women on the water. The topic – fear. We were inundated with entries from around the world, stories that were heartbreaking, inspirational, gut-wrenching and soul-baring. Four independent (and anonymous) judges undertook the mammoth task of selecting 12 finalists and whittling these down to our three major prize winners (entrants were also anonymous). Your *SisterShip* editors were not part of the judging process, we did however, read each story as it came in, at times with tears streaming down our faces. The courage shown by these women in sharing their stories is enormous. We are delighted to share the winning story with you in this issue and to announce that 46 of these stories will appear in an anthology which will be available on October 31<sup>st</sup>! We congratulate our winners and finalists and thank every woman who shared her story with us, and of course our judges too. The *SisterShip* team is in awe of you all!

In keeping with the topic of fear we include a fear-related letter trail that illustrates that fear is also felt by those left on shore. We then break with tradition and include a contribution from a man. Why? In a magazine for and by women? Simply to highlight that while women might appear to dominate the fear stakes, we don't own them. John Hembrow, from *SisterShip*'s partner the *Down Under Rally*, speaks frankly about

overcoming his own fear before heading offshore for the first time, and shares advice that helped him.

What do many of us turn to after a fearful experience? Sweet food! In keeping with our 'Fear' theme, Karen Oberg has cooked up a storm of tropical fruit desserts. For one of our editors, it doesn't get much better than black sapote mousse!

Our 'Passage Adventurers', Lucy and Mathilde, have completed their Alaskan kayak expedition (see April *SisterShip*) and we include their wrap-up in this issue. We also bring you reports from the Cork Race Week and the inaugural DBSC Women's Laser Regatta.

Those following the 2018 Golden Globe Race, are no doubt aware that drama hit some of the race fleet as they crossed the Southern Ocean between South Africa and Australia last week, with two dismastings and the rescue of Indian competitor Abhilash Tomy. Susie Goodall (see June *SisterShip*) avoided the worst of the weather and is currently placed in 4<sup>th</sup> position headed towards Australia.

Clip on those safety tethers and join us aboard *SisterShip* as we toss the lines once more...

*Shelley Wright & Jackie Parry*

## Message in a bottle

Send your letters to

[editor@sistershipmagazine.com](mailto:editor@sistershipmagazine.com)

Women support women, that's evident in the success of the Women Who Sail (WWS) movement globally, a Facebook group with over 15,000 women members. There are subgroups in Australia, Asia, the Med, New Zealand, and elsewhere. You can read about the founding of Women Who Sail here:

<http://bit.ly/FoundingofWomenWhoSail>

This post below from Ava Ryerson, appeared on WWS recently. The fear contained in these words is powerful and real. Many women related to this content – initially the

fear wasn't Ava's, it was someone else's. But given a free rein, fear is contagious.

Given the relevance (and importance) of the following topic we sought permission to publish this post from the Women Who Sail FB group.

Ava's post led to over 240 responses of support from every corner of the globe. With permission from WWS, Ava (and her aunt), and Suzanne we reproduce the following..

**Anyone have experience with naysayers that you love?**

**I just received this message from one of my aunties regarding crossing the Pacific (leaving in a few days!). We are feeling ready on all fronts and have seriously and endlessly talked about weather and passage. We have a trusted friend weather routing us every day. We feel good. Then this just jarred me. I feel super guilty about stressing my family out but what can I say to them? I just think there is no way they would understand.**

**I could use some advice on the best way to respond to this message respectfully...**

***"Please, please, please decide not to go, it really is too dangerous and not worth your beautiful life. It is never too late to change your mind. Until you're in a storm which you cannot get out of. If anything happens to one of you; sick or hurt or appendicitis or toothache, seasick nausea, the other must take all responsibility. The ocean waves are tremendous. No system is perfect. Your mother was in true shambles with that storm you were in, she was literally desperately falling apart. Please don't do this to her. Is it really worth it? Is anything or anyone else's dreams worth your own life? Please consider, consider, consider extremely carefully. Grandpa is completely convinced you should not go. He has experienced the terrors of the violent ocean waves, in a large boat, and felt you are woefully underestimating your undertaking. I know your mother will be shaking in total fear every minute, I have heard her fear first hand. And her tears. Please Ava reconsider. We love you and are so supportive of all on your undertakings, until this one that we must tell you as those who care about you it is unwise..."***

## **This is just one of the responses (reprinted with permission)...**

There are two types of people in this world. There are ones who are controlled by their fears and there are others who face fears and die without regret.

We tried to puddle jump this year from La Cruz. We got 800 miles out and had to turn around because our batteries failed, and we didn't have enough fuel to motor the entire way. It was a rougher trip than I had expected, and we learned a ton about what we will do next time.

We were sick the first three days, reefed down but still heeled over a lot of the time and the seas we're very confused. Can you say uncomfortable? Cooking was much more difficult than I expected, certain foods didn't last well, But never did we feel scared for our lives.

We have a pactor modem and downloaded grib files at least twice a day. We also have an Iridium GO!™ that sends automatic location updates and allows texting to a land based emergency contact. We even were able to imbed this location beacon into the boats website. (More people "followed" our journey than expected.)

Anyway, people were scared for us too. Once they understood that we were prepared and confident, their fear turned into excitement for us. (By the way, we have a kick-ass ditch bag too, just in case).

*Suzanne Mathieu*

Website: [Seagypsyz.com](http://Seagypsyz.com)

Instagram: [@Seagypsyz](https://www.instagram.com/Seagypsyz)

Suzanne currently lives on a sailboat in Mexico, *SV Epiphany*, a 46 ft Jeanneau, which will be headed to Panama in the Fall. She calls Melbourne, Florida home when she is not on the boat. She and her boyfriend enjoy traveling to remote locations via sailboat and intermingling with other cultures. She especially enjoys helping people by sharing her photos and blogging about their adventures.

## **Ava's response to her Aunt...**

Aunt Teresa!

I can understand why you and grandpa are afraid for me and this trip. But it is something that I have worked very hard to accomplish and Pajo and I have done every possible thing to make sure we are prepared to be safe on this journey. We have spent money to get the necessary things we and the boat need even though we don't have much.

We have consulted and reached out to all the pros and people who have done ocean voyages, attended seminars at boat shows and read hundreds of books. We have sailed over 6,000 miles so far and endured some tough stuff off the coast of Nicaragua that left me questioning a lot of things. But in the end, I still want to continue the journey because it is my dream too.

I know it is scary for everyone around me because it is an unknown, but in our large network of sailors there are many who take this path and it is not unknown to us. I am part of a FB group of 15,000 women sailors around the world and many have done this same trip this same time of year. It is the safest time to cross the Pacific. We have a weather pro sailor friend on land who is checking on us every day and sending us weather info daily via the device. We have everything on the boat we need to fix anything...

It will be challenging and scary but rewarding and fulfilling all at once. We are not naive to the mighty power of the ocean, we have been humbled by it before. We have a satellite device that we can use to communicate to other boaters, family and to coast guard if necessary. We also have personal emergency beacons on our life jackets that with one button sends out a distress signal to USCG. We have the essential antibiotics, medical kit and seasick patches that a travel doctor prescribed to us...

## Continued...

I could go on! I feel like we are more prepared than most people doing everyday normal things on land! Driving 70mph with a thousand other cars sounds a lot more dangerous to me!!! So you see we are not taking anything lightly. I hope this eases some of your stress. I have a lot of emotions and stress I'm dealing with getting ready to leave and I could use some support and a little faith from my family! I know my dad and grandma are watching over us and I will pray to them too. I love you guys very much and I hope Grandpa realizes that sometimes you just gotta trust that everything is going to work out, like grandma said to him after kid #6...

I hope you understand. I talked to my mom today and she is worried but what mother wouldn't be. I am feeling the pressure of this but I have to live my own life. I can only hope that my family can send me positive energy right now because it is only going to help me be strong for this trip. I love you Auntie, and please read this to Grandpa!

*xxoo Ava Rye*

## From Aunt Theresa:

Ok ok ok!!! That all helps SO MUCH!! I'm glad it's your dream too and wow you did your research!! Then...wish I could go too! Send my water spirit ocean vibes to the big blue sea, across the world and back! We'll be cheering you on!!!

You are living a true dream, when I read your posts I imagine myself being right there, on the beaches and feeling and hearing the wind through those trees: I replayed that one a couple times really soaking it in. Your sharing is a wonderful gift maybe especially to me. I love to imagine how it feels to be sailing, and traveling!

I have also thought to visit you at one of your ports! So keep sharing and know that I love and relish every drop off what you share: I feel the sand in my feet and smell the salt and feel the wind in my hair, hear the water lapping and the sails flapping (do you hear sails flapping??? I like to imagine it anyway). From one romantic to another: Sail on girl!!! Experience, thrill, relish, feel, smell, listen, see everything you possibly can, you are only young once! Love you to Tahiti and back!!!!

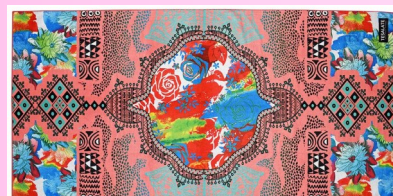
One of our lucky *SisterShip* subscribers will win an AbsorbLite™ microfibre beach towel thanks to Tesalate!

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WIN!



## More about Ava Ryerson...

I am a 33-year old sailor who hails from Seattle, Washington. I grew up on the eastern US in the lovely state of New Jersey, and have never sailed until about three years ago. I spent my twenties in the hustle and melting pot of lights and culture in New York City. There I built a career in the music business, burning the candle at both ends, as one does in NYC. At some point, I had enough of the grind and took a job that moved me and my cat across the country to Seattle. The mountains and lush green Puget Sound called to me.

After a year of settling into the gig and establishing a community, I got laid off from the music job, then another one. It was time for a career change and to explore life in the Pacific Northwest. In search of an equally fulfilling role and something new, I taught myself some web design and worked for a wedding planning and event designer. Then I took a job as a barista and manager of coffee shop in the salty part of town called Ballard. There I met all kinds of characters and an amazing community of people. I thrived so much more in these roles than in a cubicle setting.

In the midst of career changes and a little life chaos, I met a liveaboard sailor named Pajo with a dream to sail around the world. After sailing with him up through the waterways of Seattle, Puget Sound and Canada, I fell in love with sailing, from the thrills of riding on the wind to the access to wild, remote spots. I also really liked cooking on the boat, so challenging and rewarding.

And in the blink of a year, I had found a new home for my cat and was selling my vinyl records, a scooter, a car, all my vintage clothing and the rest of my earthly possessions to join this redheaded guy on his 35-foot Ericson sailboat named *Cinderella*.

Over two years, we worked like mad to

convert the bare fiberglass race boat into a cosy budget cruising boat, complete with a conversion from diesel to electric. We are committed to a petroleum free life aboard and are never looking back, the custom electric drive is completely powered by renewable energy, right down to the sailing/rowing dinghy. Having enough boat projects completed to feel 'ready' to untie the lines and head offshore, we left in September 2017 taking two burly crew members who stayed on until San Francisco.

Many adventures, projects and learning experiences have been had since then, having sailed 10,000 miles from Seattle, through Mexico and Central America and jumping the Pacific from Costa Rica to French Polynesia.

*Cinderella* and crew are in Tahiti currently making plans for re-rigging after a broken shroud halted our plans to make it to New Zealand this year. They will be navigating a long stay visa, finding marina space and are researching a conversion from rod rigging to Dyneema.

<http://www.sailingcinderella.com/>

Credit for 'whale pose shot' Katherine Fleming.



# Some days are diamond



SOME DAYS ARE DIAMOND

## Denise Lowden

I woke up this morning to a sea of blue, cliché I know, but the sky and sea blended into a beautiful blue. It seems especially nice today as the first two weeks we have been here in New Caledonia, have been spent in the marina in a haze of drizzle. Not that it's stopped us exploring the culinary and cultural delights, but we have been a little damp doing so. Today however, I wake up at Ile Mato (Mato Islet for you non-French speakers). Ile Mato is below the southernmost tip of Grand Terre (the big island) and 26 nautical miles south from Noumea, the capital. Having finally escaped the marina we were keen to explore some of the islands. Being enthusiastic divers, we wanted clear water with the promise of either snorkelling or diving. According to the local digital guide we had purchased, Mato offered both.

Ile Mato is a small island with a peak of about 45 metres which we climbed yesterday. Heavily overgrown, with vines clinging to our feet, it was not the most obvious of tracks, but the view was spectacular. There is something special about the way water changes colour over reef, coral, and sand. The camera struggles to capture all the tinted transitions, it's so pretty. 'Wow,' is whispered more than once.

The island is mostly surrounded by reefs and coral heads, providing excellent protection from, at present non-existent, winds. We are

still within the enormous lagoon that stretches the length of Grand Terre so the sea state is extraordinarily calm, and made for a great night's sleep. Having spent two nights here we are keen to keep exploring, and having looked at the predicted weather, we decided to head to Baie de Prony (Prony Bay) the very southernmost tip of the mainland and into its deep protective bay.

The wind looks like it's going to pick up to 25 knots and out here in the low-lying islands it would make for a less comfortable stay on the boat. Jamie is reluctant to head in to the mainland. The bay I have selected for its protection is also the site of a large nickel mine (green-gold as the locals call it), and he has visions of us anchored outside of Port Pirie (a mining town in South Australia) – not a pretty picture. But, he is pragmatic about the decision, it is the best place to go given our current location. So, after a lazy morning we head off. The low winds belie the incoming rain and winds and we need to run an engine to keep us going. As we near Baie de Prony Jamie's mental image takes place; it does indeed look like a mining bay with three large ships taking up much of the space near the entrance, in a queue of sorts to be filled. We push on, sails are lowered as we enter the bay and become completely becalmed, as owners of a sailing boat we always prefer to sail if we can, there is something magical about gliding through glassy waters though.



**Ile Mato and Baie de Prony.**

I sit at the helm staring at the passing scenery, a blend of fertile-green lush jungle slashed in places with rust-red dirt, is reminiscent of the outback. Jamie is inside pouring over the digital New Caledonia cruising guide, our reference. He is intrigued about an islet we are approaching in the bay (Ile Casy). Further investigations show it has a wharf, mooring buoys, and an abandoned hotel. 'Shall we stop here for lunch?' I hear, 'Why not,' I reply we only have 6nm to go to our proposed anchorage and it's 12 noon. We pick up a mooring buoy.

Lunch is Wahoo (from Lord Howe Island) and a fresh tabouleh salad. We launch the tender, hop on board, and very soon we pull into the beach. What a beautiful island, as we explore we find only foundation-like remnants of a hotel, but a picture-perfect deserted island, and the remnants of a penal colony (a well) and the burial site of the last remaining family, the Arics, who lived here after the convicts moved away. A different path to the north takes us up a clay incline to a gorgeous lookout, yes you can see the nickel mine, but the enormous bay stretches out in front of us as well, full of inlets, islands, and deep jungle.

We drop the mooring buoy and motor further up one of the fingers of the bay. It feels like we are on a houseboat puttering along the Murray River, completely silent

except for our engine, not a soul to be seen and the glassiest of water.

As we round the final bend the water shallows, and we eventually drop anchor in two-to-six metres. The bay's depth ranges wildly and although we drop the anchor in six metres the boat swings back over two metres. Neither is an issue and the anchor holds well in muddy rubble. The anchor alarm is on – it's a function of the chart plotter, once set it warns you if the boat drifts beyond a certain distance (set by you) - we generally set it to 25 metres.

Looking around, Jamie is impressed. Having expected very (very) little we are both speechless, it is beautiful. Although late, we are aware that tomorrow will probably be raining and provide us limited opportunity to explore, so we head off upstream. Our guide tells us that it is shallow up here and even at high tide (which it is as we set off) we might need to row. We putter along at low speed with the outboard motor lifted to its highest setting. The water is so still that the sky and clouds reflect in the water, it's mesmerising. I shoot a lot of footage. Eventually we come across a small, low jetty, we tie up and make our way up the path to a naturally occurring hot-water spring which bubbles its way out of the ground.



**Baie de Prony reflections.**

Major work has occurred around this natural phenomenon, although it has fallen into disrepair. There is still a hut and wooden benches in the pool, and the surrounds of the pool have been built up so it's reminiscent of a stone spa (minus the jets), we dip our legs in and the warm fresh water feels wonderful. We vow to come back tomorrow as it's getting late and light is fading (and depth probably). As we putter

our way back the still water reflects even



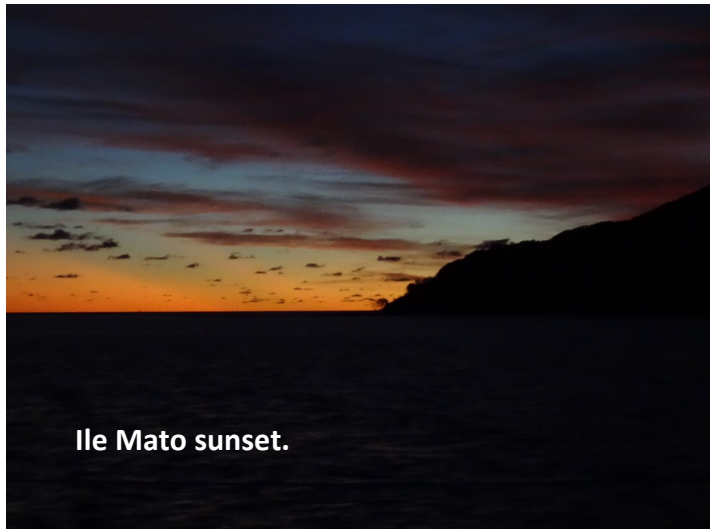
**Baie de Prony hot spring.**



**Ile Casy.**

more beautifully, and we are both silent the whole journey back.

We clamber on board and look back at the mountains that reach into the sky, they surround the still waters of the bay and I think to myself, *some days are diamonds*.



Ile Mato sunset.



**DENISE LOWDEN** is a registered nurse who has spent the last 12 years as a plastic surgery practice manager and CEO. A PADI Staff Instructor (lapsed) and wanna-be-chef, Denise (and husband Jamie) cast off in January set to explore the world both above and below the water.

<https://www.lukimyu.com.au/>

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# Double Bay Sailing Club Women's Laser Regatta



Sydney Harbour tuned into a sea of pink on Sunday, as 50 women donned life jackets covered with fuchsia bibs, emblazoned with the Women's Regatta logo, to take part in the inaugural Women's Laser Regatta hosted by Double Bay Sailing Club (DBSC). The Regatta was one of the first of its kind to promote women's Laser sailing.

Women sailors from all over Sydney and beyond attended the weekend-long event, with yoga on the deck, breakfast eggs benedict, organic juices, expert coaching, inspirational dinner with spectacular guest speakers, and competitive racing.

The event was the brainchild of club secretary, Clare Alexander, who said, 'This is so important. We women are so busy being mothers and wives, girlfriends, and independent women in between the demands of our work, that we forget what it means to have fun.'

Participants included women who had not sailed for 20 years, women who had sailed other classes but never a Laser, women whose children are rising sailing stars, and a strong contingent of those young stars themselves, along with DBSC's regular women sailors.

The weekend started early on Saturday morning, with yoga on the clubhouse deck. Overlooking the gorgeous waters of Double Bay, with the gas heaters blazing and the yoga mats rolled out, there was a sense of calm all around.

The focus then turned to sailing technique and tactics with five of Australia's best sailors providing coaching — Olympians Krystal Weir, Ashley Stoddart, Jaime Ryan and Karyn Gojnick, and twice Australian National Youth Champion, Marlena Berzins, a DBSC member. The coaches made sure that even the most inexperienced sailors got out on the water. Krystal even jumped into a Laser alongside one sailor, who later explained, 'Krystal made me feel comfortable about trying, even though I was so *so* fearful!'



On Saturday night, an elegant dinner, catered by the amazing Bernadette, was held in the modest but magical clubhouse with bubbles, canapes, and lots of friendly chat and banter of the day to help segue into the evening.

A keynote address by Olympic head coach, Krystal Weir, and Olympic sailor, Lucinda Whitty, inspired the crowd alongside Kim Bangel, who shared her amazing sailing journey of learning to sail five years ago. Having never sailed in her life, her first foray into sailing was to fly to the UK and do a training camp for the Clipper Around the World Tour that she was accepted into. Being a complete novice, it was a huge learning curve for her and she shared some of the funny and challenging moments of this adventure and where it has taken her now.

The following morning, The Hon. Gabrielle Upton, Member for Vacluse, opened the official racing portion of the event. She presented \$17,000 of NSW Government funding for repairs to the National Trust Listed clubhouse, saying, 'I'm proud to support DBSC and this event, which celebrates women. It's wonderful to see you all here with these inspirational coaches, learning and having fun.'

The racing at the regatta was intense, with

gusts up to 20-knots. While some revelled in the puffy conditions, lots of boats capsized, but the ladies righted them quickly and managed to carry on bravely. It was an incredible image to see 50 boats bunched together racing against the iconic backdrop of the Harbour Bridge, their sailors popping colour in their bright pink race vests.

Clare Alexander said, 'The generosity of our numerous sponsors has been incredible. It shows people know there's a big need. I'm so excited we're doing something about it and making a difference for women in sailing.'

DBSC is a volunteer-run club open to all members of the community. Its regular Saturday afternoon races host the largest fleet of Lasers in Australia.

Woollahra Municipal Council Mayor, Peter Cavanagh, who presented the prizes, said 'It's wonderful to see the sense of community this has created. Volunteering is such a rewarding



thing and Council is proud to have provided a grant for this event.'

Everyone agreed the inaugural Women's Laser Regatta was a huge success, with many sailors already asking about next year's event. Michelle Costandi exclaimed, 'I haven't been in a boat for 23 years because of children and 'life' and you made thinking about sailing again possible for me!'

**CLARE ALEXANDER** is the secretary of Double Bay Sailing Club. Email: [secretary@dbsc.com.au](mailto:secretary@dbsc.com.au)  
[www.dbsc.com.au](http://www.dbsc.com.au)

**PHOTOS:** *Adventures of a Sailor Girl*, Nic Douglas. <http://www.facebook.com/sailorgirlHQ/>

**COVER PHOTO:** Lucky Lion Photography. <http://www.facebook.com/luckylionphotography/>



**ABOVE:** 'Team awesome'. From left to right: Christine Patton, Clare Alexander, Christine Linhart.



# Winlink global radio email service



**Author and ‘very anxious’ sailor ANNA KIRTLAN investigates the Winlink global radio email service.**

## **Witchcraft and earthquakes**

When I was jostled about by the Big Blue during my first offshore sailing trip, one of the most comforting things was to know I was connected to the outside world through the radio and – a revelation to me – by email.

At the time, receiving email in the middle of the ocean was like a strange kind of witchcraft. I moved in the sort of circles where people asked if we were going to anchor up at night on our way from New Zealand to Tonga. (Our yacht *Wildflower* carries an enormous amount of anchor chain, but I think it’s a stretch for it to reach the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.) So, I wasn’t exactly an expert in these things.

Witchcraft or not, it was extremely reassuring; a little bit of day-to-day reality that kept me sane. It was comforting for the people left behind to keep in touch with us but, as much as they (and by ‘they’ I mean Mum) were concerned about me, I was equally worried about them.

In 2011, my partner (now fiancé – *spoiler*, we didn’t murder each other during the trip) Paddy and I sailed our 44-foot steel yacht from New Zealand around the South Pacific, travelling to Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and back home again. I had never sailed offshore, or much in general really, so I was already nervous in the lead up to leaving.

Two-thousand and eleven was also the year a major earthquake struck my hometown of Christchurch, killing 182 people and injuring many more. My parents and many of my friends lived in Christchurch, while I myself was based in our country’s capital Wellington,

watching helplessly from the side lines. This happened while we were getting the boat ready to go offshore. My friends and family were mercifully fine but there were still aftershocks hitting the city and I was in crisis wondering how I could possibly live with myself if I left.

When my mum, who I knew was as terrified about letting me go as I was about going, said I couldn't give up the opportunity of a lifetime just because the earth had a case of the 'wobblies', I knew leaving was the right decision.

The Winlink radio email system made that decision easier and helped a lot while we were on the longer passages. Just a couple of lines each day let each of us know the other was alright and kept those fears at bay.

On the way home, we heard rumours of a big aftershock in Christchurch on Boxing Day but a few lines from each family member (including my poor little sister who got stuck at the airport) stopped me jumping off the boat and trying to swim home.

### **Captain radio boffin—and why we chose Winlink**

Before email, instant messaging, or texting, I

was writing letters to pen pals and Paddy was building crystal radio sets. I guess neither of us grew out of it because I'm still a writer and Paddy is still a radio geek.

From the age of 14 he became interested in CB (citizen band) radio. It was a way of talking to other people in exotic locations like the other end of the country or, when he started to experiment with extra powerful gear, in Australia. You need an amateur radio licence to talk to other amateur radio operators and this created a tight, supportive community that sparked, and continued, his interest in amateur (or ham) radio.

*Fun Fact: the term 'ham' originated as a 19th century insult by commercial radio operators when*



*amateur operators began using the airwaves. The term 'ham fisted' was often applied to poorly skilled telegraph operators and, since many of these same people became amateur radio enthusiasts, the professionals transferred the term to suggest they were unskilled. Later, the amateur radio community reclaimed the word as their own. Shaking a ham fist at their detractors.*

When Paddy began tinkering, radio was all about voice, but in the 80s and 90s it became all about data. Sending data over the airwaves was the new challenge and soon amateur radio allowed people to send email without plugging into the internet – basically and simplistically, this is the concept of Winlink.

Paddy's exposure to the amateur radio community and the fact that we already had an amateur radio set up led to the decision to run our communications through the radio. There were other communication options such as SailMail (a subscription service for people who aren't amateur radio operators) or satellite phones (which were quite costly at the time). If it was just me, I probably would have gone the sat phone route just because of the plug in, turn-on-and-go simplicity. But

Winlink is fairly easy to use, and installation and troubleshooting kept the captain's inner radio boffin happy.

Having installed the radio himself meant that Paddy was able to diagnose and fix things when they went wrong, which proved an invaluable skill when it came to helping out fellow cruisers while we were travelling.

To use Winlink you need an amateur radio licence, but that's not hard to get. The amateur radio community make it easier for people to become good radio operators because they think it's great to have new members.

### **Invaluable volunteers**

Winlink wouldn't be what it is if it wasn't for people all over the world volunteering their time and expertise. The entire Winlink system is kept afloat (s'cuse terrible pun) by volunteer Gateway Station Sysops (systems operators) who support and run more than 1,000 shore stations around the world.

Volunteers run the Winlink website, email groups, tutorial groups, and user registrations and provide technical support to the user



community. The Winlink website states 'Through Winlink the cooperative efforts among people from many different cultures and countries, Winlink 2000 has made the world a little smaller and a little friendlier.'

When Paddy struggled to find professional support to set up a high frequency (HF) radio email system on our boat before we left, he realised he had to do it himself. After some research into the local amateur radio community he discovered Graham Ridding who ran the NZ2ABN Winlink ground station and provided invaluable help and support with installing the system and getting it to work properly.

The New Zealand-based volunteers were fabulous, supporting us straight away when we were having issues and throwing us an extra bit of time on the line when we needed it. We really appreciated the Winlink volunteers who put in the hours to make communication so much easier for us and others like us.

### **Winlink's origins**

My search to find out more about Winlink has put me in touch with some fascinating people, including Steve Waterman, co-founder and past president of the charitable organisation that owns Winlink.

At 75 years old, Steve has been an amateur radio operator since 1955. He co-founded Winlink in the early 1980s with Victor Poor, a semi-retired engineering executive who was one of the major forces behind the development of the single chip microprocessor. After Victor passed away in 2012, a group of intelligent and experienced people, many with technology backgrounds, came together to form 501C3, a charitable organisation. Its seven-person board continues to put its resources into providing enhancements for Winlink and its users.

'We are always looking at growing and improving Winlink, that's what our resources go into. Our object is not to make money. People give us money and we have to work



out ways of spending it. 'There is no profit motivation in anything we do,' Steve says.

### **What exactly is Winlink?**

Winlink is a worldwide global radio email system that is capable of operating without the internet. A volunteer-run, non-profit project, it provides services to emergency communicators and licensed radio operators. All you need to take advantage of it is an amateur radio license, a modem and, of course, a ham radio. Usage and software is free for all who qualify.

It provides the marine community email with attachments, position reporting, weather and information bulletins and often plays a major role in emergency and disaster relief communications. The system is built, operated and administered entirely by licensed volunteers and support for the system is provided by the Amateur Radio Safety Foundation Inc.

'Over time Winlink's use in the marine community has dropped off with wifi hotspots in marinas becoming more

common and a reduction in the cost of satellite phones,' Steve says.

Despite this, they still get around 5,000-6,000 contacts (messages) a day. Winlink will often work in areas where other options won't, which makes it a perfect back up for the maritime community to use for emergency communication.

Winlink has moved with the times, adapting to the technology that people are using. With the growth in popularity of the Iridium Go! satellite hotspot, Winlink has developed the Winlink Express programme which works with Iridium Go! and a Pactor 3 or 4 modem.

### **A tunnel through the internet**

'If there were some kind of cyberattack and the internet dropped off the face of the earth, Winlink will still be able to run through the radio,' Steve says.

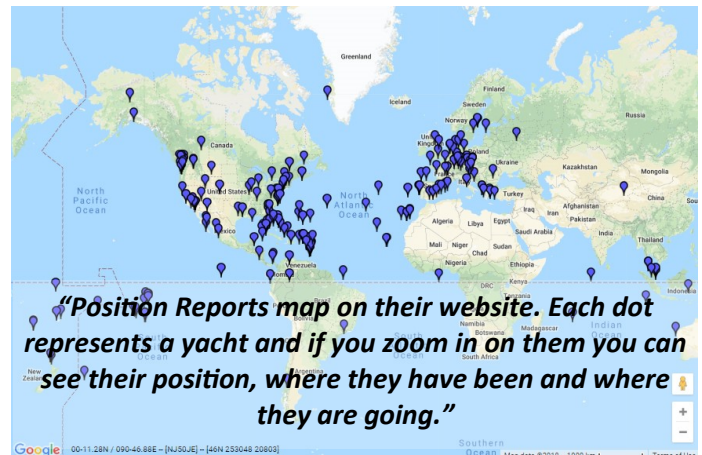
Winlink uses radio pathways where the internet is not present and is capable of operating without the internet – automatically – using smart-network radio relays. This essentially provides what he calls 'a tunnel through the internet' to Winlink's message servers which store messages virtually using Amazon's AWS cloud service.

Coastguards around the globe, cyber security organisations, the US Department of Homeland Security and various military and disaster relief organisations all use the Winlink network as their HF fall-back if traditional comms are not available.

'You can contact people anywhere through HF radio. We have been able to contact boats out at sea during tsunamis and cyclones,' Steve said.

Some people ask why bother going to all the trouble of Winlink when they have hotspots like Iridium Go!

Steve explains, 'The drawback with systems like that is that they are based on satellites that aren't stationary and often aren't being monitored. Sometimes in less populated sea areas they are switched off or run at reduced



power to save batteries.

'If you are using a ham email system like Winlink, however, your message will be picked up straight away. There's always somebody on the ham boards. I don't think there is a place on earth where you can't make contact through Winlink.'

### **Winlink saving lives**

As well as providing services for the amateur radio community and support for yachts offshore, Winlink provides support during emergencies and natural disasters. Its services are used by hospitals, Red Cross, governments, and search and rescue organisations.

Steve says, 'Four hurricanes hit the US coastline in the last year and Winlink was there for all of them. More and more governments are looking to Winlink as a failsafe when traditional comms infrastructure is compromised.'

'We get calls from the Coastguard asking when a vessel's last message was sent so they can work out where they were when the EPIRB went off. Medical problems, people being injured, strange illnesses – we have saved a lot of lives over the years.'

Winlink is very discreet when it comes to the help they provide, as people can get embarrassed, especially when it's an incident like someone accidentally dropping the EPIRB into the head (which has actually happened). They adhere to the yachting code of helping someone out then leaving the people they assist to lick their wounds in the

knowledge that next time it could be them.

‘We give a lot of assistance to the maritime community,’ Steve says.

Winlink is justifiably proud of the work its volunteers have done in major events and you can read about these on their website. During hurricanes, earthquakes and floods, in war zones and major search and rescue operations, Winlink has been there.

### For the stalkers and the helpers

Another service Winlink provides is position reporting. If you open the Position Reports map on their website you can see dots peppered all over the globe. Each dot represents a yacht and if you zoom in on them you can see their position, where they have been and where they are going.

This was great for the stalkers back home, who could keep an eye on our location and see we were heading in the right direction. It was reassuring to know they (and the people who could give us assistance should we need it) knew where we were.

As well as allowing our loved ones to stalk us, having access to email in the middle of nowhere allowed us to contact people at home who had offered us help. This applied particularly to my dad who set up a bank account for us. We were able to contact him via email and arrange to have all manner of spare parts sent over in the middle of the Pacific. When you are on an island the simplest things can be very difficult to get hold of – and the more complicated items, practically impossible. Even though we were pretty much sailing in a floating toolbox, there were often times we needed equipment even the captain hadn’t foreseen and knowing we had that back up was brilliant.

Another point where Winlink came to the rescue was on our way from New Zealand to Tonga. A *La Niña* weather pattern led to an utterly rubbish passage where we were either punching into the wind or there was no wind at all. It took twice as long as anticipated, this meant our crew were most definitely not



going to make it in time to catch their return flights home. Through Winlink we were able to contact people back in New Zealand who were able to change the flights.

### **What do you need to set Winlink up?**

*An amateur radio licence from your country of origin* – contact your local amateur radio community who will help you learn what you need to know to help you pass the test. The test is not a difficult one, particularly in New Zealand where they have dropped the requirement to know Morse Code. That is a relief for me, although like any sensible, anxious person, I do know Morse for SOS!

*A modem* – we have a Pactor 3 modem made by SCS (Spezielle Communications Systeme). It was not cheap but definitely a solid and dependable piece of equipment that never caused any problems. There are many modern variants you can use. A list is available on the Winlink website.

*The Winlink client software* – there are more options now than when we left in 2011, including Winlink Express which is compatible with satellite and cellular comms. It integrates with your boat's GPS which allows automated position reporting if you like. The software is free to download for all who qualify, and is well supported by the community.

### **Tips and troubleshooting**

*Be aware of sending limits* – There is a file size limit to any attachments you send, and receiving a large file over Winlink can suck up a lot of time and bandwidth. Be considerate when you are thinking of sending an attachment to a fellow Winlink user. In areas of low bandwidth, it's best not to send attachments at all. The limit is 12,000 bites (120kb). If a picture is too big Winlink Express will allow you to look at it and reduce it to a size that works. The preview function works the other way too. If someone sends you something that is too big or not important, you can read the message before you download it and decide whether

to download it later or erase it.

*Cut out the junk* – When you reply to a message, delete the message trail. Don't send words that have already been sent. Don't 'reply all'.

*Don't send when someone else is sending* – You will know this by the beeping noises you hear when you try. The Winlink etiquette is to listen before you transmit. The same as any radio transmission.

*Don't try to make money* – In nearly every country there's no business allowed over amateur radio. Moving money, buying or selling stock is not legal. Anything that can be deemed pecuniary interest should not be sent over the radio.

*Check the colour codes for open bands before sending* – Winlink and Winlink Express provide a colour coded propagation prediction that uses your location and the location of a receiving station to accurately predict whether your message will reach your chosen shore station using the frequency you have selected. This takes the guesswork out of sending. Green means very good, yellow is fair and once it hits red, according to Steve, you haven't got a prayer.

*Test your equipment before you hit the high seas* – often people will buy a ham radio, get their license and pay someone else to install the equipment but don't test everything out until they are in the middle of the ocean. Steve says ninety-nine percent of the problems he hears about stem from that. 'At that point there's not much I can do to help them because they are in the middle of the ocean and I'm not. You need to test your equipment when you are still close enough that you can call somebody and find out what the issue is,' he said.

### **Tips from Captain Boffin**

While this article is not a substitute for knowledge or for practical assistance with your own particular installation, the following tips worked for us and stood the captain in

good stead with fixing other less-than-ideal installations.

*A good aerial is important but so is a good RF (radio frequency) ground. The second part is often overlooked.*

*Too much AF (audio frequency) gain is counter-productive – clean tones are better than loud distorted ones.*

*RF leakage into other systems causes all sorts of issues. Our radio installation has multiple ferrite filters on pretty much everything.*

*Fully charged batteries and good wiring are your friends – a little loss of battery voltage has a disproportionate impact on transmit power.*

*A more powerful radio is less useful than a better antenna – you need to hear as well as transmit.*

*Understanding and using the propagation model is important (time of day, distance, and frequency are all important, but Winlink Express will recommend the best option for you).*

*If it is not working check your wiring. Anna once asked, 'Should there be sparks coming out of the*



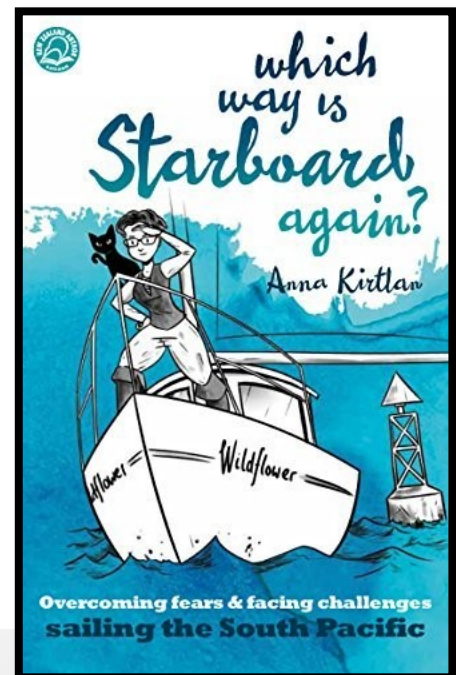
*aerial like that?' (The feed wire had a break in it, so the answer was definitely no).*

Sources:

Winlink.org

Seamunchkin.com

Captain Paddy ZL4HP



**ANNA KIRTLAN** describes herself as a short, loud, and uncoordinated cat lady who pretends to know about sailing.

Currently living in Wellington, but Cantabrian by birth, with a background in journalism, communications and magazine editing.

Anna lives with an anxiety disorder which presents its own unique challenges and she is keen to tell her story to let people know that mad and magical things really can be possible.

You can read Anna's blog at [seamunchkin.com](http://seamunchkin.com) or follow her on Twitter as @SeaMunchkin.

For Anna's book 'Which way is starboard again? Click [here](#)

**JEANNE SOCRATES, single-handed sailor and circumnavigator — twice around Cape Horn, three times around the globe — had these comments to add re Winlink...**

Winlink for me has been amazingly useful... and made it well worthwhile getting my 'ham' licence in order to use it (free of charge) on *Nereida's* SSB/HF radio.

The Airmail program in conjunction with the Pactor modem between computer and SSB radio has enabled me to keep in contact with friends and family via emails, post daily news updates to my website when on passage, download weather-faxes in real time and download a variety of weather info as grib files. The amount of weather and other information available as downloadable file attachments is vast — all listed in the Winlink 'catalog' within the Airmail program.

In among the weather-faxes are twice-daily satellite photos of different ocean areas which show IR (infrared) images of convection clouds — very useful for keeping an eye out for hurricanes and also when trying to dodge the worst of the convection when about to cross the ITCZ.

Apart from my daily news updates, I always post my position to the Winlink website at least once a day, often twice. This shows up

on a dedicated map of the world as a clear track of my voyage for up to a year, so anyone knowing my callsign can follow me and see where I am and where I've been.

The Winlink position reports are forwarded to Shiptrak (I like the Shiptrak animated position-by-position display which shows, in time order, using my callsign, how I have sailed along) and the reports are also sent to Yotreps (which uses boat names). The Shiptrak display, unlike satellite tracker displays, holds the track for many years (I'm still seeing my track from 2004 onward!)

It's important to keep the list of WL2K stations updated regularly (easily done without use of Internet) and also a good idea to do the same occasionally for the 'Catalog' (preferably when on Internet, although not essential).

Of course, when Internet is available, it's a good idea to download everything (via 'Telnet') waiting in the Inbox at the Winlink Server to avoid unnecessary use of radio and batteries when underway — again, it's very easy to do this.

I recently tried using Winlink Express but prefer Airmail — the Express software does not have all the options (e.g. no weather-faxes!) and simplicity of use of the Airmail program which, although now quite old, works very well.

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

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

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



# FEAR

Congratulations to the  
*SisterShip* short story  
competition winners!



**\*1st place: Jill Carter -**  
***'Paralysed in the Pacific'***

**\*2nd: Lanise Edwards -**  
***'Navigating Fear'***

**\*3rd: Joy Carey -**  
***'Getting Better all the Time'***

Finalists (no particular order):

Jill Budd - 'How to Sink a Narrowboat'

Elizabeth Tyler - 'What If'

Geraldine Briony Hunt - 'Touching Bottom'

Judith Maizey - 'Holding on and Untied'

Sheri Hunt - 'Bermuda to the Azores: A Whale of a Tale'

Rachel Alford-Evans - 'Wild Wind on Anchor'

Andrea Mitchell - 'Antidote to the Flood of Fear'

Anna Whitaker - '10,800 Seconds'

Renee Smith - 'Curiosity Killed the Fear'

**Special editors' prize  
awarded to our  
youngest entrant 15  
year-old Michaela-Rose  
Brumby and her story  
'Petraphobia'.**



## 'Fear' short story competition:

'It was an incredible privilege to read stories written by amazing women who've conquered or harnessed their fears. Many of the stories moved me to tears. Judging them was so very hard as each of the stories was an emotional record of the writer's sailing journey and all were very personal. I thank all the writers for sharing as their stories are inspirational and deserve to be shared.' **HELENE YOUNG.**

Judging this competition was both a privilege and a nightmare. Firstly, my immense respect to all those brave women who entered their stories; I was proud to be asked to read them. What struck me forcibly was that despite their fear, they overcame huge odds and lived to tell their tales with dignity, fulfilment and, in some cases, great humour. The nightmare part was selecting the finalists. It was incredibly difficult, because in my view, every entrant was a winner. Each of them faced their fears, endured the storm (both emotional and physical) and learned from the experience. Congratulations to the winner, but hats off to all of those who entered. You are all more courageous than I will ever be! **VALERIE POORE.**

Thanks for this opportunity! Reading the stories reminded me of my fear of the sea, not of sailing nor our well-found yacht. My crippling fear absolutely melted away as I read a quote, *'Even if I sail on the far side of the sea, there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.'* The mountainous swells, confused seas as loud as trains, and my pounding heart were not always calmed immediately but I knew I would be OK. One must never let their guard down with the sea, it is not our friend. **CAROLE GRANT.**

I was honoured to be asked to judge the *SisterShip* writing competition 'Facing your Fear'. The stories really moved me, coming from all corners of the world. Frankly I found it so difficult to judge as each one has a special message written by women who as sailors are in tune with their own emotions and competencies. I don't believe there is a 'best' and I want to thank you for the time you gave in writing such honest and emotive stories. So how did I judge? I decided to choose the ones that triggered emotions and sometimes even had me almost in tears, they were so beautifully written. So I let my heart rule my head which is probably how I make decisions normally! Thanking you all from the bottom of my heart. **LINDA FRYLINK ANDERSON.**

## LINDA FRYLINK ANDERSON:

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



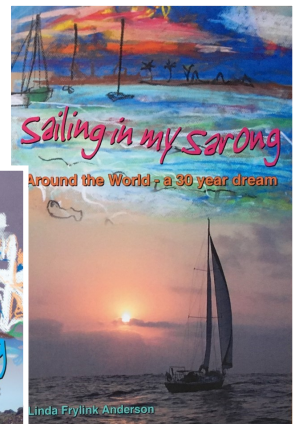
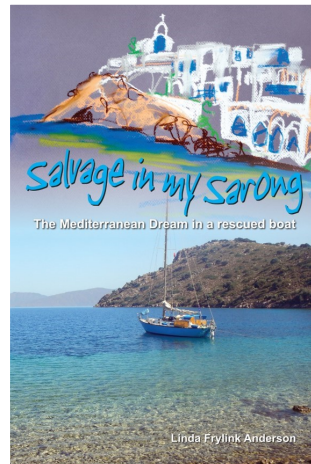
Linda's second book 'Salvage in my Sarong, The Mediterranean dream in a rescued boat,' tells the remarkable story of how Captain Underpants surprises her (and himself), by winning an online bid for a wreck of a boat in the Caribbean. *Lati* had been abandoned, ransacked and almost stolen by pirates.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

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

[www.valiam.com.au](http://www.valiam.com.au) (to order books signed by Linda)

Facebook Page: Sailing in my Sarong

Email: [valiam1@hotmail.com](mailto:valiam1@hotmail.com)



## CAROLE GRANT:

Carole has spent more than half of her life sailing, beginning with dinghy sailing on Canadian Prairie lakes to offshore Pacific sailing and yacht deliveries. Narrowboat summers in the UK were next progressing to refitting a derelict Dutch Tjalk into a comfortable moving liveaboard home in Europe. Who knows where this watery adventure will lead next... caused definitely by salt in her veins and still waters on her horizon.

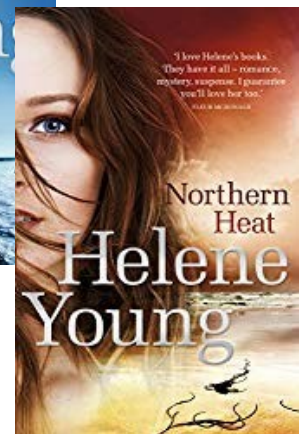
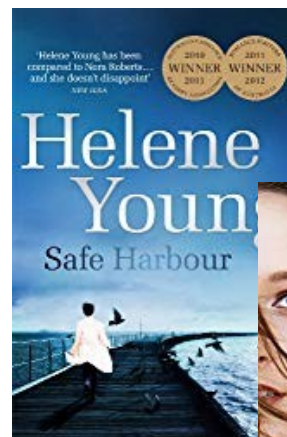
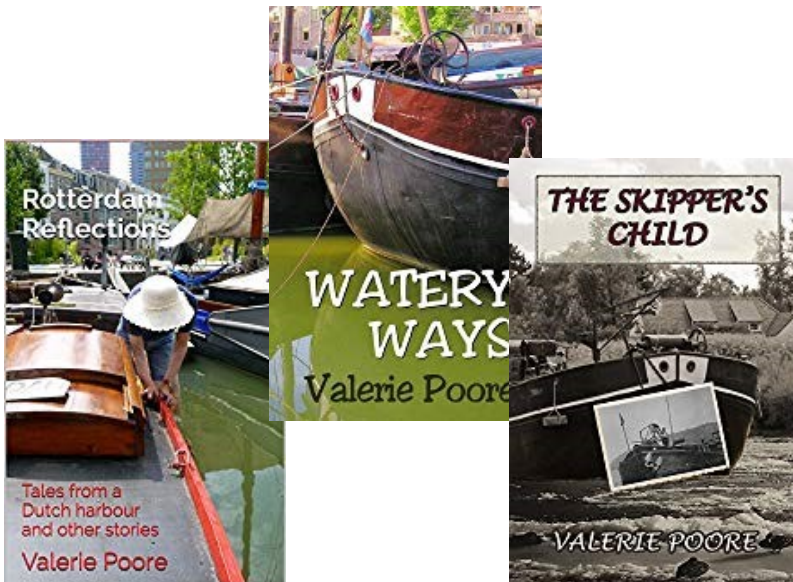
Carole (and Barrie's) beautiful Tjalk is for sale: <http://www.bowcrest.com/product/0200685-motortjalk-19-90m-x-4-20m-e158000/>



## VALERIE POORE:

Valerie 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. 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.

<https://www.amazon.com/Valerie-Poore/e/B008LSV6CE>



## HELENE YOUNG:

After 28 years as an airline captain in Australia, Helene has swapped the sky for the sea to go in search of adventure with her husband aboard a sailing catamaran. The rural and remote places she visits, along with the fascinating people she meets, provide boundless inspiration for her novels. Her strong interest in both social justice and the complexity of human nature shapes the themes she explores. Her six novels have won many awards including Romantic Book of the Year in Australia.

<https://www.heleneyoung.com/>





# Paralysed in the Pacific

Jill Carter

Arriving at Nuku Hiva.

It's dusk on Day 16 of our passage from Galapagos to the Marquesas and we're counting down the nautical miles until we spy land once again. All around us, the vast and empty Pacific Ocean glistens in the setting sun as we reef down and prepare for another night out on the big blue. We're totally in sync and pumped to have more than two thirds of this passage now under our keel; excitedly we begin to plan our first excursions as we draw closer and closer to the Land of Men. Night draws in and we settle into our evening routine. Paul, as always, takes the first watch and I head off for a few hours of contented sleep in readiness for my midnight to 0400 shift. We've learnt over the course of our world navigation which times work best with our individual body clocks and have set our routines to match.

I'm wrenched away from my dreams just after 2100 local time as Paul calls out for me to come to his assistance. The sea state has become much more boisterous and he's reefed in further to smooth out the violent jerking motion as we sail downwind. By the time I've jumped out of my bunk and scrambled out into the cockpit, we've slowed from the 5-6 knots speed we were achieving to almost a dead stop – it's as if we've been

captured by the long tentacles of a mythical kraken – we later surmise we'd been caught in a discarded purse-seine net. There's a thunderous 'BANG', we lose all steerage and immediately round up – it's got to be our rudder. There are a few shared moments of disbelief before we switch to automatic mode and deal with getting our sails down as quickly as possible. We pull in the headsail hastily, accompanied by the harsh beat of flailing canvas. We fight to furl our main, working hard to roll it down and into the boom. Once done, we sit... and the fear hits me with the power of an avalanche. We're out in the midst of the most isolated piece of water on the planet, we have no rudder, we cannot steer. A thousand doubts and worries are buzzing in my brain and I begin to shake. I look at Paul; he's shell-shocked too. We sit awhile in scared, shared silence and try to pull ourselves together. We reach out for one another and sit, hugging tightly, as we process the enormity of the situation and to somehow form coherent thoughts. Comforted by one another, the words start tumbling out as we voice our concerns and



Rudder remnants.

put together a disaster management plan. We're unhurt, we're floating, we're rudderless but we're safe. I grab the Sat phone and call our family at home in Western Australia, arranging for them to touch base with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA); I get onto SailMail and log a position report. I even have the presence of mind to inform our insurers. Paul starts thinking steerage solutions and we determine that we'll try out an emergency tiller that we have onboard. We spend the remainder of the night wrapped in each other's arms, drawing comfort and strength in this intimate, yet horrifying moment of our lives.

We sleep fitfully. As dawn breaks, although we're tired from the lack of proper rest, we're fuelled by adrenalin and coffee as we pull apart our spare bunk and drag out all the components of the emergency steering system. It's a stainless steel six-piece kit with a three-foot squared rudder and a tiller arm, manufactured by Paul, and designed to get us out of short-term trouble. We put it together, piece by piece. It's difficult to bolt the bracket to our transom while fighting the very big and uncomfortable following sea, and we're praying that we don't lose a single, nut, screw or washer overboard as we do it. It's unbelievably hard and Paul, although clipped on, is washed off a couple of times during the process. Two hours of intense teamwork later, it's assembled, and we are ready to test

operating capabilities. It takes some time, and a few false starts, but we finally figure out by combining the grunt of the bow thruster while using the autopilot to turn what little rudder is left, we can at least set a course towards Nuku Hiva. We agree a plan to cover as many miles as we can each day, hovering to at night to rest and to avoid overstressing the emergency rudder (affectionately now known as 'The Little Guy'). We know TLG doesn't have the strength to be engaged under sail and we resign ourselves to motoring our way across the Pacific to safety.

I struggle to manage the tiller and Paul becomes responsible for picking up my slack. AMSA message us through our SailMail system and request that we touch base with JRCC\* Tahiti, which I immediately attend to. They enquire about our health and safety, our fuel supply, and our onboard provisions; I assure them that all is well, and we have sufficient food, water, and diesel. I agree to provide a twice daily position report and to inform them if we get into any difficulties. I contact the SailMail Association as I'm conscious that I'm going to be totally exceeding our weekly airtime allowance and am absolutely grateful and relieved when they advise I can have unlimited access to the network. I'm managing communications with our family and friends, both through private messages and through a daily blog post. I'm maintaining contact with our insurers and I'm



M. Rouge.



plotting position reports online. We're both playing to our strengths and working as a streamlined and cohesive team. It's only in the quiet of night, when we've switched off our engine for the day, that I afford myself the time to silently work through my fears. There's no alternative but to suck it up and stay strong right now. I know intuitively that Paul is wrestling these same demons in his head and I know that neither of us wish to breathe life into what we are manifesting internally.

We forge on. We're averaging around 80 nautical miles per day and are stoked that we are aided by the swell and the south-east breeze to drift a further 5-10 nm overnight. It's the same routine day-after-day, only lightened with the arrival of a red-footed booby who turns up and hitches a ride on Day 4 of our emergency. He's a distraction and a gift sent by the universe to provide some light relief with his antics. We're both appreciative that we've been blessed with his company and how he's able to divert our thoughts, and pleased we can have a conversation about something other than our situation. We tick off the miles. On Day 8 we're in new territory – we've been at sea for 24 consecutive days which is our longest time ever and surpasses our 3,400 nm Atlantic crossing in 2014. With less than 200 nm to go and obviously sensing land, our avian companion, who I've named Monsieur Rouge, decides it's time to leave. He tightrope-walks down the starboard rail, makes a strange clacking sound and flies away. We're alone again but there's no time to be apprehensive or for me to indulge in my suppressed feelings of dread. There's a huge swell that's agitated and angered the ocean and we're surfing off waves at up to 12.3 knots. It's scary and we're truly thankful for the way *Elevation*, our beautiful yacht, is handling the conditions. Paul is unbelievably stoic and I'm doing my best to match his emotionless state. I trust him implicitly and I know in that moment that we're invincible

and we will get through this. We spend another uncomfortable night out in the open, sleeping only through sheer exhaustion. When we rise at dawn, we see that the weather gods have decided to throw everything at us and we spend our last day out dealing with squally winds, big seas, and a truly turbulent and confused Pacific. Even the channel between Ua Huka and Nuku Hiva delivers boisterous conditions but with the finish line in sight, we simply push through – nothing is going to stop us now.

How my heart soars as we round the Sentinelle De L'est; how my heart sings as we enter Baie De Taiohae and we set our anchor. All my suppressed fears, my anxiety, my concerns suddenly dissipate as if blown away on the breeze. I look at Paul, my soulmate and life partner, and see he's feeling just the same. We hug, we kiss, we give profuse thanks to both *Elevation* and 'The Little Guy'. This ordeal is over and both individually and together, we've conquered fear and adversity. I send one last message to JRCC advising of our safe arrival and joyously sign-off, '*All well onboard*'.

\*Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre

**JILL CARTER** has been a full-time bluewater cruiser since April 2010 and with her husband, Paul, has amassed close to 50,000 nm under the keel of their 48' yacht, *Elevation*. Jill hails from Fremantle and has been a member of the Fremantle Sailing Club since 2006. Jill is a newbie to writing and in recent times has enjoyed blogging about both bluewater adventures and each destination explored. Jill's blog is at:

<http://www.sailblogs.com/member/elevation/>

# Book release

eBook available for  
preorder via Amazon  
- to be released 31st  
October 2018! \*

\*Paperback  
to follow.



To preorder your copy [click here](#)

A collection of inspirational and practical stories from women on the water.

Gasp, cry and laugh out loud as forty-six women from around the globe reveal their deepest fears and coping strategies while voyaging on (and in) the world's waterways.

Experience a unique journey, witnessing the emotional turmoil that fear can create as dreams, and loved ones, are threatened.

These true tales of raw emotion and courage will help you tackle fear, cast off the lines, and take heart in knowing you are not alone.

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



Down Under Rally, in association with Sail South Pacific present...

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**QLD - Southport Yacht Club**

Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th November 2018

**NSW - Royal Motor Yacht Club**

Saturday 1st & Sunday 2nd December 2018

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# Into the blue: Overcoming and managing fear

## A man's view



John Hembrow

Before Leanne and I sailed off into the wide blue yonder we had never been more than a few miles from land – in fact before we departed Australia for New Caledonia in 2009 we had never sailed out of the sight of land. *Was I afraid?* You Bet! (Leanne was not at all afraid by the way!)

We had done a lot of coastal cruising before we made our first ocean passage, and several overnight sails were part of this coastal cruising, but to be ‘out there’ for several days and nights on our own was for me at least a daunting prospect and one I was not at all excited about.

You see, I am in it for the destinations; the sailing for me is just a way of moving my home from one country to another. Having said that, I am enjoying the sailing more and more each year.

In the months and weeks before we departed back in 2009 I spent a lot of time asking anyone who I thought might be able to provide me with some advice about bluewater sailing. Initially I was concerned, as most told me that it was very dangerous and not something that I should be doing.

I very much wanted to spend extended periods cruising in other countries so I started to ask those who gave me this advice

if they themselves had actually done any ‘bluewater’ multiday passages. Turns out none of those who advised us not to do it had ever done it themselves!

I decided that I needed to find people who had actually done what we hoped to do and ask them for advice. This, as it turned out, was not an easy task however I eventually did meet a few and all of them encouraged us and were eager to provide suggestions and advice.

In the end it was a conversation I had with a fellow who had sailed single-handed across the pacific. He said to me, ‘You know what you should be most afraid of when sailing in the ocean – LAND!’ He then said that he was not at all afraid of being in the ocean but that he feared coastal passages as there were so many more dangers when sailing on the coast then there was in the ocean.

Some 40,000 nm and almost 10 years later I find myself writing this story and I can say on reflection and without reservation that he was 100 percent correct.

Sure we have had a few days and nights in the ocean that were not fun, but compared to having to navigate in coastal shipping lanes and in areas of poorly and even sometimes uncharted reefs I can say I would choose the

ocean passages every time.

Please don't misunderstand me, there is plenty that can go wrong when you are 'out there' and I firmly believe it is essential to take the time to find out what can go wrong and learn what to do when it does. I can confidently say that every bad situation I have found myself in could have been avoided entirely.

Learning about what you can do to avoid being in a bad situation is just as important as learning what to do if it happens, in fact the old saying: *'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure'* could not be more relevant than when applied to offshore sailing and cruising.

So, what is FEAR? *An anticipation or awareness of real or perceived danger.*

Some of us are more easily frightened than others and we all have different ways of managing fear. Some of us 'just do it' and deal with the fear along the way, and others 'never do it' because they are too frightened of what might happen.

For those whose fear is based on what might happen the following acronym can often help to understand what is going on.

### False Expectation Appearing Real

This is not to say all anticipation-based fear is false but often this is the case.

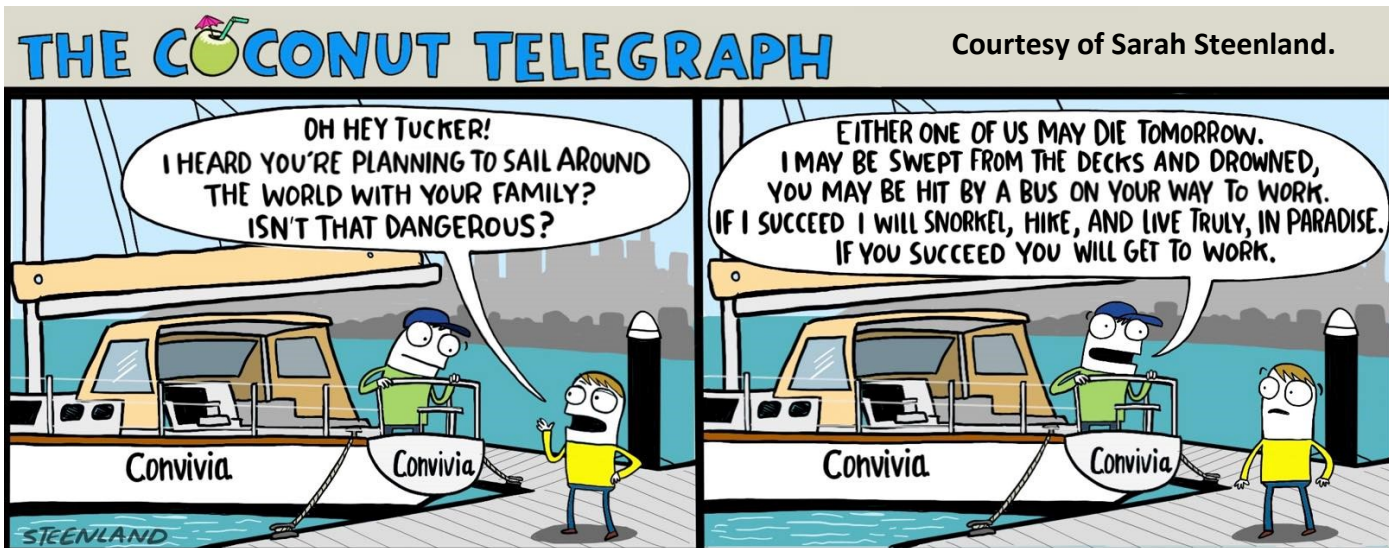
Many of us have watched movies or heard stories of boats and people being lost at sea and it is true, this happens. It does not however happen to everyone who goes to sea, in fact it happens to a very few.

Below are some suggestions for managing fear so it does not stop you from living your dream:

### Plan and prepare for the worst then hope for the best.

- Write down the things you are afraid of.
- Learn how to prepare yourself and your vessel well so that the likelihood of the things that you are afraid of happening actually happening is very low.
- Learn what to do if the worst happens.
- Practice what you have learned with someone who is experienced.
- Perhaps take an experienced crewmember along with you.

I am not at all ashamed to say that I am still very anxious every time we set sail and I believe some fear is healthy as it serves to warn us of possible danger and allows us to 'adjust our sails' in order to avoid the situation completely or to employ the skills we have learned and practiced in response to the event in order to get the best possible outcome.





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OR DESTINATIONS IN THE SW PACIFIC SUCH AS NEW CALEDONIA, VANUATU & FIJI?

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## WHERE & WHEN:

### QUEENSLAND - SATURDAY 17TH NOVEMBER

08:30am - 11:30am: Southport Yacht Club, Gold Coast, Queensland

### NEW SOUTH WALES - SATURDAY 1ST DECEMBER

08:30am - 11.30am: Royal Motor Yacht Club, Newport, New South Wales

## INFO SESSION CONTENT:

### INTRODUCTION TO OFFSHORE SAILING

- Introduction to preparing for the Voyage - Vessel & Crew
- Introduction to Offshore Communications - Email & Weather
  - Essential Cruising Guides for the Destinations
  - Sailing in Company - to rally or not to rally!
    - Where to depart from
    - The best route and why
      - What to see and do
      - How long to stay
      - Customs and Culture
  - 2019 Down Under Rally 'Go East Rally' info
- 2019 Multihull Solutions Wonderful Sail 2 Indonesia Yacht Rally info
  - Questions & Answers Session

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- Ticket cost is **\$20.00 per person** and includes GST and fees
- Proceeds from ticket sales are used to cover costs associated with holding these sessions such as venue hire and our travel related expenses
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  - Tea / Coffee / Water are included in ticket price



# GO EAST

CRUISERS RALLY  
AUSTRALIA TO THE SW PACIFIC ISLANDS





# Passage Adventures: The wrap-up

In our April issue of *SisterShip* we introduced Australians **LUCY GRAHAM** and **MATHILDE GORDON** who outlined their plan to kayak 2,103 kilometres from Juneau, Alaska, to Port Renfrew, Vancouver Island. With the trip now complete, the young women sent the following report...

## The preparation

We sat in our lounge room in Australia staring down at the 45 marine charts that showed our 2,100-kilometre kayak expedition through the 'Inside Passage' of Alaska and Canada, and it was hard to imagine what was in store for us. The journey would take us from Glacier Bay, north west of Juneau, through the island passages of Southeast Alaska and British Columbia, to Vancouver Island. Only books and words from other kayakers could help us visualise what lay ahead. From the moment we dipped our paddles into the icy waters of Glacier Bay, Alaska, we were challenged, awed, and inspired. The expedition was everything we wanted, and more than we bargained for.

When you tell people that you are planning to kayak over 2,000 kilometres through freezing

water, in bear country, and in some of the most wild and remote places, many people would ask 'why?' but Mathilde didn't.

*"In 2016 when I asked Mathilde if she would paddle 2,000 km through the Inside Passage with me, she didn't ask why, she just said 'yes...do you think I can do it? YES.'" Lucy.*

We always answer the question 'why?' with 'because we can'. That is the spirit of adventure, throwing yourself into challenge and beauty, purely because you can. Not because you know you can succeed, or you know what it is that you will face, but because you know you can plan, and research, and give it your best shot! We weren't the first to do this trip, we weren't the youngest or the oldest, or any of those things, but this would be a challenge like we had never faced before.

*"Before Lucy asked me to do this expedition, I had only done day trips in a kayak, but I enjoyed it and I knew there was going to be incredible wildlife, so I was in." Mathilde.*

*"I have been a kayak guide from the age of 18, but the longest trip I ever did was seven days, in the tropics, so this expedition was going to be the biggest challenge I've taken on." Lucy*

## Single-use plastic-free

We met at James Cook University, when we both signed up to the student sustainability club. We ended up leading this group together for a large period of our studies. Our friendship grew as we studied, campaigned, and adventured together.

Both of us are passionate about ocean conservation and have been campaigning about the issue of marine debris for over five years. About three years ago, we decided to give up single-use plastic in our lives. Being single-use-plastic-free is a constantly evolving journey, and when we started planning this trip we decided we wanted to transfer the lessons learned in everyday life to our adventure and complete the expedition without the need for single-use plastic. It was easy enough to have plastic-free toiletries, but the biggest challenge we faced was with our food.

We trialled systems on small trips at home and came up with a way to make it possible. It involved dehydrating our meals and wrapping them in three layers of newspaper, then placing them in dry bags with upcycled silica gel packs (from any outdoor store). It worked in the humid tropics of Queensland, Australia, and we were sure it would work in the cold and wet west coast of North America too. Thankfully, we had the *Lupii Cafe* sponsor us and prepare, cook, and dehydrate the 500 plus meals we needed for our three-month expedition!

Apart from the aim of completing our journey single-use-plastic-free, we saw the expedition as an opportunity to raise awareness about marine debris and to raise funds for organisations working to reduce its impact. Having now completed our expedition, we are excited to let everyone know that we have raised more than \$20,000 to be shared between The Living Oceans Society in Canada and The Tangaroa Blue Foundation in Australia. Both organisations

do important work; cleaning up beaches, collecting data, tracing debris and stopping it at its source.



Food preparation and packing for the journey.

Alongside the money we have raised, we have run several community workshops, delivered two public talks en route and another workshop on Hornby Island at the ‘Young Women in Ocean Literacy, Marine Conservation and Leadership Camp’. We have also run three beach cleanups—two in Australia and one in Canada—and contributed to a remote Living Oceans Society cleanup on Vancouver Island during our trip.

So, as you can see, the answer to the question ‘why?’ evolved as we planned. ‘Why?’ became, ‘because we can, because we care, and because the ocean needs us—not just Mathilde and me, but every one of us.’

## Beginning

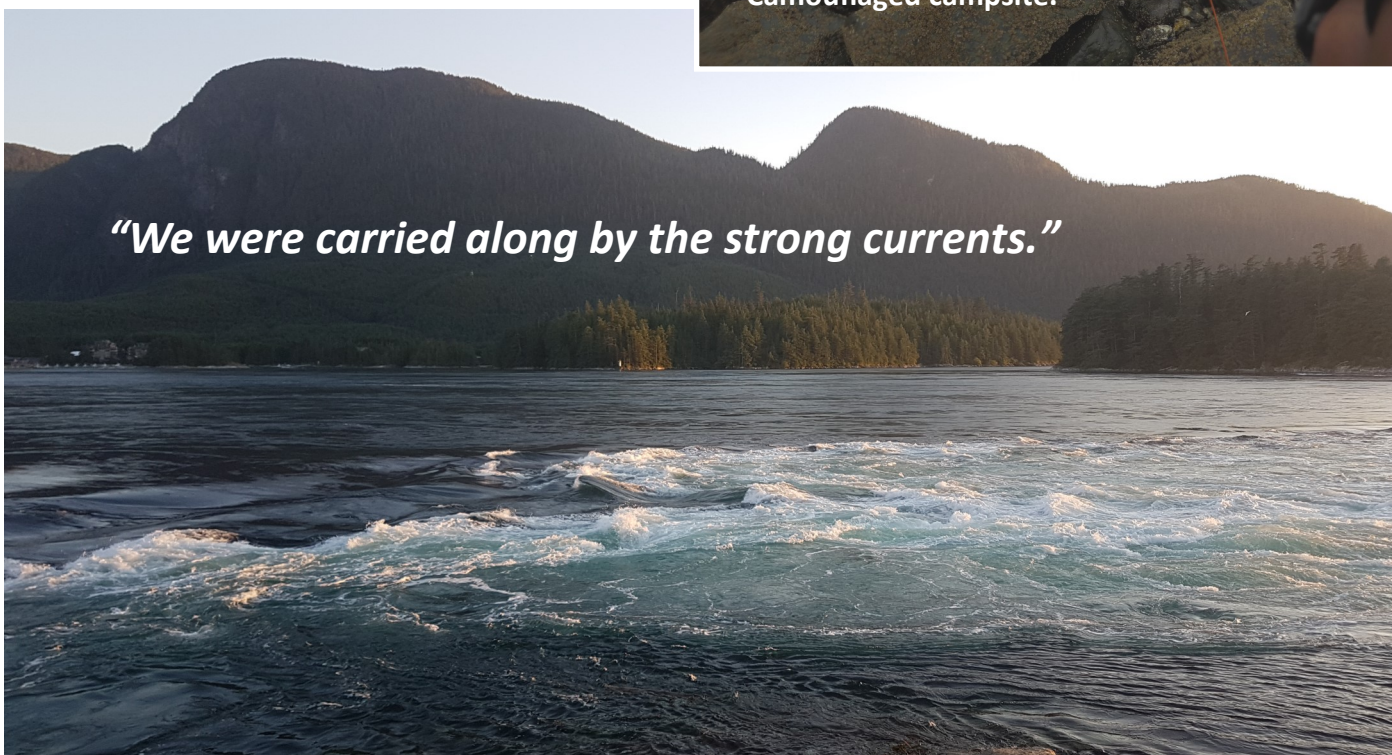
Once we were immersed in the Inside Passage, amongst the people who live in or travel through these parts, not one person asked why. After an eternity of planning, the moment when we finally started our trip seemed to arrive suddenly. We set off into Glacier Bay on the 8th of May, with the sun in the sky, adventure in our hearts, and the completely unrelated, yet beautiful, sound of drumming and singing coming from the long house of the Huna Tlingit First Nations in

Bartlett Cove. It was a heart-warming beginning to our journey.

## Ups and Downs

Kayaking in a place that you have only ever read about is both exciting and intimidating at the same time. People told us of the unforgiving waters in Alaska, the dangers experienced by everyday boaters crossing the north and south of Haida Gwaii at Dixon Entrance and Cape Caution, and the tidal rapids at Dent Island and Yuculta. Looking at the charts, studying major crossings and understanding the currents of the Inside Passage took up hours of our time in preparation for the expedition.

We really threw ourselves in the deep end by starting in Glacier Bay. Thankfully, we had



sunshine for the first three days, which made the adjustment easier. We were advised by the rangers to avoid campsites with signs of bears, however the first night we realised it wasn't actually possible in this part of the world. We settled for sites with the least evidence of bear activity and practiced our bear-safe camping.

We were overwhelmed by our surroundings. Snowcapped mountains rose steeply from islands towering over us in every direction. Glaciers cracked in the distance and filled the valleys we paddled passed. The tranquil silence was pierced only by the sound of our paddle strokes and the incredible wildlife that filled every gap and corner. We were entertained by birds, sea otters, seals, sea lions, porpoise, and an unbelievable number of whales. We were also adjusting to the challenges of carrying our kayaks and gear over rocky and barnacled intertidal zones, avoiding the biting cold of the water and the wind, and getting accustomed to pooping in the intertidal zone! During those first few weeks, we had moments of pure exhilaration as we watched whales play and birds fly, but also moments where we silently wondered if we were going to make it through the three

months of our expedition.

The Inside Passage challenged us and rewarded us in an equal measure; our experiences peaking and plummeting like a rollercoaster. After one week we made it back to Juneau from Glacier Bay and we needed to do some kayak repairs, pick up Kevlar bear bags (we had a horrible time trying to fit bear cans in our kayaks) and get a sturdy supply of chocolate. In Juneau, and throughout our entire trip, we have felt humbled by the kindness and open hearts of people along the Inside Passage. Thanks to some amazing locals, we had a place to stay in Juneau where we could rest, eat some non-dehydrated food, and repair our kayaks.

In the weeks following Juneau, we faced a lot of bad weather and wind. By the time we reached Petersburg we had been delayed by seven days. Three of those days were spent in our tent, where the winds were gusting between 30 and 40 knots, and just listening to the pines creaking and yawning in the wind above our tent was scary enough. It was a great test of our decision making, as we interpreted the weather around us and assessed whether it was safe to carry on. Although we had radios to receive weather

***“Snowcapped mountains rose steeply from islands towering over us in every direction.”***



forecasts, having a GARMIN InReach also meant we could get some help from our support team through unlimited messaging. The ability to laugh in the face of a challenge and smile in the midst of chaos is necessary during those hard times. Most of the success of our trip was knowing when conditions were beyond our abilities and staying out of harm's way.

It was a sunny day when we finally paddled into Petersburg amongst icebergs which had broken off the LeConte Glacier. After several days of continuous rain and battering wind, we diverged from our plan and stayed in Petersburg to shower, dry off and feel human again. It was a much-needed break.

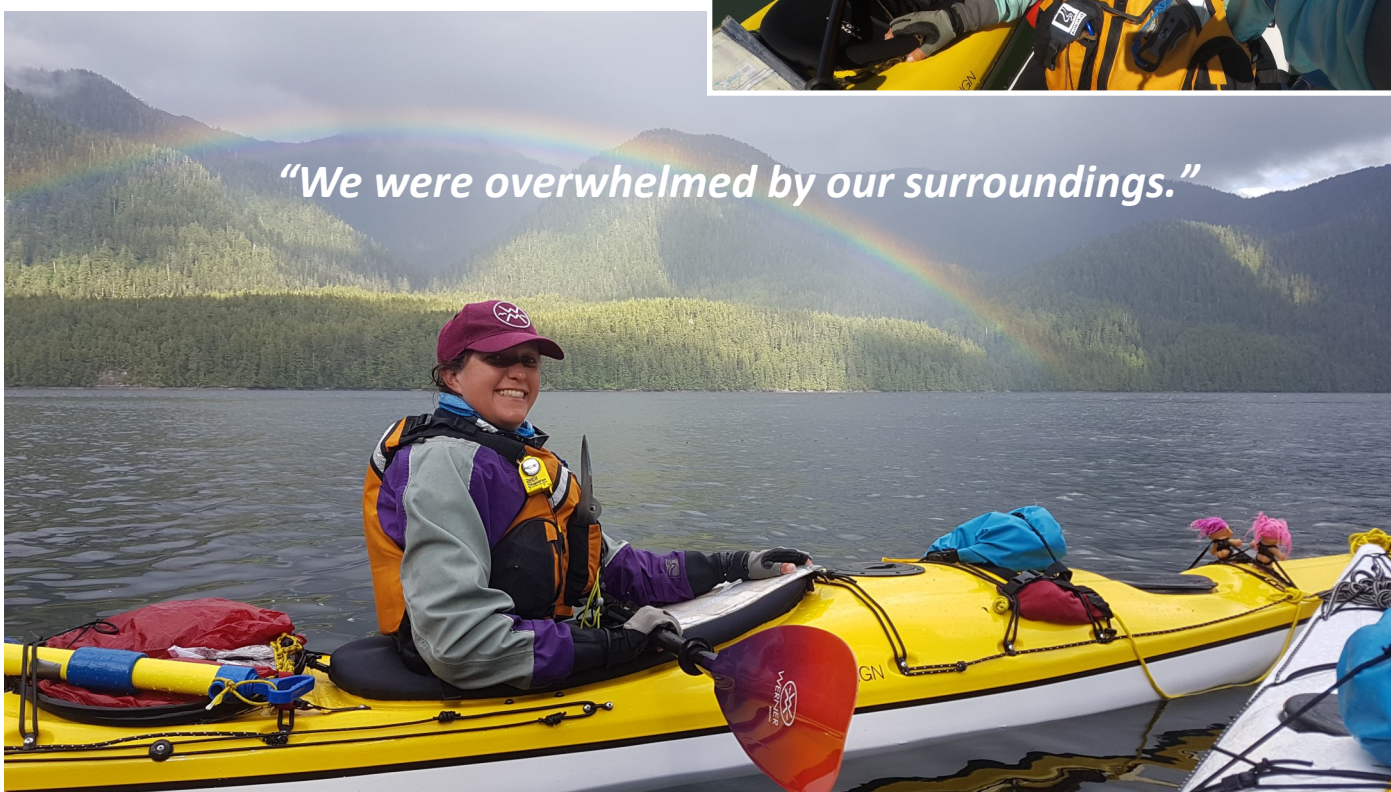
Following Petersburg, we were on a roll. We picked the tides through the Wrangell Narrows perfectly and were carried along by the strong currents. We soon found ourselves in Wrangell, enjoying the hospitality of Kem and Sue, a local pastor and his wife, who had agreed to look after our resupply until our arrival. Having prepared all of our food prior to the trip with supplies sent to meet us en route, we depended on complete strangers, who volunteered over the Internet, to look after our resupply boxes. It was truly amazing

to meet the people who held our resupplies, and to have the opportunity to understand more about life in the Inside Passage. Meeting Kem was no exception; he met us at the docks, put us up in a local hotel, and invited us to a community potluck to share our story. Originally, we thought we would try to avoid the towns and cities so as to be continuously immersed in nature, but the people of SE Alaska and British Columbia stole our hearts, and visiting towns became a highlight too.

There were still many challenges to come on our route. Both of us had days where it felt really hard. When you embark on a journey like this with a friend, you can't help but wonder whether it will strain your friendship or not. We are happy that our journey



Iceberg off Petersburg.



*"We were overwhelmed by our surroundings."*

strengthened ours. We have both admitted that there were moments of frustration, but in these cases we knew it was mostly attributed to the weather conditions, tiredness, or hunger. It was important not to voice those frustrations during tense moments as we only had each other and knew that it wouldn't help the situation. Another seemingly small thing that happened naturally, but is something we realised is so important, is thankfulness. Every time someone cooked, made tea, set up the tent, treated the water, or completed any everyday task, we thanked each other. Throughout the 89 days of our trip, having those small efforts recognised made a big difference in the long run. So that is a tip if you are planning your own expedition—never forget to appreciate those small gifts from your buddy!

Wildlife was, of course, one of our major highlights. We saw many humpback whales, and were even lucky enough to see a small group of them bubble-net feeding—a behaviour that is unique to this part of the world. Another day we had a whale follow us along our route for a couple of hours, surfacing only metres away from our kayaks. We had playful sea lions surging and circling

our kayaks, both a scary and exhilarating experience. We saw sea otters sleeping and playing together, and by the shore we watched river otters, minks, and weasels. Harbour seals—the puppies of the ocean—stayed with us for our entire journey, and along the coast of British Columbia we were lucky to see a number of mothers with their pups. We were constantly entertained by the bird life that soared above and dived below the surface of the water, feeding amongst the abundance of fish. We gained even more appreciation for the creatures of the intertidal zone when we were invited to the Vancouver Island University Deep Bay Research Centre.

Along with the moments of pure joy, there were experiences that weren't such fun. For Lucy, it was getting pulled into an uncharted whirlpool and momentarily losing control of her kayak. Thankfully, with adrenalin and instinct, she came away safely, if not a little shaken. For Mathilde, nothing on the trip



made her more scared than when a tugboat steamed towards us on autopilot, at an unforgiving speed, passing by only 15-20 metres behind us as we paddled hard to avoid it. We will also never forget our first night in Canada, where the tide came in under our tent at midnight, forcing us to wade across a river and climb the embankment to sleep on a lump of moss in the forest.

However, Mother Nature was looking after us when it came to facing major milestones on the trip. We had a perfectly clear day crossing Stephens Passage, where the tides are strong and the cruise ships steam past. When we crossed both Dixon entrance and Cape Caution, it was so calm we could have done headstands in our boats. Our final challenges were the Dent and Yuculta rapids. Timing was crucial at these rapids, as it is only possible to pass at slack water, even for motor boats! However, we were happy to have clear days and well-timed crossings as we passed through these as well. Each of these milestones had been on our minds for more than a year, and we celebrated every time we passed safely, for even with great weather, they were major achievements for us.

## Marine debris

Apart from our first week in Glacier Bay, we saw marine debris at every single beach we camped at, and on many of the shores we passed. We had expected to find less marine debris than we did, as we thought it would not have been pushed into the protected waters of the Inside Passage, and instead would have collected on the west coast of the islands. The unfortunate reality is that much of the debris we were finding was from local towns, and the large majority of trash was related to recreational and commercial fishery activities. This included fishing and mooring buoys, ghost nets, ropes, fishing line, strapping band, tags, and motor oil. In addition, we found the usual culprits; plastic bottles, soft and hard plastic remnants, and

household items. Some bottles had floated all the way from Asia and were the same brands we find on our beaches back home. A great reminder that our oceans are all interconnected. We were blown away by the amount of Styrofoam littering the shores, some pieces as large as trees and others smaller than a peanut.

## Finishing it all

Kayaking into Cadboro Bay in Victoria, 2,042 km south of where we started three months prior, was a mix of emotions for both of us. We were both happy and sad to finish our expedition and couldn't believe it was over so soon. We were met with great enthusiasm by a group of friends and family at the finish line, who had also convinced 100 or so beach goers to cheer us onto the beach! It was a humbling end to an incredible journey.

Now it's time to continue with the next chapter of our lives, our minds and hearts are already filled with the dreams of another adventure on the horizon.

**LUCY GRAHAM and MATHILDE GORDON met at university in 2013 through a shared passion for the environment and adventure. Lucy has a Certificate IV in Outdoor Recreation and a Bachelor of Sustainability. Mathilde studied ecology and zoology at university which lead to a career in conservation. Lucy and Mathilde undertake rock climbing, skydiving, snorkeling and scuba diving in addition to their kayaking and camping adventures.**

### Websites:

<https://passageadventures.org/>

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

[www.tangaroablue.org](http://www.tangaroablue.org)

[www.livingoceans.org](http://www.livingoceans.org)





# Shero!

Reading Tanya Aebi's 'Maiden Voyage' for the first time a year ago, I really connected with the struggles and tribulations of her journey. But mostly, I fell in love with her boat: the Contessa 26. The more I read about the Contessas, the more I knew that was the boat for me. Full-keeled, bluewater cruisers, of staunch build, they'd been sailed multiple times single-handed round the world.

So, when the opportunity arose to purchase the Contessa 26 of my dreams, I jumped. A rebuilt, 1972 version, Hull No. 27 *Little Minute*. No matter that she was in Maine, more than 1,000 miles away from my home in Michigan. No matter that my sailing experience consisted of six months of day sails on an 18-foot pocket cruiser, along with sailing my 18-foot sea kayak in endurance coastal racing in Florida. This would be an adventure of a lifetime.

And it's finally happened. *Little Minute* and I arrived home in Michigan after traversing more than 1,000 miles. It took six months of planning, three months of staged sailing legs in between full-time work as a veterinarian, and various other challenges. I had my first of many overnights, did my first oil change, navigated NYC waters alone (what an experience!), and had to rely on the Women Who Sail Facebook group for last minute Erie Canal help (thanks, Pam!), after unexpectedly dismissing crew. I met a lot of old salts, new salts, and everyone in between - including the Mayor of Catskills, New York in a marina tavern.

For someone who learned to sail 12 months ago, I'm thrilled! So, for now, *Little Minute* will hang tight for a "little minute" until she travels to her final berth in Northern Michigan in the next few weeks.

Sailing in Maine for her "Maiden Voyage".



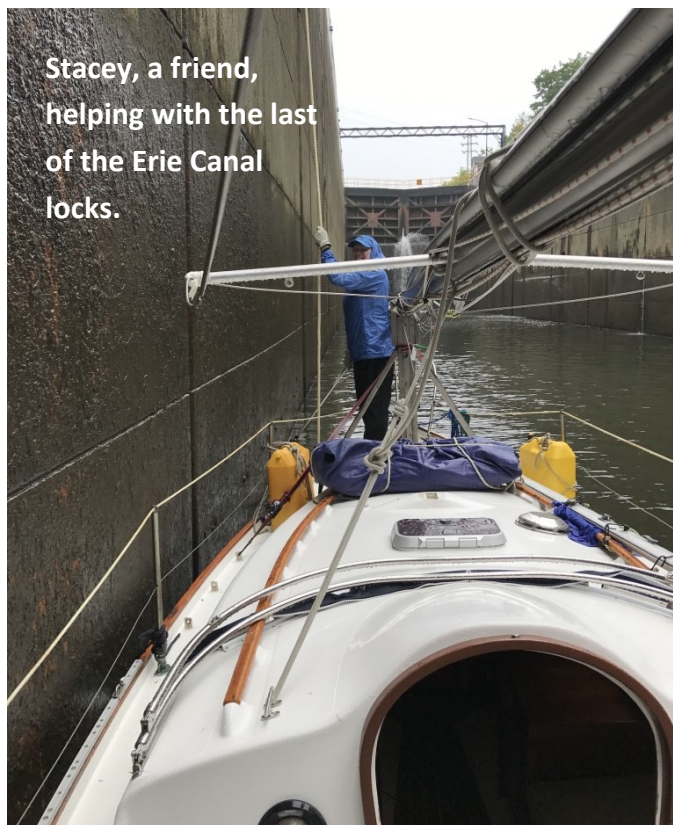
And me? I'm already planning the next journey!

**LAUREN DEMOS is a veterinarian from Michigan, USA.**



Sailing Lake Ontario, well-heeled.

Stacey, a friend, helping with the last of the Erie Canal locks.



# The Remote Southwest Coast of Tasmania



*Julienne* hiding behind the swell as she hugs the coast of South West Cape with the cliffs behind the sea mist.

## Sheenagh Neill

Three yachts, all crewed by friends, recently set out on the adventure of the year: to explore the island of Tasmania with a full circumnavigation.

Usually, March is a time when the weather is more settled, and the winds are not so strong and more predictable. Unfortunately, this year that was not the case. Gales dominated our time away and so it started with a gale. We waited out the first nasty blow in Dover, a safe place in such conditions. A local fishing boat and a yacht at Flinders Island came to grief.

After three days, the westerlies had subsided from the 35 to 40 knots we had been experiencing and swells of seven to eight metres eased, and we sailed to Recherche Bay for an overnight stop. At first light on Wednesday 22nd March we headed off with a forecast of easterly winds and swells abating to three to four metres.

It was our intention to explore the coast. Ian Johnston was collecting photographs for his

cruising guide of the area. The group were sailing boats of various lengths and drafts and helping him to test the anchorages in many uncharted areas he is writing about in a book to be released later this year\*.

The boats *Phase Three*, a Zeston 36 with a draft of 1.5 metres, *Julienne*, a converted wooden cray fishing boat also with a draft of 1.5 m, and *Tahiti*, a Sun Odyssey Jeanneau 42i with a draft of 2.15 m, set off at dawn. Ian, on *Julienne*, practically lives along this coast line, to him it's like his second home so he hugged the coast and cliff faces with the confidence of someone who knew where they were heading. Paul Strong on *Phase Three* and his crew had also sailed there frequently. For us it was our first time. In unknown and unforgiving waters with a four-metre swell we stayed further out and tried to take snaps of the other two in the sea mist and beauty of the rugged Southwest.

The occasional set would come in at over seven to eight metres, this did not phase Ian

but made the rest of us keep an eye out. Sure enough we were almost put in a very tricky situation behind Louisa Island when a huge wave came through. We disappeared into a trough up to our top spreader. We estimated it around eight to nine metres high. That was not a place to anchor overnight! It was after this spot that the phrase 'untenable', for our trip, was born.

There is no doubt the coastline around the two capes of the south is stunning, but it also clearly showed its treacherous and unforgiving side. Having said that it is a shame that many scurry around to Port Davey passing such beautiful picturesque places. To me places like Prion Beach, Louisa Bay, and McKay's Gulch, put on their best for us. I was in heaven.

After that rogue wave scared the daylight out of me we continued to a beautiful place called New Harbour. There is a creek running onto a white untouched beach. New Harbour is protected by rocks at its entrance, the length of Coss Bluff to its east and New Harbour Point to its west. We dropped anchor, walked along the shoreline and marvelled at the beauty of the untouched coastline.

The next day, Ian was keen to show us his favourite hideout in Ketchem Bay. I was having draft envy and watched as he manoeuvred *Julienne* between some rock crevices into a tiny hidey hole, anchoring there quite comfortably and declaring he was staying put for the night. We dropped our anchor in the larger part of Ketchem Bay and my partner went for a dive for abalone. The swell was not comfortable enough to stay overnight where we could fit into Ketchem Bay (in three to four metres). Untenable again. So, two of three boats headed back to New Harbour. We had a wonderful BBQ on the beach before retiring to another comfortable night's rest on the south coastline.

The next day we all caught up again and headed around Telopea Point and past South West Cape. We had settled into the conditions by now and I was more confident in our surroundings.

As we approached South West Cape, the sun came out and it was the opportune time to connect the auto helm and take a photo of *Julienne*.

I turned my attention to *Julienne* with her two masts glistening in the sun and barely recognisable behind a wave. She was so close to the shore the sea mist could be seen swirling around it in the sunlight. Through the mist the cliffs of South West Cape were just visible.

Ian insisted we drop anchor in McKay's Gulch. On seeing the seaweed hanging half way up the gulch and the beaten shape of the flora on the sides, it was clear that a calm day was a rarity. It made me nervous and I was relieved when it was time to move on.



**Phase Three and *Julienne* anchored McKay's Gulch on the Southwest coastline of Tasmania.**

The next spot was one I couldn't have imagined would be so stunning. The sea was much calmer once we passed South West Cape and the sun was warm enough for me to peel back some the many layers I wore and enjoy the freedom of unrestricted movement again.

Island Bay is one of the most picturesque places I've ever seen. In typical fashion *Phase Three* went ahead and tucked herself into a small cove with a narrow entrance and shallow depth. It was so tight, Paul had to be ingenious with his stern line and use bull kelp to keep her steady.

*Tabiti*, with her deeper draft, found a little spot in between the bommies (submerged rocks) and kelp. The water was boiling with fish and the sun was streaming down. You would be forgiven for thinking you were in the Mediterranean.

I am no longer the confident swimmer I was, but a dip became a necessity when I overheated. Jumped in I felt the fish bashing into my body. Suddenly my sensibility hit me and I realised if the fish were swarming and panicking—what else was there in the water that was potentially coming my way? I

climbed out quickly, refreshed and glad nothing untoward had happened.

After a restful few hours I convinced my partner that despite reassurances from the others, I could see a change happening in the clouds and knew that the front forecast for tomorrow was early. We picked up our anchor and moved on towards Port Davey. The others followed, *Julienne's* crew caught a tuna as she went.

After a brilliant sail, we arrived in Spain Bay just in time for sundowners and sashimi on the beach with other cruisers who had come straight around. That front did come through at about 30 knots at 3 am. I was very happy with our decision to head to Spain Bay.

The gales continued, Tasmanian Maritime radio joked with us about how bad it was for all of us around in Bathurst Harbour with



more westerlies on the way. On *Tabiti* we played guessing games before the radio scheds – would it be gales or just strong wind warnings today? The gales held us in the confines of Port Davey and Bathurst Harbour over the next two weeks. We took the time to explore every nook we could. We even had time to do some surveying of Horseshoe Inlet. Unfortunately, the three gales that barrelled through delayed us so much our planned circumnavigation had to be abandoned.

We were able to celebrate the last of the blue moons for this year, and some madness hit our crews whilst we were anchored in Wombat Cove. The Wombat Cove Club will be remembered for a long time. But that's another story.

With a two-day window to return back to the safer waters of the channel, the team split. *Julienne* continued north whilst *Phase Three* and *Tabiti* sailed overnight to New Harbour, in a great breeze, and onto Recherche the next day.

Exploring the Southwest coastline has been the highlight of my sailing. If you can convince the weather gods to behave and you

time your weather window right, then I encourage you to take the time to explore this beautiful coastline of the Southwest on the way to the safety of Port Davey.

**SHEENAGH NEILL** is the immediate past Vice Commodore of The Cruising Yacht Club of Tasmania (CYCT). She is also a member of the Kingborough Boating Club and Bellerive Yacht Club. She is an active member and admin of the online group Women Who Sail Australia and runs several online groups and pages to support sailing or clubs in Tasmania. She is a regular at the annex group of the CYCT, Women on Boats.



As a strong advocate of equality and women-can-do-anything, Sheenagh is a co-skipper of her yacht *Tahiti*, a Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 42i. She loves all things boats and updates her knowledge regularly through forums, meetings, and training. She is actively working with Government with respect to debris issues, related to marine farms, to ensure that the safety of the waterways around Tasmania is seen as a priority.

<http://cyct.org.au>

\*The book "The Shank—A Rutter for Anchorages in Tasmania's Southwest" by sailor Ian Johnston has developed from his mud maps guide of the remote and wild Southwest coast of Tasmania into a 200 page high quality coffee table book which celebrates a stunning remote coastline. There are copious notes and advice about the region as well as plenty of useful hand drawn mud maps. It will be available early December.

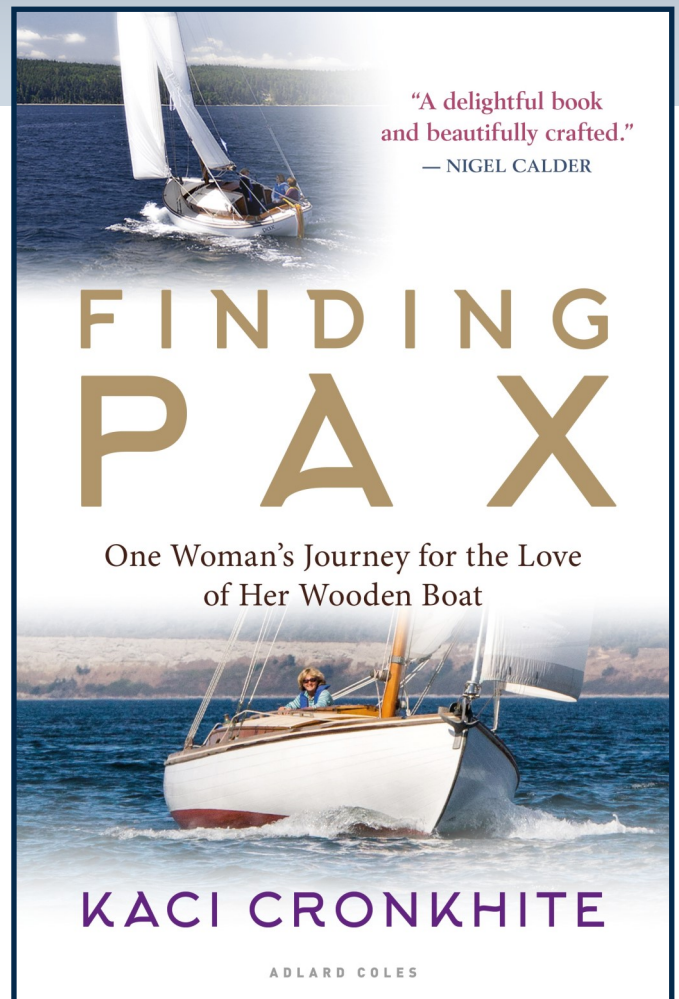


*Phase Three* riding and disappearing in the swell near Whale Head.

# Book Review

SisterShip Magazine has two copies of 'Finding Pax' to give away plus two ebooks!

All subscribers will go into the draw on Dec 10th.



*Finding Pax* is a story of discovery and reconnection like no other. Having fallen hopelessly in love with a 1930s Danish spidsgatter, a beautifully constructed 28 ft wooden double-ender, Kaci Cronkhite embarked on an international search to unravel the mystery of the boat's past, and discovered the many lives *Pax* touched since she first hit the water in 1936.

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

*"The boat appeared when I didn't expect or, frankly, need her. My bucket list was empty. Life was full...But sailing towards me was a boat that would stir the waters, waking decades of loss, revealing history untold, and restoring a legacy that was lost in the wind. For her and for me, I had to wade into that water. I had to go, to search, to find."*

<https://bloomsbury.com/us/finding-pax-9781472958600/>



# Flat bottomed girl

## Views from the canal

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

### Water in its place

You'd think that water and boats were natural allies, wouldn't you? After all, without water, no boat could float and would thus be something intrinsically less. But I've learned over the years that this truth only applies when the boat, barge, yacht, or cruiser sits in the water, and not when the water sits in the vessel. In the case of the latter, water becomes enemy number one, an adversary to be fought with fervour and gusto. Well, I hope you get the idea, but if not, let me explain.

With any boat, but especially a very old flat-bottomed iron barge like mine, one of the main aims is to keep water in its place; this means either in tightly sealed tanks for functional purposes, or outside. It really is that simple. Otherwise, water combined with boats is a recipe for disaster. In fact, someone once told me that most old iron and steel craft rot from the inside, not through the outer skin of the hull. I was shocked when I first heard this. I'd spent so much time on the slips protecting my barge's hull with impenetrable layers of tar substitute, I wasn't



quite prepared for the idea that I might be focusing on the wrong side. Later, though, I realised how true it was.

For instance, there's the perennial issue of condensation, the boat version of sweat, or should I be ladylike and say perspiration? Anyway, anyone living on board a barge will be familiar with this nightmare, particularly between the autumn and spring. The problem is that at both times, the temperature inside the boat is likely to be at variance with that of the water outside and the natural result is condensation. No matter how much insulation you pour into the bottom or squeeze to the walls of the hull, there is always somewhere the heat from your toasty warm heating stove can get through. In my case, I have no under floor insulation, so my winter days are often punctuated with inspections of my bottom (so to speak) to make sure it remains dry. Condensation not only represents random, undisciplined water on the inside, but also the prime cause of

rust. And since rust has a sneaky and insidious way of both eating your barge and growing multiple layers at the same time, condensation is the boat owner's number one foe.

Then there's rainwater. I don't know how it's possible, but rain will find the tiniest, most miniscule holes and cracks and pour through them in disproportionate torrents. I have one of these leaks somewhere in the back of my barge. It is so small it is invisible to the naked eye and I have spent years trying to trace it without success. I have patched, sealed, welded, kitted, covered and protected every place that could possibly be concealing the leak. But every time we have a downpour, I once again find large puddles of water against the engine-room bulkhead. They sit there smirking at me in rippling defiance; my unvanquished nemeses, having their own way time after time. Most definitely water out of place.

The biggest problem, however, is when I fill my barge with water myself, and I don't mean deliberately. Like most liveaboard boat dwellers, I am not connected to the mains supply; I have two 500-litre tanks that provide me with enough drinking and washing water for about ten days as long as I'm careful. The snag here is that having installed all my plumbing myself, and being something of an amateur, my fill-up system is somewhat basic. In essence, I use a garden hose connected to the tap on the quay with a T-piece to distribute the water between the two tanks. This is fine as long as I keep an eye on it. But, it is very slow and takes about an hour to do the job; time enough for me to read, write or do other chores, you might



The state of my iron bottom after a flood.

INSET: What it looked like under the water tanks.



think. Which is what I do. Most of the time, this works fine, and I've even taken the precaution of setting my alarm to warn me, but sometimes, just sometimes, it goes wrong.

There was the day when I sat down to read and got so engrossed in my book, I completely lost track of time. The first indication that something was wrong was when I saw water dribbling between my feet. My immediate instinct was to blame the dog. By the time I realised it was my own incompetence and not a leaky puppy, it was serious. I rushed outside to turn the tap off, but not before I had a sodden carpet and growing pools of water under the floorboards. The hours spent drying the carpet and the bottom of the boat should have taught me a never-to-be-forgotten lesson; it was not so.

The second time I let the tanks overflow, I'd just gone up to the harbour office for a few minutes but I got talking to a friend and one

thing led to another, which then led to coffee. No matter that I'd set the alarm to remind me to check; it wasn't going to help much if I wasn't there, was it? When I remembered what I'd forgotten, I hared off back to the barge and arrived just as the first water flowed out of the top of one of the tanks. Luckily, one fills faster than the other, so at least I didn't have double trouble, but I had to repeat the drying process all over again. Believe me, wringing out soggy cotton rugs, dog bedding, and even bathroom mats, can pall. The first time, you do it with resignation; the second time, you get angry. When you only have yourself to blame, though, the verbal tirade becomes an interesting dialogue.



Rebuilt and repainted once more.



The bottom regreased and the floor replaced. Even the pooch is pleased!

'How on earth did you manage to do that again?'

'I know, it's unbelievable, isn't it?'

'Unbelievable? Well, believe it! Look at you!'

'Speak for yourself! You forgot it too!'

'I didn't forget. I set the alarm! You just went off and got sidetracked. As usual!'

'Me? That was you up there, nattering away to Mary!'

So you see, there's not much comeback when it's all down to whichever side of you has gone AWOL.

The third time the tanks overflowed was when my daughter was staying on board with her boyfriend. It was a classic case of comic confusion. One of them turned the tap off without telling the other, who then went and turned the tap on thinking he/she was turning it off. Baffled? So was I. The resulting

sheepish looks when I caught them trying to dry the rug out ('we thought it needed airing, Mum') were a picture. On that occasion, I abdicated all responsibility and left them to the job I'd done alone twice before; I felt I'd had quite enough practice and experience already.

The long and the short of the story should be clear by now, I think. Water has its place where boats are concerned: outside is good, very good; inside is simply bad. Still, attempting to avoid these pitfalls is part of life on a liveaboard boat and can involve salutary lessons of a very soggy kind. So if you're looking for a calm and stress-free life on board, maybe buying a century's worth of rusting rivets is not a good idea to begin with. Personally, I wouldn't have it any other way.

**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.



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

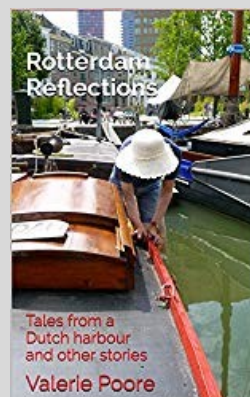
**Watery Ways:** <http://geni.us/lusDZT>

**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>



# How can I help?



**Viki Moore**

The southeast trade winds were unfortunately right on the nose as we dropped the mooring ball in Ile Casy and set off towards the Isle of Pines – New Caledonia. The upwind slog a small price to pay for being able to visit this fabulous slice of paradise again. We made an early start to ensure that we'd have enough time to navigate our way there and drop anchor again before nightfall.

We were on board our friend's 56 foot yacht *Esther Louise*. He had very kindly lent us the boat to use for a week while he made a quick business trip back to New Zealand, and of course, my friends and I had jumped at the fabulous opportunity step back on board this beautiful yacht.

Internet roaming in New Caledonia is expensive, so we relished a break from phone calls, emails, and social media. Unfortunately, that also made obtaining weather forecasts a bit trickier too, but the sun was out and it looked like a great day for a sail.

So, off we went, picking our way through the numerous reefs and tacking into the strong headwinds and building seas.

I was down below reading a book when a large wave swept over the deck, and came pouring through the not-quite-closed hatch above, completely drenching me and my book.

After checking on everyone up on deck and confirming that things were all ok, I sat back down to dry off and digest. It was at that point a terrible thought suddenly came into my mind... No one knows where we are. We hadn't done a trip report and with the lack of phone communications we hadn't told anyone back home our plans either. If we were in trouble or one of the crew was injured – would I know how to contact their families? If we set off the EPIRB then the Rescue Coordination Centre would be calling the boat owner's emergency contacts – and they definitely wouldn't have any idea how to contact our loved ones. If we needed help, or advice, who should we call? And if we didn't make it to the Isle of Pines, how long would it be before anyone actually noticed?

At that stage, we weren't in any danger. But it occurred to me that if something had gone wrong, this lack of information would make things a lot more stressful for everyone

involved, potentially cause delays in our rescue, and that with some prior preparation you could make an emergency situation much easier to deal with.

For the rest of the voyage I considered all the possible scenarios and played them out in my head. What information would be useful to prepare and share next time we headed off for an adventure to make things much easier for our families back home should we actually end up in trouble?

### **What could possibly go wrong?**

It is incredible how many terrible scenarios you can conjure up in your mind when you start to think about it! It pays not to dwell on that kind of thing or you'll never leave the couch, but have a think about how you'd like your emergency contacts to react and what information they'd require if:

- The Rescue Coordination Centre called to say your EPIRB had been activated;
- One of your crew had been badly injured;
- You'd lost your mast and require a tow/rescue;
- You were hours/days/weeks overdue on a passage;
- They hadn't been able to contact you for a period of time;
- A hurricane/earthquake/tsunami occurred in your location;
- You'd been rescued by a ship and were on the way to a completely different destination; or
- Your boat caught fire/sunk/been stolen and you'd lost everything.

### **Who you gonna call?**

When you register your EPIRB you are required to list some emergency contact details and it is worth putting some thought



into who those people should be. When the contents of your holding tank literally hit the fan, who would you want to be on hand to help sort things out? Close family? Some other sailing friends perhaps? Preferably someone who isn't likely to be with you out on the water, and someone who is going to be able to give the Rescue Coordination Centre some valuable information to assist with your rescue.

You can change your EPIRB registration details at any time free of charge, and you should check your registration details regularly to ensure that the Rescue Coordination Centre has the correct contact details for all your emergency contacts.

In our situation, when borrowing a boat we should have left our emergency contact details with the owner of the boat, so that if we had activated the EPIRB, his emergency contact people and the Rescue Coordination centre would know who to contact.

### **Well what do you know..?**

When you activate an EPIRB, one of the first things the Rescue Coordination Centre will do is pick up the phone and call one of the

emergency contacts. They will ask for some information to help assist in your rescue. For example, they'll want to know who is on board, details about the boat, and more information about the voyage.

Would your emergency contacts be able to provide that information and what information would be useful for them to have on hand?

My mother, being one of my emergency contact people, wouldn't have any idea at all about what kind of boat I was on, and I imagine that not being able to provide the correct information would be extremely distressing for her too. So when I got home, I put together a folder of key information to leave with her. Some of the information is static and some needs to be updated each trip.

### **Here's how to make a folder of your own:**

*Boat Description and Photographs* – Describe your boat in detail, give the name, length overall, colour, and type of vessel. Include other details like the model, and colour of your dinghy, and liferaft, and other safety gear on board. Add a description of dodgers, awnings, sail covers, and colours. Also have the registration number, sail number or documentation number, and EPIRB registration number.

*Emergency Gear* – List all the safety gear you carry. Include lifejackets, radios,

EPIRB, liferaft (with colour and model/type), flares, survival suits, bilge pumps, etc. Describe the contents of your grab bag.

*Navigation & Communication* – Detail all the navigation equipment aboard: AIS, GPS (include installed and hand-held), chart plotter, radar, and other electronic navigation devices. Also satellite phone numbers, VHF Radio Call Signs, SSB Radio, the registration numbers of the EPIRBs and PLBs on board.

*Sails & Engines* – Detail all the sails carried, the colour, sail numbers and logos, and sailing rig (sloop, cutter, ketch, yawl). Provide engine make, model, horsepower, and average speed. Detail the fuel tank capacity and extra fuel carried.

*Add photos* – Take outside shots of the bow, beam, and stern, and include printed copies as well as digital copies that can be emailed.

*Your Personal Details* – Include copies of your passports, sailing qualifications, printed and digital copies of recent photographs of you.

*Crew Details* – Include their names, gender, age, address, passport details, emergency contact person details.

*Medical* - Note if anyone has any medical conditions that require medication or monitoring. The more the Rescue Teams know ahead of time, the better equipped they will be to make the best decision for an injured or sick crew member.

*Insurance Details* – Leave a copy of your vessel insurance policy, and contact details of the insurer. It might even be worth giving your insurance company the details of your emergency contact person, so they have the authority to act on your behalf. If it turns out that the boat has lost its rudder or mast for example, and requires a tow – the insurance company will need to be informed. Also leave details of your health/travel insurance and life insurance policies.



*Other Important Documents* – You might like to leave a copy of your boat registration documents, your will, power of attorney, property documents, perhaps even logins to your email/Facebook accounts.

*A Trip Report* – Details of the port you are leaving, the port you are heading to, your route, any potential places you are planning or could potentially stop at along the way, the charts you have on board, and your estimated time of arrival. Perhaps you could send through a copy of your Passage Plan. How will you let your contacts know when you arrive or to advise you are ok? Will you be making Trip Reports on the radio as you sail along? These details will obviously be changing for each trip, so this information could just be in the form of an email to your emergency contacts before you head off. Without this information and if someone is overdue, any search and rescue will be like finding a needle in a haystack.

*Other Yachts* – If you are travelling with other vessels, leave their details as well, perhaps advise their blog page, satellite phone number etc. Give your buddy boat your emergency

contact details as well.

If you leave both a printed and electronic copy of all this information, the necessary details can be quickly passed on to the Rescue Coordination Centre to assist with their rescue plans. You have automatically given them a lot more information than they had to start off with.

### **Time's up!**

If we hadn't arrived as we'd planned in the Isle of Pines, I wondered how long it would have been before anyone had raised the alarm to come looking for us? Perhaps not until we'd not arrived as expected off our flights back to New Zealand a week later!

Submitting a Trip Report with Maritime Radio (and your emergency contacts) including your estimated time of arrival, will at least give people a date and time of when you might be expected to be back in contact with them.

Discuss with your contacts what they should do if you are overdue, explain that you might not be able to keep in touch when you are at sea, but when (and how) they should raise the alarm if they haven't heard from you by the agreed time?

Contact details for the Rescue Coordination Centre – give them the telephone number of who to call if you are overdue. The best is the contact details for the Rescue Coordination Centre in your country of residence (or where your EPIRB is registered) or ask them to call the Police. These people are super helpful, and they can discuss the options for starting a search if necessary.

The Emergency Contact details for the crew so that all your loved ones can easily communicate with one another and discuss any concerns and course of action.

Other Useful Contacts – your embassy in the country you are heading to, your local yacht



club, details of Facebook groups who might be able to help – Women Who Sail for example.

### Keep it all together

Buy yourself a folder to keep all the relevant documents in, and while you're at it, scan all the documents and save them in the Cloud as well. That way if you do end up somehow losing everything, you'll still be able to pick up a copy anywhere in the world.

Catch up with your emergency contacts and give them all the information. Discuss the scenarios and the information you've given them.

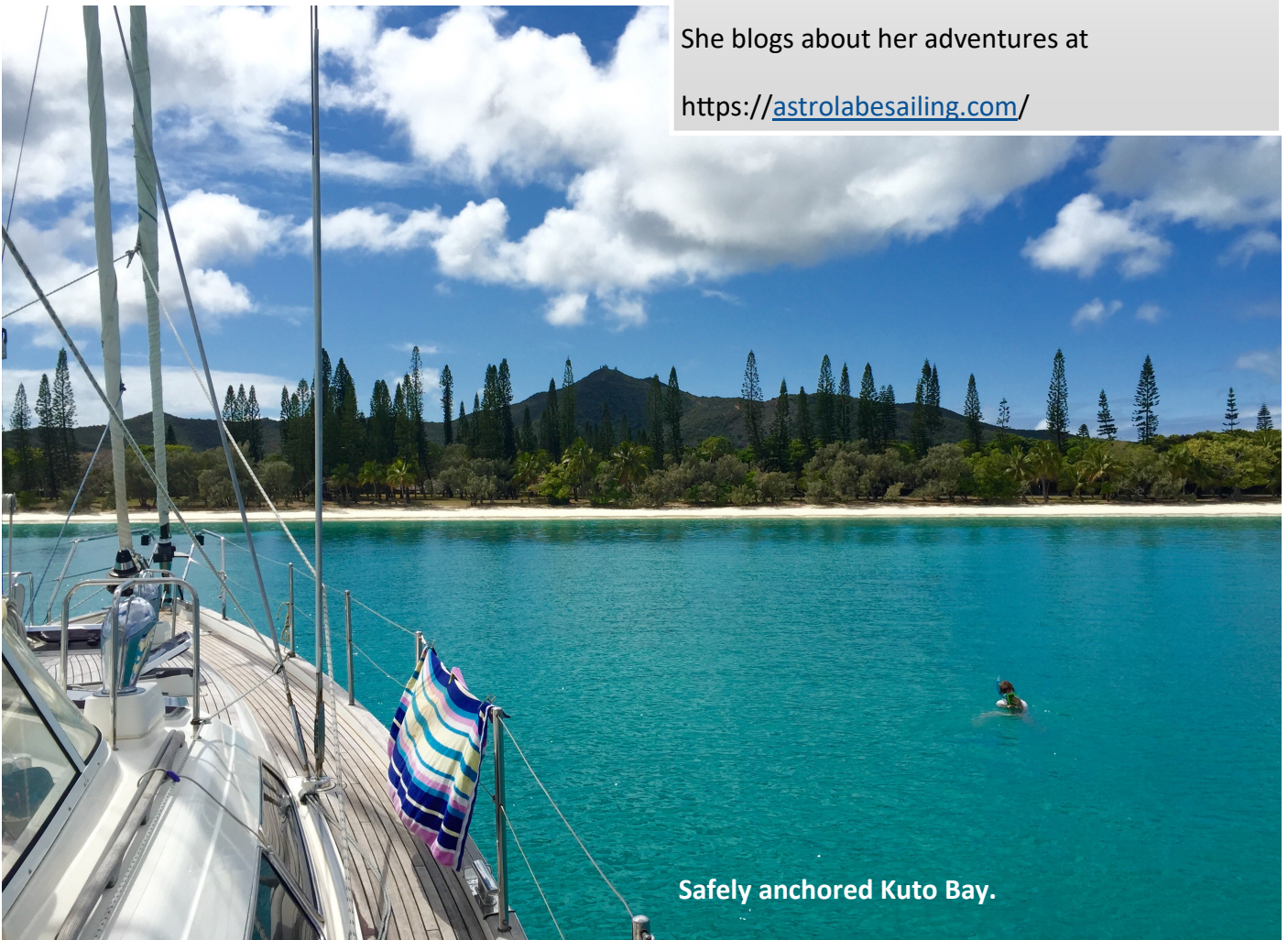
Yes, it is a lot of work to put all this together, and of course with any luck you'll never need to refer to this information! But should any kind of situation occur where you need assistance, then you'll know that your family and friends will have all the tools and information close at hand to help.

You can find a downloadable spreadsheet full of helpful templates to help you in this exercise on the Astrolabe Sailing blog

<https://astrolabesailing.com/2017/11/27/the-ultimate-boating-spreadsheet/>



Currently based in Lyttelton NZ, **VIKI MOORE** enjoys racing and cruising her Young 88. She is on the board of Yachting New Zealand and is the President of the Little Ship Club of Canterbury. She blogs about her adventures at <https://astrolabesailing.com/>



Safely anchored Kuto Bay.



## Great 'craic' and awesome racing:

## Cork Race Week 2018



Cork Yacht Club, established in 1720, is the oldest yacht club in the world which, when you're a yachtie, makes it hallowed ground. Being in Ireland, when you live down under, makes it pretty cool as well. So, this year, we decided to put together a team of girls to go and race there – well, how special is that? In July this year our SheSAILS@NCYC team did just that and I'm here to tell you, it was more than cool!

Over the course of the regatta from July 16-22 we made some great friends, expanded our skills, and had some seriously good Irish 'craic'. We all know that the Irish like to have a good time, but combine sailing, competition, and post-race partying and you have the perfect recipe for a truly fabulous regatta. And to top it off, Ireland was in the midst of their version of a drought, with heat wave conditions across the country. This is, thankfully, not the same as our Aussie version, but it did deliver the antithesis of our expectations! Whilst our packing had included thermals, fleece, sea boots, and heavy wet weather gear, we raced an entire

week in (mostly) dry and mild conditions – happy days! Over five consecutive days of intense competition our crew of nine raced two coastal, one harbour, two (gruelling) Olympic, and three (strenuous) windward leeward courses, leaving us physically shattered, more than a little bruised, and absolutely grinning from ear to ear. When we launched this campaign in 2017 (over, of course, some bubbles) it seemed a far-fetched dream, and yet here we were, and we could not have been a happier bunch of sailors.

Our SheSAILS@NCYC movement here at Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club (NCYC), in Australia, has enabled many women to embrace regatta racing in all-female teams to expand both our skills and our confidence. Mentors Jan Howard and Mary Holley, well-known and highly regarded ocean racers, had a dream to expand the number of women racing and, through much dedication and hard work, along with the unwavering support of the Newcastle sailing community, it has evolved from informally taking women of all abilities on their yachts for the local

Twilight Series, to our first all-female crewed regatta campaign at Airlie Beach Race Week in 2014. NCYC now boasts impressive statistics for women in club racing. In our 2017 sailing calendar year twenty-five percent of all Sunday racing crew and fifty-one percent of all twilight racing crew were women. This year alone, as well as the Cork Week Regatta, SheSAILS@NCYC has hosted a Development Regatta for novice sailors on our fleet of Force 24s, campaigned two all-female crews at Sail Port Stephens, combined with Gosford Sailing Club (GSC) to compete at the Australian Women's Keelboat Regatta (taking out a Division 1 IRC win), and completed a wildly successful GALs Regatta in Townsville. And yet to come is the SheSAILS@NCYC Open Regatta, again on our Force 24s, where we hope to attract crews from as far afield as Mooloolaba; as well as a bluewater campaign to ready more of our women sailors for longer offshore racing. What a long way we have come! As a lucky member of the SheSAILS 'Corkers' I feel privileged to give you a rundown on this, our first, international regatta.



**Skipper Mary proudly hoisting the SheSAILS flag.**



**Sam at work on the mast.**

I'll start by stating, for the record, that getting a campaign like this off the ground is BIG. But can I also say that women are amazing? Our organiser was an indefatigable driving force, and right from the get go, the commitment from all the crew was rock solid. I recall sending a text message to one of our crew members, asking if she was interested and able to commit and, within seconds, the answer arrived and was in no way ambivalent, 'I'm in!'. Jobs were divvied up and before we knew it we had made contact with RCYC (Royal Cork Yacht Club), who were wonderfully helpful and welcoming, had a charter boat lined up, and accommodation options had been sourced. A rough budget was drawn up and, hey presto, we were off and running. Champagne corks flew in celebration and – watch out Ireland, ready or not here we come!

And wow, what a fabulously rewarding trip it was. SheSAILS has always been about teamwork, development and, above all, FUN, and whilst the aim was to stretch ourselves and give our all we remained true to this

ethos. The five days of mixed racing on our chartered Benneteau 36.7 *Altair* were testing, demanding, and absolutely sensational. Each day took us out of our comfort zone and stretched us to learn, adapt, and improve. Regatta sailing is a great way to grow both skills and confidence, and we continued the SheSAILS formula of debriefing after each day to expedite this growth. Normally done on board over a glass of bubbles (how else?), this *What did we do well and what can we do better*, session, implemented from our very first SheSAILS regatta, celebrates improvements no matter how small, and brainstorms ways to avoid repeating those ever-present 'incidents', whilst reinforcing the lessons learned from pre-regatta training and focussing on that SheSAILS 'learn, grow, work as a team, go hard and HAVE FUN' philosophy. Our coach, Troy Poulson, would have been very proud of our spinnaker gybes, particularly when under duress! We worked very hard on these in training and managed them, right when we really needed to, swimmingly. Of course, not everything went quite so swimmingly (it's sailing, right?) but Troy would be equally proud of our ability to react quickly and get out of trouble. Yours truly on the bow managed some quite impressive tangles that got us into trouble on more than one occasion, but recovering from incidents, as a team, is one of those unique skills that regatta racing offers, and the lessons learned with every mess-up were priceless.



Of course, event photographers, whilst never seeming to capture your moments of glory, have an uncanny knack of taking a perfect snap of your more inglorious moments! Cork was no exception and, whilst we managed to have a large colour photo of *Altair* tussling with *Jomalija* in the local paper, it was sadly taken at one such moment! I have personally tried to erase the particular moment it captured, but no doubt someone has kept the image for posterity, or perhaps for a future 'what not to do' session.

Another learning curve of this regatta, born of racing a chartered, unfamiliar boat, was fixing, adjusting and adapting gear and equipment on the run. Again, these are priceless skills that make us better yachties and not only help us in future regattas but in all our boating endeavours. As was coming to terms with a four-metre tidal range! Our home waters in Newcastle did not prepare us for such strong tidal flow, and whilst we may be somewhat used to variant weather conditions, racing in tidal extremes was both new and challenging. Locals use these tides well to their advantage but were also, at times, happy to share their insider knowledge. One of the owners of our yacht, competing in another division, very helpfully advised that searching for shallow waters to avoid strong adverse tides may well be useful but, 'Sandbars are slow'.

A major highlight of the regatta was a



**SheSAILS@NCYC Volvo Cork Week Crew:** Kris Anderson (bow), Kath Hall (trim), Mary-Anne Purkiss (pit), Sharon Lovell (brace & navigation), Sam Hickey (mast), Maureen Rae (main), Anika Goninan (trim) and Mary Holley (skipper & helm).



**KRIS ANDERSON** has been sailing for around 10 years and enjoys both racing and cruising. She has raced with SheSAILS@NCYC all-female crews for several years and is a passionate advocate for women's sailing. She also sails regularly with mixed crews and particularly enjoys the longer offshore races, including Southport and Hobart. Kris considers herself fortunate to have had some extraordinary cruising opportunities that have changed her life. After a knock-down en route from Antarctica in 2016 she traded the corporate world for the life of an Ocean Gypsy and has since cruised through Patagonia, crossed the South Pacific from Chile to Australia, set sail for Lord Howe for a barbeque and joined the cruising nomads on the Australian East Coast. She has written several short stories about her adventures, which can be found online under Kris Anderson Ocean Gypsy, and is available for motivational speaking, where her 'Just Say Yes' philosophy and zest for life offers an inspirational message.

stunning start in the 'all-in' harbour race that saw a staggering 77 boats on one start line. Mary Holley held her nerve amongst some serious testosterone-fuelled argy-bargy to give us a blinder of a start. Unfortunately, there was a general recall and the whole thing had to be repeated but, undeterred, our second start was almost as good as our first. Jason (our boat owner of the 'sandbars are slow' fame) had advised Mary that morning to just, 'be ballsy' but was surprised and more than a little miffed to find himself being pushed up by us on the start. 'Jesus, I know I told you to be aggressive girls, but I didn't want yer to be doin' it to me!'. Well done Mary – a magic moment!

Throughout the five days of racing, there were aching bodies, a recovery mission up the mast and kites in the water (yes, that photo), but there were many, MANY of those magic moments. We LOVE those moments – they are why we race! Most of us mastered new positions on the boat, we managed manoeuvres under pressure that we had never done before, and our fabulous skipper Mary brought us together, so well, as a team that we experienced those precious 'gestalt' moments when the whole becomes more important than its individual parts or, as

Mary puts it, we 'Swam together like fish!' Who could ask for more?

Who sails? SheSAILS! You bet she does.

# Where in the world?

Send us your *SisterShip* shirt and bag pics!



LEFT: Wonderful evening with WWSA sisters and my *SisterShip* bag on *MV Miss McKinlay*, at Keppel Bay, Queensland, Australia. JUSTINE PORTER.



ABOVE: Photo taken at Corfu. That bag has accompanied me to many showers after cruising in Scotland and Greece, it has been to the beach in Greece and Italy and had been filled with provisions when we were racing in Cork Race week in Ireland. SAMANTHA HICKEY.



LEFT: MANDY McLEAN wearing her *SisterShip* T-shirt aboard *HM Yacht Britannia*, UK.

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*With Karen Oberg*

## Sweet Sensations

### Exotic fruit desserts

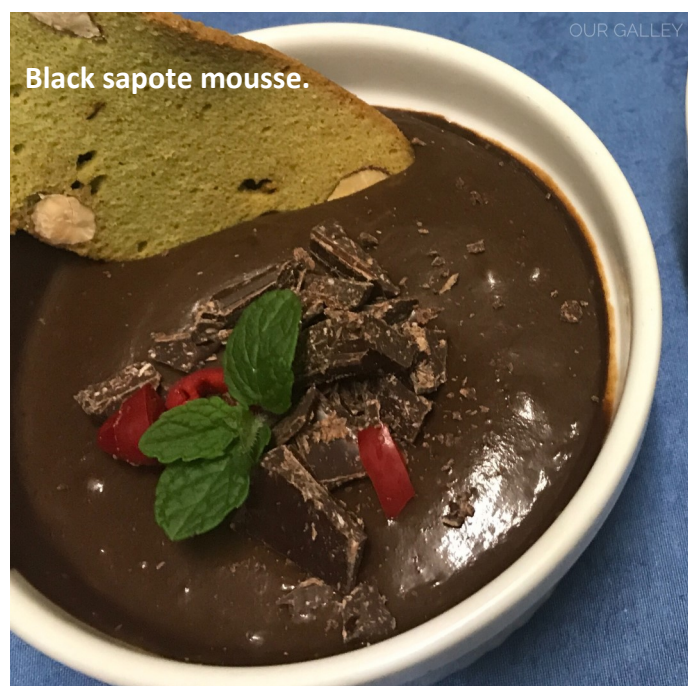
I've always been one of those girls who needs something sweet after dinner. It doesn't need to be fancy, just something to satisfy my sweet tooth. Even more so when we are on long passages. I'm not sure if it is my body telling me I need more energy foods or whether it's because I'm eating at the wrong times of the days and up at strange hours throughout the night. Whatever it is, I need that something extra to brighten my day on long passages.

Let's be honest: Anything that seriously satisfies our sweet-tooth isn't going to be the epitome of a healthy meal. But we can indulge in the sweeter things if we look to our tropical fruits. This is one of the joys of cruising, we get to experiment with new and exciting ingredients we may never have heard of before.

In the galley it always seems harder to make that perfect dessert. I have come up three easy and delectable dessert recipes for you to try. Some of these you can make from canned

and pantry staples, others you will need to obtain tropical fruits from farmers markets as you provision.

Sailing into the tropics opens up a whole new culinary experience, from exotic fruits to weird vegetables these experiences can tantalise your taste buds... but you have to know what these exotics are and how to use them. Let's take a look at a couple of my fruit favourites.



**Black sapote mousse.**

OUR GALLEY

## Black sapote (chocolate pudding fruit)

Not surprisingly this is one of our favourite fruits and if you like chocolate you'll love black sapote! Commonly known as 'chocolate pudding fruit' this amazing fruit is low in fat and an excellent source of vitamin C, containing about four times as much as an orange. As a child I use to devour these fruits just as they are, leaving the chocolate tell-tale signs all over my face. Oh, the joys of being brought up in the tropics. You too will be able to find this wonderful fruit in your local farmers markets up and down the Queensland coast. It doesn't store well so make sure you buy it in different stages of ripeness – bright green and soft means it is ready to eat.

The fruit is so delicious eaten fresh or used as a chocolate substitute in recipes and milkshakes or simply mix the pulp with yogurt and lemon juice for a refreshing treat. Fruits can be cut in half and eaten covered in passion fruit. In Mexico the pulp is mashed with orange juice or brandy and served with cream, it is also delicious mixed with wine, cinnamon, and sugar. The recipe I am going to share with you is Black Sapote Chocolate Mousse. This recipe is super simple and contains only a handful of ingredients from your pantry.

## Black Sapote Chocolate Mousse

Serves 4

### *Ingredients:*

200g black sapote flesh (approx. 2 small sapote)

1/2 tsp vanilla bean paste

1/2 cup coconut cream

1 cup whipped cream (UHT carton cream)

2 tbs raw cacao powder

1 tbs coconut sugar (optional)

4 tsp gelatine

2 tbs boiling water

1/2 tsp salt

### *Let's get Cooking*

Sapote is ripe when bright green and soft to touch. Cut sapote in half removing seeds and fibre around seeds. Scoop out flesh and place in mixing bowl.

Mix gelatine into 2 tbs of boiling water and let cool.

Place vanilla bean paste, coconut cream, cacao powder, coconut sugar, and salt into the bowl with the sapote. Using a blender stick or beaters, start slowly to combine, increase speed, and mix/beat for approx. 4 minutes until well combined creamy and smooth.

Add the cooled gelatine mixture and mix through. Whip the cream and then fold through the sapote mixture. Do not over stir you want the mixture to be light.

Pour into serving bowls/ramekins.

Allow to chill in the fridge for about 2 hours (as best served chilled).

Serve with toasted coconut twills or berries.

### *NOTES:*

If you need to sweeten the mousse, you can add one tablespoon of honey (or maple syrup), but I find that it is sweet enough, especially when the black sapote is ripe. To beat the cream I use Rob's cordless drill with the beater attachment.



## Dates

Another of my go-to pantry favourites is bliss balls. You can make them with many different ingredients however this one packs a sweet punch with the use of dates. Dates are the fruit of the date palm tree, grown in many tropical regions of the world. Depending on the variety, fresh dates are fairly small in size and range in colour from bright red to bright yellow. Medjool and Deglet Noor dates are the most commonly consumed varieties. Some of the rare varieties you will find in the farmers markets include Khalas, Barhi, Dabbas, Lulu, Fard, Khenazi, and Sheesh. Dates are chewy with a sweet flavour. They are also high in some important nutrients and have a variety of advantages and uses. They are always in our pantry staples as they add wonderful flavours to both savoury and sweet dishes.

This is a no-bake recipe and can be made ahead of time and kept in the fridge for that sneaky treat at midnight. For newbies to matcha, and lovers alike, you surely can't go wrong with these pistachio matcha bliss balls. First, they're bliss balls – and everyone loves bliss balls, right? Second, they're packed with nutrients and antioxidants from the matcha, pistachios, dates, and coconut. They're also refined sugar-free and the perfect sweet,

healthy snack. One or two will satisfy your hunger and sweet-tooth in one fell swoop.

## Matcha Date and Pistachio Bliss Balls

Makes 16

Matcha powder is made of finely ground green tea. Given matcha's slightly bitter, somewhat umami, grassy flavour, I'll be the first to admit that it's an acquired taste. BUT, once you fall in love with it, you fall hard. Trust me. And you'll find yourself sprinkling matcha on everything,

### Ingredients

1 1/2 cup (deseeded) dates, soaked in warm water for 10 mins and then drained

1 1/2 cup pistachios, finely chopped

1/2 cup desiccated coconut

2 tbs coconut oil

2 1/2 tbs matcha powder

### Let's get Cooking

In a stick blender food processor add the dates, 1 cup of the pistachios, coconut, coconut oil, and 1 1/2 tablespoons of the

matcha powder – process until well combined.

Scoop 1 tablespoon of the mixture at a time and roll into balls, set aside on baking paper.

Add the remaining 1/2 cup of pistachios and 1 tablespoon of matcha powder to a small bowl and roll all balls in this mixture.

Refrigerate until eaten. Enjoy!

## Lychees

What do you get when you mix the texture of a grape, the skin of a dinosaur, and a mild, fruity flavour that's tough to pinpoint? Lychees. This amazing fruit originates from southern China and was brought to Australia more than 100 years ago by Chinese goldminers. They are a tropical fruit, so are mostly grown in Queensland. In spring and summer, they are abundant in the markets and make the most delectable desserts because of their elegant flavour. Their balance of sweet and tart is perfect. The light, floral taste—some say it's a grape/rose. So,

my final recipe to share with you had to include the lychee. This recipe stars the lychee but also includes a touch of elegance that the fruit warrants.

## Lychee and Lemongrass Jellies with Toasted Pistachio

Serves 4

### Ingredients

1 cup caster sugar

300 ml water

2 vanilla pods split and scraped (or 1/4 tsp vanilla paste)

3 fresh bay leaves

1 tsp salt

2 stalks of lemongrass diced

200 g peeled and seeded lychees (see note)

50 ml lemon juice



4 tsp gelatine  
1/2 cup pistachios, lightly toasted  
1/2 tsp salt flakes  
1/2 tsp ground black pepper

### *Let's get Cooking*

Place the sugar, water, vanilla pods, bay leaves, lemongrass and salt into a small saucepan over a medium heat and bring to a boil. Simmer gently for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow it to cool for 5 minutes.

If using canned lychee – drain. Place half of the lychee flesh in a blender with the lemon juice and puree until they are broken down.

Add to the cooled lemongrass mixture in the saucepan, then purée and mix well. Strain this mix through a fine strainer. You should have about 600 ml liquid.

Soften your gelatine in 1 tbs of boiling water.

Return half the liquid to the saucepan and warm slightly. Add in the gelatine, whisk to combine and then add in the rest of the liquid.

Take 4 nice serving glasses and divide the reserved lychee pieces among them. Pour over the jelly mix. Once the jelly has cooled to room temperature, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate to fully set, about 4 hours.

Place the pistachios in a mortar and pestle and roughly pound with the salt and pepper, making sure to leave some large chunks. Set aside.

When you are ready to serve, remove the glasses from the fridge and serve with the pistachio crumb sprinkled over the top.

**Note:** Canned lychees are also acceptable to use in this recipe. If you don't have fresh lemongrass the zest from one lemon is equal



to two stalks of lemongrass. You can also use lemon zest along with something else that can replicate lemongrass's herbal notes. For example, you can use arugula to provide this aspect of the lemongrass flavour, or herbal lemongrass tea. These alternatives make this a great pantry recipe.

\*\*\*\*\*

So next time you're wanting something sweet, head for your pantry and whip up something a little bit special... you deserve it!

**KAREN OBERG** shares the helm with her husband on their 42' Ketch *Our Dreamtime*. They have sailed many parts of the world, including Asia and the Mediterranean. She has written four books on Cooking in a Galley and writes two blogs; one on their life aboard and one devoted to her passion for cooking. Karen states, 'We eat very well on *Our Dreamtime* but I'm not about slaving away in the galley for hours to feed the crew. I would rather be sitting with a sundowner in hand with everyone else than spending hours at the stove top. Let me share with you how I go about just that and include plenty of tips and easy recipes all of which I have cooked in our galley.'

[www.dreamtimesail.blogspot.com.au/](http://www.dreamtimesail.blogspot.com.au/)

[www.dreamtimesailourgalley.blogspot.com.au/](http://www.dreamtimesailourgalley.blogspot.com.au/)

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## Provenance

NOUN: place of origin or earliest known history.

Used as a guide to authenticity or quality.



SisterShip has a proud provenance, originating in 1988 as a result of a woman solo-sailor's love for the ocean and her desire to connect other women on the water, around the globe.

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# A new boat

**TONIA PARRONCHI**

Recently we have been actively searching for a new floating home. We have always owned sailing boats. In fact, anyone who has read my memoir 'A Whisper on the Mediterranean' will know that my 'Italian-action-man' husband, Guido, persuaded me to set off on our sailing adventures when he took early retirement and our baby son was a toddler. I went from being a complete novice and, if I'm honest, quite terrified (of losing my baby overboard mostly), to loving this way of life. We sold our last sailing boat some years ago when we invested in a large farmhouse in Tuscany, needing restoration. Guido also wanted a boat that he could sail around the world. With our beautiful Contest 40 *Euriklea* we would have needed quite a bit of work to make her ready for this kind of voyage, so we sold her and became land-lubbers for a while.

In the meantime, Guido had a few serious health problems and so it is only now that we can once more contemplate buying a new boat. Needless to say, in all this time, Guido has never stopped researching the most safe and solid boats out there. We've had to amend our idea of what kind of boat we want for several reasons. We find ourselves in economic doldrums because, as soon as we had invested our savings in the old farmhouse ruin-to-restore, Italy plunged into an enormous economic crisis. This meant that we were unable to sell our home in order to renovate the farmhouse. Now we have two

homes, one a wonderful ruin of 380sqm, and a very reduced budget to play with boat-wise. Guido is also now 70 and although he has made a good recovery from his health issues, that obviously influences our choices.

As a result, we are looking for a smaller sailing boat, 33 – 40 foot, solid and safe. We have shelved the idea of adventures around the world (for now) and look forward to sailing in the waters where we buy, either in the UK, France, or other parts of Europe. I tried to persuade Guido to buy a canal boat



and for a while he looked at them with me, but his heart belongs to the sea and aches for the moment when he loses sight of land and embarks on a 'proper' journey.

He presented me with a short-list of sailing boats before Christmas and top of the list was a beautiful Endurance 35 in England. We were in touch with the brokers and planning a trip to the UK at the beginning of the new year to buy her but someone else spotted her potential and dashed Guido's hopes by buying her before we could. It quite spoilt his Christmas! Shortly after we saw a Neptunian 33 for sale in Italy. The photos made it look beautiful so, even though I know very well that the reality is different from a picture, we set off to have a look at her.

People who do not live in Italy are always surprised when I tell them about harsh Tuscan winters. This time, even close to Rome, we manage to find a day with a howling cold wind. We even had some light snow! *Wind Roamer* was in dry dock and as I watched the waves breaking over the harbour wall of the well-protected Riva di Traiano harbour, I was very grateful that we would not be bounced around on the water. Gianni, the broker who took us around, was a giant of a man who was very knowledgeable and, once he had established that Guido was not a

weekend sailor, very hopeful of matching us with this cute little boat.

Standing underneath, we admired the beautiful curve of her hull – not a trace of osmosis and in spite of her age she looked great from that angle. Then we clambered on deck via the wobbly sea-ladder and Gianni unzipped her awning. I realised at once that this would not be the boat for us. She had a lot of potential, but she was tiny. Even with Guido and I inside the galley she would have felt cramped but Gianni the giant had to sit down to get out of the way and avoid the ceiling and I felt claustrophobic.

I could imagine just how pretty she would look once some work was done on her and could see that Guido was getting 'that' look of infatuation in his eyes. However, it was the shape of the cockpit that convinced me that this was all wrong. Being built for northern weather rather than Mediterranean heat, the cockpit was a tight, rigid structure. It would have been a perfect kennel for young Drake, our huge, ever-hungry hound of extremely uncertain parentage, but we would never have been able to stretch out comfortably as we sailed. At our age comfort is important and so, sadly, we said no to *Wind Roamer*, but I hope she soon finds owners who will love sailing in her.



Endurance 35.

So, the search is still on and Guido is definitely in love with the Endurance 35.

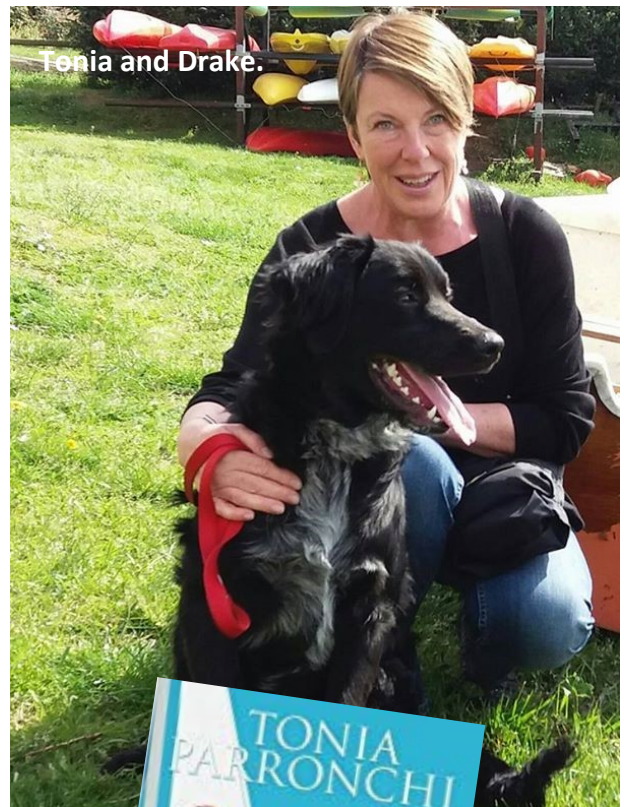
An interesting foot-note is that a young man from our nearest town of Montevarchi, Francesco Cappelletti, overhauled an Endurance 35 called 007 for this year's Golden Globe Race. Eighteen sailors set off from France to sail 30,000 miles, non-stop... alone and with no outside assistance or modern technology! Of course, we were excited about Francesco's undertaking, especially since his choice of boat just confirmed for us that this is the type of boat that will make a fine home for us some time soon. Sadly, Francesco was unable to be ready in time to participate in the race, but he chose to continue the round the globe adventure as an independent Carozzo\* sailor. This meant that he was no longer constrained by the GGR Rules and could carry modern navigation aids including GPS and satellite phone. At the time of writing this article he is off the coast of Africa.

Susie Goodall,\*\* from Britain, the youngest sailor in the race is sixth at the time of writing and is the only woman competing. I'm rooting for her.

\*Named after an Italian competitor in the original 1968 Sunday Times Golden Globe Race, Alex Carozzo. Alex officially left on the final day allowed by the race (31<sup>st</sup> Oct) but spent five days on a mooring finalising preparations to his boat before departing Cowes. He later withdrew from the race at Lisbon due to a medical issue.

\*\*See June issue of *SisterShip* magazine.

**Editor's note:** There is a second Endurance 35 competing in the GGR, *Esmeralda* skippered by Russian Igor Zaretsky. *Esmeralda* is currently lying in 7<sup>th</sup> place as the fleets sails between the Cape of Good Hope and Australia, across the Southern Ocean. At the time of writing Italian Francesco Cappelletti has pulled into Brazil with wind vane issues and Susie is lying 4<sup>th</sup>.



**For Tonia's book click here.**

**TONIA PARRONCHI** was born and grew up in England, where she obtained a degree in English Literature. She then worked in the travel industry and in fashion before moving to Italy in 1990.

She and her husband, Guido live most of the time in Tuscany, which is the setting for her novel 'The Song of the Cypress'. Her memoir of their family sailing adventures, 'A Whisper on the Mediterranean' is also set in Italy, while her humorous novel, 'The Melting of Miss Angelina Snow' is set in the UK, but with a very Italian hero.

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

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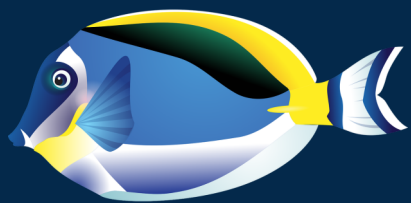
# Pearls of Wisdom



We are trying to use up what we have and then improve. We already have compostable bin liners (not biodegradable as these take years to get rid of), silicon baking sheets instead of baking paper, vegan waxed wraps for bread and cakes, Onya mesh bags for fruit and veg and cloth bags for shopping. Stainless steel water bottles. Rechargeable batteries wherever possible. Shampoo /soap bars. Bamboo cotton buds. Once our toothpaste is out, we are going to start making our own with baking soda and a bit of peppermint oil.

Jo Birch (SV Double Trouble).

**Women Who Sail Australia  
members share their tips for  
living 'green'.**



Carry my own stainless straws and cutlery. Take my stainless steel water bottle everywhere. Use beeswax wraps. Have own cups for takeaway coffee and tea. Take my own bags and vegie bags to the shops. Use fully biodegradable rubbish bags. Using body and beauty products that are 100% organic and in blocks/bars, no plastic bottles where I can. Refill larger water containers for drinking water onboard. Only have tea leaves for my tea, no teabags. Every single, little thing helps. It takes one change for it to snowball.

**Leisa Keats.**



# Pearls

## Continued...

I have always been a bit of a greenie but have learnt so many hints and tips from WWSA women I meet and from sailing the north and south Pacific many years ago. These are some I have used or learnt of recently: Soda Stream instead of single use softdrinks. "Lush.com.au" for shampoo and conditioner. Taking my own coffee cup if I buy a take away coffee. Taking my own container if I think I will need a doggy bag when going out for dinner.

Shayle Woods.

I use 'paint straining' bags from the hardware shops for vegies. Cheap and very useful. Worked in the fridge really well. Cling wrap is the worst—never any second uses. The silicone covers work well.

**Erica Hammond.**

Reuseable bags, hankies not tissues, tea leaves, homemade washing/dishwasher powder, keep cups, cook from scratch in 'bulk' and freeze (pasta sauces, stock etc...), bake biscuits (and really want to master sourdough) on silicon sheets.

Kate Collins.

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

A close-up photograph of a brown booby bird. The bird has dark brown, textured feathers, a very long and pointed, pale-colored beak, and a small, light blue eye. It is perched on a white, slightly curved surface, possibly part of a boat's deck or railing. The background is out of focus, showing more of the white structure and a hint of green. The text 'Justine Porter' is at the top, and 'Roger Booby' is at the bottom in large, stylized letters.

# Justine Porter

## Roger Booby

‘Roger’. I respond to my husband aboard our yacht *Shima* with ‘Roger’ instead of yes, it’s become a staple word, but little did I know that Roger would become a troublesome but delightful visitor.

In July 2016 we sailed to the wonderful island of Sweers in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria, northern Australia, to explore and play with our buddies aboard *Wildcard* and make new and lasting friendships including a brown booby bird with attitude!

On our first day on Sweers Island we were greeted by Tex and Lyn Battle and introduced

to the wonderful history of this now proud fishing resort but upon returning to *Shima*, our Mumby catamaran, we were confronted by a cranky booby bird. He had traversed our decks leaving parcels of poop everywhere! Glen went on deck to shoo him away, but he obstinately stood his ground, fluffed his feathers, and squawked angrily stating that he had claimed our decks. I laughed as Glen retreated, quite defeated. This bird was not to win on my watch so I got a broom to protect myself from his sharp beak and stoic attitude, and swept him gently along the deck down the steps and onto our sugar scoop, but he

just wouldn't budge at the edge, teetering holding that last piece of deck! I figured he could do little harm down there and gave up. He looked quite proud, head held high, and carefully watched our movements!

The next morning we again went ashore to look for the remnants of Matthew Flinders visit in 1802. This island is steeped in wonderful history, but unbeknownst to us

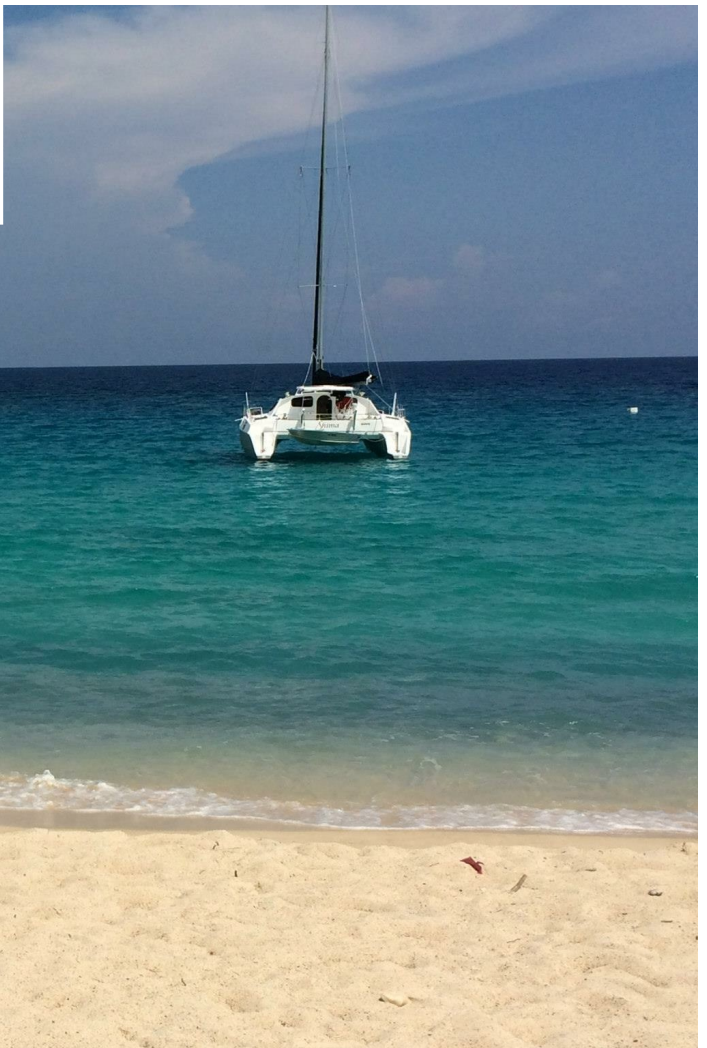
that booby-with-a-wonky-wing-feather was causing mischief back aboard!

On our return this tenacious and persistent booby had adorned our decks in poop again. Now bird poop is one thing, but booby poop is quite another, unhappy I grabbed my broom and escorted the now very defiant booby down the sugar scoop and gave him a good verbal scolding. As I turned my back he hissed at me; an acknowledgment causing us both to laugh and say, 'Roger' in unison. Our brown booby bird was duly named!

I cleaned the decks and kept looking at him, talking to him and telling him not to come on deck, gave him permission to use the sugar scoop but sternly delivered the rule book. He jumped up the first step to look at us, but I grabbed the broom and pushed him to the bottom step but no further this time, he nodded his head and looked thoughtful, did he understand?



Roger Booby.



Justine, Glen, and Shima.

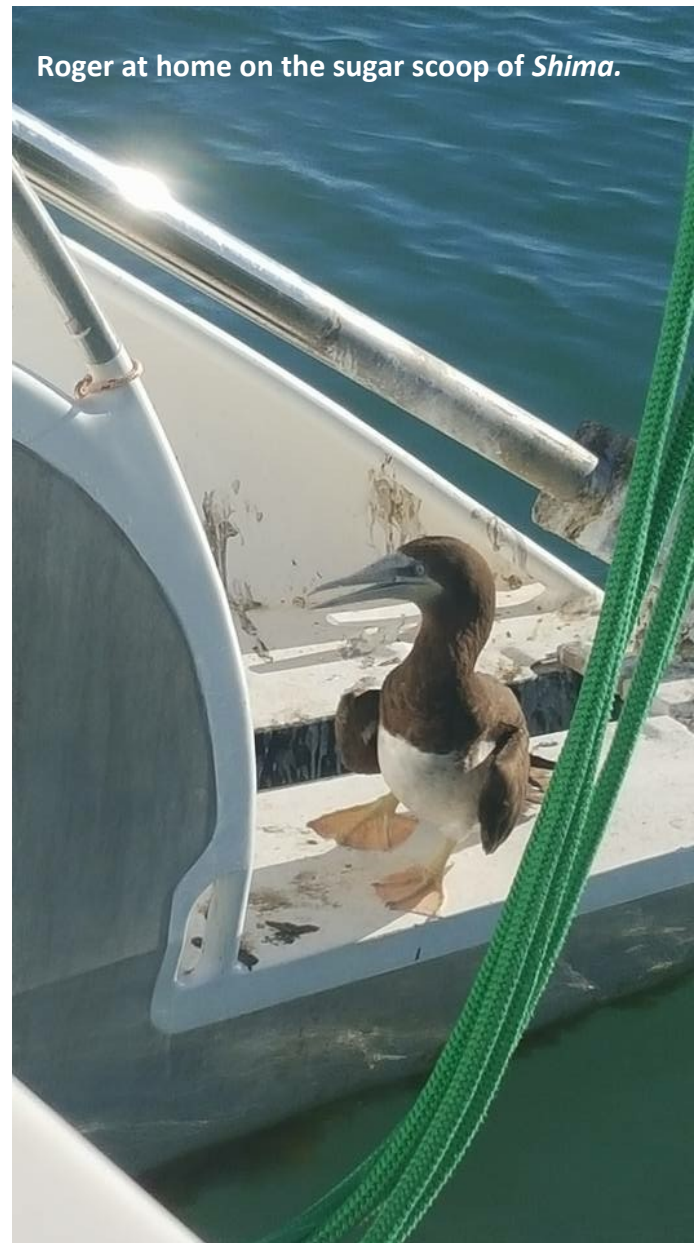
That night he tucked his head into his wonky wing and slept safely aboard *Shima*. In the morning we leaned over to see him sleeping and in unison said, ‘Good morning Roger,’ he jerked awake and watched our morning routine with interest. We watched him survey the sparkling waters then take off, swooping and diving catching fish for breakfast nearby and amazingly he flew back to *Shima*. This time he looked at us and remembered his lesson, adjusted his wonky but beautiful wings, lined up our sugar scoop and landed quite precisely looking chuffed with himself. We applauded him.

For the next three weeks this became his routine – he never attempted to come onto our decks again, happy pooping, resting, and fishing from our sugar scoop. He certainly made a mess down there, but we were happy with our arrangement. He had attitude but seemed to respond to our chats, at times he would poke his bottom over the edge and send those big wet poops to sea.

Our time at Sweers came to an end and it was time to set sail and continue our exploration of the gulf. Roger looked perplexed as we prepped the sails, cocking his head watching intently but firmly stationed in his spot. As we motored off he teetered on the edge using his wings for balance, eventually we increased our speed and the sloshing water on the scoop forced him to take flight. He circled around us saying his goodbyes. We felt sad to go as we had become quite fond of him but the story doesn’t quite end here!

### The deportation

Oh no, that Roger really did have spunk, he found a new boat to poop on – he chose MV *Solomon* to be a naughty stowaway aboard. This is the main charter vessel for the resort, named after another famous explorer, and the resort owners were not impressed with his pooping ways.



Roger became a menace, biting guests and stealing bait and generally tormenting them. So the skipper took Roger to the opposite side of the island and deposited him on the northern tip. The plan, however, was foiled as Roger did not like his new digs, flying all the way back and arriving at sunset just in time to deliver his trademark poops after the boat had been washed for the day. He tried desperately to resume his spot on MV *Solomon* but the owners of Sweers were just as determined that he should go. Over a few of their famous and delicious tawny Ports a cunning scheme was devised. Roger was encouraged the next day into a large box, they quickly taped it shut and his deportation from Sweers became official.

The propellers of a light plane whirled, and the pre-flight checks were made with a rather large brown box strapped into the backseat. Roger was probably wondering what all this fuss was about!

The landing was smooth at Burketown about 40nm away, Roger's transition to the mainland was complete. They selected a nice area where other brown boobies soared on the winds and released him. Cheers abounded the deportation a success, Roger and his wonky wing appeared happy and unharmed!

Over the following fortnight the stories of Roger's shenanigans were shared with laughter, and maybe some sadness, at the Sweers Island bar. His squawking pecking ways, his indignant stance but most of all how that bird could poop.

At sunrise one morning a brown booby with a wonky wing flew low and slow over the resort and landed nearby on the beach. As the guests and workers came down to go fishing for the day, there he was. Roger was back. His distinctive wonky wing feather obvious, and an assurance it really was him. He looked longingly at the boats, the deportation maybe did achieve something as he certainly had learnt a lesson. He kept on the outskirts but continued to fish and love his home with only the occasional deposit on



a boat as a cheeky reminder that he was still there!



**JUSTINE PORTER** lives aboard her Mumby 48 catamaran with her husband Glen 'coddwompling' for the past three years. Justine is an admin of the WWSA group.



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

### GO EAST

CRUISERS RALLY  
AUSTRALIA TO NEW CALEDONIA

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The **Down Under Rally** believes that New Caledonia is the best-kept secret in the Pacific.

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



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

### GOWEST

CRUISERS RALLY TO AUSTRALIA

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

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

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

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# Upon a painted ocean...

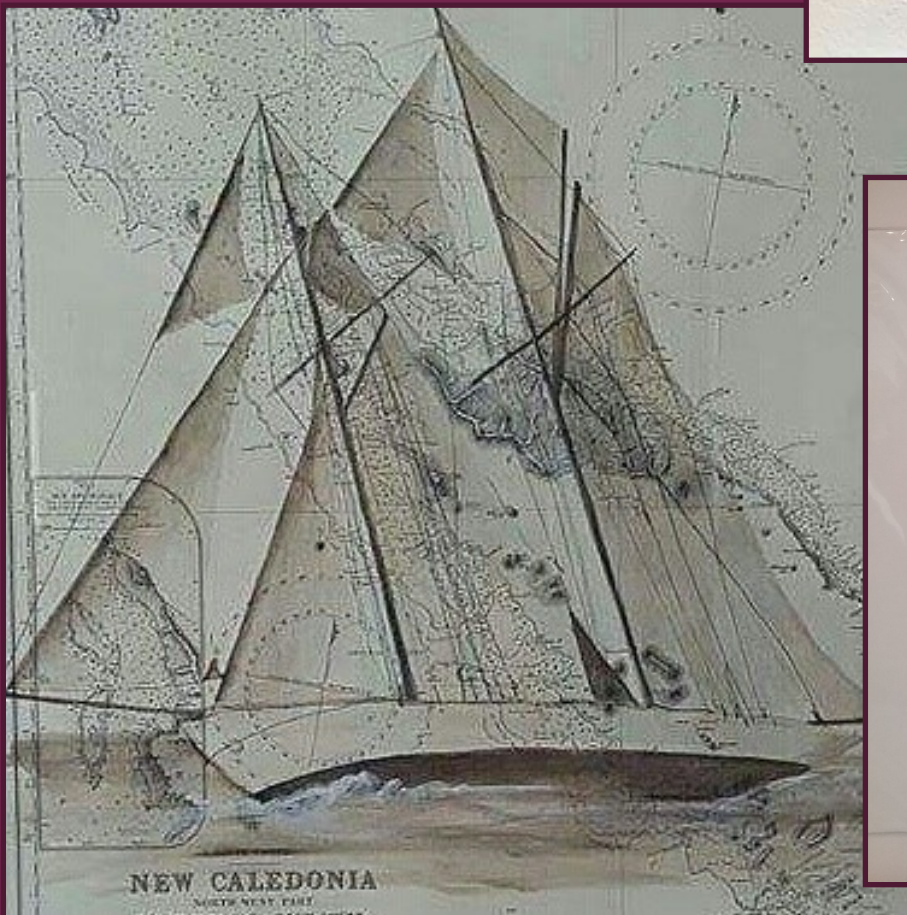
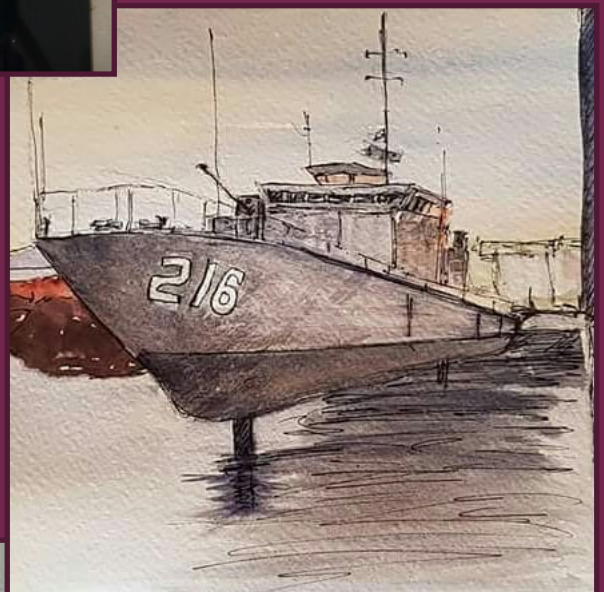
Marion Hughes

I am an artist and a newby sailor living in Gladstone, Queensland, Australia.

I have been painting for many years and one of the things I paint is yachts on old nautical charts. They are painted in watercolour but transparently, so you can still see the chart detail underneath. I am open to commissions, your yacht/boat on your chart, but the charts have to be the old style. I paint other nautical subjects if asked. I also paint nautical mugs. I also teach art and travel to where my students are rather than organising it in my own backyard.

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

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



### Leafy sea dragons and Rapid Bay Jetty, South Australia

#### Wendy Johnson

In July 2015, my partner Alex and I found ourselves on a wild and wintry day looking along the Rapid Bay Jetty in South Australia knowing it was somewhere we needed to return to with our diving gear at the ready.

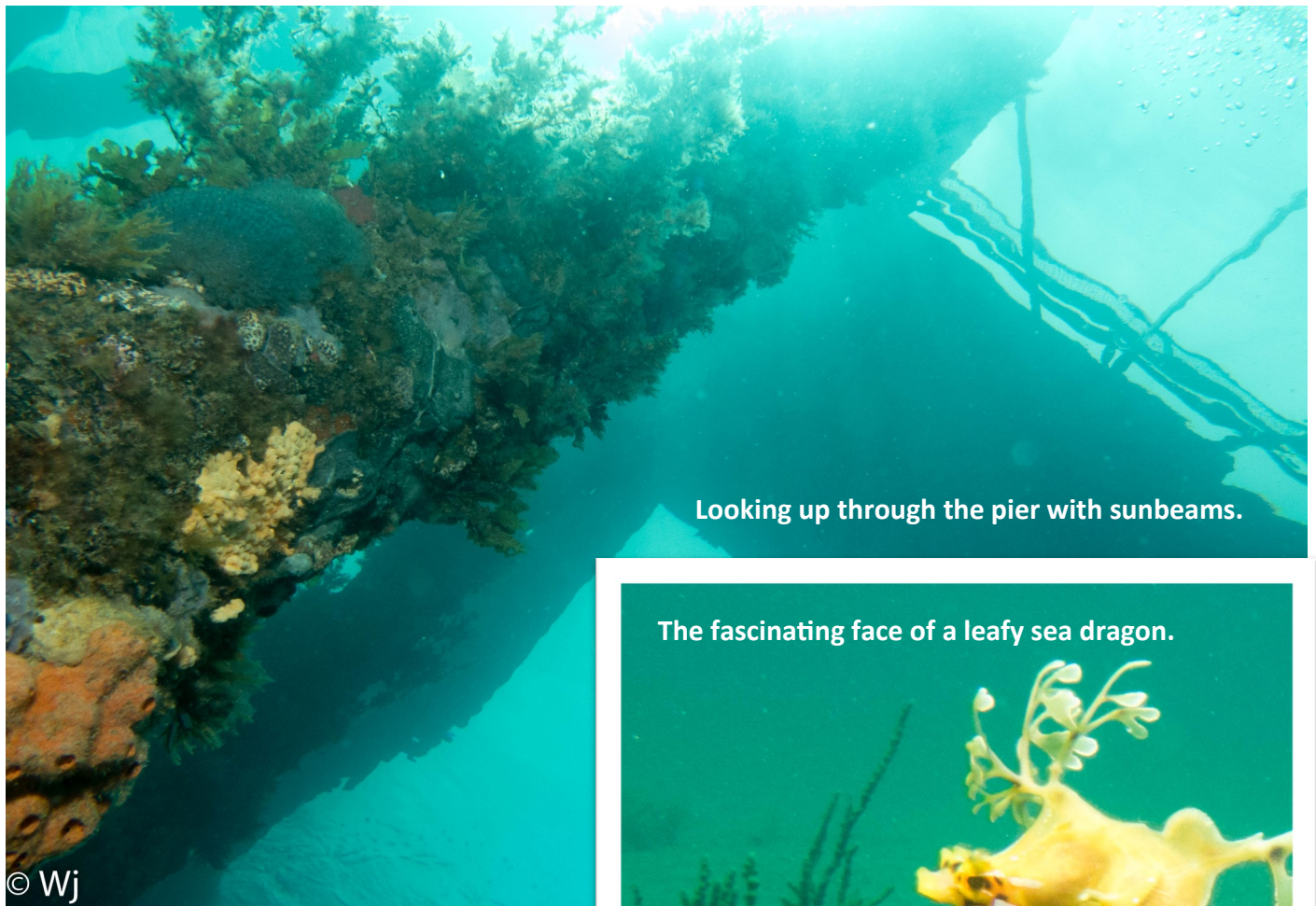
We had expected to be on a boat, with others from our home in Newcastle, heading to the Neptune Islands to dive with white sharks. The boat trip however was cancelled due to extreme weather conditions so, stranded in

Adelaide, we grabbed the opportunity to hire a car and uncover what the coast south of the city had to offer.

More than two years later, in November 2017, we finally returned for a weekend exploring Rapid Bay Jetty from below. High on our list was our quest for the leafy sea dragon which is known to inhabit the area and is affectionately referred to as the 'leafy'.

Male leafy sea dragon.





Looking up through the pier with sunbeams.

© Wj



The fascinating face of a leafy sea dragon.

© Wi



Male leafy sea dragon blending in to his surroundings.

© Wj

Our return saw clear blue skies and hot temperatures, very different conditions to our previous visit, and our anticipation rose as we neared the jetty. The original jetty, built for loading large ships with ore, is slowly tumbling into the water but the South Australian government has rebuilt a new jetty parallel to it. The new jetty is used most frequently by fisherman and divers and, reaching far into the bay, it provides ready access to the dive site. The water was crystal clear and the pebbly bottom visible as we looked over the edge on our walk to the access point.

We anticipated this area to be a fabulous dive site and it was. While our preparations focused on the quest for the 'leafy' we found so much more. Rapid Bay is very special indeed.

Our dives, for the most part, followed the old jetty with the fallen structures providing a scaffold for masses of vegetation. Sunbeams

highlighted a broad spectrum of colours. The clear blue water was teeming with fish life, colourful sponges, and plant growth. First and foremost in our minds was finding the elusive 'leafy.' It didn't take too long and leafy sea dragons quickly became one of my favourite marine creatures. We found one about 30cm long which had quite recently released his eggs, like sea horses the male sea dragons carry the eggs. A little later we found a female nearby, but that was it for the rest of the day despite a total of two hours



Wendy swimming with a female 'leafy'.

© Wj

Colourful sponges on poles creating an underwater forest.



© Wj

underwater.

'Leafys' are elusive, incredibly elegant, and yet quite peculiar. They drift along very slowly while fluttering their little fins, seemingly without any concern for divers. The buttery yellow creatures are easily mistaken for the weeds where they make themselves a home, floating in the current.

Having completed the 'leafy' quest, we continued to search for more creatures. The variety of fish, star fish, and crabs was immense with several different species from the usual east coast critters we are familiar with. Notably, we found a number of different types of crabs, some of them brazenly in the open munching on quite large fish and others wearing fascinating and very attractive grass 'hats'.

Meandering through and under the physical structures was enchanting; following schools of fish and interacting with the myriad of sea life. The reasonably shallow site (less than 10 metres) and warm water enabled long and relaxing dives, a perfect tonic to the stressors of work and everyday living.

On day two we returned with a local guide, Sharon from *Diving Adelaide*, in the hope that local knowledge would reveal more of the unique findings and, of course, more 'leafys'. With Sharon's help we found a total of nine 'leafys', all of them where we had been unsuccessfully looking the day before. Once you know how and where to look the sea dragons are much easier to spot.



This site has so much to offer and will long be remembered as a place of great beauty and the home of diverse and fascinating marine creatures. It goes down on my list of favourite dives and I would recommend it to divers of all levels.



**WENDY JOHNSON** is a qualified Dive Control Specialist with a passion for interacting with marine creatures big and small in their natural environment. Until recently Wendy has lived in Newcastle, NSW, working for over 20 years as a nurse manager.

Recently Wendy and her husband Alex have moved aboard their yacht *Ansoba* and are embarking on a cruising lifestyle, starting with a trip to New Caledonia in May with the Down Under Rally. On this journey Wendy's aim is to experience as much of the marine environment above and below the water as possible armed with her underwater camera.

# T POINT TO CAPE LIPTRAP INCLUDING WESTERN PORT

FROM LATEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN R.A.N. HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE 1967.

Based on Australian Geodetic Datum 1966.

Underlined figures express, in Feet, Drying Heights above Chart Datum.  
All other Heights are expressed in Feet above Mean Higher High Water  
For abbreviations see Admiralty Chart 5011.

SOUNDINGS IN FATHOMS

(Under Eleven in Fathoms and Feet)

NATURAL SCALE 1 : 150,000 (at Lat. 38° 38')

Projection — Mercator

# Watercolours



LEFT: Crab with grassy hat  
-a clever disguise! Taken by  
WENDY JOHNSON, at Rapid  
Bay jetty, South Australia.

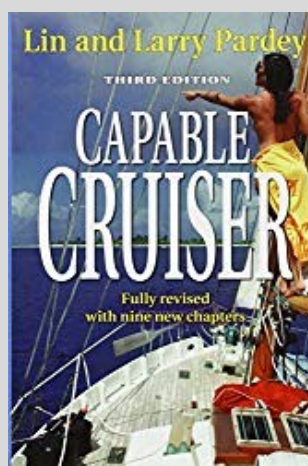
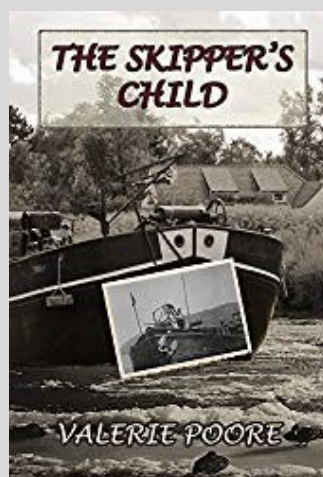
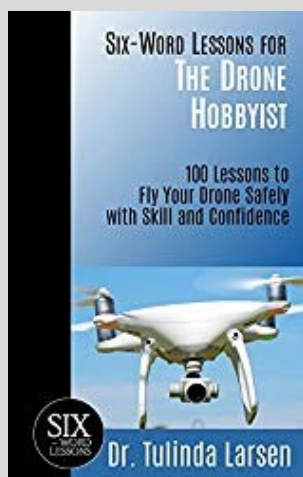
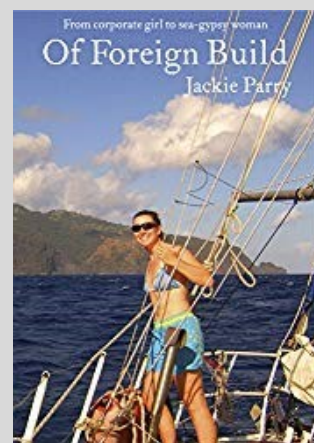
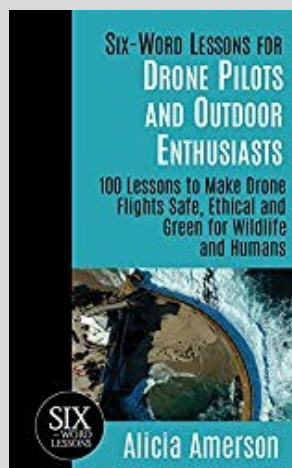
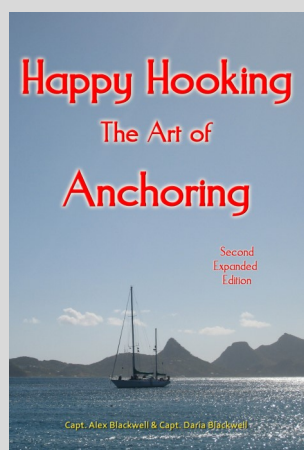
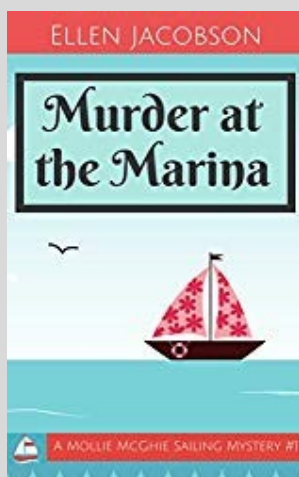
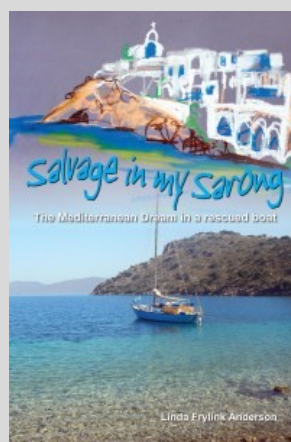
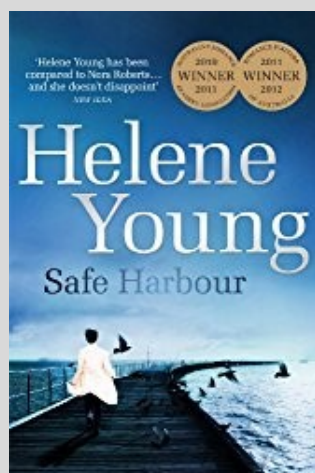
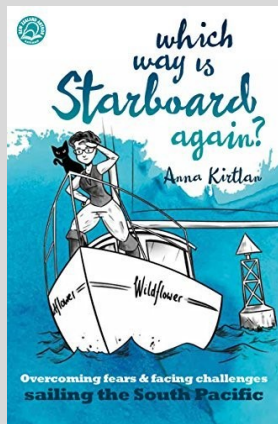
BELOW: Humpback whale and  
calf, Tonga.  
Taken by JO BIRCH.

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



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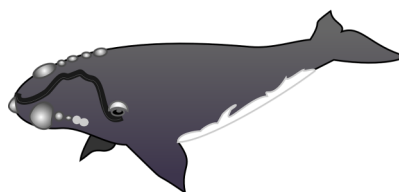
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