

September/October 2020



SisterShip

women on the water

Norway

SAILING OCEAN FOX

Return to Dinghy Sailing

Video blogging

Dreaming of
a Rolex Sydney to Hobart Race?

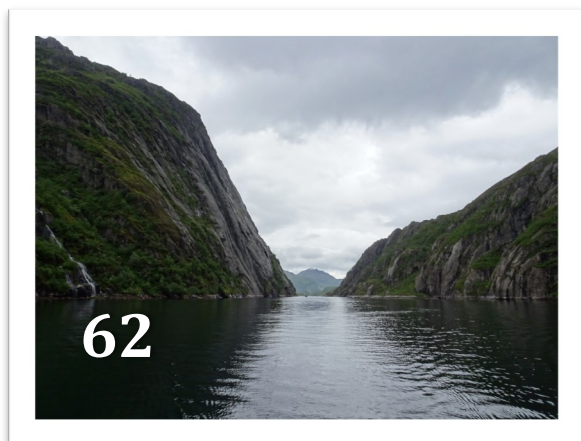
STAND UP PADDLEBOARDING

PLUS Barge Boats, Sustainable Sailing, and much more!

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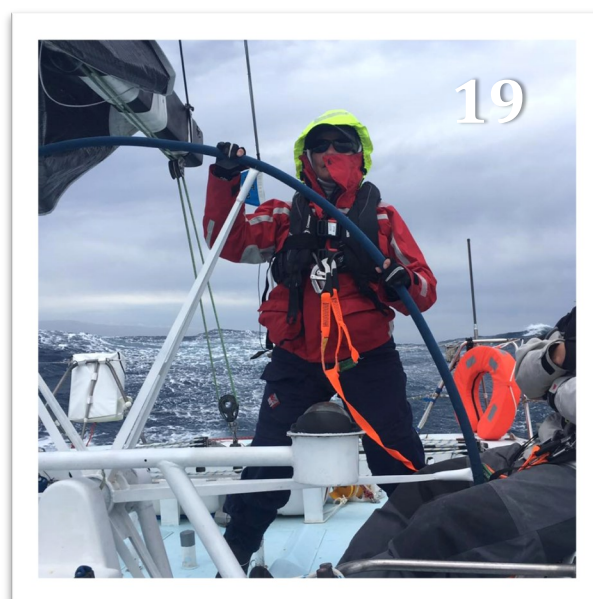
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The bowsprit

From the editor



Did 'video kill the radio star'?

What does a song released in the late 70s have to do with this issue? Nothing, and perhaps everything. Recently I was chatting with colleague and friend Phil Ross, editor of *Cruising Helmsman* magazine here in Australia (and supporter of *SisterShip*). We were discussing the rise of video blogging (vlogging) and its impact on the printed word. There would be very few of us who don't enjoy sitting down to watch a sailing vlog now and then, or even regularly.

Why then, with the multitude of YouTube sailing channels to choose from, should you subscribe to a magazine?

If you are like me, you'll choose a vlog based on the type of boat, the locations being visited, and perhaps form a bond of sorts (or not) with the people on board. All deliberate choices.

However, opening the pages of a magazine, to quote a well-known Beatles song, you, 'roll up for the magical mystery tour'. You never know where the issue will take you. Take this issue of *SisterShip* for example; who would link sorghum (a plant) to sailing (much less intentionally google it)? Yet the 'magical mystery tour' finds us in Flores (Indonesia)

with a heart-warming tale of locals starting a new venture with a little support from cruisers.

Will video kill the magazine stars (I like to think we are one!)? Time will tell, but I am optimistic that we can complement each other. To this end, we are introducing a new regular feature – '*SisterShip* watches...' helmed by successful YouTuber and circumnavigator Amy Alton. Let us know what you think.

You may notice a few of our regular contributors still missing. Unfortunately COVID-19 continues to play havoc around the world. Some of our writers are health care professionals and naturally their time is devoted to more pressing matters than our 'magical mystery tours'. Our thoughts are with them and we thank them for their tireless work on the front line. Hopefully we'll see them back here in the near future, after a well-deserved rest of course.

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

Shelley Wright

Sailing *Ocean Fox*

Interview With Carla Fowler

By Erin Carey

Carla Fowler proposed the idea of sailing around the world to her second husband just two days after their wedding. To her astonishment, Simon, a retired events manager, said yes! Although Carla wasn't a sailor and had virtually no experience with boats, something about the endless sunshine and deserted palm tree-lined islands enticed her. Later she would learn, after 25,000 nautical miles at sea, that it wasn't all sunshine and palm trees. However, Carla grew to love the cruiser lifestyle and can now confidently call herself a sailor.

Over the last two and a half years, Carla and Simon have completed two trans-Atlantic crossings and visited more than forty countries, many of them far-flung islands of the Western Caribbean. During our interview, Carla shared the many sacrifices they had to make in order to achieve their dream of

buying a yacht and sailing away, including selling their home and almost everything they owned. They also had to convince their adult children that they weren't making a terrible mistake.



Last month, Carla and Simon made landfall in Viana do Castelo, in northern Portugal, the very town in which Carla lived most of her adult life. Returning via yacht after thousands of miles at sea was a momentous achievement for the retired personal assistant, who was working five jobs before they set sail.

Carla and Simon are hosts of a popular YouTube channel called *Sailing Ocean Fox*. With a loyal and dedicated following, the couple share the realities of living on a boat and all that entails. Perhaps it's their kind, down-to-earth nature, their positive outlook on life or the fact that they do all of their own boat work. Either way, Carla and Simon are proof that it's never too late to set lofty goals and achieve them. Follow their story as they continue down the coast of Portugal, head into the Mediterranean and make their way towards Egypt and the Red Sea.

What are three words that describe you?

Strong. Determined. Thoughtful.

What is something that most people wouldn't know about you?

I am a mathematician, I love maths. I even took my degree in the subject. I have never used it apart from adding up the petty cash!

Did you grow up sailing and did you always dream of living on a boat?

When we decided to make this a way of life, I definitely wasn't a sailor. As a child, I grew up first in Angola and then in Brazil, my parents always had motorboats for fishing. When we moved on to *Ocean Fox*, my sailing experience was one weekend in the Solent and a five-day sailing course in Spain. As you can imagine, it was a huge step up, to go from there to crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

RIGHT: Carla and Ocean Fox.

What are some of the challenges you faced when preparing for your life afloat?

Disposing of everything was very difficult. All the things we kept were put into a twenty-four square foot storage room. Everything else had to go. We had one week from being given a completion date on the house, to moving out. We just could not get rid of stuff quickly enough and gave a lot away.

What/who inspired you to sell all of your possessions and buy a boat?

I was born to Portuguese parents in Angola. At the time of the revolution in 1977, my family left Angola and moved back to Portugal. Shortly after we moved to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where I spent my teenage



years and went to University. During my early twenties, I moved to San Francisco in the USA for three years. I returned to Rio and with my husband, we had my first daughter, Jessica. In 1992 we felt it was getting too dangerous to stay in Rio, so the whole family moved once again back to the town of Viana do Castelo in northern Portugal. Here I set up my own estate agency. The housing market suffered a lot in Portugal and so in 2011, I decided to move to the UK, arriving just after the new year in 2012 in a very cold London.

I guess I have always been a roamer, a traveller, with a need to visit different countries and experience different cultures. I also love the sun. Now we have the best of both worlds, we can travel, we have visited forty countries and a myriad of islands, but we take our home with us.

BELOW: Carla and Simon.

Tell us about your boat, what made you choose a Lagoon 400?

Originally my husband Simon wanted to buy a monohull, and the plan was to also buy an apartment in the UK to rent out. But when we were talking with the skipper on the sailing course, he suggested a catamaran would be a better boat for the adventure. To start with, my husband was not at all interested, but I managed to talk him into going to the south coast of England one weekend for a look. We were both sold on a cat immediately. The space is simply amazing for a forty-foot boat. And you do not have to spend your sailing life at thirty degrees or swinging around at anchor.

In late 2017 we decided to go to the Cannes boat show in France to look at all the different catamarans on the market, even though we could not afford a new one. We decided we were going to buy a Lagoon and in particular a 440. In January 2018, we put a



deposit down on a boat in Sardinia, but the owner pulled out of the deal at the last minute. We nearly bought one in the UK but they had a better offer, so that fell through as well.

One week before we were going to be homeless, Simon found a Lagoon 400 in Croatia. The next day I sent him off to buy the boat, “....and don’t come home unless you have bought it,” I laughed as I dropped him off at Heathrow airport. He was good to my word. Ten days later we were in Austria with the owners signing the paperwork and that day we moved into our new home.

You and your husband Simon started a YouTube channel called *Sailing Ocean Fox*. What made you decide to share your adventure with the world?

We had been following some sailing channels on YouTube while we were waiting to go on our trip, and found them very motivating, informative, and inspiring. We thought to ourselves, “we can do that too”. But there were two primary reasons, firstly we wanted to share our life with our children left back in the UK. My two girls are 24 and 28, and Simon’s daughter is 27, and his son is 24.

Secondly, we had spent so much money buying *Ocean Fox* (cats cost a lot more than monohulls), that we would not be able to support our lifestyle for more than one year had we not found a way to make money. YouTube does provide some revenue in return for placing adverts on your channel. But the game-changer for us has been Patreon. Patreon is a website where people sponsor you each month for a little as \$4. With our channel, they get to see an additional program each week, “For Your Eyes Only”, where we let them inside our life a little more. At present we do not make enough money to support our lifestyle but it has stopped the haemorrhaging of dollars. Maintaining the boat is a big expense, and we try to do everything ourselves, which is a

benefit for the viewers too.

We also love the interaction on social media, which we never thought we would. And, if we inspire other people to take the leap and follow their dreams, then, of course, that is the ultimate bonus.

How much work is involved in running a successful YouTube channel?

A lot! There are a lot of sailing channels out there, so you have to promote your channel in order to grow. Simon has a blog on Facebook which he writes each day, called ‘Sailing Ocean Fox’. I have a healthy eating blog on Instagram called ‘Healthy Onboard’. Our day starts with both of us writing our blogs then sharing the blogs across many different sites. We then have to shoot some footage, it is best to do some each day. By late morning we are replying to all the comments made on our blogs and on YouTube, we feel it is important to go back to people as they have invested in their time



to write to us. Each day we also film a short video clip for our Patreons, so they know what we're doing.

Simon edits the main YouTube program and I make the one for Patreons. It takes us about two days to make a program each week on our Apple Mac. Before you know it, it is almost a full-time job but we find it very rewarding. Having a YouTube channel has helped to make this life on the water more fun, we could not give it up now, it is a way of life for us.

You've been sailing for 2.5 years and covered 25,000 nautical miles. What have been some of your most memorable experiences?

This question has endless answers, but at the top of the list has to be the people we have met along the way. From our new lifelong sailing friends to some of the people that gave up their time to show us their country. Los Roques was a stunning archipelago of islands off the coast of Venezuela, I will never forget being on those remote islands. Crossing the Atlantic both ways was a great achievement, something I am very proud of.



You have an interesting pet on board, can you tell us about him?

We have a naked cat! I always wanted a cat but Simon is allergic to cats and dogs. While researching alternatives, I came across a website about Sphynx cats. I thought It could be the perfect solution, even though they are still are not necessarily hypoallergenic. The Sphynx cat, as a breed, was developed through selective breeding, starting in the 1960s in Canada and the Netherlands. They display a high level of energy, intelligence, curiosity, and affection for their owners. They are more dog-like than a cat, frequently greeting their owners at the door and friendly when meeting strangers. Dobby will sit on demand, go inside when he is told, will play and fetch, and is very affectionate.

Staying fit and eating healthy is important to you. Has this been a challenge while living on a boat and what advice do you have for ladies hoping to do the same?

This is not difficult for me as I changed my diet six years ago. Eating healthy is a lifestyle choice, you basically choose what you eat. What I did find difficult was the limited variety of vegetables in the Caribbean. For example, it was difficult to buy bananas, would you believe that? By the time we got to Bermuda, there wasn't a single banana on the island! Sweet potatoes were another vegetable that was in short supply all over the place. And in Cuba, it was almost impossible to buy anything.

Eating a healthy diet is not about strict limitations, staying unrealistically thin or depriving yourself of the foods you love. Rather, it's about feeling great, having more energy, improving your health and boosting your mood. My advice is to become more aware of what you're putting into your body. Develop an awareness around how much you're eating and understand the nutritional value of each piece you put into your mouth,

that way, when you eat with intention, you crowd out the bad foods and feel great as a result.

What are your top tips for women over 55 who want to embark on an adventure of their own?

Be brave, make the decision to go, then just do it. We tend to find reasons not to follow our dreams, dreaming is very important in order for us to make things happen, to accomplish our goals. Life is just too short not to do something special.



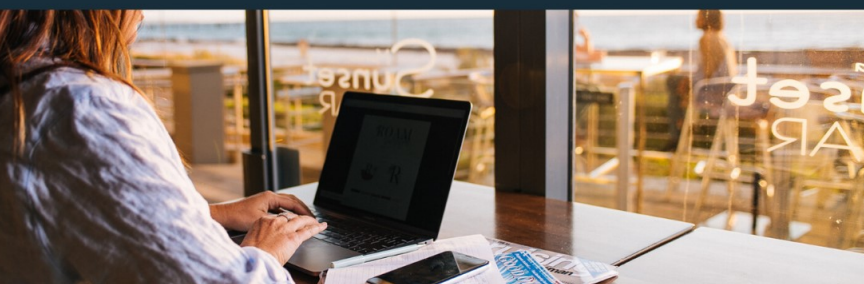
Hailing from the land down under, Erin and her family recently cruised the Caribbean for two years before crossing the Atlantic Ocean aboard their Moody 47 named *Roam*. Erin now runs her own PR and communications company called Roam Generation, helping fellow sailors and adventurers share their unique and inspiring stories.

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SisterShip Watches ...

By Amy Alton

We're introducing a new column to *SisterShip Magazine*! In future issues we'll explore sailing channels on YouTube and the women behind them.

In March of this year, I completed a world circumnavigation on my catamaran, *Starry Horizons*. A considerable aspect of our trip was filming our adventure – we've published over 150 video episodes during our six-year journey, plus informational videos like [how we set up our catamaran to sail around the world](#). We are the first channel to document a sailing circumnavigation from start to finish.

When my husband and I started our YouTube videos, sailing channels were rare. *Sailing La Vagabonde* uploaded their first video the same week we did, and *Delos* had thirty-something episodes out. Since then, YouTube sailing channels have exploded. Sailing-channels.com has hundreds of channels listed on their website, while dozens of channels make a full-time living from their videos. *Sailing La Vagabonde* has grown mainstream, with almost one-and-a-half million

subscribers.

Our channel is moderately successful at 21,000 subscribers. We've maintained the attitude throughout our travels that our videos will be a way to memorialize our trip. Hopefully, we'll be watching these videos with fond memories when we're octogenarians.

In the next issue of *SisterShip*, I'll dive into an interview with a woman who, with her partner, creates and publishes YouTube videos. For now, let's look at the basics of videos and what's made them so popular.

WHO WATCHES SAILING CHANNELS?

With the trend to cut cords and transition away from cable services to subscription services such as Netflix, YouTube has become an increasingly popular method of entertainment at a low cost to viewers.

One billion hours of videos are watched daily on YouTube. Our channel alone is responsible for over 360,000 hours of watch time in our lifetime. While the US is responsible for 36% of our views, the rest

come from over sixty countries.

“Where are the women? Ninety percent of our watches come from men.”

Based on our viewer interactions, there are two main groups of viewers watching sailing channels: those viewers who have an active plan to take off into the sunset on their voyage, and sailors who find the adventure intriguing but cannot or will not go on their own journey.

Why should people be watching sailing channels? For would-be cruisers, sailing channels offer a realistic view of what life is like while sailing. We’ve always been upfront about the best and worst parts of our lifestyle, and it can be a great insight into whether or not someone would like cruising. Many videos are educational. When I had to remove and clean the transducer from our hull, I couldn’t find a video showing me what the process entails – more specifically, how much water would start coming through the

hole I was opening up. So, I made a video! Anytime we need to do a boat project, we search YouTube first to find a channel that gives us a visual aid with which no blog can compete.

And finally, sailing channels open up a world that is entirely different from a typical travel channel. Sailors are more apt to visit remote locations and interact with the local community. Some of the top channels, with their top-of-the-line gear and professional production quality, are competitive with documentaries. With hundreds of channels to choose from, it’s easy to find a channel to enjoy.

INVESTING IN YOUR CHANNEL

Many sailing channels are started and quickly abandoned, primarily because it’s a lot of work. YouTube algorithms reward channels that publish often. Some vloggers recommend at least once a week, though daily vlogs get quickly promoted, too.

For our videos, which we try to keep between



fifteen and thirty minutes, we dedicate thirty to forty hours of work, not including filming. We often set up multiple cameras for a single shot or have to retake shots over and over again. Filming an outro for a video may take one take – or seven!

“Restricted internet limitations are another roadblock to having a successful channel. In many places cruisers visit, the internet is cost-prohibitive and very slow.”

For example, the internet in Seychelles was \$12 a gigabyte. Our videos are typically two or three gigabytes, even at 1080p. In Niue, we left our laptop running for forty hours to upload a video.

Gear is another matter. While you can start a sailing channel with something as simple as an action cam like a Go Pro, to create quality videos, you'll need multiple cameras and

accessories. On a sailing boat, wind and movement are a challenge, so we invested in cameras with stabilizers and a 'dead cat': a furry microphone cover that blocks out wind noise. Add in drones (yes, multiple), microphones, clamps, lenses, filters, and it all starts to add up. A few of the larger channels either have a videographer background (*Gone with the Wynns*) or have taken courses (*Sailing La Vagabonde*).

Check out [a comprehensive list of the photography and videography gear we use aboard *Starry Horizons*](#).

HOW DO SAILING CHANNELS MAKE MONEY?

One of the most popular ways sailing channels make money is through Patreon. The premise of Patreon is that your fans support your channel via a membership. In exchange for a monthly or per-episode fee,

Drones produce spectacular images.



they receive exclusive content. Patreon takes a cut of the subscription charges, and the exclusive content means additional work for your channel.

Next is channel monetization via YouTube's platform. There are several options through YouTube for content creators to make money. YouTube has its own Patreon competitor, called Memberships, where subscribers can click "Join" and pay a monthly subscription fee for exclusive content. Merchandise can be sold directly from a YouTube channel. Viewers can become Supers and pay for perks during live videos. Video advertising plays 30-second ads during the sailing video, and in return, the content creator receives a commission on the ad revenue.

How much money can a sailing channel make on YouTube ad monetization? While we don't monetize our channel, we have evaluated the options. According to articles from Forbes, the average ad revenue to content creators is \$5 per 1,000 views. An example channel I looked at, with 80,000 subscribers, would only make an average of a few hundred dollars per video.

The good news is that while sailing videos are a small niche market, the viewers are passionate. An example channel I looked at, with around 80,000 subscribers, has 280 Patreons (.35% of YouTube subscribers). At a minimum of \$2 pledged per video, minus Patreon's cut, and one video a week, this channel is making at least \$27,000 a year. These calculations are an overly simplified view – supporters can select a monthly limit instead of per episode, and not all supporters

will choose the smallest pledge. Those statistics aren't publicly available, so we evaluate the best we can with what we can see.

Videos can additionally receive money from affiliates programs by linking to products in their show notes, sponsored videos in which a company pays them to promote their products, and merchandising by selling tee-shirts or other branded products.

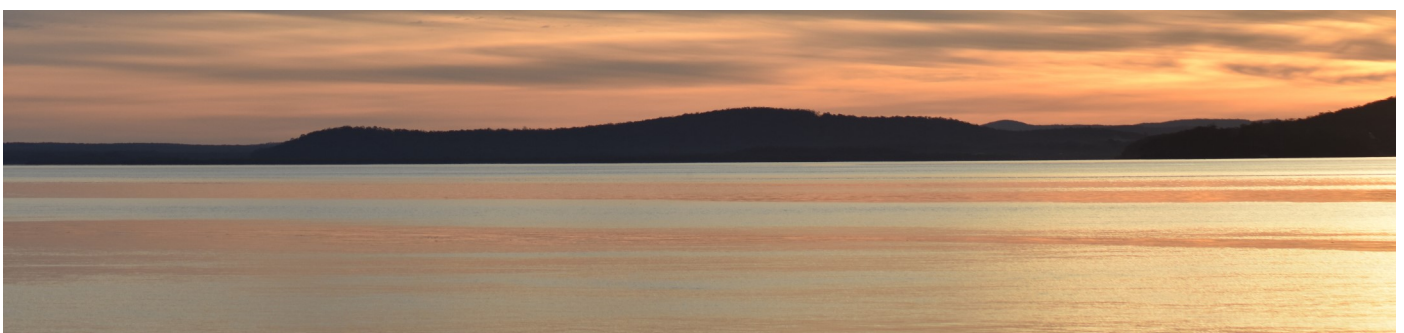
IN THE NEXT ISSUE

We'll chat with a video creator who runs a small channel and talk about what motivates her to keep filming, what makes her channel unique, and why you should tune in!



Amy Alton, in partnership with her husband, shares their journey on their YouTube channel, [Out Chasing Stars](#).

You can also enjoy her writing and photography on their blog, [OutChasingStars.com](#).



Stand Up Paddleboarding



I have a friend in the military. He uses a lot of these ‘Three Letter Acronyms’ - TLAs, he calls them. “Why are they called TLAs and why do they have to have three letters?” I asked him in exasperation, when he had confused me with yet another piece of jargon... “Ahhhh,” he explained smugly, “Because if they didn’t have three letters then they wouldn’t be TLAs...”

Insert eye roll here...



So what the heck is SUP?!

I had seen this term crop up a lot. Turns out it is probably easier to fit on the marketing blurb than the full mouthful of ‘Stand Up Paddleboard’.

People from cultures as far apart as Peru, Hawaii, and Indigenous Australia, have been using boards or rafts to walk on water for hundreds of years, but it is Hawaii where surfing evolved into what we now know as

Stand Up Paddleboarding.

From a sea kayaker’s point of view this seems like a contradiction in itself – although I have seen incredible photos of crazy people standing upright in their kayaks and paddling the turbulent waters at the aptly-named ‘Bitches’ tide race off the coast of Wales...

SUP however, manages to look like a very serene, dignified activity. The marketing blurb usually shows images of slim girls in well-fitting bikinis or moderately muscled blokes in boardshorts, all languidly poling their boards along in a steady, rhythmic action, much like the gondola guys in Venice. It looks easy; it looks relaxing; and it’s supposed to be ‘really good for your core’. I’m into Yoga so I know what my ‘core’ is, and I know I need to use it a lot in my Eskimo Rolling while sea kayaking. I decided I would have to give this SUP a try...

Easier said than done. I live on a small offshore island in Australia’s remote Gulf of Carpentaria. No SUP hire or school up here.



Lyn Battle

ABOVE: Lyn and 'Wally the Walbu' at sunset, Sweers Island.

But we go to the mainland once or twice a year and usually spend a month living on our motor catamaran *Trim* cruising the Whitsundays, so I checked out the possibilities for lessons; lots of opportunities at Hamilton Island and Airlie Beach where we call in for fuel and supplies. However, the weather sucked that trip, and each time we were in port, the strong winds had cancelled the SUP hire/classes.

Funnily enough, it was months later, at a Yoga Retreat in Bali, Indonesia, that I got my chance!

Due to the higher cost of flights from Cairns on weekends, I flew to Bali a day early and opted to stay on the coast at Sanur, before joining the girls at the Ubud retreat centre.

I researched online and found a SUP school quite near to my accommodation. Lessons were held in the early morning, before the sea breeze picked up. I emailed the owner, Jankie, and explained my situation. "You're going to a Yoga Retreat? Then you might like to join my

wife for SUP Yoga at sunset when you arrive!"

"But my SUP lesson is not til the next morning?" I pointed out, "I might spend a lot of time on the board in 'Child's Pose' or worse, falling off – wouldn't that be disrespectful?"

"SUP Yoga is fun! Not serious... Falling off is part of the fun!" he assured me.

Hmmmm...Talk about 'In at the deep end...'

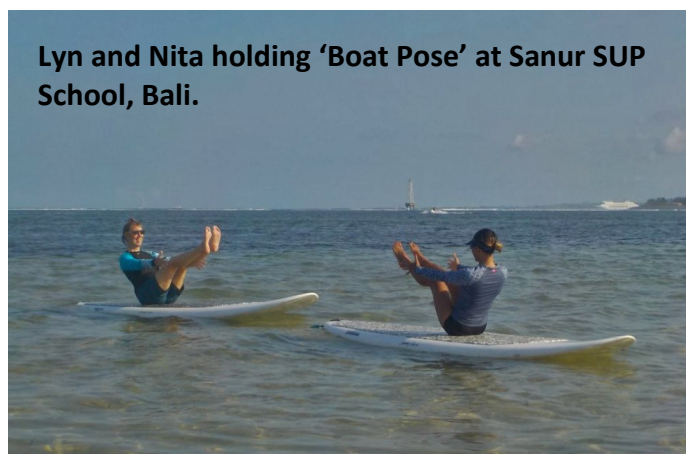


I walked through the maze of Balinese backstreets and eventually found the courtyard with a stack of giant boards and paddles of varying length, a locker for my gear, and a tiny, smiling Balinese girl called Nita, small but sturdy I just knew she had a

rock solid ‘core’ and would not be falling off HER paddleboard...

After introductions, I followed her to the beach and stood in awe of my schoolyard – the tide was low and the smooth sea stretched to the horizon, which was a frothy white, and I realised the background roar was not traffic or jets bringing more Aussie tourists, but the waves crashing on the offshore reef, where surfers were practicing their skills. Kite surfers were zipping back and forth across the flat water and I had to drag my eyes from the spectacle of it all to focus on the row of bobbing boards that Nita was pointing out to me. Several large chunky paddleboards were tethered to the beach, and she chose two of them that were facing each other. There was nobody else booked in for SUP YOGA this evening, so I had a free lesson on top of the paid experience, as Nita was a patient and encouraging Yogi, keen to share her craft (pun intended!).

We started off learning how to get onto the board. Easier than getting into an inflatable dinghy! I was surprised just how stable the big board was, and Nita started us off with some seated poses, keeping our centres of gravity low to begin with. As I settled ‘into the moment’ and closed my eyes, the swaying board bobbed around on its tether like a sailboat tugging at its anchor, eager to set sail.



It was interesting ‘grounding’ on water and yet it made sense, as our bodies are about 60% water and though our initial reaction is to feel nervous and afraid of falling in, gradually, I became aware that the foam sandwich beneath me was part of the whole system, and I was part of the ‘sandwich’ and there was, after all, barely a metre of water beneath the board...

Then we knelt on the paddleboard for some ‘Cat/Cow’ stretches; with four points of contact, it still felt pretty stable, even though the beautiful evening had now brought out the speedboats and water-skiers who whizzed by rather close for comfort, rocking the board alarmingly. We closed our eyes and zoned them out, *Ommm!*

“OK, very good, let’s try some standing

BELOW: Lyn and friends at SUP lesson Sanur, Bali. Can you guess who’s who?



postures!” Nita grinned at me as she posed like a tiny ballerina. She pointed out the lines on the board and where to place my feet for best balance position. I stood up warily, wobbled, balanced, raised one shaky leg and PLOP! over I went, with a splash, into the warm water, quite refreshing really, and no harm done. An opportunity to practice climbing back onto the board, a couple of steadying breaths, and I was briefly a warrior poised for action!

Gaining confidence (and clarity?) we went for Headstand – “You can do it!” Nita encouraged me, “if you go over, you won’t hurt yourself, you will just land in the water and learn your limits!” Oh I was so keen to go upside down, but I’d only done it against a wall on land and the fear of failure was stronger than my confidence; what if I hurt my neck before the Yoga Retreat even started? So, my little kicks got me some air but didn’t get me fully upright and I chickened out, promising to come back to Bali another time to try again.

We finished up with the most awesome ‘Savasana’ I’ve ever experienced, lying back on our boards, hands trailing in the water, rising and falling with the evening tide, oblivious now to the other water users, the sunset warm on my face, totally at one with the ocean, *Namaste...*

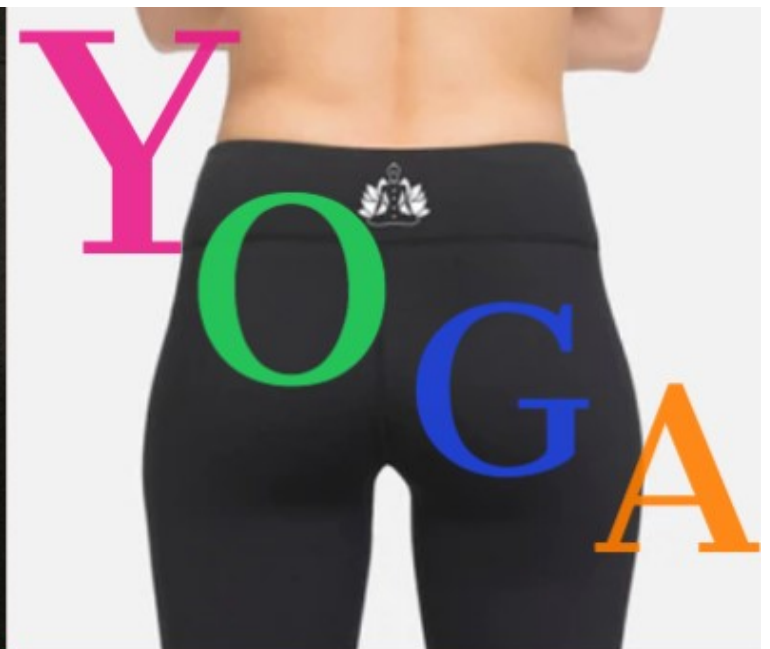
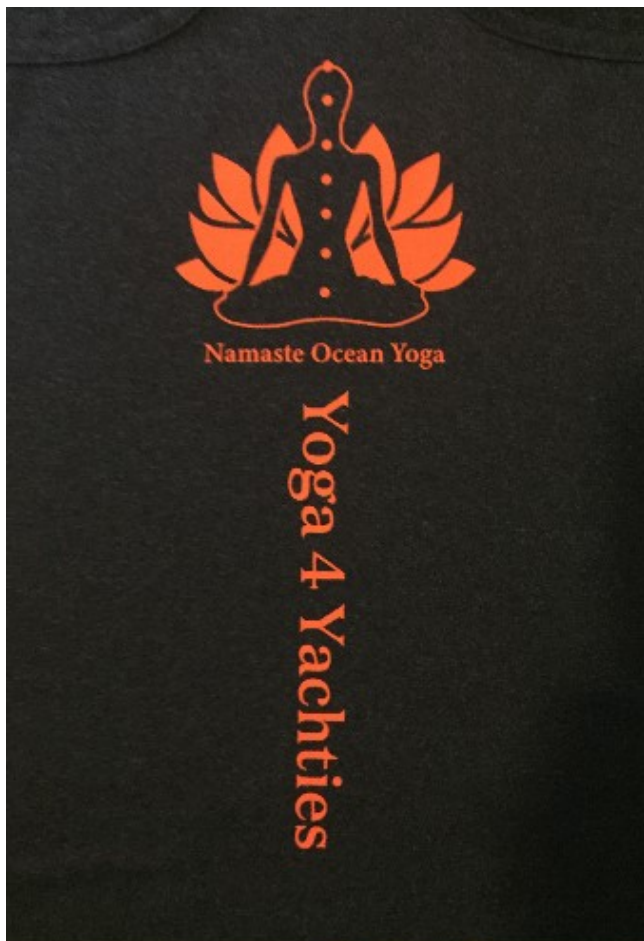
After that awesome start, I felt like a Pro when I sauntered back down to the beach next morning for my actual SUP lesson. The other students were a mother and her three teenage daughters from the Netherlands, first time for them too. Jankie expertly gauged what size paddles we required, then our instructor Tommy showed us the basic stance and paddle strokes while we were still on shore; how to balance, how to turn, how to surf (we all eyed each other with a raised eyebrow at that one). We carried our craft into the water and climbed aboard. Tommy soon had us kneeling on our boards, poling along the shallows against the light breeze,

gazing at the corals and sea stars below, in spite of his advice: “Don’t look down!” Then he got us to stand up – oooh! He made it look effortless, but there was definitely a technique to bending those knees at just the right time as you lean forward into that paddle stroke. Like everything, practice is key. We had a few ‘girl overboard’ situations but it was easy to clamber back on and our loyal little group stayed together close to shore while our instructor gazed wistfully at the reef break... alas, this group of students was not ready for that yet! We had a lovely hour or so paddling back and forth, with mum going to the top of the class, declaring it: “Wunderbar for the core!”. She had three gorgeous teenage daughters but she herself could easily have passed for their older sister and had obviously looked after her own ‘core’ - she was certainly the poster girl in the well-fitting bikini. My husband chuckled at the photos later as I was the only one in shorts and long sleeved rashie!

Do you need lessons? This depends. Find out next issue, when we chat with some Women Who Sail from around the world about their SUP experiences.



LYN BATTLE has lived for over 30 years on Sweers Island, in Australia’s Gulf of Carpentaria, where she runs a small fishing lodge with her husband Tex. Lyn recently circumnavigated Sweers Island by kayak to raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Queensland. Along with her kayak rolling coach, she hopes to make the Sweers Island Challenge a regular event, with more paddlers taking the opportunity to explore this isolated but beautiful part of Australia’s coastline.



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Dreaming of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race



By Deborah Wallace

Over the years I have been asked many times, “How do I get on a boat or do you know anyone how requires crew?”.

Over the past few months I’ve been interviewing high profile women sailors and sharing their experiences via my podcast *Women In Sailing*. There has been a common denominator throughout and it’s that they started sailing at an early age and grew up sailing with brothers and families on the water. One thing stood out when it comes to getting on a boat for the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race – that is that opportunities presented themselves at an early age, they have been sailing consistently with owners and skippers that have known, and have completed in the race previously.

However, if you come to the sport late in life how and have being dreaming of doing the race, how do you make it happen?

ABOVE: St Jude with Noel Cornish AM at the helm and Nicole Butcher on the starboard genoa winch.

Here are some take-aways from these podcasts:

- ♦ Start sailing early age if you can,
- ♦ Don’t say no to a sail,
- ♦ Hone your skills,
- ♦ Specialise,
- ♦ Get a reputation for being on time,
- ♦ Be eager to take on a variety of tasks,
- ♦ Turn up ready to go,
- ♦ Be confident and ‘own it’.

This isn’t a sure-fire way to get on any boat for any offshore racing, but it certainly helps.

A few weeks ago, I sat down with the new commodore of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA), Mr Noel Cornish AM, for a candid conversation on a number of topics.

We spoke about his experience predominately as a boat owner, and how he selected his crew: what he looks for, and what's important to him as owner and skipper of his boat *St Jude*.

Let's open with ... how did he find crew?

As any boat owner knows, normally crew finds you. Then it comes down to where you have an available position.

On all boats, crew come and go. Noel has had crew positions become available and "it's about the right person for the job". He did make mention that having both women and men on a racing yacht "feels that it's a better-balanced crew". Skippers look for good technical skills and capability. In Noel's case when it came to a navigator there was a lady who was only around 56 kilos, mid 30s who fitted the bill. An experienced naval navigator, she was a great example of the perfect fit and the role that's available. With sail trim he found a few people out of the CYCA Advanced Sailing Squad and provided them

the opportunity to do their first Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race.

Sailing offshore isn't for everyone and sometimes the dream can be shattered when you do your first offshore race. This should be tested before you make a commitment to any crew, you should know your own ability, and if you do get seasick make sure you can manage it. There is nothing worse than being one or two crew members down in time of need.

Start planning years in advance, get to know the boats and other sailors who have done the Blue Water Series and other offshore races. Find out who in your club has done the race, talk to them about their challenges and their connections. Last minute recommendations can sometimes get you on a boat out of your club.

Approaching boat owners and skippers

Many of the larger boats have crew managers and they are the ones who pick the crews



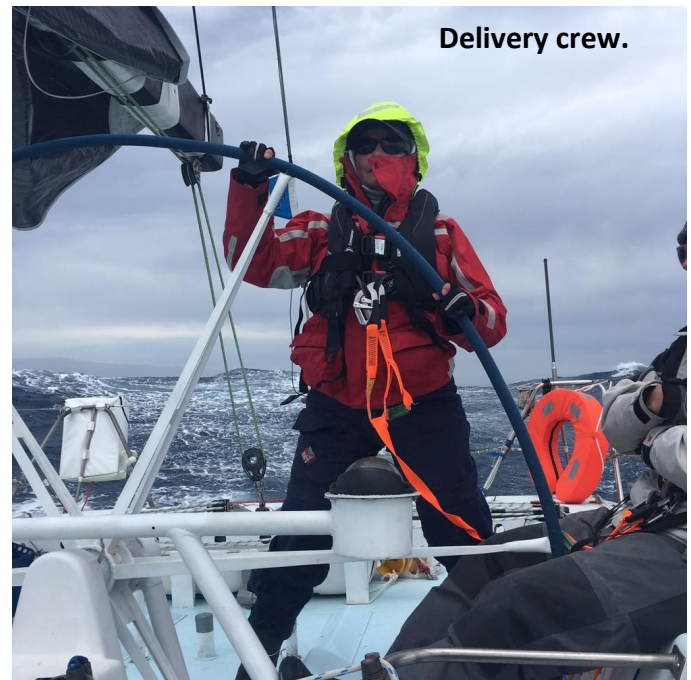
Delivery trip after a Rolex Sydney to Hobart Race.

each week. Owners, skippers, and the crew managers regularly sit down and discuss the crew and what positions are working or not working. You'll find that there is the regular core crew and sometimes these people have been sailing together for years. Then out of the blue something happens to change the crew configuration and that's when you have what I like to call 'a guest appearance' for one or a number of races.

Being back-up or delivery crew is one way to get on a boat, but you have to be ready and patient. Whilst they are auditioning you, you should be auditioning them, as sometimes there may be people that you just don't want to sail with. Being open and transparent should work both ways and if you are working hard but need to polish up on other areas, there should be productive feedback provided. Seek this out and if you need to, work out a way you can gain that extra bit of coaching. Courses, one-on-one coaching, books, and online videos are all valuable. Don't give up and keep working towards your goal.

The Internet and social media are also great ways to reach out into the yacht racing community. Visit and register your interest on the websites mysail.team and sailconnect.com. Update your details on topyacht.com.au and put your availability out on Facebook groups such as Crew Finder and Sydney Sailing Crew finder. Also register your details with the CYCA Sailing office via email with details of your sailing experience: <https://cyca.com.au/crewing-opportunities/>

If you are keen to get on a specific boat put your hand up for a delivery to or from a race destination such as Whitsundays, Gold Coast, or Hobart. Be sure to check out who is coming back and what sort of experience there is on board, as sometime deliveries can be more dangerous than the actual race. Make sure to allocate enough time as well, for example the Rolex Sydney Hobart, for the average boat, takes three to four days but the



return trip can take five to ten days.

Another suggestion Noel made, was around the lines of women supporting women, so if you have a friend who is sailing on a boat ask about opportunities. If you are a woman already established on a yacht and a position becomes available, put other women sailors forward.

There's no magic solution, so open up communications, network with people, attend functions, reach out to people you know. Keep a log book of your sailing activity and a good sailing resume. Get the relevant certificates – Sea Safety Survival, Radio and First Aid, possibly a Med5. Be persistent, if you have a clear vision I'm sure you will get there.

Listen to some of our great women sailors through our podcasts *Women In Sailing*, I hope these will inspire and empower you to go out and live your sailing dream. Good luck.

A few more words from the new CYCA commodore, Mr Noel Cornish AM

As the new commodore of the CYCA Noel shared with me one of the board's strategies. A key element is seeing more people join the

club and more members out on the water or engaging some way, whether that is the blue water racing, volunteering on a race boat, being on a spectator boat, sailing model boats on the pond, or twilight seasonal sailing. We are a sailing club, a yacht racing club, and the more members that are actively engaged one way or another, the better

We have a wonderful youth sailing academy, training kids and picking up those who show the acumen and develop them to become Olympians and World Series Winners. We have this already working well at the Club.

But what happens if you come to sailing later in life? How do we get adult sailors more active in the club? If we look at the demographic – a large component of people expressing an interest in getting out on the water are women. Noel feels strongly and passionately about creating an easier pathway. Whether it just being on the water or aspiring to being an active participant in our Offshore Yacht Racing and everything in between.

It's really great to hear that this is important to him as he takes up the helm of the club and we will be working towards establishing these pathways for both adult women and of course men.

I'd like to thank Noel for his time and his insight and I look forward to having him as the Commodore at the CYCA for the next few years.

From my perspective it's important for people to make connections, and women to support women in these endeavours. As an

active CYCA member I invite you to reach out to me if you are in the area and wish to come to the club. I'd be happy to meet you for a coffee or drink.

Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race women's team

In closing I have some exciting news to share with *SisterShip* readers. Sailing Women's Network Australia has joined forces this year with Carolijn Brouwer, Liz Wardley, Lisa Blair, and some other extremely talented professional yachswomen, and are planning to enter this year's Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. Our goal is mentor emerging women sailors to gain their first Cat 1 race, which should open doors on the world stage. The Australian based program is in its early stages and requires a sponsor or benefactor. Please reach out to me direct through www.sailingwomensnetwork.com.au if you know of any interested parties.



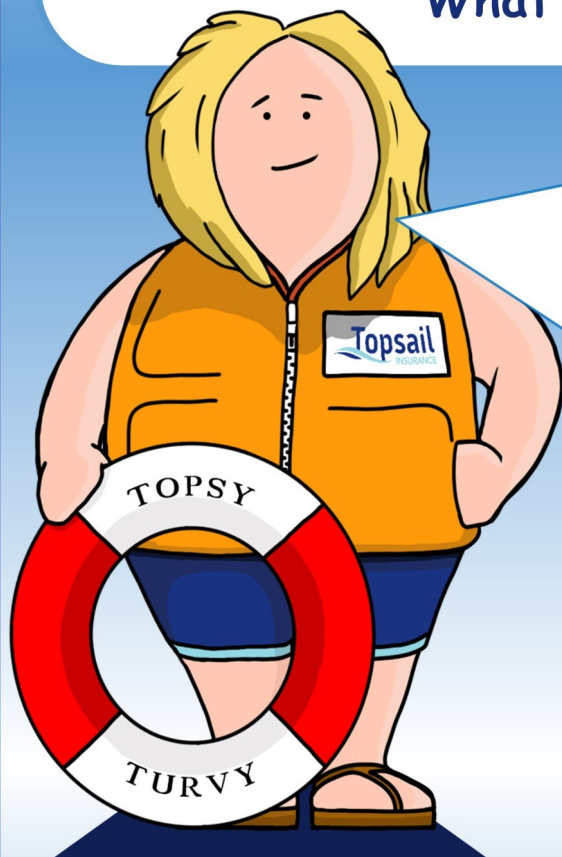
DEBORAH WALLACE is the founder of Sailing Women's Network Australia, a private group of like-minded women who enjoy and participate in inshore and offshore yacht racing Australia and worldwide. The group was formed with the idea to encourage networking and promote participation at all sailing events around Australia and overseas. Open to those who actively participate in weekly racing, volunteering, and key industry professionals, our group supports all levels of sailing skills and work with those who have a vision of participating in yacht racing. In the coming year we will be growing our group and developing partnerships that should benefit our members, more opportunities to connect with other sailors from around Australia and possibly overseas. We welcome women with a passion for yacht racing at all levels.

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RIDDLE MY BOAT PART (2 words)

My first is on a pizza or maybe sprinkled over ice cream
My second is what Johnny and Baby famously did
You do this at the building's end
but suggest you might want to use the elevator
You can pull me up and I'll never let you down and
without me you might get a nasty bump on your head
What part of the boat am I ?



*Congratulations goes to Carolanne
Clement for our July's riddle
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Setting Sail in Business

Sonia Robinson



Looking back on the past year, it's been nothing short of a rollercoaster ride. Venturing into the depths of 'solo-preneurship' has been an explosion of new experiences and unknowns. But it certainly hasn't disappointed either.

Growing up in Ireland, my parents introduced me to the water and sailing at a very young age. In my teens I already knew I wanted to sail the world's oceans and I dreamt of visiting exotic islands with coconuts, palm trees, and warm soft sandy beaches. I always imagined running my own business, but it wasn't until 2019 that I finally made it happen.

"It isn't that life ashore is distasteful to me.

But life at sea is better." Sir Francis Drake

Moving away from the safety of a salaried job was a big move and something I feared immensely. I'd observed friends and family members start businesses from their own humble beginnings. I was first inspired by my flying instructor Ruth, who was running her start-up flight training school in New Zealand from the boot of her car. I was her first female pupil and not long after I helped her

to move her business to an airport hangar. She had such passion and determination to succeed. Then came my sister, who over the years has built a small business in Ireland from a single idea to a world class attraction.

Despite the financial or gender barriers, each of these women worked hard and took risks because they believed in what they were doing. I soon discovered that I too had the burning desire to run my own business.

Having worked in the marine and maritime industry most of my life, I found myself looking for new opportunities at the beginning of 2019. I'd met with several businesses to discuss leads, attended numerous interviews but nothing was screaming out at me. Meanwhile the little voice inside my head was getting louder, "go out on your own" it kept saying.

So, fed up waiting for the phone to ring, I started mapping out a business venture. I reached out to friends I could trust to check that I wasn't completely mad, and I received overwhelming support. The seed had been sown.

I knew I had the skills and knowledge to

make a yacht brokerage work, but I needed some help. About this time, I received a call to act as an agent for an overseas yacht brokerage to facilitate the sale of a yacht in Australia. My ship had just sailed in. Although a partnership was not exactly the path I had envisaged, my dwindling bank balance told me I had to start somewhere so I agreed to try it out.

Sitting at my little desk in the lounge of a one-bedroom rented apartment I shared with my husband and our kitten, I would work through the day from 7 a.m., sometimes not stopping to eat until close to midnight. Planning, mapping, designing, reading, dreaming, scribbling, creating, and furiously typing the plans for the business. I was going to create the first female owned and operated yacht brokerage in Australia

Having already studied Business Management and Online Marketing in the past, I decided to refresh my knowledge by enrolling for a Cert IV in Small Business Management through Sydney Business Institute. This was a great refresher – particularly when it came to understanding the legislative requirements and operating licenses, not to mention sourcing suitable Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance.

I then set about a financial forecasting which helped to map out the year ahead – and an increased need for many coffee breaks.

My first sale occurred very quickly, and this meant I had money to fund ongoing set up expenses (which can be hefty). I was in business now and there was no stopping me – I had more clients in the pipeline and the rest would follow.

I've never been a fan of spending hours on Social Media but over the years I have attended workshops, seminars, and conferences on several aspects of business development (e.g advertising, sales strategies, and online social media marketing). Most of



Sonia with her sister, learning to row.

my business stems from online advertising so I have to put my best face out there. I also take a keen interest in video photography – which is an essential part of the business.

Fortunately, it's always refreshing to see pretty pictures of boats on the water but getting the right message across to the right audience is a science I am still learning.

Working in the yachting industry has its challenges, of course being female I'm in the minority and there are some that still consider sailing as men's sport. However, there are hundreds of women who laugh at this archaic theory as it's clearly not the case – we're just more humble about our abilities than others.

My business relies on the weather, and face-to-face interaction with customers and clients. Having set off to a really great start with some very positive results for the business in the first few months of operation, things took an unexpected tack later in the year. Not long after migrating the business to its own office premises in Newport, I had to leave for Ireland for family health issues. I had no one to take up where I left off and I had no backup plan for the business while I was away. Although I did try to continue in a

virtual capacity, the time difference made it challenging. I lost two potential clients that opted to go with other brokers, and I had no income. The biggest loss by far however was losing my father.

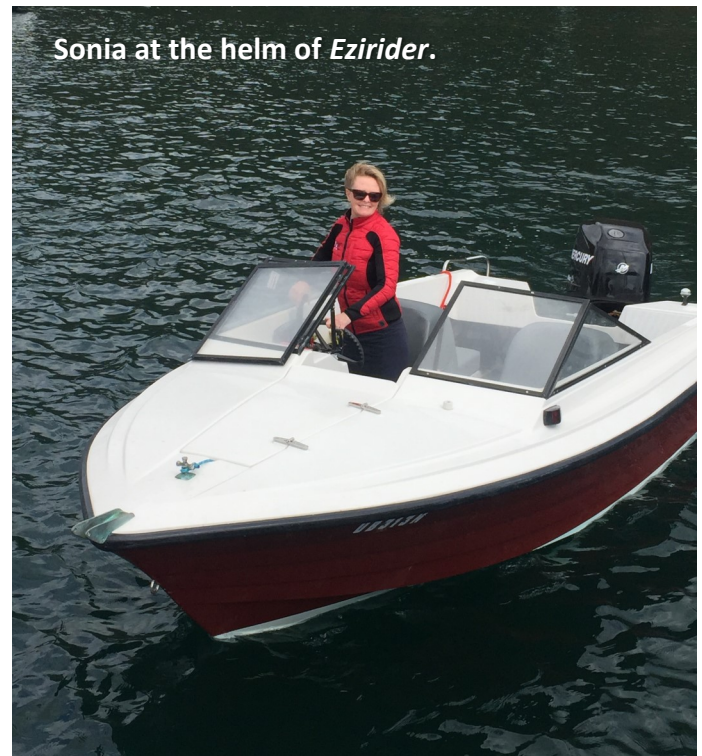
I returned in December 2019 even more determined than before to make a success of the business, working closely with my existing clients and nurturing those that were new – not dwelling on the ‘could-have-beens’.

As the bushfires worsened in the New Year, they brought on its own set of challenges. It wasn’t easy to show boats in smoky smoggy conditions, it was impossible to keep them clean and people had far more concerns on their minds than buying yachts! Next were the floods – clean boats yes, but rainy wet days don’t help to sell boats either.

And then COVID-19 meant things were going to slow down even more. Events were cancelled, no-one could travel, and my contract work dried up. For a brief moment I started to lose faith in myself – I made the mistake of comparing myself and my business to others. Then I realised I had been pushing myself too hard for too long. I was exhausted. Strangely in May, after several weeks in ‘isolation’, appeared a silver lining with more time than usual to focus on the business. Yachts were selling and somehow, I was making it happen although the logistics of selling ‘sight unseen’ can certainly add a few curve balls

It can be hard ‘going it alone’ when there are tough decisions to make... but again, I reach out to those I trust when I need to. If I look back and see how far the business has come, I have a lot to be thankful for.

One of the major challenges for me up to now, has been to accept where I am in relation to where I would like to be. But who could have predicted everything that has happened over the past six months?



Sonia at the helm of *Ezirider*.

‘When I get impatient, I remind myself that it’s about the journey rather than the destination.’

Sure, being a woman has its challenges but not in a physical sense, mostly it’s because you seem to have to always be ready to ‘prove yourself’. I sometimes wonder why people stare... but then I think “Yes, that’s right it’s a woman driving the boat – go ahead and stare all you like!” I love my work and everything I have done in life has led me to where I am now.

EZIYACHT is the evolution of a life of working on the water and combines years of experience and an everlasting passion for the sport of sailing and boating in all its forms. Sharing this passion with others is so fulfilling and that in itself means success to me.

There are certain things that will always challenge us, and things that we cannot control. What I do know is that nothing is permanent, and these tough times will pass as the tide ebbs and flows. Knowing that I am doing what I love and putting smiles on other people’s faces is all I need to be happy.

*‘I must go down to the seas again,
To the lonely sea and the sky,*

*And all I ask is a tall ship,
And a star to sail to steer her by”
John Masefield*

EZIYACHT is a marine brokerage that helps people to buy and sell boats. We specialise in the preparation and sale of used sailing and motor yachts and cruisers. We encourage more women to take to the water as boat owners and skippers and we enjoy educating others along the way. We take pride in working closely with our clients to ensure that their vessel is presented and marketed in the best imaginable way while finding the right vessel for each and every buyer.

Follow us on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#) or check out our website on www.eziyacht.com

For information on Buying and Selling Yachts you can read our features in [Sistership Magazine](#) OR get in touch by sending us an email sonia@eziyacht.com.



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A few KEY LEARNINGS to share with other Start Ups:

- **CELEBRATE** your wins – however small they may be. You’re better off today than yesterday so remind yourself of how far you’ve come
- **ACKNOWLEDGE** your failures, learn from them and **MOVE ON!**
- It’s **OKAY** to be **VULNERABLE** sometimes – it shows you are honest and willing to learn
- Keep a watchful eye on your **COMPETITORS** but don’t copy them – be **BETTER**
- Don’t be afraid to **ADD** your personal **FLAIR**
- **ALWAYS** be accountable for your words and your actions
- Look for ways to **COLLABORATE** with businesses that complement your products/ services
- **WRITE** about what you know – it costs nothing but your time, and remember to **CREDIT** your sources
- Be thankful for those that support you and believe in you – these people have helped you to get where you are today
- **NEVER** think you can’t without first trying.

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Sailing is a bit like childbirth, and other things I've discovered while cruising

Tina Hussey

**Approaching Tasman
Island, Tasmania.**

“What’s it actually like living on a boat with your family?”, a beautiful lady asked me with puzzlement and fascination in her eye.

That’s a great question and the first thing that came to mind was, “It’s a bit like childbirth”. She looked at me in surprise and confusion, half laughing...

It’s one of the most amazing things you’ll ever do, most of the time you have no idea what you’re doing, and you forget the really bad stuff and go back for more.

They say the first 12 months are the hardest when taking off cruising fulltime. I think it’s because there is so much adjusting to do, it’s a foreign environment with so much at stake. But in reality, for me, it’s the most rewarding, challenging, scary, fun, ridiculous thing I’ve done. I wouldn’t change it for the world.

I’ve met remarkable people, seen beautiful

islands, and learnt so much about myself. Some lessons have been unexpected and every day on the water I learn something new. In little over a year, some lessons still come as a surprise. Here are just a few.

Bass Strait is worth waiting for, and turning back is not a bad option

In a hurry to get into warmer waters, my family and I set off from Binalong Bay in Tasmania in May 2019, bound for Eden. We were hustling. We brought the hustle and bustle of land life, and carried it proudly onto the water. We were pushing. Pushing to get north. Our first big passage was Bass Strait and she’s not the piece of water you want to be pushing across. We learnt the hard way. Halfway across Banks Strait, the 20 knot westerly forecast was really 35 gusting to 45 on top of three metre short sharp waves. In a split second, my partner and I looked at each

other and asked, “What are we doing?” We were being knocked around, the conditions were really unenjoyable, and my motherly instincts kicked in, *how is my son going to handle this for another six plus hours*. Really, I was wondering how I was going to handle it. We made a tough decision. We needed to turn around.

“I felt like we had failed, I felt like we should have pushed on and toughened up.”

In reality however, turning around was a really good idea. For us and the boat. We had nothing to prove and learnt to stop rushing. Patience is something I have learned to embrace and waiting is just something we do.

A good weather window opened up a few weeks later, we had the most amazing three-day passage to Eden. I was comfortable, we are well rested during the passage, and we enjoyed it. Bass Strait truly is a beautiful place to be when the weather is good.

You need A LOT less than you think

We sold our house and most of our stuff to move onto our boat. We downsized three times. Turns out we had WAY too much stuff in boxes that hadn't seen the light of day for years.

I learnt that when you move from a house onto your boat, take half, actually a quarter of what you think you will need. And no, you will not start using that thing that you think you need but have never used when living in a house.

The beautiful thing about cruising is that it is a simple life. The less you have, the less you have to worry about. Just rip the band aid, sell, donate, throw things out, you will feel lighter. And yes, you will get six or seven months into cruising and get rid of more stuff!



I provision for the apocalypse

When we left Tasmania, I filled the boat up with dry beans and lentils as if the rest of Australia hadn't invented Woolworths yet. I'm not sure where I thought I was going, but we had a lot of food. But the most random food, some of it not useful at all. Like 10 kilos of dry beans? What was I planning on cooking? I don't think we had even eaten beans before, let alone dry beans. I didn't even know how to cook beans. Turns out you eat the same food on a boat as you do living in a house. I've had to learn to get better at planning and storing food and get super creative in the galley, but all in all we eat fruit, veggies, and meat just like on land.

I've learnt the value in preparing a good hearty meal before leaving port. It is so much easier to put a pot on the stove and heat up a pre-prepared curry or stew then try to make it when underway. My biggest lesson; regardless of the weather forecast, pre-cook meals!

Something that has been invaluable to me, don't underestimate the power of a block of chocolate, a packet of biscuits, or a yummy cake to lift crew moral. I have called on these many times when everyone is tired and cranky. Pulling out a cake or a sneaky packet of everyone's favourite chocolate biscuits can get us through the last three hours of a rough passage in good spirits. Hello fruit cake! A well-fed crew makes a happy boat. Have a special stash only you know about though! If the crew know where the gold is, they'll eat it in one sitting.

Wear sunscreen, drink water, buy glasses

Ladies, your health and happiness shouldn't be compromised. We invest so much into our boats to keep them in tip top condition. We have to do the same for ourselves. I have found this is amplified on the boat.

Maybe it's the small space, maybe it's the

extreme conditions but the little things can make cruising life so much more enjoyable. I indulge in essential oils to keep my skin feeling beautiful. They are a godsend at the end of long day on the water and it's heaven to have something that smells lovely.

Invest in good sunscreen and skin care. Need I say more.

Drink plenty of water. Dehydration is dangerous on a boat. Early on, I had days where I would go six or seven hours without water. I would feel terrible. We now always have at least two water bottles floating around on deck. If it's there, we drink it.

Buy glasses, as in drinking glasses. There is a misconception that glass and boats don't work... Just store them well. If I've just battled with weather and lumpy seas all day, by golly I deserve to drink my sundowner out of a nice glass, not a plastic tumbler!!

Sailing may seem hard, but so was tying your laces at some point

You are capable, you are strong, you are enough. Sailing has taught me so much – more about myself as a woman than the art of sailing. Turns out I don't give myself enough credit and I'm actually more capable than I thought. Guess what? You are too.

There is a lot to learn and it never stops

I've spoken to women who have sailed around the world three times and are still learning. You don't have to know everything right away, start small. Learn one thing really well then move onto the next. And you if you have no interest in learning, just enjoy the journey, that's ok too.

If anything, though, learn to drive the dinghy. It gives you freedom and it could save your life or someone else's. In a year, we have rescued or helped four people on different

occasions, either caught out in currents, fallen from kayaks, and even assisting a yacht in need. There may have been a time or two when I just needed to get off the boat and take myself for a walk too, but you know, that's boat life!

Mindset is your biggest asset or worst enemy

Our minds are powerful.

I've spoken to a number of women who sail on the *This Girl Sails* podcast and I am fascinated by their mindset. How do you sail around the Southern Ocean on your own, how do you take your family around the globe? How do you park your boat in the marina without hitting every super yacht on the way in?

Learn to master your mindset. Our limiting beliefs are the only thing holding us back. Three weeks into leaving our home port I woke around 3 am in a panic. 'What am I doing?' All of the 'what if' scenarios and fear had me in a cold sweat. I was lying inside a plastic tube, floating in a bay, the only thing stopping me from washing up on rocks was a piece of metal at the end of a chain. I kept wondering if I had lost my mind.

The fear of my new lifestyle hit me.

I chose to embrace the fear instead. To sit with it and be ok with feeling uncomfortable. I've also come to realise that everything feels one hundred times worse at night. I tell you what, when the sunrises some mornings, I could run out to the horizon and kiss her warm glow.

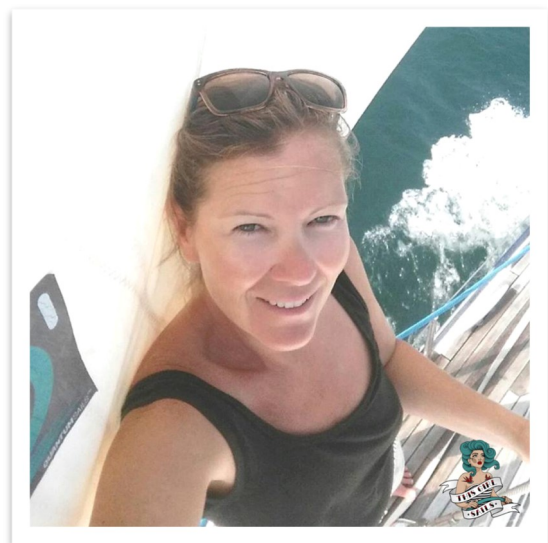
I could have quit a dozen times over the last year, but I'm learning to manage the fear and flip the stories I tell myself. I am strong enough, good enough, and I am a sailor.

Call on your sailing sisterhood

We have the most amazing network of

women, all passionate about sailing, and all willing to help, support and lend a shoulder to cry on. Please don't feel as if you are on this journey alone. Ask questions, even if they seem silly. Share knowledge and wisdom freely. Whether at your local yacht club or sailing the east coast, reach out to the women around you and make an effort to connect. In my experience, you will be welcomed with open arms. Women form the very fabric of our sailing community and I feel we have so much to give each other. I've shared so many laughs, tears, joy, and challenges with my fellow female sailors. They are the most wonderful women I've ever met and I feel I have made true friendships for life.

Cruising and living aboard for over a year now has been a wild ride. It is a wonderful lifestyle. Yes, it's challenging and scary at times but the good far outweighs the bad. If you are thinking of doing it, go now. Life is damn short. Get out enjoy it now, it's your time to thrive!



Tina Hussey lives aboard her yacht *Galileo* with her family and is currently cruising the east coast of Australia. Her passion lies in empowering women to thrive on the water. She shares her own sailing journey on her blog *This Girl Sails* as well as mentoring women to create health, wealth and connection online. On the *This Girl Sails* podcast, she talks to women who sail from around the world and shares their sailing adventures. You can find her podcast, blog and mentoring services at www.thisgirlsails.com



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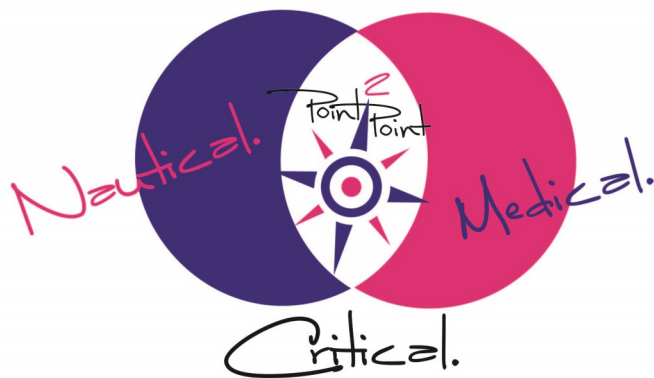
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Getting to know Sorghum



Gina de Vere

Shandy cleaning the seeds.

I knew sorghum was a plant, but what kind of plant or what it was used for was a total mystery to me. I did not realise that the millet seeds I had fed my pet canary back in New Zealand were the same seeds that would sustain locals in Flores, Indonesia, in the time of the virus COVID-19. Christian and I first met our friend Wizz back in 2012 when we were on the rally from Darwin to Malaysia. We were buddy sailing with the catamaran *Seadragon* and had decided not to take the route to Maumere but to anchor on the shallow shelf off Larantuka, Flores, which was just large enough for our two boats. The first person we saw coming to welcome us was Wizz, a guide who was to become our friend. Wizz arranged for us to have afternoon tea with the Bupati in his lovely home, to go swimming in an ancient cauldron where the bubbles still rose and gave us a hot floating bliss, and attend a clan gathering where we were accepted as 'family' forever.

The following year we sailed back via Larantuka again, this time to meet Wizz's new partner Shandy and drop off bags of clothes and quilts at the Rainbow Orphanage. We said a sad farewell not knowing if we would ever see them again and enjoy their warmth and hospitality. However, we visited again last year, by motorbike this time. Christian had motorbiked from Bali, about 5000 kilometres return trip. I flew to join him in Maumere. This time Wizz showed us some scrub covered dirt, about half an acre, which he proudly told us was going to be Shandy's new venture, growing sorghum. We gave them a small donation to help get started and have since received several updates.

The benefits of eating sorghum are many: a single serving contains significant amounts of niacin, riboflavin, copper, iron, potassium, magnesium, fibre, and antioxidants. It is 100% gluten free. It aids digestion and, being

a complex carbohydrate, it boosts energy. The calcium and magnesium promote bone health. Being full of phytochemicals it can help prevent certain types of cancers as well as being excellent for maintaining

cardiovascular health. The minerals iron, copper, magnesium, and zinc assist circulation and stimulate cell growth and repair. So, with all these wonderful benefits why wouldn't you want it? It grows like corn,



Pounding the seeds to flour.



Wizz with mature sorghum plant.



After clearing the land, planting.



Sorghum: cleaned and ready for removing the seeds.

several kilos.

If you ever sail to beautiful Flores and want to enjoy off the beaten track adventures or want to buy some sorghum, please contact me, Gina de Vere, on Messenger or through my book website:

<https://www.bluewaterwomen.com>

and I will put you in touch.

can be popped like corn but looks slightly different. To see more about this wonderful plant visit <https://helpdesertoasisteff.com>

Wizz's idea is to make a small roadside tasting shop for his guided clients and others, the construction of which has been keeping him busy through COVID-19 when Indonesia has had no tourists. The harvest from the plants has kept not only his family healthy, but also impoverished villagers to whom he donated



Time to harvest.

Wizz putting the finishing touches to the entry to Likotuden, the centre for Sorghum, Flores.



Wizz and Shandy in Flores.



Wizz and Shandy rode with us to the pretty village of Moni to visit Mount Kelimutu to see the three different coloured lakes in the crater (we ate all our meals at Mopis place and enjoyed their live music). They took us to beautiful beaches and to historical points of interest; places and experiences we would never have had on our own. We never dreamed when we dropped anchor in front of pretty Larantuka that a few years later we would become stakeholders in a sorghum growing enterprise, but that's the continual surprise of the sailing life!

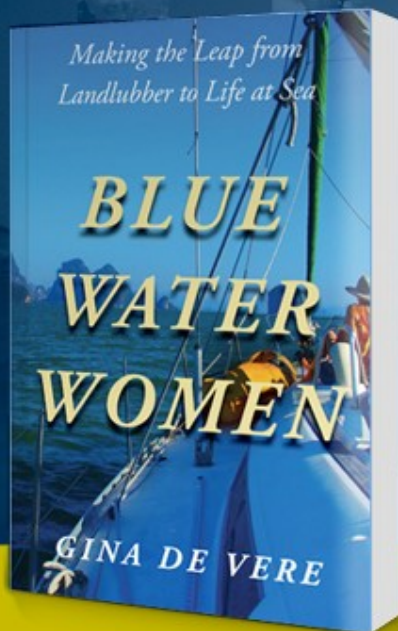


A New Zealander by birth, Gina has been sailing full time on her monohull, a Gib Sea 47.2 with her husband Christian Selaries for the past 15 years. They set sail from NZ in 2005, sailing the South Pacific, Papua New Guinea twice, Australia to Indonesia twice, exploring Borneo, Thailand and Malaysia,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

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

40 INSPIRATIONAL SAILOR WOMEN

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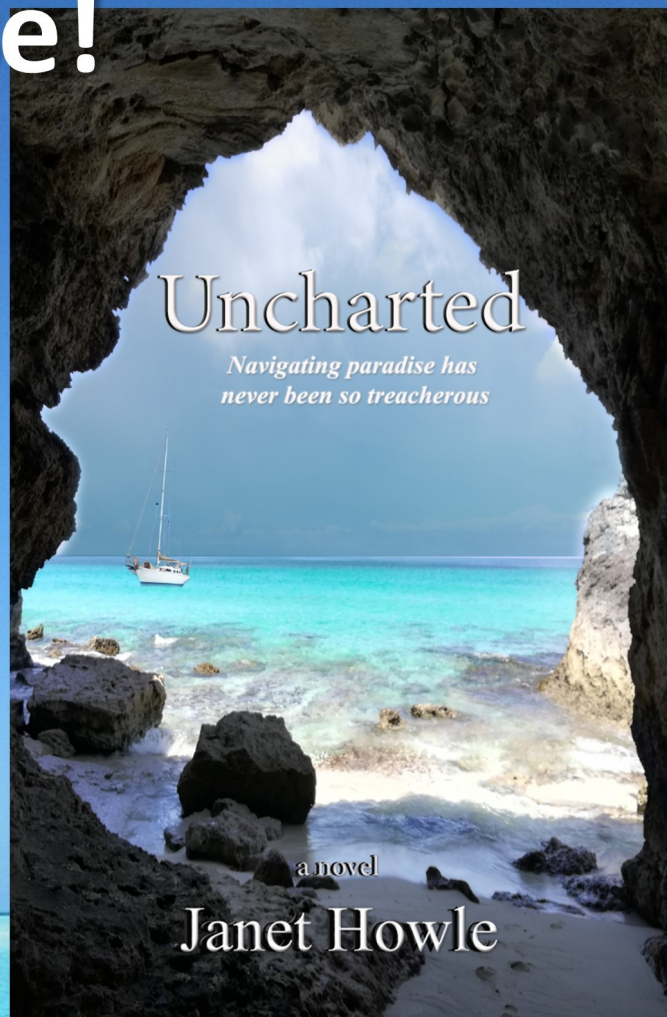
Measurements and navigation aids (IALA A and IALA B)* are different too. We want to keep you on board with our ethos of a less regimented style, and a more international spirit!

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

New Release!

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Helene Young, award-winning Australian author



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

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

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

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

www.janethowleauthor.com

Pre-order here

 **SisterShip**
women on the water

Down Under Rally Offshore Cruising Course getting great reviews!

For the past few years the Down Under Rally has held their very popular Offshore Cruising Preparation Course around Australia in venues in Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria.

In April 2020, in response to requests to make the course available to those who are unable to attend the course in person, the Down Under Rally made the entire two-day Offshore Cruising Preparation Course available online.

The course was recorded and the recording then professionally edited to break down the two days of content into 10 easy to watch sessions of about 1 hour per session, all of which are available to watch as a series online and on demand.

During the course John and Leanne share their experiences, the lessons learned and the knowledge gained, along with the experiences they have had sailing to and cruising in many different countries.

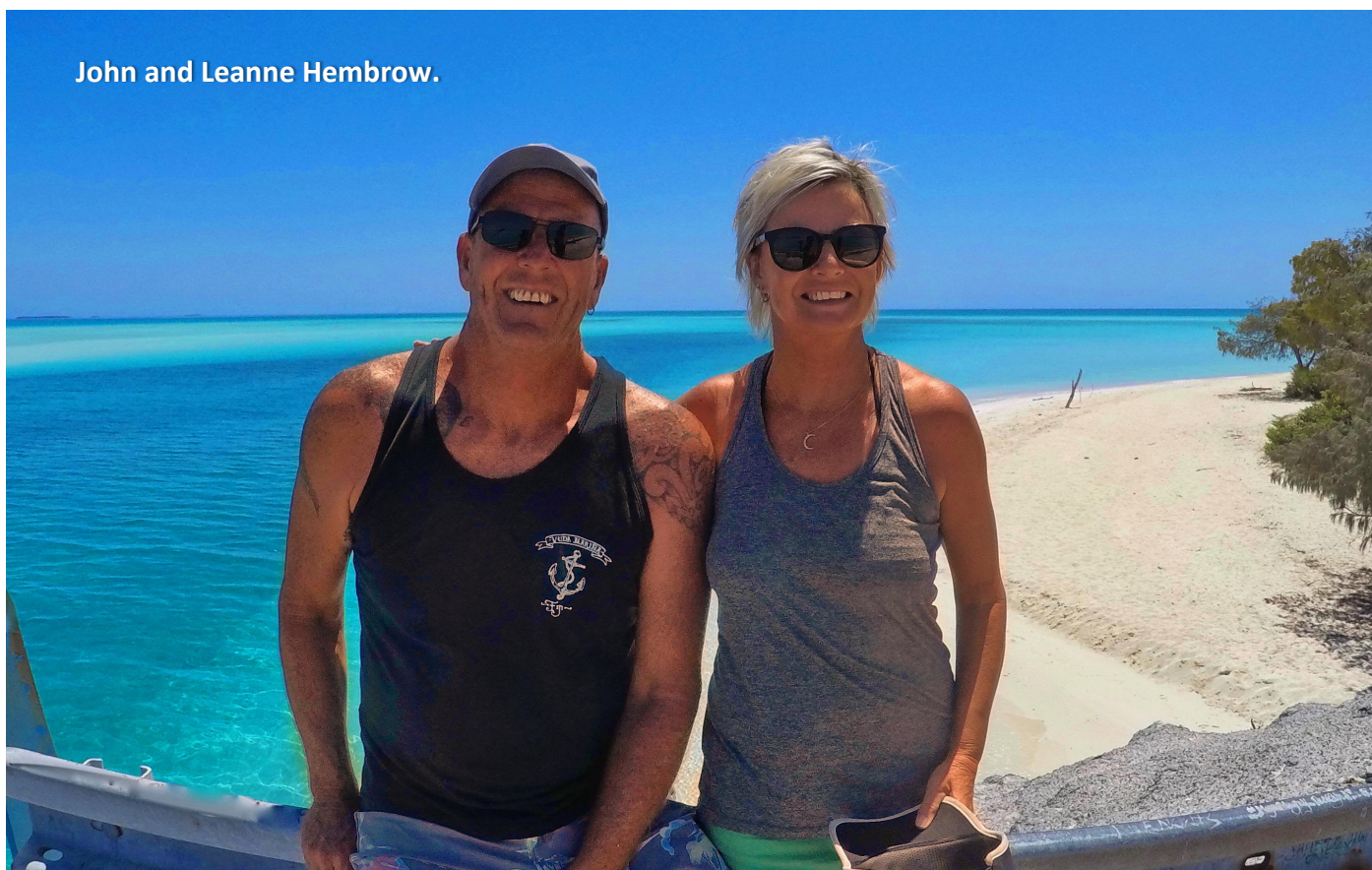
Woman Who Sail Australia group member Gaye Jennings recently had this to say about the course:

"If you are thinking about 'living the dream' either coastal or blue water sailing – or feel your sailing skills have slipped because of the unplanned hiatus many of us have had due to COVID-19 – do yourself a favour and do this online course with the team from Down Under Rally. I can honestly say this was the best course the Captain and I have done. We have learnt much about sea safety and survival, boat preparation, the must haves on your boat, latest technology tips, crew preparation etc. Additionally, John and Leanne have real experiences they can relate to on both monos and catamarans where as many courses we found were geared specifically towards monos. Overall the team provided us with the 'realities and practicalities' of cruising/sailing in comparison to the 'romantic notions' in the glossy magazines."

To learn more about the Down Under Rally Offshore Cruising Preparation Course visit:

www.downunderrally.com/events

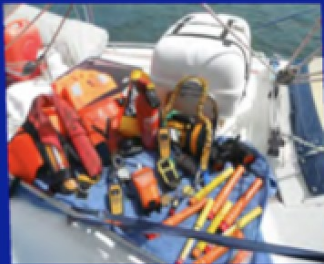
John and Leanne Hembrow.





Are you ready to go offshore?

Do you know what you don't know?



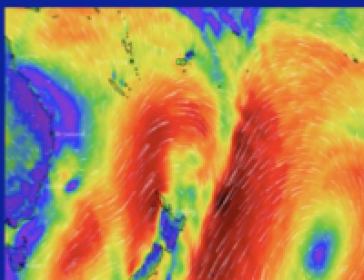
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Flat bottomed girl

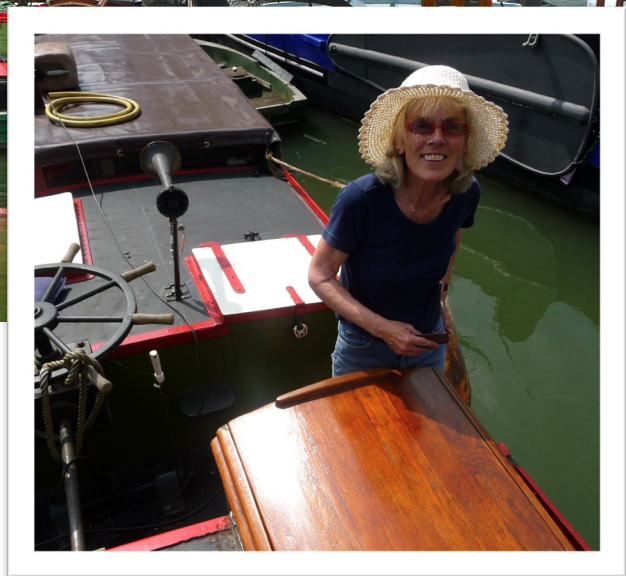
Views from the canal

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

Maintenance Therapy

I think it's true for all boat owners that maintenance is an ongoing and endless obligation, isn't it? Having a love affair with old boats means having a corresponding love affair with sandpaper, filler and paint, or at the very least, investing heavily in the local hardware store. I honestly think I should have shares in mine; the owners must be making a fortune out of me.

For our sins, my partner and I have the doubtful pleasure of owning two very old Dutch barges. I've had one of them, my nineteen-metre *pakschuit*, *Vereeniging*, since 2001, and she's been my home all these years as some readers here will know by now. She was built in 1898, so at 122 years old she needs lots of TLC, especially given the neglect she suffered for about fifteen years before I bought her. In a nutshell, she was left open to the elements in an Amsterdam canal where rain and weed collected inside her hold and prepared a lovely breeding ground for rust and decay. As a consequence, I worry over her like a protective mother hen.



Our other barge, the *Hennie Ha*, is actually even older. She was built in 1880, but she's always been a family boat and has undergone so many changes over the years that only her hull is still recognisably historic. She's a pretty fifteen-metre *friese snik*, but the modifications have been so unprofessionally done, there's not a single smooth surface on her anywhere. She's a trap for damp, mould and dirt, which means it's really difficult to paint her well and to prevent bare and rusty patches forming. We both love her and loathe her in equal measure, or more accurately, we frequently kick ourselves for buying her in the first place.

As you might have guessed by now, these are two very labour-intensive old girls, and when I'm not working at my day job, nearly all my free time is taken up with fighting a campaign against the rust in order to keep them afloat. I have to say that it's just the worst kind of opponent. It's sneaky, underhand (or should I say, underpaint) and it never, ever stops encroaching in places where you don't want it. My hobby is therefore maintenance; it has to be.



In my Sunday best!

But how do I feel about that? That's a good question. I mean, do I have a life at all? Well, the odd thing is that I enjoy the work; I really do. I'd much, much rather be scraping paint and wire brushing rust than, for instance, doing cooking of any kind. I'd even rather scrape paint than put it on, but of course, it's immensely satisfying to see the old boats looking smart, shiny and well-tended, so the painting part is still quite pleasurable. The end result makes it worth the tedium of removing the brush hairs and dust specks I always seem to find just when I think I've got the perfect finish.

But anyway, back to the maintenance. I find it all quite therapeutic, and it's what I like doing when life gets stressful.

“There's something almost meditative in the rhythmic act of removing the rot of ages.”

I also get a sense of immense satisfaction in sanding a section so smooth I can no longer feel any uneven areas when I run my fingers over it ... well, only the bumps where the barge has been dented by barging into others during its years of service.

What's even better is that it gives me time to think about things and ponder on life. While my hands are busy with these repetitive and quite intensive tasks, my mind is engaged in planning, solving problems, or simply dreaming. I've re-built my interior several times whilst attacking the rust on my rear (if that doesn't sound too painful). I've also worked out answers to many a question during a rigorous stripping session (of paint of course, just in case you had other ideas).

It's good exercise as well and I've found my arms and stomach muscles have lost just a bit of their tendency to keep wobbling after I've finished moving. When I stop, they stop too,

which is a brilliant extra benefit for one of my advancing years. All the scraping and sanding is upper body work, of course, but my bottom half gets its turn when I have to clamber in and out of my little tender from the stern and sides of the barge. I'll swear I'm nimbler now than I was twenty years ago when I embarked on this endeavour.

Even so, I've had a few near misses when halfway between barge and boat. There have been occasions when the tender has decided to swing out from the side when I've only had one foot in it; the other has still been on my very wide rubbing rail. These have been unnervingly divisive moments (sorry). On the plus side, they've have given me excellent practice in doing the splits; involuntarily, I'll admit, but I promise you can really feel the burn.

Jokes aside, another spin off benefit is what can be discovered about our barges in the process. A couple of weeks ago, I was



removing layers of ancient paint from *Vereeniging's* stern when I uncovered the original owner's name on the back of the rear cabin. It had suffered from my scraping, but it was still quite clear. And then below the name were two letters of her original home port of Loenen on the Vecht River here in

ABOVE: Scraping the paint of ages of my rear.

BELOW: *Vereeniging* on the slipway.



the Netherlands. I was immensely excited by this find as it was proof positive of my barge's history as told to me by the previous owner.

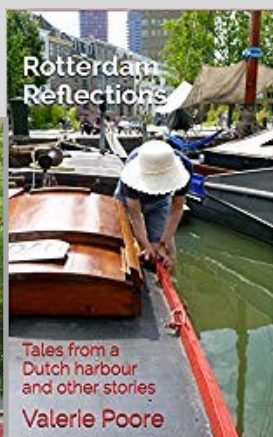
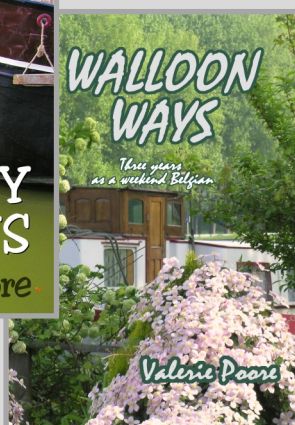
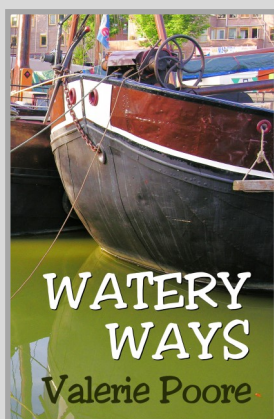
So despite the never ending list of chores and jobs to do, I personally find maintenance to be great all round therapy. What's good for the boats seems to be good for me too, and if that sounds odd or if I'm the only person I know who enjoys it, well, so be it. Someone has to, after all!



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.



Hennie Ha.



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

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

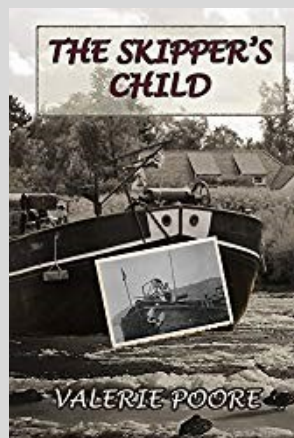
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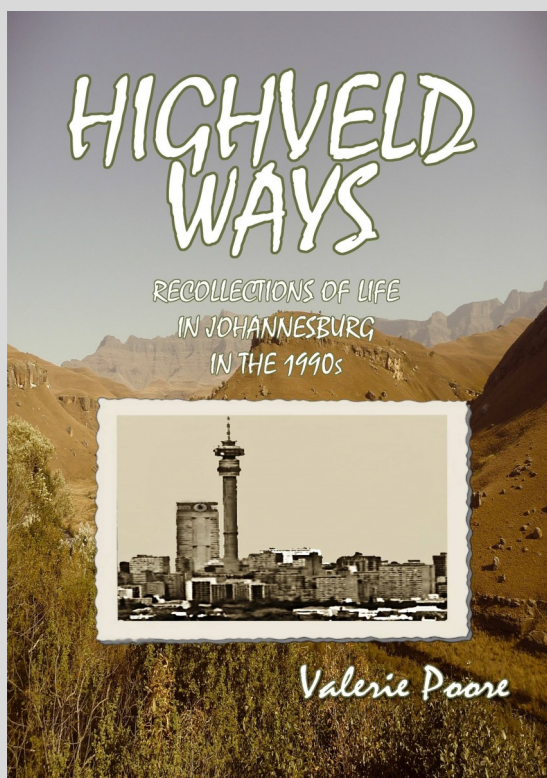
Rotterdam Reflections: <http://geni.us/5pSxcgs>

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

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



New from Valerie Poore....



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

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The Dinghy Sailor Myth

Susannah Gillam



Most sporting organisations dedicate a significant amount of time and effort to retain members and expand participation. Dinghy sailing is no different, with many young sailors, particularly girls, moving out of the sport. This has been the pattern for many years, but the silver lining is the opportunity to attract these people back.

There are many reasons why we don't sail at various times throughout our lives. My first came at about 15 when I chose to go surfing with my friends rather than sail with Dad. For many, the move from home, along with work or study commitments, and perhaps new partners, can mean sailing just does not fit in so easily.

The committed still manage to incorporate sailing into busy lives, but few can keep up the momentum when starting a family! This will definitely put the brakes on sailing, often resulting in a complete stop. Despite intentions to continue, thinking rosters and grandparent sitting will allow for a scheduled

ABOVE: WOW 2019. Women on Water. Female coached regatta Westernport Yacht Club (Victoria).

sail each week, priorities change once babies arrive. Of course, we wouldn't have it any other way as being with your children, particularly when they are young, is rewarding and a special time in life. Many of us willingly put sailing on hold, expecting to return to the sport when the time is right.

Unfortunately, the transition back to dinghy sailing after children, or any long break, is not easy. Changes in lifestyle, losing connections within the sailing community, finances, and a different body shape can all influence the decision to get back into a sport which was enjoyed in a different time and place. Whilst there are challenges these can be overcome by accepting that things may need to be done a little differently to accommodate this new stage in life. Once realised, the joy of dinghy sailing is open to all who wish to embrace it again.

One of the biggest barriers to dinghy sailing as an adult is a self-perception of being unfit and overweight. For those who are feeling this way, try going down to a dinghy club that has senior sailors and have a look as they are launching their boats.

“This is where the myth is revealed because most dinghy sailors are not slim, strong athletic people and a few will be collecting the aged pension!”

Not everyone hikes hard up the windward leg and those who don't, choose to sail boats that do not necessitate this kind of effort. Dinghies cater for a wide range of athleticism from the young Olympic hopefuls to great grand masters. Getting back onto the water is likely to be easier and more enjoyable with the right boat and the right attitude, one that suits fitness and sailing ability. This is a message that is key for a successful return.

Instant recall of all things sailing is unlikely, particularly if it has been a long break. Even

if terms and skills are not forgotten, it can take some time to get the feel of a boat's movement with waves, crew position, and response of the tiller. This varies across classes so several sails should be scheduled, to ensure that enough time has been spent in a particular boat, before making any final judgments about dinghies in general or suitable classes. When going for a test sail, avoid doing so in a boat that is overly challenging or going out in difficult sailing conditions, as the experience may not be typical.

Going out on a two-handed boat with someone experienced can be a great way of refreshing sailing knowledge mentally and physically without the responsibility of having to do everything independently first time. There are also many adult sailing programs on offer and joining one of these can help ease back into sailing without feeling obliged to know everything.

BELOW: City Sail – 2018. Female coached regatta at Albert Park Yacht Club (Melbourne).



With the decision to return to dinghy sailing comes a measure of commitment. This may take a number of forms but will most likely include taking out a club membership. If there is no need to purchase a boat immediately, crewing with someone as a reserve or on a regular basis has number of advantages. Apart from time on the water, it facilitates getting to know other sailors and how things work in the club, such as launching etiquette, typical wind and sea conditions, and race format. Opportunities to crew will be facilitated by being a club member and available when needed as emergency or regular crew.

Some sailing clubs have boats available for hire, either on a casual basis or for a whole season. These are often training boats so whilst they may not be race ready, they provide an opportunity to refresh skills and get involved in club sailing without having to buy a boat straight away. A hire fee and maintenance of the boat may be required.

Although racing isn't for everyone, the provision of rescue craft on the racecourse is a good back up if things don't go to plan. Possible gear failure or difficulties with a capsize are easier to deal with knowing help is close by if required.

Formal or informal training with a group is a very effective way of familiarising the boat and the sailing conditions of an area whilst ensuring there is support and guidance about when needed. Women's "Off the Beach" (OTB) coached regattas are becoming a regular feature in the sailing calendar and often boats can be hired at the venue. Group training has many benefits for sailors at all levels.

Thankfully, most classes of dinghy and catamarans have boats available for purchase to suit a range of budgets. Prices can vary from a few hundred dollars (often requiring a bit of work) to many thousands. When deciding what to buy, ensure the boat is



ABOVE: Efficient tie downs. Shock cord and clips are quicker to use than rope.

appropriate for sailing ability, aspirations such as competition and performance, and is enjoyable to sail. If possible, consider choosing a class of boat that is already at the club because having the same boat will fast track learning the specifics of how to sail the boat well. Even if travelling to regattas, states, and nationals are not intended, there is real value in being able look at how others set-up and sail boats of the same class. Friendly, welcoming, and supportive sailors will increase enjoyment immensely. A lot can be learned about this by going back to the beach and watching them launch and retrieve their boats. If they all help each other, particularly the ones who have already got their boat out of the water, then chances are they are going to be a good group of people to sail with. They will be willing to offer help and advice, the sort of things needed to get confidence and skills back.

Many sporting activities don't require the

same time investment as dinghy sailing. It's not just the few hours on the water that need to be factored in but also time to rig and de-rig, particularly if the boat is towed to and from the club. Time needs to be allocated to boat maintenance, packing the sailing kit, washing and drying it afterwards, and for socialising at the club. It can take up most of the day if travel time to the club is included and this is often a deterrent to people considering a return to sport.

With a little planning however, the time required to go sailing can be significantly reduced. For example, mast-up boat storage at the club saves towing and rigging time. Setting up efficient systems on the boat decrease rigging time by reducing the number of shackles to be done up and lines to be threaded.

Similarly having a system for tying the boat/trolley onto to the trailer with fewer but more effective tie downs, also saves time. After returning to sailing, I found myself at the end of the day still tying the boat onto the trailer

in wet gear, whilst my sailing pals were changed and dry in the bar. We all need efficient systems and procedures. Of course, to save time the socialising can be kept to a minimum, but it's probably best to work on the other things first.

Dinghy sailing requires a complex compilation of skills, and mastery can take many hours of practice. Sometimes we place unrealistic expectations upon ourselves. When returning to the sport later in life, fitness, agility, and reflexes may not be as good as they were. It might not be possible to make sailing a priority on the weekend, and therefore commit to sail every week or attend regattas.

A return to dinghy sailing can still be easily achieved though, by acknowledging that being highly competitive, dedicated, and athletic are not compulsory! (The other myth). We choose HOW to sail and WHEN to sail. The objective is to enjoy the sport

BELOW: Susannah and Bob.



whether this means training hard and winning races or going out for a float on a nice day.

“There is nothing wrong with being a fair-weather sailor, staying on shore in over 15 knots, having less than perfect roll tacks, and being nervous about a capsize.”

If improvements come in small steps, it's worth celebrating the gains rather than worrying about the rate of progress.

Carefully choose the boat to sail. If it is difficult to handle in normal conditions, this will be a deterrent to getting on the water. Likewise sailing a boat that does not perform or does not provide enough of those “Wahoo” moments is similarly not a good choice for those who are competitive or like a bit of excitement. Sail with a group of people who are friendly, helpful, and good fun to be with because we spend almost as much time at the club or venue on land, as

we do on the water.

If you have sailed dinghies before and have considered getting back to the sport, go for a float, go racing, or go for a picnic sail but give it a go. It's fun.



I have sailed dinghies for a long time and feel like an ambassador of the sport for the not-so-young and not-so-fit! I suspect that passively I encourage participation because people see me sailing and think “if she can then I certainly can”.

One of my biggest concerns is that many women who have sailed and stopped, for various reasons including bringing up a family, struggle to get back into the sport. I had a thirteen year break from sailing when my children were young, and I remember the excitement and exhilaration I felt when I started sailing again. I also remember my first capsize post-break and how there was a lengthy delay between the brain sending an instruction and the body responding. This is when I came to the realisation, I had aged!

Part of the reason why I became a dinghy instructor and coach, is to encourage as many women as I can to sail dinghies and show them that it is not just for the young and fit.

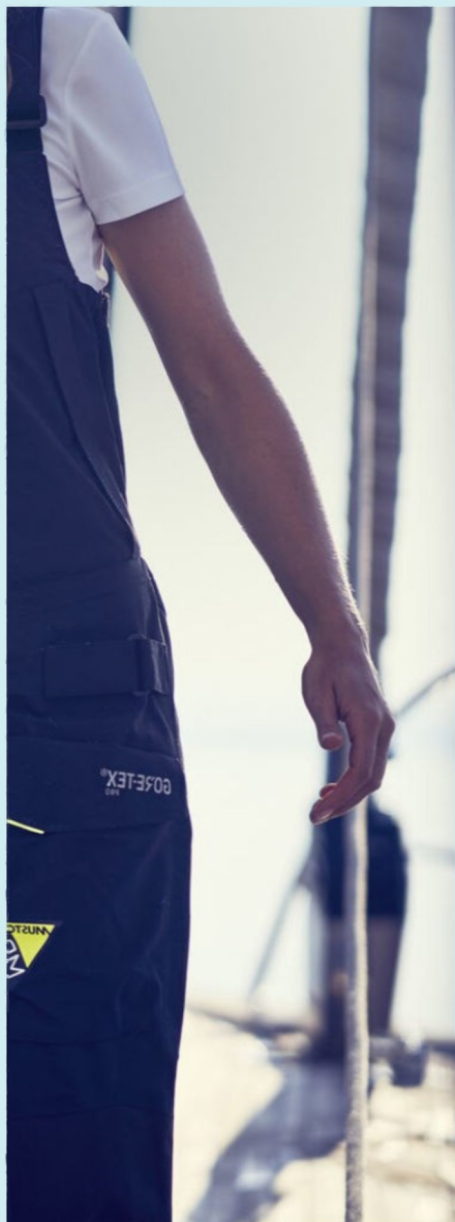
My other concern is that women have been a little overlooked when it comes to accessing equipment and technical clothing. If you don't fit a standard unisex size then choice is limited. For this reason, I started *Selki Watersport*, an online shop that specialises in watersport clothing from top brands in female styles and sizes. Women's performance clothing is still hard to source but I am as enthusiastic as I am persistent.

Susannah Gillam

Selki Watersport

Selkiwatersport.com.au

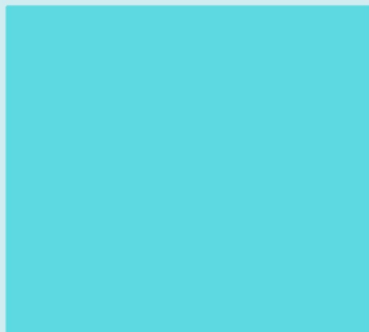
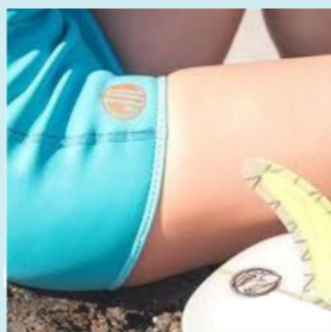
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SUSTAINABLE SAILING

HEATHER FRANCIS

Sustainable Skills

Sustainable living is all about modifying your everyday life so that change becomes habit. In other words, setting short term goals that can easily be maintained for the long run. But, implementing change is difficult if you don't have the skills to take action.

These basic skills were once passed from one generation to the next, simply through osmosis. Being able to feed and clothe yourself, having the knowledge to make minor repairs to household equipment, was necessary for everyday survival. As industry thrived and technology advanced these once necessary skills were eclipsed by mass manufactured clothes, commercially produced food, and items that were so cheaply made that it was easier to throw them away than try and fix them. Over time many have forgotten these skills.

With the recent awareness of critical climate

change there has been a move toward reviving these sustainable skills in a bid to create a more circular economy. This closed loop system uses the model of make, use, reuse, remake and recycle, which then reverts to make. This hardly seems revolutionary but is opposed to the linear economic model of make, use, dispose. By choosing to reuse and restore and reducing waste in our everyday lives we can help halt the depletion of critical resources.

Cooking

The trend of cookbooks and celebrity chefs has been hot for a while, so I was surprised during the recent global COVID-19 lockdown to learn that many people don't have basic cooking skills. It seems watching cooking shows is more entertainment than education.

It is estimated that 43% of food waste globally is produced in the home, which means expanding your cooking skills is one of the most powerful tools you can use in the battle against food waste. Being able to turn

stale bread into a sumptuous bread pudding, using bones and bits of vegetables to make stock, and knowing how to break down a chicken are great basic skills to learn and build upon. Cooking at home also cuts down on packaging inherent in takeaway or pre-packaged meals. It can also eliminate highly processed foods from your diet, which are not only more expensive but also largely bad for your health.



ABOVE: In galley cooking and preserving.

Due to their popularity, it is possible to find a cookbook that explains any cooking technique and meets any dietary requirement. There is also an endless supply of how-to videos online for all levels of cooks. So, whether you are vegan, a beginner, following keto, or just want to expand your skills now is the time to get cooking.

Food Preservation

Canning, drying and fermenting. Once a seasonal activity in kitchens across the world these basic food preservation techniques were industrialized and largely forgotten by the home cook for many years. However, over the last decade there had been a resurgence in home food preservation.

Haunted by urban legends of exploding jars or funky mold growth many people think food preservation is scary or difficult. I am happy to report that is it not. Like most

things, once you know the basic techniques you are well on your way to food preserving success.

Like many I started out making jams and pickles as a means of using up a glut of fruit and vegetables when in season. Then I moved onto fermenting my own yogurt and sauerkraut and tried my hand at dehydrating fruit. Learning basic food preservation techniques allows the home cook to better control the food that they consume. On a boat it also broadens the scope of food that is available to you. By making and preserving your own food you can reduce food waste and cut down on packaging waste. Not to mention that it is deliciously satisfying.

Basic Electrical

Over the years I have strived to overcome both my inabilities and fear when it comes to electrical problems onboard. But, after a decade of completing basic electrical projects like installing bilge pumps and light fixtures,

BELOW: Getting my hands dirty with engine repairs.



it is still something I struggle with. The good news is learning how to do electrical work on an off-grid 12 or 24-volt DC system like a boat is far less intimidating than learning how to safely work with high voltage mains power ashore.

Being able to do small electrical work means that you can trouble shoot equipment issues like when the nav lights suddenly stop working in the middle of the night on passage. Or if the anchor winch refuses to budge when it comes time to move the boat. Due to the intensely corrosive nature of salt water many electrical problems are due to simple wiring faults. Knowing how to recognize problems and affect easy repairs can save you time, money and get you out of dangerous situations.

It is necessary to understand some basic jargon and electrical principals when it comes to working with electricity, but don't let that discourage you from picking up the tools.

Taking a class or investing in a good book is a smart idea. Asking for advice from the sailing community is always helpful, as is consulting equipment manuals.

Small Engine Repair

When we bought *Kate* in 2008 we were aware that she had some engine issues – the 35hp diesel wasn't original or professionally installed. However, since I had never even owned a car I didn't really understand engines, or why a backyard install could be problematic. And, I had Steve, a marine engineer, why did I need to know about engines?

As it turned out, during the first year of our sailing adventures I spent eight weeks onboard alone. Something that wasn't exactly planned. During that time, I discovered a broken engine mounting bracket that I had to remove, have repaired, and reinstall. Shortly there after we had to lift the engine while on

Working on an electrical pump in the head.



anchor to solve a catastrophic engine problem. It also rapidly became apparent that the outboard hated me since it only seemed to act up when I was at the tiller. My learning curve was steep. I don't pretend to be much of a mechanic, but since I regularly spend six to eight weeks a year onboard by myself I am confident that I can get myself out of trouble.

Understanding what is normal for your engine – how it sounds, feels, and smells when running correctly – is a must for all boaters. Learning to do small maintenance tasks like oil and filter changes and bleeding the fuel system is a good starting place for beginners. Knowing how to troubleshoot and solve common small engine problems means less chance of pollution from oil leaks. Regular maintenance will result in an engine that is more fuel efficient, less wasteful and will last longer. If you don't have a partner who is knowledgeable or willing to teach you consider enrolling in a hands-on course designed for marine engines.

Sewing

After WWII my Grandfather started his own industrial drapery business, fitting and sewing window coverings for hospitals, schools, and government buildings across eastern Canada. I inherited his love and respect of sewing. A proper sewing machine was one of the must-haves on my list when we moved onto *Kate*.

Unlike complex garment construction, most boat projects such as sail repair and canvas creations use only basic sewing skills. A lot can be accomplished by hand if you know the proper techniques and if you can sew a straight line using a sewing machine you can conquer a lot when it comes to sewing projects on a boat. There is a wealth of good tutorials and information for free online, which means learning to sew has never been easier.

Over the years I have sewn a cover to extend the life of our dinghy, mended our exterior canvas, and reupholstered the interior cushions. Most importantly I have repaired our sails when there were no facilities ashore. When it comes to sustainable skills for sailors sewing is invaluable.

There is nothing particularly difficult about any of the skills used to live more sustainably. In fact, the working model for many is “live like Grandma.” This is not to imply that we should give up our modern conveniences and live in the middle of the woods or a farm. Rather, it asks that we make mindful choices, forgo high processed foods and harsh chemicals and learn to DIY instead of throw things away. Sustainable living means investing a little time, energy and consideration today to make tomorrow better.



Heather Francis is from Nova Scotia, Canada and has lived and worked on boats throughout the world. Since 2008 she has been living and sailing onboard *Kate*, a Newport 41 sloop, with her Aussie partner, Steve. She is a writer, photographer and cook who tries to live mindfully. Follow at www.yachtkate.com or [@sustainablesailing41](https://www.instagram.com/sustainablesailing41)

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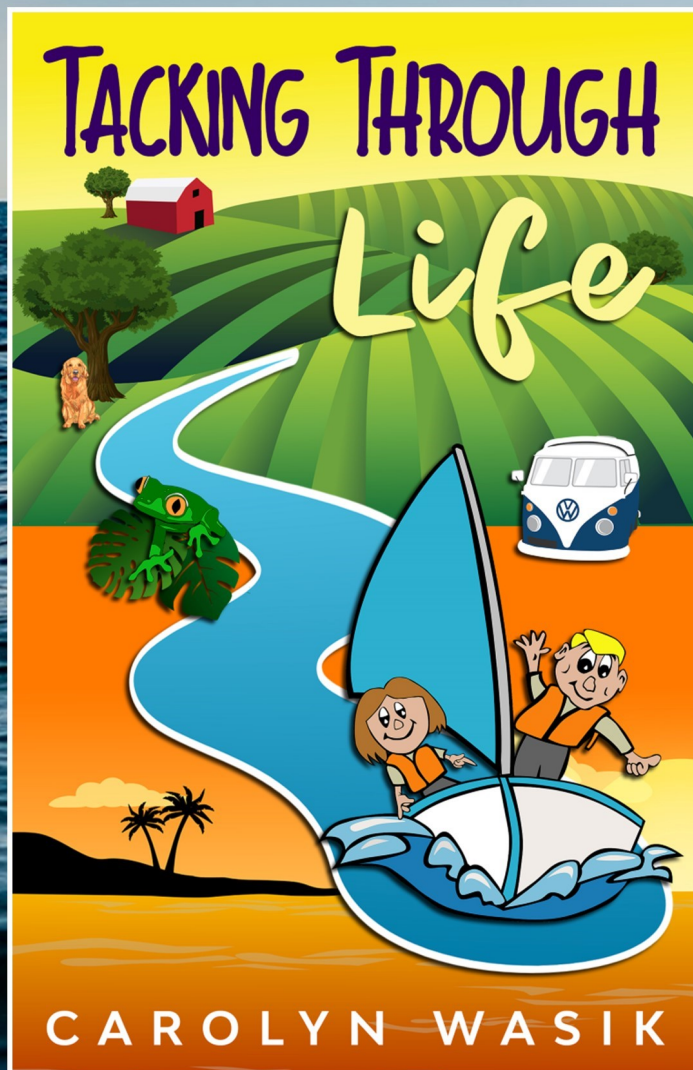
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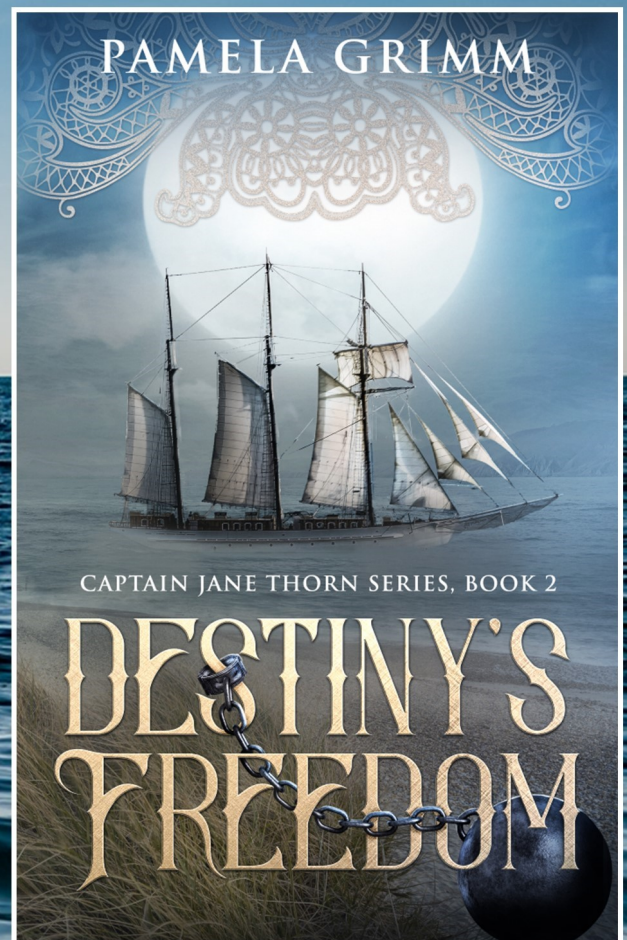
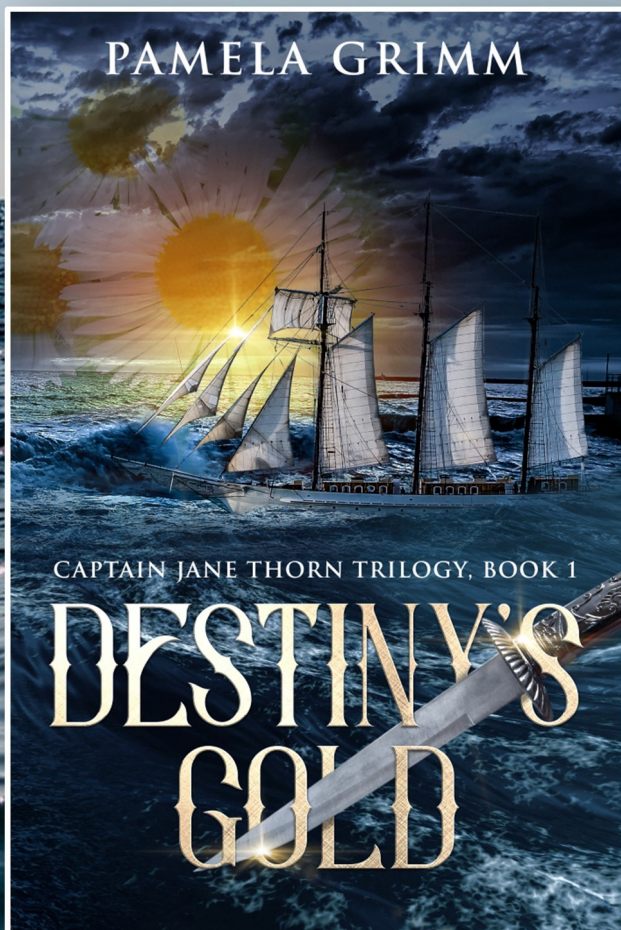
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Mud House Women's Regatta 2020



**ABOVE: Division 2 winner Sequin
(Photo Karmyn Ingram).**

Despite the limitations imposed by COVID-19 Level 2 restrictions, The Waikawa Boating Club's annual Women's regatta sponsored by Mud House Wines hit the waters of the Marlborough Sounds over the weekend. The largest ever fleet competed across two divisions, with over 170 sailors on 24 boats bringing their A game to the water.

With social gatherings around the regatta limited to 100 people, the first challenge was the regatta welcome. Hosted by Kiwi Yachting in beautiful Blackwood Bay, the barbecue featured a wine tasting conducted by Mud House wine makers Cleighen Cornelius and Krystal Palmer. Kiwi Yachting's Isobel Macalister welcomed guests and gave a brief history of 90 years of Macalisters in Blackwood Bay as well as a rundown on the development of Kiwi Yachting. With guests enjoying a gentle 40-minute launch ride to the venue, thanks to Waikawa club launch owners, the idyllic setting was completed as the launch flotilla was accompanied across the bay by a large

pod of dolphins.

Saturday saw the fleet take on two 'long harbour' courses, a dying southerly presenting conditions that favoured those with local knowledge as boats picked their way from breeze line to breeze line and significant gains and losses were made. With many of the fleet aboard their boats for the first time, the learning curve was steep. Race two took place in a gently building nor'wester allowing visitors another look at the challenges of Sounds sailing. After the learning session of the morning, boat handling and trimming stepped up considerably as the boats were driven harder and the chance came to explore sail wardrobes.

Saturday evening brought the next big social distancing challenge with the regatta dinner limited to 100. Some crews generously offered to withdraw from the dinner and

make other arrangements so that Level 2 limits could be complied with. Guests heard from our four Kiwi *Maidens* (women who have sailed as part of the *Maiden* crew) Jo Lowrey, Sharon Ferris Choat, Jo Ivory and Tash Fickling. The *Maiden* experience continued at Sunday breakfast with a Zoom linkup with Tracy Edwards MBE, the driving force behind the *Maiden* campaign. Three young women from the participating crews were able to meet their idol on the call and ask their own questions of Tracy.

Sunday's buoy racing got off to a slow start as the forecast breeze took its time arriving. Racing was tight with the fleet right on their game at the starts and local viewing platform Karaka Point struggling with the number of spectator vehicles looking to park there. Some great sail handling and tactical sailing kept margins close and the committee boat busy recording some very tight finishes. Despite the late arrival of the breeze Principal Race Officer Viv Butcher did a great job getting both scheduled races into the available time window. Evidence of the close competition came at prize giving with both divisions decided on countback after the top boats finished even on points. In Division 2 local skipper Adrienne Crossen brought *Sequin* home for the win, the Jeanneau 36 beating out Farr 727 *Freaky* skippered by Mandy Carpenter on countback with Young 780 *D'Edge* in the hands of Felicity Loncar only two points back in third. Division 1 saw some huge gains, Jo Lowrey coming to terms with *Khamsin* to win the final



Rapport gets a visit from friendly locals (photo Karmyn Ingram).

race after three mid-field finishes, the big Beneteau First 456 showing a good turn of pace once the breeze built. In the final analysis the well-performed Farr 30 *Loco* in the hands of top centreboard sailor Emily Overend took the division on countback from *Amnesty*, the Wellington based Farr 11.6 guided around the course by Ingrid Harder. After winning Division 2 in 2019 on her Young 88 *Abracadabra*, skipper Karen Selway stepped up to Division 1 helming the Ross 12 *Revs* to a consistent set of results enabling her to sneak in a point ahead of line honours winner *Satellite Spy*, the Ross 40 performing well with Carla Dixon as skipper for the third consecutive year.

With dates already set for 2021 (18/19 September) crews are already booking accommodation and flights for what is becoming one of the 'must-do' events on the sailing calendar. Of particular note was the performance of the RNZYS Youth Training Programme crew. With no previous trapezing experience the team rose to the challenge aboard the Thompson 750 *Honk 'n' Jack* kindly loaned to them by local skipper and Yachting NZ staffer Ian Gardiner. A series of mid-field results and some tight duels with boats around them saw the team go home with great smiles and a good deal of experience gathered on the racetrack.



High Voltage getting it right (photo Karmyn Ingram).

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The Lofoten Archipelago

Norway: A Photo Essay

By Sarah Rutt





In previous issues of *SisterShip Magazine* I took you on our Scottish travels with my photo journals. My husband and I have been cruising Northern Europe on our Westerly Typhoon for the last seven years but this year is turning out to be a complete contrast. Instead of being wrapped up in woolly hats and wet weather gear and sailing the northern climes, I'm kitted out in PPE working in a care home in the UK. The current situation has meant that we've decided to stay put this year, but it doesn't stop us enjoying our memories of the last few years. I've put together some photos from our adventures in Norway.

We've visited Norway three times and I've decided to start this photo journal in the Lofoten Archipelago which is above the Arctic circle and our most northerly destination. We spent a few weeks exploring this area spending most of the time anchored in amazing locations. Our arrival to the Lofotens was in time for the summer solstice but we found that the season didn't really start until July when the weather is at its best. While we were there we had a day at anchor with hail bouncing on the deck and the temperature dropped to six degrees Celsius! That was the worst day. It was mostly similar to late winter/early spring in the UK and, wrapped up well, it wasn't too cold. Our photos are mainly cloudy shots, but we did get a few sunny days. The most amazing part of being that far north is the continuous daylight and the incredible scenery. We arrived in the Lofoten Archipelago in very wet low cloud but by 11pm the rain had cleared, and we had a fantastic walk to get a few great shots at midnight. Lofoten has many delights and I hope you enjoy this small part of our Norway adventure.





INSETS: Fish drying outside is a common sight in Norway.

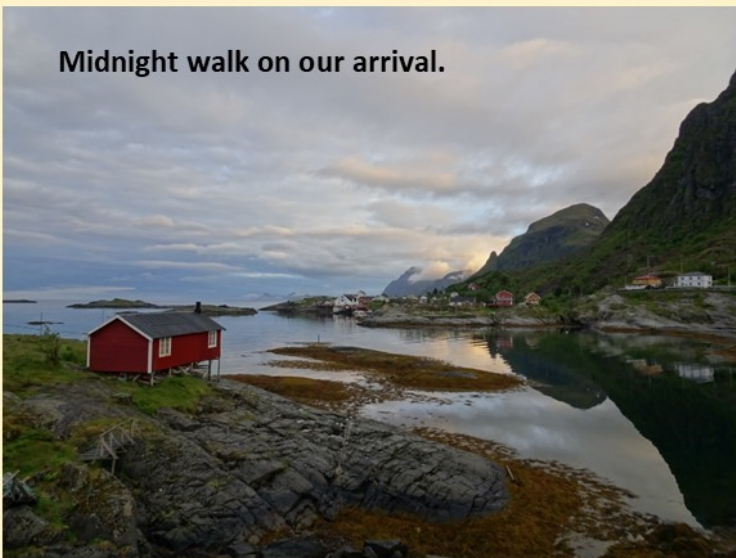








Midnight walk on our arrival.



Sarah and her husband Trevor live on their Westerly Typhoon *Zipee Too* and have spent the last seven years slowly cruising around Northern Europe, returning to the UK to overwinter. They originate from Yorkshire in the UK and prior to long term cruising have spent many years racing on the Humber Estuary and the east coast of England in Flying Fifteens and cruiser racers. They spent their honeymoon on a Westerly GK24 stuck in Hartlepool for a week in easterly gales. Sarah enjoys taking photos. She is a reluctant, dyslexic, writer yet endeavours to blog about their travels at:

<https://www.sailblogs.com/member/zipeetoo>

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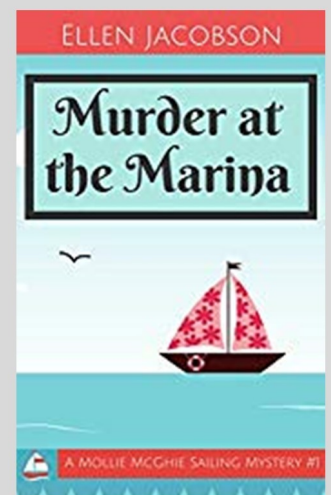
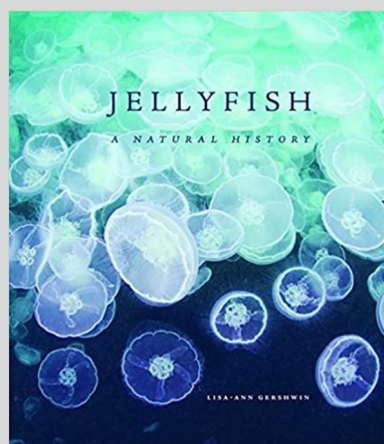
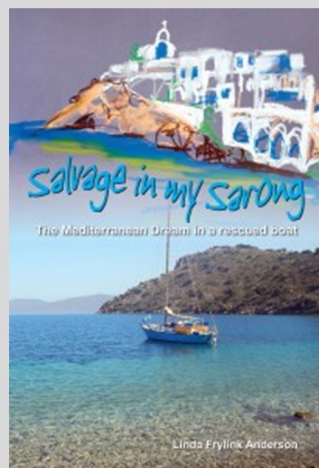
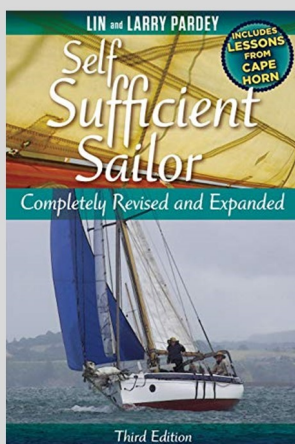
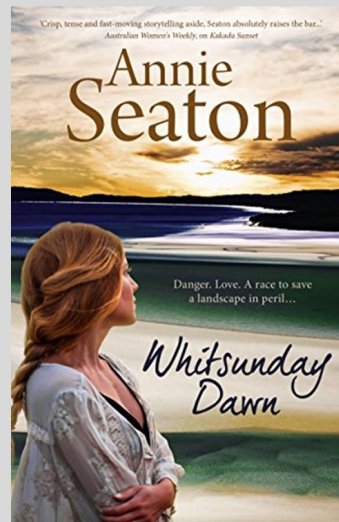
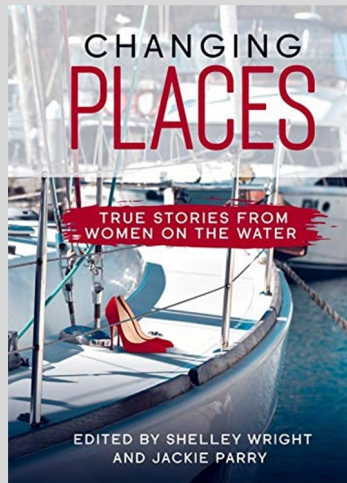
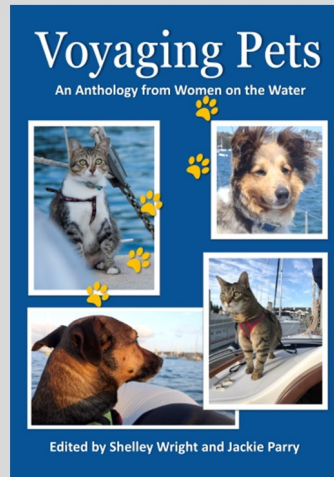
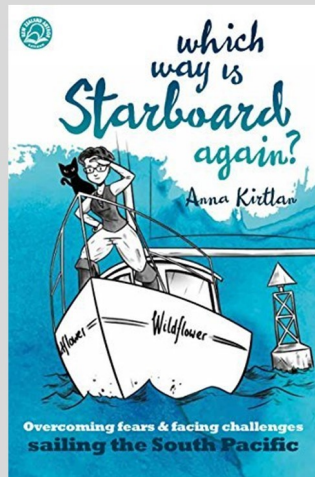
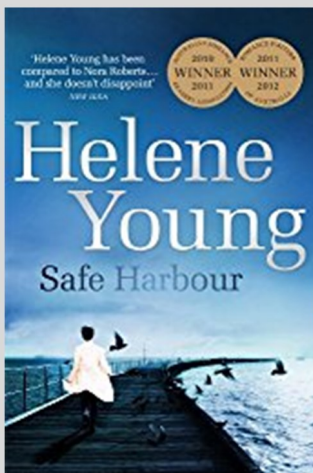
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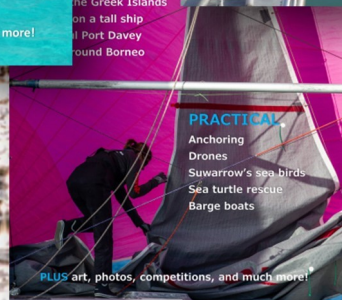
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