



Albatross

Volume 34

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February 2008



Aurielle en route from New Caledonia to New Zealand – See article on page 6

***Newsletter of the
Cruising Yacht Club of Tasmania***



THE CRUISING YACHT CLUB OF TASMANIA INC.

PO Box 605 Sandy Bay Tas 7006

www.cyct.org.au

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Vice Commodore

Andrew Boon H 6228 5807 *Reflections*

Rear Commodore

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Quartermaster

Ian Fletcher H 6229 8189 *Asterix*

Albatross mailing

Chris Creese H 6223 1550 *Neptune*

Webmaster

Dave Davey H 6267 4852 *Windclimber*

Life Members

Erika Johnson

Ken Newham Doris Newham

Send all material for publication in 'Albatross' to:
The Editor PO Box 340 Kettering Tas 7155
editor@cyct.org.au
(electronic copy preferred)

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Editorial | 2 |
| Commodore's Comments | 3 |
| Vice Commodore's Report | 4 |
| Rear Commodore's Report | 5 |
| Aurielle - New Caledonia to New Zealand | 6 |
| EPIRBS – A message from MAST | 9 |
| Anchors | 10 |
| Compass? Sextant? GPS? – Who needs 'em? | 13 |
| CYCT Calendar | 15 |



Josida and Pandora at Recherche Bay, December 2007 Photo: Chris Palmer

Editorial



Best wishes for 2008 to all CYCT members and 'Albatross' readers. I hope the Christmas and New Year holiday period provided you with some good cruising.

This edition of 'Albatross' is both earlier and thinner than usual, for which, my apologies. At the time that I would normally be working on this newsletter, I will be (along with Vice Commodore Andrew Boon) on a 53' Italian yacht sailing from Brisbane to Hobart via Sydney and a few other places. How this came to be is a long story, and not worth telling here. Suffice it to say that Andrew and I am looking forward to what will be our first long distance coastal cruise, particularly as Bass Strait is thrown in to keep us on our toes.

Anchors have been on my mind a bit of late. Early last December we took *Margaret Ellen* to Cygnet for an overnight stay. She was carrying the anchor that was on the boat when I bought her, and which had set and held well on all previous occasions. It was, I understand, a South Australian design - a sort of modified stockless 'Dreadnought' style.

Try as we might, the soft mud bottom in the Cygnet area combined with a 15 knot nor'westerly had us dragging left, right and centre. After five attempts in different locations we gave up and headed back up the Channel and picked up a Peppermint Bay courtesy mooring for the night. We now have a borrowed CQR hanging off the bow. (It's amazing what some people have under their houses in Kettering!)

Since that episode I have been searching the Web for information on different anchors and their performance, and one of the best sites so far seems to be www.rocna.com/press/press_0612_wm_ym_testing.pdf. While actually on a manufacturer's page, it is a reprint of tests undertaken by 'Yachting Monthly' and 'Sail' magazines in December 2006. It makes for interesting reading. You will also find an article on aspects of anchor performance on page 10. The only consistent thread of all the anchoring articles I could find was the lack of consistency in tests.

This issue of 'Albatross' contains another episode of *Aurielle's* adventures, this time covering the trip from New Caledonia to New Zealand. My thanks, yet again, to John and Sue Cerutti for the frequency and quality of their contributions.

Chris Palmer
editor@cyct.org.au

Commodore's Comments



2008 is upon us, and what a start to the year it has been (so far). Whatever the effect on the planet, our summers do seem to be getting longer and warmer, although childhood memories are also evoked, when it seems endless hours, day and weeks were spent by the shore.

I wasn't able to get to Partridge Island for New Year's Eve, but it was another glorious evening, and I envied those who could make it. City folk enjoyed the festivities around Hobart's wharves, and the success of the three races to Hobart this year was readily apparent, with the docks alive with people and craft. Again, it was a great reminder of yesteryear. Congratulations to the organizers for this marvellous spectacle.

December's meeting was less well attended than some, but our invited guests each contributed welcome updates in their fields of knowledge. Barry McCann outlined his ideas for an automated tracking system at Coast Radio Hobart. Richard Johnson (DSS) updated us on proposals for the new Bridgewater Bridge. Peter Hopkins from MAST advised on the recent commitment by the Minister to ensure that anchorages around South East Tasmania will continue to be available to cruisers. All this is good news, and CYCT took the opportunity to formally thank these dedicated people for representing our interests in a broad range of activities. They allow us to enjoy our boating, without continually having to watch the 'classifieds' for intrusions into our lifestyle. They deserve our appreciation, and our thanks.

I'll see many of you at Mariners Cottages for the February 'meeting cum bbq'. If circumstances allow, we might arrange a brief outline of the history of the Cottage and CYCT's role in its restoration. It might help newer members understand the Club's emotional attachment to the Cottage.

Leo Foley



Vice Commodore's Report



As I write this, I am about to leave for a cruise from Brisbane to Hobart on a big yacht. I expect that the Editor (my fellow crew) has expanded on it elsewhere, but suffice to say that I will be trying to have a quick look at the NSW coast prior to having a longer look next year.

Bridgewater Bridge, Nov 24/25

Seven Club boats headed to the Bridgewater Bridge, saw the red light, and then returned to anchor off the Austins Ferry Yacht Club for the night. *Andromeda*, *Foxy Lady*, *Mulberry*, *Reflections*, *Sagres*, *Talisman II* and *Tynwald* made the trip. We all managed to follow the channel (as detailed in *Cruising Southern Tasmania*) and *Sagres* proved that there is 15 m clearance under the western spans of the Bowen Bridge. The Austins Ferry Yacht Club kindly made their BBQ facilities available to us and we enjoyed a very good evening. Chris Creese, Judy Boon and Cheryl Price arrived by land for the evening.

For those sailing, it was a headwind most of the way up, then again on the way back on Sunday when the sea breeze came in a bit early.

Partridge Island, New Years Eve

Unfortunately I was unable to get to away for the New Year's Eve cruise and have been unable to get a report prior to the editor's deadline. I did hear *Freelance*, *Windrush* and *Asterix* in, or heading for, Tin Pot Bay and I suspect that's where the New Year was welcomed but I'll get a full report for next month's Albatross.

Snake Island, Jan 13

Likewise, look for a report next month.

Port Arthur, Australia Day long weekend, Jan 26-28

Ditto!

The Spit, Feb 23/24

The next scheduled cruise is to The Spit for an overnight stay. I especially encourage members with boats in the Hobart area to dust off the cobwebs and try this short, overnight trip. I know that those hardy Channel boats will make the trip!

Mid-Week Cruises

I have taken mid-week cruises out of the calendar until May (mainly because I won't be here for most of them).

Members' Cruising Plans

These are cruises which individual members are planning, so that other members who are interested in visiting the same areas can make contact and possibly sail in company (or as additional crew).

Port Davey, target departure late Jan/early Feb, *Pandora*

Port Davey, target departure Mar 8 (long weekend), *Reflections* and *Two-B*, 4 weeks. *Reflections* is looking for an additional crew member. Other boats from CYCT and GBBC are expected to be making this trip during March.

Circumnavigation of Australia: *Odyssey III*, possible departure March 08, several years duration.

If you are planning a cruise, please keep me up to date with your plans and I'll list them. The usual caveats apply, ie listing a proposed cruise is not an offer to take any responsibility for others tagging along, but the usual flow of information between members may help you make your own decisions.

Andrew Boon

Rear Commodore's Report



I would like to wish all members a very happy New Year for 2008 and hope that you will enjoy the club events and cruising throughout the year.

The December meeting was attended by very few club members and I understand that there were almost as many visitors as there were members but I have been informed by those attending that it was very informative and enjoyable.

The CYCT Christmas function at Dru Point was very well attended by members, their families and friends and I was delighted to see many children and grandchildren of members also in attendance. This function proved to be very popular. An added attraction was Barry Jones' classic timber speed boat and many members took the opportunity to enjoy a ride around North West Bay...Thank you Barry and thanks also to all the other helpers who assisted with the preparations.

5 February 2008

Our first meeting for 2008 is the traditional barbecue to be held at the Mariners' Cottage, Napoleon Street, Battery Point. This is once again an opportunity for

members to mix socially, get to know each other and make plans for the forthcoming year. Members should gather from 6:00pm. The barbecue is a BYO everything other than tea and coffee which will be supplied. There are some chairs, cutlery and crockery available.

4 March 2008

The guest speakers for the March meeting will provide information on fishing equipment. Information on the types of fishing equipment that have been requested so far includes net making, craypot making and fishing tackle.

Milton Cunningham

Aurielle - New Caledonia to New Zealand

John and Sue Cerutti



Karyn and Sue at the Noumea Market

We finally left Ouvea with a slight lessening in the trades with the forecast 15 to 20 SE. We planned to reach Havannah Passage on a slack low tide some 22 hours away of 'on the wind' sailing. The wind stayed as forecast for the first 6 hours but as night fell the wind began gusting over 30 and the seas were nasty to the extent where we dived thru one wave which sent a wall of water rushing over the deck. The dodger copped solid green water at full force. Thank goodness for the dodger else we would have filled the cockpit and companionway.

At midnight change of watch we spotted some nav lights off our port bow and to our surprise it was the catamaran that left Ouvea some 6 hours before us. At this stage they were motor sailing under a triple reefed main and making very hard work of it.

At dawn the wind eased and swung slightly to the east bringing some rain with it. We reached Havannah passage in 24 hours. The tide was flooding and as a result we were clocking 11 knots plus over the ground as we passed thru Woodin Canal.

We reached Noumea after 30 hours of sailing to meet Bill and Karen, who had flown in from Brisbane 24 hours previously, to join us for our trip south to NZ.

As our visa's didn't expire for 6 weeks we cruised north in company with *Insatiable II*



The dry West Coast of New Caledonia

II to visit Bay Maa, Ile Ducos, Ile Mathieu and Ile Tenia. This gave Bill and Karyn, catamaran sailors from WA, the chance to get accustomed to 'working on a slant'.

The countryside north of Noumea is very dry being on the leeward

side of New Caledonia and is a vast contrast to the east coast and to the islands of Vanuatu. Cruising along the west coast is inside the lagoon so although there is plenty of wind from the SE the water is relatively flat. With numerous walks to fossil outcrops, island wetlands and great views over the outer reef a week easily slipped by before the wind lulled and we were able to anchor at Ile Tenia in a perfect tropical scene. Tucked in behind an extensive sand bar in 2.0 m of crystal clear

water our four day stay of walks, swimming, drift snorkelling and socialising with *Insatiable II*, *Cool Bananas* and *Tropical Cat* were what cruisers dream of. As mid November was our planned departure to NZ



Cool Bananas and Aurielle at Ilot Mba

with *Cool Bananas* we wend our back to Noumea to clear out on the next favourable window.

Our planned NZ destination was Opuia in the Bay of Islands some 890 miles to the SE. The suggested route is to take a SE to E wind to the west of Norfolk Island then tack over onto a westerly front on reaching the Tasman Sea.

This was not to be our experience, though, as a tropical depression was forming up in the Solomon's which eventually became Cyclone Gaua. This influenced the Coral Sea pattern and put the fear of God into Vanuatu and New Caledonia which at various times was in Gaua's path. The weather pattern to the south became under the influence of a



stationary high over NZ which generated SE 15 – 25 knot winds with no sign of westerly fronts. Our decision to leave was based on a consistent wind of strength and direction with a promise of E and even NE 5 days out. The forecast for New Caledonia 6-7 days out was that it would come under the influence of cyclone Gaua by which time we would be in NZ.

The passage was a long sail to windward; or 'very tight reaching' as Sue prefers to call it because Cruisers Don't Go to Windward. We covered 1098 miles taking 6d 23h. After 2.5 days we were 60 miles west of Norfolk Island so we tacked over and sailed through the channel between Norfolk and Phillip Island. Sue managed to talk on VHF radio with customs on Norfolk Island who kindly emailed family in Tassie of our progress. The average time for most of the yachts that left during this weather window was between 9 and 11 days.

Clearing in to New Zealand was easy with the customs launch calling us up some 20 miles out and advising Opuia of our ETA. There are no charges whatsoever in New Zealand, which is not the case when entering Australia. Our friends on *Insatiable II* paid \$280 in Gladstone as customs work 24/7 and as they arrived after hours were charged overtime rates.

We are currently cruising in the beautiful Bay of Islands and then down the east coast to Auckland where we will leave *Aurielle* in Gulf Harbour Marina while we fly home for Christmas.



Bay of Islands, Aurielle and Lazybones USA

EPIRBS – A message from MAST

At the December General Meeting, Peter Hopkins made following points, and requested that this information be made available to all CYCT members

- 121.5 MHz EPIRB signals will **not** be picked up or recorded by AMSA after February 2009
- New 406 MHz EPIRBs now cost around \$400, and must be registered with AMSA. There is no cost attached to the registration procedure. If the EPIRB is not registered, its effectiveness is greatly limited. The registration process allows AMSA to contact the owner of the EPIRB as a first step. It is worth remembering that between January 1st and June 30th 2007, there were 2,526 121.5 MHz EPIRB activations, of which **98% were false alarms**. The 406 MHz registration will allow most, if not all, of these false alarms to be identified immediately with a single phone call.

- By February 2009, 176,000 121.5 MHz EPIRBs need to be replaced world-wide. Manufacturers have advised that only 35,000 can be made by that time. This will lead to a major supply and demand situation.

The message is clear – don't delay – get your 406 MHz EPIRB **SOON!**

Anchors

Jean Service & Capt. Tom Service

The complete article can be found at www.bluewaterins.com/second/anchor.html

With the possible exception of the integrity of your vessel's watertight hull, nothing will impact the safety and security of your life afloat more than your ground tackle. Saving money or weight when selecting this vital gear is the height of folly, and against all the principles of good seamanship - an offence that seldom goes long without its reward. Even long distance cruisers spend close to three-quarters of their time at anchor. Although all the various elements of your ground tackle system work together to provide the final effectiveness, this discussion will primarily deal with anchors and rodes.

Without first hand experience with all the sundry types of anchors, how do we choose the best type and correct size? A review of the various anchor tests - US Navy, Boat/U.S., "Practical Sailor", and "Cruising World" - seem to produce some conflicting results. Since none of the anchors available can meet all of the various types of demands cruisers put on them, the key is to establish **your** priorities, then evaluate the choices by those criteria. I require three principal attributes in an anchor: strength, setting and holding (in descending order of priority). Many of you will note that this is exactly the opposite order most of the published anchor tests use to evaluate ground tackle, if they address strength at all. Most anchors will perform successfully under light or moderate conditions ("boys' weather"), on a homogeneous bottom. The focus of our considerations should be, how does an anchor perform in heavy weather on a mixed bottom? Using this realistic criteria greatly simplifies the process, as many anchor types quickly disqualify themselves.

Strength - As the wind gets up to the point where the catenary of your rode is removed, there are only two outcomes; your anchor will either hold, or it will drag. As the wind goes from a full gale to storm force, most anchors will drag. Since real world anchorages have mixed bottoms (tropical latitudes - sand and coral, temperate latitudes - mud and rock); more times than not your anchor will drag until it hooks into something hard. Then you can conduct your own private anchor strength test, with

all your marbles on the table. If you have a structurally strong anchor, it will hold together; if not, it will come apart, and you will be underway. To me, the principal attribute of an anchor is that it must be strong, the stronger the better. In September 1990, we were anchored in 85 feet of water in a Chagos Archipelago atoll and were caught by an out of season tropical cyclone. The Bruce, on all-chain, was hooked into a large coral bommie (about the size of a '57 Buick) and held until the coral formation broke at the base, and then we fell back on the CQR. With heavy surf breaking on the reef only about 50 meters astern, our lives depended on our ground tackle. Thankfully the CQR held for the duration of the blow; an uninhabited atoll in the middle of the Indian Ocean is no place to find yourself on the beach. When the dust settled I had to dive the CQR to get it out. The plow was buried three-quarters deep in solid coral. It took about 45 minutes work with a hand sledge and a pry bar to get it out. Although a very heavy strain was put on this anchor, it did not structurally fail because it is constructed with forgings. Forgings are strong, and welds are inherently weak. Don't try this with an anchor fabricated with welds, the results will disappoint you. Welded ploughs and aluminium fluked anchors will simply come apart under these conditions. The Boat/U.S. anchor tests found that the Bruce and CQR anchors are by far the strongest anchors available.

Setting - The ease with which an anchor sets is really a matter of convenience, you just keep plowing until it digs in. It is the ability of an anchor to reset itself, unattended, that is critical. Unless you don't plan on going ashore, and only then if you are a light sleeper, smart money would buy an anchor that resets reliably when the wind or current change direction. Both the "Practical Sailor" and "Cruising World" anchor tests showed that the Bruce was the best setting, and resetting, anchor available.

Holding - In those unusual anchorages that have homogeneous mud or sand bottoms, the lightweight style of anchor (Danforth, Fortress) is tops for holding. The problem is that these anchors are easily fouled by even small rocks caught in the close clearance between the pivoting flukes and the shank (and since they are dependant on welded fabrications, they are the weakest anchors structurally). If the theoretically best holding anchors are the least suitable for actual conditions, what's a sailor to do? As a US Navy Diving and Salvage Officer, my work taught me three ways to insure that anchors hold in the worst conditions: use multiple anchors, keep a catenary in the rode, and when it really counts, swim out your hooks and visually check them - **before** you lean on them. We use these methods on *S/V Jean Marie*, and thus far they have successfully worked for us in up to, and including, Tropical Storm force conditions.

Multiple Anchors - Once the wind gets into gale force (or beforehand if it is forecast to do so) we deploy a second anchor about 45 degrees from

the first, with the two anchors approximately bisecting the axis of the wind. The best way to keep an anchor from dragging is to keep excessive dynamic forces from surging the rode, and the most effective way to do that is to hold her head and keep her from "horsing." As the wind builds, most vessels have some tendency to sail back and forth across the anchor as a result of the wind working on the hull and rigging. As the vessel builds up way, and sails obliquely across her anchorage, she snubs up short at the extreme end of each tack. This puts a great deal of strain on the rode, and often results in the hook being pulled right out of the hole - and you are under way. Using two anchors in a 45 degree spread will usually hold her head and she will quietly lie weathercocked head to wind. Additionally, US Navy salvage tests clearly demonstrated that two anchors, set independently on their own rodes, have far more resistance to drag than a single anchor equal to their combined weight. Since no one type of anchor holds best on all bottoms, it makes sense to carry different types of anchors aboard. We have outfitted *S/V Jean Marie* (37,000lb displacement) with the following anchors: 66lb Bruce, 45lb CQR, 75lb Fisherman, and a 40lb Danforth. The anchor sizes recommended in the marine discount catalogs are for light boats in light conditions. (One major catalog states that its chart is based on 30 knots of wind with a sand bottom; not the conditions bluewater cruisers need to rig for.) My advice is to go up to the next larger size from what the charts recommend. Your boat will be more secure, and you will sleep better.

Catenary - A long gradual sag in your rode (a catenary) will very effectively act as a shock absorber, dampening the boat's motion and insulating the anchor from the shock loads generated by the vessel. Proven ways to keep an effective catenary are: deploy a correct scope in the rode (7:1 in normal depths, and 3:1 for deep anchoring - over 50ft of water for yachts), utilize an all-chain rode of the correct size (both strength and weight), and in extreme conditions shackle a heavy weight to the rode at about one third of the distance from the anchor. This will act as a catenary multiplier (it is especially effective on a mixed chain and synthetic leg, connected at the interface). We carry a 50lb lead clump for this purpose. It is difficult to deploy and recover (so get it out before the storm force winds set in), but the difference it makes in the holding ability of a ground tackle leg is dramatic. In my opinion, the currently popular movement to substitute 5/16in high test chain for 3/8in proof coil is the height of folly. I fully agree with buying the high test chain, but don't downgrade your chain size to save weight. A Blue Water cruiser needs that weight to keep an effective catenary in the rode. Nothing beats an all-chain rode for catenaries, strength, or chafe resistance (coral or rock will eat right through a synthetic rode in a matter of hours). If not already so rigged, installing all-chain on your primary anchor is probably the best change you can make to your ground tackle. Those legs that are mixed

with chain and synthetic should have a minimum of one boat length of chain next to the anchor.

Visual Check - The only sure way to know that the anchor is not fouled and is correctly set, is to put your snorkel gear on, swim down the rode, and look at your hook. This provides great feedback on how to correctly anchor a vessel. You will see first hand what works and what doesn't. Make it a regular practice in warm tropical waters, and you won't be so hesitant to check out your hooks when it counts the most (when it is cold and getting ready to blow).

Compass? Sextant? GPS? – Who needs 'em?

While browsing the web for articles that may be of interest to CYCT members, I came across the following site - www.globestar.org/index.htm It covers the story of one Marvin Creamer, an American who sailed around the world without using **any** nautical instruments – not even a clock – some 25 years ago.

During the trip he called in to Hobart for a few weeks. Perhaps some older Club members may remember the event as it was headline news in the Mercury at the time, apparently.

It's a fascinating, but little known story. The format of the website does not lend itself to reproducing in 'Albatross', so I urge those interested to look at the site for themselves.

Chris Palmer





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CYCT Calendar

Sun 13th January

Day cruise to Snake Island

Sat-Mon 26th-28th January

Cruise to Port Arthur, Tasman Peninsular

Tue 5th February

Annual Summer BYO Barbecue – Mariners Cottage – 6.00pm.

Wed 13th February

Committee Meeting – 7.30pm

Sat-Sun 23rd -24th February

Weekend cruise to The Spit

Sun 2nd March

Clean Up Australia Day – Details to follow.

Tue 4th March

General Meeting – Derwent Sailing Squadron at 8.00pm. See Rear Commodore Report for details

Wed 5th March

Mid-week cruise. Meet Kettering Marina 10.00am

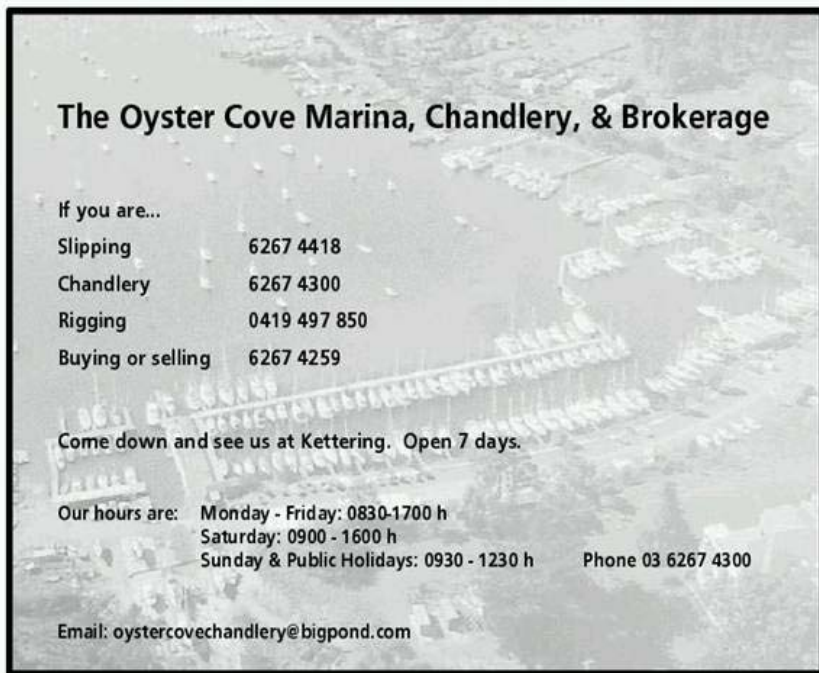
Sat-Mon 8th 10th March

Port Cygnet Regatta and Taste of the Huon. Cruise to Cygnet.

Wed 13th March

Committee Meeting – 7.30pm

Note – up to date details of all planned cruises and events can be found on the club website. www.cyct.org.au



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