

Dinah Beach Cruising Yacht Association

LOG BOOK

Available online at
www.dbcya.com.au

All the latest on developments, sailing news, events and activity around the club.

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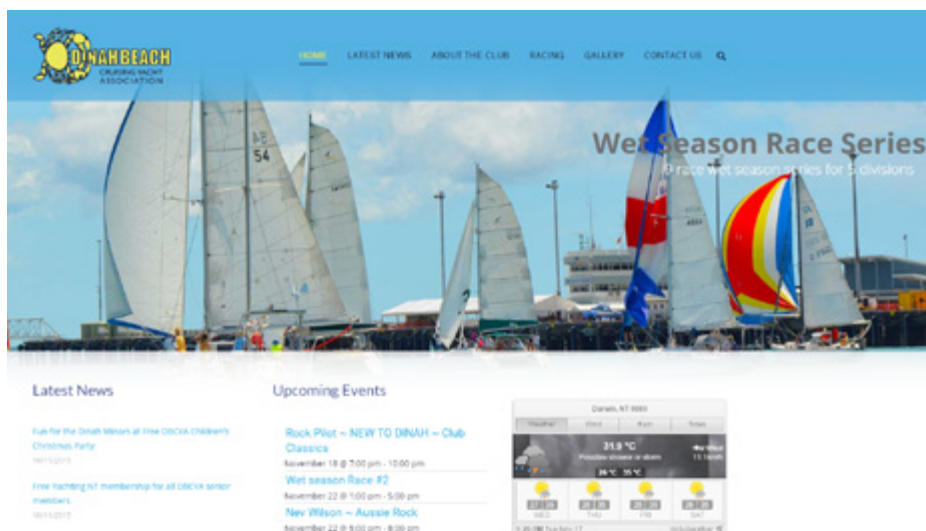
The official newsletter of



NEW LOOK WEBSITE

DBCYA now has a new website with a fresh modern look and more practical information for international and local sailors and our social members. It has up-to-date tide information on the home page, a latest news section and an events calendar for all racing, special events and social activities. It is easy to navigate and is also compatible with all mobile devices so you can surf on the go. All our available services and their associated fees are also listed here to attract national and international cruising visitors.

The web address is now www.dbcya.com.au. Any traffic to the old address (www.dinahbeachcya.com.au) will be diverted. Thanks to Jeni Jossume from Jenda 27 Website Design who has put lots of effort in to construct our site to suit our needs and look great. The website will develop further over time and suggestions for content are welcome.



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Like us on Facebook

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

COMMODORE:

Jim Grierson

VICE COMMODORE:

Liza Bowers

TREASURER:

Guy Andrew

SECRETARY:

Russell Craig

(The first four position holders above
comprise the Executive Committee)

PUBLIC OFFICER:

Jim Smith

REAR COMMODORE:

Sarah Meldrum

ORDINARY:

Glen Stanford

Sue Corry

Colin Freeman

Alan Bush

PATRONS:

the Hon. John Hardy OAM

Jack and Ilse Schreurs

YOUR 2015-16 COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEES

The AGM on 30 August saw the re-election of eight out of nine previous committee persons, with the addition of a new Rear Commodore and Ordinary Committee Member.

Your committee is dedicated to the future progression of much needed developments to the club. The commendable commitment to stay on and see projects through by the previous committee will be reflected in progress achieved over the next year. Successful planning takes time and external parties play their part in how long projects can take to come to fruition, but the Committee is surely moving things forward.

Members may not be aware that there are also several sub-committees in operation that committee members and other club members sit on to focus on specific projects. As at November these are:

Wet Season Race Series -

Chair: Liza Bowers

Plus a crew of club volunteers including regulars Colin Freeman, Ray Jarrett, Sarah Meldrum, Jim Grierson. Thanks to Val Kemp and Kevin La Mott for the hand over.

Social Sub-Committee -

Chair: Sarah Meldrum

Plus a crew of helpful club volunteers

Darwin to Ambon Organising Sub-Committee (2016) -

Members: Bob Colman , Robyn Dix, Mike Butler, Jim Grierson, Glen Stanford, Guy Andrew

Development Sub-Committee -

Members: Russell Craig , Sue Corry, Guy Andrew, Wendy McCallum, Jim Grierson, Alan Bush

Strategic Documents Sub-Committee -

Chair: Guy Andrew

Members: Alan Bush, Wendy McCallum, Colin Freeman



COMMODORE'S REPORT

I'm sure most members that frequent Dinah know me or know of me from my involvement with the Club over the years. My wife Alison and I sailed up to Darwin from Perth in 1996 and joined DBCYA pretty much straight away. Our son was born in 1997 and over the past 19 years I have interspersed raising my son with getting involved with club life, including frequent participation in the wet season race series, the Darwin to Ambon rally, attending too many club events to remember and sitting on the committee in various positions, from ordinary member, Rear Commodore, Vice Commodore x 2 to Commodore today.

We are currently going through the initial planning processes and project costings for potential major developments at the Club, including a much needed new car park; wharf repairs, careening poles upgrades, a new pontoon system (in conjunction with and dependent on Tassie Seafood's land reclamation next door) and a dedicated administration and meeting office. The purpose

of this planning is to ensure we deepen our footprint on the Club's leased land. Our progress can only be enhanced by members' support, including assisting with working bees, special projects or professional advice.

As per the constitution the members vote at a special general meeting on club expenditure of \$50,000 or more and our General Manager Wendy will use a variety of channels to get major developments information out to the members as it comes to hand.

Wendy has coordinated with a team of development committee members and professionals to submit a major Community Benefit Fund grant application for the car park, which, if successful, will reduce the total bill to the Club by \$200,000. Only 25% of the last round of grant applicants were successful, so we are not unduly getting our hopes up, but you cannot succeed if you don't try. The Club has presented a detailed project plan, letters of support and the recently obtained Development



Consent Authority Development Permit, so we have done everything we can to procure funds on behalf of the members. Thanks to Wendy, Alan Bush, Russell Craig and the development committee for preparing this grant application.

The cyclone season is nigh upon us and we need to put constructive effort into keeping our Club tidy and safe, including Boat Park hard stand occupants attending to their site to ensure vessels and smaller objects are secured as safe as possible. I encourage the yacht owners on the DBCYA hard stand to use tie downs and utilise our new acrow props that are now available for use free of charge - see below for details.

ACROW PROPS NOW AVAILABLE FOR USE

Our Commodore recently negotiated for the purchase a large quantity of different sized acrow props at a fair price thanks to Paspaley Pearling Co. They are now available for use under the following terms:

- The Acrow Props are available free of charge to senior members for short or long term use by:
 - a) Owners of new vessels coming up onto the hard stand
 - b) Owners of existing vessels already on the hard stand to provide extra reinforcement
 - c) Other situations requiring emergency support
- The Acrow Props remain the property of DBCYA and are to remain on the DBCYA premises
- To obtain a set see the General Manager who will record quantities and provide pins.
- Bolts are not to be used in lieu of pins.
- Returns via the General Manager who will record their return.



All Boat Park residents are encouraged to utilise the props now before cyclone season kicks in.

ABOUT US

Situated on the banks of Sadgroves Creek just 1km from Darwin CBD, DBCYA is a unique and friendly club. From humble beginnings in 1982, the club now boasts a healthy membership and offers excellent facilities to local and visiting yacht owners and a relaxed venue for locals to unwind.

SENIOR MEMBER FACILITIES:

- Yacht hard stand - for short and long term repairs / maintenance
- Careening poles
- Pontoon for dinghies
- Wet season race series
- Darwin to Ambon yacht race
- Laundry and ablution facilities
- DIY Workshop facilities
- Dinghy storage (limited sites)
- Mail delivery service

FACILITIES FOR ALL MEMBERS:

- Open air licensed venue open 7 days
- Bistro kitchen offering Australian and Asian meals open 7 days for dinner and lunch on the weekends

Throughout the year the Club offers a wide range of land based entertainment including live music three times a week, quiz nights, theme occasions and other attractions and activities.

TREASURER'S REPORT

July - October review

At the end of October our total cash on hand was \$949K. With the upcoming capital works in mind I like to recommend we not let our cash reserves fall below three months' expenses, which would mean around \$250K. There is nothing either scientific or magical about this figure – just a gut feel on my part. My thinking is, "What would happen if we suddenly found ourselves with none of our revenue and all of our expenses (cyclone)? Would it be unreasonable to expect us to get on top of such a problem in three months?"

Bar sales are up by \$49K on the same period last year (four months to July to October inclusive) yielding an increased bar gross profit of \$32.6K. Gross profit percentage is 51.2%. I'm pretty happy with that. Total employment expenses are around \$84K, an increase of \$14.7K. The increase is partly due to our employment of a General Manager instead of a Bar Manager. However, half of the increase is the result of reverting to the employment of a yardie. At the AGM I mentioned that our use of contractors had resulted in costs for that sort of work being classified elsewhere – ie repairs and maintenance rather than employment expenses.

The books of the club – which are well kept – report net profit for the four months at \$88K, compared

with \$35.7K for the same period last year. That current year 'net profit' is not a true net profit in conventional accrual accounting terms. This is because we only record depreciation at the end of the year and we pay our bills quickly. The \$88K is therefore much closer to what the accountant calls a 'net cash inflow' than a net profit. Moreover, some of the \$52K increase is not real – for example, the NT Government gave us \$10k towards the Ambon Race but told us to submit the paperwork in July. Accordingly the books show zero for the previous year's Ambon grant! Take that \$10K out of 2015 and put it in 2014 and you get a \$20K swing in favour of 2014. True profit is therefore closer to \$70K in the four months to October.

Monthly net cash inflows are often much more 'spikey' than monthly net profits. Nevertheless there are plenty of clubs that would kill for our level of profitability. All in all the financial year is going well.

Guy Andrew
Treasurer



Never a ship sails out of a bay, but carries my heart as a stowaway.
- Roselle Mercier Montgomery

At sea, I learned how little a person needs, not how much.
- Robin Lee Graham

USER-PAYS DINGHY STORAGE STARTS 01 JAN 2016

Interested parties to contact the General Manager now.

Born of a necessity to gain control of the large amount of unidentified dingies/tinnies/kayaks/rafts and other small floating devices that have accumulated around the club, as of 01 Jan 2016 DBCYA is introducing a user-pays system for senior members wishing to store their dinghies at the club for more than two weeks. This replaces the free unmonitored dinghy storage system. These changes form part of the recently introduced Pontoon Access and Dinghy Storage Policy (available via www.dbcya.com.au or at the bar).

There is a 48hr limit for dinghies secured to the pontoon and a two week limit for dinghies secured either side of the boat ramp. Storage for longer periods is on the dinghy storage racks, subject to available space. Dinghies are not permitted to be stored elsewhere on the premises, including on the wharf or in the bushes alongside the boat ramp (excepting within a hard stand occupier's allocated site).

Due to limited storage space the Club cannot provide an ongoing dinghy storage facility for all senior members. If there is not enough space, the member is required to make alternative storage arrangements away from DBCYA but can put themselves on the wait list for the next available spot.

Initial allocation preference will be given to existing Hard Stand occupants and wharf residents and those moored in Sadgroves creek/inner harbour (where possible and without guarantee), provided they have registered their interest by 18 December. Then it is a first-in, best-dressed arrangement.

Please note members with dinghies already stored on the racks will not automatically have first priority of allocation nor are they exempt from the terms of this new system.

If any member has information on any dinghies presently stored at the club that belong to an absent senior member please let the General Manager know so contact can be attempted.

There is a basic site rental agreement to complete and all users must mark their vessel with their membership number and pay the applicable fee in advance. More detail is provided in the terms and conditions available behind the bar or on the noticeboard.

Dinghy storage rack RENTAL FEE STRUCTURE:

- 3 months - \$30
 - 6 months - \$50
 - 12 months - \$90
- 50% pensioner concession applies

Fees are per calendar quarter or part period thereof (Jan - Mar, April - June, July - Sept and Oct - Dec).

This user-pays system is backed by the results of the 2015 members survey that showed 70% of senior members supported the introduction of user-pays for certain facilities.

Any dinghies stored on the storage rack after the start of the new year that have not been identified and/or the owners not entered into an agreement will be removed from the racks to elsewhere on the premises and marked as 'deemed abandoned'.

Any owner with their dinghy currently on the rack that does not wish to enter into a user-pays agreement is requested

to remove their dinghy prior to 01 Jan 2016.

The intention is to match all legit dinghies with their owners to ascertain which have been abandoned. After a decent time frame to allow owners to rescue their dinghies from the 'deemed abandoned' pile, any that are still unclaimed will be disposed of or sold by the Club as per the Warehousemens Liens Act.

It will be a bit of a process to get this system up and running but once going it will free the area of abandoned vehicles and allow some control over dinghy storage around the Club. Your cooperation to get this system going is appreciated.

REGISTER INTEREST NOW

Boat Park occupants / harbour or Creek mooring owners/occupants get **AUTOMATIC SITE ALLOCATION (FIRST 36 PERSONS) IF INTEREST ADVISED BY 18 DECEMBER AND SIGNED AGREEMENT AND FEES PAID BY 31 DECEMBER.**

Other senior members can also register their interest, availability will be advised after 18 December.

Register your interest over the bar, call 8981 7816 or email manager@dbcya.com.au

Allowances will be made if not back from festive leave by 01 Jan as long as interest is advised prior.



RATES FOR BOAT PARK, WHARF, CAREENING POLES

MONO-HULLS -

BOAT PARK HARD STAND:

For vessels needing long-term
hard stand facilities - typically
more than three months.

Year 1: \$105 Year 2: \$126
Year 3: \$168 Year 4: \$231
Year 5+: \$315

MONO-HULLS -

WHARF HARD STAND:

For mono-hulls needing short
term hard stand facilities typically
three months or less.

1st 12 weeks: \$110
After 12 weeks: \$220
After 24 weeks: \$440
After 52 weeks: \$880

*Please note all mono-hull owners enter
the Boat Park on a maximum 12 month
agreement and the Wharf on a maximum
12 week agreement. Agreements can be
renewed for further periods of occupancy
by agreement from both parties.*

MULTI-HULLS -

WHARF HARD STAND

(for multi-hulls too big for
the Boat Park - 3 positions)

1st 39 weeks: \$110
After 39 weeks: \$220

*Please note all multi-hull owners enter
the Wharf Hard Stand on a maximum 12
month agreement. Agreements can be
renewed for further periods of occupancy
by agreement from both parties.*

Included in Hard Stand site rental cost:
live-aboard option, access to ablutions,
water, waste removal (domestic), parking
for one vehicle. Electricity usage is
metered and charged accordingly. T&Cs
apply, bond required.

CAREENING POLES

Daily rate \$22
\$200 deposit required if
removing contaminants.
T&Cs apply.

DINGHY STORAGE RACKS

3 months - \$30
6 months - \$50
12 months - \$90. T&Cs apply.

2015/16 WET SEASON SERIES SPONSORS

The following businesses have given us their support.
Where possible please give them yours.

Principal Sponsor



Gold Sponsors



DARWIN PORT CORPORATION



silver Sponsors



bronze Sponsors



INVESTORS PLAN TO EXTEND BAYVIEW DEVELOPMENT

BAYVIEW THE BOULEVARDE

Dover Investments Pty Ltd is proposing to develop 'Bayview – The Boulevard' as an extension to the existing Bayview Haven Canal Estate.

The Project is bounded by Tiger Brennan Drive to the north, Sadgroves Creek to the east (directly opposite Charles Darwin National Park) and south, and to the existing Bayview Haven Canal Estate and Frances Bay to the west.

The Project would be aligned around a single north-south aligned, central boulevard approximately 1 km long, consisting of:

- western side of the boulevard with multiple dwelling townhouse developments, two storeys high
- eastern side of the boulevard with medium density and high-density apartments positioned at the northern and southern ends.

The Project is proposed to:

- establish up to 1100 dwellings housing a population of approximately 2500 residents
- extend the existing Bayview area perimeter walkways and sea wall around the new development area
- conserve O'Ferrals Rock as a cultural and heritage park and link with open space corridors around the eastern and southern boundaries of the development
- link to Tiger Brennan Drive via a new access road
- potentially include jetties, a restaurant, and a mangrove experience boardwalk in the southern mangrove area.

The proposed development footprint of approximately 25 hectares (ha), consisting of 20 ha of mangrove forest, zoned for future development; and 5 ha from undeveloped areas of the Bayview Haven Canal Estate, including 0.7 ha of coastal monsoon vine forest within the site of O'Ferrals Rock.



the dark green section indicates the proposed new development

The Developer is currently preparing to submit a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Once received, the DEIS will be exhibited for public review and comment for a period of six weeks. This will provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the proposal or specific environmental issues of concern. The invitation to comment will be advertised in the NT News and on the NT EPA website.

DBCYA will monitor the development progress of this project with aim to represent DBCYA member interests. Individual stakeholders are also encouraged to familiarise themselves of the development process and upcoming community consultation opportunities. Google 'Bayview the Boulevard' for further project information from the Developers and the NTEPA.

CLUB IMPROVEMENTS IN 2015

In addition to the major strategic development planning currently underway for the car park, careening poles and wharf repairs, lots of operational and administrative improvements were completed in 2015, or are in progress, to improve services and facilities, including:

- acquisition of a large amount of acrow props
- modernised website
- new ATM
- Revised staffing structure and job duties
- improved peripheral lighting in the bar
- new amplified sound system
- new camera to build up a practical photo library
- Repairs to worn boat park individual electricity meter boxes
- Purchase of third washing machine
- Upgraded computer stock control system
- improved communication channels including newsletter, facebook, mailchimp, website news feeds
- NBN installed - free high speed wifi now available in the bar area (1 tetrabyte of data each month)
- Garden overhauls (in progress)
- Member's Survey conducted and results put to use
- Dinghy trailers removed and back of workshop tidied up
- Dinghy crane compliance inspection and service
- Coordinated sponsorship drive resulting in increased local sponsorship of the Wet Season races
- New kitchen cool room floor and appliances

WET SERIES RACING GETS A HELPING HAND



For Race #3 on 06 December we will be graced by the presence of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard NT Branch, who have kindly offered to become our Safety Boat for the race season.

Race goers can feel safe on the water knowing we have the big guns out there minding our sails. A huge thanks to Australian Volunteer Coast Guard NT for providing this awesome community service for us for a mere reimbursement of fuel costs.



BUT MORE HELPERS WOULD HELP A LOT!

Want to help out and learn a bit of the behind the scenes organisation that goes into coordinating a wet season race series? We are looking for one or two people to volunteer their services to join the existing crew on the start trailer on Stokes Hill Wharf for the remaining 8 races - its good fun, you'll have a practical role and earn a bucket of brownie points for being a good sort! See Wendy or Liza if interested.



DBCYA MINDS THE KIDS FOR THE DAY

It's free, we'll mind the kids and they'll have a fun afternoon doing all the exciting things associated with Christmas.

It's as simple as registering your child/ren at the DBCYA bar (or calling 8981 7816) by 06 December then dropping them off for the afternoon.

This free event is for senior and social members' kids aged under 18. Parents can to join in or take respite from the heat in the licensed premises.



DBCYA CHILDRENS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

12:30PM SAT 12 DEC

AN AFTERNOON OF
FUN ACTIVITIES FOR
THE DINAH MINORS

**REGISTER YOUR
CHILD/REN AT THE
BAR BY 06 DEC**

A FREE EVENT FOR CLUB MEMBERS' CHILDREN

**Be The First On Your Boat
To Read Bob Bitchin's New
Book:**



From outlaw biker and bodyguard for Evel Knievel to sailing on the Flagship for Green Peace that had no engine and used kerosene running lights.

By the author and creator of Latitudes & Attitudes, Cruising Outpost, Biker Lifestyle and Tattoo Magazines. T

this is Bob's 8th book, and it's all true (well, how he remembers it anyway!) Available through Amazon.



OUR INTERTWINING LIVES

part two of a three part series on our Patrons Jack and Ilse Schreurs' involvement with DBCYA since its inception.

In 1975 we had sailed from Dinah Beach with three small kids on board, only to return after four eventful years with three rather burly teenagers - the boat was literally getting too small for us. After this 30,000+ NM voyage our first priority was to haul the Warna Carina out of the water for a major maintenance and refit program. We parked on the very spot that Geoff Stait's 'Gandalf' had just vacated, somewhere under the slab where the Spit and the BBQ are located today.

Dinah Beach was still very much the same as we had left it four years previous, except there

was quite a few more yachts and many more occupants. The same objectives and dreams still floated around the waterfront. The old pre-cyclone Tracy wish, "We must start an official Yacht Club here one of these days" was still top listed. But on the 4th of October 1981 we called for the Inaugural Foundation Meeting, the name of the club as we know it today was decided and things started to move fairly quickly from here onwards.

Over the next few years much of the wheeling and dealing with Government Departments and Politicians went on behind the scenes. I left the haggling and the hassling to the likes of Gus Withnall, Geoff Stait and Wendy Flynn, I just concentrated on pushing big quantities of fill. With a few big building projects going on in the Darwin CBD, we were ideally situated to receive all this excess building rubble and excavation fill. Thanks to my employer, Perkins Shipping, I was able to bring all sorts

of heavy duty equipment home for the weekends. A 992 CAT loader with a three cubic meter bucket soon made short work of a week's fill stockpile.

As soon as the first section of filled ground, along the south fence, had reached its required height, the NT Port Authority came good on their promise and erected a prefabricated Amenities Block (where now the first two boats are parked on your RHS as you drive in the front entrance).

All this volunteer labour and busy bees were rewarded by a regular "Monsta Party" as only Dinah Beach could organise, and show a little profit as well.

"We must start an official Yacht Club here one of these days"

Kim Hamilton (Commodore's husband), being keen hunter as well as yachtsman, would go bush and bring us back a nice young buffalo, ready to go on the spit. We'd fill several aluminium dinghies with ice, buy many cartons of beer and sell it ice cold for a dollar a can, all the meat you can eat for free. This was one of our earliest 'fund raisers' as well as lots of fun for all concerned.

In early 1986 Robert Finney (Bear) informed the Committee that he had some inside contacts at the NT Liquor Commission, and we may be able to obtain special purpose 'Limited Liquor License'. We gave Bear the go ahead to investigate.

On 12 February 1986 Robert returned to the meeting with the news that our special six hour Liquor License had been granted, the fee had been paid and Robert Finney (Bear) had become the first official Nominee of the DBCYA.

Around this time the available boat

parking spaces were almost full to capacity with many local and visiting yachts. Amongst all this lot were four boats from Perth, parked alongside each other, just about where the toilet block is today.

This "Fremantle Flotilla" as we called them, were notably the biggest mob of whingers Dinah Beach has ever seen. Everything we ever did was always wrong, and they always had lots of advice as we apparently did not know how to run a Club or any sort of organisation. When they learned of our Liquor License application they tried everything in their power to stop us. They complained to the Authorities that we were just an unruly mob of irresponsible drunks.

The Club bought a used sea-container in good condition from Perkins Shipping, the chiller type with wood/fibreglass walls. In my workshop at Perkins a team of volunteers converted this container into a very handsome, well-functioning bar. Electricians,

DBCYA LIFE MEMBERS JACK AND ILSE SCHREURS

World circumnavigators, Jack and Ilse's history and involvement with the Club spans decades.



Painters and Decorators, Plumbers, Carpenters and Fridgies - many times they laboured late into the night. Then, for the 'icing on the cake', our final masterpiece, we fitted the beautiful varnished 700mm wide bar top*. Needless to mention, but the bar was already well tested before it even left my workshop.

The flotilla whingers were in their element - it was nearing the advertised opening time and there was not even an esky in sight. We obviously could not organize a 'piss-up in a brewery'. Customers started to arrive, many thinking they were at the wrong place, that nothing much was going to happen here tonight.

At half past three in the afternoon a truck and Perkins' big fork-lift arrived at the beach and we unloaded the already fully stocked bar/container, locked it on its pre-cast footings, connected electricity and water and we were ready for business. DBCYA's Patron, the Hon. Tom Harris MLA, opened the bar at 1600hrs sharp. The party that followed is one of the biggest nights in the history of Dinah Beach.

Jack and Ilse Schreurs.

** This bar top has since been converted into the long narrow tables near the water cooler and on the opposite side of the slab.*



Hard-standing on the Dinah Beach prior to Careening Poles



Wendy Flynn and a young Geoff Stait in the foreground

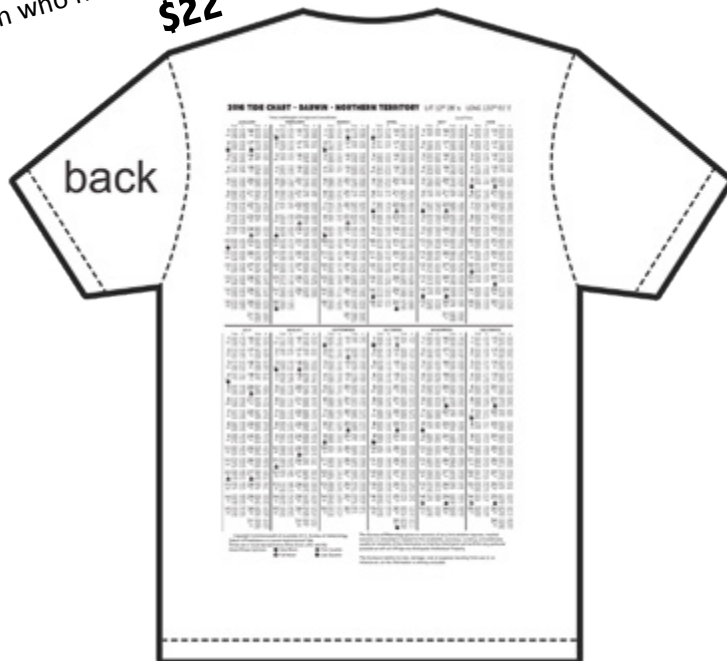
The final of Our Intertwining Lives will appear in the DBCYA logbook issue #1 2016

NEW DBCYA MERCHANDISE

hot off the press, a range of stylish consumer accessories for the fashion conscious yachtie ...

MENS AND LADIES COTTON T'S
White with the 2016 Tide Tables on the back - the perfect Xmas present for that person who has everything or has nothing!

\$22



STUBBY COOLER MK II

Our second release in the DBCYA stubby cooler designer series. More awesome pressies for the Xmas stocking

\$6



WATERPROOF POUCHES

Lightweight, Great for phone, keys, wallet, Xmas present

\$28



PENS

range of colours

\$2



BUCKET HATS

Choice of 3 colours
Practical Promowear

\$18



COMING IN TIME FOR XMAS - SINGLETS IN A RANGE OF COLOURS SALE - 2015 DARWIN TO AMBON SHIRTS \$25

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

I hope everyone is looking forward to Christmas, catching up with rellies and relaxing. I'll be floating around Dinah most of the festive period as I aim to head home to NZ to catch up with mine around April/May next year. Ashling our Bar Supervisor will also be here to keep the festive spirit happening across the bar.

It's been a year of slow to steady progress on many fronts - some visible and some behind the scenes. Our new website is attracting more international visitation, our bar sales are up and a lot of younger members have been enjoying the social facilities; we're \$5K up on last year's racing sponsorship and we have a few new very welcome backers (plus Coopers is back!) and of course a big cheers to Carol and George from Best Foods down the road who are our new principal race sponsors. We are at pretty much full capacity in the Boat Park with very little down time between vacancies. We have welcomed several new sailing seniors this year who have

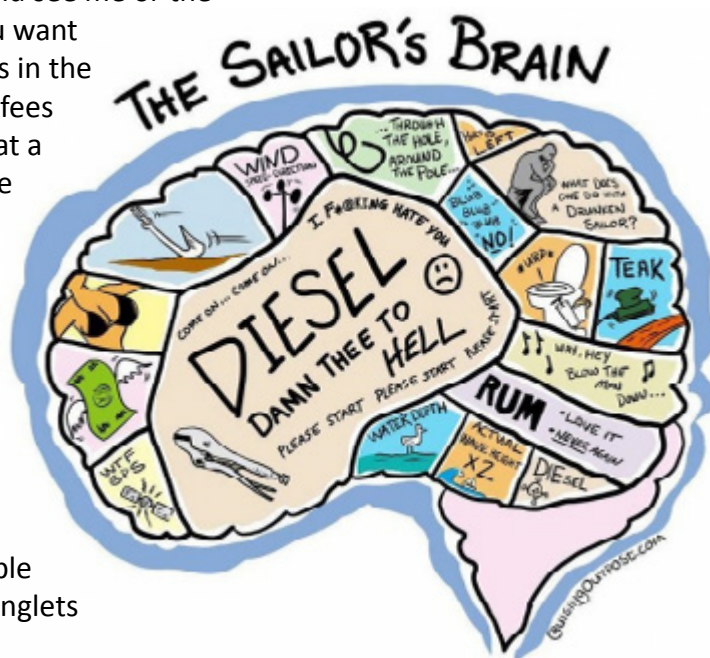
utilised the club to help with their sailing projects and dreams. We've had a good party or two on the way as well, and we have a cracking five piece band for you for New Year's eve, with singer/guitarist Nik Almenor flying up to join 'the Blu Funk Band'.

The user pays dinghy storage system kicks in on 01 Jan and will allow the Club to keep some checks and balances on 'dinghy sprawl' and sort out which dinghies have been left behind for good. Come and see me or the staff now if you want to use the racks in the new year. The fees have been set at a very reasonable rate and there is a 50% pensioner discount.

We now have lots of new merchandise including the revived tide table T-Shirts. The singlets

will be here before Xmas so your present picking problems are solved. Have yourselves a super festive season.

Wendy McCallum



Sailing - The fine art of slowly going nowhere at great expenses while being wet, cold and miserable
~ Irv Heller

YACHTING NT MEMBERSHIP IS FREE FOR ALL DBCYA SENIOR MEMBERS



DBCYA has blanket membership with Yachting NT so all individual senior members can join for free to enjoy the benefits of membership with Yachting NT. You do not need to be a wet season race participant, or

even be in the water. All hard stand occupants and residents can apply for membership to enjoy free personal accident insurance cover whilst working on their vessels amongst other benefits.

Further membership benefits info and application form available at www.dbcya.com.au in the Latest News section. Return the completed form to manager@dbcya.com.au or hand over the bar.

2015 DARWIN TO AMBON YACHT RACE AND RALLY

A wrap up from the perspective of competitor Glen Stanford on Lost Philosophy



On Saturday 5 September, we 25 yachts gathered at Stokes Hill Wharf for the start of the 2015 Darwin to Ambon. We were farewelled by the Spirit of Darwin, full of dignitaries, including the Administrator (an erstwhile participant on many occasions), spectator boats and a crowd on the wharf of family and friends. It was a spectacular day with the participants' spirits buoyed by the impending challenge. The wind Gods whilst not getting carried away by giving us a spinnaker run, at least allowed us the dignity of leaving the harbour with full sails.

By nightfall we were in the Beagle Bay inching towards Cape Fourcroy.

Of course the IRC racing and some of the faster multi-hulls were gone. I guess they were somewhere in the Arafura catching the south-easterlies and powering north, but the bulk of the fleet were settling into their night routines south of Bathurst Island. The wind Gods, who had given us half a blow earlier, obviously thought that was enough.

Fast forward 48 hours (the emphasis here on the forward, not the fast). Two days of sailing in light airs had placed us further north, but not out of the reaches of Bathurst Island. The sea was calm, dead calm. When there was enough wind to fill the sails, the compass pointed north, but the chart plotter showed a course influenced by the tide pointing us south. I gathered the crew. With some disappointment we pulled out of the race and turned the motor on. Many of those yachts around us came to the same conclusion. By the next morning the wind was strong enough to sail and so we did for most of the rest of the way.

The Arafura and Banda Seas are as fascinating as any in their uniqueness. Volcanic islands rise up from a bed 1,000 meters below. Flying fish are prolific, dolphins come in a couple of varieties and we saw whales as close as 20 metres.



By mid day on Thursday we could see the outline of Ambon through the mist in the offing. By sunset we could pick out the harbour navigation lights from the myriad of coastal lights and squid fishing rigs as into the harbour we sailed. Ambon Harbour generally has strong gusts of wind that are interlaced by dead calm. It was no different that night. After crossing the finish line in a blaze of lights and sirens we found anchor (there is a story there for another time) and cracked a bottle of bubbly. Clearance would not be till the morning.

We arrived too late, but those who were there on Thursday morning attended a commemoration for the 70th anniversary of the release of prisoners of war from the Tan Tui camp, now a Commonwealth War Cemetery. Jim Grierson laid a wreath on behalf of DBCYA. From reports I received it was a very moving occasion and the Gull Force Association were extremely pleased

with our participation.

The finish line and moorings are in the village of Amahusu. The village is dominated by the Tirta Kencana Hotel, the host of many parties. A few years back the Ambon government (council) put in a jetty. This jetty,

adorned in banners, accompanied by food stalls and supported by very loud bands, made a tremendous carnival atmosphere for both locals and yachties. The jetty was definitely the place to be when the sun set and the tropical night air set in. Those wishing a quiet beer sought out Bertie's Bar near the volleyball court, but Bertie's didn't stay quiet for long.

On Friday afternoon we were given a most welcoming Welcome Ceremony by the Ambonese. Lunch, songs, dance and laughter. These people are truly hospitable and to top it off, each of the skippers were given a beautifully woven scarf to treasure as a memento of the race.

That night we were treated to a Gala Dinner at the Vice Governor's residence perched high in the hills overlooking Ambon City. A magnificent smörgåsbord of local dishes was complimented by some very able songsters. Dancing ensued, which left me to contemplate that the further we are from home, the more comfortable we are to challenge John Travolta with our slick steps.

Amahusu hosted the Friendly Games on Saturday. The locals were no match for the Yachties in the tug-of-war, but in the slippery pole pillow fight, yours truly went down to the local guy, 2-1 in the final. I could be a sore loser but pillow fight seemed to be

a euphemism for boxing match. The locals also won the volleyball by default. They made the mistake of showing their skill whilst warming up. Suddenly all the yachties had a yearning thirst that needed serious quenching.

The Mayor of Ambon graciously made his residence available for our Presentation Night. The night became very festive as the yachties and locals mixed together to shimmy under the Limbo Stick and formed a Congo Line that wound its way through the house and garden.

Over the next few days the yachts cleared harbour and made their way home or onto other ports. Our next stop was Banda, but that was



another adventure, another party and another story. As members of the Dinah Beach Cruising Yacht Association you can be proud of this event that is organised by your club. I encourage you to keep supporting

it and remind you that the next fleet departs on 13 August 2016. Get your boat ready.

*Glen Stanford
Ambon Race Committee*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2015 DARWIN to AMBON WINNERS AND ALL WHO TOOK PART

LINE HONOURS: Spirit (Jason Gard)

IRC RACING

1st: Walk on the Wild Side (Garth Curran)

2nd: Antipodes (Chas Jacobsen)

3rd: Sue Sea (Brian Todd)

PREMIER CRUISING MULTI-HULL

1st: Spirit (Jason Gard)

2nd: Freedom Express (Ross McCombe)

3rd: Takitimu (John Nicholson)

PREMIER CRUISING MONO-HULL

1st: Churchkey (Michael Skinner)

2nd: Wallop (Marcus Ilton)

3rd: Liquidity II (Greg Dix)

COMMODORE'S TROPHY:

Balladier II (Phil Campbell)

RALLY TROPHY:

Boussole (Louise Becker)

2016

DARWIN TO AMBON

START DATE:

SAT 13 AUGUST

Give it a go!

more details posted shortly at
www.darwinambonrace.com.au

Pan Fried Snapper with a Summery Asparagus Stew

Serves: 4

Ingredients

1 cup chicken stock

¼ cup cream

Sea salt

Freshly ground pepper

Olive oil

4 x 180 g snapper fillets

Plain flour

1 lemon

2 bunches thin asparagus tips

2 tbsp. chopped fresh tarragon
or chervil leaves

A good knob of unsalted butter

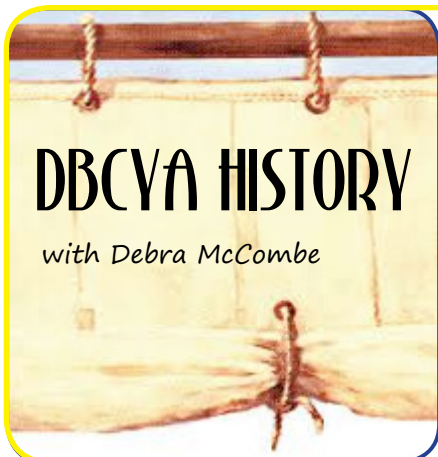
Method

1. Put the stock, cream and seasonings in a large pan and reduce by one-third. Heat a thin layer of oil in another pan and cook the lightly floured and seasoned fish with a good squeeze of lemon juice until lightly coloured.

2. At the same time, put the asparagus in a pot of salted rapidly boiling water and, the second it comes back to the boil, remove and add to the cream mixture with the herbs and butter. Swirl to melt the butter. Then spoon into four large flat soup bowls and top with the fish fillets.



Recipe supplied by Sue Jackson, DBCYA book keeper



I'm Deb McCombe, the Club's archivist. I've been involved with building yachts and sailing since 1986 when Ross and I started building our first catamaran. We first joined DBCYA in 1988. In each newsletter I plan to share snippets of Club history and anecdotes from the past retrieved from the archives.



PONTOON STORY

What was life before the pontoon like? Well I can tell you from personal experience it involved wearing 'Dinah Beach Boots'. What, you may ask, are Dinah Beach Boots? This was the name given to the mud that covered your feet and legs (sometimes up to your knees if you missed the tide) after coming ashore. The tap by the old red phone box was always the first stop for a cleanup.

The first dinghy channel was dug in the early 1990s and gave access to a rocky outcrop which is now buried under the reclaimed land on the north boundary. This made life a little easier, though it could be a trap for newcomers when the tide was in.

One of the funniest things I have seen was two guys coming in obviously unaware there was a channel. One was testing the water depth with an oar and when it was shallow enough to step out of the dinghy his mate stepped out over the other side and completely disappeared into the deep water of the channel. The look of astonishment on their faces was priceless.

The pontoon was purchased in the early 1990s. It was one of two that were used in the construction of the Elizabeth River Bridge and was modified to suit the club's purpose. With a new dinghy channel and dug out basin the pontoon was finally launched from Sadgrove's Quay on 30 December 1994. Over the next

few days, with the generous help of club members, the chains and bridge were attached. The bridge came from Newcastle University and the story goes it had to be replaced because it was too narrow. The female students complained of unwelcome close encounters with male students as they crossed. After the addition of a timber seat hand crafted by one of our members, and a canopy for shade, the pontoon became not just a place to tie dinghies but also a pleasant place to sit and dream. An official opening by Shane Stone MLA and a celebration at the Song Saigon bar were held on 18 February 1995 and 'Dinah Beach Boots' became a thing of the past.

Deb McCombe



- 1 - 2nd dinghy channel being dug
- 2 - Preparing the bridge
- 3 - attaching mooring chains
- 4 - Launching the pontoon
- 5 - Official opening

MEMOIRS OF A RECENT INTERNATIONAL VISITOR

Dustin Reynolds signed up as a temporary DBCYA member last month when he solo sailed his vessel Rudis into Darwin Harbour for repairs, restocking and a wee bit of respite from the sea. Dustin fitted in to Dinah life straight away with his laid back nature and interesting tales of maritime travel. Dustin's solo journey and achievements are all the more inspiring being a double amputee.

Yacht clubs, villages and anchorages for the single handed cruiser.

By Dustin Reynolds

One of my most frequent questions is, "Don't you get lonely?"

My answer is, "not at sea". As Captain Nemo said, "The sea is everything. It covers seven-tenths of the terrestrial globe. Its breath is pure and healthy. It is an immense desert where man is never lonely, for he feels life stirring on all sides." I believe this holds true for me.

The lonely times are the perfect secluded anchorages and new places where I don't know anyone. Most villages are extremely friendly, even overbearingly so. Yacht clubs are a hit and miss - while most cruising sailors are very friendly some yacht clubs are pretty snobby and really offer very little to a cruising sailor like laundry, showers and wifi.

I have to say my time spent in Australia was made a lot better thanks to Dinah Beach Yacht Club. Hanging out with Greg, Chris, Troy and Tom was like being around old friends. Always having a warm smile and cold drinks from Ashling and Stacey. Catching a ride from Bob when my prosthetic leg was coming apart, and the generosity from Jim on our brief meeting.

Once again it is time to say aloha to new friends to head back to sea, to another land of people I don't know. Its a life of perpetual greetings and farewells, cold beers and boat work, people of extreme generosity and those whom are looking to take advantage. Thank you to everyone that made me feel at home in Darwin.

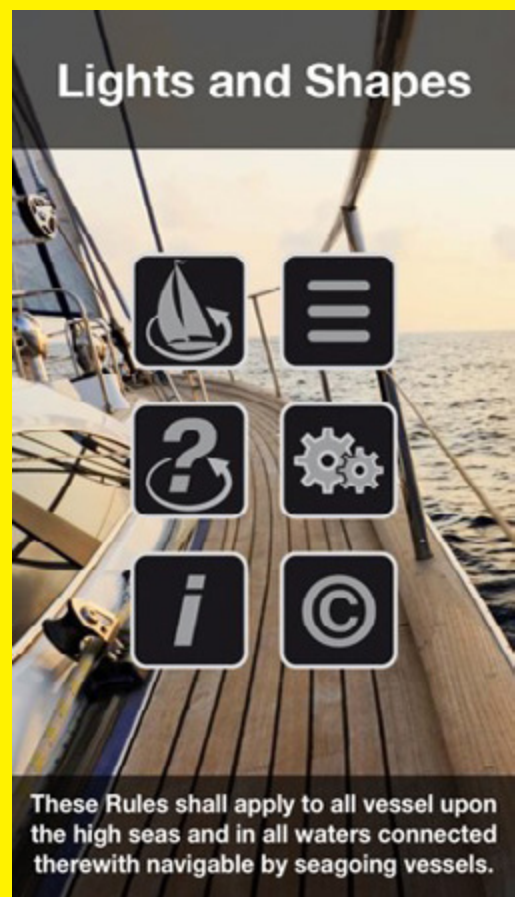
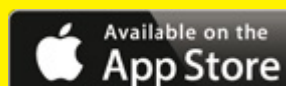


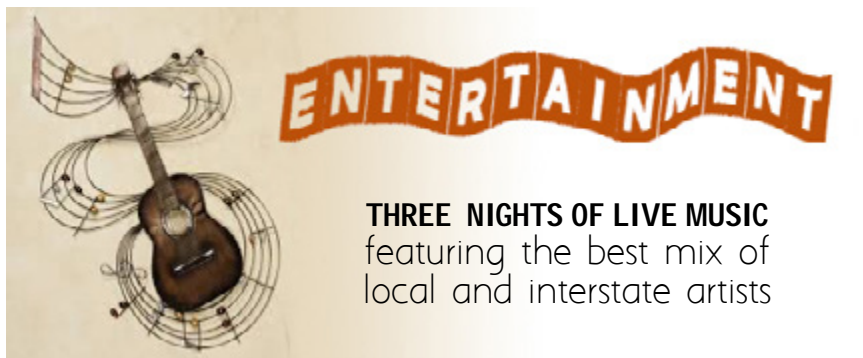
NEW APP TEACHES PREVENTION OF COLLISION AT SEA

The new way of easily learning the rules for preventing collisions at sea.

The aim of the application Lights and Shapes is to allow yachtsmen and sailors in general to recognise ships, to determine their route and to extricate themselves among the regulations of the International regulation for preventing collisions at sea. Available for iPhone and iPad.

Visit www.ilsestante.ch/lightsandshapes for more info and to view a presentation video.





THREE NIGHTS OF LIVE MUSIC
featuring the best mix of
local and interstate artists



WED 02 DEC

SUN 06 DEC

WED 09 DEC

SAT 12 DEC

SUN 13 DEC

WED 16 DEC

SUN 20 DEC

WED 23 DEC

SUN 27 DEC

WED 30 DEC

THUR 31 DEC

MAIA

SHEL O'TOOLE & CO

MARC SELEN & TONY JOYCE

FREE KIDS XMAS PARTY

PAUL BAYETTO & JK

SCOTT MURPHY

BROOKE BARNETT

TOBY

MARK PORTER

NEV WILSON

NYE PARTY

'THE LOVE BOAT' THEME

CONTEMPORARY R&B

BLUES&FOLK COVERS&ORIGINALS

CRUISIN BLUES

REGISTER BY 06 DEC

ECCENTRIC ACOUSTIC

EASY MIX

SMOOTH ROCK FUNK LOUNGE

ALTERNATE COUNTRY

LAI D BACK TRAVELLIN BLUES

AUSSIE ROCK

GREAT PARTY ENTERTAINMENT

WITH THE BLU FUNK BAND



WEDNESDAY NIGHTS FROM 7PM

Live entertainment - something
different each week

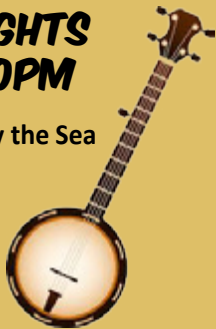
Members Badge Draw - starts at
\$500 and goes up each week
not claimed

Raffles for cash prizes

FRIDAY NIGHTS FROM 7:00PM

Open Mic Nite by the Sea

\$50 cash draw
each week for
performing
musos



SUNDAY NIGHTS FROM 5PM

Easy listening live entertainment

Lenny's Sunday Roast

The perfect way to squeeze a
bit more weekend in.



Be informed of special events, entertainment and developments at Dinah Beach as they happen



DINAH BEACH

CRUISING YACHT
ASSOCIATION

THE

Love

Boat

NEW YEARS EVE

WITH THE BLU FUNK BAND

6PM TILL LATE

CLUB OPEN DAY COME ALL
68 FRANCES BAY DRIVE STUART PARK



LIKE A BOAT OUT OF WATER ...

They were never designed to fly, but they sure look impressive in the sky



Clockwise: Charles Sturt (in), Catani (out),
Black Rose (out), Myott (in) and Catalyst (out)

Mackeral skies and mares tails, soon will be time to shorten sails.
- Old sailors proverb

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE AT THE DINAH

Committee Member Alan Bush recounts his Erebus Experience

This is the vessel I purchased last year through Club marine. It was pretty much a write off due to a marina fire Cullen Bay Fire close to the city. Several boats were severely damaged with the 'Erebus' receiving radiant heat damage down the STBD side only, with burnt sails and various other items also.

On inspection a degree of lamination had been found along roughly a 7 metre area above the water line, the deck was structurally sound, no deviations/deformations found around all chain plates, some window damage and general paint scarring was found. The photos show only slight damage due to the distance of the shot. The vessel internally required a bit of a tidy up but was in good condition.



The boat has had five owners I'm told with various names along the way. A good site to scan, if you have time, covering a 7 year span of the boat's history is <http://yachtstolenkiss.blogspot.com.au/>. This particular couple covered some distance between 2003 and 2009. Start on the archives in 2003 as they end up offloading the boat in late 2009.

I craned the vessel ashore utilising an 80t slewing crane in September 2014 and armed myself with a radial saw, grinders, sanders, reels of glass cloth and a 20 litre drum of West's epoxy. I sounded the hull, marked the area out with vertical and horizontal lines 30mm apart set the depth of the radial saw at 7mm (Hull is 3/8 or 9mm) and hooked in. To remove any



offending material a sharp 50mm wood chisel made quick work of the job. I whipped over it with a sanding disc to get rid of any highs and lows and incorporated a 20 to 1 bevel on all edges.



I've utilised some 450 gram double bias cloth and biaxial cloth alternated until the right height was achieved and utilised a west epoxy fairing material to finish it off.

The finished side after sanding, 4 lots of coats of Jotan high build and more sanding and finished paint - Jotan Emperite 300 x 3 coats.

Then some bottom work and tie coat.



I dropped the swing keel for a condition check then up she goes and into the briny.

I've still some more work to carry on with in some spots but overall things went well.



Bushy



source: De Captain's Sailing

NOTICEBOARD



XMAS TRADING HOURS

The bar will be operating as usual over the Christmas period, with the exception of Christmas day, where we legally have to keep the bar roller door down. We will be back open on Boxing Day from midday.

RECYCLE BINS

All our general recycling is now going to the one place, so this has provided the opportunity to streamline our recycling bins. Gone are the 16 yellow 240ltr bins - now we have five green 660ltr bins to house both the bar empties and all general boathold recycling.

XMAS EVE JAM SESSION

Christmas is on a Friday this year, so we'll be having the open mic nite the day before on the Thursday. All welcome to come play or listen in.

ARE YOU INTENDING TO LEAVE AN UNATTENDED CAR AT DBCYA WHILST ON HOLIDAYS? IF YES WE NEED ACCESS TO A SET OF KEYS.

All senior members who leave their car unattended at the club on a regular basis **MUST have their name and number displayed on the dash** as a basic act of consideration to other club users. There have been a few incidents of late where unmarked cars have interfered with club or other members' sailing development activity.

And all senior members who intend to utilise the club to store their vehicle whilst they head elsewhere over Xmas **need to leave a set of marked keys** with the General Manager. If there is yacht movement activity or the Club needs to do some essential facility maintenance, we must be able to move your unattended vehicle if it is blocking the way.

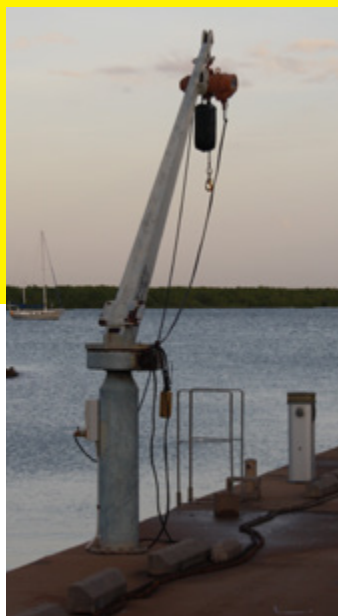
NOTICE: Any unattended vehicle parked up without a means to contact the owner and/or be moved whilst the owner is away may be moved by a tow truck if deemed necessary by DBCYA Management for the purpose of facilitating yacht movements or essential Club maintenance. The owner will be liable for all associated costs including tow fee and any damage incurred.

The acrow props have now been positioned behind the workshop so there is parking space there again for a few cars – just leave a space so that acrow props to be brought out as required.

Thank you for parking considerately this Xmas.

DINGHY DAVIT CRANE

The dinghy crane on the wharf did not pass its overdue compliance test last month. The worn and non-compliant parts have now been replaced, the motor has been serviced and it is now back in operation again.



PONTOON USERS ~ MARK YOUR DINGHIES

Several dinghies are still not yet marked with a senior member number, which is an age-old condition of use. Thank you to those who have recently identified their vessels.

From here on in random monitoring will take place at the request of and for the benefit of senior members. All unmarked dinghies, since senior members have had plenty of notice to mark theirs, will be assumed as belonging to non-members and treated accordingly, which may mean relocation or removal. No complaints will be entered into by those who find themselves stranded as there has been plenty of notice.

Visiting yachtsmen will be given a temporary sticker to display on their dinghy transom.



Yachts for Sale

RAGIN CAJUN \$40,000

Absolute bargain - 13m, centre cock pit, 4236 perkins engine, can sail dead downwind due to special sail configuration. Robust cruiser, has circumnavigated the world. Loved vessel, extremely reluctant sale. Registered with boatpoint.com, gumtree and www.yachthub.com.au.



TORBA QUEEN \$115,000

Recent major refit, hull survey completed in Mar 2015. Steel schooner rigged motor sailor. Great liveboard, 2 cabins sleeps 6 in comfort. Shaft/bearings just done, new paint all over, thousands spent to get her into great shape. View at Tipperary Waters or see listing on boatsonline.com.au for all specs. Call Todd 0417 998 535.



TROPICAL TRAVELLOR \$59,000

45ft foam sandwich F/G cutter. 2 bathrooms, hot/cold showers, electric w/c, 3 cabins, large saloon stone galley, lots of kitchen amenities, 50HP Nanni (Kubota) diesel muir electric anchor winch, pro furler TMQ auto pilot, 1000ltrs water 550ltrs fuel. Contact Bert on 0488 530 099.



CARLOFF YACHT \$49,999

38ft Caroff steel Sailboat. Rig: Langkwai Malaysia. Launched 1987 Holland. Last haulout Jan 2014. Length OA - 11.8m / 38ft. Long Fin keel, steel hull. Cabin: 6'6 head room with teak finish, 8 berth. Engine: 33HP VETUS 2900hrs. Broken head stay, some rust. Family of 3 lived aboard for 3 years, sailed to 9 South East Asian countries. More detail: www.gumtree.com.au/s-ad/stuart-park/sail-boats/38ft-caroff-steel-sailboat/1077693736



FREEDOM EXPRESS POA

Jeff Schionning designed Waterline 1480. Professionally built, well maintained. Extensive refit, ready to sail away. For inventory and more info head to www.schionningdesigns.com.au



From the DBCYA Logbook Editor

A big thanks to everyone who contributed reports and material for this newsletter. Submissions are always encouraged and appreciated, no matter the size.

All efforts have been made to check facts and details however we can accept no responsibility or liability for any errors in the final copy. Your feedback is encouraged and I hope you enjoyed your read, Wendy.

WATERFALL CHASER

Long term DBCYA member Kris Larsen, known to most as Kris Longrass, has been roaming the globe and shares his recent Venezuelan adventure to fulfill a dream 45 years in the making.



Finally I have something decent to write about.

After 45 years of dreaming, scheming, planning and haggling, I got to see the tallest waterfall on Earth. I have that thing about waterfalls. When I was 16, I wrote down all the places in the world that I really wanted to see. Four of them were waterfalls. Angel Falls in Venezuela was heading the list. Angel Falls have nothing to do with religion. They were named after Jimmie Angel, a legendary American bush pilot who discovered them by accident in November 1933. He returned with a few mates in 1937 and managed to land on top of the plateau, the first and last airplane to achieve that. On landing his wheels got stuck in the swamp and the plane remained there stuck for the next 33 years. Angel and his crew took 11 days to descend from the plateau on foot and return to civilisation.

Contrary to 'expert' opinion, there is no way to get to the falls entirely by road, not even by a native track. There is no road, and there is no native trail. Nobody lives anywhere near there.

You have to fly part of the way and then go by a boat. For half a year you can only fly. There is no airstrip anywhere near the Falls so 'fly to the falls' means a quick look from a plane and fly back. Actual land access is possible only from May to November, if it rained enough.

Venezuela has no railways - everything moves by road. Price of fuel is a joke. You get 10 litres of petrol for one Bolivar, local monetary

unit. On the black market we were getting 600 Bolivar for one dollar. That gives you 6000 litres of petrol for one dollar. Cheapest way around is by buses but lack of spare parts grounds most of the fleet, so competition for the seats is fierce. Luckily there is an alternative, 'per puesto', a shared taxi. In towns they are great big American gasoline pigs from the 70's and 80's, rumbling dilapidated V-8 sedans, seating six. An economic boycott orchestrated by USA stopped the flow of spare parts for anything manufactured in the States, so the old per puestos are repaired with wire, string, rough welding and anything they can cannibalise from grounded cars. The rusting shit-heaps have no door handles, no head lights, windows do not roll down and the bonnet protecting the vital engine is tied down with a padlocked chain. Dented panels are hanging loose from the frame, bald tyres screaming for a retread. At the price they are charging (regulated by government decree) they can't afford to spend

anything on maintenance, even if the parts were available.

In town a typical fare for 4 km is 20 Bolivar, about 3 or 4 cents. Long distance taxis are better maintained, small Japanese cars seating four. On the trunk roads it takes only a few minutes to gather a full car and off they go. Fares are about triple of the subsidised bus fares, 300 km from Puerto to Ciudad Bolivar comes to

2000 Bolivar, about \$3.

I wasn't sure what rate I can get for a cash dollar in the provinces, so I changed with my connections in Puerto all I thought we'll need for the trip to the Falls. \$300 in cash translated to over 200 000 Bolivar. Government insists US\$1 equals 6 Bolivar. Official minimum wage, what a primary school teacher earns, is 247 Bolivar a day (35 cents). So in theory the biggest denomination bill in circulation, a 100-Bolivar, is big enough. 200 000 makes a huge brick of cash that no pocket can contain. My shoulder bag was bulging at the seams with cash and I was eager to offload it as soon as possible.

Security is an issue. The complex of safe marinas and hotels in Puerto where we kept the boat is surrounded by a wide belt of fishermen's slums. Walking down the main road during the day is not a problem, but robbers are quick to spot the weak and over the years a number of more timid looking yachties were relieved of their wallets.

On the other hand, a Russian skipper in here got pissed off

with something one night, and went for a walk into the slums to relieve his anger. A hulking closely shaved bloke in his forties, as white as a white can be, sticking out like a flag screaming "please come and rob me", he kept walking up and down the crooked lanes of the slums whole night, spoiling for a fight. He was watched from half opened doorways, but nobody ventured out to cross his path, not even to ask him for a

My shoulder bag was bulging at the seams with cash and I was eager to offload it as soon as possible.



like a flimsy crate. Boxy aluminium body, skimpy struts supporting tiny wheels, massive 9-cylinder rotary engine in the front. Those guys sure had the guts. Angel was a star pilot of a flying circus in the 1920's before he got bored with barnstorming stunts and went flying between the tepuis in Guyana highlands.

cigarette. "What's wrong with these guys?" he complained to me in the morning.

The ticket booth at the bus terminal was closed, in spite of assurances they gave me the day before that they open at 5:30 AM. We wandered outside, amongst the shared taxis and 20 minutes later we were in an old Mitsubishi sedan barrelling down a 4-lane highway south. There don't seem to be a speed limit in force anywhere in Venezuela, good bitumen roads support 140-150 kmh travel and the boring flats of Llanos were zipping past. Around midday we slipped over the impressive Angostura suspension bridge across the brown murky waters of Orinoco. Until a few years ago, this was the only bridge across the entire length of Orinoco. There is no real need for more bridges, so few people live beyond Orinoco. South of Orinoco lies the Selva, the forest, jungle. From the bus terminal we caught a cab to the airport. A long spell of haggling started. It took most of the day and I was getting tired of lugging a 3kg bundle of cash around the streets. Prices we were quoted in the morning turned out to be out of date, some connections were not logistically possible, and on top of that the airport in Ciudad Bolivar is closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays for maintenance.

In the end we cut a good deal with a young Peruvian chap in his office. Relieved of the bundles of Bolivars, we sat down under the Jimmie Angel's original airplane on the front lawn. They brought it down from the mountain by a helicopter in 1960. Meticulously restored, it still looks

In the morning we were squeezed into a tiny six-seater. Four tourists, an overweight government official and a playboy pilot. Flying at 700 feet, glorious view of the savannah with scattered trees as it gave way to thin forest of gigantic broccoli. First tepui appeared on the horizon.

Canaima sits on a spectacular lagoon of Carrao. River widens to over a mile, entering the lagoon by a string of waterfalls separated by small islands, tumbling down a wide shelf maybe 20 metres tall. Two days later we were taken on a path behind the wall of a waterfall, an awesome experience. The village itself is spread over a wide area, all set amid immaculate clean lawns and patches of parkland forest. Not a piece of rubbish anywhere, no plastic bags, no candy wrappers, no used disposable nappies, not like everywhere else in Venezuela.

Canaima National Park (30 000 km square) is administered by the natives, Pemon Indians. We were handed over to our guides, who quickly changed the arrangements that outsiders tried to impose on them. A whole host of companies are vying for a thin trickle of tourists. You end up with 20 tourists who were sold 14 different schedules and itineraries, but all going up to the same Falls. Guides took a quick look and clobbered together a canoe load of younger and fitter looking visitors. We were told that we'll be going up the falls right now, instead of next day. Sandwiches for lunch on the way. Everyone agreed? Naturally we

did, so we were trucked a mile to the port of canoes.

All the traffic up river goes in timber canoes. Carved out of a single tree trunk, about 35 feet long they are about 4 feet at the widest point. Bottom about 4 inches thick, to take the impact of repeated collisions with river boulders when level of water drops. A flat plank on the transom supports a single 48HP outboard. Canoes take 10-12 passengers and 2-4 guides and boatmen.

Around noon we sat down on wooden perches in the canoe and the boatman fired up the outboard. A few miles of smooth ride up a wide river and we pulled up at a sandy bank. Mayupa Rapids, too wild to ride with a full boat. Half an hour walk down a wide sandy path through an open savannah. A token Indian village of thatched roofs and souvenir trinkets, majestic tepui rising their heads in the distance. Tepui are like remote islands on dry land. Flat topped high mesas, an ancient sandstone plateau eroded away, leaving behind these improbable clumps of sandstone with vertical walls and level tops. Auyan-tepui, the home of Angel Falls, is one of the largest ones, it stretches for 50 km, its walls towering almost a kilometre high. Carrao is 'black water', a slightly acidic river, tinted dark brown by rotting vegetation that discharge tannin into water.

We piled into the canoe, heading for the next set of rapids. A large wave broke over our bow half swamping the piroga, then another one as we flew through the turbulent waves. Everyone was soaked to the bone, but we were warned and our bags were wrapped tight. A true white water rafting experience, thrown in free of charge, going upstream. The trip follows Carrao River for about 35 km upstream, vertical walls of Auyan-tepui about half a mile distant on our right. Turn into Churun and the river changes. Only a fraction as wide as Carrao, Churun is much more shallow, much steeper, continuous rapids for the entire 30-odd km to the

camp site. The senior boatman left the outboard to his young offsider and moved into the bows of the canoe, to pick the way through the rapids, and to help steering the boat in tight corners when the outboard was tilted high and dry. Some of the stretches were so tight I would never think you can squeeze a 35-foot dugout full of people through the corner.

In Devil's Canyon the river squeezes between two huge boulders, the stream narrows to two metres racing down against you, and the way at the top is barred by a third massive round stone. The guys forced the dugout up the narrow chute, then kinked our course around the corner, frantically breaking off with the paddles, without touching a stone with the boat. Another month and there will not be enough water in the river to drag the canoe across. From December to April river is too dry for travel. A sudden rain squall hits the boat, cold downpour obscuring the way, low clouds cutting off the view. Awesome walls of the tepui were slowly gliding past, every turn in the rivers displaying different silhouettes, narrow ribbons of water leaping over the vertical edge into abyss, only to disperse into thin mist a couple of hundred metres lower, disappearing completely. From an angle it was like watching the ruptured plumbing of an archaic castle. Then suddenly in the distance a fat streak of water appeared falling from improbably high up in the sky. The top two hundred meters of the fall was clearly seen, dropping in a slow motion, bottom hidden behind a spur of the mountain. I was looking at the THING itself.

The river got very shallow, the outboard coughing and spitting. Finally we wrecked the prop and the guys pulled into a quiet corner to swap it for a newer one. Another couple of miles and we reached the camp at Isla Raton. Hidden in the forest a few metres from the bank, 8 camps are separated by a discreet distance to keep the privacy. Besides us there was nobody in sight. We dropped the

bags in the camp and in evening light walked through the next two deserted camps to a fabulous lookout

Let's just say, it took me 45 years to get here, and it was worth the wait

right opposite the waterfall. The whole leap opened into the view, barely a couple of miles away. I am not a poet and no matter what I'd write, it would do no justice to the majesty of the falls. Let's just say, it took me 45 years to get here, and it was worth the wait.

Kavac camp was two large corrugated iron roofs on timber posts, one to sleep under, the other as an open-air dining hall. No walls, two rows of sturdy hammocks hanging from the rafters, floor a clean swept sand. In the diner two long rows of tables and benches. A small masonry lock up room where the guides store the gear while there is no one using the camp. The guys barbecued chicken for the dinner - served with rice and salad it was a better meal than we were used to in the 'civilisation'.

We slept the night in hammocks. A brilliant invention. It actually comes from somewhere around here. We had no mosquitoes anywhere on this trip, but we were provided with the mosquito nets, anyway. Hanging from the same beams as the hammocks, it made the camp look like a dormitory from Arabian nights.

In the morning thick mist rising from the river enveloped the camp. You couldn't see a thing. A quick breakfast, strong coffee, and we crossed the river in the canoe to the other bank. Sunrise burnt the mist and the falls were shining overhead. We followed a short stream branching from Churun River, leading up to the falls themselves. The stream was named Gauja in 1955, after a river in Latvia. Yeah, South America is full of unexpected stories. This one is about a Latvian explorer and adventurer Alexander Laime. He was the first white man to reach the

foot of the falls, alone, in 1946. Later he cut the foot trail along the stream, the same footpath we were following to the lookout.

The trail is steadily rising. You do not see through the canopy of the trees, and suddenly the trail spits you out onto a big boulder over a ravine, and craning your neck like a goose you see the falls, complete from top to the bottom. Two narrow ribbons hurl over the edge a kilometre above you. One is dashed on the rocks mid way down, while the left one falls in a slow motion all the way to the ground. I counted how long it takes for a drop to finish its suicide mission. Somewhere around 40 seconds. Plenty of time to think about things. Water forms jagged waves in its fall, churns clouds of mist that swirls around the main ribbon, descending almost gracefully to the foot.

There is no pool of water at the bottom of the fall. A vertical sandstone wall drops a lot of weathered rubble, which collects at the foot in a big heap of sharp stones. As it hits the ground, water crashes against the sharp rocks, spilling over, under and between the boulders of loose debris. About half a mile further down the stream it forms a conventional channel, only to leap almost immediately in a beautiful cascade about 10 or 12 metres high. At the foot of this little fall nestles the 'Happiness Pool'. That was as far as we went, spending a happy couple of hours splashing in the water, sprawled on the warm boulder. Turning over on the boulder, in the opposite direction a magnificent vista opens over the deep valley that River Churun cut into the Auyan-tepui, with dark canyons eroded by its tributaries. You can see some mighty height waterfalls down that way, too.

Kris has published a range of books chronicling his adventures, excerpts of which can be viewed at <http://monsoondervish.com>. You can't purchase yet though - Kris will re-open his internet shop next year once he gets to a country with a reliable postal system.



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