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Australian Finn Championships
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Sailing Season 2013|2014

OPENING DAY - SATURDAY 31 AUGUST 2013

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The Squadron’s influence stretches around the world evidenced by Mainsheet articles this month from Charles Kosecki on the recent Fastnet Race in the UK; a resurrected attack on the Olympic Finn Class by one of our rising stars, Jake Lilley; a cruising log from Maynard and Vicki Smith in the USA aboard their latest cruising yacht, Vanish; closer to home, experiences from Hamilton Island Race Week by two participating members and interestingly, a little known initiative of some of our junior sailors helping out their 420 sailing friends in the Myanmar sailing team in the Asian region previously known as Burma.

We also had great news from Oman in the Middle East of the announcement of the ‘Rolex World Sailor of the Year’ award going to our Life Member and Olympic Gold Medallist, Mathew Belcher. This is only the second time in history that an Australian has won this accolade and surely a well deserved one.

This coming Boxing Day, Sydney will farewell six of our member yachts in the annual gruelling Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. They are Wedgetail - Bill Wild, Spirit of Mateship - P/Cdr Russell McCart and Peter Huybers, Ocean Affinity - Stewart Lewis, Mondo - Ray Sweeney, Kerumba -Tam Faragher, Black Jac - Mark Bradford and hopefully Postcode will be there as a spectator boat to see them off. They will fly the Squadron Burgee proudly and hopefully safely into Hobart.

This Christmas sees the Squadron hosting two National regattas, the Tornado Cats and Olympic Class Finn dinghies, and as usual our band of volunteers will be in force. They have become renowned for their regatta administration.

With the Marina rebuilding programme now complete and standard sub lease documentation going through Government systems, our focus has turned to the refurbishment of the 30 year old Marina office and amenities building. For economies of scale and establishment costs by builders, we have combined that project with the new kitchen and both will commence in the new year after the regatta season. A perspective of the refurbished building is contained in this Mainsheet and the works include upgraded toilets and showers including a handicapped access facility, a dedicated tradesmen’s facility and new laundry services.

Planning is well underway for an extensive dredging exercise covering some 70,000 cubic metres of spoil to restore the marina and services area to optimum depth. After extensive input from the Marina Board and external consultants, we have reduced the cost estimates from $3.5M originally to our $1M budget for which we have funds in reserve. Your Board has been keen to see that this substantial fund was not wasted on simply refilling the existing spoil reserve, further complicated by the need to retain capacity for our neighbouring users who have the right and expectation to also use that spoil pond. Our plans involve an expanded reclamation area delivering recycled fill to incorporate a dinghy launching beach and expanded public facilities to the east. Some extinguishing of native title is required and the applications will be sufficient for the next 20 years of capital works.

Finally in compliance with our development master plan established by my predecessor, P/Cdr Russell McCart, we are working on a plan for new working facilities for our tradesmen on site with appropriate workplace compliance. These tilt panel concrete buildings should complement the Marina facility and are compliant with the zoning as ancillary to the Marina use. Hopefully their funding and long term income will become the focus of a new Youth Sailing Foundation to continue the work of our original Wyuna Syndicate and encourage aspiration to Olympic representation by our talented youth. More of that in the next Mainsheet.

On behalf of my wife Julieann and I as well as my fellow Flag Officers, may I wish you all the very best for the festive season and fair winds in your sailing and boating adventures this Christmas period.

Commodore
Kevin Miller
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Welcome to the Summer Mainsheet. There has been an amazing amount of activity lately at the Squadron; lots of sailing with the Farr 40 State Titles, Beneteau Cup and French Yacht Challenges and of course the Etchells States. The Sailing Academy has been in overdrive with up to 80 children each weekend being involved and the Elliott’s being booked out most Thursdays for Ladies Sailing as well as Fridays for Twilight Friday sailing.

The Melbourne Cup function was a huge success with approximately 90 people having a wonderful time. 50 Year and 42 Year club dinners have been very well attended and Friday nights and weekend dining is very popular (to the point you need to book to ensure you are not disappointed).

The Squadron is part of a global sailing community, which is demonstrated by our members numerous successes interstate and overseas. Mathew Belcher as ISAF Sailor of the Year for 2013 (only the second Australian to be awarded this prestigious award) and the Australian Sailing Team’s numerous awards as well as Yachting Australia and Yachting Queensland Awards for our members. The Squadron is on the world stage of sailing and is respected as an institution that excels in sporting achievements.

I was recently invited and attended the International Council of Yacht Clubs meeting hosted by Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club. Clubs from Europe, Asia, North America, New Zealand and Australia attended and spent four days sharing opinions, processes, methods and issues that all of us face regularly. Ageing demographics, succession planning, being an employer of choice, race management, sponsorship and long term financial planning were some of the topics presented and discussed. The forum also presented opportunities for further reciprocal arrangements that will be forthcoming over the next 12 months, as well as opening up the possibilities of personnel development exchanges in overseas clubs. The forum also gave me an insight into large scale regatta bidding and operation.

The Squadron recently held a joint information day with the Queensland Water Police; building strong ties with the authorities who realise our members are responsible boaters. We had a full tour of the Water Police facilities and vessels and they gained an in-depth knowledge of our facilities, and potential assistance we can offer them in an emergency. You can expect to see more education opportunities from this joint day in the near future.

As we approach the festive season I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members a Happy Christmas and a very merry, and safe, New Year. The water can be an unbelievably relaxing place to spend time with family and friends but basic safety should never be forgotten. It is so easy to have a tragedy due to a momentary lapse in attention. Please stay safe.

Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year
to all Members
from the
Flag Officers,
Committee Members and Staff
Commodore Kevin Miller
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
Jimmy Buffett Tribute Band

invites you to attend the

‘Commodore’s at Home’

Where: RQYS - Boardwalk
Time: 7:00pm
Cost: $95 per person
Dress Code: Aloha Shirts, Bow Ties & Boardshorts

Bookings to: mail@rqys.com.au
or 3396 8666
RQYS 420 Sailors
Give a helping hand to the MYANMAR SAILING TEAM

BY KLAUS LORENZ AND JAMES HODGSON

Helping the Myanmar Sailing Team
RQYS 420 sailors James Hodgson and Klaus Lorenz have just returned from Ngwe Saung, where they have been helping to train the Myanmar National 420 team in preparation for the SEA Games, to be held in December.

Ngwe Saung Beach, located on the west coast in the southern part of the country and a six hour drive west from Yangon, is the proposed sailing venue for the games, being held in Myanmar for the first time in 44 years, in a new US$17m purpose-built facility currently under construction.

So, how did two sailors from regional Queensland ‘score’ this expenses-paid gig?

Early in the year, Adrian Finglas, head coach at RQYS, sent out an invitation on behalf of the Myanmar Sailing Federation (MYF) seeking a 420 team to be the ‘pacing partner’ for the duration of the team’s sea training.

Thus began this opportunity for us to experience three weeks of living and sailing with the Myanmar team under the direction of Richard Mason, the 420 coach.

Richard is from England, and his background is largely to do with 420’s and 470’s, achieving a commendable 5th placing at a 420 Worlds, and is an active member of the British Sailing Team as a 470 crew. He was initially involved with the Myanmar Yachting Federation as a 420 ‘pacing partner’ in 2006, and has since returned several times as their coach.

Klaus, “The three weeks spent with Richard and the team was extremely beneficial to our sailing because of the different perspectives on techniques and psychology it offered, not to mention the invaluable training time spent with the team.”

“Our journey began on 24 September with a 16-hour flight from Brisbane to Yangon via Kuala Lumpur, arriving at 12pm local time on 25th, where we were picked up from the airport by Richard and a Myanmar Yachting Federation representative to begin the car journey to Ngwe Saung. On the way, Richard explained the detail of what the sailors would be doing for the next three weeks.

“The training regime consisted of boat tuning, a strong focus on the racing rules, and race strategy and technique. The format for the three weeks training was loosely based around a four days on, one day off schedule, weather dependent.”

Klaus: “Training each day began at 9:00 am with a briefing, then a 3-4 hour session on the water. Evenings were spent chilling out in the dorm in front of the very welcome air conditioning. We had three days off during the three-week visit, which were spent paddle boarding and walking the ‘tourist trap’.

“Despite being told not to expect too much from our accommodation, as the facility is still under construction, we were very comfortable, had fans, aircon and an ensuite bathroom, sharing our room with Avi, a Spanish Laser sailor, there to do the same job as a ‘pacing partner’ for the Myanmar Lasers.

“Living amongst the team was just such an experience for us. The way that Richard structured the training times worked extremely well, having a rest day every four days. The total amount of days spent on the water was 15, which is the equivalent of about six months of training in Australia seeing as I live in the Whitsundays and James is down in Mooloolaba, meaning we can only really train one weekend a month. Overall, it was a fantastic experience.”
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*According to an ASFA media release, published on 7 April 2010.

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The 2013 Fastnet Race was a race to remember for the Adelaide entrant Secret Men's Business 3.5.

The ‘22’ Hobart race veteran, Geoff Boetcher has always had a goal of competing in the 608 nautical mile race and this year he shipped his Reichel Pugh 51 from Adelaide to the UK to compete in Europe’s biggest offshore race, the Fastnet.

I was part of the 14 man crew to take on the Fastnet race, this is a reflection of the race and how it panned out for the crew of Secret Men’s Business 3.5 (SMB)

The preparation started on August 4th where we began our campaign with three inshore races during Cowes Week. Light conditions only saw the start of two races but it was all good preparation to get a feel for the tides and currents of the English Channel which can run up to 8 knots.

Sunday, 11 August, saw the start of the Rolex Fastnet race. Competing in IRC ‘Z’ our start was not until 1350 which gave us time to watch a few of the earlier starts from the comfort of the shore.

The team of 14 included, eight of the South Australian 2010 Sydney to Hobart winning crew along with four international yachtsies who added great depth to the crew, the remaining couple came from Victoria and myself flying the Queensland Flag.

We were briefed, before docking out, by our navigator Steve Kemp, who was returning to compete in his third Fastnet after representing Australia in the 1989 and 1995 Admiral’s Cup, and local expert Will Best, who added further strength to our crew. The forecast was shaping up to be light out to the ‘Rock’, with the return trip showing a little more pressure with reaching/running conditions on the cards.

At 12pm we docked out and motored along the shore of the Isle of Wight. It’s a spectacular site with thousands of people along the foreshore coming out to watch the various starts. We completed the compulsory sail past, with storm gear displayed, and signed on for the 2013 race.

Being in the last division we were with the big boats and being one of the smallest in our division our goal was simply to get away cleanly. The cannon fired and we had a clear start at the pin end laying us up nicely for the dash to the shore-line to get the express lane for the current out of the channel. The wind was a steady 10-15 knots funnelling down the Solent River making the first two hours a tacking duel between our fellow competitors and fighting through the 300 boats that started before us. It was a spectacular sightseeing the fleet tack their way up the Solent, with the stunning white cliffs towering over the fleet. We passed through the end of the Solent also known as the ‘Needles’ at around 1600hrs where the fleet spread out, beginning their upwind tactics to the Rock.

That evening we settled into our watches of six hours on and three hours rack time. It was all straight forward with light upwind conditions and we passed ‘Lands End’ early on Monday morning. The following day the decision was made to tack past the Scillies Islands and get a boost from the tidal change. From there it was 154nm to Fastnet Rock where we tacked our way up, sailing around the exclusion zones, making it to the Rock at around 1400 on Tuesday 13 August.

The rounding was something I will never forget. Rounding the Fastnet Rock on an Australian yacht with a bunch of Aussies and some of the world’s leading offshore sailors was one of my most memorable yachting moments and I think it will be up there for a very long time.
a spectacular sight, sailing so close to one of the world’s most famous yachting landmarks that many of us dream of.

From the rock we rounded the Pantaenius mark 7nm from Fastnet Rock, where we rounded in some new pressure which, low and behold, came from the opposite direction making the next couple of hours on the nose. That evening the breeze began to swing more aft and we cracked sheets to a JT, staysail and 1st reef where SMB came into its element, reaching at 13-17knts at the Scillies in 20 knots of pressure with rain and mist, making it a challenging night spotting fellow competitors still making their way out. After rounding the Scillies at sunrise Wednesday morning, we had a 51nm run to the finish in Plymouth where we carried the Code O and then onto the A2 spinnaker to the finish.

Secret Men’s Business 3.5 crossed the line on Wednesday 14 August at 1447, completing the 608nm race in 73 hours. The results reflected a great race with a 3rd in IRC ‘Z’ which made us all very proud in achieving a podium finish in the Fastnet Race, given the conditions we had.

I guess the Fastnet Race is on every offshore sailor’s ‘to-do’ list and for myself at the age of 22, to compete in the race on an Australian yacht with a bunch of Aussies is a dream come true. Flying the Australian flag, and being a member of the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron in Europe’s largest offshore race was something I will cherish for many years.

There are many people who I have sailed with at RQ and I want to thank those who have helped me get to where I am now. I started my sailing with Churchie in the school teams racing and from there began sailing on the yachts out of RQYS doing numerous years with Tony Love on Sweetheart and then with Ken and Lucas Down on the Bribie Star, while always having time to go sailing with Mike Freebairn on the Spirit of Koomooloo. The main person who gave me the step up I needed was a good mate, Ashley Deeks who gave me a chance to deliver Black Jack back in 2009 from Melbourne to Brisbane. From there sailing with various people and crew all over Australia has led to many exciting times and I am looking forward to the future and seeing what it has in store.
What a Year!

My First Season in the OLYMPIC FINN CLASS

BY JAKE LILLEY

2013 WAS MY FIRST SEASON IN THE OLYMPIC FINN CLASS AND THE START OF MY CAMPAIGN TOWARDS THE 2016 RIO DE JANEIRO OLYMPIC GAMES.

THIS YEAR I ACHIEVED MORE THAN I EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE.

Results along the way included:
• Bronze ISAF Sailing World Cup Melbourne
• Gold Sydney International Regatta
• Australian Junior Champion
• Silver Australian Championships
• 31st and 32nd Overall at Palma and Hyeres ISAF Sailing World Cup Events (1st Junior at both)
• 20th Overall Garda Olympic Week EUROSAF Championship
• Silver Junior World Championships Finn Silver Cup
• Silver Junior European Champions (25th Open Europeans)
• Silver Finn Gold Cup World Championships Junior (34th Overall)

In addition I was ranked Junior World #1 and achieved a highest Olympic ranking at World #7.

This year the World Championships were an incredibly tough event with minimal winds. Three days of racing were missed due to no wind at all and racing was done in challenging conditions with 86 other boats to contend with on the race course.

I had a terrible first day and in combination with a spinal injury, was sitting 73rd after day one, the event looked like a write off.

Little did I know we would have few races left to be able to climb back through the fleet. I bounced back, sailed confidently and raced hard. Eventually winning another Silver Medal in the Junior Division and finishing 34th overall, which may have seemed near impossible to most after the opening day. Not a bad hit out for my first Olympic Class World Championship.

What an incredible season it has been, I can’t wait to get through the off-season, recover and train hard to be able to consolidate next year and cement myself as a contender for a medal in 2016.

After six weeks rehabilitation to recover from my spinal injury and hard work I am looking for some top results at ISAF World Cups Melbourne and Miami as well as the Australian Championships. The goal is nothing less than to medal at each and every event.

Finally, I would like to thank the Australian Sailing Team, Queensland Academy of Sport, Kelsow Consulting, the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron and of course, my father, for their hard work and continued support.

I can’t write this email without thanking my fantastic coach, John Bertrand. I am thankful for his help and insights every day and very grateful that such a legend is willing to tolerate me on a daily basis and work with me towards the greatest of goals. Thanks John.

I just would also like to thank each and every one of you for your support throughout the season; I hope that I have made you all proud.
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Time to Vanish
Making the switch from SAIL TO POWER

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY VICKI SMITH

Sitting on the bow at anchor tonight in the Eastern Hollandes Cays, Kuna Yala, more commonly known as the San Blas Islands in Panama, I stare at our ROYS Burgee fluttering in the breeze and watch as storms rumble and flash all around us in the tropical heat. We’re so far from home. Over the past year, I have photographed our Burgee in seven countries; the United States, Canada, Bahamas, Turks & Caicos, Dominican Republic, Colombia and now Panama. The sun has set and lightning is splitting the sky in spectacular jagged fingers above my head. We are in one of the most active lightning regions in the world.

There are no signs of electricity and little habitation other than two Kuna Indian huts nestled amongst coconut palms on a tiny cay nearby. The wind is increasing now and to be honest, I don’t fancy storms as I’ve been through too many of them in Australia and around the world. Our 185 lb CQR anchor has set well in the sandy bottom and the anchor alarm will scream at us if we move outside a set range. As long as we’re not struck by lightning, we’ll be fine. SKS (Shaky Knee Syndrome) is setting in but I’m used to it and know this won’t last long.

Maynard and I used to own Cruz Control, a 52 ft cruiser racer carbon fibre sailing yacht. We’ve owned and raced many yachts but Cruz Control was our finest. Crossing the Pacific Ocean in 1998 and winning 1st Place in PHS Division 1 in the Sydney to Hobart in 2000 were the highlights of our 15 year long affair with Cruz. We represented Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron in racing for many years but retired in 2003 and spent the next eight winter seasons sailing the east coast of Australia before deciding to sell Cruz in 2012. We wanted to do something unique but with comfort in mind.

Maynard has always had a desire to see exotic places and with almost 60,000 sea miles of experience each, we thought we’d like to go somewhere completely different but in a long range power vessel. As always, his research for the perfect vessel was extremely long and thorough taking into account the desire for a vessel already built or close to completion with a maximum LOA of 25m. Safety, comfort, operational requirements, and extensive instrumentation were top priority.

He looked at Nordhavns, Dashews, Outer Reefs, Grand Banks and Flemings but found everything he was looking for in the one off David Marlow designed vessel the Marlow Voyager 76LR, an 82 ft semi-displacement vessel with a 4,000 mile range. In fact, it was David Marlow’s brand new personal vessel. The Australian Dollar was strong at the time and David had added many upgraded instrumentation and extras so we knew it was exactly what we needed. We named her Vanish as we really like to get away from the madding crowds in order to find peace and quiet.

When considering Vanish, we spent considerable time discussing the advantages and disadvantages of her rather large size. Cruz Control had essentially one deck, a beam of 14 ft and maybe 35 ft of living space in the overall 52 ft length. Vanish on the other hand is over 20 ft wide over much of its 76 ft length with three decks, all with spacious cabins and filled with all sorts of technology and wonderful time saving and safety devices. Her large size gives us a great deal more comfort at sea. It also allows us to have multiple systems such as two large Onan gensets, two C-18 Caterpillar engines, two independent hydraulic systems, three freshwater systems (at sea you can never have too much redundancy), two sophisticated...
Raymarine digital radar systems, three G Series Raymarine chart plotters, infrared FLIR camera, three docking stations plus wireless remote control, 12 x 250amp hour batteries, bow and stern thrusters and twin strut keels. There are 5 cabins plus crew quarters, 9 TV's, 7 fridges/refrigerators, 3 cooking areas, barbecue, and two cranes plus room for our Hobie Bravo, two dinghies, two paddleboards, two Hobie Mirage kayaks and a windsurfer. Her size allows us to store 4,700 gallons (17,000 litres) of fuel meaning we can go 4,000 miles between 8 and 9 knots without interacting with marinas or fuel jetties. The top speed light ship is 24 knots, half load 20 knots and if we need to get somewhere in a hurry we do 15 – 18 knots but mostly we stick to 8 or 9 knots on one engine. We also have an industrial Sea Recovery water maker which makes 60 gallons (200 litres) of fresh water an hour. The generators are only run between 3 and 5 hours per day at anchor as we have solar panels which keep the large battery bank well charged in good sunlight. Most importantly of all, Vanish was built to the highest available certification achieving Lloyds Register Quality Assurance for Category A, Open Ocean Unrestricted Navigation. It is very unusual for a semi planning power vessel to attain this rating.

In May 2012 we arrived at Snead Island near Sarasota, Florida for our first viewing of our new boat. Three weeks later we left the Marlow boatyard after testing every system we could think of on Vanish. Our brains felt well and truly fried with so much daily information coming our way but with two crew, an engineer and stewardess, we just needed time to learn. Unfortunately, time was one thing we didn’t have much of as we’d obtained a one year USA cruising permit however, due to a number of delays, we now only had six months left. We were already officially in the area known as ‘The Box” where hurricanes are most active. The Box is an area with a northern limit of 35’N which runs through Cape Hatteras, North Carolina and the eastern limit is 55’E, the southern limit around 10’N and the western limit is around 100’W which turns out to be most of the Gulf of Mexico, but does not include Panama. 2012 was a very active tropical storm and hurricane year and straight away, we were chased north by Tropical Storm Debby. Maynard has a real aptitude for weather forecasting and knew if we stayed ahead of T.S. Debby we’d be in relatively calm weather.

We stayed ahead of this system for six days until we reached Virginia where we encountered a storm as we headed into the anchorage which ripped away a lexan panel on the starboard side adjacent to the Portugese Bridge. Luckily, it went sailing through the air without smashing into the radar, solar panels, cameras, or any other expensive equipment at the mast. A few weeks later we were in Chesapeake Bay where we anchored one night just before another severe storm called a derecho hit us with 50 – 60 knot winds and fierce lightning. This time, the portside lexan panel flew off and was lost in the melee. We never bothered replacing either of those lexan panels and as David Marlow mused, “Well I guess we know the result of the lexan product trial now.” 13 people were killed that night onshore and offshore so we felt very lucky indeed.

We spent the 4th July holiday weekend anchored near the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island in New York on the Hudson
River with our fabulous Australian flopper stoppers made on the Gold Coast by Ocean Torque. We have the largest size which is a No. 5 and each one is 900mm across. They are deployed using our two davits on each side of the boat and each flopper stopper sits between 2 and 3 meters under water. While other boats could only stay a matter of hours due to the wash from the Staten Island ferries and other vessels, we managed to stay for 3 days. The fireworks and festivities were spectacular as we jostled with the strong tide and hundreds of watercraft on the dark river. We were cheeky and flew our boxing kangaroo flag that day and were honked at and cheered by dozens of vessels.

We kept moving northward negotiating the ripping currents on the East River of New York City then past the mansions on Long Island and Rhode Island and up through the Cape Cod Canal in Massachusetts to Boston where we finally arrived in foggy Maine. Our new challenge was the swirling dense fog and thousands upon thousands of lobster pot buoys spaced around 20-40 ft apart in every part of the ocean, rivers and waterways including every navigational channel and all anchorages. There was no escape from those pots and it took tremendous concentration. Maynard said it was some of the trickiest boating he’s ever endured which says a lot. Maine is a drop dead gorgeous State with extensive forests lining the shores. It experienced one of the biggest lobster seasons in years in 2012 and prices fell to $US2.50 per pound. We fell in love with Maine and met wonderful locals, and enjoyed their fabulous cuisine. We were lucky enough that the fog lifted one day so we took Vanish 45 miles offshore to the imposing Matinicus Rock, off Rockland, Maine where we saw large numbers of migratory puffins that only breed on remote rocky islands offshore 6 weeks per year.

Knowing what we know now, we should have had a B1/B2 visa but as we only had a visa waiver, once our three month US visas expired, we were not allowed to re-enter the US on our vessel. We needed to go to Canada or a foreign country by road or air every three months, and then re-enter the US. This was an ongoing problem for us which has now been solved as we were recently granted a B1/B2 allowing us to enter the US on Vanish at any time for the next five years.

We headed across the infamous Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy which has tides reaching 17 meters (55 ft) on a rather dank foggy day, not seeing more than 75-100 meters in front of us for 8 hours. It was very disorienting staring ahead looking for stray lobster buoys. We actually spotted a huge floating spool around 12 ft in height and length very close to us. The fog didn’t lift until we were within one mile of the Customs dock in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, a small fishing village with around 9,000 residents. As luck would have it, we were there during their annual Shark Scramble, a fishing festival celebrated by the whole town.

18 fishing boats left on a Wednesday evening in the cold foggy light loaded up with heavy duty fishing gear and many slabs of beer. The object of the Shark Scramble is to catch the largest total weight of sharks with a four shark limit, or the largest weight of a shark. They were allowed to catch blue, mako, porbeagles and thresher sharks. It was horrible and fascinating all at the same time.
They returned on Friday night and the weigh-in occurred during the weekend where all the townsfolk came down to the docks to see the sharks individually weighed in front of hushed onlookers. Children licked ice-creams and dogs ran around happy with all the nasty smells wafting in the breezes. The largest shark caught for 2012 was 429 lb. In 2004, a 1,082 lb mako shark leapt 30 ft in the air into the back of one of the fishing boats and ended up being the winner of the contest! This shark still holds the record for the largest mako ever landed.

Back in Maine, by 18th October 2012 it was time to head south again as the trees were turning colour and sea fog was appearing in the 7 deg C morning temperatures. We had two new crew as our first South African crew were too problematic. We didn’t want to head south too early as hurricane season was not officially over until 15th November, but after 26 tropical storms and hurricanes to date, we had no choice but to clear out of the US as our cruising permit was about to expire. Abeam of Fort Pierce in Florida, Maynard saw that a system called Invest 99L was building in the Caribbean south of Cuba, and the forecast cone showed it heading north straight towards us. Because we had cleared out of the US in North Carolina and because we were on a tourist visa, the US Government refused our request for re-entry to a safe marina in Florida even though we stated we needed refuge from this potential hurricane. We decided to immediately head across the Gulf Stream to the Bahamas where we took a berth in an almost deserted marina at West End at the far western end of the island of Grand Bahama. We knew almost immediately that this berth was not going to work as the land was too low and the marina too exposed. We had to find somewhere to go as we were now in the path of Hurricane Sandy and there was nothing we could do about it.

To be continued........

(Since our journey started, we’ve documented our thoughts, adventures and ups and downs with Vanish on our blog with 100’s of photos, technical data, and in-depth stories at sailblogs.com/member/vanish. You are welcome to follow us so sit back and enjoy the ride. You can see more photos on the App called Instagram at mv_vanish)
GETTING THERE: A QUEENSLAND ISLAND ADVENTURE BY J BOAT

BY JENNIFER MECALFE - RAGTIME

We are on the boat, food packed, gear packed, and crates of alcohol packed, and heading out of Rosslyn Bay marina into the ocean off the Queensland coast near Rockhampton.

We leave the noisy dock and its noisy boat revellers behind and make towards the open ocean as the breeze picks up and the sun slowly sinks from the high, clear, violet sky.

I’d been promised hundreds of islands, mostly deserted, reef atolls, and a warm sea on our ocean passage stretching along the Queensland coast up to Hamilton Island in the Whitsundays. We have four days to get to Hamilton in time for Race Week.

So it was with both anticipation and relief (at being able to leave work at midday on a Tuesday) that earlier that morning I had headed up to Rockhampton from Brisbane to begin the delivery of Ragtime, the J130 boat I normally crew on.

Just 10 days earlier, we’d sailed Ragtime from Brisbane to Keppel as part of the annual 340 nautical mile offshore race. And after achieving a second place in IRC, we were still on a high and looking forward to the 30th Hamilton Island Race Week.

Ragtime skipper and owner, Chris Morgan, is at the helm as we head north out past Little Keppel Island and towards the Percy Islands. The sea is choppy and the winds light and on the nose so we motor rather than sail.

Dinner and a beer or three later, the sky is glowing pink, mauve then an indigo black as we hoist the main and turn to motor sailing. With four of us, we sail through the night with two of us on watch for two hours, and two trying to snatch some sleep before swapping.

Ray (marine), our auto pilot, guides us surely and accurately along Queensland’s coast. All we have to do on deck is to scan the horizon every 20 minutes to check for large boats approaching at speed, and check the GPS navigation to make sure there are not large rocks or islands in our path. We also watch for any whales breaching too close and count the shooting stars.

Mid-morning we arrive at Middle Percy Island. We have Ragtime’s old toilet seat ready to drop off in the hut devoted to such souvenirs. Ali, Pete and I take the toilet seat and tender ashore. We explore the hut on the beach, which is filled with the artefacts from the many boaters who have stopped and refreshed there. After navigating our way up a roughly hewn but seemingly stable ladder, we find a place on the
second floor to hang the toilet seat. We check out the tree house and the shack housing the book exchange before heading for the beach and a swim.

Ali and I decide to swim through the warm, clear, turquoise water across the white sandy bottomed sea back to the boat. Then we shower off the back of the boat, have brunch (great omelettes cooked by Ali in the galley) and head north past islands with deserted sandy beaches, tall pines and low shrubs.

There are many places one would like to linger and refresh in. Perhaps another time.

On our second night, we take a rest and anchor off Noel Island, next to Digby Island in the Beverley group of islands. After a snorkel, we dine and wine in the stillness of another tropical sunset before retiring for a full night’s sleep.

After another day of sailing past islands that form part of Northumberland and South Cumberland groups, and spotting the occasional breaching whale heading north like us, we anchor with several other boats in the protected bays of Scawfell Island.

Our last day sees the wind turn south east so we hoist the sails, and goose wing the jib and turn off the motor. It’s a delight to weave our way into the Whitsunday group of islands to the sound of wind, the boat’s wake and the occasional creak that accompanies our trim.

But when the skipper goes to turn on the engine to recharge batteries and cool the beer, there’s a disturbing burst of smoke; never a good thing on a boat! I take the helm, while the other more technically adept members of the crew try to work out the problem and fix it.

I’m secretly a little glad when their attempts don’t work and we are forced to sail all the way, past the familiar landmarks of Lindeman Island, Pentecost Island, Sidney Island (really just a large rock), and then into Dent passage.

As we enter Hamilton Island marina, a man in a small guide boat tows us into our berth, ready for the biggest annual party week in Australia’s sailing regatta calendar.

Well, almost ready, we still need to get the engine fixed!

THE CULMINATION OF THREE GREAT WEEKS OF RACING

BY MARK HIPGRAVE - THE HEALER

Hamilton Island Race Week was the culmination of three great weeks of racing for us, which started with the club’s B2K and continued with Airlie Beach Race Week before we moved across to Hamilton Island on August 17.

Highlights for us (apart from the very light winds this year – the lightest in the event’s history) included the great work by the on-water race control officers who had to deal with light winds, a big fleet, many divisions, downwind starts with a following 3 knot tide, shortened courses and numbskull skippers – “Hello this is yacht Confused – we are in Non Spinnaker Div 2. Have we started yet, and what course are we sailing today?”

All this was handled with professionalism and Job-like patience. (The biblical Job, not the other one!)

The on-shore hospitality was also excellent. For example, at the end of each day’s racing, returning yachts were handed free bags of ice, rubbish was collected from the yachts and a free sausage sizzle was underway at the end of each marina finger. Our crew was happy.

At the end of the three weeks, we were convinced that too much fun is barely enough, and while it’s great to be in your own boat, the Sunsail Charter boats, helped by some favourable PHS handicapping were nicely competitive. So for those tempted to enter next year, but daunted by the slog of getting your own yacht back to Brisbane at the end, a week on a charter boat can be just as rewarding.

RQYS was well represented during the circuit and I highly recommend members consider the B2K and these two race weeks in 2014.
The Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron has a long history of involvement in youth, the promotion of sailing and the creation of initiatives to further our sport.

This commitment has even more relevance in today’s times when our sport is facing challenges from a myriad of areas in a changing world where there are scores of sports and activities, not the least of which are electronic, diluting the available numbers and available time of potential sailors.

For decades now RQ has had youth introductory sailing programs and programs to further youth development as a follow on. These have taken different forms and to be fair have had varying amounts of success. Notwithstanding we have had great results over a long period with many champions coming from those ranks.

Early this year Adrian Finglas became the first permanent full time coach to be employed by RQYS. The changes Adrian has made to the junior training facility are vast and you would have to be blind Freddie not to have noticed the visual improvements to the western lawn area and the organised manner in which things have been rearranged. Whilst still operating out of containers I cannot see how it could be done in a more efficient manner.

All of this has taken a lot of Adrian’s time and has eroded some available coaching time on the water, this will change in the future, but it had to be done and what a result!

Maintenance of the junior training, teams racing fleets, inflatable coach boats and now the fleet of six Elliott 6’s has been a challenge not for the faint hearted and has been a continuing ongoing challenge.

Enter volunteer David Bull working out of his man shed (blue container) up near the RQ hardstand area. David has done a power of work this year and I know of one teams racing event which would not have happened without his maintenance support, say Hi if you see him toiling away. Scott Middling has been employed as the Squadron’s Bosun and this has had a very positive effect on the maintenance situation.

RQ is an accredited Yachting Australia ‘Discover Sailing Centre’. Jaime-Lee Thomasson is our full time girl on the ground to run the children’s ‘Tackers’ program and what a job she does. I am constantly amazed with the amount of organisation required to provide a Tackers coaching program for 20 to 40 children on a Saturday and Sunday morning, add to that a ‘School Tackers’ midweek program… I know why Jaime-Lee has no spare time. I am surprised the grass has a chance to grow with so much activity going on. There have been 521 placements for the ‘Tackers’ program from January to November this year, well done Jaime-Lee. Go to the Squadron ‘Sailing’ website for available classes.

Thursday ‘Ladies Sailing’ has been a great success with many ladies having a great time sailing between 10:00 and 1:00 pm. The program is run in the Elliot 6’s which are a perfect boat for this type of activity. A measure of the success of this program is that many of the ladies keep coming back for more… a good sign. You will need to pre book for this activity to avoid disappointment.

The Elliot Friday Night Sailing is extremely popular with usually no spare boats left on the dock. You will definitely need to pre book and be at the Club by 16:00 for a 17:00 start (usually three races). Then dinner and a few beers at the Club, sounds ok to me.

Look out for the Keelboat Training Program to come… There is still a lot to be done but we are on the job!
Proud Sponsor of an Elliott 6 for the Squadron Sailing Academy at RQYS

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Nearly one year into my role at RQYS as Squadron Coach we are starting to see an increase in junior activity, both in the Tackers program and the Opti and Sabot Racer Squad.

It is not uncommon to see 30 young sailors attending our coaching sessions on a Saturday morning. These young faces are the future of the Squadron.

The newly installed sandy beach, adjacent to the Sailing Academy ramp, has been a big hit with the young kids as well as their mums and dads. Our little bit of the Gold Coast in Manly.

We have an unofficial paddle board group which takes off from the beach on a Sunday morning between 7.30am and 8.00am - all are welcome. A very big thank you to Stuart Lewis and his wife Carolyn for the kind donation of a few paddle boards to the Sailing Academy, these boards can be hired from the Sailing office.

On the coaching front we kicked off our keel boat information evening for skippers keen to learn more about racing and campaigning. We are trying to assist the Keel boat program more in the near future.

The Sailing Academy has 15 new Tackers boats sponsored by Whitworth’s Marine. We have named the boats after our Life Members so the J Cuneo, Kirby, Kemp and Land and many others will be sailing the waters of Waterloo Bay with our young children.

Legendary Yachting Coach Mike Fletcher (who just turned 80) has been around the Squadron helping our Etchells fleet.

I am travelling south at Christmas to assist the Queensland Sabot sailors win back the Sabot Nationals. This, personally, will be an emotional journey for me as the Nationals are at the same venue I won my first Australia Championships as a 15 year old. Wow life goes fast!
For the producers of TV’s Biggest Loser, safety was paramount when contestants sailed from Sydney to Hobart. They chose super tough Great Circle Life Rafts for both the pre-sail safety training and their passage across the notorious Bass Strait.

Our Squadron fleet of boats is looking fantastic; many thanks must go to our new Bosun, Scotty. Working alongside Scotty has been our incredible volunteer team of David Bull, Patto and Joe Thorn.

The Junior Sailing Volunteer group has had some superstars in the last few months and I would personally like to say a big thank you to James Van Roon and Joe Thorn for their tireless efforts in getting junior sailing happening.

Like any great company or successful sports team you are only as good as your weakest link and currently we have no weak links.

Thanks Team!!

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