

# Newhaven Yacht Squadron QUARTERLY



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REMEMBER



TIDES FOR  
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NOTICES FOR  
MEMBERS



BERTH  
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SCHEDULE  
OF FEES

## YOUR COMMITTEE

### Commodore

Peter Buitenhuis -  
email: commodore@nys.org.au

### Vice Commodore

Derrick Kershaw - 0425 402 774  
email: vicecommodore@nys.org.au

### Rear Commodore

Chris Wilson - 0499 021 535  
email: rearcommodore@nys.org.au

### Secretary

David Tonkin - 0412 422 667  
email: secretary@nys.org.au

### Treasurer

Annalisa Elliot - 0438 307 843  
email: treasurer@nys.org.au

### Social Secretary

Tom Rawlings - 0468 341 076  
email: social@nys.org.au

### Safety Supervisor

Scott Newman - 0415 903 342  
email: safety@nys.org.au

### Boating Secretary

Robert Millard - 0418 565 467  
boatsecretary@nys.org.au

### Communication & Promotion Officer

Stan Jackson - 0417 318 629  
email: communicate@nys.org.au

### Training Officer

Cheree Dyson - 0400 440 470  
email: training@nys.org.au

### Sailability Coordinator

Alen Garrett - 0429 417 552  
email: sailability@nys.org.au

### Other Committee Member

Nick Blackmore - 0409 708 685

## CONTACTS

### Yachting Western Port

Chris Wilson

### Auditor

Cardell Assurance & Audit

### Maintenance Yard

Glen Botterill - 0419 514 395

### Boatique Shop Sales

email: admin@nys.org.au

## MARINA BOOKINGS

### Casual Berths

Ray Frith - 0484 828 073

### Permanent Berth, Applications

email: admin@nys.org.au

## SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Building

Gary Richards, Andy Chappell, Nick Blackmore, Helen McCrimmon, Tom Rawlings

### Marina

Derrick Kershaw, Glen Botterill, George Reek, Gary Richards, Tom Rawlings,  
Jeff Shawcroft, Ray Frith

### Finance

Annalisa Elliot, Noel Street, Andy Chappell, David Tonkin, Peter Buitenhuis, Tim Patkin, Alan  
Adamson, Robert Burnham, Pat Street

### Social

Helen McCrimmon, Jan Bayliss, David Tonkin, Brenda Blackmore

### Boating

Chris Wilson, Robert Millard, Sue Padgett, Peter Gratton, Alen Garrett, Ray Frith,  
Gavin Russell, Scott Newman, Matt Draper, Mark Szutta, Jim McWilliam, Sharon Van  
Lunteren

### Safety & Training

Scott Newman, Cheree Dyson

### Child Safety Officers

Stan Jackson, Mary Brown

### Magazine

Stan Jackson, Cheree Dyson

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**CONTENT DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS OCTOBER 1st 2019**

## NYS QUARTERLY EDITOR

Stan Jackson - 0417 318 629  
email: communicate@nys.org.au

### All correspondence to:

The Secretary, Newhaven Yacht Squadron  
PO Box 309, San Remo Vic 3925  
or email: admin@nys.org.au

NOTE: Mail can be left in the mail box in the  
committee room door on the lower deck

Phone: 5956 7515 Fax: 5956 6127  
www.nys.org.au

# NYS COMMITTEE MEMBERS



**PETER BUITENHUIS**  
COMMODORE



**DERRICK KERSHAW**  
VICE COMMODORE



**CHRIS WILSON**  
REAR COMMODORE



**DAVID TONKIN**  
SECRETARY



**ANNALISA ELLIOT**  
TREASURER



**HELLEN McCRIMMON**  
SOCIAL SECRETARY



**SCOTT NEWMAN**  
SAFETY SUPERVISOR



**ROBERT MILLARD**  
BOATING SECRETARY



**STAN JACKSON**  
COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION OFFICER



**CHERE DYSON**  
TRAINING OFFICER



**ALEN GARRETT**  
SAILABILITY COORDINATOR



**MARK SZUTTA**  
OTHER MEMBER

# COMMUNICATION & PROMOTIONS OFFICER'S REPORT



Welcome to the Winter edition of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron's magazine, the Quarterly.

One can be forgiven for thinking that not much boating goes on in our neck of the woods over the winter months; so, we consequently would expect less content in our Winter edition compared to the

other seasonal publications. Not so! As well as a couple of articles about local boating adventures, we have contributions from a couple of members about their rather unusual (to us) boating escapades in the northern hemisphere. And we even have an article from a member about how he escapes inland from the chilly south.

All boaties realise the importance weather forecasts play in terms of us deciding whether to go out or not. Member, Anthony Rae, works for the Bureau of Meteorology, and he has contributed an article on how the Bureau acquires and distributes the information we so heavily rely upon.



Anthony's article is very timely because I wanted to share some weather information of my own. I live at Cape Paterson, and on 10 May we experienced a 1-in-100 years freak hailstorm. My understanding is that in less than an hour Cape received 150-200 millimetres of precipitation, of which most was hail – I took video and photos of continuous

hail for 40 minutes! During that time, I went onto the BOM app on my phone and looked at the radar image and took a screenshot (see below). The black spot – the extreme heavy end of the scale – was exactly over Cape. Well done Anthony and the Bureau people.

I have also included 2 photos of immediately after the storm. Most houses in Cape suffered severe water ingress due to the hail blocking spoutings and rainheads; and the washaway below the lifesaving building was well publicised on local and state media. As the pelting hail was quite powerful and destructive e.g. defoliating many trees and other plants, I sometimes wonder what would have happened if it occurred at our, or another, marina. Thoughts of shredded canvas come immediately to mind; and the cockpit of a boat with its small outlet holes is an excellent catchment for hail to build up. Let's hope we never have to find out...

Phaffing about on boats is a major part of boating that we all undertake at some time (an enjoyable task for some; and a pain in the --- for others). It is not unusual for us to personally venture into the unknown when confronted by an issue with our boat. But, quite often, others have successfully dealt with this same problem that is so very perplexing to you. Within our membership we have many

boaties whom have scores of years of experience – and are willing to help out with advice. In this issue of the Quarterly I have initiated a MAINTENANCE QUESTIONS section whereby a member can submit their problem and seek advice on how best to deal with it. I encourage members to both seek and provide advice via this section – or, through our Facebook page.

And what an amazing account provided by Frank Moretti about being on a boat in a special place on Earth at a special time in history.

I thank all contributors to our magazine and look forward to more articles from members in the future. On that note, I've noticed that the quality of some of the photos in the Quarterly is pretty fuzzy. The printer has told me this is because when they're sent via a phone, they are not sent as actual size. So, if you are sending me photos, please send them as actual size – they should preferably be about 1 megabyte in size.

The front cover shows member for over 20 years, Malcolm MacArthur and his beloved Andiamo. Malcolm is 89 years old and for 14 winters up until 2 years ago, he would trailer Andiamo up to the Whitsundays and beyond by himself and sail the islands single-handed. 'Andiamo' is Italian for 'let's do it'. Well, Malcolm did it!

I'm wanting the Summer magazine to have a focus on children's boating activities. I would like members to provide e.g. articles/photographs depicting their children/grandchildren involved in boating/fishing activities; children's own accounts of these; children's ideas on how the Squadron might cater better for them; or anything else with a focus on young people and boating. I know summer is a bit down the track, but please start giving thought and gathering material to get our youngens included and involved.

Happy and safe boating

**Stan Jackson | Communication & Promotion Officer**





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# COMMODORE'S REPORT



Hello friends and club members. As you may be aware Andy Chappell resigned from his position as Commodore early in May for personal reasons. The Committee approached me, as recent past Commodore, to fill this important position leading up to the AGM in October. They have also asked if I

would nominate to stand again for another term. I have agreed to this. Of course, other members of the club are welcome to nominate for the position of Commodore, or for any other position which becomes vacant this year.

On behalf of the club and the Committee I would like to thank Andy for his work as Commodore over the time he had in the position. The role of Commodore is both time consuming and a big responsibility. Andy plans to remain on the Building Subcommittee.

There have been some other changes as well to the Committee: Helen McCrimmon has stepped down as Social Secretary for personal reasons - however she will continue on the Social Subcommittee. Helen has done a fantastic job, and with Jan Bayliss and others who have assisted, has created some wonderful events, taking the social scene at the club to a new level. We thank her for her hard work and dedication. Tom Rawlings has agreed to fill the position of Social Secretary and we welcome him back to the Committee.

Mark Szutta had a brief stint as Other Member on the Committee, a position that was vacant for some time. However, Mark decided not to continue. We are pleased to announce that Nick Blackmore has taken on this role. His main function is to assist Derrick Kershaw in his duties as Vice Commodore. We are certain Nick will be a valuable member of the Committee.

I wrote an article some time ago explaining our situation with regards to funds and future commitments facing the club. We currently have investments of just over \$2.7M, which is a great financial position to be in. Most of these invested funds have been generated by marina activity and on the face of it, it seems we have a lot of funds available to spend. However, this is not really the case and we need to remain prudent. Two years ago, we had a company look over our marina, and the report was very good and better than expected. Our marina has been well maintained but in the next 5 to 10 years it will require expensive repairs or replacement of Stage 1. The cost to replace Stage 1, two years ago was in excess of \$1.9M. Today that figure with inflation could be as high as \$2.2M.

Also, as part of our lease we are responsible to maintain our assets and the marina needs to be de-silted. We have a contingency for this activity and expect this will be in the tune of \$200,000. Derrick Kershaw has been working very hard with the assistance of some of the members of the Marina Subcommittee and has finally received approval from DWELP and Parks Victoria. A huge effort on Derrick's part and he needs to be congratulated for his input and time on this project.

Over the next few months we are going to put together a study with all our incomings and outgoings to determine how much we can spend on other projects over the next few years. There are thoughts of some renovations to the lower level of the club house. An exercise was undertaken to investigate a second pontoon - the outcome was around \$200,000 which was excessive and unaffordable. We currently have a problem concerning the deck above the Committee Room, which must be repaired. Once we conclude the study, we will be in a good position to understand our forward commitments and what we can afford for future projects.

We then plan to put aside a planning day so that we can determine future needs and write a robust 5-year plan. Once we have a good plan, we can prepare activities and costings whilst also being certain that the club remains in good fiscal shape.

Please remember that we have the AGM in October. It is important that we get a quorum at these meetings so please put the date in your calendar - we would love you to be there.

And finally, at its last meeting the Committee formalised an option that has always been available to members with the following motion: Any member who has a matter before the Committee for consideration, can on application to the Secretary (email or mail) and with the Secretary's approval, attend at an agreed Committee meeting to speak in support of their submission. Once their presentation has been completed, they will leave the Committee to continue their meeting. This will allow the member to verbalise and/or add to their written submission. As per the current process, they will then receive a written reply/decision in due course.

Wishing all members happy boating and good comradeship around the club.

Best Wishes

**Peter Buitenhuis**

# CALENDAR OF SOCIAL EVENTS FOR 2019

**Every Saturday night there will be happy hour at the club – bar opens at 6pm BYO nibbles**

- Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September Trivia Night – fingerfood provided - \$15.00pp – All profits donated to charity chosen on the night.
- Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October AGM – followed by Dinner - \$15.00 pp (numbers needed for caterer)
- Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November Melbourne Cup Day at the Club – sweeps run as usual – more information to come.
- Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November BYO BBQ – all the barbies will be fired up and ready for you to cook on – bring a salad to share with the rest of us.
- Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Dinner and Dancing – More information to be advised.
- Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> December New Year’s Eve at the Club – \$15/head for the Backdated band – Bar will be open - BYO food.
- January/February 2020 Every Saturday night will be BYO BBQ and salads to share.

**Please SMS, email or phone in your attendance so we can cater for numbers**

**Helen on 0402 158 684 or Jan on 0408 053 703 or email [admin@nys.org.au](mailto:admin@nys.org.au)**

## NEWHAVEN YACHT SQUADRON CORE VALUES

- Maintain a friendly, family-orientated environment that fosters and encourages mateship among all members
- Offer affordable, quality facilities in order to make sailing and motor boating accessible to a wide cross section of the community
- Regularly provide both competitive and social boating activities that appeal to the interests of a diverse range of members
- Conduct popular and fun-loving social activities to encourage the interaction between members and their guests
- Introduce young people and new members, without boating or fishing experience, to the sports of sailing and fishing
- Provide training to all members to enhance their general boating knowledge, skills and safety
- Act with integrity in all matters
- Be a good neighbour and member of the local community



- John Dever
- Lewis Martin
- Frank Calleja
- Andrew Vanderkolk
- Jack and Kristy Begbie
- John and Carol Goral
- Alan Baugh
- Martin and Pip Lewis
- Andrew and Kate Vanderkolk
- Frank and Bronwyn Calleja

## REAR COMMODORE'S REPORT



Hi All

Well, the winter series is well underway with some great sailing and challenging conditions, with the first few races producing some moderate conditions. Race 4 was held in some stronger conditions with winds getting up to 30 kts,

and staying quite consistent around there. As sailing in heavy weather can be a great experience and good fun, I thought that this would be a good topic to touch on.

I was Officer Of The Day for that particular race. With no gale warnings issued, which would have cancelled racing for the day, it was go time. There are a few things that Officers Of The Day need to consider in deciding on going ahead with a race.

Firstly, the weather forecast, and looking closely at synoptic charts.

Secondly, studying wind models - a minimum of three is a good start. Everyone has a favourite model and they will tell you that it is always correct and never fails. That's great, because it shows they are looking closely. However, another 2 good reliable sources are highly recommended. Wind models are exactly that – models. They are an indication; but we do need to give them a lot of consideration.

A third consideration to take into account when deciding whether or not a race should go ahead is the capability of

the boats entering - is the slowest boat going to be able to handle the conditions? In some instances, the slower boats can be more suited to the stronger conditions than the faster ones.

Finally, it is up to the individual skipper of any vessel to make the ultimate call to participate, taking into consideration the sea worthiness of the boat and the crew. If deciding to go out, the skipper also needs to make other decisions. If you are iffy about putting in 2 reefs in the marina, in my experience, put them both in. It's far easier to reef the main in the marina and shake one out if it's not required. Heading out with full main and no reefs set up and then deciding that one or two reefs is required involves a hell of a lot more effort and energy for the crew to spend before the race even starts.

Deciding on the headsail to employ can be without a doubt one of the most difficult decisions, especially if conditions are forecasted to ease.

Longer term, the skipper needs to safely manage his boat's rigging. As it stands now with most insurance companies, standing rigging needs to be replaced every 10 years. Quite often, it is extremely difficult to visually see any problems until the rigging has come apart. This is also a great time to address the halyard and sheaves.

I hope to see you all on the water.

**Chris Wilson | Rear Commodore**

## MAINTENANCE QUESTIONS

A couple of maintenance issues I would like advice/help with, please:

1. I have an oil-filled bulkhead compass which has partially leaked out...still operational but about half empty. Is it possible to refill the oil somehow or do I need to replace the whole thing? I have asked around a bit, and replacement seems the general opinion. However, if it is possible to refill it, it might save me a bit.
2. I also need to replace the diaphragm on the manual bilge pump which is split. Worth replacing the diaphragm or just replace the whole pump?

Thanks

**Anthony | [anthony.dear@monash.edu](mailto:anthony.dear@monash.edu)**



# SAILABILITY COORDINATOR'S REPORT



Planning is well under way for our **Dinghy Sailability** for Term 4, 2019. We are preparing to offer 8 dinghy programs to Bass Coast Specialist School and Newhaven Primary School. We can't wait until the weather improves and we can again go sailing in our special dinghies.

Two of our main events, usually held at the end of the year, will be postponed until February 2020. Several of our key organisers are not available for November and early December. **Golden Oldies** and our **Social Inclusion Day** are now planned for the warmer weather next year.

The **Kids Fun Regatta** will be held just after Christmas Day. We will provide an event where our young sailors can enjoy an intensive sailing program. It will be an opportunity to further develop sailing skills started by sailing our special Sailability Dinghies. Families will be encouraged to participate as we will require a parent to accompany their children.

The dates for the Fun Regatta are Saturday 28th, Sunday 29th and Monday 30th of December 2019. Entry into the Fun Regatta will be available to participants of the

Sailability Program, and grandkids and children of members and their friends. We will use the Sailability Dinghies and Club Dinghies, and we hope other participants will bring their own sailing dinghies.

This event is being developed through the Boating Subcommittee. We are keen to have ideas and input from other members. It will be an opportunity to contribute and enjoy participating in this activity; I am keen to have and suggestions and offers of assistance for this new event.

**Kids Fishing in the Marina** is planned for Saturday 4th January 2020. Usually we have our experienced 'fishos' teach us how to rig and bait our fishing rods. This year we are planning just as much fun and wanting to take families out to fish from boats. Please let me know if you are able to contribute to this event by offering your boat. Thank you.

## Police Check

It is mandatory for adults interacting with children - as we do in our Sailability Programs and the events described above - to have a Working With Children Check. It is a fairly easy process if you follow these steps:

1. Fill in the form found at <https://smarteform.auspost.com.au/aponlineforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=wwcv>
2. Register two aspects of identification e.g. Driver's Licence, Medicare Card, etc.
3. The hardest question is the address of Newhaven Yacht Squadron:  
PO Box 309, San Remo 3925; Phone 03 5956 7515
4. Once this form is completed an email is sent to you with a barcode. Copy this barcode onto your smart phone.
5. Go to either Cowes or Wonthaggi Post Office and show them your barcode or a copy of your email plus the two identifications.
6. Your photo will be taken along with a check of your identification.
7. You will receive a slip from the post office as a receipt for your application
8. You will receive an email confirming your application for a WWC check.
9. It may take several weeks for them to do the check. Please make the time to complete this task. If you have any concerns or questions about this, then please contact me.

We are always looking for more volunteers to run our Sailability Programs and Youth Events. Please contact me if you want further information and if you would like to contribute.

**Alen Garrett | NYS Sailability Coordinator**

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# VICE COMMODORE'S REPORT



As I have previously reported, our application to conduct maintenance dredging in our marina was forwarded to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) in early January. This was done in order to have sufficient time to then apply to Parks Victoria for a work permit and also

put the job out to tender and enable us to do the work this winter. DELWP did not look at our application for four months and then requested further particulars and a suggestion we consult the Federal Government as we are in a RAMSAR protected area. Our marine engineering consultant, Geoff Atkins, submitted a comprehensive response which DELWP accepted and they finally gave us their approval in June! We then applied for a work permit from Parks and we were told that could take 2 months. (Parks would not previously consider a permit until DELWP gave their approval). Parks has now requested a modelling of any potential flume from the dredging outlet pipe. This will have to be done by experts at a cost of over \$5,000. Consequently, there may be insufficient time to put out tenders and do the work this winter, so we will have to leave it until it quietens down after Easter next year.



Following the thefts from our yard and boats we have now installed proper security cameras with ample recording storage to cover the whole marina as well as the entrance. Our thanks for the work by Andy Chappell and Stan Jackson. On several occasions recently, I have also seen local police doing a drive around our marina and hope this will continue.

Work was needed on the main spill boom for the marina entrance as it does not have a throwing line and some sections have been attacked by rats. We have stored it in new bins which we have located outside the yard at the entrance so they can be readily deployed in the event of a major oil or fuel spill. Hopefully they will never be needed but it is an EPA requirement. This is in addition to the two yellow bin spill kits in the marina which also have a smaller boom to go across a pen in the event of a smaller spillage.

For some time, there has been concern about the state of the eastern end of the Centre Arm at the eastern entrance to our marina. It has been subjected to storms and innumerable tide changes which have loosened the connections between

the fingers and the walkway. If we are unable to dredge this winter, we will attempt to do the repairs ourselves. We have been unable to find any marina company interested in such work; but of course, they are willing to undertake expensive replacements. In order to repair the joins, it is necessary to disconnect the finger from the main walkway. As the finger has a heavy concrete top over a light plastic flotation underneath then it would immediately turn over once the bolts are removed. To prevent this, we will make a floating work platform to support the finger using some pontoon floats which were donated to the club by Geoff de Jong. Glen and I are continuing to make improvements to our maintenance yard. We recently purchased a new small scaffold tower and we are about to buy several aluminium planks. A big thankyou to Colin Diggins for collecting the latter from Bayswater and saving the club about \$400 freight.



The members of the Building Subcommittee have been looking at the condition of the downstairs recreation area with a view to doing some proposed improvement works. They have looked at the current use, potential use, and compliance with both local government and state government legislation and guidelines. After being briefed by former Commodore Andy, George Reek was tasked to provide some concept drawings (shown right) which see the toilets renovated to bring them up to a better

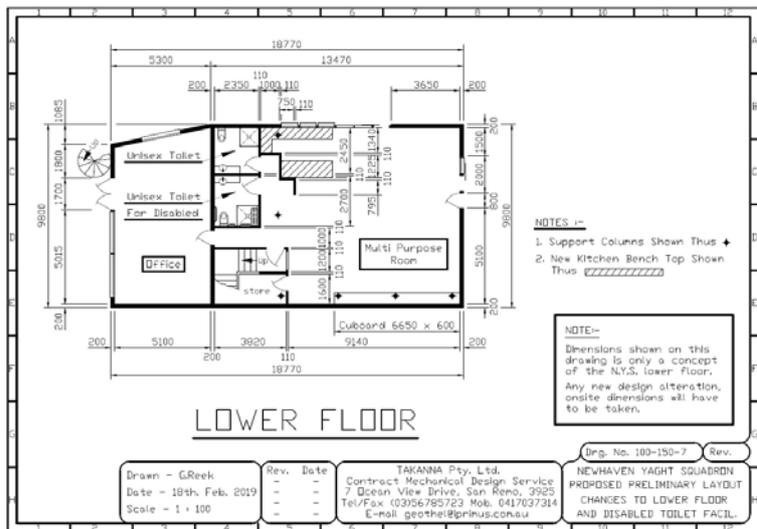
standard and current code compliance, floor levelling, new kitchen and appliances, and renovated multi-purpose room.

I am providing you, the members, with this information to gauge the support for this proposal. The Committee believes that upgrading the space downstairs will provide another area for use by the membership. It is also a separate area that our young people will be encouraged to use. So please ask your families (kids too) for their ideas.

Ideally, we would like to discuss this further at the AGM, so I look forward to your thoughts. Please send me emails through [admin@nys.org.au](mailto:admin@nys.org.au) and I will add your valued contributions into the file.

**Derrick Kershaw | Vice Commodore**

# NYS REGALIA PRICE LIST



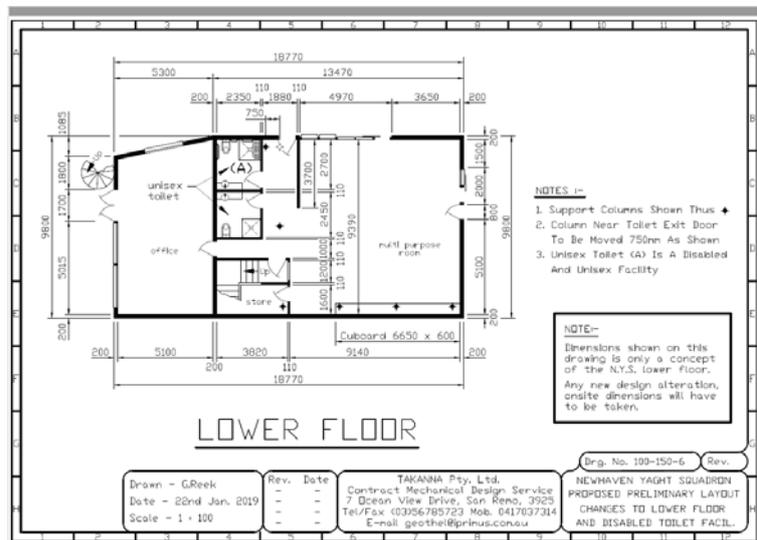
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## BIRDWATCHING AT SEA

### Southern Fulmar – a rare visitor

Southern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialisoides*) is a medium-sized, thick-necked petrel with silvery grey and white plumage. In Victorian inshore waters, at a glance, the plumage could be mistaken for that of a Silver Gull, but the species is instantly identifiable as a petrel due to its stiff-winged flight, tube nostrils, bill colour and thick neck. The species is in the family Procellariidae, the true petrels.

Adult Southern Fulmars have a white head grading to a pale grey mantle. Underwing is white/silvery grey with a narrow-width dark trailing edge. The bill is pink with a black-tip and blue-grey nasal tubes. Legs and feet are greyish pink. Body length is around 45 to 50 centimetres, weight 700 to 800 grams and wingspan 114 to 120 centimetres.

The flight of a Southern Fulmar looks effortless, like that of a small albatross, with extended periods of gliding. In calm conditions, gliding flight is interspersed with short bursts of rapid wing beats. The species readily lands on the sea where it swims well and does not require wind for take-off.

The Southern Fulmar inhabits the southern oceans, breeding on the Antarctic Continent, Antarctic Peninsula and on islands close to the continent on ice-free cliffs. During the breeding season (one egg laid in early December), the Southern Fulmar forages close to pack ice and nearby waters. The species readily follows ships and is attracted to fishing vessels. Its diet includes krill, fish and squid.

The species winters north of the Antarctic as far as 30°S. In southern Australian waters, there are records of single birds in Tasmania in most years, most frequently arriving in late winter/early spring with a peak in September. The species is rarely recorded on the mainland coast where most sightings occur during 'wreck' years when numbers

may be beach-washed and ravenous individuals may occur in inshore waters (even harbours). Wrecks are usually caused by stormy weather where persistent storms make it difficult for seabirds to forage.

There are fewer records in WA; the species is very rarely sighted and is considered to be a vagrant in NSW waters. The species is increasingly commonly recorded in New Zealand, particularly the South Island. Southern Fulmars are regularly observed off Kaikoura. Vagrants are recorded as far north as Ecuador and Brazil.



### Victorian Sightings

Southern Fulmars were recorded on three separate days on Eaglehawk Neck Pelagics off the eastern coast of Tasmania on the 18th and 19th May 2019, and 1st June 2019. The sightings were not unusual from that part of the Tasmanian coastline, but in hindsight, the birds were moving further north, possibly driven by a number of days of very strong storms from the Southern Ocean in late May.

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Very few sightings of Southern Fulmars have been recorded in Victorian waters in the past two decades. In 2019, an unusually high number of sightings were made along the Victorian coastline from late May through to early June. These sightings started on 30th May 2019 with land-based observations of at least one, possibly two birds

flying close to the coast near Cape Schanck.

After the posting of the first sighting, a number of birders and photographers visited the area hoping to view the rare Antarctic visitor. Southern Fulmars were observed from various vantage points at Cape Schanck on at least seven separate days until 8th June 2019. Other land-based sightings were recorded from Cape Nelson, Portland Bay and Cape Liptrap until 30th June 2019.

Southern Fulmars were recorded from boats, including single birds on each of the Port Fairy Pelagics run on 1st June 2019 and 15th June 2019. The species had not been recorded on any Port Fairy Pelagic since the start of 2011. Single birds were photographed by a fisherman from a boat near Port Phillip Heads on 7th June 2019 and by a photographer on a whale-watching boat off Cape Woolamai on 9th June 2019.

Very weak or dead birds were also reported on various Facebook sites (including Birdline Victoria), on Victorian beaches from Cape Conran Coastal Park in East Gippsland

to Discovery Bay in Western Victoria. Several of these birds were attended to by wildlife carers.



References:

- Birds of New Zealand A Photographic Guide, Scofield, P., Stephenson, B., Auckland University Press, 2013
- The Australian Bird Guide, Menkhorst, P., Rogers, D., Clarke, R., et al, CSIRO Publishing, 2017
- Birdline Victoria, Facebook (Public Group)

Article and photos  
Geoff Glare

*Article and photos by Geoff Glare*

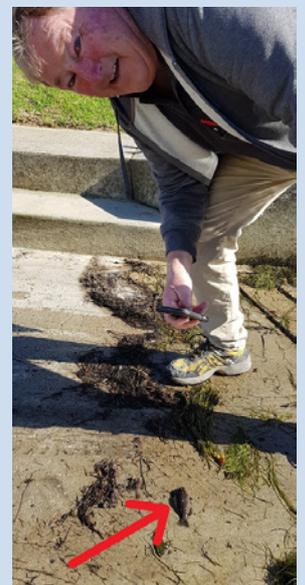
*The photographer is a retired Secondary Teacher of Mathematics/ Physics. He has photographed plants, in particular native terrestrial orchids, and natural history for more than thirty years. Since retiring, he has focused on photographing marine mammals and sea birds in Australian waters and on one visit to New Zealand. He has participated in more than fifty pelagic trips from Port Fairy, Victoria. Interstate pelagic trips include those from Port MacDonnell, SA; Albany and Bremer Bay, WA; Southport and Mooloolaba, Qld; Merimbula, NSW and Eaglehawk Neck, Tasmania.*



## WHAT'S HE LOOKING AT?

Ohh, Garry!

Is that the big one that nearly got away?!?





THE SAN REMO TRADERS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS THE SAN REMO FISHING FESTIVAL BLESSING OF THE FLEET

SEPTEMBER 14<sup>th</sup> 2019.

AS PART OF THE FISHING FESTIVAL WE WILL AGAIN CONDUCTING THE BLESSING OF THE FLEET.

THE LAST BLESSING WAS CONDUCTED AT SAN REMO AROUND 20 YEARS AGO AS PART OF THE FISHING FESTIVAL AND A TRADITION WE WANT TO CONTINUE WITH THE FESTIVAL.

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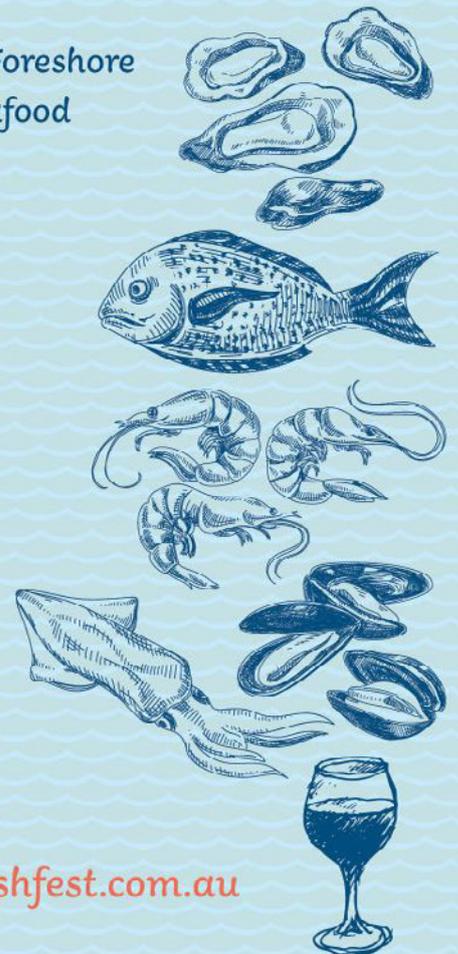
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## FRIDAY HARBOUR :

### Twilight Racing Season – Mornington, 2018/2019

Friday Harbour and her crew had mixed results. We won three races but overall we did not make any serious impact. Regardless, out of 35+ boats we finished the season in 14th place.

### Cock of the Bay

This year was Friday Harbour and her crew's very first entrance in this long-distance race from Port Melbourne to Blairgowrie. Due to lack of wind the start was shifted further south to Sandringham. We had an absolutely spot on start and for the first 15 nms. we were doing very well. Then the wind stopped and that was it. We struggled for over an hour and then pulled the pin. We were going nowhere. We dropped two crew members at Martha Cove and then motored down to Blairgowrie. Well next year we shall try again.

### 23 nm. Night Race - Mornington, 2019

Well that was another great race for Friday Harbour and her crew. The wind prediction was around 20+ coming from SW. By the time we started at 1930 hrs. it was upgraded to a strong wind warning. It was actually blowing high 20s and low 30s. With one reef on the main and 60 % of head sail out the boat was balanced quite well. We were doing very well. We copped a number of big waves and huge spays. Again, after our last turning marker at the West Channel Pile, we had a dream run home reaching all the way. The wind eased away between 18 and 22 knots, and it was perfect for Friday Harbour. In the end it was another win for us in division two.



Looking for the best position at the start of the Geelong Festival of Sail

### 2019 Geelong Festival of Sail

This year we achieved the best result in my 5-year involvement in FOS passage racing in cruising division 3 - with spinnaker. We knew that we were doing well but we never expected to finish this 40 nm. race in second place. That was a great result but the next day when we checked our handicap, we simply didn't have any chance to be competitive for rest of the three races. Our handicap went from .625 to .710 and with that, the very next day in the morning race we finished 20th out of 25 boats; and in the afternoon twilight race we finished 10th.

### Long Distance Race from Mornington to St. Leonard's and Back, 2019

That was our best race. We started well and with the wind right from St Leonard's we flew home, at times reaching 9.6 knots speed. It was Friday Harbour's very first long-distance win. We did the 24 nm. course in less than 5 hrs.

### Peninsula Regatta - Safety Beach, February 2019

Another great outcome. Seventh place in the twilight race. Then on the next day 20 nm. distance race 2nd on handicap; and first place on the third race day. That gave us the overall lead and overall win in the cruising division with no spinnaker.

### Ladies Series of Five Races

Due to lack of experience we haven't done well in that category; but Amanda and Janine since then have gained a lot of experience and next season we shall get better results.

### I Nearly Lost Her

In March we nearly lost Friday Harbour. On the day before, we had the combine race between Safety Beach Yacht Club and Mornington Yacht Club. Towards the end of the race the westerly wind went up from 12 to 18 knots, and by the time we came into Mornington Harbour it was blowing at over 25 knots. I tried to get to my swing mooring but after two or three attempts I gave up and moored at the safest possible place against the jetty. Peter, who occasionally sails with me, suggested I take Friday Harbour to Martha Cove, only 1 hr. south from Mornington; but by that time the westerly was blowing in the high 30s and kept on going upwards. We secured Friday Harbour with double mooring lines, but even that didn't make me at feel good. I stayed there until 9 p.m.

## PORT PHILLIP ADVENTURES

The wind was now blowing 40 knots plus. Finally, I left the Harbour late and during the night Brian came and checked all the lines. Peter also came around 7 a.m. to check the lines.



When I came at 9 a.m. the wind was sitting on 50 plus knots. I stayed there all day and just about when I was going to leave, I had a last look at my boat. I noticed straight away that there was something wrong. One of the lines had snapped. I went into panic mode. Thank god I got some help from Mornington member, Stephen Bolt, and together we managed to secure the boat. There was nothing else we could do.

After two days of gale wind reaching 57 knots, finally the wind started ease. Friday Harbour was safe. Lesson learned: next time take the boat to Martha Cove Marina, as I did few times before.



Brian Frazer, the son of the very first Newhaven Yacht Squadron Commodore, 3rd from the left

### Winter Series for SBYC and MCYS, Safety Beach

Well we started this series with a very good result winning the first race on handicap by sunset. But then we didn't do as well. But we are getting better.

Knowledge of the water around the area is important and we are learning.

In between a busy racing calendar Friday Harbour finds a little time to do some fun and social sailing.

**Kon Cili**

## LIGHTHOUSES OF VICTORIA: CAPE OTWAY LIGHTHOUSE



Cape Otway Lighthouse is the oldest surviving lighthouse on mainland Australia and considered the most significant. It is the leading attraction on the Great Ocean Road and is a must see for all visitors.

Built in 1848, the lighthouse known as the 'Beacon of Hope' sits 90 metres above the pristine ocean of Bass Strait. Hundreds of lives were lost along this shipwreck coast—a sad but fascinating history which led to the building of the Lighthouse on the cliffs edge. For many thousands of 19th century migrants, who spent months travelling to Australia by ship, Cape Otway was their first sight of land after leaving Europe, Asia and North America. The construction is a sandstone conical tower, painted white, with a balcony around the lantern. It had a range of 26 nautical miles, and sailing ships of the 19th century would hope to arrive somewhere between the Cape Otway light and Cape Wickham light on King Island, which had a range of 24 nautical miles.



Using a first order Fresnel Lens, it was the second lighthouse completed on the mainland and it remains

the oldest surviving one on the mainland and was decommissioned in January 1994. It has been replaced by a low powered solar light in front of the original tower, whose focal plane is at 73 m above sea level. Its light characteristic is white three flashes every 18 seconds.

Eight ships were wrecked along the coast of Cape Otway, these include the Marie in 1851, Sacramento 1883, Schomberg 1855, Loch Ard 1878, Joseph H Scammell 1891, Fiji 1891 and the Casino in 1932. The first American vessel sunk during WW11, the SS City of Rayville, was also sunk off the Cape by a German mine.

## SOCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT



Hi everyone, Tom Rawlings reporting to you live on the social activities both completed and upcoming. We have had a fantastic year from March to July 2019.

Firstly, I want to thank Helen McCrimmon for the outstanding contribution she has made since

taking over as Social Secretary nearly two years ago. We have all seen the social activities grow in both number and patronage. Her dedication and the team that support her, has provided numerous great events (some of which from this year I will refer to below). Helen has decided to step down from the Committee role but is still an active member of the Social Subcommittee. That subcommittee includes Helen, Jan, Mim, Anne-Marie, Marianne, Jacki, Rhonda, Brenda, Bernie, Cyril and every other member who provides their time, resources and expertise to our club that will keep the social scene an on-going focal point of this great club. I see my role as providing the subcommittee with the resources and support to continue their fantastic work. After one of our dinners, I recall Matt Ingram made a passionate speech about how great the social aspect of the club was and how it was continuing in the right direction. How right he was and it is thanks to Helen and her team that we have continued to grow.

We had the BBQ in March, which saw Nick, one of his guests and the ever assisting Cyril cook up a BBQ feast that was delicious and well received by the membership. The April evening saw Annalisa and Mark (and one of Mark's mates) once again produce a spit roast that is second to none and has to be a highlight of our gastronomic adventures every year. May was both presentation night and the Italian night where we again saw our members display their diverse cooking creativity with some added dishes from Mario's on the Esplanade. His two lasagnas, (a vegetarian and a beef) added to the outstanding number of choices. Cyril spent the entire night working in the kitchen and is a great asset to our club. June was our casserole night which as always is a crowd pleaser that is well patronised. Eight or nine choices with potato bakes, vegetables and Cyril's roast potatoes (OMG I am salivating just writing this). Finishing with July, the mid-year Soiree was catered by Kate's Plates with her hand made finger food that just seemed to go on forever. I don't think I have ever eaten finger food like that before. Absolutely outstanding flavours and range. Colin Willis remarked, 'You have to stop me walking past the food table; I just can't stop'. (How right he was). We were also entertained by 'Duo Sonic' who played a great assortment of hits and memories.

From an attendance point of view, we have had a loyal patronage which keeps growing. It has been great to see new couples at the functions who were well looked after by our longer time members. When they arrived, they were scooped up and seated with great company. When I see that happen, I just smile with pride because it reinforces

how great the membership of this club is. You don't turn up as a new member and get left. It's a great part of who we are and the club values we live by.

Coming up, on 10th August we have the soup and sweets night. When we held this last year I could not believe we had nearly 80 people turn up. I hope we can equal or better it. The September theme is still a work in progress so we will put notices around the club and info onto the web-site. The AGM is in October and we have decided to have a sit down meal after the formalities and afternoon drinks. It will be great to sit down and have a meal after the meeting. More information will be forthcoming on the arrangements.

Christmas Dinner in on 14 December and again I will update arrangements as we move closer.

New Year's Eve will again be held at the club in the usual BYO format with a \$15 contribution to the band. Let us know as we get closer for numbers - make up a table or just join the participants. For a number of reasons, last year we had to cancel. This year, the show will go on; so find your dancing shoes, get your hip replaced and put it into your planning because it is happening.

The position of Social Secretary will be available for interested members to apply for at the AGM. I look forward to seeing our great club find the right person to continue Helen's great work.

**Tom Rawlings | Social Secretary**



# CAN YOU BE IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE?

How can you be...  
... in two places at once?

Well, it happened once in 1899, and the story goes like this: The passenger steamer SS Warrimoo was quietly knifing its way through the waters of the mid-Pacific on its way from Vancouver to Australia.



The navigator had just finished working out a star fix and brought the master, Captain John Phillips, the result. The Warrimoo's position was LAT 0° 31' N and LON 179 30' W. The date was 31 December 1899.

"Know what this means?" First Mate Payton broke in, "We're only a few miles from the intersection of the

Equator and the International Date Line".

Captain Phillips was prankish enough to take full advantage of the opportunity for achieving the navigational freak of a lifetime.

He called his navigators to the bridge to check & double check the ship's position. He changed course slightly so as to bear directly on his mark. Then he adjusted the engine speed. The calm weather & clear night worked in his favour. At midnight the SS Warrimoo lay on the Equator at exactly the point where it crossed the International Date Line!

The consequences of this bizarre position were many:  
- the forward part (bow) of the ship was in the Southern Hemisphere & in the middle of summer  
- the rear (stern) was in the Northern Hemisphere & in the middle of winter  
- the date in the aft part of the ship was 31 December 1899  
- in the bow (forward) part it was 1 January 1900.

This ship was therefore not only in:

- Two different days,
  - Two different months,
  - Two different years,
  - Two different seasons
- But in two different centuries - all at the same time!

**Frank Moretti**

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# WATTOS' 2019 TOUR

It took us two days to arrive at Wentworth, where the Darling and Murray Rivers converge, and we managed to get a spot to camp right on the Darling River. In looking around we came across No. 10 Weir on the Murray, where a lock operates to let river traffic up and down the river. Although Wentworth is some 400 kms from the sea, the height above sea level at No 10 Weir is only 30 mts. A total of 26 dams and weirs are located along the Murray River. The next stop was Broken Hill and we drove out to Silverton where one of the Mad Max films was made. We had been there about 10 years ago, but since then the small town has lost some of its sparkle. We guess that the Mad Max films being so long ago, the town is now not the flavour of the month.

After staying only, a couple of nights we headed north to Tibooburra with the idea of visiting Cameron's Corner where South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales join. It was a bumpy 100 km drive there over some interestingly dry country, and we kept hearing a rattle in the car around the dashboard area. No amount of searching could locate this noise until we were almost back at the campsite when we found some car club cards rattling in the ash tray.



The Corner Post

At Cameron's Corner there is a post/marker showing the exact place where the three states join and a shop, named 'The Corner Store', sells food and merchandise to travellers. Just at this place is the 'dingo fence', erected during the 1880's. The idea was to stop the spread of rabbits; but because the rabbits were already on all sides, it proved of little effect for rabbits. However, it did stop wild dogs and dingos to a certain extent, from attacking sheep. Originally the fence was 8614 kms long, but it was shortened in the early 1900's to 5614 kms. It is presently maintained by the Wild Dog Destruction Board.



The Dog Fence

We had a long drive from Tibooburra into the south western part of Queensland - just about all of it on gravel roads and some really terrible bits where we could only get along at about 50 kph.



Metal Sculpture at Tibooburra

where we sunk in up to the rims of the wheels, it took a few goes to get out of that.



The Bush Library

We had stopped the night at a roadside stop and had some breakfast, as we often do when on the move, usually just having a cup of tea and a biscuit in the morning before packing up the camp. Anyhow, at this stop we found a fridge, with the words, 'Bush Library' painted on the front. The idea is that you can take or leave a book as you travel, probably something not found in any other part of the world.



Dried Up Lake

Moving a little to the east and about 400 kms, then some 200 kms north we arrived at Hughenden and made contact with John Wearing, the owner of Elabe Station. We had done some work on this property three years ago and this year during a storm the roof blew off the shearing shed, so the plan is to help fix it up.

When we got to the station which is 100 kms south down a dirt road, we set up camp by the homestead and settled down to a beer or two with John, and our mates, Bernie and Ray, whom were also helping with the shed work. Part of the job entailed replacing battens on the rafters of the 17 mtr long shed. These were metal 'top hat' design, which required screwing down with two screws on each rafter, so it was up the ladder, put two screws in, down the ladder, move the ladder, climb up and put two screws in. Phew, really found out how unfit we were, thus slept very well. So, there were 5 battens and the rafters were only 1 mtr apart. The corrugated iron was then put back up, but Ray and another fellow did that part, while I put fascia board on one end of the shed.

However, eventually we got back onto a strip of sealed road only to find a convoy of cattle trucks each with tree trailers. Most of them were stationary, but the last one made us get off the sealed road onto soft/wet dirt

where we sunk in up to the rims of the wheels, it took a few goes to get out of that.

We had stopped the night at a roadside stop and had some breakfast, as we often do when on the move, usually just having a cup of tea and a biscuit



The little dog-bit lamb



John with his tribe

John the owner, has a real affinity with his animals and one day he brought back to the homestead a lamb that had been attacked by a wild dog. It had a bad bite on its neck and was a very sorry little lamb and only wanted to lie down without any movement. However, John mixed up a bottle of warm milk and got the lamb to drink, then he made a frame with a net on top, through which he threaded the lamb's legs, so it looked as though it was standing. It did eat a little but was still there when we left the property, so we don't know what the outcome was. There were about 6 or 7 lambs and sheep around the house, all having been either abandoned or hurt and Jon has names for them all and when he calls them, they come running. His thing is to give them arrowroot biscuits, so they bleat all day waiting for biscuits or to be fed. In fact, when we were out mustering the sheep for crutching, some sheep would come up to the vehicle expecting a biscuit even when they had been out in the field for a year or two.



Two brolgas

Apart from the sheep and lambs, two Brolgas arrive every morning to be fed some corn, these elegant birds stand about 4 foot high and sometimes do a little dance, jumping up and spreading their wings. They also make a 'grumbling' type noise when they are waiting, just to let us know they are there.



T Bone steaks



Round the camp fire

We ate quite well at the property and a moo was slaughtered and cut up into edible size pieces; some were T bone steaks, which you can see being cooked on a BBQ in one of the pics.

While the boys were repairing the shearing shed, Marianne and Bernie spent their time cleaning and organising the house where John's father lives. He had had a fall and was in hospital when we arrived and was still in care when we left. So when he returns he will find a house clean and sparkling, with everything put away.

Thus we had a wonderful experience at Elabe, enjoying friendly company, helping a bit with the farm and learning quite a lot of things. Thank you John and Janine for letting us be part of your life. This note is being written in Cairns where we arrived yesterday, to see daughter Jacqueline, three grand kids and Kyh, our son-in-law. All seems well here and we have a birthday to attend and give pressies for.



John talking to Angel, a moo-cow

'Til next time

**The Wattos (Peter and Marianne)**

# WHAT'S UP, UNDERNEATH

Hi all. I'd like to introduce some new members: Gordon Campbell, Tone Lee and Justin Watson are the owners of Cortez, an old Bertram 20, that we've had a fantastic first half of the year (freediving, spearfishing, chasing crays, scuba and hookah diving, wetting a line and exploring) in, and feasting on awesome seafood, that we've caught.

Cape Woolamai offers some of the best and most accessible diving along this bit of coastline from the Pinnacles to Punch Bowl, with clear water and a huge variety of dive locations during all sorts of weather.

We've had some amazing dives. The Pinnacles, about 1km. off Woolamai, is probably the best dive location around, with fish schooling like in a David Attenborough docco. The back of Woolamai offers many interesting dive sites with plenty of fish and (sssshhhh) crays. I've seen schools of kingfish, salmon and those little pink fish with the black dot ... Pyramid Rock is great in the right weather.

We have found that different species of fish lend themselves to different cooking methods. Blue Throat are great for deep frying; Sweep, just pan fry in butter; Banded Morwong, Thai red curry; and Black Drummer, baked in foil with garlic, ginger, shallots, butter and salt 'n' pepper. Cortez is being slipped for a repaint and new decals over the next month, then we'll be back into it ...

Now I know what you are thinking: a lot of you old timers (and some young timers) turn your nose up at these reef dwellers. If you try this simple recipe, I'm sure you'll change your opinion. They are delish...

- Fillet the wrasse and cut into smaller fillet sizes
- Beer batter mixture (mix beer and self-raising flour to make batter)
- Coat fillets in dry flour first
- Coat in batter
- Place in hot vegetable oil
- When it looks ready, it is ready
- Drain on paper towel

With a side of hand cut oven roasted chips with garlic, it's bloody awesome.

Cheers from the Cortez Crew



Gordon with his first cray???? Um, it's a spider crab, mate.. :) )



My grandson, Aethel Wulf's, first fish



Ben and Tone with Blue Throat Wrasse caught off Kilcunda reef



Happy days with Mo's crays

# FORECASTING THE WEATHER

As avid boaters, we all take an active interest in the weather, or we should. Weather can make all the difference between a pleasant day on the water and potential danger, damage to property, injury and risk to life. Weather information is more available to us than ever before, particularly through mobile devices and the internet. But have you paused to think about where your weather information comes from, or even how it is derived? The answers might surprise you.

Twice every day, at the same time all around the world, something amazing happens. At more than a thousand locations around the planet, weather balloons are released into the sky. Ascending more than 20 km into the atmosphere, the tiny instrument packages dangling below the balloons send real-time measurements of temperature, humidity and wind every two seconds back to the ground station at their launch point, sometimes many tens of kilometres away.

These tiny sentinels are the front line in a global system for monitoring the atmosphere. The data they produce is shared in real-time between all the world's meteorological services, across nearly 200 countries. Together with data automatic weather stations, drifting buoys, ships, aircraft and dozens of meteorological satellites, these observations provide a snapshot of the atmosphere at a point in time, allowing scientists to determine weather patterns and atmospheric circulations.

The global exchange of data underpins the numerical weather prediction that is at the heart of weather forecasts, whether they come from the TV news, radio, newspaper, website or the app on your mobile phone. Models of the atmosphere, running on huge supercomputers, crunch the numbers and run forward in time to produce the best possible estimates of the weather today, tomorrow and next week. The Bureau of Meteorology operates one of the largest supercomputers in Australia, capable of completing more than 1.6 trillion calculations per second. Even then, the global weather model takes around two to three hours to complete.

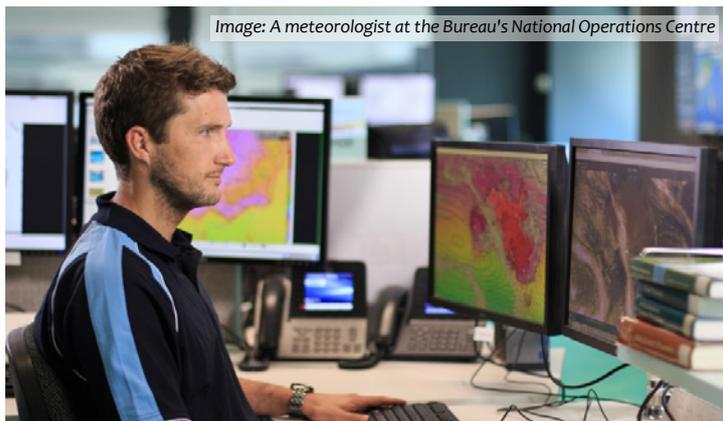
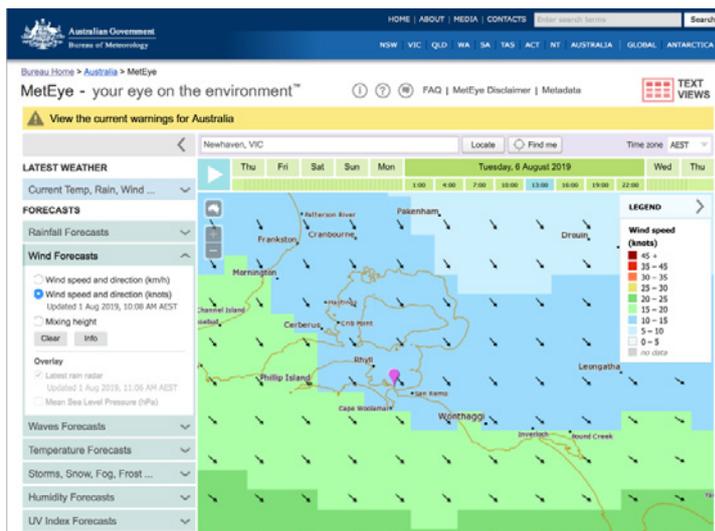


Image: A meteorologist at the Bureau's National Operations Centre

The model outputs are used within the Bureau's operational forecasting centres - one located in each capital city, where operational meteorologists working round the clock provide additional insights, analysis and fine tuning of the model grids. These grids form the basis for all of the forecasts and most warnings provided as operational services by the Bureau. Additionally, meteorologists provide a watching eye on the current weather, ready to issue real-time warnings of rapidly developing systems such as thunderstorms or cold fronts. Services are delivered to Australians through a variety of channels. The Bureau's weather information is rebroadcast by radio and television stations across the country; meteorologists do live radio crosses every day on radio stations around the country; the website ([www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)) is the most widely used government website in Australia; and the app for iPhone and Android ([www.bom.gov.au/app](http://www.bom.gov.au/app)) has been downloaded more than a million times.

For marine users, there are a number of specific services available. Most of these can be found at [www.bom.gov.au/marine](http://www.bom.gov.au/marine) which provides links to a range of products including marine winds, tides, high seas forecasts and other information. In planning a day out on the water, I often use MetEye ([www.bom.gov.au/meteye](http://www.bom.gov.au/meteye)), pictured. This site provides interactive maps of wind, every three hours, for the next seven days. This can be really useful in planning a weekend sailing expedition or fishing trip. Further updates are planned, with a marine extension to the Bureau of Meteorology app planned for later this year.



So, whilst many of us take reliable and accurate weather information for granted, next time you access one of these services, spare a thought for the effort that has gone in to providing it.

**Anthony Rea | Chief Data Officer, Bureau of Meteorology**

## CANAL DU MIDI, SOUTHERN FRANCE

I thought this might be of interest to NYS members contemplating a canal boat trip in Europe; or for those of you with a general boating interest and all of the infuriating things that can go wrong with them... Plus there is also a fishing tale to be told.



In 2014 we completed a 14 day five star Amsterdam to Budapest river boat cruise. Unfortunately, we had the worst floods in the history of the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers that closed them all to boat traffic after Day 3 of the trip. That is another story..... Anyway, this time we wanted to be a bit more adventurous and be in charge of our own time and activities. So we booked a 10 day self-skipped canal boat cruise through 'Le Boat,' one of the largest canal boat companies operating in Europe, and hoped for no floods and better luck with the weather.

We completed this trip recently (May 2019) on the Canal du Midi in southern France from Port Cassafieres (near the Mediterranean coast) NW to Castelnaudary on Le Boat's Vision 3 SL canal boat. This boat is 14.95m (49 feet) long with three double cabins each with en-suite and an excellent layout. We covered approx 150 km that incorporated 62 locks. There were three couples on board (family and good friends with an age range of 63 to 73), of which three of the crew were experienced boaties e.g. myself with a 19' half cabin moored at the NYS marina and having had various boats for over forty years; and our friends who have a 38' yacht and have sailed around Australia and to Vanuatu, etc.

When planning a similar trip note that the first day of the trip does not commence until around 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. and at the end of the trip the boat needs to be handed over by 9.30 a.m. on the last day. So if you are planning a 10 day trip, really only 8 of those days are full days on the canal. Typically you might get a few hours in on the first day and may get through the all important first lock (depending on

where you start); and on the last night you need to be at the disembarkation port so that you do not need to travel on the last day.

So, after a flurry of paperwork and signing your life away, plus way too much information, but with the all-important map, we are all excited to get on board and get going. After loading our baggage and heaps of groceries (baguettes, cheeses and the local wines) to cover the first few days, we then had a demonstration on the operation, handling and management of the boat by one of the Le Boat technicians who was very good and had obviously answered all of our questions previously.



Given the time of year it did not get dark until around 9.30 p.m. so we still had heaps of daylight to get used to operating the boat – or so we thought! However, travel on the canal is largely determined by when the locks are in operation. Depending on the season, timings are strictly from 8 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. and they are closed for lunch from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. each day. So even though we started off at 4 p.m. and had plenty of hours of daylight we still would not reach our first lock by the 5.30 p.m. closing and would not get through it until the next morning. That was OK as it allowed us to leisurely pack things away, become familiar with the boat and its operation and start to enjoy the scenery at what was a very leisurely pace, and to plan the day(s) ahead. We pulled up at the side of the canal at a pretty spot with no one around, hammered in the stakes, secured the lines (the yachties showing me the correct way to do it!), and settled in for the night - that included feasting on fresh baguettes, cheeses, terrines so famous in the area....and some very good local wine that was not expensive even taking the exchange rate into account.

Day 2 arrived, and we got the first inkling of problems to come. We got through our first lock without too many dramas – I think I did a pretty good job even though the lock keeper kept shouting and gesticulating at me?! Lesson

## SELF-SKIPPERED CANAL BOAT TRIP

learnt – look up and obey the instructions of the lock keeper even though they speak a different language ☹! It is at this point that I should explain that the Vision 3 SL boat has two steering control systems: one for the main motor that is controlled via a steering wheel on the fly bridge; and the second via a joy stick that controls thrusters for front, rear, sideways and left/right movement. Unfortunately, they cannot be operated at the same time and there is a delay between putting the main engine in neutral, pressing a button for five seconds that will then engage the joy stick. We were told to use the joy stick before we entered a lock, went through a narrow bridge (there were many), when we were pulling up on the side of the canal to go into a village, mooring for the night or in tight situations where there is a lot of traffic and little room to manoeuvre.

Ok – so approaching the second lock, different skipper. We move to the side of the canal, slow down, put the engine in neutral and press the button for five seconds to engage the joy stick. Hmm – we only have left and right turning capability, but the side thrusters are not working. Call in the old skipper. I engage the main motor, go back to neutral, press the button and all joy stick thrusters functions are working fine (bloody yachties I'm thinking to himself!). Fortunately, there was no boat traffic, not much wind at this point and we avoided heading into the bank or worse. However, the wind then started to increase and we had another 10 locks to get through that day, including the famous Fonserannes staircase of seven locks that ascends 21.5 metres over a distance of 300 metres.

Anyway, it was during the passage of the next three locks and an experience where a skipper had lost control and ploughed into the bank, where we thought that we may have an intermittent problem with the electronics. This was confirmed when approaching the Fonserannes Lock staircase when the joy stick did not engage and the cocky skipper (me) had no control whatsoever of the boat for at least thirty seconds in which time we had drifted

broadside across the canal with several boats around us. Fortunately, the boats coming down the staircase had not reached the bottom level and there was no approaching traffic. Eventually after some anxious/stressful moments, full thruster control was regained and we were able to negotiate the staircase of seven locks with two other boats squeezed into each lock with us. There was of course an audience....



On Day 3 there was significantly more boat traffic including very large canal and tourist boats; plus there were narrow stretches of the canal with tight turns. The wind also increased significantly to what I reckon was 40 knots, but the yachties said it was only 35 knots. Whatever – it was blowing hard!! We were again plagued by this intermittent electronics problem and it was after a couple of near misses and ploughing into the bank yet again, that we called Le Boat and said “Houston – we have a problem”. The response to our phone call was what we termed pathetic! We asked to speak to a technician so that we could discuss the problems. However we were called back by the receptionist indicating that the technician thought we may have had moisture in the joy stick control from rain the night before and that we should wait for it to dry out... really!!

So we decided to soldier on and head for the Le Boat base at Bram which we were due to reach the next day (Day 4) so that we could discuss the issue face to face with their technical staff. Meanwhile in between all of these more stressful episodes we visited quaint little French villages, stocked up on baguettes each morning and enjoyed the scenery, including the snow-capped Pyrenees in the distance. At Bram the joy stick control behaved and we were able to back into a berth (something we dreaded having to do) with little difficulty. I was getting confident and maybe a little cocky again! The Le Boat technicians were good, dismantled the whole control mechanism, applied some WD40 and also indicated that perhaps our problem was that we were using the joy stick incorrectly. What!!! – well the control should not be used in the



## CANAL DU MIDI, SOUTHERN FRANCE

diagonal positions, only forward, reverse, left and right, not say at 45 degrees in the direction you want to go! Hmm - it would have been nice if we had been told that at the beginning of the trip! Anyway, we gave them the benefit of the doubt as we felt that we would have used the joy stick in this intuitive way and this may have caused some of the issues. In addition, before we left they demonstrated a couple of times that the transfer of control to joy stick worked OK and that all thrusters were operational.

All good – or so it seemed. We set off and that very afternoon with the cocky skipper at the control and very blowy conditions (I'm sticking to 40 knots!) we were approaching a very narrow stone bridge. Slow to virtual stop, engage neutral, press the button for five seconds to engage the joy stick – no response. Hmm, the wind has caught us, we have forward momentum and it is swinging the nose around. Press the button for another five seconds – no response – no control whatsoever of a boat that is moving inexorably faster towards a stone bridge. SCHWEPPS (or words to that effect) – damn the joy stick, desperately try to engage the main motor again, press the button, slam it into reverse – nothing. BANG!!!! – no one hurt or thrown overboard, but crockery/cutlery, etc., was thrown everywhere in the galley and the fibreglass in the nose of the boat was splintered in three places – Ouch.... and yes one very crestfallen skipper.

We were plagued by these inconsistent electrical problems when trying to engage the joy stick control for the remainder of the trip. We did however get smarter in managing the issue, and where possible stopped a good 100mts before a lock, bridge or village on the side of the canal where the wind would push us against the bank and then attempted to engage the joy stick control no matter how long it took. This worked most of the time, except that you do not know what is around the next corner....a big barge, or a narrow bridge when you need the joy stick controls quickly.

Although we encountered this inconsistent problem at least five times per day, we fortunately only had one other near miss where I narrowly avoided demolishing an old wooden platform jutting out into the canal; instead we ploughed into the bank a metre or so from it. The nearby fisherman was not impressed!! Needless to say, the issue with the electronics made our trip way more stressful than it should have been. With a boat like ours, it is no wonder that we saw a lot of other boats fully decked out with fenders for protection from newbies and anyone with a Vision 3 SL type of boat...

We can only conclude that there is a fundamental issue with the software and/or hardware that operates the motors and thrusters in Vision 3 SL type of canal boats. Control should not be transferred to the joystick until it is actually



working; and there should be no wait time involved to transfer control between the main engine and the joystick thrusters.

Please do not let us put you off a Canal du Midi trip using Le Boat - just do not use the Vision 3 SL type of boat!! Apart from the poor advice and follow-up when we first called to report problems, thereafter Le Boat staff were very professional and courteous. This was especially the case at Castelnaudary at the end of our trip where we were treated respectfully and had a sympathetic ear to the issues that we had on our trip. My only major criticism of Le Boat is that they should not have any Vision 3 SL boats in service. There are known issues with this type of boat, yet they still operate them. We have since read on TripAdvisor of someone who had similar issues; plus on our trip a lock keeper and a mechanic from a rival boat company both told us that these specific types of boats had control problems. The design, functionality and cleanliness of the Vision 3 SL boat was fantastic for three couples, but bottom line - unless the electrical motor problems have been addressed do NOT use the Vision 3 SL type of boat - they are a major accident waiting to happen.

Fortunately, the severe winds abated, and boat traffic became less as we got further north. Despite everyday incidents with the motor we were able to enjoy the Canal du Midi and delightful scenery and villages a lot more in the last six days of the trip than the first four. We would walk or cycle to quaint villages and vineyards to get provisions and had some delightful meals at restaurants along the way - even enjoying (some of us anyway) cassoulet, a famous traditional duck, sausage, and bean dish of the region. The city of Carcassone was certainly a highlight. We stayed two nights in this impressive fortified city and were able to organise a guided tour of the castle for the six of us. This tour was excellent and well worth it – we would advise booking ahead as we were simply lucky to be able to slot into a last-minute tour cancellation.

Oh yes – the fishing story. A childhood aim since living in England for a couple of years when I was 11 years old was to catch and release a Northern Pike. Sadly, this is still an

## SELF-SKIPPERED CANAL BOAT TRIP continued...

aim. My entire catch for the trip was three catfish.....and I think I was lucky to get them. Not only was it a closed season for the Pike, but during this time apparently they do not feed and just sit on the bottom. Also, if you want to fish the canal do not even bother trying to get a fishing licence. I spent many hours trying to get one through the ‘Associations de pêche en France’ website and in the end had to give up in frustration. It is an extremely confusing website and in the end, would not accept my credit card payment. I even sourced and visited a fishing tackle shop in Paris, only to be told I had to buy the licence online Grrrrr!! So my catfish were poached; but they were released to fight another day. Oh, and did I mention that all of the sewerage from all of the canal boats is pumped directly into the canal. Yes – this day and age. It is a disgrace and I am sure there are areas of the canal that are devoid of life because of it...

There are two major items of advice that we would like to pass on to those contemplating a similar trip:

1. Per the discussion above, do not hire the Vision 3 SL type of boat from Le Boat or any other operator that uses them. There is a dangerous intermittent fault in the electronic steering control system that makes them hazardous and stressful to use.

2. Plan your trip to go downstream rather than upstream. We passed through 62 locks so we should know!! When entering a lock, it is far easier to step off the boat on the upstream side and manage the boat as water is expelled from the lock, rather than going into each lock when the water is at its lowest and having to throw ropes up to crew member who, in many instances, had to disembark before a lock, walk up to it, and then accept the ropes as they are tossed up to them. If you are going downstream then you do not have this hassle.

Also, we would take an Aussie flag to fly out the back of the boat with us next time. It is a great talking point and helps to break down some of the barriers when interacting with the locals and other foreigners that you meet along the way. Would we do it again? The answer is a definite “Maybe”. Given some of our experiences some may think it is amazing that we are all still friends at the end of the trip! But we are, and we certainly have some interesting adventures to discuss when we next meet over a glass of French wine or three.

**Mark Bourke**

## SKINNY BOATING IN WALES

Whilst our sailing boat, Harmony 1, remains in Hobart, Florian and I have been fortunate to have recently travelled overseas for five weeks. We spent time in Italy with our son and his fiancée before touring Iceland, then finally enjoying a boating holiday of a different kind in Wales.



Canal boating had been on my bucket list for some time after watching a programme on television a few years ago. After doing some research

I booked a 49 foot narrow boat through Beacon Park Boats. This company operates a fleet of 19 boats in the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal in The Brecon Beacons National Park in Rural Wales. This canal is considered to be Britain’s most Picturesque waterway, and this was confirmed by people we met along the way who had travelled many of the other canals in Britain.

We spent 7 days on the boat cruising the full length of the canal which included operating and travelling through 5 locks, opening and closing 2 manual and one electric



bridge (twice). We also went through one long tunnel, over a viaduct and under countless low bridges. All this at a speed of 2.5 miles per hour - around 70 miles

altogether. We thoroughly enjoyed the trip with beautiful and changing scenery, stopping generally for lunch at one of the canal-side or close town pubs for lunch, and having breakfast and lunch on our very well-equipped boat - full sized bed, central heating , WiFi, fully equipped kitchen and walk through shower!!



Beacon Park boats was an excellent company to deal with in all aspects of its operation, and we thoroughly enjoyed our week on the canal.

**Yvonne Brown**

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