

CORRESPONDENCE

Axel Stenross Maritime Museum,
Lincoln Highway,
Port Lincoln,
P.O. Box 316,
PORT LINCOLN. 5606

5/7/80

The Secretary,
Royal S.A. Yacht Squadron,
NORTH HAVEN. 5018

Dear Sir,

The members and committee of the Axel Stenross Maritime Museum wish to convey their thanks to yourself and members of your committee for allowing our member Mr. Wilson Hissey to place an advertisement for the sale of our commemorative plaques on your notice board. If you could include an article with reference to the sale of the Axel Stenross Maritime Museum plaques in the next issue of your newsletter we would be most grateful. Any information you may require with regard to the above museum can be supplied upon request to myself to the above address.

Yours sincerely,

G.L. Parkes. (Secretary)

(Mr. Parkes was asked to supply information for an article on the Museum but at the time of publication this had not been received. - Ed.)

NORTHWARD HO! with ACHERNAR (Concluded)

In our last article Achernar was entering the Whitsunday Islands and in these superb waters we spent a full month sailing to a different anchorage every night with plenty of time ashore for barbecues and oysters, fishing and generally having a good old rest. So much has been written on the Whitsundays that I can add very little, so let's move further northward.

Leaving Airlie Beach astern we set off in the now completely faithful and expected 15/20k SE which had freesheeted us all the way from Eden (with only a couple of variations into the West) for 2½ months. Our anchorage for the first night was under the lee of Gloucester Island, some 36 miles north of Airlie, a very spectacular anchorage right under the 1900 ft. range. Ashore we noticed what at first appeared to be some large sharks cruising with their fins cutting the surface, but a longer study showed these to always appear in pairs and as the fins came closer they joined together into the outer flaps of giant manta rays cruising in the shallows to feed. A terrific meal of 'bugs' and prawns was purchased from a trawler anchored nearby.

Next morning saw an early start for the 50 mile broadreach past Bowen to the 2000 ft. high Cape Upstart, clearly visible all day and appropriately named by Capt. Cook for the way it sticks out on its own from the coastline. We caught some beautiful Spanish mackerel on the trolling line and anchored in a perfect setting under the high peaks of Cape Upstart. Our next day's sail would bring us to Townsville and so as to arrive there in good time we anchored for the night out in the bay behind Cape Cleveland which we rounded at 5 p.m. and, seeing what appeared to be a nice beach, headed in, yet when still 3 miles off, the echo sounder warning came on, indicating we were in 12ft. of water. This great bay out from Townsville extending 20 or so miles out to Cape Cleveland is not much more than a mud flat. The navigation channel commences to seaward off Magnetic Island and is a straight dredged channel marked with piles like snow poles extending as far as the eye can see into the man-made harbor of Townsville.

The yacht harbor is up Ross Creek with only a slim channel between all the moored yachts; one of these had a familiar look to us and a closer examination revealed the 'Pavana' now a houseboat with painted masts and a none-too-loved appearance. Near the end of the creek and nearly into the main street of Townsville we tied up at the Townsville Motor Yacht Club where we were most hospitably treated and for a small payment became Visiting Members with all facilities laid on.

After a few days reprovisioning and doing some repairs to refrigeration we set off for Magnetic Island which is so close to Townsville that it is considered a suburb. Magnetic is not like other resort islands as it is totally commercialised with bitumen roads, hotels and 100 'Rent-a-Moke's' waiting at the wharf for the daily supply of trippers to arrive.

We moved on very quickly from Magnetic to get away from people and the tourist world to the Palm Island group a short motor sail to the north.

The winds had now dropped right away and every day it became necessary to use the motor otherwise no distance could be covered.

Great Palm Island is the largest of the Palm group and is a protected reserve of the Aboriginal Community. We were advised that permission had to be obtained before landing, however the yachting telegraph had given us the tip to just go ashore and visit the police who would make us welcome. This we did and spent a very interesting morning shopping in the Non Profit supermarket and buying fresh bread from the bakehouse and locally killed meat. They were a very happy and reasonably clean community. A local enterprise was the oyster lease. Our daughter Briony was amused when a group of kids remarked 'Hey, look at the whitey'.

A short sail from Palm Island past the now disused leper colony on Fantome Island brought us to Orpheus Island where we anchored for a barbecue and snorkeled amongst some of the

most beautiful coral formations yet seen. Across the channel from Orpheus Island is Hinchinbrook Island, one which we were looking forward to seeing. Hinchinbrook is the world's largest island national park, its highest peak rising to 3650 ft. On its seaward side the mountain peaks rise close behind the shore with their tops sheer cliffs for the last few hundred feet. As a result of this high steep formation, the clouds readily gather and precipitate over the island's western half and the mainland nearby where Australia's highest rainfall is recorded.

Between Hinchinbrook Island and the mainland is the Hinchinbrook Channel, a deep waterway with the mainland shore indented for miles by mangrove creeks and swamps and the island shore has the channel running close in with creeks navigable to us cutting right in against the high mountains. We spent a memorable night up Gayunda Creek with the water like glass, the only sound from crabs and perhaps crocodiles sliding into the still waters. For those who ask about the mossies, we are pleased to report that at this time of the year we had none!

On our return trip we visited the seaward side of Hinchinbrook and spent a night in Zoe Bay, said to be the most beautiful anchorage on the east coast of Australia and we can agree for it resembles the scenes of Tahiti with its gently sloping beach backed by native shrubs and palm trees and in the background the jagged backbone of the Hinchinbrook range soaring skyward. In the south corner of Zoe is a crystal pool with a waterfall cascading down the granite rocks and conveniently some Tarzan ropes for the younger set to swing into the pool.

Hinchinbrook was one of the highlights of the trip and weeks could happily have been spent in its sheltered waters.

Ion Ullett.