

# ENCOUNTER WITH BAUDIN

**Rick Baker cruised down to Kangaroo Island in *Margarita* where he discovered a celebratory re-enactment of Captain Baudin's visit to the Island in 1803.**

Following our return from North Queensland in March 2008, our first opportunity to take *Margarita* on a cruise to Kangaroo Island came in March this year. With the company of our trusted crew Ran LeLant, we left the Squadron early, heading for Stansbury. A pleasant day's sail saw us anchored north of the jetty in time for happy hour, which we enjoyed as the sun sank behind York Peninsular.

In the morning, we went ashore to explore the town and purchase a few extra items missing from the provisioning list, so it was not until midday that the anchor was weighed and we headed for Troubridge Island. Rounding the Stansbury Spit, the wind was right on the nose and began to strengthen as the southerly sea breeze began to build. By the time Port Giles was abeam it was gusting to 25 knots and we began to feel unsure about negotiating the sandbars to the Cutter Patch in these conditions. Deciding to return to Stansbury, we turned an unpleasant beat into a pleasant run and had a comfortable night.

We were under way before 9 am the following morning in much improved conditions and, after a look at Edithburgh, we had negotiated our way to the Cutter Patch by early afternoon. This gave us plenty of time to catch a good feed of tommy rougbs for dinner. It was a beautiful scene as the sun disappeared behind the wind farm south of Edithburgh and the colours of the sunset bathed picturesque Troubridge Island. Early next morning we left for Emu Bay, going east around Troubridge in calm conditions. The light southerly saw us motor-sailing well past Marion Reef until the breeze freshened and swung a little to the east, allowing us a comfortable sail to our waypoint.

In the morning we went ashore for a walk on the beach then decided to move on to Boxing Bay for the night. This anchorage certainly had a more rugged and isolated feeling, so the following morning we headed for Kingscote, where we anchored and went ashore. Pushing on to Redbanks, we were intrigued by the wildlife, where sea-eagles nested on a post on top of the strikingly red cliffs. Freshly caught snook were a real treat for dinner!

After a late breakfast and a session of unproductive fishing, we left this pretty area and headed for Brown's Beach. As we anchored and logged off with VMR American River, Alan advised us that on the following day there was to be a re-enactment of Captain Nicolas Baudin's visit in 1803, and we were cordially invited to attend the barbecue lunch in the shelter shed. Although Baudin's unexpected meeting with Matthew Flinders occurred in April 1802, Baudin returned to Kangaroo Island in January 1803 and spent several weeks exploring and collecting specimens, including live kangaroos and emus to take back to France.

And so it came about that on Wednesday the 24th of March, 2010, a fleet of small craft emerged from American River and anchored close to *Margarita*. There was much merriment as members of the local sailing club landed on the beach dressed in period costume, waving the Tricolore. As they made their way to the appointed meeting place, they came under heavy fire from a tennis ball cannon aimed by Matthew Flinders' crew. After storming the British position, a sudden epidemic of peace broke out as eskies were opened and barbecues fired up. The crew of "*Margarita*" was invited to take part in the consumption of local delicacies such as smoked snapper and kangaroo stew. We had a great time chatting to the locals, including Anthea Cowell, and it was particularly pleasing to meet Alan Meil, the voice of VMR American River, to whom we had spoken so often over the VHF radio.

Alas, the next morning it was time to leave for home, so we had to refuse an invitation to party on. We were well past Kangaroo Head before the sun came up and the only remarkable thing about the trip home was the complete lack of wind. If there was any, it was right on the nose, as usual. After 14 hours motoring, we berthed at the Squadron in absolute flat calm conditions.

I understand that the re-enactment of Baudin's landing on Kangaroo Island is an annual event and is definitely worth incorporating into the itinerary of any boat cruising there at this time of year.



Anglo-French relations improve before lunch!



French forces meet resistance from Flinders' cat Trim and a local vagabond