

The Bishop, the Roper and the Shark

Once upon a time a man received a letter, sealed in a plastic bag, from a person who came from along the coast and over a hill. The letter came with instructions. Pass it on by tomorrow morning to the final recipient, several miles further along the coast. A yacht was visiting the man's bay. He asked the skipper and his wife if they would take him and the letter by sea to save him from a long journey on foot.

So the man boarded the yacht and helped retrieve the anchor and the three sailed the boat along the coast. It was a steep coastline, covered in thick bush and fringed with dangerous reefs waiting to snag the yacht. The woman wanted to catch a fish, a big fish with sweet white meat. She trailed a rope line with hook and lure from the back of the boat. The woman also wanted to use the boat radio to get a doctor for the man, for he had a bad eye. The skipper stopped the motor so that the woman could use the radio and the boat flopped about loosely on the wallowing sea.

The rope snagged round the boat's propeller. The three tried to free the rope but, being held fast, they prepared to cut it. But first, pull in the rest of the line. It went deep. It was heavy. It was jagging, and pulling and hard to retrieve. The hook and lure had caught a shark! The shark was pulled alongside the boat and the man hit it hard several times on the nose with a winch handle. The woman poured spirits into its

curved slit of a mouth. The shark became still. It was hauled on deck and its tail tied securely.

The rope was cut and freed the propeller. The journey along the coast was resumed and the boat rounded a steep cape with jagged rocks at its feet.

Soon after that, a small beach appeared. The water was swelly and there were reefs far out. The skipper stopped the yacht and the dinghy was launched. The man and the woman went in the dinghy, up and down, up and down the waves in the small boat, to the shore. The man delivered the letter on time.

It gave news of the intended visit of an Anglican Church bishop on the next day. The Skipper, the man, and the woman sailed the boat back to bay of the man's village. The shark was towed ashore in the dinghy and fed all the village.

The bay was Bushman's Bay on Gaua Island. The man was Willie Gray, the woman, Di, the Skipper was Ian and the yacht, *Pied Piper II*.

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Emma, a Fun-filled Performer

Di Moncrieff, *Pied Piper II*

RSAYS yacht *Emma*, a 36ft Mander 11 of Van de Stadt design, is widely known for the fun and camaraderie enjoyed by those lucky enough to sail on her. And now she is for sale.

You see, owners Jack and Sally Metzger specialise in laughter. Sally's self-deprecating Irish humour is no less than wicked — really wicked — and Jack? Well Skipper Jack, the butt of many a joke himself, gives as well as he gets — and some!

Having sailed against *Emma* in many a Twilight and Lincoln Race I am also well aware of her sharp competitive edge. So it was with some eagerness that I boarded *Emma* in March 2000 to join the no less than nine others for the return trip from the Adelaide-Port Lincoln Race. It seems all those that needed to turn up for work by Tuesday and had missed out on flights to Adelaide, gave Jack or Sally a 'hoy'.

But *Emma* can handle an extra few. She is commodious below, easily accommodating a

crowd and her cockpit, roomy and comfortable enough in rough seas, has been host to many lively sundowners.

We left Lincoln on Sunday afternoon, in time thought Jack, to round Cape Spencer before dawn. Why bother I thought, but in retrospect *Doctel Rager's* infamous encounter with Reef Head just a week later gave good enough reason to prefer the west to east rounding in daylight.

Beating into SEs and sloppy seas across Spencer Gulf, *Emma* handled the crossing well. She pointed high and kept up a good speed as we tacked back and forth.

We had a close look at Emmes Reef, breakers gleaming white in the dawn, rounded the Cape, and set along the foot of Yorke Peninsula.

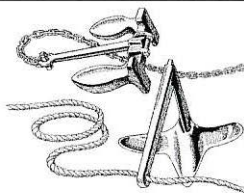
Sally by this time was as sick as the proverbial dog. She had survived the first few hours on her usual bright chatter and laughter, but when she



Emma.

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succumbed to her irresistible urge to play hostess and get some food, she was done. Poor Sal, she really suffered.

We didn't know at the time, that the extraordinarily neat stranger on board, decked out in crisp, clean, designer wet weather gear and polished deck shoes, was a medico complete with anti-puking medication. We were level with Henley Beach before he felt generous or thoughtful enough to offer it! Well, thanks!

As we sailed into a lightening breeze that had swung further from the east, there was a yacht behind us. Jack's irrepressible competitive nature kept him watching it closely and encouraging *Emma* to her best as the wind got lighter and lighter.

It was no other than Michael Tromp's new *Epsilon*, that which, 2 years later, won her Sydney Hobart division. Jack could hardly contain himself when *Epsilon* started to gain on us and it was a great relief when they passed and it was clear that the motor had been engaged for quite some time.

I am apparently responsible for a new tradition on *Emma*. As we rounded Marion Reef that trip and started the last leg home, motoring on a flat sea, I broke out the G&T's. *Emma* rounding Marion Reef from the west is now synonymous with G&T's — I am proud to take responsibility for such a civilised and pleasant tradition.

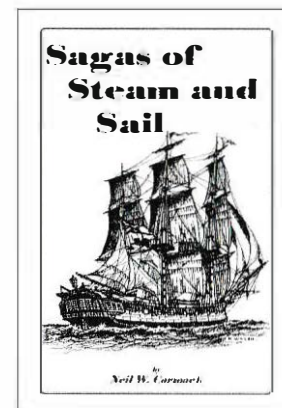
Though windless, St V's Gulf was at its best. We have all experienced the delight of dolphins playing on our bows. But these were lit with phosphorescence, sparkling in the night sea as they dipped and rolled, darting before us as if they were ghosts escorting us home. It was an eerie and very special show indeed.

I enjoyed my passage on *Emma*. She is a sound and responsive vessel to sail. She is a challenging racing competitor, as one would expect with her pedigree. She is an excellent all rounder, comfortable for cruising and fun but a performer too.

We hope that she finds a new owner who understands her capabilities and who uses them all to advantage. Hail thee *Emma*!

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Book Review



Sagas of Steam and Sail. Neil W. Cormack. Self-published, 2002. ISBN 0 9580904 0 8. Available from the author, \$12.

Reviewed by Peter Last

In this small publication Neil Cormack has brought together historical incidents and anecdotes of considerable interest to anybody who likes to know of South Australian maritime history. Many don't know that Port Adelaide had a significant boat-building industry, including small freighters of the sort well suited to our outports. Neil gives a good account of some aspects of this, as he does of some well known and lesser known marine disasters.

He well summarises the losses of the *Admella*, the *Star of Greece*, the *Ethel* and *SS Ferret*, amongst others, as well as the stranding and total loss of *MV Yandra* on South Neptune Island. That coincided with a Squadron Neptune Island race, in which yachts in the days before GPS had problems navigating in significant sea fog, which obscured all navigational lights. Henry Wilcken's *Taluma* rounded on the sound of waves on the rocks, and only by chance discovered on the way home that they were in danger of piling up on South-West Rock, four or five nm west of the south end of Thistle Island. The waves they heard were on *North Neptune Island*, so they were disqualified for rounding the wrong mark. They could very easily have become victims of a yachting disaster. Those who did round the South Neptunes saw the bonfire on the beach lit to sustain the men brought ashore, and looking up they could see stars, but they could not see the light for the fog.

A story well told is of the disastrous fire on *SS City of Singapore* on 26 April 1924. The memorial to the two firemen who were killed can be seen in the Cheltenham Cemetery as you drive up Port Road.

We are grateful to Neil for donating the review copy to the TM Hardy Library, to accompany his early gift of his excellent account of the *Herzogin Cecilie* (1996)

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(Unnamed)	Greg Johansen		