

Greetings from soggy Queensland. What with cyclone Aivu and the floods from Brisbane to Gympie, Queensland is looking a little worse for wear. We spent the cyclone season in Gladstone and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Gladstone has certainly come of age during the last decade. It has gone from a very industrial mining city to a very modern livable place. Apparently the Mayor and Councillors are very forward thinking and they have planted trees, made Malls and even boast one of the nicest natural Botanical Gardens. In fact they have won the Tidy Towns Award for the last 4 years.

The Marina deserves 10/10. Built by the Gladstone Port Authority, it is a very neat and eye catching complex. Plenty of lovely undulating lawn areas and gas barbecues have made a great meeting place for yachties on warm balmy nights. There is also a very futuristic childrens' playground and gazebos dotted around for shade. So as you can imagine it was no hardship to put in 6 months in such a delightful place. All this I might add for \$45 per week. We made a host of new friends, mainly the charter boat skippers as we were berthed in the commercial section of the Marina.

During our stay in Gladstone, we had 2 trips home to Adelaide. In November we were home for our daughter Jane's wedding to Brian Gale and then again in December for Christmas.

We fully intended to start sailing south as soon as we returned after Christmas. However, with SE winds at 20-30 for most days, we decided to stay put. During this time, Howard painted the topsides of ALLIANCE and also repainted the deck. ALLIANCE badly needed some TLC as she had taken a fair bit of abuse from native canoes during our PNG/Solomons trip.

We finally made the break from Gladstone on 13th March 89 and did an overnight sail to the Great Sandy Straits. We had booked ALLIANCE into the Maryborough Motor Boat

slip as we had not done any painting below the water line for 20 months. We had a lovely motor up the Mary River to Maryborough, a distance of about 20 miles.

Maryborough is an interesting city as it boasts some of the most beautiful early Queensland type homes. Quite a few of them have been well maintained but there were some I would love to get my hands on. The old brick buildings from the late 1800's have been repainted in lovely Federation colours and are quite outstanding.

It didn't take us long to find some-one we knew, John and Trish Lihou on their yacht MY LADY T. We first met John and Trish in Gladstone and promised to see them in Maryborough which is their home town.

The Marina at Maryborough is not large, only catering for local yachts. There are buoys in the river but we found it better to anchor just around a bend and get protection from the SE. As soon as we were anchored, Howard went ashore to check in with the Motor Boat Club slip. Back he came with a long face to announce that we couldn't slip until 6th April. This meant another 3 weeks of sitting around. We badly need to slip and at \$90 up and down and 2 days against \$600 for the same service in the northern ports, we decided to stay put and wait.

So of course we were in Maryborough when the heavy rain started and the Mary River at Gympie peaked at 20.5m. As it is only about 40 miles from Gympie, there was a mass exodus of yachts down to the heads and into the Great Sandy Straits. Maryborough was expecting the river to peak at the 1974 level of 20.7m, and this would have put most of the lower level homes along the river, under. Fortunately it only reached 6.6m. This still put Kent Street, the main street, under water and Maryborough was cut off from the south when the Lamington Bridge went under.

The debris coming down the river was a terrific hazard and the river was running at about 5-6 knots. Our little outboard on the dinghy was really struggling to make any headway, so we put the dinghy on the davits and stayed put. The yachts MY LADY T and SWALLOW were anchored near us so we kept the radio on and kept in touch. John Lihou came across in his dinghy and invited us over for dinner and a few sherbets, so our 4 days waiting for the flood to subside was quite enjoyable.

We heard on our radio that sandmining barges had broken away and were coming down the river with no lights and unattended. Thank goodness they ran aground before reaching us. Then the old GOORI, a timber barge from the turn of the century era, that was initially intended to be towed to the Straits and sunk as an artificial reef had been washed up on top of the wharf that it was tied to!

As we came back up the Mary River to Maryborough, it looked like the Spanish Armada with about 20 yachts all in a line chugging along. As we approached the town reach we could see just how high the flood had been. There was a line of rubbish on lawns and also loads of rubbish caught up in trees. When we finally reached the Marina, the pontoon was still under water. So here we are, all anchored.

In case you didn't know, we are sailing to Adelaide and taking about 12-15 months shore leave. After all we have been living aboard now for 5 years come September. I know we told family and friends we would be home this year, but what with cyclones and floods, don't put the kettle on yet.

Regards from Howard and myself to all our friends at the Squadron.

MYRA WRIGHT

At the present time (31st March 89) we are anchored in East Boyd Bay near Two Fold Bay, in the lee of the headland with the woodchip mill. It is raining and there is an E to NE wind blowing 30-40 K at times. So a good opportunity to report our progress to the Squadron.

After travelling along the North Tasmanian coast we arrived at Devonport where we berthed alongside the visitors' pontoon and enjoyed the hospitality of the Mersey Yacht Club. From Devonport we made a bus trip to Cradle Mountain through very scenic country and passed Lake Barrington with the international rowing course where local school boys were having a regatta. It is reputed to be the second best course in the world with its deep water and surrounding steep hillsides.

The Mersey is an easy river to navigate. From there we went to Port Sorrell which is more tricky to enter especially when arriving at low tide as we did. We made use of a chart issued by the Harbours Board and were lucky to arrive at the same time as a Devonport ketch MARINA III which was apparently once owned by Mr Josco Grubic. It hit bottom twice but must have been deeper than PLUTO. Once inside, the estuary opens up to the visitor who can enjoy a variety of sheltered anchorages which were shown to us by the owner of MARINA III. Plenty of oysters can be taken on the shore at low tide.

After a few days we continued to the River Tamar where we had planned our arrival for the incoming tide. I shall not elaborate too much on the trip to Launceston because you had an earlier correspondent who had been this way. We were glad to have more than a tea towel to navigate the river. Even then we met a marker in the West Arm which was not on the chart. We passed it on the wrong side and slid over a ballast heap which came into view at low tide. We stayed at the Port Dalrymple Yacht club at Beauty Point where the Australian Maritime College is. We overnighted in the lovely West Arm and