

A LONG WAY HOME ON *ERICA*

Buying a boat on the eastern seaboard means a long sail home in a boat that is new to you. This is the story of Phil and Peta Stump's *Erica*, and how she was waylaid.

The Stumps have a long association with the Squadron. In the early 60's Phil sailed with his father Jim on Frank Holsten's *Martindale*. In his mid-teens he often cruised on the motor sailor, *Nyroca* which Jim had purchased from the estate of the late Henry Rymill. Phil also raced with Alan Jordon on *Celeste II*, otherwise known as 'the floating piano'. In the 80's, Phil teamed up with Peter Muirhead to fit out the hull of *Pumpkin Eater*, a Pion 30, and successfully campaigned in many Squadron races. A cruise on *Pumpkin Eater* to KI with Peta and their 2½ year old daughter Amy in about 1985, ensured the whole family were involved in sailing. Their son Chris joined in later.



Peta & Phil on *Erica* off Island Head Creek QLD

Phil and Peta are *Erica*'s second owners. After much debate, and Peta telling friends that *Erica* was Phil's 'French mistress', they decided to retain her original name. *Erica* had spent her first 15 years plying the waters of Sydney Harbour and Pittwater. She was a little neglected when the Stumps took delivery, so, in the lead up to the proposed 'sail home' to Adelaide, Peter, Noelene and Maddie Cooling joined the Stumps for a two week maintenance cruise. Leaking skylights and hull windows were resealed and dozens of other essential maintenance tasks completed. Peter would roll out of his berth each morning enquiring "What's on my list today, mate?"

The Stumps enjoyed a magical first cruise on *Erica* exploring the well protected and picturesque waters of Pittwater and Cowan Creek, with lush green undergrowth, cascading waterfalls, and few other boats around.



Noelene, Maddie & Peter Cooling – Cowan Creek July 2007

Erica's sail home to Adelaide was deferred again while Jeff Hunt, brother-in-law Denis Harrington and his brother Mark, helped Phil sail her from Pittwater to Brisbane in late July 2007.

They had brief stays in Port Stephens and Coffs Harbour before letting their hair down at the Southport Yacht Club.

Phil says it was a good test of their navigation skills. "We entered both Port Stephens and Coffs on moonless nights, and surfed over the Southport Bar at first light."

The trip to Brisbane was meant to be a brief interlude while waiting for better weather to travel southwards. Peta and Amy teamed up with Jeff and Rae Hunt for a trip north to Fraser Island for a few weeks before returning to Brisbane. This trip had a significant impact as, Phil says, it started them questioning "What's the rush to get back to Adelaide?"

They decided to leave *Erica* in Brisbane for the 2007/2008 summer storm season and then do a seven month trip to the Whitsundays before sailing home. After experiencing people, places and the company of twelve groups of friends, they again set sail for Brisbane in late 2008, but with heavy hearts.

"About a week out of Airlie Beach and sailing towards Fraser Island we questioned why we were sailing home," Phil says. "The following two and a half years sailing the Queensland coast is another story.

It took nearly four years to finally sail *Erica* into the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron, having journeyed from Pittwater to Lizard Island and then home, covering over 9,000nm, meeting hundreds of fellow cruisers and capturing thousands of cherished memories.

See *Erica*'s details in 'Our Boat' elsewhere in this edition.