

HEALEY 1933

Running nicely to schedule, or perhaps an hour or so late, the owner and I stepped aboard the Anyndah at approximately 3 p.m. February 1st to begin our annual fortnights cruise to the other gulf. The boat was anchored off Glenelg, having been sailed round during the morning by the navigator and mate accompanied by Don Cooper, the proprietor of Wedge Island, whom we were to drop at his island home. Conditions were ideal, nice S.E. wind and every one keyed up to make the most of the next fourteen days. Bowling along in good style, the wind freshening as the afternoon advanced we made satisfactory progress being off Hearlunga before dusk. Great excitement as the Navigator caught and landed a large Tunny, (our first and only one for the cruise) Having no means of weighing or measuring the catch, opinions differed from 30 lbs. to 15, 30 being the estimate of the successful angler. Despite the difference of opinion it made a welcome addition to the larder.

At night fall the wind freshened considerably with light rain; in an hour or so both wind and rain increased so that we had no option but to tie down a couple of reefs, making things safer and more comfortable, or I should say just a bit less uncomfortable. Why do all these things happen on the first night out? None of us were feeling 100% whilst I was well down to it, I saw it out till midnight with the navigator, huddled under an alleged waterproof covering in the cockpit arousing myself at his commands to heave on sheets and each time finding a bit of personal heaving necessary. During the night we changed plans re destination and arrived Edithburgh Y.P. 6 a.m. What a night? Pelting rain and spray made everything so wet and sodden that we spent Sunday drying out, relaxing and catching up on a bit of sleep. Some cutlets of the tunny made an excellent breakfast, the owner listening with due deference to all as to how tunny should be prepared, cooked and served, went to it with his usual technique with his usual success.

Monday morn, a nice breeze and although it meant beating all the way, with the adventurous Don Cooper as pilot, we sailed through the tricky waters of Sultana Passage, only touched bottom once, and dropped the hook at Sandy Point for the night. The Pilot and our owner assured us this was an excellent anchorage; it certainly was safe but what else? The night was spent in efforts to retain one's equilibrium with more or less success, whilst the boat bucked like a circus pony. The cook managed to balance the fry-pan sufficiently next morning to prepare bacon and eggs but the motion of the boat once again found me on a different wave length with the usual results, this time I abused the cook and blamed his greasy cooking. I was reminded, but doubted the statement, it would do me good; and was wondering when the holiday would start.

As it in answer to my unvoiced queries wind and conditions broke our way and soon after setting sail that day we were able to free out the sheet, welcomed a spot of sunshine and the feel of the ship at her best, no doubt the unpleasant aspects of the previous days helped our appreciation. Leaving Sandy Point 8 a.m. we arrived and anchored at Thisle Island that evening at 6.30 having sailed pleasantly all day, balloon foresail set and all sails doing a good job, a distance of 65 miles, very good performance. The Wedge Island proprietor was, with all his gear rowed ashore by the mate whilst we were to; the wind being so much in our favour the pleasure of a visit to his homestead was postponed, also the chance of acquiring a goat (for eating purposes only.)

calm

Stayed the night at Whaler Bay; off the Thistle a decent ^{calm} anchorage at last, the stoves were put to better use than the tossing seas had so far permitted, a purr of contentment much in evidence and all enjoyed a much needed early slumber.

Leaving Whaler Bay with a good strong wind abeam at 8 a.m., we set off for Port Lincoln, our objective. No better set of conditions could be desired, wind in the right quarter, the sunlight glinting on the wave tops as we tramped along quite close to the surf pounded shore of the picturesque Thistle Island. Our navigator and mate produced lines and lures as the presence of so many birds indicated tunny. I was acting as observer, the flocks of birds being a sure guide as to the movements of the fish. The tunny in their ravenous way hunt and harass the small fry to the surface and as they leap from the water the birds with a pretty display of dive-bombing make efforts to deprive the tunny of his reward. Meanwhile our two anglers were having great sport having at least a dozen strikes but failed to put a fish on the deck. Several times they brought one to within a few feet of the boat and the mate had one, a really large tunny out of the water when as with all the other hook straightened out and goodbye fish. The pace of the boat was mostly to blame. A great morning for all, me as observer, mate and navigator very pleased (honors being equal) whilst the owner sitting at the tiller beaming all over to think his boat was capable of moving too fast. Later that day we tried for snapper near Taylor Island, without success, and arrived at Lincoln Harbour early in the afternoon, a splendid days sailing. Spent a couple of hours with the officer of a vessel undergoing repairs, both entertaining and being entertained and gave them advice on engineering problems that confronted them. After "getting the anchor" it having been dropped in nine fathoms and many more fathoms of chain played out with grand abandon by the owner, who never assists in winding it, we dropped it again in the sheltered waters of Fishermans Bay and rowed ashore for a swim on the very inviting sandy beach, hate to have to admit it but this was our first for the cruise, even so, one member refused, he was subjected to much criticism. Whilst we revelled in the water I realised that for the first three nights we turned in fully dressed, a method that has quite a bit to commend it; when morning arrives one has to but put on the hat, have a bit of a scratch and there you are, set for breakfast. We did justice to some well cooked fish that night, only having two meals for the day, had a bit of a discussion on several very prominent people of the world, were of one mind as to their breeding and careless parents, and quite sure of their ultimate destination, and so called it a day.

An early start next day, a glassy sea, no wind, no engine but an obliging fellow yachtman with motor launch, an old friend, who after a little liquid entertainment did the right thing with a tow line and there we were, Port Lincoln jetty.

Light lunch on board, much activity with razors, combs, hair oil, mirrors and clean shirts and we proceeded to grace the town. What a great institution a hot fresh water shower is, especially when the need is great as ours was? Dined ashore and returned early. Spent two very happy days and evenings at this most attractive port. Replenished stores and our water supply, met a lot of old friends and made new ones, our navigator with pavements once again under his feet, was a different lad, exploiting the personality, handing out the hand-shake and happy

laugh to all and sundry, we were relieved when we got him safely back on the high seas. And what a man the mate proved himself? Locating relatives on holidays here, invited them to supper and they very decently brought a sack of oysters and the usual liquid accompaniment, good old Uncle Carl! Quite a lot on the boat that night to visit us, but no trouble to our owner and host who entertained all with oysters and his customary light hearted chatter.

Early morning start again determined to return via Sir Joseph Bank group of islands, conditions very good, light but favourable winds, good sailing, pleasant warm day and we arrived at Morton Bay off Revsby Island. A delightful little half moon bay, white sandy beach, reefs either end, only some tropical vegetation needed and this scene would be set for a romantic novel. We had a pleasant and needed swim, only a few sheep to gaze at us, otherwise this island was as devoid of inhabitants as we were of bathers.

That evening we entertained a fisherman at dinner, a Finn, well known to us all, very likeable and generous (he brought us some snapper). During the meal I commented on the honor we three had of dining with two captains sitting opposite us, our guest with becoming modesty disclaimed the honor and saying he was not as "Mussolini looking" as our captain. When it dawned on our skipper he was being compared to Benito, if only in status and lack of hair, he just subsided or slowly deflated just as we all hope his double will soon do.

Excellent snapper breakfast, thanks to the Finn, and away we went, sailing between these islands, favourable winds, sunny day, landed a few huge snook, and arrived at Spilsby Island with a nice freshening wind at 5.30, went ashore met the owner and his son, inspected his island, sheep and rabbits, gave a lot of sound advice re lambing and pastures. I hope his sheep benefit as a result of our visit. Next day proved most entertaining, we assisted with the crayfish pots (great success) despatched a large octopus we found in the pots whilst the navigator and I armed with rifles vainly sought the bunnies so much in evidence the previous evening. What a pretty little animal the Chinchilla rabbit is that infests this island? I hope the island owner never reads this, as he has on his hands, a never ending war to remain in possession, and one sees shot and poisoned carcasses everywhere.

That night we were guests at the homestead and all hands over-eat on the crays we had caught that morning and were presented with two really nice ones to take with us. Next morning we were once again on our way, very loth to farewell this island where, with varied sport available one could easily spend a full week. For the morning we were favoured with a good breeze, but later the sea came up and the afternoon found us slogging into a big sea and wind dead ahead, on the verge of reefing several times, a habit our skipper does not indulge, but as we neared the Thistle, a favourable slant of wind enabled us to ease of the sheets and we made the anchorage in good style, arriving before sundown. A real good days sailing, all varieties of sailing except the dreaded flat calm, managed to catch a few snook, which with a crayfish

we presented to the islands owner, nice work as events proved. That night our chef turned on cray, curry, sweets and coffee, very grand of his effort as well he might.

The following day we spent on Thistle Island, exercised ourselves by swimming, long walks and even did half a days work for the proprietor, were easily persuaded to dine with him. Dinner was very late, it being nearly 10 as we finished the cleaning up, so we, not having wireless on our boat, thought we would listen in to the over-seas news. I remember the familiar phrase "This is London calling", and soon after was awakened by my own snores. On looking round I was amused to find our party and the host fast asleep, the results of a big tiring day. Next morning we thought our stores might run short before we arrived home so the navigator and myself were ordered ashore to see to it. We returned with meat sufficient for three feeds and a nice young turkey specially killed for us. Wonderful the quantity and variety of foodstuffs we had wished on us. I must mention the principal gifts we accepted, no wonder our costs are kept down; oysters and liquid from Uncle Carl, huge slab of excellent fruit cake from Uncle Arthur, flagon of lime juice from Lincoln Spring, gifts of fish from every fisherman we met, crayfish from Spillsby Island, meat and turkey from Thistle Island; not a bad list, our owner says its all done with kindness, but we wangled, scrounged, acquired and consumed the lot, and believe me it was all very welcome.

Conditions were against us and we left Whaler Bay 12.20 after waiting in vain for a change, a nasty short head sea, progress very slow, and at dusk it was necessary to reef down. Sailed through the night with no improvement, the wind and sea being the worst possible for our sturdy boat. We duly arrived at Pondalowie Bay 7.30 a.m. very pleased to dry out a bit and breakfast at this calm anchorage. Away again at 9.30 with a promising slant of wind that died to nothing by noon, and we anchored off the Althorpes for a few hours. Here we are staged one of our dominions championship and also found a few bottles of beer, our mate, reported days earlier it all gone. He was inclined to hold out on us a bit, but this was too much; however we forgave him.

Late that evening a nice strong breeze set in, so we up and away, after a few hours of really nice sailing it freshened so much, that we again reefed, but the burst was short lived and we soon let them out again. Morning found us along foot of Y.P., very little wind, but a pleasant day. How to deal with our turkey called for a conference; no seasoning and only an iron pot many sizes too small. However the bird was severed in many places, bacon used as stuffing and with potatoes, asparagus and claret we dined in good style.

On Saturday we were still floundering along with very light winds, enough to keep us headed towards home, read, relax and collect our gear. That night off Edithburgh in a flat calm, porpoises sporting round us, dinner in the cool of the evening everything was very peaceful in our world.

That night I did the first trick till after midnight, a wonderful night, an oily calm but enough wind aloft to ghost along at quite a few knots, a marvellous moon rise, mirrored in the water that fitted in with

all I've read on the matter. Torpedoes rising, to breath in their noisy manner round the boat whilst from the cabin come the snores of the occupants, three different keys and tempos. Once well in the Gulf our little boat got a special N.Y. line that enabled her, as if a homing pigeon to fly direct and fetch the dockings, after a 120 mile cruise, at noon Sunday. A good clean up and a special tidy up for the ship; the owner having loaned her to a friend who on the morrow was to set out on a cruise, whilst we went back to work. Not so good.