

An Impression.
of the Cruise of the.

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R.S.A.Y.S.

Norman Ford. Esq
owner.

Feb. 1940

By B.H.

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After six years without a holiday or a break of any kind, other than a few days sick leave and an occasional long week end, I saw the opportunity of treating myself to a whole fifteen days. Without much delay I sought out one of my oldest friends, a yacht owner whom I knew contemplated a cruise in the early part of February. My overtures were successful and my intrusion made the party up to four, just using up the available bunk space. We were all friends of long standing, well enough known to each other to be abusive and insulting without giving or taking offence.

The owner and B employed their time during the year compiling Profits for big business affairs, whilst V and myself were engaged in activities on our own accounts, with more or less success in catch-as-catch-can of modern business. And we were all more than pleased to bid farewell to city life. The prospect of being out of the sound of tram cars, telephone, radio and all the other noise distractions of modern life appealed very strongly.

Our owner does not like engines but prefers to rely on sails and wind, leaning quite a lot towards the old tradition of "wooden ships and iron men", and I must state we reached everywhere we set out for, anchored in smooth anchorages each night, which meant good meals and restful sleep, and arrived back home on time.

Our first night out was different, leaving at 2:30 Saturday afternoon, we took 23 hours to arrive at Ballast Head, K.I. All the carefree abandon left me and towards 3 a.m. I found myself the subject of cheap and ribald wit, slightly relieved later when I found V had also had a similar spasm during the night. B and the owner went along merrily proving themselves not only "men of iron" but as V remarked possessing galvanised internals. However a stretch along the rugged foreshore of K.I., the feel of firmness underfoot, back to the boat, a light meal and a heavy sleep made everything right for an early start for Ban Bay next morning.

Early rising and early retiring we found the best policy throughout. Our owner who insisted on doing all the cooking went into action at the calm anchorages and his efforts were hard to fault, we overlooked such little matters as no parsley sauce with the steamed fish, lack of gravy with the pot roast, and brandy sauce with plum pudding. Fish was usually on the menu twice daily, and under the

ideal conditions, i.e. caught, cleaned and hung in the breeze for a suitable time instead of being frozen and hawked about. Treated thus and expertly cooked as ours was fish is quite a different article from that obtained at cafes or even home.

Emu Bay gave us another stretch ashore, and a look at the good barley country. Wallabies were plentiful, but we were not interested in shooting and hope the said animals are still there. Away again, after smooth night's anchorage, leaving Kangaroo Island soon after day break. Light head winds dying to calm later in the morning. Tried for fish again, B. landed some very fine snook, and I succeeded in catch^{ing} myself, getting a hook well embedded in my finger that necessitated having the barb forced through, cut off and the shank then pulled out. It was rather painful, but V and B proved themselves very efficient with rusty pliers, pocket knife and bandages. After disinfecting by well bathing over the side, I joined the others who were already indulging in a well needed stimulant, I had to think whose finger had had the treatment.

The breeze freshened after lunch, still a head and was blowing very hard at dusk as we approached the Althorpes. As night came on we were sailing close hauled between Cape Spencer and the Althorpe Islands. This was my first time in these waters, a very short steep sea set in and I personally was anything but at ease. Big black headlands and islands, a wa^{ving} light flashing and the noise of waves thundering on reefs not far off provided quite enough thrill for one cruise. Our deck was wet and slippery and any movement was rather hazardous. Our owner was quite complacent, drawing our attentions to the wonderful sea~~and the~~ worthy qualities of the boat which is merely 28 feet long, but which with his skill did everything asked of her and after a long night sailing we dropped anchor at 3 a.m. at Wedge Island.

Despite our late retirement the skipper sounded the usual reveille at the usual time, and after breakfast we went in search of the island's occupant. Found he was away, had a most refreshing swim from the beach, tried out the whiting fish^{ing} grounds or I should say alleged grounds. Just prior to lunch the local resident arrived and was very welcome, as he was well known to all of us, having been employed in Adelaide before taking full control of this island to raise and market the assortment of stock we saw, sheep principally, cattle, horses, goats, pigs and turkeys. Whilst inspecting the place in the owner's absence B had both his dignity and equilibrium upset by being kicked through a fence by a kangaroo; he was a little relieved to learn later that the animal was a pet and was only fooling. We entertained our visitor at lunch, "wangled" a dozen small salmon.

a dozen small schnapper off him, and spent a most amusing afternoon being initiated into the art of spearing fish from a moving dinghy. V proved very efficient, of course the big one got away. Wangled some excellent whiting with liquid bait from a fishing cutter (I like that word "wangled.")

After getting opinions re probable weather we retired early. Weather prophecies were all wrong and we left Wedge Island at day break with what proved the most favourable wind of the trip. Sailing along this island's coastline with smaller islands a mere quarter of a mile away; Thistle Island looming up some 10 or 12 miles off, a beautiful sunny day helped to make this quite the best day yet, and the fore-runner of others as good to follow. Paid our respects to the proprietor of Thistle Island and away, not wanting to waste the favourable breeze. Continued on sailing, skirting along the most interesting coastline and arrived in Lincoln Harbour at dusk, having sailed under ideal conditions all day. Celebrated on arrival with fitting and filling manner, and spent the night at Fisherman's Bay.

With Port Lincoln our ~~next~~ port of call and incidentally our objective, razors and other aids to beauty were put into commission, V combed his hair many more times per day than usual, and the owner who has long since had no use for combs, never failed to snort his disgust. Arrived at the Port Lincoln jetty Friday after lunch, and spent quite a time replenishing stores and fresh water.

Probably as a war precaution we were met on arrival by the Police Sergeant who subjected us all to a careful scrutiny as we stepped on the jetty. We arrived back late in the afternoon without any police escort so we evidently were not classed as suspects. Had a very pleasant drive around on Saturday, ^{the} most interesting event probably being an inspection of the tunny canning works. The managing expert patiently explaining the process. Port Lincoln is certainly a beauty spot, and must in the near future figure large, as one of the State's attractions. Allan Payne was more than courteous during our stay and made our visit most enjoyable. Away on the return trip, via anywhere the winds would take us, leaving Port Lincoln at 7 a.m.

No cruise in these waters would be complete without a visit to Dangerous Reef, made famous by Lane Gray and sharks, so out we went towards it. Had a close up of the seals that abound there and admired their graceful display, but we did not land on the reef. We had a working arrangement with those huge sharks, we to leave them alone and they not to worry us. Our fishing gear was much too light for any of the sporting fish. We had a good view of a school of large tunny in pursuit of a school of pilchards, fine looking fish at least four feet long, and as they leapt out of the water they made a splendid silvery

picture, certainly not appreciated by the pilchards. We visited another nasty looking reef, Black Rocks, sailed close up, and seals in their inquisitive way came along to have a look at us, and once again charmed us with a show of fancy diving. Later that day I had the bad luck to neatly place our good ship on a sandspit off Taylor Island. Our skipper was so amazed he failed to abuse me, by removing a lot of weight including our own frames the skipper sailed her off without any damage except to reputation.

These days were delightful, and most conducive to a little laze off in the cabin; while two were on deck working the boat the other two would do a little relaxing or frousting, either word used according to how your luck was. After catching a lot of fish at one spot we set out for Memory Cove arriving quite early one morning.

Of all the pleasant bays and anchorages throughout our cruise this was easily the most delightful. The nearby cape and islands named by Flinders to commemorate a tragedy are all most picturesque and for rugged beauty must surely be hard to equal. We spent most of the day on the attractive beach cleaning fish, swimming, and hiking over steep hills to spots of interest, returning to the boat all pleasantly tired. Our chef put on his best performance; three course meal with trimmings. My recollections of Memory Cove will remain a mental picture of our owner, glass of sherry in one hand and fish slice in the other crooning to the noisily sizzling fish in the pan. We overlooked his vocal efforts and our forbearance was rewarded by some excellently cooked fish. From now on we staged domino matches at each anchorage, and I am proud of the fact that I hold the championship of Memory Cove -- comments re lack of science ignored.

Leaving at the usual early hour next morning we had a lot of fun catching snook, but had to leave off fishing as we caught our two days requirements in half an hour. Our progress continued still with light head winds; we visited the same islands as on the way out, nothing much to report other than our visit to Thistle Island. If this were for newspaper publication our visit to the owner of this island would have the heading in large bold type "Scrounging Extraordinary." I refrain from naming the two members of the party but they returned from a visit to the homestead with half a sheep and a large can of dripping. I am still in ignorance of the technique employed but do know the meat was excellent and a welcome change from the fish diet. We had the decency to attempt a little reciprocity and entertained in what ~~was~~ was voted a very happy sherry party on board. Our next and final anchorage was Pondalowie Bay at the foot of Yorke Peninsula, another delightful spot but surrounded with dangerous reefs. B caught an outside in barracouta which we

found excellent eating.

From here we set off for Outer Harbour, sailed all day in very light adverse conditions and sunset found us off York Head enjoying a most colorful and spectacular sunset. Massfield, Coleridge and a few other poets were aptly quoted. Wonderfully pleasant but not very helpful to a boat dependent on wind for locomotion. The sea as far as the eye could reach was ironed out like ~~smu~~^{skin} feathers. These conditions prevailed till 3:30 a.m. and found us off ~~Cape~~^N York H. A nice wind set in here, very quickly freshened and in an hours time we were labouring in very rough seas. After passing Marion Reel with more wind than required we were able to ease off the sheets and made what must be nearly a record trip to the Harbour, a marked contrast to one effort of 18 miles that took us 12 hours.

The calm pleasant days and good cooking were responsible for such inroads on the stores that despite the fact that the last two days we only had ~~two~~ two meals per day, we arrived on the moorings very short. Our stock consisted of one bottle of beer, one can of milk and a few almonds and raisins. And so ended a most pleasant cruise with good companions on board the ideal boat for the purpose.

One regret only, a most unselfish one, is that the coast line, islands and anchorages are not nearer for the lads and young men who are sailing small boats along our beaches. What an asset it would be towards them developing still more self reliance, and for others to become marine minded, as surely we cannot have too many so inclined on our island continent.