

Rubber Duckies and Anchors at 'Gentle' Reevesby Lagoon



A cruising fleet anchored at Reevesby Lagoon after the Lincoln Race was reminded that using a rubber duckie at night can be dangerous if the wind is up and the outboard fails, and that complacency and being at anchor are poor bunk fellows.

Helen Prisk and Marlene Tassicker tell their stories of Reevesby.

Cruisers exploring the relics of Reevesby Island, unaware of the night dramas to follow.

So you want to be stranded on a desert island?

Helen Prisk *The Tardis*

This is an account of a potential disaster which happened to the rookies (Helen & Graham) whilst at anchor at Reevesby Island in Spencer Gulf. The event may seem humorous now but it has made us reconsider important safety aspects of using our rubber inflatable. We were invited for dinner on another boat which was anchored about 100 metres from *The Tardis*. We set off during twilight in the duck with two bottles of wine and some spare petrol on board. After all, we were only going a short distance. The weather was quite warm and we wore tee-shirts, shorts and a light spray proof jacket. There were about twenty 20 yachts anchored in the lagoon.

At about 10:00pm Graham decided to stretch his legs and went on deck where he discovered that the wind had picked up to about 25 knots. He immediately decided that we should return to our boat. We did not drink the wine we had brought and took it with us. There was no moon, the wind was very strong, there were waves to negotiate and Charles, our host, could not get his powerful torch to work to see us back onto *The Tardis*.

We left our hosts and immediately found it difficult to make way and steer into the strong winds, as we headed towards our boat. The winds pushed us into the anchor chain of the boat as we left our host and we fended off with difficulty. Finally, after about 10 minutes we approached *The Tardis* and I made ready to grab the ladder. Then disaster struck. One foot from the ladder the two hp motor stopped suddenly and I could not reach it or any part of the boat. The wind pushed the dinghy away with great speed and we were adrift.

... squid lines ... had become hopelessly entangled around the dinghy prop.

The motor stopped because Graham had left his squid lines floating out over the stern of *The Tardis* and they had become hopelessly entangled around the dinghy prop. Not to worry, we had oars onboard, so we could row back to the boat. Or could we? Have you ever tried to row a rubber inflatable in a 25-30 knot wind? We went around in circles whilst still being pushed rapidly north west away from the fleet. We passed two boats and yelled out for help, but the wind was so strong and

noisy that nobody could hear us and our words were blown away. I became a little anxious as you do in these situations but Graham remained fairly calm. The duck floated away and the other boats became smaller as we drifted. However, Graham could see Partney Island in our path. It was very dark and I could not see it. He used an oar to steer the boat in that direction and eventually we approached a large smooth rock on the shore of the island. A wave blew us onto the rock and we pulled the dinghy up a bit further.

During the night we pulled the dinghy further up the rock as the tide kept rising. It was very cold and we were only wearing light clothing, so we turned the dinghy over to try to keep the wind off us, but it just whistled in underneath. It was very cold and neither of us could sleep on the hard rock. Graham tried to remove the fishing line from around the prop but it was too dark to see and the line was tightly entangled. Without tools and in the dark, any attempts to cut the line or remove the split pin were in vain. We found an empty beer can and tore it apart to try to gain a sharp edge to cut the fishing line but that was a useless exercise. Graham next attempted to remove the split pin holding the propeller but he had no tools and rocks were not very effective. I suggested that we break one of the wine bottles to get a sharp edge, but Graham thought that was too dangerous and we may cut ourselves in the dark.

During the night I saw bright lights among the fleet and thought that people had noticed that we were missing and were looking for us. This, however, was not the case. The wind

was so strong that at least two boats, *Grey Nurse* and *Beachcomber* dragged anchor, and the skippers were out trying to prevent damage and re-anchor their boats.

Unfortunately, we spent all night on the cold, very dark shore and had to wait for daylight to make any progress. Finally, the sun lit the land and Graham could just see the fishing line (he did not have his glasses). While he was attempting to undo the line, three boats left for their cruise to the north of Spencer Gulf. We went un-noticed. At last, the fishing lines were cleared from the prop and Graham and I lifted the duck into the water. The engine started with no problems. We were on our way back to civilisation. No one knew of our ordeal until we told them. Bye the way, the two bottles of alcohol would not have been of much use because drinking alcohol will contribute to hypothermia.

The lessons learnt on this escapade reinforce the issues of safety and I know no longer want to be stranded on a desert island.

What lessons did we learn and what equipment should be present in the dinghy?

- Always ensure that you see guests return to their boat safely. Shine a strong torch until they climb on board
- Check via radio.
- Always have warm clothes with you.
- Do not leave fishing lines dangling over the back of the yacht.
- Have spare 2 two stroke fuel on board the dinghy.
- Keep a small grab bag for the dinghy and the contents should include:
 - ☐ Spare split pins
 - ☐ Spare spark plug
 - ☐ Knife
 - ☐ Bright torch with spare batteries/globes
 - ☐ Pliers
 - ☐ Bottle of water
 - ☐ Chocolate or biscuits
 - ☐ Spare spectacles
 - ☐ Portable VHF would be useful
 - ☐ Matches
 - ☐ Personal EPIRB would be useful
 - ☐ Space blanket
 - ☐ A flare

Worry about Anchoring ... and don't we all?

Marlene Tassicker
Beachcomber

Beachcomber had a wonderful time in the Port Lincoln area at the conclusion of the race and start of the Spencer Gulf Cruise.

We joined in with the barbecue on Reevesby Island. We were aware that anchoring in that area needs careful checking as there is a thin layer of sand covering a limestone base. We made sure that we dropped the admiralty anchor in a green, sandy patch, and put on the anchor drag indicator – no movement at all.

It was quite windy, but we went ashore in the evening and had a great time.

It was planned that we would meet up again next morning and investigate the island. It was very windy that night, but the anchor was 'rock solid'.

... the anchor suddenly gave way and we were off.

Next morning was perfect, and we all had a pleasant stroll. (Unfortunately the old farm buildings have fallen into greater disrepair and surely cannot last much longer.) We returned to the boat for a late lunch.

That evening, just after dark of



Sally Metzger lifts cruisers historical knowledge of local events at Reevesby Island beach.

course, the anchor suddenly gave way and we were off. The wind was about 20 knots; there were 20+ boats in the 'park' and we headed rapidly for the closest. Fortunately we cleared away, and were able to re-lay the Admiralty again, on the second try.

The reason for this article is to point out that you just never can relax about the anchor. We had been away from the boat, out of sight of it at times too, but luck was on our side, and we were on board when the anchor gave way.

Just imagine what could have happened.....



Pelican Hook Modified

Several years ago a Squadron member fell overboard when the lifeline pelican hook that he was leaning against suddenly released. This was apparently caused by the pressure of his back sliding the small release ferrule along the rod. To prevent this happening the ferrules are sometimes taped in place but a better solution is to file a 1 mm deep flat on the release rod as pictured. The rod has then to be depressed to allow the ferrule to slide back and release the lifeline.

