

Cruising in Company to Kangaroo Island

Alan and Fay Duncan

If you want to experience the full meaning of Seamanship and Fellowship, we can recommend cruising in company. After a week cruising with Jamie and Anthea Cowell along the north coast of Kangaroo Island we and our cruising companions feel fortunate to have sailed along some of the most spectacular coastline in Australia. We have enjoyed relaxing on each other's boats (especially testing the theory that dropping the anchor causes corks to pop out of champagne bottles) and we have also learned more about sailing!

On Saturday 22 January the following vessels left for Edithburgh:

Amarina Alan and Fay Duncan
(and Imelda the Siamese cat)
Beachcomber Phil Tassicker, Brady Tassicker
and Michelle Siladi

Bianca Peter and Louise Headlam
Earrame Clive and Anne Arnold and sons
David and Michael
Kamatu Allan and Marlene Swinstead,
Richard and Tracey Colebatch
Kowhai Brian and Libby Williams
Morning Hustler Jamie and Anthea Cowell,
Allan Sinclair

With strong winds and choppy seas outside the breakwater, Michelle admitted to Phil that the highest waves she had seen on a sail up the Port River were about 15 cm. It was not surprising that she spent most of the passage adding colour to the waves. Clive and Anne's sons, although experienced sailors, also found the conditions trying that day and the next, when we sailed to Knob Point. Even the contents of the 'treats' locker could not persuade them to continue the cruise. Clive and Anne therefore decided to take a leisurely cruise eastward along the coast



Aboard *Amarina* on the C-in-C: Anthea Cowell, Brian Williams, Alan Duncan, Libby Williams, Jamie Cowell (Alan & Fay Duncan)

before returning to the Squadron. We were all glad to have a day of R and R in a very comfortable anchorage at Knob Point, even if the R and R proved to be Rain and Reading.

The weather was generally fine and sunny for the rest of the week, so we had a pleasant sail to King George Beach, where we were greeted by six children swimming out from the beach. They soon discovered that ladders and platforms on transoms are good for resting on and jumping from. *Kamatu* had limited time available, so reluctantly left the next morning while we sailed to Western River Cove, where Jamie and Anthea were joined by their daughter Jane, son-in-law David Harris and children for lunch. Then we all enjoyed a scenic and comfortable sail to De Mole River, even though we were frequently buffeted by gusts coming down the gullies.

We feel the most spectacular scenery of the north coast is to be seen from a yacht while cruising along the coast to Cape Borda. We all followed Jamie's advice and motored slowly close inshore underneath cliffs more than 200 metres high, with varied contours and colours that photographs cannot capture. We saw goats, white-breasted sea eagles and numerous buoys for crayfish pots. Unfortunately *Beachcomber* did not see an isolated rock in a bay just past Cape Torrens, and although the depth gauge read 30 feet, then 22 feet, a large piece of fibreglass was gouged out of the keel when it hit the rock with a loud crunch — yet the depth gauge still showed 12 feet! Phil and his crew were horrified when *Beachcomber's* hull was then thrown on the starboard and the port side by the waves, and Phil radioed for urgent assistance from *Amarina* and *Bianca* who were close behind. We were all relieved when *Beachcomber* motored free of the rock, and Brady was able to inspect the damage from below. Phil decided that his yacht was still seaworthy and with temporary repairs he was able to continue the journey. Michelle of course had been really enjoying the cruise after the first day of seasickness, and even this experience did not seem to dampen her enthusiasm. In fact we were told she worked her way up from cabin attendant to admiral-at-the-helm by the end of the cruise.

Perhaps one of the benefits of cruising in company is to be able to render assistance if required (although hopefully not in circumstances like this). What we particularly enjoyed was seeing the sails of our friends nearby, yet having the freedom to start later or sail ahead, knowing we had a common destination and a knowledgeable guide. Socialising was informal and fun. Quite often our boats formed a catamaran, a trimaran, a quadmaran and even a six-hulled vessel. Would that be a sexamaran or a seximaran?

Several boats trailed a paravane hoping to catch the biggest snook. Some of us were so successful we provided meals for the non-fishing yachts. The award for the longest snook belongs to Louise on *Bianca* for a fish 695 mm long, and Jamie was pleased with his bucket full of sweep caught close to the cliff face.

Our return sail from Cape Borda to De Mole River gave us an opportunity to spend another night in this delightful anchorage. The following day we sailed back to King George Beach, where *Amarina*, *Beachcomber* and *Kowhai* spent the night rolling while *Bianca* and *Morning Hustler* moved on to the Mare's Tail. This calm and beautiful anchorage was much more comfortable. Some of us sailed to Emu Bay on Saturday, while others headed north in order to be back in Adelaide by Monday. Jamie's plan to leave early on the previous Saturday in order to incorporate two weekends provided sufficient time for the group to cruise the coast and yet allowed flexibility for the return cruise.

Our group and the two previous cruising groups have gained an appreciation of this lovely area of Kangaroo Island, and we hope Jamie and Anthea will continue to be available and willing to conduct further cruises. We all thank them sincerely for their commitment to seamanship and fellowship. They, like us, are probably still pondering the answer to the question asked by one of the children at King George Beach. 'Are you here for a reason?' [SQ]