

Embassy of the United States of America

October 22, 2001

Dear Mr Henshall and members of the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron,

I apologise for the long delay in responding to your message of condolence. Your warm note to the American people is so comforting. All free men and women everywhere recognize that the events of September 11th were really an attack on civilization. It gives Americans great encouragement to know that we will not stand alone in the difficult days ahead.

Please know that I will convey your thoughts to Washington. On behalf of the American people let me say how grateful we are to have friends like you in the world.

Warmest best regards,

Sincerely,

J Thomas Schieffer
Ambassador

62 Cookes Road
Windsor Gardens 5087

3 December 2001

Re Peter Last's review of Judith Roinich's book *Yachting Yarns* in the December issue of *Squadron Quarterly*.

The reason I am writing is because I feel something has to be said in Judith's defence. In this review, Peter refers to himself as a 'pedantic editor.'

My *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* defines a *pedant* as '1. A schoolmaster, teacher or tutor. 2. A person who over-rates book-learning or technical knowledge, or parades it; one who has mere learning without practical judgment; one who lays excessive stress upon strict adherence to formal rules, etc.'

Wouldn't it have been kinder of him to simply say nothing and leave us in ignorance of his own shortcomings.

While he may have had the best of intentions to start with, I am afraid he has arrived at the wrong destination.

Yours sincerely,
Maurice J Driscoll



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Ada goes on to Brisbane and Beyond

John and Catherine Lawlor

[Continued]

We were ready leave Coffs Harbour by 23 May 2001, but, unknown to us, chief engineer Murphy had tracked us down and signed on for the voyage. We tried twice to clear the harbour entrance (with a 3 m swell rolling in) but both times the motor coughed and died just as we were between the breakwater arms. On both occasions we came about and sailed back into the main harbour, and we were eventually towed to the fishermen's wharf by the water police.

An expanded brass metal insert inside the air filter had disintegrated and was sucked into the inlet valve, which stopped the motor from firing. This was the same problem we had after we left Eden. However, this time the pieces of metal were about 20 mm x 50 mm in size. After

this metal was found and cleared, the motor still lacked power and was blowing clouds of smoke and carbon.

By the end of the day it seemed we had no choice but to pull the head off, which was machined, the cylinders and pistons were given the OK, the valves were resealed and injectors were checked. Then we were left with the task of putting it all back together again, which we managed to do successfully, as the old girl fired up first go and hasn't missed a beat since.

We eventually left Coffs Harbour on 27 May, and had a wonderful sail up to Southport, averaging 5 to 6 knots along the way. Just north of Yamba, we saw the airforce practising bombing runs along the coast. We could see the lights of the planes as they flew low over the shore, their after-burners lighting as they banked sharply, and the ignition of the 'bomb' as it hit the ground.



Ada and the other 'Bumi's', Bumi's Bay, Southport.

Entering the Gold Coast Seaway after 23 hours sailing was a challenge, as we needed to dodge para-sailers, power boats, jet skis and people on surfboards. We soon discovered this was boating Gold Coast style. We spent a day at the Southport Yacht Club, before moving up to Bums' Bay on the eastern side of the Spit, adjacent to Seaworld. It was a very entertaining anchorage. As well as the usual complement of power boats and jet skis, there were amphibious water buses, racing outrigger canoes, coast guards in training, screams, explosions and flames from Seaworld, topped off by seaplanes and helicopters overhead.

Then we went up the Coomera River to the Gold Coast City Marina to slip the boat. Four days later we were back in the water, motoring north through the Broadwater. With our eyes glued to charts and channel markers, we sailed up to the anchorage at Jacobs Well. We touched bottom at two locations on our way there and at the second one, (probably less than 1/2 mile from Jacobs Well) we tried about three times to find the gutter shown on the chart. The tide was on the way out and we were running out of water, so we decided to drop the anchor and wait for high tide. We pulled up the anchor about 2230, and successfully motored over the bar in about 3 m of water to stop at Jacobs Well for the remainder of the night.

It was the June long weekend, and Queensland boaties were out in force. We were woken about 0500 by many powerboats taking off from the nearby boat ramp. One chap motored past on his jet ski, with two fishing rods strapped to the back! We kept moving north that morning, catching the rising tide to help us over the next tricky bit that was just north of Stieglitz. However, when we got there, we ran aground — the deep water was not where it was shown on the chart. John backed us off, and we tried again. We touched bottom again. We backed off and touched again, and again. We literally threw our hands in the air in sheer disbelief. Meanwhile, *Ada* turned her bow into the current, leaving her stern facing the way we wanted to go, and proceeded to drift backwards through the channel we had been trying to find.

After that the channel was much deeper and wider, although we had to share it with a ski race that was being held round Russell Island.

The high-speed boats raced past at about 100 kmph within about 10 to 20 m of us.

The next morning we headed off to Manly and the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron (RQYS). Sailing across Moreton Bay (without having to worry about narrow, shallow channels) was great! Manly 'village' was charming, with foreshore parks, a friendly pub, a small supermarket, five coffee shops, and three chandlerys.

RSAYS yachts, *Pied Piper II* and *Coromandel II* were in port when we arrived. *Pied Piper* was preparing to leave for New Caledonia; *Coromandel* was off up north. While we were in port, *Crusader* (another RSAYS member) arrived by truck and was getting ready to depart for lower latitudes. Also, *Second Wind* (friends from North Haven) arrived and left.

We eventually left Brisbane on 23 July, six weeks to the day after we had arrived, setting sail from the RQYS about 1130 for a short and easy passage to Tangalooma on Moreton Island, before continuing on to Mooloolabah the next morning. We spent three days there, waiting for the weather to change and while we were there, we went to Noosa for the day, and caught up with *Crusader*. We also met a former ASIO spy, who had been knighted and was living on his boat, waiting to meet Miss Right, prior to departing for his villa at Rhodes (hmmmm??).

We sailed north from Mooloolabah on 28 July, leaving at 0230 so we would be at the famous Wide Bay Bar in time to cross it a few hours before high water, as recommended. We raced along with consistent SW winds of 25–30 knots. By daybreak we had set our second reef in the main and were 'enjoying' a speedy but reasonably comfortable sail. We reached Double Island Point around 1130, decided against crossing the bar (the wind had steadily increased to 30–35 knots), so kept heading north along the seaward side of Fraser Island.

We sailed out of the lee of the island just on dark and continued on to clear Breaksea Spit. As we did so, the wind picked up, reaching a steady 40–45 knots about 2000. We set our third reef (the first time we'd needed to), and furled the jib so only a handkerchief of sail remained set. The 4–5 m seas were confused and threatening, and the wind increased to 50+ knots. We both saw

our wind speed instrument record gusts of 58 and 59 knots, and it logged a maximum gust of 62 knots. The wind eased slightly around daybreak, but it remained at 40+ knots for the remainder of the morning. During the night we took turns being seasick and, once again, *Ada* and the autopilot took charge and looked after us. Through the awful misery of being sick, it was wonderful to watch how well she handled the conditions — not once did we doubt the integrity of our vessel.

After rounding Breaksea Spit, we turned west across the top end of Hervey Bay, marking time, waiting for the weather and our sickness to ease. Around midday we decided it was useless trying to make for Bundaberg (some 40 nm SW — straight into the wind), so we set a course for Pancake Creek. By sunset that day we were motoring with no wind in our sails! We dropped the pick about midnight and fell exhausted into our bunks.

Pancake Creek, a small river mouth on the western side of Bustard Head, just north of the town of 1770, was a delightful sheltered spot, and we spent a day resting and watching the activities going on around us. There was a well-established camp on the shore and 'secret men's business' (involving frenetic activity at the campsite, and on the nearby fishing boat) was underway.

We left before dawn the next morning for a glorious downwind sail to Great Keppel Island. Along the way we had our first encounter with

the marvellous phenomenon of 'Rocky Met'. This was a radio broadcast of the weather forecast by the Rockhampton office of the Bureau of Meteorology. However, Rocky Met also offered interpretation relevant to local conditions and invited comment from people on the water.

We arrived at Great Keppel in time to share the sunset with about six other boats anchored off the resort beach. The breeze was warm and balmy, the sea was calm, and there were palm trees on the shore. As we watched the sun sink beyond the horizon we both felt that we had 'arrived' at the tropical paradise we had been looking for.

It was a busy island, with resort guests, backpackers and day trippers engaged in all manner of holiday activities. Chief local character was Derek, proprietor of the Shell Museum and associated tea rooms. He was about 65 years old, had lived on the island for 35 years, and he sold shells, Devonshire teas, faded postcards, and the cheapest ice creams on the island from his old fibro house (which was probably worth about \$450,000).

We stayed for two nights before moving on again (only five miles) to Rosslyn Bay (near Yeppoon) on the mainland. Friends Brian and Glee were already there on their ketch *Second Wind*, and we met some other cruisers heading north to the Whitsundays and beyond. Close to, but separate from the marina was the Capricornia Cruising Yacht Club. It was a small

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but friendly club that made all yachties welcome and their \$5 cook-it-yourself barbecue packs were a favourite with those of us who arrived in port with an empty stores locker.

On 6 August we cast off again, heading always further north — this time in company with two other yachts. We were motor sailing (something we don't particularly like) but the day became special when we saw our first whale just north of Corio Bay. We clearly saw the blow of its spume and its fluke slapping on the surface of the water off in the distance. The end of the passage saw us entering Port Clinton (part of the Australian Army's Shoal Water Bay Reserve) as twilight gave way to night.

We woke the next morning to a magical scene of mountains shrouded in mist and the rising sun reflected on mirror calm waters. There was no time to linger, as we had another long day ahead of us. We were aiming for Hexham Island, one of a small group about 40 nm NNW of Port Clinton. Winds from the north saw us motoring again. Fortunately a wind shift during the afternoon allowed us to sail the last few hours and we made it into the anchorage as the sun was setting.

Hexham was a pretty little anchorage, but very crowded and exposed this night. Twelve other boats were there and the northerly wind was blowing straight into the bay. We let out as much scope as we could, but the swell rolling in made for a worrying night. We were both up almost continuously, keeping watch and checking that we didn't drag. Everyone else was doing the same — with one skipper actually sleeping in his cockpit.

By morning we were all ready for bed, but the call of the tropics was stronger than our need for sleep, and we were on the move again by about 0830 for a short hop to the Percy Isles. This time the wind was in our favour, just off the bow, and about 15 knots. *Ada* loved it. All her sails were up and she took off — flying along at about 6.5 knots, and we reached our destination by lunchtime.

Unfortunately we didn't visit the famous 'message hut', because the northerly winds meant we had a more comfortable anchorage on the southern side of the island at Whites Bay. It

was a beautiful spot, with a wide beach and a fairy glen of ferns, vines and paper bark trees nestled in a gully between the sand dunes. Again we shared the anchorage with many other boats, one of which was the famous *Covee*, built in NZ about 1895 and claimed to be the oldest existing boat to have completed a circumnavigation.

We left for Mackay about 0800 the following day. It was an easy but long sail past the Digby Group, and through a ship's 'parking lot' where 15 freighters were anchored about 12 nm offshore, waiting to load coal from Hay Point. We reached Mackay about 2130, and tied up at the new marina next to an impressive power boat (a Princess 52) enroute to Hamilton Island Race Week.

That night we learnt that a dear friend had passed away only that morning, and the next 24 hours were spent getting ourselves and the boat organised so we could get home for her funeral. Within 36 hours we were back where we had started from, more than five months earlier.

We returned to Mackay after spending a month in Adelaide, and set sail again on 11 September. We had an easy passage (only 4 hours) to Brampton Island, and we cheered that we were now officially in the Whitsundays! We anchored near the jetty behind *Destiny*, a magnificent 50 ft American yacht, and her owners came over to say 'g'day'. When we went ashore butterflies accompanied us along the track, and a mob of kangaroos was happily grazing on the resort golf course.

Shortly after sunrise the following morning we weighed anchor and headed off to Goldsmith Island, where we spent two days: having coffee on board *Destiny* and meeting the other yachts in the anchorage. We enjoyed a beach barbecue with the others; climbed to the top of the island for the magnificent view; and took our first 'tropical' swim.

Then we made our way north to Thomas Island, past Shaw Island and on to Plantation Bay, Lindeman Island. Seven other boats were already anchored and by nightfall, there were 17 boats in the anchorage. The Whitsundays were proving to be as busy as we had heard.

A southerly change arrived the next morning (producing conditions South Aussies consider reasonable) and the anchorage was soon deserted. We eventually left too, making our way along the northern side of Lindeman, between Little Lindeman and Pentecost Islands, and then through Dent Passage between Hamilton and Dent Islands. We sailed across the Whitsunday Passage to South Molle Island, through Unsafe Pass between South and North Molle, then along Molle Channel to Pioneer Point and into Airlie Beach, arriving about 1430. So many places in so few hours!

We anchored about 300 m offshore near the Whitsunday Yacht Club, in gusty SE winds that were setting up a sharp chop in the bay. From there we sailed NW to Woodwark Bay for a night, before moving on to Double Bay, where we settled on the northern anchorage, near an old coral lease hut. We went ashore and sheltered in the hut as rain squalls swept across the bay. While we were there we saw a turtle not far off the beach and, shortly afterwards, we saw something leap out of the water, followed by a geyser of ink or blood. Some poor creature had become another's dinner, and we hoped it wasn't the turtle.

On 20 September, we tackled the south-easterlies and sailed to Nara Inlet on Hook Island. We had two reefs in the main and 30–35 knots on the nose as we crossed a very choppy Whitsunday Passage. In stark contrast Nara was calm and sheltered, and the security of the anchorage was evident from the 30 or more yachts that were already there.

We spent a day exploring the anchorage: climbing up to see Aboriginal cave paintings on the eastern hillside; motoring around the inlet in the dinghy; and exploring a dry water course at the head of the bay full of wonderful rocks, driftwood, trees, ferns and other exotic plants. Interestingly, there was a Nara 'peak hour' rush between 0800 and 1000, as all the other boats left, and another between 1500 and 1700 when they returned.

We took advantage of the south-easterly winds and left Nara on Saturday 22 September to race up the coast to Gloucester Island, through Gloucester Passage and across Edgcombe Bay, to Bowen. Our sister ship *Sorcerer* (who we had first met on the Gold Coast), heard us on the radio trying to find out about berthing, and assisted us with mooring, as did fellow Squadron yacht *Eliza*. The berth at the North Queensland Cruising Yacht Club was incredibly tight and we have since decided, together with other yachties we've met, that the Club video tapes visiting yachts trying to squeeze into their berths, and then shows the results as entertainment in the bar.

Over the next three days the usual chores of shopping, laundry and boat jobs were eased by the pleasure of socialising with fellow cruisers.

We said goodbye to our friends in Bowen on 26 September to return to the Whitsundays. The wind was light, so we motored across Edgcombe Bay and through Gloucester Passage. Once through that we had a lovely sail



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The Resort Anchorage at Great Keppel.

to Double Cone Island before the wind shifted, compelling us to motor sail the last few hours into Nara, where we arrived shortly after yet another a magnificent sunset.

Along with most of the other boats that were there, we sailed out of Nara the next morning to be greeted by a brisk south-easterly. We wanted to go to Cid Harbour on Whitsunday Island, which was (of course) SE from Nara. Determined not to motor, we tacked, tacked, tacked and tacked some more, taking about three hours to cover the five miles we needed to travel. However, the effort was worth it. *Destiny* was at anchor in the bay and invited us over for sundowners that evening; we saw a wobbegong shark as we passed Cid Island; and turtles in the bay. The following day we had a wonderful walk, north around the headland to Dugong Beach; through beautiful bush land filled with hoop pine, eucalypts, fig trees, ferns, bracken, casuarinas, lichens, bright red fungi, and a magnificent valley of palm trees.

We departed Cid Harbour after breakfast on 29 September in company with *Destiny* to make our way to Cateran Bay on Border Island. We had a strenuous sail through Hook Passage and across the northern end of Whitsunday Island and dropped the pick around midday.

The following day, together with *Destiny*, we had a glorious run out to Bait Reef, where we went snorkelling around the Stepping Stones —

huge coral bommies on the western side of Bait Reef. We had a wonderful time swimming among all manner of fish and coral. Deep grottoes separating the bommies provided homes to hundreds of iridescent yellow, blue, purple, green, silver, white, and black fish. Three huge fish (cod or maori rass) took up residence beneath *Ada*, and when we threw them some bread they almost leapt out of the water as they quickly gulped it into their massive gaping mouths. Although the weather conditions were moderate, we spent an anxious night on the National Park mooring (anchoring is prohibited), as the strong tide that was running contrary to the brisk wind had us spinning round the mooring line.

By 0530 next morning we had had enough and we decided to leave, watched solemnly by a turtle as we did so. We had another exhilarating sail back to Hook Island, and motored to Maureen's Cove before moving on to Butterfly Bay. Both bays had some wonderful sights — brain corals, vertical lace corals, enormous blue stag horns, clams, eels, and small fish cleaning bigger fish. Exhausted but relaxed after much underwater activity, we spent the last hours of the afternoon soaking up the sun before rounding off the day with coffee on board *Destiny*. We were really starting to get into the swing of things.

The need to make contact with society once more had us returning to Airlie Beach the following day 2 October. We anchored off the

Whitsunday Yacht Club again and made our way into town to deal with the now familiar dance of banking, shopping, laundry and the eternal search for good hot espresso coffee. We bumped into *Minke II*, a Squadron yacht we knew of by name but had not met before.

We stayed overnight at Airlie before leaving for the famous Whitehaven Beach, on Whitsunday Island. This was to be our last stop before heading south, and it was a special place from which to leave. This incredibly beautiful beach was so vast that, even though in excess of 50 yachts, power boats, and tourist ferries were at anchor along its shore, it did not seem overly crowded. There was room for all of us.

We spent a very peaceful night at anchor and woke early the next morning to see the sun rise over a pristine white beach, cleansed of all traces of humanity by the tide. This day (4 October) was departure day, and it was with regret that we weighed anchor, motored through Solway Pass, and set sail for Scawfell Island, approximately 50 nm SE. Moderating and shifting winds meant that our progress varied also and we finally reached Scawfell on dusk. *Crusader* was already there, and we joined them for coffee and a chat. They too were on their way south (but only as far as Rosslyn Bay).

We were hauling the anchor by 0700 and headed out into a lovely fresh SE breeze, flying along at about 7 to 7.5 knots of boat speed. However, as the winds shifted during the day, so did our intended destination, and we eventually decided to make the most of the now favourable winds and continue on overnight to Rosslyn

Bay. *Crusader* opted to stop at Curlew Island, and they made their anchorage around 1700, as we were passing the Percy Isles.

We made excellent progress until about 2130, when the wind shifted NW and died. We were pushing against an easterly swell and the poor sails hung limp and lifeless, flogging to and fro as each wave rolled beneath us. We eventually gave in and cranked up the motor to keep us underway for about five hours, before heading into Pearl Bay for a few hours sleep. We were underway again by 1000 and, faced with continuing light winds, we set our MPS, with outstanding results. It went up without a hitch, and pushed us along at 5 knots in less than 10 knots of wind! It was a wonderful day of sailing that included sighting a whale (about 100 m away) just south of Cape Manifold. We reached Great Keppel Island about 1900 and used our spotlight to pick out other boats anchored without lights.

We spent two days once more enjoying the fun, hospitality and sunshine of Great Keppel. We whiled away the time reading the paper, watching the lorikeets and local kookaburra pestering people for food, listening to a band, and catching up with the local gossip from Derek at the Shell Museum. This time we also met an American chap who said his name was Phil Rose; he'd been sailing the world since he was 22; he did not need to work because he had made enough money for two lifetimes when he started a successful clothing company. Convincingly believable, but we reserve the right to remain sceptical.

To be continued

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