

My Favourite SA Anchorage:

Coffin Bay Waterways Yangie Bay Inlet.

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Grey Nurse



Many Squadron Members will have fond memories of Coffin Bay as a sailing destination, especially those who own or have previously owned trailerables. Why trailerables? Well Coffin Bay is only a good day's drive from Adelaide and the area offers protected waters for cruising with a choice of good anchorages depending on the weather. I consider the Coffin Bay waterways to be the area south of a line between Point Sir Isaac and Frenchman Bluff in Coffin Bay proper, including the waterways of Port Douglas, Mt Dutton Bay, Yangie Bay and Kellidie Bay.

One of my favourite anchorages in the area is Yangie Bay which is the most southerly inlet within Port Douglas, approximately 5nm west of the small seaside settlement of the same name. Those of you who read SQ February 2008 will remember that ex Commodore Bob Hogarth's favourite anchorage was Point Avoid. Yangie Bay is a just short walk east, over the dunes, from Point Avoid at the narrowest part of Coffin Bay Peninsula.

Coffin Bay means many things to our family of four who enjoyed ten straight Christmas holidays in the area up until the mid 90's.

Adventure

Lorraine and I and our two boys Darrell and Guy first dropped anchor in Yangie Bay in 1984 in our Sonata 6, *Thor*, aptly named after Norwegian adventurer Thor Heyerdahl. An adventure it was too. In those days we only had a small battery, just big enough to run the cabin and nav lights, with a hand held 27Mhz radio for communication with others in our group. Still, we didn't go without anything, often surprising friends with the gear that we produced from under the cockpit for camp cooking and living on the beach. The young boys started with beach buckets and spades, progressing in latter years to sail boards, fishing gear and a rubber dinghy. We only saw the young ones when they were hungry which meant that there was plenty of time to enjoy the company of others.

Sailing

The waters described above, especially the inner bays, are somewhat shallow but should not prove a problem to any skipper who is prepared to follow the chart (AUS 121). Like many coastal areas, it's not uncommon to experience a range of wind directions in any one day. The sea breezes fight for supremacy over the land breezes and the prevailing wind driven by the atmospherics at the time. This is almost certainly due to the fact that the land masses are roughly equal in area to the waters and positioned at the southern end of the Eyre Peninsula triangle. We've experienced fresh sea breezes (SE) during the afternoon in summer and often had to allow for moderate land breezes (NE) overnight. In other words an idyllic lunch spot may not prove to be a comfortable overnight anchorage.

Good Anchorages

Favourite spots are Sliding Rock, Farm Beach, Dixon Rocks and TSA Beach, some names of which I'm sure are unofficial. There is also good reason to pick up a mooring at the head of Mt Dutton Bay or tie up at the Coffin Bay town jetty or Yacht Club, especially if meals are on at the latter.

Yangie Bay Inlet

S 34 deg 38' E 135 deg 23'

The best all-round anchorage in the area however can be found just inside the entrance to the Yangie Bay Inlet. From the west of Rabbit Island head in a WSW direction to a point in the bay where the white sandy beaches to the South curve around to meet the golden sandy beaches that stretch further West. The channel into Yangie Bay that divides the colours of the sand is unmarked but easy to find in the normally clear waters during daylight. Keelers should take the normal precaution of entering on a rising tide to avoid embarrassment. There are several deep sandy holes in the channel and some shallower holes just inside the bay, depending on the tides. On-water exploration further than a couple of hundred metres into the bay should first be undertaken in a dinghy.

A walk around the bay reveals some rare native plants and ancient looking twisted and gnarled trees. To me this must be a photographer's wonderland. It's natural beauty is certainly the most compelling reason for using the anchorage. This year we saw two emus swim together across the channel from east to west and disappear into the scrub land beyond and again witnessed kangaroos grazing on a species of green seaweed at low tide. Did the emus wait for the right tide? Were they off to meet or rejoin others? Or did they follow a short-cut route that their ancestors have taken for hundreds of years? Who knows.

Our March 2008 Experience

This year we cruised the area in *Grey Nurse* in company with *Appledoor 2*, *Free* and *Gin and Tonic*. The children have all grown up (sad thought - not worth dwelling on) so we took the leisurely option to travel over two days, overnighing in Arno Bay on the way over and in Whyalla on the return trip. Our two weeks of great company, good sailing and almost perfect weather (whilst the rest of the State sweltered) ended with the usual promise to return.

Yacht Club and Facilities

We were made very welcome at the Coffin Bay Yacht Club where we were able to use their facilities for ablutions, showers, bar and meals and tie up at their jetty in front of the clubhouse. The jetty is made of steel with treated pine posts (not floating) so a stay of any length means fenders and spring lines to cope with the tide changes. There is fresh water but no power available at the yacht club jetty. Power is available at the town jetty (by arrangement) which is usually busy with fishing vessels.

Car and Trailer Parking: We were able to leave our cars and trailers just a short walk from the Yacht Club at the local caravan park for a small fee.

Ice: The General Store in the main street opposite the Yacht Club sells block ice.

Fuel is available from the Town Jetty or the petrol station is a short walk from the Yacht Club.

Butcher: There is a butcher shop (the business is for sale) near the Yacht Club.
Fishing: Most people know more than me on this subject but we found the area good for yellow fin whiting and snook.

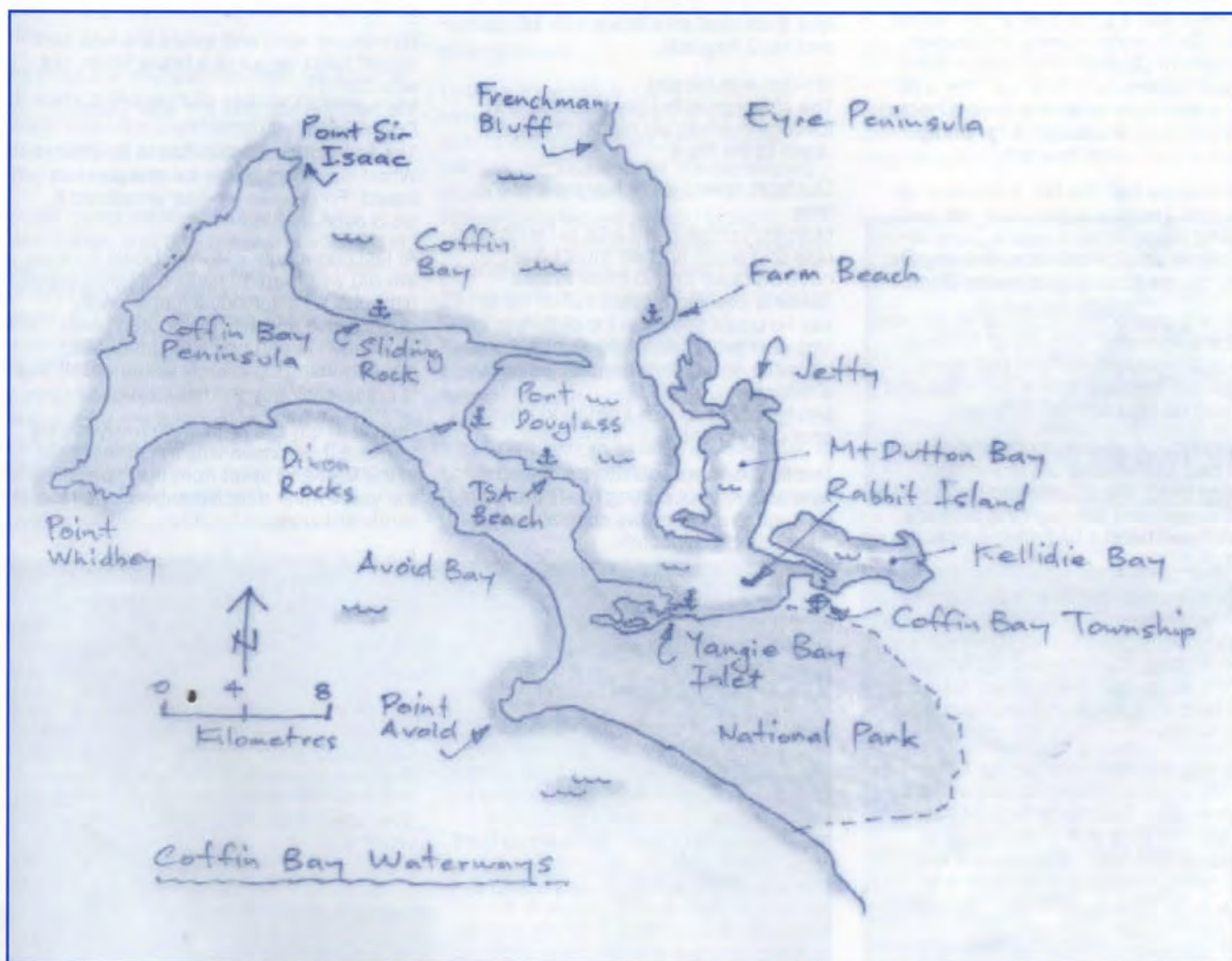
Launching Ramp: There is an excellent public ramp within a short walk NW from the Yacht Club. The current runs quite strongly past the ramp when the tide is moving so make sure that your motor is running well before you cast off.

Laundry: There are coin operated facilities in Port Lincoln or at the Coffin Bay Caravan Park.

Cruising Information: For photos maps and notes on this and many other SA anchorages be sure to visit the Squadron's website: www.squadron.asn.au



Grey Nurse at Yangie Bay with Mt Dutton in the background



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