

The Matthew Flinders Series

Over the Christmas/New Year period this summer, an exciting new offshore racing series will be conducted by the Squadron. This major event on our new calendar will provide excellent racing for those vessels unable to compete in interstate events at this time.

To commemorate the 190th year since Capt Matthew Flinders charted our coast in 1802, the Royal SA Yacht Squadron is arranging a series of races between 27th December 92 and the new year.

The major race will be over a course of 300 miles, together with a shorter course of 150 miles for slower yachts. All competitors should be back at the Squadron for New Year's Eve. To complete the series, a New Year's Day Regatta will also be held off Outer Harbor.

The Squadron's New Year's Eve Dinner Dance is always a good night, and certainly will be something special on this occasion. Therefore please make early arrangements with your crews, families and friends to take part in these great yachting and social events.

Details will be advised later, and it is also hoped that we will also be able to include a cruising competition in the series.



• RACING SAILS

• CRUISING SAILS

• COMPUTER DESIGNED

• LASER CUT

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SAILMAKERS:

Doug & Joan Humphries ☎ 356 2942

INIQUITY: Studying Whales in Antarctica

The adventurous Tim Edkins and friends are at it again. This time in Tim's latest vessel INIQUITY, they are off to Antarctica in search of the Humpback whale. "Squadron Quarter's" guest correspondent on board, Peter Drew reports.

Antarctica: the word conjures up intense images in most of our minds and yet so few of us get the opportunity to travel to the southern most latitudes.

This summer a Squadron boat is involved in an expedition to Antarctica in order to carry out Humpback whale research in conjunction with the Oceanic Research Foundation.

The idea for an expedition south began around 18 months ago when Tim Edkins purchased the steel sloop INIQUITY from Stan Morgan in Pt Lincoln. He set about a major refit to make the boat suitable for long distance cruising and so at the same time work was started on making the boat suitable for an adventure south.

By around April this year the boat was coming together. We had a group of interested crew and through ORF had developed a real purpose to what had started around the bar as a germ of an idea to go to Antarctica.

Pete Gill who is a scientist involved in whale research around Australia and who has two previous Antarctic expeditions behind him, had enthused us with the importance of understanding more about the behaviour and migration patterns of Humpback whales.

Humpbacks spend the summer months in Antarctica and then migrate north into warmer tropical waters during the winter months to mate and calve. They tend to migrate close to coasts and finally breed in

warm shallow waters. Most of the research into Humpback whale behaviour in our region has been done close to the coast of Australia. Very little work has been done in Antarctica or in the islands or reefs of the Coral Sea.

The Humpback whale is one part of a short and potentially very fragile food chain in Antarctica. The understanding of this food chain and the integration of the Humpback whale in the total ecology of our southern latitudes is much more important than academic interest for biologists. As we consider the exploitation of fish and krill and open up the possibility of reintroducing whaling, there is a real need for us to understand the impacts of these decisions in a much more informed manner than has been done historically. Even though a better understanding of Humpback whale migration patterns and behaviour may be only a small aspect of the total Antarctic debate it is still an important part.

When the whaling of Humpbacks stopped in 1962, the number remaining was estimated as 5 to 10% of the original stocks. It is useful to understand how the total Humpback population has changed it's behaviour as a consequence of this massive reduction in numbers.

As a consequence we decided to spend the winter months in northern waters to try to fill out part of the picture away from the Australian coast. We understand the Humpbacks migrate along the east coast of Australia and they are a separate breeding group from those on the west coast of

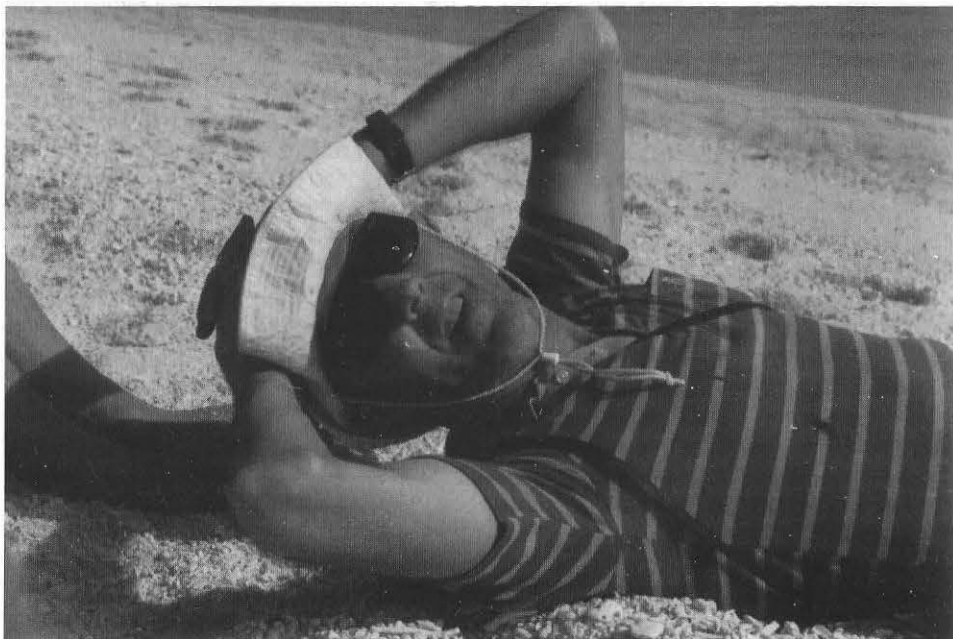
INIQUITY: Studying Whales in Antarctica

Australia. Historical records of whales killed would suggest that Humpbacks used to migrate north to the Chesterfield Reef's in the middle of the Coral Sea. Over the last few months we have tried to learn if Humpbacks still migrate to this region and to New Caledonia, and if so are they part of the same breeding group as the Eastern Australian Humpback whales.

It is not my place to detail our findings before the experts write their scientific papers, however we have made progress in filling out the picture. There are clearly Humpback whales moving through New Caledonian waters. We made what is believed to be the first recording of a Humpback whale song in New Caledonia and preliminary analysis clearly identifies

these whales as being part of the same breeding group as those on Eastern Australia.

The Chesterfield Reef's, although packed with the most incredible bird life, did not appear to have any whales. We did speak to some-one who regularly goes to these reefs who saw a mother and calf in 1990. Thus even though we did not find the result we wanted, overall progress was made and we spent a few days looking at the array of birds and turtles and collecting an abundance of shells. Those people who have sailed with Chook Smith would have been amazed to find him wandering down long sandy beaches - collecting shells, photographing birds and generally laying back into cruising mode like an expert.



Well known Squadron racing sailor, Chook Wall-Smith training for INIQUITY's recent trip to New Caledonia.

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We now sit in Mackay before moving down to the coast to Tin Can Bay, where we plan to prepare for the trip to Antarctica. We decided that we could not afford the time to sail back to Adelaide before leaving for Hobart and then south. Tin Can Bay has all the facilities that we will need.

The crew for the trip south will consist of 6 people, 2 experts and 4 Squadron members namely Tim Edkins (skipper), Peter Manthorp, Chook Smith and myself.

Thus far this trip and project has been personally funded and we have made various applications for funding or sponsorship for our expedition south. We are still waiting for a positive response to these applications and are planning on going ahead in any case. Without outside support, funding will be very tight, so if any of our fellow Squadron members feel that they are in a position to be of assistance, it would be most welcome. Anyone interested could contact either Chook Smith or Dave Hurford.

Restoration of our Library

Some months ago Helen Forsyth of the House and Social Committee offered to assist in the restoration of the Squadron's library by covering the books in protective plastic. Although some 200 books have now been covered there are still many more awaiting her attention. To help her complete the task, she would like all those books currently out on loan to be returned please.

Whilst the exercise is taking longer than at first anticipated, Helen is enjoying her work. She has admitted that she cannot resist reading the interesting dedications addressed to family members in the 1880's and 90's. Similarly her eye is frequently caught by photographs and charts of both far away places as well as those better known ones close to home.

It is hoped that some of these valuable books will be rebound at a later date. It is sad to have them deteriorate as most are irreplaceable. Helen's task now is to complete

her recovering project, and to help categorize them so that members will find the library a pleasant place in which to browse and borrow.

She would be grateful if members could return any books that they have borrowed so that the work can be completed as soon as possible. Your assistance will enable us all to enjoy the end result of the many hours that have and are yet to be spent on the restoration of this very valuable club resource.