

CONTRIBUTIONS ...

SAILING AND CRUISING - A LOOK ASTERN ...

lifebuoy!". So stay aboard.

Well, I hope some readers may have found a bit of interest in these ramblings and that it may even stimulate more of you to experiment with sailing, cruising and fishing in South Australian waters and parts beyond.

COLIN HASELGROVE

* The notes (unbound) are available from the office at two dollars - Ed.

TOWARDS THE SOUTH SEAS IN MOONGARA

The Wilsons Promontory area can be very beautiful, even in its wilder moods, although at such times the beauty is not readily appreciated from the cockpit of a small close-reefed yacht being hammered by ice-cold salt spray and rain.

So it was on the evening of 4th March, as we beat past the stark Glennie group trying to make Oberon Bay to shelter from a fierce northeasterly. It seemed for a while that we would not make up against the blasts coming down from the Promontory itself, picking up the wavetops in the bay, and shredding them to fine mist.

As usual, of course, once the anchorage was made and the anchor set and holding, our relief from the strain of sailing in such conditions increased our appreciation of the surroundings. The 'Prom' is still largely unspoiled, although we have our private views on the aesthetics of the hundreds of yacht and fishing-boat names painted over every available rockface in Refuge Cove on the eastern side.

CONTRIBUTIONS ...

TOWARDS THE SOUTH SEAS IN MOONGARA ...

On earlier passages there had seldom been time to stop and enjoy this section of Bass Strait. In fact it offers shelter from all winds in good anchorages with sand bottom: Great Glennis Island from the west, Oberon Bay from the east, and on the eastern side of the peninsula Waterloo Bay, Refuge Cove, and Sealers Cove giving shelter from all westerlies. Refuge Cove is the best, safest, and prettiest of them all; and the only other occupant when we were there was the yellow Scallywag, so that all the boats in the bay were flying the Squadron pennant.

The usual inter-ship hospitality was exchanged before we parted company. Coincidentally, each was headed in the same direction, for New Zealand, but she was going to Cook Strait, we to North Cape and Bay of Islands.

It seemed a good opportunity to visit some of the islands of Bass Strait, so we stopped off at the Hogan Group lying about 30 nautical miles S.E. of the Prom. There are good anchorages, but not spectacular, as the islands are lower and grassy. Here we encountered a large fleet of motor boats doing coastguard exercises in the course of their 'blue water' cruise; and we noted the disbelief on the flotilla leader's face when he ranged alongside to ask our destination and was told New Zealand - he pointed and said, 'What, that way?'

Another 20 odd miles S.E. is the quite fascinating Kent Group, with the narrow Murray Pass separating Erith Is. from the principal Deal Is. The view from the lighthouse on Deal, 1,000 feet above sea level, is superb; on the fine clear day we were lucky enough to have there the whole of Wilsons Promontory with its outlying islands to the west, Flinders Island to the southeast, and of course the Kent Group itself, were all clearly visible. We were lucky, as the following day brought fog and we made our departure on

CONTRIBUTIONS ...

TOWARDS THE SOUTH SEAS IN MOONGARA ...

compass courses.

Now we felt our voyage had really begun, as we set course to cross the Tasman.

The bad reputation of this sea is well founded, for the area between the Australian coast and New Zealand is a mixing bowl for two major ocean current streams and three great weather systems - the West Wind Belt (roaring forties) with its procession of low pressure cells, the S.W. corner of the South Pacific anticyclone, and cyclonic influences from the N. and N.E. Combine all this with a particularly uneven ocean floor and you have a pretty extensive agitation, which can cause high, steep and very confused seas. One log entry describes them as pyramidal in shape. Not all are like that, though, as on 19th March we went over the side for a swim in water 1½ miles deep whilst becalmed in bright sunshine, prior to lunch with white wine in the cockpit.

Since you don't sail strapped hard on when making long passages, we kept our sheets started or free for most of the time, and by working the major wind shifts managed to keep within 50 miles or so of the rhumb line; this was very gratifying and enabled us to make the North Cape area in ten days. Our best day's runs were 160 and 150 miles, riding a favourable current for most of the way.

I have already described, in letters published in the Newsletter, how we spent the next three days trying to locate New Zealand in the murk, rain and fog produced by a cyclonic disturbance down from the north. Also our later superb cruising along the East Coast of North Is. and the nasty farewell we received on departure for northern latitudes.

CONTRIBUTIONS ...

TOWARDS THE SOUTH SEAS IN MOONGARA ...

The New Zealand coast offers cruising grounds of unequalled magnificence. We never had to use the same anchorage twice, but some of the sailing conditions offshore can be pretty rugged. The wind systems hit the high ridge formed by the two islands and are diverted all over the place. This can create frustrating sailing conditions with winds varying rapidly in velocity and direction, setting up steep and confused seas which tire gear and crews and are a good test of both. It must have been a tough game, working the coastal commercial sailing vessels between New Zealand ports not so very long ago.

I think I have never seen as many yachts and small sailing craft anywhere in the world as in the Auckland and Hauraki Gulf area. There appear to be dozens of clubs and marina areas all larger than ours, and in consequence mooring space is at a premium; at the same time, facilities for servicing, fuelling, and so on are many and excellent. All the yacht clubs treat visitors very well, and will do their best to assist with temporary moorings and anything else one may need.

Near Opua, Bay of Islands, we found moored the steel ketch Wanderer IV, home of Eric and Susan Hiscock of world cruising fame. We spent a very interesting and entertaining afternoon with this couple prior to our departure for tropical waters during the third week in May.

The crew for the trip consisted of the Club's two well-known Jacks - Gamlin and Short - to Westernport Bay, where by prior arrangement ex-Whyalla yachtie David Mattiske joined the ship and Jack G. returned home. Alison and son Peter spent a very delightful three weeks with us, cruising the Bay of Islands and Whangaroa Harbour area, including the river Keri-keri and Waipapu creek leading inland from the former.

CONTRIBUTIONS ...

TOWARDS THE SOUTH SEAS IN MOONGARA ...

My brother, Dion, of Port Lincoln, joined in Auckland for the ensuing six months and Jack S. left prior to our final departure from New Zealand; this left just the two of us for the remainder of the cruise.

PEP

(Newsletter has prevailed upon Capt. 'Pep' Manthorpe to write a series of articles about his recent cruise. In the next issue he will tell us something of his voyaging among the Pacific islands - Ed.

WORLD ONE TON CUP CHAMPIONSHIP

Recently I had the pleasure of visiting New Zealand as the Australian representative on the International Jury, which comprised three New Zealanders and M. Leeman (Belgium), Dr. Jepson (Germany), Tony Mooney (Offshore Racing Council) and myself.

Although there were seventeen nominations for the contest, we finally had six New Zealand and four Australian vessels, with France, Great Britain, Canada and the U.S.A. being represented by chartered New Zealand craft.

My arrival in New Zealand coincided with the commencement of measuring and safety inspections and despite certain problems in these areas, all vessels were able to achieve the appropriate one ton rating before the start.

I was surprised at the very light construction of some of the New Zealand centreboard boats, also to discover how they have certain advantages in rating over the more orthodox keel craft. None of the competitors appeared to have the slightest relationship to Dick Fidock's Kestrel

CONTRIBUTIONS ...

WORLD ONE TON CUP CHAMPIONSHIP ...

or Andrew Iliad's Karisma.

Centreboard yachts dominated the racing, with New Zealand craft filling the first three places and an Australian boat fourth.

The event was substantially sponsored commercially and one company - "Epiglass" (Consolidated Chemicals) headed the list with a donation of ten thousand dollars.

Radio coverage and information for the general public were outstanding. An excellent commentary by Peter Montgomery came on air several times during each race, giving positions, weather reports etc. and these were transmitted through twenty radio stations in New Zealand, besides very good reporting and photographs in the Auckland newspapers.

I found the New Zealanders excellent hosts and many kindnesses and courtesies were extended to me by the Flag Officers and Committee of the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, which has a splendid clubhouse and facilities at Westhaven. It was interesting to learn that this club and indeed all but a very few of the New Zealand clubs never have Opening Days, as they sail all year round!

THOMAS G. FLINT