

threatened Tim with instant death if he breathed. Arnold's electrical friend stood on the wharf calling, 'Arnie!' for about ten minutes, until he finally gave up. Terrified that he would come back later in the day, we made the only decision possible, which was to leave, regardless of the weather forecast.

We planned to go to Auckland, over 300 nm, with a brief stop at White Island, which is an active volcano. This was fascinating, and we were enveloped in smoke and sulphurous fumes as we approached, stayed for a few hours and then moved on.

Every marina in Auckland was packed, and it was extremely difficult to get a berth. Anchoring was out of the question, as port authorities would immediately tell you to find a proper berth or else leave the vicinity. We managed to stay at Westhaven Marina for ten days, but most mornings at 0800 we were asked to move to another berth. This was the closest we could get to the city and the marina shops, and as we needed to obtain extra charts and cruising information in preparation for Tonga, we put up with the daily movement from berth to berth. It certainly gave us some practice in manoeuvring *Just Jane* in tight spots and with a critical audience.

Westhaven Marina is so big that it took up to half an hour to walk from one side to the other. Tim and I decided to use quicker modes of travel. He skateboarded while I used the roller blades I bought him one birthday when his shoe size was the same as mine. Unfortunately, the security guards (of whom there were many) did not approve of this means of travel, and continuously threatened to confiscate our board and blades. They seemed to bring out in me the rebellious nature which had lain dormant for many years, and I found myself experiencing great delight as we sped round the marina dodging these officious guards.

From Auckland we had great sailing up the E coast of the North Island to Whangarei, about 70 nm away. This was a fascinating place for us, as it was a Mecca for international cruising yachts. They go there because not only is it a pretty place, but every possible yachtie's need is within walking distance. Here we had to get ready for our next adventure, 1010 nm to Tonga. We checked our rig and gear, replaced the steering cable and stocked up with six months worth of food. From there we went to the Bay of Islands and finally Opuia, where we cleared Customs and set sail for Tonga. SQ

*To be continued...*



*White Island Volcano, New Zealand. (Jo Capel)*

## Tassie and Back

John Smith

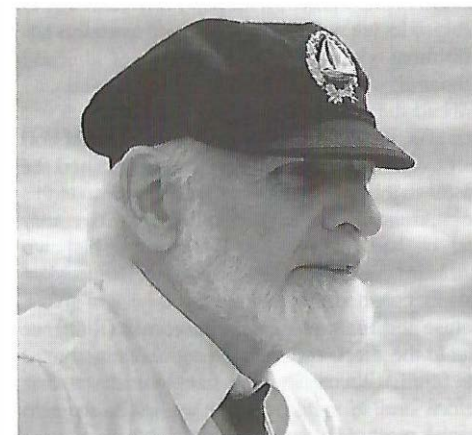
'What would you think if I said I would like to sail to Hobart and back?' This was the question I put to my wife Mavis.

Her curt and prompt reply was, 'I think you're mad!'

The project was promptly put on the back burner, with the gas firmly switched off. About two months later I cautiously broached the idea again and found an agreeable response, although Mavis would not be able to accompany me because of other commitments.

Friends asked, 'Why Hobart? Why Tasmania? It's cold down there.' They suggested I turn left at Wilson's Prom to warmer climates. This was a good question. Why indeed? It was partially my stubbornness. Most of my friends were departing on cruises to Queensland, so true to my nature I wanted to go somewhere different. Why now? This question was much easier to answer. I have been diagnosed as having Parkinson's disease. It has brought home to me that I am not getting any younger. Mavis and I concluded, if I did not go now, I may never have another opportunity. So the die was cast.

*Oberon* is a steel sloop/cutter [Does this mean she is what Norman Howard called a slut? — Ed.] Length 11 m, LWL 9.66 m, beam 3.05 m, draught 1.625 m, displacement 9 tonnes. She has a four-cylinder Perkins capable of transmitting 43 hp at 2,000 rpm through a two-bladed fixed propeller. I took a more serious look at her. She was perfectly seaworthy for local day sailing, but for a trip of this nature she would require extra work. For example, where was I to put over thirty charts and stow them flat? I would need lee sheets on all bunks. I wanted a chart table in the cockpit and an electric anchor winch, which subsequently required new chain, since the old chain refused to transport on the new gipsy. The echo sounder gave up, so the boat had to be slipped to fit a new one. The list went on and on. In addition to working on the boat, I spent many hours collecting charts, reading about anchorages and writing a cross-reference index of them, more general study and talking to people about the proposed trip.



It was intended that my son-in-law John Inverarity and Louise Hoffmann would accompany me to Hobart; Mavis, Louise and I would cruise Port Arthur and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel; and then Rick Holden, Louise and I would bring the boat home. We departed from the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron, with much flag waving, etc in the late evening of 24 January, 1997, and spent several days rolling about in Antechamber Bay awaiting the demise of a strong wind from the SE, before making an early morning start for Beachport.

About this time we discovered that the new anchor winch had put a spike into the electrical system, which damaged the memory of the VHF radio. I could not use some channels or contact Mavis by telephone. We were motoring much more than anticipated, and my concerns about fuel capacity were justified when the engine stopped with the fuel berth at Beachport in sight about three miles distant. Three hours later, having worked very light head winds, we neatly parked the boat alongside. I bought extra fuel tanks to stow on deck, extending our range under power to better than 200 nm.

At Portland we had our first experience of wood chipping. Great trucks driving over the top of massive mounds of wood chips kicked up a terrible dust, which permeated everything. When we departed, *Secret Men's Business* had

arrived back from their abortive Sydney-Hobart race, pushing the clock for the Adelaide-Port Lincoln race, and they kindly took our bags of rubbish as we motored past, which saved us the trouble of tying up at the wharf.

We had the only really good sail of the entire trip from Portland to the beautiful little harbour of Port Fairy, with the wind at ten to fifteen knots and the sheets slightly eased. The autohelm gave up at this point, causing delays. Work called John Inverarity and he had to leave us. He sent me his own autohelm from Adelaide. (Great guy!) The problem was that we had to wait for a week for it to arrive. Louise and I talked to a young woman (Ruth) we met in the street, and she was enthusiastic to cross the Strait with us. She had not done any sailing before, and in spite of some sea trials, she was seasick most of the way to King Island.

The crossing of Bass Strait was relatively uneventful, in a confused sea (not rough, just confused) and with patchy thick fog, which considerably reduced visibility. This was my first experience of sailing in fog, knowing there were big ships about, hoping they could see me, because by the time I would see them it might be too late.

At anchor at Lavinia Beach on King Island the boat rolled badly, and poor Ruth wanted to swim ashore and walk to Grassy, in spite of being miles from anywhere. We both felt very sorry for her. Motoring into Grassy Harbour, we were fortunate to meet Rob Williams, who directed us to a mooring.

There is very little room to anchor when the supply ship *Searoad Mersey* comes in, and she was due next morning. Rob invited us to a BBQ at the boat club, but when we arrived the locals had decided not to stay. Rob's wife Wendy gave us what was needed, including matches to light the gas, for she noticed we did not smoke, and asked us please to lock the club when we had finished. Ruth went off with the locals to Currie to catch a plane home. Dry land had a certain attraction for her. We later received a card saying that in spite of seasickness she enjoyed the week with us very much.

[After unexpected and generous hospitality], Louise and I sleepily got under way with the rising sun. One could not imagine the number of mutton birds to be seen as we passed along the north coast of Three Hummock Island, and the sky was literally black with them in a sight beyond comprehension. Our approach to the Tamar River was timed perfectly to coincide with the dawn, so we were able to identify the lights and have enough daylight to see our way in. The river has a very strong current, which will catch hold of your boat and take you where you don't wish to go, but with Louise on the helm and me studying the small-scale chart, there was not much of a problem other than an occasional exclamation from her as the river tried to take over.

The Dalrymple Yacht Club is thirty miles downstream from central Launceston at Beauty Point, next to the wharf of the Australian Maritime College. It is a great place, with lots of assistance

and good facilities. We took on fuel, rafted alongside *Odyssey* and slept! After staying a day, we departed in company with local boats bound for the pilot harbour at the mouth of the river, which is a useful little haven holding perhaps half a dozen yachts at the pontoon. The maritime museum there is worth a visit.

The following morning Louise and I departed for Foster Inlet, a convenient anchorage to wait for a favourable tide through Banks Strait. I was glad to have a spare GPS on board, since the memory batteries had gone flat on my own. Their life is about three years, and mine were about 2½ years old. Without a GPS and with visibility of less than a mile, it would have been quite impossible to identify the entrance to Foster Inlet, and I would have been obliged to stand off in fog, in an area where the tide runs at a phenomenal rate. We met *Barracuda* at the Inlet. They had attempted to go through Banks Strait against tide and wind, and were forced to return.

At Wine Glass Bay the sea was beginning to pick up. I was not feeling well, but Louise revels in these conditions and was all for frying up some bacon or something. Tasmar Radio asked me to contact my home base in Adelaide. Without looking at the chart, I said I would walk over to Coles Point and ring from there. The notes I looked at did not tell me that I had to climb a mountain, and by the time

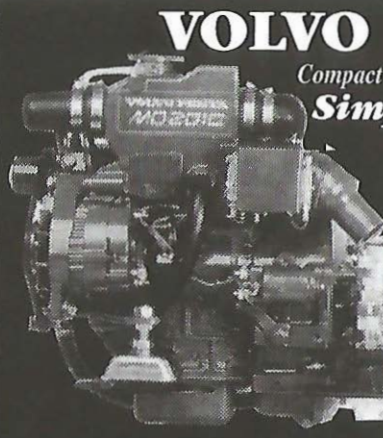
I reached the summit I was convinced that my old knees had not the ability to climb it again on the way back. When I talked to Mavis, she told me that the message was, 'Don't bother climbing the Hazards to ring me, I know you're safe' (The Hazards are one of the mountains to be climbed in the Three Peaks Race.) I returned by the so-called flat route, which is worse than climbing the Hazards because of the state of the track. That phone call took me the entire day, followed by three more for my knees to return to normal.

We had been fortunate all the way from Victoria in seeing no cray pots, but at Triabunna what seemed to be the entire Tasmanian fishing fleet was packed into the tiny harbour. If there was enough water to float, a fishing boat was there. Apparently the Tasmanian fishing fleet was banned from fishing for two weeks in the middle of the season. I never established the logic of this. Alan and Dell Sutcliffe, members of the local yacht club, directed us to a berth belonging to an absent yacht, and generously offered us their car to get a shower at the caravan park and collect provisions. Mavis arrived to join the ship for three weeks, looking tired and unwell, but a few days of sea air sorted that out.

We passed S of Tasman Island, taking local advice not to go between it and the mainland. The swell on the S side was massive. The W side of the island is even more spectacular than the E, with great columns of rock towering to the sky. The coast from here all the way into Port Arthur is unique and commanding like no other coast I had ever seen. As one enters Port Arthur the rocks on the starboard side are perpendicular, whilst the formations on the port are horizontal. Both are equally forbidding, and one imagines unforgiving.

We spent a pleasant night at anchor in the S end of Carnarvon Bay. Because we wished to visit the colonial buildings but I was reluctant to risk my ground tackle amongst the old moorings at the penal colony anchorage, we moved just S of Commandant's Point. I found Port Arthur quite beautiful, particularly when viewed from seaward, but very depressing, perhaps because it is a dramatic reminder of how inhumane man can be towards his fellow man.

We rounded Cape Raoul, the most impressive of all these Tasmanian headlands. For the first time in the



## VOLVO PENTA

Compact Collection 8kw - 57kw

### Simply the Best



**NEW**

Avail. Suit Shaft & Sail Drive

**FOLDING**

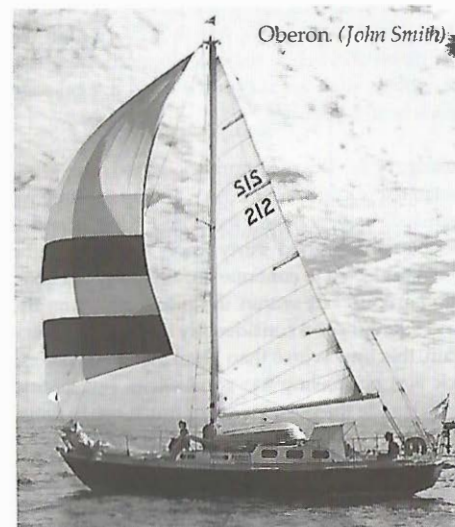
- ELECTRONIC DIESEL CONTROL ON 190kw - 450kw MODELS
- ON-BOARD GEN. SETS
- NEW REPOWERING BRACKET KITS MAKES INSTALLATION OLD-NEW CHEAPER & QUICKER

For further information and advice on "specials" contact your club member - John Morton at:



**JOHN MORTON PTY. LTD.**

70 HUMPHRIES TERRACE  
KILKENNY SA 5009  
PH: (08) 8347 0011  
FAX: (08) 8347 1389



whole trip we turned NW (and so did the wind!) into Storm Bay, where the swell easily hid a coastal steamer from our view for two or three minutes at a time, past Wedge Island, the Iron Pot and into the Derwent River.

The Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania with its excellent facilities became our base for the next eight days. We renewed our acquaintance with old friends and made new ones. At Hobart I expected to get my electronics fixed. I'll cut a long story short by saying it was a frustrating and expensive week, both in time and money. This delay had bad consequences when crew ran out of time later. A nice little car was hired, enabling us to visit the interior, up through the mountains to Queenstown and Strahan.

Back down the Derwent, we turned right opposite the Iron Pot and into the much vaunted D'Entrecasteaux Channel. There is no denying that it is beautiful, but one part is much the same as another, with rolling hills, lots of trees, and, above all, safe anchorages. This is the great attraction to the yachtsman, for in the rest of the island good safe anchorages in all conditions are few and far between. These are within spitting distance of the capital city, and no wonder they are so popular.

We anchored in several places in the Channel. At Isthmus Bay Tom and Jean Ness from the Canadian yacht *Repose* came aboard for coffee. Mavis and I went bush walking, and on the beach at Great Taylor's Bay we met Jim and Anne Cate from the American yacht *Insatiable* (36 ft). I asked them how long they had been out cruising, expecting them to say a year or so, but their reply was since 1986. Some of the anchorages are totally protected. At Simmons Bay and the 'Duck Pond' the reflections in the water were as perfect as the yachts and trees producing them. We motored over to Kettering and parked *Oberon* on a wharf belonging to the marina owner. Workmen cut down six magnificent large pine trees from alongside a house. There are so many trees in Tasmania that they don't seem to care about them in the same way as we do from the more denuded parts of Australia.

Mavis caught the bus back to Hobart and a plane to Adelaide. The following morning Louise and I started for home through the Dennison Canal. I

had obtained detailed information regarding the movements of the sand bar at Marion Narrows with charts of the changes from the Marine Board in Hobart, but this did not stop me brushing the bottom on the way through. My fault! I should have paid more attention to the notes. Caution is certainly required, but by and large the channel is well marked, and armed with the latest Marine Board notes I found Blackman Bay nowhere near as difficult to navigate as some people portrayed it to be. We motored out into a big swell in Marion Bay, passed up Mercury Passage and into Triabunna again. This time we found a commercially deserted harbour.

Going north from Wineglass Bay a strong wind was blowing with a very confused sea, so much so that the prop came out of the water a couple of times. Most unusual! I became increasingly seasick. Louise took over and guided us to shelter on the S side of Eddystone Point, where in the early hours of the morning we anchored in company with about a dozen fishing boats. We passed through Banks Strait, anchored for the night at Waterhouse Island and eventually arrived back at Beauty Point near the mouth of the Tamar. Rick Holden joined us to sail back to Adelaide, and we went to the Inspection wharf to watch the start of the Three Peaks race. The start was just like any other yacht race, but last year the contestants had to pedal or row their boats across the line and down the river for lack of wind. On leaving the Tamar River we gave the Hebe Reef a wide berth, which is more than the *Iron Baron* did when she met her doom a few years back, with great publicity and a legal saga which is still ongoing.

Passing N of Three Hummock Island, the wind started to pick up from the NW, and by the time we were half way between there and King Island it was blowing a good thirty knots straight on the nose. We elected to continue on, as Grassy is a good little harbour, but within the next two hours the wind strengthened considerably and I was seasick again, this time worse than I had ever been before. Rick was not feeling too good either, but he and Louise made the port. I was not much use to them.

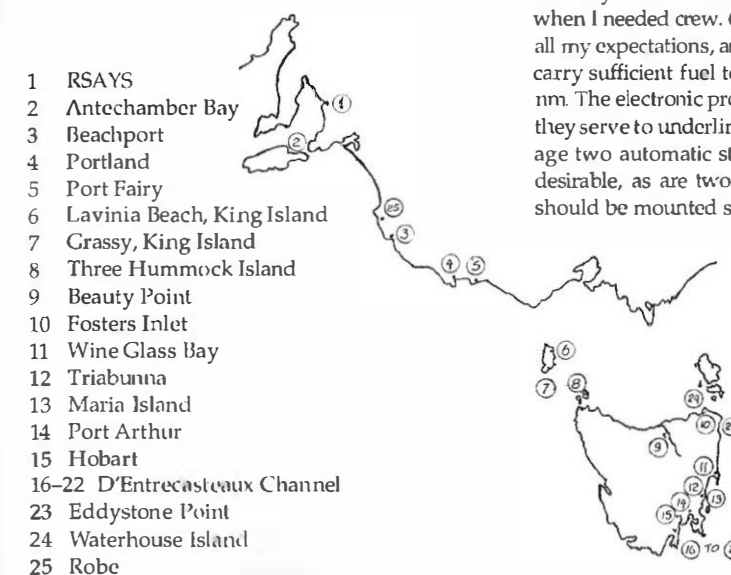
Everyone on King Island made us welcome. The wind blew strong from the NW for a week, and I wanted to let Bass Strait calm down a bit. The truth

was that the recent bouts of seasickness had undermined my confidence in my ability to keep the sea. Rick's work called and he was obliged to return home. Louise also had to leave. She had been with me for 10½ weeks and had done a great job. Without her the trip would not have been possible.

I now had a serious problem. I must find competent crew from somewhere. ... Charlie Stubbs, a school teacher, and Brian Johnstone, an ex abalone diver, came aboard, they liked the boat and agreed to sail with me. The following day we took the tide round the S of the island. Crossing the remainder of Bass Strait we didn't even have any wind. *Oberon* covered the 156 nm from the heads at Grassy to the wharf at Port Fairy in 23 hrs 10 min.

Charlie and Brian left me in Port Fairy, but I felt much happier to be stranded there than on the other side of Bass Strait, which was odd really as there was still a lot of potentially rough sea to cross. Bill Dalton came to the rescue and by the following day had lined up an excellent crew member, Bob Douglas. Bob is a man of great experience, and he and I got on well together.

As soon as we hit the open sea, bound for Beachport, I was sick, but not drastically so, which is hard to understand as there was almost no sea running. We opted to go into Portland, where I



went straight to bed. The sleep did me good, and I felt fine for the rest of the trip.

An attempt was made to enter the S end of Rivoli Bay at night, but there are plenty of places where the sea breaks. Although my plots told me we were perfectly safe, which I have since confirmed in my own mind to be true, the situation in the moonlight with white water all round looked too precarious for words. We aborted and went to Robe.

*Oberon* entered Guichen Bay like a rocket re-entering, surfing on the face of a big swell. I was not entirely happy, but thought it was normal for the area. On arrival in the harbour the fishermen said that they had not seen a swell this size for many years. I was glad there was not a sea running on top of it. We renewed our acquaintance with the Murphys at the local pub. Many will remember that they used to run the Ozone Hotel at Kingscote [and owned the Vanderstadt dogger built by Colin Bates originally called *Happy Thought* - Ed.] Next day we left for home, and reached the Squadron marina after motoring all the way.

The trip could not have been done without the tolerant and dedicated support of my wife Mavis and my long-suffering crew Louise Hoffmann, both of whom I thank sincerely. My thanks also are due to all the other fine people who helped us on our way and who willingly came to my assistance when I needed crew. *Oberon* performed better than all my expectations, and it was my fault she did not carry sufficient fuel to give a range of at least 300 nm. The electronic problems were unfortunate, but they serve to underline the fact that in this modern age two automatic steering devices on board are desirable, as are two GPS systems, one of which should be mounted so the helmsman can steer by it. I used the compass only to take bearings to check the position the GPS gave me. At no time did I steer by compass, as it only tells you where your bow is pointing, not where you are going.

I suspect that since the introduction of GPS, the sextant is also now as antiquated as the

astrolabe and more recently the slide rule. Since the purchase price of GPS is now relatively low, no vessel should put to sea without at least one aboard. I am further convinced that the ease with which a GPS will place you within two hundred yards of your correct position detracts significantly from the satisfaction of navigational achievement which would formerly have been the case when using a sextant. Having said these things, one should not place too much faith in a GPS and being exactly where you think you are. Besides other factors, charts are not always correct.

In all *Oberon* travelled 2,415 nm and not more than 10% was under sail alone, not by intent but from necessity. The longest leg was 188 nm. The duration was 13 weeks. Fuel consumption at 6.75 knots was 1.63 nm/L, or if you prefer 4.14 L/hour. Cost was \$2,500, which excluded new equipment bought for the boat, sail alterations etc, but included food, fuel, harbour fees etc. Crew paid their own way.

In retrospect, what have I learnt from this experience, this odyssey, this great adventure of

my life, for this is undoubtedly what it has been for me? Keel boat sailing has been a way of life for over twenty years, with small boats for twenty years before that, but I have not previously sailed my boat outside these two gulfs.

Even though it was more hard work than pleasure, more worry than joy, it was something I have always subconsciously wanted to do. Now I have done it and it was worth doing. I have been told that my people skills when under pressure could be improved, and this is no doubt true. In my defence, no-one has said they will not sail with me again, but their point is taken and is something I must work at.

I faced conditions and situations I had never seen before. Some I had read about, and some I had not expected or planned for. I now know that I can cope with a long coastal voyage of this type and that my only real limitation is seasickness. With good planning and common sense other problems are likely to be surmountable, but sailing outside these gulfs is not the same as sailing within them. Seasickness has become a serious worry. If I am to be cursed with this malady,

I can't take total control of the boat at all times. If I can't do that, I don't want to continue sailing and put myself and others at risk.

There are other changes in my thinking which are difficult to define. I now look at other people's exploits and experiences from a different viewpoint. Some of the implied difficulties which previously I thought I understood had passed over my head, beyond my comprehension. I now better appreciate them.

I take the responsibility of being skipper very seriously. Never before had I had this for weeks on end, for even in port you are still responsible for the safety of boat and crew. It was exhausting, and perhaps this contributed to my seasickness. I have been seasick before, but never like this. That in itself has changed my thinking towards boats.

Finally, one of my aims in life has been achieved. In my own mind there is no doubt that this trip has been something of a watershed in my life. It has shown me we have it easy in our two gulfs, with always an anchorage to run to. It has highlighted my physical limitations and social shortcomings. It has frightened my crew and humbled me.

Like the original *Odyssey*, some poetry was inspired—

#### GRASSY HARBOUR

No wind on water glassy calm  
Drives the kelp into my arms,  
But sombrelant around the boat it lays  
And guards the entrance to the bay.

Ten days now she has resided there  
Awaiting winds fine and fair,  
Now they are here, her crew has gone  
And left her to face the winter sun.

Her skipper with his deserted yacht  
Paces the deck and mourns his lot,  
For one would think the winds do plot  
Against his efforts always.

For now the winds which are standing fair  
Will evade him without a care,  
The high will pass and he will still be there,  
With his yacht and the kelp around him.

JKS

SQ

## BARRY QUIN MARINE PTY. LTD.

- *New Model Furler, Plastimo & Profurl Jib furler systems*
- *Sheerline Aluminium Mast and Spar kits*
- *Anchor and Anchor systems*
- *Mooring Ropes and Warps*
- *Covers & Cover Repairs*
- *Sailmaking and Sail Repairs*
- *Stainless Steel Rigging & Splicing*
- *Clear Screen Curtains*
- *Boommaster Boombreaks*
- *Boommaster Mooring Clips*

451 Victoria Road, Taperoo, South Australia 5017

Telephone: (08) 8248 2966

Mobile: 019 690 811



## LINCOLN COVE RESORT AND RECREATION MARINA

Welcome to

### PORT LINCOLN'S RECREATIONAL MARINA AND RESORT

Located in the centre of Lincoln Cove,  
4 kms from the heart of Port Lincoln.

#### FEATURES

- ★ 110 Modern Floating Marina Berths
- ★ Fully self contained waterfront townhouses
- ★ Mini Mart Adjacent
- ★ Sight-seeing, Fishing, Yacht Charters
- ★ Marine Shipwright and Mechanical Services
- ★ Permanent and Casual berths
- ★ Tavern, Restaurant and Leisure Centre
- ★ On Site Security

#### FOR FURTHER DETAILS

Contact Owner/Operators

BRUCE and PAM MOLL

27 Southpoint Drive • P.O. Box 2008, Port Lincoln S.A. 5606

Ph/Fax (08) 8683 0173 Mobile 014 641 675