

THE CRUISE OF THE "MORALLIE".

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OCTOBER 1920.

Saturday, October 2nd 1920. It was 3.5 p.m. by the Skipper's watch and 3.0 p.m. standard time, as was evidenced by the Port Adelaide Town Hall clock striking that number when the "Morallie" slipped away from her moorings before a light S.W. wind, and the long looked-forward-to cruise had begun to take shape.

The party consisted of the owner, (T. M. Hardy) L. H. Culver, J. P. Maple, N. Ford, and C. V. Wickens.

At 4.45. the Brevetment Mound at the Outer Harbour was cleared and a tack was made inshore to dodge the "lump" which it was evident prevailed outside. About sundown the breeze getting lighter, hauled to the south, a happy augury for an easterly. At moonrise the expected easterly duly came along and for a time looked like developing into the fresh breeze which one so often experiences on this shore; an hour or so later it began to take off, and becoming less and ever less as the night wore on. By sunrise on Sunday, 3rd, was very light and right astern. Inland Head was by this time abeam and distant about a mile. On passing Cape Jervis the wind got back a little into the east and progress quickened, so that 11.30 a.m. round the yacht scored some half mile, (or say 800 yards) above Maston Jetty. Whiting and salmon are usually found here in abundance, and it was not long before Culver, Wickens, and Ford had some two and a half dozen good fish ready for the cook to practice his art on. It should be mentioned that Wickens had on the sail down drawn up a roster allotting to each man his day's duty in the matter of cooking and clearing up after the meal. The roster was a great institution and saved many an argument.

Sunday, 4th. After a few more fish had been caught to repair the inroads which had been made on the previous supply the "Morallie" was shifted to a position just below the jetty, and the afternoon was devoted to a walk to the South Coast. The surf in Pennington Bay was rather disappointing, but the occasion was made memorable by the fact that the Skipper had a bath. The walk over, especially the last bit through the sandhills had overheated him, and he expressed the opinion that to cool and wash at same time made an appeal to the time-saving instinct. The crew stood in attitudes of ecstasy as his noble form stalked towards the seaboard, which rolled on exactly as Byron told them to.

Kangaroo Island, in common with the rest of the State, is enjoying a good season. Hog Bay made a really pretty little picture as we passed it yesterday, and in the walk over to the South Coast this day wild flowers were observed everywhere, and in place of the usual dusty track there was every evidence of recent rain. Back to the boat by sundown; music per medium of the gramophone, and a really good suggestion made as to the fit disposal of Wickens' favourite record, "Maryland"; discussions of several topics beloved of yachtsmen, and then to slumber.

Tuesday, 5th. At about 11 a. m. sail was put on "her" and before a strong S.E. breeze (two reefs) a start was made for Smokehouse Gully near the Red Banks in Western Cove. A halt was called at Stranbridge Point and a supply of cockles was laid in--- these brought down from Port Adelaide had begun to make their presence known, and when cockles become argumentative they usurp a prerogative which the crew consider theirs, and theirs alone. An hour's sail brought us opposite the black stones at the foot of the second gully east of the Red Banks but no fish were caught. We learned afterwards that this is a summer ground. It was essential that fish be caught, so it was up hook and back to the spot from whence we had come. The breeze had hardened considerably and in the thrush back all hands got distinctly wet. On the last leg in to the river the jib sheets blew out, and Hardy and Wickens had quite a nice little job making all right again. Their handiwork did not survive long as we had barely gone a couple of miles when the sheet carried away once more and right in the most awkward place imaginable; this time we had to anchor, and many and loud were the uncomplimentary remarks passed about the engine, out of which never a kick could be got. The "Morallie" carries about with her an engine and this fact makes her an auxiliary yacht. No one with any sense of humour, however, would apply the word 'auxiliary' to the little "Gray" which is supposed to develop six horse power, but in reality develops nothing but subversive language, barbed humdrum, and a tired feeling, accompanied by an alarming thirst. That morning the two experts, (nameless) had given the Gray two hours' undivided attention, and decided, after the manner of some experts, that there were about nine explanations as to why "the dam thing" wouldn't go. Its name is no longer Gray -- it begins with a letter figuring somewhat earlier in the alphabet.

Wednesday, 6th. It was decided to try to reach the head of the Pelican Lagoon, and Ford, being the only one who had hitherto been there was masterminded to pick out the somewhat narrow and tortuous channel. This was Ford's darkest day: his initial attempt at preparing breakfast was a dismal failure, and when to wind up the day's disaster properly, he put the good ship on the mud some 7,600 yards short of her proper destination. The tide was ebbing so it was voted no use trying to get her off. A stern anchor was run out down the channel, and Hardy, Culver, and Ford went forth in the dingy to find the way in against the coming off of the boat. No channel could be found; (subsequent enquiry from the nearest farmer, one Cobell, elicited the information that it had long since silted up) With a view to locating the channel a landing was effected on the island to the right, but long and earnest looking down on the water was productive of no result. Some good was achieved, as a black snake measuring three feet six inches was dealt with in a proper manner.

Thursday, 7th. At 8 a.m. the "Morallie" came off the mud and was hauled out stern first into deeper water. A thin drizzling rain had set in but did not endure. Noon found us ashore in search of stores, which it was hoped Mr. Cobell might be able to supply; he was not only able but willing, and the larder was replenished at such a trifling cost, as measured by the goods purchased, that

one could not banish the thought that the Federal Statist Gibbs is "all to hell" in his estimation of the continued increase in the U. C. L. The goods and their cost are worth enumerating-- two dozen eggs, two lbs. of flour, three lbs. of dripping, about five lbs. of lamb chops, and a lb. of excellent butter, cost 9/3. In a fit of generosity Ford, acting treasurer, insisted on making it 9/-. Back on board and after lunch the anchor was invited aboard and shortly afterwards was let go near Flag Rock. The Skipper, an enthusiastic Nature Student, immediately organized a party of fellow enquirers anxious to find out why the gulls were so perturbed on this island. At short intervals they would rise in a flock, wheeling and crying in that distressingly monotonous manner natural to the gull. The cause was not difficult to discover: nests there were everywhere, eggs in plenty, but no young birds. A large black snake was despatched, and a chance shot at him with a sharp piece of limestone took him where "the piece of old red sandstone" hit the philosopher, and disclosed the fact that he -- the snake -- not the philosopher -- had lately swallowed three young gulls.

Several rapsheets were taken on this rocky islet and then forces were divided. Wickens and Ford, naturally gifted with finer feelings went ashore in quest of scenery, the others, armed with a harpoon went out in search of stingrays; it was a fine day so they simply had to kill something. As a result of their labor one miserable little ray went to his last account. Ford redeemed his reputation a little by his culinary efforts in the making of the evening's repast, Cobell's chips, chipped potatoes, and fried onions. Then to bed.

Friday, 8th. Early breakfast, and at 8.30 a.m. we were under way. (The Skipper's argument is "weigh" -- under an anchor which has been weighed, just in case, no doubt, "someone is buying old iron ashore".) A very slow passage against the tide to Baick's Landing, where a visit was paid to the Post Office, a visit that enabled Bayle to stretch the long arm of coincidence almost to breaking point and confound Wickens's suspicion that she loved another.

Mrs. Garow Reynolds's bungalow on the hillside was much admired but it was agreed that the color scheme as regards the contrasted red roofs and native bush would not be carried out in its entirety until another house had been built just a little to the right of Mrs. Reynolds's. The Skipper was instructed to have this little matter attended to, and at once, so that Mr. and the future Mrs. might spend their honeymoon on the right shore of American River as early as possible.

Aboard again and we set out for Flag Bay to pay the rates and taxes. Breeze very light and dead ahead. Progressed about half way to Kingsree Head, where the Skipper suddenly changed his mind, ordered the balloon foresail to be set, pulled up the helm, and we set out for Kingscote. The wind freshening, a capital passage was made, "touching" at the Spit for a few seconds en route; anchored in the Bay of Shoals not far from the Pioneers' Landing Place, and lunch having been disposed of on the run across, we immediately went ashore and walked across to Kingscote. All hands were pleased to notice a new Oxen Hotel rising Phoenix like from the ashes of the old one destroyed some years ago.

The Manager, one Theo. Du Rieu, did the "decent thing" and the crew one by one retaliated. A visit to the emperor of a soor in badja named Otin Singh was very profitable to Otin. Then visited the Messrs. Anderson, at whose well-kept hotel we decided to dine. The Skipper, in the full regalia of a latter day exponent of yachting was the cynosure of all eyes, his pea-jacket in particular exciting the admiration of those members of the fair sex who chanced to be about. Then back to the yacht but not directly; Eaple, desiring to remove an attack of heartburn decided to row about until midnight. This decision he carried out under cover of an excuse that he was unable to locate the yacht. To and fro he rowed down to the Bluff, across to the Outer Spit until the heartburn having given it best, we boarded the good ship just five minutes after time. Eaple's ruse was not discovered until we got aboard -- all hands were quite convinced that he was really trying to find the boat. Next time a lantern will be hung out.

Saturday, 9th. After breakfast, the wine freshening from the North west the pick was had out of the wind and we sailed round to Kingscote Jetty to take on board the previous day's purchases. A discussion on fish, their habits, etc., unavoidably held over from the previous evening to allow Eaple to dispel his heartburn, was resumed on the shore end of the jetty, the disputants being Hurdy, Eaple, Oliver, and the Harbour Master. The other members of the crew repaired to Andersons' where that thirst with which Nature gifted man was given the attention it merits and requires. Mine host, thinking he was doing us a good turn told us of schools of fish in Cygnat River, salmon, whiting, roughs, croon flounder, etc., all mixed up like chocolates in a box. A net was borrowed and the Harbour Board lent us a notice-board to act as a net board. Directions given as to locality of this superb fishing ground were "about five miles down the coast past the Broomfield Beach." After lunch away we went until the yacht came to anchor of her own accord some three quarters of a mile off the supposed mouth of the river. Oliver, Eaple, and Ford spent over two hours looking for a place in which to shoot the net, and then returned to the yacht, now high and dry, just coming to a decision as to which side to lie down on. She ultimately chose the starboard and at low water the clinometer showed the angle to be forty degrees. It was a tense-up which was the more uncomfortable, the cook, when preparing the evening meal, or the unfortunate who had to eat the result. However, it was agreed that it might have been worse -- she might have been at an angle of fifty degrees.

Sunday, 10th. About 2.30 a.m. the tide had served sufficiently to allow Eaple and Wickens to shove her nose round to seaward, and an hour later she came off and started back to Kingscote. The net returned to the jetty, the sheet was coiled up, and before a freshening nor'wester we started back to American River. A further supply of fish was caught, and about five p.m. it started to rain, the wind all the time rising until it culminated in a very strong blow. All hands were ready for bed by eight, and after Oliver, the sleepless one, had located and dealt with some nine or ten different knocking and tapping noises outside, we turned in in search of the several hours' sleep lost on the previous night. Only one spot in the dock house leaked, and try as he would, Oliver could not escape it. A coffee pot slung under the offending spot did the trick at last, and peace reigned -- and it kept on raining.

Monday, 11th. Blowing heavily and raining steadily until about 11 a. m. The sky then cleared but the wind still blew with unabated vigor. All hands went for a long ramble ashore, and Espie, Hardy, and Wickens are not likely to forget their several attempts to reach the yacht, some two hundred row against the wind and tide; altogether a quiet day followed by a discursive evening; a very wide range of subjects debated and all satisfactorily fixed up with the exception of the efficacy of the Divining Rod as a means of locating water. Wickens, a perfunctory believer, is to be tried out, and provided he can guarantee a good supply of fresh water somewhere near Mrs. Raynall's bungalow, the first step towards completing the color scheme before mentioned may be said to have been taken. Oliver, it should be mentioned is to do the check divining.

Tuesday, 12th. By the kindness of Mr. Clark we were permitted to visit the Salt Company's works at Ruston. Went down on the train and were shown all over the factory and had the various processes explained by one of the foremen. Instantly resolved never again to eat imported salt. Lunched on the banks of the lake from which last year over 12,000 tons of salt were scraped. The record "catch" for any one season was 25,000 tons. Walked across to the south coast opposite the lake then followed the shore round to Remington Bay. Oliver and Ford went down over the cliffs to the beach -- more difficult going, but well worth while; the breakers were magnificent and there was the added interest of nesting penguins. These quaint little birds were found to be in occupation of nearly every hole in the face of the cliffs.

We managed to relieve them of the presence of a black snake whose object in life was no doubt the same as his relations' on Shag Rock. On arrival at Remington Bay all hands indulged in a surf bath, and then to round off the walk properly Oliver and Ford took the high road to the summit of Prospect Hill or Mount Thinky. The view from the top of this eminence is well worth the climb. Back to the boat, which was reached just before dark; a little music, and then to bed.

Wednesday, 13th. Out into Eastern Cove. Anchored near Rocky Point after trying unsuccessfully to locate Potter's Rock. A walk ashore before lunch, another attempt to find the Rock, and then returned to the River to replenish the fish supply. Strange to say, there was nothing doing in this direction, the fish had apparently left for fresh fields and pastures new. Another discursive evening; the only subject left untouched up to date is Hans Hule for Ireland -- we'll fix this up for Mr. George shortly. And so ended a quiet day.

Thursday, 14th. The fish having returned to their old haunts a fresh supply was laid in. Under way again, but she touched the lee shore and stayed there for about an hour during which time Oliver much enjoyed himself running out the anchor and watching the other four drag it home again. Nice quiet little pastime this. The rising tide finally took her off and we brought up near Ruston. More water was put on board, and whilst Espie and Hardy, the strong men, were juggling with the water-bag the others paid a call on Mr. and Mrs. Clark, as a result of which all hands were invited up for the evening. This invitation caused all hands to shave and some of them needed it. A pleasant evening; Wickens discovered to be the owner of a "voice."

Friday, 15th. An early start was made for Hog Bay -- the rates and taxes were really going to be paid at last. Light baffling winds delayed us until well on in the afternoon but Kipie and Oliver were sent off in the dingy to see if they could catch some sweep which are said to abound near Mangaroo Head. They were unsuccessful, however, and having returned to the yacht, we shortly afterwards anchored in Christmas Cove. Over the hill to Penneshaw to find that it was the weekly half holiday and all the stores were shut. The Hotel was luckily wide open and we repaired thither to rest awhile. Later on prevailed upon one Murray to open his shop and expenditure on groceries followed. Walked round Hog Bay to the site of the original Frenchman's Rock, on which was carved a rough inscription setting forth the fact that an Expedition of Discovery under the command of Captain Baudin, *"Geographe"* had landed on this beach in 1803. The original rock has been transferred to the Adelaide Museum to prevent its ultimate destruction by erosion.

Once again on board, where Kipie distinguished himself both by the manner in which he prepared the evening repast, and the manner in which he addressed the various ingredients, the stove, and in fact, everything else. Early to bed, but so far as Oliver was concerned, not to sleep.

Saturday, 16th. The wind had hauled to the north east during the night previous and the tide setting out round the corner caused a most uneasy little swell, and Oliver spent most of his time crawling around in the dark locating and "stomaching" strange noises. It was discovered that the red rag of the bull fighter is not half so provocative of rage as in the bull as is the rattle of the alloy in the soda-water bottle in Oliver. At daybreak it was decided to get out and away to some quieter spot. Sail was made and we anchored shortly afterwards opposite Wilsons' Sandhill, in two fathoms. Breakfast was over at seven and the Skipper and Kipie went out in the dingy after fish.

The presence of five cutters opposite Grubby Jack (or Little Rocky Point) led them down to that spot and they were soon on whiting. Later on the yacht was taken down to them and sufficient fish having been obtained, we again got under way for Kingscote. The wind, a steady little breeze, was now in the north, and this fact, combined with a falling glass, inclined us to the belief that a change in the weather would shortly arrive. With the big jib set a delightful sail across the two bays, or coves, brought us in two hours twenty minutes once again to the Bay of Shells. Ashore for a walk and dined at Andersons' where we learned that when our informant told us on our previous visit that Oyster River was distant five miles he meant two and a half miles.

This evening we made arrangements with one Victor Bootley to drive us on the morrow to Vivonne Bay, distant some forty one miles. Back to the boat after we had accepted an invitation to "come aboard" the "Karratta" which, as it has just, was lying alongside the Kingscote Jetty. No difficulty was experienced this time in finding the "Hercules" as a precautionary measure a lantern had been left burning.

Sunday, 17th. Up bathos, breakfasted, and went ashore to keep our appointment with Bootley and his Buick car. At ten we started and no member of the party is likely to forget the run down to Vivonne Bay. The falling glass of the previous day was the precursor of sultry uncomfortable conditions, and with five of us in a car driven and steered by one who must surely be a lineal descendant of John, things were not too comfortable, especially for the mountain of flesh in the rear seat.

Out as far as Oygnet River the road was not bad; the scenery was flat and uninteresting. Beyond that the road got worse and worse -- the scenery didn't because it couldn't. Mile after mile of dwarf scrub relieved at intervals certainly by the "Yacca" or "blackboy," now in flower. Notwithstanding the good season wild flowers were seldom seen and there was an entire absence of food. In a run of over forty miles, excepting the settlement between Kingscote and Oygnet River we passed about four homesteads only. No sign of any bird or animal life -- one large black snake quite six feet or more in length crossed our path. No will cross no more.

Law evidence of the work of gun getters and no one in the party envied the poor devils their occupation or their surroundings. Just before sighting the Harriet River we had tyre trouble but it was soon repaired. On arrival at Vivonne Bay made the acquaintance of seemingly the only inhabitant, one Bill Iles, an identity with the playful habit of walking every now and then to Kingscote -- distance forty one miles -- time occupied, one day -- state of track in any weather, harder. This fact was verified later by Charles Anderson, of Kingscote Hotel, who was careful to explain, however, that Bill's idea of a working or a walking day is from three or four a.m. to nine or ten p. m.

After lunch repaired to the beach, walked round to the jetty and over to the Point to see what was going in the way of surf. Vivonne Bay is an extremely pretty little spot named, as were several other parts of the coast, by Dandin, the French navigator, who circumnavigated the Island in 1803. It is the only indentation in the south coast of Kangaroo Island that affords any shelter from anything with a trace of south in it. The sole commodity passing outward appears to be Yacca gum and the inward trade is confined apparently to stores for the gun getters. So poor is the back country that in this splendid season the gun carters were compelled to import fodder for their livestock.

Last week the "Jessie Darling" took away from here two hundred tons of gum, and advantage was taken by one of her crew of the opportunity to liven up the place and improve the occasion by an attempt at suicide. The attempt, a really good one, by all accounts, failed.

The return to Kingscote was devoid of incident, but Booby was not to blame. The west yet glimmered with some streaks of day when a weary boatload might have been seen making their way towards a yacht moored in the Bay of Shosha. After tea Culver adjusted the anti-rattlers, argument petered out and all was still.

Monday, 18th. The last week of the cruise had begun; the bird of time had but a little way to fly, and lo! the bird was well and truly on the wing. But, as we said philosophically, why fret about tomorrow if today be sweet? After Ford and Williams had brought off the stores we once again turned the yacht's back and came on Kingscote. None for discussion: have yachts back? if not, why not?

A perfect day and with the balloon foretell growing like the Mustard Plaster mentioned in the Book of Proverbs (which read and find out) we tramped across to Crabby Jack in one hour fifty five minutes -- good going -- fourteen miles -- for a thirtysix foot boat. The whiting were still in a Barrie-like mood and required no persuasion other than a few cockles and a little bit of cray, (filched by Culver from the hatch "Janet" the late Sir William Clarke's famous racing yacht.) Before sunset returned to the River, which steadily grows in the affections of all of us,

and anchored against the eastern bank opposite Huston. As a precautionary measure a stern anchor was run but with no wind about so strong was the tide that the yacht dragged the stern hook all over the place.

Tuesday, 19th. An early start was made for Pennington Bay on a sweep fishing excursion; Culver stayed behind to clean up the boat - the subject need not be perused any further. A long day on the reef produced a few fish, one a very fine young chap landed by the Skipper. Wickens and Ford spent most of the time shedding tears of regret because they had neglected to bring their cameras. The friends of Maccs. Nopie and Hardy would have loved to see them clad in yachting caps and little else standing up to their knees in surf.

The two on the reef still fishing Wickens and Ford climbed Mount Trishy to take a last birds' eye view of the best yachting ground near Adelaide. Wickens did a little water-divining, the genuineness of which remains to be proved. Then hey! for Huston and Culver. The "Hearlie" was found to be in fair order, but the brass work was superb. It literally caught the rays of the setting sun and "flung back the blaze in lines of dazzling light" The long walk and climb had induced a thirst worth a crown; all we needed was an excuse; Culver supplied one - - we drank to his continued health.

Sweep for tea, a discursive evening, and then, Culver having resolved himself into a listening post we turned in.

Wednesday 20th. A quiet morning, shaving, laying in a stock of water, giving the dingy a much needed clean-up, (for it was to ferry ladies that afternoon) replenishing the cockpit department, and then after lunch we took Mr. and Mrs. Clarke and their daughter Pulcic for a sail out into Eastern Cove. Ideal conditions, cloudless sky, warm sun, tempered by a breeze off shore, good company, fish biting, in fact the only thing needed was the presence of some cheerful soul like Frank Iode to make the day really worth while. But in this vale of tears nothing is perfect; after a few fish had been caught, and Nopie and Wickens had distinguished themselves by recovering a lost revivick inadvertently dropped overboard, we delivered our visitors at Huston and turned down stream for the last time and went to the mouth of the river in preparation for the homeward journey, which it was intended should begin on the morrow.

Thursday, 21st. Put the dingy on dock after clearing the Spit but the wind falling light, little or no progress was made. By noon a flat calm was in evidence and so it continued until about three p. m. One snook and two large barracoota were caught and then suddenly the Skipper got his punch in; he changed his mind, didn't like the look of the glass or something to that effect, and our projected visit to Troubridge Shoals was doomed and ended. Big jib was put on and we sneaked across to Kingscote before a very light northerly. Arrived just in time to stop one ---- Southcott from going on board his own vessel, the "Vectis". He being a mighty fisherman and some sailorman was invited to tea and the discussion that raged between him and the Skipper looked like going on for ever; we finally drove them out on to the counter and no one knows when or how it ended. It ended alright because Hardy was in his bunk when we awoke next morning.

