

It had been brought to the Committees' attention, especially after the recent problems that had arisen at the CYCA following the 1998 Sydney-Hobart Race, that prior to the Squadron settling on the land it does not have any hard assets. Someone could try to sue us beyond our insurance, and at present they would have to take on the Ports Corp. Once the Squadron owned the land there would be a substantial asset. In the event of a major mishap, the party looking to sue would see a balance sheet of 5 million dollars in excess of any insurance, which they would pursue until they obtained it all. The Club had to be set up so that into the future this would not be able to happen. The Management Committee has considered this matter in depth, following legal and other advice. The Bank agrees with the concept of forming a company limited by guarantee as a holding company for the freehold assets of the Squadron. Options are being looked at which will be put to a special meeting. There would be no Constitutional change. The asset, instead of being sold to the Incorporated Club, would be sold to another vehicle and the Club would lease in the same way it leases through the Ports Corp. It would be simply structured and would not alter the balance of power within the organisation.

A new Rule was added to the Constitution: Rule 9.20 The Patron's burgee shall be the Squadron burgee rectangular surrounded by a silver cord having a ceremonial frog loop at each corner.

Mr Robert Stevens addressed the meeting concerning the circumstances behind the transfer of a marina berth licence in the name of a Member, whom he felt was not treated well, especially in the light of his long membership and increasing age. Commodore Henshall advised that the Committee would look into the matter.

Mr Peter McBride related to Members his 61 years experience in slipping boats, both at the Squadron and elsewhere and praised the expertise of Mr Sam Clohessy. With the report on the Sydney Hobart Race very much to the fore, he urged the Squadron to be exceedingly careful to ensure compliance with the statutory and Department requirements with such things as cradles, slings and slipping equipment. If there were an accident, the Squadron may have to answer to a Coroner.

Mr McBride asked that consideration be given to a seat at the top of the ramp on the northern bank to assist those waiting in the area.

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Beverley J Sullivan

REGISTERED CONVEYANCER

Austin Gibson

CONSULTANT CONVEYANCER

4th Floor, Epworth Building 33 Pirie Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Ph (08) 8212 3311 Fax (08) 8212 5158
Mobile: 0419 858 392
E-mail: beverley@senet.com.au

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The Cod Hole

Di and Ian Moncrieff, *Pied Piper II*, Lizard Island, Far North Queensland

Held over from our last issue. This account was dated 10 September 2000 — Ed.

A few days ago we poked *Pied Piper's* bow east through Cormorant Pass, a break in the long, skinny ribbon reefs making up this part of the outer Great Barrier Reef along the edge of the continental shelf. We were in about 30 meters of flat water. (Cormorant Pass for those familiar with James Cook's epic voyage, is just three gaps south of Cook's Passage, where he took the repaired but still leaking *Endeavour* into the Coral Sea and nearly lost her again.

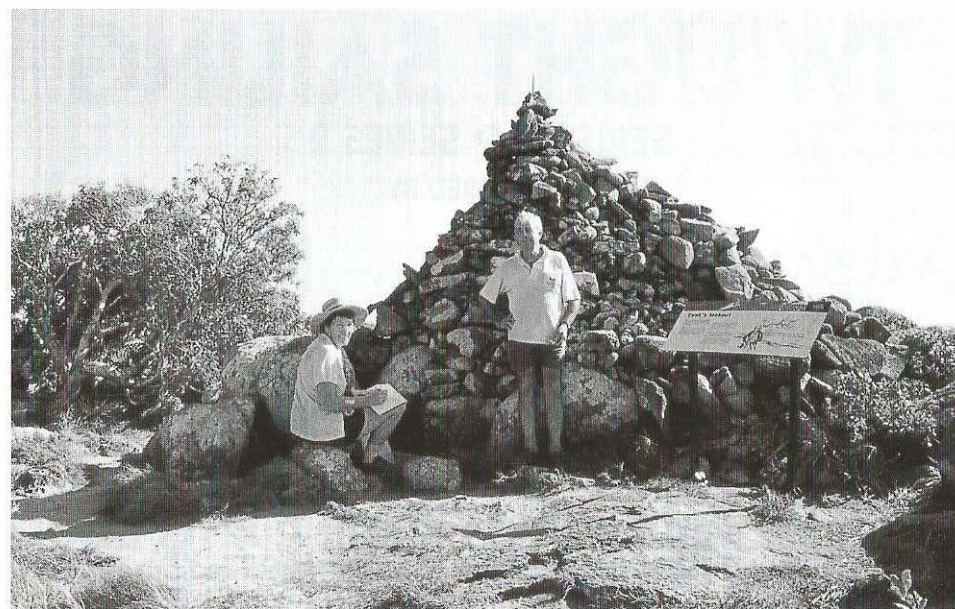
That was on Thursday 16 August 1770. Cook's breathless description, containing one of the most memorable accounts of suspense at sea ever written, is copied at the end of this article. —Ed.

As we felt the effect of the great Pacific swells, rolling in over 2-3,000 metres depth and stopped short but a few metres away by the huge coral

walls of the Great Barrier, it reminded us that we must indeed be in one of the largest, most beautiful calm water cruising grounds in the world. Sea conditions are broadcast daily for inside the reef in wave height, but outside the reef swell and wave heights are reported separately.

Whilst there is no doubt that yachtics must be very careful of the reefs and isolated coral heads in these waters, and that gales can and do arise, for most of the winter north Queensland waters offer plain sailing in stunning territory.

The reason for our trip to Cormorant Pass was to visit the Cod Hole, a world famous dive spot. We had co-ordinates for it, right on the north west tip of Number 10 Ribbon Reef. A lad we met in Cairns, who works on a cruise ship in this area, had numbered the ribbon reefs for us on the chart, so we had a fair idea where to go. We are not that keen on 'fair ideas' in these waters, so we accepted eagerly an offer to follow *New Silver Gull* which had several route co-ordinates



Di and Ian Moncrieff at Cook's Look, Lizard Island, elevation 1,179 feet. The view of the reefs to the east hasn't changed since he was there on Sunday 12 August 1770.

to follow. We left Lizard Island about 0700, skirted MacGillivray Reef to the north and motored about 12 miles across clear water into an easterly breeze, before we skirted another reef and entered the pass. As the sun rose higher, the reefs became very easy to see and *Pied Piper II* hung off the stern of *New Silver Gull*, which had picked up a Marine Park mooring there for the purpose. It placed us directly over the Cod Hole. All we had to do was don goggles and snorkels and drop over the side into a brilliant turquoise abyss.

It was an astounding experience.

The sea was full of fish — big fish — and they were not in the least shy or afraid. The largest were the famous potato cod: grey spotted, grumpy looking, but seemingly friendly. Walls of coral marked the inner edge of the reef, looking more like a gorgeous quirky garden the Mad Hatter might have created rather than the collection of animals it really is. We just hung

there on the surface, gurgling through our snorkels, in awe.

Now back at Lizard Island, in a delightful, protected anchorage (shared with many others), we are constantly busy. We climbed to Cook's Look on the highest peak of the island in the early morning while the western hillside was still shaded. Our reference on Cook for this voyage has been Ray Parkin's HM *Bark Endeavour*, a large volume recording amongst other things, detailed excerpts from the ship's, Cook's, Banks', and Parkinson's logs. Notwithstanding the frequent references to bearings and distances, it makes for extraordinarily exciting reading. These people were hanging on to their lives by grim determination and application for weeks and weeks on end. Elation soared as solutions evolved, but crashing disappointments always seemed to follow as new seemingly insurmountable troubles were flung at them.

After departing the repair site in the *Endeavour* River, and surviving a night time drag past several reefs, Cook left the *Endeavour* anchored near the mainland at Lookout Point, just north of Cape Flattery. With stores for three days on board, he and Banks sailed in the pinnacle offshore for about 17 miles to Lizard Island, which promised views from its high hill.

Hundreds of people annually ooh and aah in wonder at the same view that must have been such a blow to Lieutenant James Cook. Looking east, the long line of ribbon reefs and the breakers hitting them, can be seen by mid morning. The gaps in between them gradually appear when clarity increases as the sun moves further overhead and then behind to the west.

Standing there, it was very difficult to imagine the unthinkable; taking the *Endeavour* through the Outer Reef, with no charts, no ability to sail into the wind, no motor, no GPS — and she's leaking! Climbing Cook's Look and reading the logs took a day.

From our anchorage in Watson's Bay, we take the dinghy to the clam gardens, a nearby coral patch, which includes enormous clams, brilliant reef fish and soft and hard corals. If together we stretch our arms out in a circle we approximate the circumference of one of the bigger clams. Looking down into their jaws you can see a volcano-shaped opening that sucks in water and all the nutrients therein, and a slit where water is expelled. Little fish swim in and out without harm.

Paths round the island have vegetation marked with European and Aboriginal names, as well as descriptions of traditional uses. We know now

how we could treat colds and asthma, how to sandpaper a spear, what to use for shelter and where to find water if needed.

We have also visited the Australian Museum Research Station situated at Lizard Island. It was wonderful to get extra information on some of the reef animals we have seen. On asking a question about a stunning blue starfish we have frequently seen, I was given one to hold and I could see and feel the suckers underneath that are used to move across the coral and sand. There are over sixty research projects proceeding at any one time, some emanating from overseas agencies and many with commercial applications. The group of yachties we were with were keen to support the work with either donations or the purchase of merchandise.

Global warming and increased human use pose the greatest threats to the reef, and as yet very little is known about most species of fish and corals and interactions between them. Socialising, journal writing, ship maintenance, quilting, baking bread, reading, swimming and yoga on the beach also fill our days. We are approaching the time when we will be ready to head south, for Lizard is the spot where yachts tend either to continue north to Cape York and Darwin, or wait for a break in the south easterlies to return south. The last time Ian was here he joined David and Dee Henshall on *Lara III* and headed north for a marvelous passage to Darwin. For this year anyway, *Pied Piper II* awaits wind on a northerly quarter to return south.

The Moncrieffs put *Pied Piper II* back in the water in Townsville in June, have cruised north to Lizard Island and will sail back as far as the Brisbane area by November. SQ

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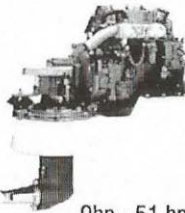




Join the fun and bring your guests also

Squadron dining room is open after the races for dinner and prize giving

*Note: Special conditions apply in relation to air tickets. The tickets are subject to load & can only be confirmed on the day of flying. Squadron Office has the full terms and conditions.





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