

LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB
CRUISING DIVISION

CRUISELETTER



July 2022 No. 388



The Bach at the reef - from John and Raewyn's cruise notes.

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Skipper's Report

Our June Members Meeting was attended by around 25 members, so the early sunsets and colder nights are starting to keep some of us at home. The guest speakers were Raewyn and John Lemberg who talked about their recent 21-day trip from Bundaberg to Townsville via the Coral Sea. The trip was facilitated by a commercial organisation with around 20 boats participating. It sounded like a great trip.

Cruising Division Editor:

Any articles for the Cruiseletter can be sent to Cruiseletter Editor David Baker, preferably in MS Word format.

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Please address all letters for the Cruising Division to:

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Skipper's Report cont'd

Our June activity was planned to be a "soup day" with the opportunity to share favourite soups at a lunch on Saturday. The weather forecast was for significant rain so arrangements were changed to include a Friday night dinner at Rathmines Chinese and Saturday lunch at the Rathmines bowling club. The four boats who attended enjoyed good sailing conditions on the Friday, with most of the rain on Saturday occurring overnight. Around 16 people attended the lunch on Saturday.

Gordon Butler
Skipper



Lunch at the Rathmines Bowling Club

Upcoming activities

Our normal schedule is:

Members' meetings – Second Monday of the month, 7:00 pm at the Club.

On water activities – The weekend following the members' meeting.

11th July - Ralph Asquith

Cruising Port Stephens / Broughton Island / Myall Lakes

16th July Activity

Visit to Marine Rescue Base TBC

Morning visit, then lunch at the Swansea RSL

8th August – General meeting

Guest speakers Mark and Carolanne Clement - Cruising Sydney and Middle Harbour.

12-14th August activity

Arrangements are to be advised!

Position Vacant – Cruiseletter Editor

The Cruiseletter is a key part of how the Cruising Division communicates with the members. David has done a great job as Cruiseletter editor over the last few years. Carrying out this role during the disruptions brought by COVID has been particularly challenging and David has been very effective in actively seeking material for the Cruiseletter. However, David has decided that he would like to hand the role over to someone new.

Please think about contributing to the Cruising Division by taking up the role. It is one where the editor has great freedom to pursue subjects that are of interest to them. There are many members of the Cruising Division who are willing to contribute articles, if approached by the editor. If you are interested and need any further information, please talk to me.

John and Raewyn's learnings on cruising comfortably

"The Bach" has returned. Two plus years of cruising north we are back to check out the house, catch up with good friends and get more use from the winter wardrobe. So why not share a few of the lessons learned along the way?

Fishing while cruising

We are late comers to fishing. For all my previous decades of yacht ownership I could never rationalise the thought of deliberately fighting a flappy bloody fish on the transom of the yacht that I had spent so much time and effort trying to keep clean. The whole smelly process just didn't seem to be worth it. Therefore, any attempt we did make in the early days to actually catch a fish was undertaken half-heartedly and landings were rare. The few fish we did manage to land, when divided into the cumulative cost of the gear, worked out to be prohibitively expensive. Add to that the pitiful recovery of edible flesh after John had hacked at the poor fish in an attempt at filleting and the whole sorry process produced nothing but very expensive bruised nuggets of fish. It is little wonder then that it has taken us so long to get to the point where we now seldom don't have fresh fish fillets in the fridge.

We remain very much at the bottom of the learning curve on the art and science of fishing. I am far from qualified to be giving fishing tips. This story is for those who may prefer to keep the fishing business at arm's length from the cruising stuff, as we did. I'll describe our process of fishing enlightenment hoping that it might inspire you to follow.

Sooner or later, you will spend time cruising in the company of a true 'Fisho'. These individuals are the gurus of fishing. A 'Fisho' we befriended purchased his 45 ft sailing cat, with no previous sailing experience, because he thought it would provide a good platform to pursue fish up the QLD coast from his home in Runaway Bay. When he and his wife drop the anchor in a new anchorage there is a second splash minutes later as the tender is dropped and he is off to catch dinner. Note, he is not off to maybe catch dinner – he will catch species to order. Another 'Fisho' friend we made while sheltering in Yellow Patch for ten days is seldom without a hook in the water. Watching her catch whiting is extraordinary. She knows exactly where and when to drop a yabbie on a hook as the school of whiting rides the flooding tide. As the whiting school collide with baited hook the process just becomes a blur of dozens of wiggling fish being hoisted into catch buckets. So, find your mentors. It is a myth that 'Fishos' keep their knowledge tightly held. We have found them to be overwhelmingly generous with their knowledge and time. It is clear the joy they get from helping you to experience the endorphin rush that comes with the zing of a line.

The clip is of our early fishing exploits chasing whiting and Raewyn landing a massive grunter! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFq9RkHR1q0>



Learning how to deal with the messy bits just comes down to practice and having things in order ready for the task. If we land a fish while on passage, and conditions are smooth enough we fillet the fish on the bow of the cat. It keeps the mess clear of the cockpit and is easy to clean away through the trampoline with the deck wash. I recall the first time I used this approach. As we neared Middle Percy Island I carried a mackerel forward by its tail to attempt to extract a couple of fillets. We had been in the anchorage a day or so before and by chance we took the tender down the side of the boat that I had carried the fish forward. It looked like there had been a massacre aboard. Blood stains from the water line to gunwale and from transom to bow! I now try harder to keep the fish clear of the top sides as I take it forward! We also learned very quickly that the quality of outcome from the filleting process is directly proportional to the sharpness of ones' knife. The fillet knife is now run through the sharpener before every use.

The big question – which lure to use? The array of choice available is mind numbing. The 'Fishos' can probably explain all the differences. However, I do tend to think the kaleidoscope of colours adorning the walls of the BCF etc. are more about marketing to the shopper rather than presenting a wider choice for the fish. Our favourite for towing behind 'The Bach' is the dependable 'Qantas' lure. Always have spares aboard.



The rest of the kit that has kept us well supplied with protein is pictured below. A couple of heavier setups; one with mono filament for trolling, the other with braid for reef fishing. Two lighter rods for estuary fishing. We also carry a yabbie pump for bait collection.

We still have much to learn and have many frustrating days when the fillet knife remains in its sheath. But we have made the transition from being fishing spectators to participants and found that we can maintain the condition of the transom and enjoy the thrill of the zing of a reel and the pleasure of fresh fish on the plate.

So, please share your fishing experiences while cruising and tips on the Facebook thread.

Next month.....Tender accessories.

John and Raewyn



The Sand Whiting, found along the East Australian Coast

Safety Corner June 2022 meeting - Tony Austin

LMYC CD Cruisers: Pre-sail Checklist Tony Austin June 2022

Preamble:

Following the introduction of the formal CD Equipment Audit process I started to look more critically at how I was managing safety issues on my boat. Thinking back over the years, I realised that most of my boat checks were done in a very ad hoc manner and quite frankly many were being done after the event. Examples included finding corroded rivet heads littering the deck, deck organiser sheaves frozen with corrosion, turning blocks frozen because of deformation and bent shackle pins that had been overloaded and could no longer be easily removed. The list goes on and even included a major ding to my front cross beam that was not obvious when viewed from the boat. Apparently, we were hit by another vessel with no note or acknowledgement. That one cost \$14,000 to repair! Having a background in both aviation and medicine I make no apology for being a strong supporter of checklists!

Assumptions:

Your vessel has had a CD audit within the past year.

You adhere to a maintenance schedule as per manufacturers recommendations e.g. Main Engine(s), outboard motor, winches, toilet(s) etc.

Your vessel carries a range of common spares e.g. fuses, globes, oil filters etc.

You conduct your checklist using all your senses – sight, smell, touch and hearing and remain totally focused on the task until all elements are completed.

1. Approaching the vessel:

- Visual check of mast, standing rigging (including spreaders) & masthead fittings (VHF aerial, anemometer, halyards, jib furler etc)
- Visual check of lifelines, boom bag, bimini, solar panels etc.
- Visual check of waterline – correct depth, symmetrical, degree of fouling
- Visual check for floating rope or fishing lines e.g. crab pot lines

2. Board the vessel:

- Check for signs of forced entry/unauthorized boarding
- Check for damage to awnings or covers.

3. Unlock and enter the vessel:

- Switch on electrical system and check voltages/SOC for house and starter batteries.
- Check under hatches for any water ingress – pooling or stains
- Check cabin and engine bilges for water or oil
- Check oil level and appearance in engine
- Check water inlet filter/strainer
- Open seacocks as required (engine, toilet, drains, galley etc)
- Fit through hull fittings if required (e.g. speed log)
- Confirm navigation instruments on and working
- Confirm radio on and working.
- Confirm adequate fuel, water & gas for the planned activity

- Confirm all mandatory safety equipment is onboard
- Unlock all deck hatches BUT kept closed whilst underway

4. Walk around deck and inspect all critical hardware:

- Sail bag(s), bimini intact
- Check deck for broken hardware – shackle pins or rivet heads etc.
- Shrouds tight and free of cracks or loose strands
- Chain plates free of cracks or movement, turnbuckles tight, lock nuts tight, split pins in place
- Shackle pins are all straight, in place and tight
- Check all running rigging for chafe, twists or knots
- Headsail furler line intact and on drum.
- Lifelines intact, lashings serviceable, turnbuckle locking nuts tight.
- Prepare sail(s) for immediate use in case of engine failure – winch handles in place.
- Prepare anchor for immediate deployment in case of engine failure or emergency (Check all navigation and deck lights if planning nighttime passage)

5. Start engine:

- Note battery voltage drop during start (voltage gauge or by ear)
- Check exhaust for water flow.
- Check charging of batteries after engine start.
- Check engine instruments for normal operation.
- Check gear shift (forward/neutral/reverse) before leaving mooring or berth.
- Check steering system for ease and range of movement.

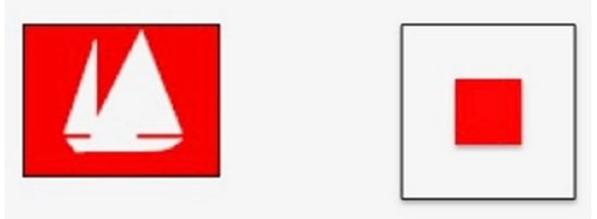
6. Plan your departure:

- Identify risks
- Develop a preferred strategy
- Develop flexible options

7. Brief crew on planned departure strategy:

- Ensure crew are clear on their tasks (and priorities) during departure.
- Explain 'bale out' options if problems develop.

HISTORY OF LAKE MACQUARIE YACHT CLUB CRUISING DIVISION from 1985 to 2010 - The first 25 years



Earlier this year we were tidying up the Christmas decorations box and came across a document

detailing the early years of our Cruising Division (CD). We thought that the history may be of interest to our members, so here is a summary between 1985 and 2010, the first 25 years. The author didn't put their name to the document but thank you to whoever took the time to write it.

In September 1985 a group of like minded people who were interested in cruising Lake Macquarie decided to form a cruising group unattached to any specific club. Its aims were to bring together cruising sailors and to encourage non-competitive coastal and off-shore sailing.

As interest grew it was seen that the possibility of an individual group was not practical so the group approached the Lake Macquarie Yacht Club (LMYC) and asked if it could be the host club for the Cruising Group. Members of the Cruising Group had to belong to a club that was affiliated with the NSW Yachting Association. It was thereafter known as the Lake Macquarie Yacht Club Cruising Division (LMYC CD)

The **first function** of the LMYC Cruising Division was a BBQ on Friday 27th December 1985 at the LMYC. Immediately following the BBQ a get to know you cruise departed to Brown's Bay.

The **first meeting** was held in February 1986 with 30 people attending. The CD would be an autonomous body separate from the LMYC, a proposed sailing program was presented, a flag selected of a white 30cm square having a red 15cm square in the centre, the annual fees \$10 per boat, a newsletter to be distributed and a monthly meeting would be held on the first Monday of each month. A social meeting would commence with a BYO BBQ at 6.00pm followed at 7.30 with the formal meeting which would include a guest speaker, films, seminars or other special features.

The **first Skipper** was Graeme Penny, Secretary, Ian Seggie and Treasurer Pat Austin. There were 38 boats in the Division at the time of the first AGM in March 1986. A draft constitution was drawn up by Ivan Irwin around that time.

By 1987-88 there were 61 boats in the Division which were made up of 35 under 30 feet, 22 between 30 and 40 feet and 4 boats over 40 feet, average 30.1 feet. By 2008 the average had increased by 4.5 feet. I imagine that now the average will have increased again. There were no details of how many were mono hulls and how many were catamarans.

That year there were six cruises on the lake and more than a dozen CD boats sailed to Sydney Harbour to view the Bi-Centennial celebrations.

Over the years there were many offshore cruises which included:

Newcastle - many times
Pittwater (the early cruises combined with LMYC)
Port Stephens to Laurieton
Port Stephens
One day cruises - Mattara (not sure where or what this was) and Bird Island
Grafton
Broughton Island
NYE Sydney Harbour
The first Pittwater cruise that was organised by the CD was in 1994

Cruises on the Lake and activities:

Moonlight cruise
Observations cruise
Flare demo
Fancy Dress boat cruise
Man overboard demo
Life raft demo
Fire extinguisher demo
Soup night
Lake circumnavigation
Visit to Penta Comstat Radio base
Most lake cruises were well attended.
Wolstoncroft was obviously a favourite destination as it was unofficially renamed by the CD as Cruising Cove
Other named destinations - the Duck Hole, Pulbah, Brown's Bay and Rathmines/Styles.

Interesting facts:

In 1990/91 the then Commodore of LMYC (Ray Kiely) was concerned that the CD was dividing themselves from the LMYC. It was suggested that the Cruiseletter could be incorporated within the LMYC Newsletter. At a meeting a month or so later it was resolved that a members of the CD would become full Sailing Members of the Lake Macquarie Yacht Club and that all CD members will become legally covered by the LMYC's Insurance Policies. The CD would no longer be an autonomous group.

In 1992-3 members were encouraged to gain Cat 7 certification for their boats and a year later more pressure was placed on members to obtain a Cat 7 certificate.

The flag we use today was introduced in 1995

In 2000 a week long lake cruise was organised by foundation member Ivan Irwin. Sadly Ivan died on an overseas trip before the cruise had taken place. The cruise went ahead as planned and was named The Ivan Irwin Memorial Cruise. We usually hold this cruise in October.

The shallow channel is a problem now and during the first 25 years there was mention of a shallow channel in 1997, 2000 and 2009. In 2009 it was not navigable from March to September after which it was dredged to a depth of 3.5 meters.

In April of 2002 an insurance letter from LMYC was sent to the CD stating that appointed officers were covered providing regulations were abided by.

It appears that what is old is new and vice versa!

Nikki Cahil

Cruising

Some thoughts on climbing the mast when solo sailing. By David Baker

Some years ago, during a Pittwater Cruise, I demonstrated climbing the mast using two ascenders. It had been a while since I had done this, so it took a few minutes to get everything sorted, which is an argument for practice, practice, practice.

Of course, using climbing gear, let alone ascending masts by any means, is not everyone's cuppa. I first learned these techniques during a period of my life spent in the apparently useless pursuit of mountaineering - and survived.

Some time ago, in the world before covid, I had reason to bring out the old climbing gear when my asymmetric spinnaker and genoa furler became irretrievably entwined in a marriage that would last forever unless I intervened. So you never know when that mast might have to be ascended by someone, by some means.

I have recently encountered an article by Fox Morgan in Yachting Monthly (June 1, 2022) where she describes the equipment and method in great detail, including a brief video. Without breaching copyright too severely, I will for educational purposes hit the highlights and encourage you to check it out for yourself on the website or Facebook link:

https://www.yachtingmonthly.com/gear/how-to-climb-a-mast-solo-and-short-handed-87297?utm_content=ym&utm_campaign=socialflow&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&fbclid=IwAR2xXI3oduz5MqEdcffJfwOPIZVMi5Gh8uUC7Amyy4mBtjc-EcnUDHeNxfc

If you intend trying this (it really isn't that difficult) my advice is:

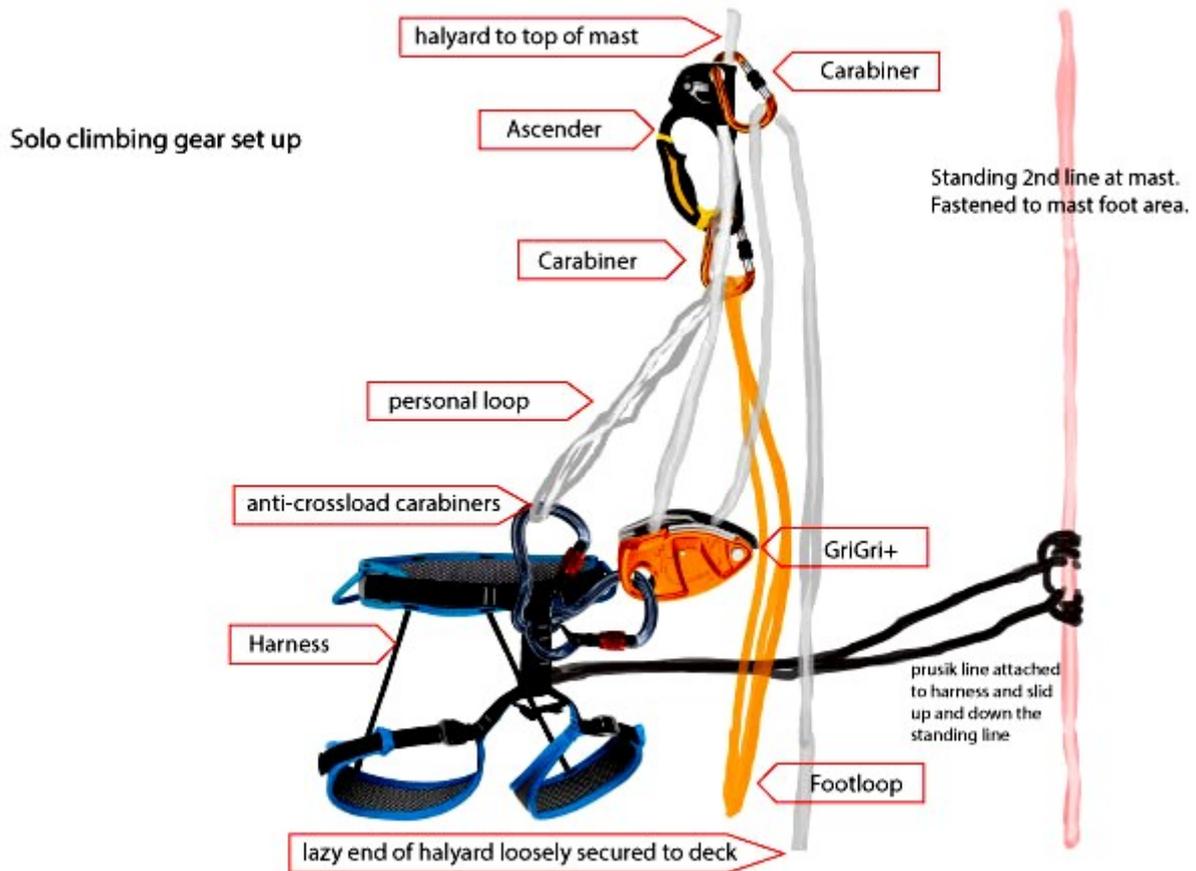
- Use two ascenders or an ascender and a gri-gri. One at belt height and the other able to be raised the length of one's arm.
- Use **two** stirrup webbings as I have found one to be tiring. The mountaineering method uses leg muscles to lift so doesn't need the halyard to act as a pulley as shown here.
- Wear shoes.
- Make sure you know how to tie a good prussic hitch.
- Use two separate, strong halyards - one to climb on, the other as safety. I tie the climb halyard down and lock the ends through cleats, but leave the safety line with a bit of slack so I can move it as needed. This all depends on skill level and confidence.

Here are Fox Morgan's recommendations:

Solo Mast Climbing Technique

- Wear appropriate clothing. We recommend close fitting clothing that won't snag on anything. Also protect your shins.
- Consider wearing body armour if going up the mast at sea. It's very easy to be slammed against the mast and crack a rib, which will definitely spoil your day.
- Wear a helmet if you are in a rolling anchorage or underway. A BMX, kayak or dedicated climbing hard shell helmet is ideal.
- You should be fit enough to be able to lift your own weight with one leg in a foot strap and one arm on an ascender.

Assemble the climbing gear like this:



- Attach 2 halyards to the mast foot area.
- Attach prusik line to the halyard or line you are using as a backup safety.
- Attach Ascender and GriGri to the main working line/halyard.
- Clip on harness.
- Double check all carabiner gates are locked closed and nothing is cross loaded.

Fox provides us with a little video to demonstrate how she goes about climbing the mast safely when on her own.

<https://content.jwplatform.com/previews/01TSH46b>

Follow the links to read the rest of the article.

Credit and thanks to Yachting Monthly and Fox Morgan for this helpful article.