

# Ferro News

September 2000 Quarterly Newsletter for Ferrocement Boat Owners

Issue 15

**T**he last issue and as usual its late. Since the the June issue I've been contacted by some enthusiastic volunteers to continue FN. Eactly what form it will take is still being worked out. I hope that the spirit will live on. If you have internet access, please go to [www.geocities.com.au/mcfarlanei](http://www.geocities.com.au/mcfarlanei) and join the Ferro email news group. This is only a temporary web site until something better is put together by the others. I will put all the old issues of Ferro News up there so you can download them if you wish. Please be patient, as I'm having some trouble uploading the large files with my ISP dropping me out nearly every time.

During September Trudy and I sailed north for a months holiday in Hervey Bay. The weather was great, and we finally made it to Lady Musgrave Island. You may remeber our plan was to go cruising for six months starting May 2001. But instead, I'll be spending this time building in a cot into Lilly Ann. (Yes ... Trudy is expecting a new addition to the Lilly Ann crew).

Since the cruise, I've been flat out trying to get enough hours up for my paragliding licence, whilst working on all the maintenance jobs aboard Lilly Ann. There never seems to be

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*Lilly Ann seen through an old boiler from the days gone by ...*

## ***I Wouldn't Be Dead For Quids***

*by Ray and Cindi SV Rays Hell*

All considered, its been a very busy financial year for Cindi and I, and with the onset of the GST beginning to bite, we decided to turn our backs on Darwin for a time, provision our yacht "Rays Hell", and go cruising. Its about 240 nautical miles from Darwin, our current home-port, to the King George River, which is situated on the western shore of the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf; in that region of Western Australia known as the Kimberly. The crossing can be boisterous, with 8 metre tides and 20 knot easterly trade-winds at cross purposes, but to our delight we managed to pick a brief "window" of lovely, calm conditions. We completed the voyage in 46 hours, and experienced ideal motor-sailing weather for the duration. The night before our landfall can best be described as similar to "sliding along a sea of molten chocolate", and was one of the most sedate passages I have ever experienced. Ahh! The tropics!

We anchored in 5 metres of crystal clear water, having entered Koolama Bay at 0500 hrs. in an inky blackness. Our new radar had proven itself to be an exellent investment. Three vessels lay at anchor, and all three diplayed their anchor-lights; proving that there really is a first time for everything! After a short sleep we undertook to soundout the shallow sand-bar at the mouth of the river, and managed to discover a narrow channel, just on 2 metres deep at high

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*Rays Hell Acnhored in the King George River*



**Whats On ...**

**CRUISE 2000**

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**KEITH'S PRACTICAL TIPS**

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tide, and we placed 4 buoys at critical positions. The following day we would enter this mighty river. That evening the universal flag of welcome was displayed in the rigging of the trimaran "Moonglow", so it was an intrepid and diverse group of individuals that congregated aboard. We were to learn that this group of sailors were in fact leaving for the Berkeley River the next day, and ultimately on to Darwin, having sailed through the Kimberley for some weeks; and we all laughed and joked and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Then it was time to return to "Rays Hell", to our own cosy bunk, and a superb nights rest. As the other craft slowly made their way out of the bay the following morning, I decided that the conditions were ideal, and made my way towards the buoyed channel. We glided in over the bar, only briefly touching bottom, and "Rays Hell" was once again within the beautiful, tranquil waters of the King George River. On a gentle rising tide we made our way up-stream, and were held in awe by the spectacle unfolding all around us: we were surrounded by sheer cliffs, 100 metres and more in height, which had been finely sculpted by wind and wave for at least 100 million years! The place is truly awesome! We passed small inlets, lined with dense mangrove forests, and filled also with the promise of excellent fishing, and the strong chance of the presence of large carnivorous reptiles? We continued on, the cliffs gradually narrowing, and finally, some 6 miles from the coast, anchored in 7 metres of brackish water, just 500 metres from the magnificent King George Falls.

At once, almost as the anchor took hold of the mud, life on board took on another dimension entirely, as we immediatly adjusted to "river time": The relentless and notorious Kimberley tides no longer dictated our decisions, as the effects of the ebb and flow were of little consequence this far up-stream. A strong wind warning was broadcast by Darwin Radios excellent weather schedule, but as the gusts touched 40 knots and stronger "bullets" shot down from the heights "Rays Hell" simply lay serenely at anchor, oblivious to the dreaded trade-winds.

On previous visits to this place the falls had been dry, it being later in the dry season (October) but this time, it being early August they were absolutely magnificent! As we approached the base of this mighty spectacle the noise and spray and the towering cliffs all around was indeed overwhelming! The

afternoon sunlight caught the spray as a spectrum, and a small but lovely rainbow appeared. The feeling was unforgettable.

By climbing up a 70 degree incline of huge fallen boulders and hanging on to trees on some of the steeper sections, we eventually climbed 130 metres to reach the top, and we were rewarded with an excellent panoramic view, both of the waterfalls and of the gorge and our proud vessel. Large deep pools of cool pure water stretched away from the falls upstream, and we swam and bathed the day away, until it was time to find our way down to the river again. I made a batch of homebrew the next day, and many a toast "To King George" would be heard for the next 5 weeks. Such is the magnetism of the waterfalls, it was to be a full 8 days before we thought of moving downstream. We were lost in the quality of the bird life, and in a strange "lost world" feeling. Much of the narrow, meandering section of the river is deep, up to 18 metres deep and not suitable anchorage. The bare rock is scoured completely, but as we rounded a bend, a spit of mud was visible, opposite a thick stand of mangrove trees. Into this forest ran a small back-water, only 5 metres wide. the sound of a dozen birdcalls filled the air. Here we would find our quarry; Mangrove Jack! We stayed there at the King George for 5 weeks. We caught our share of fish, and we also drank our share of home-brew! and we thoroughly enjoyed the whole trip. We are back in Darwin now, already planning our next cruise. I wouldnt be dead for quids!!!!!!



## Merry Christmas

*by Ray and Cindi SV Rays Hell*

Greetings from steamy Darwin! The wet season is fast approaching, and a great deal of activity is evident. Boats and crews are coming and going, as the easterlys begin to ease and allow for a comfortable, fast passage across the Gulf of Carpentaria, and the last of the circumnavigators leave for a late run through Indonesia and on to Phuket. Cindi is in America visiting her family, so its the life of a bachelor for the next few weeks, and of course the never-ending re-fit is keeping me busy. The current political situation in Indonesia and the Solomon Islands has forced us to place our planned cruise on hold for the time being, so the direction of our next voyage remains unclear. I wish you all a very merry Christmas and may the year 2001 be one of peace and prosperity for you all.

**September 2000** S/V Lilly Ann



*Common Dolphins bow-riding offshore as we approach Lady Musgrave Island*



*Tuna! Caught just off Double Island Point.*



*Bundaberg Mid-Town Marina*



*The Engine Cover - and Chart Table*



*Four Weeks of Sunshine.  
Just another Sun-Set!*

*I have really enjoyed producing Ferro News over the last four years. It is with some sadness that I let it go. I would like to think we could keep in touch. So I encourage you to join the Ferro Boats email group that I've set up at [www.geocities.com/mcfarlanei](http://www.geocities.com/mcfarlanei). This group allows us all to participate, that is when you send an email it goes to all subscribers. You can upload pictures and usefull links if you wish. It could become the*



*Our tender ashore on Lady Musgrave.  
Those wheels where well worth the money!*

## Boat Talk From WA *SV Stand Easy*

Thanks for your reply to my last and the heap of back copies. One correction ... you've quoted our effort to keep the Freo. Sailing Club down to \$3000.00 the real figure is 3000 MEMBERS .... like all clubs we're feeling the pinch and subs have increased a heap so all of 'em are very dependant on "participating" and "contributing" members. Unfortunately, at F.S.C. when we had a financial hiatus back when we went "Big" and sallied forth on a very ambitious programme, 500 plus boat marina, hard stand for many more, lush premises etc. we had to "encourage" membership. The result, just when "boating" became the "in" thing, along trundled the mugs with no experience but aquatic ambition and plenty of dough! The "up river" clubs literally "own" their pens and are in a position to dictate..."if you do not participate, sorry we don't have a pen available for you" as it is, we're saddled with a lot of "marina users" the club's simply some place to stow the boat, show it off to our mates, pay our subs, and/or any dues, not patronise the bar or the dining room, miss any working bees, depend on our "insurance" for any mishaps never learn how to throw a heaving line "rule o' the road" etc. When they apply for membership, they're invited to indicate the club sections they'll interest themselves in. Just about every section is ticked, thereafter we never see 'em!

However, the main interest your very welcome, newsy offering gave me was/were the articles on electrolysis. Now here's the story "Stand Easy" has, underwater, several types of bronze, 316 stainless, galvanising, monel...you name it, the prop. is an expensive 32" X 28" affair so naturally I was keen to preserve all of 'em...so I installed bolts, aft to house the annodes but somehow forgot to bung 'em on when I launched the vessel! Several slippings later I noted that there appeared to be no damage to any of the underwater gear so imagined I was in the clear "Not so" said my, many mentors, you're bound to suffer severe damage to those expensive bits an' pieces, same as we all do!" so I purchased two bloody great lumps of zinc, bunged 'em on aforementioned studs, an' then the "advice" started "You're primarily concerned with saving that prop. so you hook up one of these annodes to it with a copper strap" this from a friend who has a masters in electrical science. "Not so" says an onlooker, I'm a specialty welder I know what'm talking about, you use a stainless strap!" Now with my experience of "experts" who the Hell do I believe? the theorist or the practical! so to satisfy both of 'em I bung a copper strap onto one of the annodes and a stainless one on the other and connect 'em BOTH up to studs in contact with the prop. The result, BOTH annodes disappear within weeks! Now that was at least twelve years ago, so I've decided that I'm immune and have not noticed the slightest underwater damage to ANY gear since. When I did manage to go aground, in a channel thru' which I must've been a coupla hundred times! sheer carelessness ..the ship was bolt upright, resting on the rocks on the great big keel, no danger, so I tossed the main halyard to one of my friends who'd come out to abuse me, the ole' hand! and then told him to "Go like buggery, dead abeam!" the idea being to lessen the draught, unfortunately, a nigger head cropped up just at the

wrong time and we hit on the beam just below the water-line between two frames, water seeped in, about a gallon a minute, nothing serious (I can get at every possible area, inside the boat, less the water tanks, which I can isolate anyway, in just such an emergency) so I piled over the side and applied underwater epoxy, it sealed the leak immediately, but I was keen to find out just how the mesh etc. was behaving, so a few weeks later I slipped the boat, cleaned out the entire area surrounding the damage, finished up with an area about 120 round...the mesh, hard drawn wire etc. absolutely pristine! I re-newed the mesh, 25cents! My theory has always been that the mix, properly done is impervious..having seen the effect of sea water on most "concrete" wharves, jetties etc. I can realise the doubts that corrosion can raise..but most of the ferro. craft in my club are unaware of any damage to the "armature" and many of them have been many years afloat .... I attribute the erosion of my annodes more to the proximity of steel piles, steel craft and all sorts of steel very common to any marina ...surely all the "soft" metals "Stand Easy" has on her underbody are nowhere near as noble" as the steel in her armature? I'd appreciate your, or anyone else's CONFIRMED opinion on the matter! To give you some idea an ole' mate o' mine since deceased, was local manager for Johns' Yalves. He accurately predicted the deminishing of the stems in all the hull valves in my last craft. They found the problem the leaching of the zinc from the copper and fixed it up with some chemical treatment result is, no problems over 20 odd years, with the many valves in "Stand Easy" tho' I watch 'em like a hawk! The same bloke said to me..."I've had more experience and know more about osmosis than any bastard in Perth an' I still know stuffall!" here's an example... "we put in all the plumbing fixtures in the "Sheraton" and also in the other pub a coupla hundred yards away, the same plumbing consultant the same plumbing firm and the same water, in the pub. on the Esplanade we had Christ knows how much trouble with osmosis, with the Sheraton, stuffall!" So you tell me!

Thanks again for the contact..I know Keith Morris quite well, th "Ketchup" he's also a contributing member!

Thanks for another interesting read. In reply to your interest in Electrolysis, I do agree that results vary considerably from boat to boat. My confirmed evidence consists of erroded skin fittings that were not correctly bonded. The single large zinc block (2kg) which I replace each year certainly has not been detrimental if it has not actively protected. Our boat now in the water for 13 years doesn't have a spot of rust below the waterline. Inspection of the mesh during the cutting of new thru-hulls shows pristine. However, I've seen so many, in fact too many boats with rotting rods and mesh, one so bad the owner thought the hull was about to collapse. So I can't argue with those amune, but I do agree with those that believe that it does more harm than good.

## ***Salt Water in the Sink*** by Keith Fleming S/V Zodiac



Fresh water in any yacht is a precious commodity. There just never seems to be enough and so we are conscious at all times of how much we use and how we use it. We could look at how we could enhance our methods of collecting and increasing our storage potential, however we can make what we have got go a lot further by the use of salt water. Any cruiser worth his salt will have fitted a saltwater tap over his galley sink. The best methods are to have a electric pressure pump operated by a foot switch or toggle switch near the sink. The other method is to have it operated by a manual foot pump that allows the hands free action. This saltwater is used for many things from rinsing the dirty dishes to washing hands to provide good clean salt water for cooking. For instance you haven't lived until you eat spuds boiled in saltwater. The rinsing of the food plates is most important and you will find that most cruisers will scrub the plates under saltwater immediately after removing from the table. You will notice that cruisers never stack dirty plates as this makes both sides of the plate dirty and so twice the work. Often you will use a dish drainer in insituu when at anchor for some period and the washing and drying of the plates will allow them to be used again and again without using freshwater or detergent. A good deal of thought will go into where to acquire your supply of good clean fresh saltwater. Preferably an inlet fitting right below the sink and a short distance from the sink drain is alright. It is always preferable to have the toilet outlet on the other side of the keel.

Some cruisers have hang up about the number of through hull fittings they have in their boat. There is very little reason for this but it is a perceived fear that the more holes you have through the hull the greater the possibility of creating a major leak. This fear is a basic hangover from the days of wooden hulls. For those, there are alternatives. You can look around and see where else you have ingress of water into the boat. There is the inlet for the toilet but we will give that amiss. Fresh saltwater is used in cooling the main engine and there is a possibility of taking off a supply just after the main seacock and before it enters the inboard water strainer. In fact you could use any offshoot between the main inlet and the water pump as tis is submerged below water level at all times. Anywhere near the water pump though cold create a air ingress if it should pump the water our of the tap hose. A more likely place would be in the cockpit drain outlets. these are usually permanently submerged but you could have trouble pumping water if the vessel was heeled to a degree that the outlets were above water. Another problem you need to consider that salt water laying in hoses does go off and produces a rotten egg type gas smell. On stepping on board my yacht I switch on the power, the gas and then pump through fresh saltwater into the sink and the toilet. If you have long piping or hosing say from the rear of the cockpit to the sink you may have to pump through a fair amount of water each time so this is why an inlet directly below the sink is ideal.

While on the subject of sinks, it is not always wise to have a plug in the outlet. The hydraulic action of the boat pitching and rolling will often blow the plug out and you lose all you water. Because the plug sits up above the bottom of the sink it is often knocked out of its hole with the dishes. The drain from the sink should be directly below the sink outlet and fitted with a sea cock. A second butterfly or lever seacock or valve should be fitted directly under the sink outlet. This then takes the place of the plug. This is also switched to o\$' when sailing to stop water entering the sink when the boat is

## ***Dinghy Improvements***

by Keith Fleming S/V Zodiac

As the cruising yachties dinghy is like his car in everyday life, so there are certain things that can be added or built onto the dinghy that will make life just so much easier. Eddy and Barbara Homer from 'Gandalf of Brisbane' are one couple with lots of cruising experience and has travelled extensively in the Pacific. They have learned the problem that can be associated with being caught ashore and having the tide disappear from under the dinghy. They always carry their own fender which they use as a roller to move the dinghy over the sand and also use as a fender when visiting other yachts. When they ordered their dinghy from the manufacturers they had extra hand grips welded on along the chine. As they carry the dinghy upside down on deck these handgrips provide extra safety when moving around in bad weather as well as providing loops to contain the hold down ties when it is strapped to the deck. Other advantage of the handles are that when swimming from the dinghy or diving the person in the water has an extra hold. They also can be used as a step up when trying to board the dinghy over the side. When the boat is sitting high and dry the chine rests on the handles and so keeps it level and there is not so much weight resting on any rocks under the hull. These few simple ideas can make life a whole lot easier.