

Ferro News

December 1998

Quarterly Newsletter for Ferrocement Boat Owners

Issue 9

Is it Christmas already? Worse! Its the new year! Well happy new year everybody! This year is going to be the busiest yet. Lilly-Ann sets sail north in May - preparations are becoming frantic. With only four months to go, the list is still very large. The new fridge is underconstruction, the solar panels are framed and ready for fitting and wiring. The Muir manual anchor winch has been purchased, but I'm still pondering how its going to fit, and so on, and so on. And to add more insanity to madness, I've decided to get my paragliding license in March following a seven day course. Paragliders just have to be cruising sailors answer to flight - just packing away in a backpack. I can't wait to fly off the north Queensland coastal mountains, and sand dunes!

Our trip plan includes sailing north to Cairns by end of June, where we meet up with friends and take off in a 4WD for a month in the Northern Territory (Ray & Cindi, Darrel & Bev

make sure you let me where to find you and we'll drop in), back to Cairns by August and setting sail north for Princess Charlotte Bay and Lizard Island for another month finishing back in Cairns again by September. That leaves us September and October to get back to Brisbane.

Don't forget that easter weekend in April is Ferro '99 in the Brisbane River!

This issue Ray's Hell makes it to Darwin. I read with great interest Doug Wallace's article outlining Mystery's engine mounting and shaft coupling. (Doug: could you draw some diagrams of the special shaft coupling and thrust bearings you describe) Keith Fleming from "Zodiac" gives us more interesting articles including working with those big tides, and we reveal part two of the Ketchup II adventures.

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More Letters please we are getting skinny!!

DARWIN FOR XMAS

By Ray, Cindi. & Bodhi S/V "Ray's Hell"

Hello again! This time we are writing from tropical Darwin. We've been here for 2 months and are presently sitting on the hard at Sandgraves Quay Boatyard. Our trip from Broome was absolutely fantastic; the seas were mirror calm for most of the way, and even though we could have handled more wind, I won't complain! I had experienced the tidal phenomena in the Kimberly region many years ago, when I had 1200 horsepower under me, so with only 72Hp this time, I was careful to calculate our moves. I made one error in particular, and that was moving from the 11 metre tides of King Sound into the smaller 6 metre tides of Yampi Sound! Ever tried motoring up-hill? After that little miscalculation I was much more careful, and quickly learned to use the tides in our favour. We feasted off oysters and a variety of reef and bottom fish for an idyllic 8 weeks, covering maybe 30nm in a day, usually before midday. One could easily spend 6 Months travelling between Broome and Darwin, but we wanted to arrive before the N.W. monsoon developed, which its associated squalls to 50 knts, and so we



At anchor 6 miles up the King George River

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did! Good holding ground is rare in Darwin, the bottom being very thin mud, so we find ourselves in George LaSette's excellent boatyard, giving Ray's Hell some much needed T.L.C. Its been 4 years between coats of antifouling by-the-way! Our next move is to Indonesia, and on to the Solomon Islands via PNG and New Britian sometime next year?

I'm off to Bass Strait via Fremantle next week to restock the kitty. Never a dull moment.



Bodhi taking the helm near Cape Leveque

Features...

MORE ON MYSTERY'S FITOUT
THE ADVENTURES OF KETCHUP II
DEALING WITH TIDES

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Ketchup II - Day 3 and On

Last issue Ferro News featured Ketchup II, and shared adventurous log book antries for Day 1 and Day 2. This issue we join Keith & Ann once again.

Sunday morning John and Wally came over to see if we want to go snorkelling for Baldchin Groper. They are going to check their pot's first. All hands on deck to check where J & W have dropped their pots. Ah ha, so that's the place! No-where near the spot they told us to put ours! Sneaky, and blow me down, if they didn't get a bucketful of crayfish. Kate, Jonathon and I donned our wet suits and relocated our cray pots. Then with J&W, commenced to search for the elusive Baldchin Groper (and anything else that we might come across). Success, after what seemed a lifetime, we found a nice coral patch and before long Jonathan had speared two good sized Baldchins for tea. Nothing like freshly baked Baldchin Groper, washed down with a very pleasant Chardonnay....this is what we all signed on for. The weather was quite disappointing over Easter overcast and winds of 20 knots plus, from the north of east which is not the best for Turtle Bay. The rolling was eased dramatically by streaming our spare 451b CQR anchor from the starboard quarter and heaving K2 head to swell.

Monday came all too soon for Ann and Steve, who had to fly out that afternoon. James was due to fly out at 10.30. Father and son set off in plenty of time, as reports mentioned that it was something of a safari to get to the terminal. Well, when I say terminal I mean to say the tin shed at the end of a dirt track that they call the runway. Lets hope those sea eagles clear off before the plane comes. Eventually the plane landed and number one son was winging his way back to Geraldton. Hard to imagine that the flight would only take about half an hour. Nearly as long as it took us to claw our way through the scrub to get there.

For your information, it's much easier to walk the length of the runway, then five minutes through the scrub and you are on the beach. The art is finding the end of the runway when you first leave the beach! I left a bit of drift wood as a marker for Steve and Ann to mark the beach end of the runway, so they wouldn't need to go bush for too long. It was decided to make ready to move round to Pidgeon Island as soon as possible, as the swell was making life difficult. Meridian had already left - wise move. The cray pots were pulled and the cupboard was bare except for a large octopus. No wonder there weren't any crays! (Occies

eat them too!) It's amazing how much ink those devils squirt out when bludgeoned with a heavy object. Ann decided to come with us for a bit of a snorkel before flying out. It wasn't a really good idea. The visibility was about as good as the black hole that now housed my two coupling bolts. The swell was two metres over the reef and breaking, so the exercise was aborted rather rapidly. Poor Ann, really felt sorry about the relatively poor weather we had experienced since arriving here. Even Steve must have felt quite cheated, having spent a fortune on fishing gear, only to be rewarded with a few - dare I say it? -

'blowies'. Sorry Steve. [Having finally seen Ann & Steve ashore, we motored round the NE end of Wallabi Island, to the placid anchorage of Great Pidgeon. The huts on the island reminded me of what one might see as one approaches the Mekong river. Really struck me as quite a strange sight. K2 seems quite empty now with only the four of us aboard. Heaven knows what it will be like when we take Jonathan and Kate back to Geraldton and only the "wrinklies" remain... peacefully quiet, amen! Beautiful deep sleep last night. John & Wally have invited us to explore Webbe Hayes fort. Kate and Jonathan declined. Joe and I are eager beavers for a bit of history. We take our Zodiac. The water near West Wallabi is really shallow and we have to paddle some distance. The forts were circles of

rough rock about six metres in diameter. Hard to imagine the terror that must have consumed the survivors, as they fought off the mutineers. Wally was a mine of information on the whole sorry tale of the Batavia shipwreck and her crew.

What ever you do, if you go to Pidgeon Island, try not to catch the pet Samson fish that the islanders feed. The problem was, at the time, we didn't know this! It's amazing how fast a 40 kg fish can rip

line off a reel! Happily after the culprit was landed and photographed, it was released and after some encouragement from Kate and Jonathan in the Zodiac, swam off non-the worse for wear.

We decided to head off with Meridian to Long Island to find a place to scuba dive. Our first attempt to find a place at the north end of the island wasn't too good, as there was still a bit of a swell. Further south towards the middle of the island was a perfect spot. The island at this point is less than 50 metres wide and barely two metres high. We anchored about 50m off the beach in 15m of water. Eagerly we donned our scuba gear. Joe kept ship watch or was it ship sleep? The three of us had a pleasant hour long dive, going to a maximum of 24 metres. There were lots of staghorn corals, and I saw a nice lionfish and several parrot fish. J & W came over for a few nibbles and beer but the exertions of the day had taken its toll. We were all in bed by 8pm !.

Day 4

My slumber was rudely awoken at 1.00am, when the ratchet gear on my Alvey reel went berserk. I raced on deck trying to pull on my underpants and my glasses and at the same time, trying to find a torch. Isn't it amazing when you need help, there is never anyone round? Whatever it was that had taken the ockie bait, was certainly putting up a fight. Surely Joe can hear me yelling for the gaff? Eventually, a bleary eyed chief engineer appeared on deck wanting to know what all the racket was about. Why was I fishing in the middle of the night, with one leg in and one leg out of

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Fire On Board

By Keith Fleming S/V "Zodiac"

We all hope that we never have a fire on board even though we load the boat up with fire extinguishers and fire blankets. But it does happen and like all boating accidents there is something to learn. Last year a couple of cataramans cruised across the top to the Kimberleys and had a wonderful trip. On the way home they called in at KARUMBA to restock and fill the fuel and water tanks. After leaving there they decided to put the two boats on the beach and catch up on a few repairs and give the bottoms a scrub. At a deserted beach they put them ashore. before the tide went out they loaded

up 6 buckets of seawater on the back deck for various uses like washing hands and dishes etc. One of the skippers wanted to do some fibreglass work in the bridge deck and he also had a small workshop in one of the hulls. Toilet off the job quickly he placed a desk fan near the,work. on switching on the fan the whole of the boat became an instant fire ball. He chased the fire down into the workshop side hull with a fire extinguisher with little effect, The buckets of water made no impression and he found himself trapped in the forward part of one hull, Luckily they had quite large hatches over the forward bunks and he was able to scramble in shock out that hatch. The boat was totally destroyed. Other points of interest were that it was a very hot day of a little over 30 degrees and there was quite a brisk breeze blowing from the bow to stern. The assumption is that while preparing the acetone for glassing that there must have been a fair amount of evaporation from the can and the job itself. The switching on of the fan created the spark to ignite the mixture, The main lesson to be learned is to try and not create a build up of the gas given off. Keep cans well covered when not actually pouring, Keeping the job well ventilated and do not use any electrical items until a short time after all the raw materials

have been removed or sealed. All electrical items including

the fridge should be turned off before you start the job. On any boat you should have a forward hatch that is large enough to exit from. Some boats have very small forward hatches. Another problem was that the two cats were beached quite close together so that it was convenient to exchange tools etc and in this instance they were lucky enough to be far enough apart that the second boat did not catch fire. With the tide well out there was no access to heaps of water should they have needed it. A boat fire can be a killer with all the exotic materials used in its construction

Working the Tides

By Keith Fleming S/V "Zodiac"

The rise and fall of the tides around our coastline provides both the cruiser and the racing yachting with many a challenge. The rise and fall of the water must create currents, and these currents have an enormous effect on a yacht's movement through the water.

Not just from the effect of the current or water itself but also from the effect of the wind on the water. The effect of a strong wind against a strong tide can create some enormous seas and have such an effect on the movement of the yacht (hobby horsing) that progress can be reduced to a minimum. Of course if you are travelling with the current the tides become a bonus and if the wind is in the same direction as the water movement then that is even better.

The yacht skipper needs to know at all times what the tide is doing and at what stage you are passing through. If you are on a coastal transit it is important to have a full set of tide tables to cover the full length of the coast over which you are travelling.

It is not only the travelling aspect you may have to be aware of but also the unexpected aspects such as having to anchor and seek shelter in some bay or have to access one of the many rivers along our coastline that have a dangerous bar. You don't need to be

trying to enter a river port during a strong outgoing spring tide and big seas on the outside. The two events coinciding can create a very dangerous situation for a slow moving displacement hull. It is on these occasions that it pays to remain offshore until the tide changes and you have the swells and the tide both going in the same direction. This knowledge is an important part of sailing. It is not just a matter of knowing how to steer and sail the boat.

Sailors in the southern part of Australia may not be troubled very much by the tides as the rise and fall is not so great. However as most of them tend to gravitate to the northern [altitudes eventually a whole new can of worms is opened for them with the much greater tides which not only create problems with anchoring but also create a number of very stony currents. Luckily today we have the advantage of the cross track error on OF our GPS to alert us to side currents. Areas around Townsend Bay and to the South Mackay in Queensland can often catch the unwary skipper or watch keeper who has recently arrived from the south. Tides in this area are often as much as 4m in difference and that is a lot of water to move in a period of 6 hours. To work the tides you need to constantly check your chart to know which direction they are moving. You will also find the State Tide Books a great read and a wealth of knowledge.

When anchoring you really need to work the tides. You need to understand your tides and be able to work out exactly at what stage the tide is at at the time of anchoring. The skipper needs to be able to calculate the rise and fall of the tide at any given stage of the tide as the water rises and falls at different speeds during that 6 hour period. This method is explained in the tide book. Not only do you need to know how much water you are going to lose before the next low tide, but also if there are any lower tides following during which period you may still be anchored. For instance the low water at 3am might be nearly 1m lower than

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the low at which you anchored 2pm the previous afternoon. Coupled with all this knowledge you need to know the height of your transducer above the keel and just how accurate your sounder registers. You need to know the exact reading of your sounder when you touch the bottom. You can find this out by picking a gently sloping sandy bank and on a RISING tide gently motor the vessel forward until you come to a stop. If you have a sounder that you can calibrate then this is the time to do just that. In northern waters it is most important to know how far your keel is off the bottom.

Regular cruisers will know that usually the closer you can get to the shore the calmer the water. They also know that there is no difference between having 6 inches of water under the keel or 2m. By working the tides you can anchor in depths that may only leave 6 inches below the keel and be quite safe. Of course if you are worried about the anchor dragging then you should not be on the water anyway. If you have a problem with a dragging anchor then it is time you solved the problem.

Working the tides can come into its own when crossing a tidal stream. By having a thorough knowledge of the times, direction and height of the tides you can plan a trip that is going to take you across a tide so that you do it easily, safely, and quickly. If you are making a short hop then you may leave your trip from the morning when you may have the wind against the tide until the afternoon when the wind and the tide

are both going in the same direction. An early morning start before the wind gets up might be a good move if you are likely to have wind against tide. If you are transiting such places in the dark then you should be doubly diligent in keeping your eye on the cross track error of the GPS and plot your position on the chart every hour to make sure.

In northern Australia there are many rivers and creeks that can be accessed even though you may have an exposed sandbar across the mouth at low tide. If you draw say 2m and on the previous low tide you know that the entrance just dried by about 6 inches then if you consult your tide chart and find that you have a 3.4m tide difference (note that it is the tidal DIFFERENCE that is important) you should be able to enter the creek or river (assuming there is plenty of water once you get inside) just before high tide. Two important features you need to watch is that you have an almost flat sea (which is normal in shallow water) and that you study the tides for the following few weeks to see that you are not going to get trapped in the creek by neap tides. We draw 2m and with careful use of the tide charts we were able to visit the Bloomfield River for a week. This river often dries

at low tide and is just South of Cooktown.

There is so much involved with sailing that is affected by the tides that the subject needs quite an amount of study to get a good handle on how to understand them and use them to the best effect. By understanding all the ramifications it will open up lots of areas that appear at first sight to be

barred to any keel boat. With a good understanding of tides you will also begin to realize that there is not as great an importance in the use of shoal draft keels. Improve your knowledge and enjoy better sailing.



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From the Decks of Mystery

by Doug Wallace S/V Mystery

Dear Ian and Trudy, Another great Ferro News!, was very interested in the photo's of Lilly Ann, particularly the solid looking coupling. My original coupling was a single rubber disc about 150mm diam cut from conveyor belt. Two three fingered spiders bolted to the rubber. Since it is almost imposible to accuratly punch six holes in 18mm reinforced rubber with absolute precision, there was a slight eccentricity which set up some horrendous vibration in the soft mounted engine. There was only a limited range of RPM where the engine looked less blurred. My new coupling has two polyethylene discs (with two-bolt yokes like universal joints) joined by a short "tail shaft" 70mm long. This will allow for (1)Angular misalignment,(2) lateral displacement, (3) longitudinal end float. There will be no engine vibration transmitted to the shaft, seal, thrust box, prop tube and hull. The back to back thrust bearings means the propeller thrust ahead and astern is not transmitted to the coupling or the engine or the engine mounts. The engine is free to hop around on its rubber mounts completely unrestrained. (The trust bearings are sitting each side of a collar which is keyed to the shaft with 3 grub screws). When I installed the engine I made an alignment tool which bolts to the gearbox flange. It has a steel rod welded to it, turned to a point on the lathe exactly the same length as the coupling. When the point is exactly on the centre punch mark on the end of the shaft, the tool is replaced by the coupling. While the shaft was out to have the new 14 X 9" prop fitted, I pulled a string line up the stern tube and put a centre punch mark in the shiny new paint on my 50mm steel tubing mast compression post. I cut a triangular piece of ply, notched to sit on the foreward end of the engine bearers so the apex of the triangle just touched the string. When I began aligning the engine I discovered that the crankshaft pully on the front of the engine (Yanmar 1 GM) is not the same height as the gearbox flange. (To

measure the offset I put a spirit level vertically against the gearbox flange and

adjusted the engine until it was perfectly level, levelled across from the centre of the flange to put a pencil mark on the galley cupboard door. Next I levelled across from the centre of the front crankshaft pully and put a pencil mark on another cupboard door. When I levelled the two marks vertically adjacent they were 65 mm apart). The front pully was 65 mm higher so I clamped a piece of scrap ply to the front pully and marked the offset 65 mm directly below the centre of the pully. I clamped a string on the centre punch mark on the compression post, stretched it to just touch the apex of the ply triangle and adjusted the engine until it met the 65mm offset mark. With both ends of the engine exactly in line the coupling will not have much work to do.

Coachroof Headliner. Mystery's cabin top is plywood on transverse laminated beams 70mm by 30mm spaced 300mm apart. The beams are varnished and the ply painted white. In the tropics with the sun belting down vertically, a lot of heat was radiated into the cabin from the hot coachroof. I have insulated it with 12mm plastic foam sheet. The local upholsterer sold me some light grey vinyl liner with a dimpled texture, (unperforated). At no extra charge they laminated the vinyl to the sheet foam, applying the contact adhesive with a spay gun. I cut this into strips with scissors to fit between the beams, glued to the ply with non drip gell contact adhesive. Varnished 9mm Tas oak quad was tacked onto the beams with brass pins for a neat professional finish. The cabin is noticably cooler in hot weather and also quieter because the insulation absorbs sound. The sides of the cabin are ferro cement about 12mm thick and I have glued on grey polypropylene lining material (like thin carpet) to prevent condensation and it looks neater than paint. My four opening ports have varnished ply trim to cover the heads of the bolts.

Floor covering: Mystery does not have a conventional cabin sole with floor boards. The deadrise of the bilges is so shallow that the concrete of the hull is the floor. If I put in transverse bearers

and made the floor flat I would lose my standing headroom and it would be harder to stand on when the boat is heeled. With my concave floor there is always somewhere level. When I ripped all the original soggy chipboard furniture out of the cabin I chiselled off the old vinyl tiles and was very impressed by the amount of effort required to get them unstuck. I have now glued down new vinyl tiles (with contact adhesive) and am very pleased with the new floor. The tiles are hard and brittle when cold, but when heated with a hot air gun they become soft and pliable like slices of grilled cheese. They can be cut with scissors and bent to any curvature, going hard again when they cool down. The edges can be trimmed to butt up tight using a hand plane. I am sure all you astute readers are wondering where all the stray bilge water lives. At the lowest point I have cut a drainage sump with a diamond disc and chisel, 300mm by 200mm and 100mm deep. this houses a strum box connected to the bilge pump by a PVC tube buried in the floor. A perforated stainless steel plate screws down over the sump flush with the tiles. The keel is wide enough to accomodate the under floor plumbing.

Securing Ballast: Mystery has an unknown quantity of scrap steel thrown in the keel and filled with cement. When I repaired the bottom, an assortment of offcuts fell out, angle iron, flat bar, tubing, water pipe, flattened lead pipe, nuts and bolts and an old chisel. The whole thing was a mass of voids, all full of rusty water. (The water oozed out of the blisters for months when I first pulled her out). To secure a mass off concrete with embedded 25kg lumps of steel, I would make about a dozen hook bolts out of 1/2" or 5/8" stainless? rod long enough to reach about halfway down the keel cavity and rise above the top of the ballast. These would have a sharpish 90 degree bend on the bottom long enough to go two thirds of the way into holes drilled through the sides of the keel. The rods are epoxy fibreglassed in place. When the ballast is in, bits of angle iron or heavy flat are drilled, slipped on to the rods, bedded down on the ballast and welded in place. This solution just came off the top of my head and may not be the complete

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my underpants? Was it some sort of pagan ritual fishermen did on moonlit nights? Never mind that, get the bloody gaff and watch where you stick the pointy bit! A few minutes later we had landed a fine specimen of a reef shark that was to feed the four of us for lunch and the BBQ tea that night on the beach. The day dawned with sunshine. A light NE'ly, no swell, and the deep satisfaction of a good catch during the night. Jonathan and Kate gear up for another dive. Jonathan is determined to spear a good reef fish for the BBQ tonight. Before too long, they are back with a fine Baldchin. What decisions we have to make: do we have shark for lunch or the Baldchin? What the heck lets have both! Wednesday afternoon was spent removing the mizzen boom, so we would be able to stow the Zodiac over the after cabin. Made a huge difference to the space on the foredeck. Evening came and we eagerly went ashore to show off our prowess as fisherpersons to John & Wally. We were joined at the fire by Peter & Teresa off Sliver. They are on their way north to Broome, hopefully to pick up some charter work. The BBQ, needless to say, was superb. We all crashed out at 8pm, again! God is in His heaven, all's well with the world or at least on K2.

Up at 7am for breakfast and to check the pots. What! only one cray? Must be something to do with the moon.... 9am saw K2 squared away, anchor up and two reefs in the main, when literally, quite out of the blue, there was a torrential down pour, reducing visibility to about 50 metres. Certainly not enough

to see our way out past the reefs. So we hove to, keeping station with the anchored Sliver. Fifteen minutes seemed like a life time, waiting for the visibility to improve, but it eventually did and we gently motor sailed out through the reef entrance, bound for Geraldton to drop off Kate and Jonathon.

The wind was ESE all day but we still made good time arriving at 7pm to be met by Mat Bond (Sunseeker) and Alex (Sundancer of Bunbury) who took our lines. It's so nice to be met by friendly helpful people. Makes life that much easier when trying to lasso posts and especially the right ones. A quick tidy up, cold can of Guinness and bed. James had driven up to collect Kate and Jonathan and was persuaded that it would be a good idea to stay the night on the boat, rather than race back to Perth in the early hours of the morning Sense prevailed, for a change! The kids were away by first light. K2 really did feel empty now. Just Joe and me - great - only two lots of dishes to wash and wipe! Off we both went to the laundrette with our 'dhobi' as we both call our washing, reminding us of our deep sea going days, many moons ago. After the 'dhobi' came the radio repairs again. It was recommended that I put in 8176 kHz so that I could pick up Nav. warnings and the weather. This was great as it turned out, if I wanted Darwin, Townsville or Sydney's weather, but not VIP Perth! That's the trouble with having an antiquated crystal

tuned radio, limited to 10 channels. Some channels need two crystals, one for Tx (transmitting) and the other for Rx (receiving) and at \$120 each, it becomes an expensive exercise changing crystals The remainder of the day was spent victualling up. Joe visited a chiropractor as he had strained his

back earlier in the trip and wasn't getting better. My back had been playing up but had come good. We must have seemed like a couple of old crocks to the kids. Thankfully, they kept such thoughts to themselves or at least out of our ear-shot. Saturday morning dawned with a few rain showers and a light WSW breeze. Graham & Fiona (Katrina Michelle) didn't leave as expected - no doubt waiting for finer weather. We planned to leave about 3am Sunday morning. It was a mass exodus: Katrina Michelle had already left for the Middle group; Sunseeker was preparing to leave for Steep Pt. and Sundancer of Bunbury would be leaving about 4am. The wind was so light that we motored past the fairway buoy and tried putting the main up but it just slatted back and forth, in that really frustrating and annoying way. Down came the main and we motored the whole way to Middle Island in the Pelsaert Group, some 35 mls away, anchoring at about 11 am. Finding your way into Middle Island is a bit tricky for first timers like ourselves, but after a bit of trial and error we finally made it. At least we didn't touch bottom, but the look on Joe's face and the comment about walking ashore gave me the feeling that we were in pretty shallow water... Don't you hate it, when your depth sounder starts shouting at you just when you think you are in deeper water?

Day 5

Being Sunday, we treated ourselves to a huge cooked brunch of bacon, eggs, tomatoes, beans and toast. Meridian II arrived about an hour later and we handed over two fresh lettuce, then off to bed. Our deep slumbers were rudely awoken by shouts of "Fisheries".. I thought I was dreaming. Joe was first on deck. Sure enough a large Dept. of Fisheries jet boat was almost along side us. It's a small world though, as the boarding officer looked vaguely familiar... Infact Kieran and I were in the same TAFE Marine Engine Drivers course a couple of years before. It was good to catch up with him and no, we didn't have any illegal fish or crays. Those fisheries' boats are incredible.. only draw nine inches and fly over the reefs at around 30 knots... so watch out! Back to bed again..."Fisheries inspection" came the call again. I don't believe it. Well, it wasn't the jet boat this time but two mischievous matelots, alias John & Wally, who had brought us tea in the shape of a nice Baldchin, so they were immediately forgiven for waking us up! An invitation for pre dinner nibbles on Meridian II is not to be missed. What a splendid table they put on - especially the cray claws which were dutifully dispatched. Back aboard K2 for tea of Baldchin and salad, then bed by 8pm.. What a tough life! Monday dawned overcast. There had been some showers overnight, although it was still quite calm. After a healthy breakfast of bran & bananas, we decided to explore Middle Island and collect some wood for a BBQ that night. There wasn't a great deal to see, except for a couple of sea eagles and a million biting flies. We tried to find the channel into Middle Island but it wasn't easy to see from the shore, so we decided to take the Zodiac and have a mooch around. We baited up the cray pots, got our fishing gear together and headed off - two hours later we came back empty handed, fed up with fish anyway! Corned beef and salad tasted beautiful. We had a real surprise later in the afternoon, another visit from Kieran and the fisheries jet boat, but this

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time they had a journalist, Mike Zekulich and his photographer Ron onboard. They asked us if they could interview us as first time visitors to the Abrolhos. Seemingly they were interviewing various visitors to the island for an article for the West Australian, Perth's weekend newspaper, which should be coming out shortly. After a brief interview, it was Ron's turn to get some pictures. The skipper of the jet boat showed great poise and patience when Ron wanted Joe and I on the bow of K2. Ron was on the front of the jet boat giving directions to the skipper, so he could get the right shots. By the way, it was blowing around 20 knots and to try and manoeuvre to Ron's hand signals, took some doing. Now we know how Wile must feel ! The weather pattern looks good for our trip back via Jurien. Even with a stop over there, we should get back for the long weekend. I'm sure the ladies will appreciate a couple of days over at Rottneest. So we quickly stowed all the gear, Zodiac etc., said our farewells to Meridian and headed out. We cleared the north end of Pelsaert by noon and started heading south in a light easterly. The forecast was for a seabreeze then NE'ly then NW' ly overnight. Guess where the wind stayed: SW then SE'ly, so we motor-sailed the remaining 16 hours arriving in Jurien at 1345 hours. We were unable to contact the harbour master but Jurien sea rescue were very helpful, although our berthing instructions were a bit vague, to say the least We had made contact with them by VHF some two hours prior to arriving. Our instructions were: to find a pen that didn't have new mooring ropes and take that. Well, after 20 minutes of looking for a suitable pen, the harbour master made contact with us and directed us to a berth that was "close to the facilities". Unfortunately as we made our approach to this pen, we saw it was already occupied by rather a large runabout, neatly moored up at the far end athwartships. We declined the offer of trying to share the pen. As we pointed out to the harbour master, we have a bob stay from the fore foot to the bowsprit that would have neatly cut the thing in two. We were then redirected to another berth that was vacant. However I was a little suspicious, as the mooring ropes were brand new. Sure enough just as we were entering this pen a rather flash looking crayboat pulled up along side us and kindly informed us that the boat whose pen we had been directed to, was about half an hour away. They suggested an alternative pen a little further over. So an hour after we arrived, we were snugly tied up, never to see the harbour master again. Thank goodness it wasn't night time! Those of you who know Jurien will be aware of the "facilities"- a toilet and a telephone. Joe was brave enough to walk into Jurien later that afternoon, for a newspaper and some fresh milk. I had a nap. After tea and telephone calls to our loved ones, we crashed early, as we wanted a fairly early start in the morning, if the weather forecast was good.

Day 6

Up at 6.15, no wind at all. The forecast from Jurien sea rescue was good with easterlies and NE'lies, too good to be true, me thinks. We tried contacting the harbour master to pay our dues and were told by the sea rescue people that they send a bill to our home address. So with that, we motored out and headed SW through the south passage past Eclipse Island. There was

a fair swell rutting but no problems seeing the reef markers. 1030 saw the breeze kick in from the SW. All sails were set: K2 had the bone between her teeth and was bounding along beautifully. At this rate we shall be at FSC in the early hours of Friday morning. Little did we know what was instore for us. Occasionally when the breeze died away, we would put Mr. Ford on. Fortunately his services weren't used all that much. I came up on watch at about

10.30 pm. We were just abeam of Two Rocks with the wind dying away. The forecast was for SW winds shifting SE 12 to 18 knots overnight. At this rate we should be tied up about 4 am. On went the engine so we could get as far south before the SE'ly came in. Joe went below for a well-deserted sleep. At 1 am Rottneest light was clearly visible - we had had a dream run so far. All this was to change within minutes. Wait a moment, where's the light gone? The wind was still SW about 10 knots and we were still motoring. The rain came down in torrents, like a typical tropical downpour, with little or no increase in wind speed but a big shift to the SE. Visibility was virtually zero. K2 tacked herself onto starboard with the wind shift and although we only had the small high cut Yankee up Murphy's law had it that the sheets fouled up on something. That necessitated me going forward to release it. I was not too impressed with getting a cold water shower at this time in the morning, I can tell you! Joe appeared in the cockpit, having been woken by the boat tacking. Because the wind had gone SE and that was the exact course we wanted I decided to drop the headsail out of the way and motor sail with just the full main. The wind at this stage had increased slightly to 15/18 knots but the rain had stopped. We were making good progress SE. The breeze lightened a bit but there was quite a decent beam swell. Not to worry we shall soon be in the lee of Rotto. CRACK, BANG, it was like a canon going off - the boom just snapped into two pieces. Joe and I looked at each other in disbelief. Within minutes the main was down and the halves of

boom were lashed to the deck but without the steadying influence of the main, poor old K2 started to roll onto her beam ends. Without the driving power of the main sail, the engine found it hard going against what sea there was. Surprisingly, it was only when we put her up to full power that she felt more comfortable. (In hind sight, I should have put the small headsail up to dampen the rolling). However, we eventually arrived home, more than a little tired. Closer inspection of the boom showed that there had been a repair job done on it, which couldn't be detected from the outside. It had been welded and ground back bogged and nicely painted. We were thankful that it broke fairly close to home and that no one was hurt. And so ends our Abrolhos saga. The boom and mainsail have been repaired by Taskers and we look forward to our next adventure. I took the precaution of getting Taskers to do a rig inspection afterwards. They were very thorough, although perhaps it would have been prudent to have had it checked

before we left But: 'it won't happen to me'

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