

Take me There

been there ... doing that



Lightwaves Cruise in Company:

Paradise in PNG, So Close to Home!

Guy Chester, EcoSustainAbility, Rally Organiser
Photos supplied by Guy Chester & Rob Robson

Panapompom Island

Northern Misima



The Dance teacher



Rob leading Waltzing Matilda for the crowd



Misima Miss



Louisiades Rally for 2009!

The Louisiades Yacht Rally will be held again in 2009. After a very successful inaugural Rally last year both the yachties and locals are getting ready for this year's event.

The Islands and People

The Louisiades are a chain of tropical reefs and islands to the east of mainland Papua New Guinea and are just 520 nautical miles across the Coral Sea north-east of Cairns. The islands are spectacular and provide many safe anchorages. With abundant coral reefs there is snorkeling, diving and fishing galore. There are skull caves and hills to climb, coral reefs to snorkel, cays to visit, mangrove lined creeks, coconut shaded beaches, lagoons, creeks, waterfalls and shady forests to explore.

They are inhabited by very welcoming Melanesian people who have little cash economy and look forward to festivities and trading with the yachts. The islands and people are fantastic, so welcoming its often embarrassing. Most folk live in villages with from one family to hundreds. There is no formal traditional chiefly system but it seems every island has a councillor who sits on the local government. Councillors are elected so they do change each five years or so.

The Rally

The Rally is a great experience for us, the yachties. Those with no previous offshore cruising experience to those with tens of thousands of miles of bluewater experience enjoyed the Rally last year. The locals also enjoy the Rally and the islands we visit are already planning their welcome for yachts this year!

Based on other cruisers experiences and local knowledge from the Louisiades June-August can be pretty windy and wet, the south easterly tend to be a bit fiercer at this time. We also miss PNG's National Day, which means the locals can have their own celebrations and we don't have to chose which place to be (this would end up with many folk upset at us!).

So hopefully the weather is better and we get a great experience at each of the islands.

Returning to Queensland by mid November gets folk off the Coral Sea for the cyclone season (although they can occur earlier!) and should allow an easier return down the Queensland coast with the summer northerlies.

A cruise in company across the Coral Sea to the spectacular Louisiades, with a mix of events

(ranging from sailing canoe racing, feasts, sing sings, skull cave visit, traditional dancing, a remote river trip, school and hospital visits etc.) and time for independent exploration of the islands and their friendly communities.

One of the highlights of the Rally is the traditional sailing canoe (lakatois) regatta, held at Panapompom Island, which after a hectic day last year will be held over two days and see 30-50 of the traditional sailing canoes racing. "Lakatois are the local transport, they are the truck, car and school bus for these island communities, but they are no slouch, they will race past at 12-15 knots", said Guy.

The lakatois are not the only multihulls in the event, in 2008 almost half the fleet were catamarans. The Rally organiser sails a 21 year old Crowther and was joined by a wide variety of catamarans, from a large Perry to Graingers and a Seawind. "Catamarans just work for this tropical cruising" said Guy. "The relatively effortless passages compared to some of the monohulls was noted by the fleet, the stability at anchorage makes otherwise rolly anchorage (for leanahulls) tenable and the sheer livable space mean the cats were the party boats! The standout cat in 2008 was Rob and Pam Robsons Lightwave "5:00 Somewhere": "We should have known that these folk were into a good time, from the name based on the Jimmy Buffet song.. a sailing anthem. Rob's ability with the guitar was a highlight of the trip, including leading all the yachties in a rendition of Waltzing Matilda to over a thousand locals in Misima". However Rob and Pam were not just party folk, they also got on well with the local community, and indeed became the local Ferry when "Five O'clock" took over twenty villagers over thirty miles back to their village on Misima island, saving them a two day walk across the island.

Guy noted that the Lightwave was ideally suited to the Rally, the relatively high bridgedeck clearance, the layout and hull designs appears to make the Lightwave a top performer and seakindly cruising platform with good load carrying. "Rob and Pam, Five O'Clock and the guitar are joining the rally again this year, but we also hope for a strong contingent of Lightwaves in the fleet for 2009!"

Why Join a Rally?

The support from the rally includes safety and navigation briefings, Cairns marina berth (Yorkeys Knob Boating Club), weather, radio skeds, Australian/PNG customs arrangements and many events in the Louisiades. The organisers are committed to arranging a successful rally to the

Notice of 2009 Rallies



5 O'Clock Somewhere plays passenger ferry for local villagers

Louisiades in 2009, we will try to do everything we can to make it all work out.

2008 participants said the major benefits of the Rally were the safety briefings and cruise in company aspects, and the events many community which would otherwise not be experienced by independent cruisers.

Community Benefit

Whilst the Rally is organised for the yachties, we also aim to support the local community and last year the rally yachts took many items to donate to local schools and the local clinic. Trading for items is also very popular and by rally's end most yachts had exhausted their trading supplies (but had their fill of fruits and lobster and returned with great carvings and handicrafts).

Last year we took many goods to donate (as well as trade goods), we spent over \$15,000 on the events, food, handicrafts and fuel etc., raised over \$4,000 in donations to clinics and the government spent over \$15,000 on supporting the Misima event. All support that would otherwise not reach this remote and largely forgotten community.

Supporters

The Rally is supported by the Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority and the Yorkeys Knob Boating Club. Yachts muster

"A great suggestion from long range cruisers Rob & Pamela of LW45 5 O'Clock Somewhere, and Nils & Mayte of LW45 Muskateer, is to have a professional skipper on board for the week to tune those sailing and navigation skills, boat handling, safety and emergency procedures. Nils recommends:
STEVE CROCKETT M: 0402904701 E: stephen.crockett@bigpond.com"

at Yorkeys by September 6 and depart 12 September, yachts return to Australia mid October to mid November. Power and sail boats are welcome!

2009 Rally

Cairns (Yorkeys Knob) to Louisiades (PNG)
Departs 12 September

Return mid to late October

Further information:

Guy Chester on 0407 391211

Louisiadesrally@EcoSustainAbility.com,



Typical breakfast

Pamela's balancing act



In her other life this lady is the school teacher at Bagaman Is.

LIGHTWAVE45 MUSKAT to participate in Brisbane to Vanuatu Charity Rally

Nils and Mayte from Lightwave 45 MUSKAT are participating in the Brisbane-Vanuatu Charity Rally, starting May 2, which sees yachts travel in Company to beautiful Vanuatu, with a focus on supporting the medical and educational needs of the people of local Islands. The 2009 rally will see support of villagers on Gaua & Vanua Lava Islands. Nils and Mayte will also be taking another doctor as crew, to assist with medical help to the local villagers.

Rally organiser, Dr. Alan Profke, has visited Vanuatu the past three years and provided services in the clinics there. He advises that "many people have conditions ranging from chronic ringworm, white spot (tinea), through to diabetes, hypertension, degenerative joint diseases, malaria, gut parasites etc. So what we can offer in the way of help is varied but whatever we can do is certainly better than what is currently available. We are also making our boat available to transport a group of MDs and Dentists around the remote areas to do basic medicine in the villages".

Nils is the Director of Surgery at the Mackay Base Hospital, and has attracted a lot of support



Nils and spongebob

within his own medical fraternity, with donations of medical supplies. The image included is of Nils (pushing the Lightwave brand - go Nils!) with the stacks of medical donations in the background as well as their good old mate spongy Bob who is their dedicated LW pilot! He has been overwhelmed with donations and has had to find space on his Lightwave for 6 large boxes of medical supplies and equipment with another 4 being dispersed among the fleet for stowage and transportation to Vanuatu.

FOR MORE DETAILS ON BRISBANE - VANUATU CHARITY RALLY, contact:

The South Pacific Assn. (Rego No. 33412)

(Charity Registered In Vanuatu)

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CRUISING TALES OF LW35 'ULTIMATE DREAM', Bleeps & All

Kev & Paddy Armstrong & Simba (our dog)



August 2003 saw us heading north from our home on the Clarence River (Northern NSW), for the first time on our lovely "home away from home". Once again we had lovely overnights at Peel Island (Moreton Bay), Mooloolaba, Gary's Anchorage & a few nights in Hervey Bay, then onto Bundaberg. The weather was just lovely each day so went out to Lady Musgrave for a couple of nights. The morning we were to leave we got caught on a "bommie", so that set us back a day. YOU GUESSED IT! Copped an awful hammering all the way to Tryon Island. So we anchored there & bounced and banged around, when about an hour later found a dolphin had decided to look after us & stayed all night patrolling back & forth across the back of the boat & chirping at us to make sure we stayed awake & alert. JUST AWESOME!

Finally made it to Great Keppel Island next day & had some wonderful days there. We love the fact that no matter which way the wind blows we can always find a safe anchorage. Plenty of wonderful walks & lots of yachties to have the odd sundowner with. Sadly had to leave G.K.I. and head home. Took friends on board at Hervey Bay & overnights at Rooney Point (Fraser Island). Had the special treat of hearing the whales sing us to sleep. Too good. Next day passed about 24 whales & babies on our way down Fraser Island to Moon Point. Just fabulous. Dropped our friends off & continued heading south. Got caught in a storm in Moreton Bay and so decided they should concrete Moreton Bay & turn it into a carpark. Bloody awful place when the winds pick up & it storms.

We then decided to head to the Gold Coast via the Canaipa Passage. BIG MISTAKE! Somehow got hopelessly lost & ended up in amongst mangroves & God knows what else – thought we'd never be seen again. Finally made it to the Gold Coast for a few days, then a lovely sail home to the Clarence River.



We continued to enjoy our journeys north each year always discovering new places & anchorages & making some lovely new lifelong friends.

In April 2003 we headed to the Gold Coast for the very first Lightwave Regatta which was an absolute blinding success!! So we attended every one after that. Just the best three days of fun ever! So good to catch up with all the other happy Lightwave owners. Inspected each others yachts & got some very good ideas for our boat & vice versa. Having retired in 2008, we decided it was time for Kev to fulfill his ultimate dream and cruise north for nine months. We left home in April so we could once again participate in the Lightwave Regatta, then said farewell & kept heading north. Spent a few days at Gary's Anchorage with "Out of the Blue II". Great fun. Then on up to the Whitsundays for a fortnight. As we continued north Kev kept us well supplied with beautiful oysters & lots of fish. Oysters are very plentiful at places such as Hunter Island, Orpheus Island, Whitsunday Island, Cape Upstart & Lizard Island.

Thoroughly enjoyed our stay at Horseshoe Bay, Magnetic Island & lovely Fitzroy Island where Kev went snorkeling with a huge manta ray. By now we had made good friends with two others. Pommie Chris & Linda on their mono "Gitano" & Yankee Chris & Erin on their catamaran "Barefeet". Both couples heading on overseas & we still keep in touch. Will join "Barefeet" in 2009 in the Med. Our stay in Cairns was fun & we just loved Port Douglas. Went "croc spotting" up the river in Port Douglas. Saw about 12 big beauties.

We then headed on up to beautiful Hope Island & then to Cooktown for an overnights. Luckily Kev had made "croc gates" we could slide into the top of the back steps. Very paranoid with our little dog "Simba" on board. Heard a few nasty stories of crocs taking dogs so we were taking no chances. A "must see" in Cooktown is inside the Cooktown RSL Club. It has the most amazing collection of wartime memorabilia we've ever seen. Much better than a lot of museums. Left next day & had a wonderful sail on a 20-25 knot S.E. all the way to lovely Lizard Island. Spent a month there with our new mates & another couple Peter & Ferne on their cat "Kincheega" (from Mooloolaba). Had fabulous company with other yachties. Lots of great walks up to Mount Cook, Research Station, Blue Lagoon to mention a few. Endless sundowners & "pot lucks" on the beach at the "Lizard Island Yacht Club". This club consisted of one tree & a table! Yachties from all over the world had collected large cuttle shells & written their name & yachts on them then tied them into the tree. Sadly, once again the lousy National Parks mob pulled it all down & took away the table so Lizard Island Yacht Club no longer exists. Miserable buggers!

The snorkeling with huge Maori Wrasse was fabulous & hand feeding the huge greedy batfish from the back steps. Doesn't get much better than this. The beautiful coral "bommies" offered wonderful diving & snorkeling. It was not hard to spend a month there. Sadly had to say good-bye (for a while) to our lovely overseas mates & wish them a safe journey.

We finally said farewell to Lizard Island & yachtie mates & headed off into S.E. winds all the way home for the next 3 months.

Spent time at Low Isles, Havannah Island, Fantome Island (old leper colony), High Island & North Barnard. We found a treasure in Gool Island just off Cardwell. A beautiful island with wonderful camping facilities AND A WATER TANK! From there we went to Scraggy Point in the Hinchinbrook Channel. Once again heaps of huge oysters (by this time Paddy was slipping bromide in Kev's coffee!) Also a lovely bushwalk & a campsite. We had a week in Cardwell Marina along with "Salacia" & "Muscat 7". Looked a bit like a Lightwave Regatta. Paddy organised a yachties party on one of the wharf fingers which was very well attended by about 30 people plus kids & dogs & guitars. All great fun.

Our trip down the majestic Hinchinbrook Channel was just beautiful. Lovely mountains reaching

right down to the sea.

We finally ended up back at Magnetic Island for a week, then a few days in Townsville Harbour. Magnificent waterfront parks but awful C.B.D. Really needs a huge facelift. The Maritime museum is well worth a visit, very interesting history up this way. We learnt how very close we came to speaking Japanese!

We continued on south stopping at Gloucester Island (having visited Bowen on the way north). We're very pleased to report that Monte's Resort has had a massive make-over & is once again a beautiful yachties stop-over.

Finally got down to the Whitsundays where we picked up friends for a week then Paddy & Simba jumped ship (with friends) to go back to Sydney for daughter's big 40. Kev then continued south picking up son Scott & friend "Crowie" for a week, then various friends along the way for company.

One island which really stands out for us is the Newry Islands. Good fishing, oysters (and crocs) & a very interesting history of an old resort built back in the 1930's. An absolute "must see".



We travelled with our little dog "Simba" who thoroughly enjoys the yachting life (especially the dinghy). We managed to take him ashore walking every morning and evening, making sure to keep him on the beach & not in the parks or bush. It also made us get off our bums & get some exercise so a winner for everybody. National Parks were O.K as long as we kept him between the high water mark & low water mark. Although I have a feeling this may have changed in recent days.

It was an absolutely amazing 9 months, having travelled 3,129 nautical miles. Also amazing how two people can live that long on a boat 24/7 & still stay happily married. A very good test for any couple.

We visited so many beautiful islands & towns, each one different from the other, but for us our favourite is still the Great Keppel Island & Bunker Group.

Our beautiful Lightwave served us so well with every possible comfort & convenience you could ever want. Kev's vigilant maintenance & Paddy's obsessive cleaning had many other yachties commenting on how beautifully kept the boat was.

As we end this story we are once again planning another trip up north to The Great Keppel Islands & Outer Barrier Reef in August 2009. It sure is a lovely life on a lovely yacht & we're so fortunate we have good health to be able to enjoy it to the full.



LIGHTWAVE^{45sp} **Innforapenny II**

After spending the last 2 seasons cruising the Mediterranean, Penny and I decided it was time to move on. Our next cruising area was to be the Caribbean, but before we could get there we needed to cross a little stretch of water called the Atlantic or as the British call it "The Pond"!!! The ideal time of the year is from mid November through to May when the trade winds are most favourable and the hurricane season is over.

ATLANTIC **crossing**

by Peter Faulkner, Lightwave owner

Departure



The start of the race in Las Palmas

The usual point of departure is the Canary islands, a group of volcanic islands located 60 miles off the African coastline and about 600 miles south of Gibraltar. The Canaries are an ideal place to restock and prepare the boat for the crossing and in any season 1000 plus boats will pass through the islands en route to the Caribbean and South America. Most boats leave at the end of November which will enable them to arrive in the Caribbean in time for Christmas. The alternative departure point is to head further south to the Cape Verde islands, which reduces your longest leg by about 600 miles.

When planning your crossing it is advisable to go with other boats. You can either join one of the rallies that go across, which we did, or form your own group of similar size boats. Not that you will actually see your cruising buddies after the first couple of days, but it's good to share weather conditions and reports and know that someone is experiencing similar conditions as you are and should you get into difficulty your buddies should be within 200 miles or so of you.

Every year the World Cruising club organizes the worlds' largest annual trans-ocean event, better known as the ARC. It is conceived as a friendly race for cruising yachts to make the crossing both safer and more enjoyable. Between 200 and 250 boats take part each year. It is divided up into 4 main divisions

Open – for the serious race boats rated under the ARC Handicap System

Cruising Division – uses the World Cruising Club handicap where you can use your engines, although you are heavily penalized if you do

Motor Sailing division

– where there is no racing and no limit on engine hours

Multihull division

– has the same race rules as the Cruising Division

During the two weeks leading up to departure, on the 23rd November, the ARC organizes a diverse programme of events, from fancy dress parties to safety seminars. Part of the conditions of entry is that each boat has to go through a full safety audit and if you don't meet their high standards your entry is refused. One of the great things about the ARC is that lots of the boat manufacturing companies and equipment suppliers send their own representatives and engineers down to Las Palmas to check on their boats and equipment, even flying people in from the UK to make sure none of their equipment fails in the crossing. The ARC publish a list of equipment failures in the yachting press and it doesn't make good reading if a particular make of watermaker or navigation equipment keeps failing.

The only down side we found of the ARC is the cost, for a 45ft boat including 5 crew it came to over £1000. You really need to be there for the full two weeks before departure to take advantage of all the parties and seminars that are on offer. As long as you don't have too much to do in preparing your boat I think you can go to a free drinks party, put on by different sponsors, nearly every night. The two weeks before the race there is a high degree of excitement as everyone prepares for the race.

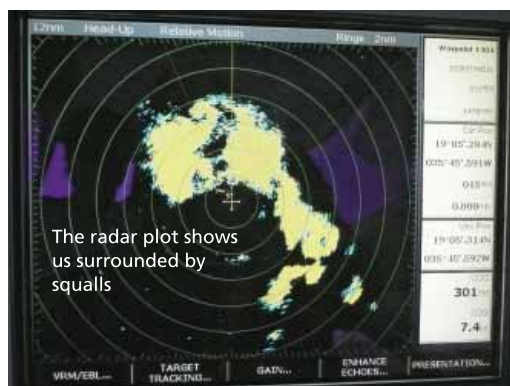
The crossing

From the Canaries there are two ways to cross. You can take the rhumb line which is about 2750 miles to St. Lucia or you head south to just north of the Cape Verde islands and then turn west for the Caribbean; or as the old sailors use to say "keep heading south until the butter melts". This southern route will add another 150 to 200 miles on to your trip but it should give you better trade winds and less of

chance of getting bad weather and you can easily make up the distance.

2008 ARC crossing was one of the slowest on record, due to the very light winds. Innforapenny's average wind strength over the 17 days was 9 to 10 knots and it wasn't until we got about 500 miles from St. Lucia that the wind started to pick up and become more constant. Most of the fleet kept heading south hoping to find better wind, which never materialized. One of the reasons we did so well in the race was after the first 4 days of heading south, we took the more direct route and followed the rhumb line. It certainly helped with our spinnaker pole set up and the skills of our number one sail trimmer Andrew Stanning (owner of Lightwave 38 -Northstar). Our strategy seemed to pay off and at one stage we were running 10th overall, even beating all the large race boats. Unfortunately it didn't last as we hit a hole in the weather system – there wasn't a breath of wind. At least some of the crew managed to go swimming mid Atlantic, not that they were that impressed as the water was alive with Blue Bottles. It was very frustrating watching our competitors complete 200 mile plus days while we struggled with 120 miles. After 36 hours the trade winds started to kick in and off we went again.

As you start to get closer to the Caribbean the likelihood of squalls increase – During the day time you can see them quite clearly but without radar at night it would be quite difficult. Although they only



last a few minutes they can certainly do a lot of damage. We tended to wait until the squall was about three miles away before of days you soon get into a routine. During the night on Innforapenny we ran



LIGHTWAVE45sp Innforapenny II
CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE WORLD ...
their journey so far



Sunset mid Atlantic

a two watch systems – Andrew and myself did 4 hours on and 4 hours off, while Penny, Emily and Barry did 3 hours on and 6 off. So at any one time we always had two people on. During major spinnaker changes we all had to be on deck. In the day time we tended not to be too regimental about set times.

As you can imagine there was a fair amount of free time. Emily kept us entertained with yoga sessions, Pilates, cards, scrabble and numerous other forms of entertainment including getting all the crew knitting beanies! Of course there was always fishing. We had some great catches.

Arrival

On 11th December at 1.00am we crossed the finishing line. We were 34th over the line from a fleet of 211. We were welcomed by the local St. Lucians with their smiling friendly faces and beautiful music, a big basket of local fruits and spices and a most welcome Caribbean rum punch. That only whet the appetite and as the ARC bar was open 24 hours a day we went for another rum punch... and another...and another. We were all high on adrenaline (until the rum took over) and we didn't get to bed until dawn, a very exhilarated and very exhausted (and slightly tipsy)

crew. A thought did go through our minds of all those crews still out there, some with over 1200 miles still to go! The party atmosphere continued for the next two weeks, finalizing in the ARC Prize giving night where we found we had come first in the multihull division.

A combination of calm weather conditions, our great crew, and our safe, fast and seaworthy boat made the experience of crossing the Atlantic a very memorable.

If asked if we would do it again, the answer would be a defiant YES!!

Emily and myself with a double hook up



Crew member & Lightwave 38 owner, Andrew, learning a new skill in light winds



Penny and Emily doing a "Letter Box Drop" when the spinnaker sock got stuck and the only way to get the Spinnaker down is pull it through one of the hatches.



Coral Sea Cooktown



Endeavor River Cooktown



Mrs Watsons Bay



On a windswept Coral Sea passage to the tip of Australia and beyond

Strong winds can blow here for weeks at a time, telecommunications are a constant challenge and companion boats are mostly few and far between - but Far North Queensland's Coral Sea and Torres Strait are awash with seductive anchorages that will stay in your memory forever.

For us, cruising these uncluttered waters equalled our best experiences along other parts of the Queensland coast, including the glorious but often-overcrowded Whitsundays, hundreds of nautical miles to the south.

On the passage north from Cairns, every new leg brings another new favourite. Three front-runners for us were Lizard Island, Cooktown, and tiny, sleepy Seisia just around the bend from the famous 'tip' on Cape York Peninsula.

Lizard Island is definitely a world beater. It's hard to improve on a couple of weeks tucked into Lizard's gloriously sheltered - and highly sociable - Mrs Watson's Bay where you while away the days oblivious to anything that's happening in the outside world. You can snorkel over coral bommies and reefs all day, or intersperse such relaxation by traipsing up to 'Cook's Look' at the summit to see where Captain James Cook found his opening in the reef in 1770. Then there are the nightly sundowners with compatriots on the beach - the perfect way to end another lazy day on Lizard!

Around the next corner from Mrs Watson's Bay is the exclusive Lizard Island Resort. 'Grotty yachties' are banished from landing here during the day, but welcome to dinghy around for sausage sizzles, pizzas and coldies at the resort staff's lively Marlin Bar on any Wednesday or Friday evening.

Lizard Island is a good day's sail to the northeast of Cooktown. And if you haven't got deadlines to drag you away, it's an incredible place to hang out while waiting for the south-easterlies to abate so you can continue north, or for the north-westerlies to switch in if you're heading south again.

We did the 60 nm crossing from Cooktown in perfect conditions. We were loaded up with fresh fruit and vegetables for cruising friends - and new friends of our friends - who'd been happily 'stranded' in Mrs Watson's Bay, in some cases for nearly three months, because unkind winds wouldn't allow them back to Cooktown to restock. A seaplane can fly in fresh supplies but getting new arrivals to do it is a far cheaper option.

Lizard is the one place north of Cooktown where you might need to jostle for a position. There were 40-50 boats in the bay while we were there, though we still managed to drop anchor in crystal clear water just a short swim from the beach. Lots of east coast sailors use Lizard as the pinnacle and turn-around point for

their seasonal cruise north.

Speaking of Cooktown, what a joy this place is, with its many quaint monuments and old convent museum, all commemorating the town's most famous visitor, Captain Cook, who repaired his damaged Endeavour here in the river now named after the boat. Available anchorages close to shore are few and far between at Cooktown. Ours was a 10-minute dinghy ride away but we did the trip back and forth regularly because there was so much to see and do. It has a spirit all of its own!

Apart from its wonderful history, characters and stunning coastal mountain and Coral Sea views, its main street along the waterfront has stacks of historic pubs and a couple of clubs where you can get a great feed for either lunch or dinner. Unlike Lizard, swimming is not a sensible option anywhere in the Endeavour River. We didn't see any ourselves but the locals are quick to tell you about the notable huge crocodilian characters that lurk around the mangrove fringe waiting for a tasty morsel.

Crocodiles are everywhere from here on in - all the way up the cape, around the rim of the Gulf, across the entire Top End coast and down to waters south of Broome in WA. They are not often visible but we know they are there. On the night before our 10 knot tidal surge through the beautiful Albany Passage to Cape York, we negotiated Brahminy deep into the Escape River, past its notorious 'mouth full of crocodiles' and endless lines of pearling racks that just happen to block off all the best anchorages within easy reach of the open sea.

Rounding the mainland's northern-most tip was an absolute thrill so we anchored in the shallow bay just beyond it and went ashore to walk with the tourists and pose with the sign on the rocks at this famous northern landmark. Then we came to tiny Seisia and fell in love with this charming coastal outpost for the nearby Bamaga Aboriginal community.

We spent a week anchored just beyond Seisia's wharf and barge landing, in a calm and gentle bay protected by the closest of the Torres Strait islands. We walked the soft white beach, devoured a Friday night barbeque steak at the local fishing club, stocked up at the community's excellent supermarket, and walked into Bamaga to meet some of the locals.

And because we were so close and wouldn't be back this way for a while, we took the half-hour ferry ride across to Thursday Island to be tourists for a day among the intriguing wartime and pearling history of this exquisite Torres Strait gem.

It was hard to leave Seisia. It was warm, friendly, comfortable and packed with special treats. It was the perfect sojourn before declaring the time and conditions were right to take the brisk sail down Cape York Peninsula's protected western coast and position Brahminy near Weipa, ready for the 55-hour Gulf of Carpentaria crossing to the Arnhem Land coast then home!

Kerry & Col Sharp

LW 38 Brahminy Darwin NT

Cook Memorial



Captain Cook Museum



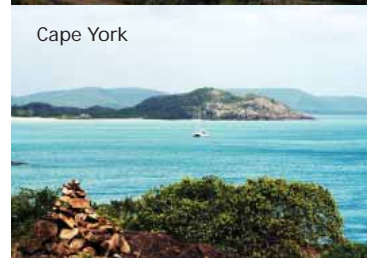
Cape York tourists



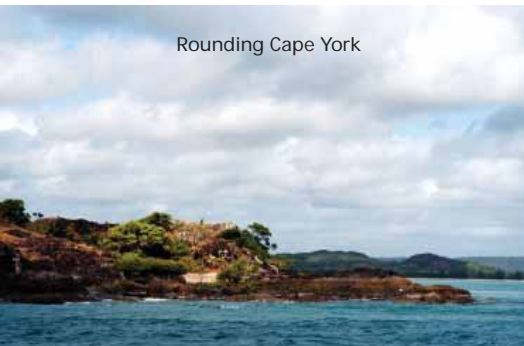
Thursday Island



Cape York



Rounding Cape York



Lizard Island



Lizard Island from the top



Cruising & Diving



The pristine beauty
of the G.B.R.



LIGHTWAVE 46pc FLASH DANCER
anchored at Wheeler Reef
on a perfect day

Townsville's Green Reefs

by Robin Jefferies, Owner of **LIGHTWAVE 46pc** FLASH DANCER



Shoal atop Coll Reef

My feelings inevitably turn to eager anticipation when the sparkling green aqua colors of a new Coral reef address come into focus. It doesn't get much better than **cruise / diving on the G.B.R.**, especially when the weather is on your side.



Robin at the helm

Robin at back of boat with hookah



Fan coral



Reef scene



LIGHTWAVE46pc anchored in Zoe Bay Hinchinbrook Island



Yeah OK!! I admit to belonging to the grey haired retired travelling set ... but no caravan, just a boat, **a sweet 46ft Lightwave Power Cat equipped to be our travelling home 7-8 months of the year and quite capable when it comes to zipping around tricky coral reef waters.**

These days many cruising boaties have taken to diving and many dedicated divers have taken to cruising. Some cruisers use Scuba with their own tank filling compressor and others prefer a Hookah. On our boat we use a Hookah that will put 2 of us down to 20 meters and our Scuba tanks seldom get wet.

One of my favorite diving areas is the extensive green zone starting 45nm East of Townsville at Wheeler Reef and extending out about 70 NM to Myrmidon Reef.

North of Cairns, the Ribbon Reefs are also a favorite cruise / dive location but it gets a lot windier the further north one travels. So on balance we prefer the calmer Townsville weather, and if you like being on your lonesome the reefs in this green zone are seldom visited and offer remote serenity with plenty of safe anchorages in up to 15 – 20 knots during the normal prevailing SE trade winds.

At times we've stopped for as long as 6 days on the one reef. I guess we get attached to the locals. Last spring we found a little gem of a reef which gave great weather protection from the late spring northerly's ... and its turned out to be not only handy but also a top diving site.

Coil reef is a small reef 60NM east of Townsville and close to the edge of the continental shelf. A few days here is guaranteed to both nourish the soul and excite the adventure diver in you.

A pristine large bommie rises from 10m in the sheltered area behind the main reef. It's perfect for snorkeling and free diving with your non diving partner or for when you want to just take it easy. There is plenty of good things to see and pics to be had, even with a basic point and shoot under water camera. **Filling in an hour circling this bommie is very easy with glorious coral, every type of reef fish imaginable and docile patrolling white tip sharks.** Not forgetting those cute little turtles that pop up all over these reefs.

I especially love the extensive fields of hard coral that are plentiful around here. We call our favourite "Pipe Organ Coral" for its tubular appearance. Visibility is good at around 18-23m unless you journey out into the coral sea it won't get very much better.

After the gentle ambience of the inner bommie it's time to get a little adrenaline pumping through those veins and move further out for a dive where anything can appear.

300m further out is a larger shoal area rising slowly from around 30m to just below the surface in places.

The Eastern Australian Current rips along not far out from here and especially in the late spring and summer months can combine with tides to create lots of current and fish action. When diving care must be taken for at times the currents are moderate and run in odd directions.



Susan in the dingy at Myrmidon...MY PARTNER KEEPS MY bbq sizzling ... but best of all she loves snorkeling and sharing my G.B.R. adventures



Reef scene

Despite the shoal being more exposed with additional wave action the hard coral is still interesting and down deeper gracious red and orange fans appear. Lots of Humpnose Unicorn and other Surgeon fish, Trout, Chinese Footballers, Bumphead Parrot fish, Trevally, occasional Manta Rays and plenty of bait fish are to be found ... **but the real attraction for me here are the hunters like Sharks, Mackerel, GT's and sometimes Tuna.**

My favorites are the Grey sharks. Their sleek graceful bodies beautifully silhouetted in the blue waters are a sight to behold and the coral back drop adds the finishing touches to another of natures stunning under water panoramas that hang vividly in one's memory.

I usually run into a few Greys each dive and after 6 dives I think I'm getting to know some of them ...

There's little Agro who is never happy to see me and got quite agitated on my first dive and then there's Mum. She?? or is it he?? is big, fat and calm and usually hangs about for a while checking me out ... I miss her when she moves on. I imagine she is curious and wants to ask me exactly what am I and what am I doing with that black thing I keep pointing at her and I'd like to ask her to stay in close and smile for the camera!



Grey shark checking out the weirdo



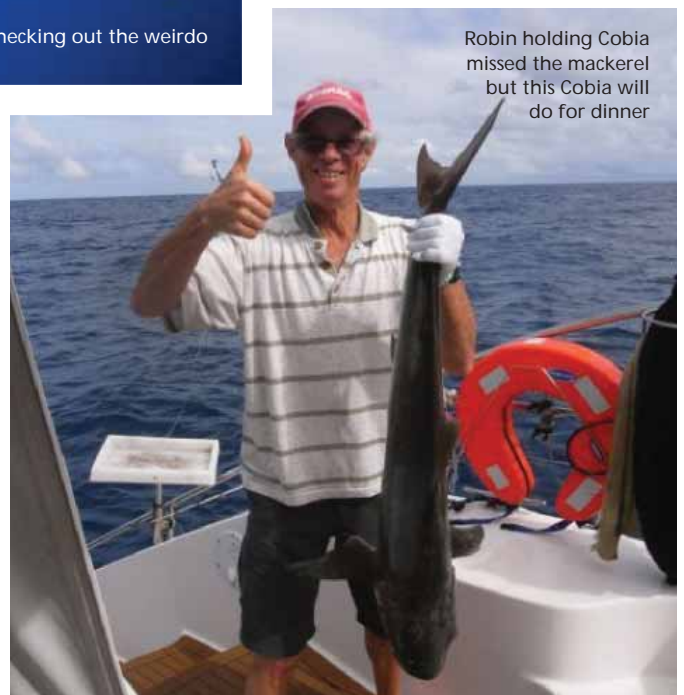
Clowning around

Some of my other preferred reef locations around here are: the pretty coral gardens at **Wheeler Reef**, the wonderful bommies rising straight up from 20 - 30m to the west of **Bowl Reef**, the top anchorage at **Faraday Reef** and the giant Groper and Marie Wrasse that reside at **Myrmidon Reef**. By chance this area is also a gateway to many Coral sea atolls, first step **Flinders Reef Cay is only another 75 east of Myrmidon!!** Hell ... you've come this far ... why not keep going??? Maybe not this trip!!! But there's another grand boating / diving / fishing adventure to be had.

P.S. Hey, I forgot to mention when we are cruising about and **not in a green zone** we frequently throw in a line ... or 2 plenty of pelagics around here & **Mackerel patties are delicious** even for those party poopers (sorry dear) who normally don't like eating fish.



Robin diving with camera



Robin holding Cobia missed the mackerel but this Cobia will do for dinner



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